

THE SPEEDWAY RESEARCHER

Promoting Research into the history of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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LIBRARY LEGISLATION

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COLINDALE LIBRARY

The British Library has been collecting papers and journals for many years and it's holdings are kept at the branch in Colindale in north London. This is situated just over the road from Colindale underground station. It has limited off street car parking facilities at the front of the building, if you want to use these arrive early enough to get a space.

The public reading room is open Monday to Saturday (Except for its closed week and public holidays - check before you go for details) from 10 am to 4.30 pm and is open to members of the public from about 9.30 am and the building closes about 4.45 pm. Readers' tickets can be obtained on the day of the visit and are currently free of charge. Bags etc must be left at the cloakroom just inside the front door. Take your own pens, pencils and paper. I'm not sure if you can take laptop computers, a facility available in the National Library of Scotland.

Most of the newspaper and magazine holding is in the form of hard 1 copy, ie the original newspapers, but the holding of microfilm is gradually increasing. Readers are restricted to four volumes of hard copy or four microfilms or a mixture thereof at any one time. There are usually more reading desk spaces for hard copy than microfilm readers

so try to do the microfilms before the hard copy if you are able to organise it that way.

Pressure on the book delivery and collection staff means that there can be delays in receiving new material when you arrive at first. It is possible to reserve material by telephoning the day before and this helps avoid some delays in getting started in the morning. You will need to be able to tell the person you speak to details of the volumes you want placed on reserve. In order to maintain a steady supply of material, volumes which are exhausted should be carefully set aside for collection staff to retrieve and orders for new material lodged immediately thereafter at the desk.

It is possible to obtain photocopies of material and photographs of newspaper photographs held by the British Library and information on current fees are available on request. These copies are subject to copyright legislation and if you wish to reproduce them, reproduction fees. Again you should check with the library for full information about this matter. The library provides marker cards to indicate where material you wish to be copied is located in the newspaper or journal. The library does not provide a search service to locate items for you.

The Speedway Researcher is serialising the Colindale newspaper catalogue for all speedway track towns so you can check the appropriate volume of the Researcher for details of its holdings.(If we've not yet covered the track you are interested in, contact Jim Henry and he will dig out the information for you.) Colindale holds a number of foreign newspapers as well as UK journals. It holds the Southern Autos and the Speedway News etc.

Good luck with your researching. Remember, if there is no speedway information in a newspaper, don't worry, the contemporary news reports will give you a fascinating insight into life then. They often help put the prize money into context and gives an idea of the competing attractions of the day.

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COPYRIGHT AND REPRODUCTION ISSUES

Copyright will be discussed in a future edition. The best advice is not to use any material like maps, photographs and cartoons without the permission of the holder of the copyright. If after an exhaustive search you genuinely cannot trace the copyright holder, give the library details of your search efforts and

explain your lack of success. The source of written extracts of reports, if quoted directly, should be acknowledged (To avoid accusations of plagiarism (copying something and claiming it to be your own work.)) in your text.

Reproduction fees for photographs are a topic for discussion with individual source libraries / owners of copyright material. You probably will have to get the copyright owner's permission to copy a photograph from a newspaper in the first place. Most newspapers appear to take the view that if your publication is of marginal financial viability then they will not be difficult and, let's face it, speedway history books are not likely to be best sellers. It may be possible to strike a deal with the newspaper and the library which supplies photographs you wish to reproduce whereby a copy or two of the publication will be accepted in lieu of fees.

Currently the life of copyright is 70 years from the year of publication or the death of the author. This means that 1928 material in newspapers should now be out of copyright **but do check** with librarians.

Local History Societies

There is an ever growing interest in the history of folk's home patch. Lots of enthusiastic people are digging into newspapers and any other records they can find in order to compile local histories. Don't be afraid to get in contact and tell them of your findings. After all, you never know what they may be able to help you with. Jim Henry supplied the local Blantyre historian with details of the Glasgow and Motherwell Speedways' (1928 - 1932) riders known as "The Blantyre Crowd." The article was published in the local society's newsletter.

David Poole, who some of you may remember as the author of the articles on York Speedway which appeared in the early Vintage Speedway Magazine, was not a speedway fan when he decided to research the history of Burnholme. His studies were published in a local history magazine and he was even given sight of a few York programmes during his searches.

