

Riders to Remember....Tom Farndon

By Paul Houghton



Tom Farndon

When I was told I was distantly related to Tom Farndon I was intrigued, so I set out to find out about this pre-war star of the dirt track.

Tom was Coventry born & bred, my best mate's mum said that her mum used to watch him wheel his bike to the Lythalls Lane track, he would blast round the Foleshill circuit much to the thrills & cheers of local fans. He was a big hit with the ladies too with his film star good looks.

Brandon was where he got noticed when he became a founder member of Coventry's first ever team. When I go to Brandon now, some 72 years after his tragic and way too early passing, I try to imagine him racing round. Going by the newspaper articles that was something else and something which brought the crowd to its feet. I'd have loved to have been there to see Tom in full flight.

Tom then made the move which would signal his arrival in the big time, Crystal Palace. By now he had become an England International and held many track records, he also won national trophies against some top class opposition, his match race against Dicky Case at Wembley where he is pictured making a swoop round the boards is just stunning.

I am sure Tom would have won the world championship if the grim reaper hadn't been present at New Cross that fateful night.

To be a legend full stop is testimony to his riding prowess but to be a legend in his own lifetime says a lot about a quiet and unassuming man who loved to race and then meet the fans afterwards in the clubhouse.

RIP Tom

Picture of Tom courtesy of Norbold's New Cross Gallery.