

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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Welcome to Volume 15

Ron McNeil

It is with much regret we have to report the untimely death, at the age of 62, of our original webmaster **Ron McNeil**. Ron died in early February but his funeral in Milton Keynes wasn't until early March. Ron had been involved at both Middlesbrough and Milton Keynes Speedways and was known by the nickname – Too Small.

If it hadn't been for Ron's hard work we would not have the excellent web site we have now. Ron put a lot of time and effort into setting it up and was webmaster until ill health forced him to give it up.

I never met Ron in person but we would often have lengthy chats on the phone and he would talk with a great deal of enthusiasm for his of his other interests – his music and his flight simulator programmes. Ron enjoyed playing his guitar and even took to the stage in amateur events playing music from the 1960s.

I'll miss our long chats, his sense of humour and his patient of explaining to a totally useless and less than enthusiastic potential new webmaster (me) what to do. Goodbye mate and thanks for all your hard work.

Jim Henry

A.J.Hunting and Frank Hunting

Tony Webb has undertaken research into pioneer Aussie promoters which we hope will be of great interest to fellow researchers.

A lot has been written regarding the pioneers of speedway, none have a greater claim than A J and Frank Hunting

The Hunting brothers' rightful claim to fame, the family have always thought that their place in speedway history was overlooked. Over the past three years I have met family members, I have been given access

to rare family archives and enjoyed the company of one of the grand children as a guest in my home. The following overview is a result of that involvement. It is only a snap shot of the Hunting brothers. It is my interpretation of events but the substance is backed up by over 400 press cuttings, company records, shipping lists and personal letters

Albert John Hunting was actually born Albert John Schutze in Ballarat - the fifth child and third son of George and Augusta Schutze. His brother Frank also became involved in speedway promotion. In 1916, when he was 33, his family changed their surname to Hunting by deed poll.

Hunting is the English translation of the German surname Schutze which means Hunter. It is thought the family made the decision following the outbreak of World War I. though of German/Danish descent, they were proud to be Australians. Albert John Hunting was always referred to as AJ and seldom Albert.

Hunting's nomadic life began at an early age. His parents moved from Ballarat to Melbourne in 1885 where his mother died in the suburb of Balacava in 1891. AJ then went to live with his grandmother on his mother's side in Bendigo; then to his mother's brother Joe in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1896. By 1901 he was back in Melbourne living with his father in Pahrn. The end of the year saw him at the home of his mother's brother Albert in Bendigo. At the age of 16 he started work at Bendigo hospital; then moved to Spring Gully to work in the mines. The next year, 1902, he was in Perth, WA working in a chemist shop before once again returning to Melbourne in 1903. Hunting then worked as a travelling salesman for his father's interests in Jaegues Underwear. He married Ethel Smith in 1909. They lived in Wangaratta, Victoria where they owned a poultry farm and a bakery until 1919. They then moved to the prestigious suburb of Rose Bay in Sydney. Hunting's first enterprise was to manufacture toy tin model cars. The demand for metal in World War I curtailed this flourishing business but, ever resourceful, he carried on the production in timber - a practice he resumed later in life.

In 1923 he began his foray into speedway promoting. Hunting learned John Wren was financing what became the Melbourne Motordrome and reasoned Sydney could at least match such a venue so he turned to his friend Hugh D McIntosh (then Minister for Lands in NSW and the same man who made a fortune from staging the Burns-Johnson world heavyweight title fight, newspapers and a chain of vaudeville theatres in Sydney) and wrangled a lease on a large acreage of deserted sandhills

near Maroubra Junction. He then talked such Sydney business notables as Boyd Edkins and other motoring tycoons into putting up the capital to launch his Olympia Motor Speedways Ltd company and went to work. Hunting was manager/promoter for the first Maroubra season. The concrete bowl opened on December 5, 1925 to a crowd of 74,000! Hunting instructed a Sydney company to mint the first Golden helmet, this was displayed in a George Street jewellers. Hunting then sold his shares to Edkins and others and went to Brisbane where he set up residence in the Regatta hotel, then moved to a riverside mansion in Toowong. [this was sold recently for a believed multi million dollar price]

In March, 1926 he floated another Olympia Motor Speedway company (this time preceded by the word 'Brisbane') and used some of the money from a share float to carve out the shape of another Maroubra styled motordrome in the suburb of Oxley . But the project was washed out in a flood, he needed cash flow so he obtained a lease to run speedway at the Exhibition Grounds. Oxley was rebuilt, they held two practise sessions there in September 1926, where A J actually competed, and then the Brisbane City Council refused a public license. A further flood in 1931 washed away all trace of the track.

On October 16, 1926 he staged the first of his 31 meetings at the Ekka. In 1927 he ran some meetings at Toowoomba Showground under a new company, National Speedways. And then on August 6 1927 came the big one - the opening of Davies Park Speedway in Brisbane. This was an enormous success. Hunting ran 54 meetings, some twice weekly, he opened up some meetings at Ipswich Showground in 1927. Discussions took place with English visitors Lionel Wills [he was not a member of the Wills tobacco company but a wealthy man in his own right] and Stanley Glanfield. Plans were finalised to take a party of Australian riders to England. Other promoters from Australia and England were also showing a keen interest, both Johnny Hoskins in Perth and Jimmy Baxter in London were hatching plans. A mention here of Johnny Hoskins, his name was been linked with the Hunting promotions in England and later in South America in articles in the Speedway News, however it is almost certain he was not employed by Hunting at any time AJ did visit JSH in Perth on his way to England, that was the only contact. In fact the Hunting family are emphatic in distancing themselves.

