

HG AEROSPACE EAGLES SPEEDWAY MAGAZINE

Flying High

No. 6



SEASON PREVIEW

Get to know your Eagles and Seagulls

RACE NIGHT DETAILS 🦅 JON COOK 🦅 2021 FIXTURES

Flying High Foreword

HG AEROSPACE EAGLES SPEEDWAY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 6 | MAY 2021

JON COOK

THE TRAGIC NEWS about Jon received on Tuesday morning after the early May bank holiday Monday has hit everyone very hard.

There are tributes in this edition of Flying High, on our website and there will be more in the programme for the opening match and at the Newcastle fixture.

We'll also discuss something appropriate with Jon's sons and family when the time is right and we're already working hard on some sort of lasting recognition of Jon's service to the Club involving on and off the track, to be announced in due course.

The 2021 team features much of Jon's work and recruitment when returning in 2019.

His passion for helping to create an all-British Team and culture will be his lasting testimony and something we'll run with and cherish. . . that as much as his visionary warning about the possible shocking impact of Brexit on Speedway and the danger ahead are a fitting epitaph.

THIS WILL BE the sixth *Flying High* edition and it has certainly raised the bar in terms of a FREE information-packed publication written almost totally independently for Speedway supporters, not only in Sussex but everywhere.

The credit must go to all involved in the ongoing creation of the e-magazine and every facet of it is we believe first class and all should be incredibly proud.

With the season approaching, we'll focus now on transferring some facets of our already award-winning match programme which will be available not only in the usual printed format but also a downloadable e-format like *Flying High* for the first time.

The match programme will have more pages for 2021 and that's as a direct result of feedback from the critique when we were runner up in the *Speedway Star Programme of the Year in 2019*.

The only reason we weren't winners was that the judges thought the quality deserved more pages. Their wish is our command and we hope to raise the bar again.

There is plenty to read again in this edition of *Flying High* and it will take a break now for a few months but we plan a mid-season special and an extensive Limited Edition and Printed "90th Anniversary Special Magazine" of top quality, for a reasonable cost that will hopefully be a roaring success and sell out as something to be cherished for all Eastbourne and Speedway supporters.

Flying High will return in the autumn once the season finishes and we hope will again be essential reading next winter.

“These are “generational repairs” and we cannot thank the Owners enough for that support.”

“We will still be under severe crowd restrictions until at least June 21 when hopefully we can begin to see a return to more normality.”

Emotional return

It's going to be an incredibly emotional return to Arlington on the May 22.

It will have been over 600 days since we last met and sadly some wonderfully loyal servants of the club from the inner workings and our loyal supporter base will not be around to share that moment with us.

We will do and will continue to do all we can to do to remember them and never forget their affection for our Club.

We have held some private behind closed doors practice sessions in the past month and I can only pay massive and fulsome praise to all involved in getting the track in to shape, particularly Neil Hollebbon who as the new track curator (together with Chris Geer) has done some outstanding work.

Team GB

We had one very special private practice session at the stadium on Sunday, May 2, when we were delighted to host the Team GB Squad and their entourage of experts and management.

They gave us incredibly positive feedback and are looking forward to returning in the future.

It's a relationship that has been nurtured for the past 18 months and we can now confirm that subject to Covid-19 behaving itself we will stage a TEAM GB Under-23 Test Match at Arlington on Sunday, July 11, with major opponents to be confirmed nearer the time and subject to which country / team would best fit the then Covid travel restrictions.

It promises to be a fantastic weekend with some form of OPEN DAY with Team GB planned for the Saturday (July 10).

The match forms part of a series of matches including a similar Under- 23 Fixture at Plymouth on Tuesday, July 6; and a FULL Team GB Test Match at Glasgow on Saturday, July 17.

Supporters will also enjoy the benefits of a massive financial investment by Eric, Margaret and Paul Dugard in respect of a complete electrical rewire and upgrade of Arlington Stadium, some redecoration of the toilets, driveway resurfacing of the car park and repairs that are ongoing to other parts of the stadium. These are "generational repairs" and we cannot thank the Owners enough for that support.

Their positivity about what Speedway is trying to achieve as a long-term project at a recent meeting was a fantastic filip after a torrid 18 months due to Covid-19 lockdown and closure and we can't wait to get started.

We will still be under severe crowd restrictions until at least June 21 when hopefully we can begin to see a return to more normality. We will be limited to crowds of about 750 for the opening fixtures and when you consider that includes riders, mechanics, staff and essential services; this will place an incredible strain on already limited resources.



Sponsors

We cannot thank our Sponsors enough for their continued support, Lee is working hard on recruiting some more and a massive thank you too to all of our 2020 Season Ticket and 10 Match Ticket Holders who agreed to roll-over to 2021.

Without that Sponsor support and loyalty of supporters we would not be here.

I must pay fulsome tribute to my Co-Director Les Fineing who has supported me and the business £ for £ in the period of inactivity in our investment into the Club to keep things ticking over.

The nature of Speedway is that for 18 months we have suffered a 95% reduction in income based on turnover yet essential costs and expenses mean that around 25% of those have had to be paid out. We remain confident that once crowd limits ease hopefully after the June 21, and in the expectation of two successful teams plus MSDL development Squad and your wonderful support, we can again hit and hopefully exceed the average crowds of around 1000 that we had in 2019; and then may be add 20% to that average later in the summer so that we can stabilise and secure the long term future. The Winter Support Package Loans available to some Speedway Clubs (£300,000 in total not £300,000 per Club sadly) was not applicable to us given our recently new company formation but credit must go to the BSPL for the great work they have done to secure it for the Sport as whole.

Spread the message

Your support is legendary and very much appreciated but if you can help to spread the message, especially once we can have bigger crowds, it would be fantastic and as you know there is no better night out or afternoon in the sun, than Speedway at Arlington.

The Stocks and Bangers can attract crowds of 4,000 plus to big meetings and wouldn't it be fantastic if one day we could aspire to do the same thing for Speedway?

I can promise everyone that we are and will be making significant progress week on week on modernising the feel and visual impact of Arlington Stadium.

We have a series of enhancements planned for May, June and July and I feel sure that by the end of the 2021 season you'll all be impressed with the progress made.

“ The Winter Support Package Loans available to some Speedway Clubs (£300,000 in total not £300,000 per Club sadly) was not applicable to us given our recently new company formation. ”

“ £10 Speedway at NDL is considered by many to be "the holy grail" and that's what we'll be proud to deliver. ”

Every penny of gate and match proceeds and commercial and advertising income helps and we have very deliberately made pricing for these opportunities as cheap and cost effective as possible as we know how much ALL business and personal finances are hurting and how difficult it has been for everyone.

'The Holy Grail'

As part of our recognition of this we will stage the first of several standalone NDL Fixtures on Sunday, June 19, with the Eastbourne Seagulls taking on the Kent Royals with an MSDL-level second-half all for a TENNER.....£10 Speedway at NDL is considered by many to be "the holy grail" and that's what we'll be proud to deliver.

Keep an eye out for some fixture amendments to create a few more of these £10 standalone NDL fixtures.

Please bear with us in the opening weeks, it won't be quite the same due to Covid restrictions but we can see the light at the end of a very long tunnel, some Speedway has to be far better and we can't wait to get started.

Hopefully we'll see you all in the coming months and until then STAY SAFE and spread the positive word about Speedway at Arlington.....Thank You

Ian Jordan

DIRECTOR

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



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Design by Barry Cross Artwork

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Mark Paulson @MarkNPaulson 1h
Remembering when the late Jon Cook guided the Eastbourne Eagles to Elite League glory. What a night it was at a packed Arlington Stadium for the title decider versus King's Lynn.

Ronnie Piccolo @RonniePiccolo 16h
So sorry to hear about the passing of Jon Cook he was a lovely man thinking of Jon and his family at this sad time 🥺

Official British Speedway @Sp... 21h
JON COOK

BRITISH Speedway is deeply shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of our former Vice-Chairman Jon Cook.

David Gentle + Pearcey(1962... 15h
Replying to @SpeedwayGP @SpeedwayGB
Another one of Speedway's good guys gone.RIP Jon Cook

Thurrock Hammers Ltd @Thurr... 21h
Everyone at The Hammers are deeply shocked and saddened to hear about the sudden passing of our former Promoter Jon Cook.

Sending all of our thoughts & condolences to his family and friends at this incredibly sad time. #RIP 🙏

Belle Vue Speedway @TheAces 16h
JON COOK | Belle Vue Speedway is saddened to learn of the passing of former British Speedway vice-chairman Jon Cook.

Jon died on Monday at the age of 55.

Everyone at the club sends our thoughts and deepest condolences to Jon's family at this difficult time.

Mark Paulson @MarkNPaulson 11h
Shocked to hear of the death of former Eastbourne Speedway co-promoter Jon Cook. There may have been a love/hate relationship with Eastbourne fans after he joined rivals Arena-Essex but he was the best in the business and it was a massive boost when he returned to Sussex in 2019

Sport_Sussex @SportSussex 19h
"I'm sure everyone involved with Eastbourne who has worked with or for Jon will hear this news with great sadness." @eastbournespeed lead the tributes to speedway stalwart Jon Cook - eastbourneherald.co.uk/sport/motorcyc...

Simon Lambert Racing @lambo... 21h
Rest in peace Jon Cook, thoughts are with your friends and family! 🙏

Jeff @scott_jeff 15h
really very sad day for British speedway
Jon Cook RIP
(some thoughtful, direct & wry words from/with Jon from 2005 that stand the test of time) methanolpress.com/jon-cook-thoug...

Alan Bates @silverbee52 21h
Jon Cook being around has been a constant since I started going to speedway. Always spoke well and passionately, one of the good guys. 55 is no age to go. Such a shame.

Mark Simm @markesimm 14h
shocked to about Jon Cook - 55 is no age. RIP

Southwick 1882 FC @SFC_TheW... 11h
Today we are saddened & shocked by the passing of a true gentlemen, a father, friend and highly thought of by all that knew Jon. Thoughts and condolences are with Wickers player Jacob and his family. Rip Jon cook ❤️❤️

K.L.S.S.C @KLSSClub 14h
Rest in peace Jon Cook.

Our thoughts are with Jon's family and friends. ❤️

Robin Allen @Robin_Allen91 21h
Rest easy Jon Cook 🙏

you were a fantastic servant to British Speedway 🙏

Nicolai Klindt @nklindt 13h
sad to hear the passing of jon cook. lots of wishes to his family!

An Ordinary Man @Marillionmark 20h
You could visit every speedway track in the land and in any era, and you wouldn't meet a finer gentleman man than Jon Cook!
His untimely passing will leave a void within British Speedway that won't ever be filled!

