



# I connected

£3.50/Free to Members Issue 76

## ***Hellcats in Colorado***

***in this issue...***

***Le Mans report***



***AMX Javelin***



***plus...***

***Haynes Museum***

***\*NEW\* Road Test article***

***Don Carlton retrospective***

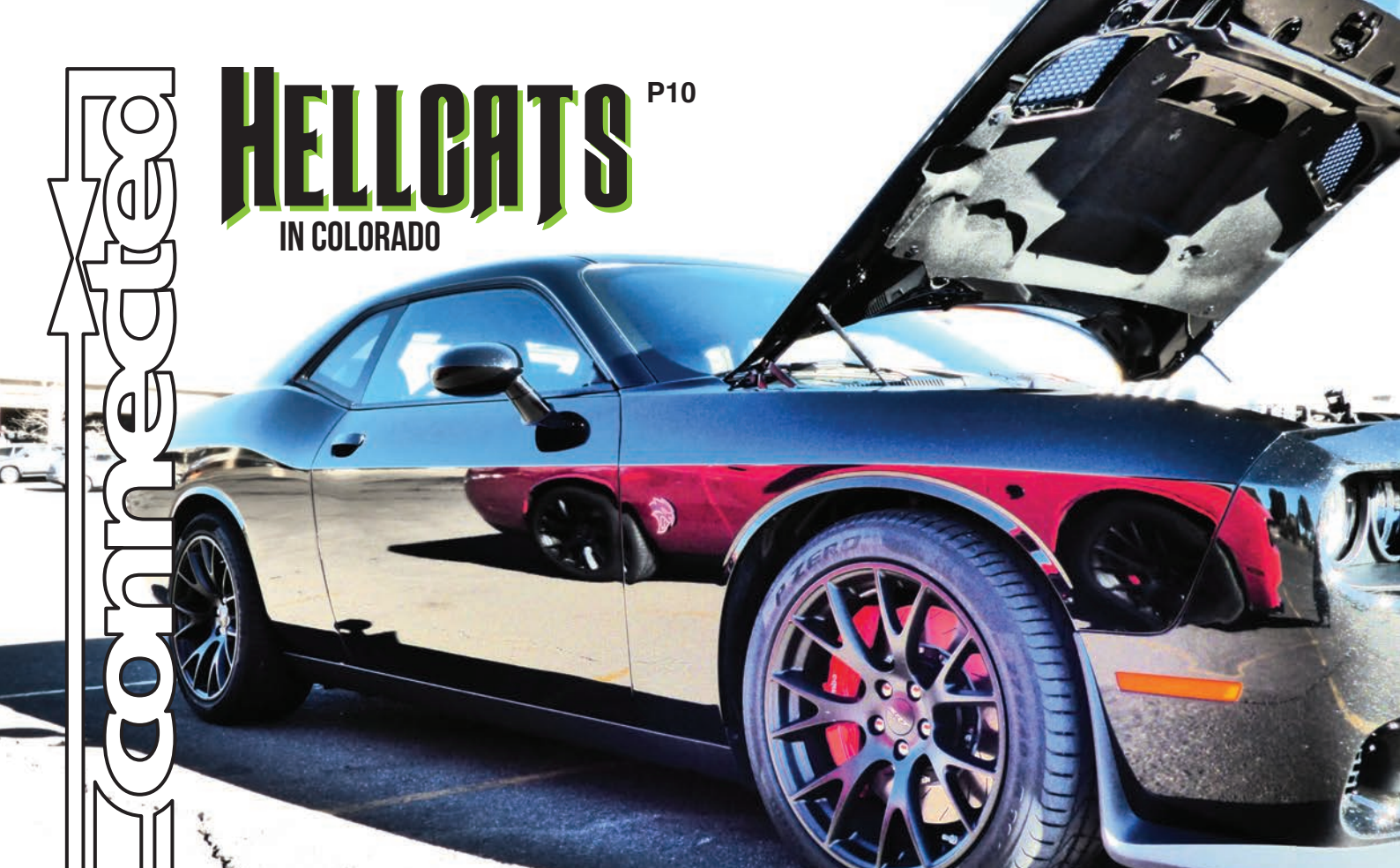
***...plus all the regular features***



# HELLOCATS

IN COLORADO

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## Welcome to Issue 76 of 'Connected'.

It's great to be Back in Black....in black print I mean!  
Thanks to Shaun and the Committee for finding the way to come back to hardcopy. Nothing wrong with pdf but this is the real medium of a magazine for me. So, in the first paper pages of 2015 you will find:

★ Hellcats in Colorado – Drew's been up close with some new Hellcats in the wild.

★ Le Mans – Matt Hollingsworth recounts his 2014 visit.

★ Junior page – Josh has supplied a write up of his school's stop off at the Haynes Museum.

★ I'm going to run a feature on racers for next couple of issues – in this first piece I've focused on Don Carlton.

★ Down Time – considering adding decals to your ride to create a tribute? Then here's some things to consider.

★ In Carrington's travels Kev's in Miami for a meet up; hope he did not go for the Crockett and Tubbs look!

★ In the Events section you can find what's coming up for the next few months

★ A Non-Member's Mopar from NEC.....we need to get back to Member's Mopars so send me some brief and basic information and photos about your ride, where and why you got it etc..

★ One other regular feature now is WTF...What's on The Forum. I would especially urge all members to look at Shaun's Rare Mopars thread and respond to his request for any comments about which Mopars should represent the club at the NEC show this year.

• Speaking of the NEC Classic Show one idea for Connected that came up at last year's event was to consider including a road test report. So I'm throwing that open to anyone..... why not spend a little time writing up a Road Test of your vehicle? This would not only be interesting to readers of this magazine but if we put it somewhere on the forum it could be very helpful information for anyone thinking of getting the sort of car you have and would certainly assist the spreading of some of the mass of knowledge in the MMA. If we had enough interest in this it could become a regular Connected feature. I would suggest Member's Mopar would stay as a one page appetiser for someone telling us a little about their ride; the road test would be a more in depth focus on the experience and practicalities of running the car. It would not need to be War and Peace or grammatically perfect – I can do any tweaking. You could go in any direction with this....for example you could comment on handling, acceleration, economy, comfort, niggly faults, things to watch for etc. I'm not envisaging sending out any Top Gear challenges but just asking for a genuine write up of what a car is like to own and drive on the road. You could just concentrate on your current car or do a comparison with another car you own or have owned, the floor is yours. Just as an indication of one way of doing it I've used some headings to create a sample of what the road test article could look like and stuck it after the Down Time feature.

• If you've got any views or suggestions for the Road Test or anything else you think would be a good addition to Connected or you want to submit anything please get in touch via the forum or editors contact details.

• All the best  
• Simon Fann  
• (Gas for GOSH)  
•



# CHAIRMAN



## Connected '76



Welcome to the revived, printed Connected! (unless you're reading the pdf version that is!). I hope you're happy with the committee's decision to put Connected back into print, it was one of the main issues that members talked to me about throughout last year and something I personally felt very passionate about, so I'm pleased we've managed to achieve it.

