

lenged, only Ray Hoare's fast but smaller 5-litre car getting close. Then the D. B. Motors rear-engined 427 rail showed up and ran some very strong 170 mph runs before the motor came apart at the penultimate meeting. Driver Kevin Burrows should be another to watch in Pro Comp this year with the rebuilt car.

Outstanding in Senior Competition again were the Page brothers with their "Panic" Fiat Chev. This was soon the car to beat after some early traction problems, but just when it looked as if they were back on form, the car was written off when Dave Page rolled it after crossing a damp patch at Santa Pod. They set to work feverishly to build a new car, and within a few weeks unveiled a longer and lower car with a "T" body which ended up by recording a sensational 9.4 s at 154 mph. In their absence, Dick Sharpe had stepped into the number one spot with the Dorset Horn A35 Pontiac, but his 10.6 s times could not cope with the Chevy when it returned to the strips.

The street classes, after their excellent showing in 1973, were a disappointment, with only a handful of entries in the Super Street and Top Street classes. Pro Stock was dominated by the two Heavy Mopars of Yorke and Mullen. Both showed how far the class had developed in the US by running clockwork-like mid nines, but after an early showing by Kevin Pilling which ended when his motor blew, only Gary Goggin stayed to try and beat them with his Camaro. This he did once or twice through sheer driving ability, but the writing was on the wall, and his season ended as Pilling's had begun with a blown engine.

The regular appearance of one or two of the Heavies soon showed that however fast a car may be, it needs effective opposition to make it interesting, and so Pro Stock '74 was a shadow of Pro Stock '73.

In Super Street Dave Rose started off well with several wins with his 440 'Cuda, but eventually Dennis Stone and Musapha Erol overtook him in Escort/Chev and Camaro respectively, Erol getting down to 10.6 s with the ex-Crane car. Dave Lee Travis also drove the Precision Tapes Escort when he could, winning at Silverstone. Top Street was largely fought out between the Mustangs of Ledster and Fryer, whose street driven car continued to perform well in the mid 13 second range.

Of more than passing interest to the followers of the sport was the visit by T. C. Christensen, who brought over his twin engined Norton and ran regular 8.9 s runs on what were to him, rather indifferent tracks, showing that drag racing is not limited to cars when it comes to low ets.

Al O'Connor's popular Al's Gasser has 495 ci power.



AUTOSPORT, FEBRUARY 20, 1975

# A neat MGB rubber scorcher

ONE MAN who'll be burning a lot of rubber in 1975 is Oxfordshire telephone engineer Dave Branch. Many people will remember Dave's neat 1000cc Morris-engined "Minotaur" that used to smoke the rear slick for a hundred yards or more, now he's gone the whole hog and built an 1800cc MGB-engined plot that's intended to do only one thing — win!

The big MG engine is fed by a 2-litre Wade supercharger breathing straight methanol through twin 1½ in SU carbs. A Laycock overdrive unit has been used to build a two-speed transmission and a home-made slider clutch using Norton Commando plates will help to get off the line.

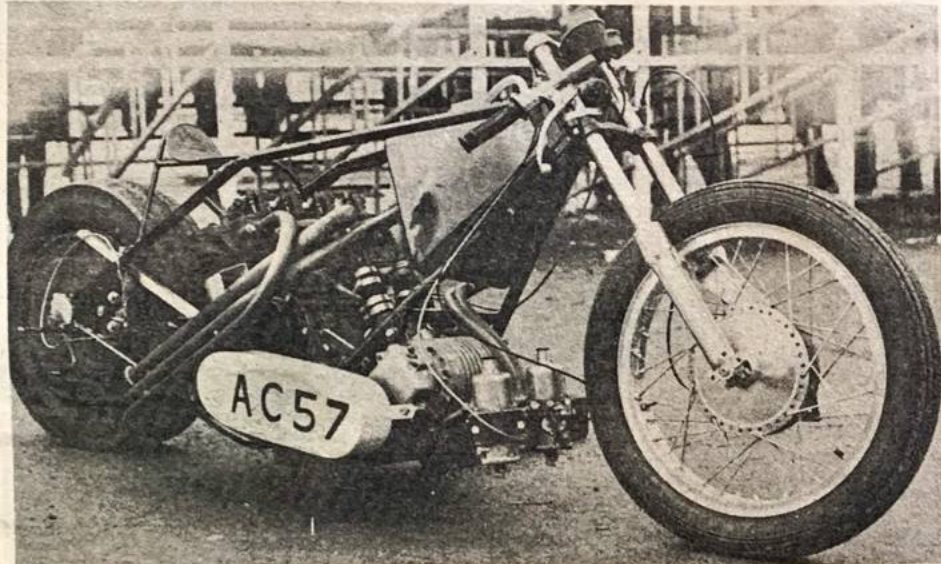
Frame is to Dave's own design and was built in the workshops of his sponsors, Clarkman

Engineering. Also backing this exciting new quarter-miler are Industrial Trucking Services.

The engine will run without any sort of coolant in the cylinder block, just twin air scoops to get a blast of air around the hard-working cylinders. This system was used with the smaller bike and was completely reliable with the blower pushing fuel loads up to 50 per cent nitro-methane into the heart of the matter.

It's a big cycle and Dave admits it. "We don't know how much it weighs," he says, "but there's a lot of pounds to come off it yet."

It handles well, however, as private tests have shown. At speeds up to 120 mph, there was no trouble at all — "It handled perfectly — I was very pleased", said Mr Branch, a man looking for a chance to show the big names the way home in 1975.



Dave March's new MGB engined tarmac-scorcher will certainly be a top runner this season



## Straight up

WITH JIM REYNOLDS

# A sponsor or it's for sale

BRIAN SMITH, who has built, tuned and ridden his 750 Morgo-Triumph "The Cheltenham Flyer" to a best time of 9.70 seconds in the 1974 season, is looking for some sponsorship for the coming season.

## Biking builder sponsors Mick

MOST UNUSUAL sponsor of the year? So far, it must be Mick Butler's new helper, Bedford builder Chris Thorman.

Chris was doing some alterations to the Butler habitation and got talking to Britain's answer to TC. It didn't take the go-ahead Chris long to realise that a lot of Bedfordshire drag fans are potential customers and he quickly signed up to give cash backing to Mick this year.

If he can build houses as well as Mick Butler can build bikes, he should do well. Rumours of Mick using a blown concrete-mixer in his efforts to be the first Englishman into the "eights" are absolutely untrue, however!

"It's a case of a sponsor for 1975, or a bike for sale for 1976," said Brian ruefully, when I spoke to him at the recent Midland Motor Cycle Show. Brian's immaculate dragster was on the NSA stand.

