



Books, Books, And More Books

Well, it happened again...the books piled up on my desk and it is time to offer a few words about four you might want to have for yourself.

Competition Car Aerodynamics – A Practical handbook by Simon McBeath

Aerodynamics doesn't play a huge part in land speed racing for those who have a fine time playing speed racer in the sub 200MPH range, but when you start carving out your spot in triple digits north of 250 this "invisible" science is one of the most important factors in modern competition car design.

Before you leather-clad competitors

ferences to land speed racing, the text does not make any assumptions on the reader and offers basic instruction, including a glossary of terms and abbreviations that serve anyone seeking stability by resolving forces and reactions at speed.

McBeath reminds racers "one of the most sensible things you can try to do is to separate the mechanical balance of your car from the aerodynamic balance."

First published in 2006, this updated, 10-chapter version has great chapters on wings, airdams, splitters, spoilers and for the zippy fast folks – the very important underbody aerodynamics. The book also covers down force, drag, wind-tunnel studies, a full chapter on CFD (Computational Fluid Dynamics) and plenty of illustrations and color diagrams to demonstrate how aerodynamic devices work.

From my perspective, this hardcover book from Haynes Publishing (ISBN: 0857330071) will give amateur and semi-professional racer/designers/drivers a useful understanding of the subject. Available here in the states through distributor Motorbooks International.

Bill Ward's Double Header: *Three Times in a Row and Kiwi-A-Salt*

Bill Ward had long distance dreams back in the 1970s, about 7,000 miles worth. Nevertheless, in 1979, he and a few friends built a little Street Roadster with a small block Chevrolet engine calling it "Kiwi A Salt" with the team slogan, "Kiwi's can't fly, but they sure run fast."

So mesmerized by salt racing, he wrote one, then a second book about his high-speed adventures that took place a quarter of the way around the globe. The first, "Three Times in a Row", is a 118 page speed confession that started out simply as a way for Ward to remember what he had accomplished, but was later published in 2006 "by accident" Ward insists, with many black and white photos scattered throughout the story. Then, in 2008, he sat down and penned "Kiwi-A-Salt," a 184-page book with color and black and white photos that picks up the Kiwi speeder's tale.

Three Times in a Row is set in 1979 when Kiwi Bill arrives from New Zealand along with hundreds of other speed hopefuls to compete in the USFRA World of Speed event.

It was also a long way from his "other life", his musical career, which started in earnest as lead guitarist and founding member of "The Four Fours" who later renamed themselves Human Instinct, which inked a record contract with Mer-

cury Records.

The band supported such groups as the Rolling Stones, Jeff Beck Band, Searchers, Roy Orbison, Spencer Davis Group, Moody Blues, Manfred Mann and Cat Stevens.

After bouncing around the London music scene for a couple years, the band went home, but not before Ward bought an American Hot Rod magazine that happened to have a recap article on that year's Bonneville Speedweek for the long flight back. "A seed was sown" says Ward.

Ward shares a classic tale told a thousand times by every racing hopeful who felt the thrill, the elation of a full throttle run across Utah's famous white salt flats. Ward, as so many before, and all those still to come, cherish their velocity moments and relive their runs forever after.

Here is one racer's try to prove - through his ingenuity and innumerable hours of toil - that it was all worth it. The first attempt to set a land speed record driving his hand-built roadster had mixed results. He didn't come home with a record, but he did earn "fastest in class" honors, which snagged a trophy that sits proudly to this day on his mantle.

Kiwi-A-Salt continues the tale began in 'Three Times in a Row', when Ward, now a certified "speed wrinkle" returns to the salt after 28 years, at age 70 with a completely new vehicle in 2007. Again, friends appeared for days, weeks, months on end this time to build a more radical race car - a rear engine modified roadster powered by a flathead engine.

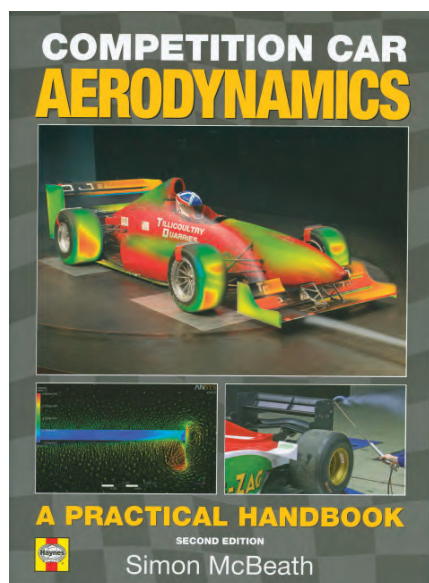
Others took up the job of raising funds. Coming to Bonneville is no cheap date when you need to traverse the Pacific Ocean with car, crew and every spare part you can afford.

Burt Munro and his astonishing little

Indian Scout were the first New Zealanders to challenge the salt clocks, but Bill Ward, now 74, and crew were the first on four wheels. And although they never met, Ward recognizes and acknowledges Munro's burning passion beginning his book with a quote from Burt "You live more during that few seconds blast down the salt than some people do in their whole life."

