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RECORD

I am sad to hear that the Track Record will be no more. It has been a great means of staying in touch and remembering those post war years when we all tore round the nearest bomb site. Even now, the picture of the Tarrant twins in the latest issue brings back those wonderful friends I met when I joined the Warwick Lions. I also met my late wife, Lilian there and I can honestly say that my life was changed enormously for the better as a result.

I do hope that there will be some young lads or lasses who will be keen to keep the connections running by relieving us octogenarians of the task. Well done for your work to keep us informed.

John Goldsmith

.Bill, Thanks for sending the latest 'Track Record'. I was very sad to learn that there will be only one more issue: I always look forward to receiving and reading the Record and re-living past memories. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the hard work you have put into editing and producing the magazine in recent years. You have done an excellent job and deserve the heartfelt thanks of every member.

Robin Martakies.

Was horrified to hear that the next "Track Record" would be the last. I suppose it had to happen, but none of us thought it would. The magazine is a huge credit to you. I am writing an article that I will send to you shortly, with four photos, (pages 4-6)

Bill Punter seems to be representing Britain, but I have no idea where or when. You can ask your readers in the next edition, but you will not be able to print their answers!

Bob Saunders.



I am so disappointed that the demise of the Publication is nigh -what a shame but I am afraid it is the story of so many organisations these, days which do not seem to attract the younger generation eg Masonic lodges, Rotary groups, school old boys associations to name but a few.

.Now back to cycle speedway, one final item I can offer is about the Forrest family well known in West Yorkshire for their involvement in motor sport. I knew Robert as a cycle speedway rider in the Bradford/Halifax area and his middle brother Alan may also have ridden but went onto motor speedway at Halifax and Odsal but it is fair to say he never broke any records unlike eldest brother Arthur. There was also a sister Jean who was a stock car racer and suffered in her career with a serious leg injury possibly resulting in amputation. Turning back to Arthur, he was my hero at Odsal at the height of his career around the 1950's and my best memory was going to Wembley for the 1956 World final when he finished in third place. Winner was Ove Fundin, second Ronnie Moore and Arthur Forrest third after a run off with Peter Craven. Great night of memories for a 14 year old! He retired in 1959 at the age of 26 after Odsal had closed and spending a season or two with Coventry. Arthur died in 2000 aged 68.

Tony Emmott.

Many thanks for the latest Track Record, which was very good as always. Thank you for your hard work over the years. I fully understand the message, we are all getting older and time always wins. I was 79 yesterday and I am now quite disabled with multiple health trouble, but you just plod on.

I spent over 20 years riding and building tracks and running clubs, so I know the situation. I am probably the only Midlander who took the time to attend some of Association events. One at Rye House Speedway and one at Hackney Speedway. At Rye House, Len Silver put on a buffet for us and we had reduced entry at both tracks. I really enjoyed meeting the London based members and some of their wives, and had long chats with a lot of them at Rye House. I met Stan Stevens, whom I rode against, when Barkingside Cobras visited Birmingham on tour.

I can remember how proud I was, when I was first selected for Birmingham, we rode and beat Coventry on the Alvis Motors track in Coventry. Of course I got the same feeling, when first being selected for England v Scotland, Glasgow 1958.

