

Blowin' in the wind

Betty Boop does

Dragstalgia



My AAFZ stood alone on the bridge; talk about runnin' strong, with big NitroFire blowin' in the wind!

words and photos mike collins

"It was on the bridge at midnight..." No, that's not true, but having stopped Betty Boop from revealing all on the track I couldn't very well say "No" when she reached for her zipper alongside the River Great Ouse, so I didn't! After all we'd had a great day of horsepower overload at the Pod, which may well have been a tad understated for my nitro-jaded taste buds, but the delightful Miss Boop had been thrilled by it all. And I must admit the racing we saw was entertaining; the show put on by the Fireforce jet funny car was mind-blowing and I'd even managed to get her wrapped in some nitro clouds! Although the advertised Cacklefest was once again mainly a noise-o-rama, there was a hint of nitro thrown in, which is better than none... But that's their problem and we weren't complaining 'cos, although it was cold and wet, we had a little sunshine and it was fun, fun, fun until daddy took her T'bird away. Actually, that's not true either; we drove away in it after a wild day at the track feeling more than a little satisfied. And you can see the reasons below - yep, side-by-side AA/Fuel Zippos for the first time on this planet! As you'd expect, they both got out of shape; the AA/FZ at right was brand spanking new, straight out of the box, so it ran bit rich! Luckily the Black beast has been running a 100% G-Max fuel mix for a decade or more and it ran straight and blue. But we did give some fans what they wanted - side-by-side nitro! And yes, I am joking, but only because they weren't racing!



Robin Read's baby fueller was also flying the G-Max decal; in competition for the first time since way baaaack when, and still running the original set of Venolia pistons made for him by Gentleman Joe Pisano back in the 80's! "They must be really stout pistons," one spectator commented when he heard the tale. Stout pistons indeed, Joe P would've been proud of his product. Robin was over the moon, not so much with his 7.72 at 173mph (slowed by some blocked jets), but because "Oi beat a fuel altered," he told me with a big grin. And he did too, although in truth it was a BB/FA which had a problematic run, but that's drag racing! That said, the faux NFAA car has run in the sixes and has a bunch more blown an' injected cubes than the almost-tiny AA Daimler dragster, so well done my friend. Hope you get the baby fueller back to some six-second action soon

Sadly we didn't see Mustang Sally on the track, except when she added nitro cackle to the Pod's noise fest. Perhaps, if they gave folks the nitro needed to cackle we might get real side-by-side header flames! Talking of which; thanks to Einstein's theory of relativity, my AA/FZ's put out as much nitro fire, even when blowin' in the wind. Sadly, they don't cackle! But the good thing about taking a true neophyte like Betty Boop to a drag race is that it's all new and exciting so they don't miss NitroThunder...





Track & Field @ Dragstalgia



Obviously there's no nitro fueled eXtravaganza, but the promoter always reserves the right - as Santa Pod fans well know! Instead here's a power pictorial showing some of the downright wicked machines seen on the track and in the fields. I had a ball shooting 'em and hope you enjoy them too. Betty Boop's excitement began on our cross country thunder run, but that's a whole 'nother story. And then she said "wow" as we cruised up to the gate behind this big 'ol Cadillac cruiser, and then they just kept on coming...



Always had a soft spot for the '57 Ranchero Ford



This classic 1967 GTO won a top five trophy on Sunday



1960 El Camino is cool - but green flamingoes!



A 1967 Ford Futura Sports Coupe; an expensive name for a Falcon!



