

THE HENRY LONG COLLECTION

Part 1 – 1946 to 1948

1946/47

The seeds of a post-war revival of speedway racing in South Africa were sown on the battlefields of the Middle East and Europe. Buddy Fuller, the 1939 National Champion, joined the SAAF at the outbreak of hostilities and after training at Kimberley was posted to the Middle East. There he procured motor cycles, built a raceway and staged meetings for the benefit of members of the armed forces. Buddy's shows continued for some time until he was posted to Italy and it was there he met up again with Doug Serrurier, a fellow pre-war rider, and together they set about arranging meetings for those servicemen posted to the Italian theatre of war. These speedway presentations lasted until the end of hostilities, after which Doug and Buddy undertook an in-depth tour of Europe, gathering knowledge of how speedway was organised there before returning to South Africa.

Once back in the country Doug Serrurier returned to his peacetime occupation of building motor cycle frames and restoring vintage vehicles whilst for Buddy it was back to speedway and the Old Barn raceway. In 1946 negotiations were begun with the property owner, C.D. Bullman, and after many meetings a one-year lease and a monthly rental were agreed upon. The pre-war track was not used, and it was decided to build a new circuit. The new track was 700 yards long and being kidney-shaped incorporated a right-hand turn which made it unique and uncharacteristic of a typical speedway, (but not uncommon on British grass tracks.)

The 1946/47 season was primarily a series of individual meetings with the highlight being the staging of the first post-war National Championship in 1946. This was a full day's meeting with elimination heats in the morning and the final after lunch. Buddy Fuller retained the title he had won in 1939, with Dirk Schoombie second and Doug Serrurier third.

With a renewal of the lease at the Old Barn not yet agreed upon, Fuller reasoned it was time to explore other more prestigious locations for the sport in the Johannesburg area and his eyes focused on Wembley Stadium.

1947/48

Wembley Stadium can be said to have been the home of greyhound racing on the Rand, having hosted the sport since its opening in 1934. However, dark clouds were on the horizon with the progress through Parliament of the Gambling Bill, a clause of which would ban greyhound racing, the prime money spinner for the stadium's owners. This led to a search for an alternative income source, and after lengthy negotiations Buddy Fuller's proposal for speedway to replace greyhounds was accepted, with the first meeting staged on 29th November 1947

The season was not without its problems, the chief of which seems initially to have started as a challenge by the Chairman of the Motor Cycle Union of Southern Africa, (speedway's controlling body,) John Bunton, to the monopoly held by Buddy Fuller over the riders. Whatever the cause, this rapidly degenerated into a stand-off between the Pretoria (Zwartkops) and Randfontein tracks on the one hand and Wembley on the other, with riders also dividing into the two camps. The dispute rumbled on until well after the end of the season and directly affected the 1948 National Championship as the Pretoria and Randfontein clubs refused to support the event. It was only shortly before the start of the new season that peace was restored and a Speedway Riders' Association established under the chairmanship of Buddy Fuller.

A Transvaal League was formed and operated on a four team tournament basis, with the founder members being Johannesburg Tigers, Pretoria Buffaloes, East Rand Eagles and West Rand Lions. All meetings were staged at Wembley but it was apparent as the season progressed that supporters were becoming disenchanted with seeing the same riders and teams every week. The first Transvaal League winners were Johannesburg Tigers captained by Buddy Fuller. The National Championship was retained by Buddy Fuller at Wembley with a 14 points total, and a new track record of 77.0 secs in heat 1.

1946/'47 & 1947/'48 seasons' Roll of Honour

SA National Championship, 1946:	– Buddy Fuller, @ Old Barn
SA National Championship, 1948:	– Buddy Fuller, @ Wembley
Wembley Open Championship, 1948*	– Henry Long (*Held over from 1947/48 season, staged in Oct. 1948.)
Transvaal League Champions 1948:	– Johannesburg Tigers



Old Barn 1946: #3 J.Harazee, #26 W.Hansen, #25 H.Long, ? , #23 A.Poulter, #5 J.Dixon.



Sept.1946: #19 Harold Norton, #25 Henry Long.



Sept.1946: #16 Fred Wills, #15 Duggie Holmes



#2 J.Blankfield, ? , #25 H.Long, #10 L.Zeeman, #7 Jack Serrurier.



#11 Buddy Fuller



#10 Laurie Zeeman, ? , #7 Jack Serrurier, #25 Henry Long.

The Henry Long Collection:
1946 – 1948, Klerksdorp & Pretoria.

Speedway-SA.com



KLERKSDORP, Oct.26 1946: #17 Doug Serrurier, #10 L.Zeeman.



#11 Buddy Fuller, #16 M.J.Prinsloo #41,

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**#17, Doug Serrurier, #11 B.Fuller.**



**ZWARTSKOPS Racetrack, Pretoria:**

Johnny Bunton (stdg), Butch Maddern,



**John Bunton on JAP, Pretoria.**

**The following riders / race-numbers**  
**are included in these articles :-**

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 Joe Blankfield  | 19 Harold Norton        |
| 3 Jack Harazee    | 23 Alf Poulter          |
| 5 Joe Dixon       | 25 Henry Long           |
| 7 Jack Serrurier  | 26 W. Hansen            |
| 10 Laurie Zeeman  | 34 R. Roodt             |
| 11 Buddy Fuller   | 39 Rudy Allison         |
| 15 Duggie Holmes  | 40 Charlie Hurst        |
| 16 Fred Wills     | 41 M.J.(Marty) Prinsloo |
| 17 Doug Serrurier |                         |



**#17, Doug Serrurier, #11, B.Fuller, Pretoria**