

T

A publication of the

SECRETARY:-

Publishing Editor

England international teams as captain, right up to his retirement in 1963. A hard working officer on the Manchester League committee and the National Association Executive, he was a member of the Steering committee that united the sports governing bodies in 1973 and was elected the first chairman of the Cycle Speedway Council. He was also elected President of the VCSRA in 1999. Always willing to give help and advice to both new and experienced

Continued on next page.

D

Brian Moston (from page 1.)

riders alike, Brian was a down to earth "rider's rider" who left countless good memories. He will be sadly missed by his many friends.

Derek Garnett.

Lew Grepp writes

As one of Brian's oldest friends, I should like to contribute a small tribute to add to the many that you no doubt will have received for inclusion in the next newsletter.

It was with great sorrow that I learned Brian had died in hospital. I first encountered him in 1947 with the formation of the Stockport and district league when he rode for Stockport Defiants.

He later moved to Chorlton Aces in the Manchester league at which time, matches between them and Cheadle Hulme, (my team) were legendary and my own battles with Brian memorable. We also rode together as a pair on many occasions in the Manchester test team and also when representing the North against the South at the Empress Hall in 1951. What great days they were, good friends off it sharing an interest in railways, motor-cycling, and speedway. Holidays were spent at Butlins and there was always the hospitality of his family. We lost regular contact in the late 1950's, our meetings being by chance, few and far between. It was however at such a meeting at Belle Vue in 1996, following the death of my wife, that he invited me to join a circle of his friends. This, coupled with his setting up the Manchester arm of the VCSRA has resulted in our more frequent meetings.

It is ironic that the last time I saw Brian was when we travelled together to the recent VCSRA meeting at Gorton. It is fitting for his love of Cycle Speedway that only days before he died, he was seen cutting the grass around his CarrsWood track, the venue of many great matches since its opening in 1951 but sadly, no longer in use. Brian leaves an indelible mark on the world of Cycle Speedway and on the memories of those that knew him.

Lew Grepp.

Among the many mourners at the funeral were Vic Hinchcliffe, John Whiting, John Watling, Vinny Morsland, Dave Blinston, Charlie Nanfan, George Fernyhough, Tony Mann, Ken Taylor, Josh Gleave, Jimmy Cobain, Derek Garnett and Lew Grepp. Former president, Derek Cattle, represented the VCSRA along with Len Kitchen and Mick Little who join with our members in sending deepest sympathy from here in London and the South to Jean and to the many close friends of Brian in and around Manchester.

Ted Walker

We have also received the sad news that Ted Walker died on 24th July. Ted was a widower, living alone, having lost his wife many years ago and had been in poor health for some time. In the late 1940's and early 50's Ted was an outstanding rider in the East London League when he rode with his old pal, Ernie Lamacq for the successful Portway Penguins team. Ted was noted for his spirited and whole-hearted riding. Ted has also been an enthusiastic member of the VCSRA and despite ill health has attended many of our functions. At High Beech in February he joked with old friends and seemed to be in good form.

The funeral was held on Thursday, 1st. August at the East London Crematorium. Several of our members attended including John and Mrs. Halloran, Peter Chubb, Vic Duffy, Malcolm and Mrs. Bell and others, while former president Johnnie Brown represented the VCSRA. Ted's good company will be sadly missed in future and our sincere condolences go out to his relatives and many friends at this time.

"Key "Points to a Tooting Tigers Weekend. by John Cooper.

Way back in the autumn of 2001, John Cooper of Tooting Tigers decided he would like to take a party of his old mates to the British Grand Prix at the Millennium stadium in Cardiff. He decided to take a twelve seater mini-bus, so he booked eleven tickets and five rooms at the Moto Travel Inn at junction 33 on the M.4. well in advance for the 8th June G.P. meeting.

He then began to enlist his team to fill the bus as local to his home as possible. They included **Jean and Arthur Newsom, Ron and Kath Holvey, Derek Cattle, Ken Archer, Ray Gingell, Wally Dighton and Ron Woolley.** On the day of departure, John woke up to discover that he had no ignition keys for the bus. They had been locked in the mini-bus overnight. It was Ken to the rescue with a quick trip to the hire company for another set of keys. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise – read on. On his return with the keys, John drove the mini-bus to the arranged meeting point in Caterham. Off we went, "TIGERS ALL" and after 200 miles or so and a couple of comfort stops, we arrived at the Travel Inn at 3.pm, just in time for a wash and brush up and food at a 20% reduction in the adjoining food establishment.

After some discussion as to whether it was taxi or park and ride, park and ride won and we set off for the eight mile ride to park. We followed the appropriate signs and parked. Then we looked for the buses to ride on – OH DEAR- none to be seen so it was a good two mile trudge to the stadium on foot, stopping several times for the stragglers to catch up. En Route, who should we bump into but **Ernie Winn and Irene.** We are now getting close to the stadium and the air is electric with air-horns blasting, a great atmosphere to savour that was to go on for hours, increasing in volume.

