

In the Welsh Marches

Aberdare Park and Hawkstone

THE two circuits covered in this Souvenir are in the west of Britain and lie on opposite sides of the English-Welsh border, in the country known since the Conquest as the Welsh Marches. But Aberdare Park, a road racing circuit in Glamorgan, and Hawkstone Park, a scrambles course in Shropshire, have one thing in common—their birthdays both fell in 1950.

The Aberdare circuit lies in the town's public park. Its inaugural meeting, on September 30, 1950, was held under the aegis of the Aberaman and D. M.C. and L.C.C. who had, until that time, organized nothing more ambitious than grass-track racing at the Ynys Stadium in Aberdare. The course, on a lap of 1,338 yards, was used for a solos-only Centre meeting which, despite the counter-attraction of Silverstone on the same day, drew some 15,000 spectators in weather that was far from kind. The occasion was such an unqualified success that the local council promptly asked the Aberaman club to promote two meetings during 1951! These were duly staged over this beautiful miniature course.

The club's first "national" meeting was organized in 1952 and produced some brilliant riding by an unknown youngster, one John Surtees. Not only did he win his two heats but the 500 c.c. final also—all this from a rider who was not even mentioned in the "Today's Personalities" section of that day's programme! Surtees certainly lost no time in making his mark on Aberdare Park.



Small-capacity expert John Hogan, Aberdare's "125" lap record holder.

The course has remained virtually unchanged since its inception; no increase in the lap distance is possible, as the full length of the narrow service road in the park is already employed. But speeds have increased over the last few years because foliage has been cut back, giving riders much better views of awkward corners, and some bad cambers have been eased.

After cancellations in 1957 due to petrol rationing, Aberdare Park racing is back in 1958 with meetings planned for May and August; both are



Joint lap record holder at Hawkstone, scrambler Brian Stonebridge.

The next highlight in the track's history came on June 18, 1955, when, at the request of the B.B.C., a special and extra meeting was staged for a TV broadcast, the first "live" presentation of motorcycle racing. Only 30 minutes of viewing had originally been planned, but fortuitous trouble with a cricket fixture resulted in satisfying coverage of some extra events. All of this served to place Aberdare Park prominently before the country's enthusiasts.

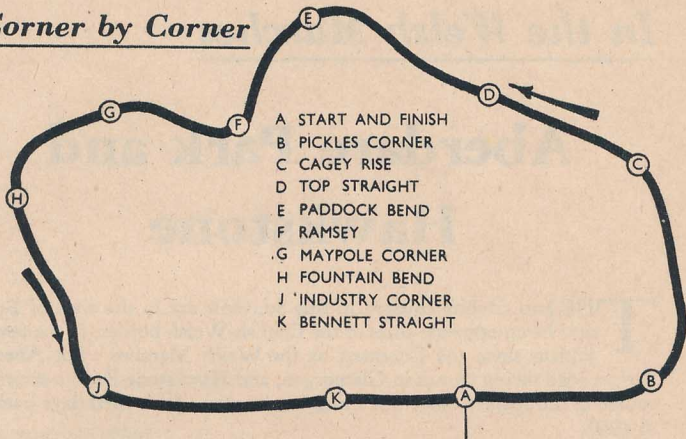
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Page One

MOTOR CYCLING

CIRCUIT SOUVENIR No. 6
Pull away from staples, slit edge and re-fold to pocket size

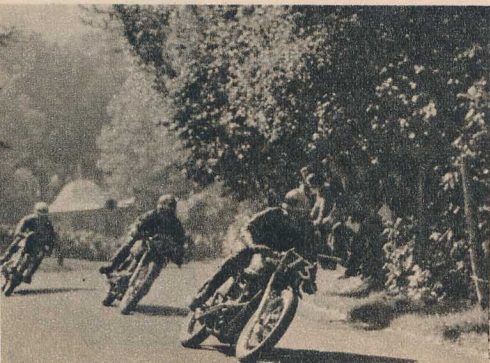
The Course, Corner by Corner



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Swervery at two points on the well-wooded section at the boating-lake end of the Aberdare course.



