

# The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

**Volume No.7 No.1 June 2004**  
**Edited by Graham Fraser and Jim Henry**

## The Trials of the PC

It would be fair to say that I have had fun starting this new volume as it meant the old dog learning the new tricks which are required to work in the PC format. Now that apology is out of the way I can welcome you to Volume Seven and see what happens in this next 12 month slot.

## Feedback

You will always get us, warts and all, giving you an assessment of what you think of us. We can say with honesty that the feedback is yet again quite favourable. No point telling you the favourable bits, which, thankfully are in the majority, so let us justify the adverse comments. Firstly we had a few comments complaining about the number of book reviews. Well, books are the proud output of many of our researchers and it puts their hard work in public domain for all to see. Yes the books often earn the authors money but if you put it into a return per hour it is probably a pretty poor return. Some books have been privately funded and unless we are aware of them and give support the return will be writ large in red ink. At least we have recorded the hard work of authors and we feel they will be valuable sources for historians in the future when we have packed up our magnifying glasses and bloodhounds.

Format – well – a big split. However, on balance most people look for The Speedway Researcher to be packed with words with little wasted white paper space and, as Editors, it tends to reflect how we want the magazine to be. We'll see how this one goes and ask again at the end of the Volume again.

Photographs – yet another split. A valid comment raised a question about how photographs would photocopy and maybe we need to try that out to get the answer. To be honest it is not something we had thought about when we suggested including photos.

In the next section we pick up on some of the comments made about what we might cover and the critical comments we have noted and thought about. We give our response to explain why we took the decisions we did.

**Vic Vanni** from Glasgow did not like the magazine introducing politics into its 1 pages. We are not sure which item has offended Vic but we assume it was the

article about Clem Beckett which set out Clem's political views. Fair comment Vic but it is a historical fact that Clem's politics were very left wing and his demise in Spain is part of his history. Yes the political activities were after he had given up speedway but there is an interest in what riders do after they pack in the sport and Clem's post speedway history is very unusual. At the blue end of the spectrum you can have Jack Nixon-Browne a short lived rider -promoter at Glasgow Carntyne in 1928 who went on to represent Glasgow Craigton for the Conservative Party and enter the House of Lords as Lord Craigton. Fay Taylour was well right wing and her story made that quite clear. We hope you can appreciate we try to record the history, warts and all and that we make no comment on political issues in The Speedway Researcher, we just record the history of riders as a fact. Vic, as our fellow countryman Rabbie Burns said – Facts are chieils that win a ding – and we do our best to give the facts.

**Frank Hortopp** illustrates the point made above and asks could we provide information on what ex-riders are doing now. As ever we would be happy to include items on this but look to contributions from our readers to publish.

**Eric Standere** from Ipswich suggests that we should provide information on Test / International / Touring Matches both home (UK) and abroad, unofficial and otherwise. This a great idea Eric. We would love cover this and would welcome items on this topic.

We had a request for information on web sites. Rather than list lots of site addresses can we suggest that you do a bit of surfing the web. [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com) and [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) are two really good search engines and it is quite good fun to enter a topic between inverted commas and see what turns up. Many sites are good and carry very helpful links to other web sites. A good example of this is the Friends of Edinburgh Speedway site which you can find by entering "Edinburgh Speedway" in Yahoo or Google. An example of the serendipitous (pot luck if you prefer a less pretentious way of putting it) nature of surfing was entering "Cardiff Speedway" and reading an item about speedway in Singapore in the pre-war days. Good luck on the web.

**Maurice Archard** asks if we could provide team lists for the early days – 1929 onwards. Does anyone hold this information and could do an article for us.

**Les Hawkins** suggests we include adverts. We decided some time ago not to do this. Maybe we should remind subscribers that we will carry their fliers in with the magazine, provided we have the capacity to do so, free of charge to subscribers and good causes. Contact Graham Fraser for further details.

**Colin Parker** suggests that bigger would be better. We would love to do a lot more but as always it depends on contributors coming up with items to publish. Colin has contributed great items about Coventry's first venue in the early pre-war days and we can but encourage everyone else to get writing. We have 75 years plus to cover now and the range of readers interests are very wide ranging over this time. Colin suggests we could do a bit about early Australian speedway – see book reviews and include information about speedway programme covers / content. 2

(There is a very good website which has illustrations of programme covers - [www.speedwayswopshop.co.uk](http://www.speedwayswopshop.co.uk) )

**Andy Marlow** asks what progress is being made on establishing the Speedway Statistics Society. We can only pass on this one as, much as we would love to, we do not have the time to give it justice. We again make the offer to carry information and assist in any way we can but we do need someone else to make the running on this. Maybe at the end of this volume we will carry a question on the renewal slip that will pose a question or two on the topic. IF we can identify the names of those interested we could publish them and let you folk get together. Andy is looking for contacts in Europe, especially Germany, Russia, Poland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. ( Suggest you try the Friends of Edinburgh Speedway website as it has lots of links to foreign websites. For a contact in Sweden try Anders Aberg who is a contact for the Swedish Speedway History Society and his website is one of the FOES website links. The Speedway Researcher does not have many foreign subscribers but if you do make contact – please tell folks about us.)

**Jeremy Jackson** asks if we could include an item about speedway brothers. Over to you biography folks – a list would do for starters on this one. Also Jeremy suggests we could include items about riders who have crossed over from other two wheel sports into speedway.

[ Ross Brady and John Louis spring readily to mind as those who have come into speedway. Going the other way only Arthur Browning who moved to road racing (and uses a modified 2 valve Jawa) and Eric Boocock, who has taken up trials, spring readily to mind.]

**Bob Ferry** suggests that we should give more coverage to the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. We have no objections to doing this and would welcome items which do just this. The sad thing Bob is that for lots of us (Jim especially) this is in the era we have followed speedway and mentally we don't think about it as being history. However, as always, we would be happy to publish items about these now ever dimmer and distant days.

**Anthony Mole**, (before you all ask – the answer is yes) asks if someone could do a potted history of Iwade. A potted history of this track featured in the book written by Norman Jacobs “Speedway in the South-East” published in 2003.

**Colin Greenwell**, 71 Skippers Lane, Normansby, Middlesbrough, TS6 0JE suggests that we could include an A-Z of pre-war riders. A tall order Colin! If you want an almost complete A – Z list for Scotland in the pre-war days I can refer you to A History of Edinburgh Speedway – Part 1 – The Pre War Years and Glasgow's Speedways: The Pre-War Years. The exercise for the whole of the UK would be a monumental task. Is anyone working towards compiling such a tomb out there?

Colin also suggests that we could include email addresses in our contact details so  
3 we will add that to our renewal forms for Volume 8.

## Ipswich in 1935 – 1936?

**Keith Farman** suggests that his research indicates that there was a licenced track in 1935 – 1936. Can anyone shed a bit more light on this one? Was it a true cinder or shale surface or was in a grass track posing as a speedway?