After taking directions and walking the entire circumference of the stadium complex we arrived at our entrance point to an even more deafening sound of air horns and music. Taking our front row seats, we were given some marvellous rocking oldies by Susie Quatro etc. Then it was on with the business of the evening, the most exciting 25 heats of racing anybody could want to see with much passing to add to the entertainment, although the track was a bit narrow. Big screens were provided for all the action replays. Racing over, it was on to the presentations to the winners. Ryan Sullivan first, Todd Wiltshire second and Mikael Karlsson third, amid ear splitting noise and fireworks galore. Sadly the four hours of entertainment were at an end. Not bad value for £12.00 – for OAP's. Now it was back to the mini-bus, this time the walk did not seem so long as we were all so keyed up after a great evening and then again John informed us that he had lost the original set of keys to the bus, the set with the filler cap key attached. Arriving back at the Travel Inn we all had a look for them but to no avail. It was time for bed- 12 mid-night for some, those who decided to eat – 1 am.

Next day we met for breakfast at 9.30 am after which we all tried our keys in the filler cap of the mini-bus but none fitted so it was Ken to the rescue again. His AA card was brought into action and the AA man duly arrived and showed us how to use a screwdriver on it. All OK we set off for home in pouring rain stopping at Membury services for refreshments etc then on to our anticipated mystery shop for afternoon tea at "Fanny's Farm". This is a collection of sheds joined together plus a garden centre, animals etc. very rural- a haunt of some of the famous. She made us all very welcome with home-made cakes and tea all round. Still in the pouring rain we made our way back to Caterham station for our goodbyes after a most enjoyable weekend with grand company. John, Ron and wives then continued to Arthur and Jean's house for more tea and chat about the good old days and then off to our respective homes.

Same again next year please John!

The Glasgow Re-Union.

by Bertola "Haggis" Harkins.

It isn't only in the South that bygone cycle speedway riders are meeting to re-live the past. North of the border in Scotland, former riders from the Glasgow Cycle Speedway Association have been staging an annual get-together.

The latest dinner was held in the plush surroundings of the Strathclyde University Business School in Glasgow's City centre and a grand time was had by all. Unfortunately, the main organiser of the re-union Peter Bell, ex Craigton Eagles, missed the event as he was seriously ill in the intensive care ward at Glasgow's Royal Infirmary and missed the festivities that he had helped to plan. Fortunately Pete came through the ordeal and is now at home, convalescing. His duties for the dinner were ably handled by Joe Letts and Brian Gilliland, both former stars of Glasgow's cycle speedway tracks.

The format of the dinner was very well organised, with tables occupied by various teams from the old Glasgow Cycle speedway League. For example, the Pioneers table had Ronald Miller, Norrie Whitfield, Bill Ritchie and Jack (Red) Monteith (who later rode motor-cycle speedway for Glasgow Tigers. At the Craigton Eagles table were Hamish Orr, (Now there's a good old Scottish name!) Jim Thornton, John A.(Joe) Letts, and Roy Patterson. Mansewood Lions/ Eastwood Aces table had Peter Christie (now a Country & Western singer) his brother Norman, Brian Gilliland, Douglas Nicolson and Bert Harkins (who?) Glasgow Cycle Speedway table had Dave Young, Ian (Chick) Mackie who is still racing as he nears his old age pension and his son, young Alan, the new Glasgow "Superstar." We even had some of our old rivals from Edinburgh making the trip along the M.8 motorway and they included the legendary Johnny Murphy, Ian (Caveman) McKinlay, Jackie Pinkerton and Pete Young.

All in all, it was a great evening of good food, good company and good memories of the halcyon days of Scottish cycle speedway when we had regular Scotland v. England and Glasgow v. Bradford internationals and Glasgow v. Edinburgh inter-city "punch ups." Roll on the next Glasgow cycle speedway re-union dinner!

Seventeen hours for 3 minutes fun !!

The thoughts of Terry Stone on driving the last lone leg home at 0400 hours on Saturday, 27th. October 2001.

I left my home in Essex at 12 noon on Friday 26th. October 2001 bound for Somerset speedway, Highbridge. First I drove to Welwyn, Hertfordshire to meet up with **Jim Gregory** and pick up the van loaded with all seven motor bikes which are two Douglasses and five Rudges. Included of course were all the rest of the tools required to take to an old time speedway meeting. (No modern day stuff for us!)

We then went to Tring to meet with our other old timer, **Tom Richardson**. This was to be the last race for Tom, prior to retirement from racing. Jim had already retired after riding from 1948 -2001. Not bad for an old boy?

