

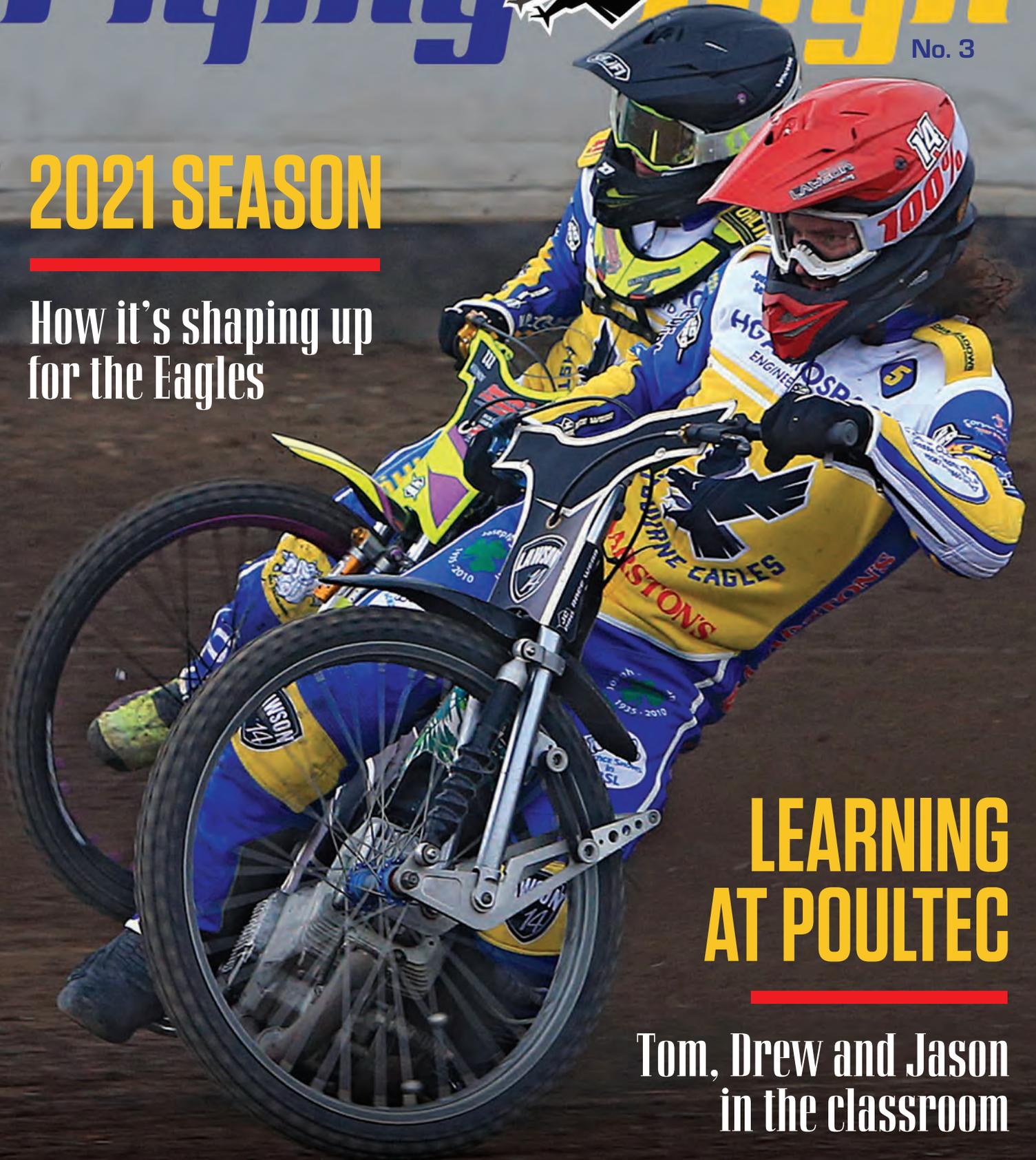
Flying High



No. 3

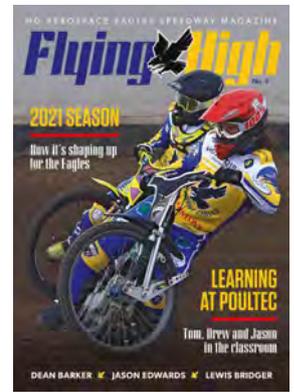
2021 SEASON

How it's shaping up
for the Eagles



LEARNING AT POULTEC

Tom, Drew and Jason
in the classroom



I HAD HOPED TO be sharing with you some news about the BSPL AGM and also a fixture list in this foreword to the third edition of *Flying High*.

The BSPL Promoters and Board met (via Zoom) on Thursday, January 14, and a lot was discussed and agreed but which is currently under BSPL embargo.

It may be that some significant detail will be released by the BSPL just before or around the time that you received this edition of *Flying High*.

You will all understand that as a member club our Promoter(s) have to comply with the wishes of the sports governing body. We will release all news as soon as we are authorised to do so.

We're happy to hear that our originally declared 1-7 for the 2020 Championship season will be accepted as our confirmed 1-7 for the 2021 Season, which is great news for everyone at Arlington and something we have fought very hard to ensure over the past few months, with the support of some other clubs in a similar position to ourselves.

When we can elaborate further on this we will definitely do so.

These are very worrying times though with a new strain of the Covid-19 virus and a frightening increase in infections and deaths. We can all only hope that we will soon be over the worst, that the vaccination programme will work and that by the time we get to late spring/early summer we can be watching some form of competitive Speedway, not only at Arlington, but across the United Kingdom and Europe.

Right now though we all have to focus 100% on staying healthy, staying safe, surviving tough economic times and looking out for each other. To pretend anything else would be quite wrong and I think frankly delusional because the sunny uplands feel a long way off in life and for Speedway at the moment.

We all have to hope that the green shoots of recovery come in the early spring so that we can move forwards out of this very long and dark tunnel.

There can be no doubt that we and all other clubs face a very challenging season and a very challenging national and economic crisis in which to operate and try to succeed.

It was very sad to hear of the news that both Swindon Robins and the Somerset Rebels had decided to sit out the 2021 season.

CLICK TO JOIN OUR MAILING LIST



Contributors: Ken Burnett, Adrian Dent, Dave Earl, Mike Hinves, Lauren Hinves, Taylor Lanning, John Ling, Kevin Ling, Paul Watson, Kevin Whiting, Tiffani Graveling, Chris Drewery Photography, Leigh Capon, Ian Smalley.

Design by Barry Cross Artwork.

All content Copyright of Eastbourne Speedway Ltd 2021

Flying High



HG AEROSPACE EAGLES SPEEDWAY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 3 | JANUARY 2021

They are hugely successful Clubs and both have outstanding people involved. Their reasons are totally understandable and I absolutely hope that both will be back in 2022. There will always be those who will see this type of news as a reason to spread doom and negativity, personally I think they'd be better served by trying to support the Sport they claim to love, rather than disparage it at every turn.

The Sport we love is far from perfect, but we have to find ways to stabilise it and strengthen it in the future with a clear vision, which the BSPL will no doubt do their best to try to set out in the coming months.

A long career in business and running a business has taught me many lessons and many have been learned as a result of my own mistakes. I came to the conclusion at the midpoint of my own personal journey that there is frankly no point in wasting time on issues that you cannot change or influence and it's best to optimise time and energy on what you can change and influence.

That means a renewed focus of all of my Speedway time and energy on Eastbourne HG Aerospace Eagles and all associated with it.

We can't influence Covid-19 we have to react to it. We can't influence the Global or UK Speedway direction of travel, we have to abide by regulations laid down.

We'll rely on and trust in those who can in Government and in governance of our Sport to do their jobs, but it's important to share with you some realities of what 2021 might look like at Arlington in terms of the Eastbourne HG Aerospace Eagles.

I think it's important as always to be as transparent and as honest with you as possible about what we are doing, and we will continue to do that end and hopefully a positive outcome and conclusion.

My fellow Director Les Fineing, our Promoter Trevor Geer and myself remain confident that we have the team on and off the track to ride out the storm and difficulties and to be as prepared as we can be to face the future with confidence but with a pragmatic realism.

We have some fantastic helpers and volunteers and together with some wonderfully loyal Sponsors and Supporters hopefully we can enjoy some fantastic and winning Speedway in the months and years ahead. It can't be said often enough so THANK YOU all for your incredible support in the past, the present and hopefully the future.

That level of support deserves 100% of the time that I personally can devote to Speedway, which probably averages 30-40 hours of unpaid time a week; 12 months a year in one way or another, and the ultimate financial risk of running Speedway that is shared with Les Fineing.

As a result, I have decided – with the full and amicable agreement

of Mark Phillips and everyone at Plymouth Gladiators – to step back from all Speedway activity there to focus on Eastbourne. There is some exciting work to be done at The Coliseum in managing and driving forwards the non-Speedway event management of the Stadium to optimise the potential of it, and that will be my only involvement at Plymouth, as in reality 90% of that will be in the vision and optimisation of the Project and mostly done in the winter months.

Financially these are very tough times for everyone. We've had no gate income which is usually 90% of our turnover since September 2019. The support of our Sponsors in allowing us to retain funding that had been paid before the cancelled 2020 season for 2021 or a commitment to help if they can in 2021 if they had not already paid and the truly humbling support of Season and 10-match Speedway Tickets in rolling over those tickets to 2021 has to put it bluntly enabled us to consider returning in 2021.

Without that incredible loyalty, and that of volunteers and others we would not be here.

Despite not running, there have been substantial costs from ongoing contracts and contractual agreements that cannot be cancelled without penalties so Les and I have agreed to put in some additional interim funding in anticipation of being able to start in the late spring and we remain 100% confident of the viability of Speedway at Arlington and will do all we can to sustain, stabilise and grow it in the coming years as a legacy for everyone to enjoy.

A massive thank you to Les for his ongoing support and also to Trevor Geer, not only one of the nicest and most genuine people I have ever met, but a guy who has worked tirelessly throughout the winter as our Promoter and representative in the BSPL General Council.

Trevor has spent countless hours in Zoom meetings working for the love of the Club and thank you barely seems enough for his efforts and for those over many years.

There was a time when Speedway clubs could employ a full-time Promoter and pay them a good living salary and whilst a few remain in the Sport, it is a luxury that we had to dispense with at the end of the 2019 season when Jon moved to work on Stadium activities, and therefore the largely "expenses only" work done by Trevor and until his retirement Mike Bellerby cannot be underestimated.

Our honest and pragmatic assessment for Eastbourne is that a League Speedway season is possible if the virus relents in the face of an organised vaccination programme, the warmer weather of spring and summer and everyone abiding by lockdown rules in these crucial first three months of 2021.

I think we all may have to accept that Covid-19 is never going to go away, will remain as a serious flu variant, and quite possibly require ongoing mass vaccination and possible winter restrictions for many years to come.

Continued on page 9 ➤

Education - in much more than Speedway



Mike Hines



British Speedway is building strong foundations for the future and the days of leaving rider development to chance are thankfully behind us. Under the guidance of Neil Vatcher, the British Youth Championships for riders under 16 has gone from strength to strength and is rightly lauded as a success story. Paul Watson has talked to three young Eagles whose speedway education is continuing apace, even though they have long left the schoolroom.

THE NAME POULTEC has become synonymous with the vocational education of young British speedway riders.

The training specialist has come a long way from its original roots when the business was established in 1997 to offer work-based training to those working in the poultry industry.

The original core of the enterprise is no surprise when you learn activities are based in Norfolk where the turkey king, Bernard 'Bootiful' Matthews established his empire.

Poultec has moved on apace and now offers a broad range of training across many disciplines, including speedway.

Tom Brennan, Drew Kemp and Jason Edwards have all benefited from the expertise of Poultec, where one of the tutors is former Eagle, Olly Allen, who is now joint GB team manager with Simon Stead.

Tom and Jason are following one route for their training while Jason is doing something slightly different.

Poultec and Allen have been able to utilise some top drawer speedway talent who live in the Norwich area – 2017 World Champion, Jason Doyle, and 2020 European Speedway Champion, Robert Lambert.

The course Tom and Drew are following is a Level 2 Diploma in Speedway Business Skills.

It is designed to develop their professional career and their business. As a result they learn about bikes and engineering but other vital factors such as seeking sponsorship running a business, sports psychology, workplace health and safety and media studies/communications.



Tom's course ended in September 2019, but he opted to do another year which should have run until September 2020. However, Covid-19, knocked that on the head.

"You normally go to Poultec three times a month. However, because it's in Norfolk they usually did it all in one week to minimise our costs and travelling.

