

The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

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Welcome to Volume 14

We would like to thank those of you who have re-subscribed. No point beating about the bush. Whilst, we don't want to alienate those of you who have re-subscribed, the renewals have not been good and we invite those of you being sent the magazine who have not yet done so to please renew. Subscription numbers have fallen over the years and we are asking if the Speedway Researcher has run its course. When we started there was no internet with its easy access to information from a myriad of sources, Email was in its infancy and help was needed to find your way about the sources of information. We will see out this Volume but it may be the last unless there is a significant pick up in interest. There are also problems with the website – see back page.

Graham and Jim

Jim Gregory – An Autobiography Part 2

We continue **Jim Gregory's** story.

I suppose the highlight of my Wimbledon days was when Wimbledon beat Wembley at the Wembley Stadium. It was unheard of for anyone to beat Wembley Lions at the Empire Stadium. Although I was only a reserve I was give a full quota of rides and was only beaten by Freddie Williams of the Lions. Unfortunately I met him in two races but I finished up with 8 points and 2 bonus points. I don't know what got into me that night. It never happened again.

The other highlights were all the meetings at Shelbourne Park during the 1950 season.

While I was at Wimbledon in 1952 I married Peggy, bought a house in Borehamwood and went into partnership with Cyril Brine. He leased **1**

a small shoe shop for his wife to run but it had not been very successful so he turned it into a cycle shop and I joined him to help run it. After a while we branched out into motorcycles and took over the shop next door. Later on we took over a large do-it-yourself store and really expanded selling cycles. Motorcycles and even some cars. The main problem we had was lack of capital. We were always short of cash and, as company secretary, I had to face the bank manager whenever we exceeded our overdraft limit. This was a very traumatic period.

However, back to speedway.

Ronnie Greene decided that I would benefit from a spell in a lower division and arranged for a transfer for me to Oxford. The Second Division Cheetahs paid the princely sum of £500. There were many in the Oxford crowd who thought £500 was far too much for a First Division failure. After a few weeks at Oxford I proved them wrong. With Oxford I had 3 seasons and top scored at most of the meetings, although Oxford seemed to go from bad to worse which made my performances seem even better.

One of the highlights was riding in one of the Continental Rounds of the World Championship staged in Sweden which involved a flight from Northolt to Oslo where I was put on a train for Falköping. I won three races and took the Swedes by surprise. They made quite sure I didn't win the last one. Still I qualified for the next round of the Championship.

Another highlight was gaining a maximum score at Exeter, the only visiting rider to do so that season. This included beating Goog Hoskin who was practically unbeaten around Exeter which I always considered to be a smashing high speed track.

Unfortunately my professional speedway career all came to a crashing halt at Birmingham in 1954 when I hit somebody's back wheel in Midland Riders' Championship early in July. I landed on my head and was taken to hospital suffering from concussion. Whilst I was released later that day I was not too well. I went back to riding shortly afterwards but I went back too soon and couldn't ride at all well.

I had been made captain of the Cheetahs shortly before the accident but I was out of the team after a week, so I decided to retire. I do feel that the Oxford management could have more to help me recover my lost form, especially as I had done so much for the team since I had joined
2 them.

However, I didn't feel too bad about it as the Cyril Brine & Co. Ltd shop was very busy and it took up a great deal of my time.

Little did I realise that great changes were coming, but that is another story. The lack of capital was coming acute and one day somebody (a Financier) approached us with a scheme to help us out. We were to buy the freehold of our premises together with the premises next door which was a market arcade. The Financier would put up the money and lease the shop back to us and give us a large sum of money for doing the deal. This we did, but instead of investing the money in the business we decided to split the money between the four Directors which was a very unwise decision. However, we carried on the business and I offered to buy out the other Directors. A counter bid from Cyril Brine was the outcome and, after reluctantly agreeing, I left the firm and had to cast around for another job.

About this time I had purchased a building plot in Welwyn with a view to build a bungalow from a book of plans I had purchased, I managed to get a job at Godfrey Davies Ltd (A main Ford Agent) in Welwyn which was quite convenient. I managed to sell my house in Borehamwood in the nick of time as it turned out.

Apart from spell with another car dealer, H.A.Saunders in Radlett, I spent the bulk of the time I quit professional speedway with Godfrey Davies before I took early retirement in 1989.

It was during my time at H.A.Saunders that I was introduced to Vintage Hill Climbs and this lead to me purchasing a Grass Track Rudge. In turn I was introduced to the Vintage Motor Cycle Club by Malcolm Webb and I was back in the bike scene again.

Other machines came my way but the real turning point came when I purchased a Douglas Dirt Track machine from a relative of the original dirt track rider of 1928.

Subsequently I accumulated quite a number of Rudge and Douglas machines aet several people on the road to success in Vinatge Speedway and Grass Track. Whether their wives thank me for this is not certain.

A few years later a chap called John Stallworthy phoned to ask if I would be interested in riding a vintage speedway bike at the British Motorcycle Federation Rally in Peterborough. This must have been about 1980 and that was the start of my vintage speedway career for the next 30 years. I managed to combine this with my day job until I took early retirement in 1989 at the age of 63.

I particularly enjoyed my vintage speedway days, especially the trips to Edinburgh, Glasgow, Linlithgow, Berwick, St Austell and Exeter to name but a few. I miss these outings but, on balance, all in all, I think I have had a very good innings.

