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SPEEDWAY RIDERS
ASSOCIATION**

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SECRETARY:-

Vic White

90 Ruskin Avenue

Long Eaton

Nottingham

NG10 3HX

Tel:- 0115-973 6041

Publishing Editor

Bill Gadsby

7 Sewell Close

St. Albans

Herts

AL4 0TB

Tel:- 01727-859943

e-mail:-vwhite@legend3333.worldonline.co.uk - bill.gadsby@lineone.net

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ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE

Saturday November 15th 2003, at 6.30.p.m.

at Ye Olde Plough House Motel, Bulphan, Essex

This is your final reminder to either book, if you have not already done so or to send the balance of your payment if you have just paid a deposit. As we will shortly have to finalise numbers for the meal, the table plan and also members needing overnight accommodation we need to hear from you as soon as possible in order that we can ensure that the evening goes as well as we would like it to. To date numbers are lower than in previous years so if you have forgotten to book and wish to come along, please contact us right away. Thank you.



RYE HOUSE

Another successful evening was enjoyed by our members on a beautiful sunny and warm night at the Hoddesden race track. Over 70 people turned up to see some good racing and to renew acquaintances with old friends and rivals. The only disappointment was the fact that a number of members asked for tickets to come along and then did not turn up (as happened last year also) with no word to say that they could not make it. We asked previously and included it on the acceptance form that should anyone book to go and then find that they were unable to go along to let us know so that we would not have to pay for people who were not there. Unfortunately there were some who did not come along and also did not let us know in time to avoid paying for them. We do, after all, arrange these events for your enjoyment and surely it isn't too much to ask that you let us know any changes in your plans, but if this situation continues we may have to give serious thought to just what events we can organise for you in the future.

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From Neil Tulberg

I was a member of the Bristol CSC from 1963 to 1970, hence was involved in the club from it joining the Southern League, to the British League proper in 1968, to becoming in 1970 the first (& only ever?) to:-

Win the British League;

Win the Gold Cup Final at Southampton against Tottenham ;

Provide 1st 2nd & 3rd (Keith Lyons, Geoff Patman & Dave Massey) in the British Riders Championship held at Edmonton, of which field 7 of the 16 were Bristol riders;

Win the Combination League.

In addition the club finished 2nd (to Tottenham) in 1969 after a poor start, but beat Tottenham at Bristol lost there by only eight points with Patman having an off-day, but got a draw at Edmonton, then the only tarmac track in the country

Good to see that Southampton are still going (my daughter is just finishing her PhD there) as are:-

Hellingly, Horspath, Hawbush and Norwich from my era. Even better to see George Hollebon, Colin Wheeler and Glen Norton are still involved, I sometimes wish I was.

Unfortunately, as many of you know, Bristol gave up the struggle some years ago. I last saw and spoke to Geoff Patman 3 or 4 years ago, and often wonder how many of the 69/70 side are still around, with us even. Most I have not seen or spoken to for 30+ years. For the record the names are :-

Mike Curtis (remember his trick at Southampton you Kangaroos?), captain Roger Davey, Keith Lyons, my opening pairing partner Dave Massey (missed winning the BLRC in 1970 due to a puncture), Roger Lowrey, Bob Martin, Charlie Sprague, Geoff Patman, Colin Rossiter, Vic Potter. Our team manager was Roger Seymour, ex Uxbridge Pirates..

In my last season, 1970, the British League comprised Bournemouth Viscounts, Bristol, Edmonton Monarchs, South London Rangers, Norwich Stars, Tuckswood Stars (Norwich), Hellingly Lions, Horspath Hammers, Tottenham Kangaroos & Southampton Saints. Earlier seasons (1965-1969) included Broad Oak Aces (near Hellingly), Hawbush Hammers, Kingstanding Monarchs Beckenham Monarchs & Leicester Monarchs.