"There isn't really a typical day at Poultec. One day they may

have hired King's Lynn Speedway for a track day, the next you're in a classroom learning nutrition or in the workshop learning how to maintain your bikes then in the gym later on. It always varies quite a lot because there is so much they can help you with."

Tom's secondary education was completed at Downlands Community School in Hassocks, which is just north of Brighton in Mid Sussex. "You can't really compare my experience at Poultec to my experience at Downlands'. Secondary school for me was my worst nightmare because I just wasn't interested but with Poultec you get more freedom, grow up quicker and you're doing something you enjoy," he said. "It's both physical and theoretical and forces you to be independent. It was like day and night."

Tom selected the Level 2 Diploma in Speedway Business Skills because he thought it would be the best option for him to continue to grow his career and become a more professional in his approach to Speedway, "which it did".

He commented: "I didn't consider any other options, purely because I didn't want to. I'm not really interested in much else. This is my passion and the comparison for me in working winter jobs and riding is incomparable. I had help from Olly Allen in making my decision too, and he confirmed my decision really."

The course also helped Tom diagnose problems that occurred with his bikes which he had not come across before.

"When we weren't in Norfolk, we were following training and diet programs to get us in the best shape for when we did ride and therefore they could see real results in numbers and demonstrated to us how it's beneficial from our own classmates.

"It's helped in many ways from prepping your bikes, to eating healthy when on the road, to how you are on the bike. It doesn't really stop anywhere because it's all the marginal gains and how you interpret them is to how much they help you.

"This is actually very different to school but maybe that's because I was interested in the subject but for me learning new things was what I enjoyed the most, whatever they were.

"Everything we were taught made you think and then you could use it to suit you and that was quite interesting. One of the worst parts is doing the fitness tests, although it's good to see where you're at. They're hard that's for sure," Tom said.

"Now I've completed the course my plan is to put into practice everything I've learnt to push me further in my career."

Instructors monitor their students every step of the way to ensure they have the required skills and knowledge as set out in the programme. When Tom was doing Poultec his contemporaries included Jamie Bursill, Sheldon Davies and Sam Bebee. In the year below came were the likes of Drew, Jason and Dan Gilkes.



Tom on a Poultec track day with Jack Thomas, Kelsey Dugard and Alfie Bowtell.



Drew Kemp's story



Tiffani Graveling

Fitness training is part of the Poultec Speedway course.

Drew, like Tom is following the Level 2 Diploma in Speedway Business Skills

He said: "I've done about a year-and-a-half of a three-year course. I missed a bit going to Australia and then I went once in 2020 before lockdown and it hasn't restarted since."

He was used to attending for three days, once a month.

"Wednesday would be classroom in the morning, gym in the afternoon. We'd have a day in the classroom or engineering centre on Thursday and then Friday would be a track day – usually at King's Lynn," he said.

Drew is a former pupil of Claydon High School on the outskirts of Ipswich and said Poultec "is more" with less discipline

"It's perfect for someone wanting to get into speedway and has benefited my career.

"I did have an option to learn mechanics at college, but I figured with my speedway I would miss too much college time and wouldn't have got the most out of the course," he said.

Poultec offers classroom tuition backed by on-the-job learning at the company's engineering centre and, of course, the speedway track.

Drew said: "It has helped me by learning about things that surround the actual racing. Organising flights is a good example.

"I'm learning about what I love to do and how to have the best career in speedway. The worst part is that it is only three days a month. It would be good if it was more regular."

Drew's aim is to become the best speedway rider he can be and believes the most important things he is learning is "everything around speedway, the business side, presenting yourself - things a lot of riders don't think about".

Course contemporaries include Jason Edwards and Dan Gilkes.



Steve Hone

Drew was just 14 when he was invited by Ollly Allen to a taster day with Poultec which led to him taking up the course.



Jason Edwards' story

As stated earlier, Jason's course at Poultec is different and he is completing the City and Guilds Level 2 NVQ Diploma in Performing Jason explained: "The speedway business skills is something that we are completing at the speedway side of Poultec.

"This is meant to be a two-year course, where we would go in for three days a month, every month. This, however, was stopped through lockdown. As we all come from different areas this side hasn't gone back yet due to that. So I'm not too sure what's happening on that side of my course.

"It is why I want to just get on and eventually get the Level 3 qualification purely on the engineering side."

Jason told *Flying High* how the Poultec operation is set up.

"Poultec is split into two sides. You've got the main centre where all the other courses are such as butchery, beauty, fitness etc and that's at South Green Park, Mattishall, near East Dereham.

"And then you've got the engineering side, where I've been going now. It's on the Hendersen Industrial Estate in Norwich.

"This is a purpose-built facility, with the machine room on one end, with lathes, a mill, pillar drills, a welding machine and plenty of tools. Then you've got the middle room which is mainly used as a classroom and then finally the end room which has plenty of tools for working on the mechanical side but is also set-up with computers so lessons can take place."

Jason's course has been continuing with the Level 2 and 3 engineering with on-the-job learning at the Martin Hagon factory.

He told us what a typical day could be like on the engineering side of his training. "Often in the morning we'll either design a part or be given a part which will be made. Often this is to show that you are able to do all the different techniques but other parts will be more on the practical side that would be able to be used.

"So, the mornings are normally spent on the practical side, recently mainly on the lathe and the mill and then the afternoon Olly will have set some classroom based work on the theory side. Part of that is the writing up, explaining and reviewing what's been made but also practices within the workplace and other things like that," Jason said.

The speedway side which myself, Tom and Drew were doing is three days.

Day 1: Morning we do lots of classroom based things, from mechanical understanding of different aspects, nutritional tasks and then also the business side of speedway from sponsorship, travel arrangements and more. Then In the afternoon it's on to the gym, where we'll normally do a spin session or circuits. What we have been doing is fitness tests, so then we can see what and where to work on.

Day 2: This is spent at the engineering centre, where we either do work on the bikes they have there, think of ways to improve our own parts and using the machines and tools to make various parts.

Day 3: When its possible, this is a track day. If this is cancelled, often due to the weather, we will just spend another day continuing with where we left off in the engineering centre."

Jason is a former pupil of Mayflower High School in Billericay, Essex, and that's where he took his GCSEs – revision often taking place in the back of the van while on the way to speedway matches around the country.

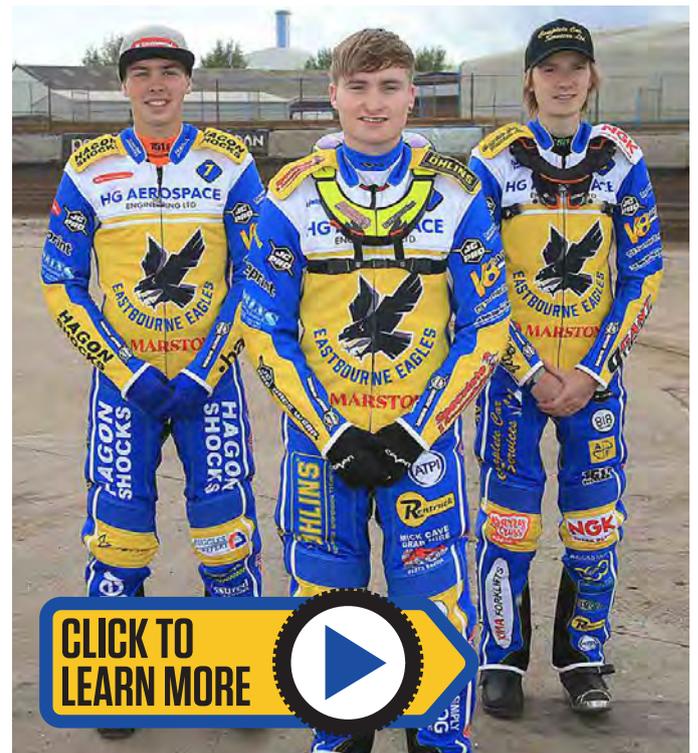
He commented: "Poultec is very different from school purely because its more focussed in a particular area. It's a lot more independent and what you put in is what you get out of it where I guess at school, if your falling behind the teachers will get you to catch up, where now, if you don't get on well that's your fault ...in the nicest way. I looked into different options, one of which was carpentry but Poultec its flexible and flexible is what you need when you are racing six months of the year.

"I didn't want to compromise or miss any racing so it all works well and complements each other well," he said.

Jason also paid tribute to Martin Hagon and said the Factory work was adding hugely to his skills and knowledge.

"Martin has been unbelievable to me from the start of my speedway career and I asked whether there would be a place for me. He let me start working there and it's been great and I've learnt lots," he said. "I genuinely believe having a greater understanding of engineering will help a lot with my career. Mechanics, assembly and making of other things will all help.

"The best part of the course is definitely when you have finished the part you are making. It is just a good feeling really – not the same as winning races though, nothing replaces that," Jason said. 🦋



**CLICK TO
LEARN MORE**



Jason, Tom and Drew - three HG Aerospace Eagles who have been learning their trade at Poultec

THANKS TO THE HG AEROSPACE EAGLES RACE SUIT SPONSORS 2021

EDWARD KENNETT



SPONSORED BY
**TRIANGLE
FIRE SYSTEMS**

LEWI KERR



SPONSORED BY
**KEVIN & DEAN
TOOKEY**

RICHARD LAWSON



SPONSORED BY
**SOUTH EAST
METAL SERVICES LTD**

KYLE NEWMAN



SPONSORED BY
**WAYNE
CLARKE**

TOM BRENNAN



SPONSORED BY
**JC
REFRIGERATION**

DREW KEMP



SPONSORED BY
**THE PARRY
FAMILY**

JASON EDWARDS



SPONSORED BY
**M SHUTTLEWOOD
LTD**

ELITEDISCOS
PROFESSIONAL DISCOTHEQUE

Mobile Disco
Eastbourne / Sussex

www.elitediscos.net

David Graveling
Property Maintenance

07976652813 / 01424 428311
www.davidgraveling.com

◀ Continued from page 3

That's the scenario we as a Club and a business are now preparing for.

I don't think as things stand that we can have any realistic hope of starting before early to mid-May as an absolute best case scenario. I think that currently any earlier is unrealistic and only raises false expectations. If we can, it will be an unexpected bonus.

We hope to be in a 12-strong Championship League, with a programme of at least 15-16 home meetings, more if we progress in League Play Offs and Cup, and including a few special Meetings, one of which will be our delayed 90th Anniversary Speedway-weekend on September 4 and 5.

I certainly expect to see plenty of our MSDL Eastbourne Seagulls backed by The Save Thurrock Hammers Campaign side in action too once we start the season. I am very excited at the prospect of working more closely with all of the wonderful people seeking to return the Thurrock Hammers to the Sport and to welcoming Thurrock fans to their and our MSDL Meetings.

I can also reveal that we are one of two unnamed Clubs to have enquired about having a team too in the NDL (National Development League). This is in addition to our Championship Team not instead of it and that needs to be made crystal clear.

It is both as a backstop as we had initially thought an early April start was possible at the time of the application and had sufficient dates to enter a development team in that League in addition to the Championship, and as an exciting additional option.

That now looks less likely with COVID-19 so rampant and a probably delayed start to 2021, so we will be applying at the NDL AGM, subject to the prior approval of the BSPL, to have at least the option of staging some NDL level fixtures either in the NDL or as possible "open meetings".

If it happens the experience and knowledge of our team manager Will Pottinger in NDL Racing at Cradley Heathens will be a big asset as well.

This move will also ensure that should we have to stage initial meetings with a reduced crowd limit below 750, that would be too low to sustain Championship level Speedway as financially viable, we can stage competitive Speedway to a lower level and lower financial "break even" with the plan to stage Championship matches as soon as restrictions and fiscal viability arrive.

It's vitally important to have the flexibility to have a Plan A, Plan B, Plan C etc in the hope that we can act quickly and decisively to the ongoing situation. We will keep you all fully informed at all times and try as always to explain the logic behind our decision making.

What will change and which will be difficult I know for some, at least for the foreseeable future is your Match Day/Evening experience. The Health and Safety of everyone will be paramount and above every other consideration – supporters, sponsors, staff, riders and essential services like paramedics and stadium security.

We are very fortunate that in Barry Johnson, who works on behalf of the Stadium for Stock Car and Speedway Health and Safety Regulation, we have an outstanding and servant of the Club and we are massively appreciative of the work that Barry, Neil Hollebon, Roy Prodger and the incredible financial support Eric, Margaret and Paul Dugard continue to do for Arlington Stadium and the enjoyment of us all.

All Speedway fixtures ticketing for the foreseeable future will be online, or pre-purchased Season and 10-Match Ticket (all 2020 Season and 10-Match Tickets will be valid and have priority in any restricted crowd numbers at any level).