The original Hagon frame has been modified and now sports a much longer wheelbase and a revised top-tube layout. The engine remains a 750 and is as ready to go as any fast bike is going to be at the season's opening meetings.

Watch out for his name in the results while the new machinery is still being sorted out.

Duckhams provide Brian with oil and at the moment they are his only backers. He'd be glad to hear from anyone interested in backing a neat rider on a reliable and attractively turned out bike. Drop him a line at 16 Short Street, Cheltenham Gloucestershire

## Government aid

WHEN Norman Hyde heard that government inspectors were to visit Burmah House, in Swindon, home of the Castrol empire, to discuss aid for the company, his comment was a classic of his droll wit.

"It's a bit early to say what's going to happen next season," said Norman. "They're talking to the government today to see if there's enough money to keep my sponsorship going!"

In fact, Castrol are to continue their backing for Norman during 1975, along with the official factory contribution and help from Elite Motors.

## Red faced Mick has top award

MICK HAND had the reddest face at the recent NSA dinner and dance, where the 1974 prizes were distributed.

Mick is established top man in the 250 class with his sweet-sounding Honda "Little David". But when he tried his luck on Keith Parnell's 750 Triumph at a Wroughton sprint and clocked a superb run in 9.24 seconds he didn't realise that it would result in him being given the NSA trophy for the best non-expert of the year.

Mick wasn't qualified as an expert in the 750 class, but after that effort the records will have to be re-written.

## Joining Gus

JOINING Gus Kuhn and Elite Motors in sponsoring drag bikes for the 1975 season will be Sid Moram, of Slough, Bucks.

Director Colin Moram regards the quarter-mile scene as a good place to get publicity, so will be backing local man Roger Williamson. Roger campaigns the 1300cc double-Triumph that he bought from Dave Clew a year ago.



It pushes out a massive 1,800bhp at 10,000rpm! Every moving part inside the engine has to be especially tough, particularly the crankshaft which could easily break up at peak revs and flail about, causing a lot of damage. All parts are balanced to prevent vibration and uneven stresses.

As the dragster's run is so short, engine cooling is not a great problem. Before a run each of the two cylinder heads is filled with a gallon of water which blows off in the form of steam once pressure has risen above 6lbs/sq.in.

#### ANTI-SPARK BLOWER

Above the cylinder block is the inlet manifold and supercharger. About 50 per cent of the fuel mixture goes straight into the blower and the other 50 per cent is fed under pressure to the engine fuel injectors. Teflon coatings on the supercharger vanes are designed to prevent a chance spark igniting the mixture and blowing the "blower" to smithereens!

The fuel tank, positioned between the engine and driver, holds five gallons. The engine is a thirsty beast, gulping up 4½ gallons in two short "burn-outs" and one 7-second run down the strip.

Drive from the engine is taken via a special multi-plate clutch which uses iron and brass linings instead of the more usual fibre-composition which would quickly burn-out under the tremendous power it has to transmit. Just in case centrifugal force causes the clutch assembly to explode and

disintegrate like a bomb, a 3/16ths of an inch thick steel sheet casing, called the "clutch can" is used to shield it.

From the clutch, the power goes through a quick-shift two-speed gearbox. On a run a change from low to high gear is made about a third of the way down the strip.

The driver's controls are somewhat different from an ordinary car. To begin with, the 11in. dia. rear disc brakes are operated by a hand lever on the driver's right. Ahead of him are two pedals, the clutch and accelerator. On the left is a lever that works the two-speed shift and by his right shoulder is the release pull for the 11-foot "cross-form" parachute.

#### STARTING AND STOPPING

There are four operations in starting a dragster's engine: (1) Push start at 45mph in high gear with clutch engaged to bring up engine oil pressure. (2) Prime fuel system by flooring throttle. Wait until fuel trickles out of exhaust pipes. (3) Switch on ignition and "fire" engine. (4) Remove push bar from chassis.

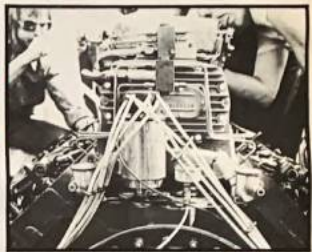
In the "stage area" by the starting line there are two "staging"

**KEY:** 1. Solid disc wheels. 2. Armoured shield. 3. Remote engine-starter mounting. 4. Fuel control valve. 5. Supercharger air intake "bug-catcher". 6. Supercharger. 7. Fuel injection blocks for the Stroak Dragway slicks. 11. Parachute pack. 12. Brake calipers. 13. 11in. dia. disc brakes. 14. Removable "push bar". 15. Clutch lever ignition. 16. Fillers for cooling water for cylinder heads. 17. Magneto stubs. 20. Twin oil filters. 21. Fuel tank. 22. Torsion bar front suspension.

light beams 4in. apart with a "four" or false start light beam 8in. ahead of these. The idea is to bring the dragster's front wheel just past the second staging beam into the "8in. space". When both dragsters are "staged" there is a short pause before an amber light flashes and 3-second later the green blinkers for "GO".

To stop at the end of the run the "chute is released. This takes over a second to deploy. Then the accelerator is released and the engine declutched after passing the end of the 1/4-mile strip. Finally, the fuel is shut off, the driver counts to five and switches off the ignition.

Below: The narrow rear axle of the GTX. Eleven-inch dia. disc brakes help slow the dragster to a halt once the release cable and pin on the parachute pack have been pulled. A small 12in. drogue chute then pulls out the main 11ft. cross-shaped braking parachute.



Right, centre: Wires from the magneto supply a spark to each of the eight plugs. The rocker box cover on each bank of four cylinders has been removed to expose the valve mechanism. A mechanic adjusts the supercharger which forces an air/fuel mixture into the engine. Right: The "blower" is driven from the crankshaft by a toothed belt. Aircraft-type stainless steel braided piping is used for the fuel lines. Part of the armoured shield that protects the driver can be seen on the extreme left of the picture.

Get away drawing courtesy "Autocar"  
Photos: Mike Ky

DICK ELLIS  
M.S.I.A.