Opposition competitors I remember include South London's Arthur Ellis, Ray Foy, Ken Dare, Kevin Wilson (British Champion 1969) Hellingly's Tom Killick, George Hollebon; Southampton's Dave Butcher, Clive McCormick, Mike Vernam, Colin Wheeler; Edmonton's Les Westwood, Tottenham's John Cobbin, Dave Collins, Paul Donagy, Bournemouth's Mike Pretty; Norwich's Clive Hurrell, Glen Norton; Leicester's Grant Warwick, Bruce Heath, Bruce Ward, Harry Glover, John Knock; Kingstanding's (later Wednesfield) Roger Ellis, Dave Parry (he of Wolves Speedway!)

If any of my generation would care to contact me, I'd be greatly chuffed,
on e-mail nt007a1751@blueyonder.co.uk tel. 01275 794020 or 07712 190623

I still live in the Bristol area, in Clevedon, and am now semi-retired, aged 57

Thanks for reading all this. Neil Tulberg



As well as the official Cycle Speedway web site mentioned on page 11 (www.cyclespeedway.co.uk) if you log on to www.google.co.uk and type cycle speedway in the search box, it says that there are 37,900 (yes, thirty seven thousand nine hundred) mentions of cycle speedway. Going through the first hundred or so, many are duplicates and most refer to the present day sport. There are also some quite interesting finds, mostly the web pages of local newspapers. One of these "Evening 24" a Norwich paper dated March 13th 2002, under the heading "Marauding Pirates are on parade", gave the history of the Galley Pirates. It included a team photo from the mid 1950s and another from 1963, when they won the league, also a very good action shot. The reason for the article was to publicise a proposed reunion. The issue of April 9th gave a report of the reunion together with a photo of some of the forty or so riders that attended.

Nostalgia Time at the Exmouth Club, Stepney



Our regular nostalgia evening at the Exmouth Club in Stepney was held on Saturday 2nd. August and once again was a great success. Despite the very warm weather, about eighty of our members and their friends met again for this yearly social occasion in a convivial atmosphere.

Derek Cattle, our host, was there as usual to receive our members at the now familiar venue, the Exmouth Social club, where the comfortable surroundings provided ideal conditions in which to meet old friends, exchange news, tell a few jokes and generally enjoy each other's company. Some regular members did not appear this time and others came along, despite physical problems which might have put off the less enthusiastic. It was really good to see **Wally Dighton**, who, because of a recent injury, was wearing a head support around his neck which must have been pretty uncomfortable (Wally later won a Teddy bear in our raffle) and **Frank Duffy**, recovering from a stroke. Frank of course would have been entertaining us with his songs and jokes, but for his illness, from which he continues to make a good recovery.

Music this year was provided by the disco "Eye 2 Eye." The mixture of lively modern and nostalgic music eventually got our members dancing and we were surprisingly treated to a song from our host, Derek, with his own version of "Thanks for the memory." It was well received and rumour has it that Derek is already planning a follow-up for next year showing what talent there is amongst our members. Another interesting feature was a display of photographs sent in by **Derek Garnett** showing riders from the Manchester area and including a tribute to the late **Brian Moston**, once president of the VCSRA admired by all with whom he had made contact.

The buffet provided was once again excellent and more than enough food was available for everyone. The bar's friendly staff looked after us very well as they always do and our thanks are due to Derek and his social club members for ensuring that the evening was a success. As our members left, many expressed their hopes that we can look forward to another evening at the Exmouth Social Club in 2004.

Dear Friends,

A message of thanks.

This letter comes with my sincere gratitude to everyone who sent me good wishes, "get well" cards, cheerful 'phone calls and gave me very welcome practical help in recent difficult weeks. After feeling unwell since last November, it was found that I had gastric and prostate problems which are now, thankfully, responding to treatment.

It was impossible for me to continue as editor of the "Track Record." Fortunately we could call upon the very able and experienced services of Bill, who has written about our sport since the early days. Our newsletter is in good hands and may he have every success.

At this time, the friendship and goodwill extended to me through members in our association has been touching & generous and showed the value of our organisation. My thanks once again.

Alan Catley.

President of the VCSRA.

From Bob Andrews Lea Valley Knights

What a wonderful thing this e-mail business is. With our latest address book, I included my e-mail address. John Brown of Whipps Cross Comets picked up on it, and sent a "Hello" note. Well I was back to him in a flash. It brought back a lot of memories, John was the man you feared when it was your turn to race him. You know when you hear a tune on the radio (from the 50s and 60s) it always brings a memory. Well hearing from John was a bit like that. He was the sort of bloke that you envied because he was consistently good.

