

East Anglian Circuits

Shrubland Park and Snetterton

EAST ANGLIAN enthusiasts are lucky in that they have two excellent circuits on their doorsteps. One of the premier scrambling courses of Great Britain lies in Shrubland Park, near Ipswich, whilst a fine aerodrome road-racing track is at Snetterton, between Thetford and Norwich. Both fall under the jurisdiction of the Eastern Centre of the A.-C.U.; the organization at Shrubland is carried out by the Ipswich M.C. and C.C. and that at Snetterton by the Snetterton Combine, a group of clubs from Norfolk and Suffolk.

Shrubland Park has been the home of competitive motorcycle events since the early 1920s, when highly popular sprint meetings were held on the main drive and attracted such well-known figures as the late Eric Fernihough. However, it was not until Easter, 1947, that scrambling came to the course with an Eastern Centre meeting. Then Freddie Rist suggested to the late Charlie Smith that a "national" permit should be applied for. This was duly done, not without some misgivings about the club's ability to carry through such an ambitious undertaking on the strength of its limited experience. If the unexpected flood of spectators was any criterion, that 1948 meeting was a success. Under the guiding hands of Charlie Smith and Harry Redhead, 36 entries were accepted, including those of Norman Hooton, Bill Nicholson and Ted Ogden. Their names drew bigger crowds than the organizers had bargained for!



Shrubland Park's "hat trick" performer, scrambler Les Archer.

The years 1951 to 1953 were notable for Les Archer's triple victory, a hat-trick performance that has not been repeated. He was ousted in 1954 by Johnny Draper, who completely dominated the meeting. In 1956, a £500 water system was installed to lay the dust, but the club's efforts were rendered superfluous by an entirely natural watering system which, assisted by hail-storms, reduced the course to liquid mud and inspired Brian Stonebridge to dub the



Bob McIntyre, 350 c.c. lap record holder at Snetterton.

By 1949, the club's promotions had been given trade support and the entry had jumped into the 70s, including Geoff Duke and Basil Hall as stars. That was Duke's only appearance at Shrubland Park, but Hall went on to become perhaps one of the most popular and consistent riders at the circuit. Since then trade support has been received each year.

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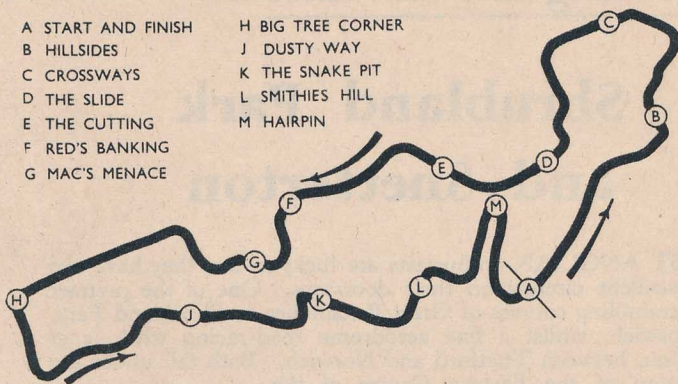
MOTOR CYCLING

CIRCUIT SOUVENIR No. 7

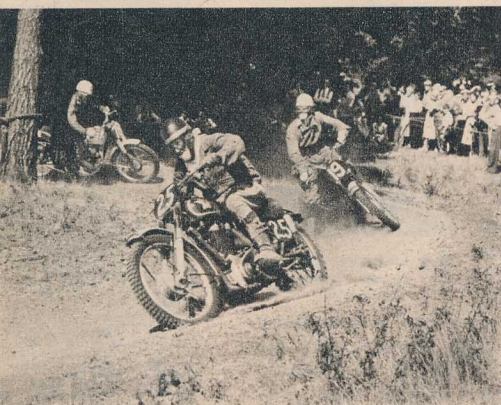
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The Course, Corner by Corner