ABERDARE PARK

THE local by-laws of the Aberdare U.D.C. permit the closing of the park for five days of each year, and at present two of these days are devoted to motorcycle racing. Riders compete over a 20-30 ft. wide boundary-cum-service road of undulating contour and roughly oval plan; an unusual feature is that the $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile course is tackled anti-clockwise. The circuit is a slow one and provides practically no employment for a normal top gear; consequently competitors face the choice of gearing high and using the three intermediates or gearing low and using the three higher ratios. Most take the former course.

The start, A, is situated on the longest straight of the course, towards the farther end. Almost immediately after it is Pickles Corner, B, where there are said to be 57 different ways of falling off. The corner is loose, has an adverse camber on the exit and is normally taken in bottom gear.

Past lawns and flower gardens, the machines climb up to Cagey Rise, C, a second-gear bend, still ascending, after which riders snick into "third" for a short space along the 200-yard Top Straight, D. This brings them to Paddock Bend, E, so called because the competitors' enclosure is sited here on the outside of the track. The brakes are used hardly at all on the approach to this second-gear bend, the drill being to "shut it off and drop a cog." The surface is rather bumpy and the faster men prefer to keep well in, which also places them correctly on the left side of the road for the following right-hander.

Ramsey, F, is the second part of the

double swerve, where machines are put rapidly onto opposite bank after Paddock. Bottom gear is the rule for a Senior machine, "second" going home on the exit. From Ramsey, riders catch a brief glimpse of the boating lake and bandstand on the inside of the course—a part, incidentally, to which spectators are admitted. In fact, access generally is very free at this informal and pleasant Welsh circuit.

Maypole Corner, G, is second-gear work and misleading; machines accelerate gently all the way round the left-hand turn to the second half of this double

hazard, known as Fountain Bend, H. There is next a swing to the right, easing off throttle in the process, until power is restored for Industry Corner, J. Concrete seats around the corner at this point are removed before each meeting to permit riders to lean over without hindrance.

It is then an uphill sprint along the $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile Bennett Straight, K—named after the late Dave Bennett, who was killed in the Swiss G.P. Third gear goes home about half-way along the straight and towards the end there is a hump which causes machines to leap into the air in spectacular fashion.

LAP RECORDS

125 c.c. Solo: 56.8 sec. = 47.54 m.p.h. J. A. Hogan (M.V.), 27.8.1955.

250 c.c. Solo: 49.6 sec. = 54.44 m.p.h. J. Surtees (Norton), 27.8.1955.

350 c.c. Solo: 48.2 sec. = 55.82 m.p.h. J. Surtees (Norton), 27.8.1955.

500 c.c. Solo: 47.8 sec. = 56.95 m.p.h. J. Surtees (Norton), 27.8.1955.

Sidecars: This class is not catered for, owing to the narrowness of the track.

Absolute Track Record: Held by 500 c.c. solo.

MEETING DATES

(with times of first races)

Road Races

Saturday, May 17—2 p.m. (National permit.)

Saturday, August 23—2 p.m. (National permit.)

Circuit Admission Charges: Adults, 3s.; children under 14, 1s.

Car Park Charges: Free.

Organizers: Aberaman M.C. and L.C.C.; secretary, Mrs. M. Pryse, Preswylfa, Campbell Terrace, Mountain Ash, Glamorgan. (Mountain Ash 2191.)

LAND OF COAL, STEEL AND SONG

THE land of coal, steel and song . . . South Wales. This is the home of the Aberdare Park circuit, which lies in the north of Glamorganshire, just over a score of miles from Cardiff.

The 813 square miles of Glamorganshire is the most important area of Wales. Its northern upland section forms part of the South Wales coalfield and is bleak, hilly country, but as one journeys south towards the Bristol Channel there is a marked change. One leaves behind the seemingly endless rows of houses that line the valley sides; the contours of the land grow less sharp and there is less work for the gearbox. The country becomes greener and more agricultural, but is nevertheless a hive of engineering industry.

Cardiff, the capital of Wales, is by far the most visit-worthy spot in the area. At one time Cardiff cleared the highest tonnage of shipping of any port in the United Kingdom and was the major coal exporting port of the world. If the visitor has time to spare, a trip on one of Campbells' steamers is well worth while. These paddle-boats cross the mouth of the Severn and also journey round the coast as far as Lfracombe during day trips.

