

# The Speedway Researcher

Promoting Research into the History of Speedway and Dirt Track Racing

**Volume No.9 No.2 September 2006**

**Edited by Graham Fraser and Jim Henry**

## **Carlo Biagi**

Speedway lost a great pal in mid June with the passing of Carlo Biagi. Carlo never rode a bike but this larger than life character was a huge influence on speedway history. Carlo's medical skills, operating (pardon the pun) out of a hospital in the rural setting of the Scottish Borders, was legend and he put too many to name back on the track when others had been dismissive about their chance to ride again. The names who owe Carlo a deep debt of gratitude include riders from World Champions to rank novices. If a rider was genuinely injured his skills healed but, from personal experience (as Clerk of the Course at many meetings Carlo attended (JH)) those who lay there with mostly wounded pride, sympathy was not on the menu.

Carlo was a great medic but that wasn't all. Carlo was a warm character who made everyone he spoke to feel good. He will be missed by all who knew him and we send his immediate family and his "speedway family" our condolences.

On a side note a gentleman called George Biagi rode on the sand tracks on the Ayrshire coast and the pioneer Glasgow tracks in 1928. Carlo came from the same neck of the woods.

**Editors**

## **Feedback II**

**Bob Ozanne**, 31 Ruffle Close, West Drayton, Middlesex, UB7 9BP  
Email [robertjozanne@hotmail.com](mailto:robertjozanne@hotmail.com), one of the powerhouse team working on the pre-war items for the web is seeking details of collectors willing to help him with data from pre-war meeting programmes. Please contact Bob via email if possible but can accept contributions in other formats.

**Peter Jackson**, 41 Riversfield Road, Enfield, Middlesex, EN1 3DH Tel: 0208 366 3295 Email [pjackson41@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pjackson41@hotmail.co.uk) who is also working on the pre-war web and giving Jim solid backing on the post war task would like to see a list of who is doing what for each track. We did this a good

like to see a list of who is doing what for each track. We did this a good while ago and it does need an update. Think this is an item to be addressed via the next renewal slip but it does need to be done again as a refresh item.(Eds).

**John Wall**, 25 Highfield Drive, Gildersome, Leeds, LS27 7DW Tel: 0113 2523844 would like to hear a bit more about Leeds (Fullerton Park), Post Hill (a short lived 8 meeting venue in Pudsey) and a venture at Morley in Leeds which may or may not be a pukka dirt track. (The Post Hill and Fullerton Park details are in local newspapers and they would probably shed a great deal more light on Morley as well.JH)

**Howard Jones**, suggests we consider items on club colours and nicknames. Think we've covered nicknames in the track directory feature but never pulled it out as a dedicated report. Anyone fancy a trawl of back numbers to pull together an article?

**Alex Broadhurst**, from Chingford suggests we should list web sites with speedway history links and suggests [www.bauer-speedway.com/link/link.htm](http://www.bauer-speedway.com/link/link.htm) as a start. We would be happy to do this Alex – if you have a list to start us off we would be happy to publish it.

**Dave Ireland**, from Bearsden near Glasgow suggests each track should appoint an official track historian to gather and collate information for their particular track. Not a bad idea Dave.

**Vic Vanni** from Glasgow has written to question the article about Victor Grayson. Vic is convinced that he saw a television programme about the disappearing MP which stated Victor Grayson came back into UK politics, albeit in a lesser role, sometime later on.

**Mike Greenwood** from Birkenshaw, Bradford adds the name of Tony Childs to the list of wall of death performers. At the time of his horizontal ride Tony was a member of the then very popular Hull Vikings team. Incidentally Tony, who can claim the demolition of the Norwich fence on the closing night in his CV, rode the wall wearing his Hull race jacket at the Hull Fair on 15 October 1971.

**Alan Jones**, our man on the Leicester case adds a wee bit to **Keith Farman's** Match Race details with 6.7.1956 eliminator at Leicester when Alan Hunt beat Dick Bradley 2 – 0; 16.5.1958 eliminator at Leicester when Peter Moore beat Ron How 2 – 1 and 26.1958 at Leicester when Brian Crutcher beat Ken McKinlay 2 – 0.

The daughter of pioneer Scott (Lawrence C.) Michie, a rider who is probably best known for his spell at Rochdale in 1930 than for his activities on the Continent, went on to race in Czechoslovakia in the early

1930s in search of the Golden Helmet, then valued at £150 . He appears to have been living in a place called White-Sands near to Dumfries and was working as head salesman at a local garage. Scott was the son of a banker who came from Sanquhar (pronounced Sanker) which is north of Dumfries.

**Nigel Bird**, our very active researcher in the Midlands, (keep up the good work Nigel) sends in a few more items by way of feedback.

### **Coventry, Brandon 1934 & 36**

As I reported a couple of issues ago the events of 34 were official, matches were held against, Hall Green, West Ham and others, In September Joe Dallison who up till now had been pit manager, took over the lease and ran a couple of unaffiliated events (pirate). These mixed events included sidecars and motorcars.

**1936.** Syd Farndon ran a number of meetings from July 36 with some success, crowds averaging between 3,000&5,000. Events were held against teams calling themselves Bristol, Cardiff, Plymouth, Dagenham and others. These teams were filled with riders whose names are not familiar to me, and to my knowledge not associated with the particular teams mentioned, plus some names were obviously pseudonyms. Could a Plymouth team member named as Nobby Wilcox be Nobby Key? This would not be the first time Key had ridden at an unaffiliated venue. (Mile Oak). It seems certain these events were 'Pirate'.

