

THE TRACK RECORD

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**VETERAN CYCLE
SPEEDWAY RIDERS
ASSOCIATION**
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Walthamstow Carnival Cup 1965 Whipps Cross Comets v Wembley Lions.
Comet's Riders Joe Morement & Mick Curry (outside)
Photo from Johnny Brown

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2017

Members are reminded their renewal falls due on APRIL 1st. 2017.

I am pleased to report the Committee have held the Subscription at £10 for 2017.
The Committee also requests that you enclose a STAMPED ADDRESSED ENVELOPE with your remittance, and would also appreciate a donation enclosed with your renewal. (This will help us to keep our costs down).

No SAE means that your M/ship Card will be enclosed in the next Track Record.

Members can also pay via Bank Transfer if required
VCSRA Bank details – HSBC Bank. Account No. 71361317. Sort Code 40 – 20 – 22.
If paying this way their M/ship Card will be enclosed in the next Track Record.

Thank you. Malcolm Belchambers. Hon. M/ship Sec. VCSRA.

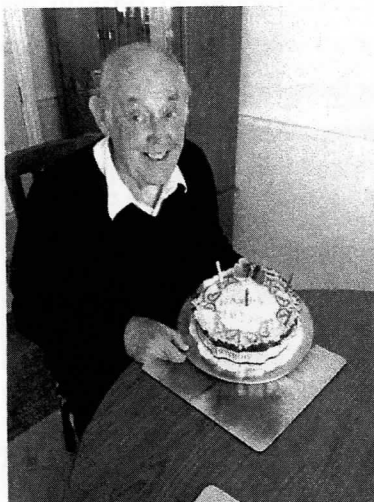
MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY AMENDMENTS.

TREVOR WINHAM – 16, Elmwood Rd., St Johns, Woking, Surrey. GU21 8XE.

BOB ANDREWS – New e-mail address. bob.lynda@xtra.co.nz Tel No. 0064916

DIANE GEATER (Widow of Bryan) is now an 'Hon' Member.

John (Johnny) Unsworth. 02.05.1935 to 12.02.2017



It is with great sadness that I have to announce the death of Johnny Unsworth. John rode for Langley Leopards alongside his best mate Geoff Pearce and then they later joined Uxbridge Pirates managed by Maurice Maitland. John also rode for the 1957 London Clubs team that rode in Holland against a Dutch Select side and did well until his knee gave out.

Despite having a tricky knee John wouldn't give up the sport he loved and rode with Uxbridge Pirates for a number of years. He loved receiving the magazine especially when he saw a Team or person he had known.

Ann Unsworth (wife)

John Unsworth passed away on 12th February 2017 aged 81 after a long illness. He leaves his wife Ann and son Paul, daughter Helen and grandchild Jessica.

John first rode for Slough Racers until they lost their track. He then moved to Langley Leopards until they lost their track behind William IV pub. With Geoff Pearce, he joined Uxbridge Pirates in 1952 until he retired in 1971. He was a good club rider and supporter along with his family who were also good supporters. He rode in many National Semi-finals and two Finals plus helping in winning North West Middlesex League and Home Counties League, and was also a regular in the North West Middlesex Test Team.

Maurice Maitland.



John leading in (a possible?) 5-1 for Langley Leopards v Uxbridge Pirates

I am saddened to report that Frank Finnegan passed away on Thursday 12th January 2017, at the age of 68. Frank was an extremely competitive racer, who began racing in 1963 in the Manchester Winter Satellite League, for CarrsWood. He stayed with CarrsWood, before joining Denton in 1973, racing in three British Team Finals for them, before moving to Stockport in 1978. Frank was very much their kingpin, holding them together through a lean spell, before Stockport became a strong force, up to their demise in 1999. By that time, Frank was living in Congleton and he joined Stoke, who were his nearest club, helping them to win two Premier League titles.

In 2003, Frank switched to Astley & Tyldesley, soon followed by his son Chris, who had ridden with him at Stockport and Stoke. A&T were Frank's last club and his final match in the sport was in the Veterans British Club Championship at Hull in 2008, two months before his 60th birthday.

Frank was always a fiercely competitive rider on the track and a friendly man off it, never slow to hand out advice and encouragement to younger riders. After a career as a top senior rider, he moved up a level as a Veteran and he excelled at indoor racing, where he was the undisputed master of the sport.

He was British Veterans Indoor Champion on five occasions, as well as finishing 3rd in the Open Final in 2000, at the age of 52. His fifth title in 2003 capped a great family day, with son Chris winning the British Open Indoor title on the same day. Frank also took 2nd place in the outdoor British 0-50's Individual Final in 2004.

