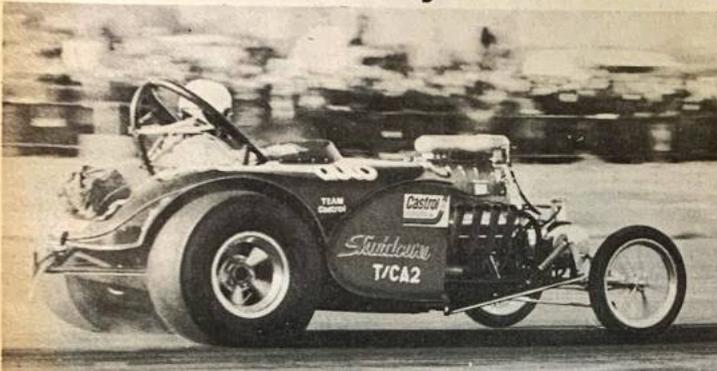


Blackbushe drag racing—Castrol Quiz—Record at Castle Howard—Lyons' double—Hinde marches on



Mike Hall's 329ci Shutdown tears down the strip to keep the Top Comp class open.

BLACKBUSHE

Disorganisation still

The NDRC's first event of the season, and second round of the Castrol/RAC championship was blessed with near perfect drag racing weather, only a mild head wind to perhaps slow the cars down slightly. But despite this, the sad fact remains that little had improved in the organisation of the event as far as the NDRC was concerned. Late in starting, when qualifying did get under way it went fairly well, but following the lunchbreak which stretched on and on, the all too familiar pattern of hold ups and unexplainable delays took hold, punctuated with some admittedly good runs from the leading cars.

Of the three fuelers, Clive Skilton was first to run in the Castrol car, taking an easy pass at a mere 8.2 s to qualify, whilst Dennis Priddle in the Revell fueller suffered a rare thing for him when the blower coughed on the line breaking the drive belt and ruined his chances of a good time. Fred Whittle was unable to attend to drive the second Skilton car, so Roland Pratt found himself with a drive again. This soon came to an end however, when the oil pump drive shaft broke after he fired up for his first attempt and he had to wait until the afternoon before making a run.

The two funny cars present were also troubled in one way or another, Priddle's STP Avenger breaking a throttle cable, which although a comparatively minor ailment, combined with the problems on the rail, put the car out of action for the day. Mark Stratton's new rear-engined Vauxhall was easily his best creation to date, looking very purposeful indeed, but after one run that ended with a broken clutch pedal, driver Ed Shaver and the crew were unable to fire the car up for a second run.

Finally however, both Skilton and Priddle were ready to run, and as so often happens between the two, it was the one who left first who won. This time it was Dennis who stole the narrowest of margins at the start and held on to it despite the usual strong top end charge of Skilton's car. Dennis in fact burnt several pistons in turning his winning 7.79 s at 178 mph, whilst Clive was close with a 7.82 s at 208 mph. This put Dennis out of action for the day, a situation that

hardly pleased him, but by this time Roland's oil pump had been repaired, so the two rear engined cars made the last run, with Clive going away to a good 7.4 s as Roland slowed with more engine trouble. Not the best of days in the Top Fuel division, but a good one again in Top Dragster, though still short on entries. Prior and Andrews were joined by Ray Hoare for this meeting though his 11.4 s qualifying run was hardly up to the usual standard of his "small block" car. Most interest centred on the two injected "Rat" motored cars, Andrews 440 and Roz Prior's 454. The two came out to qualify together, and with a perfectly executed start it was the little lady who was away first and really flying to her first sub nine second run at 8.97 s, fractions ahead of the Stone Racing entry at 9.07 s. This gave Roz the benefit of the bye run in eliminations, which she took with a slight misfire at 9.4 s, whilst Andrews too dipped into the eights in beating Hoare with 8.87 s. In a repeat of the morning's line-up, the two faced each other in the same lanes in the late afternoon, but this time, Gerry Andrews moved first and was gone to a better 8.7 s, with Roz chasing hard at 9.3 s.

With both the funnies giving trouble, Top Competition boiled down to the two altereds of Stone and Hall, and both went well in practice. Hall again showed that he is master of the big supercharged Chrysler, doing several good 9 s runs at over 160 mph during the morning, each time keeping his foot well down despite getting more than a little out of shape. Dave Stone made only one qualifying run in the supercharged Tee Rat, and what a run it was, the engine sounding absolutely fabulous as he boiled the tyres right up the strip to a stunningly good 8.5 s. But in his first run in competition, another bye as it happened, the same start ended in a broken rear axle at around mid distance, so Mike Hall took the final with a similar solo run to keep this division of the championship wide open going into this weekend's big event at Santa Pod.

Clive Page had a few problems with his Fiat/Chev in Senior Comp, including losing a core plug, but despite being off form, he won the class with a slow 13.3 s over Law-

rence Burn in his Avenger Chev—the ex Spence, Morris and Burrows car of last season, and now using a larger 350 engine. Dick Sharp looked like providing some opposition in the rebuilt "Dorset Horn" A35 Pontiac. With a lower roof line and smart new paint work to match the improvements made in the engine, the team hoped to get into the tens, but after one easy run at 12.2 s the engine swallowed a couple of valves, though apparently with little serious damage.

