The future of the Track Record

Compiling any form of magazine requires a great deal of effort and the Track Record is very much dependant on the support of the membership of the VCSRA. At the AGM I listened and took note of everything that was going on and noticed that there were some very dedicated committee members acting on the members behalf. I was told how the magazine is probably the single most important reason for being a member and several members like to keep their copies as mementoes of days gone bye. Some members said that it needed to cover activities beyond the 1960's but they must realise that the editor can only publish what he has available.
I use this opportunity to ask all our members to support the fine job that Bill Gadsby does and put forward, for publishing, the stories and memories of their racing days for us all to enjoy. The situation is that if we do not support our magazine we will lose it, so come on all you scribes and story tellers Bill Gadsby is waiting for your articles so tell your friends to send something in now.

Bill Gill

L. to R
.Ernie Lamaq (Poplar Penguins) Ron Holvey (Tooting Tigers), Pete Weston (New Cross Rangers) Tommy Sweetman (Arsenal Aces), George Harrison (Warwick Lions) Vic White (Arsenal Aces), Gus Garratt (Verney Lions) & Joe Goody (Blackheath Aces).

This picture & the one on the front cover from Ron Holvey.

In Loving Memory of

Ernest Edward Lamacq

22nd July 1934 - 12th October 2013

It is with great regrets that I have to inform you, of the passing away of my father Ernest Lamacq on the 12 October 2013, after a short battle with pancreatic cancer.

Ernie lived all his life supported by his wife Marina and his three children Carol, Lorraine and Ernie junior. My dad always enjoyed reading your magazine that was sent to him from England. He would often talk about his days racing and always had the magazine at the kitchen table. Every now and then he would be delighted to see old photos and names that he recognised and it was a bonus for him to even see himself.

Thank you so much for being a part of my father's life as your magazine kept him in touch with his beloved England. At dads funeral we showed a series of Ernie's life photos on the video screen including his cycle days with east London. And at the end we all sang his favourite song "I'm forever blowing bubbles" from his beloved Hammers football team.

Please find attached photos of my father Ernie, one of in his cycling glory.

Kind regards

Ernie Lamacq Junior

Carol Lamacq

Ernie rode for a number of East London Clubs, including East Ham Stars, Regent Rockets, Poplar Penguins, Portway Penguins & West Ham Penguins.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THURROCK

The Thurrock club started in 1957 from the remnants of the old Tilbury Hammers that had finished in the early 50's. The driving forces were Stan Leeds and Bert"Bluey" Waterson and riders joined from other clubs but things were a great struggle. Wishing to get on in the sport Bert Waterson took the club into the BCSF but times were hard and the club left for a while and then returned but numbers and riding ability was always poor. The track facilities were very poor and there was no real driving force to improve.

In 1961 I took on the mantle of Manager and put forward a grand scheme to improve things at the Tilbury track with the construction of permanent concrete lines, safety fence and a general spruce up of everything Thurrock.

A new water supply was brought in to improve the racing surface and new body colours and dress code were introduced in line with the BCSF. Thurrock was on the up and I was very much supported by my late wife and my parents throughout these times.

My desire was to get away from Tilbury to a more desirable site in a public park and when Essex County Council wanted the Tilbury site to extend the school adjacent to the track I seized the opportunity. We still had three years to run on our lease so I put pressure on the local authorities and on March 31st 1968 the club held its opening match at Blackshots , Grays with Hawbush as the visitors and an interval attraction of West Ham Speedway riders .

This was the start of a dream that I shared with my wife Pat and we went on to take the club to dizzy heights. Tiered seating, floodlights a purpose built complex with a fully licensed bar, cafeteria, changing rooms and showers all en closed in a 2 metre high concrete fence, a perfect home for Cycle Speedway.

Things had improved on the track also because gone were the days when Thurrock were underdogs and were very much the team to beat. My son Ian
went on the first Australian tour and really showed his strength and ability and when he returned he became very successful around the tracks and took the British under 21 title in 82. Thurrock were flying and the dream I had with Pat was all but complete. In 1985 Thurrock took the British Senior Team Champion ship and how proud we both were with both of our sons in the team and Pat's brother Dave Beadle one of the leading scorers. Thurrock repeated this in 86 and the membership grew and the future was very bright. In 1989 I received a body blow when Pat died from cancer and all of a sudden my future changed.