The Empire Games are being held in Cardiff in July this year and the largest swimming baths in the British Isles have been built specially for the occasion.

Just $\frac{1}{4}$ miles west of the city is St. Fagan's Castle, which was opened in 1948 as the Welsh National Folk Museum. The museum gives a picture of the life of Wales through the centuries; the castle stands in 18 acres of gardens and grounds.

A little farther from the circuit than Cardiff is

Swansea, which boasts a fine new town centre—the old centre was destroyed by the *Luftwaffe* in 1941. The town is the birthplace of Beau Nash, whose home is still preserved, and its market is the largest in Wales. Oliver Cromwell, in his charter of 1655, recognized Swansea as "convenient for shipping and resisting foreign invasions." Nowadays it is a fine point for starting an "invasion" of the beautiful West Wales coast.

WHERE TO STAY

THE Black Lion Hotel (Tel. 73), The Boot Hotel (192), The Crown Hotel (175), The Llwyncelyn Inn (647) and The Y Wern Guest House, Llwydcoed, (606), all at Aberdare; The New Inn (2201), Pontypridd, 11 miles distant.

THIS Circuit Souvenir is the sixth in a series of eight. Save them all after detaching and folding as directed and you will have a 64-page guide to most race courses in England and Wales.

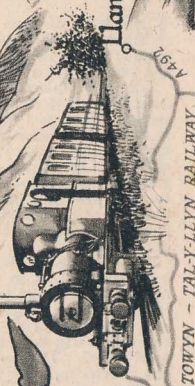
Souvenir No. 1, published on February 20, covered Brands Hatch and Crystal Palace; No. 2, on February 27, Castle Combe and Thruxton; No. 3, on March 6, Silverstone; No. 4, on March 13, Aintree and Oulton Park; No. 5, on March 20, Cadwell Park and Mallory Park. Next week: Snetterton and Shrubland Park.