We went on our way to the meeting via Oxford to the M.4 motorway. It was raining all the way. At the M.4 the sun shone and good weather was enjoyed from then on. Continued next page :-

Hooray! As usual the Motorway on Friday was chaos. On arriving at Bristol we decided to come off the M.4 and proceed through the town – not a good idea at all !! It was just like -

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

*Half a mile, half a mile, half a mile onward,
Cars to the right, cars to the left, cars in front & cars to the back of us.
Someone had blundered, was there a man dismayed?
Stormed at from all sides, boldly we drove on out,
Right through the line we broke, out of the Bristol hell - never to return to this ??*

We arrived at the track at 19.40 hours and the first race was on. After parking, we unloaded the van Jim was dope and oil man for the night and did a great job. On with the black leathers and all the old body colours – Hackney, New Cross, Belle Vue, Southampton and West Ham. We were in the second half with Douglas and Rudge racing together, JAP's in the other races. The roar of the old machines and all the riders in black was a great sight for the big crowd. We had three races each. There was no top man of the night and we had all enjoyed ourselves. Afterwards, the bikes were on display for the fans. Great enjoyment was had by all. Our programme billing was "The Old Timers."

We loaded up the van and left Somerset "Rebels" track at midnight. Now, here I am, driving home after a good time. The bike and black leathers are full of mud. As I pull into my drive, happy to be home, the time is now 0500 hours and it is only seventeen hours since I left home!!!

All the best from the men in black Jim, Tom, Terry.

DINNER & DANCE 16TH. NOVEMBER AT BULPHAN .

We mentioned in a previous "Track Record" that Vic will be out of the country for four weeks from 11th.October to 8th.November returning just a few days before the Dinner & Dance. To help Vic to ensure that there are no problems, would everybody who wishes to go please make sure that Vic has been informed and all payments due are received by 30th. September latest. In the event of any last minute bookings, please contact either Johnnie Brown or Alan Catley. We would prefer that these are made by the end of September if possible. Thanks for your help.

When Len was an evacuee ?

Every so often one of our readers sends in an absolute gem and, recalling a memory of Len Silver, R.S. Lyon from Noraville, New South Wales, writes:

"Dear Vic, Whilst browsing through the November 2000 issue of the "Best of Brits," I was pleasantly surprised by your article on cycle speedway and the memories flooded back A bit of trivia, your first president, Lennie Silver, I met when we were fellow evacuees in Frome, Somerset, in the early forties. I went to the cubs once. There was Len in full regalia running the show even in those days, give him my best wishes."

Thank you Mr. Lyon, I'm sure Len would want us to send m our best wishes to you.

A reluctant Peter Chubb wins the Bert Hudson Trophy at Hawbush

On Sunday 30th June at the Hawbush Hammers track at Barkingside, despite an unseasonable chilly wind and competition from the final of the football world cup on T.V. a good crowd attended for our annual meeting.

The main event was the Bert Hudson trophy, an event for riders aged 65 and over. Winner was **Peter Chubb** with a maximum of twelve points. **Tony Marsh** dropped only one point, coming second and **Denny Daniels** came third with ten points. Peter who was unsure whether he should ride, owing to recent injuries from falls, decided "to see how my knee feels after a ride," was never headed and won in fine style. Other scorers were :- **Stan Stevens** 7, **Vic Duffy** 7, **Len Kitchen** 6, **Dennis Bottazzi** 5, **Malcolm Bell** 5, **John Bonnella** 4, **Eric Hemsley** (2 rides) 2, **John Woolnough** 2, **G.Wakeman** 1. The last winner of this trophy in 2000 was **Sid Tomlyn** who was unable to appear through illness. The latest information is that Sid is improving and we wish him a speedy recovery.

The second half programme was the Match Race Championship for the under 65's. After some good racing, this was won by **Tony Johnson**, who beat **Dave Palfreyman** in the final. This year's event was also an enjoyable social occasion. **Steve Bloxham** provided a great track environment and a welcome barbecue. A musical team, headed by **Frank Duffy**, gave us some live entertainment and a totally unrecognisable **Roy Delaney**, dressed as a tramp, confused us all. **Stan Stevens**, among others, was uncertain how to react to this dubious intruder whose antics on the track and in the pits were very funny.

Our thanks also go to **Johnnie Brown** for organising the racing and announcing the results and to **Stan Allison**, match referee. As an interesting footnote, we unexpectedly gained a new member, **George Fowler** (Ex. West End Wanderers & Warwick Lions.) George had not heard of the VCSRA but had simply visited a cycle speedway track for the first time in forty years, out of curiosity to see modern racing. Imagine his astonishment to find that his old team-mate, not seen since the early fifties, **Dennis Bottazzi**, now in his 71st year, had won the first race! Welcome to the club George.

The St. John's Cup at Great Wakering 21st July .

In the annual four team tournament raced for the St. John's Cup at Great Wakering, some fast racing was seen by our younger veterans, which made great entertainment in fine weather on the East Anglian track.

