

# HOFtalk



## The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame News Bulletin Summer 2015 Issue I

Compiled and Edited by Simon Groves; additional words by Brian Taylor and Andy 'Tog' Rogers; on-line version by Nigel Holland

### 2015 INDUCTEES ANNOUNCED

The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame (BDRHoF) has just announced the names of the three people selected for induction into the Hall of Fame in 2015. They are drag bike rider/builder John Clift, long standing hot rod and dragster builder/racer Ken Cooper and one of the longest serving drag race organisers in the UK Yvonne Tramm.



**John Clift**



**Ken Cooper**



**Yvonne Tramm**

Their detailed Citations are published in the next three pages and their names join those whose contributions to British drag racing are considered to have been extraordinary. The Induction Ceremonies will take place at the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner being held at the prestigious Savill Court Hotel, Windsor Great Park on November 21<sup>st</sup> when drag racing personalities and fans from around the world will celebrate the commitment shown by these all too often un-sung heroes and the influence they have had on drag racing. We welcome them all into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.

#### From the Editor



Hi. My name is Simon Groves. Some of you may know me as reporter for Eurodragster.com. I also work with Dave Riswick of John Woolfe Racing helping him archive items for his private drag racing museum in Bedford.

For some time the BDRHoF Management Board has been wanting to improve the communication with and about inductees and supporters so I was very pleased to volunteer to edit and compile this new BDRHoF on-line publication **HOFtalk**. Hopefully this will fill that need. Let us know what you are up to and we'll include it in the next issue.

Send any contributions to [simon@britishdragracinghof.co.uk](mailto:simon@britishdragracinghof.co.uk)

Also available in pdf form at  
[http://www.eurodragster.com/news/features/HOFtalk/HOFtalk\\_01.pdf](http://www.eurodragster.com/news/features/HOFtalk/HOFtalk_01.pdf)

## John Clift – a profile by Keith Lee



Anyone remotely interested in motorcycle drag racing during the 1970s and 80s will be familiar with the name John Clift. He was always a determined, hard-charging competitor in Top Fuel, or Top Bike as it was called at the time; arguably the most competitive class in British drag racing during that period.

John originally competed in road racing up to National level, but a friend kept nagging him to have a go at sprinting. He started out drag racing in 1971 running in the Junior Bike class, but made rapid strides through the bike ranks as he developed his machinery.

He made his name first with a supercharged Triumph, interestingly called 'The co-respondent', and John was the third rider below 9 seconds in a record breaking 1975 season. By 1979 he had set the 1000cc record at 8.34s/165.

In the search for better and stronger items to keep him racing, John was an early collaborator with British Drag Racing Hall of Fame member Pete Davies, helping to develop the world dominating Puma engine parts. But he was also a talented fabricator. Many well-known riders of the day, both in the UK and abroad, would use one of his rolling chassis or other fabricated components. His advice and generous financial terms were renowned throughout the paddock. At the same time he was a fierce competitor on the track, and would always make race day - no matter how many hours of work and travel miles it took.

He was one rider who helped build good relations in Holland in particular, where John and wife Pat were always very welcome guests – as they were at any drag racing or sprint meeting. Their two daughters, Julie and Nikki, were brought up in the pits, and went on to be involved in the bike side of the sport themselves. Grandson Jamie now crews for Rune Fjeld Racing.

The Puma Weslake, featuring the first of Puma's billet heads, was still competitive in the mid-1980s, ending with a best of 8.21s/ 181mph.



His on track career ended in the Pro Stock class, winning the European Championship in 1988 on a Suzuki, before retiring in 1990. At that time he was actually constructing a state of the art Top Fuel bike that would feature the first complete 4 cylinder Puma billet motor. Sadly rising costs delayed its completion, but the machine did go to Australia, where ex-pat Jay Upton became a top runner.

Now living in France, rarely do you come across someone involved in drag racing who is so universally liked and respected as John. When a rider had mechanical gremlins he was always first on the scene to offer a helping hand; often putting his own racing activities in jeopardy due to the time spent in helping out others.

His outgoing and generous-in-spirit personality has been an asset to British drag racing. It is for this and his commitment to drag bike racing as a competitor and an inventive constructor that he has been inducted into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. *(Photos; Keith Lee)*

## Ken Cooper – a profile by Herb Andrews and Nick Pettitt



When people talk about the true pioneers of British drag racing and hot rodding, the name Ken 'flathead' Cooper comes close to the top of the list. He bought his first car, a '37 Ford coupe, in 1959 and being an avid reader of Hot Rod magazine he soon turned it into a hot rod by fitting a '41 Mercury flathead with dual exhausts, lowering the front suspension and painting it bright yellow.

He was one of the first members of the British Hot Rod Association and at the first AGM was elected as Midlands Division secretary. He also formed a local Hot Rod club known as the 'Roadrunners'.

He began constructing his first dragster in 1960 – based on what he had seen in Hot Rod magazine. By that time things were starting to move forward for drag racing in Britain. Sydney Allard had announced that he was building a dragster and things were looking good. But there was a problem. The RAC, who governed motor sport in the UK at that time, did not have a separate class for dragsters. Instead they grouped dragsters with cars designed for sprinting meaning front brakes and engine covers had to be fitted.

That certainly did not fit in with Ken's idea of what a dragster should look like. If he was going to build one he wanted it to be like what he had seen in Hot Rod magazine so in 1962 he dumped the part-finished dragster chassis at the bottom of his garden.

Instead, he built another hot rod from a '33 Ford Cabriolet - flathead powered of course, and much lighter than his first attempt.



With news in 1964 that the RAC had recognised dragsters as a separate class, Ken literally dragged his chassis out of the weeds in his garden and set about finishing it for the 1965 season, debuting at the first practice meet at Graveley. Known as 'Bazooka' it was powered by another Mercury flathead, topped off by three carbs on a Navarro manifold. Running methanol and with Edelbrock heads fitted it was looking every bit like the American dragsters he had so much admired.

Ken replaced it with a new updated and longer 'Bazooka Too' in 1967, followed later by 'Blast from the Past' and continued racing, tuning and building more chassis up to 1981. His best times were 10.68 @ 132mph, not bad for a flathead even today. In 1974 Ken and the late Tony Beadle had formed the British Flathead Racers Association. Flatheads were relatively cheap then and the association was formed mainly as an inexpensive way to go racing. Ken built many of the cars in the BFRA and would always go out of his way to help fellow racers with flathead tuning and chassis construction advice.



