

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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At The End of Another Volume

The number four has come round again and after a bit soul searching we have decided to go on for at least another volume. We've been heartened by some really good articles this edition but as ever our cry for material is no less quiet. We are also going to ask whacking great increase in the subscription – 25% no less but at £5.00 for four editions we don't think we will be breaking the bank. We are again asking you to complete your renewal forms and ask for you to provide the information we seek. Look forward to having you all on board next Volume heartened by two good articles ready to roll at the start of Volume 11 – the more the merrier.

Graham and Jim

Bryan's Thought's

Bryan Tungate has a classic line at the end of his emails as follows:-
“If the Lord invented anything better than Speedway - He kept it for Himself.”
Patent it Bryan, before somebody else does.

Nigel's Natterings

Yet again we publish the findings of our man Brummie country, **Nigel Bird. Speedway in Singapore 1930**

Speedway has been held in what could be considered strange places, none more so than sub tropical Malaysia or to be more precise Singapore. At this time Singapore was a British colony full of ex. pats, Europeans and a mixture of Asian cultures not known for their interest in motor sport, but something had persuaded A J Reynolds Australian entrepreneur, showman, theatre manager and speedway promoter that running speedway in this location was worth the

gamble. Reynolds arrived in Singapore in March 1930 and set up the promoting company 'Singapore Speedways Ltd', soon after, he was joined by Australian speedway riders Charlie Datson, Jack Sharp, Tiger Lewis* and Fred Yates, all of whom helped with the organisation and preparation. Also to join the troupe was Welshman George Gregor a Cardiff pioneer rider. The Alkaff Gardens built by a Yemeni sheik was to be the location of the track. The 440yds (402m) oval with white board safety fence was surrounded by palm trees. Stands were built and floodlighting installed all at great expense, but Reynolds did not have enough capital of his own to finance such a large undertaking and local contractors may have financed the construction in exchange for shares or the promise of payment later. Practice sessions for the locals were arranged and a riders association was formed. Australians apart, the riders were beginners comprising of a few ex pats, Malay born Europeans, plus various Asians, Chinese and Cocos Islanders. A huge and expensive advertising campaign began 3 weeks before the opening night (19th April); full page adverts appeared in the press and accompanied by speedway related articles, dominated the newspapers. All along the Serangoon road to the stadium giant Chinese fliers fluttered in the breeze and announced the grand opening. An estimated 35,000 attended that opening night, a figure never to be repeated. The programme consisted of match and handicap races, plus record breaking attempts. Chas. Datson set the first track record for the 4 lap flying start at 86secs. Riders on the opening night included Ong Chin Beng, Lee Seng Soon, Cho Jolly (China), Bepo Wahid (Cocos Islands), Sob Prasong, the Siamese (Thai) motorcycle champion, Philippe Ledonou (France), R. McCreath, Jack Holliman, (Malaya) Bobby Waters, Harry Riches, England. A motley collection of bikes were used, BSA, OEC, Sunbeam, Charter Lea, etc. Douglas DTs. were only used by the Aussies and Welshman G. Gregor who was advertised as the English champion! Aussie Sig Schlam also appeared later on during the short season to augment the few real speedway riders. International matches were arranged, China v Cocos islanders and China v England. Captain of China was Ong Ching Bing, England's captain was Bobby Waters, but these somewhat farcical international races were not completed. The diet of the same riders in a mixture of handicap races, record attempts and match races soon palled and by the final meeting 7th June the crowds had dwindled to nothing and the enterprise collapsed. A.J. Reynolds could not be contacted, apparently he had skipped the country, Ceylon his destination, leaving behind a trail of angry creditors.

The rotund and affable Reynolds had a couple of brushes with authority... was hauled up in court for breaking the strict gambling laws by using lucky programme numbers, but the smooth talker failed to shift the blame onto the programme printers and was fined.

(Footnote) Ceylon = Sri Lanka

(Datson, Sharp, Lewis and Schlam had raced in Britain).

**According to the Malay press Harry 'Tiger' Lewis was a native of the Malay states and not Australian?*

The following article was taken from "The Motor Cycle" April 1923 Fascinating Dirt Track Racing

"Exciting but not really dangerous sport--An American idea that England might imitate" As an Englishman in America, keenly interested in motor cycling, especially racing, I notice several of your correspondents seem to have mistaken the ideas about racing conditions in the USA. Saucer tracks are a thing of the past; they went out of vogue about 1915. The present day racing is conducted entirely on dirt tracks of half to one mile or sometimes 2 miles to the lap. They are to all intents and purposes unbanked; that is they are, on average only two to three feet higher on the outside than on the inside as they are used extensively for horse trotting races as well as for motorcycles and cars. The surface of a good track is of Clay, which is rolled and dragged, and usually has a cushion of softish earth on top. The tracks are generally surrounded by wooden fences inside and out. During 1922 I do not recollect having heard of one single race meet conducted on anything other than dirt tracks and most of them were half mile tracks. There is also a certain very limited amount of record breaking carried out on banked Board tracks of one mile or more to the lap, in the Los Angeles and San Francisco districts.

(Evidence suggests that board track racing continued up to 1928.. NB) I have raced several times at Brooklands and last summer (1922) I raced in seven Half mile dirt track meets over here. The dirt track as an engine testing ground cannot compare with Brooklands. By taking big risks a man often beats a faster machine ridden by a more cautious rider. No one would ever win at Brooklands by riding the "turns" two feet from the inside. On a dirt track the going is often best right next to the inside fence and the more daring riders will slither and slide around just close to the fence as they can keep, also no fast machine can be ridden wide open around a half mile track; the machine would turn completely round and go down, though some of the best riders will slide all the way around the turn with the back wheel twelve inches further out than it

should be. This sounds impossible but never the less it happens. To all intents and purposes one steers by sliding the back wheel and the peculiar nature of the track surface makes this very much easier than it appears. From a sporting point of view the half mile un banked dirt track is better than any other form of racing except the T.T.. So long as there is a bank of soft earth between the riders and the fences to prevent some of them taking undue risks cornering, it is the most fascinating sport I have ever gone in for and provided one wears leather clothes one can come off any number of time without serious consequences to rider or machine. The writer would like to see half a dozen dirt tracks scattered over England. They are cheap to construct, the gate money would more than pay for them, and they would give a large number of private owners a chance of motor cycle racing in one of its most fascinating forms.

The writers name was not given.

So the question is, who was Britain's first dirt track rider?..... A mystery man with Brooklands experience.

