



#### H-1479 DENNIS PRIDDLE'S "MR. REVELL"

First through the seven second barrier in 1972, Dennis Priddle—known since then as Mr. Six—is probably Britain's best known dragster pilot. Holder of the FIA World Quarter Mile record at 6.7 seconds he consolidated his position as Britain's number one drag racer in 1973 by winning the international series at Santa Pod Raceway. His fastest time in Mr. Revell is 6.59 secs with a terminal speed of 211 mph. Now fitted with a 417 cu. in. Donovan aluminium motor, Vancharger 6-71 blower and magnesium body panels, the car weighs in at 1280 lbs. Revell's super-scale kit gives you the living detail of Britain's top fuel Dragster in big 1/16th scale—available June 1974 at around £4.00.



THIS HASN'T been the best of seasons for Dennis Priddle, the leading drag racing exponent in this country. However, he did win the big Bank Holiday meet at Santa Pod where in the AA fuel dragster class Priddle had fitted a new Donovan motor to Mr. Revell. Dennis, in beating the Houndog Team's latest car, managed 6.60 secs, a terminal speed of 209.21 mph. Priddle also gave his new funny car the STP Chrysler Avenger its first outing with a new 392. cu. ins. Chrysler Hemi engine, but he was beaten by Allan Herridge's Stardust.

#### REAR RAILER

● Storm Bringer is the name of the latest rear-engined rail to hit the British strips—it's run by the Edmondson brothers of Hunter Plastics fame with Peter Crane. Chassis was built by American Don Lang based on last year's successful Walton/Corney/Moody rail and engine is a 454 cu. in. Ed Pink Chrysler running on 80 per cent nitro. Pete—whose previous AA fueller experience was limited to a couple of passes in Firefly—has already run a 6.91 sec ET at 187 mph in only his second drive in Storm Bringer. The gearing was to be altered in time for the November Santa Pod Fireworks meet and the team were hoping for a 230 mph terminal speed. Incidentally, front tyres are specially selected Avons, possibly the first time they've been used on a fueller.







COME AND SEE  
A TREMENDOUS  
SPECTACLE THIS  
WEEKEND

## SILVERSTONE INTERNATIONAL DRAG RACING FESTIVAL

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 15 at Noon (Qualifying on Sat. Sept 14)

Fantastic 200mph action on two and four wheels

Top drivers from Sweden, Britain and the European debut of the World's fastest Drag Racer on 2 wheels: TOM CHRISTENSON from America.

Sunday's admission to Special Trackside Enclosures: Adult £1.20; Child 20p Saturday: Adult £1.00; Child 20p. FREE Parking and CAMPING facilities.

The organisers reserve the right to alter or cancel the programme without notice.

## DRAG

# Weather drowns out popular Silverstone

Once again the weather played its all too familiar role in the NDRC's Silverstone drag meeting at the weekend, and the large crowd who did take a chance and come out in the rain were robbed of what could certainly have been the best meeting of the year.

The highlight of the event was to have been the big Top Comp and Funny car eliminator with the first ever eight car entry. Saturday, with fine weather all day, produced some pretty sensational times, mostly one at a time, with the fastest of all being Dave Stone in his 427 Chev altered at 7.8 s. The only other car into the seven was Leif Dabachs' similarly powered Volvo funny car which ran its quickest time yet in England at 7.96 s 182 mph. Fellow Swede Roland Larson clocked a good 8.54 s in the Canon camera Toyota Chrysler funny, but hit the centre lights at the finish and damaged the car beyond immediate repair, also depriving the strip of any mph readings for the rest of the day.

Dennis Priddle, not favourite in the STP Avenger went up in smoke at the start, got a bit crossed up towards the finish and shut off to a 9.3 s, but safe enough to qualify. Ed Shaver took the Castrol Vauxhall to its best yet at 8.56 to show up as a real threat, whilst Mike Hall, after having fitted some new ported heads to his 392 altered, really got going well to an 8.8 s at 177 mph and then an 8.8 s without a formal recorded, but quite possibly in the 180s. Next to qualify was Keith Harvie in the new "American" Chevy altered, perhaps the most immaculate car to appear yet in this country. Built essentially as a short wheelbase funny with a "T" body, the car is equipped with a B&B three speed and reverse unit and has clocked 9.9 s on straight methanol. Keith was trying the car out and shut off early to record a best of 10.0 s.

The other new car was Roland Pratt's "Revell Hillbillies" Scimitar, the body of which dates back some five years or more in its original form to the car that Dennis Priddle drove to some 17 wins in Top Competition with a 427 Chev for power. Now fitted with a 392 and a longer chassis as well as suitable body mods, the car had one or two handling problems on its first run, but was soon ready for action on Sunday.

In Top Fuel, Dennis Priddle took the other Revell car, his rail, to a strong 6.6 s run carrying his front wheels for some fifty yards, whilst Clive Skilton, driving Revolution Three drove to an easy 7.4 s. Roz Prior had two unlucky runs in the Acles and Pollock car with injector troubles on both occasions.

In Top Dragster, Gerry Andrews led as usual with the Stones injected Chev, against a new threat, in the shape of the DB Motors backed ren-engineered Burrows driven 427, another car equipped with a Lenco two speed. Again teething troubles slowed the car to a 12.2 s on its first run, but judging by the standard of finish, it can be relied upon to go well within a short space of time. Liz Burn took her 454 rail to a good 9.5 s, with Alan Blount also qualifying with a slow 12.7 s with his small block Chev.

Pro Stock had four entries, Gunne Blackie being unable to come in the end, with Adrian Yorke quickest at 9.6 s for the "Brooklyn Heavy" car. Colin Mullen was next at 10 s, not far ahead of Gary Goggin's 10.3 s for his Camaro. Bo Hollstrom's Swedish Camaro was down in the 13 s with engine trouble, while leading the SuperStreet classes again was Mustapha Erol at 10.8 s in his Camaro. DLT ran a respectable 11.6 s in the Precision Tapes Escort, with Johnny Johnson's Swedish

## World's fastest drag bike here

AMERICAN Tom Christenson, reputed to be the world's fastest motorcycle drag rider, will run his modified 1000 cc double engine bike at 1500 cc double engine bike at the International meeting at Silverstone this weekend. He aims to set the first eighth second quarter mile for a motorcycle in Britain. In America he has run 8.45 to 169 mph. He will be up against Britain's best including Mike Butler's 1000 cc Norton and John Hobbs' 1500 cc Triumph, both bikes double engine.

The car entry includes Clive Skilton, Dennis Priddle, Roz Prior and Swede John Anders. There are 200 entries for the meeting and racing practice on Saturday and racing starting at 12.00 on Sunday.

'Vette at 11.1 s. Dave Rose swallowed a couple of valves in his big Hemi Cuda and had to withdraw from the proposed STP Super Car eliminator for Pro and Super class.