Ken's passion and enthusiasm for flathead drag racing is still as strong today as it ever was so when his son Bradley showed an interest to race in 2009, Ken at 72 years old set about building another new flathead dragster. It debuted in 2012 with Bradley in the driver's seat and Ken looking after the tuning. The period correct attention to detail is fantastic, looking once again like it's jumped from the pages of a '50s Hot Rod Magazine and the 'Back from the Past' dragster has been a popular addition at nostalgia drag races ever since. It is for his pioneering roles in promoting hot rodding and drag racing in the early years and his continued support of sportsman class drag racing for over 50 years that Ken Cooper has been inducted into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. (Photos; Nick Pettitt)

## Yvonne Tramm – a profile by Simon Groves



Yvonne Tramm and husband Steve first went to Santa Pod Raceway in late 1974. They were completely 'blown away' by the spectacle and from the beginning of 1975 until today they have only missed five events. Children arrived, Spencer and Kirstie, and from a very early age the family sat on the spectator bank at the end of the quarter mile enjoying the racing. They joined the then organising club the British Drag Racing and Hot Rod Association (BDR&HRA), and after it had been renamed the British Drag Racing Association (BDRA) in 1983 Yvonne became the General Secretary – a club with around 1000 members at that time.

Most of the work was carried out at home, with all the family helping to send out tickets to racers, circulating the club magazine Drag Racing News and taking in membership subscriptions. Most of the press liaison was carried out by the club in those days too. There were Area Representatives to manage; they would organise evening social meetings for like-minded racers and spectators in pubs featuring drag racing films and presentations by the top racers of the day. These meetings were an important part of communicating with club members in the days prior to Facebook, Twitter, e-mail and club web sites. She also ran the club shop at Santa Pod Raceway, selling merchandise at the track and by mail order.

In the late eighties, she started managing the signing on of racers. This included much 'on-the-day' chasing of competitors. International meetings provided a special challenge and stories of Yvonne rushing down the fire-up road to sign on Swedish competitor the late Lee Anders Hasselstrom just prior to his next Funny Car pass, and confronting Norwegian Rune Fjeld - who has claimed to her on many occasions that he does not speak English - are now part of European drag racing folklore.

At the end of 1990, Yvonne decided to take a break from the BDRA that was merging with the recently folded National Drag Racing Club, becoming the British National Drag Racing Association (BNDRA) organising meetings at venues other than Santa Pod Raceway. But this retirement lasted only a few months because early in 1991 she was asked to join the Santa Pod Racers Club (SPRC) that had become the host organising club at Santa Pod Raceway.



She worked at the track on merchandising and organising the dinner dance, until about seven years ago when she switched to the signing on office.

The late Paula Marshall was the General Secretary at that time but when Paula became ill, Yvonne took on the role of organising the dinner dance once again along with recording the meeting minutes for the SPRC Executive Committee, inter club meetings, riders and drivers meetings and the tech committee – plus managing the UK National Drag Racing Championship and the SPRC Club Championship; all quite a handful alongside a full time career.

As well as being a key member of the team that organises racing at Santa Pod, Yvonne has become friends with many UK racers who she thinks of as her second family. In fact she has done her share of crewing for teams steered by the racing activities of Spencer and Kirstie Tramm. This involved her in supporting Spencer's racing at NHRA meetings at Las Vegas and Pomona as well as in the UK, building and running a Pro Mod car and Kirstie's photography at European race events for [www.eurodragster.com](http://www.eurodragster.com).

But it is for her tireless work during 32 years on the organisation side of drag racing that Yvonne Tramm has been inducted into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. Without people like Yvonne the sport could not exist. (Photo; Simon Groves)



Chairman of the BDRHoF Stu Bradbury said, "Once again I think the Selection Committee have chosen very well. It is not an easy task but somehow they come up with the goods each year and I would like to thank them for the work they do. John Clift, Ken Cooper and Yvonne Tramm are names respected by all those that have been following the sport as it has grown over the years. These inductions into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame represent our tribute to their dedication. It will ensure their names are honoured for all time".

They join a select group whose names are shown below in alphabetical order.

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

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**July 12: BDRHoF at Dragstalgia** The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame shared a stand with the Allard Chrysler Action Group in the Historic Vehicle Tent at Dragstalgia 2015. BDRHoF International Liaison Director Geoff Stilwell also booked a box in the Bank Side VIP Centre for invited BDRHoF Guests.

It was a fabulous event and many existing BDRHoF/ACAG members came to say hello as well as potential members. You can read about them on page 24 of this publication. Thanks to the BDRHoF/ACAG team of Stu and Bev Bradbury, Brian Taylor, Phil Cottingham, Syd and Carol McDonald, Kev Roberts and Bob Dugdale for manning the display. The BDRHoF is proud to have been involved in developing this event since the concept was originally launched. James Forester of Santa Pod Raceway has done a great job in carrying it forward.



BDRHoF Chairman Stu Bradbury and Commerce and Marketing Director Brian Taylor are joined by Nickie Anniwell (left) and Holly Jakes (Right). *(Photo by Mark Skinner)*. A lot more dressing up going on this year. Thank you ladies. You made two old men very happy. Photos below show Syd, Carol, Bev, Brian and Stu in a busy Marquee full of satisfied customers old and young. Thanks to Les Downey of Lucas Oil for the easy-up. *(Photos Brian Taylor, Kev Roberts)*





More photos showing Syd, Carol and Brian keeping the customers satisfied and two people living the dream sitting in Europe's first dragster – Sydney Allard's 1961 Allard Chrysler owned by the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

The pretty one in the dragster is 18 year old Laura Jane Baynton who has just been licensed to drive her Dad's V8 Mark I Capri. The bearded one is UK artist Paul Whitehouse being watched over by Brian Taylor. (Photos; Kev Roberts)



During the weekend Californian drag racing personality Julie Braskett kindly presented BDRHoF International Liaison Director Geoff Stilwell with her sponsorship for the Grand Autograph Signing at the 2015 BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner being held on November 21<sup>st</sup>. She is co-sponsoring once more with U S Automotive. They both supported Tea at the Pod with Garlits last year.





Geoff is now in the USA holding a series of meetings with people and companies who are interested in becoming involved with the BDRHoF. One of those wanting to meet Geoff (and give him a cuddle evidently) was Eileen Daniels.



*(Photo: Donna Garlits)*

These days Eileen is a Consultant to the NHRA specialising in Annual Events, VIPs and Car Shows. In fact, she was one of the first people employed by the NHRA. Back in 1959 her late husband Bob Daniels was appointed by Wally Parks as NHRA North Central Division (Division Three) director for the six Midwestern states and adjacent Canadian provinces.

Working with Eileen he served in this role for two decades, coordinating the activities of NHRA members and tracks, assisting with the design and construction of more than 20 racing facilities.

He was instrumental in influencing the NHRA to consider Indianapolis Raceway Park as the permanent home of the U.S. Nationals and after its acquisition he was appointed its General Manager. He was so successful that he was named 1988 Auto Racing Promoter of the Year by a vote of his fellow promoters taken through Racing Promotion Monthly magazine. Bob and Eileen have been very active with the NHRA Hot Rod Reunions – a duty Eileen continues today. They certainly helped grow NHRA to the prominence it currently enjoys.