I continued with Thurrock and the year before I closed the club we had taken the British Under 15,under18 and under21 Team Championships but still the real driving force had left Thurrock because Pat was my driving force and without her there was no future. Our dream was over and Thurrock closed. A day never passes without me thinking about the Thurrock club and so many happy memories.

Bill Gill

From Les Gustafson

The Home Internationals had their origins in 1949 when the first England v Scotland Test Matches took place, and they continued intermittently for the next twenty years, until the decline in activity in Edinburgh made Full Internationals no longer viable. A significant proportion of these Internationals were staged during the 60s decade, and two of these were noteworthy for different reasons.

The June 1965 Test in Edinburgh was memorable for the entry on to the international scene of a young Roger Ellis, who scored 17 out of 18 points from his rides, being headed across the line only once, by home star Jackie Pinkerton. Roger was head and shoulders above the other participants on the day, obviously taking a liking to the Granton Griffins track at Davidsons Mains, and equalling the best-ever individual performance between the two sides — that of Dennis Botazzi in the inaugural Test in 1949 at Rayleigh.

A small piece in '50 Years of Cycle Speedway' reports that the support of a huge partisan crowd kept the Scots well in the running until the interval, but as reported in the early-July 1965 edition of the Cycle Speedway Record, five consecutive England 5-1 heat scores after the break gave them a comfortable margin of victory.

The other Test was in September 1967 at the Honey Green track, somewhere up a hill in Halifax (most tracks in Halifax were up a hill, or so it seemed). Speedway rider Vic Lonsdale is credited with the introduction of the pedal version of the sport in Halifax in 1965, when Speedway side Halifax Dukes began riding at The Shay (or was it re introduction ? Neighbouring Bradford was one of the sport's earliest centres, along with London and Glasgow, after the war, but Halifax does not seem to have been active at that time). The earliest tracks in Halifax were small and heavily banked, but council-built Horley Green was of a more conventional size and shape, and allocation of this Test was an acknowledgement of how the sport had developed in the town.

The match programme shows that England were as selected, but half of the Scottish side were replacements for programmed absentees, so the Scots did well under the circumstances to run England as close as 59-49 (the difference in the score-line reflected the performance of the respective reserves — England's pair scoring ten points between them to Scotland's nil). Two incidents still remain in the memory — the first was a sublime piece of team riding by the Derek Gannett/Tony Hardy pairing, which effortlessly turned a 3-3 into an England 5-1, and the other was one of the heats involving Bill Savage, which had to be re-run twice (or maybe three times), as all four riders came down on the first bend each time the tapes went up.

England:-

Derek Garnet (Capt.)10, Tony Hardy 11, Vic Hinchliffe 7, Bill Savage 8, Chris Gooch 8,

John Heaton 5, Vin Marsland 6 & John Watling 4.

Scotland:-

Doug Noble 12, John Speirs 5, Tom Daly (Capt.) 13, Doug Bald 6, Don Moir 6,

Jackie Pinkerton 7, Dick Barrie o & G. Clement .

Vic Duffy 22/2/1930 - 19/3/2014

Vic started life in Canning Town, something he was proud of, and never let you forget it. He started with Cycle Speedway in mid-1950's forming East Ham, Stars on the old Ferndale track. He started Welling Wings, south of the river, as a team of youngsters to feed talent into East Ham team. He left the sport for a while whilst working in Herts and Bedford and appeared at Great Wakering. When he moved to Colchester, and joined up with some old pals racing again and helped Denny Winch with the club admin. He started the Colchester team as a mid-week affair and although he finished after his wife died, he kept in touch with me and we spoke often on the phone but unable to get him on one occasion I was informed by his daughter he had moved. A few days later I was informed he had had a stroke and was in hospital. I went to see him and he was more concerned about Terry Greenaway passing away and also wanted to talk about Stratford Hammers, despite having difficulty in talking. He also wished to be remembered to Roy Garnham, but sadly a second stroke was too much for him and he passed away peacefully surrounded by family.

