

1951 – A snapshot review first published in '50 Years of Cycle Speedway' by The British Cycle Speedway Council in 1996.

1951

Empress Hall Stages London Championships

London's Empress Hall, part of the giant Earls Court complex, staged four match series for the County of London area championship. Four area representative teams of eight riders comprising North, South, East and West London did battle over 16 heats. Although the final results are unknown, we do know that the squads were:

NORTH LONDON

Derek Sheridan and Dennis Bottazzi (Warwick Lions), Stanley Addison and John Skeet (East End Eagles), Douglas Bourne and Arthur Caunt (Hackney Comets), Reg Martin and Sid Fage (Warwick Stars), George Harrison and Ron Mitchell (Hackney Comets)

SOUTH LONDON

Ray Braddon and Vic Winter (Peckham Stars), Terry Vinter and Basil Casey and Mick Griffin (Ruskin Flyers), Ron Holvey, John Cooper and Billy Larue (Tooting Tigers), Arthur Davis and Percy Turner (Cardinal Monarchs)

EAST LONDON

Pat Gore and Ron Jarrett (Bermondsey Greyhounds), Jack Lunan and Roy Lawrence (Verney Lions), David Still and Walter Lloyd (Beckton), Geoff Whitsey and Tommy Weston (New Forest Rangers)

WEST LONDON

Jack Buffham and Don Matthews (West Kensington Archers), Len Herrick and Paul Price (Putney Panthers), Don Angliss (Western Stars), Ernest Black and Ken Archer (Battersea Eagles), Derrick Shackles (Battersea Rockets), Tommy Nouch and David Camp (Shatsbury Stars)

London Boys Attract Big Television Audience

Encouraged by the cheers of hundreds of their supporters, London rode in great style at the Empress Hall, Earls Court on Wednesday 28 March 1951 to beat Birmingham 55.5 to 40.5 in an inter-city challenge match for the News Chronicle Trophy. The match was watched by hundreds of thousands of viewers on television sets.

London had a shock in the opening heat when the Birmingham pair broke away to snatch maximum points, but by heat four the Londoners had forged into a lead which they never lost.

The trophy was presented to the London captain, 20 year old Ron Holvey, by West Ham speedway rider Wally Green, who was runner-up in the World's Championship last year.

He was introduced to the large crowd by Mr Frank Waters, managing director of the News Chronicle. Mr Waters referred to the great interest in the national team championships, sponsored by the News Chronicle last year, and said it was a pleasure to return to the Empress Hall to compliment the young riders on another fine and exciting evenings sport.

Two members of the London team, skipper Holvey and 19 year old Ray Braddon, are in the Army and obtained special leave. It was a journey well worth while from the Londoners' point of view since Braddon, whose home is at Peckham, was second highest scorer for his team with ten points.

Stalwart for the winners was dark haired slightly built Jack Buffham, a 20 year old clerk, who rode in particularly dashing fashion to collect 11 points. Real hero of the evening, however, was Birmingham's

Roy Turnham, Roy, suffering from fatigue, had to receive attention from first aid men after making an all outbid to dead-heat for second place in the tenth heat.

He quickly recovered and insisted on taking his place in the final nominated riders heat. He crowned an excellent performance by winning the heat to finish highest scorer of the night with 11.5 points.

Another Birmingham rider to feel the strain of the hectic racing was Roy Farndon (17), Roy, only son of former New Cross and England speedway idol, the late Tom Farndon, twice had to receive attention from the first aid attendants, but he stuck to his task and collected six points for his team. Details:

London:

J Buffham 11, R Braddon 10, T Weston 7.5, D Bottazzi 7, J Lunan and G Harrison 6, R Holvey 5, E Black 3

Birmingham:

R Turnham 11.5, B Slater and H Kent 8, R Farndon 6, M Spooner 3, A Herbert 2, V Halliwell and B Bamwell 1

In a North v South test trial which preceded the inter-city match, the Northerners proved themselves vastly superior and gained a runaway win by 65 points to 30. Details:

North of England:

B Moston 10.5, D Fletcher 10, L Grepp 9.5, G Barraclough and K Vine 8, B Slater 7, M Flood and J Hawley 6

South:

K Worlock and J Henderson 6, R Swaine 4, S Luke A Dabinette, D Hunter and J Windsor 3, M Mulholland 0



Newly crowned national champion Lew Grepp receives

Grepp becomes First National Champion

The inaugural national individual championships at Hayes in Middlesex, attracted one the biggest crowds ever to watch cycle speedway. Lew Grepp of Cheadle Hulme Rangers (Cheshire) won the Mars Golden helmet national individual championship. The 20 year old northerner was in unbeatable form and took the title with a brilliant 15 point maximum. Malcolm Flood from the Earlham Eagles team in Norwich took second place on 13 points after a run-off with Bill Powell of Roseycombe Rockets (Warwickshire). Grepp and Powell were involved in a terrific last race tussle with the Cheadle rider edging home by half a length.

