

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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Edited by Graham Fraser and Jim Henry

Subscribers : 130

“Cheap As Chips”

Fred Paul from Cornwall came up with the above phrase describing The Speedway Researcher and **John Jarvis** from Bristol asked us why we don't put our prices up. (Well, that is what we have translated his comment to mean.) Sorry, but the Editors are of the opinion that they are not out to make money on this publication. At the current subscription level it washes it's face and there is no need to shove the prices up. We are currently in the black but the subscription numbers have been on a downwards trend over the years so - if you can encourage new subscribers - we would be quite delighted to have them on board with us.

One thing that does surprise us is the number of people who seem to stumble across The Speedway Researcher and indicate their amazement that we exist. Please tell any fellow researcher who you think does not realise we exist about us, especially anyone outside Britain.

We have had lots of very supportive comments and lots of good ideas for further editions which we will cover during this volume. As ever we encourage you to get your pens out and do articles for us as we don't want to be the authors of all the items that appear in the magazine.

We have had a few responses suggesting that you would like items on Long Track Racing. Anyone with a good records who might be able to give us an article on this aspect of speedway. (I can recall three meetings held at Motherwell in the early 1970s which were billed as long track events, a track in north Wales near Chester, Chasewater, Kendal and another track near York in the same era. JH)

There is also a bit of interest in knowing what other researchers are doing. We have covered this in previous editions but could update with details of those subscribers not previously mentioned or who have moved on to other projects. We have particular interest in who has been compiling, or is currently working on heat by heat histories. So we will survey that at the end of volume six. (For my part I am working on White City, Glasgow 1945 - 1956, Motherwell 1950 - 1954 and Fleetwood 1948 - 1952. Jim Henry.)

Another interesting suggestion is that we review progress on the data bases we proposed in the first volume. It is a good idea and one we can look at. **1**

Feedback on the history of Fleetwood is good, so there is the opportunity for anyone wishing to tell us about the hazier post war venues is there and will be welcomed by the readers and Editors alike.

One subscriber has asked for histories of Liverpool, Walthamstow, Wombwell, Motherwell, Hastings and Cardiff. (I can do an item on Motherwell - any offers for the rest? JH.)

The feedback on the grass track has been mixed. We have concluded that the maybe a little category comes out tops so we will take that approach for this issue. Some qualified support for the grass with a request that we stick to grass speedways or articles that mention riders who were known performers on the shale as well. Anyway, we will see how we can develop this “maybe a little approach” in this volume and see what you think at the end of the volume.

A few folk have asked for a bigger magazine. Well - it is up to you. We would if we had more material to publish - so, as ever, we invite you to get your pens out and give us your items.

The feedback on memorabilia has been also mixed and the maybe a little category is probably the approach we will take in this magazine. However, there is scope to try something innovative with the spare weight capacity we have in the system and we have an idea to use this capacity in a manner that might help us boost circulation and widen the circle of contacts.

Finally, we have a suggestion that we carry items on websites with speedway history. Can you provide us with this information to pass on?

Graham Fraser and **Jim Henry** Joint Editors.

Can You Help?

As ever our first edition of the new volume has a pile of requests for information. We include addresses and telephone numbers for direct contact. However, if you want to pass on information on a confidential basis we will be happy to act as a post box.

Jim Gregory, 5b Roundabout Lane, Welyn, Hertfordshire, AL6 0TH
Tel: 01438 714462 is looking for photocopies programmes for the following Oxford meetings 1952: v Ashfield 31.07; v Edinburgh 07.08; v Ashfield 28.08; 25.09; and v Stoke 02.10. Jim is also looking for full meeting heat details - match and second half - for Shelbourne v Exeter 04.06.1950; and for the following meetings all staged in 1953: Oxford v Swindon 03.04; Oxford v Wolverhampton 21.05; Oxford Midland Riders Championship 04.06; Southampton Best Pairs 09.06; Coventry Midland Riders Championship 20.06; Oxford v Plymouth 25.06; Wolverhampton v Oxford 26.06; Oxford v Plymouth 30.07; and Plymouth v Oxford 31.07.

2 John Cruxon, 39 Chandos Street, Netherfield, Nottingham, NG4 2LP Tel: 0115 9113165 is seeking heat details for Wigan v Long Eaton 16.5.1952 and for a Long Eaton match in Dublin in 1952. John is not sure which Dublin track staged this fixture.

Vic Vanni, 26 Baker Street, Glasgow, G41 3YE wonders if anyone has copies of a boys paper called "Champion". Vic recalls in 1946 the magazine carried a story "The Team With No Track" which featured a speedway team that had to ride all its fixtures on away tracks.

Vic Butcher, 7 Derwent Close, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 2FQ, Tel: 01243 532819 is looking for heat details and scorers for the following Southampton aways: 1929 15/5 at West Ham; 1.6 at Crystal Palace; 3.6 at Birmingham; 11.7 at Wembley; 15.7 at Wimbledon; 5.8 at Aldershot; 12.9 at Wembley. 1930 25.4 at Hall Green; 3.5 at Harringay; 13.5 at West Ham; 10.7 at Wembley; 23.7 at Exeter; 14.8 at Nottingham; 30.8 at High Beech; 31.10 at Wembley. 1936 13.4 at Cardiff; 8.5 at Bristol; 13.5 at Liverpool; 26.5 at Nottingham; 1.6 at Liverpool; 12.6 at Bristol; 20.8 at Nottingham; 4.9 at Bristol. 1949 v Tamworth in Italy.

Keith Farman, 230 Beccles Road, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 8AH. Tel: 01493 668139 is seeking information on second half races involving Ove Fundin as follows: 1956 6.4 at Leicester; 8.6 at Rayleigh; 23.6 at Bradford; 1957 12.6 at Bradford; 27.6 at Ipswich; 19.7 at Bradford; 9.8 at Bradford; 12.8 at Exeter; 1960 22.9 at Ipswich; 1963 7.7 at Oxford; 1964 4.6 at Oxford; 30.6 at West Ham; 9.7 at Oxford; 1966 12.4; 3.5; 10.5; 17.10; 31.5 all at Long Eaton; 1967 8.7 at Coventry; 17.8 at Wimbledon; 2.9 at Belle Vue; 1970 1.4 at Poole; 4.4 at Swindon; 11.4 at Coventry; 23.4 at Oxford; 9.5 at Cradley; 30.5 at Wembley; 5.6 at Wolverhampton; 12.6 at Hackney; 20.6 at Wembley.

Keith is also seeking information on Newmarket 1932 and 1937 and Ashwell (Cambridge) 1931.

John Jarvis, 104 Pound Lane, Kingswood, Bristol, BS15 4QU. Tel: 0117 9676320 is seeking any additions or corrections to the tracks listed in his book "Homes of British Speedway". The information is required as second edition is due to be published in 2004. Where advising John of an addition, please give details of source of information (copy if possible).

Eric Watson, 43 Hammonds Green, Totton, Southampton, SO40 3HU. Tel: 0238087 1561. is looking for details of the race jacket designs for the Chapelizod teams who raced as Dublin Eagles and The Lizods and Santry team of the early 1950s. Eric is also seeking details of the Dunmore Bees race jacket. Dunmore Stadium, Belfast featured speedway in 1950.

(Dunmore did have Wally Lloyd as a rider / manager and the meeting details are well covered in the 1950 Speedway News.)

