

THE TRACK RECORD

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VETERAN CYCLE
SPEEDWAY RIDERS
ASSOCIATION
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John Brown and Eric Hemsley at the Langstone Eagles track
on the Whipps Cross Comets Welsh tour in 1955

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EDITORS NOTES.

LEN SILVER. AS LUCK WOULD HAVE IT. A COCKNEYS TALE.

Just in case there is anyone who does not know that Len has written his autobiography, I thought I would give it a mention here. Having joined the long queue at Rye House to buy a copy, where Len personally signed each one, I can thoroughly recommend it. Writing about his childhood, then his cycle speedway days with Stratford Hammers on, to his time as a speedway rider, then promoter, right up to the present day at Rye House.

With 272 pages with more than 150 pictures, it will give many hours of very interesting reading. It is priced at £15 and also helps a good cause, as Len will be donating all his profits from the book to the Speedway Riders Benevolent Fund. If you have not yet bought your copy, you can send a cheque for £15 (its post free in the U.K £5 for overseas) payable to Retro Speedway and send it to Retro Speedway (LS Book) 103 Douglas Road, Hornchurch, Essex, RM11 1AW. Or you can use their credit card phone line 01708 734 502.

PEDALS to POWER.

This one of MALCOLM BROWN is made up entirely of pictures from his "Facebook" this is a small selection of them. There are many more from his time with the "Hackney Hawks" and the "Leicester Lions". When he retired from British Speedway in 1975, he moved to Rhodesia. He became the promoter of the "Bulawayo Warriors" and continued riding and still holds the title of Rhodesian Speedway Champion. As well as pictures from Rhodesia, there are also pictures of his time in the army, with the R.A.S.C. Motor Cycle Display Team, and of Malcolm with the Ken Mackintosh Orchestra.

CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for a "battery operated mega-phone" to use at an event in February. If you are able to lend us this equipment for this occasion, please contact Roy Delany. Phone 0208 5290446.

WANTED 22 TOOTH SPROCKET

Brian George is rebuilding a "Philips Speedtrack" and all that he needs to complete it is a 22 tooth sprocket. If anyone has one of these, could they contact Brian at Halcon Vogue, St. Day, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 5NP or phone 01209 822605

LEN'S RAMBLE

Twelve members "enjoyed" (perhaps enjoyed is not quite the word) a Ramble in the North Downs on Wednesday August 29th. The weather was warm & sunny.

Starting on Farthing Downs (should they be renamed 0.6 pence Downs?) the walk took in the Twelfth Century Church at Chaldon, The Happy Valley and "The Fox" Pub on Coulsdon Common.

On a recce in the spring there had been a fine view from the field of maize en-route to Chaldon Church. Now the corn was as high as an elephants eye and the view obscured. Added to that we were almost run down by a rogue tractor!

The struggle up a long flight of steps out of the Happy Valley, had the incentive of "The Fox" pub not far from the top. I think President Stan Stevens, resplendent in his chain of office, was "King of the Mountains" being first to the top.

The following masochists survived:-

Chas Aldrich, Ken Archer, Danny & Dolly Daniels, Ray Gingell, Ron & Kathy Holvey, Len Kitchen, Peter Page, Stan Stevens, and Martin & Eve Willgress.

LEN KITCHEN.

Secretaries Notes – October 2009

Another Year.

When you get your next issue in Jan/Feb: 2010 will be upon us so, a little early I and all the committee would like to wish all members

A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HEALTHY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.

2009 is drawing to a close and there is good news and there is bad news. We have finally finished collecting the subs for 2009 and Malcolm tells me that the membership is currently at 200, good news. But it would feel a lot better if we had a few more **active** members. Whilst both Bill Gadsby and myself may well keep the '**Track Record**' and the web site, www.cyclespeedwayvets.org.uk going until we fall of our respective perches and the committee appreciate that we are all getting older and being active does not always come easy one or two responses however to my request in the last issue for volunteers to offer their services to the committee would have been encouraging.

On a more positive note the web site continues to stimulate interest resulting over the past year in 5 new members, Austen Horrex 'Estuary Eagles', Bill Pettingale 'Weston Stars', Stan Barrett 'Hackney Comets', Vic Hinchcliffe 'Offerton', and Alf Still 'Portway Panthers'. Responses after enquiries from Brian Lamond and David Stear are still outstanding.