Middle Competition had the biggest ever entry of any competition class with 21 cars trying for 16 positions, and it was the Swedish 33 Plymouth Chev of Anders Lantz driven by Tony Johnson that led with a 10.2 s. Next was the twin turbo '70 Chev at 11.2 s to be second, with Alan Sherwin's Travel Agent blown Jag next at 11.69 s. John Morton's 350 Chev Firenza was fourth at 11.9 s.

The Swedish entry of Bengt Stafberg also topped Senior Comp with a 10.2 s in his injected 427 Chev altered, with Clive Page next at 10.59 s from the carburetted 427 T altered. Dick Sharpe was next at 10.99 s in his Pontiac A35, with four more cars to make the strip of any competition class in this class, though Lawrence Burn retired with another broken half shaft in his 350 Chev/Avenger.

On two wheels the great T. C. Christenson unveiled his latest twin Norton, ran a 9.5 for its first ever clocking, then followed this with an 8.8 s without really extending it.

But on Sunday morning all this promise was lost as rain fell steadily past midday and it was nearly three o'clock before any runs took place. The NDRC coped very well with the exasperating conditions that have dogged them at nearly every meeting, trying to get as many spectacular cars out for the long suffering public as possible.

In the big Competition class, all the runs were solo passes as some competitors felt that the track was unsafe for two, so that the fastest time was to decide the winner. It must be said that this was apparently not made clear to all, for after running a 7.9 s on what the team assumed was a bye run, Dave Stone sat and watched Dennis Priddle pip him with a 7.8 s from the STP funny. As it happened, Stone's steering broke at the end of the run so that he would not have been able to try again anyway, for he certainly could have pushed Dennis very hard for the low time. Roland Pratt had a blowier pulley shatter on his attempt, whilst Leif Dabach broke his axle on the Volvo. By the time some of the cars were readying for second runs, the track was slick again and both Keith Harvie and Ed Shaver found conditions too bad to more than tickle the throttles.

Dennis never got to run his dragster, but Clive and Roz came out for the first of a round-robin, with Roz anticipating the countdown slightly by building the revs early and then having to ease off a little to wait for the first amber. When the green came she was not quite ready and Clive left hard to a 7.2 s, shutting down to 1.67 mph as she chased hard to 180 mph in 17.7 s. Gerry Andrews followed this with a single run in the Stones Top Dragster at 8.19 s 172 mph as the only car left in the class.

In Senior Competition, Stafberg had a bye run to go through, Dick Sharpe took his first round with an 11.1 s against John Dickson's 11.5 s from his Dacks/Pop and Olive Page ran his best ever at 9.6 s against Freeman Rogers' 427 Ford/Rochdale. The middle competition runs that followed were the last of the day, with the cars getting more and more skittier as rain started again. Various other racing had taken place, but no finals or even semi final took place, and in fact there were a few finals to be run from the rained-out Blackbushe affair that didn't take place again—prompting some to say that the NDRC will be holding a meeting just to finish off all the pending races!

AUTOSPORT, SEPTEMBER 19, 1974

# 'TC' MEETS EGITS

TOM 'TC' Christenson, the man responsible for the Norton land speed bid, is the first drag racer to break the eight second barrier in Europe.

At Silverstone on Saturday, against Britain's Mick Butler, he clocked 8.98s, crossing the line at 160 mph with his 1500cc double-engine Norton 'Hogslayer'.

The second day of the MCN-backed meeting was badly hit by rain, and the finals have to be decided at the September 29 Stretton event, when 'TC' and his fabulous Norton will again be in action.

## and Silverstone

THE eight car competition class was the highlight of yet another rain-riveted meeting at Silverstone at the weekend, with a terrific qualifying session on Saturday providing most of the action.

No fewer than five funny cars precluded side runs so it was on hand to run with three Top Comp alters. Favourite was Dennis Priddle's STP Avenger 392, whose 9.2s qualifying run was slowed by wheelspin and a somewhat hairy top end that caused him to shut down early. Ed Shaver took the novel ren-engineered Castrol car to a best ever 8.56s with Swede Roland Larson taking his Canon Toyota to an 8.54s before demolishing the centre lights and bending his car.

Teamate Leif Dabach took his Volvo Chev to a stunning 7.9s at 182 mph, the best showing yet in four visits, whilst last of the funny cars was Roland Pratt's new Revell Scimitar that had minor handling problems and ran in the mid tens on its first run.

But faster than all of these yet again was Dave Stone, with a 7.8s from his Chev altered, and not far behind was Mike Hall whose big Chrysler was running better than ever at 8.6s. Keith Harvie made up the field with his fabulous imported Chev altered, capable of low sevents, but content with a 10.0s in his second ever run in the low slung car.

The conditions on Sunday

Continued from page 16

9.5s Kevin Burrows debuted his smart new ren-engineered Chev but had a bearing failure and had to withdraw from the elimination, as did Alan Blount, and later Liz Burn, so that Andrews had but one run at 8.19s to win the class.

In Senior Competition fastest qualifier was Bengt Stafberg in his injected 427 Chev with a 10.2s ahead of the Page brothers 10.59s and Dick Sharpe's 10.99s. Next was Chey and Pontiac cars respectively. But it was Page who looked the most likely winner after the first and only round as he beat Freeman Rogers' 427 Ford with a best ever for the new car of 9.6s. Stafberg had a misfire on a bye run at 11s, whilst Dick Sharpe won his run with an 11.1s over Dickson's 11.5s for his Olds/Pop.

In the enormous Middle Comp field, the most likely winner would have been Tony Johnson in Anders Lantz's Chev powered 33 Plymouth that has become a firm favourite. Only Roger Bishop in the Jag Minivan would have had any chance on a dry track, and at 11.2s he was a full second slower. When they did run Middle, Lantz scrambled through in the wet and Bishop went out to Pete Skinner's Jag/Falcon who found a bit more grip than Bishop.

But after a couple of more pairs, the elimination came to a halt as rain again soaked the track, and the meeting was called off.

was the highlight of yet another rain-riveted meeting at Silverstone at the weekend, with a terrific qualifying session on Saturday providing most of the action.

as the decider, and when the meeting was brought to a halt this time to Dennis Priddle at 7.8s. Just behind was Dave Stone at 7.9s after he had shut down early and subsequently found his steering broken as he tried to leave the track. Keith Harvie returned with Revolution Three, the GTX car not being repaired, and Roz Prior who had injection trouble on both her qualifying runs. Clive and Roz were first to run, with Clive taking the win 7.2s/167 mph to 7.7s 190 mph as Roz was caught without enough revs on the line at the green. No more runs took place in the Top Fuel round-robin.

Top Dragster was dominated by Gerry Andrews as usual, with an easy 8.8s to qualify his 440 Chev rail ahead of Liz Burn's 454 rail at 9.5 s.

