

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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Yet another Volume End

Well, the earth has spun round the sun once more and it is time to look forward to another Volume of the magazine. Yet again we have thought about the future and we have agreed we can continue on run with Volume 15. Yet again we put out a call for articles which allows us to share information of interest to we speedway historians. There is a massive range of topics out there and there is no restriction on the era you can write about.

The subscription for Volume 15 will be £5 yet again so not cost of living busting rise to add to inflationary pressures (whatever that means.) We are still in the black and there is no need to bump up prices to our loyal band of subscribers. The renewal slip is included with this edition and we look forward to hearing from you yet again. **Graham and Jim**

Wartime Speedway at Belle Vue

Barry Stephenson lives near Workington but is a great fan of Belle Vue with an equally great interest in the history of the Manchester team. Barry has penned the following article.

As a keen programme collector of Belle Vue and Workington memorabilia I hoped someday to be able to collect all the wartime Belle Vue programmes. There were 168 Belle Vue programmes issued between 23 September 1939 and the end of the 1945 season encompassing 174 meetings. The differences were down to two meetings in 1941 that ran afternoon and evening meetings on a Bank Holiday Monday and the six novice meetings run in 1945.

The novice meetings were run on a Wednesday evening but the details were included in the previous Saturday's programme. I did manage to collect all the wartime Belle Vue meeting programmes but unfortunately a lot of the programmes I bought were disbound copies which had blank race sheets. That left a problem, so that I decided to prepare a race sheet for every Belle Vue meeting in wartime. (Yes madness does run in the family). This has been a long term project as I decided to do this several years ago but only now am I seeing light at the end of the tunnel. I have prepared a race sheet for 169 of those meetings and I am short of five meetings only namely – 12 April 1941, 25 May 1942, 30 May 1942, 4 July 1942 and 11 July 1945 novice. If anyone can help with these meetings do let me know.

I had my collection to review and I had a lot of information from Jim Henry when he had the Jack Bailey collection to record. Trevor James was kind enough to let me review his collection and we were on the right road. Other collectors including Phil Smith have sent me scans as well.

There are a few myths about wartime speedway at Belle Vue and reviewing the programmes led to a lot of questions but few answers.

Any rider could turn up at Belle Vue and would get a ride is a myth in my view. There were comparatively few programme changes in the meetings at Belle Vue, certainly less than a current Elite League Riders Championship! as riders usually phoned in or sent telegrams that they could or could not ride by the Thursday prior to a match. Certainly in 1944 only 27 riders took to the track and in 1945 25 riders (plus novices).

I have formed the opinion that some riders eg Ernie Appleby used to turn up on spec and if the 'Star' rider did not manage to get there they would be riding.

A lot of riders rode in most of the meetings at Belle Vue. Four riders did at least 130 meetings – Jack Parker, Norman Parker, Tommy Price and Bill Pitcher - during the war.

2 Eric Chitty and Oliver Hart did over 150 meetings each.

In total about 80 riders plus novices rode at Belle Vue during the war. In 1944 six riders – Eric Chitty, Ron Clarke, Oliver Hart, Jack Parker, Les Wotton and Frank Varey rode in all 26 meetings albeit for different teams each week!

The programmes did relate details of riders who had joined the forces and been posted abroad and the sad cases who did not return from the conflict such as George Pepper and George Cochbone.

There were also the sad cases of riders who lost their lives in this country owing to accidents such as Jack Hargreaves. Some riders were only injured in motoring accidents which kept them off the track. Eric Gregory was hospitalised for some time in 1941. Alan Butler was injured in a road crash in September 1940 and was in hospital for eighteen months.

On 22 August 1945 during a novice meeting Maurice Butler fell in the last heat. Returning home to Birmingham with his family he became unconscious and was admitted to hospital where he died owing to a ruptured artery.

Riders did seem to be well equipped with a number of bikes to their names certainly when war broke out. As time went on spares did dry up. However riders were resourceful as well as being superb engineers and could make some of the parts needed.

Victor Martin & Co. who used to supply JAP parts had large stocks when war broke out but eventually these stocks ran low and although officially Victor Martin & Co were making dry cell batteries on Government contracts one suspects that some of the extra overtime put in by their engineers was the manufacture of speedway spares.

Other riders who were too busy on Government work or had received injuries which would not allow them to take to the track again did sell their spares or indeed bikes to other riders.

Certainly Eric and Oliver Langton did not ride after 1942 just being too busy on war work. Eric retired from speedway riding in June 1945 to become a Director of Odsal Speedway with John S Hoskins.

Oliver Langton at one point in 1943 found himself training women motor-cycle messengers round the Fullerton Park speedway track in Leeds.

One bulletin suggests that riders did not receive fees for riding at Belle Vue during the war. How did they afford it if they received no payment? This is an unresolved question.

