

THE SPEEDWAY RESEARCHER

Edited by Graham Fraser & Jim Henry

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A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year
to all our subscribers (76) as we publish Vol.1 No.3.

WHERE DO I GET THE INFORMATION ?

Probably the best source of post war speedway information is the dedicated speedway magazines like the Speedway Star, the Speedway News and the Speedway Gazette. However, before the war, the newspapers are probably a much better source of data. Newspaper coverage is not always guaranteed but it is often a rich source of written material and photographs.

If you want to know which newspapers cover the geographical area for tracks you are interested in, probably the best source is the NEWSPLAN series of books. There is almost complete coverage of the UK and Ireland (eight out of the ten areas are available) and the published coverage is broken down as follows: Newsplan Scotland; Newsplan Wales; Newsplan Ireland; Newsplan London and South Eastern Library Region {London, Essex, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, East Sussex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, West Sussex}; Newsplan East Midlands {Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Suffolk}; Newsplan North Western Region {Manchester, Liverpool, Cheshire, Isle of Man, Lancashire}; Newsplan Northern Region {Newcastle, Northumberland, Durham, Cleveland, Cumbria}; Newsplan Yorkshire and Humberside {North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Humberside}. The remainder of the country is or is about to be covered but as yet we have no details of when these will be published.

These books, published over the years by the British Library, carry details of known newspapers by town of publication. Library holdings are not always complete and Newsplan gives details of copies known to exist and where the papers are held. It also gives details of the condition of the holdings and how the copies are held (ie Paper copy or microfilm). Copies are usually held in libraries or by the publisher but in some instances copies held by private collectors are also listed. It is most likely copies of Newsplan will be held in the Reference Section of your local library. If not, don't be frightened to ask politely for a copy from the British Library Lending Division at Boston Spa through the inter-library loan system.

Look for the most obvious sources first but don't be afraid of casting your net wider. Speedway reports often found its way into papers published well away from the track site. County wide newspaper titles often featured speedway if the town was within its circulation area. It is also worth checking in the press for nearby towns. For example a newspaper published in Hamilton carried details and an action photograph of activity at Motherwell in 1932.

Sometimes it is worth looking in the newspapers from the home town of visiting teams. In the pre war era some newspapers carried details of their team on their travels. An example is the Newcastle newspaper which carried details of the Newcastle team's matches at Middlesbrough. You never know what is there until you actually look.

Good hunting. As they say in the X Files - The truth is out there. If you want some more tips - don't hesitate to contact us - we've both spent hours in libraries chasing speedway data and probably know most, if not all the pitfalls of being a researcher.

We'll talk a bit about Colindale in a later edition as this is probably the best source of newspapers in the country and it is open Monday to Saturday almost every week of the year. (It does have a closed week for stock checks etc.). If you want to go it is almost immediately over the road from Colindale Underground station and has car parking spaces at the front door. It is open for consultation 10am to 4.30pm but the doors are open from 9.30am if you arrive early. You can even ring in advance and ask for some of the material you want to be placed on reserve.

ALLO ALLO

We really do want to hear from you !!!!! The Speedway Researcher was set up to exchange ideas and information and to allow us to help each other. It was really nice to receive your letters and subscriptions (we have topped the 70 mark) but **we do want material from YOU** - what information **YOU** are looking for - what information **YOU** have to share. You can either write or phone us - we do genuinely want to get the network working were we can share information. When asking for information, please specific as you can be. Remember the more help you can give, the easier it is to respond.

Now that winter is with us we have lots of time to get on with research. We want articles for inclusion in The Speedway Researcher - Graham and I don't want to hog these pages.

The deadline for copy, requests, etc is 1st February 1999. We will do our level best to fit in your requests as soon as possible. Next Publication date 1st March 1999.

Burnley Speedway - Short Lived but What a Legacy

Editor Graham Fraser has researched the history of the very short lived venture at Burnley in Lancashire.

It makes fascinating reading. A track with riders of the status of Frank Charles, Joe Abbott and Ginger Lees on its books and it could not make a go of it. Now read on.