This will ensure Covid-19 compliance and us having contact details of everyone present prior to the meeting so we can create a "bubble" to notify quickly of any issues up to 14 days afterwards.

The opportunity to meet and mingle with riders before and after the meeting won't be possible either for obvious reasons until the Covid-19 situation is much improved.

Access to food and drink outlets will have to be managed within strict Covid-19 regulations and may be subject to sudden change. There may be a limit on crowds and there will have to be some Social Distancing in various parts of the Stadium.

Entry and exit to the Stadium for some will be via outdoor gates, not turnstiles.

Our track shop and merchandise will be largely online.

Masks and sanitisers will have to be used and regulations complied with.

This may seem draconian and very 2020, but it will now likely impact on at least some, most likely all of 2021.

What I can say having seen and been involved in putting on a couple of matches at Plymouth under similar restrictions in September 2020, is that it can still be an incredibly safe and enjoyable experience and once you smell the Castrol R, hear the bikes, experience the Live Product, it's still fantastic, somewhat cathartic and it's our job to make it safe and enjoyable for you to come, and to want you to come again and again.

To say I cannot wait is a massive understatement.

This Covid-19 reality actually transcends competitive Speedway too at Arlington.

We want to start training and practice sessions as soon as possible, naturally. However, we will have to apply for and meet, as in all scenarios, National Government and Local Authority consents and regulations, medical cover availability and I have to say, a degree of common sense and community spirit and awareness.

We cannot ethically, morally consider starting whilst A+E departments are full, ambulances are queueing outside and our wonderful public and care and associated key workers are under immense physical and mental strain.

We will not encourage anyone to travel in and out of and through Tiers until it is legally and ethically right to do so, the overriding consideration won't be money, quick financial gain or taking risks; it will be "when we can and it is legally, ethically and within guidelines to do so", not a minute before.

We do have a lot to announce commercially and some very exciting surprises up our sleeves IF we can get started in line within the above timescales.

More news of these will be announced in the coming weeks when it feels right to do so and hopefully in the February Edition of *Flying High*.

These are as we said at the beginning unprecedented in peacetime times, I hope that you enjoy this Edition of *Flying High*, above all, stay safe, stay healthy, reach out if you need help and hopefully we can all meet up and enjoy the wonderful Arlington experience soon.

In the next edition we will both pay tribute to all of those that keep the Show on the road off the track, covering media, administration and match day roles and also announce some new roles and opportunities both paid and voluntary (but allowing free entry to matches).

In the meantime, thanks again to everyone involved in producing *Flying High*, a concept turned to reality of which we are very proud.

***The Management of Eastbourne HG Aerospace Eagles and The Eastbourne Seagulls powered by The Save Thurrock Hammers Campaign.**



DEAN BARKER at 50

Last month we tracked the earlier parts of Dean Barker's career and this month we chart how he came back from an injury which looked to have ended his career.

In 1997 at Arlington, his arm was trapped in the bike after a horror crash. The humerus in his arm was broken and when he woke up, he had no feeling in his arm and hand. His radial nerve had snapped.

This part also reveals how the model Jordan came to be one of his sponsors.

DEAN BARKER NEEDED some good fortune at this point and it came with the help of Dugard's and one of the company's senior managers, Bob Bicknell, who linked Dean with a Harley Street specialist.

Almost immediately, Dean and Bob Dugard were off to London for a consultation.

"I walked into this room and it was like Sherlock Holmes, all olde worlde," Dean recalls.

After an examination Dean was asked: 'What are you doing tomorrow?'

And that was the cue for him to be in Stanmore hospital 24 hours later for a radial nerve graft.

That afternoon the specialist told Dean: "I have done a radial nerve graft which is like thousands of little wires. I probably won't get them all right but I will give it a good go.

His arm was in a full-length cast, originally for two weeks.

The cast was due to come off just before he went on holiday to the paradise that is the Seychelles but there was a mix-up and the job couldn't be done. So off he went with his arm in a cast but that was a minor setback in the grand scheme of things.

"I was absolutely gutted that I could not too much out there," he said.

Then it was a waiting to game to see what happened.

"Your nerve grew a millimetre per day. After two months, I tapped my arm I knew where it was because you had feeling. After about 18 months, my fingers started to move. Of course, it has never been 100 per cent."

At that point, he saw a road racer who had a similar injury was returning with a special glove and one was manufactured for Dean by a company called Spidi, which specialises in motorcycling clothing.

"They wanted to help me and they made me a special hand for my left hand, the clutch with support in the glove. At that point, I couldn't use my tear-offs because I couldn't take my hand off the handlebars so we had a German visor with the blowing mechanism. Basically, I would have to blow to make a new film to clear it.

"You got used to it. Your mind does a fantastic job because you want to grab your tear-off but I have to keep my hand on the handlebars. I had to remember I had a pipe in my mouth.

"It was complicated but I got some good results. I went from reserve and I think I rode at every number from 1 to 7 and had a very good year. I got rider of the year and that was comeback after having 18 months off the bike."

At the point of the crash he had been on the verge of the GP Challenge.

"I had been riding in Sweden and rode at Västervik the week before and had a really good meeting. I was so looking forward to it. My mindset after the crash was that I'm still going there, even though I had broken my arm. I was plastered up and swelling and thought I am going."

To this day, Dean is not sure when the damage to the nerve was done - in the crash or during a pinning operation. He was told he had finger movements immediately after the crash.

After a good season for Dean in 1999, everyone at Arlington went into the 2000 campaign with high hopes and an eye on becoming Millennium Champions. Injury again dogged Dean and he declared his season was over with knee ligament damage.

"I said to Cookie (Jon Cook) that I am done for the season and we got to the week before the 'final' and Stefan Danno got hurt and we had nobody there.

"Jon came to me saying 'we've no-one to ride' so I said 'let me try Jon'. We went over for a practise and for the match I iced up my leg and I got four or five points and we won the title. The very next day I was in hospital for the operation. At least I got the celebrations this time."

In 1995, when Eastbourne won the league, Dean was in hospital after breaking his leg in the title-clinching meeting against Exeter.

In 2000 it wasn't the Grand Final as we now know after Play Offs. In that year King's Lynn came to Arlington for a league match which would decide the title and, of course, the Eagles triumphed before a massive crowd.

Dean really found



Mike Hinves

his form again in 2003.

"I had a fall back from 1994. All of a sudden it was there again.

"I had new bikes and Eddie Bull, who was a great engine tuner, was with me at my testimonial and set my bikes up, I had a fantastic testimonial meeting.

"That year was unbelievable.

In 2003, I came second British Final at Eastbourne and I didn't make one start that night. The engine was fine and when I changed the clutch for the one on my other bike at a subsequent meeting, the bike was like a rocket.

"In the workshop we found the clutch springs were totally different to the ones we had been using. ➤




Dean also had a good career in Sweden, mostly with Målilla. He did a few meetings in Poland and Germany but was never a rider to be criss-crossing Europe all the time. He also broke the track record in Brokstedt in a Bundesliga match.

Mike Hinves

Sponsored by a celebrity

ONE OF DEAN'S BEST friends, Scott, starting going out with the celebrity model Jordan (Katie Price).

As a result, Dean came to know Katie well. When Jordan took part in the 2004 I'm A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here, she was wooed by Peter Andre and Scott flew out to Australia to find out what was going on.

Dean recalls: "Me, my friend Scott and some other friends had been out in America just having a holiday travelling around the Las Vegas area. We had Billy Janniro with us the whole time. We had a right good laugh." And it was while they were in the USA that the love storm broke.

"We got home and there was Press all outside Scott's house. I got home and he rang me and asked if I wanted to go to Australia in a minute. This was about five-o'clock in the afternoon.

"Scott said we have the ten-o'clock flight tonight so I quickly packed. When we went from Scott's house all the paparazzi were there."

On the flight out they were in "cattle class" but Scott saw singer-songwriter Brian McFadden, who was married to Kerry Katona, who was also in the Jungle.

As a result, Dean and Scott were upgraded to first class.

"I got into these fancy bed. I had taken some strong sleeping tablets for the trip and within seconds, I was asleep. Next thing I knew we were coming into land and I had missed the whole thing," Dean said.

"Once we left Singapore, we said goodbye to him."

Jordan wouldn't talk to Scott because of what was going on in the jungle but she was in contact with Dean via text. When we got home, I asked her about a bit of sponsorship. She wanted her name on the suit and that was it really. I promoted one of her sites - nothing glamorous," he said.



Mike Patrick (The John Somerville Collection)

World Under-21 hopes dashed

IN HIS LAST YEAR as an Under-21, Dean went to Holsted tand won the qualifying. He and Joe Screen were then sent to Russia for the next round but the visas didn't arrive.

After a huge row, a run-off between Dean and Joe was staged at Coventry to get in the world under-21.

"I think it was all wrong. I won the round before we went to Russia. We didn't get to Russia. Screenie had a few years but he beat me in the run off. Fair play he got there.

"It didn't happen."

I heard those words World Team Cup and thought I have to do this ...probably one of the best things I ever did in my life. We got to the final and had two good runs before the final.

◀ "It was a mistake but obviously it wasn't meant to happen."

Dean was and remains upset that he didn't get the pick for the GP at Cardiff having come second in the British Final.

"I had heard rumours they were going to ask me to be in the World Team Cup and I was going to tell them to stick it. I didn't get the Cardiff ride and I thought, sod it.

"I was second in the British Final and was flying.

"The World team Cup came and I was at Poole and Middlo said you are in the World Team Cup.

"Cookie said don't bite off your nose to spite your face. I heard those words World Team Cup and thought I have to do this.

"It is probably one of the best things I ever did in my life.

"We got to the final but we had two good runs before the final. We didn't cut the mustard on the night but we were there."

Dean was looking to be back at Eastbourne in 2004 but found he was out. The choice appears to have been between Dean and David Norris and Floppy got the nod. He was intending to end his career there and then but he had two phone calls within 20 minutes. One was from Ronnie Russell at Arena Essex and the other was from Trevor Swales at Peterborough.

"I wasn't mega keen on the Arena track and I liked Peterborough more than Arena but I wasn't over keen on the travel up there. I know it was not far but far enough.

"I went for Arena and started off the first two meetings against Eastbourne like a bullet."

At that point Ronnie Russell praise him for his team riding and "from that point I went downhill", Dean told *Flying High*.

"I don't know why or what. I just could not get it together.

Ronnie is such a lovely, lovely man and I felt so bad at the end of the season. I rode and rode and I let Ronnie down so bad by losing my interest in the sport but turning up every week and just scoring as many points as I could. I should have been there to race but I think the Eastbourne thing, getting rid of me, I thought I was on a losing battle.

"In the first two meeting I wanted to put it over Eastbourne and thought have 'you done the right thing or the wrong thing'.



Mike Hinves

'If you can read this, you're too close'

RIDERS OFTEN put 'messages' on the back of their Kevlars and Dean once sported:

'If you can read this, you're too close'.

"You have nicknames on there. I had Zippy on there because I talk too much. Zippy was always one of my things. Ronnie, as Ronnie Barker was another one. It was only what people named me over the years," he said.

"Then I had Mr Barker. I had all sorts. 'If you can read this, you're too close' was a bit of a joke. It is like something you will see on the back of a van, something really stupid.

"It had no meaning to it all up.

"I could have pointed it at Flop," he laughed [referencing the crash at Arlington where David Norris ran into the back of Dean which resulted in his arm injuries]. Flop is a very good mate of mine. He was a fabulous rider and I think the pair of us were probably the best team riders around Eastbourne, in my eyes. We did it for many, many years."

"They probably did the right thing because Dave Noris turned his career around and turned into a world class rider."

Dean felt his "head was not in the right place" and turned down a chance to represent his country again in the 2004 World Team Cup at Arlington. Dean set himself up in 2005 with all new equipment and was back with Eastbourne.

"I started riding well and went to Arena Essex and scored a bag full of points and Ronnie Russell said to me 'why couldn't you have done for me?' I said 'Ronnie, all I can do is apologise. My head was not in it.

"Even Matt Ford rang me when I was at Arena and said you need to come to Poole and get everything running. I told him I have done a deal with Ronnie but I had lost my mojo.

