



words & photos
mike collins

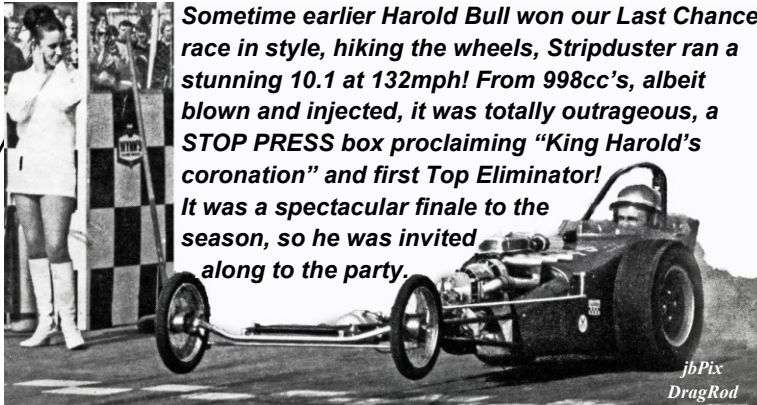
It was late in the season when I was told that a major agency would be making a TV ad at the Pod, everything was organised, "Just get on with it," so I did. Met Tim Pemberton who told me his needs as director, no problem, my early advice being "These are not cars that you just turn on and off at will!" Tim said this was cool and some days later we all met up at the track for a truly memorable few days that expanded my media knowledge to say the very least, heck I even become a telephone hustler!



Nigel Dodd courtesy ttdvds

Mike Hutcherson drove Hounddog to three Top

Eliminator wins in 1968 so Nobby Hills was invited to tow it up and join us. FYI as some folks say, Movin' Mike once pushed this digger the whole 1320feet just to qualify! But our 1968 Nitro Champion Bootsie was the star with the Herridge & Beadle brothers Motovation, in which he won the title by overcoming a hole shot with his first sub ten.

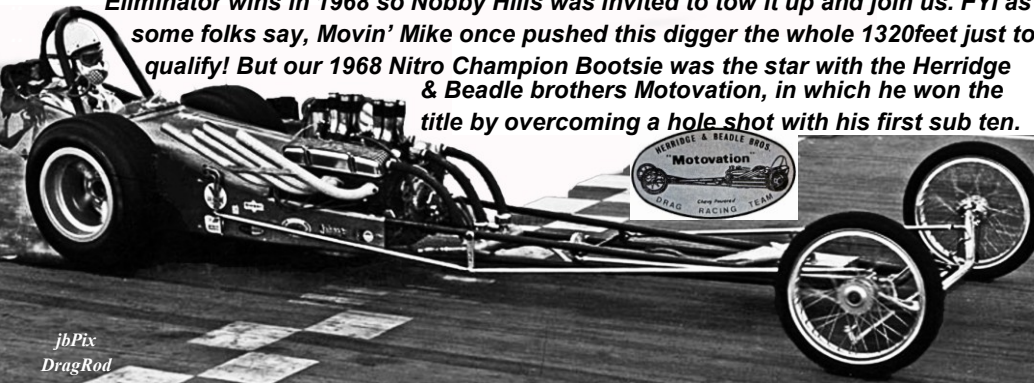


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DRAG RACING & HOT ROD

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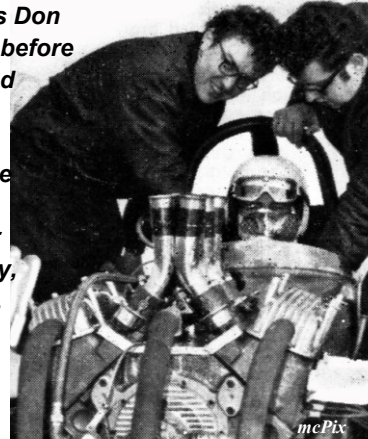
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MOTOVATION