Other action included some promising runs for the STP Super Car eliminator, with Adrian Yorke leading Pro Stock with a 9.0s, and Colin Mullen at the other 'Heavy' car second at 10.0s. Gary Goggin was next at 10.3s in his Camaro, with Mustapha Erol at 10.8s in his Super Street Camaro. Johnny Johnson's Swedish was at 11.1s in his 427 Vette, with Dave Liz Travis at 11.6s in the Stones Escort. But this was another by the weather before it had got past the first round, so the probable confrontation of Goggin, who beat Erol despite 0.8s handicaps and the 'Heavy' Duster never took place. DLT broke a halfshaft racing Al O'Connor's Popular who went out at 10.6s.

So another sad end to what would have been a terrific meeting just as anyone's standards and praise must go not only to the organisers for not just giving up in despair at yet more rain, but also to the competitors who tried to put on a show in hopeless conditions.

J.T.D.



# Dragging at Santa Pod -

THE weekend drag racing event at Santa Pod was not widely advertised as a major event and as a whole it was a rather long drawn-out affair with a shortage of entries in several classes that led to some match racing and even handicapping in Pro-Stock/Top Street as only one car of each showed up.

But the event was more than memorable for the three runs by Dennis Priddle, culminating in a new strip low e.t. of 6.49s. In fact with four fuel cars, the racing was first class in the elimination, with the slowest qualifier Allan Herridge in "Firefly" at 7.2s/210 mph, the car being fitted with a "bitsa" engine most of which was Ed Pink's funny car equipment. Next was Peter Crane this car too having an Ed Pink motor that pushed the car to a 7.07s/184 mph time, just behind Mike Hutcherson's 7.05s/198 mph run in his Houndog 8 rail. But both took a back seat to Dennis Priddle who opened up his Donovan powered Mr. Revell to a terrific 6.67s at 200 mph in strong headwinds.

In a repeat of their meeting two weeks before, Crane and Priddle lined up together for the first pair, and with the growing potential of the Crane car, Priddle made no mistakes as he powered away to a 6.63s/206 mph run, with Crane clocking his first six at 6.91s and 186 mph. Firefly's new motor didn't last too long as a rod broke just off the line against Hutcherson who went on to a 6.96s/179 mph run.

Both the new rear engined car and Priddle's sleek front engined car lined up for side-by-side burn-outs in the final and slowly edged into stage, both waiting till the last moment before finally rolling in. Again Priddle leapt away intent on making sure of the win and was rewarded by the fastest time ever of 6.49s at 210 mph, the fastest ever outside North America apart from a couple of touring Americans in Australia. Hutcherson's time was a little slower than before at 7.22s/199 mph.

In Top Dragster only Gerry Andrews made it to the final as Liz Burn was unable to run her 454 Chev rail, leaving the 440 car of the Stone team with an 8.2s win.

In Top Comp team-mate Dave Stone took his usual win with the big blown 427T, leading qualifying with an easy shut-off eight. Phil Elson, a new liner installed in the ex-Houndog 392 motor in his T ran a 9.2s with Mike Hall next at 9.4s. When Elson had trouble in the first run, Hall still put his foot hard down to record 8.8s/165 mph. Stone ran a 7.9s to get to the final on a bye run that looked easy, so regularly does the car run that sort of time. Once more in the final as he dipped to a 7.8s at 185 mph to Hall's 9.0s at 165 mph, but could Hall at last have found the key to consistent eights and even the sevens that the car must be capable of?

Not that far behind in Senior Comp, Dave Page got the team's new altered back into the nine second stage that the original Fiat/Chev ran consistently, the new T bodied creation running a 9.8s at 133 mph to beat Dick Sharpe's 10.8s in the Dorset Horn Pontiac A35, running on methanol for the first time. The other three cars

running, Burn's, Hammond's and Dickson's all ran under their usual times so that only the two finalists were really well on form.

The aforementioned handicap event was between John Ledster's Top Street Mustang and Colin Mullen in the London Heavy Pro Stock Dodge with a 3.9s spot to Ledster that he used to advantage in the second and third runs to edge home the winner.

In Super Street Dave Rose and Mustapha Erol were to run three times, for Al O'Connor had taken his Pop/Chev back into the Competition ranks where it first saw the light of competition in it's original owners hands.

Erol was slowed by the headwinds to an 11.3s in qualifying his Camaro, with Rose running an 11.9s in his newly re-engined HemiCuda. But he stalled in the first run, only to watch as Erol slowed with a broken axle. So eventually he made his three runs, the best at over 121 mph to win.

J.D.D.

## Raceway





# History is made as 'TC' goes into eights

EUROPEAN drag fans saw their first-ever eight-second run on Saturday, when Tom Christenson unleashed the huge power of his 1500 cc Norton "Hogslayer" and showed his rear tyre to British challenger Mick Butler all the way up to the finishing line.

Christenson's starting technique was superb, leaving the line and heading for home before quick-starter Butler had even got the clutch to bite!

Butler clocked a below-par time of 10.21 seconds, but would have stood no chance whatever his form in the face of the American's 8.98 seconds at 160 mph.

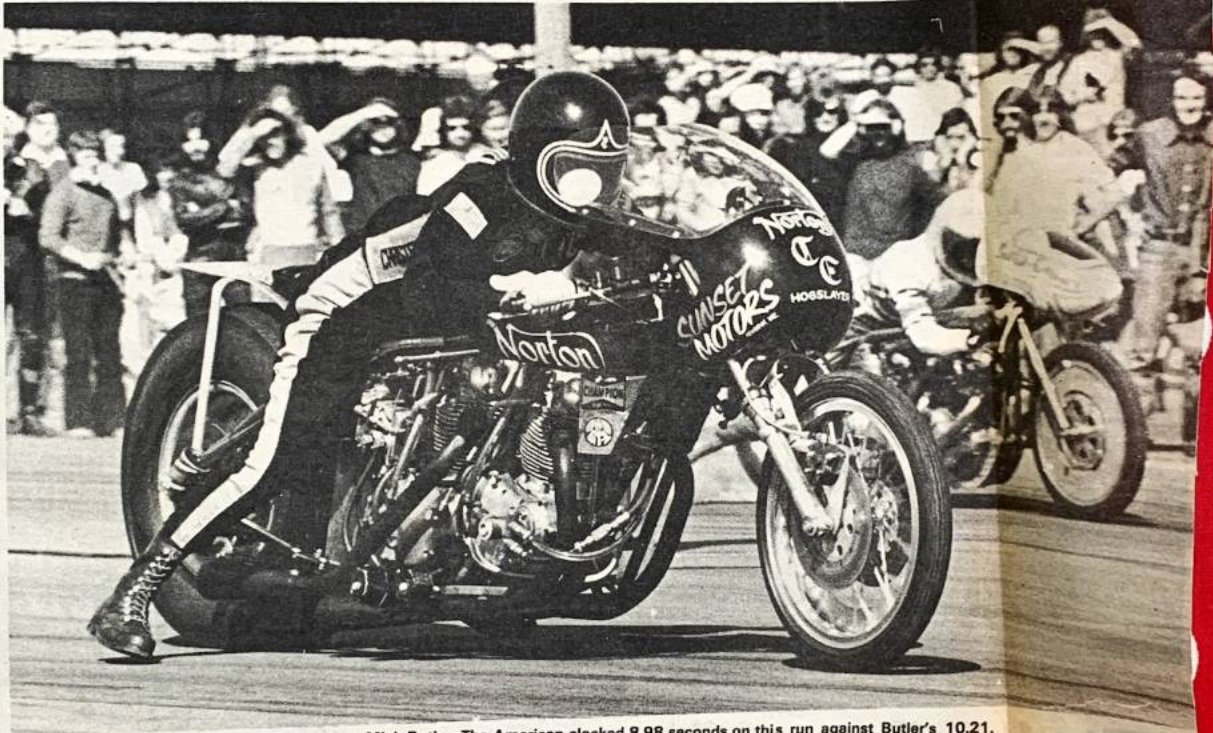
'T C' had opened proceedings with a shake-down run for his new bike in 9.53 seconds at 156 mph. Happy that he knew how much grip the tarmac could give, he made no further runs before meeting Butler in the first of their three-round MCN Challenge Series.

