

# The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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## Cheetahs Crash

It is always sad to see a track or team close down and the sudden demise of Oxford as an Elite League venture happened just as our previous edition went to copying. At the time of noting the end of the Cheetahs as an Elite League team our thoughts were the silver lining – comfort zone if you like – is that the stadium is not under threat of re-development and hopefully the City of Dreaming Spires would see speedway action soon. And so it came to pass that aspiring Exeter saviour Allen Trump has stepped into the gulf and saved the Conference League lads who now race under the name of Cheetahs.

Allen has given the place a boost by hiring Peter Oakes to boot.

Good luck lads – Lang May Yer Lum Reek (wi other folks' coal).

**JH**

## Goodbye Michal and Kenny

Whilst it is sad to lose a track, it is heartbreaking to lose riders. We send our deepest sympathies to the families of young Czech Republic rider Michal Matula and Swede Kenny Olsson who lost their lives on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> May and Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> June respectively. Michal never raced for a UK team but Kenny was a popular member of the Glasgow Tigers during his last spell over here and the loss will be deeply felt by the Tigers' fans and other admirers who followed his other teams in the UK. We will add their names to the Roll of Honour and hope, as ever, they will be the last names we will add to it.

**Editors**

## West Maitland

We take the opportunity to reproduce this item from the Parramatta Speedway programme of 27 March 1954 written by **Ken Collyer** who took a walk Down Memory Lane.

(How Speedway all Began)

A little over 30 years ago - 31, to be exact - it all started, this spectacle of speedway.

Started in a humble way up at the Maitland Showground, where the annual local show was in progress and things weren't going too well.

The attendance figures were down and nobody was showing any great interest in the things that were on.

And then one chap came forward with the suggestion that perhaps they could run a race for motor bikes as there were a lot of them around and, perhaps they would be interested in a race for themselves and perhaps the public might be interested, too.

At any rate, the idea should draw a few more patrons in through the turnstyles, as the bike riders would have a few friends who'd come along to see them ride.

The prize? Well, how about £10?

About 40 fellows showed an inclination to "have a go" at the idea and duly presented themselves to the chap in charge of the idea.

It was decided to run the race off in heats and the winners going into a final, with one prize - £10!

Of course, £10 then was of far greater value than the same £10 to-day. In those days, £10 was a veritable fortune. And every rider wanted that "tenner".

Of rules, there were none. Nobody had ever run this kind of thing before, but it was agreed by all and sundry that nobody should be allowed to put their foot down going around corners!

Whilst leather jackets and riding gloves and crash helmets weren't disbarred, they were classed as being "cissy," and no one who cared for his reputation would have used them.

Safety fences weren't born then. If you fell off, it was a case of rolling out of the way pretty smartly - at any rate, the track was green grass, and who going to get hurt there?

The machines line up, every type that you could imagine - Nortons, A.J.S.'s, Excelsiors, Twin Indians and big Harleys.

The machines had been ridden to the track and then stripped of their accessories at the trackside.

The first heat was on, and with their open exhausts roaring, the riders streaked around the then 600-yard circuit.

Some fell, others had their engines quit, but the races went on, heat after heat, and as the evening went on more and more came to watch and stay.

The track that had originally been a nice green sward, was now shorn of its grass and was mud-bespattered and full of holes and ruts.

Came the final, and of the eight who qualified only five could make the grade - men and machines were fast falling by the wayside.

The race was started by the firing of a pistol, and off went the five, lap after lap until, in the end, only one rider was left to cross the winning line!

And after it was all over, the spectators clamoured for more of this thrill; they wanted more of this bike racing. (It wasn't until nearly five years later that the name of speedway was to be used.)

And the chap who had first proposed this race agreed with them - a man who was soon to become one of the top men in the speedway promotion world. His name was John S. Hoskins.

He has remained at the top of the speedway ladder ever since, having promoted and managed speedway tracks throughout the length and breadth of Australia, England and Scotland.

But for the next lot of races it was proposed by the riders that a fence be built to protect the spectators, as they reckoned that sooner or later a spectator might be killed when some bike got out of control and careered through the thin wire fence!

Other riders reckoned that the grass track was no good and that all the grass should be removed. This was agreed to, and then came the problem of what to do with the dirt surface. Someone suggested pouring tons of clay on the dirt and this was tried; but after rolling it, they found that the surface was like concrete. Then came the idea of mixing cinders, so cinders inches thick were tried and this was reckoned to be the best surface of all. And so the cinder track was born.

A track was created at Newcastle, and more riders came into the sport.

Stars were born into the speedway game. Names like Billy Lamont, who on the Maitland track was almost invincible. Charlie Spinks, who can still mount a machine up in Queensland.

In 1925 Billy Lamont was called the boy wonder of speedway - he was only sixteen years of age!

By 1926 the sport in Australia was well established. Top names were Hurricane Vic Huxley, Max Grosskreutz, Frank Arthur and Lionel Van Praag.

In 1927 the West Australians opened their big track at Claremont just outside of Perth. Ron Johnson was the star of the track, and although he always rode for Australia in Test matches, he was Scottish born!

Over in England there had been a form of this dirt track riding going on, but not on the highly commercialised lines that Johnny Hoskins and the Australians had brought it to.

Came 1928, and the English motor cycle folk were clamouring for these Australians to come over and show their stuff.

And over they went to England, and there, as time progressed, they thought up the idea of knee hooks, crash helmets, leathers. Steel boots were introduced to add to the spectacle.

Rules were drawn up. in fact the drawing up of the rules of the Speedway sport is a story in itself.

And then the sport was placed on a competitive basis, which has existed until the present day. When overseas, the public has demanded something new in their speedway spectacle, so perhaps you to-night are seeing the type of racing that within the next few years may be the order of the sport in England.