Frank also put so much back into the sport as an official, not only at club level, but by being Chairman of the Northern league for many years during the 1990s.

He was an excellent referee and officiated at many major finals and was a member of the Cycle Speedway Council Executive, as the Referees' Manager, for many years during the 1990's. An extremely articulate, witty and intelligent man, Frank was always forthright in his views and very passionate about the sport.



RIP Frank
You were such a big player in Cycle Speedway for 45 years and will be sadly missed by so many people who knew you.

MIKE HACK

Mick Curry 1945-2012

Mick started his cycle speedway career at Whipps Cross Comets. At that time the Comets had "A" and "B" teams, plus a junior team. Soon Mick got the odd reserve berth in the "A" team. He was a capable "gater" and with strong legs a liking for big fast tracks, it was no surprise in 1961 that he became National Junior Champion at Uxbridge. He went to Uxbridge as third reserve, he got a place due to absentees and the rest is history.

Things did not work out in the family home, consequently Mick went to live with his Aunt & Uncle, then with his Grandparents.

Mick went in the army (Royal Artillery) did not use ear plugs when the guns were fired and soon came out due to ear damage.

He rode for Hungerford, but soon came back to ride for the Comets again. He did ride for Tottenham Kangaroos, before ending his career with Hackney Cheetahs.

In the seventies we had reports that he was in Greece hiring out sailing boats.

Unfortunately news has come through, that Mick had a fatal motor cycle accident in Bangkok Thailand. Vic Haines was in Essex for a cycling hill climb event, when a lady introduced herself to Vic and told him the sad news. I believe it was Margaret, the mother of Vic's two children, it is not sure whether they ever married, but did live together for a few years.

ERIC HEMSLEY



Mick Currey (center) National Junior Individual Champion 1961

Photo from Johnny Brown.

Things are stirring in the North.....

For longer than they probably care to consider, the Edinburgh club was out on a limb as far as the sport's participation was concerned. Once the proud centre of several divisions and many teams, staging Internationals and a World Championship, the city was reduced to one club whose nearest competitive fixture was down in Yorkshire. Only in the present decade did the resumption of Cycle Speedway on Tyneside give them a relatively 'local' rival, and when Cathkin Park in Glasgow was brought back into regular use a tri-partite competition was able to be introduced (the Three Rivers League - Tyne, Forth & Clyde), in which some of the three clubs' lesser-lights were given the opportunity to race outside the confines of their own tracks. 2016 saw the emergence of the Fife team and track in Dunfermline and an expanded version of the league will see the intended participation of six teams in 2017 (Edinburgh entering a Leith side and Northumbria running a Cramlington team).

If Fife also enter a team in the Northern League as intended, then that would bring the number of sides up to nine, assuming the others all come to the tapes in 2017.

The piece about National League Speedway in the last issue reminds how the motorised and pedal versions have developed, and whether the presence of Speedway in a particular area is essential for the health of Cycle Speedway (assuming you regard the latter as linked to the former, and not some stand-alone activity).

Notwithstanding some claims of earlier existence, after having its origins during the post-war Speedway boom Cycle Speedway held its own during the next decade, as Speedway tracks dwindled in number to a handful of clubs in the National League, but undoubtedly received a boost in the early 1960s when new and revived Speedway tracks participated in the Provincial League. The surviving National League tracks were located in London, Manchester, and the Midlands (Oxford/Swindon/Coventry), with outposts at Southampton and Norwich, and although these last two did not survive long enough to join the merged British Speedway League in 1965, Cycle Speedway has maintained a more-or-less continuous presence in all of those same locations - indeed, in Norwich it comfortably survived the closure of the Firs Stadium fifty years ago, but does not seem to have gained a foothold in the Norfolk location which took over the Speedway - Kings Lynn (Dave Hunting's site does list a team in the town, but with no date for its existence).

London has one remaining club - East London—whose track is only a stone's throw from the long-gone West Ham Stadium site, but the demographics of the area have changed since the Hammers took to the Custom House track. The recreation ground next to the East London club's track can have a dozen football teams in action, but the club had struggled to recruit new riders.

Of the Yorkshire clubs only Sheffield still has an active Speedway, and the titanic efforts of the Hollebon family to keep the sport alive in Sussex would surely have been made even more difficult without the presence of Eastbourne Speedway Stadium a couple of miles down the road.

