

WROUGHTON

NDRC hit by wet again

The NDRC seemed doomed to suffer bad weather at Wroughton, for the re-run of the third round of the Castrol RAC championship was just that, weather included. Rain settled in before most people had set out in the morning, and didn't stop until nearly three o'clock, with the track taking some more time to dry out. Considering this, the club did a heroic job of putting on a race meeting, though of necessity it was cut down in places and several matchrace pairings only had one or two runs in place of the usual three.

Qualifying consisted of single runs for all the cars, some on the damp track, so times were not really too important here, though Gerry Andrews went well in the Stones Top Dragster with an 8.7 s run, Ray Hoare being behind him with a 9.6 s in his small block rail. In the first run of their scheduled three, Andrews had trouble and shut off on the line, so Hoare sportingly shut off as well

rather than run by himself. Second time out Andrews clocked a straight 8.4 s to Hoare's 9.8 s, whilst the third round fell to the seven o'clock deadline for the meet.

In Top Fuel, big news was of course the entry of Roz Prior in the Fast Lady rail sponsored again by Accles and Pollock and Castrol. This is in fact "Mr Six" right down to the last nut and bolt, but has a new paint scheme to suit its sponsorship and driver. Roz had made a full power pass in Skilton's Revolution Three at Silverstone, clocking an 8.1 s/190 mph time after



Clive Skilton recorded the quickest elapsed time this year at 6.72 s/200 mph.

rolling out of stage and losing perhaps half a second, so she was obviously capable of running with the best. Unfortunately fate struck a cruel blow when her small son fell in the pits and gashed his head open. He had to be taken to hospital and was fortunately able to return complete with a row of stitches, but Roz was of course unable to drive the car.

Dennis Priddle was with the team though and drove the car to an 8.4 s run which

ended with a set of pushrods broken and bent. The cause of this was a mystery as they were brand new for the meeting, but little other damage was in evidence. Dennis himself, without a new Donovan for his fueller, also had to leave the STP funny at home after cracking the block at Silverstone. Clive and Roland were able to make runs though, and in fact despite shutting down early, Clive recorded the quickest et yet this year with a 6.72 at 200 mph to beat Roland's 7.6 s at 190 mph to close the meeting.

Top Competition went predictably to Dave Stone, though with comparatively slow times of 9.1 s and 8.6 s over Mike Hall, whose Chrysler altered was troubled with backfiring through the supercharger and was down in the tens.

The Senior, Dick Sharpe won his first round handily when Tony Preston broke a halfshaft on the line in his Chev/T, whilst Bob Deichen had an easy win over John Dickson's Duckhams backed Olds/Pop which was still troubled by the injection problems. In the final, Sharpe made his best run yet with his own injection, taking the Pontiac A35 to an 11.0 s win over Deichen's 13.3 s in his Daimler/4.5 altered.

In Middle, Bob Messent and John Moreton again met in their wheelstanding Mini Van and Firenz respectively, and with more nitro going into the Jag, John let the tyres down on his Chev powered car and side-stepped the clutch at 8000 rpm only to miss a shift whilst holding the screaming Jag and lose with a 13.7 s to 11.3 s, the Jag finding this time quite consistently now.

Lastly in the street classes, the only entries in Pro Stock were the two Plymouth "Heavy" cars, and Colin Mullen came out the winner with a 9.9 s as Adrian Yorke broke in the Duster. In SuperStreet Mustapha Errol again came out on top in his Camaro, running an 11.4 s to beat Dennis Stone in the Precision Tapes Escort when he broke the gearbox to a 12.5 s.

Considering the handicap under which the meeting started it was a miracle that any racing took place at all, but the four hours or so running that did take place went very well indeed.

DRAG RACING

SAT. 13th, SUN. 14th, JULY

DRAGSTERS, FUNNIES, ALTEREDS, BIKES,
TOP STREET CARS, WHEELIE CARS.

5 MILES FROM M62 JUNCTIONS 23 OR 24

ADMISSION INCLUDES CAR PARK, PITS, ETC.
ACCOMPANIED CHILDREN UNDER 12 FREE.

PENNINE RACEWAY
CROSSLAND MOOR
HUDDERSFIELD

47 770

WE BACK JOHN HOBBS TO BEAT THE WORLD



"MOTOR CYCLE" and John Hobbs, the fastest standing quarter mile rider in Britain, are to get together to build Olympus III for next year. And our readers will get an added bonus, for we'll be following John at every stage as he builds the gleaming newcomer, which will be painted in "Motor Cycle's" colours of orange, white and black. Step by step, we'll

report, in full-page features, the building of the drag bike which could become the fastest in the world.

At present, the 1500 cc, double-engined Olympus II has set the fastest British time of 9.16 secs., but next year the lighter, even more businesslike Olympus, will be aiming for the eights.



Anders Lantz won his class in his 227 Plymouth Coupe.

SANTA POD

Disappointing entry

After last year's International event with the visiting American team, it was hard to see how this year's fifth running of the BDR and HRA's major event could top it, and after four years of progressively better events, it must be said that this year's was a step back—primarily because of the lack of Pro-Fuel cars.

Dennis Priddle was unable to attend after having dropped an engine on his foot the previous week, whilst Roz Prior and team were still looking into the cause of all their bent pushrods the previous weekend. Clive Skilton was apparently "not needed" according to one source, whilst "Firefly" the Raceway's car normally handled by Allan Herridge was being used as a test bed for Pete Crane, who was trying his hand at a Fueller in readiness for the arrival of his own car. Fine, but choosing a major meeting to teach anyone to drive such a car seems a peculiar move when the strip is available all week to the owners. The only car was Mike Hutcherson's Houndog, which although shortly to be replaced, went well with a best of 7.8 s, narrowly losing to Herridge when he did have his one and only run in the car with a 7.4 s.

