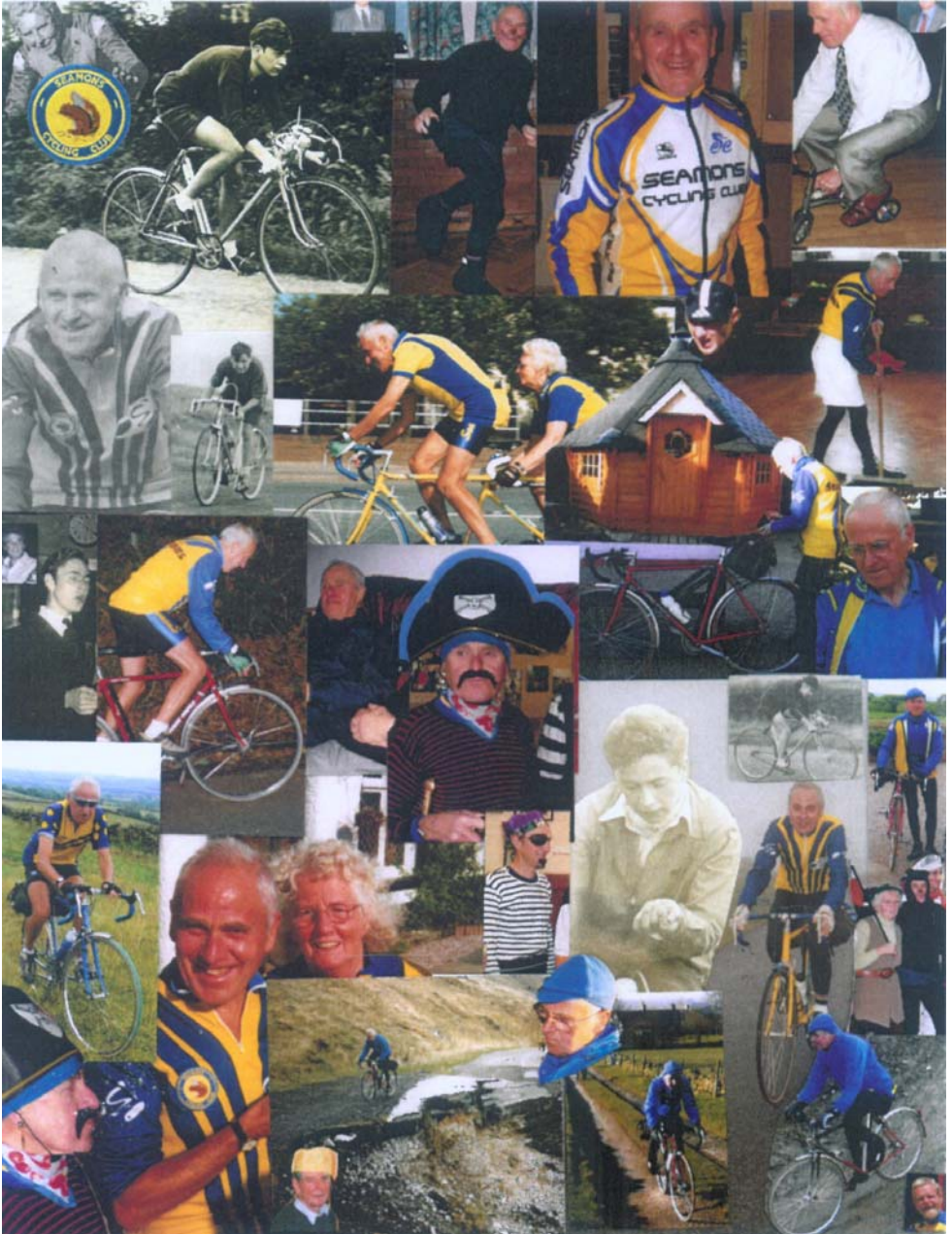


# THE SQUIRREL

Spring 2007





**Cheshire 2 Day – 5/6 May 2007**  
**Promoted by Wills Wheels CC & Seamons CC with the assistance of [CDNW](http://www.cdnw.org)**

On Sunday the racing moves to the other side of Middlewich on the again rolling course of Swettenham. With a couple of short sharp climbs and some twisty lanes this is another course which lends itself to aggressive racing and should see more breakaways to liven up proceedings. The leader after stage 2 will have to be strong and on the ball to ensure he remains in the lead at the end of this stage. Again this race will be marshalled by the excellent NEG motorcycle escort. Headquarters will be at Cranage village hall for this event which again is a stones throw from the M6.

We are still courting additional sponsors to add to the prize list but prizes will be awarded for stages, GC, Winning Team, Best 2<sup>nd</sup> Cat and Best 3<sup>rd</sup> Cat riders.

Further details are available online on the CDNW website [www.cdnw.org](http://www.cdnw.org) and updates and changes will be notified online

# Inside this Issue

- 5 Meet your clubmate.....Karen Blenkinsop
- 6 Moberley 8.....Gordon Peake
- 7 Tourist Trophy.....Dave Barker
- 8 Montgomery Madness 1.....Martin Wiggan
- 13 Back Pedaling.....Jim Krieger
- 14 Books & Videos.....Jim Boydell
- 15 Montgomery Madness 2.....John Pardoe
- 16 The new President.....John Pardoe
- 17 Longs and Shorts.....John Carberry
- 18 The Cerrig 2 day.....John Pardoe
- 20 Llangollen 2007.....Keith Stacey
- 22 Lanzarote.....Karen Blenkinsop
- 12 Letter.....Jim Krieger
- 24 Tasmanian Cycle Tour.....John

## **CTC Women's National Cycling Weekend June 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Beginners ride Saturday June 2<sup>nd</sup> from Hills Garden Centre, Allostock, A50, 2 miles north of Holmes Chapel. Start 1.30 p.m. to café for afternoon tea. Total 20 miles.

More experienced riders, Sunday June 3<sup>rd</sup> from Hills Garden Centre, as above. Start 10.00 a.m. approx. 50 miles to café for lunch. Bring waterproof, drink and spare inner tubes.

Contact: Carol Pardoe, 01565 723090.

Cover: Collage of Reg Blease to celebrate his 58 years with the club.  
'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](mailto:pete@thepot.freeserve.co.uk). Club website at [www.seamons.org.uk](http://www.seamons.org.uk) from where the on-line version of this magazine is available in PDF format.

# BITS AND BITS

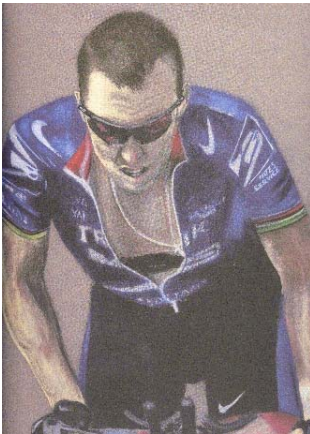
## The most expensive helmet you can buy:

Paul took Lindsay into Royles bike shop for a helmet and she came out with a Pinarello!

Who's got the cat's whiskers? When Pete Coles was asked if he would be joining the Spanish gang he replied that his cat is still in a mood after he went away on the Cerrig 2 day, so 10 days away in Spain is out of the question!

## The Bus Pass

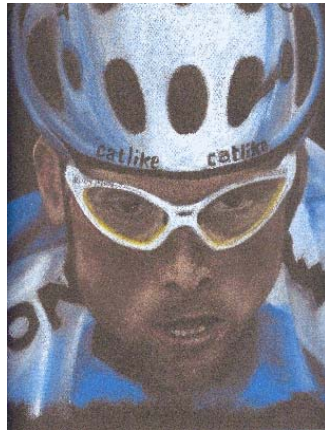
With her newly acquired maturity the secretary decided she would claim her bus pass from Vale Royal. Did she have proof of identity? Yes, she was wearing her Seamons CC jersey. And yes, she was a rate payer. Right, check the Vale Royal website. Not working! Delving into the depths of her lightweight (ie no money) cycling purse she found her "Carnet de camping International". "This has got me all round Europe without trouble", she said. OK, said the assistant, "what's good enough for Europe is good enough for Vale Royal". But where to go on the bus? There are only 2 a week from Allostock – to Sandbach...



Our thanks go to Emma Silversides, the artist who very generously donated the signed limited edition prints that were on display at the Annual Dinner. As a result £100 went into the

club kitty and I still have two prints left, one of Armstrong and the other of the recently retired Ullrich. Both are illustrated below so if you are interested in either then give me a call and make an offer. All monies go to club funds.

Several people were disappointed on the night at missing out on the chance of the four that were sold. These were of Armstrong, Pantani, Cippolini and Graeme Obree. All these were full pictures of riders and their bikes unlike the ones featured below. Copies of these may still be available and if you are interested then please contact the artist direct. Details follow...



Emma Silversides, c/o School Nurseries, 29 Broad Lane, Cawood, Selby, North Yorks. YO8 3SQ or visit her website at

[www.emmasilversides.com](http://www.emmasilversides.com)

Both prints are on thick quality paper, sized (approx) 16.5 in x 11.75 including borders. Both are certified and stamped by Tygre galleries and signed by the artist.

