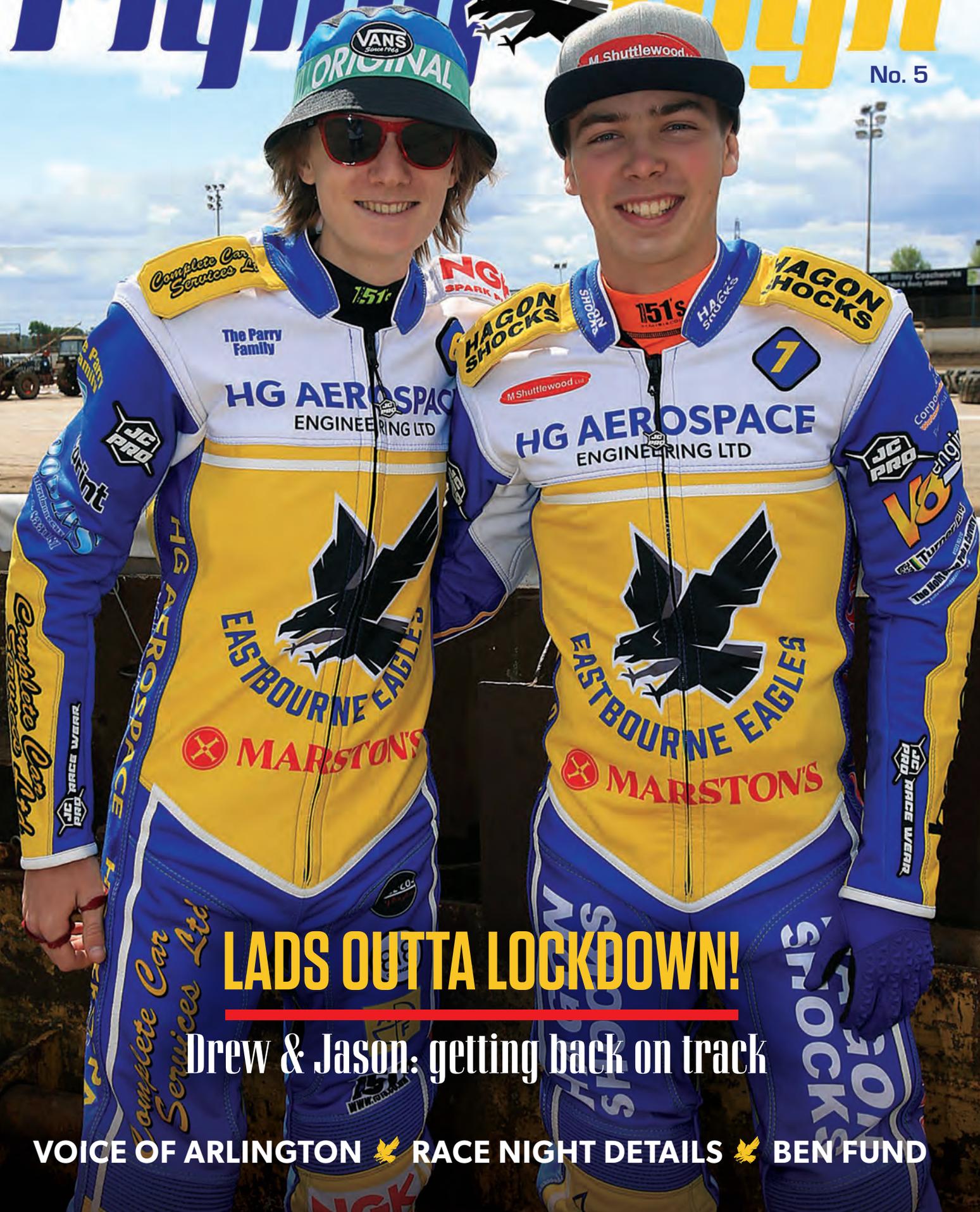


Flying High

No. 5



LADS OUTTA LOCKDOWN!

Drew & Jason: getting back on track

Flying High Foreword

HG AEROSPACE EAGLES SPEEDWAY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 5 | APRIL 2021

THERE HAS CERTAINLY been a lot of positive progress since the last edition of Flying High towards Speedway returning in the UK from the May 17. We are not quite there yet but the news over Easter that the next phase of easement will commence as planned on April 12 is a huge boost for everyone.

On a personal level, it allows Chris and myself to get over to Eastbourne and legally "stay over" and we're really looking forward to doing that for a week from the April 19.

There are lots of things to be done before we can hopefully start on the May 22 and we'll need to get over the next easement hurdle on the May 17, but we can at least now see a rapidly growing light at the end of a long dark tunnel.

Season opener

If we start on the May 22 with a double header of Championship and National League action against Newcastle, it will be 602 days since our last competitive action at Arlington on the September 28, 2019.

We just can't wait to get started and it's not as if there is no pressure with a lot of independent pundits and supporters making Eastbourne among the title favourites at both CL and NDL level.

We know that every match at home and away will be a titanic struggle but we also know we have some of, if not the best fans in the Sport, indeed in any Sport to cheer us on.

We are seeking to build a level of team spirit and intensity across both teams that will bond us and help us in the battles ahead.

Ticket arrangements

Of course, Covid-19 isn't going away. The restrictions and regulations mean that we have to adopt an ONLINE pre-booked ticketing facility for all matches until at least June 2021 and this has caused concern and disquiet in some quarters.

To be perfectly honest and transparent, they are not our rules, nor are they our choices but they are what we have to do to be legal and compliant.

We are working on some plans to enable those without internet access, or the necessary confidence to use the internet to book online, to be able to access tickets by more conventional methods so that as many as possible can come and enjoy Speedway in a safe and secure environment. We must stress, though, that this will not include any option to pay on the day which is not possible whilst Covid-19 restrictions remain in place; but having more options to book/purchase in advance.

We'll be making those announcements within the next week, so please watch the website and social media and don't forget, if you want to be kept updated of all important news, you can receive it directly in to your email inbox by [registering here](#)

“ We are seeking to build a level of team spirit and intensity across both teams that will bond us and help us in the battles ahead. ”

“ Ticket sales are going very well and I would suggest that if you want to be assured of seeing the fixtures in May that you book soon to avoid disappointment. ”

Get your tickets now

Ticket sales are going very well and I would suggest that if you want to be assured of seeing the fixtures in May that you book soon to avoid disappointment (and we are also selling June fixtures now too. [Click here to purchase Tickets](#))

On Saturday, June 19, we plan to stage a standalone NDL fixture v the Kent Royals and for that fixture we will charge a standard adult/concession price of £10.

That £10 price has long been seen as the "holy grail" of National Development League Speedway and we are delighted to be able to offer it for any standalone NDL fixtures (more are planned) and with the double headers attracting only a £6 surcharge (difference between CL and double header prices for adults and concessions respectively), we hope that you will support and embrace all of the Speedway on offer in 2021.

We will stage a second-half at all standalone fixtures – six heats of NDL and MSDL-level action to help to develop the next generation of riders and also to ease congestion around the car parks and exits after the meetings as we know many will want to stay on and watch.

'Opt out' arrangements

We have had some complaints about the number of double headers and the concern that some people won't want to stay for both matches.

We have subsequently arranged an "opt out" option, where those who don't want to stay for both matches will have the option of a ten-minute window to leave the Stadium, after heat 15 of the CL match and before the parade on the NDL match.

Details are here and we will expand on how this will work in detail, by emailing everyone who has purchased tickets for the first double header on May 22.

It's important to note that most double headers are in the mid-summer period when the weather is at its best and some are on Sundays too.

Those that use the "opt out" facility will pay only for the CL match once a refund has been levied off their next ticket purchase ([full info here](#)). Of course, we hope that the vast majority will stay for NDL matches to cheer the Seagulls on to success.

Getting the pipeline flowing

I think it's important to emphasise why we have joined the NDL in 2021 and hopefully for many years to come.

We want to build a "conveyor belt" of talent from junior levels at pre-10 years of age, through youth Speedway, on to the MSDL and NDL and into the professional side, be that in the Championship or possibly the Premiership in the future.



We have identified some exceptional young talent, much of it local, and we want to nurture and develop it.

One thing is certain, if we don't someone else will, and the vultures are circling, so rather than risk losing outstanding future talent, we will and are INVESTING in it and want that talent to develop and grow in to the fully fledged Eagles and hopefully international stars of the future.

We'll expand more on our "Academy Plans" in the next edition of Flying High which will be a bumper pre-season Edition out a few weeks before the season starts.

This year's NDL

We can't leave the topic of the NDL without touching on the disappointing news that the Isle of Wight Warriors won't be coming to tapes in the NDL in 2021.

Plymouth have made a bold move up to the Championship and have decided to focus on that project this season and Mildenhall have decided to remain in the NDL as the only standalone club.

However, the IOW have decided to jump ship and to leave the governance of the BSPL and SCB and have plans to try something completely different under a different regulatory umbrella.

Mildenhall I think deserve great credit for sticking with the NDL and we are more than happy to support them and to honour our 2020 agreement to loan Jason (Edwards) to them for the 2021 season. Jason loves it there, has links with the Promotion and we think it will be a beneficial arrangement for all concerned.

'Bold brave move'

I also wish Barry Bishop and Martin Widman every success on a personal and professional level. It is a bold and brave move.

The politics of why they feel forced to have had to make the decision they have is between them and the BSPL/SCB and has been the subject of much debate.

Sadly, as part of that debate, the NDL product as it stands for 2021 has been somewhat trashed and tarnished, not by Barry or Martin I would add, but by some on the fringes who sometimes just want to knock chunks out of the Sport they claim to support, which is very sad and even more sadly utterly predictable.

Ultimately we have a fantastic product, it is called Speedway, it is not perfect and evolution and change is needed.

What the Sport needs above all though is positive publicity and focus and hopefully in 2021 that will come from both the mainstream and any offshoots.

“ We have identified some exceptional young talent, much of it local, and we want to nurture and develop it. ”

“ What the Sport needs above all though is positive publicity and focus and hopefully in 2021 that will come from both the mainstream and any offshoots. ”

Loyal fanbase

At Eastbourne we have a loyal and wonderful fanbase who we believe want to see our Club stabilise, develop and grow and to do that we will work with the Sport's governing bodies, the BSPL, the SCB and the ACU and where we agree we will offer fulsome support and where we don't agree, we will give honest, open and constructive feedback from within the organisation and structure which we support and want to see flourish.

We have to be "in it to win it" and we have to accept that whilst at times we may agree and at times we may not agree, that the Sport and our combined efforts to secure it and to develop it are the most important thing; indeed the only important thing, and fundamentally there is far more that bonds us than divides us and we hope to be part of it for many years to come as a driving force for evolution.

Next month we will focus on the thoughts of my fellow Director Les Fineing for the season ahead, when you will be seeing and hearing a lot more from Les and the revised management team of Lee Kilby, Barry Johnson, Ian Smalley, Russ Keetch, Mark Sexton, the media team of Kevin Ling, Ken Burnett and Paul Watson and others OFF the track and with Trevor Geer, Will Pottinger and Mark Sexton ON the track.

Ian Jordan

DIRECTOR

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



Contributors: Paul Ackroyd, Ken Burnett, Simon Chapman, Kevin Coombes, Mick Corby, Colin Fairclough, Mike Hinvies, Lauren Hinvies, John Ling, Kevin Ling, Pete Lulham, Jeff Scott, Alan South, Liz Taylor, Paul Watson, Cesca Wright, Tiffani Graveling, Kevin Whiting, Ian Smalley.

Design by Barry Cross Artwork

Thanks to John Somerville - www.skidmarks1928.com

All content Copyright of Eastbourne Speedway Ltd 2021

Amanda Morrison



Drew & Jason: Locking down, looking ahead and a long racing history!

Flying High talks to HG Aerospace Eagles' Drew Kemp and Jason Edwards about life in lockdown and their hopes ahead of the 2021 speedway season at Arlington with Eastbourne.

In the process we discover how Drew and Jason's paths - and wheels, have consistently crossed over their many years of racing in motocross and speedway.



Drew Kemp (No. 11) lines up for his first ever motocross race at Great Hockham, Norfolk alongside Jason Edwards (24) in 2009.



Jason lifts and Drew looks out of shape in their first race against each other.

“We’ve ridden in so many meetings together since that first race it won’t be unusual when I look over and see Jason at the starting gate with me.”

DREW KEMP

“It’s amazing that Jason was in my first ever motocross race all those years ago and now we’re in the Eagles team together,” said Drew. “We’ve ridden in so many meetings together since that first race it won’t be unusual when I look over and see Jason at the starting gate with me, I think a few 5-1s are in order!”

Jason also remembers lining up with Drew and looks back on his days in the sport with great affection. “Motocross was such a good sport to be involved in, it’s a great way to learn bike skills and it’s easier to get involved in motocross at an entry level. It’s usually a weekend event so it’s also about spending quality time with the family which was always fun. Me and Drew were both in the Norfolk and Suffolk Motocross Club so would often meet at various tracks.” said Jason.

Although they both started out riding motocross, the routes Drew and Jason took to move into speedway were very different. For Jason, speedway was always his first choice and when Martin Hagon started his speedway academy at Lakeside, it was the perfect opportunity for Jason to realise his ambition on shale.

“Speedway was my first love,” explains Jason. “I wanted to be a speedway rider before I did motocross. I was a real fan as a kid, going to Cardiff and taking it all in when the riders rocked up in their vans.

“Martin’s academy was brilliant, it was just half an hour up the road and you could just turn up in your motocross gear and give it a go, all the specialist speedway equipment was supplied so there was no big outlay if you didn’t carry it on, although obviously I did and loved it.” ➤

Drew Kemp and Jason Edwards practice at Iwade as the first lockdown eased in July 2020 and (above) on the podium during the 250cc British Youth Championships in 2016.

WHEN THE EASTBOURNE pairing of Drew Kemp and Jason Edwards line-up for the HG Aerospace Eagles at Arlington in May, it will be the latest in long line of races where the two young British riders have lined up together.

You can go back over eleven years for their first meeting when a seven year-old Drew Kemp took to the track for his first ever motocross race at the Great Hockham motocross track in September 2009, and lining up next to him was another seven-year-old, Jason Edwards.

In the intervening years the names of Kemp and Edwards have appeared together in many speedway meeting programmes.



Drew Kemp (red) leads Jason Edwards (white) at the Jeff Gittus Memorial meeting in Australia in January 2020.

◀ For Drew, a chance conversation between his grandad and speedway equipment supplier John Carpenter presented Drew with the opportunity to give speedway a try.

"I remember that day like yesterday," says Drew. "John said I could have a go on one of his speedway bikes so we went over to Iwade and I gave it a run out. I was just in my motocross gear on this 500cc speedway bike and I was immediately hooked. I don't think anyone expected me to go as fast as I did - especially John! But I loved the speed and pretty much decided there and then it was what I wanted to do."

