

# Spare the rod !

WHAT a fine collection of people drag racers are. Pete Miller's Elf Special suffered a rare misfortune at Santa Pod recently, when a seal in the fuel tap gave up and the blower slowly filled with fuel as Pete awaited his next race.

On the starting rollers, there was no obvious trouble to be seen, but neat fuel was pouring from the exhaust pipes as the engine turned over, so spannerman Ray Baskerville gave Pete the "thumbs down" and the bike was taken back home for a strip-down. They found that the fuel had hydraulicised in the engine, bending one of the Weslake connecting rods. Weslake rods are said to be unbendable, so the home-made motor must be mighty strong to withstand a load that bends an unbendable rod!

Pete tried everywhere to locate another rod, but there

were none available. So Jeff Byne, his own double-Morgo Triumph still not ready for action, let Pete have one of his own four precious rods and the Miller-Baskerville ensemble

## Double dealing

WHO says there's an economic crisis? Not in drag racing, it seems, with news of another two riders in the process of gathering bits together for double-engined racers.

Tony Weeden, not content with owning the fastest accelerating 500 in the world, is planning a 1,000cc double-Triumph to replace "Blue Ron-do", a bike that has run a best time of 9.35 seconds.

Tony has another engine and blower already and hopes to have all the bits together by the

were back in business. Which leaves Jeff Byne with a problem — three connecting rods and four cylinders for the new bike! Like I said . . . nice people.

winter. As Tony said: "If the 500 will do that sort of speed, a double must be good for the eights."

Not that the 500 represents a lot of money. The engine is a 1957 Tiger 100, with a three-piece crank that knowledgeable people say just won't stand high revs without breaking.

Four years ago Tony had the second-hand crank lightened and balanced by ex-MCN correspondent Phil Manzano and went racing. He revs that little Triumph up to 10,000 rpm on almost every run and has clocked a best terminal speed after 440 yards of 155 mph, but it just won't break.

The other double will be a twice 500 Triumph from Bletchley rider Roger Forsythe. Roger runs a very neat 500, "Alter Ego." Best time to date is 12.60, using carburetors only and straight methanol for fuel. A regular runner in the Middle Bike category, Roger's neat riding and a bike that is well prepared and reliable should be enough to get him into the results.

all influenced by Tom Christenson's Norton "Hogslayer".

But in America, they are moving on to the next stage of development. Torque conver-

tors in the rear hub are one way of getting the go on the ground; another is to adapt a snowmobile belt transmission with expanding pulleys.

Guy Leaming is using just such a unit on his petrol-burning single engined Harley and has put in runs in the nine-second bracket.

And to connect two or three engines together, there are a variety of solutions to the breakage problem on the American scene. Russ Collins' triple Honda, with some 3,000cc of nitro-burning twelve cylinders to keep in harmony, uses a toothed rubber belt. The same type of belt is used on Terry Vance's double-Honda that has run a best time of 8.93 seconds on petrol. Strong stuff!

Latest double-Harley to hit the American strips is a brutal looking device from the Jerry Cox/Dave Campos team. Campos previously owned and ran one of the prettiest bikes in competition and was a regular eight-second man with just one of the Milwaukee twins to provide the poke.

Now he has a lot of power. The new bike was running at last year's Bonneville Speed Week and clocked speeds in the 200 mph bracket.



## Straight up

WITH JIM REYNOLDS

## ONE STEP BEYOND

IN ENGLAND, there are a rash of riders trying out new ideas in two-speed transmissions and slider clutches,



Ouch! The Jerry Cox/Dave Campos sheds its rear chain and whacks Dave on the rump as he breaks the light beam and heads for the horizon at Irwindale Raceway, California. The bike has two 1700cc Harley engines and eight-second potential if the chains stay together.

## PETE'S BREAKTHROUGH

BIGGEST grin in the Snetterton paddock during the recent two-day event was on Pete Smith's face.

Pete had ridden his 750 Hadleigh Custom ARE-Triumph into the nines in practice with a stylish 9.89 run and

a terminal speed of 142 mph. Then he backed it up with 9.83 at 147 mph.

Pete has been trying to get that Triumph to go that way ever since he spent last winter sleeping in the garage with the bike!

## . . . and men and machines

BANBURY rider Tony Marsh is being backed by Duckhams Oil and local dealer Dave Robbins this year . . . **British Drag Racing and Hot Rod Association** will be putting on a show of drag racing machinery at the third Cyclo 73 show at Jericho Farm, Cassington, Oxon, on Sunday, June 22. Cassington is eight miles west of Oxford, on the A40 . . . Latest recruit to the team is eight time champion rider Brian Chapman, current leader in the MCN Top Bike Championship . . . **Ron Cheeseman** has a home-made rotary inlet valve on the 250 Montesa engine of his racer . . . Welsh rider **Ron Hughes** won the Middle Bike class at his first visit to Santa Pod on May 11; should please sponsor Alan Terry, boss of Terison Engineering and the engineering brains behind the old Duncan Hocking world record holder . . . Superfresh Catering, purveyors of doughnuts at Santa Pod and Snetterton, are backing **Pete Miller's Elf Special** this year