Deano's Eastbourne career in numbers

	Matches	Rides	Points	BP	Total	Average
1999	Elite League, Knock-Out Cup and Craven Shield					
Dean Barker	38	178	278	35	313	7.03
2000	Elite League, Knock-Out Cup and Craven Shield					
Dean Barker	33	139	200	44	244	5.73
2001	Elite League, Knock-Out Cup and Craven Shield					
Dean Barker	29	123	181	28	209	6.80
2002	Elite League, Knock-Out Cup and Craven Shield					
Dean Barker	36	154	238	38	276	7.17
2003	Elite League, Knock-Out Cup and Craven Shield					
Dean Barker	42	187	331	51	382	8.17

Additional Information and Statistics courtesy of Ken Burnett

"But in 2005, the racing came back to me and in 2006 I was riding really well and broke my shoulder.

"I thought then that's the end and to this day I am still seeing surgeons but they won't replace it yet. I am at the point where I will have to have another operation in the future." 🦋



Dean Barker's farewell.

Mike Hinves



**HG AEROSPACE
ENGINEERING LTD**

HG Aerospace LTD are an aerospace manufacturing component company.
We manufacture and supply components for both military and commercial aerospace companies.

☎ (+44) 1424 853 444 🌐 <https://hgaerospaceltd.com>

🦅 Proud Community Partners with The Eastbourne Fineprint Eagles 🦅

www.eastbourne-speedway.com/community



ROBINS
of Herstmonceux

Top Soil, Waste Transfer, Crusher Hire, Roadways, Aggregates, Coal & Garden Supplies

☎ **01323 833181** ✉ enquiries@robinsofherstmonceux.co.uk

Proud long-term sponsors of Edward Kennett
and the Eastbourne Fineprint Eagles

<https://robinsofherstmonceux.co.uk>




OH WOW!

THAT

MOMENT

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU KID...

Davey Watt seems to be going to extraordinary lengths to get a close-up look at Eagle Cameron Woodward. Capturing the dramatic moment was photographer Mike Hinves.



Mike Hinves

signwizard

Eastbourne & East Sussex'
leading sign Manufacturer,
Designer and Installer.

www.sign-wizard.co.uk
01323 371686



SPEEDWAY
Chat Show

www.facebook.com/SpeedwayChatShow

Turner Engineering

 Remanufacturer of Land Rover engines,
supplier of new engine parts

 Engines

 Cylinder Heads

 Parts

 +44 (0) 1342 834713

 www.turnerengineering.co.uk

 **V8**engines.eu



01323 763212



Hailsham Rd, Stone Cross, East Sussex BN24 5BU

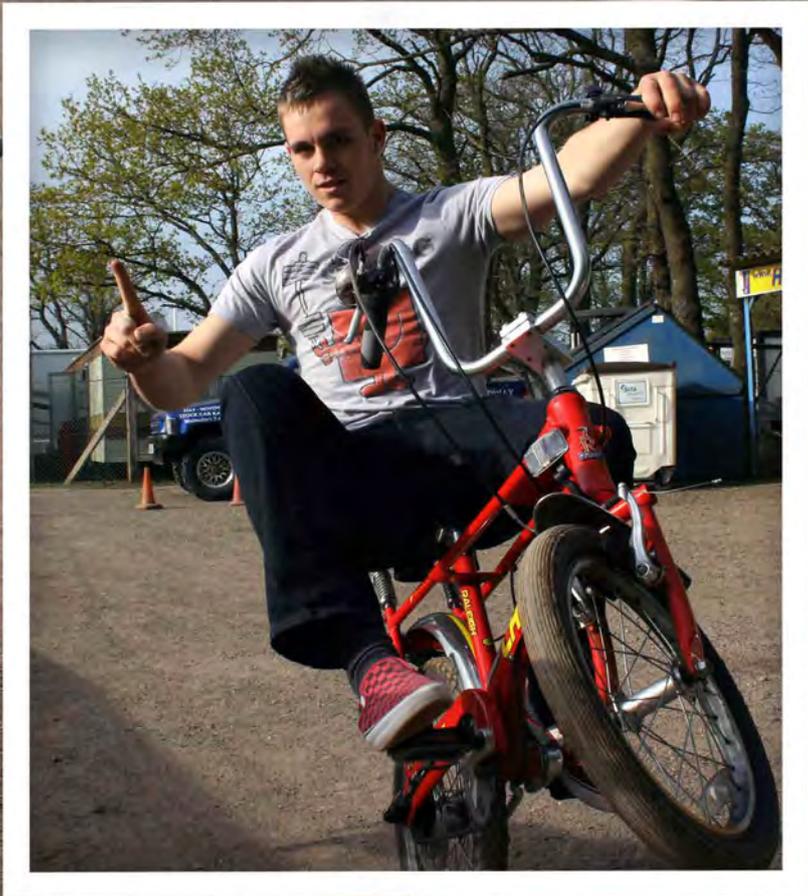


LEWIS BRIDGER ALWAYS HAD great confidence on a bike - whether it was a Raleigh Chopper or a 500cc speedway machine. Lewis is pictured on the bicycle near to the little training track at Arlington Stadium by Pete Lulham and pulling a spectacular wheelie by Mike Hinves. Many, including the then *Speedway Star* reporter for Eastbourne, Paul Watson, tipped Bridger to go all the way and become world champion but it was not to be as he lost his love of the sport and dropped out. Amazing to think he is still only 31.

"Everyone at Eastbourne HG Aerospace Eagles is delighted to see Lewis return to the Sport for a Premiership Club that at time of writing we are not allowed to name.

We can reveal that in the midst of an injury and suspension crisis in August 2019 we did hold tentative talks with Lewis's representatives about a return, but at the late stage of the season, and having been advised a higher than anticipated average by the BSPL, we could not progress the idea at that point.

We wish Lewis well on his return and hopefully we will see him in action at Arlington in the near future"





50/50 winners

WINNERS OF THE January Eagles 50/50 draw were:

- 1 **Noel and Sue King** - £300
- 2 **K. Fell** - £125
- 3 **Mark Horsman** - £75

Keep your eye on club's social media for news of the next draw which will come at the beginning of February.

High News



Spalding programme

AN INTERESTING PIECE of memorabilia has turned up showing the Eastbourne Eagles rode at Holbeach in South Lincolnshire, just before the outbreak of World War Two.

This meeting had, apparently, not been previously recorded in any history, although that is now being rectified.

The programme came to light on eBay and shows Holbeach and Spalding took on Eastbourne at the 370 yards Bell End track which was out in the countryside near Holbeach at a place known as Whaplode St Catherine.

Now that really is remote.

The home side were known as the Tulips, referencing an important horticultural industry in the area,

The match was over 18 heats on Sunday, May 14, and the Eagles were hammered 79-29.

Two interesting sidelights:

The home team raced in the red and green helmet colours, while the away team was in the black and the white.

One of the home reserves was named as "Crasher" Warren.

Speedway artist

SOPHIE BROOKS is a speedway artist and fan. The Ipswich Witches and Mildenhall Fen Tigers supporter first started drawing in April 2019, with a picture of Elliot Kelly, sharing her work on her Instagram channel @speedwayartbysophie.

She commented: "When the first lockdown happened, I started to do more drawings and got a lot of response from the riders and even plenty of requests. I have now done over 150 drawings."

To follow Sophie on Instagram click here.



Eagles promise digital experience

EASTBOURNE SPEEDWAY director Ian Jordan was again on the airwaves this month, taking part in a BBC Sussex and Surrey evening sports programme where he was interviewed by Tim Durrans.

It gave Ian the opportunity to explain to a wider audience the plans for a more digital meeting experience at Arlington, for those who want it.

Don't worry, we will still be doing the traditional printed programme and the announcements from Kevin Coombes.

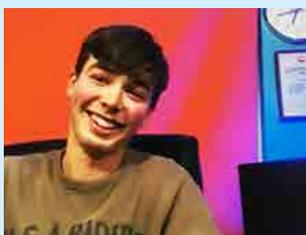
If you missed the news, all the details are on the club website. Click here.



The Five-1 Speedway Show

AS WE MENTIONED in edition one of *Flying High*, former Eagle, Niall Strudwick, launched a new podcast, The Five-1 Speedway Show on YouTube and Spotify. Since then, Niall has racked up 19 episodes of his show, including six editions with a specific Eagles interest: Martin Dugard, Jason Edwards, Lewi Kerr, Drew Kemp, Tom Brennan and Simon Gustafsson.

Click on a thumbnail to the Right to launch.



Cameron at the controls

CAMERON Woodward, who featured in edition one of *Flying High*, is a "referee in training" and is "progressing well", according to a report in the *Speedway Star*.

Cam was at the controls at the Phil Crump Trophy in Mildura, Victoria, on January 2.

He won the inaugural running of the event in 2013.

FOR ALL the latest news from the Eastbourne HG Aerospace Eagles, check out our website, join our mailing list or follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.. That's where you will see news from your club first.



THE JOHN SOMERVILLE COLLECTION

View and purchase images from the illustrious history of Eastbourne Eagles and the wonderful world of speedway at

www.skidmarks1928.com

Fineprint

SUSSEX LTD

**QUALITY PRINTING
AT COMPETITIVE PRICES**



From Corporate Identity, through Design Concepts to the final printed article.

**NO JOB TOO BIG
or TOO SMALL**

07949 615710 for a price or advice on your next printing job or project

Fineprint (Sussex) Limited, 17 Burgess Road, Hastings, East Sussex TN35 4NR
Hastings : 01424 427676 ■ Mobile : 07949 615710 ■ Email : les@fineprintsl.co.uk

www.fineprintsl.co.uk

STAFF CARD

NUMBER 3:

John Strudwick



John Strudwick (right) with Alan Roscoe at Arlington.

We turn the spotlight on volunteers who play a big part behind the scenes in making sure everything is all right on the night. This month, John Strudwick.

Q: What do you do on a speedway night?

A: I am "Clerk of the Course" at Eastbourne Speedway. Mmm ...I hear you say, what does that involve?

To be honest, it was quite a shock to me. My first season was 2019 in this role and at times it was a bit of a baptism of fire.

My Speedway day starts when I arrive at the track around 4pm and there are usually a few barriers to put out in the pits area and I do a quick wander through the pits checking to make sure things like fire extinguishers, sand buckets and waste oil tanks are in place.

By this time key track staff are arriving, the machine examiners Jeff Donovan and Dave Mitchell are usually first to arrive.

At about 5pm the staff programmes are given to me and this allows the machine examiners and myself to prepare the paperwork that must be handed to the meeting referee before the meeting can start.

Usually most of the riders have arrived and in the pits by 5.30pm and I like to go and introduce myself and have a chat with the riders from both sides.

It's also nice to catch up with riders and mechanics I haven't seen in ages.

The meeting referee has also usually arrived and started his/her safety inspection around this time. Again, I make a point of introducing myself and make myself available if required and inform the

referee about the format for the rider presentation, interval and planned track grades.

I must say that in my first season as Clerk of the Course I have found all the referees that came to Arlington incredibly helpful. It's around 6.15pm when my righthand man arrives at the track Alan Roscoe, his role is the pit marshal and assistant Clerk of the Course and without Alan's help I probably wouldn't be Clerk of the Course.

Things start to get busy for me from now. I'm trying to find all the necessary people to sign the "meeting certificate form" these include the team managers, team captains, and the medical team. At 6.45pm, I contact Kevin Coombes to announce that the pits are closed to the public, bikes get warmed up and I make sure that all marshal positions are covered. Alan (Rosco) then organises the bikes on track for the rider's presentation.

It is usually about 7.25pm when riders and any team mascots are called up to pit gate and are ready for the presentation of riders and it is over to Kevin (Coombes) for the rider's introduction.

I then make sure I have radio contact with race control and have a little bit of banter with Pete Lulham up in the box and make sure the medical team can hear me.

When the riders are back in the pits, it's on to heat one.

Once the racing starts the meeting more or less follows the laid out programmed format. All I have to do is to keep the referee updated and vice versa with team changes and any requests from team managers i.e. extra time for a rider, track grades etc.

Hopefully, the meeting gets to heat 15 without any major incidents. My last job of



the meeting is to relay to race control the riders for heat 15. Once the last heat has been completed and the victorious team has done a lap of honour, the meeting is declared closed. Once all engines have stopped in the pits, I then allow the security staff to open the pits to the public. I generally get to leave the stadium at around 11.30pm.

The one thing I feel I should mention is delays to meetings after a serious crash, it's down to me to give the okay as to when the meeting can commence.

Delays are usually down to waiting for an ambulance to arrive. The paramedic must stay with the rider, particularly when any medication has been administered and has to do a formal handover to the ambulance crew. This takes as long as it takes and until the paramedic is back on the centre green racing cannot commence.

Q: How did you become involved?

A: Well I suppose I first got involved back in 1993 when myself, my wife Annette and my son Niall used to stand at the start line, Niall was just three years old and used to stand on a set of steps,

Niall was a fan of the starting marshal Alan Rolf and used to mimic his actions (the Argus ran an article on him in the sports page) and we got to know Alan and Terry, the start marshals, very well.

