

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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WAS JACK PARKER THE FIRST WORLD CHAMPION ?

Many fans of Jack Parker considered him to be the greatest rider never to win a World Championship. However, Jack did win the event that was billed as the World Championship in 1931, an event that the powers that be refused to endorse after it was completed. We are indebted to **Don Gray** for his article on this previously poorly recorded competition. Do Jack's efforts merit recognition, albeit 70 years almost after the event ? Don is convinced of Jack's claim to the title.

The First World Championship Competition

During 1930 Vic Huxley had been so successful that, at the start of 1931, members of the Promoters Association declared him to be the best in the world. However, there were one or two dissenters from this view. Norman H. Pritchard, the editor of "Speedway News" and manager of the Australian Test Team, was of the opinion that Tommy Benstead, a New South Wales rider, who never left Australia, was capable of beating anyone.

It so happened that Colin Watson of England started off the 1931 season in brilliant form and the Southern League promoters decided that he should engage in a series of match races as challenger to Huxley for the "best rider" accolade, the winner to be considered the World's undisputed champion.

On Whitsun Bank Holiday Monday afternoon, 25th May, Huxley beat Watson by two runs to nil at West Ham. Both riders were using the new JAP engine. A couple of weeks later Watson reversed the position, winning two runs to nil at Stamford Bridge. A decider was held at Wembley on 25th June and Huxley emerged victorious by two runs to nil.

The considerable public and media interest engendered by these contests prompted the promoters of both the Northern and Southern Association to hold eliminating knock out match races under a World Championship label, the ultimate winner in each region to race the other to decide who would challenge Huxley for his title of Individual World Champion.

The Northern Contests

Sheffield, Preston and Leicester Super nominated as their track **1** representatives Dusty Haigh, Ginger Lees and Arthur Jervis respectively, while Belle Vue, Leeds and Glasgow each held a domestic track championship to decide their respective representatives.

The outcome of the Belle Vue event was:

Arthur Franklyn bt Len Woods 2 - 0; Eric Langton bt Chun Moore 2 - 0 and Eric Langton bt Arthur Franklyn 2 - 0.

Leeds championship saw Roy Barrowclough beat Frank Charles 2 - 1.

The event at Glasgow was a bit more complicated. The competitors were selected by a ballot of the track fans.

First Round Drew McQueen bt Norrie Isbister 2 - 0; Alfie Williams beat George McKenzie 2 - 0 and Andy Nichol received a bye.

Second Round Andy Nichol bt Alfie Williams 2 - 0 and this time Drew McQueen received a bye.

Final This brought McQueen and Nichol into conflict and Drew won 2 - 0.

In the next round of the event Eric Langton beat Arthur Jervis 2 - 0 at Belle Vue and repeated the dose at Leicester Super by a similar margin. Roy Barrowclough beat Drew McQueen 2 - 0 at Leeds. There was no return leg at Glasgow due to fixture problems and Glasgow's closure.

Lees and Haigh appear to have been given a bye each in to the next round.

Eric Langton disposed of Dusty Haigh winning 3 - 0 at Belle Vue and by an unknown score at Sheffield. Ginger Lees defeated Roy Barrowclough in events at Preston and Leeds (Any details welcome).

The Final between Eric Langton and Ginger Lees resulted in a 3 - 0 nil win for Langton at Belle Vue and a 1 all draw at Preston. Langton's fourth win was enough to give him the best of 6.

The Southern Contests

In the South five riders were chosen by the Southern Association to compete as challengers. The match results were as follows : -

Round 1 :- Tommy Croombs vs "Squib" Burton. Croombs received a walk over as Burton was seriously injured before the match could be held.

Jack Parker vs Dicky Case. Parker received a walk over as Dick Case was also seriously injured before the match could be held. Frank Arthur received a bye.

Round 2 :- Frank Arthur bt Jack Parker 2 - 0 at Stamford Bridge and Parker bt Arthur 2 - 0 at Southampton. As a result of the tie the event was restaged and this time Parker beat Arthur 2 - 0 at both venues. Tommy Croombs received a bye.

Final :- Jack Parker bt Tommy Croombs 2 - 0 at Southampton and 2 - 1 at West Ham.

North - South Eliminator

Jack Parker bt Eric Langton 2 - 0 at Southampton and 2 - 0 at Belle Vue to win the right to challenge Vic Huxley for the championship.

The World Championship Match Race Contest

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Jack Parker and Vic Huxley drew one and a half races each at Wimbledon

Jack Parker beat Vic Huxley 2 - 0 at Southampton

Jack Parker beat Vic Huxley 2 - 1 at Wimbledon.

Jack Parker was declared the Individual World Champion but on October 31st the ACU refused to sanction any official title on the grounds that Huxley did not hold any official championship title in the first place. It is not recorded why the ACU did not make their views known when the whole series was first mooted.

In my mind Jack Parker was the first man to win a creditable World Championship competition five years before Lionel Van Praag was crowned champion in 1936.

Don Gray

SOUTHAMPTON 1928 - 1929

Vic Butcher has sent us the following brief article.

The Stadium at Southampton was built in 1928 and greyhound racing commence in August that year. Shortly thereafter plans were made to incorporate the new sport of Dirt Track racing. A track was laid with a view to opening in October.

An advert for potential new riders appeared in the local press asking them to contact Alec Bennett, a local motor cycle dealer and a road race competitor. Bennett himself was reported to have had a trial spin but I have no record of him riding in an actual meeting. Another well known motorcyclist Eric Fernihough did ride, but with little success.

The first meeting was held on the afternoon of 6th October 1928 and despite the season, thirteen meetings were held with two meetings a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The press report of the first meeting appears in the Sports Echo of 6th October. (Can be viewed in Echo Office in Southampton.) Unlike many reports of this era it concentrates on the background but gives little information about the actual racing. I have not had the good fortune to come across a copy of the first meeting programme but, if the format of subsequent meetings was followed, the first event was the opening heat of the handicap and the honour of the first win fell to Ivor Creek. The Handicap Final went to Les Dallimore and the Golden Gauntlet went to Sprouts Elder who also

beat Creek 2 - 0 in the Match Race. The following meetings followed a similar format and crowds of 17,000 were not unusual.

It is, however, interesting to note that even at this early stage, the idea of team racing was being tried out. On 3rd November a four man London team beat a four man Southampton 15 - 12. Each team had a reserve rider. The matches were raced over 9 heats with the race winner scoring 2 points and second placed man scoring 1 point.

Buster Frogley top scored for Southampton with 5 while the best visitors **3** were Buzz Hibberd, Roger May and Nick Nicols each scoring four. A match between teams representing the Stands and the Terraces was held the following week.

