

HOF TALK

Founding Chairman: Stuart Bradbury 1945-2020



The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame News Bulletin

Compiled and edited by Jeremy Cookson; additional words by Simon Groves

The Later Than Late Issue # 10

Considered by many as the voice of the National Drag Racing Club Alan Wigmore was inducted into the BDRHoF in 2008. As founding chairman of the NDRC and a racer in the very late 60s/70s Alan is pictured here at the wheel of his one and only race car 'Itzaviva'. Much later in life Alan was presented with a Golden Microphone Lifetime Achievement award in 1980.



THE STUART BRADBURY TRIBUTE ISSUE



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Welcome

From Lesley Wright – BDRHoF Chair

It was a total surprise when I received the call asking me to be the new Chair of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame and it is such an honour to follow in Stuart's footsteps. I only hope that I can do the role justice, as he more than did!

I have already received great support and enthusiasm from all those involved in the organisation – the Directors, Advisers and the Selectors and many good wishes from around the world.

I hope to bring some fresh ideas and inspiration so that together we can ensure the continuing success of the organisation, whilst maintaining the clear objective to recognise significant contributions and achievements in the sport of Drag Racing in Britain.

It is such a shame that we have had to cancel our annual gala dinner this year and postpone the celebration of this year's inductees. We certainly hope that we will be able to hold this in 2021 and we would love to see all of our inducted members there.

I would like to thank the friends and supporters of the Hall of Fame who have given us valuable contributions in previous years and helped us to maintain our position within the sport. We continue to highlight those companies and organisations that have supported us in the past and I would ask everyone in return to show their appreciation where they can.

2020 has been a trying time for all of us and we pay tribute to those the sport has lost. Our deepest sympathies go out to their families and we dedicate this issue to our founding Chairman Stuart Bradbury, whose contribution to Drag Racing and the Hall of Fame is immeasurable. Let us all keep our fingers crossed that by the start of a new race season next year we will all be able to meet up and start making some new memories to treasure.

Lesley



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Thank you for your continued support.





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BDRHoF 2020 Gala cancelled

On 30th June, the Directors of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame sadly announced the cancellation of our 2020 Gala Awards Dinner, scheduled to be held on Saturday 21st November at the Oatlands Park Hotel, Weybridge, Surrey. While UK pandemic lockdown rules and restrictions had been amended on a weekly basis by the UK Government, too much uncertainty remained for us to commit confidently to proceed with the occasion. It was not known at the time whether indoor, close-quarter gatherings such as ours would be permitted by November, nor whether international travel will continue to be restricted. (In actual fact, both of these key factors have remained adverse to us and England is now in lockdown from 5th November to 2nd December). In view of the preparation time and expense involved in staging the Gala, there was no option but to cancel for this year. It is our hope and expectation that normal service will resume in 2021 with a provisional date of Saturday 20th November where we hope to induct Top Fuel Bike riders Jeff Byne and Ian King; Swedish Top Fuel Dragster duo Pelle Lindelöw and Gunnar Elmqvist (P&G Racing); Top Methanol Dragster champion Dave Wilson; engineer, doorslammer and Fuel Altered campaigner Nick Davies; and commentator/presenter/broadcaster John Price. It is unlikely that further membership selections will be made until 2022.

British Drag Racing Hall of Fame names new Hon. Chair

The directors of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame are pleased to announce that Lesley Wright (formerly Lesley Digby) will serve as the organisation's new Honorary Chair, succeeding founding chairman, the late Stuart Bradbury.



Lesley & John Wright's 2017 BDRHoF 'Bootsie' presented by Funny Car legend Roland Leong.

Lesley has enjoyed a long and distinguished association with British drag racing. Having served on the BDR&HRA committee, she documented late-1980s racing tours to the USA in publications of the time. Returning to the UK, she helped to promote the Super Gas Drag Racers Association, gaining sponsorship for the class.

She joined the newly formed Santa Pod Racers Club committee and as full-time SPRC secretary in the mid-1990s, she masterminded its formation into a limited liability company for the protection of members, and worked with the SPRC's Technical Committee to revise the rule book and introduce SFI safety measures to Europe. She also helped found the Hall of Fame itself, later stepping aside. In recognition of her influential contributions to the sport she was elected a Member of the Hall of Fame in 2017 along with her husband, fuel tuner and former racer John Wright, and subsequently joined the organisation's advisory group.

Lesley assumes the Honorary Chair role with immediate effect. Lesley has crewed on several race cars and 2021 is no exception as she is joining John on the crew of Tony Betts' Nostalgia Funny Car. So if you would like to have a chat with her, you'll find her in the Venom pit.



Presentation photo courtesy of Julian Hunt, Venom Team photo courtesy of Andy Willsheer.

2020 BDRHoF INDUCTEES ANNOUNCED

Although we had no racing to speak of mid-summer due to the global pandemic, and no Dragstalgia to shout about this year's 2020 inductees in what seemed like five agonising and secretive months, the big reveal finally took place in time honoured tradition and through the electronic pages of our long standing friends at Eurodragster.com.

This year's BDRHoF honourees for their contributions to the sport either as a racer, constructor, promoter, marshal or official & supporter, or having taken part in British drag racing in any capacity, and having been involved for at least 20 years are **Jeff Byne**, 1978 ACU Motorcycle Drag Racing champion and record-setter, **Nick Davies**, twice UK Pro Modified Champion, Fuel Altered racer and engine builder, **Ian King**, twelve-time FIM European Drag Bike champion, multiple record setter and co-owner of Puma Engineering, **John Price**, former Santa Pod Raceway track announcer and the face of drag racing on TV for a quarter of a century, and **Dave Wilson**, five times FIA European Top Methanol Champion who made a success of running with blown methanol and injected nitro combinations.

Our overseas inductees this year are **Pelle Lindelöw** and **Gunnar Elmqvist**, who as P&G Racing became multiple championship winners in Top Fuel in the pre-FIA era and ambassadors for the category in Japan in 1994 and 1995.

We welcome them into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.

Their detailed citations can be found on the next five pages of this issue and their names join those whose contributions to British drag racing are considered to have been extraordinary. Sadly the annual Gala Awards Dinner scheduled to be held on Saturday 21st November at the Oatlands Park Hotel, Weybridge, Surrey, has had to be cancelled owing to uncertainties arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. It is the hope and expectation of the board of the BDRHoF that normal service will resume in 2021. On-going news about the Gala, sponsors and other events in which the BDRHoF is involved with is regularly published on the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame website, www.britishdragracinghof.co.uk & www.eurodragster.com.

Photos courtesy of Keith Simmons, Julian Hunt, Andy 'Tog' Rogers, Dick Parnham & Keith Lee.





2020/21 INDUCTEES ROLL OF HONOUR

Jeff Byne – a profile by Keith Lee

Jeff Byne's drag bike career began in 1970, with a 650 Triumph. It was not long before he started modifying it; adding a supercharger helped move him up the ranks. The name *Hurricane* became familiar on the strips. By September 1972 he had dipped into the 9-second zone on a modest 40% nitro. In 1974 Jeff recorded the quickest time by a single-engined Triumph, 9.4sec, at the July International. It was a successful season – and also eventful. In August, Jeff clocked 9.38sec while shearing the rear-wheel spindle at over 120mph! He still came back out to win the event! A huge blowup at that season's end destroyed the motor and damaged the chassis, but plans were already afoot for a new machine which would confirm his reputation as a top competitor in this era.



In May 1976, a double-engined 1500cc Triumph was debuted. Two motors are never an easy proposition, but a 9.6sec pass first time out, while qualifying for Top Bike eliminator, showed his capabilities. By October that same year, Jeff had recorded 8.70sec on the orange machine, becoming only the fourth rider to dip below 9 seconds. He ended 1976 as the year's quickest double-engined racer.

The 1977 Jubilee meeting at Santa Pod was the first time that anyone had run eight-second passes through all three rounds of eliminations, as Jeff scored a memorable win.

A frightening 175mph crash at Easter 1978 thankfully left Jeff virtually unscathed, but the bike was badly damaged. A new chassis was required, and the following year proved to be a classic one on two wheels. John Hobbs set the quickest-ever time by a European rider with 8.07sec in July, which was virtually matched by Jeff in August, before Jeff went on to run a new European best of 8.02sec the following month. This time would prove to be the quickest ever by a British rider in this golden era of twin-engined British bikes. To cap a successful season, Jeff won the ACU drag bike championship, also setting the fastest European terminal speed, at 181.8mph, during another elimination win in October.



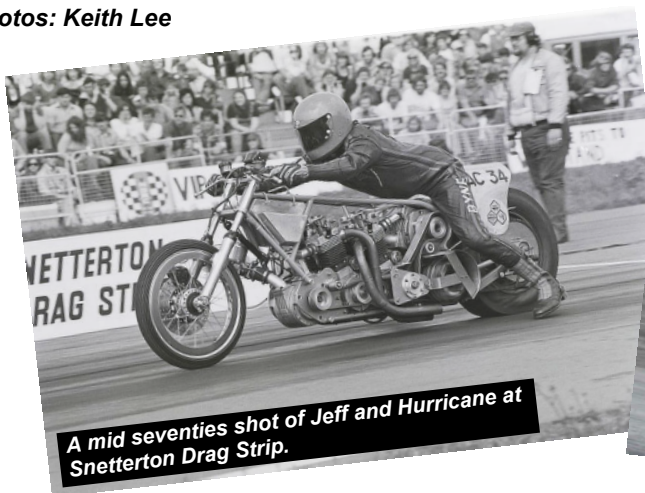
Jeff lays some rubber across the Santa Pod start line.

Jeff was a determined rider on track, but was also ready and willing to help fellow competitors who had problems, even offering to pull the two-speed box out of his bike to help a rival at one meeting, which is no small job.

Hurricane continued racing into the early 1980's to good effect, but the era of the twins had run its course. Jeff kept his record-breaking machine and, over 30 years on, made a welcome return to the track in 2014 to take part in Dragstalgia, after so many years of not riding any type of bike. He has been a regular participant since, as he shows off one of the iconic machines of the era.

It is for his formidable contribution to motorcycle drag racing throughout the sport's formative years that Jeff Byne is hereby inducted into membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.

Photos: Keith Lee



A mid seventies shot of Jeff and Hurricane at Snetterton Drag Strip.



Hurricane back for more at Santa Pod's Dragstalgia.



Nick Davies – a profile by Robin Jackson



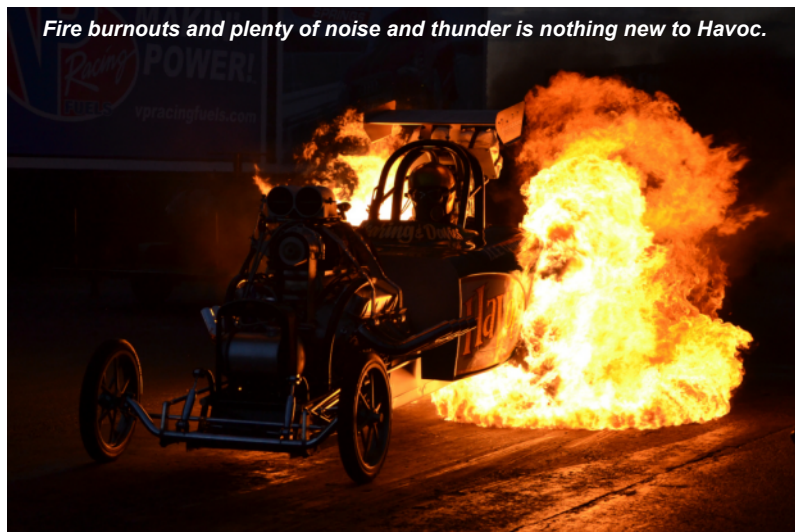
It was youthful spectator visits to the dragstrip that would spur on the engineer and businessman Nick Davies to distinguished participation and intercontinental success. Passive attendance became active involvement with a 1993 foray into Super Gas, followed by a step up to Pro Modified two years later. If his association with doorslammers has defined his engagement with drag racing, it has been Nick's ventures into more recondite regions that have fully stamped his prominence on the sport.

The foundations of Nick's success lie at a racing venue of a different kind. In 1997 he joined forces with another future Hall of Fame member, Rob Loaring, to acquire the parts company Rooster Racing Equipment, combining it with a near-bankrupt ICE Automotive Racing Engines and transferring the new business from a farm building to a 2,500 sq.ft. facility at Silverstone circuit, where it still resides.

In 1999, the partnership won its first UK National Pro Mod championship, with Nick at the wheel, and retained the title the following season. At the same time, they played a pivotal role in the development of Super Modified Eliminator, a lower-cost but highly competitive doorslammer class which would enjoy success for a decade and which forms the backbone of Competition Eliminator today.



The teams Olds Cutlass Super Modified.



Fire burnouts and plenty of noise and thunder is nothing new to Havoc.

In 2004, Nick began managing and tuning a Street Eliminator entry for Steve Nash which, four years later, would be the first turbocharged car to win the class championship. Meanwhile, 2005 began the venture beyond the doorslammer bounds into blown, open-wheel territory with the construction of *Havoc*, at first propelled by methanol, later by a tip of the nitro can. Over the next several years, Nick campaigned *Havoc* in the Nostalgia Fuel Altered Association series, setting the blown methanol speed record at 205mph in 2005, and later drove Lawrie Gatehouse's *Chaos* Altered, this time with nitro in the tank. In 2013 he managed the construction of Tim Garlick's *Apache* Funny Car, helping launch the Nostalgia Funny Car movement.

In 2015, following a famous Dragstalgia match race against *Pure Hell*, the legendary American Fuel Altered, *Havoc* switched to nitro. The upshot, two years later, was a four-race tour of America with Ron Hope's *Rat Trap* Racing, culminating in victory at Bakersfield's

California Hot Rod Reunion, the only British blown nitro win achieved on US soil.

In 2011 Nick had managed, tuned and driven Britain's first turbocharged Pro Mod entry for car-owner Graham Ellis, earning a runner-up finish and the then-fastest speed by a UK Pro Mod, 239mph. This exercise would pave the way for ICE Automotive's own turbo Pro Mod venture. Unveiled in 2018 and still a work in progress, the Pontiac Firebird has already set a UK speed record of 249.05mph, the first British mark to top 400 kilometres per hour.

It is for his exemplary racing successes in two classes, and on two continents, and for his engineering achievements at the forefront of our sport, that Nick Davies is hereby inducted into membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.



It's all in a days HAVOC!

Photos courtesy of Darryl Bradford (top), Andy 'Tog' Rogers (middle) & Julian Hunt (bottom).



Ian King – a profile by Ian Messenger

Ian King is a record-breaking, multiple European drag racing champion. Ian has won twelve FIM European Championships – ten as rider, two as Team Principal – plus two ACU British and one MCUI Irish Championships and has broken various British and European records and an FIM World Land Speed Record. He is the eighth, and only British, member of the international MTC Engineering Top Fuel Bike 5-Second Club.

Ian built his first motorcycle at 13 and became a multi-award-winning constructor of custom bikes. He first encountered drag racing on a trip to Santa Pod with the Scouts. From 17 he raced his friends on their road bikes at 'RWYB' weekends, beginning his 'formal' racing career in the 1980s in the SuperBike-conceived Ultimate Streetbike series on his custom road-legal specials.



Photos courtesy of Dick Parnham

From Street classes he progressed to Funnybike in the UK's ACU series on a self-built turbo-methanol Suzuki before acquiring his first nitro project, a 2700cc nitro V8 Puma in 1997. However, before the unique project was completed, Ian received an offer he could not refuse for the unfinished machine and used the funds to acquire the *Quarter Scorcher 5* Puma from Frank Brachtvogel in 1999.

Updates and improvements to the bike improved its performance over a decade into a state-of-art five-time FIM European Championship-winning machine. In 2010 Ian sold the bike and conceived an all-new, world-leading bike under the auspices of his company Puma Engineering. In 2012 the Gulf Oil-sponsored team secured the first of eight further FIM European Top Fuel Bike Championships to date.