The two funny cars were also alone, and spent a troubled weekend before both actually made side by side runs. The first was on Sunday afternoon, and went to Allan Herridge with a 7.4 s at a shut off 160 mph, with Haywood close at 7.7 s at 190 mph. But for the second run, all the stops were out, and after executing perfect side-by-side burnouts that once again obliterated the start line area with smoke they were off, with Haywood just stealing a car length from Herridge. But the new 460 Ed Pink motor in 'Stardust' just told, for in what was the closest race ever between these two cars, Herridge just got by with a 7.00 s at 202 mph as Haywood dropped his 'chute in the closing inches to a 7.11 s at 154 mph—showing the tremendous stopping power of the parachute in only a few yards.

The rest of the action really centred round the Competition Altered classes, which were at their fullest and most exciting for a long time. Starting with the four Top class cars, Dave Stone qualified at an electrifying 7.8 s in 'Tee Rat' at a mere 162 mph, with Phil Elson going well at 8.6 s in his 392 T 'Sneaky'. Mike Hall's similar 392 Bantam was once again very fast at the top end with 160 mph plus runs, but was hampered by poor low end performance with a 9.7 s. Freeman Rodgers' car, now sporting a new paint scheme after the recent fire, again went well at 9.03 s with the big 427 Ford. But despite a good start, he was left by Stone with a 7.7 s/160 mph

run to 9.9 s, Stone's quickest run to date. Mike Hall red-lit against Phil Elson with a 9.3 s to 9.4, but Elson damaged a couple of roller lifters and had to withdraw, leaving Hall back in with the break rule. Faced with long odds, Hall left very well but was soon caught and passed by the seemingly unbeatable Chevrolet of Stone who kept the power on all the way for the first time at Santa Pod and thundered through the finish at 196 mph in 7.9 s to Hall's 9.2 s at 161 mph.

Senior Comp had a full entry, one of which, Neil England's promising 327 Chev Bantam, was virtually written off when the car flipped at the end of its first run. England was not seriously hurt and hopes to salvage some of the car, but it was a sorry sight after a long awaited debut. Leading qualifying was the Swedish Gas-Rat 396 Chev of Bo Stafberg with an 11.1 s just ahead of Dick Sharpe's Dorset Horn. A surprising third with 11.7 s was John Dickson in the Duckhams Popular, which although still not right, put together one reasonable pass on Saturday. Unfortunately the car was slower on Sunday and lost to Bob Deichen's Daimler again with a 12.9 s to 12.8 s. Dick Sharpe ran an 11.06 s to beat Dave Hayden Smith's 12.4 s with his Chevrolet/Model B replica and then a 10.91 s to eliminate Tony Preston's nice 283 T with a 12.0 s. Stafberg, meanwhile, had run Deichen and hit an all-time low of 10.5 s for the car, so Dick Sharpe went down to the start as decided underdog. With the Swedes doing well elsewhere, the crowd was with the tiny A35 as Sharpe made the start of his life and got enough daylight between the two cars to hold off the Chevrolet's 10.46 s with a terrific 10.77 s that had the stands full of cheering people.

It was perhaps ironic that the two cars that caused so much controversy last year when they ran in street, Anders Lantz's 227 Plymouth Coupe and Svent Erickson's 440 'Jeep' both ran in middle competition, and both had the legs of anything else in Senior as well for that matter. The fabulous '32 Plymouth ran 10.1 s' and 10.00s' all weekend, with the Jeep just behind at 10.3 s. Going well in the class was Glen Searlie in the 283 Fiat who ran an 11.3 s to beat John Williamson's fast Jag Rochdale. But faced with running the Jeep he decided to run some nitro and lost everything as the car slowed to a 16 s. Bob Messert in 'Strip-teaser' tried hard but lost to Lantz with an 11.8 s after a good hole-shot, so in the end the two Swedes met in the final with Lantz just taking it with a 10.32 s to 10.24 s with identical 132.28 mph speeds.

Not long before this Roy Phelps had taken the exhibition 'wheelie' Stingray for another of its two wheel runs and lost the body when nearing finish at some 70 mph on the back wheels. Turning a neat somersault the all-glass shell landed the right way up and slid to a halt virtually undamaged to be re-fitted to the car a few minutes later by the Santa Pod crew. Phelps then drove away even more amused than the crowd.

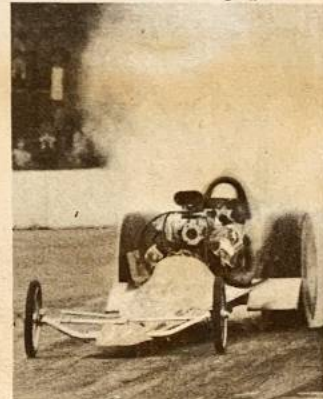
Other dragster classes saw two 8.2 s runs from Gerry Andrews in the Stone's car to two good 9.30 s and 9.28 s from Liz Burn, new driver for the ex-Roz Prior's car, and obviously shaping up as a very capable. Dick Carpenter took his rear engine Daimler to another good 9.58 s clocking to beat Ian Frazer's side mounted V6 Ford at 11.27 s, whilst John Rotherham repeated his earlier win this year over John Whitmore in Middle with an 11.57 s to an off-form 13.0 s for the BMC car. Geoff Masters took the perennial 'Worden', now about thirteen years old, to a 13.0 s win in Junior over Brian Parkins' kart at 14.9 s—another off-form run.

The 'Heavy' Pro Stockers had two Sox and Martin men flown into help oversee the operation, with Adrian Yorke leading qualifying with a stunning 9.4 s at 146 mph, so presumably the trip over wasn't wasted. Mullen was close with a 9.6 s, Goggin troubled by various engine problems was at 10.9 s, and the great Gunne Backe last at 11.3 s. Yorke's 9.56 s simply overwhelmed Goggin's start and leading making a typical Goggin start and leading Mullen's 9.8 s. The sight of the two cars blasting through the finish 9.53 s to 9.66 s for Yorke was certainly impressive, but one feels that it is not doing the already sparse Pro-Stock class any good at all in the long run.