. . . Dutch Kawasaki importer **Henk Vink** sent two mechanics over to Danny Johnson's Carolina speed shop to learn the tricks of the eight second trade. Two bikes for Henk this year, trying to be the fastest in Europe . . . **John Cliff** is being sponsored by Shoei Helmet importers Interpart Sales Ltd. . . Three days of thrills at the Spring Bank Holiday **Santa Pod** meeting. Qualifying on Saturday and racing Sunday and Monday . . . **Sid Austin** has fitted a Morgo 750 conversion on his latest "Savage." As he said, "It's the best" . . . Neat new Honda from Birmingham rider **Paul Eastbury** uses a 500-4 engine, running on petrol until Paul gets used to the switch from a Starmaker 250 to the four-pot four stroke. Very neat magneto conversion by Paul . . . Sprinting veteran **Basil Keys** has bought the ex Pete Miller 500 Triumph that ran 9.56 seconds in its hey-day . . . **Keith Parnell**, fastest man this year so far, is to fit a Pete Miller/Ray Baskerville slider

clutch to his 30 Triumph "Rouge et Noir" . . . **Mick Hand** is to produce a bash-off super-strong slider . . . **John Norton** gearboxes . . . prototype is in Keith Parnell's box and has stayed in one piece for a 9.29 second run. Strong . . . Guernsey rider **Richard le Page** got the ex Bob Webster 750 Triumph "Tempest" down to 10.13 seconds at Snetterton recently. Said Richard: "Love-ly — fantastic" . . . Reset by primary chain breakages, **John Cliff** spent £10 on a 54-link American Litton chain. Expensive . . . After winning the Snetterton Top Bike Final on May 4 with a time of 9.29 and a terminal speed of 152mph, **Keith Parnell** found the cross-stopping on the grass. Look out, Don Godden . . . With a 9.38/143mph win in the semi-final at Santa Pod on May 11, **Mick Butler** got a real tank-slapper as he crossed the winning line and had nearby marshals running for cover . . .

# Rush for the under-8s run

THE BRITISH Drag Racing and Hot-rod Association is organising a one-day drag race event at Santa Pod raceway on Sunday, June 8.

Keith Parnell's recent 8.05 seconds run has really added spice to the race for the first European eight-second run by a non-American.

John Hobbs should be making his debut on the

"Motor Cycle"-sponsored "Hobbit" after a recent test session for initial sorting out. The bike was prevented from competing at Whitsun with a last-minute delay with engines.

Mick Butler, Tony Weeden, Brian Chapman and most of the other top UK riders will be on hand to provide stiff competition in the Top Bike eliminator.

## Sports extra

### Weather wins at the Pod

The weather at the weekend at Santa Pod was the dominant feature; for once the sun shone hard all day, and with a small entry and small crowd, the racing was almost a side show.

Only two Top Fuel cars, those driven by Pete Crane and Ron Picardo were on hand, with Crane as usual continuing his quest for a five. But he made only two full power runs, the first being spoilt again by a piece of paper blowing through the lights and preventing any times being recorded. The second and final run of the day netted a 6.7s, and wisps of clutch smoke at the top end showed that the team have still to get the right combination.

After debuting his rebuilt Camaro Pro Stock at Whitsun, Gary Goggin was out again for a serious attempt at the nines, running three rounds against Steve Osment-Petrie's steadily improving 'Easy Ridin' Camaro. Gary won the first with a 10.8s run, and the second round with a strong 10.1s, very close to his best ever, while Petrie got into the 11s with a solid 11.6s — some way to go yet, but his best yet by far.

For the third and last run, the two staged together and did simultaneous burn-outs, and suddenly it was 1973 again and the hay day of Pro-Stock action, the remaining crowd loved it, and so at last it looks as if the new Pro-Stock circus is getting together for the second half of the season. Gary powered away convincingly on the green, the whine of the gear drive cam sounding clear above the roar of the engine, but his time was slower this run, 10.3s to 11.6s again. But it appeared to have spelt the end of his clutch at the finish — a brand new twin plate one at that.

Gary Goggin (right) heads a thundering Pro Stock Camaro battle.



# Crane's relaxed win

THE beautiful weather overshadowed all else on Sunday, being far more conducive to collapsing on the grass than working on hot engines, and with a small entry, the whole affair was rather relaxed and pleasant.

Pete Crane was out again to try for his longed for five, but only made two runs, and didn't get a time on the first. Both were against Ron Picardo in "Firefly", who got a bit near the edge in the braking area on the first run and was lost to view in dust for a time. On the second he had to cut the motor on the line, as Crane had done earlier when the rear mainsail sprang a leak on his Milodon. Crane's second timed run netted a 6.7s.

In Top Dragster Pat Cuss looked like sewing up the class with some startlingly good runs from his 354 Hemi-powered dragster, but red-lit in the final against John Siggery's 371 Oldsmobile. He had earlier run an 8.6s to beat Paul Jones' ex-Ringsall "Taxi". In the final Siggery ran through with a dead engine, having yet to find his winning form of a few years ago.

