

The Wild Bunch Drag Racing Association proudly presents

# Against the Clock



## EASTER THUNDERBALL 2006

### Editors Note

Ok so who stole my time machine and made every day only last 24 hours?! Come on, own up.... I know you're out there somewhere!

Loads has happened since I last wrote to you all - most notably The Wild Bunch getting lots of attention at the Easter Thunderball, a success for Helen Smythe at the Shakespeare Nationals, a joint first for Crazy Chris and 'yours truly' at the American Car World Nationals and the forthcoming launch of a self titled book by a gentleman we all know - "Derek Annable (Boy Racer) 60 years behind the wheel".

Upcoming social events include a Beach Party at the Mini Showdown in July so don't forget to bring your bikini's for that, boys included! More details will follow on the website and at the track!

It's a handful as usual! Please enjoy.

Yours truly

Alice

Yes, yes, I know it was ages ago now but Wowzers what a fantastic 4 days we had at Santa Pod for this years Easter Thunderball! The list of highlights is long but included the inductions to the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame, flag starts, 10 rounds of Wild Bunch racing, a Wild Bunch Cinema & an Easter Egg hunt! Awesome stuff & the Nostalgia Fuel Alters put down some great runs to get the crowd even more fired up! It was wonderful to see so many people over the whole weekend, there were long queues to get in on most days and an even longer queue for grandstand tickets on Monday .... I should know, I was at the front of it!

Well, where to start, firstly a thank you to Darren Prentice of Santa Pod for inviting us as a class to the event. To say that we're proud to have been involved would be an understatement and although the number of Wild Bunch cars entered was not huge, the quality was excellent and much appreciated by the audience. So who was there strutting it Wild Bunch style, none other than Team Twisted with Hell's Belle, C & C Racing with Backdraft, The Dogs Bollocks team with Ramraider, Mad R's with Shy Talker, Phil Sweeney with Antisocial, Darren Law & the team with Wicked Lady and Roy Wilding with Chariot of Fire. A small but nostalgically flavoured group who put in some class runs with plenty of personal bests including an 8.143 from Alec Coe in Shy Talker.

On the Saturday the Wild Bunch were chosen to take part in a pair of demo runs with Santa Pod's original starter Stu Bradbury. Helen in Hell's Belle paired against Roy in Chariot of Fire and Crazy Chris in Backdraft paired against Phil in Antisocial. In dynamic style, Stu leapt in the air to start each pair just as he would've done in the the late 60's. It certainly looked a fantastic sight & will remain as a very memorable experience for those involved.

We'll cut to the chase with the Wild Bunch racing as with 8 qualifying runs there just isn't room in one newsletter to fit it all in! I should have done a 'Sunday supplement'!! Having damaged their engine, Shy Talker & the Mad R's team were unable to take part on race day which left 6 bunchers fighting it out. Number One qualifier Darren Law in The Wicked Lady, sat pretty on the top of the pile with a bye run through to the semi-finals. Also on a bye run but by virtue of the Mad R's breakage was Edd Yates in Ramraider. He ran through with a 10.266. Roy faced Helen again but broke out on his 11.59 dial in with an 11.43 handing the win to the lady in the purple altered. Crazy Chris in Backdraft went up against Phil in Antisocial, the start was incredibly close with them recording identical reaction times! Chris took the win with a backing out 9.392 while Phil won the Best Slingshot spot prize for his entertaining wheelies and debut of the new engine! The semi-finals should have seen Helen face Edd and Chris facing Darren but the weather intervened and the event was sadly called off. The prize list went like this: 1st Darren Law - The Wicked Lady, 2nd Helen Smythe - Hell's Belle, 3rd Chris Hartnell - Backdraft & 4th Edd Yates - Ramraider. The Best Altered spot prize was awarded to a delighted Roy Wilding with Chariot of Fire whilst the best Radical/ Dragster was clearly Darren Law in The Wicked Lady! Alec Coe claimed Quickest ET with his 8.143 and C&C were crowned Best Appearing Team for their period look. What a great event, fingers crossed that we're called back for the 41st anniversary!!



Helen, Roy, Chris & Phil with Santa Pod's original starter Stu Bradbury



Crazy Chris under a flag start



The Easter Egg hunters!



