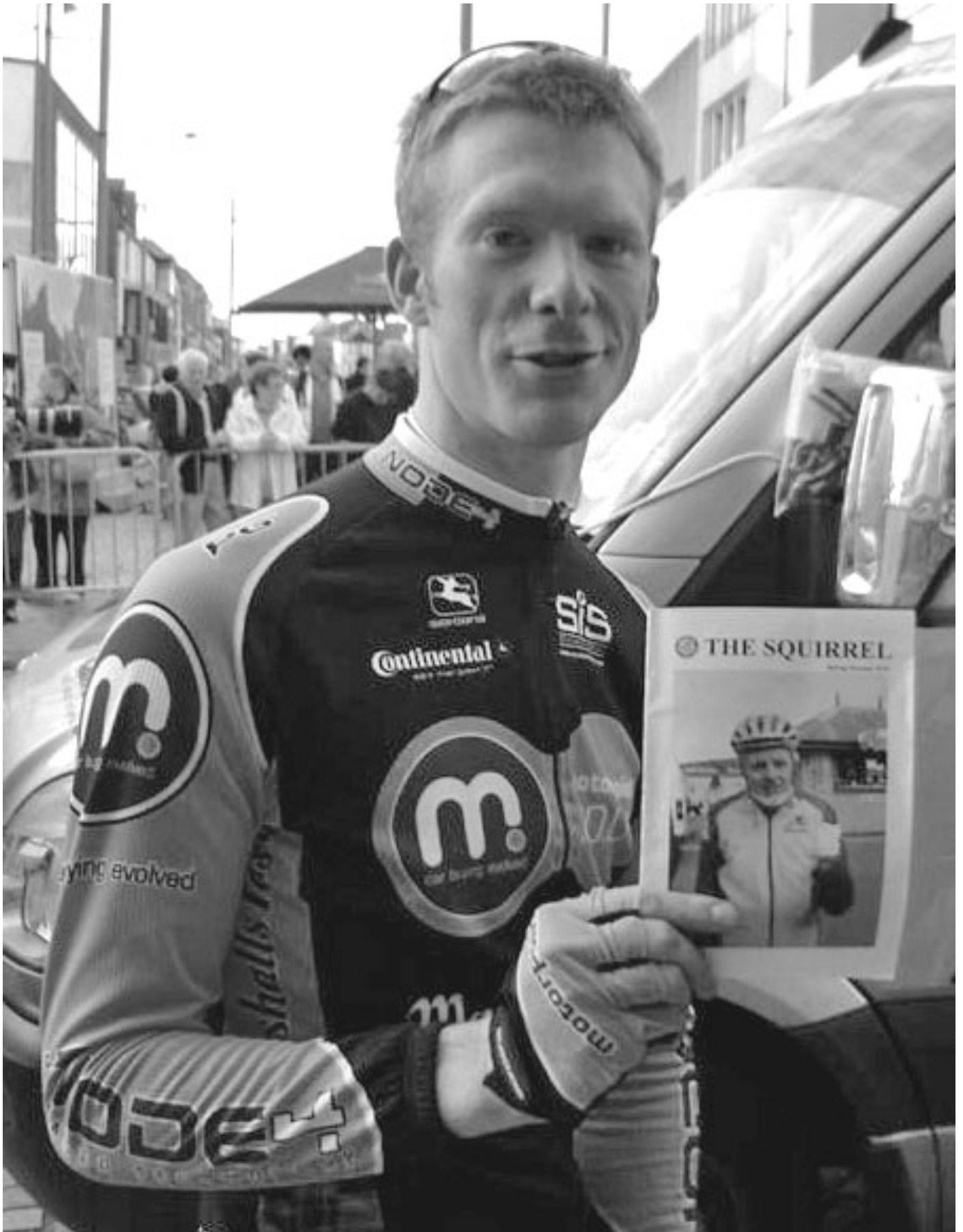




THE SQUIRREL

Autumn/Winter 2010



Editorial

By John Carberry

Remember your first ride with the club?

You might have been a teenager or even younger. Riding in jeans perhaps, or your dad's tracksters? Maybe you were in your 30s and determined to do something about your health?

No matter how long ago and no matter how many times you've been out with the club since, the memory of that first ride will still be with you.

I recall having a light-headed stop at Summertrees and then peeling off early to be accompanied home.

I knew before I set off I was with the wrong group – the tourers were on a weekend away – so it was a half-day beasting for me. Probably the last time anyone's seen Carradice in that bunch.

As well as being a lesson in trying not to get dropped so I didn't get lost, it was also a lesson in what the club is all about. I was looked after. It was my first ever time out, any club, and Bob McPartland and Jim

Boydell took me under their collective wings to make sure I "enjoyed myself" and made it home safely.

Next time you're out on a run, remember how it felt when you were new; or maybe just off it.

Clubmanship is more than just riding in a bunch, it is riding as a group, together.

