Norwich Cycle Speedway Picture from Terry Porter

THE THOUGHTS OF CHAIRMAN DEREK

Well gentlemen it seems I owe you all an apology.
In the last issue of The Track Record, I spoke about two of our coming events.
Len Kitchings ramble and the day out to Duxford, unfortunately they were over before the issue came out. SORRY.
Now it is my turn to have a moan, in the last issue we asked for photos or good copies of your original team.
The response so far is disappointing to say the least, we have received six pictures to date and two of them where mine
Now the museum is due to open next spring so come along gentlemen help us.
Sadly in the last few weeks we have lost two more of our happy band.
Firstly John Blatch and then Bert Hudson.
John was a mine of information on Speedway and Cycle Speedway especially in Essex and the East London area.
What can you say about Bert. A man who would not suffer fools gladly; if something needed saying he said it.
I did not know Bert in the past but I was aware of his record, we became friends when we came onto the committee of the V.C.S.R.A.
It was great to work with Bert even though we would often have a shouting match on the drive home from meetings.
A man I will sorely miss.
There appears to be some confusion regarding the Presidential nomination forms/
To clear this up. You are asked to nominate any member of our association you think is deserving of this honour, then get another member to second your nomination. When we receive all nominations hopefully before Christmas a voting slip is sent to all members, voting for one of the nominees, returned to us just prior to the AG.M. Even a mushroom should be able to understand this.
Now a word on our latest outings
Firstly the Bluebell railway and the visit to Sheffield Park National Trust Gardens. This was absolute magic to walk round these gardens was like walking through paradise to think that it was all man made, the gardener architect had to be a genius. The trip on the railway was for me like a trip into the past it reminded me so much of the place I was evacuated to, I was as happy as a pig in s"t.
Now for Lens ramble I can only hope that the next one is better attended/
Len takes so much trouble sending us maps on how to get there, where to park, and then a map of the route we would take, a smashing pub to have our lunch then a slow amble back
Thanks again from all of us Len!
Finally we a coming up to our main event the Dinner/Dance those of you who have not booked yet get your finger out and please keep the raffle prizes coming.

DEREK CATTLE.

Following the continued ill health of Alan Catley, the committee unanimously co-opted Mr Colin Booth on to the committee until the 2008 A.G.M.

Provisional 2007 Events Diary

AGM. Thursday 29th or Saturday 31st March
Brewers Fayre Public House Woolwich Manor Way, Becton, East London.
Plenty of Parking, Easy access from M25
Coordinator/Organiser Derek Cattle

Spring Golf Day. Thursday 10th or 17th May
At a course in either Kent, Surrey or East Sussex
Coordinator/Organisers Colin Booth/Roy Garnham

Speedway Museum Opening Event. Date TBA (A spring, May/June opening is hoped for.)
Paradise Wildlife Park, Broxbourne, Hertfordshire.
Coordinator/Organisers Malcolm Belchambers/John Brown

Nostalgia Day and Picnic. Date in July/August TBA
Leeds Castle Kent or an alternative, similar location if not available.
Coordinator/Organisers Derek Cattle/Colin Booth

Country Ramble and Pub Lunch. Date in late August TBA
Location Surrey and/or East Sussex
Coordinator/Organisers Derek Cattle/Len Kitchen

Autumn Golf Day and VCSRA Trophy Competition. Thursday 4th or 11th October
At a course in either Essex or Hertfordshire
Coordinator/Organisers Colin Booth/Roy Garnham

12th Annual Dinner/Dance Saturday 24th November
Ye Olde Plough House Motel, Bulphan, Essex
Coordinator/Organisers Colin Booth/Roy Garnham

TO ALL MEMBERS OF V.C.S.R.A.

I am writing on behalf of my sister, JEAN HUDSON who wishes me to thank everyone for the kind messages of sympathy and also for the beautiful floral tribute sent in remembrance of BERT HUDSON.

Jean and the many relatives who attended the church service and also at the chapel in East London Cemetery were truly overwhelmed by the kindness and concern by the members who were there.
Sincere thanks to you all.

From Marie Wagstaff (Jean's Sister)

FROM JOHN MANN

Thank you for forwarding me details of the Veteran Cycle Speedway Riders Association and copies of the track record, which I found very interesting. "Good Old Days". I notice that most of the pictures and articles are of clubs in the London area, nothing wrong with that. Interesting.

I have enclosed the names of leagues and clubs who competed in our area, which perhaps you will find interesting and care to print in one of your forthcoming editions of Track Record. It may stir a few memories of members who may have visited the area.