Roger Hulbert, 6 The Garth, First Lane, Anlaby, Hull, HU10 6UY. Tel: 01482 648240 is looking to borrow copies of photos of Hull riders 1930s Hull White City, 1948 - 49 Hull Hedon and 1971 - 81 Hull Boulevard for **3** a project on a book on a history of Hull Speedway.

Don Gray, "Old Orchard", High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, CB5 9JU. Tel: 01223 862279. Don is seeking for as full and complete a list of riders attached to the lesser publicised tracks in the Northern Leagues of 1929 and 1930. e.g Halifax, Rochdale, Salford, Barnsley, Burnley, Hanley (Stoke), Bolton, Wombwell. Also Don is looking for similar information for venues from the same era such as Long Eaton, Wolverhampton, Crewe, Northampton (Red Barn), Rotherham, and, Hull White City. (Huddersfield held only four or five meetings and probably never had any permanent riders.)
Glynn Shailes, 64 Station Road, Purton, Near Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 4AJ. Tel: 01793 770009. Glynn is looking for photographs of Mick Holland (Cardiff and Swindon 1941 - 1955) and Bill Downton (Swindon 1949 - 1950 and Exeter 1950.)

Maurice Archard, 99 Pulleys Avenue, London, E6 3NA. Tel: 0208 552 6087. Maurice is looking for details of Jimmy Grant who rode for Harringay, Walthamstow, Ipswich and Wolverhampton from 1947 to 1952.

Paul Jeffries, 54 Hoel Erwin, Cardiff, CF14 6QQ. Tel: 029 2062 5976. Paul is seeking details of matches where the match result was changed as a result of an appeal to the ruling body of the sport. (The only one I can think of is Edinburgh v Plymouth 1961 when Doug Templeton's points were deducted after Plymouth challenged his use of a Barum tyre even tho' he raced one heat on a standard tyre of the day. On a more unusual note a meeting at Marine Gardens in 1930 had two different results in the two Edinburgh newspapers. The difference was due to the match steward advising one of the reporters that he had excluded Drew McQueen after the race but had not had his decision reported to the crowd. Broadsider carries an item on a change to the score of the Glasgow v Norwich league match of 21.4.1948. After a protest the 42 all score became 43 - 41 to Norwich. JH)

John Scrutton, 4 Clovelly Drive, Hellesdon Hall Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR6 5EY. Tel: 01603 417043. John is looking for details of the scorers for the following meetings v Norwich : Middlesbrough 13.6.1946; 4.7.1946; 29.5.1947; 15.4.48; 1.7.1948; 9.9.1948. Newcastle 17.6.1946; 6.7.1946; 16.9.1946; 14.5.1947; 30.6.1947; 19.7.1948; 15.6.1951. Wigan 4.8.1947. Southampton 17.4.1951. Plymouth 18.5.1950, and Sheffield 22.8.1946.

Chris Durno, c/o Speedway Researcher wishes us to pass on his thanks for all the information you have sent him and asks if anyone can help with the following heat details or scorers for: 1929 Coventry v Hall Green 9.5; Perry Barr (Birmingham) v Coventry 13.7; Wembley v Coventry 1.8;

4 Perry Barr (Birmingham) v Coventry 5.8; Coventry v White City Manchester 5.9; Coventry v White City London 12.9.; Lea Bridge v Coventry 25.9; White City Manchester v Coventry 12.10. 1930 Perry Barr (Birmingham) v Coventry 30.7; Belle Vue v Coventry 27.8.

Alan Jones, 24 Purbeck Avenue, Shepshed, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 9HD. Tel: 01509 561521 is seeking heat details for Training School fixtures as follows: 21.3.1949 Tamworth v Leicester; Jan/Feb 1950 Cradley v Leicester; 18.2.1952 Cradley v Leicester/Coventry (Combined Team); 7.8.1980 and 24.9.1980 Mildenhall v Leicester; ; and 29.9.1980 King's Lynn A and B v Leicester.

Pete Ross, 75 Hennings Park Road, Oakdale, Poole, BH15 3QX, Tel: 01202 241086. is seeking details of Corfe Mullen Speedway (a grass track ?) 1937 - 1939. (Have you tried "Motorcycle" and "Motorcycling" which carried fixtures and the odd meeting report? I think these are available at the National Newspaper Library at Colindale. JH)

Bruce Harrison, Lot 21, Gaquly Road, Dartanup 6236, Western Australia is looking for dates of birth for Arthur Payne, Cliff Watson, Gary Middleton, Peter Moore, and Charlie Monk and details of the teams they rode for. (Charlie Monk rode for Neath 1962, Long Eaton 1963, Glasgow 1964 - 67, 1969 - 72, Sheffield 1968, Halifax 1973 - 76, Edinburgh 1977 and Barrow 1978.)

Bob Ferry, 13 West Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland, SR6 7SJ. Tel: 0191 5365064 is looking for photographs of Russ Dent in his Glasgow Tigers race jacket. He is also looking for photographs of Jack Millen in his Edinburgh race jacket from 1977.

Alan Patterson, 16 Eshott Close, Regent Farm, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3PD asks about items on the exact locations of tracks. (We suggest that you have a look at John Jarvis' book "Homes of British Speedway" as each entry has a track address. If you want more detailed information finding a map may mean visits to a local library in the town nearest to the track or www.multimap.co.uk. The coverage by the ordnance survey can be patchy as it depends when an area was surveyed. Some longish life tracks are not shown on any maps, but, others, like one meeting wonder Carlisle, are. Local maps and street directories are another source of map information but they also can also be patchy. The National Library of Scotland has a map library which has a very comprehensive collection of Ordnance Survey maps covering most of the UK. It is located in Causewayside, Edinburgh and is open all day weekdays and Saturday mornings. Maps are subject to copyright legislation and the Ordnance Survey maps are in crown copyright for 70 years from year of publication. Reproduction fees are payable for maps in copyright. Editors)

James Gooderham, 3 Riverview Road, Harkstead, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP9 1BL. Tel: 01473 327174 wants to know if a programme was printed for the

following meetings: 1953 Ipswich v St Austell 30.4. and v Oxford 29.8; 5 1954 Ipswich v Exeter 7.8; Motherwell v Ipswich 10.9 and 1.10; 1955 Exeter v Ipswich 18.7; Southampton v Ipswich 3.5; 1956 Ipswich v Stockholm; 1958 Ipswich v Leicester 8.5.

Roger Beaman, 47 Peel Way, Tividale Oldbury, West Midlands, B69 3JX. Tel: 0121 532 8614 is seeking second half details for the following away meetings involving Cradley Heath. 1947 at Stoke 8.5; at Wombwell 20.6; at Tamworth 25.6; at Wombwell 4.7; at Stoke 24.7; at Tamworth 4.8; at Tamworth 20.8; at Wombwell 22.8; at Stoke 28.8; at Eastbourne 13.9; at Stoke 18.9 and at Tamworth 8.10. 1948 at Tamworth 28.3; at Hull 3.4; at Wombwell 9.4; at Hull 1,5; at Exeter 10.5; at Hull 5.6; at Exeter 28.6; at Sheffield 10.7; v Stoke at Belle Vue 15.7; at Coventry 24.7; at Southampton 3.8; at Tamworth 17.8; at Stoke 23.9; v Coventry at Tamworth 12.10; at Wombwell 15.10. 1949 at Fleetwood 4.5; at Walthamstow 9.5; at Fleetwood 15.6; at Walthamstow 20.6; at Bristol 2.7; at Leicester 6.7; v Sheffield at Tamworth 14.7; at Norwich 23.7; at Oxford 11.8; at Sheffield 25.8 at Newcastle 29.8.

