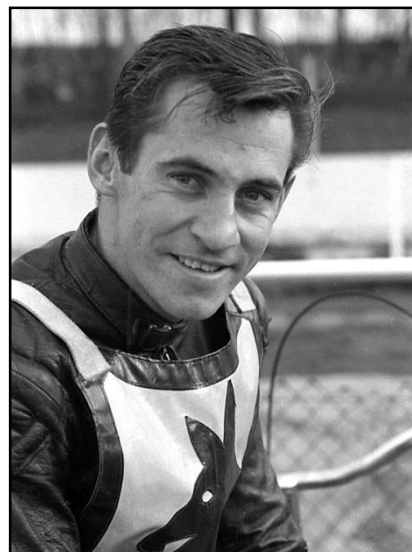


## AIREY, James Sydney (Jim)

**Born:** August 19, 1941, Earlswood, New South Wales, Australia.\*

Australia's number one rider of the late 1960s and early 1970s, Jim had a relatively short career in speedway for such a top line star. He had shown much promise on the local tracks of New South Wales before embarking on the journey to England in 1964 with his great friend Gordon Guasco, and joined up with the Mike Parker promotion at the short lived Sunderland venture. When the sport closed at the Boldon Stadium after only a handful of matches, Jim was allocated to another track in the Parker empire – Wolverhampton - where he was to build a fine reputation as a British League heat leader. He opted to miss the 1966 season but returned better than ever the following year to form a fine spearhead with the Swedish star Hasse Holmqvist which was a match for most in the league. In his four seasons at Wolverhampton, Jim rattled up over 1100 points and was certainly one of the best riders ever to don the gold and black race jacket.



In 1968 it seemed that all was not well with Jim and the Monmore Green promoter Bill Bridgett, and a move looked on the cards during a winter in which he claimed his second successive Australian championship. It was Sheffield who won Jim's signature in time for the 1969 season as the South Yorkshire club looked for a new number one to replace Charlie Monk who was to return to Glasgow after just one season at Owlerton. Jim proved to be the perfect man for the job with his fast gating and smooth style making him a firm favourite with the fans as he clocked up an average of just under ten points per match in his debut year. If his first season was a good one, his second and third were sensational as he lifted his average over ten and a half points per match and firmly established his position as the best rider Sheffield had had in the post-war era, and possibly their entire history.

He claimed his third successive Australian title in 1970 and reached the World Final for the first time the following season, finishing 8<sup>th</sup> in Gothenburg to become the first Australian to reach the final since Peter Moore eight years earlier. That same season he was a member of the Great Britain side that won the World Team Cup in Wroclaw along with Ivan Mauger, Barry Briggs and Ray Wilson but amazingly called time on the British League at the end of the season at the peak of his career. Aged just 30, Jim decided to concentrate on his motorcycle business back in Sydney and never returned to league action in this country. He continued to race occasionally in Australia and made his last international appearances for his country in 1973 when he returned to the U.K. to race in the prestigious Daily Mirror international tournament.

Year	Club	Division	M	R	P	BP	TP	CMA	FM	PM
1964	Sunderland	PL	3	13	20	4	24	7.38	-	-
1964	Wolverhampton	PL	20	73	87	13	100	5.48	-	-
1965	Wolverhampton	BL	35	145	271	26	297	8.19	1	1
1967	Wolverhampton	BL	35	156	334	20	354	9.08	1	4
1968	Wolverhampton	BL1	40	184	412	13	425	9.24	4	3
1969	Sheffield	BL1	40	175	425	8	433	9.90	7	3
1970	Sheffield	BL1	37	162	436	4	440	10.86	13	2
1971	Sheffield	BL1	35	155	411	5	416	10.74	14	1

**Individual Honours:** World finalist 1971 (8<sup>th</sup>), Australian Champion 1968, 1969, 1970, 1972.

**International Honours:** World Team Cup winner 1971, Australian international – 36 caps, 432 points, Great Britain international – 17 caps, 137 points.