The bulletin mentions many times during the period that no petrol whatsoever was used in the meetings and that the machines ran on methanol and that anyone who tried to run their car on methanol would soon be walking. The riders seemed to get to Belle Vue by public transport, truck or cars in the early days until petrol became unobtainable. The car park at Hyde Road was virtually empty during meetings when it had been full before the war.

Certainly after cars were no longer being used for transport a truck used to leave the Midlands each Saturday heading for Belle Vue with the Parkers and entourage on board. It must have helped being in the transport business.

Trams got a great number of the public to meetings and home again. Several of the programmes I inspected had the last heat time not filled in and one can only conclude that the purchaser was running for the tram or bus home.

Meetings were run in the light as no floodlights could be used in the war. There was double summertime for several months and the season finished about the 10th of September when the nights started drawing in.

People especially riders had a great faith in the railways during the war as they often sent their bikes to Belle Vue by train and in over 90% of cases the bikes were waiting for them at Belle Vue. On some occasions the bikes did not turn up until days later but none seem to have been totally lost. Eric Chitty of course travelled to Belle Vue from London each week by train. Certainly on one occasion he arrived but his bike did not necessitating that the event one match race was not run.

The riders during the war were the pre war riders who were of an 4 age who would not be expected to join the infantry in the war.

A goodly number of riders were too old for that but had exceptional engineering skills which kept them based in Government factories working on munitions and aircraft parts etc. That meant that they were able to produce and repair some of the parts they needed for their speedway machinery.

The size of the programme changed in 1941 owing to wartime paper shortages. There were some photographs included in the first three years or so but they were all pre war. Belle Vue could not get the printers blocks to reproduce the photographs if they had any which they seemed not to have. Until a press journalist was demobbed and was able to take some photos which were used in the programme.

The bulletin announced in 1942 that Paper Control Regulations required the programme to be a certain size. The Bulletin however was a publication and had different rules but had to be kept separate from the programme.

What the riders wore as race jackets also intrigued me as very few photos from the war show riders wearing anything over their leathers. One Bulletin reported that race jackets with the Ace of Clubs were not available. The 1939 jackets had been used until the end of 1940 when presumably they had dropped to bits. The factory that made race jackets for all teams in London had been bombed out. Eventually a supporter had made up two sets of colours which could be used in team or individual events. Again presumably that was two sets numbered one to eight in red and black.

The track grader was dispensed with in 1942 owing to a lack of petrol. How they graded the track before a meeting I do not know but there was no grading done during a meeting. So by the end of the night the track would be somewhat rough and the times increasing throughout the meeting.

The Belle Vue Supporters Club found themselves homeless when the Army took over their club room. The Supporters eventually moved to the Kings Hall.

I find the wartime era of speedway fascinating because very little has been published thereon and Speedway News ended in September 1939 and did not make the news stands again until 1946 so there are no magazines to consult.

Belle Vue was the track that never closed in wartime but other tracks that were open at some point in the conflict included Southampton, West Ham, Oxford, White City Glasgow, Oxford, Rye House, Crystal Palace and possibly Harringay. It is my intention to do a race sheet for each of these meetings as well so if any reader can scan any filled in race sheets for any of these tracks please send me a copy. A number of tracks did open of course after V E day in 1945. Speedway promoters seemed not to treat the war seriously up to 1940 as West Ham were suggesting running a League in that summer.

Please send any information to

barry.stephenson@stainburn52.fsnet.co.uk There are a lot of small details missing from a number of programmes eg times and a list of information needed is included in each year pack.

The one thing I am sure about is that mistakes have been made by me as well as the programme fillers-in. For one meeting I had four programmes available and there were a number of differences between them even including times for races. 1941 and 1942 were the worst years for that and one can only suggest that there was a war on!

Trevor and I have made copies of our researches available to Jim Henry to put on the Speedway Researcher website so that collectors and researchers can get some idea of wartime Belle Vue. (Article copyrighted to Barry Stephenson.)

Nigel's Natters December 2011

We welcome a few short snippets by **Nigel Bird**. We suspect a few of them will be a topic for further debate.

Mexico April 1933. A group of Californians headed by Cordy Milne, Wilbur Lamoreaux and Jimmy Gibb raced in Mexico City.

6 New Brighton. The official measurement of this Merseyside track

was 511.66 yards for one lap.

Plymouth. Cosmopolitan Speedways Ltd attempted to introduce speedway to Plymouth in 1928.

England's first Dirt Track Rider. C.R.Ashby, Sheffield speedway correspondent for the Speedway News, claims to have ridden on American Dirt Tracks in 1912 (Trotting Tracks)

Riskit Riley. Real Name Donald Riley, A fruiterer from Hovily Brow, Hyde, Manchester.

Liverpool Seaforth; rode team matches in 1935 with the nickname "Lions"

Brian Donkin. A native of Eastbourne.

Brighton. Early team event, Brighton Reds v Worthing Blues 21 July 1928

Clem Beckett raced in many countries including Romania.

Coventry Foleshill 1938. Team colours were to have been Red & Gold for this failed attempt to bring team speedway to Foleshill.