Although Gary Goggin did eventually turn up with his Camaro after an all-night stint getting it ready, he was in fact too late to race, so Kevin Pilling was again alone with his Camaro in Pro Stock. He had been trying to get a fibreglass front end made between meetings, but had been unable to get the job finished in time, so was running without any front end sheet metal. His runs amounted to little more than demonstrations, but true to form he filled the car with tyre smoke on his burn outs, and had to have both doors opened to fan the smoke out before he could run! Power shifting with almost unbelievable speed, his times were still not as good as usual, the poor traction losing him nearly a second over his previous best times, but trying to actually detect when he had changed gear was enjoyment enough in itself.

Other notable winners included John Morten in Middle Comp with the "Invader" Firenza/Chev in its second outing, Ivan Fryer in Top Street with his faithful Mustang 351 and Sylvia Read in her 440 Dodge in the production class with a strong 13.9 s run.

A scrappy meeting then, and one can only hope that things will get better from now on. It can be done, and there is really no excuse for not improving things for the rest of the year. Meanwhile, there is the Easter meeting at the Pod to look forward to, traditionally the best attended meeting of the season for spectators, and although there will doubtless still be some leading cars missing, a good turnout is expected.

HOT CAR AT THE POD

COME AND MEET US AT SANTA POD FOR THE BIG GO



HOW TO BLOW YOUR mind in one easy lesson—roll up to Santa Pod at 9.30 on the morning of Sunday May 26! That's when the greens light up for the 1974 **Hot Car Big Go**, one of Britain's premier drag events—two solid days of the very best in quarter-mile racing this side of the Atlantic. It's our privilege to once again host this Whitsun Bank Holiday event with **Santa Pod Raceway**—one of the major meetings of 1974 at the Northamptonshire strip.

Yes folks, May 26/27 features rounds of all the major British drag championships organised by the British Drag Racing and Hot Rod Association. And there's plenty in it for you, the spectator. **Hot Car** will be organising race-day competitors to keep the excitement high.

Already it seems likely that Dennis Priddle and Clive Skilton will be matched up in their AA fuellers for some really exciting action—and it's rumoured that Freddie Whittle could appear in a Double A, too! Funnies will be represented by Stardust, Miss STP (a namechange in the pipeline now STP aren't backing it), Dennis Priddle's Avenger AA funny (now STP sponsored despite last month's announcement of it running in Shell-sport colours!), and Roly Pratt's planned funny. As we write this, the season hasn't even got under way

properly, but Santa Pod Raceway reckon 1974 could see one of the best turnouts ever. Bikes look hot too, and expect to see records broken all round if weather and traction are good.

For the spectator, admission is still kept down to £1 per day, plus 50p paddock transfer—or the special two-day and paddock all-in price of £2.50. Facilities include catering and refreshments; two goodie shops; trade stands; overnight camping free of charge; water; toilets; free stands and excellent viewing down either side of the strip. Local petrol stations will be open over the weekend subject to availability of petrol, so you shouldn't get stranded—fill up before you leave home though!

Extra attractions apart from the qualifying Sunday and racing Monday will include the wheelie Stingray; rumours of that trick truck again (!) and best rod concours and parade. And don't forget the **Hot Car** competitions—**Hot Car's** current issue will be on sale at the strip, too.

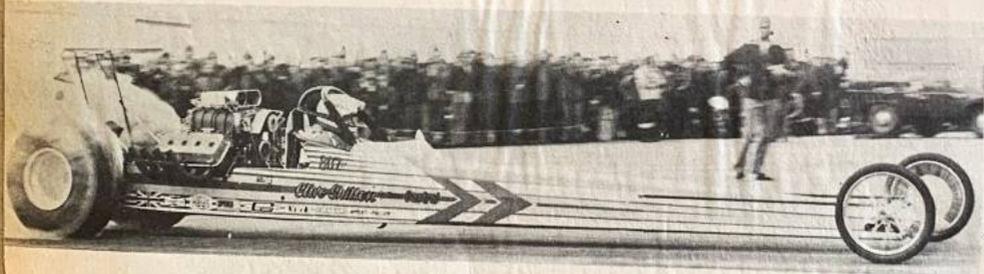
Championship rounds at the **Hot Car Big Go** include: BDRHRA Club Championship; Castrol/RAC Drag Championship; STP/Custom Car Pro-Stock Championship; STP/Custom Car Street Championship; and Castrol Drag Bike Championship. **Hot Car** will be presenting major division awards again. Don't forget—May 26/27. See you there!