 Sports Coupe

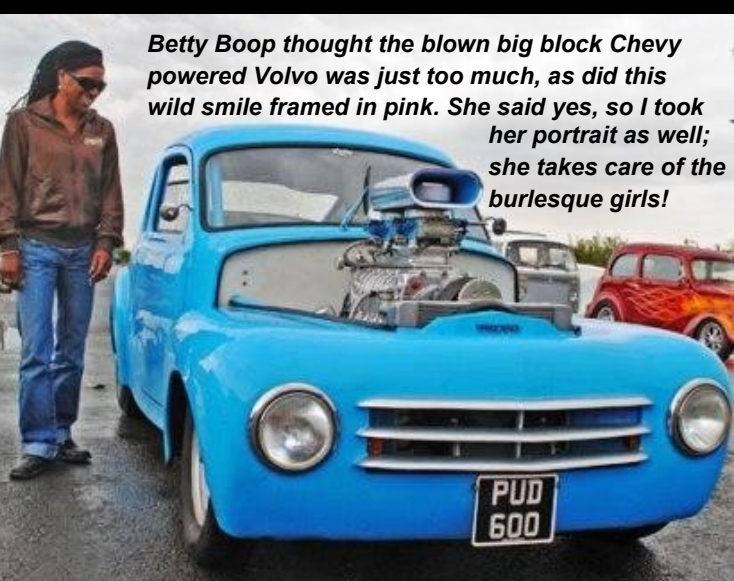
Then it was back in time a tad further; a wild flame job on an early Anglia Ford a stark contrast to the bare blaaaack beauty of the Model B



Love the stance, and expensive looking spoke wheels on both these wild rides



Tough and expensive lookin' drum brakes

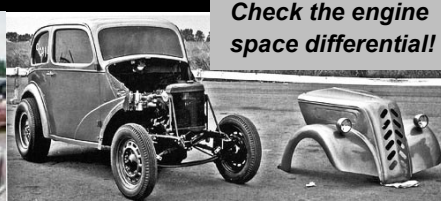


Betty Boop thought the blown big block Chevy powered Volvo was just too much, as did this wild smile framed in pink. She said yes, so I took her portrait as well; she takes care of the burlesque girls!



Wow! Only 10 minutes out of the car and I too was walking through a field of dreams! But, back to the cars; I was lost amongst the clean curves of a '54 stovebolt when a rumble turned my head and this bucket T Ford filled with happy grins and a wild induction system stole my attention





Check the engine space differential!



DRAG RACING anglia.co.uk



Being rapt in the big blocks I missed this rare ol' Ford



Then my world went nuts as I spliced a '57 Chevy...

...and a pair of Anglia Ford's crammed full of big block Chevy power blew me away as I recalled the emptiness in the engine bay of the UK's first Jag powered flip-front Pop in 1967!

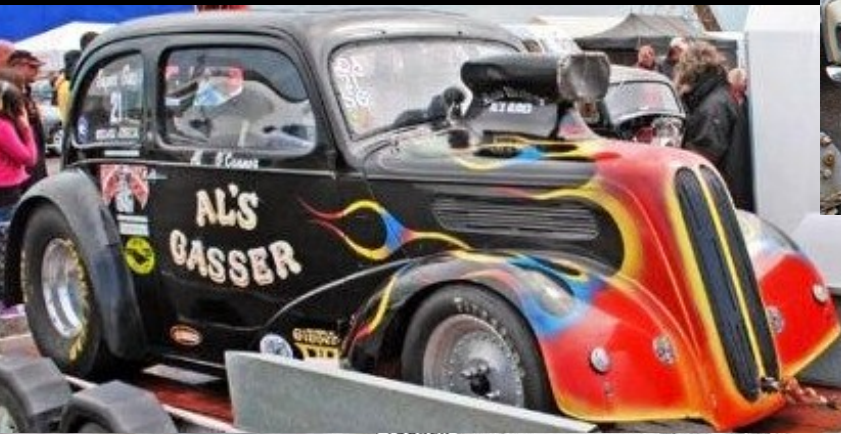


...and the wild '23 bucket T rumbled back by



2012 Anglia mimics John Bennett's '67 Drag Rod shot

Al's Gasser's been doing it since 1974; and what a great tow car! I've memories of "doing the ton" - six-up at Elvington in a similar Dodge Charger with Wild Bill Weichert at the helm!