Frank Varey was born in the village of Gilstead near Bingley Yorks.

Warrington May 1930. A rider on the programme went by the name of Ginger Beer, although this may have been South African Ginger Bowers. Another S. A. rider to race here was Stan Collins (1929).

Derby 1930. Proposals were made to introduce the sport to the municipal sports ground. **Squib Burton** put in an appearance at the velodrome "Jean Bouin" Marseilles.

Daily Mirror. Mon.13 Feb.1928 pages 2 & 3, carried an article on the forthcoming High Beech meeting and photos of Ilford Club members practicing at the track.

Floodlighting. At Brighton, lighting for the dog track was by gas.

United Speedways Ltd controlled Hamburg and Copenhagen.

Fred J. Fearnley of the South Manchester motor cycle club was responsible for the first Droylsden meeting 1927 and was later involved with West Ham also did a bit of broadsiding. At his marriage in Aug 1928 guests included; Johnnie Hoskins, Charlie Datson and Ron Johnson.

Yorkshireman J.G. 'Dick' Southouse the 4 times married speedway manager of such pre-war tracks as Wolverhampton, Coventry, Luton, Cardiff, Nottingham and Hull (1947) was manager of the Speedway Control Board 1945-46. It is recorded he had a wooden leg/foot as a result of a speedway accident.

Onaoff Johnson's first name was David.

Gus Kuhn rode foot forward style from the very beginning.

The Coventry grading tractor was named the Silver Arrow.

Sprouts Elder was twice married.

Stewi St George made his first appearance at the Hamilton Grass track NZ in 1916 at the age of 14, took to the dirt for the first time in 1921 at Wanganui NZ.

Ray Tauser's parents were born in Austria, Ray born Portland Oregon USA, raced on Portland's board and dirt tracks.

Spain. The Barcelona Track opened August 5th 1929.

Stamford Bridge. Despite much conjecture about their nickname I believe they were simply known as "The Bridge".

Speedway Transfers

I enjoyed the Mastermind programme and the excellent display on speedway questions. One of the questions stimulated me and that was the one about Alec Statham's transfer from Bradford to Wimbledon. It set me thinking about speedway transfers and I wonder if anyone has compiled a record of riders who have been transferred and what fees are, or are reportedly, changed hands. I'd love to publish this information in a forthcoming edition of The Speedway Researcher.

Jim Henry

Ken "Casper" Cameron

Tony Webb recalls a colourful wee Aussie who will be remembered for his trademark Casper the Friendly Ghost race jacket, his white leathers and his leg trailing style of riding.

Whatever happened to Ken Cameron aka "Little Casper", a spectacular rider who looked a world beater in his early days.?

Ken was born in 1936, the son of a Scot who had emigrated to Australia. He started riding in Victoria in 1959 on a JAP machine.

Before then he was a very good jockey with thirty winners and a good lightweight boxer from where he earned the nickname "Little Casper".

In the Australian 1959/1960 season he was selected for the Australian 8 team to meet New Zealand in a three match series at Western

Springs. Ken scored thirteen points from the three matches, Australia lost the series 1-2. Returning to Melbourne he was picked for the first test against England on January 16, 1960. It was not a happy debut as he failed to score in Australia's loss to England 21-38. He travelled to Queensland in 1961 basing himself in Brisbane. the spectacular rider adopted white leathers in the Ken Le Breton style, this with his spectacular leg trailing style made him a popular performer with the Ekka patrons. The white effect was secured by painting the leathers which made them a little stiff to say the least.

During the summer of 1961 he invested in a brand new ESO moved up to Rockhampton Showgrounds riding for promoter Ted Price. The tropical venue was the winter base for many top Australian and New Zealand riders. Ivan Mauger, Goog Allen, Leo J Ramm, Keith Gurtner, Bob Sharp Ken McKinlay, Charlie Monk, Bill Bryden, and Roger Forsberg provided tough competition for Ken.

A second spot behind veteran Keith Gurtner in the Queensland solo titles at Rockhampton on May 20 was his career highlight. A setback to his progress was an accident on June 10 when he broke both arms in a spill avoiding fallen riders, the quaintly worded headline "CAMERON BREAKS TWO ARMS" was recorded in the UK Speedway Star. This injury resulted in a change of riding style for Ken, he found the leg trailing method easier for him.

Ken was back on the track for the November 3 meeting winning the handicap final from Bob Sharp.

During 1962 he rode in Adelaide and Perth before returning to reside in New Farm Brisbane. it was in the Speedway Star on December 8 1962 he stated his desire to race in Great Britain, advertising his address.

His request was taken up by Edinburgh Monarchs, he arrived in Scotland amid great fanfare in April 1963. He stayed with Norrie and Ronnie Allen when he first arrived. Sadly his time with the Monarchs as a rider was brief, His first meeting was against Newcastle on April 6, he won his first ride and then a paid first in his second. This was a very good debut and it had the Monarchs' fans hopeful that they had a promising star. The second meeting for him was against.

