

A publication of the
**VETERAN CYCLE
 SPEEDWAY RIDERS
 ASSOCIATION**
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THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2003

On 15th. February at the Exmouth Social Club, Stepney , under the chairmanship of our host, Derek Cattle, the AGM got off to a promising start with reports from our secretary and treasurer, showing the VCSRA to have had a good year. Our functions had been successful and well attended and our financial position healthy.

Membership remained fairly constant, our current number being 255. Inevitably some have left or have been unable to continue, but attracting some new members have enabled us to maintain the status quo. Advertising to obtain new members will continue to be made.

The committee and secretary/treasurer were returned again unopposed and Bert Hudson was elected to take up the office in November as President of the Association for 2003/2004.

Events for 2003 will include our regular favourites with Spring and Autumn golf tournaments, dates to be fixed, a Hawbush social race day, sometime in June, the nostalgia evening at the Exmouth Social club pencilled in for 2nd. August but to be confirmed and the Rye House Speedway evening in the Autumn.

The annual Dinner/Dance will be held on 15th. November 2003 at Ye Olde Plough House at Bulphan as usual. The price of a ticket and overnight accommodation will remain the same as last year at £18.50 and £45 for a double room. **Subscriptions, will remain unchanged at £6 and are due now** and a new members' directory should accompany this newsletter.

In any other business, a proposal by Eric Hemsley, carried unanimously, resulted in the following paragraph being added to our constitution:- *In the event of the Association ceasing to operate for any reason whatsoever , the funds remaining, after all liabilities have been settled shall be distributed to various causes as decided by those attending an Extraordinary General Meeting.*



At the AGM in February questions arose regarding the Constitution of the VCSRA, re-printed below.

CONSTITUTION OF THE VETERAN CYCLE SPEEDWAY RIDERS ASSOCIATION

The Association is the Veteran Cycle Speedway Riders Association.

The objectives of the Association, at all times, are purely social and benevolent. It was formed to help former colleagues to keep in touch with each other, to stage frequent re-unions and to enjoy the pleasures of re-living old times in convivial company.

A General meeting shall be called annually, with no more than 15 months between meetings and no less than 60 days notice being given to members.

The Secretary shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting at the request of a majority of the committee or, upon receipt of a written petition of no less than 15 members of the Association giving their reasons for such a meeting. The meeting will only discuss the specific purpose for which it was called. No less than 14 days notice of the meeting shall be given and the meeting shall take place within 28 days of receipt of the petition. (Public and Bank holidays excepted)

There shall be a committee consisting of seven members, these to be elected at an Annual General Meeting. The committee shall elect their own chairman. There shall be a quorum of 4 members. Nominations for officials must be received in writing, with a seconder for the proposal, at least 28 days prior to the A.G.M. and in exceptional circumstances nominations MAY be considered from the floor. Any officer wishing to stand down from the committee, for whatever reason, shall give at least 28 days notice of their retirement.

The committee shall decide the number of meetings that are required during the year and will arrange them, as necessary.

The committee shall have the power to co-opt another member to replace a regular member, absent for any reason. If a committee member is absent he may then give his proxy vote to another committee member which may be used if there is no co-opted member.

The committee shall have power to either refuse or withdraw membership, if in their opinion, it is in the interest of the Association to do so. The committee shall also have the power to waive the membership fee, in exceptional circumstances.

The committee shall consider candidates for President of the Association and nominate them for election at an Annual General Meeting, along with any other nominations received in writing at least 28 days prior to the AGM. The President's term of office shall be for one year only, commencing at our Dinner & Dance, later in the year. Between the AGM and his inauguration he will be President Elect.

Any proposed amendment to the constitution must be put in writing and received at least 28 days prior to the AGM.

Membership fees due on April 1st must be paid by June 30th or else membership shall be considered lapsed. Membership fees shall be decided by the committee.

In the event of the Association ceasing to operate, for any reason whatsoever, the funds remaining after all liabilities have been settled shall be distributed to various causes as decided by those attending an Extraordinary General Meeting.

GREAT TEAMS OF THE FORTIES NO 1. BECTON ACES.



Becton Aces (East London League) 1947

The earliest great cycle speedway team in the East London League was almost certainly Becton Aces, pictured above. They set the standard for others to follow in an area which produced some of the finest teams in the country.