Dave Gibbon's havin' fun



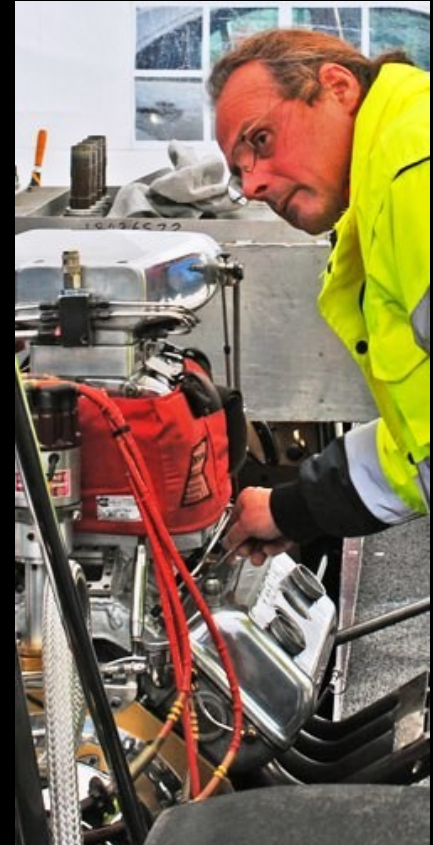
Naked AA/FA motor



Al was faster than I thought!

Al O'Conner in action at both ends of the track from earlier races

Rockin' Ramon's wild Willys scooter and Clive Mecheall's California Kid AA/FA now fully booted and spurred. Sadly mechanical woes kept it off the track for the whole weekend



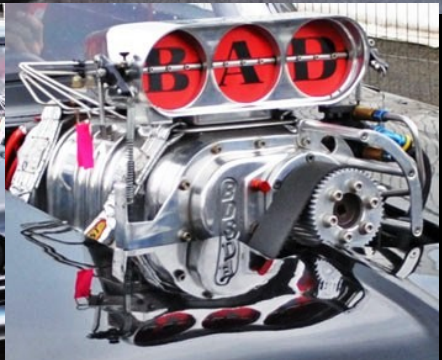
Tall in the saddle!



Robin Read said I'd missed a warm-up ride in his baby fueler, but that I'd be "okay for tomorrow", which sadly never came as I stayed home!



Short an' tall, long an' fat; you pay y'r money and take your choice. Gotta admit that sit-up-and-beg Ford looks cool, but I'd rather have the beater Cadillac. Think I'd also go for the chopped and channeled Model B with the small block and 3-three deuces. As f'r the truck an' the Nova - I'll opt for the BAD blown power plant and stick it in the Model B. All I've got to do now is win the lottery!



Suddenly the sky was a bright blue and we were ready to go racin'





By the time I'd walked the length of the "Back from The Past" flathead dragster, Bradley Cooper had been joined by his dad Ken; Mr Flathead hisself. Ken and I'd been pals back in halcyon days at the ol' Pod track, and it's always fun meeting up



Talk about contrasts – a fat an' low GTO runnin' state of the art 21st century twin turbos and a real hot rod style Willys coupe with a big blown 509 – and an amazing silhouette

1967
BRITISH HOT ROD ASSOCIATION
DRAG
RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS
SANTA POD RACEWAY



Courtesy Betty Boop



And talking about the halcyon days at the Pod; here's a heads-up to my ol' pal from waaaaay back, Ian Demaine. He won the 1967 BHRA Street Championship, gave me my first track ride in his hot Mustang powered Z, a car he still races – without acknowledgement! Even so, it was great to see him getting excited about racin' at Dragstalgia. Way to go Ian (All 1967 photos John Bennett Drag Rod)