Demonstration passes took the team to unusual places across the world. In 2006 he became the first to ride a nitromethane-powered bike in the Middle East at the Bahrain F1 circuit. In 2011 he visited India to perform on behalf of Gulf Oil International. In 2013 Ian performed burnouts in front of over 100,000 people at the Goodwood Festival of Speed, earning that year's Goodwood Choice Award. Since then, the team has been invited back annually to the prestigious event.

In March 2014 Ian won the opening event of the USA Championship. In the final, his 5.878-second elapsed time conferred eighth and the coveted final place in the MTC Top Fuel Bike 5-Second Club.

In 2018, Greek rider Fil Papafilippou took over riding duties on the Gulf Oil machine for the season's FIM European Championship races. With Ian now serving as Team Principal, Fil has added two more FIM Championships to the team's tally. In 2018 and 2019 Ian raced twice more at the US Final events, making the final on both occasions.

Ian also co-owns the world-renowned Puma Engineering. The company offers parts to construct all combinations of nitromethane drag bikes. Puma engines power many championship-winning bikes and recently propelled multi-US champion Larry McBride to the quickest (5.507sec) and fastest (264.96mph/426.41km/h) Top Fuel Bike run in history.

It is for his exceptional range of two-wheeled achievements that Ian King is hereby inducted into membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.



Good measures of crowd appealing smoke at Goodwood!



John Price – a profile by Simon Groves

John Price first commentated at Santa Pod from 1981 to 1987. He then worked at York Raceway for five or six years but also resumed commentating at Santa Pod in 1990, continuing there, except for a year at Avon Park's Super Series events in 1997-8, until his retirement from drag racing in 2008.

John began DJ'ing aged just 21, and it was his musical activities which would bring him to drag racing's attention. He worked for Roger Squires, a mobile disco pioneer in the late 1960s/early '70s, presenting many gigs in his native London area, and then for a music management company whose clients included Alvin Stardust and the Rubettes.

At one of his gigs, John met Nick Shanley, then chairman of the National Association of Street Clubs. As a result, John was engaged to DJ at NASC Nationals events such as Knebworth and Bruntingthorpe, and at Gary's Picnic when it took place at Santa Pod Raceway. During one of these events he was introduced to Ron Clarke, promoter of custom car shows around the country.



At one of Ron's shows in Leeds (which was badly weather affected – perhaps an omen of things to come) John encountered a group from Santa Pod Raceway. Dave Prior, who organised Santa Pod's displays, asked John to host a Santa Pod show at Milton Keynes shopping centre. Santa Pod's owner, Roy Phelps, then interviewed him for the position of track commentator, recently vacated by Brian Taylor, and John started the job in March 1981.

Many followers of the sport at that time will recall John masquerading as Captain Chaos – on roller skates! – to promote Santa Pod's association with the film *The Cannonball Run*, the launch pad for the venue's famous series of 'Cannonball' race meetings.

John's car show engagements

continued. In 1982 he served as Show Host of the London Custom Car Show at Olympia, which entailed him working on the Radio One Roadshow stand. As a freelancer not employed by Radio One, he could not resist wearing a t-shirt inscribed with the motto 'I'm not famous', much to the Radio One producer's annoyance.

John's only venture on to the track was to drive a Radio Luxembourg-emblazoned Mustang in a grudge match against Radio One's Simon Bates – after which he promptly retired from racing.

John presented ITV Anglia's drag racing coverage in the late 1980s, along with European races for Sky. Thus by the 1990s he had become the face, and voice, of drag racing on TV. His Sky commentaries included many other motorsport disciplines too. Since retiring from the drag racing scene John has continued to inform and entertain the crowds at car shows just as he did from the commentary box at the drag strip.

It is for the quality and enthusiasm of his commentary contributions to UK drag racing, at the track and via television, media and car shows, that John Price is hereby inducted into membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.



Whether its interviewing famous radio celebrities or the best in the business 'JP's done it all!

Photos courtesy of Nick Brooke-Langham, Andy 'Tog' Rogers & the JC Collection.



Dave Wilson – a profile by Simon Groves

Dave Wilson was involved in the Supercharged Methanol racing category throughout his career and five times became FIA European Top Methanol champion, adding several British championships and many race wins to his name.



His drag racing experience began with Rod George, whom Dave helped with his transmission. A chance to drive Rod's *Creeper* dragster hooked him on the sport. *Creeper* was replaced by the famous *Stormbringer* car, previously the first to run a five-second ET outside America. Renamed *Krypton*, the car crashed at York, injuring Dave seriously.

The team regrouped and Rod sold his share. Dave partnered with Steve Martyn and, helped by Dave Fletcher, built a new *Krypton*. Steve drove the car in 1981, qualified low at that year's World Finals and finished runner-up. Dave resumed driving in 1982, racing



Krypton successfully until 1986. Attending the US Nationals, he learned how to run the car much harder. Back home, the improved power produced severe breakage at his first race. It took three years to repair and update the parts needed to get the car back on track. Dave upgraded gradually and by 1997 could run as quickly as 6.009sec.



In 1999 Dave teamed up with the Redstone & Gleadow team who had imported a car named *Nemesys* from Finland. The team joined that season's FIA European tour and clocked fives, qualifying no.1 and winning an event. Such success attracted team sponsorship from Lucas Oil Products. In 2001 Dave bought the car from Barry Redstone and, sponsored by American Car Imports, Air Sea Logistics, Sony PlayStation and 76 Racing Fuels, formed a two-car team with Wendy Baker.

Increased sponsorship from Antony Cohen (American Car Imports) enabled Dave to buy a complete Bob Meyer car in 2002. Following a US debut at Pomona, he set new ET and speed records in Europe while finishing FIA Championship runner-up. In 2003, driving a new Brad Hadman car, he became the first racer outside the USA to clock 5.50s, 5.40s, 5.30s and 5.20s and to exceed 260 and 270mph. This form delivered five consecutive FIA

Championships from 2003 to 2007, a period of dominance producing 14 event wins, 49 round wins and 19 number one qualifiers. On another USA trip, Dave became the first European to win an NHRA "Wally". But did he rest on his laurels?

With Silverline Tools' backing, in 2008 Dave changed his engine combination from supercharged methanol to injected nitro, a major move in terms of engineering, parts and tuning. In only his second A/Fuel year he finished second in the FIA championship and set the European ET record twice, later achieving a career-best of 5.2605sec at Tierp in 2012. Dave's last event victory came at the 2015 Main Event.

Dave leads the all-time FIA Top Methanol table in championships (five), event wins (18), round wins (96) and low qualifiers (30). It is for his excellence in racing performance and for challenges overcome that Dave Wilson is hereby inducted into membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.

Photos courtesy of Dick Pamham, Andy 'Tog Rogers & Rose Hughes



They called him 'da grump' but Dave Wilson was far from that and he certainly knows how to drive race cars!



Pelle Lindelöw and Gunnar Elmqvist – a profile by Jerry Cookson



In a 25-year career, lifelong friends Pelle Lindelöw and Gunnar Elmqvist enjoyed one of the longest drag racing partnerships outside America. It began during the sport's earliest days in Scandinavia, with a chance meeting of old school friends in 1970 at Sweden's Mantorp Park. Pelle had never witnessed a drag race but was instantly hooked by the speed and power. Pelle, Gunnar and another friend, Janne Rosquist, found they shared a passion for the Renault 4CV. Having hot-rodged their little French cars with modified engines, they embarked on an inspirational road trip to England for Santa Pod's 1972 International meet.



Impressed by the smaller-capacity vehicles, Pelle and Gunnar decided to buy another 4CV and convert it into a race car with a modified R16 Arne Berg engine. Following its debut in 1974, the pair became the team to beat in the Competition Altered ranks, defeating every American machine in sight.

British fans first saw this amazing little car at Snetterton in 1975, but the pair hadn't bargained on the might of that staple of British Comp Altered teams, the trusty Jaguar, in particular the one campaigned by a certain Barry Sheavills, known as *Stagecoach*.

After a move to an injected 454ci A/Gas Dragster produced a nondescript couple of seasons in 1977 and '78, Lee Anders Hasselström convinced Pelle and Gunnar (P&G) to take the Top Fuel challenge.

A year later P&G were proud owners of a new Kjellin Brothers chassis powered by an ageing iron-block Chevy. After breaking into the 6-second, 200mph zone, driver Pelle rolled the car on the short Mantorp Park track. Armed with another Kjellin chassis the team were soon deep into the mid-sixes.

1983 was a significant year. The team secured its first major sponsorship from Clarion Car Stereo and began clocking regular low sixes, eventually dipping to a 5.95sec.

Helped by Jarmo Pulkkinen, Pelle purchased the ex-Dick LaHaie *Miller Beer* dragster, considered at the time the first 'real' Top Fuel Dragster in Scandinavia. With hired help from US Funny Car racer and tuner Gary Burgin, P&G Racing quickly became one of the European scene's most feared Top Fuel entries, leading the way with numerous national records and championships.



The tide turned again in 1991 with the acquisition of the ex-Kenny Bernstein *Budweiser King* dragster and came good in 1993 as Pelle dominated the class, winning four out of six races and the ETFA Challenge title. As reigning champions, the team was invited to Japan by the NHRA in 1994 and '95 to represent Europe against racers from America and Australia at Fuji, enjoying great success.

Over the next two years, however, further European success proved elusive and, with Pelle now suffering back problems, the pair reluctantly decided to retire the team.

It is for their achievements in rising from humble beginnings to the sport's highest international echelons, accomplished in a good-natured spirit throughout, that Pelle Lindelöw and Gunnar Elmqvist – P&G Racing – are hereby inducted into membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.



Photos courtesy of Karl Anders Alfeld, Eric Sawyer & Dick Parnham



BDRHoF Roll Of Honour 2006 - 2020



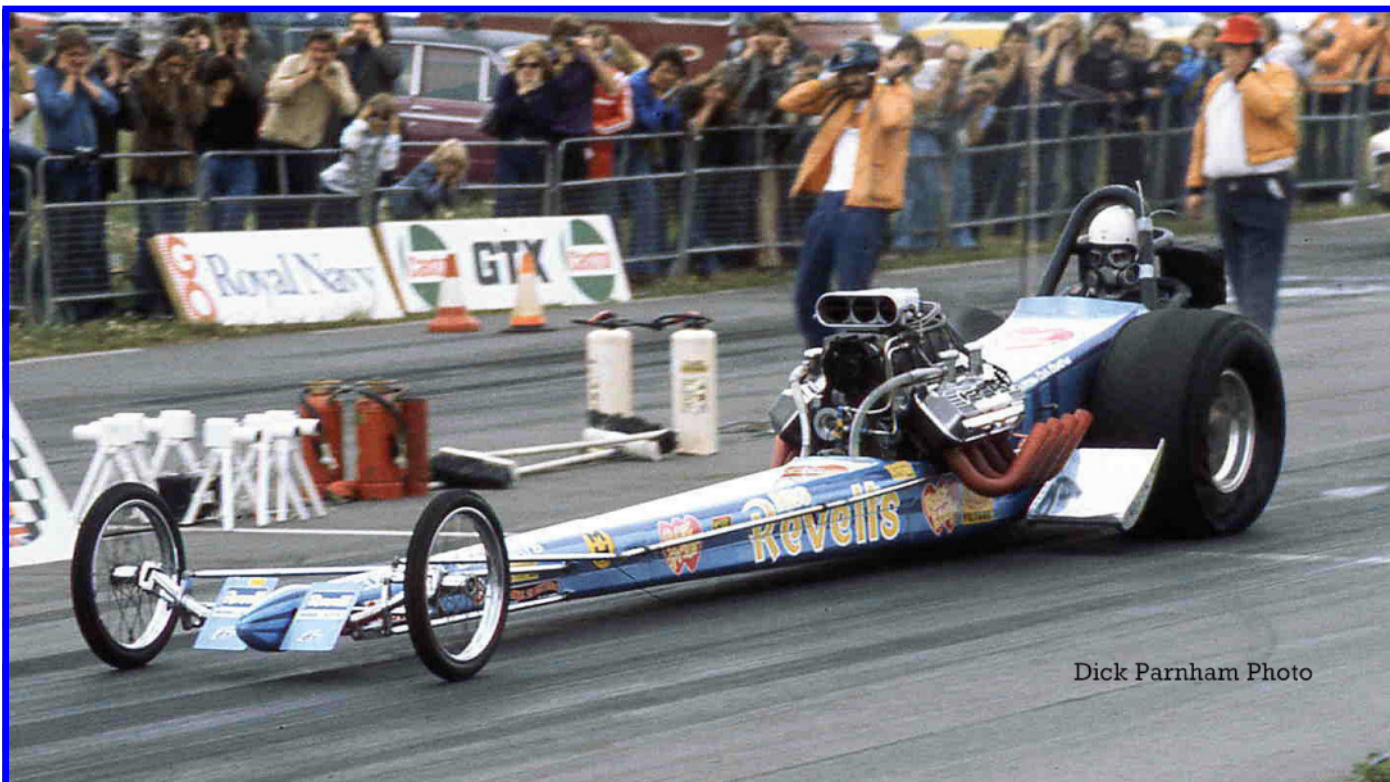
Members of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame are shown below in order of induction.

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Allan Herridge* | 26. Geof Hauser | 51. Santa Pod Raceway |
| 2. The Phelps Family | 27. Al O'Connor | 52. Rob Loaring |
| 3. Phil Evans | 28. Peter & Erica Bartlett* | 53. Paula Marshall* |
| 4. Dennis Priddle | 29. Krister Johansson | 54. Karsten & Per Andersen |
| 5. John Ledster* | 30. Peter Crane | 55. John and Lesley Wright |
| 6. Tony Densham* | 31. Terry Gibbs* | 56. Steve Woollatt |
| 7. Roz Prior | 32. Brian Sparrow | 57. Lawrie Gatehouse* |
| 8. Dennis Stone* | 33. Pete Davies | 58. Pip Higham |
| 9. Clive Skilton | 34. Harlan Thompson | 59. Stuart Bradbury* |
| 10. Sydney Allard* | 35. Barry Sheavills | 60. The Cookson Family |
| 11. John Hobbs | 36. Dave Lee Travis (DLT) | 61. Steve Horn |
| 12. Nobby Hills | 37. The Brachtvogel Family | 62. Peter Lantz |
| 13. Custom Car Magazine | 38. Tony Murray* | 63. Team Pegasus |
| 14. Ton Pels | 39. Carl Olson | 64. Andy Robinson |
| 15. The Page Family | 40. Keith & Frances Parker | 65. Eurodragster.com |
| 16. The Read Family | 41. Brian Chapman | 66. Ian Lloyd |
| 17. Brian Johnson* | 42. Russ Carpenter | 67. McCoy Dynamics Team |
| 18. Alan Wigmore* | 43. Gerry Belton | 68. Wild Bunch |
| 19. Sammy Miller* | 44. John Whitmore | 69. Anita Mäkelä |
| 20. John Bennett | 45. Dennis 'Stormin' Norman | 70. Jeff Byne |
| 21. Dave Grady* | 46. Don Garlits | 71. Nick Davies |
| 22. Alf Hagon | 47. Yvonne Tramm | 72. Ian King |
| 23. The Murty Family | 48. Ken Cooper | 73. John Price |
| 24. Rune Fjeld | 49. John Clift | 74. Dave Wilson |
| 25. Harold Bull | 50. Bob Keith* | 75. Pelle Lindelöw & Gunnar Elmqvist |