The majority of the tracks were dug out and had dirt surfaces, had proper safety fences and were between 100 and 110 yards round. They had a proper pit area fenced separately, public address system and fly up starting tapes. One of our local teams, Hellingly Lions are still riding at the present time in a National League.

I will try to forward you some photographs.

SEDLESCOMBE LEAGUE

Battle Bulldogs
Cobbs Wood Eagles (Ashford, Kent)
Hellingly Lions
Icklesham Vikings
Horsmonden Tigers (Kent)
Peasmarsh Panthers
Robertsbridge Rockets
Sandhurst Invictas (Kent)
Sedlescombe Saints
Tenterden Tigers (Kent)
Wadhurst Lions
Broad Oak Aces (Heathfield)
Guestling Ghosts
Hawkhurst Hawks (Kent)
Lydd Lions (Kent)
Northian Knights
Rolvenden Rockets (Kent)
Rye Aces
Staplecross Swifts
Ticehurst Terriers
Udimore Tigers
Westfield Wolves

HASTINGS LEAGUE

Ridge Eagles
Rock-A-Nore Rockets
Baldslow Boomerangs
Hollington Greenleaf Mosquitos
Clive Vale Saints
Hollington Lions
Sidley Cyclones
Sidley Bluebells

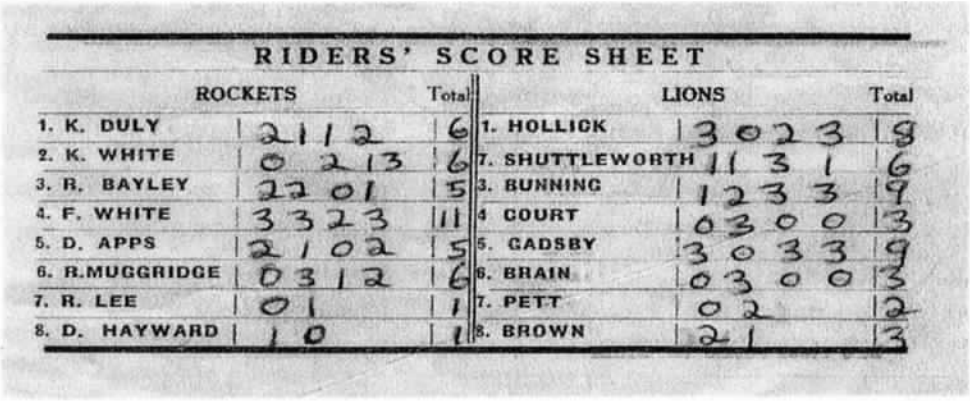
TOURING TEAMS

Edinburgh Monarchs (Scotland)
Glasgow Tigers (Scotland)
Mussleburgh Giants (Scotland)
Walton on Naze (Essex)
Fishergate Flyers (Brighton)

MORE EDITORS RAMBLING

One of the nice things about being editor, and I hope for the readers, is that some of the articles bring back half forgotten memories. An example is the contribution on page 7 from John Mann. The mention of one team set me searching through my programmes.

During the summer of 1950 I was on holiday in Hastings, walking along the front I saw a huge crowd, going to see what the attraction was, I was surprised to see that it was a cycle speedway match. The Rock-a-Noor Rockets had track on the beach, right by the road. I was impressed by the presentation and asked their manager if I could bring the Kingsbury Lions down for a match. We agreed a date, so now the only problem was how do I get the team down there. Fortunately one of our team new a friendly greengrocer who agreed to take us down there in his lorry provided we kept the back door shut and kept quiet, as he was using "red" petrol. The two teams were evenly matched, with the lead changing hands several times before the Lions finally won by 41-43. The main difference between the two teams, were our reserves, Terry Pett and Tom Brown, who although getting only two rides each, were involved in two 5-1s and a 4-2 getting 5 points plus two bonus between them, whereas their opposite numbers only scored 2 points and one bonus. F. White was outstanding for the Rockets, dropping only one point. (modesty prevents me from saying to whom!)



RIDERS' SCORE SHEET

ROCKETS		Total	LIONS		Total
1. K. DULY	2 1 1 2	6	1. HOLLICK	3 0 2 3	8
2. K. WHITE	0 2 1 3	6	7. SHUTTLEWORTH	1 1 3 1	6
3. R. BAYLEY	2 2 0 1	5	3. BUNNING	1 2 3 3	9
4. F. WHITE	3 3 2 3	11	4 COURT	1 0 3 0 0	3
5. D. APPS	2 1 0 2	5	5. CADSBY	3 0 3 3	9
6. R.MUGGRIDGE	0 3 1 2	6	6. BRAIN	1 0 3 0 0	3
7. R. LEE	0 1	1	7. PETT	0 2	2
8. D. HAYWARD	1 0	1	8. BROWN	2 1	3

The reason that only the surnames are shown for our team, is that I confirmed it by telegram, and to have included the initial and the full stop would have trebled the price!