HOW TO GET THERE



From Liverpool

From Manchester



HOW TO GET THERE

HAWKSTONE



Ludlow

KIDDERMINSTE

GATEHOUSE - STOKESAY CASTLE

Stokesay

Montgomery

Newtown

Welshpool

Llanidloes

Towyn

Tal-y-lyn

Dinas Mawddwy

Bala

Harlech

Cardigan Bay

Wolverhampton

Wellington

Whitchurch

Oswestry

Wrexham

Llangollen

Shrewsbury

Crewe

Stoke-on-Trent

Nantwich

Market Drayton

Bridgnorth

From Birmingham

Abertystwyth

Towyn - Tal-y-Llyn Railway

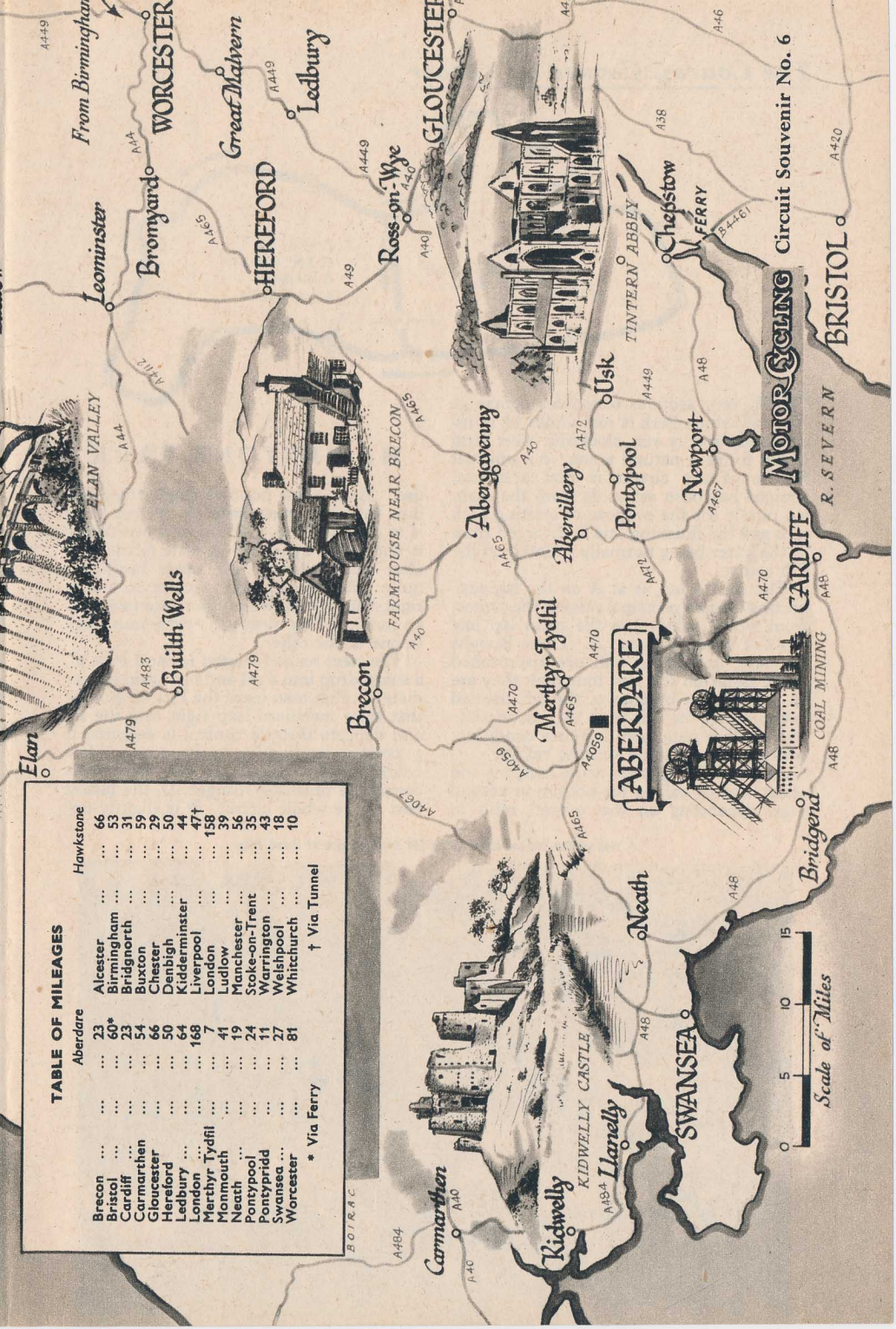
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London	19	39
Manchester	24	56
Nottingham	11	35
Pontypool	27	43
Pontypridd	27	18
Swansea	81	10
Worcester

* Via Ferry

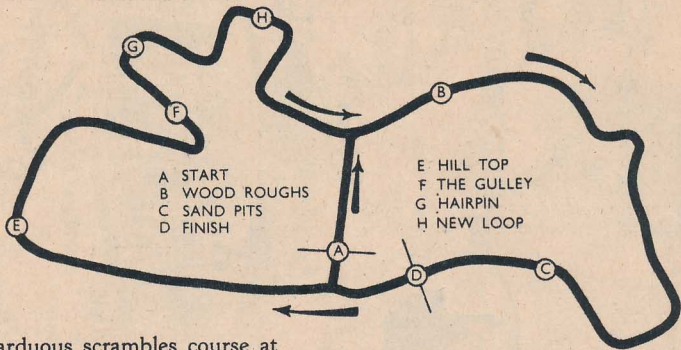
† Via Tunnel

B.O.R.R.C.



MOTOR CIRCUIT Circuit Souvenir No. 6

The Course, Corner by Corner



THE very arduous scrambles course at Hawkstone Park is just under $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles in length and is run clockwise over land which forms a natural arena. An unusual feature of the circuit is that a special straight has been set aside from the main lap purely for the purpose of starting each race and the finishing line is divorced from it, the latter being normally situated on the full course.

The start, then, is at A on the leg connecting the two principal sides of the course, from which riders join the main lap just short of Wood Roughs, B. These Roughs are very undulating and are approached much faster on the first tour than they are on a flying lap because of the left-handed sweep across the exit from the starting leg. Bad weather puts them in prime condition, which produces some exciting riding.

After the Roughs are acute hairpins and other hazards calling for bottom or second gear, depending on the overall ratio in

HAWKSTONE PARK

use. Here, a rut imposes single-track going; the rider must keep to the rut if he is to stay with his machine and overtaking is out of the question. A little farther on, after going down over open heathland quite quickly, competitors come to a fast, right-hand sweep where there are two ruts, an inner and an outer; the rider must stay in one or the other.

