

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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Nigel's Natterings

Doncaster Speedway 1929

York Rd Stadium... known as the "Doncaster Stadium Speedway" Unfortunately it was Grass track racing. Large adverts in the newspaper clearly state, grass track racing at the stadium speedway. All meetings clearly reported. All say Grass track racing. About 4-6 meetings were run. First meet 1st September 1929. A cinder track was never laid. The grass wore off and it became a bit dusty. Ref. "Doncaster Gazette" 1929.

Rotherham speedway 1929-30

Most of the riders who competed here were low grade little known and mostly amateur. Of the few familiar names the most regular was Tommy Bateman, followed by Cyclone Smith and Larry Coffey. Biggest crowd was about 7,000 but the average was nearer 2,000. **Nigel Bird**

Bob "Cowboy" Sharp

Tony Webb continues his review of the lesser known Aussies who raced in the UK. (In Scotland Bob was known as "Last bend Bob" due to his rush to the flag.)

The career of Australian solo legend Bob Sharp started on a track carved out of the bush on his father's outer Sydney property in 1950. It was there he and his brother Ray learnt the rudiments of the sideways art before presenting themselves to the Sydney Showground for trials.

Bob was signed by Johnnie S Hoskins for the Glasgow Ashfield Giants team in December 1951. He travelled to Gt Britain on the SS Stavanher arriving April 1952. Billed as "Cowboy" Bob Sharp he was an instant success with the Glasgow fans with his cowboy hat and western shirts, but found points on the track hard to come by in his first season.

His first appearance at Ashfield was in the official practise on March 18. A second half followed in the first match against Edinburgh, Bob won his 1

first race, the consolation heat from Jim Russell the other two riders failed to finish. Live wire promoter Hoskins had introduced Bob to the Scottish crowd mounted on a horse. Bluey Scott, who was there on the night, recalled they had great difficulty finding a docile nag, as Bob's horsemanship skills were somewhat less than his advance publicity portrayed.

After several matches in the second half he got his first team ride at the against Yarmouth Bloaters on June 14., following team mate Willie Wilson home in third spot he gained his first league point and a bonus one too. With rides hard still to come by in the Giants line up he was transferred to Glasgow White City later in June. In his first meeting in the Discovery race he won from Jimmy Tannock , Red Monteith and Stuart Irvine, these three riders would be stiff competition for Bob in the battle for a spot in the strong Tigers line up. The big chance came in the match against Edinburgh on July 23rd, a paid 3 points was a great start that gained him a reserve spot for the Tigers southern tour a few days later. Matches at Stoke, Yarmouth, home and then Liverpool netted 5 points in total.

The following week a fall in the Scottish Open Championship would sideline Bob's chances until the month of September. He then regained his reserve spot after winning his second half rides for two consecutive meetings. On October 25 his first heat win came on the tricky Oxford track, then all too soon the season was over after one more match. The last match at Glasgow was cancelled due to rain. Then it was home to sunny Australia...He rode eleven official matches in his first season scoring 21 points giving an average of 1.09.

The next season 1953 he was an ever present in the team riding in 32 matches. Bob's first 1953 meeting was on April 1st at Glasgow he started the season slowly with a 4 point score. Away meetings at Wolverhampton and Yarmouth netted 6 and 7 respectively. The 1953 Scottish open saw Bob finish midfield with a score of 7. Visiting Ipswich in August he showed a liking for the 440 yard Foxhall Heath track with a creditable 5 points, this performance was noted by the Witches manager Arthur Franklyn for future reference. The last meeting before returning home to Australia was on September 23. A good season where he showed steady improvement.

Bob arrived back in England on the SS Strathaird to find an unsettled future for the 1954 season with the Glasgow Tigers , they had transferred long serving Junior Bainbridge to Ipswich to bolster their flagging finances, but the writing was on the wall. Bob rose to the challenge with 2 scores of 6 at Edinburgh, 8 at Leicester and then his best ever score

9 at Ipswich. This prompted the Witches to make a bid for his services and a deal was done. Sadly the Tigers folded after a few more meetings. Home was a caravan on Foxhall Heath close to the stadium which he shared with West Australian rider Johnny Chamberlain. Ipswich was a home from home for Australian riders at that time. Also on the books were former Glasgow captain Junior Bainbridge, West Aussie George McPherson and Graeme Murphy. Bluey Scott joined the team in late 1955, followed by NSW Champion Bill Bryden in 1956, Victorians Peter Moore and Ray Cresp in 1958. Bob rode for the Witches for five seasons, reaching the team's number one position in 1956. A number of riders also came down from Scotland to don the Witches race jacket, Larry Lazarus, Cyril Cooper, Doug Templeton, Dick Campbell and Jock Pryde with varying degrees of success.

Bob's finest hour in English speedway was the epic match at Belle Vue when the lowly Witches took on the mighty Aces and won the day. The turning point in the hard fought battle was Bob's defeat of home skipper, the late Ken Sharples, they rode neck and neck in the second from last heat the lead for ever changing hands, Bob scraping the fence and Ken on the white line, it is a race that is talked about by fans with long memories up in the north of England.

Support for the previously well supported Ipswich team waned during the next 2 years, which eventually saw the club withdrawing from the league at the end of 1958.

Bob's form had fallen badly in that last season with mechanical and injury problems. There was another Ipswich "Cowboy" in the eighties, the unpredictable American John Cook, but Witches fans with long memories always regarded Bob Sharp as the original Cowboy.

Bob's career was to carry on in Australia until 1969 Although a serious eye injury that was to impair his vision, threatened to finish his career in 1962. Bobs career was beset by injury. When he was in St Vincent's Hospital Sydney in September 1968, with his left leg broken in two places, he claimed this was the thirty third fracture from a speedway accident and one from rugby league as a teenager.