Top: Santa Pod's Miss STP funny car depicted by Tony Townsend—see it alongside Stardust, but no longer in its STP rigout

Above: Mick Gleadows blasts his superb jellymould Anglia 'Motor Psycho' off the line

Below: Superstar Skilton—the man himself will be racing up against Dennis Priddle for the British title this year



Skilton fastest at Blackbushe

CLIVE SKILTON took his second win of the year at Blackbushe on April 6/7 with a final round run of 7.4s over Roland Pratt in the second Skilton team car. Originally entered for Fred Whittle, Pratt took over the drive again when Whittle couldn't make the event at the last minute. But it was not an easy day for any of the Top Fuel cars or anyone else for that matter, with Dennis Priddle suffering a blower backfire on his first run to qualify.

His second run against Skilton netted him a close win at 7.79s to 7.82s, but this was at the expense of several burnt pistons, and maybe even more damage, so Skilton was back in action. He had qualified at 8.2s, a slow run for him, whilst Pratt had missed qualifying altogether with a broken oil pump. This was repaired in time for the final round, but further trouble plagued him as Skilton streaked to a better 7.4s run.

With his fueller keeping him busy, Priddle had little time to tend to the new STP Avenger, so when the throttle cable broke he had little option but to load up and write the weekend off to experience. Ed Shaver, driving Mark Stratton's newest and best creation yet, the rear engine Vauxhall funny, also had problems, first with a broken clutch linkage, then an engine that refused to fire-up in competition against Dave Stone in the blown Tee-Rat altered. He had qualified at a very impressive 8.5s run, smoking the tyres for almost the entire quarter-mile, and looked well on the way to a similar if not better time when the rear axle said enough at around 300 yards. The other qualifier in the class, Mike Hall in the blown Chrysler altered, enjoyed himself and pleased the large crowd with several exciting low nines, and ended up taking the win as all else failed around him on only his second outing with the car.

The Stone team fared better with

their other car however, though not without a strong fight from Roz Prior, who led Gerry Andrews in the injected rail in qualifying with an 8.97s to 9.07s, her first eight. Ray Hoare fell to Andrews in the first round, his small 302 Chevy not running to its usual form, whilst Roz took a bye at 9.3s. In the final, Andrews left first to hold a car-length lead as he recorded a best yet of 8.7s as Roz chased hard with a 9.3s. The two cars looked and sounded equally good, so with one win each to date in the Castrol/RAC Championship, it obviously is going to be a close fought race - soon to be joined by others in the class to bring in more variables.

In Senior Competition, the 'Dorset Horn' team was back in action with its 421 Pontiac powered A35. With a new block, rods, pistons and numerous minor improvements and a lowered roof line and new paint, the consistent winner from last season was expected to do well, and indeed it sounded more like a racing engine than it did last year, when it hardly ever went over 5,500 rpm. But after an easy 12.2s pass, the engine broke a couple of pushrods and was sidelined for the day. This left Clive Page taking his turn in the team Chev/Topolino with a virtually unchallenged shot at the win. Lawrence Burn's 350 Chev/Avenger was not running well, and couldn't match the big 427 Chevrolet engine of Page,

which even so was not going well and won with a mere 13.3s.

This was slower than the winner of Middle Comp, John Morton in the ex-Hall, ex-Mullen Firenza/Chevrolet 350. He ran a good 11.7s to beat Roger Bishop in the very fast Jaguar Minivan 'Strip-teaser', still running a manual box but hoping to be automatic by Easter this weekend at Santa Pod - a move that is awaited eagerly by many people apart from their competition!

Kevin Pilling was again the only Pro Stock driver to run, though Gary Goggin did arrive late after working most of the night on his Camaro. Pilling's car was without any front end metal as a glass-fibre one-piece unit is currently being made for him, and although his times were impaired by the lack of grip, he lived up to his reputation as a showman by laying down some great burn-outs.

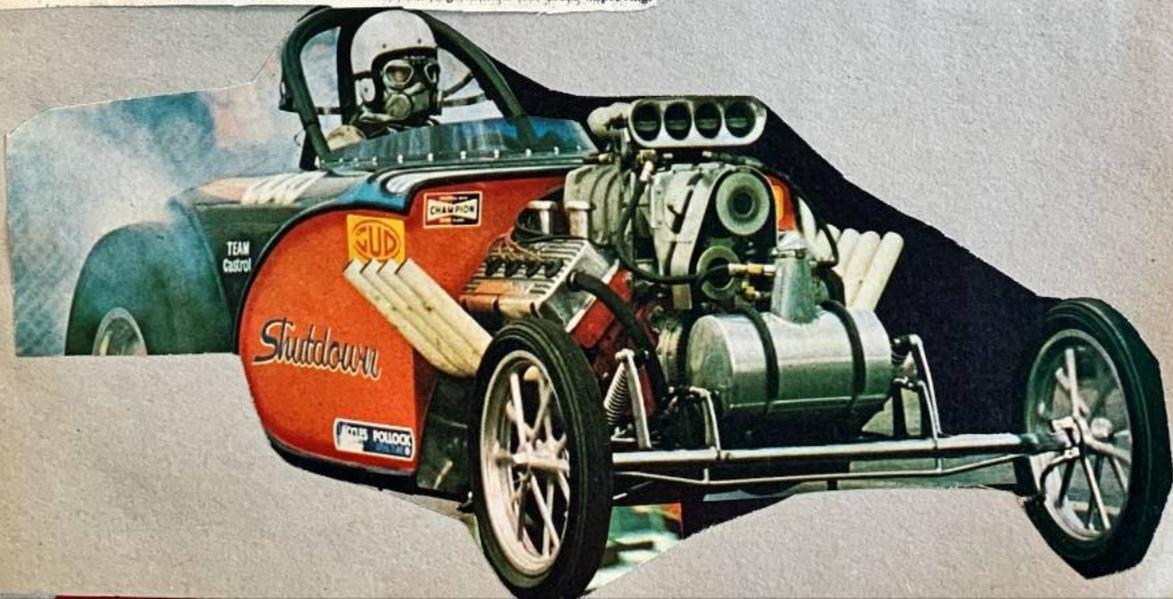
Sylvia Read, who it may be remembered drove Pete Bennet's Pro Stock Nova a couple of times last year, was racing for the first time in her own 440 Dodge, and went well enough to win the Production class with a 13.9s run - quicker than Ivan Fryer's Top Street winning time of 14.8s in his 351 Mustang.