The next named hazard is Sand Pits, C, a sharp drop into a pit and out again immediately. Fast men leave the Pits so quickly that their machines leap right into the air and delicate throttle control is essential if a correct landing is to be made. The course passes round an oak tree, then comes the finishing straight, D, the fastest part of the whole circuit. It is slightly up-

A wet course makes hard going for competitors at Sand Pits.



hill to the line and then flat; here, machines are on full chat, reaching—motors permitting—65-70 m.p.h.

The notorious Hawkstone Hill brings riders to Hill Top, E. The ascent is made by climbing a steep sandstone cliff, 100 yards or so in length, which becomes progressively steeper until the gradient is 1 in 3. Although second gear is in use, the rider must not go too fast, or he may hit the rocks that work to the surface throughout each race; repeated collisions with these can lead to wheel collapse. Hill Top is muddy and rutted.

After some 50 yards, the course leads over an abrupt drop produced by a large rock step. Immediately after this, riders turn sharp right to commence the descent of the cliff; this is the most dangerous part of the circuit, being especially bad in the wet.

There is only one line into The Gulley, F, because of the single rut. Competitors must get into this rut and turn left into

The Gulley, along which speed is entirely controlled by the switchback humps; here, riding either too fast or too slowly will result in trouble.

At G, The Hairpin, is an acute right turn in front of a large sandstone slab, well-marked by footrests; bottom gear is the rule. Then the course leads back on to higher ground, from which there is a gradual descent through heathland to The New Loop, H. Here is a double right turn on deep mould, red in colour, and very loose; the mould is powdery when dry and boggy when wet, and if a certain critical approach speed is not maintained the rider will be handicapped by bad wheelspin. He must also avoid the large rocks which come to the surface as the mould beds down.

After a quick descent, machines turn sharply left to enter the sweeping left-hander which leads them past the exit from the starting leg to Wood Roughs for the second time.

LAP RECORDS

As this is a newly modified circuit none has, as yet, been established. Absolute record for the old circuit, held jointly by B. Stonebridge and J. V. Smith (B.S.A.s), was 2 min. 32.2 sec. = 29.6 m.p.h.

MEETING DATES (with times of first races)

Scrambles

Easter Sunday, April 6—1.30 p.m. (National permit.) *Daily Herald* meeting.
Sunday, July 6—2 p.m. (International permit.) The Moto-cross Grand Prix of Great Britain.

Sunday, August 24—2 p.m. (Midland Centre permit.) Midland Centre scramble championship.

Circuit Admission Charges: Free; admission to enclosures at special prices.

Car Park Charges: Motorcycles and three-wheelers, 1s. 6d.; cars, 2s. 6d.; coaches and pedal cycles, free.

Organizers: Salop M.C. secretary, C. O. Bate, 1 Marine Cottages, English Bridge, Shrewsbury. (Shrewsbury 3836.)

THE SHROPSHIRE BORDER

HAWKSTONE is in Shropshire, a west midland county on the Welsh border. For the most part, it is an "off the map" area of red sandstone churches, huge old estates and castles. Hills seem to "jump" suddenly out of the undulating countryside and nearly always they dominate the view. About four-fifths of the county is under cultivation and there are large tracts of woodland—part of the course runs through a wood.

The scenery is often striking—and so is the county's history. The constant need to defend the territory during the Norman era against attack by the Welsh prompted the Shropshire lords into a flurry of castle building. Of the 186 castles in England, no fewer than 32 are in Shropshire.

Next door, to the north, is Cheshire and much that can be written about the Aintree and Oulton Park circuit localities in Circuit Souvenir No. 4 will be useful to the Hawkstone visitor. Hawkstone lies ten miles from Shrewsbury on the Whitchurch road. Under 20 miles from Whitchurch via the A49 is Oulton Park, and Chester is only a little farther on the A41.

Shrewsbury is by far the most interesting place in the area. Its position as an "entrance" to Wales has made it a town of great importance. It is rightly proud of its beautiful situation on the undulating

banks of the Severn, its crumbling old red sandstone, its Norman associations in the Castle and its timber-framed black and white houses. In recent years engineering industry has come on apace in the district.