Racing in his adopted home of Rockhampton in 1961 he regained his earlier form to the extent he won the Australian title at Rocky and he was chosen to represent Australia in a series of matches in New Zealand in January 1962. Team mates were Aub Lawson, [Captain] Chum Taylor and Peter Moore .the matches were staged in Auckland , Palmerston North and

Rotorua resulting in a drawn series, Bob's contribution was 19 points from the 5 matches. 3

In Brisbane he won the Australian title again in 1965. Noting Bob's Australian form English promoter Reg Fearman had earmarked Bob to lead his newly formed Halifax team in the British League but that failed to materialise when former Bradford Birmingham and Middlesboro favourite Eric Boothroyd came out of retirement to captain the Dukes. He also ran second in the Queensland titles in 1962, 1965 and 1968. Tragedy hit the family when Bob's brother Ray was killed in a track accident at the Ekka Showgrounds in Brisbane in 1965.

As a diversion from speedway Bob made an attempt on the World Speed Record in the early 1970's. He raced a Triumph Twin on the salt lakes in South Australia, but I have been unable to find any actual details.

Racing in Queensland in the winter time became a way of life for Bob, based in Rockhampton, he was a regular performer at Cairns, Townsville, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Mackay

A promotion team was launched with Gordon Guasco and Bluey Scott in 1967 staging meetings at Rockhampton, Townsville, Bundaberg, Mackay and Gladstone from 1967-69 under the banner of the Bob Sharp Troupe.

There is as an annual event at Neapan speedway in Sydney named the Bob Sharp trophy which is a coveted trophy by the junior riders.

Post speedway Bob has lived for a number of years on a large farming property west of Brisbane. He lives a life style that is basic and well away from the stress and strains of modern living. I am told that despite his isolation he is well informed on any current speedway happenings..

1952 Ashfield Giants 1 1 1.0

1952 Glasgow White City 11 21 1.9

1953 Glasgow White City 32 87 2.7

1954 Glasgow White City

1954 Ipswich 88

1955 Ipswich 174

1956 Ipswich 265

1957 Ipswich 126

1958 Ipswich 51

Australia test team appearances 7

1958/59 v England

Brisbane 6

Sydney 6

Sydney 2

1959/60 v England

Sydney 4
4 Sydney 5
 Brisbane 3
 Brisbane 4
 Australasia v England 1958 UK
 I match DNS
 Australian Champion 1961 1965
 New South Wales Champion 1964
 Queensland Championship 2nd 1962, 1965 and 1968

AUSTRALIANS IN UK 1928 - 2007

Part 4 of **Tony Webb's** list and yet again you are invited to pass your comments on the attached list. S/H = Second half rides only. ISL = International Speedways Ltd. DSL = Dirt Track Speedways Ltd T/A = track accident R\A = road accident. Of you have any additions or alterations to Tony's list, please get in touch with him at binbooks@inet.net.au

Mangham Harry	NZ	QLD? Lea Bridge 1930
Mackay Mal	SA	Workington 1978
Maddern Bill	SA	Bristol 1938, Edinburgh 1948, Yarmouth 1950. Died
Adelaide		2004 Age 88
Malm Arthur	NSW	Glasgow 1953 Edinburgh 1961 but never rode
Malouf Frank	NSW	Fleetwood 1949, Long Eaton 1951/2, Southampton 1952, Liverpool 1953. Died Sydney 2004 Age 88
Margarson Andy	NSW	Kings Lynn/Workington 1978
Martin Jack	VIC	Glasgow 1948
Martin Mark	SA	Canterbury 1982
Martin Sam	SA	Berwick 2007
Marshall Peter	QLD	1968
Maxfield Rob	SA	Bradford 1973, Coatbridge 1976, Glasgow 1977, Newcastle 1977 Workington/Belle Vue 1978
McCullum Bruce	QLD	,West Ham 1929, Leicester /Belle Vue 1930/31
McConnel Kym	SA	Workington 1979
McDonald Kevin	QLD	Newcastle 1978
McDonald Glen	NSW	Nottingham 1979, Cradley 1980
McGregor Robbie	NSW	Glasgow 1980
McGowan Travis	NSW	Rye House 2006 Reading 2007
Mcoy Michael	NSW	Paisley/Glasgow 1977
Mcoy Bernie	VIC	1953 Swindon Victorian champion 1952 [Speedway world 25/2/53
McKay Brendon	NT	1996
McKay Keith	NSW	DSL 1928

McKean Dudley	WA	Edinburgh 1962/3, 1966
McKeon Mick	WA	Coatbridge 1975/6, Ellesmere Port 1975, Glasgow 1977, Halifax 1977/82
McLachlan Doug	NSW	Sheffield 1939 Newcastle 1947, Birmingham 1948/50
McNeil Greg	VIC	Scunthorpe 1974
McNeill John	VIC	Mildenhall 1975/6, Scunthorpe 1977/8, Leicester 1978, Cradley 1981
McPherson George	WA	Yarmouth 1953, Wolverhampton 1954
Melbin Derrol	WA	Sheffield 1960/3
Menzies Andy	VIC	Wembley 1939, Odsal 1948, Sheffield 1949
Meredith Geoff	NSW	DSL 1928. died pneumonia late 1928. IOM
Michiledes Phil	WA	Newcastle 1976
Middleton Garry	SA	Belle Vue 1967, Kings Lynn 1968, Wimbledon 1969, Hackney 1970/1, Oxford 1972, Leicester 1975, Coventry 1973
Mills Dave	NSW	Hull 1973
Mitchell Clem	SA	Crystal Palace 1930/2, Harringay 1938, New Cross 1938, Edinburgh 1948/ 51
Mitchell Lindsay	SA	Hanley 1947 New Cross 1948
Mitchell Sam	NSW	Weymouth/Swindon 1954
Moffat Sam	UK	NT Champion 6 times. NZ 1974 AUS Champ. 6th 1984
Monk Charle	SA	Neath 1962, Long Eaton 1963, Glasgow 1964/76, Edinburgh 1977 Barrow 1978, Sheffield 1979
Moore Gary	VIC	Crewe 1968, Rayleigh 1969
Moore Mick	WA	Teeside 1974
Moore Peter	VIC	Long Eaton 1951/2, Wimbledon 1952/6, Ipswich 1957/62, Kings Lynn 1965
Moy Peter	QLD	Newcastle 1978 s/h
Mountford Stuart	NSW	Paisley 1975 76 Stoke 1978
Mudge Geoff	SA	Poole 1960/4
Muddle Wayne	NSW	Barrow 1978
Murphy Mick	WA	Wimbledon 1933, Plymouth 1934, Hackney 1935. Died Perth 1999
Murray Ken	QLD	Barrow 1978
Newman Adrian	NSW	IOW 2000, Somerset 2001
Nickisson Ross	WA	Cowdenbeath 1965 Edinburgh 1965
Nixon Lindsay	QLD	Motherwell Wolverhampton 1952
Nixon Brian		Eastbourne 1990
Newton Cliff	VIC	Southampton 1957
Norman Scott	SA	Peterboro 1989
Norman Jason	SA	2005
North Rob	NSW	Stoke/Workington 1968
Norton Ashley	SA	Middlesboro 1982/7
Nunan Tim	NSW	Stoke 1976/8
O'Brien Trevor	NT	Rye House 1989-92
Oliver John	QLD	2006/7
Oram Johnny	SA	Edinburgh 1951

