

SANTA POD RACEWAY

No. 2

DRAG RACING PICTORIAL

Compiled in conjunction with DRAG RACING NEWS



**Inside: EUROPE'S TOP DRAG
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ACTION, AND MORE.**

50p.

SANTA POD RACEWAY

DRAG RACING PICTORIAL

No.2

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DRAG RACING NEWS

PRODUCED ANNUALLY, AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH YEAR, THIS IS THE
SECOND DRAG RACING PICTORIAL, PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY 1975.

*Front Cover: Allan (Bootsie) Herridge floors the gas pedal, and out rolls the smoke
from the Stardust Funny Car.*

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DRAG RACING NEWS, 58 SALISBURY ROAD, TONBRIDGE, KENT.



The latest Top Altered to hit the strip is this one, imported and driven by Keith Harvie, of Americar fame. Power comes from a blown and injected big block Chevy running on methanol and capable of putting the car into the low sevens.





4↑ This is the latest creation to come from the team of Kevin Burroughs, Jess Morris and Rob Spence, being a super neat Top Dragster, pushed by an injected, nitro gulping, Chevrolet motor.

↓5 The maestro, John Hobbs, aboard his mighty Olympus II which has carried him to an incredible 9.16 second pass at 158mph with still more in hand from the double Triumph power unit.

more in hand from the double Triumph power unit.

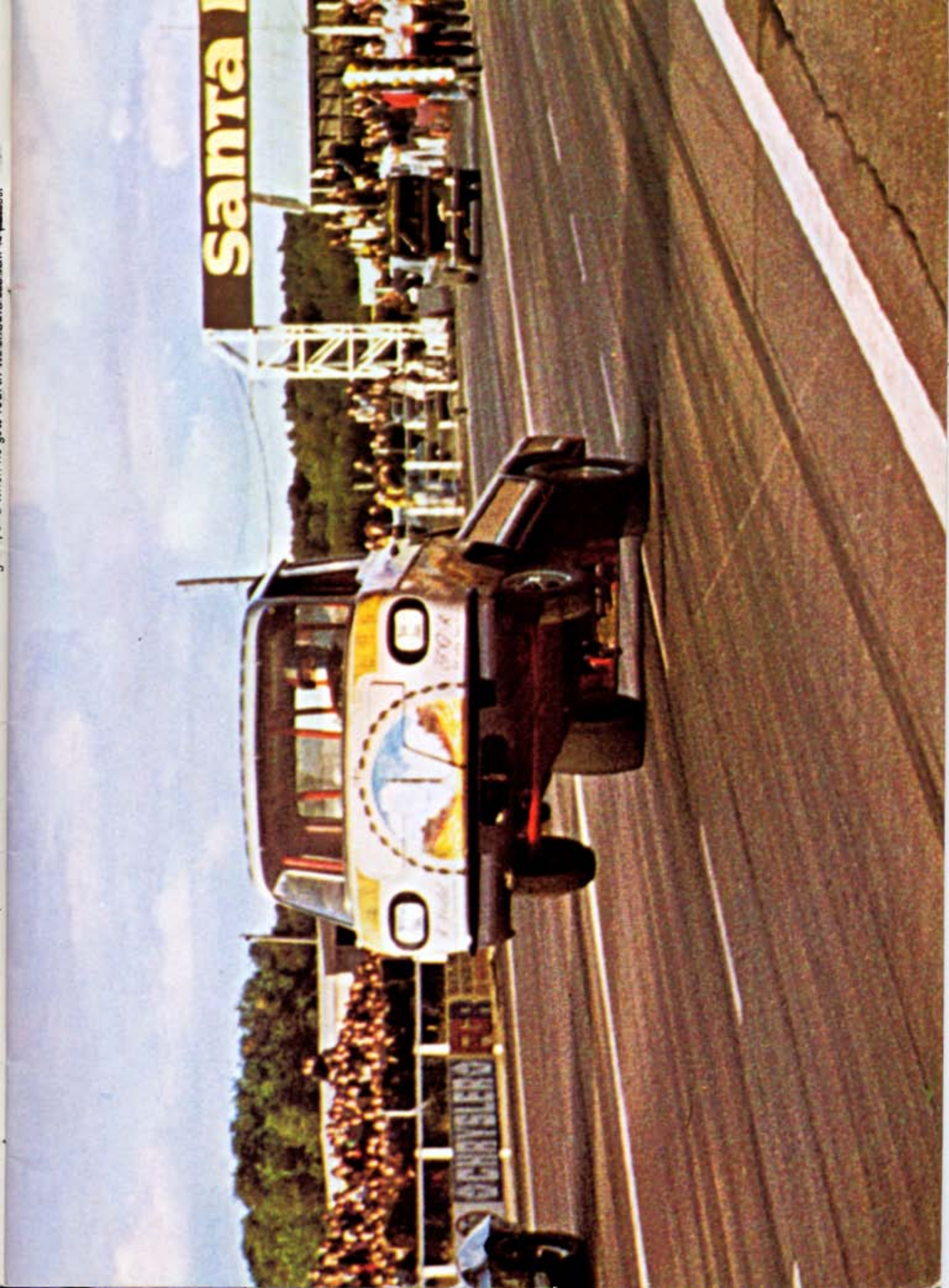
by air injected, nitro guilping, Chevrolet motor.





After an early season argument with the crash barrier, the Page team came back out with this new 'Panic.' Altered and managed to carry on their winning ways, with runs consistently in the nineties.

It has taken a while, but now Ron Picardo can keep the wheels of the wheelie pick-up high off the ground through first, second and third gears, and when he gets fourth we should see full $\frac{1}{4}$ masts.

