

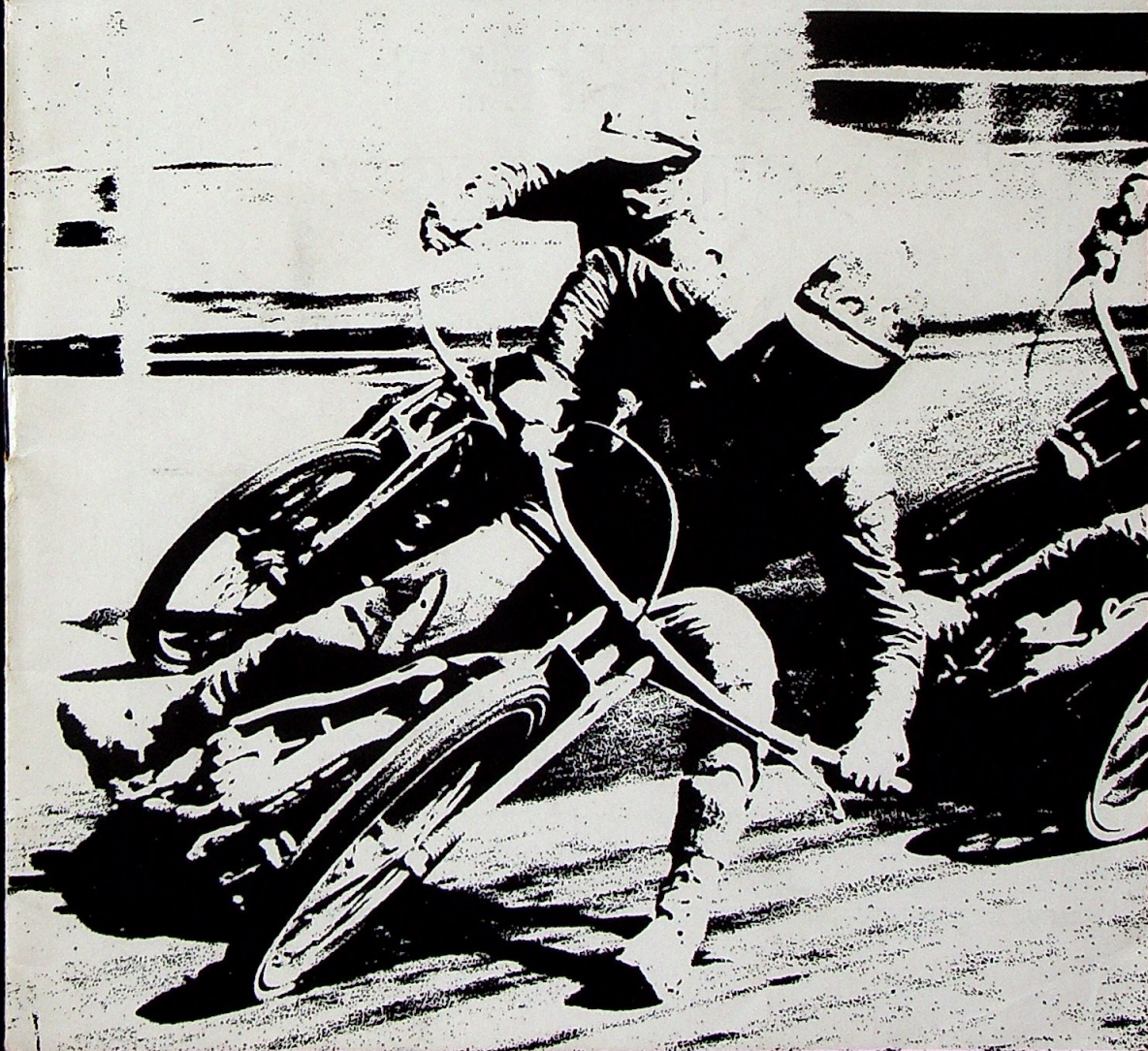
1966

WORLD SPEEDWAY CHAMPIONSHIP

SPONSORED BY THE SUNDAY MIRROR

EUROPEAN FINAL WEMBLEY STADIUM

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 3rd 7 pm.
OFFICIAL SOUVENIR PROGRAMME 2s.



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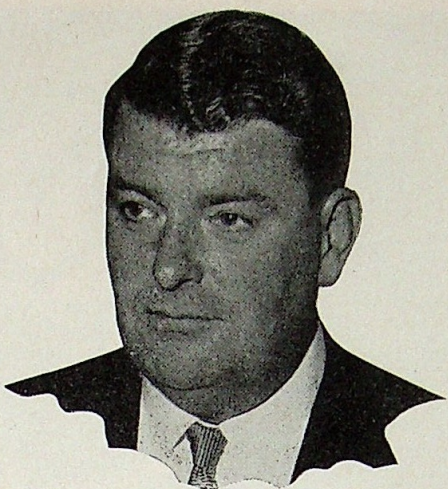
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OVERSEAS CHALLENGE STRONG

By Nelson Mills Baldwin
Chairman Speedway Control Board



NOT even the World Final will produce a more cosmopolitan and international field than the sixteen riders who compete for European Championship honours here at Wembley Stadium tonight. We have three Englishmen, two Scots, two New Zealanders, a Norwegian, a Russian and, rather significantly, no less than seven Poles, with an Englishman and a Czech in reserve.

In the Continental Final at Slany, Czechoslovakia, only the outstandingly brilliant Russian star, Igor Plechanov, who, of course, also rides here tonight, could break the Polish stranglehold on the eight "admission tickets" for Wembley. The measure of Plechanov's achievement was that the one Polish star eliminated to make way for him was Zbigniew Podlecki, who was European Champion in 1964 and a member of Poland's World Cup-winning team last year!

So not the least fascinating aspect of tonight's meeting will be to see how our home contenders will face up to our visitors from behind the Iron Curtain.

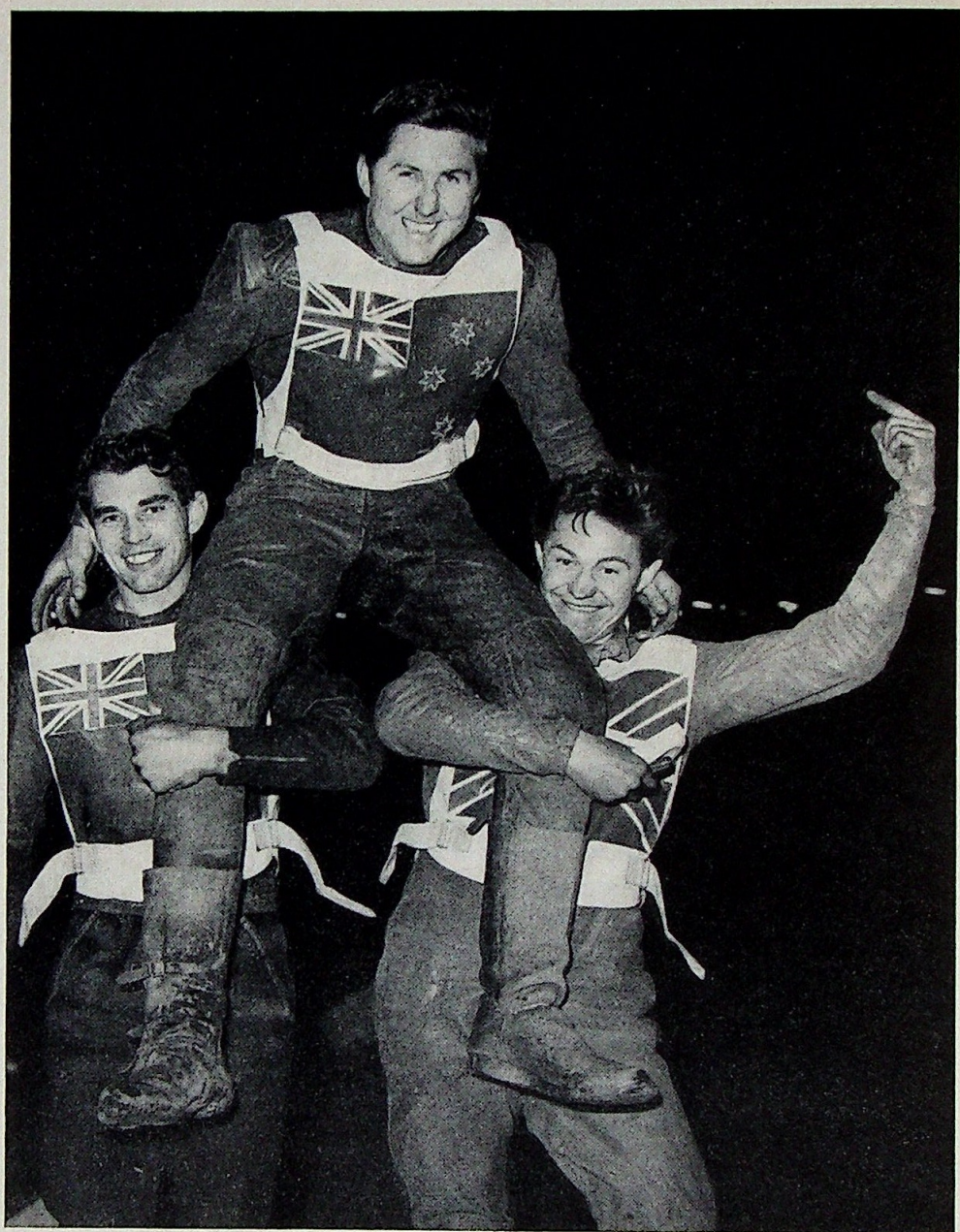
This has been a year of consolidation for British Speedway. The nineteen-team British League is producing great competition with—as I write—Coventry, Swindon, Wimbledon and Halifax looking the strongest contenders for honours. Attendances may occasionally have been a little disappointing but it is a measure of the grip this sport has on the British public that so many people have flocked to the tracks despite the tremendous counter-attractions this summer on the football and cricket fields of this country. There is every indication that 1967 will be better yet for speedway.