The final meeting of 1928 was held on 17th November and it was a between England and Australia. (Was this the first unofficial Test Match ??) England won 19 - 8 and the scorers were as follows :

England : Eric Spencer 6, Les Dallimore 5, Roger May 5, Bill Bragg 2, Sonny Wilson 1, Colin Watson 1.

Australia : Buzz Hibberd 4, Noel Johnson 4, Hilary Buchanan 0, Boyd Pratt 0, Harry Stephens 0, Bert Spencer 0.

Having been one of the last tracks to close in 1928, it was one of the first to open in 1929 (if you discount New Years Day events.) The first meeting was held on 29th March and another 63 were staged at the rate of two per week until 26th October. This was, of course, the first season of league racing and Southampton were to finish runners up to Stamford Bridge.

The Southampton team remained unbeaten at home in the league and the only home defeat was 9 - 11 to Exeter in a three heat match.

The riders who represented Southampton included Jimmy Hayes, Ernie Rickman, Clarrie Eldridge, Tommy Cullis, Don Durant, Reg and Cecil Bounds, Eric Lister, Vic Collins, Col (Colin) Stewart, Albert Wakerley, C.S. Barrow, and Frank Bond.

A few interesting snippets from 1929 are:-

The pre-league trial match was held on 27th April in which Southampton beat West Ham 41 - 22. The home side included R. Seward and Sonny Wilson, neither of whom subsequently rode for the league team.

In the League match against Stamford Bridge on 12th July Southampton nominated TWO reserves, both of whom rode. (Can anyone verify this?)

On 31st July Southampton thrashed Scotland 45 - 18. Tiger Stevenson and Don Durrant were both unbeaten on 12 and Ivor Creek scored 10. Drew McQueen was best for a depleted visiting side on 6.

The researcher's worst nightmare took place on 5th October in an event called The Mystery 16. This took place over 4 heats, 2 semi finals and a final. The problem is that no names were printed in the programme. The spectators were asked to identify the riders and estimate the speed with a pen to the best entry. The competition winner is mentioned in the press but the details of the riders who took part in the event appear to be unavailable. (Can anyone help?)

On 19th October in an amateur Ladies race Miss Carol Williams beat Hortense Williams in 63.8 seconds (2 laps). The best time in the meeting was 78.6 seconds set by Tiger Stevenson.

Vic would be glad to hear from anyone who has press reports or programmes relating to Southampton home or away for any pre - war matches. 7 Derwent Close, Tangmere, PO20 6FQ. Phone 01243 532819.

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NEWSPAPER INFORMATION

Swindon : Tracks : **Gorse Hill** and **Abbey Stadium, Blunsdon**. Gorse Hill is an early pioneer venue while Abbey Stadium opened in 1949 and is still going strong. There was also a training track in the Swindon area.

Newspapers : (422) Evening Advertiser and Evening North Wilts Herald 1928 - date; (423) Evening Swindon Advertiser Football Pink 1928 - Sept 1939 & 1956 - date; (424) North Wilts Herald 1928 - Dec 1941; (425) Swindon Advertiser, Wiltshire, Berkshire and Gloucester Chronicle 1949 - April 1950; (426) Wiltshire Herald and Advertiser April 1950 - Sept 1956; (427) Swindon Echo July 1962 - Nov 1966; (428) Wiltshire Gazette and Herald Oct 1956 - date.

Tamworth : Tracks : Pre war **Tamworth Speedway** and **Mile Oak**, Post war **Fazeley**. Tamworth has a much more extensive history than previously imagined as we have covered in previous editions.

Newspapers : (429) The Tamworth Herald and General Advertiser 1928 - date; (430) The Tamworth Mercury 1928 - May 1957.

Tynemouth : Track : **Whitley Bay**. Short lived venue.

Newspaper : (431) The Shields Daily News 1929. See also Newcastle upon Tyne newspapers which carry match details and some photographs.

Wallasey : Track : **New Brighton**. The Tower Grounds.

Newspapers : (432) Wallasey and Wirral Chronicle 1928 - June 1941; (433) The Wallasey News and Wirral General Advertiser 1928 - date.

Warrington : Track : **Motordrome Arpley**. Early pre war venture which was the subject of proposals to re open in the late 1940s. Took part in English and Northern Dirt Track Leagues.

Newspapers : (434) The Warrington Examiner 1928 - Sept 1957; (435) The Warrington Guardian 1928 - date. See entry for Crewe Newspapers as they carry details of Warrington meetings.

Weymouth : Track : **Radipole Lane**. A fair history of of action from 1954 with lots of odd seasons and team names. Stadium site redeveloped for a supermarket.

Newspapers : (436) Dorset Daily Echo and Weymouth Dispatch 1954 - June 1958; (437) Dorset Evening Echo and Weymouth Dispatch July 1958 - July 1960; (438) Dorset Evening Echo July 1960 - date; (439) Southern Journal and Wessex Post May 1957; (440) Southern Times and Weymouth and Portland Times Sept 1957 - Feb 1963.

Whitley Bay : Track : **Rockcliffe Park**. First track to open on Tyneside and first to close down. April to June/July 1929.

Newspaper: (441) Whitley Seaside Chronicle and Visitors Gazette 1929.

Wigan : Tracks : **Poolstock** and **Woodhouse Lane**. A few odd seasons 1947 - 1960. Hint of possible pre war action not confirmed.

Newspapers: (442) The Wigan Examiner 1928 - June 1961; (443) The Wigan Observer and District Advertiser 1928 - date.

Wimbourne : Tracks : May carry **Poole** and **Ringwood** information.

Newspapers : (444) Southern Journal and Wessex Post (for Wimbourne, Ringwood and Blandford) March - Oct 1951; (445) Southern Journal and Essex Post (for Dorset, Hants and Wilts) Oct 1953 - Feb 1963; (446) Wimbourne and District News July 5 1948 - June 1956.

Wisbech : Track : **Wisbech**. An obscure grass speedway or half grass half dirt. Yet another in a long line of tracks needing some digging.

Newspapers: (447) Isle of Ely and Wisbech Advertiser 1928 - 1962; (448) The Wisbech Constitutional Gazette and Isle of Ely Standard 1928 - Jan 1943; (449) The Wisbech Standard 1928 - date.

Wokingham : Track : **Longmoor or California in Reading**. Prewar training track and post war Southern Area League venture.