Paul Baston, 30 The Weald, East Grinstead, Sussex, RH19 3HB. Tel: 01342 323734 email: paul.baston@virgin.net is seeking details of the 2002 Southern Junior League - did it run? and is also looking for details of the 2001 SJL and Northern Development League. Does anyone know who is the Secretary of these leagues?

Andy Marlow, 15 Thatcher Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 0WG is looking for photographs of Leicester Super Stadium. (Try contacting Alan Jones who is about to publish a book on pre-war action in Leicester - see enclosed flyer.)

1936 World Final (Part II)

We conclude **Mark Sawbridge's** in depth article on the first ever FIM inscribed Speedway World Championship.

The championship round began at Harringay on July 11, which saw four of the qualifying round's unbeaten riders come together. At the end of the meeting only one remained - home rider Jack Parker. Misfortune was suffered by Bluey Wilkinson who fell once and came last in another. These dropped points were to prove costly in the long run for the West Ham man. Another rider to experience problems was New Cross hero Ron Johnson, who fell twice. Three nights later at West Ham, Jack Parker dropped five points in a meeting won by Eric Langton who scored a brilliant maximum. Lionel Van Pragg won the next round on his home track, Wembley, with both Frank Charles and Cordy Milne experiencing problems along the way.

6 At New Cross on July 29, youngster George Newton stunned his elder compatriots to win the round with fourteen points. Another shock was the performance of "Uncle" Bob Harrison of Belle Vue, who finished third. Lionel Van Praag had three engine failures in his opening three rides, then won his last two outings. Jack Milne also experienced engine trouble which restricted his scoring, whilst home favourite Ron Johnson, had a patchy evening.

The next round was at Belle Vue where there was both good and bad news for the 35,000 Aces fans who packed Hyde Road. The meeting was won by home rider Eric Langton who produced several spectacular overtaking moves on his way to a fifteen point maximum. Unfortunately another Aces rider, 'Iron Man' Joe Abbott broke an arm. It ruled him out of the championship which he had gone well in up to that point. George Newton and Bob Harrison again performed well, finishing second and third respectively.

So far the championship round meetings had been exciting. However this was soon to end with a night's entertainment described by the Speedway News as "tepid". They were referring to the Wimbledon round held on August 10 in which most races were ridden in silence as the crowd had little enthusiasm for the event. Dons' number one, Vic Huxley, had a poor night scoring only four points whilst Norman Parker had to withdraw with a foot injury. Lionel Van Praag won from Eric Langton with Jack Ormston turning in a lively performance to finish third.

The final round was held at Hackney Wick. It was won by Wembley's Frank Charles although George Newton was unlucky to fall in one race which dropped his tally to 12 points on the night. Jack Parker was second with Newton in third place.

Championship Round scorers.

Harringay - July 11. Jack Parker 15, Charles 13, Newton 11, Van Praag 11, Cordy Milne 10, Ormston 9, Lees 8, Pitcher 8, Wilkinson 7, Chitty 6, Baltazar Hansen 5, Norman Parker 5, Clibbett 5, Dixon 2, Stobbart 1, Johnson 0.

West Ham - July 14 Langton 15, Huxley 14, Wilkinson 12, Case 11, Jack Parker 10, Pitcher 9, Dixon 8 Atkinson 6, Murphy 5, Clibbett 4, Ormston 4, Chitty 3, Baltazar Hansen 3, Khun 2, Stobbart 1.

Wembley - July 23 Van Praag 15, Huxley 13, Ormston 12, Morian Hansen 11, Wilkinson 10, Charles 9, Lees 9, Abbott 7, Johnson 7, Norman Parker 6, Cordy Milne 5, Clibbett 4, Murphy 4, Atkinson 3, Dixon 1.

New Cross - July 29 Newton 14, Langton 13, Harrison 13, Jack Milne 10, Case 9, Jack Parker 9, Norman Parker 8, Morian Hansen 8, Kilmister 7, Johnson 6, Van Praag 6, Baltazar Hansen 5, Phillips 4, Stobbart 3, Lloyd 3, Pitcher 2.

Belle Vue - August 8. Langton 15, Newton 14, Harrison 13, Charles 10, Johnson 9, Huxley 8, Phillips 8, Jack Milne 8, Lees 7, Wilkinson 7, 7

Kitchen 6, Abbott 5, Dixon 4, Chitty 3, Murphy 2, Gordon Byers 2, Stobbart 1, Khun 0.

Wimbledon - August 10. Van Praag 15, Langton 14, Ormston 11, Case 9, Phillips 9, Cordy Milne 8, Jack Milne 8, Morian Hansen 8, Kitchen 7, Harrison 6, Atkinson 5, Lees 4, Pitcher 4, Huxley 4, Kilmister 4, Khun 4.

Hackney Wick - August 14. Charles 15, Jack Parker 13, Newton 12, Morian Hansen 12, Kitchen 9, Cordy Milne 9, Case 8, Jack Milne 8, Harrison 7, Chitty 6, Atkinson 6, Phillips 5, Baltazar Hansen 4, Clibbett 3, Kilmister 2, Murphy 2.

The full list of qualifying scorers were: Langton 13, Charles 12, Newton 12, Jack Parker 12, Lionel Van Praag 12, Morian Hansen 10, Harrison 10, Huxley 10, Wilkinson 10, Case 9, Ormston 9, Jack Milne 9, Lees 7, Phillips 7, Abbott 7. Reserves Johnson 7, Pitcher 7. Non- Qualifiers Atkinson 6, Norman Parker 6, Baltazar Hansen 5, Clibbett 5, Chitty 5, Kilmister 5, Dixon 4, Murphy 4, Stobbart 3, Khun 3, Tate 2.

Of the qualifiers, only Newton could be classed as a youngster, as all the others had started their careers in the 1920s. The Milnes and Morian Hansen were the only non-British Empire qualifiers. Abbott's injury prevented him from taking his place in the Final and his place went to Ron Johnson. A bigger shock was that Jack Parker had hurt his wrist before the Final and he was replaced by Arthur Atkinson. Norman Parker and Baltazar Hansen stepped up to the reserve spots.

The big day arrived and 74,000 people packed into Wembley Stadium, the largest speedway crowd ever at that point. Admission costs ranged from 1/3 (@6p) for unreserved standing spaces at 10/6 (@52p) for the best seats in the house. There were discounted rates for party bookings from supporters' clubs. Eric Langton celebrated his 29th birthday on the day of the Final.

An unusual, and potentially catastrophic event happened on the day of the Final. The BBC announced on the radio that the Final had been cancelled. Where they got their information from heaven knows but they had to announce the truth at fifteen minute intervals throughout the day to prevent fans from not travelling to the event.

The Final itself is well covered in books by Robert Bamford and Glynn Shailes and by John Chaplin which give the details race by race so there is no need to repeat them here.

Frank Charles declared his intent in heat one, winning in a track record time of 7.6 seconds. The Wembley rider followed this win a win in heat five and looked like the man to beat. However Charles ran a shock last in heat nine and his chances were over.

Cordy Milne greatly impressed the crowd with some terrific riding, scoring eleven points for fourth overall on the night and in the competition as a

8 whole. George Newton's chances were blown by a fall in heat one while Bill Pitcher earned the dubious honour of being the first man to be excluded from a World Championship race in a World Final for touching the tapes at the start of heat twelve.