But to return to tonight. I would like to express on behalf of the Control Board, our warm appreciation of the continued efforts and sponsorship of our friends from the "Sunday Mirror"—the newspaper which has done more for the sport than any other in this country.

And I would like to thank too the Speedway Promoters' Association led by Chairman Mike Parker, the members of his Management Committee, and their Secretary Dave Stevens; and the Riders' Association, under the chairmanship of Jack Biggs with Ray Cresp as secretary.

Everything which could be done in advance to make tonight a success has been done. The rest is up to the riders and I am sure they will not let you down. I wish them all the best of luck.

NELSON MILLS BALDWIN, Chairman of the Speedway Control Board, is a London solicitor and a member of the Committee of the Royal Automobile Club. A North-country man, keenly interested in most sports, he earned a Rugger blue with Cambridge in 1941 and 1942. Served with the Navy on North Russian convoys until torpedoed off Murmansk in 1945.



Don't drop the Nordic – British Champion, boys !

A triumphant Barry Briggs is chaired by Ivan Mauger and Nigel Boocock after winning the Nordic-British Final at Owlerton Stadium. The final reached a thrilling climax in the last heat of all with the two Kiwis, Briggs and Mauger, each having won their four previous heats. So everything was on Heat 20—and with Mike Broadbanks also in the race, neither Briggs nor Mauger could afford to relax a second. In the sequel, Briggs crossed the line first with Broadbanks second and Mauger third to make the final score: Briggs 15, Mauger 13 and Nigel Boocock 12.

HOW OLD IS A VETERAN?

ASKS GEORGE CASEY

Sports Editor of the Sunday Mirror

THE old guard. I've seen that phrase used in connection with speedway riders off and on ever since the last war.

It puzzles me. I never know whether writers mean that riders have been in the game a long time or have become long in the tooth.

I picked up an old programme the other evening. There it was again. The old guard. The reference was made about the Polish stars—Marian Kaiser, Pawel Waloszek, Konstantyn Pocijkowicz and Stanislaw Tkocz.

The oldest one of these four musketeers is, I think, thirty-four years old. That's Konstantyn Pocijkowicz. Marian Kaiser is nearly a year younger.

Why does age have to stamp a man who rides speedway? Pocijkowicz isn't old. Kaiser certainly isn't.

We've had some brilliant stars in England who were entitled to be called grand-dads. They were almost twice the age of our Polish friends when still showing the way to the lads.

The great factors in the making of speedway riders I was told by the old maestro, Jack Parker, were weight and height.

He maintained that around 10st. 7lbs. was the ideal weight and 5ft. 10ins. the maximum height.

And if you study the really greats of the game you'll discover that they all came within these limits. Perhaps an exception to prove the rule is Barry Briggs, who is made more like a middle-weight boxer than a speedway rider.

But his bulk is not neglect of training. I've known him to train with the Chelsea

footballers. He's hard. He's tough. He realises the value of body fitness.

In the main this is the one department of the sport where the Continentals have the edge on us. They realise that ability can be useless without good physical condition.

Of course, some riders are lucky. Height and weight problems do not bother them. Jack Parker was one. The late Peter Craven was another. Vic Duggan was another natural.

Mention of Peter Craven brings me back abruptly to the subject of the tigerish Polish opposition our men face in the *Sunday Mirror*-sponsored European Speedway Final this evening.

I have read much this season about the Polish team which visited us and made a fine impression on the fans up and down Britain.

But in relating their rise to world strength little, if any, attention was paid to a long-forgotten tour of Poland by a British team.

I went to Poland with this party in the autumn of 1960. Peter Craven, Bob Andrews, Ken McKinlay, Brian Elliott, Nigel Boocock, Ronnie Genz and Cyril Maidment were riders.

To me that five-match engagement in ten days in places as far apart as Wroclaw, Nowa Huta, Rzeszow, Rybnik and Lesno was the sign of things to come in speedway from Poland.

Ted Flanagan, then Oxford now Cradley Heath, was manager of the England team.

Sudden discovery in the 1966 season that the Poles are fearless and natural riders rather makes me laugh.

veterans

Ted Flanagan knew what their lads were like way back in 1960. So did Ken McKinlay and Nigel Boocock, who are in tonight's final.

The whole pattern of speedway racing in Poland was an eye-opener.

Each track was either controlled indirectly by military authority or a large business concern, which was more or less state-controlled as I understood it.

The riders did not have to provide their own machines. These were found by the clubs, who ran the various teams.

Tyres? No bother. On some tracks I saw piles of old ones which, I reckon, some of our riders would be glad to have for use now.

Mechanics? Hordes of them. Seemed to me like one mechanic to one rider.

How different it was with the England team, as the Poles so proudly printed on their pre-meeting posters and their programmes.

Joe Crowther, the Coventry back-room "boy", was our party's only mechanic. One man for seven riders! But I must confess that help was offered on some of the tracks visited.

All Peter

And what a sight it was for the eyes to see above-ground pits, sloped runways on to the track, so that pushers-off were rarely needed, and welding apparatus in the pits ready for instant use.

It wasn't surprising that the so-called England team was beaten by three matches to two. And if it hadn't been for Peter Craven we'd have been scrubbed completely.

The following is a points chart for each rider in the five matches. It tells its own tale.

							<i>Total</i>
P. Craven	...	21	18	14	21	17	91
B. Andrews	...	2	6	2	5	5	20
Ken McKinlay	...	0	14	1	3	12	30
Brian Elliott	...	8	6	0	2	0	16
Nigel Boocock	...	4	9	3	6	8	30
Ronnie Genz	...	0	9	2	8	10	29
Cyril Maidment	...	4	—	8	6	4	22

Don't let anyone tell you that strange tracks and strange conditions are a handicap to a visiting rider.

Peter Craven was an outstanding and magnificent example that if the spirit and the flesh is willing and the skill is there, even foreign tracks present little difficulty that can't be overcome.

Peter was the only rider in the England party who took a spare engine with him.

It was true that Peter had ridden one or two of the tracks when the old managerial maestro, Johnny Hoskins, took a Belle Vue team to Poland.

But his 1960 performance was fantastic. Only in the first meeting with the Polish team did he fail to beat or equal the track record.

And it was only in the last outing of the tour that he only equalled the circuit's best time. And I wasn't surprised.

The Birds

When this particular track was reached it was still raining cats and dogs and the actual racing surface was covered with pools of water with birds floating about on them!

Secretly, the lads were a trifle happy in the hope that this last match would not take place. But they underestimated the Polish drive.

Evidently this Poland-England encounter was an all-ticket affair and, providing the meeting was started, no money need be refunded.

The rain did cease. Ted Flanagan and myself were called into a bed-sitting room. We were greeted with liberal glasses of Vodka. "What could be done to make the meeting possible?" we were asked.

Ted and I suggested we call in the England riders and enlist their help first. Would they ride? They agreed if enough sawdust was obtained to soak up the water.

Can you imagine getting loads and loads of sawdust on a Sunday in England at a moment's notice? The Polish officials did.