There was also a "Second Half" of two heats and a final, but for some reason only the 1-4 of each team was included, so I missed out on that. (Del Hollick won the final) I nearly did get some extra rides, as after a short interval the Rockets raced again against a team from East London. Fifteen minutes before the start time, three of the visitors had not arrived, so three Lions were asked to line up their place, but the missing riders turned up minutes before the match began. It would be interesting to know which team I nearly got to ride for. Any one from an East London team remember riding in Hastings in August 1950?

All in all it was a very pleasant day out and we were given a share of the collection, which paid for about half of our travel expenses.

I received an email from **Paul Thorne** saying that he noted that only the Whipps Cross riders were mentioned in the caption for the front cover photo of the last issue and pointing out that the Horspath rider leading the race was Mick Grant, with his younger brother Wally bringing up the rear.

Paul also reminded me that we had ridden together for the Bournemouth Vikings Combination Team in back in 1964. I still have all the programmes, but unfortunately (or maybe fortunately!) the scores have not been filled in. More Happy Memories.

Incidentally I used that photo on a poster. I realised that the Cunningham Library (where "Computer Friendly" give lessons) was only a few hundred yards from the site of the St. Albans Cobras track in Cell Barnes Lane. I put the poster in the library window, asking if anyone remembered the team or the track. I have not received any reply, it was a long shot, but I thought it was worth a try.

VCSRA Autumn Golf Day & Stableford Trophy Competition

By Colin Booth

Thursday 5th October 2006 at Panshanger Golf Complex, Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

Firstly an apology to those who could not join us due to the last minute change of venue. We had originally planned to play at the Darenth Valley Course in Kent where they do not normally have golf buggies but had promised they would attempt to hire 2 or 3 for our society. Unfortunately after many phone calls they failed to produce any guarantee that they would do so and we were forced to cancel the booking. Next year the Spring Day will be held in Kent or Surrey, Dennis England and Dave Burton are already looking for a suitable venue.

At Panshanger there were plenty of buggies and the course was excellent, the same could not be said of the weather. It was WET.

The rain did not put us off however and there was a healthy and very close competition for the VCSRA Trophy. The eventual winner Len Adams with 31 points was closely followed by Roy Fraser and Stan Brown with 30. Dave Burton scored 29' Roy Garnham 27, Dennis Bottazzi and Dennis England 26, Harry Thompson 24 and finally the wooden spoon went to Colin Booth with 19 points. The ladies trophy went, for the third year running to Doreen Fraser on 25 points with Jackie Adams and Ann Thompson close on her heels with 24 points each. There were also two guests playing with the men, Jim Feats and Ken Hildrew on 35 and 34 points respectively who did not qualify as non-members to play for the Trophy. The longest drive prize on the 5th hole went to our guest Ken Hildrew. Nearest the pin on the 14th went to Dennis England who was the only player to get his or her ball actually on the green!

In the evening we were joined by President Elect Nobby Dunn, VCSRA Treasurer Tom Kilbey and his wife and the inimitable Wally Warrington. The meal I think could have been described as "nuvo cuisine", sadly it was very bland and not as tasty as the menu hinted. The prizes were once again distributed by yours truly and the evening concluded with the telling of jokes by Stan Brown. Despite the shortcomings the evening and company were enjoyed by all.

Editors Rambling cont.

Email from Ron Tarrant

Dear Bill, Many thanks for the Track Record, which I enjoy reading. I am now on email after swearing I would never have a computer, so wondered if I could save the Vets stamps by receiving it on line? I don't believe that we have ever met, but if I ever get over there again I do hope to bump into you at one of the Vets functions. My regards to the Vets executive and incoming President Nobby Dunn who I met when I was over last. Thanks again for everything. Ron Tarrant ex Warwick and Catterick Lion.

Anybody wishing to contact Ron his email address is rt0903@telus.net

Colin Booth has now put the May edition of The Track Record on the "Vets" web site.

Colin also received an email from Stephen Pimm, asking if anyone had any information on Littlemore Cycle Speedway Club in Oxford, as his father John Pimm, who died in March, was the Captain in the 1950s.