Another positive, following on from the very successful reunion he organised of riders from the Southend-on Sea area Dave Whithers will be joining the VCSRA Committee at their next meeting in January. If you live in the area you may have seen the pictures in the local press and even heard Dave being interviewed on BBC Radio Essex.

The Southend reunion highlights and at the same time indicates a solution to a problem that has always concerned the Committee, as all the committee reside in the south east all the social events they organise take place in that area offering nothing to members who live in the remainder of the country. The solution is of course that a member in an area that the directory tells him there are other members living within a mile or two gets on the phone and does what Dave did and organised a local reunion. That's what Cycle Speedway was all about in the early days, organising things for ourselves!

CD & Book Sales

13 copies of the 'Ted Gee's Pictures' CD have sold and are still available at £3.00
8 of the 10 copies, donated by Bill Gill of '50 Years of Cycle Speedway' have been sold the 2 remaining are still available at £15.00

Autumn Golf Day – VCSRA Trophy - Thursday 24th September 2009



Harry receives the Trophy
from Roy Garnham

Only 5 members took to the upper course at the Hainault Forest Golf Complex in Chigwell to contest, for the 13th time the VCSRA Annual Golf Trophy. Joined by 6 guests it turned out to be a high scoring stableford competition with last years winner, Harry Thompson retaining the Trophy on 43 points followed by Len Adams with 39, Dennis Daniel 37, Roy Garnham 36 and Colin Booth with 33. For the guests, Ken Hildrew topped their scores with 42 points. Jackie Adams and Ann Thompson competed for the Ladies Trophy with Jackie just taking it with 28 points to Ann's 27. Len Adams took the nearest the pin prize on the 15th hole and guest Alan Robson the longest drive on the 14th.

A provisional date for our next Golf Day has been set for Thursday 20th May 2010, however, as can be seen we need a few more golfers to stimulate the competition, anyone have any ideas?

VCSRA Annual General Meeting – Saturday 10th October 2009 4.30pm

A disappointing affair, only 14 members attended and this included the 7 committee members.

The meeting was chaired by Derek Cattle who announced that due to ill health and his plans for a move into Suffolk or Norfolk he would be resigning from the committee at the end of the meeting. John Brown proposed a vote of thanks for all the work he had done on behalf of the Association.

The result of the postal vote for the 2009/10 president was announced, Malcolm Belchambers had received 55 votes and Pete Leckie 22.

Coming to the election of officers Secretary, Colin Booth declared that as there had been no response to his request for volunteers in the Track Record all the members of the 2008/9 committee had agreed, with the exception of Derek to carry-on. The 2009/10 committee will now be, John Brown, Colin Booth Secretary, Malcolm Belchambers Membership Sec., Tom Kilbey Treasurer, Ken Archer, Ray Gingell and the two members co-opted at last years AGM Stan Stevens and Roy Garnham.

The meeting was told that the committee would endeavour to issue a list of its proposed events for 2010 in the Jan/Feb issue of the Track Record and that next year we will be reverting to spring a AGM and that a provisional date of Saturday 17th April 2010 had been allocated at a venue yet to be determined. The meeting closed at 5.30pm

14th Annual VCSRA Dinner / Dance - Saturday 10th October 2009

With only 64 members and their guests, it's usually around 100 taking their places for dinner the atmosphere was a little subdued. Sadly the meal did not help to lift the spirits of the company, whilst one or two found it acceptable the general feeling was that the main course, very dry chicken wrapped in a rasher of bacon was not and the desert, a very questionable 'chocolate bread and butter pudding' did nothing to redeem the meal.