George Formby

Preston, April 1929:- Comedian George Formby won a not too serious race against Frank Chiswell, Formby having a lap start. Ham Burrill won the 'Formby Cup'. It is said that George was also going to make a record attempt and compete in the Golden Helmet match race at Whitley Bay Speedway 4th May, but I have found no mention of him in the post meeting reports. If a 'Formby Cup' was raced for? then George was almost certainly there? He also performed the opening ceremony at Tamworth in 1947.

Newcastle.

Gosforth rider Bud Thompson was originally 'Spud'.

California – Just who held the track Record?

Arnie Gibbons poses an interesting question .

October's (2007) California reunion at the Country Park home of the old amateur speedway track was a fantastic occasion. George Thompson, Roy Allison and Stuart Towner did a great job in organising a great day. With bikes, programmes, the wonderfully preserved starting area and competitors from California's history memories were flying round.

The question of the California track record came up. Jim Tebby is usually credited with the honour of holding the record at the time of the tracks demise, however the true answer is more complicated.

Late in 1935 the track was shortened to 310 yards and the three great products of the track held the record at various times before World War 2 started. Lloyd Goffe (briefly the most expensive man in speedway), Reg Vigor (killed at Wimbledon in 1937) and Jim Boyd (a post war Ace at Belle Vue) all took their turn.

Racing returned to California in 1948. The following year Jack Peck became the first rider to lower Boyd's pre-war record. Trevor Davies dominated events at California in 1950 and 1951, and gained the track record on 28 May 1950. He continued to hold it until early 1953 with one brief gap. Ron How lowered it (to 66.8) in October 1950, only for Davies to regain a share of the record in April 1951.

Those two shared the record until Jim Tebby came along. Tebby's father Stan had been a California regular and on reaching sixteen in 1952 Jim took to the track too. The following year he was already the top dog at California, and on April 19 annexed the track record in a meeting where he scored a maximum as California beat Cyril Maidment's Team 45-36.

His winning time of 1 minute 6 seconds (as 1953 programmes showed the track record) mysteriously became 65 seconds in 1954 programmes and all subsequent references to the track record.

This left open the possibility that a rider may have clocked a sub 66 second time and not been credited with a share of the track record. An extensive trawl of programmes (and for 1954 and 1955 Speedway Star match reports) does throw up such an event. The rider deprived of the credit for being the fastest rider round California is Jimmy Heard. In a last heat decider the Eastbourne rider completed his maximum by passing both Poppies riders (Jimmy Gleed and Peter Mould) to win the match for the Eagles. His heat 14 winning time was 65.0 seconds. Filled in programmes show the time was noted as equalling Tebby's erroneous figure on the day, but future programmes don't reflect his share of that record. Further examination of the programme for the Eastbourne match reveals the track length as 334 yards. In 1954 the white line was moved out. Inspection of photos from 1953 and 1954 clearly shows the change from a raised kerb to a 'flush' one further out.

So shouldn't Tebby's record have been frozen and a new one set at the start of 1954? Heard still remains as the holder at the end of the track's life in 1957, but who held it in the intervening period?

I am grateful to Les Hawkins for his assistance with this research. Without a complete set of (accurately) completed programmes it is difficult to be certain,

but with most meetings covered a provisional list can be compiled. Any information that would update this list would be welcomed.

1954: 18.4 R Sharp 71.8, G Goldfinch 71.4 (twice), Sharp 71.0
25.4 Goldfinch 71.0 9.5 S George (Brafield), J Gleed 69.0 20.6 Gleed 68.8 &
68.4 (in second half) 18.7 E Lessiter (Ringwood) 68.4 15.8 V Hall
(Brafield) 68.2 29.8 B Andrews 68.2 19.9 Goldfinch 68.0 26.9 Goldfinch 66.8
1955 29.5 V Hall (Brafield) 66.0 **1956** 12.8 J Heard (Eastborne) 65.0

John's Pre-War Top Ten

John Hyam offers this for debate - here's my Top Ten riders based on British form between 1930-39.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| (1) Jack Milne (USA) | (2) Bluey Wilkinson (Australia) |
| (3) Cordy Milne (USA) | (4) Wilbur Lamoreaux (USA) |
| (5) Eric Langton (England) | (6) Jack Parker (England) |
| (7) Vic Duggan (Australia) | (8) Frank Charles (England) |
| (9) Lionel Van Praag (Australia)
(England). | (10) Jack Ormston |

Sprouts on the Boards

John Hyam pasted this interesting item on the Yahoo speedway chatzone stating he has found some interesting information about the pioneer USA rider Lloyd 'Sprouts' Elder in regard to the early days of his motorcycle racing career.

According to the AMA 'Hall of Fame', Elder started racing on the USA board tracks before going to Australia in the mid-1920s where he won a 'Gold Helmet' for his victory in the 1927 Australian Championship?

Was this a speedway championship?

There is also a mention of Elder competing in South America around this time, presumably on speedway?

A photo on the 'Hall of Fame' shows Elder sitting on a bike that bears a strong resemblance in design to the Harley Davidson Peashooter (HDP) that has been featured in recent posts on this site. Is the HDP in fact a board track bike?

Of further interest, just how involved in the development of speedway in the 1920s might the USA board tracks have been, and what other pioneer USA riders also graduated from them to speedway? The names of Cecil Brown and

Ray Tauser especially spring to mind.
And what exactly is the definition of a board track?

Can You Help?

Keith Farman 230 Beccles Road, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth NR31 8AH Tel 01493 668139 is looking for the following 1948 24.4 at Hull Second Half (SH); 12.6. at Hull Non Finishers/Replacement + SH; 2.8. at Tamworth all times Non finishers/Replacement + SH; 19.8 at Tamworth all times Non Finishers / Replacement + SH: 31.8 Yarmouth v Hanley All Non Finishers/Replacement; 6.9.48 at Exeter all Times; 19.10 Yarmouth v Hastings Time Scratch Race; 22.10 at Wombwell details Final Race. **1949** 8.4 at Liverpool Non Finishers / Replacement + SH; 20.4 at Liverpool SH; 27.4 at Hastings SH; 28.4. at Oxford SH; 14.5. at Hull SH; 27.5 at Leicester Non Finishers / Replacement + SH; 1.6 at Hastings SH; 15.6. at Tamworth SH; 18.6. at Rayleigh T2nd men SH; 2.7.49 T2nd men SH; 14.8. at Exeter T Scr Race Final; 8.8. at Liverpool SH; 16.8. at Poole T2nd men SH; 20.8. at Hull SH; 28.9. at Hastings SH. **1950** 11.5. at Plymouth SH; 20.4. at Cradley Times first 2 hrs SH; 2.6. at Sheffield time Newcomers Race; 28.8. at Walthamstow All times + SH. **1951.** 1.5. Yarmouth v Coventry second half times; 21.7; 5.8. v Stoke time scratch race final; 4.6. at Fleetwood Details Novices Scratch Race. **1952** 25.4 at Cradley SH; 9.5 at Leicester SH; 26.6. at Coventry Times last 2 Scratch Races (E3 & E4); 11.6. at Fleetwood – SH; 17.7. at Oxford SH; **1953** 4.4 at Ipswich – all times; 17.4. at Wolverhampton T2nd men SH; 11.5. at Poole Det Final Poole Scr; 18.7 at Coventry Det Ht2 Stadium Scr; 14.8. at Wolverhampton SH – Home 11.4. v Stoke T Scr Final; 19.5; Liverpool T Ht3 Jnr Lge Match; 23.6. v Norwich T Norfolk Trophy Final; 8.8. v Norwich T Race 21 Scratch Final.

