



THE SQUIRREL



Easter 2006



**STOP PRESS!
COMMONWEALTH GAMES: CONGRATULATIONS TO MATT CRAMP-
TON ON WINNING SILVER IN THE
TEAM SPRINT, AND 4TH PLACE IN
THE INDIVIDUAL SPRINT**



Matt with his medal pictured in the Clubroom

MID-WEEK RUNS

TUESDAY: Seamons have a table at Matthews Garden Centre from 12 noon every week.

WEDNESDAY: Ladies Run - meet Chelford 10 a.m. (Contact Carol Pardoe)

Manchester Vets - meet Chelford 10 a.m.

THURSDAY: Seamons Club Run - meet Old Bleeding Wolf, Hale Barns 9.30 a.m.(Contact Dave Barker)

SATURDAY: LADIES RIDE MEET CHELFORD POST OFFICE 10 a.m.

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"Wanted: C17 & C18 sprockets in fair or new condition for 7 speed Suntuour Winner block. These are the third ones in from the outside. Please help keep my old screw on hubs alive. Contact David Matthews."

Treasure Hunt

Date - Bank Hol Monday 29th May

Start Rackhams 11am

Organiser Gordon Peake 0161 962 - 1649

Cover: Carol Pardoe nr Bickerton en route to Llangolen

'The Squirrel' is the magazine of the Seamons Cycling Club. Editor— Pete Coles, 72 Bold Street, Altrincham, WA14 2ES. (0161 929 1462 or e-mail pete@thepot.freeserve.co.uk. Club website at www.seamons.org.uk from where the on-line version of this magazine is available in PDF format.

BITS AND BITS



Overheard on an extremely well-attended club night in Neil's bike shop: "It's a bit cramped in here, can't they get rid of some of the bikes?"

"I've been for blood tests today for cholesterol. How's your carpal tunnel?" "We used to talk about gears, sprockets, wheels." "Well, you can here – we're in the right place."

Meanwhile on the club run: "I prefer whole-meal." "Oh I use white – have you seen that recipe in Good Housekeeping?" Was I on the Half-day section or what?

It was a snowy, sleety, chilly morning. We were lingering a long time in the café in Middlewich Garden Centre. Wilkie's phone went off. He took it out of his pocket: "Hello. Hello. Damn, my puncture kit's not working." He then found his phone. It was Andy in Wigan. "What's the weather like, shall I get the train?" "Yes, we're in Middlewich, I know it should be Madeley, but it still begins with "M". (Don't tell Andy they shut Middlewich station down 40 years ago).

I didn't know him from Adam

It was the Saturday Ladies ride up to Common Barn Farm, somewhere in the middle of no-

where, above Rainow – great ride, but misty, cold and wet that day.

As we were tucking into hot soup Sara asked if I thought the half-day group had ever been there. "Oh no, they're wimps, they wouldn't explore up here." Something made me turn to the lone cyclist at the table behind us. "You didn't hear that, did you?" He grinned. "Are you in a club?" I asked. "Yes," he grinned some more, "Seamons, half-day." "Oh no! you're Adam aren't you?" recognition was now slowly dawning. Oh ground, please swallow me up...

Big Mouth

'Mind control' over muscle power

Thinking about the way your muscles work could physically boost your strength, research suggests. A Hull University team asked 30 subjects to do biceps curls and found their muscles worked more when they focused on what the muscles were doing. But lower rates of muscle activity were recorded when they simply visualised themselves lifting the weight.

MISSING:

FROM THE CLUB ARCHIVE: VIDEO TAPE 29:

50th ANNIVERSARY DINNER/LLANGOLLEN THRASH. PLEASE DO YOU HAVE THIS TAPE?

TEL: JP 0161 723090



Hi,

I'm writing to tell you about a grass-roots cy-

The Squirrel

cling campaign at givecyclistsroom.co.uk that was started through the Cycling Plus Forum.

Through discussion there and on other threads, we worked out that the single biggest cause of accidents and near misses involving cyclists is car drivers simply not giving us enough room. Now I know that most of you are reading this and thinking, well 'Duh!', and yes it is obvious, but only to us, not to the 'civilian' car driver.

You've seen it as often as I have, where you get 6" outside your elbow, or a car dives in front of you, only to brake hard for the LHJ, or they pull out on you ...

"Sorry, mate. I didn't see you"

"I'm bloody head to bloody toe in day-glo & scotchlite. I've got twin spots that are brighter than the sun. How could you not have seen me?"

You all know how it goes.

The other thing that we worked out is there are basically 3 types of driver.

1. The considerate and careful driver. Always give you loads of room & probably cycles themselves.
2. The consummate idiot who doesn't believe that you should be on the road. There's nothing we can do to change their behaviour. Just avoid them & collect registration numbers in the vain hope that one day you'll have a witness.
3. The regular driver. He's not particularly bothered about cyclists, but he doesn't always pay attention to them either. These are the targets of this campaign.

The idea is simple enough. The window stickers simply say 'Give Cyclists Room'. The logic runs to some degree of sociology involving 'ingroups' and 'outgroups', which you can read about in a simplified form on citycy-cling.co.uk when the new edition comes out on Friday. But the drip-feeding of the message is the key thing. And it works, or at least it appears to anecdotally. See the article for more detail.

We've got C+ behind us, [with this](#), and we'll be sponsoring their letters page next month. The [London Cycling Campaign](#) are also going to be promoting us, and I hope you and your club will as well.

Please have a look at the website, www.givecyclistsroom.co.uk, [forward this within your club, point any press contact you might have in the direction of the site, or support us any way you can. I'm attaching the press release that announced our existence too.](#)

We'll be supporting grassroots cycling charities out of the revenues raised and have already committed to support the Rhyl CC Memorial Fund, but we're also looking for further nominated charities.

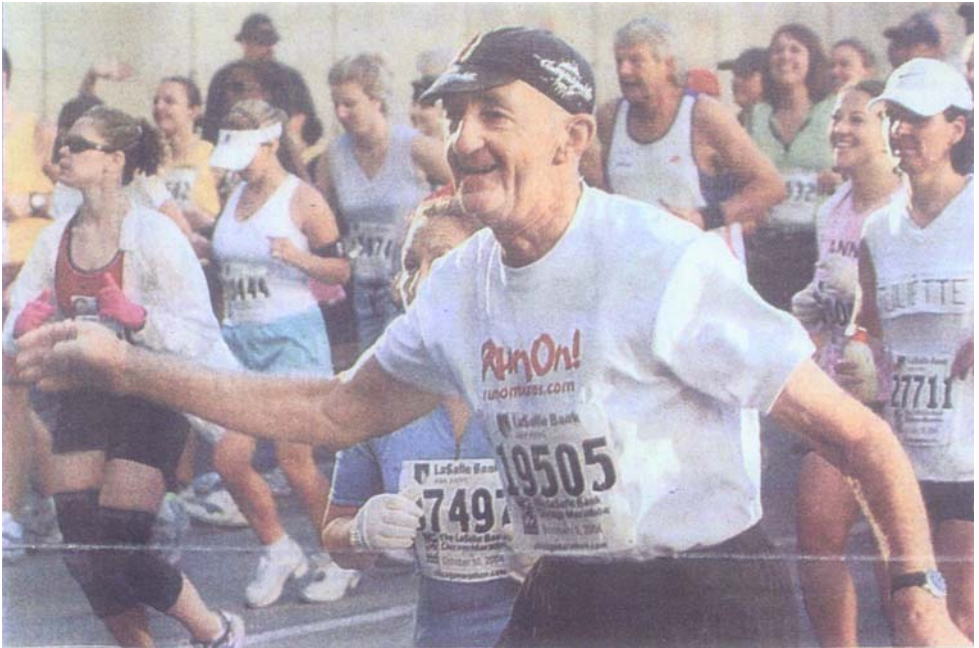
Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Justin Beattie
Campaign Manager
www.givecyclistsroom.co.uk

TWO DOZEN DOUBLE DAMASK DINER NAPKINS (Joyce Grenfell) – or 101 things to do with a tissue (kitchen roll or café napkins are best):

1. Wipe your mud-splattered face when you arrive at the café.
2. Dry off the rain on your helmet.
3. Soak up the sweat inside your helmet – press serviette to affected area for a minute or so.
4. Tuck inside your shorts in the small of your back before you leave in morning, to soak up sweat. Remove on arrival and discretely dispose of. Nice dry back. Replace with dry one.
5. Wrap round wet gloves and sit on them. They'll dry out a bit, and they'll be warm!
6. Wrap round wet toes to soak rain out of socks while sitting in café.
7. Press on wet knees to soak up rain while sitting in café.

Please send in your top tissue tips to the Editor.



Jeff Robinson, 73 of Dallas, was one of the 40,000 runners entered in the 27th LaSalle Bank Chicago Marathon.

My wife got me into running at age 73. I did a 4Hr. 48 mins. For my first Marathon good for 2nd place in my age group. Evans Rutto of Kenya won this one in 2.06.16.!

Snail Mail Received from America!

Just a little note, r.e. The (Probable) Theo Parsons.

Yes I am Jeff Robinson, and yes Jim Krieger bought it from me, the number on the bottom bracket is '83'.

Theo built me this wonderful frame after he closed his shop. I have covered many thousands of miles on it. From Velodrome racing, to riding it 15 miles each way to work, when I lived near Detroit Michigan.

I was very sad to read of Bob Richardsons passing. He was the greatest President any Bike Club could ever have.

I have written to Leo and will give you more information in future letters.