But in general it was a dull meeting, with too many delays and hold-ups, not all of which can be forgiven as 'first meeting cobwebs', and the NDRC should be looking to improve their running for their next events; an overall and consistent improvement is really long overdue.

J.T.D.



THERE was a good crowd at Blackbushe to see Skilton win but the organisation still needs improving.



JOHN DICKSON'S



DRAG RACING

The first drag event of the new season at Santa Pod was one of the best 'Season Openers' in memory. Generally, these events prove to be a bit slow as both racers and organisation get into gear after the winter lay-off but although the entry was quite small this year the racing was well run and contained some exciting moments.

Several cars had new owners and of these, Mike Hall impressed most with his handling of the ex-Fred Whittle 'Shutdown' altered, still adorned with 'Auto' paintwork. After one trial run, he zipped off a fine 9.6 secs at 160 mph to show that he has no fear of the big 392 Hemi and looks like being a real threat to the other entrants in the big AA Top Comp class this year. With Phil Elson, and Dave Stone in the supercharged 'Tee-Rat', for opposition, this was a good elimination, and whilst it could have benefited from more cars, demonstrated that the big 'altered' still put on a good show. Stone had had trouble with his car in qualifying and many felt that Hall would pull off a win at his first attempt; engines thundering, the two cars went through their burn-outs, with Stone finding that he couldn't be pulled back over the line owing to a clearance problem with the direct drive

unit. Moving right over to the fence, he drove round and restaged after going behind Hall and across the bleach box. Hall rolled slowly into the beams and redlit, but still poured it on to hit 146 mph. Stone winning with a 9.18. Elson, who had qualified with a 9.4, took a bye run at 9.7, then stole a lead on Stone in the final—but Dave soon had his foot well into the boards and shot past to an 8.54, though only at 134 to Phil's 9.2 at 155.

Gerry Andrews also had trouble with the Stones' second car, the 'Hemi-Hunter' Top Dragster now fitted with the injected motor from the altered. Dave had turned an 8.2 in the car the previous weekend, but air in the fuel lines stopped any meaningful runs and Roz Prior took the first round of this promising class with a 9.3.

Clive Skilton predictably took the Top Fuel win in the absence of Dennis Priddle, though a blown head gasket in qualifying kept him from his usual No.1 spot. This went to Allan Herridge, who ran 'Firefly' to a better than average 7.4. He followed that with a solo 7.9 bye, Mike Hutcherson making a terrific start against Skilton in the other pairing only to be out powered by Clive's 7.0 at 211 to 8.3/160. In the final the Santa Pod car coughed and died on the line while Clive streaked to a 7.1 at 214, laying down a great tail of smoke on what was a slightly damp track. Another notable run took place in Senior Competition, with favourite Dave Page facing Kevin Pilling in his Pro-Stock Camaro (who had been the only such entrant, and decided to run in this class, having little trouble in getting to the final).

Page, who surprisingly was not going as well as he had last year, had only managed low tens despite running well over 140 mph on each run and put it down to his new tyres, which appeared to be of too hard a compound, just spinning helplessly. On the final run, he burnt-out over the line, stopped to reverse back and gunned it a bit too hard, which sloshed some Trick-Shift fluid out of

the breather pipe on his Clutchflite trans. When the green came on, Kevin catapulted away, whilst Page first sat and spun, then charged up the strip and crossed into Pilling's lane, the fluid having coated the right slick. Almost in Pilling's boot before he shut off, it looked like it would have been a close one, but the win went to Pilling with a best ever 10.4 (though it should be said that with the stage beams now 8 inches apart, this season's times cannot simply be related to last year's).