Man of the evening was Bluey Wilkinson, who raced to a brilliant maximum. However, the popular Aussie was denied victory due to the iniquitous bonus points system which meant that he only came third in the final reckoning. That left the title to be fought between two riders - Lionel Van Pragg and Eric Langton. The two riders met in the last programmed race of the night with van Pragg needing a win to secure a run off. He achieved this and the stage was set for a showdown of enormous proportions.

Legend has it that Langton and Van Pragg met before the race and came up with a rather spurious gentlemen's agreement. Concerned about the cut-throat nature of the race that they were about to have, allegedly the pair agreed that the person who got to the first bend in front would be allowed to win untroubled by the other. Unfortunately Langton went through the tapes to spoil things rather. The ACU Steward, Mr. J. O'Neill, allowed Langton back in - a controversial decision if ever there was one!

In the rerun, the story goes, Langton led from the start but was passed by Van Praag. At the end of the race, a furious Langton confronted Van Praag, who said the deal was invalidated by Langton's tape-breaking offence!

So Lionel Van Pragg entered the record books as the first ever winner of the World Speedway Championship. The most important thing, however, is that the championship had been a roaring success and, apart from a brief interruption by Herr Hitler, has been with us ever since.

Final scorers (total from evening, then bonus points, to create the final score.)
Lionel van Praag 14 + 12 = 26; Eric Langton 13 + 13 = 26; Bluey Wilkinson 15 + 10 = 25; Cordy Milne 11 + 9 = 20; Frank Charles 8 + 12 = 20; Dicky Case 8 + 9 = 17; Jack Ormston 8 + 9 = 17; Vic Huxley 7 + 10 = 17; George Newton 4 + 12 = 16; Jack Milne 6 + 9 = 15; Bob Harrison 5 + 10 = 15; Morian Hansen 5 + 10 = 15; Wal Phillips 5 + 7 = 12; Ginger Lees 4 + 7 = 11; Arthur Atkinson 3 + 6 = 9; Bill Pitcher 2 + 6 = 8; Norman Parker (reserve) 1 + 6 = 7; Baltazer Hansen (non riding reserve) 0 + 5.

Publications

Hackney Speedway - Friday at Eight by **Chris Fenn** is another offering from Tempus. This time the subject is the East London venue which, in its day, provided some really good speedway. I was lucky enough to watch one meeting on the old banked track and agree with Chris that it was something special.

The history covers the pre-war Hackney Wick Wolves then looks at the post war era which featured the Hawks, Kestrels and, latterly, the London Lions. Regrettably the stadium, which has a chequered and sad history, now stands very derelict but at least it hasn't gone under the developer's cosh. Chris gives a very balanced review of each season, charting the highs and the lows as each came and went. I remember the stand out season when they wiped the floor with the opposition virtually everywhere. My fondest recollection is watching Andy Galvin fly round Powderhall (Edinburgh) making his bike do some amazing moves which beggared belief. The book is, yet again, an interesting source book for speedway historians who want the flavour of this track which many would like to see back on the speedway stage.

One thing Chris has got wrong is his claim that Hackney staged the first Boxing Day meeting. Sorry Chris but Cardiff White City (Sloper Road) beat you to it by about eight years. They opened on Boxing Day 1928. Priced £14.99 (Plus P & P) the book is available from Tempus Publishing Limited, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QG. Book reviewed by **Jim Henry**.

Heathens. Cradley Heath Speedway 1977 - 1996 is the second part of the personal history by **Peter Foster** of the late lamented Midlands speedway venue which fell victim to redevelopment.

Whilst it has a sad ending, as any loss of a speedway track is, it has lots of good memories which Peter shares with us in a very easily read style. There is no doubting his passion for the subject as you can capture his smile as he recalls victories over arch rivals Wolverhampton and Coventry. There is pride too in Peter's words. There is pride in the teams that, after so many false dawns, finally gathered a trophy or two and great pride too in the men who carried the Heathens colours when winning world championship crowns. There is no doubt that anyone who reads this book will have a sound understanding of the roller coaster of emotions that can be felt by a speedway fan - over the season and over the passage of a meeting, and, even maybe, over the passage of a single race.

I can't fault this book and am glad to be able to add it to my smallish collection of speedway books. I only hope it has not deterred those researchers working on a detailed heat by heat study of Cradley Heath from publishing the fruits of their labours in due course.

Priced £14.99 (Plus P & P) it is also available from Tempus. **Jim Henry**

Speedway in Manchester 1927 -1945 written by **Trevor James** and **Barry Stevenson** boldly throws down the gauntlet to speedway historians **10** who

would take the view that speedway came to the UK in 1928. **Graham Fraser** has penned the following review.

As a Lancastrian by birth, I have a particular interest in this area of speedway history and this book has been well worth the wait,. Although Belle Vue must obviously feature heavily in such a regional history the Belle Vue Kirkmanshume Lane early history, before Hyde Road, was of particular interest. Also the establishment of the track at Belle Vue Gardens which was to see the Mancunian club become predominant in pre-war British Speedway and beyond.

As ever, the quality of this Tempus book is excellent. The photographs include many I have not seen before including numerous rider and action shots and stadium pictures from White City and Droylesden. (The photo of Scotty Cummings is a gem - Scotty was co-builder of the Sheffield track and probably built the 1930 Glasgow Carntyne strip too. JH) I still have to see any photographs of Salford Albion stadium and wonder if such a thing exists now anywhere.

The wartime chapter on Belle Vue will interest many speedway historians and although I have seen quite a number of programmes from those fixtures this is the first time I have seen the known information compiled in one place.

I was also very pleased to see this history cover the pre-war Manchester tracks more generally: Audenshaw, Droylesdan, Salford and Manchester White City as well as coverage of the pre-war Northern League competition. I suppose today Bolton and Rochdale are considered part of Greater Manchester and the inclusion of these short lived tracks would have been good, but any history book has to have some limits to its size. I hope some other author will include them in any future Tempus "Speedway in the NorthWest" edition in the series. This is a must for anyone with even a passing interest in the history of speedway and is very readable in its own right.

Published by Tempus Publishing Limited £14.99 (Plus P & P).

Ipswich Speedway: The First Fifty Years by **Dave Feakes** and **Colin Barber** is a 250 page history of the Ipswich Witches. It has been published by the authors who have in their own words produced "not a statistical history but more of a story of how the whole thing evolved and how the club went on to be one of the most successful clubs of all time." Its year to a chapter (fifty in all, up to the Golden Jubilee year of 2001) approach certainly packs in detail about the team and its riders.

The opening chapter which details the motorcycle racing that took place at the Portman Road football ground in 1904 and the authors lay some claim to this being the precursor of the dirt track / speedway sport. A fascinating fact also emerges that Ipswich Town FC was actively seeking to incorporate a

speedway track around their pitch in 1934/ 35, but never **11** succeeded. Also mentioned is a possible grass speedway at Nacton Road in the town in 1936/37. Time then jumps forward to 1946 and an unsuccessful attempt to build a track in Bamford Road, which failed the planning hurdle, so attention turned to Foxhall Heath which opened for speedway in October 1950. This kind of information is smattered throughout this excellent book which will interest all historians, although its prime market will obviously be Witches fans. Its style is detailed but not too dense and its yearly chapters are relatively short which makes them easily readable. This the only book on Ipswich I have in my collection apart from an early supporters booklet and a statistical results guide produced by Mike Smillie a few years ago. Well worth adding to your speedway bookshelf.