And then almost everyone on the track, myself included in a brand new pair of light brown shoes, raked the sawdust evenly over the whole circuit. Next, we prayed it wouldn't rain any more.

It didn't. And it was on this sawdust-soaked surface that Peter Craven just failed to break his fourth track record in a row. Still, he did the next best thing. He equalled their best time.

How It All Began

BLUEY'S

big night . . .

'THE World Championship.' To the devotees of the speedway cult, there is magic in those words. Magic which every September draws thousands of excited spectators to Wembley Stadium where they watch sixteen crack riders battle in no quarter and devil-take-the-hindmost competition for the sport's most coveted trophy, or (in years when the World Final is held abroad) for the European title.

The memory of the late Bluey Wilkinson is imperishably linked with the world crown yet Bluey won it but once—in 1938.

The story really started nine years before that when the first British Riders' Championship was sponsored by *The Star*. It was 1929 and the event was run in two sections, Home and Overseas, since it was believed that no Englishman would stand a chance against the experienced Aussies. How wrong the organisers were was to be proved within a year of two.

Frank Arthur headed the Overseas section with Roger Frogley winner of the home series. Frogley was something of a miracle man and at a time when many took to this new sport like a homing-pigeon to its loft, none showed more aptitude and promise of a bright future than this husky giant.

He was one of the first pupils of Digger Pugh, the Australian engaged to coach new recruits at King's Oak in those fabulous days of 1928 when the sport was young and there were no war clouds on the horizon. A few short hours after his

initiation into 'dirt-track' Roger was showing a clean pair of wheels to his coach and whizzed on to become captain of England.

In 1930 the title went to Vic Huxley and by now English riders had progressed so fast and so sure that the event was run-off in one section. Huxley, good-looking, likeable young Australian, was at the top of the tree for six years or so. Then, when he felt himself slipping he retired, still a champion, which seems to point a moral somewhere.

That year was a great one for the lad from Brisbane. Apart from taking the British Championship, he walked away with special events at tracks all over the country and probably averaged around £300 a week. Nice work when you can get it!

The following season Ray Tauser collared the honours and the cash and then in 1932 an Englishman won the title for the first time in open competition, Eric Langton, Belle Vue ace for many years, laying claim to the trophy. Followed a run of champions from the Old Country, Tom Farndon, Jack Parker and in 1935, the late Frank Charles.

The World Championship was born in 1936 and from the moment of its conception has exercised a powerful attraction and influence, being one of the biggest money-spinners in the history of any sport.

And this is where Bluey Wilkinson comes in.

bluey's night

He didn't win that first championship but he did win the plaudits of the crowd and the admiration of his fellow-riders. It had been decided that each qualifier for the final would be awarded a percentage of the points he had earned in the earlier rounds, these bonus points to be added to whatever points the entrant gained in the final, the organisers taking the view that consistently good riding in the qualifying stages deserved its reward.

This of course was great for riders with a good bonus but it wasn't much good to Bluey who had entered the final with little in the way of bonus due to him. He had only one chance—to win every race he competed in on that memorable night. With a machine lent him by his countryman Max Grosskreutz he went out and did just that. But it wasn't good enough.

Fine fettle

Wembley's Lionel Van Praag and Belle Vue's Eric Langton were in fine fettle too and when the last heat had been decided Lionel and Eric were tied for first place with twenty-six points each. In a dramatic and thrilling run-off for the title, Van Praag forced his bucking machine over the line first to become the World Champion, number one in an illustrious line of the famous.

The final placings in that history-making final were:

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 1. Lionel Van Praag | Australia |
| 2. Eric Langton | England |
| 3. Bluey Wilkinson | Australia |
| 4. Frank Charles | England |
| 5. Cordy Milne | U.S.A. |
| 6. Vic Huxley | Australia |
| 7. Dicky Case | Australia |
| 8. Jack Ormston | England |
| 9. George Newton | England |
| 10. Morian Hansen | Denmark |
| 11. Bob Harrison | England |
| 12. Jack Milne | U.S.A. |
| 13. Jack Parker | England |
| 14. Wal Phillips | England |
| 15. Ginger Lees | England |
| 16. Arthur Atkinson | England |

Sixteen names all of which have their own niche in the record books of the great.

Came 1937 and still it wasn't Wilkinson's year. With memories of his failure the previous season due to lack of bonus points, Bluey was taking no chances this time. He burned up the track in the early rounds and then tragedy overtook him. A broken wrist and goodbye to the much-sought honour once again.

It was a year of triumph for the United States. Jack Milne reached the final with thirteen bonus points, one more than Wilbur Lamoureux and Eric Langton, but when the night had ended, the Yanks had swept the board and filled the first three places. Jack was champion, 'Lammy' runner-up, and Cordy Milne third. Van Praag, the holder, finished seventh while the leading Englishman, Jack Parker, finished behind Cordy in fourth spot.

And so to 1938, Bluey's year at last. It didn't seem that way twenty-four hours before the final. He had qualified at the head of the list to enter the last round with most bonus points and the stage seemed set for that long-awaited triumph.

Then, racing at New Cross with the final due on the morrow, Bluey's own private jinx struck again. Competing in an unimportant scratch race he crashed. His collarbone was injured. To Bluey, pain-wracked and tense, it must have seemed the end to burning ambition and hope. Someone suggested an X-ray. Then the little Aussie made his big decision. He couldn't give up without a fight. He would ride and hang doctors and X-rays until the final was over. That decision put him among the immortals.

Grease rags

90,000 loyal followers packed Wembley Stadium for the big occasion, highlight of the season and every man-jack and every girl among 'em seemed to be rooting for Bluey, their idol.

It was a night to remember, a night which won't be forgotten wherever there are 'bikes and grease-rags and machine-oil and mechanics, a night which fires and stirs the imagination all these years later. As the meeting worked up to a climax, two men emerged from the ruck and the issue became a duel for the crown between Bluey and the reigning title-holder Jack Milne.

bluey's night



Ove Fundin, four times World Champion, in action

Finally they clashed in Heat Nineteen. Wilkinson, with four wins under his belt, needed two points, second place, to clinch the championship. Milne had to win this heat and he must rely on his brother Cordy or Jack Parker, the remaining contestant, to keep Bluey into third place. The odds were in Bluey's favour but nothing is certain in the cinders game and he was lined-up against three of the best.

The tapes flew up and Jack Milne jumped into the lead. Bluey, still troubled by that collarbone, decided to play safe and made no attempt to catch the flying American, concentrating instead on making sure of second place, all he needed to make the World title his for the first time.

Jack Parker was tailed off last while Cordy could make little impression on his brother's rival. It looked a procession with Jack Milne way out in front, Bluey many yards ahead of Cordy and the other Jack, Parker, bringing up the rear.

Wilkinson evidently thought so too

and going into the last bend determined to run no risk of falling, he slowed almost to a standstill, a blunder which almost cost him dear. Cordy wasn't so far behind as the Aussie had imagined and seeing this one faint last chance of securing for his brother the premier award, the American turned everything on in an effort to make up arrears.

Wilkinson suddenly realised his danger, wrenched his machine straight, turned on the taps and scampered like a bat out of hell for the finishing line and the World Championship.

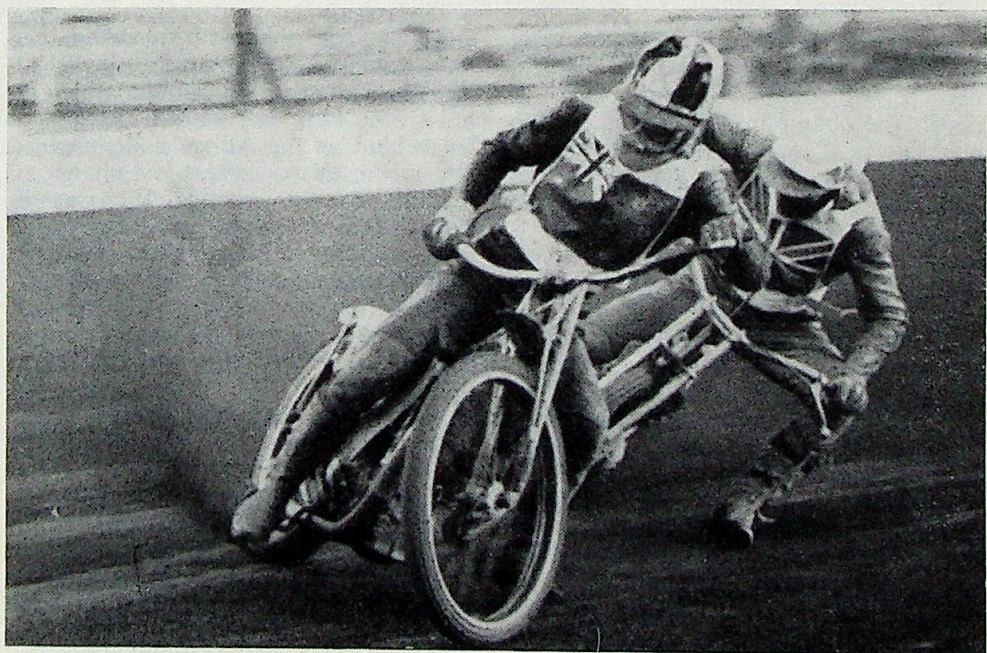
As he stood there and listened to the roar of the crowd the years of waiting seemed well worth while. . . .