#RIPJonCook

Glenn Collins @collins_glenn 14h
Saddened and shocked to hear about the passing of former Lakeside and Eastbourne promoter Jon Cook. Met and spoke to him a number of times and had a lot of respect for Jon. Rest in peace

James Jessop @Jessop217 21h
R.I.P Jon Cook

Will be missed by Eastbourne and Lakeside fans everywhere 🥺

Eric Marchment @ecmarch5 14h
Shocking and numbing: Speedway in mourning after death of Jon Cook | Eastbourne Herald eastbourneherald.co.uk/sport/motorcyc...

n @howe147 19h
Replying to @theardvark2
Hi mark great picture did u hear about the sad passing of jon cook what a travesty for the sport really nice bloke always took time to speak to us fans at arena and im sure was a great team manager

Rory Schlein @RorySchlein3 11h
Shocked to hear the news of the passing of Jon Cook a guy i got to know well in 2013 and 2014. I lost count on the times the phone rang and it was cooking ask for me to guest. And always had a can of Solo ready. RIP dude

British speedway news!! @uks... 10h
Life is to short for what u want to achieve so get out ther and do it tomorrow!!! Dreams can happen if u want them to,,,RIP Jon cook speedway legend

“ Absolutely terrible news. Jon started riding second halves around the time I started going to speedway so he's been a massive part of my life for many years. A great man who always had the best interests of speedway at heart, never afraid to rock the boat of the establishment for the good of the sport and amazingly tactically aware. For me there has been no finer team manager or promoter at Eastbourne and I was gutted when he left for Lakeside. Time will show that Jon was one of speedways finest men. There are not many that shared his true passion and desire to do things the right way for the better of the sport. Will be truly missed. Condolences to friends and family. ”

■ PETER BAKER

“ Cookie was a good fun guy who loved speedway, the last time I spoke to him I was telling him about the time I phoned the hotline only to hear an out of breath cookie pick up and start telling me the scores as he hadn't recorded it yet. Told him to get his breath back and he just laughed and said, well you're paying for it.! Oh and the time we were at Ipswich and it turned out cookie was trying to help I think Stefan Danno start his bike. All we saw was Jon rapidly emerging from the pits hanging on to the bike and piling into the safety fence.. Always a laugh when Cookie was around, gutted to read this awful news.. R I P. Jon. ”

■ SHANE LOVE



Jon Cook tributes to his life in Speedway

British Speedway was shocked and saddened to learn of Jon Cook's death at the age of 55.

He was long associated with the Eastbourne Eagles and for around 15 years was very much the face and voice of the club as he served as co-promoter from 1993 to 2007.

Jon went on to promote at Lakeside but was back at Arlington in 2019 to play an important role as the club moved to the Championship from the National Development League.

The club's tribute to Jon appeared the day after his death on our website.

Many supporters from across the country took to social media to pay their respects and send condolences to Jon's family.

Here is a selection.



“ Really sad and shocked to hear this. What a man and brilliant promoter. When he left our club to go to Lakeside we certainly missed him and his input. Was great to see him back at Arlington. What a shocker. My thoughts and prayers are with Cookie's family and friends at such a sad and shocking times. R.I.P Jon Cook. ”

■ TREVOR SKINNER

“ Such terrible news. I once tried to interview Jon moments after Eagles had won a league title. He was completely overcome by emotion, for once unable to get any words out. But the look on his face said it all, so thrilled and proud that his Eagles were champions. I will remember him this way. RIP Jon. ”

■ BEN FINDON

“ Cant believe this sad news. Remember Jon in second half racing years ago . He would always say hello. Thoughts and condolences to his family. Big loss to speedway.R.I.P Jon. ”

■ DEB HOAD

“ A true gentleman who had shale in his blood. I had the pleasure of meeting him when I was part of a consortium seeking to revive Oxford Cheetahs. A sad loss. RIP Jon Cook. ”

■ IAN KIRKE

- Steve Hilliard** @Hackett01 20h
Replying to @eastbournespeed
Such sad news !!! Condolences to friends + family. Opinionated and passionate about the sport of speedway. RIP Jon Cook.
- roger clarke** @rogerclarke12 20h
Terrible news about Jon Cook always an Eagle at heart RIP Jon
- Speedway GP** @SpeedwayGP 20h
We send our condolences to the family and friends of former @SpeedwayGB vice-chairman Jon Cook, who passed away on Monday
- Sussex Sunday Football Leag...** 19h
Our thoughts go out to the cook family today after the sudden loss Jon Cook. Anyone who came in contact with him will never forget his infectious enthusiasm for everything he did. @Bn_Dons
- Nick Laurence** @Nicklaurence199 21h
Very saddened to hear the passing of my former team manager Jon cook at my time with Lakeside in 2017, my thoughts are with his family at this sad time 🙏
- Tim Hamblin** @TimHamblinShale 19h
Stunned to learn of the death, at 55, of Jon Cook, a huge figure in speedway. By turns articulate, passionate, friendly, direct and informed -- often all of them in the space of minutes. A major loss to sport, but obviously a tragedy of far greater import to family and friends.
- Speedway Star** @speedwaystar... 19h
Speedway Star are saddened to learn of the passing of former Eastbourne and Arena-Essex promoter Jon Cook.

Our thoughts are with Jon's family at this most difficult time.


- Mark Loram** @theaarvark2 12h
My earliest memory of Jon Cook was at Eastbourne riding with Paul, Deano and Martin.

He later became a very good and respected manager and promoter who I rode for over a number of years.

Shocking and sad news, my thoughts are with all those he leaves behind x
- Sport_Sussex** @SportSussex 19h
"I'm sure everyone involved with Eastbourne who has worked with or for Jon will hear this news with great sadness." @eastbournespeed lead the tributes to speedway stalwart Jon Cook - eastbourneherald.co.uk/sport/motorcyc...
- Wolves Speedway** @WolvesSpe... 17h
JON COOK: WOLVERHAMPTON owner Chris Van Straaten has paid tribute to former Eastbourne counterpart Jon Cook. dlvr.it/Rz25fl



Mike Hirves

MY TEAM by Trevor Geer

Eastbourne HG Aerospace Eagles co-promoter and team manager Trevor Geer believes this year's Eagles have what it takes to make a genuine Championship challenge.

The 2019 season was a big learning curve for all connected with the club and since then changes have been made to strengthen the club on and off the track ready for the 2021 campaign.

Geer believes the Eagles will benefit hugely from having an all-British team as the country comes out of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns.

Geer also points to the fact that Lewi Kerr, Tom Brennan and Drew Kemp are part of the Team GB set-up and with Jason Edwards coming through, Eastbourne have a crop of riders that will play a big part in the nation's future.

Will Eastbourne will the title? "I expect us to make the Play Offs (top four) and let's see what happens from there," he said.

Trevor Geer talks about 'My team'

EDWARD KENNETT

EDWARD, OF COURSE, comes from a family with a great Speedway racing pedigree with his dad and uncles. He is such a talented rider and could have gone so much further in the sport than what he has done.

Having said that, he has been No 1 for lots of teams and has a good career. The talent he has got, I think he could have gone a lot further.

He is so determined and doesn't like to get beaten. Very often we need him in heat 15 and he has come up trumps.

I think the highlight of that was at Leicester in 2019 when he passed Scott Nicholls and had a fantastic race with him which was nip and tuck all the way. To get the better of Scott round there took some doing.

Edward is not the best of trappers; he's not bad but he is capable of coming from behind – inside or outside. He can ride the whole track.



Edward is so determined and doesn't like to get beaten.

RICHARD LAWSON

Richard is such a talented rider, he is so smooth on a bike.



THERE'S A RIDER who could be No 1 in any team in the league. He is very under-rated, even still but he such a talented rider. Richard is so smooth on a bike.

He came down to a practice session at Arlington and hadn't sat on a bike for more than six months when we went to King's Lynn last July. He looked like he had never been off the bike, right from his first lap. He didn't put a foot wrong and was reeling off smooth laps right from the off. He was putting the bike exactly where he wanted on the track.

Richard is determined to get his nose in front from the start and just seems to go that little bit further into the first corner to make it his. If it means turning later and giving someone a push, he will do it. That's what Speedway is all about.

He could have easily gone up to the next level and been up with the Tai Woffindens.

However, that level is a whole new ball game in what you have to spend on engines and tuners; everything really.

He'll have a good season. I was impressed by him in 2019.

LEWI KERR

WE HAVE MADE Lewi captain this year and he is destined for a really good year. They have made him captain at King's Lynn in the Premiership and that says a lot.

Lewi is so brave when riding and so good. It is fantastic to see, bearing in the mind the terrible accidents he has had. He has come back and is a racer through and through.

He is a good trapper a good racer and good with the crowd and supporters. Lewi is a good ambassador for Speedway.

I didn't know much about him before he came to Eastbourne in 2019. He really came through and matured into a very good rider when we were down in the National League.



Lewi is a good trapper, a good racer and good with the crowd and supporters.

Trevor Geer talks about 'My team'

TOM BRENNAN

HE IS WORKING HARD and determined to do well. Tom has been out in Poland this year training and he is well in with Team GB. He has benefited from the help given to him by Martin Dugard and now also has advice from Craig Cummins, his girlfriend's father, who was involved with Billy Hamill and Greg Hancock. He is getting good advice all round.

We have seen Tom's career develop here at Eastbourne, from going round on the junior tracks and he has come through the ranks. He has always impressed and I can well see Tom getting to the Speedway GPs in the next few years.

Tom has good racing brain and he has that determination to get to the top.



Mike Hines

Tom has good racing brain and he has that determination to get to the top.

KYLE NEWMAN

Speedway is all about confidence and Kyle certainly thrives on that. At the end of 2019 he was pushing our three heat leaders.



I HAVE KNOWN HIM for years. All the while we were in the Elite League, Kyle would be a good guest for us. He loves coming to Eastbourne.

He was riding at Birmingham in 2019 when we came back into this league and was having injury and machine problems. I don't think he was really enjoying his racing.

When we mentioned about coming to Eastbourne, he jumped at it, even though he lives down at Poole. I have always had a good relationship with him and in 2019 he got better and better as the year went on.

Speedway is all about confidence and Kyle certainly thrives on that. At the end of 2019 he was pushing our three heat leaders.

JASON EDWARDS

YOU WOULD NEVER think he was a racer. He always has a smile on his face, and talks to everybody. Even when there is real pressure on in a meeting, he is chatting away to people and smiling as if he doesn't have a care in a world.

Put him on a bike and push him out on to the track, he is a completely different person. He has done well in big meetings against good opposition and that tells me everything about his dedication and commitment.

Jason thrives on riding and he needs as many meetings as he can get. He has done well.

This season he is in a strong team and could well struggle to get out of the reserve berth but he is a really good reserve for us to have.



Jason has done well in big meetings against good opposition and that tells me everything about his dedication and commitment.

DREW KEMP

“ Practising at Arlington Drew was superb while some of the others were struggling with the conditions. He just made it look easy. ”



I DON'T THINK there will be a better reserve in the league than Drew. He is looking awesome at the practice sessions.

He looks the part in all aspects of being a Speedway rider.

Drew has superb style, trains hard and is destined for the top. We are fortunate to have him at Eastbourne.

I know he has had the benefit this year of a spell out in Poland but practising at Arlington he was superb while some of the others were struggling with the conditions. He just made it look easy.

On one occasion, I think he could well have been the quickest of everyone who was there.



And finally

The reserves will be our strong point throughout the season and I think we are the envy of every team in the league starting off for being an all-British team, our strength in depth and for our reserves.

There are some really good No 1s in the other teams in the Championship and I think we will see some really good racing at Arlington this season. 🐦

How we are setting up the Eagles for success

Club director Ian Jordan gives further insights in to the 2021 Eagles explaining how the club manages the rider to find success individually and as a team

WHEN WE SAT DOWN in the final weeks of 2019 to discuss the 2020 team, which is of course now the 2021 team, we were keen to retain the core strength of the squad which had taken us to a Shield Final – beating Glasgow in the semi-final – and to the semi-final of the Knock-Out Cup where we were beaten over two legs narrowly by the eventual winners Redcar.

It still really does massively annoy and frustrate all of the management team that we were not only denied the services of Georgie Wood for the crucial home leg of the semi-final of the KO Cup and final of the Championship Shield, but also an

adequate replacement at the time in Danyon Hume who we were keen to sign and who was keen to come to join us.