Jimmy Baxter had already encouraged three Australians from Sydney: Keith McKay William James Pomfroy and Geoff Meredith to travel to England to form a rival company known as Dirt Track Speedways Limited. **Error! Bookmark not defined.** Actually Meredith had three riders under contract, sadly Meredith caught pneumonia while in the IOM where he passed away. Hunting himself lost no time in making contracts with the National Greyhound Association to run speedway on smaller tracks within several London greyhound stadiums.

In the January of 1928 A.J. Hunting left the affairs of Davies Park in the capable hands of his brother Frank, and left for England, travelling overland by train to Fremantle and set sail to England on the SS Naldera. Hunting arrived at the first English speedway meeting that was held at High Beech in February 1928 (this is always regarded as the first speedway meeting, events also took place earlier in Greenford and Manchester). Having registered dismay at the lack of organisation, he was invited to prepare the track for the next meeting.

In London it was announced in the Times newspaper on March 23 1928 that he succeeded in floating a 30,000 pound company known as International Speedways Limited (ISL) for the express purpose of promoting speedway in England.

The company had a strong board of directors drawn from some very influential London identities. Under the chairmanship of Colonel Walter Bersey of Wembley Exhibition fame, fellow board members were Theodore Goddard **Error! Bookmark not defined.** a lawyer and director of Picture Post, W.J. Cearns Sir John Rhodes Charles E Wakeling, William E Robbins and Lord Sempill **Error! Bookmark not defined.** General manager was Vivian Van Damm who later came to fame with the Windmill Theatre in London's West End. The company had offices at 10, Sarjeants Inn and 40-43 Fleet Street in London EC14. The appointment of Lord Sempill to the board would prove to be a shrewd move by Hunting. Later in the 1928 season speedway was gaining bad publicity by a section of the press who labelled the sport as a low form of entertainment and something was needed to lift the public image. Lord Sempill was able to use his considerable influence to persuade royalty, HRH King Alfonso of Spain, HRH Princess Ingrid of Sweden, novelist Edgar Wallace speed celebrities Sir Henry Segrave, Sir Malcolm Campbell and actresses Miss May Bacon and Peggy O'Neil to attend speedway meetings and present the prizes. This lifted the profile of speedway in the public's eye

A team of ten Australian riders, all of whom were Davies Park regulars, was announced in the Brisbane Courier Mail on March 20 1928. Each rider had first class fares on the Orient liner "Oransay" paid from Sydney to England and also received as an added incentive a parcel of shares in the company. The riders chosen were Vic Huxley Frank Pearce Dicky Smythe Noel Johnson, Hilary Buchanan and Ben Unwin, all from Brisbane, together with Frank Arthur, Jack Bishop and Charlie Spinks from Toowoomba and Billy Lamont from Newcastle, New South Wales. Lamont in fact left earlier to travel via the USA with Cecil Brown who was also a member of Hunting's group. Officials Frank Hunting, Roland Robbins, Keith Logan and Norman Pritchard accompanied the riders. Prior to the departure the team were photographed by the Courier Mail in Adelaide Terrace [Frank Pearce, in a 1985 interview claimed the photo was taken in Wickham Terrace outside the Trades Hall Although they were splendidly attired in suits and hats, they probably had little idea of what a historic event this would be in the future of speedway. Later in the year Bert Spencer **Error! Bookmark not defined.**, Harold Stevens Fred Hore and Lyle Boyd Pratt sailed to England to join up with the original party The voyage had been a time to relax from all the pressures of preparation. They were joined by Huxley as planned at Adelaide and then at Fremantle on April 10, 1928 by four more travellers, Ron Johnson, Sig Schlam, Charlie Datson who were under contract to Geoff Meredith and the legendary Johnnie Hoskins who was travelling to England as an advisor . At Naples Huxley left the ship to travel overland to honour an earlier booking to race at High Beech. He arrived for the fifth meeting on May 5. The trip continued without event although the Bay of Biscay lived up to its reputation with a taste of the type of weather they would have to endure. The ship berthed at the French port of Toulon they then travelled by train to Paris where they stayed for a few days. It was then on to Calais to catch the Channel ferry to Dover - an arduous route by today's standards. An especially reserved Pullman railway carriage was awaiting them with an afternoon tea prepared. The final stage was to Victoria Station London where they were met by Hunting. Rooms at the Bedford Head Hotel in Tottenham Court Road had been booked for the weary travellers. However, they were a little disappointed that there had been delays in track construction. It would be another two weeks before they could demonstrate their skills. The time was taken up with organising

workshops; getting lost in London's maze of streets and a visit to the Douglas Motorcycle works in Bristol. To further cover the mechanical side Hunting made the very shrewd move of signing up the ace tuner, Alec Mosely, to work exclusively for International Speedways Limited. As an indication of the confidence shown in the future of speedway, International Speedways Ltd. had placed an order for seventy five speedway machines including fifty new Douglas dirt track bikes, part of the reason behind this large order was to give the Douglas company encouragement, as they had stopped production the previous year. The Douglas management took a different view fearing these large orders would command further concessions from the promoters, therefore there was a reluctance to accept them. The orders were then placed via a number of agencies. It would appear that these large orders were never completed as machine shortages were to be a problem for the remainder of the season. The supply of speedway machines at the beginning of each season is a problem that has never been resolved throughout the years. This is mainly because speedway machines are not generally mass produced, requiring tuning and modification to the individual riders requirements.

Stanley Glanfield of Glanfield Lawrence Motors Ltd established a most advanced workshop complex in a four storey building in Ridgmont Street off Tottenham Court Road. The top floor was divided in to cubicles where up to twenty individual riders and mechanics could service their machines. The second floor had fully equipped workshops to carry out every facet of speedway tuning and machining. The mechanics were on hand 24/7, they were employed by Glanfield and received a bonus based on the success of the riders. Several of the top tuners including, Dendy, Mosely, Dixon and Hubbard worked from here and they were able to discuss their ideas with each other in the well appointed conference room, sometime very Hted debates took place. To continue the story of the riders arrival, the following evening the riders were spectators at Stamford Bridge where they were surprised by the shape of the track, with its long straights and narrow bends. They realised there would be a lot of adapting to do. The Australian riders found that only the High Beech track, renamed [Kings Oak, was similar to Davies Park which is a no surprise as A. J. Hunting had an influence in the design of the track after the first meeting.