Oh yes I am not totally computer illiterate. I will answer my E-Mails at

Luditejeff@aol.com

So as we say in Texas – (A.K.A.- the big Empty).

Y'all take care now

I am still cycling and running.

Jeff Robinson

The Squirrel

Hello,

I just wanted to let you know that with some regret I have decided not to renew my membership with Seamons for the coming year. Perhaps you could include this email in a forthcoming squirrel to express my gratitude to everyone involved with the club.

As some may have noticed I have not been out with the club for the last few months. Other commitments have meant it has been increasingly difficult to make the trip down to south manchester each Sunday and has in recent months simply not happened. For those that recall my encounter with the tarmac on my last club run, rest assured I fully recovered from an accident entirely of my own making. Three weeks after this tumble I did manage to finish my first ironman distance triathlon in pouring rain in the beautiful setting of Wolverhampton. My time of just over thirteen hours didnt exactly set the world alight but the satisfaction of completing the distance and the post event rub down by two ladies (one for each leg) made it all worth while.

To everyone involved in the club, many thanks for you help, support, encouragement and most of all friendship. Despite not getting to the south side, I am riding more than ever so will keep a look out for you all at local events.

Kind regards

Colin Levy

Wild Wales 2006 Sunday 27 August 2006

The entry form is now available on www.merseysidectc.com. Fee £10-- Limit 600 riders.

Given the current massive interest in cyclosporatives at present, you may wish to get your entry in soon.

Ride a Classic---Seamons CC "Tour of the Berwyns"

We are to organise this 204K event for the fifth time on Saturday May 20 2006. The start is at Willington Hall, 5 miles East of Chester.

Willington Hall is a beautiful Country House Hotel with panoramic views over Cheshire to the Welsh hills. We are very lucky that the owners remain enthusiastic to host our event providing good safe parking and a free cup of tea to start us off. This is arguably one of the finest starts to any Audax event in the UK. The route has been modified this year to avoid the deteriorating roads over Worlds End and, against normal Audax tradition, is now slightly easier.

Initially you follow winding Cheshire lanes until arriving at the first hill over the border in Wales, near to Ruabon. A steady series of climbs then takes you to a check point at the lofty Prospect Café. The superb Welsh scenery then starts in earnest as you descend the Llangollen panorama to a wonderful series of riverside lanes leading to the café control at Corwen.

Beyond Corwen you follow a valley road until the hills proper are reached at the Millt y Cerig pass. This pass leads over the Berwyn hills part 1 to Llangynog. From here you climb remote but well surfaced lanes over the Berwyns part 2 before a long descent to civilisation and a café at Chirk.

After Chirk a series of undulating lanes take you back through Cheshire to the finish at Summertrees Café. Here we provide a free feed, before you make the short descent back to Willington Hall.

Our aim in 2006 is to achieve an entry list of 100 riders ---assisted by the fact that we have been nominated as a National Audax event. We hope you will come and join us for this exhilarating ride.

Club says council's cycle plans are off-track

CYCLISTS in Trafford are being left in the slow lane because councillors are backpedalling on their commitments to them, a cycling club has claimed.

And Altrincham-based Seamons Cycling Club has challenged the authority's executive member for environmental services, Councillor June Reilly - and Tory leader David Cameron - to get on their bikes and see for themselves the state of the borough's facilities. "Trafford is the only authority in Manchester with-out a designated



Carol Pardoe (secretary of Seamons Cycling Club) and David Barker (Right to Ride representative for Trafford)

cycling *officer*. Its cycling strategy amounts to two lines on a website," said Seamons' secretary Carol Pardoe.

"Everyone in Trafford is being let down and cyclists are being left behind because councillors can't be bothered to take the issue seriously. In the past three months alone I know of three cyclists who've been knocked off their bikes in cycle lanes in Trafford."

In a letter to Cllr Reilly and keen cycle-commuter David Cameron, she asks for an explanation of what has happened to Trafford's commitment to cycling - and invites them to come for a ride.

Dave Barker, who is the Cyclists' Touring Club Right to Ride representative for the area, said: "Two years ago we had a cycling forum and a cycling strategy. Now we have

neither."

Steve Bowater, from the Greater Manchester Cycling Campaign added: "We've become totally disillusioned with the lack of consultation between the council and the cycle forums in Trafford. I've been trying to get information from the council on how they are going to progress this for two years now."

Cllr Matthew Colledge, Trafford's executive member for technical services, replied: "The council is aware of the issues raised by cycling clubs and we are looking to engage with cyclists to address some of their concerns.

(Continued on page 8)



David Cameron the new Tory leader

(Continued from page 7)

We understand the importance of cycling as a green and healthy alternative to other forms of transport and also as a leisure activity for people of all ages. Indeed more school children are trained in cycle safety in Trafford than in any other authority in Manchester."

(Continued from page 21)

stop. Some may say this is because it means it'll take longer to get to the pub. Kinder souls will know it's because the touring section could just as easily be called the Grand Old Order of Rigwelters such is our ability to stay put in the warm once we've got off the bikes. So it was with some alarm that, at Keith's suggestion, we diverted to Dones Green mid-morning. Whether it was because the miles were getting to Wilk or whether it was because he just wanted to shut up our whingeing, we may never know. True to form though, Keith never once described it as an elevenses stop. He's such a stickler for maintaining the hard-rider credentials of the tourers. Spare a thought for club stalwart Reg Blease. Never one to shirk his responsibility on a run, he will take his turn at the front even

though the riders behind him are giving him half his age. But while we see a rider defining style and class, the uninitiated see an old gadger on a bike. And so it proved when we hit one lunch-stop. As Reg walks through the pub, a young bar-fly turns to his mate and says: "The last time I saw legs like that they were hanging out of a nest." Of course, none of the touring section thought it was funny or fair.



Keith Wilkinson at Coed Llandegla For-



Xmas Off Road ride 2005

Meet your Clubmates

Our first clubmate this month took a rather circuitous route to the club from his birth in Bury. First he went North to Newcastle, then down to London and the Home Counties before returning up north to Cheshire. The lure of Tyneside pulled him back to Northumberland for a couple of years before the greater pull of the Seamons dragged him back again. Quiet but obviously determined, he took off a few years ago with no fanfare or backup and rode the Land's End to John O'Groats in little over a week, relishing the challenge. Meet **Stuart Kay**....

When and Where were you born? 15th July 1954, Beal Maternity Home, Radcliffe.

When did you first start cycling and what was your first club? Verulam CC, St Albans, after a chance meeting with Don Andrews and Paul Bennett (former '25' comp record holder) in 1987. Up to then it had been lone touring and CTC

What is your favourite touring area? The Eden Valley in Cumbria - as quiet and peaceful as ever - anywhere north of Preston.

What is your favourite meal? Lancashire hot pot with red cabbage and chicken tikka balti from Lal Quila in Rusholme.

What were you like at school? Mostly average reports; then again my science teacher at the school in Northumberland was famous for saying to Bobby as he watched a football match taking place outside - "It's no good looking out of the window Charlton, you'll never be a footballer."

What kind of books do you read? Whatever takes my fancy at the airport - travel, biography and maybe the odd thriller.

What kind of music do you enjoy? Blues, soul, smooth jazz fm type stuff.

And your favourite TV programmes? Comedy, documentaries, fictional crime.

Which newspaper do you read? Times - although I don't often get through it all.

What is your ideal holiday destination? Somewhere I can take my bike with me and sneak out for a couple of hours; not fussy really.

Do you have any hobbies? Fell walking in the lakes when it's not raining (which isn't very often). Also occasional photography and fishing for trout - but not at the same time.

Who would play you in a film of your life? My wife would say Richard Gere or George Clooney - in her dreams!

What is your greatest fear? Like most people, anything happening to my family.

How would you describe yourself in a lonely-hearts ad? Have to be careful, might get into trouble. Energetic lover of, the great outdoors, seeks fit young female for adventures in the undergrowth.

What is your favourite training ride? Training, training? What's that? Well OK, I have to admit that I have recently had to start if only to keep up with the half day group. Delamere area or Two Mills if time allows or the wind is not too strong.

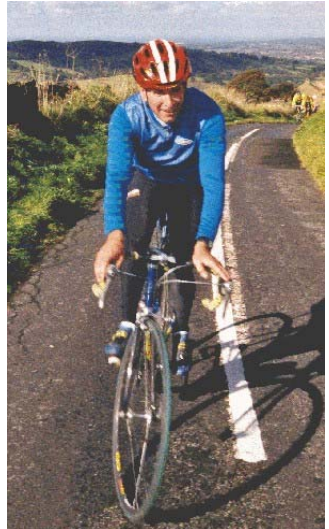
What is your most unpleasant characteristic? Deliberately trying to slow down the half day run so I can have a conversation.

What characteristic do you most dislike in others? I try to look for the good points in everyone - though not too keen on arrogant 4x4 drivers.

Who would you most like to have met and why? My ancestors to find out what life was really like for them.

What was your most embarrassing moment? Oh dear. Whilst sprinting along the platform at Euston to catch the train home, a little old lady stepped out right in front of me. I served, lost my footing, briefcase & contents slid one way and I the other - on my back and into a luggage trolley. The 500 or so commuters all looked round and no doubt thought "Not another drunk and it's only 6.30pm !"

Four words to describe yourself? Needs to get fitter.



DANGEROUS ROAD SURFACE

To the Senior Highway Engineer Tel. 01244 603 475

A hazard to cyclists exists on the bound carriageway
of (road/town/village)
near (house no. or landmark)

where a

- Pothole
- Raised / sunken gully / manhole
- Badly restored trench / excavation
- Other:

.....
.....

represents a danger.