So here is one of my memories of going to Whipps Cross from Edmonton. I suppose it must be 10 miles? So the lads of Lea Valley Knights are to meet at the "Cart Overthrown" pub on Sunday at 10 am. Some get there at 9.30, there are couple that live about 4 miles further out, and how do we get to Whipps Cross? Well we peddle of course. You always got the "junior" rider who was probably the reserve, showing all us "veterans of the track" how he can broadside through a puddle or gravel that has found its way to one end of the car park, and he has no tread on his tyres before he races, so someone has words with him, then there is an argument, perhaps a punch or two, as Captain I have to split them up, then we are off. We pedal off down to the canal past the blue lake (I never saw it other than muddy brown.) Then along the tow path towards Tottenham then on to Hackney. I had a bike that had a long right pedal arm, (good for starts) and a short left side pedal arm (so it did not hit the ground coming out of corners) so offset pedalling all the way to the track.

Also I tacked on to my left shoe some tin plate, well it was from a tin of cat food, cut with snips and of course, after walking around the pits area before racing, it would split, and usually coming into a corner bend behind someone who has just cut over to slow you down it snaps then folds up under your shoe, then your foot slides off the pedal, then a good second place goes and you come last. But I do remember beating Whipps Cross once, can't remember the date, or the score.

So then it is back to riding all the way back to Edmonton, some of us with spokes missing, and perhaps someone having to have a cross bar back on someone's bike. But "Chubby" Denton had a girls frame so he was never in that position.

Thanks for the e-mail John and the memory it brought back to me.

From Stan Brown

Thursday 22nd May was another good day for the VCSRA Golf Day, held at Uxbridge Golf Club. There were twelve of us playing, with four more for the evening meal. We were sorry that Vic White was unable to attend due to a back problem. Wish you well Vic.

After morning rain we were very lucky as by ten o'clock our teeing off time it turned out to be a fine day. The course is first class, very short and compact and was enjoyed by all. I think we must thank Doreen and Roy Fraser for picking this venue.

After some very close scoring, for the gents, Len Adams was a good winner, while for the ladies Doreen Fraser was first.

The evening meal was a carvery. Everyone was of the highest award for this golf club and said we would like to play here again.

We would like to get some more members to take part in our golf days, so come on lads, get them golf clubs out and join us.



A TRIBUTE TO PETE RIDES

Last year, Len Kitchen and myself were fortunate enough to spend a month in Australia, with Pete Rides. We spent a fortnight in Tasmania, at Pete's home and a fortnight in the mainland, ending with the Australian Grand Prix in Sydney. Whilst there, we visited his mother, sons and brothers. We could not have been made more welcome. Neither Len, nor myself dreamt, when we made our farewells, that less than a year later, Pete would be dead at the age of sixty.

During my teens, I was a great mate of Pete's brother, Ray, so I knew Pete, but due to age difference, we were never, what you would call mates, all this was to change, when he came into cycle speedway.

I remember being down the Cheam track, practising one Saturday morning, when this cheeky little kid turned up. He had an old bike, with great wide handlebars (Big Barry Briggs fan). Yes it was Pete. After watching him go around the track, it was obvious here was a natural talent. Within a week, he was in the second team and within a few weeks, had progressed to the first team.

When Cheam closed, Len Kitchen, Pete and myself went on to ride for Tolworth and Raynes Park. It seemed that whatever team we rode for we always stuck together.

During his racing days, Pete won the Southern Junior Championship in 1957 and the National Junior Championship (1960). Pete also rode in the Raynes Park National winning team of 1960.

Talking to Mick Little recently, he told me some amusing stories. Pete and Mick used to work together at the WRAC camp in Richmond Park. Pete's job was to get the ladies for parties.

Also in those days, the Berkshire Grand Prix at Hungerford had qualifying rounds on the Sunday and the final on Bank Holiday Monday. Pete won the qualifying round on Sunday. That night D.Garnett, V.Hinchcliff and C. Wheeler took him out on the beer. Mick found him the next morning in a ditch. He never rode in the final.