Radio Pioneer

Trawling, somewhat unproductively, through the Daily Sketch for 1930 I can across an item about Dirt Track racing on the radio. The BBC announced that when would record some of a meeting at Wembley on Thursday 15th May and that the edited highlights, together with an interview with Johnnie Hoskins would be broadcast UK wide on a programme called Diversions Hour that evening.

The regular meeting programme was supplemented by a Novel Match Race featuring Miss Billie Smith and Miss Sunny Somerset (AKA Vera Hole.)

Never one to miss a trick, Johnny took a full page spread in the Speedway News proclaiming the event as Broadcast Night. **Jim Henry**

Scottish Match Race Championship 1949 - 1969

Colin Jewes cjewes@hotmail.co.uk has penned this article which sets out just what he knows and the gaps in the information he is seeking to fill.

1949 - 1953

Le Breton, Young, Miller: these 3 men dominated the Scottish Match Race Championship (S.MRC) after the war until its demise mid-1953 when the then holder Tommy Miller could be found no more worthy challengers, having been unbeaten since Jack Young moved South. The SMRC ran in parallel with the National League, Division Two Match Race Championship which Miller had likewise called his own having defeated the Monarch immediately prior to his capture of the World Championship in Sept. 1951. For this British title, raced for monthly against nominated challengers, best of 3, home & away, the trophy was the MRC **Silver Helmet**, which complemented the Division One MRC **Golden Helmet**. (There was also a Division Three **Bronze 4 Helmet**.)

So with Gold, Silver and Bronze accounted for, - all holders, challengers and results can be seen at <http://speedwaychampions.com/BritishMatchRaceChmpshp.aspx> - , **What was the actual trophy for the S.MRC holder during this period ?** (A helmet? a cup? or what ? - A photo of Miller, Young or le Breton receiving the award might provide the answer.)

1964 – 1968

With the return of Tigers in 1964 (in the pirate Provincial Lge. alongside Monarchs,) the S.MRC was resurrected, and it continued into the British Lge. era intermittently at least for the next 4 years. But information for this period is either vague or the competition was no frequent than twice a year, -? Known results are:

1964 July: C.Monk bt. D Templeton 2-0 @ Edinburgh; Aug: C.Monk bt. G.Hunter 2-1 @Edinburgh.

1965 May: C.Monk bt. G.Hunter 2-1 @Glasgow; June: G.Hunter bt. C.Monk 2-1 @Edinburgh.

1966 Aug: C.Monk bt. G.Hunter 2-0 @ Glg; Sept: B.Jansson bt. M.Mattingley 2-0 @ Edinburgh.

1967: No contests. (t.b.c.)

1968: (single races only): May: B.Persson bt. J.McMillan @Glasgow; Aug: O.Berg bt. B.Persson @ Glasgow; Sept: R.Eide bt. O.Berg @ Coatbridge.

Were challengers nominated or were they the top scorer of the visiting team?

Were contests little more than twice a season?, or are more results known ? (especially for 1968.)

Why didn't Monk 'defend' in Sept '68? (Injured perhaps?)

(As with the earlier period,) **What was the Scottish Match Race Championship Trophy? - helmet? cup? or what?**

Can You Help?

Jim Gregory is looking for second half details from his days at Oxford 1952 – 1954. There is a lot of this information on The Speedway Researcher web site but there are a few needs. If you think you can help, please have look on the site for the needs, and, if you can pass any additional bits to Jim Henry, he'll add to the site and make them available to everyone.

OXFORD 1952 Needs - 10th April 1952 v Leicester Times; 17th April v Stoke Meeting Details; 1st May v Glasgow SH; 8th May v Lanarkshire Eagles SH; 15th May v Liverpool SH; 22nd May v Poole SHT 2nd Men; 19th June v Poole SH; 26th June v Edinburgh SH; 24th July v Leicester SH; 31st July v Ashfield SH; 7th August v Edinburgh SH; 14th August v Lanarkshire Eagles SH; 28th August v Ashfield SH; 17th September v Poole SH; 25th September v Glasgow SH; 2nd October v Stoke SH.

Oxford 1953 Needs – 9th April V Filbyterna SHT2ndmen; 16th April v Rayleigh SH; 23rd April v Plymouth SH; 14th May v Rayleigh SH; 21st May v Wolverhampton SH; 04/06/53 MIDLAND RIDERS CH Q R Meeting Details; 25/06/53 v PLYMOUTH Meeting Details; 9th July Coronation Best Pairs Tournament SH; 30th July 1953 v Plymouth Times +SH; 6th August v Rayleigh SH Times; 27th August v St Austell SH; 10th September v Ipswich SH; 23rd September v Birmingham SH

Oxford 1954 Needs - 16th April v Exeter SH; 13th May 1954 v Plymouth Ht Times + SH; 10th June v Bristol SH; 8th July v Ipswich SH; 19th August v Exeter THt14 + SH; 26th August v Bristol SH; 9th September v Rayleigh SH; 23rd September v Poole SH

Maurice Archard is looking for Dagenham information. This is probably one for someone with access to Colindale as it is more than likely the events at home would have been covered.

Vic Butcher is hoping to hear from you if you have any details of Southampton matches home or away in the pre-war days. Vic also wonders if anyone has any idea how he might get details of the Southampton v Tamworth matches in Italy staged between 9th & 11th September 1947.

Michael Gardner is looking for details of Junior League fixtures. He is looking for results from Anglian Junior League 1982 & 1985; Central Junior League 1982 and Scottish Junior League 1982, 1983, 1984.

