

HOFTalk



The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame News Bulletin Winter 2017 Issue 5

Compiled and Edited by Simon Groves; additional words by Andy 'Tog' Rogers

From the Editor



Welcome to the fifth issue of HoFTalk.

Last November, we held our Gala Awards Dinner at the Oatlands Park hotel and it was another great success. The new location proved highly suitable for the occasion.

In this issue you can see pictures of the Gala and the personalities who attended. We also look at the second half of the 2017 season and some of the treats in store for nostalgia drag racing enthusiasts in 2018.

Season's greetings and look out for an announcement soon about the 2018 BDRHoF Gala!

Gallery of stars of BDRHoF Gala



Lawrie Gatehouse accepting his membership of BDRHoF



Inductee **Pip Higham** was presented with his trophy by Marvin Graham

Pictures: Eurodragster.com, Andy Willsheer



Top Fuel Bike racer **Steve Woollatt** accepting his trophy from Bob Muravez



Lesley and John Wright accept their BDRHoF trophy from Roland Leong



Karsten Andersen and Per Andersen accepting membership from Clay Millican



BDRHoF Chairman **Stu Bradbury** received his trophy from Santa Pod Raceway CEO Keith Bartlett



The Lucas Oils Global Achievement Trophy was awarded to **Steve Gibbs**



Connie Kalitta won a special trophy for his contribution to drag racing



Ian Wagstaff received the Allard/Lucas award for written journalism



The first Allard/Lucas award for videography went to **Barney Campbell** of Box Lane Productions



Mike Collins won the Allard/Lucas photographic award



Tony Thacker was compere for the evening

Chairman of the BDRHoF Stu Bradbury said, *"Congratulations to all our inductees, and everyone who received our appreciation for what they have done and continue to do for our sport. We were delighted to see the top three National Championship racers in Junior Dragster and Junior Drag Bike at the Gala as they are the future of the Sport. Thanks to all of our sponsors and in particular our sponsor partner and British Drag Racing Hall of Fame International Liaison adviser Geoff Stilwell of Beech Underwriting. The BDRHoF has gone from strength to strength, and with Geoff's support, we can offer a memorable weekend to our valued guests. The BDRHOF Benevolent Fund also succeeded in raising a large sum for future grants to racers, officials and the Air Ambulance."*

Members of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame are shown below in alphabetical order:

Alf Hagon	Harlan Thompson	Peter Billinton
Alan O'Connor	Harold Bull	The Phelps Family
Alan Wigmore	John Bennett	Pip Higham
Allan Herridge	John Clift	Phil Evans
Barry Sheavills	John Hobbs	The Read Family
Bob Keith	John Ledster	Rob Loaring
The Brachtvogels	John and Lesley Wright	Roz Prior
Brian Chapman	John Whitmore	Rune Fjeld
Brian Johnson	Karsten Andersen and Per Andersen	Russ Carpenter
Brian Sparrow	Keith and Frances Parker	Sammy Miller
Clive Skilton	Ken Cooper	Santa Pod Raceway
Custom Car Magazine	Krister Johansson	Steve Woollatt
Carl Olson	Lawrie Gatehouse	Stuart Bradbury
Dave Grady	The Murty Family	Sydney Allard
Dave Lee Travis	Nobby Hills	Terry Gibbs
Dennis Norman	The Page Family	Ton Pels
Dennis Priddle	Paula Marshall	Tony Densham
Dennis Stone	Pete Davies	Tony Murray
Don Garlits	Peter Crane	Yvonne Tramm
Geof Hauser	Peter and Erica Bartlett	
Gerry Belton		

Also available in pdf form at

www.eurodragster.com/news/features/HOFTalk/HOFTalk_05.pdf

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HOFdiaries

Bench Racing Returns to BDRHoF Gala

Words by Andy 'Tog' Rogers, Eurodragster.com, pictures Andy Willsheer and Julian Hunt, Eurodragster.com

Fresh from a day at the Brooklands Museum the US and UK guests of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala headed to the Oatlands Park Hotel for Saturday's Bench Race organised by Geoff Stilwell of Beech Underwriting.

The Bench Race panel, from left to right in the picture above right, were: Jim Oberhofer, Tom Hoover, Dennis Priddle, Ron Hope, moderator Bob McClurg, Clay Millican, Jeff Lutz, Roy Phelps and lower row Joe Schubeck, Roland Leong, Steve Gibbs, Ed McCulloch, Bob Muravez, Marvin Graham, Dale Emery and Connie Kalitta.



During introductions **Bob McClurg** set the tone by introducing Tom Hoover as "A legend - just ask him". Ed McCulloch, feeling somewhat encouraged, said about Connie Kalitta that "We all remember when he was a kid!". Jim Oberhofer on being asked to introduce himself quoted Connie's description of Kalitta Motorsports as "A drag racing team which owns an air cargo company".

The Bench Race was a mix of questions from the floor and pre-prepared questions and good-natured insults from Bob McClurg. The session opened with a question from the floor to **Jeff Lutz** about what went through his mind whilst driving his race car from track to track during Hot Rod Drag Week, towing everything he needed. "You've paid three hundred dollars to put yourself through this - they should pay us!", said Jeff. "It's pure hell. You're in survival mode. Winning is easy, getting to the next track is hell. There's no fun to it!". Jeff later related a story about banging up the



same race car three times in the space of two weeks, which will feature in an episode of Street Outlaws which has yet to be aired.

Bob McClurg then asked the panel what was the most spectacular thing they had ever seen. **Ed McCulloch** led. "Jungle Jim and his notoriety", he said. "The bitchiest run I ever saw was in New Jersey. Jungle turned up late, barely got through tech, left with the front wheels two feet in the air and didn't put them down until the first light. And then he went off match racing!"