Riders above from left to right, back row. Terry Brown, Malcolm Harris, Ray Black (Cpt.) Pat Clarke, Ken Randall and Wally Hulme (track official) Front row: Les Redgrave, George Stephens and Lew Dowell.

The team were joined later by Bert Hudson and Cyril Prince.

Regarded as a pioneer club and admired by many, Becton Aces were formed in 1946. They won many trophies of those times including the "Stratford Express" cup, the East London trophy and the newly formed East London League in 1947 and 1948. Ray Black also captained the East London test team and Ray, George Stevens and Ken Randall rode for England in the first international meeting against Scotland in May 1949.

- During 1949, the team lost several riders to National Service causing them to lose their domination since first being formed and giving way in East London to the mighty Stratford Hammers.

75 YEARS OF SPEEDWAY CELEBRATION AT HIGH BEACH

On Sunday 9th February, the annual event run by the Vintage Speedway Magazine at the Kings Oak hotel at High Beach in Essex to commemorate the birth of Speedway racing in this country, this year celebrated 75 years of the sport.

Despite the wet weather, a good crowd attended, including many of our members and former speedway stars including Archie Windmill who, as President of the VSRA was wearing his chain of office, Wally Green and Danny Dunton. The usual interesting display of vintage motor bikes were on display with the familiar sounds and smells as they were kicked into life and excited the senses again.

Films of early racing were shown to an eager audience inside the hotel while the hectic exchange of memorabilia was going on everywhere. Among those interviewed was John Chaplin, brilliant editor of the VSM who is leaving now for pastures anew. He was thanked for his remarkable contribution since the magazine was launched in 1993. In yet another of his many disguises, Roy Delaney wandered through the crowd, totally unrecognisable, as a wild, be-whiskered character he called "beach boy" to add humour to this celebration.

An offer to stage cycle speedway racing on a grass area next to the hotel was not taken up for various reasons, which was providential owing to the bad weather, but perhaps something to consider for future occasions. With sufficient time for preparation, it could be a project for next year and it would be of help to hear from members interested in organising such an event.

Calling all Computer "Whiz kids."

We are looking for a volunteer with computer access to up-date and maintain the VCSRA web site. Our hard pressed secretary does not have the time to take on the additional responsibility but would be happy to assist anyone interested in getting this project off the ground. If interested, please call Vic on the telephone number shown on front page.

East London Cycle Speedway Club

Prince Regent Lane, (A13 junct.) Canning Town, London, E.16.

Interested or can you help?

The club is looking for new riders as we are starting a mid week youth league for riders from 7 to 16 years old. We have cycles you can use and we will provide training. We also need people to help run meetings, i.e. referees, starter and flag marshals, pits marshals, team managers, announcers, mechanics and first aid persons. We will provide training for track officials.

New riders of any age from 7 to 50 years old can come and try our sport. You will receive help and advice on riding. The whole family are always welcome at East London Cycle Speedway Club.

For more information, please telephone Dave Flemming 020 8518 7112 or visit our web site, www.eastlondoncyclespeedwayclub.com or email: info@eastlondoncyclespeedwayclub.com

Wilf Smith

The sad news was recently received that Wilf Smith, who was aged about 70, died in Eastbourne during the Autumn of 2001. He lived alone and had no close relatives. Because of this, the news has only just reached us.

Wilf joined the association in 1996 and attended the 50 years celebration at Thurrock but left soon afterwards. He started riding for Tottenham Racers in 1947 and went on later to the Edmonton Saints as a rider and assistant manager where he was an enthusiastic and popular member of the team for some years. We offer our condolences to his friends.



The picture taken at the Edmonton Saints track in 1951, shows from left to right the late Wilf Smith, The Mayor of Edmonton, Mrs.A. M. Glover, Johnny Brown and Peter Day.

ADDITIONS AND AMENDMENTS TO MEMBERS DIRECTORY

We welcome the following new members:-

Stewart Jago **Mick Jeffrey.** (Details already shown in new directory)

Judith Holmwood 65, Cherry Drive, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 8HE.
Tele: 01795 530903. Mobile: 07719-632135
email: sexynurse57@hotmail.com

David Fleming 42, Witham Court, Thant Close, Leyton, London, E10 5PJ
Tele: 0208-518-7112
email: davidsidney@dfleming.freemove.co.uk

* AMENDMENT

Brian Greatley New telephone number 0208-642-2179

Great Waking Rebels make history!

By Vic Duffy.