Once the big double Norton was wheeled to the assembly area, the pits emptied as riders hurried to join the spectators and watch drag-racing history being made.

Once the deep note of 'Hogslayer' rang out, the crowd were on their toes, straining for a first glimpse of the big bike with the little man on board. The tickover of the engines was incredible — despite a fuel load of 95% nitro-methane in the tank it tick-tocked away like a 300 bhp sewing machine.

T C made his usual storming burn-outs, sitting in a pool of bleach and dropping the clutch to get the rear eight-inch-wide slick spinning before it was warm enough to bite into the tarmac and send the bike and rider flying forward in a cloud of smoke and steam towards the starting line.

Mick Butler's static burn-out, with the front wheel of the bike against the rear bumper of a car as the rear slick spun itself warm and sticky, was a hurried affair, as he was urged to get to the line and not keep the American waiting.



Tom Christenson versus Mick Butler. The American clocked 8.98 seconds on this run against Butler's 10.21.

This may have upset Butler, for as the starting lights flicked down to green, he was left sitting on the line while Christenson's biggie leapt off the line faster than any double-engined bike ever seen in this country.

Butler had no chance but to follow behind and have a grandstand seat as the first-ever "eight" went into the record book and T C proved that all the claims made on his behalf had been true.

Determined to do better in the second round, Butler was needle-sharp for the starting lights, but the rear chain snapped as he popped the clutch and he moved only half a yard as T C covered the whole 440 yards with an easy run of 9.15

seconds — no terminal speeds being available after an off-line car had smashed the finishing line lights and left the timekeepers with only enough gear to get the elapsed times.

Making no mistakes in the third round, Butler did his burn-out in good time and staged the bike alongside T C as the American came to the line.

As Butler said afterwards, "I've learnt a lot from him"—and he showed what he had learnt by getting away ahead of Christenson.

A wheel ahead as they left the line, Butler was overtaken in the first 20 yards when the big M&H wide slick of the American bike bit

into the tarmac and launched T C past the British boy's double-Norton and on to a three-out-of-three victory in the Challenge Series.

John Hobbs came to the meeting with his double-Triumph "Olympus LL" loaded with an 80% nitro boost to power in his personal bid to get into the eight-second bracket and show that England can match the best that America has.

But it was in vain — on his first qualifying run the clutch refused to take the strain imposed upon it and came apart in a big way, scattering bits across the strip and rendering the Number One British runner a spectator for the weekend.

While T C and Butler fought out

their Trans-Atlantic match, the other riders were busy qualifying for Sunday's Motor Cycle News Top Bike Eliminator Trophy.

Faster time went to Jeff Byne, who clocked a personal best of 9.38 to head the list of hopefuls who would have a chance to race the best in the world, for it had been agreed that T C would run in competition on Sunday and not in Match Races.

Keith Parnell put in a very smooth-looking run to clock 9.49 at 140 mph, but was overtaken later in the day when both Bob Webster and John Clift got their 750 Triumphs down to 9.45 seconds.

Then Norman Hyde, determined to keep the Top Bike crown he won at the July MCN Silverstone meeting, got his own show well and truly on the road with a 9.43 second run, crossing the line at 147 mph.

John Todman made his first-ever nine-second run early on Saturday, clocking 9.74 at 149 mph to join the elite in the MCN Top Bike runners. Alas, he could get no oil pressure when the bike was fired up on Sunday and he could not run.

Street Class looked like being a victory for Terry Revill's 812 cc Dresda-Honda, clocking 12.11 to Dave Rawlins' best of 12.34.



**Silverstone  
drag races  
by  
Jim Reynolds**

ON SUNDAY came the rain. A damp strip had hearts sinking as riders and spectators surveyed the grey sky and scudding clouds.

After a long wait for a break in the weather, the Street Class bikes were given a chance to try the damp tarmac and after a gentle blast they all agreed to race. Only the slower drag bikes and the Street Class runners were allowed to run until the strip was considered safe to use for the really quick boys.

### Straight

Street class saw Terry Revill's big Dressda-Honda beat Phil Brister's Commando to reach the final and race Dave Rawlins, who had beaten Chris Russell's blown Triumph in the second semi-final.

In the final, Rawlins showed just why he was chosen to ride the works Norton — leaving the start line as straight as a die, he left Revill no chance to catch him. In fact, Revill went from his own lane to Rawlins' and then back into his own lane again as he screwed the big four-potter sideways in his efforts to make up for his slow start.

The first round of Top Bike saw Jeff Byne trail Keith Parnell away from the start. With the big Morgo-Triumph buzzing at around 8,000rpm, Byne began to catch up as they neared the finish, but the over-worked engine gave up the struggle and spread itself across the tarmac, leaving Parnell to take the win.

Bob Webster looked the

## SUNDAY—ELIMINATIONS AND MCN TRC

# CLOSE CHALLENGE FROM BRAVE BY



Norman Hyde smokes his Triumph-3 off the line.

favourite to win when he faced up to Brian Chapman's little 500cc Vincent, but Chapman's low-slung "Mighty Mouse" left early and never waited for the bigger engine Triumph of Webster, which broke third gear and could not approach Chapman's storming

9.94/137mph.

Norman Hyde should have faced John Todman, but Roger Williamson's 1300cc Triumph double was brought in to replace the broken Todman machine. Hyde's experience showed when the green light shone — he was on

his way to another win, despite slowing to 11.86/79mph as he ran through the debris of Byne's mishap.

