

Ipswich Evening Star – Pub. 7th April 2009

Remembering the heyday of cycle speedway

KESGRAVE Panthers, Ipswich Vampires and Woodbridge Wildcats, just some of the teams who competed during the heyday of cycle-speedway. Dave Hunting, who is still active in organising the sport locally, recalled recently in Kindred Spirits how popular the sport was when most towns and villages in the area had a team.

Don Corcoran of Crowfield has sent me a couple of teams from the mid 1950s.

1954 CHAMPS: The Ipswich Vampires team, right, who were County Champions in 1954: Left to right: Des Blowers, John Chamberlin, Fred Friend (manager partly hidden), Maurice Page, John Benfield, and John Corham. On wheel left: Don Corcoran. On wheel right: Terry Abbott. On the bike: Ron Bagley. Ron was county and All-England champion and one year later Terry Abbott was Suffolk champion.



KINGS OF '56: The Woodbridge Wildcats, above, who were Suffolk champions for 1956. Picture shows left to right: Don Corcoran, Alf Darvell, Derrick Prescott on bike, Clive Hill, Bill Ganwood, Maurice Page, John Benfield, Alan Williamson (manager). Teams had to split up and join up as the lads had to do their national service.

AND THEY'RE OFF: This photograph right from Ron Latter of Whershead Road, Ipswich, was taken at the final of the Bryden Trophy held at the Melton track in September 1955. Ron is second left breaking away from the start with riders from the Ipswich Vampires, Trimley Tigers and the Melton Metiors.



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Pictured Top – Ipswich Vampires 1954 County Champions, left to right: Des Blowers, John Chamberlin, Fred Friend (partly hidden), Maurice Page, John Benfield, and John Corham. On wheel left Don Corcoran. On wheel right Terry Abbott. On the Bike: Ron Bagley, Ron was County and All England champion and one year later Terry Abbott was Suffolk Champion.

Pictured Middle – Woodbridge Wildcats 1956 Suffolk Champions left to right: Don Corcoran, Alf Darvell, Derrick Prescott on bike, Clive Hill, Bill Ganwood, Maurice Page, John Benfield, Alan Williamson (manager). Teams had to split up and join up as the lads had to do their National Service.

Pictured Bottom – Picture by Ron Latter of The Bryden Trophy final held at Melton track in September 1955.

Ron is 2nd left with riders from Ipswich Vampires, Trimley Tigers and the Melton Metiors.

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COPDOCK RACERS, MID 1950'S: Back row, left to right: Not known, M Roworth, Herbie Wright, Derek Ellis, Brian Harvey and Bob Sharp. Front row, left to right: Johnny Chamberlain, Richard Steward, Brian Taylor and Dennis Enefer

Bob looks Sharp in this photo

MEMORIES: A big thanks to Richard Steward, a regular Witches fan since the '50s, who sent me this cycle speedway photograph of Copdock Racers, a team near Ipswich.

And on this photograph, back row, right, is Bob Sharp, who passed away recently.

"Bob and John Chamberlain both rode speedway and both came up to have a watch and help boost our attendance for a meeting or two," said Richard.

"I'm in the picture and it was taken about 1956/57. We used to get about two or three hundred watching."

THANKS Richard for this and I hope it brings some memories back for a few of you and certainly Bob Sharp fans. If you have any old photographs send them to me: Mike Bacon Love Speedway, 30 Lower Brook St., Ipswich IP4 1AN.

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Pictured Top – Mid 1950's Copdock Racers

Back row, left to right: Not known, M. Roworth, Herbie Wright, Derek Ellis, Brian Harvey and Bob Sharp. Front Row: Johnny Chamberlain, Richard Steward, Brian Taylor and Dennis Enefer