By the time you read this spring will finally be here and lots of us will be pulling our cars out of storage and getting them prepped for a great show season. We have some positive points for our hobby already this year, including the 40 year rolling historical vehicle tax. This now includes vehicles manufactured before 1<sup>st</sup> January 1974, so all those '73 car owners can also save a few quid, not to mention the lowest fuel prices since 2009 which is a big help to us all!

Regarding the 2015 show season, here are some shows the MMA will have a presence at so get these dates in your diary:

3<sup>rd</sup> April – Wheels Day – Rushmoor Arena  
Aldershot

3<sup>rd</sup> May - Duxford Imperial War Museum Spring  
Car Show

7<sup>th</sup> June – Speedfest - Brands Hatch

24<sup>th</sup>–26<sup>th</sup> July – Mopar Euro Nats – Santa Pod

2<sup>nd</sup> August - Duxford Imperial War Museum  
Summer Car Show

13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> November – NEC Classic Car Show

When you find yourselves at a show why not take some good photos, add a few words about the show & email it to Simon ([editor@moparuk.com](mailto:editor@moparuk.com)) for a future edition of Connected.

So what else is planned for the MMA? Well, by the time you read this our Facebook page will be up and running. Many thanks to Karen (Derek's

daughter) who has very generously offered to create and run the page for us. It is not to replace or take anything away from the forum but to promote the club and to help keep people up to date with upcoming shows and events. Currently it is being run as a closed group so all you need to do is visit the page: Mopar Muscle Association UK & click 'Join Group' & one of the admin team will grant you access. You will then be able to view all posts, comment and like to your heart's content! Once we have got our heads around it we may well open it up so you can share the page with your Facebook pals to help spread the joy of Mopar.

As I mentioned in my last column we also have a revamp of our website in the pipeline which will help ensure we keep up to date with ever changing technology. I will have more news on that later on in the year.

Hopefully you will all be aware of the new MMA t-shirts that are now available in the online store as well as our stand at the upcoming Mopar Euro Nats. They are very high quality & well worth the money, so why not order one in for the summer.

## Shaun Senior Chairman MMA





# JUNIOR PAGE



## VISIT TO THE HAYNES MOTOR MUSEUM BY JOSH FANN



In the previous Connected I wrote about my school's Engineering Club and what happened at the Greenpower International Final 2014. On the way up from Cornwall we made a stop at the Haynes Museum as its location at Sparkford, near Yeovil in Somerset was on the way. If you want to go there the prices now are roughly £14 adult £8 child but less if you go on a school educational trip like we did. So it's quite good value for money.

The museum hosts over 400 cars from all eras, there's also an outdoor play area for small kids and children under 17 can learn to drive. They even have workshops and MOT testing as a hint back to the car manuals that apparently made the Haynes name famous (according to my Dad!).

In 2013 our stop off had been at Beaulieu Motor Museum and I thought that Haynes was better in terms of the range of cars. Beaulieu might have had more activities going on but the people at Haynes told us they have revamped the place and added a lot more. So if you have not been for a while it might be worth a look.



They have a red room, where cars are on show for the obvious reason! It's not all Ferraris – there was this awesome Trans Am. There a number of halls to look around, some of them themed. But as with the Trans Am it does not mean that all Americans are lumped together.



There are some wonderful classic cars there and you can get quite close up to some of them. Others are roped off but here's one of the dads having a closer look at the horizontal suspension on the classic Rover. We decided not to copy that design as a last minute adjustment to our car!



Out of the American offerings here are my favourites. I've always loved the late 60s Camaros with their hidden headlights and, no offence, smaller body than the Charger. The white one here looked really smart. The red Chevelle was also top notch; the blue 69 Charger not so stunning but they had to have one in there. The red Viper was the only other decent Mopar there but more attention was paid to the GT40. So all in all a good place to visit, especially if you like a wide range of vehicles (*more photos on page 6*).

*Best wishes, Josh*



# JUNIOR PAGE





# CARRINGTON'S TRAVELS

Hi All,

The car show we are covering in this issue was held at the Sample McDougald house in Pompano Beach, Florida. This is a beautiful property with a ton of history, including being moved from one location to another! Google the name if you want to know more.

The show itself was not massive and had hardly any Mopar representation, except for a nice AMX, but there were some really nice cars here.

It was amusing to see that all the classic cars and trucks parked up on show at one side of the house and everything else on the other side.

As always, the weather was fantastic!

My favourites were the Red Studebaker Hawk with 3.8 Turbo'd V6 from a Buick GNX, a Turquoise 55 Ford Thunderbird, the Orange AMX (obviously!) and the stunning Peachy Pink 56 Ford Fairlane convertible.

Enjoy the pics

Cheers

*Kev Carrington*

\*\*If anyone wants my USA & Australia car show pics on a DVD please contact me at [kevsv8dodge@msn.com](mailto:kevsv8dodge@msn.com) \*\*













# HELLOCATS

## IN COLORADO



These guys all belong to the Colorado Challenger Club which is mostly for the modern style challengers. I went to meet them out in Aurora County, a nice spot for summer cruises.

For the first meeting I drove my modern daily chally and there was a red Hellcat owned by a nice guy. It was pretty cool, he just bought the car for fun he has owned several other muscle cars. On the second time I drove my old one and a guy brought a black one and the red one showed up too.

To have over 1400 horse power sitting right there was pretty cool.

As I had brought my old one some people were interested, but like I said these guys are in to the newer stuff, so much so their pictures were neatly taken so my car is out of all their photos. I even overheard one of them giggle and say "what do we do with the 70?"

Oh well some people don't appreciate the old stuff but they don't realize that without the old originals you would never have the new ones.

STOP PRESS NEWS...these are lucky owners in the light of this statement from Dodge to Fox news: "Due to unprecedented demand for the 2015 Charger and Challenger Hellcats, we are temporarily restricting orders while we validate current orders that are in the system." Apparently Dodge was caught off guard by the interest in these cars and has received twice as many orders than it planned to build in 2015. This shortage has led to 50% markups by some dealers whilst others are taking deposits on vehicles that will take years to arrive. Hence the shutting of the order book for now.

Words and photos Andrew McCraner

















# Le Mans Classic 2014



Words and photos Matt Hollingsworth

Having first attended this fabulous event in 2010, I returned in 2012 and vowed to take a "proper" car on the next running of the event in 2014, (it's bi-annual).

My son Jack suggested we get the Challenger built in time to take it to Le Mans, which is another story, but safe to say we achieved that goal and got the car ready in time.

I had raved about the Le Mans Classic enough to encourage a small group of friends to all go as a group, so we ended up with a four car convoy, consisting of my Sam Posey tribute Challenger, Plum Crazy Demon, 69 Mustang notch back and the Jeep Wrangler, our modern support vehicle, but still a Mopar. The journey down in convoy was quite a long day, not helped by the Challenger losing its exhaust at the Tunnel customs check, and having to miss the first train. We caught up the rest of the group one train later, somewhere near Boulogne. Finding the campsite once at Le Mans proved frustrating as we got split up. We finally talked the Demon in by walkie talkie, a good hour later. Arrival at the campsite also took the Challenger exhaust off again, so it was decided to leave it off all weekend, nice sound and in keeping with a petrol head weekend.