* Indicates member passed away

HoF portrait

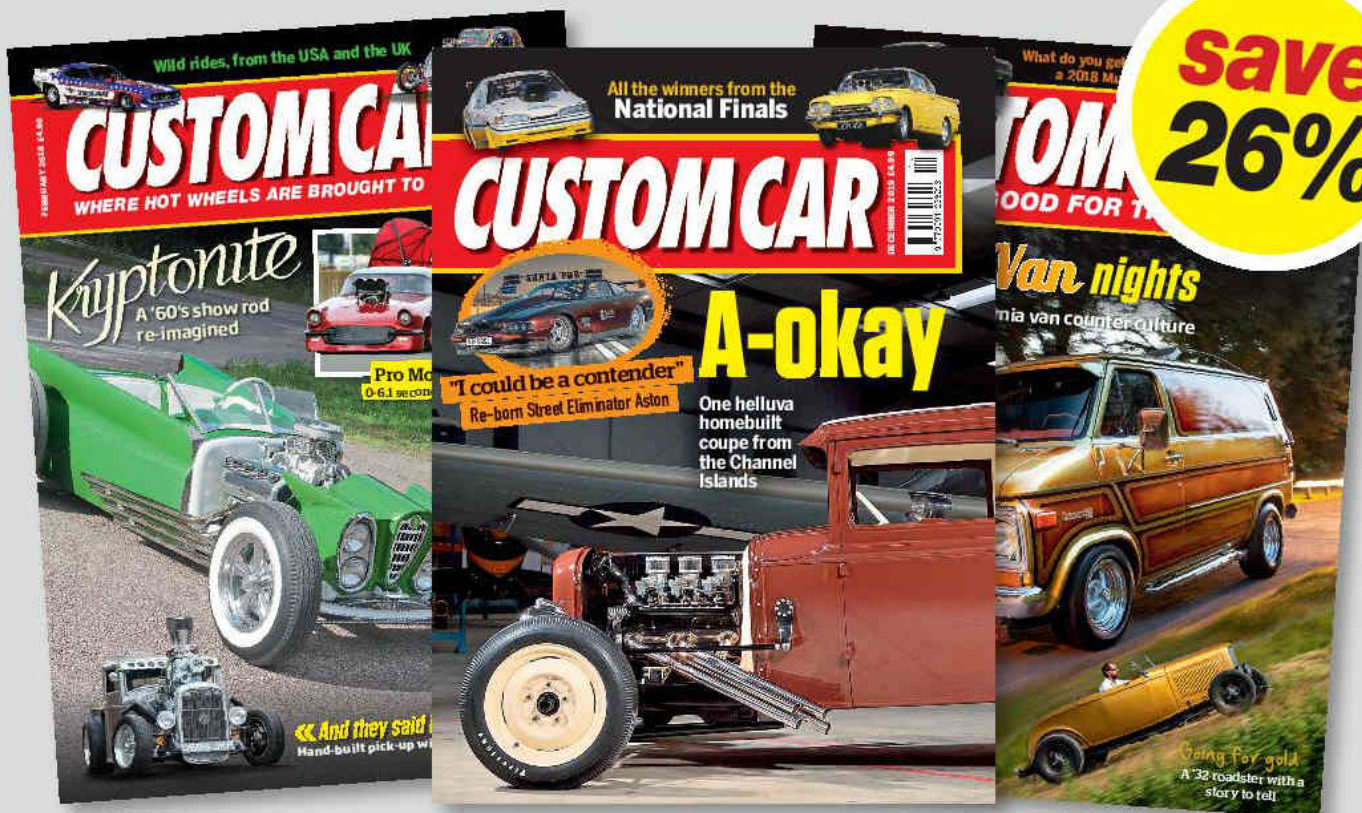
"IT'S LOUD" - BDRHoF member **Roz Prior** brilliantly caught in the mid 70s by NDRC photographer Dick Parnham launching the Miss Revell dragster off the Snetterton start line with the blower hat blades wide open. Just look at NDRC starter Phil Drage and the crowd behind holding on to their ears! Awesome photograph.



Dick Parnham Photo

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Remembering those the sport has lost

Stuart Bradbury



It was with profound sadness that the BDRHoF Directors announced on Friday 10th July 2020 the death of our Founder and Honorary Chairman, Stuart D. Bradbury, after a long illness. A lifelong resident of Wellingborough, Stuart was able to spend his final days at home in the care of his wife, Bev, and daughter, Genna, and celebrated his 75th birthday with them. Stuart had been associated with Santa Pod Raceway from its earliest days, having helped the crew labouring to prepare the track before the venue's opening in 1966. He served as Deputy Starter in 1967 then took over as Chief Starter the following year, a role he held through the 1980s. He was also involved in racing projects at Avon Park Raceway, Long Marston, and Rockingham Motor Speedway near Corby, and assisted Top Fuel Dragster star Andy Carter. Stuart spent most of his working life in the specialist motor trade, first with John Woolfe Racing, then with USAutomotive. In 2005 Stuart convened the meeting of fellow enthusiasts that would result in the founding of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. He remained Honorary Chairman, and the fulcrum of its activities, for the rest of his life. In 2017, he was dumbfounded to find

himself elected by general acclaim to membership in his own right, having always maintained an iron rule that no member of the Hall of Fame's management or selection panel should be eligible. Members and supporters, however, decided secretly that it was appropriate to make a single exception to that rule to recognise the extent of his contribution to the cause, a decision Stuart accepted with rueful good grace. Stuart was finally laid to rest on Wednesday 29th July at Wellingborough's Nene Valley Crematorium. To mark the occasion in Stuart's memory, friends and associates were invited to donate to two charitable organisations which served him in his final days, Marie Curie Cancer Care and the Cynthia Spencer Hospice at Northampton.

Shortly after Stuart's passing Eurodragster.com set up a tribute page in his memory where friends along with many drag racing fans around the world shared their respects in Stuart's memory.

We were so sad to hear of Stu's passing. He was such a wonderful and lovely man who has done so much for the sport of Drag Racing in the UK and beyond for well over 50 years, and most especially in recent years with the founding of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame, of which he was such a worthy inductee himself. (Even if he was somewhat reluctant and humbled, it was so very well deserved!). Stu was always such a gentleman and so well respected and admired and loved by so many. His passion for the sport and constant support to so many racers and teams and people associated with the sport for many decades, as well as his promotion of the sport and celebration of those who made its history are such a tribute to this amazing man and will be his lasting legacy. He will be very much missed by so many! It was a real honour to know him and a privilege to be friends with him. We will always remember him fondly and treasure his friendship and support over the years, especially for our C&C Nostalgia Racing team and Backdraft, and for the whole of the Wild Bunch who were so very honoured to join him as inductees in the BDRHoF last year. We send our warmest thoughts and Love to his lovely wife Bev and daughter Genna and family, and so many friends from around the world. Rest in Peace Stu. Hope you're flagging off some amazing races in the heavens. With Love, Chris & Claire and family xx
- Chris Hartnell and Claire Meadows

My honour at induction into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame this year was tinged with great sadness at the passing on the very same day of a true icon of our sport, Stu Bradbury. Stu was the rock behind our sport, from his contributions in helping to build Santa Pod in the beginning, through his time as Chief Starter and latterly as the founding Chairman of the BDRHoF. His work for our sport was tireless and despite his health problems over the last years his enthusiasm did not wane. When he originally approached me in 2017 with an invitation to become an inductee I was hugely embarrassed to ask to defer as I was racing in the USA that year, and due to the fact that the USA Dragbike finals always takes place on the same weekend as the BDRHoF awards evening, Stu and the selectors kindly and patiently agreed to further defer for subsequent years whilst I continued to participate. However, with the current pandemic crisis it was decided that racing in the US was not possible this year, and so Stu with his normal grace agreed to make the necessary arrangements despite his ill health. I am so glad that he was able to see that I was, at last, to join those honoured by the world famous association he co-founded, but devastated that I will no longer be able to celebrate it with him at the ceremony. Whenever I think of racing I always think of Stu on the startline, he simply was Santa Pod to me.

My deepest condolences go out to his wife Bev and daughter Genna at this incredibly sad time for them and our collective drag race family. Godspeed Stu.
-- Ian King



Stu's service to drag racing since its birth in the UK is well-documented and the early part of his career is in itself enough of a legacy. But, as it turned out, Stu was not done with serving the sport when he stepped down as Chief Starter.

For a long time a lot of people said what a great idea it would be to have a Hall of Fame in the UK. For years the talk was repetitious and then Stu and a very small number of people stepped forward and set up the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame from nothing. Neither Stu or any of the others involved had ever done such a thing before, and you would have a long search to find a book on how to set up a Hall of Fame, but nevertheless Stu and his colleagues did it and made a huge success of it. There could have been no better figurehead for the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame than Stu, whose long years of dealing with the racing community had made him both mentally tough and skilled in both types of diplomacy – the treading-carefully version and the standing-one's-ground version. That Stu achieved all of this whilst unwell should be an eternal source of shame to those social media experts whose arses even now remain firmly in their seats and whose fingers remain unlifted to this day. There is no better tribute to Stu than to witness the reaction of inductees when they receive the phone call or letter inviting them to join the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. Stu's own response when the rest of the Hall of Fame selectors and management stitched him up and forcibly inducted him will live with us all for a long time.

Having dedicated your life to our sport it's time for a well-deserved rest, Stu. Your place in the history of drag racing is assured.

-- Andy 'Tog' Rogers



So sad to hear of the passing of dear old Brad. Wendy and I have had the pleasure to have known him since the early 70's when I was crew chief for Dennis Priddle and then the 32 years I ran Specialist Autoparts.

He has battled for many years of illness with strength and dignity. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time. Let's now remember him as the new chief starter in the sky!!

-- Barry & Wendy Dufty



Stu with BDRA starter Brian Holmes.

I first saw Stu Bradbury in the sixties when I was a teenager, spectating at Santa Pod. He was the cool dude working the start line, and I watched him with admiration from the bank.

The first time I actually spoke to him was in 1972 when I started racing and found him to be a thoroughly nice man, always polite and helpful.

Fast forward to 2006 and I was honoured with membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. Subsequently I have had the pleasure of working with Stu and Bev, in connection with the Hall of Fame, for these last 14 years and have always been impressed with his vision and drive, especially as he wasn't a well man for a good deal of the time.

Stu was a wonderful ambassador for our sport and if you were at the Hall of Fame Gala last November you would have witnessed a great event that was testament to his vision and fortitude.

He took an idea and turned it into a highly successful reality.

RIP Stu, you will be greatly missed by us all.

-- Philip Evans

Words are often easy said, but no words can express the loss to us all in the drag racing family. Stu dedicated his life to Santa Pod doing what he loved most, supporting many people's dreams and aspirations, and encouraged us all, including myself in difficult times, to stick with it and make it all worthwhile.



I've got my eye on you Big Daddy Garlits!

Stu was a showman of the first degree and I'm sure many will have special memories of his startline antics! Not afraid to tell it like it was, even to some of our American racers putting them in their place when necessary! But always the consummate gentleman.

Stu over many years was not a person that only knew the seat in the office; he led by example, not by standing at the rear saying what should or shouldn't be done.

If anyone deserves recognition for all he has done for the sport Stu does, and I hope that he will be honoured in some way. So goodbye Stu, you will always be with us in spirit and talked about for many years to come, I for one will hold him in my memories; he is certainly a hard act to follow.

It goes without saying we send our love and best wishes to Bev, Genna and family; be proud that he brought a lot of people a lot of happiness over the years.

-- Roy and Ros Phelps

Thank you Stu!

What an inspirational man and a true gentleman, always having the time to stop and chat no matter how busy.

Dragstalgia and BDRHoF dinner dances will not be the same without you but one thing's for sure,

you will always be there with us. Our heartfelt condolences to Bev, Genna and family. Keep on draggin' Stu!

-- Nev & Libby Mottershead



Hi to Stu's family and friends,
I got to know Stu through racing at Shakey and at the Pod, but mainly through the endless times he would go searching through the boxes with me for a part that could help me out upstairs at USAutomotive, always with a wit and a kind smile. Thinking of you all at this difficult time.
Much love and respect.
-- Kit Dawson

Stuart's death is a very sad loss to the world of European drag racing, and comes at an embattled time for the sport. Special thoughts must be felt for Bev and Genna in their grief. Having served as part of the Santa Pod start crew under Stu's leadership for a couple of years in the late sixties, and like him having had my 75th birthday in recently, I feel a special affinity.
Stu was always the star of the startline.
-- Mike Lintern

It is hard to believe that I will no longer hear that distinctive voice. Stu refused to give in to his major health problems in recent years, and did what he has always done, which was to devote his time to the sport he loved. He was the constant figure at the centre of the action for so long - and for the past 15 years he fought to establish and promote the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame, as it was so important to him to recognise those who had really made their mark on his beloved sport. There is no doubting the lasting mark that Stu himself made over his lifetime. He was always ready to encourage others, and to spread the word. His loss to Bev and Genna - and his wider drag racing family - will be so keenly felt.
RIP my friend.
-- Keith Lee

On behalf of the Garlits Family, I would like to send our love and support to Bev and Genna. We had the pleasure of meeting Stu in 2014, when Dad (Don Garlits) was asked to travel to England to be honored with the induction into the BDRHoF and receive the Global Achievement Award in memory of my mom Pat. Stu and Bev were such wonderful people to our entire family then and became dear friends to us all. Dad and I honored Stu and all he had done for the sport of Drag Racing, as well as his years as a starter at Santa Pod in England, with a framed photo piece of art. Brian Taylor wrote the biography and Robin Jackson helped with the photos.

This piece is on display in the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing alongside the dragster Dad took to England in the 70s. A photo in this piece is of Stu starting the race while Dad is driving this dragster. I also traveled to England in June of 2016 to present an exact replica of this piece to Stu in person. Stu will be forever memorialized in our museum as one of the finest gentleman our family has known. I myself love this family dearly and will miss Stu very much. My heart breaks for Bev and Genna and our entire family is keeping them in our prayers. We pray God gives them strength and comfort and surrounds them both with family, friends and an abundance of love. RIP Stu...we will see you again on the other side.
-- Donna, Rodney and Sarah, Don and Lisa, GayLyn and Family



Uncle Stuart

I have known you all my life through our family and you were one of the two reasons i started working at Santa Pod. You were loved by all and will be missed by all.

Godspeed
-- Martin Wallis

His enthusiasm on the start line will never be forgotten.
A great, great loss to British drag racing.
Our condolences go to Stuart's family.
-- Roger & Simon Cooper. (S/C Outlaws)

Sorry to see the news about Stuart. I'm not a racer, but a race fan. He was a legend, helping set up Santa Pod and being the starter. I can remember him from the 80's, and standing in the left lane when Sammy Miller ran his rocket cars.
R.I.P. Stuart, now go and get a strip set up, for all the drag racers who have gone to heaven.
-- Stephen Billings

Was very sad to hear the news of Stu's passing. He appeared to be invincible! - And 75 is still far too young as I'm sure he still had a lot of living to do!
My heartfelt condolences to Bev and Genna at this sad time.
Although I had the honour to know Stu later in the Dragstalgia years, it was back in the 70's when he was a great presence in my life; he was always there, in his Cowboy boots and Shades, guiding me round onto the startline as I prepared for a run.
Rest in Peace Stu.
-- Liz (Burn)





Not only have we lost a dear friend in the passing of Stuart Bradbury, British Drag Racing has lost one of its finest ambassadors, the world will also be missing a genuinely nice guy. Forever in our thoughts.

-- Ian & Pauline Messenger

So sad to hear this news of Stu, gone to a better place & now pain free, Rest in peace my friend, Thinking of you Bev & Genna.

-- Rod & Anne Pallant

Very sad news about the passing of Stu Bradbury.

I was honoured to be involved with the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame from the start and without Stu's vision and determination it would not be what it is today.

He was a good friend; he loved his family and his Sport and will be greatly missed.

RIP my friend.

-- Phil Cottingham

Everyone knew Stu, he didn't get to know everyone, as that would be impossible, he was someone we all trusted, on the day that Liv was waiting to run after a rain break he told her the track was good, she trusted him in what he told her the rest in in the history books !!!

-- Dave Mann

It has taken a while for this to sink in.

My dearest friend is gone. He was an amazing man and friend. I suspect he is up there and boss of "The Hot Rod Angels".

Rest my friend but be warned you will be with me in the 7707 Lucas Oil Landspeed Car every-time we run. So hang on to your wings!!! Going to miss you so much.

-- Geoff Stilwell

So very, very sorry to hear of Stu's passing. I knew Stu from 1967 and saw quite a bit of him over the years. A lovely man who always had a good word. Miss you, my friend...

-- John Davison

Anyone that went to Santa Pod at any time would have known of Stu. He wasn't just part of Santa Pod, he was Santa Pod.

I must say that there no doubt will have been a few girls in the 70s that thought that seeing Stu on the startline each meeting made the prospect of the sunburn, rain, mud and the ringing ears, extra worthwhile. He will be sadly missed.