By early 2016 Drew had his own speedway bike and was ready to compete although he was only 13 so limited to racing a 250cc. His first competitive race was at a Southern Track



Drew takes to the shale in his motocross gear.

Riders tournament where just as he had done many times in motocross he lined up against Jason Edwards.

It was a good recollection for Jason. "I remember that day well, I got five wins! Then we went into the 250cc British Youth Championship together where it was me, Drew and Leon Flint vying for the win in our class. I had some good races with Drew and Leon - although we were young we always used to race, so it was a good learning time. It felt like such a big deal at the time, like we were riding in the biggest meeting in the world, but looking back we did learn so much."

Jason finished second in the 2016 250cc British Youth Championship with Drew third and Leon Flint taking the title. In 2017 Drew moved up to the 500cc class and claimed his first British title.

"I'd always wanted to be a British Champion - even when I was racing in motocross, so it was great to win the 500cc British Youth title," said Drew. "It was a good result and gave me confidence going into league racing"

Drew and Jason turned 15 in the middle of the 2017 season which made them eligible to race in the National League and they both made appearances

for Eastbourne towards the end of the season. It was a time Drew remembers fondly, "I had some good times at Eastbourne when I was just starting out. It was a great atmosphere and although I was only guesting I was always made to feel really welcome. I remember the day I walked into the pits and saw I had my own pit board, I was so chuffed and I've still got it. I had a few decent scores too and I'm sure the Eagles fans remember me beating Luke Bowen at Kent that year. I'm expecting the same kind of buzz to be around Arlington this season, that would be great."

Although he was close to becoming an Eagle in 2018 Drew eventually joined Mildenhall while Jason was part of Eastbourne's successful National League line-up in 2018. The Eagles finished with a league and cup double and Jason soon moved up from the reserve berth to the main body of the team finishing with an average of 7.59. Drew also enjoyed a successful season becoming number 1 at Mildenhall with an average of 9.15 and he also teamed up with Jason in the Cradley Heathens team to compete in the National Trophy tournament.

Drew and Jason both enjoyed their time together with the Heathens where they worked with Eagles manager Will Pottinger, Drew recalls: "Cradley was so much fun, I think the fans were so grateful to see some speedway and the terraces were always packed with fans."

Jason was equally enthusiastic about his time with the Heathens: "Cradley was a brilliant year, they have a great set of fans and we had great support whatever the results were. The fans would always chat with us before and after the meetings and it was a good time."

In 2019 both Drew and Jason continued to race in the National League with Kent and Mildenhall respectively but both made inroads into Championship racing.

Both admit it was a big jump up to the Championship but realise how important it is to push themselves at a higher level.



Drew Kemp on the inside in his first ever competitive speedway race in a Southern Track Riders tournament at Rye House on 17th April 2016, Jason Edwards - from the outside gate, won the race which also included Anders Rowe (blue) and Joe Boatman (white).

"I was so pleased to get a call from Eastbourne and make some appearances for the Eagles towards the end of the 2019 season." says Jason "I had some tough meetings but it certainly gave me a taste for the standard I need to be at."

Drew had been through an equally testing year in the Championship with Sheffield. "If you asked me during the season I would have probably called it a living nightmare," reveals Drew. "I started off ok but I soon moved into the main body of the team and then I struggled. My head dropped and I lost confidence but when I look back at it now I know it taught me so much in terms of the mental side of speedway."

The season did have it's high points for the pair and Drew won the British Under-19 title at Redcar in August with Jason finishing runner-up. Then as the



Jason and Drew show some team riding for Cradley Heath during a National League match against Stoke in 2018, fans will be hoping they can pair up with similar effect for the HG Aerospace Eagles this season.

Paul Rose

British season ended, both Drew and Jason were given the opportunity to ride in Australia.

"I think going to Australia was the best thing that could have happened after a tough domestic season in the UK," said Drew. "I spent a lot of time with Tai Woffinden and finished second to him in many of the meetings, he even had me cleaning his bikes!"

Jason and Drew represented Great Britain in two victorious test matches against Australia.

"I'll never forget scoring a 5-1 for my country with Tai," enthuses Jason. "The whole experience was brilliant. It's all very well watching the best riders on TV but when you come in from your own race and then watch a rider like Tai or Jason Crump go out on the same track and ride it like they do - you just learn so much, so yeah Australia

was an amazing experience. It was a great life lesson too, learning to do things for myself, it's just an amazing lifestyle out there and I enjoyed it so much." ➤



Jason and Drew are interviewed by Young Lions' manager Neil Vatcher at the end of the 2016 British Youth Championship series.



Success for Drew and Jason at the British Under-19 Championship in 2019 with Drew becoming champion for the first of his two title wins and Jason taking the runner-up spot.

Colin Poole



Mike Hinves



Just making memories - from Leicester to Australia!

Drew and Jason on the podium during the 250cc British Youth Championship in 2016. Jason won the second round of the competition at Scunthorpe with Leon Flint coming second and Drew third. Just over three years later in the winter of 2019/20, Drew, Jason and Leon found themselves on a speedway tour of Australia. They are pictured on a break from racing, taking in some sightseeing and posing for the obligatory koala photo!



← When Drew and Jason returned refreshed from Australia in January 2020 they were looking forward to the new season racing for the HG Aersospace Eagles, but the year didn't go to plan for anyone and both had a year of limited opportunities to race.

Drew had more chance than most riding in 10 meetings mainly across Europe and took many positives from his meetings.

"The highlights of 2020 were obviously retaining my British Under-19 title and representing my country at the Speedway of Nations," says Drew "but I was also happy with how I performed at big meetings like the British Final and the Peter Craven Memorial meeting. I was on the pace in those meetings and beat some top guys, even when I was at the back I was still competing whereas I know in 2019 I would have been half a lap behind. I know I made progress in 2020 and that gives me confidence going into the 2021 season."

Jason had a couple of meetings in the UK and rode twice in Europe including representing GB in the European Under-19 Pairs with Jordan Palin.

"The Under-19 Pairs in Gustrow was a great experience, we were always in the races and competing and I don't think the final result did us justice," said Jason

"I didn't have enough meetings to be racing consistently and it doesn't matter what you do in practice it's all different coming from the tapes in a race but I learnt a lot about how I need to transfer what I do in practice into racing."

"The last time I rode my bike was at the end of October on one of the GB Academy training days, despite the lack of racing those days were brilliant. The best thing about those days was the one to one tuition we got. I'd be out for a few laps then get called in by Jason Crump or Rory Schlein and get told where you were going right, or going wrong. It's been brilliant to be part of that and the effort put into that is amazing. You come away thinking that you've learnt something."

The recent news that restrictions are to be eased in the UK is welcome news for both youngsters although they made the most of lockdown to work on their fitness. "I'm probably in the best shape I've ever been fitness wise," reveals Jason.

"Although it's not an endurance sport like motocross, you do need to be physically fit to ride speedway - you only need to look at the GP riders and see what the top guys look like, and obviously weight plays a part in speedway too, the less you're carrying on the bike the better.

"I bought a new mountain bike in the first lockdown and I found loads of footpaths and trails in my local area that I've never ridden before. I've also been riding the mountain biking course they used at the 2012 Olympics, it's kept me competitive even if it's just against myself and trying to beat my personal best. It's physically knacker but something I've done to keep up my fitness in preparation for the new season."

"I'm not the biggest fan of running but it's something else I started to do more in lockdown, challenging myself to improve and I was crazy enough to run a half marathon on the hottest day of the year."

Drew has also been cycling and used an exercise bike when weather conditions weren't favourable. "I used a virtual cycling app called Zwift," said Drew. "It made it fun and I could virtually take any route in the world and ride with anyone. I did a ride with Kenneth Bjerre of over 100 miles. The good thing about being on the exercise bike is I can watch something at the same time, put it this way, I've seen a lot of episodes of *Friends*!"



Jason Edwards and Drew Kemp both made appearances for Eastbourne Eagles when they turned 15 in 2017. Here they line up after victory over Kent in the National League play-off semi-final with Charley Powell, Jason & Drew, Mattie Bates, Josh Bailey, Tom Brennan, Connor Dugard (manager) and Georgie Wood (front).

Mike Hinves

The Eagles duo both admit to watching the Netflix series *Tiger King* during the first lockdown but haven't felt the need to fill endless hours with TV.

"I've missed meeting up with people and the social side but there's much of lockdown life I've enjoyed," said Jason. "I guess we've always been in a bit of a bubble really so apart from speedway I haven't missed much and I've really enjoyed getting out in the countryside where we live."

Drew's predominant thought about lockdown is simple: "I miss riding my bike, that's what I do!"

Drew and Jason will be glad to get back on their bikes to continue their racing careers as both have been working in more traditional jobs during lockdown. Jason has been in a 9-5 job at the Hagon factory while Drew has worked shifts in a local care home.

As well as his Championship meetings for the HG Aerospace Eagles, Drew lines up for Ipswich Witches in the Premiership and Gdansk in Poland.

"After the last 12 months it will be great to be busy on the bike," says Drew. "All I want to be doing is riding my bike and with three teams I'll be riding my bike a lot! If I do have a bad meeting I won't have time to dwell on it as I'll already be on my way to the next one and that can only be good for me."

"I'm really looking forward to finally getting a full season with Eastbourne and getting to grips with the Arlington track, I've often said it's not my favourite but riding there every week means it just might turn out to be. There's a great mix of experience and youth in the Eagles team and I think that will pay dividends for us. It will create a good atmosphere and we'll soon become a strong unit."

"One of my favourites seasons was with Mildenhall in 2018, we were having fun, enjoyed our racing and with that we won meetings, we created a winning mentality. I think that can happen at Eastbourne."



March 2021 - Jason gets some two-wheeled action in preparation for the new season with Eastbourne.



Drew and Jason practising at Iwade in 2020 are up for the new season with HG Aerospace Eagles in 2021

Amanda Morrison

Jason will combine his Championship meetings with Eastbourne with a National Development League spot with Mildenhall.

"Even though Eastbourne have a National League team, the management were great about me riding for Mildenhall. It was my decision and I think it will do me good having two different home tracks. It will be a bit strange when Mildenhall have their NL visit to Arlington, I guess I'll get pushed over to the other side of the pits after the Championship meeting!

"My bikes are all ready for the new season, working at Hagon has meant I've been able to take advantage of their machinery so we're all set to go as soon as we can.

"I see this as my last year in the National League so will aim to end it as a number one, it will be great if I get some meetings abroad but I want to have a good domestic season and establish myself in the UK." added Jason

Drew and Jason are currently over 1000 miles apart, Jason preparing for the new season at his home in Billericay in Essex while Drew is in Poland practicing for his season with Gdansk, but they are both looking forward to lining up together for the HG Aerospace Eagles when the UK season is scheduled to begin in May.

"It's been so long without speedway, we'll all be raring to go." said Drew

"I think everyone is going to be so eager to enjoy speedway again - riders, fans, there'll be so much enthusiasm for it" added Jason

Whatever the season holds it will be a further chapter in the racing story Drew Kemp and Jason Edwards have enjoyed since childhood. The good thing about this chapter is that we all get the chance to witness it at Arlington in 2021.

"I really can't wait!" concludes Jason, while Drew adds an unintentional but perfect couplet: "It's gonna be great!" 🐦



March 2021 - Drew gets his first competitive meeting of the season at the Henryka Żyto Memorial in Gdansk.

Arkadiusz Buczyński - akb@akbi.pl

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**

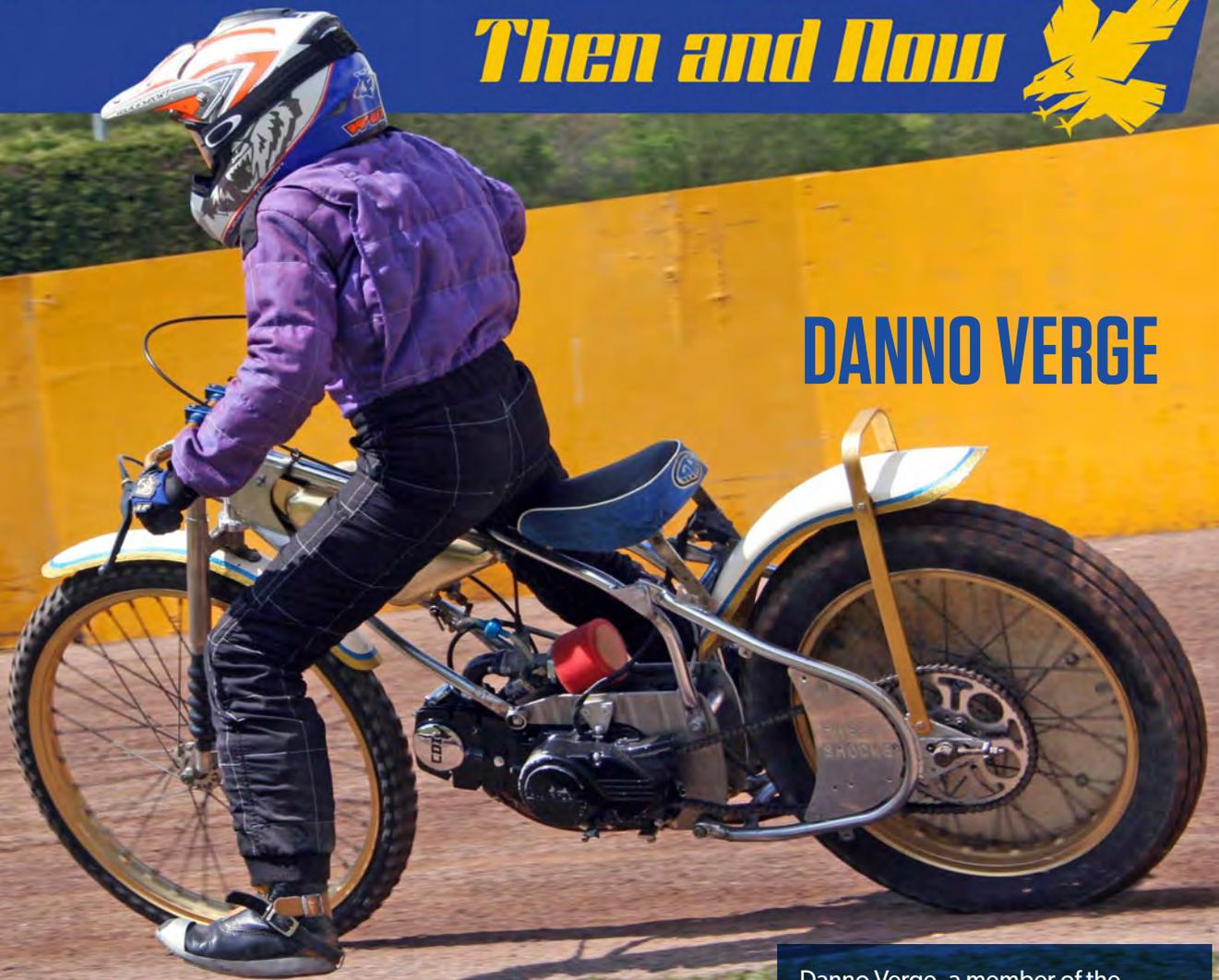
ELITEDISCOS
PROFESSIONAL DISCOTHEQUE

Mobile Disco
Eastbourne / Sussex

www.elitediscos.net

David Graveling
Property Maintenance

07976652813 / 01424 428311
www.davegraveling.co.uk



DANNO VERGE

Danno Verge, a member of the Eastbourne Seagulls squad, was once a regular at Arlington attending training sessions on the junior track. Here he is taking a somewhat tentative spin as a youngster.