Handicap Racing 1962 to 1964

Alex Broadhurst sends the details of the handicap racing of the early 60s. The introduction of handicap racing was announced in January 1962. It was introduced to improve racing and pull in the crowds. It possibly saved some clubs from pulling out of the league.

Details were announced in March. There were to be three grades of riders, A, B and C. The handicaps were A grade - 20 yards (30 yards at Belle Vue, Ipswich and Norwich), B grade - 10 yards (15 yards at Belle Vue, Ipswich and Norwich), and C grade - scratch.

The only A grade riders were Barry Briggs, Peter Craven, Ove Fundin, Bjorn Knutsson and Ronnie Moore.

The B grade was more complicated. Some riders were only off a handicap at certain tracks.

Billy Bales only had to ride off handicap at Belle Vue, Norwich, Ipswich, Coventry and Swindon.

Gordon McGregor as Billy Bales plus Oxford.

George White at Swindon only.

Dick Fisher at Belle Vue only.

Jack Kitchen at Belle Vue only.

Ron Mountford at Coventry only.

Ray Cresp at Ipswich only.

Ronnie Genz, Jack Biggs and Jack Geran at Oxford only.

B grade riders at all tracks were Arne Pander, Pawel Waloszek*, Olle Nygren*, Eric Williams, Peter Moore, Mike Broadbank, Jack Young, Teo Teodorowicz, Nigel Boocock, Ken McKinlay, Bob Andrews and Ron How.

* Waloszek and Nygren were allocated to Belle Vue and Ipswich respectively but never rode for either team. Nygren did ride a few meetings for Swindon and Norwich.

After the opening meetings most tracks considered handicap racing to be a success. Only Ipswich and Norwich deemed it to be a failure. They even threatened to pull out of the league. Norwich actually raced off their designated 15 and 30 yard handicaps for their opening home match, switched to 5 and 10 yard handicaps for their second, raced off scratch only for their East Anglian Shield match v. Ipswich, and then off 10 and 20 yards for their next match v. Belle Vue on the 23rd April.

The Control Board, chaired by Bill Fearnley, was to review handicaps on a monthly basis, but at the end of April it was decided that, as from May 3rd, 10 and 20 yard handicaps were to be universal. The reserves and substitute reserves (6th lowest average) were to race off scratch. The 5 stars were to stay at the back and all other riders to race from 10 yards.

Pay rates were :- Scratch - £6.10s machine allowance plus £1. 2s. 6d. a point.
10 yards - £7.10s allowance plus £1. 2s. 6d. a point. 20 yards - £6. 10s. allowance, £3 a start and £1. 2s. 6d. a point.

A meeting of the Control Board on July 10th 1962 refined the handicap rules again. The 5 star riders - 20 yards, others- 10 yards, reserves with averages of less than 1 point per race - scratch.

In 1964 Barry Briggs led a campaign to abolish handicap racing. In his autobiography he wrote that he felt that it was becoming more dangerous as riders weren't leaving the room they had in the early days. Barry, Bjorn

Knutsson and Ove Fundin sent a joint letter of protest to the S.C.B.. The board replied that the matter would be reviewed prior to the next season. Barry wasn't happy with the response and threatened to quit. Nothing more happened until prior to Swindon's match v. Wimbledon on August 8th. Barry refused to ride. The A-C. U. Steward, Cecil Telling promised to personally attend the next S.C.B. meeting to sort out the problem. Barry rode, Cecil Telling was true to his word and the S.C.B. ended the 20 yard handicap on August 22nd. I believe reserves were still given a 10 yard start.

Puzzle

Like a challenge with numbers? Well – how about trying to come up with a format of this meeting. It isn't the ACU Cup format for sure.

If you've got a programme – well that makes it easy – tell us what it says.

Saturday 5th August 1950 Fleetwood Flyers 55 Liverpool Chads 41 (Ch)
Fleetwood

Don Potter 3 3 2 8; Bill Reynolds 2' 2' 2' 1 7 3; Wilf Plant 3 2 3 8; Alf Parker 3 1' 2 3 9 1; Dick Geary 2 2 3 2 9; Norman Hargreaves 1' 1' 1 3 2; Graham Williams 2' 2 2 1 7 1; Russ Pursehouse 1 3 4.

Liverpool

Arthur Bush 3 3 2 8; Harry Welch 1 1; Doug Serrurier 0 1 3 1' 5 1; Percy Brine 1 2 3 6; Bill Griffiths 1 1; Reg Duval 3 2 3 2 10; Derek Glover 1 1' 1 3 1; Alf Webster 3 1 3 7.

Ht1 Potter, Reynolds, Welch, 69.0	5	1	5	1
Ht2 Parker, Williams, Brine, 69.6	5	1	10	2
Ht3 Duval, Geary, Hargreaves, 70.6	3	3	13	5
Ht4 Bush, Williams, Glover, 69.0	2	4	15	9
Ht5 Potter, Reynolds, Serrurier, 68.4 5	1	20	10	
Ht6 Plant, Duval, Glover, 69.2	3	3	23	13
Ht7 Duval, Williams, Parker, 69.0	3	3	26	16
Ht8 Webster, Plant, Pursehouse, 69.8	3	3	29	19
Ht9 Bush, Geary, Hargreaves, 68.0	3	3	32	22
Ht10 Serrurier, Parker, Webster, 68.8	2	4	34	26
Ht11 Pursehouse, Reynolds, Griffiths, 70.2	5	1	39	27
Ht12 Parker, Bush, Williams, 68.6	4	2	43	29
Ht13 Geary, Brine, Serrurier, 69.6	3	3	46	32
Ht14 Plant, Duval, Reynolds, 69.6	4	2	50	34
Ht15 Brine, Geary, Glover, 70.2	2	4	52	38
Ht16 Webster, Potter, Hargreaves, 69.2	3	3	55	41

Jim Henry

SPEEDWAY'S "RIDER REPLACEMENT RULE", 1967 to 2007

Part 1

Paul Jeffries has pulled together an excellent overview of the topic. We run the first part and will conclude in the next edition.