1968 Drag Racing Champion!

JANUARY 1969

This 9.907 at 141.64mph was the first nine by a junior fueller outside the USA, later improved to a 9.73 at 145mph. ... Actually, it wasn't really a party, but it was fun for all of us and hard work too, especially for yours truly, but that's what they paid me for, so there was no bitchin' at all, I just laughed and got on with it! It's for sure the racers didn't bitch 'cos they were getting paid, having fun too, although they had to work hard on their cars, with Beadle brothers Don and Tony strapping Bootsie in before making a burnout that was used for my DragRod cover shot. As you might know, there was no CGI or anything digital in the '60s, film was made with shots skilfully edited, mixed together or overlaid at the end of the day, and during the next few weeks. It was hard work folks tried to make easy by getting things right each time, otherwise it could get costly!



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Before that burn out they shot my flag start, after fixing the missing button on my fly! On my first jump it just popped off leaving gaping jeans – oops! "Props," someone yelled, moments later asking for safety pins and shortly later a rather cute assistant was applying said pins and then my jeans were held together like a chastity belt! Regardless, it worked and I ended up jumping higher than most folks thanks to on-the-ground camera angle with someone shaking the car's chassis rather than fire it up, and that was cool as in truth Bootsie's launch would've squashed me as I was right between his front wheels! Sometime later Tim the director said he'd like to speak with Bootsie about his planned finale, and was soon asking him to make a full bore pass, "Okay," Bootsie replied. "The wrong way down the track with the sunset behind you," added Tim. Again Bootsie said, "Okay," this time with a big grin, looking at me with a shrug that said "No problems." And then Tim said the chute had to be deployed just before reaching the camera straddling the centre line! "What if something goes wrong?" Bootsie asked with a straight face also directed my way like "He's kidding right!" However, Tim was smiling as he replied, "We'll get some great film I guess." "Yeah, you're right" said Bootsie, laughing and adding with a big grin, "but you'll probably never see it!" Adding, "We'll see," still laughing as he walked back to his car...



NitroAlert!



Image courtesy
Tim Pemberton

See the final part of our TV party in next month's Hot Gossip - find out if Tim got his dream finale or made a claim for a wiped out camera! The whole truth on our end of season escapades is eXclusive to Street Machine. And what's captured chief wrench Don Beadle's eyes? Definitely not a spark plug!



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Andy Willsheer photo

Loved this image from the get-go with its Friday night side-by-side NitroFire - Leah Pritchett, 3.64, 329 (left), the quickest babe on the planet (#1 at every Q session of the 2018 Auto Club Finals!), her 3.631 low ET - and j'st 0.003 off Clay Millican's 3.628 NHRA record! Brittany Force's right there too with a 3.644, and Tony Schumacher, (at right), the winningest Top Fuel driver in history (84 wins in 153 Finals!), who not only holds the short track Top Fuel speed mark at 336.57 (despite new speed reduction rules!), but the all-time 1320 record at 337.58 too! On taking a closer look at the shot I was totally blown away by the fully lit tree - that's gotta be rare as rockin' horse sh*t, unless you've got a truly mega buck NASA style camera! Andy normally shoots "at the hit" - his old rig using a 60th & 500 ISO, but his newer Nikon's numbers are impressive. It was shot at 1/500ths of a second (a tick ahead of the tree's 1/400ths), and 10,000 ISO - that's kinda fast to say the least. My award winning NitroFire image of Timo Lehtimäki (on the Pod's last Saturday night quarter mile pass!), was shot at a 25th of a second and 800 ISO - caveman stuff! Talking of which, let's head back to 1968 where, in the past issues, you've been reading of our ever improving and always entertaining race weekends...