-- Jane Wood

So sad to hear last night that our friend Stu Bradbury has lost his fight, after kicking the ass of his illness for several years. He will be joining some of the best of our drag racing family, and no doubt they will all be sitting around somewhere drinking bourbon and telling tales. His stories about things that have happened both on and off the track have had me in tears of laughter at times. Stu was one of the best and I'm proud to have been able to call him a friend for over 45 years. Condolences go to his wife Bev and daughter Genna.

-- Annie Lee

Stuart was Mr Dragracing UK. I first met Stuart in the early 1970's when we started drag racing at Santa Pod. He was accommodating and kind to us as novices and I'm sure it was the same for all new competitors. He was very helpful both at John Woolfe Racing and at USA. I have very fond memories of Stuart and send warm condolences to all of his family. I will always remember Stuart with a kind heart and smile.

RIP Stuart

-- Mike Kason - Kerbdozer Racing

Some very sad news this morning, the Drag racing community has lost one of its most loyal and proactive supporters. Stu Bradbury has been around the sport since the early days and knew everyone; charismatic and enthusiastic, people listened to Stu! He liked people and they liked him. A visit from Stu at the racetrack (or wherever) was always a pleasure, he was knowledgeable and always supportive, it didn't matter who you were or what you raced, he knew how much effort it takes to get a car or bike to the track.

We will miss you Stu.

-- Robin Read

I'm lost for words waking up this morning; that I have lost a dear friend and an icon of British Drag Racing. Dad knew him more than I did in our early years racing his dragster at Santa Pod but it wasn't until Stuart asked me to join the board of selectors for the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. Both Ali and I send our condolences to Bev and family. We're going to miss him dearly. RIP my friend. I'm sure that along with his American pal Buster they will be raising a glass to us all.

-- Jerry Cookson

Admired him for years from the bank. Met him and worked with him on the Allard Chrysler project. Great guy, enthusiast to his very core.

-- Bob Roberts



Photo courtesy of Jon Spoard, UKDRN

Really sorry to hear the news of the loss of Stu Bradbury. Another icon gone. For me he was a major personality in British drag racing.
I've been going to "The Pod" since about 1966 and until we came back into the sport in '97 he was always on the start line.
A true legend and a thoroughly all round good guy, I'll miss you mate. RIP
-- Dick Sharp - Dorset Horn



Such a sad loss for British Drag Racing. A truly nice guy and always a pleasure to speak to. It felt comforting to pull round for a run and see Stu standing there.
He will be sorely missed, but he's up there bench racing with other legends.
Condolences and lots of love to Bev and Genna and family and friends.
-- Lesley Prior

We are so saddened to learn of Stu's passing. Chris and I send our heart felt condolences to Bev and Genna. I've known Stu since the beginning, he was always there on the start line, he made it run like clockwork. We couldn't have had a better starter.
When he started the Hall of Fame, he applied his knowledge and drive and made a resounding success of it. When he introduced the annual Gala event he and Bev put so much effort into it and made it the huge success it has become.
For me, what I remember most was when I had my bowel cancer diagnosis, and he got in touch and gave me support and advice, which I will always be grateful for. He had his own situation to deal with but he was optimistic and a strong character.
We will all miss you.
I hope that when Dragstalgia resumes, SPR could organise a one minute silence in appreciation for all he has contributed to the sport.
-- Pete Crane



So sad to hear this, a greater ambassador to the sport will be hard to find, always cheerful despite his illness, we had some good laughs, especially when he burnt his prized nylon trousers on the Allard headers, a true gent, he will be greatly missed.
RIP Stu, my condolences to Bev & Genna, thinking of you.
-- Martin Dunks - Allard crew

My thoughts are with Stu's family and friends at this sad time. Stu was always welcoming and always made time to talk to you regardless if you were a racer or just a fan like me. God's speed Stu you will be sadly missed.
-- Russ Hill

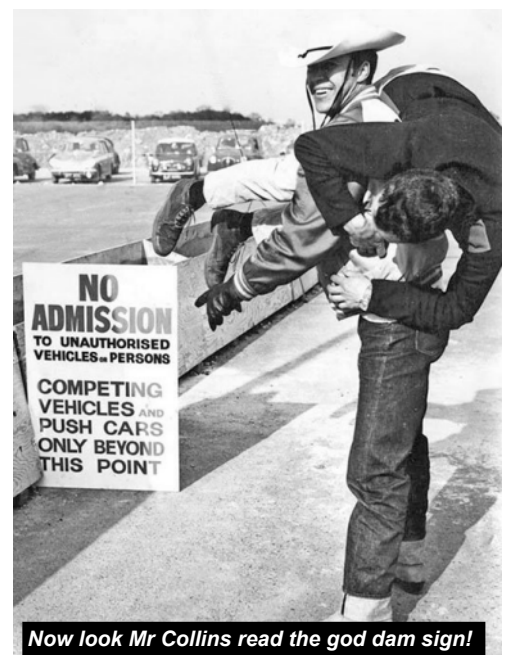
When Geoff got in touch last night to tell me of Stu's passing, I was at a loss on what to say. Stu put up such a colossal battle. He was such a lovely man. I'm going to miss his passion for racing, his relentless determination, the tireless hard work with the BDRHoF, his encouragement and his wit.
A true charismatic gentleman and genuine people person. There was nothing not to like about him.
It was a privilege to know him, and will be greatly missed.
Bev and Genna, I'm thinking of you.
-- Lizz Charman

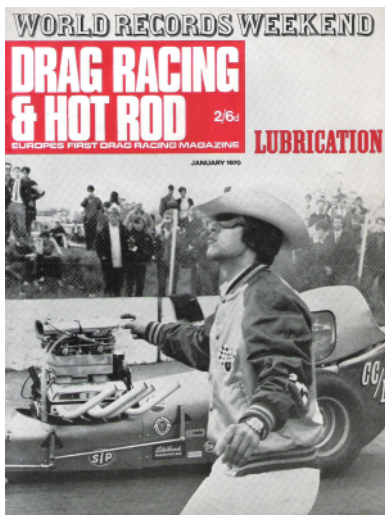
In 2017 I wanted to attend the BDRHOF in Surrey as a long standing fan. I have never raced or even been down the track, but after 40 years of attending I didn't want to miss the chance to be in the presence of so many drag racing greats.
I contacted Stu by email and he kindly made space for me at the gala dinner, where I had the pleasure of sitting at the same table as Rob Loaring, Nick Davies and Tom Hoover, amongst others.
What a lovely man, and what a great friend to British drag racing.
My condolences to his wife and family.
-- Neil Marks

We are so sad to hear about Stewart and we send our condolences to his family. He was a legend and a good friend. Will be so missed.
-- Barbara Purple-Weber

Really sad news of Stuart passing yesterday, one of those people you just looked up to.
His commitment to our sport never ceased to amaze me and without him it would not be where it is today.
You will be Sadly missed, RIP Stuart
-- Paul & Donna Brooks

Sincere condolences to Stuart's family and friends, I have memories of a great conversation with him at the PDRC dinner, RIP
-- Peter Youhill





My thoughts go out to your family at this sad time.

Stu, you were a true gentleman and a drag racing legend. It was a pleasure knowing you and working you at our time with Carter Motorsport.

You would make us laugh with stories of the antics and things that went on at Santa Pod during the early years.

You will be deeply missed, Rest in my peace my old friend.

-- Gareth Robinson

Such sad news, I have known Stu since the 1960's and although I have been on the receiving end of the slap on the wrist for various cases of liberty taking over the years we always greeted each other warmly. He was a lovely guy and in his role in the BDRHOF he worked tirelessly to honour the pioneers of the sport.

I have a fond memory from a recent Dragstalgia, he was with Roland Leong and spotted me in my funny car Hawaiian shirt and pointed it out to Roland who admired the shirt and Stu produced a sharpie for the man to autograph it!

Thanks for that and so many things Stu, I shall miss you and I know the whole sport of drag racing will miss you as well my friend.

-- Steve Young

It is with great sadness that we have learned of Stuart's passing. We only met him this past year at the Hall of Fame Gala, but we were immediately accepted as if we were long term friends.

Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

-- Bob Beck & Peggy Beck

Stuart Bradbury, an icon of British drag racing, will be forever missed. We were close from our first meeting at The Pod in 1968 until I relocated to California in 1976. I will now be digging into all the fantastic old start line photos of those glory years and drift into those days. Stuart has definitely gone to where the good guys go.....thanks for the memories Stu..... Clive

-- Clive Skilton

It is with deep regret that we learnt of the passing of Stu Bradbury. I have been very aware of how serious Stu's illness has been over the past few years. It was amazing how well Stu fought his illness over the last few years and carried on with his role as chairman and founder of the BDRHoF. With the support of his wife Bev, family and friends, Stu carried on being involved in the sport of drag racing – a sport that Stu had first been involved in back in the mid to late 1960's.

I will always remember watching Stu on the start line in the 1970's, dressed in full Americana, with boots, bright yellow jacket, Stetson hat and cowboy boots. When the American drivers came to Santa Pod to race back in the 1970's they were greeted on the start line with a chief starter almost being one of their own. On my own first ever run down the Santa Pod ¼ mile in the mid 1970's I was under the chief starter Stu Bradbury who I saw as real pro, while I was just a guy coming from street racing thinking I can make it here – on that first run not only was I shaking on the line, but I also managed to red light!

During the early 1970's I was in awe of so many people at Santa Pod from drivers like Dave Stone, Owen Hayward, Dennis Priddle, Clive Skilton who were my heroes and many of the Pro Stock drivers of the day, as I was very much into door slammer classes – and added to that was Stu Bradbury this larger than life chief starter.

After a fairly long period out of the front line of drag racing Stu came back into it full on in the 2000's, when he founded and set up the BDRHoF (British Drag Racing Hall of Fame) of which I have been privileged to be part of. Over the past 7-10 years Stu along with people like Geoff Stilwell, has taken the BDRHoF into becoming a world-wide recognised organisation and this has been achieved despite fighting his illness over the past few years.

In my opinion it is fitting and maybe ironic that in 2020 there will not be the BDRHoF Awards Banquet held each November (due to the Covid-19 Virus), which if it had gone ahead would have been held without Stu at the helm.

Stu you will be sorely missed in the drag racing family. Hopefully his wife Beverly will still be seen around the track and keep some involvement with the BDRHoF.

Keith Bartlett

CEO – Trakbak Racing Ltd





Photo Credit Matt Woods

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Isky inducted into SEMA Hall of Fame



When he was a young man racing his own cars, **Ed Iskenderian** – or as he was later nicknamed, “Camfather” – had trouble buying racing grind camshafts, writes Carl Winn of SEMA [Specialty Equipment Market Association]. He didn’t like to wait for them. So, he said to himself, “I can make those....” And that was the start of Iskenderian Racing Cams, popularly known as “Isky Cams”, one of the largest speciality cam grinders in America.

Isky Cams developed the first high-density chilled-iron lifters for Top Fuel Dragsters, and was also responsible for the first anti cam-walk kit for Chevy V8s and the first offset cam keys and bushings for adjusting cam timing. Iskenderian was part of the small group that created SEMA, and was its first president. One of the official events they backed was the International Dragster Challenge organised by Sydney Allard in the UK during the same year of 1963 with visiting Americans Dean Moon and Dante Duce driving Mooneyes, and the Harvey Aluminium Special dragster of record breaker Mickey Thompson against the Allard Chrysler Dragster at several iconic British venues; Silverstone and Brighton, and the RAFs Church Lawford and Debden. He also pioneered corporate sponsorship in motor sport in the 1950s. Isky was memorably a special guest at the 2016 British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala where he received a special trophy for his achievements

and took part in the Beech Underwriting Bench Racing Session to the delight of all present.

Havoc history online

For those who fancy a leisurely and entertaining read this winter, we can thoroughly recommend a series of articles posted to Facebook written by BDRHoF inductees and the men behind ICE Engineering **Rob Loaring** and **Nick Davies** entitled ‘Havoc – The History’. This 10-part series features photos of Havoc’s build-up, on track photos taken at Santa Pod, Shakespeare County Raceway and from the duo’s most recent trip to the States to race the British Fuel Altered against America’s best. You can find all the series and much more on the Havoc AA/FA Fuel Altered Racing page at <https://www.facebook.com/HavocDragRacing>. Nick was due to receive his BDRHoF induction later this year but owing to the Covid-19 pandemic this has been held over to 2021. Rob received his induction in 2016.



Robinson Race Cars on tour

Another recommended series of winter reading comes via Bob Roberts who has written about BDRHoF member **Andy Robinson’s** trip to Hockenheim for the 2005 NitrOlympX. In that year the competition in the Pro Modified division, as with Top Fuel, Top Methanol Funny Car and Super Modified, was on a Cannonball basis. The Sunday racing was completely rained off. However promoter Rico Anthes persuaded the Pro Mods to come out and do some burnouts and launches to entertain the fans who had come in the hope of some action. Andy and the Robinson Race Cars team finished first in the event, running 6.429sec/223.8mph in the process.

Bob’s account tells the behind-the-scenes story of the team’s weekend with a generous gallery of 40 photos. You can read Part 1 of Robinson Race Cars On Tour via Eurodragster.com’s Features, Interviews and Tributes page in association with Lucas Oil Products. Here you will find a further four parts with RRC’s on-tour races at Mantorp Park, Gardermoen, Alastaro, Tierp Arena and Kunmadaras.

BDRHoF US representatives active in the media

Our thanks to BDRHoF supporter and Land Speed racer Geoff Stilwell for drawing our attention to a detailed and well researched article about the background to **Bob Muravez’s** racing life. Bob, an international ambassador of the BDRHoF, famously raced under the alias of Floyd Lippencotte Jr in the 1960s when he was a feared competitor in Top Gas Dragster. John P.Gilonna, writing for SB Nation web site, documents Bob’s childhood and the difficult relationship with his father which led Bob to adopt his nom-de-guerre, and what happened when this was uncovered. It is not an

easy read emotionally, but it is an outstanding story that can be downloaded here:

<https://www.sbnation.com/2020/4/27/21235185/floyd-lippencott-jr-drag-racer-secret-identity-bob-muravez>

On a different note but sometimes tinged with sadness is a series of presentations by BDRHoF 2017 Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award recipient **Steve Gibbs** filmed by daughter Cindy and posted on the Nitro Revival Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1361501637259580> Facebook page. Steve is a great raconteur as those who met him at the BDRHoF Galas will remember. These videos are like a one-man bench race, coming as they do from someone with huge experience of running the sport in the NHRA.



Thacker launches blog

Photo journalist **Tony Thacker** lives and breathes car culture as those who have met him will attest. Among his achievements are the editorship of *Custom Car*, director of the NHRA Museum in Pomona, California, founder of the World of Speed Museum in Oregon and compere of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Galas for the last three years.

Tony has now launched his own personal blog with his take on the many automotive things that fascinate him and us. *Torqtalk* covers both the UK and US speed and custom scenes and pieces posted recently include a Dragstalgia review, the *Ugly Sister* world’s fastest ’56 Chevy, Geoff Stilwell’s 300 mph Bonneville LSR roadster and Williams Bros Racing.

The July blog featured a story penned by new BDRHoF inductee Nick Davies about how his company ICE Automotive (along with business partner and BDRHoF member Rob Loaring) took a Keith Black 426ci Hemi engine and built it, with a few modifications along the way, so that it was able to power Tim Garlick's Apache Funny Car to a five second run.

The story gives the reader some idea about the expertise necessary to put together such an engine in a way that it produces the desired performance (in this case a five second timeslip) reliably. As Nick says: 'Granted, it's not the cheapest way to go racing, but there is something about an all-new cast KB hemi that reminds us of what we dreamed of as kids.' You can read Nick's article and many others on www.torgtalk.com.

Thanks go to designer Kailay Yu and sponsors Geoff Stilwell & BUA Motorsports, HandFlatheads.com, MicksPaint.com, RatTracing.com and USAutomotive.co.uk.

John Hobbs book under way



Good news for drag bike enthusiasts is that we can announce that BDRHoF Selector **Keith Lee** is busy working on his new project, which will be the story of drag bike legend and BDRHoF member **John Hobbs**. This follow-up to his highly-regarded book on Mister Six himself, **Dennis Priddle**, will focus on the two-wheeled side of drag racing, as it evolved out of the world of sprinting. From raw newcomer to world record holder, the Hobbs name was rapidly established in the late sixties, and he went on to lead the way during the golden years of the sport in the 1970s.

