

## **Dream Team : Craig Milner**

*Attended my first meeting, aged 7, when Middlesbrough reopened in 1968 against Berwick, from then on I missed only a handful of home meetings (holidays, illness, university) right through to the final night at Cleveland Park in 1996. Never got to numerous away meetings, but managed many local ones especially up at Brough Park. Nowadays follow the Bears again at Redcar.*



Wilcock

Dixon

### **Steve Wilcock**

Without question the number one Middlesbrough rider of the modern era, watched him progress from solid second string to THE best rider in the National League. He never really received the full accolades he deserved, possibly due to being too quiet both on and off the track, just basically piling the points unnoticed. I also had the thrill of winning his race jacket and getting a ride round Cleveland Park with Steve after the Ellesmere Port match in 1985!!

### **Allan Brown**

My first hero in 1968 was Graham Edmonds, but after he was injured Allan Brown came in and he became my top man. I don't have many personal memories from back then, but know he was very stylish (and won lots of races).

### **Tom Leadbitter**

As well as being a top performer for the Teessiders/Tigers Tom was a great team man, always helping teammates on and off the track. He was also great with the fans and loved to be involved in everything going on. I have a fantastic picture of an end of season meeting. Tom is covered in flour, riding a donkey like it's the finish of the Grand National.

### **Martin Dixon**

Dicko in full action was worth the admission money alone!! I've witnessed numerous passes both inside and out at Cleveland Park, when the opposing riding hasn't known what's hit them. At the time of his serious elbow injury in the late 80s, in my opinion Dicko was the best rider in the National League and would have dominated for several years. He also had fantastic equipment, I remember one away match at Stoke, M'bro needed a 3-3 to win the match, Wilks (Steve Wilcock) had been struggling all night, but came out on Dicko's bike against Paul Thorp, gated and won by a mile.

### **Gary Havelock**

Witnessed his after meeting rides, pre meeting rides, first "official" team rides and all the time we all knew he had that special something. Another who never looked overly

spectacular, but had a great knack of gating when he had to and winning the important races. Nowadays at Redcar he leads by example and if heat 15 is vital then he brings out all the World Champion class to produce the goods.

### **Bruce Forrester**

Another of my heroes sadly no longer with us. Bruce came to Cleveland Park a novice, but was a quick developer, and another who led by example. Very quick out of the gate, Bruce also wasn't afraid to move opponents if he had to. One meeting up at Sunderland he invariably was ahead after turn 2 and the Sunderland fans gave him real stick, but at the end of a superb maximum they all applauded a great performance.

### **Jim Burdfield**

For my last rider I wanted someone who typified the Middlesbrough spirit of wholehearted trier, if not a top performer. I considered John Spilsbury, Dave Butt, Bob Watts and John Place amongst others, but eventually went for Burdy - mainly due to his personality, his ability to produce match winning performances and most of all his never say die attitude.

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