### **The Golden Helmet**

It seems that just about every track in 1928-29 held a 'Golden Helmet' event.

That's a lot of Helmets, 60 plus? Were they mass produced by the same company? Where did they all end up? How many survive? Does any one know the whereabouts of any of these items, who manufactured them etc? There were of course also 'Silver Helmets' The Golden Helmet was referred to by the riders as the '**Brass Hat**'. Golden gauntlets, gloves, sashes, belts, arm bands, plus a few other golden items the names of which I can't think of at the moment, the sport was awash with them. Many must survive?

[Ian Paterson has a few in his collection including the third Marine Gardens Helmet. A number of helmets were up for sale in Australia a year or two ago and fetched some interesting sums. A pioneer rider I (JH) spoke to a good many years ago was convinced, on the basis of

the promoters he knew, that many of the “Golden” prizes would have been melted down when the track closed.]

### **The “News of the World” Belt.**

How many ‘N.O.T.W.’ belts were made? It seems quite a number of tracks held races for this trophy 1928-30. Wolverhampton, Coventry (Foleshill) are just 2 tracks that come to mind. Sprouts Elder won one, Billy Dallison won his at Wolverhampton, I am sure there are more. Does any one have a database on all of these trophies?

‘Looking for a project?’ Is there any one prepared to research and list the ‘who, where, when,’ of these items. Should keep someone busy for a while.

I have been privileged to see the N.O.T.W. belt that Billy Dallison won. It is based on the design of belts presented to boxers. The belt is covered in Royal Blue silk. The solid silver mounts are top quality detailed castings with a superb quality enamelled picture of 2 riders in action. The silver is Hallmarked, for those who are perhaps not familiar with Hallmarks this guarantees it is real silver. The Hallmark tells us it was assayed in Birmingham in 1928-9, the maker’s mark is JF which is I believe the mark of James Fenton? a silversmith from Birmingham’s jewellery quarter. Incidentally I (NB) served my apprenticeship just around the corner from where Fenton’s workshop once stood. And yes I will be delving into Fenton’s history.

Adding to Colin Parker’s story of **Arthur ‘Tiny’ Tims**

Tiny Tims career finished in 1934, he was a Brummie and came from one of Birmingham’s most affluent suburbs ‘Edgbaston.’ One of Tiny’s brothers, Edward also raced but his career was cut short by an accident at Coventry 29<sup>th</sup> May 1930, which left him unconscious for 18 hrs. Ted was programmed to ride at Wolverhampton on Saturday 31st May but obviously did not appear.

## **Can You Help?**

**Steve Harland**, 57 Mordales Drive, Marske-By-The –Sea, Redcar, Cleveland, TS11 7JH Tel : 01642 485720 Email [stevemharland@aol.com](mailto:stevemharland@aol.com) is seeking heat details for the Barrow v Teesside National League match of 1978.

**Phil Smith**, Warren House, 34, Rodney Hill, Loxley, Sheffield, S6 6SG. Tel :0114 2337355 who is researching PreWar Leeds and Sheffield is seeking details of Robert Sneath the post card publisher from Sheffield.

He is seeking details of the cards held by you to add to his catalogue in order to confirm or extend his listing.

**Andrew Welch**, 36 Thornaby Close, Cardiff, CF14 1UT Tel 02920613614 Email [Andrew@welchmedia.com](mailto:Andrew@welchmedia.com) is looking for any details of Tom Lougher who rode at Cardiff in 1930. Andrew is also looking for photos of action at the Welsh tracks and long tracks other than Newport and Carmarthen. Andrew's other love is Stock cars and Midgets which is for others to pursue as they had four wheels.

## **London Underground Poster**

We would like to thank **Deborah Cherry** for sending us a letter on a fabulous card which has been based on a London Underground Poster called Speedway which was used in 1928. The post card is produced by London's Transport Museum. The original poster was used to advertise the nearest stations to the tracks at White City, Stamford Bridge, Wimbledon, Harringay, Lea Bridge and West Ham. see [www.museums-direct.com](http://www.museums-direct.com) . **Eds**

## **Digital Technology**

Thanks to **Phil Hood**, a Newcastle fan based far flung from Brough Park, in Peterborough, for letting us know that a major city library allowed him to take digital photographs of newspapers in their collection provided he didn't use the flash unit. Phil whipped through a number of papers abstracting lots of items. As the man said (a famous saying of Jim's Mother) "It is a dumb bairn that gets nothing." So, next time you are looking at paper copies in a library you can but ask if they would be prepared to let you take digital photograph extracts (sans flash). For the record Phil tried the technique on the film reader screen but without any great success. One further good point is that digital photos can solve the problem of tight binding which often prevented scanning of the inside column. **Eds**

## **Buster Brown**

A few editions ago we asked about Buster Brown who rode for Wembley, Oxford, Swindon and Poole. **Glynn Shailles**, has come up with

a bit about the man who he remembers from his early days at Oxford and Swindon.

Buster's real name was Raymond and, at the time of writing he was still with us enjoying retirement in Peacehaven, East Sussex.

Buster was top scorer for Swindon in his first season at Blunsdon in 1951 and, has an odd claim to fame in that he was once credited the fastest time of the season when he didn't actually win the race. On 14 July Trevor Redmond, then of Aldershot, raced round to win setting a new record time of 74.2 beating Bill Hole's time of 74.6 . The following Buster was clocked at 74.8 which made him the fastest Robin which improved upon his previous best time of 75.0 seconds set in June.