Burnley will never feature as a major track. However in its brief history the track at Towneley proved to be a fertile breeding ground for speedway talent. Towneley Stadium, built for greyhound racing, opened its doors to 12,000 spectators on the afternoon of Easter Saturday 1929 - 30th March. Opened by the local mayor the major trophies were presented to Ginger Lees and Arthur Franklyn of Manchester White City. The second event, also billed in the newspaper as an opening meeting, was staged on Easter Monday and a crowd of 4,000 saw Frank Charles clean up the meeting.

Local press coverage of these two events was excellent with a number of photographs splashed over the front page. The locals had to know that speedway had arrived at Towneley.

The Burnley promotion decide to enter the Northern Dirt Track League and their first match was away at nearby Barnsley Lundwood. The visitors, represented by Frank Charles, Arthur and Cyril Wilcock and Joe Abbott won 17 - 11. This one of the few four man team four heat league format matches (the format was changed to 9 heat six man teams) and the race scores were on the 4 - 2 - 1 basis.

The crowds fell by another thousand for the home meeting of 13th April, some 3,000 watching Frank Charles win the Golden Gauntlet and Cyril Wilcock take the Golden Helmet.

The Burnley team raced at White City in Manchester in a league fixture and were thumped in a bruising 9 heat encounter by 49 - 13. New captain Ginger Lees scored 4, Joe Abbott 3, Frank Charles 3, Cyril Wilcock 2 and Jack Lund 1. The remaining Burnley man in the six man side is not recorded.

The track fell quiet for a short spell as a meeting scheduled for 27th April was postponed to allow for ground reconstruction works to provide car parking spaces at Towneley.

Back on the road the destination was Liverpool's Stanley Stadium in Prescot Road. This time Burnley won 35 - 28 with Frank Charles leading the charge with a 3 ride 12 point maximum, Lees gathered 9 while Abbott took 6 from three second places behind Charles.

The home league debut for Burnley took place at last as the visitors came from the town of Salford and represented Albion Speedway. Another victory with three full or paid maximums from Lees 12, Abbott 11 and Charles 10. The crowds flocked in to see this and at 10,000 the level should have made the promoters very happy with their decision to run league speedway.

Happiness did not last for long and by mid May the promotion decided to call it a day because of the lack of support and loss of capital. The track was put on the market. Despite this the team stayed together and even ventured to Hanley to race in league fixture there. Hanley had just taken over the interests of another Lancashire failure, Bolton, who were out of business at the Raikes Park venue.

Yet again the Burnley side carried all before them and won by an impressive margin of 49 to 13 and visiting stars carried off all the silverware.

Like Bolton and Burnley, the Hanley flirtation with the league did not last very long in 1929. However, unlike the other two, Hanley did come back from the dead and Sun Street staged a fair amount of speedway after the war before it was demolished after the 1963 season.

The sales negotiations ran from mid May until almost the end of June. On 26th June it was announced that the stadium had been sold to a Mr Percy Platt, managing director of Rochdale Speedway. Speedway returned on 29th June when the Burnley team raced Leicester. Joy for the Lancashire speedway fans but, not for long as the meeting was dusted off. After three heats with Burnley leading 13 - 8 the volume of dust was considered to be unacceptable and the meeting was abandoned. A local drought meant that there was no water available to damp down the track.

The last ever meeting was staged on 6th July when the promotion offered the fans a series of individual races. Not surprisingly the major honours went to Frank Charles and Joe Abbott.

The team formally withdrew from the league on 20th July 1929 and speedway died in Burnley. The track continued as a greyhound race stadium for some time but it also closed down. The site is now shared by a school and golf course but careful examination of the area might reward you with a relic.

The Burnley press must have hoped for a reprieve for the sport as they faithfully reported on the exploits of the men who had represented the town. It told of the exploits of Joe Abbott who was loaned to nearby Preston for the season. It gave details of Frank Charles who moved south to Manchester's White City. It even told of the exploits of Ginger Lees who went abroad to race in Copenhagen in Denmark and Hamburg in Germany. The exploits of the other sixty odd riders, reportedly on Burnley's books, are not chronicled in any detail.

What is perhaps amazing is that their stars stayed loyal to them for so long as the number of home bookings they had was very minimal indeed. Maybe

they were on a big retainer fee as race income could not have amounted to very much.