Roger Beaman is looking for Cradley Heath Junior Matches 1963 Away 17/8 Coventry. 1965 Home 3/7 Coventry, 28/8 Wolves, 2/10 Coventry. 1967 Home 2/9 Coventry. 1972 Home: Training School Matches: 25/3 Wolves, 1/4 Possibles 1 v Possibles 2, 24/4 Wolves, 12/6 Jephcott v Bragg, 30/8 Crewe, 9/9 Wolves; Away: 24/3 Wolves, 19/5 Wolves, 29/9 Wolves. 1973 Away 25/2 Wolves Cubs. 1974 Home: 20/4 Wolves. 1976 Home: 4/2 Training School, 14/2 Reg's Tigers, 21/2 Coventry, 28/2 Coventry, 5/6 Coventry, 4/10 King's Lynn; Away: 14/5 Wolves, 27/6 King's Lynn. 1984 Away: 17/5 Wimbledon, 30/9

King's Lynn, 25/10 Sheffield. 1985 Home: 6/5 Belle Vue. Away: 2/5 Sheffield, 18/5 Kings Lynn, 24/8 Halifax, 6/9 Birmingham, 27/9 Belle Vue, 4/10 Oxford, 10/10 Sheffield, 12/10 Kings Lynn. 1986 Home: 5/4 Sheffield, 5/7 Oxford, 18/10 Birmingham, 25/10 Best Pairs. Away: 29/3 Belle Vue, 28/4 Reading, 3/5 Belle Vue, 11/6 Kings Lynn, 20/6 Oxford, 7/7 Reading, 8/7 Bradford, 13/7 Bradford, 24/7 Sheffield, 25/7 Oxford, 1/9 Wolves, 3/9 Coventry, 5/10 Kings Lynn, 20/10 Wolves, 24/10 Oxford Best Pairs. 1987 Home: 27/6 Reading, 11/7 Bradford, 29/7 Sheffield, 31/8 Sheffield, 16/9 Ipswich ?. Away: 3/4 Oxford, 17/4 King's Lynn, 9/5 Bradford, 22/5 Hackney, 25/5 Sheffield, 1/6 Reading, 17/8 Reading, 19/8 Oxford, 23/8 King's Lynn, 15/9 Bradford, 22/9 Coventry, 1/10 Sheffield, 12/10 Reading, 18/10 Bradford, 20/10 Coventry, 4/11 Ipswich. 1988 Home: 1/10 Ipswich, 29/10 Coventry. Away: 28/3 Reading, 9/4 Bradford, 21/4 Sheffield, 6/5 Belle Vue, 26/5 Oxford, 12/6 Eastbourne u21 champs, 19/6 Kings Lynn, 26/6 Eastbourne, 21/7 Ipswich, 9/8 Bradford, 13/8 Kings Lynn, 18/8 Sheffield, 22/8 Reading, 26/8 Belle Vue, 17/10 Reading, 26/10 Reading. 1989 Home: 21/10 Reading. Away: 31/3 Belle Vue, 8/4 Bradford, 24/4 Wolves, 22/5 Reading, 17/6 Kings Lynn, 9/7 Eastbourne, 22/7 Bradford, 24/7 Wolves, 31/7 Reading, 15/9 Oxford, 29/9 Belle Vue, 2/10 Wolves, 23/10 Wolves. 1990 Home: 11/7 Bradford, 4/8 A team v B team, Away: 30/3 Oxford, 14/4 Bradford, 16/4 Coventry, 2/5 Coventry, 14/5 Reading, 25/5 Oxford, 6/7 Belle Vue, 9/7 Reading, 14/7 Bradford, 6/9 Bradford, 7/9 Belle Vue, 4/10 Bradford, 11/10 Kings Lynn, 17/10 Bradford. 1991 Home: 20/3 Swindon. Away: 19/9 Sheffield. 1992 Away: 2/5 Bradford, 21/8 Belle Vue, 22/8 Bradford, 24/8 Arena Essex, 31/8 Wolves. 1993 Home: 18/9 Wolves. Away: 20/9 Reading.

Stuart Stait-Aris is looking for details of Coventry's Southern league meetings, mainly the away matches, for 1929. If possible he would like scans of any pre-war Coventry meetings / match programmes to record the events in programme format.

Eric Watson is looking for race jackets which were made for special events.

Coventry's Refusal of League Membership - 1931

Stuart Stait-Aris recalls a time when Coventry, (Brandon) and the authorities did not see eye to eye.

January 1931 – Brandon Speedway Big Plans

As a result of ongoing winter negotiations the Brandon operation of Motodromes Ltd confirmed that Brandon supporters would be ensured a series of high quality events throughout the spring and summer of 1931. The planned opening date was to be the beginning of April subject to weather conditions.

The discussions over contracts for the 1931 season had already begun with; Jack Parker, Norman Parker, Wilmot Evans, Tom Farndon, Lew Lancaster, John Deeley, George Allbrook and Arthur Tims. Thus the Brandon supporters were to be assured of a first class team to follow. The 1930 season had seen a number of matches already lost before a really sound team had been got together. Once the settled side had been achieved the Coventry team had then lost very few meetings. With the proposed team it was anticipated that the Coventry side would be up amongst the leaders right from the start of the season. The main difficulty they could foresee was who to initially leave out of the six rider team.

The contracts to be handed to the riders included the condition that they must each possess two machines in good running order to rule out lost points due to mechanical failures.