There will always be times when someone misses a turn or has an out-of-sight mechanical, that's cycling.

But these times can be made rarer if we keep an eye on each other and remember the other reason why we joined a club to enjoy our cycling.

This is particularly so for new riders – your possible clubmates of the future.

You don't want their first-ride memory to be of shivering at the side of the road waiting for their partner or dad to come and pick them up because the group rode off into the distance without them.

And even when they have found their legs, the culture they need to learn is one of friendship, camaraderie, and fun – not everyone for themselves and last one back's a loser.

This doesn't have to be about riding at the pace of the slowest rider, but it should be about remembering that we're not riding on our own, we're riding as a club.

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Social riders being sociable... what it's ultimately about.

Meet you clubmates... Ed Baldwin

When and where were you born?

10:15am, October 10, 1968, Chorley, Lancashire.

When did you start cycling and what was your first club?

In spring 1983 the film *Breaking Away* was on the TV. From that moment I was hooked. I joined Cleveleys Road Club

What was your first race?

Southport Criterium Series, March 3, 1984. Memorable.

What was your first win?

Blackpool Promenade Criterium, April 1984. I won enough money for three days in the Isle of Man Internationals.

Which performance do you rate as your best?

I did a 22:45 on the A6 circuit around Churchtown, near Garstang, as a schoolboy. I wasn't too happy with it at the time as Chris Boardman (same age as me) was starting to do times of under 20 minutes

What is your favourite meal?

Probably a big Chinese banquet with the family and friends.

What were you like at school?

Very shy but well liked. I stood up to the bullies and I never got caught being naughty. I always thought that school should be saved for rainy days as I had too much to do.

What kind of books do you read?

I occasionally read popular fiction, Ludlum, Archer, LeCarre, Brown. etc. Some non-fiction on my fads of the moment and books involving Bruce Lee.

What kind of music do you enjoy?

My taste is from one extreme to the other. AC/DC is definitely one of the main diet with Groove Armada, Prodigy and their colleagues also in the mix. Dave Lee Roth had a big influence, and some jazz if I'm in the mood (and all in-between). I appreciate all good music.



*Seamons' laid-back Time Trial Secretary...
laying back*

And your favourite type of TV programme?

One of my favourite films is *Shawshank Redemption*, I love a good comedy, and if I have time to relax I will just sit and watch what the family is watching (unless the TdeF is on)

Which newspaper do you read?

No real time to read the paper.

What is your ideal holiday destination?

I like a lot of places. I would really like to go on a Cycling Cruise and have a long ride in a different place each day to burn off all that food they force you to eat.

Do you have any hobbies (apart from cycling)?

I really enjoy Wing Chun, a form of Kung Fu. I'm a member of a club; it's very friendly, respectful and has a good, hard work ethic. It's really tough especially on the legs and I suffer on a Sunday because of it (that's not an excuse).

Who would play you in a film of your life?

Clint Eastwood or Bart Simpson, not sure really. What's the budget?

What is your greatest fear?

Not being there to help a family member if they were in distress.

From the President

By Keith Stacey

It seems as though summer had barely arrived yet this edition of the Squirrel was set to last up to Christmas, so it must be nearly winter!

Well at least one problem has been sorted out by the process of natural selection.

An "alternative half-day section" has emerged and seems to be filling its brief exactly. Numbers on the original half-day section have reduced to manageable proportions and members now have the opportunity of moving more easily from one section to another, a real plus for the club.

The tens have gone remarkably well with up to 50 riders taking part. We did try and get permission to start riders at 30-second intervals but drew a blank. With these numbers we will have to try again for next season or we may have to reduce entries for early and late season events, still it's a nice problem to have.

Ed Baldwin did an excellent job of organising the tens and the Open 25 and thanks also go out to those club members who regularly turn out to time and marshal and

to the ladies who did the catering at the 25.

The last Squirrel contained a pull-out questionnaire about the annual dinner but only a small number of these have been returned. Further copies are available if you have lost yours. Please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire. It is the only way we have of trying to work out what sort of function you, the members, want.

Half-way through the shelf life of this magazine we will be holding our AGM. If you want to make changes to the rules or constitution, please let Ian have your proposals in good time. Nominations will also be required for committee positions, again please let Ian have your nomination(s) in plenty of time and also let him know if you are prepared to take on one of the committee jobs.

This will be my last President's Piece as my term also comes to an end at the AGM. It has been a great honour to have held this post and I would like to thank you again for letting me represent the club in this role for the past two years.

Meet your clubmates...

How would you describe yourself in a Lonely Hearts column?

A handsome, funny, quick-witted, considerate man. No refunds.

What is your favourite training ride?

Training? What's that? I do like "retro" rides in the Trough of Bowland, they bring back good memories. I spent a lot of time up there as a lad.

What is your most unpleasant characteristic?

I just have been informed that one of many is my temper.

Which characteristic do you most dislike in others?

A bullying one.

Who would you most like to have met

and why?

