

World Finals

Santa Pod Raceway

September 17-18th 1994



Every time Ray White's Zephyr left the line it made like an aeroplane and tried to take off. Nice one Ray.

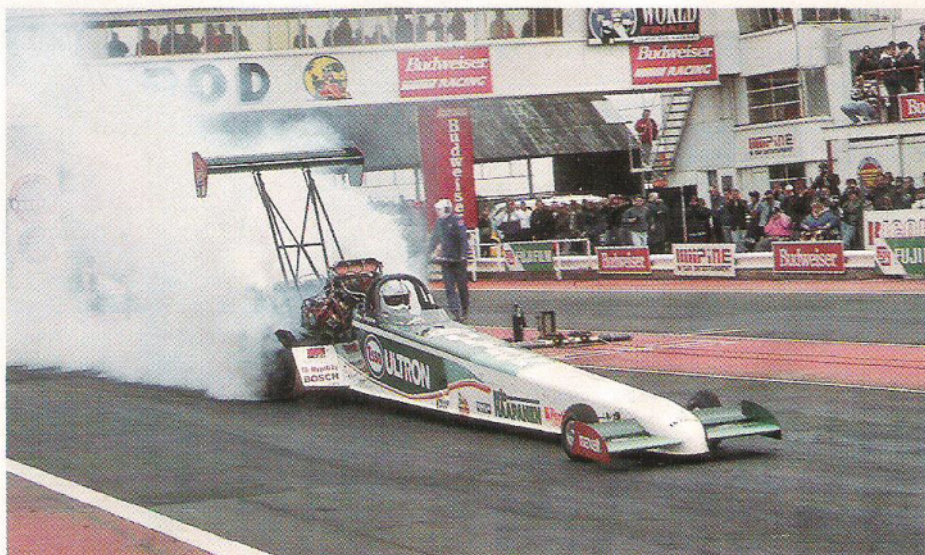
TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY:
DAVE & ALI GIBBONS

WHAT A RACE MEET, great champions crowned and a clutch of personal bests discovered. The tyre smoke has settled and nitro fumes dispersed - this is the story of a wild weekend of the best drag racing you're ever likely to have seen.

SUPER GAS

The field was smaller than expected in the Mac Tools' Championship, but the action was heavy with twelve of the 18 entrants qualifying between the magic 9.90 and 10.00. Brian Pateman topped the class and could secure the title in a couple of rounds, but it was a war for the remaining spots.

Terry Gibbs found new strength in improved



It was fingers in the ears time when the rails came out to play. It seemed like every run saw a new record set, we've never seen anything like it

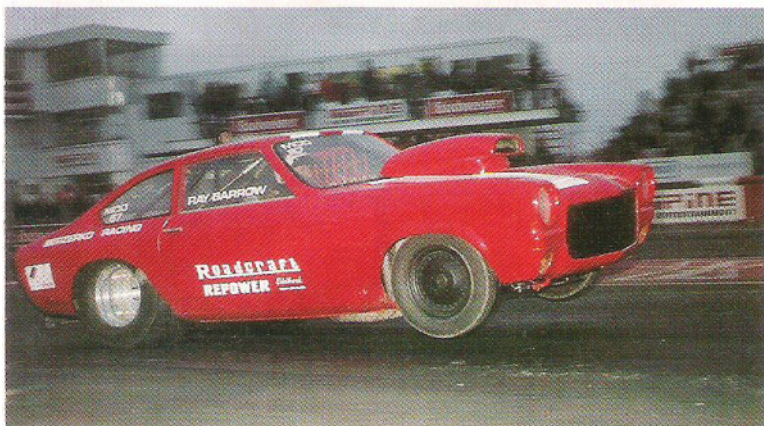
reaction times and was on a mission. He defeated Jon Webster's best ever 9.95 with a slower 9.97 and won a double breakout affair against Billy 'The Kid' MacDermid. Gibbs then went on to out-react both Brian Pateman, (who by now had sewn up the championship) and Ray White in the stonking Mk1 Zephyr. All were close races and gave Terry a place in the final - which if he won would make him the Mac Tools' runner-up.