Newspapers : (450) The Wokingham Gazette and Berkshire County Advertiser; (451) Wokingham Times and Weekly News Oct 1930 - Sept 1939; (452) Wokingham, Bracknell and Ascot Times and Weekly News Sept 1939 - Nov 1942 & Dec 1948 - Dec 1949; (453) Wokingham Times and Weekly News Nov 1942 - Jan 1948 & March - Dec 1948; (454) East Berkshire Times and Weekly News Jan - March 1948; (455) Wokingham and Bracknell Times Jan 1950 - May 1956; (456) Wokingham Times May 1956 - June 1957; (457) Wokingham, Bracknell and Ascot Times June 1957 - July 1959.

Wolverhampton : Track : **Monmore Green**. Both sides of the war for this venue.

Newspapers : (458) Wolverhampton Chronicle 1928 - Dec 1930; (459) Wolverhampton Times and South Staffordshire Advertiser July 1930 - July 1931.

Poor local press coverage holdings at Colindale!!!

Workington : Track : **Lonsdale Park** on and off pre war and **Derwent Park** on and off since 1970.

Newspapers : (460) Evening Star Feb 1929 - June 1935; (461) Cumberland Evening Star and Mail June 1935 - June 1967; (462) The Workington Star and Harriston Guardian 1928 - Sept 1955. Carlisle based newspapers cover Workington area.

Yarmouth : Track : **Caister Road Greyhound Stadium**. Pre war and post war action in this area. Mr Yarmouth Speedway is Keith Farman See Vol 1 No.2.

Newspapers : (463) Yarmouth and Central Norfolk Citizen April 1961 - Jan 1962; (464) Yarmouth Independent 1928 - July 1940; (465) The Yarmouth Mercury, Gorleston Herald and North Norfolk Advertiser 1928 - date.

York : Track : **Burnholme**. Completed in time to stage a practice event in 1930. Staged meetings in 1931. Stadium site developed for housing. David Poole of York, featured in an early Vintage Speedway Magazine with a history of York.

Newspapers : (466) Yorkshire Evening Press 1928- date; (467) The Yorkshire Herald 1928 - June 1954; (468) The York Star 1928 - Nov 1954; (469) Yorkshire Gazette 1928 - June 1954; (470) Yorkshire Gazette and Herald (County Edition) 1958 - date; (471) Gazette and Herald (East Riding Edition) 1965; (472) Yorkshire Gazette and Herald (East Riding Edition) Jan 1966 - date; (473) The Yorkshire News 1928 - Nov 1954 and Jan 1955 - 1957. These could contain quite a lot of Yorkshire wide information - worth a look for lots of tracks.

IRISH NEWSPAPERS

Belfast : Tracks : **Dunroyd, Dunmore, Gibson Park, Windsor Park**. Limited information on the details of activity at these venues.

Newspapers : (474) Belfast Telegraph 1928 -date; (475) Gazette 1928 - Sept 1951; (476) Irish Motoring 1928 - Nov 1964; (477) Irish News 1928 - date.

To be continued.

TRACK INFORMATION

We continue with even more of **John Jarvis'** track information.

HULL : New Craven Park, Preston Road, Hull. Track Length : 375 yards. 1st Meeting : 5th April 1995. Years of Operation : 1995 - 98 - Premier League; 1999 - Elite League; 2000 - Premier League. (N.)

HULL : White City, Anlaby Road, Hull. Track Length : Not Known. 1st Meeting : 3rd May 1930. Years of Operation : As grass track 1928 - 30. 1930 - Open. May have operated 1931 - 33 as open venue.

IPSWICH : Foxhall Heath Stadium, Ipswich. Track Length : 410 yards 1951 - 61 329 yards 1969. 1st Meeting : 25th October 1950. Years of Operation : 1950 -51 - Open; 1952 - 53 - Southern League; 1954 - 56 - National League Division Two; 1957 - 58 - National League; 1959 - Southern Area League; 1960 - 62 - National League; 1962 - National League - resigned; 1964 - Metropolitan League; 1965 - Open; 1969 - 71 - British league Division Two; 1972 - 74 - British League Division One; 1975 - 88 - British League; 1989 - 90 National League; 1991 - 94 - British League Division One; 1995 - 96 - Premier League; 1997 - Elite League and Conference League 1998 - 2000 - Elite League. (U.) Anglian Angels raced some fixtures here.

IWADE (OLD) : Marsh Bank Farm, Ferry Road, Iwade, Kent. Track Length : 250 yards. Years of Operation : 1970 - Open & Training; 1971 - Training. Not on site of existing track - in adjacent field. (U.)

IWADE (NEW) : Marsh Bank Farm, Ferry Road, Iwade, Kent. Track Length : 315 yards 1975, 295 1988. 1st Meeting : Not Known. Years of Operation : 1971 - Training; 1972 - 93 - Open & Training; 1994 - Open & Training & British League Division Three; 1995 - Amateur League; 1996 - 1997 - Conference League; 1998 - Training; 1999 - 2000 Training (U.)

IWADE - Junior track which is a tiddler in the lands of the Iwade track used in 1990, 1995, 1999 and 2000. (N.)

KETTERING : Red House Speedway, Hannington, Nr Kettering. Track Length : Not Known. 1st Meeting : Not Known. Years of Operation : 1928 - 29 - Open. (N.)

KING'S LYNN : Saddlebow Road Stadium, King's Lynn, Norfolk. Track Length : 400 yards 1965 - 74, 375 yards 1975. 1st Meeting : 7th September 1952. Years of Operation : Grass Speedway 1952 - 53. 1965 - Open; 1966 - 67 - British League; 1968 - British League Division One; 1969 - 70 - British League Divisions One and Two; 1971 - 74 - British League Division One; 1975 - 90 - British League; 1991 - 94 - British League Division One; 1995 - Premier League; 1996 - Training; 1997 - 2000 - Elite League and Conference League. Home of Anglian Angels here in 1997. Norfolk Braves (as Skegness) - here 1998 - 99. A Boston team 7 raced here 2000. (U.)

KING'S LYNN : Training track 170 yards long constructed inside stadium centre green. Used 1991. (N.)

LEA BRIDGE : Lea Bridge Stadium, Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, London. Track Length : 446 yards 1928, 440 yards 1930 & 38. 1st Meeting : 14th July 1928. Years of Operation : 1928 - Open; 1929 - 31 Southern League; 1932 - 33 - National League; 1934 - National League Division One; 1935 - Training; 1936 -37 - Open ?(needs confirmation.); 1938 - National League Division Two; 1939 - Training. The site is now an industrial estate known as Speedway Estate. (U.)