ROAD HAZARD
Sketch map of location

**I WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD REMEDY THIS
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Date:

Best Clubman 2005

Congratulations to Reg Blease on winning the Best Clubman Trophy with a phenomenal points total. Thirty members accumulated over one hundred points during the year, on Sunday Club Runs, Friday Club Nights and the Wednesday night 10s in the summer.

Top Thirty

1 Reg Blease	259	15 Ian Udall	140
2 Phil Holden	252	17 John Pardoe	138
3 Peter Coles	225	18 Keith Bailey	133
4 Mike McConville	223	18 Dan Mathers	133
5 Dave Barker	217	20 Keith Wilkinson	130
6 John Coles	187	21 Robin Haigh	127
7 Roger Haines	186	22 Carol Pardoe	118
8 Keith Stacey	183	23 Jim Boydell	113
9 Malc McAllister	175	24 Stuart Kay	112
10 Mike Brooks	164	24 Allan Thompson	112
11 Gordon Peake	160	26 Harvey Maitland	111
12 Tim Seddon	157	27 John Woodhouse	104
13 Jon Rowlinson	155	28 Peter Devine	103
14 Allan Blackburn	150	29 John Carberry	102
15 Dave McIlroy	140	30 Richard Williams	100

And on the subject of attendances, who says Club Runs are a thing of the past? During 2005 we averaged just over 30 out with the three sections on Sundays. The high spots were the National Championship 10, the Club Hill Climb and the Christmas Hotpot – which was as you might have expected.

But then you have to ask – what possessed 43 members to venture out on 16 January 2005? Some went to Summertrees, some to the Cat

and Fiddle and some went somewhere with Dave Mac. If memory serves correctly, you might get some fairly colourful answers from Jim Boydell on the wisdom of winning one-

self up to 1600+ feet in the middle of January.

The low spot occurred in the first week of November when thirteen assembled in the midst of an unremitting deluge. One of them was heard to remark, 'I only came to see who else would be stupid enough to come out.'





Digging in the Dirt - Coed Llandegla Forest

Following on from ongoing initiatives over recent years by Neil Walton and Johnny Coles and probably others I'm not aware of, Andy Burns has taken on the mantle of instigating more Off Road Club Events. Andy is well known for using his Off-Road bike(s) on "Sunday tarmac runs", that most cyclists wouldn't dream of attempting on anything less than an audax model. "Quality training" he calls it. A strong off-road section could attract more youngsters who aren't as likely to join a bunch of middle-aged roaders at the crack of dawn on Sundays. Conversion to "club life" is more likely. Longer term – a healthy club future?

The first ride, in what hopefully becomes a regular feature, took place on Saturday 11th Feb. Being Car assisted, some prior "buddying up" on transport was arranged, and

Coed Llandegla Forest, the 11am destination. Andy had previously done a reky at this ideal spot not far from Wrexham.

The facilities include Car Park (Pay & Display), a Café and Bike shop, which are about six months old in a very impressive log cabin style. A bike washing area with water gun is



provided which nearly gave Roger a thrombi when, after queuing up he found it costs a quid. The main attractions of course are the miles of semi-managed tracks through Forestry, which

hides some fairly undulating terrain. There are three routes to choose from, increasing in length and difficulty, which are post marked appropriately.

Check out the web site <http://www.coedllandegla.com/index.htm>.

Nine Seamons turned out on a cold but reasonably bright morning with a variety of bikes ranging from the high tech to Reg Blease's converted Dawes with "normal" tyres. You have to admire his ability to do off roading on this all-purpose bike. However I happened to witness it's limitations on one or two occasions, but he kept smiling, brushed the mud of his jacket and covered every inch. The morning was filled with the short course and the ground still reasonably hard from the frost. Lunch at the Scandinavian style cabin, which is very impressive and has reasonably, priced selection and good-sized portions. Awake now and fed, the afternoon route develops into more adventurous terrain. Some clever landscaping by the designers includes zigzag bank-



ing and several series of downhill humps, which are well worth a second, go at. Steps, tree trunks and elevated boardwalks add to the variety. Everybody goes around the same way so you're not likely to meet someone coming around the bend the opposite direction. The trails are that long you don't see much of other riders anyway, despite the Car Park evidence that possibly a hundred bikes were out there somewhere. By now a full thaw had ensued and sticky Welsh Gunk transformed my brand

new cherry red Kona (Thanks to Neil Walton and the Club' Bike Shak night) into Peanut butter – colour and texture! It was my first experience of "springy" forks and disc brakes – highly recommended. Despite these aids I found myself careering "off piste" into the trees followed by Roger. Hysterical giggling attracted the shout, "What are you two doing in there ?"

Capt Wilkie - still not convinced there is any merit in off-roading, cruised around and declared an unconvincing "Isn't it good". Mr Pardoe showed us how to off road in the "Pinerello" style. Never seen John so mucky before ! Andy of course is a natural – no sense - but tons of enthusiasm. Reg ran out of inner



tubes but kept smiling. Gareth and Roger make it look easy. Johnny Coles went off the front whilst brother Pete played sweeper. My highlight was leaving the ground, both wheels at once, and yet still feeling

reasonably in control of my own destiny. It wasn't by choice - these things just happen.

Reg's last puncture happened in a spot with a good view so I happily waited whilst he wrestled in the mud. We were actually in a very nice part of Wales!

De brief ensued in the Café, (now there's a novelty) with mugs of T and a huge plate of cheese on toast. Ta Andy!

This was real "playing out on the bikes – digging in the dirt"! Even better being in a gang – and planned for Saturdays, because we all know - Sundays are sacrosanct! Roll on the next One.



Seamons Annual Dinner and Prize Presentation

Over 100 guests sat down to dine at our new venue, the Cinnamon Club, Bowdon. The evening was held together by MC Johnny Pardoe, with the Prize Presentation being conducted by Jim Boydell. Our Guest of Honour, John Leach, of the Kent Valley CC, presented the prizes. He proved to be a very popular Guest of Honour, with an endless store of

improbable tales, which had everyone still laughing weeks later.

Johnny Helms was our Special Guest, in honour of his 60 years as Cycling's cartoonist, a unique achievement. He was presented with a certificate to mark the occasion.

Founder Member, Reg Herbert, presented the Reg Herbert Ladies Trophy to Sara Blackburn.



Johns, Pardoe, Leach, & Helms



Reg Herbert & Sara Blackburn

The Club B.A.R. Champion was Dan Mathers,

Vets Champion Dave Bates, 24 Hour and Vets B.A.R. Phil Holden, Road Race and Hill Climb Champion Paul Smith, R.W.Chapman Trophy winner Paul McAllister, Keith Bailey Llangollen, Tourist Trophy winner Gordon Peake, Best Clubman Reg Blease, and the Most Meritorious Jim Boydell for all his work organizing the National CTT "10" Champion-

8, Cancer Ride marshalling, Manchester-Blackpool, off-road rides etc etc

BEST CLUBMAN 2006

Stop press: Editor takes an early lead; holder hanging on in there.

At the end of March the top twenty were:

- 1. Peter Coles 65
- 2. Reg Blease 60
- 3. John Coles 56
- 4. Gordon Peake 55
- 5. Phil Holden 52
- 6. Roger Haines 51
Keith Stacey 51
- 8. John Pardoe 49
- 9. Dave Barker 78
- 10. Tim Seddon 46
- 11. Carol Pardoe 45
- 12. Stuart Kay 42
- 13. Mike McConville 40
- 14. Malc McAllister 38
Ian Udall 38
- 16. Jon Rowlinson 35
- 17. Allan Blackburn 33
Nick Crampton 33
- 19. Alan Thompson 32
- 20. Keith Bailey 31



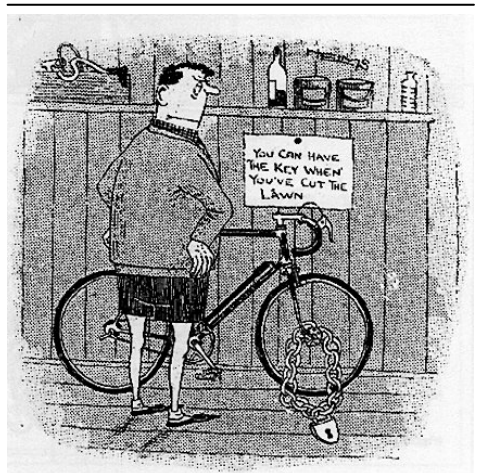
ship. JP got the Hammer. We were entertained by a superb swing band, not to mention the hotly contested mini-bike race. The Cinnamon has been booked for next year, February 10th: see you there!

TOURIST TROPHY

2006 PROGRAMME

- 7 May Club 100 in 8 Altrincham
- 13 May 201/165 km Audax, Shrewsbury
- 20 May SEAMONS CC TOUR OF THE BERWYNS 204 km AUDAX, WILLINGTON HALL, NEAR KELSALL
- 3 June Plains 408 km Audax, Poynton
- 18 June 204/170/110 km Audax, Kerridge, Macclesfield
- 23-25 June York Rally
- 9 July 201/104 km Audax, Shrewsbury
- 15 July 70 km off-road Audax, Sedbergh
- 6 Aug 202/165/104 Audax, Denshaw, Oldham
- 27 Aug Wild Wales, Bala

Plus, as usual, Club weekends, car-assisted rides, Treasure Hunts, Touring Section 100 in





Ice Cold in Powys

The February 2006 edition of the Gospel Pass Brevet, starting from Chepstow, promised real ale and 6 nations' rugby at the finish of 150k of hills and valleys. This welcoming conclusion to the ride, and the chance to meet up with friends who live in the nearby Forest of Dean, was sufficient inducement to get me to enter for a second time---the first being in 2003 when I found this a tough test so early in the season.