**July 4: Gala Dinner Tickets** This year's British Drag Racing Hall of Fame (BDRHoF) Gala Awards Dinner will be the most exciting yet. The evening will be about this year's inductees, but you would have to go back to the 1970s to be in the company of so many American drag racing legends at a UK event.



Held on Saturday 21st November at Savill Court Hotel, Wick Lane, Bishops Gate, Windsor, Surrey TW20 0XN there are still some tickets available and prices remain as last year at £60 per person. *(Photo; Savill Court Hotel)*

Corporate tables of ten are available at £580. Room prices also remain as last year, £99 for double and £79 for single including breakfast. Complimentary use of swimming pool, sauna, steam room, jacuzzi, and free car parking are also part of the package. For advance booking of Gala Dinner tickets contact [britishdrhof@aol.com](mailto:britishdrhof@aol.com) or telephone Stu Bradbury on 01933 279102.

For room bookings call the Savill Court Hotel on 01784 472000 quoting Hall of Fame dinner 21st November.





### June 28: Garlits at Goodwood



BDRHoF member Don Garlits made his debut at the Goodwood Festival of Speed this year. Arrangements were made during Don's visit last year to the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala Awards Dinner when representatives from the BDRHoF and US Automotive, along with Ron Hope, introduced Don to Lord March at a meeting in London.

This year's runs did not go without a few worries. After the first Friday run the blower belt caused problems. These were fixed but the second run on Friday highlighted deeper damage.

A broken valve spring caused the valve to drop down. The piston hit it and knocked off the valve head punching a hole in the combustion chamber. Without spare parts and any extensive toolkit the problem looked to be terminal, so the Saturday was spent signing autographs and doing interviews.



Sunday morning saw the team investigate further and the hot-rodder in Don thought the engine could be repaired for a final burnout in front of the House at Goodwood later in the day. It would mean running one cylinder light and slightly out of balance but Don recalled that he had won many championships on 7 cylinders. The resulting repair will go down in Goodwood history and nobody in the pits – apart from Don - thought it was possible. The team pulled the pushrod and the lifters out. They then cut out a piece of a Sprite drinks can, and, using Dental Fixodent they slipped it between the manifold gasket on number five. That blocked the air getting into the damaged cylinder and the engine was reassembled.



It was started in the pits with the help of couple of crew members from the Williams Formula One Team and was able to make that final round at Goodwood. In fact Don closed the show. The photos give a flavour of the event, as do the links to footage of Don's three runs. The publicity given to drag racing and Santa Pod Raceway was tremendous. (Photos; Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing, Stu Bradbury. Videos; Goodwood Festival of Speed and US Automotive)

First run starts at about 16 minutes in

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25JG88LEtjI&feature=youtu.be>

Another video of the first run from US Automotive

<https://www.facebook.com/USAutomotiveUK?fref=nf>

Second run starts at about 14 minutes in.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHgHnxyDvRs>

Final run

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHWPncLJeA>



**June 1: Radio Advert** BDRHoF Commerce and Marketing Director Brian Taylor put on his old voice-over hat and made a radio advertisement to promote the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner. It is being broadcast on Nitro FM and at Shakey during the season.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZSSjuNGKeQ&feature=youtu.be>



It's in the style of 'You Buy One You Get One Free'. Music is Pipeline by the Chantays - edited and speeded up a bit. Dead on 30 seconds. (Photos; Brian Taylor)

**June 3: Big Daddy plans return for Gala Dinner** Big Daddy Don Garlits plans to make a return trip to the UK to make the presentation of the Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award to Mopar at the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame event at the Savill Court Hotel in Windsor on 21st November. Don has been a Mopar Ambassador for sixty years and was at the forefront of developing the Mopar Hemi engine in his series of Swamp Rat dragsters. He was the first to receive the 426 cubic inch Hemi 'Elephant Motor' which was installed in Swamp Rat 8 at the end of 1964. In March this year he received the Mopar President's Award for his sixty years as a Mopar Ambassador. For this trip he will again be joined by his daughter Donna Garlits, Chief Financial Officer of the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing in Ocala. Donna's son Rodney will also be making a return trip to the Gala Dinner.

Don said: *"On hearing that the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame had selected Mopar to receive the Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award I knew I had to make the presentation. My relationship with Mopar over most of my drag racing career has been the cornerstone of my achievements. I was honoured to receive the Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award last year and presenting it to Mopar this year will give me a great deal of pleasure and pride. I'm looking forward to meeting the many friends I have made in the UK and celebrating the Mopar Hemi with them. That makes two trips to England this year because I'm also at the Goodwood Festival of Speed on 25th to 28th June."*



(Photos; Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing)



**June 3: Gala Dinner Announcers** The on-stage announcers for the Gala Dinner have been more or less finalised. The UK team of long-serving Santa Pod Raceway and National Street Rod Association announcer John Price will be joined by broadcaster and Chairman of the Guild of Motoring Writers Guy Loveridge, official Gala MC Paul Wright, and BDRHoF Commerce and Marketing Director Brian Taylor.

But to introduce the Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award this year and to interview those involved, BDRHoF have invited leading American Sports Network broadcaster Jack Korpela.



A University of Florida graduate, Jack Korpela is a professional broadcaster who has worked for several sports networks including ESPN, CBS and Fox Sports. As well as commentating on football, baseball and professional wrestling (seen in over 160 countries), he became well known as a pit reporter for ESPN's Inside Drag Racing, The Mother's Polish Car Show Series and In The Driver's Seat. He is also the editor of a popular motorcycle racing news website, Cycledrag.com and PR Consultant to Larry McBride.

(Photo; Jack Korpela)

You can see Jack at work at [www.vimeo.com/32855366](http://www.vimeo.com/32855366)

Talking about his trip to the Gala, Jack said *"It is a great honour for me to be a part of such a prestigious and illustrious event – particularly the presentation of the Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award to Mopar. And I have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for the late Brian Johnson so I find it very fitting that during my first trip across the pond I will be able to pay homage to him. I'm sure Ann and Brian will be smiling down as Larry 'Spiderman' McBride honours their memory. While I'm there I want to interview some drag bike riders because I'm very keen to promote this event and the UK drag bike scene in the USA."*

**May 23: 2015 Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award Goes to Mopar** The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame is pleased to announce that the 2015 BDRHoF Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award will go to FCA US LLC's Mopar brand for the role played in drag racing by its famed Hemi V8 engine.

The crystal trophy will be presented at the 2015 BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner at the fabulous Savill Court Hotel, Windsor Great Park, United Kingdom on 21st November and Mopar representatives will fly in from Auburn Hills to receive it.