The four teams taking part were:- Hawbush, Great Wakering, South London and the Nomads. Hawbush and the Nomads (a team organised by Eric Hemsley) reached the final phase of the competition, and after four races, were level on points. A nominated riders heat was required which was won, 4-2 by the Hawbush team making them winners of the St. John's Cup (final phase) by 16 points to 14. Outstanding for Hawbush was **Dave Palfreyman** who was unbeaten by an opponent throughout and **Dave Tulloch** for the Nomads who won five of his seven races .

Prior to the St. John's Cup, individual competitions were held and, once again, **Peter Chubb** was the winner of the over 65 's with a maximum of 12 points. **Denny Daniels** was second with 11 points and **Stan Stevens** third with 10 points. Other scorers were:- **Vic Duffy** 8, **Eric Hemsley** 8, **Terry Denton** 7, **John.Helbin** 6, **John Bonnella** 5.

Great Wakering. continued

The under 65's competition was won by **Dave Palfreyman** with 11 points, second was **Steve Bloxham** after a run-off with **Dave Tulloch** (both with 10 points), **Tony Johnson** 9, **Tony Ridgewell** 9, **Peter Page** 7, **Stewart Jago** 6, **Peter Elliott** 5, **Len Kitchen** 5.

Standing in for **Denny Winch**, who was not well enough to be present, the racing was well organised by **Eric Hemsley** and **Darren Cousins** who was married only the day previously and provided a free buffet, appreciated by all. Our thanks go to match referee, **Stan Allison** and announcer, **Johnnie Brown** and our best wishes to Denny Winch for a speedy recovery and a quick return..

Den Winch has an M.O.T!

by **Eric Hemsley.**

On Thursday, 11th. July 2002, Den Winch had to go into hospital. For weeks previously he had been having falls and the ambulance folk were being called three or four times a week.

On this occasion he fell outside the evening before and was not found by a neighbour until lunch time the next day, so he laid outside for about fifteen hours. Den had put on a lot of weight and the ambulance crew that attended had to call for additional help. Once they had got him on the stretcher, he did not want to go to hospital and only agreed, if he could make a phone call. He tried to phone **Terry Stone** and spoke to his wife, Jean. Jean alerted Carlo, an old friend who goes back to the days when they both supported Rayleigh Rockets, who visited Den. So Carlo was first to see Den In hospital. I came second on that score! Den was soon moved to a very good rehabilitation centre in order to get him walking and to care for himself again. His main problem is water retention and we hope that tablets will correct that. I have seen Den every other day and each time he has looked better. He does not like it at the centre but the care is good and hopefully he will soon be back at home.

The Nostalgia Evening at Stepney.

On Saturday, 27th July our regular annual event, the **Nostalgia Evening** was held as usual at the **Exmouth Social Club in Stepney**. Our host, **Derek Cattle** again made us very welcome, arranged a feast of a buffet and gave nearly a hundred of our members and their friends an enjoyable get-together.

The club is large enough to seat everyone in comfort and provides an ideal meeting place for our purposes. The bar's friendly staff looked after us very well and our thanks go to Derek and his social club members for their efforts in ensuring that the evening was a success. An interesting display of photographs of the early post war Tooting Tigers created a lot of interest. Derek would welcome a similar display of another team from that period for next year's event and would like to hear from anyone interested.

Music was again provided by members **Frank Duffy**, **Ron Woolley** and **Alan Catley** and their guests, singers **Joyce Stoughton** and **Derek Hunt**, who treated us to the evergreen songs our audience seemed to appreciate. A collection was held for **Denny Winch** who is at present going through a difficult time which resulted in the generous response of £140 and our good wishes for his return to good health.

The get-together ended around 11.30pm when we said goodnight to our friends and farewell to the Exmouth social club, hoping that Derek invites us again next year.

The Scene in Kent.

by Fred Pallett.

Not long after joining the Association, it occurred to me that, although the "Track Record" included much historical material about cycle speedway in East and North London, there was little or nothing at all about South East London/ North West Kent. As this area was a thriving one in the 1940's/50's, I am forwarding the following information.

I was born in 1934 and grew up in Bexleyheath, Kent, living through the London blitz. During the immediate post war years, my friends and I became keen speedway fans. In what might be called the metropolitan part of Kent, most supported their local teams, New Cross or West Ham. However, I followed Wembley and travelled across London every Thursday to cheer on the "Lions." It was not long before my friends and I were trying to emulate our idols on our bicycles and we constructed rough tracks on any convenient unused land, there being plenty of "bomb sites" awaiting re-development. In 1948 my friends and I decided to form a team, the Welling Wings and our first track was built at Danson Park on the disused site of a wartime anti-aircraft gun-battery.



The Welling Wings in 1950.

Left to right. Don Baldry, Jack Ellis, Fred Pallett, Colin Thompson, Geoff Stark, Barry West (Cpt) Mick Tottle and Derek Browne.