I'm not too sure how it came about but Alan invited me to join them at the start line as a raker, that's where it all started for me.

Q: How long have you been involved?

A: I have been involved in speedway at Arlington for about 28 years now, I have been a start line assistant, track marshal, machine examiner and mechanic. I have helped run the junior track, organised teams of people to take down and put up the air fence every week. My most enjoyable role was out on the junior track out the back at Arlington, there were so many great people involved, all wanting speedway to be the greatest of sports.

There was so much talent in young riders at that time, I miss those times so much. The worst role was taking the air fence down when the meeting was abandoned half way through due to rain, taking it down while it's still raining was an awful job, but again there was a great team of parents and lads we just got the job done.

Q: When did you start watching speedway and where?

Crikey, now you're asking. I think it was back in 1969 when I first went to watch live speedway at Arlington (I have vague memories of watching speedway on TV in the good old days of black and white telly).

I had been to many grass track meetings



John Strudwick with son Niall.

before but speedway seemed to attract me the most. For me I couldn't get enough of speedway I remember it ran alternate Sundays with bangers and sometimes they were long fortnights.

Q: What was Speedway's attraction?

A: To be absolutely honest I love watching all forms of motorcycle sport from road racing to trials but speedway (and to a slightly lesser degree grass track) always came out on top because as some of you know that I'm only 5ft 3in tall and I can see all the racing from one spot.

It always seemed to me whenever I went to watch road racing or some motocross meetings there was always someone 6ft tall in front of me and I couldn't see what was happening.

So the main attraction was I could hang on the boards at Arlington see all the racing from the riders presentation to the final heat. It's a team sport on motorcycles there is nothing else like it, plus meetings that go to heat 15 you just can't beat a last heat decider the crowd cheering a home win has always given me goosebumps.

Q: Who is your favourite Eagle and why?

A: Martin Dugard and Gordon Kennett. I have given this a lot of thought and I can't decide, I have watched them both from youngsters to becoming top international speedway riders their highs and their lows they are the top Eagles for me. 🐦



John's son Niall was the Eastbourne Eagles' number 8 rider for the 2015 season.

Chris Drewery Photography

Mike Hinves

SUBSCRIBE, SAVE
MONEY AND GET
Speedway Star
DELIVERED DIRECTLY
TO YOUR DOOR...

...OR DIGITAL DEVICE
Speedway Star

is also available in digital format.
Guaranteed to be delivered to
your desktop or app. first thing Thursday.
For digital version please visit:
www.exacteditions.com/speedwaystar



you subscribe to the print version of **Speedway Star** and have not received your weekly copy following Friday's postal deliveries we can now offer you the opportunity to access the digital magazine for one week **free** of charge.

Simply **e-mail** your name, postcode and, if you know it, your reference number to: ssdigital@pinegen.co.uk and a link will be sent back to you as soon as possible. This new email account at Pinegen will be monitored seven days a week to ensure a swift reply to your request.

A replacement print copy can be sent. **Please state this in your e-mail** if required, although these will most likely not be despatched from our Surbiton office until Monday morning and can still face delays with Royal Mail.

www.speedwaystar.net



Time for change in British Speedway?

THIS REALLY IS the time for history to repeat itself and for the British League to be reborn.

The Covid-19 pandemic wiped out the 2020 season and there is little chance of getting started on the 2021 campaign any time soon.

Since we last stood on the terraces, the world has changed and speedway's world should change too.

Personally, I can only see 2021 being a "holding" season but one which paves the way for a big change in 2022.

Even if the nation tames the Covid beast, some of speedway's problems will not go away.

Polish Speedway will continue "hogging" all the best riders and limiting their ability to race elsewhere.

He who pays the piper etc.

The days of jetting around Europe on cheap flights are over for now. The plethora of inexpensive flights to continental destinations will hit the riders as well as those of us who like a short-break holiday in a European city.

Brexit – I use the word with trepidation – has also changed the Speedway landscape.

Riders from outside the UK will need permits and that's an additional hurdle. I'm not sure how that's going to pan out.

The Speedway Star is often "in the know" about what is going to happen but sometimes you have to read between the lines and put 2 + 2 together.

I've just read Neil Vatcher talking about having two young Brits in reserve positions (remember the Fast Track Reserves in the Elite League from a few years back).

I've also re-read the statement after the BSPL annual meeting

which refers to, and I quote: There is a clear pathway for the development of British Speedway and young British riders, not just in 2021 but in the years ahead."

No complaints from me, if British Speedway goes down the route of having two young Brits at reserve.

It makes sense, rather than paying for a foreign rider to take the place with all his extra associated costs.

Poland has a similar rule. Do you see the trend? Polish Speedway looks after No 1 and puts its interests before anyone else.

If you are a student of British Speedway history you will know in the early 1960s that the sport was in many ways on its uppers.

The top league was down to seven clubs and the Provincial League (second division) operated outside Speedway Control Board authority.

Everyone kissed and made up and in 1965 the British League was formed.

I recall that foreign riders (didn't include Aussies) were few and far between. Was there a limit on the number of Swedes?

Anyway, the crowds flocked to Speedway and boom years followed.

Something along those lines would not go amiss in 2022.

**The opinions in this article are the writer's own and should not be interpreted as representing the position of Eastbourne Speedway, its directors or promoter.*

***Adrian Dent lives near to the Kent/Sussex border and watches the Eagles and (whisper it) the Kent Kings.**



Action from 2018 with Drew Kemp (white, in action for Kent), Tom Brennan (blue), Georgie Wood (red) and Jack Thomas (yellow).



On Two Minutes...

JASON EDWARDS

EASTBOURNE EAGLES

1. How did you first get involved with speedway?

I first got involved in speedway when I was three or four years old. I just remember watching Jason Crump win the World Championship and for me, being a little kid, that was kind of like the light bulb moment. That's what I want to be, that's what I want to do when I'm older and then from there, that's what I've always wanted to be.

In terms of getting into Speedway, it was 2013 on the little Academy track at Lakeside. It was absolutely amazing. Martin Hagon supplied all the bikes, the equipment, and we could just turn up. I was one of those kids that turned up every Saturday. Super keen, super enthusiastic. Then at the end of the year, I managed to slide the bike and I loved every minute of it and I'm still loving it now!

2. Talk us through your career so far.

I progressed through all the Youth Championships and the Youth rounds, the 150ccs, the 250ccs. I never quite won the British Championship, but I was always kind of there or thereabouts, winning rounds.

Then, obviously, you step into the National League and I was fortunate enough that Lakeside gave me that opportunity. I'd literally just turned 15 at the time and ridden the 500cc once or twice, but I jumped straight into meeting with them and scored 10 points in the semi-finals of the playoffs. That that was an amazing experience.

Then it just gradually progressed. I signed with Eastbourne the next year and had a great first year in the National League. We won the Knockout cup and the League title as well. Then in 2019 I rode for Mildenhall in the National League and Eastbourne in the Championship. Every year I've learned so much more and every year I've progressed, so hopefully we can just get back on track next year and I can just keep progressing and just see how far I can get in the sport.

3. Who is your favourite rider and why?

My favourite rider is Jason Crump. Being little, he was the guy I looked up to, whether that was just at first thinking he's got the same name as me, but from that day onwards he's always been my favourite rider to watch and to learn from. He's the kind of person I've always looked up to and I don't think you can pick a better person than a three times World Champion.

4. Which is your favourite track and why?

There are loads of different tracks up and down the country, and I've been really lucky to experience riding lots over here and even abroad so far. But for me, my favourite one, purely because I got the chance to ride there, was Cardiff. The GP Academy was running alongside with Poultec and on the Friday morning, just before practice, all of us on 250ccs got to ride the track.

Jack Parkinson-Blackburn and I were the first ones and just rolling out, looking around the stadium, which although it was empty, you're like is the stadium, this is the track! Because I went there like every year as a kid, that was an unreal feeling getting to ride there. It was absolutely amazing.

5. What is the best thing about riding a speedway bike?

It's everything really. The racing side of it — four riders flat out into the first bend, elbows up and seeing who comes out on top. Even to going into the next corner, two or three abreast, all in, no one's shutting off. There's nothing quite like it and we're sure missing it at the moment. Even just the feeling of riding a bike. The feeling of having something under you. You're about to tip into the bend and you're still giving it full throttle, you give it more motor. There's not a feeling quite like riding a speedway bike. If any of you get the chance I do advise, just to give it a go, just to get an understanding.

6. What's the worst thing about speedway?

Injuries have got to be the worst part about speedway. Every time you step on the bike obviously you know the risk, but at the same time you accept the risk, because if that's in the back of your mind all the time, then you're never going to go forward in sport. But injuries are part and parcel of it. You can get injured crossing the road or tripping over doing something stupid, but we love it, so we take the risk.

7. What are your hopes and aims for 2021?

The biggest hope is really we just get racing underway. I don't think we can ask for much more than just hoping to get speedway back to how it was. Getting to race again, that's going to be the biggest thing. I was lucky last year, I got to do a few meetings, we got to go abroad to the Czech Republic and to Germany and race Europe's best, but at the same time it's just that regular League racing that we missed.

So, if we can get League racing back again it would be brilliant for me, because I can hopefully just progress and continue from where I was. Just bike time and race time. Race time's a big thing so that's the biggest hope. Let's just get racing!

8. How do you combine speedway with college?

I haven't quite got to that point yet. Over the winter I've been really fortunate that Martin at Hagon Shocks has given me a job, so I've been working with him and everyone down there at the factory.

I haven't got to the point where I'm working and doing speedway at the same time. I know some riders do bits and pieces, but now that's what I'm doing and obviously when racing starts, I'll shift my focus back to the racing side. But just the engineering and mechanical side so far, working at the factory and just doing that whole side of it gives different perspective and I've loved working there, but not as much as I love speedway!

9. Other than speedway what else are you in too?

I used to race motocross, that's what we did every Saturday and Sunday. I still try and do that as much as I can. We're quite fortunate where we live, as we're able to just mess about on different bikes and just generally have a little mess around. Other than that, I'm really enjoying lots of cycling at the moment

and obviously that's great for the fitness side. Even if it wasn't for speedway, I'd probably still love doing my cycling and mountain biking. Anything two wheels or four wheels or with an engine, we will give it a good crack. I just love it all really.

10. What is your ambition within the sport?

My ambition in the sport, is just purely to go as far as I can. A lot of us youngsters sit here, and we all say we want to be World Champion and I'm no different to that. That's where I want to be, but at the same time, I just want to push as far as I can and get as far as I can in the sport.

Putting in 100% and seeing where I can go. I want to be riding the speedway as much as I can. Obviously, that's building up and taking the steps it takes to get there, and that's really what I want to be.

11. A shout out to your sponsors

Speedway is like nothing else. It's one of those sports where you're self-employed and it's all performance-based, so the better you do, the more money you get and then the more money get, the more you can invest into all your machinery to get better.

To start off with I'd just love to thank Martin Hagon. I say it a lot, but I can't thank him enough for what he's done. I started at his Academy and he's supported me ever since, so I'm always proud to have the Hagon Shocks logo on my bike all the time. I can't thank him enough and then everyone else that supports me and just helps in every single way they can.

I'm fortunate to have a lot of great sponsors like M Shuttlewood Ltd, Hager, Speculate to Accumulate, Manchetts, Ruggles and Jeffery, 151s, David Graveling and a lot of the Eastbourne supporters help in a big way as well. I really can't thank everyone enough for all their help and I can't wait to see you all this year and get things rolling back on track. So, see you all soon and everyone stay safe and like I say, I can't wait to see you all.



EAGLETS COLOURING IN



Here's an action picture of Jason Edwards to colour in, use the photo above for reference of Jason's race suit colours.



☎ 0845 0920368


Corporate-Connection
Workwear & Business Clothing Limited
Professional Image Makers

☎ 0845 0920368

One Solution for all your corporate uniform needs.



 Competitive Pricing

 Next Day Delivery

 In-house Embroidery

 Online Ordering

Official Merchandise Partner of the Eastbourne Fineprint Eagles

EXCLUSIVE DISCOUNTS for Eastbourne Fineprint Eagles supporters. Quote **Eagles19** with any enquiry or order for your own Corporate / Work / Club needs

www.corporate-connection.co.uk

M Shuttlewood Ltd

COMPLETE SOLUTIONS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR

M Shuttlewood Ltd are proud to be an established family run business with 22 years' experience offering national coverage, and has been consistently awarded a full three year term asbestos licence from the HSE.