Maybe, when we get space, we might try to compile a record of these bodies for speedway areas. If you know of any, please let us have the details. Local knowledge can be very very valuable. **3**

THE GRASS TRACK SPEEDWAYS

It was with a great deal of interest that we read the articles Keith Farman sent The Speedway Researcher about Yarmouth Speedway of 1932. It seems clear that this venture was a grass track as both reports state this quite

clearly. However, it appears that it was a highly organised operation as the main event of Sunday 17th July was a team match over 9 heats between Yarmouth and Staines (Middlesex).

Other events were staged in a speedway style meeting set up and included match races and a one mile invitation event.

Rightly Keith poses the question - where do you draw the line between grass track and speedway where the surface of the track gets the worse of tyre wear and loses its greenery ? The answer is - we don't know. As ever we throw open the pages to debate and welcome your thoughts.

We have heard that some venues had dirt bends and grass straights - we feel sure Holbeach Belle End was described thus.

We would suggest that the best guide must be from the newspaper adverts and the event reports. If they say grass track - we must go along with that.

It also begs the question - how many grass venues used the description speedway in their title. We know of Trentham Gardens in the Stoke area. It was known as the Midlands Grass Speedway in 1928.

Maybe we could work with Carl Croucher and John Jarvis on this and split out the speedways from the grass tracks as we go.

WALTHAMSTOW 1934

At the beginning of the 1934 season Lea Bridge opened up with a completely new team, the previous year's team, known as Clapton having been relocated at the reborn Harringay. The new Lea Bridge team consisted mainly of riders from the failed Sheffield track reinforced by the addition of Dick Case from Coventry.

In July 1934 Lea Bridge folded and a new track at Walthamstow opened. It became the home of the Lea Bridge side promoted by Fred Mockford and Dicky Maybrooke.

Dick Case replaced Squib Burton as captain and stayed at Chingford Road for the season and the team lineup was the established : Case, Burton, Dusty Haigh, Wally Hull, Eric Blain, Chun Moore and new Aussies Steve Langton, Clem Thomas, Jack Bibby and Fred Tracey. The team race jacket featured a five pointed star on a plain background. What the actual colours were is not known.

The team moved again in 1935, for a third time to become Hackney Wolves at Waterden Road. **Don Gray** **4**

The Tamworth Puzzle - The Mystery Unravels

We are sure many of you will know of the existence of the old Midlands Division Three track at Deer Park, Fazeley, Tamworth in the 1940s/1950s but did you know about one and possibly two pre war pirate tracks in the same locality ?

The Tamworth mystery is the stuff of dedicated research. Snippets of information, someone who remembers being there and the appearance of an advertisement and an old programme sheet that unfortunately only clouds the picture. Readers of the Vintage Speedway Magazine will recall letters from the late Les Tallis who was seeking clarification on the operation of a track called Mile Oak Speedway, near Tamworth. This produced a most valuable response revealing that Mike Erskine rode in an unlicensed track at Fazeley in 1932.

Time passes and an advertisement for the first meeting at Tamworth Speedway, Tamworth Road, Fazley on a “full size speedway” turns up. This is thought to be from August Bank Holiday Monday 1932 tho’ the year cannot be positively verified. It lists a programme of team racing including Cracker Jack and his team versus Broadside Bow and his team plus Atta Boy Dick Woodwright and the famous 22 year old American Star Pat Biddle (riders who were known to have raced in 1932.) You can easily see from this listing that it was a pirate track with riders aliases liberally used.

Then a programme for the “The New Mile Oak Speedway” near Tamworth surfaces. A small 275 yard circuit that ran in 1934. From the riders listed (H.W. Hooper, T.Johnson, A Palmer, Don Maxwell, N.Trimnell, M. Butler, F.Rich, Von Eagan, T. Stewart, E.Butler, W.Keys (Wally “Nobby “Keys ?), G.Plant, De Reske, A. Butler (Alan Butler of Belle Vue ?), L. Cox, L.Butler.) who appeared in a series of 21 events including a Scratch Race, a Flying Twelve Race and a Big Nine Super Race) aliases were again to the fore. (But equally a couple of possible bona fide riders in the list.) This meeting was staged on Sunday 27th May 1934 and it was not a one-of as the programme shows the track record of 70.0 seconds had been set the week before by L.Cox. The track was co promoted by a G.B.Mountford and C.H.(Harold) Trimmell who was a Birmingham businessman and was responsible for the opening of Coventry Brandon Speedway in 1934 when it staged six meetings as an unaffiliated track.