Facing up to Christenson was John Clift, the Epsom runner who builds bikes for other riders. Out to

prove that he knows how to make them go, Clift had a big load of nitro-methane pumping into the supercharged 750 Triumph as he lined up next to the great man.

Clift is a professional, but TC is a super-professional — the two ran side-by-side for 200 yards, with Clift trying all he knew, but once the big Norton shifted into top gear, the Triumph lost ground.

### Trying

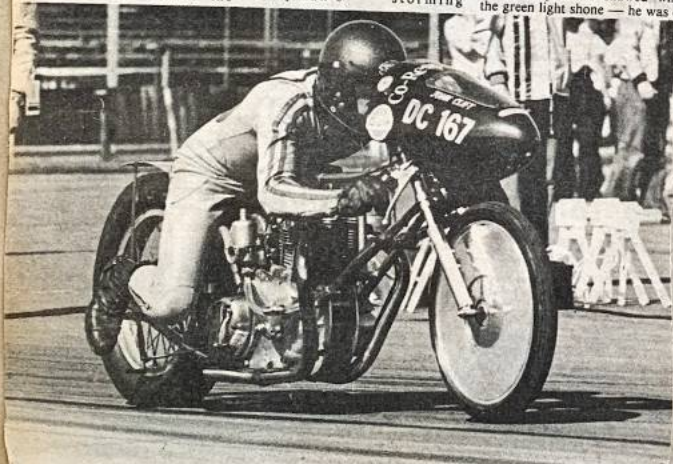
Clift clocked 9.63/139mph to give TC his closest race of the weekend, but he just couldn't live with a man putting in gentle runs of 9.27/149mph and not having to try too hard to get there.

As the first rounds finished the rain gently returned. But the show turned into a downpour and the hopes of completing the meeting before the 5.00 pm deadline faded and died.

### Finals

As the crowds left for home and the crowd around the big double-Norton in the paddock grew even bigger, the event organisers, the National Drag Racing Club, announced that the semi-finals and finals would be run in the morning of their Snetterton event on September 29.

And TC will be there to set the tarmac sizzling at this new venue's debut event, before flying back to America.



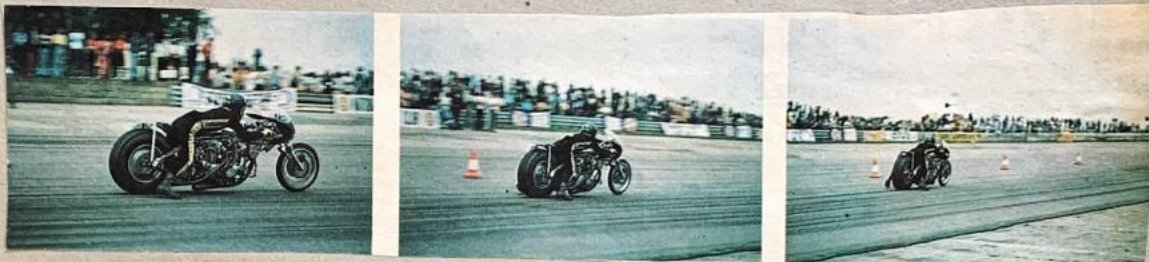
John Clift gave Christenson his closest race of the weekend with a 9.63/139 mph run.

THE AMERICAN WHO C



OPHY  
GE  
NE

# TOM CHRISTENSON



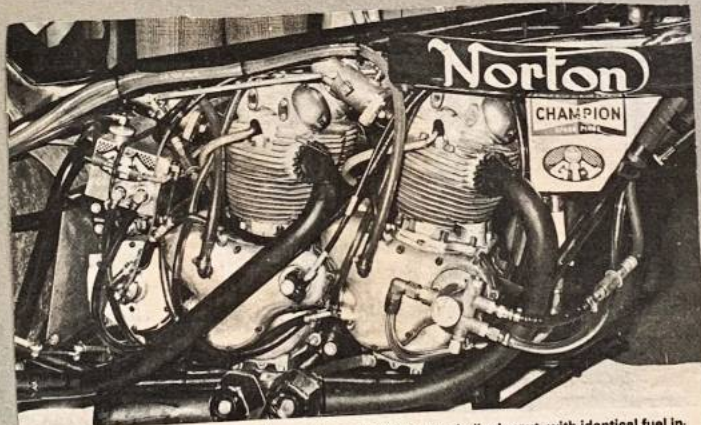
TOM "TC" CHRISTENSON is one of the world's top motor cycle drag racers. Last week he set the first eight second standing quarter in Europe at Silverstone on his 1,500cc Norton "Hogslayer." He is also the man behind the engine preparation for Norton's attack on the world land speed record.

On the left is a colour sequence of his record breaking run, taken by photographer Brian Holder.

On Sunday he will be in action again at Snetterton determined to better last week's 8.98s run.

Here he discusses British drag racing with MCN's Jim Reynolds and also provides some of the insight into our review of the Norton's speed record attempt.

● Christenson had to turn down the opportunity of being back-up rider on the world record run because of drag racing commitments in the States and in Britain.



Close up of Hogslayer's engine. The world record bike has a similar layout, with identical fuel injectors, although the exhaust pipes turn upwards and end in open pipes on the streamliner.

## CONQUERED EUROPE



Christenson talks to Jim Reynolds

### 6 JIM: What's your first impression of British drag racing?

TC: It's a few years behind us as far as the equipment is concerned but your guys are probably making as much horsepower as we are with those big double engine jobs. What I mean by lacking in equipment is as far as making the things accelerate — tyres, clutches, transmissions — are obvious, because your lads are not poleshotting as the big machines in the States do.

JR: It was noticeable that you left the line well ahead of Mick Butler — one of our fastest men.

TC: I'm able to leave the line basically because it's laying down enough rubber on the ground. I cut out a lot of horsepower through the tyre without turning it, whereas he was turning his tyre right off. I mean you smoke it you're going to lose. Our tyres stick to the ground and make the bike move. Everybody is trying the new eight inch M & H slick. Me and Danny Johnson and Russ Collins have been trying and we've been having problems with handling.

We crashed two months ago and that was strictly because of the rear wheel assembly. We are now working on a new frame design to try and make the tyre work again.

The six inch tyres are no problem. The bikes normally handle really well, but the eight inch has created quite a few problems. JR: I notice you're running counterweights on the right hand side of the bike.

TC: The motors are in line with the centres of the wheels. The drive and primary drive, which is on the left of the machine, is extremely heavy and we had to move it all an inch and five-eighths to make room for the chain to run to the rear wheel. So all the weight went to the left side of the bike.

We counterbalance it by hanging the lead weight on the right. We do not know if that is doing any good either because we ran better times without the weight but it does seem to make the bike more stable, and I can alter the weights depending on the cross-winds.

JR: What is your best time on this bike?