## Looking after our Trophies

Those who have attended the annual dinner will be aware of the fine array of silverware to

## The Squirrel

be awarded to members. After this year's event however most people disappeared with their spoils but neglected to take their protective bags with them. These are now in the hands of Mike McConville and we would like to re-unite them with their respective trophies. If this affects you, can you please arrange with Mike to make the collection. Previously each trophy winner has been given a note with guidance on how to care for the trophy but this has fallen into disuse over the last few years. As we now have an influx of new members then maybe now is a good time to remind everybody of the contents.

"The Seamons CC Trophies have been acquired over the years and are a permanent record of the club's racing history. Your name joins a long list of distinguished riders that have fought for these trophies in the past and the present condition of many is testament to the way they have been looked after by previous recipients. Please continue the tradition and to help you, here are some hints & tips.

**Insurance:** There is no need to include these items on your household insurance as they are all insured by the club. Even so, some are very valuable so we ask you to be very careful as their monetary value is of secondary importance to historical value to the Seamons CC

**Transporting:** Each trophy now has its own dedicated cloth bag with drawstring and is clearly labelled. After the prize presentation is over please pick up the appropriate bag from the display table and make sure the trophy is placed inside carefully. Some of the trophies are less secure than others and all need to be handled with care. When the trophy is returned early next year use the bag provided. **Please don't lose it.** Two trophies have separate bases and need special care. **The '100' trophy** has one bag and the cup is inverted and placed on the base. Make sure you use the cloth provided to protect the inside of the cup. **The '50' trophy** has two separate bags for base and cup.

**Display:** If you intend to display the cup(s) the shine will last longer if you choose a warm, dry room. If that is not possible it may well be best to leave them in their bags, somewhere safe.

**Cleaning:** A difficult one this. In a word 'less' is better. Some of our trophies have been cleaned to near extinction by over vigorous use of unsuitable substances. If you don't intend to display the trophies, store them somewhere, wrapped up, and *don't touch them!* If you intend to display them, regular use of a solvent-based cleaner (eg Duraglit) is the least damaging. Other cleaners like Silvo should be used sparingly, and harsher, abrasive cleaners *never*. Always remember to use a soft cloth.

**Banned Substances !!** Anything which might cause damage. Into this category we put Brasso, Vim, Kitchen & Bathroom Cream Cleaners, Chrome Polish, Car Polish etc. etc.

**Return:** It is customary to return your trophy on the first clubnight after Christmas to enable engraving for the Dinner in February. "

PS The new Malc Judge trophy is the only one that has not had a bag specifically made for it.

On the Thursday run last week Reg Blease was spotted retrieving a water bottle from behind a wall, near Belmont. It transpires that he left it there when the club went to watch the Tour of Britain in 2004!





profile. There is no specified route although a recognised preferred route has developed. Its emphasis is definitely social rather than cycling although most perambulate on two or more wheels. I've even witnessed it being done by taxi, but what that must cost is frightening. Recumbent cycle's have

## Mobberley Eight

The Mobberley 8 is an impromptu event organised by no one other than tradition. Originally a walking challenge (about 1969) to visit the eight pubs in Mobberley between 12 and 2pm (the original permitted opening hours) on Good Friday. Today, on foot it would still be some feat (or feet), even with more relaxed opening times. Starting at The Plough & Flail a lemonade in each is all that's required. The more astute amongst you will struggle to count eight pubs in Mobberley. The Stag and the Frozen Mop (Originally The Warford Arms) are the wrong side of Mobberley Brook and therefore in Warford. Does this matter – not a bit! The total is nine but who's counting. The Roebuck is more of a restaurant nowadays and this year the Mop was closed for refurbishment.

Over the years the modes of transport and dress (fancy through Morris Dancing attire to lycra) have varied and as a good day out it now attracts a couple of hundred. This year a team from Timperley resplendent in matching and specially printed T-shirts had the high

been seen and occasionally a full size Traction Engine. Some take the train from Hale and go no further than The Railway Inn, the traditional finishing line. Club colours are frowned upon but an all year round training regime is essential. Practice runs (or training) outside Bank Holidays are impossible due to some 2pm closures, but this just makes the day a bit more special. Having achieved all eight or was it ten, once, I now take a more relaxed approach and visit a mere handful and take lunch at the Bird in Hand or The Bull.

With a 12 o'clock start, a morning's preamble can extend its usefulness for those with more miles to collect. The ride out and back can make it a good introductory ride (20 + miles) for novice and relatives. We now meet youngsters who remember being push chaired around in their juvenile beginnings. You're very likely to meet an old friend as people travel back home from all over to partake. Haven't mentioned The Church or Chapel House. Still counting?

With care its good fun.

# Tourist Trophy

## TOURIST TROPHY 2006

Last year's cliff-hanger finished as a dead-heat between Gordon Peake and Roger Haines.

Leading positions:

1. Roger Haines	10
Gordon Peake	10
3. Reg Blease	8
Keith Wilkinson	8
John Carberry	8
6. Peter Coles	7.5
John Pardoe	7.5
8. Dave Matthews	6.5
Carol Pardoe	6.5
10. Andy Burns	6
Dave Barker	6

## AND 2007

So far points have been picked up in a 200 km Audax, an off-road session at Llandegla, the Cerrig week-end in March, a cycling holiday in Spain and in the Easter 50 in 4.

Gordon Peake leads with 4, followed by Keith Wilkinson and Fred Foster on 3 and a gaggle of hopefuls on 2.

**DON'T FORGET THE TOUR OF THE BERWYNS ON 19 MAY; ENTRIES TO DAVE BARKER BY 12 MAY.**

## TOURIST TROPHY PROGRAMME

19 May SEAMONS CC TOUR OR THE BERWYNS, 206km AUDAX, WILLINGTON HALL, KELSALL

other local Audax events;

York Rally

Treasure Hunts

off-road rides

Touring section 100 in 8

marshalling Tatton Cancer Ride

Manchester-Blackpool  
etc, etc

Two members (at least) are planning end-to-end rides this summer. Worth 2 points.

## BEST CLUBMAN 2006

Congratulations to Phil Holden who lifted this trophy once again.

Leading placings:

1. Phil Holden	257
2. Peter Coles	251
3. Reg Blease	247
4. Mike McConville	233
5. Jon Rowlinson	224
6. Gordon Peake	216
7. Keith Stacey	209
8. Tim Seddon	198
9. Dave Barker	183
10. John Coles	179
11. Allan Blackburn	171
Ian Udall	171
13. Roger Haines	166
14. John Barry	148
15. Keith Bailey	143
16. Malc McAllister	142
Mike Brooks	142
18. Roy Myers	141
John Pardoe	141
20. Dave McIlroy	138
21. Stuart Kay	137
22. Carol Pardoe	129
23. Nick Crampton	128
24. Adam Rycroft	123
25. Alan Thompson	118
26. Keith Wilkinson	114
27. Jim Boydell	108
28. John Carberry	104
Martin Wiggan	104
Simon Williams	104



## 2006 My second experience of the Montgomery Madness

It's Weds 12th December 2006 – 3 days after the 2006 Montgomery weekend – and at the time of writing this I still can't walk. When Bjarn Ries took over at CSC he initiated a winter training camp for the team that was set by the Danish equivalent of the S.A.S – this is my second Montgomery weekend – and I feel like the big Dane might have had a hand in this years planning.

Day 1 – In the beginning there were fresh legs.

It's the middle of winter, we're all suffering colds etc, we can't really afford it 'cos it's nearly Christmas and it's a time for family.....so what do 20 of us decide to do...that's right, spend three days (2 nights) in a hotel in the middle of Wales away from families,

“enjoying” three of the toughest days bike riding one could ever do.

**BUT WE LOVE IT!** No really. For some very different and somewhat peculiar reasons, we all absolutely love it!

The weekend itself was another great success – everyone there appreciated the effort of making the arrangements so a big, “Thank You” to Robin once again.

The weekend was marked by the usual killer bike-riding, cheesy comic moments (too many crap jokes), camaraderie, food, food & more food, beer, pool, tiredness, thrills, spills & all-over-body-ache. We must not forget the all important competition, balls-out gutsy heroism in the form of exceptional climbing & sprinting performances that epitomises the fact that the majority of the “nutters” there are men

– and can never resist a challenge, no matter how daft it may seem afterwards.

I arrived Friday morning to hear from Robin, Keith & Chris that they had ignored the flood diversions and had instead taken-on the river Seven – and won! Right lads, Lets Rock, time to party. It's time for that type of crazy 'Montgomery-ness' that we all fear/love (cross off as appropriate) and barely survive. What a way to set the tone for ignoring all normal sensibilities – nice one gents.

More cars arrived, "morning", "how are you?", "not too good", mmmmm bit nervous", "not sure what the legs will do". Rubbish!!! It's all a big bl\*\*dy cover up. Every last one of us has been on the turbo trainer for weeks – don't let anyone tell you different. Slowly but surely the Seamons's Lycra-clad heroes (see 'nutter's) & wannabes turnout in yellow, blue & black – and we think we look cool (laughs). Final preparations are made to bikes & kit and we all want to get going so we can get the suffering over with sooner – at least that's my motivation for wanting to get off. Then there's the wish to ride before it rains of course.