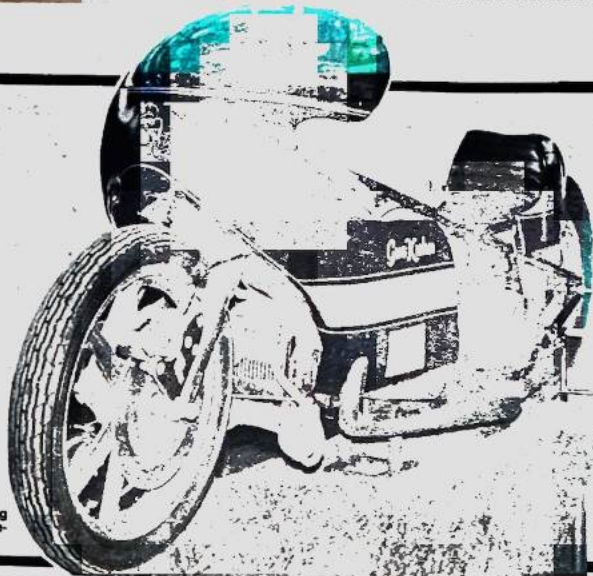
by CHARLES DEANE

# The return of McKiernan — he's out to win!

WITH the drag racing season a few weeks away, things are really warming up in the workshops. Triple-engined twins, twin-engined triples and supercharged, twin-engined twins... every possible permutation.

One of the hopefuls is John McKiernan, 31, from Welling, Kent, who is returning to the drag racing scene after a break of six years, with the full backing of Vincent Davey, boss of Gus Kuhn Motorcycles.

Right: Exhibited at the 1975 Racing Show, John McKiernan's double-engined Norton sprinter.



How long have you been competing on two wheels?

"About six or seven years. I started in sprinting with a 650 supercharged Triumph but I only did this for one season. In that year I won the NSA points championship for the 750 cc class."

How many meetings did you have to do to win that?

"Well, I did about a dozen. But I also got four world records."

"I was up in the low elevens. My old bike was bought by Duncan Hocking when I went into road racing. He put the motor in a Hagon frame, because mine was a heavy old beast, and he went on to break the 750 solo world record."

When did you go into road racing?

"The same year. I fitted the sprint engines into and I used to take them down to Brands to run them in. I had the opportunity of taking over somebody's ride in a race at Lydden and I came fifth."

"Next weekend at Brands it just happened that there was the 'Stars of Tomorrow' meeting and I entered that first road race really. I won the heat and then won the race for the Paul Dunstall trophy. I think that was in 1969. So I packed up sprinting and went over to road racing."

What made you go back to drag racing?

"The opportunity arose through Vincent Davey after talking to him and I thought we could do well. He is a Norton man and they're a good engine for it. I just talked to him about it and originally, he agreed to loan me two engines."

"Of course, this thing has gone on since the Racing and Sporting show, particularly with the interest people have shown in it."

When was the machine built?

"It started around March last year after the 1974 Racing Show. The past year we've more or less spent building things."

Who built the frame?

"Originally, it was going to be Vincent Davey supplying you with the motors. How has it progressed from there?"

"The main trouble hitting these drag bikes is transmission trouble. So I wanted to build something and gradually test it out. We built that frame — it's really built for 'fliers' not standing quarters."

"Mr Davey has helped out with the tyres, wheels and the clutch... all from America, all very expensive, and he's bought all that."

Which motors are you using?

"Two 850 motors, both supercharged using a single supercharger. What transmission will you be using for the Norton?"

"No. The bike at the moment is purely a test bed. There is another bike with another frame which will go on the strips when we are ready and that will have the two-speed gearbox with a slipper clutch."

Will you be using the six- or eight-inch M&H slick tyre?

"The eight."

What is your aim with this new bike? Is it to have a go at Mickey Butler and John Hobbs?

"It's not to have a go at anyone — it's to win! The fiercest competition will probably be Mickey Butler and John Hobbs."

You're using twin-engined motors — how have you connected the primary drives together?

"Gears throughout. The linking of the two motors and the primary drive to the clutch is done with five gears. The primary drive plate was cut out of two-inch thick solid dural. It takes a lot of jig boring and milling. I've done a lot of it myself,

but the bits I couldn't I've taken around to local machine shops."

When do you reckon you'll be out for the first time?

"The bike's now ready to run. We should fire it up this week. If there's no problem then we'll convert it, put the other stuff on. I'm not bringing it out to Santa Pod or any of the other meetings until it's going properly. I shall be going to NSA sprints to test it."

What sort of times are you aiming for?

"Obviously in the eight seconds mark. I should think there will be a lot of bikes in the eights this year."

Engine wise, is there anything special you have had to do or are you simply using the Gus Kuhn tuning components?

"Gus Kuhn's have got a very comprehensive knowledge and range of tuning gear necessary to make a Norton go and they're available to us. The engines at the moment are pretty standard apart from the fact that they've been stripped, balanced and rebuilt as they should be. The goodies will be put in as and when necessary. The last thing we're looking for at the moment is extra power."

"If you're running heavy doses of nitro and it's supercharged, it's debatable whether the standard items could stand up to it. T. C. Christenson said he was using standard pistons and connecting rods but his bike is unsupercharged and there's a lot of difference."

Who else is working on the bike with you?

"Just me, Vincent Davey and my band of followers."

What do you mean, 'Band of followers'?

"Well you know, the people that help me out — mechanics, engineers. And one in particular who does most of the machining work, Colin Little."

Will you be going for any more world records?

"No, I don't think so. The bike's being built as a quarter-mile drag bike. There's no point in trying to change it."

So you're not going to do the NSA world records meeting?

"We might do. There are two bikes One's geared for fliers; one for the quarter. If we feel we want it or wanted to do it for some reason, then we'll be there. I don't know yet; I might, take it to give it a thrashing just to test the gears."

Do you think we have a chance of beating the Americans in drag racing?

"Yes. Given time and losing the 2,000 cc limit. One of the quickest Americans for the last two years has been using unblown Nortons."

If you get the machine running well and you achieve your aim of getting into the low eight seconds mark for the standing quarter, what do you estimate will be your terminal speed?

"For a low eight second run, you must be touching between 170 to 180 mph at the end of the strip and possibly still accelerating!"

What will be the biggest problem at those sort of speeds?

"The handling and braking. We've got Norton front forks and disc brakes, as well as a round profile racing tyre on the front wheel."