Cycle Speedway history was made in a recent league match which will go into the record book when Great Waking Rebels narrowly defeated Colchester Stars by 88 points to 81.

The Rebels put out the *oldest* ever team in a league match with an average age of 54 years. The Stars put out the *youngest* ever team in a senior event, with an average age of 14.

The match was a "nip and tuck" affair but the Rebels had an ace up their sleeve. The strategic and tactical expertise of 71 year old Den Winch which proved to be a decisive factor. Den has always been famous for his clever use of reserves and it was this which won the match for the Rebels.

Scorers for the Rebels. (with their ages in brackets)

S.Jago (50) 16 pts. D.Cousins (35) 14 pts. T.Hughes (43) 14 pts. T.Marsh (65) 13 pts.
E.Hemsley (65) 12 pts. J.Woolnough (70) 7 pts. V.Duffy (72) 6 pts. J.Helbin (42) 6 pts.

"Stars" riders ages ranged from 9 year old Oscar Clayson and 11 year old twins, Adam and James Hislop to 17 year old Liam Spurgeon.

Editor's note: I'm sure that everybody had a great time. Vic tells me that the above also appeared in the East Anglia & Essex newspaper which must have raised some eyebrows? We would like to hear from anyone who knows of any other record breaking matches.



?

Is this the first Speedway
v.Cycle speedway match

No, it is part of the 1950 advertisement to launch the new Phillips cycle, the "Speedtrack" at a cost Of £10.17.6d. The saddle is described as "tilted back, it provides correct riding position with greatest thrust!" So that's the reason I couldn't beat Johnny Brown ?

Despite the price which was hefty for us in those days, many were sold and raced successfully around

the country. I believe that most of us still preferred to "customise" our old bikes to make them fit our own requirements so, although the Phillips was frequently seen, it did not revolutionize our sport. (I wish I'd known about the thrust earlier though.) The photograph, taken at Birmingham Speedway track shows home rider **Geoff Bennett** (identified for us by **Stan Stevens**) The "Speedtrack" cycle (missing its front fork chromium stays) is being ridden by an unknown rider.

Our thanks to **Fred Pallett** who sent in the photograph.

Accent On Youth

by Roy Delaney

Cycle speedway as we know it no longer exists, thanks to the older riders who will not move over and give the youngsters a chance. It is not unusual to see riders well into their forties participating in league matches. I can remember when I was public relations officer of Edmonton in the 70's and 80's, the smell of muscle lubricating oil was very prominent in the dressing room. When I told the older riders that they should consider retiring and go over to the admin team for the purpose of training the youngsters, I was snubbed and told that I did not know anything about riding. Yet, strange as it may be, I was the original Edmonton captain, a position which I held for no less than ten years.

Cycle speedway in the beginning was a stepping stone to motor cycle speedway and many riders like **Bob Andrews, Mike Broadbanks and Clive Hitch** made the grade to the senior sport. Now, unfortunately we are in a position where a lot of riders are twice the age of speedway riders....Crazy, isn't it? and unless the Cycle speedway organisers introduce an age deadline rule, the young would-be riders will walk away from the sport. When the Edmonton Panthers disbanded in the 80's, the late Mr Jackson and I decided to open up a young BMX speedway club. We ran it as a cycle speedway. The idea became an instant success, following a lot of publicity. During our three year run, we had ten teams and formed our own league. Our crowds consisted mainly of parents, grandparents and friends. I told the Cycle speedway Council that this was the future of the sport. As the young ones got older, they would automatically progress into the cycle speedway team but alas, my suggestion fell on deaf ears.

The only reason that we packed up was that the BMX boys lacked outside competition and got bored with the home products. So, If the sport is to survive, I would recommend that the powers that be get rid of the riding granddads & concentrate on youth as **Vic Duffy** does in Colchester.

Editor's note: Roy has raised some controversial points. What do you think ?

News from Plymouth

by Fred Paul

Re the "Track Record", January 03, I consider John Heaton to be correct in saying that the motorised sport and cycle speedway go together like, "peaches and cream." Just look at the number of speedway riders that started as "skid kids." Our own secretary, **Vic White**, just for one. Cycle speedway seemed to flourish in towns and areas where there were successful motor Speedway teams up and down the country.

