

THE CYCLE SPEEDWAY SPOTLIGHT

Issue No 4

Vol No 1



**Bringing The World Of
Cycle Speedway Into Focus**

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Edited by Ken Cooper & Vic Cowell

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THE CYCLE SPEEDWAY SPOTLIGHT

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Ken Cooper & Vic Cowell.

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MONDAY FEBRUARY 27th, 1956.

POLICY!

In this fourth issue of the "Spotlight", we would like to draw our readers' attention to two items of our policy:-

1. We never intend to publish in this magazine, any direct attack on persons or organisations. We do not believe that such attacks serve any useful purpose.

To date, none of our readers have asked us to print any such attacks. We hope they never will, because they will be wasting their time and energy.

We are, however, pleased to print any constructive criticism of any ideas which appear in the magazine.

We know, from the response we have received from all over the country, that the greater majority of people concerned with Cycle Speedway are of the same opinion as ourselves on this point.

2. We do not intend to publish articles etc., unless they carry, either, the names of the editors, or the correct names of the correspondents.

We realise, that on occasions, this policy has its drawbacks. But we know, that in the long run, the many advantages by far outweigh the disadvantages.

Generally, it will be our policy to give all areas a reasonable amount of space for news and opinions.

KINGS OF HERTS

THE LEAGUE COMMENCES ON SUNDAY MARCH 4TH.

The Test Matches between Essex and Herts. at Longbridge on Sunday 12th. February, were abandoned after heat two of the "A" match due to the rapid thaw making the track unridable.

The Herts. League season begins on Sunday 4th. March, with a full quota of League matches. It is hoped to race off quite a few League battles before the National Trophy Rounds commence.

Herts. line-up for the 1956 season is as follows:-

CLAY HILL ACES
PECKHAM STARS
WHIPPS X COMETS
EDMONTON SAINTS

LANGLEY LIONS
HODDESDON KANGAROOS
FINCHLEY SABRES
WALTHAMSTOW WOLVES

The League welcomes both new teams, Peckham Stars and Finchley Sabres, and hopes they will enjoy a successful season's racing.

This Sunday, 26th. February, the League's Junior Championship is to be held at Peckham. The riders are as follows:-

EDMONTON SAINTS; Wright, O'Neil, T. Jackson, Parsley, Keay, Issacs, Jordan; HODDESDON KANGAROOS; Zwagger, Salmon, Jervis, Ellis; CLAY HILL ACES; Scott, Mumford, Hull; PECKHAM STARS; A.N. Other.

Peckham Stars also entertain Hoddesdon Kangaroos in a Challenge match.

KEN COOPER.

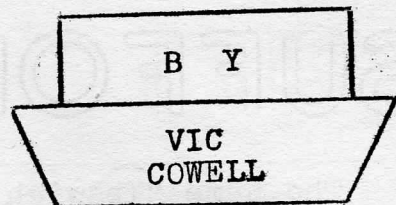
SUFFOLK SCENE

The name "Ipswich Pirates", has always been associated with good sportmanship, and good organisation. This club to whom much credit must be given for the organisation that functions in Suffolk today, had to close down eighteen months ago through call-up and lack of officers. Practically every charitable cause in this county received help of some description from this club, including the Red Cross, Old Age Pensioners, British Legion and Village Sports etc. They were all assisted without hesitation when the call came. Throughout the county, the name Ipswich Pirates meant a good show and a profitable one. It was a sad blow to many when it was realised that the Pirates were finished. But today, comes the news that the Pirates are to be restarted once again. Already sixteen riders have signed on; a general meeting has been held, and if the same enthusiasm prevails as was so much to the fore at the meeting, then we shall indeed have our Pirates back again. They have much leeway to make up, but somehow knowing the lads, I am sure they will make it.

Another team that is fast making a name for itself, and now going into its third season is the "Copdock Racers". Exceptionally well organised, very comfortably off for riders and very secure financially, they recently started a youth club in the village, and up to date they have some thirty members. As I write this, I have heard that today, in all the slush and mess of the thaw, riders and officials are on the track looking over the gear. The one outstanding feature of this club, is the fact that they will not stand inefficiency. If a rider or officer fails in his job, he is out. I have seen many changes in the controlling officers of the Racers, but they have always gone from strength to strength, and today, they have the finest company of organisers of both sexes, that, in my opinion, could be desired.

CLAUDE R. JOLLY.

NOAH'S ARK



In 1950, I accompanied a London Select team on a tour of Edinburgh. In the party were Arsenal Aces star, Tommy Sweetman, Sid Fage of Stratford Hammers and another well known rider, Jim Preddy of Caledonian Tigers.