Time moves on to 30th April 1947 when Fazeley Stadium (in the grounds of Sir Robert Peel’s estate) opens and enters the old Division Three as the Tamworth Hounds. The guiding light of the Hounds was Arthur “Westy” Westwood. By 1950 Birmingham promoter Les Marshall had taken over the Hounds to be a nursery team for Cradley Heath and Birmingham. (Aside : the promotion must win any prize for boring race 5 jacket designs Tamworth with the big T Cradley with the letters CH and Birmingham with the letter B.) The

Hounds bowed out at the end of the 1950 season and speedway never returned to this midlands venue.

So here is the puzzle for any you Midlanders. Were there two pre- war tracks one and the same ? This seems unlikely as the 1932 (?) venue on the Tamworth Road was described as a full sized speedway not the description that would fit a 275 yard circuit like that known as Mile Oak.

The late Les Tallis visited the Mile Oak venture more than once and was absolutely certain it was not the same site as the post war Deer Park track. Are we then talking about three Tamworth tracks running between 1932 and the 1950s ?

The Tamworth story is just one of a number of pre war pirate ventures requiring some digging into the newspapers. We look forward to the answers emerging and we will print the results of any research.

Graham acknowledges the help from the late Les Tallis, John Kolasa , the VSM and in particular, Colin Parker, for providing many details for this item.

Publications

You probably know about two magazines, each dedicated to writing a history of the track they represent, called “The Potter- Stoke Speedway History Magazine” and “The Ace - Belle Vue Aces History Magazine.” If you don’t, you do now! The former has reached Vol 3 No 3 while the latter is at Vol 1 No 7. Both are sold to subscribers - The Potter costs £22.50 for 12 editions (cover price £1.50)(Overseas £40) while the The Ace costs £24 for 12 editions (Overseas £40) with a cover price of £2.00. These magazines are both available from Howard Jones c/o Berry & Jackson Printers, Rear 10, Allenby Road, St Annes on Sea, Lancashire FY8 2DG (Phone /Fax 01253 732387). Both recently carried an advert for The Speedway Researcher.

N.B. The Potter recently carried details of the Middlesbrough versus Stoke meeting which completed Hugh Vass’s search for Provincial League match details.) Now for something just a wee bit more obscure. School books which deal with Speedway. Author Peter Stuart Westwood wrote at least four books for the Read Write and Enjoy Speedway Series which, from a copy examined in the National Library of Scotland, is an English class text book. The book examined is Book 4 which is entitled “Rider of The Night”. It tells of a young lad moving to Manchester and after he is taken to Belle Vue by a friend, he gets the bug and takes up the sport himself. It has some photographs and drawings.The books were published by Oliver & Boyd of Edinburgh in 1975.

The National Library has a few books on its catalogue under the heading of speedway and we’ll check them over in due course and tell you what we find. It may be there will be some gems amongst the list - you never know until you have a look.

OUR FRIENDS OUT THERE

COLIN PARKER 59 Clinton Lane, Kenilworth,
Warwickshire, CV8 1AS

Colin's interest lies within the Godiva town of Coventry and the pre war era at Brandon and the Lythalls Lane stadium. He has collected newspaper cuttings of the activities but the format in which they are held makes photocopying very difficult. However, if you are looking for information about action in Coventry in this era, contact Colin to see how he can help. Colin is also very interested in speedway photographs, especially of pre-war action. As you see in an other section, Colin is interested in setting up an exchange scheme.

MICK PARTRIDGE 20 Devitre Cottages, Ashton Road,
Lancaster LA1 5AN
Telephone : 01524 69012

Mick is a fan of the famous Belle Vue Aces and his interests are in the post war period which has seen the highs and lows of a most famous club. Mick is trying to compile details of the Aces activity and is in the process of compiling data from the published sources in the Star & News. (A word of caution - always cross check the scorer's total and the heat results in these reports as errors do creep into them from time to time.)

Details of the information Mick is still seeking will appear in a subsequent Help Wanted section.

HUW JONES 1 Seymour Villas, Anerley, London, SE20
8TR Telephone : 0181 659 3555

Huw is interested in the Sydenham venue Crystal Palace, home the team known as the Glaziers. A prominent pr-war venue the History of Crystal Palace has been covered in general terms by the late Lionel 7

Crossley's book (available from Eddie's Books at £1.50 plus £0.87 postage). Huw is intending to go into the history in greater detail and

compile records on a heat by heat basis. Doubtless Huw will let The Researcher know of his requirements for information in due course.

