Fig 4 and 5. John Goldsmith and Vic White "team-ride" against Kenny Randall and John Halloran of *Beckton Aces* 1949.

cuit with broken bricks (Fig 3). They had not thought to ask anyone if they could use the site.

In general a track was a 120 yards long rectangle with two 180 degree bends. The centre was left to grow grass but the track itself was flattened brick rubble which was gradually improved with a surface made slick by brick dust which encouraged fast racing and broadsides (Fig 4 and 5). The rules and point scoring were the same as Speedway with two riders from each team pitted against each other for a four lap race around the circuit. Properly appointed Stewards officiated at the meeting ensuring fair play and confirming the result of each race.

Reflecting on the creation of the track and the Club for a moment, it was very remarkable that these two teenagers should set up this track without permission or "planning approval". Although the freeholders were never consulted they must have known about this squatting but never objected. Of course it is possible that the owners might have been killed in the bombing, but the same thing was happening all over the east end of London and soon spread all over the country.

In no time the team acquired the name the *Warwick Lions*, and entered the East London Cycle Speedway league. The original members of the team are George Jordan, Ron and Peter Tarrant, Dennis Puttock, Gus Murray, John Bonella, Charles Aldridge, Gordon Day, Victor White, Frank Duffy, Alan Catley, Derek Sheridan, Eric Phillipson and Ron Johnson.

Eric (George) Jordan (Fig 6) took on the role of manager of the club and approached the Hackney Council to legalise the squat. Approval was forthcoming with the help of Alderman Darke, who professed that any activity which kept boys off the streets and doing something constructive was good news.

The lads were very well supported by parents and local residents. The local pub, *The Sir Walter Scott,* allowed the team to store the removable starting gate (Fig 7) and the portable stewards box in their back yard and subsequently provided an electrical supply for the PA system.

Meetings were held on Sunday afternoons and crowds of several hundreds regularly watched the excitement (Fig 8). Ice cream vendors latched on to the commercial possibility and ice lollies became the staple diet. The spent sticks, it was conjectured, would form a stratum which could well puzzle future archaeological excavations on the site.

Modest terracing was added in the form of further 'controlled' fly tipping (Fig 9) but the track

Fig 6. Early match in 1946. George Jordan, manager and acting steward. Ron and Pete Tarrant at the start.

Fig 7. Warwick Lions vs Albion Romans 1948. Alan Catley and Derek Sheridan try out the new starting gate.

and Laurence Read and Gordon Smith.

The presentation of meetings became quite polished with PA announcements, score board and printed programmes sold to raise funds for the maintenance of the track.

The crowds inevitably added atmosphere to the meetings and fixtures against the rivals Stratford Hammers were usually hard fought affairs.

Recognition of the quality of the *Warwick Lions* team was made when they were selected to meet the *Stratford Hammers* in an invitation meeting held under a circus big-top on a site off the Woodford Avenue in Woodford in November 1949. The promoters were the Speedway Cyclists Association Ltd. who aspired to make the sport a commercial venture. The *Lions* beat the *Hammers* on the night and the final individual event was also won by the Lions (see fig 10).

The *Lions* went from strength to strength with further victories against the *Hammers* in the annual Rivets Cup. This was achieved on a home and away basis by one point. A further fine result was to

was never vandalised even though it was unfenced and open throughout the week.

There was a constant turnover of riders due to the National Service conscription taking lads away for the two year stint in the armed forces. Some riders transferred from other clubs, such as Ron Newson, John Goldsmith, Kenny Jenkins, George Jennings and Jimmy and Ronnie Veal and so on. Also replacements emerged as the younger riders matured and they came up from the Stars, the second team which had been formed to nurture the younger talent. Such riders were Charles

Fig 8. A crowd of over 1500 watch the memorable Rivets Cup victory over Stratford Hammers. Left to right: John Goldsmith, Jimmy Heard, Derek Sheridan, and Roy Garnham.

Fig 9. Spectators take advantage of elevated "terracing" on the first bend.

Fig 10. The Speedway Association individual cup winner November 25, 1949. Left to right: winner, John Goldsmith holding cup, Jimmy Veal, Gordon Smith and Len Silver (Len later became speedway rider, speedway manager, promoter and England Team Manager).

Fig 11. East London Cycle Speedway Stadium, London Borough of Newham.

Fig 12. Reunion meeting on Easter Monday 1951. Back row, left to right: Vic White, Harry White, George Lewsey, George Jennings. Middle row, l to r: Ron Tarrant, George Jordan, Peter Tarrant. Kneeling, l to r: John Goldsmith, Alan Catley, Ron Newson.

become the London County Champions in the News Chronicle national championship beating the very strong south London team, *Tooting Tigers* by 66 points to 25.