His funeral took place on Monday April 7th and members in attendance included Eric Hemsley, John & Sheila Brown, Bill Gill, Sid & Daphne Pipe, Tony Marsh, Tony Johnson, John Woolnough, Keith Brooks, Janet & Liam Spurgeon, Rick Burling, David Hobson Terry Ashford & Caroline Kruger.

Condolences go to his daughter Kathy and other family members

Eric Hemsley

TRIALS & TRIBULATIONS OF A CYCLE SPEEDWAY SECRETARY.

This article was written by Vic Duffy for Inclusion in the Track Record May 1999

On Monday, after no reply to a previous letter, I walked into the East Ham Town Hall. Obviously, I had no appointment, but I asked to see The Town Clerk on "sporting" matters. I knew that Mr Smith, the Town Clerk, had been a top sportsman in his youth and had been a member of my Dad's boxing club, (which I made sure to mention). Amazingly I was granted an interview.

I told him of the poor state of the cycle speedway track. I gave him a list of many youngsters using the track, pointing out how this helped to keep them out of mischief. I was armed with memos and photos from John Leith, Editor of the Cycle Speedway Gazette. They included Hungerford, Whipps Cross, Hendon, Aston (Birmingham), Victoria Park etc., plus my own designs including an improved drainage system. He seemed very impressed but I wasn't too hopeful when he gave the time honoured reply of officialdom, "I can't promise anything, but I will look into it". I was pleasantly surprised when, just a couple of months later, council workers were building a virtually new track. I could guarantee that the track would be well maintained and in a tip top condition, because I had transferred from my job as Woodsman/Ranger Assistant in Epping Forest to Gardener/Groundsman at Little Ilford Park, where the track was I had hoped to become a Forest Ranger, but there was an unofficial rule of a minimum height of 6ft (life's not that much fun when you're 5ft lin).

Secretaries can sometimes find themselves needed in two places at once. Twice I had to resolve this dilemma.

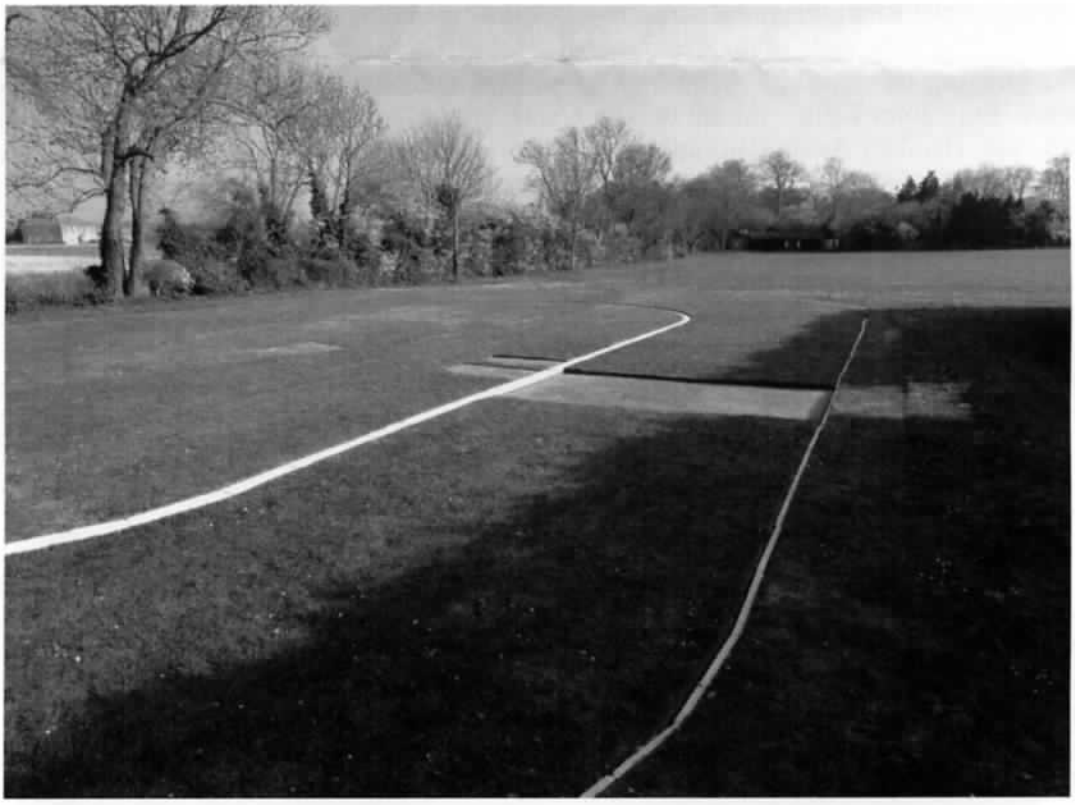
One Wednesday I was due at an important meeting at Ron Bull's Essex league in Romford. However, I received a last minute plea from the fledgling committee of the newly formed (or re-formed) St. Mary's Cray Tigers to attend their AGM the same evening. I left work at Epping at 5 o'clock on my motor bike and arrived at 6 o'clock for a 6.39 start. At 7.45 I left for Romford, arriving at about 8.30, "late again" said someone! Also, having stupidly double booked my Welling Juniors to race Beckenham, I'd also arranged for the young Ferndale team to race against Thurrock Not wishing to let down any of them I arranged to race my races at Welling, I raced four races straight off, then leaving Brian Lucas, the Captain to carry on. I cycled some 6 miles to Ferndale and raced in the last three races. (We lost both).