BARRY WALLACE 32 Gorsedene Road, Whitley Bay,
Tyne & Wear, NE26 4AH.
Telephone : 0191 252 3825

Barry is the "voice" of Brough Park - the man on the mike and true black and white Diamonds (and Magpies fan.). Not surprisingly Barry's interests lie close to home in Whitley Bay (which operated at Rockcliffe Park Stadium from 20th April 1929 to some time in June/July 1929), Newcastle Gosforth (June 1929 - 1931), Newcastle Brough Park (17th May 1929 to date (with various breaks)) and Sunderland 1964 & 1971 - 1974. If you want any meeting details for Brough Park 1945 to 1998 or for Sunderland, Barry can help you. He is now working on the pre-war activity so we may see a request for Newcastle's away action. (All the Scottish meetings which featured Newcastle teams 1929 -1939 are in Newcastle Central Library.) Maybe Barry will resolve the Burnhills story for us . Was it a speedway or a scrambles etc course, or both ? The truth is located in Gateshead Library.

SYDNEY DOBSON 59
Longfields,Swaffham,Norfolk,PE377RS
Telephone : 01710 722395

Sydney has an interest in the history of Rye House which led to his learning of the existence of leagues outside the professional clubs. Tracks included Dagenham, Rye House, High Beech, Reading (California or Longmoor) and Eastbourne formed such a league in 1936. In 1938 the amateur league included Eastbourne, Smallford, Romford, Dagenham, and Rye House. Sydney is looking for any information on these leagues.

e need your entries for this section. Please send them in.

If needs be Graham and Jim will edit them to this format.

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CAN YOU HELP ?

Graham Fraser's biggest pet project is Preston Speedway which operated from 1929 to 1932. Graham is looking for any details of the following meetings, all Northern Dirt Track League fixtures for 1929. Away at Bolton 20.4; at Belle Vue 4.5; at Leeds 8.5; at Rochdale 1.6; at White City Manchester 8.6; at Warrington 21.6; at Sheffield 29.6; at Salford 1.7; at Leicester 4.7; at Middlesbrough 16.7; at Halifax 8.8; at Liverpool 10.8; at Barnsley 24.8. The 1929 KO Cup fixtures at Liverpool 21.8; at Sheffield 18.9; at Leicester 3.10; and at Halifax 9.10. Finally a challenge at Warrington 9.8. Graham is especially looking from details from programmes and rider/action photographs of Preston riders. This is part of a book on the history of Preston Speedway Graham is working on.

In addition it would be interesting if anyone can come up with any information about a supposed track at the greyhound stadium (Acregate) which may have operated in 1937 and featured a team called Preston Spinners.

Friends of Edinburgh Speedway (c/o Mike Hunter, 33 Groathill Road South, Edinburgh) are intending to produce one of the "Tales From Scottish Shale" dealing with the short lived ventures at Cowdenbeath (Britain's most northerly track) and Newtongrange which operated in the early 1950s, 1970 and 1973. FOES is seeking action photographs from these venues and portraits photographs of riders in the Fife Lions and Rockets (1950s), Saints (1970), and, Edinburgh Monarchs (1973) race jackets.

Graeme Frost, 8 Strathbogie Avenue, Findon, South Australia, 5023 is interested to know if anyone can help him with information about the Aussie pioneers' arrival in the UK. Graeme wishes to know the dates of arrival of Keith McKay and Billy Galloway and the subsequent waves of Aussie invaders. He is convinced that the published information is inaccurate. Maybe somebody in the southern liner termini like Southampton or Tilbury (for example) knows how to find out this information and can help out.

Graeme is also very interested in finding out details of the first meetings at speedway venues in the UK and would welcome photocopies of adverts and opening meeting reports.

Can you help provide **Trevor James** with any details of the following fixtures from the 1929 Northern League ? Did they take place or not ?

Halifax v Liverpool; **Middlesbrough** v Liverpool, v Barnsley, v White City Manchester; **Newcastle** (Brough Park) v Preston, v Warrington, v White City Manchester; **Sheffield** v Salford, v Middlesbrough, v White City Manchester; **Warrington** v Leeds, v Liverpool, v Newcastle, v Barnsley; and **White City Manchester** v Liverpool. If so, contact Trevor James, 14 Keats Road, Greenmount, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 4EP. **9**