LEEDS : Fullerton Park, Elland Road, Leeds, Yorkshire. Track Length : 409 yards 1929, 402 yards 1930, 420 yards 1938. 1st meeting : 13th October 1928. Years of Operation : 1928 - Open; 1929 - English League; 1930 - Open; 1931 - Northern League; 1932 - Open; 1938 - Open the National League Division Two. Site partly training pitches and partly industrial estate. (U.)

LEEDS : PUDSEY : Post Hill, Nr Pudsey, Leeds. Track Length : 354 yards. 1st Meeting : 2nd April 1928. Year of Operation : 1928 - Open. 8 meetings, the last few were composite hill climb, speedway and road race events. No records of use after 1928 so some research needed here. (N.)

LINLITHGOW : Heathersfield Stadium, Nr Linlithgow. (Also known as LATHALLAN for one season.) Track Length : 175 yards then rebuilt as 208 yards. 1st Meeting : 5th August 1989. Years of Operation : 1989 - Open & Training; 1990 - 93 - Training; Lengthened track - 1994 - British League Division Three; 1995 - Amateur League; 1996 - 97 - Conference League; 1998 - Open & Training; 1999- Conference League. 2000 - training. Site now cleared and returned to farmer.(N.)

LEICESTER STADIUM : Blackbird Road Stadium, Leicester. Track Length : 348 yards 1928, 380 yards 1980, 364 yards. 1st Meeting : ? August 1928.

Years of Operation : 1928 - Open; 1929 - English League; 1930 - 31 - Southern League; 1932 - Open; 1937 - Provincial League Second Division - resigned; 1949 - 50 - National League Division Three; 1951 - 56 - National League Division Two; 1957 - 61 - National League; 1962 - Provincial League; 1963 - Open; 1968 - 74 - British League Division One; 1975 - 83 - British League. Stadium was demolished and redeveloped for housing. A sad loss to British Speedway - a real racers circuit. Alan Jones working on the history of this track. (U.)

LEICESTER SUPER : Melton Road, Leicester. Track Length : 586 yards. 1st Meeting : 18th May 1929. Years of Operation : 1929 - Open; 1930 - Northern League; 1931 - Northern League - closed; 1932 - Open; 1936 - Open. High speed Australian type circuit. Races staged over three laps.

LEICESTER : Syston, Nr Leicester. Track Length : Not Known. Training venture of 1952 - no further details known. (N.)

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LISBURN : Lambeg Stadium, Lisburn, County Antrim. Track Length : Not Known. 1st Meeting : Not Known. Year of Operation : 1971 - Open Pirate Events. Trotting track which staged team events. Nickname : Border Lions. A candidate for some research !!! (N.)

LITTLE WALTHAM : Montpelier Farm, Little Waltham, Nr Chelmsford. A training track built by Johnny Guilfoyle and used in 1969 and 1970.(N.)

LIVERPOOL : Seaforth Greyhound Stadium, Crosby Road, Seaforth, Liverpool. Track Length : 330 yards. 1st meeting : Not Known. Years of Operation : 1934 - 35 - Open. A venue in need of some research. (U.)

LIVERPOOL : Stanley Stadium, Prescot Road, Liverpool. Track Length : 432 yards 1929, 433 yards 1949, 446 yards. 1st Meeting : 25th August 1928. Years of Operation : 1928 - Open; 1929 -

English League; 1930 - Northern League; 1936 - Provincial League; 1937 - Provincial League - transferred to Belle Vue in July; 1949 - 50 - National League Division Three; 1951 - 52 - National League Division Two; 1953 - National League Division Three - closed August; 1957 - Open; 1959 - Open; 1960 - Provincial League. Practice track on car park 1949 - 50. Demolished and is now site of a fruit market.

LONDON : White City Stadium, Wood Lane, London, W12. Track Length : 383 yards 1928, 418 yards 1976, 378 yards. 1st Meeting : 19th May 1928. Years of Operation : 1928 - Open; 1929 - Southern League; 1930 - 31 - Open ???; 1953 - 1958 Cavalcade of Speed meetings (composite events with lots of different motor sport events including speedway); 1961 Cavalcade of Speed meeting; 1976 - 78 - British League; 1979 - 83 - Open.

Purchased by BBC for extension to Television Centre and demolished. (U.)

LONG EATON : Long Eaton Stadium, Station Road, Long Eaton. Track Length : 367 yards 1929, 370 yards. 1st Meeting : 11th May 1929. Years of Operation : 1929 - Open - English Dirt Track League but did not take part; 1930 - Open; 1950 - Open; 1951 - 52 - National League Division Three; 1953 - Open & Training; 1954 - Open (Pirate events); 1963 - 64 - Provincial League; 1965 - 67 - British League; 1968 - Training; 1969 -74 - British League Division Two; 1975 - Training; 1979 - 80 & 1982 - 90 - National League; 1991 - 94 - British League Division Two; 1995 - 97 Premier League. Haste Ye Back !!!!!(U.)

LUTON : Skimpot Lane, Dunstable Road, Luton. Track Length : 311 yards. 1st Meeting : Not Known. Years of Operation : 1934 - Amateur Open & Training; 1935 - Open; 1936 - Amateur Open & Training. Nickname - Hatters. (U.)

LYDD : Belgar Farm, Romney Road, Lydd, Kent. Track Length : 210 metres. 1st Meeting : Not Known. Years of Operation : 1996 - 2000 - Training & Open. (N.)

MANCHESTER : White City Stadium, Old Trafford, Manchester. Track Length : 440 yards 1928, 446 yards 1930. 1st Meeting : 16th June 1928. **9**

Years of Operation : 1928 - Open; 1929 - English Dirt Track League - resigned; 1930 - Northern League - resigned. Became a stock car track and was redeveloped to become a retail park. (U.)

Wolverhampton - 1930

The 1930 season at the Midlands venue opened on April Fools Day and drew a big crowd. The track lighting was poor but the crowd were compensated by being able to listen to the gramophone records which were played over the tannoy. Harry Taft won both the Scratch and Handicap events.

A week later John Deeley broke the track record setting a new time of 83.4 seconds. Lew Lancaster was taken to hospital with concussion while Australian Cecil Walker smashed into a lamp standard in what was considered to be the most sensational crash ever seen at the track to date.

Meeting number three saw "Smiling Jim" Kempster take on Les Blakeborough in a match race series and emerge the victor by 2 to 1. Norman Parker cleaned up the big events winning both Scratch and Handicap events. This meeting saw crash victim Reg Hutchins, a local lad, break his toe.

Norman's brother Jack appeared in meeting four staged on 22nd April. Jack contested a match race with Leicester's Syd Jackson and won the contest in a new track record time of 81.8 seconds. George Allbrook won the Monmore Cup event.