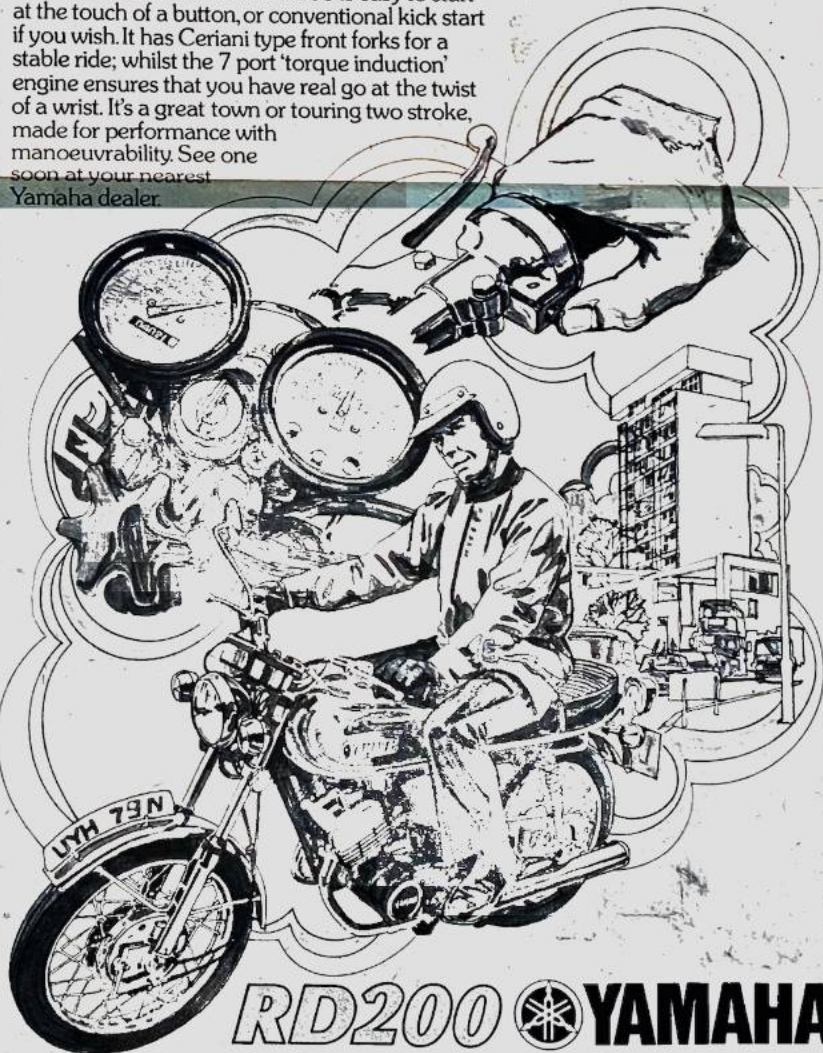
Thanks for talking to us, John. May I wish you a lot of success this coming season.

"Thank you. May I just add a word of thanks to Vincent Davey, who's been really great."

"I couldn't wish for a better sponsor."

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# KEEPING THE HOBBIT'S WHEELS APART

In this, the third story on the "Motor Cycle"-sponsored bid for a British eight-second standing quarter-mile, John Hobbs tells technical editor Vic Willoughby what keeps the wheels apart and why he needs all that rubber

**STAY WITH US**  
As the Hobbit takes shape, technical editor Vic Willoughby will keep readers up to date with progress towards that elusive eight-second bracket in British quarter-mile.



THERE seems to be a growing dislike between John Hobbs' front and rear wheels. Already none too close on Olympus II, they have separated a further 4in on The Hobbit, kept apart by a new Dimension Four frame with a wheelbase of 72in — which is best part of 2ft longer than yours and mine.

But, for all their spacing, those wheels should work in greater harmony than ever before, because the frame is designed to accommodate the driving stresses without turning of wheels out of line.

Incredibly, considering its length and stiffness, the frame weighs less than 10 lb — though the bike's total weight will be increased from 425 to about 450 lb, chiefly because the Lenco epicyclic gearbox, and Crower-style clutch are so much heavier than the Norton transmission on Olympus II.

Secret of the frame's lightness, made possible by first-class design, materials and workmanship, is that none of the Reynolds 531 tubing is heavier than 16 gauge. This gauge is used for the in-diameter front down tubes, the 11in-diameter rear fork and the two in-diameter tubes be-

low the fork arms proper. To resist frame flexure under driving loads, the axes of the rear-engine crankshaft, the gearbox mainshaft and the rear wheel are all in the same plane — and the rear fork, the drive-side arm of which is straight, not curved, also lies in that plane.

What's more the 1in-diameter rear wheel spindle is unusually well located in the 16-gauge, box-section fork ends, for there are two pairs of chain adjusters, one pulling forward, the other rearward.

On the basis of his experience with Olympus II,

Sprayson, to lower the intersection point of the steering axis and the front-wheel rolling radius to the midpoint of that radius, in the interest of weight-assisted stability. It results in a fork trail of some 4 to 5in.

John is looking forward to the improvement because, although Olympus II, with a 58-deg head angle, got off the mark as if on rails, it could come alarmingly close to getting out of hand at top speed.

The rear fork arms are also much wider spaced than on Olympus II, because John has not only specified an M &

better acceleration, without serious oversteering at the end of the quarter-mile.

Apart from having identical Lyster brake discs, with Lockheed hydraulics, the wheels are as different as chalk from cheese. The front one, a gift from Tony Foals of Tonbridge, Kent, is an Offenside six-spoke, magnesium casting, shod with a 2.75 x 18in Dunlop KR76 road-racing tyre.

The wheel is carried in a S600 lightweight racing telescopic fork, donated by Metal Profiles. It is fitted with heavy-duty springs and both bottom and top yokes are in light alloy.

Incidentally, if you think the gifts towards this project, (frame tubing, both wheels, front fork, RGM dolphin fairs and seat, etc) make it a candidate for the name The Givvit rather than The Hobbit, think again.

The transmission set John has the best part of £600; those balloonlike M & H tyres cost around £50 a piece, a dual wheel sprocket for the Renold 1 x 1in rear chain will cost about £25 to make; while the nitromethane that cascades through the jets like a miniature Niagara is virtually liquid gold.

Back to the front fork. Since the Hobbit is designed to go straight, there is no call for the sophistication of ball or roller steering bearings. So the fork is pivoted on flanged plain bearings—dual plugs with thin bronze linings. Not only is this arrangement light, but nipping up the steering column nut provides a variable degree of friction damping.

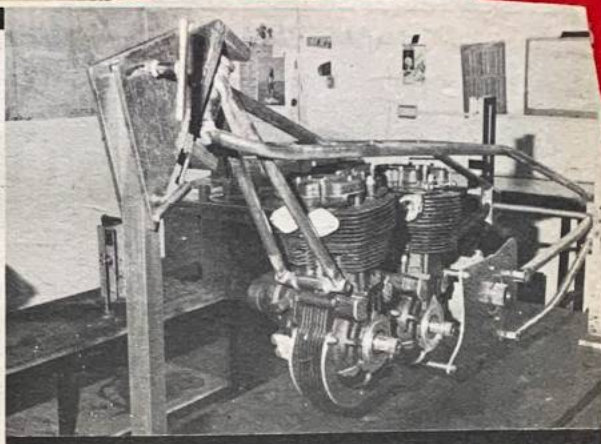
Donated by Tech Del, of West London, the Minilite magnesium-alloy rear wheel is of 15in diameter, compared with 14in on Olympus II. That extra inch means that the tyre walls are shallower, for the same 28in overall diameter. Hence the tyre is more stable at the low pressures John will use.