Roger Hulbert, 6 The Garth, First Lane, Anlaby, Hull, HU10 6UY, author of the Hull history is looking for any information about Hull White City 1931 and

beyond. He is also looking for biographical information (ie date of birth (and date of death if applicable)) for the following riders. Where birthplace information is required the name has BP and where a photograph is required P is also added. The numbers following the name are the year/s they rode. The riders are : Ken Allick 49; Al Allison 48; Tony Armstrong 71; Bob Baker 48/49 BP; Peter Baldock 71; George Beaton 71; Chris Blythe 73; Peter Boston 71-73; Ian Bottomly 71; Harold Bottoms 49 P; Tom Coggins 48 P; George Craig 48-49 BP; Phil Dargue 48 P; George Davenport 71-72; Peter Dodds 48 P; Clarke Facey 72-73; Dennis Gavros 72-73; Mick Glover 71 P; Les Godwin 49 P; Brian Gorman 48 P; Norman Johnson 48-49 BP; Bryan Loakes 72; Eric Mason 49; Dave Mills 72-73; Ray Muir 48 P; Bob Newell 49 P; Alan Nicholson 49 BP; Dave O'Connor 73; Tommy Roper 74; Barry Simpson 81 P; Ron Stringer 49 P; Colin Tucker 71-72; Mike Vernam 73; Dennis Wasden 71/73; Jack Watts 49P; Mike Wood 49P; Bill Worgan 48P.

A SPEEDWAY PHOTOGRAPH EXCHANGE

Colin Parker, 59 Clinton Lane, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1AS is keen to establish a speedway photograph exchange. Contact Colin if you are interested. The editors, as ever, sound a note of caution about copying copyrighted photographs.

ROLL OF HONOUR

We hadn't thought of serialising the Roll but, in response to a request - here is the second part. Note the correction : Charlie Appleby not Appley.

Tadeusz ARASIEWICZ	21	Polish	Torun Czestochova	25.07.76	25.07.76
Jack ARNOTT	24	Kiwi		Davies Park	
	16.11.29		16.11.29		
Dennis ATKINSON	19	English	Leeds Middlesbrough	12.07.29	13.07.29
Chuck BASNEY	41	American	Gardenia, Cal.		
Ken BERRY	24	American	San Bernadino	13.07.88	
	20.07.88				
Jean BERTHET		French	Zurich		.50
Jerzy BIALEK	20	Polish	Gdansk Rzeszow	11.08.74	11.08.74
Charlie BIDDLE	19	English	Stamford Br.	05.28	.05.28
Jack BIGGS	50	Australian	Melbourne Bendigo		08.12.72
Jerzy BILDZIUKIEWCZ	22	Polish	Bydgoszcz Bydgoszcz	29.08.71	29.08.71
Charlie BLACKLOCK	27	N.Zealand	Harringay Christchurch	27.01.35	27.01.35
Benedykt BLASZKIEWICZ	18	Polish	Torun Torun	29.06.70	29.06.70
Stan BOX		Australian	Melbourne		17.12.49
George BRADLEY		American	Gardenia, Cal.		
Bert BRENNAN		Australian	Sydney S.Gn.	03.12.32	03.12.32
Eddie BRINCK		American	Springfield	* possibly a board track.	
Billy BROWN			Audenshaw	.31	.31

Birmingham (Continued) Newspapers : (26) Hall Green Times Nov 1931 - May 1932; (27) The Birmingham Weekly Post 1928 - Dec 1954; (28) Birmingham Weekly Post and Midland Pictorial Jan 1955 - April 1960; (29) Sport & Play & Wheel Life 1928 - Sept 1938; (31) Sports Argus 1928 - June 1940 & Sept 1946 - April 1953; (32) Evening Mail and Despatch Sports Argus April 1963 - Date.

Blackpool : Tracks : **Highfield Road** and **South Shore** . Both of these are pre war venues of which one was a trotting track which staged clockwise racing. Again these two venues could do with a bit of research.

Newspapers : (33) Blackpool Gazette and Herald, Fylde News and Advertiser 1928 - Date; (34) The Blackpool Mail 1928 - Oct 1928; (35) Blackpool and Fylde Illustrated Mail Oct 1928 - March 1929; (36) West Lancashire Evening Gazette May 1929 - Date.

Bletchley : Tracks : **Milton Keynes (Grovetway)** which was the greyhound track located in Bletchley. It opened in 1978. The second Milton Keynes venue at **Elfield Park** was in Milton Keynes. Most meetings should be covered in the Speedway Star and Speedway Mail.

Newspaper : (37) Bletchley and Milton Keynes Gazette 1978 - Date.

Bolton : Track : **Bolton (Raikes Park)**. This was a very short lived venue which operated in the late 1920s. It ventured into the Northern Dirt Track League for a short spell in 1929. Yet again, this is a hazy venue and it could result in some good research work.

Newspapers : (38) Bolton Evening News 1928 - Aug 1962; (39) Bolton Standard and Weekly Advertiser 1928 - Oct 1933; (40) Bolton Journal and Guardian and District News 1928 - Sept 1946.

