



BACK IN BLACK

MIGHTY MINOR BACK FROM THE DEAD

SEXUALLY HARRISSED - STREET TOUGH ZEPH HAS THE LONDON LOOK

BIG-BLOCK BRUISER FOR HATCHBACK CASH

FLAT-FOUR FLAT-PACK - CAMPER CRAZINESS

Looking like an old Police car it was written off at the Pod, now this back-in-black Morris Minor leads Street Machine's April issue – and it's packed with an in y'face blown big-block Chevy! An understated 1952 Ford Zephyr is stuffed with a hot 360 Mopar V8 and there's a rat rod based on a Jensen Interceptor – with 440 Mopar power! A wild Phoenix, a space-age Seventies-tastic camper based on a VW bus is a far cry from the 1990s Plymouth Prowler. Many loved the factory hot rod's looks, but it always lacked power, so Vince Andrews went to Andy Robison Race Cars, and their ground-up build delivered an ultra-cool sleeper filled with Chevy LS3 power! Our Editor's been busy as usual, writing a bunch of features, visiting the NSRA Swap Meet and the London Classic, changing the sub-frame bushes on an F-body - and getting his 302 block machined! Out now, this issue also has Jerry Cookson's take on Race Retro, plus all the usual guff and more. In April's Hot Gossip, Mike Collins goes back to his early days of show an' go at Street Machine, moves stateside to Lead East 1984 for some fifties Kustoms, hits Englishtown twice, first finding some iconic muscle cars, later returning for the real deal with TAFc's, Fuel Coupes AAFC's and Jet Funny Cars - racing side-by-side!



April issue out now!

Apart from Street Machine cover, all images are Pix

2018's second Hot Gossip (an XtraSpecial mcMix for Eurodragster with added hyperlinks and Xclusive Pix!), kicks off with 1979's serendipitous meeting of Swedish racer Knut Söderquist and Harlan Thompson at the famed Central Jersey Speed Shop in Fords, New Jersey, catching fire with their visit to Santa Pod in 1980 for the largest nitro Funny Car race held outside the USA (to this day!), giving birth to a legend that transformed our fuel coupe racing forever, and the glory days of nitro funny car competition over here began! Mike also has fun with legends old and new at the 2017 BDRHoF Gala! An eXclusive for Eurodragster readers are these signed mini-spreads and hyperlinks to his original 2011 features published in Drag Racing Online when Harlan was inducted into the BDRHoF – and other eXciting links, including the AA awesome 1994 Cannonball with a classic line from Santa Pod's PA - "Remember folks we're not racing, we're just looking for the time..." - the Vicar of Dibley would've been proud! Meanwhile, after waiting 21years to put his favourite Tre Kronor image on a spread, this first feature in DRO made his day. It tells of Harlan's years as a gun for hire up to his first meeting with Budweiser in 1982. DRO put MC on cloud nine again with "A long way from Seattle" - a colourful tale they worked really hard on as you'll see when you click the link. Tom Hoover's hole shot on Lee Anders Flygvapnet is another of Mike's favourites he thought welcomed half-a-dozen shots of our best fuel coupes in action!

US Fuel Coupe ace Harlan Thompson enters British Drag Racing Hall of Fame

Words and photos Mike Collins (with extensive notes)

More than three decades after meeting the 1952 Ford at Santa Pod, Harlan Thompson has been inducted into the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame. The 1952 Ford was the first of many cars that Harlan would race in the UK, and it was here that he met Mike Collins. The two became friends and collaborators, with Mike writing the book 'A long way from Seattle' about Harlan's life in drag racing. Harlan's induction is a testament to his impact on the sport and his friendship with Mike. The book 'A long way from Seattle' is a colorful tale of Harlan's life in drag racing, from his early days in the USA to his time in the UK. It covers his career as a 'gun for hire' and his eventual partnership with Budweiser. The book is available on Amazon and other retailers.