Two weeks later, the NDRC moved into action at Blackbushe; whereas the weather at Santa Pod had been bitterly cold, near perfect sunshine attracted a crowd said to be well over ten thousand to the first meet at the Surrey strip. Unfortunately, the organisation of the racing was as vague as ever and, while the (late) qualifying period went well enough, a big cheer from the crowd after the painfully long lunch break showed that they had been kept waiting far too long for some action. To compound the troubles, nearly all the bigger cars had problems of one sort or another, neither Dennis Priddle in the STP Avenger nor Ed Shaver in the Castrol Vauxhall making a proper run. Ed broke the clutch pedal on his only appearance in his very well turned-out car with its new rear-engined chassis, while Dennis Priddle had the throttle linkage break on his car and was unable to repair it satisfactorily to make a run.

Dave Stone was back at an NDRC meet after a year's absence, and he did a most impressive 8.5 in the car, smoking all the way up the strip to the delight of all; Mike Hall was in action again and running well, with consistent nines that included some quite hairy moments, serving to reinforce the impression he had made two weeks before. Ed Shaver had, in fact, qualified his car in the run when he broke the pedal (though with a very slow time) but when it came time to run against Stone, the team couldn't fire the new 392 up, so Dave went off by himself again in a

dense cloud of smoke that only ceased when the rear axle broke. This left Hall with a bye-run final win to reverse the result of the first meeting. A similar thing happened in Top Dragster, when Roz Prior outqualified Andrews with a very close 8.97 to 9.07 but lost the final to Andrew's improved 8.7 to 9.2, the Accles and Pollock/Castrol car still sounding a little rough at high revs. Ray Hoare had appeared as well but was way below his usual form and went out to Andrews with an 11.

In Top Fuel, Clive ran 8.3, Dennis coughed a blower and trickled through the lights and Roland Pratt, standing in for Fred Whittle in Clive's second car, had an oil pump failure and didn't make a qualifying run. When Dennis and Clive did make it on to the strip it was the front-engined car that got away first and despite a top end charge to 208 mph by Clive, his 7.82 was just behind Dennis' winning 7.79. This proved to be an expensive win, for several pistons melted in Priddle's Donovan engine and he was, of course, unable to run again. For a finale, the second car was readied by Clive's mechanics and both of his machines came out down the strip to fire up. This time, Clive got hooked into the tricky surface a little better, setting a 7.4 time, one of the best at Blackbushe for some while; Roland went through slowly with more troubles.

Kevin Pilling again had the only Pro-Stock in attendance, though Gary Goggin did turn up late after working till the last moment but was only able to make a couple of shake-down runs after the event was over. Pilling's car was running without the front bodywork, which was being used for a mould for a one-piece front end and he put on his usual show of burn-outs before doing his runs (which took the form of demonstrations in the absence of any opposition).

Hopefully, the problems which beset the meeting will not occur again and we can look forward to later NDRC meetings improving to the standard of their excellent Silverstone bash last year.



Sports extra

SANTA POD

Priddle takes Pro Fuel

The first major meeting of the drag racing season at Santa Pod showed that the great expectations of this year looked like being fulfilled, with the first full-sized entry turning in some notable times in closely fought eliminations.

As is customary at two-day events, the Sunday was given over entirely to qualifying in all classes, and for perhaps the first time, it was not one of the Top Fuel dragsters that set the low e.t. of the day. This honour went to Allan Herridge in the "Stardust" funny car when he rocketed through in a mere 7.11 s at 200 mph. Owen Haywood, after leaving alongside Herridge, slowed with a damaged blower, and did not reappear that day.

Herridge's second attempt after two very sideways burn-outs netted a 7.7 s as he shut off with serious engine damage. Mark Stratton's funny car was found to have a cracked block in the week, and the team did not have time to build up a new motor, so the other car in the class was Dennis Priddle's STP Avenger, which came straight out and ran an easy-looking 8.1 s, making it the fastest British-built car of the class in one run.

Mike Hall's "Shutdown" altered, improved again to a 9.1 s whilst Dave Stone, after fitting bigger and taller slicks found that they were growing into the bodywork at around mid-distance, so he retired to the workshop for suitable modifications. Phil Elson and Freeman Rodgers, in their Chrysler and Ford alters respectively, had troubled times, with neither really coming up with a full power pass.

Priddle's second car, the Revell-sponsored dragster led the Top Fuel, qualifying with a 7.14 s, just outside Herridge's funny car time, whilst neither Hutcherson in the "Hounding" team car with a broken axle, nor Herridge in the Raceway dragster were near their usual best. Clive Skilton was not in attendance. The Top Dragster class had one more entrant in Peter Jones, new owner of Brian Ringsall's small 331in Chrysler rail, and he went well to record 10.6 s on his first run with the car. Ray Hoare had improved since Blackbushe, having traced his problems to the injection of his 292 Chev, but was still way off the mark at a similar 10.6 s. Of the two big Chevies, Gerry Andrews was fastest, running the Stones' car through to a very straight and impressive 8.19 s. Roz Prior replied with an 8.7 s, and later improved on this to 8.6 s, apparently on a lower nitro percentage. Gerry tried once more to improve on his time, but after spending some time in getting the car to run, was slightly slower at 8.3 s.

