AGM 2007
Saturday 31st March at the 'Winsor House' Public House
Beckton East London

Another new venue, which proved easy to get to, if you approached it before the West Ham football crowd and to have plenty of parking which together with sunny day and a very good meal made for a successful AGM.

Attendance was slightly up on last year with 24 members attending including our President Nobby Dunn and the editor of 'The Spokesman' Rod Witham. The Spokesman for those of you who are unfamiliar with the publication is the quarterly magazine published by the British Cycle Speedway Council.

The meeting was got underway at 2.00 pm with chairman Derek Cattle asking those gathered to rise and stand for a minuets silence in honour of Alan Catley. Derek addressed the meeting having previously distributed copies of the agenda, minutes of last years AGM and an account summary for 2006/7. Copies of all three documents are available from Colin Booth upon request. Derek reviewed the years events, the Duxford visit which due a date mix-up did not happen, the trip on the Blue Belle railway which was OK, Len Kitching's Ramble was once again a great success, the day at Paradise Park enjoyed by all who made the trip to Hertfordshire and the Dinner Dance in November which received the approval of the majority of those who attended. A request for the resurrection of the yearly Nostalgia Evening came from the floor to which Derek responded by stating that he was looking into the possibility of arranging an event at the Exmouth Social Club in September but as he was no longer the manager all things would have to be paid for and therefore the events feasibility would have to be looked at.

The meeting continued with the secretaries' report. Colin Booth welcomed those present and after declaring that the association had a healthy membership of 215 promised to be brief. Having taken over from Alan in July he still hadn't got a full grip everything but confirmed that he would be happy to continue until the next AGM when he hoped a younger secretary would come forward. Rising from the floor John Brown proposed that at the next committee meeting they should appoint an understudy to work with Colin to ensure continuity should the secretary not be available at any time. Tony Marsh seconded this proposal.

A summary of the year's accounts showing a healthy balance having been circulated at the opening the meeting was asked for any questions. There was only one and Tom Kilbey confirmed that the money raised by the D/D Raffle would be used to ensure the price of D/D tickets would not be raised. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by John Brown and seconded by Wally Dighton.

The election by the attendees at the meeting of the committee for 2007 was conducted. Before announcing the result Derek proposed a vote of thanks to Sid Pipe who was retiring from the committee due to family commitments. The results, Secretary Colin Booth and Treasurer Tom Kilbey were returned unopposed with votes for the 5 remaining places on the committee from the 6 nominations being as follows, Derek Cattle 21, John Brown 20, Ken Archer 19, Malcolm Bellchambers 21, Ray Gingell 21, and Eric Hemsley 4. The result of the postal vote for next years President was then announced, total votes caste 85, votes for Vic White 43, for Stan Stevens 26 and for Malcolm Bellchambers 16. Vic will be serving as President from November 2007 until November 2008

Tom Kilbey gave the meeting a rundown of what had been going on at the Speedway Museum and our Cycle Speedway Corner. The space allocated had increased in size to about 3 yards by 1.5 yards. Two bikes would be on display together with two large, 4ft. by 6ft wallboards that will depict the early days of cycle speedway and display featuring Malcolm Bells Pedals to Power. Cycle speedway films are also being gathered by the museum team that are going too be converted to a single DVD by Stan Stevens and hopefully be part of a continuous loop that will be shown at the museum. Tom Kilbey, John Brown and Roy Delaney are undertaking the work at the Museum.

The penultimate item was a short review by the Chairman of events that were being considered for 2007, they included a day out at Leeds Castle, a trip to the Coln Valley Railway, a visit to Colchester Castle and in the autumn a day at Paradise Park to take in the museum.

The meeting concluded with any other business, which brought Roy Delaney to his feet to describe his proposal for the 'Bombsite Trophy'. He envisaged that this would be 16 rider individual competition contested by 16 current riders racing under the names of 16 VCSRA members. In this way he hoped that VCSRA members could get involved in the action without getting hurt. The committee agreed to consider and investigate possible venues.

The meeting finished a very substantial meal was served and enjoyed by all partaking.

HOME FROM HOME MEMORIES OF AN AWAY MATCH
BIRMINGHAM LIONS 37-TOOTING TIGERS 59

It was common practice at Tooting to follow our Sunday afternoon league match with a challenge match against teams not in our league. On one occasion we had two matches at home, cleared the track up and went away for another meeting. Happy Days.