## Roll of Honour Update

**Andy Marlow**, 15 Thatcher Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 0WE has sent an extract from a Polish website [www.zuzel-end.w.pl](http://www.zuzel-end.w.pl) . This list includes Wlodimierz Wolak who rode for Stal Gorzow and was killed in 1957 at Gorzow; Witold Switakowski who rode for Start Gniezno and was killed in 1960 at Rybnik, and, Lesezek Zienkiewicz who rode for Stal Rzeszow and was killed in 1961 at Rzeszow who were not included in the list published a few years ago. Andy suggests that there may be a few more names of riders from behind the old “Iron Curtain” that could be added – any information out there?

## An Amazing Home Defeat

**Alan Bates** has penned this item.

Most clubs suffer the odd unexpected home defeat from time to time but few can have had such an experience as West Ham did on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 1952. The Hammers had just won two away league matches in a row, at Bradford by 43 – 41 on August 9<sup>th</sup> and at Norwich by 43 – 41 on 16<sup>th</sup> August. They had also drawn 42 all at Wimbledon on the night before the visit of Wembley to Customs House Stadium that Tuesday in question.

The Hammers had already beaten the Lions in the East End in May by 48 -33, but had been thrashed at the Empire Stadium by 60 – 24 on July 3<sup>rd</sup>. In view of these three excellent away performances on the trot, West Ham must have been full of confidence before facing their London rivals yet again.

On a very cloudy evening things started to go wrong for the Hammers in the very first heat, when Malcolm Craven's engine cut out at the gate and left Eric Williams and Tommy Price to take an easy 5 – 1 over Kid Curtis. Wally Green won heat two from Bob Oakley and Trevor Redmond so Wembley led 8 – 4. In heat three there was a rarity of a fall from Jack Young who came down at the first bend and was excluded from the rerun. Freddie Williams and George Wilks won this with ease after Pat Clarke had overslid when trying to pass and so another 5 – 1 put the Lions 13 – 5 in front.

Another 5 – 1 for Lions looked on the cards in heat four but Cliff Watson overtook Bill Kitchen but he could not catch Tommy Price giving the visitors a 4 – 2 heat win. Kid Curtis led for half a lap in heat five but Trevor Redmond and Bob Oakley sailed past and stayed ahead to the flag for another 5 – 1. Heat six ended up with 4

the same score in Lions favour. This time Freddie Williams and George Wilks had an easy win over Wally Green and Wal Morton to take the progressive score to West Ham 9 Wembley 27.

Jack Young had gashed his knee and wrecked his bike in the opening heat fall so he had to come out on a spare machine. He was down on power and finished a poor third to Tommy Price and Eric Williams who bagged yet another Lions 5 – 1.

Jimmy Gooch became the first Wembley man to fail to score in heat eight and the Hammers duo of Howdy Byford and Wally Green followed home Bob Oakley for a 3 all to make the score West Ham 13 Wembley 35.

Freddie Williams won heat nine and George Wilks brilliantly overtook Kid Curtis and Malcolm Craven to partner the Welshman to yet another 5 – 1. No respite for the Hammers in heat ten as Tommy Price and Eric Williams gathered their third 5 – 1 of the night to boost the Wembley score to 45 which was three times the West Ham score.

Pat Clarke was one Hammer who was trying very hard and he split the Bob Oakley / Trevor Redmond pairing in heat eleven after Jack Young had retired from the race. Wembley took another 5 – 1 in heat twelve through Freddie Williams and Jimmy Gooch and yet another in heat thirteen thanks to Trevor Redmond and Bill Kitchen as Jack Young was replaced by Cliff Watson. The ever trying Pat Clarke overtook George Wilks in the last heat but he was well behind Eric Williams and the resulting Wembley 4 – 2 resulted in a final score of West Ham 21 and Wembley 63.

Wembley had won nine heats by the 5 – 1 margin and Wally Green took the only West Ham bonus point.

## Can You Help?

**Bryan Tungate**, 9 Hanover Gardens, Mulbarton, Norfolk, NR14 8AZ, Tel: 01508 578460 is looking for a results chart for the 1953 Coronation Cup competition including the New Cross results. (If anyone can sent us the score chart and league table we will publish this as a centre page spread. )

**Andy Marlow** (address above) is seeking information about the following riders – Martin Scheneewis (Austria) (died 1947); Hugo Rosak (Czechoslovakia); Heman Gunzenhauser (Germany); Lambert Dock (Belgium); Karoly Domjan (Hungary); Tadeusz Koleczek (Poland) (died c.1952); Eugeniusz Zenderowski (Poland) and Andry Krzesinski (Poland).

**Ken Taylor**, 37 Hawthorn Road, Great Clacton, Essex, CO15 4QZ. Tel: 01255 434559 asks How many of the riders shown on the 1936 cigarette cards are still alive?

**Bob Ferry**, 13 West Drive, Cleadon, Sunderland, SR6 7SJ. Tel: 0191 5365064 is looking for heat details of Jack Millen's time as Berwick Bandit in 1978.

(Probably most, if not all, would be in the contemporary editions of the Speedway Star.)

**Peter Jackson**, 41 Riversfield Road, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3OH. Tel: 0208 366 3295. is working on statistics for 1957 to 1964. He is seeking heat details for the following Provincial League matches: Yarmouth v Bradford 1960; Newcastle v Rayleigh 18.9.61; Exeter v Newcastle 13.8.62 and Exeter v Bradford 30.7.62.

**M.W. Howes**, 33 Falkland Close, Hellsdon, Norwich, Norfolk, NR6 5QZ Tel: 01603 484032 is seeking speedway origins in Argentina, Egypt and other obscure countries. (Not sure how best to advise you on this one other than a trawl through some of the early copies of The Speedway News, the Auto, Motorcycle and Motorcycling in the British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale (opposite Colindale Underground) and seeing what they hold by way of newspapers from these countries.

**Don Gray**, "Old Orchard", High Street, Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire, CB5 9JU. Tel: 01223 862279 is seeking details of an alleged speedway star who rode under the name of Alf Chick and was associated with Wembley in 1928/29. (I have information that Alf Chick rode a couple of times at Glasgow White City in 1929 and one at Marine Gardens the same year. A note in my Glasgow book indicates Alf was born in Fulham in London but can't recall where this information came from. JH). Don is also looking for any information on another couple of pioneer Aussies Charlie Gray and Jim Pomeroy, where they rode and what track were they associated with.

**Maurice Archard**, 99 Pulleyns Avenue, London, E6 3NA. Tel: 0208 552 6087 is looking for details of Golden Helmet Match race dates and venues from 1952 to 1960. (The British Library at Colindale has speedway magazines from this era and the events are well chronicled in them.)

**C.V. Chubb**, 38 Stock Street, Plaistow, London, E13 OBY is seeking details of rider / promoters and riders who turned promoter. Let us offer you rider -promoters in Trevor Redmond (Neath, St Austell & Glasgow White City.) and Jack Nixon-Browne (Glasgow Carntyne 1928). Ex riders turned promoter include Bleuy Wilkinson, Frank Arthur, Harold 'Tiger' Stevenson, Don Potter, Frank Varey, Reg Fearman, Wally Maudsley, Bill Bridgett, Peter Waite, Ron Bagley, Eric Salmon, Peter Lansdale, and Len Silver to name but a few. Any more offers?