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The Shakespeare Nationals took place way back at the end of April in a blaze of ... well dryness to be fair! The weather forecast wasn't great but Saturday saw 5 rounds of qualifying! I KNOW .... 5! What's all that about?! Starting us off then is Helen Smythe with the Team Twisted **Hell's Belle** altered. Helen ran a storming 9.724 @ 133.90 mph, on a 9.70 dial, to take #1 Qualifier on her third run which was the best of her 4. 'Crazy' Chris Hartnell was back with the **Backdraft** slingshot. He dialled in at 8.90 for the first qualifier to get a banker in, and recorded a 9.367 @ 139.91 mph. Then, in the 2nd qualifier where he dialled in at 9.10, he performed the burnout with no problems but on launching something let go. Chris immediately pulled over to the side of the track & when he got back to the pits, removed the prop shaft cover to discover a broken male pinion coupler. Not fixable at the track, so despite his 4<sup>th</sup> qualifying place he couldn't take any further part in the racing. Ed Yates was having his third turn of the season in the Dog Bollocks **RamRaider** slingshot. Fresh from some low 10-second passes at the Pod he dialled in with a hopeful 9.80. The team had made some experimental tuning changes & Ed went from an 11.147 @ 120.30 mph to a slow and problematic 19-second pass. Ed qualified in 7<sup>th</sup> place & the team worked on the tuning for race-day, trying to get a handle on the fuel injection system. Darren Law was eager to repeat the consistency that gave him a win at the Thunderball with **The**

**Wicked Lady** rear-engine dragster He dialled in at 11.15 & ran through with a 10.954 @ 124.74 mph. Unfortunately, after this, the team discovered a bent push rod, but luckily there was no other damage and they were able to replace it joining back in the 3rd round. His best ET of the weekend came in round 4, a 10.663 on a 10.00 Dial-in, which eventually earned him qualifying spot number 5. Sarah Howells was back in the hot seat of the **Destiny's Angel** altered of Bernie Nicholas. She had a narrow lead in the Ultimate Power Series by virtue of being #1 Qualifier at the 'Power Nationals'. Dialling in at 9.65 for the first round she ran a 9.696 @ 141.13 mph to go straight in at No. 1, only to lose it to fellow girlie Helen in round 3! Phil Sweeney was in his second event of the year with the new Rover engine in his **Antisocial** slingshot. He started off with a dial-in of 11.98 and eventually ran down to a new PB E.T. of 12.220! He used this as his dial for the fifth qualifier, and ran a 12.515, which moved him up the order and he finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall. Neil Ward was in his first event of 2006 in the **Andromeda** slingshot. Neil had gotten down to the 9.0's on his last outing & the whole team were eager to run that first 8-second pass. He dialled in at 10.00 for round one, without the nitrous on, & ran an 11.100. The team made some adjustments & by round 4 had run a way better 9.555 @ 138.92 mph. Neil qualified in 6<sup>th</sup> place overall, and the team contemplated turning on the gas for the following day! It had rained early in the morning on Sunday (Race Day) and the day

dawned cloudy and cool. The wet track first thing meant the start got delayed til noon, but things went well and all eliminations were completed before 5:30pm. All 7 Wild Bunch cars had qualified for race-day, but with

**Backdraft** sidelined, it meant 2 races and 2 Byes. So we started straight away with the Quarter Finals. The first pairing saw Phil facing Neil. This turned out to be a battle of the breakouts with Neil recording an excellent 9.352 on a 9.45 dial-in, still without gas, whilst Phil went through to the next round with a lesser breakout of 12.307 on a 12.35. Next up should have seen 'Crazy' Chris taking on Ed but Ed ended up with a bye run. Dialling in at 9.80 Ed just went for it & recorded his first ever 9-second pass with a 9.964 @ 138.29 mph! Well

done, Ed & congratulations to the whole team! Lastly it was Darren against Sarah. Darren dialled in at 10.30 but was somewhat off the pace, registering an 11.225, whilst Sarah advanced to the Semis with a "Closest to Dial-in" of 9.660 on a 9.60. Darren and the team were very pleased to be awarded the "Best Radical/Dragster" Spot Prize by the commentary team for their well turned out rear-engine dragster, which had been back in the 10's over the weekend. Rounding off the quarter-finals was Helen Smythe with a bye run, by virtue of being Number 1 Qualifier. She posted a 9.907 @ 133.84 mph on a 9.80 dial-in.

In the Semis, Helen took on Phil who, despite a good reaction of .071, faltered off the line, running a 12.697 on a 12.25, handing the win to



Ed Yates and Ramraider - Best Slingshot winners.

Look at the size of my trophy!  
Helen takes the win.