In 1950 the club began an annual Battle of Britain Trophy individual event. This was sponsored by the RAF Association and attracted crowds of over 1500 spectators. Well known personalities from speedway and show business attended signifying the importance attached to the event. Winners were in 1950 Vic White, 1951 Arthur Caunt, 1952, Vic White, 1953, Frank Duffy (Fig 14) and in 1954, Derek Sheridan. (See the appendix)

The Club also ran winter close season social events and in several cases riders met their future life partners through meeting them after the races were over or during these social events. Lifelong relationships arose from this chance meeting of young people attracted by the excitement of creating a new sport from the ruins of war.

The *Warwick Lions* were forced to close their track when the owners of the sites opted for post war redevelopment. The local authority created a new purpose built track on nearby Well Street Common and the Lions continued until the late 1950's but after several years the new track fell into disuse as the popularity of speedway and cycle speedway declined. Perhaps as speedway currently sees a return to popularity, through the Sky TV coverage, the need for another purpose built track in Hackney will arise (Fig 11). The success of British cycling in the Beijing Olympics raises the idea that alongside the new Velodrome to be built on the site of the Eton Manor and Whipps Cross Comets track, perhaps there can be room for a new cycle

speedway track.

We ex-*Warwick Lions* can vouch for the fact that the period that we were involved in cycle speedway was one of the most exciting and formative periods of our lives. Perhaps given the chance, today's youngsters will find the sport of similar benefit and use the experience to base their future lives upon too (Fig 13).

John Goldsmith, Frank Duffy, Vic White, Ron and Peter Tarrant

Fig. 13. 1996 REUNION. Some of the original Warwick Lions pictured at Thundersley Cycle Speedway track on 16th June 1996.

Back Row (L to R): Frank Duffy, Alan Catley, Eric Phillipson, Ron Johnson, Charles Aldridge, Doug Bourne.

Seated on bike: Vic White Kneeling: Ron Tarrant, John Goldsmith.

Photo: Lilian Goldsmith

THE WARWICK LIONS1949

Back Row: (L to R) Frank Duffy "George" Jordon - Team Manager, Vic White, Eric Phillipson, Alan Catley, Ron Newson, Harry White – General Manager, Danny Dunton (visiting Harringay Racers Speedway rider.) Sitting on bike: Ron Tarrant (Capt.) Sitting on wheels: Derek Sheridan & Peter Tarrant.

THE WARWICK LIONS CYCLE SPEEDWAY CLUB - A POST-WAR PHENOMENON

This tribute to the Warwick Lions was produced by JOHN GOLDSMITH for the Hackney Library and is Dedicated to the memory of Lilian Goldsmith (nee Hall)
1929-2008

13th Annual Dinner/Dance Saturday 22nd November 2008
Ye Olde Plough House Motel Bulphan Essex.

91 Members and their Guests gathered in the early evening at the Plough for what turned out, for most to be another successful VCSRA Dinner/Dance proving once again the old adage '*you can please some of the people some of the time but you cannot please all of the people all of the time'*. The meal, main course, Fillet of Beef was for the majority 'one of the best they had had' for some however it was too rare. In addition your committee, which does its best decided to vary the evenings entertainment with some record requests, MC for the evening, Chairman Derek Cattle who introduced the discs was happy with the venture feeling that it had been 'worth a try' but not everybody agreed!

Vic White fits new President Stan Stevens with the Chain of Office

The meal cleared away the new President, Stan Stevens was introduced by outgoing incumbent, Vic White who transferred the chain office. Stan entertained the audience with a lively and amusing acceptance speech, well-done Stan. The speeches were concluded with a photo-call for the new and six past presidents attending the Dinner.

During the evening the customary raffle raised the princely sum of £233.00 for Association funds. This year in addition to the prizes donated by members the committee purchased 5 groups of 5 lucky-dip National Lottery tickets. These were eagerly snapped up by the lucky ticket holders, as yet we have heard of no one having a winning lottery ticket! At the same time Malcolm (Belchambers) was collecting the raffle money Derek had invited members to contribute to a collection for his local hospice, 'Richard House' which raised a total of £186.70 for which Derek would like to thank all those generous members.

VCSRA Presidents, back row left to right, John Brown 1998/99, Derek Cattle 2000/01, Vic White 2007/08, Nobby Dunn 2006/07, front row, Ron Holvey 2004/05, Stan Stevens 2008/09, Wally Dighton 2005/06.