Pietro Gorlier, President and CEO – Mopar Brand Service, Parts and Customer Care, FCA, said: *"We are very proud of our history at the strip and thrilled that the Hemi engine has been recognised by the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame in this fashion. Our involvement in drag racing over the years has fed our production development as well, and still does. The strip and the street are forever linked together in Mopar's DNA. We look forward to meeting UK-based Mopar and Hemi engine enthusiasts in November and accepting an award that will have pride of place back home in Auburn Hills."* (Photo; Mopar)

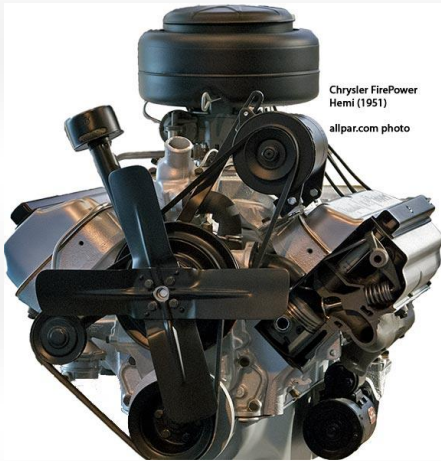
BDRHoF Chair Stu Bradbury said *"The 2015 BDRHoF Gala Dinner has been made even more special with the honour of presenting this award to a company that has been at the forefront of the quest for improved drag racing performance since the beginning. The Hemi V8 engine has achieved legendary status within our sport and, with this year marking the 65th anniversary of the engine first being available on production line cars, it is even more special. It will certainly be a night to remember."*

The 331 cubic inch Chrysler Firepower HEMI engine (below) was first offered on production cars in 1951. The Chrysler New Yorker Convertible was one of the first to receive it. (Photos [allpar.com](http://allpar.com) and [Schmitt.com](http://Schmitt.com))



**The History;** It was the autumn of 1950-51. Rock'n'Roll had not been invented and Goodnight Irene was on top of the Billboard Music Charts, along with The Third Man Theme. If you attended the cinema, you saw Sunset Boulevard and Annie Get Your Gun. On TV, I Love Lucy and the Jack Benny Show were popular. Stevie Wonder and Jay Leno had just entered the world.

This is the year in which the 331 cubic inch Firepower Hemi was first installed in the Chrysler Saratoga, New Yorker and Imperial models; an engine that, in many ways, would go on to shape modern drag racing, and this year marks the 65th anniversary of that event.



However, the engine's development goes back much further, to well before World War II. Although today Chrysler is a brand within the FCA US LLC's portfolio, back then it was the Chrysler Corporation and Hemi heads were used in tank and aircraft engines built by Chrysler Corporation engineers, who studied various engine combinations (one that impressed was made by Riley/Healey in the UK – the 149 cubic inch Hemi Four). In 1948 the go-ahead was given to develop a production engine for Chrysler Corporation cars but it was a further two years before it was ready to be offered in Chrysler Corporation models coming off the production

line. It went on to be included in other Chrysler models, with variations for Plymouth, Desoto, Jeep and Dodge vehicles – with truck and industrial options as well.

The love affair between the Hemi engine and the hot rodding/drag racing fraternity really started when Chrysler Corporation began to develop the engine to produce more power. In 1956 Dodge introduced the 354 cubic inch engine leading to the 392 in 1957. This became the workhorse of drag racing and the love affair continued, although by 1959 the 392 was only offered as a car production engine in the Crown Imperial.

In 1964 Don Garlits' Swamp Rat 8 featured the then-new 426 cubic inch HEMI engine. *(Photo; Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing)*



With the debut of the Elephant Motor in 1964, the Hemi had a rebirth when the 426 cubic inch unit was launched as a race engine, followed in 1966 by a street 426 Hemi that lasted until 1971. Heading Chrysler Corporation's Race Engine Group was ex-Ramcharger Tom Hoover (not the Funny Car racer). Sometimes referred to as "The Father of the 426 Hemi", Tom sadly passed away recently. In 1993 Mopar introduced a Hemi engine block, and of course the Hemi history in drag racing goes on with the many race engine specialists developing derivatives of the ubiquitous 392s and 426s.

A comprehensive history of the HEMI V8 can be found on

[www.allpar.com/mopar/hemi/chrysler-hemi.html](http://www.allpar.com/mopar/hemi/chrysler-hemi.html)





Matt Hagan is one of the current DSR Mopar-backed backed Funny Car stars. (Photo: Mopar)

**Mopar and Drag Racing Today** The Mopar brand is still very much involved in drag racing today. Current major Team Mopar stars include members of Don Schumacher Racing's Funny Car team — Matt Hagan, Jack Beckman, Tommy Johnson Jr and Ron Capps. Don Schumacher raced in the UK in 1973 and Tommy Johnson Jr in 2011, driving in Top Fuel. Allen Johnson is flying the Mopar banner in Pro Stock along with V Gaines and Richie Stevens Jr, and Mopar continues its support of the NHRA Sportsman classes with its sponsorship of the Mopar Hemi Challenge and the Tom Hoover Sportsman Challenge.

This year Mopar and the FCA Foundation have joined forces with the NHRA Motorsports Museum and 'Be Responsible And Keep Everyone Safe' (BRAKES) in the defensive driving Mopar Road Ready safety programme geared for teenage drivers. This continues Wally Parks' original mission for the NHRA of promoting safe driving within the car culture, and is in line with the BDRHoF involvement with the UK based Institute of the Motor Industry student programmes.

Introduced in 2014, the **BDRHoF Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award** is presented for achievements in the world of drag racing that have had a global impact. It can be presented to a person, a team, a company, an institution/organisation or any other body that in the opinion of the judges has increased the awareness and stature of drag racing on a global basis, or contributed to the technical development of the sport that has resulted in advances on a worldwide basis.

A unique aspect of the crystal trophy is the inscription "In Memory of Pat Garlits"— something that is engraved each time the award is presented. It is a tribute to Mopar brand ambassador Don Garlits' wife Pat who passed away early in 2014. Don was the first person to receive this award and, as well as being his wife, Pat was his constant companion at the drag strip throughout his amazing career and as such the trophy marks the role played by all family members associated with drag racing. Without their support it could not happen.



**May 22: IMI Students** On May 22<sup>nd</sup> the BDRHoF in association with the Allard Chrysler Action Group (ACAG) acted as Pit Tour Guides for Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) students invited by the IMI and Santa Pod Raceway on the Friday of the Main Event Meeting at Santa Pod Raceway – the first round of the FIA European Drag Racing Championship.



It is something we have been doing over the last few years and is part of a strategy to get young people in the motor industry more interested and involved in drag racing. Thankfully the weather was fine this year and approaching 700 students enjoyed the day. Over the years this programme has been in place many have returned to watch other events. (Photos; Sue Whyte)

**May 12: Larry 'Spiderman' McBride attending BDRHoF Gala** Fourteen-times Top Fuel Bike Champion and World Record holder Larry 'Spiderman' McBride has announced that he's booked his flights and tickets for the 2015 BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner.

It takes a special type of individual to throw a leg over a 240-mph plus, nitro-guzzling Top Fuel Bike. As the Elder Statesman of Top Fuel Bike racing, Larry has been piloting these frightening machines for thirty seven years, starting before he was able to legally drink a beer.



