

No, not on fire, just Adrian Yorke going through his burn-out with the Sox and Martin built Heavy Dodge Challenger.

DRAG

First 'seven' for Britain

Nearly two years to the day after he made history by running the first six second run in this country, Dennis Priddle again notched up a notable first in recording the first seven second run by a British built and driven funny car. The final run against Ed Shaver was one of the highlights of what turned out to be a good afternoon of drag racing at Wroughton on Sunday.

With rain all morning, and a wet track until well into the afternoon, any hope of running a complete drag meeting was abandoned, so as many cars as possible came out in pairs of their own choosing to put on a display for the surprising number of loyal spectators who stood in the cold and wet all day.

Dennis, in strength as usual with both his cars, made one run by himself at 9.2 s, a time that was not really representative as he bogged on the line before working up to 173 mph, whilst his second pass with Ed Shaver, who had earlier made a half run in the Castrol Vauxhall to try out the car under power for the first time, netted the best time to date. Both cars sounded strong, and it was Shaver away first only to slow before picking up again and then finally shutting off once more with a slipping clutch. Dennis meanwhile had taken the STP Avenger to a stunning 7.85 s at 183 mph, a really creditable time that shows the car to be a real threat to the two Santa Pod American cars.

Switching seats to the fueller, Dennis lost his first race against Clive Skilton in the Castrol car when the fuel shut-off worked prematurely, resulting in an 8.69 s after a promising start that looked to have been a winner. In the second round, held shortly before the funny car final, both cars sounded very, very strong, and went through really vicious burn-outs that shook the ground with a combination of engine and tyre vibrations.

Dennis again left first and had perhaps half a car length on Clive, who chased hard with his well-known top end superiority. The clocks said that Dennis recorded a 7.8 s at 204 mph to Clive's losing 7.06 s at 217 mph, a time that frankly didn't fit the facts, a 7.18 s being more likely for Dennis, who although leaving first, had not done so by seven-tenths of a second.

Although they didn't actually face each other, both Roz Prior in the Accles and Pollock car, and Gerry Andrews in the Stone Racing team car made good runs, with Roz netting an 8.9 s at 156 mph and Gerry an 8.4 s at 163 mph, whilst Ian Frazer in the novel V6 engine rail and John Whitmore in his new rear engine 1300 cc BLMC car made good runs, Frazer with a 10.74 s and Whitmore with a 10.82 s—still a long way

from his low 9s, but a steady improvement for the new car.

Bob Messent made several good runs in the "Strip-teaser" Minivan culminating in an 11.75 s at 120 mph, but had trouble with repeated wheelstands and now faces the problem of getting the car to handle well

enough to cope with its power train.

Of the many other runs that took place, just one stood out, and that was that of Adrian Yorke in the sole Pro-Stock. Formerly the "Brooklyn Heavy" car built by Sox and Martin, the leading Chrysler campaigners in America, the car looked as professional as it had been made out to be. Although the chassis is basically stock, and is not one of the current tubular constructions, it abounds with the best idea for getting a saloon car up the quarter mile. Titanium is used for many of the nuts and bolts and assorted hardware, whilst the acid-dipped body was suitably delicate to the touch. After two gentle runs at 11.1 s and 130 mph, Yorke lined up for a serious attempt with the car, using rosin for his burn-out as well as the usual water. Despite the car's obvious potential, the sixteen plug 426 Hemi powered Challenger did not sound that wild, but fairly exploded off the line, carrying the right front wheel for some distance as Yorke slammed through the Lenco four speed transmission. Just 10.04 s later it was over, still a fraction outside Goggin's 10.02 record, but at 143 mph, obviously well up on power. This weekend should see a match between the two, which could be very interesting!

Given that it was not necessary to arrange pairings, the NDRC fared much better than they had at Blackbushe, and if, as seems possible, a substitute date is arranged for the venue later this year, they could have a first class event on their hands.

Wet drag meeting

RAIN most of the morning and lingering pools of water effectively halted any actual racing at the weekend meeting at the Royal Naval base at Wroughton. Nonetheless, by late afternoon conditions had improved sufficiently to allow some action, and although it was only paired match racing, it went a lot smoother than Blackbushe and resulted in some good runs that included the fastest yet this year by Clive Skilton, and a new British funny car best by Priddle.