On the other hand, Peterborough has had Speedway for many years without any apparent signs of developing a CS scene, whereas the Leicester club thrived at Slater Street during Speedway's thirty-year absence from the city, and in a reversal of tradition it was three times World Champion Dave Hemsley who brought the powered version back to the area. Manchester's clubs are now located around the periphery of the city.

The International scene is also mixed - Holland was once a leading CS nation (providing the first World Champion without ever hitting the Speedway heights, and Denmark have been a major force in Speedway since Ole Olsen began winning World titles in the 1970s, but there's no particular evidence of the pedal sport, whereas Poland's Speedway success is matched by their CS competitors - indeed outdone with more CS World titles than in Speedway itself. Sweden, where Elite Speedway currently attracts attendances of 3-4,000 according to 'Speedway Star' (huge spectator stats in a nation with a population of less than 10 million), never seems to have quite got CS organised after those early days and appears restricted to Junior activity, according to recent posts on the 33-18website. Australia once had three centres of Cycle Speedway, but Sydney and Perth shut up shop, leaving Adelaide to represent the nation in international events.

The World Championships, which alternate between Europe and the Southern Hemisphere (apart from one staging at Edenton in the USA), had been tentatively penciled in for New Zealand in 2017. at a proposed new sports complex. Unfortunately, it doesn't seem to have got off the ground and Adelaide will again be the venue.

From LES GUSTAFSON

I have been loaned a selection of 1940's - 50's Cycle Speedway Mags and I thought the enclosed might fill in some pages of future T/Records if you are looking for 'copy'.

There are some articles featuring present VCSRA members. i.e. Len Silver, Eric Hockaday, Lew Grepp, John Brown, Dennis Bottazzi, Henk de Bruin and your good self. There are also articles on the Phillips 'Speedtrack', 'Wally Green Special', Dutch machines etc. also info on Avon 'Gripster' Tyres. I have also included cartoons from Bill Ritchie. (He had a very dry wit). I think with the passing of years most articles, photos etc are 'out of copyright'.

The advert on 'Robbialac Paint' brought back some memories. Jenson & Nicholson of Carpenters Road, Stratford, London, Carpenters Road used to be known locally as 'STINKBOMB ALLEY'. In that road were a Bone and Glue factory, a Fertilizer factory, Yardleys Soap and Perfume factory, a Tar factory plus various factories giving off their own unique 'whiff'.

Early in 1949, I was still learning to stay on a Cycle Speedway Bike. I, together with Vic Harding, Pete Bromley, Pete Fraser and Roy 'Nipper' Kempen used to cycle past these factories on our way to the Albion Hawks (The Albion Romans 2nd Team) practice track on Hackney Marshes.



*We shall have to make do with this
until we get our new starting-gate!*

It's a good job-it's ROBBIALAC SYNTHETIC FINISH

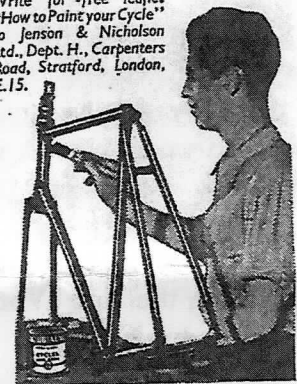
Make your old bike look new
—with Robbialac

- Extra hard gloss
- Easier to use
- Also ideal for painting models
- Quicker drying
- No brush marks

In black, white and six attractive colours.
From all Cycle Dealers and Stores.

2/3 3/10½
quarter-pint tin half-pint tin

Write for -free leaflet
"How to Paint your Cycle"
to Jenson & Nicholson
Ltd., Dept. H., Carpenters
Road, Stratford, London,
E.15.



The track was marked out with 'house bricks' and the surface was cinder and clinker brought from the Becton Gasworks near to East Ham,

The 'Starting-gate' was a length of elastic anchored at one end to a pole driven into the ground. If you could stay upright on that surface you could stay upright anywhere! -- Happy Days! The present-day riders would have had 'heart attacks' if they had to ride it now!

Malcolm Belchambers

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CYCLE SPEEDWAY MONTHLY

MARCH, 1949

SIXPENCE

15 Locket Rd., Harrow, Middx.

A MESSAGE FROM

Johnnie Hoskins

So you are bringing out a Cycle Speedway Monthly. Good luck to you!

Cycle speedway is a natural development, gradual, sure and permanent. It fills a necessary gap between schools, where all worthwhile sport is developed, and the grand clamorous sport of speedway racing.