'Blue' has been Larry's beloved Puma-powered Top Fuel Motorcycle for the past twenty one seasons. A regular five-second runner, there may be no more legendary or accomplished piece of equipment in Drag Bike history. Blue was the first motorcycle to reach the five second zone, it currently holds the North American Elapsed Time record at 5.76 seconds and it has utterly dominated the Top Fuel Motorcycle class for the past fifteen years. But the

McBrides – Larry and brother Steve – have a new, state-of-the-art motorcycle nearing completion so a fresh chapter in the story may be about to fire up.

Although they both work on the bike, Steve was always the builder with Larry the rider. But it wasn't always drag racing. It started with Go Karts and then Motocross and drag dirt bike racing. In 1980 Larry was hired by Danny Johnson, who had recently crashed in California, to ride his supercharged four-cylinder Kawasaki at Indianapolis. Larry had never ridden or seen the bike before arriving

at the track but he qualified number four in the first ever all six-second motorcycle field. He went on to become the first to run under the 6.50-second elapsed time barrier, setting the record of 6.49 seconds in 1991 - a mark that would not be broken for three years.

It was at Indy that Larry picked up his 'Spiderman' nickname. The bikes weren't quite as long as today's machines and as a tall man he moved around on the bike. The announcer at Indy said "This guy moves around on the bike like Spiderman". Over the years Larry has added to the image until he admits it is now out of control, but he has remained one of the quickest, fastest and most successful Top Fuel Drag Bike riders in the world.

The McBride brothers operate Cycle Specialists in Newport News, Virginia, a performance motorcycle shop where they build and maintain their Championship-winning rides. In addition to Harley-Davidsons and import 'hop ups', they specialise in preparing Yamaha FJ-1200 engines for the legends race car series. Over recent years, like Big Daddy Don Garlits, they have been working with electric motors and batteries developing an Electric Drag Bike in association with Lawless Industries and TV reality show subjects Orange County Chopper Rocket. They have already cut a 6.94-second quarter mile time at 201.37 mph – two firsts for an electric-powered vehicle. You can take a look at a video of a run in 2010 at [https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=e4\\_64trQ71g](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=e4_64trQ71g).



Talking about his forthcoming trip to the UK in November, Larry said *"I'm pleased to say that my brother Steve will be joining me on this trip along with my friend Connie Miller. We're really looking forward to meeting up with some old friends in the UK. And something I am honoured to be able to do at the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner is pay an on-stage tribute to my old buddy, UK Top Fuel Bike racer Brian Johnson. I was so shocked when I heard about his sudden passing. He wasn't just well known in Europe but a big star in the USA. In 1984 he became IDBA Champion beating the likes of Sam Wills, Elmer Trett and me on the way. He was a true World Champion but he didn't stop there. In 1991 he set a world record time of 6.61 seconds and in 1999 he took the AMA/Prostar World Finals at Gainesville with a 6.292 at 227 mph. Top Fuel Drag Bike riders throughout the world feel his loss because Brian was family and we miss him."*

BDRHoF Chairman Stu Bradbury says *"It's great to know that Larry is joining the list of American drag racing legends attending the Gala Awards Dinner in November, and particularly poignant in the year that we lost our own two-wheeled superstar Brian Johnson. Larry's presence will enable us to celebrate Brian's life in some style. I think he would have liked that."*

*(Photos supplied by Larry McBride)*



## April 28: Bruce Larson visiting BDRHoF Gala



If stardom is measured by the number of Halls of Fame into which you have been inducted then American Funny Car driver Bruce Larson is definitely a superstar.

Check out the list. The International Drag Racing Hall of Fame, the East Coast Drag Times Hall of Fame, the Eastern Motorsports Press Association Hall of Fame, the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame, and the Super Stock Magazine Drag Racing Hall of Fame.

However, he has never had the chance to race in Europe.

But we can live in hope and the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame (BDRHoF) has invited him and his wife Nancy to join Ron Hope of Rat Trap fame, Bob Muravez (Floyd Lippencote jnr) of Freight Train fame and Waterbed Fred Miller of Blue Max fame, to be special guests at this year's BDRHoF's Gala Awards Dinner being held at the Savill Court Hotel, Windsor Great Park on November 21<sup>st</sup>. This is his first trip overseas.

Competing in his 1932 Ford, Bruce Larson began drag racing as an East Coast 16-year-old. By the mid-1960s he was working at a Chevrolet dealership and he formed a Chevrolet-based Funny Car team with the dealership owner Greg Sutliff. At this time the Funny Car class was still being born and the cars were still described as Factory Experimentals.

They initially built a fiberglass-bodied injected Chevrolet Chevelle (now in the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing). This was followed by a Camaro and they toured the country in match races. He added the famous "USA-1" license plate and painted the cars red, white, and blue - applying "USA-1" decals to the side. The Bruce Larson brand had arrived.



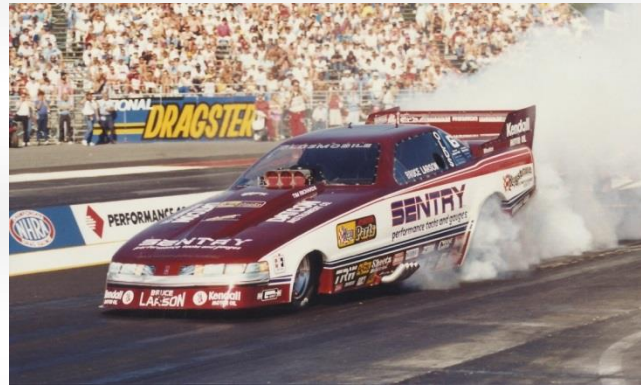
Larson put down a 7.41-second run in 1967 which broke the existing Funny Car elapsed time record. After a Funny Car fire in 1972 destroyed his machine, he began to do some Pro Stock racing and his familiar red, white and blue "USA-1" livery was this time seen on a 1970 Camaro and later on a 1972 Chevrolet Vega. He returned to the Funny Car ranks in 1975 with a Chevrolet Monza and later a Corvette.



Larson did not have a major sponsor until he found Datcon/Sentry in 1985. That year he switched from Chevrolet to Oldsmobile and teamed up with world champion Joe Amato. The two shared information and Larson won his first national funny car event at the Cajun Nationals.

He then hired Pennsylvania sprint car racer Maynard Yingst as his crew chief and the duo started 1989 by winning the Winternationals followed by the Springnationals, Mile-High nationals, Seafair nationals, Fallnationals, and the Winston Finals, plus finishing second at five additional events competing against Don Prudhomme, Kenny Bernstein, John Force and Ed McCulloch.

He led the season point's standings from start to finish claiming the 1989 NHRA Funny Car national championship; more than justifying being voted Car Craft magazine's Funny Car Driver of the Year.