Keith commented: 'It took some time to decide whether I was up for the task of writing another comprehensive book, but one thing I did know was that there was only one person in my sights if it was going to happen. John is someone I have known for 50 years now – and even followed him up the track in the other lane on a couple of occasions in the early seventies! I have reported and commentated on his

racing career so many times, and focused my lens on him in action equally often. If I was going to undertake another book of the breadth of Mister Six – John Hobbs just had to be the subject. He has been a tremendous ambassador for the sport, and the names of his bikes, *Olympus* and *Hobbit*, have been etched into the record books many times. Dragstalgia in particular has given younger drag race enthusiasts a chance to see this standout racer from an earlier era show that he has lost none of his competitive drive and speed – despite now being in his early seventies.

'John and Cheryl, who has supported him throughout his racing career, recently celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary, and it is true to say that without her backing it would have been a much shorter story!

'I first broached the subject of a book with John in the latter part of last year, and was pleased that he was happy to be grilled extensively as part of the process. We now have many hours of conversation logged, with plenty more to come, both from John and Cheryl, along with other competitors and relevant people along the way. If you enjoyed the Mister Six book, then this will be in a similar format, but with a North London accent instead of a Somerset dialect.'

Both HoFTalk and Eurodragster.com will bring you blog updates as the book progresses. Keith himself has put a Facebook page together – John Hobbs Book – to keep everyone up to date and exchange views. The plan is to publish the book next year, most probably in the second half of 2021. More details on that in future updates. Keith himself can be contacted via Facebook, at Keith Lee Images, or e-mail: info@keithleeimages.co.uk.



From swamp to drag-strip, Melbourne lives!

Trevor Duckworth, founder of **Straightliners Events** and the **UKTA** (UK Timing Association) and long-time BDRHoF supporter, embarked on an almost, some would say, laughable project to save an iconic drag strip on a farm in Yorkshire, writes Straightliners Media Team member Mark Nightingale.

The project would attempt not only to gain ownership of running events at the farm...but to raise £100,000+ to lay a new quarter mile track, but the money had to be raised in around 8 months to make the project a reality. So, on the 27th June 2019, one logo and a Facebook page later, the Save Melbourne Raceway project began after considerable meetings with the land owners (absolutely incredible people allowing this to continue on their land). Trevor, or 'The Bishop' as he is known in the racing fraternity, sealed the deal on the basis that he could raise the money and prove the project had legs, especially as this had been attempted before and for many reasons the project had unfortunately collapsed.

A meeting at the venue was booked for 3rd/4th August 2019 to be run on a very short part of the existing track to gather interest and to prove the racing community still had a desire to race at this iconic venue. The event went down a storm and what happened over the past 12 months has been nothing less than remarkable.

A community of drag racers and motorsports enthusiasts soon caught wind of the project thanks to the wonders of social media, and literally within days the Facebook page had reached over 2000 followers. The racing community raised its head amidst the negative keyboard warriors and the haters and showed that something was happening. The community just kept on pushing nothing but positivity and, within the Straightliners crew and media team managing the project in the early stages, the project was simply put forward as a fundraiser and nothing more – no promises, no exceptions other than to raise money and save the track. Well, as you can imagine, bolstered by the passion and the decades of memories among the loyal racers, the fundraising began.

Calendars, t-shirts, raffles; the list goes on. Straightliners had a Totaliser put on a dedicated page so the donations could be seen and the targets reached.

Continued on page 21



The project floundered a bit around the £40K mark but some fresh enthusiasm and another push from the community drove the target forward and closer to its goal.



To shorten a long story, early in 2020 before the dreaded lockdown, the £100k mark was surpassed. Despite the hardships the UK was facing, people had dug deep, pledged money and stepped up. Then work could begin. By 22nd June 2020 Trinity Surfacing & MAC Planing, who have some extremely expensive and unique resurfacing equipment, roared into action on the site, operating the machine from dawn till dusk. What they achieved is just unbelievable. By 24th June a new quarter-mile strip had been laid. Melbourne Raceway lives! Straightliners/UKTA now holds the rights to the venue for the next decade. A community like no other had stepped up through adversity and hardship and proved that the UK's love for racing, while other venues were being closed by noise complaints and property developers, is still as strong as ever. The community wasn't going to allow Mother Nature to reclaim this strip just yet. While the smell of fresh new tarmac still lingers, one of the most dedicated and hard-working men in drag racing and landspeed record breaking in the UK will soon reach eight decades on this floating ball in space – a man who has spent most of his life removing red tape so that people like you and I can go racing. Thanks to his skills and abilities, he now stands at the beginning of a runway grinning like a Cheshire cat, proving that there's still life in the old goat yet. What's more, the incredible community that raised this money in the first place, stepping up and supporting the cause, believed in Trevor. Long live Melbourne Raceway. Now who wants to go racing?

Since Martin Nightingale wrote this for Eurodragster.com three very successful Dragtastic events have been held at Melbourne. Once the world has returned to normality (whenever that might be) Trevor and the Straightliners crew will have a great 2021 season to look forward to, one I'm sure the BDRHoF will share in too!

The Storm returns!



In July, the *Storm* Drag Bike team, led by rider Lorcan Parnell and crew chief and BDRHoF member **Mick Hand**, said: 'A successful day's testing for us at a very windy Santa Pod "Back On Track" day. It was good to see the team again and some of our fellow competitors, blinking in the sunlight as we gradually emerge from lockdown, and to get our first runs under our belts since October 2019.

'Several small issues were corrected during the day with the help of Mark Harrison from Horsepower Factory UK. First run was a launch and 2 seconds of power; the clutch pulled the bike through the beams for a red light and the turbo speeds were riding high. Second run, the bike pulled through the beams again, left hardish with a little hesitation, 1.18 to 60' and shut off at 2.5 seconds for a 305 at 330'. A hose had come off the wastegate causing a 50 psi boost spike. The small turbo was saved by an rpm limiter we had installed to prevent

it overspeeding. We fixed the hose and the turbo speed readings.

'The third run was more controlled, another red light though, with a low (for us) 38 psi launch and shutoff at 1000ft for a 7.27/171mph, which was the quickest run of the weekend at that point. Stu Crane later pipped us with a 7.24/190mph on his new turbo bike, tuned by someone in America.

'We went to the start line one more time. It was completely empty but the bike would not start – possibly a cam sensor failure or something simple – so we called it a day.

No go to Bonneville

Unfortunately, owing to the continuing Covid 19 issues around the world and the fact that the travel embargo has not been lifted on Brits being allowed to enter the USA, BDRHoF sponsor **Geoff Stilwell**, Team Principal of the record-setting Lucas Oil Landspeed Team and Eurodragster.com sponsor for Nitro Revival, had to withdraw from this year's Bonneville Speedweek.

Geoff said, "This is all very frustrating in that the race car is already in the USA and ready to go. Sadly, the UK-based team, consisting of me, fellow BDRHoF members Nick Davies and Rob Loaring of ICE Automotive plus Scotty Barnes, are stuck in the UK unable to travel. We are all extremely disappointed in that salt conditions were probably the best they have been for years."

If travel restrictions allow, Geoff was hoping to travel to the Salt Flats in October to run his B/Fuel Roadster in an attempt to set a new class record, with a challenge delivered to Ron Hope at last year's BDRHoF Bench Race to be the first of them past 300 mph. To follow this project from the ground upwards on Facebook, just look up Geoff Stilwell.

Spirit of Le Patron debuts

At Santa Pod's STP Greenlight Nationals last August the new nitro Daimler-powered dragster *Spirit of Le Patron* made its debut with BDRHoF member **Robin Read** driving and got down to the numbers very quickly, running 7.0742sec/189.74mph in his first full pass and only his third run in the car.

"It's been a long journey to get this far, one I would not have been able to complete without the support and assistance of those close to me. It was never going to be easy taking things to another level. I'd also promised myself that *Spirit* would not borrow any parts from the little car," Robin said afterwards. "After the run we found some issues with the magneto drive and control, also some things within the clutch that required investigation, so we will look at them in the workshop."

A few weeks later at the NSRA Hot Rod Drags, and back at Santa Pod, Robin set another world-class achievement by recording a stunning 6.7873/200.67, the first time ever for a British-engined car over 200 mph and the quickest ever run by one too. Well done Robin. You can see a full account of Robin's build-up followed by the first two outings for *Spirit of Le Patron* in Robin's 'Tales from the Shed' series by becoming a member of his Facebook group, Robin Read Drag Racing.



BDRHoF Member returns to NHRA winners circle



It was almost like old times in September as a distinguished Member of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame stepped once more into the Top Fuel Winner's Circle at NHRA's rearranged Gatornationals at Gainesville, Florida. **'Big Daddy' Don Garlits** was not actually driving the winning car but spectators and television viewers around the world would be forgiven if a shiver of déjà vu swept over them.

Current NHRA champion Steve Torrence had decked out his Top Fueler in a 1970s-era Garlits livery as a Gatornationals tribute to the great man, intending to unveil it on the race's original date in March. No sooner was the car unloaded; however, than it was packed away again when the Florida governor's Covid-19 edict brought an abrupt end to the event after just a morning's preliminary Sportsman qualifying.

The race was eventually completed at the end of September before a socially-distanced crowd and Torrence carried the Garlits colours (any colour you like so long as it's black – after Henry Ford) all the way to victory, with Garlits himself on the start line to watch each round before joining the winning crew in the post-race celebration.

Don Garlits was inducted into Membership of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame in 2014, marking the 50th anniversary of the 1964 International Drag Festival when Sydney Allard and NHRA's Wally Parks brought Garlits and a host of American stars to race on airfield sites around England. The tour set the sport in motion in Britain and Europe for the next half-century and beyond, with Santa Pod Raceway opening two years later.

For anyone attending future editions of the Gatornationals, a visit to the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing is a must. The museum is located at Ocala, alongside the I-75, just an hour's drive south of Gainesville.



Bonneville 2021, here we (and maybe you) come!



Further to our previous item, Landspeed racer and BDRHoF sponsor on behalf of Nitro Revival, **Geoff Stilwell** has been in touch with a further update on his 7707 Lucas Oil Products Landspeed team and plans for 2021.

"With 2020 Landspeed racing being virtually ruined because of Covid, the SCTA (Southern California Timing Association) went beyond what anyone thought they could do in August. With the support of the Utah Assembly, special permits were granted for Bonneville Speedweek and the Bonneville World Finals.

Unfortunately, owing to the current rules and regulations, no Brits were allowed into the US unless specifically agreed. Sadly, despite many racers trying to help, apparently motor racing does not count as a special reason to get entry, but golf and tennis do! So, sadly, no-one from the 7707 Lucas Oil Landspeed Team could attend. However, and as is typical of these situations, the salt was in fantastic condition and numerous records were reset. *Speed Demon*, driven by George Poteet, went 481 mph which made it the fastest piston-engined car on the planet. The World Finals, with around 100 racers attending, had around 48 records reset. My good friends at Vintage Hot Rods running the 911 car went 302 mph in a Model B Roadster. Seeing these cars and bikes at these speeds is

really something, especially at 7.00 am, which is when the backup runs are made.

"For anyone in Europe who would like to attend Speedweek in 2021, it will be held from August 7th-13th. That's seven solid days of racing from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm every day. Wendover is the nearest town, approx. 10 minutes' drive from the salt, and if you have an RV there is camping at 'Dead Mans Curve' on the main entrance to the Speedway or you can stay in one of the many hotels in Wendover. Soak up the atmosphere with Rod Shows most nights in town. The hotels start releasing the rooms from February 1st 2021. Do not leave it to the last minute. Usually there are about 500 plus teams running and with the crews it quickly fills up. For those flying in, you can fly to Salt Lake City and then it's a two hour drive west, or flying to Las Vegas and it's about five hours, or LA/San Francisco about eight to nine hours.

"The 7707 Landspeed team will again be working with Lucas Oil during 2021 in our quest for 300 mph and hopefully to reset the class record during Speedweek. There are normally numerous European, Asian, Kiwi and Aussie teams running making it a truly international event and it's something you will never forget.

"The event is not to be missed, especially looking down the track at 7.00 am watching the sun rise and looking at the curvature of the earth. So, if you are thinking of a US trip in 2021, then come and spend some time on the salt supporting the 7707 Blown Fuel Roadster and you never know who you might meet. Finally, I need to thank the Teams at Lucas Oil in Corona, USA, Beech Underwriting, Mick's Paint (Pomona), Rat Trap Racing, Tony Thacker, Kiwi Steve, Mickey Larson, Paul Rivera, S&S Engineering (Azusa), for all their help plus, the SCTA and everyone who helps at the Landspeed Events.' For further information Geoff can be contacted on 07764 222232.

We end this issue of HofTalk's *Hof People* with this fitting tribute to Stu Bradbury and Mike Kuhl whose names have been immortalised by brush artist Brad King on the side pods of Geoff's record setting 7707 Lucas Oil Landspeed Team 1972 B/Fuel Roadster. Brad, your work is deeply appreciated by the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.



Big bang theory put to the test!

The Euro Finals last September, or to be officially correct the 'Not The Euro Finals' held at Santa Pod Raceway will be remembered for many reasons. Not just for its unusual circumstances due to covid but for one blindingly obvious moment late on Friday evening when BDRHoF member **Jason Phelps** pulled round from the staging lanes sat in the Hawk Racing 'Gladiator' tribute Dodge Stratus nitro Funny Car with all eight pipes banging.

Jason's fellow racers; Steve Ashdown, Tony Betts, Paul Harris and Kevin Chapman had already made side-by-side passes in what was billed as *Funny Car Friday - David vs Goliath*. His opponent on this occasion was the 'Nitro Bug' of Andy Raw. This was a match up highly anticipated after Andy's licensing runs the previous weekend and the Gladiator being such an iconic name in UK drag racing. On the green, both cars left hard. Then a split second later the Gladiator's exhausts lit up in a way that showed it was fully loaded. By the eighth it was hauling at 3.7206/226.71. Then, at 1000ft it all came apart and erupted in a huge blower explosion that we had never seen before. The once beautiful Stratus body instantly shredded in the unfolding drama. The percussion of the bang was so violent that it lifted both rear slicks clean off the ground. Thankfully Jason, who was now just a passenger, brought the car to a safe stop in the shutdown area.

In an interview with colour commentator Darryl Bradford Jason said, "At 700 to 800 ft it let go. There was no warning whatsoever. It just blew up. There wasn't a lot of flame [in the cockpit] but the body disappeared obviously. The first thing I thought was "I've had one of them", and if truth be known, I've kind of always wanted one of them!"

The crowd hung on to every word as Jason described in graphic detail about what he went through moments previously, "It's the best run we've got out of that car so far. The rotors of the blower are near the blocks at the end of the track and went about four hundred metres down the racetrack from where the car ended up. I couldn't see anything, I was just trying to keep it in the centre of the track. It's devastation. Are we going to make the next round, is that what you're asking me? We're going to need some pop rivets and a load of aluminium."

Jason continued, "The Gladiator's been an interesting car to drive, it's pulled a few stunts on me, Mark and Jackie [Hawkins], we've had such a lovely time, we're just a group of friends who go racing. It's been an exciting car to drive, it's stood on its back wheels, tried to throw itself in the wall and so on. All I was thinking was 'I'm no.1 qualifier', I know it's not qualifying, it's a race but I don't think we're going to make the next round."

Racing to the 1000ft the flaming projectile exited the traps at 230.40 mph and with all the drama and carnage surrounding it the Gladiator's elapsed time was 4.7065s. Wow, and from the 1000ft spectator viewing area, or known to regular Podders as bankside' motor sports photographer Nicki Douglas-Lee caught it all in graphic fiery detail. Having photographed horses and showjumping for years this was a different kind of destructive horsepower that she'd never thought that would be possible to be caught on camera. And as you can clearly see every setting on her camera has captured the explosion the likes of which we don't want to see again, and again!



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NEWS!