In Senior Comp, the Pages found their traction again, the rather hard slicks apparently having been worn down and softened a bit by Blackbushe's abrasive surface, with Dave Page making two near identical runs at 9.6 s/145 mph. Dick Sharoe and crew had found some studs pulled out of the heads of their 428 Pontiac engine, and after fitting new screw-in ones, arrived full of confidence. Dick's first run was an 11.1 s, but the engine seemed to be suffering from fuel starvation, so they borrowed a pump from Dave Page in a nice example of drag racing friendship, and immediately went down to 10.7 s at 136 mph, nearly 20 mph faster than they had ever been before.

Kevin Pilling at last had some opposition in Pro Stock, with Gary Goggin's much-lowered Camaro looking very mean. The first run together resulted in a 10.2 s/139 mph for Goggin and a 10.5 s/129 mph for Pilling, times which they both virtually repeated later on. Peter Crane was the third entrant, but after breaking an oil-pump driveshaft, he was

sidelined for most of the day, finally coming out for a 12.2 s on what was really a try-out on the new engine.

Fastest of the SuperStreet entries was Dave Rose with an 11.99 s in his Barracuda, still running the 440 wedge engine before fitting his 426 Hemi and possibly moving up to Pro Stock. Much of the original street Hemi equipment incidentally is now in Gordon Spices' "STP" Cuda, whilst some of the more exotic parts on that now belong to Rose.

On Monday morning the sun had gone, and the weather was again cold, but racing got under way with practice and qualifying runs for one or two people who had been in trouble on Sunday. Pete Crane found that his engine had digested a screw from a butterfly on his injection, damaging a piston, so again the Pro Stock class was down to two. Gary Goggin ran a sensational 10.02 s in practice, starting to move ahead of Pilling on times. Their first race of a three-match series saw Goggin pulling the front wheels well over a foot off the ground as he rocketed to another 10.3 s, with Pilling just behind with another 10.5 s. For the second round they both went through their burn-outs, with Goggin's car smelling of clutch as they staged. But after again leading, he slowed towards the finish



Dave Page's Panic (foreground) and B. Deichen's Daimler-engined Majesty fight out Senior Comp.

with what turned out to be a throttle cable drift, letting Pilling through to win with a 10.7 s, but as he shut off there was an ominous bang, and at long last his reliable engine had had enough as two rods came out the side. With one win each, they called it a day and loaded up.

The "Stardust" funny car proved to be beyond repair with the crank in three bits, so all eyes were now on the match between Priddle and Haywood. With Priddle's STP Avenger looking every bit as mean as the American car, they both lined up behind the start with their crews using the portable starters to fire them up together. Dennis went over a 100 yards up the strip on his first real burn-out, with Haywood doing his usual professional job alongside him. With both cars barking and shaking, they crept into stage. Dennis left first, but smoked the tyres heavily and lost ground to the extra 100 cu in of the American car as Owen hit a 7.7 s at 179 mph to Dennis's 8.6 s at 175 mph. The second round was just as exciting, the two cars changing lanes, with Dennis still smoking, but leaving well and holding his slender lead to an 8.4 s/179 mph as Haywood's clutch expired at mid distance to a 9.2 s at 188 mph. A terrific first outing for the British car, and one that still left hope

for Shaver to beat him into the sevens.

In Top Fuel, Dennis reigned supreme over the other two, with an easy bye, then a 7.2 s at 201 mph over Herridge in the final when the Raceway car shut off early. Herridge had beaten Hutcherson with a 7.7 s to 8.2 s in his semi-final.

The four blown alters put on another good show, with Mike Hall again defeating Phil Elson with another 9.2 s, and Dave Stone winning over Freeman Rodgers in the blown 427 Ford. This made a surprisingly good start, with plenty of power boiling the tyres, but slowed with a misfire at the top end as Stone coasted through. All attention was now on the Chrysler v Chevrolet final again as the two potent and ill-handling cars fired up. But luck was not with Stone again as his clutch refused to disengage after the burn-out so Mike Hall took his second win with a bye run at 9.2 s/168 mph, the car really moving well at the top end, although still missing the elusive eights.

In Top Dragster, Roz Prior ran another straight 8.7 s to beat Peter Jones's hemi at 10.4 s, whilst poor Ray Hoare lost fire in his car against Gerry Andrews in the Stones' other entry, and sat and watched the injected "HemiHunter" run to an 8.55 s. So in a final which held as much attention as any other that day, the same two cars faced up yet again.

Roz made a beautiful start and was going away from the other car when cruel luck struck as the parachute opened some 100 yards from the finish, with the win well in her grasp. Snaking viciously under full power, the car was at one time on one wheel at a frightening angle to the direction of travel, but somehow she kept control, but lost the race as Andrews powered past with an 8.64 s at 172 mph, prompting thought on what Prior's time would have been!