He plans to start off at 12 psi and work progressively downward until the handling shows signs of getting hairy. To prevent the cover from creeping round the rim, there will be six self-tapping screws on each side.

Dimension Four are machining the rear hub from a 6in-diameter, solid dual billet. It will be supported on a double-row ball bearing on the left, to which side the wheel and sprocket will be bolted, and a single row on the right, which will carry the brake disc.

Incidentally, with light-alloy rear sprockets being so expensive, changes in overall gearing will be made at the steel gearbox sprocket.

There is a school of thought, chiefly among dragsters of an earlier generation, that the latest monsters are overtired. An 8in tread is too wide they argue, for maximum traction — which



ABOVE: Since the rear crankshaft, gearbox shaft and wheel spindle are in line, the straight left-side fork arm takes compression stresses only. To suit the blower, the front cylinder head is reversed, so that all exhaust ports face inward. The engines can be serviced in situ. BELOW: Tubular spacers separate the gearbox plates. The splined output sleeve takes a flanged collar for different-size chain sprockets. Stage-ground clearance is 3in front, 2in rear.

theoretically calls for a small degree of spin. Hobbs is emphatically agn the argument and points out that some Yanks are using 10in treads. He says that Olympus II, with two 750 cc Triumph engines, was nothing like over-tyred with a 7in tread. He was always looking for grip and even with 5in he expects to be doing the same with the extra power of the Weslake engines.

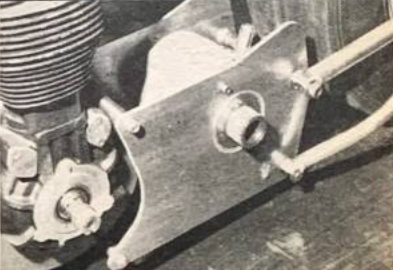
There is much more to tread width than meets the eye. By cutting down initial spin, a wide tread gives more traction, hence a briefer elapsed time. But as the speed rises, the tyre soaks up too much power, so cutting terminal velocity.

Conversely, a narrow tread makes for longer times but higher speeds.

It's a classical case of swings and roundabouts and there is little option but to strike a balance, which will vary from strip to strip according to the surface.

John agrees that you can easily over-tyre with a 'old-fashioned' manual clutch and single gear. There is a severe limit to the slipping such a clutch will stand and too wide a tread could bog the engine down at low revs.

But with a slider clutch to keep the revs up, he can do



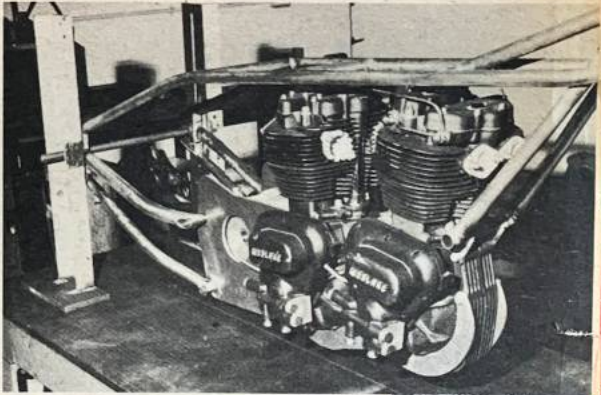
with all the tread he can get, short of a tyre so wide and soft that it will wallow at take-off or top speed, or both.

All this explains why really top-drawer drag bikes now have to be set up for the traditional quarter-mile only. To switch to the kilometre, where the relative importance of top speed to getaway is greater, would call for a narrower tread as well as higher gearing.

Enough of theory. In the nose of the glass-fibre fairing will be a 11-gallon, light-alloy fuel tank. To obviate all risk of starvation, the feed

pipes will be of 1in bore and, of course, inertia helps the fuel supply to the carbs on take-off. The tank will be attached to the frame, however, in case the fairing has to be discarded in a strong wind.

The Hobbit will be brightly decked out in Motor Cycle colours. But so much more work remains to be done, that I'm sure John will be relieved to make his debut on it at Whitsun. If anyone beats him into the eight-second bracket before then, he says philosophically, he'll just have to reassert himself by going quicker!



ABOVE: Mock-up in the frame jig. The front supercharger will be ahead of the crankcase, the rear one above the gearbox. Of the three cross-tubes spanning the top frame rails, the front one bolts to the cylinder head, the rear one to the supercharger plates.



LEFT: Brake discs from a twin-disc Lyster hub will be fitted — one at each end. On the right is the anchor arm for the rear Lockheed caliper.

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Adam Bennett, of Dimension Four, shows John Hobbs' Mini-lite rear wheel with M & H Racemaster tyre. Though the wheel is a thin-section magnesium casting, further weight has been saved by turning metal off the rim.

Hobbs roughed out a frame sketch and gave it to Dimension Four, along with a set of 5/16in duralumin engine and gearbox plates, two empty Weslake engines, the gearbox and a Shorrock blower case.

In Northampton, Adam Bennett produced pukka engineering drawings and Bill "The Weld" Woodruff got busy with his silicon-bronze magic in a frame jig. The only significant alteration to John's layout is a steepening of the steering head from 58 to 60 degrees.

This was advised by Ken

H Racemaster tyre with an 8in-wide tread (7in on Olympus), but he has also chosen a 7in-wide (previously 5in) to get the widest possible "footprint" — as the contact area on the track is called. Two inches of radial clearance all round is necessary to allow for centrifugal fling at top speed and no one appreciates this better than Hobbs. He once failed to make enough allowance for tread fling on Olympus II and went through the finishing lights with the tyre smoking — not from wheel-spin but from rubbing hard under the glass-fibre seat!

Naturally, the degree of fling is less with a wider rim. Even so, John reckons the gearing-up effect will be worth 10 to 15 mph on maximum speed, which has the advantage of permitting lower overall gearing for

Will you have HONDA STYLE?

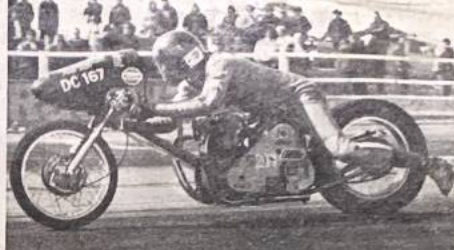
# RACE TO THE NINES



Tony Weedon on the line at Santa Pod.

## BLESTED EFF!

KEITH LEE previews the 1975 drag racing season which starts this Sunday at Santa Pod.



John Clift — a consistent runner last year.