In those days many Secretaries, including me, didn't have cars or phones. I once had to reply quickly to a letter by phone, but as usual every public phone in Canning Town had been vandalised (quite usual). I had to swallow my pride and ask a neighbour, the only one with a phone in the street, if I could use his. We had had a row over "noisy motor bikes" a few days earlier. So I had to apologise and then ask to use the phone.

From Dave Hunting
Resurrection of the Grundisburgh Bombers track.

The Grundisburgh Bombers track has been resurrected over the past three days after laying dormant underneath the turf of the village playing field since 1980. Most of the kerbing is still in place, together with the starting grid, although the fence, starting gates and hut have all disappeared.

The reason for this work being undertaken is to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Bombers getting to the National junior team final at Leicester in only their second year of racing, quite an achievement for a small village team who were led by the former Suffolk Champion (1957/58) Dave Hunting. In the final it was a match of two halves against Woodside Diamonds, with the nerves of the Bombers riders playing a vital role in the first half, finding themselves ten points down at half time. In the second half the Bombers threw everything possible at the Diamonds, winning the second half by eight points, but losing the final itself by two points, 40-38.



The Track Outline as it is Today.
I personally built the track in 1972, entering the Bombers into the Suffolk/East Anglian League in 1973.

To the Editor. Hello Bill.
I have just picked up and read the January 2014 issue, which has been sitting at the side of my desk for several weeks untouched!

I was very sorry to read the obituary of Terry Greenaway who became a member of the Stratford Hammers, the team I was associated with from it's inception in 1946 until I joined the RAF for National Service in June 1950. I well remember Terry's D R boots which he wore constantly, they were his trademark and probably helped him to become one of our best riders at a time when we were "all- powerful". I was astonished to see the picture of the East London Test Team, including both Terry and several others that I remember, wearing the distinct body colours that I made personally on my mother's sewing machine with the captain's colour on a white background with red design while all the others were the other way round. That they had obviously lasted for at least 5 years, still looking good is quite remarkable. It all brought back some great memories and my thoughts must also go to Terry's family in their loss..R.I.P.

