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**VETERAN CYCLE
SPEEDWAY RIDERS
ASSOCIATION**
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Mike Pretty leads from Brian Legg, Ken Pitfield & Jim Newman.
This photo come from 1960 taken at a practice track we used behind the Bournemouth Football Stadium. The riders are wearing the race jackets of Vickers Viscounts - Vickers disbanded at the end of 1959 then re— formed as Bournemouth in 1960
One of a series of photos from Mike Pretty.

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Rye House invitation to VCSRA Members.

On Sunday 16 August LEN SILVER invited VCSRA Members to be his guests at Rye House Speedway.

23 Members, plus wives and friends attended this event. A very enjoyable time was had by all.

During the Meeting we held a 'whip-round collection' and raised £200.00, coupled to the £75.00 I had previously received it gave me great pleasure to forward £275.00 to Mr. Paul Ackroyd, Secretary of the SPEEDWAY RIDERS BENEVOLENT FUND at SRBF H.Q. at Wood Street, Rugby. CV21 2YX. Many thanks to all those who contributed to this worthy fund, and a special thanks to Len Silver and Warren Scott, (the new owner of Rye House Speedway), for their invitation.

On the day, everyone's a winner! (except Workington Comets!). Len's 'Rockets' beat Workington 'Comets').

Our Members had a good day out. And the SRBF gained a few Pounds!

Malcolm Belchambers (aka Malcolm Bell).

Hon. M/ship Sec. VCSRA.

VCSRA 2014 Directory, additions and amendments. August 2015.

New Members

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DENNIS BOTTAZZI, no longer has a e-mail address.

KEN DARE, — new e-mail address. trudydare57@gmail.com

New Honorary Member

MARGARET READING, 3 Meadow Way, Verwood, Dorset. BH31 6EP.

Malcolm Belchambers

Hon. M/ship Sec. VCSRA.



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8th September 2015

Dear Malcolm,

I am writing to acknowledge receipt of your kind donation of £275.00 following the VCSRA recent visit to Rye House Speedway.

It is very thoughtful of you to consider the SRBF for which we are very grateful. The money will be put to good use assisting our injured riders.

Thank you.

Kind Regards
Paul Ackroyd



Sorry to hear of Jim Cobains passing. I am writing to let you know the names of the riders of the Scottish Team published in the Track Record Issue 3, July 2015.

The team was:-Back row L/R. Maxwell, Wade, Letts & Cobain. Front L/R Orr, Mackie, Gray & Patrick.

The Test Match England v Scotland took place at Maneswood Glasgow on July 13th 1958. The score was Scotland 47 England 61. I was a member of the England team that day.



Back Row L/R:-Dave Stevens (manager) Pete Blackwell, Ron Bull, Sandy McGillivray, Ken Worlock & John Heaton.

Front Row L/R. Alan Harrison Ron Gibbons & Dixie Dean (Capt.)

Alan Harrison, Pete Blackwell & Myself and two friends travelled up by car, it was a long journey in those days from Birmingham to Glasgow before motorways, so we stopped in digs in Carlisle on the first night. Ken Worlock and myself stayed with the Scottish rider Robert Gray and his parents in a tenement, which was very nice, on the night before the match. Mr Gray worked at a Whisky Distillery and gave Ken and Myself a large glass of the product, I was 18 and did not understand drink, but to be polite I took a swig and cried out to much humour when it nearly blew my head off. I think Ken drank the rest.

The same year, England rode against Sweden at the Whipps Cross Comets Track, at Temple Mills on August 16th 1958, the score was England 97 Sweden 35. There were two changes to the England team to face Sweden:- Vic Hinchcliffe replaced Sandy McGillivray who was racing motor speedway and Gerald Kean replaced Ron Bull.

Details of the Swedish team (photo opposite page)

Back Row L/R. Karl Holm (manager), Hans Johanson, Crister Lundquist, Tord Erikson, & Hans Sjoberg.