And so we go....heading out of Montgomery all of us together (there's time for a split later). Anyone that knows the feeling of the first morning understands the nice rolling downhill that first greets you. It's effortless, fresh legs, downhill, wind assisted, it feels great. But the feeling is tainted and short-lived. Something dark looms on the horizon. Hills in the distance torment a cyclists mind. There's no turning back, the pride won't allow it. As so, it's quiet in the peleton. I know why – in fact it's no secret. We are all mindful of the pain to come. We don't want to fail ourselves. Mountains have to be tamed, and that takes concentration, guts, nerve, restraint and most of all long lasting power (over mind AND body). 1st up is 'Long Mountain' – Great, why's it called that? – is the rhetorical question posed. Less than twenty minutes into the

first ride first day, not warmed up and the road goes pretty much straight up. Wow! It's a massive effort – especially from cold. From 60% effort to 97% effort in less than a minute. Nearly ten minutes climbing with some sections up to 20% gradient. I start in my lowest gear. I have a 25 on the back and goodness knows what on the front. At first I'm spinning, clearing lactic easily, but it's early and we're running on 7-8-9% gradient. Then the road really does go up, a sustained 300m section at over 15%. Adam & Ian, Chris, Keith go up the road! Lactic build and my lungs start to bleed. The reality of why I am anxious about the weekend sets in – I'm vindicated – damn it! ...But nearing the top I recover quickly; ground & breath. I am not last and the restraint early on is paying off. We reach the first summit – 'Long Mountain' tamed by all, we have bagged our first summit!

Once re-grouped & recovered I'm elated. I notice too that the endorphins must have hit Phil Holden. He's off !! Up & out of the saddle up the steady remaining incline. Nice one Phil. It's magic for us all. And the panoramic view is unbelievable. Contours, light, shadow & autumn colours, with clean air, blue skies and a low sun that forces everything wet to shine – amplified in the senses by the rush we're getting on the bike – and it's magnificent. I love riding my bike in the hills. But there's no real time for poetry at the top – there's a massive rush to be gotten from descending too. Nick Crampton, Robin, Keith, Allan, Adam et al, they want to fly.....What a relentless descent – rolling, uninterrupted, with good vision of the road – perfect.

The first day settles quickly into the climb-descent-climb rhythm – it's incessant. We eventually lunched at a pub in Stiperstones, after the first inevitable sprint victory from no other than Mr Chris Siepin – good lad – (but shouldn't you be in yellow after the first stage win? Maybe next year Chris – better tell Will). To be fair it was less of a sprint than a hiding



## *The Squirrel*

dished out – cat’ one style!

Then post lunch after the giving what I know is my one good climb of the day the group decides to split. It’s inevitable I guess, that’s what must happen to suit all levels on the weekend. The more sensible of us turned right at the top and headed back for a more moderate finish to the day. But my group, we want more – animals (see ‘overzealous fools’). We start to descend the west side of ‘Long Mind’ (tenderly, if inappropriately re-named last year – ask Adam Rycroft). A friendly voice warns me of the descents deception & cattle-grids, sweeping turns hidden behind walls and the likes. I follow Keith B looking to match him for speed, skip, trip, lightness and deftness that only he has. I manage to match him for enthusiasm only as he skips off like a skilled mountain goat – what a bike rider, the balance, handling, skill, carving & crafting of his way down this wonderful mountain - Conrad Bartelski (Remember him? Men’s Downhill) had nothing on Keith.

I think it was the ebb & flow of the descents hypnotic rhythm that was shortly to be my undoing. The first & last crash of the 2006 adventure. After the umpteenth cattle grid, I missed my line into the right hander that followed - I panicked. The road was fast disappearing on my left where grass and mountain-side, barbed wire & rock took its place. At about 20 mph, I hit the back brake in the hope of re-gaining composure on the road, throwing myself into the right-hander that I was late on. The back wheel skidded out left and touched turf. I released the rear break in the vain hope that the front end, still on tarmac, would lead on and the rear would be righted back to safety – not so. The front wheel hit a rock (...I think..... yeah, it was a rock.....I think) on the side of the tarmac and I was catapulted from the saddle, luckily leaning right, I hit the tarmac – wrists & palms outstretched – thank heavens for padded gloves. In a flash I was down – and not sure immediately if I was OK. Within the briefest of sec-

onds Nick C hit me full on, riding over his bars and hitting the tarmac himself – Sorry Nick. Then a moment of stillness ensued..... Were we both OK?

“Spillage Idiot”

Within a matter of seconds we had checked our own vital signs – no majors to speak of. I felt lucky, Nick seemed OK – almost matter-of-fact. My first real spillage – I was shaken. I finally arrived at the bottom, gingerly in one piece. A puncture fixed, I sort solace at the back of the group to lick my wounds – until the next climb of course ;o)

So, we do lunch, we ride, we climb, we sprint, we café (we take the inevitable and frequent stops at five-bar gates), we sprint again, and eventually, after watching Adam Rycroft launch a gritty attack that beats Bailey & Siepin to the Town sign (they said the sign had moved – no it hadn’t lads), we arrive at Bishops Castle for a dose of herpes (Sorry that used to say Herbies Café). Post Bishops castle is the annual black hole ride back home and we arrive back in familiar surroundings of the warm & welcoming Dragon – no ‘Den’ is this. In need of a pint or three we decide to break the sauna, bath/shower and congregate in the bar before food. A deep satisfaction & relaxation descends and we sink deeply & completely into the seats and nurse a couple of cold ones! Mmmmm – well smug & proper knackered!

Day Two – Let there be banter!

The first day was fast last year (my first year), but then so was the second & the third day – masculine pride rules the roost – that’s the Montgomery Madness descending. Having arrived home (from day 1’s ride and the pub) in one piece – almost, it is the job of everyone to awake on day two fresh ready for a lot more of the same.

Cumulative fatigue is a mental challenge.



Knowing there is much more to come is worse than what's coming. We were looking at 80 miles straight in the face on day two. That's 5 hours plus in the saddle – essentially interval-training on the hills. OK, there'll be some stops & food, cafés & pubs, but that only drags out the inevitable suffering. Couple that with the 50 hard miles we did yesterday it's a big mental ask; and the cumulative fatigue takes its toll on the body. That said, we're sprightly, up-for-it again and the mood is buoyant. Louise arrives this morning and so we are many men and one female national road race contender – wow! Now check out the testosterone levels!! Fuelling the male pride to boiling point it was going to get messy in the hills today. And so we start to feign excuses, "I'm done, taking it steady today", "you have to conserve", you can't go for it on every hill", "we'll go easy", "I'm not sure I'll get round today" – and once again we reach for the salt, throwing saddlebags full of the stuff over both shoulders. We all know full well that we'll hit it hard – reach our limits – prove ourselves. And there's the fact that conservation of energy on 20% hills over 80 miles is simply a luxury of a choice we don't have.

So, donning extra winter layers, a fresh inner tube or six we roll once again out of Montgomery in the direction of a hill – east I think. It was another cracking dry day. Low sun, bouncing off hills that roll on and on to Lud-

low. Now Chris Siepin is hard, there's no denying it – but crossing a foot deep fjord after only 30 minutes of the ride takes more than being fearless – It takes the promise of "Lad Points". So, with 70 miles yet to ride, before we have even started to really get going, there we all stood only half contemplating the prospect of riding through it – all except Chris that is. As I rolled gently up to the back of the group, I could see that the majority were queuing up to cross the eminently sensible wooden footbridge that lay to the right of the fjord. I pulled up alongside Keith Bailey and watched in disbelief as Chris plunged his bike into the fast flowing water. I am guessing that he had about 20 feet of "river" to cross having taken about 20 feet run-up. He hit the water pretty fast & with some conviction, but unable to pedal, for fear of having both feet filled with water, I watched as his speed rapidly dwindled. He stuttered and made an instant attempt to regain balance but only managed to with one foot fully submerged into the water. But he managed the rest with only feet wet – a risk that only just paid off. We all breathed a sigh of relief – that's Montgomery Madness again.

Cyclists 2, rivers 0!

We lunched in a place called Burford – south east of Ludlow – some 40' odd miles from Home. Lunch was literally lollopped up – you ever seen pack of hungry Labradors eat? More chips than McDonalds in the Trafford Centre. Post lunch we headed back in the direction of Ludlow, before turning west back into the hills for a final Café-stop on the B488 some 7 miles south of Bishops Castle. We must have doubled that poor woman's takings for the day – well nearly, her only customers upped and left on our arrival (for some reason). It was getting dark outside and we had ridden 65 miles – 17 to go. The café was the warmest building I have ever been in – warmer than the Sauna at the hotel even (not difficult since we'd broken it on the first night – trying to get 17 in a room half as big as my shed). The other noticeable

## The Squirrel

thing was how quiet we were – pure and simply done-in! The 17 miles that followed in the dark were quite serene – apart from the loss of a front light that also took Allan’s spare inner-tube. Ian and I rode effortlessly on the front until the madness descended once again for the final run into Montgomery- which I missed whilst being chaperoned back to base by Ian and his front light.

And that was me. I relaxed completely with about 6 pints. I knew that I wasn’t riding on Sunday. I had promised the missus that I would get back in time for her pantomime rehearsal. So with my tail between my legs, I



rose on Sunday, ate and left.

I am told that Sunday was quite an elite group; topped by the fact that Dan Mather arrived (with a new pair of new Bontrager XX-lite road wheels), so I was glad to be going home. Getting my proverbial kicked for a third day was not something I relished. I am told by Dan that it was a great days riding. He assures me that Robin knew exactly where on the map he was at all times – you can make your own mind up. The day was topped only by the most hilarious story I have heard for a good while.

