

# Weeksy

He has been putting in some eye-catching performances in the National Bangers, but Dan Weeks has a specific goal in mind. Rob Griffin went along to meet him.



## Close knit

Banger racing is certainly a family affair with Mum Louise and sister Becca all active members of Team Weeks, along with Grandad Ken and Paddy. But while Becca has had a couple of outings in ladies' races, Louise stays away as whenever she watches Dan, he crashes out! "I remember he got spun out at Arlington in the minis on the pit bend and his car wouldn't start," she recalls. "On the last lap someone was fired head-on into him (Vicki Brand) and when he got out of the car he couldn't walk." A subsequent X-ray revealed three broken bones in his left foot.

While Nigel is more relaxed about spectating, he still admits to feeling anxious when Dan takes to the tracks. "I prefer it when I'm on the infield and enjoyed it more when he was racing at Dover because it wasn't so fast," he says. "I also get upset if the car lets him down because that's not his fault – although I also get annoyed if I see he's in a really good position and wastes it."

## The bug bit

There was little doubt that young Dan would follow his father onto the ovals, born as he was just hours after a typically lively mid-week session at Arlington. "I left a note on the kitchen table for Nigel telling him to come to the hospital – and he arrived straight from the track absolutely filthy," recalls Louise. "He was covered in oil when they handed Dan to him."

The racing bug bit particularly early and Dan was following Nigel around the tracks from



From the top: An outing at the London Open at Wimbledon Stadium earlier this year (Karl Annets); The Lincoln Continental bites the dust in spectacular fashion at the opening day of the new Aldershot Stadium – the Barry Collins memorial meeting (Karl Annets); A rusty Wolseley 16/60 made to look respectable for the annual A60 Amble at Arlington (Karl Annets); a cheery wave at Arlington's Gala night (Topsy).

the time he was a year old – and buying photos from the track shops of his Dad in action, as soon as he had money in his hand. "Just to prove his obsession is the fact we have thousands of programmes and magazines going back about 30 years which he still reads today," adds Louise.

## Late start

Despite his enthusiasm, Dan's own racing career started relatively late – when he joined the mini stock ranks at Arena Essex just five years ago at a relatively old 14 years of age. "The plan was to go straight into bangers but I became mates with those racing minis," he explains. "It was a spur of the moment decision but probably too late as I only had one full season in them."

Within a year he made his banger debut at Dover. "I didn't find it any different to the minis because I knew everyone out there," he recalls. "In fact, I remember winning my first race until Shane Davies and Sean Winchester came past me. The car kept coming back straight so we kept using it."

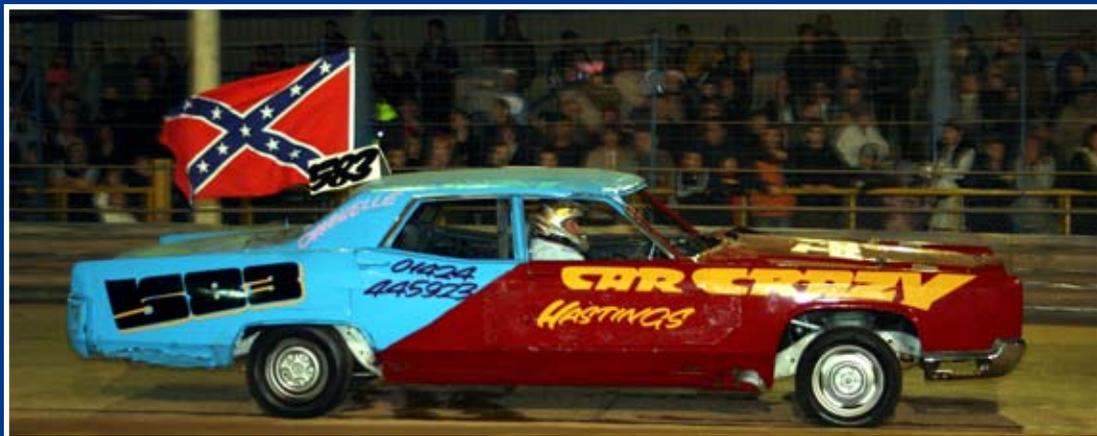
Soon afterwards he was racing everywhere he could – including the (rookie) bangers at Arlington on his 16th birthday – and that continues to be the case. More than 8,000 miles have already been clocked up this season and plenty other trips are planned.

## Hearse

Some all-action performances in recent months have pushed him onto the sport's radar screens, none more so than at this year's Southern Championship at Arlington where, driving a Hearse, he performed the hit of the night on Timmy McDonald's similar machine.

It saw the back axle of the 88 car pushed up to the roll cage. Long-distance traveller Steve Bailey (Pikey) then piled into the back of the stationary 538 machine – photographers catch-

Dan would like to say thanks to his sponsors: Car Crazy (Hastings); Downtown Diner (Ashford); and TW Fuggle & Son funeral directors, as well as Roy and Josh Bramley, Graham Duell and Dave Hazelden for their help.



ing Dan grinning in the driver's seat. "No-one else wanted to hit it," he recalls. "I couldn't believe how much damage it did. I'd expected to drive through the back of it and get stuck in – not come out the other side!"

### Banned

The meeting was his 20th of the year in the National Bangers, the (rookie) bangers having been off-limits to him since he was banned at the end of 2007 for what was politely described as an accumulation of offences.