Pete has gone, but will never be forgotten, a real character and competitor until the end, racing go-carts in Australia.

Good on yer cobber! We'll miss you.

Peter Page

Vic Cowell

Here are some tributes to Vic Cowell who sadly died recently.

From Mick Jeffery

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death on 30th July this year, of Vic Cowell, following an illness lasting these past few years. All ex Edmonton club members and all those who came into contact with Vic during the 1950's—1970's period will I am sure, wish to offer our sympathies to his wife Paula, his children and his grandchildren. Paula was always there to assist Vic during the Cycle Speedway years, and in more recent times when they have been heavily involved in the Church and was forever at his side during his illness.

My memories and participation with Vic were encapsulated in an article I wrote for the British Cycle Speedway Councils publication "50 Years of Cycle Speedway" published in 1997, which is reprinted again here.

I first met Vic Cowell at the beginning of 1950, when myself and a few other fourteen year olds wanted to start a cycle speedway team. We approached the local league side the Arsenal Aces and it was Vic, then a current member, who helped to form a reserve side for us.

The team raced on Wood Green Common and on Sunday afternoons would draw very large crowds to watch their matches. The manager George Court, was a showman. He played to the crowds with additional events such as riding through hoops of fire, races for toddlers on three wheeled bikes etc.

In 1950 Bill Cowell was then one of Arsenal Aces best and most spectacular riders, always immaculately turned out and with his distinctive off saddle, foot well forward style. We all used to follow Haringay Speedway Club then, whose star was undoubtedly Vic Duggan. Bill Cowell quickly turned into Vic Cowell and the Christian name remained with him throughout his time in cycle speedway. The presentation and showmanship during the few years spent at Wood Green before he was lost to National Service for three years, made a huge mark on Vic. On his return in 1955 he joined Edmonton Saints, who then raced in the Hertfordshire League. By early 1957 he was ready to start his own club, with a lot of new ideas for the team and the sport lodged in his mind. The new Edmonton Monarchs were formed sharing a track with the Saints.

Having completed my own two years in the Air Force by the end of 1956, I rejoined my old mentor and was at once fired by his enthusiasm for the new team. The oil crisis had made travelling expensive so Vic organised the formation of a new local league, the North London Independent, comprising his old club the Edmonton Saints, his new creation Edmonton Monarchs, Finchley Sabres, Warwick Lions from Hackney and Tottenham. The "Independent" in the league title came from Vic's disillusionment with NACSA, the sports governing body, so the new league's teams elected to remain independent. He strongly felt that the sport should project a better image. To move in this direction he decked his team out in uniform coloured jerseys and jeans like two wheeled ice hockey players, rather than the ragged look of most of the current teams of the time. The NLIL, under Vic's management, took a select side to Hellingley later that year, the outcome being the start of a close friendship with George Hollebon, with Hellingley, oddly in geographical terms, joining the NLIL for the 1958 season.

At the same time Vic started a dialogue with Derek Bacon, manager of South London Rangers, which was to have massive implications for the sport. It was obvious that here were two kindred spirits with the strong desire to drag cycle speedway up from the "snotty nosed skid kids" era to a respectable smart and presentable sport.

The British Cycle Speedway Federation was formed in direct competition with NACSA. Vic and Derek Bacon were joined by John Whittaker, John Richardson and others as officers of the new controlling body. In 1960 selected clubs were invited to form the British League, the first year's teams comprising South London, Edmonton, Beckenham, Tottenham, Thurrock, Eastbourne (Hellingley), Bournemouth, with later additions of Norwich, Southampton, Oxford and Bristol.

Vic's influence and gospel spread across the southern counties of England and for the first time a national league was in being. The Federation also operated two other main events. The Gold Cup being the knock-out competition and the Britannia Shield, the individual championship, both commencing in 1958. As Edmonton's manager, Vic presented the Gold Cup finals at Edmonton from 1958 until 1961 with great success and stage management.