Now for those of you who know, the hotel always holds a single “shower room” for the lads to change & shower post their final ride on the Sunday, before heading home. It’s a generous offer that keeps us coming back and helps us recover just enough before the drive the 3 hours back to Manchester. This year’s room was served up as usual, and received with the usual gratefulness of eight people just desperate to get warm, washed and dry – so they can feel human again. One thing that needed to be worked out however, was the logistics of having Louise there (single white female extraordinaire, who as the only female also needed to use the facilities). Now I am not going to mention any names, buy my source for this story comes straight from the horses mouth. Louise tells me that she had a most enlightening of times when entering the designated shower room, in that one of the remaining gents had not realised that she was there, and had bared all from the shower room before realising. Having noticed, and started to retreat & apologise profusely, the gent in question reversed back into the shower room only to yelp, having burned his bum on the scolding towel rail. He lives amongst us and is a living breathing testimony, that even after 3 of the hardest days cycling one could imagine, there is still enough life so as to run-the-proverbial-mile.

Just keep any eye out, one day, whilst sitting in the group on the half day section, you may well see his scar.

Nice one all. Thanks for the laughs, the fun, banter, the beer & camaraderie. Thanks for the hills, the pain and the joy. Thanks for the food, the sleep, the down-hills and landscape. Thanks for the humility the mountains command. Most of all, thanks to the Montgomery madness.

See you all in December – I hope.

**BACKPEDALING**  
**ODDS AND SODS FROM THE HISTORY OF BICYCLING**  
by Jim Krieger

*"When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking."*

These words were penned, many years ago, by the author who gave us the immortal Sherlock Holmes. Holmes had his violin to divert his mind and soothe his spirit, but Holmes' creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, preferred a more vigorous pursuit to while away his leisure time. After more than a century of proof, Sir Arthur's words yet ring true.

Doyle was, apparently, a fancier not only of bicycles, but tricycles as well. Whilst living in South Norwood, Doyle and his first wife, Louisa, were reportedly "keen tricyclists".<sup>1</sup> Cycling was not merely a recreational diversion for Doyle, but part of his creative process as an author. He related in later years that "it was whilst out riding" that he conceived ideas for many of his stories.<sup>2</sup>

Charmed in many ways, Doyle's life was not without its deeply tragic events, and his reference to times "when hope hardly seems worth having" was not mere hyperbole. Doyle was a physician and surgeon, and well knew the relationship between regular exercise and good mental health. His advice to us was born not just from his medical training, but from his personal experience as well.

The next time you're out of sorts, here's your prescription from Dr. Doyle: "Mount a bicycle, and go out for a spin."

---

1. McGurn, James, *On Your Bicycle*, Facts on File, Oxford, 1987

2. Ibid.

---

*(Continued from page 17)*

camp.

John Coles was having none of this modern super-smart, lightweight road-bike nonsense.

Ignoring the fact he'd hired a pukka racing bike, JC proceeds to remove the saddle and stick on a 400-year-old Brooks.

"I need that so I can get my saddlebag on.

That thin saddle hasn't got any loops for a saddlebag," he offered.

There's probably a reason for that John.

Never ones to miss a tea-drinking opportunity, the tourers were happily obliged by Jim Boydell. After puncturing on the hill up to the Wizard, he was left with a support crew/critical audience of two while the rest of the

group carried on upwards. Despite a tight-fitting tyre the repair team and Jim were soon on their way. At the top of the hill it looked like a very thin group were waiting. However, it soon became clear why that was - some of them had taken full advantage of Jim's misfortune and before you could say "puncture!" they'd availed themselves the nearest services and were swigging tea.

It's a hard life in the touring section.

## **Books & Videos**

With the advent of the new library case up at the clubroom, there is now the opportunity to clear out those unwanted videos and books that have a cycling theme and so let your clubmates have access to them. Come up on a Friday night and speak to a committee member if you wish to donate any unwanted items. Are you willing to let other members have access to your collection but would rather retain control yourself? Fair enough, then make a list with your contact details and it can be placed in the library so a mutual arrangement can be made.

To start the ball rolling I have a number of books and recordings that members may be interested in, listed below with a brief synopsis.

In no particular order they are.....

### **Books.**

*The Escape Artist* by Matt Seaton (pp182) Man finds cycling, finds wife, loses wife and loses heart for the bike. sounds depressing but a wonderful narrative and insight into the mind of a cyclist.

*Need for the Bike* by Paul Fourmel (pp150) A very personal view of the relationship between a man and his bike

Translated from the original French into English (well American actually but we'll forgive that.) A quick and satisfying read.

*Fastest Man on Two Wheels* by Phil Liggett (pp127) Boardman's Story – illuminating and plenty of photos.

*Greg Lemond – Incredible Comeback* by Samuel Abt (pp222) Three-time winner's story. Well written as Greg paves way for the future domination by Armstrong. Both had severe life threatening setbacks to overcome.

*Flying Scotsman* by Graeme Obree (pp246) Amazingly frank autobiography by the Scottish one-off. Suffer with Obree as he takes on a world that he always seems at odds with.

*One More Kilometre and we're in the Shower* by Tim Hilton (pp396) Sixty year-old British cyclist's view of the cycling world and its changes throughout his life. A great read though there are some inaccuracies. (only a few!)

*Fat Man on a Bicycle* by Tom Vernon (pp350) Eccentric overweight novice pedaller discovers the delights of rural France as he meanders from the 'Manche' to the 'Med' on a proper bike but did he really have to wear sandals?

*A Spoke in the Wheel* by Les Woodland (pp128) A personal view of the cycling scene by a true cyclist, clubman and Veteran of the 'golden era' of the '60's. Our own Keith Stacey gets a mention. Illustrations by Johnny Helms.

*Byway Biking in Lancs* Intro plus 27 routes varying from 8 to 51 miles with lots of off-road.

*Mountain Bike Guide (Derbyshire & Peak District)* Intro plus 21 routes varying from 6 to 38 miles.

## **Videos**

Sunday in Hell (Paris –Roubaix 1976) 105 minutes of Merckx, De Vlaeminck, Maertens and Moser.

La Course en Tete (At the Head of the Field) 105 mins. Career of Merckx from start to finish from '61 to '77

Stars and Watercarriers 90 mins. 1973 Giro D'Italia. Merckx, Gimondi, Moser, Battaglin etc

Ghent-Wevelgem '94 80 mins. Peeters and Ballerini battle it out to the finish line.

Tour de France '89 85 mins. Official video, English commentary as Lemond outwits Fignon in the final time trial. We were there!

Fausto Coppi – Ein Italienische Radsport Legende 90 mins recorded from a TV documentary. Contains rare footage.

Chacun Son Tour 105 mins. TdeF Documentary again recorded from the TV. (Both the above are on one tape)

Jim Boydell Tel: 0161 442 6370 or e-mail jim.boydell@btinternet.com

---

## **MONTGOMERY MADNESS - Part 2**

Meanwhile the “B” team were also enjoying the unique atmosphere for which this weekend is now famous, but at a slightly more leisurely pace. I have to admit that Long Mountain gets longer and steeper each year, but it instantly sorts out the pecking order.

Lunch at Stiperstones was very sociable, and afterwards we were treated to the stunning panoramic view from the summit of The Bog over Caer caradog and beyond. Following the fabulous, but hairy (ask Martin Wiggan) descent to Ratlinghope the “Evergreens” were more than happy to follow my not so quite challenging route to Bishop’s castle, with afternoon tea at Herbie’s Café, then back to base before darkness fell.

Down in the bar voices could be heard slightly raised over some dubious contentious offerings conjured up by Phil on the Scrabble board. Words that Mike was to check out at a later date in the Scrabble dictionary. A pint or two later and all was forgiven.

Day 2: another fine day and the “B” team opted for the well trodden (ridden) route over the Kerry Forest climb to Anchor, then over

Black Mountain to Knighton, where we enjoyed lunch in our usual café: welsh rarebit to die for, and a super omelette.

Our route back through Bucknell, Bedstone, and Bishop’s Castle meant we were back before dark – just. Riding with Phil – who, incidentally celebrated his 60th over the weekend – is like being on the end of a ten foot bungi: one minute you’re on his wheel, then next minute he’s off into the proverbial distance. Too much hanging on to Tim’s wheel on the Half-day gang, I suspect. Neil kept taking the bait, leaving JP and Mike to meander along quite happily at their own pace.

Day 3: JP decided to plough a lonely furrow to Clun via the Kerry Forest route, only to find the café was closed. I then met up with the now depleted “A” team which had been joined by Dan Mathers, and we all enjoyed lunch at Herbie’s café in Bishop’s Castle again.

As I have said before, weekends away are what club life is all about, and I’m sure we all enjoyed the “Montgomery Madness” in our own way. Get your name down for next year, Dec.8-9th. The comfortable base of the Dragon Hotel is already booked.

**INTRODUCING OUR NEW PRESIDENT  
AND LIFE MEMBER**



– sister of our late Founder Member, Bob Richardson.



