



"...just watch and enjoy," were the words of greeting as I tuned in to the FHRA's NitroNationals LIVE stream out of Alastaro. A tad later than planned but good timing due to a weather delay, and what a welcome - two fuel cars burning out prior to the first round of Q racing... Congratulations to Timo Lehtimäki on winning the final Nitro nationals at Alastaro. It wasn't pretty as they say, but Timo was consistent in that he got the finish line first each time! Better yet, in round one he ran low ET and Top Speed of eliminations with a 4.139 @ 290.19mph, his best speed ever! Our own Liam Jones took pole with a 4.05 and then a 4.01 and 305mph for Top Speed ahead of flying Finns Anita Mäkelä's 4.04, Antti Horto's 4.07 ahead of Timo's 4.26 who cracked his big grin after that pass. Imagine that grin as he won the final round when FIA Top Fuel champion Duncan Micallef was up in smoke at the hit!

icing on the birthday cake special edition



"Anita Mäkelä has a good sense of humor, even after two runs in eliminations where she idled to the finish line in 26.8 and 18.7 seconds," wrote Remco Scheelings in his Farewell to Alastaro after Anita had said "I have never had so much track time." Jimmy Ålund also had a mile-wide grin after winning Pro Modified and Pro Stock - the first double in the history of FIA European Drag Racing!

NitroFire unleashed as Timo Lehtimäki makes the final Saturday night qualifying pass down the Pod's quarter mile in 2011

First published that year, I was over the moon when this all-time favourite shot won the BDRHoF's Sydney Allard Media Award following its publication on Eurodragster in The Razor's Edge in 2017, Celebrating 50years of NitroThunder since my own quarter mile introduction to the sound and the fury of NitroPower in 1967 from Ultra Sonic. The DragRod cover with John Bennett's photo of the run is shown at right, and this Xtreme crop shows just how different the modern Top Fuel car launches compared to that AA/FD driven by American Bud Barnes, the Pod's original NitroMessiah in 1966.

words & photos
mike collins

As you may recall, July 20th 1968 was not only my birthday, but the date of our AA/Fuel Dragster race won by Tony Densham when Rex Sluggett red lit twice, and smoked his way to a 180mph record on our new track!

Following these epic runs rain stopped play, and on Monday morning my work began promoting their next race (at the August 4th DragRod Trophy Meeting), in the media. Guess what folks, "atrocious weather conditions led to it being abandoned soon after the start when Ken Obee (1650 Lotus Super 7) had a big crash near the finish line." Ken's car was written off after hitting the barrier at over 100mph, but he was unhurt. In the media we said the race between "Commuter and Tudor Rose would be re-run of the Drag Racing and Hot Rod Magazine Trophy meet at Santa Pod on August 11."

Yeah right! It woulda been cool, but the Swedish Hot Rod Association had booked Tudor Rose and the Allard/Skilton to appear at their Inaugural Swedish Nationals at Anderstorp!

No problem, in fact it was an epic event as my story in Motoring News said a couple of days later...

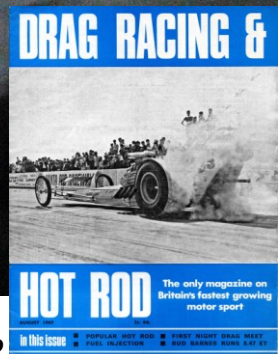
John Bennett
DragRod photo



Tune in next month for the Battle of the Giants, when my Colt 45 can and Cuban cigar were crushed in the excitement of our first Saturday night AAFD race...

"Thousands of fans who turned up for the re-run of the Drag Racing and Hot Rod Magazine Trophy Meet at Santa Pod went wild as world record holder Tony Densham drove his 427ci Ford powered-Dragster "Commuter" faster than his own World Record to become the first Englishman to "run an eight" at Santa Pod at 8.89 and 173mph! To prove it wasn't a fluke Tony came out again, astounding everyone with a mind-bending 8.459, 180mph blast!" My Autosport story told of, "The even more incredible goings-on in Sweden, where Tudor Rose driver Rex Sluggett was hurt when arch-rival Clive Skilton (Skilton-Allard rail) accidentally ran over his foot, so Rex's mechanic and partner Dennis Priddle took Tudor Rose out, smoking the whole quarter mile to a fantastic 8.53! Then he raced the Allard-Skilton and beat Clive with an 8.88!" What an AA awesome weekend - and there's more to come! But right now it's back to the future and Dragstalgia

Gifted by Rex Sluggett
photographer unknown



bbbf photographer unknown



John Bennett DragRod photo

Pat & Chris Church's 289 Pop had copper pipe headers as dad was a plumber – and check that drilled out axle!