The campsite was with the Triumph Sports Six Club, who have exclusive use of Tertre Rouge, a great camp site 30 yards from the race track, and close to the Dunlop Bridge, so perfect to access all areas. They also had a superb catering van, hot showers and a bar run on a token system which never closed!

The practices for the racing started at 3pm on the Friday, and ran through the night. As in previous years, it was

grouped into age brackets (Plateaux), and all the cars taking part were ex Le Mans competition vehicles, or of a type that raced there, up to 1985. The selection of machinery was priceless and stunning to see, hear and touch. You could go right up to these cars in the pits and speak to the drivers, see the cars being worked on and feel the history of them, many cars in the same condition as when raced by the famous names back in the day. Whole pit lanes of Cobras, GT40s, Porsche 917s, E types, D types, Green flag Bentleys, Bugattis, Lolas, Isos, Bizzarinnis and of course the Olympia Dodge Charger. The variety was endless. You could also stand feet away from them as they came in from racing along the pit lane roads, past the car club parking.

A huge part of the whole event is the club participation. Classic car clubs from all over Europe descend on







the track for the weekend, meaning there are literally thousands of classic cars parked in the car parks, track in field, campsites and the trader's village. Despite best efforts to see everything there is so much there, it is hard to get around all of it, and see the racing, and the superb museum, and the drive in movie theatre. Sleep is the one thing to try to avoid, as it robs you of valuable time! There was racing right through the night Friday and Saturday if you could keep awake long enough.

On the second night we ventured to Arnage village in convoy (with no exhaust!!) to eat in one of the village cafés, whilst all the classic cars trundled past. The atmosphere was superb, with the wide long Main Street full of old classics, either cruising or parking up. From the village we went on to Arnage corner to watch the racing as it got dark. The spectacle there is something to behold, headlights of the race cars lighting up the forest as they come around Indianapolis towards the sharp right of Arnage, braking hard and getting the discs glowing, before flooring it away, red lights disappearing towards the Porsche Curves.

We had planned to avoid the rush on the Sunday night, and have a gentle trundle back on the Monday. This meant Sunday night was a nice chilled out evening, where we also got the chance to park the cars right near the track to get some good photos with the Dunlop Bridge.

Monday morning was an early start but we did get to drive the Mulsanne straight. The journey back was fun, as a lot of classics were also heading the same way, waving as they passed. In summary, the Le Mans Classic was as good as ever, but so much better for going in a Classic car. It may take a little longer than a new car, but it's so much more fun, and you feel part of the event. My Dad and son Jack had never been before and both loved it. Jack even got to drive the Challenger around the campsite, not bad for 14 when he should have been at school. (He did have permission from school to go to France, Le Mans is a very educational place!).

Next Le Mans Classic will be July 2016. If you've never been, put it on your bucket list and go there. I thoroughly recommend it.

*Matt Hollingsworth*









# Non-member's Mopar



**1973 AMC Javelin, Smok Makwana**



Ed – well, since the MMA stand was parked up next to this beauty I had to go and make some enquiries.

This Javelin has a 360ci John Sleath built V8 bored .020", Crane Cam, Edelbrock heads, Edelbrock 750cfm carb, Roller Rockers, internal oil way mods, ROSS pistons, balanced crank....all good for around 500hp. Transmission 3 speed 727, disc brake all round; suspension – front coil over conversion, rear leaf spring with performance shocks; full stainless exhaust; 8 x 18" wheels....the owner is a great guy called Smok who's had it 20+ years and did not know it was a Mopar! Naturally I introduced him to the MMA so hopefully he may join up.

It will be great to get back to Member's Mopars next issue.....so come on you new members email or pm me with details and some photos please!





# Road Test



**68 CHARGER V 08 CHALLENGER**





# 1968 DODGE CHARGER

## Factory standard

383 ci 4 bbl V8

727 3 speed auto

Powered drum brakes

Power steering

Leaf springs

14" magnums with BF Goodrich radials

Grant GT steering wheel



**Words and photos Simon Fann**

**About the roads....** I've lived in Cornwall for 15 years and spent five years with the Charger and a year with the Challenger driving along the dual carriageway A30 and numerous bendy minor roads with plenty of hills. Tarmac lovers please note we have no motorways in this county.

**Handling:** the Charger did not come with handling as an optioned extra. Yes lots of knowledge and time can be spent adding modern updates to a standard 68: caltracs instead of leafs, better sway bars etc but that would have ruined the originality of the ride. I preferred to live with the original limitations of the vehicle, especially when it came to braking distances. On the bendy road from Brighton Cross to Ladock there was plenty of fun to be had just letting the back out enough to make me smile but with the knowledge that if I overcooked it the car would not be at all forgiving or able to compensate. The modern Challenger, as you would expect, is an entirely different matter. It has an anti-spin rear axle and Electronic Stability Programme for starters and brakes that bite. Yes the driver can switch the ESP off and for slightly more of a responsive feel you can use the autostick instead of just leaving it in drive (tug the gear lever towards you or push away to change down or up). It is a particular advantage to use the autostick for engine braking going down some of the steep hills here rather than just leaving it in drive and having your foot on the brake all the way down as I had to in the Charger.

**Acceleration:** the rear gears in the Charger were probably 2.73, the Challenger 3.06 but the modern engineering

# 2008 DODGE CHALLENGER SRT8

## Factory standard

6.1 (370 ci) litre V8

5 speed auto with Auto-stick

Brembo disc brakes

Power steering

Bilstein shocks

20" wheels with Eagle F1 tyres



engaged the power much more effectively in the Chally. I have taken both down the track at Santa Pod but never really made what real racers would consider a hard, aggressive launch. The Charger eased to a 17 second quarter at 90mph; the Challenger 13.6 at 104. The timeslips did indicate that the 60 and 330 foot times were quicker in the Chally when the ESP was turned off and I was autosticking rather than when everything was left in automatic. Both cars had plenty of pull to go for gaps on roundabouts when all the tourist traffic was down in the summer or I needed to get to Rowe's pasty shop before it closed.

**Economy:** we don't really buy these cars to generate fuel economy records but they returned about the same, namely 22 to the gallon on regular use in Cornwall. The 68 Charger was exempt from VEL, the Challenger £280pa. The 68 was far cheaper to insure (£110) than the modern Mope (£600).

**Comfort:** have to say I preferred the Charger. Real leather seats and the look of a period dash; sure the Challenger has seats that support you and are safer (Charger had no headrests) but they feel bulky. The Charger had much more leg room for rear passengers. The sound system in the Challenger is the best I have heard anywhere whereas I never used the radio in the 68....to know why just roll the windows down and take the road from the A390 to Tregony up the windy hill with trees smothering either side of the road: you have to punch it due to the incline and the sound of the engine echoing off the trees is pure music in itself.