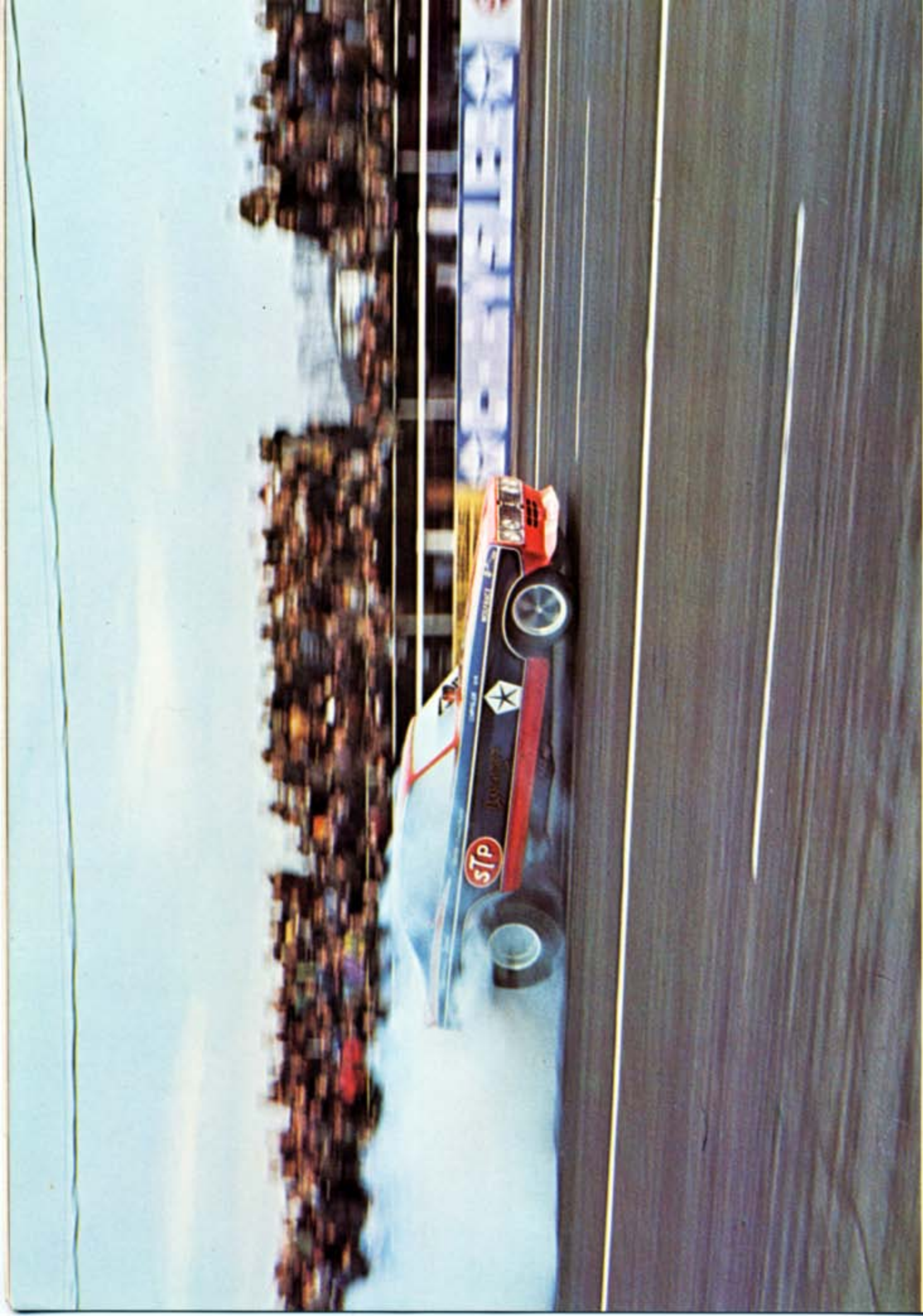




Alan O'Connors fabulous Al's Gasser Chevy/Pop is equally capable of running in both Top Street and Comp Altered, but whichever, the competition had better watch out as it is super quick on the tarmac.

Pete Crane heads into the dark in the burnout routine of Stormbringer, one of the latest Pro Fuelers to tackle the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile, successfully running in the sixes, with top speeds will over the 200mph mark.





As smoke starts to pour out of the cockpit, Dennis Priddle prepares to shut down the Donovan motor in his Avenger Funny Car, with his rear slicks really hot and sticky, ready for another low seven second pass.

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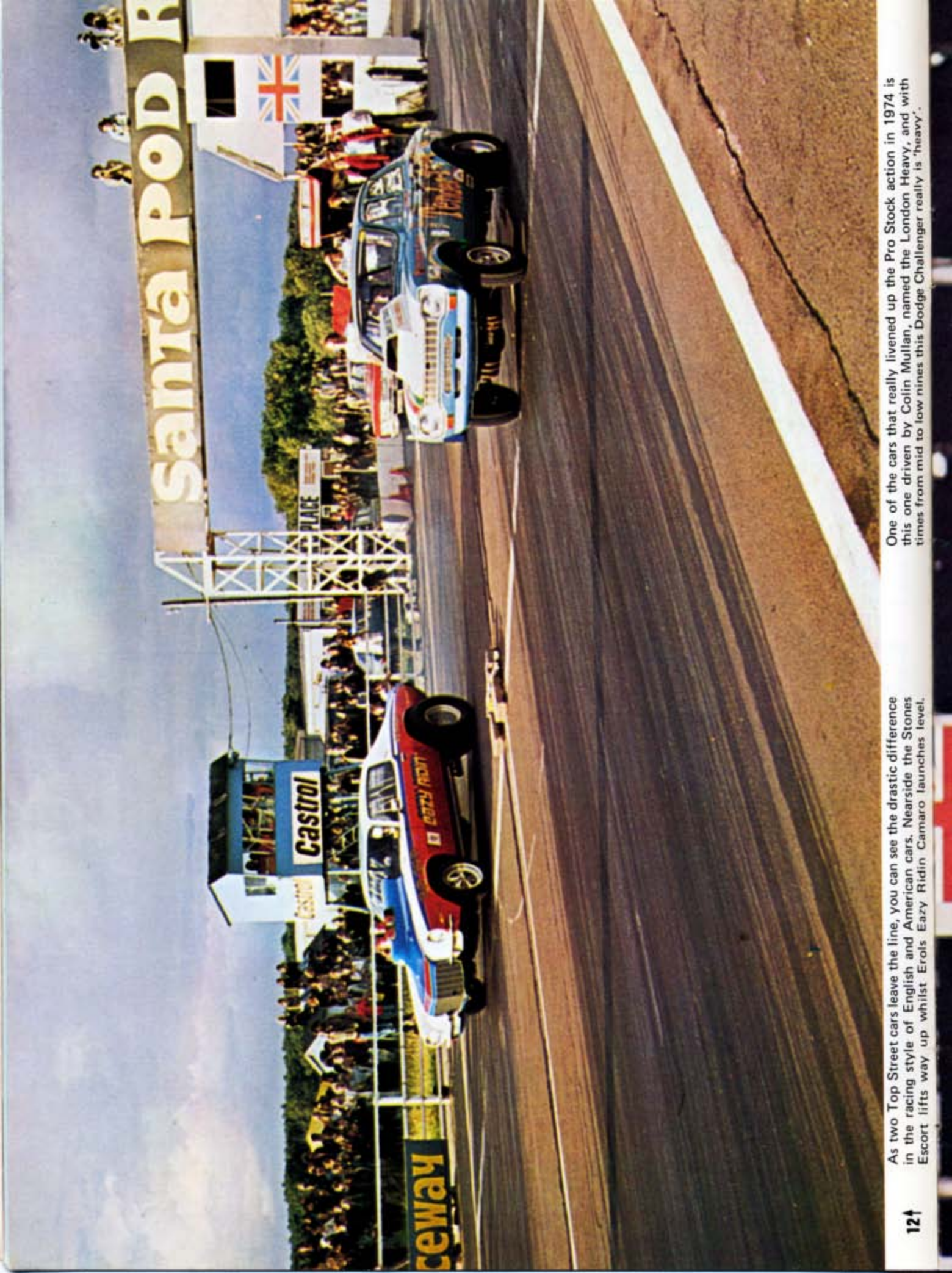
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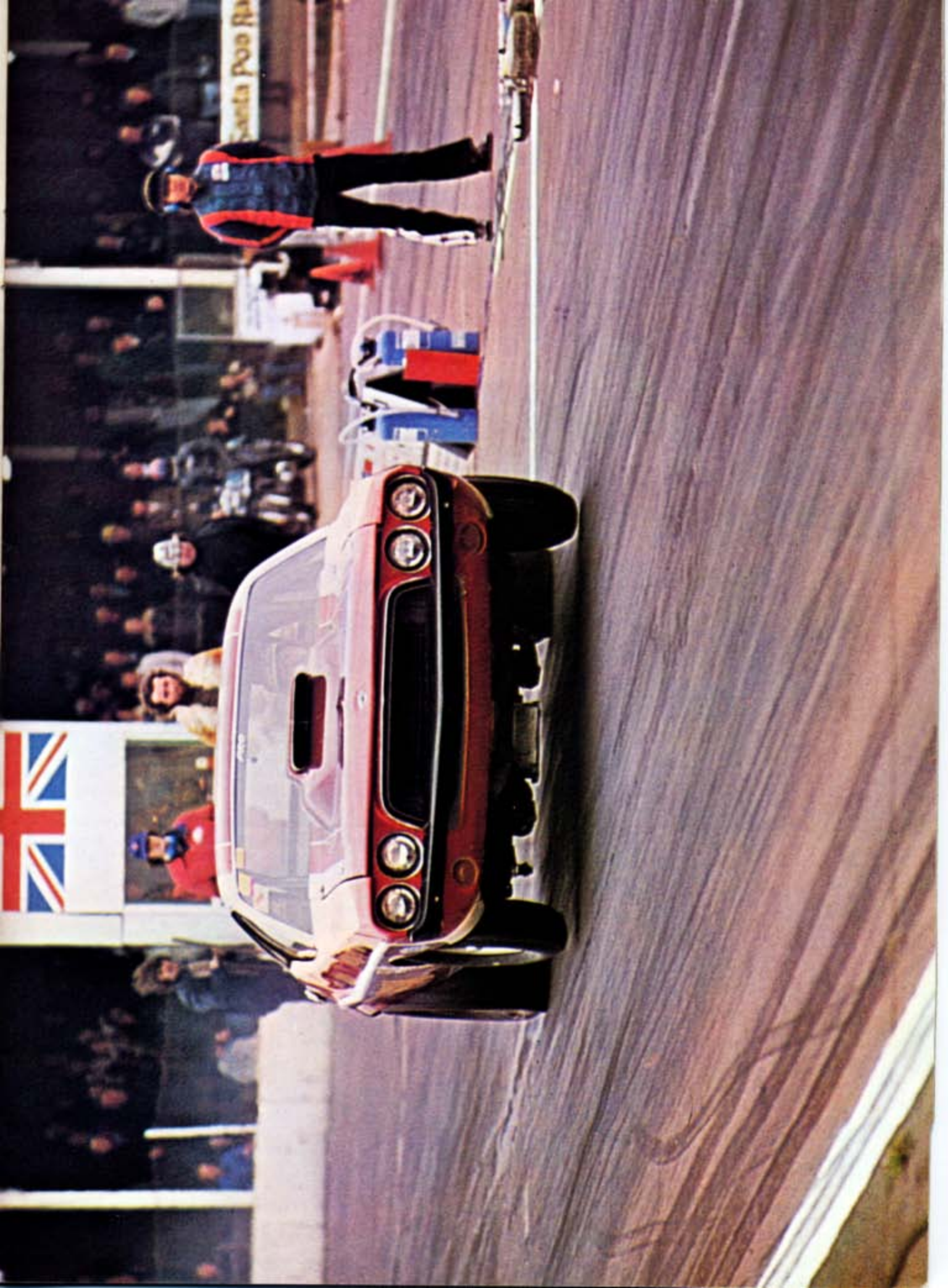
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As two Top Street cars leave the line, you can see the drastic difference in the racing style of English and American cars. Nearside the Stones Escort lifts way up whilst Erols Eazy Ridin Camaro launches level.