## Adverts

Just a few lines to reiterate our policy re adverts. We are not a collector/collecting orientated magazine. However, we are happy to carry fliers produced by subscribers advertising whatever they wish, provided there is capacity in the envelope within the postage limits (due to be revised in the very near future) to do so. Please contact Graham for details.

## 1956 Inter-Divisional League or Inter-Division Tournament

**Alex Broadhurst** has managed to find out a bit more about this somewhat obscure competition from Coventry programmes of this era. 14 teams, 7 each from Divisions One and Two were to take part but Wembley refused to participate. All matches had to be raced on Second Division tracks. All teams to race three basic matches with additional engagements if desired. Table placings to be decided on a percentage of match points obtained from match points possible. The points were scored 3 for an away win, 2 for an away draw, 2 for a home win and 1 for a home draw. Second Division team to receive no points handicap start, nor were they permitted to use guests. Alex thinks that Oxford broke the last named rule.

Updated details set out on pages 12 & 13. Two fixtures were not raced Oxford v Birmingham and Rayleigh v Wimbledon. Wembley were programmed to race at Coventry, Swindon and Rayleigh. Wembley were prepared to race the meetings as challenge matches and appeared at Swindon on 1 September losing 49 – 47 to the Robins.

Wembley's withdrawal and the Speedway Control Board's failure to either punish Wembley or produce a league table, despite representations from Charles Ochiltree, sank the competition without trace of an official winner. Ochiltree asked the question "When is an official competition unofficial?"

Alex thought originally that the competition was split into three groups. He does not think this assumption was correct as Coventry programmes, with the exception of the last meeting of 15 September, show all the teams in one table. In the programme for this meeting the teams are placed in three groups depending on the number of matches raced, either 3, 2 or 1. It is an illustration, in their words, "to give an indication of performance."

(Details of this competition will appear on the centre page spread.

Alex has also sent details of the betting at Lea Bridge which we will run in Vol 9 No.3 Eds.)

### **Was Birmingham The First in the UK? Or Early Oval Racing**

**Nigel Bird** throws this interesting item into the ring with an extract from the Birmingham Mail July 1928.

Quote:- It is less than a mile from the old Aston cinder track to the new Alexander Sports track at Perry Barr, but it is 16 or 17 years at least since one saw cinder track racing in Birmingham at Aston, and in the interim ideas and speeds have change very considerably.

Cinder track racing is no new sport but there is a very vast difference between the riding of today and that of a decade ago. The old track was hard rolled; the new one is soft and loose as a ploughed field.

'Broadsiding' has come to us from 'down under' and it is this which has made the new riding so much more thrilling. Until Thursday evening last, few Birmingham people had seen any modern cinder track racing, and still fewer had seen the real thing in

'Broadsiding. :- Un-Quote.

So up until about 1912 Motor cycle racing was being held on a cinder track within spitting distance of the Aston Villa football ground.

Nigel has never heard about this track before, more research to be done. (We agree – Eds but to be fair there are a few records of demonstration runs by the then fairly new fangled things called motor

cycles and it was a popular pastime racing then round tracks available in the day. The article does talk about the track being rolled hard which is consistent with the concrete surfaces of the day and it suggests that little or no dirt flew up.)

[ On a total aside the Jim Blanchard chat shop on Vintage Speedway has been debating the definition of speedway. An interesting read to say the very least. (There are a pile of other items of interest too.)

Find Jim's web site at [www.vintagespeedway.proboards46.com](http://www.vintagespeedway.proboards46.com)

## **Publications**

### **FAY TAYLOUR QUEEN OF SPEEDWAY**

**Brian Belton with introduction by Reg Fearman. Published by Panther Publishing Ltd, 10 Lime Avenue, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1DP at £16.99 + p & p.**

This excellent book starts as with all good reads at the beginning when Francis Helen Taylour was born to Helen Allardice & Herbert Fetherstonehaugh Taylour in Birr, King's County, Southern Ireland on 5 April 1904, to her death on 2 August 1983 in Weymouth, Dorset. The book is not just a facts and figures tome and covers all aspects of Fay's life and covers almost all forms of motorsport to which she became accomplished on both 2 wheels and 4. It covers travels around the World including visits to the USA and Australia where she made a name for herself doing what she did best and that was race.

The photographs contained therein are few and far between, not surprising given the art of photography in those days was still in its relative infancy, but those that do appear are of good quality and include Eva Asquith, Sig Schlam, Johnnie Hoskins as well as several of Fay herself including a rare action shot showing her typical leg-trailing style so favoured by many riders in those early days.

One major point made in the book was the comparative short period of time Fay raced in the UK due mainly to the ban on women racers as far back as 1930, a ban which was in force up until a few short years ago. She then turned to motor car racing although she started in trials riding, a sport which has never shied from allowing women competitors.

Conclusion: An excellent autobiography of Fay Taylour which more than justifies her title of Queen of Speedway and an excellent

historical works of the very early days of speedway around the World and the many stories that abound throughout that era. The book is an excellent, well priced addition to anyone's bookshelves and will keep the reader enthralled for many a cold, wet and rainy day or night in those long times between seasons or at any other time as a replacement for the oblong picture box in the corner.

I can heartily recommend this book to everyone with an interest in speedway and in particular one of the sports more unusual characters.