### **A Sign of No Times**

Compleatists crack up at the lack of times for races and the early post war years at Wimbledon certainly were giving me the pip. However, **Bryan Seery** as put my mind at rest. The times were not officially recorded from 7<sup>th</sup> June 1946 until the end of 1948. The programme of 28<sup>th</sup> March 1949 advises readers that the announcing of race times is being restored. I know Walthamstow suspended announcing times for a short spell in 1951 but do you know of any other tracks where times were not given? I had just about written off heat times for Exeter 1947 as there is no space for recording times against each heat, despite the end of the events having a space for marking in the fastest time of the night, when **Tony Lethbridge** sent me the details of the race times for almost all of the meetings. Some of the programmes Tony supplied were clearly endorsed by the meeting timekeeper. What is more amazing is that one of the timekeepers marked in the times for each and every rider in the meeting. I've only seen this in one other programme – one from Birmingham and the reason was that the qualification for the Rider of the Night final was taken on best times. **Jim Henry**

### **Cambridge Speedway**

Thanks to **Glynn Shailes**, via **Keith Farman**, we can record activity at a track in Cambridge in 1939. Keith sent on a scan of a programme for the

meetings staged at the Newmarket Road Dog Track, Cambridge on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1939. The meeting was billed as Newmarket v Eastern Counties because the meetings were staged, under the control of Jimmy Millward, by the Newmarket Motor Cycle Club. The two teams were : Newmarket – Tiger Hart, Charlie Appleby, Paddy Mills, Wilf Plant, A.Sweaby, Stan Williams with Reg Holland and Ted Gibson at reserve. Eastern Centre – Allan Smith, Ted English, S.Warren, Ken Tidbury, Jack Tidbury, Tip Mills, with E.Youngs and A.Gregory at reserve.

The back of the programme indicates the next meeting would be Newmarket v Holbeach on 23<sup>rd</sup> April. A newspaper clipping mentions a meeting v Eastbourne.

It is great to add a venue previously uncatalogued and yet again it begs the question – how many meetings were staged at this venue and when did it operate?

It also begs the question – how many more are out there?

**Jim**

**Henry**

### **Thanks Colin**

We had to find a wee bit space to say thanks to **Colin Pike** for his excellent cumulative index which appears on the web site. We use it a lot to avoid saying the same old thing more than once.

**Editors**

### **Can You Help?**

**Roger Beaman**, (AKA Granda Roger), 47 Peel Way, Tividale, Oldbury, B69 3JX Tel: 0121 532 8614 is looking for heat details for Midland Junior League Matches for 1953. Leicester v Coventry 1.5; v Coventry 4.9; Stoke v Wolverhampton 2.5; v Wolverhampton 13. 6; v Birmingham 18.6 ; v Coventry 2.7. Coventry v Birmingham 16.5; v Wolverhampton 30.5; v Wolverhampton 25.6; v Wolverhampton 22.8; v Stoke 29.8; v Leicester 12.9.

**Alan Bates**, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Flat, 71 Bouverie Road West, Folkestone, Kent, CT20 2RL would like the following information to complete details of 1932 Clapton: last placed men/non-finishers v Crystal Palace 20.7.; v Stamford Bridge 30.7; v Stamford Bridge 21.9; v Plymouth 16.8. Alan is also looking for full meeting details for the matches v Crystal palace on 28.9 and 5.10.

**Adrian Pavey** 15 Millhill, Cleator Moor, Cumbria, GA25 5SD Tel: 0773 068 4564 is looking for information on what happened to the 500cc Honda machines which were to be given extensive testing on speedway tracks.

**Adrian** is also looking for heat details of the Long Track meeting held at Kendal 23.4.1972. (I'm sure this was reported in Motor Cycle News JH)

**Graham Gleave**, 7 Naunton Road, Alkington, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1FX is trying to find out if Shelbourne staged a meeting versus Belle Vue on 28 August 1961.

**Keith Green**, 38 Hartley Brook Road, Shiregreen, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S5 0JB Tel 0114 2402753 Email keith.green97@tiscali .co.uk is looking for information about Tom Farndon's racing career in 1929 and 1930 when he was racing for Coventry.

### **Eastbourne 1947**

The request for Wombwell resulted in a fair few gaps being filled but there is still a long way to go. Anyway, as a result **Jim Henry** is now making a request for the following Eastbourne 1947 information for web site: 19.4. v Stoke (Hanley) 4<sup>th</sup> placed men, All Times, SH; 26.4. v Exeter SH; 3.5 v Southampton SH; 10.5. The Championship of Sussex Meeting Details; 17.5. v Southampton Saints SH; 31.5. British Riders Q R Decider Time; 28.6. v Wombwell Colliers Meeting Details; 6.9. v Plymouth Time Hard Luck Race; 13.9. v Cradley Heath Time Runners Up SH; 20.9. v Tamworth SH. This would complete home information for the season.

### **Hastings 1948 – 49**

Similarly to Eastbourne – here are the gaps to be filled for Hastings. 1948 21.4.v Stoke (Hanley) All times; 19.5. Speedway Riders Champs Meeting Details; 2.6. v Southampton Second Half (SH); 7.7. v Coventry Times & SH; 14.7 v Tamworth Time SH Final; 21.7. v Wombwell SH; 2.8. Saxon Trophy Meeting Details; 18.8 v Stoke (Hanley) SH; 25.8 v Hull SH; 8.9 v Hull SH; 29.0 v Tamworth Meeting Details. 1949 Second Halves for 6.4. v Leicester; 13.4. v Plymouth; 20.4. v Rayleigh; 27.4. v Yarmouth ; 4.5 v Stoke (Hanley); 11.5. v Oxford; 25.5 v Liverpool; 1.6 v Yarmouth; 8.6 v Plymouth; 15.6 v Exeter; 22.6. v Hull; 19.6 v Tamworth; 2.7. v Yarmouth; 20.7. v Rayleigh; 27.7 v All Stars; 3.8. v Liverpool; 10.7 v Stoke (Hanley); 24.8. v Leicester; 31.7. v Exeter; 14.9. v Oxford; 28.9 v Yarmouth; 5.10 v Tamworth. + 17.8 v Norwich All Times & SH.

## Feedback 1

**Adrian Pavey**, from Cumbria has written to tell of the library at the HQ of the Vintage Motorcycle Club which is based in Burton on Trent. Adrian advises that the library holds a pile of speedway related treasures including factory records on many early dirt track machines, notebooks and scrapbooks from past members and copies of the Motor Cycle and Motorcycling. Both magazines gave dirt track racing a great deal of coverage in the pioneer days. Another library tracked down by Adrian is that of the National Motorcycle Museum at Beaulieu. It holds a number of personal papers from a number of riders including Eva Asquith, Fay Taylour and Eric Langton. They do have their own researchers who do initial searches of information for you.