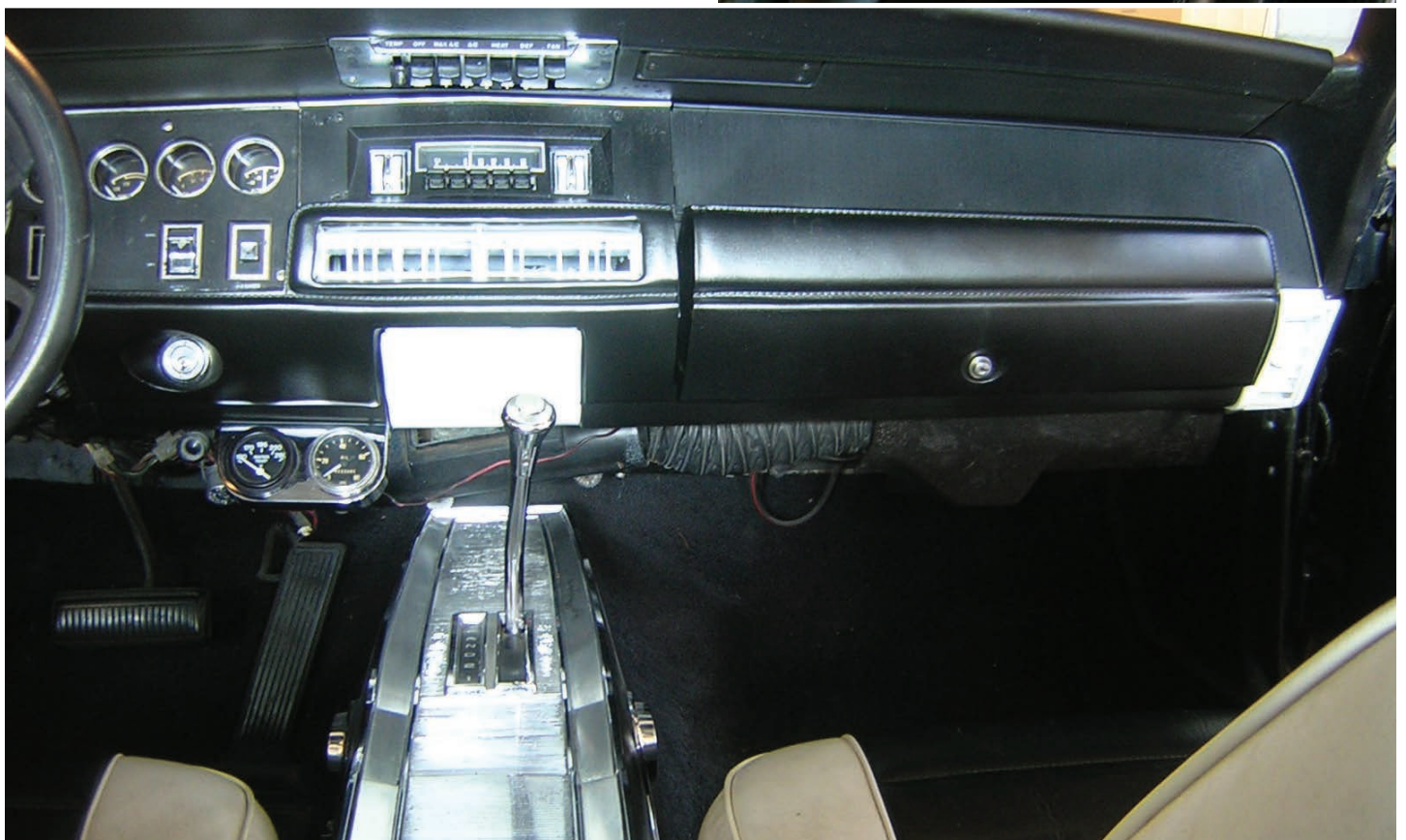


**Niggly faults:** naturally older cars are going to have issues. On mine it was the occasional issue with fuel starvation. I was running a mechanical not an electric fuel pump – when we were running on open roads she was fine, but stuck in traffic she started to splutter a bit. Ultimately this was traced to a worn fuel pump push rod, but I was adjusting the throttle screw, inspecting fuel lines and taking the air cleaner off to tweak the carb every so often which naturally was never an issue for the modern engine. Only niggly things on the Challenger were the aircon recirculate button not working every so often unless the vent plates were exactly closed and the top of the dipstick coming off in my hand.....why have a plastic 0 finger grip instead of the solid one piece metal in the Charger??

**Things to consider:** the Challenger's engine note is very docile until you give the pedal some kickdown. Mine had a standard exhaust so you could of course change to a Mopar Performance model or other variant to add noise if you wish. Neither had good rear visibility for manouvering. The Challenger is wider which can be an issue for some Cornish roads and garage doors.

**Verdict:** I choose my cars to be road vehicles not track demons but I want power and design, which is why I'm into Mopar. In an ideal world I'd have kept both but that's not an option. I'd use the Challenger all day every day whatever the weather; the Charger requires a bit more selection of conditions but was used all year round. Loved the Charger like a first romance, lots of nervous fiddling around trying to know where you stand; loved the Challenger like a stable marriage, there are dull bits but you know the excitement can still be there.

*Fancy writing a road test? You don't have to follow these headings, they're just to give an idea....it's an open road, go where you want!*





# Don Carlton and the MOTOWN MISSILE

## LOST IN THE PAST, AHEAD OF THEIR TIME: A PERSPECTIVE ON DON CARLTON AND THE MOTOWN MISSILE – BY SIMON FANN

Everyone has an event they wished they could have seen. Maybe they weren't born at the time, perhaps they lived in another country or they weren't aware of its significance but for whatever reason they missed it. For many people this "I really would have loved to see that" debate concerns a concert – Hendrix at the Isle of Wight, Queen at Wembley etc. But there is one truth here – Hendrix and Mercury are gone and short of owning a DeLorean time machine if you missed it first time round, the best you can do is retrospectively appreciate the genius and the talent to keep their name alive. For me that kind of reverence also includes a Mopar and its driver:

Don Carlton and the Motown Missile 1971 Dodge Challenger. This article is an attempt to do justice to the man, his crew and the machine. I have compiled it by researching various articles and news reports which are referenced at the end. The principal source is the Rick Laney piece and where quotes are taken from this or other sources the numeric (1) denotes the accredited source.



### Setting the scene: drag racing in the late 1960s – early 1970s

Born on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1940 Carlton's early career, as was the case for many of his contemporaries in the late 60s and early 70s, was conducted in his spare time. But this was a transition era for drag racing and success at the wheel began to attract both publicity and significant finance through sponsorship.