Probably Arnold Schwarzenegger. I was given a book about him when I left school and all that he said he would do he has, except become president... That's an achievement.

What was your most embarrassing moment?

I am past being embarrassed but I embarrass my girls, without fail, with my dancing at weddings.

Four words to describe yourself:

Faithful. Funny. Friendly. Disorganised.



"When Cameron's Conservatives come to power it will be a golden age for cyclists and an Elysium of cycle lanes, bike racks, and sharia law for bike thieves." - Boris Johnson

Weekend wanderings in Wales

By Dave Barker

At first sight Anglesey doesn't have a whole lot going for it. The awe-inspiring peaks of Snowdonia to the south confront a flattish, ordinary-looking off-shore island to the north. For many who cross the Menai Straits things don't improve much when they get there, particularly if all they do is follow the A55 to Holyhead – an eminently forgettable experience.

So why did we decide to spend a weekend there in April? Part of the answer is that strange things get decided after a few jars in the OMT in January; another part is that someone claimed to have had a good holiday there at some time in the past. A search of the web came up with a 13-berth cottage halfway between Llangefni and Holyhead; 11 decided to take a lucky dip and booked in.

In the event, any doubts and misgivings started to subside as soon as we left the A55 on a glorious, sunny Friday morning. Strange how different things start to look as soon as you leave a straight, tedious dual carriageway.

The B-road to the north was narrow, winding and rolling; mostly it was set deep between drystone walls and high hedges; every now and then came a gap in the hedge or the top of a rise and a view of rolling green hills, fields full of sheep and lambs, huge expanses of blazing gorse and Snowdonia forming a jagged backdrop away to the south.

It got even better: when we got to The Mount the view from the conservatory window was directly across to the mountains of Snowdonia. Just over the road the land fell away to the west with views of Holyhead harbour. Some began to wonder whether there was any need to go out at all.

By mid-afternoon the usual split had occurred: John Coles had taken off for Parys Mountain to the north, while John Carberry was enthusing about a great pub on the shores of Red Wharf Bay to the east. The



Anglesey's contours bunch up dramatically...

two Bleases, Wilky and Dave Barker needn't need much convincing and we took off on a roller-coaster of a ride past (wait for it) Llanerchymedd, Maenaddwyn, Brynteg and assorted burial chambers and hut circles, before the descent to the Ship.

We were rapidly learning the big lesson of the weekend – for all that it is not mountainous, Anglesey is not flat. The highest point is Holyhead Mountain at a mere 220m, but all the contours between 0 and 220 keep appearing and re-appearing one after another, non-stop.

The Ship was a great pub in a superb setting; so great that John was halfway through his second pint before he had the devastating thought that he wouldn't be able to drive that night; Wilky was keeping up with him, so he couldn't either. As luck would have it Reg was one behind and Dave was on shandy. Thus was re-enacted the biblical message in a revised form: he that hath two pints in the afternoon shall have many more at dinner in Llangefni that night, while he that drinketh more slowly hath perforce to stay cold bleeding sober so that he that boozeth shall be conveyed safely. And the Bible is supposed to be about justice. But it was obvious that the drinkers suffered more on the hills going back, none more than Wilky who was passed by a kid on a BMX on a drag in

Weekend wanderings in Wales...

Bodffordd, so maybe there's a moral there somewhere.

The six bike-riders were joined by Vera and Marysia for the expedition to the Bull in Llangefni. A good meal was enlivened by a local who wandered over to borrow a chair and was so delighted that a party of foreigners were keen to explore his island that he spent the next half hour telling us where we should go and what we should see and why. His enthusiasm was such that no one was bored and he completely forgot why he had come across in the first place. Back at the ranch/Mount, Gordon, Karen and Ros had arrived to complete the party.

Next morning John Coles was unanimously elected runs leader for the weekend and he took seven of us on what proved to be one of those magical days on a bike when the weather, the scenery, the route, the company and 'events' combine to leave an indelible impression.

We got a perfect spring day. The rugged west side of the island proved to be uncannily like the west coast of Ireland – very green, but with plenty of rocky outcrops; pretty well devoid of trees, while those trees that did manage to survive were stunted and bent dramatically to the east by the prevailing westerly gales; dotted with isolated white-washed farmhouses and settlements; spectacular cliffs and little bays; narrow, winding, bobbing, traffic-free lanes. Altogether it was a bike-rider's paradise, provided you didn't want to get anywhere at all fast, which suited all of us just fine.

For lunch we helped to christen a brand new café in Cemaes. There were the inevitable teething troubles and first-day nerves, but when the food did, eventually, arrive it was excellent. Asked if we could make any constructive suggestions, we wondered whether putting up a 'café' sign might not be a bad idea; apparently this had occurred to them, but so far they hadn't got round to it.