One of the cars that really livened up the Pro Stock action in 1974 is this one driven by Colin Mullan, named the London Heavy, and with times from mid to low nines this Dodge Challenger really is 'heavy'.



SANTA POD RACEWAY AND DRAG RACING

Without exception, the most successful branch of motor racing to have evolved since the war years, is Drag Racing, the sensational motor sport that centres on just two machines racing at one time for a mere six seconds in a simple knock-out competition.

Strangely enough, although this country was the heart of motor racing, the sport grew up in the States, where they've been at it since 1948, when the police took the racers off the freeways and on to organised strips. Gradually more and more Drag Strips opened up throughout the country with boundaries being broken in every direction. Crowds regularly exceed the 80,000 mark, as the speeds of the top cars go over 250mph and the elapsed times down below 5.8 seconds.

Meanwhile, here in downtown Britain, we had our own Drag Strip by 1966, in the shape of Santa Pod Raceway, just 70 miles north of London. With the opening of this strip the sport really came on strong in this country, as the public had somewhere to directly relate with what was going on the the crowds started to roll in. By 1970, the first of an annual International event was staged and in the succeeding years more and more racers were buying their machinery in from America. This all added up to one thing, super quick times being laid on the quarter mile straightway, so now everybody was sitting up and watching what could only be described as a real entertainment form.

If you come Drag Racing, the one thing you can't miss is the showmanship that just about every team enters into, which starts with the machine itself. This is wildly painted in many way out colours that glisten in the sun as it charges up the $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of tarmac. Each racer takes great delight in giving their machine a name and this too adorns its sides from the wierd to the plain. Also the crews get into the swing of the scene, all dressed in their matching suits as they frantically rush around the car whilst it prepares for its next pass and to look at the drivers of the upper classes of cars, you would think that they were preparing for a moonshot instead of getting ready for their regular Sunday drive.

If we look right into the competition side we can see that it is basically a race between two machines, the first one to reach the finish line going through to the next round. The race is held from a standing start, over a measured quarter mile, with the time taken to cover the distance given as the elapsed time (E.T.)

and the speed across the finish line given as the terminal speed (T.S.). All times and speed are measured electronically by photo-electric beams on the start and finish lines, with additional beams on the start line to 'stage' the machines before their run. Once they are both staged the Christmas Tree start system begins its countdown, running amber, green and on the green you go. If you go before the green, you get a red foul light, which means you are out of the competition. You can also collect a foul by crossing the centre line dividing the two lanes, but if you escape these two problems, and get to the finish first, then you are on your way up the ladder of success.

One of the most inviting features about Drag Racing though, is its ability to accommodate any type of machinery, whether it's an everyday commuter vehicle, a fully-customised Street Rod or a piece of out and out racing equipment and this fact has made it the world's largest participant motor sport, which seems to be right for the spectator as well. All this is attained by a clever classification system that starts off by putting street driven cars and bikes in their appropriate position in a very complex Street Division. Next up the scale are Pro Stocks, which are extensively modified production saloons with specific performance and weight rules. Over on two wheels are the Competition Motorcycles which are running with times in the low nine second bracket with the top eight racers often separated by just tenths of a second to provide some extremely close racing.

Above these are the Competition Alters which are cars built for all out competition that must carry a production or replica body and with certain limits on the engine location. By now the speeds are up in the 200mph region and there are still two more classes to go.