Rick Laney summarises this evolution of "pastime-to-sport" era superbly. "The typical drag racer of the late '60s spent a considerable amount of his own money building-and rebuilding-his car, only to spend more of his money taking that car to the track. Every now and then, he might win a race and recover a small portion of what he invested, but it was not a sport that made people wealthy."(1)

This enhanced status of drag racing brought one adverse consequence. It became increasingly difficult for committed and talented drivers and mechanics to work long hours in their day time jobs to put food on the table and then put the time in to preparing and racing a competitive car. As Reyes puts it: "The one thing I have

learned about drag racers is that they come from all walks of life. Don Carlton was a prime example of this as he came out of the furniture factories of Lenoir, North Carolina, to become one of the best of the best Pro Stock drivers in those early days of the class. He labored at his factory job for eight hours, returned home to work on his 'weekend warrior' drag car, and raced that weekend. His talent behind the wheel earned him winnings that he turned around and put back into the car, a vicious cycle that most drag racers endured throughout the 1960s. By 1970 Carlton was racing against full time racing teams which was something a weekend racer couldn't keep up with on the quarter mile or within his budget." (4 at page 87)

If you want to read a really great book about drivers of this era and their cars I totally recommend "The Dawn of ProStock" by Steve Reyes (2013). It is full of information and photographs that give a decent insight into what must have been exciting times. Here is an example of what the book says about Carlton.

Due to the increase of funded teams racers like Carlton were compelled to find funding themselves or join the big business funded teams. Carlton drove a second Sox & Martin car behind Ronnie Sox between 1968-70. In 1970, he was hired by Ted Spehar to campaign Chrysler's Pro Stock Missile cars, the 1971 Challenger and subsequently the 1972 Barracuda and the 1973 Duster.(2) Chrysler's support enabled Carlton to go drag racing full time and alter his cars the way he had wanted but previously could not fund. The partnership with Chrysler extended



At the beginning of 1971, a mild-mannered, bespectacled Don Carlton took over the driving chores of the high-tech Motown Missile Pro Stock. The former furniture worker from North Carolina made the most of his first big-time Pro Stock ride. Carlton proved to be one of the most talented Pro Stock drivers to venture down the quarter-mile.



In this image provided by Quartermilenstones.com, Don Carlton launches the Motown Missile at Martin, Michigan, in 1971. In the upper left of this photo is a photographer in a light jacket and dark pants. That is yours truly, shooting coverage for Popular Hot Rodding. I rarely saw photos of myself working back in the good ol' days. This race proved to be the Motown Missile's first major Pro Stock Eliminator title. The track was home to the largest independent major drag race, the Popular Hot Rodding Championships.



beyond funding to afford Carlton invaluable access to the company's new cars, automotive engineers and, crucially, their racing and testing programmes. The result was mutually successful as Carlton won championships and set records whilst doing what he wanted to do. The word envious comes to mind! But this was no overnight success story, it was the product of dedication and hard graft. Along with the provided Chrysler team Carlton was able to bring in some of his own crew. Joe Pappas worked with him from 1971-73. In an interview he said "In the early days the drag racers were just out there developing as much horsepower as they could by the seat of their pants. After 1970, it became both a business and a science - and it changed the sport dramatically."(1)

On the business side huge corporate investment requires payback. And Carlton duly obliged winning six major NHRA events and at least one major title each year for five consecutive years.

On the science side interviews recorded with crew member Dick Oldfield (1) show how the team relied heavily on data to ensure consistent performance. "Our instrumentation included a variety of sensors and transmitters in the car," Oldfield explained. "We had the ability to see everything that happened in the car sequentially, from the launch through the finish line."

#### A commitment to technology and science to assist racecar development:

Forty years on such data analysis is taken for granted in today's computer augmented cars, back then it was a major innovation in which Carlton and his team were instrumental. Laney writes "The innovative Motown Missile and Mopar

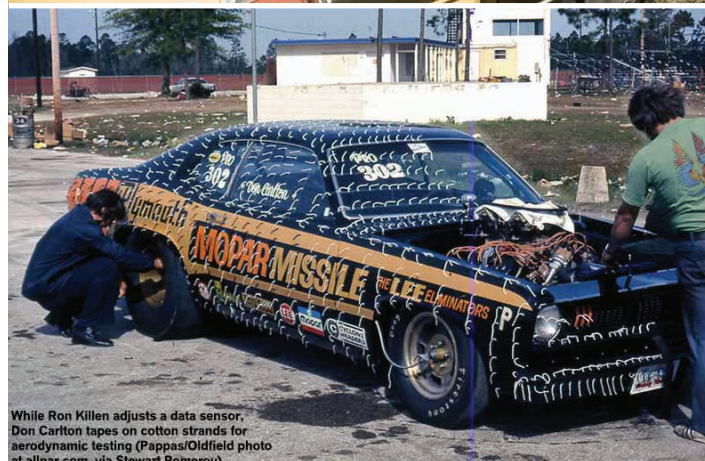
Missile programs are widely recognized for being among the earliest to use computers. The team did extensive development and testing with ClutchFlite transmissions and worked on both two- and six-speed configurations. The infamous Don Carlton Wire Car utilized titanium and magnesium components from the suspension and axle tubes down to the nuts, bolts, and pins. Because the chassis ended at the rear wheelhousing, the rearend of the Wire Car was literally held together with wires. Much of what they did was light years ahead of its time. The team's technical philosophy was simple: eliminate all variables. By knowing the oil pressure, temperature, airflow, rpm, and everything else that could possibly be monitored by computer, the crew could easily determine the best configuration for the car at any given time. Testing and re-testing was the foundation of the entire program. Although the program focused on gathering information about the cars, the team also relied heavily on Carlton's skill in the driver seat."(1)

"I watched a lot of drivers, and I worked with a lot of them," said Pappas. "Don Carlton was by far the best driver I ever saw - ever. He believed in the technology, and that was very important. But as we worked to eliminate variables, we knew the one place most racing teams had huge variables was in the cockpit. Not us. When Carlton was behind the wheel, he was so methodical; we knew we'd get exactly what we asked for from him." According to Pappas, Carlton had the unique ability to duplicate a run flawlessly many times in a row, a critical part of the team's testing program. If the engineers asked Carlton to shift to third gear at very specific rpm, he would shift at precisely that rpm without any variation, and, according to Pappas, Carlton could do that all afternoon. "For every one run we did at the track on race day, we did 50 test runs in the week leading up to the race," Pappas said. "We were always well-prepared, and we always knew what we had to do before we ever got to the track. Knowing what Don was



The 1972 NHRA Gatornationals marked a milestone for Don Carlton when he notched his first major NHRA Pro Stock Eliminator victory with ET's of 9.58, 9.56, 9.55, and 9.55. His opponent was privateer Melvin Yow, who red-lighted in the final round.

At the 1973 NHRA Winternationals in Pomona, California, fans were delighted to find a Don versus Don match-up in the Pro Stock final. "Dyno" Don Nicholson's Ford Pinto edged out Don Carlton's Mopar Missile with a fantastic 9.33 in the final round. Carlton had qualified first with a 9.22, and Nicholson wrapped up second with a 9.38.