In our first competitive season of 1949, the Wings' regular team comprised **Barry West, Colin Thompson, Derek Browne, Fred Pallett, Roy Harvey and Ralph Ambrose.** The Danson Road track, having a clay surface, proved to be quite unsuitable as it was dusty when dry and muddy when wet. Accordingly, we built a new track with a rolled clinker ash surface at the rear of the "Green Man" public house in Wickham Street, Welling. Later we moved to our last track on which the "William Camden" pub now stands in Pickford Lane, Bexleyheath. We were soon to learn that there were several other teams within a few miles of us and a Kent league was soon established, under the administration of a new Kent County Amateur Cycle Speedway Association. I was later appointed as the Association's press officer to publicise the league and its constituent clubs. I also wrote reports on the Welling Wings' matches for the "Bexleyheath and Welling Observer." Continued over :-

Other local teams included the Welling Stars, Blackfen Hammers, Bostall Flyers, West Heath Vikings, Orpington (formerly Cray Valley) Eagles, Cray Tigers, Eltham Royals, Mottingham Aces, Woolwich Vampires and, from further afield, Meophan Monarchs and Whitstable Wasps. The tracks were 90 – 120 yards in length, clinker ash or similar surface and elastic powered starting gates. The Cray Tigers could have been considered as the Manchester United of their day. They were sponsored by a local farmer, who not only provided a floodlit track with a remotely controlled starting gate, but also a public address system and a riders/spectators' cafeteria, all of which made the other clubs appear as poor neighbours.

I recall the visit to London of the Netherlands test team to compete in an indoor match against England at the Empress hall, Earls Court. A few days later, the visitors took part in a friendly evening match against Cray Tigers, which finished 68 – 29 in favour of the home team. The next afternoon, the Dutch lads rode against the Woolwich Vampires at Abbey Wood. After the match, a series of impromptu scratch races were staged. In one of these, I was matched against the Dutch captain, Henk de Bruin who was widely considered to be unbeatable. I later concluded that this was probably true because, although I finished in a creditable second place, he crossed the finishing line the best part of a lap in front of me. My participation in the sport ceased in 1952 when I was called up for National Service with the Royal Corps of Signals and went to Catterick Camp, Yorkshire, (I knew nothing of an army cycle speedway team there) and then on to an operational unit in Wiltshire. On my return to "Civvy Street" in 1954, times and friends had changed and I was soon to meet the woman who would become my wife. I believe that the sport faded out in this area in the mid/late 1950's.

I still have a few items of memorabilia and quite recently I was able to supply the Bexley Libraries service with some local cycle speedway information. I have very fond memories both of the sport and of the many friends that I made and it is with some regret that I have lost contact with almost all of them. I hope that you find the above of some interest and evidence that the sport also thrived south of the River Thames.

Yours sincerely, Fred Pallett

Members Directory.

New Members. We welcome:

George Fowler. Flat 4, 158, Randolph Avenue, Maida Vale, W9.1PG
telephone . 07958-181115.

Patrick Elflain, 312, Goresbrook Road, Dagenham, Essex. RM9-6XX
telephone 0208-517-2735.

Change of
address

Peter Chubb now lives at: "Roversome" Hook End Road, Hook End,
nr. Brentwood, Essex. CM15 OHB. Telephone 01277-821602
" " **David Robinson** now lives at 16, Leedham Close, Shiregreen, Sheffield, S5 6BY
telephone 0114-249-4925.

Fifty years wed !

May we raise our glasses and send our heartiest congratulations to one of our friendliest couples, **Joan and Dennis Bottazzi**, who celebrate their golden wedding on 21st September this year. Some of our members who will be attending the celebrations in Little Wymondley, Herts, can be assured that it will be an occasion to remember.