Three tracks were laid in London at Harringay, White City and Wimbledon one at Kirkmanshulme in Manchester and one in Hall

Green Birmingham. Portsmouth was another venue under consideration and with the permission of the Portsmouth Greyhound Club a track was laid at the new stadium at Copnor, However the planned September opening did not happen, although the Jimmy Baxter company DSL did stage racing there in 1929 .

The Australian riders had their first taste of high society when a luncheon was held in their honour at the famous Savoy Hotel in London on May 16 presided over by Lord Strathspey. One of the speakers Theodore Collins prophesied that the sport of speedway could well eclipse football and greyhound racing in popularity. Tributes were paid to the enthusiasm of A.J.Hunting and his team.

Another Hunting legacy is the present day Speedway Star, speedways iconic journal. The origins of this magazine were in Brisbane in 1926, it doubled up as the programme for the exhibition speedway and later Davies park. When the hunting party arrived in England in 1927, Norman Pritchard the speedway news editor was a member of the party. Norman set up the speedway news in London publishing the first UK edition in May 1927. Years later it became the Speedway Star, the Star News and then reverted again to the Speedway Star. Another Hunting initiative.

From the beginning International Speedways took a strong stand against Sunday meetings and on track betting, the company were firmly against both issues and always adhered to that position.

The first meeting was at London's White City on May 19 opened by Lady Strathspey on a very wet evening. Ben Unwin was the surprise packet with the fastest time of the night. Regular meetings followed at Harringay and Wimbledon but machine failures and the shortage of spares continually hampered them. The new cinder tracks were also causing a lot of falls. Dicky Smythe broke a finger, Vic Huxley Jack Bishop, Hilary Buchanan and Billy Lamont all had spells on the injured list.

Hunting was keen to see that his sixteen star riders were not over extended. He had a policy that no more than eight of his riders would be in action on the same night. For the first season the ISL riders were identified by coloured blouses but that was discontinued in 1929, This is a way of dating a photograph though.

Another sign of the Australians popularity was the inspiration for the composing of a song "My speedway hero (He's a rider) " as it was a fox trot it was in demand in dance halls. Featured on the sheet music cover

were “Whirlwind” Charlie Spinks, “Dare Devil” Dicky Smythe “Wizard” Frank Arthur “Broadside” Vic Huxley and “Cyclone” Billy Lamont - a collectors item today.

Although living conditions, rain and machinery problems dampened the spirits of the Australians they could do no wrong in the eyes of the British public. Respected British speedway author Tom Stenner wrote in 1934: ⁵

“Without a shadow of doubt we have to thank the Australians for putting speedway racing on the map in this country. The brilliant band of riders, who came to England under the banner of Brisbane promoter A.J.Hunting, showed us that even the best Englishman was a raw novice. We did not know what broadsiding was until Huxley, Arthur and their colleagues dumbfounded the critics and crowd alike by seemingly laying their machines at impossible angles to send the cinders spouting Vesuvius- like from flying wheels over the fence and into the stands. ”

A record crowd of 74,000 was recorded at the White City Stadium for the June 9th meeting, a boost to the coffers of ISL. Drawing again on their ideas from Australia ISL introduced the seven popular trophies that were so keenly contested at Davies Park, they were the Golden Helmet and Gauntlet, Silver Armlet, Sash, Wings and Pennant. The first Golden helmet had been introduced in Sydney in 1925. The first one was on display in a George Street jewellers and reported in the press. To the families regret Golden helmets held by Frank and AJ have not been returned to them after loaning them out for display. At the end of the season ISL took over the management of Stamford Bridge [home of the Chelsea Football Club from Claude Langdon

Another example of the ploys that were used by International Speedways, to gain the utmost publicity, was the visit of the ISL riders to the Princess Theatre in the West End to see Mae Bacon in the comedy “Lumber Love” As the party went backstage Frank Hunting picked up a silk stocking belonging to Mae, the actress duly autographed it with a flourish and it was put up as the trophy for the next White City meeting which Frank Arthur duly won.

As the season progressed the shortage of machinery eased, as the manufactures became more accommodating to the Australians needs. By the end of September Hunting’s riders had raced all over England, from London to Manchester and Birmingham a mention of the Manchester track should be made as it is sometimes referred to as White

City, in fact there were 2 tracks in the White City area of Manchester, the ISL one was Kirkmanshulme greyhound stadium was known as Belle Vue [now home of the present day Belle Vue team] the other was at White City Leisure Centre.⁷ As they prepared to return to Australia the mission was completed. Speedway was well and truly introduced to England. The methods of running speedway meetings, which were developed in Brisbane, were to become the models for the presentation of speedway until the present day. The formation of the Speedway Control Board in May 1928 prompted a statement from Hunting that would ring true the following year. Safety of my riders is my first priority he said. If there is any compromise on safety I will go it alone. Safety fences were an issue with ISL. Hunting had designed a fence to withstand a force of sixty tons at sixty miles per hour. Back in Brisbane the first grand prix was run at Davies Park, the winner was none other than Lionel van Praag, the format was exactly the same as today.

The Motor Cycle magazine reported in October 1928 that AJ Hunting departed from England in September 1928 for Buenos Aires where he was exploring the opportunities for speedway in the South American city.