When there was no home match, we would go anywhere for a friendly match. On our travels we rode on some great tracks, met many lovely people, who are still our friends. One match that stands out for me was our visit to Balsall Heath, Birmingham on the eight March 1953, where we met the Birmingham Lions. When we stepped off the coach and we got our first glance of the track, we were amazed it was of similar size, shape and surface as our own track. The track was in superb condition and it produced an excellent match. The racing was much closer than the score suggested. The Lions got their revenge winning the B match. Unfortunately I have no programme or photos. Just this cutting and as it was sometimes the case when short of space the local newspaper only put in the Tooting scores.

If any of our members were in the Lions team that day, or know someone who was it would be interesting to know the names of our opponents that day, after so many years.

All in All a match to remember.

RON HOLVEY

Tigers maul Lions

Tooting Tigers went to Birmingham on Sunday to race the Birmingham Lions, and they gave them a mauling Winning 13 of the 16 heats, Tooting won the match 59—37. Highlight was the riding of R. Holvey, A. Newsom, who never lost to an opponent. C. Elmer and B. Marshall were only beaten once.

Then Ron Holvey ended a brilliant day by shattering the Lions' track record by 7 secs.

The Cubs were beaten by the Lions' B team.

Tigers: Ron Holvey 12, Arthur Newsom 10, Barry Marshall 10, Clive Elmer 9, Alan Brett 7, Del Cattle 5, Ken Archer 4, Brian Fookes 2.

Cubs: Johnny Bragg 9, Tommy Roman 7, Eric Avenell 7, Tommy Davis 6, Billy Brerton 4, Johnny Herron 3, Pete Baldwin 3, Dave Fairfoul 2.

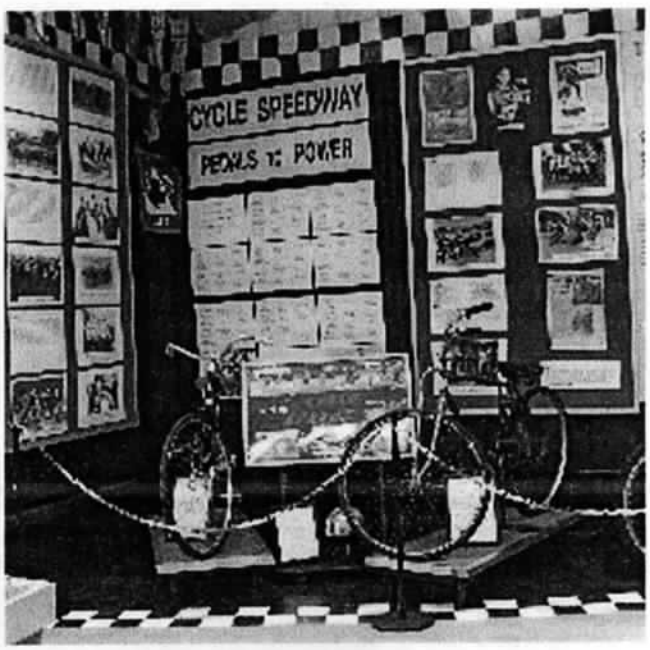
Museum Corner – 3

By Colin Booth (Sec.)

Thanks to the efforts of members Tom Kilbey, John Brown and Roy Delaney the Cycle Speedway corner is ready for its first visitors when the Paradise Park Speedway Museum opens, on schedule at the end of April. The Speedway Museum, when I took the pictures below (11th April) was almost ready. George Barclay who has been putting in five days a week at the museum has, with the help of Terry Stone done a tremendous job.

Our exhibit which can be found on the left as you enter is fronted by two track bikes. The bikes in pristine condition have been restored and presented to the VCSRA by Alan Doggett of the Clay Hill Aces (Herts). Behind, wall mounted are 3 display boards, the first and third show text and pictures giving a very brief history of cycle speedway and attempt to capture the character of our sport and the atmosphere of those early bombsite 'do-it-yourself' days. The second or middle, 'Pedals to Power' board highlights some of those riders who made a successful transition to motor speedway. In amongst the bikes we are displaying the 'Mars Silver Helmet' won by Brian Moston and donated by our new member, Rod Witham and a framed set of pictures of the 50th Anniversary Veterans Event at Thurrock in 1996. It is envisaged that, eventually there will be several sets of pictures available, which will be displayed on a rotational basis. For this to happen however we will need the help of one or two members who live local to the museum. Volunteers should contact Tom (Stan) Kilbey, his number is in our directory. The display of trophies, cup, shields etc. is held up until a suitable shelf or cabinet is available. George Barclay and Tom Kilbey are currently reviewing the provision of these facilities. We apologise for the delay especially to the relatives of Les Westwood who kindly donated his World Cup Replica last year.