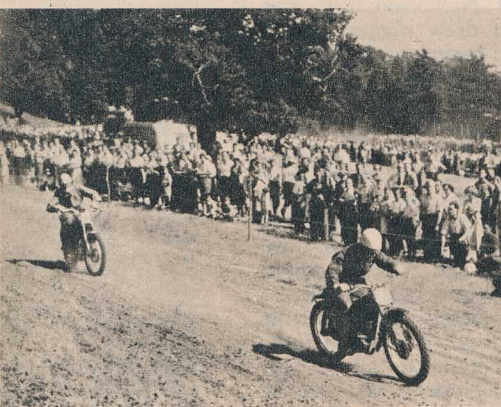
- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| A START AND FINISH | H BIG TREE CORNER |
| B HILLSIDES | J DUSTY WAY |
| C CROSSWAYS | K THE SNAKE PIT |
| D THE SLIDE | L SMITHIES HILL |
| E THE CUTTING | M HAIRPIN |
| F RED'S BANKING | |
| G MAC'S MENACE | |



670



(Above) Close work at acute angles round The Hairpin at Shrubland and (below) an open-tap spurt along the straight which follows.



SHRUBLAND PARK

THE 1.9-mile course at Shrubland Park is an arduous one for both rider and machine and includes an excellent variety of sections and terrain. The track, situated in pleasant woodland, is ridden anti-clockwise and, for 1958, has been slightly modified in the Tower Corner area immediately after the start.

The start, A, comprises an extended box that funnels down into the normal-width course over a distance of some 300 yards. In this box, 60 competitors can be accommodated and it is a favourite spot for spectators who can watch riders jockeying for position as they descend *en masse* on the narrow outlet. The old Tower Corner, no longer used, still has a loose, sandy surface which is crossed on the way to the new section, Hill-sides, B. Here machines plunge down a short, steep hill and then up a long, acute climb.

From this, they sweep round to the left to Crossways, C—a popular vantage point, for here machines leap over a sunken road-crossing before turning left to dive down into a woodland clearing on their way to The Slide, D, where the course drops sharply, bringing competitors into view of the watchers on the straight.

Riders then turn right into The Cutting, E. This has a bad hump, quite notorious, about half-way up, which must be treated with respect. Natural grandstands make this one of the most popular vantage points of the whole course.

A short straight, taken fairly fast, leads to Red Banking, F, where capable competitors do a "wall of death" act to get round the left-hander for the drop into the next section. This is called Mac's Menace, G, and

is a long descent over acute earth steps, well laced with tree roots. Star riders leap here spectacularly and the tricky steps extract their toll of the rash or unwary. Another good vantage point.

After the Menace, rough forest tracks provide high-speed motoring past the left-hand bend of Big Tree Corner, *H*, through another acute bend, not named, to Dusty Way, *J*. This is a long, corrugated track which enables the better riders to utilize the performance of their mounts to the utmost. Its name is self-explanatory!

A group of bends provides the approach to the sunken area of the Snake Pit, *K*, a switch-back of humps and holes. Used for tank testing during the last war, it tests steering and suspension—as well as the physical fitness of the pilots—in no uncertain manner.

Emerging from the Pit, competitors are

confronted with Smithies Hill, *L*, a steep ascent of some 50 yards with a hairpin turn to the right on the summit and an equally hazardous descent; this has been cut into a series of sharp steps of a spine-shattering nature and leads towards The Hairpin, *M*.

The Hairpin, with its machine-made banking, comes very close to the opposite side of the course and from it riders accelerate to Victory Corner, a full-lock slide, for the entry to the wide finishing straight. A miscalculation here can cost the leader the race. If it is a flying lap, contenders carry on over the finishing line to achieve high speeds down the straight. The sight of speeding scrambles mounts, together with the interest of the starting and finishing area and the distant views of Smithies Hill and The Slide, make this an extremely popular place from which to watch the day's racing.

LAP RECORDS

As events at Shrubland Park are not timed, no lap speeds have been recorded.

MEETING DATES (with times of first races)

Scrambles

Easter Monday, April 7—1.30 p.m. (Eastern Centre permit.) Short course meeting.

Bank Holiday Monday, August 4—2 p.m. (National permit.) Trade-supported meeting.

Sunday, August 17—Details yet to be announced.