Available from Enjay Designs Ltd, 31 Fairfield Avenue, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 9JQ priced £10.99 plus £1.50 P & P. **Graham Fraser**

The Flyers Remembered

Mike Craven completes his story of the team from the seaside town just north of Blackpool.

The 1950 season was awaited in an atmosphere of high expectancy not just at Fleetwood but amongst the second division teams generally. An extended National League Division Two including Halifax, Hanley (Stoke), Plymouth and Yarmouth from the ranks of the Third Division held out the prospect of seeing the likes of Arthur Forrest, Les Jenkins, Pete Lansdale and Tip Mills competing at a higher level. An exciting prospect to say the least but one rider who wouldn't be on show would be Yarmouth's free scoring Billy Bales who had been called up for National Service.

The Speedway Control Board in its infinite wisdom made the somewhat perplexing decision to sub-divide the Division along geographical lines for the first seven weeks thereafter resorting to normal operations the reason presumably being to minimise travel expenses. It made little sense however if the result was simply an escalation of costs later in the season as engagements reached their peak.

Also of concern was the introduction of the compulsory narrow gauge tyre with all the disadvantages of greater wear and tear, shorter life and higher maintenance costs. (*)

This was all very well but the Fleetwood promoters had even more pressing matters to worry about such as team strength, or the lack of it. With Wilf Plant still on the transfer list and George Newton rumoured to be seeking a return to his native south for health reasons the team's remaining heat leader, Norman Hargeaves, must have felt the weight descending on his shoulders.

Furthermore the £800 close season transfer to Coventry of the **14** popular Cyril Cooper merely added to the misery of the promoters and fans alike. On the plus side the previous season's "discovery" Don Potter had undergone intensive training o Ainsdale (Southport) sands and twenty three year old Graham Williams was on his way over from Australia to try his luck with the Flyers after experience with Sydney Royale.

After the laying of the new standard red shale track surface and the completion of the transfer of Alf Parker from Sheffield the season's battle commenced - with three heavy away defeats. Why were we not surprised? The Flyers found themselves firmly anchored to the bottom of the table before the first home meeting - which we lost. A narrow defeat of top of the table Ashfield did little to raise the gloom - only two points being gained from the first nine fixtures. Early statistics disclosed Don Potter as the team's second highest scorer to date behind Norman Hargreaves and ahead of Wilf Plant and George Newton serving to underline his spectacular progress and future potential.

The bombshell struck mid-May. George Newton's transfer request became official. A deal was struck with Walthamstow on a rider exchange basis and the town speculated upon the identity of the mystery man who took a few days to make up his mind about a move north. He was eventually unmasked as Dick Geary who had finally agreed to return to his former club after a season with the Wolves which saw his decline from captain / heatleader to reserve within a space of a few weeks. The problem was a nasty arm injury sustained during his last ride for Fleetwood two seasons earlier. His early results as a new Flyer were modest but he was later to produce some good scores reminiscent of earlier days.

There were plenty of novices recommended by other riders although few were to make the grade. Eric Newton (George's brother), Ted Gibson, Geoff Culshaw and Arthur Cowells, the latter two both local lads. In fact Cowells' debut was spectacular. In two successive heats as a reserve he commenced his career with a heat win ahead of Halifax star Al Allison and followed up with a good second to Arthur Forrest. This was to be the pinnacle of his success however.

A big win (57 - 27) was registered against Yarmouth at which point Fleetwood were sixth in the table but it was all downhill from there. Don Potter was now the team's leading scorer and Graham Williams, after losing his place in the team, had returned to his reserve berth to average five points per match from July. Graham scored six in a match against Plymouth during which he recorded the fastest time of the night by any rider. Then Ron Hart recently transferred to Ashfield returned with his new team to score ten points against the Flyers to emphasise what they had lost. The local fans had never seen ride so well or so successfully in the two previous full seasons.

Dick Geary next produced eleven points against Leicester although the team's performances generally were dominated by appalling luck as burst **15** tyres, freak collisions and dubious disqualifications made life difficult. By the end of August the Flyers were ninth in the table out of fifteen. Their biggest defeat ever 69 - 15 at the hands of Norwich did little for their confidence and they proceeded to a 59 - 28 reverse at Yarmouth.

And then after more bad luck: Dick Geary broke the same arm again. This necessitated a cap in hand approach to Liverpool for the loan the big Scot Angus McGuire as the team descended the table rapidly ending the season with the unwanted present of a wooden spoon.

Two riders who emerged from the season well were Don Potter who was top scorer with 326.5 points and the old faithful Norman Hargreaves with 310. Wilf Plant who completed the season with Flyers after all scored 238. he had previously complained bitterly to the Speedway Control Board about the prohibitive fee demanded by Fleetwood for his transfer only to lose the appeal as the fee was upheld.

Graham Williams and his fellow Australian Bill Reynolds both returned creditable figures of 141 each and so ended the season.

Moving on to the 1951 season which would be Fleetwood's last as member of the Second Division. Speculation had been rife with regard to the future of the club. Would there be speedway at Fleetwood again? Had planning permission been granted to Blackpool for the development of a new stadium? Well yes actually but subject to certain conditions which the promoters omitted to mention to the media. With two weeks to the start of the season with riders under contract there was a deafening silence from the management as to whether there was to be a show or not. There was and the season opened with the now customary away defeats.

The weaknesses in the team were critical as they were obvious. Effectively the team had three riders and five reserves. Wilf Plant had reaffirmed his intention to leave saying that he would rather retire than ride for Fleetwood again. He appealed a second time to the Board this time successfully and he was quickly transferred to Coventry. Fifty years on he was to tell me how much he had over the years regretted leaving the Flyers. With hindsight "the worst decision of my life" was how he described it. Overall he recalled his Fleetwood days with affection in spite of the ups and downs.

Dick Geary was a non-starter as expected and the Australian duo Williams and Reynolds had remained silent other than confirm their intention not to return to Britain in 1951. This left Potter, Hargreaves and Parker to take the strain.

The first home match was a thriller against Ashfield with victory secured in the final heat from behind. There were more wins interspersed among the

defeats but it was hard going for an inexperienced team with limited talents. The arrival of veteran racer Wilf Jay helped considerably as did the **16** improvement of some of the reserves notably Jeff Crawford, Ray Harker and, to a lesser extent, Russ Pursehouse. All had their moments and earned the affection of the fans. Most points came from the quartet of Hargreaves, Potter, Jay and Parker although Ray Harker regularly chipped in with six, seven or even eight. Alf Parker performed brilliantly against Leicester with a series of thrilling rides which netted him his team's highest score of ten points. Perhaps significantly he was transferred to the Hunters when when Flyers lost their league status.

After the completion of twenty one league fixtures the team were twelfth in the league table (out of sixteen.)

The arrival from New Cross in August of Ray Moore, a former dust bowl golden boy, was a non-event and the season progressed to its inevitable conclusion, Fleetwood finishing fourteenth in the league with two teams underneath them. Even so the team had won most of its home matches but it was the heavy away defeats which reduced them to a mediocre outfit. Opponents would claim, perhaps with some justification, that the Highbury Avenue Sports Stadium track was sub standard. Certainly this would explain the advantage the home riders seemed to possess on their patch but fails to explain how so many of the visiting stars managed to overcome the difficulties and score heavily.

Wilf Jay was the top League points scorer with 224 followed by Hargreaves on 206 and Potter on 201. Of the remainder only Alf Parker on 171 managed to achieve three figures. Fifth was Ray Harker with 78.