Front Row L/R. Lennart Kjellin, Douglas Nordberg, Soren Fermelin & Jan Nilsson.

I rode for England a further 3 times :- v Scotland at Carrs Wood, Manchester in 1966 v Scotland, Davidson Mains, Edinburgh 1967 & v Scotland, Horley Green, Halifax 1967.



MALCOLM READING

I was very shocked and sorry to hear of the passing of former Tottenham and Edmonton rider Malcolm Reading.

I initially met Malcolm during the early 1950 whilst I was getting to grips with my new Phillips cycle speedway bike on recreation ground almost adjacent to my house, he called out and beckoned me over to him, I became aware of him sitting astride a stripped down cycle with a four wheeled barrow tied to the rear of his bike that contained a dog. We got chatting and he told me that he rode for Tottenham Kangaroos, I informed him that I was rider manager of Edmonton Saints and gave him my address for future reference. Within eighteen months he contacted me stating his desire to ride for my club.

I invited him to our forthcoming AGM which he gladly accepted which in turn led to his enrolment to the North London club, one thing that sticks in my mind of the said meeting was when I informed members that I was writing to top pop singer Alma Cogan asking if she would be president of the club. As we moved on through the agenda Malcolm called out from the rear of the hall "Why are you writing to Alma Cogan?", and before I could answer my second team manager Vic Cowell replied off the cuff "To ask WHY DO FOOLS FALL IN LOVE" this was Alma's smash hit at the time. We had a laugh when I mentioned this incident to Malcolm at a VCSRA dinner at Paradise Park.

Roy Delaney



The Swedish Test Team v England August 16th 1958.

RON WOOLEY 25/ 7/ 1931 —12/ 7/ 2015

Sadly our old friend Ron Wooley passed away just 13 days short of his 84th birthday. Ron was the first captain of Tooting Tiger Cubs when they were formed in late 1948, Ron remained with the cubs until the end of 1949 when he moved to the Tigers. We did not see a lot of Ron in 1950 due to National Service, but always got a place in the team on his rare appearances. Ron was a regular member of Tooting Tigers in 1951, sharing in all their successes. Ron retired at the end of 1952, he was certainly missed, such a happy cheerful disposition. Ron was a much valued member of the team, so solid and reliable, an asset to any side. In those early years Ron was a regular at Wimbledon speedway, and in recent times a keen supporter of AFC Wimbledon. Ron had another passion, jazz and played the trumpet with a few like minded friends. Ron led a group back in the sixties and has been in group somewhere ever since. Ron also played at the Exmouth club in Stepney among other places, I am pleased to say I heard Ron on many occasions. Many cycle speedway vets including Ron met in Wimbledon every other month, for lunch and a chat. Ron often spoke of Gina, his sons and the grandchildren, he was very proud of his family, and having met them all at the funeral I could see why, such a lovely family, Ron will be sadly missed by us all.

Ron & Kath Holvey, Ron & Anne Johson, Danny & Doll Daniel, Len & Liz Kitching, Martin & Eve Willgress & Ken Dare. Attended Ron's funeral.

RON HOLVEY

1951

Away to Langley Leopards
Ron Wooley on far left.



John Livings

It is with sadness we announce the passing of John Livings. He had the loving care of his family to help him through his long and tragic illness.

To Eve his wife, David and Stephen his sons and all the family we send our condolences.

As a leading member of the Stratford Hammers from its formation in 1947 John became one of the most successful riders in the home counties. He captained the East London test team and, for Stratford Hammers was one of the best.

I will always remember John's quiet unassuming manner that disguised a highly competitive nature that was determined to win at all costs.

Roy Garnham
(Captain Straford Hammers 1947/52)





My thanks to Les Gustafson for the article on pages 8&9 it comes from the "Boys Own Paper" from October 1949.