What follows is a year by year account of the evolution of the Rider Replacement rule, a fine example of the way in which the sport seems totally incapable of living from one season to the next without tinkering with its own rule book. It can surely be argued that a rule should only need changing if it has proved a bad rule; therefore if (as in the current example) it is changed virtually every year, then we can say that virtually every year the sport's administrators must have got it wrong. Viewed from this perspective, forty-plus years of getting it wrong and having to change it must have amounted to a frankly astonishing catalogue of error. One has to wonder how and why this has been allowed to happen, and to go on happening. One problem of course is that the more a rule is amended, the further away it gets from the original intention, and the harder it is to interpret just what it says and just what it means. The current (2007) rule book is one of the hardest yet to follow; it doesn't have any comprehensive index to act as a guide, but if anyone really wants to check the current situation as regards Rider

Replacement, well, you'll just have to piece it together by reference to sections 18.1.1 to 18.1.5 inclusive, 18.2.2, 18.4, and 18.8.1 to 18.8.3 inclusive. It really shouldn't have to be this hard!

When the Speedway Regulations were re-written for the 1967 season, the Rider Replacement rule was defined very simply. It applied only when a Heat Leader was injured prior to a meeting, or away on international duty; the absent rider was programmed at his normal position (number 1, 3 or 5) and an additional rider was programmed at number 8. Each member of the team could take one of the absentee's rides, and it was necessary to advise the opposing Promoter beforehand.

For 1968, "international duty" was expanded to include any compulsory overseas duty, whilst "injury" was expanded also to include illness, although in such cases the Management Committee would authorise Rider Replacement only on condition that the rider would not ride again within 14 days of his last appearance. A new rule meant that where both teams had a Heat Leader absent, neither side was permitted to use Rider Replacement. A clarification on the use of the number 8 rider was added, explaining that he could be used in

any race in which the absentee was eligible to ride; any other team member could still only take one Rider Replacement ride but, if circumstances permitted, could additionally replace him as a Tactical Substitute. There was a new requirement to notify the Referee (as well as the opposing Promoter) before the match of the intention to use the Rider Replacement facility. For 1969, cases of illness were still to be referred to the Management Committee for special dispensation, but the 14 day prohibition was dropped. More detailed provisions were introduced in respect of absent Heat Leaders. If both sides had an equal number of Heat Leaders missing, neither was permitted to use Rider Replacement, but a new formula was introduced to deal with an imbalance in the number of Heat Leaders on each side. There could still be no more than one Rider Replacement in the team, with any further shortfall compensated by Guest Riders.

1970 saw only a minor change, to clarify that Reserves were eligible to take Rider Replacement rides, whilst 1971 brought a further explanation that the number 8 rider was not to be regarded as an “additional reserve”, as he could *only* replace the absent rider. He was, however, permitted to act as a reserve to take the place of a nominated Replacement rider who suffered exclusion under the 2-minute rule or for a tapes offence, or to take the place of a Replacement rider who through injury was unable to take part in a re-run race. In Division 1 matches, absence of a team’s number 1 rider was now compensated by a Guest rather than Rider Replacement, and the same now applied to any Heat Leader absent on international or compulsory overseas duty. In the case of Rider

Replacement for illness or non-speedway injury (which had to be supported by a medical certificate) the 14-day rule was reinstated, effective from the date of the certificate.

An interesting new provision in 1972 required that the number 8 be given a minimum of two rides which, if not taken during the match, had to be allowed during the second half events. Use of Rider Replacement was restored as an option for any Heat Leader on international or compulsory overseas duty (although a Guest could still be used instead). 1973 brought a minor change in regard to the two rides to be granted to a number 8, recognising that this could not be guaranteed in a “double header”, and this was further relaxed in 1974 to cover any situation where no second half racing was programmed. For this season, the rule was changed such that the Rider Replacement facility applied only where a side had both its top two riders absent. One was to be covered by a Guest, and the other by Rider Replacement. The “cancelling out”

National League Division One 1951

Away Team	Belle Vue	Birmingham	Bradford	Bristol	Harringay	New Cross	Wembley	West Ham	Wimbledon
Home Team									
Belle Vue	xxxxxx	44 – 40	57 – 27	50 – 34	55 – 29	52 – 31	43 – 41	51 – 33	47 – 36
	xxxxxx	61 – 23	57 – 27	43 – 41	52 – 32	48 – 36	45 – 39	42 – 42	51 – 33
Birmingham	45 – 39	xxxxxx	56 – 28	37 – 46	44 – 39	51 – 33	41 – 43	52 – 31	48 – 36
	43 – 41	xxxxxx	40 – 44	55 – 29	53 – 31	59 – 25	45 – 39	48 – 36	49 – 35
Bradford	33 – 55	41 – 42	xxxxxx	48 – 36	36 – 45	44 – 40	25 – 59	50 – 34	43 – 41
	45 – 39	37 – 47	xxxxxx	37 – 47	34 – 50	45 – 39	40 – 44	53 – 31	54 – 30
Bristol	54 – 30	54 – 29	65 – 19	xxxxxx	46 – 38	38 – 46	48 – 35	49 – 35	40 – 44
	62 – 22	51 – 33	46 – 38	xxxxxx	50 – 34	56 – 28	37 – 47	44 – 40	52 – 32
Harringay	40 – 44	55 – 29	51 – 28	56 – 28	xxxxxx	50 – 34	47 – 36	48 – 36	39 – 44
	56 – 28	48 – 36	53 – 31	42 – 42	xxxxxx	45 – 38	35 – 49	45 – 39	45 – 39
New Cross	39 – 45	43 – 41	56 – 28	48 – 34	45 – 39	xxxxxx	29 – 53	43 – 41	42 – 42
	39 – 45	36 – 48	54 – 29	51 – 33	35 – 47	xxxxxx	35 – 49	49 – 34	39 – 45
Wembley	57 – 27	43 – 41	60 – 24	56 – 28	55 – 29	55 – 28	xxxxxx	44 – 40	49 – 35
	61 – 23	55 – 29	50 – 34	53 – 31	43 – 41	57 – 27	xxxxxx	38 – 45	49 – 35
West Ham	51 – 33	54 – 30	48 – 36	53 – 31	50 – 34	48 – 36	37 – 47	xxxxxx	59 – 25
	54.5-29.5	58 – 26	58 – 26	47 – 37	54 – 41	44 – 40	39 – 44	xxxxxx	47 – 37
Wimbledon	49 – 35	57 – 27	55 – 29	45 – 39	44 – 40	51 – 33	47 – 37	40 – 44	xxxxxx
	49 – 35	51 – 33	63 – 21	60 – 24	50 – 34	49 – 35	36 – 48	46 – 38	xxxxxx