The last meeting in April saw the visit of famous Aussie Vic Huxley. He lost in a match race against fellow Aussie Billy Dallison but was made motor for his win. Dallison set yet another track record time, this time it went down to 80.2 seconds.

There are no records to hand of the event for 6th May when Wolverhampton were due to race Hall Green. Was it rained off ?

Frank Arthur thrilled the crowd on 13th May and he was opposed by English lad Squib Burton. Jack Parker had been due to appear but he had to stay away because of an injury to his hand sustained whilst working on his car.

Burton beat the Aussie in their match race but failed to last the pace in the final of the handicap event when his front tyre came off.

Norman Parker was back for the meeting of 20th May and he faced Tom Farndon. Farndon won the match race series 2 - 1. Tom came from the back on the last bend of the decider to take the flag. Farndon won the Scratch event but failed to clean up. Irishman Larry Coffey won the Handicap and Hutchins won the Monmore Cup.

Saturday afternoon speedway returned to Monmore Green on 1st June. This showed up local lad, 24 year old Norman Pitts, in a good light. **10**

Norman claimed several notable scalps in winning the Scratch race but he ended his day in hospital after falling and severing an artery.

A week later on June 8th the meeting failed to draw a reasonable crowd and signalled the end of Saturday afternoon events. A novelty event was a donkey race which took all of seven minutes to complete. On board a dirt track bike Jimmy Gent won the Flying Six.

A short break in the season of 16 days and the bikes were back on the evening of Tuesday 24th June. It must have been a dry spell or the track preparation had been neglected as clouds of dust rose during every race. Billy Dallison was back and he cleaned up both Handicap and Scratch events.

This appears to be the last meeting at Monmore Green until 1950 unless anyone has information to the contrary.

If you are seeking any information about Wolverhampton 1928 to 1930 please contact **Mark Sawbridge**. Mark has contributed this interesting insight of the early days of Wolverhampton and similar types of reports about other venues would be welcome. We'd be happy to cover post war venues in a similar fashion as a recent Melton Mowbray article.

Keith Cracks It !!

A big thanks to **Barry Stephenson** in Workington for helping complete **Keith Farman's** quest for the 1940s - early 1950s Yarmouth information.

Barry was able to send Keith the heat details from the Wombwell meeting after reading the request in the last edition of **The Speedway Researcher**. The Editors are delighted to hear of this co-operation and this is just why we started this wee magazine.

Bike Bits (Part 2)

The history of our speedway machine is very interesting. We conclude **Chris Byles'** thoughts on the topic.

Towards the end of 1930, Stanley Greening and Wal Philips convinced their boss John A. Prestwich to go ahead in the production of a speedway engine, as, up to that point, John had shown little interest in the new sport that was taking the country by storm. The first of the engines was fitted into a Wallis frame in August 1930 and, with Philips aboard, it swept the board at Stamford Bridge setting a new speed record of 46 m.p.h.

The fabulous J.A.P. was born and it would reign supreme for the next thirty years or more. The era of the standardised, specialised speedway machine had begun. Like the Rudge it would oust, the JAP motor fitted well into **11**

he short wheel-based frames and allowed for the tight white line racing we are generally familiar with. That said there were a few lads, notably Billy Galloway, who could hold a Dougie on the line if needs be.

Arguably the change from the long wheel base Douglas lost some of the thrills of the big sprays of cinders, some of the sport's early charm was lost, but it now pitted rider against rider on a bit more equal footing. Ability was more of a telling factor than the difference in machine types. Whilst the engine type had become standardised (the actual engine evolved a little over the years for example the exposed rocker springs became enclosed) it wasn't until the late 1930s that the frame types took a similar path. Max Grosskreutz, a former cane cutter from Queensland, helped steer Australia to a 69 - 38 Test win at Wembley on 14th June 1934 on a machine he had built himself from pieces discarded by fellow riders. Topping the Aussie's scoring on fifteen points, this frame was to be the prototype of the famous Grosskreutz frames which were to revolutionise Speedway in future years. It was the first to do away with the old style saddle that sat on springs, opting instead for the seat type as we know today. This early prototype became known as the "Pinto", and when Bluey Wilkinson rode one to win all his heats in the 1936 World Final, interest and demand started to grow. Initially the frames were not available commercially, but by mid 1939, Max turned to the Excelsior Motorcycle Company to start manufacturing his frame types. The first thirty to roll off the line were snapped up by such stars as Oliver Langton, Ray Duggan, Ernie Price, George Saunders and Bert Spencer.

Thereafter, many frame types were built over the years, each with their own characteristics. However, for the most part, these were generally copies of someone else's frame and it takes a keen eye to differentiate one from the other.

Minor modifications were, as mentioned above, made to the JAP over the years but the basic concept changed very little. As late as 1967 the JAP was still winning World Finals when Ove Fundin used one, albeit in a JAWA frame, to clinch his fifth title. Everyone raced a JAP in one frame or another, and whilst several other makes of engine made an attempt to challenge the dominance of the JAP - none succeeded. The challengers included the Vincent - HRD combine which produced engines for the West Ham team about 1947 and at least two are known to exist. However, by the 1960's, the writing was on the wall, and a more serious challenge had emerged for the lightweight British engine from another factory - in another country.

Behind the "Iron Curtain" speedway had steadily been developing and it seemed there was only one way to seriously challenge the JAP with its 14:1 compression ratio, namely to build something very similar. The Polish built the "FIS" machine had some success, its name deriving from the **14**

initials of the makers - F for Fedski I for Izewski and S for "Stalowcy".

However it was left to the Czechoslovakians, who also like the Poles made copycat JAPs, (I think Huskvarna also did this in Sweden (Jim Henry)) to bring us the engine that was eventually to take the place of the JAP as a dominant factor. There is much confusion as to the real story behind the forerunner of the JAWA engine, namely the ESO, which first made its appearance in Britain in the hands of Ove Fundin in 1961. Many sources will have us believe that Jawa turned out the Eso engine, when in fact it should be noted that Eso were a company in their own right and had previously taken over from the JOLI engine. Josef Linhart made the JOLI between 1947 and 1950, the name being derived from the first two letters of his first name and his surname. It was in fact a replica of the JAP engine of that period. From 1950 Jaroslav Simaldi bought up all the remaining spares of the now defunct JOLI engines and used them to produce his own version - the Eso, this later being bought out by the Jawa factory.