In the lower altered divisions, Dave Page had a lucky escape when his front torsion bar snapped on a 10.0 s run, but he managed to repair it with assistance from Allan Herridge before the final, where perennial rival Dick Sharpe waited with the Pontiac A35. Sharpe left first, and looked as if he might pull off what would have been an upset, but the extra power of Page's Chevrolet told, and he got by at the top with a 10.66 s to 10.9 s, but Sharpe was well pleased with his increased performance. In Middle, the two fastest Jaguar-powered cars met in the final, with Roger Bishop in the "Stripteaser" Mini- van having trouble in adapting to the new B&M Clutchrite transmission. Missing second gear, he managed a 12.1 s to Pete Skinner's good 11.93 s in "Midas Mist."

Dave Rose had a rewarding first outing with his SuperStreet Barracuda, coming to the final with a best of 11.8 s to beat Bob Oram's turbo-charged E-type with an 11.9 s to a troubled 18.4 s, the former all-conquering Jag being a long way off last year's times.

The most amusing event of the day was Dave Lee Travis's challenge to motorcycle journalist and commentator Mike Cazelet for a roller-skate race. DLT was to have driven the Stones Escort Chev in Super Street, but a warped block prevented this. After a thrilling flame burn-out on the skates, the two intrepid speed freaks lined up, with DLT red lighting!

Cazelet got a tow from race director Sid MacDonald's Honda, so Travis hung on to the back of the breakdown truck and chased after him the two having already collided once as Cazelet crossed the centre line. Cazelet then lost part of his skate and crashed, bringing Honda and MacDonald down with him. With DLT finally coming down in the traps as well, Cazelet was declared the winner with a 124 s e.t. to DLT's faster, but red-light 118 s.

Apart from the cold, an enjoyable and well organised meeting, although it would have been nice to have seen Skilton's two cars as well.

Priddle at 7.14s

THE weekend drag meeting at Santa Pod, first of the big meetings of 1974 was held in cold, blustery weather but despite this a good crowd attended to see some excellent racing and qualifying, with the first day being devoted entirely to the latter. Entries in Top Fuel consisted of Dennis Priddle in the STP/Revell car, Mike Hutcherson in the Houndog team car, and Allan Herridge in the Santa Pod dragster.

Clive Skilton was on holiday in France so the low ET in qualifying was 7.14s, shutting down well before the finish to about 160 mph. A later run started with an excess of wheelspin, so that despite a 195 mph top end, the time was a low 8s. Allan Herridge failed to get a time on Sunday with the 426 cu.in. powered car, whilst Mike Hutcherson broke his rear end.

But Allan did get a time in the 'Stardust' funny car and for the first time, it was not only quicker than the class record held by Paula Murphy, but also faster than Priddle's qualifying run at 7.11s, 200 mph. Owen Haywood lost a blower on his only Sunday run, whilst Allan went on to do serious engine damage on a later 7.7s pass. Priddle also had his funny in attendance and recorded an impressive 8.1s at his first attempt, the quickest to date by an English built car, and a source of some disappointment to Ed Shaver, who had hoped to beat Dennis into the sevens with Mark Stratton's rear-engine device. This was out of action with a cracked block following Blackbushe.

Of the four big altereds present, all but Mike Hall had some trouble, Freeman Rodgers with a damaged blower on his 427 Ford/Rochdale, Phil Elson with a sticky clutch and Dave Stone with tyres. The team had fitted some bigger 34.5 inch tall slicks, and at anything over a 100 mph, these 'grew' into the bodywork, so after a quick pass to qualify, the took the body off to modify it. Hall meanwhile ran two low 9s with a best of 9.1s.

In Top Dragster, Ray Hoare and Peter Jones, new owner of Brian Ringsall's old 331 cu.in. hemi rail both ran 10.6s, slow for Ray's 292 Chev, but good for the new driver, whilst nearly two seconds away the battle continued between Prior and Andrews. Roz's first run was a best over 8.7s in the 454 Accles and Pollock car whilst



DENNIS PRIDDLE in his front engine STP dragster was fastest at Santa Pod with Skilton absent.

In SuperStreet Dave Rose had left qualifying with an 11.9s in his Barracuda, still with 440 cu.in. wedge engine and improved on this to an 11.8s in practice. Bob Gram was the finalist in his turbocharged Elype but the car was not going at all well, and lost to Rose's 11.7s with an 18.4s giving Rose his first STP championship points of the year.

Dick Sharpe and Dave Page predictably dominated Senior Competition to come to the final together, though Page had his torsion bar suspension fail on his semi-final run but Allan Herridge repairing it for him. Doubtless leaving a little unsure after a hair-raising previous run, Page didn't come out as hard as usual, and at mid-distance, Austin was nosing out ahead but then the big 427 started to work and the Fiat went past to a 0.6s to 10.9s in a close finish.

Top Competition with all four blown cars present was equally dramatic with Mike Hall beating Phil Elson in the first round with another low nine second run at 165 mph and Dave Stone beating Freeman Rodgers' troubled 427 Ford car. With both the big supercharged motors rumbling defiantly the two cars lurched through their burn-outs for the final with Stone again having clutch trouble and being unable to be pulled back. He tried driving Hall again but could not disengage the clutch and had to shut off, to give Hall his second win this year at 9.2s, 168 mph.