Met at Edinburgh Station by the local enthusiasts, we were whisked off to a good meal and then to the places where we were to stay, homes of the riders and officials, who really made us welcome. The following day we got down to racing, and we met the full Scottish Test Team at Prestonpans, a first class track. This was a great match, and at the end the Scottish team ran out worthy winners 59-48. The second match was against top liners, Musselburgh Giants, who included in their line-up, personality boy, Danny McGrath, who with Jim Rose, was responsible for another defeat, this time 42-41.

Two down, we were up against it. The next night we were all lined up for a match with Redford Diamonds, but the weather called a halt to the proceedings. Yet another defeat followed, this time at the hands of Lothians Select 56-49. This was held in the Speedway car park, the white line being a trail of Vim, sprinkled in an oval shape. This was quite unorthodox to us, but the match was certainly kept "clean"!

At last came our revenge, in the shape of wins over the Edinburgh Test Team 63-44, and Redford Diamonds, 47-37. Played five, lost three, won two, that was our record, and although the London team had been none too successful, we left behind happy memories of a sporting series. The losing of three matches, was compensated for by the many new friendships we made. The hospitality had to be seen to be believed, and after we had been given gifts, and had exchanged colours and club badges etc., we said our goodbyes, and returned to London feeling "That all good things must come to an end."

Vic Cowell

PIT'S PORTRAIT

SID KINGSNORTH (Whipps X Comets)

Sid Kingsnorth, one of the Comets original riders, started riding in 1948. Not making the grade, Sid retired and after a short spell he returned to join the Comets 2nd team at their new track at Greenleaf Road. This was to be a short spell and he then moved on to the Palmerstone Panthers. Here he filled the position of Vice Captain. When the council took over the track he returned to the Comets. Again finding it difficult to hold a team place he switched to the Walthamstow Diamonds. However, this didn't last and he once again rejoined the Comets to ride for their 3rd team. He proved a great leader and helped his team to reach the West Essex Shield Final.

He soon paired with P. Bunce and riding like Ken Le Breton in white, became one of the league's strongest pairings.

After completing his National Service Sid once more returned to the Comets. Joining them on their tour of Dublin, and also their other tours of Birmingham and Wales, he finished high up in the score chart, thus proving his worth, he was picked for the England .v. Wales select.

In the Hertfordshire 1954 County Final, against Clay Hill Aces, Sid rode hard and brought the Comets through with flying colours.

Last season he was runner-up in the Comets Individual Championship against hot opposition.

This rider should be watched carefully in 1956, and could quite easily upset the more prominent riders in the Hertfordshire League.

THE FACTS FOR THIS ARTICLE WERE SUPPLIED BY JOHN BROWN OF WHIPPS CROSS COMETS.

STOP PRESS

DUTCH REPRESENTATIVE IS IN LONDON

On Tuesday 21st. February, an Express letter arrived for Vic Cowell from Hartog de Ronde, to say that Hartog would be arriving at London Airport on Thursday 23rd. inst. at approximately 8.25.P.M.

Mr.de Ronde has asked Vic, as his representative, to arrange a meeting of various people who he would like to meet while he is in England.

Well, Vic has done his best, He has written to all those mentioned in Mr.de Ronde's letter, informing them of the time and place of the meeting, which is to be held in Edmonton on Saturday 25th. February at 3.0.p.m.

We hope that most of the people concerned will be able to attend this meeting.

It is realised of course, that there has not been very much notice of the actual date of the visit, but, we understand that Hartog has only just been able to finalise his plans.

We would point out that Mr.de Ronde is flying to this country at his own expense, with the express idea of clearing up details of the proposed visits to Holland this year of several English teams.

By the way, don't be surprised if Hartog turns up at your local track on Sunday afternoon -- if you live in the London area that is -- for he is staying over the weekend, and has expressed a wish to see some racing. Let us hope the weather permits.

KEN COOPER.

TRACK BIKE!

The frame is the topic of conversation this week. No matter whether it originated from the rubbish dump, Uncle Bill, or a shop, those found most suitable are nearly all 21" frames with a bottom bracket spindle clearance of about 11". We will discount frames angles, as although they may be useful to the road racing fraternity, they do not make much difference to us.

Now comes the question of what alterations to the existing frame are considered necessary. Many riders run into trouble because their left pedal hits the deck when they are cornering, and naturally, they become convinced that a higher bottom bracket will remedy this. They then proceed to chop about 5" off the seat pillar, and bend their rear forks and weld the whole lot up again. Lew G. did this on the frame on which he won the National Individual Championship in 1951, and made his ground clearance 15" but soon after winning the championship, he reverted to a normal machine as the high driving position caused him to "wag" along the straight.