Super Street went to Johnny Johnson's 427 Corvette, the Swedish entry running 11.2 s in qualifying. Dennis Stone, had fitted the Clutch-Turbo trans from Pete Crane's Camaro to the Precision Tapes Escort but had problems during qualifying and had to rest on a 12.4 s, whilst Dave Rose ran a 12.1 s before breaking a diff. G. Hamlyn's 302 Escort was the fourth man, and he beat Rose with a 13.4 s. Rose had fitted two Holley carbs in place of his ancient Carter's and although seemingly better, it slowed to a 14.4 s when on the track. Stone had to shut down with a broken fan belt on the line rather than risk damaging another engine, so the big 'Vette had an easy 11.8 s win over the other Escort in the final to 12.9 s. Melvin Wooding took Top with a good 12.89 s from his 289 Falcon, beating Bob Swansborough's blown V6 Anglia at 14.7 s.

By current standards, not a great meeting, but certainly a good weekend in the altered divisions, with the funny car runs a highlight.

One of the few fuellers taking off.



Santa Pod

WHEN the entry in Pro Fuel at the premier event of the Santa Pod year had but two cars compared with last year's eight, there was no way the meeting could be considered in the same class—particularly when both were owned or backed by Santa Pod itself. For various reasons, some mechanical, and some medical (Priddle was out with a crushed foot) only Houndog and Firefly were out at the weekend. The aging Houndog went very well but was virtually alone, and Pete Crane handled the other car in preparation for his own new rail.

But learning to drive a fueler is not really done at a major meet when the crowd come to see action, so the only good run of the weekend came when Herridge took over and ran a 7.4s against Hutchinson's good 7.8s.

Not very far behind on time was Gerry Andrews, who ran two 8.2s in the Stone's Chevy Top Dragster, which appears to be about the limit for the car in its' current state, with Liz Burn taking the ex-Roz Prior rail to two 9.3s runs at 150 mph plus.

Pro Stock has become virtually a two car class. With two Sox and Martin mechanics to help, both Adrian Yorke in the Duster and Colin Mullen in the Cuda played with the opposition all weekend, Yorke qualifying with a 9.4s at 146 mph, a time that would not go amiss in Dragster or Competition classes. Gary Goggin was in action again but couldn't get his Camaro to rev over 7,000 and was slow at 10.9s, whilst Swede Gunne Backe was content with an 11.3s, saving what little chance he had for the race.

He improved to a 10.7s that was still no match for Mullen's 9.8s, whilst Gary shut down to a disappointing 12.2s against Yorke's 9.56s. Yorke in the eight plug car then beat Mullen, whose supposedly more powerful 16 plug motor is around five mph slower, did 9.53s, 141 mph to 9.66s, 139 mph.

The Swedes did better in Super

Erickson had a similar win over Glen Searle's Fiat Chev which had previously run an 11.3 before the team poured in some nitro in a vain attempt at beating the Jeep but went slower and lost any chance of winning. In the end the two Swedes faced each other and turned exactly 132.28 mph each, the Plymouth just leaving first with a 10.32s to 10.24s.

Bo Stafberg's GasRat II was the fancied car in Senior, with a 10.5s potential in Sweden and an easy 11.1s in qualifying ahead of Dick Sharpe in the A35 Pontiac.

Deichen then faced the 'GasRat' for a mere 10.5s as the Chev stormed through to win and meet Sharpe in the final. This run Dick pulled out everything taking a chance on the lights that payed off with a massive hole-shot and nosed home first to win with a fabulous 10.77s 121 mph to a late 10.46s at 134 mph.

In Top Comp, Dave Stone predictably was the man to try and beat with a 7.8s blast in qualifying at a 'mere' 160 odd mph, whilst going much better was Phil Elson with his 392 T at 8.6s. Freeman Rodgers took the big Ford car to a 9.0s ahead of Mike Hall in the other Chrysler-powered car, his 392 Bantam at 9.7s. He red lit against Elson 9.3s to 9.4s but came back in the running when Elson had to pull out with a broken cam follower.

Stone meanwhile had gone even faster at 7.78s in beating Rodger's 9.9s, so it was another Chev v Chrysler final. Hall left first, but his car hasn't got the bottom end to do the job at the moment, although it has recorded mid eights in the past. Stone shot past Long on the way to his highest clocking yet at Santa Pod, 196 mph in 7.9s to 164 mph in 9.2s.

J.T.D.

The right time

I would like to take this opportunity to reply to the comments passed in your report of the July 6/7 BDR and HRA meeting at Santa Pod.

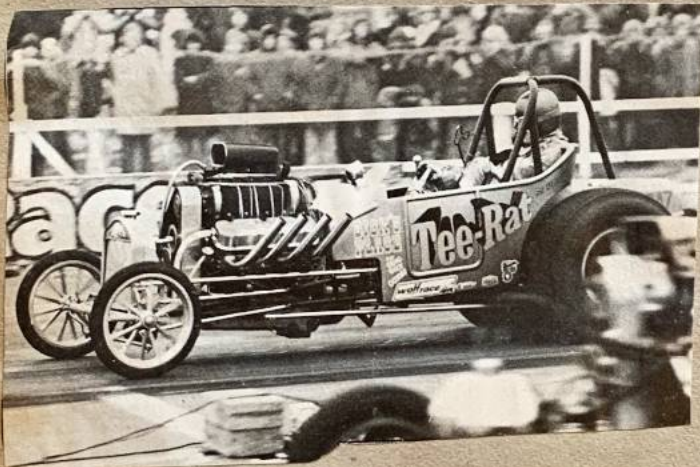
First I would like to thank all the Santa Pod crew for allowing me to drive "Firefly," and all their help. Secondly, I would like to point out, and I would have thought it obvious to anyone loosely connected with any form of motor sport, that I had my first outing at a meeting because at no other time would there be the facilities that the club provides, namely a doctor, ambulance, firecrews and marshalls, etc. It would be foolhardy to

imagine these are not vital to the safety of all concerned. A perfect example was Neil England's crash at this very meeting. He, thankfully, was not seriously hurt, but this only emphasises the importance of safety and proper supervision.