In the afternoon John took us back to Parys



Tea being imbibed at the Cemaes Cafe

Mountain. From the main road there is not much to see apart from the Heritage Site signs but after a quarter of a mile of track an unbelievable landscape opens up, the outcome of over 2,000 years of mining for metals, mostly copper. We learnt that at some point in the nineteenth century Amlwch (where the miners lived and from where the copper was shipped) was bigger than New York and that life as a copper miner was pretty crap, though Gordon questioned whether it was any worse than working for Tameside.

More gorgeous lanes dropped us on to the east coast (more trees hereabouts) and the Pilot Boat, a pub overlooking Traeth Dulas (Dulas Beach); irresistible to half of us but, sadly, not to John who headed home with the map and the Bleases. Naturally we made a big fuss about being abandoned, but we had a pretty good idea about the route and in fact pulled back about twenty minutes on the return journey (no racing, of course).



Reading 2000 years' history of Parys Mountain



▲ *Sitting on the dock of the (Cemaes) Bay
South Stack's 409 step* ▼



▲ *Church Bay* *Lunch on the beach* ▼



Then it was a case of déjà vu: more afternoon tea in the conservatory; more views of Snowdonia; another trip into Llangefni for another meal at the Bull. These weekends get so boring!

Sunday was dramatically different: Snowdonia had disappeared, there was a thickish mist and it was much cooler. We headed for South Stack lighthouse on Holyhead Island, which was mainly memorable for descending then climbing 409 stone steps, not easy for those with Look cleats.

After lunch in Treaddur Bay the mist started to lift. We explored the coast around RAF Valley then got on to NCN Route 5 (more gorgeous lanes) and headed home. As proof of our dedication and athleticism, when we discovered we were just short of forty miles for the day, we put in an extra loop of nearly three miles, by which time we were ready for a gourmet dinner cooked by Karen and Wilky.

On Monday it was back to boring old sunshine once again; the six survivors reconstituted themselves as the Seamons Rambling Club, set off in the cars for Church Bay and walked up the coastal path towards Carmel Head (the north west tip of the island overlooking the Skerries Rock). It was agreed that the coast is even more spectacular when you walk it than when you cycle it; and we discovered a new subspecies of bird life, the sea coot, three of which were quite happily paddling up and down a secluded bay, oblivious to the rule that coots are solely and exclusively fresh water birds. Remember that you read this first in the Squirrel, 2010.



Fearless foursome ride the 12

By Carol Pardoe

Twelve hours sunshine – a record!

Four stalwart Seamons members rode and finished, with Charles Carraz heading the team, followed (quite closely at times) by young Dan Snape in his first “12” ever.

Phil Holden rode his umpteenth 12 and enjoyed a virtual non-stop picnic all the way round, and Malc McAllister was celebrating his 70th birthday.

We all sang to him as he rode round Espley Island for about the sixth time. Unfortunately we all ate his cake (sorry Malc) while watching is hard work. Luckily we had another one, but we forced that on Charles as his dad was worried he was only taking those frogspawn gel things.

Anyway, good, strong, steady riding all day saw Charles still riding well on the finishing circuit, giving him 6th place and 249 miles. Without the stops that would have been well over 250 miles. Bigger pockets stuffed with lots of food next time!

Meanwhile, Dan was never far behind all day, looking very stylish, and riding with purpose.

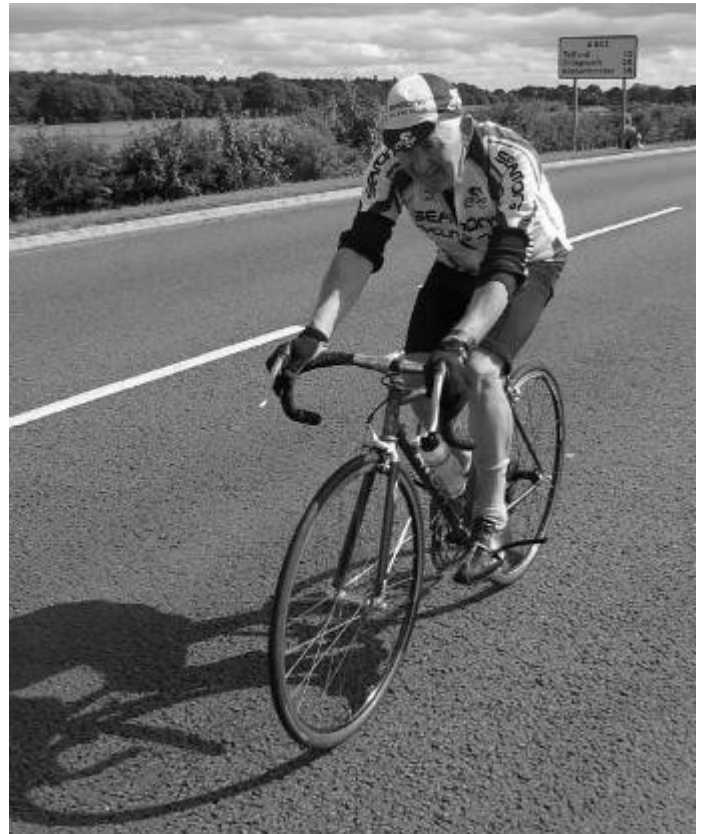
He had an enthusiastic support team, under the watchful eye of “H”.