The Brandon Riders Club

The Brandon Riders Club was still going strong in the close season. At this stage of development only 14 more amateur riders were required for the club to complete its maximum compliment of members. The Brandon management were supporting the venture as it was the likely source of new developing riders for the Coventry team.

The Brandon Financial Aspect

Mr S.T. Glanfield the managing director of Motodromes Ltd confirmed that the Brandon operation had made a small loss during the 1930 season.

He stated that the main reason was due to the very heavy initial expenses incurred in setting up the track and the fact that a good deal of capital expenditure was wiped off.

Mr Glanfield expected the 1931 season if as good as anticipated would result in the track becoming a thoroughly sound and established business proposition with an assured future.

At the track the plans were to gradually increase the Grandstand accommodation and a great deal of new terracing had also been
8 constructed during the winter months.

Another proposal on the business side was to convert the owning company from a private concern into a public one. This was to give local sportsmen an opportunity of giving the track financial backing.

January 27th 1931 – Rumours of no Speedway in Coventry

Early February saw rumours flying around that there would be no Speedway at either Brandon or Lythalls Lane in 1931.

Coventry Sporting Club Statement

There was a statement issued from the management of Coventry Sporting Club who controlled the Lythalls Lane Stadium. The secretary Eugene Fields on behalf of the management issued the following;

“In view of the numerous enquiries being made respecting the possible resumption of Speedway racing at the Stadium, it appears desirable that an official statement should be made.”

“After the harsh and unsportsmanlike treatment meted out to the management by the Northern Promoters Association last year the promoters of the Coventry Stadium have no intention of repeating their application for membership and will not themselves promote any Speedway racing at the stadium.”

“The Speedway together with adequate facilities as approved and licensed by the A.C.U. is as it was when racing closed down last season, and the management will be prepared to consider any business proposition which may be put forward by any other responsible body of sportsmen for the use of the track for motor cycle racing.”

“This means that the stadium management would be prepared to let the track for the purpose of Speedway racing throughout the season.”

No Speedway Rumours – Supporters Response

Early February still saw the question as to whether Coventry was to see Speedway racing in 1931. At present there was no sign of either Brandon or Lythalls Lane being reopened for business.

There were a number of factors cropping up for consideration the main one being as below;

- Was there sufficient enthusiasm for the sport locally to make the project successful if a body of sportsmen were to get together to finance one of the two closed down tracks?

The Midland Daily Telegraph columnist “Broadsider” received a letter from Mr Eric R Smith a well known figure in Midland Speedway circles wishing anyone interested in the sport to get in contact with him with a view to taking further action to save the sport in Coventry. That letter was as below;

“Dear Broadsider,”

“Your article in the January 27th issue of the Midland Daily Telegraph has I am sure caused considerable comment amongst the Speedway fans of Coventry, and I myself read it with considerable interest. It does seem a shame that after the hold Speedway racing has in this district, it should be dropped altogether.”

“There are two tracks both at present are idle and the season is nearly here, and no progress seems to have been made. Where oh where are the local sportsmen to let this fine sport perish! Surely there are some who would like to see the boys again on the cinders.”

“I happened to be up at one of the tracks this morning. This track could be turned into a very successful Speedway, that is if only the public would give it their support, and if the promoters who would run it would guarantee good racing, and first class star riders who would actually appear when and as advertised.”

“I fully realise that Brandon is “The track” but as it is so near to the time when most of the tracks are open and nothing is heard from the “Brandon people” well lets have the next best thing.”

“ In conclusion I again appeal to all the old supporters “Lets be hearing from you” and see what can be done for some cinder shifting again this season – Now’s the time to act.”

Yours Faithfully

Eric R Smith 100 Lower Ford St Coventry

February 19th 1931 - Coventry Supporters Club Hold a Meeting

Coventry Speedway Supporters Club despite there being little hope of reviving the sport locally still held a general meeting.

The meeting was held at the Kings Head hotel in Coventry and it was decided by an overwhelming majority to keep the Supporters club running. The Committee were asked to explore every means possible in the endeavour to arrange visits to other tracks.

The decision to carry on was made in the face of a resolution from Club chairman Mr H Cooper. He wanted for the time being for the club to suspend all activities unless it came to their knowledge that Speedway was to resume in or near to Coventry.

In the unlikely event of Speedway resuming the club Secretary was to keep the club books and the Treasurer was to bank the money the club had in hand. The treasurer Mr A Warrington confirmed this to be ten **10** guineas.

Mr Cooper gave the supporters some idea of the activity that had been going on behind the scenes for a considerable period of time. Mr Cooper stated that he himself had been energetically involved in the endeavour to re-establish Speedway in Coventry.

Mr Cooper said that he hoped there were sufficient men in Coventry with a little capital and enough of the sporting instinct to have joined together and bought the Brandon speedway. He had found that there was a good deal of interest in Speedway racing in Coventry but that that interest died as soon as the subject of finance was mentioned.

Everybody seemed prepared to pay to see the meetings but hardly anybody was prepared to put down a shilling or two to finance the concern.

When he found that this was the position Mr Cooper thought that it was his duty as Chairman of the Supporters Club to try and do something a little better. He went into the matter very thoroughly and had an excellent reception from the proprietors of the Midland Daily Telegraph who would have supported them in every way both as regards publicity and a trophy if he had been able to get things moving.

Inside twenty minutes when he called on the Manager of the Coventry Corporation Tramways he had gone a long way towards solving the transport problem which had been experienced in 1930.