I have gained what experience I have, the same way as everyone else—in competition; so I feel disappointed that I should have to justify my presence at this meeting as I am a club member and paid my entry fee. In fact, the views voiced should have been printed under "Purely Personal." As to the lack of Pro Fuel cars, I would point out that the August Bank Holiday meeting will see the debut of the Hunter Group's new car which I shall be driving, and also Nobby Hill's new Houndog mid engine entry and, hopefully, Roz Prior will have repaired "Fast Lady's" engine. These cars should swell the Pro Fuel ranks somewhat.

ORPINGTON, KENT.

PETE CRANE





HOT CAR AT BLACKBUSHE!

AUGUST 18. IMPRINT THAT date firmly in your mind, dear reader, for that be the date of the **1974 Hot Car/208 Grand-nationals**. Drag racing type. At Blackbushe Airport, Surrey. Yes, dear things, we once again bring you the tinsel and glitter, the romance and colour, the roar and the heartbreak of drag racing. See the superstars—Skilton, Priddle, Pratt, Roz Pryor, Shaver, Hall, Stones, the bike boys, York and many more. But most of all be there yourself.

Now the oldest-established sponsored drag meet in Britain—we go into our fourth year of co-promotion with **208 Radio Luxembourg** at the NDRC event—Blackbushe promises to attract all the best in British drag racing, yet again. Last year an estimated 20,000 people spectated—were you one of them?

Biggest excitement promises to be the startling **Roz Pryor**, five-foot nothing of AA fuelier driver, who moves into Dennis Priddle's former Mister Six. Can Roz handle 1500 bhp plus in a car with six-second potential? Will Roland Pratt's long-awaited AA funny Scimitar be rolling? We hear it's almost a cert. Clive Skilton is aiming for a 230 mph run—can he do it? Certainly the trip

itself is ready for the big times—use over the past couple of years and the meeting earlier this year has laid down a fine rubber coating. "I've already run a 6.90 without any smoke, and a 222 mph," says Clive. "So I reckon that 230 mph isn't too optimistic."

All the regulars will be there. Dave Stone continuing his winning ways with Tee-Rat. There's a Hot Car feature race too—at Santa Pod it was pogo sticks. What'll it be at Blackbushe?

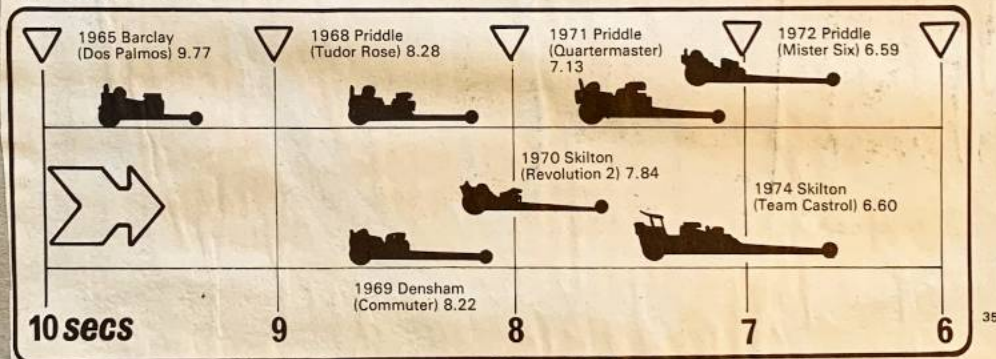
Hot Car will be running the usual crowd-pleasing promotions too—demonstrations, commentary spots and selling your favourite magazine, folks. Special enclosure admission is the usual too—despite rising costs, the promoters have kept entrance down to £1 for adults and free for kiddies under 12, with parking free. The action blasts off at 9 am with practice, racing at 1 pm and finals around 6 pm. Don't miss them.

Blackbushe Airport is on the A30 just through Camberley, Surrey, from the London direction. There are several main gates to the parking areas to eliminate some of the crush of past years, but police do advise spectators to get there early to avoid last-minute jams just before the action starts! See you all there.

Chart (below) shows how low ETs of top British dragsters have dropped since 1965. Note that Priddle and Skilton are now on par



Colin Mullen's Heavy pro-stock (top) has run 9s in the States. Dave Stone (above) took Tee-Rat to a staggering 7.98 in June. Dennis Priddle will challenge Skilton (below) in Mr Revell/STP



35

● The Roz Prior Fan Club is now looking for members. The membership fee is only £1 and each member will receive membership card, autographed photo of Roz and the new car and personal information on Roz. A regular news-sheet about Roz will keep members informed on any TV appearances, race activities etc and all new members will be vities etc and all new members will be personally introduced to the Fast Lady herself. A special Roz Prior T Shirt will be available to members at £1.10 each and children's sizes will be available. All membership enquiries should be sent to Helen Taylor at 1 Leeds Smith Drive, Sandy, Beds.