Circuit Admission Charges: April 7: Adults, 2s. August 4: Adults, 3s.

Car Park Charges: April 7: cars, 1s.; motorcycles and three-wheelers, 6d. August 4: cars, 2s.; motorcycles and three-wheelers, 1s.

Organizers: Ipswich M.C. and C.C. Secretary, Mrs. S. M. Wigg, 62 Cedarcroft Road, Ipswich, Suffolk. (Ipswich 81335.)

THE SHRUBLAND COUNTRY

THE Shrubland Park circuit lies roughly in the centre of Suffolk, in a setting which can hardly be surpassed in Britain. This is lovely wooded parkland, part of a magnificent estate covering some thousands of acres; however, the remains of an army camp in the area is a reminder of the war years. It is also an ideal camping region, as competitors know full well.

The county covers an area of 1,482 sq. miles with a coastline of 62 miles, extending from Yarmouth to the mouth of the Stour. At Lowestoft it has the distinction of being the most easterly part of the British Isles. The seaside is always an attraction, and less than an hour's run from the scramble venue is Felixstowe, with its two-miles-long sea wall and promenade laid out with gardens and pavilions. Connected by ferry is the port of Harwich, where so many thousands annually set off for a continental holiday.

Farther south along the coast is Clacton, one of the jolliest of the country's seaside resorts. Situated in a crescent-shaped bay, the sea front extends for more than two miles along the coast with a broad expanse of golden sands. Whether one chooses to swim, play or just relax, there is everything here for the visitor, and the pier, with its games, rides, ballroom, theatre and swimming pool, is always a popular rendezvous.

But the coast is not everyone's cup of tea and this land of low hills is as peacefully rural as only a predominantly agricultural area can be. But this was not always an agricultural county—from the 14th century to the 17th, it was among the chief manufacturing counties of England, owing to its cloth-

weaving industry. Then, in the 18th century, it became famed for its dairy products, only to have many of the pastures broken up for the plough due to the high price of grain during the wars of the French Revolution.

In Norman times this was one of the most populous parts of England and the visitor may well wonder at the size of the many magnificent flintwork churches. Many of them owe their existence to the vanished wool trade and the wealth of their congregations in medieval times.

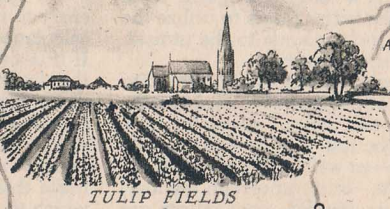
The nearest town of size to the circuit is Ipswich, while on the other side of Shrubland Park—is the A45—is Bury St. Edmunds. Here is an architectural curiosity which is well worth a visit. It is Ickworth House, three miles south of the town, a National Trust property with an overall length of some 600 feet. Another great house quite near is Melford Hall, on the Bury St. Edmunds-Sudbury road.

WHERE TO STAY

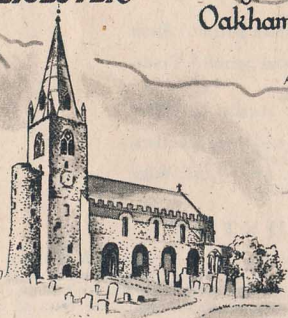
THE Fox Hotel (Tel. 98) and The King's Head Hotel (99). Stowmarket, 5 miles distant; The Crown and Anchor Hotel (53547), The Golden Lion Hotel (52523), The Great White Horse Hotel (53584) and The Queen's Hotel (53078), Ipswich, 6 miles; The Bull Hotel (89), The Crown Hotel (34) and The Seckford Hall Hotel (678), Woodbridge, 14 miles; The White Hart Hotel (203), Wickham Market, 15 miles; The Cavendish Hotel (696), The Glenroy Hotel (540), The Melrose Hotel (103), The Ordnance Hotel (276) and The Orwell Hotel (70), Felixstowe, 17 miles.



