

THE TRACK RECORD

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Abstract

From attending regular sessions on basic and the growing off-road technology on Thursday July 24th, after which there is a full-on road test, and the last night of the event when we are taken to a special, one-time-only event, the water therapy and the final day of the event at the end of the week.

NEW STATE OF

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FRED ASHTONHURST was a well known figure in Cycle Speedway circles in the 1950's and 60's and was founder Chairman of the Manchester, Stockport & District league and it is largely due to his hard work, principles and ideals laid down in 1948, that has enabled the Manchester league to continue it's unbroken run to the present day. He was present at the inaugural meeting of the National Amateur Cycle Speedway Association, later gaining a position on the Executive committee and then being elected Treasurer, a position he held until the formation of the Cycle Speedway Council, when a heart attack forced him to curtail many of his Cycle Speedway activities. His other interests in later life were following the fortunes of Lancashire Cricket Club and Stockport County Football Club.

At the Final Dinner in 1996, BILL GILL presented Fred with the Golden Jubilee Diploma in recognition of his loyalty and dedication to Cycle Speedway, an honour that he richly deserved. His last function was the "Booze and Chat" night of the Manchester branch of the VCSRA at Manchester in May.

He will be sadly missed by everyone.

MANCHESTER. A "booze & chat" evening was held on May 7th at The Imperial Hotel, Blackley, Manchester and despite torrential rain during the evening, around 30 turned up for a social night together, including several "new faces". During the evening it transpired that quite a number of members were in favour of having a "blast round" a track again and consequently a Race Day was arranged for June 14th at the Astley track.

Around 35 turned up on the day, including 6 former National Champions, but regrettably many were unable to take part due to health problems. This left 16 fit to race and as 3 were still actively competing on a regular basis, some segregation was necessary. The oldest rider present, LEW GREPP gave a good account of himself against younger opposition. By the time everyone had taken part in 3 races the infamous Manchester weather came to the rescue of the tired legs and exhausted lungs. With the rain coming down quite hard, it was decided that it was better to get wet on the inside than on the outside and all retired to the nearest bar !!

The next "booze & chat" night will be on Wednesday September 24th and it will be held at the GORTON Conservative Club, 572 Gorton Lane, Manchester 18 and will start around 8.00.p.m. Please make an effort to attend as all will be most welcome.

BIRMINGHAM. JOHN HEATON has arranged a get-together of ex Birmingham riders on FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 12TH at OLD OSCOTT Working Men's Club, Aldridge Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, start time 7.30.p.m. Anyone wishing to attend will be more than welcome. We will be represented by the Right Hon Sec. and hopefully we will be able to swell our numbers with some new members from the Midlands.

MEMBERSHIP

This the "Good news - Bad news" section. The good news is that we have recruited quite a large number of new members during 1997, but the bad news is that around 60 of our original members have not re-joined. This is very disappointing after the initial response last year when we had over 200 members and although we are over that figure now, when you consider how many have not re-joined, then you can see what might have been. We first talked about 1997 memberships in the December newsletter, then again in the April one and finally in the June edition, but despite a limited response after each one, the renewals dried up. We will not turn down any application, no matter how late, but we cannot keep on sending newsletters to the people who have not re-joined.

THE TRACK RECORD

A publication of the **VETERAN CYCLE SPEEDWAY RIDERS ASSOCIATION.**

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Volume 1 Issue 2

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(Warwick v Stratford)

Nostalgia Evening. At the end of September, around 60 people gathered at PETE SAUNDERS' Snooker Club at Ampthill for an evening of reminiscing and re-run races, as well as a few frames of Snooker. The scrap books and photographs were everywhere and there were some interesting videos as well. Pete very kindly laid on a super buffet, free of charge, and we would like to thank him very much for his hospitality. Everyone voted the evening a great success and as long as Pete is happy to have us back, we would hope to make it an annual event.

Dinner and Dance. Our annual get-together was, as usual, a great success with a total of 188 people having booked to come along. Unfortunately, at the last minute several were unable to get there for various reasons but, nevertheless it was a great turnout and it seemed that everybody enjoyed the evening. You were, once again, very generous with raffle prizes and we thank everyone who brought gifts along, they were greatly appreciated. The PLOUGH has been provisionally booked for next year and the date is November 21st, as the usual Saturday was unavailable.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Next year's AGM will take place on Saturday February 28th at 2.00.p.m. at the WALTHAM ABBEY SPORTS CENTRE - BROOMSTICKHALL ROAD - WALTHAM ABBEY - ESSEX. To get to it you go off the M25 at J.26 and head towards Waltham Abbey. You will eventually go down Honeypot Lane and at the end of it, turn right into Broomstickhall Road. The centre will then be on your right. Tel. 01992-716194. Ladies will be welcome.

If you wish to nominate any member/s for consideration as committee members, please write in with your nominations. Please do likewise with any nominations for President for 1998/9. Any nominations will require a seconder and will be included in the Election of Officers at the AGM. If you are unable to attend and wish for something to be brought up at the meeting then you can either write to us or ask another member who will be attending to bring the matter up for you.