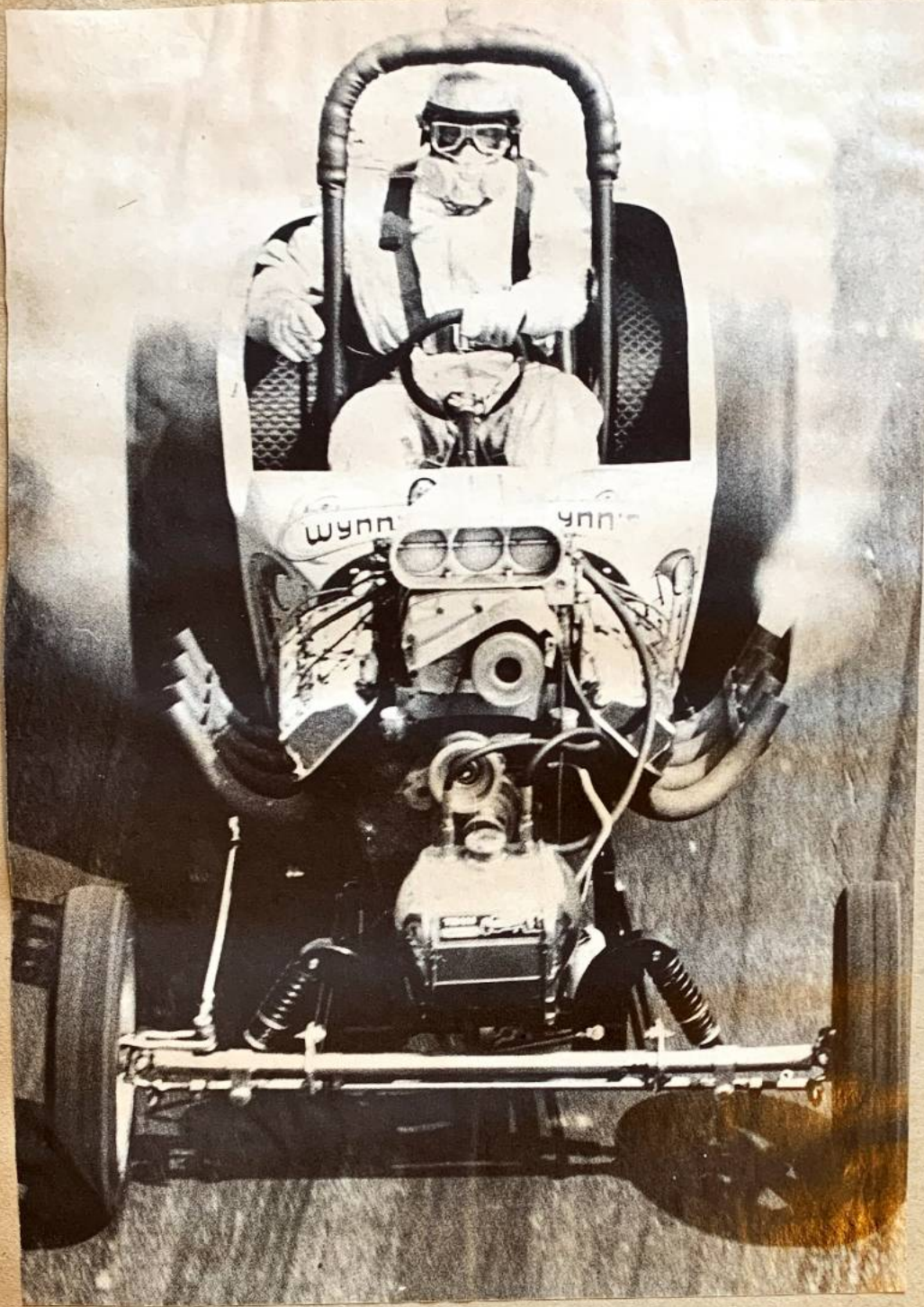


ROZ PRIOR FAN CLUB

The Roz Prior Fan Club is now looking for members. The membership fee is £1 and each new member will receive membership card, autographed photo of Roz and the new car and personal information on Roz. A regular news sheet will keep members informed on any TV appearances, race activities and the like, and all new members will be personally introduced to the Fast Lady herself. A special Roz Prior T Shirt will be available to members

at £1.10 each and children's sizes will be available. Non-members will be able to purchase the shirt at £1.50. The secretary of the club is Helen Taylor and she lives at 1 Leeds Smith Drive, Sandy, Beds, (Tel Sandy 80083.) All membership enquiries should be sent to her at this address, or to Roz, Dave or Helen in the pits. Once the club gets going Helen hopes to run barbecues and the aim is to promote Roz's activities, and, hopefully to be able to help Roz financially in her drag racing career.

So all you ladies, and you male supporters, join the Roz Prior set. She's going places fast.



c
v
S
n
o
w
t
h
r
o
a
n
1
bl
9
A



Rob Messent again performed his usual two-wheel antics in Strip-teaser, but was narrowly defeated in the Middle Comp final.

DRAG

Nobby Hills debuts promising fueller

The second meeting sponsored by Drag Racing News, the BDR&HRA's own excellent monthly publication had perfect weather, a rather disappointing crowd, and some interesting action from the large 170 plus entries. Most notable of these was the long awaited and sorely needed new Top Fuel car from Nobby Hills. Built as a near copy of Tony Nancy's car as seen at the Internationals last year and sporting the same livery as the funny car, the immaculate rear engine car was complete with another Ed Pink Hemi, Lenco two speed and reverser, the first rail to have both these items in this country.

Running against Allan Herridge in the 426 engine Firedly after one half pass to check the handling and steering, the new car rocketed away from Herridge in no uncertain way, with Hutcherson shutting down early to record a very satisfying 7.3 s. Afterwards he was almost at a loss for words to describe the car in comparison with the old front engine one, and there can be little doubt that a very strong threat to the Skilton-Fridde domination is now in evidence. But Herridge was not so lucky, for on the same run, while trying hard to stay with the other car after his own 7.3 s qualifying run, the motor let go in the worst possible way, leaving a gaping hole that you could see right through in the block and sump.