Roland Leong related a story of one of Don Prudhomme's legendary crashes, this one in Seattle. "Somehow I was first to Prudhomme and he could barely breathe", said Roland. "I went to hospital with him. At Seattle there was only one way in and one way out, but there was a second gate for emergencies. The ambulance stopped by gate two, the gate was opened, Prudhomme was laying there moaning and groaning, the driver hit the gas and I fell on top of Prudhomme! At the hospital a nurse came in with a container for Prudhomme and asked me to hold it for him. I said "We're close but not that close!"



Steve Gibbs' most spectacular moment was at Irwindale. "We booked in eight wheelstanders including Connie Swingle in the Trash Truck. Swingle made his run and went on to the return road so we let Bob Riggle go. I should have known... Riggle was making his run and Swingle appeared wheelying up the return road and they passed at mid-track. It took my breath away!"



Bob McClurg related a story about Connie Kalitta at Pomona in the days of push starts. "Connie's car wouldn't start and they kept pushing, they got to the end of the fire-up road and Connie turned left and the car hit the fence on the left turn, and then that's all the car was good for - turning left". **Steve Gibbs** told the rest of the story. "Another team hit the fence again so there was no fence. Then Fred Farndon

took the gap and hit a portable toilet with someone in there, and he still didn't shut off! The guy came out of the toilet and he was wet all over."

Connie Kalitta's first story was about Tommy Ivo's legendary crew member Tarzan. "Ivo had a bad case of poison ivy. He was in the truck naked under a sheet. They pulled up to a toll booth and there were two women in there. So Tarzan whipped the sheet off Ivo!"

The next question from the floor was to **Bob Muravez** who was asked how he persuaded his wife to let him carry on racing considering some spectacular incidents. "Before I ran I suited up and kissed her goodbye, then when I was strapped in I would point at myself, make a heart, and point at her - I love you", he said.



Continuing the theme of spectacular incidents



Dale Emery

was asked to tell the story of a crash in which he ended up strapped into his race car upside down in a ditch. "The steering wheel came off", he said. "I was struggling for breath. They got me out and the ambulance driver tried to take off my helmet... without undoing it. One of my crew hit him and he ended up halfway across the ditch. The driver asked me who hit him and I said "You

don't want to know"."

Roy Phelps was asked how he persuaded US racers to come to Santa Pod Raceway. "Well, in the last fifty years they invented the telephone!", he said. "In the early days we had Dick Lawrence and Bob George who would call, and back then you had to call the operator and book an overseas call. You had to fly by the seat of your pants but I saw it as a thing we needed to do. The spectators wanted a good show and I wanted to give them a good deal and something new each year. Paying for it wasn't easy."



The panel were asked about their first visit to a race track. **Jim Oberhofer** said "Island Dragway on Long Island. I was five or six years old and I saw Jungle Jim and Don Garlits". **Tom Hoover** said "There was a straight road behind my school, we practiced before school but it wasn't street racing. My first race track was Twin City Raceway in Minneapolis". **Dennis Priddle** said that he started in sprinting at Duxford. "Tony Gane built a motorcycle with a 500 cc Rudge motor. But my first proper drag race

was the Drag Fest". **Ron Hope** said "I was sixteen and Pomona used to run every weekend. I promised my parents I wouldn't race. I took my Chevy there and accidentally raced". **Clay Millican** vividly remembers visiting Lakeland Dragway: "My first memory was seeing Don Garlits and I thought "Dear Lord, let me be able to drive one of these things!", he said.

Jeff Lutz said that his first visit to a race track was National Trail Raceway in the late 1980s seeing some of the old-time big names. "It was like a drug and I've been hooked ever since", he said. "The Drag Fest at Blackbushe was my first drag race", said **Roy Phelps**.

"My first race was at Akron Airport", said **Connie Kalitta**. When asked the year he said "Before Jesus, I think!". **Dale Emery** first attended Kingdom Drag Strip in 1955. "There were three Fuel cars there", he said. "I thought it would be the coolest thing to do to run one". **Marvin Graham** borrowed his dad's car "But I didn't tell him I was going to race!". **Bob Muravez** bought a Corvette which previously belonged to Betty Grable and took it racing, "But I quickly worked out that you don't race the same car you want to take your girlfriend in, it breaks!". **Ed McCulloch**'s parents were farmers and had an orchard near a drag strip. "I took my dad's '55 Buick to do my work and drove it back home", he said. "I was working on the tractor and I saw them racing across the street. I went and made laps then went back to the tractor". **Steve Gibbs** did not do much racing himself but went and hung around outside the entrance of San Gabriel and watched race cars go in and out. "There were so many different types of race car, you didn't know what you would see – this was in late 1956", he said.

Roland Leong said that he grew up with the wrong crowd. "I used to play in a band", he said. "The other guys were older than me. We'd go and race on side streets. As soon as I got my licence at fifteen I went to the drag strip with my mum's car. My sister and her boyfriend were at the races and told Mom and Dad. Back in those days the reputation of drag racers was like Hell's Angels. But I survived!".



Joe Schubeck started racing at Dragway 42. "I built a new car around the 392 Chrysler", he said. "I won that day and they gave me a trophy. "Any money with this?" I asked and they said "No, just the trophy". My mom was a big fan and was so excited that I won a trophy. We were king of the hill every week, I would get home and mom would be waiting for my trophy with her cleaning rag in her hand. One day I came home without a trophy,

Gordon Collett had beaten me but mom said "Maybe he won't be there next week". It got worse the next week because Kalitta was there too! On the Saturday night we took Kalitta out to a place with good broads and gave him a good night. The next morning I was still drunk and I needed oxygen to sober me up so I went to the ambulance and Kalitta was already there with his face in the oxygen mask!"

Bob McClurg then asked the panel how many times any of them had been on their heads. "We were doing well in IHRA", said **Clay Millican**. "The balance of the car had always been weird. We had done a deal with Warner Brothers and had The Dukes of Hazzard on the car. We were up against the Lucas Oil car and the front end moved, I pedalled, and it made another move. The car kept on rotating and everything was very silent. I got in the foetal position and it went over and slid



backwards. I thought "Kloeber's going to be pissed off with me". I radio'd the crew "I'm OK", then I saw the wall beside me. I hit the button again and said "I'm OK". Then I saw fire. I stopped upside down and one of the safety crew tried to undo my belts. He said "Are you OK?" and I said "I'm OK as long as you don't undo the belts!".