In addition he had managed to gather around him about half a dozen enthusiastic people some of whom were prepared to put as much as £200 or £300 into the concern. He got from the liquidators of Messes Motordromes as much information as possible and as a result of further investigation he offered their debenture holders the sum of £1,200.00 if they would grant him an option on the Speedway until January 31st. If he had been given that option it was his intention to form a company and proceed. He had all his plans cut and dried. He wanted 5,000 people to invest £1 each and had also obtained a promise from all the riders to appear again. However the debenture holders would not accept less than £5,800 and the scheme fell through.

Mr Cooper revealed that the Speedway would be up for public auction the following week. He did not think there was the slightest hope of anyone buying it for the purpose of promoting Speedway racing. He said he had done his best but in his opinion Speedway racing was dead in Coventry for 1931. He also stated if it did not run in 1931 Coventry was likely never to see Speedway racing again.

The Future of Tom Farndon

Tom Farndon was present at the Supporters Club evening despite still recovering from a tonsils operation the week before.

Tom stated that he definitely would not be joining Leicester Stadium as had been indicated in a Leicester newspaper. He was on his way to London on Saturday February 21st for the purpose of signing a contract to ride for either Crystal Palace or for International Speedways at Harringay.

At the Supporters meeting Tom said he had not yet made up his mind but in all probability it would be Crystal Palace.

Tom was hoping to do great things in 1931 and he had been experimenting with a special Coventry made machine.

February 24th 1931 - Brandon Speedway Sold by Auction

Tuesday February 24th saw Brandon Speedway saved from closing down. Brandon came under the hammer in the open market at an auction conducted by George Lovett and Sons in conjunction with Messer's Jones, Son and Day at the Mart in Hertford Street Coventry. The sale was held by order of Mr T Wells Daffern Receiver of the First Debenture holders of the old Motordromes company. The Solicitors concerned were Messers R. A. Rotherham and Co Coventry and Messers Gellatly, Son and Taylor London.

Bidding for the stadium described as one of the best in England commenced at £1000. There were a number of interested parties for the property which was still practically ready for immediate reopening. The site including the large car park area covered 24 acres.

The saviour was Charles W East of Leytonstone London who bought the stadium site for £2275.00. Mr East was one of the directors of the previous Motordromes promotion and was stated to be the largest debenture holder of the old company.

Charles East and his Plans for Brandon

Charles East stated that he planned to reopen the Brandon track for racing but had not decided which form this racing was to be.

He did say that Speedway racing fans would be those principally careered for although other Motor cycle attractions were also to be considered.

Mr East wanted to push ahead in order to get the stadium reopened as soon as possible with a target date of Easter Monday.

Rider Prospects at Brandon

Following Mr East's auction success the Brandon Riders Club was to **14** resume practise sessions immediately. Mr C Patten of Clay Lane

Coventry was to resume the control and organisation of these sessions to unearth new riders for the Coventry team.

Coventry based Syd Jackson who by February had still not resigned for Leicester Stadium expressed a willingness to appear at Brandon if suitable arrangements could be made.

One man to be missing from the new Brandon set up was rising star Tom Farndon. Tuesday February 23rd 1931 saw him sign a contract to ride for Crystal Palace.

Jack and Norman Parker were still available in February having not agreed terms with any of the league clubs.

Bill Stanley was also still open to offers to ride for Coventry again although he was to eventually join Stamford Bridge in London.

Star Rider Jack Parker Leaves Coventry

Thursday March 12th saw the first signs that Star rider Jack Parker was due to leave Brandon. There was no official confirmation from the Brandon management however it was almost certain that he was due to sign a contract at Southampton the club that his brother Norman had already joined.

Jack had attended an informal meeting at Brandon on Friday March 6th and at that stage he had been fairly confident that he would still be leading the Coventry team in 1931.

The main reason for Jack moving to Southampton was that he was eligible to compete in both the League and Daily Mail Trophy for the south coast side. The associated Prize money to be gained from the number of meetings possible was too much to lose out on. Southampton were also desperate to replace non returning American star Sprouts Elder.

The Brandon management however did confirm that Jack's services would not be lost totally if he did join Southampton. Arrangements were to be made for him to appear regularly at Brandon on Thursdays when his other engagements permitted and a similar arrangement had been organised with Tom Farndon.

The closure of Brandon in 1930 had immediately sparked great competition for Parker's services with him being amongst the best half a dozen riders in the country.

Jack had represented England in Test matches against Australia, had been runner up in the English Riders Championship, won the Edinburgh Championship and the Scottish Golden Helmet.

March 1931 – Coventry Denied League Membership

Early March saw a meeting of the Southern Speedway Promoters Association with Coventry admitted for membership. Thus Coventry was to be run under official guidelines in co-operation with the ruling authority with all the benefits of being affiliated.

The one snag was that Coventry were denied membership into the League Competition due to the lateness of the application to join. The reason given was that the league arrangements and fixtures had already practically been completed.

The Brandon management thus indicated that the competitive side of the programme would be catered for in the form of Inter City Challenge Matches.

There was still a possibility at that stage of Coventry being admitted into the Daily Mail National Trophy competition due to the withdrawal of Liverpool and Mr Charles East was pressing for Coventry's inclusion.

Brandon was also to have a new Track Manager in the form of Mr Jack H. White.

Meetings were again to be staged at Brandon on Thursday evenings which was deemed to be the most suitable day. The opening fixture was planned for Easter Monday with a strong opening programme.