I travelled down from Chester to South Wales Border country by car the day before, stopping off in Bishops Castle for some sightseeing. On this day the northeast wind, carrying occasional flurries of snow, cut through me like a knife. As I looked south to the black clouds over the Welsh hills, there seemed little prospect of snow and ice free roads the next day.

On Saturday morning however the weather had moderated slightly as I travelled down to the start in the shadow of Chepstow Castle. The roads were clear, the sky was blue and steady progress was made over many hills and through stunning scenery to the first control at Pontrilas.

Beyond Pontrilas the route takes the delightful "Golden Valley" of Herefordshire past many orchards and places with strange sounding names such as Ewyas Harold. There must be an awful lot of history to unearth round here---but only when it's at least 10° warmer!

The Golden Valley eventually leads on to Hay on Wye; 2nd hand book capital of Britain. The control was at the rather splendid Granary Café, where we cyclists were regarded as

rather curious objects by the resident bibliophiles. There was undoubtedly a degree of reciprocation of this view.

From a comfortable seat in the café, I now had to consider my options for reaching Abergavenny if the Gospel Pass, rising to 542 metres (1800ft) was blocked by snow. After some time spent studying the map, I decided to give the pass a try and (famous last words!) return if things got too difficult. It would then be possible to return down minor roads parallel to the Golden Valley before turning south to Abergavenny.

Initially the narrow road leading steeply up to the pass was clear of snow. A number of 4X4 vehicles were ploughing up and down, which suggested that the road over the top of the pass was open.

After a couple of miles, the road became snow covered and cars were parked at the side as they could go no further. The cycle tyre tracks continued on in spite of the jammed cars, so I resolved to continue for a while.

Soon I met 3 riders who were taking the sane option and returning to the valley. But the tyre tracks in the snow continued---I had travelled a long way to do this ride---there were walkers around to give an illusion of rescue teams---so I continued. Some walkers I met told me that the road was snowed up for about 1 further mile and that other cyclists were crossing the pass successfully ahead of me.

After a further mile of pushing my bike through the snow, using my Look shoe plates as makeshift crampons, I was fully committed to crossing the pass. The summit was nowhere in sight, contrary to what the walkers had told me. However, the prospect of returning seemed much worse than whatever difficulties could lie ahead.

The icy wind whistled and the road almost disappeared under the drifting snow---but the

beckoning cycle tyre tracks continued ever onwards. The conditions gave a wonderful opportunity to compare the insulating properties of cycling vs hill walking clothing and to my relief the cycling garb acquitted itself admirably. (well maybe all except the shoes).

Eventually after 2 to 3 miles of pushing the bike on foot, I thankfully reached the top of the pass which had previously been hidden by a twist in the road. The SE facing descent from here to Abergavenny soon showed a ribbon of tarmac which enabled me to start the long descent to civilisation (once an inch of solid ice had been removed from the bottom of my shoes and I could once again clip in to the pedals). On the descent, I gave silent thanks to the trailblazers who crossed the pass first and left their cycle tracks for others to follow.

A few miles down the pass, cars were once again in evidence. Clearly the cars seen on the north side, taken to mean the pass was open, were returning after failure to cross as nothing on 4 wheels could have traversed the pass that day.

Once through Abergavenny another set of scenic and often hilly roads, giving magnificent views of the bridges across the Bristol Channel, leads to the promised real ale at Chepstow.

The Gospel Pass Brevet 2006, with its brilliant scenery and icy conditions remains a very memorable cycling experience.



First symptoms of Bike Flu!



“I’m with You” – Montgomery weekend 2005

This now well-established and popular club fixture attracted even more takers this year with the regulars being joined by newcomers Martin Wiggan, Neil Walton, Adam Rycroft and Ian Udall.

Despite various diversions and road-works on the car assisted journey down, a frisky bunch of 15 left Montgomery at 11 a.m. on the Saturday. By way of a change we avoided the traditional route over Long Mountain, and headed out through Chirbury, passing the Herbert Arms – a famous cyclists’ watering hole in the 60’s and 70’s.

Then on to the narrow and water-logged lanes towards Linley – scene of guest rider Chris Siepen’s spectacular tumble of a few years ago. This year it was Dan Mathers’ turn – no dramatics, but a damaged rim following a puncture. Through Norbury to the base of the notorious Asterton Bank climb – 1 in 4. But it

feels a lot steeper! Nick Crampton had a bad start to the climb when he came to grief on the cattle grid. He survived, but it could have been nasty.

This climb rears fiercely up, with spectacular views to the left over the Welsh borders – that is if you dare to take your eyes off the narrow road ahead. Yours truly was forced to make the decision between either using all the gears and technology available and climb the brute, or get off half-way up and record digitally for posterity the sight of the rest of the bunch taking to shanks’s pony = 24” gear = 2 feet = walking! (It’s OK, chaps, your secret’s safe with me) Once over the summit you are greeted with superb views of the Long Mynd and Caer Caradoc to the East, and the Glider club to the south. Then comes the long, hair-raising descent of the Burway which drops you dramatically and swiftly into Church Stretton. Not for the faint at heart.

Lunch at the Holly Tree café where I suspect

the owner is still suffering from shock after dealing with 15 hungry cyclists. She coped very well and kept topping up the tea pots without our having to ask. Brilliant.

The search for a new front wheel for Dan seemed to take forever. No bike shop in church Stretton now, but some bloke who lives up a steep climb (not another one!) out of All Stretton apparently keeps a few bits and pieces in his shed – once you've found the place. He saved the day, eventually.

Time was getting on and it was now raining. More climbing out of Little Stretton – more narrow lanes, more mud, and a ford to cross. Through Minton and then a superb swoosh down to join the relatively flat A489. It was here we had the first split of the weekend. Robin's proposed route rang warning bells with yours truly, who opted for the Bishop's Castle alternative. "I'm with you," chorused Phil, Mike, Dave and Neil without any hesitation. We were soon enjoying afternoon tea in Herbie's café. On leaving Bishop's Castle we spotted the "A" team bikes outside the Poppy House. So we were assured of a reasonably steady ride back in the dark, a real pleasure on the quiet roads. Roger, meanwhile, had ploughed a lonely furrow to Stiperstones, unaware of our change of plan – it was ever thus...

Day 2

On hearing Robin's plans for Day 2 the B group chorused again, "I'm with you", looking in JP's direction. We set off with the A team as far as Abermule, then branched left for the steady climb through Clun Forest to Anchor. Neil planned on taking the direct route to Clun, but our gentle powers of persuasion talked him into Knighton rather than Presteigne, the original plan.

We took the narrow hilly road over Black Mountain to Felindre, straight over the main road and another Black Mountain, then drop-

ping very steeply into Llangunilo, and eventually Knighton.

After welsh rarebit to die for and 35 miles, we followed the delightful flat! lane which runs alongside the railway to Bucknell, and eventually to Bishop's Castle via Bedstone Twitchen, Little Brampton and Lydbury North.

We were enjoying a hot cappuccino in the bookshop café when Neil noticed a strange smell. His sweaty gloves! No wonder we had the café to ourselves. Even the owner kept disappearing. Another pleasant ride back to base, this time before dark.

Meanwhile the President was treating the A team – guest rider Chris Siepen, Keith Bailey, Adam, Paul Smith, Martin, Dave Bates, Nick, Allan Blackburn and Ian – to a map-reading bonanza in the high welsh mountains and valleys around Llandidloes and Rhayader etc. finally returning to base after a full 80 mile day out, some 2 hours after us.

Roger and Sian enjoyed a gentle potter to Bishop's Castle to enjoy the hospitality at the Six Bells and the Three Tuns. Roger enjoyed the special brews so much he topped up his feeding bottles as well.

In the evening we were joined by Founder Member of the Club, Reg Herbert, who lives locally now. He was clearly enjoying the camaraderie and banter. He later passed the comment: "Nothing changes, cyclists are still as mad as ever." (40 years on)

I picked a good partner for the annual pool competition, apparently Paul plays every day. We were finally beaten by the local experts from the Crown Inn.

The friendly (?) rivalry between Phil and Mike on the Scrabble was stretched to its limit when they clashed over the spelling of "glazing".

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The Squirrel

They even got the hotel receptionist involved and she was German. “Just because I’m German doesn’t mean I can’t spell”.

Former Chairman, Bob McPartland, who has just retired from the Police, also joined us for a drink. Roger had met him in Bishop’s Castle earlier in the day.

Day 3

I made the serious mistake of joining what was left of the A team, after the others had had to return home to work, and things like that.

The destination? Emily’s café, just short of Lake Vernwy. The route included some of Robin’s map-reading gems, short-cuts, loops, leg-breaking climbs, and spectacular descents via Llanfair Caereinion, Dolanog and Pont Llogel, only to find that the café was closed! The old man said, “We were expecting you yesterday, the ladies are Christmas shopping in Shrewsbury.”

The now rather subdued bunch reluctantly hit the road again, and then, within a few hundred yards, a mirage – a fluorescent sign advertising “Hot meals”. It seemed to take forever to reach the elusive café, at the summit of yet another lung-burster, in the village of Llanfihangel yng-Ngwynfa (!!!)