TC: 8.39s and a few 8.40s and a lot of 8.50s. We feel that in the right conditions and I don't know about these tracks, for in Britain you don't have the rubber concentration on the start lines like we have in the States so we can get a real good bite on it. On our nationals, we have liquid traction and good big burnouts then you can start making times for you can put more horsepower through the rear wheel.

On an average any of these bikes can drop two or three tenths right off because of the traction available.

JR: So really we have the machinery available for the eights, but not the tracks to back up the machinery!

TC: The only way to overcome it is to use bigger wheels. Eventually they're going to do

# 'Five British bikes could run eights'

— a few are trying now, John and them. They'll get it. But he's playing with a clutch that's got to regulate the power to the tyre even though he's got a six inch slick.

And he's playing with a clutch but he blew his yesterday at Silverstone. It'll work, but it'll take a little more development.

JR: When did you start in the sport?

TC: I have been drag racing for 11 years. I picked up about 10,000 dollars for a six month season last year. Spent 7,000 dollars on travelling. And I did it with a 10,000 dollar motor cycle.

JR: Did you go for Norton engine, solely because you favour them as a racing unit or because they assist in your living?

TC: Basically I used to ride BSA units but I had severe engine problems all the time. Overstress, and breaking them.

When the 650 Nortons finally came into the country in 1961, they really ran strong. Good performing machines after you'd put pistons in 'em.

I switched to Norton when they came over with a 750

line which immediately we developed into a drag "gas" type machine. My Hogslayer is obsolete now as far as the drag racing is concerned in the States. Harley will take a lot of stopping.

We have most of the parts for a triple. Frame, wheels, injection, but we decided against it. We fear it's going to be too heavy and increased hp to weight would be involved.

It would pick up two or three tenths maximum and if I ran at 8.20 with it and a possible seven would be the most that could be expected. The weight and money not worth the effort.

What I would like to do in future is to put a pair of 850s side by side and supercharge them then maybe ride with light loads of fuel and

## Norton—out for records on salt flats and drag strips



"Man, it's quick down the straightaways!" JPN rider Dave Croxford tries out "Hogslayer" for size at the press conference in the London Savoy Hotel to launch Norton's attack on the world speed record. With him are Norton Villiers chairman Dennis Poore (left) and "Hogslayer" rider Tom Christenson.

develop it to make it accelerate. Everyone here seems crazy about building hp but they don't need it. They've got to hp. There's at least five bikes here that could run in the eights. If they could get clutches and tyres, they would be in the eights. They don't need hp—just need traction.

Two or three years ago, I started development of the gearbox. I ran the whole bike for four months just to make the transmission work properly. We used a four-inch tyre and it never ran under 9.30. After we got the gearbox developed, we got clutch and six-inch tyre, we were right from 9.2s to 8.50s. There was a 7/10th drop just after we developed the transmission.

The bike was finished in the early part of June. We ran June 1961 in September developing the gearbox which was shifting real good with the slipper clutch which we had developed previously.

JR: You say supercharging, but the US bikes go so quickly just on the very refined fuel injection system you run. Do you think your power boost from supercharging is going to be that much better?

TC: The thing is we are lacking hp. The Harley-Davidson twin engines are just playing. They're not even trying. They're not developed and they're in the mid-eights. They could get in the high sevens no problem — it may take a month or two to get it developed.

Our bike is maximum development just now. It's capable on a super track of running an 8.20 or 8.30s. On an average, we should get 8.5 or six as long as we get the handling down again. But that ain't competitive for these guys are going from 8.5 downwards.

JR: Who is going to break the first seven in the States?

TC: It's going to be hard. It's going up in squares at the moment with the strain that's put on everything, like Russ Collins' triple engine Honda—more than enough power and engineering to get into the sevens, but he developed the bike on a six-inch tyre. He had enough

power to smoke the thing all the way down.

He went into the traction trick with an eight-inch tyre and then the handling became a problem. In fact it slowed him right down—back in the nines!

He's got to develop that tyre—and if he don't get it right he won't make the seven he's capable of.

The Harleys are also capable of sevens, but they're not yet playing with eight-inch tyres. They've seen a machine crash and they've seen Collins' handling troubles, so they haven't decided.

JR: Didn't Danny Johnson have an eight-inch slick on his Harley when he recently clocked 8.44?

TC: Yes. He's not leading on it. The bike was running soft. He's just slipping the clutch a lot and letting it pull a little on the big end. He's keeping it competitive, but he's not trying to develop it.

JR: How does the new bike you have in Britain compare with the old one?

TC: After we crashed the other one we re-designed the rake and trail. We stepped up the forks, raked it up to 39 degrees so that when it accelerates, it gets down to between 37 and 38, which is what you want. The trail went up from four and five-eighths to five and a quarter, which is the same as the machine before which handled real well. We put strut frame tubes on top limiting some of the flexing area of the frame and we kicked the wheelbase out a shade from 76 to 77 inches.

We played a little with wheel alignment to see if we can get it to compensate for the torque on the frame tube. It's close to what it was before; there's just minor changes.

It weighs near on 450 pounds, give or take five or ten pounds

depending on how much lead you're using. Reasonably heavy. Brake crankshaft power is 300 bhp.



**NATIONAL DRAG RACING CLUB PRESENTS  
FINALS OF RAC/CASTROL CHAMPIONSHIPS**



**DRAG RACE**

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER AT  
**SNETTERTON**  
ON A11 THETFORD/NORWICH ROAD  
**SUNDAY 29 SEPTEMBER**

CHILDREN UNDER 12 ADMITTED FREE  
ADMISSION INCLUDES PADDOCK ENCLOSURE, PITS PARKING  
GATES OPEN 9 A.M. RACING 11 A.M. - 9 P.M.  
GRANDSTAND SEATS, REFRESHMENTS  
**EAST OF ENGLAND'S OWN DRAG STRIP WITH  
220 M.P.H. ACTION**

The organisers reserve the right to alter or cancel whole or part of the meeting without notice.  
Telephone: Potters Bar 43116 for further details and Entry Forms

**Roz Prior joins Revell**

Revell is a name very familiar with drag racing fans. As well as being the manufacturers of the world famous super detailed plastic model kits, they sponsor some of the most popular drag racing stars in the world. Names like Tony Nancy, Jeb Allen, Kuhl & Olsen, Wild Willie Borsch, Mickey Thomson, Whipple & McCulloch, Gene Snow, Roland Leong, and more recently, Don Garlits, are all part of the Revell line up. In Europe they sponsor Dennis Priddle and The Hillbillies, but now a new name is being added to this fantastic team of stars; it is Roz Prior, The Fast Lady.

Revell are to become a major sponsor of Roz and she will be known as Miss Revell during 1975. They have taken up the option to make a kit of her A/A Fuel dragster so watch out for this one in the future and the super new paint job that will appear towards the end of 1974. This sponsorship is a reflection of the popularity of Revell drag racing kits, and of the importance with which Revell view the sport of drag racing.