Established in the public sector and recognised and trusted within the local community, our primary business objective is to serve the construction and related industries through its enabling services.

Our motivation and commitment to health and safety is fundamental in everything we do.

All of our removals and construction are conducted in accordance with the statutory requirements under The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 and current HSE guidance.

OUR SERVICES

- ✓ Asbestos removal
- ✓ Reinstatement
- ✓ Demolition,
- ✓ Hazardous waste collections service,
- ✓ CCTV drain surveys
- ✓ High pressure jetting
- ✓ Groundworks
- ✓ General building maintenance

GET IN TOUCH

Freephone: 0800 111 4634 Office: 01268 692299
enquiries@mshuttlewood.co.uk or
visit our website www.mshuttlewood.co.uk



Checkatrade.com



Josh Warren

Josh Warren is 20 and lives at Whittlesey on the outskirts of Peterborough.

He works for a small builder, AJH Contract Builders, in the Peterborough area and has recently qualified after serving a bricklaying apprenticeship.

His boss is very supportive and allows Josh to have time off to go and ride when necessary.

Both parents are also very supportive with his mother cleaning his kit.

His father has a yard where Josh shares a workshop with Danny King.

He has an older brother who lives over in Australia which is somewhere Josh would like to live in the future.

Working on his bikes occupy much of his spare time but he likes to keep fit by going to the gym or by running/cycling.

He became a Seagull after being recommended by a fellow team member, Francesca, who he met at a practice day at Scunthorpe. She told Mark Sexton about Josh and it went from there.

Q: How did you become interested in Speedway?

A: Both my parents were involved in speedway before I was born and were big friends with former Peterborough favourite Mick Poole. He then introduced my parents to a young up and coming speedway star from Australia called Chris Holder.

Chris stayed with us for a couple years which is where I found my love for the sport by going to meetings with him. After he moved on, Mick's son, Taylor Poole, came and lived with us and once again I was up and down the country with Taylor going to meetings.

With my father sponsoring Danny King, he was always down my father's yard doing his bikes and he has been a big influence.

Q: Why did you want to ride Speedway and what do you love about racing?

A: I ride motocross and have competed in a few competitions but it wasn't until the end of 2019 that I decided I wanted to have a go at speedway, so booked myself into the Scunthorpe training day and I was hooked instantly. I love the thrill of riding a speedway bike and constantly wanting to improve. With racing it is such an adrenaline rush and puts a smile from ear to ear.

Q: Do you ride any other motor-bikes (eg: grass, moto-cross or road bike)?

A: From when I was young I always rode quads and bikes down my dad's yard but once I got a bit older I started doing motocross at a track. If I have a bit of spare time I'll always jump on my pitbike and build tracks in the fields.

Q: So far, what's your favourite three-point win?

A: I have only really just started and given circumstances I haven't had the chance to race much but have competed in a few amateur meetings at Scunthorpe where I have won two of the meetings but only got to race once for the team, where I got my first race win which would have to be the best.

Q: So far, who had had the biggest influence on your career?

A: From when I was young, Chris Holder was a big inspiration but over the past few years I have become really good mates with Danny King who goes above and beyond with helping me out on my bikes in the workshop and even coming and helping me at meetings and practices. He pushes me to be better on and off the



Kevin Whiting

track. Ipswich manager Ritchie Hawkins has also been a massive help with helping me at the track and giving me advice on how to become a better rider.

Q: Which two words best sum you up?

A: Determined and ambitious.

Q: If we made a video of you racing, what music would you want to accompany the film?

A: I would like Notorious B.I.G by the Notorious B.I.G as he is one of my favourite artists but there are many more songs I would also love to have on my video.

Q: What advice would you give to anyone thinking of starting Speedway racing?

A: Go for it, you are only here once so you might as well go for it and enjoy yourself.

Q: Anyone else to mention?

A: So far my speedway journey has been a short one but a few people have helped me with advice and finance. The bank of dad and RJ Warren, my grandad for supplying the parts to build my second bike, my mother for being manager of personal equipment (kit washer).

As mentioned earlier, Ritchie Hawkins for his support and Danny King who helped me with my first bike and whatever I need help with and being a mentor to me.

Also, I think it's worth the mention to the guys at Scunthorpe who give up their time to offer a facility where people like myself can be introduced to the sport.

CLICK TO
WATCH VIDEO



90 Glorious Years of Eastbourne Speedway



PART THREE : THE 1950s

1. With the demise of Hastings, speedway returned to Arlington in 1950 but just as Challenge matches. Crowds were lower than at Hastings. The club was forced to race on a Saturday, rather than on the preferred Sunday because of Lord's Day Observance laws.
2. The crowds were so low that there was no racing at Arlington in 1951 and 1952. An attempt to stage 'pony racing' was vetoed by the local authorities on the grounds it would be a gambling sport.
3. Charlie Dugard tested the waters again in 1953 and the Sussex Championship was staged – won by Ron Barrett.
4. The crowd was sufficient for Dugard to enter the Southern Area League (SAL) and league racing returned to Arlington in 1954 after a gap of seven years when Rye House were the visitors.
5. The SAL was a training league and consisted of Eastbourne, Rye House, Brafield (just south of Northampton), California (that will be one near Wokingham Berkshire), Aldershot and Ringwood just north of Bournemouth



Harold MacNaughton 1953

Eastbourne Speedway can trace its roots right back to the beginnings of the sport in Britain. All being well, in season 2021, the HG Aerospace Eagles will celebrate the club's 90th+ anniversary. In the build-up to the big day, we are featuring some highlights from the past, thanks to author Ken Burnett, who is a member of our media team. This year, the 1950s. You can read his much more detailed account on our website



The referee's box in 1954

6. Eastbourne had a torrid time in 1954. By August 15, Eagles record read, Won 0, Drawn 0, Lost 12 as defeat followed defeat, the worst being 60-22 at California and 59-25 at home to Ringwood.
7. The Eagles gained a shock win over Ringwood but were soon back to losing ways and finished rock bottom of the SAL with just two victories all year.
8. Surely, things could only get better in 1955? Sadly not, there was only one win during the whole season with Brafield going down 49-43 at Arlington on September 4.
9. In 1956, Eastbourne were racing on Sundays but ran into trouble again with the Lord's Day Observance laws and found they were not able to charge admission. They got round it by people having to buy a programme for admission.
10. No-one in the crowd for the Sussex Championship on August 4, 1957, would have realised that one of the competitors would go on to be six times world speedway champion. New Zealander Ivan Mauger scored seven points from five rides.



Bob Dugard

11. A new league was formed in 1957 to replace the SAL but it went ahead without Eastbourne who reverted to challenge matches. Arlington did, however, stage its first test match (at junior level): Young England v Overseas. Mauger made his first international team appearance.

12. Mauger won the final meeting of the season – the Supporters’ Trophy – who also annexed the track record. Although there had been no league this year, the season was nevertheless considered a “Mauger” success!

13. League racing was back at Arlington in 1959. The Speedway Control Board reorganised the league in mid season, some matches were deleted from the records and riders were switched around to try and even up team strengths. Even guest riders were allowed.

14. In the end, in spite of all the complications, it was Eastbourne who finished up as League champions, with five wins and just one loss out of eight matches, their first success since 1947.

15. Eagles’ Colin Goody averaged over 11 points per match and amazingly was never headed on an away track.

16. Bob Dugard turned out several times for the team at the start of what proved to be a long career as a rider.



John Dugard

Interested in learning more about speedway at Hastings? There’s loads to see and read on the Eastbourne Speedway website



All images copyright Ken Burnett



Eastbourne team, 1958



Speedway has always prided itself on being a family sport and in this feature we turn the spotlight on families who just love the thrills and spills. This month: Brian and Jackie Jones.

SPEEDWAY NIGHTS AT Arlington sees the Jones family install themselves a few yards 'up' from the starting gate. A banner is attached to the stock car 'catch fence', chairs are set out as they ready themselves for the night's racing.

Brian is nothing if not passionate about his speedway and the Eastbourne Eagles. By his own admission, he "gets a bit excited".

He is the scourge of referees, often offering advice as to the "error" of their ways.

With the ref's box just a few yards away and the window open on a summer's evening, there is no way the match official will not hear Brian's view of a particular decision.

In fact, some referees look out for him, especially Dave Robinson who will peer out of the window as he prepares to take control of the match and say something like: "Is he here".

And, you can bet your bottom dollar, that 'he', Jackie and other members of the family will be 'here'.

Brian first saw speedway in the early 1970s, going to watch the Rayleigh Rockets with brother Keith. He became an Arlington regular in 1977 after moving from Great Yarmouth to Bexhill.

And 1977 was the first time that wife Jackie saw speedway at Arlington – some years before she met Brian.

She told *Flying High*: "I wanted somewhere to go or something to do and my mum said 'why don't you try speedway'. My reaction was 'what is speedway?' This was a bit bad as I was born and bred in Polegate and had been to one or two stock car meetings but had no idea about speedway.

"Both my mum and dad before they met had both gone to Arlington in the 1950s and said it was good, so me and my sister went along.

No 3: BRIAN AND JACKIE JONES aka The Lukas Dryml Appreciation Society



Brian and Jackie and son Cameron at the ice racing

"From what I remember it was a bit of a thrashing against Newport or somebody but we went along the next week and just got hooked.

"We watched from the old scaffold stand and when that disappeared we moved to the 1st/2nd bend. We went home filthy.

"That, along with the noise, smell and the excitement did it for us. Oh and the odd fight here and there.

"After five years or so we started standing in the covered stand near the starting gate which is where I met Brian.

"I have always said that Bob Dugard has a lot to answer for."

Brian was a member of the Hastings and Sussex Speedway Association (HASSA) and played in its darts league for several years.

He said: "When I eventually asked Jackie out, I took her to an away speedway darts match for our first date (romantic, eh). I know how to show a girl a good time!

"Where we stand is where my charm and wit won Jackie over. In those days there was a large group of us including John and Kevin Ling. When we got married, our evening 'do' consisted of a large contingent of speedway friends," Brian said.

With the ref's box just a few yards away there is no way the match official will not hear Brian's view of a particular decision. Some referees look out for him, especially Dave Robinson who will peer out of the window and say: "Is he here".

"Everyone who knows me know I get a bit excited watching the Eagles and get a bit loud and do two of my sons Scott and Cameron.

"It must be in the genes."

Brian and Jackie have three sons who, not surprisingly, were all taken to see the speedway.

Jackie said: "The eldest Richard first went at six weeks old but he is the one of the three who is no longer interested.

"Both Scott and Cam have always been into speedway and Scott's two children Scarlett (7) and Ethan (3) have both been going since they were babies and became obsessed.

"We picked Ethan up one evening and he cried all the way to the track. We

pulled up in the car park and he looked at the stadium and said 'bikes', stopped crying instantly and was all smiles.

"One meeting Scarlett missed was the Glasgow match [in 2019] with you know who! She was gutted she missed the fight and I had to show her the video.

"A while after Craig Cook was on TV and every time he came on Scarlett said Craig Cook boooo!

"Hopefully, they will still be as obsessed after this enforced absence."

Brian and Jackie also enjoy the social side of speedway, as Brian recalled:

Like many of the regular Arlington supporters, you will often find Brian and Jackie on the terraces when the Eagles are the away team.

FAVOURITE TRACK

Brian - My favourite track of all time was Halifax. On bends 1 and 2 the riders went up an incline of about 10 feet and powered down the back straight with a hell of a lot of speed. Loved it. Poole is also another great track for me. There's nothing better than a Good Friday morning meeting there and back at Eastbourne in the evening.

Jackie - Peterborough, probably because it scares me. ■

THE LUKAS DRYML CONNECTION

BRIAN PAID TRIBUTE to everyone who has ridden for the club over the years. "They've all given 100% effort, no matter what the score. He said: "Riders have good meetings and they have bad meetings and always give us enjoyment. That is why I haven't mentioned any rider in particular until now.

"When it was announced that the Czech rider Lukas Dryml had signed for Eastbourne, nobody thought he would master a small track like ours. Oh how wrong they could be. After a few meetings he took to the track like a duck to water and he cracked it. One of our group bought a Czech flag which we put up only for Lukas to gesture at us from the centre green that it was the wrong way round. We then got another flag and put his name on and, along with the Eastbourne Eagles flag, it went to every track with us.

"Over time we got chatting to Lukas and we arranged a bit of sponsorship for him. When the 100 Club started we couldn't afford the £1,000 on our own so started a syndicate of ten people all putting in £100. He was so popular we had to start a second syndicate and so The Lukas Dryml Appreciation Society was born. The chant *Lukas Dryml, Lukas* came about courtesy of a bunch of drunk Poles at Cardiff singing *Jarek Hampel, Jarek*.