**Keith Farman**, 230 Beccles Road, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, NR31 8AH. Tel: 01493 668139 is seeking information on the real name of Tich Osborne who held the Norwich track record in 1931 and was killed in a car crash in 1933. (What about coroners records – full name and address of the victim would be held.)

**Mike Kemp**, 33 Town House Road, Old Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk, NR8 5BS, Tel: 01603 746557 is looking for photographs of Max Grosskreutz and Dick Wise from pre or post war days. Mike will cover costs of making copies.

**Tony Steele**, c/o The Speedway Researcher is seeking details of any films of speedway – 8mm or 16mm. Tony is particularly interested in copies of action from any past World Finals.

**Adrian Pavey**, 43 Norbeck Park, Cleator Moor, Cumbria, CA25 5RL, Tel: 0773 068 4564 is looking to build up a record of the racing careers of Frank Charles and Aussie Vic Cterctecko who raced in the UK in the early 1930s.

Adrian is seeking any information about meetings in Blackpool in 1929 and 1930.

**Bob Ozanne**, 33 Houghton Avenue, Park Farm, Stanground, Peterborough, PE2 8UR, Tel: 01733 765732 is looking for details of the third and fourth placed men in each of the Belle Vue v Preston Northern League match staged on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1931.

**Derek Bridgett**, 38 Paris Avenue, Westlands, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 2RQ, Tel: 01782 637970 is looking for details of midget car racing (often referred to as doodle bugs) which featured as part of speedway meetings in the period 1933 – 1939.

**Graeme Frost** 8 Strathbogie Avenue, Findon, South Australia is seeking details of Graham 'Bambi' Royal to supply information to Bambi's son. Andrew Weltch has supplied information that indicates he was with Cardiff in 1952 and 1953 but tried his hand at Yarmouth and Exeter in 1951. Can you help with details of the 1951 action. Maybe Bambi's son will let us know why his father used this name as Bambi himself would not give out this information to the Cardiff programme feature writer in 1952. Graeme Frost can be contacted via email on [graemf@chariot.net.au](mailto:graemf@chariot.net.au)

Graeme is also looking for information on the UK career of Bill Maddern, in particular his time with Bristol and Yarmouth in response to a request for information from Bill's daughter. For information Bill's real name was Thornton Alexander Maddern and he was born 26.2.1915 and died late in 2003.

**Jonathan Burrows**, Flat 61, Beverley, The Park, Sidcup, Kent, DA14 6AN Tel: 020 8309 6958 is still seeking copies of a video of the whole series of King Cinder which was never released as a commercial venture by the BBC.

**Colin Parker**, 59 Clinton Lane, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1AS, Tel: 01926 854852 is looking for details of the alias names used by riders in 1936 when they raced at unlicensed tracks.

**Pete Ross**, 75 Hennings Park Road, Oakdale, Poole, Dorset, BH15 3QX, Tel: 01202 241086 is seeking details of pre-war grass track racing in Dorset. (Can we suggest that you start by consulting a couple of magazines – MotorCycle and Motorcycling. Both provide details of up and coming grass events during the era you are interested in and meeting reports of a few after the event. There is every likelihood that the meetings will be reported in local newspapers and we can only refer you to the Newsplan directories (which will indicate local holdings ) and Colindale.

#### **The Editors.**

Pete is also looking for information about the New Forest Training School at St Ives, Ferndown, Dorset.

**Alan Jones**, 24 Purbeck Avenue, Shepshed Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 9HD, Tel: 01509 561521 is seeking heat details for the Shelbourne v Leicester meeting staged on 27.5.1951 to complete a full statistical record of every match **7** involving Leicester Hunters.

**Andy Marlow**, address above, Tel :0116 235333 is looking for heat details for the following World Championship Qualifying Rounds: Abensberg (Germany) 17.5.1953; 23.5.1954; 13.6.1955; 26.5.1957; 18.5.1958. Osijek (Yugoslavia) 1.5.1955. Unknown venue 1.5.1956. Oslo (Norway) 24.5.1957. Vienna (Austria) 18.5.1958. Oberhausen (Germany) 1.6.1958. Kranj (Yugoslavia) 31.5.1959.

**David Selby**, 34 Paddock Drive, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 6SS, Tel: 01245 464922 is looking for heat details for meetings staged in 1963, both National League and Provincial League. (Can we suggest that you will find this information in the Speedway Star and News which should be available in Colindale. Copies of the SSN for this era are still relatively easy to obtain so keep an eye out at collectors fairs. **The Editors**)

**Jeremy Jackson**, 85 Park Way, Fairfield Park, St Austell, Cornwall, PL25 4HR, Tel 01726 66484 is looking for details of Ivan Mauger's visits to the Cornish Stadium, St Austell.

**John Scrutton**, 4 Clovelly Drive, Norwich, Norfolk, NR6 5EY is looking for heat details for the following Norwich away matches: 1946. Middlesbrough 13.06; 4.07. Newcastle 8.07; Sheffield 22.08;12.09.

1947: Wigan 4.08. 1948 Middlesbrough 15.04;1.07; 29.07;9.09. Sheffield 17.06;5.08. Newcastle 19.07. Fleetwood 28.09 (times). 1950 Sheffield 31.08. Plymouth 18.05. 1951 Newcastle 15.06. Southampton 27.04.

**Kevin McGuire**, 48 Wheatcroft, Hanover Street, Batley, West Yorksire, WF17 5BW, Tel 01924 470769 is seeking details of a magazine entitled "Speedway" from around 1978.

**Hugh Vass**, 111 Arthur View Crescent, Danderhall, Midlothian, EH22 1QS is looking for full meeting heat details for the following fixtures staged in 1950: West Ham v Harringay 29.08; v Bradford 12.09. Aldershot v Rayleigh 31.05. Oxford v Tamworth 19.05; v Halifax 25.-5; v Aldershot 1.06; v Tamworth 8.06. Rayleigh v Aldershot 9.05; v St Austell 22.08. St Austell v Aldershot 9.05; v Aldershot 22.08. Tamworth v Poole 31.05. Hugh is also seeking heat details for all Stoke home League and National Trophy matches in 1950.

**John Jarvis**, 104 Pound Road, Bristol, BS15 4QH is still looking for any track details that may have been missed out of the first edition of Homes of British Speedway. Items such as tracks missed or missing years of operation.

## **The Steel Plate Starting Grid**

Way back in the 1950s riders racing in the UK did not start from the track surface as they do now. The start grid was a ribbed concrete surface which often upset visiting foreign riders not used to this material.

Concerned about the starts dominating meetings leading to runaway wins Ian Hoskins, then the promoter at Glasgow White City based Glasgow Tigers came up with the idea of handicapping riders by making them start off from a steel plate **8**

surface. The steel plate did not provide as much grip as the concrete and would mean riders normally fast out of the traps would be slow off the mark and would have to come from the back.