Another café owner probably now still suffering from the shock of 10 seriously hungry cyclists falling through her door desperately, as she said: “Good God, we don’t normally get any customers at this time year.” She had not bargained for the now famous Seamons Montgomery weekend! Anyway, she coped very well, and it wasn’t long before we were enjoying the long hair-raising descent to Meifod. Paul Smith – club hill-climb champion, was heard to say, “I want to go home avoiding all hills.” Very difficult in these parts.

By the time we reached Garthmyl with some 5 miles to go, the bunch had become somewhat fragmented. Apparently it was left to Dan and Paul to fight it out over the remaining miles.

Dan suggested through and off; Dan went through, and Paul went off!

Meanwhile I really enjoyed the last few wind-assisted miles – at my own pace at last. Perhaps for me not one of my better days on a bike. I realized I may well be in line for a major trophy at the Club Dinner...

Our base for the last 6 years has been the very comfortable and very reasonably priced Dragon Hotel. Considering the time of year the weather was kind to us, although damp at times, but nothing serious. The camaraderie was second to none. This, plus the scenery and relatively quiet roads made for a truly memorable weekend. To me this is what club cycling is all about. Thanks once again to our President, Robin Haigh for stitching it all together. See you all again next year.



Robin Haigh Montgomery 2005

Longs and shorts



Sometimes things happen in just such a way that when you have to describe them it's as if they've been contrived just to get a laugh. Take Dave Barker's experiences. An uneventful parade out towards Alderley Edge was enlivened dramatically when Mr B struck a pot-hole. No damage done but his bottle jumped from his cage. Never ones to miss an opportunity, the touring section is straight in with the gags: "Dave's lost his bottle, and we've not even started the hills yet." Yes, yes, very funny. Later as the group tracked across Rainow Dave's luck continued to desert him. Dropping down some of the hills, Dave noticed his brakes were not sounding or gripping like they should. Closer inspection revealed they were well past their stop-by date and a dejected Dave headed, very gingerly, for Macc and Halfords. Having "lost his bottle" before, events had now really conspired against him. Where did he discover his dodgy brakes? Ward's Knob. Hmmm. So you could say Dave had worn out his brake blocks on Ward's Knob? Ouch. While the rest of the mobile knitting club/touring section continued on its way, there was another noticeable absentee that day - the runs leader. Feigning "illness", Wilkie had texted earlier to say he was sitting this one out. If only. Unfettered by the need to ride a bike, he was clearly poring over the map

on his sick bed; Lemsip in one hand, index finger tracing devious routes on the map with the other. The result was an otherwise pleasurable ride in the countryside routinely interrupted with suggestions via mobile phone of which way we should go next. The cheek of this was really compounded in the coming weeks when it was clear Keith was always available to ride the flat runs but was suddenly "ill" or "unavailable" to do the hilly ones. It's enough to turn you cynical. And speaking of absentees. The touring section - with or without Keith, to be fair - is renowned for its apparent inability to finish a run with the same number of riders it started with. Sometimes there are more, mostly there are less, sometimes there is the same number but it's all different people. But even by the tourers'



Xmas Off Road ride 2005

"standards", losing someone at the first turn must be record. While we all headed straight on at McDonald's (this is the one in Altrincham, the one about 100 yards from Rackhams), Eddie followed the wrong wheel and took a left. While he missed the proper run out, he did get to see the M&D dinner! When he can be bothered to come out, Wilkie is quite the athlete. He hates having an elevelenses

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The Squirrel

M&D Christmas “10” and Fancy Dress

It was cold, but Braveheart, alias Roger, alias



Bravelegs, didn't appear to notice as he sped off in his splendid tartan plaid and sword and bare legs. Neil Skellern looked warm in his woollen worsteds and flat cap, fob watch and



tweed jacket. He was riding a sturdy steed as “Sturme Archer”. Dan Mathers had been waiting for the AA as his car wouldn't start, embarrassing as he was dressed as Spiderman at the time, but he did a good ride all the same, coming 3rd overall. Paul McAllister was in “normal” racing gear, padded out with a few extra thermals, and was fastest on fixed. JP and I were the official judges, which was really hard as we thought the Seamons were all brilliant, but we didn't want to appear biased. We awarded Neil Skellern 1st prize for

all the thought that had obviously gone into his costume and bike, Roger 2nd prize, and



Dan 3rd prize. Then it was off to the cyclists' carol service at Chelford for a good burst of



carol-singing and more tea and mince-pies.



Another symptom of Bike Flu!

INDIAN CYCLE TOUR

by John Mercer

CTC Cycle Tour to Kerala and Tamil Nadu,

South India

February 5th to 19th 2006

Leaders: John and Pat Ashwell

This was a very enjoyable and fairly demanding tour. It was also an excellent introduction to India. John Thorogood (JT) and I joined 12 others and the leaders in Trivandrum, near the southern tip of India. It was a very interesting group, and contained some formidable cyclists. One couple, in their late fifties, had recently cycled from Melbourne to Perth in Australia, via Sydney and Darwin, carrying a tent. They seemed to be able to cycle for ever. I was the oldest, and was very much at the bottom of the group. The other ages ranged from 45 to 66, with an American woman in her thirties.

The tour was something of a test for me. I had a knee replacement operation in January 2005, and I was worried how the knee would stand up to touring. And I had put on a lot of weight since the operation: how could an old fat cripple possibly cope? With difficulty, and help from the support vehicles.

We had three minibuses with drivers, and also an Indian coordinator, Rajesh. The organisation was highly complex. The vehicles carried both the bikes and ourselves over dull sections and through towns. Indian traffic has to be seen to be believed, and traffic conventions are totally different from Britain. Indian traffic is based on priority for the most powerful. A hoot from behind means "get out of my way or I will run you over". This is hard for a British cyclist to accept.

Temperatures were high. I have a computer which registers both temperature and cumula-

tive altitude climbed in the day. At sea level, it was usually above 30 C, the highest being 41 C. In the hills, it could be as low as 20 C in the morning, but up to 35 C in the afternoon. When climbing, it felt even hotter, as I was not going fast enough to get a cooling breeze. In these conditions, you need to drink lots of water: this was supplied by the support vehicles.

After 3 days on the flat, we went into the hills. The first hill day was dramatic, with 7000 ft of ascent over 50 miles in great heat. This was too much for me, and I had to take a ride in a minibus. I took a couple of other rides when I was going slowly and would have delayed the party if I had insisted on riding. But I did complete one day which was 50 miles and 4,000 ft of climbing. So perhaps I will be able to do some gentle touring in the future. The hills were very attractive, and were covered in tea estates. The cycling was all up and down, with scarcely any flat ground.

An important feature of the tour was the many trips and excursions. These varied from grand sightseeing, like the visits to the fifteen acre Hindu temple in Madurai, and to historic



Cochin, to the idyllic 2 day trip on a houseboat on the backwaters of Kerala. These are a series of lakes, rivers, canals and waterways which stretch for about 50 miles along the coast. The backwaters provide the setting for the Booker Prize winning novel "The God of Small Things" by Arundhati Roy. The visits to

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local activities were just as interesting. We saw a simple sugar processing plant, crushing the cane and evaporating the juice to produce lumps of crude sugar, manual spinning of coconut fibre and production of fibre doormats on a simple hand loom. All were done by labour intensive manual methods, and could have been done more cheaply and better mechanically. Likewise, all the rice in the area was harvested by hand. The justification of all this is to provide work: the Luddite argument. Manual labour is paid 50p to £1.50 per day. It is an interesting question whether this policy can be justified in the long term.

John, and particularly Pat, are very good organisers. The tour organisation was pretty complex, with vehicle movements, accommodation, and food, including packed lunches all having to be coordinated. I expected something to go wrong, but it never did. John and Pat have fine tuned the trip with constant improvements like replacing inadequate hotels with better ones. I can heartily recommend any of their tours. The accommodation was good, and the food excellent if you like curry and spicy food. (It was pretty good even if you do not.) The cycling was only part of the story, and so mileages can be misleading. But here they are anyway: we cycled about 350 miles, and climbed about 22,000 feet, in 5 full days and 4 half days cycling.

After the tour was over, I left my bike in Trivandrum, and toured independently in Delhi and Rajasthan. Highlights of my trip included the Taj Mahal, the magnificent forts and palaces of Rajasthan, Delhi, a camel safari with a night spent sleeping out in the desert under the stars, and visits to a game reserve where I saw two tigers. But this is another story.



Andy Cook Training Camp – Majorca.

Attendees :

Seamons – Sara & Allan Blackburn, Cath Schofield;

Macclesfield Wheelers – Sue Rowson.

Friday

We arrived at the Pollentia Club Resort. It was a pleasant afternoon so Allan put the bikes together and he and I headed out the 3 miles along the sea front to Pollentia for our first cafe stop (well you don't want to overdo it on the first day). Back and a quick shower and down for pre-dinner drinks and a chance to meet up with old faces from last year. Malcolm Elliot is a guest rider on the camp this week, last week it was Jeff Thomas. Some nights feature nutrition or training talks. Briefings are held each night to discuss routes, safety, leaders, pace etc

Saturday

Choice of Sa Pobla/Can Picafort 50 – 70km, or 130km to Porto Cristo. We chose Porto Cristo which is approx 80 miles (for those of us who dislike kilometres). The group I set out with attempted to merge with a faster group when it passed, which was briefly successful then caused mayhem as riders including myself started to get dropped and spread out. The leader then reorganized a now halved group and continued to Porto Cristo. That wasn't a confidence building start, thrashing into the headwind and getting dropped, however, at Porto Cristo our group size for the return home doubled.