**Review by Ron "TooSmall" McNeil**

**Speedway Star Almanac - 2006 Yearbook & Who's Who** - Edited by Peter Oakes @ £14.95 from Speedway Star

Doyen of speedway publications, Peter Oakes, has in recent years produced his own annual speedway, Who's Who & Yearbook, which along with Robert Bamford's Yearbooks have filled a gap in the market for speedway historians and statisticians. For 2006 he has teamed up with Speedway Star to produce a softback large format glossy book that has the same layout as the Star and continues to provide full British rider biographies and team records for 2005, including a full team by team result and rider scores listing for league and cup fixtures. Its up to you whether you buy this or the Tempus Yearbook to maintain your records on British Speedway.

**Review by Graham Fraser**

**Wheels & Deals** by Ian Thomas - Published by and available from Speedway Star @ £14.95

The last nine years since the launch of the Speedway Researcher has seen a huge growth in the number of speedway publications much of which has come from the involvement of Tempus Publishing and all the speedway historians out there who have fulfilled their ambitions by getting their team/rider histories in print. Surprisingly Speedway Star magazine has been quite late on the book scene but this publication and the one previously reviewed shows that they are perhaps looking to increase their list of book titles.

Showman, Ian Thomas, is well know in post 1960s speedway through his involvement in the sport as a promoter, manager and his connections with Ivan Mauger and Barry Briggs. After a break from speedway in the 1990s he returned to manage the successful Workington team in 1999 and his involvement in the sport continues as Promoter at Belle Vue. This is a warts and all account of his life in speedway and pulls no punches. It's a good easy read and an

interesting insight into the inside dealings of British speedway and as you'd expect from Ian Thomas it has its fair share of humorous moments. However, I do consider the asking price a bit steep at £14.95. **Review by Graham Fraser**

**A world of my own: Jason Crump** - by Jason Crump with Martin Rogers - Pub by Galathco Publications - Available from 'MLR Book', 6 Crown Close, Long Eaton, Nottingham NG10 3QP @ £21.00 inc p&p (cheques/PO payable to MLR Book)

2004 saw Jason Crump finally fulfill his potential by winning the Grand Prix series and with it the title World Speedway Champion, so the only surprise about this book is that it took another two years for his biography to appear. It follows the normal chronological format of an autobiography, with the addition of comment boxes featuring a whole range of speedway names liberally spread through out the book, along with Crump family photographs.

What I found most interesting about this book is the recent phenomenon of the life led by top-flight speedway riders like Crump. Their lives revolve around a series of meetings spread around Europe on several days during each week, interspersed by practice and racing in the growing Grand Prix series for the world championship. The rewards may be great but I suspect the cost in terms of injuries, travel fatigue, and impact on family life eventually catch up with most top riders. Expensive at over £20 but an interesting read. **Review by Graham Fraser**

[ Just a note to let book collectors know that Ian Hoskins has revised and updated his book on the Family Hoskins and this is now available from Ian in New Zealand. No information on how they may be imported but contact details for Ian can be supplied by JH.]

{Another Footnote – Midget Car fans will know that **Derek Bridgett**'s book on the subject has been published. Any car fan prepared to do a brief review placing a speedway emphasis on the contents of the book. }

## **Sidecars on Sky**

Must give a brief mention to mention to Sky Sports, (the team that brings us regular solo speedway fare throughout the summer (which if we have observant wives(who immediately kick themselves) can watch in bars on holiday in places such as Ibiza (Bar 2TT in Es Cana) ))featured sidecar

speedway action from the Isle of Wight. To the solo purist I suspect they were interesting but the big bikes are even more thrilling on grass. Maybe Sky will extend their coverage to solos and sidecars on grass. Maybe we will see the flat trackers too but I did hear that a lot of racers are using enduro type machines rather than the big bikes we would expect to see based on footage from the USA.

## **Noel Johnson**

**Nigel Bird** has written this career record of a pioneer. Nigel would welcome any details of meetings that featured Noel.

John 'Noel' Johnson was born in Brisbane Australia on December 25 1904, because he was born on Christmas day his parents gave him the name 'Noel'. As a young man he raced cycles and was quite successful before drifting into speedway racing. His first race taking place at the Brisbane exhibition grounds 1926/27. He then raced at Davies Park for a season where he continued to improve. In 1928 he came to England with the A.J.Hunting troupe of riders and was contracted to the "International Speedways" tracks.

Noel, riding a Harley Davidson Peashooter, was not particularly successful, most good results coming from handicap races. An I.S.L. end of season rider report did not see him worthy of a mention.

1929. Noel known as 'Shorty' by his team mates moves to Exeter, the track and the level of racing suiting him better. There he becomes a regular member and captain of the Exeter team. In May he wins his first major award since arriving in England, the 'Silver Star', beating Lew Lancaster in the final. May also sees him appear in the Harringay team, away at West Ham, scoring 2 pts.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> June he earns his promotion to 'star' status when he wins the silver helmet & handicap finals, the following meeting sees him beat Jack Bishop to win the Gold star scratch race final.

In July he represents Australia in a sort of test match v England for the Ashes (at Exeter). This event was run over 4 hrs, semi finals & finals. This was not a test match in the true sense more a series of match races, Noel beating Jim Kempster but losing to fellow Aussie Jack bishop in the semi final. The final was between 2 Aussies. In October he is matched against lady rider Dorothy Bunt who wins thanks to Noel falling off. Falling off for Noel seems to be a regular happening, fortunately without injury.

1930. Noel continues his successes at Exeter and continues as team captain and steady scorer. In July an injured foot followed by a broken collar bone keeps him off the track for a few weeks and the team captaincy was handed to Frank Buckland. On his return he falls and injures a knee. It is not the last time he falls, it is a year in which he bites the dust more frequently than last, fortunately most times without injury. In Sept. Exeter stage a proper but unofficial test match. Noel paired with Dicky Case scores 2 pts for the Australians in their 28- 24 win. In the second unofficial test he ends up on the losing side 24-30.