He remembered how he began racing at his home town of Bathurst, New South Wales, in 1928, how the crowd soon nicknamed him Bluey, the Australian equivalent of Ginger and bestowed for the same obvious reasons. . . .

How he landed in England with a few pounds in his pocketbook and in less than a year was a member of the Austra-



1966 British Speedway Champion is that well-known leather-clad gentleman, Barry Briggs, of Swindon and New Zealand. Here he is receiving the magnificent new Speedway Control Board Trophy from the Chairman of the Board, Mr. Nelson Mills Baldwin, after winning the Championship at Wimbledon.



Two of tonight's qualifiers, Newcastle's New Zealand star, Ivan Mauger, and England international, Mike Broadbanks, of Swindon, battle it out in the Nordic-British Final at Sheffield. Mauger was just nosed out for honours by fellow-countryman, Barry Briggs.

bluey's night

lian Test Team and riding regularly for West Ham. . . .

And the years of waiting seemed well worth while. . . .

After winning the championship he retired from the saddle to manage the Second Division club, Sheffield. But Fate had one last trick to play on Bluey Wilkinson. Riding a motorcycle along a wet Sydney road with his wife as a pillion-passenger, he skidded and crashed. His wife was thrown clear. Bluey was killed instantly.

So on July 27th, 1940, he died as he had lived, with a roaring engine under him, Bluey Wilkinson, undefeated champion of the world.

Fate was to play a big part in the 1939 Championships too, only this time it was to be war and speedway became lost in the resultant maelstrom.

Bad luck

That was tough on Arthur Atkinson, an English rider who had just reached the pinnacle of his career. Atkinson had been Wilkinson's riding-mate in the West Ham team and everyone expected him to equal his partner's success and capture the championship, this time for England. Arthur met with the same sort of bad luck as had befallen Wilkinson in his quest for the title.

He suffered an injury yet qualified by winning all five races in a preliminary round meeting on his home track at Custom House, an epic performance which is often cited as one of the most outstanding exhibitions of grit and courage ever seen.

But that injury had robbed him of top bonus points and Cordy Milne was left to head the qualifiers, two markers to the good over Atkinson.

Nevertheless, most people still selected the Englishman as favourite. The argument was never to be settled. Four days before the final the blow fell and war was declared.

When peace came, Cordy was back in the States and Arthur had gone into retirement to become a director of the

West Ham and Rayleigh tracks.

It wasn't thought opportune to revive the World Championship when hostilities ceased and so, instead, the British Riders' Championship made its re-appearance.

Entrants came from the National League and the Northern League then operating and one good innovation was made, all sixteen finalists starting on level terms. The winner, first past the post in each of his five races, was Tommy Price, of Wembley, then thirty-five years of age. It marked the high spot of a career which started in 1936 when he signed for Wembley Lions, his only League club, after a long experience on grass tracks.

Quiet-spoken

More honours were in store for this quiet-spoken man who looked after his machines as if they were children and liked nothing better than to support his fellow-Lions, the ice hockey players, in the off-season.

Two points behind was his team-mate and skipper Bill Kitchen with the Belle Vue veterans, Jack Parker and Eric Langton, third and fourth respectively.

In 1947, Jack Parker became the first man to win the British title twice, his previous success being thirteen years earlier, and in 1948, the Australian wonder-man Vic Duggan annexed the crown.

With new aces catching the public eye and competition getting keener, the time had come to restore the world series.

Galaxy

Adding the international flavour, ten foreigners were admitted to the lists although none of them succeeded in reaching the final.

The élite of speedway was represented in this first post-war galaxy of stars. Price, Kitchen and Bill Gilbert, from Wembley, Parker and two brilliant newcomers, Dent Oliver and Louis Lawson, from Belle Vue, the American topnotcher Wilbur Lamoureux and a sensational new Australian discovery Graham Warren.

bluey's night

Probably least-fancied was Tommy Price, the 1946 British kingpin. He had had a very bad start to the season and wasn't given a bye into the championship round as were most of the First Division cracks. Despite this he qualified in fine style and on the big night went through the card, winning all his races to become the first English World Champion.

He had his share of luck, all champions do. The American Lamoureux had bad luck, someone always does. That isn't speedway, that's life.

Since those days, thanks largely to the unswerving faith the *Sunday Mirror* has always had in speedway, the 'Night of Nights' at Wembley has seen glamour, thrills, hard luck and heartbreak. But always, always provided the sports' loyal fans with value for money in keen racing, good fun and excitement.

May it always be so. . . .

(Based on extracts from the book, "Speedway", by Phil Drackett, published by W. & G. Foyle Limited.)



Owing to the late withdrawal of Pawel Waloszek, of Poland, his place in tonight's final is taken by reserve Pawel Mares, of Czechoslovakia.

In turn, Mares is replaced as reserve by Marian Rose, of Poland, who was Continental reserve for last year's World Championship final at Wembley. Rose (pictured above) was beaten into last place in the European Final of that year after a run-off with Tomicek and Larsson.

A veteran of Polish speedway, he rides for Stal Torun.

He reached the Continental Final in 1963, 1964, 1965 and, of course, this year.

He has figured prominently in Poland's World Cup Team endeavours and in the Polish Championship and Golden Helmet.



A fine action shot of an international match between the Wolves of Sweden and the Wolves of Wolverhampton.



To-night's time-table

6.15 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.	The Band of the Royal Engineers (by kind permission of the Engineer-in-Chief) Director of Music Captain P. W. Parkes, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., p.s.m., R.E.
7.00 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.	Introduction and parade of the riders including presentation of commemorative medals by the F.I.M. Steward.
7.15 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.	First ten races.
8.00 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.	Interval. Marching display by the Band of the Royal Engineers.
8.15 p.m. to 9.00 p.m.	Second ten races.
9.05 p.m.	Deciding races if necessary.
9.10 p.m.	Presentation of awards for the meeting.
Times subject to adjustment.	

Officials of the meeting

<i>F.I.M. Steward of the Meeting</i>	...	...	HERR EMIL VORSTER
<i>A.C.U. Referee</i>	...	...	H. P. ELLIS
<i>A.C.U. Judge-Timekeeper</i>	...	...	R. CONNOR
<i>A.C.U. Measurer</i>	...	...	F. A. LOWE
<i>Starting Marshal</i>	...	...	S. W. LAWRENCE
<i>Chief Pit Marshal</i>	...	...	G. GREENWOOD
<i>Machine Examiner</i>	...	...	W. KITCHEN
<i>Medical Officer</i>	...	...	D. H. CAMPBELL M.D., Ch.B.
<i>Clerk of the Course</i>	...	...	D. H. DELAMONT
<i>Secretary of the Meeting</i>	...	...	J. McNULTY

Permit No. SP 5

Meeting is held under the International Sporting Code of the F.I.M.
Acknowledgments to: *The Sunday Mirror*—sponsors of tonight's meeting
The Ford Motor Co., Ltd.—for the Tractor and Float. Rootes Group
Ltd.—for the three Sunbeam Cars.

BETTING IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED AT ALL SPEEDWAY MEETINGS

RIDERS' INDIVIDUAL SCORE CHART

The Score Chart has been put here for your convenience. It is suggested that when you transfer the scores it would simplify matters to refer to the riders by number and not by name.

RIDERS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	TOTAL	RIDERS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	TOTAL	RIDERS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	TOTAL
1. N. BOOCOCK ...	2	2	2				7. P. MARES BB...	0	1	1				13. S. TKOCZ ...	1	1	3			
2. E. MIGOS ...	1	0	0				8. M. KAISER ...	3	0	2				14. I. MAUGER ...	2	3	3			
3. K. POCEJKOWICZ	3	0	1				9. C. PRATT ...	0	0	0				15. A. POGORZELSKI ...	1	2	1			
4. G. HUNTER ...	0	1	0				10. M. BROADBANKS	3	2	2				16. B. BRIGGS ...	3	2	2			
5. I. PLECHANOV ...	1	3	2				11. S. HARRFELDT ...	2	3	1				17. B. BRETT ...	3	2	3			
6. K. MCKINLAY ...	2	1	0				12. A. WORYNA ...	1	3	3				18. M. ROSE ...						