The Pro-Stock scene started to look up again after a lean time with Gary Goggin and Steve Petrie putting on a good show in their Camaros. Goggin's immaculately prepared car ran a 10.18s against Petrie on the second of the three runs — very near his best ever.

In the other classes, Bob Messent won as usual in Middle Comp with a 10.5s run, beating Kevin Harvey, who broke on the line after running some good 11.1s earlier in his Chevy/Vauxhall altered that looks

almost identical to Skilton's new Funny. In Junior, Barry Sheavils won in the perennial Jag-powered Austin 7 "Stagecoach" that must now be one of the oldest surviving drag cars.

Senior and Top were singleton entries again, with Page and Elson again running together, with a half second handicap for Page's unblown car. The next time out Elson will have a Capri body and run in Funny Car as the popular Pro Comp class has been adopted by the BDR & HRA as well now, and blown nitro motors are not allowed.

John Ledster continued his winning ways, taking Top Street with his 389 Mustang now going better than ever with low 12s runs, whilst Al O'Connor knocked on the 10 second door to take Super Street with 11.0s.

Lastly, Keith Parnell was hero of the day on his Triumph 750 bike, becoming the first Briton to run an eight at 8.93s on the way to winning Top Fuel Bike.

J.T.D.

# Wroughton's big weekend

The first International drag meet of the season this weekend at Wroughton looks like being the biggest yet for the sport, with well over 200 entries received a week before the event. At least 18 of these will come from Europe, mostly Sweden, courtesy of TOR Line, who largely unheralded have backed the richest championship yet in Drag racing in Europe, the four-round Funny Car championship at £1,000 per round.

They will get their money's worth this weekend with the first ever 8 car all funny-car field. Representing the UK will be Dennis Priddle's Donovan Avenger, Clive Skilton's Donovan Vauxhall, Roland Pratt's 392 Scimitar and Liam Churchill's wild 392 Capri, which is a cert for longest burn-out awards on past showings.

Leading the Swedish contingent is Hazze Frome, whose Capri now sports a ground-shaking Garlits-built motor of no less than 520 cubic inches—nearer 9 litres than 8!

Backing up this fearsome device is Bjorn Anderson with his 392 Opel Manta, Leif Dabach's 480 Chev Volvo and the Canon Cameras Toyota, also Chevy powered.

For once the Top Fuel battle will take a back seat to all this, but John

Anderson now has a 426 Hemi in his rail, which should propel the car into the sixes this year. Roz Prior and Trevor Young are the other entrants in this class.

The 208 Pro Comp championship and MCN bike championship both have well supported rounds at the event, with Hall, Burrows, Barnett, Cuss and Rowat confirmed so far in the first, and some Dutch two wheeled entries in the second including a GMC blown 1500 cc Kawasaki.

Other foreign entries include such well known names as Anders Lantz and Gunne Backe with the famous Hemi-Jeep and 'Gas-Rat' altered respectively promising the Page brothers a stiff run in Senior Comp. Apart from Gunne Backe's Pro Stock, several street cars, including a 4 cylinder Volvo that runs in the 12 second range, will fill out the entry.

With practice starting at 10 o'clock on Saturday, admission is £1 on the first day, with Sunday's short qualifying session and racing costing £1.50. Camping facilities have been arranged, and the meeting, promoted by European Dragways is being held with the co-operation of the Royal Navy, who will doubtless be glad to sign you up to see the world.

## Funny Cars at Wroughton

THE second round of the prestigious Tor Line Funny Car Championship takes place at Wroughton Naval Yard, near Swindon, this weekend and has attracted an exciting eight-car entry headed by Dennis Priddle and Clive Skilton. Their Donovan-powered cars are joined in the UK team by Churchill and Pratt in their Capri and Scimitar. Of the four Swedish drivers, Frome is the one that Priddle will have to watch if he is to win in front of his home crowd. Apart from the Funny Cars their will be a full race programme for all Drag Racing classes, including bikes, with practice and qualifying on Saturday and racing on Sunday.

# Sporting Scene



## Priddle dominates

DENNIS PRIDDLE appears to be more or less unbeatable at the moment and despite the fact that he was the slowest qualifier for the weekend's Tor Line Funny Car championship round at Wroughton having arrived late, he just made a quick pass to get in the elimination and most people would have put money on the blue Avenger at the end of Saturday's practice.

Clive Skilton was quickest at 7.58s, but tailed off from then on with a rather weak sounding engine, with Hazze Fromm next at 8.03s. Fromm's Swedish Capri sports a 520 cubic inch Hemi built by Don Garlits. Next up was Liam Churchill, going well with his 392 powered Capri, then Bjorn Anderson's Opel, Leif Dabach's Volvo and Roland Pratt's new Avenger-bodied car, the Scimitar body having been dropped because of unfavourable aerodynamics at high speed.