No one started cycle speedway racing, it just grew up like "Topsy." I can remember racing round our tennis court at Wanstead back in 1935 with my three vigorous growing sons, who were all dressed in borrowed "Hammers" colours.

Here at Odsal, we had four teams at a time racing before the speedway crowds almost every week, contesting for the Harry Horuby Cup and the Johnnie Hoskins League Cup. We had about five hundred members of our Bradford League, and this year we are having two divisions.

Personally, I am all for cycle speedway racing. To many lads it's more thrilling—more expensive, too—than football or cricket.

We have our own Control Board—at least, the clubs have—and there are no fussy old codgers on it, either. This is a sport for youth, developed, controlled and run by the grandest lot of lads one could wish to meet. I feel that as speedway grows so your cycle speedway will keep step with it in city after city, town after town, and finally to the village green.

A LOT OF "MEENIES"

We have staged more cycle speedway meetings at our own regular speedway stadium than all the other speedways put together! And at the risk of getting a hefty sock on the nose, I'm going to say that all your speedway managers such as New Cross, Wembley, Harringay, West Ham and Wimbledon are a lot of "meenies" for not giving the cycle speedways a chance to show the big speedway public what the lads can do on push-bikes.

Cycle speedway is fun, it's sport, it's a thrill, and it's come to stay. We're going to get some real speedway riders from the ranks, too. That's the natural place to get them from, anyway. So "let's do what comes naturally."

Good luck to your paper, and all its readers. (What about adopting the new speedway jet propelled idea to cycles? We can do it, you know!)

Cycle Speedway has come to stay

Like a giant circus that descends overnight upon a town, so cycle speedway made its premiere.

Starting from scratch just after the war, it rapidly spread all over the country as far as the Scottish towns. The Elder Generation shook their heads, and the general opinion was that another five-minute craze had come. But how very wrong they were proved to be!

Let us go back to April 1946 post-war speedway had already begun. There in the stadiums of London eager eyes watched with excitement and wonder—eyes that belonged to the lads who founded cycle speedway. So from the bombed sites of London came the first meeting ever staged of this new sport. A crude affair, with no one a master, an ace or a craftsman: it was rough and tumble.

As time went on it was taken more seriously. It no longer interested these lads simply as a pastime: they were determined to make a national sport of it. Rules and regulations were soon compiled, Control Boards instituted and leagues formed. Cycle speedway was building such a name for itself that the Elder Generation began to sit up and take notice. There was something in it after all.

Just as the senior teams have their own tracks, so, too, have the cycle enthusiasts. Patches of wasteland were requisitioned, levelled, and the sides banked, and astride their track machines, the heroes of the local teams win the hearts of their excited audiences—and what audiences cycle speedway has—fans turn up in their hundreds.

These young riders are in two classes—those for the fun of it, and those with ambition. Many of them play the other British games, but there were many who never followed any particular sport . . . then came cycle speedway. To these, the roar of the engines, the smell of burning fuel, the cries from the stadium, are just around the corner.

Stars of Tomorrow

Many a future star will be discovered from these miniature speedways—indeed, some have already reached the realms of fame. Mr. Frank Arnold, the Rayleigh Manager, who arranges matches for the cycle speedway teams in his district, not long ago signed up a junior rider with the view to a possible trial sometime this season. Dick Wise, manager of the Norwich Speedway team, is also developing lads who show exceptional promise, as also is Johnnie Hoskins, the "Father of British Speedway." While in the Lancashire area, Miss Doris Hart, manageress of Belle Vue team, has formed a league for all teams within a twenty mile radius of Manchester.

Some of the famous speedway magazines and local papers help to boost up the sport by publishing small articles dealing with current news from all districts. It is time that cycle speedway received the full attention it so richly deserves.

Latest reports show that the sport has caught on in Holland. Trust the Dutch lads to recognise a fine adventure when they see one!

What can the sceptics of the Elder Generation say of their five-minute craze now, except that they were totally mistaken? A new venture is listed in the field of World Sport. Cycle speedway has come—to STAY.

WE INTRODUCE OURSELVES

A 100 per cent. Cycle Speedway ...

Hello, all cycle speedway enthusiasts! May this season be your best yet. In many ways this 1949 season will differ from the last; not only will riding and competition be greater, but you now have your own paper in which you can follow the sport all over the country.

It is a known fact that cycle speedway has progressed to such an extent that it has become a very serious rival to the other leading sports of this country.

Remember, "Cycle Speedway Monthly" welcomes all suggestions for its improvement.

Order your copies.