For ordering details consult www.kiwiassalt.co.nz.

Haynes Pocket Manual: World's Fastest Cars by Richard Dredge



start hissing please know I agree that bikes are the exception, that good aero styling at any speed is as much a part of safety as it is velocity. Spinning a car and have a bike swap ends have massively different outcomes.

When Competition Car Aerodynamics by Simon McBeath arrived I was expecting a dead serious, three-coffee-cup, pinched brow read with "explain this please" phone calls to my favorite aero wizard Craig McCarthy at Aerodine in Indianapolis. Surprise! Other than the math, which often induces spurts of cussing, I found the book to be exceptionally easy-to-understand, digesting great chunks on whatever page I flipped to in the 287 page second edition.

Caution: Simon is a Brit and therefore spells funny and odd terms we Yanks might scratch our heads over (I live with one of Her Majesty's own and am often amused by the weird phraseology), but his straight-forward writing style for this normally complex technical subject matter is to be commended.

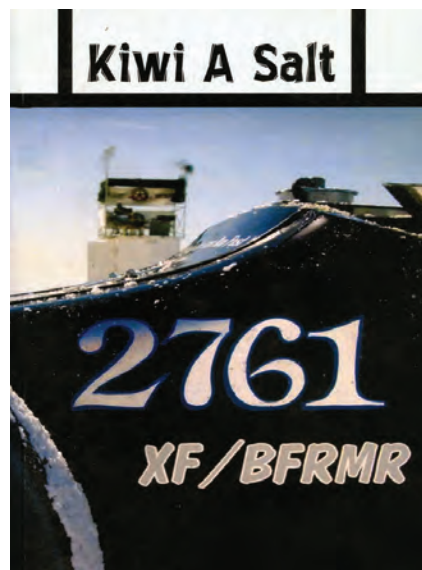
Although there are precious few ref-



Part of a new series of small books that boasts of "providing factual and practical information on a wide range of popular subjects" the book, I am sad to say, contains a number of "facts" that have not been checked. Because the books are aimed at children I am a bit annoyed with the publisher for not taking greater care. We adults have a duty to give kids straight talk, not fantasy facts.

Am I out of line? Consider these points: The land speed record section is seriously out-of-date and lopsided in its offering using a photo of Donald Campbell's 1964 Proteus Bluebird record and totally ignores the current wheel driven record holder, Don and Rick Vesco's Turbinator, 458MPH (October 18, 2001). You get the distinct impression author, Dredge, believes that the only people setting records are British, or that he has precious little understanding of the sport beyond England's shores.

That goes for drag racing as well, as Dredge tells readers that "drag racing



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started in the late 1940s on the dry lakes bed of California's Mojave Desert". Sorry, wrong sport. Land speed racing that began in the 1920's at Harper's, Muroc and El Mirage dry lakes that decades later gave rise to the sport of drag racing. The iconic performance parts so well known today were developed and tested on those dusty playas long before Wally Parks ever thought of NHRA.

Drag racing, as any 1/4-mile historian will tell you, got its start on an abandoned Goleta, California airstrip in 1950. That same year CJ "Pappy" and Peggy Hart founded Santa Ana Drag Strip in Orange County, California cementing the sport recognized worldwide today.

On page 13 of the drag racing section is "Slammin'" Sammy Miller's Vanishing Point rocket car from 1979 when it ran 317MPH/4.2 ET at England's Santa Pod. It is listed as a "key car" and ignores the fact that nearly EVERY funny car and top fuel dragster today runs in excess of 300MPH!

Give me a break. When you use the term "World's Fastest" in the title I expect you to do proper research and give readers a worldwide, not a myopic chest thumper confined to the Union Jack folks.

Sammy was a friend of mine, raced with him often, but even he would laugh about his "key car" status 30 years after the fact. Dredge is out of his comfort zone writing about the world stage. Or did the Haynes editors screw up this book?

Charles Burnett III's Inspiration on page 31 highlighted as a "key car" yet is simply called "steam car" and only touts second driver Don Wales' record but totally ignores Burnett the American who devoted nearly 10 years of his life and personal fortune to developing the car at his Newtown Park Estate in southern England.

Finally, on page 36 and 37 are a couple nice photos of the hydrogen powered Buckeye Bullet built and operated by Ohio State University students.

There are 171 color illustrations on the 128 pages, 100 of which are devoted to the various ultra-fast road cars and this where the books shines for kids. From the 9FF remade Porsche to the Danish Zenvo, Dredge collected some marvelous photos and offers a few tantalizing bits on each car.

Available from Motorbooks.

Note: Photojournalist Louise Ann Noeth is the authoress of the award-winning book, *Bonneville: The Fastest Place on Earth*, a complete historical review of the first 50 years of land speed racing. After 11 years in print only a VERY limited number of the author's special autographed edition remain. For more details and to order, go to:

www.landspeedproductions.biz. 