For A.J.Hunting the 1929 season ended early as he sensationally severed all contact with speedway in England and travelled to Buenos Aires on the Ameda from London on July 10.^{8A}. One of the reasons for his departure was that he arrived in England in January 1928 he only had one official body to negotiate with, the Auto Cycle Union. Now there was the infamous Track Licensing Body (TLB) a newly formed National Promoters Association (NPA) and a Dirt Track Riders Association (DTRA) to deal with. Becoming increasingly frustrated with the complexities of these four bodies, the bickering and the infighting, Hunting moved his operations to Buenos Aires in Argentina where he constructed the La Huracan speedway. In the northern winter of 1929 Hunting invited a team of Australian, American and English riders to the South American city. In the team were Davies Park favourite Max Grosskreutz, New South Wales rider Buzz Hibberd and South Australian Frank Duckett. A question often arises over whether Bruce McCallum was in the party, and this stems from a group photograph shown below that names a "Pug" McCullum. Note the "u" in the spelling, the fact is that Pug was the track mechanic, who was often mistaken for Eric Langton and was completely different in stature to

Bruce who never went to South America This story was reported in the Auto Journal of November 28 1930

Johnnie Hoskins the great showman and promoter, made an interesting observation to UK journalist Richard Bott In 1974

“In 1928, The top Australian and a few of the Aussie trained Americans came to London-and that was the end of speedway in Australia until a few of us got together in 1932 and took two teams of the best Australian and British riders down under.”

This was not strictly true as the Hunting brothers arrived back in Australia in 1931 to revive the speedway scene with some notable riders lined up.. Speedway in Australia had encountered some difficult times in the 1929-1931 period as it was the lowest point of the depression, but it certainly was not the end of speedway in Australia.

The Davies Park Grand Prix held on October 13, was another original event that has significance in the history of speedway, Sixty six years later that exact same formula was applied to a newly vamped World Championship series in Europe which completely changed the future of speedway racing. This is another point where it can be said ” it started at Davies Park. ” The first ever Grand Prix was won by Sydney rider Lionel Van Praag who also won the consolation final. Surprise packet of the meeting was newcomer Ossie Brachler who won the handicap final from Jock Hollis. At the same meeting an added attraction was the South Brisbane Goat Derby which featured goats from Townsville, Rockhampton and Brisbane! ¹

He returned to Brisbane in July 1931 entering negotiations with the RNA to reopen the Ekka as stated earlier. Following the Brisbane City Council decision to revoke the licence he returned to Davies Park, but after six meetings there he withdrew from the promotion. The track struggled on under a co-operative for a few more meetings but Hunting had no involvement.

Nothing more was heard of Hunting until September 1933 when he formed a company named Professional One Day Cricket Limited to promote one day matches on the Brisbane Ekka oval., The players were paid ten shillings for every run scored over ten. The first match, that included interstate players Gordon Amos, Len Waterman and Norman Grant was held on Saturday October 7 1933 and opened by Alderman H Massey.^{2A} Public support in this time of cherished amateur values was dismal and after five matches the whole scheme came to nothing. Kerry Packer picked up the idea in the ‘70’s with resounding success.

We then move on to 1937 when talks were re-opened with the RNA and Brisbane City Council that led to Hunting returning to promote speedway at the Ekka on October 23, 1937, after an absence of ten years. The summer of 1938 was one of the wettest on record and this caused considerable hardships with running the speedway. As a result only seven meetings were held before the doors closed at the Ekka and a revival did not take place until 1946. Another factor that added to Hunting's woes was that the original problem of free admission for RNA members still had not been resolved.³

On June 16, 1937 he registered Speedway (Exhibition) Pty Ltd in Brisbane with fellow directors Arthur Broadbent and John Henderson and they opened the new Ekka season on October 23 (1937).

In 1938 he again looked to other sports, this time forming Big Fights Pty Ltd which promoted a boxing match in Brisbane. The Ekka closed again on October 10, 1938 and Hunting semi retired to Upper Brookfield in the western suburbs of Brisbane.

This marvellous impresario wasn't finished yet and in 1938 he opened Australia's first floodlit golf driving range at Windsor, Brisbane. His application to the Brisbane city council included speedway but this never got off the ground.

Then, with the Second World War raging, in 1940 he invented the thermos fridge for the Australian Army. In 1941 he had had enough of promoting and retired from the 'rat race' to grow silver beet on his Upper Brookfield property. He also returned to one of his earlier pastimes, toy making - in a shed built of two-gallon drums laid like bricks. It was known locally as the 'drum shed'.

At the end of the war Hunting visited his native Victoria where, on September 26, 1946 at the age of 63 he passed away suddenly at his daughter's home in New Brighton, Melbourne. Sadly this was the same year as speedway returned to the EKKA, his protégé Frank Arthur, it was ironic that this was the season that cars at last became popular in Queensland, ironic because A J was a car man from the beginning, he did not live to see his dreams fulfilled.

Frank Hunting was involved in speedway at Melbourne exhibition for a few years, then gave the sport away to become a Church of Christ minister in Adelaide.

Hunting was survived by his wife Ethel, son George and daughters Nancy, Guschen (aka Betty), Marion (aka Peggy) and Vere (aka Bidy).

The Hunting legacy is formidable. They initiated Golden Helmet 1925, the first speedway magazine, the Speedway News, the first Grand prix, the first Australians to England. The speedway coat of arms and motto. Developed speedway at seven UK tracks, three in South America and five Australian venues. There were also attempts at several other venues. In fact Hunting floated a total of nineteen companies. The claims of over other pioneer promoters pale into insignificance in comparison.

Star Championship Trophy Competition 1932

Each of the nine National League tracks were to run a series of scratch races open to only the tracks contracted riders.

The winner of each tracks qualifying event was to represent his track at the final at Wembley on September 22nd with the supporters at each track voting for their second qualifier.