After these sessions, young Danno would stay at Arlington see the Eagles in action during the evening.

We are able to bring you this Then and Now feature thanks to incident recorder, Pete Lulham.

He has a collection of photographs shot over a number of years of up-and-coming riders taking their early speedway rides on the Arlington mini-track.

Tiffani Graveling was behind the camera for the modern-day shot.



Frequently asked Speedway Grand Prix questions

AFTER TRAVELLING TO increasingly obscure parts of regional Europe for two seasons to watch every professional race the Speedway Grand Prix World Championships offers, I still had more questions than answers.

Those I could answer were about ticket prices (answer: invariably extortionate), getting there (complex or invariably high on impossible by public transport) or entertainment (fleeting, at best).

The question most people asked me with any real intensity or curiosity was: had I met any Monster Energy start line operatives?

Even the telephone agent at my car insurance company asked about them.

He only knew about speedway because he had once worked in temporary security at the Speedway of Nations event held at the National Speedway stadium in Manchester.

His work required facing away from the track so – to his recollection – the action was “boring”. What he could recall in vivid detail was the innovative race format. Only kidding!

He didn’t even know there were different helmet colours.

What he had clocked though were the start women. To the casual observer, since their arrival race excitement has declined in inverse proportion to the tightness of the clothing worn by the start women.

More people remember the décolletage and general dress sense of the Monster-era start women than the name of the world champion.

One of many ironies is that despite being so memorable to the drive-by observer, these Monster people and even the product they promote are a recent ‘innovation’ and are really nothing to with speedway per se.

Wherever speedway bikes have roared – especially at the bigger meetings – there is a rich tradition of old school glamour injected by scantily clad start operatives and glamorous trophy presenters.

Various states of undress and degrees of decorum have either varied or moved with the times, despite strong rumours that the sexual revolution hit pit lane with tsunami force but largely avoided speedway fans on the terraces.

Though changing attitudes and falling crowds saw start operatives die out in

Author Jeff Scott, who you will often find on the terraces at Arlington watching the Eagles, lets readers into more secrets from the Speedway Grand Prix series.

British League speedway, pockets of resistance to sexual equality legislation remained at Coventry – with two sets of majorette style artistes performing every week in strict choreographed rotation under the watchful eye of their exacting but ageing trainer – and, for a while, at Workington where Cumbrian girl-next-door types with umbrellas appeared, thanks to the support and sponsorship of loyal local businesses such as Cumberland Carpets.

Even here at Arlington, we had a one night only flirtation with start operatives.

It was hard to establish afterwards why they didn’t reappear? Some said it was because of their lap dancing place of employ burnt down in mysterious circumstances in Eastbourne town centre.

Others cited the precautionary principle on account of the health and safety danger to life and limb their ultra-vertiginous heels created on the shale surface.

Whatever the exact reason, their close to X-rated but supple toe-touching performance saw old age pensioners

spontaneously spit their false teeth in adulation onto the stock car track surface.

In comparison to that for-one-night-only blink-and-they’re-gone but never forgotten Arlington start line presentational troupe, the Monster Energy start team dress like nuns.

Away from the track, sightings of these most elusive of the regular of SGP backroom staff are as frequent seeing herds of wildebeest hoof pack down SGP tracks instead of blokes in overalls.

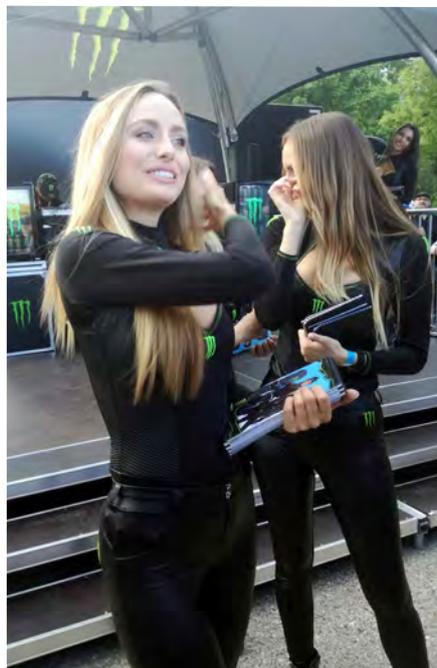
All are, of course, either officially or informally supervised by FIM Race Director (“one of the most powerful men in speedway”, writes Peter Oakes mistily) Phil Morris.

Nothing escapes his watchful Welsh eyes, least of all the wildebeest and these ever changing squads of Monster Energy start women. BSI long ago effectively handed over the stadia and pre-meeting entertainment to Monster as a cost-cutting exercise in defiance of yet another discarded cast-iron strategic promise of the SGP experience from its founding father John Postlethwaite, “on pre-show entertainment, we are going to make sure people have an unbelievable night”.

Pacing myself for one of those “unbelievable” SGP nights ahead, I went to the basement store cupboard that doubled as the hotel gym and, FINALLY, bumped into a Monster start women in the wild.

Already cosy inside with only one person when numbers double this gym becomes claustrophobic, albeit acceptably so. Apparently, under the mistaken impression she has entered a fully-functioning “fitness centre” as described on the Mercure website, I need no second invitation to watch this fellow hotel guest and Monster employee – judged by her accent from the Czech Republic – struggle to get any of the equipment going to her satisfaction.

Enjoy the preserved time capsule that are the interactive gym museum facilities here.



First she tries to use the running machine. After a few stutter steps in vain and some increasingly exasperated twirls of its Thunderbirds launch control panel knobs to zero reaction, she abandons the runner for its accompanying cross-bike/trainer.

This also spectacularly fails to vroom. Despite energetic pumping of the pedals and random thrusts of her arms in a style that wouldn't disgrace her if she has to suddenly step into the FIM Race Director's dainty shoes later this evening.

Keen rectify things right, she grasps the electric cable of this hybrid exercise machine only to angrily exclaim, "it doesn't even have a plug".

The rower then defies understanding and meaningful operation.

Finding myself lying stretching next her, I realise I must have been granted a wish by a very literal SGP genie. Ignoring there is no pillow or, indeed, champagne glasses and a rose petal strewn duvet on hand, this really isn't the melodic pillow talk I daydreamed.

That was more smoochy love chat along the lines of "OMG! Your slow caresses and sensual touch transports me to the edge of extreme ecstasy close to that apparently felt every single race by the SGP world feed commentary team!"

No sooner do these thoughts cross my mind unbidden than she further punctures my fantasy narrative with an angry outburst, "this is awful!" In a weird instance of gym use possibly imitating life and SGP media reporting, her anger rises in the face of flaccid equipment that badly fails to live up to its wild promises.

She spits, "they should shut it down!" Me saying, "actually it is only a mini-gym" only serves to exasperate her more, "it is pathetic!"

I enjoy the short shrift of a death stare and a brief flash of perfect white teeth that is more shark grimace than smile. Vehemently pulling on the rare sight of a logo-free bog standard beany hat – something that looks like haute couture on her head – she elects to head out to the park for a run instead of helping me up off the floor.

In the dining area, some other Monster women dine at breakfast with their own big glass jars of the generously sized kind used to house and showcase pet stick insects. Rather than drink the fluid of their employer, it turns out it is salad – and lots of it – that fuels their day.

This is sensible from both an economy and nutrition point of view. If seeing how sausages get made alienates users for life, then the same can't be said of watching how these glass jars get lovingly prepared by the Monster women.

They transport and patiently mix their selections with expert almost artisan skill using carefully measured portions of each and every ingredient in exactly the right amount and ideal order.

A sea of avid onlookers are eager to savour what looks to the uninitiated observer as a free geology tutorial conducted by comely teachers using a variety of mostly dried breakfast buffet salad ingredients and occasional dressings.

These unexpected shale professors create a soil profile using breakfast buffet ingredients to visually illustrate the six main soil horizons traditionally held to inform the geology discipline.

If all teachers enjoyed this level of attention and scrutiny, educational achievement would be off the charts. Each layer requires careful selection, curation and measure. It is a tremendously diligent and smoothly executed breakfast buffet theft. Done in plain sight as waiters itch to help with additional ingredients but don't have the expertise to predict the next important choice, let alone the precise glycaemic index required.

Of course, basic stadium start line survivalist technique dictates that these ingredients must not cause bloating. Luckily, start line flatulence is allowed as easily masked by the extreme revs of four speedway bike engines. These foodstuff must also be slowly absorbed low GI foodstuffs to avoid rapid rise in blood sugar levels.

Between races these Monster start line operatives remain calm throughout by practising seated meditation knowing most professional SGP races almost certainly won't trigger any sudden distracting increase in heart rate activity.

The geological soil horizons this morning are formed by a base layer of seeds (pumpkin, sesame) and nuts (cashew; peanut, with skin; almond; walnut). Above this sediment are layers of fruit (orange segments; carefully chopped apples; three different types of melons with a green splash of avocado), salad



Jeff Scott's acclaimed books on the SGP – *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Speedway Grand Prix* (2019) and *Who Gates Wins* (2020) – are available at www.methanolpress.com, all good bookshops and Amazon.

leaves (the whole range including lettuce, radicchio, arugula, Batavia and frisee), tomato and then cucumber topped off with a seed and nut topsoil.

Concentration levels are off the scale.

The room is almost operating theatre hushed. Albeit we have bubbling coffee percolating instead of compressed air and the distant sound of a kitchen whisk rather than mechanical saw on bone.

Constructed with focus and precision, their every move is studied with the intensity of especially anxious trainee surgeons who know they are soon to be randomly quizzed upon the nuances of the operation they just witnessed.

Each layer is dressed with dexterity while each woman is mentally undressed similarly surgically by the audience as they collect and mix the ingredients.

If this breakfast buffet specimen jar of healthy eating is the best solution to hunger pangs at work by Monster employees then clearly there is a big disconnect between the claims made for a Monster Energy drink by its manufacturer and the brute reality.

With unlimited access to the male gaze AND free cans of Monster, it says something that you deliberately reject the official SGP beverage you promote as YOUR OWN choice of liquid fuel during the long hours of your work at whatever obscure stadium it is this weekend.

While the advertising claims that only a single can really boosts your "energy" levels, it is telling that promotional staff avoid it passing their lips like the plague.

With the equivalent of thirteen sugar cubes and two espressos in a standard can (according to The Guardian), it is not hard to imagine you would be wired for some time afterwards. Whether this would be a pleasant experience is altogether another matter. Monster sponsored riders contractually have to manfully and ostentatiously swig from a branded receptacle with abandon every time a live broadcast camera hoves into view.

Tai Woffinden is such a company man that – once a season whether he needs it or not (probably to briefly pacify doubting Thomases sceptical he is imbibing the company fluids) – sometimes deliberately opens a fresh can and performatively quaffs from it. ALWAYS on camera. Sometimes even before his serious racing is over.

Setting aside taste and health claims, regularly drinking cans of this stuff is going to lead to weight gain for riders, fans and start line operatives alike if they regularly indulge.

The Monster women leave breakfast holding the glass jar like a trophy. Their preparation of this feast for later at the final SGP meeting of the season in Torun has been a banquet for sexist eyes now but will – inevitably – leave all parties still hungry for more later. 🐦

**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

ROBINS

SCANIA

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

LEAN ON ME

LEAN ON ME was the title of a 1972 hit by American singer-songwriter Bill Withers and it seems appropriate title to sum up this photograph from Mike Hinves.

This really is some close action featuring Eagles Dean Barker and Andy Galvin from Hackney. Thanks to Pete Lulham and Steve Verge for identifying the riders for *Flying High*.



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

V8engines.eu



01323 763212



Hailsham Rd, Stone Cross, East Sussex BN24 5BU



by Alan South

Eastbourne need to beware 'magpies'

EASTBOURNE SPEEDWAY have used the pause in racing caused by the Covid-19 to good effect.

The Seagulls project has landed at Arlington with the club having riders at MSDL level and now a National Development League (NDL) team. It shows there is a career route at Eastbourne for those who are good enough.

There is a tantalising prospect for a youngster starting at the lowest level to be able to go on to be the Eastbourne Eagles No 1 in the Championship. That must be a huge incentive for any rider and especially so for those who have Hailsham or Eastbourne as part of their home address.

The Eagles have the foundations of an academy, which is what all the top football clubs do.

After all, it must be cheaper to bring in a player from the academy than pay however many millions in transfer fees.

It's the same for the Eagles: nurture your own talent and reap the benefits for years to come. Local riders are very likely to engender more local support and there is certainly a saving on air fares and

the like. After all, you could buy the diesel to bring a van from Hailsham to Arlington for a pound, and still have change.

Eastbourne long ago had the reputation of being a nursery for riders with many of them coming from the Kent grasstrack scene.

The Belle Vue training schools run by Dent Oliver are a thing of legend. The NDL, which a few years ago seemed to be heading towards being a genuine division three, has had its wings clipped by the BSPL and now has a new purpose.

There is now but one standalone club – Mildenhall – after the Isle of Wight felt they could not swallow the BSPL medicine.

The Island outfit are going their own way and the majority of people have had nothing but praise for the way Barry Bishop and Martin Widman have staged speedway in the past.

I say the majority but I do know of people who say the entertainment factor at Smallmead was over-hyped and cringe at the thought of yet another children's race as if they were watching a village school's sports day. Those people were the minority, no doubt, but it just proves that is difficult to satisfy all of the people all of the time, especially when it comes to Speedway.

However, back to the NDL.

Edinburgh (Armada), Belle Vue, Berwick, Eastbourne, Kent, Leicester and Newcastle effectively have feeder teams.

Scunthorpe certainly have sufficient track and practice days to develop their own riders. When you look at that list you realise there are an awful lot of teams with no development scheme in place. The topflight have their junior league heats after the main match but that looks little more than tokenism. Better than nothing, yes but hardly sufficient to develop riders without them learning elsewhere as well – unless you are Belle Vue.

As things stand, there are quite a few Championship teams without any formal scheme. And here's the rub for Eastbourne and the other dual clubs in the NDL.

They are in danger of spending time and effort to bring on riders and then see them picked off by other clubs without a training scheme, just a magpie is tempted to steal bright and shiny things.