INDIVIDUAL ROUND-UP

Individual Championships have played a great part in the recent London racing calendar. All three of the competitions reported below are in the first year but from reports received they look certain to be set favourites from now on. South London Rangers promoted the "Champion of Champions" meeting, the Middlesex board promoted the "Middlesex Grand Prix" and Brickett Wood Kangaroos the "Hertfordshire Grand Prix".

The "Champion of Champions" meeting, staged at Garrett Park, was won by Pete Jarman—the brilliant stylist from Beckenham Monarchs—after a run off with Gerry Kean (Kingstanding Monarchs), both having scored 13 points. Third was Dave Chivers (Raynes Park Tigers) with 11. Dixie Dean (Wembley All Stars) and Ivan Mauger (South London Rangers) both scored 10.

Roy Baker (South London Rangers) won the "Middlesex Grand Prix" with 12 points, second—after another run off—was Dixie Dean with Pete Blackwell (Kingstanding Monarchs) third; both scored 11 points. This event was spread over two days; two semi-finals were held on August Sunday with the final on the August Monday.

Walthamstow Wolves dominated the "Hertfordshire Grand Prix", taking the first four places. Winner was Pete Fraser with Malcolm Bell in second place—both had scored 12 points; there was a three man run-off for third place with Ron Gibbons taking the verdict from Alan Risley and Pat O'Grady (Wembley Hawks)—all had scored 11 points. Best of the locals was Pete Saunders with 9.

* * *

At the 4th annual Hungerford Fete and Gymkhana, Hungerford Panthers retained the Wiltshire Herald and Advertiser Cup in a last-heat decider against Cleverton Hornets.

Kingstanding Monarchs won the Marlborough Times Cup by defeating Thatcham Pirates by four points in a junior 4-a-side knock-out team competition. Novelty events included two laps backwards and 25 [illegible]s slow races, and a 1-mile cross country scramble. In the even[illegible], riders got together at a Grand Dance.

KIWI STAR PROMOTED

Raynes Park Tigers, champions of the Southern Premier League for 1957, travelled to Southend recently with their junior team, the Stars, for matches with the Southend "A" and "B" teams. Although the racing was first class, the local organisation was chaotic, for such matches; Raynes Park even had to provide the programmes! reports TONY JONES.

In recent weeks there has been some excellent racing within the league, and at the time of writing there is only four points separating the top four teams. Leaders are South London Rangers, who have recently promoted New Zealander, Ivan Mauger, from their second team; close behind are Beckenham Monarchs, with Raynes Park Tigers (who are unbeaten to date) and Ditton Devils in third place.

The league will be meeting the North London league in a Test Series shortly; the first leg takes place at Garrett Park on Saturday, 5th July, commencing at 7.30 p.m., with the return at Edmonton on the 23rd August; Beckenham Monarchs recently travelled to Hellingly Lions (Sussex). Raynes Park have arranged home and away fixtures with Wembley Hawks for July and South London expect to visit Tottenham Kangaroos later in the year. The Kangaroos recently visited the Rangers, and lost by 53 points to 43.

★ ★ ★

CHIVERS RETAINS CHAMPIONSHIP

For the second successive year Dave Chivers (Raynes Park Tigers) is again the Southern Area Champion; the event, promoted by the South London Cycle Speedway Club at their Garrett Park circuit, was one of the finest presented meetings that I have ever witnessed, writes DAVE STEVENS. A prompt start, some excellent racing and first class organisation all helped to make the trip a most pleasant evening.

Sixteen riders competed for the title; two from Middlesex, two from Southend and twelve from clubs in the Southern Premier league. Derek Wills, of the North London league champions, Tottenham Kangaroos, was also invited to compete but had to withdraw owing to a fractured ankle.

The racing was very fast, sometimes too fast! and there were several thrilling spills; one of these spills possibly cost Pete Jarman (Beckenham Monarchs) the title. Pete was in second place when he overslid on the last bend; he won his remaining four races and finished one point behind the winner.

Roy Baker (South London Rangers) and Geoff Penniket (Raynes Park Tigers), tied for third place, with 11 points apiece. In the thrilling run-off there was never more than a couple of feet separating the riders, the final decision going to Baker by inches. Others to impress were Kiwi, Ivan Mauger (S.L. Rangers), Ditton Devil's, Sam Sabourne—9 points [illegible]iece, Ray Chivers and Danny Daniels (each with 8 points).

Top:- September 1958 Bottom June 1958

Pages from Cycle Speedway Argus from Pete Saunders