Gazette Launched

A new magazine has been launched for cycle speedway followers in the Coventry area.. Published and printed by the LDP Duplicating Company and edited by John Leith, the Cycle Speedway Gazette was a mix of news, views and match reports. The first edition sold for six old pence, 2.5 p at today's value.

From its humble beginnings, Cycle Speedway Gazette established itself as the sport's foremost magazine. Cycle Speedway Gazette continued to be published until June 1968. After 17 years and 342 editions, sales plummeted severely leaving long serving editor John Leith little option but to close the magazine.

ADMIN CHANGES

1951 saw a number of administrative changes on the national governing body. George Fernyhough became national administrative secretary in place of W F Sonnex who was promoted to the role of vice-chairman. New committee members W H Causer, W Kavangh, F W Lancaster and R Pike replaced Athersuch and Burton. Neil, Maclean and Co were appointed as honorary solicitors and four sub-committee were formed to deal with the expanding work of the Association. They were Rules- Norman Guest (chairman), D L Brunstrom, Ken Cooper. Stewards and Tracks - S G Wynne (chairman), W J Cattle, E Jones. Appeals - Bertram J G Duffield (chairman), S Kippin, R Pike, W F (Bill) Sonnex. Fixtures and Trophies - G W Fernyhough (chairman), F Ashtonhurst, K Cooper.

Age Category Rumpus

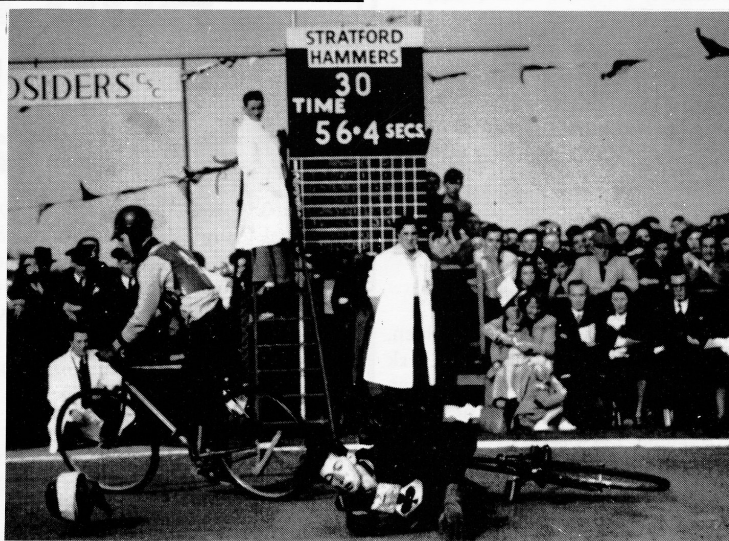
The National Amateur Cycle Speedway Association introduced a ruling which barred any rider over 25 from competing in the sport. The directive attracted widespread dissent from the rank and file and the rule was dropped in later years.

Cycle Speedway Flourishes

Cycle speedway featured prominently in the News Chronicle Boys Book of All Sports (8/6). NACSA vice chairman Bill Sonnex penned a feature entitled "Britain's new sport is doing well".

Champions All

Top teams in 1951 were Rayleigh & Hawkwell Stars (Southend and District League champions), Millbrook Turfs (Southampton League), EAC (English Aircraft Corporation) Hawks (Hertfordshire League), Russell Eagles (Barnett and District League), Chorlton Aces (Manchester, Stockport and District Division One), Brinnington Stars (Division Two), Kirby Kings (Leicestershire League), Harefield Pirates (North-West Middlesex League), Earlham Eagles (Norwich League), Hethersett Hornets (Wymondham League), Whitby Lions (Somerset League), Claydon Greyhounds (Deben League), Aston Aces (Birmingham League), Grange Leopards (Bradford League), Lambhill Lions (Glasgow League). Hollandse Welpen were the Dutch champions.



It's the eleventh heat and Chorlton Aces (Lancashire) are leading Stratford Hammers (Essex) in the final of the News Chronicle national cycle speedway team championships. Brian Moston (Chorlton) crashes, his helmet flying along the track, and Dennis Hubble (Stratford) darts ahead. Now the Hammers are only a point behind. After the next race they are ahead and steadily increase their lead to win the trophy by 58 points to 36. For the second successive year the Aces were runners-up.

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Star Studded Ball

Hundreds of cycle speedway enthusiasts bedecked in team colours, flocked to the Hammersmith Palais for a special eve-of-finals ball. Among those present were American film star Zachary Scott and radio and television star Petula Clark.

Stratford Win Team Final

London's Stratford Hammers easily won the national team championship trophy when they eased to a comfortable victory over Chorlton Aces by 58 points to 36 at Hayes End Recreation Ground, Middlesex. Undoubted star of the show was Cockney George Stephens who won all of his five races with ease to score a 15 point maximum. The northerners were simply outclassed by a fitter, faster team. It was a double disappointment for Chorlton who finished runners-up for the second successive year. Last season they were beaten by six points in the final by Dorset's Gem Pirates.