I have been told that Bob Dugard would



Nathan Ablitt

Mike Hirves



Vinnie Foord

Mike Hirves

become infuriated when discovering rival clubs had sent scouts to Arlington to watch over the emerging talent on the training track and then sign them up from under the noses of the Eagles.

With a more formal academy, Eastbourne may be able to close that door.

However, the BSPL needs to put in place rules to recompense clubs if a rider they have trained and developed ends up signing for another club.

It's only fair and would probably encourage some clubs to stop resting on their laurels and leaving future rider development to others.

***Alan South is a speedway fan who works all round country, watching speedway wherever he can. He lives in Sussex.**

**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.*



Flag to remember Sid

THIS amazing flag will be seen flying high at Eastbourne Speedway matches this coming season. It is also hoped that it will make plenty of appearances on away tracks.

The flag has been made in memory of the late Sid Greatley – a tribute appeared in edition two of *Flying High*.

Sid was originally a Wimbledon fan but transferred his loyalties to Eastbourne when the South West London club ceased. Sid's grandson, Colin Fairclough, is pictured with his sister Gemma. Colin is a Chelsea FC fan and has a friend he met through the football.

He said: "I took him to speedway for the first time at Stoke a few years ago as he lives in Crewe. He met my grandad and loved him as soon as he met him." It was his friend's idea to get a flag made in memory of Sid and the idea struck a chord with Colin.

"My friend recommended a company that makes flags for football fans all around the country and they designed the flag and once myself and my nan Doreen approved the design, they made it. Grandad was known by speedway fans up and down the country, so it means that not just our family and friends will enjoy the flag but all speedway fans will get to enjoy this flag and remember what a great man my grandad was and the passion he had for speedway," Colin said. The flag was paid for by the Sid's widow.



Sid Greatley

Jeff Scott

THIS YEAR'S British Youth Championship has six rounds confirmed for 2021, with the possibility of two more. Eastbourne fans will be able to see the 'Stars of Tomorrow' when the Eagles host a round (the final one as things stand) on Saturday, September 19 (all classes).

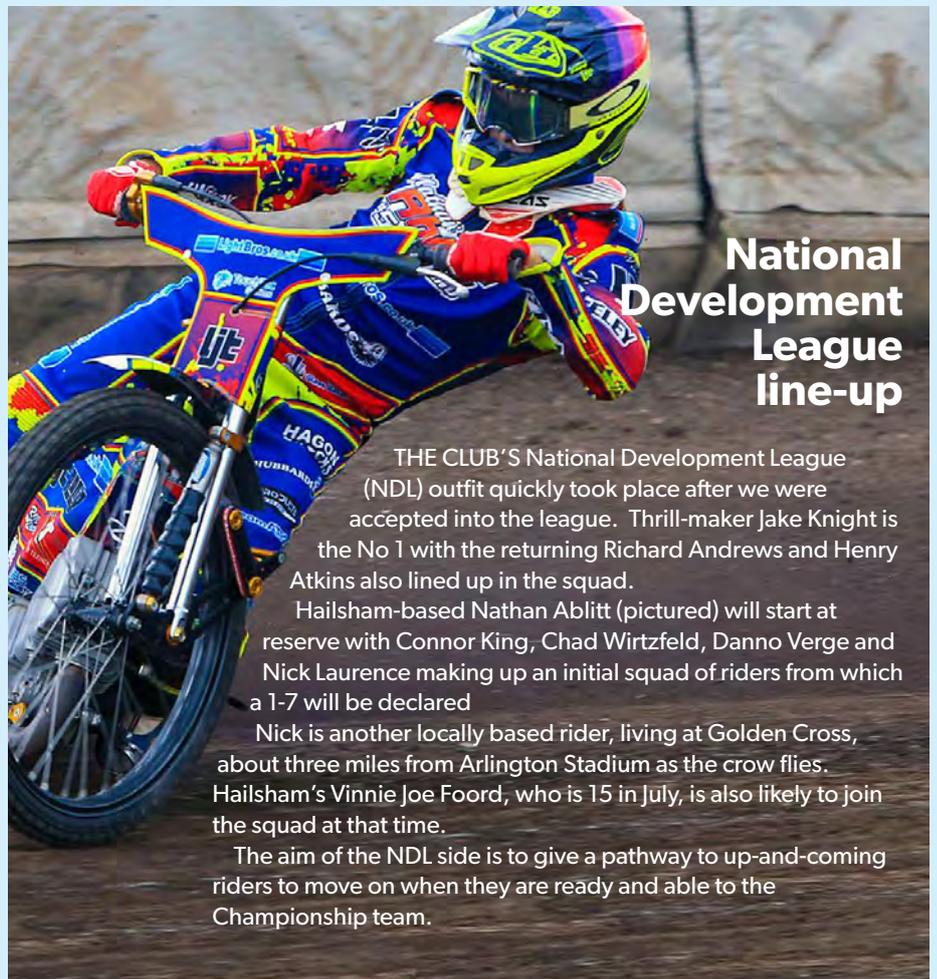
RICHARD Knight, whose son Jake will spearhead the Eastbourne Seagulls National Development League team, has been appointed commercial manager of Peterborough Panthers and the King's Lynn Stars.

Both clubs are run by Keith Chapman. Richard rode for three East Anglian tracks, including King's Lynn, and Berwick during his racing career.

CO-OWNER of Birmingham Speedway, David Mason, who lives in Eastbourne, pulled off a coup with the Brummies final signing for 2021.

David, dad Peter and manager Laurence Rogers kept cool in the search for their final rider and swooped once it became known that Erik Riss had changed his mind and would ride in the UK in 2021.

Eastbourne fans will well remember Riss, a former world long track champion, riding at Arlington for Redcar in 2019.



National Development League line-up

THE CLUB'S National Development League (NDL) outfit quickly took place after we were accepted into the league. Thrill-maker Jake Knight is the No 1 with the returning Richard Andrews and Henry Atkins also lined up in the squad.

Hailsham-based Nathan Ablitt (pictured) will start at reserve with Connor King, Chad Wirtzfeld, Danno Verge and Nick Laurence making up an initial squad of riders from which a 1-7 will be declared

Nick is another locally based rider, living at Golden Cross, about three miles from Arlington Stadium as the crow flies. Hailsham's Vinnie Joe Foord, who is 15 in July, is also likely to join the squad at that time.

The aim of the NDL side is to give a pathway to up-and-coming riders to move on when they are ready and able to the Championship team.

Mike Hirves

Blast from the past

HERE'S a real blast from the past, thanks to Simon Chapman.

He's not sure of the era adding: "Not sure what era, but the late John Groombridge was my father-in-law and I used to work at the garage and these found their way home with me after the garage was sold on.

I am not sure of the dates but the photos have numbers on the back: 714, 751 and another number I can't make out possibly 404. Not sure if these are rider numbers and I'm not sure if John sponsored the club or just some riders."

We at *Flying High* believe John Groombridge was a club sponsor but over to you readers.

What more can you add to the story? Let us know by emailing flyinghigh@eastbourn-speedway.com



Former Eagle Ben Morley will be riding for rivals Kent in 2021

Tiffani Graveling

Former Eagles on track in 2021

RIDERS formerly of this parish will be found in 2021 at:

Newcastle Gems - **Kelsey Dugard**
 Sheffield Tigers - **Adam Ellis**
 Sheffield Tigers - **Troy Batchelor**
 King's Lynn Stars - **Lewis Bridger**
 Kent Kings - **Ben Morley**
 Kent Kings - **Paul Hurry**
 Plymouth Gladiators - **Alfie Bowtell**
 Peterborough Panthers and Plymouth Gladiators - **Bjarne Pedersen**
 Peterborough Panthers and Kent Kings - **Scott Nicholls**
 Peterborough Panthers and Glasgow Tigers - **Ulrich Ostergaard**
 Kent Kings - **Scott Nicholls**
 Kent Kings - **Ben Morley**
 Kent Kings - **Paul Hurry**
 Plymouth Gladiators - **Alfie Bowtell**
 Peterborough Panthers and Glasgow Tigers - **Ulrich Ostergaard**

Sheffield Tigers - **Troy Batchelor**
 MEMBERS of our Championship team racing in the Premiership are:
Lewi Kerr - King's Lynn Stars
Drew Kemp - Ipswich Witches
Tom Brennan - Belle Vue Aces

WE will have a full preview of the 2021 season in *Flying High 6*.



Former Eagle Kelsey Dugard is back on track with Newcastle Gems in 2021.

50/50 winners

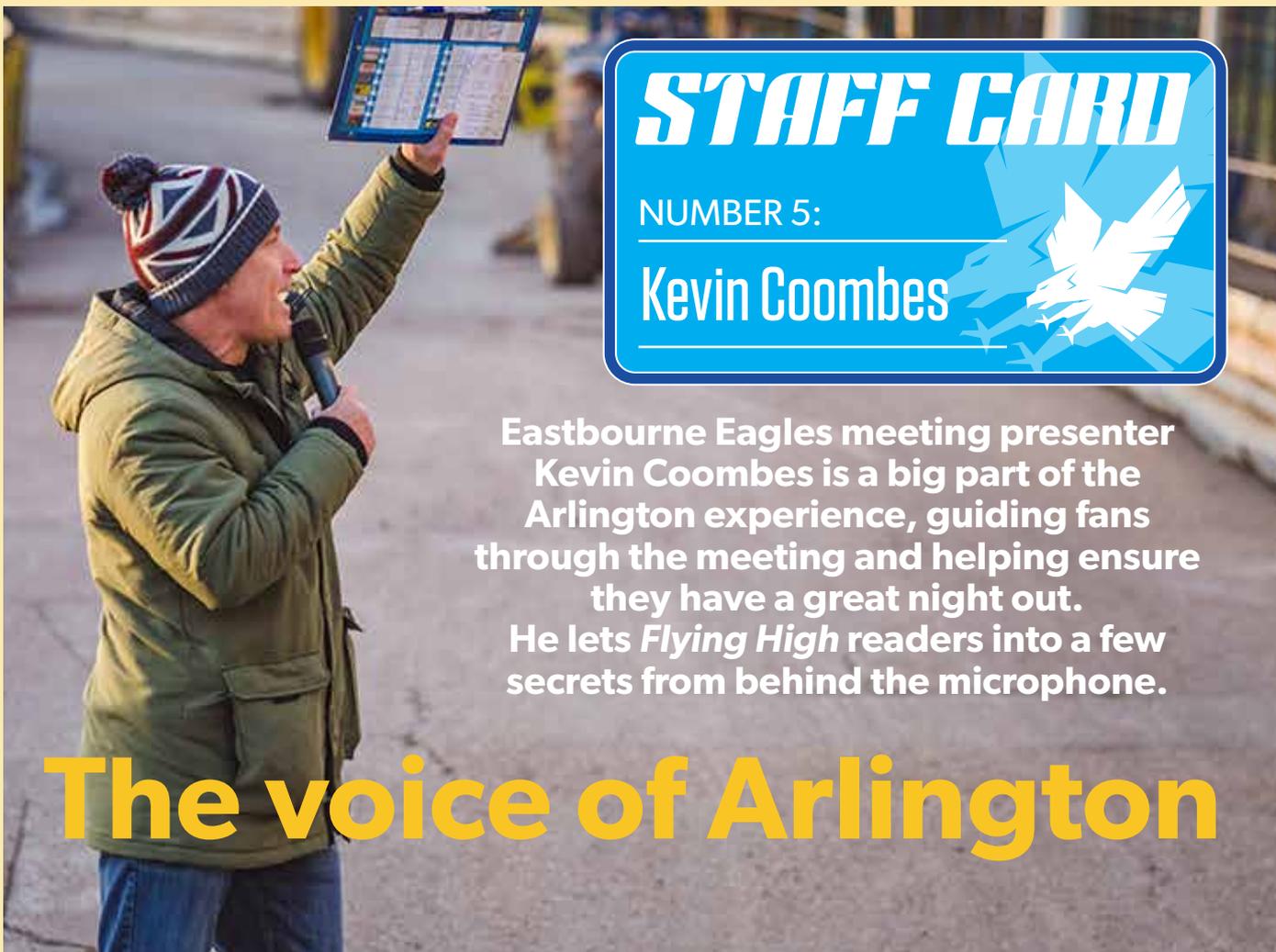
WIINNERS in the March 50/50 draw were:

61 (£300) - **T. Turner**
41 (£125) - **P. Turner**
37 (£75) - **A. M. Roberts**

WIINNERS in the April 50/50 draw were:

33 (£300) - **J. Homer**
73 (£125) - **B. Hinves**
12 (£75) - **M. Rice.**





STAFF CARD

NUMBER 5:

Kevin Coombes



Eastbourne Eagles meeting presenter Kevin Coombes is a big part of the Arlington experience, guiding fans through the meeting and helping ensure they have a great night out. He lets *Flying High* readers into a few secrets from behind the microphone.

The voice of Arlington

Tiffani Graveling

KEVIN COOMBES AS a lad “stumbled” across Speedway one Sunday afternoon while out with his parents.

That’s quite amazing when you know the family lived in Hailsham, on the main drag into town from the A22 Arlington Eagles roundabout (he lived near to what is now the BP garage/KFC for those of you who are local).

“We were driving past the stadium on a balmy summer Sunday afternoon. I think it was 1979.

“We pulled into the car park. I don’t recall going through the turnstiles and having to pay so it must have been a ‘Golden Snowball’ second-half and we walked in to see what was going on.

“I loved what I saw.

“The following season we went properly. They were my earliest memories.

“We lived a stone’s throw away from Arlington but we had never been and it was only by accident that we stopped that Sunday afternoon.

“From 1980 we went regularly.

“Tony Millard (who went to commentate on Speedway for Sky) was doing the stadium PA. He was brilliant and I was absolutely hooked.

“The only time I didn’t go was when I went travelling.”

There was also a hiatus during the club’s National League time, although he did put in a few appearances.

“The guy who took over from me, Steve Crow - I thought he was brilliant. He is a very good people person. His rapport with the crowd was very good.

“It is not an easy job on the centre green to get the right balance and not be talking all the time. You do need a few giggles; after all it is entertainment at the end of the day.”

Kevin stepped from the terraces to become the announcer after the regular guy, who followed Millard, was away for some time.



Kevin Coombes interviews Trevor Geer.

He had been critical of this man in conversations with a person who helped run the supporters’ club and she told him there was now a chance to ‘put his money where his mouth was’.

Many stadium announcers come from a broadcasting/DJ-ing background but not Kevin.

The one and only time he had held a microphone in his hand before stepping into the announcer’s chair was during his college days when, as part of an exercise, he took the role of a tour bus guide/commentator.

“My very first meeting was a junior meeting and that was the first time I worked with Barrie Geer (BG). For me, it was a nice chance to have a go as obviously not many people were there.

“I was just announcing the riders and results and kept it quite simple.

“Bob Dugard asked ‘who is that guy on the mic’.

“That was it and I was asked back the following week and here we are.”