National League Division One 1951

Team	Home						Away						MatchPts
	R	W	D	L	PtsF	PtsA	W	D	L	PtsF	PtsA		
Wembley	32	15	0	1	825	517	10	0	6	710	629	50	
Belle Vue	32	15	1	0	798	544	4	0	12	565.5	777.5	39	
Wimbledon	32	14	0	2	792	552	3	1	12	589	753	35	
West Ham	32	14	0	2	800.5	542.5	2	1	13	599	742	33	
Birmingham	32	13	0	3	766	575	3	0	13	552	790	32	
Bristol	32	13	0	3	792	550	2	1	13	560	781	31	
Harringay	32	12	1	3	755	581	3	0	13	593	745	31	
New Cross	32	8	1	7	685	651	1	0	15	549	792	19	
Bradford	32	8	0	8	665	674	1	0	15	469	869	18	

Heat details for most of the meetings on www.speedwayresearcher.org.uk

provision still applied however, so that if both sides were missing their top two riders, neither could use the rule. Rider Replacement remained available, subject to the 14-day rule, for any Heat Leader absent through illness or non-speedway injury, whilst the facility was extended to absence for “compulsory national competitions (including FIM meetings)”; the latter however was clarified in 1975 as applying only to “foreign” riders.

The British League rules were otherwise unchanged for 1975, but in the New National League the Rider Replacement rule could be applied for any absent Heat Leader. For both leagues, the cancelling out provision was amended to apply only where the absentees were of the same rank, eg where both sides had their top rider missing. The cancelling-out rule was dropped altogether in 1976. The NNL also changed its rule such that Rider Replacement applied only for a Heat Leader who had suffered a speedway injury. The BL, however, made substantial changes. Rider Replacement was to be allowed for any absent Heat Leader, including for the first time a Heat Leader withholding his services or suspended by the Speedway Control Board. The BL also, for this season, allowed two absent Heat Leaders each to be covered by Rider Replacement, in which case a number 9 rider had also to be nominated, whose use was governed by the same principles as the number 8. An absent rider could be replaced once only by the rider ranked immediately above him, but up to three times by any other rider. As an exception, if the third-ranked Heat Leader was absent, he could be replaced once by the number 1 if the number 2 was also absent.

Whilst the National League made no change to its rule for 1977, the British League situation was clearly too complex and further significant changes were made. The facility for double Rider Replacement, and associated provision for a number 9 rider, was withdrawn; where more than one Heat Leader

was absent, Rider Replacement applied to the higher-ranked absentee, and any other rider could take not more than two of his rides, except that where the absentee was the third-ranked Heat Leader, the number 1 was not eligible. A reminder was added to the effect that, where circumstances permitted, a Tactical Substitute could be used in place of a Rider Replacement ride.

1978 saw the BL and NL at last agree on a Rider Replacement covering both leagues; this meant the BL reverting to the old rule whereby the absent rider could be replaced only once by any other rider (unless as a Tactical Substitute). The cancelling-out provision was restored for both leagues, but the BL restricted this to instances where the absentees were of equal rank (eg

both number 1s). After all these years of upheaval, the new-found status quo then settled down, with no changes made for 1979, 1980, or 1981, whilst in 1982 the only change related to the BL where the decision as to whether to cancel out equally-ranked absentees was now left to the home promoter, and a new provision was introduced whereby Rider Replacement in the event of non-equally ranked absentees could be cancelled out at the option of the promoter with the higher-ranked absentee. **To be continued.**

Jack Wright Coventry Bees 1951 to 1954

Coventry historian **Chris Durno** has produced this interesting article about one time Bee – Jack Wright, who started out at Wimbledon.

Jack Wright during his time racing for the Coventry Bees between the seasons 1951 and 1954 was a very popular rider, although never breaking through to heat-leader status, he was a good team man come second string. He was a good-looking young guy and from reports very popular with the ladies. I only have any information from his days racing for the Bees. I know he signed for Coventry on a transfer from the famous first division club Wimbledon Dons in 1951. Coventry were a second division side so as Jack was struggling to get many match riding for the Dons a chance to step down a league ensured he had plenty of regular racing. His appearances for Wimbledon must have been pretty limited as from my yearbooks I have he managed just 8 league points for the Dons in 1949 his debut season and only a further 4 points in the following 1950 season.

He arrived at Coventry on a full transfer and made his debut on April 7th 1951 when he rode at home for Coventry against Yarmouth in a Southern Shield meeting scoring 5 + 1 from 4 rides. As you can see from the averages above, he rode quite regularly but not quite to the level that would guarantee himself a place every week, as Coventry had a excess of young riders all pushing for team places. It was as far as averages go, his best every season for the Bees, who managed to finish 4th in the National League Division 2. An end of season programme declares “The Wright dash is good to watch, and obviously with unlimited courage (shall we ever forget that terrific tussle with Roger Wise in the Midland Cup) he proves a great asset as his track craft improves with experience. Jack came from Wimbledon, not as a young rider of vast experience, but as a young rider of much promise and immediate fight and dash”.

Another article I found gave some interesting background information

Titled from El Ballah to Brandon

It was in Egypt in 1947 that the clouds of sand first heralded the approach of JACK WRIGHT in his initial baptism to competitive racing. Out there with the Army on National Service, stationed at Tek, he quickly evinced an interest in the sport of sand racing, becoming a noted exponent in the art. Indeed he progress with extreme rapidity, going on to win the 1947 Championship of El Ballah.

It was not entirely unexpected that, fired with the ambition to make a career of motor cycle racing, he should approach one of the English Speedway tracks for a trial when he got demobbed. It was Wimbledon that he first made his first tentative enquiries. There was no particular reason why it should have been Plough Lane that attracted him but, it happened to be convenient to his home at Cobham Surrey.

