

JOHNSON, John Noel

Born: December 25, 1902, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Died: August 25, 1931

Noel began riding at the Brisbane Exhibition Grounds in the Australian summer of 1926-27 and came to the U.K. in 1928 with the A.J. Hunting troupe of riders, being contracted to the International Speedways tracks. He wasn't overly successful and was some way behind the top Aussies, Vic Huxley, Frank Arthur and others as he rode predominantly on the London tracks. In 1929 Noel moved to Exeter and became a hugely popular figure at the County Ground. The club had not entered into a league and ran a series of open meetings and challenge match events and Noel was a central figure in developing the sport in Devon. His official league engagements were limited to just one meeting when he rode for Harringay in the Southern League match at West Ham on May 16, 1929 but he appeared to be content with his new found stardom at Exeter and continued there in 1930.

Once more, Exeter were not part of any league structure and competed in challenge matches with Noel being captain of the side when injury allowed – a injured foot and a broken collarbone keeping him out of the saddle for several weeks.

In June 1931, he moved to the newly-opened track at Plymouth, where he was appointed vice-captain, again competing in challenge matches rather than league events, and was racing in such a meeting against Coventry at the Pennycross track on August 25 that year. In heat seven he crashed and was hit by the closely following Coventry rider Bill Allen, who was unable to avoid his stricken opponent. Noel died in the local hospital one-and-a-half hours after the accident from an internal hemorrhage.

Noel's death record states that he was 24 years old at the time of his death but an examination of the Queensland birth records confirms the year of his birth as 1902.

Year	Club	Division	M	R	P	BP	TP	CMA	FM	PM
1929	Harringay	SL	1	2	1	0	1	2.00	-	-