Finally as we noted in the past the Speedway Museum is a registered charity and George Barclay, the fund raiser for the museum has pointed out that in order to retain this status which ensures certain financial benefits our exhibit must encourage and show how participation in our sport can be achieved. To do this, bearing in mind that our space is very limited we will be displaying only one or two current photographs with the appropriate contact numbers or addresses. To ensure our information is up-to-date we have contacted the East London Club but if there are any other clubs you know of that may be interested in providing an input please ask them to get in touch with Tom Kilbey.



Apologies. Due to the Secretary running out of time the 'Pedals to Power' profile of Stan Stevens will not be appearing until the next issue of The Track Record.

Roy Small (Wembley Panthers & Russell Eagles)

Explains his catapult start (in an email from Arizona to "Trigger" in Australia!)

Picture 1
Roy Small demonstrating his "catapult start"

Left to right
Sid Luke, Johnny Pinnock, Roy Howard & on the inside Roy Small demonstrates his catapult start.

As you know, everyone wanted to get a fast start, everyone tried hard to be a quicker thinker than the others, to see those tapes go up before the other guy. That helped but was not enough. I gave this a lot of thought in my early Wembley days and devised , what I referred to as a catapult start. If you look at the first picture, four of us are lined up ready to start. I'm in the number two slot, note that the other riders have their left foot squarely on the ground and to the left of their pedal, you can see their left pedal quite clearly. Everyone did this automatically. They all pushed themselves off with their left foot when the tapes went up, what else were you to do.

If you look closely at my left foot, you will see that it is not in the same position, it is in front of my left pedal. This is the key. All the other riders always put their right foot on their right pedal and waited for the tapes to go up before they put pressure enough to get going. I was different. I placed my left foot directly in front of the pedal, that pedal could not go anywhere, because my left ankle was in the way, then I put every ounce of energy I could find into pushing the right pedal down hard. Unlike the others I could not go foreword when I pushed my right foot down, because my left ankle was stopping me. It was a form of dynamic tension. As I pushed hard on that right pedal, I was also at the same time pulling on the handlebars as hard as I could. All I had to do was release my left toe from the ground and I shot away from the gate way ahead of the others.

The second picture shows it a little better. The tapes have gone up and you can see that Sid Luke and Roy Howard have not moved and Jonny Pinnock is just ahead of them with a very slight movement… but on the inside I am already on the move.

Directory Amendments

Change of Address

Tom Chubb – Appledore, Pengelly, Callington, Cornwall, PL17 7DZ
Nobby Dunn – DP1 Gallagh, Enniskillen, Nth. Ireland, BT92 3Dg Tele 02866 348033

Corrected Errors

Arthur Caunt – Post Code Should Read – RM4 1JH
Mike Vernam - Post Code Should Read – BH23 4NY
Sid Umney – Tele. No. Should Read – 01462 621234

New Members

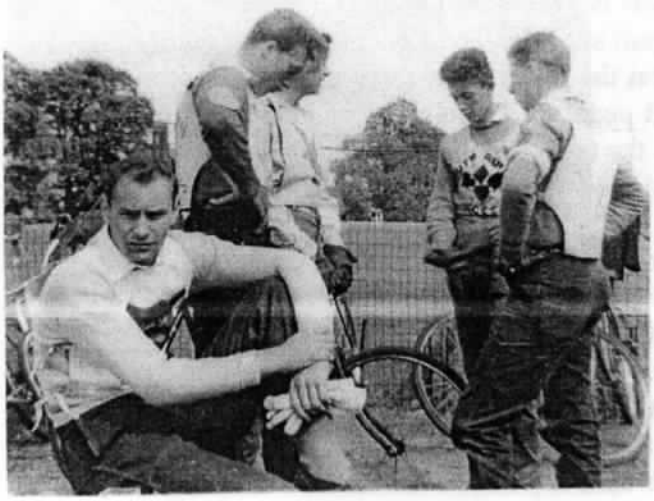
Bill Whyte – 2A Poulters Lane, Worthing, West Sussex, BN14 7SP Tele. 01903 603132
Norman Hunter – 4 Newstead Avenue, Leicester, LE3 9TB. Tele. 0116 262 6226
Rod Witham – 57 Rectory Lane, Poringland, Norwich, Norfolk, NR14 7SW. Tele 01508 493880