The championship sponsor the Star newspaper was to give the scratch race final winner at each track a bronze star.

National League Qualifying Events

Wembley Thursday June 9th 1932

The Wembley supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Gordon Byers resulted in a vote for Ginger Lees.

Ht 1 1st Harry Whitfield 2nd Wally Kilmister

Ht 2 1st Jack Ormston 2nd George Greenwood

3rd Lionel Van Praag (mt) George Greenwood led for a time before being passed by Lionel Van Praag. Jack Ormston then got going and passed both his opponents. Greenwood ended up second when Van Praag had to retire with machinery problems which also afflicted Greenwood later in the race.

Ht 3 1st Gordon Byers 2nd Reg Bounds Reg Bounds led for two laps until Gordon Byers riding with such abandon that a fall looked imminent went past him and went on to win easily.

Ht 4 1st Ginger Lees 2nd Norman Evans 3rd Charlie Shelton Ginger Lees won his Ht by five lengths. Charlie Shelton had been running a close second until the last bend when Norman Evans found a way through and took second place by three quarters of a length.

Semi Final 1 1st Gordon Byers 2nd Jack Ormston Time 79.8 secs

Gordon Byers rode even better than in his Ht taking the lead from the start and gradually increasing it due to good riding and in the end winning by around 40 yards.

Semi Final 2 1st Wally Kilmister 2nd Ginger Lees Wally Kilmister was always in front after the first bend. In his attempt to catch the New Zealander Lees crossed the white line (unintentionally and no exclusion) and was beaten by half a dozen lengths.

Final – One Round Match Race 1st Gordon Byers 2nd Wally Kilmister Wally Kilmister out-manoeuvred Gordon Byers at the start of the final and got the jump by half a length. He led for a time but Byers was on the chase and on the pit bend for the third time Byers got through inside Kilmister and went on to win by five to six lengths.

Crystal Palace – Saturday July 2nd 1932

The Crystal Palace supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Joe Francis resulted in a vote for Tom Farndon.

Ht 1 (Re Run) 1st Alex Peel 2nd Jim Willmott 3rd Clem Mitchell 3rd Nobby Key (retired) Nobby Key had very poor opposition and was winning as he liked when he had a wheel collapse on the third lap. Jim Willmott in swerving to avoid the fallen Key also fell and lay across the track in a dangerous position which required the A.C.U. Steward to stop the race. Nobby Key was allowed in the re run but in a gesture of sportsmanship feeling that after his crash one of the other riders should have won the race he merely crossed the start line and then throttled down. Alex Peel won by some distance from Jim Willmott

Ht 2 1st Harry Shepherd 2nd Triss Sharp Also Rode Eric Blain Alf Sawford Harry Shepherd won easily.

Ht 3 1st Joe Francis 2nd Ron Johnson 3rd George Newton 4th Tom Farndon (fell) Tom Farndon was out of the race as he fell on the first bend. Until the last bend Francis and Johnson stayed within a couple of lengths of each other until Ron Johnson over slid on the last corner. Ron managed to correct his over slide without falling but that allowed Francis to cross the finish line some way ahead of him.

Semi Final 1 1st Joe Francis 2nd Harry Shepherd

Semi Final 2 1st Ron Johnson 2nd Alex Peel

Final 1st Joe Francis 2nd Ron Johnson Speed 46.03 mph

Also Rode Harry Shepherd Alex Peel For three laps Ron Johnson and Joe Francis were shoulder to shoulder but then Johnson again met with trouble which gave Joe Francis a big lead. Johnson had suffered a front

wheel puncture, he wobbled but recovered and kept going but his chance of victory had gone.

West Ham – Tuesday 19th July 1932

The West Ham supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Les Smiler Wotton resulted in a vote for Tommy Croombs who had been unable to ride in the qualifier due to injury.

Ht 1 1st Rol Stobart 2nd Jack Barnett 3rd Drew McQueen

Rol Stobart just beat Jack Barnett by half a length.

Ht 2 1st Les Smiler Wotton 2nd Tommy Allott 3rd Arthur Jervis

Les Wotton won easily from Tommy Allott

Ht 3 1st Tiger Stevenson 2nd Arthur Atkinson 3rd Tommy Gamble

Ht 4 1st Bluey Wilkinson 2nd Phil Tiger Hart 3rd Charlie Spinks

Phil Tiger Hart not riding as well as usual was a distant second behind Bluey Wilkinson

Semi Final 1 1st Harold Tiger Stevenson 2nd Bluey Wilkinson

Also Rode Arthur Atkinson Phil Tiger Hart Tiger Stevenson won an eventful and thrilling Semi Final race by just half a length.

Semi Final 2 1st Les Smiler Wotton 2nd Tommy Allott Les Wotton won easily against his fellow West Ham junior riders. **Also Rode Rol Stobart Jack Barnett**

Final 1st Les Wotton 2nd Tiger Stevenson Time 85.6 secs Also Rode

Bluey Wilkinson Tommy Allott This race produced the fastest four laps of the meeting equating to a speed of 42 miles an hour. Les Wotton won but Tiger Stevenson finished only two to three lengths behind him. The time was good as the West Ham track was in a bumpy condition.

Stamford Bridge – Saturday July 23rd 1932

The Stamford Bridge supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Frank Arthur resulted in a vote for Wal Phillips.

Ht 1 1st Frank Arthur 2nd Gus Kuhn 3rd Dick Wise Speed 46.03 mph

Frank Arthur recorded the fastest time of the meeting.

Ht 2 1st Frank Bond 2nd Jack Chapman 3rd Wal Phillips (f) Speed

45.0 mph Frank Bond shot into the lead on the first corner and was leading the way out of it as Wal Phillips fell. Bond continued to lead the way from Jack Chapman and eventually won the race by 30 yards despite touching the safety fence on the last lap and almost coming to grief just managing to right himself in time.