**Snetterton**

DRAG RACING comes to Snetterton for the first time on Sunday. The shattering noisy straight liners will run on the relatively new Back Straight, starting at the Esses end and blasting up towards Sear before the brake chutes billow out. Among the entry will be Skilton, Priddle, Quick and Prior in Top Fuelers, Stone, Harvis and Hall in their Altereds and Priddle, Shaver, Pratt and Churchill in their funny cars.

With any luck Allan Herridge will bring the Santa Pod Stardust and Tom Christianson his 170 mph twin engined Norton bike. The meeting starts at 10.00 for the 200 plus field to qualify, with the runs that count beginning around 14.00.

**Drag debuts at Snetterton**

Drag racing makes further inroads on the traditional homes of motor racing this weekend with the inaugural event on Snetterton's newly laid strip.

Once again the Top Competition field has attracted an eight-car entry, with the fastest car of all, the Stardust funny car, which, provided some new heads arrive in time, will be entered by Santa Pod Raceway and driven by Allan Herridge. Dennis Priddle will be favourite to give the 6.8 s car its strongest challenge with his STP Avenger, while Ed Shaver's Castrol car, Roland Pratt's Revell Scimitar and Liam Churchill's Capri will also be in attendance. The altereds will be headed by Dave Stone's 7.7 s Chevy, Mike Hall's improved Chrysler and Keith Harvie's new American built Chevy, so weather permitting, we could see all the cars qualified under nine seconds.

Clive Skilton is virtually assured of having his GTX rebuilt to make the Top Fuel class up to four again, Malcolm Quick handling Revolution Three, and Roz Prior in the Accles

and Pollock car and Dennis Priddle in the Revell rail.

Kevin Burrows in the new DB Motors rear engined Chevy Top Dragster will be out to prove that the car has the potential to beat the current class leader Gerry Andrews, while full fields are assured in all other classes—with another 20-car Middle Competition field.

In Pro Stock the Mullen-Yorke Mopars and Goggin's Camaro may also have Roy Osbourne's immaculate Nova to contend with if it is ready in time, while in SuperStreet, the Erol v Stone conflict will again head the entry, Dave Rose being unlikely to make it in his HemiCuda.

Tom Christensen will be staying over for the event on his twin Norton and hopes to set the UK record at something under 8.5 s so that it will stand for a long time, so that in all, the meet holds as much promise as the rained-off Silverstone.

The action starts on Sunday morning with qualifying from 10 am onwards, racing from around 2 pm.

AUTOSPORT, SEPTEMBER 26, 1974



**High flyer!**

**TAKE-OFF!** Mick Butler gets his 1,000 cc double engined Norton right off the ground at Snetterton on Sunday in a final desperate attempt to beat American drag racer Tom "TC" Christianson on his 1500 cc "Hogslyer." He had to roll back the throttle to stay in control however, and failed.

But it was still a great day for British drag racing, with Snetterton's biggest crowd of the year turning up for the inaugural drag meeting there.

The future of the sport at the Norfolk circuit is now assured and on Monday Chris Lowe, general manager of MCD who owns Snetterton said: "There will be three drag race meetings at Snetterton next year, and this will include two-day events.

**SNETTERTON**

**New drag strip opens**

There was an encouragingly large crowd at Snetterton on Sunday to see the first ever drag meeting to be organised on the new strip. Organisation was in the hands of the NDRC and the highlight of a fine afternoon's racing was Allan Herridge's 7.06 s/202 mph run in his "Stardust" Plymouth Satellite Funny car.

The first runs for the Funnies brought an electrifying 7.26 s/190 mph run from Dennis Priddle (STP Avenger). Herridge in the

other lane claimed that a dip in the track near the start produced a serious loss of traction, a complaint which was borne out by several more powerful cars.

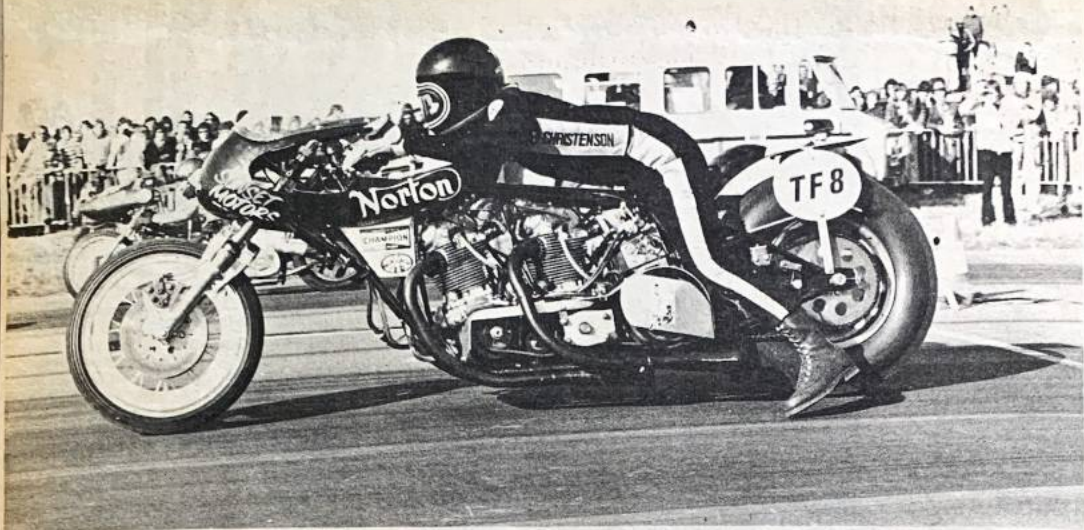
The dragster class produced a fine first win for Roz Prior with a 7.3 s/200 mph run against Malcolm Quick. She put down an even faster 7.2 s for 208 mph in a qualifying run against Clive Skilton whose engine broke on the line. Also out of the money was Dennis Priddle, who broke an axle.

John Dickson



The first drag race meeting held at Snetterton's new strip produced plenty of spectacle, including a 200 mph run by "Fast Lady" Roz Prior (left)





Tom Christenson on his huge Norton-powered "Hogslayer." Once again he proved the American supremacy in drag racing.

# 'TC' REIGNS OVER ENGLAND'S BEST

... and wins Silverstone's postponed final too!

SNETTERTON'S brand new drag strip opened with a brilliant sunny day and some of the best racing ever seen in England, during Sunday's MCN sponsored event.

The finals from the rain-hit Silverstone meeting, run off during the morning qualifying session, gave a huge crowd a double dose of racing.

Star of the show was Tom Christenson clocking no less than four eight second runs to take the MCN Top Bike trophy for both the Silverstone and Snetterton events. But TC had no easy time, with the top British riders chasing him hard. The Silverstone deciders opened with Ted Dunmow clearing off to leave John Cheadle's Yamaha. Ted clocked 10.00/136 mph to John's 11.33/117 mph.

