

Les Blakebrough

A short account of this rider by Brian Collins of internationalspeedway@yahoo.co.uk



The first is from the front (!) page of the Daily Mail. Of the second, his daughter Jennifer says "it shows Dad standing up on his motorbike." It was said he invented the special rear wheel ; it looks as though it had beads or balls instead of a tyre.

Les Blakebrough - Setting the record straight

This well-known London-based rider was active in the early days of the sport, from 1928 to 1933, notably for Crystal Palace and Stamford Bridge. It has previously been stated in print that he adopted his mother's maiden name of Blakebrough, rather than using his own name of Bottomley, when riding, and also that he died of diphtheria in 1933.

I was recently contacted by Les' daughter, Jennifer, asking for any information on his speedway career. When I related the above "facts" to her, she was somewhat surprised, since she wasn't born until 1941! Les Blakebrough (NOT Blakeborough) WAS his true name. The family does not recognise the name Bottomley at all.

Les retired from speedway because he shattered his right knee in a crash. Because of this, he was turned down for active war service, but worked on radar development as a civilian during the war years, then later in the aircraft industry. He retired in 1973 to Crackington Haven in Cornwall, where he died on Jan 26, 1978. He is buried in St. Gennys churchyard.

His oldest son, Gordon, adopted his father's Christian name when he emigrated to Australia, and became a world-renowned ceramic artist (see www.lesblakebrough.com.au)