Mick Bedford Dave Robinson John Sykes John Hodkin

Back row.
Chris Cottingham, Mick Bedford John Sykes (on bike), Glen Gallagher, John Hodkin, Jamie Young and Ian Bennet
In front Dave Robinson & Rob Knight

News from the Committee

Committee meetings were held in 2004 on 28th. February (after the AGM) 27th. March, 22nd May, 17th. July, 30th. October and 27th. November. We had lost the services of our long serving secretary/treasurer, Vic White and also Peter Saunders (who had printed our newsletters) at the start of the year. In their places Colin Booth took over as secretary/ treasurer and has worked hard to keep up the high standard set by Vic and Malcolm Bell was elected on to the committee in February.

The main concerns in 2004 were to try to increase our membership, which is currently around 212, maintain the annual events such as the dinner dance, the nostalgia evening, the golf days and cycle speedway fun days. We wanted to keep the Rye House Speedway evening, as well as finding new interests for our members. This we were able to do successfully, but more support from our members is necessary and **is vital if we are to increase our functions to everyone's satisfaction in 2005.**

1. **The Dinner/Dance.** This was a tremendous success reported elsewhere in the "Track Record."
2. **The Nostalgia Evening** at the Exmouth Social club in Stepney in July was a great social occasion with live entertainment and an excellent buffet arranged by our host, Derek Cattle. Unfortunately, only about 30 members and their guests appeared, when we had expected nearer 50.
3. **The Spring and Autumn golf tournaments** went very well and will continue. We need a few more golfers to get the benefit of a group booking.
4. **The Race track fun day** was held at Colchester and was expected to attract more members. Again a very nice occasion should have been better supported. Our evening at **Rye House** was as usual very well supported and enjoyed by everyone..

The Committee taken in May 2004 at the home of Johnnie Brown .
From left to right (back row):- Roy Garnham, Alan Catley, Johnnie Brown, Malcolm Bell and Colin Booth (secretary/treasurer) Front Row. Bert Hudson and Derek Cattle.

ALAN CATLEY

VCSRA Dinner Dance 2004. And Welcome to our new President.

The annual dinner/dance held as usual at "Ye Olde Plough" at Bulphan, Essex on 13th. November this year was generally agreed to have been one of our best ever.

An excellent atmosphere accompanied the meal and service which were said by our members to be the best yet. This was followed by our toasts and the introduction of our new president, **Ron Holvey** for 2004-2005 by out-going president, Bert Hudson who reminded us of Ron's early successful exploits in cycle speedway in South London. Ron, who seemed lost for words, initially, eventually replied, saying how much he appreciated this honour and was privileged to be associated with our members who had previously been voted into this position.

A presentation of an engraved desk set was made to Peter Saunders for his long standing good work on the VCSRA committee, his hospitality in allowing the committee to use his home for meetings and his generous help in printing the "Track Record" over a long period. In the absence of Vic White, our co-founder, who has always been master of ceremonies in the past, Derek Cattle and Johnnie Brown (who told us a wildly funny story about his oddly named dog) took over, got us through the raffle and introduced the Joe 90 Disco, who entertained us with some lively music until late.

Once again this successful evening came about through the efforts of a few people and our thanks are due to all those who contributed. Particularly to Roy Fraser who generously produced and donated again our attractive menu cards, Derek Cattle who took over the MC duties, organised the raffle and found an excellent disco and to Colin Booth, our secretary and Roy Garnham who successfully negotiated with the "Plough" management to provide an excellent evening.

Ron Holvey our President for 2004-2005

Quiet and unassuming, Ron has been a great supporter of The VCSRA and a popular member since its onset. He attends most of our functions and is in regular contact with his ex-team mates to maintain interest and discover new members.

Ron's brilliant cycle speedway career began in 1947 with the Wimbledon Wolves and he won the South East London League Individual Championship in 1949. He then moved on to Tooting Tigers until 1957 where he became the highest scoring rider in a very successful side. He captained a London representative side against county sides and in March 1951 captained a London side against Birmingham at the Empress Hall. He represented England in 1957 to complete a remarkable career and to confirm his status as one of England's outstanding cycle speedway riders. Congratulations Ron !

ALAN CATLEY

Bill can you please put this letter in the next track record.

To the V.C.S.R.A.Committee.

I would like to thank you for the surprise gift that you presented me with at the recent Veteran cycle speedway riders association annual dinner and dance,it now resides as the centre piece on my desk in my office and will be very much treasured.