June 1931. He moves to the newly opened track at Plymouth where he is appointed vice captain. The very first meeting is a match against his former team Exeter, he scores a meagre 1 pt in Plymouth's 32-21 victory. (9hts. 3 races per man) In the return match he top scores with 7 for Plymouth as they lose 20-33. The following week a creditable 5pts against Southampton, Noel then cleans up the second half scratch races and wins the 'Raven Trophy'. Gaining confidence with every meeting Noel is now on the way up, scoring a 9 pt maximum against Exeter and again cleaning up in the scratch races. The next week, against West Ham he drops 1pt to score 8 and again wins the scratch race final. Tragically, fate now takes a grim hand and his promise is gone as Noel's career ends abruptly on August 25th 1931 in heat 7 of the challenge match with Coventry. He over slides and is thrown from his machine. Following close behind is Coventry's Bill Allen (of Kidderminster); unable to avoid Noel, he rides over him. Apparently the Doctor and medics at the track do not realise the extent of his injuries, which may have delayed his removal to hospital. He dies in the local hospital one and a half hours after the accident from an internal haemorrhage. At the inquest a distraught Bill Allen is exonerated of any blame.

26 year old bachelor Noel was buried on 28<sup>th</sup> August. The funeral cortege with more than a dozen black sedans travelled through the streets of Plymouth where the crowds lined the route as many as 5 deep. The bearers included team mates Paddy Dean, Bert Spencer & Bert Jones. Amongst the mourners were Plymouth & Exeter speedway officials and the Exeter team. His crash helmet and race jacket were dropped onto the Coffin before the soil was replaced. In 1932 the Plymouth supporters club had £94 in a memorial fund (a useful sum of money in those days) but deciding it was not enough

for their purpose donated the money to the local hospital where it was used to purchase special lighting for the operating theatre. Noel lies in Efford Cemetery Plymouth. His grave is most probably neglected. It would be nice if any speedway minded people nearby paid it a visit and if possible tidied it up so that one of speedways pioneers is not forgotten.

## DKW

**Colin Chubb**, from Plaistow has written to tell of a Classic Racer magazine article of summer 1987 which featured an item about a rider called Jim Bounds who had raced a DKW powered machine at Barnet Speedway and a venue called Hampton Court Speedway. Barnet we know about but does Hampton Court ring any bells, and if so, can you tell us about it, even if it was a grass track, please do.

There are references to the DKW machine in the pioneer days and I think there was a photo of this 600cc machine, which was produced in Germany, in one of the contemporary magazines. On a personal note I am aware that Norrie Isbister had intended to race one of these machines. However, from Norrie's personal effects, I have drawn the conclusion that whilst he paid for one it never arrived. I have a veritable sheaf of letters from a company which appear to be the importers of the DKW which indicate they repaid Norrie but in dribs and drabs of a fiver or so a week.

**Jim Henry**

## Speedway Researcher Web Site

**Ron McNeil** continues to batter on with the web site and the site content continues to grow concentrating on the immediate post war years in all three divisions of the National League plus other venues of that era. Exeter and Plymouth 1947 are on an others will follow in due course. As yet there is limited coverage of the very early 1950s and beyond but it will grow as time goes by. Again, all offers of help will be considered. We are delighted to be involved in the new Speedway Museum project which will draw upon the web site for meeting and rider information. We can also announce that thanks to **Roger Beaman** and **Nigel Nicklin** that their **Cradley Heath** archive of meetings from 1947 to 1952 is appearing on the web. No to be outdone it is expected that Wolverhampton material will appear on the site thanks to **Mark**

**Sawbridge. Roger and Nigel's** gesture is massive and one which is really appreciated as is **Mark's**

Another huge thanks is given to **Barry Stephenson** from Workington who has been supplying Belle Vue data into the 1950s. and will keep the material coming until my finger tips are worn away. **Barry** intends to make another major gift in the near future which, I promise will knock your socks off. Get your suspenders (OK it is an American idea) out now!

**Bob Ozanne** continues to head up the team that is dealing with the pre-war era and is doing sterling work there. Whilst the main thrust is on the main competitions, details of other meetings are always welcome.

**Ron** ran a trial chat room for a few weeks and ran into a few snags. The idea is to provide subscribers to this magazine the opportunity to contact each other via the web site. Anyone, who does not subscribe, but who has a casual interest would have the opportunity to request information via the existing "Can You Help" section on the web but it is the intention to keep the chat room for subscribers initially. Ron is working on ground rules for the new chat room and we should be in a position to publish these rules in Vol9 No.3.

### **Team Colours and Race Jacket Data**

**Nigel Bird**, 38 Blakemore Drive, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 7RN Tel: 0121 329 3942 offers this information on the 1929 Southern League and asks if anyone can add to his information.

<b>Teams</b>	<b>Colours</b>	<b>R/J data</b>	<b>Nickname</b>
--------------	----------------	-----------------	-----------------

Birmingham (Perry Barr)	Pink/Blue	Horizontal halves	Not found
Coventry	Red/Green	Horizontal halves	None?
Crystal Palace	Orange	Orange + Black lettering "Crystal Palace Speedway" (1)	Glaziers
Crystal Palace	Orange	Plain orange R/J (2)	.....
Hall Green (Birmingham)	Claret/Blue	Horizontal Halves ??	none
Harringay	Yellow	Plain R/J	none
Lea Bridge	Black/White	Black ground with White portcullis pattern	Bridgers??
Southampton	Light Blue	Plain + Black No. RJ also plain shirts	Saints
Stamford Bridge	Mid Blue/White	3 Horizontal bands, centre band white	Pensioners??
Wembley	Red/White	Horizontal halves	Lions?
West Ham	White	Plain Shirt & or R/J	none
White City (London)	Red/White/Blue	3 Horizontal bands	none

		(Thirds)	
Wimbledon	Red	Plain RJ	????