The country has never seen so many Funny Cars lined up to run to start the racing and all eyes were on the start as Skilton took the first run with a 7.9s.

Priddle was next against Churchill, whose car sounded better than ever and initially looked as if it might even do the trick. But Priddle was having none of that and found enough bite to make his extra power tell and thundered past at 190 mph in 8.23s to 8.35 at 150 mph. With one home entry eliminated by another, it was now the turn of one Swede to beat another, and it came easily for Dabach when Fromm sprang a leak from the oil filter during a rather promising burn-out from the huge engine. So Dabach's Volvo Chev slowed to an 8.7s as the marshals hurriedly mopped up the spilt oil. Roland Pratt was the unfortunate one who had to run in that lane, and try as he might to stay clear of it, he got onto the cement dust and had a hairy ride past mid distance when he got the car sorted out and overhauled Anderson's Opel which had just nosed in front. Pratt's winning time was 8.04s at 177 mph to 8.25s.

Almost an hour later as planned the second rounds started, with Skilton and Priddle the first pairing. By now Priddle knew the track and made sure of the start by thundering away from Skilton to a resounding 7.14s at 196 mph. Other people may have been having traction problems, but he knew what to do about it. Sweden's remaining hope, Leif Dabach then felt the might of Roland Pratt's 392, his big Chevy being unable to hold off the Chrysler at 8.21s to 8.48s.

For the final, Skilton was sitting in his car in case either driver should have trouble and have to pull out, and as luck would have it that was just what happened, for the extra nitro they had put in Pratt's car for the vital run proved too much as the inlet manifold gasket blew out. With Priddle already running Skilton fired up to give him a run - not to win, but just for revenge. Priddle's answer was an even more stunning run at 6.94s, 204 mph to a slowing 8.9s for poor Clive.

A run-off for third place had earlier gone to Bjorn Anderson over Liam Churchill with a 7.7s run as Churchill had had to shut down with an engine problem when the two cars were level.

Top Fuel went to Trevor Young easily, Roz Prior breaking her axle on the first run. Young's first time was a 7.2s at 202 mph, and his second, solo pass a 7.1s at 208 mph, so it shouldn't be long before the country had another six second runner.

Pro Comp was won by James Rowat at his first attempt, his new 354 Chev-powered dragster having only appeared once before this year with the new big engine. He led qualifying with an efficient looking 9.1s ahead of such established runners as Cuss, Hall, Barnett and Burrows, none of whom were running as well as usual. In the final Hall lost oil pressure in his transmission and couldn't run, luckily for Rowat, whose own transmission failed him a hundred yards out, although he coasted through to win with a 26s time!

Possibly the most popular win of the day outside Funny Car was in Senior Comp, where Clive Page faced a strong Swedish threat from Bengt Staffberg and Anders Lantz. All three cars were Chevy powered, with the Swedes injected and Page's on carburettors, but Page cracked a head on Saturday, and was hoping it would hold up all day. It did, particularly for the final run, for after staying in the tens all day, Page exploded off the line against Lantz's American-built car, carrying the same body as Page, and held off the other car with a 9.6s run, though Lantz had the satisfaction of setting a new class record earlier on with a 9.31s run.

Racing in all classes exceptionally good at the well-run meeting, but really, with such a terrific funny car entry would have been happy to see nothing else. Drag racing certainly needs more big entries like this in the top classes. J.T.D.

### EUROPEAN DRAGWAYS present INTERNATIONAL DRAG RACING

SUNDAY, JUNE 18 (practice and qualifying from midday, Sat 14)

SWINDON

Royal Naval Air Yard, Wroughton, Wilts (M4 Exit 15), by kind permission of the Royal Navy



### TORLINE FUNNY CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

EIGHT FUNNY CARS ENTERED - FIRST TIME IN U.K.!! Entries from Sweden and Holland

Admission includes spectator enclosure, pits and paddock. CHILDREN ADMITTED FREE!!

GATES OPEN 9 a.m.

This replaces the Silverstone Meeting.

Organised by the NATIONAL DRAG RACING CLUB

The promoters and organisers reserve the right to cancel or alter the whole or part of the meeting without notice.



This is Clive Skilton's new funny car which debuted last weekend at Wroughton. Skilton is a Vauxhall dealer, so it's not surprising to see a VX4/90 body over the 1500 bhp engine.