Ian canvassed his idea and even staged a demonstration race at White City in July 1953. He used three of his men, Tommy Miller, Ken McKinlay and Junior Bainbridge and one Edinburgh Monarch – Bob Mark. Miller and Bainbridge went off the steel whilst McKinlay and Mark used the concrete. Tommy, despite the handicap, won from McKinlay, Mark and Bainbridge. Ken soundly outgated Tommy but Bob reported that he lifted and wasted his advantage. Despite this Bob thought it was a good idea and suggested it should have a trial in a full meeting. The idea was shelved as Ian could not drum up enough support. Ian tried to re-introduce the idea in the 1960s but it came to nothing yet again.

A concrete grid or steel plate would stop the digging at the gate that many fans moan about on a regular basis.

**Jim Henry**

### **The Early Days of Suffolk Speedway Part 3**

We conclude **Keith Farman's** history of the pre-war days in Suffolk.

#### **East Coast Speedway Pakefield 1936**

The 1936 season opened on Whit Monday (31<sup>st</sup> May) with team handicap racing. Entries included Tiger Lewis, Jim Millward, Ted English, Jerry Williams and Canadian speedway newcomer Eric Chitty. The Secretary was now J.T.Baldwin who had been the timekeeper the previous season but all correspondence was directed to the Bevan Street address of Surtees Garage.

Lowestoft lost to Suffolk 19 – 25 over 7 races with Jim Millward the most successful rider gaining two firsts for Suffolk and setting the fastest time of the meeting at 93.2. Five riders attempted to establish a one-lap flying start record. Fred Leavis had to retire because of machine trouble and the fastest time was set by Chitty. His 22 seconds was never beaten. Leavis did win the Handicap Final in a close race with Millward.

The second meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> June saw Suffolk have an easy 31 – 11 win over London. The ever popular Millward broke the track record setting the new mark at 93.4.

Eric Chitty took a first and a third for London. Eric, who was struggling in his first season in England, did eventually become the top Canadian rider, making the grade with West Ham, a team he captained after the war.

It was reported in the Speedway News that Eric was sadly disillusioned so far as the prize money was concerned. Nevertheless after the meeting he was one of the many riders who enjoyed the hospitality of the Munnings family and Mrs. Munnings' famous home made wine.

Tiger Hart and his Provincial League side were advertised to race against Jim Millward and his East Coast team on 28<sup>th</sup> June but there is no report of this fixture in the local press.

A large crowd watched the Gigantic Race Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July helped by the fact that the admission prices had been reduced to one shilling and six pence (7.5p) with children being charged half that. Jim Millward was once again the top rider with Tiger (Phil) Hart crashing in his last race. One other rider of note who gained a third place in one of the heats was P.Lansdale who I am sure would have been Peter Lansdale who became a speedway star with Plymouth and other tracks after the war.

Jim Millward, Tiger Lewis, Tiger Hart and Ted English were advertised to appear on 2<sup>nd</sup> August but again no reports can be found for this meeting in the local press. The final meeting was held on 16<sup>th</sup> August 1936 with Jack Sharpe, the Australian test rider, top of the billing. Wembley's Millward, Hackney Wick's Tigers, Hart and Lewis, and a South African by the name of De Le Porte were also booked to ride.

Sharpe reverted to his East Anglian nom de plume of Smythe, a name he had used in the past at Norwich, Bradwell and Yarmouth in the days when he was learning his trade.

An admission gate was sited on the side of the field near the Caravan Park and later a new, loudmouthed committee member persuaded them to put another gate on the north side. It seemed that despite the crowd numbers increasing the takings were decreasing. The reason for this was that the new committee member had been helping himself to the customers' cash.

After this meeting the promotion went bust, but, they had been pioneers establishing the first ACU permit venture in Suffolk.

In 1938 Jim Millward, who had been such a favourite, opened an ACU licenced track in his home town of Newmarket. Newmarket is known to have staged meetings in 1932 as there are reports of Arthur Reynolds (Fred Leavis having been injured in a track crash at this venue in that year.

#### **Other Events**

The Lowestoft boys also raced at various Sports Days when they would appear and stage a few races. Venues included Wymondham, where the riders raced on a very wet surface and wrecked the local vicarage lawn, and Attleborough where the track was on land owned by the father of Harry Edwards who is raced for many years after the war.

#### **Conclusion**

This completes the article by **Keith** and in the next edition we will start to take a look at the shale activity at Yarmouth and the history of the Bloaters who were based at Caister Road, that tricky wee track that was the graveyard of so many visiting teams, especially those based in Scotland.

## Team Nicknames

In the last edition I posed the question as to whether speedway was the first sport to use team nicknames. The answer is an emphatic no. **Alan Bates** and **Andrew Weltch** both have provided details which confirm I was writing rubbish. However, to be fair, I did put my head over the parapet and did suggest that someone with a bit more knowledge of sport would put me right. Alan includes an item from a magazine published in 1911 which carried photographs of action at a football match which referred to The (West Ham) Hammers and (Norwich) Canaries. Andrew tells of ice hockey's London Lions defeating Glasgow Mohawks in 1929 – 30 season and goes back to Canada in 1898 to refer to Montreal Victorias. To add weight to his comments Andrew quotes an American football reference of 1904 which mentions Canton Bulldogs and Massillon Tigers and baseball in 1869 when there was a team called New York Knickerbockers and in 1883 a team were known as Cincinatti Red Stockings.

There, as they say, you have it. Speedway wasn't the first. However they were ahead of the game from rugby and cricket.

**Jim Henry**

## Stock Cars and Midget Cars

**Andrew Weltch** has written to us suggesting that we cover stock cars and midget cars. In their early days these four wheeled sports used speedway tracks but there the similarities end. The Editors have considered this suggestion but feel that these two sports are outside the remit of The Speedway Researcher's aims and objectives and decline to move in to cover those two sports. We will publish specific requests for information about midget car events which are integral to the history of a particular speedway venue or rider but we don't want to any much greater involvement. **The Editors**

## Publications

### Speedway in the North West

The map of the UK that hangs in Tempus Publishing Ltd's office must be changing colour at an alarming rate as they knock off another area in their "Speedway In" series of publications. (The big gaps must be the Midlands, and the Eastern part of England north of East Anglia and it is high time someone filled them in too.) In the latest offering from Tempus, which is written by **Adrian Pavey** assisted by **Tony Jackson**, the Tempus crayon has covered from Manchester north to the border and almost everything west of the Pennines.

The latest book maintains the high standard of the previous publications and adds to the store of speedway knowledge in a very readable format for many hazy **11**

venues in an area that has little by way of live breathing speedway tracks today. The hazy venues include the tracks in Barrow in Furness, Whalley, Preston, Blackpool, Carlisle, and Fleetwood.

It probably answers a question I've had for a while as to who the Willie Wilson that raced in the pioneer days in Glasgow was. Adrian mentions a gentleman of this name active on the grass in the Whitehaven area at the appropriate time so I make the big assumption they were one and the same person. You just never know what these books are liable to turn until you get your nose into them.

Adrian goes a wee bit wider than the speedways themselves and has a look at the career of Frank Charles and Bill Kitchen's family connections. He even looks, albeit very briefly, at the famous midget cars associated with the area because their manufacturer, Harry Skirrow, lived in the area and covers a bit of the local grass track history as well..