For any one who is interested in Speedway, there is an excellent online magazine that you can see at www.speedwayplus.co.uk it has many interesting articles and pictures, well worth a look. I particularly liked an article in issue one, summer 2005 by Dave Gifford on the advantages of moving from Wolverhampton to Coatbridge:- " For a start, the referees had a clear understanding of the fact that the home riders never did anything wrong and that the rule book was at best only used as a rough guide to running the meeting. They also came up with a novel innovation, they removed the bulbs from the red and blue exclusion lights, which I thought was a marvellous idea!"

The picture on the back page was sent in by Terry Porter, he saw it when on holiday in Norfolk

I held this page, waiting for a tribute to Bert Hudson. It is always sad when one of our members pass away, but worse I think, when their passing is not commemorated in the magazine. I had other things that I could have filled this page with, but I hope you wont mind if I indulge myself and write this story. Writing about the Kingsbury Lions (page 8) brought back some happy memories but also some anger and bitterness.

KENTON HAWKS/KINGSBURY LIONS.

In 1948 the Hawks were founder members of the Wembley and District League. The other teams and their tracks:- Kingsbury Lions had theirs on the Kingsbury Circle. The Acton Acorns had lost their track, so they shared with the Wembley Panthers, This was a large circular track, with the inside line marked out with large rocks, it was on land owned by the L.M.S. Railway at the bottom of Berkhamstead Avenue. Both teams were regularly evicted from the track by the police at the request of the railway company. There was also some waste land here and this was used as a short cut to Wembley Town Centre via London Road. It was here some ten years later that the Wembley Hawks made their home. Sudbury Court Flyers had theirs on a disused golf course at Northwick Park, it was in a former bunker, which gave it banked straights. Hendon Pirates had the best track, made on a disused tennis court in the grounds of The Brent Bridge Hotel. It seems strange that a luxury hotel should be quite happy to have a cycle speedway track in their grounds, while the LMS w constantly hassling the Panthers, getting the police to evict them from, what was, although fenced off, derelict ground. Kingsbury Tigers had a large sloping mud track in Church Lane. They or at least some of the team had previously ridden at The Paddocks just round the corner from Wembley Town Hall. As no one else was using this, The Hawks took it over when the Control Board upheld the Kingsbury Tigers complaint that our track in Kenton was not wide enough for league racing.

I am not sure who won the league, but we (Hawks) came bottom with null points. We did manage a draw in our home match against the Kingsbury Lions, but they managed to get the match rerun, by which time our top scorer, Den Kirby had joined the Lions and rode against us. We may not have set the league alight, but we turned up for all our matches on time and did our best. We were certainly one of the best turned out teams, with our red football jerseys, with a black hawk on a white background sewn on. Did I score any points? I don't remember, so I probably did not.

At the end of the season our top riders joined the Kingsbury Lions, while those of the Sudbury Court Flyers joined the Wembley Monarchs. I took the remaining riders that no one else wanted and formed a team to enter in the newly formed second division. We used the Flyers Northwick Park track, and as it was near South Kenton station, we kept the name Kenton Hawks. I bought some barrage balloon fabric and made (or rather my Mother made) a smart new set of breast plates, based on the Exeter Falcons Speedway colou Other teams in the division were:- Alperton Penguins, Cricklewood Cobras, Kingsbury Devils, Kingsbury Monarchs & Stonebridge Rockets. Teams met once home and away, giving us only ten matches.

This time I know exactly how many points I scored:- 99½ Lets face it a figure like that stays in your mind! Another ½ point and I would have had an average of 10 (out of 12) with out bonus points. This improvement in form was entirely due to Charlie May. Charlie was an average reserve with the Wembley Lions Speedway Team, but when he dropped down to the second division with Walthamstow, he was virtually unbeatable, challenging and beating the top National League stars in match races. So I figured that if Charlie could do it, then so could I.

Once we had completed our fixtures I joined the Kingsbury Lions, this meant that ex Hawks now made up half the team. The following season (1950) there was no second division, but I hoped to keep the Hawks together, maybe get them "adopted" as the Lions second team, then they could replace senior riders as they were called up for National Service. However when three or four riders were called up at the same time, the remainder of the team decided that they did not want to ride with " a bunch of kids" and went off to join other teams. Mrs Mahony, the Lions manager said that she did not wish to continue, so that should have been the end of the team. So we (Hawks) had a meeting and decided to ride the Lions remaining matches. One or two Lions showed an interest in returning when they realised that I was going to keep the team going, but I decided that we would sink or swim with the team that I had. With me as by far our most experienced rider, and at fifteen probably the oldest, we were ready to take on the might of the Wembley League, we very nearly sank!