1966 SPEEDWAY CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE WORLD EUROPEAN FINAL

Points are awarded: 3—1st; 2—2nd; 1—3rd. Individual Score Chart above.

Riders' starting positions are indicated by their helmet colours. Red No. 1 position, Blue No. 2, White No. 3, and Yellow No. 4, counting from the inside.



Event	Helmet No. Colour	RIDERS	Result	Event	Helmet No. Colour	RIDERS	Result	Event	Helmet No. Colour	RIDERS	Result
1st Race	1 Red 2 Blue 3 White 4 Yellow	Nigel Boocock (ENG.) Edmund Migos (P.L.) K. Pocijkowicz (P.L.) George Hunter (SCOT.)	1st KB 2nd VB 3rd EM Time	8th Race	4 Red 8 Blue 12 White 16 Yellow	George Hunter (SCOT.) Marian Kaiser (P.L.) Antonin Woryna (P.L.) Barry Briggs (N.Z.)	1st AW 2nd BB 3rd BH Time	15th Race	16 Red 3 Blue 10 White 5 Yellow	Colin Pratt (ENG.) K. Pocijkowicz (P.L.) Mike Broadbanks (ENG.) Igor Plechanov (S.U.)	1st BB 2nd MB 3rd MB Time
2nd Race	5 Red 7 Blue 6 White 8 Yellow	Igor Plechanov (S.U.) BB Ken McKinlay (SCOT.) Marian Kaiser (P.L.)	1st MB 2nd KM 3rd IP Time	9th Race	6 Red 16 Blue 1 White 11 Yellow	Ken McKinlay (SCOT.) Barry Briggs (N.Z.) Nigel Boocock (ENG.) Sverre Harrfeldt (N.)	1st BB 2nd VB 3rd SH Time	16th Race	9 Red 6 Blue 4 White 15 Yellow	Colin Pratt (ENG.) Ken McKinlay (SCOT.) George Hunter (SCOT.) Andrej Pogorzelski (P.L.)	1st KM 2nd AF 3rd GH Time
3rd Race	10 Red 11 Blue 9 White 12 Yellow	Mike Broadbanks (ENG.) Sverre Harrfeldt (N.) Colin Pratt (ENG.) Antonin Woryna (P.L.)	1st MB 2nd SH 3rd AW Time	10th Race	12 Red 5 Blue 15 White 2 Yellow	Antonin Woryna (P.L.) Igor Plechanov (S.U.) Andrej Pogorzelski (P.L.) Edmund Migos (P.L.)	1st AW 2nd IP 3rd AP Time	17th Race	1 Red 8 Blue 15 White 10 Yellow	Nigel Boocock (ENG.) Marian Kaiser (P.L.) Andrej Pogorzelski (P.L.) Mike Broadbanks (ENG.)	1st MB 2nd AP 3rd MB Time
4th Race	15 Red 14 Blue 16 White 13 Yellow	Andrej Pogorzelski (P.L.) Ivan Mauger (N.Z.) Barry Briggs (N.Z.) Stanislaw Tkocz (P.L.)	1st BB 2nd IP 3rd AP Time	11th Race	8 Red 9 Blue 3 White 14 Yellow	Marian Kaiser (P.L.) Colin Pratt (ENG.) K. Pocijkowicz (P.L.) Ivan Mauger (N.Z.)	1st IM 2nd AF 3rd AP Time	18th Race	9 Red 2 Blue 7 White 16 Yellow	Colin Pratt (ENG.) Edmund Migos (P.L.) Pawel Mares (C.S.) BB Barry Briggs (N.Z.)	1st EM 2nd BB 3rd BB Time
5th Race	13 Red 1 Blue 5 White 9 Yellow	Stanislaw Tkocz (P.L.) Nigel Boocock (ENG.) Igor Plechanov (S.U.) Colin Pratt (ENG.)	1st IP 2nd VB 3rd ST Time	12th Race	13 Red 4 Blue 10 White 7 Yellow	Stanislaw Tkocz (P.L.) George Hunter (SCOT.) Mike Broadbanks (ENG.) Pawel Mares (C.S.) BB	1st ST 2nd MB 3rd BB Time	19th Race	3 Red 12 Blue 13 White 6 Yellow	K. Pocijkowicz (P.L.) Antonin Woryna (P.L.) Stanislaw Tkocz (P.L.) Ken McKinlay (SCOT.)	1st ST 2nd AW 3rd KP Time
6th Race	14 Red 10 Blue 2 White 6 Yellow	Ivan Mauger (N.Z.) Mike Broadbanks (ENG.) Edmund Migos (P.L.) Ken McKinlay (SCOT.)	1st IM 2nd MB 3rd AP Time	13th Race	7 Red 12 Blue 14 White 1 Yellow	Pawel Mares (C.S.) BB Antonin Woryna (P.L.) Ivan Mauger (N.Z.) Nigel Boocock (ENG.)	1st IM 2nd MB 3rd NB Time	20th Race	5 Red 14 Blue 11 White 4 Yellow	Igor Plechanov (S.U.) Ivan Mauger (N.Z.) Sverre Harrfeldt (N.) George Hunter (SCOT.)	1st IM 2nd IP 3rd IP Time
7th Race	11 Red 15 Blue 7 White 3 Yellow	Sverre Harrfeldt (N.) Andrej Pogorzelski (P.L.) Pawel Mares (C.S.) BB K. Pocijkowicz (P.L.)	1st SH 2nd AP 3rd BB Time	14th Race	2 Red 13 Blue 8 White 11 Yellow	Edmund Migos (P.L.) Stanislaw Tkocz (P.L.) Marian Kaiser (P.L.) Sverre Harrfeldt (N.)	1st SH 2nd MK 3rd ST Time	*21st Race	Red Blue White Yellow		1st 2nd 3rd Time
THE DRAW FOR THE HEATS AND STARTING POSITIONS WAS MADE BY THE F.I.M.								†22nd Race	Red Blue White Yellow		1st 2nd 3rd Time

* To be run only if two or more riders tie for first place.

† To be run only if two or more riders tie for second or third place.

PAST WINNERS OF THE WORLD SPEEDWAY CHAMPIONSHIP

1936—Lionel Van Praag (Australia) 1, Eric Langton (England) 2, "Bluey" Wilkinson (Australia) 3.

1937—Jack Milne (U.S.A.) 1, Wilbur Lamoreaux (U.S.A.) 2, Cordy Milne (U.S.A.) 3.

1938—"Bluey" Wilkinson (Australia) 1, Jack Milne (U.S.A.) 2, Wilbur Lamoreaux (U.S.A.) 3.

1949—Tommy Price (England) 1, Jack Parker (England) 2, Louis Lawson (England) 3.

1950—Fred Williams (Wales) 1, Wally Green (England) 2, Graham Warren (Australia) 3.

1951—Jack Young (Australia) 1, Split Waterman (England) 2, Jack Biggs (Australia) 3.

1952—Jack Young (Australia) 1, Fred Williams (Wales) 2, Bob Oakley (England) 3.

1953—Fred Williams (Wales) 1, Split Waterman (England) 2, Geoff Mardon (New Zealand) 3.

1954—Ronnie Moore (New Zealand) 1, Brian Crutcher (England) 2, Olle Nygren (Sweden) 3.

1955—Peter Craven (England) 1, Ronnie Moore (New Zealand) 2, Barry Briggs (New Zealand) 3.

1956—Ove Fundin (Sweden) 1, Ronnie Moore (New Zealand) 2, Arthur Forrest (England) 3.

1957—Barry Briggs (New Zealand), 1, Ove Fundin (Sweden) 2, Peter Craven (England) 3.

1958—Barry Briggs (New Zealand) 1, Ove Fundin (Sweden) 2, Aub Lawson (Australia) 3.

1959—Ronnie Moore (New Zealand) 1, Ove Fundin (Sweden) 2, Barry Briggs (New Zealand) 3.

1960—Ove Fundin (Sweden) 1, Ronnie Moore (New Zealand) 2, Peter Craven (England) 3.

1961—Ove Fundin (Sweden) 1, Bjorn Knutsson (Sweden) 2, Gote Nordin (Sweden) 3.