After taking over the driving duties on Don Garlits Swamp Rat 32 dragster in June 1992 when Don retired due to a detached retina, Larson raced his first Top Fuel dragster and went on to win four IHRA National events. Garlits closed his racing operation in 1995, but Larson returned to help Big Daddy work on his dragster during 2002 when Don made a comeback.

Larson's championship-winning Sentry Olds Funny Car was donated to the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C and since 1995 he has been collecting and restoring drag racing vehicles that he displays in his own museum - Bruce Larson's Barn.



But he has still been out on the track racing Nostalgia Funny Cars because for 2013, Worm, Inc. created a replica of the Camaro. The chassis meets current safety rules, but maintains the appearance of the original car and Larson entertains fans at tracks across the country.

On being invited to the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner He said, *"I've heard a lot about drag racing in England and it's always been my wish to race there one day – particularly now the Nostalgia Funny Car scene is beginning to take hold. Big Daddy told me what a great time he had at the 2014 British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala Awards Dinner and it sounds like quite a show. It's great to be invited and get a chance to meet the British racers and fans"*.

BDRHoF Chairman Stu Bradbury said, *"We are celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> year of presenting these awards so it's fabulous to have so many great drag racing pioneers from the USA attending. Being invited to the 2015 International Drag Racing Awards Dinner held in Gainesville enabled us to make contact with so many new friends and it is rewarding that they want to join us to celebrate our own pioneers. It is a rare opportunity for British fans to meet and greet them"*.

*(Photos provided by Bruce Larson)*

**April 22: Lucas continues BDRHoF Sponsorship** Lucas Oil Products UK is again sponsoring and hosting the pre-dinner reception drinks and providing table gift items at the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2015.



Photo shows Les Downey (right) joining Princess Katarina of Yugoslavia and Serbia in presenting the 2014 Lucas Oil Global Achievement Award to Don Garlits. *(Photo; Keith Lee)*

Les Downey, Managing Director and Director of European Operations, Lucas Oil Products UK said, *"We are delighted to be supporting this fantastic drag racing social event again. Last year's occasion was one of the best we have attended covering any of the sports that we are involved with and I look forward to another great night this year. I know the attention to detail that the organisers give to this Gala Dinner and it certainly shows through"*.

Stu Bradbury, BDRHoF Chairman said: *"A huge thanks to Les who is a long-time sponsor of drag racing. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of the BDRHoF's strategy to increase the prestige and profile of the sport by injecting a bit of razzmatazz to the social side of things, making it appealing to sponsors and the media. Thanks to people like Les we now have an enhanced global presence that would have been thought impossible a couple of years ago."*



#### April 4: Waterbed Fred Miller and Bob Muravez attending 2015 Gala



(Photo; Bev Bradbury)

'Waterbed' Fred Miller is attending the 2014 BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner in November. Pictured here with BDRHoF Chairman Stu Bradbury at the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame Dinner held in Gainesville earlier this year, he is one of the most respected tuners in drag racing and it was in that role that he joined Raymond Beadle on the Blue Max Funny Car Team during the visits made to Santa Pod Raceway in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

He said, "I was glad to do what I did in the era of Prudhomme, McEwen, Garlits and Shirley. I think it was a lot more fun back then and I miss hanging out with Raymond. We had great fun during our visits to the UK and meeting up with Stu Bradbury at the recent International Drag Racing Hall of Fame Awards Dinner in Gainesville brought back a lot of memories. I'm really looking forward to attending the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala Dinner with my wife Diane in November and meeting up with some old friends from back in the Blue Max era".

Joining Fred is another legend, unfortunately one who we have not seen racing in the UK – Bob Muravez. When you talk about the old Top Gas Dragster eliminators in the USA one name comes to mind and that is the fabulous twin Chevy engined Freight Train dragster owned by John Peters. From its debut in 1959 right up to its demise in 1972 it dominated the class.

The dragster's most successful driver was Bob Muravez who made over 1,300 passes in the car.

However, unknown to many at the time, Muravez came from a rather well-to-do family that simply did not approve of him driving any of those dirty drag racing machines.



Their disapproval was so strong that for a short period he actually stepped out of the seat to appease them, despite the fact that his driving in 1962 netted the team a win at the March Meet, the first major race for the Top Gas class.



After several other top drivers had failed to get the same performance out of the car he was persuaded to return and drove it under the car owner's name for a while. Later, NHRA Race Director Steve Gibbs gave him the nickname Floyd Lippencotte Jr. and under this pseudonym, he would drive the car to six NHRA national event wins, this in the days when there were only two to three such events each year. He took to coming into the winners circle in his fire mask and there are some great old ads in the pages of Hot Rod Magazine showing head shots of famous drag racers and there was always one guy still in his fire mask.

In 1970 and 1971 Peters teamed up with Walt Rhoades to run the car with Bob still in the driver's seat. They ditched the Chevy motors for a pair of 428ci Chrysler Hemis. They also painted the car black, a departure from the traditional red scheme it had sported for a decade. Despite the additional weight of the big Chrysler lumps, the car was still unstoppable and the team won the 1971 GatorNationals with this set up. It was to be the last big win for the car as the class was scrapped the following year and Peters had no interest in going down the Super Comp road.



Muravez retired from drag racing at that time and didn't drive again until John Peters restored the Freight Train in 1993 and ran exhibition runs at four national events. The dragster's home these days is the NHRA Museum, beautifully restored with Chevys back between the frame rails. Not just a static display car, the Freight Train participates in the CHRR 'Cacklefests'.

Bob said, *"I'm so looking forward to being at the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala Awards dinner in November. We have heard so much about it and it will be a great privilege to meet up with drag racers and racing fans in the UK. Along with my wife 'Big Red' Sharon, I expect my friend Floyd Lippencotte Jr. will be with us as well, so watch out for some special photo opportunities."*  
(Photos provided by Bob Muravez)

### **March 28: BDRHoF shows Aptitude**

Aptitude (a Bedford-based full service digital agency that works with a range of companies across the UK) is sponsoring the BDRHoF in 2015. Aptitude developed the new website for the BDRHoF which can be seen at

<http://www.britishdragracinghof.co.uk/>.

Details about Aptitude can be found on [www.aptitude.co.uk](http://www.aptitude.co.uk).



Managing Director of Aptitude, Lee Messenger said: *"During recent years the way we use and interact with websites has changed dramatically, which is why we're working with BDRHoF to develop a fully-responsive website. The BDRHoF do great work and we are happy to be working with them."*

**March 30: Ron Hope and Rat Trap Racing supporting BDRHoF** Ron Hope and Rat Trap Racing are supporting the BDRHoF financially in 2015. Ron grew up in Southern California during the late 1950's early 1960's and, as a teenager he was quite active in the Dry Lakes Racing and Bonneville Land Speed scenes Record Racing scenes.

Always a Chrysler Hemi fan he is now most known as the owner and driver of one of the most exciting Fuel Altered's in the world – Rat Trap. Driving this car he has thrilled spectators in many countries – including the UK when he appeared at the Dragstalgia Meeting held at Santa Pod Raceway in 2014. He was also at the Goodwood Festival of Speed during the same year. Details about Rat Trap racing can be found on [www.rattrapacing.com](http://www.rattrapacing.com).