## Stats and That

We have never shirked taking criticism and when **Bryan Seery**, doyen of speedway statistics speaks we won't ignore what he has to say. Bryan is not happy about inaccuracies in figures we publish. To be fair to us, we have never claimed our figures to be the definitive article and have always been happy to print corrections pointed out to us where necessary. The Speedway Researcher is about digging out the information and has never claimed to be a statistics orientated venture. WE would LOVE to see all you statistics fans get together and get the right information into the system but, we cannot take a lead on this. We have made the offer to help and the web site could be a home for accurate statistics.

**Editors**

## Collectors Corner

**Graham Gleave** has written bemoaning the lack of a paper based magazine for collectors in this ever growing electronic age. It has never been the intention of The Speedway Researcher to stray into this territory as we feel that it is not our role. We will help where we can. Also we can't deny that we do rely on collectors to help us with information, and, in return, we give them information if they want to complete programmes when they need the heat details. We would even be pleased to help where we could to re-launch this type of magazine by giving publicity to anyone wanting to start up a new collectors magazine. However, we cannot take it on as an extension to the role

of this magazine. We provide a service for subscribers to take up the weight capacity of the envelope by offering to distribute your fliers. The fliers can be subscribers needs lists. Contact Graham as this is on a first come basis. We would be happy to publish items from collectors about collecting provided it adds to the research dimension with information of interest to historians.

**Editors**

## **Nigel's Natters 4**

**Nigel Bird**, our avid researcher of pre-war pioneer facts, passes on a few more items for our enlightenment. (Keep up the good work Nigel – Eds)

### **Greenford 1931**

Having last seen speedway in 1928 and 1929 the trotting track venue in west London, Greenford, reopened for a short season on 22 August 1931. The opening was marred by a tragedy which had happened a few days earlier on the 18 August when 26 year old Percy Kent of Harrow out for the first time on a speedway bike crashed during a practice session. No other riders were on the track at that time. His injuries did not seem serious but he was later taken to hospital where sadly on the 20 August he died of head injuries. Most of the riders were amateurs, one exception was Aussie Jack Sharp. The locals who enjoyed a nice view across Greenford Park protested about the noise and disturbance and threatened an injunction. When it was pointed out that if they did this it was most likely the park would be sold for housing or factories, they suddenly found a little disturbance from the speedway was no problem at all! At a club meeting Tue 22 Sept. it was decided that the general public would no longer be admitted to race meetings. Any future meetings would be for members only. Was the meeting held on 10 October being the last event?

### **Speedway in Marseilles Part II**

Those hell raisers Skid Skinner and Clem Beckett enjoyed their eight weeks in the South of France but at one stage they got a little bored. Having found that guns were freely available in France they got themselves tooled up. A few hours target practice created a bit of a disturbance which literally reached the ears of the local gendarmes who threw both of them into the slammer. With much argument, from amongst others the British Consul, they were released with a paltry 20 francs fine and a promise that they would not do it again.

### **Another Yank on the Wall**

American Dab Boston who came to England in 1929 with one or two other yanks, (*Chick Remington, Red Murch, Smokey Joe Pachasa, Ray*

*Creviston*). Nearly all failed to impress and disappeared without trace, Dab later turned up on the Wall Of Death at the Kursaal, Southend.

Another rider to try his hand at the Wall was Alf Viccary, tutored by the renowned Tornado Smith at the Kursaal. Gus Kuhn also had a spin on the Wall probably with the help of his mechanic Rudi Knight who was a Wall of Death rider

The Wall of Death show started before the First World War using bicycles, the original idea may be French not American. In 1910 a Frenchman was riding a motorcycle around the inside of what looked like a giant basket constructed of wooden slats with gaps between each slat, so the spectators could view the action from the outside. (*Photo in a recent book about Harley Davidson*)

Nobby Key (Crystal Palace/ New Cross) found himself on the wall of death which as an interval attraction was located on the centre green at Crystal Palace speedway. This Wall of Death was of the early type, that resembled a giant wooden slatted basket.

Tempus have published a book "Riding the Wall of Death" by Allen Ford There are probably some speedway references.

Dab Boston and Red Murch promoted speedway in the USA their 440 yard track was located at Dexter Park, New Jersey 1931, throwing doubts on the story that Sprouts Elder introduced European style speedway to America. (California maybe?)

Boston, Murch and Remington had their greatest successes in England at Greenford. The half mile trotting track was more to their liking being similar to an American style dirt track rather than speedway.

(DAB was apparently Boston's initials. **Eds**)

### **Luton 1935**

Promoted by the Luton and Dunstable Greyhound Racing Club headed by Mr A Saunders who employed as his speedway manager Mr 'Kiss of Death', J.G. 'Dick' Southouse,...Kiss of Death because every track he managed closed before the season was over. Wolverhampton 1930, Tamworth (pirate) 1933, Coventry 1934, Luton 1935 and Cardiff 1936. "Dick" brought to Luton with him old friends Norman Trimmell, Mike Erskine and two Coventry juniors, Don Stewart and Bob Henderson plus Yorkshire man Jack Dalton. Among other regulars were Keith Harvey (S.A.) & Doug McLachlan (Aus.) From the outset it was made clear that the intention was to enter a team in the proposed second division. Meanwhile matches were arranged against weakened versions of such teams as Seaforth, West Ham, Wembley, Hackney Wick and

Wimbledon. The country was celebrating the Silver Jubilee of King George V when the opening meeting took place on Monday 6 May when a crowd of 2,000 turned up and it was noted they stood there impassively, no sign of enthusiasm being shown, but by the third meeting the fans had started to show signs of life by applauding. Crowds still rarely climbed above 2,000 and the local press constantly commented on the soon to be announced second division.....It never came, and in mid July the shutters went up... the announcement read “racing is postponed until the second division is formed”. The newspapers that were generous in their speedway reportage make no mention of speedway in 1934 or 36 I have not found any hard evidence to suggest speedway had taken place in Luton other than 1935.

I would welcome any info on J.G. Southouse. Where did he come from? Southouse also turned his hand to announcing at Wolverhampton and Coventry.

### **Buzz Hibberd**

It may have been said that Australian Buzz Hibberd’s Christian name was Paul? It is in fact Geoffrey ...Geoffrey Claude Hibberd. (This may have been mentioned in an earlier edition of the researcher?) Dirt Track Speedways Ltd had listed as one of their shareholders a ‘Paul J. Hibberd’ of Lawrence Rd, Romford Essex, whose occupation was later given as a dirt track rider. This is not the Australian version. (Ref. *Ross Garrigan, Australia & H.M. Government documents, Company registrations*).