6 O'Neill Paul	NSW	Cradley 1970, Crewe, Middlesborough 1968/9
Packer Laurie	SA	Edinburgh 1930 Sheffield 1930, Glasgow 1939
Palmer Ray	NSW	Glasgow 1980-86
Page Mick	NSW	1971
Parker Shane	SA	Ipswich 1990/4, Middlesboro 1995/6, Kings Lynn 1997/2000 Belle Vue 2000, Peterboro 2001/2, Kings Lynn 2002/3, Glasgow 2003/9
Paynter Alan	NSW	Newcastle Berwick 1969/71
Parsons Joel	NSW	Rye House 2004, Hull 2005, Belle Vue 2006, Newport 2007
Parsons Syd	WA	Edinburgh 1930
Payne Arthur	NSW	Tamworth 1947, Birmingham 1947/54
Payne Steve	NSW	Milton Keynes 1981/9
Pearce Max	VIC	Yarmouth 1948
Pearce Mark	QLD	Stoke 1989
Pearce Frank	QLD	ISL 1928, High Beech 1931, Plymouth 1931/4
Pearson John	NSW	Edinburgh 1970. Former sidecar man
Peck Joey	NSW	Stoke 1953
Perron Mark	NSW	Berwick 1972
Phillips Ron	NSW	Edinburgh 1950, Ashfield 1951/2, Motherwell 1953/4, Ipswich 1955, Leicester 1956
Phillips Jim	WA	West Ham S/H 1965
Platt Cec	NSW	Wembley/West Ham 1969
Poole Matt		Peterborough 1990
Poole Mick	NSW	Poole 1991, Peterboro
Powell Ben	QLD	Sheffield 2002/3, Carmarthen 2003/4, Boston 2004/5, Coventry 2004, Rye House 2005, Mildenhall 2006
Powell Mick	QLD	Edinburgh Glasgow 1991/8, Berwick 1999/2003
Prettijohn Don	SA	Cradley 1952, St. Austell 1952
Pratt Boyd Lyle	QLD	ISL 1928, Plymouth 1930
Primmer Tony	NSW	Milton Keynes 1997
Prior Justin		Wimbledon 1990
Pryde Jock	VIC(?)	Edinburgh 1950 Ipswich 1954. Scots born came to AUS in 1954 (lived in Scotland Died Aussie on holiday)
Pcyke Morrie	NSW	Leicester/Ipswich 1955-6
Quigley Chris	NSW	Kings Lynn/Berwick 1973 1974 Glasgow
Quinn Allan	NSW	St. Austell 1951/2, Harringay 1953, Southampton 1954

Errata : Dave Kumeta is English but now resides in Australia.

A Letter From Jack Chiswell to Fred Rogers

Some time ago **Mike Kemp** from Norwich sent a copy of letter which is an interesting read with a great deal insight into the sport in the pioneer days. It carries no date and it probably has few inaccuracies but it is interesting nonetheless.

Skipping the first paragraph which deals with items sent by Fred to Jack the letter goes on.

From what I understand, I am the oldest living rider in this country and I have to say that reading your letter took me back a long long way to what I consider to be the good old days?

At the time racing came to High Beech I was a garage lad owning a New Hudson for transport. This I used on the track for a while.

Some time later, I was able to sell my local doctor's daughter a new Morris car and as a reward, my boss gave me a used Coulson B motorcycle, which I duly used for transport. This allowed me to adapt the New Hudson for racing only.

I was lucky that the garage had a machine shop. After stripping down the engine, the first thing was to turn off $3/16$ " (three sixteenths of an inch) from the base of the cylinder to raise the compression and then turn off about 6 ounces from each flywheel, grind out and polish both ports and fit a Bosch mag(nito). Finally, I removed the gearbox and made and fitted a countershaft.

All this gave a lot of satisfaction and made the bike quite competitive for a while. Frank (Chiswell) rode a Triumph Recardo but he never adapted it. The early days were great fun for all concerned, it was the beginning of a new sport which took the country by surprise.

I always remember one incident at High Beech, at the start of one meeting it came over the speakers that Bill Capsey, a rider of "no mean proportions", would make an attempt on the track record.

He eventually emerged from the pits with a little Francis Barnett two stroke under one arm. The crowd were highly amused, as you can guess.

I have to say that my greatest disappointment concerned "The News of the World Trophy". Jack Barnett and myself had worked our way to the final. By this time I had changed jobs in order to earn enough money with which to get a better machine. In due course a 500cc road model Douglas came my way. This was the model upon which the Dirt Dougie came about.

I put a lot of work into the engine and fitted a new rear wheel with a larger section tyre. When I finished it proved to be four or five seconds faster than the New Hudson over four laps.

My new boss was very keen for me to win the trophy and offered to have the engine tuned by Glanfield Lawrence, a specialist firm in the field. I certainly could not afford at that time to have it done, it was very expensive and cost more than the machine.

The bike was duly delivered on the morning of the race day. When the 8 finals came, I was lucky to get to the inside position and was able to

take the lead for a lap and a half, when alas, the engine began to misfire very badly with the result that I had to retire after three laps. At that time when I got back to the pits I just did not know where to hide myself, for I felt very bad about it, being the local lad with a local following I felt I had let them and my boss down badly.