Racing isn't easy, but Tim Adam had an easier time than some. After a first round no show Tim had to wrestle the little Anglia down the track to a 10.44 over a breakout Nick Davies, and curtailing a rare Santa Pod outing of Alan Flavell by drilling him on the tree and taking a 10.04 win over a stout 9.98. Tim then received his allotted bye run, as allowed for in the 'all cars run' system, and found himself in the final - in the dark.

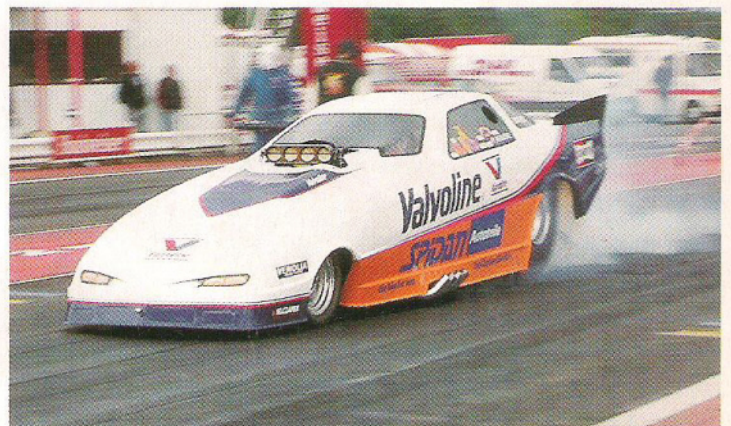
Terry Gibbs looked like a winner, but blew away both his win and the runner-up to champion title with a massive red light. Tim Adam saw it and cruised the quarter for the win. Billy 'The Kid' MacDermid became runner up - Gibbs third.



Packman did 1/8-mile burnouts and the crowds went completely mental. Then he went on to run a 6.81!



Ray Barrow picked the wheels up on every run. Berzerko racing have one sweet little car here



Peter Kruse didn't have the best of weekends when he damaged his motor and was kicked out by Anita Makela



We'll have to wait 'til next year to see a 'four' from a Fueler. Fives are still crazy



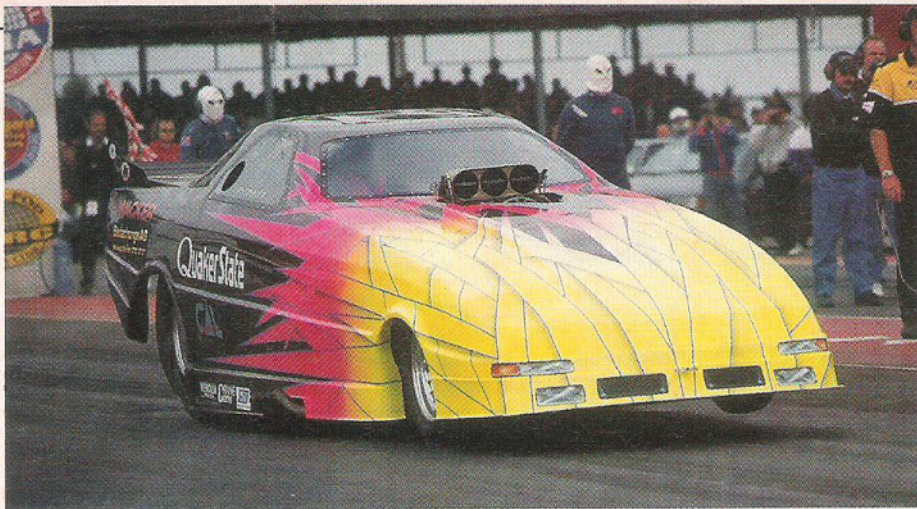
Fuel cars, side by side, at night are an incredible sight. Awesome, even

TOP ALCOHOL

In a weekend of 'quickest evers' it was hard to keep track. Nineteen cars showed for the European Top Alcohol Championship, and England's Barry Sheavills headed the pile with a 6.03. Crew chief Wayne Riddel told me, "We're just trying a few things to see if they work".

Finland's Anita Makela was also on form, she used a 6.28 to defeat a motor-damaged Peter Kruse, and pulled out a 6.11 with lightning reactions to see off Urs Erbacher's serious 6.10. Frenchman 'Rocket' Bob Feeler fell next to the fast Finn. Bob had run teens and zeros all weekend, but Makela took out Monsieur Feeler with a closer than close 0.525 RT - 6.09secs at 227.52 mph pass to a sterling 0.591 R. - 6.07secs at 227.87 mph.