Now into the top two classes, where the speeds are well over the 200mph mark and the name of the game, sheer excitement. First are the Funny Cars, which are full bodied cars with complete, purpose built inards that punch out enough power to leave thick black lines the whole length of the track on their way to mid six second passes with the speeds approaching 220mph. Last, but not least, are the Dragsters, which are what the sport is all about. Long spindly looking cars that can only sensibly be driven in a straight line, with small motorcycle wheels up front and double big Drag Slicks at the back. The super big V8 engines push these cars way over the 220mph speeds reached by the Funnies, with the E.T.s dropping into the low sixes.

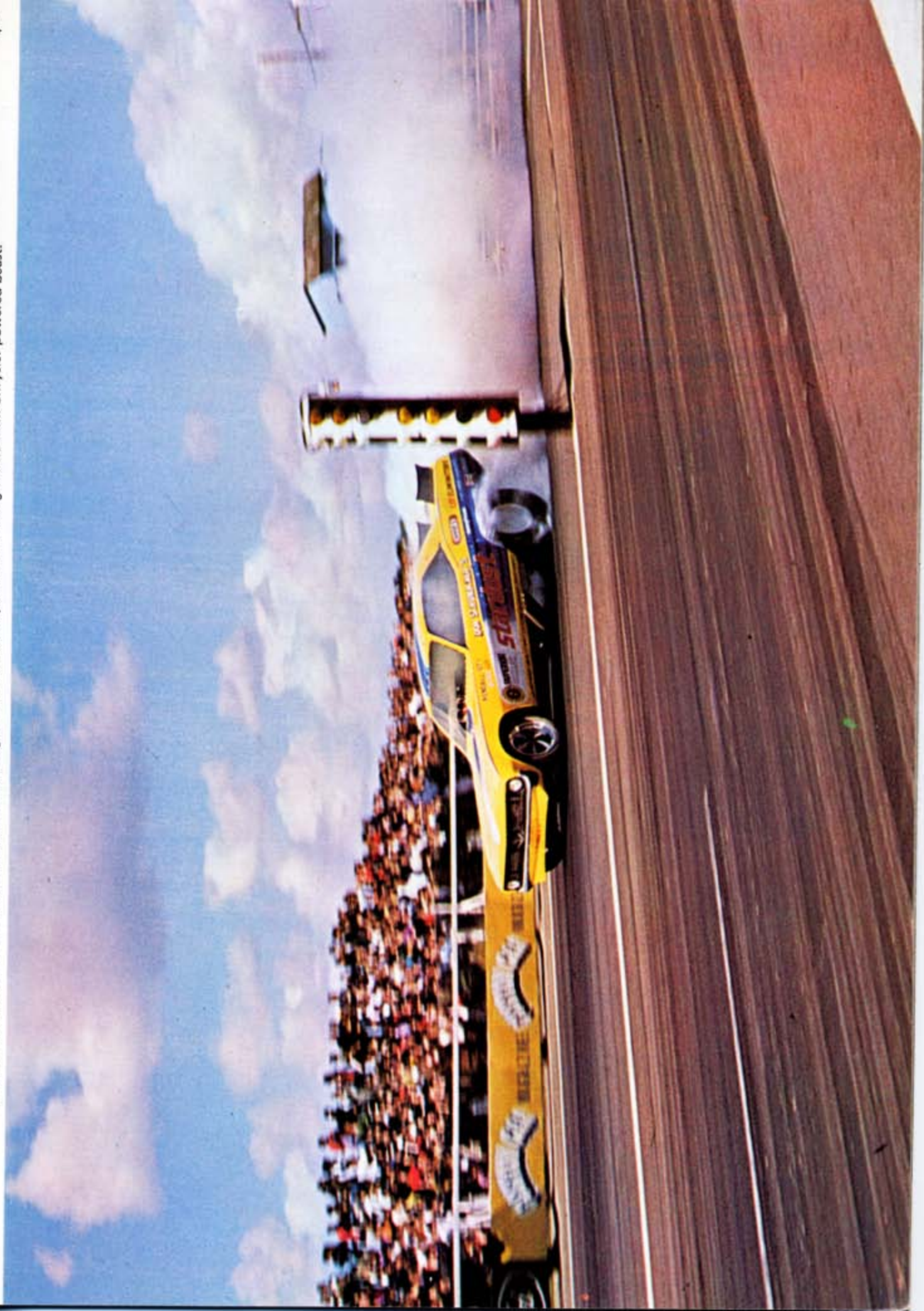
To get in on the action at Santa Pod Raceway, one should join the British Drag Racing & Hot Rod Association, who organise all the meetings at this, the first purpose built Drag Strip in Europe, and still the Home of European Drag Racing. The club's address is c/o S. Watts, All Saints Lane, Clevedon, Avon and they will tell you what else you need to do to compete in this most exhilarating motor sport.

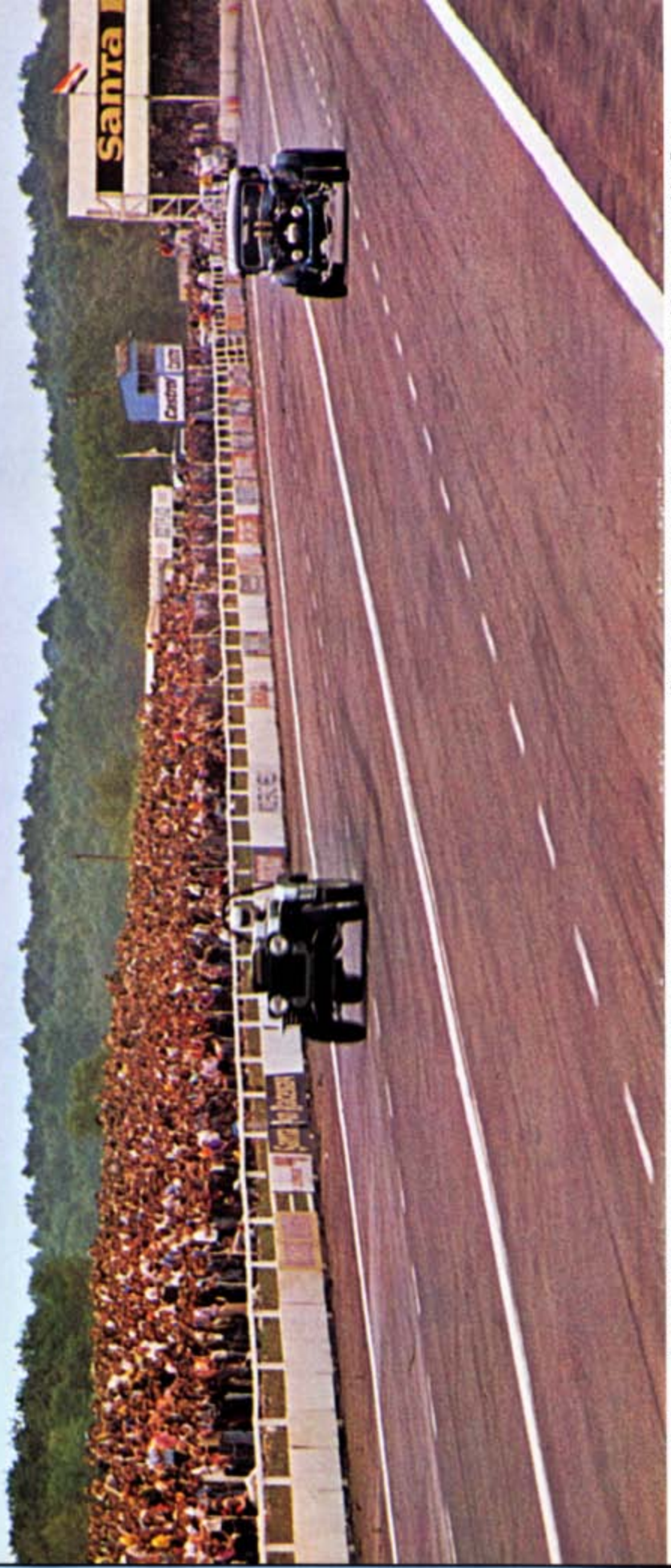
If you prefer to just watch though, the meetings are staged about every third weekend and you can ring 01-464 5445 for more information.