Burnley is, despite the volume of detail in this article, one of those dusty old venues. Graham feels his research is not yet complete and would welcome any information about this track you may be able to pass on to him. 4

OUR FRIENDS OUT THERE

CARL CROUCHER 4 Whitmore Street, Maidstone, Kent ME16 8JU
Telephone : 01622 204745

Carl is not strictly a speedway historian. His interest is grass track history. (I know we call ourselves The Speedway Researcher but the chances are you will come across grass tracks in you search for speedway and there is no hurt in jotting down the details and sending them to Carl. (Editors)). Carl's speedway interests are sidecars which featured in many of the 1928 meetings up and down the country and were the subject of an attempted revival by a couple of Australians (Alan Bruce and Keith Horton) in 1930 and by another group of Aussies in more recent years.

ROBIN PLAYSTED Noirmont, 23 Eastfield, West Hill,
Ottery St. Mary, Devon, EX11 1XN
Telephone : 01404 815956

Robin's main interest is speedway badges (and runs dare we say it the Speedway Badge Collectors Club). Robin is trying to compile and circulate information on badges issuing sheets of drawings of badges to members. If you want information on badges, Robin is the person to contact.

ALAN BATES Flat G, 14 Radnor Park Avenue, Folkestone,
Kent, CT19 5HN
Telephone : 01303 253924

The north London speedway venue of Walthamstow is Alan's main interest. He has been working on the post war history (there are records indicating that the track operated in 1934) and he now has heat details for all but five meetings. The missing matches are Away at Aldershot 6.9.1950, Away at Wolverhampton 31.8.1951 and the three team matches

raced by the Wolves in Dublin.16.7.50; 23.5.51;24.6.51. (It is possible these results may be in the Dublin newspapers held in 5 Colindale as some do carry heat details.) Equally, if you are looking for Walthamstow information, Alan is the man to get in touch with. (Maybe once Alan has all the post war data he would complete the track history and research 1934. Jim Henry for one would be very interested in what went on there as it is another of these hazy venues.)

MIKE CRAVEN "Appleby", 10 Station Road,
Mickle Trafford, Chester, CH2 4EH
Telephone : 01244 300286

Mike's interest lies in the coastal town of Fleetwood and the team that raced there in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Mike is trying to compile details of the Flyers, not an easy task as the programmes are now very very hard to come by. The local papers did carry match details but did not extend to heat details. He is also trying to contact and interview riders with a view to gathering their reminiscences of the Highbury Avenue venue.

JACK WILLIAMS History Section, School of Social Science,
Liverpool John Moores University,
Trueman Building, 15/21 Webster Street,
Liverpool, L3 2ET
Telephone : 0151 231 4064.Fax 0151 258
1224. Email j.a.williams@livjm.ac.uk

Jack is, as you can tell from the address, an academic and we welcome him to the fold. Jack's particular interest is speedway in Britain between the Wars and in particular the beginnings of speedway; the early speedway promoters, the economics of speedway in the 1920s and 1930s, the administration and organisation of speedway and the numbers of speedway spectators. (It is quite common to see information on the prizes to be won and the crowd numbers in reports of pre war meetings. It is always worthwhile noting down these facts if you are abstracting meeting information.) 6

!!! GET YOUR SLEEVES ROLLED UP !!!!!!

In 1/1 Graham and I suggested that there was a lot of work to do. In this the third effort we want to set up some targets for you to think about researching.

To quote The Sound of Music - let's start at the very beginning - and the letter A. **Aberdeen** is one on offer as there have been suggestions that dirt track racing was staged in the Granite City. The problem is when? Certainly wasn't 1928 to 1931 as I have been through the "Press & Journal" which would have documented anything of this nature. Maybe 1931 to 1939 and 1945 onwards. Certainly there was sand track racing on the beach (it was free to watch from The Esplanade) and grass tracks by the score. (Remember Andy Ross of Peterborough - he came from Stonehaven which is ten miles south of Aberdeen.)

Next we offer **Alde rshot - Boxhall Lane**. I know of 12 meetings in 1929. The question is - were there any more meetings before the stadium site was redeveloped sometime before the area was resurveyed by the Ordnance Survey for its 1937 edition.?

How about **Wombwell - Ings Road**? The better known track was at South Yorkshire Sports Stadium (SYSS) but Ings Road was operated by Darfield Motor Cycle Club from 1928 until ?? Maybe you could start by looking in the Barnsley Chronicle which covers Barnsley (Lundwood) and Wombwell (SYSS).