Kevin looks at the job from the point of view of the fans, asking himself: “What would I like to hear?”

And with Millard something of a role model, Kevin came down from the box and on to the centre green to become announcer/presenter with the scope to

conduct interviews with the riders and management while the match is going on. He can also interact with the fans.

He acknowledged the job was to get a mix between speech and music and noted the choice of music has to be varied to try and cater for everyone's tastes. Kevin also pays tribute to the support and help from Barrie Geer who is an essential link between himself and the referee.

BG also does much more, he pointed out. He's the timekeeper, music 'director' and will pick up the role of the incident recorder in the coming season.

He added: "The disadvantage of being on the centre green is when there are technical, radio issue between Barrie and myself. He feeds me the official results, obviously I can see who has finished first second, third fourth, and the race times. Sometimes when it is very close I cannot say anything until I hear from Barrie.

"The clear positive for me is that I get a sense of the crowd being out there. If I am stuck away in the box I cannot feel the crowd. It is probably one of the secrets to what I do is that I get the buzz off the crowd by being out there. That's what I feed off and I try and keep the momentum going.

"It also means I can dash around to get to speak to a rider or to a crash and give spectators as much information as I can. Doing the mic work is really part of a double act with Barrie and I doff my cap to him because his role within the box can be vital."

One thing that Kevin is acutely aware of is the need to pick right moment when asking a rider to speak to the crowd - not wanting to interrupt a rider when they are



The man in red leading the way is Kevin Coombes.

Kevin on four wheels

KEVIN ENJOYS competitive kart racing because "I am not brave enough to do speedway". He said: "I have grown up with the excitement and adrenaline that motorsport brings, he thinks karting is the closest he was ever going to get to pull on a helmet and experience it.

He said: "I have been very lucky and seem to have done quite well with it over the years. I take part in Club100 which takes me all over the country.

"They supply all the karts for all the drivers so you all on a level playing field.

It is all down to driver ability and not how big your cheque book is. That's my only vice really; the need for speed."

More on Club100 at their website

CLICK TO
LEARN MORE



busy and also finding a break in the action with no bikes on the track.

The Voice of Arlington is clearing his throat ready for when we start racing again. Kevin, like the rest of us, is counting down the days. 🦋

On GP duty at Cardiff

KEVIN HAS also become one of the voices of the British GP at Cardiff as an announcer.

"In 2002, Eastbourne staged a test match and BSI (which promotes the GP series) were present.

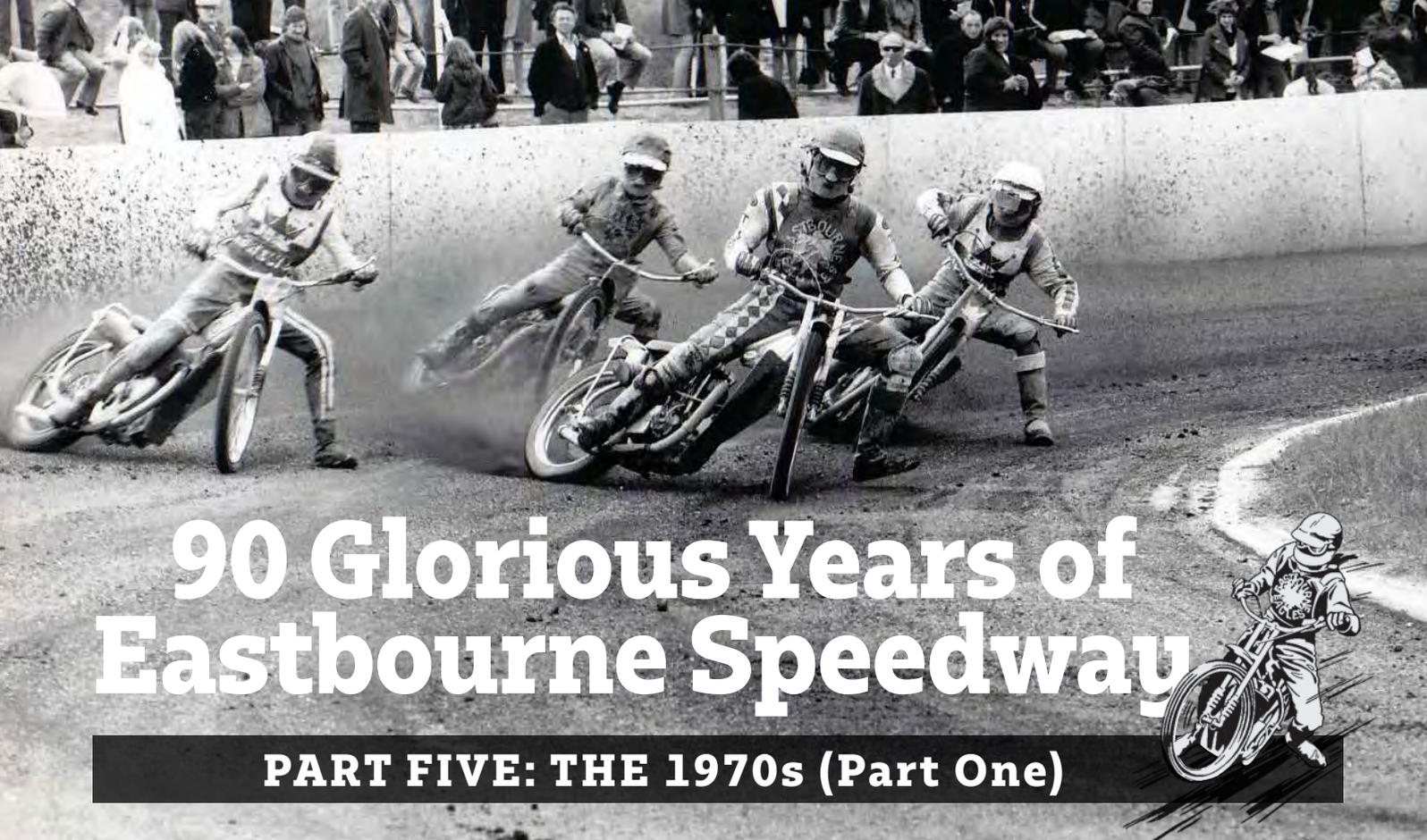
"They saw what Barrie and I were doing and it followed on from that.

"It has been amazing to be able to do Cardiff for so long, especially when Chris 'Bomber' Harris won the meeting in 2007.

"I remember coming on the mic as he came over the line in the final and saying: 'Cardiff, we have a British winner' and the place just went berserk. "The line-up in that final was incredible with (Greg) Hancock and (Jason) Crump. No-one was thinking Bomber would do it but it is a moment that has gone down in history," he said.



Kevin Coombes interviews Tom Brennan during a meeting at Arlington.



90 Glorious Years of Eastbourne Speedway

PART FIVE: THE 1970s (Part One)

1. 'House full' notices went up for the first meeting of the 1970 season and hundreds were turned away from Arlington Stadium.
2. The Eagles finished second in the league and unearthed some spectacular junior talent, including Gordon Kennett.
3. So wild was Kennett when he started that he picked up the nicknames "Bronco" and "Cowboy". One promoter even said he was so dangerous and should be banned. But, by the end of his first season, he had ridden in 29 matches for the Eagles and scored at a sensational average of 6.79.
4. There were also debuts for Roger Johns and Dave Kennett in 1970.
5. Dave Jessup upped sticks from Arlington and moved into the top flight with Wembley in 1971. Other senior riders also departed the scene but the young Eagles powered to 11 wins and a draw in their first 12 matches.
6. They finally tasted defeat in controversial circumstances at Boston where some refereeing decisions caused great debate.

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 1970s (Part One). You can read a much more detailed account on our website.

7. However, when it comes to controversy the Boston match was a tea party in comparison with the near war which broke out at Canterbury in the second leg of the KO Cup tie.
8. Eastbourne took a comfortable lead to Kent and with Laurie Sims injured drafted in Bob Dugard for the second leg at Kingsmead. Eastbourne hit three quick 5-1s to lead 18-6 after heat four. In heat nine, Dugard went in hard on Crusaders' Ted Hubbard who fell.



Eagles' Bobby McNeil and George Major of Birmingham.



1972 Eagles team

9. Much to the amazement of most spectators it was the Canterbury rider who was excluded. This was a signal for pandemonium to break loose. Protesting home supporters climbed on to the track and just about everywhere else with a few even trying to get in to the referee's box.
10. When the match was restarted some 25 minutes later, the Eagles, who had already done enough to ensure the aggregate victory, took it steady, with a 39-39 draw the result. Dugard himself took no further part in the meeting or indeed the season.
11. Workington put the Eagles out of the cup in 1971 but they went on to lift the league title by four points and were given a civic reception in Eastbourne.
12. Eastbourne claimed that winning the Division Two title should entitle them to be promoted. They were refused and then declined to pay £3,500 for a division one licence.
13. In 1972, Eastbourne could not repeat the success and dropped down to fifth place in the league. Crewe took the Eagles' place as the star team of Division Two as they took the League title, the KO Cup and provided the Division Two Riders' Champion in super Aussie Phil Crump.

14. The following year, Malcolm Ballard and Gordon Kennett left for higher grade racing with Oxford and Derek Cook moved to Canterbury. Bobby McNeil and Roger Johns became the Arlington kingpins.
15. Neil Middleditch, 16, came into the team part way through 1973 and was at the centre of huge controversy at Long Eaton. The home team were leading 26-22 when Middleditch was excluded for ducking under the tapes at the start of heat eight. Eastbourne argued that Strachan had rolled forward and it was this that had caused Middleditch to get a flyer and referee should have ruled an unsatisfactory start with all four riders back.

16. Referee E. W. Roe, however, refused to change his decision, so the whole Eastbourne team walked out, handing Long Eaton five 5-0s and the match, 51-22.

17. In a match at Arlington against Boston in August, the oldest Eastbourne rider on show was 20 years and 55 days.

You can read more about this era on the club website.



All images copyright Ken Burnett



Malcolm Ballard



Eastbourne v Canterbury in 1973 with (left to right): Les Rumsey, Roger Johns, Ted Hubbard and Bobby McNeil.

Ken Burnett lets Flying High readers into a few secrets from the referee's box

So you want to be a referee?



So, what do you require to become a referee?

Someone to nominate you, someone to back you, good eyesight, strong personality, and a thick skin!

I was lucky to get my chance.

After years of writing, reporting, photographing and filming speedway, I was watching a match at Wimbledon with good friend and former referee Geoff Dalby.

Geoff was quick to acknowledge my ability to observe and take in events and stated, that I should apply, and he would support me. It was something I said "I'll think about".

Every time I saw him, he said: "Have you done it yet?" to which I replied, "no not yet".

Eventually Geoff said: "I thought not, so I brought you some forms to complete."

I filled them out then and there and he took them back.

The next thing I had an interview at the ACU in Rugby. I remember John Eglese saying, you will need thick skin and you must be honest with yourself and we will back you.

I was given the chance to learn and my mentor was Frank Ebdon. Frank was a no-nonsense referee, riders and managers certainly knew where they stood with him, and so did I.

But he was great, and I learned so much from him.

I also received great support from former Eagle then referee Reg Trott, who I was great friends with, Lew Stripp, Jim Lawrence, Graham Brodie and Paul Ackroyd, who always set me exams and a test wherever I went, and he was there.

I did 114 meetings in my first year and really enjoyed most of it.

I learned quickly and got on rather well with riders and most promoters. I did a lot of training at Arena Essex and Mildenhall where Chris Gay, used to ask if he could sit in with me.

I was not allowed to do Eastbourne as it was my local club, although I did do a couple of meetings at Arlington under guidance.

One thing Frank pointed out was everyone in the stadium, thinks they are a referee, but you are the only one. Your view and decision is the one that counts.

That is so true, and you are always going to upset someone, because they wear rose-tinted glasses and naturally want their team to win. That is where the thick skin comes in handy as quite often, a referee's eyesight and parentage are questioned.

Frank sadly gave up as he was not happy with how the TV companies stuck a camera in the box and scrutinised everything a referee did, something that I am pleased to say has now stopped, particularly as those scrutinising, have never even been a referee.

Last I heard was that he had not been too well.

You have some funny moments too, I remember one referee asking me what happened in a race at Wimbledon.

When I told him, he replied, "thank goodness you were watching, I took a mouthful of my hot drink and my glasses steamed up and I could not see, mind you, nowadays, I cannot see the back straight anyway".

Another, at Arena, when a manager was giving me stick, I said, "I have made my mind up and am not changing".

He asked to speak to Frank after showing me he only knew words beginning with "F", Frank said, think yourself lucky, I have been listening in and you would be £250 out of pocket if it had been to me.

I went to Bradford and the referee said: "You can do this, you know enough, but I am here if you need me."

I did the whole KO Cup match and the Bradford Promoter Alan Ham, picked up the microphone and said that I was the best newcomer he had seen and thanked me, to which the crowd gave me a good round of applause, a great feeling indeed.

Another referee was John Whittaker, nice guy, but old school, I remember a match at Long Eaton v Glasgow, it must have been 75F, so I loosened my tie.

He threw a real wobbly and made me do it back up.

At Milton Keynes one night they were racing Stoke, it was very wet, and some riders wanted to ride, and some did not.

I called the riders together, which was a mistake as the arguing continued, so I sent them all back other than the two captains, I said is it rideable or raceable?

They both replied, it is barely rideable for us, so I called it off, Nigel Crabtree replied, Bloody hell, a referee with a brain! Graham Brodie then said he thought I handled it well as he was going to call it off anyway.

I did a Scottish Open at Edinburgh, when the referee who was there was not feeling too good, after the meeting, he was told they were the best starts he had ever made, to which I had a big grin.

However, at Middlesbrough v Newcastle, I excluded David Bargh after a tangle with Doug Nicol and Donny Odom, which saw the home rider bite the dust.

It was only afterwards when I was shown the video tape filmed by Eddie Myers, when the home rider admitted his bike was slowing so he deliberately dropped it on David going into the turn, knowing he would have to knock him off

It was at Wolverhampton, when a referee at that time, stated his views, to which I did not agree; so much so that I had made up my mind not to carry on.

I did my test at Swindon and spoke with John Eglese afterwards, stating that I was not carrying on.

Both Geoff Dalby and Frank Ebdon were disappointed with my decision until I explained why, but then agreed. Both John Eglese and the referee in question are no longer around, so maybe things have now changed.

I have stayed friends with a lot of the referees and know what they are doing, even if I do not always agree with their decisions and have the utmost respect for them.



Ken Burnett interviews at the Eastbourne press and practice day in 2020.

So, it was back to reporting, photography and filming and back with Southern ITV, who I had been supplying news and sports stories since 1986.

One of my first items was Chris Mulvihill's dad going over the fence in a mechanics race.

I also linked up with my dear friend Mike Bennett at MBL covering speedway and TSN sport, filming professional football.