Allan went out with the "fast lads" and had the pleasure of riding and chatting with Malcolm Elliott on the return from Cristo. Malcolm actually punctured on the way back and my group passed him at the side of the road. The fast group didn't need to wait for him however and he was soon back in the pack.

Sunday

Choice of Lluc 74km, or Lluc and Colobra 120km. The Lluc ride is your first taste on the camp at some serious climbing. You ride out over the flats then hit a couple of small climbs



<http://www.clubpollentia.com>
<http://www.pollentiaclubresort.com>
<http://www.pollentiahotels.com>



up into some villages riding through the (very) narrow streets negotiating the many potholes, locals, cars, stop signs, etc. Lots of shouting, stopping and starting, and manoeuvring going on through here. Soon after you're at the foot of the massive Lluc climb and everyone strings out as they find their own pace up the hill. The climb itself is fantastic with beautiful scenery of the valley below as you negotiate the countless switchbacks. I had set out that day to do just Lluc thinking my elbow and legs would not hold out, but had a change of heart at the top and proceeded up to the Shack and then on to the top to the Colobra café. I must confess to getting an "assist" in the last 50 meters of the climb, thank you Allan for the push. This is where you have a chance to descend down to Colobra, turn round, and ride back up. There's only one road down – and once you're down there there's only one way back up. I had a look over the edge from the top down the Colobra, but the view didn't do my fear of heights any good so I had a gel and returned down to the Shack, then Lluc, and then (via a different return route) the glorious 15 miles of mainly descending back to Pollentia. The full Colobra route will have to wait till next year! This was a 57 mile ride.

Monday

Choice of Sineu/Petra 65km, or San Salvador 120km. I chose Petra today to spin my legs

after the climbing yesterday and did approx 60 miles. Allan went out with an impromptu group for a 50 mile brisk recovery spin.

Tuesday

Poor weather forecast meant we postponed the mountain day to Wednesday and visited Binisalem and the bike shop! Why is it that when you pick up some nice Assos gear and head for the till, your husband turns up at the shop? 50 miles.

Wednesday

Oh my god - mountain ride day!

There were a number of options. Option 1 ride with the slow group to Bunyola then climb the Orient. Option 2, ride with the mountain group over the Orient to Bunyola, then join the slow group with which you could go back on the flat to Pollentia or possibly climb the Orient in the reverse direction. Option 3, do the whole Mountain ride i.e. the Orient, Soller and the Puig Major. I thought this meant the big pig, but apparently it means the big peak.

I chose Option 2, however at Bunyola I got persuaded/press ganged into continuing with the mountain climb, I had a promise of a lift in the support van if I couldn't complete it! Bunyola square is fantastic. Crammed full of cyclists from all nations all sat in the sun drinking coffee and chatting, the place has a real buzz. The sound of post hill-climb analysis and clicking cleats and complaints of aching legs is everywhere. After a quick coffee break

The Squirrel

I set off from Bunyola behind the group as the other riders had arrived and left before me. I set off on my own, with another group leader to follow in pursuit, and the bike mechanic looked round the corner at me from the Bunyola square and shouted “Wrong side of the road”. I waved a thank you and continued merrily on my way. Within 3-4 miles of leaving the square you’re onto the foot of the climb of Soller with its never-ending switch backs gently ascending the sunshine-baked hillside. There’s a tunnel through the hill for cars (no cycles allowed) so the climb up Soller is virtually car free. The Soller climb was doable but I had a gel at the top as I knew the worst was to come. Nice descent off Soller down the other side and again the road is a seemingly never-ending array of switch backs. The sun had been beating down all day. I reached the Puig, and Malcolm Elliot breezed past me.

Some of the group found themselves able to keep pace with Malcolm later on in the climb and thought they were pretty cool, then noticed his unusual style, head bobbing up and down oddly, and noticed he was pedalling with just one leg for training purposes! Half way up the Puig I had a surreal experience when I spotted what presumably was a farm labourer, sat on a wall cutting his toe nails! Absolutely bloody charming! The rest of the scenery however was absolutely amazing. Behind you you can see right down to the sea and up ahead are massive cliffs of sheer rock. To the right the valley opens up and the town of Soller we left only a few minutes before, now looks like a set of match boxes laid out across a flat surface. The Puig has a climb of 9.5 miles and the heat was relentless. Turn after turn after turn and each time more climbing ahead. It’s not that steep but it’s just relentless. I could feel my legs getting weaker and weaker as I slogged away in my lowest (34/25) gear. I ran desperately short of water and was getting near breaking point when I spotted the van and the other cyclists at the top ahead of me and cried tears of relief! Over an hour of climbing from the bottom, if I needed

a reward it appeared in the form of Sean Kelly arriving just behind me. Just chance for a quick refill of the bottles from the support van, and some warm clothing for the descent. Everyone standing around analysing each twist and turn of the mountain they’ve just conquered. Allan had waited for me at the top and set off through the tunnel with me for the massive descent down to the Shack. A chance for a coffee, and more analysis at the shack, (Only €3.50 for a coffee and a Mars! Bargain). Just about 20 miles from here to home and most of them are down hill. You feel the worst of the day is behind you at this point so you can enjoy the views on the way home and that smug feeling you get when you know you’ve suffered and all you have left is a smooth descent on a warm afternoon, a hot bath and a good meal waiting.

Reaching the foot of Lluç a German rider slowly passed me. He was sweating profusely, and I do think if he wants to wear white shorts in future when so sweaty that he should give careful consideration to waxing.

Ninety miles later – exhausted – but happy!

Thursday

A choice of a 100 mile ride to Randa/Porreres, or various other options on a brisker or easier scale. I chose a 40 mile easy spin and lunch in the sun in Pollentia.

Cath and Sue chose the 100 mile route and battled headwinds and resisted the temptation to turn in early when the ride was trying to make up the miles to reach the magical 100! At a set of traffic lights a group leader attempted a track stand and fell onto a rider, knocking them both over. Having dusted themselves off they set off. At the next lights the same leader attempted the same manoeuvre next to Cath. Cath advised him not to do that anywhere near her!

Allan did Cap Formentor. I still can’t understand why the camp class Cap Formentor as a rest day ride!

Friday

Early start and return home – Boo!

FROM THE ARCHIVE

THE 24 HOUR MEN

Following on from the Club's success in last year's Mersey Roads Club event when Phil Holden, Dave Tickle and John Rowlinson won the team award in the V.T.T.A. National Championship, this prompted me to delve into the club history to find out just how many club members have ridden a 24 hour event.

My research revealed that members of the Seamons have had a long association with this, the longest, toughest, most physically and mentally demanding of all the time-trialling disciplines.

Way back in the 50's the late former Club Chairman, Ron De Looze, set the ball rolling with 2 rides in 1952 and 53.

The late great George Arstall rode 5 "24"s between 1954 and 59, his best being 436 miles, which he went on to achieve twice in consecutive years, and on fixed wheel.



Alan Rogerson and Jock Baird in 1960

Jock Baird and Alan (Koj) Rogerson, on three wheels, rode the event in 1960, followed by fireman – yes, another one! – Sid McMullen who completed 3 "24"s between 1962 and 66. Yours truly recorded 420 miles on three wheels in 1965, in an event where I had the undoubted honour of being caught and passed



Johnny Pardoe in 1965

many times by all the great 24 hour riders of that era: Eric Matthews, Arch Harding, Cliff Smith, Freddy Burrell, Dick Poole, Nim Carline to name but a few. What an honour it was sharing the same roads for a day and night with all those undisputed Giants of the Long Distance cycling world.

In that event the first 3 all recorded over 480 miles (20m.p.h. av. For 24 hours), and the eventual winner and National Champion was Nim Carline, a former Guest of Honour at our Annual Dinner, with 485 miles – 41 years ago. Incidentally, Malc McAllister also rode in the event, riding for the Altrincham Road Club on that occasion, as did John Taylor, father of another of our former Guests of Honour, Lynne Taylor, current R.R.A. End-to-End and 1,000 mile record holder.

Paul McKechnie was next in 1970 followed by Founder Member, Bob Hill who went on to compete in 1979, 1980 and 81. His three rides at the distance were quite remarkable, considering 30 years earlier he and his brother, Bernard, were accomplished grass track riders. There are many stories of the Hill brothers riding home from track events in Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and beyond, carrying their prizes - such as rolls of carpet! – on their bikes. Obviously good training for "24"s. Brian Bailey also completed four 24 hour events between 1989-2,000, and other club members who have competed are Rob Morton and our President Robin Haigh, who rode for



Malc Judge in a local '24'

the Greater Manchester Fire Service. By far the most successful rider at the distance in the history of the Club is Malc Judge. He rode four "24"s between 1968-1980, coming 2nd to the late great Cliff Smith in the North Road Classic, recording 455 miles, which remains the Club Record to this day, 38 years on. He also came 3rd in the Merseyside event in 1968 with 453 miles. Malc finally reached the pinnacle of his long distance career win-



ning the prestigious Mersey Roads event in 1980 with 454 miles, plus leading the Seamons to a team win, supported by Dave Bates and Bob Hill. What an honour for Malc, the team, and the Club.

It's Spring Again! – Since the last issue of the SQUIRREL the xmas hot pot has been and gone! Thanks to all involved for making it a success.