Len Silver

Grundisbrgh Bombers first team squad in 1974.
L/R Rob Smith, Kenny Jessop, Dave Hunting, Ray Smith Mike Hart (Capt.) Dick Smith,

Looking for something to fill a page or two, I went through some old magazines and found one that I had forgotten about:- Middlesex Cycle Speedway News, issue No. 1 Edited by myself and Bob Saunders. There never was an issue 2, although Bob went on to produce many magazines.
I have printed this page in full, not because I scored 9 points as a guest for Bushey, or that I scored 11 away to the Hellingly Lions. Although it was nice to be reminded of this.
I have printed it to correct a mistake after all these years. And it was a mistake (honest)
The result Wembley Hawks 49 Lupset Aces 47. If you add up the individual scores of the Hawks, they only come to 48. Count the number of riders listed, there are only seven. That means the rider not named scored just one point. No prizes for guessing who that was! Mind you if I had not scored that one point, the match would have been a draw!
Bill Gadsby.

RESULTS

Wembley All Stars 61 Tottenham 35.
This was a complete reversal of the previous weeks match, the reason being that Wembley had their old hands back, while Grand Prix winner Wispy Wills was missing from the Tottenham side.
All Stars. Wildman 12, Rankmore 10 A.Fraser 9, Dean 8½, Carter 7½, Hill 6 Bristow 5, Leeke 3.
Kangeroos. Bracey 11, C.Hill 8, Reading 6, Bennett 4, Jackson 3, Lansley 2.

Weston 49 Harefield Pirates 47.
The lead changed hands throughout this match, and with only the nominated to go, Pirates led 46-44, but a 5-1 from Dave Jenkins & Maurey Shaw, turned the match in Westons favour.
Stars. Shaw 15, Jenkins 12, Harvey 8, Cornwall 6, Wildman 4, Pittingdale 3.
Pirates. Punter 10, Norris 8, Seymour 7, Leckie 7, Harper 5, Pearce, Thompson 5

BRICKET WOOD SUSSEX TOUR.

Brighton Scorchers 47 Kangeroos 49.
Held on the Worthing track, the Kangeroos raced a close match with the Scorchers. With one heat to go the scores were level, a 5-1 from Frank Males & Pete Saunders gave the Kangeroos victory.
Scorchers. Goddard 12, Pemberton 10 Makepeace 8, B.Pemberton 7, Reynolds 4, Masser 3, Tilman 1.
Kangeroos. Males 13, P.Saunders 13, Birch 8, B.Saunders 6, Gillett 5, V.Roft 2, Bye 1, M.Roft 1.

Worthing Sputniks 54 Kangeroos 42
Feilding the same understrengh side, Bricket Wood found Worthing a harder match. At heat 10, Kangeroos were only 2 points down, but the Sputniks gradually pulledaway. Feature of the match was a fine maximum by Frank Males.

Tolworth Tudors 65 Tolworth Aces 30
Tudors. Rides 12, White 10, Pearce 10, Little 9, Murdon 8, Kirk 9, Claydon 7.
Aces. Brimson 10, Page 5, Hurley 4, G.Squires 3, Steemson 2, Edwards 2.

LUPSET ACES TOUR.

Lupset Aces, who hail from Yorkshire have been the only team to tour the Middlesex area this year. The Aces are currently lying second in the Manchester League, and have amongst their riders Nick Bedford, who rode for England against Scotland this year.
Bricket Wood Kangeroos 36 Lupset 60
Kangeroos. Gadsby 9, P.Saunders 8 B.Saunders 5, C.Wise 4, Males 3, Gillet 3, Brown 3, Birch 1.
Aces. Johnston 12, Holmes 12, Vickers 11, Ashworth 7, Bedford 6, Wainwright 5

Harefield Pirates 50 Lupset Aces 46
Pirates. Punter 12, Boutell 8, Lester 7, King 6, Seymour 5, Harper 5, Norris 5
Aces. Holmes 13, Bedford 11, Johnstone 7, Vickers 6, Ashworth 5, Turner 2.

Wembley Hawks 49 Lupset Aces 47.
Hawks Boutell 13, Smith 11, O'Grady 7 Dunlop 7, Mason 5, Palmer 3, Osborne 2.
Aces. Vickers 11, Bedford 10, Holmes Johnston 9, Ashworth 3, Shulver 2.