It will be, as the title suggests, a monthly publication, and as paper restrictions are coming to an end there should be enough to suit all demands. Nevertheless, team secretaries and captains are strongly advised to order the copies for their riders at the earliest convenience and thus save disappointment.

Again, remember, "Cycle Speedway Monthly" is your own 100 per cent. cycle speedway paper. YOU, through US, can spread information to the few who have yet to appreciate the sport. In short, the whole success rests entirely with you, our readers. To achieve this, you must give us firm co-operation. Send us your team's news and results. Correspond frequently, and, above all, GOOD READING.

THE START OF CYCLE SPEEDWAY IN WEMBLEY.

The article "Bombsite Bombshells" in the November issue from The Sporting Record of 1950, is one of many similar articles in various magazines of that time.

There is a similar article on the BBC news site called "The skid kids who raced on WW2 bombsites" This can be found on:-

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-31013387> It contains some interesting photos.

There can not be many of our members who are not aware that cycle speedway started on the bomb sites. They were ideal, plentiful open spaces, sites already cleared and most of important of all, you did not need permission to make a track on them.

But what about the rest of the country, the Home Counties and beyond, although there were plentiful open spaces, these were mainly privately or council owned, none of whom welcomed a cycle speedway track on their land. I am not sure about other areas.

In 1946 there was a track in Wembley, this was on a tennis court on a disused sports ground. Riders from all around the district came to race on it. It was not until the estate of pre-cast concrete houses had nearly reached the track, that alternative sites were sought. One of the first of these was immediately opposite our home. A group of footballers descended on the field and made a track, I have no idea where they came from, they certainly were not locals, presumably they had searched the area looking for a suitable vacant space. The track was quite narrow, with the neighbouring house's fence down one side and bushes on the other. No attempt was made to form a team, two teams would be formed if enough riders turned up. (A bit like some present day Speedway matches).

Then when the season started the footballers disappeared never to be seen again. Those of us left decided that we would form a team. I became manager, (less of a liability than as a rider!) I seemed to have "inherited" a set of football jerseys, I decided on the name Hawks, cut up an old sheet, stencilled a hawk on it and my mother sewed it to the jerseys.

So we were all set and ready to go, just one thing missing, we did not have anyone to race against. I was not aware of any other teams in the area and I was sure that nobody knew of our existence. It was not until Spring of 1948, that I got a letter from a Mr. Jim White inviting me to a meeting to set up the Wembley and District Cycle Speedway League.

So together with five other teams the Hawks became founder members of the League. The other teams:- Kingsbury Lions, who had a track at Kingsbury Circle. Hendon Pirates, whose track was on a disused tennis court in the grounds of the Brent Bridge Hotel. Sudbury Court Flyers, had a track in a bunker on a disused golf course, this gave it banked straights. Wembley Panthers and Acton Acorns shared a track on Railway land at the bottom of Berkhamstead Avenue. This was on the same piece of waste ground that later became home to Wembley Hawks/Lions. (See map page 12) Matches were often disrupted by the police evicting them from the ground.

Our first home match was against the Tigers, their two riders shot out of the gate, round the bend and straight into the bushes. They refused to continue the match, saying that the track was not suitable for league racing. The control board upheld their complaint. So now the League had only four tracks, only one of them in Wembley.

It was agreed that we should share the Kingsbury Tigers track, this was at least twice the size of ours, and was on a steep slope. When our riders saw it, half of them refused point blank to ride there, so we had not only lost our track, I had lost half my team. (At least now there was a place for me in the team!)

Although our relationship with the Tigers was not exactly harmonious their top rider, Roy Howard, became quite friendly, he sort of took me under his wing, giving me (much needed) help and advice. Roy was an apprentice electrician, and when I said that we could do with an electric light in our shed, he offered to do the job. When he refused payment for the work, my father asked if he would like two tickets for a West End Show.

He accepted the offer, but I was very surprised when he said that he did not know anyone to take, and asked if I would go with him. Although I had already seen the show twice, once in Brighton and again in London, I agreed to go with him.

The show was "Burlesque" and starred Bonar Colleano, who was at the same time filming "Once a Jolly Swagman" The London Evening Papers carried stories of him being such a good rider, that he had been offered a contract by West Ham! Good publicity, but of course completely untrue. When my Father introduced me to him, and said that I was a Speedway fan, of course Bonar came out with the Spiel " Oh sure kid, it's dead easy, West Ham wanted me to ride for them tonight, but I can't as I am on stage" He must have known that anyone who followed speedway would know that he had never even sat on a bike, never mind ridden one, but I suppose he had to live up to his publicity. If my memory serves me, Rayleigh riders including Ron Howes and Jack Cooley did the actual action scenes, the later breaking his collar bone or arm in one of the staged crashes. Jack was also credited as an advisor.

