

# Retro Ramblin's



Words & photos  
Mike Collins

In 1957 Don Garlits set new world records of 8.79 at 176.40mph (the first pass over 170!), in Don's Speed Shop Special while I was learning to drive an aircraft carrier! (Next year he ran an 8.36 and the first 180mph pass, all using the eight Stromberg carbs seen above with a healthy dose of nitro.) The car became known as Swamp Rat 1, of which Don often said, "It's my favourite car in the whole world; it made me what I am today!" The thrill of seeing Big Daddy drive it at Art Malone's DeSoto Dragway in 1988

**DRAG RACING &**  
**FREE!!** Decal Brochure **INSIDE.**  
**HOT ROD**  
in this issue: MUSTER! SUPER WORLD RECORDS

has always been an all time favourite memory – and here are a few more magic moments from my past...

10 years after those first record breaking runs, things moved quickly for me in more ways than one when I became professionally involved with Santa Pod and the BHRA. First up Ian Demaine gave me my first shotgun ride in his Mustang-powered Zodiac - Ian put his boot heel atop the floor mounted gas pedal, kicking his leg straight as the lights ran. The car leapt off the line like a bucking bronco, power twitching all over the place, but he never lifted. In fact, with his heel jammed to the floor and leg locked straight he couldn't! The car had bungee cords twanging behind the bench seat, the doors trying to pop open as Ian's wicked power shifts torque-twisted the aged Ford chassis! I saw Ian again a few years back at the NSRA's Hot Rod Drags at Shakespeare County Raceway, and on his final pass down the quarter mile Ian ran his best non-nitrous pass, a 12.99 at 122mph – in the car he won the BHRA Street Championship with in 1967! His Z car is seen on the DragRod cover racing Clive Skilton's hi-po 1964 Stingray, another wild ride for a future story!



1979

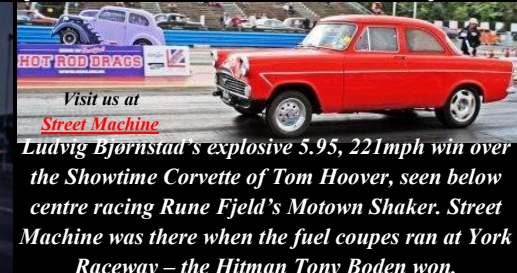
The Hemi came by after 1300 feet!  
Top end shot by Clive Househam



Hole shot courtesy Nick Pettitt's Time Travel DV's



See Hot Gossip in **Street Machine** January issue on sale soon



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Luavig Bjornstad's explosive 5.95, 221mph win over the Showtime Corvette of Tom Hoover, seen below centre racing Rune Fjeld's Motown Shaker. Street Machine was there when the fuel coupes ran at York Raceway – the Hitman Tony Boden won.



1984 Sam pulled 13g's on this power pass!  
Ron Fisher photo courtesy TimeTravel DVD's

I took a huge hole shot in a 350hp CJ7, but Hot Car's Keith Seume drove by down track in a Hemi Challenger at Blackbushe! Every Slam'n Sammy pass I saw was sheer magic, pure thunder and totally awesome! The big races of 1966 were between the UK's Jerry Tyack's Cobra and the Lawman, Mopar racer Al Eckstrand's hemi Charger. Street Machine's 1983 Street Racer Champs at York with Nick Mann's V8 eating Morris Minor aided by BDRHoF legend Jim Read



Street Machine's 1983 Blackbushe Summer Nats saw Tony Gransden win the big bucks with a 10.83 at 130 mph, the UK's first street legal 10 and new speed record too in his "daily driver," a twin turbocharged Camaro



1966 match race



Wild Pro Mods in the 1980s!



Bud Barnes' Ultra Sonic introduced me to NitroPower in '67 –and ran in the wet too!  
Brian Sutton photo courtesy TimeTravel DVD's

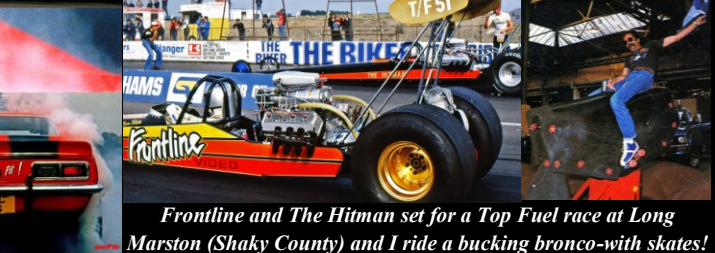


In 1980 Harlan Thompson drove Knut Söderquist's Tres Kroner to glory at the biggest fuel coupe race outside the USA. You read about this "lone gun" first in Hot Gossip!