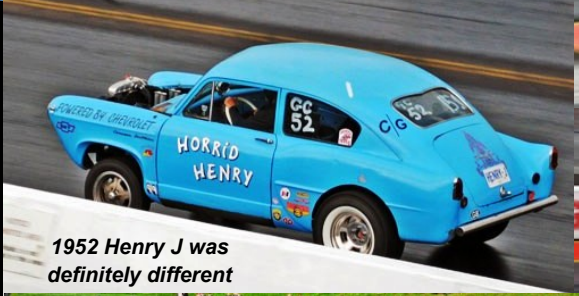
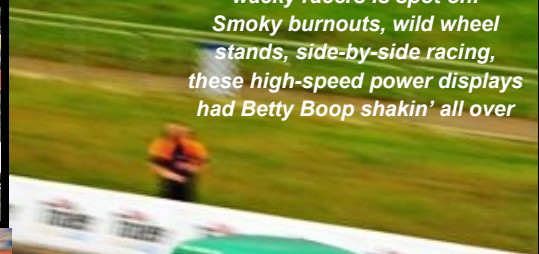
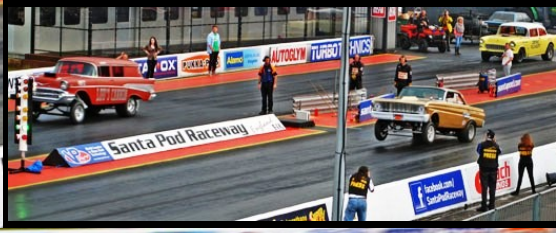
A quick fast-forward and here's Ian Demaine putting a hole shot on Ashley Troop's Nova – but only for a few inches! We didn't actually sit down as the seats were a mess – but they were free!



Dick Sharpe's 435ci A35 Dorset Horn is another veteran racer



Although the nitro's sadly missing from Dragstalgia, the entertainment value of such a diverse array of wild and often wacky racers is spot on. Smoky burnouts, wild wheel stands, side-by-side racing, these high-speed power displays had Betty Boop shakin' all over



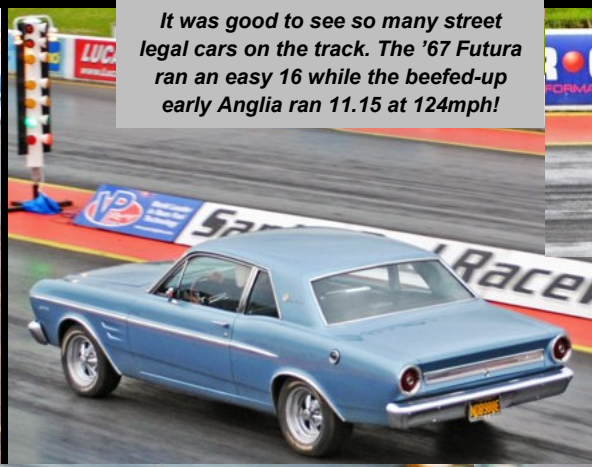
1952 Henry J was definitely different



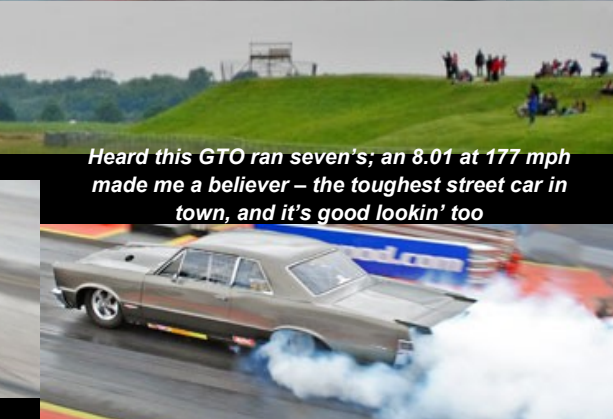
The Cobra and Nova both ran low nine second ET's



Vintage two-wheel action came from Hall of Famer John Hobbs with his 1968 Drag Racing Championship winning Olympus



It was good to see so many street legal cars on the track. The '67 Futura ran an easy 16 while the beefed-up early Anglia ran 11.15 at 124mph!