Jack H. White Outlines Brandon Policy

The new Brandon Track Manager Jack H. White issued an official statement on March 19th 1931 at the annual meeting of the Brandon Speedway Supporters Club at the Kings Head Hotel. His statement was to outline to supporters the future policy of Brandon Speedway.

Mr White stated that the hope of League racing being staged at Brandon in 1931 was very remote as admission would only be granted if an already accepted team withdrew from the league.

He added that there was more chance of a Coventry side being accepted into the Daily Mail National Cup competition and every effort would be made to field a strong Coventry side in this if admitted.

The main aim of the 1931 season would be to build up a team of riders of sufficient strength to enter the Southern league competition in 1932.

Mr White stated that he had every hope of making the track a success with it being one of the finest in the country. He added that several important improvements were underway with no effort being spared to increase its popularity with strong programmes and a greater variety of star riders.

16 Coventry to take over Leicester Stadium Southern League Fixtures

Tuesday May 26th 1931

At a meeting of the promoters of the Southern Speedway League in London on Tuesday May 26th 1931 Coventry were accepted to fill the vacancy in the League caused by the withdrawal of the Leicester Speedway Stadium and were to take over Leicester's remaining Southern League fixtures.

At the meeting it was agreed to transfer to Coventry immediately Leicester's Tiny Tims, John Deeley and Les Patrick with the futures of Squib Burton, Syd Jackson and Australian Charlie Datson will be considered by the A.C.U on the following Friday.

Coventry's first match in the League was be against High Beech away on Saturday afternoon May 30th. The first home meeting was to be against Stamford Bridge on June 4th.

Keyworth Speedway

Thanks to the local history society in the town we can provide a bit of information about this venue. It operated up to the start of World War II and was located in a field on the east side of Wysall Lane and immediately north of Fairham Brook. It was probably viewed as a source of income for the landowner who was a Bob Smith. According to a local source, Arthur Wood, who's recollections were recorded by **Bob Hammond**. "Competitors for the speedway would come from all over the Nottingham area and spectators often numbered two to three hundred who had to pay an entrance fee to get in to the field and park their bikes (if they had one). Some would watch over the hedge from Ling's Lane and avoid paying. The competing bikes had megaphones attached to their exhausts. The course was circular and over the years had become increasingly worn. It is only since the farmer started ploughing the field that the course of the track ceased to become visible."

This tends to suggest that it was a grass track to start with but as the grass wore off it was a dirt or soil surface.

Jim Henry

The Boys From Victoria **Andy Menzies Morrie Bond and Dave Hynes**

The background to these stories were provided to **Tony Webb** over a series of interviews this year with by former Brisbane rider Russell 17

Box, one of the few remaining riders of the 1946-1950 Brisbane seasons Russell was a personal friend of the riders mentioned and also of Keith Cox, Cyril Romaine and Keith Gurtner.

Frank Arthur reopened Brisbane Exhibition ground in 1946, he faced a shortage of experienced riders in the early days of the promotion. To swell the ranks he brought up three close friends from Melbourne, Maurice "Morrie" Bond, Dave Hynes and Andy Menzies who had all had some pre war experience in Melbourne and Sydney. Between the trio there was a wealth of mechanical expertise, adventure spirit and riding ability that would become well known in speedway circles in the future years. All three had an involvement with speedway in America and are all renowned for their various developments with engines and frames both in Australia and the States

Maurice Palmer Bond was born in Pahrn Victoria on January 12 1908, he began his speedway riding under Andy Menzies at Olympic Speedway Melbourne in 1938, moving on to Sydney in 1939 At the outbreak of war he joined the Australian Navy on October 29 1941 serving on HMAS Melville, he gained the nickname of "Sailor" Morrie, [he preferred to be known as Maurice,] had a very distinguished service career, serving in five theatres of war he was awarded the Africa Star, 1939-1945 Star, Phillipines Liberation Medal, Italy Star, Burma Star and Pacific Star.

After his discharge in December 1945 he moved up to Brisbane with other Southern based riders signed up by Frank Arthur that included Ron Bainbridge, Keith Gurtner, Hugh Geddes, Archie Neil, Andy Menzies, Dave Hynes and Harold Gillet. He quickly established himself at the Brisbane track winning the Golden Helmet in September. Morrie's first appearance was at the Ekka on September 7, the following day he was hit by a runaway car in Adelaide Street, luckily he escaped with minor injuries.

A reminder of his war service came in the Ekka pits in October 1946. During the wartime action in Ipla Ipla he had borrowed some electrical switches from another regiment under the leadership of speedcar star Lew Murphy, neither of them knew of the others involvement in speedway. On meeting Lew at the Ekka Morrie was asked "when was he going to return the bloody switches," Morrie's typical response was I thought you were Yanks and I did not have to return them.

In his first Queensland season in 1946 Morrie won the Brisbane Best 18 Pairs with Ron [Junior]Bainbridge, the Dowett Brothers Trophy,

Queensland Blood Donars Trophy and established 4 track records at the end of the run up to Christmas he was the leader in the Christmas point score.

Morrie established himself as a panel beater with workshops in Blackmore Street Albion area close to the speedway, Close friend and fellow rider Russell Box had an adjoining paint shop. .

Morrie married Marcia, sister of Brisbane rider Harry Goodridge. He had a battle for the hand of Marcia as Junior Bainbridge was also a contender, Morrie won the battle and they settled in Auchenflower, before building a house in Monarchy street, Mitchellton.