What they did was to refine the JAP by making their engine an all alloy unit with the rocker gear and pushrods all enclosed and, more so than the JAP, it thrived on high revs. In the beginning it struggled to compete with the JAP but Ove Fundin observed with it although he did revert to his JAP for all-important events. In 1965 Aussie Rim Malskities was the harbinger of Jawa power in British League speedway and in 1966 the British agency was taken over by Barry Briggs.

After initial teething problems Barry showed what the engine could do by winning the 1966 World Final and the trickle of converts earlier that year became a flood.

1966 saw a brief British revival in the shape of a Matchless motor which was used briefly by Bill Landels at Edinburgh and Nigel Boocock at Coventry. However the speedway engine, born out of moto cross engine by engineer Jack Emmett was not considered to be competitive and ditched. No known examples exist but adverts for the motor and cut away drawings of the engine were featured in the contemporary press.

Jawa ruled the roost until the mid 1970s when another speedway engine revolution was about to burst on the scene. It could be called The Four Valve Revolution.

For Australia, it was the old engineering master Neil Street, who along with Ivan Tighe, produced the TSR4, a 4 valve head conversion to fit on to a standard Jawa engine bottom end. It had chain driven overhead cams (instead of pushrods) with 4 valves (two inlet and two exhaust) and such was its performance that the Street was soon being inundated with orders. The TSR4 was later marketed in England under the name of SR4. Meanwhile in Sweden, the ERM (Endfors Racing Motors) 4 valve conversion was also under production and this set history by becoming the first 4 valver to be used in a World Final when it was used by Sweden's Christer Lofquist in the 1974 Final.

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Meanwhile a small English firm was quick to realise the potential of the four valve revolution and thrust forward its own conversion before eventually making an entire engine on its own, one that would be a serious challenger to the JAWA. That machine was the famous Weslake.

It seemed for a time that the dominance of the Jawa was going to go the same way that the JAP had gone before it as more and more riders switched to the British Weslake. Unlike the JAP (which did produce a 4 valve engine also) the Jawa factory bit back and was soon churning out its own 4 valve motor.

Never since those early pioneering days were such a galaxy of new names to appear on the scene as it seemed that everyone was turning out a 4 valve conversion of one kind or another. The American Drake, the Luckhurst, The Briggo, the Ricksson to name but a few. Some such as the JWS from the Netherlands even tried other arrangements such as a 3 valve conversion. (Jawa made at least one 5 valve head).

Two other contenders joined the battle with Jawa, the Italian contender built by Guiseppi Marzotto. (who had raced for Wolverhampton as Charlie Brown) known simply as the GM and the Godden built by Don Godden in England. The three were much pretty equal but then newer versions of the Jawa and upgrades of the GM pulled away from the Godden.

More recently the engine scene has changed with the introduction of the laydown engines which are more accurately described as angled at about 45 degrees from the vertical. Both GM and Jawa produce these. They have been joined by a new Czech bike ridden by Lee Richardson in early 2000.

Laydown engines are by no means a new idea to capitalise on a lowered centre of gravity. Charlie McEvoy used a horizontal single cylinder machine in 1928 and Wal Phillips experimented with a lay down JAP in 1948.

So the next time you look at machines lining up at the tapes it is worthwhile giving some thought to the past when sponsor's logos were not the only way of recognising a machine.

Chris Byles

Can You Help ???

Eric Watson's list of requirements for information on race jackets and names continues. We use the same code for Team Colours (TC), Logo or Design on the race jacket (L) and nickname for the team (N): High Beech Southern League 1930- 31 TC,L, Foresters (unless you have alternative); Leicester Super Northern League 1929 - 30 TC,L,N; Leicester Stadium Southern

League 1930 - 31 Provincial League 1937 TC, L,N; Hackney Wick National League 1935, National League Division One 1936 - 37, National League Division Two 1938 - 39 TC,L,N; Lea Bridge Southern League 1929 - 31; National League Division One 1938 TC,L,N; Leeds Northern League 1929,1931,National League Division Two 1938,TC,L,N; Liverpool Northern League 1929 - 30, Provincial League 1936 - 37 TC,L,N; Middlesbrough Northern League 1929,National League Division Two 1939 TC,L,N; New Cross National League 1934 TC,L,N; Newcastle Brough Park Northern League 1929 National League Division Two 1938 - 39 TC,L,N; Newcastle Gosforth Northern League 1930 TC,L,N.

Jim Henry is seeking heat details for Nelson v Glasgow "B" 2.9.1967; Bergen v Coatbridge 26.10.1973 and Sandnes & Jaeren v Coatbridge 2.11.1973.

Ian Moultray is seeking Glasgow Ashfield second half heat details for the following 1949 19.4. v Walthamstow; 26.4, v Glasgow Tigers; 3.5. Kangaroos v Rest of Scotland; 10.5 v Southampton; 17.5. v Cradley Heath; 23.5. v Coventry; 24.5 v Sheffield. 1950 30.5 v Cradley Heath, 17.6 v Glasgow Tigers; 8.8. v Sheffield; 19.9. v Fleetwood, 1952 3.6. v Stoke. Heat times for Norwich v Ashfield 9.9.1950 and Walthamstow v Ashfield 2.10.1950. Details of scoring of Ashfield riders in Motherwell Best Pairs Cup 22.9.1950, England v Australia, Shelbourne Park 24.9.1950, World Championship QR Ipswich 29.5.1952 and Fleetwood v All Star Team 20.8.1952.

Adrian Pavey, Plot 3, Commongate, Low Moresby, Whitehaven, Cumbria, CA28 6RX, 01946 691091 is looking for information about 1930 Norton and BSA speedway machines. He is looking for anything at all, press cuttings, factory literature, and/or workshop manuals, advertisements, illustrations and photographs. Loaned material would be carefully copied and returned promptly. (Drew McQueen and Arthur Franklyn had Nortons and McQueen used his briefly at Marine Gardens. George McKenzie told me the Norton was top heavy for a speedway bike and the vibration transmitted through the frame gave him double vision as he raced on it. Norton illustrated in the book on the history of the Norton marque.(Jim Henry))

Alan Barwick, 6 Croft Villas, Church Street, Herfield, West Sussex wonders if anyone can tell him which 1931 team had a race jacket which featured three horizontal sabres. It is worn by William "Stiffy" Aston and possibly taken at Lea Bridge or another southern track. Alan also has a photograph Of Lou Berger and a B. Archer at a track he can't identify. The tracks has trees surrounding it and a white plank fence with wire mesh on top.

Hugh Vass is seeking heat details for the full meeting (Match and second half) for the following Third Division track meetings in 1947.