It was a day or two before I could face that "B" bike again, however, it had to be done. The plugs were changed the mag was checked and tested and the carbs cleaned.

Off we went to the track for a test run, but sadly the fault persisted, a lot of head scratching went on and we came to the conclusion that the trouble must be due to fuel starvation.

As you know the Dougie had a separate feed to each carb. Upon removing the fuel pipe, the fuel flowed freely from the tank, when it came to the rear one, fuel just trickled out. On removing the tap we found a matchstick, broken in half and wedged into the tap thus restricting the flow.

Some time later, one of the riders told me that Jack Barnett was a regular customer of Glanfield Lawrence ?

I think it was in 1930 that a Mr Jackman came down from Preston to see Frank and myself. He stated that a new track was being built at Preston and that he would like us to form part of the team there. This we did in due course and I have to say, that after a poor start, I spent two very happy years there. The poor start was due to the fact that Mr Jackman advised me to buy of the Coventry Victor dirt bikes. I never got to ride the machine in an actual race, for each time I took it out for practice, it failed. In the end they took it back, gave me my money back and scrapped it.

We won the Championship of the North Trophy and as a reward we did a tour of Germany which we all very much enjoyed.

Frank went over to Liverpool for the second year.

At the end of the second year I decided to give up racing and start up in the motor trade.

Jack goes on to tell of how he set up in business how he was amazed to have been reported as dying in 1971. (See Preston articles for more on Jack's career.)

News of the World Dirt-Track Championship Belts

In the not too distant past a trophy awarded by the Sunday newspaper the News of The World and won by Billy Dallison came on the market and was snapped up by the owners of the title. **Nick Mays**, Archivist for News International Limited has kindly sent the following details of the trophies. **9**

NOTES

- All information is taken from reports in the *News of the World* unless otherwise stated.
- The dates cited are those of the reports in the *News of the World*.
- 14 belts (worth 50 guineas each) plus 2 cups were presented at various tracks by 2/9/1928. [One track where a belt was purportedly presented remains unidentified as only 13 tracks are subsequently mentioned in reports.]

Belle Vue (Manchester)

[23/9/1928 Semi-finals to be run in the coming week (riders listed). No subsequent reports.]

Crystal Palace

- 19/8/1928 Roger Frogley won the first challenge belt, beating Gordon Cobbold and Arthur Willimott
- 26/8/1928 Roger Frogley retained the belt beating Lionel Willis.
- 2/9/1928 Roger Frogley retained the belt beating Joe Francis. [A cartoon by The Tout was also published on the back page featuring racing at Crystal Palace which included Roger Frogley wearing his belt.]
- 16/9/1928 Roger Frogley retained his belt beating A.R. "Buster" Frogley (his brother) and Dick Bellamy (Coventry)
- 23/9/1928 Roger Frogley retained his belt beating Arthur Willimott.
- 30/9/1928 Roger Frogley retained his belt beating Jimmy Taylor (retired).
- 7/10/1928 A.R. "Buster" Frogley beat Arthur Willimott and Walter Harris (the title was vacant, Roger Frogley having retired as the holder).
- 21/10/1928 Roger Frogley beat A.R. "Buster" Frogley.
- 7/4/1929 A.R. "Buster" Frogley beat Colin Ford and Bill Bragg.
- 14/4/1929 Colin Ford beat Ivor Creek and "Tiger" Stevenson (tied).
- 21/4/1929 Colin Ford beat Triss Sharp (pushed his bike over the line) and Jack Barrett (did not finish).
- 28/4/1929 Gordon Baxter (Birmingham crack) beat Ron Johnson and Colin Ford.
- 12/5/1929 Ron Johnson beat Nick Nichol and Ben Heiatt.
- 26/5/1929 Ron Johnson beat Gus Kuhn and Jack Barrett.
- 9/6/1929 Triss Sharp beat Gus Kuhn and Jack Barrett.
- 16/6/1929 Roger Frogley beat Gus Kuhn and Billy Coghlan.
- 7/7/1929 Ivor Creek beat Triss Sharp and Arthur Willimott in a "News of the World scratch race".
- 21/7/1929 Ron Johnson beat Clem Cort and Gus Kuhn.
- 4/8/1929 George Lovick beat Arthur Willimott and Bryan Donkin.
- 13/10/1929 George Lovick beat Les Blakeborough and Jack Barrett.
- 27/7/1930 Jack Barrett beat Geoff Taylor.

Foleshill (Coventry)

10 [9/9/1928 Dates of heats to be announced later. No subsequent reports.]

13/10/1928 Syd Jackson won the final. [Information provided by Nigel Bird to the *News of the World* Archivist. See also *Speedway Researcher* Vol. 1, No. 1, June 2001 (page 11).]

Hall Green (Birmingham)

[23/9/1928 Semi-finals to be run in the coming week (riders listed). No subsequent reports.]

Harringay

9/9/1928 Eric Spencer beat “Cyclone” Billy Lamont.

16/9/1928 Jack Bishop beat Ben Unwin in the “News of the World handicap”.

[23/9/1928 Semi-finals to be run in the coming week (riders listed).]

Knowle (Bristol)

[9/9/1928 Dates of heats to be announced later. No subsequent reports.]

Lea Bridge

2/9/1928 Tommy Croombs beat Alan Kilfoyle.

9/9/1928 Tommy Croombs retained the belt beating D.A. Durant.

16/9/1928 Tommy Croombs retained the belt beating Allen Kilfoyle.

23/9/1928 Mart Seiffert beat Tommy Croombs (when his chain broke).

30/9/1928 Tommy Croombs beat Mart Seiffert (when the latter scratched).

7/10/1928 Tommy Croombs retained the belt beating Allen Kilfoyle.

Stanley (Liverpool)

[30/9/1928 Heats held [information only published in the Sunday Edition and not in the Sunday Special Edition]. No subsequent reports.]

Stamford Bridge

30/9/1928 Roger Frogley won the “silver cup” (beating Roger May).

West Ham

14/10/1928 “Sprouts” Elder beat Ivor Creek and Tommy Croombs.