Speedway in the North West has a whole host of photographs to illustrate all the eras covered by the book, many are probably unique to this publication.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and it was devoured in a few evenings of serious reading. Without reservation I urge you to add this to your collection.

Published by the aforementioned Tempus Publishing Ltd, it is priced £14.99 plus P & P, and can be obtained from the publishers at The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 2QC.

**Jim Henry**

### History of Australian Speedway

This book was so popular that it was quickly out of print and it may prove difficult to get hold of in the UK although the publishers did have a special offer which was advertised in the Speedway Star a few weeks ago.

**Jim Shepherd** has set down a history of all the facets of speedway in Australia so it covers not only solos – what we would think of as speedway – but also sidecars, midget cars, stock cars, sprint cars and sedans. However, a great deal of the information is about the solos and the very early days, even before the watershed year of 1923 which is taken as the start of speedway as we think of it today.

The book is a mine of information and is packed with loads of interesting illustrations of track action, portraits of participants and promoters, photos of venues and programmes.

The vital statistics section gives details of Australian championship winners and a potted history of the Australia versus England / UK test matches. It includes a list of various tracks and has a where are they now section which is a wee bit depressing at times and an Australian Role of Honour.

It would be nice to think that this book might spark off a bit more interest in the history of solo speedway in Australia as there is probably scope for a more detailed follow up.

All I can sum with is – I you can get this book, and it may be difficult get a hold of a copy unless it goes to a reprint – do so.

**Jim Henry**

### **Tempus Speedway Yearbook**

For publishers who seem to fight shy of potentially excellent publications because of the statistical content, Tempus have mended their ways somewhat with this bulky compendium edited by Robert Bamford. The date on the cover suggests it covers 2004 (just like Stenners Annual before it) but obviously it tells all about last year (as the story of 2004 is emerging before our very eyes) and it does it in an amazing amount of detail. This probably the closest we get to a Speedway Wisden in this era, all that is missing is the heat details on a match by match basis. I could list all the items it includes but it is so comprehensive that is rather pointless. I could go on about what it doesn't have but that would be difficult. So – all I will say is that if you are looking for a comprehensive record of the year that was 2003, then shell out your £17.99 plus postage and packaging and order one up from Tempus.

**Jim Henry**

### **Breaking the Limits: the Sam Ermolenko Story**

When the history of speedway's first 100 years is chronicled in some twenty odd years time (19 if you are in Australia) there will be many names that will enter the riders "Hall of Fame" but I suspect that Sam Ermolenko will not, in most fans' view, rank along with the likes of Bluey Wilkinson, Barry Briggs, Ove Fundin or Ivan Mauger – which is a shame. Sudden Sam has for over 20 years been a star rider, World Champion and a great ambassador for our sport. I hope this book will raise Sam's profile, in this his last competitive racing year, and help lift what has been a great career into one which sticks in the memory of those who have frequented the speedway terraces. Brian Burford, who has previously written the biography of the Moran Brother, has followed a similar chronological method of detailing the Ermolenko story from growing up in the US through his British and European speedway career. However, what makes this book particularly useful to speedway historians and fans alike is that Sam's own words are liberally sprinkled throughout its pages. Add to this family photographs from his childhood to the present and you have an autobiography in your hands. This is a book which reveals new insights into Sam the man, as well as giving his personal view of key aspects of his career, well worth the price which ever format you buy into. Book written by Brian Burford and Sam Ermolenko. Hardback £19.99, Paperback £14.99 both plus P & P from Tempus. **Graham Fraser**

### **Speedway through the lens of Mike Patrick**

I would be surprised if there many readers of The Speedway Researcher who do not have one of Mike Patrick's speedway photo-books on their bookshelves. He has been an institution on the speedway scene for many decades and although his photographs continue to grace the Speedway Star and many speedway 15 programmes, this is the first new book for quite a number of years.

This is a softback large(ish) format all-colour book. It splits up, what Mike thinks are amongst the best of his collection of over a million speedway photos he has taken, into sections around speedway countries and many of their key riders. There are many action shots, as well as portraits of riders carrying out their business in the pits or on the podium. This kind of book you will sit with and marvel at the skill of the rider concerned. Price £17.99 plus P & P from Tempus. **Graham Fraser**

(Maybe Tempus could tempt other photographers to do a compendium book of their photographs. One photographer – Alf Weedon – springs to mind as the perfect candidate as Alf was the main snapper before Mike.)

### **Norwich Speedway**

This team history follows those of Southampton and Bristol in the "Images of Sport" series and is written by two subscribers to The Speedway Researcher. Norman has also previously written the some of the Speedway In books and Mike is a long time Norwich archivist and together they have produced a sumptuously illustrated history at The Firs from 1930 until its sad demise in the mid 1960s. The "Images of Speedway" series is primarily a history of individual speedway teams through photographs and images supported by very detailed captions. In this book the Norwich history is divided up into five eras of the team and supplemented by a potted history from each era. For the nostalgia buffs, aficionados of the pre- 1960s era, Norwich fans still lamenting their passing or those of you just wishing to see the history of racing at The Firs in photograph then this book is for you. Book by Norman Jacobs and Mike Kemp. Priced £12.99 postage free from Norman Jacobs, 101 Farnleigh Avenue, Clacton on Sea, Essex, C)15 4UL. **Graham Fraser**

### **10<sup>th</sup> Yer baws!**

This written by Edinburgh fanatic Gary Lough and chronicles his trip through 2003 and the highs and the lows he encounters as the man who was convinced Monarchs would win the Premier League long before anyone recognised the team was on the way to the title. The book title, for those of you south of the border and all points furth of Scotland could be translated as "I do not think your prediction that Edinburgh will finish in tenth place in this season's Premier League is correct" in a very derisive tone. With minor variations this became Gary's track by track war cry. The book is not one for the speedway historian – there is much more comprehensive information elsewhere – but it is a look at one fan's world for a season. It is a straight from the heart via the shoulder and it is easy to read. The quote from the book that has had me chuckling is his self description that he is "built like the gable end of a crisp." **16**

Nobel Prize for literature material it ain't but you might find it amusing, hard hitting, rude, or honest depending on your particular interests or the team you support and / or riders you support.