Neil &amp; Chris doing it Nostalgia Style

Helen who ran a 9.946 on a 9.80. Phil did however run his best ever speed in this round, a 109.56 mph on his top end charge. In the other race, Ed was matched with Sarah, team mates but now racing against each other & it was an exciting race! Ed broke out by just *one thousandth* of a second, running a new Personal Best E.T. of 9.899 on a 9.90 Dial! This was also a Dog's Bollock's team best ever E.T. in any of their cars! This meant Sarah took the victory but Ed was awarded the "Best Slingshot" Spot Prize by the commentary team for his first 9's, and great appearance of the car, and the whole team were chuffed with the performance. Phil finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place by being closer to Dial-in (without breaking out) whilst Ed took 4<sup>th</sup> place for the second event in a row.

The final was an all-girl affair with Helen and Sarah vying for the title. Sarah dialled in at 9.63 and broke out with a strong (*trying too hard!*) 9.595 @ 142.65 mph, the "Fastest MPH" of the weekend for the Wild Bunch. Whilst in the other lane, Helen recorded her second 9.907 of the day on her 9.80 dial-in to take her first ever event win! Many congratulations Helen and Dean! They were also very pleased to take home the "Best Altered" Spot Prize for their consistent performance and well turned out purple car!

It had been a good event where we were lucky with the weather! Thanks again to all the hard working marshals & officials for their efforts.

Well done all!

What a glorious sight it was to see so many Wild Bunch cars in one place! With our own 'town' at the top end of the pits we settled into a great weekend of racing and some terrifically stormy weather and so much rain on Saturday night we thought we'd be washed away! There were so many of us that it leaves little space to write niceties so we'll just get on with it! This was the first appearance of the year for 2005 Wild Bunch Champion Mike Cresswell in the **"Living the Dream"** slingshot. He had been to a recent RWYB event & run promising low 11's so dialled in 11.35, but gearbox problems sidelined him after a 17 second run in the 2nd round. Tony Smith in **"The Cunning Plan"** minivan altered had also been test n tuning & running pretty consistently with his freshened motor. Tony dialled in 11.55 for Sunday and opened with an 11.671 @ 111.46 mph. He went on to run a strong 11.481 & then an 11.505 to finish 6<sup>th</sup> overall. Tony had been doing some stonking smoky burnouts during the weekend and was described as 'whiting out the startline like a jet car', so it was no wonder he won the "Best Burnout" trophy for the weekend! Helen Smythe in the **"Hell's Belle"** altered made a total of 5 practice passes so was well set up for Sunday. The Twisted Team dialled in 9.85 starting off with a 9.962. She continued with even better runs of 9.776 & 9.889 to finish in 5<sup>th</sup> place overall. The team were awarded the "Best Altered" Spot Prize, and were particularly thrilled to be going home with a 'Mr Bolt' of their own! 'Crazy' Chris Hartnell was back in his dream home, the **"Backdraft"** slingshot! Having fixed the pinion coupler he was testing out the fuel system to try to get back into the 8's again. He made three runs on Saturday, all against son Mark, with the third run of the day getting that magical 8 for the first time this season, in the shape of a big wheelie & an 8.990 @ 145 mph! Chuffed with this he posted an 8.99 dial for Sunday's rounds. With a close 8.974 @ 147.77 mph followed by an 8.941 and then a 9.009 Chris, to his amazement, finished in equal first place!! Congratulations to Chris on his first event win for some time! Ray Ford was taking his turn in the new **"RamRaider"** slingshot. Fresh from a recent test day where he had put in low ten passes, he went straight in with an excellent 9.684 @ 140.53 mph on the Saturday! Having got down to a PB E.T 9.503 @ 142.36 mph, the team dialled him in at 9.60 for Sunday. Ray went well in the first round, posting a solid 9.636 @ 140.39 mph but the run bent some valves & the car had to be sidelined for the rest of the day. Mark Hartnell was out with the Wild Bunch in

his **"Awesome 4-Some"** slingshot. He was hoping to test out the tuning he'd done during a college practical lesson! However, on Saturday after runs from 18 to 22 seconds he discovered a blown head gasket and set to work on fixing this whilst sheltering from the storms under his awning! On a 13.50 dial in for Sunday's rounds he matched up with Dad Chris but after the burnout had to be pushed back as he'd broken his gearbox! Rotten luck, but despite a very limited budget Mark will be back soon we're sure. Talking of limitedness (!) Mark Coulsell and his **"Limited Funz"** slingshot bounded back after a year out welcoming son Harley to the world! There's special cause for Mark to



Joint winners Chris & Sarah get airborne although at slightly different heights!!