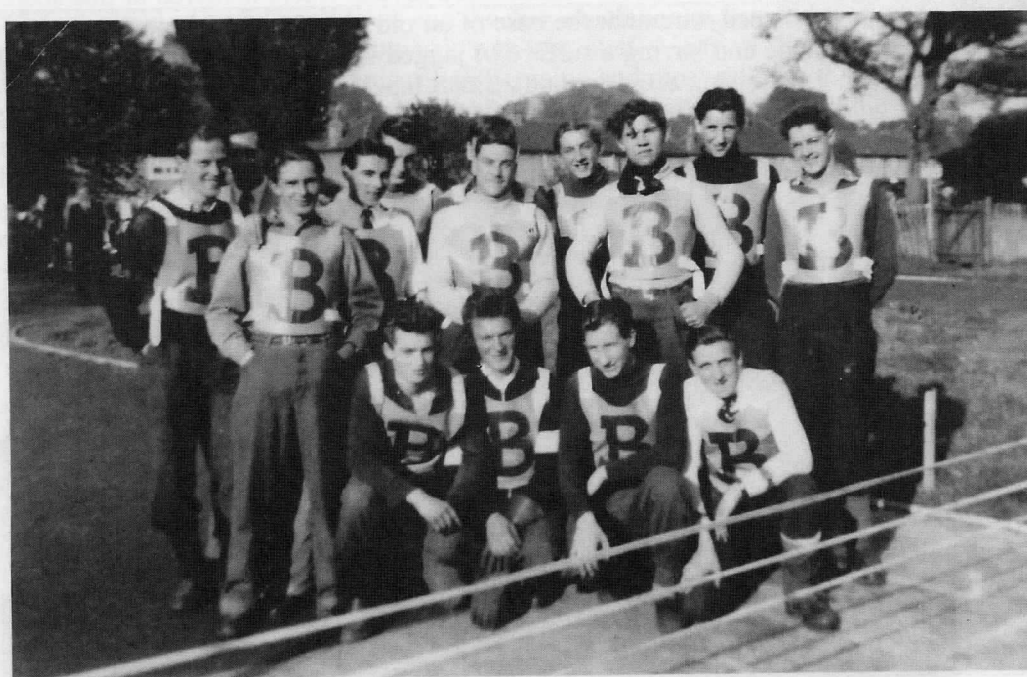
I was lucky enough in my career to race for Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton test teams. Never to be repeated?

Finally looking back at my 20 years in Cycle Speedway and given that we wore no helmets it's a wonder there were not more serious accidents. The sport now under British Cycling, must wear helmets as they should be a must.

Please find enclosed a donation of £20 and a photo that you may use .

The photo is Birmingham A & B Test teams, most members are Birmingham Lions or Kingstanding Monarchs riders.

John Heaton.



Standing L/R. Vic Halliwell, Harold Smith, Ray Goode, Ewie Edwards, Pete Dorman, ? , Roy Shirley, ? , & Graham Hancox.
Kneeling L/R. Gerald Kean, Archie Holyoake, Archie Wilkinson & Tony Rake.

FAREWELL HAPPY TIMES

I picked up the October edition of The Track Record with the usual feeling of nostalgic pleasure. Then I had a sinking feeling in the stomach which remained with me for the rest of the day. It said that the next issue would be the last.

We thought it would never happen, mainly because we never actually thought about it. The Track Record was a part of life. Each time it arrived we were taken back to those happy days of cycle speedway racing long ago. Long ago it may have been, but it has never really left us. We don't race round the tracks any more yet we still think of ourselves as riders. It is inbuilt. The bug has never really gone. This is why The Track Record has been so important to us. It gave us so much remembrance of times we do not wish to forget.

For this we have to thank the Editor, Bill Gadsby. When he produced the Cycle Speedway Star in his riding days, he could never have known that later on he would produce another magazine on the subject which would run for 22 years. Congratulations, Bill, on your dedication. I first met Bill in 1957 at Bushey and his enthusiasm for the sport has hardly waned since then.

Recently, Ron Watters, Roy Tuthill and I, together with our wives, had a reunion lunch. Ron travelled over 100 miles each way to be there. It is this cycle speedway bonding which keeps friendships forever.

I often think of how it all started, but my first glimpse of cycle speedway brought no interest whatsoever. It was at Peckham Rye in the early fifties. The track looked well laid out, was fenced and attracted a good crowd. But I took no notice as I was only interested in collecting bus numbers at that time.

We had a track in our back garden though it was certainly not a cycle speedway track. It was more like a scrambles track. Overtaking was difficult and anybody coming into contact with the thick trunk of an Oak tree did not race again for some while. There were several riders involved at this stage and we tried moving to a speedway shaped circuit at the base of an old disused gravel pit. It was not satisfactory, however, being on a slope and having a surface of jagged stones. We now considered ourselves a cycle speedway club with fund raising activities and a smart lapel badge.