The two Donovan-powered dragsters showed the west country fans what the sport is all about with two very good runs, the thundering engines sounding better than they had all year. With his famed start, Dennis Priddle led Skilton away on the first run only to slow with a faulty fuel shut-off to an 8.69s at a mere 127 mph with the Castrol car coming past at the top end with a 7.41s at 206 mph.

On the second run, it was the Revell/STP car away yet again to an announced 7.8s at 204 mph, but it seemed quicker to most. Clive's losing time in the Castrol car was a much quicker 7.06s at 217 mph, but he had not been that much behind at the start and most assumed that there had been some gremlin in the electronics.

This was further backed up by Dennis's time in the Avenger funny. His first run with a poor start resulted in 9.2s at 177 mph. Ed Shaver made a half pass in the Vauxhall funny before making his bid for a seven second run, and both came round for the last run of the day, Priddle having jumped out of his fueller and driven straight down to the start line to climb into the funny.

Shaver moved first, but soon slowed with clutch problems as Priddle rocketed to an impressive 7.85s at 183 mph, a nearly identical time to the fueller, but on a run that was obviously not as quick.

Roz Prior and Gerry Andrews

again made good runs in their respective Top Dragsters although not alongside one another, Prior recording an 8.9s at 156 mph and Andrews an 8.4s at 163 mph. Ray Hoare was also present in his small block car and seemed to be running a little better than in previous weeks but was still stuck in the tens.

John Whitmore's new rear-engine BLMC car also improved with a 10.8s at 143 mph and should soon be back in the nines (and possibly the eights late in the year) but no other substantial improvements were made on what was still a far from perfect track.

In the Pro-Stock class, the sole entry was the first non-Chevrolet seen to date in this country. This was Adrian Yorke's Dodge Challenger complete with 16 plug 426 cu. in. Hemi engine with all the right parts, Lenco four speed transmission, acid dipped body and assorted titanium hardware.

With a reputed best of 9.1s and 152 mph to its credit, the car obviously attracted a lot of interest and after two careful 11.1s runs, Adrian uncorked the beast to a 143 mph top end in a stunning 10.04s, just .02s off Goggin's record of a fortnight ago and without doubt still some way off its best.

After such a dismal start to the day, things worked out quite well, and with luck the meeting will be held again later this year.

J.T.D.



DRAG MICHAEL KEY

HANDS UP ALL YOU LOT who did not attend the **season opener** at Pod. All those who did deserve a Hemi medal, 'cause it was bloody cold. In fact when I was having a mardle with Clive Skilton in his pit (at Pod you fool not his lav) he fired up the big thunder and ice was forming on the bug catcher. Dennis Priddle did not turn up due to a late entry or something, so Clive did not meet Mr Six at the first meet of the year. However, Hound-dog and Firefly were there and the final was Firefly against Clive. Both came to the line after great burnouts, the lights ran. Clive pushed the right foot and smoked the whole quarter, leaving Firefly standing on the line. Clive's time was 7.17 sec at 214 mph.

Tee-Rat was there with its new blower running in the final against a super paint job Sneaky. Dave Stone blasted from the line and went skidding sideways, but won with a time of 8.45 sec at 134 mph. Everyone had traction problems (must have been the cold asphalt, must get the

strip done with underground heating!). Hemi Hunter, the Stones' top dragster, was being driven by Gerry Andrews and made some trouble in the final against Roz Prior. Roz ran 9.31 sec at 137 mph at a practice a couple of weeks before this meet. Dave Stone did an 8 ft. wheelstand in Hemi Hunter, wondered why Gerry was driving. Also at the practice meet Dave Lee Travis had a mishap in Tender Trap and blew up the 350 Chevy leaving only one controd not wrecked!

Kevin Pilling was the only Pro Stock driver there and did a best run of 10.51 sec at 132 mph. Striptease was sporting a new front spoiler and looked nearer to the ground than ever. Owen Haywood did an all-American burnout in the STP car, so good I did not get the time.

So there it was—cold but dry, a good crowd attendance but not quite up to standard on the competitors side.