He suffered back trouble part way through, and died a serious death on the finishing circuit, but he finished.

When questioned a few days later by Johnny Pardoe, he sort of said he’ll be back for more next year! Provisional distance: 235 miles.

We think he will get the best novice rider award. Well done!

The Seamons support team consisted of John Verbickas, whose entry went astray – rumour has it he’s put his entry in already for next year, when it will be the National Championship – JP and CP, Karen Blenkinsop (also feeding the Warrington and the Abbotsford), Roy Myers, Paul McAllister and Dave Matthews.



Malc celebrates his 70th with a quick spin on the bike...

The event was won by Neil Skellern, Congleton CC, with a PB of 276 miles, after a day-long battle with Alf Hilton, also of the Congleton CC, who finished with 275 miles.

All photographs courtesy of Johnny Pardoe.





▲ Phil Holden rides his umpteenth 12-hour
...while Dan Snape rides his first ▼



◀ Charles Carraz's second 12-hour sees a second consecutive Championship victory

Carol & Karen feeding the Duks* ▼



*Messrs Clayton & Nelson of Dukinfield CC (r)



Ode to Autumn in the Cheshire Lanes

(with apologies to Keats)

By Dave Matthews

Season of mists and muddy farmers' tracks

Close mucky friend of the extruding cow

Conspiring with her how to load and dress with filth

The lanes – my bike is always dirty now!

Journey without maps



As some of you may know, the club was left a legacy, some years ago, of £500 by former member Arthur Thorlby.

It was decided, as Arthur was a great tourist and former leader of the touring section, to use the money to purchase some Ordnance Survey Landranger maps for use by club members.

We acquired 47 laminated maps numbers 89 to 130 inclusive and 135, 136, 137, 138, 147 and 148. They are housed at the club room and can be signed out on loan to any member.

Unfortunately – or remarkably – we appear to be one map adrift of our total.

If you have **the Buxton map** (and haven't signed it out!) please return it asap.

If you wish to borrow a map please follow the dual signature procedure so we can keep track of this great asset!

"Guys would sleep with a bicycle if it had the right color lip gloss on."

Tori Amos, presumably thinking of the Cervelo P4



The only way is up

By Mike Brooks

Imagine! – a freezing cold February evening at the club dinner, numerous bevvies consumed and John Carberry asks me: “How do you fancy the Alps in June?” Immediate thought: “The warmth, the views, and the gentle climbs.” Count me in!

Fast forward four months. Immediate thought: “The warmth, the views, and what the *!?! am I doing here?” No gears left, heart pumping like an orgasmic elephant and not a gentle climb in sight!

On this latest JC extravaganza we were to be joined by his cousin Nigel and son Hamish. Gordon had met Nigel a couple of years ago and described him as similar in build to himself, and Hamish was only 11! “Very reassuring,” I thought.

But two years on and Nigel has a PhD in hilly sportives, including the Etape Caledonia at an average speed of 20mph, and Hamish is a member of the Scottish Youth track squad. And their combined weight was the same as JCs... “Blinkin` eck,” (or words to that effect) I thought!

And so it came to pass: a series of a**e kickings for me, and to a lesser degree for John, but we held our own on the less severe hills and flats, and John really came into his own on the descents, something to do with Newton`s Law of Gravity $F = -Gm_1m_2/d^2$; I`m not sure of all the abbreviations but I do know $m = \text{meat pies}$ (think Ullrich).

We all managed Alpe d`Huez twice (on separate days!) and some attempted, but not all succeeded at Le Glandon, Le Croix de Feu and Les Deux Alpes – names withheld to protect the bone idle.

Le Galibier was closed due to snow – oh dear!

When booking the campsite JC was informed there would be a few Dutch folk doing an event on the Thursday and it might be a little busy. This turned out to be an annual charity event where, from 5am



Mike Brooks - without the aid of oven cleaner

until 8pm (that`s 15 hours!), the idea was to go up Alpe D`Huez (and down) as many times as possible. And “the few Dutch folk” amounted to 3,000-plus.

The record is nine times up and down! Just to put it into perspective the climb is only 14 kilometres long (a little longer than the Cat & Fiddle), 21 hairpins – all numbered to remind you how much pain to come – and an ascent of 1,120 metres (3674ft).

The record is 37mins 35secs by Marco Pantani in 1997 (fuelled by EPO, heroine and a substance only found in oven cleaner).

My mind boggled at the thought of 3,000+ people doing hill reps over the canal bridges in Holland!

John`s recently acquired campervan provided our transport and accommodation for this excursion, and proved to be an admirable tool for exploring the fantastic cycling opportunities in La Belle France.