celebrate in 2006 too as his car was originally built back in 1966 & this is his 10th season of racing! He made a couple of passes on Saturday & dialled in 10.60 for Sunday. He ran a 10.667 @ 124.22 mph, with a good reaction of .040, straight back on form already, then a 10.799 & an 11.292 to finish 10<sup>th</sup> overall. Les Stephenson debuted his Mini-bodied **"Top Car"** altered. Les made a couple of passes on Saturday, starting with a 21.890 @ 48 mph. He dialled in 14.40 for the rounds and recorded runs of 15.985, 14.578 @ 85 mph & 14.696 finishing 11<sup>th</sup> on his first competitive event. The Mad R's **"Shy Talker"** slingshot returned with new valves & springs installed after the damage at the Easter Thunderball. Alec Coe was able to make a checkout pass of 8.8 during Saturday afternoon & for Sun-

day's rounds, son Tommy 'the Gun' took over the hot seat with an 8.60 dial in. What a good judge that was as Tom ran an 8.601 @ 163.31 mph in the first round!! Especially amazing since it was Tom's first full pass in the car this year! He maintained this consistency with a strong 8.605 @ 165.60 mph, but the team missed out on getting a 3rd run. Darren Law was eager to get back into the hot seat of **"The Wicked Lady"** rear-engine dragster. Darren made a few passes on Saturday and the team dialled in 11.10 for Sunday. In the first round, Darren put in an 11.633 @ 118.20 mph, followed by an 11.672 and a 12.756 to finish in 12<sup>th</sup> place for the weekend. The team were sporting their smart new shirts with an embroidered logo of the "Wicked Lady" on the back and were awarded "Best Appearing Team" by the commentators. Martin Holgate was a welcoming sight with the recently upgraded **"Paranoia"**. With a host of new parts and a great paint job, the car really was looking stunning. Martin also had former comp-altered racer Herb Andrews crewing with him & they were looking forward to putting in some test runs to get a handle on the new set-up. Martin ran a couple of passes Saturday and dialled in an optimistic 10.50 for Sunday. He started with a 14.691 @ 117.74 mph followed by a 14.294. He then improved to an 11.769 @ 115 mph in the third round to finish in 13<sup>th</sup> place. Sarah Howells was back in the Bernie Nicholas **"Destiny's Angel"** altered. Saturday was pretty consistent with Bernie as always in charge of the dial in board! Dialling in a 9.65 she started off well with a 9.697 then went closer in the second round with a 9.677, running against Helen for a good close match-up which they both really enjoyed! Getting a little closer in the third with a 9.640, Sarah took the joint event win with Crazy Chris! Nice one Alice!! Phil Sweeney and his **"Antisocial"** slingshot put in four passes on Saturday, with a best of 12.397, plus his best speed ever of 110.23 mph, on his 12.424 pass. He dialled in 12.35 for the rounds but started with an off-pace 13.043 and pulled a cherry which put him out of contention for a top 4 placing from the off. 12.334 was his best pass of the weekend, and on this run he recorded "Best Reaction" of the day for Wild Bunch, with a great .011. Neil Ward & his **"Andromeda"** slingshot were still searching for their 8-second pass! Neil made a tuning run early on the Saturday and then, on the second pass came the moment they had all been waiting for, an amazing 8.996 @ 148.54 mph!! Fair play, and many

# American Car World Nationals continued....

congratulations to Neil and the whole team!! They dialled in 8.90 for the rounds starting well with an 8.985, another new PB E.T. He then matched up with 'Crazy' Chris for the second & third rounds to record a 9.156 & a 9.071 @ 148.04 mph, in fact, if this 3rd round had been a race, Chris would have 'won' by just one thousandth of a second! Finishing 8th overall, Neil loved the match racing and the whole team were thrilled to be awarded a 'Mr Bolt' for "Best Slingshot" by the commentary team! Smokin Joe Stevens was in his first appearance this season with The Wild Bunch. His blower powered "**Back in Black**" altered has seen him running very low 9's and consistently too with a PB ET of 9.17 @ 144 mph. He made several tuning passes on Saturday & dialled in at 9.17 on Sunday. In the first round he ran 9.242 @ 141.23 mph, followed with a 9.277 & then his best pass of the day, a strong 9.205 @ 143.22 mph, to finish in 4<sup>th</sup> place overall. Good to see him back and straight into the Top 4! Steve 'Jacko' Taylor & his "**Claustrophobic**" rear-engined dragster made a few runs on Saturday including a 13.276 @