Middlesbrough on April 13, three paid five was again good return. Away to Middlesboro on April 18 he gained a solitary third. The home meeting against Sheffield on April 20 was better with two seconds and winning the reserves race. A visit to Newcastle on April 22 returned two points. In the team proper for the match at Sheffield returned 9

three after two falls. These were all Northern Shield matches. The Provincial league matches commenced in May. Six paid eight at home to St Austell and a win in the reserves race, then a six paid seven against Long Eaton endeared him to the home fans, his last home match was a six paid seven against Wolverhampton. Tragedy struck in the return match at Monmore Green in Wolverhampton. While partnering George Hunter in heat three he fell and sustained a fractured skull when he hit his head on the concrete inner edge of the track.

He tried to make a comeback in 1964 second halving at the Scottish tracks in Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as Newcastle and Sunderland. Unfortunately I believe this wasn't a success and he gave up speedway riding. His only appearance for Sunderland was at Newcastle where he partnered Gordon Guasco and then Jim Airey. he failed to score, in his first ride and then falling in his second and last ride.

Ken remained in Scotland, settled down and married. He worked as a bus driver for a while then started work at Edinburgh University Geology Department as a technician. He became a bit of a mineralogy expert, especially skilled in preparing thin section slides. He gained a degree in the subject. However, he fancied a return to Australia. He packed it in on the offer of a job in Australia which didn't happen and came back to Edinburgh after a short visit to his native country.

Ken did get back on a bike a few more times taking a few outings at Powderhall and Shawfield when the Men in Black made their annual trip north to display and race their collection of Douglas, Rudge and JAP machines.

Ken now lives in the old folks home in Fords Road in Edinburgh. He has a son -also called Ken.

Acknowledgements Tony Webb, Bob Ferry, Jim Henry and Horrie Harvey.

Brandon Hosts Testing of New Rudge Dirt Track Machinery

Stuart Staite-Aris has researched the activities of the Rudge company undertaking machine testing at the Coventry track.

Rudge cycles started life in Wolverhampton when pub landlord Dan Rudge built his first cycle in 1869.

Dan Rudge passed away in 1880 and the company began its Coventry **10** existence when it was sold to Coventry solicitor George Woodcock

who already owned two other cycle firms. Woodcock began selling cycles from his factory at Crow Lane Coventry under the company name of D Rudge and Co which soon became Rudge Cycle Co.

In 1894 the Rudge Cycle Co. merged with the Whitworth Cycle Co. of Birmingham and became Rudge-Whitworth Ltd. By 1897 the company was producing 25,000 bicycles a year at its now enlarged factory at 34, Spon Street Coventry.

Rudge-Whitworth Ltd did not start producing motorcycles until 1910 which by then was some way behind their local Coventry rivals in the same field of expertise. The first Rudge-Whitworth motorcycle had a 3 1/2 hp engine with overhead inlet valve, chain drive to the camshaft and a magneto.

Following the end of the First World War Rudge-Whitworth Ltd concentrated on targeting motorcycle racing success by using modified standard road use machines. Successes included:-

- 1921 497cc TT
- Roadster Multi TT
- 999cc V Twin TT

In July 1928 Rudge-Whitworth Sales Agent and future Brandon Coventry promoter (see previous Researcher article) Stanley Glanfield embarked on a World tour on a Coventry built 499cc Rudge motorcycle and sidecar combination. This motorcycle is on display in the Coventry Motor Museum.

Rudge-Whitworth Ltd were to very quickly get involved in the new sport of Dirt Track racing with a 499cc Speedway model.

New Rudge Put Through its Paces at Brandon

On the crisp morning of January 31st 1930 Brandon roared to the sound of the new Rudge machinery. This was hoped to be the new wonder machine for use on the Dirt Tracks in 1930. The event was the first properly staged dress rehearsal for a number of riders to test out the much discussed Rudge-Whitworth new Dirt Track machine.

The new bike had been developed with careful research and expert craftsmanship at the Rudge-Whitworth works in Spon Street Coventry over a long period of time. The first impressions were that it fully justified all that had been said about it.

The event bought out a large number of interested experts from all around the country. There were many admiring glances and complimentary terms used when riders and promoters had their first inspection.

The new Rudge was slightly larger than the model that had been seen in 1929 and had a number of new features that created great interest. The main feature was its engine speed which was claimed to be 90 m.p.h. when run on Benzole fuel. The engine had been built as a racing variant. It had been designed with a wet sump which was done this way owing to the picking up of dirt from the track surface. Rudge-Whitworth claimed the dirt track model was both reliable and cheap to maintain.

- The frame was also very different to anything that had been seen before from Rudge.
- The wheels were 28 inches by 2 ¾ inches with Avon tyres.
- The drive was a plain straightforward countershaft. There would be no gear troubles as there were none, and various sprocket sizes would be available to suit different sized tracks.
- The steering was so easy on the new model that the performance on the track was to be the same as if using it on the road.
- The shorter wheel base allowed for a big advantage over machines like the Douglas when the machines were coming out of the turns at speed.