In the late forties and early fifties when down here "Plymouth Devils" were in the middle of a boom period, there was a flourishing local Plymouth and district cycle speedway league. Made up from teams from the city of Plymouth, villages in South Devon and even our own "Torpoint Flyers," the only team across the river Tamar in Cornwall. Interest waned and clubs folded after "Plymouth Devils" speedway called it a day. Sadly, as far as I know, there is no cycle speedway this side of Exeter. But where there is motorised speedway, eg. Exeter, Poole and Newport, Cycle speedway is still active.

I was very sorry to read of the death of **Barry Shapley**. Although I never met him, he would phone me regarding the sport's history etc. down here in Plymouth for his articles he wrote in the "Speedway Mail" each week. In conclusion, I would like to thank you and the members of the VCSRA who were so very kind to me at the Rye House speedway "do" last summer. God willing, I hope to see you all this summer. All the very best Fred Paul.

GOOD WISHES.

Our good wishes go to any of our members at home or in hospital who are unwell and to those below recovering from serious illness.

To **Bob Parish** (known to his pals as "Goffy") in Beeston Regis, Norfolk who suffered a stroke late last year with the crippling incapacity associated with this condition. The news is that Bob is now back at home and making a good recovery. **Alan Doggett**, himself a one time stroke victim, tells us that Bob is in good spirits, has responded to treatment and is improving daily. Bob has been pleased to receive many calls from well-wishers and will be glad to have a chat with any of his old friends.

To **Frank Duffy** in Barnet, North London, who also suffered a stroke in January and was in hospital for five weeks. Frank is now at home, has responded to physiotherapy and is making very good progress. He has been full of admiration for the treatment received from the dedicated medical staff at Barnet General hospital and North Finchley Memorial hospital. He also told me how he wants to thank all his old friends for their good wishes while he continues his recovery.

To **John Cooper** (Clapham Panthers—Tooting Tigers 1946-1952) in Seaford, East Sussex, recovering from a traumatic operation who writes below:-

Dear all,

John Cooper and Barbara would like to thank all their friends and fellow riders for the way they rallied round after it was diagnosed that John had developed cancer. During his stay in hospital there was a constant stream of visitors to take his mind off things. Added to this, the phone lines at home were red hot throughout the weeks that followed.

We must say that without our very special neighbours, **Ron and Kath Holvey**, we know things would have been a lot more grim than they were, nothing was too much trouble for them. Ron and John scored another 5-1 team riding throughout this race, as always in the past.

The good news is that the big 'C' is now in remission - we hope - though chemotherapy may follow. To finish, belonging to the VCSRA has changed our lives so much and at this time has been a life saver.

Thank you once again, words cannot express our feelings. Kindest regards to you all,
John & Barbara.

P.S. John got a big lift whilst in hospital with a surprise visit from David Norris, Eastbourne Speedway star.

Ladies ! The success of the "Track Record" depends to a great extent on the letters received from our members who provide much of the content of this quarterly publication. We would now like to hear from our long suffering ladies who must have lots to say after the cycle-speedway talk has ended. Our events and personalities, anniversaries, stories, etc. from the ladies' angle would be much appreciated and included in the next issue.

VETERAN RIDERS



Bert Hudson's special view of our Annual Dinner/Dance.

Looking for a Cycle Speedway film.

By Fred Pallett.

Recently a freebie local newspaper for South East London called "The Mercury" featured a short article about cycle speedway. In particular, it mentioned the former New Cross Rangers whose track was in Evelyn Street, Deptford, SE8. The article included an interview with a Derek Turner, a former Rangers rider who lives locally to me. It appears that a film was made in 1949 of a match between the Rangers and the Honor Oak Aces for the Glover trophy. This might be worth mentioning in the "Track Record" to see whether any Association members can recollect it and, indeed whether the film still exists.

{If any of our readers can help, please get in touch with Fred, who is in our members directory, or contact Vic, our secretary whose telephone number is on the front page.}

RYE HOUSE GET-TOGETHER

We have made arrangements to have a get together at RYE HOUSE on Saturday July 12th when NEWPORT will be the opposition in the Premier League match followed by a Conference League match.

They now have a great Harry Ramsden's Fish and Chip shop on site in case you feel hungry during the evening.

If you wish to come along, please fill in the attached acceptance slip and return to Vic.

Last year some members booked and we sent them tickets which they subsequently did not use. However we had to pay for all tickets issued so if you receive tickets and are unable to come, please return them so that we do not pay for people not attending.

Thank you.

RYE HOUSE SATURDAY July 12th

I wish to attend.

Name.....

Number of people.....