"We remain good friends with Lukas and went to Pardubice to see him and watch the Golden Helmet meeting."

Jackie added: "When we went to Pardubice we met up with him, he was busy with the meetings etc but made time for us, posed with the Eastbourne



Brian and Jackie with Lukas Dryml.

flag and took us out to dinner. He's a really nice guy and I'm not surprised he was such a favourite at Arlington."

Lukas revealed that he's kept one bike from his racing career and the engine is the last one he used at Eastbourne. It can be seen at the Skoda dealership which he runs with his brother, Ales.

Brian said: "We always supported him whether he got one point or a maximum. He always had time for the fans and always gave his best for the club - a true professional.

"One time his scores were patchy and he was sacked. Lewis Bridger was to take his place. Lukas was upset about that but within a couple of days he was reinstated when Lewis' move fell through. We were at Birmingham when he had his dreadful crash and apparently when he was in hospital he asked was it a good crash?

"Safe to say he will always be a part of Eagles' history and a nice all round bloke. Jackie recalled: "We were in the pits at Coventry and Lukas came over to us to say thank you for supporting him. It just went from there.

"He loved it and always played up to it, coming over to bow in front of us or whatever after he won a race. On the victory lap on the truck he would often make a gesture to us of drinking which meant see you in the bar after.

"After a meeting at Swindon he came for a drink with us and there was a group of Scots who joined us outside who magicked up a bottle of vodka and tried recruiting him for what I think it was Berwick, telling him how much he'd like it there.

"We told them they couldn't have him." ■

Said Brian: "I always loved going to Crayford, as most times we would win there. At Hackney and Wimbledon you never knew what lay ahead but sadly now all three tracks have gone.

"One night we were at Lakeside standing in our usual spot under the ref's box and were being loud and good humoured as usual when two burly security guards came over. One stood in front of us and one behind to keep us in check. Some old 'witch' had reported that we were shouting in her direction. Of course, we were even louder after that.

"Another time we were on our way to Coventry when we broke down on the M25 and were stood on the hard shoulder. Luckily there was a complete traffic jam so traffic was moving slowly. Then who should come along but Kevin and John Ling who saw us, stopped and reversed back towards us only to crash into the barriers. How we laughed, only for Kev to tell us the meeting was off."

Jackie is equally at home on the away terraces as she is at Arlington.

She said: "My first away match I think was the 1978 Cup Final at Rye House and we've seen the Eagles many times all over the country since.

"Sadly a lot of the tracks no longer exist. Apart from Cardiff, we've also seen speedway at places like Toruń, Gdańsk, Pardubice, Prague, the Paris Showground in Ontario Canada and ice speedway in Kazakhstan. When we went to the Paris Showground the man who was organising it, David Hensby, said he would meet us on the gate which he did decked out in a Poole Pirates shirt as were some others. It was a bit of a shock but at least we had our Eagles/Nicki Pedersen things on to counteract it."

There is one area in particular where Brian and Jackie do not see eye-to-eye. Together, they love their speedway but when it comes to football it is another story. Jackie has supported Manchester Utd since she was "knee high to a grasshopper".

"My dad supported them as do my brothers and sister and our kids. For some reason Brian doesn't.

"He was OK about it until Utd started winning everything so he supports whoever we're against. We go up to Manchester as often as possible to watch them but I doubt I'll ever get Brian to a match. That's probably just as well as it wouldn't go down too well on the

LEAST FAVOURITE PLACES

Brian - Canterbury, it was always cold and wet.

Jackie - I don't really dislike any track but not that keen on Mildenhall since the incident with a man in a van reversing into the Eagles fans after we had won the league. It nearly all kicked off but I either bravely or more likely stupidly stepped in between two men when punches started to be thrown, one of whom was the husband who doesn't even remember me saving him from a battering! ■

Stretford End with him cheering the opposition.

"In 2009, we did a week's speedway tour which included the Eagles at Belle Vue so I booked the Old Trafford stadium tour. Brian huffed and puffed about it but he did go. He won't admit it but he was quite impressed." 🐦

ON THE OCHE!



THE JONES HOLD A speedway darts party night each year at the end of January. They provide the food and drink and even the darts, if needed.

Everyone attends is an Eagles fan and the evening is a darts match with two teams of seven. The rules are the same as speedway with three points for the winning double and the remaining three people throw for the highest score to get 2nd, 3rd & 4th.

It usually takes as long as a real speedway meeting and quite often a lot longer. Luckily, there is no curfew.

Team manager Trevor, who attends with wife Diane, has proved something of a dark horse when it comes to darts.

Jackie said: "The first time Trevor came I think we ran it as an individual meeting. He told us he wasn't very good at darts so we told him don't worry about it, nobody is. He went and won it, so I think he was fibbing."

A KO Cup final like no other

ELLESMERE PORT IS A WORKADAY town on the south bank of the River Mersey in Cheshire. Probably, its biggest claim to fame is that it is home to the Vauxhall car assembly plant where the current model is the Astra.

There is also an oil refinery and a chemical works

Other claims to fame, according to internet research, include being the birthplace of: comedian Russ Abbot; former England football club manager, Joe Mercer; legendary Wolves soccer manager, Stan Cullis; and former Aston Villa FC chairman, Doug Ellis.

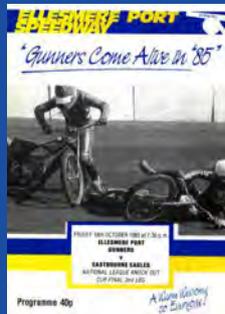
All in all, there are not too many attractions that would drag people from the South East corner of England to Ellesmere Port. But it was a very different story on Friday, October 18, 1985.

Eastbourne fans in their droves made their way to this unremarkable town for the showdown to decide who would win the National League KO Cup.

Ellesmere Port had a very good speedway team in 1985. They had two of the best riders in the league in Joe Owen and Louis Carr. At the end of the year, Owen was equal top of the averages with Gordon Kennett on 10.47 with Carr just over a point behind. They made a potent spearhead.

The supporting cast was none too shabby in Dave Walsh, Dave Morton and Joe Owen's brother, Richie. The aptly

Ellesmere Port 41, Eastbourne 37.



The bare result doesn't give a clue as to why many Eagles fans regard this as the best (favourite) match they have ever seen.

When we tell you this was the second leg of the 1985 National League KO Cup Final and the aggregate score was Ellesmere Port 73, Eastbourne 83 you may get something of a sense of why this match lives in the memory. This wasn't any old cup win, this was a cup win that defied belief and all the

odds. In fact, as we shall see, Eastbourne could have been dumped out of that year's competition at the first time of asking by Canterbury.

Flying High looks back at the match through the eyes of some fans who stood on the terraces and witnessed a speedway match they have never forgotten.

named Gunners operated from a stadium in Thornton Road and 1985 proved to be their final season. In this year, they became National League champions on 52 points, edging out Poole and Middlesbrough who both ended with 51 points.

The Eagles were becalmed in 11th...so the odds appeared to be stacked in favour of Ellesmere Port. In the league, they had steamrolled Eastbourne 50-28 at Thornton Road – 13 heat matches in those days – and secured a

rather fortunate draw at Arlington.

The first leg of the final was in Sussex on October 13 and the Eagles gave themselves at least "half-a-chance" with a 46-32 victory. In fact, one local newspaper said the Eagles were in the "driving seat" and had left their rivals in a "flap".

Eastbourne had come out of the blocks like a rocket but by the end their firepower was tamed by a superb Port fightback.

After 35 years, it is hard to gauge exactly whether Eastbourne fans travelled in expectation of cup success (probably not) but at least they went with hope in their hearts (Liverpool is virtually opposite Ellesmere Port) of cup success. It turned into such a memorable meeting that if you talk to any Eastbourne fan who was there, their eyes become all misty as they recall the fabulous Eagles' performance. It is a subject those supporters return to time and again.

The *Flying High* editorial team had the match down on the 'long list' of ideas for a possible feature but we turned that into a 'must have' when we heard from supporter Dave Earl.

Thank you, Dave, for ensuring we got on the case because we have unearthed some gems and incredible anecdotes of the night of October 18 in Cheshire.

We will let Dave Earl, former raker at Arlington back in the day, kick off the walk down memory lane. ➤



Mike Patrick - The John Somerville Collection

The Eastbourne team of 1985.

Dave Earl: Drinking Champagne from the cup

AFTER SIX PRETTY much fruitless years in the top flight British League, Eastbourne began 1985 back in the lower division, the National League.

Through the season, there were a number of team personnel changes, but come the latter half of the campaign, the seven became settled with Gordon Kennett (my all-time favourite rider), Keith Pritchard, Andy Buck, Paul Clarke, Colin Richardson, the young hopeful Martin Dugard and Chris Mulvihill.

With a history of lower league trophy wins, somehow in this "new" era for Eastbourne, we found ourselves through to the NL KO Cup Final, v Ellesmere Port Gunners, who went on to win



the National League title that year.

To get to the final, we'd beaten big rivals Canterbury Crusaders, Milton Keynes Knights, Wimbledon Dons and the Middlesbrough Tigers, the latter by just two points on aggregate.

After a first leg win at Arlington 46 - 32, a much better performance than the 39 - 39 league match earlier in the season,

there was real hope that we would return to cup winning ways on Merseyside, five days later on October 18.

I drove in the company of my dear friend Mo Morgan.

I'd just had my broken leg taken out of plaster, similar for Mo following a wrist operation. There was no guarantee either of us were



Ken Burnett: Bob Dugard saved my day

PROBABLY THE EAGLES best cup final ever. After a home draw and heavy league defeat, no-one gave the mid-table Eagles much hope against Joe Owen's all star Gunners, but being mad fans, we hit the road once again in hope.

Even a 46-32 1st leg lead, looked as wobbly as my legs when you take my crutches away; specially when the Gunners took a last race 1-5 at Arlington.

The drama for me started well before a wheel had been turned as Kevin Ling myself and a few others were not so politely told to leave the (Liverpool) Kop at Anfield (the gate was left open), mind you we did tie a Man Utd scarf around the rails to take some pics.

We'd also dropped into Edinburgh (Wednesday Eagles league fixture) Blackpool and Old Trafford on the way, but that's another story.

When we arrived at the Gunners' Thornton Road track, we went into the local pub which was all decked out with The Gunners memorabilia and very friendly.

Then it was on to the speedway, and for me a real problem as the metal rods in my crutches snapped completely, meaning I was unable to walk.

I went into the pits to see if anyone could help, with tape or something to get me by.

And up pops Bob Dugard "give em here a minute". Off he went with my sticks over to his van, out came a welding set and within no time at all,



Ken Burnett at the British GP at Cardiff

they were back in usable order, much to my relief. (Is that what's known as a "crutch start"? Get your coat Ken - Editor)

Then the real event started, one of the best meetings I can recall, Gordon Kennett (12 point maximum) and Colin Richardson was magnificent, as were the whole team, and a massive Eagles 5-1 in heat 2, set the ball rolling and the 16 point advantage never looked threatened.

Fair play to the home management and fans who applauded the Eagles, who against all odds were superb.

I still believe that we could have won on the day, if needed as we eased off the gas towards the end. We were 18-24 at one stage and it was 33-33 before the home side took a 5-1.

All the Eagles fans on turn 3, were jumping with joy that hadn't been seen since the demolition of Rye House in the 78 final, but we were favourites on that occasion.

The cup was won, a trophy that was also retained in 1986 and 1987 when the Eagles did the Double double.

It took a long time to leave the stadium, not because of the crowd, but due to the fact we didn't want to!

Only disappointment is that it wasn't filmed, TSN sport covered the 1st leg at Arlington for Screensport but not the second leg, which to me is a bit like having a last heat decider and not showing it. ■



Bob Dugard

going to be cast-free for the journey!

Prior to the second leg, we bumped into Andy near the stadium, who felt under immense pressure to replicate 16 from 6, which he'd scored there earlier in the season for Scunthorpe.

I reassured him that the travelling Eagles fans were most certainly not expecting that type of performance on this occasion, which seemed to calm him down.

Heat one and Gordon breaks the track record in a 3 - 3. Good enough start!

Well done "Cowboy," as he was known, early 70s. Heat two with Martin and Chris. Hmmm! Anything could happen here, we all thought.

Well now, the boys came out of the first bend side-by-side, ahead of the Gunners - 5 - 1, 8 - 4 to us and an aggregate lead of 18 points.

The home side never recovered from that stunning race result for us, and we went on to win the cup, 83 - 73 on aggregate, agonisingly losing on the night 37 - 41.