I would also like to say how much Ronnie and I enjoyed this years dinner and dance it was a great success and the committee deserve a pat on the back for the effort they put in to make it a great night for all of us.

Thanks once again.

PETE SAUNDERS.

Pete Saunders in action at Bushey

From Roger Seymour

The 1957 season was a good one for the sport, tracks were improving and competitions were becoming more popular. This was also my first visit abroad, along with Ron Bull, a popular figure in the Essex area, we took a combined team from both Essex and Middlesex and rode as London. Amongst the riders I can recall, we had Geoff Pearce, Johnny Unsworth , Bill Punter, Ian Dunford, John Dryden, Bluey Waterson and myself. We all met up at Liverpool Street Station, with Bill Gadsby having delivered the bikes earlier for us, we started a weeks venture.

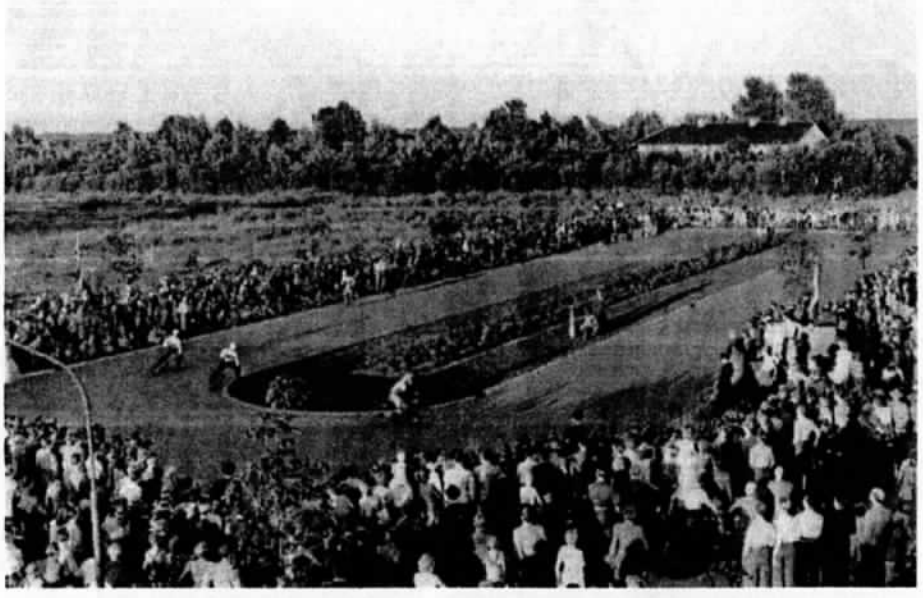
The Crossing from Harwich to the Hook of Holland, was reasonably smooth, we managed to sleep anyway. We docked at 6am and watched as our bikes were unloaded. After some delay we eventually found our train to Utrecht, this was a really nice train, very modern. We changed at Utrecht for the shorter journey to Hilversum. On our arrival we were met by a large delegation our bikes and luggage were taken to lorries and then we went to our hotel. The next day we went to the track, this was tarmac, long and narrow, but a nice stadium. Our first practise soon raised some problems, our new Avon tyres were all over the place, we were bouncing around. So it was out with the knives, we were cutting off the knobbly tread off the tyres, which helped a bit.

Our first match was an eye opener, the Dutch bikes were totally different, with a smaller rear wheel they could corner so much easier. We did our best but were never totally at ease. The crowds which paid to watch were really good, they were fair to both teams. The second match was a little better, again a big crowd and some fast and furious racing.

Our Host Hartog De Ronde, spent a lot of time showing us around the area and we spent a lot of time with the Dutch team. We were better at Pool.

Rain throughout the day nearly put paid to our third match, it was torrential and at 7 pm. we thought it was going to be cancelled, no one called for us, so out came the cards and the pool table was soon in use. Then a toot of a horn was heard and we were off. We were amazed to hear that a large crowd was already in the Stadium at Minklesraat. So we got our gear and stood on the back of the lorry and were well and truly soaked well before we arrived. We had a good reception on arrival, so it was on with the racing. The rain did not really affect the track as it was well soaked and lead to some good racing.

We were all sorry to leave Hilversum, they had made us very welcome, but it was back to the Hook and more heavy rain. The crossing was very rough, crockery flying everywhere, a few grey faces and finally Harwich. It was late September and nearly the end of the season, but some of us would return.