The two riders in the action photo are Don Mahony with Ray (Roy) Rogers on the inside, both Kingsbury Lions. It was "staged" for a photo session in January 1949, prior to the "Ghost Match" between Wembley and Hollandse Welpen. The picture was published by the Sunday Pictorial. The other picture shows Mrs Mahony (mother of Don), the Lions formidable manager.

Below is an extract from a (very) long letter from Jim White, castigating the Wembley Council for not assisting in preparation of the track.

After riding for the Kenton Hawks in the 2nd division I joined the Kingsbury Lions for the 1949/50 Winter Season.

Shortly after the start of the 1950 Season, Mrs Mahony lost interest when her son and several other members of the team were called up for National Service. Rather than let the team fold, I took over as manager and filled the vacant team places with "my" former "Hawks".

At the start of the 1951 Season, the Roxeth Rockets having lost their track, their manager, Vic Merner asked if they could use the Kingsbury track, and if any of our riders would be interested in riding for them, before long the majority of the team were former Hawks.

This meant that more or less the same riders, were Kenton Hawks in 1949, Kingsbury Lions in 1950 and Roxeth Rockets 1951/2.

When I returned to cycle speedway on completing my National Service, the Rockets had lost the Kingsbury track and were riding at Hendon and were now calling themselves the Wembley All Stars" (Although they did not come from Wembley and were not all stars!)

A large Garage and service Station was built on the Kingsbury Circle site. I was offered a job there, it was quite a good offer, and I quite liked the idea of working on the site of my former track, I never did, when I went to hand in my notice, I got a better offer, so I stayed put!

Bill Gadsby

To the Editor

Sir,—I have lived in Wembley for 15 years now, and it was not until Saturday that I felt ashamed to admit it.

From a spectator's point of view, the international "shadow" cycle speedway match at Kingsbury Circle was a highly successful meeting, but for each of the nine heats I suffered a thousand agonies! I knew just how the riders felt on a track that is a disgrace to the nation.

It is not generally known, but four tons of cinders were laid down during the past week, but the absence of rain, and the point blank refusal of the local Council to hire to us a steamroller, necessitated the cinders being removed before the meeting commenced.

That the lads shifted over two tons in an hour is to their credit; the fact that such a course had to be taken was a disgrace to the borough, for two of the lads who helped to shift it were riding in the international match, representing their country in general, and their borough in particular. That they were tired is no excuse for the slow times on the Kingsbury track. They have ridden before with every limb aching and still won. I am very reluctant to admit it, but the onus must rest on the local authorities.

Such a match as this, with the many Press representatives and newsreels present, to say nothing of the record crowd, was just a little too big for us. We needed some official help; help like the Dutch lads have from their local authorities. It pays dividends too, for the Dutch riders' times were 31 seconds faster than our own.

SKID-KIDS!

It's tough! It's exciting! It's Cycle Speedway! LESLIE BELL, well-known speedway writer, introduces B.O.P. readers to this new sport which is capturing the imagination of young cyclists all over the country



THOSE two wheels that you tucked away in the corner of the shed because they were a bit out of true; that old frame you hung on a nail on the garage wall. Rusted, is it? Never mind. Get it down, shake the dust off those two old wheels and start fixing together the nuts, bolts, and bearings cones. Dig down in the junk drawer and bring out that old school jersey, thick stockings, your oldest pair of football boots and that battered old scrum helmet.

Then, when you are fully booted and spurred and mounted on your junk machine, get outside and join in the sport that is sweeping the country from Land's End to John o' Groat's.

Cycle speedway racing really got under way at the end of the war, the main centres of activity being in the badly bombed areas and towns. Here, among shattered ruins, boys, their ages ranging from five to eighteen years, cleared the bombed sites, and brought order out of chaos. They also brought—cycle speedway!

On these ruined grounds, by many hours of toil after school or working hours and at week-ends, they built speedway tracks, exact in detail, miniature counterparts of the oval, senior tracks. A few pioneers started it off, matching their speed and skill against each other, riding on a variety of surfaces. One day fine, powdered dust—the next, after rain, skidding and slithering on a treacherous mud surface.