(Buzz was always known as Buzz, even one of his great friends, George McKenzie only knew him by that name. Whilst writing the book on Marine Gardens, Graeme Frost managed to unearth Buzz’s name as Geoffrey but the Claude middle name is new to me. This ties in with a name on the list of Speedway Riders’ Association representatives listed as G.C.Hibberd. JH)

**Copac**, it sounds like a pain killer I use when have a really sore back and it may just save you a few headaches (JH). Copac Academic and National Library Catalogue web site – <http://copac.ac.uk> provides you with free access to the merged on line catalogues of major university and National Libraries in the UK and Ireland, including the British Library. This site is worth a look.

### **Monmore Speedways (1929) Ltd. (Wolverhampton) part II**

There were two companies operating Monmore Green in 1929. ‘ Monmore Speedways Ltd (1929) ( MD A. Westwood) ’and ‘ Midland Speedways Ltd’ which comprised of 15 riders one of whom was Arthur Westwood. Which company was the subsidiary and which the controlling company is anyone’s guess. Financial jiggery pokery appears to be the reason for two companies?

**Arthur 'Tiny' Tims**:- Apologies, Vol. 9 no.2. I missed out the fact that Tims made a comeback in 1936 for Nottingham, and then retired. The provincial league gave opportunities for some of the boys to give it another go.

### **White City London, Team Colours Mystery 1929**

Just when you think you've got it right, up pops a gremlin and sticks a bl\*\*\*y big spanner in the works! Magazine references and a June W/C Programme give the colours as Red/White/**Blue**, all sorted? Then out of the blue comes an August W/C prog. giving the colours as Red/White/**Yellow**. With all the other facts and references I have, I can only conclude that for some reason they changed colours mid season, (*July maybe?*) Question is :- Why?; They wore a long shirt equally divided into 3 horizontal bands R/W/B and it looked exactly the same as the shirt worn by the England team R/W/B, this may be the reason they changed to R/W/Yellow. (*Any other idea folks?*)

### **Nobby Clarke**

**Bob Ballard** from Somerset points out a small correction to the item by **Keith Farman**. It appears that Ceclia Colledge was British Ice Figure Skating Champion (not dance) 1935 – 1938 & 1946, European Champion 1937 – 1939 and World Champion 1937.

## **Preston Speedway 1929-1932**

### **Part 1: Beginnings & Into The First Season**

**Graham Fraser** has been researching the action in Preston for some time and is now serialising the story.

News of the introduction of dirt track racing in the Lancashire mill town of Preston was not heralded with massive press coverage in the local *Preston Herald* or *Lancashire Daily Post* in March 1929. The chairman of directors of the promotion, *Preston Speedways Ltd*, was W.D. Meagher, better known as founder and chairman of the Northern Dirt Track Owners' Association and notably a director of the Leeds and Bolton tracks. Certainly a man of many interests. He had identified a location for the then new sport at a former Pleasure Garden with a bicycle circuit surrounding a football field on the outskirts of the town, called Farrington Park. Importantly it was close to the main Preston to Blackburn Road which was on a tram route. The club leased the park together with the Preston Grasshoppers Rugby Union team.

### National League Division One 1953

Away Team	Belle Vue	Birmingham	Bradford	Bristol	Harringay	Norwich	Wembley	West Ham	Wimbledon
Home Team									
Belle Vue	XXXXX	39 – 45	37 – 47	46 – 37	52 – 32	62 – 22	42 – 42	48 – 36	53 – 31
Birmingham	48 – 36	XXXXXX	51 – 33	53 – 31	37 – 47	56 – 28	46 – 38	49 – 35	48 – 36
Bradford	56 – 28	42 – 42	XXXXXX	55 – 29	37 – 47	51 – 33	40 – 43	58 – 26	43 – 41
Bristol	63 – 21	50 – 34	58 – 26	XXXXX	41 – 43	56 – 28	40 – 43	62 – 22	39 – 45
Harringay	47 – 37	53 – 30	51 – 22	51 – 33	XXXXXX	56 – 27	33 – 51	60 – 24	49 – 35
Norwich	51 – 33	37 – 47	36 – 48	59 – 25	54 – 30	XXXXX	44 – 39	55 – 29	51 – 32
Wembley	51 – 33	57 – 27	59 – 25	51 – 33	50 – 34	59 – 25	XXXXXX	39.5-44.5	58 – 26
West Ham	57 – 27	54 – 30	51 – 33	46 – 38	26 – 58	57 – 27	33 – 51	XXXXXX	50 – 34
Wimbledon	56 – 28	46 – 36	39 – 45	52 – 32	59 – 25	59 – 25	42 – 41	50 – 34	XXXXXX

### National League Division One 1953

Team	Home						Away					
	R	W	D	L	PtsF	PtsA	W	D	L	PtsF	PtsA	MatchPts
Wembley	16	7	0	1	424.5	247.5	4	1	3	348	320	23
Harringay	16	7	0	1	400	269	4	0	4	316	356	22
Birmingham	16	7	0	1	388	284	2	1	5	291	378	19
Bradford	16	5	1	2	382	289	3	0	5	289	382	17
Wimbledon	16	7	0	1	403	266	1	0	7	280	391	16
West Ham	16	6	0	2	374	298	1	0	7	250.5	421.5	14
Norwich	16	6	0	2	387	283	0	0	8	215	456	12
Belle Vue	16	5	1	2	379	292	0	0	8	243	429	11
Bristol	16	5	0	3	409	262	0	0	8	258	413	10

### National Trophy 1953

#### Round One

Exeter 100 Swindon 116  
 St Austell 83 Cardiff 133  
 Southampton 125 Ipswich 90  
 Oxford 120 Plymouth 96

#### Round Two

Leicester 135.5 Cardiff 80.5  
 Southampton 86 Wolverhampton 130  
 Swindon 92 Motherwell 124  
 Glasgow 136 Edinburgh 80  
 Rayleigh 124 Oxford 92  
 Coventry 144 Liverpool 72  
 Yarmouth 91 Stoke 124

#### Round Three

Poole 97 Motherwell 119  
 Wolverhampton 81 Glasgow 135  
 Rayleigh 112 Leicester 104  
 Stoke 110 Coventry 106

To Be Completed

Initial press reports suggest that some substantial investment was put into laying a quarter mile cinder track (a steady supply of cinders would have been available from the innumerable local mills), with a track safety fence. The local press reported it as the fastest in the North of England, in the opinion of and a surrounding stadium fence to keep in (or out) the 20,000 capacity crowds that were hoped for. The existing covered accommodation was upgraded and a new stand added. Floodlighting by 50 arc lamps and a public address system were installed from the start of the new teams venture into the fledgling sport. Obviously no expense was being spared.

