

Jim Oddy – East Coast Dorset

From Craig Stare

Photos by Dave McKee, John Hale and John Cassiol

AFTER winning unblown B/GS coupe at the 1965 US Nationals Jim Oddy built an AA/GS supercharged Hemi powered Austin which he campaigned from 1966 until 1971. He ran it 3 or 4 nights a week all over North America and won at most of the tracks he ran at. In 1969 the car ran in BB/GS and set a NHRA speed record for that class.

The car consisted of a Hilborn-injected, blown 392 Hemi with Mondello prepped heads built at Gorden Automotive where Jim was shop manager. A Torqueflite, tube axle with



Check out this massive wheelstand at the night drags!

was 8-years-old. His neighbour had a Willys gasser and upon going to the track as a youngster spied an Austin and said "Some day".....



Photo by Don Hale

Willys stub axles and an Olds rear end completed the picture.

As Jim was a paint and body man by trade the car was immaculate, with its Anderson Industries one-piece fibre front, and magnificent Sapphire Mist lacquer paint. It weighed in at 2420lbs and was capable of running 8.70 at around the 160mph mark in its prime.

After Jim sold, it was campaigned for a short time as 'Blue Max'. Around 1979 it was retired from racing and became a street rod. It saw many street miles in Toronto, Montreal, Burlington and finally back to Long Island, New York.

Another native New Yorker had built up a pro street, tube-framed Austin; his name was John 'Trouble' Cassiol. John had been in love with gassers since he

After John's Austin was destroyed in an unfortunate accident he started to track down his dream car which was Jim Oddy's Austin gasser which had entertained so many in those early days. After finally finding the Austin, he discovered its owner didn't want to part with it, but after John showed him photos of what had happened to his car the owner cracked and agreed to sell.

Time had not been good to the famous little blue Dorset with many paint jobs and modifications, the last rendition featured lightning bolts in the paint and motorcycle fenders.....Don't ask! Since finding it in this deplorable condition John has spent the past 8



In blue primer at recent Lancaster Nostalgia Drags. Dave McKee photo.

years lovingly restoring the Austin back to its late '60s drag racing guise. After the original builder Jim Oddy found out the car had not only been found but was being restored back to how he had it, he not only agreed to have his name back on the door but he'd do all the machine work on the new 392 Hemi at his business Oddy Automotive in Elma, New York.

The 392 will run modded 354 heads, a Delta blower and Hilborn injection. John is not a rich car collector; he has a passion and knew exactly what had to happen to this car. A lack of money, caused by a serious back injury has slowed progress but he's determined to see the project through to completion with the help of his good friends.

The Austin will again tour all over the US, but this time just as a display, a history lesson if you like. The fans will get a close-up look at a '60s gasser, sit in it, have their photo taken by it, and many will still remember



The 392 runs modded 354 heads, a Delta blower and Hilborn injection. Photo by John Cassiol.

watching it race. The Austin won't be totally static, it'll be very drivable and who knows, everyone still likes the smell of rubber!

Today Jim Oddy is still involved in drag racing as crew chief for a Pro Extreme '57 Chev which campaigns in ADRL drag racing.