"I got a warning a couple of years ago for turning around and kept getting away with it," he admits. "In the end I went a bit stupid and started hitting empty cars. I did quite a lot wrong and knew what would happen."

Many of these battles were with Tim "Weevil" James, although a truce has been declared in that particular war. In fact, Dan has been more preoccupied in recent months in partnering the Worm (Adrian Clifton) in his battles with the Midnight Runners. However, keeping his head down and clocking up some serious World qualifying points is the priority for the next

couple of months. He is also planning a return to the bangers now that his period of enforced absence has come to an end. "A few of us are going to try and liven things up," he promises. "There wasn't much action last night (at Arlington) as they seemed to drive past each other because they are best mates."

Talking of the light contact bangers, one of his fellow pilots – and reigning Arlington track champion – Louis Hazell provides some storage space for him, as does the Worm. The rest are kept at home where there is room for at least 10 cars, more at a push.

### Stockpile

At present the stockpile consists of a Rover P5, a bluebird and a handful of Capris, along with the Granny earmarked for the World Final. A DS Limo, meanwhile, is on its way. The deal

*This page from top: The Lincoln Continental makes its debut at Arlington's Gala night (Karl Annets); Wrecked at this year's London Open (Karl Annets); Pure American muscle (Bull). Opposite: First banger win at Dover (Bull); Sister Becca behind the wheel (Karl Annets); Mini action at Arena (Bull); Nailed by Pikey at this year's Southern Championship (Karl Annets)*

has been struck; all that's awaited is its arrival. "If you had come round here a month ago the yard was full – but now it's virtually empty," says Nigel. "We are struggling for cars – even the small stuff is pretty hard to come by these days."

The increasing rarity of certain marques, coupled with the soaring price of scrap metal, means suitable machinery can be hard to find. As a result, it's costing more to buy cars when they do come up for grabs.

"At the beginning of the year we had enough cars to do all the Spedeworth qualifying rounds," says Nigel. "However, everyone is now scrapping the cars whereas they used to be left lying around. We'd give £300 for any Granada now."

The team has certainly got plenty of kit should an influx of cars come its way. "We've got enough gear to have five different cars ready," says Nigel. "At one stage we had all five built, two of which were already painted and sign written."

### American muscle

A Lincoln Continental, an Austin 3 Litre, a MK1 Granada Coupe, Triumph 2000 and an A60 have been the most impressive material raced, along with the usual diet of Granadas, Bluebirds, Capris and Metros.

His favourite? The Lincoln, which appeared at both the Arlington Gala night last November

and the Barry Collins memorial at Aldershot back in April. "That Yank cost us just £50 but had no engine or box," says Dan. "We knew what we wanted it for so it stayed around the back for months."

Even so, it proved to be one of the easier challenges for Nigel, a self-employed motor mechanic. "I probably did the least amount of work on it than for any of them," he says. "Everything worked fine once I worked out how to put an axle in it."

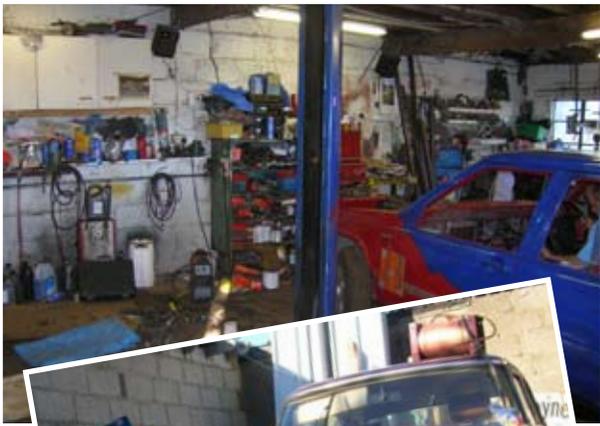
Unsurprisingly, the father and son team are working in the garage virtually every day – with the exception of Sundays where they are usually racing. Dan, a stonemason by trade, clocks up three hours-a-day in the workshop after getting home from work around 4pm.

However, all the hard graft put in will be worth it if he realises his dream of being on that all-important grid come November. "The target is definitely the World Final," he says. "Getting into that race is all I want to do this year and we're giving it a go."



*Clockwise from above: Dan's spectacular hit on Tim McDonald at the Southern Championship (Matt Bull/Racepixels); Nailed by Pikey a few minutes later (Karl Annets); First banger win at Dover (Bull); Mini action at Arena (Bull); Sister Becca behind the wheel (Karl Annets).*





Clockwise from top right: Nigel hard at work; Inside the workshop; Granny earmarked for the World Final; The Bluebird that refuses to die; The Wolseley used in the A60 Amble; A Rover P5 awaits preparation; The workshop; Plenty of space to work on the cars.

# Coventry Masters

Friday August 1st, 2008

Coventry Stadium



Clockwise from top: Shaun Rushton (179) seen through the smoke; 149 Wayne Bailey and his badly damaged Volvo 240 Estate; 528 Alan 'Jethro' Hunt; The monster Lincoln Town Car Limo for 266 Callum Hall; 397 Stu Sandell in a Rover P5B - in which he was to suffer a broken foot; A smart DS420 Limo for 110 Paul Latkowski.

**Is this the biggest wreck of 2008? See next page...**