MAJOR OAK - SHERWOOD FOREST



TULIP FIELDS



BRIXWORTH CHURCH - A.D. 680



ELY CATHEDRAL



CAMBRIDGE

TABLE OF MILEAGES

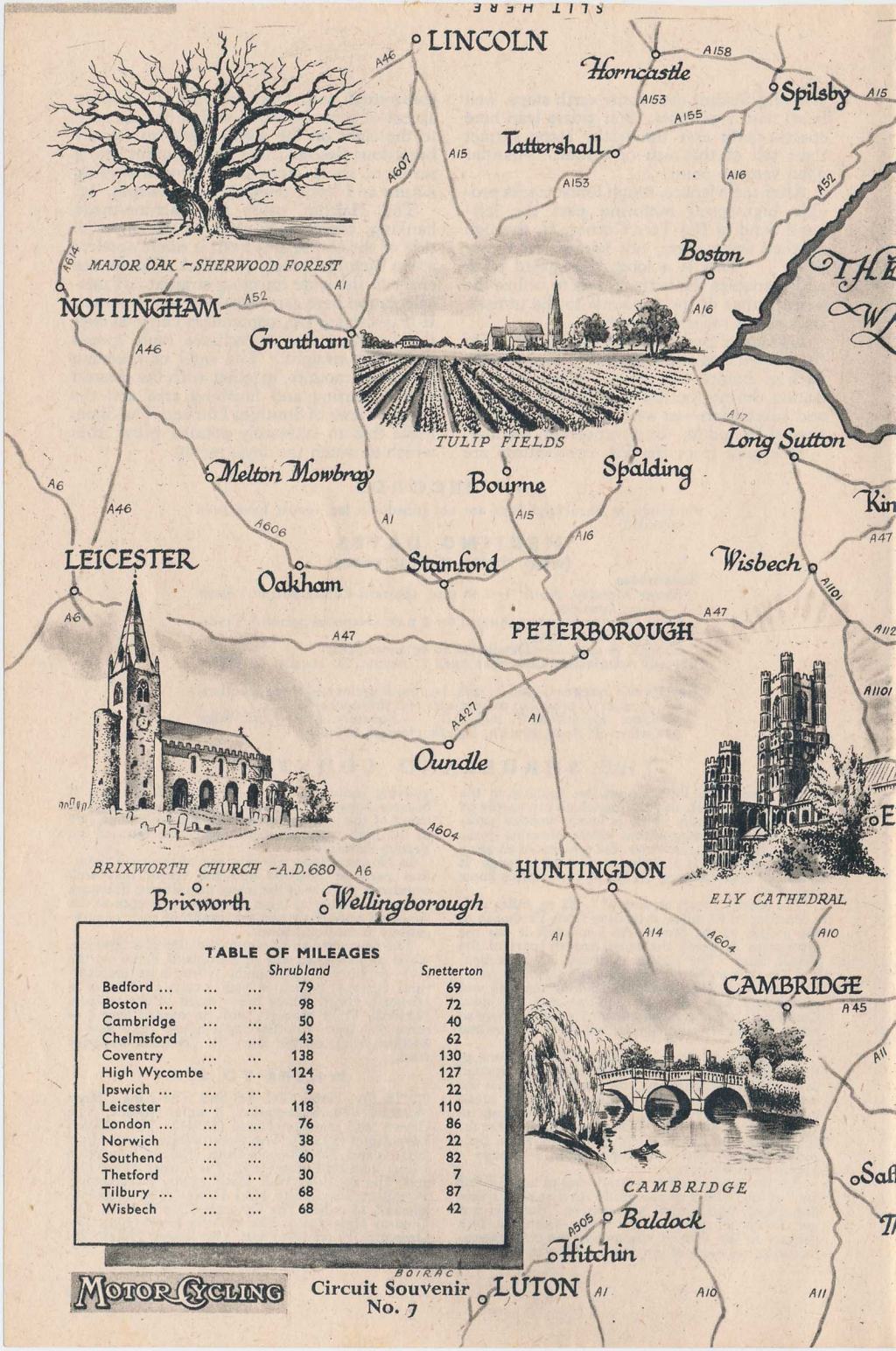
	Shrubland	Snetterton
Bedford	79	69
Boston	98	72
Cambridge	50	40
Chelmsford	43	62
Coventry	138	130
High Wycombe	124	127
Ipswich	9	22
Leicester	118	110
London	76	86
Norwich	38	22
Southend	60	82
Thetford	30	7
Tilbury	68	87
Wisbech	68	42