Eastbourne : 19.4; 26.4; 3.5; 10.5; 17.5; 24.5; 21.6; 5.7; and Wombwell 9.5; 16.5; 23.5; 26.5; 30.5; 6.6; 20.6; 27.6; 4.7.

Alan Jones is looking for the heat details for Leicester Stadium 1929: Home 18.7 v Salford; 1.8 v Liverpool; 15.8 v Middlesbrough; 29.8 v White City (Manchester); Away 2.6 at White City (Mcr); 15.6 at Leeds; 19.7 at Warrington; 20.7 at Rochdale; 23.7 at Middlesbrough; 25.7 at Warrington; 26.7 at Salford; 3.8 at Liverpool; 17.8 at Barnsley; 7.9 at Sheffield. 1930: Away 16.5 at Hall Green; 30.7 at Stamford Bridge; 16.8 at High Beech. 1931: Away 16.4 at Coventry. For Leicester Super 1930: Away 17.5 at White City (Manchester); 28.6 at Belle Vue.

Andy Marlow is seeking a copy of the UK fixture lists for 1946 - 1964.

(Stenners Annual 1947 has complete listing of all meetings staged in 1946 - can anyone tell us of a handy reference source or sources for the rest of the seasons 1947 onwards?)

Queries and Quibbles

We never like to suggest that what we print is absolutely definitive. If you disagree with us or other contributors let us know what concerns you. We welcome constructive debate.

Vic Butcher takes us to task on the recently published league tables as follows :-

1929 Southern League. Wimbledon v Southampton 26 - 37 appears under the Lea Bridge column. This change makes Southampton for 673 and 500 against. This disagrees with the published table which gives 672 - 501. Vic also thinks the Coventry v Southampton result should be 44 - 19 not 43 - 20 as shown.

1930 Southern League. The table shows Southampton For 716 Against 560 which disagrees with a table published by Maurice Jones who gives the tally as 717 - 561. Vic thinks the Lea Bridge v Southampton score should be 24 - 30 not 23 - 30.

Vic also adds to our Roll of Honour information with Jack Eaves died 26.12.1954, Sig Schlam crashed 1.11.1930 died 2.11.1930 at the Western Cricket Association Ground, Perth, Western Australia aged 25, Jock Shead was aged 24. Keith MacKay died 1.2.1929 not 1928 as per Vol 4 No.2, Grzegory Smolinski of Gniezwo crashed 12.4.1987 and died 22.4.1987 and Wieslaw Pawlak crashed 2.8.1987 and died 13.8.1987.

Bill Lamb takes us to task on the Tamworth race jacket colours. Bill recalls seeing Peter Orpwood at Old Meadowbank in 1949 and suggests the colours were a Red T on a yellow background and that the "T" was in an italics form viz. *T*.

Bill also recalls the 1954 decision to indicate the status of riders by the colour of the back of race jackets. Home heat leaders were to have red backs, second strings blue backs and the reserve riders were to have backs of red and blue halves divided by a diagonal line. The away team would race with white backs, the away second strings with yellow backs and the away **Andy Marlow** has done a statistical breakdown of the Roll of Honour. Without publishing all the data the most cheering statistic is that there is a clear overall downward trend over the decades. With regard to the riders listed as non speedway fatalities, Andy suggests that Sven Lofquist should be Fritz Lofquist and gives dates for Steve Ison (25.9.1948), Christer Lofquist (Illness Feb 1978); Jack Millen (29.4.1978); Graham Banks 4.6.1978); Mikael Krasnow (Illness 1979) Billy Saunders 23.4.1985) and Kenny Carter (27.5.1986).

A Wee Man Cut Short

Now we know that the title of this piece by **Keith Farman** probably won't make much sense but it is a Coatbridge (once home of The Monarchs and The Tigers) saying to describe a man who is short in stature. Dare we say it but it sounds better than the modern PC turn of phrase - vertically challenged. We did ask you who you thought was the smallest rider. Here we draw from Keith's article on the man he thinks was the smallest rider and, as ever, welcome any advances on Keith's facts.

Keith believes that the smallest rider was Johnny Chamberlain who was 57 inches tall 4 feet 9 inches tall (1 metre is about 39 inches) as reported in the Speedway Star in July 1953. The measurement was given by Johnny's Mother.

Johnny started at Yarmouth in 1952 and struggled a bit at first. However, by the end of the season he was scoring maximums. Johnny was one of the most spectacular riders that I have ever seen. Because of his height he was always fighting his bike. Paired with Terry Courtnell in 1952 the Chamberlain / Courtnell twosome were spectacular as Johnny held the line while Courtnell bounced along the fence. The pair parted company with their machines quite often as they learned their trade.

In 1953 the wee man progressed so well that he was capped in a Test match at Norwich. Unfortunately the glory was short lived as he collided with Ken Middleditch at Yarmouth whilst reeling in the Poole star in the last lap. Unfortunately Johnny ended up with a broken shin and missed out on the rest of the season.

After Yarmouth closed Johnny moved on to Ipswich for a few seasons before moving to his third East Anglian side, Norwich, in 1958. This helped boost his form and he rode in Test teams and World Cup Final.

Johnny's career in England came to an end on 28th August 1961 when he had a spectacular fall. Despite the tumble not looking too serious he had broken his wrist in four places. The wee Aussie returned home and, after a few events at Claremont, retired. Maybe those readers who are into rider biographies could offer any challengers.

Who is The Grand Old Man ?

Keith Farman suggests that we could take our pick from his suggestions. Firstly Jack Parker was a very senior citizen when he turned out at Hackney in the Golden Jubilee meeting. Keith also suggests Jimmy Squibb, who at 54 was second halving at Canterbury. Geoff Pymar was 50 at Middlesbrough in the early 1960s and Wal Morton was 52 about then.

The Editors toss in the name of Alex Gilroy who made his League debut for the Lightning Ashfield Giants at 60 as reported in the Speedway Star in August.

Yet again we throw the floor open and ask you stick to men performing in a recognised league team. If you don't make this stipulation we Editors suggest that one of our subscribers - Jim Gregory - at 70 + years young is the oldest rider still competing.

Worth A Look ?

On a visit to Vodka Town, Warrington to all you good sober speedway researchers out there, **Graham Fraser**, went hunting for the site of the Motordrome that featured action in 1929 and 1930. Graham managed to track it down and considers that the site has a great deal of potential for reintroducing the sport to the town. Anyone interested should contact Graham directly. Remember - if you have any suggestions for venues - pass them to us and we'll publish them.