It was not long before other boys, their imagination fired by the sport, joined in their hundreds and soon the friendly rivalry was responsible for team organization. Within a short time, village rode against village, town against town until, to-day, the sport is now on an international footing, country riding against country!

Many cycle speedway tracks are now expert jobs, hundreds of tons of cinders having been transported by the various teams and carefully spread. In one instance, enthusiasts have built a miniature stadium, replacing the former viewpoints of nearby trees and walls. And it has been built by the boys themselves!

Few boys to-day are ignorant of the rules governing the senior sport of speedway racing. Cycle speedway operates in exactly the same manner, with four riders in a heat and with a three- or four-lap circuit. Equipment is simple, but must be strong enough to take severe punishment.

Riding gauntlets for the hands, a crash helmet of sorts to protect the head, the very oldest but thickest of clothing, and, for the feet, many teams are using old football boots, minus studs. But there is no hard and fast ruling. Some boys I know wear ordinary boots, with cloth or sacking wound puttee-fashion around the legs. Others prefer gum boots or waders.

EACH team has its own colours and emblem, adopted in the main from senior teams. Club colours usually comprise a breast cloth made at home, and all are registered with the Control Board of the region.

Much hard practice is necessary to qualify for a team, for competition is strong and the standard is high. Usually, team members can be identified by their similarity of riding style to some senior speedway star, whom they have studied very carefully. The machines themselves can be built up from parts previously discarded for perhaps trifling reasons. But here, the cheapness and ease of operation is at an end.



A crash seems certain as two young 'skid-kids' take a dangerous corner at high speed on the Kingsbury track in London

England to ride in a series of matches, the first being at Rayleigh where the speedway manager of Rayleigh Rockets had laid down a special 120-yard track. Now, there is talk of Scotland challenging England and the North opposing the South.

IN the ears of every boy racing around his home-made track on his stripped-down push-bike, there is the sound of snarling, "revving" engines . . . the swelling roar of vast crowds. . . . Does this dream ever materialize? It has—it does!

On a tiny, muddy circuit near Wembley two years ago I watched some lads slithering around the bends. Five months ago I saw one of them again. This time it was different.

"Buster" Brown, a slim, gleaming figure in black leathers on a shining new speedway machine, brought sixty-three thousand people to their feet as he hurled his roaring bike into the bends, fought it out and up into the lead while the vast Wembley Stadium echoed with wild cheering. Behind me, in the press box, somebody said, "He's only seventeen and a half; used to be a 'skid-kid'. There goes a star in the making!"

This young draughtsman has made the grade. So, too, can you. If you are interested, write to me c/o B.O.P for the list of regional controllers, who will send you all the information you require.

The maintenance of your machine may be quite an expensive item, regular replacement of spokes and tyres and sometimes of the wheels themselves, being necessary. Fixtures have to be organized, and expenses paid for "away" meetings. Some clubs operate a weekly payment scheme to enable boys of limited pocket-money to draw funds for these purposes.

This keenness has proved itself. Many stars of the senior speedway come along to give tips, some of them actually to ride a push-bike on the track. Yes, cycle speedway has come a long way. So far, in fact, that in May a Dutch team, the *Hollande Welpen* (Little Dutch Lions), came to,

With the expert guidance of their manageress, these riders are giving their machines a last-minute check before wheeling them out to the track for the next race



From: LES GUSTAFSON

World Vets Final

The forerunner to the main World events at Wednesfield took place at Leicester on Friday 7th August, and featured several finalists from previous World Open and Vets events, including reigning Vets Champion Steve Harris.