Bob Saunders (White City), leading Vic Duffy (Newham) and Terry Russel (White City)
At Whie City 1967.

One day I strolled into a grocery shop in Rickmansworth. It happened that a man in the shop was Eric Branch, the Treasurer of NACSA. He saw my badge with the wording :-
 "Kangaroo Cycle Speedway Club" "Which Kangaroos?" He asked. "Just Kangaroos," I replied.
 "You must have a proper name such as, for example, Tottenham Kangaroos," he said.
 And so the Bricket Wood Kangaroos came to be born.

Somebody discovered that there was a track at Harefield. We challenged Harefield Pirates to a friendly. We all cycled the 10 miles on our track bikes. Most of us fitted a brake, but not all. Going down Scots Hill at Rickmansworth was a bit hairy because of its 1 in 8 gradient with a tight bend at the bottom.

We arrived to find a league match underway between Harefield and Uxbridge. None of us had ever seen a match before. We were shocked by the speed out of the gate and the hell-for-leather pedalling along the straights. Pete Leckie explained that it was due to gear ratios. We knew nothing about this and had normal 18 tooth road bike ratios, except Pete (Saunders) who was lucky to have a 20 sprocket. A lesson had been learned and we were better prepared for our next friendly against Langley Lions (Stevenage)

All of us had cowhorn handlebars. They were regarded as an essential ingredient of a track bike. Most cycle speedway riders had gone over to Canadian bends, though not all. Gradually our riders started to go over. I was quite late in making the change. I remember a match when I was riding for Wembley Hawks against Uxbridge. I was trailing in third place behind Roger Seymour and Johnny Unsworth. They were team-riding to perfection with Roger on the inside and Johnny on the out. On about the third lap Roger decided to take a wide sweep into the bend and cut back close to the inside line coming out. I could hardly believe the gap that appeared in front of me and I dived into it. Roger then came back towards the inside line not expecting to find me there. He cannoned off me and into his partner. Both hit the deck. Back in the pits Roger was losing no time in blaming my cowhorn handlebars. I did change them shortly after this.

Sometimes we raced in awful conditions and the one which comes to mind was when Wembley visited Chessington. The rain absolutely fell down. It was torrential. Many of the riders did not want to race. Eventually we decided to give it a go. It was hardly racing and most riders just wanted to get it over with. We were totally drenched. I cannot remember whether we actually completed the match or whether we called it a day around heat 14 when the result was clear. We clambered back into my 9 seater Ford transporter, glad to get a roof over our heads. We threw off some of our soaking clothes and commenced the journey home. The windows soon misted up. The rain was coming down so hard that driving was dangerous. I somehow missed the Kingston Bypass and eventually ended up near central London. We were lost. Then we saw a policeman sheltering in a shop doorway. Frank Males offered to ask him directions. We watched Frank go up to the copper – forgetting that he had no trousers on.



Terry Russel (White City)

Leading

Dave Stitchman (Newham)

At White City 1967.



Was it a con? I still cannot make up my mind about Len Kitching. I had just resigned from Wembley when Len approached me suggesting that I joined Raynes Park Tigers. He said that the riders were new and he was the only one with experience. I would be a valuable second experienced rider. I agreed to join. Within a week or two of my joining Len then left to return to Tolworth. It seemed as though my presence was the excuse he needed to leave – a put up job. Upon reflection it could be argued that he did an honourable thing in ensuring that he had arranged a replacement for himself and not left them in the lurch. Fair enough.

In the end both of us were happy. Len was always a Tolworth man and he was back in his comfort zone. I think I can say that my 2 years with Raynes Park were probably the most enjoyable of my cycle speedway career. I had no organisational duties and all I had to do was race. I was fortunate to be paired with Tony Johnson who had a knack of being able to hurl round the outside on the first bend. Many times on the bend I would look across to see Tony alongside. There was a little social life at the club too and on Monday evenings a good contingent would assemble at Wimbledon Speedway, especially Paul Richardson who rarely missed.

