

Bill Kitchen

By Robert J. Rogers

Bill Kitchen would have been 100 years old this year, born 1908 in Galgate, Lancaster.

Before taking up Speedway, Bill had also taken part in the Isle of Man TT, as well as road trials and sand racing.

He first properly rode speedway in 1933 where he became an almost overnight star for Belle Vue, although he had tried the sport out in 1929. He was one of the favourites for the 1939 World Final, though world events prevented that from taking place.

In 1946 he led a team of British riders (with Wimbledon's Norman Parker, brother of Jack) in Germany on a tour of the B.O.A.R. (British Occupational Army of the Rhine) units, racing against local Army Units (this is where Jimmy Gooch was discovered). The track at Hanover had been built by R.E.M.E. (Royal Mechanical and Electrical Engineers)

He was made captain of Wembley Lions in 1946 (and remained their Captain until his last season in 1954, I believe, but it seems for some of this time he was a non-riding captain after an accident). He also acted as a coach at Plymouth for a while.

Bill in later years was the official track inspector for the ACU, he led the inquiry into the infamous Newcastle match at West Ham in 1970 where the majority of the Diamonds refused to ride because they said the track was too dangerous.



Bill (right) with Brian Crutcher



Bill Kitchen with the 1954 National Trophy & London Cup



Bill Kitchen

Bill astride his machine



Bill Kitchen and Eric Williams, is the Question,
"Come on Captain, is my brother Fred as good as everybody said?"

Bill (left) with Eric Williams



Another shot of the London Cup Winning Lions.

It is a rare shot of the Lions with the word WEMBLEY on their race jackets.

London Cup Winners 1951



The Lions with the 1952 National League Trophy.

Freddie Williams, Tommy Price, Jimmy Gooch, Trevor Redmond, George Wilks, Bill Longley, Duncan King (Manager), Eric Williams, Bob Oakley & Den Crosby.
Captian Bill Kitchen is holding the Trophy.

1952 National League Trophy Presentation

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