Rudge-Whitworth also claimed that chain problems on the Dirt Track would be a thing of the past as the new bike and engine was protected by shields on the front down tube of the frame. The shields would keep the cinders out without reducing the speed of the machine owing to wind pressure.

Riders Opinions

Frank Arthur had tried the Rudge with great success in Australia and had already broken the Australian lap record and mile records using the new machine. Englishman Jim Kempster already had great regard for the new machine and other riders had also obtained it or were in the process of, these included;

Arthur Jervis, Sprouts Elder, Billy Lamont, Colin Watson, Syd Jackson, Triss Sharp and Arthur Willimott and some of the Brandon stars.

George Allbrook was the first local man to try out the Rudge and he handled it very well for his first attempt demonstrating how easy it was to ride. Allbrook was able to show off the machine's pace on the straights and how close it was possible to keep the machine to the white **14** line on the bend at the pits end.

During the afternoon several well known riders based locally attended and each tried out the new machine.

The Demise of Rudge-Whitworth Ltd

Rudge-Whitworth eventually got into financial difficulties in the mid to Late 1930's by which time the J.A.P. engine had become the Speedway engine of choice. The company eventually went into liquidation and in 1940 it was purchased by the Gramophone Co which was part of the giant EMI group. The business was lost from its iconic Coventry factory and relocated to the Gramophone Co factory at Hayes.

References

Coventry's Motorcycle Heritage – Damien Kinberley – (The History Press 2009) Midland Daily Telegraph 1930

Erratta

A sentence from the Col Stewart article crept into the article re The Star Championship in reformatting. Whilst I do try to ensure this doesn't happen it does sometimes and I apologise for the error. **Jim**

Wally Higgs

Tony Webb looks at another hazy hero from Australia who featured in a short item by the late **Keith Farman** in Volume 9 No.4.

Wally Higgs was a star on two wheels and four wheels.

Wally was truly one of speedway's gentlemen and senior statesmen, his contribution reached to every aspect of motorsport in Western Australia. He was an inductee of the Claremont Speedway Hall of Fame and a West Australian champion on solos and TQ's. He was a foundation member of the Perth TQ club switching to four wheels after an impressive career on solos. Starting at Claremont in the post war years, he travelled to UK in 1950 to ride for the Yarmouth Bloaters in 1950 in the Second Division. He gained an average of 3.75 in his only UK season. He never forgot the warm hospitality of the Norfolk family where he boarded.

At Claremont he held all the solo track records for several years, In the 1949/50 season he was on a massive 220 yard handicap at Claremont. Wally won back to back West Australian solo titles in 1951/52 and 1952/53.

Switching to cars in 1954 he took out the WA TQ Championship for three consecutive seasons 1957-1960. He then turned his racing skills and extensive mechanical expertise to road racing where he competed at the famous Caversham and Mooliabeenie circuits and the round the houses races at Collie, York, Albany and other country centres. In later years he developed a prototype speedway machine with fuel injection. In his twilight years living in the beach suburb of Mandurah he still used his mechanical skills repairing push bikes for local children. Wally Higgs passed away at his home on August 2 at the age of 92 Truly one of speedways gentleman .

Web Words

We will start by yet again thanking **Colin Pike** for his hard work in keeping the cumulative index for the magazine up to date. This is available on the web site and includes those magazines published up to the last edition – Number 55. This is really appreciated Colin.

1961 files were placed on the site a bit earlier than expected and work on 1962 is finished as far as I can take them. 1963 is up and running before the summer but if the weather is good then it might be Autumn before it is completed and on the site. Jim aims to get to the end of 1964 but once he gets there is every likelihood he'll go stir crazy and do some more recent seasons. Just which one he'll try remains to be seen but don't hold your breath.

We have had some interesting pre-war additions which have been drawing a bit of attention thanks to **Bob Ozanne** and **Brian Collins**. **Barry Stephenson** has provided revamped Belle Vue Wartime files which is also a valuable addition to the site. Assistance from **Martin Greene** has massively upgraded most of the Irish track information and **Keith Corns** has provided massive support from his collection of programmes covering a number of season. **Steve Wilks** and **Mark Aspinell** are working away turning out files for the period post 1964. The Speedway Researcher up to the end of Volume 12 is now available on line to read or download.

The revamped site is attracting a fair bit of interest and comments indicate a favourable reaction. Webmaster **Matt Jackson** is doing a great job and keeps the site up to date adding new additions and 16 alterations as they arrive in his inbox. **Jim Henry**

Rules of Engagement 1929 Star Championship

Stuart Staite-Aris looks at The Star Championship 1929 Rules and Regulations.

The Star Newspaper offered two trophies to the Association of Motor Cycle track racing promoters.

The trophies were to be competed for by nominated riders from such tracks in a position to enter one Overseas and one Home rider.