In these times girls rarely raced. In fact the only one I remember was Carol Martin of Greenford in the Middlesex Independent League, which operated on Summer evenings for juniors only. On one occasion in a match v Hendon, Mick Honour deliberately rammed Carol on the first bend, knocking her off then falling on her. He was excluded, of course, but deserved much more punishment. I was not pleased.

So the memories keep flooding back. How can we ever forget them? The Track Record stimulated these memories so its closure must be unhappy for us all. My very good wishes go out to everybody who has ever been connected with cycle speedway. Farewell.



Ernie Norris (uxbridge) leading Len Kitchen (Tolworth)

BOB SAUNDERS

Guardian & Gazette - April 11th 1996 – Waltham Forest Feature The Founding of the VCSRA

The boy racers who felt the need for speed

IT IS 50 years since the first Skid Kids flocked to makeshift race tracks on East London bomb sites.

The lads with their stripped-down bicycles have grown up, acquired respectability and moved all over the country in the years since.

But at heart they are still enthusiasts and this year have formed The Veteran Cycle Speedway Riders' Association to celebrate the half-century of their sport.

The first Skid Kids were boys ambitious to become motorcycle speedway champs but too poor to afford fancy machines or the petrol scarce in the post-war years.

They formed teams with dramatic-sounding names like Warwick Lions, Stratford Hammers, Whipps Cross Comets, Fyfield Falcons and Edmon-

Pat Stannard recalls the days when lads who were too poor to buy motorcycles stripped down pushbikes and headed for the racetrack.

ton Devils.

And they formed leagues, acquired devoted followings of fans and battled it out every year for a set of cups and trophies.

Cycle speedway was so popular that one entrepreneur tried to commercialise it and hired a circus tent in Ilford to promote events.

The craze was strong for at least a decade, then slowly died off.

It was certainly past its heyday by the 1960s.

The Skid Kids survived on their personal memories alone until three years ago when a reunion dinner was planned for 40 former members of the Warwick Lions and Stratford Hammers.

We previewed the occasion with a feature in the Guardian Gazette and Independent newspapers – and 32 more ex-Skid Kids asked to join in.

It has escalat-

ed since then.

The president of the new Association is Len Silver, who was involved in the first East London League in 1946 and went on to become a professional and all-England team manager.

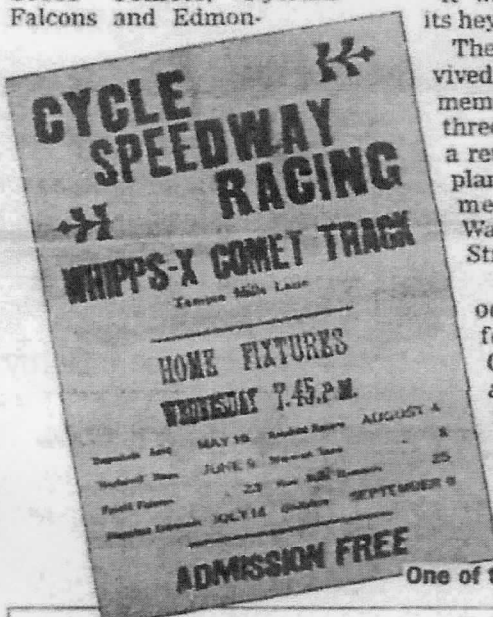
He now runs the successful Silver Ski holiday company and is promoter of Eastbourne Speedway.

Vic White, who later managed Leicester Speedway, is secretary and treasurer.

And the committee comprises John Brown on Chingford – who has loaned us some of his photo collection for this article – Roy Garnham, Alan Catley, Ken Taylor and Stan Stevens.

Vic White has offered to sponsor a cycle speedway day at Thurrock in the summer to celebrate the 50th birthday and there will be a dinner dance in November at Bulphan, Essex.

If you remember the glory days and would like to join the veteran's association, write to Vic White, 90 Ruskin Avenue, Long Eaton, Nottingham, NG10 3HX.



One of the posters from yesteryear advertising fixtures

A GOLDEN ERA FOR LEICESTER "MONARCHS"



LEICESTER "MONARCHS" 1963.