Ht 3 1st Charlie Blacklock 2nd Arthur Warwick 3rd Jack Bishop

Speed 45.57 mph This was a great race fought at high speed. Arthur Warwick was always close but never quite managed to get in front. Warwick got very near on the last bend but still lost by a length and a half. Jack Bishop finished third less than half a dozen lengths behind.

Ht 4 1st Dick Smythe 2nd Keith Harvey 3rd Cyril Anderson

Dick Smythe had a very easy win and only had to turn on a little extra speed when danger threatened to ease away from the opposition. Keith Harvey beat the faster looking Cyril Anderson by a wheel for second place.

Semi Final 1 1st Frank Arthur 2nd Gus Kuhn 3rd Charlie Blacklock (fell) Speed 45.68 mph Charlie Blacklock fell on the first turn and Frank Arthur was able to lead home Gus Kuhn all the way.

Semi Final 2 1st Frank Bond 2nd Dick Smythe 3rd Arthur Warwick Speed 45.34 mph Arthur Warwick found himself shut out on the first corner and was then stuck in third place all the way. Dick Smythe got away well with Frank Bond chasing him. Bond always looked dangerous and eventually found a way through on the second corner of the third lap with an inside move and he went on to win by three lengths.

Final 1st Frank Arthur 2nd Dick Smythe 3rd Frank Bond 4th Gus Kuhn Frank Bond was left badly at the start and Dicky Smythe held the lead for three quarters of a lap. Frank Arthur who was taking no chances then slipped through and won the race by nearly ten lengths. At the finish the rapidly chasing Frank Bond was only two to three lengths behind second man home Smythe.

Frank Arthur was presented with his winners Bronze Star by Mr Chattaway the editor of The Star newspaper.

Coventry – Thursday August 4th 1932

The Coventry supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Roy Dook resulted in a vote for Syd Jackson.

After problems in the league match Roy Dook dominated the second half winning the Star Trophy Scratch race to qualify for the final at Wembley later in the season.

Ht 1 1st Syd Jackson 2nd Stan Dell Time 75.secs

Ht 2 1st Roy Dook 2nd Stan Greatrex Time 75.8 secs

Ht 3 1st Stew Fairbairn 2nd Skid Pitcher Time 75.8 secs

Ht 4 1st Arthur Tiny Tims 2nd Mick Smith (ns) 3rd Cyril Taft (exbor)

Semi Final 1 1st Roy Dook 2nd Stan Greatrex 3rd Stan Dell

3rd Syd Jackson (mt) Time 77 secs After winning his Heat Syd Jackson had to pack up with motor trouble when leading Roy Dook in the Semi final.

Semi Final 2 1st Stew Fairbairn 2nd Skid Pitcher 3rd Arthur Tims Time 79 secs

Final 1st Roy Dook 2nd Stan Greatrex 3rd Skid Pitcher 4th Stew Fairbairn Time 77 secs In the Final Stan Greatrex was leading and was having a great scrap with Roy Dook. Greatrex held the line until the last bend when Dook rode around him.

Plymouth – Thursday August 4th 1932

The Plymouth supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Eric Collins resulted in a vote for Bill Clibbett.

Ht 1 1st Bill Clibbett 2nd Clem Mitchell Bill Clibbett won his Ht in convincing style. Clem Mitchell finished only a fifth of a second behind him.

Ht 2 1st Bert Spencer 2nd Jack Jackson

Ht 3 1st Fred Hawken 2nd Ray Taylor Ray Taylor was unlucky as he led until his chain broke. He still finished second but the loss of time eliminated him from being one of the two slowest second placed riders to qualify for the Semi Final stage.

Ht 4 1st Eric Collins 2nd Frank Goulden

Semi Final 1 1st Bill Clibbett 2nd Bert Spencer 3rd Clem Mitchell

After a splendid piece of racing Bill Clibbett went straight into the final and Bert Spencer also qualified as the fastest Semi Final second placed man.

Semi Final 2 1st Eric Collins 2nd Frank Goulden 3rd Fred Hawken

Frank Goulden was well beaten by Eric Collins

Final 1st Eric Collins 2nd Bert Spencer 3rd Frank Goulden

4th Bill Clibbett (fell) Bill Clibbett fell on the second lap and after that Eric Collins had a fairly comfortable win.

Belle Vue – Saturday August 20th 1932

The Belle Vue supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Eric Langton resulted in a vote for Frank Varey.

Ht 1 1st Eric Langton 2nd Frank Charles 3rd Bronco Dixon (ns)

Ht 2 1st Frank Varey 2nd Bob Harrison 3rd Len Woods

Ht 3 1st Dusty Haigh 2nd Oliver Langton 3rd Larry Boulton

This was a more exciting contest as Dusty Haigh and Oliver Langton had a very tight scrap until Langton's machine started to lose some of its power allowing Haigh to pull away.

Ht 4 1st Eric Gregory 2nd Harold Hastings 3rd Max Grosskreutz (mt)

Final 1st Eric Langton 2nd Frank Varey 3rd Eric Gregory

4th Dusty Haigh Frank Varey once got his nose in front but Eric Langton proved to be his master and won the race.

Clapton – Wednesday August 24th 1932

The Clapton supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Norman Parker resulted in a vote for Jack Parker.

Jack Parker was unable to ride in the Clapton Star Championship qualifier due to injury but he still took a prominent part in proceedings.

At the request of Mr Jack Harrison of the "Star" Parker handed his brother Norman the Bronze Star round winner's prize.

Ht 11st Norman Parker 2nd Vic Collins 3rd John Deeley (mt)

4th Ben Living (fell) Norman Parker won by a considerable distance.