Bootle (Liverpool) : Track : **Seaforth**, a mid 1930's hazy venue which is another in need of some research which may be covered in the Bootle press. May even have some coverage of Liverpool Stanley.

Newspaper : (41) Bootle Times 1928 - May 1965.

Boston : Track : **New Hammond Beck Stadium** operated from 1970 when it took over from King's Lynn Two to 1984. Most of its history should be contained in the Speedway Star and Speedway Mail.

Newspaper : (42) Lincolnshire Standard (Boston Edition) 1970 - Date.

Bradford : Tracks : **Bradford Autodrome (Greenfields)** was a greyhound stadium which staged speedway in 1928 and again in 1961 and 1962. **Odsal Stadium** opened in 1945 and had had an off and on relationship with the sport. Coverage of its activities should be well documented in the speedway press. **Post Hill, Pudsey**, better known as a hill climb venue, staged 8 meetings in 1928 but may have operated at other times, is likely to be covered in the Bradford press.

Newspapers : (43) Bradford Daily Telegraph and Argus 1928 - May 1930; (44) Telegraph and Argus May 1930 - Date; (45) The Bradford Gazette 1928 - June 1941 & Aug 1946 - June 1966; (46) The Bradford Leader April 1930 - April 1931; (47) The Yorkshire Observer 1928 - Nov 1956; (48) Bradford Pioneer 1928 - Oct 1936; (49)

The Yorkshire Observer Budget 1928 - May 1940 & June 1946 - Nov 1956; (50) Yorkshire Sports and Football Argus 1928 - May 1940 & Aug 1946 - Date.

Brighton : Track : **Brighton (Hove Stadium)** which operated in 1928 as pioneer venue under the direction of John S. Hoskins. This stadium still exists as a greyhound venue (see Live TV on Cable).

Newspapers : (51) Evening Argus 1928 - Date; (52) Brighton Weekly Programme 1928 ; (53) Brighton Standard and Fashionable Visitors List 1928; (54) Brighton Gazette 1928; (55) Sussex Daily News 1928; (56) Southern Weekly News 1928. **To be Continued.**

Note: Catalogue shows titles as Despatch this probably should be Dispatch. 11

The 1929 Northern Dirt Track League *

Team	P	W	D	L	Pts	For	Against
Leeds	20	16	1	3	33	728	517
Halifax	19	12	1	6	25	634	552
Preston	19	12	7	24	24	593	493
Newcastle BP	19	10	9	20	20	606	563
Salford	19	10	9	20	20	595	584
Rochdale	20	9	1	10	19	624	627
Liverpool	18	9	9	18	18	549	566
Leicester Super	20	9	11	18	18	609	637
Middlesbrough	17	5	12	10	10	465	582
Barnsley	19	5	14	10	10	489	574
Sheffield	18	4	1	13	9	462	659

* For teams who completed the league. Source : Trevor James.

In future editions we will publish other versions with various permutations of the table drawn up by Trevor which makes provision for teams which did not last the pace. We will also publish a results grid. This league scored 4 - 2 - 1 and changed the match format from four to nine heats a few weeks into the season but allowed the results to stand. Once we have sorted out this league, we will look at the 1930 Northern League, another which was never completed. We also intend to give details of the 1929 Northern League KO Cup which was won by Preston.

More Publications

Friends of Edinburgh Speedway has published the **1998 Edinburgh Speedway Handbook** priced £5.00 plus £1.00 P & P and **Tales From Scottish Shale No.3** which tells of Ken Le Breton, the famous White Ghost. Ken was very popular at Newcastle and was the darling of Glasgow Ashfield in 1949 and 1950 (Did you know Ken also turned out as the Red Toreador for a short spell in at Newcastle in 1948 ?) priced £1.00 plus £0.30 P & P. Orders with cheques/postal orders made payable to **Friends of Edinburgh Speedway** should be sent to Ian Moultray, 24 Moredun Park Gardens, Edinburgh. Back numbers of the Edinburgh Handbooks and Tales From Scottish Shale No1 and No2 are available from Ian. For details call Ian on 0131 666 2826. A few copies of A History of Edinburgh Speedway Part 1 : The Marine Gardens Years are still available at £11.99 plus £2.00 but (as they say) hurry while stocks last as reprinting is unlikely.

Peter Oakes has advertised two new books **British Speedway Who's Who 1999** and **The Ultimate Speedway Guide** in the Speedway Star. According to the advert both are priced £5.99 from Sportsdata Books, 4 The Green, Yaxley, Peterborough, PE7 3LT. Details from the publisher. We expect these will be on par with previous publications Peter has turned out in the past. 12

!!!!!! GET YOUR SLEEVES ROLLED AGAIN !!!!!!!