Now for an obscure one which is causing Graham grief - **Derby**. Did it or did it not have a track? The era of search is 1928 to 1932 (say) and should not be confused with Long Eaton which operated in 1929.

The Leeds - Bradford area is a place where there may be a lot of gems to be uncovered. There was a "dirt track" of sorts at Morley in 1928 but it is thought that it was a scrambles type venue if contemporary photographs can be confirmed. **Post Hill, Pudsey** definitely staged 8 meetings in 1928 in addition to its more famous hill climbs and scrambles events. A venue called Leeds Speedway which operated in the summer of 1928, sometime before Fullarton Park opened in October, was more than likely a grass track but needs checking. Finally, speedway was staged at Greenfields Dog Track and called The Autodrome in 1928 and this requires research. We do know it was the venue for a race between a rider and greyhound. (Greenfields was Bradford Speedway in 1961 and 1962.)

Our final target is **Barrow - Little Park**. This operated from some time in 1931 onwards until ????. According to Don MacDonald (Grant's Dad) there are cinder traces where this track was supposed to be located.

We will publish any details you can come up with. More targets for work in the next edition. However, just to whet your whistle I'll mention **Mansfield Woodhouse** (Not Mansfield); **Stainforth**; **Thorne**; **Huddersfield**; and **Whalley** as candidates. (JH)

There is a fair bit of interest in the compilation of a list of riders. It is a very big task and requires, like everything else, someone, (or more than someone,) willing to tackle the task. Any offers for this task. The Marine Gardens book has A - Z sections which lists all the riders known to have raced at that track. I have compiled A-Zs of all the riders appearing at the tracks in Glasgow 1928 to 1932 and 1939 to 1940. I also have a similar list of riders who visited Old Meadowbank between 1948 and 1954 and could compile a home rider and novice list for that era quite quickly.

The exercise for Glasgow is incomplete as the newspapers did not list the also rans in most events and only the riders who finished in first and second places are recorded. However, it is still an exercise worth doing.

An interesting spin off is the compilation of real names and nicknames. For example Paddy Mills of Norwich fame was really Horace Burke and Tip Mills was really plain old Horace too. Mark Hall of Berwick was Walter Elliott. "Onanoff" "Johnson was plain David, "Stiffy" Aston was William and "Buzz" Hibberd was christened Geoffrey. Terry Stone - ex Rayleigh, Exeter, Glasgow and New Cross - is interested in nicknames and is compiling a list for his display on his superb stall which he mounts a various events.

Any offers for the real names of Taffy Williams - Cardiff / West Ham 1928 - 1930, Butch Williams - West Ham Hawks 1938, Buster Breaks of Rochdale 1930, Smoke Robinson of Preston and then Belle Vue of 1929/1930 and Son Mitchell of post war Newcastle? (JH)

SEASONS 1939,1946 AND 1947

Hugh Vass of 111 Arthurview Crescent, Danderhall, Dalkeith, Midlothian, Scotland has offered to take compiling the meeting details for seasons 1939, 1946 and 1947. Thanks Hugh. What is needed now is for everyone who has unpublished information on these three seasons to pass it on to Hugh. If the meeting details featured in the Speedway News Hugh has the published information - but can you fill the gaps? He is seeking details not published including second half details.

The exercise raises an interesting issue, the standardisation of the annotation of the available information. We probably mark our programmes - ef - when a rider suffers engine failure. This is not always so and we know of annotations such as conked, conk, bd which mean the same. The annotation of a fall is usually - f - but off and crashed have been used. Ideas on a standard list of speedway statistical notations are welcomed. There is a list of markings in the speedway rule books which is quite comprehensive.

HELP WANTED

Jim Gregory (ex Rayleigh, Wimbledon and Oxford who has flashed almost subliminally on BBC's advert for it's Annual Report) is looking for heat details of the following meetings he rode in : Oxford 28/05/1953 World Championship Round; 4/06/1953 Midland Riders Championship; 16/06/1953 Best Pairs; 25/06/1953 v Plymouth; 2/07/1953 v St.Austell; 30/07/1953 v Plymouth. Wolverhampton 26/06/1953 v Oxford. Plymouth 31/07/1953 v Oxford. Rayleigh 9/05/1953 v Oxford; 21/05/1953 v Wolverhampton.Exeter 8/06/1952 v Oxford. Details to Jim at Holly Lodge, Roundabout Lane, Wellyw00n, Herts.