Ed McCulloch recalled his famous two-car crash with John Collins at Baton Rouge in 1984. "The track was marginal at best", he said. "We left the start line and then eighty feet out the car took a hard right turn. I T-boned Collins, went upside down, slid across the track, hit the wall and the fuel tank exploded. When we stopped Collins was upside down and I was right side up. We were both OK, got out and embraced,

but it was the worst day of my life".

Marvin Graham recalled a run in Michigan. "We were running Low ET every round but we ran left lane every time", he said. "This time I went right lane. I didn't know about the bump. The front wheels came up and at three hundred feet I was looking at the floorboards in the car. The front came down, a front wheel came off, I hit the throttle and it hit the rail - in those days there was a gap at the bottom of the rail and the front of the car went in the gap. I hit the throttle again and the clutch went "Boom!". One of my crew got to me and he was pissed. He said "Get out of the car and let your daughter know you are OK - she is going frantic on the start line!".



Dale Emery's big Moment came at Indy in 1978. "I was carrying the front end, it came down and hit the rail and the car went in the air", he said. "I thought "This will hurt". The next day Ray Beadle asked me to work with him". **Tom Hoover** remarked how far safety has progressed. "Back then front motor fires were a problem", he said.

Joe Schubeck related a story about racing Connie Kalitta at Dragway 42. "I watched Kalitta walking up the right lane and down the left lane", he said. "He had a rag and he was cleaning patches and removing stones. Then he came to me and said "I can't see out of one eye, can I take the right lane?". I said "OK" and of course the left lane was covered in oil and my tyres spun. Kalitta had Gordon Collett next round, I watched him walk the lanes again and then he went to Gordon and said "I can't see out of one eye, can I take the left lane?"."

Roland Leong said that for a short while he and Connie Kalitta were dating the same girl. "My last wife!", interjected Connie. Roland went on "I went to one race and there were two big testicles on his trailer and underneath it said "These ain't pineapples!". One of Connie Kalitta's Bounty Hunter dragsters famously

had a panel on its rear listing all of the racers he was going after, with a line through the name when he had beaten the racer. Don Garlits looked for his own name on the list and asked Connie why he was not included. "I told him "Go get your own list"!", he said.



Steve Gibbs told the story of a huge crash which Connie Kalitta suffered in the early days of rear-engined dragsters. "Connie had a wedge-shaped car", he said. "It was a spectacular accident, he got into the finish line sign. We had a guy sitting at the finish line, a black guy, and he was at the sign which Connie took out. Connie was being looked after, we dealt with Shirley, and then we thought "Where is the finish

line guy?". We expected to find pieces of him everywhere. But we found him drinking a Coke in the finish line tower. We told him he couldn't sit there again and I think he thought we were discriminating against him."

Dennis Priddle was asked about his first experience of night racing. "Tony Densham was in Commuter and I was in Tudor Rose", he said. "We looked and we both thought it didn't look too bad. Back in those days you sat very low in the car and all you could see was the back of the supercharger. It looked like a lit track but it was very dark. We got to the end and it was completely black. I got stopped and it was totally silent. I heard a voice calling "Dennis?" and I called back "Is that you Tony?". He replied "Yes, where are you?". We could only see when the push car came. I was right on the outside edge of my lane and Tony was right on the outside edge of his lane. I promised myself that next time I would go to the end of the track and see how dark it was."



Bob Muravez agreed about the inadequacies of lighting in the early days. "Taft Drag Strip had a big searchlight looking down the track", he said. "As you took off your shadow got bigger and bigger and you were driving into a big black hole. You don't need lights, you need stupid young men."

During the Bench Race original paintings by Paul Whitehouse were presented to Clay Millican, Marvin Graham, Jeff Lutz, Roland Leong, Dale Emery and Connie Kalitta. Tony Thacker conducted the auction to raise funds for the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund including the sale of a crash helmet worn by the legendary Raymond Beadle on his first visit to Santa Pod Raceway.

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BDRHOF Benevolent Fund raises \$10,000

The BDRHOF Benevolent Fund was established as a registered Charity to provide benefit to people involved in drag racing who have need of financial support through injury, accident or financial circumstance, including organisations that operate in drag racing but also for the public benefit. So the money raised by donation goes back into the sport. No money goes to the BDRHoF, which is funded by separate sponsors.

At the 2017 BDRHoF Gala Dinner there were auctions, raffles and sales of some eye-watering prizes. The total raised was £8000, or \$10,000.

At the Beech Underwriting/BDRHoF Bench Racing session on 18th November at noon, when 16 legends from the sport regaled the 100-strong audience, a range of memorabilia was for auction and sale.

The star auction prize was the very helmet worn by the late Raymond Beadle when he raced at Santa Pod Raceway from 1977 to 1980. Also for auction is a pewter tankard presented to Raymond for setting a new speed record of 221mph at his very first appearance in 1978, and a Skoal Bandit team shirt signed by Don 'The Snake' Prudhomme, who raced at SPR in September 1980. The winning bid was from Keith Bartlett, Santa Pod Raceway CEO and the item is destined for the track's forthcoming museum.



For sale before and after the Bench Racing session were signed copies of the books 'Six Seconds To Glory' by Don Prudhomme and 'Mongoose, The Life and Times of Tom McEwen'

signed by the Snake and Mongoose themselves. Also for sale were pistons signed by John Force and other goodies. Our grateful thanks to 'Waterbed' Fred Miller (sadly absent from the Gala due to an elbow problem) and Bob and Sharon Muravez for helping to source these items and get them signed.



Les Downey from Lucas Oil UK very kindly agreed to raffle one of Lucas Oil's remote-controlled racing trucks (valued at over £300) at Saturday night's drinks reception. Tickets in aid of the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund were sold on the entrance to the drinks

reception at £2.00 each.