Ronnie Greene, the Dons Promoter was quick to see the possibilities in the fair-haired, good looking Jack and loaned him to Rayleigh in 1948, where he gained valuable experience with the "Rockets". The following year he returned to Plough Lane, riding in second half events, the junior league and on odd occasions in the reserve position for the first team. Conclusions that Jack has already drawn from his limited time as a first division rider lead him to say that Wembley and Harringay are his favourite tracks so far. This augers well for both circuits have much in common with our own Coventry track at Brandon.

To converse with Jack is a pleasant pastime. He has a frank open way with himself, so conversation never flags. Although not prone to talking about himself, he will answer any reasonable question without demur. And it took him but a short time to elicit the information that he is 26, single, and keen on every form of sport, although he can't find time to indulge in much else apart from speedway. His motorcycle repair shop he runs keeps him fully occupied, and the balance of his time goes towards furthering his speedway ambitions. The machine he favours most for his racing is equipped with an Erskine frame; he is hoping before long he will ride it to his first maximum for the "Bees".

If fitness is any criteria, then our new boy will make rapid strides, for he eschews smoking and rarely takes a drink unless it is for socialising. He is going to prove a great asset to us once he has settled down. With his pleasing personality and nice style you can earmark him right now as one of Coventry's future favourites."

By 1952 he was pretty much a regular feature in the Bees side, generally moving between reserve and second-string positions. One interesting story in

the match programme was a picture on his wedding day that year. There is a picture with his wife Yvonne on a bike with all the speedway team gathered around on the wedding day at Walton on Thames. It also tells that Jack broke the honeymoon at Cheddar to dash back to Oxford to ride for the Bees in the Midland Cup, helping Bees to win through. He was also part of the team that won the Midland cup beating Birmingham over two legs in the final.

The end of year programme stated "JACK WRIGHT whose performances have quietly but effectively improved. With a style better suited to deep surfaces. Jack did best on circuits such as Liverpool. On slicker circuits he is not able to give his best performances. Jack's wedding in September was attended by practically the whole team who travelled down to Waltham on Thames what was described as the "best party ever" and to which we commend its excellence as we followed it up by two crushing Midland cup victories over our deadly rivals Oxford.

1953 was a glorious year for Coventry as they secured their first ever major trophy in winning the National League Division 2 championship trophy. Jack never missed a league meeting and gave some vital back up in the reserve berth throughout the league winning campaign.

1954 was to be his last ever year riding for the Bees, he held a team place until July then with increasing competition for team places, his position in the team saw less frequent appearances. He stayed with the Bees despite spasmodic selection and rode his last match for Coventry in their final meeting of the year an inter league challenge match at Birmingham on October 27th, where Jack posted his final Bees points of 2 + 1 off three rides. He actually posted his best ever match scores in 1954 when against Southampton in the National trophy meetings in May, he scored 11 + 1 from 5 rides at Brandon then three days later he scored another 10 from 5 rides at Southampton.

After his time with Coventry Bees, I lose all track of what happened to Jack or even whether he actually continued riding, as all my records are Coventry only related. I hope this in some way satisfies your interest in Jack Wright. I would be interested in copies of any of the information you have, especially any photographs you have, as the only photos I have ever seen of Jack is small thumb nail photos in the Coventry match programmes and in some of the team photographs of the time. I have never actually seen a photograph that showing him on a bike racing. Anything you could provide copies of I would be most interested as I am trying to put together a complete racing record of all riders to have raced for Coventry and would like to enhance it with photographs, both portrait and action. (Can anybody help Chris? Editors)

Pre-War Website

Bob Ozanne gives an insight into the pre-war part of the web site.

I started collecting pre-war speedway results about ten years ago. It's almost 3 years since I first spoke to Jim Henry about publishing pre-war heat details via The Speedway Researcher. I thought the best way to do this was on the web and Jim put me in touch with Ron McNeil. The pre-war site began and I have been very encouraged by the response. I have been lucky enough to receive a lot of enthusiastic comments besides very valuable contributions. The sites main coverage of League, Cup, Tests and big individual events is starting to expand. The expansion will continue and I hope to soon bring in more non league tracks as well. The rare copy of the Newmarket programme is quite a find for the site.

There is some new material due to come online in the next few months 1) 1936 Provincial League, including every League fixture in at least first 3 places heat detail. 2) major updates to 1931 and 1932 with many more 4th place positions than before and some of the gaps currently on the site resolved. 3) 1937 season in the usual detail.

I have been working on 1928 -1930 for some years. I have plenty of information in hand including some great contributions. The possibility of other contributions has been mentioned too so there is more to come. I tend to think of those very early years as Speedway's "Dark Ages"! Certainly documentary evidence is much rarer. Heat details are very hard to come by even when judged against 1931, when the press first seemed to realize there were folk collecting speedway results even back then! Amateur "statts" were asking Speedway News to name 4th place riders for their records way back before the War. It's a shame that it didn't happen.

I want to take this chance to thank all of you who have helped with the pre-war years in various different ways. Alan Bates, Roger Beaman, Nigel Bird, Alex Broadhurst, Brian Collins, Philip Dalling, Keith Farman, Keith Green, Jim Henry, Peter Jackson, Norman Jacobs, Alan Jones, John Somerville, Mike Terran, Allen Trump and Bryan Tungate.

I would love to hear from anyone with any pre-war information. Everything is welcome. Scans of programmes are ideal but photo copies or written details by email or letter will equally do nicely. You can contact me on robertjozanne@hotmail.com or write to me Bob Ozanne 31 Ruffle Close, West

Drayton , Middlesex, UB7 9BP. I will be delighted to hear from you and credit for contributions will always be given on the site.

Starts

Colin Parker from Coventry sent in the following – any article by Freddie Mockford in the Crystal Palace programme for 3 June 1933.

The Starting Problem – Everyone for the past two years has aired their views regarding this. Last season flying starts were causing a lot of trouble owing to the difficulty of getting three men in line between the starting line and the four yards back liner. Then, during the winter, the Promoters' Association came to the conclusion that clutch starts would definitely improve the starting. Quite frankly, I had rather an open mind on this, but at the same time I was hopeful that it would.

After watching practically every League Match which has taken place in London this season, and also been away with my team, I can say, in my opinion, that the starts have not improved. Clutch starts have definitely done away with several runs round the track, but there are just as much jumping with the clutch start, and far more disqualifications, and, to my mind, it is getting worse rather than better. For instance, on Monday in a League match, three riders were excluded in one race. Again the same thing happened in a League Match on Tuesday, thus robbing the race of all interest. Also, I maintain that the clutch start has taken one of the big thrills out of racing, i.e./ the hectic dash for the first bend which you get in the rolling start.