Sheavills had been keeping himself busy in the other half of the ladder. He used a stunning tyre shaking 6.02 against Craig Lowes, and a very sleepy 6.10 to cook Jens Nybo's bacon



Urs Erbacher has one of the most colourful Funny cars on the circuit. Unfortunately he went out in the first round

and send him back to the land of Danepak, his impressive 6.44 didn't cut it. Barry was close to an on the line shut off against Swede, Lief Helander. Sheavills' chute wanted out when the crew pulled the safety pins, thankfully stayed packed on his wowing 6.00 pass 223.38mph.

All watches at Santa Pod seemed to be running slow when the racing continued beyond the Sunday six o'clock curfew, and in the dark both Makela and Sheavills were as ready as they could be, but it was party time in the Sheavill's camp when it all came together. An outlandish 0.949 60-foot time had Barry on his way to an awesome - and I mean AWESOME - 5.97 at 223.13mph winning pass. Chassis builder Geoff Hauser shed tears. Anita's valiant 6.14 was never going to be enough, but she did return to Finland the European Top Alcohol champ.

TOP FUEL

Qualifying gave no indication of what was to come. Only three elimination passes were slower than 5.65, and that meant close nitro action. Seven cars made the pilgrimage to the Pod, including one young Tommi Haapenen from Finland, who astounded all with a top qualifying 5.28 at 267.45mph.

German, Rico Anthes, brought along his two-car operation, Rico chose to pilot his Swindahl-built Fueller, while Kent Persson took the saddle of his number two car - Rico's famous blow over car 'front halved' by fellow

fuel racer Peter Lantz. It features some design from an F1 Benetton - the nose looked a little like a belonged rowing skiff.

Haapenen made a tyre shaking shut off by run, while Rico Anthes was sshhmokin a 6.68 at 144.22 against the 5.26 at 273.23mph of Sweden's Peter Lantz. Fellow Swede, Tony Bryntesson drove past a way out of shape Kent Persson in Rico's spare - Tony's 5.22 pass looked promising. Risto Poutiainen sat in for a pregnant Liv Berstad in the Mobil 1 mount and destroyed a motor big time in qualifying, before he trounced a sleepy Viveca Averstedt. Viveca blew both a slick off the car and a motor on her 5.65/222.89mph effort.

Haapenen eased his way to the final with a useful 5.29 against a red lighting 5.24 from Peter Lantz, Tony Bryntesson managed a 5.62 to a defeating 5.29 at 272.66mph pass from Poutiainen in Berstead's Rune Fjeld machine.

Red lights were common in the darkness, the air was thick with moisture, nitro fumes and a promising final round. Both were solid five-twenty cars and performed their burnout business. Poutiainen made like a bullet and shot away from the line first, Haapenen followed sharply, but his 5.93 at 245.77 mph wasn't enough to beat a rod kicking and on fire through the lights 6.01 at 159.66 run from the Mobil 1 dragster. Peter Lantz earned enough points to take the championship title. I can't wait for next year.

OTHER NOTES AND NOTIONS

- Andy Carter has the quickest and fastest Ford Pop in the world, he ran a mind bending 7.57 at 181.8 mph and looked like an air-to-ground missile. Congratulations Andy and team.
- Alan Packman wants to drive the quickest Ford in the World, his 6.81 was only six hundredths off. His demonstration appearance in the eleven-litre Scorpio sparked off the biggest cheers from the crowd - perhaps Santa Pod should review their Pro Mod policy?
- Micke Kagered drove with a broken foot. Damaged received to himself and his new Ford Mustang at the Summer Nationals forced him bring his old Probe back into play.
- Not only did Rico Anthes try some new front end design, he also tried a huge single element rear wing on his Persson driven number two car, similar to those popular some seven years ago. It didn't work and he reverted to a more advanced dual element design. In my humble opinion, this car looks about ready to fly again.
- Billy 'The Kid' MacDermid relieved race car builder Geof Hauser of a thousand beer tokens at the World Finals, he had run a perfect 9.90 in competition at York a week earlier to take the 'Grand Nine Ninety' award.



SNAP SHOTS FROM SANTA POD