A long way from Seattle

Part two

It's a long way from Seattle, Washington to Santa Pod Raceway in Bedfordshire, England, and even further after several years making the journey a quarter mile at a time. Back then, 20-year-old Harlan Thompson, a young ex-serviceman not long back from the conflict in Vietnam, was introduced to the world of nitro funny car racing. The excitement factor was such that shortly after he bought his first car he was soon driving through the night on the streets of Santa Pod, racing down and around the track. Plastic cans, Koppers, kerosene, car, can what you will, the awesome and when some took over their track they're grabbed by the hair and hauled out for a ride. A fine nitro shot to drive the racers, sometimes successfully - sometimes not!

Things had changed since Harlan and Knut first bonded into the Pod with the Kronor riding in an open trailer, now they were ready to compete with a fully motorized car, having a whole host of metal parts and a single holding fuel coupe. Others had also become stronger since that first incredible year. For Thompson, that was the 1979 Dimensional Competition, where he ran a Lee Anders Flygvapnet in Swedish Air Force livery. And Norwegian Rune Field had stepped up and bought the air of all British Drag Racers (over 100) to add some twenty new power to the show.

On the home front, Ronnie Heritage, one of the most successful racers in the world, had also been inducted into the Hall of Fame. Harlan's induction is a testament to his impact on the sport and his friendship with Mike. The book 'A long way from Seattle' is a colorful tale of Harlan's life in drag racing, from his early days in the USA to his time in the UK. It covers his career as a 'gun for hire' and his eventual partnership with Budweiser. The book is available on Amazon and other retailers.

The Budweiser years' DRO issue is back-to-front - just scroll to the bottom move up after each page - it's worth it as there's an Isky Interview too! On the next page big-buck serendipity leads to a clip that ran all weekend on BBCTV 'cos they loved it, but not as much as Budweiser - check it out and see why!

Harlan Thompson's Last Tour

Harlan's Last Tour is cool!

1987 gave Harlan & Knut a 100% win record - Nick Pettit filmed the Santa World Pod Finals

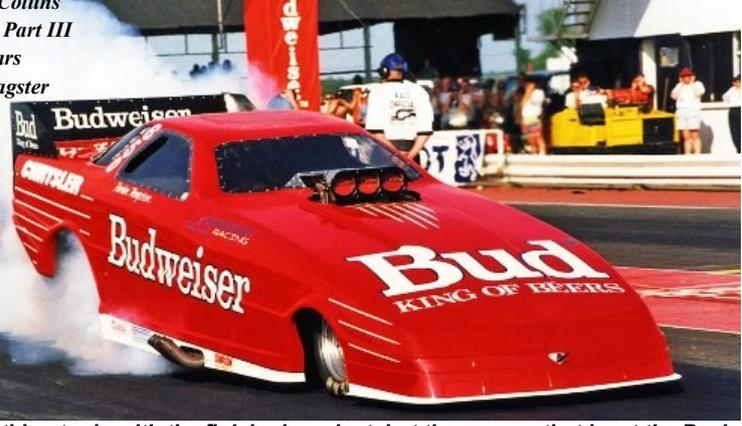
A solo pass for the Bud car shot from the barn in 1987

Harlan smokes to his 5th Cannonball win in 1994 with a 5.89 @ 261over Micke Kagered's TAFc

Chillin' with SuperDudes - Jeff, Per, Karsten, Clay

Wall to wall Budweiser!