Australia were represented by Brad Hoppe, taking a day off from his duties as Team Manager of the Australian Touring Party, and ex-pat Paul White, who was a GB International before emigrating Down Under. Those two riders had finished 2nd and 3rd, respectively, in the 2011 Final. There were no Polish participants in the Final - which is not really all that surprising as they have hardly been doing the sport long enough to have many veteran riders, and sadly no Dutch entries, as it is at least ten years since any rider from that country took part in any World event. The rest of the field was made up of riders from the four Home Nations.

Craig Marchant put down a marker in the very first heat by beating Steve Harris into second place, and took another significant win in heat five, when he kept Gavin Parr behind him. Gavin was already shaping up as the other likely winner, and after three rides each the leading scorers were Craig on 12 points, Gavin on 11 and Steve Harris level with Key Bums on 10 - the latter appearing in his first Senior Final of any kind, according to the Match Programme.

(Note for any Vets: the 4-3-2-1 scoring system adopted years ago often causes confusion and messy programmes for anyone used to filling them out in the old way).

First and second positions remained the same after four rides, but Steve had nosed ahead of Key into 3rd place by a point.

Heat 17 saw Craig Marchant looking to secure at least a place in a run-off for the title (second would take him to 19 points, which only Gavin Parr could equal if he won his last ride) or ideally, a straight win to give him maximum points and outright victory - but facing Craig in the heat was Gavin's Northumbria team-mate Jason Keith, who was obviously going to do all he could to ensure that such a run-off would be needed. And Jason went into the lead as the tapes went up, but Craig's sheer speed and local knowledge saw him past Jason and gave him the 20 points he needed for the title. Gavin duly won his last race, to finish runner-up on 19 points. Steve Harris had looked good to join them on the podium, but an unfortunate last ride saw him overhauled for 3rd place by Key Burns on 16 points.

The trophies - courtesy of Dash - were presented by Leicester Speedway Promoter, Dave Hemsley, himself no stranger to Cycle Speedway titles. Craig was dominant on the day, but spare a thought for Gavin Parr, whose Northumbria club didn't exist until three years ago and which didn't have a track until eighteen months ago.

The pace might sometimes have been a little slower than that seen two days later at Wednesfield, but there was no lack of effort and commitment from the Vets, as their scrapes and bruises would testify on Saturday morning. Scotland's Lee Lawrence had to withdraw early from the meeting after a bad fall.

British Vets Team Finals 15th August

GB Vets had scarcely any time to recover their breath and rest their tired limbs after the Leicester World Individuals before being called up again one week later for the British Vets Team Finals at Hull.

Most of the names which had figured prominently on the score-sheet at Leicester were on parade at the Humberside track, taking part in two semis and a final, using a four-team format. Steve Harris made up for the disappointment at missing out on a podium place in the previous week's Individuals by top-scoring for Poole in the Final with an unbeaten 16 points, but he couldn't hold back the strong Leicester quintet tracking Steve's successor as World Vets Champion, Craig Marchant, and Key Burns, who had taken 3rd place behind Craig.

The racer who had split those two Leicester riders on the Worlds podium one week previously - Gavin Parr - was also busy, taking part in two run-off races - the first one to put Northumbria into the final at the expense of Kesgrave, and the second one in the Final itself to secure the Bronze Medal for his side.

Leicester were convincing winners on 52 points, but a blanket could have been thrown over the other three finalists, with Poole runners-up on 37 pts, Northumbria third on 35 pts and Birmingham also on 35 pts but relegated to 4th by the run-off with Northumbria.

Oldest man in the Final (?) Northumbria's VCSRA member Terry Kirkup, seen on his debut in 1967 in the photograph below.



BRITISH VETS FINALS AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEK-END IN SUFFOLK

In the Over-40 category Gavin Parr and Craig Marchant renewed their rivalry from a few weeks previously, with Gavin coming out on top this time to take the title. Steve Harris joined them on the podium.

The Over 50 winner was Edinburgh Lee Lawrence, thankfully recovered from the injury which forced him to withdraw during the World Vets Final. The Birmingham duo of Steve Hodgkinson and Paul Timms were second and third respectively.