Membership Renewal

Memberships were due for renewal from the 1st of April 2007 and a renewal form has been included with this issue. Please make all cheques payable to the VCSRA and post to Colin Booth, 29 Broad Oaks, Wickford, Essex SS12 9BQ. **For those of you who paid your subs to me at the AGM I will be sending you your membership cards when I return from holiday at the beginning of May, sorry for the delay**.

PS. You will be pleased to know that we have started negotiations with Paradise Park for concessionary tickets for a member's event at the Park, sometime in September.

Below and opposite page some pictures to welcome two of our new members.



Pictures from North v South match.
Above left to right:-
P.Blackwell (Kingstanding) B.Whyte (Ruislip Aces) &
J.Unsworth (Langley Leopards.)

Top picture
Wembley All Stars on their annual visit to Devon to race against the Shaldon Kestrels
Wembley left to right Dixie Dean, Roy Fraser, Den Green, Brian Carter, Gerry Wallace & Eddie Hill. Sitting in front Norman Hunter
Shaldon Riders not known
Bottom picture
Wembley All Stars track at the Welsh Harp Hendon

Both pictures from the late Alan Cowland, who can be seen sitting on the tree trunk in the bottom picture.

Editors Rambling.

With this issue of the "Track Record" you should receive a Tribute to Alan Catley. A big thank you to everyone who contributed to this, especially Tom Kilby who was responsible for most of the photos and also for getting the contributions from the Police and the R.A.F.
Have you all seen the March edition of "Best of British"? It has an excellent article "Rough & Tumble of Cycle Speedway" by Brian Makepiece. It covers 2 pages and has seven photographs.
Does anyone remember Roy Small? He claims that his "catapult start" resulted in him scoring 20 or 21 points every match. The article on page 7 is a condensed version (from 3 pages!) of his email to "Trigger" He claims that nobody noticed or copied his starting technique. It looks as if it would work, maybe if we have a Fun Race Day, someone might like to try it out!
Colin's web site seems to have been getting noticed. Sid Russel (Wembley Lions) phoned to say that he logged on to the site and was surprised to see his photo on the front cover of the (May 2006) Track Record. He is the rider behind Gerry Wallace. He asked for a membership form, but has not yet joined.
Bill Gadsby

DO YOU REGONISE ANYONE HERE?

1954: SKID KIDS GET ON THEIR BIKES FOR CHURCH PARADE

The scene is familiar, the date is May 1954 and the occasion is the "Skid Kids" church parade. The riders in the foreground are members of the Syston Foxes (recognise a face?) and they are just crossing the junction of London Road, Granville Road and Evington Road in Leicester. These were the days before this spot had either a roundabout or traffic lights. This Mercury archive photo just gave the minimum of information on the reverse, but I'm sure there must be many readers who remember this event and can tell me where the parade had come from and where it was heading.
The above newspaper cutting was sent in by Brian Green.

"MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS" *by Brian Makepeace*

The old pictures of the "early days" in Plymouth, on the back page of a recent issue of "The Track Record", provided the stimulus for a little day-dreaming - and one of the beauties of reaching the age of dotage is that you are forgiven for looking back and thoroughly enjoying your memories. It occurred to me that there may be a few readers who may enjoy sharing my recollections of those pioneering days when our sport was not only on a high in terms of teams involved but was just simply great fun.

It was 1952 when I was introduced to cycle speedway at Fishersgate, some 6 miles west of Brighton, and what was to become a lifelong involvement with the sport (38 years to be exact) had begun in earnest. An oddity that didn't hit me at first was that, although there were around thirty teams in Sussex, we were never really able to compete with them. Battle Bulldogs, East Hill Swifts, Ridge Eagles and Hollington Hammers were among the top Hastings teams. The Eastbourne area had Sidley Cyclones, Seddlescombe Bluebells, Westfield Wolves and Hellingly Lions (still going strong and surely the oldest club in the sport!).