Heard this GTO ran seven's; an 8.01 at 177 mph made me a believer – the toughest street car in town, and it's good lookin' too



After this lengthy burnout, Nick Davies ran a 6.55 at 206 mph in Lawrie Gatehouse's Chaos AA/FA, the aroma of nitro filling our nostrils as he powered down track. On Sunday it ran a pair of 6.40's

Okay, your guess is as good as mine; is he shootin' the bitchin' '71 Dodge Charger BB/FC, or Kirsten, Ramon's long-legged back-up babe? Either way, Rockin' Ramon ran straight to an 8.20 on a troubled pass.



On meeting him earlier I said how much we all loved his car and then asked, "when you goin' to switch to nitro?" He was grinning as he said, "maybe in a couple of years when I've learned how to drive this car," chuckling as he added, "But first I want to run a seven!"



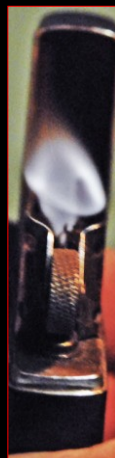
Walking on the moon 1964 --- 2012



Sydney Allard stands proud at Blackbushe in 1964 as son Alan lights 'em up for the last time, running a best ever ET of 10.28 in the Allard; our first blown an' injected rail
(Photographer unknown BBLF courtesy Asphalt Archives)



Over the moon and posing it up big time before taking the Allard onto a drag strip for the first time in almost 50 years



"If I'd known I had to dress like that to go drag racing Stu, I'd have been a baker," said Ronnie Picardo with a chuckle. "But you don't understand Ron, its traditional..."
It's also traditional that you need nitro to cackle!

Either way, they had to more than just wait for their turn on the track; they had to halt their photographic session so the Fireforce jet funny car could make its way out cos it was...

Show time!



Sadly fans on the banking only heard the start of the flame and thunder show as it took place in the right lane, hidden behind the VIP suites!



As you can see, the show they missed was spectacular; Richard Henry was directing the awesome display, pointing and flickin' his fingers with driver Martin Hill following his lead. Each time Richard flicked Martin gave the equivalent number of stomps on the loud pedal and the mighty GE J60 Westinghouse roared, shaking the ground each time – or at least our stand! And Betty Boop went nuts

Shortly later, each blast of flame saw the Fire Force Jet Funny Car move slowly out from behind the suites and closer to the line, with fans at last getting to see, hear and feel the awesome power



When the roar of the thundering five second pass had abated, the ACAG pushed the Allard dragster onto the track...



Sadly the Allard's engine didn't run for long; a valve was "barfing alcohol," a puddle formed and "driver" Andy Robinson, knowing the dangers of methanol, clicked it off. But he was happy, as were the other white suited gentlemen as they'd fulfilled their obligation to "fire it up at Dragstalgia" - even if they didn't cackle!

Hearing the commentator screaming out in 20 foot tall letters that it was "fantastic" didn't help, as it was anything but! For me it was incredible to see the aged beauty being pushed onto a drag strip for the first time in almost fifty years, and to hear it fire up.

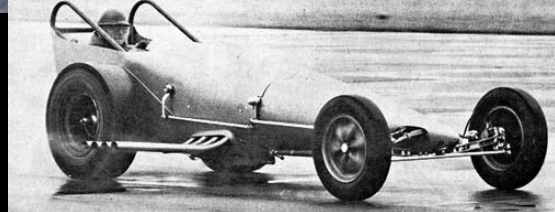
But far from being a religious experience, it did not sound good at all!

The following day Andy Robinson fired it a couple of times on alcohol, confidence building each time and, having devised a way to run it on alcohol from a bottle quite successfully, finally decided to put some "pop" in the tank.

Happily Ian Turberville had some spare G-Max which he donated, and for the first time ever Sydney Allard's ol' dragster fired up on nitro, cacklin' briefly for a small audience who just happened to be around the pit at the time. Lucky truckers!