Of the area's many castles, one at least merits particular reference. This is Stokesay Castle, situated about 20 miles south of Shrewsbury on the Ludlow road (A49)—a fine example of a moated and fortified manor house, dating from the 12th and 13th centuries. It is open to visitors all the year round.

WHERE TO STAY

THE Castle Hotel (Tel. 30), Wem, 2 miles distant;
The Black Lion Hotel (18), Ellesmere, 7 miles;
The Beauchamp Hotel (3230), **The Britannia Hotel** (2480), **The George Hotel** (2461), **The Lion Hotel** (2236), **The Pengwern Hotel** (5045), **The Radbrook Hall Hotel** (4861), **The Raven Hotel** (4414), Shrewsbury, 9 miles; **The Dodington Lodge Hotel** (539), **The Lamb Hotel** (473), **The Swan Hotel** (28), **The Victoria Hotel** (31), Whitchurch, 10 miles; **The Charlton Arms Hotel** (74), **The Red Lion Hotel** (152), Wellington, 15 miles; **The Corbet Arms Hotel** (2261), **The Raven Hotel** (2145), **The Royal Oak Hotel** (2140), Market Drayton, 16 miles.

In the Welsh Marches

CONTINUED

"national" promotions, details of which appear on Page Two.

HAWKSTONE PARK, the first scrambles course to be featured in this series, is situated between Whitchurch and Shrewsbury and is within reach of the densely populated areas of Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham. It has proved to be a most popular course with the enthusiasts of these districts; for them, the journey has always been well worth while, the Salop M.C. staging some of the finest scrambling ever to be seen in Britain.

Early in 1950 a group of committee members of the Salop club started to look for a scrambles course in Shropshire; they were convinced that grass-track racing (their pastime) was dying, though this view was not shared throughout the club. A suitable course was found on the land of Brigadier Sir Alexander Stanier at Stanton-on-Hine Heath, near Hawkstone Park. Sir Alexander, as patron, gave permission for events to be held there on a trial basis, and later about 90 acres were leased to the club.

The land selected for the 1½-mile course forms a natural arena. The sandstone cliff which today provides the difficult one-in-three climb is honeycombed with caves that were once the homes of Ancient Britons; later the Romans camped around the base of the hill and built a road to Uriconium, near Wellington.

Hawkstone's initial experimental meeting was held under a Midland Centre permit on March 5, 1950, and attracted some 1,000 spectators. The same number came to a repeat performance on July 23.

The 1951 season saw a "national" pro-



Clerks of the course both: Hawkstone's Harold Johnson (left) and Dave Pryse, of Aberdare.



Joint holder of Hawkstone lap honours is Jeff Smith (left). Well remembered by Aberdare crowds is Glamorganshire-born Ivor Lloyd (right).

motion and eligibility was granted for the newly-instituted National Scramble Star. Two more meetings were held that year under Centre permits; the attendance gradually rose and it was apparent that scrambling had come to stay for the Salop M.C. The 1952 events drew more riders of good calibre, which in turn boosted the number of spectators.

The following year the "national" meeting and the three later Centre promotions were all well supported, but the climax of the season was not reached until the final event, when two Continental stars, Henny Reitman and Jan Clynk, came to Hawkstone to do battle with the cream of British scramblers. The gate had risen to 18,000.

July 4, 1954, was the date of the course's first International Moto-cross Grand Prix of Great Britain; it produced a never-to-be-forgotten duel between Geoff Ward and August Mingsels witnessed by 30,000 enthusiasts.

The subsequent years took much the same pattern but with a steady increase in the number of competitors, particularly from abroad. Last season was exceptional in that bad weather made the famous hill unclimbable and a short circuit had to be used. This by-pass is now a permanent—if emergency—feature of the track and connects the bottom of the hill to the right-hand side with the gully at the bottom of the descent. Otherwise, only minor modifications have been made to the course in its entire life, except that this year the Sandpits section has been made more difficult with the object of keeping lap speeds below 30 m.p.h., at the A.-C.U.'s request. The lap is now some 40 yards under 1½ miles.

Another suggestion that has been implemented for 1958 is to put on only three promotions, but to make them really important ones. This they will be, and they are scheduled for April, July and August, as shown on Page Seven.