After all this there was speedway at Highbury Avenue Sports Stadium, albeit of the friendly non-league variety. A complete change of management in 1952 kept the engines roaring admittedly for a shorter season but probably it was the most successful.

A succession of challenges or competition for obscure trophies provided the basis for a hugely entertaining season. The nucleus of the team would be Wilf Jay, Norman Hargreaves, Don Potter, Jeff Crawford and Ray Harker supported by other contracted riders and occasional guests. Messers Jay, Hargreaves and Potter were loaned out to other clubs provided they fulfilled their obligations to Fleetwood who were now known as the Knights.

There were also a number of individual championships as well as Best Pairs competitions all helping to keep the flag flying whilst the new management dreamed about the restoration of league status the following year. It remained a dream though and the season finished early in September. Sadly it was not just the season that finished. It was the end of an entire era but one which lives

on in the minds of those of a certain age who were fortunate to have been around at the time.

An elite club of which I am a life member.

Mike Craven

(*) The use of the new tyre ended after a relatively short time. Riders' protests were heeded and they reverted back to the old style tyre. (JH) **17**

Fleetwood Information

Jim Henry (Joint Editor) is working on compiling race by race heat details for Fleetwood Flyers (and Knights) 1948 to 1952 in conjunction with **Mike Craven**. They are seeking the following details: (4th placed men (4PM)) (Heat Times (T)) (All meeting details (MD)) 1948 7.4 at Glasgow WC 4PM; 20.4 v Sheffield 4PM + T; 27.4 v Norwich 4PM + T; 29.4 at Middlesbrough 4PM + T; 4.5 v Birmingham 4PM + T; 11.5 v Bristol T; 17.5 v Middlesbrough MD; 18.5 v Newcastle T; 25.5 v Middlesbrough T; 29.6 v Glasgow 4PM; 6.7. British Riders Championship T; 13.7 v Birmingham 4PM; 10.8 v Middlesbrough 4PM; 12.8 at Sheffield 4PM; 24.8 v Norwich 4PM; 28.9 v Norwich T; 19.10 v Sheffield MD. 1949 18.5 Northern Trophy T; 23.5 at Walthamstow THt14. 1950 17.5 v Stoke T; 28.6 Reds v Blues v Whites v Yellows MD; 22.7 v Glasgow 4PM; 8.9 v Cradley T; 13.9 v Sheffield 4PM; 2.10 at Liverpool THts13& 15; 5.10 v Sheffield MD. 1951 6.4 at Motherwell 4PM; 18.4 v Newcastle 4PM; 9.5 v Newcastle MD; 13.6. v America 4PM; 25.7 v Norwich 4PM + T; 15.8 v Coventry 4PM; 29.8 v Odsal 4PM; 12.9 v Oxford 4PM; 1952 30.4 v Liverpool MD; 28.5 v Coventry MD; 4.6 v Long Eaton MD; 30.7 Individual MD; 6.8 Best Pairs MD; 2.9 Best Pairs MD. **Jim Henry**

Telling Tales

We thank **Vic Vanni** from Glasgow for this one.

You asked for any zany interval events and the zaniest I can remember is an Ian Hoskins inspiration at White City in either 1950 or 1951. This was a one-lap race for kids using hoops, tyres or anything round. At the start a hoard of kids of all sizes set off with the bigger ones well in front and a wee boy struggling at the rear with a tyre as big as himself.

Enter Ian Hoskins.

He sprinted across the centre green, tucked the wee boy under his arm, took over the tyre and was going through the field at speed when disaster struck. Ian stood on the tyre and this produced as spectacular a crash as any ever seen on a speedway track. The crowd were convulsed but what none of us knew was that the wee boy was so badly hurt that his father considered suing Ian.

Another zany event was in the second half races at White City's last meeting in 1947. Ian had all the riders in the heats and final racing adorned with false face masks complete with long beards.

(Just for the record Laurence Hare raced in false beard at a Testimonial type event at Ashfield a few years ago and Brett Saunders once raced at

18 Powderhall with false ears glued to the side of his helmet - before the ref made him remove them. JH)

David Hallam, 54 Lightwoods Hill, Smethwick, West Midlands, B67 5EB.

Tel: 0121 429 4207 email: davidhallam 5@aol.com.

David advises that during a recent visit to Nottingham he visited the Empics Sports Photo Agency which is located just by the Castle. Empics have acquired two sports agency archives and this includes a large amount of speedway material. The Barratts archive has a pile (circa 2,000 speedway photographs) of 1930s material featuring many star men and photographs taken at tracks such as Aldershot, Lea Bridge, New Cross, Harringay, Stamford Bridge and Wembley. The Sports and General archive has mostly post war materials. Empics has all the speedway photographs catalogued. Costs of reproduction and publication fees are likely to vary according to proposed use. To contact Empics phone 0115 8447 479. or email at jen.little@empics.com while their web site is at www.empics.com .

Fred Paul, 6 Horsepool Road, Shevlock, Torpoint, Cornwall PL11 3EP.

Tel: 01503 230855 writes to tell us that Pete Lansdale who rode for Plymouth and a number of other tracks post war rode in TT races before the war.

John Scrutton, 4 Clovelly Drive, Hellesdon Hall Road, Norwich, Norfolk, NR6 5EY. Tel: 01603 417043. John advises that the Trawlers Critic Club Members Cigarette Cards Series - Dirt Track Riders (Series of 54) included the following: No.2 "Brocho" Dixon; No.4 Frank Charles; No.13 J.P. Abbott; No. 22 Jack Barnet; No.23 Fay Taylour; No.26 Roger Frogley; No.28 Eva Asquith; No. 20 Billy Galloway; No.30 Frank Arthur; No. 34 Sprouts Elder; No. 36 Billy Dallison; No.43 Alec Jackson; No.45 H.R. Ginger Lees. [Still a fair few gaps to fill - any other information out there?]

David Hartley, 26 Haugh End Lane, Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire, HX6 3BJ Tel: 01422 839933 tells us that Odsal Stadium in Bradford has been refurbished and is now used only for rugby league. This is a real pity as the big bowl made for interesting speedway and provided a big venue for major meetings.

Bruce Harrison advises that we missed out Briggo - Barry Briggs Speedway Champion; Loaders International Speedway Annual 1993 and Australian Speedway Review 1993 from our book lists in recent editions.

Norman Briggs, 7 Somerset Road, Failsworth, Manchester, M35 0NV has sent in more information on Clem Beckett including a booklet entitled "Clem

Beckett - Hero and Sportsman" which seems to have been published circa 1937, articles from the The Worker Sportsman published on 1st May and 1st June 1932 in which Clem writes on Speed and Spondulacs, items about an exhibition which was staged in Oldham which looked at the men from the area who had taken part in the Spanish Civil War and Clem's obituary in the Daily Worker of 14th April 1937

Interestingly the obituary states that Clem was expelled from the ACU **19** because of the articles in The Worker Sportsman. It also suggests that it was Clem who introduced speedway to Russia in 1931 when he visited there as part of a delegation of athletes.

The Third Division Riders' Championship 1950

Alan Bates recalls this interesting competition which was the forerunner of the modern day Divisional Championship events.

An excellent idea was thought up in 1950 for a Third Division Riders' Championship which gave all riders a chance of reaching the final, even if they had missed part of the season through injury. During that season, after every league match, the four top scorers from each side (including bonus points), contested Championship rounds and when all the league fixtures had been completed, the top 16 points scorers from this second half competition, qualified for the final which was staged at the neutral National League Division Two Walthamstow track on Monday 23 October.