Back row L/R. Barrie Peel, Colin Warren, Paul Smith John Knock & Mick Harvey.
Front row L/R. Grant Warwick, Harry Glover (Captain on bike) & Wilson Burns.

The 1960s was a very successful time for the "Monarchs" as can be seen below:-

1964 British League runners up.

1965,66,67 British League Champions.

1965,66 Gold Cup winners.

1965,66,67 British Combination League Champions.

1968 Speedway Argus Cup winners.

The "Monarchs" were the first British team to beat De Hollandse "Welpen" on the Hilversum tarmac track and the first team to beat Edmonton "Monarchs" on the Montague Road tarmac track.

The team were unbeaten at home for a number of years and the riders had considerable individual success amongst them being :-

Harry Glover - 1964 British Riders' Champion.

Grant Warwick - 1967 British Riders' Champion.

Ken Adams, Grant Warwick, Wilson Burns all won the Under 21 Minors Derby.

Ken Adams, Harry Glover, Grant Warwick all won the Pride of the Midlands.

Ken Adams won the Cycle Speedway Gazette Cup.

Harry Glover won the Pride of the East.

The club was instrumental in the formation of the Northern Premier League. The intention being to attract the top northern and midland clubs and to introduce track standards and dress codes to rival the English League.



L/R.
Grant Warwick,
Ernie Randle,
Bruce Heath
& Dave Butcher

While I agree with a lot of John Smith's article [Track Record Vol.22 Iss.3] the north and Scotland did have some great riders in Derek Garnett, John Watchman, Tam Daly, Dougie Noble, etc and teams Blackley "Flyers", Offerton Devils, Sighthill "Hammers", Ecurie Alba, etc I feel that the Leicester team and some of their riders were a match for them. John must surely agree that they were the best team in the midlands at the time.

Finally I would just like to say that I am so glad I discovered cycle speedway. The sport took me to places I would never have dreamed of going too. It was a golden era with numerous local leagues still in existence as well as the British League and the National championships. I made lots of friends and hopefully not too many enemies. I was with Johan Koudijs a few weeks ago and surprisingly we often discuss the "old days". Johan thinks there were no real enemies, as following a match we would usually end up in a pub drinking with our rivals.

GOLD CUP WINNERS 1966.

L/R John Knock (Captain),
Colin Warren, Steve Corley,
Harry Glover, Grant Warwick,
Wilson Burns & Bruce Heath.



Thought you might like these two photos for the last edition of the Track Record.



Lea Valley Knights in the early 1950s
L/R. Dick Money, Alan Scrase, Dereck Avery, Pete Kempster, Charlie Crason, Terry Denton & Ernie Skinner. On the bike is captain Bob Andrews. Think photo was taken at Whipps Cross.



Lea Valley Knights and Warwick Lions in the early 1950s.
L/R. Derek Avery. ?, Charlie Grayson, Terry Denton, ex West Ham Speedway rider, ?
Was probably at the Warwick Lions track, think the speedway rider is Eric Chitty.

Terry (chub) Denton.



Very interesting to see the photo on the cover of the last Track Record showing Barry Shapley in action in 1965. I attach a photo of Barry some 13 years earlier in 1952 racing at Nacton Airport riding for Ipswich Vampires. Barry rode for the Vampires while stationed at Ipswich Airport on National Service in the RAF.



The team photo was taken at Claydon Greyhound track in 1952 and was for the League cup final, it shows L/R an official from Lowestoft, Brian Hurren, Des Blowers, Barry Shapley, Margaret Elmer, Don Corcoran, Ron Bagley, Roger Elliott, Mr. Booth Manager, C Jolly, by the smiles on their faces it was taken before the meeting as the Vampires lost by 2 points. Ron Bagley, who passed away in early 2018 aged 80, went on to ride speedway for Ipswich and Sheffield, before returning to manage Ipswich Speedway. Ron was British Cycle Speedway Champion in 1955.