The fact that the suspension of Georgie was requested by his then NDL Club who at the time were the Isle of Wight, and had nothing to do with his Championship and asset-holding club Eastbourne, was even more galling and frankly unfathomable even now.

It's water under the bridge and that period defined our desire to retain the core of the side but to seek greater intensity and more balance.

The achilles heel of the 2019 side was away form and that bought into focus a particular phrase that is the mantra of my horse racing service: "if you can't win, don't lose" (each way in horse racing) which in Speedway terms is the vital one point available to the away team if they lose by six points or less.

Accumulation of much cherished away wins and running all clubs to within six points if you can't win is vital to reaching Play Offs.

We need to be going into Heats 14 and 15 at every away match seeking points everywhere.

“ The achilles heel of the 2019 side was away form. ”

Whilst Trevor has perfectly explained the riding qualities of each team member, I think it's also vitally important that we also understand what makes each rider tick, on and off the track.

As a club, we need do all we can to set them up to succeed in every way we can; working with the guys on "mindset and confidence" and also team bonding and togetherness.

We need not only win as a team, but when we lose, we lose as a team and learn together individually and collectively.

It's important, therefore, that the guys know that they are our "first picks".

They all are and at no point since 2019 have we ever thought about making changes to the declared 1-7.

They are all British, they get on well with each other, no language barriers, no cliques and no "them and us" mentality.

Bonding and togetherness in the heat of battle will win us those last heat deciders. My focus is to make the guys feel secure and comfortable in the knowledge that if there are any issues, concerns or problems that have someone to come and talk to.

If it's a riding issue then obviously it gets delegated but if it's related to the more mundane day-to-day stuff, finance, family, unexpected events then we want everyone to know that support, help and advice is there.

A particular example of that was when Covid hit. We gave them any help and advice we could about the various Government aid schemes for self-employed (which they all are), and given my background in financial services for many decades, in some individual circumstances to point them in the right direction for help and guidance.

That's unseen but little things like that have I feel bonded us in ways we could never have expected.

In terms of each rider, we believe each can improve and we'll try to help them to do that.

It's fascinating as a long-standing "people manager" to realise that whilst a Speedway track might not be much like an office desk, a production line or a retail outlet, there are striking similarities in terms of cajoling someone when they have a bad ride or meeting or a loss of confidence, encouraging others and yes, sometime a little kick up the backside and gee up.



Drew Kemp and Lewi Kerr practicing starts at Arlington last month.

Mike Hirves

What strikes me most of all though is how passionate all of our guys are to succeed individually and collectively and how seriously they take riding for Eastbourne and how it does hurt them when they don't win.

That intensity is something we lacked in 2019, that's not being disrespectful to anyone at all, but this is professional sport where if you give an opponent an inch, they'll take a mile and we want to aim to have the intensity that clubs like Glasgow, Leicester and Redcar have and for our team to have the level that the likes of Scott Nicholls, Craig Cook and others have.

That doesn't mean we can't have fun. We will have fun and in Lewi Kerr and mechanic Steve Norman (Stevo) we have two of life's great practical jokers, believe me you have to be on your guard with those pair around.

I think with Edward it's a case of helping him to believe in himself as much as we believe in him.

He retains a mercurial talent that would grace the GP stage. He showed that in

“ Lewi is let's face it a "miracle man" in terms of what has happened in his Speedway career. ”

glimpses in 2019 and never more than heat 15 of the cup match at Leicester. It's a case of giving him the confidence to become more consistent and feel wanted and comfortable enough to show it.

Richard is the ultimate professional, he just comes and does his job and is an absolute pleasure to deal with on and off the track.

He knows now how passionate Eastbourne supporters are and at times in 2019 was blown away by it, I'd love Richard to see out his CL career here at Arlington.

Lewi is let's face it a "miracle man" in terms of what has happened in his Speedway career. 2019 was injury free, we all pray that 2021 will be the same and his intensity and fitness and preparation is staggering, that's why we've made him Captain as he wants the responsibility and thrives off it.

When Kyle joined us following Tom's terrible accident he fitted in immediately. We all saw how he arrived with self confidence at a low ebb but slowly improved and in the final weeks of the season made significant improvement.

The ability is not in doubt and nor is the application. Kyle has said he always felt he needed a "home", somewhere that he could build roots and a level of security. He's found that at Arlington and I believe we can now reap the rewards of 2019 and that Kyle can at last fulfil that undoubted potential. ➤

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EDWARD KENNETT



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“ If a young rider gets disappointed that the transition up a League is harder than they thought, it can quickly affect confidence. ”

◀ Tom has matured massively off the track and fought back from that terrible night. He's faced his demons at every stage of that process and come through with incredible bravery and fortitude both physically and mentally.

There have been plateaus and confidence losses along the way but as the saying goes "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger", and Tom is now I think in the best place he has ever been, especially with opportunities at Belle Vue and Poland to become a world class talent.

When we signed Jason in July 2019 it was seen as a risk and a gamble by some, too soon by others; and many of those know a lot more about Speedway than I do.

However, it was at my instigation and very much part of a long-term plan.

I'd seen this incredibly mature and talented kid in 2018, seen massive improvement in some NDL matches I saw in 2019 when Jason rode for Mildenhall and the vultures were circling and we needed to act.

Jason for one so young bought that intensity that some in the 2019 team we felt lacked at the time. The key with any young rider is to understand their expectation, if you can get to the bottom that early you can stop them putting unnecessary expectations on themselves.

This is part of the mental side of the Sport few see from the outside. If a young rider gets disappointed that the transition up a League is harder than they thought, it can quickly affect confidence.

So, we work on that and it's a case of setting realistic expectations from the Club, they are invariably lower than their own expectations; but it's all about boosting and maintaining confidence and nurturing that precious talent and stressing over and over again that there is no pressure from us, merely a desire to help them to be as good as they can be.

Jason is a long-term work in progress and with luck and good health, we're 100% sure he can go right to the very top of the Sport.

It is going to be incredibly exciting to work with Drew and in terms of team

building we set out our stall and fought off numerous other clubs and were able to convince Drew that we could be a club that did all of that support and nurturing and give him scope to realise his potential that we have discussed above.

The thing I like most about Drew is that he has actually come right out of his comfort blanket to come back to Arlington, a track he openly admits he doesn't like in terms of suiting his style.

That speaks volumes for his mindset and ambition, a desire to work on his perceived weaknesses to improve overall.

We all saw how competitive and passionate Drew is to win during the 2018 season when he rode for Mildenhall, that's just the attitude we want and we'll do all we can to support him whilst he is with us. Drew is an Ipswich asset and has already made great strides in Poland and is another destined for the very top of the Sport.

It's been a long wait, terribly frustrating at times worrying and financially very challenging but I know our Team is the best we could possibly have recruited and will make the supporters proud. We also know one other thing – riders and

“ We also know one other thing and that is that we have without doubt the most loyal, most passionate, at times loudest and intense supporters in Speedway. ”

management – and that is that we have without doubt the most loyal, most passionate, at times loudest and intense supporters in Speedway.

When the brilliant documentary that Glasgow Speedway did called "Into the Red" focuses on your PASSION then that's an incredible endorsement from people brought up with Celtic v Rangers. It's taken as a compliment and we want you to enjoy a great season and to create that atmosphere and to bring some silverware home in the autumn. 🏆



Tom Brennan and Richard Lawson in action during practice.



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Championship line-ups

Twelve teams compete in this year's Championship.

Newcomers are Poole, Plymouth and Kent.

The Pirates would have ridden in the Championship in 2020, after dropping down from the Premiership, had the season gone ahead.

It is the first time the Dorset club have been in the second tier since 1990.

The Gladiators are back in the second tier after a spell in the NDL while Kent ride in the second tier for the first time and – like Eastbourne – have a NDL team.

Somerset are not running this year.

The four top teams in the league will qualify for the Play Offs and will go into two semi-finals with the winners of each going through to the final.

The winner of Play Off final will be Champions.

Here are your runners and riders for the 2020 Championship



Berwick Bandits

Kyle Bickley
Jye Etheridge
Coty Garcia
Leon Flint
Dany Gappmaier
Nikolaj Busk Jakobsen
Aaron Summers

Edinburgh Monarchs

Nathan Greaves
William Lawson
Joe Lawlor
Sam Masters
Josh Pickering
Kye Thomson
Richie Worrall

Leicester Lions

Josh Bates
Ryan Douglas
Kyle Howarth
Nick Morris
Ty Proctor
Dan Thompson
Joe Thompson

Poole Pirates

Ben Cook
Danyon Hume
Zane Keleher
Danny King
Stefan Nielsen
Rory Schlein
Steve Worrall

Birmingham Brummies

Paco Castagna
Chris Harris
Valentin Grobauer
Ashley Morris
Erik Riss
James Shanes
Jack Thomas

Glasgow Tigers

Craig Cook
Sam Jensen
Justin Sedgemen
Jack Smith
Broc Nicol
Ulrich Ostergaard
Ricky Wells

Newcastle Diamonds

Joe Alcock
Ben Barker
Max Clegg
Connor Mountain
Adam Roynon
Matt Wethers
James Wright

Redcar Bears

Jake Allen
Jordan Jenkins
Anders Rowe
Jordan Stewart
Michael Palm Toft
Charles Wright
James Sarjeant

Eastbourne Eagles

Tom Brennan
Jason Edwards
Edward Kennett
Drew Kemp
Lewi Kerr
Richard Lawson
Kyle Newman

Kent Kings

Tom Bacon
Dan Gilkes
Cameron Heeps
Paul Hurry
Ben Morley
Paul Starke
Scott Nicholls

Plymouth Gladiators

Henry Atkins
Alfie Bowtell
Zach Cook
Jason Crump
Steven Goret
Bjarne Pedersen
Dillon Ruml

Scunthorpe Scorpions

Tero Aarnio
Josh Auty
Thomas Jorgensen
Simon Lambert
Josh MacDoanld
Jordan Palin
Theo Pijper

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The race for Championship glory

Well, heavens above one and all, is it really almost that time? The moment when we can emerge from a dark time, blinking once more into the light and some sort of semblance of normality.

Nobody can deny that the last 18 months or so have taken a toll on us all. Everybody has a story to tell and everyone has been affected in some way.

Finally, the moment is approaching for our two-wheeled gladiators to line up at the tapes and with that let us hope that the Speedway based smiles quickly return to our collective faces.

We are all in need of some light relief right now and scanning down the respective line-ups of our own Eagles, set to do battle in the 2021 Championship and also the Seagulls, set to represent us both at NDL and MDSL level, are such to give us all plenty to smile about as the campaign unfolds.

Given the complement that we had assembled ahead of the 2020 season it certainly seemed that exciting times were in store in the weeks ahead. We all know what happened to put the brakes on that ambition but fast forward a year and it is no wonder that we can look forward to 2021 in similar fashion.

Exciting, young, all-British

Thankfully, we have the same team of riders representing us, an exciting, young, all-British line-up, one both rich in experience but also bursting with potential and the opportunity to improve right throughout the order.

In Richard, Edward and newly appointed captain Lewi we have a heat leader trio that is surely comparable to any other in the league and the envy of most.

Providing the perfect back to our big three comes the wholly experienced Kyle together with the youthful exuberance of Tom. An attractive looking middle order indeed.

It seems likely that Tom may need time to find his feet again with regard to team competition as he was not only denied the 2020 season along with everyone else but also the large part of 2019 following his injury in the first few weeks of the campaign.

That brings us to the reserve berth and wow, wow, wow, what a treat we have in

Twelve teams will battle it out for Championship glory. The first aim will be to make the Play Offs and to do that you have to finish in the top four at the end of the regular season.