For our home match against South Harrow Greyhounds, we only had six riders, I was thinking that this would probably be our last match and that I would have to admit defeat and throw in the towel. Then just before the match was due to start two riders Del Hollick (a Wembley Test Rider) and Brian Court, said that they had fallen out with their team, Cricklewood Cobras, and could they please come and ride for me !!!!! The Greyhounds manager, Mr Dean (Dixie's Dad) agreed that they could ride in the match, although any points that they scored would not count.
The following week, another rider John Bunning, came up and said that he would be interested in riding again. He proved to be another very good signing and all of a sudden we had a team that would be a match for anyone. This was the team that I took to Hastings.

Shortly after that match the Wembley League collapsed, or at least that is what I believed at the time and still believed until a couple of years ago, when an email made me realise that I had been conned and that in fact the League had continued for a few more years.

Alan Low was one of the Kenton Hawks top riders during our 1949 season in the second division. He had an injury to his knee, that became badly infected (probably something to do with the cows that grazed in the park.) There was a strong possibility that he could lose his leg. At a Control Board meeting I asked if it was possible to hold a benefit meeting for Alan. This was agreed and one member, I can not remember his name, was very enthusiastic and offered to organise the meeting. When Alan suggested that he could come to the meeting (he was wearing a calliper on his leg at that time.) with his parents, and maybe present the prizes, the organiser was horrified and said that Alan should not attend. This same person was the announcer at the meeting, and between races was urging people to give generously to the fund. I suppose a large amount of money must have been collected to make it worth while for him to somehow manage to convince me that the League had collapsed. I do not know how I could have been so naive or just plain stupid as to accept that, without checking with some of the other teams. (who had presumably been informed that we had dropped out of the League.) I can not believe that after struggling to keep the team going against all the odds, that I should give up just as we were having some success. Even if the League had folded I could have kept the team going with challenge matches, but I thought that was the end of Cycle Speedway.

I would probably never have ridden again, but for the phone call from Vic Merner, asking if the Roxeth Rockets could use our track and would any of our former riders be interested in joining them. This was probably my happiest time in the sport, Vic was an excellent manager, it was a real pleasure to just turn up and ride with out all the problems of managing a team. Also after a few weeks, five of "my" former Hawks/Lions had found a place in the team. I am afraid that I forgot all about Alan, and did not give the Wembley League a second thought.

Christopher Tregidgo (Trigger) rode with me in the Kenton Hawks. I had not heard from him since then until he emailed me from Australia when he saw my entry in "Friends Reunited". We reminisced about the "Good Old Days". When I asked him about who he had ridden for after his National Service, his answer came like a bolt from the blue. He said that he had ridden for The Wembley All Stars until 1953 or 1954. riding at The Paddocks, Wormwood Scrubs and West Hendon. So while the Rockets were riding at the Kingsbury Circle, the All Stars were riding (in the Wembley League) just a mile or so up the road at The Paddocks. Neither team being aware of the other.

This answered one thing that had puzzled me. When I started my National Service, I was riding for Roxeth Rockets, they had already moved from Kingsbury Circle to the West Hendon track. When I returned, to what I assumed to be the same team, it was managed by Vic Merner, but was now named "The Wembley All Stars". I wondered how a team that did not come from Wembley and were certainly not all stars got that name? The answer of course is that the team originally came from Wembley and they were most certainly all stars. It was almost the Wembley Test Team:- Roy Howard, Eric Marshall, Ken Bell, Pete Rhodes, Peter Smith, Peter Harris, Ray (Roy) Rogers, Stan Baldock and of course "Trigger". Exactly how they came to combine with the Roxeth Rockets is something that I will probably never know!

Bill Gadsby

Picture: EDP LIBRARY

Speedway team's pumped up for action

MEMORY LANE

BY MICHAEL POLLITT

It is 32 years ago when this gallant group of youngsters – members of Norwich Cycle Speedway – is pictured for a celebration photograph.

There are some splendid cheesy grins from some members, who have been persuaded to pose for the camera. By modern standards, the bikes look almost standard models, which must have been hard work compared with the very latest light-weight versions. The cyclists, pictured on May 14, 1974, are wearing a Norwich badge.

If any reader has any details or information please write to Michael Pollitt, rural affairs editor, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich, NR1 1RE. Copies of this staff photograph, C10839, can be obtained from EDP offices.

NEXT: Norwich 1964 donkey derby.

■ **THE REGION IN PICTURES – for more nostalgia pictures see www.edp24.co.uk/photosales**