Racing in Holland in 1957 Picture from Johnny Brown

Photo from "Cycle Speedway Star" August 1957
Sussex Versus North London

Left to right
B.Smith (Hellingly Lions) J. Pinnock (Finchley Sabres) D. Cox (Hellingly Lions)
and C. Read (Warwick Lions)

The photo above was from JOHNNY PINNOCK, who was a regular contributor to Cycle Speedway Star. He reported on the North London Independent League (not always favourably) Here are some examples.

TEST MATCH SATURDAY JUNE 1ST SUSSEX V NORTH LONDON.
The North London boys soon found that they were quite at home on the tight circuit at Hellimgly.
The racing throughout the meeting was fast and exciting to watch. Les Westwood and Mick Jeffery both rode brilliantly, being unbeaten by the opposition.
Sussex 29. Scorers not available.
North London 79.
L.Westwood 14, M. Jefferey 13, C.Read 11, S.Wills 11, N.Dunn 10, L.Adams 9 and J.Pinnock 6.
In the event that followed, Les Wetwood again showed that he is on top form, beating all the opposition.
The North London party were entertained handsomely to refreshments at a local public house after the match and wish to thank all those responsible for a most enjoyable outing.

FINCHLEY TO DISBAND? (July 1957)
At the time of writing, the future of Finchley Sabres is very uncertain, in fact it is doubtful if they have any future at all. The Sabres have been struggling along in the North London League all this season with only four riders of their own:- Johnny Pinnock (Capt.), Tony Mobbs, Terry Porter and Eddie Collett (manager). The remainder of the team being made up of guest riders from other teams and one or two novices. Johnny Pinnock has worked very hard, trying to keep the team going, but now comes the news that both Edmonton teams have approached Tony Mobbs to ride for them and that he is almost certain to join one of them.

To quote Johnny Pinnock " This is the last straw, the whole thing has been done behind by back. If Mobbs leaves I shall close the team down altogether. If however the control board rules that he is to stay with us for the rest of the season, I shall probably make an effort to complete our fixtures and then review the situation at the end of the season." At the beginning of the season, when the North London League came into being, both Roy Delany and Vic Cowell said to Finchley " What ever you do you must keep the team going, if you don't it will leave the League in the cart" It seems pointless that Edmonton should split into two teams then try to get another team to disband, merely to strengthen the side.

BRIEFLY (Sept 1957)

Finchley Sabres have now disbanded, Tony Mobbs has been transferred to Edmonton Saints, Terry Porter to the Monarchs, Johnny Pinnock is as yet unattached. Tony Mobbs at last gets that Test place he couldn't achieve when with Finchley, while Johnny Pinnock is dropped.

John did not remain unattached for long, he did not take much persuading to join me (Bill Gadsby) at Bushey and saw out the rest of the season with us. The following season (1958) we became the Wembley Hawks and John had one last season with us before calling it a day.

Footnote

At home we had a (very) large shed. It had been the builders site office and then their sales office.

My father did a deal with the contractors, they could continue to use the office after we moved in, provided they did not take it with them when they left.

Some years later (1947), when a cycle speedway track appeared some 50 yards from our front door, the shed was "commandeered" by the team (Kenton Hawks). Roy Howard (Kingsbury Tigers and Wembley Test Star) was an apprentice electrician and volunteered to run an electric supply to the shed.

Unfortunately, the first time we switched the light on all the lights in the house went out, but he eventually got that sorted out.

Some years later when I had moved out, I still left my bike(s) there and those of various team mates . John's bike was one of those. Eventually the shed became the worse for wear, so my Mother decided to have it replaced with a smaller one. I was living in a flat at the time so had nowhere to keep the bikes.

So two Philips bikes and John's ended up on the dump. The next year (1964) I started riding again and was scratching around trying to find a bike!

Riders on their bikes for Den memorial

CYCLE RACING

THE Den Winch Memorial Trophy cycle speedway competition at Great Wakering Rebels' sports centre headquarters proved a big success.

Tom Hughes won the veterans' competition with 17 points and Hawbush visitor Dave Tulloch, who used to ride for the village team, won a run-off for runners-up spot with home riders Stuart Jago and Darren Cousins, after all had totalled 15.

Vic Duffy and John Woolnough were both on 13 points.

The junior event saw east London visitor Alec Briggs the winner with a 16-point maximum. His East London colleague Steve Jarvis was runner-up after a run-off with Tom and Rhys Naylor. The trio all had 12 points.