Incidentally for the female lead it was decided to bring over a Hollywood Star. Marjorie Reynolds had starred with Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire in "Holiday Inn" the film that first featured the song "White Christmas". Every Christmas on T.V. they show the black & white clip of her singing a duet with Bing, except she is not singing, she is miming (and not very well if you watch closely!). So we have a musical with a Star that can't sing (or dance.)

I met Marjorie when the show was in Brighton, she had had some publicity photos taken with the American Ice Hockey team, who were playing in the town. She looked through them and said :- "You can not use these, they make me look like a Skinny Cow"
I still have the photos and



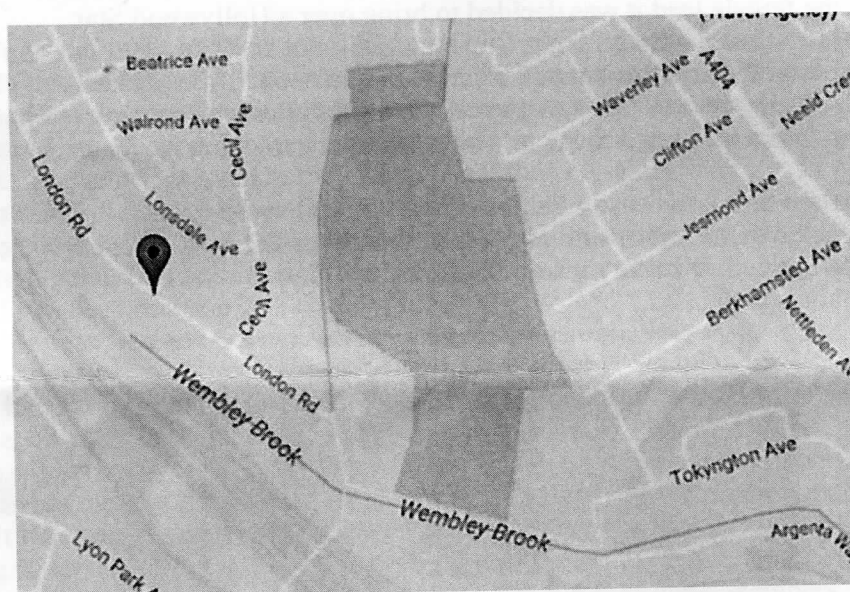
We did not share the Tigers track for long, it turned out that they had another track, a much better track, at the Paddocks in Wembley, Although they were not using it, they did not want anyone else using it. Eventually they relented and said we could have the track until the end of the season.(Probably just to get rid of us!)

So with a track of our own and a settled team things were looking up. We even drew our home match against the mighty Kingsbury Lions, that is until they were able to (wrongly) get the match rerun on some technicality. By the time the match was run, our best rider (Den Kirby) had signed for the Lions and rode against us. So we ended up with "null" points, but at least we did finish the season.

BILL GADSBY.

In addition to the contribution from Malcolm Belchambers, Pete Saunders has given me several copies of the many magazines that his brother Bob produced. An article in "Cycle Speedway Review from September 1965 was of particular interest and brought back many happy memories.

GONE. The old Wembley Hawks track at London Road is now under a building site. Although criticised by many, this was ideally situated in the centre of Wembley. The sport has much to thank the track for. It was the starting ground of many well known riders. Names such as Chris Hunt, Ken Harris, Fred Bouttell, Dave Dunlop, Pete Sargeant, Sid Russell, Keith Hunt, Terry Palmer, Pete Courts, Vic Burton all started their careers at London Road. It has also been the home track to many other riders during their heyday. Riders like Johnny Pinnock, Bill Gadsby, Ron Mallett, Roger Dewhurst, Robin Morse and Bonny Edwards. That famous Hawks pair of the 1958/61 era, Brian Smith and Bernie Mason were also bred at London Road. Yes the sport has a lot to thank the London Road circuit for. And for a central practise track in Wembley it can never be replaced.



The London Road Track was on waste ground in the Middle of Wembley, just off the High Street, at the end (of course) of London Road. In 1948 The Wembley Panthers had a track on the same site, at the bottom of Berkhamsted Road. The Panthers track was a large circular track, with rocks marking the inside line. They shared the track with The Acton Acorns.

In the 1950s some young lads had made a small makeshift circular track at London Road, they called themselves The Wembley Tigers.