At the Gala Dinner, a silent auction was held for an amazing prize worth £2,000 of two event tickets and Kalitta Motorsports VIP passes to the NHRA Gatornationals at Gainesville Raceway from 15 to 18 March 2018, including return flights from the UK to Orlando, seven-day car hire plus up to £500 towards hotel costs booked through DialAFlight. The opportunity to make a sealed bid was open to all attendees at

the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner, with the exclusion of Board members and advisers and BDRHoF Selection Panel members. The winning bidder with a bid of over £3,500 was William Sherratt Snr, son of Funny Car racer and cackle car owner Bill Sherratt. Many thanks to him and to Bobby Tuggey of DialAFlight and Jim Oberhofer of Kalitta Motorsports for arranging the prize.



And Kalitta Motorsports' major sponsor Mac Tools supplied a 3-Drawer Utility Cart worth over £1,000 which was auctioned online courtesy of



of Eurodragster.com. The auction took place between Monday, 6th November and Sunday 12th

November, and the lucky winner was Pro Modified racer Chris Orthodoxou. Thanks to USAutomotive for funding shipping to the UK to their warehouse in Bedford.

Stu Bradbury, trustee of the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund and Chairman of the BDRHoF said 'We are truly grateful to 'Waterbed' Fred, Bob and Sharon Muravez, Les Downey, DialAFlight and Mac Tools for making these incredible prizes available which will raise money for our Charity and benefit racers directly in the future.'

This theme of fundraising by auctions, raffles and charity sales will be continued into 2018 with chances to win more fantastic items and contribute to the sport's own charity at the same time

Sydney Allard Media Awards

The Sydney Allard Media Awards pay tribute to the influence of journalists, photographers and videographers in the promotion of drag racing, along with the role played by Sydney Allard in establishing the sport in Europe during the early 1960s. This year the awards are sponsored by Lucas Oil Products UK. Over the last 20 years Lucas Oil has spent countless hours on the race track and in the laboratory to develop a wide range of high performance motor oils and lubricants. From this, Lucas Oil now has a lubricant to cover all aspects of the motor industry, from motor racing to your everyday vehicle.

Photo journalism

The outright winner of the 2017 Sydney Allard Photo Journalism Award was Mike Collins for a dramatic launch shot of Finnish racer Timo Lehtimaki's Top Fuel Dragster which was taken from the pit side grandstand at Santa Pod Raceway in 2011 and first published in Eurodragster.com in December 2016. It was taken using a Nikon D3000 with a 55-200mm telephoto lens and 3D-tracking (11 points). Mike has entitled it 'The Razor's Edge'.



Guild of Motoring Writers President and Pink Floyd drummer, Trustee of the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, and Co-Patron of the Allard Chrysler Action Group Nick Mason selected the top three and chose the winner. The independent judge from Octane Magazine, Associate Editor of Octane Magazine Glen Waddington then ratified Nick's selection.

Second place went to 2015 winner Jeni Long of yawningcatphotography.com for her photo of Graham Smith's Snow White '57 Chevy burning out at Shakespeare County Raceway at the 2017 NSRA Nostalgia Nationals. Third place also went to Jeni Long for another burnout photo, this time of the 327 Chevy-propelled Outlaw Anglia of Merv Barnett and also at the 2017 NSRA Nostalgia Nationals held at Shakespeare County Raceway.

Videography

The second Media Award is for video, which is a new category this year. Nick Mason considered amateur and professional videos reflecting coverage of British Drag Racing and associated activities during the 12-months ending July 2017. Our winner is Barney Campbell of Box Lane Productions for his video entitled 'Welcome to Santa Pod' which is full of wonderfully innovative camera work using a hoverboard amongst other devices.



Written Journalism

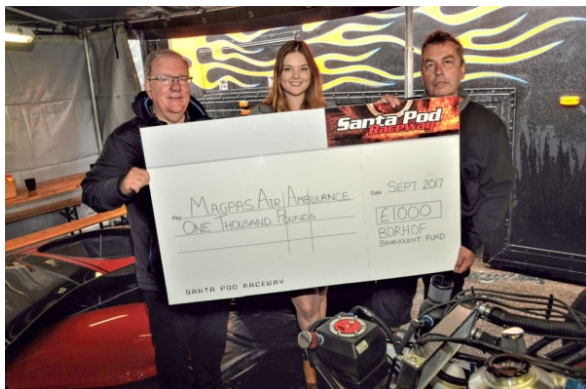
The winner of the 2017 Sydney Allard Written Journalism Award is someone very well respected in the motor industry. It is award-winning author and motoring journalist Ian Wagstaff. One time Press and Promotions Manager for Silverstone Circuit and member of the Guild of Motoring Writers, Ian first attended drag racing events in the early 1960s. Ian wins the award for his race track profile on

Santa Pod Raceway. The Chief Judge was Guy Loveridge, Deputy Chairman of the Guild of Motoring Writers. The piece was published in the May 2017 edition of PRI Magazine which has wide circulation in the US and internationally.



Ian's piece summarises the history of drag racing in the UK and the importance of the variety of events taking place at Santa Pod Raceway - eighty in total per year. Interviews with Trakbak Chief Executive Keith Bartlett and Commercial Manager Caroline Holden show their passion for the culture of the sport in the UK and the importance of family involvement.

BDRHoF donation marks start of Air Ambulance Week



When Swedish Pro Mod star Roger Johansson crashed at over 200mph at The Main Event in 2016, it was Huntingdon-based Magpas Air Ambulance that airlifted him to hospital from Santa Pod Raceway. This past weekend at the European Finals, making his first competitive Santa Pod appearance since that traumatic day, Roger was delighted to return the favour by presenting Magpas with a cheque for £1,000 to mark the start of National Air Ambulance Week. The donation was made on behalf of the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund.