● Just over a year ago I used to drive a Dyane 6 Citroën—perhaps that's

why the first new car I'm going to write about this season is a **2CV Citroën!** My Dyane was a real worker. 70 all day at 50 mpg—why did I ever sell her? Back to the 2CV.

French Connection has been built by a team and is owned by Bill Schoon. It's an all-steel body with the front doors welded up for added strength. The front suspension is stock Citroën, but wait for it, the engine is a 283 cu. in. Chevy—with stock parts right through including the two-barrel Rochester under the air scoop. The gearbox is manual Chevy which sits a bit further to the rear than the original. This is why the driver is reclining in the back seats! The rear axle is from a Chevy Impala and is just the right width to push the tyres

and wheels out of the original arches.

The French Connection cost only £150 to build, which goes to show what can be done on a small budget. It runs 15.40 sec at 92 mph. The team is to beef up the 283 Chevy and also to build a glassfibre body.

● **STOP PRESS!** Match race of the meet at the **Hot Car Big Go**, Santa Pod Raceway, over May 26/27 promises to be the return between Dave Lee Travis and our colleague Mike Cazalet of **Motorcycle Mechanics**, who also does the Pod's commentaries. What return? Well at the Easter meet they raced each other over the quarter on roller skates. This time it's pogo sticks with Mike determined to reply to DLT's abuse and cheating ways with a low-6 boing-boing.

You've seen the film, now read the car—Bill Schoon's Citroën



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Al O'Connor's Al Gasser, a 302ci Chevy Anglia, steals a few yards on David Rose's 440 Barracuda.

SANTA POD

Pro Stock enlivens wet day

For the second week running, rain shortened the racing at the weekend meeting at Santa Pod, but whereas last week it had prevented any qualifying and practice, this time it came after the first rounds of the afternoon's eliminations had taken place, and despite a brief respite, settled in for the day, stopping the event in mid track.

The entry was small anyway, and the meeting had lacked sparkle apart from in one particular sphere—Pro Stock, which proved once again to be the major talking point of the day, and certainly provoked the biggest crowd reaction.

The two fuelers present were the Santa Pod "Firefly", and Mike Hutcherson in Nobby Hills' "Hounddog," which were down for a best of three match race. However, in the first, Hutcherson's car failed to get started and Allan Herridge in the other car shut down at mid distance with no one to race. In the second round, Hutcherson again lost fire, but this time after the burn-out, so fuel surge was a likely reason as he braked to a halt. Herridge lined up in the pit lane and dropped the clutch as the green came on. One wheel found more traction than the other and the car veered sharply to the barrier and what looked like a certain front-end write-off. But Allan was once again in command of the situation, shut off, steered the beast straight again and got back on the throttle, all before most people had really realised what was going on. Another example of Allan's reaction time and ability at the wheel of the awkward car. The third round never materialised because of the weather, so the fastest time of the day went to Gerry Andrews in the Stones' Top Dragster, with a qualifying shot of 8.29 s at 161 mph, the first time in years that the low time of a meeting has gone to anything but a Pro Fueller or one of the two funnies.

Not far behind was Roz Prior in the Accles and Pollack car, with a 8.67 s/149 mph run. Martin Rowat was also on hand with his very tidy rear-engined 302 Chevrolet dragster, and qualified with a good first run of 10.02 s, showing great promise for future events.

But the two leading Top Dragster drivers also came to settle their argument with a three-round series, which again was limited to only one by the weather. After a long warm up that both cars needed, the two burnt out and moved into stage, with Roz Prior in particular really building the revs on the line. With a rather long hold before the countdown started, both were obviously on edge, and it was Andrews who moved first and red lit, handing the win to Prior, who shot off anyway to her best ever of 8.47 s at 157 mph, narrowing the gap between

the two cars to around three-tenths—a difference she usually seems able to make up on the start with some excellent reaction times!

With the ex-Schumacher funny still having a new motor readied, Owen Hayward faced Dave Stone's blown altered, but on their one and only run the altered bogged on the line as the funny shot away to a clear win, again shutting down with some minor problem to a mid nine.