Stu Bradbury told me later, "Now we're going to finish it properly."

Following an appearance at a prestigious Chelsea show, the Allard is due to be stripped back down again, then fully rebuilt, chromed and painted to original spec so it can be presented as a total restoration of the UK's first dragster



Sydney Allard drivin' it back in the day
Hot Rod Magazine courtesy Nick Pettitt



Meanwhile, the noise fest continued...



It was great to see some flames out there; possibly from adding colour to the alcohol, as some tractor pullers do to good effect. Or were they secret can-tippers!



Robin Read's baby fueler and Wendy Baker's Time Warp AA/FC Mustang both ran G-Max, the aroma of nitro filling our nostrils with pleasure and our eyes with tears



The almost gentle cackle was music to the ears; but only for some of us!



Then it was over, the Allard drawing applause from those in our stand

Saturday night fire-fest...

Dave Gibbon's obviously loves being in the hot seat! Rough Diamond was blistered by flame last year, yet he was back again thrilling fire freaks in the audience. Happily for fans on the banking, this year the Pod put the cars in the left lane for all to see



The way they do it today is not really my cup of tea, but the fans seem to love 'em, it's a good photo op' and Betty Boop thought it was wild. Just a pity we didn't have some marshmallows to roast!



But Betty Boop still wanted more and as she'd never seen a Wall of Death either, we pulled over and had some two-wheeled fun. Must admit, I'm still not sure which is crazier; fire burnouts or three wide on a Wall of Death!

For pyrotechnic freaks, a couple close-ups of real Top Fuel NitroPowered fire burnouts from 30 years ago; awesome then and still AA awesome today - different too!



When you've a drive back through country lanes at night and then across the Metropolis, it always pays to take time out on the bridge over the River Great Ouse and unwind before the, hopefully, fast journey home. It also provides welcome relief after a long day of horsepower overload, Dragstalgia style

Now Betty Boop wants to experience the power and feel the noise of real nitro thunder at the FIA Finals...



Match-race magic...



Photos above courtesy santapodraceway.com



Courtesy Nitro Nostrils (aka Wide Angle Willsheer)

Fans just love nostalgia funny car match race thunder; especially when it comes with a back-up babe like Kirsten and dry-hops before the actual race. Although Nick Davies drove the Chaos AA/FA to a pair of blistering 6.4second ET's, the performance of the weekend had to be that of Rockin' Ramon van der Weurf and his Wild'r at Heart nostalgia funny car on Sunday...



These Snips from Philip Leamon's clip on YouTube show Ramon really rockin' the joint, strapping a giant holeshot (.19 to a .56, on Wendy Baker's Time Warp AA/FC Mustang. Ramon said he said he wanted to run a seven and he stepped up big time to a stunning 7.01, blowing the doors of the genuine nostalgia fuel coupe's 7.09 at a charging 194.7!



Way to go Ramon – see you in the sixes soon. Click the link and enjoy the race; with the added bonus of film from a camera mounted on board Time Warp...

Recently, during the Saturday night show at Hockenheim, the pair showed fans what nostalgia funny car racing is all about - and it was awesome!



Sunday top end shots courtesy Nitro Nostrils (aka Long Lens Willsheer)



Wendy Baker kicked it off, clearing the throats of her nitro fueled Time Warp followed by the pair making strong, almost side-by-side half track burnouts. Then it was true nostalgia time; both cars barking challenges as they dry hopped into stage. What a race; when Ramon's hole shot turned to smoke he kept churnin' and burnin' as Time Warp chased him down track - on the big screen too!



Both cars vanished behind the scoreboards, then the fuel coupe's lit first; didn't matter they both ran 10s, it'd become a good close race that was pure magic - sounded good too! Sadly, producers of the Pod's highly touted TV show opted not to show this great side-by-side funny car duel. However, this links to RMA's Amateur Footage, click it, crank it and enjoy it to the max on YouTube! More nostalgia FC's next time folks, maybe even quicker and faster...