As I am aware of the Edinburgh scene, know the author's love of Edinburgh Monarchs, and the mention I get in the book is reasonably flattering, I have no qualms about saying I did not take long to race through from cover to cover. Book by Gary Lough, 12 Stenhouse Drive, Edinburgh, EH11 3JE. Priced £7.00 P&P £1.00.  
**Jim Henry**

## 1950 Regional Competitions

**Alex Broadhurst**, 58 Leonard Road, Chingford, London, E4 8NE, Tel: 020 8531 8553 suggests that the tables should be amended as follows:  
North Area - Edinburgh 56 – 27 Stoke; Halifax 53 – 31 Sheffield; Sheffield 47 – 37 Stoke. Alex suggests the Fleetwood v Newcastle fixture was not raced and the match shown as finishing at 52 – 32 was a challenge match raced after the closing date for the competition. Alex quotes an item from the Speedway World which said “Note for all those who keep records. The match played at Fleetwood between Fliers and Newcastle was a challenge and not a National League fixture as published. Reason for this was that these teams had this outstanding fixture in the North Shield but owing to Fleetwood being unable to fix the match before the competition ended, two points were awarded to Newcastle with the understanding a challenge match should be run later in the season to compensate the riders for their loss.” (Can we ask Barry Wallace and Mike Craven for their comments on this one please.) The tables would be amended accordingly.  
South Area – Coventry 48 – 36 Southampton; Cradley 57.5 – 26.5 Coventry; Norwich 57 – 27 Southampton; Norwich 38 – 46 Walthamstow; Southampton 55 – 28 Norwich. Again the tables would be amended accordingly for points for and against.  
In the Division One Spring Cup Alex suggests the scores that need correcting are Bristol 74 – 46 Wimbledon and Harringay 67 – 53 West Ham.

Have you spotted any other errors ? If so, let us know and we'll pass on the corrections.  
**The Editors**

## Should You or Shouldn't You ?

Now, every now and then we like to toss a smoking grenade into the arena and let it go off to stimulate a bit of correspondence. How about this one? In a speedway match riders from opposing teams cross the line together and a deadheat is called. Each rider is awarded two and a half points. Does the man who finishes third **17** receive a bonus point?

Equally, what would happen if two riders deadheat for second and third? In the instance should the man who finishes behind his partner receive a bonus point or should they just get half a bonus point? Similarly what should happen if two riders deadheat for third place? Maybe our statistical experts will be able to give us a definitive answer. Bonus points were introduced in the early 1950s to encourage team riding but have they been successful ? That might be another topic you might wish to give us your thoughts about. As ever we would be pleased to publish the best responses.  
**The Editors.**

## 75 and Still Going – Speedway in New Zealand

**Eric Watson** has sent the following item in which he acknowledges the source of much of the information as **Allan Batt** our lone subscriber in New Zealand. Last year, 2003, Britain celebrated Speedway's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. But did you know that this year New Zealand celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. The first speedway meeting staged in New Zealand took place on 9<sup>th</sup> March 1929 in the Kilbirnie Stadium in Wellington. Since then New Zealand has produced a plethora of top class riders, and a few have reached the pinnacle of the sport winning the World Championship Title. The World Championship winners are Ronnie Moore\*, Barry Briggs and Ivan Mauger who between them topped the rostrum a total of twelve times. Other famous kiwi names include Wally Kilmister, Bruce Abernethy, Ron Johnston, Geoff Mardon, Dick Campbell, Trevor Redmond, and Mick Holland. In more recent years Larry Ross and Mark Thorpe are probably the best known New Zealanders. Although it is generally accepted that New Zealand born Johnnie Hoskins started speedway at the West Maitland Showground in Australia in 1923, it wasn't until March 1929 the new sport came to New Zealand. Why it took so long is not known because by that time Kiwi riders such as Stewie St George and Spencer “Smokey” Stratton were already riding in Britain while Jack Arnott, Harry Manghan and Bill Allen were carving out similar reputations in Australia. A group of Wellington businessmen who heard about the large crowds attracted by the sport were keen to bring it to New Zealand. The venue they chose to launch their activities was a local football park and it was quickly transformed into a Speedway Stadium with an open grandstand built around a cinder track which encircled the soccer pitch. Floodlights giving 120,000 candlepower were erected in time for night racing and the Kilbirnie Stadium was born. On the opening night a large crowd turned up to see the new sport. Of the twenty five riders competing only four had ever raced on cinders before. However, such was the performance of the newcomers that the four with experience had to really open their throttles to contain the opposition. In reality it was thought that the Australian riders Max Graham and Gus Clifton who had been brought over to get things going would steal the show. However **18**

Clifton suffered mechanical problems and Graham had to fight hard to hold his own.

The first event of the Handicap Races saw H.D. Ross of Napier enter the record books as the winner of the very first speedway race in New Zealand. No doubt H.D. was greatly assisted by his 18 seconds start over runner up Bill Allen while in third place was rider called Tim Wilkinson. The Final of the Handicap saw Norton mounted Bill Allen beat Peter McGee, Ron MacKenzie and H.D. Ross. From his past experience Allen was able to overcome his big handicap to gradually work his way past his less experienced rivals to win the race by a comfortable margin. The Silver Gauntlet Scratch Final for 'B' grade riders next, was won by Eddie Naylor on a Douglas from Bill Harvie, also on a Douglas, with Peter McGhee third on his Harley Davidson. The crowd thought this was the most spectacular race of the night because both riders broadsided around the corners with large plumes of cinders being thrown up. Both Naylor and Harvie seemed to achieve the art of broadsiding extremely well.

The big event of the night was the Golden Helmet Scratch Races. In heat one Max Graham riding against Bill Allen (both on Nortons) put up a terrific display until Allen's bike failed leaving the 'crack' Australian to win alone. Then in heat two Wellington's Wally Kilmister on a AJS was pitted against Palmerston North rider Jack Arnott on a Royal Enfield. Arnott started as favourite because of his previous experience in Australia but Kilmister, who, during the evening had taken to the cinders like a duck to water, was improving with every ride. The great battle anticipated expired when Arnott fell leaving Kilmister to win the heat and earn the right to face Max Graham in the Final.

With the experienced gained during the night enabled the newcomer Kilmister to fight a tight duel over his much more experienced 'Aussie' rival. Both riders raced away from a flying start with Graham taking the lead immediately but he could not shake off the persistent Kilmister. As they entered the third lap the crowd let out a thunderous roar as Kilmister took the lead. However, in the last lap Graham managed to regain the lead and he went on to win the race by a couple of bike lengths.

The meeting showed that several local lads had real talent, especially Wally Kilmister, who would go on to dominate the sport in Wellington and other tracks in New Zealand during the 1930s. Wally also rode successfully in the UK riding for Wembley Lions from 1930 to 1938.

The crowd on that far away evening in March 1929 left the Kilbirnie Stadium well satisfied having seen some great racing and at last Speedway had arrived in New Zealand.

\* To be accurate Ronnie Moore was born in Australia, Tasmania to be exact, but won his championships riding as a New Zealander. Still, no matter how you look at it the Kiwis have had stars and hopefully they will rise again in the future to be a **19** power in world speedway.

## A Bit More Whimsy

**Bob Spence**, 27 Jackson Avenue, Leeds, LS8 1NP, Tel: 0113 2667539 offers us this list of town names which link in with the surnames of speedway riders: David BLACKBURN, Bernie LEIGH, Alf WELLS, Dave DURHAM, Terry STONE, Claude RYE, Lew LANCASTER, Harold HASTINGS, Wally HULL, Squib BURTON, Randy BRIGHTON, Jeremy DONCASTER, Ricky SCARBOROUGH, Chris MANCHESTER. (What about Mick POOLE, Dave GIFFORD, Pete READING, Stuart IRVINE, and Tommy YORK Editors.)