This left the two altereds of Phil Elson and Freeman Rodgers in what had once been Elson's car. Elson's blown Chrysler was the clear favourite, but no one was more surprised than Elson, and possibly Rodgers himself, when the blown 427 Ford engine from the troublesome "Commuter" dragster actually ran cleanly for the entire run, pressing Elson with an extremely close and exciting run of 9.14 s to 9.16 s, Elson's hole-shot winning him the run by scant inches. The seeming miracle happened again on the second run when, despite again just losing, Rodgers hung on with a 9.2 s to 9.1 s, and looks well set to dip into the eights as a very real threat to Hall and Stone—at least until they start tipping the nitro can

in larger doses.

And so to Pro Stock. Talking point was the eligibility or otherwise of the Dodge 426 of Yorke and Mullen that went so well at Swindon. One of the main debating points in Pro Stock has been the desirability of keeping the cars somewhere near production, and to this aim, the Lenco transmission has been outlawed from '75 onwards, it being thought that no one was actually likely to turn up with one before then. But as one car has, it is eligible to use it for the remainder of the year, unfortunately for the other, admittedly few, entrants. Instead of being a modified four-speed or three-speed automatic unit, it consists of three separate dragster underdrive units bolted together, with a reverser tacked on the end. All three transmissions are put in low and each of the three levers is shifted in turn into high, with no clutch needed, with a subsequent gain of between 0.1 and 0.3 s. Apart from the rather exotic specification, the price comes to more than some cars have cost complete, so most would rather see it kept out of the class.

With Colin Mullen taking over the driving, it was widely expected to dip into the nines, with only Gary Goggin likely to put up much of a fight. He was late in qualifying after a string of minor problems, but ran an easy 10.5 s to bed in a new clutch. Pete Crane had gone very well with his injected Camaro at 10.7 s, but ran his bearings yet again in doing it, so went home in subdued elation. Meanwhile, Mullen had shattered the class record by a vast margin, storming to a 9.64 s at 139 mph with apparent ease. An immediate hit with the crowd, he was loudly cheered as he came down to face Goggin who, in the unfamiliar position of underdog, received even wilder acclaim. Whether they wanted the new hero or the established favourite to win was not clear, but after the two had made threatening burn-outs at each other and made a great fuss about very careful staging, all eyes were on the lights. It came as no surprise to regulars that Gary read the lights to perfection and stole an enormous hole-shot over Mullen who, although an old hand, was still only on his second competitive run in the car. Holding his ever narrowing lead, it was Goggin who made it first with a 10.32 s/135 mph as the big Dodge chased hard with a 0.75 s at 138 mph—a measure of the start Goggin had made.

Despite this popular win, the writing is obviously on the wall for the Chevrolet camp, who will have to find a lot of horsepower to beat the Dodge in a straight race.

Mullen breaks ten with Pro-Stock Dodge

COLIN MULLEN made the headlines at the weekend drag meeting at Santa Pod, taking over the driving of the ex-Brooklyn Heavy Sox and Martin-built Dodge Pro Stock. Having already recorded a 10.04s at Swindon last weekend, interest centred on whether Gary Goggin could beat him into the nines with his Camaro, or indeed if he could beat him at all!

Rain unfortunately shortened the meeting again with many match races left unfinished, and eliminations stopped halfway through, so the two only met once. Goggin had qualified late with a steady 10.5s run, whilst a surprisingly fast third was Pete Crane in his Camaro with 10.7s; but this was at the expense of yet another set of bearings, so he was out of action again. Mullen showed them both the way though with a stunning 9.64s run at 139 mph in the 16-plug 426 Hemi-powered car and was an immediate hit with the crowd.

But when it came to the first of their meetings it was Goggin who was willed to win after having put on so many good shows over the years, usually as the dominant driver. Relying on all his experience he won the race on the line, the only place he could, for his 427 Chevrolet was obviously no match for the 426 Chrysler. His 10.3s run had enough of a hole-shot to beat the 9.75s of the Dodge but as he himself said afterwards he wouldn't be able to rely on that every time from now on!