1962—Peter Craven (England) 1, Barry Briggs (New Zealand) 2, Ove Fundin (Sweden) 3.

1963—Ove Fundin (Sweden) 1, Bjorn Knutsson (Sweden) 2, Barry Briggs (New Zealand) 3.

1964—Barry Briggs (New Zealand) 1, Igor Plechanov (U.S.S.R.) 2, Ove Fundin (Sweden) 3.

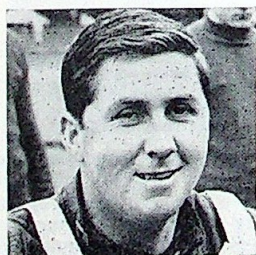
1965—Bjorn Knutsson (Sweden) 1, Igor Plechanov (U.S.S.R.) 2, Ove Fundin (Sweden) 3.

MEET THE RIDERS

By Paul Parish—Editor Speedway Star and News—and Dave Stevens:
Photographs by Alf Weedon

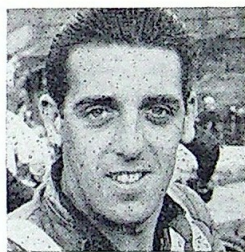


NIGEL BOOCOCK (England and Coventry). A spectacular merchant with coloured leathers, Nigel's known as "Little Boy Blue" to Coventry fans in particular and speedway in general. A recent Golden Helmet challenger, Nigel has been attached to Bradford, Ipswich and Birmingham before joining up with the Bees where he now plays an important role developing junior talent in after-match practice sessions. A regular World Finalist and an automatic choice for Great Britain and England teams. Against Russia he led England in all five matches; and trekked around Poland with the Great Britain team in July. A native of Wakefield, Nigel started his speedway career in Yorkshire at the Odsal (Bradford) track in 1954 and qualified for his World Final, as reserve, two years later in 1956. He was reserve again in 1962 and had his first full World Final meeting in 1963 when he scored 8 points. Track-wise, Nigel moved to Birmingham when Odsal closed down and later joined Ipswich before joining Coventry in 1959. Married, with a daughter, he now lives at Rugby.



BARRY BRIGGS (New Zealand and Swindon). There's little can be said about this man that hasn't been said already! World Champion in 1957 and '58 and again in 1964, Barry recently completed a hat-trick

of British Championship wins in taking this year's event with 12 points. Current holder of the Golden Helmet match race championship, he also recently held the Silver Sash title too and as far as individual events go—he's won most of them in his time, this year having already won the Midland Riders' Championship and the Alan Hunt Memorial Trophy. First rode for Wimbledon and later had spells with New Cross and Southampton before joining his present club Swindon. When one recalls just how difficult Barry found it to stay on a 'bike when he first arrived at Wimbledon in 1952, it's difficult to imagine that this is the same Barry Briggs. Barry has shown that perseverance pays off. Qualified for his first World Final in 1954 (the same year incidentally as the late Peter Craven and Sweden's Ove Fundin—two more of the sport's great World Champions—made their debut) and has had a great record ever since. He was third in 1955; joint fourth in 1956; winner in 1957 and 1958; third in 1959; sixth in 1960; fourth in 1961; runner-up in 1962; and third in 1963. Lives at Southampton with his wife and two sons, but commutes almost daily to the Continent for meetings additional to his British League engagements.



MIKE BROADBANKS (England and Swindon). Another product from Rye House, Mike later operated the training school himself before moving away from the area to be near his present track Swindon. A spectacular rider, Mike really sets the tracks alight and with his red leathers he's earned for himself the nickname of "The Red Devil". Several times a World Finalist and a regular in England and Great Britain teams, Mike has also toured Australia on several occasions, winning the Australian Championship out there in 1962. Born at Hoddesdon in 1934 and started his career under former



meet the riders

Hackney, Wembley and Australian star Dicky Case at Rye House in 1952. Three years later, on his 21st birthday he won the Southern Area League's riders' championship and was offered a contract by Wembley on the spot. He stayed with the Lions until moving to Swindon in 1957.



SVERRE HARRFELDT (Norway and West Ham). Without doubt Sverre is the man who will provide the biggest challenge to the British riders in this meeting. Harrfeldt burst into the limelight after winning both long and short track titles in Norway in 1962. Joined Wimbledon in 1963 as a replacement for Ronnie Moore and reached the World Final where he scored 10 points. Was eliminated from the 1964 World Championship when he injured a shoulder during the Nordic Final in Denmark and was put out of last year's hunt when a mix-up in dates sent him to the European Final in Czechoslovakia a day late. Joined West Ham in 1965. Sverre had a hernia operation at the beginning of this season and scored 12 points in his comeback meeting.



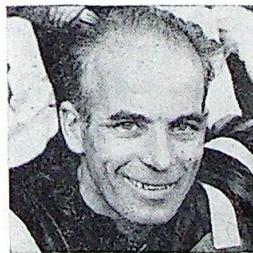
GEORGE HUNTER (Scotland and Edinburgh). Fast becoming one of Scotland's greatest home-produced riders, Hunter has spent all his racing career with Edinburgh, really coming to the fore in last year's British League when he was selected for several of the Great Britain teams against the U.S.S.R. and unsuccessfully challenged Barry Briggs for the Golden Helmet. This year he has been experiencing some difficulties in getting around away tracks but he's still done enough to represent Scotland in all their Internationals.



MARIAN KAISER (Poland and Wybrzeze Gdansk). Age 33. Captains his club team and is well known with English fans after riding for Leicester in 1959. A World Finalist and European Champion in 1960 and toured England previously in 1958 and 1960. Polish Champion in 1957 and 1962 and was third in last year's Championship.



IVAN MAUGER (New Zealand and Newcastle). Runner-up in this year's British Final. A junior with Wimbledon in the late 50's, Mauger just couldn't make the grade and returned home to Kiwi-land, coming back to England in 1963 where he set the former Provincial League alight with some sparkling performances for Newcastle—still his present track. For long a holder of the PL's Silver Sash, Ivan's World Championship progress last year was halted by injury but he's fighting fit now and determined to earn a Gothenberg place for himself. A Great Britain team man in Poland.



KEN MCKINLAY (Scotland and West Ham). The original "Hurri-Ken", McKinlay started his speedway career on the Army tracks of Germany, joining Glasgow (White City) on demob, and later moving via Leicester and Coventry to West Ham, whom he led to the triple championship of British League, Knock-out Cup and London Cup in 1965. Another regular World Finalist with a great string of international caps and World Team Cup

meet the riders

appearances, McKinlay is also an ace tuner and in addition to looking after his own machine is also responsible for those of many of his other competitors on the track. Christened John Robert Vicars at High Blantyre where he was born in 1928 speedway fans renamed him Ken and when he started flying "Hurri-Ken". A regular Australian visitor, he was South Australian Champion in 1957-58 and New South Wales title holder in 1960/61. British honours include the Brandonapolis (1955) and the Midland Riders' Championship (1955, 1956 and 1959). He missed the World Final in 1959 and again in 1963 but other than those two years he's been a regular Finalist since 1956. Lives at Leicester with his wife and two sons, but also regards Australia as "home".



EDMUND MIGOS (Poland and Stal Gorzow). Age 29. Before this season Migos was regarded as just a social club rider. Finished eighth in the Polish Golden Helmet last year. Has "come good" this year with some fine performances in the World Championships which have put him through to Wembley. In the Continental Final at Slany, Czechoslovakia, he returned the fastest time of the night—just outside Bjorn Knutsson's four-year-old track record.



IGOR PLECHANOV (U.S.S.R.). This brilliant Russian speedster from Ufa makes his fifth World Final appearance and hopes to improve on his 1964 and 1965 runners-up placing! Igor was a trials rider before speedway was introduced into the Soviet Union in 1958. Since then he has been the Russians' number one rider and has won the Soviet championship four times. Aged 32, Igor has captained all three Soviet touring sides to Britain. Igor is a correspondence student of a physical

training institute. Off the tracks Plechanov likes fishing and hunting and is a fanatical collector of speedway badges.



KONSTANTYN POCIEJKOWICZ (Poland and Sparta Wroclaw). Age 34. The oldest member of the Polish party and shock qualifier for the European Final. Was a real thrill-maker when he toured England in 1958. Polish Champion in 1960 and rode in all three tests against Britain in Poland the same year. Was third in this year's Continental Final which ranks as his best ever performance.