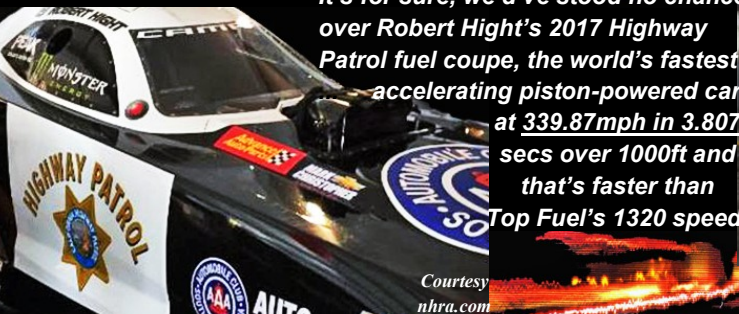


...but there's been nowt on our après race Sunday nights - running single file and playing leap frog round slower traffic on mainway one before hitting the legendary Baker Street. Things were different in those days, there were hardly any parked cars, not much traffic - with a bunch of lights that, on a good night, gave more reds than greens! To say we raced would be an understatement, and also suggest we broke the law, so I won't. But boy did we have fun; there'd often be JB's hot rod 105E with its extra couple litres of straight six power, my '54 Chevy and Bernie D's flatbed pickup. Here we'd be side-by-side - at least until the lights went green! But only on a Sunday night, so it was no wonder that when Ric said, "Hang a right, it's quicker that way," a couple of hours after we'd left Silverstone he'd heard, "No way Jose, let's check out Baker Street!" But we found it almost empty, opening the windows to enjoy the cool evening air, the car idling almost hungrily in top gear as I said, "Guess we should've taken your short cut 'cos there's nowt out tonight." "Right," Ric shrugged, "There's not even any babes," adding with a chuckle, "Think I'll crack a cold one."

mePix

But he didn't, lighting a cigarette instead (only allowed with windows open), happily I might add as, a few moments later, a police Jaguar pulled up alongside, its driver checking out our golden fastback Mustang, a unique sight on London streets that must've looked kinda cool under the light 'cos he was smiling when he said, "That's a pretty car you've got there," both officers chuckling. "Bad choice of words," was an immediate thought, and then found myself saying "But it'll blow the doors off that any day!" In retrospect just as bad, but it seemed like a good response at the time and put an almost bemused look on his face, and maybe slowed him down a tad as, inside the Mustang, a shifter snicked home, a foot applied a gentle pressure on the gas pedal, the easy bent-eight burble coming on strong when I stood on it as the lights changed and we were gone, leaving the Jagwhar eating our dust... The Police car eased back alongside at the next lights, no smile as the driver said "Bet you can't do that again..." Yeah right! This time I put some more rpm up as the amber light came on then punched it, smoking away hard, short shiftn' with my foot firmly on the floor before backing off almost instantly, slowing as the next light went red! "Glad I didn't grab a cold one," Ric laughed out loud as he added, "An' I bet you are too!" Moments later the Jaguar pulled alongside, this time with its driver sat tall, eyes front with no hint of a smile while a very uptight-looking officer in the passenger seat said, "You won't do that again," almost glaring as he added, "Will you Sonny!" My "No sir," was smooth and easy, as was moving the shifter into neutral, putting both feet on the floor - and then the Jag stormed off into the night, blue lights flashing, rear tyres screeching as it sped away, took the first turning and vanished. There was no sight of it when we drove over the intersection, both of us chuckling like school kids, Ric laughing out loud, slapping me on the back as he said, "I can't believe it, we had a Police escort this morning and now this," chuckling around, "The gals are gonna love it, when we tell 'em, heck we might both get lucky!" Giving a wild laugh and asking, "How'd you feel about being permanent designated driver?" "Cool," I thought! To this day the mind boggles when I recall adding, "Two out of three, wow!" However I was thankful the squad car was called into action and the stop lights were all close together or there might well've been a different outcome to our version of Saturday night fever...

Cool



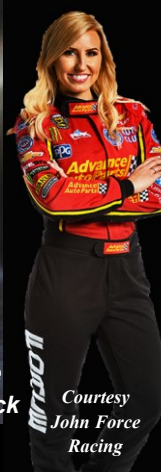
It's for sure, we'd've stood no chance over Robert Hight's 2017 Highway Patrol fuel coupe, the world's fastest accelerating piston-powered car at 339.87mph in 3.807 secs over 1000ft and that's faster than Top Fuel's 1320 speed!