While Ron Killen adjusts a data sensor, Don Carlton tapes on cotton strands for aerodynamic testing (Pappas/Oldfield photo at allpar.com, via Stewart Pomeroy)



going to do was as important to the plan as knowing how the engine would perform. Fortunately, we always knew how Don would perform."(1)

Laney also offers wonderful insight into Carlton's crew's style of working: "Because Carlton believed races were won and lost before a car was ever staged, his pit operations were noticeably different than most racing teams. He and his team were more like a surgical staff than a pit crew. Cursing, yelling, and throwing damaged components, commonplace with many racing teams, was not part of what they did. Everything the team did was deliberate and precise. Under normal circumstances, the crew rarely did more than minor adjustments once they arrived at the track—all of the major work had been done the days, weeks, and months before during the design and testing stages of their preparation." (1)

Inkeeping with the scientific "eliminate all variables" technological philosophy, the Motown and Mopar Missile programs also relied on sciences not normally associated with drag racing. At a time when many racing teams could barely afford a trailer to haul their car to the track, Carlton's race-day equipment included a fully equipped weather van. "We had this cargo van full of weather-monitoring equipment," said Pappas. "It was a full-scale weather station, and it told us how much moisture was in the air, what the track temperature was, and what the weather was going to do to the car's performance that day. No one else was doing that kind of thing in the '70s." (1)

#### Don Carlton the man:

Besides his driving skill what else is recorded about the character of Don Carlton? From the material I've read he was a totally grounded, reliable guy without the massive ego that some track stars covert. Interviews with Carlton's son Donny provide some clues: "My dad was never boastful," Donny Carlton (1) explained. "He would have quickly pointed out that there were ten or twelve other drivers out there in the early '70s—guys like Ronnie Sox and Dick Landy, who were all equally talented. Dad never thought he was doing anything new or different behind the wheel. He was confident in his driving, but he knew he could beat those guys with technology. Dad always believed it was the technology that won races. As more money came into drag racing, it started to change some of the drivers and racing teams," Donny said. "Some of the guys were really concerned about who had the biggest trailer and the prettiest paint job. My dad was never into all of that. He didn't care about the politics, the huge trailers, and the fancy jackets. To him, it was all about being the fastest, and a lot of people loved him for that."(1)

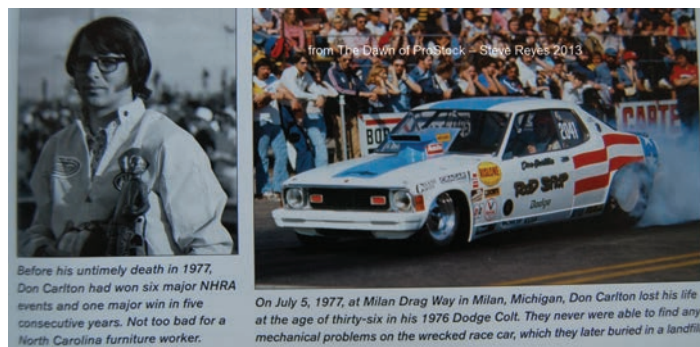
Laney confirms that "although Carlton never viewed drag racing as a popularity contest, he was a track celebrity by the mid-'70s. Recognized as both a mechanical genius and a top-notch driver, he consistently won national titles and set the standard for speed and elapsed time in the Pro Stock category. His match-ups with Bill "Grumpy" Jenkins and Don "Dyno Don" Nicholson are the stuff of drag racing legends." (1)

After Chrysler's support for Pro Stock racing was halted in 1973, the company and Don Carlton turned to development of Dodge Colt and Plymouth Arrow race cars

(2). Following a 1976 National Title win at Indianapolis, the team was fine-tuning a '76 Dodge Hemi Colt.

"We had just come off about four or five days of intense testing in Milan, Michigan," Oldfield (1) recalled. "It was Tuesday afternoon, July 5, 1977. We'd been running that Colt all day, and the temperature was well above 90-degrees—it had been for about four days in a row. It was a normal test run. Don launched the car and everything looked perfect until it sounded like his foot came off the pedal; the car just started coasting. Then it started to swerve and it dug in. The car rolled, and he sustained a serious head injury."

Here is another extract from the Reyes book.



Carlton, only 36 years old, never regained consciousness following the crash. A thorough investigation of the car he was driving did not identify any mechanical problems that would have contributed to the crash. Crewmembers who were at the track that day believe he simply passed out from dehydration and the stifling heat. Following the investigation, the wrecked '76 Dodge Colt was buried in a landfill. (1)

At the time of his death, Carlton was so far ahead in the lead for the Grace Cup (the points program that determined the NHRA's Champion) his lead stood for months before it was overtaken. Carlton was named to the International Drag Racing Hall of Fame, associated with the Don Garlits Museum of Drag Racing in Ocala, in 1992; to the North Carolina Drag Racing Hall of Fame in 2007; and was the recipient of the East Coast Drag Times Hall of Fame's annual Ronnie Sox Memorial Award in 2012 (2).

#### What became of the Carlton cars:



Yetter (3) provides this information:

"The first car driven by Don Carlton in NHRA Pro Stock





was the 1971 Dodge Challenger Motown Missile. Now owned by Arnie Klann, it was recently restored in California under the supervision of one of its original mechanics, Dick Oldfield. It has been exhibited at the Peterson Automotive Museum in Los Angeles. The fifth car in the Missile series, the legendary Plymouth Duster "Wire Car" is also owned by Arnie Klann. Former mechanic Joe Pappas writes: "It would have run as a new Mopar Missile in 1975. We built the car as an 'A' engine Pro Stocker because of NHRA rule changes that made the Hemi not feasible for further development. It got the most advanced methods of design and construction available at the time, and made extensive use of lightweight titanium and magnesium, with chrome-moly chassis tubing size and placement optimized using computer analysis. Complete less paint, the car was technically way over the top for its day! But we never got to race it because Chrysler cancelled its Pro Stock program late in the year. The car will appear in Mopar Missile livery as was always intended. The restored Challenger and '75 Duster are both fully operational."

The second Carlton car in the Missile series was the 1972 Plymouth Barracuda Motown Missile. It is undergoing restoration at the George Paul Body Shop in Star, Mississippi, as described in an article in the April 2011 issue of Mopar Action Magazine.

Third in the Missile series, the 1973 Plymouth Duster, Mopar Missile, appeared at Henderson in 2011 and will be back this year. Ben Donhoff bought the car from a former owner after it had been damaged in a track accident in south Florida. He restored and raced it locally for about ten years, then lent it to Don Garlits' Museum of Drag Racing in Ocala, where it was on display for another ten years. In 2008 Ben and a partner, Larry Mayes, of Haines City, Florida, took the car out of the Museum to race again.

The status of a fourth Missile, reported by Joe Pappas as a "Dodge D5 Hemi Colt," is unknown.

The Macomb Missile, an F-Body Aspen was built by Don and his long-time partner, Clyde Hodges, at their shop in Lenoir, North Carolina, in 1977. It was the last project the two worked on before Don died that year. It was a commissioned build, was never raced successfully and it

remained in storage for over 25 years. Present owner Mike Ricketts, living in Macomb County, Michigan, bought it in 2008. He undid modifications made over the years by its original owner, and finally restored it to its condition when it left Don's and Clyde's shop."