ANDREZEJ POGORZELSKI (Poland and Stal Gorzow). Age 27. World Finalist and a World Cup performer in 1965. First major success came recently when he won the Continental Final. Was third in the Polish Championships in 1964 and 1965 and second in the Golden Helmet both years. Third in last year's Continental Final. Motorcycle mad "Pogo" is a big man for a speedway rider but that doesn't restrict his ability on the tracks. Possesses colossal strength and uses this to good advantage when racing. Rides for Stal Gorzow now but started his speedway career in 1958 as a member of the Unia Leszno club. Pogorzelski has been a regular in the Polish International squad since 1963.



COLIN PRATT (England and Hackney). The surprise of the British Final in finishing up third-placed, the stylish Hackney

meet the riders

skipper is coming along fine at the moment and a regular double-figure scorer for the Hawks. A product of the famous Rye House training track, Colin had spells with Poole and Southampton before joining up with Stoke where he really started to make the cinders fly. Joined his present track when Stoke closed down through redevelopment and has been a leading light in the side ever since. So far, the really big honours have eluded Pratt, but they can't be far away now. Had a good run in the Silver Sash competition at the end of '65. Colin may well earn himself a brand-new engine if he qualifies for the world championship final. Two keen Hackney supporters have started a fund to raise the necessary cash. The Supporters Club are joining in by running several special events and, naturally, Pratt is delighted by the encouragement and determined to qualify for the final.



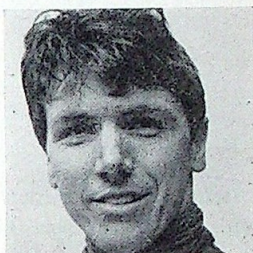
STANISLAW TKOCZ (Poland and R.O.W. Rybnik). Age 30. Reigning Polish Champion and Golden Helmet holder. Was also Polish champion in 1958 and a World Finalist in 1961. Captained Poland's side that won a Test series in Sweden this year.



PAWEL WALOSZEK (Poland and Swietlowchice). Age 28. A World Finalist in 1962 and reserve for the side that won the World Cup last year. A consistent performer who has done well in Golden Helmet meetings in Poland over the years. Waloszek and Zbigniew Podlecki scored 28 out of a possible 30 points as partners in a Test match against Sweden earlier this year. Captains the Slask team in Poland.



ANTONI WORYNA (Poland and R.O.W. Rybnik). Age 25. Made his International debut, against Russia in 1961, but has really hit the jackpot in the last two years. Third in last year's European Final, six points in the World Final and a member of the Polish World Cup winning squad. Third in last year's Golden Helmet. Has reached this year's European Final after finishing runner-up in the Continental Final. A very keen movie-maker.



BRIAN BRETT (England and Newcastle). Hoddesdon born "Pommy" as he's known in speedway circles, shook the speedway world when he announced his retirement but Newcastle talked him into riding for them when they were hit by injuries and he travels north each Monday by rail for his "home" meetings. Was a match winner for Great Britain against Soviet Russia in the 1964 Coventry Test. Born in 1938, Brian started his career at Rye House where he was assisted by another Hoddesdon man Mike Broadbanks. Started his team career with Southampton and had a spell with Belle Vue before joining up with "Broadie" a few years back at Swindon, where he stayed until the start of last season.

PAWEL MARES (Czechoslovakia). Czechoslovakia's brightest hope for future honours is this 24-year-old garage mechanic from Prague. Desperately unlucky not to have qualified in full for tonight's meeting. He scored nine points in the Continental Final at Slany, Czechoslovakia, only two less than the winner Andrzej Pogorzelski. But the racing was so tight that night that Mares comes to Wembley as a reserve having lost a run-off with Polish rider Stanislaw Tkocz. Mares had been prominent in earlier World Championship rounds but the best performance of his career came in June when he won the Baltic Cup in Poland.

Briggs fears them all - - -

says Don Clarke

Speedway Columnist of the Sunday Mirror

“WHO are the men you fear most in the European Final?” That is the question I shot at former World Champion and reigning British champion, Barry Briggs, during a rest between races.

“All of ‘em”, came the quick answer from the usually slow-drawling New Zealand ace.

Briggs added: “My psychological approach to speedway has never changed. Watch everybody. Don’t underestimate anybody. The other finalists didn’t walk into the European Final. It took talent to get there. To do that they must be good”.

Looking at Briggs’ opposition tonight—seven Poles, six British, a Russian and a Norwegian—I can well understand the reason for Briggs’ vigilance.

Briggs is the type of rider who goes into battle with a campaign that even an Army General would admire.

Strike them quick. Strike them often. Keep at them. This was Briggs’ style when he arrived from New Zealand as a seventeen-year-old novice to ride for Wimbledon.

Fourteen years later Briggs hasn’t changed his plan of battle. And who can blame him!

It has won him the World Crown three times, and the British Match Race title, which he has held since October 1964.

But sitting in the pits tonight are two men who I consider have advanced as rapidly as Briggs. They can be danger men to Briggs.

First is Igor Plechanov, the Ufa sky-rocket, Russia’s greatest ever speedway product and among the world’s track élite.

This cheerful Ukrainian has set up a most impressive record in European speedway. Runner-up in the World Final at Gothenburg in 1964, and again at Wembley last year, he is the only Russian to qualify for tonight’s European Final.

The fact that the Russians were ‘pole-axed’ by the Poles in the Continental Final at Slany, Czechoslovakia, was not due to individual efforts by the Poles.

The crushing of the Russians was more a team effort on the part of the Polish finalists.

This is a danger that the British contestants are liable to face tonight.

With seven men in tonight’s clashes the Poles can well afford to ‘gang up’ on the British contingent in their effort to win passport to the World Final, in Gothenburg in three weeks’ time.

The Bear

But while the British and Poles are watching each other like hawks, they may lose sight of the lone Russian bear, who is capable of crushing them all.

The Russian has a spectacular, but determined style; is a lightning gater, a master tactician from behind, and is quite prepared to scrape the safety fence should the occasion demand it.

Plechanov will not only be riding for himself. He will be the spearhead of Russian speedway, which has ambitions of winning the World title this year.

They have made great advances since they entered the sport eight years ago.

In 1958, when the first Russian speed-

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the name. And we're so easy to get to . . .

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BRAFIELD SELECT v. COVENTRY COLTS

Full catering facilities available. Racing starts at 3 p.m.

Future speedway dates at Brafield-on-the-Green are: September 11, September 25, October 9 and October 23. See Press for full details.

all of them

way trials took place, stadiums were almost empty.

Now millions follow their favourite riders, and tracks are spreading across the whole country from the Baltic to the Pacific.

Fans watch the shale fly in Lvov and other Ukranian cities; in town in the Volga: in Novosibirsk, in Siberia; Amalyk, in Central Asia; Erevan, in Armenia; and in Leningrad. When the frosts come they race on ice.

Danger Man

Hub of Soviet speedway is the Republic of Bashkiria, and its capital is Ufa, where Plechanov was born.

This is the speedway heritage that Igor Plechanov has to uphold tonight.

Make no mistake. The Ufa skyrocket will be out to see that the Hammer and Sickle banner flies over the winner's rostrum at the end of twenty heats.

My second danger man is 27-year-old New Zealander Ivan Mauger, a hard 'diamond' from Newcastle, who finished runner-up to Briggs in the British Final, at Wimbledon, and British-European Final, at Sheffield.

Mauger has had a chequered career. In 1957 he arrived at Wimbledon as a raw seventeen-year-old, and found rides hard to come by.

He stayed a season and then went to learn speedway the hard way in Australia and New Zealand.

Fiery Style

Returning to Britain three years ago he joined Newcastle and started to set the crowds alight with his fiery style of riding.

Mauger went from strength to strength and last year looked ready to stake a claim for World Championship honours.

But a tumble which resulted in five breaks in an ankle and leg took some of the polish off this brilliant 'diamond'.

Today, Mauger can be grouped in the same class as Ronnie Moore and Barry Briggs, fellow-countrymen and world champions.

Moore and Briggs hail from Mauger's home town, Christchurch. They too came over as seventeen-year-old novices to join Wimbledon.

Can Mauger emulate Moore and Briggs in World Championship battles?

To do so he will have to ride like the devil. But I have a strong feeling that Mauger will be battling on when many of the other British hopes have given up the ghost.

In two hours time the winner and runners-up of tonight's battles will be ready to receive their medals and *Sunday Mirror* cheques.

Barry Briggs will start a hot favourite to mount the winner's rostrum. But he'll have to keep his eyes on my two danger men.