Gail`s instruction as we left Bracken Way was: “Please! No man smells in the camper van when you get back.” I didn`t really understand what she meant, but we do keep the windows open for the last 100 miles!



Message from the Chair

By Mike McConville

The club 10s have gone from strength to strength this summer with numbers growing from a maximum of 30 last year, to an average of around 40 riders per week. We had our largest turnout on the last Wednesday when 60 riders lined up to take part.

I must thank Eddy Baldwin, John Barry, Valentina, Dave Attwell, Phil Holden, Reg Blease, Dave Barker, Eddy Robinson and Allan Blackburn, and all the other marshals and helpers, for their efforts in running such a successful event.

We have also had success in increasing the number of club runs leaving Rackhams every Sunday morning, thanks to the efforts of Darren Buckley and Dave Barker and we now have five runs offering a wider range of rides.

With success comes additional risk. John Barry has found it necessary to remind everyone of their responsibilities as cyclists and for those taking part in the Wednesday TT about the need to observe the highway code at all times. One or two were taking too many risks for us to continue to run an incident free event. I am glad to say everyone took notice of John's comments, especially those about going round the roundabout at the far turn.

Continuing on a serious note, I get the feeling that there has been an increase in the number of incidents with car drivers on a

Sunday morning.

I find it very frustrating that the average motorist has not got a clue about the highway code in relation to cyclists. We are entitled to ride anywhere in the left hand lane, we can ride two abreast, the national speed limits on the roads we travel are all maximums not minimums and mobile phone should not be in use.

It's a shame some motorists don't know these things and their reaction to us being on the road is terrible: horns blaring, shouting abuse, hand gestures, driving very dangerously (some might even say on purpose.)

When we are on a club run in club colours we should try to stay calm no matter what the provocation from an arrogant motorist. These ones like nothing better than a good bust up and we never know what type of person is behind the wheel of any particular car, and an incident could turn into a bad case of road rage very quickly without very much effort.

To be honest, when it comes down to what feels more pain, your body or their car, your body loses every time.

When confronted with arrogant motorists our reaction should be to meet their arrogance and ignorance with a happy smile and cheery wave! That'll show them.



Johnny Helms' GP des Gentlemen

STOP PRESS: The first Warrington RC 2-up team time trial in memory of Johnny Helms on 10th October was blessed with a brilliant autumn sun and the atmosphere of a national championship.

The best of British TT from today and yesteryear were paired up to compete on Vets standard on behalf of their chosen charity. Seamons' own Dan Mathers and Keith Stacey (left) rode a 57:31 to achieve a 16th placing with a +17:51, behind Carl Ruebotham & Derek Hodgins' winning +24.01 (57:47).

Road-testing the theory

By Harry Streuli

Roy and I packed up shop at 4pm and loaded up his small car with two TT bikes, race gear and several pairs of wheels; we were heading down to Etwall to race the fast course on the A50: the A25/11 at the weekly South Pennines Road Club event.

We were very conscious of the weather, and quite rightly so, as we arrived at the HQ with a horrible wind blowing and in pouring rain. The race was called off, due to excessive spray from traffic on the main road.

However, we were both determined to get good times on the renowned course, so two weeks later we went again, along with Scott Burns from Manchester Wheelers.

Again, the weather was looking dodgy, but we risked it and after the 90-minute journey we arrived at the HQ in near perfect conditions.

The van was filled with excitement and we were all eager to get out on the road, so started the warm-up early to briefly go over the course.

I was off first, wearing number 12, and quickly negotiated the roundabouts on the first mile of the course and got settled on the dual carriageway of the A50, fighting into a headwind. Roy was four minutes behind me, and Scott four minutes behind him.

We had spent the journey discussing Roy's new-found experience of "leg speed", so I started pushing bigger and bigger gears on the course, and found myself at the turn with an average speed of about 22.5 miles per hour, but I knew I had to pick it up a bit on the way back!

Thankfully, however, I had the wind behind me for the return leg, so pushed it all the way back down the A50.

Knowing that Roy and Scott were both likely to be catching me up gave me a bit more, but I was caught by them both in the last five miles.



Roy Myers putting leg speed into practice

I flew off the dual carriageway with just under 60 minutes on the clock. I had to push the last bit hard!

The hour slipped through my fingers but I came over the line in one hour and 58 seconds, a massive improvement on my personal best!

We came away from the race with three personal bests; 56-24 for Roy and 51-52 for Scott. Well done guys!

Such a massive improvement in time seems to show that Roy's "leg speed" theory really works, especially after some great times from both of us since then!



CONGRATULATIONS

... to Louise Eden & Dave Walker on going permanently two-up in August...



...to Dave Matthews on becoming one of only 14 people in 2010 to be included in the Audax Altitude Award Roll of Honour.

The comeback king

By Dave Matthews

The audacious exploits of the Audax expert—PART TWO

Dave Matthews picks up his years-long quest to achieve an Audax dream: completing a recognised 200k Audax ride every month for a year.