Pat Clarke of Oxford headed the qualifying list with 159 points followed by Trevor Redmond (Aldershot) 141 and Cyril Quick (Poole) 140. The last qualifying spot went to Harwood Pike (Leicester) who gathered 77 points. Harwood did very well to make the last 16 as he missed eleven matches due to injury. It worked out that all ten teams in League were represented but, surprisingly, the league champions, Oxford, only had one rider, whereas the bottom club, St. Austell, had two. (Oxford had four riders in the top 16 at mid-August but slipped back as the season drew to a close.)

On the night, before a record crowd of 23,000, everything went very much to form apart from the failure of Cyril Quick who scored 5 points to finish well down the field. Twelve of the 16 riders gained at least one heat win as Pat Clarke won the event with a 15 point maximum from Trevor Redmond on 13. In third place was Poole's Ken Middleditch (Neil's Dad). Pat had a relatively easy victory and set the fastest time of the night in heat 7. He did have a bit of a scare when Aldershot's Basil Harris held him back for three laps in heat 12 but he managed to pass Basil to take the flag.

Points scorers were: Pat Clarke (Oxford) 15, Trevor Redmond (Aldershot) 13, Ken Middleditch (Poole) 11, Norman Street (St.Austell) 9, Gerald Jackson

(Rayleigh) 9, Dick Tolley (Tamworth) 8, Reg Duval (Liverpool) 8, Basil Harris (Aldershot) 7, Alex Gray (Swindon) 6, Harwood Pike (Leicester) 6, Jack Unstead (Rayleigh) 6, Cyril Quick (Poole) 5, Lionel Watling (Tamworth) 5, Ray Ellis (St. Austell) 3, Hugh Geddes (Swindon) 3, Don Hardy (Exeter) 3 and Arthur Pilgrim (Exeter (Reserve))) 1.

The competition was staged in 1951 but a different qualifying system was adopted.

(Note: In the early 1960 as similar type competition for top scorers was **20** run in the National League of the day. The top two scorers from each side raced off for Gold Cup points. The Gold Cup Final was staged at Wimbledon (I think) at the end of the season. JH.)

Towards The Ideal Speedway Programme

Keith Brooker, 18 Harefield Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 5EA. Tel: 01628 632472 has suggested that we should provide information on the contents of the programmes from all tracks. A tall order but maybe there is a programme collector out there who wants to give us the benefit of their thoughts on the quality of programmes over the years. [For my twopence worth I've now seen a few Fleetwoods (photocopies I hasten to add) and they are pretty poor content-wise while from a completist's point of view 1950s Bristol and Norwich programmes made life difficult for those who like to see records of falls and engine failures as they left little space for this being recorded. JH] Nominations for the best programme ever and the reasons why would be of interest too.

Salford 1929 - Highs and Lows

After the successful launch of speedway racing at Albion Dirt Track in 1928 there was much anticipation for the 1929 season. The company which controlled the track, Albion Auto Racers Ltd. had learnt lessons from the previous year, particularly in track preparation. They now used a "special preparation" that it was claimed made it faster, more spectacular and safer. The problems that had been experienced with flooding had been, hopefully, banished by a new drainage system.

There was some concern that as new tracks opened across the country that some of the stars that graced the Salford track in 1928 might not feature this year. Such a racer was Ron Johnson, whose skill on the Salford track had not gone unnoticed, and who was lured away to a lucrative appointment in the South of England. Salford had had Ron pencilled in for league and championship meetings throughout the forthcoming season. New rules

introduced for 1929 also saw the Dirt Track Owners' Association permit regulars at the Albion, like the Langton Brothers and Alec Jackson, to race on other tracks and their regular appearance at Salford was not expected.

There was mixed anticipation for the introduction of league speedway with Northern and Midland teams competing in the English Dirt Track and their southern counterparts in the Southern Inter-Track League. This was to feature six rider teams with six replacement riders in reserve. The twelve rider Salford League squad started the season as follows: Cliff Watson, Syd Newiss, Tommy Mason, Frank Whatley, Sam Higgins, Freddie Williams, **21** William Price, Henry Pearce, Billy Fletcher, Leo Kenny, Jack Kenny, J.S. Wynne. All told, the Salford promotion signed up an incredible 84 riders for the individual and league fixtures of the forthcoming 1929 season. Initially meetings were to be held once a week on a Monday evening but by early May an additional Friday meeting was added.

The season opener on Easter Monday, 1st April, featured competition racing for the City Hall Cup (Winner Arthur Jervis); the Corinthian Column (Winner W. Simpson); an Eliminating Challenge Race (Winner: Arthur Jervis); and the Golden Helmet (Winner: Arthur Jervis). The 10,000 crowd watched Coventry rider Jervis clean up on the night but apparently local boy Cliff Watson was the most popular rider of the night because of his spectacular display of broadsiding.

The following week saw the first 'team' fixture, held under the new league format, with what appears to have been a challenge fixture against Halifax. The home team won convincingly in front of 10,000 people. Unfortunately the local newspaper, the Salford City Reporter, despite detailed coverage of Salford Dirt Track meetings never featured heat results or any details of this or any other team fixture. This was perhaps a reflection of the local crowd's preference for individual races and 'name' riders to team events.

The season then progressed from May 1929 with twice weekly meetings sometimes individual racing and other times team league racing with a second half of scratch and handicap races. Early May also saw the introduction of the George Pemberton Trophy, a gold casket which was competed for at each home meeting (each win securing two points) and won outright by the rider with the highest aggregate of points won in the 1929 season. (I have not been able to ascertain who finally won this trophy as by the season's end there were three riders with six wins (12 points) each - Eric Langton, Frank Varey, and Broadside Burton. - Can you help with this one?)

The Salford league team had a bad start to its campaign losing its first two home fixtures to White City (Manchester) and Warrington before finally securing a victory over Middlesbrough. From then on they had an impressive run of home results. The team's away form was disappointing to say the least

with just a single win over the season out of 14 fixtures. A real Jekyll and Hyde team in a league that saw teams drop out throughout the season and others fail to complete their fixtures. On the basis of their home results versus away performances it could be argued that Salford were a mid-table team. The Salford team results in the English Dirt Track League were as follows (Salford score first.)

Home : Halifax 22 - 0 Challenge; White City 15 - 44; Warrington 27 - 36; **22** Middlesbrough 36 - 27; Sheffield 41 - 22; Rochdale 39 - 24; Halifax 38 - 25; Preston 31 - 32; Belle Vue 29 - 34; Leicester Stadium 43 - 18; Liverpool 41 - 21; Barnsley 46 - 17; Rochdale 37 - 26 (KO Cup); Leeds 41 - 22; Newcastle 33 - 28; Preston 22 - 5 (Challenge). (League P13 W9 D0 L4)

Away : Warrington 24 - 39; Leeds 16 - 46; Sheffield 16 - 46; Leicester Stadium 29 - 33; Rochdale 26 - 37; Barnsley 31 - 24; Rochdale 23 - 39 (KO Cup); Newcastle 20 - 41; Belle Vue 20 - 43; Burnley 22 - 41; Halifax 21 - 42; Liverpool 21 - 42; Middlesbrough 18 - 44; Preston 24 - 38; White City 20 - 42. (League P14 W1 D0 L13)

(N.B. The accuracy of some of these results is questionable as different publications have given slightly different final results and in the absence of heat result total accuracy cannot be assured. The Editors would welcome any follow up information on any of these scores together with source details. (Scoring system was win 4 points, second 2 points, third 1 point.))