Track Manager was a Mr Jackman who was responsible for recruiting riders to appear at Farringdon Park which, given that there to be two meetings a week on Thursday and Saturday nights was no small task. He was also responsible for recruiting riders to form the Preston team that had successfully applied for membership to the new English (or Northern) Dirt Track League. The first riders to be signed included former local boxer , Ian Ritchings; Ham Burrill, Londoners Frank and Jack Chiswell; “Crazy” Hutchins; “Smoke” Robinson; “Winks” Rice; Tony Barratt; F T Myhill; P G & Claude Rye; Len Myerscough; Tommy Price, John Stockdale and Jack Palastrand. Not all these riders made it into the Preston team, many only performed in open meetings and others either re-surfaced riding for other teams or disappeared completely. In those early days anyone could have a go, many failed but the rewards for those who were successful was a good living.

The new venture opened at 7pm (following on from the Preston North End football match that afternoon) on Friday, 29 March 1929 (with earlier frosty conditions preventing the completion of stadium terracing thereby reducing the crowd capacity) with a programme of individual events (either handicap or scratch races) with five riders per race (wearing red, blue, white, green and orange colours) Qualifying was through a series of heats to the competition final. The Senior Scratch races and the Golden Helmet races had seven qualifying heats, two semi-finals and a final each, the Junior Scratch had four qualifying heats into a final and finally there were Eliminating Challenge Races with three heats into a Final. By my reckoning that must have been 29 races and approaching sixty riders competing for the opening evening meeting. The 10,000 paying crowd certainly got their money’s worth although press reports suggested that hundreds more rushed the gates to get in and consequently not everyone got a good view. The promotion must have had a hefty wage bill for appearance and winning rider’s money for that day.

The victors on that opening night were:

Golden Helmet: Winner AW Jervis, 2 Arthur Franklyn, 3 HC Jervis, 4 C Wilcock

Senior Scratch Race: Winner Rex Kirby, 2 AW Jervis, 3 Ginger Lees, 4 Mark Sheldon

Junior Scratch Race: Winner Joe Abbott, 2 H C Jervis, 3 H Anderton 4 J Lund

Eliminating Challenge Races: Winner Norman Dawson, 2 Arthur Franklyn, 3 Len Myerscough

According to press reports the fastest time was set by A W Jervis on his AJS with a time of 1min 37.2 secs for the four laps (1 mile), an average speed of 37 miles an hour!

So no doubt the lessons of that opening meeting were learnt by the promotion who must have thought they had a real money-spinner in Preston Dirt Track. They did not have long to wait before the turnstiles were turning again with the second individual meeting lined up for Easter Monday, 1<sup>st</sup> April. The weather was not kind however being particularly cold which affected the crowd level, some 4,000 turning out. However that did not stop the track record being lowered twice by Oliver Langton to 1 min 30 secs, then in the Final of the Eliminating Challenge Races Tommy Price shaved off another eight tenths of a second to set the mark at 1 min 36.2. Most successful rider on the night was undoubtedly Oliver Langton.

Reports suggest that the cold weather created a difficult track surface for some of the lesser lights with several accidents including Winks Rice who suffered shock and severe bruising to his leg and Yorkshire novice John Hastings who was taken to Preston Infirmary with slight concussion and abrasions to the face. It was a hard sport in those early days, just as it can be now. Reports suggested that the first rider away from the start generally won. Also, local rider Ian Ritchings had two attempts to lower both the standing and flying start Preston track records but failed on both occasions. Winners on Easter Monday 1929 were:

Golden Sash: Oliver Langton

Senior Scratch Race: Oliver Langton

Eliminating Challenge Races: Tommy Price

Junior Scratch Race: R F McNab

Through April the regular pattern of twice weekly individual meetings continued attracting crowds between 4,000 and 7,000. However things were about to change with the start of the English Dirt Track League season.

Preston opening league fixture was something of a false start. They travelled to face fellow newcomers Bolton at Raikes Park (which continued as a dog

track into the 1990s) in a nine heat league contest on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> April. Despite exhaustive research little has been found about that fixture other than a result (Bolton won 36-24) Ham Burrill is the only known Preston rider that day (Winks Rice and Smoke Robinson reported as away riding in Copenhagen, Len Myerscough unavailable as he was recovering from an injury), with Jack Wood, Alec Jackson and possibly Norman Dawson forming the core of the Bolton team. Ham Burrill won the second half Golden Helmet Race and Preston regular, W H Chrystall taking the Junior Race. (Does anyone out there have any more details or a programme from this meeting ?!?!?). Whatever the result however it was expunged from the records as Bolton soon folded as a league team (they did have two short seasons of initial meetings before the sport was finally lost to the town).

Preston however continued and the following Saturday opening their home league fixtures with a tough meeting against Leeds. This time the teams and results are almost completely known (thanks to a surviving completed programme)..

The Preston team was: Ham Burrill, Tommy Price, Frank Chiswell, Jack Chiswell, Crazy Hutchins, Ian Ritchings with reserves, Claude Rye and Will Anderton

Leeds were represented by: Eric Langton, Oliver Langton, Arthur Atkinson, Billy Burrows, Alec Hill, Tommy Bullus? with reserves, Arnold Moore and Denis Atkinson

An enthusiastic Farringdon Park crowd of 10,000 were obviously attracted by league racing and the opportunity to support their local team. Eric Langton won the first heat and the four points for Leeds with the two Preston opponents picking up three points for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ham Burrill then easily won heat 2 and took the track record at 1 min 30.2 (rolling start). Heat 3 was a disaster for Preston with Jack Chiswell and Crazy Hutchins both falling to hand Leeds a 6-0. Over the next two heats Preston pulled the scores level. Heat 7 saw both Leeds riders have accidents with Preston opening up a 26-22 lead and wins in the remaining two heats saw them victorious 35-27 in their first proper league fixture. Ham Burrill as man of the match added to his success by taking the Golden Gauntlet on his Douglas. The Preston league season had really begun on a high after a false start.  
(next time: the league season takes off and Preston challenge for honours)

## **Feedback 2**

**Adrian Pavey**, our historian in the north west of England has penned this interesting item.

As a follow up to Liz Rees' article in the last issue, I can heartily recommend Local Archive and Record Offices for gathering information. During my own research on speedway at Barrow in 1930 and 1931 I was privy to material belonging to the Northern Motor Sports Club (NMSC) which confirmed that the first meeting at Holker Street on 12 June 1930 was actually raced on a cinder surface. Previously it appeared that the meeting used a grass surface. In the NMSC records there was a note from Vickers Shipyard confirming delivery of a substantial load of ash in the weeks leading up to the opening night. \*

Another invoice reveals a further 50 tons of black cinders from the Vickers furnaces were delivered on 23 June.