MOTOR CYCLING

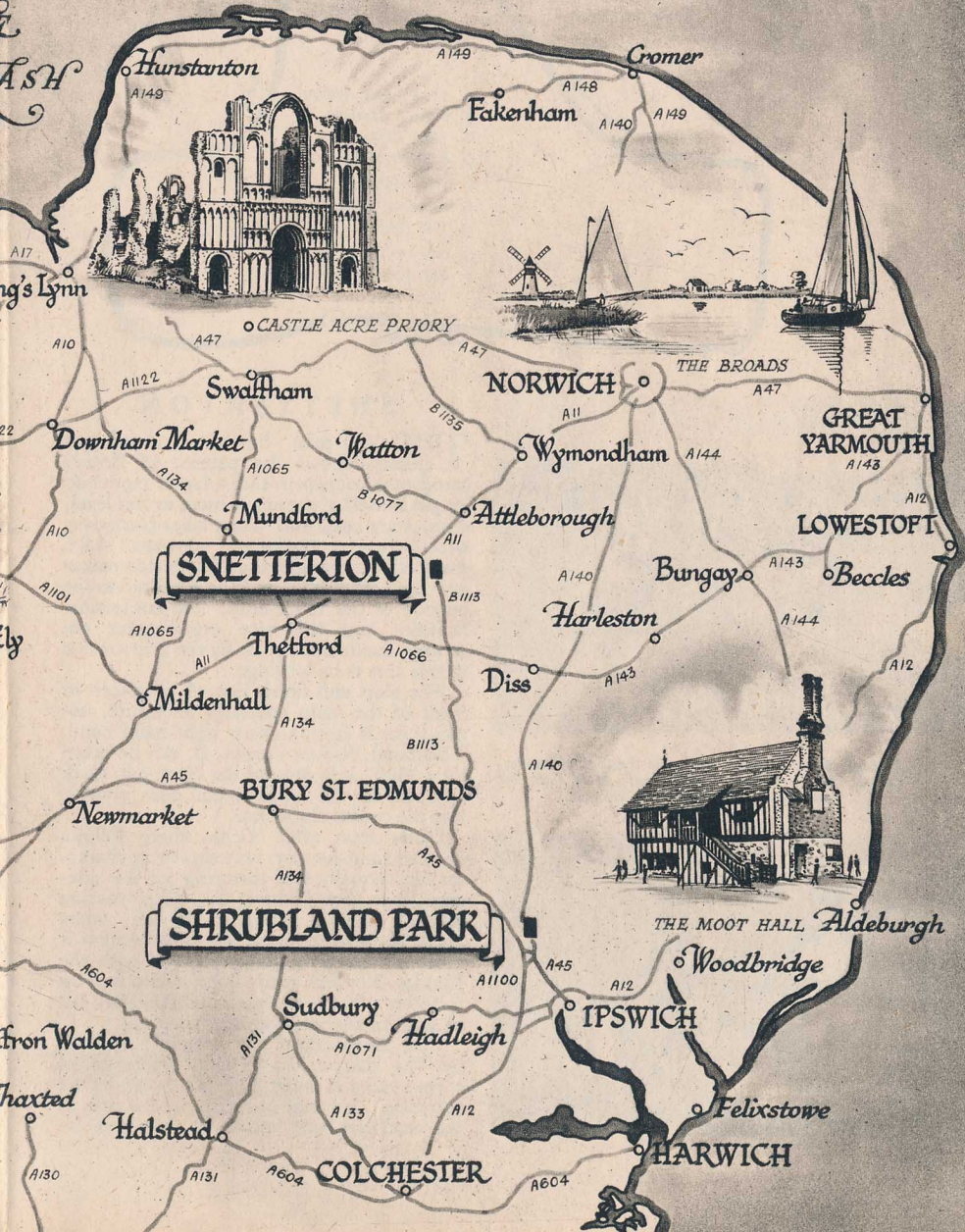
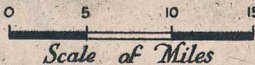
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LUTON