Incoming President Malcolm Belchambers (Lt) receives his chain of office from out going President Stan Stevens (Rt)

Once the tables had been cleared and the formal toasts over 2008/9 President Stan Stevens took to the floor and gave a review of his year in office, finishing by introducing and fitting the chain of office on the President elect Malcolm Belchambers. At the end of his acceptance speech Malcolm announced that he was very happy to undertake his next task, to make a presentation to a member who could very certainly be called an 'ambassador for the sport of cycle speedway' a real 'diamond geezer' the retiring chairman of the VCSRA committee Derek Cattle. Handing him a very impressive engraved 'Jade Glass' shield Malcolm added that not only did it indicate that it was presented in appreciation of Derek's efforts on behalf of the Association it also listed his considerable cycle speedway achievements. Derek, a little lost for words saying that he had really enjoyed his years on the committee gratefully accepted the Trophy.

The formalities over the band, 'Jackson Queen' opened the dancing. A very accomplished 3-piece band



Retiring Chairman Derek Cattle receives his recognition award from new President Malcolm Belchambers (Rt)

they were enjoyed by most although a few more on the dance floor would have lifted the still subdued atmosphere. The proceedings drew to a close at 12 midnight.

Dinner / Dance – Saturday 13th November 2010
The Plough Motel, Bulphan, Essex

Although we have made a provisional booking with The Plough for the 2010 Dinner Dance we are **NOT PROCEEDING** with making any arrangements until we feel sure there is enough commitment amongst our membership to ensure we get more than 80 diners, the minimum the Plough normally require for the Monks Barn Banqueting Hall.

So please, give us some encouragement, let us know by phone, letter or email if you anticipate coming to the dinner/dance by 20th January when we have our next committee meeting. And please note your commitment will not be binding until you return the ticket slip, which we will send out with the April issue of the Track Record.

Directory Amendments

New Address

Dennis England – 9 Marlborough Court, Cranley Gardens, Wallington, Surrey, SM6 9PG

Mick Jeffery – 'Woodbine Cottage', 16 Langham Road, Binham, Norfolk, NR21 0DW

Dave Flemming – 22 John Crewdon Court, 26 Annis Road, Hackney, London, E9 5BQ

Derek Hilton – 84 Carr Lane, Willerby, Kingston Upon Hull, HU10 6JN

New or amended Tel. Nos. or Email addresses.

Dennis England – Tel No. 0208 773 0085

Dave Flemming – Tel No. 0208 985 0845

J.A.Thomas – Email johnt52@live.co.uk

Alf Still's Pictures

One of our new members, Alf Still found our web site and phoned and asked if we would be interested in some pictures, circa 1950/51 of the Portway Panthers. They turned



* The first bend at the Arbour Atoms track with the Atoms riders
1 & 3

out to be 3 of the best quality pictures of that time I have ever received, the originals were probably taken by a press photographer, with them was copy of a press cutting describing a match between the Arbour Atoms and the Portway Panthers at the Atoms track in Arbour Square Stepney. Arbour Square it turns out is at the end of Clearbrook Way where our Chairman, Derek currently lives, he tells us that the flats which appear to be being

built when the picture was taken are now about to be demolished. The Panthers, I was told shared a track with the more well known Portway Penquins. The Arbour Atoms riders were

all members of the Arbour Square youth club which apparently was a well-known boxing club at the time.



The 1950/51 Portway Panthers at the Arbour Atoms track, Arbour Square, Stepney. Only 2 riders so far identified, 2nd from the right Alf Still and 4th from right Reggie Goode

Mike Cockroft

An email received on 9th September from Graham Stead in Thailand

'It is with great sadness I must inform you that Mike Cockroft passed away on 7th September 2009. He had been living in Thailand for the last 12 years but due to a sudden illness and many weeks in ICU it was decided when he was stabilised to air lift him back to the UK and to Calderdale Royal Hospital in Halifax where care could be given, unavailable here in Thailand, on what we were told would be a long road to recovery, if that was possible. Sadly his condition once again deteriorated and he passed away peacefully.

Mike was a member of the Veteran Cycle Speedway Riders Association and a successful member of The Horton Rangers. He often spoke to his many friends here in Thailand of his days in Cycle Speedway and I am sure he will be remembered by many of your members, not just in Yorkshire but nationwide. He will be sadly missed.