In the winter of 1956/7 there was no official winter league, and the Wembley All Stars did not have any matches planned, so I decided to run a mini league. We had four teams:- Finchley Sabres, Hendon Stars, Wembley Aces and Wembley Tigers, who were strengthened by the addition of Norman Hunter!

There was another match staged there, Wembley All Stars (select) v Langley Leopards.

This came about when the Hendon track was waterlogged, Langley arrived and agreed that the match could not go ahead, in any case most of the "Stars" had gone home by then.

To save them a wasted journey, I suggested that we could have a match of sorts at London Road, they agreed. There were a couple of young lads with decent looking track bikes hanging about, so I asked them if they would like to make up the numbers in our team, they jumped at the chance of a ride. I'm not sure if any one bothered to keep the score. It would not have been worth reporting this, except that the two lads were Alan Cowland & Brian Deveroux, who both rode very well and of course were immediately signed up.

In a round about way, The Wembley Hawks would never been formed if The Langley Lions had not withdrawn from the N.W.Middx League.

While still riding for Wembley All Stars, I was helping Frank Males to reform The Bushey Aces. Nobody was interested in riding challenge matches against us. So I asked if we could join the league in place of the Lions I figured that would at least give us some matches. With hindsight this was a mistake, the team was very weak, I did "poach" Roger Dewhurst from the All Stars and when Finchley closed, signed Johnny Pinnock & Terry Porter. We still finished joint bottom of the League. Then Frank Males said that he did not approve of me signing "foreigners" and we were no more welcome at "his" track. So I was left with half a team and no track.

We had discarded London Road as being too small and unsuitable for league racing.

When nothing else was found we decided to have another look, and found that by removing a 4ft bank, we could more than double the size of the track. Work was finally completed by Feb (1958) And who better to open our new track than our friends(?) The Wembley All Stars.

From Cycle Speedway Star Feb 1958.

WEMBLEY V WEMBLEY

On Feb 2nd Wembley Hawks held their opening meeting and entertained their near neighbours Wembley All Stars. Unfortunately for the Hawks, their track had only been completed the previous weekend, so hardly any of the team had had a chance to practice on it. In fact the more experienced visitors settled in so well you would have thought they were the home team. Both teams were without there captains, Dixie Dean (All Stars) & Roger Dewhurst (Hawks).

Best for the visitors were their two Middlesex Champions Roy Fraser & Norman Hunter, both of whom were unbeaten. Top for the home team was ex Finchley Captain Johnny Pinnock.

HAWKS. J. Pinnock 10, P. O'Grady 9, A. Axton & B. Gadsby 7, R Mallett & T. Porter 4 and T. Cruse 2.

ALL STARS. N. Hunter 12, R. Fraser 11, K. Bristow 9, B. Carter 8, A. Fraser 7, E. Hill &



Wembley All Stars v Hendon Stars.

Wembley riders Bill Gadsby (inside) & Brian "Taffy" Evans.

For Hendon Eddie Osbourne (outside) & Paddy O'Grady, both former Tigers & future Hawks.

BCSF MUTTERINGS

In recent years the immense contribution that the British Cycle Speedway Federation made to the sport has been glossed over and never been surpassed. Minimum track standards, professional looking programmes where the competitors names had to be printed in the week prior to the fixture, match results in the Daily Express on the following Monday morning, a rigorously enforced dress code, as we found out to our cost when we forgot the body colours in a fixture at Tottenham.

Remember the all black strip and the Union Jack body colours that the riders wore for the British Rider's Championship Final at Garratt Park. In my opinion, ignoring the rocking drain cover on gate two, it was the best track in the country.

Although it would now be politically incorrect the event was sponsored by a major tobacco company.

Derek Bacon, Ron Johnston, John Richardson and Vic Cowell deserve greater recognition for their far sighted vision.

NACSA had some great riders, which lead to some friendly rivalry when competitors from the two governing bodies clashed. I remember returning from a match at Southampton on a Sunday evening and stopping at Hungerford for a drink. It was the Hungerford weekend and when we walked into the pub we were greeted by cries of "Feds", "Feds" by the Blackley riders.

Les Gustafson's letter reminded me of the Test match at Ashton against the immensely strong Manchester League that included two of the all-time greats in Derek Garnett and John Watchman. I was immensely proud to represent the British League, but overriding memory is that before the match team manager Derek Bacon said to me "It's your first time riding for the British League isn't it?" "Yes." I replied, "It will be the last bloody time unless you do well." He added. I believe that we would have won the home leg with the team we put out at Ashton.