**STAGING . . . amber, amber, green . . . GO!**  
A crescendo of revs blasts the eardrums of all watchers, the tension of the last half-minute dissolves as a huge spinning slick bites into greasy tarmac hurtling a man and machine up a quarter-mile strip.

Sunday's meeting at the Santa Pod Raceway, near Wellingborough, Northants, Britain's only permanent drag facility, will be just a warm-up for some of the bikes finished early — and more new bikes than ever are being prepared to make this a super season.

So let's take a look at what some of the top riders have planned for their assault on the nine second barrier.

Who will run the first "eight" is a matter for speculation, but whoever is first will not be alone for long — that's for sure.

Byrne and Bob Webster, whose new twin-engined machines were reviewed in a recent *Drugstrip* column, is that both have taken delivery of their Puma crankcases and are well on the way to completing their respective machines in time for an Easter debut.

Byrne has a Lenco two-speed box installed, working in conjunction with a Davies slipper clutch. The Lenco was obtained from Sonny Routt through Dave Johnson, whose twin Routt-Triumph bike has been updated with a new

clutch and two-speed. This revamped bike should be at the Pod this weekend.

Another rider feverishly at work in his garden shed is "Mighty" Mick Warne, who is building himself a 1500 cc Triumph which is almost completed.

His aim is to become the "World's fastest fat man" — that's all 17 stone of him! Although one of last year's sponsors has dropped out, Mick has backing from Castrol and Denselube Super-chains, and Bewley Engineering are giving him the first of their two-speed gearboxes specially modified for drag racing.

Last season saw Warne clock a best of 9.9 seconds on his 850 Triumph, very notable performance when you consider the all-up weight thundering down the quarter-mile.

"staying single!" is Peter Miller who, with Ray Baskerville has produced a remarkable piece of engineering, ground up, and anyone who remembers Miller's old 500 Triumph which ran a best of 9.56 secs will appreciate just what a force he is likely to be, along with John Clift as the doubles light to overcome their teething troubles.

There is one twin-engined rider at least who will be fighting fit for the commencement of the season — Mick Butler, who was very pleased with his end of season form, chalking up a best mark of 9.23 secs/155 mph on Super Cyclops.

Only changes for this year are a new, slightly longer frame to replace the old one which didn't appreciate being wheeled down the strip; and also a new transmission is being fitted to replace the Bewley two-speed which was mated to a slider clutch.

"Apart from that, all I've got to do is de-coke the motors," says Butler, who is determined to lead the race to the "nines". "I've got to beat that guy Hobbs there, haven't I?" And if that isn't a challenge, what is!

Norton riders present a tough threat in the battle of the twins.

There is the Ian Messenger-Derek Chinn "Pegasus" machine. They had some bad luck last year with engine breakage on their superbly turned out projectile, and are looking for better luck in the coming year.

Then there is Dennis Norman who debuted his twin 850 Norton in the middle of last year. He has now overcome problems with the torque converter and engine misfiring and "Storming Norton" is confident that '75 will see plenty of "Storming".

Yet another Norton challenge comes from the Gas Kuhn sponsored entry of John McKiernan. No newcomer to the sprint scene, John is making a return, but using a pair of eight-rod thrust world of dragging using a pair of eight-rod Commando motors.

Debuted at the sporting motor cycle show in January, the black red and gold painted entry looked very impressive. Starting out on straight methanol, this new

addition to the Top Bike ranks looks destined to cut some very quick quarters in the near future.

Now for the unusual — one of which is the ingenious project of Mick Hand and Angus McPhail. Mick, not being content with qualifying for Top Bike eliminations in the past on his incredible 250 Honda, is to do "something different" in the form of a 750 twin-cylinder Ford. It will be virtually half of a BDA engine.

Four-valve heads, home-made crank, twin blowers and torque converter transmission go to make this one of the more unusual creations that gives drag racing its unique status in motor racing — there being nothing accepted as normal practice.

Three engines is not normal, but quick it should certainly be. That is the hope of John Tedman and John Jacques, who are well on the way to completion of their mighty triple Triumph which consists of three six-fifty motors in fairly standard trim, apart from six special cams.

Hilborn port injection has been ordered from America

to work in conjunction with a large capacity Wade blower. Other goodies include a Christenson gearbox and slider clutch plus the latest M&H slick.

One of the most costly additions to the bike ranks, it should prove to be a most spectacular one as well.

The above are just some of the exciting machines to be seen on British drag strips in the coming year. With just a brief look at the specifications of them it can be seen that during the last few months the sport has taken on a much more professional outlook.

When you consider how many riders had decent transmissions or tyres last year compared to the current situation, it can be seen how things have changed.

Add to the above list the names of Norman Hyde, Tony Weedon, Keith Parnell, Brian Chapman, and you have formidable list of stars.

All have one goal in mind, and shooting starts on Sunday as the bikes fire up in anger for the first time this season as a curtain-raiser to an incredible year's drag racing action.



Above: Ian Messenger aboard the superbly presented "Pegasus".

rate was astronomical as evidenced by the trail of broken engines and gearboxes left scattered alongside many tracks — the famed Warne powershifts wreaking more than a little havoc on the poor old AMC cogbox (hence Mick's introduction of Bewley to drag racing).

The frame for the new bike has been built by someone. Mick describes it as a slightly tongue-in-cheek as a "promising newcomer" — John Clift.

Other items include a pair of C78B blowers, possibly working in conjunction with Philips injectors. Gear coupling is used between the motors, and transmission is completed by a six-spring sintered Norton clutch and a Sinter wide Racemaster slick. Jack Cooper has prepared a special single magento to fire both engines.

Look to Mick Warne to be trying doubly hard in 1975 — the biggest, fastest advertising space in the country! Although it might seem otherwise, not everyone is building a double for the new year. John Clift is trying to find time between building frames for other racers to finish off his own machine. Puma cases, Norton crank, and 50cc barrels combine to give a total capacity of some 910 cc. Built on a big Shorrock C142B supercharger and you have the makings of a very powerful engine.

Despite a few blowups during '74, Clift proved himself to be a very consistent runner, and this year should see no change in that form.

Another prominent rider

Speaking of John, Motor Cycle readers are no doubt keeping in touch by reading Vic Willoughby's articles on the exploits of the "Hobbit", and there is little that can be added except that John has different ideas about who he wants to see into the eight first.

Once upon a time, drag racing was virtually an all-Triumph affair, but no more.