As far as membership of the Seamons is concerned, Reg Blease has always been there. Joining the Club in 1948, Reg is still going strong and taking part in all facets of Club life. Only last year he took to the boards of the famous Manchester Velodrome for his first “crack at the track”. Earlier this year he was seen enjoying off-roading in the Llandegla Forest, not, I may add, on a super-duper specialist ATB, but on a sit-up-and-beg Dawes that he inherited from Jim Boydell’s late Dad. In May, last year, Reg successfully completed the challenging 208km Seamons Audax in the Berwyns, in far from ideal conditions. He also completed the “100 in 8” on his own during the summer. Reg is one of a select band of members who met his wife through the club, this being Vera

Reg is a one hundred per cent Seamons member, very rarely missing a club run, always unassuming and willing to help, whether it be standing on a windswept corner marshalling a club event, or sweeping up after club night or the hot-pot. Reg can always be relied upon. I think all members will agree that, after 58 years of loyal service to the Club, Reg is indeed a worthy President and Life Member.



# LONGS AND SHORTS

The cryptic note which fell out of the mysterious and partly torn envelope read: How to make friends and effluence people. No signature.

Enclosed were four short strips of clear plastic. Plus one washer.

Hmmm.

It took a while for the penny to drop. First, I recognised the enigmatic style of the note and then it all fell into place - mud-flaps.

Fed-up with getting covered in road grime (as he constantly followed my wheel, I might add) Gordon Peake had clearly taken matters into his own hands and sent me something to keep him clean.

Unluckily for me, the rip in the envelope meant not all of the package had arrived, the fixings for the flaps having disappeared through the hole at some point.

Typical of the touring section I thought: lots of flap but just no nuts when it counts.

My dandy new mud-flaps were particularly useful on the Cerrig weekend.

Having escaped, for the most part, rain on the Saturday, even to the point of enjoying ice-creams on the beach at Conway, we were not to be so lucky on the Sunday when we are all due to welcome the fast group in Llangollen.

Filled by a hearty breakfast and softened by the warmth of the bunkhouse the biting of the wind and the whipping of the rain were going to take their toll.

With barely three miles covered between the bunkhouse and the village, the touring section was all over Wales.

Some were determined to make it to Llangollen as planned, others had no

choice as they were riding all the way home, others thought: "stuff this".

At the first big turn - left for Llangollen, right for back to the bunkhouse - the chickens turned right.

Fortunately, after such an arduous ride so soon after breakfast the café in the village was open. Huzzah!

Cups of coffee in the warm watching the rain-soaked road through steamed-up windows, chatting about how foolish other people would be to ride in this weather.

"Now this is what cycling's all about," I thought.

I'm sure the hardy few who made it to Llangollen know exactly what cycling's all about!

Still, at least my feet stayed dry on the short spin back to the car thanks to those new mud-flaps.

Still in Wales...After my epic conquering of the Wayfarer on a road bike, I was pleased to see my triumph further enhanced - nay, officially endorsed - by the CTC magazine's feature on: Britain's Best Climbs - on and off-road.

What does it say about The Wayfarer Mr Haines and your

You'll-be-Fine-on-a-Road-Bike posse?

First, it's identified as an off-road ride, then it introduces the climb as

"the all-time classic rough-stuff climb", and finally it adds, quite clearly

in black and white: "This is wild and open country, and the trail is challenging - especially on a tourer."

I know.

There was more mismatching from the touring section when a breakaway group made it to Spain for an, err, spring training

*(Continued on page 13)*



## **The Cerrig 2 day**

It is great to report that the Cerrig 2 day has now become a regular fixture on the Club calendar, and one way or another sixteen of us turned up at Linda Parker's very comfortable camping barn at Tyddan Buchan, Cefyn Brith. As the forecast for Friday and Saturday (I'll not mention Sunday at this stage) was good I decided to ride over on the Friday, making it a 3 day for me.

The sun shone all day, making my ride via Vale Royal, Tattenhall, Shocklach, Bangor-on-Dee and Llangollen for lunch a real treat, despite a nagging headwind.

The back road down (we did it the next day and it is UP! -Carol) the valley to Corwen via Rhewl and Carrog is an absolute delight, making the last few miles up the A5 bearable, and there was little traffic.

Arriving at Cefyn Brith around 5 o'clock, on just 75 miles, I was met by Linda, who served up one of her specials, delivered to the bunkhouse door around 7 p.m.

Saturday: I'd just finished breakfast when the Touring section arrived (by car, we say that quietly), and within half an hour we were on the road. Meanwhile Dave Barker was riding out from Sale, to meet up with Carol, Sara, Cath and Claire at Beeston. We were to meet up with Fred Foster in Conwy, where he now lives.

For the next 53 miles I was treated to a real gem of a ride on roads which were all new to me. Leaving Cefn Brith it was a swoop down to the A5 then quiet undulating roads through Pentrefoal and Nebo along the ridge road with wide sweeping views of the Snowdonia National Park for 20 minutes or so, before dropping into a very busy Conwy, to meet Fred, bang on the dot of 12.15 p.m. – well done Captain Wilkie. Lunch was taken at a very nice café, followed by a gentle stroll along the sea front. A group photo was called for, and John Carberry and Pete Coles enjoyed their first ice-cream of the year.

Yes, the sky was blue and the sun was warm – it was one of those days, although we had



begun to hear rumours about Sunday's forecast.

Leaving Conwy behind we took the valley road back to Betwys-y-Coed, with a brief stop for running repairs to Roger's chain – thanks to Captain Wilkie's chain tool.

I'm not sure whether an impending rain shower forced us into the pub, I can't remember, but as the liquid gold, served by the establishment, received instant approval from the connoisseur beer-drinkers, another round was ordered, and it looked like a session was developing. Time was getting on, and Roger had just remembered that the girls' kit was locked in his van and he had the key with him...JP volunteered to adopt a KEY role in the matter, and set off, to enjoy the only bit of tailwind of the whole weekend, flying down the A5, to arrive just minutes after the girls and Dave. Sixteen of us sat down that evening to a great meal – so great we couldn't eat it all! - in front of a roaring log fire, followed by a few drinks to celebrate Wilkie's birthday. Later we gath-



ered outside to witness the total eclipse of the moon by the earth in a clear, starlit sky. What would the morning bring? was the question. Sunday dawned, grey and windy. Oh dear. Old habits die hard, and I was up early, memories of hostel weekends, racing weekends, Easter tours, summer tours – up early to check the bikes for overnight punctures. I poked my head out of the bunkhouse: I could not believe it, the wind had changed, strong and blustery from the south-east, the clouds low and very threatening. Carol had been telling the girls all the previous day what a great tailwind they would have going back. I'll not tell them, I thought, they'll find out soon enough. They did.

Now the normal plan is for the weekenders to ride to Llangollen to meet up with the "Llangollen Direct", who set out from Altrincham on the Sunday. There didn't seem to be much interest from the Touring section, and in the end only John Hurley and Johnny Coles made it, with Dave and the girls.

The ride to Llangollen was tough, to say the least. In fact it was a nightmare. We had scarcely set off when the rain started to get heavier and heavier, and we were into the teeth of a strong crosswind. What a contrast to the rest of the weekend. We were a sorry sight in the very hospitable Country Kitchen in Llangollen: huddling round a small fan heater in a pool of water dripping from our clothes.

Cath and Claire were soaked to the skin. I like to think I came to their rescue, producing dry towels, spare vest and top from the depths of my faithful old saddle-bag – as I say, old habits die hard. I must say my spare top looked much better on Claire than it ever did on me. It took Carol's considerable motivating skills to convince the girls that riding home together was a far better option than calling partners or ex-husbands to come out on a mission of mercy, especially as one was in New Zealand! We were certainly paying for Saturday's – and in my case, Friday's – lovely weather – but that's cycling, take the rough with the smooth, and although I'm not allowed to say it (sorry

Cath) it IS character building! Although I think by now my character is well and truly built, although fraying at the edges a little bit



on occasions.

Devotion to wifely duty forced Sara away from the comfort of the Country Kitchen to witness the arrival of the "Direct" group. It was a depleted squad this year, consisting of Robin, Keith Bailey, Ian Udall, Dan Mathers, Keith Stacey, Allan Blackburn, John McIver and Adam Rycroft. Robin was to lift yet another Llangollen trophy. Rumours were rife of a possible contender for the illustrious "Hammering of the Year" award when Adam was spotted at the side of the road on the Marford climb, temporarily not enjoying the best of health.

One always feels better after a meal and many hot drinks, but it was a very reluctant posse that set out from Llangollen on the homeward journey. Only 50 miles to go...

We were in Bangor-is-y-Coed in no time, and after Worthenbury we took a left turn towards Shocklach to enjoy a more helpful wind and slightly less heavy rain. Tattenhall for afternoon tea – what a great café, brilliant service and 10% discount for cyclists! Then back into the rain, we didn't care now, it got heavier, the roads were awash, but spirits were high through Vale Royal and we arrived back in Allstock all together, very wet, but feeling well satisfied at having overcome adversity, and having enjoyed yet again the Cerrig 2 day.



Judging by the turnout on the half-day section club-runs leading up to the Llangollen ride a good turnout was expected this year. Sure enough nineteen riders assembled at Rack-hams but whereas in previous years this has been the ride when members produce their new steed this year there was a notable lack of new machinery.

OK so Ian Udall had a new Trek Madone 5.2 and Robin had a new-to him Giant, oh and Alan Blackburn had a new set of Mavic wheels beyond that there was not much to ogle at. But hang on a lot of riders were on their winter bikes, well not surprising really, they had heard the weather forecast all week promising torrential rain and gale force winds.

Never mind, off we go. The recent introduction of 5 minutes turns at the front kept the pace high and Louise turned off at the Wind-mill (probable going home and back to bed—a wise choice at it turned out). That left eighteen of us mostly in our new club strip and once again a car on the roundabout at Davenham stopped to let us pass obviously thinking we looked serious. (And so we were).