More in **Street Machine** on sale soon



Tony Densham won our first AA/FD race when Rex Sluggett red lit – twice, and also ran a huge 180mph! Anita Mäkelä won the 2016 FIA title and RMF's Duncan Micallef ran 3.89 at 312, the year's best numbers. In 2017 he won the FIA title for Malta - and put the icing on the cake for Rune Fjeld Motorsport's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations!



Frontline and The Hitman set for a Top Fuel race at Long Marston (Shaky County) and I ride a bucking bronco-with skates!



Timo Lehtimäki's NitroFire fills the night on the Pod's final Saturday night quarter mile pass in 2011. Batman's 316.40 for the Andersen's in 2014 is still the best 1000ft speed



1968

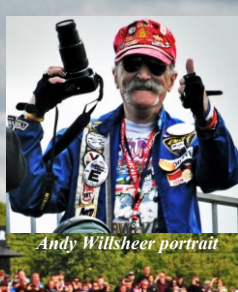
JB Pix  
DragRod



NKG - my first sponsor!

THE WORLD'S No.1 SPARK PLUG

Santa Pod Raceway



Andy Willsheer portrait



Wojtek Photo



Tim Garlick's 6.16 at 230mph kept Fuel Coupe fans happy when Tony Betts' Venom got a fuel leak



Sartorial elegance, NitroFan style!



Main images Saturday qualifying



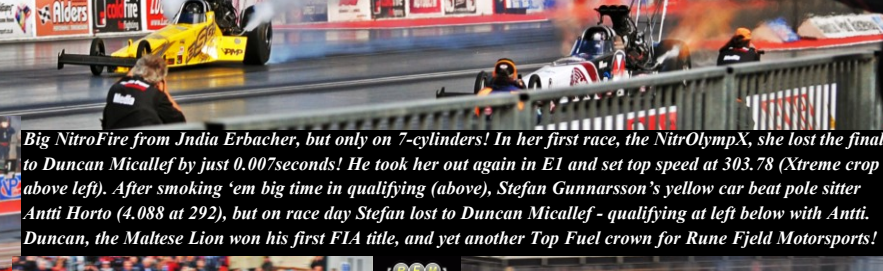
Santa Pod Raceway



Recently licensed Norwegian Top Fuel rookie Maja Urdian qualified 3rd and gave us a great smile after the smoke cleared from her warm-up in the Islanders fueler. A fuel leak stopped her in round 4



2016 FIA Champ Anita Mäkelä's 4.07 in round one was low ET of the race and put her in the finals - but rain stopped play. Stig Neergaard got kinda close to the wall here



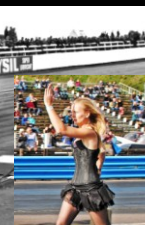
Big NitroFire from India Erbacher, but only on 7-cylinders! In her first race, the NitrOlympX, she lost the final to Duncan Micallef by just 0.007seconds! He took her out again in E1 and set top speed at 303.78 (Xtreme crop above left). After smoking 'em big time in qualifying (above), Stefan Gunnarsson's yellow car beat pole sitter Antti Horto (4.088 at 292), but on race day Stefan lost to Duncan Micallef - qualifying at left below with Antti. Duncan, the Maltese Lion won his first FIA title, and yet another Top Fuel crown for Rune Fjeld Motorsports!



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Upper Lotus Cortina vs an Olds powered Model A and the Lurch Pop/Pilot from 1966 Stu Bradbury in 1967. Kirsten in 2009 (mcPix) Lower Battle of the Giants, Santa Pod's first green light AA/FD race in 1968 - Tudor Rose takes down Commuter. Jag power in 1966- check out the back-seat driver in the wild lookin' Model Y Juggernaut, my favourite early hot rod and Wild Thing at speed - like a warship! (John Bennett DragRod images)



21st century Flathead, Tot Rod, Kirsten and Ramon at Shaky County



Dennis Priddle's hole shot 8.87 drove us wild!



Dragstalgia 2017 - Brian Savidge hole shot John Byng, his 10.89, 120.55 was a tenth behind the Minor's 10.56, 128.6. Rockin' Ramon's BBFC ran a stormin' first-ever six, a 6.73 at 206 mph at Shaky County in 2012 - he's been eating fuel couples since. A 6.35 at 216 did it again when Tony Betts' AA/FC red lit to a 6.51, 214.87. Robin Read's baby fuel car ran 6.69 at 199.89mph - awesome!



Mark Todd's GTO got a hole shot and won our first street-legal 200mph race with a 7.24, 200.66 over Steve Neimantas's close 7.32 209.10!

Image courtesy THE SANTAPODER@YouTube



1969 Woodvale MercHouse BBLF Photographer unknown - all images fine-tuned by MC



Dave Grady's High Spirits live on at York