DON CORCORAN

My name is Larry Read (now aged 83). I am the younger brother of Chas Read (now aged just short of 85) I also took up the sport at the same time in 1949, but I retired in 1957, while Chas retired in 1963. Chas has asked me to send you an extract of a letter I sent him on 3rd September 1952, it described a cycle speedway race meeting that took place at West Ham Speedway at Custom House. I hope it is quite amusing.

(Note that I was 17 year old at this time!)

I can also email you some pics of some races and team photos from the 1950,s era.

CYCLE SPEEDWAY EVENT AT WEST HAM SPEEDWAY

I rode at West Ham last night. The new idea is to have a 12 heat match with 8 riders aside who all have 3 races each. The Warwick Lions rode against Southall Hammers. I rode for the Lions as 9th Man. About half way through the match Joe Jennings flopped out. I took his place in the race and won it by a ¼ of a lap.

I rode your track bike with a 44 x 16 gear. After I won the race three or four of the team borrowed your bike. They all won except Allen Steffe who was unlucky to have the chain off while he was in the lead. The Lions just won by 6 points.

In the interval we had a race riding the wrong way round. We thought it would be simple till we found out that the wrong way round meant sitting on your handlebars and riding the bike that way. 3 Southall Hammers came first, second and third. We all thought it was a put up job. The Southall mob had been practicing for 3 weeks.

Then we had a mass start. There were 18 riders at the gate. All shoulder to shoulder. I finally got into the first bend in about 6th place, after I ripped 4 spokes out of some blokes wheel with my pedal. Down the back straight I came into 4th place. 3 blokes riding shoulder to shoulder were in front of me. I went round 2 of them but I could not catch the one who came first. I came second and Jimmy Veal came third.

We three got silver cups. Came home feeling very smug.

Larry Read



Chas Read at Wells Street Common 1956.



Larry Read at Wells Street Common 1956



Warwick Lions at Andrews Road 1952.



Start at Wells St. Common 1956.



SOME DAY I'M GOING TO WRITE THE STORY OF MY LIFE.

Going through all the boxes and folders of memorabilia, has brought back a lot of Memories, so I have decided to write about some of them. This is mainly for my benefit, but I hope that some of you may find them interesting. Originally they were going to be several pages, but as contributions finally came in I have had to leave some out.

Looking back, if it had not been for a phone call, my cycle speedway would have finished in 1950. So I would not have had another 15 years or so of riding, would not have joined the VCSRA, been editor of the Track Record and would not be writing this!

The phone call came from Vic Merner, manager of the Roxeth Rockets, he said they had lost their track, and if we were no longer using it, could they use ours. He was enquiring about the Kenton Hawks track in Northwick Park, but when I said the Kingsbury Circle track was available, he went for that. He gave me the date of the first match and said that if I or any of my former riders were interested in riding we should come along. So I went with my former team mate Johnny Huth, we tossed up to see who got the one available team place. I lost!

The next match was away to one of the Ruislip teams, this time I had a place at number eight. I remember the match as if it was yesterday, I came third in my first ride, was winning my second ride, but being race rusty, did not pick up my pedals properly coming out of the last corner, lost momentum and was pipped on the line. Won my third race easily enough. Was in the nominated race, but came last. Considering I had not ridden since August the previous year I did not think that I had done too badly and hoped that I had done enough to earn a team place. Vic obviously thought that I had, as next match I was number one! Three weeks later when Terry de Barba was called up, I voted in as captain. After a few months, for one reason or another, there were only three "Rockets" left, Keith Lawrence, Roy Garland and Roy Twitchen, the remainder of the places filled by ex "Hawks". As Bob Saunders says in his article, this was my happiest time in cycle speedway, no managerial problems, just turn up and ride. I am not sure how successful the team was, but it was a happy team, on and of the track.

Vic Merner persuaded Roy Garland and myself to join him for lessons at the "Guy Hayward School of Dancing in Harrow! Neither of us got the hang of it and left after a few weeks. The reason for the lessons was that the Rockets were holding a Grand Fund Raising Dance. It was quite successful, our President, Wembley Speedway rider Eric Williams accepted our invitation to attend, come to think of it, that was the only time we ever saw him.