In just over an hour we reached the turn off for the café at Delamere. What's this nearly half the bunch opts to turn right! Off go some of the members that had been giving the run a hard time on runs up to now. One who had already started racing and another who often misses the café stop so he can get in a good non-stop ride!

The remaining nine soon become eight as Roy Myers drops off the back on the descent of Kelsall rise where I clock 44mph at the front. Soon we reach Tarvin and the rain has started. No one demurs when we stop to don our cagoules, we know it's going to be like this for the rest of the ride.

Chester roundabout is reached in an hour and a half and by now we doing through and off with the speed varies from 20 to 28 mph. Dan Snape(?) is struggling to come through so I shout at him to stay on the back. The spray off the bikes in front is horrendous at these motor-way-like road surfaces are laid to a minimum camber and seem to hold the water. Cars and trucks flash pass adding their spray to our deluge. Still we soon turn off and head for the old main road that will take us off this dual carriageway for several miles. Over the border into Wales and the (for me) dreaded site of Marford rise looms into view. I'm at the front at the bottom of the climb- I don't want to be here- still everyone else will have to come past me so I might stay on a bit longer.

Then it happens Ian Udall comes past in his typical huge gear, body rock steady and sitting in the saddle. Robin , Keith Bailey and Dan

are hanging on, I try my hardest but after a hundred yards or so I can't hold the pace and shout for anyone behind me to come past. Adam lunges forward, the gap is fifty yards but the pace Ian is setting is relentless. I am doing 14 mph but the gap is widening. Adam makes some progress but he tries too hard and has to pull in and is sick with the effort he has made.

At the roundabout where we re-join the Wrexham by-pass I am on my own. I still have the break in sight but the four of them working together soon put more distance between them and me. Still it's only 13 miles to the finish and the wind isn't always against. Anyway I have never finished lower than fifth on this ride and I want to maintain that record. I look behind but can't see anybody. If Adam and Alan Blackburn get together they could overhaul me so I get my head down.

A contra flow system on the by-pass leaves little room for traffic to get past, I wonder how the four-up ahead of me coped? At last the left slip road that will take me on the run-in to Llangollen. First however there are three consecutive cols to tackle (well at this stage a railway bridge feels like a col!).

Once over these it is mostly down hill or flat. I still cannot see any chasers but with a mile to go I see Dave Barker heading back in the direction I have just come from straight into the wind and its still pouring down. ( He had ridden out the day before).

At the café I find that unsurprisingly Robin had arrived first, twenty yards in front of Keith Bailey. Dan Mathers had put in a massive effort but too early and had nothing left at the finish. Ian, had been resigned from the start to fill a minor placing, notwithstanding the fact that on the day he was far the strongest rider. Watch out Robin if ever he learns how to sprint!

We calculate the Robin's time for the ride was

about 2hours 32 minutes (I was about 3 minutes behind). Several minutes later the remains of the "bunch" arrive, Alan, Adam and John McIver.

John Pardoe and four lady members who had ridden out the day before into a strong head-wind and were now faced with an even stronger wind and rain to get back home beat us to the café.



The preferred route home for us was over the Horseshoe Pass, often a nice ride with great views but today the top was shrouded in cloud and the rain was horizontal. The descent was even worse as hailstone hurt our faces. But no, at least on that part we could freewheel. Over the Llandegla Moors, through Treudin and back onto the flat near the Airbus factory in Broughton and into Chester where I say good by to my comrades as I have to pop in to see my one week old grand daughter ( oh, and get at lift home by my son. Still I've done 90 miles and it's only 2.30).



The new Llangollen racing bike



## **Lanzarote**

It's late March and the traditional training camp destinations of Majorca, the Costa Blanca and Lanzarote are all suffering un-spring like weather. Meanwhile, telephone calls home reveal that Britain is bathed in sunshine (or was that just my Mother getting me back for not smuggling her into my luggage?) Ah, well, you can't win 'em all!

We were in Lanzarote for seven days, staying in a villa in the centre of the island, convenient for riding in both the north and the south, just as we had last year. This year, however, we were joined by Messers Stratus, Cumulus and Nimbostratus, ensuring that my nest husband never actually got down to short sleeves and I had to endure a week of riding behind a Warrington R C training jacket, (I did try to hide it, but he found it and packed it!)

We only had a couple of days where it rained for any significant length of time, so the weather didn't keep us in much and we got some nice riding in. For those of you who have never been, Lanzarote is a volcanic island and can be accurately described as lumpy rather than mountainous. However, don't let this fool you into thinking that the riding is easy. The lumpiness can feel torturous when the unrelenting wind is factored in and a ride that you believed to be uphill all the way to the café stop, can feel equally uphill all the way home again.

The north provides the most challenging and perhaps most interesting rides, with the climbs up to Haria and Mirador del Rio. The vegetation is much more lush at that end of the island, looking less like a coal tip than the south and it is also more windy, making it easy to get blown off your bike. It also felt incredibly hot on the climbs, with little shelter. Tiny lizards that had been baking on the tarmac,



scurried out of the way of our wheels into the undergrowth, giving added interest to the ride, as we tried to avoid them. The climbs were worth the effort for the views alone and the descents were great fun, (when the wind wasn't blowing us back uphill again that is!)

The south does have a look of Leigh in the 1970's, when slag heaps were a common site, but the riding is pleasant on mainly smooth roads and the drivers are generally courteous and leave plenty of room.

---

Letter received from Jim Krieger  
via Jim Boydell

Theo's frame is (finally) back from the painter's shop. Photos are attached. I hope to have it assembled soon, as the weather is once again becoming clement, and I desperately want to ride it. Once I have some pictures of it all assembled, I'll submit them with an article.



I have seen Jeff twice in the past month, and I am happy to report that he is doing well.



My next restoration project is a 1974 Mercian. It's going in to be resprayed next week. Perhaps he can have it back to me by next Christmas . . .

## Tasmanian Cycle Tour

### Tasmania and Jet Lag

Many of my readers will be familiar with the onset of senility: you are disorientated and headachy, and everything takes much longer than it used to. Jet lag is much the same, but, unlike senility, it passes away after a day or two. Since the journey to Australia takes 24 hours, with an 11 hour time change, jet lag is inevitable. The other major problem with my tour was that Tasmania is unrelentingly hilly. There is almost no flat land, and the hills are steep and long. My knee is not very good for hill climbing, particularly with loaded panniers. But there are many other factors which make cycle touring in Tasmania very attractive.

Tasmania is an island separated from mainland Australia by the 200 mile wide Bass Strait. It is about the size of Ireland, and is in the shape of a triangular shield 200 miles from east to west and 200 miles from north to south. The population is only 500,000, with most of the people in Hobart, the capital, and Launceston, and so traffic is very light. Winds are strong, but although the latitude is the same as that of Rome, the temperature in February was a pleasant 20 to 25 C. Food is good and cheap. There is plenty of fish, and the steaks are excellent. The cherries are the best I have ever tasted. Accommodation is cheap and plentiful: I favoured backpackers at about £10 per night, but I also stayed in pubs at £25 per night and B and Bs at about the same price. The people are very friendly, and speak a version of English that I can understand (most of the time). I flew from Manchester to Melbourne via Dubai on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007 and caught the overnight ferry from Melbourne to Devonport on Tasmania's north coast. I returned from Melbourne on March 4<sup>th</sup> 2007

### Tasmanian Wine

"Cool Climate" wine is all the vogue in Australia, and Tasmanian wine is very much to the fore in this. Wine growing has only been sig-

nificant in Tasmania for the last 10 years, and there are many new plantings. The scene is changing very fast. Is all the hype justified? I think so. The two varieties I liked best were pinot noir (red) and riesling (white). The pinots had good acidity and excellent cherry fruit. They were more fruit driven than red burgundy, but did not have the farmyard character of some burgundy. They resembled, but were rather lighter than, Otago pinots from New Zealand. I talked to one winemaker, who said he had been to a tasting of 12 of the best Tasmanian and Otago pinots exchanged with Otago growers. The Otago growers found the Tasmanians too light, whereas the Tasmanians thought the Otago wines over extracted. This is a good example of how you come to like best what you are most familiar with, and highlights the difficulties of comparative tasting. I thought the rieslings were lovely. They had excellent honeyed fruit, with real zingy acidity.

I visited about 20 wineries during my trip, and thoroughly enjoyed tasting the wines and talking to the winemakers.

### Great Sights

The two most popular postcards of Tasmania are of Wineglass Bay on the east coast and of Cradle Mountain in the north, and it was obvious that I had to visit both. Each was outstanding. Wineglass Bay is a glorious half circle of white sand in a clear blue sea. It is on the far side of a peninsula. There is no road, and there is stiff walk over a col to get there. The difficult access reduces both crowds and litter.

Cradle Mountain is the most iconic National Park in Tasmania. It is the start of the 50 mile, 5 day Overland Trek to Lake St Clair. My knee is not good for hill walking, and the mountain is 1545 metres high. I found its ascent quite demanding: the last 500 feet is rough scrambling. Young and fit walkers bounded up it. But the weather was excellent, the views were splendid and getting to the top was very satisfying.