Apart from Vic's driving force behind the creation of a new governing body for the sport, one must not forget his prowess on the track. As rider/manager at Edmonton, still with his unique style, he was the mainstay of the team which won the British League and Gold Cup "double" for three years running from 1960 to 1962. Trips to Holland from 1956 onwards, including the 1958 World Finals, convinced Vic of the benefits of a tarmac riding surface. Never one to be backward looking he convinced Edmonton Council to lay this hard surface on the Edmonton track, which in 1960 became the Country's first. This created more spectacle for the North London supporters as helmets became mandatory, riding angles more acute and racing cleaner and faster.

Vic retired from racing in 1963, but continued to manage Edmonton for another ten years. Mention must be made here of his wife Paula, who from the mid 1950s had actively encouraged him in all of his cycle speedway activities. I shall be ever grateful to Vic for his inspiration and friendship for over 22 years of racing, whilst the sport owes Vic a great debt for the foresight, the organisational ability and the flair for the dramatic, which were his trademark.

In the past year the Edmonton club has lost its best rider, Les Westwood and now its inspirational creator and manager Vic Cowell. Vic and the club he moulded will forever live in the memory of all those surviving members

Mick Jeffery July 2003



From Terry Porter

On the 7th August I attended the funeral of Bill who was not just a cycle speedway rider, manager, promoter and innovator to me, but the best man at my wedding some 40 years ago and he and his wife Paula God Parents to my first son Allan.

Bill and Paula had become very much involved in the local church over the last 30 years, and he used his organising expertise to great effect and benefit to their cause. It was not unexpected therefore to see a full church and amongst the mourners representatives of his cycle speedway years, including Mick Jeffery, Derek Wills, Len Adams, Nobby Dunn, Roy Delany Alan Catley and Percy Taylor (Referee)

After the moving service and formalities it was decided to make a pilgrimage to the old Edmonton track in Montague Road, which perhaps due to development in the area may not exist for much longer. Thus myself, Jeffrey, Wills, Adams and Dunn had a nostalgic walk around the track on this baking hot summer day. The track, now worse for wear, could still have been ridden on, even down to the markings on the starting grid and white line — this laid a few ghosts to rest and D.W even managed to borrow a bike from a passing lad for a compulsory couple of laps. The lad had more sense and retrieved his steed before anyone else could have a go!

So the day came to an end, a sad one, but many memories were revived. Those who knew Bill will know him as an organiser supreme and Nobby's passing remark "When the sun no longer rises in the east, we will know that Bill is making his mark" raised a smile.

God Bless you Bill and our thoughts are with Paula, his wife of 48 years, children Martin, Jane, Ian and grandchildren.

Rest in Peace

Terry Porter

Tributes to Vic Cowell continued

From Roy Delany

I was very distressed to learn of the recent death of my old fellow team mate and promoter Vic Cowel. I first spotted Vic in action around about 1950 on the old Wood Green Common track, which was home of the Arsenal Aces, which Vic was a member of.

Vic was a prominent figure on this fast dirt track, his riding style was neat and original, with black riding breeches and coupled with red and white socks over his riding boots Vic looked more like a speedway rider.

When the Aces broke up I was fast to swoop, and within a week Vic was a registered member of the Edmonton Saints. After a couple of years Vic suggested forming his own team, which I thought was a very good idea, Vic named the team Edmonton Monarchs.

When the Saints disbanded in 1957, Vic went on to raise the finest cycle speedway team in the country. The Monarchs became league and Gold Cup winners on more than one occasion, then Les Westwood put the icing on the cake by winning the World Championship.

Vic who was a dedicated family man had a good sense of humour, he was also gifted with a fast thinking wit, like the time at one of Edmonton's AGM. I informed the members that I had written to Alma Cogan for the purpose of becoming the Club's President, one young rider who was seated at the back called out "Why are you writing to Alma Cogan", Vic was fast to answer "To ask her why do fools fall in love", this was Alma's current hit at the time.

A memory of Vic Cowell From Bob Andrews (Lea Vallet Knights & Edmonton Saints.)

I rang Bill Gadsby early August, (just to put a voice to the man) He told me that Vic Cowell had passed away at the end of July.