WHERE IT'S AT



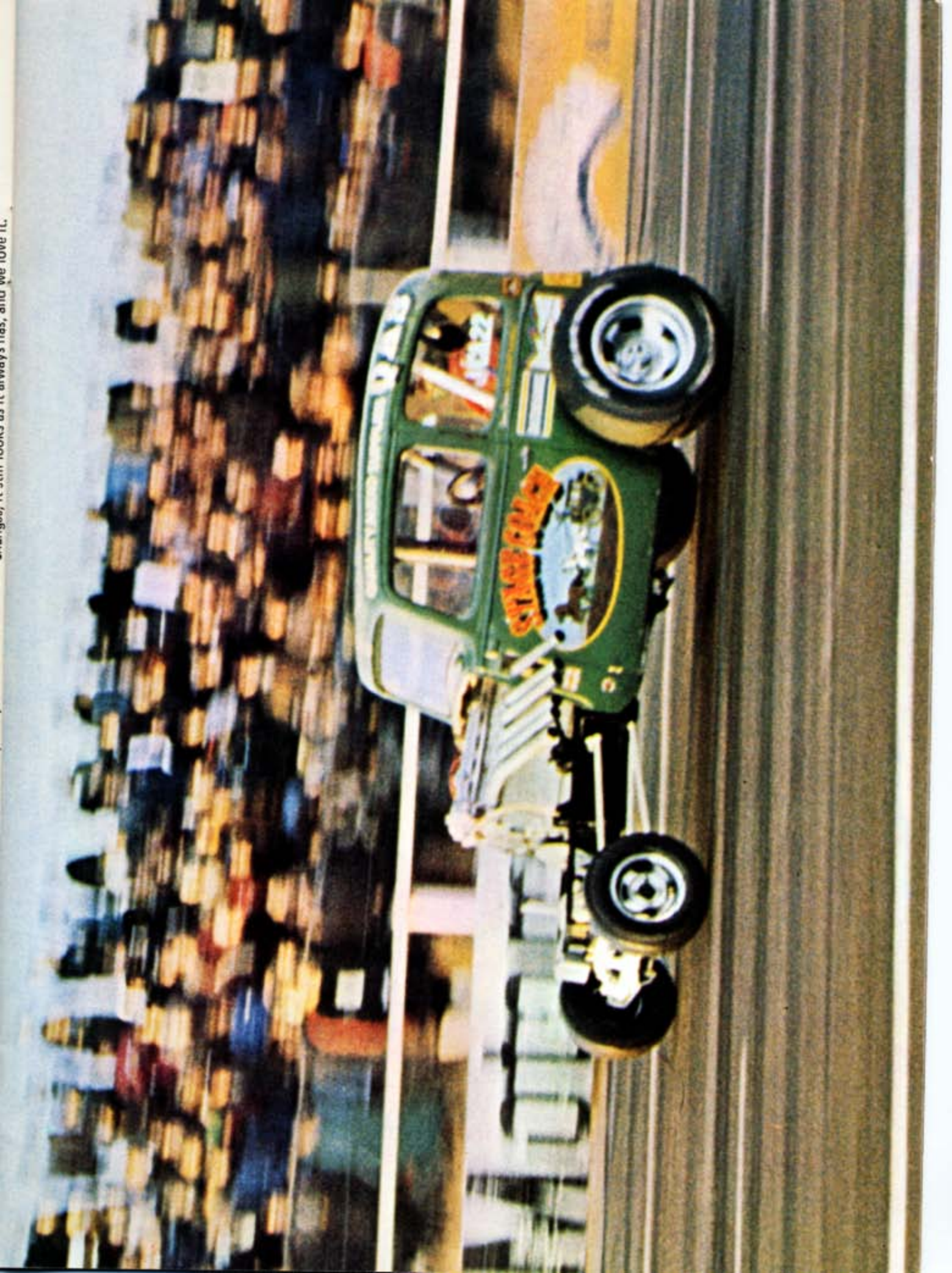
Stardust, the quickest and fastest Funny Car outside America, and one of the biggest crowd attractions in this country, lays one of its favourite acts, the big smokey burnout, with little Allan Herridge on the levers and pedals controlling the Ed Pink Chrysler powered beast.





Each year Santa Pod Raceway hosts an International event and here a big crowd watch two of the Swedish cars charge up the track. Nearside is Anders Lantz' Plymouth Coupe, farside Svante Ericksons Willys Jeep.

One of the oldest cars still running today is this one owned by Barry and David Sheavills. Stagecoach is the name, and apart from minor changes, it still looks as it always has, and we love it.





They took a while, but at long last Roland Pratt and Mike Derry have replaced their ill-fated 'Transcontinental' Funny Car with this Reliant Scimitar bodied Funny. Motivation comes in the form of a 392 Chrysler and the finish is to the usual Hillbillies high standard.

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ous power put out by the top drag racing cars, once the Christmas Tree turns green, anything can happen, as Owen Hayward ably e. First he lays a great burnout to get the tyres hot and sticky. Then it's time to go, but as the clutch locks up the wheels start to lift, now where you are, you're up on the back bumper. Next you can see that just before it lands again the bug catcher is missing from e with everything twisted, then, back to terra firma with the body relocated, super low.