BOIRAC



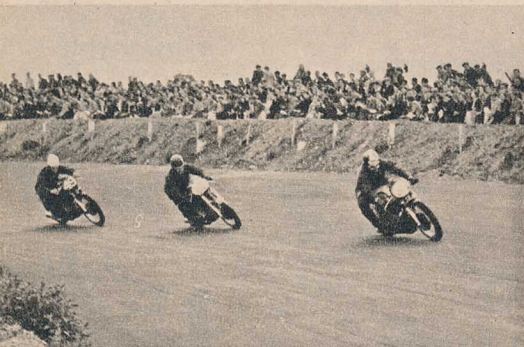
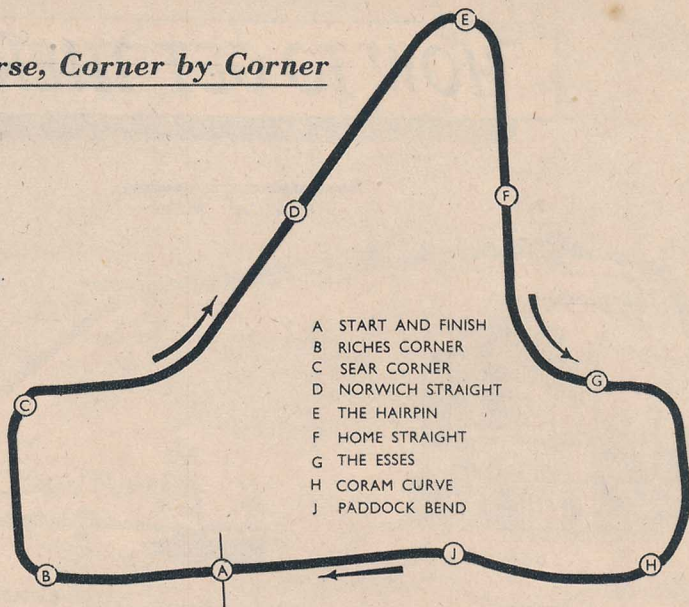
HOW TO GET THERE



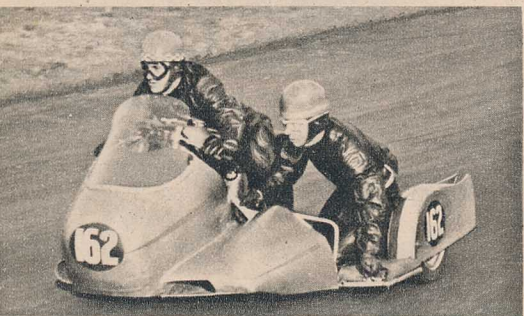
SNETTERTON

SHRUBLAND PARK

The Course, Corner by Corner



(Above) Solos sweep round the fast right-hander, Coram Curve. (Below) "Chairmen" must fight for wheelgrip as they leave The Hairpin.



SNETTERTON

THE 2.71-mile Snetterton road-race circuit follows the pattern of British aerodrome courses in that a lap of moderate length is used, the going is more or less level, corners are open and racing takes place over wide perimeter tracks and runways. Like many of its contemporaries, Snetterton makes provision for spectators to be admitted to the outside of the track only. All competitor facilities and the race organization are centred inside the circuit by the grid; access to this area is by a bridge.

The start and finish line, A, is placed in front of the main spectator enclosure, not many yards from a sharp right-hand bend. This bend, Riches Corner, B, can be taken by a "500" solo around the 70 m.p.h. mark and calls for the use of second gear; close to it is the course clubhouse.

Quite soon after Riches there follows another right-hander, very similar in character, and equally tyre-torturing for the sidecars; it is Sear Corner, C. After passing through a slight sweep to the left, riders reach Norwich Straight, D. This section is more or less level going, parallel with the London-Norwich road; along it speeds of up to 130 m.p.h. are attained, unfortunately out of sight of the main spectating areas.