The club dinner had a new venue this year and was also a success, thanks again to all helpers, especially Johnny and Carol, who will be taking a well earned rest from organising! The dinner survey has provided some very positive results. More on that in a later issue. The easter festivities went down well with the three day event keenly supported.

Forth coming Attractions.

11th May Inter Club Table Tennis Tournament with Rob Morton's walking group. – players wanted. (see Roger)

29th May Gordon Peake's Famous Treasure Hunt start 11:00am at Rackhams.

24,25th June York Rally more details later.

Please take your Camcorders to club events, so we have a record of activities throughout the coming year.



Asian Bike Flu!

A WIRRAL VILLAGE.

How delightful it is to leave town behind, it only for a day or two, and retreat to one of Nature's pleasant places. Here in Little Sutton one seems a long way from what is called the world, and yet the place is easily accessible for anyone who has a day or two to spare. It is true the village boasts a railway station and a telegraph office, and that its neighbourhood has not escaped the notice of those in search of sites for pretty villa residences. But none of these things have spoiled it, and it retains a rural simplicity unmarred by any of the ugliness that the touch of civilization too often leaves behind. To stroll in any direction from Little Sutton is a pleasant thing. One may go northward past the gates of Hooton Park, or wander westward into beautiful undulating country with the Welsh hills far away ahead.

I would not let the journey hither be marred by one unpleasant mile, as in the approach to Northwich, where the blighting breath of alkali fumes has blackened the fair green of Spring. I chose instead the alternative to the main road to Chester which presents itself at New Bridge Hollow, two miles from Altrincham, and which is not by any means so widely known as it should be. On the road to Lymm I passed a strong gipsy encampment, their vans drawn up on the margin of turf, where they themselves sat leisurely twining osiers into basketwork. After about the eighteenth mile, where the low, blunt tower of Grappenhall Church is passed on the left, a district is entered which is very ill-provided with direction posts. It is not that these are wanting, but their arms only have the name of the places they indicate painted on one side, and there are cases in which that side is not visible from any part of the road, but only from a field ! Where the three ways meet at Stockton Heath the unwary wheelman is as likely as not to take the road to Wilderspool instead of bearing to his left ; and soon afterwards, three roads meeting again, there is nothing to show that one should bear to the right and go through the Waltons. Skirting the

pool at Lower Walton the road rises gently, with a fine park on the left, till it passes the church at Higher Walton. Dipping under the Bridgewater Canal, which the road passes over a little before Thelwall, there is a long rise, at first steep and afterwards more gradual, to Daresbury. It has an old church with a high roof and low tower, and on the opposite side of the way the large modern hostelry called the Ring o' Bells bears the same name and occupies the same site as the ancient inn which was its predecessor. A little beyond Daresbury, looking over the quarry on the right, a fine view may be had of Norton Tower, which has hitherto been only seen by glimpses. It is in this tower, standing upon a wooded eminence across the vale, that the water of the Vyrnwy on its way to the Liverpool Waterworks is allowed to fall from a higher to a lower level before it again pursues its journey by the action of gravity in the conduits. The road is well engineered. Where the hilltops to be surmounted are of awkward shape for carrying a highway a rock cutting is made at the summit and the climax abated. The way drops easily, and crossing Preston Brook continues to Sutton Weaver, whence a fine view of Weaver Pool and the Mersey estuary opens on the right. And so, rounding the steep heights of Frodsham, Helsby, and Dunham-on-the-Hill, it passes through Plemonstall to Chester, which it enters by the Fore-gate.

Leaving the city by the North Gate, and taking care to follow the Liverpool road, on the right, we have a fine, smooth, undulating road all the way to Little Sutton. Now we dip over a brook, now plunge through densely growing trees, now spin along the level. There is always the verdure of sloping fields that characterises the Wirral ; and long bird's-eye views, whenever the openings in the trees will permit of them, show blue Cambrian mountains on the one hand and the far shore of the Mersey on the other. It is a glorious ride, and its destination, this village among the fruit trees, is not more than forty-five miles from home even by the circuitous route we have taken.



TESTING TIMES



Some roads lead to Llangollen

Sadly the 2 day Llangollen weekend to Cerrig y drudion was cancelled. The owner rang Wilkie to report 9" snow, the children couldn't get to school, and more snow was forecast. So it was wait for Sunday and see...

We gambled on a car-assisted run to Tattenhall, then ride from there to Llangollen. We were confident the racing lads wouldn't miss the annual thrash. The lanes were a winter wonderland round Bickerton and Bickley. We walked quite a bit. The sky was blue, the sun was shining, we were warm, and hardly any traffic. Bliss. After crossing the A41 we headed out to Malpas and out of the snow. Through Threapwood and Bangor-on-Dee, then straight into a

headwind and a stinging short, sharp blizzard towards Johnstown, round Ruabon, and on to the final 5 mile stretch of main road into Llangollen.

A new Llangollen sign greeted us on the descent, we stopped, "is this it?" we asked ourselves. Even as we spoke a fast-moving close-packed group hove into view, bearing down on us as one. It was them. The group fragmented as they passed, but Keith Bailey hurtled on to the 30 sign.

We chased after them to the café. "It's got to be a tie," they were saying, "I didn't know which sign we were going for." "Where's Robin?", "Oh, his saddle came loose," "Everyone just shot off, so I did as well," said Adam. Nick had a pleased look on his face, but probably because he'd just found a fan

heater, strategically placed to dry off his clothes. Martin's comment was that it was a nice little(?) early-season lung-burster, but he's had to be disqualified because he was heard to phone a friend. "I'm in a café", and the friend promptly appeared in a car! Still, he did opt to ride up the Horseshoe Pass after lunch, before leaving the rest of the group who then had to make their weary way back.

Meanwhile Dave Matthews, fresh(?) from his mid-winter Audax up the Gospel Pass, treated us to a delightful circuitous route back through the lanes round Shocklach-Chorlton-Tilston, and back to Tattenhall. 60 miles covered, enough for today, bearing in mind the conditions first thing at 9 a.m. and the now rising headwind and very black clouds looming.



Bike Flu reaches Belgium !

23:48, this time 2 other Seamons members also turned out Paul Smith and Claire Bridge. On Saturday 18th March Paul again competed in an M&D 10 finishing 3rd with a 24:35, he must like the cold. This event saw the return of Roy Myers.

Martin Wiggan and Roy Myers took part in the Altrincham Ravens 25 on March 25th, Martin finished in the top 10 with a 1:00:51, and Roy finished with a 1:07:48.

April 1st saw Claire Bridge, Sara Blackburn, Martin Wiggan, Nigel Harrop, Alan Blackburn, and Roy Myers take part in the South Lincs 10. take part in the Southport CC 2 up doing 1:05:57. A number of members had also booked in to do the Withington Whs 25 on Cheshire but due to the bad weather that day the race was abandoned.



The National 24 team with their Medals

Testing Times

At the end of January Seamons members turned out in force at the M&D TTA prize giving dinner in Middlewich, to see Dan Mathers, Ian Udall, Dave Bates, and John Woodhouse walk away with a hat full of major awards, Seamons was also named club of the year.

The time trial season began on 25th February with an M&D 10 where Paul McAllister came 3rd with a 24:49 in very cold conditions. A week later he did even better coming 1st with

Tattenhall in the Spring Time

It's a glorious Sunday morning in April the sky is blue the sun is shining, the weather forecast in not brilliant, and the half day crew is off to Tattenhall.

The weather forecast and the current weather, is causing great debate in the house, how many layers do I wear, should I wear shorts or longs, should I take the summer bike without mudguards or the winter one with. Beth and Elliot have endless fun taking the mickey out of my indecisions, they are no help, and all

The Squirrel

they are doing is causing more confusion in my mind.

8.30am comes, decisions have to be made, Seamons long sleeve top, shorts, and waterproof socks, with a shower proof top in the back pocket just in case. Winter bike with mudguards.

I arrive at Rackhams various members take the mickey out of my short hairy legs and make a few pointed comments about the weather forecast. The usual crew have no mudguards, its April now, so you can officially shower your club mates in sh_t as the mudguard rule no longer applies.



Ian Udall in the Buxton mountain t

Chris Siepen has turned up, Robert Crampton has come back for more, and Sara fresh from Spain has decided to give it a go, Dans turned up, saying he's looking for an easy ride as he is doing a 25 in the late afternoon. The only problem being that we are leaderless and no one is that confident about the way. Help is soon at hand Tim turns up, he knows were he's going, the only problem now is keeping him under control so no one gets lost.

We leave Alty in the sunshine, everybody looking forward to a refreshing ride and a hot cup of tea at Tattenhall. The journey to Church Minshull is uneventful not even a puncture. The sky ahead of us is turning ominously black, the weather looks like its about to change. We carry on. The day is getting

darker and darker. At the A51 a quick runs committee meeting is held and the destination is changed to Beeston in the wild hope we can make shelter before the rain comes.

Adam is on the front the speed has gone up to 25 mph its going to be a quick dash, you don't want to come off the back now and not know your way to the café. Adam's lost it; he's off to Bunbury, as he missed the right turn. The havens have opened, forget the rain I have hail stones stinging my ears and face, I am on the front and have slowed a little because of the hail, it seems others are not as concerned as me and fly past, the race is on, Adam, Chris, Keith and Robin all fly along the A49 the road is a wash with rain and hail its freezing, but they are determined to get to shelter. The road is turning into a river.

Everyone gets to the café wet and cold but it was quicker than going to Tattenhall.