SID STARKEY

It was with deep regret that we learnt of the death, in October, of one of our early members, Sid Starkey. Sid was one of the first to join the Association in 1996 and he first rode for SOUTHEND SABRES in 1951 and then SOUTHEND EAGLES. We offer our sincere condolences to his wife and family in their time of sorrow. Sid will be sadly missed.

STRATFORD HAMMERS v WARWICK LIONS

Over the years these two teams had some great battles and more often than not, the HAMMERS came out on top. So just to redress the balance the following reports will show that the LIONS also had their moments. In 1949 the RIVETTS CUP FINAL took place between these two teams and WARWICK LIONS raced the first leg at home and at the end of the 16 heats the score was LIONS 49 HAMMERS 47. Even the staunchest of LIONS supporters didn't feel that a two point advantage would be good enough to take to JANSEN ROAD but, nevertheless, went there with the intention of doing the impossible. The second leg proved to be even more tense and exciting than the first one and with just one race to go the HAMMERS held a slender 1 point lead and needed a 4-2 in the last heat to win the trophy again. Heat 16 saw LEN SILVER and JIMMY HEARD for the HAMMERS and VIC WHITE and JOHNNY GOLDSMITH for the LIONS. At the end of an exciting race the result was 1st JIMMY HEARD, second JOHNNY GOLDSMITH and third VIC WHITE. The 3-3 result giving the LIONS an unexpected victory over the HAMMERS by 1 point on aggregate 96-95, which certainly turned the form book upside down. Scorers for STRATFORD were :- JOHN LIVINGS 11, LEN SILVER 10, JIMMY HEARD 9, ROY GARNHAM 6, EDDIE PARHAM, JACKIE WILSON and ROY ARCHIE 4 each. total. 48 points and for the LIONS:- VIC WHITE 11, JOHNNY GOLDSMITH 8, ALAN CATLEY and FRANK DUFFY 7 each, DEREK SHERIDAN 5, ALF RUSSELL 4, GORDON SMITH 3, and JIMMY VEAL 2, total 47.

HAMMERS v LIONS, re-union match at THUNDERSLEY on August 25th 1957.

The following is the exact report from The Hackney Gazette of the above match. On Sunday last, after a lapse of five years, the old Warwick Lions and old Stratford Hammers met in a challenge match at Thundersley, Essex. Both teams consisted of the original riders who raced as long ago as 1948 and the majority had not raced for at least four years. Supporters who watched the Lions at Andrews Road in the past will readily remember the exciting and tense battles that frequently took place between these two first class teams and Sunday was no exception. Although the match was perhaps a little more light-hearted than of old it was, nevertheless, very keen and close. Never were there more than four points between the teams. First, the Hammers took a lead of two points only to have the scores levelled within the next couple of heats and then the Lions would get a couple of points up and so on all the way through the 16 thrill packed heats. Eventually the Lions acquired a four point lead with two heats to go, which they held on to, to finish winners by 50 points to 46. Strangely enough, the top scorers for each team had not ridden for four years. For the Hammers EDDIE PARHAM rode brilliantly for 11 points, having his colours lowered only once by FRANK DUFFY, who scored 10 points. Other scorers for the Lions were, Derek Sheridan 9, Ken Scott 8, Alan Catley 8, Vic White 7, Ken Jenkins and Tom Kilbey 4 each. For the Hammers, Jackie Wilson and Don Wagstaff 9 each, Ken Lewis 6, Len Silver and John Livings 4 each, Ken Baxter 2 and Norman Lewis 1. After the match both teams descended upon Southend and later The Halfway House on their way back home and after spending an enjoyable afternoon and evening together went home tired, but happy and with a lot of memories to look back on.

Our old friend ROY DELANEY has written to us and asked that we print his letter in this publication, so here it is:-

"Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the HAWBUSH HAMMERS and GREAT WAKERING REBELS for staging the recent veteran cycle speedway meetings on their respective circuits. However, I do feel that in the event of further vet meetings being held, it is essential that The St.Johns Ambulance Brigade should be approached to meet our requirements, as we are all over twenty one now and may be a little bit vulnerable!. In the old days, as you remember, the St.Johns were always in attendance, in fact they seemed to be part of the club. The St. Johns used to be a free service and relied upon donations, if this is still so I am sure that none of us will mind contributing a pound or two to their funds, after all it is also for our benefit. (Editors note:- I could not agree with you more Roy, rest assured this will be done for future events.)

Secondly, it would be nice and nostalgic to hold a vets meeting or scratch races for all non riding club members dressed as original 1946 cycle speedway riders astride, if possible, old style bikes. If you are interested in obtaining an old style bike, Alan (Sprocket) Doggett is your man and he can be contacted on 01284-761729. Come along boys, have a go and join me at the tapes. "

Former National Champion LEW GREPP has written to us regarding Test Matches between Manchester and Birmingham and this is his letter.

" Thanks for the Track Record No.1., I was particularly interested in JOHN HEATON'S article , especially his reference to the Test Matches between Birmingham and Manchester. I don't know how far back J.H's records go back but although the Manchester team was all conquering during the period he mentions, prior to this there were two matches held in Birmingham against Manchester, both won by Birmingham.