Why do we need a promotional display. Originally to promote interest in early cycle speedway history. Now because of the imminent retirement of the whole of the VCSRA committee we need to appeal to those members of the current cycle speedway community who have done a wonderful job of keeping the sport going all these years and who have recently retired or are now approaching retirement who would enjoy keeping the VCSRA going for another 20 years.

The idea of secretary Colin Booth in the spring of 2008 it was hoped that the display would promote interest in the origins and history of cycle speedway and attract some new members. The set of 6 boards were collected from Pete Chubb's workshop in July. They were furnished with a preliminary display for the 2009 VCSRA Dinner/Dance at Bulphan Essex. The first full display for the general public was at the Celebration of Speedway event at Paradise Park on Sunday 21st February 2010. They don't appear to have had the desired result.

In the autumn of last year the last action by Dave Hunting as a member of the VCSRA committee was to suggest that we should have 3 more sets of display stands made to be permanently stored for display at big events at 3 big centres of cycle speedway, Poole in Dorset, Wednesfield in the Midlands and at Tyldesley Greater Manchester in the North East. It is believed that Dave intended to visit these centres and arrange and man the displays himself. Sadly the time and resources that Dave could offer us are no longer available and Bill Gill our current Secretary accepted the task of arranging for manufacture, furnishing the display material and delivering them to their respective centres. Members from the different areas will have to be relied upon to erect and man the stands at the big events. Interested members who would like to help organise VCSRA activities in their area should contact Bill (Tel. No. 01255 813476) who will co-ordinate if necessary. One panel section has been left blank where local news and notices of events can be added.

Bill collected the panels from the workshop of Pete Chubb (Hawbush Hammers) in late July and after some frantic work by Bill and Colin Booth they were ready for the first delivery on Sunday 2nd August. .



Above. VCSRA Stand at Poole, Peter Courts is seen having a serious discussion on the far right.

Above Right. A stand pictured in Bill Gill's Garden - side 1 All about the VCSRA (on the reverse cycle speedway 1946 to 1996.)

Right. A gathering of veterans in front of the VCSRA stand, on the far right Ken Dare from South London. Can you name any of the remaining veterans?.



Bill left his home in Clacton, Essex at 6am and after picking up Colin on-route they arrived at the idyllically located Poole track in Harbour Park just before 11am. in time to erect the stand and Gazebo before racing started

Manning the stand during the meeting, the Ladies World Individual semi-finals in the morning and the Junior & Senior World Team Cup finals, between England, Poland, Wales and Australia in the afternoon with Poland taking the honours.

It was a successful afternoon for the VCSRA, 3 membership renewals were collected and 2 membership forms handed out to prospective members, not overwhelming but big things can grow from small beginnings. Both had an enjoyable day, Bill renewing old acquaintanceships and Colin witnessing a full cycle speedway meeting for the first time since 1960.

On the following Sunday, the 9th Bill again left Clacton with the rising sun, this time unaccompanied and with 2 sets of 6 boards in the back of his car he made the 4 hour drive to Wednesfield for the Finals Day, the Ladies Individual followed by the Junior & Senior World Individual Finals.

Bill reports that plenty of interest was shown by members of the large crowd. Subscriptions were taken from 2 new members, a few commented that their area held the occasional gathering/reunion and Veteran *Andy Franks* donated a large box of redundant Body Colours to the Association. Bill was able to pass a few on straight away to interested collectors but the committee would be interested to hear from any member as to what we could do with the rest!

It was also suggested by a couple of members from areas not covered by our current plans that a set of boards for their area would be a good idea. *On reflection Bill & Colin's response to this was that any further displays would be limited to 2 Sections to minimise the costs and transporting problems.*

At Wednesfield a visitor to the stand from the Anglia area, Terry Ashford offered his services to man a stand at the Ipswich finals weekend. Bill willingly agreed to deliver our original stand that resided in his garage in Clacton to Great Blakenham on his next trip to his caravan in Norfolk. In time for the Saturday meeting. Terry further agreed to move the stand onto Kesgrave Sunday and Ipswich on Monday were Bill would meet him for the British Individual Finals.