### Convict History

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Britain thought that criminals were evil people who should be removed from society by transporting them elsewhere. At first they were sent to America or the West Indies, and at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century it was decided to develop the newly discovered Australia as a penal colony. This seems bizarre to us: however, we still do not know what to do with criminals, and I am sure our present system will seem pretty stupid in 200 years time.

Convicts were sent out with the first settlers, and the problem soon arose of what to do with convicts who re-offended. The answer was to send them to Van Diemens Land, as Tasmania was then known. The first settlement, founded in 1822, was on Sarah Island in the very isolated Macquarie Harbour in the west of Tasmania. The settlement included a shipyard to exploit the Huon Pine. This provides easily worked timber, which is rot proof, and so is ideal for shipbuilding. Unfortunately, it is also extremely slow growing: trees can take hundreds of years to reach maturity. 500 convicts at the settlement built 131 ships in a little over 8 years. When the settlement was closed in 1833, a 200 ton brig was still under construction. 10 convicts were kept on to finish her. When they had done this, they commandeered the ship and sailed her 10,000 miles to Chile. Sarah Island proved too inconvenient, and from 1830 to 1877 Port Arthur on the south eastern tip of Tasmania was the major convict settlement. This included major manufacturing, agricultural and mining activities, and accommodated up to 2,000 convicts. An amazing feature was the Dog Line at Eaglehawk Neck. This is a spit of sand 100 metres wide, which provided the only overland route to Port Arthur. Savage dogs were chained every 10 metres across the spit to prevent convicts escaping. I visited both Sarah Island and Port Arthur, and found both fascinating. Most of the buildings are in ruins, both as a result of bush fires destroy-

ing the roofs, and of deliberate destruction.

### Forests and Bush

Most of Tasmania is covered by forest and bush. The only untouched rainforest is in the west where the rainfall is high. Elsewhere, bush fires and forestry have disturbed the original forest. The trees are largely varieties of eucalyptus. I found the forests and bush rather straggly and not very attractive. This is not a politically correct view, as much of this area is World Heritage Wilderness. Perhaps, as with wine, you like what you are used to. There is a great conflict in Tasmania between environmentalists and forestry interests. I do not have enough information to have definite opinions on this, but I do know that I preferred the countryside where some of the bush had been cleared to give views.

Bush fires are a major problem. There was a particularly bad fire in 1967. An 8 man fire fighting team was completely surrounded by fire, and it seemed certain that they would all be killed. Then the fire chief dug a hole with a bulldozer, and drove the bulldozer over the hole. The team crawled in to the hole, and all were saved.

### Wildlife

There is plenty of wildlife in Tasmania, but since it is largely nocturnal, you only see it at dusk or as roadkill. It is therefore well worth going to a wildlife park.

Wildlife in Tasmania has evolved differently from that on the mainland. The predominant species is the wallaby rather than the kangaroo. The most individual species is the Tasmanian devil, which is now extinct on the mainland. It is about the size of a small dog, and is a scavenger with very strong jaws. Snakes are quite common, and bush walkers wear gaiters to protect against snake bite. I was standing by the side of the road in a forest area, when a 3 foot long black snake crossed the road. I did not interfere with it, and it did not interfere with me.



## *The Squirrel*

### Coastal Activities and Cruises

The coast is a most attractive feature in Tasmania. I took several cruises, seeing impressive cliff formations and sea stacks, over a thousand seals, sea eagles, penguins at sea, and dolphins. On a couple of occasions, a cruise boat was the most convenient and pleasant way of getting where I wanted to go. The most interesting cruise was to Macquarie harbour and the Gordon River from Strahan on the west coast. Macquarie harbour is 25 miles long and 5 miles wide, but has an entrance, Hells Gates, which is only 60 metres wide. I visited Sarah Island as part of this cruise, which also included an hour's walk in the rainforest.

Sea kayaking was also another enjoyable activity. I took a couple of good trips for 3 hours along sheltered parts of the coast. On the second trip, I capsized after 10 seconds, but scrambled ashore, got back in the kayak, and did the rest of the trip without further alarms.

### Cities

Hobart, the capital, and Launceston, are the only two cities in Tasmania. I enjoyed a boat trip and a walk up a gorge in Launceston, and a visit to some of the older parts of Hobart and to the fine Saturday market. But a Tasmanian holiday is not about cities.

### Cycling

Buses will take bikes in Tasmania if booked in advance. I had known this before I left, and I used buses where the hills were too demanding. I also used buses in the west of the state where rainfall is up to 3 metres a year. In the event, I had very little rain in the west. My major cycling problem was that my frame cracked. Fortunately, this was near the fishing port of St Helens on the east coast. There is a welding firm here, which maintains fishing boats: they welded the frame in an hour and charged me £8.

I met two supported cycling groups. The biggest one was organised by Cycling Victoria, and included a thousand cyclists. They were on a 7 day trip from Launceston to Hobart,

and slept overnight in a vast tented camp. Their hangers on mopped up all the available local accommodation. This was inconvenient for me, because I wanted to stay in Richmond the night they were there. (Richmond is the best known "historic" town in Tasmania. It has a gaol and bridge both built by convicts in 1823, as well as several attractive old houses. It is also the centre of a wine growing area). So I stayed elsewhere, and cycled in to Richmond without panniers. I cycled 72 miles this day over relatively flat country. This was my longest day. Generally the distance cycled was determined by the availability of accommodation, and was typically about 50 miles. There were few other independent cyclists. I had a meal with three from the US who were cycling up the east coast. I also met a couple from Melbourne. Their club has a regular Friday ride in Melbourne, and I was able to join them on the Friday before I left Melbourne. This was a very enjoyable 45 mile ride along the coast to the west of Melbourne. Melbourne is one of the most cycle friendly cities in the world. There are many cycle lanes, and a multitude of cycle paths: our ride was largely on these.

### Finale

My daughter Clare works for Lonely Planet, whose headquarters are in Melbourne. By happy accident, she was in Melbourne on business, and I met her for a boat trip down the Yarra River and a good lunch on the day I got the plane home.

I was in Tasmania for 5 weeks and cycled 900 miles. My plan had been to use the bike as a means of taking me to interesting places where I could explore further. I used the Lonely Planet Tasmania guide, and found it excellent for the basic details of accommodation and tourist facilities, although I personally would have liked some more historical information. It was an excellent trip, which obviously could also be done in a car or by bus: doing it on a bike gave it an extra dimension.



### Scorchio or Mistral ?

John Carberry's annual training camp in Spain, attracted eight Seamons this year, including our estranged Fred Foster now residing in Colwyn Bay, (don't dare ask "How's life in sunny Rhyl" like I did). – With tighter security at the airport be advised to put any personal medication you may have wished to keep handy, in your suitcase, otherwise it ends up being waved about in a clear plastic bag for the whole world and worse, your mates to see. The sight of John Carberry in his socks being fully frisked alleviated any embarrassment by Keith. It's Johns designer stubble makes him look dodgy!

With an age range from mid 30's to mid 70's you would expect a few medical requirements. However it was Rob Morton, the youngest, who managed to loose a filling on one of those crunchy Spanish rolls during lunch. The local

dentist efficiently sorted it. By the evening he was recovering his speech control so I asked him how he was. "The tooth's ok, but I haven't been since we left England". Bare in mind this was Monday evening and we'd left about 5am Friday morning. Why he suddenly shared this information to the whole group is beyond me. Tuesday's breakfast was disrupted by celebrations more akin to Wythenshawe Maternity's Delivery suite. A rather pale and shaken Rob appeared to announce "twins". All other comments are not suitable for print! It's the change of water, Rob!

Yet again we'd acquired / hired great road bikes including a couple of brand new one's from Javea Bike Shop. (highly recommended). Whilst most attached minimal requirements, Johnny Coles managed to "personalise" his with a full on "Brookes saddle and saddle-bag". No amount of ribbing bothered him. In went the Kag, camera, maps, snacks – kitchen

## The Squirrel

sink and deep fat fryer! (Read on). To his credit he's taken 100's of snaps. This year, Keith managed to avoid any mishaps, either on the bike or in the car. Mike Brookes took the disaster banner - his brand new bike managed a very sudden squealing rear wheel hub and complete seizure. This late morning disaster some 30 miles "out" led to half an hour's roadside fiddling with advice overload, but sad lack of appropriate tools. Informed comments from Pete Devine about "factory built wheels" are lost on me. We got it moving and retreated to a nearby little town. Into the first narrow street and there, all on its own, a Cycle and Lambretta garage. What luck! Plus an early lunch!! Being almost vegetarian I don't eat Lambrettas ! This is when Rob lost his filling so a disciplined retreat to Javea followed for oral and rear end repairs. (a wheel replacement that is).

Other than this mishap we collectively ran nearly 2,500 miles without a single puncture, no spills and a celebrity appearance of Stuart Kay on day 2.

The daily routine is - early starts, elevenses, civilised lunch stops, afternoon coffee, and re-hydration break at the end. Laundry duty and showers precluded a series of superb and incredibly cheap evening meals, followed by Villa based - video club, footy on TV, book and map reading and for three of the crew "sudoku" - now that's the ultimate social activity?? A little wine tasting preceded early nights. The villa pool saw very little activity all week; it just wasn't quite warm enough! Keith takes the dolphin prize - 1 immersion lasting half an hour.