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2021 NSRA EVENTS

- NSRA Southern Swap Meet - 7 March 2021, North Weald
- NSRA Spring Cruise - 24/25 April 2021
- NSRA Nostalgia Nationals - Date to be confirmed
- NSRA Fun Run - 18-20 June 2021, Rutland Showground
- 30th NSRA Hot Rod Supernationals - 6-8 August 2021, Old Warden Park
- NSRA Hot Rod Drags - Date to be confirmed
- NSRA Northern Swap Meet - 10 October 2021, Magna Sheffield

ALL event dates are subject to change pending ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.

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Looking back through time!



Reading back through the world's headlines of 2008 the year seemed to be a much more focused and proactive place to be. Prince Harry was doing his bit in Afghanistan; Heather Mills accepted a £24.3m divorce settlement from her estranged husband Sir Paul McCartney; Boris Johnson made headlines around the world in becoming the London Mayor; a huge fire destroyed the historic Grand Pier at Weston-super-Mare; the BBC suspended Jonathan Ross and Russell Brand over a prank phone call; Barack Obama won the US Presidential election; and John Sergeant quit Strictly Come Dancing despite strong public support. On the music front Nickelback, Duffy and Adele were top the top single acts for the year and on the sports front the biggest event of the year was the Beijing Summer Olympics, Rafael Nadal won Wimbledon and Tiger Woods won the US Golf Open for a third time.

It was also another fantastic year for British drag racing, and in particular the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame as it entered its third year.

Of particular interest in 2008 was the news that *Rough Diamond*, one of the most feared and respected Competition Alters from the late seventies in the hands of Dave Gibbons, had been found and would be fully restored to race against formidable sparring partners *Paranoia* and *Stripteaser* on the British drag strips one more time as the growth of nostalgia racing began to take hold. Mid-year we had to sadly say goodbye to Vic Outen, another of British drag racing's backroom pioneers from the formative years of the 1960s.

Britain's Andy Carter took the Lucas

Oils Top Fuel Dragster to an unprecedented third FIA European Championship crown, aided by a stunning 4.90s pass in qualifying at Santa Pod's European Finals. However, in a titanic battle with Sweden's Mickie Kågered and Finland's Tommi Haapanen the final was a pretty un-climactic affair as rain intervened yet again, and with enough points in front, another title for Andy.

Announced on Eurodragster.com as **'Beckwith's last ride'** at

Santa Pod's UK National Finals it was particularly a sad moment as it was the last appearance after seventeen years on the mic of BDRHoF Selector Graham Beckwith. *"Since I first donned the Helmet of Truth at the 1991 Cannonball, a series of people have joined me in sporting that apparel, but of course the man who has coloured my performance, and left me dazzled by his people skills, is my mate John Price. One could not have experienced a happier partnership. I've had a ball. But never a Pukka Pie!"* Graham wrote.



Although written for Eurodragster.com by our late founding father Stuart Bradbury in November 2008, for him the 6th November 1983 was a particularly significant date to remember in the sport's history when British drag racing lost one of its treasured heroes. Stuart wrote: "Allan 'Bootsie' Herridge made his last ever run on the famed Santa Pod quarter mile on a cold November day. Allan was debuting the new Jet Funny Car *Midnight Cowboy* which he had built himself. For reasons which still haven't been fully explained, the car did a hard left turn at the top end of the strip and headed straight into the crash barrier. As Chief Starter at the time, I will never forget looking up the strip and seeing the outline of Allan's car encapsulated in a massive ball of flame. Allan was killed instantly.

Bootsie was an original, an innovator, a hero to us all, and a very sad loss to the world of drag racing. The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame pays tribute to Allan by having his image forever engraved inside the BDRHoF award trophy. We all miss his humour, his camaraderie, his willingness to help anyone and everyone and, most of all, his smile. God bless AI."

Former Santa Pod Raceway commentator and the instigator of the restoration of the Allard Chrysler dragster, Brian Taylor was feeling pretty nostalgic while knee deep in old magazines, books and photos in the last big push before the April release date the following year of his book, *Crazy Horses*, which documented the history of drag racing in the UK.

However, before all this had taken place we turn the clock back to February and the published

Eurodragster.com story that the BDRHoF had been recognised by the **Don Garlits International Drag Racing Hall of Fame**, as well as the **Don Garlits Museum** and **Motorsports Hall of Fame America**.

"This is yet more confirmation that the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame is being seen as one of the most important organisations honouring those who have contributed to drag racing worldwide, and spreading the word truly internationally rather than just honouring contributors in the USA," said Founding Chairman Stu Bradbury. *"The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame is only in its third year of existence, but in that short space of time has become one of the most welcomed and prestigious awards given by drag racing both here and abroad"*.

At the 3rd annual joint Inter-Clubs Awards Evening with the Santa Pod Racers Club & Avon Park Int'l Racing Association, held at Northampton's Park Inn a further five inductees were announced, honoured and presented with their BDRHoF 'Bootsie' Awards. These included **Brian Johnson**, **The Page family**, **The Read family**, **Alan Wigmore** and **Sammy Miller**.



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The Hall of Fame		INDUCTED 2006	INDUCTED 2007	INDUCTED 2008
<p>The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame honours those who have made a significant contribution to the sport of British Drag Racing. It is the highest accolade in the sport and is awarded to those who have made a significant contribution to the sport of British Drag Racing.</p> <p>These honorees have been selected by the members of the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame and are a testament to their achievements in the sport.</p> <p>The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame is a proud member of the International Motorsports Hall of Fame and Museum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allan Herridge The Phelps Family Phil Evans Dennis Stone John Ledster Dennis Priddle Peter Billinton Tony Densham Roz Prior Clive Skilton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sydney Allard Nobby Hills John Hobbs Tom Pels Custom Car Magazine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alan Wigmore Sammy Miller The Page Family The Read Family Brian Johnson 	



Brian Johnson: Brian Johnson started in the mid-1970s winning three championships in Pro Stock Bike before moving to Top Fuel Bike. He took his first fuel bike win in the USA in 1984 and won the championship there. His next *Imperial Wizard* machine was the quickest outside the USA months after having competed in 1990; a year later Brian took the world record with a 6.61. His talented engineering mind was displayed to the public in the TV programme *Scrapheap Challenge*. Brian retired from racing at the end of 2001 but is still an enthusiastic follower of the sport. With personal bests of 6.101 seconds and 234.11 mph he stood as the eighth quickest and fastest Top Fuel Bike racer on the planet until his untimely passing in April 2015.

The Page family: The Page Brothers Clive, Dave and Gary began their drag racing career as crew members of Wild Bill Weichelt's *Dos Palms/Asmodeus* dragster in the late 1960s. After running the ex-Mark Stratton *Hustler* BSA pick-up at the start of the 1970s they

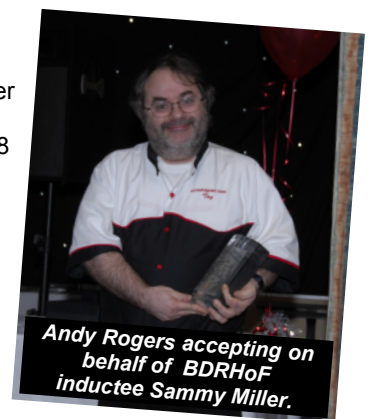
raced a series of Competition Altered, all called *Panic*, driving in turn and supported by other members of the family. Mother Iris helped in the administration of the National Drag Racing Club and sisters Janice and Christine played an active part. Gary became the regular driver when the team switched to a nitro Funny Car in 1982. Dave was tragically killed in a road accident in 1986 at the age of 34, but Gary carried on the family tradition for the last twenty years in a variety of nitro-burning vehicles, driving and crewing. He has been joined on the track by niece Heidi and nephew Dan, who in 2007 had a successful debut year in Pro ET.



The Read family: Jim Read, the father figure and patron of his family's racing activities, raced dragsters in the 1970s and early 1980s, mainly in the methanol-fuelled Pro Comp category following a period in which he and his eldest son Glen raced home-built slingshots. The family raced in Europe and Jim became a key figure in the organisation of the British Drag Racing Association of which he was the chairman of both Executive and Competition Committees and their International Liaison Officer. Sadly Jim died in 1989, but by then sons Steve, Robin and Tim had taken on the family racing tradition. Robin raced a Daimler-powered dragster which amazingly for the size of its engine ran in the six-second bracket. Steve won the UK Top Alcohol Championship six times and the European Championship five times before emigrating to Australia and winning both Top Alcohol and Top Fuel Championships twice. Tim currently serves on the UK Tech crew.

Alan Wigmore: Alan Wigmore was the Founding Chairman of the National Drag Racing Club when it first broke away from its parent the British Drag Racing & Hot Rod Association in 1970. The RAC, the UK's governing body, then deemed that a National club had to be just that. Alan's boundless enthusiasm became channelled into running events at many venues around the UK such as Snetterton, Silverstone and Blackbushe, which was a major factor in its meteoric growth in popularity in the 1970s. He then spearheaded the campaign to make Long Marston a permanent venue for drag racing. His promotional acumen led to the sport's involvement with brands such as Castrol, Duckhams and Gauloises. If it was not for Alan's untimely death in 1998 he would still undoubtedly be offering his vast knowledge of the sport as a commentator and journalist.

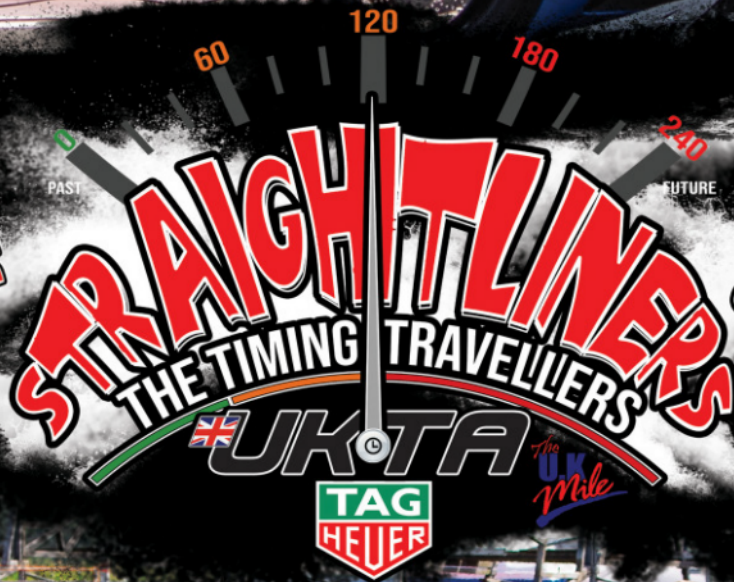
Sammy Miller (2008 overseas member): Arguably the sport's greatest showman, Sammy Miller achieved his major achievements in rocket cars after starting in fuel cars, and internationally rather than solely in his native USA where rocket-powered cars were banned in 1984. Sammy remains the quickest person ever to have traversed the quarter mile drag strip with an elapsed time of 3.58 seconds. He still holds quarter-mile records in five countries and eighth-mile records in six countries. Behind these facts was a man of superlative bravery, friendliness towards an adoring and devoted fan base and a wonderful sense of humour, including waving at nervous NHRA officials at over 300mph on a licensing pass, running a rocket car on the street, and a scarily accurate Donald Duck voice. When Sammy died in an industrial accident in 2002 the sport was robbed of one of its great personalities.



Presentation photos courtesy of Roger Gorringe - Nitro Exposure. Biographies courtesy of Eurodragster.com news editor Simon Groves who would like to acknowledge the use of Trakbytes UK Drag Racing History www.trakbytes.co.uk as a reference and the use of photos accredited to some of the finest drag racing photographers in the UK & Europe.

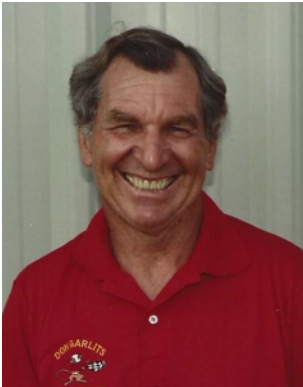


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Remembering those the sport has lost



Ed Garlits

The BDRHoF was sad to report the death of Ed Garlits, brother of BDRHoF member Don Garlits. Ed passed away six days after this year's International Drag Racing Hall of Fame banquet.

Ed Garlits was born on December 30, 1933, in Limona, Florida and entered into the sport of drag racing in 1952 after serving in the United States Marines. In his first competition he raced a Buick-powered 1932 Ford Roadster. Wanting to go faster, Ed installed the Buick engine into a C/Gas Dragster that he and Don built in Don's garage in Tampa. Ed christened the car *The Banana*. In the car's first event in Miami, Florida, Ed won the Florida State Championship. Ed and Don would build several versions of the *Swamp Rat Too* dragster that Ed would subsequently drive. The *Swamp Rat Toos* would carry Ed to four Florida State Championships (1957, 1958, 1960, 1961) and an AHRA national Gas Championship in 1961.

Ed then had to make the hard decision to continue racing – or get married. Ed chose to get married and retired from driving. During this time, he took over the running of Don's garage so that Don could go racing full-time.

After he divorced, Ed jumped back into drag racing not as a driver, but as the crew chief for Don from 1974 to 1978. Although Ed missed out on Don's tours of Europe in 1976 and 1977, 1978 was a very successful season for Don, winning the Gatornationals and U.S. Nationals with Ed turning the wrenches. In 1992 Ed would again return to drag racing as a member of Don's crew. For the next three years, Ed was the clutch man on the *Swamp Rat 32* and *Swamp Rat 34* mono-wing dragsters. Ed's mechanical knowledge was an asset to his brother's racing career.

On March 12 2009, Ed was inducted into the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame for his accomplishments as a driver and for the success he enjoyed as the crew chief and crew member of his brother's racing team.

In the early 2000s Ed was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. Ed fought a long, hard battle for almost 20 years, but on Wednesday March 18 2020, he passed away. He is survived by his sons Eddie, Billy and David Garlits; grandchildren, great grandchildren, brother Don and nieces GayLyn Capitano and Donna Garlits.



Angus MacPhail



We were very sorry to hear of the death of motorcycle engineer and drag racer Angus MacPhail. Angus or 'Ag' formed the McCoy Dynamics team in the 1970s with Mick Hand and Keith Parnell. Together the team set world records at Elvington and produced some of the most innovative machines ever seen in the drag bike ranks.

Keith Lee wrote in the citation for the McCoy Dynamics team's induction into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame: he was someone who is definitely able to think laterally. After a spell riding a miniature Ariel two-stroke, he built his version of a three-wheeler which featured the Triumph engine and gearbox positioned between the rider and passenger. He next built a novel Ford-powered three-wheeler which featured the rider prone, in front of the engine. When three-

wheelers were banned from competition – due in no small part to the performance achieved by Ag, he remodelled the bike as a two-wheeler, with wide slick, to mutterings that it would never work. It did!

The McCoy machine was effectively a test bed for the unforgettable *Jade Warrior*, boasting a monocoque chassis, one-off 2-litre supercharged motor, torque converter transmission – and a very effective exhaust-driven ground effects system. Helped by Mick, this most unusual machine eventually broke into the seven-second zone in 1985, running on straight methanol, which was a brilliant achievement.

In his eighties but still an 'out of the box' thinker, Angus made his own notable contribution to the Storm drag project – especially with the fairing design.

Team member Mick Hand wrote on Facebook in tribute: With great sadness, I must inform you that Angus MacPhail passed away last night as a result of diabetes and coronavirus. Our sincere condolences go to his wife, Carol, his family and friends. Angus, I'm sure, will be remembered by many people for many things. For me, growing up around 1970s drag racing, Angus was the softly spoken boffin with the Scottish name but the London accent. The mad professor who didn't know what day it was, would turn up at a race meeting at 4pm on the Sunday, hoping to get some runs in with "just a bit of nut and bolt work to do".

I remember him introducing exhaust-driven ground effects into drag racing, conceived with his brother Nick, and tried first on my father's bike, where it proceeded to pebble dash any unfortunate marshals standing behind with grit from the track surface. But most of all, I will remember listening to Angus rambling about the comparative strengths and attributes of various materials, for which he had an infectious and unending enthusiasm. We will miss you Angus. Like your bikes, you were one of a kind.



Jim Rowat



We were very sorry to hear of the death of former British Pro Comp racer Jim Rowat from his son Jason. Jason said that his dad 'slipped through our fingers and took his own life' on 2nd June 2020; unfortunately Covid 19 was believed to be a contributing factor to his loss.