Kevin Ling reviews the prospects

store for you there. Not just one, but two of the most exciting young prospects in Drew and Jason that British Speedway has to offer.

With all that I'd say that the near future looks bright for us but what of our rivals? Well, let us just say, while I feel that we are well capable of being in contention for honours, we will certainly not have things our own way.

Team by team

Let's just run through team by team starting in alphabetical order with the Berwick Bandits.

Once again they promise to be very strong, particularly at home. Aaron Summers, Nikolaj Busk Jakobsen and Jye Etheridge are likely to be a strong heat leader trio. Daniel Gappmaier and Fernando Garcia will both have good points in them while Leon Flint and Kyle Bickley, form an exciting reserve duo much like ours.

Birmingham Brummies: Chris Harris will always put bums on seats but the Brummies raised their profile massively in recent weeks with the acquisition of Erik Riss, a formidable spearhead indeed.

Scanning further down the line-up come a number of riders who on the day will prove a match for anyone.

Ashley Morris and James Shanes have both scored well for the Perry Barr outfit in the past while Paco Castagna has often proved something of a hero for the Brummies.

Valentin Groubauer proved a capable performer for Somerset in 2019 and undoubtedly will continue to do so with his new club. Last but not least, another young man, rich in potential who we know well from his time here with Kent, is Jack Thomas.

Birmingham will prove a tough nut to crack around their home circuit and should both Riss and Harris click at the

same time they will likely pick up points on the road.

Edinburgh Monarchs: Another formidable heat leader trio in Sam Masters, Richie Worrall and Josh Pickering (who certainly demonstrated a liking for Arlington on his last visit, I seem to recall). For me, and with no disrespect intended, maybe they will prove a little too long in the tail to feature strongly for honours.

Who's to say though, I've been wrong before and inevitably will be again but much will depend on whether Nathan Greaves, Kye Thomson, William Lawson and Joe Lawlor hit the ground running.

Glasgow Tigers: What can anyone say? Plenty has been and some no doubt will have plenty more to say as the time approaches but no one can deny that the Tigers were one of the standout teams in 2019 and viewing their new line-up will undoubtedly prove so again.

Two potential number ones

Craig Cook and Ricky Wells, not just one but two potential number ones. Backing them up are three riders who are wholly capable of double figure returns both home and away, namely Justin Sedgmen, Broc Nicol (a superb performance for Sheffield on his last visit to Sussex) and former Eagle Ulrich Ostergaard.

Sam Jensen and Jack Smith will both have a part to play in the reserve berth but the Tigers, taken as a whole, just as they did in 2019, will certainly be vying for honours once again in 2021.

Kent Kings: One of the plus points as we look ahead to the season ahead is the opportunity to renew local rivalries so, therefore, the elevation of the Men of Kent, or Kentish Men, however they might consider themselves to the Championship is great news for all of us here at Arlington. An interesting line-up and one not easy to quantify as regards a potential assault for honours.

That said Scott Nicholls, another former Eagle of course, who captained the reigning league champions Leicester to glory in 2019, was surely the ideal start to their team building agenda.

Cameron Heeps and Paul Starke will inevitably provide the chief back up to Scott considering past performance.

However, should Paul Hurry (yet another former Eagle I feel compelled to mention) recreate former glories then the Kings could well prove very difficult to beat.

With Tom Bacon, Ben Morley and, another highly prize acquisition, Dan Gilkes, Kent could upset many an appiecart in the coming weeks and months.

Leicester Lions: Bearing little resemblance to the team that took the title last time out, the 2021 pride of Lions have the pedigree to emulate the achievements of their forbears.

Nick Morris, Ryan Douglas and Kyle Howarth will certainly compare well to other heat leader trios up and down the league and Ty Proctor and Josh Bates offer similar promise in their support roles. With the Thompson twins, Dan and Joe looking to continue their upward mobility there's every chance that the Lions will be thereabouts when the prizes are handed out but given the make up of some of the other teams they will face I believe that the task will be even harder for them in 2021 than it was in 2019.

Fond memories

Newcastle Diamonds: I suspect there will be others reading this who have fond memories of our triumph at Brough Park, our sole league success on our travels in 2019.

Therefore, it is a relief that the Diamonds managed to survive to fight another day when it appeared that for a time they might be lost to the sport.

I do rather fear for them, however, when you compare their comparative strengths against certain others in the league and I feel they might struggle at times.

No one can deny that Ben Barker will pull in the points and there is every chance that comeback man James Wright will rekindle the sort of form that identified him as a high flyer in days gone by.

Both Matthew Wethers and Max Clegg performed heroically for the Tyne outfit in 2019 and will undoubtedly do so again.

If Connor Mountain and Adam Roynon can also recapture some of the past form they have displayed and Joe Alcock can also give a good account of himself they could well become a solid home team.

I do question how they might fare on their travels however.

Poole Pirates: Well now we are talking, aren't we? Considering the success that

they enjoyed for many years in the top flight it was considered something akin to fake news when it was announced that they would be dropping down a level ahead of the 2020 season.

Local(ish) rivalry

Well the Premiership's loss is certainly our gain, particularly for ourselves as we get to renew another local(ish) rivalry.

They certainly have a strong look about them with Rory Schlein, Danny King and Steve Worrall leading the charge. While more is known of Stefan Nielsen and Danyon Hume and improvement is likely from them both, less is apparent about either Ben Cook or Zane Keleher.

However, we know the Ford focus of old and the capability of them spotting a gem. Therefore, the Pirates management will remain confident of displaying the dominance they so often did in the top flight now they have joined us in the Championship.

Plymouth Gladiators: Another potential fairy story in the making and the Gladiators announced their arrival at the party with the signing of a genuine Speedway superstar, former World Champion and hall-of-famer Jason Crump.

Alongside him is another much loved character and one we know well here at Arlington, Bjarne Pedersen.

Suffice to say these two have gobbled up much of the Plymouth points allowance so their management have been forced to be a little creative to fill the remainder of the side.

They may well have identified a few jewels of their own so we all look forward to charting the progress of Steven Goret, Zach Cook and Dillon Ruml. Meanwhile

Alfie Bowtell and Henry Atkins (who we look forward to getting to know well as part of our Seagulls side) will likely form a capable reserve duo, so very much a case of wait and see with regard to the Gladiators.

Redcar Bears: Knockout Cup winners in 2019 and the team who so nearly spoiled the party for the Leicester Lions in the Play Offs, the Redcar Bears once again have an exciting looking septet that could potentially go all the way in the season ahead.

British Champion Charles Wright and Michael Palm Toft is a great start but add to that the talent of Jake Allen that really is a triple threat spearhead to savour.

Jordan Stewart is another who will not find points difficult to come by and Anders Rowe, James Sargeant and Jordan Jenkins will all, inevitably have their moments to shine.

Potentially great team

On paper a very good team, on track potentially a great team who I suspect will feature strongly for honours.

Scunthorpe Scorpions: Again, this is a teamstand a great chance of beating the best, if all comes together well.

They have proven performers all the way down the line, Josh Auty, Tero Aarnio and Thomas Jorgensen will blend well as a heat leader trio while Theo Pijper and Simon Lambert each have the credentials to break into the top three.

Josh Macdonald was often a free scorer in 2019 with Edinburgh while Jordan Palin was a rapidly rising talent at ND level.

A team I suspect will occupy the middle order but a confident start to the campaign could well be the making of them. 🦋



Jason Edwards and Richard Lawson in practice.

My team by Will Pottinger

Eastbourne's "second team" will compete in this year's National Development League.

The Seagulls, powered by Save Thurrock Hammers, are expected to show strongly in a league Eastbourne won in 2018.

The club has gone for a mixture of experience and youth.

All will be part of the Arlington 'family' and can look to the club's senior riders in the Championship team for help, advice and ...some banter.

When it is a double header, there will be some nifty work behind the scenes to get the Championship riders out and the NDL teams in and ready for action so that fans are not waiting around overly long for the action to restart.

Some NDL Seagulls are familiar names to long-standing fans, others are something of a mystery.

Team manager Will Pottinger talks about 'My team'.

Jake Knight will be a familiar face to many at Arlington after his successful spell with the club a few years ago in the National League. I had the pleasure of team managing him last year when was part of the Eagles Select at Plymouth. He seemed very keen then to get back into Speedway and proved he could still do it and had the desire to ride Speedway.

He has plenty of experience and this is a great opportunity for him to become an established No 1 in the National League and really dominate races, especially at Arlington. I think he will be winning most of his races.

I think it was a natural thing really for him to come back once Eastbourne were back in the NL after the success he had here. He is popular with the fans.

Jake ticks all the boxes. I am looking forward to working with him and getting to know him better.

It will give him the opportunity to get back to Championship and with the ladder between the two Eastbourne teams, there is the opportunity to put themselves in the shop window. Another familiar face back at Arlington is **Richard Andrews**. I managed him a couple of times for Cradley.

He and his dad are super nice guys and you always get 110 per cent.

He has always been there or thereabouts in the NDL between second string/third heat leader and this is a good opportunity for him to establish himself as

a genuine heat leader and score double figures, at home especially and contributing away from home will be vital.

He has it within himself to have a good season and I know he is delighted to be back in Sussex.

Newcomer to Arlington is **Henry Atkins** ...it is an absolute mystery to me as to how he is on the average he is. He is a far, far better rider than the averages suggests.



I fully expect him to be adding plenty of points to his average.

He has raced in the Championship in 2019 for Somerset so he has a lot of experience despite being young. I expect him to have a very good season.

The opportunity is there for him to push on and become a top rider in the National League.

From what Ian (Jordan) has told me, Henry learned a lot when he did a practice session at Eastbourne a couple of



Jake Knight

weeks ago. That bodes well.

Moving over from the big track of the Isle of Wight are **Chad Wirtzfeld** and **Connor King**.

It is a huge contrast between Smallbrook and Arlington but it will be good for their progression to have a different type of home track so they can master that.

You don't want to become a one-trick pony and you have to be able to ride big tracks and small tracks if you wish to become a successful speedway rider.

I have only seen Chad race against me a couple of times. He always seems he has something about him to become a decent rider. It will be good to see how he gets on at Eastbourne.

A practice session or two and he will not be too far away at all, as will Connor.

Both lads will have pressure on them from the reserves but I am sure they will do well. They will have to be on their toes to score good solid points for us home and away but they are up for that.

Connor rode for us at Plymouth and got better as the evening went on. He will continue to progress and is very keen to come down to Eastbourne and practise as much as he can.

He may be a slow burner. He won't go from a four point average to a nine overnight but he will just keep chipping away and adding points to his average.

This will be good for both Chad and Connor.

Local lad **Nathan Ablitt** is at reserve and I first saw him at Lakeside when I was managing there in 2018. He was practising and racing before the meetings and was really impressive.



Nathan Ablitt

He has such a nice riding style and it is good that he is involved with Eastbourne, his local track.

I think he can be really successful this year and score plenty of points for us. He had a difficult spell with injury at Kent in 2019 but he has the potential to put points on his average and I am looking forward to working with him.

Our other reserve is another local rider, **Nick Laurence**. I have known him for quite a few years.

In 2019 he was spanning for Richard Lawson at home meetings and he is going to be helping Edward Kennett this year. He is a really good character and been round the National League for a few years.

Riding for Eastbourne will be good for him. He can ride the bike and make good starts. If he makes good starts home and away and get a few points that could be the difference between the team winning and losing, especially in a league where there are so many new riders at reserve.