Courtesy nhra.com



Marc Gewertz, photo courtesy nhra.com

Robert's JFR teammate Courtney Force's the fastest babe on the planet at 338.68! No wonder NHRA nixed swept-back headers and changed the track-prep mix to try and slow 'em down - wonder what they'll think of this year...



Courtesy John Force Racing

Now it's back to 1968 where the FGR Stingray was more than just popular with fans at Silverstone, the new Hot Car magazine loved it too. A few days after the Gold Leaf gig a staff photographer asked me to arrange a photo shoot as they wanted a cover shot - a couple days later it was dry but chilly at the track, and boy did we have fun... Wonder what Roy replied when asked why he'd swapped the original power-filled 427 mill for a weak-ass 317 Olds! There again, my first 427 Stingray drive was a real animal, far heavier than his tube chassied ride (its FGR body coming in at around 250lbs!), spending much time on its rear wheels, a great reason to learn how it worked with a tame V8 - but even that saw him thrill fans! Vic Smith's stunning paint job was silver flecked onto black, a copper Metaflake racing stripe laid on the left side, then came the hard work with 30-coats of hand rubbed lacquer giving a finish that'd do justice to any car show - and it did indeed win a bunch of awards.

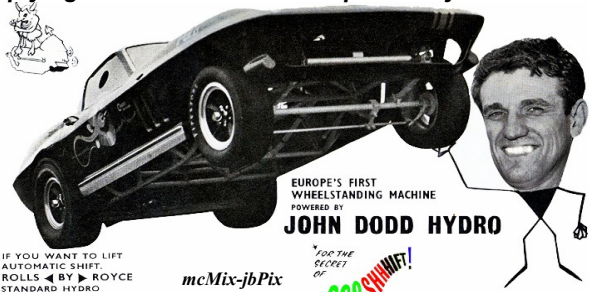


My original story quoted a cost of around £300, the M/T mag wheels taking a third, the Olds V8 £25 from a scrap dealer! FGR also offered an untrimmed Stingray body for £150 - anyone got a time machine! The Stingray was "about the finest piece of customising that Hot Car has ever seen," wrote Richard Hudson-Evans. Drag Rod reported "the most spontaneous crowd appreciation" at the Pod with Roy Phelps' "...continued patience and determination," the now 427powered Stingray "reached for the sky," and "the big blaring V8 kept it that way for the full 1,320 feet..." which, "...really raised the applause..." Seems Roy had mastered the steering technique, a lever connecting the wheel to a pair of brake master cylinders, applying rear wheel brakes independently.

NEW!
HOT CAR
 FEBRUARY 1969 · 2/6
 FOR THE ENTHUSIAST

HEAD TUNING—No. 2
MINI GOES T100!
IMP v. COOPER TEST
BUYING A HEALEY
TORNADO CUSTOM
LOW-LINE HERALD

SPORT INTRO: GO RACE A SALOON!



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 WHEELSTANDING MACHINE
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IF YOU WANT TO LIFT
 AUTOMATIC SHIFT.
 ROLLS A BY ROYCE
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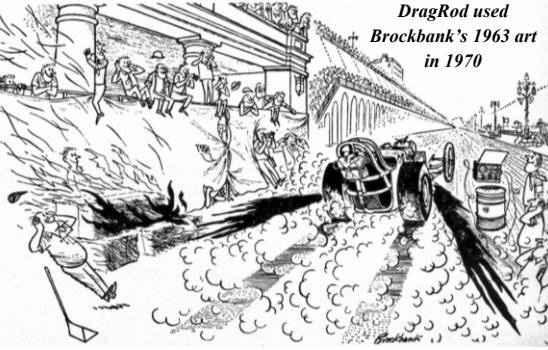
FOR THE
 SECRET
 OF
SSS SHIMM!
 EPISON
 26632

No mention that you could lift it with one hand as John Dodd did (in my first ever advert!), but it wouldn't stay up with chubby Roy in it, so guess who drove the beast for Hot Car's cover shot? Sadly Roy didn't let me fire it up, and not just 'cos it was pointing the wrong way!