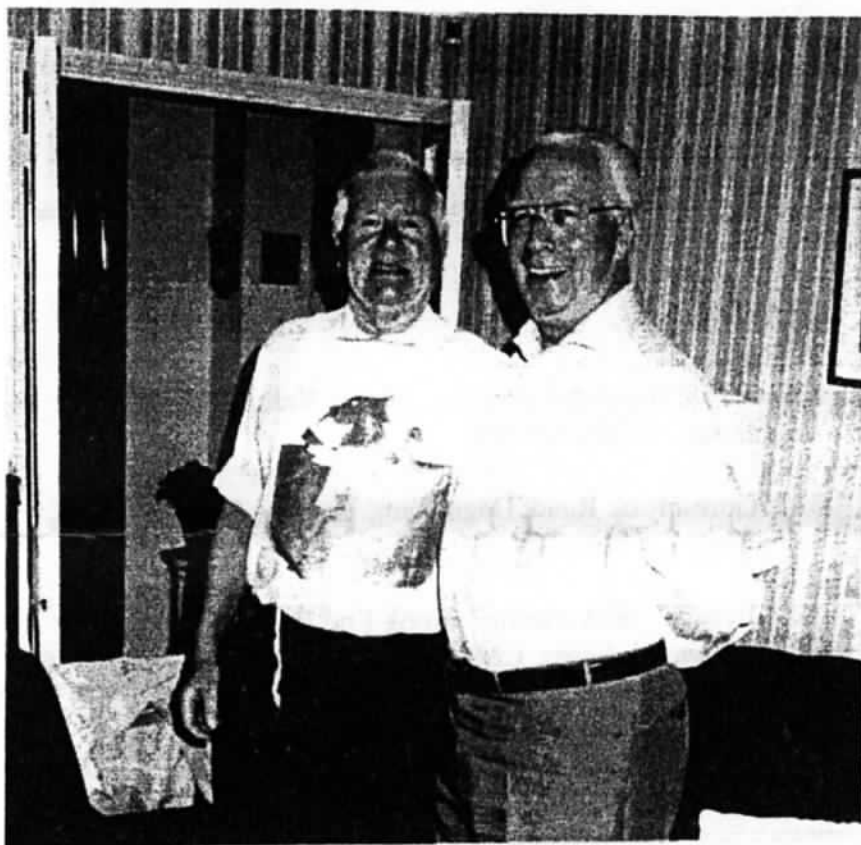
Thank you so much for that lovely weekend.

By Ron Tarrant.

Like the old Ted Heath ballad, I used for the title of this piece, the last few days of my four week holiday in England were really lovely.

On Friday 21st. June, I met with **Vic White, Dennis Bottazzi** and **Roy Garnham** for a round of golf at Stevenage, where my host and chauffeur, **Alan Catley** acted as both caddie and ball-retriever. This was set up by Vic and I had a terrific time with these old friends. The following day was a trip to Rye House, where I had raced for a few weeks in 1955 before pranging my bike and hanging up my leathers. Gone was the cinder track and corrugated fence, replaced by shale and modern facilities. Old Stratford Hammer rivals, **Eddie Parham, Ray Wilmore** and **Kenny Baxter** et al were somewhat out-numbered by a large pride of ex Warwick Lions. It was great to see **Frank Duffy, Johnny Bonnella, Kenny Jenkins, Ken Scott, Tony Marsh** and others all looking so well.

The racing was great, viewed from the interior of the lounge. Our drinking and eating needs were adequately taken care of by two charming and friendly young ladies behind the bar. I found the track and facilities better than at Coventry where I watched the World's best pairs championship in September 2000. Len deserves a pat on the back for reviving speedway at Rye House and for arranging for our Vets' Association to enjoy a night's racing with some free hospitality thrown in. To conclude my idyllic weekend, a supper was arranged in a nice little pub in Waltham Abbey to meet up with some of the old Lions who had been at Rye House, together with additions, **Eric Phillipson, Ron Johnson** and ex Hammer, **Jimmy Heard**. We even got Jim to wear Lions' colours! This was another super night as we enjoyed a good meal and recalled the fun days of cycle speedway In and around East London.



Jimmy Heard (in Warwick Lions' colours!) and **Ron**.

I think we are very fortunate to have such an organisation as the VCSRA and I am honoured to be a member. Those who know of our association and have chosen not to join just can't know what great fun and comradeship they are missing. With President **Jackie Wilson**, past presidents **Johnny Brown** and **Derek Cattle**, cartoonist **Bert Hudson** and the rest of our executive, our association is in very good hands. They deserve our continued support and yes, I've paid my annual dues!

It is sometimes hard to realize that we all go back so far and that a bunch of kids who survived the war and grew up in less than optimum circumstances, helped start a sport that still flourishes today. Perhaps the next time I get over I will be able to make it to one of Derek's Nostalgia evenings? My thanks again to

all who helped make my last weekend so special and it was great meeting up again with **Stan Stevens, Sid Pipe** and **Alan Doggett** who told me that he rode at the Catterick army camp. It's a small world.

(Thank you Ron. We will forward to your next visit to England from your home in Calgary, Alberta.)

News from Down Under

We recently received a letter and many paper cuttings of results and photographs from the early days from Bob Andrews (a self confessed hoarder,) for which we are extremely grateful, from his home in Auckland, New Zealand.

Bob who raced for the Lea Valley Knights and Edmonton Saints before going on to become a very successful motor speedway rider, settled in New Zealand and visited the UK. earlier this year, writes :-

"I came across a lot of cycle speedway stuff while I was having a clear out. I photocopied the old yellow newspaper stuff....But I am a bit of a "hoarder" so I still have some cycle speedway annuals from 1951 (Good old days) I did enjoy those days, hope you enjoy them."