White City

14/10/1928 Clem Cort beat Mart Seiffert and Hilary Buchanan (Vic Huxley did not finish). [A photograph of Clem Cort wearing over his shoulder the belt he had just won was also published in the First, Saturday and Sunday Editions but not the Sunday Special Edition, that day.]

Wimbledon

[23/9/1928 Semi-finals to be run in the coming week (riders listed). No subsequent reports.]

Wolverhampton

22/9/1928 Won by Billy Dallison [see reports in the *Express and Star* on the 22nd and 24th].

***News of the World* Dirt-Track Championship Cups**

List of Winners

Greenford

30/9/1928 Len Dallimore beat Les Blakeborough and S. Brown.

King's Oak (High Beech)

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2/9/1928 N. Humphrys beat J. Reeves and G. Farley.

9/9/1928 Jack Barnett beat E. Farley and D. Seaman.

30/9/1928 Jack Barnett beat E. Farley.

7/10/1928 Jack Barnett beat D. Seaman and E. Farley (and won the "belt" outright as it was the fourth occasion he had triumphed).

[Note: All references to racing at King's Oak are for a cup except when Barnett won the trophy outright when it is referred to as a belt four times in the report.]

BILLY DALLISON [William J. Dallison]

Just for good measure **Nick Mays** has compiled a very comprehensive profile on Bill Dallison which makes interesting reading.

1901/1902 Born in London.

c.1904 Family moved to Canada, when he was aged three, and stayed there for 7 years.

c.1911 Family returned to England, settling in Birmingham.

1928 Took up speedway racing.

1929 Member of White City (Manchester) team in English [Northern] League.

Lost to Billy Lamont in a triangular match at Harringay run alongside the Harringay v Perry Barr league match, having beaten Jim Kempster in the first round - he is described in the report as "the Manchester crack" [*News of the World*, June 30].

Raced against the Australian Frank Arthur in a challenge match at Stamford Bridge which he lost 2-0 [*News of the World*, October 13].

Won the inter-speedway match at Stamford Bridge beating Billy Lamont (White City) in the heat and Colin Watson (Harringay) and Jim Kempster (Wimbledon) in the final [*News of the World*, October 27].

Won George Formby First Hurdle Cup.

1930 Captain of the Hall Green (Birmingham) team in the Southern League.

Beat Jack Barnett 2-0 in a special match and also won the scratch race at High Beech - he is described in the report as "the Birmingham crack" [*News of the World*, April 13].

Took part in the inter-track match at High Beech, winning his heat and coming second (to P. Bishop) in the final; also won the scratch race [*News of the World*, April 20].

Took part in the Big Six Match at High Beech on April 26, losing his heat to Frank Arthur (Stamford Bridge). Won the Big Four match at Stamford Bridge the same evening beating Len Parker in the final [*News of the World*, April 27].

- 14 Member of Homeland team in unofficial match versus Colonies held at West Ham on May 1 [Homeland won 27-16].
Recorded as winning 3 heats in the King's Oak (High Beech) v Hall Green (Birmingham) league match [*News of the World*, May 5].
Took part in the Big Six Match at Stamford Bridge, losing his heat to Wal Phillips (Stamford Bridge) after suffering engine trouble [*News of the World*, May 25].
Scored maximum points in the home league match against Stamford Bridge, the 1929 champions; also defeated Frank Arthur (Stamford Bridge) 2-0 in a match race [*News of the World*, June 8].
Took part in the Big Six Match at Harringay, losing his heat to Vic Huxley (Harringay), which followed the league match which Hall Green won 32-22. [*News of the World*, June 22].
Was involved in a crash with Bill White (Stamford Bridge) in the first heat of the league match at Stamford Bridge, which Hall Green lost 19-35, and was taken to hospital [*News of the World*, June 29].
He did not race again that year.
- 1931 Member of High Beech team in Southern League.
- 1932-1933 Member of Clapton Saints team in the National League [they began the 1932 season in Southampton and moved to race on the Lea Bridge track after 11 matches].
- 1933 The following notice from the *London Gazette* was reprinted in *The Times* under the heading "Partnerships Dissolved" on March 29 (21e): "*W.J. Dallison and A.E. Titley, motor agents and engineers, 89 Granville Street, Birmingham, under the style of "Granville Motors."*"
Included in the Possibles team for the second Test Trial match to be held at Clapton on June 17, 1933 [*The Times*, June 12, 1933 (4c)].
- 1934-1937 Member of Harringay team in the National League. The team won the London Cup and the National Trophy and were runners-up in the National League and ACU Cup in 1935. When the Provincial League started in 1936 he additionally rode for Southampton, continuing this dual role in 1937.
- 1936 Won the Hendy Trophy.
- 1936-1939 Member of Southampton Saints team in the Provincial League [as well as Harringay in the National League]. They won both the league and the Provincial Trophy in 1936 and were runners-up in the league and Coronation Cup in 1937. The league was renamed National League Division 2 in 1938. In 1939 Southampton replaced Bristol in National League Division 1 but the season was never completed due to the outbreak of the Second World War.
- 1937 Member of the English Provincial Riders team for matches 1, 2 and 4 of the five match series versus Australia held during July to August which Australia won 5-0.

- 1938 Member of the England team for match 3 [at Southampton on August 3] in a seven match England v. Dominions (Division 2) series [England lost the match 53-55 and the series 2-5].
Won the Beernem Speedway Cup at Bruges.
- 1940 Retired.
- n.d. Owned a garage on Tyburn Road, Birmingham.
- 1942-1946 Manager/Licencee, the Fox Hotel, Hurst Street, Birmingham.
- 1946 Died on March 25 in Birmingham [aged 45].
His brother, Joe Dallison, was also a speedway rider.

Waveney Speed Track at Bradwell in 1932

Keith Farman has sent in the following from a local newspaper dated Saturday 11th June 1932 The Yarmouth Independent & Journal.