Another method of raising the bottom bracket is to straighten the front forks. This will add another $\frac{1}{2}$ " to the clearance, which is generally thought sufficient. But playing about with the forks shortens the wheelbase and gives the bike a different handling on the bends, which is better for some riders, but not for all.

All Carrs Wood Linters have straight forks, and they won the Team Championship two years running. So even if they are of no advantage, they cannot be of much disadvantage.

Many riders have said to me that they would like to have some form of front and rear springing, but as yet, I am still waiting to see it done successfully. If anyone has what they consider a really good springing system, I would certainly like to hear about it.

BRIAN MOSTON.

PLEASE SEND YOUR COMMENTS DIRECT TO BRIAN AT 36,
WEST END AVENUE, GATLEY, CHESHIRE.

ODD

BOX

"ARE THINGS LOOKING UP IN COVENTRY ?"

We were pleased to hear from Roger Gilbert of Coventry last week, giving us some news from his area. He says that at their General Meeting, only two teams applied for entry into the Leaguem and they naturally didn't feel too optimistic. Since then, however, another three clubs have shown interest. He goes on to say, "in Coventry, the sport is very low, the main reasons for this being the call-up, and the lack of tracks. We had three league's in the old days, but last season we were down to seven clubs. Coventry Kangaroos have had their crack built on, so they will have to move. At the moment, however, we are shorter of clubs than of tracks

Thanks for writing Roger, we hope that the next time we hear from you, it will be to say that the Coventry league is operating successfully.

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"PUBLICITY THROUGH B.B.C UNDER TWENTIES PARADE"

The Younger Generation Production Unit of the B.B.C. is always glad to have news of interesting events in the youth field for the Under-Twenties programmes. They ask for ideas and activities that are out of the ordinary, "grappling with problems of job and family, shaping careers in science and the crafts" - and prefer informal enterprises in which the under-twenties themselves provide most of the 'go' and imagination, rather than highly organised functions. They like to record on the spot, so they must know well in advance. Ideas and suggestions to :- The Younger Generation, B.B.C. London, W.1.

W. TREACHER.

Hon. Chairman, Edmonton Saints C.S.C.

B u d g e t !

(See "FEES" Edition 2., and "OPINION" Edition 3.)

From Mr.Slaters' letter, it would seem that he believes me to be a N.A.C.S.A official, and I should therefore like to make it clear that my only connection with N.A.C.S.A. is that of being secretary and treasurer to an affiliated club.

We appear to be agreed that financially, N.A.C.S.A. is in a bad way, yet Mr.Slater calls for the association to set an example by cutting its fees! In the present circumstances an economic impossibility. The Association is actually in debt; with fees at their present level, it should just about pull through this year, but with reduced fees it would either sink deeper into debt, or be forced to cancel one of the national competitions, a step which would surely be its last.

The question of sponsorship has been discussed, and would obviously solve many of N.A.C.S.A's problems, but how many sponsors would even consider taking-up an organisation which was either in debt or else unable to stage national competitions ? In other words, we must help N.A.C.S.A. 'keep up appearances' until it's 'sold' to the public and possibly to a sponsor. Then we can look for the lightening of the load.

If only people could realise that N.A.C.S.A. is not a mysterious money-grabbing body set up by others. It is a creature of our own making and belongs to us all, the shop-window of the sport, and one we must keep well-lit and attractive.

This is not a particularly cheerful article, in fact it bears an uncomfortably close resemblance to the speeches made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer before disclosing a new austerity budget; all that I've left out are the injunctions to put our shoulders to the grindstone, and to leave no stone unturned. But there is a similarity in the cases.

NORMA GOODY

THE FOCUS ON

THE GLADIATORS

The Gladiators started 1955 with a mere handful of riders, and an ability to smile in the face of adversity. During the winter they improved on 1954 form, winning several matches both home and away. Fred Prior, Derek Littleton and Arthur Warren were the backbone of the team, while Demi Pratt, Ron Sutton and Gerry Edge were all reliable. Gladiators entered Div.2. of the S.Essex League, received a thrashing at Dagenham, but turned in good scores against Warwick 'B' and Barkingside Cobras. However, National Service hit the club. Riders went with monotonous regularity, but their luck held. New signings Sandy McGillivray and Benny Shrimpton scored well, and matches were still won. A bad patch in July nearly finished their League hopes, for they lost away to Fyfield and Shelly. Edge was called up. Warren, McGillivray and the improved Pratt, now carried the team, with Bull, Shrimpton and Perham playing a hand. Then, in late Summer, they struck form and strengthened their League challenge again. But, Warren shocked the team by transferring to Hawbush, and Shrimpton retired for a time. Captain Alan Perham lost his form, and things looked rough. However, Jones was persuaded to race again and Stan Stevens and Sid Tomlyn were signed from Longbridge for the rest of the year.