Some other interesting papers included correspondence between the NMSC and the ACU regarding the use of dirt track bikes at Barrow's Little Park in 1931. Apparently they were running with a special track licence and not the proper dirt track licence. Hence the reason racing was suspended between 15 June and 24 August 1931.

(\* This begs the question, could it have been stored at the site and used as a track at a later date?)

### **DMW**

**Tony Webb** has just completed a record of 76 speedway machines. He had not discovered the DKW, but though readers might like to know of the DMW. William Leslie Dawson, a grasstrack and speedway rider from Heswall, Birkenhead raced his own DMW/Chater Lea at Rochdale, New Brighton and Belle Vue in the early 1930 period. After the war he opened Dawsons Motor Works in Pool Street area of Wolverhampton where he manufactured machines with 350 and 500cc JAP engines. Tony has a photo of Leslie on a DMW c1938, he is wearing a Brummies racejacket but he does not know if he rode for them. (Can't think of Brummies race jacket appearing before the War – any thoughts you lads in the Midlands? **Editors**.)

### **DKW and Hampton Court**

An editor's dream is a link between two items and we thank **Colin Chubb**, from London for this one. Colin sent in an extract from a Summer 1987 Classic Racer magazine which tells of one Jim Bound who started out on the

dirt at Barnet on a 1929 600cc water cooled DKW and also raced at Hampton Court Speedway. The DKW, which cost him £25.00 was described by Jim (and I quote the article) as a “Bu..er” and justified this by saying that it used to overheat and spray the rider’s face with boiling water. The author of the article was Peter Dobson – anyone know where is now and if he can shed any further light on the Hampton Court Speedway?

## CLAPTON 1932 Part 2

**Alan Bates**, continues his history of this somewhat hazy pre-war London venue.

After their elimination from the London Cup by Crystal Palace towards the end of July, Clapton then went out of the National Trophy at the hands of Coventry. They won the home leg on 27 July by 50 – 44 thanks to a late rally, with Jack Parker 12 and brother Norman Parker 11 as their top scorers. The next evening at Coventry, Clapton suffered two early 5 – 1s and eventually went down 41 – 55. The Parker brothers were again the pick of the Clapton riders as Jack scored 10 and Norman 9. The aggregate defeat was 91 – 99. It was then back to League racing with their first match in the New National League competition. Clapton made a terrible start when they were thrashed 15 – 39 at Stamford Bridge on 30 July. Wal Phillips scored a maximum for the Bridge. Even though Clapton were doing poorly it was a boom time for Speedway as the Speedway Control Board announced that up to the end of July 1,556,945 people had paid to watch at the nine tracks in the League championship.

August began with the Bank Holiday double with Wimbledon but the rain won easily as the match at Plough Lane was abandoned after 4 heats and no start was made at all for the return at Lea Bridge in the evening. On 3 August Clapton lost at home to Belle Vue 21 – 32 in front of an 11,000 crowd. Eric Langton recorded a maximum for the Aces and the Parker brothers were the only home riders to win any heats. The following Wednesday Clapton were at home to Wembley and, without Jack Parker who had been injured in the Test Match at Crystal Palace. Clapton won the first heat 4 -2 but then lost six of the remaining eight to end up with a thrashing by 20 – 34. George Greenwood notched a maximum for the Lions.

The losing run continued with a 20 – 33 defeat at Plymouth on 16 August on a very bumpy track, There were numerous fallers and in Heat 1 three riders fell and remounted. The 5 – 1 Clapton win was their only success of the night.

The next evening, at home to Coventry and still without Jack Parker, Clapton led with three heats to go before a 5 – 1 and two 4 – 2s to the visitors gave them a 27 – 24 win.

On Wednesday 24 August 8,000 turned up at Clapton to see the Star Home Riders' Championship which was won by Norman Parker. This was followed by an Inter County match when Essex beat Surrey 29 – 24. Dick Case scored a maximum but still finished up on the losing side.

At last the elusive League victory was achieved. On 31 August Clapton easily defeated Wimbledon at home by 35 – 19. Jack Parker returned with a maximum in front of a crowd of 10,000. Clapton almost made it two wins in two days as the following evening they led Coventry 22 – 19 at Brandon with two heats to go. However the home side then put in a 5 – 1 followed by a match winning 4 – 2. Clapton may have won but they lost Phil Bishop following a fall in his first ride.

Clapton put up another good away show at West Ham on 6 September and led after four heats. Yet again they suffered bad luck. Norman Parker and Athur Westwood both fell in heat 5 and Jack Parker's machine conked out (failed) in heat 7. The net result was that Coventry won the match 29 – 22.

The next evening at Lea Bridge the big prize up for competition was the Clapton Silver Trophy and the £150 prize money that was up for grabs. Although Ginger Lees topped the scores after every rider had completed four rides, Jack Parker won the Final event which was contested by the top four qualifying scorers.

Back to the League and Clapton trounced Plymouth at home by 36 – 18 on 14 September. Norman Parker notched his only maximum of the season, Three days later Clapton made a good start at Crystal Palace and it was level at 12 points all after four races. However, Palace then bagged three 5 – 1s and two 4 – 2s to record a convincing 35 – 19 success. Ron Johnson, with 9 and Nobby Key, on 8, were the top men for the Sydenham side.

On 21 September Clapton and Stamford Bridge fought out a close match for six heats and at that stage Clapton led 19 – 17. Wally Lloyd and Phil Bishop scored a 5 – 1 and Jack Parker won one of the remaining heats to clinch the match which ended as a 31 – 23 win for the home side. Stamford Bridge's best man was Wal Phillips who scored a maximum.

On 24 September Clapton were hammered at Belle Vue where the best they could do was share a couple of heats. Frank Varey and Eric Langton both scored maximums for the Aces as the Manchester team cruised home 38 – 16. Jack Parker missed this and the remaining meetings due to injury.