## OUR MAN HOBBS

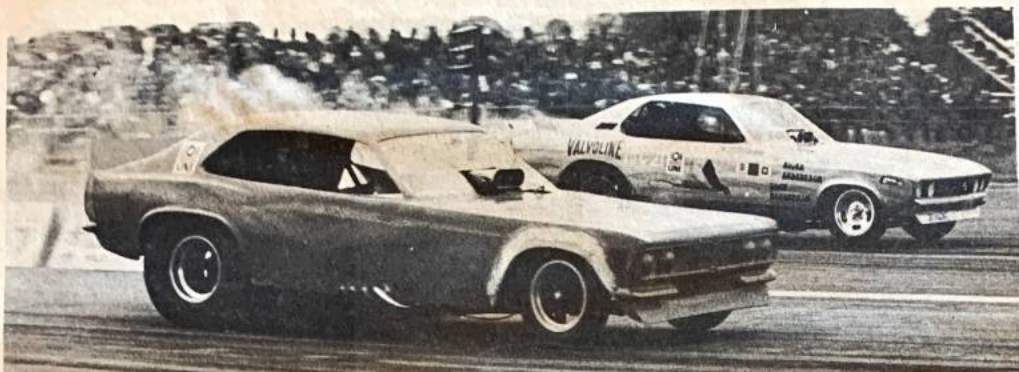
JOHN HOBBS takes off on the first run of the "The Hobbit" — the "Motor Cycle" sponsored drag bike — at Wroughton last week. Next British run is hoped to be at Santa Pod on July 5/6 when American Danny Johnson will be appearing with his double-engined Harley-Davidson.

## Moreton back

John Moreton will be making a return to the drag strips very soon with the popular "Invader" Firenza/Chev. It will be recalled that some two years ago the car did a 10.7s when in the hands of Colin Mullen, but has not been as consistent since then, gearbox troubles letting the car down several times.

A complete and thorough engine rebuild has been accompanied with a switch to a clutch/Turbo transmission, and John is now seriously hoping to get into the nines with the car — it should certainly challenge "Strip-teaser" again as it did in the early part of last year.





Roland Pratt just gets the jump on Bjorn Anderson's Opel, to head him in the run despite oil and cement dust.

## WROUGHTON

# Funny car orgy for seven

Funny car fans were treated to an orgy of the most spectacular class at Wroughton at the weekend, with seven cars battling it out for the TOR line championship. The only non-runner was the Canon Cameras Toyota, which was found to have a chassis problem shortly before it was due to leave for the U.K.

None of the entries made particularly spectacular runs on Saturday, although Skilton ran a good 7.5 with his Vauxhall/Donovan. Hazze Fromm, with the big 250 cubic inch Capri, made a strong start but apparently had shifter problems.

On Sunday morning all were out to qualify and practice, and by the end of the morning the times stood with Skilton fastest at 7.5s, Fromm second with a strong 8.03s half pass, Liam Churchill next at 8.06s after his quickest ever run. Bjorn Anderson's Opel Chevy at 8.6s, and Leif Dabach's Volvo Chev at 9.04. All suffered traction problems with loose dust, at the mid range leading to some spectacular moments. Late comers were Dennis Priddle and Roland Pratt, who had abandoned his Scimitar body for a still unpainted Avenger. Both qualified in the tens with half passes.

Skilton started with a bye run as the row of funny cars lined up behind him ready to fire up in quick succession, but his Donovan did not really sound right and the time dropped to a 7.9s. Priddle and Churchill were next, it was a close race as both cars thundered away, with Priddle getting the verdict with a top-end charge of 190mph in 8.23s to 150mph and 8.35s for Churchill's Capri. Sweden's best hope went out in the next round when an oil filter split on Fromm's big hemi during the burn-out. This left Leif Dabach with an unopposed run at 8.7s and a long streak of oil in the right hand lane. Pratt had to cope with this as he faced Bjorn Anderson's Opel, and what a race it was, with Pratt leaving first and then running through the cloud of cement dust and getting sideways. But he kept charging on and got the car pointed in the right direction again in time to beat the Opel's 8.2s with an 8.0s at 177m.

The second round started with that epic confrontation, Skilton and Priddle, the first time that they have met in funny car, but again, Skilton's car didn't sound as if it had the measure of Priddle's low, low Avenger, and when Priddle made one of his instant starts, it was all over — and Skilton had red lit anyway. The time was way down at 7.1s and 196mph to an 8.1s for Skilton. Pratt and Dabach were next out, but despite a strong try by the Volvo driver, it was Pratt and the UK again with an 8.2s to 8.4s.

When final time came, Pratt was unlucky, for the blower inlet gasket blew as the car was fired up, and rather than leave Priddle alone in the final run, Skilton jumped into his waiting car and fired up alongside to make a race of it — though Priddle could not now lose the title. Not that he would have done anyway as he drove Skilton into the ground with a shattering 6.94s at 204mph.

Top Fuel was limited to two cars in the end, so John Anderson failed to make it from Sweden, so Roz Prior and Trevor Young faced each other for

three runs. Roz broke her back axle on the first though, so Young cleaned up with a 7.22s at 202mph, and backed it out later with a 7.12s at 208mph.

Sensation of Pro Comp was James Rowat, who lead all qualifiers in the class with his 354 Chev dragster. Pat Cuss was not on his recent 8.6s form and after a bye went out to the Chev with a 9.2s at 167mph for his 354 Chrysler, the Chev turning a terrific 8.65s at 164mph. Mike Hall put out Peter Barnet's funny car with his altered after Barnet redlit, Barnet having had a win over Kevin Burrow's dragster when it failed to fire.