Mercury House gave birth to Car Mechanics who begat Hot Car that became Street Machine's father
bbf photographer unknown



Steve Martyn's 4-pot Ford JD20 is the total opposite of any AAFD! (Data courtesy Nick Pettitt TTDVD's) Those breeze blocks didn't last long once they'd been sent flying by an out-of-shape race car!

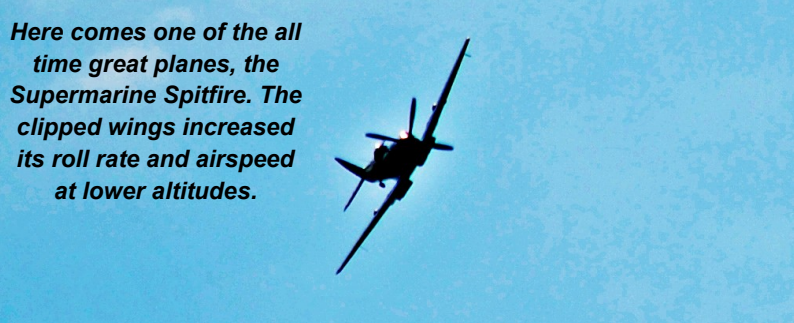
John Bennett DragRod photo



A good leave for Joe Rico and me in a pair of 14-15 second cars - although the blown Anglia's owner said it was okay to power-shift, the lever snapped off so I think Rico's Mustang won...



Radical rides, big, bad and blown! Agamemnon's 565ci '57 is well out on Paul Dale's Acute Angle



Here comes one of the all time great planes, the Supermarine Spitfire. The clipped wings increased its roll rate and airspeed at lower altitudes.



Dave East photo courtesy ttdvds

289 power with 1968 fan favourites Gold Rush and Ian Demaine's Z-car



Photographer unknown courtesy Nick Pettitt



A historically significant pair and a cool dude! Nick Pettitt's dad learning to drive his mum's '47 Prefect in 1950, and in 2018 he's driving Nick's '53 Prefect with a 1600cc Ford Capri Crossflow and other mods an' customising from the '80s.



Nick Pettitt photo



What a way to start my celebrations – 3rd pair in and Colin Millar laid down an awesome 7.43 at 181 in the Flyin' Flyer, 564ci Ford after this powerful burnout, Outlaw Anglias indeed!

Gettin' there is more than half the fun, and anytime you can put a two tenths hole shot on the end... Awesome Havoc there's goin' to be a smile on your face no matter what happens at the top end...



A pair of happy smilin' faces in what has to be an ultimate ride when it comes to going drag racing, a 1930 Ford pick-up with 5.7 (probably a Chevy), and maybe carrying race spares. Back in the day it was a no-no to carry racing numbers on the street! Things have changed or they think they're outlaws...



Enjoying such a good close race was the best birthday present you could wish for, but Havoc had a problem...

Hiking Havoc's front end, Nick thundered to a huge 233mph, his 6.236 just 0.129 behind Ramon's 6.237 at the stripe – wow!



Then Nitro Thunder filled my nostrils with the sweet scent of eight trunks trumpeting as Nick finally got his power back...



A great race makes for happy fans





Fans loved this great side-by-side race between a pair of Nostalgia Fuel Coupes with victory coming from a hole-shot!

Loved the blowers and wild wheel stands...



Kirsten ran a best of 8.50 at 164.25 and averaged 8.54 and 163.19mph over five runs



Cai Carlsson's Strip Teaser 1969 AA/Fuel

Strong smoky burnouts and wide open wheel stands by this pair of Swedish stunners from Persäkers Speed Shop kept fans happy



This fly-past by a clipped wing Spitfire was a powerful reminder of the freedom we all enjoy



Magnus Larsson's Fools Gold



Allan Lloyd's Gonzo the Great takes out Dave Gibbons' Rough Diamond - 8.24 at 157 to 8.53, 152, just like his dad Ian did back in the day! Classic motorcycle art from long-time Mooneyes fan, Davy of Italy.

In Q3 Nick Davies drove the Havoc AAFA to a thundering PB Top Speed of 238.91mph, then ate another hole-shot from the Wild'r at Heart funny car to win the 2018 Nostalgia Cannonball with a 6.21, 231.70 over Ramon's 6.41, 215.93. What a great way to close the show before mothballin' the ol' gal - thanks guys



Loved her shades and the parasol's cool too