

Did Cycle Speedway begin in 1929?

Those of us who thought that our sport began in 1946 may be in for a surprise.

A photograph was received last year from Bob Spence, an ex-rider, now in his eighties.

The photo, taken in 1929, showed Bob astride a lady's bicycle with no brakes or mudguards and a low saddle. In his exact words, Bob wrote to us as follows:

"1929/30 Dirt track cycling.

Track: Cinder surfaced recreation ground on Tooting Bec Common. 4am to 6am before park keepers and bobbies came on duty. (Coppers were all on foot in those days.)

Bikes: No crossbar (ladies) Bikes bought for 5/- (25p) in London street markets. (They'd probably been stolen!)

Clothing: Well padded knees and elbows. Football boots (sometimes with a tin jammed on the left toe cap) since all action was Australian leg trail. Foot forward hadn't been brought down from N.England then!

Races: Standing or flying start. All individual—No team events."

(Which is not surprising if they started at 4am
but we'd love to know more Bob.)