### CALENDAR FOR 1975

British Drag Racing and Hot Rod Association  
All at Santa Pod  
March 9  
March 30/31  
April 20  
May 11  
May 25/26  
June 8  
July 5/6  
July 27  
August 24/25  
September 20/21  
September 28  
October 12  
November 1/2  
December 6/7

National Drag Racing Club  
March 16 Long Marston (1 mile warm-up only)  
March 28 Snetterton  
April 13 Blackbushe (near Camberley, Surrey)  
May 3/4 Snetterton  
May 14/15 Silverstone  
July 19/20 Snetterton  
August 17 Blackbushe  
September 6/7 Snetterton  
September 14 Wroughton (near Swindon)  
October 5 Blackbushe



Right: The "Mighty" Mick Warne — heavy weight champion of the drag strips.

## 1925 Golden Jubilee Discounts 1975

NEW DISCOUNT BARGAINS

HONDA LIST PRICE	NEW PRICE	OUR PRICE
125	1165	1125
C70	1189	1179
500	2215	2199
ST 70	1200	1188
SL 125	1319	1293
CB 125	1299	1279
CB 175	1335	1316
CB 175	1395	1379
CB 200	1429	1399
CB 350	1569	1539
CB 500	1859	1799
CB 750	1979	1899

SUZUKI

A 50L	1161	1132
TS 100L	1285	1265
TS 125M	1311	1299
GT 125L	1353	1339
RV 125L	1353	1329
GT 180M	1399	1379
GT 250M	1499	1469
TS 250L	1449	1429
T 500M	1579	1559
GT 500M	1749	1729
GT 750M	1899	1849

YAMAHA

TS1 E	1215	1199
RD 125	1368	1329
RD 175	1419	1329
RD 175	1383	1348
RD 200	1407	1379
RD 250	1519	1478
RD 350	1630	1499

TRIUMPH/NORTON

T150W	1970	1848
TR 24	1928	1839
TR 24 1-stroke	1928	1839

USED SELECTION

74 SUZUKI TS250	£389
74 YAMAHA TS125	£379
74 SUZUKI RV125	£279
74 SUZUKI GT150	£729
72 HONDA CB175	£229
74 SUZUKI TS125L	£269
74 HONDA CB250 G6	£429
72 HONDA CB250	£359
73 TRIUMPH T100T	£439
74 HONDA CB500	£689
74 HONDA CB250 G6	£399
73 YAMAHA RD100	£229
73 HONDA CB350	£359
73 HONDA CB500	£599
74 HONDA CB250	£329
74 TRIUMPH 1140V	£629
73 SUZUKI GT250	£389
74 HONDA CB250	£359
74 HONDA XL250	£399
74 KTM Enduro 175	£429
73 YAMAHA RD200	£229
72 MOBYLETTE 500	£299
72 HONDA ST70	£99
73 PUCH Mini 5	£79
74 MALAGUTI Redhead bike	£79
74 HONDA CB750	£699
74 SUZUKI GT350	£619
72 HONDA CB500	£419
73 SUZUKI GT500	£979
74 YAMAHA RD250	£419
74 HONDA CB500	£179
71 HONDA CD175	£149
74 C.Z. 175	£149
74 SUZUKI A600	£199
74 PANTIC 500	£129
74 PUCH Mini N	£69

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## BDRHRA present awards

The BDRHRA's annual dinner dance at Luton a couple of weeks ago was attended by some 300 racers and officials together with an encouraging number of existing or potential sponsors in a time when such are few and far between. Among the awards presented was the Kelly Springfield trophy for the most outstanding contribution to the sport in '74, which went to Allan Herridge, whose many runs in the 'Stardust' and 'Firefly' funny car and fueller respectively have earned him a big following among public and fellow competitors. Custom Car magazine gave Peter Crane their Most Promising Newcomer trophy, and although he is not exactly new to the sport, his meteoric ascendancy in Top Fuel was the talking point of the last few months of the year. The Drag Racing News 'Best appearing car' went to the new D.B. Motors rear engine Top Dragster, the Dennis Stone 'Triers' award went to the Page team for their undying

efforts in bringing out a new car within weeks of writing off their Fiat altered, and the Revell Rosehowl for the most popular car went to the Striptease team, who always had a big following for the wheelstanding Minivan.

Nobby Hills took the team managers award, Gary Goggin the most consistent Runner-up, and BDRHRA chairman Jim Read the infamous Red-light trophy. With entertainment by DLT and others, the evening was a worthy finale to the '74 season.

## Long rebuild for Dickson

Nearing the end of what is possibly the most complete rebuild yet of a car for Drag's Pro Stock is Tony Dickson, whose 'Money Hungry' Camaro was the first of the imported stockers seen in early '72. The major part of the work has been centred around the back half of the car, the chassis being narrowed to accommodate even larger wheels than the ones that last graced the car. The suspension system remains the same, as do the chassis rails themselves, they are just closer together whilst the flooring and new wheel arches and other metal work have gone back in steel rather than alloy. As lack of finance will prevent him having his 'demon' engine ready for a while, he will be hoping that full use of power from the original reliable 'street' engine, plus ease of maintenance and plenty of spares in the drive line will keep him in contention until around mid-year, when the other engine will be ready. He will not be ready for some weeks yet anyway, but with Dave Ross's HemiCuda joining in it will make the field up to five again if all goes to plan.

## Errol swops

Mustapha Errol has swopped his Easy Ridin' Camaro for the earlier and lighter model owned by Steve Osmond-Petrie. This was originally owned by Keith Harvie as 'Fire-brewed', running an 11.2s at the tail end of the '72 season when still classed as a Top Street car. Since then the car has had a somewhat chequered career: a new alloy motor blew up in early '73 to be followed by two more iron blocks, and the car was only seen a couple of times after this expensive period, and possibly only once in Petrie's hands.

Errol is keeping his injected motor however and has bought the spare ATI Clutch-Turbo from Peter Bennet that was originally in his Nova, which is now of course owned by Roy Osbourne. Osbourne was prevented from running his immaculately resprayed and rebuilt car through illness last year, but should be back in the thick of the Pro Stock action this year. Errol's 10.6s performance last year in the heavier car should point to a low 10 second potential this season, particularly with the ATI box, which should give him the reliability that was missing last year when he depended on a manual transmission.

AUTOSPORT, MARCH 6, 1975

## Royal Navy comes into drag racing

WELL, no, we're not going to see frigates and gunboats blasting up the strip at Santa Pod, unfortunately, but the Royal Navy is going to enter the circles of drag racing as a sponsor. (So that's what they plan to do with all those obsolete aircraft carriers!) Apart from taking trackside advertising space as part of a recruiting campaign, the "Senior Service" is financing the meeting at Wroughton, near Swindon, in Wiltshire, this summer. Wroughton is normally a Royal Naval air base.