Last time we listed a few outstanding tracks and asked for research. Let us set up a few more obscure venues for you to consider doing some research on.

One of the very earliest venues was at a Midlands town of **Mansfield Woodhouse** which lies immediately north of its better known neighbour, Mansfield. The venue was at a place called Park Hall and was probably a half mile circuit. It was probably pretty basic as a photograph showing Charlie McEvoy does not appear to feature a fence. It is known to have operated early in 1928 but what is its history ?

Moving a little north we come to a small town near Doncaster called **Stainforth**. The track is known to have operated in 1930. It opened as a professional venue, ran into trouble, closed, and then re opened under a rider cooperative. It is featured in the local Doncaster press and is mentioned in some of the major Yorkshire newspapers from time to time. Did it operate any other years than 1930 ?

“The Wembley of The North” is how **Thorne** was billed in a local press. The copy writer had a vivid imagination as the track seems as though it was in a football stadium of sorts with very little by way of facilities. Contemporary Ordnance Survey maps show this track as rectangular following the four edges of a football pitch. Like Stainforth it features in the local Doncaster press and the Yorkshire press. Well known rider Tommy Bateman raced here on occasions. This venue operated in 1930 but, yet again, could have operated in other seasons.

Keeping the Yorkshire connection we arrive at **Huddersfield** where speedway didn't last too long at the purpose built pear shaped track at Quarmby in the town. The local press features the events and even carries a photograph from the opening meeting. Research probably won't take long as we think this venue staged not much more than four meetings in 1929. Maybe you can tell us a bit more about this obscure track.

Amateur speedway in Lancashire. Yes, the venue was at a place called Dean's Pleasure Ground in **Whalley** (pronounced Wally). A photograph of the track featured in Auto showed it next to a river or canal and a helter skelter. It was a real tiddler and was so narrow that only two riders were allowed out at a time.

I expect you researchers from Wales are feeling out of it. Maybe we can stir you into action and see what you can come up with about **Tredeggar or New Tredeggar**. The track definitely staged events in 1929 and ran alongside Pontypridd and Cardiff Sloper Road. Sprouts Elder graced this track as he raced three meetings in two days when he visited the valleys and Welsh

Capital. While you are at it you could record the action at **Taff Vale Park in Pontypridd** as well.

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Next time we shall be crossing the seas to Ireland and asking if you can help with **Belfast's** venues at **Dunmore, Dunroyd Park, Gibson Park, and Windsor Park**. We also seek help from Londoners who can tell us about **Catford, Clapton** and one of the real pioneer venues, the trotting track at **Greenford**.

Riders' Names

Lets start with an apology. Tip Mills wasn't Horace. His real name was Harold Edward Mills. The name - Tip - apparently came about because of a relative with a speech impediment tried to say baby Harold was “a chip off the old block” but couldn't quite get it out clearly. So Tip it was.

Charlie Smith of Yarmouth and Norwich (in 1947) was in fact Reginald Charles Derisley. He got his name thanks to Dick Wise, the Norwich promoter of the day, who firstly started using Reginald's second name to avoid confusing him with the others called Reg - then forgetting his real name and improvising the surname.

Other East Anglian ringers (of 1931) were Bert Peters who was actually Bill Butler (who like George McKenzie rode under an assumed name (Wilson Seaforth) to avoid his employer knowing what he was up to), Joe Nelson was Jack Newlands, Wimbledon rider Fred Leavis rode at Norwich as Arthur Reynolds and Aussie Jack Sharpe rode as Jack Smythe.

Cardiff White City probably had the most riders with nicknames on the programme anywhere. Take this example from the meeting of 15th July 1929. Nobby (Walter) Key, Whirlwind (Ronnie) Baker, Hurricane (Fred) Hampson, Lightning (Jack) Luke, Champ (Charles) Upham (JH- I have seen him as Jack), Sunshine (Ray) Cannell, “Genial Jimmy” Hindle, and “Nick” Carter.

Don Gray of Cambridgeshire suggests that “Chun” Moore of Sheffield, then Belle Vue fame was plain old Walter and Smoke Robinson of Preston and Belle Vue was possibly Harold. Chun is sometimes mis named as Chum. Quite what the Chun was short for we don't know. Another mystery for Researchers to answer.

“Dank” Ewing of Stamford Bridge and later Leeds was Frank though again I have seen him as Jim. The Dank was supposed to be his brother's nickname for him and you can see the similarities.