Dave Hynes and Morrie travelled to USA in October 1947 with USA star Wilbur Lamoreaux who had been racing in Australia, they raced in Sacramento and Fresno in North California. Morrie and Dave formed life-long friendships with the Milne brothers, Wilbur Lamoreaux and the Williams brothers.

Little is known on his whereabouts in early 1948, but he was back in Brisbane for the 1948/1949. Australian titles where he scored 5 points. He rode at Lismore NSW and competed in hill climbs at Bardon, then returned to Victoria for a while renewing his friendship with Andy Menzies, before arriving back in Brisbane in December 1949, he continued to race in Queensland until March 1951.

He was joined in his business by Syd Littlewood, who rode for Newcastle and Norwich. They were a formidable pair and well known for the love of a good social life!.

Morrie built a new workshop at Eight Mile Plains, which he later sold to car dealer Lennie Cox brother of Keith Cox.

While at Eight Mile Plains he built his first replica car, a Mercedes SSK Coupe NZG 985. This had a 1962 Holden EK engine and front suspension, MG TC windscreen, Vauxhall headlights and Sunbeam Rapier instrumentation, a true hybrid. ,This was known as P64, the year work started this was later changed to P68 the date it was finished. The story goes that Morrie sold the car for \$500 in a moment of rashness after being abused by a young bloke who said “what is an old man like you doing driving a car like that.”

During the early seventies Morrie spent time at Andy Menzies workshops in Melbourne building a JAP with the timing side reversed. This machine was later shipped to Queensland where Morrie completed the work.

Morrie bought land in Wiss Street Kalbar Queensland in the scenic rim 120 k south west of Brisbane in 1980. He built his retirement home and a new workshop in the tranquil mountain setting. It was here he constructed the car known as P70, which was the subject of an ABC programme

Sadly Morrie died of emphysema in 1993 and was laid to rest in Boonah cemetery before the car was finished. His widow Marcia sold the unfinished project for \$10,000 to local trader Herb Jensen who completed the classic car and gave it a maiden run to Boonah.

The whereabouts of both cars and the back to front Jap are unknown at this time.

The eldest of the trio was **Andy Menzies**, born South Melbourne 1908 his career started in 1937, in Melbourne he went to England in 1938 joining the Wembley Lions. A 1939 Speedway News report placed Andy third to Aub Lawson and Vic Duggan as potential stars of the future.

The war years intervened. Enlisting in the Australian Heavy Artillery at Laverton Victoria in 1942, It four years before Andy got back in the saddle at Brisbane. in September 1946 he quickly became the man to beat around the Exhibition ground, but returned to Melbourne for the Christmas break. He won the 1947 Australian four lap title at that track. He travelled to the USA where he rode at Sacramento in California. Australian Test team selection in the 1947/1948 Australian season saw him represent his country in Brisbane and Sydney

Andy travelled to England for the 1948 season linking with the Odsal Boomerangs under Johnnie Hoskins scoring 32 points he stayed in England missing the 1948/49 Australian season. Transferred to Sheffield he scored 125 points in 1949 his last season in England.

Andy returned to Melbourne where he set up a workshop with Morrie Bond. Andy was renowned as a tuner. He rode the 1949/50 season in Melbourne making one appearance for Australia against England. team, he scored one point

Following retirement from speedway he had a caravan and boat business. He made several trips to Queensland to meet up with with old friend Morrie Bond. Andy passed away from natural causes in 1990

Dave Hynes gained fame as a frame builder for Graham Warren, a good performer on the track, he raced in the British second division for Plymouth in 1948. His speedway career also started in his home state of **20** Victoria in 1936. When the Putt Mossman stunt team visited

Australia in 1937 he accepted an offer to appear with them. They made headlines when they were lost in the outback for a while during an overland drive from Melbourne to Brisbane.

At the end of the war he rode at the Brisbane Exhibition track in early 1947 before going to the USA with Morrie Bond in later that year. His frame building expertise came to the attention of World finalist Graham Warren who declared that he would never ride anything but a Hynes product. By the beginning of the 1948 season everyone wanted the Hynes, or the Aussie frame as it was known. Dave set up business in the Birmingham area and worked with another ex-pat Australian, Huck Fynn. Later in 1948, he returned home to Australia where he received information from England that another company were producing identical frames. Dave had not registered a patent and was philosophical about the whole situation, he then diverted his attention to other speedway products.

He represented Australia in the test match at Brisbane in the 1947/1948 series and continued to ride until 1951.

Travelling back to the USA he worked with Ken Williams and his father in 1975 developing an engine. This particular motor is now under restoration and is of the type that has a CB ignition timing cover fitted. There is a second timing cover which uses a Lucas magneto for ignition. The cases are made of steel and incorporate the engine mounting plates. The cylinder is aluminium that houses a Jawa sleeve whilst the head is JAP converted to overhead cam. Like the cylinder sleeve, the flywheels were also Jawa.

With Ken Williams and his father they produced a Williams Hynes frame I constructed from mild steel tubing, jig welded using heliarc and high tensile strength welding rod.

The top tube is of 2 inch O.D. 1/16 wall swaged down to 1 1/2 inch at the headstock. The headstock and front down tube is of 1 1/2 inch O.D. 1/16 wall tubing. The rear down tube is of the same 2 inch O.D. as the top tube. Gussets are welded between the top and front down tube at the headstock.

The top and rear down tube serve as the fuel tank with dual petcocks at the base of the down tube. The front down tube serves as the oil tank with the filler tube passing through the top tube. The early frames had this tube in front of the fuel filler with the later version having it behind. Fuel capacity is 2.5 litres, oil capacity is 1.5 litres.