Perhaps the other big surprise of the day was the performance of the blown 427 Ford engine in Freeman Rodgers' altered. Formerly in the "Commuter" dragster, the engine has not been

exactly famed for its reliability over the years, so when the car held on to Phil Elson's Hemi in two runs, with a 9.14s to 9.16s and a 9.2s to 9.1s, people sat up and looked in amazement. Elson actually won both races, with a hole-shot start in the first, but his former car certainly pressed him hard on both occasions.

Dave Stone meanwhile, was trying his luck against Owen Hayward in the Hounddog funny car, but bogged badly on the line in his altered and never had a second chance after the rain came down. The funny shut down to a low 9s run. The other Hounddog team car, Mike Hutcherson's dragster, was also out of luck for he lost fire on both runs against Allan Herridge in "Firefly". Herridge fared little better, nearly hitting the guardrail on the second run and only avoiding it with his usual skillful handling.

Fastest run of the day came from Gerry Andrews in the Stone team's other car in Top Dragster with his qualifying run of 8.29s at 161 mph, ahead of Roz Prior in the Accles and Pollack/Castrol car. She ran an 8.67s to qualify and managed to out-guess Andrews in the first race when the countdown to start seemed to be a bit slow. Andrews red-lit away his chances but she went on anyway to a personal best of 8.47s. Without doubt the car is within reach of the

sevens, though it will take some attaining in the coming months.

As in so many cases, the weather stopped any further action here and most of the other runs of note were individual qualifying passes. Dave Page managed 9.8s in his 427 Fiat, but his usual rival Dick Sharpe was out of action with a spun bearing in the Pontiac-engined A35. The team had fitted injection in place of its rather ancient carburation in the past week and had been confident of a substantial improvement, so this was a disappointment to them.

But if they were disappointed the "Strip-tease" team were elated with their 11.4s/119 mph run in the Jaguar/Minivan as they got the handling and clutch set-up to suit their new transmission better.

But apart from these it was not a particularly inspiring meeting, although doubtless some interesting results would have been seen if rain had not stopped proceedings in mid-afternoon.

I.T.D.

★ ★ ★

This weekend on the drag racing calendar, with entries from Sweden coming over to Blackbushe for two days of practice and racing. Bjorn Anderson will add his name to the Pro Fuellers of Skilton, Priddle and Pratt, whilst the funnies and altereds of Priddle, Shaver, Hall and Stone will also have some new opposition. If Gunnar Backe makes it with his Pro Stock, he will probably be amazed at the electrifying performance of not only the Yorke/Mullen car but Goggin as well, as news is not likely to have yet got across to him of their recent times.

With qualifying on Saturday afternoon, a full day's racing starts on Sunday morning at the NDRC meeting.

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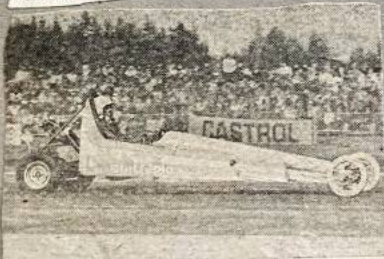
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Skilton, Priddle, Goggin and Mullen this weekend at Blackbushe

This weekend at Blackbushe, Goggin and Mullen can be expected to continue their battle, although with the rather indifferent traction, times will probably not be as good as those already recorded. With a full international status, Skilton and Priddle will have Swedish opposition to cope with as well as Roly Pratt in the Revolution Three rail. Rumour has it that Roz Prior will also have a run in this car, but she would only reply: "No comment" when asked.

Stone, Hall, Priddle, and Shaver will have their blown altereds and funnies out as usual, whilst all the regular entrants will be on hand for two days action, with practice on Saturday and racing on Sunday, joined by more entries from Sweden in the Competition classes.



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Blackbushe drag racing

AFTER the dismal showing at the last drag racing at Blackbushe interest centred on whether the running of the event would improve, and with two days to help get the practice and qualifying in, it did go off better. The failure of the Christmas Tree lighting system in the middle of the afternoon also led to a long delay before the start was switched to the archaic flag system.

With a scarcity of entrants in several leading classes, the racing was a bit thin on the ground with several eliminations down to two cars facing each other in match races and in the case of Pro Stock, just one, the Camaro of Gary Goggin. Although entered, the big Dodge threat failed to arrive for reasons best known to its owner who is already said to be buying a new car for Yorke and Mullen to run. Goggin went well to run consistent mid-tens on the slippery track but found enough grip to lift the front wheels in each gear.