I linked up with Isle of Wight filming their matches from 1998-2010 making sure they had as much TV exposure as possible including fronting a weekly TV programme on TV12 and Solent TV, that led to work with other TV companies including BBC, Sky, Eurosport, Motors, Channel 4, BT sport as well as ITV.

From 2003-2006, I managed to add Eastbourne to my portfolio with the Eagles featuring most weeks.

New owners meant that I was surplus to requirements at Arlington and I was left to

focus on Rye House and The Islanders.

Now I concentrate on Eastbourne, although we have added Kent, Poole and amateur club Crayford who are hoping to bring back speedway to North Kent.

I also still cover football at Charlton for my sins which I have been doing for some 14 odd years.

In 2019, I managed to get the Eagles mentioned on ITV 29 times and had nine news items in 2020, despite no speedway taking place, so my target for 2021 is 30. With five mentions already, it should be a doddle!

All in all, it is 51 years (longer if you count all my schoolbooks that had match reports in from all the Eagles matches as part of my written English!) since I did my first bit of media work for the Daily Mirror.

I used to provide the scores that used to be in the back of the paper as the man who did it was not a speedway fan, so he paid me enough to cover my speedway to save him having to go. 🐦



Ken Burnett with TV12 studio guests Craig Boyce (right) and Ray Morton.

Essential guide to Arlington

SPEEDWAY plans to return to Arlington Stadium on Saturday, May 22, when Newcastle visit.

This is a double header with the Championship league match against the Diamonds starting at 5pm (note the start time), followed by the NDL match against the Newcastle Gems.

It's still four riders, four laps and they're still turning left. Some things have not changed.

However, Covid-19 regulations means there will be changes from what you will have been used to in previous seasons.

Here's *Flying High's* quick guide.

1. Entry by advance purchase ONLINE tickets only
2. No "on-the-day" walk-up admission by cash/card (This is Government / Local Authority ruling that we have to strictly enforce)
3. 2020 Season tickets and 10-match tickets remain valid. Holders of these tickets DO NOT have to book and you will NOT receive new tickets for the 2021 season. There will be a dedicated, clearly marked, entrance point for season ticket / 10-match ticket holders.
4. General admission tickets are on sale now for the first four matches to enable fans to budget and phase their spending.
5. Eastbourne Speedway WILL require a valid e-mail address and contact telephone number when ordering your ticket(s) for us to be able to send your electronic tickets to you. (We can accept no responsibility if invalid email addresses are provided).
6. Inside Arlington: You will find the stadium is split into two areas. Area 1: Home Straight covered stand and stock car track and 1st PITS bend terracing. Area 2: Back straight grandstand + Hailsham bend and home straight area up to turnstile area.
7. You cannot move between the two areas. (This ensures social distancing to agreed limits with Local Authority and must be strictly adhered to)
8. Area 1 will have a specific turnstile, as will Area 2.
9. Car parking: Cars will be parked in designated areas which will correspond to the area of the stadium for which you have purchased tickets. Full details of this will be issued in the weeks before fixtures commence.
10. Programmes will be sold in plastic packets. £3 per programme. Correct money only. No change given. They will also be available ONLINE as a download also for the cost of £3.00.
11. Specific seats cannot be pre-booked and will be strictly limited to be available within set social distancing guidelines and criteria. If seated / sitting you will be shown to your seats by a Steward and will be socially distanced from anyone outside of your group once seated. We will attempt to seat you in your preferred area but seating will be on a first come, first served basis.
12. Spectators will not be allowed into the pits before or after the meeting. Sorry, but again this is to ensure Covid security.
13. You can read more and keep find out the latest on the club website here and here.
14. Please follow the instructions of stewards at all times.
15. Everyone who has purchased tickets ONLINE will be sent an update e-mail 24 hours before the Match to detail any changes / easements to Covid-19 policy between the time the Tickets were purchased and the Match taking place.
16. It is envisaged that these processes will apply to ALL Speedway fixtures at Arlington until at least 21st June 2021 and most probably a lot longer (21st June is the date of the planned final easing of restrictions laid out by UK Government which may or may not change)

2021
HG AEROSPACE
ENGINEERING LTD
EASTBOURNE EAGLES

NEWCASTLE DIAMONDS
NEWCASTLE
STADIUM
SPEEDWAY

SEASON OPENING DOUBLE HEADER
CHAMPIONSHIP CLASH
THE EAGLES V THE DIAMONDS
FOLLOWED BY NATIONAL LEAGUE ACTION
THE SEAGULLS V THE GEMS

SATURDAY 22ND MAY | TAPES UP 5PM | ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

HG AEROSPACE ENGINEERING LTD MARSTONS Turner Engineering v8 engines.eu ROBINS of Horsham Corporate Connection M Shuttlewood Ltd Fineprint

www.eastbourne-speedway.com

Speedway matches

2021 Admission Prices

PLAN C – Covid-19 Attendance Restricted Match – all Fixtures prior to at least June 30, 2021

Meeting Type	Adult	Concession	Children 5-15	Under 5s
CL - Championship	18.00	16.00	5.00	Free
NDL - National League	10.00	10.00	5.00	Free
CL/NDL - Double Header	24.00	24.00	5.00	Free

Adult – anyone aged 16 to 64 at time of purchasing ticket
 Concession – Age 65 or over at time of purchasing Ticket / Registered Disabled – with 1 Free Carer. (Limited Disabled Places are available please see Booking Terms and Conditions for more information). *
 Children – Age under 16 but over 5 on the date of Ticket Purchase *
 Under 5 – Age Under 5 on the date of Ticket Purchase – FREE * A ticket must be booked for the child, even though admission is free. (* Proof of Age may be requested on specific occasions)
 (* definition is date you PURCHASE the Ticket NOT the Date of the Match)

PLAN A – Aspirational Match Pricing – post Covid-19 Restricted Crowds

Meeting Type	Adult	Concession	Children 12-15	Under 12s
CL - Championship	18.00	16.00	5.00	Free
NDL - National League	10.00	10.00	5.00	Free
CL/NDL - Double Header	24.00	24.00	5.00	Free

Adult – anyone aged 16 to 64 at time of purchasing Ticket
 Concession – Age 65 or over at time of purchasing Ticket / Registered Disabled – with 1 Free Carer. (Limited Disabled Places are available please see Booking Terms and Conditions for more information). *

Children – Age 12 -15 over 12 but under 16 on the date of Ticket Purchase *

Under 12 – Age Under 12 on the date of Ticket Purchase – FREE *
 (* Proof of Age may be requested on specific occasions)
 (* definition is date you PURCHASE the Ticket NOT the Date of the Match)

Note: In the case of double headers, there is no separate admission for one or other of the two meetings.

Purchase advance tickets for the opening fixtures.

Advance tickets are now available The Championship / NDL Double header against The Newcastle Diamonds on Saturday 22nd May (5pm start), and the eagerly awaited South Coast Derby against The Poole Pirates Sat 29th May (7.30pm start).

DISABLED SUPPORTERS - We have space for five wheelchairs and nominated carers. This is located in Area 1 – please contact us at Commercial@eastbourne-speedway.com for further details

A maximum of 6 tickets can be ordered per purchase. When ordering your tickets you will go through the following process:

- Select the number of tickets & area you wish to purchase.
- Complete your details as specified within the process.
- Complete your payment details and order.
- Order will now be complete.

To purchase tickets, please click on the image below and follow the online process.

See also our Frequently Asked Questions section on the website





THE SOUTH COAST DERBY!

CHAMPIONSHIP SPEEDWAY ACTION

THE EAGLES V THE PIRATES

FOLLOWED BY 4 Heats of NDL/MSDL Level Junior Races

SATURDAY 29th MAY | TAPES UP 7.30PM | ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY










www.eastbourne-speedway.com

Feedback

If you have any questions, thoughts; feedback or comments we are more than happy to listen, learn, implement and discuss where we can. As you will know by now, we do try to monitor Social Media and Forums and answer directly where possible, but it's not always possible to pick up every query or concern.

The best way to contact and communicate with us is via e-mail to admin@eastbourne-speedway.com.

We have made a real effort since the Spring of 2019

when we took over the running of the club to be open, transparent and approachable at all times. There is no need to have to hide behind false names or be scared to voice an opinion in fear of being banned or penalised, we actively seek your views and opinions as without you, our Supporters there would be no Speedway. Please feel free to engage with us at all times.

We look forward to seeing you all in May.

Thank You and please Stay Safe and Healthy



2021 HG AEROSPACE ENGINEERING LTD EASTBOURNE EAGLES

KENT KINGS

KO CUP SPEEDWAY ACTION!

ARLINGTON STADIUM

THE EAGLES V THE KINGS

FOLLOWED BY 6 Heats of NDL/MSDL Level Junior Races

SUNDAY 6th JUNE | TAPES UP 3.30PM | ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

HG AEROSPACE ENGINEERING LTD | MARSTONS | Turner Engineering | v8 engines.eu | ROBINS of Horsham | Corporate Connection | Shuttlewood Ltd | Fineprint

www.eastbourne-speedway.com



2021 HG AEROSPACE ENGINEERING LTD EASTBOURNE EAGLES

MONARCHS

CHAMPIONSHIP SPEEDWAY ACTION!

ARLINGTON STADIUM

THE EAGLES V THE MONARCHS

FOLLOWED BY 6 Heats of NDL/MSDL Level Junior Races

SATURDAY 12th JUNE | TAPES UP 7.30PM | ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY

HG AEROSPACE ENGINEERING LTD | MARSTONS | Turner Engineering | v8 engines.eu | ROBINS of Horsham | Corporate Connection | Shuttlewood Ltd | Fineprint

www.eastbourne-speedway.com



Cesca Wright

Cesca Wright lives near Coventry with her husband and works as a Project and Strategy Adviser for the National Association of Funeral Directors (NAFD). She is helping the organisation create a five-year strategy for the organisation and review their local membership groups to make them more effective, along with a whole host of other projects.

As well as riding speedway, Cesca is also an avid baker (much to the joy of my teammates), and she has started learning how to snowboard – although obviously this is on hold thanks to Covid-19.

Q: How did you become interested in Speedway?

A: I remember going and watching the Coventry Bees race with my family when I was young and just loving it – the noise, the excitement, the smell of methanol.

I never anticipated I would ever end up racing a speedway bike though. My Dad was the one who kickstarted it all really. He used to race grass track, so motorbikes have always been a big part of our family, and he booked my sister Hannah on to an all-ladies training day while I was living in Germany. They booked me in for a session when I came home, and I haven't looked back since.

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

A: Honestly, the sport just kind of crept up on me and then hooked me in. I never thought about riding speedway – I was doing the Ladies Nationals in trials and I was pretty content with that – but when I first rode speedway, I just loved how different it was to my trials bike, especially the speed element which trials doesn't really have.

I'm quite a competitive person, so it really appeals to that aspect of my character, and I also like the camaraderie on and off track; people are always so nice and supportive, and it is great to be around that. I also met my husband through speedway, so I guess that's a bonus too!

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

A: I used to ride trials, although I've put that on hold in favour of pushing forward with speedway. I also have a road bike license (although I don't have a road bike, but my sister has just bought one so maybe she'll let me borrow hers!).

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

A: I have two favourites. One would definitely be when I raced at a Carmarthen Dragons Amateur meeting, and I got there to find out not only had they decided to move me up a class, but no one from my team had showed up, so I had to steal one of the opposing team's riders and we both had to do all 10 heats. I scored 16 (which included a heat win), and my teammate, Steve, scored 24, and we won!

The other is my first ever speedway race, because it was where I met my now husband (although we didn't actually say a word to each other the entire day, even though we were in the same team), and although I was utterly terrible and crashed into my sister, the rest of my team weren't so I got a medal for it.

Q: What are your most embarrassing moments (a) on track and (b) off track?

A: I actually don't tend to get embarrassed that easily, but I guess:
On track - Either when I ran over my sister in my first ever speedway race and we ended up in a pile up of limbs and bikes, or when I



Kevin Whiting

asked Adam Skornicki how he kept his hair ending up from being a tangled, muddy mess (it's a real pain riding in winter, I'll tell you!).

Off track - My husband could probably come up with loads of times he's had second-hand embarrassment because of me, but the only thing I can really think of is when I was living in Germany, my best friend Zoe and I were going out in the evening, and we got on the bus and were walking down the aisle to get to the seats at the back when the driver decided to race off, and so I ended up falling into some strange German man's lap and then having to apologise profusely!

Q: Which two words best sum you up?

A: (i) Ambitious: I always want to do my very best, whether that's in speedway or work or any part of my life. I think it's what makes me such a competitive person, because I'm always pushing to be the best I can be. It helps to drive me out of my comfort zone too, which for me is important, because I think in life it's crucial to challenge yourself.

(ii) Funny: I like to think I'm funny anyway! I think it's important not to take yourself too seriously (hence why I don't get embarrassed easily), and as I have worked in politics for the last eight years, it's kind of a prerequisite to have a sense of humour, otherwise I think I'd have gone crazy with stress.

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

A: Livin' on a Prayer, Bon Jovi, just because it's an awesome song.

Q: You can line-up in Heat 15 with any three riders from Speedway history. You are in the race. Who would the other three riders be?

A: As I am such a huge advocate of women speedway riders, and one of my main aims is to try and increase female participation in the sport, it would have to be an all-female line-up with Fay Tylour, Kate McAuley, and my partner-in-crime Rachel Hellowell.

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

A: Make sure you've got good protective gear, especially your helmet Don't put too much pressure on yourself, just go out and try to enjoy it.

Cesca's sponsors:

Carl Ford Accountancy, Source UK, In Motion Trials, LPE Consultants Ltd, Jim West Photography, Peter Gillam, Jonathan Carling, Craig Dickson, Steve Rushton, Graham Wilkins, Terry McGowan, Dave Hutchinson, Sam Peters Racing, Chesil Radio.

'No better time to get involved



Having been announced in my role as Commercial Manager with the Eagles in issue 4 of Flying High, I feel I am now really starting to get a feel for the club and beginning to lay the commercial foundations for the upcoming 2021 season.

I spent a day at Arlington with Promoter Trevor Geer at the end of March and we discussed all things Eastbourne Speedway and, in particular, our 2021 Eagles and Seagulls teams.

We were both noticeably excited about our prospects for the season on track.

Both teams have a great blend of experience and youth and are packed with exciting, entertaining riders. And we didn't forget the MSDL Seagulls which is a very important part of our setup.

To offer racing to riders at every level of the sport shows how committed we are to developing and helping bring on riders. A very exciting season awaits us all.

With that in mind, and with my commercial head on, we chatted about the stadium and the huge potential it has for businesses and companies to market and advertise their products and services.



Lee Kilby brings fans right up to date on the latest commercial news.

It's a different proposition to other stadiums I have worked with, and the close proximity of terraces to stands, and these to the track lends itself to maximum exposure and brand placement and exposure.

Fans being permitted back into stadiums is a tremendous relief and early ticket sales shows us the appetite for racing from our Eagles contingent is good.