Mercury House photo

Fast forward 50 years and we find Nick Pettitt's 1953 Prefect (an '80s hot rod!), doing the same in my flipped Snip of a cool 2-tone Edsel from a film he shot at Madeira Drive's annual Boxing Day meet-up, he wrote that "close to 100 rods, customs, classics, yanks, retro's and tuners were there, and some left a little rubber behind. Still cool to think that Duce and Thompson left their mark there 55 years ago..." A good excuse to show Dante Duce and Mooneyes in action! For me it was instant love for a 1950 Chevy coupe and a blown Morris Minor!



DragRod used
 Brockbank's 1963 art
 in 1970



Photographer unknown BBLF



McSnip-Nick P movie

My first Snip from Nick's film was a cool pair, Colin Brown's Junkyard MC 1950 fastback and Jaime Ayres' blown Brodix Morris built in '97. After making Street Machine's pages it was sold to a guy in the US who definitely had some fun before it came home, was bought by Jaime who took it to New Zealand for a few years, now it's back again, seen in Eastbourne a few months ago with Nick's rod. Click the link and enjoy some cool cruising from Nick's 42 minute [film on the front...](#)



McSnips-Nick P movie



Pomona 2013 courtesy nhra
 50 years on, Big Jim
 Dunn's Mooneyes hides
 ugly shopping cars!
 And races John Force!



McSnip-Nick P movie



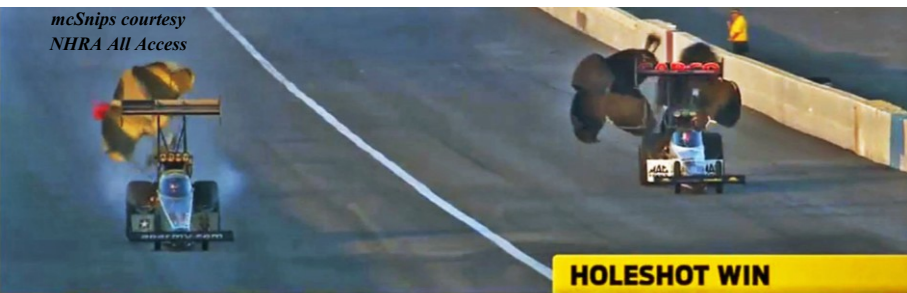
Okay, time out for a pit stop in 1976 and my first meeting with Don Garlits (1975's first Winston Champion), who owned NHRA's Top Fuel [5.63/250.69mph records](#) ol' Nitro Nostrils recalls seeing him make at the famed Ontario Motor Speedway. After seeing this stunning pass, and hearing the mind numbing numbers, he'd remarked "Well f*ck me!" An' that's cool 'cos it blew most folks minds. During our meeting Don told me how hard it was... "Running a fueler, it's a split-second situation, but it takes so much preparation to get it all to come together, people just don't understand how complicated it is to get it perfect every time." Then he told me of making "Five runs, in competition, in the 5-second bracket," adding "That's incredible that you can go up there five times, plus prior to that I'd made four or five more runs in the fives during time trials. To people that are in the sport and are actually in the cars, they realise, that's just so difficult to do. There are so many little things that can go wrong. One little oil spot, one little gust of wind, one spark plug cracks, the engine j'st," slapping his hands together, "pooft, you know, coughs once, the clutch doesn't hook up right. A million and one little things can cause the car not to run at its maximum." With Big Daddy talking 5-second ETs and around 250mph, how much more valid must it be when you're talking 3-second ETs at over 330mph? In the 2018 NHRA Mello Yello countdown season of six races Steve Torrence's Capco car made a first ever clean sweep, unbeaten for 24 straight rounds of racing, its total track time from green light to finish line of 90.599, an average race ET of 15.099 per event which came out at 3.774 per race round! Seems these 21st century fuel cars are easier to drive than getting Big's beast down track under full power! Perhaps my calculator skills might be suspect over so many numbers, but at Pomona's 2018 Autoclub Finals the numbers from 4-rounds of eliminations were 15.076seconds total track time for an average ET 3.769, with credit going to a pair of ol' school tuners in crew chief Richard Hogan and Bobby Lagana Jr who together made the magic that no other team could match, and to the good Lord for aiding one bad-ass Texan to a stunning NHRA Mello Yello Top Fuel Championship with his car faltering only a couple times!