Fishersgate Flyers were almost "outlaws" and, as a result, we spent almost all of our weekends meeting up with the big boys from the London area, Surrey, Hampshire and Kent!

With the prospect of a weekend in Brighton for our visitors we had no difficulty in attracting some of the top teams to our track on a Saturday evening and most Sundays were spent in a coach on a 130-170 mile round trip for return challenge matches. This at a time when the sport was enjoying such "local" rivalry around the country that many teams simply rode their track bikes to away matches!

From memory one of the only local teams that we regularly raced was Beddingham Tigers with a track at a railway crossing, just outside Lewes (Sussex), and run by the British Rail crossing keeper who occasionally had to leave the match to open the train gates! Apart from that our "local" fixtures were with Horsmonden Hawks and Rolvenden Rockets (Kent) where we often had to wait for the home team to "come in from Harvesting" if we went late in the season.

My first memory was a home match against Blackheath Aces and I was more than impressed by both their ability and their smart turn-out (including John Hyam I recall!). Even in those days there were some very smart teams around and one of the smartest was Chertsey Mustangs. All the team wore black jodhpurs, despatch rider boots, white sweatshirts and proper speedway body colours of navy blue with a white "Mustang". This "uniform look" and the team turn-out was something that stayed with me throughout my many years in the sport and it was something that certainly preceded the marvellous BCSF standards of the 60's and 70's.

Harefield Pirates (Middx) provided me with my first away experience where we rode on a track laid in a chalk-pit in the area used by Denham Studios — an impressive memory was that I was told that some of the scenes in the film "Treasure Island" were shot there.

London tracks we visited included Peckham Stars and Ruskin Flyers, near a fire-station in Wyndham Road, Camberwell; Bermondsey Greyhounds close to a canal in Cable Street; Tottenham Kangaroos on their original track I believe in the corner of the Hackney Marshes. It was Tottenham's visit to Fishersgate that set something of a record with no less than 13 of the 16 heats being 3-3 in a not surprising drawn match!

Wimbledon Stars, in the "Castle" Pub car park at Tooting, Battersea Eagles, with the famous "White Ghost" Stan Blackwell - later to become the even more famous Rory Blackwell world record drummer and still in the Guiness Book of World Records. Stepney Pirates, Deptford Aces and Black Heath Aces all paid flying visits to Brighton and hosted Flyers back at their tracks.

Surrey trips were almost "local derbies" - Chertsey Mustangs, Cranleigh Eagles and Guildford's Westway Bluebirds - where I first encountered compulsory helmets . . . lightweight, peaked cycle polo style, with three or four sizes in yellow and white, in a rack on the visitors side of the pits! If we were early on our trip there we might stop off at a fabulous track, Millmead Monarchs, by the river in Guildford - now covered by the Yvonne Arnaud theatre - bikes off the roof and a few "warm up" laps before moving on to the tight, sloping Westway track.

Once again there was an oddity in this southern part of Surrey - with two League set-ups in and around Guildford (one with two divisions!) yet virtually no contact or contest between the two. Trips to Hampshire, just down the road and only a 120 mile round trip, saw us meet Highfield Cobras (Petersfield) and the redoubtable Andy Mowatt, Soberton Stars, where again we had to await the end of a days harvesting before the match went ahead. Remarkably, when I moved to Southampton in later years, I found that no-one in that area had even heard of Soberton Stars .. . and they were just 15 miles from the Southampton!

These are my early memories - they may have revived a few for you too. Without a doubt I now look back and think that they were "the good old days" and a time when the sport was friendly, fiercely competitive but fun. Maybe, if you have enjoyed my ramblings, I can produce more of my memories from the latter stages of my courtship with this great sport and cover the late 50's with Brighton Scorchers and the 60's and 70's.

From Tony Marsh

Ron Mapp, Tony Marsh and John Bonnella look to the camera, posing before the start of The Hackney Coronation Cup 1954 at Whipps Cross, which saw Whipps Cross Comets win the Triangular Tournament. Most of the "Big Guns" by now had left Warwick Lions. Vic White, Alan Catley, Keith Jenkins Ken Scott Charlie Read (R.A.F.) Ron Mitchell, Derek Sheridan, Frank Duffy (National Service). We continued at Andrews Road track until the Council took over the land, so we started 1957 on Well Street Common in the S.E. Essex League.

Warwick Lions Individual 1954
Frank Duffy leading J.Bonnella and R.Mapp