To sum up Cycle Speedway took me to places I would never have dreamed of visiting, Holland for example. Remember the tarmac track at Hilversum? It was like travelling to the far side of the world for us simple Leicester lads in the sixties. I have made many friends, some who used to be rivals, among them Johan Koudijs who I see regularly. It is good to see so many of my generation still standing.

Grant Warwick

CORONATION CUP 1956

WHIPPS CROSS COMETS 69 WARWICK LIONS 38

These cup matches were fiercely contested, with Warwick winning in 1953 and 1954, with the Comets taking the honours in 1955. So both sides were looking for a win. In 55 the Comets were at home for the first match and won by four points. The Lions were very sporting and said "we will beat you on our big track". Little did they know most of the Comets did not like their own tight track. The Comets won the return leg by six points. So the matches for the 56 season would be well contested.

The first two races went to the Comets 5-1, race one, Hemsley & Nastri scoring the points. Race two saw Brown & Pipe with a repeat performance. The only difference, Comets first pairing ended up being the worst pairing, while the other two were their best pairing. Heat 3 saw the Lions gain a 4-2 with Len Adams winning. Heat four it was the turn of the Comets best pair John Brown and Sid Pipe to score another 5-1. John Brown went on to score a maximum, maybe that's why he gave me the programme!

Heat 5 saw an unusual Comets pairing of Terry Howse & Terry Bunce their styles did not suit each other, the Lions came back with a 5-1 from Tony Marsh & Terry Emmons. Heat 6 saw the Lions continue winning with a 4-2, Terry Walter winning. With a score 20-16 the Lions were all go. The next two heats were 3-3, but heat 9 saw Terry Howse & Ken Mills score a 5-1 over Tony Marsh & Read.

Then another 3-3 before heat 11, which was very unusual both Sid Pipe & Terry Walter were excluded, unusual, because Sid rarely got excluded. Can not give further details, as I only have the programme and can just not remember.

Heat 12 and Howse & Bunce got it together with a 5-1, the score being 42-29. The Lions still have a chance of winning, but would have to go some.

The next heat was 3-3 followed by a 4-2 from Bunce & Mills and then a 5-1 to the Comets by good riding from the two Sids, Pipe & Kingsnorth. The next 3 races went to the Comets 5-1, with points from Brown & Hemsley, Nastri & Bunce and finally in heat 18 Pipe & Howse.

This 18 heat programme produced some odd pairings. This was a printed programme and at the last minute, Terry Bunce replaced Keith Taylor. Terry Bunce was a heat leader, with Sid Kingsnorth his partner, But to avoid too many changes, Sid stayed at first reserve and scored 8 points, only beaten once by Terry Walter, his only race win.

I spoke to Tony Marsh and he was sure that Len Adams never raced for the Lions. Len could not remember riding, saying that he never rode for Warwick, but the programme says he did. So nice guy Len was a ringer, it did not matter, as the Comets were in good form.

COMETS.

E.Hemsley 8, T. Nastri 7, J. Brown 15, S. Pipe 8, T. Howse 10, T. Bunce 10, S. Kingsnorth 8 & K. Mills 3.

LIONS.

C. Read 1, R. Mapps 3, T. Marsh 7, T. Emmons 6, T. Walter 5, L. Adams 7, L. Read 2 & A Muncer 6.

ERIC HEMSLEY



1961 Tottenham Kangaroos at Garret Park South London.

Back Row L to R Ted Sear, Malcolm Reading, John Boulger, Kenny Bennet.

Front Row L to R Mick Curry, Len Adams (Capt.), John Cobbin, Clive Hill.

Picture No. 2022 Submitted by Jim Mitchell WXC

I did not know that Ted Sear had ridden for Tottenham. Ted and Ken Mills (who I only made contact with recently) were similar in as they both had interests outside cycle speedway, and were not always available So their other interests did not give them long runs in the team.

Ted with his speedway announcing and Ken was a very active member of the St. Johns Ambulance, as was his father, who did referee for the Comets. He was very good, but too fair with the visitors, only a few teams were that good to the Comets.

Jim was a friend of Mick Curry, so maybe he gave Mick support at Tottenham and took the photo. At least Ken got a ride in the Coronation Cup.

This good photo was submitted by Jim Mitchell, who did ride for Whipps Cross Comets.

This photo links together:-

Ken, Ted, Jim, Mick and Len Adams who turned out for Warwick Lions.

ERIC HEMSLEY