*(Photo; Jon Spoard)*

As well as his extensive drag racing activities Ron operates Capital Automotive Reconditioning Services (CARS Recon Inc.) a huge vehicle auction support business that has 30 business units in 19 States employing 650 people.

When announcing his support Ron said, *"I have known British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Chairman Stu Bradbury for some time and he was instrumental in arranging for US Automotive to sponsor our 2014 trip to the UK"*.

*"I was lucky enough to attend the BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner last year and it blew me away. What a fabulous event and I have already booked my tickets for this year"*.

*"The people running the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame are all volunteers and they work really hard to celebrate our history so I am pleased to be able to help keep the wheels turning"*.



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

Aussie based BDRHoF Member **Steve Read** has a new sponsor for his Top Fuel Dragster – Brisbane Truck Centre. Steve and his wife Heather attended last year's BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner and caught up with many friends. *(Photo; Andy Wilsheer)*



Details of his Willowbank Winternationals performance with video can be found on <http://www.speedcafe.com/2015/06/06/read-thrills-in-winternationals-qualifying/>

One of his brothers, BDRHoF Member **Robin Read**, has been busy restoring and racing his blown Daimler dragster. Their late father, BDRHoF Member **Jim Read** would be proud of them.

BDRHoF member **Peter Billinton** was able to catch up with fellow member **Don Garlits** during his visit to the Goodwood Festival of Speed. They met in Don's hotel and spent a long time catching up and reminiscing.



*(Photo; Paul Whitehouse)*

It was good to see Commuter at Dragstalgia – the car now owned and restored by Peter's son Antony. Shown here next to BDRHoF Member **Harold Bull's** Stripduster (Harold was also at the fabulous Dragstalgia event), Commuter's appearances always reminds us of the role BDRHoF Member **Tony Densham** played during the early days of drag racing in the UK.



Thanks to BDRHoF member **Gary Page** for helping out Big Daddy during his Festival of Speed appearance. Something a bit special to go on his drag racing CV. (Photo; Stu Bradbury)

BDRHoF member **Custom Car magazine** is still going strong and it's great to see Keith Lee busy writing about drag racing. His recent article about BDRHoF member **Dennis Priddle** captured the character of the man.

Keith's article about BDRHoF member **John Hobbs** and the Hobbit appeared in Classic Bike. John regularly gives the Hobbit and Olympus I outings at Sprints and Nostalgia drag race meets. At Dragstalgia this year John celebrated 50 years in drag racing and 40 years of the Hobbit.



The party in the pits at Dragstalgia saw the Hobbit crew get together with Jonny Munn flying in from Australia where his business restores vintage motorcycles.

Left to right in the photo shows John's son Mark, Brian Taylor, Cheryl Hobbs, John, Ian Dentith, Ray Baskerville, Chris Tee (went on to have a career in Formula One) and Jonny Munn.

(Photo; Syd McDonald)

If you are wondering why BDRHoF Commerce and Marketing Director Brian Taylor is hovering behind Cheryl Hobbs it is because he negotiated the sponsorship with Motorcycle, Weslake, Shell and Phil Read that helped realise the project.

Your editor was honoured to interview BDRHoF members **Clive Skilton** and **Carl Olson** last year while out in California. This is published on

[http://www.eurodragster.com/news/features/clive\\_skilton/default.asp](http://www.eurodragster.com/news/features/clive_skilton/default.asp).

We sent Carl details of the 2015 Inductees and wanted to pass on his congratulations. He also said *"I'm so proud to be in the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame; more than you will ever know"*.



BDRHoF member **Russ Carpenter** recently took his Glacier Grenade dragster to the Beaulieu Hot Rod and Custom Show. (Photo; Brian Taylor)

Displayed next to **Sydney Allard's** Chrysler dragster that is owned by the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, he fired up the Daimler and was a great hit with show visitors. This link takes you to a video of Russ's cackle.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ-0uKcKLPQ&feature=youtu.be](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZ-0uKcKLPQ&feature=youtu.be)

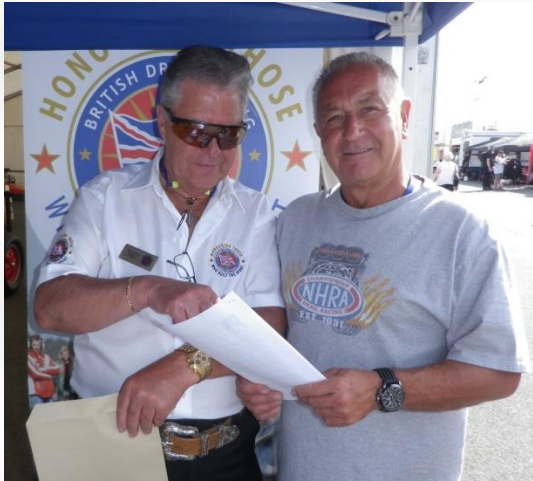
Russ was also at Dragstalgia and although the lack of arm restraints prevented him running he had a very loud presence at the 'Cacklefest' on Saturday evening.

BDRHoF member **Peter Crane** was at Dragstalgia and spent many hours at the BDRHoF display in the Historic Vehicle Marquee. The photo shows him with BDRHoF members **John Whitmore** and **Ken Cooper**. Liz Rowland (AKA Liz Burn) is keeping an eye on them. We all need carers now. A second photo shows Peter with John Dickson and Roger Marshall of Good Vibrations Fame. Syd McDonald and Stu Bradbury join for the group photo.



(Photos; Brian Taylor)



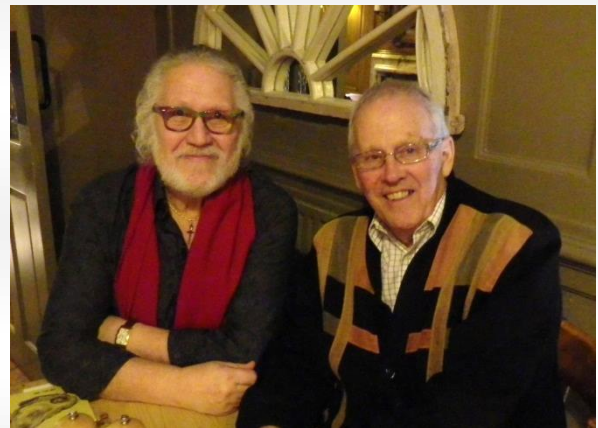


Another BDRHoF member visiting the display was the ever-youthful **Barry Sheavills**. Must be Mandy keeping him young. Photo shows him with BDRHoF Chairman Stu Bradbury. *(Photo; Brian Taylor)*

And what about BDRHoF member **Roz Prior's** daughter Lesley. Back in a competition car after 30 years or more - and a dragster at that, rather than a Funny Car. Her first time in a dragster yet after two runs she was in the 8s. Must be in the genes. I wonder whether mum knows yet.