Worse was to come, for the old Houndog car, now being driven by Harold Bull, (who ran a very successful 998 cc BMC rail a couple of years back), was written off on his first full power run. After clocking a good 8.3 s, the car, with no parachute in evidence, veered across the track to hit the crash barrier and bounce and scrape along it for some hundreds of feet before coming to rest. Luckily Bull was unhurt, but the venerable Houndog was twisted beyond hope, although the engine appeared to be intact.

There were three Top Dragsters present, with Gerry Andrews again taking the number one spot with an 8.3, Liz Burn number two with a 9.2 s and Ray Hoare third with 9.3 s in their Chevrolet powered cars. Ray made a good start against Gerry and was only passed towards the finish in a race that was closer than the times suggest at 8.3 s to 9.5 s. Liz met Gerry in the final and ran her best time yet at 8.9 s, but was unable to hold off the top speed of the two gear car as Andrews clocked an 8.2 s at 170 mph to 144 mph.

Keith Dancy ran in Senior with his small block powered rail to an equally impressive 9.6 s on straight methanol, enough to beat

Malcolm Olley's carburetted Chevrolet car with a 10.5 s, while John Rotherham again took Middle with an 11.8 s run in his Allard Dragon that like a few other dragsters currently around, has been running in various hands for years, and still with consistent success.

Top Competition again had four entries, with Dave Stone fastest qualifier at 8.5 s, but this was at the expense of a bent chassis as the car went through the dip in the braking area. Phil Elson managed a 9.1 s, the same as Freeman Rodgers in the 427 Ford car, with Mike Hall getting badly out of shape off the line and only running a 10 s time.

Faced with the possibility of another bend in his buckled tubing, Stone thundered off the line ahead of Rodgers and shut off very early, coasting through at 127 mph in 8.2 s to 9.4 s and 148 mph for the Ford. Elson got a start on Hall and held it all the way with another good time at 8.8 s (159 mph) to 9.2 s at 157 mph, the two big hemi's looking and sounding very good as they thundered through the finish only a few yards apart.

Elson went into the final with perhaps better odds than in a long time, but it was not to be his day either. Stone had trouble with his clutch again after the burn out, and had to be dragged back to the line while Elson waited, but both left hard and strong until there was an ominous bang from Elson's car that spelt the end of another big motor as two rods let go taking the block and crank with them. Stone again shut off early, but still ran a 7.71 s at 163 mph, so could well have done a 7.6 s or better if he had been able to keep the power on.

Only three cars were to be found in Senior, with Tony Preston's neat "T" Chev out of action with a broken half shaft. Dick Sharpe was fastest qualifier with an 11.1 s, slow for the Pontiac A35, with John Dickson next at 11.7 s, still running too rich with injector troubles, but a little more consistent, with Bob Deichen's Daimler last at 13.0 s, off his best times.

When Dickson bogged with a slightly cold engine, it looked as if he would again win against the Duckhams Popular, but in an incredibly close finish, the big 474 Olds motor made up the difference by inches to win with a 12.56 s to 12.69 s. Sharpe had a bye run at 10.6 s, his best ever, and finally quicker than the times achieved with carburation some seven or eight meetings ago, and repeated the performance in the final to win against Dickson who made another poor start and 12.3 s time.

A surprising and welcome winner in Middle Comp was Alan Sherwin in his blown Jag "T" who came through with Rob Messent to the final in the Jag Minivan and won with a close 11.84 s to 11.87 s.

In the Street classes, only two Pro Stocks were present, Mullen's Challenger and Goggin's Camaro, which soon expired with clutch failure, Goggin's bad luck streak continuing to dog him. Mullen again ran steady 9.6 s and 9.7 s to take the win by himself, an unfortunately hollow victory in an already sparse class.

Following yet another discussion earlier in the week, both Super Street and Top Street were run together, with a handicap based on the class record being used to run the cars against each other. Mustapha Errol ran his first ten at 10.9 s in his Camaro, with Al O'Connor doing his best yet at 11.5 s in his Anglia/Chev with new Olds axle and 5.11 gearing, while Dennis Stone could only manage an 11.7 s in the Precision Tapes Escort.

With another round of the STP championship at stake, all eyes were on the class to see how the handicap would work, and basically, the slower Top Street cars slaughtered the Super Street cars. Stone got to the semi-final before going down to Oram's E type 11.4 s to 12.4 s with roughly a 1½ second handicap in operation, Errol went out in the first round to Oram with an 11.2 s to 12.6 s, and O'Connor lost to Melvin Wooding's Falcon 11.7 s to 12.7 s, with Wooding going on to win over Oram with another very close run 12.40 s to 12.48 s.

Doubtless the idea will be looked at further before the next meeting, but quite an enjoyable, if expensive, day's racing.

Pr
relat
amor
wire
the d
Ther
some
and
Prik
of a
fuel,
and
thro
hear
that
the

Santa Pod Hounddog howls

THE drag racing meeting on July 21 at Santa Pod was blessed with perfect weather for a change, and some 170 entries competed. Biggest news of the day was in Top Fuel, which at last had a new car in the shape of Nobby Hills' entry driven by Mike Hutcherson. The eighth in the Hounddog series and by common consent the best yet, the rear-engined Ed Pink-powered device was equipped not only with a Lenco two-speed but a reverser as well, the first fueler that has not needed a crew to pull it back into stage after the burn-out.

After one gentle spurt off the line to check everything out, Hutcherson faced Herridge for the first of three runs. Herridge as usual was in Firefly having run a 7.3s in qualifying, but he was left standing by the meteoric launch of the new car and in fact blew the 426 motor apart near the finish. Hutcherson meanwhile had shut down very early having stunned himself with the fierce acceleration and yet still recorded a 7.3s. So the run would certainly have been a six if he had kept on the power.