Jim Henry would like heat details for the following meetings at Glasgow White City 1945. Glasgow 61 London 47 raced 15.8.1945; Glasgow56 Newcastle 51 29.8.1945;Ron Johnson's Select 42 Bill Kitchen's Select 42 10.10.1945. (Will provide details of all other 7 meetings raced in 1945 in exchange for all or any missing details.)

Ian Moultray, 24 Moredun Park Gardens, Edinburgh Tel ephone 0131 666 2826 is working on the history of Edinburgh Speedway 1948 to 1954 and would like details of meetings which featured Edinburgh riders other than league/ cup matches. Ian would like a detailed break down of the scores ie Jack Young 3 3 3 3 3 15. In particular Ian is seeking the scores for : Dennis Parker - Speedway Riders' Championship Round at Hastings 19 May 1948; Eddie Lack, Harold Booth and Harold Fairhurst - Gala Cup at Motherwell 21 July 1950; Danny Lee for North of England Select at Motherwell on 28 July 1950 (Speedway News doesn't give 4th places), Ron Phillips, Harold Booth, Bob Mark and Bill Baird for Scottish Select at Motherwell 15 September 1950 and Eddie Lack, Harold Booth, Ron Phillips and Bob Mark Best Pairs at Motherwell 22 September 1950. Finally, can you help provide the scoring details for Bob Mark's world championship round in Munich 16 June 1952 ? (Touches of Chariots of Fire here as a team mate was originally drawn to ride this round but withdrew because of his personal views. Bob stepped in and took his place and team mate competed in the UK rounds.)

Robert Bamford, 14 High Street, Malmesbury, Wiltshire, SN16 9AU Telephone 01666 826282 is researching the history of Swindon with a view to publish a book to coincide with the Robins' 50th Birthday. He is urgently seeking some heat details for meetings at Tamworth, Poole and Hanley (Stoke) - presumably for meetings in the old Third Division circa 1949 to 1951- as they don't appear in contemporary publications.
Roger Whitehouse, 7729 Hazelmere Street, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5E

2BS, Canada is trying to collate the riding numbers from the Association of Southern Speedway Promoters in the pre war era. Roger has identified Art Pechar as No2 (there being no No.1) and has reached Ernie Mayne at 251 but is still trying to fill gaps in between and riders numbered higher than 251.

Paul Baston, 30 The Weald, East Grinstead, Sussex, RH19 3UB is preparing to research all junior leagues prior to 1984, including an attempt to compile a record of rider averages. This a daunting task as most information will be in programmes because most of these events were staged as second halves.

OFFERS OF HELP

Bernard Brinkley of 31 Bedford Road, Ickleford, Hitchin, Hertfordshire Telephone No. 014262 422294 makes a very kind offer of going to research material from the Colindale Library for anyone who is looking for information from that source. Bearing in mind the volume of information that is held there, this could be a full time task. Contact Bernard directly to discuss with him how he could help you.

Graham Haynes of Coleford House, Coleford Close, Mytchett, Camberley, Surrey, GU16 6DX can supply details for the following Southampton 1936 and 1962 seasons; New Cross 1962; Wembley 1946 to 1954, West Ham 1965 and Eastbourne 1969 onwards. Graham has shown interest in his local press and rediscovered Aldershot Boxhall Lane which staged 12 meetings in 1929. (Jim Henry dug details of this one after reading in the caption of a photograph in the Southern edition of the Auto that Stan Lemon was track record holder at Aldershot.)

Paul Hornsby, 186 Broadway, Yaxley, Peterborough, PE7 3NT is intending to log in details of Peterborough's meetings into his computer. He can provide details of meetings staged at the East of England Showground for anyone researching team details or individual rider information. (Hope Paul will be inspired to dig out details of pre 1970 Peterborough activity.)

Mick Bird, 18 Tyndale Street, Leicester LE3 0QP Telephone 0116 254 9977 has agreed to undertake the task compiling a database on programmes (including programmes for rain offs and other non events (like the Edinburgh v Liverpool match in 1953 and Jim Henry's Sanata's Sleighers v The Hogmanay Hangovers snowed off event at Linlithgow)).He is trying to list (and collect a copy of) every

programme ever produced. Anyone with information to contribute or seeking information should contact Mick directly in the first instance.