An email received on 16th October from Tony Emmot in Yorkshire

Colin - What a shock to hear from you of the death of Mike Cockroft. Mike was probably the most successful cycle speedway rider to come out of the white rose county - God's own county. I first met Mike in the late 1950's when - if my memory serves me correctly - Mike was riding for the Wakefield team Lindale Lions who with Lupset Aces (also based in Wakefield) rode in the Manchester League. At that time teams were starting in the Bradford area so a committee of us thrashed out a Bradford league arrangement headed by John Broadbent the Wakefield organiser. One or two of the fledgling Bradford teams rode at Lindale only to get thrashed emphasising the chasm in standards so Lindale and Lupset riders were allocated to the Bradford teams to form a level league. Mike was at the forefront of this and organised two teams riding at Horton fair ground off Southfield Lane -

Horton Rangers (New Cross body colours) and Horton Pirates (like Poole colours). The other teams were Elmfield Eagles (riding at Morley Carr Low Moor), Holme Wood Red Devils riding at Tong Street Dudley, Bradford Moor Vulcans (riding at Myra Shay) and Bowling Aces riding at a new track built at Parry Lane Bradford. Non-league teams were also operating at Bierley and Sedbergh boys club. Mike held all this together for a few seasons as league secretary, rider, steward, the lot. We all used to go to the speedway at Odsal and Greenfield Stadium (both Bradford) and the Shay at Halifax. Once the Bradford speedway folded I lost touch with Mike but he continued his good work in the Halifax area repeating his success with the Halifax league. The archive stuff I sent to you a few years ago will have many reports involving Mike. Cycle speedway would not have been the same in West Yorkshire but for Mike - he was Mr. Cycle Speedway. Mike was always good fun for a laugh. He was a brilliant rider and very fair in everything he did.

Our New President - Malcolm Belchambers

Malcolm was known as *Malcolm Bell* during his racing days. He first started riding in 1948 for a school team at Westcliff-on-Sea Essex. 1949 he moved to East Ham, London and rode for 'Albion Romans/Hawkes'. In 1950 he joined the newly formed 'Black Lion Monarchs' at Plaistow East London. The 'Monarchs' had their track at the rear of the 'Black Lion' public house owned by Mr. A.W. Clarke, father of speedway riders Pat and Colin Clarke.

In 1952-54 he did his National service in North Wales, coming home on leave to ride for the 'Monarchs' whenever possible. When 'demobbed' in February 1954 he joined the 'Walthamstow Wolves' as the 'Monarchs' had disbanded. He stayed with the 'Wolves' 1959 when they lost their track at Low Hall Farm and moved further east to become the 'East Ham Wolves'. He remained with the 'E.H. Wolves' till they disbanded in 1962 when he moved to the 'Hawbush Hammers'. He stayed with the 'Hammer' until he finally retired 1969.

He was a member of the National Team Champions the 'Walthamstow Wolves' in 1958 and a member of the Runners-Up, the 'East Ham Wolves' in 1959. He has represented East London, Hertfordshire and Essex at inter-county Test Match level.

Malcolm has held the post of VCSRA Membership Secretary since 2008.

His hobbies are restoring and showing Classic Rover Cars, Caravanning and Photography. He is also a keen 'Big Band' and 'Traditional Jazz' fan and has been a fan of the 'Belle-Vue Aces' since 1949! (Well no one is perfect, are they)

A Celebration of Speedway

Sunday 21st February 2010

The High Beech Anniversary Event will be held at
Paradise Wildlife Park & Speedway Museum
Broxbourne Herts EN10 7QA

The VCSRA will be having a stall/display in the pavilion and be presenting a Trophy to the winners of Cycle Speedway Challenge Match being organized (weather permitting) by Terry Stone & Dave Hunting of the Ipswich CSC. The riders taking part will be the youngsters from Dave's club and it will be raced on a track laid out on the car park adjacent to the Speedway Museum.

The park will be open from 10.00am and ENTRY will be FREE.

Just tell the person manning the pay kiosk that you are going to the Speedway Museum

With the arrival of Speedway Racing at the Rayleigh Weir Stadium in 1948, it also introduced another fast growing sport already well established on the bomb sites in London - the sport of Cycle Speedway.