Any wonder of the increasing popularity of motorcycle racing all over the country is quickly dispelled by a visit to any of the tracks. Here are real motorcycles, stripped of all unnecessary "frills" and tuned to the highest pitch of efficiency to give the speed and acceleration that win races. Ugly? In a way. They are not the gaudy, chromium-plated machines ridden by the youths in gaily coloured, berets and scarves. Noisy? Yes, but to fit them with silencers and mudguards would be as great a sin as to harness a racehorse to a cab. The sharp roar of the exhaust is as pleasant to the ears of the enthusiasts as the sweetest music and the whiff of the racing oil and "dope" left by the machines roaring past. With its engine screaming madly is more alluring than the most expensive perfume.

And thrills? Watch one of the machines skidding and jumping on a treacherous corner, with the rider kicking at the ground with mettle-tipped boot in what seems an impossible attempt to keep it upright. He's off! No, he still has his mount under control, and is nearly out of the bend. A quick flick of the wrist and he accelerates madly up the straight to flash past the post!

Is it any wonder that the attendances at the "Waveney" speed track, on Doles Meadow, Bradwell, have increased steadily since the track was first opened only a few weeks ago? The crowd on Saturday was a record one, and there is even sign that it will continue to increase.

Saturday 18th June 1932 Independent & Journal

The Waveney Speed Track at Doles Meadow, Bradwell, is becoming more popular than ever. And no wonder! Riders bedecked in their helmets and outfits, exhaust popping like machine guns, and riders and machines hurtling round the course at breakneck speed all present a wonderful

16 spectacle.

And the maidens! They adore the sport! Here are thrills, which have hitherto remained unseen in Yarmouth. They crowd to the rails and cheer their fancies on perhaps the time will come when, like the nights of old these aces will wear the favours of their lady loves.

Thrills are certainly not lacking at the Bradwell Speed Track. Picture a rider traveling around the course at a high speed. He reaches the bend, digs his metal toe into the ground to help him take the corner, he has almost rounded it when his front wheel skids, he wrenches the handle bars to straighten his machine, it gets a wobble, with a superhuman effort he straightens it again-and now he is accelerating on the straight. These are only a few of the thrills. Sometimes a rider, in spite of his pluck, cannot get his machine straight-and then the initiate-he crashes and sprawls on the ground, his machine whirling its wheels round in the air and sputtering like a demon about to meet an untimely end, and the rider? He first picks himself up, sweeps off superfluous dust and turf, and endeavors to remount his machine and finish the race.

Publications

Tears and Glory – The Winged Wheel Story. Arnie Gibbons

I've had this book for a fair while now and I must tender an apology to Arnie for my tardiness in reading it. The first thing is the title – it is so apt as Reading Speedway has had more than its fair share of highs and lows. I had hoped by now that the low that was the closure of Smallmead and the cracking wee training track would have bottomed out and the rising graph would indicate a new venue was on the horizon.

Arnie sets out in, a fairly forthright way, the story of the team that like a bride had something old (Tilehurst), something borrowed (the team name Racers were once the Harringay team) and something blue (the team colours). The low of the closure of Tilehurst and the high of the new track at Smallmead are alluded to in the title as are the World Championships for Anders Michanek and Per Jonsson. These highs can be set against the lows including the loss of Geoff Curtis and Denny Pyeatt to track accidents and Per Jonsson's horrific injuries. I'll finish this on a high remembering Racers as champions of their league on five occasions.

The book has lot of team photos and an interesting and useful resume of club statistics. The most interesting is the list of Testimonials which were given to eight men over the 40 year period.

The book is 256 pages of history of Reading to date. I hope Arnie will be able to write the next generation book covering the next 40 years. **17**

The book costing £15.00 (inc P & P)is worth every penny. Get yours from <http://www.readingspeedway.com/tearsandglory.html> and by post from: 102A Cole Park Road, Twickenham, TW1 1JA Cost £15.Cheques payable to A.Gibbons. Review by **Jim Henry**

Coventry's Two Speedways – The Story of Lythalls Lanne and Brandon Speedways from 1928 to 1939. Colin Parker

When Graham and I founded The Speedway Researcher all those years ago we probably had a dream that our humble wee mag might just bring information on relatively unknown venues into the open. So, when someone we have known and been supported by from the off as a subscriber and contributor, brings out a definitive book on the largely unreported pre-war era of two tracks, we are both well pleased to let you know about it. Indeed we urge you to add this one to your collection. Colin's commitment to the history is evidenced by this very lovely book, a limited edition, which he has funded himself. The book has lots of interesting photographs to illustrate the history of the lesser known Lythalls Lane track and the modern day home of the Coventry Bees at Brandon. Lots of action shots showing the pioneer machines spraying cinders everywhere as the rider flat out along the bike tries to keep in on course. Don't be like the youngsters pictured on the back page of the book – buy a copy and get into history of these two pioneer tracks.

£14.99 plus £1.76 P & P from Colin Parker 59 Clinton Lane, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1AS colineparker@tiscali.co.uk 011926854852.

Review by **Jim Henry**

The Story of Grass-track Racing 1966-74, D.Stallworthy 2009

Grass-track, Speedway, moto X, commentator Dave Stallworthy is back in print with a smashing new book on Grass-track racing. It is the follow up to his very enjoyable 1950-1965 grass-track history which came out some time ago. The new book is full of evocative photos many snapped by the late Gordon Francis, including all the great names of solo racing such as, Peter Collins, Julian Wigg, Chris Pusey, Brian Maxted, Andy Ross, Tig Perry, Brian Clark, Arthur Stuffs, John Webb, Don Godden, Graham Banks, Reg Luckhurst, brothers Chris and Dave Baybutt, and not forgetting my old friend octogenarian Lew Coffin who is still actively involved in the sport today. The name Adrian Kessell of St.Dennis appears many times across the Centre results, proving he was committed and prepared to travel. The sidecar crews of that era are also featured, a photo of St.Austell's Ken Westaway and Joe Sturtridge getting down to it leapt out at me on page 47! Top sidecar drivers of this nine year period were Steve **18** Smith, Paddy Lynch, Eddie Black, Dave Heath, Pete Robson,

Geoff Rawlings, Alan Artus, Roger Measor, Gerald Stoneman, Cecil Taylor and Dave Hunt.