Jim Rowat and his older brother Martin successfully campaigned dragsters in the 1970s. Martin made his debut in November 1971 driving a supercharged Daimler-engined slingshot called *Asterix the Gaul*. The following year, parts attrition in the form of three junked superchargers in three months with the Daimler engine forced a change of direction and inspired the name change for their next car.

The new slingshot, brought out at the start of 1973, was named *Double or Quits* and, as the name implies, both the driving and costs were shared between Martin and Jim. The dragster utilised a rebuilt ex-Alan Wigmore small-block Chevy that utilised a self-built fuel injection system with Jim making aluminium castings and Martin machining them, and also a home-built clutch. This second car was more successful but got replaced by a more modern design after a year.

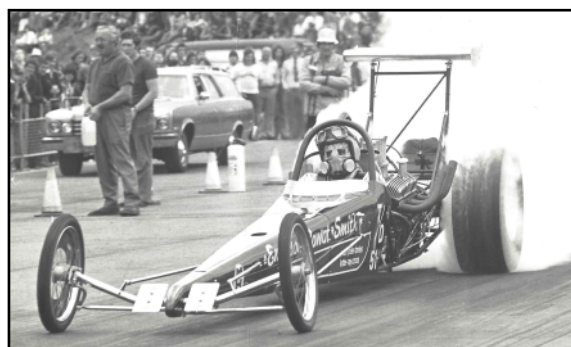
In the winter of 1973/74 Jim and Martin built a rear-engine dragster for their small block Chevy which gained Donovan heads and had a two speed gearbox of the brothers' own manufacture. After running Senior Dragster in 1974, it continued in Pro Comp which was introduced the following year. Using 85% nitro, *Double or Quits* won several races with the brothers still driving in turns and running as quick as 8.03/174. Then in the summer of 1976 Martin left the team in order to further his studies at university and Jim took over the running of the team. In qualifying for the 1977 Easter

Spring Nationals, a front wheel collapsed at over 100 mph. The car rolled about six times and was virtually totalled.

Jason says, 'My mother gave my dad an ultimatum after that crash – me or the car. Mum won. Whether dad had regrets later in life he couldn't express to his family, I guess we will never know. One thing I do know is that they would have gone far had they stayed in the sport.' Jim, who was a successful computer programmer, only visited Santa Pod twice after the 1977 accident, once in 1998 to oversee a neighbour's Pontiac and then twice as a spectator with Jason in 2001.

As well as winning a Best Engineered Car award in 1974, Jim was 1973 and 1974 NDRC [National Drag Racing Club] Senior Dragster Champion.

'Dad and Martin (who survives him) were quite modest characters despite them achieving so much during their time racing. They missed out on the *Crazy Horses* book as they didn't pipe up about themselves then. I'd like to showcase their history to the drag world as I'm now in possession of all of dad's photos and memorabilia.'



Kenneth Söderström



We were shocked and very sorry to hear of the death of former Pro Stock racer Kenneth Söderström. Kenneth came into Pro Stock in 1999 after a period in Competition Eliminator. He ran the FIA European Championship for 10 years, taking 2005 off to build a new car after an accident at Santa Pod Raceway at the 2004 Euro Finals, having previously suffered a crash at Alastaro in 2001. His best championship finish was fifth.

We remember Kenneth as a quiet racer who was honest enough to admit to the rare errors he made in his driving. He was also determined to have the car perform at its best potential and be competitive with the class leaders. After he retired from racing he ran an engine-rebuilding business as well as his main leisure activity of fishing.

Michael Malmgren said on behalf of the European Pro Stock Association: 'We all feel a deep sadness that Kenneth Söderström has suddenly passed away, way too early in life. Kenneth drove a family-operated car, you could say, as brother Håkan handled the tuning. They didn't have the biggest budget, but always gave it all they'd got, and were always a threat.'

'I remember I raced Kenneth in the first round at Santa Pod many years back and felt like this will be no problem, but wow, how wrong I was! He had a big holeshot over me and I was out. If I recall correctly he went all the way to the final.'

'For me Kenneth was a very cool, kind and relaxed guy, no stress, but at the start line was always a threat. In Pro Stock we always try to keep it as a family between the teams and share a good laugh, and we also always try to help each other if parts are needed.'

'I feel I can say from all of us racing Pro Stock back then, when Kenneth was active, and also racers active today that knew Kenneth, that we feel deep grief at his passing. May he rest in peace.'



Paul Castle

We were very sorry to hear of the death of former UK Supertwin racer Paul Castle. Born in Henley-on-Thames, Paul was a member of the Infantry Junior Leaders Battalion of the Grenadier Guards, and in later life lived in Eindhoven, Netherlands where he was an engine builder. Paul was a supporter of drag racing and the guys at Eurodragster.com. In the early days of the internet he set up a web site and photo gallery featuring his own reports of his exploits at the track. He took his Supertwin Fuel Bike *Grandpa's Toy* to various events in Holland, and even following the end of his racing career he would be seen at Drachten firing the bike up to make some noise for the fans. Godspeed Paul.

Lawrie Gatehouse



Fuel Altered and Pro Modified racer Nick Davies writes: I'm very sad to have to report that Lawrie Gatehouse passed away on September 13th, after a brief illness.

Lawrie became one of British drag racing's foremost photographers after attending the Blackbushe Dragfest meeting in 1964, witnessing the travelling American circus and falling in love with the sport. He travelled to the US on numerous occasions, taking pictures at many of the famous and now closed tracks from the halcyon days of racing.

After a hiatus from the sport during which time he started and grew a successful engineering business, Lawrie then returned to drag racing and was the driving force behind the newly-formed Nostalgia Fuel Altered Association, supporting his passion for, perhaps, the sport's once most entertaining class. He was also instrumental in the re-introduction of nitromethane to classes outside the Pro ranks.

Never afraid to invest in what he believed in, Lawrie took on the responsibilities of race car ownership, with the building of the mighty *Chaos* AA/FA which, prior to its retirement in 2015, dominated the class for several years. As well as his own car, a number of teams benefitted from his support and generosity in time of need.

His wide and varied contributions to the sport were recognised by his induction into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame in 2017.

Former Santa Pod Raceway owner, promoter and BDRHoF member Roy Phelps, who worked with Lawrie on the *Chaos* Team writes:

Goodbye Lawrie, old friend.

Your passing on as a very good friend, with so many memories of last 40 years, leaves me sad and indebted. Indeed, the heart of the British drag racing world is deeply saddened because it owes you so much, from your early days as a trackside photographer to your build-up of a racing class. For me, you were always there on the other end of the phone when needed, through my highs and lows.

You did not suffer fools gladly, but I know the cost you freely suffered for the benefit of others.

Until we meet again....

Our deepest condolences go to Judith, and to all of Lawrie's family and friends.



Stig Olsson



We were very sorry to hear of the passing of Stig Olsson at the early age of 65 from cancer. Stig was from Strömstad in Sweden where he lived for much of his life. He got into drag racing in 1976 when he had a nitro-fuelled slingshot dragster bought from Krister Johansson which had a Dodge 242 engine and ran in Competition Eliminator, the category in which he ran for his entire career.

By the early 1990s his dragster had a Buick 317 engine and ran mid-sevens. Around this time Stig founded StigO Transmissions which specialised in preparing Powerglide gearboxes for mainly drag racing applications. Gearboxes prepared by him were used all over Europe and in the US. His innovations included developing a dual transbrake that was capable of operating in first or second gear, and pairing a Powerglide gearbox with an electric engine.

His slingshot dragsters were sponsored by longtime supporters Norrlands Custom Speed Shop and he was not averse to changing classes if he felt the index was

favourable. After running a six in 2008, from 2010 to 2014 he ran in lower classes with a smaller engine, but still ran sixes, setting European records and winning Competition Eliminator championship in the EDRS Central series in 2012.

His first trip to the US, in a rear-engined dragster, was on the NHRA tour in 1989. He was attracted back to the US and made a

return to racing across the pond when he sold his slingshot in 2017 to Swedish racer Johan Pripp, buying a new Neil & Parks car which he campaigned in 2018, 2019 and 2020 until the Gatornationals were closed down by the pandemic. In March 2019 he set a new NHRA national Record in the A/DA class of 6.54sec (compared with his best time in Europe of 6.481 in 2015). During his time in the US, as well as being helped by wife Bente (a winning racer from the 1970s too), a number of Swedish racers crewed for him.

He was generous, offering to lend his Norwegian holiday home to US teams in return for their hospitality to him. He was involved in supporting Daniel Jedborn in FIA races driving the A/Fuel car Stig had bought from Stefan Gunnarson, and in sponsoring a pro Street Shootout at the Mantorp Nitro Revival in 2020. His favourite saying was "Money talks but all mine ever says is goodbye".

We send our deepest condolences to Bente, their two children and their family and friends.



Photo credits: Patrik Jacobsson and Lena Perés.

The International Organisation of Professional Drivers



The International Organisation of Professional Drivers (IOPD) was formed in 1990 by Steve Murty, Edwin and Karimah MacKnight to regulate and support the driving experience sector of recreational motor sport in the UK. This was brought about by the MSA/ RAC refusal to recognise and permit Run What Ya Brung events, including so called outlaw events, and track driving activities thereby denying participants and organisers a route to legitimisation and parity with mainstream motor sports.

From the IOPD's recognition by the DOT and subsequent statutory empowerment in 1991, (giving the IOPD the same authorising powers as the MSA) the IOPD soon grew to be disapplying the Road Traffic Act for some 70,000 to 100,000 participants per year, not only for driving experiences but for full competition and Drag Racing.

The IOPD also took on the authorising (permitting) some 38 other disciplines of recreational auto activity across 1,2,3,4,6 and 8 wheeled activities, including tracked and jet thrust vehicles. In fact any discipline from Mini Moto to F1. Through its statutory powers the IOPD also authorises and permits many of the world's international motor manufacturer's driving experience programmes and track days.

The IOPD is proud to authorise and licence 12 sprint and drag racing venues in the UK, including speed record testing and demonstrations. These venues have catered for more than 10.000 participants and 1 million spectators over a 20 year period. The IOPD has also pioneered permitting closed road motor racing demonstrations in city centre locations for up to ¼ million spectators per event.

The IOPD continues to defend organisers and participants for corporate manslaughter charges and charges of death by dangerous driving including HSE/ EHO prosecutions. The IOPD is currently at the forefront in the consultation process on the British Government sponsored review of the EU Motor Sport Insurance Directive (Vnuk) and Motor Sport Safety Guidance.

The IOPD is happy to support the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame as a totally non-political, impartial organisation dedicated to recognising and celebrating the special people who have given so much to create our sport today.

Tel 01422 843651 Email info@iopd.org.uk

Eurodragster/HoF interviews

We pick up our Eurodragster.com interview with BDRHoF members Clive Skilton, Carl Olson and the late Mike Kuhl with Clive switching to Funny Cars in the UK after purchasing a rolling chassis from someone's garden in the USA. Over to Clive....

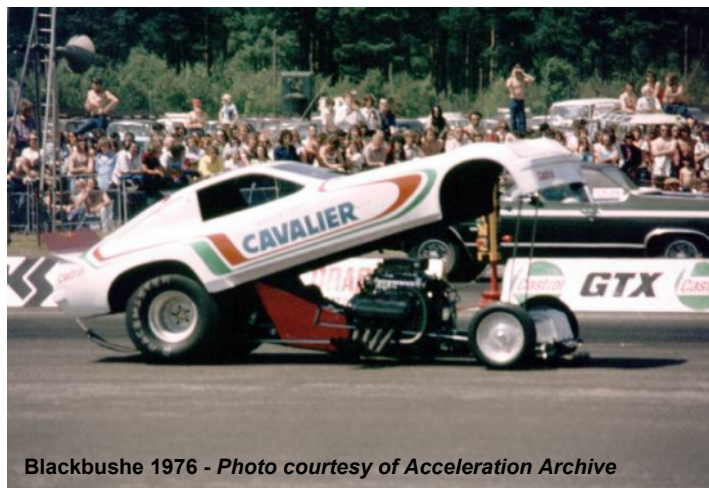
Clive Skilton: We raced [Revolution 4] for a couple of years and then sold it to Liz and Ollie [Burn] and then started on Funny Cars. I bought a Funny car out of somebody's garden in Fountain Valley, it was an old Ed McCulloch car owned by someone who went on to do Indy Cars. I took the motor that we had, put it in that car and then we built our own body for it as it was the rolling chassis that I had bought and we put that VX 490 on it.

Years later in 1995 I got the Jeep dealership in Placentia and walked into my showroom at 8.00 am and the night watchman says to me I just took a phone call at 5.00 am from a guy who is at Detroit Airport and he'd like to talk to you. So I called this number and get this guy and he said "You probably don't remember but I'm the guy that worked for Vauxhall in the design department when I was twenty years old and did that design with the flowing Union Jack down the side of the car". I said "What are you doing in the States?". He said "I've just had a weekend with Henry Ford". I said "How come?". He said "I am now Chief Designer for Jaguar Cars". It was Geoff Lawson. Ford bought Jaguar and that was the connection with Henry Ford. He said "I'm going to go to England in May" and he designed the XJ220, XK, Mark II XJ, and the S-Type. I was getting ready to go to England to meet this guy and have a tour round Jaguar, I picked up Automotive News, the trade magazine, and found he had died aged only fifty five years old.

Carl Olson: During those three weeks they were stuck here, Don Beadle was here and Kuhl was putting him through school, building engines and machining parts, and he was a smart guy and a sponge for knowledge about these engines. He wanted to go back and kick everyone's ass in England and he did. While he was here we discovered that he was twenty one years old, not really worldly, pretty sheltered and inexperienced in life, so we showed him how to have some adult fun here in Southern California. He was a fast learner in that department as well.

Don was an Indycar mechanic for many years and he currently lives in Indianapolis with his family. What a great guy, I used to run into him at Indianapolis. Losing his brother was a very sad loss.

Eurodragster.com: You were running Funny Cars in the UK and had a Vauxhall dealership in St Albans and you decided to move over to the US?



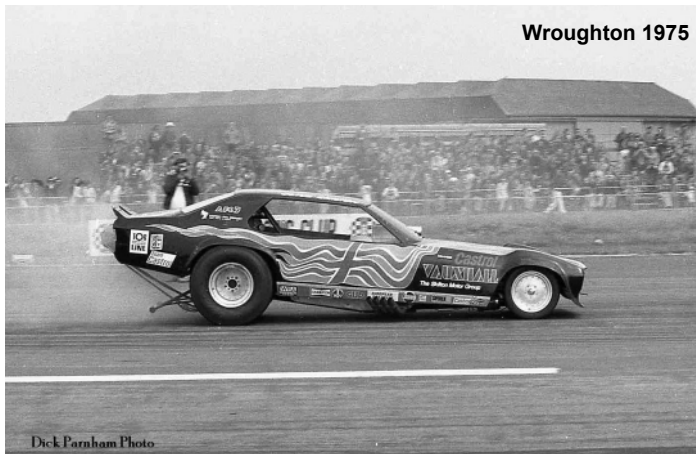
Blackbushe 1976 - Photo courtesy of Acceleration Archive

Eurodragster.com: Who was your team and what car?

Clive Skilton: The first team was Geof Hauser, he did the first third of the year but didn't come on the full tour, then the other guy who was from Whitefish Montana, Bernie Lewis, did the rest. We would pull into the drag strip and would pick up help. The first race I went to in 1977 was Phoenix NHRA. I had never been so fast in my life so what you do is figure out when you're driving you know the difference between six and six and half seconds. I was driving that car and in my mind was set on my normal performance and the next thing I know I'm a long way through the lights, right out the back door, and did 247 mph, that was my first run in that car, the quickest I had ever been. Mike got mad at me because I had driven it like that on a qualifying run and we were number 1 qualifier but had damaged the crank. We didn't have any spares and put it in the trailer and came home.

Eurodragster.com: Were you racing together as a team?

Mike Kuhl: I was just there helping him. It was our last car and when we quit racing we sold everything to Clive, the car the trailer and the truck.