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WHAT ABOUT - A SPEEDWAY HALL OF FAME ?

John Dotters from Flixton, Manchester came up with an interesting idea. (One that I floated in a Linlithgow programme a few years ago when I had the opportunity to use this as a soap box. (Jim Henry)) However, it is perhaps worth re-examining. John suggests we might like to think about a Speedway Hall of Fame. Barry Briggs established a Speedway Hall of Fame at the museum at Donnington and restricted membership to those who had won the Speedway World Championship. It is not a bad starting point but it rules out riders who performed 1923 to 1935 and 1939 to 1947. Equally it rules out riders who were stars of their day but never quite managed to reach that pinnacle. John has a good idea and one which is worthy of debate.

What about guys like Sprouts Elder who could add many thousands to the gate of meeting between 1928 and 1930 yet he left Britain at the end of 1930 never to return. Vic Duggan was an immediate post war star who peaked before the World Trophy returned and who could dismiss the claims for Jack Parker's elevation to a place in a Hall of Fame ?

There is one thing for sure - speedway statisticians would be able to put the efforts of many riders into some context similar to modern day averages - allowing the efforts of pre war riders to be fully evaluated. (Aside - how do we evaluate the efforts of riders in the days before league averages ?)

We do have a slight reservation, and it is thus : Is The Speedway Researcher the correct channel for such debate or should it be tackled by other publications ? As ever, we would love to hear your ideas - for example, should we have a Speedway Hall of Fame Committee charged with the election of riders to the task of selecting candidates for the honour ? If so, who should be on that Committee ? Where should the Hall of Fame be Housed ? (A couple of places spring to mind - The National Motorcycle Museum - and the ACU Offices at Rugby for starters. Maybe Wembley could find space for the Hall of Fame, after all, so many World Championships were staged there.)

DATABASE SUGGESTIONS

Another idea for compiling a database about is cigarette cards. Again, Graham and I think it is a worthwhile exercise and are happy to float it in The Speedway Researcher. Yet again we would be happy to see a person to coordinate the compilation of the database.

Any other ideas will be welcome as we would like to think we can reflect what our subscribers are interested in. If we are not getting it right - tell us and we will see what we can do for you.

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NEWSPAPER INFORMATION

In order to help you find the information we intend to compile a record of newspapers which might be a source of records of speedway meetings. The record is compiled from the Colindale Library (BL) catalogue and each newspaper will be allocated a number. The dates given relate to Colindale's holdings. Later in the series we will give details of local library holdings by reference to the unique number each newspaper has been allocated. The papers are listed in the BL catalogue by town of publication and not town of track.

We personally don't know how good or bad many of these papers are. Please feel free to tell us how good or bad any newspaper is for speedway coverage and we'll let everyone know. There is no point wasting time chasing through papers which are quite useless and give nil coverage.

ALDERSHOT : Tracks : **Boxhall Lane** - known to have staged 12 meetings in 1929. Track was a greyhound stadium which had gone by the survey for the Ordnance Survey map of 1937. Did this track run in any other seasons ?
Aldershot Stadium, Tongham - recorded as racing 1950 to 1960 in various competitions.

Newspapers: (1) Aldershot & District Town Crier June 1933 - July 1939; (2) The Aldershot News 1928 - Oct 1969

BARNSELEY : Tracks : **Barnsley Lundwood** - 1928 to 1930 at least. This out of town venue with its straights at different levels and its (reportedly) turf safety fence is a poorly documented venture. (**Wombwell South Yorkshire Stadium and Wombwell Ings Road** are close by to Barnsley and local coverage is likely.)

Newspapers: (3) Barnsley Chronicle and South Yorkshire News 1928 - 1949; (4) Barnsley Independent 1928 - Sept 1939.

BARROW : Tracks : **Barrow Holker Street** - 1929, 1930; 1972 - 1974. This track was built round the football stadium. It opened one week as a grass track and a week later it was a dirt track just like Hull White City.

Barrow Little Park - 1931 - 1932. The opener is featured in the Auto but it is a hazy venue worthy of some research. **Barrow Park Road** - The tiddler on the hillside which flourished in the late 1970s and was used by a very young Grant MacDonald for a spell in the the 1990s.