The Roxeth Rockets were invited to open a new track in the Bristol area, I do not remember who the team were, or where the track was, but you could see the Clifton Suspension Bridge. The match was broadcast live on BBC radio. The photo opposite has the stamp of a Bristol Evening paper on the back, so would probably have more pictures and a report, but I can not find any trace of it on the British Library website. Not that I would particularly like to see the report, as the match was a disaster for me. Although it was not actually raining, it was a damp, miserable day. Going out in heat one, I pulled on my handlebars as the tapes went up, a handle grip came off in my hand! For the next race I tried fixing it on with adhesive tape, but of course being damp, it did not hold, so the same thing happened! Trying in the next race not to pull too hard, I was of course left at the gate. So any report would probably show me with "null" points.



L/R. Tom Brown, one of the four former members of the Kenton Hawks/Kingsbury Lions.

Keith Lawrence, one of the three original Roxeth Rockets, if the team is lined up in riding order, I am surprised to see him here, as when I joined, he was the Rockets top rider.

Den Kirby, was one of the original Hawks from 1948, was one of our top scorers until lured away by the Kingsbury Lions. He lived in one of flats above the shops next to the track. So when he finished his National Service, seeing there was still cycle speedway there, got his bike out and came over to have a go and soon had a place in the team.

Roy Twitchen & Roy Garland, the two other original Rockets.

Alan Gibbons, the only "foreigner" more on him below.

Brian Shuttleworth & Bill Gadsby the other two Hawks/Lions.

I am not sure how Alan came to join the team, (I must have run out of Hawks/Lions!) He had originally ridden for the Shaftsbury Broadbides. Almost from the day he joined, he was on at me to join him in taking up speedway. Eventually I agreed, so we bought a bike. Alan had a motor bike and side car so we strapped the bike on and with me on the pillion, we set out for Rye House fortnightly. You read about modern day training schools where not only is there tuition in riding, but on bike maintenance, life style etc. Here we got nothing, not one word of advice or assistance of any kind. You just turned up, paid your money and when it was your turn you rode round for a few laps. Alan kept telling me that I was improving, but that was probably just to keep me going on! I did not think that I was making any progress, so when National Service, called I called it a day. I did hear that Roy Garland had a go on the bike and wrecked it, but I am not sure if that was true.

I did mean to continue riding cycle speedway, so on my first weekend leave, I was back in the team, but somehow seemed to have lost the hang of riding, I am not sure if this was because of the different exercise of "Square Bashing" or lack of concentration I don't know, but after a couple of more matches I decided it was not fair for someone to lose their team place, so I decided not to ride until "Demob" day. When that finally came the first person I saw was Vic Merner and three days later I was riding for the Wembley All Stars!



Edmonton Saints 1958.



L/R. Grant Warwick, Dave Collins, Len Adams & Bruce Heath

From: L GUSTAFSON

Following on from the photo of Frank Auffret in the last issue, after a few laps at both Heckmondwike and Northumbria he made his Vets debut by jumping in with both feet at the Vets Season Grand Finale at Leicester (must have been 1970 when he last raced there - in fact he had raced Speedway in the city more recently than that, when he rode for the Lions at Blackbird Road later in the same decade). The attached photo has him on Gate One, with 2017 World Vets Champion Norman Venson on Two (no pressure there then).



From the Euro-Vets website.



We could not resist turning the clock back to 1968 or thereabouts with this shot of our motley or more appropriately on this occasion, mottled crew from that era.

L/R Fred Rothwell, (then Woodside Diamonds, Halifax)

Leslie Gustafson, (then Saltersgill Saints, Middlebrough , Newcastle Vikings)

Frank Auffret (then Saltergill Saints, Middlbrough , Newcastle Vikings & Trow Lea Mariners)

Terry Kirkup, (then Trow Lea Mariners, South Shields & Newcastle Vikings)

Ashie Patterson (then Newcastle Vikings)

Les, we need to see you on a bike again next year!

Just received the sad news that Brian Makepeace died on Christmas Day aged 80. Brian rode for Brighton among other clubs and managed Southampton Saints for many years. He was also a committee member with BCSF and English League.