I had an instant memory of Vic, I think it was one Xmas, about 1957 or 58. We had some sort of gathering the Edmonton Saints and I can't remember if Vic had started the Monarchs.

We were at "Harry Bolts School of Dancing" at Edmonton Green. We had hired the hall. At one stage during the party, Vic got up on the "mike" and he sang "Walking in the rain" (he was a great Johnnie Ray fan, as was I.) And what a great voice he had and he sounded just like Johnnie Ray. I would like to have heard him do "Cry." So whenever Vic was mentioned, that would be my memory of him. He was also a Vic Duggan fan, hence the name "Vic". He has done such a lot for cycle speedway around Edmonton, and can I remember him smoking a pipe?? You will be missed Vic.

Bob also sent in this Photo of Vic, taken from the cover of the programme of an Earls Court meeting.



Den Winch

A tribute to Den Winch by Vic Duffy and Eric Hemsley

Sadly Den Winch passed away on Saturday 16th August in Southend General Hospital at age 72. This marks the end of an era in the Cycle Speedway world, having starting his career in 1948. He has been ill for eighteen months and for the last two months had been confined to his home. Den, a bachelor found it hard to manage on his own, especially the domestic side of life.

More known as a manager, although he tells the story of when as a rider, Roy Milano pushed him wide, shoulder to shoulder and his shoulder hurt him for weeks. The lads asked him, did you fall "no" said Den, he was told Roy was just being friendly.

Den was well known in the sports world locally and in his younger days he was a wrestling reporter for the local paper. Allegedly one report stated that the wrestlers in one bout were not worth their money and Den was told that he must not report in that manner again. Maybe that was why Den had such a good understanding with the local press.

Until a few years ago he was a season ticket holder at Southend F.C. and only gave up due to his difficulty in travelling. Whenever he could get to Great Wakering F.C.'s home matches on his invalid carriage he would and they let him in free as a concession.

Den was known as Mr Cycle Speedway having been involved for 55 years with most of the local teams. Even helping Vic Duffy to form Colchester Stars, so without Den's help there may not have been a team in Colchester.

Of those local teams, Barling Brigands, a very early team, and the outline of the track can still be seen, this was the time that most East End riders met Denny, with tea and sandwiches in an out building beside the Rose & Crown.

Southend Lions in Clony Square, the track has long gone and Clony Square forms part of Southend's shopping centre.

Gainsborough Goblins and Prittlewell Pirates, both tracks were in the Prittlewell Chase area and are now built on.

Denny is known best for his last two teams, Estuary Eagles and Great Wakering Rebels. The Eagles were very successful during the 60's with riders like Mick Webb and the then young riders that Denny encouraged such as Val Hockley, Johnny Brooks, Russell Hill and Keith Novard. The Rebels, named Rebels because the club and team were formed with members of Estuary who were considered too old and kicked out.

The first Wakering track was built on the common but it suffered so much vandalism that it was transferred to the sports centre. And transferred it was, new track dug out— old track surface scraped off, then sub surface put on new track, followed by the top surface. This was all transferred with tractor and trailer by a friendly farmer.

All this paid off when Den assembled one of his best teams that, then went onto win the East Anglian 2nd division in 1981. Among the riders were Derek Wills, Roger Rolfe, Barry Chalk Pete Stevens (ex Thurrock), Dave Tulloch, John & Shaun Spooner, Andrew Quelch and Eric Hemsley. As a very young rider Darren Cousins got the odd ride, had a long time away but is now back running the club, but unfortunately without Denny's guiding hand.

It is never a truer word to say he will be surely and sadly missed.

With so many obituaries, I thought something a little lighter would be appropriate. I am not quite sure what triggered this memory, maybe it will bring back memories for some of you.

I lived in Kenton Middx. Just across the road was a field, full of trees and bushes with just a couple of clearings. Nobody knew who it belonged to, certainly no one ever looked after it. Over the years it had been ideal for all the childhood games, hide & seek, Cowboys & Indians, Cops and Robbers, Doctors &, well you know the rest.