As most of the league teams seem to be too busy for league matches, Wembley Hawks travelled down to Hellingly to give the Local Lions a challenge match.
Wembley Hawks 50 Hellingly Lions 57
Hawks. Gadsby 11, Boutell 10, O'Grady 9, Dunlop 7, Mason 6, Allday 3.
Lions. Page 14, Hollebon 12, Smith 9, Myles 7, Prodger 2, Bettger, J.Smith 2.

* * * * *

TEN YEARS AGO. From the "Track Record" April 2004.

.A Tribute to Vic White

I heard on very good authority that our first and only secretary / treasurer left his post in February this year. I am sad to think that Vic has stepped down as he has done so much for the VCSRA. Vic breathed life into what has become a flourishing organisation which has re-united so many old friends throughout the UK and around the world.

It is true that over the years we have been blessed with a willing and industrious executive committee and some super presidents but all have had the support and at times, leadership of Vic, a man of exceptional talents and energy. I received a call from him in 1996 telling me of the planned re-union at Thurrock and he commenced to sweet talk my wife, Lina, to push me into flying over for the get together, a trip that I was so very pleased to make. The organisation on the day had Vic's hand stamped all over it. What a great idea and what a terrific follow-up, an association of old friends and rivals, enjoying each other's company at the various functions through the years.

Although I am so many miles away, I feel quite close in the knowledge that I am a member of a group whose objectives on the back page of our directory are in keeping with all we hold so dear. We all owe a large debt of gratitude to Vic, for his foresight and limitless energy in keeping us informed, inexpensive and in the black. So from one old Warwick Lion to another, I say thank you to Vic for all his efforts on our behalf and hope that he will continue to be seen at our meetings, on the golf course, the nostalgic nights and the annual dinner and dance.

Sincerely, Ron Tarrant, Calgary, Canada.

As Ron Tarrant says, Vic was secretary/treasurer, he also produced the "Track Record". At the same time he was secretary for The World Speedway Riders Association. It was to concentrate on this that Vic stood down from the VCSRA.

Now ten years later, he has retired as secretary to the WSRA.

The photo of Vic receiving his award from Ove Fundin and the extract below are from the report on the WSRA Annual Dinner 2014 on the WSRA web site. www.world-sra.co.uk

One extra "surprise" award was made when our retiring Secretary, Vic White was given a Lifetime Achievement and Services to Speedway award by the Committee for his hard work for the WSRA over the past 13 years. Vic has done a great job for the Association, organising dinners, lunches, memberships and the magazine, "Opposite Lock",

To show what a great job Vic has done, it will now take several people to fill his many posts.
Peter Oakes now edits the new "Tapes Up" magazine, Peter Sampson and his staff at Paradise Wildlife Park along with the WSRA Committee will now handle memberships, lunches, the annual dinner and the Association's accounts, proving just how much work Vic White had previously taken care of.

1950's Arbour Atoms/Stepney Pirates.

I grew up in London's east end (Stepney) now known as Tower Hamlets, my mother and father owned a local pub. Twelve years of age I was a member of the Arbour Youth Club, I captained one of the clubs table tennis teams at that time. A number of my friends some of whom were also club members told me that they had recently been to watch a local cycle speedway team called the East End Eagles, racing against another local team, and would I like to join them next time they went to watch another race meeting?. YEAH!! That's howl became interested in cycle speedway:

After the racing was over, being cheeky young school boys we asked some of the Eagles riders (most of whom were in their twenties) if we could borrow their bikes and have ago. Looking back, those Eagles riders who lent us their bikes were very kind to us, one rider in particular Stan Allison stands out in my memory. Over time they taught us how to start (gate) and how to negotiate the track at maximum speed.

The next step was obvious to us, how to make our own cycle speedway bikes, being school boys with no income; this was not an easy task. It was back to Stan and his friends to let us have any discarded bike bits and pieces that they no longer required. The finished bikes would not have won any prizes, but that didn't matter we had our own bike.