Sifting through the memorabilia sent, I found the photograph below of the Lea Valley Knights, Bob's first team, taken in 1951 after they had just beaten Edmonton Saints to win the Nella Cup with an aggregate score of 100 points to 92. Bob tells us that the Nella Cup was so called by reversing the name of the gentleman who gave it - Mr. Allen.



The Lea Valley Knights 1951.

From left to right :- Terry Felton (Manager) Pete Kempster, Clive Cooke, Alan Scrace, Bob Andrews (Cpt) Terry(Chubby) Denton, Ernie Skinner, Charlie Creighton, Mr. Bill Treacher (Edm.Saints Chairman who presented the cup) Derek Avery, Ray Stocker, and David (Dickie) Money.



The Veterans Cycle Speedway Star

Cycle Speedway Star 1957

As Hillingdon Stars have not turned up for any of their N.W. Middlesex League matches and have not attended any Control Board meetings it has been decided to send an invitation to Hoddesdon Kangaroos.

"I proposed that Hoddesdon be invited to join the league, they accepted the invitation by phone, telegram and by letter."

With the season less than half way through two teams in the N.W. Middx League have disbanded. The withdrawal of the Langley Lions comes as a shock, for although they had been soundly beaten in all their matches and had been let down by one or two teams regarding fixtures, it was thought that they would pull through.

"Frank Males had reformed the Bushey Aces, and although I was riding for Wembley All Stars at the time, he asked me if I would manage the team and ride for them in challenge matches, but as we were having difficulty arranging any matches, I asked if we could take over the Lions fixtures. Our first match against Hoddesdon gave an indication of how each team would fare."

Bushey 30 B. Gadsby 7, E. Wells 7

Hoddesdon 80. C. Hitch 20, A. Catley 12, V. White 12, D. Hutchings 9, T. Kilby 8

"Clive's 20 points was a 5 ride maximum it had been decided to award 4 points for 1st but still 2 for second and 1 for third. This was to help teams like Wembley All Stars and Ruislip Aces, who often fielded five man teams.

Despite this Ruislip folded before the end of the season and their results were deleted (Including my one and only 20 point maximum!)"

Hoddesdon Kangaroos, Herts champs in 1956, rode against Wembley All Stars Middx champs of 1956. A good match took place, Wembley were winners by 62-50. For the Kangaroos Clive Hitch rode well to score 13, with good support from Alan Catley with 11. For Wembley, Dixie Dean, Norman Hunter, and Roger Dewhurst did the bulk of the scoring.

Roger Seymours Middx review seemed rarely to mention Hoddesdon, maybe that's why they sent in their own report of recent challenge matches.

Hellingly Lions 51. J. Smith 11, R. Smith 10, G. Page 9, G. Hollebon 8, D. Cox 7, R. Cox 3.

Hoddesdon 54. F. Duffy 14 V. White 9,

A. Catley 8, A. Skeggs 7, R. Baxter 5.

Hoddesdon 60 D. Hannington & A. Hitch 10,

A. Catley 9, A. Skeggs & V. White 8 F. Duffy 7.

Hellingly Lions 32 R. Smith 9, G. Hollebon 7,

J. Smith 5, R. Prodder 4, D. Cox 3.

An individual championship among Hoddesdon riders was won by F. Duffy, with T. Salmon 2nd & V. White 3rd.

Two League matches were won by the Kangaroos away against Wembley All Stars 49-61 and Hendon Stars 35-75. These victories give Hoddesdon a good outside chance of winning the league.

"It was not to be, they should have won the league, but as I remember it, there was a protest against Weston Stars, which although justified, was disallowed on some technical point. Hoddesdon quit the league in protest without completing their remaining match. So far as I know they never raced as a team again".

That left Western Stars and Harefield Pirates, to battle it out for the league title. And it was not decided until the last race of the last match of the season. Racing was very even with the lead changing hands several times. With one heat to go, Pirates were one point up, but with Weston getting a 4-3 in the nominated race the match ended as a draw. Only one point stopped Harefield from winning the league for the seventh time. For Harefield it was Pete Leckie who topped the scores with 13 points, Dave Stonex 11, Dave Thompson 10, Lenny Richards 9, and Fred Tillyer 8.

For Weston, captain Maury Shaw was leading scorer with 16 points, with reserve Ron Humphries scoring 10, Brian Betts 9 and Sid Luke 8.

Meanwhile at the other end of the league table Bushey did have one early success, beating Hendon Stars, Wembley All Stars second team.

Bushey 60. Males 20, Gadsby 12, Wells 8, Wise 7, Brabent 5, Gillett 5, Jefkin 3.

Hendon 49. Freer 13, Deveraux 11, Simmonds 8, O'Grady 7, Cowland 6.

After this we were regularly soundly beaten home and away.

Bushey Aces 36 Gadsby 16, Males 7.

Harefield 76 Leckie 16 Barrett 12, King 10, Richards 10, Seymour 8.