Then one day a Cycle Speedway track appeared in one of the clearing. As I remember not much work went into making it, just mark it out and riding round wore the grass away. It was quite a narrow clearing, down one straight was the fence of the adjoining house. I am not sure what the occupants made of dozens of exuberant kids riding their bikes like maniacs just two feet from their garden but they never complained. Along the other straight were bushes.

Riders turned up with all sorts of machines, tradesman's bikes, mother's bikes complete with pannier, bikes with calliper brakes. Soon the bikes were stripped down, first to go were the mudguards, usually broken off in the many crashes, then anything else that could be removed was taken off or fell off. One day a school mate Terry Vicary turned up with a tailor made bike, "Cow Horn" handle bars and a low gear. Much of his success was down to his bike. Not so with Jackie Prearer, who would turn up grab any bike available and leave every one else standing. (Now why does this make me think of Roy Fraser?) Then there was Christopher Tredidgo, who always turned up immaculately dressed all in white, and I'm sure that this was before "The White Ghost" Ken Le Breton first rode in this country. Chris of course was nicknamed "Trigger" and two years later, when he joined the Kingsbury Lions, someone with a sense of humour paired him with Roy Rogers.

Coming home on the top of the bus one day, as it went past Kingsbury Circle, I could see a hive of activity. Lots of kids with shovels, another track was being built only half a mile or so from ours. This was to become the home of the Kingsbury Lions. As more tracks sprung up Jim White saw the potential of Cycle Speedway and started to form a league. I accepted the invitation to join and so the **Kenton Hawks** became founder members of the league, together with:-

Acton Acorns, Wembley Panthers, Kingsbury Lions, Hendon Pirates, Sudbury Court Flyers and Kingsbury Tigers.

Our first home match was against the Tigers, in the first race, their two riders shot out of the gate, round the bend and straight into the bushes! They then refused to ride any more, saying that the track was not suitable for league racing. I'm sure that if our first match had been against one of the lesser teams such as the Flyers or Pirates, they would have ridden the match without complaint. As it was the Control Board upheld Tigers complaint and so we were homeless. We had previously considered moving the track the other side of the bushes next to the main road where the bus queue would have given us a captive audience, but when we marked out the track we found that anyone being pushed wide coming out of the second bend would have mowed down the queue.

There were no other suitable sites in the area (they were all full of cycle speedway tracks) so as a temporary measure the Kingsbury Tigers agreed to us sharing their track. Then it was agreed that we could use the track at the Paddocks, just round the corner from Wembley Town Hall & Stadium. The team that had been racing there had combined with the Kingsbury Tigers and were using their track in Church Lane. So now we had a permanent home, but lost half our team, as they did not fancy riding on a home track that was further away than most of the away tracks.

Just because we had to ride our league matches in Kingsbury I saw reason why things could not have continued as normal on our "home" track, but people lost interest and gradually drifted away until I had the track all to myself.

How did the Hawks do in the league? Well I did write about that for the last issue of "The Track Record" but had to leave it out due to lack of space. Maybe next time.

Bill Gadsby

Rye House "get together"

On Saturday July 12th around 75 members, their wives and friends enjoyed a very pleasant evening at Rye House speedway and saw the Premier league match between Rye House and Newport, followed by the conference league fixture between the same two clubs.

As usual LEN SILVER gave us exclusive use of the top bar and also a free glass of wine on arrival and we would like to thank Len and his staff very much indeed for their hospitality and for making us so welcome.

There was one small blip during the evening when the mother of Jenny, Eric Hemsley's partner, was taken ill but the St. John's Ambulance Brigade members were quickly on the scene and it turned out that she had become dehydrated due to the heat and soon recovered.

Jenny sent me the following thank you note.

Dear Vic

Just a few lines to show my appreciation for the prompt way in which you got the St. John's Ambulance Brigade up into the stand to attend to my mother when she was taken ill at Rye House speedway. I am not sure how you became aware that we required help but your actions were greatly appreciated. I was concerned at the time as Mum is 82 years old and has a heart problem, but thankfully she was O.K. and they put it down to heat and dehydration.

Jenny Layton

Q There used to be a cycle speedway track in Swaythling, Southampton, back in the 1960s. Is cycle speedway still held anywhere in Britain?