I am getting fully focused on May 22 and the start to our home campaign for both the Eagles and Seagulls.

With the ever-improving Covid-19 situation, myself and Ian Jordan have discussed in depth the sponsorship and partnership opportunities we would be able to and will be offering this coming season.

with Eastbourne Speedway'



**CLICK TO
LEARN MORE**



The bottom line to our discussions is that there really is no better time to get involved with Eastbourne Speedway.

Our bespoke sponsorship and partnership packages offer every business and individual, regardless of size or budget, the opportunity to be involved – and this is important to us.

I know my background and history is pretty much all Swindon, but that doesn't stop me from knowing the excellent relationship and successes this club has had in the local community down the years.

This is something I am really keen to focus and expand on both on and off the track.

We have something for everyone with meeting and rider-of-the-night sponsorship open to family and friend groups, as well as businesses and companies.

What a way to celebrate a special occasion, or to host clients and business associates by booking the Eagles Eyrie Suite overlooking turn two and having an Eagle or Seagull visit pre-meeting for a chat and photo opportunity, then choosing and presenting the rider of the night on the centre green, having enjoyed heats 14 and 15 from this great vantage point



With prices starting at just £350, banner advertising in the stadium whether that be air fence, crowd facing boards or centre green A-frames, are a great way to get a business name and details seen by fans, cameras and our Eagles TV.

And we even have larger board for advertising opportunities on the referee's box, main stands and outward-facing Hailsham bend.

For more information, please visit the website, alternatively you can get in touch with me via lee@eastbourne-speedway.com and I can send over an online brochure or flipbook with all the details.

We have something to suit all requirements and importantly all budgets, and I am ready and happy to discuss when you are. 🦋



BEN IS FIRST FROM THE

SPEEDWAY CRASHES happen in a split second. Thankfully, on most occasions, riders dust themselves down and get ready for their next race.

Sometimes the injuries will rule them out for a few days but it is when the crash has longer-lasting effects that the benevolent fund steps in.

They help the rider and just as importantly help his family.

Imagine a rider based here on the south coast and ending up in an Edinburgh hospital after a bad crash.

Paul Ackroyd and his team can swing into action within as little as 90 minutes of a serious accident occurring to find out what's needed and to offer help.

The Speedway Riders' Benevolent Fund began soon after World War Two and is the only one its kind in the world, specifically for speedway.

It is available for any rider (British or foreign) injured in British racing or for any British rider on international duty, anywhere in the world.

In a normal year its income is about £100,000 and its expenditure about £100,000.

Paul said: "It has evolved over the years and the main objective is to help riders who get into difficulties through serious injuries. It is there to help them, their families and children.

"In an average year we would normally help about 35 to 40 riders who have an

The Speedway Riders' Benevolent Fund is the best friend an injured rider can have. Flying High talks to Paul Ackroyd, chairman of the BEN fund.



Paul Ackroyd

accident at Speedway and are out of racing for some months, or longer.

"In addition, we also help our former British riders who are paraplegics as a result of a speedway crash. There are ten of those, of which Steve Weatherley [former Eastbourne Eagle] is one.

"They receive ongoing support with material things like wheelchairs, adaptations to homes, stair lifts, showers, ramps – anything we can do in practical terms we will assist them to buy that or have that fitted.

"We also look after their welfare as well."

The fund has five trustees and a secretary, all unpaid volunteers.

"It ticks over quite well under normal circumstances," Paul said.

The main sources of income are track collections – every year each club has to stage a collection and there are also collections at BSPL shared events, such as the British Final.

Supporters leave money in wills and do their own fund-raising.

Some of the riders help with their own fund-fund-raising for the benevolent fund.

The Eagles Lewi Kerr, for example, regularly stages a charity golf day near his West Norfolk home.

The biggest source of income is from the BEN Fund Bonanza meeting – there have been 11 so far – which normally generates about 30/35% of the income on an annual basis.

Payments to injured riders are worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Paul said: "Normally we pay a rider monthly. The rider has to be injured for four weeks or more.

"We don't help a rider who breaks a

A 2021 Bonanza?

HISTORICALLY, THE Bonanza is the pipe opener to the new season but that won't be the case this year. Naturally, clubs will want to get their own matches under way and to earn some income. It seems certain crowds will be restricted under Covid-19 regulations when the season begins. There is also the question of how supporters will react about going back into stadiums.

Paul said: "We hope to slot something in maybe September or October time. We will see how things unfold."

There is a huge amount of work needed to run the Bonanza and it is important for the fund to maximise the crowd numbers for the meeting. Competitors in the BEN fund ride for free, although they receive travel expenses and there is a cash prize for the winner. The Association of Referees provides the meeting every year with a referee for free. Most other officials and track staff are likewise.



HG Aerospace Eagles' Drew Kemp raised money for the Ben Fund from sales of his 2018 book, *Diary of a Speedway Kid*.

Ian Rispin

TAPES IN A CRISIS



The John Somerville Collection

Steve Weatherly in action for Eastbourne against Wolverhampton's Ed Stangeland in 1979.

finger and are out for one week. It is something more serious."

Families are also helped.

If an Eastbourne rider is injured at Glasgow, for example, and is in hospital in Scotland and cannot be moved, the fund helps his wife/partner, gets her into a hotel and ensures she has some money to function with while the husband or partner is laid up miles from home.

"There are things we can do and do very quickly. We can react within an hour or hour-and-a-half if something major happens.

"We have a good track record of being able to deal with most situations," Paul said.

Support for paraplegic riders continues, as it did for former Belle Vue rider, Alan Wilkinson, who died last year.

After he died, his widow was supported until sadly she died a few weeks ago.

A rider's children are also catered for in these circumstances and sometimes money is put into a trust for when they get a little bit older.

"It's a very individual thing. We do what we think is right for each person. We do have a rule of thumb but every case is pretty much individual.

Broken legs and arms are fairly standard

for us. It is the more technical problems we have to go the extra mile," Paul said.

Here are four illustrations

- Aussie Jason Lyons was badly injured at Redcar and was rushed to hospital at Middlesbrough. His van was no longer available to him and the benevolent fund hired a car so his wife could get from their home in Manchester to Middlesbrough on a regular basis. They made sure she had money
- When Sam Norris was seriously injured at Glasgow, the first thing the fund did was to make sure his mother was in a hotel near to the hospital.
- Australian John Oliver, who had young wife and baby, received similar assistance. And when the time came for them to go back to Australia the BEN fund paid for the flight to get the family home.
- Within hours of the death of Danny Ayres, his partner had money from the fund and the children will be looked after until they grown up.

How BEN coped in 2020

INCOME was massively reduced because there were no track collections. The Bonanza ran on March 14 at Scunthorpe but the crowd was massively affected as the Coronavirus pandemic loomed ever closer.

The attendance was a 1,000 where it had played to attendances a high as 4,000 at some places in the past.

However, no riders were injured last year but some riders injured in 2019 still required ongoing support.

"At the end of the year we pretty much balanced our books," Paul said.

Isle of Wight virtual speedway meetings raised two or three thousand pounds and Lee Kilby shaving his hair raised another two or three thousand pounds.

Redcar Speedway's Jitendra Duffill, along with Jamie Swales and Jade Mudgway, raised around £5,000 with a walk the equivalent from Edinburgh to Plymouth.

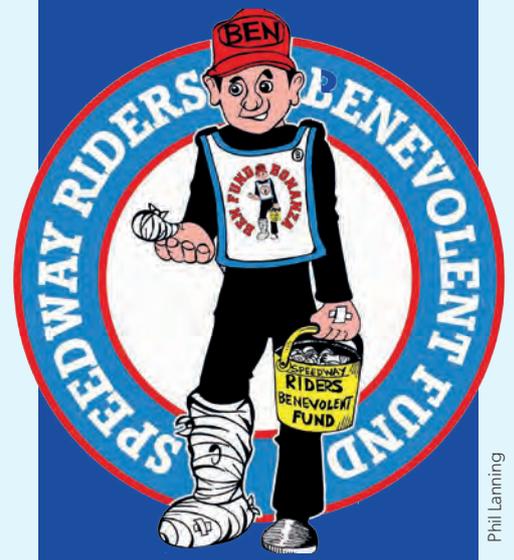
Sheffield rider Kyle Howarth raised a similar amount with a cycle ride.

Paul commented: "We managed to plug the gap with all these extra things going on throughout the year.

"When we looked at the end of the year we were not any worse off than we would have been normally but we didn't have 40 riders getting injured either to look after.

"Nobody knew what to expect last March and we did think 'crikey, we may struggle this year'.

"We do have some reserves in place for an emergency and we would have had to call on that had things not worked out the way they did."



Phil Lanning

STEVE WEATHERLEY, who was paralysed in 1979 while riding for Eastbourne at Hackney in a crash which claimed the life of Vic Harding:

"I have got nothing but praise for Paul and the BEN fund. They make our lives much more comfortable. If you need something, you don't feel awkward about it. They are very proactive which is hugely appreciated.

"They are like a big brother looking after you all the time. It has become more relaxed. I used to feel a little bit of a burden if you needed something and thought perhaps I don't need it, someone else might need it more but now it is completely different.

"It has made a big difference in my life.

We go to the Bonanza meetings and are made to feel really special. We are encouraged to attend and made to feel like celebrities and are treated like VIPs. It makes you feel still part of Speedway."



LEWI KERR, who was flown to hospital by air ambulance after a terrible crash at Peterborough in the Fours (see *Flying High* Issue 4). Since then Lewi has raised thousands of pounds for the fund with a golf day on a course near his West Norfolk home. He is hopeful of being able to stage the event again this year in the autumn.

"I have had my fair share of injuries and they have always been there for me.

"When I had my head injury at Peterborough, by the time I got to hospital and Jessie (wife) arrived, the fund had called my wife straight away and were unbelievable.

"They sent money instantly. That's why I do my golf day (pictured above), I like to give something back."

TOM BRENNAN, who was severely injured at Arlington part way through the 2019 season: "The effort from everyone involved with the Ben Fund really is remarkable and the donations from the fans too. Without the help of the Ben Fund who even knows if I'd have still been in the sport 18 months later. It really is an incredible set up and should 100% be supported by everyone in Speedway."



Hair today, gone today!

Before and after: An amazing £2,245 was raised for the Speedway Riders Benevolent Fund by this year's Eastbourne commercial chief, Lee Kilby, and former Swindon Robin, Mitchell Davey, in what was dubbed the 'Great Speedway Head Shave!'

Filmed live on Facebook during the first lockdown, more than 100 people watching as Lee in London and Mitchell in Glasgow took it in turns to have their locks clipped. Lee said; "An undoubted highlight for most people watching was when my then seven-year-old son Samuel accidentally dropped the clippers mid shave, breaking them into three pieces, stopping my heart in the process. Thankfully, fixable and we completed the shave, raising a tremendous amount for the fund." Lee is pictured with sons Max (left) and Samuel who took it in turns to do the shave.



HOW TO DONATE

DONATE BY TEXT

Text SRBF to 70085 to donate £5.

DONATE BY PAYPAL

The quickest and easiest way to make a donation to the Speedway Riders Benevolent Fund is via our secure online donation system.

All online donations made via our official website here at www.srbf.co.uk are processed on the fully secure payment servers of PayPal, our chosen online payment agents.

DONATE BY CHEQUE

Write a cheque payable to **SRBF** and post to **10 Magpie Way, Aqueduct, Telford, TF4 3TS**

LEAVE A LEGACY

SRBF has teamed up with Woskrow Brown to help make the creation of a will as simple as possible. See the SRBF website www.srbf.co.uk/donate/legacy There is a special rate if you leave a legacy to the BEN fund.

Professionally Written Wills
normally from £150 (single) £230 (mirror)

With a Sporting Legacy
from only **£100** (single) **£140** (mirror)

LEAVE A SPORTING LEGACY

**SUPPORT THE SPEEDWAY
RIDERS BENEVOLENT FUND
BY LEAVING A LEGACY IN
YOUR WILL.**

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A DISCOUNTED
WILL BY LEAVING A GIFT TO YOUR
FAVOURITE SPORT



Charges for complex Wills and specialist legal advice will apply.



Wills | Probate | Powers of Attorney | Trusts | Court of Protection | Tax Planning
Asset Protection | No Obligation Quotes | No Hidden Charges | Practical Advice

For initial help & advice, call our Wills & Probate Team on

0114 2566 590



**WOSSKOW
BROWN**
Solicitors

Or get in touch by email
sporting.legacy@wosskowbrown.co.uk
www.wosskowbrown.co.uk

Registered Office: 620 Attercliffe Road, Sheffield S9 3QS

Wills, Probate & Trusts | Property | Family Law | Personal Injury | Immigration | Dispute Resolution | Corporate | Commercial | Employment

Liz Taylor's Speedway life

LIZ TAYLOR HAS never been afraid to go the extra mile in her support for the Eagles. Starting marshal, fan club secretary, DJ and cheerleader are just some of the roles she has undertaken at Arlington.

"My mum took me to Arlington when I was six months old and that was in the days – I could be wrong here – of Colin Goody and Jimmy Herd.

"My mum still goes to this day and I have never left.

"I absolutely love it, the smell, the sound...everything about it.

"What I like about it most of all is that it is a true Speedway family.

"Once you have made friends there, you keep in contact. It is like you have never been apart.

"With a lot of sports, you cannot even get close to the sports people but with Speedway you can go to Arlington, perhaps not this year with the pandemic, and see riders before the meeting or after the meeting. Even if they are in a hurry, they will make time for people to have a chat.

"Most sports you go to it's 'you're not allowed in that area' and they have bodyguards all round them and they cost the earth to go and see. And you don't really get any trouble at Speedway. . . it's just banter."

With her long record of watching the Eagles, Liz finds it hard to name a favourite rider but when pushed she came up with a surprising name.

Chris Holder. She has followed the former world champion ever since he came to these shores.

When it comes to the Eagles, Liz names Dave Jessup, Gordon Kennett and has stayed in contact with Jake Knight, who is back at Arlington this year to head the NDL Seagulls.

"Another one I have followed is Nathan Ablitt. I think he has got it. He has had a few knocks so let's hope this year he has passed that. I like following them from when they are young and it is nice to watch them come through, such as the Kennetts," she said.

She feels the sport no longer has the characters that helped build the atmosphere from the days when riders such as Kelvin Mullarkey were very much the 'villain' at Arlington.

"You don't want the riders knocking themselves out and I don't like dirty riders either but it added to the oomph of the meeting.

Flying High talks to Liz Taylor from Polegate and discovers some amazing stories of her time supporting the Eagles.



"The Glasgow meeting in 2019 was a great meeting for the wrong reasons but everybody said 'what a brilliant evening'. The atmosphere was back.

"I know the crowds have gone off and they are doing what they can but maybe it would be good to have a war cry. I don't think it hurts at all."