Due to family commitments, and the fact that my garage had been demolished to build a new one, thus scattering bikes and bits over a wide area, I was not able to attempt 200k number nine until the latter half of December.

By this time the cold weather, ice and snow had set in on a seemingly permanent basis.

Our village in west Cheshire experienced temperatures as low as -14.5C and the roads carried an almost permanent sheen of ice.

Every morning I would scan the weather websites for the whole country in the hope of getting a safe 200k ride in somewhere – but winter's icy grip seemed universal.

I did drive out to attempt a ride from Bunbury just after Christmas, but as the temperature was -8.5C and the roads were coated with black ice, any attempt at cycling would have been foolhardy in the extreme.

I had almost given up hope of completing a 200k in December due to the extreme weather, when a glimmer of hope appeared for New Year's Eve.

The weather forecast indicated that the temperatures would rise to the dizzy heights of +3C and the day would be dry.

Reviewing the available permanents, I reckoned that riding Mike's Eccleshall 200k gave me the best chance of safe completion, ridden from Bunbury.

Suffice to say that I did manage to com-



Dave in the sunnier (and much warmer) climes of Melbourne, Australia

plete the ride in cold and icy conditions. It was necessary to walk through patches of snow and ice a few times in the lanes, but fortunately none of these patches stretched further than 1/2km.

I finally got back to Bunbury at 8:10pm to find that the "control" Co-op shop had closed early for the new year.

The local pub was hosting a formal dress evening, so it was unlikely they would welcome a sweaty cyclist requesting a brevet card stamp.

Thus, I took an info mark at the Co-op and obtained a control print out in nearby Tarporley to confirm the ride.

On returning home at 9:15pm, I had a quick meal and then fell asleep in a chair until 3:00 am on New Year's Day. So, we let the new year in 24 hours late!

The freezing weather continued well into January and kept me off the bike for two weeks due to the dangerous state of the roads.

Finally, the weather relented slightly and I was able to ride Mike's Holt 200k perm

The comeback king...

from Tattenhall on Friday, January 22.

My diary entry says it all: "Drizzle, rain, grey skies and cold for first 150k. Breezy headwinds. Dark and scary leaving Wilmslow through to Middlewich in rush hour. Back mudguard collapsed in Cholmondeston. Glad to finish."

Exactly one month later, I was in Bunbury for a re-run of the Eccleshall 200k, previously ridden in December.

I started late at 9am to let the temperature rise a little – but it was still -4.5C when I set off.

Within 1k of the start, a farmer suddenly started up a hedge cutter in the adjacent field and spewed thorns all over the road. You can imagine I was not best pleased at having to fix a puncture with freezing fingers just 1.5k into the ride!

One advantage of the late start was that the Priest Hole cafe was open when I got to Audlem. A brew with toasted tea cakes, and Jane's cheery conversation, raised my morale no end prior to setting off for Eccleshall.

There was even more snow and ice in the lanes than during December, so I had to spend a fair time walking to get through.

Beyond Eccleshall, the route heads back NE to Wilmslow for 70K. This proved to be my joint sternest test of the series (along with the back pain in July) as I was heading directly into an icy cold headwind the whole way. It was so cold that my leg muscles could hardly function, causing a real struggle to ascend any gradients in my weakened state.

Eventually I did get to Wilmslow and turned back towards Helsby with the wind behind

me, at last.

On approaching Great Budworth in the gloom, I turned on my lights to discover that my main front light had failed. Fortunately I had good back-up lights and was able to progress safely along well-known roads.

Those who know Great Budworth will be aware of the descent and then steep re-ascent after crossing the main road just beyond the village. Prepared as ever for the steep hill, I changed down to the inner ring just as I started the ascent.

All of a sudden, the chain jumped off the inner ring whilst simultaneously falling off the bottom sprocket into the back wheel.

So here I was without a good light, at the side of the road, with all my gears wrapped up! It seemed for a while that my ride was over as the chain just refused to get back into drive and it looked like I had broken the rear mech.

Eventually though everything freed up, and I was able to continue through to a control at Helsby and then back through the lanes to finish at Bunbury.

The temperature at the finish was -1.5C and had never got above freezing all day.

I had been feeling some pain in both sides the ball of my right foot during, and especially after, these winter rides. This pain had now become so severe that I went to visit the local chiropodist to try and get some relief. Her diagnosis, which shocked me somewhat, was that I had frostbite in both sides of my foot and black blisters to prove it. Such is the joy of winter cycling.

My final ride of the series, ridden with damaged foot well padded, was the Eureka 200k in early March.

By this time, the weather had relented somewhat and it was daylight for at least

ten hours.

This ride passed by without any drama apart from a snapped chain in Alderley Edge. Fortunately, I always carry a chain tool and spare power link, so was able to effect a repair.

So finally, I rode into Bunbury, scene of so many frosty starts, to complete the RRtY series.

It had taken me 26 200k rides to complete 12 consecutively.