Now how to build our own track. London's east end was very heavily bombed during the second world war so there were plenty of bomb sites available. One very close to the Arbour Youth Club was chosen. With the help of many youth club members, parents and many more very kind people the track was built. As a token of our appreciation for all the help received from many members of the youth club, it was decided to call the team "Arbour Atoms".

The team now required an administrator, Ron Catchpole my race team partners father William Catchpole, (we called him Bill), volunteered to become our manager, his daughter Jean became our secretary. There's an old saying that one man's misfortune is another's good fortune, in our case the good fortune being the local council confiscating the Eagles track site for a new housing project. I'll explain later.

Moving on, over time the Atoms' team became very successful, and then an unexpected problem, left with no track of their own the Eagles riders asked if they could join us. Remembering they had been our mentors, lent us their bikes and helped us initially to build our own bikes, also they were older and more experienced riders than us. It was not an easy decision to make, they could easily have become our first team and relegated us to a second team which we did not want to happen. The decision agreed on. Four of the Eagles best riders would be integrated into the team, Stan Allison would be our captain and the name of the team would be changed to the: "Stepney Pirates". "As they say, the rest is history".

The above article and pictures were sent in by Reg Dance. Reg has been living in Reading for about 50 years and has lost touch.
Would be interested to hear from any of his old team mates.
This picture shows Reg (aged 13 or 14) leading with his partner Ron Catchpole in third place.
The riders in the Arbour Atoms team photo on the opposite page are L/R. Jimmy Brown, Reg Dance, Ken Crickmar, ? Olson, Ron Catchpole & Johnny English. Reg says that he can not remember the names of the last two riders.
Reg can be contacted at:-
reg_dance@yahoo.co.uk

From Bob Saunders.

There is one match in particular which I remember when we both rode for Wembley. I do not remember who it was against but it could well be the Tolworth match which you detailed.

You put us down as two reserves. In heat 14 it was my last scheduled ride. You decided to come in for an extra ride as tactical reserve. In heat 15 it was your last scheduled ride. You suggested that I should use my extra reserve ride in this. Then came the nominated and you chose yourself and myself. So the same pair rode in 3 successive heats. I don't recall any other occasion in my riding time that this happened. It probably has been done somewhere else, so I doubt that the Guinness book of records would be interested.

Editor note:-

I do not remember this particular match, but I am sure that it happened. It is strange, how one match or team can stay in your mind, when the rest of that season is a complete blank.

One team that came to mind recently, was the Yeiwsley Racers. They had a track in the space between two rows of back to back houses. This meant that the track was very narrow. They did have floodlights, the power coming from one of the houses.

The Roxeth Rockets were riding there. I had the inside gate in heat 1, the gates went up and the two Yeiwsley riders were away, while I was still thinking about it.

Every race was the same, the Rockets left at the gate. The start had to be "fixed", but how?

I watched closely to try to see how it was done. Did the tapes go up after so many seconds? Difficult to get right. Was there something about their starting gate that gave them warning the tapes were about to go up?

This theory was disproved when the eagerly awaited return match was staged at our Kingsbury Circle track. Yeiwsley very "kindly" offered to provide the starter, incredibly Vic (Merner) agreed! So yet again we were left standing at the gate, while the Yeiwsley riders disappeared in the distance!

Paradise Park 16th February 2014.

On the 16th February the VCSRA had a presence at the annual Celebration of Speedway event held at Paradise Park in Hertfordshire. Arriving early on a wind/rain free Sunday morning, with the sun for once appearing from behind the clouds, Bill Gill and Dave Hunting commenced to erect the VCSRAs Promotional Gazeebo amongst the many outside stands. During the day there was a steady attendance at the stand, with many VCSRA members showing their support. Once again several new members were encouraged to join the association, which was certainly a bonus on the day. Many memories were exchanged between the visiting members/public whilst taking a well earned rest on the seats provided at the stand. All in all a very successful day.

Pete Saunders & Bert Harkins lock arms in battle pose.

L/R. Pete Page, Len Kitching, Bill Gadsby, Bill Gill & Pete Leckie.