Within weeks of the stadium being opened, cycle speedway tracks and teams were being established all over South East Essex. To name just a few: Southend Sabres, Eastwood Meteors, Rayleigh Eagles, Ashingdon Adders, Thundersley Phantoms, Prittlewell Pirates, Hul Pirates and many more. Leagues were organised and a control board was set up to organise the governing of the sport. Such was the popularity of the sport that reports of matches regularly appeared in the Southend Pictorial and the Southend Standard. Most matches were raced on Sunday afternoons, watched by crowds of two or three hundred spectators. Cycle Speedway had arrived! Not only in S.E. Essex, but teams had also sprung up in Barking, Romford, Dagenham, Brentwood, Ongar, Latchingdon, Grays, Stratford and many more Essex towns.

It was great fun, and a very enjoyable time as it kept kids off the streets. It was also a way forward to take up the brother sport of Speedway Racing. Some of the Cycle Speedway riders who graduated to the Motor Cycle Sport were Peter Craven, World Champion twice, Ivan Mauger, World Champion six times, Len Silver, Terry Stone, Reg Reeves, Stan Stevens and Sandy McGilivray. I could name many more.

The sport continued to thrive through to the early fifties when a lot of the tracks and teams began closing down, due mainly to many of the lads being called up for National Service. However, the sport was kept alive by a handful of teams still operating.

In 1956 the sport was about to be reborn with the arrival of many new teams, and tracks being established. To name a few: Barling Brigands, Wakering Hawks, Southend Lions, Southend Skulls, Sutton Saints, Shobury Devils, Rayleigh Rockets, Rayleigh Pirates and Thundersley Cobras.

I can remember the great baffles my own team, the Rayleigh Rockets, had against the mighty Southend Lions at their track in Cluny Square. In fact, we were the first team to beat them on their own track, taking their unbeaten record.

In 1957 the Dutch International Team came over to ride at Thundersley Common, watched by a crowd of around three hundred people. Sadly, the sport once again went into decline during the mid sixties. This was mainly due to the building boom in S.E. Essex, with many tracks being built on.

However, the sport still continued thanks to Mr. Cycle Speedway himself, ex Prittlewell Pirates rider, Denny Winch. With four teams still operating, Great Wakering Rebels, Estuary Eagles, Basildon Monarchs, and a team at Waterside, Canvey known as Castle Point, the sport continued into the Millennium with just a last team left in S.E. Essex, Great Wakering Rebels being managed by Denny Winch.

Sadly, Denny passed away in 2003 and the sport of Cycle Speedway died with him, as soon after his death the team folded and the track fell into disrepair.

Last year, however, I attended the Speedway Reunion at the Rayleigh Weir and met quite a few of the cycle speedway riders from way back. It was suggested to me that it would be great if we could hold our own Cycle Speedway Reunion.

So I am writing this letter in the hope that you can print it with my telephone number and address, so that any former rider or anyone associated with the sport can contact me. I am also looking for a venue to hold this event, where we can have a pint and swap memories.

I understand that Cycle Speedway is still alive and well in Essex with half a dozen teams and tracks still operating in the Colchester area, competing in the Ipswich League. So perhaps, one day, we might see the return of the sport in S.E. Essex.

I also enclose two photocopies of my own team, the Rayleigh Rockets, and the Rayleigh Pirates, both taken in 1956, for possible inclusion in your paper. I hope you find this letter interesting and eagerly await the outcome.

The above, and the pictures on the next page are copies, that Dave Withers sent to his local papers. As you can see in Colin Booth's Secretaries Notes (page 3) Dave was able to arrange a very successful reunion of riders from the Southend on Sea area..



Rayleigh Rockets Cycle Speedway Team at their Progress Road Track in Eastwood Essex in 1956.

Back Row Left to Right
Mick Webb, Peter Ebbs, Bert Randal,
Bob Schooling, Dave Withers & Charlie Kaufman (Manager)

Front Row Left to Right
Barry Gates, Roy Giggins (Captain) & John Walden.



Dave Withers (Rayleigh Rockets) coming round the outside of Derek Munroe (Rayleigh Pirates) At the Progress Road Track in 1957.

Rayleigh Pirates at their Leslie road track in 1956.

Back Row Left to Right
Pete Broomfield, Bill Ponder
(Manager) Johnie Hunter
& Bob Broomfield.