A full strength Gladiators travelled to Ferndale, and smashed the Stars unbeaten home record by 40 points. With a home victory over Shelly and an away win over Tottenham 'B', they took the Second Div. title. Thus they rounded off their best season to date.

With Pratt and Robinson in the services, and without Stevens and Tomlyn, 1956 will see the Gladiators facing the well earned onslaught of Div.1. With Jones McGillivray and Shrimpton to lead, it is hoped that the support of Bull, Perham and Grant will enthuse younger riders, Dave Robinson, Ken Gibson and Barry Done enough for them to enjoy a moderate season.

THE FACTS FOR THE ABOVE WERE SUPPLIED BY RON BULL.

MANCUNIAN

The number of teams in the Manchester, Stockport and District League will be nine. The additional team from the list published in the last issue, is Clayton Cobras, who should be stronger than last season, having taken over some of the Openshaw Monarchs' riders as that team has decided to disband.

Most other teams have had their A.G.M.s, and taken stock, and all seem quite happy regarding the number of riders on their books. Offerton Devils are still on the look out for one more rider, and Blackley Flyers haven't made any statement yet regarding who they will be signing.

The fixture list is just to hand, and it is noted that in the Lancashire v Cheshire series, the "A" matches are scheduled for Offerton and Belle Vue, and the "B" team matches for Blackley and Wilmslow.

Date to note, for the main event of the season, the "Manchester Grand Prix", is 22nd. July.

So far, all teams, except new team Ladybarn, will be racing on the same tracks as last season, although Longsight are hoping for a move early in the season. After negotiations with the Parks Dept. during the close season, it seems that a track in one of the larger public parks is in the offing. Ladybarn have still not settled for a site to build a track, and so in the meantime, Carrs Wood have put their circuit at their disposal. They should soon be pretty well at home on it if practice means anything.

Offerton Devils held their track Championship on 12th. February, and what a first class afternoon's racing was served up. Due to the quick thaw, the track was very muddy and spills were the order of the day, with most riders having at least one spill. Record tumbler of the afternoon was Belle Vue's Jim Jacoby with five falls in as many races. Eventual winner was local rider/manager, Dereck Garnett with 14pts, with Carrs Wood's Art Bailey runner-up. A run-off for third place went to local rider Fred Heath after a close tussle with Wilmslow's "Mac" McDonald.

F.ASHTONHURST.

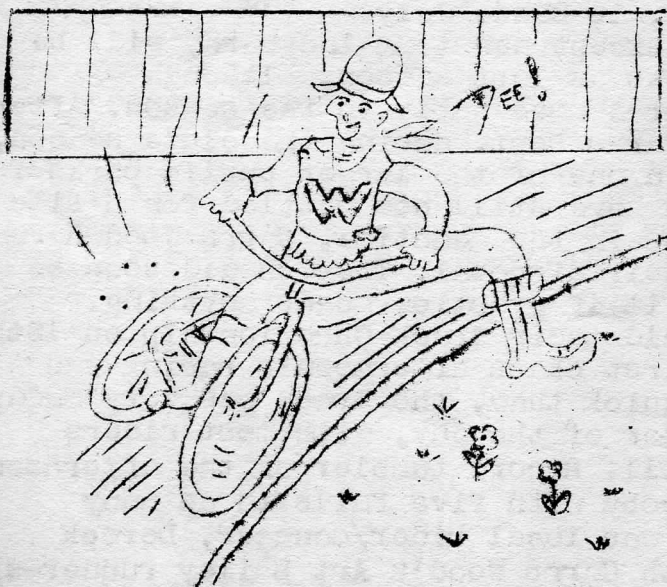
SPARE

SPINDLES.

BIRMINGHAM : As reported in an earlier edition, Lambeth Aces are after a star for their line up this season. Rider in question is Dennis Marsham, B'ham Lions and ex Pelshall Pirates and test rider, Lions have been approached regarding his release.

MANCHESTER : Brian Moston became engaged recently to Miss Margaret Liggat. The "Spotlight" wishes the couple every happiness.

HOLLAND : Work on the Hollandse Welpens' new track has been held up recently by a 30 inch blanket of snow. Our correspondent in Hilversum states that its been with them for four weeks now, and delayed all building plans.



BIRMINGHAM ARE
"BACK IN THE OLD ROUTINE"

LONDON : Don't be surprised if a team which spent last season playing football, return to racing at Stratford this year.

YOUR TOWN : From our next issue, the "SPOTLIGHT" will be increased by four pages, reserved for match results etc., and will be on sale MONDAY, 12 MARCH, '56 still fourpence, plus twopence for postage and packing. Issues, 1,2,3, sold out....sorry!

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