Bill was also happy to reported that as arranged he was able to hand over the 3rd set of new boards to Mike Hack for delivery to the Tyldesly Club.

And finally on Bank Holiday Monday Bill rendezvoused with Terry Ashford at the Ipswich Eagles track as planned for the British Individual Finals. Terry commented that there had been plenty of interest in the associations display on the Saturday and Sunday and that maybe we could expect a few new members! Bill had yet another nostalgic day and returned home together with our stand satisfied that as much as possible had been done to promote a healthy future for the VCSRA.

Bill & Colin's Conclusions. *From our observations there seemed to many veterans associated with or members of the clubs in the various areas visited sufficient in fact to support a VCSRA Secretary, if each area agreed the post could be filled on a yearly rotation. The areas could continue to arrange their get together's, endeavouring to put notice or reports in the Track Record and in the event of the position of the editorship of the Track Record becoming vacant gather and collate the material and arrange for the printing and distribution. Computer literacy would be a great asset but were sure most veterans could enlist the help of a younger relative. The current administration has reached that point when the VCSRA's future is in your hands!!*

EAST HAM STARS by JOE BARRETT



Let's get going with the background history of the formation of East London cycle speedway.

After the war (WW2) in 1945, there was a lot of bombed out areas especially where I lived, in Plaistow near the docks in London. We had survived the blitz but now the clean up started. Nobody had any money to spare so we had to make our own entertainment from whatever we could find or dream up.

West Ham speedway started up, the stadium being very near where I lived. It was exciting to watch, when we could afford it, otherwise listening to the roar of the engines and our imaginations of Eric Chitty or Malcolm Craven getting another win for West Ham Hammers, especially after the restrictions of wartime. The kids soon wanted to race against each other and we first started to use old bike wheels to race around a makeshift track, hoopla style. We soon found out that the use of a skimmer made up of stout wire on a bare rim tyre-less wheel was much superior to the paddle stick that some kids had, and then the use of an all round ring skimmer instead of a hooked type, also that an Endrick rim was easier to control

than a roadster rim. Funny how quickly we learned these things, even though we were very young, and also we had to burn off the energy somehow. There was not much traffic in those days, so we made up a track and raced in the street. There were a few busted up bikes about as you could imagine, after the bombing. We used to pillage around the old Beckton Road dumps to get what we wanted. Nobody could afford to buy a bike so we scavenged what we could from the mangled wrecks. The Beckton Stars had formed themselves into a team (1946) riding on a track at The New Beckton Road, later the A13 arterial road. We would go to watch and soon everyone wanted to get into a team, though we were a bit young for the Beckton Stars.

So we made up bikes from the bits and pieces from any old wreck we could find. We soon became expert bike mechanics, a skill which has served me well to this day. We learned how to straighten up buckled wheels and even made up the tyres lapping pieces cut from old tyres under the worn out holes in the best tyre. We started to build a track along the Old Beckton Road, now renamed Tollgate Road, I believe. This was about 1949/50. Soon we wanted to make up a proper team and called ourselves the Beckton Panthers, if you could make up, or borrow a bike you were in. Riders names I remember were, in addition to myself;- My brother MK(Benny) Barrett, Billy Egglestone, Reg Harris, Peter Hudson, Dick Clarke, Bob Pike, Albert Lovelock, Cohn Hill, Ron Gibbons, Jackie Butler, Mick De-Courcey, etc. Team manager was Doug Goodgame, who was Billy's brother-in-law. I was elected Captain, I don't think anyone else wanted the position.