With Hall capable of eights, the final looked good, but first he failed to get oil pressure in his B&J three speed, then after a strong launch, Rowat had a transmission failure and just managed to coast through to win. Yet another new challenge for the exciting 208 Pro-Comp championship.

The Page team had their strongest challenge yet in Senior Comp with both Bengt Stafbeg and Anders Lantz bringing their Chevy powered altereds over. Lantz's American built car, running injection ran a 9.31s, with Stafbeg slightly slower at 9.9s with his similarly powered car. Clive Page ran a 9.8s, all these runs taking place on Saturday, then found a cracked valve, the head of which was

only just attached. They fitted a new valve into the equally cracked head and tried not to run too hard until they had to. Luckily Lantz eliminated Stafbeg with 9.4s to 10.3s, whilst they beat Vic Hammond's Chrysler T with a 10.2s.

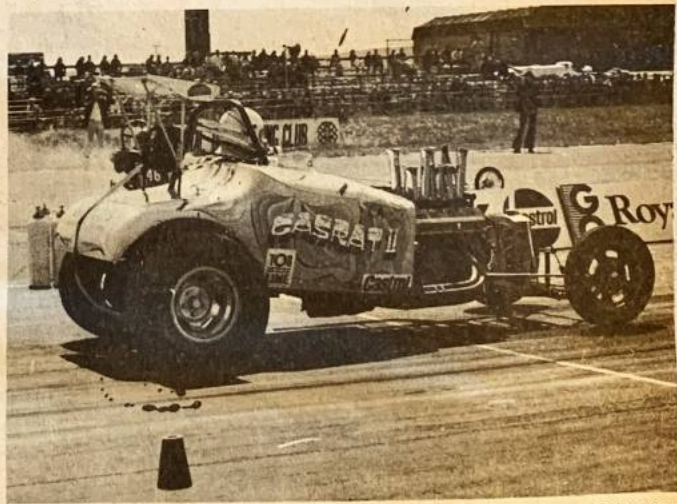
The two near-identical cars fired up for the final and at the green, Page's carburetted Chev leapt away from the injected car and held the lead all the way to a 9.6s — the cheers were loud again.

But in Middle comp, the task proved just too much for Bob Messent in Stripeaster, faced again with the ex-Lantz Plymouth coupe and Svante Erickson's Hemi-Jeep. There was little doubt that Stripeaster would be the fastest UK entry, and Messent worked through the 16 car field to meet Erickson in the semi-final. Messent's Jaguar engine was down one cylinder, while the clutch was fading fast on the Jeep, so when the Minivan jumped away to the lead, it looked for a minute that he might do the impossible as Erickson eased the Jeep away, but eventually the cubes told as the Swede thundered through at 140mph in 10.3s to the final, the immaculate but slightly heavier Chevy powered Plymouth a couple of lengths behind at the finish.

Other Swedish entries included Peter Svensson in his 2 litre Volvo that lived up to its reputation by running a string of 12 second runs to take Senior Street; Bengt Fredrickson with his 289/Cortina, who looked certain to win junior Comp when Brian Monday broke his transmission, but lost his chance when he hit the start line lights on his burn out.

## JOHN DICKSON

Bengt Stafbug brought his 402 ci Buick engined T over from Sweden.



AUTOSPORT, JUNE 19, 1975

# DRAG RACING AT AINTREE!

AINTREE, home of the Grand National steeplechase, is to stage drag racing!

The first event at the Lancashire venue will be on July 12 when the Pennine Drag Racing Club

organises the fourth round of the MCN Top Bike championship.

The introduction of drag racing to the racecourse, near Liverpool, follows countrywide efforts by the Pennine club after action by the Kirk Lees Metropolitan Council stopped racing at the Pennine

dragway near Huddersfield, Yorkshire.

At Aintree — it's only a mile off the end of the M57 motorway! — the Pennine club will have the choice of two one-eighth-of-a-mile drag strips.

Pennine Raceways director, well-known rider Steve Murty, explained the two strips: "One is on the grandstand straight, with a grandstand able to house 20,000 people and offering top-line facilities.

"The other is on the railway straight and has a 20-foot high grass bank offering excellent viewing for fans. We're really excited about this new strip — great for riders and fans."

Co-promoters, European Dragways and Pennine Raceway, plan to give top value with a full day's qualifying and racing. Qualifying and practise will start at 10 am and continue until 3 pm,

to give the fast men time to get used to the Aintree surface and starting lights.

With one eighth of a mile to race over, there will be little chance of a fast finishing bike catching a rival who makes a better job of starting.

Racing proper will begin at 3.30 and carry through until 7.30 pm. "We are going to give everyone a chance of watching the racing, even if they can only make it in the evening," explained Mr Murty.

The contenders for MCN championship points will be reaching speeds up to 100 mph within the 220 yards of the strip.

Terms are being negotiated with the best talent in drag racing, and the bikes will be backed by a range of exciting cars.

Regulations for the event are available from Jack Fletcher, 388 Whitechapel Road, Scholes, Cleckheaton, Yorkshire. Telephone: Cleckheaton 77172.