This book has it all for the grass-track fans and will appeal to any track racing enthusiast across the country. Dave has lovingly put together over 300 pages which highlights the boom years in the sport and gives the winners pride of place in a roll of honour at the end of each chapter. I thoroughly recommend this book to you which was printed by Leopard Press. It can be purchased directly from Dave Stallworthy priced at £19-99 plus £1-99 P & P at 68, Glenfall, Yate, Bristol, South Gloucs. BS37 4LY.
Review by **Jeremy Jackson**

Can You Help?

We set out below requests for information – ideas on articles. We indicate who is seeking the information and are happy to put anyone in touch.

Eric Watson is looking for details of race jackets used by club teams in Australia and New Zealand.

Steve Standere is interested in details of the American Touring Teams of 1937 and 1951 (details of most of their UK based meetings in web team files for 1951 – Shelbourne Park info not so complete.). He also is interested in the All-American Teams of 1936 and 1937.

Some Pioneer Aussie Information

Graeme Frost sends some more information which may be of interest to the readers of Speedway Researcher. It concerns the first “broadsideing” in South Australia.

The Motor Cycle Club of South Australia, in conjunction with the Southern M.C.C., staged a track racing meeting on the Strathalbyn Racecourse on Saturday afternoon, 26 April 1926. Strathalbyn is a country town, which was about 35 miles from Adelaide on the road that existed at the time. The track was a grass/semi dirt track.

In reference to this meeting, The Motor Cycle Club [of SA] Year Book, published in June 1926, said: “At the Strathalbyn meeting a new style of riding was introduced by Johnny Wise, which was responsible for his making the fastest average speed ever put up on a S.A. race track, viz., 70.1 m.p.h. for five miles. At this meeting he employed the American style of skidding the corners, thus saving valuable seconds on those points. That is the S.A. record for track work, although the record for Gawler is held by Eddy Ferguson at 69.5 m.p.h. on grass. This sensational speed caused **19**

endless comment at the time, and still does, but it has been clearly seen that the semi-dirt track at Strathalbyn was much the faster.”

Johnny Wise, or Jack as he was more commonly known, was one of the pioneers of the Track Racing in South Australia and held the track racing record for 5 miles for three years in succession before he went to America, where he gained considerable experience in cornering. After being away some thirteen months he returned and again took up Track Racing for a brief time but had retired by the end of the 1920s, although still only in his twenties.

His younger brother, however, was much more enthralled by the sport and started racing as soon as he was old enough and went on to remain involved in speedway for most of his life. He was well known in England from the 1930s to the 1950s — he was Dick Wise.

A “New” Track In Essex

Readers of the Opposite Lock, distributed to WSRA members, will have maybe missed a item about Arthur Pilgrim in which he mentioned a track at Leigh on Sea where he had raced in the pre-war era. A phone conversation with Arthur pinpointed the venue behind The Woodcutters Arms in the town. Another call saw WSRA President Terry Stone (who lives in nearby Thundersley) spring into action and a visit to the area reveals the pub is still there and some local corroboration that the track existed. Anyone have any more details of this hazy venue? **Jim Henry**

Former Yarmouth Speedway Star Billy Bales Celebrates his Eightieth Birthday

Keith Farman, custodian of The Bloater Pond writes:

Saturday 6 June is always remembered as D-Day but for all the old Yarmouth Speedway fans it's also the birthday of their hero Billy Bales. This year was a milestone as Billy celebrated his eightieth birthday with a surprise party at the house of his son Andrew in Hellesden, with his family, friends and ex riders.

After the war Speedway racing attracted big crowds all over the country. Soon young lads started to make their own tracks using the bombsites and any spare land to race like their speedway heroes. Speedway bikes have no brakes, so the lads took off the brakes and mudguards of their bicycles to **20** be like their Speedway heroes as they formed teams and leagues.

Billy lived very close to the Norwich Speedway track and he too became one of the 'Skid Kids', riding for the Hellesden Harriers on a track in the stadium car park. As they raced around they dreamed of becoming a speedway rider.

Norwich Speedway formed a partnership with the Yarmouth Stadium to promote a Yarmouth Speedway team to run in the Third Division in 1948. So in the winter of 1947-48 at Norwich, there was a training school set up for budding speedway riders, for the new team. Billy was one of the many who decided that he would try his luck at this school. During that winter he was noted, by one of the trainers, as the lad who "bent the bikes" as he seemed to crash a lot in trying to master the art of sliding a speedway bike at speed.

In the first meeting of the 1948 Norwich season Billy was given a race in the novice race. Billy, had been christened Raymond Arthur Bales, but for whatever reason was programmed that night as Billy Bales and the name stuck. So it was as Billy Bales that he rode in another novice race in the first ever meeting held at Yarmouth, getting a second place

The Yarmouth team had their first meetings away at Hull and Poole. Unfortunately at Poole in the very first race a serious accident happened which resulted in the Yarmouth rider, Reg Craven, losing his life. Two other Yarmouth riders were also injured that night.

The next night at Yarmouth, the depleted team had to race against Poole, in the second leg of the National Trophy match. Billy arrived at the Yarmouth track expecting to just get a ride in the novice race, but he was very surprised to find himself riding at reserve for the Bloaters. The reserve was programmed to have just two rides while the full team members had five. What happened next was the making of a Speedway Icon, as Billy was given three extra riders and in each he came second, to top score in his first ever meeting with 10 points, that made him an overnight sensation in what was classed as one of the most successful debuts ever record in Speedway.

This was just the start and soon he was scoring the maximum points for the Yarmouth team, plus he was also very fast, as he broke the Yarmouth track record in only his eighth meeting at Yarmouth. He was given rave reviews, as at just seventeen he was the youngest rider in the League. Most of the other riders were twice his age, he was also at just 5 foot tall he was also smaller than most of the other riders.

The Yarmouth track was egg shaped and this suited Billy's dare devil style of riding. He had the crowd gasping in amazement, as he would cut under riders who thought the bends were the same. If he could not get inside of an opponent he swept out wide and so those fans very close to the

fence were covered with the flying ciders. This was just magic.

Billy was making headlines in the Nation Press as the First of the 'Skid Kids' to become a speedway star. Now every 'Skid Kid' wanted to be the next Billy Bales. It was even said that Billy was the patron Saint of the 'Skid Kids.'