If you have come across some amusing nicknames - tell us about them if you know their real name and if you just know the nickname - well - we'll see if anyone can help. For example what was the real name of “Chippy”

Lomas of Sheffield of 1930, Son Mitchell of Newcastle, Buster Breaks of Rochdale 1930, and Louis Lawson of Belle Vue.

Thanks to **Keith Farman** for the East Anglian information. **14**

Oddments (and Sodments)

At Leicester Super in Melton Road the scribes of 1930 were bemoaning the lack of good speedway and blaming the manager Jock Halllas for providing a slick track in the attempt to gain the mile record. Fastest track at that time was Hamburg in Germany.

Also at Leicester Super in 1930 the rain was so heavy that it was splashing up mud into the face of Glasgow's wee Aussie star Billy Galloway. The conditions were so bad during the racing that the only way they could recognise their mate Arthur Moser was to look out for his distinctive nose.

Finally, at Leicester Super the track was one third of a mile long and races were over three laps.

Glasgow's pioneer Blantyre man Andy Nicholl fell off in the prematch parade at Belle Vue, was run into by a team mate and sustained a broken bone which ruled him out of the meeting.

1930 speedway was so popular at some tracks that the stadium was re engineered to bring the speedway track to the edge of the terraces displacing the dog track to the inside of the speedway circuit. (Just like Exeter and, at one time, Stoke (Chesterton).

Proposals to stage speedway in Canterbury at Hales Place in 1929 came to nothing. The site was developed for housing instead. Stirling, Kilmarnock, Thornton (Fife where there is still a dog track), Ayr Whitlets and Roseberry Park, Glasgow are others that never made it.

The weather delayed the construction of York Speedway at Burnholme House in 1930 to such an extent that only one practice event was staged there that year. That practice event was given great coverage in the local Yorkshire press, photographs and all.

Alan Graham's BSA of the 1970s was not scrapped. It still survives intact. Alan has said he found riding it good experience as he had to keep the motor wound on to make it perform. A Vincent / HRD or two of West Ham fame in the immediate post war era also survive.

Clem Beckett nearly lost a leg during the winter of 1929 - 1930. He was involved in a car crash and gangrene set in to the injured limb.

Greenford, the big trotting track in Perivale London featured a one legged rider. No, he didn't race solos but he did pilot a sidecar outfit.

Norwich had a speedway team in 1931. The side was full of ringers who hid their true identity because of the status of the speedway there.

John Jarvis tells us : The **Huddersfield** track at Quarmby was described as being pear shaped. The first meeting was staged on 4th August 1928 and it continued into 1929. The Amateur track at **Whalley** in Lancashire was 150 yards long, circular in shape and had no banking. The first meeting at **Barrow, Little Park**, was on 1st June 1931. It closed after a few meetings to allow for an ACU track inspection probably because of **15**

rider complaints that the track was too bumpy. It reopened on 4th August 1931 with ACU approval. The track was on the site of an old Rugby League Football Ground and is now a housing site. **Mansfield Woodhouse** opened on 19th May 1928 and meetings were promoted by the Midland Motor Cycle Dirt Track Club. The opening meeting was rained off after four races. The track was a half mile per lap and was egg shaped.

Speedway (and Jim Henry) gets a mention in the memoirs of the late Frank Tindall, one time County Planning Officer at East Lothian County Council. Seems Frank was very keen to provide a new track for Edinburgh Monarchs in 1968 at Prestonpans where a couple of training tracks were laid out at one time.

BRITISH MOTORCYCLE FEDERATION SPRING RALLY

The third Sunday in May sees the British Motorcycle Federation (BMF) hold it's annual spring rally at Peterborough's East of England Showground. Each year John Stallworthy organises a superb show of speedway machinery and a couple of vintage speedway demonstration events.

The range of equipment on show over the years has been amazing and include a 1930 Norton, the early BSA, the V twin James, a Huskvarna built JAP replica, Indian, Harley Davidson Pea Shooter etc. It has also included an OEC centre hub steer powered by an early JAP which is an amazing piece of engineering.

Bike enthusiasts!!! This is for you!!!!

If you want to show your bike or just go along and look at bikes - get along there. It is a great day out. For Details contact John Stallworthy, 10 Station Road, Stanbridge, Leighton Buzzard, Beds. (Tel : 01525 210486)

Preston Publication

Finally, a local Preston historian has produced a booklet on the history of Farringdon Park. It tells a wee bit about this northern venue but it does not go into a great deal of detail. Details of the publication for anyone who would like a copy from Graham Fraser.

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