Blackpool 1928

The seaside holiday town saw action at two venues in 1928. The trotting track in Highfield Road and the Greyhound Stadium in St. Anne's Road. The first venue opened on 21st April and staged a total of 10 between April and 6th October which were reported in the Blackpool and Fylde Evening Gazette. Another meeting was advertised but is not reported on.

The Greyhound Stadium opened on 11th September 1928 and ran six meetings up to 29th September.

The former venue was promoted by the Blackpool and Fylde Motor Club in conjunction with the North Manchester Motor Club. The track was a full half mile. The other venue was promoted by the British Dirt Track Racing Association.

Despite efforts speedway never returned to the seaside town and the closest it came was the nearby town of Fleetwood in the 1950s.

Thanks to **Trevor James** for this information and apologies for taking so long to publish it.

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Publications

Tempus Publishing Limited, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, CL5 2QG has published "Speedway in East Anglia" by Norman Jacobs. This 160 page perfect bound book is packed with interesting photographs and tells the tale of speedway at Norwich, Ipswich, Yarmouth, King's Lynn, Rayleigh, Peterborough and Mildenhall and of the many stars who graced the East Anglian shale and cinders. Cost £12.99 and details from Liz Mabley on 01453 883300. It is hoped that this toe in the water by Tempus encourages them to cover the country with similar books.

The book is of very good quality and well worth a read. (See leaflet.)

Howard Jones second publication on defunct tracks has been issued. This one is about Paisley, the Love Street venue which lasted all of two seasons 1975 - 76 and the Paisley Lions that raced there.

Probably the most famous event was the exclusion of Tom Owen, for unfair riding, in 1976. Nothing unusual about exclusions - well Tom was excluded from the the rest of the meeting for his heat one actions which saw the two Paisley riders sitting on the track. The stadium has been redeveloped and now has squared of ends for St. Mirren F.C..

“The Star” Championships 1932

Mike Terran adds to our knowledge about the 1932 event which was one of the main events staged at that time. The winner of the event has often been equated to the World Champion of the day. The 1932 event was won by Eric Langton of Belle Vue.

Teams and representatives were : Belle Vue - Eric Langton, Frank Varey; Clapton -Norman Parker, Jack Parker; Crystal Palace - Roy Dook, Syd Jackson; Plymouth - Joe Francis^, Tom Farndon; Plymouth - Eric Collins*, Stamford Bridge - Frank Arthur, Wal Phillips; Wembley - Gordon Byers, Ginger Lees; West Ham - Les Wotton, Bluey Wilkinson“; Wimbledon - Vic Huxley, Dick Case. Injured riders replaced by ^ Ron Johnson; * Bert Spencer and “ Tommy Croombs respectively.

The event was staged as a single meeting at the Empire Stadium, Wembley on 22nd September and the 18 candidates took part in an event which had a six heat, two semi finals and a final format. The heats went Ht1. Byers, Dook, Arthur; Ht2. Case N.Parker (fell), Johnson (fell); Ht3. Langton, Wotton, Jackson (retired); Ht4. Huxley, Spencer, Phillips; Ht5. J.Parker, Varey, Croombs; Ht6. Lees, Farndon, Clibbett. Semi 1. Case, Langton, J.Parker; Semi 2. Huxley, Byers, Lees (fell).

Final Langton, Huxley, Case (fell). It is assumed that Langton qualified on the basis of being the fastest second placed rider.

British Individual Championship 1932

Another **Mike Terran** contribution is the details of the 1932 British Individual Championships. This was a match race format like the original Star Championship format. The main event was an eliminators or Challengers Competition to decide who would face Jack Parker in the final. Challengers Competition.

First Round: Eric Langton (Belle Vue) beat Dick Case (Wimbledon) ?*-2 at Belle Vue, 2-0 at Wimbledon and 2-0 at Wembley. Max Grosskreutz (Belle Vue) beat Arthur Jervis (West Ham) 2-1 at Belle Vue and 2-0 at West Ham. Frank Arthur (Stamford Bridge) beat Vic Huxley (Wimbledon) 2-0 at Stamford Bridge, 0-2 at Wimbledon and 2-0 at Crystal Palace. Tom Farndon (Crystal Palace) beat Colin Watson 2-0 at Crystal Palace and 2-0 at Wembley. (* can you help answer this query ?)

Second Round: Eric Langton beat Max Grosskreutz 2-0 and 0-2 at Belle Vue. (Details of the decider needed.) Frank Arthur beat Tom Farndon 1-2 at Stamford Bridge; 2-1 at Crystal Palace and 2-1 at Plymouth.

Final: Eric Langton beat Frank Arthur 2-0 at Belle Vue. The second leg was not staged and Langton won the tie by default.

British Individual Championship - Final

Eric Langton beat Jack Parker 3-0 at Belle Vue. Parker was unable to contest the second leg and lost by default.

Peterborough Eastfield (Old Showground)

Keith Farman has sent us a cutting from a Peterborough programme of 1989 in which a writer, a gentleman called **Mark Smith**, writing under the heading Supersleuth, tells of the Peterborough Eastfield Showground site. Meetings held under grass track rules featuring teams called Peterborough which raced teams from various places including Middlesbrough and Tamworth. The riders who appeared were all well known speedway names like Wilf Plant, Bill Kitchen and Split Waterman.

This is not the track we mentioned in Vol 3 No.2 but the one across the road.

As we often say, this is a venue worthy of some research. However, on the basis of the information in the article it is to be pigeon holed under grass track rather than speedway in the absence of more definitive information on the surface.

It is likely there are a number of venues which were to all intents and purposes a speedway or dirt track but operated as a grass track to avoid Speedway Control Board rules, such as no professional Sunday speedway racing.

Who is Doing What

Steve Collins **British Speedway Results and Scorers 1929 to date - especially pre-war**

12 Ash Tree Drive, Huxley, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN9 2JT
01427 754138

Mike Craven **Fleetwood Speedway 1948 - 1952**

Appleby, 10 Station Road, Mickle Trafford, Chester, CH2 4EH
01244 300286

Keith Farman **Yarmouth Speedway / East Anglian pre war** **tracks**

250 Beccles Road, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 6AH
01493 668139

Colin Greenwell **Middlesbrough Speedway**

71 Skippers Lane, Normanby, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS6 0JE

Jim Gregory **Early Speedway Bikes**

Holly Lodge, 5b Roundabout Lane, Welyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0TH
01438 714462

Steven Harland **History of Middlesbrough Speedway**

8 Bramley Parade, Bowesfield Lane, Stockton on Tees, TS18 3JG
01642 656803

David Hartley **Track details especially Leeds & early Iwade**

26 Haugh End Lane, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX6 3BJ
01422 829933

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