He has that experience which those lads haven't and hopefully he will use that to his advantage. In 2017, when I managed a few matches for Lakeside, he was a match-winner for us at Stoke.

Arlington will also see some ND and MSDL level second-half races after any standalone Championship or ND-level fixture. This will give an opportunity to some riders who aren't currently in ND Teams who have been in the past and also some valuable track time and experience to those at MSDL level looking to impress for possible future opportunity. We will especially look forwards to seeing Club Asset Vinnie Joe-Foord in regular action both before and after his 15th birthday in July and our other mascots including Seth Norman who is making rapid progress in the Sport.

In summary, the Eastbourne Seagulls are the club's first side into action when they ride at Leicester on May 19. It will be good to be back involved and back out there.

I want us to be up there challenging for the title. We want a winning team, whether it be Championship or National League.

People want to support winning teams and we have two good teams. There is no reason why we cannot do well in both.

We will work hard and get the boys together at Leicester and see whether we can come up with a good result against the defending league champions. 🐦



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National Development League line-ups

The National Development League has been recast in many ways for the 2021 season.

Eastbourne have rejoined the league they won in 2018, this time as the Seagulls which will be the club's second team.

There is now only one standalone club – the Mildenhall Fen Tigers after the Isle of Wight withdrew to follow a different path.

The remaining clubs all have a team riding at a higher level.

Armadale ride at Edinburgh.

Here are your runners and riders for the 2021 National Development League



Armadale Devils

Sheldon Davies
Nathan Greaves
Gregor Millar
Lewis Millar
Danny Phillips
George Rothery
Tom Woolley

Berwick Bullets

Kyle Bickley
Greg Blair
Kieran Douglas
Leon Flint
Ryan MacDonald
Ben Rathbone
Mason Watson

Kent Royals

Jacob Clouting
Jamie Couzins
Dan Gilkes
Ryan Kinsley
Rob Ledwith
Jake Mulford
Josh Warren

Mildenhall Fen Tigers

Sam Bebee
Aaron Butcher
Jason Edwards
Sam Hagon
Jordan Jenkins
Elliot Kelly
Luke Ruddick

Belle Vue Colts

Paul Bowen
Connor Coles
Benji Compton
Harry McGurk
Sam McGurk
Jack Parkinson-Blackburn
Ben Woodhull

Eastbourne Seagulls

Nathan Ablitt
Richard Andrews
Henry Atkins
Connor King
Jake Knight
Nick Laurence
Chad Wirtzfeld

Leicester Cubs

Joe Lawlor
Tom Spencer
Dan Thompson
Joe Thompson
Ben Trigger
Kai Ward
TBA

Newcastle Gems

Joe Alcock
Max Clegg
Ryan Terry Daley
Kelsey Dugard
Josh Embleton
Archie Freeman
Dany Smith



Jake Knight in action for Eastbourne in 2016

The race for National Development League glory

SEVEN OF THE eight teams will have two measures of success.

Those five, including Eastbourne, see the NDL team as a way of developing riders for the senior team. It's a worthy and sensible objective but make no mistake – they would like to be crowned champions.

Stand-alone Mildenhall will see success as negotiating the choppy waters of Speedway survival to fight again in 2022 but the Fen folk will be smiling from ear-to-ear if they can emerge at the top of the pile against their more (perhaps) glamorous rivals.

Eastbourne set the dovescots fluttering with their National Development League squad. The mix of experience and youthful promise looks like a perfect cocktail for success and one that will entertain at home and away.

Many have installed the Seagulls as favourites for the NDL title and you can see why.

Thrilling rider

The team is led by Jake Knight who is one of the most thrilling riders to watch in British Speedway. Jake believes in entertaining the fans and the way he throws the bike round Arlington can be thrilling, if not a little bit heart-stopping at times. He rides it like it stole it, comes to mind.

Jake is set to be a big beast in this NDL.

Richie Andrews had a smile a mile wide when he walked into the pits for a pre-season practice session. He was popular with the fans when he rode for the club before - OK and dad, Gary is too - and is just delighted to be back.

He is really looking forward to connecting again with the fans at Arlington.

Richie is from the Exeter area as is Henry Atkins. Many tip Henry for big success in Speedway. It maybe a name we don't know too well at Arlington but that's likely to change pretty soon.

Key to the door

Henry has had a few outings at Arlington in the past but never really unlocked the track's secrets...with some practice and guidance from the club's more senior riders, he will soon find the key of the door.

Eight teams will battle it out for National Development League (NDL) glory in 2021. There are no Play Offs this year in this league - the team finishing top will be crowned champions.

Paul Watson reviews the prospects.

Chad Wirtzfeld is another who has great talent on a motor-cycle and is now building a Speedway career as well.

His previous home was the wide open spaces of the Isle of Wight (he is a long track racer too) so he was another working hard at the club's practice sessions to sort out Arlington.

Connor King had never been to Arlington until he arrived for the club's first practice session of 2021. He had also ridden for the Isle of Wight so it's a case of him dialling in.

He's a hard worker and improved lap by lap; just as he did when he put in an appearance for Eastbourne Select in a 3TT at Plymouth last year.

Plenty of experience

Nick Laurence has plenty of experience at this level of Speedway and the team will be able to look to him for sage advice when it comes to racing and the mechanical side of things. There's more about Nick in the MSDL Seagulls preview.

And last and certainly not least is



Richard Andrews in Eastbourne Eagles colours in 2016.

Mike Hirves

Nathan Ablitt from Hailsham.

It feels like we have been watching Nathan for a long, long time. In one sense that is true but most of his laps round Arlington have been in the junior classes.

His experience on a 500cc bike here is far more limited.

Nathan tasted NDL racing for Kent in 2019 before injury ruled him out and now he is looking to press on with his career with this home-town team.

Eastbourne may be favourites in some people's eyes but as in all Speedway, injuries can play apart and dash the best laid plans of mouse and man.

It is also possible that some of our NDL team will have to miss matches because of other commitments and that could dent our chances.

It is something that can happen to all clubs at this level of Speedway.

Retain

Leicester will be out to retain the NDL title and have two great prospects in the Thompson twins.

Unfortunately, Jamie Halder misses the start of the year through injury and at the time of writing they had not named a replacement. That could well have a big impact on their chances of success.

Of course, if they pull the proverbial rabbit out of the hat, things could well be different.

Kent have also made a late change and brought in Jamie Couzins for Jamie Bursill and that could be a net gain for the Royals.

They certainly are going to be in the mix for the title and I would make them favourites.

Outstanding talent

They have the outstanding talent of Dan Gilkes, backed by the experience of Ryan Kinsley and Rob Ledwith. Throw in the emerging talent of Jake Mulford and this could turn into a coronation for the Central Park outfit if one of the others also comes on strong.

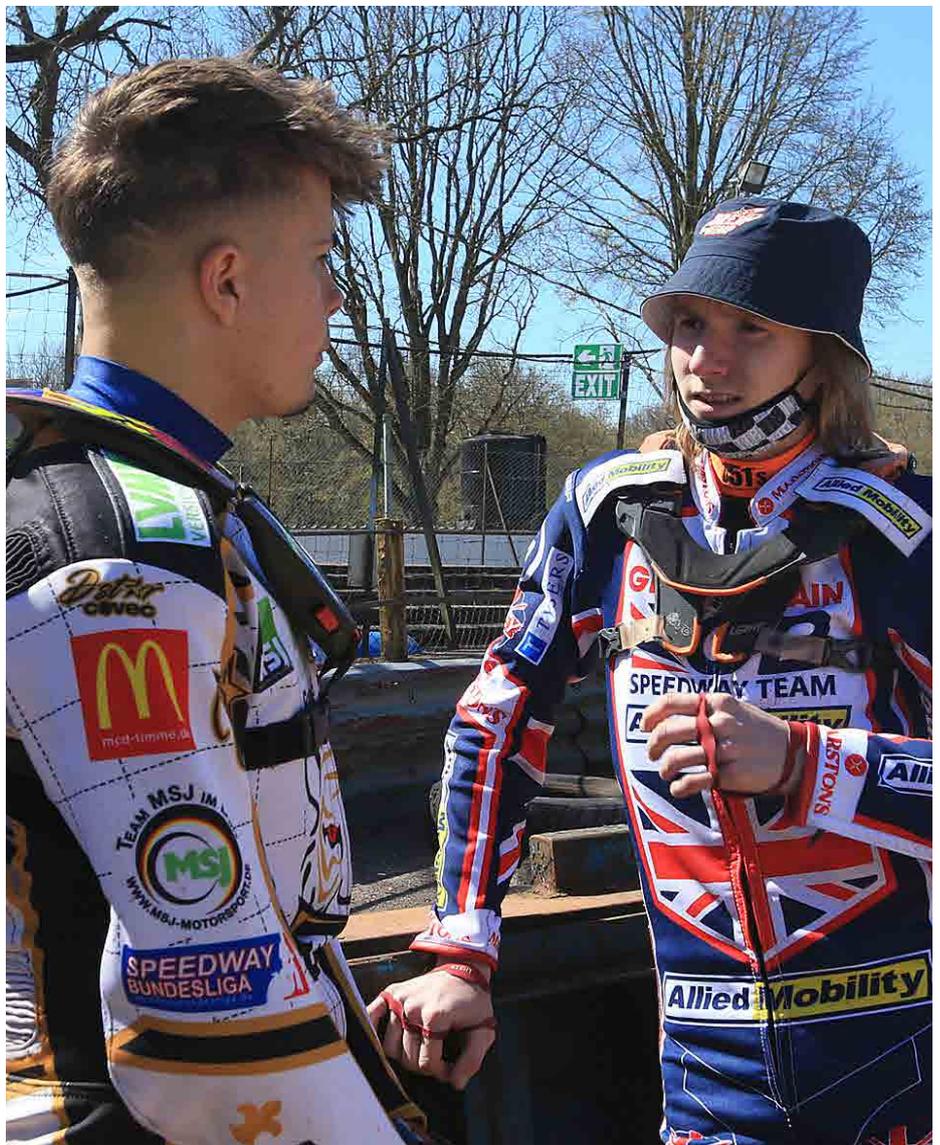
Mildenhall also look pretty handy, especially with Jason Edwards leading the team. Jason thrives on 'laps' and hopefully he will get plenty around West Row with every heat 15 that's going.

Sam Bebee has been blighted by injury but looks good and Jordan Jenkins knows the Mildenhall track well and will thrive on the extra rides at Championship level with Redcar.

Sam Hagon has a well deserved place in the NDL and he too should thrive there.

Belle Vue Colts are a famous name in British Speedway and is good to see them come to tapes again in 2021. They will have huge home advantage because most riders at this level have so little experience on such a fast track.

The McGurk boys are another two big emerging talents, Connor Coles has been



Eastbourne Seagull Nathan Ablitt talks to Eastbourne Eagle Drew Kemp at Arlington last month.

Mike Hirves

there or thereabouts in the NDL for a time but their big hope must be Jack Parkinson-Blackburn. He was a big gun at this level – remember him riding against the Eagles for Birmingham?

If JPB gets back on it, don't rule the Colts from a title tilt; especially with Benji Compton back.

Kelsey Dugard, once dubbed (probably by his brother Connor) as the King of Crash returns to riding with the Newcastle Gems. You never knew if he was going to win the race until he crossed the line.

A few years on and greater maturity, I expect Kelsey to kick on and still be speedy, gutsy but will make better decisions in the heat of racing.

The Gems think highly of Archie

Freeman but he is not one I have seen so look forward to seeing him very soon at Arlington.