The BDRHOF Benevolent Fund is a registered charity formed in 2016 with the object of helping distressed members of the racing community. This purpose includes contributing to Air Ambulance services that cover the main drag racing venues in Britain. The coincidence of Roger Johansson's return to Santa Pod and the start of National Air Ambulance Week provided the ideal opportunity to make the Fund's first donation to Magpas Air Ambulance.

Magpas Air Ambulance's Head of Communications, Antonia Brickell, said: "We're thrilled to see Roger Johansson looking so well and to hear he has made such a good recovery. We of course wish Roger well and every success in his future racing career."

“We’d also like to thank the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund for its generous donation. Magpas Air Ambulance is not a state-funded service and relies on generous public donations to continue saving lives. Once again, thank you from everyone at Magpas Air Ambulance for helping us to continue delivering our vital service.”

After Santa Pod’s track crew and medical team had rescued Roger at the crash scene, they worked alongside the Magpas enhanced doctor and paramedic team to stabilise his condition. Magpas Air Ambulance then transferred the injured racer safely to hospital, monitoring his condition all the way. Santa Pod’s Commercial Manager, Caroline Holden, was instrumental in arranging this weekend’s presentation and said: “We think the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund is an admirable initiative and we’re pleased that its inaugural donation should be made to Magpas during our biggest drag racing event of the year, the European Finals. We had planned a grand public presentation to take place on the start line around midday on Friday, but the downpour defeated that. Instead, the presentation took place under cover in Roger’s pit area, and we’re now eager to spread the news of it far and wide.”



The presentation was filmed for regional television news.

More stars for BDRHoF Awards Gala

In early September the BDRHoF announced that a further current NHRA star will be attending, and be joined by the two time winner of Hot Rod Drag Week who has the quickest and fastest street car on the planet, and a British drag racing journalist who has held senior positions in the US racing world.



Clay Millican, from Drummonds, Tennessee, got his first race car at the age of 16. After working as a forklift driver as well as competing in IHRA Modified Eliminator, his friend Peter Lehman moved Clay to the professional ranks by buying a Top Fuel team in 1998. With Peter, Clay was dominant in IHRA competition and won six IHRA championships.

Clay became a full time NHRA competitor from 2012 with crew chief David Grubnic. In 2017 he won his first NHRA title at Bristol, and in September clocked the quickest Top Fuel ET in history, 3.631sec, at St. Louis. Clay has also hosted Speed Channel's Blow It Up and Drag Race High, and co-starred in Pinks All Out.

Clay was joined by **Jeff Lutz** who is the two time winner of Hot Rod Drag Week, a test of five drag races in five days at four different tracks with the race cars

having to drive on public highways 1,000-plus miles from track to track. Jeff previously ran two '57 Chevys titled Evil Twins and became a crowd favourite. then built a street-legal Pro Mod Camaro known as MadMax which had run at NMCA Pro Street events. Following his win at the 2016 Hot Rod Drag Week, Jeff ran bests of 5.85/250 with it - and then built a third '57 Chevy which he intends to campaign at Drag Week 2017 on 10-15 September, and in the TV show Street Outlaws.



On the day after the Gala, Clay, Jeff and US TV producer Ray Iddings made the journey to Santa Pod Raceway and also to EBC Brakes in Northampton for a Motor Trends' Roadkill show.



Born in Nottingham and after seeing his first Top Fuel Dragster pass at Santa Pod Raceway, aged 11, **Melvyn Record** became a drag racing journalist in the UK. In 1989 he moved to the US and was employed by the NHRA as a writer and photographer with their weekly newspaper National Dragster. Later, he was promoted by the NHRA to Director of International Relations and Director of Field Marketing. In 2000 he became Vice President of Marketing at Infineon Raceway in Sonoma, California and now holds the position of Vice President Marketing and Sales, Mazda Raceway, Laguna Seca.

BDRHoF Chairman Stu Bradbury said "We are delighted that the Gala Dinner is attracting so many figures from the US scene who can share in the excitement of the inductions and awards being given. It gives us a real international reach".

HOFpeople

These are stories about BDRHoF members and what they have been up to recently. Send your stories to simon@britishdragracinghof.co.uk so we can include them in the next issue.



The final two races of the Havoc Fuel Altered team's US tour were at US 131 Motorsports Park in Martin, Michigan and at Famoso Raceway, Bakersfield, California. BDRHoF member and crew chief **Rob Loaring** worked with driver Nick Davies and crewman Scott Barnes to prepare the car.

At US 131 Motorsports Park, Havoc joined Ron Hope's Rat Trap, Randy Bradford's Topolino and Dave Hough in Nanook as well as Mike Hilsabeck's Arizona Thunder and a local car. The cars ran on Saturday and Nick ran a best of 6.34 at 234.99 against Rat Trap before having to lift against Nanook.

The visit to the famed California Hot Rod Reunion was the most successful of the four outings and had a bumper field of thirteen of the world's finest classic Fuel Altered. Supported by vocal UK fans, Havoc ran personal bests galore to win the event with a best of 6.117 in the final against Nanook.

Havoc's 2017 US tour was supported by Beech Underwriting Agencies, Rat Trap Racing, the NFAA, USAutomotive, Motorstate Distributing, Lucas Oils, ARP Fasteners, Goodyear Tyres, VP Racing Fuels, Thacker & Friends and the Sherratt family.

Drag Racing DVD producers **Zeon TV** have released their 2017 UK drag racing DVDs with a strong Nostalgia element and including shots of and interviews with BDRHoF members. The superb DVDs cover Dragstalgia, the NSRA Hot Rod Drags, the Mopar EuroNationals, Serck Motorsport Outlaw Anglia, the Wild Bunch and UK Nostalgia Super Stock / JT Construction UK Top Sportsman as well as MSA Pro Modified, Topspeed Automotive Street Eliminator and ACU Super Street Bike. You can purchase any or all of these Zeon DVDs for £14.95 each plus £1.50 postage per order to UK and £1.75 to anywhere else in the world. All DVDs are region free and in PAL format, which means you can watch them on a computer anywhere and on a PAL-compatible TV. Various deals are available for the purchase of multiple titles. You can order on-line at www.quartermilehigh.com.