With the 'Stardust' funny out of action with a totally destroyed engine, Owen Haywood and Dennis Priddle remained for a thrilling match race. After a long burn-out in the smart STP Avenger, Dennis backed up to the line with Haywood who had already done his, and suddenly it was back to the Internationals of last year.

All the excitement and tension was there, the British-built versus the American-built car, and with Dennis' experience and already proved potential it could have gone to either. On the green, Dennis was moving first but was slower as his massive tyres fought for traction and when they finally did hook up it was too late. The bigger 488 cubic inch Dodge engine had pushed Haywood's Duster to a 7.7s at 179 mph to 8.6s at 175 mph. For the second round it was expected that Dennis would have adjusted the clutch to give less bottom end bite, and although he still smoked off the line, he led all the way to an 8.4s at 179 mph as Haywood had his clutch disintegrate at around three hundred yards.

It was not a particularly successful weekend for either Mike Hutcherson or Allan Herridge, who both fell to Priddle's Revell backed car in Top Fuel. Herridge beat Hutcherson in the first round with a 7.7s to 8.2s, with Dennis taking the bye as fastest qualifier and then beating herridge in the final with a 7.2s at 201 mph though strangely not getting into the sixes again.

Just before this final the two remaining Top Dragsters had run with Roz Prior and Gerry Andrews in their two injected Chevrolets. Roz had beaten Peter Jones with an 8.7s in her first round whilst Gerry had a bye when Ray Hoare lost fire in his small block rear engine rail turning an 8.5s.

After a long wait to get the engines up to temperature on the cold day they were ready with Roz leaving hard and well and going away from Gerry. But suddenly her clutch was out, and she was fighting for control as Andrews came past to a winning 8.6s, 172 mph run. When Roz had the car straightened out she still managed a low nine at over 130 and would without doubt have bettered her best time to date.

With Dave Lee Travis and commentator Mike Cazelet having an epic and hilarious roller skate race with much cheating and even more crashing the meeting had everything except some warmer weather and a few more entries in some classes, but it still attracted the traditionally large Easter crowd that must have been around the 20,000 mark over two days.

J.D.

Pro Stock views from Santa Pod

The small band of Pro Stock drivers were rather shaken by Gary Goggin's sensational performance at the Easter Santa Pod meeting, 10.0 s runs being beyond the reach of anyone else at this time. Even Kevin Pilling, who was able to match Goggin last year was finding that a two car hole-shot was not enough to stay ahead, and he is talking of a major chassis rebuild now that he has to find a new engine after his unfortunate blow-up. Tony Dickson has finally committed himself to doing the same thing, and has started work on his Camaro, narrowing of the rear axle and lowering the car being the two major items. He does not expect to be out till very late this year, if at all, and looks to 1975 for a well-prepared effort. With more trouble on the weekend, Pete Crane is no nearer finding out what his injected Camaro is capable of, but it is generally thought too heavy to equal Goggin's times. Roy Osbourne's very light Nova might be able to get near, but he hurried off after the meeting looking a bit glum, and hopes to be running in about a month. Meanwhile, Adrian York was strolling round the pits telling everyone about his new car, an ex-Ronnie Sox Dodge Challenger that has reputedly done an incredible 9.1 s at 153 mph, a time which casts some doubt on its legality by our rules! It's expected to be here at the end of the month, so hopefully will be seen at the May 5 Santa Pod meeting.

Drag at Wroughton

This weekend, Sunday, April 28, the NDRC hold their second event, third round of the Castrol/RAC championship, and again, the entry is headed by Clive Skilton and Dennis Priddle in their two Donovan powered dragsters, with ex-stock car racer Malcolm Quick handling the second Skilton car.

Priddle will also have his STP funny car entered, fresh from its 8.1 s run last weekend, and apart from Ed Shaver in the Vauxhall funny, should have both Roland Pratt in the 'Hillbillies' Reliant funny and Liam Churchill in the Barmet Motor Co's Capri to contend with. The big Altered of Dave Stone and Mike Hall will also continue their fight for domination, with Hall at present holding two wins over Stone.

Roz Prior will be out to avenge herself after her unlucky run against Gerry Andrews in Top Dragster, with Ray Hoare and Peter Jones also entered in this class, whilst in Senior Comp, Dave Page and Dick Sharpe will hopefully have some more opposition from the long awaited 'Good Vibrations' 7.8-litre Popular. Full entries are expected in all other classes with the exception of Pro Stock, which could well be a one-car race again with Pilling sidelined—though he has a reputation of rustling up parts from nowhere to keep running.

Held at the Royal Naval Air Yard at Wroughton near Swindon, the event is being used as a promotional and recruiting exercise by the Navy—a practice that has caught on in the USA with several leading cars sponsored by the armed forces. On display will be a 1 scale mock-up of a Polaris submarine and other exhibits.

The gates open at 9 am with racing at around 2 pm.

● Seen at Santa Pod at Easter was Bill Marshall, well known for both his Elan and TVR Tuscan in 1971 and 1972. After working in Australia and coming back via America, Bill is eager to start racing again, and is looking for a suitable Top Street car.