## 'TC' boosted by Dunstall

TOM CHRISTENSON'S recent superb American drag race victory over Russ Collins' triple-engined Honda was achieved with British-made Dunstall barrels boosting the capacity of the bike to 1,620cc.

In search for more power to overcome the challenge of Collins' incredible 3,300cc monster and a growing number of double-engined Harley-Davidsons with up to 3,700cc, "TC" fitted the 810cc Dunstall conversions to power him to his 8.66 second victory.

But Pat Dunstall, interviewed at his Erith, Kent, factory, knew nothing of the American ace's plans to use his equipment. "It's news to me," said Mr Dunstall. "We did have a talk to Tom some time ago, but I had no idea he was going to enter the bike as a Dunstall/Norton. We did send him out some tuning bits and bobs, but we had no special arrangement. He must be using the name out of the goodness of his heart."

"He has two of our 810cc barrels and we did a couple of cylinder heads for him," explained a happy Mr Dunstall, whose American business will be boosted with such a high-speed demonstration of the effectiveness of his big-bore conversions.

Although Dunstall's have no plans to get involved in drag racing, he will be building two of the most breathtaking machines to hit British roads later this year — A Kawasaki Z1 four, with a big-bore 1,100cc kit fitted and a converted 900cc Honda, fitted with American Blake turbo-chargers, for use by Mr Dunstall and one of his staff.

"They will be strictly for fun — there's no question of them being raced," he said. "I'm told by American journalists who have ridden bikes with these turbo-chargers fitted that they are like a normal bike up to 4,500 rpm, then they just take off."

Meanwhile, over in America, Tom Christenson will continue to campaign the Dunstall Norton until his latest creation is unveiled. And that will really set the tongues wagging, for Tom will be following British practise and fitting superchargers for extra power.



Keith Parnell... into the eights at Santa Pod this weekend?

## Two more join 9-second elite

TWO new names have been added to the nine second list. First was John Lloyd, on his and brother Eddy's 2,000 cc Volkswagen-powered machine which he pushed into the single figure bracket with a run of 9.76 seconds at Santa Pod.

That figure is even more notable because the motor runs only on straight methanol. A lot of work has been performed by the pair over the past winter to get the machine into such really competitive trim.

With help from Yateley Motors, and technical assistance from Autocavan, they have a lot of trick American tuning parts inside the flat four motor — and a two-speed overdrive unit in place of the previous single gear setup helped performance

enormously.

Second newcomer to single figures is the bearded Peter Smith from Canvey Island, Essex. At Snetterton on May 4 he made back-to-back runs of 9.89sec/142mph and 9.83sec/147mph on his seven-fifty Triumph — and that should well please sponsors, Hadleigh Custom.

Pete spent four years developing a 500 Triumph until the end of 1974. Then he got his hands on the 750 motor from the old "Reflection" street bike of the other Hadleigh rider Chris Russell, to which a few mods have been made. A new frame was needed to house the motor, and Smith acquired the ex-John Jacques "Satan's Cycle" frame.

Best times for Pete on the old five hundred were 10.13sec/136mph, but in only

three meetings on the new plot he has certainly improved those marks. The times have consistently dropped, starting at 10.26sec, followed up second time out



The Lloyd brothers' 2,000 cc gets into the nines.



at 10.05sec, and continuing the trend at Snetterton with that run of 9.83 seconds.

With only some 70 per cent nitro in the tank there is plenty of scope for times to continue their downward spiral.

The old five hundred should soon be seen back in action on the strips, having been sold complete to another Easterer, Terry Sands.

### Tyre help

The days of the Avon drag slick are long gone, for all but the few slower machines that haven't yet managed to wear them down to the canvas yet — and the imported American M & H Racemaster tyre has more than ably taken its place. More than 50,000 car and bike slicks per year are produced at the manufacturing plant. Riders can select the grade of tyre that suits them best.

Only facility missing — until now, that is — had been the lack of technical information to help racers decide on the most suitable tyre compound for their machine.

That has all changed with the formation of M & H International Sales by a group of ex-Firestone engineers. The five-man company are attending the majority of this year's race meetings — they are soon to set-up offices in the Camberley area — and are offering advice and practical assistance to anyone who takes the trouble to go and ask.

They carry a good range of tyres in their van, for sale at reasonable prices. Any tyre not in stock can, I am told, be shipped into the country within 8-9 days. So if you've got a tyre problem then go and see the experts — it could be worth a couple of tenths off your elapsed time.

### Novel prize

The French cigarette firm Gitanes have sponsored Phil Drake's seven-fifty Triumph which is a neatly turned-out piece of race machinery. And to help promote the standard of bike finish they are presenting a cheque for £5 and 200 cigarettes to the rider of the best turned out bike at each of this year's NDRC race meetings.

At the recent Snetterton two-day meeting, Johnny



Mick Hand picks up some well-earned prize money.

Munn won the comp bike award with his new Norton, featured in a recent Dragstrip column, while Colin Digby won the second award with his 812 cc street Honda.