But with the arrival of one new car, there was a departure of another, for after a couple of gentle runs in the old Hounddog, Harold Bull, who had taken over the driving of the car from Hutcherson lost it after a good 8.3s run. The accident was possibly caused by a puncture, and the rail smacked into the pit side return-road barrier. By the time the car had come to a halt there was little left that could be used again apart from the engine.

Herridge, meanwhile, had a run in the Stardust funny car which despite a lack of traction at a start that kept it's time down at 7.3s, wound up to a new high of 210 mph through the finish in an awe-inspiring blast of noise.

The four big Top class altered once again put on a good show, with Dave Stone predictably dominating practice with his blown Chevy at 8.5s. Phil Elson ran a 9.1s with his Chrysler just ahead of Freeman Rodgers' Ford at 9.1s and Mike Hall, whose own Chrysler powered car got sideways coming off the line. Hall was slowed to a low ten by the time he had collected it together and got going again.

Having bent the top frame rail in the morning going through the braking area dip, Stone shut off not far past the eighth of a mile mark against Rodgers but still posted a comfortable 8.7s to 9.4s. Hall and Elson had a terrific set, to, with Elson's car going through a couple of cars lengths ahead of Halls' with

an 8.8s to 9.2s, which left Elson with a good chance in the final. But for the second time that day, the expense of running a blown fuel engine was demonstrated when his engine let go in the worst way. Stone had been troubled by a sticky clutch again after the burn-out, but still managed a 7.7s at another shut-off speed of 163 mph to win.

In Top Dragster, the Stone team had another win with Gerry Andrews leading qualifying at 8.2s in his 440 Chevy rail, with Liz Burn at 9.2s with her 454 Chevy and Ray Hoare at 9.3s with his 292 Chevy. Ray was once again outpowered by the bigger car of Andrews with an 8.3s to 9.5s, but their top speeds at 155 mph and 156 mph were close.

Liz had a bye run to the final, which was her best yet as she got the car back into the eights for the first time with an 8.9s to 8.2s, so her progress in the steps of Roz Prior continues to improve.

Senior Competition was also down to three cars, the fourth entered, Tony Preston's Chev 'T' having broken a half shaft in practice. Dick Sharpe was once again fastest with an 11.1s from the Pontiac A35, with John Dickson second at 11.7s in the Duckhams 474 Olds/Pop.

Bob Deichen's lightweight Daimler 4.5 car was slower than normal at 13.0s. He got a good

start against Dickson, but the bigger engine caught up the deficit in the last few feet with a 12.5s to 12.6s, with Sharpe running a bye at 10.6s. This was a time that he

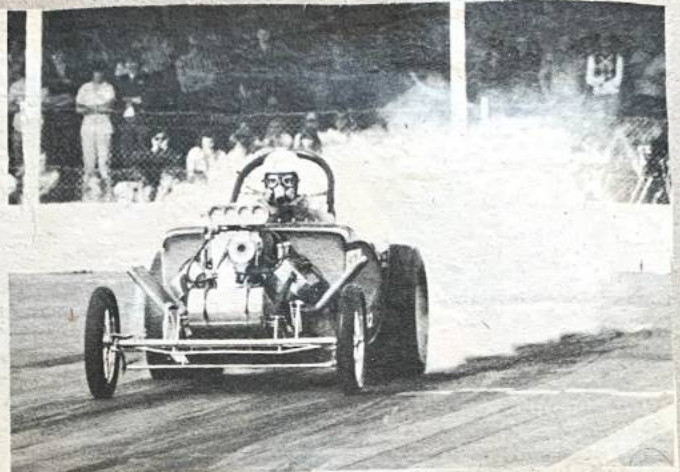
backed up with a 10.7s in the final against Dickson, who was again slower at 12.3s.

In middle, Rob Messent ran his best ever at 11.2s in Stripreter getting to the final but was beaten in a very close race by Alan Sherwin's blown Jag 'T' with an exciting 11.84s/111.6 mph to 11.87s/112.6 mph for the Jag Minivan.

With just Gary Goggin entered in Pro Stock against Colin Mullen's 'Heavy' Challenger, it was to have been a best-of-three series, but when Goggin lost his clutch in qualifying, there was little for Mullen to do, running his usual mid nines by himself.

The two classes of Super Street and Top Street were amalgamated to try out a handicap system and give a bigger field of cars. Mustapha Errol ran a good 10.9s in his Camaro to set a new class record for the handicap to be based on for Modified cars, whilst both Al O'Connor in his 283 Popular with an 11.3s and Dennis Stone with the 302 Escort at 11.7s had the same record to contend with.

With cars such as Bob Oram's E type and Melvin Wooding's 289 Falcon in Top, all three of the Super cars fell, first Errol to Oram with a 12.69s to 11.2s losing time, then Stone with an 11.4s loss to the Jag's 12.4s. Wooding took care of O'Connor with a 12.7s to 11.7s and went on to beat Oram in the final with a close 12.40s, 110.6 mph to 12.48s, 109.2 mph, so whether the idea will be tried again in the same format remains to be seen.



THE Firefly of Herridge had a very unfortunate first run when he blew the mill near the finish.

Today's funny cars are built by a select group of chassis builders, some of whom specialise in this type of car, others who build fuelers as well. A brief flirtation with independent front suspension on some cars has given way to almost universal dropped tube axles, with the usual chrome-moly frame. Wheelbase have come down from the 120" range to around 115" as most drivers have switched to the smaller Vega and Pinto sized cars for less frontal area. Rear axles are mostly Ford or Dana, the only two production items that have proved strong enough (with extensive modification of course) while a new Lenco axle has recently been introduced and is fitted to some of the leading cars.