Crystal Palace colours were originally Orange, black being introduced for the lettering and numbering before it was adopted as part of the team colours. White City's colours have been frequently quoted as red/white/yellow this I believe is incorrect. Early motor cycle magazines (1929) and a June 1929 White City programme clearly give the colours as red/white/ blue. Harringay's nickname "Canaries" was not introduced until 1930. High Beech (open meetings) ran some non league team events in 1929 did they use the redundant Hall Green race jackets? (Both tracks under the same promotion) I'm not certain of the H/Green RJ design. Photo confirmation required.

### MISSING OR DOUBTFUL COLOURS 1929-39

Can you help Nigel Bird fill in the gaps here?

TEAM	NICK NAME	YEAR (S)	COLOURS
BELLE VUE	none	1930	Red/ blk ? horiz. Striped jersey (April 1930)
BELLE VUE (reserves)	none?	1931	Red/Black? Diagonal halves + white No.
BELLE VUE (south`n)manchester	?	1931	?
BELLE VUE II (reserves)	COLTS	1938	Red / black?
BELLE VUE II (reserves)	?	1939	Red / black?
BIRMINGHAM (Perry Barr)	?	1930	? (from mid May, promotion change)
BRISTOL	none	1929-30	Black/white?
CARDIFF	?	1929-30	?
CARDIFF	?	1935	?
CARDIFF	?	1936	Blue / yellow ?
CARDIFF	?	1937	?
GLASGOW (white city)	none	1930	Jersey (colour ?) . (early 1930)
GLASGOW (white city)	?	1931	Green or blue? + red letter.

HALIFAX	?	1929	
HIGH BEECH	?	1929	Claret/ blue horiz halves (Ex Hall Green)?
LEA BRIDGE II (Reserves)	?	1934	Red/black. ?
LEEDS	?	1929	?
LEICESTER (super)	?	1929	Cambridge blue?
LEICESTER (super)	SUPER?	1930	White / Cambridge blue?
LIVERPOOL	?	1929	?
LIVERPOOL	?	1930	Red / blue ?
LUTON	Hatters?	1934-36	?
MIDDLESBROUGH	none	1929	?
MIDDLESBROUGH	none	1930-31	?
MIDDLESBROUGH	?	1936	White + union jack?
MIDDLESBROUGH	?	1937	White?
MIDDLESBROUGH	?	1938	White?
NEWCASTLE (Brough Pk)	?	1929	?
NEWCASTLE (Brough Pk)	?	1930	?
NEWCASTLE (Gosforth)	?	1930	?
NORTHAMPTON	?	1929-30	?
NOTTINGHAM	?	1929	?
NOTTINGHAM	?	1934 ?	?
PLYMOUTH	Panthers	1936	Orange/white or Yellow/ white ? (from Bristol programme)
PLYMOUTH	?	1937	?
PORTSMOUTH	?	1930	Blue/White?
PRESTON	none?	1929	Blue/white ?
ROCHDALE	none?	1929	?
SALFORD (Manchester)	Albion?	1929	?
SHEFFIELD	?	1929	Lime green ?
STOKE (Hanley)	?	1929	?
STOKE	?	1939	Red / white ?
WARRINGTON	?	1929	Yellow/blue?
WEST HAM	?	1930	Claret/blue? (not red/blue)
WOLVERHAMPTON	none	1929- 30	?

**Arthur Forrest**

**David Hartley** from Sowerby Bridge has written the following about that icon of Yorkshire Speedway, Arthur Forrest, recording his first season in speedway. (You can follow part of Arthur's career in the Halifax section of the web site.)

Arthur was born in Mirfield, West Yorkshire, the family were involved in equestrian sport and Arthur had won many competitions up and down the country.

In 1948 Arthur and close friend Jack Hughes attended training sessions at Bradford and during that season rode for the homeless Halifax "Nomads" who were involved in challenge matches because they were on a provisional licence. Arthur rode in a match at Rayleigh, who were also hoping for League status, the home side won 57 – 27. Halifax had Norman Price top scoring with 9 while Arthur had 2 points.

As well as attending the Bradford training school he practiced at Ainsdale Sands, Southport with many other young riders.

Construction started on The Shay track at Halifax on 8 February 1949, the track was 402 yards in length and had banked corners and was completed in the afternoon of the first meeting. The first meeting took place on 6 April with a National League Division Three match against Yarmouth Bloaters and was held in pouring rain. It was not a dream start as the Dukes lost 37 – 45 and the 17 year old Arthur had just three points and an engine failure from his four rides.

The following Monday Halifax had the long trip to Poole's Wimbourne Road track for the first leg of the first leg of a National Trophy match with the Pirates who won 70 – 38. Arthur scored 4 points.

It was back to The Shay on 13 April for a League match against Exeter and the Dukes lost 34 – 49 which saw a promising 9 points score for Arthur. However, in his next match, away at Hastings against the Saxons, the Dukes lost 58 – 25 and Arthur failed to score. In the National Trophy tie second leg against Poole at Halifax on the Pirates won 59 – 48 to win the tie on aggregate. Top Duke was their captain Vic Emms who scored an 18 point maximum while Arthur scored 9 points without winning a race in the 18 heat match.