Front row Left To Right
Ronnie Osler, Dereck Monroe,
Ian Watson (Captain) John Hedge
& Alan Ponder (Wint).



PEDALS to POWER MALCOLM BROWN

Pictures from Facebook



Riding for Whipps Cross -
Comets 1952



Whipps Cross Comets. Lee Valley Cup Winners 1951.
J. Clatworthy, M. Brown, R. Foreman, S. Harris, R. Goody, S. Pipe,
Dave Brown, S. Sherman, J. Woolnough & J. Brown (Captain)

Whipps Cross Riders
Championship Round 1955.
J. Woolnough, Malcolm Brown
& J. Clatworthy.



Whipps Cross Comets 1952
Sid Pipe, Malcolm Brown,
R. Goody, B. Aubrey,
J. Clatworthy, H. Hopwood,
S. Sherman, D. Whittle,
John Brown (Capt)
& M. Arnold.



1962. Malcolm at the start of his
Speedway Career in with the
Rye House "Red Devils".



1964 Malcolm became a member of the "Hackney Hawks"
Pictures of Press and Practice day at Hackney Stadium



Malcolm in 1968 taken
when riding for Leicester Lions



1971 Alan Cowland, Vic White, Malcolm Brown, Ray Wilson, (Capt)
Tom Leadbetter, Norman Storer, Johnny Boulger and Graham Plant



Malcolm Brown leading Malcolm Shakespear & George Hunter



Team Manager Vic White " You've
got Ivan Mauger & Barry Briggs in
this race and you are off gate four!!
See you in the bar mate!

Heat 1 at West Ham
Ray Wilson (Capt.)
Stan Stevens &
Malcolm Brown



First Corner at Leicester
Malcolm Brown &
Ray Wilson



Guinness book of records speedway team! The only team to field the same seven riders for the whole season!

Norman Storer, Malcolm Brown, Ray Wilson (Capt.) Dwanye Keeter (USA) Ron Wilson, Johnny Boulger, Johnny Hart and Graham Plant. Record still stands today!

Secretaries Notes Continued.....

I had just got everything ready to go to the printers when I realised, prompted by Len Kitchen's piece on page 2 that I had forgotten the 'Rambles', in particular the email and picture I had received from Ron Holvey.

Summer Rambles

Epping Forest— Wednesday 12th August 2009

A small party gathered in the Warren Pond car park opposite the 'Queen Elisabeth' hunting lodge on a not very bright morning. Assembled with our President Stan Stevens, complete with chain of office were Ken Archer, Len Kitchen, Colin Booth, Tom Kilbey and his wife Sheila, Roy Garnham and Malcolm Belchambers. After a gentle stroll across Chingford plains and through the forest we left the trees behind and took to some rather overgrown country paths arriving eventually at 'The Owl' pub on Lip-pets Hill just as the rain started to fall. Stopping at the pub for a meal we where met by John & Sheila Brown and Sid & Pat Kingsnorth As the sky's cleared we left the pub and ambled through the forest back to Chingford where a couple of us finished off a very pleasant day with a look around the genuine tudor hunting lodge.



Lt to Rt. Ken Archer, Len Kitchen, Colin Booth, Malcolm Belchambers, Stan Stevens, Tom Kilbey & Roy Garnham.

Farthing Downs— Wednesday 19th August 2009

On the 19th of August 12 of us assembled in the car park on Farthing Downs, for the 2009 Veterans Ramble, the weather was just perfect. At around 10-45 we set off, along the way a slight diversion took us to the 800 year old church, of st peter and St Paul, in the village of Chaldon. We then went back through a corn field and continued across Happy Valley, and on to the Fox Inn on Coulsdon common. The food and ale were enjoyed by all, then we ambled back to the car park to start our journeys home.

Thank you once again LEN for another interesting and pleasant ramble
Ron Holvey



The 'Happy Wanderers' Front Row Left to Right, Kath & Ron Holvey, Dol Daniel, Ken Archer & Peter Page. Back Row, Len Kitchen, Stan Stevens, Martin Willgress, Danny Daniel, Ray Gingell & Chas Aldridge.

Picture by Eve Willgress.