All this was thrown into disarray on day four by rain. I'd never seen rain in Spain before. The word "mistral" replaced "scorchio". A mistral is a French meteorological disaster that affects Spain - just our luck. For two whole days the place was awash and the normally vertical palm trees bent horizontal. A resident ex pat informed us he'd never seen the likes in five years out there. With riding abandoned we filled our time with some sightseeing in the old town, beach and headland walking, but

mainly sheltering in eating emporiums. My normal slight weight loss went into reverse. Mr Coles forever searching out the "with chips" option even found a "Bangers chips and beans" option - a true Brit! (How come he



stays so lean ?)

On Friday the sun reappeared and we cruised up the normally bone dry Xelon valley with a river in full spate. The vegetation was blossoming and the temperature regained some normality. Single layer riding took us up the "Cole de Rates" - a steady climb not dissimilar to the Cat. The views at the top bear no similarity. On a clear day I believe the Balearics isles (Ibiza etc) can be seen and all around some superb jagged mountain tops. We stayed out as long as we could to regain the lost mileage.

Saturday and the start moved earlier as we panicked to regain the lost days before the inevitable hand back of the bikes.

All in all a great nine days away and despite the weather we've all got a healthier glow, and enough left over sun cream for next year. Since then there's been talk of a "biking hotel" on east coast of Italy accommodating all "styles" and no limit on numbers - Speak to Andy and Sue Burns - they've just been. - We could all go!!!

Gordon Peake... March 07.

# Meet your Clubmates

As befits an ex-headmaster, **Nigel Harrop** has lots to say. Pay attention at the back of the class!

**When and where were you born?** Glossop in 1950, accompanied by loud bangs and the smell of burning effigies. No, not a celebration for me. It was Bonfire Night.

**When did you start cycling and what was your first club?** I can't remember not cycling. One of the earliest memories is of losing control of my tricycle on a steep hill near our house and smacking into a factory wall. My first club could only have been the Glossop Velo RC.

**What was your first race?** April 4<sup>th</sup> 1965, Withington Whs Novices 25 on the J24 (Chelford – Holmes Chapel – Congleton and back) I startled the marshals by going the wrong way round Chelford Island. I don't know why I did it, but still managed a "12". H W Gardner (1.03.29) from the Apollo Whs won it.

**What was your first win?** 30<sup>th</sup> July 1966. It was the M/c District Heat of the first ever GHS 10 mile TT Championship. I did 25.15 on 72 inch fixed much to my surprise. It's a fantastic medal cast in bronze.

**Which performance do you rate as your best?** In terms of pure wins I guess it would be in 1976, the Bob Jackson Grand Prix on the Poole Bank course near Leeds. It was one of those rare days when you know you can do anything you want, and I did, winning alone. For the Time Trialists, winning the Adorior "Circuit of Kinder" Mountain TT in 1968.

**What is your favourite meal?** Anything in vast quantities, especially breakfast cereal and loads of milk. For a real treat a good piece of steak, pommes dauphinoise, red wine gravy, mushrooms and a bottle of Chilean Cabernet Sauvignon, each.

**What were you like at school?** Because of cycling, nowhere near as good as I should have been. I spent a lot of time not doing homework. Wednesday pm's were good (PE) as school let me out on my bike.

**What kind of books do you read?** "Cycling Past 50" by Joe Friel is a must for the aspiring Elite Road Racer. More recently I really enjoyed Ben Elton's World War One thriller "The First Casualty" It's really evocative of the era and ruthlessly portrays the pointlessness of conflict.

**What kind of music do you enjoy?** Neil Young is a god. Turbo training to Greenday or the Killers is fun, especially if you want to get your heart rate up to 120% of max. CASCADA if you want 200%.

**And your favourite TV programmes?** Life on Mars, Waking the Dead, ER, Father Ted and Extras

**Which newspaper do you read?** Guardian, well the bits in big print and the cartoons.

**What's your ideal holiday destination?** Anywhere with sea, sand and s..... sunsets. Mallorca is a destination I never tire of visiting, even without a bike, but I do know a good hire company.

**Do you have any hobbies?** No. Uhm, sorry I've just been told the correct answer is family walks.

**Who would play you in a film of your life?** Lenny Henry made a half decent inner city Headteacher, but he didn't have the innate skill to catch truants like I did. There aren't many other similarities either.

**What is your greatest fear?**

All the obvious things like ill health or harm to loved ones, but after this Winter it has to be Tim Seddon's on the front in the Half-Day rides.

**How would you describe yourself in a lonely hearts ad?** Shaves legs, uses massage oils and addicted to carbon fibre. Just a normal bloke really!

**What is your favourite training ride?** Mobberley, The Wizard, Henbury, Warren, Marton, Newsbank, Twemlow, Byley, Lach Dennis, Plumley, Knutsford, Rostherne and home. Fifty miles of beautiful lanes and hardly a car for 40 of them.

**What is your most unpleasant characteristic?** Too numerous to mention but, avoiding doing a turn at the front on club runs must be up there. Not a problem when Tim's with us!

**Which characteristic do you most dislike in others?** Half wheeling. Come on Tim, no need to get paranoid!

**Who would you have most like to have met, and why?** Neil Young. If you have to ask why you probably wouldn't understand the answer.

**What was your most embarrassing moment?** Years ago whilst having a haircut I congratulated the hairdresser about her very obvious and imminent pregnancy. "I'm not pregnant" was the stony reply.

**Four words to describe yourself?** Self-Delusional Elite Racer. That's three!





# TESTING TIMES



## Club Racing Standards

The club has set club racing standards for both men and women at all recognised time trial distances, these standards are readily available in the club hand book.

The Club endeavours to keep a record of all the member's achievements during the season. There is great difficulty in doing this because not all the results are published on the CTT website. Some members race outside Cheshire and don't inform us of their results and some people just e-mail Steve Booth with their results. As a result of this it is an almost impossible task to keep a record of all members PB's over the years.

Gold, Silver and Bronze standards are awarded only once at each discipline, it is up to the individual to claim in writing to the time trial secretary by 30<sup>th</sup> December each year if they are claiming any of the Standard Awards. The claim should be accompanied by a copy of the result sheet for the time they have achieved.

## CLUB RUNS 2006

Last year, on average, 27 of us were out each week on Club Runs.

It is probably not surprising that in February and March the figure dipped to 22 and 23, but it may surprise you to learn that your favourite months were October, November and December, with 31, 29 and 30 respectively.

This tends to suggest that we really are a bunch of masochists.

## Best Clubman 2007.

As the competition gets under way (good grief - we're already a quarter way through!) here is a reminder of the points on offer that were agreed back in 1994.

Attendance at start of clubrun.....	1
point	
Attendance at (published) destination.....	2
points	
Possible total on clubruns.....	3
points	
Attendance on clubnight.....	2
points	
Marshalling, helping at club events &Opens ...	2
points	
Riding in club events, opens & Champs.....	2
points	
Attending Club Dinner.....	5
points	
Attending Club AGM.....	5
points	
Acting as a delegate on behalf of the Club.....	3
points	
Attending Committee Meetings.....	2
points	

Whilst most of these have survived it appears that some have fallen by the wayside. The last two seem to have disappeared completely and the Dinner and AGM have lost their kudos and reverted to being treated just like an ordinary clubnight. Is it time to look at the points allocation again? What do other members feel?



How about this for the club 10's?

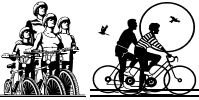
**BEST CLUBMAN 2007**

At the end of March there was not much change from last December.

- |                    |    |
|--------------------|----|
| 1. Peter Coles     | 64 |
| 2. Reg Blease      | 60 |
| 3. Mike McConville | 58 |
| 4. Phil Holden     | 53 |
| 5. John Coles      | 51 |
| 6. Keith Stacey    | 48 |
| 7. Tim Seddon      | 46 |
| 8. John Pardoe     | 40 |
| Gordon Peake       | 40 |
| 10. Jim Boydel     | 39 |
| Roger Haines       | 39 |



**Dan, Alan and Ian at the M&D Dinner**



# CLUBRUNS



DATE	HALF-DAY	TOURING SECTION
06 MAY	TWO MILLS *	AUDLEM
13 MAY	BEESTON	MEERBROOK
20 MAY	RADWAY GREEN	TWO MILLS
27 MAY	BLAZE FARM	HOPE
03 JUNE	SUMMERTREES	TILSTONE
10 JUNE	NANTWICH MARINA	LONGNOR
17 JUNE	MEERBROOK	STOAK
24 JUNE	DELAMERE	MILLERS DALE **
01 JULY	ASTBURY	100 IN 8
08 JULY	CAT & FIDDLE	IPSTONES
15 JULY	BUXTON	SOUTHPORT
22 JULY	TATTENHALL ***	MONYASH
29 JULY	WINCLE MINN	WHITMORE
05 AUGUST	POOLE MARINA	19 GATES
12 AUGUST	BLAZE FARM	HALE
19 AUGUST	HOLLANDS	TIDESWELL
26 AUGUST	RADWAY GREEN	BANGOR ON DEE
02 SEPTEMBER	TWO MILLS	HARTINGTON
09 SEPTEMBER	CAT & FIDDLE *****	TATTENHALL *****

- \* Seamons CC Road Race Swettenham
- \*\* York Rally Weekend
- \*\*\* Mersey Roads Club 24 hour
- \*\*\*\* CTC Beard Cup Hill Climb (Sunday)
- \*\*\*\*\* Sept 8th Saturday - Club Fun Ten 2-up at the Kilton

LAST LAUGH