The following day the Dukes visited Stoke which was then known as Hanley for a League match and were slaughtered 65 – 19 in which Arthur scored just 2 points.

The Dukes then met fellow League newcomers Liverpool Chads home and away losing 39 – 44 in Halifax and 40 – 44 at the Stanley Stadium. The young Duke scored 6 at home and 10 in Liverpool. The Dukes recorded their maiden League victory on Wednesday 4 May against the visiting Rayleigh Rockets. The score stood at 62 – 22 after 14 heats and Arthur scored 9 of those points for the Dukes. In consecutive nights at Poole and Caister Road, Yarmouth, Arthur had 5 points in the 37 – 46 defeat in Poole and 3 points in the 21 – 63 defeat by the Bloaters.

Arthur scored the first of many maximums on 11 May and his 12 points helped the Dukes beat Stoke Potters 47 – 35. The win showed that at last the youngsters were blending into team and it was an added bonus as the Potters led the League at this time.

Arthur entered the chase for the World Championship, taking part in the Qualifying Round at Rayleigh. He managed just six points but in winning heat 8 he broke the track record by a full second.

The Dukes fans had five home League fixtures on the trot starting with fellow Yorkshiremen, Hull Angels as the first of the five visitors on 25 May. The Angels were put to flight by 57 – 26 and Arthur recorded his second 12 point maximum. Arthur scored 11 points in the next which was a 54 – 29 win over Plymouth Devils with Pete Lansdale the only man to lower his colours.

On Whit Monday, supported by 14,000 fans, Dukes took a 59 – 24 win over Hastings Saxons with Arthur chipping in 9 points. In the process Arthur lowered the track record to 70.0 seconds in his opening ride. The maximum hopes were dashed when he fell in his second ride. Arthur was back to maximum form in the next fixture as he collected 12 points in the Dukes 49 – 35 win over Exeter Falcons and on 15 June Oxford Cheetahs were defeated 66 – 18 in match which saw Arthur collect another maximum.

With 56 points out of 60 possible and The Shay track record, Arthur had arrived.

Arthur was always immaculately turned out in those highly polished black leathers, the socks over the tops of the boots with his scarf round his neck. The turn out of the machine matched the personal appearance. The machine was spotless too. Arthur's turn out earned him the nickname The Black Prince.

On 13 June Arthur was again in World Championship action. This time he raced at Walthamstow in the Second Round event there and

finished a very creditable fourth with 10 points which was enough to take him to the Third round.

Back to League action on 16 June and a visit to Hull. Arthur took 8 points in the Dukes 46 – 37 win. The Dukes returned home for the following Wednesday and Arthur scored a paid maximum (11 paid 12) as they beat Leicester Hunters 58 – 26.

Our Man in Black of the day scored more than half the Halifax total of 22 with another 12 as the Pirates ran up 62 points. The Dukes pulled off a 42 all draw at Oxford's Cowley Stadium and Arthur scored 11.

The second trip to Rayleigh on 2 July was a poor night for our Yorkshire Duke as he only managed four of points from a couple of rides and his bike failed to complete the four laps in his other two outings. To Be Continued.

### **An Epic Dirt Track Tale**

We hope you enjoyed **Ian Paterson's** poetry in the last edition. At long last Ian has agreed to allow us to reproduce his full epic (which runs a full 20 plus pages) and we will serialize it over the next few editions. It goes from the primordial times to modern (2004) times and is quite a sharp, and amusing insight into the sport over the years. If there is demand we will reproduce it in booklet form once we complete serialization. Ian has some fun cartoons to go with the text based on his career as a grass tracker and speedway man with the Berwick Bandits. The epic starts here:

“PRE-HISTORY”

Our speedway, once a sport sublime,  
(It's origins lost in the mists of time).

Some say '06 or eight or ten,

The fact remains we don't know when!

Was it first seen in the USA?

At Capetown, I've heard others say.

Or Camden, on a cycle track?

No matter when, 'twas way way back!

Could it be they sowed the seeds,

When men first mounted 'Iron Steeds'?

On flimsy bikes, instead of horse,

Did they tear up the trotting courses?

When men with motor cycles meet,  
The outcome is they will complete.  
A grassy field looked good enough,  
But all too soon it cut up rough.

And when it rained, the track got wetter,  
They found, the thrill was even better.  
Now sliding round, each other chasing,  
Was this the birth of dirt track racing?

“BOARD TRACK RACING”

In Yankee Land, its understood,  
That ‘Uncle Sam’, built tracks of wood.  
With bends, banked steeply to the sky,  
These board race boys could really fly!  
    On ‘Cyclones’, ‘Thors’, or ‘Indians’,  
    (One thousand cubes of big vee twins.)  
    These crazy bas..ards got there fun,  
    When lapping board tracks at the ton!

They raced on mile, or half mile tracks,  
Bends high enough for steeplejacks.  
Too many deaths in competition,  
Brought about their abolition.

“THE FATHER FIGURE”

From ‘Aussie’, they’d heard stories wild,  
They raved of ‘Roarin’ John’s brainchild.  
Of how he ran some ‘Dirt track races’,  
At Maitland, and such other places.

    His job, as ‘Gaffer’ at the show,  
    Was to bring in punters, (make some dough!)  
    The fun began, the racing followed,  
    These country boys, sure whooped and hollered!

When Johnnie saw the crowd’s delight,  
It served to whet his appetite.