Anything that helps to promote improved standards of appearance has to be good, and the Gitanes-sponsored machine is a good example to follow.

Prize money at Santa Pod meetings has been significantly increased this year, with two separate day's racing at two-day meetings, the winners of Top Bike elimination can win up to £50 per day at the present time. That should inspire even greater efforts to clinch a spot in the top eight, with all eight places being paid.

Although we have not yet seen an all-nine-second field this year, there have been some exceptional performances, and I have a feeling that this weekend's Santa Pod meeting will produce some really exciting times. Keith Parnell is all set for yet another crack at the nine second barrier with his 750 Triumph. He upped the nitro to 88 per cent for the first

time at Snetterton and cranked out a 9.28sec time on the grippy tarmac.

Then at Santa Pod at Whit came his amazing 9.05sec/152 mph — and he had detuned back down from 88 nitro to 82 per cent.

### Hand grins

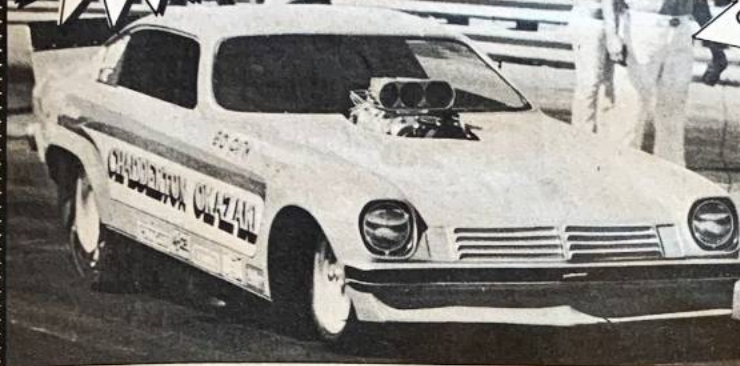
While Parnell aims for an "eight," team-mate Mick Hand will be trying equally hard to become the first rider of a 250 cc machine to clock less than ten seconds on his twin cylinder Honda.

Having sorted out his clutch problems, as proved by his enormous wheelie at Snetterton, he could well hit single figures if he ups the nitro to around 85 per cent in an attempt to keep up with the big uns.

Hand has now qualified for the Top Bike field on no less than four consecutive occasions this year — no wonder he's got a big grin as he is seen picking up some well earned prize money from BDR & HRA official Erica Bartlett in our picture.

**SAT. - SUN.**  
**JULY 5th 6th**

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**COMPETITORS**  
**9 ENTRIES SO FAR**  
**RECEIVED FOR THE**  
**FUNNY CAR**  
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**SANTA POD RACEWAY, PODINGTON, NR. WELLINGBOROUGH**

## Pro Comp in

The BDR&HRA is to adopt the Pro Comp division as from their next meeting, good news to the steadily growing ranks of potential entrants in this class. Looking ahead, the 1976 season, with perhaps a joint championship run through the year, could really see this take off, with packed fields of competitive 7.5s-8s cars that will not be so crippling expensive to run as the Top Fuel and Funny Car divisions.

• Hoping for 9s runs at Santa Pod this weekend will be Dick Sharpe, who should have rebuilt the "Dorset Horn" Pontiac A35 altered by the weekend, all being well, after its unfortunate Whitsun accident. This would give the Pages some sorely needed competition in the Senior Comp class, which they have dominated more or less continuously for two years.

• Dave Rose took his first win in a long while at Wroughton in Super Street, running his 440 Wedge engine at present to beat Jim Kirk's TVR after a close race with a 12.9s. As Top Street contender Dennis Wheatley is considering buying Rose's 440 complete for his Charger, he was not pushing the valuable piece of equipment too hard.

• Rather than convert his Fuel motor to methanol as would be required, Phil Eison will move to Funny car, fitting a Capri body to his altered courtesy of Fibre Glass Repairs in Bromley, and should be running for the Pod International on July 5/6.

## Pro stock problems

Gunne Back didn't make it over to Wroughton's drag meeting with his Pro Stock in the end, which was probably just as well for the UK drivers.

Gary Goggin, who had in fact suffered a gearbox failure the previous weekend at Santa Pod, not clutch, found that he couldn't get top gear and didn't get to run, while Steve Osment Petrie sheared all the bolts in his ring gear on Saturday. He got the car going for the next day though, but despite sounding better than ever and launching well, was let down by some missed shifts that kept his times down in the 11s.

## Stripteaser challengers

One of the best supported drag racing classes at present is Middle Competition, with at least twenty cars appearing at some meetings, all chasing after the Jaguar powered "Stripteaser" which is still holding its own against the V8s.

Two cars which came close a few weeks ago were Sue Coles' Chev/T and Mick Saunders' similar car. Unfortunately Sue lost an engine at the last Pod meet, but Mick Saunders will be out at the International again following an axle failure recently. He has now replaced his Jaguar set-up with the much stronger and increasingly rare '57 Oldsmobile unit, which should take anything that his Chevy engine can give. Together with more suitable gearing, the set-up should get him down into the 10s.

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