The trophies were to be known as:-

- **The Star Overseas Riders Trophy.**
- **The Star Home Riders Trophy.**

The Suggested Rules

1. Each track was to nominate two riders one Overseas and one Home rider. The nominations were to be sent to the Star office at 19 Bouverie Street and the ACU before June 17th 1929
2. The first set of match races was to be run during the period of July 1st -August 1st 1929. The final was to be run before September 1929.
3. Should any nominated rider fall out before the first fixture he may be replaced by another rider. However after that date no more nominations may be received.
4. For the purposes of this competition nominations of Home riders will only be considered if the riders whose birthplace is in the British Isles have not competed in Speedway races here or abroad prior to January 1st 1929.
5. The competitions are to be run on the knockout principle. The positions of the nominated riders in the first round will be drawn for with separate draws for the Overseas and Home sections.
6. The matches were to be decided on the principle of the best out of three. Three races were to take place on the home track of each Competitor so ensuring there was no unfair advantage to be gained. Also it enabled each track to have an equal share of gate monies and publicity.
7. In the event of a third deciding series of races being necessary the two riders were to toss a coin immediately after the last race and the deciding series was to be run on the home track of the rider who won the toss. The exception was to be the Final where should the rider

be a nominee of a provincial track he was to regard the London track belonging to his nominator as his Home track.

8. The races were to be run under ACU match rules in force at the time of the contest.

9. Facilities must be given to the visiting rider for practice before his race.

10. The Second and subsequent rounds of the contest were to be run on the principle of the best out of three and on substantially the same lines as the opening rounds.

11. In the event of their being an odd number of competitors a bye shall be declared and he shall ride in the next round.

12. The Final was to be run on the principle of the best out of three. Three races were to take place on the home track of each Competitor. The exception was if the rider was a nominee of a provincial track he was then to regard the London track belonging to his nominator as his Home track. In the event of a third deciding series of races being necessary the two riders were to toss a coin immediately after the last race and the deciding series was to be run on the home track of the rider who won the toss.

Star Championship Prizes

In all matches except the final the riders were to receive the usual race prizes and appearance money. These were to be provided by the track promotions concerned.

In the finals the proprietors of the Star newspaper were to present the following prizes

The rider who wins the Star Overseas Riders Trophy will receive £100.00 in cash and a £25 trophy. The runner up will receive £25 in cash.

The rider who wins the Star Home Riders Trophy will receive £100.00 in cash and a £25 trophy. The runner up will receive £25 in cash.

Disputes

In the event of any dispute arising that cannot be settled by the stewards of the meeting at which it takes place it shall be laid before a committee of three. This shall comprise a representative of the ACU, a representative of the promoters association (who is not involved in the dispute) and a representative of the Star newspaper. The decision of this
18 committee to be final and binding.

The Speedway correspondent of the Star Mr Harrison is to be given seven days notice of any meetings or races in the series so that we can notify our readers of any forthcoming events.

The prizes will be presented to the winning riders by a representative of the Star immediately after the final races have been run.

Belle Vue Wartime Queries

Barry Stephenson is looking for the following War Time Belle Vue meeting details. Barry's contact details appear in his article above.

1940

22 March 1940 Manchester scratch race times for heat 4 and final; 23 March 1940 time for Scratch race heat 2 needed; 8 June 1940 Time for B V scurry needed; 29 June 1940 Time for B V Scurry needed; 13 July 1940 Results of B V scurry needed. Was it run ?; 7 September 1940 Time for heat 10 needed;

1941

11 April 1941 Event 4 Hart Clarke last two places needed from Price and Mitchell; 12 April 1941 Full results needed; 17 May 1941 Event 3 B Vue Scratch Race result needed; 24 May 1941 Event 1 match race Chitty and Parker. Result and time needed; 31 May 1941 Event 3 Palatine Scratch Race. Result and time needed; 14 June 1941 Final B Vue Scratch Race time needed; 21 June 1941 Best Pairs heat 16 time needed; 28 June 1941 Sealed Handicap Details of handicaps needed. Event 2 Open Scratch race result needed; 5 July 1941 Need times for Open Scratch races and B V Scurry; 19 July 1941 Grand Prix time for heat 16 needed; 2 August 1941 Event 6 Scratch Race. Times for heats 3 and 4 and Final needed; 23 August 1941 time for heat 7 needed; 30 August 1941 times for heats 10, 11, 13 and 14 needed

1942

4 April 1942 Event 1 time needed together with times for heats 12 and 16 of Easter T; 6 April 1942 Event 2 match race time needed. All results needed after 1st S F Mancunian Cup; 11 April 1942 Event 3 All Star Scratch Race. Results and time needed; 18 April 1942 Result of Event 4 Scratch Race needed; 9 May 1942 Northern Champ Time for heat 16 and results for following races; 16 May 1942 Result needed for Belle Vue Scratch Race; 25 May 1942 Speedway Cup Full results **19**

needed;30 May 1942 National Trophy Full details needed 20 June 1942 100 Gns Trophy Times for most heats required; 27 June 1942 Result needed for Belle Vue Scratch Race Final;4 July International Trophy Full results needed;11 July International Trophy times needed for heats 1 to 8 and 18;18 July 1942 Result of heat 10 needed. Was O Langton replaced by a reserve? Who?;25 July 1942 Time for heat 12 needed;1 August 1942 Results of Champ and Belle Vue Scratch Races. I have winners only;22 August 1942 BIC Time for heat 20 needed. 29 August 1942 results for All Star Scratch and B Vue Scurry needed with times;12 September 1942 Result of Belle Vue Scurry and time for B Vue Scratch race needed.