The twice-weekly meetings continued from May until mid September when the Salford promotion made a shock announcement that there would be no meeting held on Monday 23rd September and that the track would be closed. The reason given was the damage done to the track by the heavy rains during the previous Saturday's meeting. As the season was drawing to a close, the management decided it was unwise to go to the expense of reconditioning the track. It was reported that it would cost £100 to repair the track fit to resume racing.

Just as suddenly it was announced on the following day that a meeting of prominent riders connected with the track had met and decided to approach Albion Auto-Racers Ltd and Albion Greyhounds Limited, who owned the stadium, with a view to getting their permission to arrange meetings organised by the riders themselves. These advances were accepted and nine riders : Cliff Watson, Cliff Whatley, Freddy Williams, Billy Howard, Tommy Mason, Charlie Bentley, Eric Worswick, "Cracker" Simpson and A.J. Howard, together with the instigator of the project, former rider Tommy Blakemore, got the approval of the speedway authorities to continue speedway in Salford. The riders repaired the track themselves in readiness for the re-opening meeting on Friday 27th September, which was to be a Salford night, solely for Salford riders. (Is this the first riders co-op?)

It proved to be a special evening with riders inspired by the circumstances of the meeting putting on a special show of speedway racing in front of the best crowd of the season.

Unfortunately by the following Monday the track was flooded again by rain and that evening's meeting cancelled. The following Friday, Frank Varey knocked nearly a second off the flying lap record. Despite more wet weather meetings continued until Friday 18th October 1929 when the deteriorating condition of the track forced the rider consortium to call it **23** a day for the 1929 season, allegedly having made a loss on their venture. In all 52 meetings were held through the season in front of generally good crowds.

That proved to be the end of dirt track racing at the Albion Speedway. Why it never reopened for 1930 remains a mystery. The stadium continued with greyhound racing and the speedway track was uncovered in 1970 for stock car racing which ran for a short period. The greyhound racing finally closed in 1976, the stadium demolished and it is now the site of the Albion Casino.

Graham Fraser

Speedway Statistics Club

We have raised this idea on more than one occasion and have been asked if there is any progress. Is there anyone who is prepared to run with this concept and make it a reality? The joint editors will give you support to get it off the ground including space in this magazine or fliers seeking members.

Prize Competition

In the five years we have been in existence we have never run a competition before but as we have said before, we will try anything once (well almost anything.). As we have a spare copy of "Speedway in the South East" by Norman Jacobs we thought we would offer it as a prize.

The question is probably all too easy for historians of the sport but here we go anyway.

The first speedway meeting that is reputed to have taken place in Britain took place on 19th February 1928 at a track in Essex. What was the name of that track?

Please send your entries on a post card or in writing to **Graham Fraser** at the address below. All successful entries will be drawn from a hat on Friday 27th June 2003 at Armadale Speedway. The name of the winner will be published in the next issue of The Speedway Researcher.

Deadline for items for next edition is : 31st July 2003

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1946 AUTOCYCLE UNION CUP - NATIONAL LEAGUE

Away Team	Belle Vue	Bradford	New Cross	Wembley	West Ham	Wimbledon	Team	Home	Away											
Home Team							M	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	PTS		
Belle Vue	xxxxxx	49 - 46	57 - 38	53 - 43	61 - 35	64 - 32	Belle Vue	10	5	0	0	284	194	3	0	2	244	234	19	
Bradford	44 - 51	xxxxxx	50 - 46	48 - 48	50 - 46	55 - 41	Wembley	10	4	0	1	282	194	2	1	2	240	237	16	
New Cross	49 - 47	50 - 46	xxxxxx	39 - 48	61 - 35	54 - 40	New Cross	10	4	0	1	253	223	2	0	3	225	251	14	
Wembley	46 - 50	68 - 27	57 - 37	xxxxxx	53 - 42	58 - 38	Bradford	10	3	1	1	247	232	1	0	4	216	261	10	
West Ham	45 - 50	46 - 50	42 - 54	50 - 46	xxxxxx	45 - 48	Wimbledon	10	3	0	2	241.5	235.5	1	0	4	199	276	9	
Wimbledon	50 - 46	48 - 47	45 - 50	47 - 48	51.5	44.5	xxxxxx	West Ham	10	1	0	4	228	248	0	0	5	202.5	276.5	2

1947 BRITISH SPEEDWAY CUP - NATIONAL LEAGUE DIVISION TWO

	Birmingham	Bristol	Glasgow	Middlesbrough	Newcastle	Norwich	Sheffield	Wigan					
Birmingham	xxxxxx	59 - 37	59 - 37	45 - 50	53 - 42	56 - 40	37 - 59	66 - 28					
Bristol	62 - 33	xxxxxx	59 - 37	64 - 32	53 - 42	50 - 44	44 - 50	52 - 44					
Glasgow	62 - 34	54 - 42	xxxxxx	38 - 58	51 - 44	55 - 41	42 - 54	52 - 44					
Middlesbrough	73 - 22	61 - 35	62 - 33	xxxxxx	48.5 - 47.5	45 - 49	67 - 29	70 - 26					
Newcastle	59 - 37	54 - 42	50 - 46	30 - 65	xxxxxx	60 - 34	53 - 43	58 - 37					
Norwich	60 - 36	73 - 23	63 - 33	51 - 45	61.5 - 34.5	xxxxxx	44 - 51	55 - 40					
Sheffield	63 - 32	76 - 20	56 - 40	56 - 40	59 - 37	66 - 30	xxxxxx	68 - 28					
Wigan	54 - 41	52 - 42	51 - 45	62 - 34	41 - 53	65 - 31	55 - 41	xxxxxx					
	M Home	W	D	L	F	A	Points	Note 3 points away win.					
Sheffield	14	7	0	0	444	227	4	0	3	327	342	26	
Middlesbrough	14	6	0	1	426.5	241.5	3	0	4	324	346	21	
Norwich	14	6	0	1	407.5	262.5	1	0	6	269	397	15	
Newcastle	14	6	0	1	364	304	1	0	6	300	367	15	
Wigan	14	6	0	1	380	287	0	0	7	247	421	12	
Bristol	14	6	0	1	384	282	0	0	7	241	429	12	
Glasgow	14	5	0	2	354	317	0	0	7	271	400	10	
Birmingham	14	5	0	2	375	293	0	0	7	235	433	10	

1950 National League Division Two - North Shield (L) and South Shield (R)

	M	W	D	L	F	A	Points		M	W	D	L	F	A	Points
Halifax	14	10	0	4	631	541	20	Cradley Heath	12	8	0	4	528.5	487.5	16
Ashfield	14	9	0	5	606	562	18	Coventry	12	8	0	4	519.5	486.5	16
Edinburgh	14	8	1	5	669	500	17	Walthamstow	12	7	0	5	530	476	14
Hanley (Stoke)	14	8	1	5	622	548	17	Plymouth	12	6	0	6	520	487	12
Sheffield	14	6	0	8	547	625	12	Norwich	12	5	0	7	499.5	505.5	10
Newcastle	14	6	0	8	573	601	12	Southampton	12	4	0	8	479.5	481.5	8
Fleetwood	14	4	0	10	500	568	8	Yarmouth	12	4	0	8	446.5	561.5	8
Glasgow (WC)	14	4	0	10	536	639	8								

Thanks to **Hugh Vass** for the details for the ACU Cup 1946 and British Speedway Cup 1947.