YESTERDAY'S DIRT TRACK ACES ARE HERE TONIGHT

THE stars of yesterday will be watching the stars of the present at tonight's meeting. As at every Wembley final since its formation in 1957, there will be a party from the Veteran Dirt Track Riders' Association in the grandstand. The Association, which now has a membership of nearly 200, includes most of the great names of pre-war speedway still alive and living in England. Tonight's party is expected to number about 85. The Annual General Meeting will be held earlier in the day, followed by a 'bun fight' before the 'lads' move on to the Stadium.—*Peter Arnold.*

PHOTOGRAPHERS

THE photograph of Nelson Mills Baldwin handing the Speedway Control Board Trophy to Barry Briggs was taken by Trevor Meeks. Other photographs in the programme are the work of Alf Weedon.

THEY ARE TAKING OVER!

By
ERIC LINDEN

Columnist and Commentator



SO you get yourself a sport all of your own which you invent, nurse, build, establish. And what happens? The foreigners move in and before you know it they're better than you (or so they say). And they are taking over the sport. And life is getting more than a little tough for you.

That's the story of our sporting life here in Britain.

Never more so than in speedway.

And it's never been more so in speedway than this year. Because the seven boys from Britain, racing here tonight in their bid to move on into the World Final itself, have had the longest and toughest championship battle that any of our lads have ever had.

All because of the foreigners, of course.

You see, speedway is not different to any other kind of sport. It has its fanatical followers who will swear by it. And it has its fanatical critics who will swear at it.

It has its ups and downs, as any rider will tell you. And it has its cycles. If you will pardon the last, unintentional, pun.

The present cycle in speedway is a brand-new one. It dates from the start of this season only. Here in Britain we can call it the Tough Cycle. The year when the British boys had to go at it real hard where the World Championship was concerned.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not complaining about the foreigners because they've helped build this Championship into something internationally great. And I'm not even saying that it was ever a push-

over for our blokes. But by and large the British-based rider has had it easier than the foreign brigade.

Perhaps we've tended to take it all for granted. After all, but for speedway's New Zealand "daddy", the great Johnnie Hoskins, speedway might never have been invented. And being a Kiwi, and Johnnie, he naturally had to invent it in Australia.

However, but for the way we took it up, speedway would never have developed first into a major sport and then into an International one.

The start was some forty years ago. It developed like wildfire in Britain a few years later, settled down into an organised national sport big enough to attract the foreign boys over here for their share of the thrills and the loot.

Inside the first ten years, from the staging of that very first meeting in Aussie, we had progressed to a World Championship. Staged here in Britain, of course. And we kept on staging them until the Second World War broke out and all but stamped out speedway's life spark.

After the war was over speedway started up again, like a volcano erupting. It mushroomed all over the country. Inside a few years we were back in the World Championship staging business.

Despite the title we didn't regard it as a World Championship so much as our big night of the year. All right, so there was a pot of gold and a title for the winning rider. But somehow it was our night, not the world's.

take-over

Now all that has changed. Now the World Championship really is what it says—the greatest individual honour that any man can win in his life on the speedway tracks.

Any rider.

Not just one who happens to be riding in Britain and who, therefore, has a much better chance of getting to the final. And so a much better chance of winning the title.

It used to be that way. British riders provided practically all the qualifiers.

Then the foreign lads got busy.

I remember being extremely annoyed and shocked that anyone should dare to ask permission to take the World Final away from Wembley. And shocked and numb when the Swedes were accorded the honour for Malmo in 1961.

I mean to say. It was all right for foreign riders being allowed to enter the contest, *our* World Championship contest. But for one of them to steal the Final away, that was a bit too much.

In truth the sport had grown up, but British speedway thinking hadn't.

Gradually it became more difficult for the British boys to win places in the Final. There were more places for the foreign lads and there was more competition for our blokes.

The championship pace was hotting up.

So Hot

But never has it been as hot for British boys as it has this year. We've had more rounds and finals than we've had sunny days this summer. Well, that's a bit of an exaggeration, but you get the general idea.

We started off with one-hundred-plus riders having a go at our preliminary, or qualifying, rounds. They all had three meetings apiece and then the statisticians got to work and whittled off the two-thirds who had the lowest score. There ended the first hurdle.

Maybe the second hurdle was the worst of all. Two quick-fire sudden-death semi-finals. This was the point where one engine failure, a fall, a blotting out at the first bend, could (and in some cases did) put a man right out of the running.

The top eight men at each meeting went forward to the British Final. Sixteen survivors, now, from the original 100-plus starters.

As if it hadn't been tough enough getting over hurdles one and two we now skimmed the cream of the British Finalists off, taking the top eight scorers and pushing them into the Nordic-British Final for hurdle four.

In came the top eight men from the Nordic Final to meet our lads. And out they all went, bar one. Sverre Harrfeldt, regular with West Ham, was their only survivor. And forward went the top eight into tonight's meeting. The fifth hurdle.

And the last one before the World Final itself.

No wonder Barry Briggs, our best bet to take the World Title once again, cracked:

"I've ridden in so many World Championship Finals this year, I don't think I'll have the strength left to ride in the final Final . . . if I make it."

Hard Trail

If Barry doesn't make it, if he isn't one of the ten top scorers that push forward from tonight's meeting between the best of the British and the Nordic riders, and the best from the Continent, then it will be a sensation.

But that's another matter.

The switch to the Tough Cycle only came to Britain this year. In effect it has amounted to two extra Finals being staged here. The Nordic-British and tonight's European Final.

Certainly it has been a tougher, harder trail for the British boys. But it won't hurt them. In fact it will do the boys who have made it so far the power of good. And it will probably do our national team, be it Great Britain or England, the world of good too.

For among our super septet there are three lads bidding to get to their first World Final.

Colin Pratt, George Hunter, Ivan Mauger.

They are the advance guard of the new generation of young British stars. Lads who have, by and large, done all their riding in either the old Provincial League or new British League.

take-over

They have served the apprenticeship that speedway does demand and now they are emerging as International stars. If they join the ten top scorers who qualify from tonight's meeting for the Final itself, then we'll really have something to crow about. Even if they don't all manage it, we can be proud of them for having got through so far on the toughest championship trail of them all.

The toughest, that is, so far. For as speedway spreads its International boundaries even further, and as it extends its grip on the countries where it is already

staged, so the Finals are likely to be spread around a bit more.

Perhaps soon we'll be lucky to stage the World Final itself more than once every three years. Perhaps soon there will be other countries who will want to stage British-Nordic Finals, or European Finals. Then it will be tougher than ever.

But that's the future. What's fascinating now is the present. For the present is tonight. And tonight ends the long, long trail in Britain. And after the tough time getting here, here's hoping all our lads are still going to be on that tough, tough trail when Heat 20 is over and the next step is Sweden . . . and the final Final, the World Championship Final.

TEN POINTS YOU SHOULD KNOW . . .

When the green light is showing at the Starting Gate, the riders are under Starter's orders and must be ready to start from that moment.

If a rider's engine stalls at the Start, he can be pushed for thirty yards in order to re-start his engine and keep him in the race.

If a rider falls and anyone touches him or his machine, he is automatically excluded.

Speedway motor-cycles have no brakes and the only way a rider can suddenly stop—say to avoid a fallen rider—is to lay-down his machine deliberately. This is often done.

The track surface thrown back by a rear wheel can scour the skin of a following rider's face if he is not adequately protected.

All riders must wear leather riding suits, approved crash helmets, gloves, knee-length boots and non-splinterable goggles while racing.

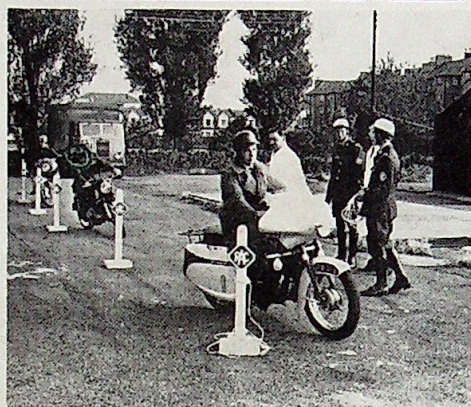
Every rider in this meeting rides against every other rider and each rider has five races. Their starts are so arranged that their starting positions alternate with each appearance.

The coloured lights above the track just after the Starting Gate are for the Referee of the Meeting to indicate to a rider that he is excluded—according to the colour of the light illuminated.

Signals to riders are as follows: Red lights—Danger on the track, stop racing; Yellow flag with black diagonal cross—One more lap to go; Black flag shown to a rider—withdraw from the course; Black and white check flag—End of race.

In judging a close finish, the Judge watches the tyres of the front wheels—and not the riders' helmets. The first tyre on the line is the winner.





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