Top of the tree for the Gems is Max Clegg. Max, who as a real youngster was drafted in by the Eagles in Elite League days as a guest for a match at King's Lynn.

Max probably has not made the progress many and himself perhaps would have expected but it's not too late. He should smash this league.

Big hopes

Berwick Bullets have two of Britain's big hopes for the future in Leon Flint and Kyle Bickley. I also hear good things of Kieran Douglas and Mason Watson (he's no relation, before you ask).

However, if I think there are too many 'ifs' around Berwick for them to be genuine title challengers.

Armadale (Edinburgh) are another team with a No 1 who has not as yet fulfilled his promise. Nathan Greaves should be outstanding in this year's league. Danny Phillips and Tom Woolley are established at this level but with three newcomers in the team, I find it hard to believe they will challenge for the title.

“ Eastbourne's mix of experience and youthful promise looks like a perfect cocktail for success and one that will entertain at home and away. ”

Introducing the

Eastbourne fans saw quite a bit of MSDL-level racing in recent years when Arlington hosted Nomad clubs, Reading and Weymouth. Now they have their own team to cheer.

The Seagulls, powered by Save Thurrock Hammers Speedway, will be in competitive league action against Wolverhampton and Birmingham and will also take place in a season-long individual championship at Arlington.

Mark Sexton, a director of the Save Thurrock Hammers Speedway, introduces the Seagulls.

Eli Meadows

At just turned 17 in April, and the youngest rider in our squad, Eli is obviously just making his way in the sport but despite his youth he already has got a fair amount of experience under his belt.

Eli is officially a Somerset Rebels asset with plenty of laps under his belt at the Oak Track Arena after being their mascot for a couple of years and signing an official letter of intent but he has also ridden elsewhere, appearing competitively in eight MSDL matches.

In 2019, aged just 15, he turned out once for the Isle of Wight, twice for the MK Knights and five times for the Reading Racers averaging just over a point a ride (with bonus points).

Hailing from Evesham in Worcestershire, Eli has a full-time job/apprenticeship and has already impressed everyone with his work ethic, positive attitude and sense of humour.

Away from the sweeping turns at Somerset, Eli may take a little time to adapt to his new home track but he's been practising hard on the 'tiddler' at Plymouth so we're expecting him to make rapid strides on the relatively wide-open spaces here at Arlington.

Eli enjoyed a successful year on the grass in 2018, dominating his class and is now determined to follow in fellow (NDL) Seagull Henry Atkin's tyre tracks from Somerset to Eastbourne and, like Henry this year, is hoping to fulfil ambitions to be in next season's Seagulls NDL line up.



Kevin Whiting



Mike Hinves

Nick Laurence

Captain of the MSDL Seagulls, Nick really is the leader of the group and is held in high regard by all his teammates.

He has a great deal of experience at this level predominantly with the Reading Racers and MK Knights but has spent some time in the league above and will so again this season, lining up at reserve in the Seagulls' NDL side in 2021.

Now the 'wrong side' of 30, Nick has been riding for well over a decade, including a season for the Lakeside Hammers in 2017.

He skippered Reading (who were based at Eastbourne) in 2018 averaging well over 10 points and returned over 8 points a meeting when the Racers decamped their MSDL operation to Swindon in 2019.

On track, we'll definitely be looking for big points from Nick. He is a very good gater and if he makes starts, should prove very difficult to beat especially around Arlington where it is vital that we dominate the opposition.

Being a local lad, he feels a great affinity with the Eagles and will, no doubt, take his captaincy responsibilities very seriously and in his own inimitable style.

Nick is a skilled mechanic, having worked with both Edward Kennett and Richard Lawson recently, and we'll looking for him to really help the rest of the team with bike set ups and advice. Knowing Nick, he'll also probably have access to some great value parts (taps nose) that he can share with the other Seagulls!



Kevin Whiting

James Laker

As the season starts, we will be looking at James to fill a heat leader role in the team and to be challenging Nick Laurence for the number 1 race jacket by the end of the season.

Born and raised in Kent, James made numerous SDL appearances for Kent Kestrels in 2018 but slightly further afield, has ridden for the Weymouth Wildcats, skippering their MSDL team in 2019. James was a consistent performer and scorer that year accumulating 'paid' 70 points from 10 meetings and averaging 9.52 (9.65 inc bonus) which meant he was the best 'non-National League' MSDL rider at the end of that season.

By his own admission, James is a more reserved character than most, but there's no doubting his determination to progress in the sport.

He was a student of the Poultec Academy in 2018/19 so he definitely knows his way around both tracks and machines and with many of the top MSDL riders from 2019 now in NDL teams (including our own Connor King and Chad Wirtzfeld) he must be the next 'cab off the rank' so look out for a great year for James!

MSDL Seagulls



Kevin Whiting

Josh Warren

Sometimes riders seem to appear out of nowhere and Josh probably falls into that category although maybe it shouldn't be that much of a surprise.

Josh, 21, is an accomplished Moto-X rider and having been a close personal friend of ex-British Champion Danny King for many years, a transition to the speedway track was, perhaps, inevitable at some point. (Supporters of Danny may be familiar with the 'R.J Warren' branding that has appeared on his machinery for many years now – Rob Warren is Josh's father).

Josh is taking to the shale like a duck to water, winning a class at his first amateur meeting at Scunthorpe and he greatly impressed everyone watching when he made his competitive team debut for the Thurrock Hammers team that rode at Crayford (Lydd) 'behind closed doors' last October.

Someone in Kent was obviously taking notice as Josh has been handed an NDL reserve spot with the Kent Royals for 2021 so at some point this year, he will be on the opposite side of the pits!

There's no doubt that he will be immaculately turned out and with Danny in his corner, will be getting some top-class advice so we shouldn't be surprised if Josh makes significant progress this year which will be great for our chances of MSDL success.

Kevin Whiting

James Jessop

James has been riding amateur and MSDL speedway for about four years and has been combining his on-track appearances with life as a drama student at the University of Northampton.

He's due to graduate this year but that success, and his planned appearances on track for the Seagulls, have both been put somewhat on ice by an unfortunate (football related) injury to his left ankle which has meant an operation and at least a couple of months of recuperation and recovery.

James appeared in four matches for the Weymouth Wildcats in 2018 and in another five matches for the Wildcats in 2019, making progress year on year. He also rode for the Thurrock Hammers in the fixture at Lydd, scoring a creditable five points on his first visit to the track.

Before his recent injury, he was working hard on his fitness and also doing a great job promoting both himself and the Seagulls on the business networking circuit.

James has been recruited by the Ashfield Giants in the Northern Junior League which, once fit, will provide him with some valuable extra meetings on a variety of tracks.

It's a great job that James actually enjoys the travelling aspect of life as a speedway rider as he'll certainly be putting the miles in!



Kevin Whiting

Cesca Wright

Cesca is one half of the 'Shale Sisters' (with her twin Hannah) and has been making consistent strides in the sport since her friend Rachel Hellowell encouraged her to give speedway a try a few years ago.

It will be a great moment when the two of them race against each other in a competitive fixture later this season.

Like both James Laker and James Jessop (JJ), Cesca rode for the Weymouth Wildcats team in 2019 and finished the season as the league's top averaged female rider.

Cesca is married to former MSDL rider Alec Wright and has recently taken a new job as the Project and Strategy Adviser with the National Association of Funeral Directors.

Over the winter, she has made several speedway related presentations to business groups, written an article for her professional magazine and also appeared on her local BBC radio station (Coventry/Warwickshire) to discuss speedway and a range of other topics.

Despite all of these commitments, Cesca has been as busy as any rider through the winter, looking for practice opportunities, which only goes to demonstrate her commitment to making progress and to the Seagulls.

It would be easy to place too much emphasis on Cesca's role as a trailblazer for women in motorsport (which she is) to the exclusion of her development as a speedway rider. We will treat her the same as any other member of the squad – which is what Cesca would expect us to do. 🍂

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
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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

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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

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PIRATES POOLE Est. 1948

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

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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

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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

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Surely, only doyen Speedway journalist Dick Barrie is the only the scribe around who can get taking the head off a JAP engine and unhooking a bra in the same sentence. It's one to make us smile but there's some very serious point here about the future of the sport we all love.

IT WOULD BE NICE to report that the invitation 'dropped onto my door-mat with a thud' in the traditional way, but in fact it arrived – like so many communications in today's electronic world – by e-mail.

The HG Aerospace Eagles have an online magazine, would I like to put in a page?

Musing that the editorial team must be barrel-bottom-scraping to have to ask, I was of course pleased and proud to accept this out-of-the-blue-clear-sky invitation – even if 90% of the readership (of what I can see, after a quick shufti through the first five editions is a cracking wee read) won't have a scooby-doo who I am.

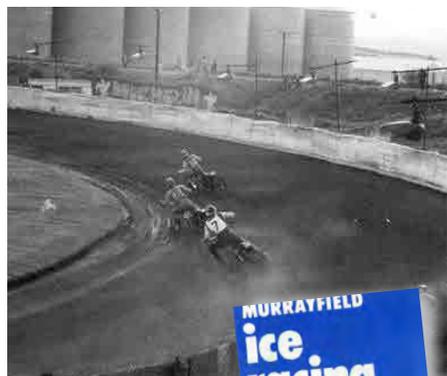
I note from the last *Flying High* that it will be over six hundred days between the last meeting at Arlington and this year's pipe-opener later in the month.

Is that all?

I can go back a whole lot longer than that...

During the winter of 1971/72, I had been tapped up (at a domestic ice-racing meeting in Edinburgh) by Berwick promoter Ken Taylor and asked if I might be available to act as their track announcer for a few weeks early in the coming speedway season.

Those "few weeks" have so far lasted around half a century. Therefore, the first time I saw Eastbourne Eagles racing was on Saturday, May 6, 1972 – almost exactly forty-nine years ago.



Above: Shielified in 1972. It's a bit tidier now, but the Bandits keep on winning!
Right: Don't go to an ice speedway match if you don't want to be lumbered with a job for fifty years!

Go-ahead promotions will reap the benefits



Dick Barrie with Gordon Kennett at Arlington in 2019

This was at Shielfield Park of course, and I recall a close enough encounter (a 40-37 home win) which had Trevor Geer contributing two points to the visiting cause, while the 18-year-old Gordon Kennett's dozen kept the Eagles in touch until the final heat.

In 2019 (I almost wrote 'last season' as it is already difficult to realise there's a year completely missing from all our speedway lives) I had the pleasure of meeting up with both Trevor and Gordon when our clubs met again at Arlington, again in May.

We all looked just the same – honest!

I'm hoping to meet these guys again this coming season, in August – Sunday 15th at Arlington and close to a fortnight later at Shielfield Park on Saturday 28th .

These promise to be occasions worthy of two famous clubs, encompassing no less than SIXTY races over the two meetings.

Both Eastbourne and Berwick have made the bold step of entering a second side in the NDL this coming summer, and (sensibly, given the travelling involved) have each agreed to stage double-header meetings to take care of business at both Championship (Eagles and Bandits) and NDL (Seagulls against Bullets) levels.

Now here's the thing.

The concept of running two parallel teams is bright, breezy and just what you might expect from progressive and energetic promotions – yet I'm hearing that there are sad malcontents (both in the north and south) who have taken to social media to complain about, well, everything about the two-team approach.

The kind of cynic who looks on progress in speedway presentation in much the way a grumpy middle-aged wife looks at her husband when the Monster girls appear at the starting-gate.