In Super Street Dave Rose had three wins over John Manley's TVR with his 440 'Cuda running 12.4s to the Tuscan's 13.4s with Ivan Fryer having a similar win in Top Street with his Mustang over the blown V6 Anglia of Bob Swansborough.

With Dick Sharpe's car absent with a damaged bottom end after Santa Pod the previous weekend, the Pages looked to have it their own way in Senior Comp, but a broken diff made them work for the win in their 427 Topolono and each run had to be taken carefully doing just enough to win in case the cracked diff came apart again under full power.

A similar fate befell Dave Stone's Tee-Rat altered in Top Competition. After breaking an axle at the last Blackbushe event on the bumpy surface, the team deliberately took it easy in qualifying, keeping the car in the nines with their Top Dragster on Saturday. The first and only competition run was a win for Stone over Ed Shaver in the Vauxhall funny with a good 8.84s but almost as expected the axle failed again, this time a half shaft. Shaver slowed with a 16s and stayed in the elimination to replace Stone on the breakage rule.

Dennis Priddle had a good run against Mike Hall's big Chrysler Altered before out-powering the car at the top end in his STP Avenger funny, 8.9s, 182 mph to 9.7s, 162 mph, though neither was really indicative of the potential. For the final the two funnies again met them with Priddle favourite and looking for a win to compensate in some way for the misfortune that befell his dragster, more of which later.

But Shaver was away first and looking good as the two cars fought for some grip. As in the run against Hall, Priddle really got going after the first couple of hundred yards, and although slower than his previous runs his

9.2s at 154 mph was enough to beat Shaver's slowing 10.0s.

The second Stone Racing entry Gerry Andrews Top Dragster went some way to making up for the altered and indeed their Top Street Escort Chev which wouldn't even run properly in the pits all weekend. With a nine in practice, he too was taking it easy, but let the car all out in the elimination against Prior. She had beat Ray Hoare with an off-form 9.8s in her Accles and Pollock car, with Andrews taking a bye at 8.7s. He improved on this in the final with a commendable 8.5s at 172 mph as her clutch started to give out, slowing the car to a 10.1s run.

This left the three Pro Fuel cars, Roland Pratt in Revolution Three, Clive Skilton in the Castrol car and Dennis Priddle in the STP-backed front-engined rail. On Saturday he ran a 7.54s at 193 mph, fastest of all, but beaten by Clive Skilton on Sunday morning with a 7.02s at 222 mph, fastest ever at Blackbushe and close to his best of 224 mph at Santa Pod last year.

Roland Pratt had trouble with the throttle icing up on his car but by Sunday it was running well enough to let Roz Prior have a try at AA/Fuel power.

She made a short half-pass at 9.9s and expressed delight at the experience but what lies in the future remains to be seen.

On the first run Pratt had his brake linkage come apart forcing him to shut off after the burn-out whilst when Dennis Priddle let the clutch out the Donovan engine expired in the worst possible way when the crank broke in two, seriously damaging the aluminium block, which will probably have to go back to America for repair. A small fire broke out in the headers which was quickly put out but it was obviously a big blow, both morally and financially to the team who have put on such a professional showing.

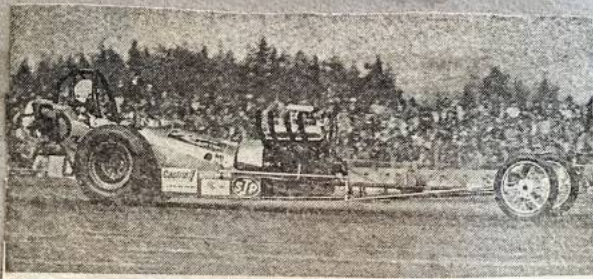
Clive waited until Pratt repaired his brakes then made one of the most blatant red-light runs of all time going almost before the amber was on but recording a best ever at Blackbushe of 6.91s at 213 mph as Pratt chased with a 7.7s at 183 mph to win by Clive's default.