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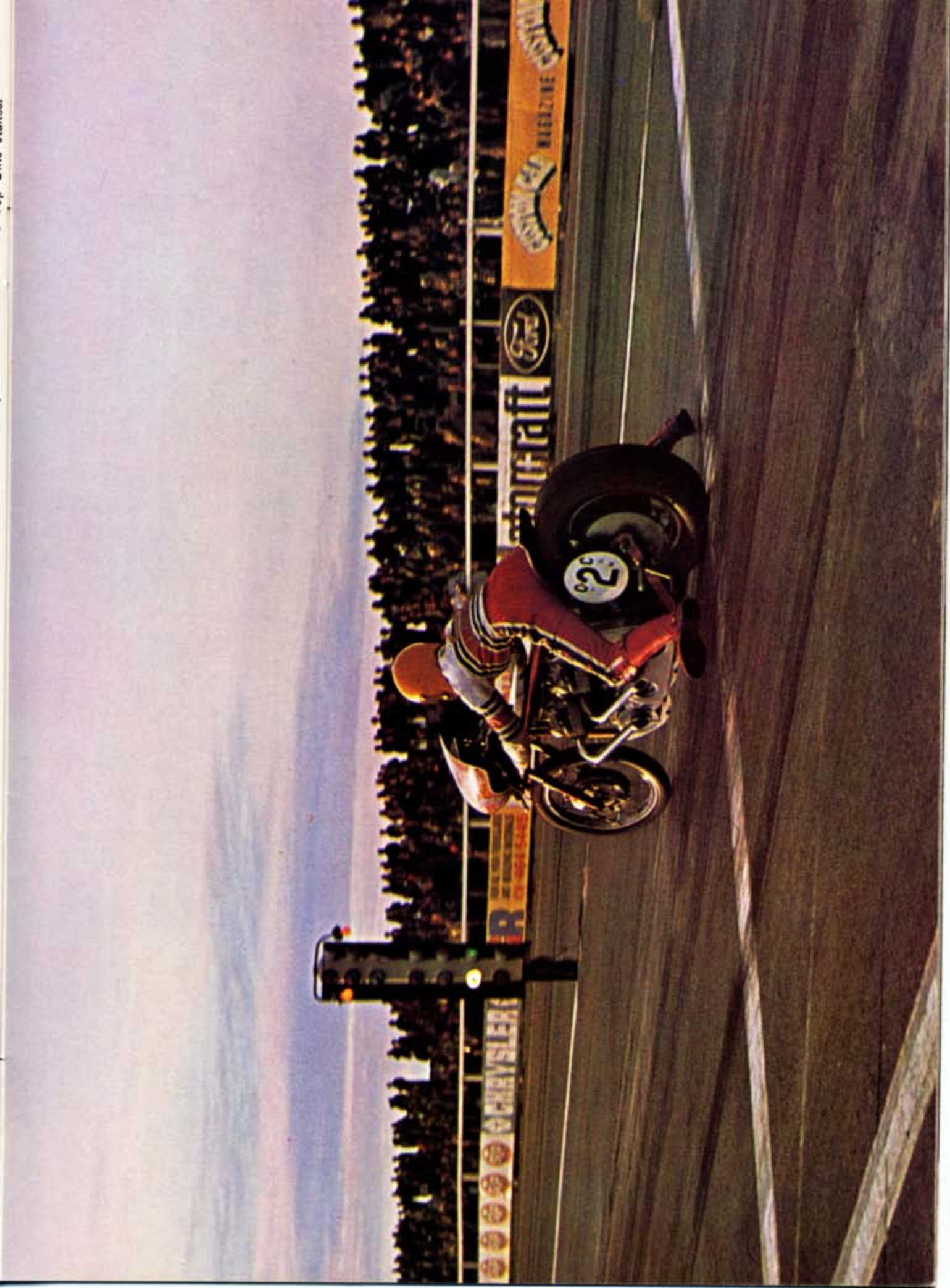
Mr. Revell, Dennis Priddles 392 motored Fueler, lays rubber in preparation for another assault of the 1420 feet of asphalt. Seen here without its body panels for a change, we learn that this is really how Dennis likes to see the cars. Whichever way, the car looks really great, and having held the all out record for over two years the performance matches the looks.

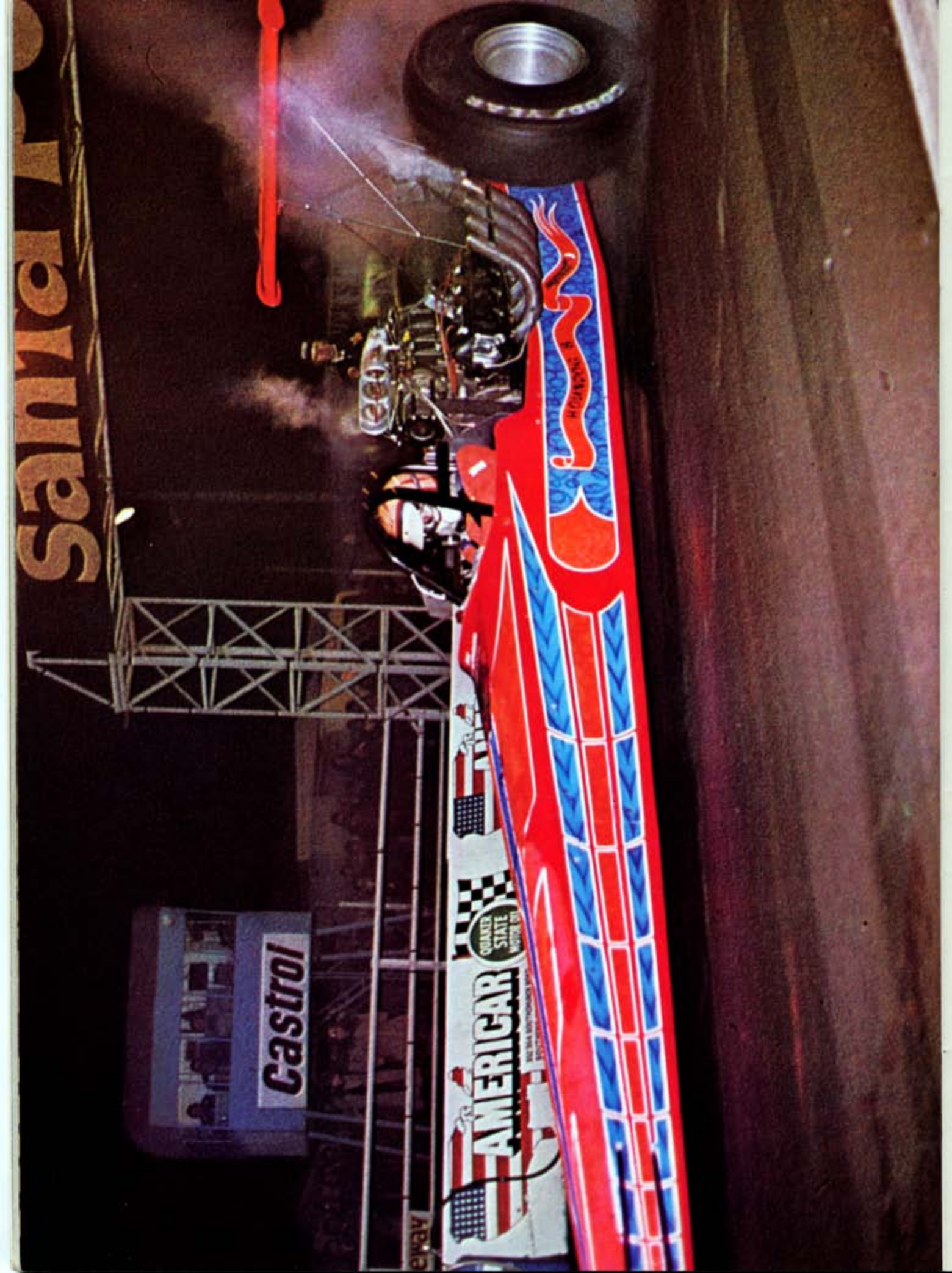




Running in Senior Dragster is Tony Anderson with this beautifully finished Daimler powered rail, which can only be described as a mini fueler and certainly not worthy of its name, 'Even More Trouble'.