She also regrets how in modern-day speedway riders come and go between teams, based on averages, unlike the days when clubs made few changes between seasons.

"You had a team and most of them were still with you the following season," she commented.

DJ Liz

When Eastbourne was synonymous with Sunday Speedway, the post-meeting 'party' in the clubhouse was a 'must' for many fans. Liz was the DJ.

"Well, I call it a disco. We had a record player and Margaret (Dugard) used to give me some money each week to get the new singles and I would put them on.

"All the riders, especially when Crayford and Canterbury visited, would stay and we used to have a really good night. We wouldn't leave until 11pm.

"Nowadays people may pop in for a quick drink and that's it.

"We finish later, of course. Things have changed and not necessarily for the better, in my opinion."

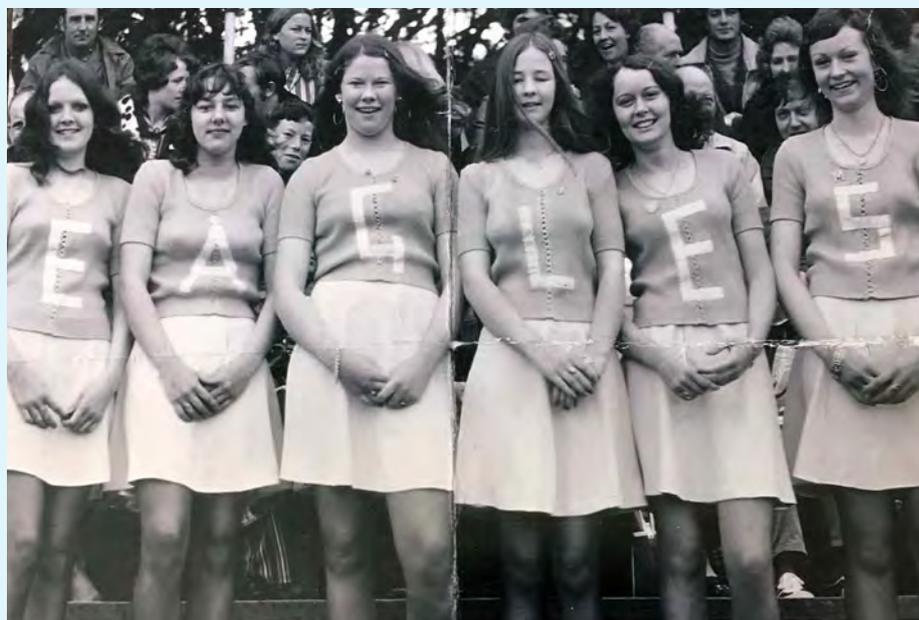
Fan club secretary

Liz ran Bobby McNeils' fan club and recalls him giving her quite a fright.

The cheerleaders would stand behind the riders as they were introduced to the crowd.

McNeil has previously won a cup and gave it to her to hold. She hopped on the back of the bike as he went round on the presentation lap.

She said: "I could only hold to Bobby with one arm. As we went into the second bend, he opened it up. 'Sorry, Liz', he said, 'I forgot you were there'."



Back in the day ...the Eastbourne cheerleaders (from left) Liz, Angela, Sharron, Karen, ?, Maureen.

“ I absolutely love it, the smell, the sound... everything about it. What I like about it most is that it is a true Speedway family. Once you have made friends there, you keep in contact. ”

Cheerleader

Bob and Margaret Dugard set up the group. Personnel changed over the years but they always needed six on parade to be able to spell out E-A-G-L-E-S.

“We needed a couple of people spare in case of holidays. We used to do the carnivals. When we went to Peterborough we had to have police protection because they absolutely hated us with a passion.

“When we went to Canterbury, you can imagine what that was like. We had tin cans, all sorts thrown at us.

“It all added to the fun of the evening.”

Starting marshal

Liz became the first female starting marshal when she was aged 22. She wasn't sure about the idea but said she would give it a go. However, she refused to wear the outfit provided - cowboy boots, a short skirt, vest and black fishnet tights.

“I said ‘Im sorry but I am not going out there like that’.”

A more practical outfit was found, more in keeping with the role. However, the job wasn't completely to her taste because having an official role meant she could not get involved in the meetings like she had been used to.

Liz said: “You have to look out for so many things. I am sure Reg Trott was the referee and he let it go but I am absolutely sure they did five laps before I put the flag out. I was getting so engrossed in the meeting that I forgot. After a time, I said this isn't for me. I like to watch the meeting. When you are a spectator you can get more involved but doing that job you have a responsibility and have to listen out and watch for things.

“All I know is that I was the first woman starting marshal. I did six or seven meetings. Basically I was putting the flags out but a couple of times I did go out and help get them lined up.”

Liz on Reg Trott:

“What a lovely man. I don't think anybody had anything bad so say about him.”

He always wanted to make sure the girls could get home safely along the unlit road from the stadium.

“It was pretty dark and we started walking home and a car came and we could see people walking towards us. When another car came, they were not there. We turned round and we have never run so fast in all our lives. We practically fell into the clubhouse,” she said.

Reg inquired what was wrong and when he found out gave them a telling off reminding them he had said many occasion he would drive them along the lane to the bus stop.

And finally

You cannot mistake the enduring enthusiasm for the Eastbourne Eagles and Speedway more generally when you talk to Liz Taylor. The passion still burns brightly for her team and her sport.

Things may not be like they used to be but make no mistake, Liz will be back on the Arlington terraces for the umpteenth year running once we start racing, all being well next month.

Fineprint
SUSSEX LTD

**QUALITY PRINTING
AT COMPETITIVE PRICES**

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

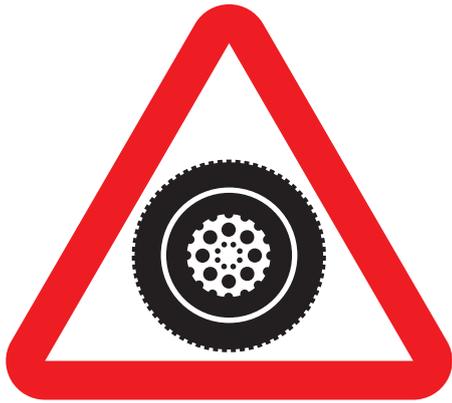
**NO JOB TOO BIG
or TOO SMALL**

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

“Eastbourne crowned 2002 Elite League Champions!”



Re-writing History

League Champions!”

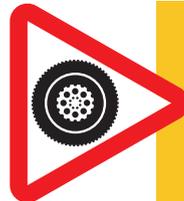
Eastbourne topped the table at the end of the regular season with 58 points – four ahead of Wolverhampton. However, they were not crowned champions as they had been in 2000 when they also headed the league. This was the first year of the Elite League Play Offs.

Wolves won the title, a result which still sticks in the craw of many Eastbourne supporters, including Paul Watson who reported on the home leg of the final for the *Speedway Star*, and Kevin Ling who was the expert summariser for BBC local radio coverage.

Eighteen+ years on, Paul has grabbed the chance to re-write history and finally write the story he wanted to write that October night in 2002:

Eagles crowned champions for second time in three seasons.

WHAT IF Krzysztof Ceglielski had become an Eagle?



What really happened

Eastbourne's 2002 campaign got off on a strange note, a young, outstanding Polish rider, was replaced on the eve of the season.

At the time, it was reported that there was a licence problem for Ceglielski, who had made his name in English speedway the previous year with Poole.

He was ruled out of the Pirates team in 2002 because of the one GP rider per team rule and all seemed set for him to come to Arlington.

But, on the eve of the season he was out and, within hours, in walked an ever bigger name – the 2000 World Champion, Mark Loram. Loram had looked like having to sit out the start of the season because plans to develop a speedway track at Sittingbourne ran into difficulties.

There was no Martin Dugard for the Eagles but the introduction of Loram ensured the Eagles came to tapes with a powerful top five: Mark Loram, Joe Screen, David Norris, Dean Barker and Stefan Andersson. In at reserve were Toni Svab and Savalas Clouting.

There was also a new promoter with Terry Russell taking over from Bob Dugard, who concentrated on stadium matters.

Excitement was high when Krzysztof Ceglielski took to the Arlington track on the club's press and practice day. The previous year he had been a sensation at Poole and he was going to be even more successful as an Eagle.

Ceglielski was first out on a cold, spring day and immediately impressed the people in the pits and the fans scattered around the stadium clutching steaming cups of tea and coffee to keep warm.

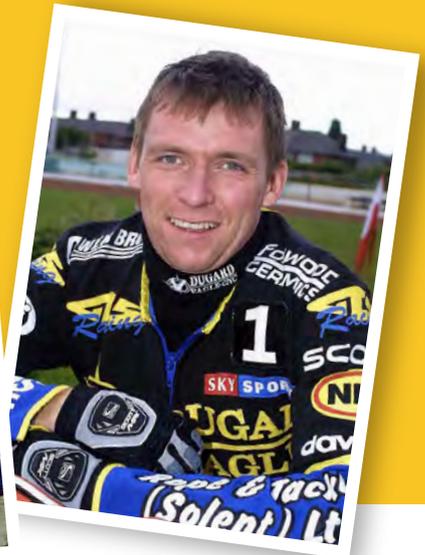
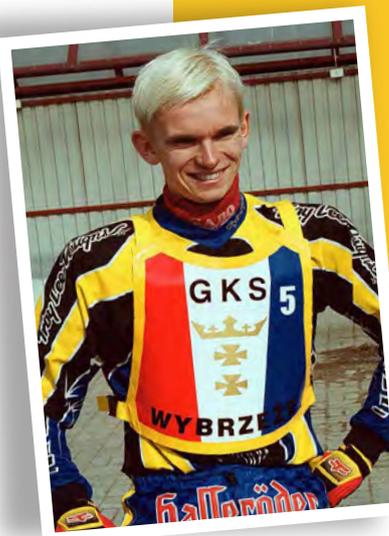
The young Pole looked sensational and some reckoned a four-lap blitz mid practice would have smashed the then track record. Ceglielski took that form into the league campaign and was brilliant home and away.

Soon enough he was the “man to beat” in the Elite League and the rider everyone wanted to see. Maximum followed maximum and the Eagles were on a roll. They soon became front runners, heading the league for weeks on end before finishing top of the table by a country mile.

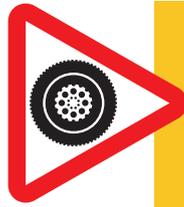
It was on to the Play Offs where Ceglielski had a chance to dazzle on British Speedway's biggest TV night. Eastbourne trailed by eight points after the first leg at Monmore Green but they soon took the upper hand at Arlington. If Ceglielski has been good during the regular season, he was nothing sort of sensational in the second leg. He totally missed the start in heat one and you could hear the groans from the Eastbourne faithful. The groans soon turned to cheers as Ceglielski made up ground to cut through the field and take the lead with one lap to go.

With Stefan Andersson battling through to take second place, the Eagles had a 5-1; Wolves lead was just four points. Game on.

The stunning ride from their Polish superstar galvanised the rest of the team and they tore into Wolverhampton. The eight point deficit at the start was soon turned into an eight-point lead as Eastbourne galloped off into the distance. The league title flag was to fly once again at Arlington.



WHAT IF Savalas Clouting had been fit for the second leg?



Suffolk-based Savalas Clouting had been a key man all year down in the reserve berth for Eastbourne. He had a knack of winning races, especially heat 14, much as Petri Kokko had done in the year 2000.

He only scored two points in the first leg of the final at Wolverhampton but he fancied his chances on home soil and the Eagles management were confident he would be the trump card.

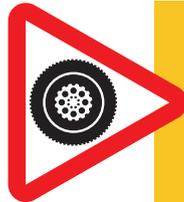
And so it turned out.

Clouting came out in heat two and annihilated the opposition. If Krzysztof Cegliński had been slow from the tapes in heat one, Clouting was like greased lightning.

The home fans were cheering wildly as he sped down the back straight of heat one with Billy Janniro hot on his heels.

Clouting had done exactly what was necessary and Eastbourne were very much on the front foot with Wolves in seeming disarray; a state that even the legendary team manager Peter Adams could not pull them back from.

WHAT IF Wolves had finished top of the league?



Wolverhampton were seeded direct to the final because they finished top of the league. On the face of it, that seemed to be an advantage but in truth it didn't work out like that.

The Wolves riders sat around while their opponents raced and by the time it came to the final, the West Midlands side had gone "cold" through weeks of inaction.

Eastbourne, Coventry and Poole fought out semi-finals and when it came to the final the eventual victors were in hot form.

The league itself had turned very much into a battle between Wolverhampton and Eastbourne and the Monmore outfit eventually topped the table when the 32 regular league matches had been completed.

For the first time, there was no prize for finishing top and the Elite League pennant didn't fly at Monmore Green. Five teams were in the Play Offs and Wolverhampton sat on the sidelines and watched Eastbourne beat the Peterborough Panthers in one quarter final and Coventry get the better of Poole in the other.

Eastbourne went on to beat Coventry in the semi-final and the Eagles septet was on fire as the final arrived in front of the Sky TV cameras. In the first leg of the final, at Monmore Green, the home side threatened to run riot and take the tie away from Eastbourne. However, the Sussex men came back strongly and in the end went down 49-41 – an eight-point deficit which the Arlington camp felt was just about in range.

And so it proved on the night of October 2.

In the countdown to the match, there was good news for the Eagles. David Norris and Stefan Andersson were fully fit and came through a practice session with flying colours.

There was an illness scare over Savalas Clouting, who scored many valuable points during the season, but he was given a clean bill of health. The Eagles had been so worried that they put teenager Edward Kennett on stand-by but in the end he was not needed.

What really happened

On the day of the second leg, Savalas Clouting woke up with a severe headache and was soon in hospital. He couldn't see properly and could not stand bright light.

He pulled out of the tie at lunchtime and rookie Edward Kennett was thrust into action. Edward didn't disgrace himself and scored two points and a bonus but the nagging feeling is that Clouting would have got half-a-dozen and turned the course of history.



Eddie Garvey - The John Somerville Collection

What really happened

Eastbourne won the league and not the title. The rest, as they say, is history.

Eagles really did win the KO Cup

THERE WAS SOME consolation for Eastbourne fans as their heroes won the 2002 KO Cup. The team recovered from the Play Off heartbreak to beat Peterborough in the final. Eastbourne established a 55-35 point lead on September 21 and hung on in the second leg at the East of England Showground, losing 51-39.

The Eagles had defeated Wolverhampton home and away in the semi-final.

BLOOPER 1: During the live commentary on BBC radio, Kevin Ling commented 'what wonderful work Sky Sports are doing for Speedway'. Said Kevin: "I remember the young man who was commentating with me saying 'I couldn't possibly comment on that'."

BLOOPER 2: Look carefully at this piece of merchandise. Yes, Eastbourne were the 2002 KO Cup winners but the item celebrating the 2002 league championship was a tad premature, to say the least.



**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

Flying High



Tom Brennan