Real winner on the day was the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity which received a large payment from the proceeds.

■ **Taking the bend — Darren Cousins in action during the Den Winch Memorial Trophy**

On Sunday Rebels travelled to Ipswich to take on Kesgrave and lost 90-70.

In a match closer than the final scoreline suggests, Rob Hughes was the Wakering star, dropping only three points from a possible 214.

Wayde Davies, in only his third match, continued to show rapid improvement with 12 points and veteran Tom Hughes deserved more than his 10-point tally.

Rebels did their best work in the closing stages and, in the penultimate heat. Rob Hughes and Davies fought out a thrilling duel with their opponents to record a 6-4 win.

Rob Hughes and Tom Hughes looking to land a 7-3 win in the nominated final heat.

The referee made what Wakering veteran Vic Duffy later described as "a bizarre" decision to disqualify the latter after an opposition rider had unsuccessfully tried to come up the inside of the Rebels' man.

Other Rebels scores: Tom Naylor (8), Rhys Naylor (7), Vic Duffy (5).

Made it to page twelve. When the committee asked if I could have this ready by the first week in January, I thought it would have to be "abridged" to eight or even four pages. Then Colin Booth e-mailed the Don Smith tribute and the accounts. Then there was David Robinson's article about his reunion that I could not use in the last issue as the photos where too dark. Then a letter from Pete Saunders and an article on Racing in Holland by Roger Seymour. Six pages, halfway there. Looking through copies of "Cycle Speedway Star" for inspiration I saw the picture and reports from Johnny Pinnock. I thought this would be of interest as many of you will remember John. My main memory of him, was not all the points that he scored for us. It was a cold and miserable wet afternoon when I went to the Finchley Sabres track on the North Circular road for a team practice. When I got their John was the only other rider. He said he wanted to practice starts. I thought that I was a reasonable starter, but the first couple of starts John was round the first bend while I was still thinking about it. So he gave me a 10 yard start, much the same thing, and even from 20 yards he sometimes beat me to the first bend.

Then I found a very good team photo of Harefield Pirates 1957/8 (Courtesy of Middlesex County Press) but there was one rider that I could not identify and two others that I was not 100% certain of. So then I had an idea, I e-mailed the photo to Roger Seymour in Spain and asked if he could name the riders. (Roger now has a new e-mail address:- ROGERSEYMOUR@ terra.es) He replied with the names and said that he had lost all his memorabilia and did not have a single photograph. He has made a full size copy of the picture and is going to frame it. Roger is still very involved in Petanca. Now there's a thought how about a Veteran Cycle Speedway riders Pentanca (Boules) Tournament?

Then Alan Catley sent in a couple of pages, so now here I am wondering what to leave out!

.Johnny Brown came up with a good idea, He has sent in several photos, some of them with unnamed riders in them. He suggested a "can you name the rider" feature.

Nobody has come up with a name for the Weston Stars rider in the last issue. Roy Fraser thinks his first name was Cyril. Any Ideas?

Bob Andrews has sent in some contributions, including this picture. Also a interesting article "Times Past Speedway skid kids on the right track" which will fill a page in the next issue. I am not sure which publication it came from. (Perhaps you can let me know Bob.)

He also sent a tale about Lynda, which I feel I must include.

RIDE ON: Tommy Kilbey, in the uniform of the day, shows his paces on a new Phillips speedway cycle. The picture was tak 1950 at the Montague Road track. By 1948 the sport had be so popular that the National Cycle Speedway Association wa up in North London (c)

"Must tell you this, the other night Lynda was invited out for a night with "the girls" she told me that she would be home by midnight. "I promise" she said. Well the hours passed and the margaritas went down too easy.

Around three am., she headed for home. Just as she got to the door the cuckoo clock in the hall started up and cuckooed three times. Quickly realizing that it would probably wake me up, she cuckooed another nine times. She was really proud of herself for coming up with such a quick witted solution (even when totally smashed) in order to escape a possible conflict with me.

The next morning I asked her what time she had got in? and she told me "Midnight" I did not seem annoyed at all! Whew! Got away with that one, she thought. Then I said " we need a new cuckoo clock. When she asked me why, I said, "Well, last night our clock cuckooed three times, then said "Oh shit" cuckooed four more times, cleared it's throat, cuckooed another three times, giggled, cuckooed twice more. Then tripped over the coffee table and farted" BOB ANDREWS.

Finally we have heard that Jean Bottazzi has not been very well and we wish her a speedy recovery