Photo courtesy Dragster Insider nhra.com



Looks like ol' Nitro Nostrils at left – hope he got the shot! Click it for NHRA's Auto Club Finals' awesome [Fast Five highlights](#)



mcSnips courtesy NHRA All Access



SCHUMACHER		TORRENCE	
.053	RT	.029	
3.700	ET	3.702	
331.61	MPH	330.07	

Tell you what folks, watching the action on NHRA All Access was like being there, and by the time he faced Tony Schumacher (his last pass in DSR's US Army car), in the final it felt like I was at the track – especially with the cans on, a cold Bud and the stereo cranked up loud with, as you can see, a hole shot [margin of victory at 0.002 of a second!](#) It was totally AA awesome, despite a pair of quirky passes, the team's performance was NitroPower personified, f*cking AA amazing and quite the most exciting racing I've seen for a while with four new Pro Champions also winning the race – a unique event in itself! Times 've indeed changed, everything's computer controlled to such an extent that all a driver has to do is just that, drive - but at 330mph things can still get kinda hairy even on a 1,000foot track, and that's always fun to watch! One of my favourite Pomona races (at left), a full 1320 street race with the winning car, a 1963 Olds

driven over 2,000miles to the track and running a 9.037 at 148.46mph for glory to the Trans Am's 9.756 at 132.43. You can bet I'll be keeping my eyes peeled for All Access' Early Bird discount, and it's not just the Mello Yello season, it's the whole NHRA library with more straight-line action that you could watch in a year – unless you had to stay in bed perhaps, in which case bring a friend so she can give you a hug if you lose! And talking of which, I'd not been with Street Machine long, in fact we'd hardly started on the first issue when I was told about Billy Ray Richardson, an ISCA judge, long-time street machiner from Texas, in London today and told "it'd be good if you go meet him, just look for a cowboy." Cool, but then I found the hotel was base camp for a country music festival packed with tall cowboys and their gals! Luckily Billy had asked about me and soon I heard, "Mistuh Callins, how y' doin'?" in a full-on Texas accent that introduced me to a tall dude lookin' nothing like a cowboy, and we laughed out loud at the tale. In the 40years since that meeting Texas Billy's greeting was always the same, but sadly he passed away just before Christmas, my sadness, although bolstered with the joy his words always brought, is heartfelt, especially for his son Tommy (who lost his mum Anna in 2017), and his niece Karen (who told me about Billy), and her brother Jim both sending me the images below of the family '55 that's been winning shows since – well there's son Tommy knee high to the hub caps back in the early '70's when his dad was showing the car, then a couple years back when Tommy was driving it again after he too became an ISCA judge, The shot at right was by Tommy's old ISCA adversary Bill Kirkland who helped me in my quest for details. Gonna miss Texas Billy as the dude was lotta fun, he was in our first issue and will live on with his 5-Fiver Chevy. I've a few tall tales from Texas to tell, with some cool images from the ISCA's General Manager Janet Bires that I'll show you sometime...



Photos courtesy Karen Mathews & Jim Hewitt

Photo by Bill Kirkland

Together again, Anna and Billy Ray Rest in peace my friends

mcPix