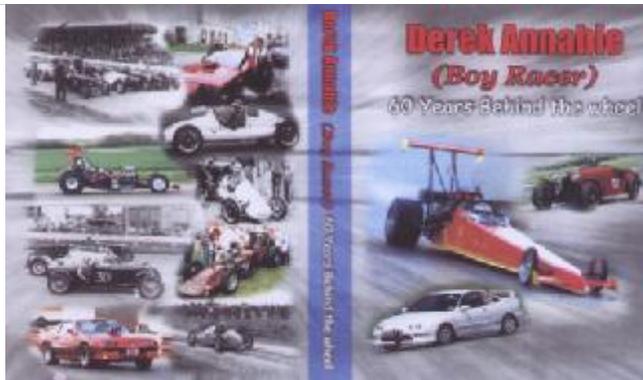
100.38 mph. Steve dialled in at 13.10 and ran a close 13.419 in the first round with a better 13.383 and 13.298 to finish in 9<sup>th</sup> place for the event. Jacko was really thrilled to be awarded the 'Mr Bolt' for "Best Dragster/Radical". Roy Wilding was again taking the controls of the "**Chariot of Fire**" altered & was making further progress with the tuning setup. He made several runs on Saturday, including a new PB E.T. of 11.245, taking two-tenths off his previous best for the altered. He dialled in at 11.40 for Sunday & started off with a fantastic 11.406 @ 117.77 mph. He then ran an 11.478 & another close 11.380 at a new PB speed of 121.92. Roy finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall and, with an average of .0347 was very pleased with this performance over the weekend. The "**B-Sting**" boys were back for their first Wild Bunch event of the year. On Saturday, Bob Morgan took the helm and started the day with a pass of 12.440. He then went on to record a new PB E.T. of 10.387 @ 127.67 mph, also new bests for the car! On Sunday, Paul Croston took the reins and dialled in at 10.30, hoping to start where Bob had left off! He opened the day with a 10.645 and followed this

with a great new PB E.T. of 10.293 @ 127.60, a new PB speed, and just seven thousandths off the blind dial-in! With a final 10.358 they finished in 7<sup>th</sup> place. Great to have the boys in yellow and black back with the Bunch! Sid Slattery's first appearance in Wild Bunch this season was also this event! With his beautiful "**Destiny**" slingshot, he was really chuffed to be one of 3 Jag-powered racecars in the pits & to top it all, he had the car's original owner, Richard Dawson, crewing with the team! Sid made a couple of checkout passes on Saturday but encountered problems, including a stripped spark plug & could not take part in the rounds. Just minor problems, so Sid is sure to have them ironed out very soon. That's your lot! Well done to all. We had a fantastic time & thanks as always go to the hard working track marshals & officials.



## 60 years behind the wheel a lifetime of love & motor sport

Long time supporter of The Wild Bunch, Derek Annable brings us exciting details of his forthcoming book which is due for launch about now! Set to be an interesting & inspiring read, Derek describes the book as "the story of one mans love of Motor Sport and his wife, who was part of it. When you read the book time stands still and you will see who is the winner. Chapter after chapter the passion unfolds but keep reading past the timing tickets! There it is, Derek and Brenda's love is explosive, with fire through to old age. Few people in Motor Sport have achieved the ultimate acclaim, a trophy for a 'Lifetime dedication to Motor Sport' followed by a trophy



'Services to Motor Sport'. These were won by a husband and wife team, which is unique considering their age. This is a book of both Motor Sport and a human story full of passion. Anybody who wants a good read should buy it, the last chapter says it all." Details of how you can purchase Derek's book will be made available shortly & will be posted on the Wild Bunch website. We wish Derek & Brenda well as always.

## Who's that guy?



It's Mr Bolt! Throughout the season, we will be awarding 3 special Spot Prize trophies for The Wild Bunch, in the shape of "Mr Bolt", fabricated by Elaine Southworth, wife of long-time Wild Bunch member 'Daddy Cool' Sag. Elaine kindly donated 3 dozen of the little fellows made from head bolts, bent valves (not Sag's!!) and other engine parts, coated silver, and posed in different positions. They have already become a great talking point and are hotly sought after! This "Mr Bolt" is pictured at his new home - Twisted Towers!

Thanks as ever goes to Sharkman & the Eurodragster team for the use of their photographs throughout AtC. You can see more of their work by checking out [www.topendtales.com](http://www.topendtales.com) or [www.eurodraster.com](http://www.eurodraster.com)

**Next AtC issue due out mid July**

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