Other BDRHoF Members at Dragstalga were **Dennis Norman, Alan O'Connor and Geof Hauser**.

Brian Taylor had a chance to catch up with British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Member **Dave Lee Travis** earlier this year. Spent a pleasant evening chatting over dinner in Aston Clinton. We trust he and Marianne can start rebuilding their lives again soon. They hope to attend the 2015 BDRHoF Gala Awards Dinner. *(Photo; Brian Taylor)*



**Sad News** As we were going to press we heard that American drag racer Bob Keith has lost his battle with cancer. Although not a BDRHoF Member himself, Bob was one of the first to contact BDRHoF Member Sydney Allard to see how he could help forward the sport of drag racing in the UK. He was in the 1964 American team with his Dos Palms rail and returned as Captain of the 1965 team. The 1964 car was bought by a UK team and was driven by BDRHoF Member Gerry Belton for a while. It had a rebirth in the hands of Bill Weichelt as Asmodeus and the original chassis had recently been discovered in the USA. Bob and friends had just started a restoration. Our thoughts are with his wife Lee and the family.

**April 30: In Memory of Peter Bartlett** We were very sorry to hear of the death of UK drag racing pioneer and British Drag Racing Hall of Fame member Peter Bartlett.

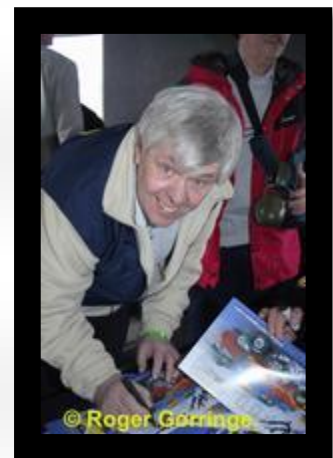


Peter Bartlett's part in British drag racing history goes back to the very beginning when he was a member of the Highwaymen Hot Rod Club along with Allan Herridge and joined the British Hot Rod Association when it was formed in 1960. At the BHRA's first get together in 1962 he turned up in his customised '47 Plymouth Coupe complete with pinstriped dash and record player.

The BHRA formed its first Committee at the end of 1962 which included Peter Bartlett as Treasurer, a position he continued to hold after the BHRA became the British Drag Racing and Hot Rod Association. Peter's wife and fellow BDRHoF member Erica (who died in 2014) served alongside him as BDR&HRA General Secretary from 1970 before both retired in 1980. Our deepest sympathies to Peter's family and friends.

**April 14: In Memory of Brian Johnson** We were very sorry to hear of the sudden death of legendary bike racer and British Drag Racing Hall of Fame member Brian Johnson. Brian was particularly renowned as one of the small number of European racers who raced with huge success in the USA.

Brian's racing career started in Street Bike on a 750 cc Honda, found drag racing to his liking and quickly moved to Pro Stock Bike, becoming the first European Pro Stock Bike racer to record an eight-second pass in 1981. After three PSB Championships Brian moved to Top Fuel Bike on the first of the Imperial Wizard bikes with which he set records and won a Championship in the USA. The second Imperial Wizard was the first TFB outside the USA to run a six-second pass, and in 1991 took the world best of 6.61 seconds. More USA success came in 1999 when he won Top Fuel Bike at the AMA/Prostar World Finals in Gainesville.



Brian set best marks of 6.101 seconds and 234.11 mph before retiring in 2001 at which point he was presented with keys to Santa Pod Raceway. Brian's engineering skills and innovative spirit were in the finest British tradition. He and his ever-supportive wife Ann were inseparable at the track and away from it. Ann passed away just a month after Brian. He was always a friendly and approachable, hospitable, informative, no-nonsense and on occasion very funny; he once famously said of his Top Fuel Bike that "After you've spent the off-season riding a push bike and stroking the cats it's a bit unreal getting back on these things!".

Our deepest sympathies all Brian and Ann's family members

## About the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame

The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame is a non-profit making organisation that was established in 2006 to recognise significant contributions or achievements in the sport of British drag racing. It is run by volunteers and the twelve Selection Board members include club & track officials, promoters, former racers, journalists and fans with a long background in the sport. They convene annually to nominate candidates for inclusion into the Hall of Fame.

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

## British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Selection Board

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

**Keith Bartlett** – Santa Pod Raceway CEO and FIA Championship Promoter

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

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

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

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

**Ian Marshall** – Santa Pod Racers Club Chief Starter.

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

**Ian Messenger** – Former drag bike racer and now commercial photographer.

**Darren Prentice** – Santa Pod Racers Club International Race Director.

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

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

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

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



## **British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Management Board**

The management of the BDRHoF is carried out by a separate Management Board which looks after strategy, finance, commercial, marketing, sponsorship, press & public relations, membership liaison, international liaison, events and general secretary duties.

**Stu Bradbury** – Chairman

**Brian Taylor** – Commerce and Marketing

**Robin Jackson** – Press and Public Relations

**Phil Cottingham** – Outdoor Events

**Simon Groves** – Membership Liaison

**Geoff Stilwell** – International Liaison

**Rob Ward** – Finance

**Phil Evans** – Special Liaison

**Bev Bradbury** – General Secretary and Treasurer.

The Management Board meets regularly to discuss issues associated with finance, operations and structure. For convenience meetings are usually held at the Savill Court Hotel, Windsor Great Park (the Gala Awards Dinner venue) and major topics have included the Gala Awards Dinner, increasing promotional activity, and moving towards becoming a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. This year meetings have been held on January 24<sup>th</sup>, March 28<sup>th</sup> and May 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **Contacts**

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HOF*talk* enquiries

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## Sponsors

The BDRHoF could not exist without the support of its sponsors. Three levels of sponsorship are available – Partnership, Primary and Regular/Event sponsorship. If your company would like to join these supporters please contact [brian@britishdragracinghof.co.uk](mailto:brian@britishdragracinghof.co.uk)

### BDRHoF Sponsorship Partner – Beech Underwriting

#### beech underwriting agencies

### BDRHoF Primary Sponsors – U S Automotive and Santa Pod Racers Club



**BDRHoF General and Event Supporters -** The Pennine Drag Racing Club; Eurodragster.com; Avon Park International Racing Association; Shakespeare County Raceway; Santa Pod Raceway; York Raceway; Lucas Oil; Julie Braskett, MQQNEYES; International Organisation of Professional Drivers and Rat Trap Racing.



International Organisation of Professional Drivers  
Authorized by the Secretary of State for the regulation of all highway and events under various licenses (S10 to S17)



## Items for sale

The British Drag Racing Hall of Fame has a range of branded items available for sale. You can find details on [www.britishdragracinghof.co.uk/shop/](http://www.britishdragracinghof.co.uk/shop/)

New items are being added and these include ball point pens and mouse mats.

Mantis Web advert