The UK's **National Street Rod Association** have announced that their **Nostalgia Nationals and Hot Rod Drags** will take place at **Santa Pod Raceway** starting next year. The NSRA said: 2018 marks the 25th Annual NSRA Nostalgia Nationals and the 30th Annual Original Hot Rod Drags, a milestone year for sure. With continuing uncertainty and much speculation about the immediate future of the facility at Shakespeare County Raceway, a decision has had to be made to secure the long term future of both events, which have become a major feature in the calendar for both hot rodders and drag racers alike.



With that in mind, both events will now take place at Santa Pod Raceway, the Nostalgia Nationals over the weekend 11th-13th May and the Original Hot Rod Drags on 14th-16th September. The formats will remain the same, with a firm

commitment to pre-1973 RWYB, coupled with the ever-popular and entertaining action provided by Outlaw Anglia, the Gasser Circus, Supercharged Outlaws and the Wild Bunch, as well as some additional track action which will be announced in the not-too-distant future.

We are still confident that we can retain the distinct flavour of both meetings with the emphasis still being that of a Rod Run which just happens to take place at a race track. It will still



be the same team promoting the events and sorting all the details, we've even been assured that the admission fees will stay the same, so we look forward to welcoming you all at our new home.

On a final note, the NSRA would like to thank the management and crew at Shakespeare County Raceway for their tireless support over the last three decades, as well as recognising the support we have had from the team at Santa Pod and their desire to secure the long term future of both events. Most of all though, we want to thank each and every one of you who have supported us through the years, you make it all worthwhile. Here's to the next thirty years!

Our very best wishes to BDRHoF Selection Panel member and Shakespeare County Raceway Promotions Manager **Jerry Cookson** who has made a successful recovery after suffering a heart attack at the Pistons and Props Drag Demos at Sywell Aerodrome. Jerry expressed his gratitude to all those who helped, supported and visited him during his stay in hospital.

BDRHoF Drag Racing History consultant **Nick Pettitt** has been busy with a new

British Drag Racing & Hot Rodding Archive...

photos, memorabilia, audio and Time Travel DVDs...



web site with masses of historical pictures and information at timetraveldvds.blogspot.co.uk. And on YouTube, Nick has posted cine films that fan Trevor Webber took of UK drag racing between 1973 and 1980. To see these historic videos, just search 'Nick Pettitt' on YouTube.

Earlier in 2017 **York Raceway** fans were delivered a huge blow as the land owners were made an immensely better offer to rent out the main runway of Melbourne Airfield (the home of York Raceway and drag racing in the north of England) to a huge parts manufacturer, with a stipulation that no drag racing takes place on the site.



Months of negotiations and improved rent from Pennine Raceway Ltd as a direct result of the increased race and RWYB entry, along with forty years' goodwill, meant that the land owner went back to the parts manufacturer and told them they had to find a way to share the venue or leave, putting the deal at risk. After a brief stalemate, the parts manufacturer agreed to share the main runway with drag racing. The land owner gave drag racing its terms: raise a minimum of £100,000 minimum towards resurfacing the track and reinvesting into the facility by 1st January 2018 and you can continue to use the site for drag racing for the next ten years.

This was soon realised by many like-minded people to be the catalyst for a new beginning for York Raceway to become a far better facility than ever before. Some would say that to raise £100,000 in five months from sponsors and donations alone was an unbelievably steep mountain to climb, but Pennine Raceway Ltd and the Pennine Drag Racing Club agreed to at least try to make this happen.



PDRC and PRL put in their reserves of £10K each and the first physical donation of £1000 was handed over by York Raceway's promoter and BDRHoF member Chris 'CJ' Murty from his personal savings. Soon donations were coming in from other racers and supporters and new sponsors came on board, enticed by the prospect of generating revenue for their businesses. An army of supporters came together and created new ways of generating money: selling old parts,

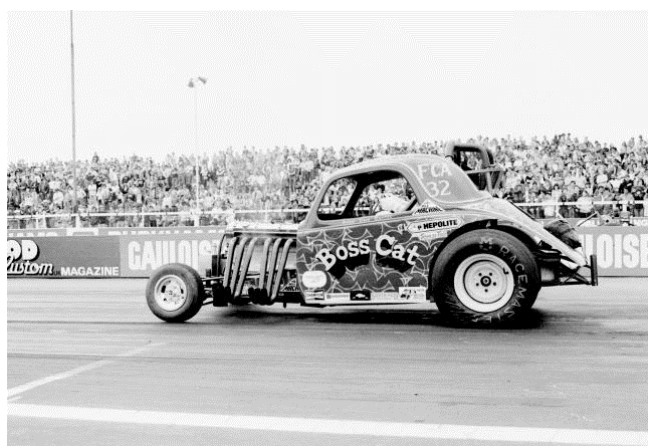
publishing calendars, selling prints, raffling off their services, anything which could add something to the pot.

With three weeks to go until the deadline PDRC and PRL announced they had reached the required amount. The drag racing community has united and played their part to save York Raceway and give the community a permanent drag strip for the next ten years.

HOFtributes

Dave Burfitt We were very sorry to hear of the death of longtime UK Comp Altered then bike racer Dave Burfitt. Dave's son and fellow racer Andy writes:

Dave started drag racing in 1976 with a Jaguar-powered altered called Expectations, which he then ran in Junior Comp. His first win with the bog stock 3.8 Jag came at only his second meeting at Snetterton, qualifying third and managing to drive around the likes of Tim Claxton and Brian Mondey for the win. In 1977 the car was re-bodied with a Pat Cuss Austin A35 to, in his words, "Hide the awful chassis!". The car then changed names to Boss Cat. Dave enjoyed success with this car in 1978 and in 1979 won the NDRC Senior Comp championship (Pic courtesy Acceleration Archive).