Wroughton 1975

Dick Parnham Photo

Clive Skilton: What happened is I got the second Funny Car from Kosty Ivanoff in New England, it was a brand new copy of the Boston Shaker. That was a fantastic car and then I got involved in that big fire in Sweden and lost that car. That's when I came over here and bought the Revell car from Mike and Carl. I had no idea what was going on here, how difficult it was and put a map of America on the wall in my apartment. I put some pins in the map of the cities with the dates of the NHRA tour then in between those I started calling tracks because in the back of National Dragster there was a track directory, so I looked where I was travelling and called the track to see where I could get booked in for a match race.

That was fine on the West Coast because you knew the travel would take less than a day but when you were in Virginia, say, you couldn't drive those distances so I really screwed up because I thought I could drive them. The other problem was I didn't really have any money so I was robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Clive Skilton: The next race I did was a match race with Garlits in Jackson, Mississippi. In those days there was still unofficial segregation in Jackson and folks were shocked that I went into the wrong toilet. We went there and Bernie Lewis and me and my two boys. It was a best of three with Garlits and beat him in the first round and then we came out for the second round and we beat him again. By the time I got out of the car, Garlits and the track promoter were there and they were about to kill me. They were saying "What the heck's going on?", I said "What happened to you?". He said "These are the rules of the game, if you win the first one, you do not win the second one". The track promoter said "Hey, I'm done, they're all going home now, you cost me beer, you cost me hot dogs, you win one, you lose one and then you race". So we beat Garlits three out of three. He was having a frustrating bad day. Don Garlits was always good to me, he was a great help because we went from there to the Springnationals where we got to the Finals with Shirley and we had that damn race won too until we lost a cylinder in the last hundred feet. Garlits went out first or second round and he came over to our car and stayed with me for the rest of the day and did all the tune-up on the car, took the plugs out, rejetted it and the whole thing and we were doing good. He just wanted us to win, he didn't want Shirley to win.

Eurodragster.com: Was it Garlits every time with match racing or were there other racers?

Clive Skilton: There were other cars. I went to Alabama and Clayton Harris was the local hero in the yellow car. They billed it as the Englishman versus Clayton Harris. So we do the first two rounds and win one each and it starts raining. It was 10.00 pm and the promoter said "It's only a shower, wait and you can race". There was plenty of beer being served to the crowd and I was sitting there with Clayton Harris ready to do the final round. And I could hear all the noise, you could hear them getting drunk and you could smell the marijuana from half a mile away. The place was crazy and finally it was finally dry enough to run the final round the engine. The announcers were whipping the crowd up saying "Who's for Clayton Harris our local hero?", which drew massive cheers, "Who's for the Englishman?" which got loads of boos and "Cut his legs off" and beer cans being thrown at me sitting in the car. It was a culture shock. We encountered that so many times, they used to drink gallons of warm beer out of plastic jugs set on their elbow.

Carl Olson: Clive bought the '74 car – both the '73 and '74 cars were Revell Cars.

Mike Kuhl: The '73 car ended up being the first Revell car. The killer on that car was the original paint job last about two months before we had to paint it to the Revell colours and, boy, that was sad because it was our prettiest car. We ran it unpainted at Ontario in the fall of '72 and then won at the last drag race at Lions.

The '74 car won the Bakersfield March Meet in 1974 which was the only time we ran the table. Top Speed, Low ET, and number one qualifier and won the race. The closest Clive ever came to winning a National Event in that car was Columbus Spring Nationals.



Clive Skilton: We also did good at Indy but Richard Tharp put me out in the quarter finals. That was a thirty two car field and we were number five qualifier for most of it. Bernie Lewis was my team.

ABC put us on Good Morning America and a limousine called at our hotel to collect Shirley Muldowney, Gary Beck and I for a slot on national TV. This was my first ride in a stretch limo and Shirley said "This sure beats working for a living!"

At Indy, Donovan couldn't believe it, we threw a rod in the motor and it went straight through the pan, we took the pan off and put another rod in it and didn't hurt the crank or block.

Carl Olson: We broke rods in our Donovan without a problem, we broke one at Sanair in Montreal, Canada, and didn't know. We pushed the car to start it to warm up in the morning, and it just locked up when I let the clutch out, and I thought "Somebody forgot to do something".

Clive Skilton: What Donovan said to me was "Just make sure it's running on all eight cylinders, half these guys don't even know when it's not".



Carl Olson: That car would run on eight cylinders from one end to the other and as a driver you couldn't ask more than that.

Mike Kuhl: We did finally kill a Donovan block but it wasn't throwing a rod out of it, it was breaking the crankshaft.

Clive Skilton: Did you see the pictures of that Sid Waterman equipped car that was John Durkee's car with the fire out of it at Ontario Motor Speedway in 1974? The rod came out of the side of the block after it had been pushed back after the burnout. I was staging the car and I didn't know that there was a hole in the side of the block. The motor was running but it wasn't running good, it was on seven cylinders, but I'm ready to go. It was like a big oil pump, the fire coming out of the side of the block. I could see the people telling me to get out of the car and it was starting to feel a bit warm and the flames were bubbling the paint on my helmet.

Carl Olson: That Durkee car was trouble from day one. We were here one night and he had a shop in this complex, the Allison brothers sold it to him. He was a nice guy but they couldn't get the motor to run. He came down here and said "Kuhl could we push this down the alley and get it started?". So I jumped in the car and we were down the end of the street (a cul de sac). There was something going on which meant we had to fire it up in the alley,

we constantly fired fuel dragsters up in the street otherwise. We pushed and Kuhl was waiting, I let the clutch out and gave it throttle and it started but it sounded raggedy-ass, really bad and I rolled out to where Kuhl was and he was just starting to come over and the idle was a bit low on it and I just squeezed it to bring the idle up on it and it went BANG! I was enveloped in a ball of fire the size of this room, burnt my eyelashes off, burned all the hair off my arms, if I hadn't been wearing a hat it would have burned the air off my head.

Eurodragster.com: No fire suit, no fire extinguisher near?

Carl Olson: No of course not, why do a silly thing like that. I got out and said "That's it, that's it, that's the last time I want anything to do with that car – or Durkee".

Mike Kuhl: Another time we threw the rods out of it and didn't know was when Rick Ramsey drove it and we went to Orange County one night. They had a points race there, you qualified on Friday night and raced on Saturday night. We went down there right out of the box and that thing set low ET, there was nothing to it. We came back, were popping open the beer, drinking and having a ball and Darryl came over to me and said "Kuhl, there's something wrong. Go and look at the pan". We saw the pan, there was a ding in it but there was no oil on the ground. I said "Don't say nothing to nobody, we're packing it up and going home". We brought it in here pulled the pan off and there was a rod laying in the pan. So we took the spare motor out of the trailer and put it back in the car and went back there the next day. And nobody knew, the only thing someone saw was that the spare motor wasn't in the trailer. There were some pictures of the race. It was the Revell Fast Guys car.

Carl Olson: That would have been '75 because we retired in '74. Rick Ramsey drove the California Charger and a lot of other stuff. He was fun to have around.

Clive Skilton: I now have the original the Second Allard-Chrysler chassis. It originally had a Potvin front-motored blower on it and then Alan Allard and I were partners in it and when I bought Alan out I put the blower on the top. That was the first Top Fuel car I drove and became Revolution 1. Several years ago somebody found the car, it was on the roof of a barn somewhere in England. Someone said "Look at this car chassis, it's stainless steel", and it's the only stainless steel dragster chassis in the world to my knowledge and the reason is you could not buy chrome moly in England in the early sixties so this stainless steel had the closest properties to it. Allard got the drawings from Don Long and had an aircraft engineer weld it up. Mike and I started to look into it a few weeks ago, you can buy Don Long stuff that bolts straight on there so one of these days I will get it together. The guy wouldn't sell it to me a few years back and then he was going to put it on Ebay for something stupid, so I said I would get an old 354 and ship it to you in England and go 50:50 on the car. Then he called me up two years later and said "I'm getting married, I need the money", so I bought it. But I've been so busy with my other projects, my kid rallying, so I've got to get on with it.



The John Durkee car 'Pegasus' on fire again at Ontario.



Eurodragster.com: How long did you do match racing for?

Clive Skilton: Just the one year 1977, and I came back and the final race was the very last race at Ontario Motor Speedway and that was the only National Event I didn't qualify at. So I was pretty depressed, had run out of money so I took a job at the MG/Triumph/Jaguar dealerships selling cars and that was a temporary job that lasted seven years. I scraped up enough money to go to the Winternationals in '78 and the car shook so bad that the frame broke, so we put it in the trailer, brought it home, welded it up and it went to Reg Hazelton in the UK.

Carl Olson: I saw the car at Santa Pod on more than one occasion. It was an alcohol dragster [Pro Comp] by some really nice guys. They ran it for many years. I looked at it in the pits and thought "Wait a minute, that car looks very familiar".

Clive Skilton: I was so depressed after that. I lived near Orange County in Irvine, I could hear the cars from my garden at OCIR and never went to the race track again for five or six years. Then I heard that Garlits was in town and he was testing the Sidewinder which was chain driven at OCIR so I took the day off and saw him there, but after that I never went to a drag strip for years. It was cold turkey to get a break.

Eurodragster.com: What happened next in your motoring career?

Clive Skilton: The MG/Triumph/Jaguar dealership also had a Buick dealership and after a couple of years some guys walked in and said they were looking for the owner. I said "He's not there, what do you need him for?". He said "We've got this Buick NAS-CAR race car and we're looking for sponsorship. We're looking for enough money to buy a motor". I gave him my card and he said

“Are you the drag racer from England? How would you like to drive my NASCAR car?”. It was a good way to get sponsorship! So I ended up driving the car for three years in the Winston West Series on the West Coast, on road courses like Riverside Raceway and Sonoma, high speed ovals like Phoenix, quarter mile or five eighths ovals at fairgrounds.

Twice a year the Winston Cup guys would come to the west coast and we'd race against them which was great. That was at Riverside Raceway and at Sears Point and I also raced with them at Phoenix. I got lucky, I raced against people like Richard Petty, [Bobby] Allison and all those guys. They had a radar trap at Riverside, I'm doing 168 in a Buick Regal down the back straight and Richard Petty suddenly came by me so fast he almost blew my doors off. That's how much faster the East Coast guys were. We were in our own little world.

I did that for three years then I took a job with a Dodge dealer, Pete Ellis Dodge. After selling jags in Newport Beach I went to Long Beach Freeway Bellflower selling Dodges but I got lucky there and my life in America turned around. I didn't want to work for the guy but he kept on and on. So he made me used car manager, which I had been at the Buick dealership. So I said “Don't even pay me a salary, just give me twenty per cent of that department and I'll come and work for you”. And it just took off, we sold a lot of cars and from the proceeds of that and help from my new wife Kathy I got my own dealership in 1986.

I was being in the right place at the right time. I got into the jeep dealership when SUVs were taking off in America. I thought I was smart but really I was just lucky. I managed to sell that business in 1998.

Mike Kuhl: That's how I got these buildings, I didn't plan on getting them, I just got lucky with the whole deal. The guys that owned the buildings came to me and said “Would you like to buy these buildings?”. I said, “Yeah, but I've got no money, forget it”. They said “What if we lend you the money?”. I said “How does that work?”. They went to the escrow office came back with the papers and said “Sign here” and the next thing I knew I own a bunch of buildings. They were out to sell that and I was first option. My idea was I didn't want to move. I've been here for forty seven years.

Carl Olson: We were racing when Mike bought it. We made some pretty good money when we were racing for a living. It supported two families and their houses and cars and enabled us to raise kids and put some money in the bank. We had a very interesting economic model. Whatever money the car brought in be it prize money or sponsorship money, fifty per cent of it went back into the operation and we split the other fifty per cent and that was enough to get the best equipment you could possibly acquire.

Clive Skilton: My main racing activity now is with the Jeepspeed Challenge, which I founded in 2001 as an affordable off road race and rally type class after going to the Dakar Rally with my son Darren, who has been racing Dakar and Baja since 1991. We run six Jeepspeed Challenge races a year. My two boys started racing in 1990 when they were about twenty years old. Gavin, my younger son, had to quit eighteen months ago when he was shockingly diagnosed with progressive multiple sclerosis.

We started racing off road in 1989 as we owned that Jeep dealership. When I had the Jeep dealership I also had Kia and was one of the first Kia dealers in America. So I got to know the guys at Kia and the CEO of Kia in America was the ex-CEO of Volvo. We became friends and he ended up getting fired by the Koreans. A couple of years later I get a call from him and he said “What are you doing with this Jeepspeed thing? You're the guy I need, I've got 4,000 Jeep engines”. The money he took when they fired him from Kia, he bought a company ATK and it's the second largest remanufacturing company of engines and transmissions in America, Jasper is number one. He ended up sponsoring the Jeepspeed Racing Series and gave me engines, but he's just sold it now. He was in Santa Ana, but now they're in Texas.

I had one dealership in Bellflower Los Angeles County and one in Placentia in Orange County which was previously owned by Brian Chachua. I bought the first one in 1983 and the next one in 1993 and sold them in 1988. The Wall Street boys got into car dealerships to buy out decent sized dealerships. We were the number one Jeep dealership in America and were top of the list.

Carl Olson: Trust me, Clive didn't end up with the number one Jeep dealership in the US by accident! He worked his butt off building his car businesses.

Clive Skilton: Only in America can you be broke in 1978 and then be the #1 Jeep dealer in 1988... this is still the land of opportunity. I love America.



Thank you to Eurodragster.com's Simon Groves who conducted this interview in 2014 at Mike Kuhl Racing Enterprises in Santa Ana, California, and it's with their kind permission that we could republish Simon's interview with BDRHoF members Clive Skilton, Carl Olson, and Mike Kuhl with additional archive material made available by BDRHoF historian Nick Pettitt and my own material from the JC Collection. Eurodragster.com thanks John Woolfe Racing's Dave Riswick for helping to arrange the interview.

About the Hall of Fame

British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Limited is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales under no. 10387951 and whose registered office is 227 Cassiobury Drive, Watford WD17 3AN

Directors: Beverly Bradbury, Jeremy Cookson, Ian Hart, Robin Jackson, Lesley Wright.

The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame was established in 2006 to recognise significant contributions and achievements in the sport of Drag Racing in Britain. The Panel of Selectors consists of club and track officials, promoters, former racers, journalists and enthusiasts, all long associated with the sport. The Panel convenes annually to nominate candidates for induction into the Hall of Fame. Nominees are inducted at a Gala Dinner usually held in November, but in special circumstances may be inducted at race events or on other occasions if deemed appropriate. Inductees receive a commemorative trophy known as a 'Bootsie' – a crystal tablet containing an image of the late Allan 'Bootsie' Herridge, a racer and engineer of great distinction from the sport's earliest days – and an exclusive gold, enamelled membership badge.

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Ian Marshall – Secretary: Santa Pod Racers Club, Chief Starter: Santa Pod Raceway
Ian Messenger – Former Dragbike Racer, BDRHoF website administrator
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Andy Rogers (Tog) – Former editor: Eurodragster.com

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Brian Taylor

BDRHOF Benevolent Fund Caring For The Drag Racing Community

The BDRHoF Benevolent Fund was established by the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame and registered with the Charities Commission in 2016 to create a professional fund-raising platform to support injured racers and the Air Ambulances that support Britain's Drag Racing tracks. During 2019, the Benevolent Fund made a donation of a patient-monitor device to Santa Pod Raceway's medical services team, and in previous years there were grants to the charities that operate the Air Ambulances that serve Santa Pod Raceway and York Raceway. The BDRHoF Benevolent Fund charity registration number is 1167197. It is run for drag racing by trustees who have had many years' experience in the sport. They are: Simon Groves, Robin Jackson, Ian Messenger, Ian Marshall, Graham Beckwith and Phil Cottingham. They would like to thank all those who have contributed during the year.

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These were popular fashion accessories back in the mid seventies! Only two were produced by Action Automotive as lick & stick paper stickers and anyone who was anyone had them in their car windows or race trailers doors.



Action Automotive produced quite a number of one off badges, cloth badges and stickers as well as two model kits from the Monogram range when they re-branded two of their lead Funny Cars - Snake & Mongoose to Stardust & Hounddog. I wonder how many still exist! Built or unbuilt.



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