The front forks are 1 1/4 inch tube telescopic type with 2 inches of travel. The rear section is of 7/8 inch tubing and is comparable to other such rear sections. There was a second type of rear section with a larger loop and the wheel mount and adjusters forward of this loop. This proved too weak and would break just forward of the wheel mounts. The purpose of the design and building of this frame was to provide a light weight yet more rigid frame than was available at the time. It proved to be more rigid than the Jawa while also having less weight, so in that area the design was successful

Dave was held in high esteem by the car racing fraternity in America and continued to travel between Australia and the States for several years

Dave returned to live on the Gold Coast, life was very sad for him in later years losing his daughter, then his wife in the most tragic of circumstances before passing away from Alzheimers at an early age himself.

Three mates who collectively were the most ingenious trio in speedway history, they never achieved individual fame, but they made a great contribution to speedway in general with their willingness to formulate new ideas and continually strive for improvements.

References: Australian Hot Rod Magazine March 1967; ABC 1992 Stenners Annual 1947-1952; British Speedway Leagues 1946-1964 Peter Morrish; Russel Box Arana Hills interview 20-5-2010
The Workshop Chris Byles.

Gus Khun's Epic Journey

Those of you familiar with the pioneer days will know of dirt track rider Gus Khun. You may not know he was an accomplished motorcyclist prior to taking up speedway riding in the TT and in many other forms of the bike sports of the day. He was also an early works rider in the days when a motorcyclist had the choice of goodness knows how many marques to choose from and manufacturers vied for methods to promote their machines.

In 1919 Gus was employed by Birmingham based Levis to undertake an epic journey from Birmingham to John O'Groats, back to Birmingham, then on to Land's End and back to Birmingham via the Motorcycle 22 show at Olympia in London.

Gus set off at 6.45am on 13th November and ran into deep snow at Shap which meant his 206 mile journey to Carlisle did not end until 9.30pm. The following day he rode a further 204 miles to Aberdeen without any reported problems. He left Aberdeen at 11am on 15th November and struggled much of the 104 miles to Inverness hampered again by snow. The weather forecast meant he strapped a shovel to his back when he set out on 16th November he travelled via Beaulieu (avoiding a ferry crossing in these days of yore) and Golspie, and he yet again encountered deep snow on route to his overnight stop at Lybster. Gus reported that the shovel proved hand for digging himself out of snow drifts. On 17th November he arrived at John O'Groats at the end of an epic 647 mile leg of the trip.

The snow abated for the start of the return trip from John O' Groats to Tain but he had the hazard of icy roads to contend with. The following day, 19th November, he travelled from Tain to Aberdeen without mishap. The icy roads and snow were noted as a problem for the Aberdeen to Edinburgh leg on 20th November. On 20th November Gus made good progress to Newport, some 36 miles from Birmingham at 11.30pm but he didn't get to his start point until 7.30am the next day. Despite this he gamely set off for and reached Land's End on the 22nd covering some 287 miles.

The next leg of his run on 23rd November took him 290 miles to Olympia in London for the Motorcycle Show but, he was too late and the hall was closed for the night. However, he did arrive the following day and had photographs taken which were published in the Motorcycling magazine.

It was an epic journey in which he encountered unseasonal bad weather, as November is not normally a snowy time of year in Britain, and it says much for him that he stuck to his task in what must have been very uncomfortable travelling conditions.

Jim Henry

Nigel's Natterings

Nigel Bird writes Re:- Vol.13 No 4 page 20. March 2011. The Yanks Remington, Boston and Murch were certainly not banned as they were welcomed as guests to a dinner in a London hotel. I believe Indian motorcycle importer Billy Wells was their contact in this country. Wells was of course involved with Stamford Bridge and was partly responsible for bringing over Art Pechar. There was supposed to be **23**

another rider, Smokey Joe Pachasna but I have not found any evidence he was in this country. The Yanks were not up to much their best results coming from the trotting tracks of Greenford and Audenshaw and the less competitive “country” tracks like Cardiff. Boston ended up riding the Wall of Death at the Kurrsal, Southend. In the early 1930s Boston and Murch promoted speedway on the east coast of the USA. There was however a fourth rider, now in the veteran stage of his career champion board track and dirt track racer Ray Creviston, his contact in this country was Crystal Palace and Perry Barr promoter Fred Mockford. Creviston was advertised to race at Perry Barr but post meeting reports in the local press make no mention of him. (Creviston was an Indian works rider)

Web

We have been having problems with the web site in recent months and if you want information and are having problems, email at address below. **Ron McNeil** who deserves a monster pile of credit for the time and effort he has put into the site wants to step down. For a spell it looked dark but **Matt Jackson** has now offered to take over the webmaster role and is about to get stuck in. Hopefully by the next edition this will be back to normal and the scores of updates will be available to everyone.

Jim Henry

TT Douglas

A trawl through the magazine Motor Cycling has revealed that the TT Douglas machine, which was the forerunner of the Dirt Track Douglas, was introduced in 1923.

Jim Henry

Deadline for items for next edition is 30th July 2011

Web Master: Ron McNeil

www.speedwayresearcher.org.uk

Or jjh1950@blueyonder.co.uk

The Speedway Researcher is edited and published by:

Graham Fraser

Jim Henry

All mail to Jim at 90 Greenend Gardens, Edinburgh, EH17 7QH

24 Graham Tel : 01786 471992

Jim Tel : 0131 664 7185