Newspapers: (5) The Barrow Guardian 1928 - June 1947. (6) The Barrow News 1928 - June 1947. (7) Barrow News and Barrow Guardian July 1948 to date. (8) North West Gazette Nov 1971 - Date. (9) The North Western Daily Mail 1928 - Dec 1940. (10) North Western Evening Mail Jan 1941 - Date.

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BERWICK : Tracks : **Berwick Shielfield** - Opened in 1968 but was closed down at the end of 1981. Reopened 1996 and still running 1998. **Berwick Berrington Lough** - The deep rural stadium which housed Bandits between spells at Shielfield.

Newspaper: (11) The Berwickshire News and the Berwickshire Advertiser 1968 - Date.

BIRKENHEAD : Track : **New Brighton** - Yet another hazy venue which is thought to be the greyhound track in the New Brighton area of the Wirral Peninsula. No accurate details on when this pre war track operated.

Newspapers: (12) Birkenhead Advertiser and Wallasey Guardian 1928 - July 1940. (13) The Birkenhead News and Wirral General Advertiser 1928 - 1940.

BIRMINGHAM : Tracks : **Birmingham GreetMotordrome** - Short lived pioneer era venue. **Birmingham Hall Green**- Main track in the pre war era which was closed down due to noise complaints from local residents.

Birmingham Perry Barr (Alexander) - An early pre war venue we think and the mainstay of post war speedway. 1946 - 1957 with a short open licence season in 1960. **Birmingham Perry Barr Greyhound Stadium** - a pre war venue 1928 - 1930 then the post war venue 1971 until closure for redevelopment for a supermarket. **Birmingham Wheels Project** a short lived 1980s venture close to the city centre. This was also known as Bordesley Green.

Newspapers : (14) Birmingham Gazette 1928 - Nov 1956. (15) The Birmingham Mail 1928 - April 1963. (16) Birmingham Evening Mail and Despatch April 1963 - Date. (17) Birmingham Post 1928 - Nov 1956. (18) Evening Despatch 1928 - April 1963. (19) The Midland Counties Herald, Birmingham and General Advertiser 1928 - Jan 1933. (20) Evening Despatch Sporting Buff 1928 - May 1940. (21) Sporting Buff Aug 1946 - April 1960. (22) Birmingham Times Sept 1936 - Aug 1938. (23) Sunday Mercury and News 1928 - July 1931. (24) Sunday Mercury July 1931 - April 1960. (25) Sunday Mercury and Weekly Post May 1960 - Date. (To Be Cont.)

OBSCURE JOTTINGS - (OR DID YOU KNOW ?)

The Speedway Researcher can reveal exclusively that the trophy won by Wimbledon's Bobby Andrews in 1963 and featured in the Vintage Speedway

Magazine was probably one of two identical trophies presented by Victor Martin to Belle Vue Speedway in 1942 (or one from a similar casting). Known as the Victory Trophy one was won by a rider and the other by a supporter holding a lucky programme. One trophy is in Scotland. (Thanks to Ian Sommerville and Barry Stephenson for help with this one.)

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The opening meeting at Melton Mowbray Speedway in Leicestershire was staged on Sunday 7th August 1949 and featured a challenge match between Melton and The Rest. Prime mover of the meeting, organised by the Melton Mowbray Motor Cycle Club, was Wilf Plant. It was a cinder track where the cinders were laid down over the grass in the centre green of the greyhound stadium. The opener was picketed by the Lord's Day Observance Society who opposed racing on a Sunday. The leader of the picket, a local minister (sorry, vicar) did relent as he stood in the pouring rain and go in and have a look at the action. He told the press that he did not think the action was much to get excited about.

In the early days speedway was prohibited by the ACU on Sundays. Riders who rode at Audenshaw, a Sunday track were suspended for racing there so rode under assumed names like Dan De Lyon. Leeds, a track which found it difficult to draw a crowd on a Saturday because of the religious beliefs of many potential fans, also staged Sunday meetings late in 1930 which resulted in rider bans.

Ron Johnson lost a passenger from his sports car as he sped through Hyde Park one evening. He is reported to have hit a bump in the road so hard that the gentleman travelling with him was catapulted out of the seat.