Things were moving quickly and it didn't take long (After a couple of seasons) we became friendly with another group called The Ferndale Stars and we amalgamated as the East Ham Stars, riding at the Femdale track adjacent to the Docks at Cyprus Place, Now taken over by the Docks Authorities, One of the riders was Ken Barrett, same name as my brother, which was why we had to refer to my brother as Benny.

I was elected captain of the new team and a few of the Panthers had stopped riding.



MK(Benny) Barrett in action with Ernie Lamacq.
Top picture Joe Barrett getting ready for action.



EAST HAM STARS 1959.

L/R. Norman Lillywhite, MK (Benny) Barrett, Joe Barrett (Capt.) Ernie Lamacq, Ted Walker, Unknown & Johnnie Halloran. In front Vic Duffy.

In about 1952/3 I was working at Poplar High Street and noticed a group laying a track along the High Street, Opposite Robin Hood Lane, I used to go along after work and help them and became friendly with the Captain, Ernie Lamacq. I fancied riding for them as they were a top class team (Portway Penguins now renamed Poplar Penguins, therefore aka The Penguins). So I got a couple of rides before I went in for national service (in May 1953) and a couple of times on leave possibly because of helping them by working on the track. While I was away my brother MK (Benny) Barrett was made captain of the Stars in my absence.

After national service (1955) I resumed with the Stars and again took over the captaincy.

After Poplar Penguins disbanded (about 1957), Ernie Lamacq, Ted Walker, and Johimie Halloran came over to the Stars. Other riders I can remember were: Ken Barrett, Norman Lillywhite, Johnnie Attfield, Jimmie Palmer, Mike De-Courcey, MK (Benny) Barrett, Reg Goode, Sid Wilson, Vic Duffy, Dave Stichman, John Wright, and Billy Kielly etc

The Ferndale Stars became like a second team and sometimes rode as the Beckton Panthers, using the Panther colours , I guess while the first team rode an away match. This is possibly why they are shown in the cyclespeedwayhistory.org website picture wearing the Beckton Panther colours.

I retired in about 1961, Ernie went to Australia in about 1960, and Ted and Johnnie Halloran stopped about the same time as me. The Stars disbanded in 1965, with the remainder of the riders joining up as the Newham Hammers riding at the Little Ilford Park track.

Many of the Stars have now passed away, Ernie Lamacq traveled from Australia for Johimie Halloran's funeral, showing the respect between all the Stars riders and all the supporters, which is a fitting tribute to the team spirit and character building that this sport develops in the young generation. Johnnie Halloran, Ernie Lamacq, Ted Walker and Vie Duffy have now all passed away, we shall always miss them, sometimes with a smile at the antics they got up to.

Meopham Monarchs from: Fred Pallett

Meopham Monarchs competed in the Kent League during the 1950s. The VCSRA has been contacted by Bill Stanley, who believes that his late father was involved with the Monarchs and is keen to establish his father's exact role. To this end, he has supplied the following two photographs to assist in his search.

The first photograph shows a group of Monarchs riders at the 'Railway Tavern' in Meopham in 1952. Bill Stanley's father Reg Stanley, wearing dark rimmed glasses, is seated near the front.

This second photograph shows Reg Stanley standing to the left of a tractor and float representing the Monarchs in the 1953 Meopham Carnival. Seated on the tractor driver's lap is none other than Reg's baby son Bill Stanley.

Bill states that, at the time the photographs were taken, his father would have been in his mid to late 50s. It could be assumed, therefore, that he was unlikely to have been a rider, so perhaps he was the Monarchs' team manager. Also, Bill's father possessed a lapel badge for the National Amateur Cycle Speedway Association, so it is possible that he could have undertaken a wider administrative role in the sport.

Anyone who can shed light on Reg Stanley's involvement with the Meopham Monarchs or a possible wider administrative role, or who can identify any of the riders in the first photograph, can contact:- Bill Stanley at 21 Hampton Crescent, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 4TH

(Tel: 07751 705222), or by email at billstanley579@gmail.com