I know it is easy to criticise, but I want to go further and be constructive, and am fully convinced that if the powers that be had realised the difficulty of three men being in line within a distance of four yards with a flying start, they would have never have made that distance. If that distance had been increased to twelve yards, I consider there would be very little difficulty in getting a start in every race bearing in mind, of course, the man who used his head is likely to get an advantage, which he definitely deserves in my opinion.

Now, Regarding the clutch starts, if they are to continue, I consider there is only one practical way of avoiding the jumping and the disqualification of riders, which, after all, affects their pockets and also does not produce the racing you have paid to come and see. My idea is to work rather on the principle of a gate start, which, I understand, is used in horse racing, and I believe that something on these lines could be produced, quite simply and with very little cost. To explain it more simply, you would have two posts, one

on the outside of the track and one on the inside, you would have a gate that is pulled down rather like a window sash on some system of operating with a locking device. The riders would then ride up to it with their engines running, and when they were ready to start, the starter would simply release the gate and it would fly upwards. It would thus leave every rider to do what he liked, and would, therefore, do away with disqualification and definitely no one rider would jump the start.

Some people may criticise this and say they would hit the gate, but I hardly think this would happen, as taking dog racing, the trap flies upwards and dogs – in my mind – get off the mark as quickly as a rider would using his clutch and after making enquiries, I have not yet discovered a dog has ever hit the gate of the trap as he came out.

I am perfectly certain that this method could be employed and would be entirely satisfactory.

Aldershot Needs 1950

Can you help fill any the gaps here ? 4.4. Aldershot Easter Trophy Meeting details; 12.4. v Leicester SH + Times 19.4. v Poole THt15; 4th Man Ht18 + SH; 1.5 v Tamworth SH; 10.5. v Exeter T Ht14 + SH; 17.5. v St Austell SH; 24.5 v Liverpool SH; 29.5 Best Pairs all Ht Times + SH; 31.5 v Rayleigh SH; 7.6 v Swindon SH; 14.6. v Poole Ht Times + SH; 21.6. Walthamstow v Southampton Saints SH; 28.6 v Oxford SH; 5.7. v Southern Stars SH; 12.7. v Rayleigh SH; 19.7. v Exeter Falcons Ht Times + SH; 26.7. v Swindon SH; 2.8. v Oxford SH; v Tamworth; 7.8. v Tamworth SH; 23.8. v Poole TimesHTs1,2&14 + SH; 6.9. v Walthamstow Meeting Details; 13.9. v St Austell Ht Times + SH; 16.9. v Liverpool Times + SH; 20.9 England v Overseas Times + SH; 4.10. v Tamworth Ht Times + SH.

Jim Henry

A Few Thoughts From 1950

Graeme Frost has sent this interesting item from yesteryear. It was entitled EXPECT BIG CHANGES NEXT SEASON and was penned by Phil Sugden, Sports Reporter 4 August 1950

THE biggest shake-up Speedway has ever seen, and an entirely new system aimed at cutting down expenses and levelling up racing. That's what 1951 may bring. Yes, it sounds revolutionary. In fact, it almost sounds like a fairy-tale, but it's quite on the cards.

Anybody connected with Speedway who has an ounce of common sense, knows that practically every promoter in the country has gained more grey hairs this year than in the remainder of Speedway history in this country. FOR many promoters, it has been a double edged problem. That of ever increasing expenses, and constantly decreasing crowds.

No longer can one point to Division One and say, "Here is the best racing, and here are the best riders." There are now several really powerful Second Division sides, and the second grade can point to 20, 30, or more, riders who can hold their own with the majority of top grade men, and beat the pants off a large number of them.

Seen Saturday's challenge match results, for example? Edinburgh 57, Harringay 27; Norwich 54, West Ham 30.

ANOTHER problem is that of the same old teams being in Division One. In the last few years, we have seen only two teams, Birmingham and Bristol, admitted to the top grade. If the First League guv'nors had their way, there wouldn't be any more for a long time.

The result has been, is, and will be, that, unless a new system is introduced, the First Division followers, getting the same old repeat performances week in and week out, will carry on showing their dissatisfaction in the best way they know-by staying away.

What a different story it has been in Divisions Two and Three. New teams have been admitted, and with them has come colour and thrills to delight the fans-but many of these teams just cannot make ends meet.

HERE, then, is the first big problem which must be faced and cleared up. We need new teams and need them urgently. The promoter who is prepared to take a chance and lay out a very large amount of money in putting down a track, providing equipment and staging the sport, takes a big gamble under existing conditions.

Every promoter knows this, yet they are all prepared to do it. Most of them know, long before they start on such a venture, that it will be long, if ever, before they get their money back.

Now, fair play has always been a tradition of British sport, but I feel that many of our promoters are not being fairly treated. Many promoters feel the same way, and several have told me quite fairly and squarely, "I just don't feel like carrying on."

AT the risk of incurring the great displeasure of the First Division promoters who would have us believe that they, above all people, are the big noises of

Speedway, I think it is about time somebody attempted to break open this First Division closed shop.

Believe me, if you, the paying public, knew just some of the things that go on inside Speedway and the promotion of the sport, your eyes would open with a click which could be heard a mile away.

FOR example, do you know that the opposition to the promotion of Bristol was so tough in some quarters that it was almost bitter?

Do you also know that one certain team admitted to Division Two a couple of seasons ago were admitted only on condition that no application was made for promotion to Division One?

These and many things more do go on in Speedway, but believe me, the days of dictation by any individual or small group of big-wigs is nearing its end.

I started this article by telling you that the sport's biggest ever shake-up is on its way. The plan in mind really boils down to amalgamating the First and Second Divisions, and then zoning them north and south into "A" and "B" areas.

THE plan follows the obvious success of the Second Division North and South trophy events, which opened this year's campaign. These were highly successful affairs, and kept expenses down to the minimum.

Personally, I hope the scheme comes, and I hope that, somehow, it can be enlarged to help the struggling Third Division sides.

Assuming, however, it can be applied only to the first two leagues, here is the way I see the set up :

Zone "A" (South): Wembley, New Cross, West Ham, Bristol, Birmingham, Wimbledon, Haringay, Plymouth, Walthamstow, Yarmouth, Norwich, Southampton, Cradley Heath, Coventry and Hanley.

Zone "B" (North) : Belle Vue, Odsal, Halifax, Newcastle, White City, Edinburgh, Ashfield, Fleetwood and Sheffield.

Under such a set-up, of course, we get an uneven division with 15 teams- assuming they all take part-in zone "A" and only nine in zone "B." Birmingham, Cradley and Coventry are border-line cases and, if included in the north section, would give an equal division.