Looks folks, as this nation – which misguidedly voted for Brexit – as a direct result finds itself running short of overseas riders who can't get visas, or flights, or out of jail in Poland to race here, it will be clubs with go-ahead promotions like those at Shielfield Park and Arlington who long-term benefit, harvesting the cream of the crop of young British riders who will emerge from the National Development League in this and future seasons.

Keyboard critics who don't want a second squad tacked onto their Championship side are clearly the kind of dopes who would prefer the kind of promoter who goes by the ethic of "leave your money at the turnstile and shut up".

This type of entrepreneur often ends up leaving town in a hurry, hotly followed by former fans keen to honour them with a nice coating of tar (with optional feathers).

I've been around (understatement alert) a goodly while and I respect clear-thinking, forward-planning promotion of our sport.

I should also say I am really looking forward to this coming year. Indeed, I eagerly look forward to waking up in the morning – nothing's guaranteed – and I want to capture every last moment of every season, shaking the remaining pixie-dust over every new memory.

This will, unbelievably (to me, anyway) be my seventy-third season.

I was taken to see the bikes at an early age and by the time I was ten or eleven I was hanging around the workshops at Glasgow's old White City after school, running errands for the guys and watching the machinery being fettled.

I was shown how to take the cylinder head off a JAP engine before I learned how to unhook a bra. Which might explain a few things, I guess... 🐦

High News

Practice sessions behind closed doors

SADLY, the club's pre-season practice sessions all had to be behind closed door and locked gates.

Normally fans are welcome to watch from the terraces but this year it was very much a no, no because of the Covid-19 restrictions.

The weather intervened on a couple of occasions but relented for the SpeedwayGB boys to have an on-track session after an off-track event the day before in Southampton.

Lewi Kerr, Tom Brennan, Drew Kemp and Henry Atkins were all part of the weekend "performance camp".

Eastbourne Seagull's Jake Knight is pictured right with Eagle Lewi Kerr during practice session at Arlington.



Mike Hines

Fineprint

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Vinnie Joe Foord



James Jessop

In the Wars!

Even before the start of the season, two of our younger riders are injured.

Vinnie Joe Foord, who will turn 15 in a few weeks time, crashed while practising at Arlington and suffered an arm injury while James Jessop put himself in hospital while playing football. Speedy recovery to you both.

Ahead of the game with online ticket sales

EASTBOURNE were very much ahead of the game when it came to online ticket sales. Club bosses saw early on this would be necessity, at least in the early part of the year, and the tech wizards came up with an easy-to-use buying system.

Have to say, the Premiership clubs seemed to hang on until the last minute before launching sales and then failed to deliver a co-ordinated launch.



Welcome to The Eagles Online Ticket store.

Currently all matches in 2021 will be ALL TICKET. Tickets must be purchased ONLINE and in advance. There will be no 'walk up or gate' facility under current restrictions and regulations. This restriction may change after full assessment of lockdown, but not before the 23rd June 2021, and will be subject to Local Authority approval and guidance at all times. Please scroll down to purchase tickets.

The stadium is also divided into two zones due to Covid Restrictions. To purchase a ticket for the first two fixtures, please click on the image below to launch the secure ticket portal. Tickets for further fixtures will be launched shortly.

To view an overview of the zones, ticket pricing and full terms & conditions, please scroll down the page.

Origin of the historic Arlington pictures

YOU MAY remember in *Flying High 5* we published some historic pictures of Arlington provided by Simon Chapman who wondered when they were taken. We heard from Brian Heasman who told us:

I think the pictures were in the mid to latter half of the 50s or early 60s.

The starting gate was on the other side of the track to where it is now and the view is looking towards the pits from just in front of the starting line.

It was after much work had been done at the track to accommodate stock cars.

In those days, stock cars and speedway were on the same track. As a result, the track became quite bumpy for speedway and although I am not sure, I think it may have led to the track being deemed to be unfit for speedway racing.

In the mid 50s, when in my youth, I helped at the track, raking, watering and on one of the red flags – no red lights then.

I enjoyed the company of Charlie Dugard, his sons John and Bob and Joe who worked for Charlie.

John rode in meetings and Bob, being younger rode his smaller bike.

We used to go the track some Sundays during the winter, when various riders,

including Charlie would get in some laps, if conditions permitted.

I still have strong memories of Charlie riding his speedway bike in his gabardine raincoat, wellington boots with a steel shoe (no helmet)! He was a very stylish and capable rider and passed on tips to up and coming riders, including his sons.

I disappeared from the scene in 1957 when I went into the Army to do my National Service.

I think my first memories of speedway were in the late 1940s, since when the names of Wally Green, Jock Grierson and Basil Harris have stuck in my mind.

I also remember watching Norman Street get a 12 point maximum and I believe he was then banned from riding for Eastbourne in the league because he was too good a rider!



May 50/50 winners

WINNERS in the May 50/50 draw were:

15 (£300) - C. Knight

89 (£300) - D. Graveling

62 (£75) - P. Ling



A Speedway GP magical mystery tour

THOROUGHLY SCHOOLED to nowadays mostly expecting speedway grands prix in far flung but not exotic locations, from Stockholm I set off on Swedish railways to Vasteras – apparently NOT a Game of Thrones twin town – to wait an hour for the connecting bus I booked to Hallsta vägskäl.

From the transport terminus, the bus quickly finds the edge of town, exhausts the string of low-slung industrial estates to find endless mostly cultivated fields whose low crops bask bright green in the blistering sunshine.

The driver speaks no English and, strangely, though I am on the correct 569 bus, Hallstavik completely fails to appear amongst the litany of obscure Swedish place names on its electronic route planner.

My choice of potential English speakers amongst the two other late lunchtime passengers is a nervous old lady who avoids eye contact and a bearded heavy-metal fan looking bloke with pounding music seeping from headphones who wouldn't be out of place setting up on the Monster Energy SGP fanzone stand.

He is helpful and speaks fluent English so consults with the driver to identify and agree my request stop.

"You are lucky I was here to ask, otherwise as he did not understand you or know you wanted that special Hallsta stop."

My good Samaritan knows and once relished going to speedway but is shocked verging on amazed to discover that he hadn't even heard that a major international individual speedway meeting is going to be staged in his neck of the woods this evening.

Before we can debate it further, my bus suddenly slows to a halt by a request stop in the middle of nowhere with green but featureless fields on either side.

And, hurrah, there is also a wood – whose regular rows of trees and general geometric shape indicates it was newly planted two decades back – and it's the middle of nowhere so it must be a BSI era SGP series meeting venue.

The driver unnecessarily points to the only adjacent narrow road and a sign on the village limits that says Hallsta.

It is a place that immediately prompts closer inspection of my travel ticket pdf where it is rather grandly described as Hallsta vägskäl. Though, I anticipated Hallstavik to be small, rural and remote,

Just actually getting to a Speedway Grand Prix is often more memorable than the meeting itself, as author Jeff Scott discovers



Down town Hallstavik

where I stand looks ridiculously so. On a dark winter's night, it would make a good setting for the opening scene of a horror movie.

Even in bright sunshine, there is a sense of desolation. Apart from the narrow road to the village, the surrounding fields are also cut through by a curved section of dual carriageway that needs substantial crash barriers to manage high speed of passing vehicles that zoom past on this nowhere section of road.

It is gloriously sunny and, apart from the occasional air displacement whoosh of a passing car, notably quiet. Nothing stirs except my feeling of dread. There is no sign at all of the legendary Hallstavik paper mill on any horizon. It looks like a no-horse village. Actually, to be fair, it is so rural, they probably do have horses.

Though fancying myself as something of a travel expert with Mr Google at hand, it is clear I have most likely badly boomed in my travel arrangements and totally vagskalled myself!

A short walk takes me to the nearest property – more John 'Boy' Walton homestead in the Swedish countryside vernacular than family house – to ask for directions but find no one home.

Like a thirsty man in a desert, sight of two women carrying stuff from their car into a larger sized but gated house makes me sprint up the narrow road ahead in case they suddenly disappear again. With all their doors open and packages in hand, the two women are guarded and suspicious.

The suspicious sight of a stranger is tempered by the sound of spoken English. Their three fair-haired daughters stop playing to briefly look on curiously.

My statement, "I have come from England for the speedway" only gets further blank looks. "Where am I?" prompts a thaw in their reserve and frostiness. "You are in Hallsta, where should you be?"

Saying "Hallstavik for the speedway" aloud brings immediate broad smiles and barely suppressed laughter, "Hallstavik!?!?" They proceed to roll the suddenly remarkably different sounding – now they are spoken correctly accented and out loud – pronunciations of Hallstavik and Hallsta with delight round their mouths.

I may have accidentally stumbled upon a new Buddhist mantra for them. Though, I suspect, its incantation would amuse too much to allow them to the appropriate levels of mental emptiness required to begin to find Nirvana.

After quick consultation of a map of Sweden, they flourish a mobile phone screen, "Look, you are here in Hallsta and [scrolls bigly in completely opposite direction from Stockholm] there is Hallstavik! Quite some way away! Many, many kilometres away."

Though no longer unexpected, the news is quite a blow to my Sherpa credentials but also my chance of getting to the speedway GP I came for having left England to do so the morning before yesterday.

"You are 145 or so kilometres [90 miles] away from Hallstavik! How did you get here?"

"By train from Stockholm then bus from Vasteras. When is the next bus back?"

"[consults phone] Three hours."

"Three hours!"

"If it sees you, it will stop. Sometimes

they don't stop as they don't see you. It is a special stop."

"I'll hitch back."

"No one will stop to pick you up. That is certain. It is dangerous. There have been robberies."

"By hitchhikers?" "By people pretending to need help by broken cars."

"Not hitchers, though?"

"They will not stop for you, even if you have no broken car. What time does your event start in Hallstavik?"

"Seven."

"You will be able to get there today from Vasteras but maybe not in this four and one half hours."

Feeling a potent mix of chastened and angry at my silly error, I say thanks and head back to what – now I'm going to hitch and feel the All-American lure of the open road – I'll call the freeway. There is a short pull-in-cum-halt to stand by that is really just the turn into the one narrow road to Hallsta village.

As they warned about the discretionary bus stop, its placement is such that you would have to know it is there or else be an extremely observant but brave driver to manage to both see me and then safely stop in the distance available. I pray for a helpful driver with wonderful eyesight, exceptional reactions and advanced motoring skills.

Sadly, there aren't many cars going in either direction and, on my side of the road, the few that do are going at quite a lick.

Yet amazingly, hallelujah, within just minutes a car going in the other direction slows, crosses the freeway and manoeuvres into the turning lane for Hallsta to pull to a halt to pick me up! Astonishingly, I have only waited five minutes. The kindness of strangers! How wonderful.

My good Samaritans and generous guardian angels are Dennis and Emma. They are on their way to the apparently famous vintage American car rally event held annually in Vasteras but specifically turned round to get me having glimpsed me as they originally shot past. They confirm my incredible good fortune.

"We saw you but couldn't stop but he said 'turn round'."

"But why did you stop? I was told people wouldn't."

"You were in the middle of nowhere. Who would be here who didn't need help?"

"I feel like crying with happiness and stupidity."

"We feel like laughing at your stupidity!"

They too roll the pronunciations of Hallsta and Hallstavik around their mouths and, again it has to be said, with



Teddy Bear Picnic site

great difference and clarity.

On his phone, Dennis looks up a range of possible travel options from Vasteras to Hallstavik. The best option goes in 30 minutes and is a four-change journey by train, train, bus and bus that – if all connections are made – sees me arrive at Hallstavik bus station with 20 minutes to spare before the SGP starts.