The conclusion of the straight is marked by The Hairpin, E, an acute right-handed corner taken at under 30 m.p.h., even by the star men. A change of surface on the apex of the bend has been known to cause tumbles

if the machine is either banked over too much or power is applied too hard and too soon. A popular vantage point for visitors, the corner shows sidecar technique to advantage. Here may be seen the "barrow-boys" accelerating hard in bottom gear, the back wheel alternately biting and spinning, with a thin plume of blue smoke from burning rubber behind it. Sometimes there is also the odour of cooking clutches! That smell is balanced by those from the brakes which are used so hard on the approach to The Hairpin.

The Home Straight, *F*, in full sight of spectators, is another fast part of the course where speeds of up to 100 m.p.h. are common. At the end of the runway is a sharp left-hander which leads immediately into the dip and right-hand curve that are jointly named The Esses. The dip sometimes becomes flooded in very bad weather. This is an exciting spot to watch the very fast riders throw their mounts from one lock to the

other as they change direction quickly. Sidecar passengers, too, have to be extremely agile at this spot. Second gear is the wear here.

The right-handed sweep of Coram Curve, *H*, is a third-cog effort attempted at some 85 m.p.h. The bend is extremely bumpy and the rider can easily be thrown off line as he is settling down for the dive towards Paddock Bend, *J*. Paddock is a fast left-handed sweep taken at some 95 m.p.h. and is one of those curves where charioteers are not sure whether the ballast should lean out or not. On the last lap of a closely-fought sidecar race, when the outfits are duelling neck and neck, this becomes a very important point, and many a chair wheel has been seen to lift here when haste has over-ruled prudence.

The course then rises slightly uphill past the paddock entrance on the right and over the grid, bringing machines at high speed up to Riches Corner for another tour.

LAP RECORDS

- 125 c.c. Solo:** 2 min. 16.2 sec. = 71.37 m.p.h. J. Hogan (M.V.), 5.8.1956.
250 c.c. Solo: 2 min. 0.2 sec. = 80.86 m.p.h. J. Surtees (M.V.), 8.4.1956.
350 c.c. Solo: 1 min. 56.3 sec. = 83.37 m.p.h. R. McIntyre (Norton), 5.8.1956.
500 c.c. Solo: 1 min. 50 sec. = 88.37 m.p.h. J. Surtees (M.V.), 8.4.1956.
500 c.c. Three wheelers: 1 min. 59.7 sec. = 81.26 m.p.h. P. V. Harris (Norton), 5.8.1956.
1,200 c.c. Three wheelers: 1 min. 59.7 sec. = 81.26 m.p.h. P. V. Harris (Norton), 5.8.1956.
Absolute Track Record: 1 min. 41 sec. = 96.3 m.p.h. A. Scott-Brown (Connaught).

MEETING DATES

(with times of first races)

Road Races

- Easter Sunday, April 6—1 p.m. (Eastern Centre permit.)
 Sunday, June 15—1.30 p.m. (National permit.)
 Sunday, September 21—1.30 p.m. (National permit.)

Circuit Admission Charges: Free.

Car Park Charges: Cars, 1 and 10s.; motorcycles and three-wheelers, 5s.; pedal cycles, 1s.

Organizers: Snetterton Combine; secretary, R J Havers, 138 Hall Road, Norwich. (Norwich 29005.)

THE SERENE FENLANDS

NORFOLK and Suffolk, the two counties that offer such fine tourist attractions to the Snetterton visitor, are almost uniformly flat, with the result that even small eminences offer fine views. Within some 50 miles of the course are to be found picturesque villages, many historic buildings associated with the development of Britain and much beautiful countryside. Both counties have some fine coastland. Norfolk is known for its grand bathing beaches and Suffolk for the famed Broads. With the bracing East Coast air, the whole area offers an unusual and not over-popular touring ground.

King's Lynn, an ancient town and sea-port close to the Wash, has a variety of medieval buildings and lies to the north-west of the circuit. Along the coast are such pleasant holiday resorts, quiet in character, as Hunstanton, Sheringham and Cromer; all offer sea bathing, while the sands are exceptionally fine at little-known Snettisham.