Ben Living was a faller on the first turn.

Ht 2 1st Wally Lloyd 2nd Bill Crouch 3rd Arthur Westwood (fell rem)

Wally Lloyd won easily from Bill Crouch. Arthur Westwood trying to get ahead on the first turn came down. He remounted and then rode faster than anyone but he was obviously out of the running.

Ht 3 1st Phil Bishop 2nd Alf Foulds 3rd Chun Moore Phil Bishop did well to move up from third place to win Ht three. Chun Moore however was unlucky as he had let until mechanical trouble set in.

Ht 4 1st Steve Langton 2nd Roy Barrowclough

Semi Final 1 1st Norman Parker 2nd Bill Crouch 3rd Vic Collins

3rd Wally Lloyd (mt) Wally Lloyd was a good second to Norman Parker when his motor packed up giving Bill Crouch an easy second place.

Semi Final 2 1st Steve Langton 2nd Roy Barrowclough 3rd Alf Foulds

4th Phil Bishop (fell) Steve Langton just ran away with his Semi Final after Phil Bishop had fallen and won by some distance from Roy Barrowclough.

Final 1st Norman Parker 2nd Steve Langton 3rd Bill Crouch

4th Roy Barrowclough The Steward made several attempts to get a good start in the Final but over keenness foiled him and when the riders were allowed to go Norman Parker had a slight advantage. Parker

gradually increased his lead with Steve Langton finishing several lengths behind him and Bill Crouch 3-4 lengths further back.

Wimbledon – Monday August 29th 1932

The Wimbledon supporters vote as to which unsuccessful rider in this qualifier would travel to Wembley for the Star Championship Final along with Vic Huxley resulted in a vote for Wally Hull.

Ht 11st Vic Huxley 2nd Ivor Hill Vic Huxley recorded a very easy win

Ht 2 1st Dick Hutchings 2nd Dicky Case 3rd Len Parker Time 73.6 secs Dicky Case on form alone should have won very easily but Ht 2 provided a sensation. Len Parker and Dick Hutchings proceeded to shut Case out on the first turn. Parker faltered slightly in straightening up for the back straight and Case got past him. It looked like Case would take the lead a matter of seconds later but Hutchings kept his lead for lap after lap and maintained a fast pace without faltering and went on to win by five lengths.

Ht 3 1st Claude Rye 2nd Wally Hull Time 74.8 secs Claude Rye once in front maintained his lead very easily

Semi Final 1 1st Vic Huxley 2nd Wally Hull 3rd Dicky Case Time 79 secs Another fast ride gave Huxley a Semi Final victory from Wally Hull with Dicky Case half a lap behind in third place.

Semi Final 2 1st Claude Rye 2nd Ivor Hill 3rd Dick Hutchings Time 80.6 secs Ivor Hill and Claude Rye immediately filled the first two places and Dick Hutchings was close behind them when he over slid and fell. Rye won the race but not before both he and Hill had also fallen.

They were having a close race when Ivor Hill who had just been ahead for most of the race over slid on leaving the first bend on the last lap. Claude Rye himself came down too on the last corner. Hill was unable to get going again without a delay and as Rye immediately remounted he won easily. Hill finished some 25 seconds behind the winner.

Final 1st Vic Huxley 2nd Wally Hull Also Rode Claude Rye Ivor Hill Vic Huxley was leading the final easily before a lap had been completed and won in masterly fashion.

National League Riders Star Final Championship Wembley – Thursday September 22nd 1932

Eighteen riders were to take part in the Star Championship Final. These included the nine men who had won their track qualifying event and the nine riders nominated by their tracks supporters.

The prize money available for the event was over £400. The Star newspaper also now had the distinction of presenting the only £100 prize now competed for in the Speedway World. (The exception being the British Individual Championship which was a closed event)

1st Place – A Silver Star and £100.00 2nd Place – A Bronze Star and £50 3rd Place - £25

Star Championship Qualifiers 1932

Team	Club	Qualifier
Coventry	Roy Dook	Qualifier
	Syd Jackson	Voted For
Crystal Palace	Joe Francis	Qualifier
	Tom Farndon	Voted For
Wimbledon	Vic Huxley	Qualifier
	Dicky Case	Voted For
Stamford Bridge	Frank Arthur	Qualifier
	Wal Phillips	Voted For
Clapton	Norman Parker	Qualifier
	Jack Parker	Voted For
West Ham	Les Wotton	Qualifier
	Tommy Croombs	Voted For
Wembley	Gordon Byers	Qualifier
	Harold Riley “Ginger” Lees	Voted For
Belle Vue	Eric Langton	Qualifier
	Frank Varey	Voted For
Plymouth	Eric Collins	Qualifier
	Bill Clibbett	Voted For

Missing from the line up through injury despite qualifying were:-

Crystal Palace – Joe Francis replaced by Ron Johnson

Plymouth – Eric Collins replaced by Bert Spencer

Ht 1 1st Gordon Byers 2nd Roy Dook 3rd Frank Arthur Time 81.0

secs The first surprise was Frank Arthur unable to get off the start as quick as his opponents. He had Gordon Byers and Roy Dook either side of him and ended up being partially filled in. As a result Frank Arthur never managed to move out of the third place position and finished three lengths behind second placed Roy Dook. Roy Dook led for nearly three laps before Gordon Byers moved past him and went on to win by ten lengths.

Ht 2 1st Dicky Case 2nd Norman Parker 3rd Ron Johnson (ret)

Time 80 2/5 secs Ron Johnson and Dicky Case when round the first bend and into the second wheel to wheel. Case had however been drawn on the inside start position and on the second bend he took Ron out near the fence and left him there. As a result of being taken wide Norman Parker managed to take second place away from Ron Johnson and Johnson having ridden through a lot of dirt retired before the end of the race. Dicky Case won easily.