Clapton's overall performance was so poor that they looked in danger of finishing bottom of the League. However, on 28 September it looked as though it might be possible to avoid this fate when they narrowly defeated Crystal Palace 28 – 26. The result did not stand as the visitors complained about several starting irregularities and the outcome was a requirement to re-stage the match.

The dejected Clapton team were defeated 17 – 35 at Wimbledon on 3 October with Phil Bishop as Clapton's sole race winner. Wimbledon won the rest of the heats and Dicky Case scored a maximum. There was an unusual incident in the last heat. The race had to be rerun as the lights failed during the original staging. Phil Bishop was due to ride in the rerun but his machine suffered engine failure and couldn't make the re-start. Clapton decided to call in reserve Arthur Westwood, but, for some odd reason, he was in the bath and the upshot was Clapton had to contest the race with one rider.

The last match of the season was the re-scheduled fixture with Crystal Palace which took place on 5 October. What a match this turned out to be. Palace led after 4 heats. Then Clapton got ahead, Then a 5 – 1 for Palace pushed them ahead of Clapton. It was 25 – 23 at the start of the last heat for Palace. To the delight of the home fans in the 15,000 crowd, Billy Dallison and Steve Langton took a 5 – 1 to seal a 28 – 26 victory for the Clapton team. This win moved Clapton above Plymouth but only on race points difference. Both Clapton and Plymouth ended up with 8 League points.

The top scorers in the competition were Norman Parker 82, Wally Lloyd 66 and Jack Parker 65.

## **Publications**

**Nottingham and Long Eaton Speedway by Philip Dalling. Published by Stadia (part of Tempus Publishing) £14.99 plus P & P.**

I must admit that I found this history very interesting as I knew very little about Nottingham's speedway tracks and their pre-war activity. The action at Long Eaton was also a bit obscure so Philip has helped my enlightenment on that score. The post war Long Eaton venture has been chequered to say the least and again I learned a fair bit about the 50s and some of the background to the 60s. I will also admit to being surprised that the history seems to end with the move of the team to Leicester at the end of 1967 as it operated post that date in a number of guises.

Nonetheless, the book is well worth adding to the bookshelf when you finally manage to put it down. Go on treat yourselves to this one. **Jim Henry Shale Britannia – A Sideways Glance at Speedway by Jeff Scott (£18.00 inc P&P from Methanol Press, 2 Tidy Street, Brighton, BN1 4EL)** Every now and then a book comes out that makes you think and by goodness this is it. It doesn't have any photographs of racing action. There are very few photographs of riders. However, it takes a look at British speedway's many venues, warts and all, and it will, in years ahead, be a real nostalgia jerker. I have been lucky enough to get round a fair few tracks over the years and enjoyed trying to identify the venues. The photos of the less obvious nooks and crannies meant that I had often to refer to the list at the back. If you are into riders and action this is not for you, but if you are interested in the venues and social history – well – flourish the cheque book, write a cheque, and send it, made for the sum above, payable to Mr.J.Scott, to Methanol Press.

**Jim Henry**

**The Story of Oxford Speedway by Glynn Shailes and Robert Bamford - £14.99 plus P &P from Stadia (Tempus Publishing)**

The authors will forgive me for starting the review by saying "Lucky White Heather". It springs from a Ricky Fulton (Great Scottish Comedian) sketch in his annual Scotch and Rye where, as a Lucky White Heather seller, he gives all his woes. Glynn and Robert launched the book the day Oxford appeared to shut up the shutters when they withdrew from the Elite League. However the up side is the book is a winner and, if you didn't know already, ups and downs are a feature of Oxford Speedway. Loads of cups and loads of wooden spoons to go with them. I would have loved to see a bit more about the pioneer days of this venue but you can't have everything as history of Cowley, which thankfully (like Jim Gregory's speedway career) will go beyond the book launch. Glynn and Robert tell their story in a very readable and enjoyable fashion. Another book which is well worth adding to your bookshelf. **JHenry St Austell Speedway: The early Years 1949-1954** by Jeremy Jackson - Pub. By Tempus Publishing Ltd, obtainable from Jeremy Jackson at: Glen Maye, 85 Park Way, Fairfield Park, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4HR @ £14.99 (Post free service in UK) Long time supporter of the Researcher, Jeremy Jackson is well known for his publications on South-West speedway and motorcycle history, often producing self-published books. This is his first foray into the Tempus family of speedway publications that continues his passion for recording the history of the sport in his own part of the world with a welcome early history of Cornish speedway at St Austell. We should all be grateful to

Jeremy and Tony Lethbridge for recording the sport so well in their speedway outpost. The book catalogues the history of St Austell Speedway at Cornish Stadium or Par Moor as it was more affectionately known from its first Open Licence season in 1949, through the League seasons as the Gulls, up to 1954 when the promotion were refused membership of the league and that was it for that season, In between the Gulls toiled to make a mark in league speedway despite healthy crowds: 1950 Div 3 10<sup>th</sup> out of 10;1951 Div 3 8<sup>th</sup> out of 10;1952 Southern Lge 10<sup>th</sup> out of 10;1953 Southern Lge 7<sup>th</sup> out of 8. A history of this short-lived promotion is to be welcomed as a valuable addition and fills out much of the history of speedway at Par Moor that has only been covered in one small booklet publication previously. As well as being well researched and full of fascinating photographs this is also a darn good read and worth buying. Jeremy tells us that he will be publishing the next instalment of the St Austell history shortly, which together with the earlier "Clay Country History" book covering the post 1997 Gulls and Trelawny

Tigers will complete the history of Cornish speedway.**Review G. Fraser British Speedway Leagues 1991 -2006** by Alan Robertson - Self - published and available from the author at 28 Riverside, Salford, Lancashire M7 1PP @ £11 incl p&p (see flyer leaflet enclosed with this edition)

There have been periods when speedway yearbooks were obtainable at the end of every season for the speedway researchers and statisticians out there originally in publications like Stenners, Five Star Annuals, Peter Oakes annuals and Maurice Jones Speedway Survey Yearbooks. In the 1990s and early part of the new century there were suddenly gaps so that the survey of some seasons went unpublished in one source. More recently Peter Oakes and Robert Bamford have resumed the practice, which has to be welcomed, and Peter Jackson has catalogued National League seasons in the post- war period and through the 1950s. Also in recent years speedway statistician Alan Robertson has started to produce single retrospective season yearbooks covering 1958, 1965,1966, 1970, 1975 and 2000. Now he has pulled together every British League result, team rider averages, competition winners, International and Tour matches for the seasons 1991 to 2006.