During the winter of 1948-49, Billy practiced hard and it all proved worthwhile in the 1949 season. He had an incredible season for Yarmouth, breaking seven track records, and in one amazing run he rode at six tracks and took five track records. That season Billy won the Speedway Echo Mr. Max for scoring the most maximums 13 home and 4 away. He beat Billy Hole, Pete Lansdale and the great Vic Duggan. He won the Junior Riders Championship and was capped for England in the Test at Glasgow against Scotland.

Without a doubt Billy was the best rider in Division 3 in 1949. He then showed in his last two meetings of the season that he could beat anyone. In Yarmouth's last meeting of the season, against Second Division Norwich, in a challenge match, he scored an excellent paid maximum.

The next week, again in a challenge match, at the new St. Austell track, Billy rode for (Lloyd) Goffe's Team against (Tommy) Price's Team. In his first race he found himself up against the 1949 World Champion Tommy Price. Billy won that race and to show it was no fluke he beat the Champion again in heat 10. In the second half they met twice, again Billy won both times.

That night Billy had gone out and had beaten the World Champion Tommy Price four times, on a track he had never seen before, this was certainly a great performance by the young star. Tommy Price had won the World Championship title on his home track Wembley. Biased Yarmouth fans could argue that if the Championship had been held at Yarmouth, Billy would have been World Champion.

The Yarmouth team came second to Hanley and gained promotion to Division for the 1950 season. But Billy now had to do his National Service and was sent to Egypt, this was after he had carried on winning in the higher League as he had beaten Alan Hunt, the Second Division Champion on his home track.

On his return to civilian life he became a Norwich rider and scored a maximum in his first meeting in Division 1. Billy then rode for the Stars until they closed in 1964, gaining the nickname of the Mighty Atom. He rode in Test matches and captained England at Norwich in 1955 and, also that season he rode in the World Final.

22 Unfortunately during his long career he sustained several very bad injuries, but he still came back to win more races. Billy was truly a star of the Stars riding in 302 meetings at the Firs in 1571 races.

With Norwich closed Billy joined Sheffield in 1965 and stayed with the Tigers until he retired in 1969.

Next Sunday Billy Bales will be racing, but at 80 its not the former star, but his twelve-year-old grandson Billy Bales, so the name races on, and old time Bloater fans can once again call out “Come on Billy,”

Web Revamp

Webmaster **Ron McNeil** has been revamping the web to make it a bit easier to locate files by the season and by track. It took a bit time but it all should be up and running by now. I am still pumping in information and am almost through the results I can find for 1955 and about to move on to 1956. The needs file continues to grow and is now 25 pages long BUT I'm sure you may be able to help. So, do have a look at it if you have a computer with internet links. Any help is welcome. **Jim Henry**

Information Needed

Every so often I take editorial liberty to seek help. This time I'm showing what I need for Motherwell or Lanarkshire Speedway in the early 1950s.

MOTHERWELL - LANARKSHIRE

Friday 28th July 1950 Lanarkshire Eagles 45 North of England Select 39 (Ch) Times Hts1-14 + SH

Friday 4th August 1950 Lanarkshire Eagles 39 The Rest 44 (Ch) Junior Scratch 4th Man

Friday 18th August 1950 Lanarkshire Eagles 43 Sheffield Tars 41 (Ch) 4th Placed Men SH

Friday 1st September 1950 Lanarkshire Eagles 37 Glasgow Tigers Select 47 (Ch) Final Larkhall Scr

Friday 15th September 1950 Lanarkshire Eagles 36 Scottish Select 48 (Ch) Times Ht1-14 SH

Friday 22nd September 1950 Motherwell Best Pairs Search For Talent

Friday 27th April 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 42 Newcastle Diamonds 41(North Tr) SH

Friday 8th June 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 47 Walthamstow Wolves 37 (NLD2) SH

Tuesday 26th June 1951 Motherwell Bothwell Bulls 15 Newtongrange Rockets 35 (Junior Chall) Meeting Det

Friday 27th July 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 43 Coventry Bees 41(NLD2) 4th Placed Ht2 Newarthill Scrs

Friday 3rd August 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 46 Norwich Stars 38 (NLD2) 4th Reserves Sc

Monday 27th August 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 43 Leicester Hunters 41(NLD2) SH

Friday 31st August 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 55 Fleetwood Flyers 29 (NLD2) SH

Friday 7th September 1951 Lanarkshire Eagles 61 Oxford Cheetahs 23 (NLD2) SH Ht3 4th man

Friday 23rd May 1952 Lanarkshire Eagles 61 Coventry Bees 47 (NatTr 1st Leg) Ht18 4th Man

Friday 6th June 1952 Lanarkshire Eagles 48 Cradley Heath Heathens 36 (NLD2) SH

Friday 27th March 1953, Motherwell Best Pairs SH team Selection Race

Any help welcome

Jim Henry

Who Was The First Rider To Wheelie ?

It is commonplace these days to see riders giving the front wheel some air. However, someone must have started doing it and we wonder who. **Jimmy Tannock** suggests the first rider to race on the back wheel only was one time fellow Lanarkshire Eagle, Derrick Close. Jimmy recalls Derrick going along the straight on one wheel quite regularly.

Out of interest I suggest the modern wheelies must have started sometime after the introduction of the Weslakes with their smoother power bands. I recall Doug Templeton, who spent a season as the Powderhall track man, expressing his amazement at the antics of the then modern riders lifting their front wheel. Doug commented that if a rider had tried it with a JAP he would have been flipped over the back. He did add that he thought the modern carburettors allowed more throttle control and that with the JAPs the power was either all or nothing.

This puts Derrick's wheelies into perspective suggesting he was a master of throttle control.

Now, if you have come across someone who wheelied before Derrick, (and the name Clem Beckett is niggling in the back of my mind right now) please feel free to send us your thoughts on the matter. Any other thoughts on the subject – maybe even thoughts on daft stunts like tyre burnouts and doughnuts we seen quite often today – other the like. Suggestions on who is / was the greatest showman with his bike stunts

Jim Henry

Deadline for items for next edition is 31st October 2009

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