The teams could meet twice in League matches, and the top eight would go into quarter finals and so on to the final event.

WELL, there it is. Pick holes in the plan if you like. It's not my scheme, but I like it, and I do know it is being considered in semi-official circles right now.

There is, of course, an alternative, and that is to promote at least four or five sides into Division One. While I would like that, it would not help the

promoters. Long distance travelling with subsequent high expenses would remain.

Under the plan I have outlined, a great deal of money would be saved and more important still-a great deal of unnecessary travelling would be avoided. Naturally, there are snags, and obviously there will be protests from some quarters, but, believe me, there will be changes in the present set-up and this seems one of the most likely.

Post War Web

The Festive season break allowed a pile of files to be brought to a stage where Webmaster **Ron McNeil** could do a significant update and add a few new files. There is now significant coverage 1946 – 1950 and Division One 1951 is nearly complete. Work has started on Divisions Two and Three 1951 so any help would be very welcome. As always we are looking to fill gaps in the files that have gone on the site – if you've any programmes from the 1946 – 1950 era – dig them out and see if you can help with what is needed.

A major move has been the arrival of **Steve Wilkes** and **Gary Done**, who have been working on the early British League and onwards, to give everyone the benefit of their hard work in this era. At the time of writing 1966 to 1968 is on the site and other material will follow. It is extremely generous and shows the amount of time and effort they have dedicated to this project. This will add significantly to the information in the public domain for the post war section.

Ron and Jim

Publications

70 Years of Rye House Speedway by Norman Jacobs – Pub. By Stadia – Available from the author at 101 Farnleigh Avenue, Clacton on Sea, Essex CO15 4UL (Tel: 01255 426115) - @ £14.99

It seems only a few years ago that speedway publishing relied on a handful of people producing team yearbooks and season surveys but little else – enter Tempus and a squad of keen speedway enthusiasts who have produced a whole library of team, track and rider histories and speedway buffs have never been so well served. However, you do need deep pockets to keep up with every book that is appearing now, almost every month.

A major contributor to this renaissance in speedway authorship is Essex-based Norman Jacobs who has just produced his ninth speedway publication, a history of the 70 years of the sport at Rye House.

I have always been fascinated by the fact that the Rye House track of today was moved in 1960 from an adjacent location, currently occupied by a karting circuit, into the neighbouring greyhound stadium only a few hundred yards away. This book catalogues that development as well as giving us a season by season run down of the track from the first meeting in 1934 through various periods of league speedway and closure up to the 2005 season. I also seem to recall that Rye House ran a training track for a short period before meetings were started, run I believe by Jack Chiswell, the pre-war ace.

This is a short overview of all the seasons speedway has taken place in the 70 years up to 2004 (plus 2005 is added as an epilogue) and lists season by season all results and riders (not league tables though). It will appeal to historians as well as long time and newer Rockets supporters and adds yet another brick in the wall of speedway history.

Watch out for Norman's next and 10th Tempus effort, "Out of the Frying Pan": A History of New Cross Speedway, due around June this year.

Review by **Graham Fraser**

TV. Did Speedway Miss The Boat?

Anyone with an interest in speedway history cannot fail to have the legends of the malady that beset the sport from the early 1950s until the resurgence that was the Provincial League. The dreaded Entertainment Tax and the burgeoning of television.

Having seen the level of tax paid by speedway compared with other forms of sport and entertainment, there is no doubt that the Government of the day did speedway no favours whatsoever and the promoters of the day were right to fight it.

Whether you like it or not, people have to pay the taxes levied and this didn't help but television was an altogether different proposition. The promoters had a choice, go for it and welcome it, or spurn it and make sure they closed ranks to all but a few opportunities for the sport to appear on the wee screen.

In the early days of TV the approach was to turn away from the box and treat it like a illness which drew away the fans who had come along and swelled the ranks on the terraces in the immediate post war years when entertainment was live.

Maybe the promoters got it all wrong. After all football, which was on a par or even a bit behind speedway in the public ratings, took every opportunity to grab the coverage it could bringing the sport into livingrooms and pubs up and down

the country. Did they not give thought to the possibility that TV could give speedway the exposure in areas of the country without a speedway track and show them just what they were missing.

I suspect too that TV wasn't just ready for too much coverage of a fast moving sport like speedway as the degree of sophistication the cameras have now reached were nothing near that in the pioneer days of Muffin The Mule. However, cine of its day good quality and in colour, and coverage could have been achieved given the will and encouragement in the right quarters.

Yes 20-20 hindsight might just have a role to play. BUT and it is a big BUT, football has flourished and grown hand in hand with television. It could be argued that the football mega clubs are those who appear on TV on a regular basis across the globe. The megaclubs appear to be growing stronger than their fellow teams as witnessed by the Champions League which is taking on the appearance of an old boys club for the big boys in Europe.

Perhaps we, the historians of today, should be challenging the myth that it was television that nearly killed speedway. Rather, should we be asking – was it the promoters of the day who nearly killed the sport because they failed to recognise the immense potential of television to give exposure to a sport which was doing quite nicely before the arrival of “the box”?

As ever, the debate on this is thrown wide open for any contributions. **Jim H**

Speedway in the UK is 80

Without wishing to cast out with anyone in the Manchester area, or anywhere else for that matter, we remind everyone that speedway in the UK is considered by most speedway historians to be 80 years old this year. Twenty years to go to the big one. I'd like to be at High Beech on Saturday 19th February or Sunday 20th February 2028 if I'm spared and I'm sure there are lots of you who have the date pencilled in too. There doesn't seem to be much by way of celebrations planned across the country for year 80. It might be interesting to speculate where speedway will be in 2028 given the changes over the last twenty years.

On the birthday angle, there are some youngsters hitting memorable targets. Poole Pirates – a sprightly sixty this year – is having a BIG bash and a few drams are surely being readied to give Edinburgh Monarchs a cheer on making the same birthday. Will there be extra honey served up at Brandon where the Bees also reach the age where they can rest their wings and get their bus pass

to get about? (I assume you get bus passes at sixty south of the Border too.
JH)

Happy birthday speedway – lang may yer lum reek.

Deadline for items for next edition is 30th April 2008

Web Master: Ron McNeil

Contact at info@speedwayresearcher.org.uk

Or jjh1950@blueyonder.co.uk

The Speedway Researcher is edited and published by:

**Graham Fraser
7b Bruce Street,
Stirling, FK8 1PD
24 Tel : 01786 471992**

**Jim Henry
90 Greenend Gardens,
Edinburgh, EH17 7QH
Tel : 0131 664 7185**