Weston Stars 75 Harvey 20, Webb 16, Cathcart 15,

Bushey Aces 37 Gadsby 9, Males 7, Wells 6, Lipscomb 4, Brabent 4.

Also losing to Harefield 91-21 and to Wembley All Stars 66-43. For Wembley Roy Fraser scored a maximum with Laurie Pardoe Scoring 16 and Norman Hunter 11.

In an attempt to strengthen the team, we signed Johnny Pinnock and Terry Porter from Finchley Sabres and "poached" Roger Dewhurst from Wembley All Stars.

Despite this we managed only one more win, against fellow strugglers Langley Leopards.

Bushey 69. R. Dewhurst 16, J. Pinnock 13, B. Gadsby 11 T. Porter 11, C. Wise 7.

Langley 41. G. Pearce 14, J. Unsworth 10.

We were beating Weston Stars, when the match was abandoned after 13 heats due to bad light.

Bushey 49 Dewhurst 14, Wells 12, Gadsby 8, Bodman 6, Crews 5.

Weston 41 Shaw 12, Cable 10, Webb 6.

Had this match been completed or the result allowed to stand, Hoddesdon could still have won the league.

But Weston made no mistake in the rerun.

Bushey 41 Dewhurst 11, Crews 10, Pinnock 5 Porter 5, Gadsby 4, Wise 4, Birch 2.

Weston 70 Hammond 15, Betts 11, Luke 10, Cathcart 9, Riley 8, Shaw 6, Jenkins 6.

At the end of the season, Frank Males, said that he was forming a new local team and as they would be riding on "his" track we would have to move elsewhere. We did look for a site in the area, then considered using the Finchley Sabres track. We eventually made a new track at the end of London Road, Wembley and so the Bushey Aces became the Wembley Hawks.

The Middlesex League lost four teams during the season, and Hendon Stars, Wembley All Stars second team did not enter the league the following season Only five of the teams that competed entered in 1958.

Harefield Pirates, Wembley All Stars, Langley Leopards, Wembley Hawks, and Weston Stars.

They were joined by Whipps Cross Comets and Tolworth Tudors A & B teams.

Bricket Wood Kangaroos joined just after the start of the season making a total of nine teams.

Bill Gadsby

Hitchen Aces.

Hitchen once boasted its own cycle speedway, started in 1948 by several cycle-mad young lads, including George Prowse, Sid Springett and Ginner Williams. They removed the brakes and mudguards from their cycles and competed against each other in the King George V. playing field. However, they very soon progressed to a track of their own on Bury Mead, which Sam Masters helped them build. It was as good a track as any in the county, and large crowds would gather to watch the races. At first the boys used any old bikes, but as the team grew and competition became stronger, they saved hard, and each member purchased a new machine from Muntz at a cost of about £27, which was of course quite a lot of money at the time. They raced against other local teams, among them Paynes Park Panthers and the Walsworth Boomerangs. Teams from further afield, such as the Bermondsey Bashers and the Ruskin Flyers also took up the challenge, each race being of four laps.

The Hitchen Aces, as they called themselves, joined the Hertfordshire League and went from strength to strength as they raced against all the county teams; indeed, two of the boys, Sid Springett and Ginner Williams were selected to ride for England against Sweden. It was a great pity that the Hitchen Aces club should only have lasted for five years, for many young lads today would enjoy the challenge of cycle speedway.

The Hitchen Historical Society in collaboration with North Hertfordshire District Council Museums Service have produced a series of booklets "An Aspect of Hitchen Transport." The above came from "The Bicycle". It has pictures of early bicycles, including penny farthings. The front cover has a gentleman with a long beard on an old tricycle. The back cover has a full page photo, with the caption "Vic Wayling presents a trophy to the captain of the Hitchen Aces." It does not say who Vic Wayling is, what the trophy was for or even the name of the Aces captain. Inside there is a good action picture "The Hitchen Aces riding against the Ruskin Flyers at the Bury Mead track around 1950." This shows two of the Aces leading a Flyer, in front of a large crowd. In the Acknowledgements, it thanks George Prowse and Sid Springett of the Hitchen Aces. The Museum says that they have no further information on cycle speedway in the area.

Final North West Middlesex League Table 1957

	Pl.	Home			Away			Pnts
		W	D	L	W	D	L	
Weston Stars	12	5	1	0	4	1	1	25
Harefield Pirates	12	3	2	1	5	0	1	23
Hoddesdon K'groos	11	4	0	2	4	1	0	22
Wembley All Stars	12	3	0	3	4	1	1	20
Langley Leopards	11	2	0	3	0	0	6	4
Hendon Stars	12	2	0	4	0	0	6	4
Bushey Aces	12	2	0	4	0	0	6	4

League points were awarded :- 3 for an away win 2 for a home win
 2 for an away draw 1 for a home draw

The records of Hillingdon Stars, Langley Lions and Ruislip Aces were deleted.