Mick Butler on his Super Cyclops double Norton machine has gone lower and lower into the nines, finishing '74 with a best of 9.23 seconds and second only to John Hobbs in the Top Bike stakes.





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SANTA POD RACEWAY

ANATOMY OF A FUEL CAR

27

Nobby Hills latest asset is this Pro Fueler, Hounddog 8, which is based on the Tony Nancy car, seen in this country at the '73 Internationals. In the hands of Mike Hutcherson the car is showing great potential, with runs already established in the six second bracket.

With the current trend amongst this country's top racers of either buying their machinery in from the States or copying the American equipment down to the last detail, one can now almost give a rundown on a top car without knowing the exact details. The one area where this is most evident is in the engine department where there are just three types competing in this country at the present time. First and least powerful, are the standard sized, 392 cubic inch Chrysler V8 engines campaigned by upwards of five Funny Car and Dragster teams. Next are the Donovan engines, of which, there are three in this country. These are enlarged versions of the 392 motor, but made in aluminium by the American Donovan workshop. Their standard size is 417 cubic inches but with work they can be taken out to 480 cubic inches (7.8 litres). Last, and top of the power and size lists are the Ed Pink modified, 426 cubic inch Chrysler based engines. There are four of these engines laying rubber on the track in the UK with the biggest and most powerful one measuring an enormous 510 cubic inches (8.4 litres!). The power output of this engine is well in excess of 2,000 bhp, which gives you one heck of a kick on the back on take-off.

If we take a look inside one of these Pink engines, we find that the stock 426 block has taken a 60 thou overbore, with aluminium rods and pistons filling the new holes. These swing on an Ed Pink crank which has a longer stroke than standard by up to $\frac{5}{8}$ inch. This is where the real increase in size takes place, with $\frac{5}{8}$ being just about the longest one can go. All is kept running smooth by TRW bearings and Kendal GT1 70W racing oil.

Up on top is an Enderle three port bug-catcher injection set-up, which pours the fuel into the motor quicker than you can tip it out of a can, using six gallons on each run. From here the fuel rushes through a GMC 6/71 supercharger, which is again modified by Pink and then down through the Cragar inlet manifold to the highly modified heads. These heads are so different from stock, that the port exits are in a completely different position. This is achieved by welding up the stock port, then cutting out the new one in the desired position. All the valve gear is Pink except the exhaust valves which are from Donovans.

Handling all the power thrown out by the engine, we find a variety of clutches. The Dragsters are running Hayes or Scheiffer triple plate slider clutches whilst the Funny Cars are using Crowderglide clutches. All these are very similar, with the clutch locking up more with the increase in revs of the engine via bob-weights on the clutch fingers, although the Crowderglide unit does differ in one important way, in that it doesn't have a clutch pedal, making it virtually an automatic.

Next, the power passes through a Lenco two speed gearbox and a reverser unit. The two speed box is similar in principle to an overdrive unit seen on many production cars, but is instead, an underdrive type, with top gear being 1:1 drive, this being a safer set-up as the old overdrives were prone to breaking up. These underdrive boxes operate with a whole mass of clutch plates, with an operating fork, which is tapered, and is rammed in-between the plates when the top gear is required. This system does away with declutching and lowering the revs, so all you will hear when the gear is changed, is a slight drop in the engine note as it picks up the top gear.

Last in the drive train is the rear axle which has changed from the old accepted Oldsmobile item to a

Ford one. This runs Scheiffer gears and Summers Brothers shafts with fully floating hubs. Hanging on this are a set of 16 inch magnesium wheels with 16 inch wide slicks which run at a pressure of around 4½ psi, depending on the weather conditions. Inside the slicks are a set of inner tyres, which are inflated to around 40 psi through an inner tube, and these serve to hold the slicks really hard against the wheel rims. The slicks themselves are of the wrinkle wall variety, so that the faster the wheels go round, the more they can grow, so increasing the gear ratio as well as the rolling resistance. They can in fact grow in height by six to nine inches and can best be seen in the burnout routine.

Up in front of the 240 inch wheelbase Dragsters are a pair of motorcycle wheels mounted on a solidly suspended tube axle and running 2.25 x 17 Avon Speedmaster Mk 11 rubber. Also across the front you will find an aerofoil which becomes very functional at the top end of the strip as the car constantly tries to leave the ground and go its own way. On the short 120 inch wheelbase Funny Cars, the front is held off the ground by a pair of Mag spoke wheels with 5 x 15 tyres.

So, now we have briefly seen the cars, it is all down to seeing through a days racing, at the end of which we will all be proficient Pro Fuel drivers.

Once at the strip and having unloaded the car, the first chore is to bet the car warmed up. This we do with a mediocre fuel mix of around 70% nitro with the rest being methanol. Also we use warmup plugs for this job, which are virtually standard road plugs. The engines are started with clip-on starters, or on the starting rollers, if they are available. As soon as the oil pressure is up, the engine is fired and allowed to idle, with the occasional blip to check that the revs pick up alright and all the time the crew check for anything abnormal in the form of leaks and the like. When the motor is warm, which is told by feeling the heads, it is switched off, by cutting off the fuel. Now it is time to get everything ready for the first run. The plugs are changed to Autolite racing plugs and the fuel tank is topped up to make the running mix at around 90% nitro depending on the track and weather conditions. Also the ignition (around 70 degrees advance) and the clutch are set up to the conditions along with the tyres and then we are about ready.

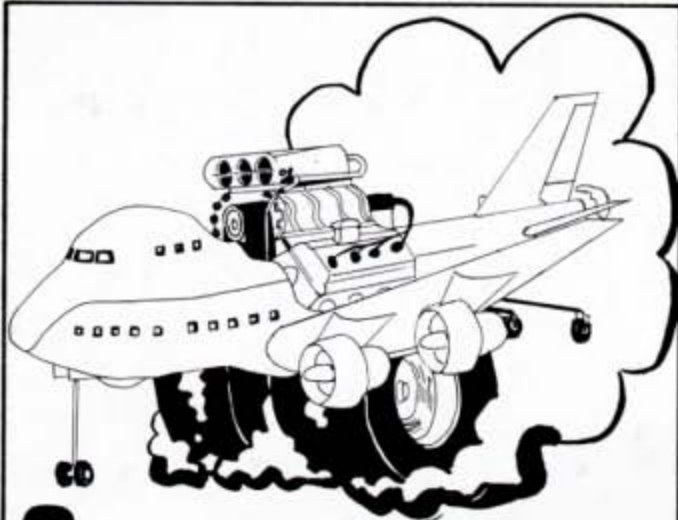
When we are called, we push down the fire-up rod at 40mph, out with the clutch, up comes the oil pressure switch on the ignition and away we go. With the noise suddenly there, all the crowd are on their feet and waiting. First into the burnout area, where the crew pour bleach in front of the rear slicks. When the engine is ready, up go the revs, the clutch locks and out rolls the smoke in great clouds. This is all done to warm up the slicks and make them grip the tarmac better on the run proper. Once the crew has pushed the car back to the start area and we are lined up on the black lines just laid, the car is edged into stage. Suddenly the lights are rolling, it's green and we're gone with a tremendous 3g force in the back. Almost instantly it is time to change into top and nearly as quickly it is time to pull the release for the Simpson parachute which slows us down with 4g force the other way. With the Hurst/Airheart disc brakes bringing the car to a final stop in the return road, we check that somewhere in the confusion of stopping from over 220mph we did in fact turn off the fuel supply to cut the motor and now the push car is here and it's back to the pits to ready the car for another crack at the ¼ mile challenge, that is always there waiting to be beaten.