In late 1979 there was a change to the Topolino, and a new chassis was bought from the Cross Brothers. The most memorable race with this car was in Holland at the 1984 Zandvoort circuit meeting, run over the eighth mile. Dave managed

the Bracket 3 win over John Mullan's Camaro in the final. In 1985 Dave took a year out to build his own house down in Dorset, however during this time Dave he bought a rolling chassis from Andy Muir and the Dart team (formally Norm Wheeldon's Wheel Thing). The same 3.8 Jag motor now, with a few goodies from Jim Tester and a different clutch, was fitted to the above mentioned chassis. Dave ran this car with success until 1987 when he decided to revisit his love of motorcycling. Riding around Europe and competing in various trials and rallies kept his thirst for competition fuelled.

Forward to 2004 and after helping Son Andy with his 10.90 Bike Dave's passion for drag racing was re-ignited. With the purchase of Fred Furlong's Suzuki GSXR 1100 Dave joined the racers in 10.90 Bike. At the 2004 FIA European Finals Dave took the 10.90 win and Son Andy took the 9.90 Bike win. This would be such a memorable race for both, and the last time that both 10.90 Bike and 9.90 Bike classes would run at the European Finals.

In 2004 Dave finished runner-up in both the UK National Championship and the APIRA Championship. In 2005 Dave added nitrous and a lock-up clutch and moved to the changed-index 9.50 Bike class. Over the next few years Dave would enjoy many memorable races at Santa Pod and Shakespeare County Raceway with Son Andy running in the same class.

Dave will be sadly missed but will always be remembered by us and many others as a kind and loving husband, father, grandfather and friend who would always put others before himself. A quiet and unassuming man who took pride in all that he set out to achieve.



Colin Digby We were sorry to hear from Terry Revill of the death of Colin Digby. Terry Revill writes: Colin was one of the leading lights of the Street Bike class in the the early 1970s riding a gold Dresda Honda, and was one of the first to race a Japanese bike. Colin then crewed for me and was instrumental in my becoming the first person outside of the states to run nines on petrol. He then helped to build Assassin, the double-engined

Kawasaki gas bike. Lots of memories of racing including many trips to Holland. Colin was liked by many and will be missed by many. Rest in peace.

Images courtesy Keith Lee and Kelvin Fagan

Sag Southworth.

We were very sorry to hear of the death of UK Wild Bunch racer and supporter Dave Southworth, universally known as 'Sag'. A testament to Sag's mettle is the fact that even though terminally ill he continued to race, and in fact set a new Personal Best for speed in recent weeks.

Having run an altered named Jeepers Creepers Sag and Crew Chief Alan Grimes built and ran the Daddy Cool dragster, running it into the eights at 145 mph. A longtime supporter and very popular member of the Wild Bunch with whom he raced, Sag posted an annual trophy for Personal Achievement.



Our deepest sympathies to Elaine and to all of Sag's family and friends. (pic courtesy Ian Merryweather).

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About the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame

The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame is a not for profit organisation that was established in 2006 to recognise significant contributions or achievements in the sport of British drag racing. It is run by volunteers and the twelve Selection Panel members include club & track officials, promoters, former racers, journalists and fans with a long background in the sport. They convene annually to nominate candidates for inclusion into the Hall of Fame.

Eligibility for induction into the British Drag Racing Hall Of Fame is extended to any person who has driven, piloted, owned, designed, built, maintained, prepared, promoted, officiated, supported or taken part in any capacity connected with British drag racing. An inductee must have been retired for a least three years or must have been engaged at the top level of his/her area of British drag racing for at least 20 years, or made a recognizable and significant contribution to the sport. Inductees are characterized by their desire to win, mastery of their own particular field and courage to innovate.

British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Selection Panel

Stu Bradbury – Former Santa Pod Raceway Chief Starter and Hall of Fame Chairman.

Keith Bartlett – Santa Pod Raceway CEO and FIA Championship Promoter

Phil Evans – Member of FIA Drag Racing Commission and Chair of MSA Drag Racing Committee.

Robin Jackson – MSA British Drag Racing Championship representative and Santa Pod Raceway Press Officer.

Jeremy Cookson – Shakespeare County Raceway Promotions Manager and UK Nostalgia enthusiast.

Graham Beckwith – Former Santa Pod Raceway Commentator and now event MC and track announcer at York Dragway.

Ian Marshall – Santa Pod Racers Club Chief Starter.

Phil Cottingham – Spectator Representative and Former Carter Motorsport Marketing Manager.

Ian Messenger – Former Bike Racer & BDRHoF Website Administrator.

Darren Prentice – Santa Pod Racers Club International Race Director.

Andy Rogers (Tog) – Eurodragster.com news editor.

Keith Lee – Photo journalist, former bike racer, Santa Pod Raceway commentator and BDR&HRA committee member.

Drag Racing History Consultants – **Nick Pettitt** and **Keith Lee**

The BDRHoF also presents the three annual BDRHoF Sydney Allard Media Awards for Photo and Written Journalism and videos. A further intermittent trophy is the BDRHoF Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award.

British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Limited

In September 2016 a Limited Company was incorporated to place the BDRHoF on a corporate footing. The management of the BDRHoF is carried out by its Management Board which looks after strategy, finance, commercial, marketing,

sponsorship, press & public relations, membership liaison, international liaison, events and general secretary duties. The Directors are listed below:

Stu Bradbury – Honorary Chairman

Simon Groves – Company Secretary and Membership Liaison

Robin Jackson – Press Liaison

Guy Loveridge – Industry Liaison

Bev Bradbury – General Secretary and Treasurer

Advisers: Geoff Stilwell (sponsorship partner and international liaison), **Phil Cottingham** (outdoor events), **Phil Evans** (special motorsport liaison) **Julian Parsons** (audio visual), **Andy Wheeler** (social media and special projects), **Nigel Payne** (transport), **Jordan Payne** (Junior Drag Racing liaison) and **Ian Hart** (event co-ordination).