Inland from the north Norfolk coast there is a slight ridge of higher ground, hard by which is Sandringham and its Royal estates. An ancient tower dominates the surrounding countryside from this ridge; scattered at random are the picturesque

remains of windmills and watermills which were used to reduce the corn crops grown so prolifically on the fertile East Anglian plain.

Norwich in springtime is said to be one of the loveliest cities in the British Isles—and worthy of a visit at any other season, too. It has timbered houses, an ancient cathedral, a castle and quaint side-streets that are a delight to explore.

The Broads can best be seen by boat, yet from the road there is much of interest, their rivers, inlets and creeks being as fascinating as their large stretches of open water. All is watery peace with birds, anglers and yachtsmen providing a moving backcloth to the delightful scene.

Many of the places mentioned in "The Shrubland Country" on Page Three are also within reach of the visitor to Snetterton.

WHERE TO STAY

THE Doric Club Hotel (Tel. 2125), The Griffin Hotel (3265), The Royal Hotel (2124) and The Station Hotel (2171), Attleborough, 7 miles distant; The Bell Hotel (219311), Thetford, 7 miles; The Bull Hotel (245), Watton, 10 miles.

East Anglian Circuits

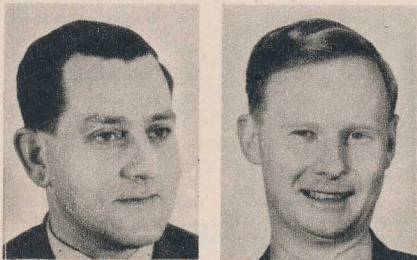
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event "Shrubland Park Regatta". But the weather was not allowed to curtail the programme.

The lap has remained substantially unchanged until this season. For 1958, the course will include a new hazard in the form of a pit and a long, steep hill which eliminates Tower Corner; it is called Hill-sides and its introduction produces a lap length of 1.9 miles. There is also a short course, occasionally used, over a circuit of 1 mile.

ALTHOUGH the first event to be staged at Snetterton took place in October, 1951, it was not until the following year that racing proper started. The early events were for four-wheelers and the new course quickly found favour with drivers because of its complex shape and good surface, as well as the extremely easy access (it lies on the side of the London to Norwich road.) It was Geoff Duke, as a "works" driver for Aston-Martin, who remarked to the circuit proprietor, Oliver Sear, that the circuit would be admirable for motorcycle racing.

So negotiations were put in hand, and the winter of 1952 saw them completed in readiness for the first motorcycle meeting on May 2, 1953. The man who had started the ball rolling, Geoff Duke, took Denis Parkinson's Norton round for a lap of honour—and the course was open. Within hours, John Surtees had won three heats and three finals, recording fastest time in each and also the best time for the day! Winning "chairman" was Ted Davis on a Vincent.



Shrubland Park officials: Secretary of the meeting Peter Wigg (left) and chief marshal John Bradley.



Snetterton personalities: Secretary of the meeting and clerk of the course Bob Havers (left) and chief marshal S. J. Palmer.

From that day forward, the Snetterton Combine, under the secretaryship of Bob Havers, has put on two or three meetings each year. These, as Sunday promotions, have been handicapped by the re-enforcement of the Sunday Observance Act of 1780 which debarred a paying gate. Nevertheless, this, like other obstacles, has been taken in the Combine's stride and the circuit remains more firmly established than ever.

Since the first motorcycle meeting five years ago, much has been done to improve spectator and rider facilities. Safety precautions now ensure that wherever the public go crash barriers separate them from the machines. A permanent club house, pits, offices, a bridge and extensive re-surfacing of the course comprise the riders' share of benefits. And all these facilities have been provided despite legislation which deprives the track of what would normally be its chief source of income.

It is not surprising that Snetterton, situated in the heart of the East Anglian breckland, has become the Mecca for many thousands of Eastern enthusiasts who make regular pilgrimages to this fine road-racing circuit.

THIS Circuit Souvenir is the seventh 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; No. 6, on March 27, Aberdare Park and Hawkstone. Next week: Scarborough.