“I’ll spread this sport the world o’er”,

So he set off for England’s shore

    With a bunch of lads, he sailed away,  
    On board the “S.S.Oransay”.

    ‘Twas then, that Hoskins calculate,  
    That this was where his fortune waited!

“ENGLISH BIRTH PANGS”

A February Day in twenty-eight  
[Sunday the nineteenth was the date]  
Races were run by the local club,  
On a running track at the “Kings Oak” Pub.  
    They raced in twenty-seven, it is true,  
    But weren’t blessed by the ACU.  
    So was it just by chance (or fate)  
    That the organizers chose this date?  
They hoped this was a master stroke,  
(The Ilford Club was stoney broke).  
Fans choked the roads for miles around,  
And thirty thousand filled the ground!  
    Such massive crowds had not been seen,  
    They even lined the centre green!  
    A huge success, Jack Hill-Bailey  
    And front page news on Monday’s daily!  
They knew they’d broken every rule,  
And suffered “Hunting’s” ridicule.  
Said J.H-B “We did our best,  
We’ve rolled the ball, where will it rest?”  
“THE EXPLOSION”  
Soon ‘con-men’ started to promote  
(with trilby hat and camel coat)  
New tracks were sprouting overnight,  
And mostly on some landfill site!  
    “We’ll visit gasworks for some ash,  
    Then lay it down and make some cash.  
    With two ‘crack’ riders for top slots,  
    The rest, the local idiots!”  
Now this bred riders in profusion,  
But fans grew tired, and disillusioned.  
The same old faces, every meeting  
This formula was self defeating.  
To Be Continued

## **Contact Update**

**Alan Bates**, AKA our expert on Walthamstow and Lea Bridge has moved (he was the victim of a JH attempt to move him some time

ago) is now at 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Flat, 71 Bouverie Road West, Folkestone,  
Kent, CT20 2RL Mobile: 07804 933789.

**Deadline for the next edition is 31<sup>st</sup> October 2006**

See [www.speedwayresearcher.org.uk](http://www.speedwayresearcher.org.uk) site. Web Master Ron McNeil

**The Speedway Researcher is edited and published by :**

**Graham Fraser**

**7 B Bruce Street**

**Stirling, FK8 1PD**

**Tel: 01786 471992**

**Jim Henry**

**90 Greenend Gardens,**

**Edinburgh, EH17 7QH**

**Tel: 0131 664 7185      24**

## 1956 Inter-Division League

Results	17.4. Swindon 51 Poole 45*	24.4. Southampton 51 Belle Vue 45	27.4. Leicester 45 Birmingham 51
	12.5. Coventry 50 Wimbledon 46	17.5. Ipswich 60 Norwich 36	19.5. Rayleigh 46 Poole 50
	08.6. Leicester 49 Bradford 47	14.6. Oxford 60 Bradford 36	15.6. Leicester 55 Norwich 41
	26.6. Southampton 54 Norwich 42	05.7. Ipswich 54 Belle Vue 42	11.8. Swindon 33 Wimbledon 63
	01.9. Coventry 55 Poole 41	18.9. Southampton 48 Birmingham 47	04.10. Oxford 37 Belle Vue 59

\* revised score. Not Raced Oxford v Birmingham and Rayleigh v Wimbledon  
Wembley v Coventry, Swindon, and Rayleigh not raced.

## Central Challenge Shield 1961

Away Team	Coventry	Leicester	Oxford	Swindon	Scoring system	League Points
Home Team					Up to 29 -	0 Pts
Coventry	xxxxxx	51 - 27 (8 - 0)	48 - 30 (7 - 1)	48 - 30 (7 - 1)	30 - 32	- 1 Pt
Leicester	44 - 34 (6 - 2)	xxxxxx	48 - 29 (8 - 0)	46 - 32 (7 - 1)	33 - 35	- 2 Pts
Oxford	42 - 36 (5 - 3)	43 - 35 (6 - 2)	xxxxxx	47 - 31 (7 - 1)	39 -	4 Pts
Swindon	49 - 29 (8 - 0)	48 - 30 (7 - 1)	47 - 31 (7 - 1)	xxxxxx	40 - 42	- 5 Pts
					43 - 45	- 6 Pts
					46 - 48	- 7 Pts
					49 & 49 +	- 8 Pts

### League Table

	R	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	6	3	0	3	246	222	27
Swindon	6	3	0	3	237	231	25
Leicester	6	3	0	3	231	237	24
Oxford	6	3	0	3	222	246	20

Concept was to get away from 2 for win  
1 for draw and 0 for loss.

## Provincial League - Northern League 1961

Away Team	Cradley Heath	Edinburgh	Middlesbrough	Newcastle	Sheffield	Stoke	Wolves
Home Team							
Cradley Heath	xxxxxx	42 - 36	48 - 30	59 - 19	60 - 18	38 - 40	53 - 24
Edinburgh	43 - 34	xxxxxx	49 - 29	60 - 18	53 - 25	41 - 37	56 - 21
Middlesbrough	36 - 40	42.5 - 35.5	xxxxxx	44 - 32	36 - 42	40 - 38	38 - 39
Newcastle	30 - 44	24 - 54	36 - 41	xxxxxx	53 - 24	35 - 43	53 - 25
Sheffield	38 - 40	39 - 39	46 - 32	53 - 25	xxxxxx	44 - 33	45 - 33
Stoke	50 - 28	49 - 29	46 - 30	42 - 36	53 - 25	xxxxxx	51 - 27
Wolverhampton	41 - 37	39 - 39	59 - 19	50 - 28	49.5 - 28.5	33 - 45	xxxxxx