#### Main sources:

(1) Drag Racing History - Pro Stock Flashback: Don Carlton And The Evolution Of Drag Racing by Rick Laney, Photography by Dick Oldfield, Joe Pappas - Mopar Muscle, May, 2006 [www.moparmuscle.com/thehistoryof/mopp\\_0605\\_drag\\_racing\\_history/viewall.html](http://www.moparmuscle.com/thehistoryof/mopp_0605_drag_racing_history/viewall.html)

(NB a request for agreement photographs was posted on this site but never replied to)

(2) <http://www.eastcoastdragtimeshalloffame.com/East-Coast-Drag-Times-Hall-Of-Fame-News/Five-Don-Carlton-Missile-Cars-to-Exhibit-At-11th-Annual-East-Coast-Drag-Times-Hall-of-Fame-Reunion-in-October.html> 13 sept 2012

(3) <http://www.allpar.com/racing/nhra/carlton-cars.html> by Gene Yetter

(4) The Dawn of ProStock – Steve Reyes 2013

#### Other sources:

<http://www.allpar.com/racing/nhra/carlton-cars.html>

"Names in the news," Los Angeles Times, May 6, 1977

"Crash kills test driver," Ironwood Daily Globe, July 6, 1977

"Pro drag racer dies in crash," Oxnard Press-Courier, July 6, 1977

"Don Carlton dies in crash," Burlington Daily Times News, July 6, 1977

Drag RacersReunion website

(<http://dragracersreunion.ning.com/photo/carltons-last-ride>)



# Down Time

Words and photos Simon Fann



**Down Time...car related ideas for what to do when the strip is shut down, you're waiting for a part to arrive or you've just got some time on your hands to chill!**

"What's the graphics all about then? What's the "Motown Missile" mean? Who's Don Carlton?".....these are some of the questions people ask on seeing my car out and about. If you read the previous article about Don Carlton and the car you'll guess the answer: this is my all time favourite car. Having run a 1968 Charger for 5 years I knew that using a 1971 Challenger as the more accurate base for the tribute was not an option for me. I needed the car to be usable as a daily driver all year round and to be extremely dependable with minimal maintenance.....hence the decision to get a black 2008 SRT8 to be the base for the tribute vehicle. The design of the 2008 has enough of a throwback look to satisfy me whilst also fulfilling the regular use and reliability criteria (although I must admit the 71 rear styling of the 2015 Hellcat would not have gone amiss!)

So how did I go about creating the graphics for the Motown Missile tribute? Firstly, I dusted off the 1/18 scale model on my shelf and set about researching pictures on the internet. There are a number of photos of the Missile in slightly different livery and sponsor decals but in the end I went with the look of the scale model.



Why do different sides? Well, the 2008 isn't made in 'Motown' Detroit, it's put together in Brampton Ontario with parts from Germany. Therefore I made an initial decision not to do a modern version of the 'Motown' decal but to use the car to reflect 40 years between the new and old

Challenger. So the Missile side is as faithful as I could be to the 1971 original whilst the 'Brampton Bullet' side reflects my favourite new style Challenger decal designs, namely the 2011 Drag Pack and later Redstripe.



To reduce cost I wanted to do as much of the design and application as I could. So I mocked up the designs with the help of old school flipchart paper and basic computer graphics to help me decide what I thought looked best. Although the front end of the 2008 is a decent throwback to the 70s styling, the modern side of the car obviously has



different panel fit to the original and has a higher, chunkier look due, I believe, to the designers being told to raise the beltline for health and safety impact reasons. So I had options as to where the yellow strip could exactly start or finish. I had more latitude with the other side as the drag pack and redstripe were more my personal interpretation of those designs. But still I mocked up different versions until I was sure of what I wanted and what I rejected.



When I was settled on the designs I took them to Parcsigns in St Austell where Nick Aston was the main guy in applying the yellow stripe, Motown lettering and the dragpack decals. They did a super job in following my design and I was pleased with what she looked like when I picked her up.



After that it was over to me to apply the rest of the racing and supplier logo decals which I had been collecting for months in preparation. I had tracked down most of the original logo decals from sites in the U.S. but had to ask Nick to create a couple I could not source (like the 'FENTON' sticker) based on the 1/18 model. Again the panel fit on the 2008 is not identical at all to the 1971 so I used masking tape to work out the best possible alignment on the Missile side. Then I added current equivalents for the modern side based on components I knew were in the car, such as K & N filter, Brembo brakes and Bilstein shocks.



This completed my vision of having two sides that reflected the 40 years between the original Motown Missile and my modern Brampton Bullet version of the Drag Pack. I loved taking the car to Santa Pod for the Euronats in July for a couple of blips down the track and am grateful to photographer EJ Adams for this fabulous shot (p27) showing both sides against the backdrop of the units you come past





on the return from the strip. Definitely my all time fav photo of any car I've owned. After that it was on to the Lancaster Classic show at the Birmingham NEC and loads more questions to answer on the MMA stand.

So if you're thinking of doing something different with your car there are a number of things to consider. Firstly, paint v vinyl. Painted stripes do look better than vinyl up close, but the factory paint is original only once. Using vinyl is, for me, the best balance of changing the look of the car whilst protecting the originality. And if you become bored with the look such decals are removable. Secondly, get involved. I recommend doing as much of the design and application as possible because it's fun in addition to keeping costs down. Finally, don't do it if you don't like talking to people! To drive any Mopar you're unlikely to be the shy, retiring type who's afraid of standing out. But doing something radical will certainly increase the time you spend answering questions!





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# WTF: What's on The Forum

Whether you're a novice or an experienced hand, membership of the MMA gives full access to a forum full of knowledge and insight. So I thought I'd start a short piece each issue to highlight some bits and pieces from the MMA forum you may have missed or might find interesting, informative or amusing.....