**Alan Bates** has really gone to town on the names and come up with the following. The Animals – Track – Foxhall Heath – Manager – Tiger Hart or Tony Mole. Scott LAMB, Harold BULL, Arne (PANDA) PANDER, Robbie BLACKADDER, Lawrence HARE, Carl SQUIRRELL, Jaroslav WOLF, Oliver HART, Kevin BOCK.

The Birds – Track – Owlerton – Manager – Clive Featherby. Wilf JAY, Phil WOODCOCK, David CRANE, Carl BLACKBIRD, Danny BIRD, Dick PARTRIDGE, Gareth MARTIN, Steve FINCH. Les EAGLETON.

The Ecclesiasticals – Track – Abbey Stadium – Manager – Simon Cross. Joe ABBOTT, Charlie MONK, Phil BISHOP, John BISHOP, Arthur PILGRIM, Kevin POPE, Luke PRIEST, Ivan CROZIER, Joel PARSONS, Chris CHAPLIN.

The Countryside – Track – Meadowbank – Manager – Bruce Forrester. Arthur FORREST, Trevor HEDGE, Wilf PLANT, Ken MOSS, Dave BEECH, George FLOWER, Arthur BUSH, Krister MARSH, Paul WOODS, Roger HILL, George WALL, Roger HILL.

The Townies – Track – Tilehurst – Manager – Mick Blackburn. Buck WHITBY, Johnny BRADFORD, Stan BEDFORD, Jeremy DONCASTER, Tim BUNGAY, Chris MANCHESTER, Bert KINGSTON, Pete BOSTON, Chris NEATH.

The Elites – Track – Queensway Meadows – Manager – Bert Kingston. Marian KAISER, Benny KING, Herby KING, Richard KNIGHT, George MAJOR, Barry DUKE, Drew McQUEEN, Bambi ROYALE. Cyril LORD, Colin EARL.

The Noshers – Track – Peamore – Manager – John Belcher. Mike CAKE, Nobby STOCK, Charlie OATES, Mark LEMON, Derek COOK, Gary ROLLS, Adrian PEPPER, Ed PYE, Fred TUCK, Paul FUDGE Paul CANDY.

The Sea Food – Track – Waterden Road – Manager – Dick Fisher. Harwood PIKE, Phil BASS, Bill CODLING, Eric SALMON, Paul FRY, Ron PIKE, Dave MULLETT. (Boy SPRATT (programme spelling error (aka BOYD PRATT )) James COCKLE.

Thanks to you gentlemen but I think we'll underscore this one here and maybe see **20** what else we can come up with in a similar vein in another volume.

## Peter Craven

In response to the recent book review on the book about Peter Craven the following contemporary items have been abstracted from the newspapers of the day and are reproduced below.

The following was published in the Edinburgh Evening News on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> September 1963 under the headline Peter Craven's condition is still serious. And attributed to J.R.S. "The condition of former World Speedway Champion Peter Craven, who received serious head and neck injuries in a three man pile-up at Old Meadowbank last night, was said at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary this afternoon to be "unchanged".

It is understood that he underwent an operation early today.

The smash came in the second last race of the match between an Edinburgh Select and Belle Vue, Manchester. It was expected to be the race of a night of dramatic racing for it brought together Edinburgh star George Hunter and Peter Craven who was World champion in 1955 and 1962, for the second time. Craven was earlier in a thrilling duel. Hunter swept into an early lead and Craven stuck right on his heels for the whole of the first lap. The stadium echoed to the roar of an excited 10,000 crowd.

Then going into the first bend on the second lap the front wheel of Hunter's bike developed a wobble. In his efforts to control it he went into a right hand skid and came off.

### Terrific Impact

Craven, following right behind, had no hope of avoiding the Edinburgh rider, and went right over the top of him. Craven's machine struck the safety fence with terrific impact and the momentum dragged machine and rider along the barrier splintering one of the panels.

Seconds before announcer Don Cummings had begged fans who were leaning on the safety fence at various points around the track to keep clear.

The third man to become involved in the melee was Willie Templeton.

Within seconds of the crash the track was swarming with police, ambulance men and track officials as the crowd, who shortly before had been cheering wildly, watched in hushed silence. Hunter suffered a foot injury, but Templeton escaped with bruising.

Just before the start of Heat 12 promoter Ian Hoskins announced that Peter Craven would give the rest of the field a 20-yard start – as he has to do in all national League matches. The Manchester star had said earlier in the week that if Belle Vue had a lead of six points or more he would operate this rule.

### Howl of Derision

However, when Hoskins made the announcement the Edinburgh Select were leading the match by 34 to 32. The news was immediately greeted with a howl **21**

of derision from the fans who wanted to see Hunter and the former world champion competing on the same terms.

Hunter set a hot pace from the start, and the theory was put forward last night that in his enthusiasm he went into the corner a shade too fast.

Before his accident, Craven, who is married with two children, had given the fans some wonderful displays of power riding. His small build and lightness enable him to let his machine go like the proverbial rocket, and he made it look so easy.

He spoke to the crowd before the start of the match, which Edinburgh eventually won 40 points to 38, and said he had ridden at Edinburgh 13 years ago and picked up two points. "I hope to do better tonight," he added laughingly.

Later he posed for photographers with another "wee man," Walter McGowan, the British and Empire Fly-weight Boxing Champion.

### Thrill a Second

The meeting provided thrill-a-second racing. The first four heats were drawn then Edinburgh got a couple of 4-2's to pull them ahead. They managed to build up a lead of as much as four points at one stage, but a 5-1 for Belle Vue in the ill-fated twelfth heat let them pull ahead by a couple of points, but Doug Templeton and Jimmy Squibb eased a 5 – 1 in the last race to snatch victory. Scorers: Edinburgh Select – Jimmy Squibb (10); George Hunter, Douglas Templeton (8 each); Eric Boocock, Dudley McKean (4 each); Alf Wells, Willie Templeton (3 each).

Belle Vue – Gordon McGregor (10); Peter Craven (9); Sven Sjosten (8); Cyril Maidment (5); Bill Powell (3); Norman Nevitt (2); Jim Yacoby (1).

The following was published in the Glasgow Herald on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1964 and was headlined Formal Verdict on Death of Speedway Rider.

"The death of Peter Theodore Craven, a former world champion speedway rider and captain of Manchester Belle Vue Speedway Club, from injuries he received in a race at Old Meadowbank Stadium, Edinburgh, on September 20 last year, was the subject of a fatal accident inquiry at Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

Craven (29) of Liverpool, died in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary four days after he had been injured in a match between Edinburgh Monarchs and Manchester Belle Vue.

A jury returned a formal verdict.

Ian Hoskins (39), Shawlands, Glasgow, promoter of the match said he was watching a race between the two riders from the Monarchs team and two riders from Manchester Belle Vue.

At the end of the second lap, George Hunter, Ladybank, Fife was in the lead, with Craven closing the gap between them. As the leading rider went into the corner he came off his machine and Craven tried to avoid hitting the motorcycle which slid across the track. Craven's front wheel seemed to touch the other machine and he **22** was thrown off and hit the safety fence with a heavy blow.