From time to time the Editors of the Researcher get asked by some readers and others what publications will provide them with details of some seasons and even some of the more recent annuals and yearbooks are hard to come by. This books therefore fills two gaps, it bridges those seasons where no other seasonal publication was produced and helps those researchers and speedway fans looking for more detailed seasonal team, rider or league details

seeking to fill gaps in their speedway libraries. This is an A4 size publication, well detailed, easy to search and certainly a valuable addition to my speedway library and one that will certainly be well thumbed.

Watch out too for Alan's "Scunthorpe Speedway 1971-85" publication on the earlier incarnations of speedway at the Lincolnshire town. **Review G.Fraser**

## **Newspaper Speedway Specials**

Many newspapers published in speedway towns and cities carried a Speedway Special edition. It is unlikely that these editions would find their way into local libraries but a big collection of the Speedway Specials from the Edinburgh Evening News and Edinburgh Evening Dispatch (before it merged with the News) running from the start of 1963 to 1969 are being copied by the National Library of Scotland and made available to City of Edinburgh Library. They probably won't be available for inspection until late 2007 / early 2008.

How many tracks had local coverage? I have a loan of three Speedway Specials from the Glasgow Citizen and the Newcastle Chronicle, but where else had coverage? Does anyone hold copies of this type of publication from other tracks? Would the British Library (or even local libraries) be interested in copying editions from south of the Border? Any answers on this one? **JH**

## **Web Words**

**Webmaster McNeil** has had a few problems over the recent months but these are things of the past and the fruits of our labours are now evident. By the time this lands through your letter box winter is nearing and Jim will be itching to spend even more time battering information. Our offer to send you the contents of the web site on disc remains (Phone Ron on 01908 501130) for details. If you can send information from programmes for re-formatting and adding to the site – please do so. All contributions are acknowledged on the file and contributors page and, if you have a computer, we will send you the file in electronic format. The winter is likely to concentrate on the period up 1950 to 1954 with a lot of gaps remaining from 1946 – 1949 to be filled. Those of you who don't have a computer or don't have access via a computer to the internet should be aware that many local libraries are offering access to the web. This service is often free of charge or at worst a nominal fee. As a rule librarians are very helpful folks so ask to have a look at [www.speedwayresearcher.org.uk](http://www.speedwayresearcher.org.uk) and be prepared to be absorbed. **EDS**

## **Book Launch**

St.Austell Speedway, 1958-1963 plus The Sidecar Years is to be launched on Saturday 6th.October 2007 at 7pm.at Porthpean Golf Club, Porthpean, near St.Austell. For those able to attend it will be all ticket only, tickets at a pound SAE to Jeremy, at 85, Parkway, St.Austell, PL25 4HR. all proceeds from the evening go to Motor Neurone Disease Association. Make cheques payable to M.N.D.A. For those of you don't understand what a debilitating disease this is information can be found at [www.mndassociation.org](http://www.mndassociation.org)

The evening will include meeting some of the old riders, a look at lots of the old photos and hopefully a few surprise guests. The book will cover 1958 to 1964 year by year, tell you about the sidecar competitors at Par Moor 1959 to 1986. Plus a 2006 sidecar update & a fitting tribute to the late Trevor Redmond who did sterling work for Speedway on both sides of the border. The new J & S Publication will be on sale for £11.95(which is three pounds cheaper than its predecessor). Postage will vary Great Britain or Overseas.

## **Let's Help The Heathens**

No, we haven't become religious evangelists. We have, however, taken the opportunity to help those who have launched an online petition for people to show support for the return of CRADLEY SPEEDWAY. We are helping those who are calling upon Dudley Council to actively support Cradley Speedway, give favorable consideration to the Planning Application and ensure the return of Speedway racing to the Dudley Borough. You can access the petition using the link below. Please pass this on to anyone you feel may be interested in signing and giving their support.

<http://www.gopetition.co.uk/petitions/bring-back-cradley-speedway.html> .

[Please take a bit of time in to this site to look for the on-line petition calling on the good Burghers of Bristol to find a site for a speedway track there. ]

## **A Few More Thoughts from Rodin's Statue**

### **Injuries**

Speedway by its very nature could be described as a dangerous sport, but this season seems to be branded a particularly bad one. So far we have seen

two fatalities and the nasty injuries to Gary Stead which have left him in a wheelchair. However we have no statistical proof to compare seasons. The Stenners Magazines which lasted until the mid 1950s carried details of injuries supplied by George Burrows, the company which for many years supplied insurance cover for the sport.

A few editions ago **Barry Stephenson** did a very thorough analysis of the situation with regard to rain offs and was able to demonstrate a significant trend which has emerged over the years.

It would be a fair old feat to compile a season by season comparison for injuries but it would allow a rational basis for discussion on the topic of injury in the sport. It would also allow some attempt to compare speedway with other sports to determine where it fits in with other sports such as other branches of motorcycle sport such as road racing, scrambles and grass track racing. It might even facilitate comparison with other sports such as boxing is cited as a dangerous sport.

If the amount of information permits it might be able to indicate whether the air fence protected tracks do have a better record than those without air fences. In no way am I trying to make a case for air fences or trying to suggest they are a waste of money. From coverage on SKY TV the fences may well be in place but injuries can still result from accidents away from the fence on the bends and it isn't the total answer.

### **Tracks**

Surprised no one came back with comments about track surfaces. SKYTV has shown up, in a very public manner, the odd hooky surface over the years. It has also show the odd that looked like it would that you would have sworn on oath it wasn't wonderful but my goodness, they did produce some good racing. Yes I am talking about the Cardiff Grand Prix track. It was a corking good meeting with everyone going at it especially Chris Harris.

In the old days tracks had a goodly number of young fit lads called rakers. In the pioneer days they did use a garden rake to rake the cinders of the track but latterly, with shale surfaces, their job was to draw back the loose material from the edge of the fence to allow the tractor drawn grader to spread it a bit further refreshing the loose racing surface on the bends. A good team of rakers, working in harmony with a good tractor driver could, in a couple of laps of the track by the tractor, do the business. This could be done between races without any real interruptions to a meeting. Would bringing back rakers, (in sufficient numbers at each track) help improve the racing strip and the racing?

### **Rodin's Statue**

**Deadline for items for next edition is 31<sup>st</sup> October2007**

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