The first was in Bromford in Oct 49 and the result was Birmingham 79 Manchester 31.

Scorers were for Birmingham :- Smith 18, Anderson 12 and Halliwell 11 and for Manchester Pennington 9 Grepp 9 and Moston 7.

The second was at Coleshill in Aug 50, which Birmingham won 65 to 53. Scorers were Turner 13, Halliwell 12 and Dorman 8 and for Manchester, Pennington 13, Grepp 10 and Collier 9.

As I remember both were fairly large tracks, but whilst the former was a hard surface the Coleshill track was reached over a small river bridge and was on the "boggy" side."

PETER RANDALL from Norwich still has a number of master tapes of cycle speedway matches taken during 1996/7 and if you are interested in purchasing any he can make you a copy direct from the original. The prices are :- Tape plus 1 meeting £5.00. plus 2 meetings £6.50, plus 3 meetings £8.00. Post and packing £1.50. per video. His telephone number is 01603 - 484857. Any order will be processed within 14 days.

List of meetings :-

Great Britain v Poland 2nd Junior match at Thurrock	8.7.96. 65 mins.
Pride of the East / Norwich G.P. at Norwich.	20.7.96. 80 mins.
London Counties v Leicestershire at Canning Town.	11.8.96. 40 mins.
B.I.C. Junior Final at Astley & Tyldesley.	26.8.96. 71 mins.
B.I.C. Senior Final at Astley & Tyldesley.	26.8.96 87 mins.
Home International Rd 2 at Wimbledon.	18.5.97. 62 mins.
Leicester v Norwich (E.L. Div.1.) at Slater Street.	8.6.97. 50 mins.

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Home International Rd 4.	at Birmingham	6.7.97.	67 mins.
E. Anglia v N. Counties	at Hanford	15.6.97.	65 mins.
W. Midlands v E. Anglia	at Sandwell	27.7.97.	80 mins.
Norwich v Gt. Blakenham	(E.C.L. Div's 1 + 2)	31.8.97.	92 mins
Norwich v East London	(E.C.L. Div 1)	5.10.97.	50 mins.
Leicestershire v E. Anglia	at Slater Street	21.9.97.	58 mins
East Anglian Team Cup	at Gt. Blakenham	7.9.97.	53 mins.
B.I.C. Junior Final	at Leicester	26.8.97.	74 mins.
B.I.C. Senior Final	at Leicester	26.8.97.	89 mins.
B.I.C. Under 16's Final	at Gt. Blakenham	13.9.97.	59 mins.
B.I.C. Under 13's Final	at Gt. Blakenham	20.9.97.	60 mins.

BRIAN MOSTON writes that the MANCHESTER branch of the VCSRA held another successful "booze and chat" evening, on Wednesday 24th September at the Gorton Conservative Club.

"It was pleasing to see many fresh faces among the 40 members present who had not been able to attend previous get-togethers. Among them were :- GEORGE FERNYHOUGH who was a founder member of the Manchester League and an early Secretary of the NACSA and who was making his first visit to a cycle speedway function in 25 years. JOHN BARTHOLOMEW, JOHN WATLING and PETE BURY who all rode for Gorton Pirates in the 1950's. BRIAN MORRISON who started his career with Chorlton Aces in 1950, DENIS McGEE, from the 1948 Hyde Rangers Team and DAVE ROBINSON, who made the long journey from Sheffield.

This was the first meeting since the departure of FRED ASHTONHURST to that great meeting place in the "World Above" and glasses were raised in his memory. Acting on behalf of the British Cycle Speedway Council, BRIAN MOSTON presented the Golden Jubilee Certificate to GEORGE FERNYHOUGH for outstanding dedication and loyalty to the sport.

The possibility of home and away fixtures between the London vets and the Manchester vets was met with approval and a committee comprising DEREK GARNETT, DAVE BLINSTON and BRIAN MOSTON was formed to discuss relevant details."

GOLF DAY

Our Golf day at JOHN HARRHY'S Windmill Farm Hotel and Golf Course at Coventry proved to a successful one. The weather was glorious and at the end of the afternoon the winner of the Ladies competition was DOREEN FRASER and the winner of the mens was former Stratford Hammer, KEN BAXTER. After a few drinks and we had all cooled off we had a first class dinner and we were joined by BARRY BRIGGS with his son TONY and his young lady. Barry was staying at the Windmill whilst arranging his Golden Greats meeting for Coventry, which was, unfortunately called off due to bad weather. Everyone certainly enjoyed the day and we will be doing another one in 1998.

MEMBER'S DIRECTORY.

A directory of members is now available and the cost is just £1.00 plus 25 p. for postage. This is a must for anyone wanting to find out just who our members are and where they can be contacted. One error has been reported to us, we got the telephone number wrong for RAY GINGELL, this should be 0181-543 1179. Sorry Ray !

EVENTS FOR 1998

During 1998 we will be arranging various activities, amongst them another Race Day and as mentioned previously, against Manchester. We will also arrange another evening at Arena Essex Speedway, a Nostalgia evening and a Golf Tournament. As soon as we have more details, such as dates and venues, they will be published in a future TRACK RECORD.