1943

24 April 1943 Time for Longley 1 lap attempt;1 May 1943 time for heat 16 needed and Scratch race result. I have winner;8 May 1943 Result of heat 15 needed. I have variations;29 May 1943 Result of heat 9 needed. I have variations;19 June 1943 results of heats 18 and 20 needed;26 June 1943 Result for Scratch Race needed. I have winner

1944

8 April 1944 Result of All Star Scratch race; 10 April 1944 results of Bank Holiday Scratch Final needed;9 September 1944 results of heat 14 required. I have variations

1945

11 July 1945 Novice full results needed;20 October 1945 B V Scratch Race Final results needed

The History of Preston Speedway – Part 2 – 1930 (continued)

Graham Fraser continues this history three months into the 1930 season. On Thursday, 26th June, Preston hosted Warrington in a National Speedways League Match (Northern Section) meeting – yes that was the league name in one of the few existing Preston programmes still accessible – I have a photocopy with full programme results, times in all league and individual races – a real rarity.

Preston's quartet were Ham Burrill (C); Joe Abbott; George Reynard & Frank Chiswell – Jack Tye was Reserve. Warrington were represented by George Milton; Charles Hornby; Tommy Hatch and H. Solomon – Stan Collins at Reserve. In a fairly close meeting Charlie Hornby won all three of his heats, gaining 9 points out of his teams total of 14;

20 Preston's top scorers were Ham Burrill with 7 and Joe Abbott on 8,

as Preston won 22-14. In the second half Joe Abbott won in the final of the Golden Sash Handicap Race; Freddy Williams took the Golden Gauntlet Race final and in an International Challenge Race for the Golden Helmet three qualifying heats were won by Ham Burrill over Stan Collins; Frank Varey over Tommy Hatch and Joe Abbott beat Charlie Hornby. In the final Varey was victorious over Abbott (2nd) with Burrill (3rd).

Top dirt track riders often rode most nights of the week – an example was Joe Abbott who raced on Thursday's at Preston had, on Wednesday 1st July ridden at Coventry Stadium and broke the track record by a fifth of a second in a match race with track record holder, Liverpool's Ginger Lees. Abbot must have had a good payday that night winning the Scratch Race final over Smiler Wooton.

A day later Preston's home league meeting at Farringdon Park with Glasgow was called off due to heavy rain. However a few thousand people gathered at the track and a good proportion of the riders expressed willingness to race but the Preston MD and ACU steward determined the track would cut up badly and become unsafe so good performances would be impossible. Nevertheless, fans were entertained by Tipple and Tople, the trick riders who did a few practice laps. The Glasgow team scheduled to ride was: Col Stewart (c); Arthur Moser; Bill Llewellyn; Allan Campbell and Arthur Mann at Reserve.

Later that week it was announced Preston had exchanged Frank Chiswell to Liverpool for Tommy Price.

On Thursday, 10th July 8000 people watched a six-a-side Inter-City Challenge Match in which Preston hosted Birmingham Hall Green from the Southern League. Press reports are very sketchy and all we know is Preston won 42-21 with Preston's team comprising in part Ham Burrill; Joe Abbott; Tommy Price and George Reynard. Only two of the Hall Green team are known: Bunny Wilcox and Les Patrick. Otherwise the highlights of the night were Vic Huxley defeating Frank Varey in 2 of 3 Match Races and also the Final of the Golden Helmet Flying 12 Race. This was a surprise as Varey was virtually unbeatable around Farringdon Park and Huxley has broken no records in his career to that point.

A week later a challenge meeting at Liverpool was cancelled due a waterlogged Stanley Speedway. The following night saw the American Ace Sprouts Elder paying his first visit to the Preston track racing against the Preston aces in three different individual races. Elder **21**

was beaten in a best of 3 Match race with Ham Burrill – due mainly to engine failures. Elder failed to qualify for the final of the Flying Twelve (George Formby Cup) but closed off the meeting by winning the Golden Armlet Race from Max Grosskreutz.

(It was once muted by a Researcher reader that an attempt was due to be made to catalogue every meeting Sprouts Elder raced in his short career in the UK – anyone readers fancy an attempt at that, which the SR would happy to publish?)

In the same week the Lancashire Daily Post Speedway Notes Column reported the closure of the Barnsley Lundwood track and the suspension of racing at Brough Park, Newcastle and Middlesbrough Speedway. However a new track in Barrow has started, with Preston's aces racing at the successful opening night.