I am forced to have a second cup of tea, as the stop is prolonged as we watch the hail and the rain falling, its going to be a cold wet ride home for my short hairy legs.

The hail and rain stop its time to go, we start off up hill and the road is still a river, its slow going at first, the weather is cold and the roads are covered in hail, its time for the strong fit riders to sit on the front, we find a willing volunteer, Robert Crampton, all of 13 and 8 stone wet through, dad just behind.

The rides a bit quieter now we are all wet and cold, past Whitegate and on to Northwich, the firemen think they have there blue lights flashing as they go across the Swing bridge in the middle of Northwich on the wrong side of the road, Chris has followed, but the rest stop at the roundabout and wait there turn. It's a bit of a chase to catch the 3 and the weather starts to close in again, hail and rain again, as the group comes back together. The weather improves as we go past Pickmere in the dry. Robin and Chris are on the front as we head towards the A556, the air starts to feel cold again. Cold rain starts to fall. We head across the A556 towards Knutsford. The rain turns to hail for the third time, Chris has had enough, must be thinking the quicker he gets home the



Nick Crampton at the club hill climb

quicker he gets out of this weather, so quick it is, up Tabley Hill, hail stones are bouncing off my ears and face, they sting my lips, there is no need to take a drink as I am now eating the ice, its cold now.

The pace is very quick as we head along the Tatton wall, Dan's had enough of his quiet ride and heads to the front, my legs are now a stinging red colour as I feel every one of the hail stones now.

I am starting to get worried now, the pace is crazy, the road is a wash with hail, and my vision is down to about 4 feet, wet steamed up sunglasses are no good in these conditions.

The last straw comes when a car overtakes us, and seems to slow down as he goes past, showering my short hairy legs with the hail that had fallen on the other side of the road. That hurt.

I drop off the bunch, and ride home with Phil, the weather had picked up again by Ashley and we made it home in the dry.

Monday morning comes, ice covering the

roads and I set off for work, very slowly. My route takes me down Manor avenue, as I approach the stationary traffic at the far end I see a sporty black merc soft top, with several fingers waving out of the nearside window. I rack my brains as to what I could have done to upset this motorist.

As I get along side I find Keith Stacey inside eagerly enquiring as to where the group got to on Sunday. I quickly explained about the weather etc, but this didn't prevent him from describing us as a set of wimps for not getting to our stated destination, he was there having tea by himself. Wimps I don't think, I bet he got a lift back off Beryl.



Robert Crampton at the club hill climb

The Squirrel

100 in 8 Course

Start At Rackhams, Altrincham and follow the usual route up the main street to Bowdon and on to the lights on the A556 at Dunham. Straight on past the park on the left and turn left into the track that goes to Bollington Mill footbridge. Exit onto the A56, where left and then immediately right to follow the lanes through to

High Legh School Hall and join the A50. Turn left and then right and follow through to the T-junction (phone box) where right for Great Budworth and follow to Westage Lane where right to Great Budworth and through the village to cross the A559 and follow to a T junction at Comberbach, where left, right and left again. In 1.5 miles turn left for Little Leigh, cross the A533 by turning left and then immediately right and into Little Leigh Through the village and left at the T -junction to join the A49 at

Acton Bridge Left along the A49, over the bridge and then right and up the hill to turn left at the top for

Acton Bridge Station Turn right on the B5153 in the direction of Kingsley. In 1.5 miles turn left, signposted Onston, and follow through to a T-junction where right for

Norley. In Norley bear left at the Tiger's Head, then right up Maddocks Hill. At the end of the village turn left at the X-roads into Post House Lane and follow to

Hatchmere X-Roads (24 miles). Straight on and through the forest. Straight on at next X-roads to arrive at a T-junction. Turn left on the B5393 (direction Ashton) to

Ashton where left at the Golden Lion, then right into Kelsall Rd. Follow through to

Kelsall By-Pass (A54) where right and left (with great care) towards Kelsall. On the edge of the village turn right into Flat Lane and follow the lanes, bearing right at small junctions to emerge at a T-junction (no signpost) where right for

Oscroft. In the village fork left (after the '30' sign & chapel on the left) and in 1 mile at the T-junction follow the Chester/Nantwich sign to join the Tarvin by-pass (A51) Here turn right & left, (sp Waverton) and follow through to a T-junction, where right (sp Waverton, Hargrave) and then left (sp Hargrave/Huxley) to follow through to

Hargrave. At the T-junction turn left (sp Huxley) and in just over a mile reach a T-junction where left (again sp Huxley), then in 1/4 mile ignore the Huxley turn to left and go straight on in the direction of Tattenhall. Pass the

Poacher's Pocket and at the next X-roads turn left (sp Beeston / Cheshire Ice Cream Farm) and continue to the

Ice Cream Farm on the right (39 miles). Continue in the same direction and at the T-junction turn left (sp Tattenhall / Burwardsley). At the next T-junction turn left (sp Burwardsley) and follow to

Burwardsley where bear right at the Post Office (sp Broxton) and on to the next T-function where left (sp Broxton / Harthill). Past Harthill, fork left (unmarked) then ignore the next left fork to cross the A534 (sp Cholmondeley etc). Straight on at Bickerton Church to Bickerton School, where fork left (sp Cholmondeley)

Danger : Ice on road near castle!

Cross the A49 at Cholmondeley Arms into Wrenbury Rd and bear right at the junction (sp Wrenbury 3) to reach Wrenbury. (52.4 miles) Straight on past the church and Post Office to reach the school where right (sp Wrenbury Stn / Aston) and follow to

Aston. Follow 'Whitchurch' at the Nantwich / Whitchurch fork. Cross the A530 into Sheppenhall Lane. In just over a mile turn left (sp Brown's Bank Audlem) and at the 'Give Way' bear right (sp Audlem) to then turn left onto the A525 (sp Newcastle) and follow into

Audlem (58.8 miles) Bear left at the church on the A529 for Nantwich and through Hankelow. After the Hatherton sign turn right (sp Hunsterson) and follow the lane to cross the A51 at Bridgemere (sp Checkley / Wrinehill) and on to

Wrinehill. At the Blue Belt turn left onto the A531 (sp Betley / Balterley Heath). After Betley turn right (sp Balterley / Balterley Green) and at Balterley Church right and left across the B5500 (sp Balterley Green / Barthomley). At the T-junction turn right (sp Barthor'nley) and follow through to the village. In

Barthomley bear left at the White Lion (sp Alsager). At the T-junction turn left onto the B 5078 (sp Alsager) to

Radway Green (72.3 miles) At the lights (left if you want the cafe) turn right onto the B5077 and into Alsager. At the large sign 'Leisure Centre / Crewe Alsager Faculty' take Chancery Lane which becomes Lodge Rd before exiting left onto the B5078 (sp Nantwich). At the 'Give Way' in

Church Lawton bear left (the Betchton sign is just past the corner) At the A533 left and right into Love Lane (sp Smallwood). At the unmarked T-junction turn right and follow to the lights at the A50. Straight across (sp Smallwood / Brookhouse Green) and follow through to join the A34 at

Astbury. Left to pass the Post Office and Water Park cafes (79.5 miles) before turning left (sp Nantwich / Holmes Chapel). Cross the A534 into Box Lane and at the A54 turn left and right (sp Somerford Booths/ Swettenham). Right at the T-junction to start the descent of Radnor Bank (care on the left-hand bend at the bottom) . After climbing out of the valley, straight on for Lower Withington etc. At the T-junction turn left (sp Lower Withington) and at the next 'Give Way' (Care) bear right for

Lower Withington and the Red Lion. After the pub turn left and then left again in the village to fork right for Chelford and join the A535 at Burgess' Garage. Bear right and at the right hand bend turn sharp left (Care) and then right for Bate Mill. Past mill and up the hill to the X-roads where right and follow through to the next X-roads. Straight over to

Marthall. (90.2 miles) Cross the A537 and next left to follow the usual route back past the Pinfold Stud (Don't frighten the horses !), and through to Mobberley, Ashley, Hale and into Altrincham (100.4 miles)



CLUBRUNS



DATE	HALF-DAY	TOURING SECTION
07 MAY	HOPE	BUXTON *
14 MAY	PADDOCK FARM	MADELEY
21 MAY	RADWAY GREEN	MEERBROOK **
28 MAY	BUXTON	TWO MILLS ***
04 JUNE	DELAMERE	LONGNOR
11 JUNE	MEERBROOK	TILSTONE
18 JUNE	ASTBURY	HOLMFIRTH
25 JUNE	WINCLE FARM	CHESTER ****
02 JULY	TATTENHALL	HATHERSAGE
09 JULY	TWO MILLS	TATTON PARK *****
16 JULY	PADDOCK FARM	100 IN 8
23 JULY	BEESTON	MATLOCK (ELTON CAFÉ FOR LUNCH)
30 JULY	HOPE	MALPAS
06 AUGUST	HOLLANDS GAWS-WORTH	19 GATES
13 AUGUST	RADWAY GREEN	SOUTHPORT
20 AUGUST	NANTWICH MARINA	MONYASH
27 AUGUST	BUXTON	WHITCHURCH
03 SEPTEMBER	DELAMERE	CHELMORTON

- * 100 in 8
- ** SEAMONS CC TOUR OF THE BERWYNS 204 km AUDAX SAT. 20th May
- *** Gordon's Treasure Hunt meet at Rackhams 11:00am Bank Holiday Monday 29th May
- **** York Rally Weekend
- ***** Marshalling Cancer Research UK Charity Ride based around Tatton Park.

LAST LAUGH