Charles Allen, engineer, Craigentenny Avenue, Edinburgh, who was acting as pit mechanic for Hunter said he examined Hunter's machine after the accident and he found the engine had seized because of a broken piston. The damage could not have been foreseen."

Note for Information: The Fatal Accident Inquiry was held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 1964. The actual verbatim court records have not been archived in the Scottish Records System for the period that includes this date.

### **BackTrack**

For those of you who like your history a bit more recent than some of us fossilised fact finders (Dave Lanning's description of Jim) you may be interested in the magazine that describes it self as the new retro speedway magazine. Volume 1 no. 1 had a special launch price of £1.00 but will £16 per year for a UK subscription for 6 issues.

Having invested in the first edition at the bargain price I was impressed by the quality and content and know it will provide those unfamiliar with the 70s and 80s a big insight into this era.

The big shock was the photographs of Bruce Penhall as he is today. I can liken the experience to Nelson Mandela's release from prison, the person you saw in the photographs and the vision you had in your mind's eye when the name Bruce Penhall was mentioned, had changed markedly from the man today. The image I had of Bruce was the "youngster" who was a world beater. The 46 year old Bruce was so different from the blond all American boy. Even Howard Cole – who I remember back in the days when he was known as Kid Bodie – looks older.

(Maybe I should look in the mirror too.)

**Jim Henry**

### **Format Changes 2004**

The format changes introduced for 2004 have caused quite a split in the ranks of many supporters. Gone is the tactical substitute and golden double rules used in 2003. In come the Tactical Ride (TR) and the new Tactical Substitute (TS). The TR can be used by rider who is already programmed for the heat starting from the starting gate. The rider nominated for the TR ride scores double. TR rides can only be taken when a team is eight or more points behind after heat four and can be used twice during the match. The TS rides must be taken from 15 metres behind the starting gate and the TS is a replacement rider. The TS can only be used once per meeting. We make no comment on the new rule but it is one future historians may have some comments about. Obviously the promoters will be monitoring the rule. The proof of the pudding will be the next British Speedway Promoters Conference when the new rules will be retained or flung out.

23

### **For the Purists**

For you collectors out there a few of the early 2004 season Edinburgh meetings have programmes which have used two different covers. The match versus Glasgow on May 7<sup>th</sup> 2004 featured three different covers. Does any other track use different covers or different coloured covers for their match programmes this season, if so, please let us know. From a historical slant we have discovered Glasgow White City used different colours in 1931 and St Austell adopted this practice in the early 1960s. Can anyone tell us just how many different colours St Austell used per match?

### **Eric Abbott**

We were saddened to hear, from his long-term friend Fed Paul, of the sudden death of Eric Abbott. Eric was a subscriber to The Speedway Researcher and a researcher himself into Plymouth Speedway. Many of you will know Eric through his adverts in the VSM, as well as The Researcher, trying (with Fred) to compile the history of Plymouth Speedway. Eric was a good friend of The Researcher, regular correspondent and our condolences go to his family. We hope that all the Plymouth research carried out by Eric will perhaps be continued by Fred and others, as a history of that track is long overdue.

**The Editors**

### **Post War Walthamstow History Complete**

Purely by chance it emerged that an old friend of Jim Henry had a copy of the programme for the meeting that was the last, vital, plank in Alan Bates' records of Walthamstow Speedway in the 1949 – 1951 era. The programme from Chapelizod that Alan has asked for many times in this magazine. Alan was advised of the contact details and now has his results complete from stem to stern.

We know we have a few collectors who subscribe but many more don't. If you now any collectors, can you ask them if they have the programmes from the matches we feature in our Can You Help section on the off chance they can help. We have helped so many close that last gap. Can we help Alan Jones do it now – see Can You Help section? It would be another feather in our collective cap.

**The Editors**

**Deadline for the next edition is 31<sup>st</sup> July 2004**

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24

### Britannia Shield 1959

North					South					
Away Team	Belle Vue	Coventry	Leicester	Oxford	Away Team	Norwich	Poole	Southampton	Swindon	Wimbledon
Home Team					Home Team					
Belle Vue	xxxxxx	57-33	58-32	51-39	Norwich	xxxxxx	62-38	57-33	69-21	54-36
Coventry	35-53	xxxxxx	49-41	52-38	Poole	48-42	xxxxxx	43-47	38-52	43-47
Leicester	46-44	44-46	xxxxxx	62-28	Southampton	60-30	54-36	xxxxxx	50-40	48-42
Oxford	51-39	41-49	47-43	xxxxxx	Swindon	45-45	42-48	46-43	xxxxxx	44-42
					Wimbledon	59-31	57-33	60-30	53-37	xxxxxx

Final 1<sup>st</sup> Leg Wimbledon 59 Belle Vue 31 2<sup>nd</sup> Leg Belle Vue 34 Wimbledon 56 Aggregate **Wimbledon win 115-65**

North								South							
Team	R	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Team	R	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belle Vue	6	4	0	2	302	236	8	Wimbledon	8	6	0	2	400	320	12
Coventry	6	4	0	2	262	274	8	Southampton	8	5	0	3	365	354	10
Leicester	6	2	0	4	268	272	4	Norwich	8	4	1	3	380	340	9
Oxford	6	2	0	4	244	296	4	Swindon	8	2	1	5	327	392	5
								Poole	8	2	0	6	327	393	4

### Britannia Shield 1960

North						South					
Away Team	Belle Vue	Coventry	Ipswich	Leicester	Oxford	Away Team	New Cross	Norwich	Southampton	Swindon	Wimbledon
Home Team						Home Team					
Belle Vue	xxxxxx	55-35	52-38	58-32	50-39	New Cross	xxxxxx	48-42	36-54	35-55	28-62
Coventry	43-47	xxxxxx	61-27	56-34	61-28	Norwich	65-25	xxxxxx	57-33	47-42	47-43
Ipswich	41-49	*43-47	xxxxxx	60-30	54-36	Southampton	66-24	50-40	xxxxxx	49-41	42-48
Leicester	44-46	55-35	52-38	xxxxxx	54-36	Swindon	62-28	54-35	53-37	xxxxxx	41-49
Oxford	34-56	59-30	49-41	40-50	xxxxxx	Wimbledon	56-31	54-36	59-30	56-34	xxxxxx

Final 1<sup>st</sup> Leg Belle Vue 56 Wimbledon 34 2<sup>nd</sup> Leg Wimbledon 46 Belle Vue 44 Aggregate **Belle Vue win 100-80**

North								South							
Team	R	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	Team	R	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Belle Vue	8	8	0	0	413	306	16	Wimbledon	8	7	0	1	427	289	14
Leicester	8	4	0	4	351	369	8	Swindon	8	4	0	4	382	336	8
Coventry	7	3	0	4	321	307	6	Norwich	8	4	0	4	369	349	8
Ipswich	7	2	0	5	301	329	4	Southampton	8	4	0	4	361	358	8
Oxford	8	2	0	6	321	396	2	New Cross	8	1	0	7	255	462	2

**12** \* Ipswich v Coventry on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1960 declared void and expunged from the records by the Speedway Control Board. Compiled by **Hugh Vass. 13**