As Clive Skilton crosses the finish line at just over 200mph, trouble strikes with a front tyre blowout. With the parachute billowing out behind

As Clive Skilton crosses the finish line at just over 200mph, trouble strikes with a front tyre blowout. With the parachute billowing out behind him, Clive struggles to control the car, but to no avail, as he hits the barrier. Above right you can see the parachute still trying to stop him while over to the right, in the air, is one of the rear wheels that has just broken off. Lastly, below, is proof that driving a double A Fueller is definitely not child's play, although Clive did walk away from this one without even a bruise.





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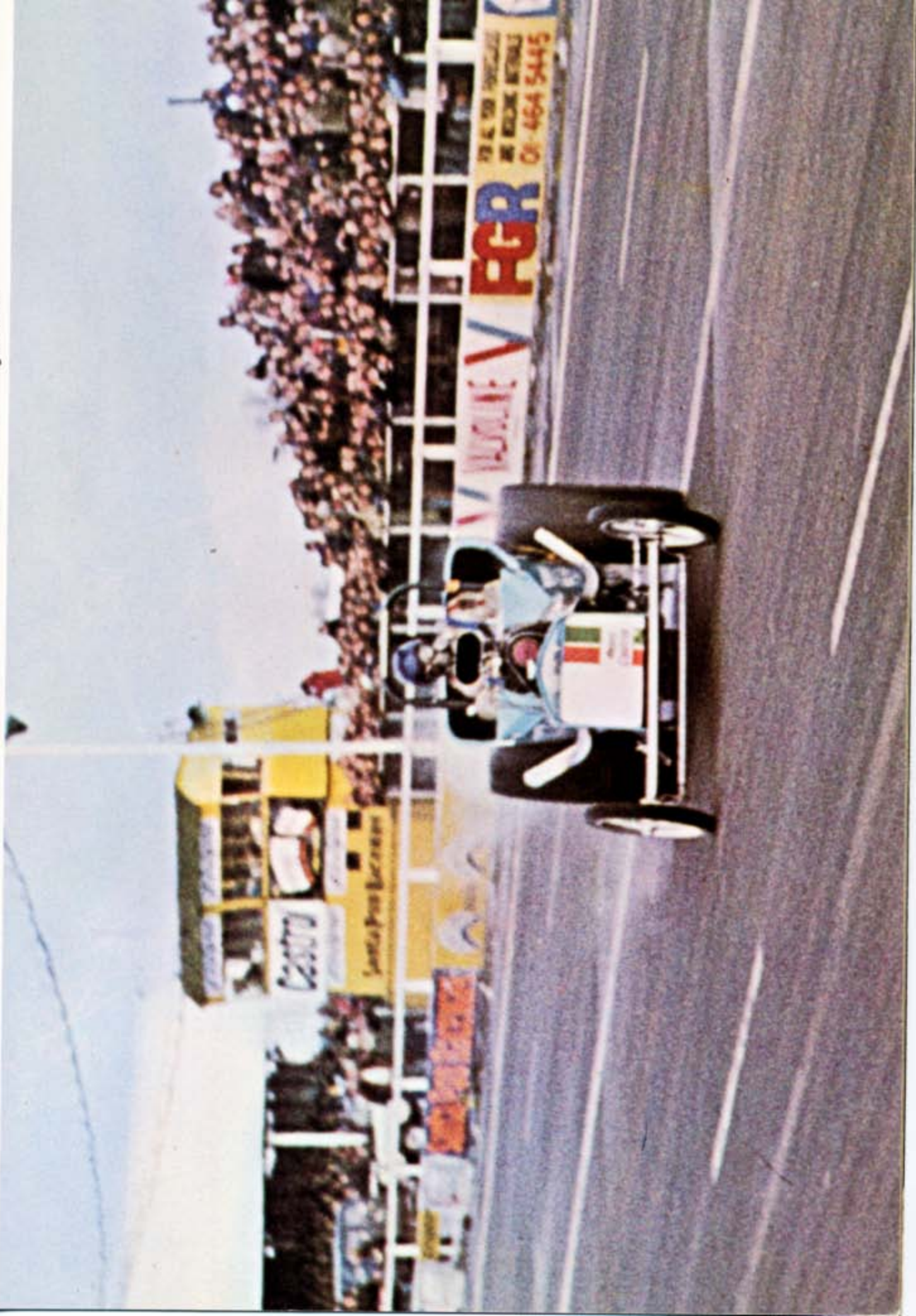
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Dave Stone and his Tee Rat Altered have captivated the crowd for so long now that we have all lost count, and always for one major reason, no matter what the situation Dave will not take his foot off the gas pedal. Unfortunately it didn't work out this time, as he went on from this sideways blast to write the chassis off against the crash barrier. Watch out for the new car though, it's bound to be a giant killer.





32↑
Allan Herridge not only drives Stardust, but also this Pro Fueler, good old Firefly, the 426 Chrysler powered digger that performs all manner of antics as it storms up the track in Bootsies very capable hands.

↑33
After another super strong pass, Dennis Priddle bounces his way down the shutoff area in his STP Avenger Funny Car with the crossform parachute working overtime to slow him from the 200mph terminal





This is the second in John Whitmores line of Drag-n-Flys and although not quite as quick as the first yet, it is getting there, as Gerry Cookson learns from his grandstand seat in the background.

Drag-n-Fly could in fact be an apt title for this real flying machine, the wheelie Stingray, with its full $\frac{1}{4}$ mile wheels up passes. Get up and go comes from a 427 Chevy sitting beside Roy Phelps in the passenger seat.



One of the British built Funny Cars currently showing its paces is this one from Liam Churchill, Nestling under the lengthened Capri body-shell is a 354 cubic inch Chrysler motor.

One of the quickest Top Bike contenders is John Clifts 750 Triumph, which has managed several wins through its life, as Dutch rider Henk Vink discovers here as he trails off the start line.





With eyes fixed ahead, Phil Elson powers his 392 Chrysler motored Sneaky Tee Altered off the line. Phil's best to date is in the high eights.

Back Cover: Mike Hall in the ex-Fred Whittle "Shutdown" charges through the top end of the strip

John Williamson lifts the wheels of his 3.8 Jaguar powered "Sachs Motor" Middle Altered, as he storms out of the hole and away.