As mentioned, the powerplants are virtually exclusively late-model Hemis with at least half-inch stroker cranks to give some 480 cubic inches (8 litres) capacity; some have gone up to nine litres with spacer plates between block and heads to allow even longer strokes. Although giving colossal power outputs, these big motors are frighteningly expensive to run and even the very latest 'Kryptonite Kranks' from engine builder Keith Black (at \$1,000 each) are said to be good for one hundred runs at the very most. When these motors come apart the result is often extremely violent, with the entire body being ripped off the car in some cases. Even with less violent failures, fuel and oil fires are only too common and, fanned by the wind at over 220mph, these have made the funnies the most dangerous breed of all. It is said that some 70% of all funnies are destroyed by fire before they reach 'retirement' (which for most chassis would probably be after two to three years) so new regulations stipulate extensive fire precautions, with most of the effort devoted to keeping the driver in an inert atmosphere long enough for him to stop the car and get out. Parachutes are now fire-proof, as well as the suits that the drivers wear, to ensure that they can still stop even when flames are covering the cords and material of the 'chute itself.

Most development today concerns aerodynamics, though, for pushing a large body through the air uses a lot of power. Don Schumacher was the first really to get to grips with this problem with his incredibly low Vega. At 43½ inches it compares with the famous

Ford GT 40, so-named because it stood just 40 inches from the ground; considering the sheer bulk of a blown V8 and the height of the slicks (34 inches), this is some achievement! The front is lowered right over the wheels, with bumps in the wings to give suspension clearance, whilst louvers on the back of the bumps and in the bonnet allow air to pass out of the top rather than get trapped in the body. Similar louvers are used for the rear window while the wheels are faired in with smooth alloy discs to give a cleaner side profile. Schumacher is confident that he will be the first to top 230mph with this car and though it is possible that he might be beaten to it, the odds are that it would be by a similar vehicle.

In the U.K., the breed has only recently been established in earnest, with the two American cars (one of them Schumacher's old car) bought by Santa Pod Raceway last year. Running the big 480 inch late-model Hemis, they are unlikely to be beaten in a straight race for a while yet, but they are certain to be well-challenged by the new breed of English cars appearing this year. One of these is the Vauxhall driven by Ed Shaver, built by Mark Stratton and team. Mark is well-known for a seemingly endless stream of cars, commencing with the BSA Altered currently run by Neil England. His second car, the Reliant Scimitar, still exists in body form, though starting with a carburetted 427 Chevy, it now has a fuel Chrysler and will appear this year as a rival funny driven by Roland Pratt of the Hillbillies. The Bond Bug is still around somewhere, while last year he concentrated on funny cars and produced a novel rear-engined design that has proved to be his quickest car to date. Over the winter a new chassis was thought to be necessary so, true to tradition, the old one went to a new owner and plans for a new one were obtained from America. These were of the Dunn and Reath car, the only successful rear-engined funny of the handful run in the States. Built on 118 inch wheelbase, the frame is constructed of 4130 chrome-moly tubing: 1½" 16swg main frame rails with 1" and 1¼" 18swg uprights; the roll cage is a stronger 1¼" 10swg. More novelty is found at the front with independent suspension, utilizing Herald wishbones and spindles suspended by Lambretta coil/damper units. The steering is also from a Herald and, to get a central steering position, two racks were spliced together to do the job. The front wheels are five-spoke American mags with new Dunlop racing tyres in place of the previously-used radials (which were not really up to the 200mph potential of the car). Mounted just in front of the driver's feet are two big fire bottles, with a pair of nozzles aimed at the driver, one at each header bank (prime source of oil fires) and one into the injectors.

Behind the driver is a dural sheet to give protection from the engine bay holding the 392 Chrysler motor. This, in fact, uses 30 thou. oversize Venolia pistons with Teflon buttoned skirts to reduce scuffing on the cylinder walls. The flat tops are .200" down the bore at TDC to give the compression ratio of around 6 to 1, whilst the rings are Perfect Circle; rods are aluminium Howard's (aluminium 'giving' more under the violent stress of high nitro loads). The crank is a modified stock item in TRW bearings. A roller cam, also Howard's, is used, with aluminium Engle lifters and valve train ending in stainless steel 2" Donovan valves in Mondello heads. Lighting the fire is a Vertex mag, while the supercharger is a Danekas GMC type with Enderle 'bug-catcher' injection. A Weiland manifold adapts the two, with a Cragar drive unit turning the blower; a Hilborn pump is driven from the front of the cam, (gear-driven instead of the stock chain) and can be varied from direct drive to more than 30% overdrive against engine speed.

Inside the Donovan scatter-shield is a 3-plate Hays slipper clutch driving through a Greek coupler (a simplified universal drive to take up any misalignment or chassis flex) to a Lenco reverser for getting out of the burn-out smoke. The rear axle came from 'Revolution 3', Clive Skilton's British-built rear engined car, and is basically a Chrysler case, suitably narrowed. The axle shafts are by Mark Williams of Denver, whilst the gears are 4.3 Schiefers. Twin-spot Airheart discs are mounted inside the big, spun-aluminium E.T. wheels, 16" by 13", with M&H slicks handling the 1300-plus horsepower; two Irvin chutes do the primary stopping.

Looking at the body, you might wonder where it has been changed and the lowering and lengthening has indeed been done skilfully. This was worked out on a Vauxhall computer and applied by Pat Cuss of Fibre Glass Applications (rapidly becoming the only place to have 'glass work done in drag racing circles). The paint was a 'quickie' by Auto Art, done in a couple of days between meetings last year, while, as can be seen, assistance and oil comes from Castrol.

The amazing Ed Shaver, one of America's better exports, drove the car to low 8's and over 180mph last year, without the body, and he is looking to follow Dennis Priddle into the sevens before too long. With the much better preparation made possible by sponsorship, the team should do well this year and, although even Dunn and Reath have now switched back to a more conventional, front-engined car, for reasons other than the obvious safety considerations of sitting in front of the engine the team feel that the concept will work and win.