

# Excellent Training and Support Facilities for Budding Young British Speedway Riders



Poultec Project Manager – Ollie Allen (left) with ACU Track Racing Chairman Dickie Staff (right)



Lathes situated in the engineering unit



IT suite

the opportunity of being given a guided tour of Poultec's state of the art premises by the man running this programme.

The first thing that struck me was Poultec's very impressive facilities and resources – they have two sites, one of which is a state of the art engineering workshop, the other, a more academic type facility where the recently opened and fully equipped gymnasium block is also situated.

Ollie explained the goals of this programme: 'the idea is to provide the future generation of riders every 'tool' they might need to succeed in an ever evolving sport. Riders are taught a variety of skills including bike maintenance, engineering, fitness, nutrition, accounting, PR skills, but of course the main focus is coached track time.'

'Since managing this programme, I realise how lucky I was to have a Father who was an ex- rider, because as I soon found out, some of the 'Poultec lads' have had no-one to support them or who could share knowledge or previous

experiences with them. I soon found that I was teaching the trainees things I assumed they already knew. I'm not just talking about riding skills, there are a lot of things I took for granted for example, I hardly ever had any mechanical failures as a rider due to the engineering background I came from, and the skills that I was taught. At a very young age I was trained to use tools and learnt about the need for bike preparation, and how to look for things that might go wrong, identify what the potential problem might be, then put it right before it could cause me a problem or a break down during a race. However for some of the lads, they have had no guidance ....they can buy a bike and off they go to the track and start riding. If their Dad didn't ride, and they were lucky someone might take them under their wing, but if you are not one of the 'top upcoming young boys' this gaining of knowledge can take a long time, and I know that we've lost a number of talented young riders as a result. Sometimes it's not just their lack of knowledge, it can also be their attitude, and this is where we here at Poultec are confident that our programme can benefit not only our current trainees, but every young rider if it's used to its full potential."

Ollie shared with me that the



CNC (computer numerically controlled) lathe



Recently opened gymnasium and fitness centre

ratios and it also gives the guys a better understanding of basic book-keeping, and the benefit of getting receipts for things they buy for their racing.

"They then progress to work out profit and loss, which in turn helps them to understand what it costs them to ride for the year, what it costs per match, and if they really want to they can take it as far as every lap!!"

Every day the trainees have to attend fitness training in Poultec's state of the art gymnasium, and this is something Ollie is keen to instil into his students..... "as motorsports evolve, so do the riders, the top riders are athletes now, so every student on our programme has a tailor made fitness programme to suit their needs."

Having travelled the short distance to the engineering unit on the outskirts of Norwich, Ollie then explained that they aim to get the trainees into this unit during one of the three days the youngsters attend Poultec. Again I was extremely impressed with the level of investment at these premises which is equipped with top of the range milling and turning machines, as well as a fabrication and composite area, where the trainees learn to work with fibreglass and carbon fibre. "So far we've been making seat brackets, spacers, exhaust brackets and other bits and pieces" explained Ollie, and any engineering skills we can cover will benefit the lads as well as their bikes.

The first year's intake of riders was capped at 12, and included a range of youngsters from across the UK. One of Poultec's shining stars is 19-year-old James Shanes, who travels to Norfolk from his home near Dorchester. James, who rides in the National League for Kent Kings at Sittingbourne, recently defended his ACU British Masters Grass Track title for the second time, and on the 11th September became FIME European Grass Track Champion (see article on page 28)

So to summarise Poultec are offering the opportunity for young riders to stay in education after high school, gain a qualification, and at the same time focus on the sport they love. If you are interested in finding out more about Poultec, visit their website

**" They then progress to work out profit and loss, which in turn helps them to understand what it costs them to ride for the year, what it costs per match, and if they really want to they can take it as far as every lap!! "**

(weather permitting) with all the riders getting onto the track and 'getting in some laps', but during each block of learning, the trainees must also attend lessons in the functional skills of English and mathematics to satisfy government guidelines well as Ofsted demands.

However, as Olly even maths and English can play an important part in furthering a rider's career. "Poultec are aware these are lads aren't necessarily brilliant in the class room but once they have a better knowledge of maths they can soon see how it helps them in other ways – for example helping them work out exactly how much they are earning, how they can easily calculate gear

programme itself is split into a series of three day blocks of learning, with the trainees following a familiar but changeable pattern.

Every three-day session ends