The Board meets regularly to discuss issues associated with finance, operations and structure. For convenience meetings are usually held at the Oatlands Park Hotel (the Gala Awards Dinner venue) and major topics have included the Gala Awards Dinner and increasing promotional activity. This year meetings have been held on 22nd January, 31st March, 7th June, 14th July, 6th September and 25th October.

BDRHOF Benevolent Fund

In March 2016 the BDRHOF Benevolent Fund was created as registered charity no. 1167197. The BDRHOF Benevolent Fund is run for drag racers by trustees who have had many years' experience in the sport. Trustees are: **Stu Bradbury, Simon Groves, Robin Jackson, Ian Messenger, Graham Beckwith, Ian Marshall and Phil Cottingham.**

Racers or officials who through injury have fallen on hard times may be invited to apply for grants. Money raised will also go to the Air Ambulances local to UK drag racing tracks. All money raised by donation goes to charitable grants.

Collections will be organised at meetings at three of the UK's drag racing tracks, Santa Pod Raceway, Shakespeare County Raceway and York Raceway. There will also be collections at BDRHOF events and through corporate giving by sponsors.

Many thanks to those who contributed a total of £8,000 to the appeal at the 2017 BDRHoF Gala.

Help Required

If you would like to help the BDRHoF we are urgently seeking assistance with event management tasks such as Powerpoint presentations, journalism, script writing, programme producing, liaising with sponsors, managing Media Award entries, and more besides. In working for the BDRHoF you will have a chance to network with legends of drag racing around the world and enhance your CV skills base. Contact stuart@britishdragracinghof.co.uk.

Contacts

Main Office - British Drag Racing Hall of Fame, Adelaide Cottage, 39 Hatton Park Road, Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 5AT, United Kingdom

Telephone 0044 1 933 297102; Website www.britishdragracinghof.co.uk

General enquiries

stuart@britishdragracinghof.co.uk

Industry Liaison enquiries

guy@britishdragracinghof.co.uk

Press and Public Relations enquiries

robin@britishdragracinghof.co.uk

International enquiries

geoff@britishdragracinghof.co.uk

HOFtalk enquiries

simon@britishdragracinghof.co.uk

Sponsors

The BDRHoF could not exist without the support of its sponsors. Three levels of sponsorship are available – Partnership, Primary and Regular/Event sponsorship. If your company would like to join these supporters please contact

stuart@britishdragracinghof.co.uk

BDRHoF Sponsorship Partner – Beech Underwriting

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BDRHoF General and Event Supporters - Santa Pod Raceway; DialAFlight; Aptitude; Kelsey Media; Lucas Oil; Rat Trap Racing; The Pennine Drag Racing Club; Shakespeare County Raceway; York Raceway; Eurodragster.com; International Organisation of Professional Drivers; Kalitta Motorsports; Avon Park International Racing Association; Atlantic Fluid Tech; Prop Portfolio and Straightliners.



Items for sale

The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame has a range of branded items available for sale. You can find details on www.britishdragracinghof.co.uk/shop/. New items are being added and these include ball point pens and mouse mats.

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NOSTALGIA NATIONALS 12-13 MAY

The 25th annual NSRA Nostalgia Nationals comes to Santa Pod for the first time. Expect the same laid back atmosphere with "Power Parking" show area, Pre-1973 RWYB for Hot Rods, Customs and Street Machines, front engine dragsters, comp altered's and early doorslammers. Plus live entertainment, trade stands and loads more! www.santapod.com

THE DOORSLAMMERS 19-20 MAY

Huge cash payouts attracting the best doorslammers in Europe. The quickest cars go head to head including the unlimited Pro Doorslammer class, the True Street class, the Big Bracket and FWD Class. www.thedoorlammers.co.uk

FIA EUROPEAN DRAG RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS inc FIM DRAG BIKES **THE MAIN EVENT** 25-28 MAY

The hugely popular "Main Event" presents 4 days of high speed drag racing action over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend and is the 1st round of the prestigious European Championship. With a huge entry of over 250 teams, expect to see Europe's finest battle it out on the famous quarter mile. Witness the ground-shaking, nitro-burning 300mph Top Fuel Dragsters which accelerate from 0-100mph in less than 1 second plus 200mph Drag Bikes and a full range of supporting classes. With the famous Jet Cars, Monster Trucks and Live Action Arena shows this is the perfect event for the hard-core drag racing fan and families alike! www.santapod.com

DRAGSTALGIA 13-15 JULY

Taking you back to the way we were, this nostalgic event steps back in time, dedicated to historic Drag Racing in an adrenalin-fuelled blast from the past! Expect an action-packed weekend with Nostalgia Drag Racing aplenty from iconic classes, historic displays, massive Show & Shine paddock and Dragstalgia Beer Festival. Saturday night showcases the famous 'Cracklefest' and fire burnouts. Period costumes encouraged! www.dragstalgia.co.uk

FIA EUROPEAN DRAG RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS inc FIM DRAG BIKES

THE EURO FINALS 6-9 SEPTEMBER

Exemplifying the very greatest, fastest and loudest spectacles in drag racing, this final round of the hotly contested European Championship gathers the most brutal machines in Europe and pits them head to head in an epic battle to be crowned 2018 Champion. The European Finals showcases drag racing at its very best with over 250 entries including the iconic nitro burning 300mph Top Fuel Dragsters which accelerate from 0-100mph in less than 1 second plus 200mph Drag Bikes and a full range of supporting classes. With the famous Jet Cars, Monster Trucks and Live Action Arena shows, this event is unrivalled for both the quality and quantity of racing. Don't miss Nitro cars running at dusk on Friday evening! www.santapod.com



HOT ROD DRAGS 15-16 SEPTEMBER

The NSRA Hot Rod Drags celebrates its 30th anniversary with a move to a new venue in the form of Santa Pod. Nostalgia Drag Racing with invited classes, Pre-1973 Show & Shine and RWYB, Jet Car, Cracklefest, Fireworks Display, live entertainment, trade stands and much more. www.santapod.com

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