On Thursday, 24th July Preston hosted Liverpool in a £100 Challenge Team Match in front of a crowd of 11,000. Preston scraped a 27-26 win. Captain Ham Burrill was thrown from his bike in the first corner of the first heat and was badly shaken and bruised taking no further part in the meeting. Tommy Price got a three wins and Liverpool Ginger Lees was the top Liverpool scorer with 8.

This meeting was also notable when in the second heat of the Golden Helmet Race, the final event of the evening, Young, up and coming Preston rider James Carnie 23 (who had two good wins earlier in the meeting) caught the back wheel of a rider in front, lost control and was flung outwards and jammed against the fence, following rider George Reynard caught young Carnie and he suffered a fractured skull, He died within half an hour. It was ironical that Carnie had said earlier it was his intention to retire from that sport after that night's racing. The Preston newspapers subsequently carried full details of the rider's inquest which returned a verdict of accidental death. Carnie was buried in Preston Cemetery next to the track and a large crowd was in attendance at the funeral. An ornate marble memorial was placed on the grave which is still there as I found when visiting the track site and cemetery a few years ago.

Whilst the club and its fans were recovering from this shock, a Preston Team fulfilled an Inter-Track Challenge meeting at Fullerton Park, Leeds which Leeds won 19-16.

On 30th July Preston raced in the second round of challenge matches at Liverpool, again with another £100 winner-take-all prize. In a very 22 close match Preston scraped through 29-25. Joe Abbott 8; Claude

Rye & Tommy Price 6; with Smiler Wooton scoring 9 and Larry Boulton 8 for the homesters. This gave Preston an aggregate 56-51 win over the two matches. Unusually a Reserve Team meeting also took place and Liverpool gained some revenge winning 13-11 in a four heat contest – Liverpool featured Skid Plevin and Crasher Coxhead!! Back to League action the following evening as Preston hosted top of the table Belle Vue at Farringdon Park. Belle Vue were represented by Frank Varey; Clem Cort; Eric Langton, Dusty Haigh & Bob Harrison at reserve. The Preston team was Burrill; Claude Rye; Joe Abbott; Tommy Price and Jack Tye at Reserve. Certainly a who's who of top northern dirt track riders! Over the six heats both teams had 4-2 heat victories and a shared 3-3 in Heat 1, which also saw Frank Varey break the track record Sadly for Preston a dead heat third place in heat 4 meant a heat result of 3.5 to 2.5 in favour of Belle Vue and the visitors winning by the narrowest of possible margins of 13.5 to 12.5. Dead heats at that time were virtually unknown – has anybody come across dead heats in early league speedway meetings?

Graham Fraser (To be continued)

The Lure of The Speedway

(A psychologist writing in The Daily Record newspaper looks at the sport in 1949) Speedway racing on motor-cycles is different in important ways from all other sports available to Scottish spectators. It is still a recent phenomenon, yet it attracts the same enthusiasm as the long established national game of football – sometimes even more. It is popular with its devotees as greyhound racing despite the fact that gambling on speedway races is virtually non-existent. Wherein lies its allure?

We cannot dismiss it merely as a bobby-socks hysteria for speedway audiences include also large numbers of middle-aged people, husbands and wives, often with their young children on their shoulders, the better to see the cinders flying.

Well, firstly, the speedway audience finds the release of tension, which satisfies a natural need. Modern life involves a series of tensions which may produce a persistent submerged feeling of uneasiness – sometimes like waiting for the man upstairs to drop his other shoe.

The motor-cycle race is in some measure a symbolised picture of life in general. It is a struggle, but in this case the struggle is quickly over, the tension is quickly resolved. The spectator who identifies himself with the winning rider enjoys, at second hand, a sense of relief and triumph. It is only fair to add that the enthusiast who takes himself too seriously and whose favourite loses the race is left with the tension unresolved, waiting for the next race in which he may achieve his object. The Modern Demi-God

Speedway racing is unique in another way, from the physical nature of the sport: since more than any other vehicle the high powered motorcycle is not merely a vehicle like a car or an aeroplane, but is almost part of the rider, a physical extension of his own body.

In this sense the fulfilment of the dream of every boy in the audience, the acme of masculine power. This may help to explain the hero-worship given to speedway riders more than to any other sportsmen, since they represent in truth the supermen, the irresistible beings with more than human power.

And the girls who are devoted to the sport make, in effect, a similar projection of their ideals on to the riders whose autographs they seek and to whom they accord an idol worship almost more loyally than to their favourite film stars. The Greeks, from whose legends and mythology psycho-analysis has deduced so much of man's unconscious life, created a hierarchy of gods and heroes with ordinary human emotions and failings, but with overwhelming powers. In our emotional life we are still with the Greeks. We cannot believe in such gods, so we engage one mechanical superman. And in sixty seconds of fifty mile an hour virility shared with the riders, the ordinary timid mortal can live like the gods.

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