In the Senior Bike final John Jacques had a walk over when Mick Butler's clutch cable snapped as the bike was being started. While Butler cursed his luck Jacques grabbed his chance and took the money with a 10.36/134 mph pass.

In Top Bike, Keith Parnell took the first semi final from Brian Chapman's Vincent, Parnell running a gentle 10.29/123 mph.

In the second semi, Norman Hyde, with the chance of a lifetime before him failed to make the start when his big Trident apparently suffered a bout of stage fright and refused to run against Christenson's big Norton.

TC just warmed up the big double and got to know the Snetterton tarmac with a run in 8.91 seconds at 143 mph.

In the MCN Top Bike final, Christenson and Parnell met, leaving the line side by side and stayed that way until the half way mark.

Then TC shifted into high gear and the big Norton left away leaving Parnell to ease off to 10.29/123 mph behind the flying American 8.84/146 mph winner.

Snetterton drag races: Report—Jim Reynolds : Pictures—Keith Simmons

**TOM CHRISTENSON** took on seven of the fastest riders in England in the eight runner MCN Top Bike Elimination at Snetterton on Sunday.

John Clift had first try at the great man and fed over 90 per cent of nitro methane into the tank in a do or die attempt to put down TC — but he was doomed to fail in the race of an even faster Christenson.

That big Norton just walked away from poor Clift to clock a European best ever of 8.81 seconds/156 mph to the Englishman's 9.78/142 mph.

Keith Parnell put out Brian Chapman for the second time in a day, with a storming 9.40/147 mph that overwhelmed Chapman's 10.03/146 mph. Mick Butler, with a best qualifying run of 9.95 seconds went even faster in competition and clocked 9.39/144 mph to eliminate Ted Dunmow.

Mick Hand screamed his little 250 Honda into the Top Eight with a best ever 250 time of 10.08/134 mph. But anxious to show Bob Webster the way home, he left a shade too early and drew a red light, giving Webster an automatic path through to the semi-finals.

Parnell raced "TC" in the first semi-final and clocked his personal best ever with 9.35/146 mph in a superb run that pushed the American down into the eights yet again to stay ahead of the flying Triumph.

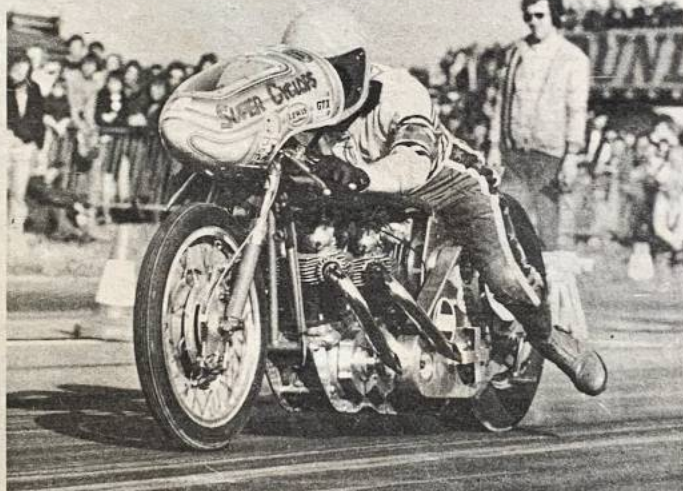
But try as he might, Parnell just could not match the 8.89/155 mph magic of the American.

Mick Butler raced the final and another chance to have a crack at TC after rival Bob Webster lit up the red bulb on the starting lights and threw away his chance.

The final of Top Bike was to be the climax of the day's racing and Butler and Christenson sat and waited while the other classes were run off.

They saw John Jacques absolutely dominate the Senior Bike event. With his first ever nine second run, Jacques beat Cheltenham star Brian Smith in the first round, clocking 9.93/131 mph. He then went on to beat John Lloyd's 1600cc Volkswagen engine.

Reilly suggested a re-run but again



Britain's main hope to stop TC—Mick Butler on his double-engined Norton.

mph, and in the final met Clive Liddiards big Vincent twin.

Together they left the line but Jacques Triumph gained ground all the way to stop the clocks at 9.76/136 mph, to Liddiards 10.13/137 mph.

Bob Beckworth's two speed 650 Triumph took the Middle Bike title with 11.91/105 mph when Terry Fisher's 1300cc double Triumph set the red light glowing.

In the Street Bike class, arch rivals Dave Rawlins (830 Norton) and Terry Revill (812 Dreda Honda) met. But Rawlins rolled back a shade and again the red light winked on as Revill took off on the big Honda.

In a show of real sportsmanship, Revill suggested a re-run but again

Rawlins set the "Evil Eye" glowing as he chased Revill who took the race with 11.91/110 mph.

The day's racing came to a climax with the final of the Top Bike — USA versus England, all Norton match between Christenson and Butler.

Both riders crouched low over the bikes as the starting lights flicked down to green.

They launched forward together as the first trace of current began to light the bulb, but Butler's bike, using a five-inch wide rear slick for the first time, really dug in and Butler found himself sitting on the back of the biggest wheelie ever seen.

He had to roll the power off a little to get back to earth and pursue the leading TC.

TC was just too fast, clocking 9.02/155 mph to Butlers 9.69/144 mph, leaving English drag racers to ponder on what they must do to emulate this super star.

#### PROVISIONAL RESULTS

Top bike: T Christenson (1500 Norton "Hogslayer") 9.02/155 mph beat M Butler (1000 Norton "Super Cyclops") 9.69/144 mph.

Senior bikes: J Jacques (650 Triumph "Satans Cycle") 9.76/136 mph beat C Liddiards (1600 Vincent "Flying Baron") 10.13/137 mph.

Middle bike: B Beckwith (650 Triumph "Tenafly") 11.91/105 mph beat T Fisher (1300 Triumph) — red light.

Street bikes: B Eastman (500 Triumph "Nitro Function") 12.90/103 mph beat R Read (500 Lambretta-Triumph "Je Mutant") 15.10/93 mph.

Street bikes: T Revill (812 Dreda Honda) 11.97/110 mph beat D Rawlins (828 Norton) — red light.

#### Provisional results

MCN Top Bike Trophy: T Christenson (1500 Norton "Hogslayer") 8.84/146 mph beat K Parnell (750 Triumph "Rouge et Noir") 10/123 mph.

Senior bikes: J Jacques (650 Triumph "Satans Cycle") 10.36/134 mph beat M Butler (1000 Norton "Super Cyclops") did not start.

Middle bike: E Dunmow (750 Triumph "Paper Tiger") 10.00/136 mph beat J Cheadle (350 Yamaha "The Frontiersman")

Street bikes: T Revill (812 Dreda Honda) 11.97/110 mph beat D Rawlins (828 Norton) — red light.