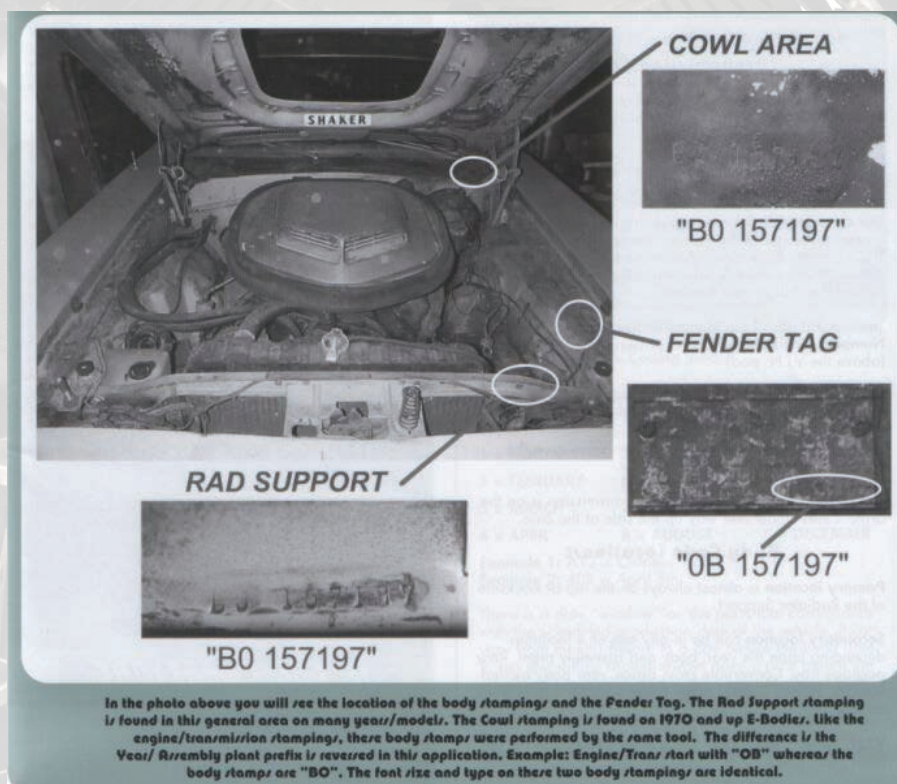
**Here's a selection of links to some of the more informative, interesting or fun posts on the MMA forum.**

Shaun, our Chairman, raised an intriguing question about rare cars in the MMA and asking for views as to which ones would members like to see representing the MMA at the NEC Classic Car Show in November. If you want to see which cars were proposed as rare or comment on those that would look good at this prestigious show, then look here in the Mopar Lounge:

<http://www.moparuk.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=49509>

For those looking for information on where to find a VIN number the photos and information here might help. This thread's in Restoration & Miscellaneous:

<http://www.moparuk.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=46763>



Want to know how to assess correct wheels and tyres, check out the useful tyre calculator in Wheels and Tyres: <http://www.moparuk.com/forums/viewtopic.php?t=46911>

Got anything you need shifting or collecting around the country? Then remember you can create a post in Relay Service to see if anyone can help out:

<http://www.moparuk.com/forums/viewforum.php?f=46>



# EVENTS



## Cruises & Regular Meets:

**KENT:** Cobtree Manor Park, Forstal Road, Ayelsford Nr Maidstone Kent ME20 7AG. It's 5 mins from M20 Junction 6 (Bluebell Hill). **10.30am second Sunday of the month.**

**LINCOLNSHIRE SOUTH:** Witham/Blues Road House Club/Bar/Restaurant, at Langrick Bridge, Boston, Lincs where all American car/hotrod petrolheads are welcome. See Witham/Blues website for full details. **Every Tuesday night right through the year.**

**MIDDLESEX/WEST LONDON:** Ace Café, North Circular, London NW10. **Last Sat of every month, 5.00pm onwards, then cruising to Chelsea Bridge at 7.30pm.**

**SOUTH LONDON/SURREY:** Krispy Kreme, Shannon Corner, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4NA, for doughnuts, coffee and a good time. Contact Derek for more info: 07724 752512. **3rd Sunday of every month, from 9.00am** until the last one goes home. Also The Chelsea Cruise, **last Saturday of the month**, Chelsea Bridge from 7-30pm, better in the summer months, once again contact Derek for more info.

**SUSSEX:** The Berwick Inn, Station Road, Berwick, East Sussex BN26 6SZ, **first Sunday of the month from 12 noon.**

**WEST MIDLANDS:** The Butty Run, The Long Itchington Diner, Southam Road, Long Itchington, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 9QZ.

<http://www.butty-run.com/hot-rod.html> or contact Guy on 07815 850389, **normally the first Sunday of every month.** (Run in conjunction with Mad Fish car club)

**HERTS & BEDS:** The Three Horseshoes, Hooks Cross; on the A602, just south of Stevenage. **Second Wednesday of every month at 8pm.**

**DORSET:** Viewpoint, Seaview Road/Ashley Road, Parkstone, Poole, **every Sunday afternoon** weather permitting.

**ESSEX:** Dick Turpin Pub, A127, Basildon. 7pm **last Wednesday every month.**

### NORTH WEST:

**Hollow Tree:** 1st & 3rd Wednesday of the month Apr to Oct inc 7pm, then 3rd Sunday of the month Nov to Mar inc 11am, the Hollow Tree, Tarporley Road (A49), Warrington, Cheshire, WA4 4LX (M56 J10), [www.americanautomags.com](http://www.americanautomags.com)

**Krispy Kreme:** 1st Sunday of the month 11am, Krispy Kreme, Barton Dock Road, Trafford Park, Manchester, M41 7PP (just behind the Asda gas station)

**Mascrat Manor:** 2nd Wednesday of the month 7pm, the Mascrat Manor, Manchester Road (A57), Warrington, Cheshire, WA3 6DR (M6 J21)

**Preston:** 1st Friday of the month 7pm, the Lea Gate, Blackpool Road (A583), Lea, Preston. PR4 0XB

### Santa Pod dates:

#### April 2015

**3rd - 5th FESTIVAL OF POWER** - An action packed Easter weekend for the whole family featuring Top Fuel Dragster Match Race, European Nitro Funny Car Series, Jet Car Shootout and National Drag Racing classes headlined by the MSA 200mph Pro Mods.

#### May 2015

**22nd - 25th FIA EUROPEAN DRAG RACING CHAMPIONSHIPS** inc FIM DRAG BIKES

#### June 2015

**Sun 21st RETRO SHOW** - The multi-marque event for fans of retro vehicles on two and four wheels. Pre 1990 RWYB, Show & Shine, Retro Drift Challenge, car clubs and retro entertainment. [www.RetroShow.co.uk](http://www.RetroShow.co.uk)

**27th - 28th SUMMER NATIONALS** - National Drag Racing Championships headlined by MSA 200mph Pro Mods, Drag Bikes, Nostalgia classes and the Jet Car.

**10th - 12th DRAGSTALGIA** - A weekend dedicated to race cars, bikes and hot rods from a bygone era with Jet Car, race classes, live evening entertainment, swap meet, Show & Shine (In association with the NSRA) and more. [www.dragstalga.co.uk](http://www.dragstalga.co.uk)

**24th - 26th 22nd MOPAR EURO NATIONALS** - The Ultimate American Muscle Car show with RWYB, burnout competition, huge show & shine, muscle car cruise, MSA Pro Modified and live evening entertainment.

### Shakespeare County Raceway dates:

**April 18th/19th** - Public Track Weekend

**May 2nd/4th** - APIRA Springspeed Nationals (MSA/ACU)

**May 23rd/25th** - Yanks Public Track Weekend

**June 6th/7th** - Public Track Weekend

**June 19th/21st** - NSRA Nostalgia Nationals

**July 4th/5th** - GTi International

**July 18th/19th** - Public Track Weekend





# MMA SHOP

Photos by Earl Adams Photography, Modelled by Ellie, Jack, Mandie, Matt & Shaun

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Blue CD Case	£5
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