But in the second run Pratt left first fair and square to a good 7.5s at 190 mph forcing Clive to chase all the way with a 7.2s at 222 mph again, both cars smoking for most of the distance as the big tyres sought some grip on the marbles.

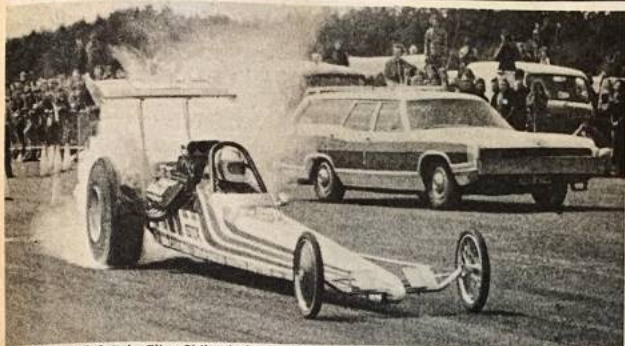
J.D.



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Sunday was definitely Clive Skilton's for he took a new track record in the Castrol rail as well as doing the first 6 s run this year.

BLACKBUSHE

Skilton's track record

Contrary to the short preview last week, the weekend drag meeting at Blackbushe was not an International event after all. Although originally scheduled as such, for reasons connected with the events cut back/fuel shortage, it reverted to a regular event with an extra afternoon's qualifying and practice, but with the added bonus of Radio Luxembourg involvement as the first of their 208 Star Days, which included visits from the Bay City Rollers, Sweet and the almost obligatory Wombles, without which no function is complete these days.

For Clive Skilton it was a good day, with a new track record to his credit including the first six run anywhere this year, and a 222 mph top end run, nearly his best ever. For poor Dennis Priddle, though it was another story, for after a promising 7.5 s run on Saturday in the STP dragster, his luck went downhill. The first round of the three car Top Fuel match pitted him against Roland Pratt in the Revolution Three car. After the traditionally long lunch break, the event needed the thunder of these two to waken things up, and all eyes and ears were on the start as the two cars screamed through their burn-outs. But Roland had to shut off when part of his brake linkage came adrift while being pulled back to the line. With attention switched to Dennis, the sleek front engine car edged into stage. But as he dropped the clutch at the green the motor expired ominously, with flames licking from the exhausts that were soon doused. A dent in the sump looked expensive, and indeed it was, for it transpired that the crank had broken inside the massive girdle of the Donovan engine, and whilst the girdle itself remained intact, handfuls of aluminium web and other parts of the expensive block spelt the end of the day for Dennis. Owing to the high quality of the casting, it is possible to weld the engine back together, but this would have to be done at Donovan's in America, so the team now have to decide whether to pull the trusty 392 iron motor from the funny and put it in the dragster, or retire the dragster for the time being.

The poor traction had kept the times down on Saturday, the 9.4 s run and 171 mph top end showing the amount of wheel spin Priddle's funny car was getting before it hooked up. In the first round of Top Competition, Priddle faced Mike Hall in his 392

Altered, and once again times were not outstanding for either car as they smoked their way down the strip, but by mid-distance Priddle started to edge ahead to hit 182 in 8.9 s to Hall's 161 mph in 9.7 s.

The other pair in the elimination consisted of Shaver in the Castrol funny and Dave Stone in "Tee-Rat," which he had kept in the nines the previous day, wary of breaking another ring and pinion on the bumpy track. Shaver had got his car onto one wheel whilst fighting a strong cross wind, so he too was cautious on what was still quite a windy day. Dave Stone led all the way though when they left, but a sudden swerve to the centre line near the end spelt the end of a half shaft as he slowed to 8.8 s at 127 mph. Shaver trailing through with a 16 s and suspected blower trouble. Nothing was found amiss though, so he returned to face Priddle in the final, Stone being unable to make it out with his broken axle. Hall also came out for another run by himself when things had got a bit slack when the Christmas Tree packed up again, and after a storming 9 s run dropped the chute and promptly left the track at some 160 mph, to bounce across the grass before coming to a halt unharmed and undamaged after what must have been one of the "hairiest" rides at any drag meet in this country.