There is, in fact, a very good choice of public transport travel modes and routes to Hallstavik. The station staff recommend the two bus cross-country version with a change in Uppsala (the closest railway station to my destination).

Though everything feels like a crime in price terms in Sweden, this is surprisingly good value at around £15.

Many hours later, I arrive at Hallstavik bus terminal via Uppsala. This is a grandiose way to describe its reality. It is a purpose-built stopping point of concrete, bus stops and basic shelters close to a crossroads that looks over-sized for its purpose and traffic volumes.

The SGP is around a 15-minute walk away according to the other bus passenger.

Typical of the all-expenses-spared parsimonious approach BSI take with its sub-contracted outlier events, the first fan experience 'touch-point' (as then CEO Steve Gould grandiosely called them) and only real concession to razzmatazz is a single laminated A4 sign with a

“ My good Samaritan knows and once relished going to speedway but is shocked verging on amazed to discover that he hadn't even heard that a major international individual speedway meeting is going to be staged in his neck of the woods this evening. ”

SGP-branded background compliant with the colour palette and layout requirements of its corporate identity manual.

Though this manual is kept permanently handy in the desk drawer of a slightly sweaty-bottomed middle-manager tasked with brand supervision back at BSI Towers in suburban London, out in the Swedish wilds on SGP manoeuvres its power remains undimmed.

Stuck to a lamppost and beneath an advice arrow point onwards, the only A4 laminated notice I find anywhere around the bus station states "Parking and Camping". Though brevity and honesty aren't words you associate with BSI, the SGP or its media boosters, this isn't an overly helpful sign for anyone walking.

Given its size, it isn't overly helpful for passing drivers either unless viewed as a sight exam or reactions test.

There is no-one around to ask for directions. Though the track is nowhere in sight, through the trees there is the comforting sound of amplified music.

These distant wafts are occasionally broken up by announcements whose specific wording is lost into the ether at this distance. After so much (self-inflicted) hassle to get here, the standard pre-meeting sounds and music of a speedway night ahead reassures and soothes but also fires my anticipation.

Down a residential street and into a wood, as you eventually crest of the final section of sloping path, the stadium suddenly appears ahead displayed in its full glory.

At first sight, possibly because it is seen from a tree-surrounded clearing, the impression is more of a holiday camp in the midst of minor celebration than the oft-proclaimed "world" championship. I am here for the first ever SGP to be staged in Hallstavik and a sign over the main entrance to the stadium proclaims this location as the "HZ BYGG ARENA" with the added swagger of a suitably large typeface. Predictably, as with many size claims, the club is at best compact rather than bygg. The word "HALLSTAVIK" appears underneath the location warning so we are left in no doubt about exactly where we all are right now.

This is handy as, even for regular Rospiggarna league meetings, according to Greg Hancock's prolix "Reel 45" podcasts, "most people come from other places" and only 11 percent of attendees actually come from Hallstavik.

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.

Eastbourne Speedway Fixtures 2021

Home meetings are in BOLD CAPITALS, away meetings in Italics. Provisional NDL / MSDL Meetings (subject to confirmation) are in BOLD ITALICS.

If viewing on a mobile, tilt your device for the best experience.

All fixtures subject to change. Check before travelling on the club website.

Date	Meeting	Info	Time	Event
MAY				
Weds 19th	Leicester			NDL
Sat 22nd	NEWCASTLE	DOUBLE HEADER	5.00pm	CHAMPIONSHIP / NDL
<i>Tues 25th</i>	<i>Kent</i>			<i>KO Cup</i>
Sat 29th	POOLE		7.30pm	CHAMPIONSHIP
Mon 31st	Kent			NDL
JUNE				
<i>Fri 4th</i>	<i>Scunthorpe</i>			<i>Championship</i>
SUN 6th	KENT		5.00pm	KO CUP
SAT 12th	EDINBURGH		7.30pm	CHAMPIONSHIP
SAT 19th	KENT		5.00pm	KO CUP
	SEAGULLS v BIRMINGHAM - A Fixture			MSDL
Sun 20th	Mildenhall			NDL
<i>Mon 21st</i>	<i>Wolverhampton v Seagulls - A Fixture</i>			<i>MSDL</i>
<i>Fri 25th</i>	<i>Glasgow</i>			<i>Championship</i>
SAT 26th	<i>No Meeting</i>	STOCK CARS		
JULY				
Fri 2nd	Redcar			Championship
SUN 4th	GLASGOW		5.00pm	CHAMPIONSHIP
	SEAGULLS v WOLVES - A Fixture			MSDL
Sun 4th	Newcastle			NDL
<i>Wed 7th</i>	<i>Poole</i>			<i>Championship</i>
SUN 11th	TEAM GB U21			INTERNATIONAL
<i>Tues 13th</i>	<i>Kent</i>			<i>Championship</i>
Fri 16th	Championship Pairs	Venue TBC		Championship
SAT 17th	BELLE VUE COLTS		7.30pm	NDL
SAT 24th	SCUNTHORPE		7.30pm	CHAMPIONSHIP
<i>Wed 28th</i>	<i>Birmingham v Seagulls A Fixture</i>			<i>MSDL</i>
SAT 31st	PLYMOUTH/Armadale	DOUBLE HEADER	7.30pm	CHAMPIONSHIP



Mike Hines

AUGUST

SAT 7th	BIRMINGHAM		7.30 pm	CHAMPIONSHIP
	SEAGULLS v BIRMINGHAM - B Fixture			MSDL
<i>Mon 9th</i>	<i>Wolverhampton</i>	<i>Seagulls</i>	<i>B Fixture</i>	<i>MSDL</i>
<i>Sat 14th</i>	<i>Leicester</i>			<i>Championship</i>
SUN 15th	BERWICK	DOUBLE HEADER	3.00PM	CHAMPIONSHIP/NDL
SAT 21st	REDCAR /Mildenhall	DOUBLE HEADER	7.00PM	CHAMPIONSHIP/NDL
<i>Fri 27th</i>	<i>Edinburgh</i>			<i>Championship</i>
<i>Sat 28th</i>	<i>Edinburgh</i>	<i>(afternoon meeting)</i>		<i>NDL</i>
<i>Sat 28th</i>	<i>Berwick</i>	<i>Double Header</i>		<i>Championship/NDL</i>
<i>Sun 29th</i>	<i>Newcastle</i>			<i>Championship</i>

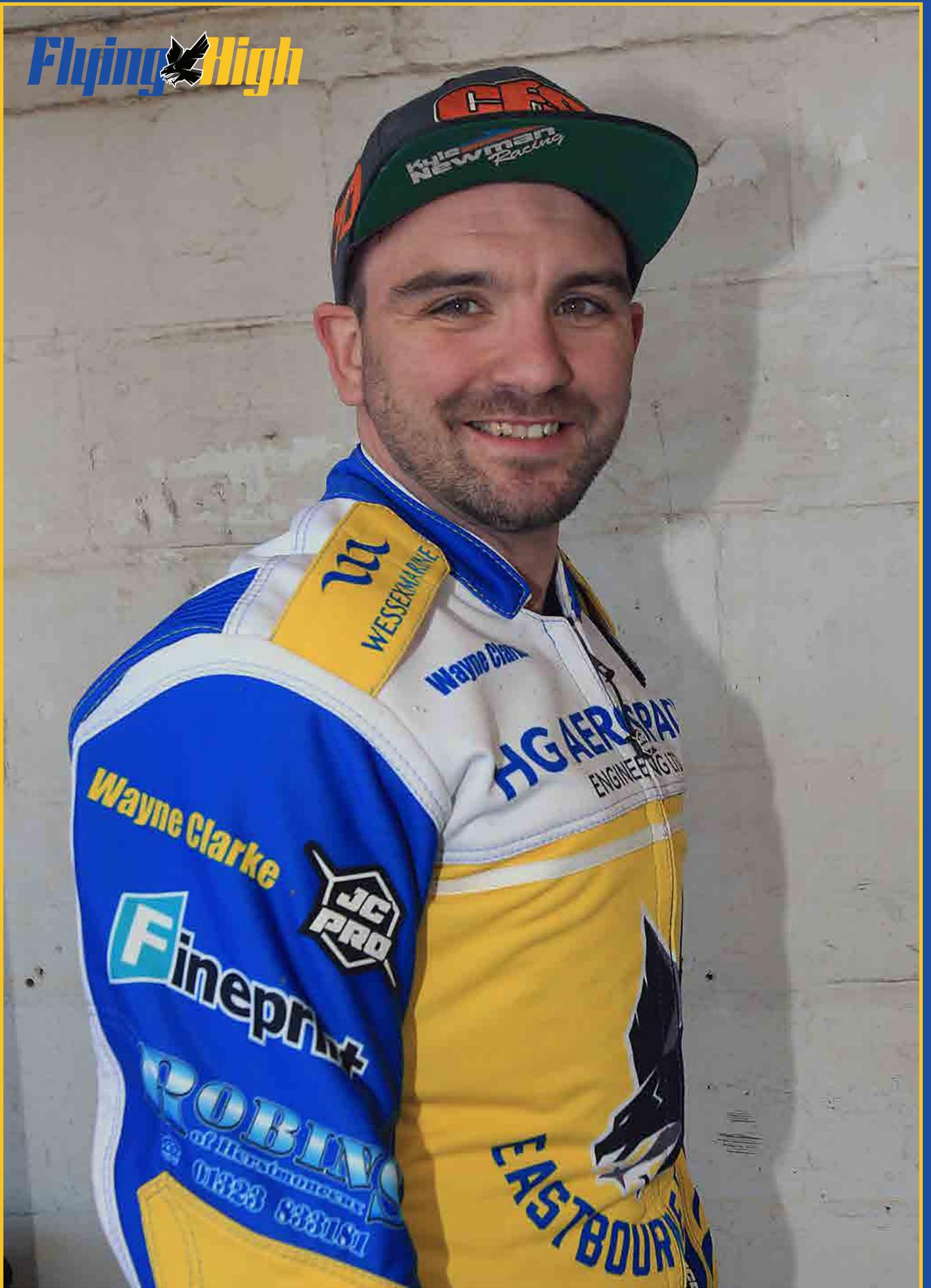
SEPTEMBER

<i>Weds 1st</i>	<i>Birmingham</i>			<i>Championship</i>
	<i>Birmingham v Seagulls - B Fixture</i>			<i>MSDL</i>
<i>Sun 5th</i>	<i>Eastbourne</i>	<i>Reserved</i>		
<i>Tues 7th</i>	<i>Plymouth</i>			<i>Championship</i>
<i>Fri 10th</i>	<i>Belle Vue Colts</i>			<i>NDL</i>
<i>Sat 11th</i>	<i>Eastbourne</i>	<i>Reserved</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>KO Cup</i>
SUN 12th	KENT		3.30pm	CHAMPIONSHIP
<i>Sat 18th</i>	<i>Eastbourne</i>	<i>Reserved</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Play Offs</i>
SUN 19th	British Youth	Championship	Midday	British Youth
<i>Sat 25th</i>	<i>Eastbourne</i>	<i>Reserved</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Play Offs</i>
SUN 26th	90TH ANNIVERSARY		3.30pm	

OCTOBER

<i>SAT 2nd</i>	<i>Eastbourne</i>	<i>Reserved</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Play Offs</i>
<i>SAT 9th</i>	<i>Eastbourne</i>	<i>Reserved</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>Play Offs</i>
<i>Sat 23rd</i>	NO MEETING	STOCK CARS		
<i>Sat 30th</i>	NO MEETING	STOCK CARS		

TBB Leicester (Home) CL + NDL



Kyle Newman