Ht 3 1st Eric Langton 2nd Les Wotton 3rd Syd Jackson (retired)

Time 79 3/5 secs Syd Jackson retired from the race before the first lap had been covered. Les Wotton showing he was better than a team reserve man gave Eric Langton a hard time. Wotton had the required speed and he got in front of Eric Langton on the first lap and he led the Belle Vue star man until the first bend of lap three. At that point Wotton went sliding far too wide which let Eric Langton through. Les Wotton recovered and nearly caught Eric Langton on the last corner with an inside move and he lost by only a length at the finish.

Ht 4 1st Vic Huxley 2nd Bert Spencer 3rd Wal Phillips Time 80 2/5

secs Wal Phillips was drawn inside Bert Spencer and Vic Huxley and actually managed to pull out a lead by a few lengths. Huxley from the outside gate wasn't able to slip inside Bert Spencer until the second turn. Huxley then began to chase down Wal Phillips but only caught him when Phillips suffered magneto problems on the last lap and was only able to crawl home third two or three lengths behind Bert Spencer.

Ht 5 1st Jack Parker 2nd Frank Varey 3rd Tommy Croombs Time 79

2/5 secs Jack Parker won his Ht easily and focussed attention on himself as the "Man to Beat"

Ht 6 1st Ginger Lees 2nd Tom Farndon 3rd Bill Clibbett Time 78 1/5

secs Ginger Lees was drawn on the outside gate and he dropped in behind Bill Clibbett and Tom Farndon as the riders entered the first bend and then came out in front following a neat clever piece of riding. From that point on Lees was always in control of the race winning easily from second placed Tom Farndon.

Semi Final 1 1st Dicky Case (Inside) 2nd Eric Langton 3rd Jack

Parker (mt) (Outside) Time 78 2/5 secs Before the race Jack Parker returned to the paddock to give his machine attention and during the two false starts that followed he seemed to have difficulty in keeping up with the other riders. Once the race started Eric Langton led around the first turn but Dicky Case overtook him entering the back straight and

from that point always led. Langton always looked like he might catch the Australian but Case still won by three lengths.

Semi Final 2 1st Vic Huxley 2nd Gordon Byers (Inside) 3rd Ginger Lees (fell) (Outside) Time 78 4/5 secs There were a number of false starts as the meeting Steward was insisting on as even a start as possible with the importance of the event. However when the green light was at last shown Vic Huxley gained almost a wheel advantage. On the first corner Gordon Byers on the inside came through with a slight lead with Ginger Lees only fractionally behind him. On the second turn there was a Vic Huxley master class of riding when he nipped inside Gordon Byers and came out with his front wheel in front. All three riders very close for nearly two laps when Ginger Lees fell and from that point on Vic Huxley had control of the race and won by four or five lengths.

Star Championship Final

1st Eric Langton (outside) 2nd Vic Huxley 3rd Dicky Case (inside) (fell) Time 77 3/5 secs Eric Langton qualified for the Star Final as the fastest second placed man from the Semi Final stage. Langton then flew from the gate and beat the two Australians through the first turn and from then on was always in command of the race. Vic Huxley accidentally touched Dicky Case as they entered the first corner and baulked him enough to put Case back into third place. Eric Langton gradually drew away until he won by ten lengths. Huxley and Case were within a few yards of each other until Case fell on the last bend.

North V South Test Match – North 34 South 20

The Star Championship was followed by the first official North v South test match. The match was disappointing as it became a one sided affair right from the start.

The Midland based riders were a strong contingent and were allocated to North or South by drawing a line through Meriden (“The Centre of England”) and allocating the riders to North or South based on their birth place.

North

Eric Langton	5	Frank Varey	6
Ginger Lees	7	Gordon Byers	3
Jack Parker	9	Norman Parker	3
Les Wotton (reserve)	1		

South

Wal Phillips	5	Colin Watson	2
Tom Farndon	3	Tiger Stevenson	5

Syd Jackson **5** **Nobby Key** **0**
Ht 1 1st Frank Varey 2nd Eric Langton 3rd Colin Watson 4th Wal Phillips Wal Phillips was suffering from magneto problems and trailed in last.

Ht 2 1st Tom Farndon 2nd Ginger Lees 3rd Tiger Stevenson 4th Gordon Byers (fell) Tom Farndon won his only race however behind his Gordon Byers fell in front of Ginger Lees so slowing him up slightly although at the time Farndon was already in front.

Ht 3 1st Jack Parker 2nd Norman Parker 3rd Syd Jackson 4th Nobby Key (mt) Nobby Key suffered machine failure on the first bend.

Ht 4 1st Eric Langton 2nd Tiger Stevenson 3rd Frank Varey 4th Tom Farndon (mt) Eric Langton won easily. Tom Farndon suffered machine failure on the second turn.

Ht 5 1st Ginger Lees 2nd Gordon Byers 3rd Syd Jackson 4th Nobby Key Syd Jackson made an effort for a lap but Gordon Byers passed him on the first bend on the second lap and Jackson then just toured around in third place.

Ht 6 1st Jack Parker 2nd Wal Phillips 3rd Colin Watson 4th Norman Parker Jack Parker won easily without having to hurry too much. Wal Phillips motor still wasn't right although he did manage to finish second.

Ht 7 1st Syd Jackson 2nd Frank Varey 3rd Les Wotton 4th Nobby Key

Ht 8 1st Wal Phillips 2nd Ginger Lees 3rd Gordon Byers 4th Colin Watson Wal Phillips having solved his engine problems had a good race against Ginger Lees with Wal managing to win by a few lengths.

Ht 9 1st Jack Parker 2nd Tiger Stevenson 3rd Norman Parker 4th Tom Farndon

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