Words & photos Mike Collins
 from Harlan Thompson Part III
 The Budweiser years
 Re-mixed for Eurodragster
 April 2018



Eric Sawyer photo

Nancy Bracey, a powerhouse executive who'd taken over marketing of Budweiser across Europe in 1989, knew nothing of drag racing, but when she met Harlan at the Budweiser backed Irish Derby she was more than just impressed with the modest, soft spoken American. Sometime later she visited with the team at the track and was totally in awe at the sound and fury of NitroThunder, naturally! She couldn't believe the noise and acceleration, loved the fact the team were touring US bases, and decided to increase Budweiser's presence at Santa Pod. As we know, drag racing explosions make highlight reels. The UK is no exception, and Harlan's horrific fireballs were featured heavily on primetime TV. However, thanks to Nancy, British drag racing's best ever exposure came about before the season began in 1992, when she managed to get a BBC a crew to visit Harlan's Budweiser team at a pre-race media gig at Santa Pod.

Mind you, she had nothing to do with the finished product, but the powers that be at the Beeb (as the world's biggest and best non commercial TV channel is affectionately known), loved their short film so much they showed it three times each day through the bank-holiday weekend! The clip's well made and its climax is funny, but more than just a good plug for drag racing, I'm sure you'll all agree it was massive for Budweiser! Nancy rang Tuesday morning to thank him, saying "That was great Harlan; you've already made your sponsorship worthwhile." She also sent out a press release stating "Harlan gave us more prime time media exposure than our budget in Europe could ever buy," and also expressing her thanks to Harlan "for giving Anheuser-Busch the opportunity to sponsor the race-car." Wow!



Andy Willsheer photo

Bud signage dominating the Pod and Harlan's unique factory backed two-car fuel coupe team was looking good! Yep, he'd worked some real magic with Anheuser-Busch and Chrysler to get himself a matching pair of fuel coupes! He'd also gained a new Budweiser Drag Series for Santa Pod on top of the long standing Budweiser Cannonball. And the new Budweiser VIP stand was filled with employees and lucky fans thrilled to be so close to the awesome ground pounding NitroPowered action. Despite this step up, Harlan still collected his own nitro from the G-Max store.



the CANNONBALL
 SANTA POD RACEWAY
 JULY 3/4/5
 THE 1992 BUDWEISER FUNNY CAR SHOOTOUT

Wet weather saw the fuel coupes make one pass each, the quickest two reaching the finals...

After that awesome burnout above Harlan got the hole shot, lifting as his car made a violent move leaving John Spuffard to win his first Budweiser Cannonball in Bob Jarrett's Showtime at 5.96, 224mph. Things were much the same back in 1988 as rain stopped play at Santa Pod's World Finals, but not before the final - Harlan had a half-car hole shot, overpowered the track and got badly out of shape. This time it was Gary Page winning in Bob Jarrett's Showtime with low ET of 5.89 at 229 mph.



For 26 years Harlan's "office" was a blown an' injected fuel coupe, Budweiser happily sponsoring his racing and USO tours from 1983 to 2012, but the Bud decal first appeared in Sweden 1982 with Harlan seen racing Lee Anders' Flygvapnet Datsun.



Happily my plans to return to the UK with Harlan went out the window; I just drove him to the airport and made a quick tour of autumnal New England before returning to life as beach-bum in Bradenton. My babe was over-the-moon (serving me roast dinner while naked!), the weather was glorious, the Jet Ski was oh-so fast and so was my racing at DeSoto! I shot John Force, Gene Snow's 4.99 (the 4th and first outside Texas), Big Daddy driving his Swamp Rat 1 and more! Later, having found out it rained at the Pod it was easy to call my decision spot-on!



Photographer unknown courtesy Harlan Thompson



Carlson Drag Photos



Eric Sawyer photo

And so was Harlan's crew on his first Fuel Coupe back in 1970 at Bremerton Raceway who suggested trying for a "Best Appearing Crew" award and won with this really outrageous kit - can you imagine it in colour? His 1970 ex-Jerry "The King" Ruth Camaro was cool, and so was his 1986 Bud car - good lookin' but it gave them a bunch of problems though! However, to the fan's delight, it always made ground pounding burnouts like this before it quit! Talking of which, enjoy Hot Gossip 'cos I'm outta here 'til next time. MC



Courtesy Harlan Thompson