Bradford Autodrome, (Greenfields Stadium) staged a race between a speedway rider and a greyhound in 1928. Obviously they had to travel different distances and in the end the speedway rider won. In a similar bit of Yorkshire "madness" a grass track rider raced an aeroplane over four laps and beat the flier.

Contributions to obscure jottings will be welcomed with open arms by Graham and Jim.

New Publications

Allan Batt, POBox 19687, Christchurch, New Zealand has published "The Cindershifters - Pre War Speedway in New Zealand" which covers this interesting era. The book is modestly priced at £3.50 including air mail postage. Suggest you send payment in New Zealand dollars - available from most banks.

Jeremy Jackson's recent book on St.Austell is now sold out. He is planning a second book, on St.Austell Gulls 1998 plus details of 1960s Gulls Glyn Chandler, Ivor Toms and Chris Julian.

THE BACK PAGE

It is desirable that we are all working to a common goal and to achieve this we need to work in a standardised manner for every bit of work. We realise gaps may still exist as information is supplied but some information is better than nothing. If you have information - share it if you can. The following is a sample of the information being gathered by various researchers. Please feel free to send us details of your data bases and maybe someone can help you add to yours.

THE ROLL OF HONOUR

The Roll of Honour is an attempt to pull together the names of riders killed on speedway tracks from its earliest days in 1923. (Is Roll of Honour the best description for such a list ?) The exercise was started by Colin Clarke, ex Rayleigh, in his year as President of the Veteran Speedway Riders' Association. The task has been picked up by the Editors of The Speedway Researcher and significant contributions have been made by Gosta Kinnander in Sweden and Graeme Frost in Australia. An extract of the Roll of Honour appeared in the Vintage Speedway Magazine Vol 5 No. 4. The following extract is set out below showing the format of the information sought. An exercise to extend it to riders killed in non speedway accidents has been started by Don Gray of Waterbeach is a welcome addition to the knowledge base. The Roll of Honour has deliberately been compiled in alphabetical order. A time ordered list, we feel, begs the additions to a list which nobody wishes to grow.

SPEEDWAY ROLL OF HONOUR

WORLD WIDE LIST OF RIDERS KILLED IN TRACK ACCIDENTS

Name	Age	Nationality	Home Track	Fatal Track	Accident	Died
Joe ABBOTT	47	English	Odsal	Odsal	01.07.50	01.07.50
Brett ALDERTON	18	Australian	Milton Keynes	King's L	17.04.82	21.04.82
Jimmy "Indian" ALLAN		English	Belle Vue	Belle Vue	09.09.31	12.09.31
Cyril ANDERSON	39	English	Norwich	Norwich		16.08.47
Agne ANDERSSON	23	Swedish	Motala	Hagfors	26.07.86	26.07.86
Goran ANDERSSON		Swedish	Orebro	Aldershot		
	.52					.52
Harry ANDERSSON	37	Swedish	Avesta	Avesta	22.05.49	22.05.49

Josef ANGERMULLER German
 Charlie APPLEY 33 Canadian
 07.10.46 07.10.46

Chivitta Nuova 24.04.77 24.04.77
 Birmingham Newcastle

THE THOUGHTS OF A PIONEER

As a contribution to a proposed book which would provide a full history of Glasgow's pre war speedways, Norrie Isbister penned this short article. Norrie, who can be called Mr Glasgow Speedway because of his many levels of involvement in the sport in the city, has an interesting thought on the name for the sport which interests us all.

IT SHOULD BE CALLED DIRT TRACK SPEEDWAY RACING

Maybe being an old Pioneer and racing under the heading of Dirt Track Racing - I could be a little biased and not so keen on the words speedway racing. My reason being that, on its own, it in no way is sufficient description of what our family sport presents or in actual fact is.

To the average outside public it might suggest some guy trying to go faster than an other guy, but on what ?

Then we have the original - Dirt Track - suggests more of what it's about but still does not ring the bell loud enough.

There is, therefore, no reason why the old and new cannot be combined to make it Dirt Track Speedway Racing as this explains what it is.

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The next issue will complete Volume One. We look forward to your support for Volume Two. We have grown from a four page effort to this which is double that size. Has The Speedway Researcher helped you ?

Have you made new contacts ? Let us know - as we said before - we want to hear from you and make this your magazine.