Meanwhile improvements are being made to the Snetterton drag strip during the winter. The right-hand lane has been resurfaced, spectator enclosures have been completed on both sides of the track and the public address system will be renewed. First drag meeting of the year at Snetterton is on Good Friday, when expected entries include Dennis Priddle and Roz Prior in Mr. and Miss Revell, Lawrence Burn in GTX, Clive Skilton's old car, and Trevor Young in Revolution 3, another rail once raced by Skilton.

Clive Skilton himself, meanwhile, has started a new promotions company known as European Dragways. In effect this is the same firm as the established Clive Lanson Enterprises venture, but the name has been changed because of their involvement in continental Europe this year. For a start they will be running drag race promotions in Sweden and Germany. The new group proposes to form a supporters club in the near future to look after the interests of the sport's many fans.

## Castrol's support

The many fingered hand of Castrol's Roger Willis extends into many fields of motor sport, and despite Burmah's uncertain future, Castrol will be supporting many different cars in different realms of the sport. On the club production saloon car side, Jennifer Birrell's SMT Vauxhall Magnum will receive support for Ingliston events, as will Noel Edmunds' already announced Ford Capri II, and a pair of Mazda RX3s for Wendy Markey and Cozy Powell.

The off-track scene sees the Merridale brothers, Tony and Bob, in Castrol colours on the auto-cross scene, and drag racers Clive Skilton, Denis Priddle and Roz Prior.

AUTOSPORT, JANUARY 30, 1975



## Set back increased

The set-back allowances in drag racing has just been increased to 30% in line with the new American ruling which was made to give the altered class cars a better chance in the new Pro-Comp division in America. Keith Harvie's imported altered was constructed to these rules anyway, and was allowed to run last year — the car now being up for sale incidentally, as Harvie's sponsorship deal was temporarily shelved for this year.

Currently nearing completion for Pro Comp when it gets going here is the Stones' new altered, being built by "Hilbillies" Mike Derry and Roland Pratt down in the West Country. The chassis, which will also feature a 30% set-back, is a near copy of the Revell Scimitar that they debuted last year, but will of course carry Chevy power in the form of the blown motor from "Tee-Rat".

With that car perhaps not capable of making the most of the tremendous power available, some substantial improvements can be expected — and it has not gone without notice that a full funny-car body could easily be fitted if they decided to run in that guise.

AUTOSPORT, MARCH 27, 1975

## Garlits again

At the February Winter nationals, USA, Don Garlits went on to record his 12th major National win in Top Fuel, although he had only qualified his brand-new car with a 6.074s run. Paul Longenecker was fastest with a 5.93s ahead of Gary Beck's 5.971s and Gary Read's 5.972s. Sixteenth was Dick LaHae with a 6.098s. Oil in one lane from an early blow-up cost many their chance of a win, and even Garlits looked as he would go out the same way when he went up in smoke against Don Ewald, but Ewald later drifted over the centre line for an immediate disqualification — a fact seen by Garlits from behind who coasted through at 119mph in 7.9s clapping his hands in the air! Garlits went on to beat Dave Settles with an easy 6.23s as his opponent went up in smoke to a 14.0s.

In Funny Car, Don Prudhomme entered his brand new Monza bodied car, qualified second and eclipsed everyone with consistent times to culminate in a 6.24s win over Jim Green's Vega. With traction not up to standard at Pomona, times were not what they might have been, but Prudhomme, who has already run several 6.0s times, is expected to be the first into the fives with a funny car this year the first that he runs on a premium track.

## Bumper festival of drag

DRAG racing fans can look forward to a bumper festival of racing all over the Easter weekend.

Weather put the dampers on the early meetings so Good Friday at Snetterton will see the first major drag race event of 1975.

Titled the First Annual Easter National, many of the top riders will be trying their steeds for the first time this year. Although "Motor Cycle" sponsored John Hobbs has still to finish his machine

and will not be able to make this meeting, each rival Mick Butler is busily finishing his double-Norton "Super Cyclops" and hopes to be there.

On Sunday and Monday the action moves on to the Santa Pod for the Easter Weekend Spring Nationals. The race at both events will be for the magical eight-second run — can Mickey Butler do it before Hobbs is even ready? Snetterton is near Thetford, Norfolk and Santa Pod near Wellingborough Northants.

# Oldie but Goodie

Long time followers of drag racing may recall that way back in the late sixties there was a unique Mini pick-up powered by an injected 392 Chrysler Hemi running in the altered class. The injection was home made, and the whole car was a very well-engineered construction, having a square tube frame with the engine and Jaguar gearbox mounted in the pick-up bed, the driver sitting more or less in the usual place. Various minor problems centred around the injection and problems with the rather involved shifter mechanism prevented the car from ever reaching its full potential, and if I recall correctly, it never ran better than 13 seconds. Like so many cars it disappeared from the scene to go from garage to garage around the country. But also like so many other drag cars, it has re-emerged in Dorking where Bob Hobbs is getting the car ready for this season.

The engine remains a 392, but will probably run on a single four barrel Holley unless some new injection can be found for the car — the original seems to have disappeared (and any information on its whereabouts would be appreciated), but long-term plans will include a switch to methanol and possibly an automatic gearbox.

One problem that may take some solving is the wheelbase and engine set-back. When the car was first built, interpretation of the rules was somewhat more liberal, and no one did anything about the fact that the set-back was somewhere over 35% instead of the allowed 25% measured from the front spindle to the first spark-plug. With a somewhat limited wheelbase to work with, there is little room for an automatic at present, and the engine may have to be moved forwards to get round both problems.

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## DRAG

Good Friday sees the first major drag event of the season at Snetterton, scene of the NDRC's finest event last year, and with numerous improvements to the track including more banking, better public address and most of all a resurface over the notorious dip in the right hand lane,

it promises to be a tremendous start to the year. Entries in Top Fuel include Dennis Priddle, Roz Prior, Liz Burn making her first appearance in Skilton's GTX car now owned by the Burns, and Trevor Young, new owner of "Revolution Three". There should be at least two funny cars including Skilton's new car, which has an imported chassis, Donovan power and a new body built by Pat Cuss. The Stones hope to have their altered ready to join the other two cars, while many of the new or improved cars built over the winter months will get their first airing. Action starts as usual with

qualifying at around 10 o'clock, with eliminations starting early in the afternoon.

On Sunday and Monday the Santa Pod season starts in earnest after its initial rain-out (a fate that also befell the NDRC Long Marston event on the 16th), the two day event traditionally being the biggest in terms of attendance of the year. This will be the first time that two drag events have taken place on the same weekend, but if all goes well the meeting will attract most of the same entrants, plus the two Funny cars and dragsters from the "Pod camp."

**EASTER WEEKEND 30/31 MARCH**  
\*SuperNationals\*

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