Southampton 1967 (?)

Back Row (L - R): Colin Wheeler; Graham Davis; Brian Makepeace; John ; Peter Hobbs
Front Row (L - R): Clive McCormick; Dave Butcher; Bob Wyatt; John White

Directory Amendments, Jan 2019.

WILLIAM GILL. – c/o/a, 35, Warren Lane, Stanway, Colchester, Essex. CO3 OLN.
Mobile No,0749 872 6526.

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JOHN HEATON – bheaton70@gmail.com

DON CORCORAN – Son's e-mail. – acorcoran25@btinternet.com

Malcolm Belchambers, Hon.M/ship, VCSRA

End of the Road.

When I received an invitation to a "Grand Cycle Speedway Reunion" in October 1965, I thought why not produce a special edition of the "Cycle Speedway Star". Although I only had a lap top, I typed out an article from each edition and printed out about 20 copies to give out.

Even after I was asked to Edit the Track Record, I was still thinking about the possibility of reviving the "Star" as a nostalgia magazine. Then at the 2004 AGM, when Eric Hemsley made a few comments about the magazine, all of which I agreed with. (It was his idea to put the index on the front cover.) Chairman Derek Cattle said that they intended inviting me to the next committee meeting to discuss it. The discussion went like this:- Derek "You're the editor, edit!" giving me a virtual free hand to do whatever I liked.

Although I had produced a couple of editions on my computer, it was not up to what I had planned. I bought a new computer, which came with Microsoft works and a combined printer and scanner. I was ready to go! I increased the number of pages to twelve and the articles and photos came flooding in. So much so that Colin Booth suggested increasing it to sixteen pages. (Thanks a lot Colin!) This was a serious error, there was no reason why all the articles should go in the current issue, anything other than an obituary could be carried over to future issues.

I said at the beginning, that I would like to do the magazine for ten years, and that is when I should have stopped, contributions had dropped off, and it was suggested that there was no need for the magazine and that everything could be done on the internet. So when in 2014 the hard disc became corrupted, and the computer would no longer produce the magazine. I did not need a new computer, so saw no reason to buy one. Eventually the committee very reluctantly said they would pay for it, if I would continue with the magazine. This model was never satisfactory, it did not come with any software, you had to pay £79 per year (which I charged to VCSRA) for Windows 365, which would not do many of the things that the free version of Microsoft Works did. Again when the printer packed up a year or so later, two members donated £50 each towards the cost rather than the VCSRA. I estimate that producing the Track Record for the last sixteen years has cost me well in excess of £1000.00. Not just the cost of two computers and three printers, I bought software, books, folders, printing paper etc. When I cancelled my subscription to the British Newspaper Library, I was shocked to find that I had already spent £358.75 looking (unsuccessfully) for articles for the magazine. I must say that I was very disappointed that the Association was so reluctant to contribute to the cost of THEIR magazine.

So now it is all over, I must admit that it has been getting harder over the last few years, so no more struggling to find something to fill a few pages, searching the internet, looking through old magazines. One of my problems has been that I never learnt to type, so all this is done with two fingers! I still get hand written contributions that need to be deciphered and typed out, but if someone has taken the trouble to write, the least I can do is to include it. Also if I had learned to type, or knew someone that could, I have dozens of duplicated magazines where the print has faded, so that you could not scan them into the magazine, but they were still readable, so if someone had the patience to retype them it would have made some interesting contributions.

So now it is all over, the committee decided to pull the plug, so there will not be "just one more " In one way it is a relief , (especially as the computer is playing up, and I was worried that I would not be able to finish this last issue.) but I am sure that I will miss it. So thanks to all the members who have supported the magazine over the years.. It is nice to know that some of you have appreciated my efforts.

So to all members Happy New Year.

Goodbye to you all.

BILL GADSBY

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**91ST ANNIVERSARY OF
 SPEEDWAY IN THE UK**
 at Paradise Wildlife Park - Home of the National Speedway Museum
SUNDAY 17TH FEBRUARY 2019
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