T Manns, Compton Dundon, Somerset

A Cycle speedway is still going strong, more so in some areas than others.

Southampton are the British team champions, having first won the title in 2001. Racing takes place at about 40 clubs around the country. Ipswich Cycle Speedway Club reformed last year after being out of action for seven years and they now boast 53 riders.

There are plenty of opportunities for riders with British categories ranging from the over-50 super-vets down to the under-eights. The world junior championships will be held in Poland next month, with the world senior championships in September at Bury CSC and Astley, both in Greater Manchester. Several websites have been set up by cycle speedway enthusiasts. Log on to www.Cyclespeedway.co.uk for links to all other sites.

Ivan Pike, via e-mail

From The Sunday Times 22nd June 2003

I received a very interesting e-mail from MIKE HACK, giving a report on the World Championships. Seven teams contested the World Team Cup. England retained the Cup by beating Poland by just one point.

England 71 Poland 70 Scotland 52 Australia 48 Wales 44 Ireland 32 & Holland 31.

The Individual Championships took place over 3 days at both the Bury and Astley tracks.

72 riders contested a series of qualifying matches to arrive at a 16 rider line up for the final at Bury on Sunday. 11 English 1 Australian & 4 Polish riders lined up for the final.

Some controversial decisions made during the match stoked the crowd up and the referee was struggling to maintain control. This led to the unprecedented spectacle of an English rider winning a World title on an English track and being booed and jeered by most of the crowd.

Result:-

1st Dave Hemsley (England & Poole)

2nd Lee Arris (England & Wednesfield)

3rd Lukasz Nowacki (Poland & Rawicz)

AMENDMENTS AND ADDITIONS TO MEMBERS DIRECTORY

DUNN Nobby Change of telephone number and e-mail
Tel:- 01727 799771 E-mail nobchris@btopenworld.com

COCKCROFT Mike should be COCKROFT

PERCIVAL Keith address should be 6a Offerton Fold not Road

WAKEMAN George postcode should be IG3 8NA

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

ALLISON Stan 7 Windmill Gardens, Wisbech, Cambs, PE14 7YA Tel 01945 582977

PARKES Willie, 14 Lupin Close, Littlehampton, Sussex, BN17 6WF Tel 01903 714781

What to fill the last half page with? The jokes on this page last time received a mixed reception. So no jokes, well maybe just this one from ERIC HEMSLEY:-

Q. What has a railway line got in common with our committee?

A. Too many sleepers.

In the last issue I said that the Hayes Broadsiders track had not been used since the early 1950s. One of our younger members STEVE MYHILL corrected me and said that the Hayes Falcons were riding there in the 1970s He did say that he would send in a contribution from that era.

We have a new member, RORY BLACKWELL who used to ride for Bater Aces and London Aces. Rory went on to become a Rock & Roll idol, playing with many of the great names of the day. PETE SAUNDERS has prepared an article for the next issue, listing his many achievements.

TERRY STONE has sent in some very interesting newspaper cuttings. One from 1950 has a photo of the start of a "toddlers race" with the caption:- Over 1,000 spectators cheered the toddlers as the starting gate rose for their race at Wood Green Common on Sunday. This race is now one of the most popular features of the Arsenal Aces cycle speedway programme. Another (undated) has a picture of a very young Len Adams with the caption Tottenham Kangaroos cycle speedway skipper Les Adams waits in the pits. He was selected for the third season running as England's captain. He came third in the British riders championship final

From May 1951, a letter headed Cycle Speedway Protest. I wish to protest at the destruction of the Cycle Speedway, home ground of the Russell Eagles Club, on waste ground behind Hood Avenue Southgate, at present in the process of being levelled. Mr Legate (club manager), two of their star riders and I spent most of last Saturday and Sunday afternoons trying to save the track. Although we found two Aldermen in sympathy with the club, we failed to stop the bulldozer. My own opinion is that these sympathies should, as quickly as possible be transformed into some practical steps to provide the club with an alternative track. By many hours of hard work and at some expense, these lads brought their track up to official standards and quickly became Hertfordshire League champions. There are few enough chances for working class youths to find cheap recreation in Southgate.
Ernest G Suckling