This was after getting hammered at Thornton Road in the league, 50-28 back in June.

The Eagles fans, watching from the entrance into the third bend and near the pits, celebrated wildly the moment the cup was won and, after heat 13, we stormed the track, enjoying champagne from the cup, with our blue and yellow heroes.

As a postscript, Gordon went on to win the second half final.

In The Gunners pub afterwards, there was a huge area where the home fans were in silence, as I'm sure they thought the cup would be theirs. And in a little corner of the watering hole, loud conversation from the visiting fans.

Of course ,no-one knew yet, that we'd do the league and cup "double" in 1986 and '87, thus winning the KO Cup three times in a row.

It took me a couple of days to calm down afterwards, and it was certainly a great day at Eastbourne on October 20th, as we celebrated winning the cup, whilst beating the Berwick Bandits 47 - 31. Happy days



Louis Carr

Noel King: A worrying tap on the shoulder

CUP FEVER CERTAINLY gripped us as we boarded the coach for the long trip to Ellesmere Port on Friday, 18th October for the 2nd leg of the National League Knock Out Cup Final.

Myself and a decently sized group of the White City Rebels contingent were picked up to join the Eastbourne supporters on a coach run by HASSA .

As I remember it, a lot of drinks were drunk on the trip up to Ellesmere, in order to calm our nerves (or at least that was our excuse). We were defending a 14 point lead, so the match was finely poised.

When we arrived at the track we joined all of the other supporters on the terraces, and when I opened the programme I noticed that Ellesmere had drafted in Gary O'Hare at No 5 to take the place of Miles Evans who had ridden in the 1st leg at Arlington.

This was much to my annoyance as it was reported that Miles Evans was not feeling too well, and Gary O'Hare, a much better rider, was brought in to replace him.

I let my feelings be known to all around me, only to be tapped on the shoulder by a person standing behind me. It was Miles Evans' mother with her son and they were not too enamoured by my comments. But thankfully it was

all taken in good spirit, after all it was only a mum looking out for her son.

Heat 1 started very well, Gordon Kennett equalling the tack record of 68.3 in a shared heat. Gordon had also broken the track record at Eastbourne in heat 1 of the 1st leg with a time of 58.14.

In heat 2 when Martin Dugard and Chris Mulvihill secured a 5-1 for us the dream of securing the cup was beginning to look a reality. The cup was secured by heat 10 with the scores level at 30-30, finally losing 41-37 but winning by 10 points on aggregate.

We had eight heat winners to their five, thus indicating the control we had over the course of the meeting.

Cue the celebrations, fans singing and hugging each other, some continuously falling over the perimeter trip wire around the track, all very joyous scenes from the travelling contingent.

Just to round off a perfect night, the second half Rider of the Night Final was won by Andy Buck with Gordon Kennett in second place.

A very jubilant coach journey followed for the trip home.

This was certainly a day that none in attendance from the Eastbourne ranks will ever forget. Great memories. ■



The Ellesmere Port team of 1985.

In Part Two of this feature (February) we will look at data from the second leg and Kevin Ling takes us through Eastbourne's route to the final - plus quite a bit more.



No 3: Marston's



Leigh Capon



Marston's is a leading nationwide pub and hotel company based in Wolverhampton. They have been brewing beer and running pubs and hotels for more than 180 years. With over 1,300 pubs and 1,600 hotel rooms in their estate, they are one of the UK's largest hospitality companies employing over 14,000 people.

Recently, Marston's formed a joint venture with Carlsberg to create the Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company in which Marston's hold a 40% share and they also signed a deal with Welsh brewer SA Brains to manage their 156-pub estate which in doing so saved over 1,300 jobs.

Marston's involvement in Speedway started with its very successful partnership between the Holly Blue at Stone Cross and Eastbourne in the 2019 season.

Leigh Capon, a lifelong speedway fan who at the time was in charge of the Holly Blue, offered to help promote the sport through the pub and roadside advertising and gave out complimentary meal vouchers at home meetings for fans and families of the Eaglets mascots and supplied the bottles of fizz for the rider of the night presentations.

He also helped with the hotel arrangements for the club's Northern tour at a Marston's venue in Scotland and held a fans forum at the Holly Blue.

Through the sponsorship deal with the Holly Blue at Stone Cross being so successful, Marston's are now working with Team GB Managing Director, Rob Painter, to see what they can do to help, support and promote the sport to the next generation of fans throughout their network of pubs and hotels in the UK

Leigh is now currently running The Watermead in Northwich, Cheshire, which is thirty minutes from Belle Vue in Manchester.

Flying High talked to Leigh.

Q. When did you first go to a speedway match and where was that?

My first speedway experience was at Arlington in the late 70s with my family when I was about six. I remember sitting and playing underneath the scaffolding temporary stand where the Grandstand is now. I don't remember much about the speedway but I do remember the noise, smell and the large crowds.

Q. Did you become a regular immediately, or did the speedway 'bug' take time to bite?

I started going to Arlington regularly from 1981 onwards with my brothers and family. I was hooked straight away by the sounds and smell of speedway and it was my highlight of the week. I used to hate it when it rained on a Sunday and sometimes even the skill of Bob Dugard and a ton of sawdust couldn't get the meeting on which would ruin the week for me.

I loved watching the American riders when they came down to Eastbourne, they had so many superstars in the 80s – Schwartz, Sigalos, Cook, Penhall and the Moran brothers to name a few. They were so different and flamboyant, bright leathers with sponsors badges all over, baseball hats, sunglasses etc and when I got autographs from them I was on cloud nine.

Q What attracts you most to speedway?

I honestly think that Speedway is the most exciting and exhilarating motorsport in the



The Holly Blue at Stone Cross



Action from Eastbourne v Leicester with the Holly Blue sponsored fence panel in the background

world. It's sixty seconds of breath-taking, non-stop, gladiatorial action.

The one big advantage over Superbikes and Formula One for me is that you get to see all the action from one vantage point live, you see the whole product undiluted by TV screens. Its family friendly (most of the time) and the riders and management of the teams are accessible to the fans which I think is really important in this day and age and Eastbourne do that so well.

I was also so impressed in which the way Scott Nicholls stayed to talk to fans, have photos taken, sign autographs etc when he rode for Leicester against the Eagles in 2019, he is a true professional and a credit to our great sport.

Q What would you change about speedway, if you could?

The racing itself I wouldn't change anything, I'm a fan and I love it. I do think Speedway in general needs to start becoming a lot more professional and business minded and that has already started at a lot of tracks such as Eastbourne where Ian Jordan and the team have done wonders in a short space of time.

We really need to take our sport and promote it to the next generation of fans. I would like to see a few more individual meetings like the Championship of Sussex and the Golden and Silver Helmet Challenges return.

I'm still undecided about the GP series, I grew up with the one meeting World Championship final and always enjoyed it. I know it's a good money spinner with TV rights but I would like to see some of that go back into grass roots speedway to protect the future of clubs and the sport.

Q What is or was your favourite track?

My favourite track is Arlington, such great memories with my brothers watching the Eagles. My favourite away track was Plough Lane, Wimbledon which was a fantastic stadium. I went to all the away meetings with my brothers and friends and we had so much fun on our road trips.



Jason Edwards in his Eastbourne race suit emblazoned with the Marstons logo.

I also used to watch, sponsor and tour with the Isle of Wight and I was lucky enough to see Craig Boyce at the end of his career and Chris Holder and Jason Doyle at the start of their careers.

I remember presenting the rider of the night award to Noddy (Chris) after I had sponsored the meeting and saying to a packed clubhouse that one day he would be the World Champion and a few years later he was.

Q Who is your favourite rider of all time?

There are so many to choose from but my top three Eastbourne riders would have to be Bobby Schwartz – he was my speedway hero as a lad, Gordon Kennett – the King of Arlington for me and Colin Richardson – I loved his style of riding.

Away from Arlington it would have to be Greg Hancock and Scott Nicholls for their absolute dedication and professionalism to the sport and Chris Holder for watching him grow and develop into becoming the World Champion.

Q What are your final thoughts?

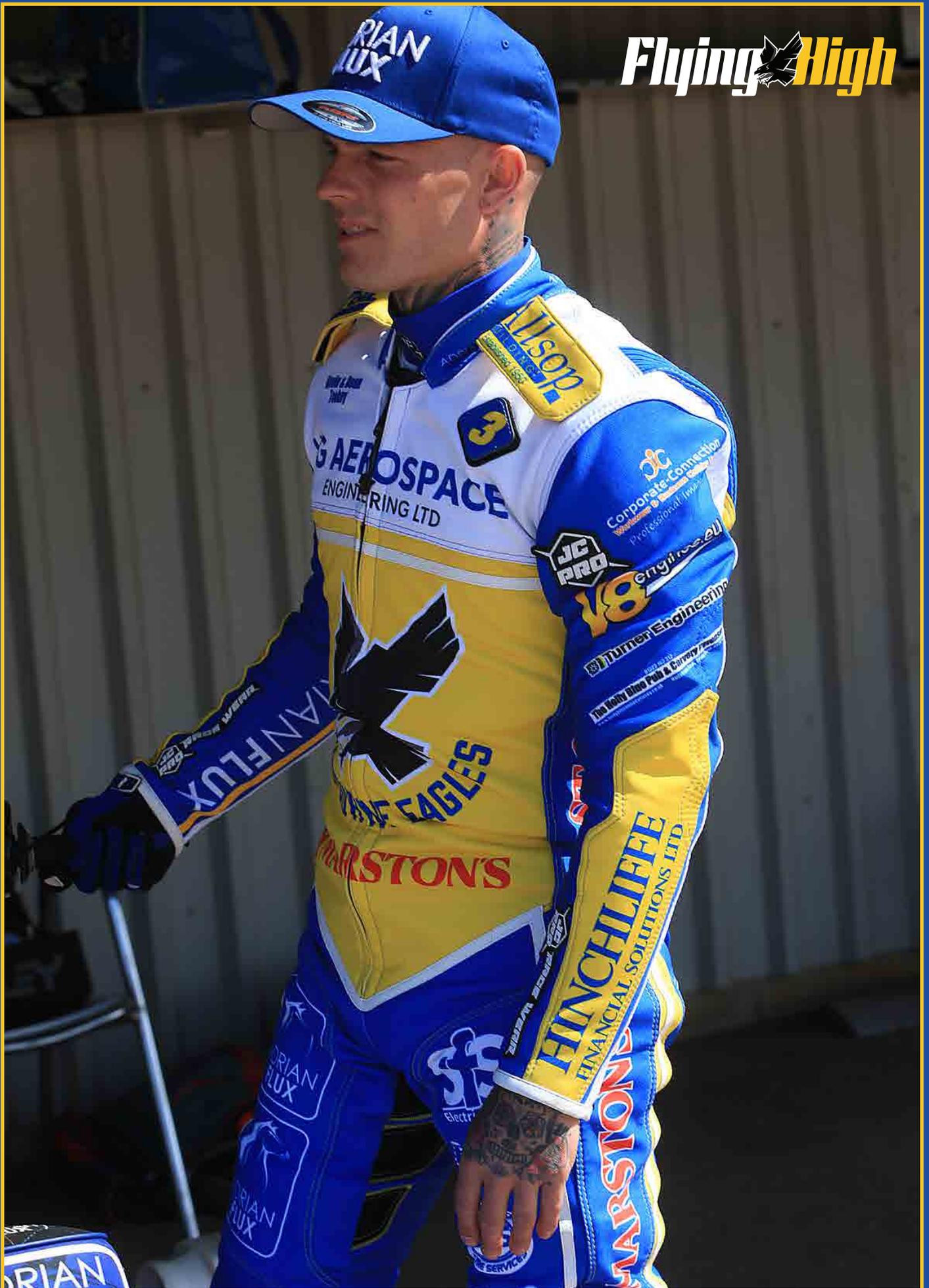
I really hope we can get to see some racing in 2021 but I think sadly it's probably more realistic to look at 2022 before the full league programme can continue.

I know that there is a lot of planning and preparation going on in the speedway world at the moment to combat the challenges that we all face but as a business model you cannot afford to run at a loss and sadly Covid-19 has had a massive effect on everybody.

It costs Marston's approx. £8-9 million pounds each month that our pub and hotel businesses are closed and that's without any revenue coming in as we still like everybody else have bills to pay but our JV with Carlsberg has helped secure our immediate long term future and that is what we need to think about in the speedway world, the future.

The future of the clubs has to be the number one priority as without the clubs we have no product to show, share and develop the next generation of riders. It's been a real honour to work with everybody at Eastbourne and I look forward to being at Arlington again to see everybody when we can go racing again in the future. 🦋





Lewi Kerr