So once again the two funnies faced each other, with Shaver getting a lead on Priddle as both smoked heavily from the line. But once again, Shaver shut off as Priddle went through to win with another good run of 9.2 s at 154 mph.

With Pratt's brakes repaired, and Priddle out, the two rear engine cars faced each other twice, with Pratt losing fire on the first run and being frantically restarted in time to line up with Skilton, who made a meteoric start on the amber light to record his 6.91 s best time at 213 mph, but giving the win to Pratt's 7.7 s at 183 mph. The second meeting, the last run of the day saw him leave on the green this time, and in the closest race for some time between the two, he just fought off Pratt's strong 7.56 s 190 mph with a 7.23 s at 222 mph, Pratt having made a very good start that had him ahead for some time.

Both the leading Top Dragster entrants, Prior and Andrews had been happy with nines on Saturday, with Ray Hoare not far behind at 10.02 s with his small block car. He met Prior in the first round, and gave her a close race at 10.0 s to 9.8 s, the bigger 454 car not going so well as usual. Andrews took a bye at 8.7 s before meeting Prior in the final, and walking away from her with an 8.56 s 172 mph run as the fast lady's clutch gave out.

Clive Page was taking his turn at the wheel of "Panic" the team 427 Fiat, and suffered one of the many breakages on Saturday when the spider gears broke. After welding the unit up, a small crack was noticed in the differential case so they decided to take it easy and hope for the best. With main rival Dick Sharpe in the 428 Pontiac A35 absent with a damaged crank, they had Bob Deachen's 425 litre Daimler to run three times, with Clive taking all the runs without having to better 11 s on the delicate rear end.

All too many eliminations involved similar three match series, including Top and Super Street. Top went to Ivan Fryer's Mustang with a string of 13s over Bob Swansborough's blown V6 Anglia, whilst Dave Rose did a similar trick on John Manley in his TVR Tuscan (formerly Bill Marshall's car), and managed a best of 12.2 s on new M&H slicks, not too bad under the conditions.

Gary Goggin was the sole representative of the Pro Stocks, the Mullen/Yorke car being conspicuous by its absence, and surrounded by rumour either that it is already up for sale, or that a sister car is soon to arrive. Goggin ran three 10.5 s and 10.6 s runs at 135 mph as demonstration runs, but would have been glad of some opposition.

Compared with the last Blackbushe event, things did run better, but there is still a long way to go before the racers get back the enthusiasm that they seem to have lost for racing at Blackbushe.

BOOTSIE RUNS 6!

● Bootsie Herridge is now the third British driver to clock a sub-seven second run on the drag strips, but—wait for it—in a funny car!!

Yes, in what must have been one of the most sensational runs ever seen on the strips, Bootsie fairly leapt off the line in the Ed Pink motored Stardust and kept the power hard on right up to the ¼ mile and earned himself a standing ovation for that incredible 6.87 seconds. And this was just to qualify! In an action-packed final, Bootsie came within a foot of the barrier before lifting off to concede a narrow defeat to Dennis Priddle in the Avenger funny.

This was the highest of many

high spots in the Hot Car Big Go Springbank meeting at Santa Pod. A huge crowd watched a record entry of over 220 cars and bikes.

The two-day meeting, however, spelled disaster for Dave Page when he hit a patch of water in the heats on the first day. His Chevy-engined Topolino Panic sledged sideways, hit a barrier about 40 yards out and rolled over. A shaken but lucky Dave walked away from his wreck unhurt.

On day two, he challenged Dave Lee Travis—who was campaigning his Chevy Escort Tender Trap—to the Hot Car Grand Challenge Pogo Stick Race. After a hilarious bout of cheating on both parts, the race ended with

the two crossing the line neck and neck on monkey bikes!

Overall, a superb meeting and we'd like to thank the following for helping to make it possible:

Mike Cazalet for his great commenting despite being run over heavily by a fire tender.
Barron Eurotrade of Hornchurch for the fabulous little Fantichino monkey-bike.

Volkswagen for lending us a camper to officiate from.
Daisy Haddon for donating those wild pogo sticks.

RadioMobile for allowing us to give Dave Page a stereo car radio/cartridge player.

And Dave Lee Travis for making such a darn fool of himself.