A great challenge which seems to have dominated my life during the last year, but one I am relieved to have completed.

And would I do it again?

-

Footnote – It makes an interesting comparison that when I rode the Eureka 200 in June, my ride time was 10hrs, 34min. My time in March, when I was much fitter was 12hrs, 5min. This shows the effect that winter weather and darkness can have on ride times!

Seamons on tour - Bishop's Castle

By Gordon Peake

This now annual, late-season jaunt to the heart of Shropshire attracted some 16 Seamons this year – plus an appearance by Ian Nightingale and his pal John. Ian was a member some ten years ago and now resides in Leicester. Always pleasant to see “old” faces. Our mates The Wigan Wheelers kept popping up. Always good company.

The weekend was stunningly well organised by me! OK, Karen is the brains behind the complicated bits like booking the two statics, collating the finances, organising the meals and kitting us out with tea, coffee, cereals, bread etc.

The only complaint was a lack of marmalade on morning one. Soon rectified, it joined the homemade damson jam (Reg's favourite) on the menu.

Rides went out around the rolling hills of the Welsh/English border on Friday, Saturday and Monday. Aply led by Pete C with his satnav (and now nourished with some marmalade). All points of the compass covered. The rest survived on pans of Thai green curry, hot pot, soup and various breads, the result of Karen's industrious



Thursday pm preparations. Add to that a full cooked breakfast with a small glass of champagne on Sunday. We'd even remembered the HP sauce! On the way home we did a milk count and stopped at 18 pints. Did you bring an extra one Mr Carberry? It's a little known fact that Mr C used to deliver milk in his student days. His last proper job, I believe!

All this complemented by the back-drop of Bishop's Castle's Michaelmas celebrations to fill in the rest periods. Actually it can all get exhausting as you're constantly roaming around playing catch-up, trying to see everything and not miss the highlights.

Free music all day from Stipperstones

Seamons on tour...

brass and Bidgenorth fiddly folk to African rhythms. Steam engines of all shapes and sizes (guessing 30+), street entertainers and whilst not everyone's bag – the best Morris dancers I've ever suffered. Seriously they'd got it "sorted", all sooted and booted with the Lancashire Clog. So English! Of course we avoided the temptation of the 25-choice cider and real ale festival, preferring long quiet evenings drooling over OS maps in the caravans! Did I promise not to repeat previous reports?

By Monday the town returns to normal and is incredibly quiet and by lunchtime the place is spotless and all the paraphernalia packed away until next time.

Those not riding took the opportunity for a good walk across surrounding fields and secret valleys around the River Unk. The sun giving us a pleasant glow as we ventured along another bit of the Shropshire Way. Our Karma suddenly interrupted by an animated Eco Hermit bursting out of his rather eccentrically decorated farmhouse. No, not the "get orfff my land" scenario but "The Age of Stupid", with Pete Postlethwaite! have you seen it?"

He remonstrated: "The Chinese are planning 60 new airports." "It's crazy". A country gent I could happily have given more time to on another occasion. I froze, just nodding agreement whilst the others, discreetly, kept moving through his cows – diplomatic polite exit.

Eventually, we literally crept back through the town for a late lunch in the almost deserted Three Tuns Inn.

Over lunch and my first pint of the weekend ("Liar!" I hear you cry), I recalled "The Age of Stupid" film that the Guardian described as "a must see film". So that DVD is going

on my Christmas list.

On the way home we managed a red kite sighting after previous false alarms. Another dry (just) cracking weekend, and thanks to all for the laughs. A very special thanks to Karen.



Diary dates

Don't forget, the fun doesn't start and finish on club nights or club runs. Oh no, there's much more time you can spend with your clubmates.

Darren Buckley has organised another track night (November 27). While there's enough people who've said they want to ride, you can still join in as a curry is planned afterwards.

This will be back in Altrincham. There may be room at the table. Contact Darren if you fancy currying favour with your friends.

Meanwhile, back at the velodrome, the Revolution is returning. October 23, November 20, December 11 and January 15 are the dates you need.

It's hill climbing season (as anyone foolish enough to venture out to Withenshaw Hill earlier this month will know).

If Gordon's write-up on the Cotswolds whets your appetite, you can pay a visit on October 31 as it's the scene of the national hill climb championship.

And in the run-up to Christmas don't forget the Montgomery weekend (December 4-5) and then the hot pot run, via the Carberry Grotto, on December 19.

And then it's 2011 when you need to remember the M&D lunch on January 30, the club dinner on February 12th, and then it's the Llangollen/Cerrig weekend on March 5-6.

By which time, it'll be the next edition of the Squirrel. Blimey.

Alpine epic

By Sara Blackburn

Sara Blackburn takes on the Raid Alpine for a week of intense altitude assaults. Here is her diary.

Day 0—Saturday July 24th—Arrival

We arrived at the hotel in Thonon les Bains and met our support team (Andy, Julie and Eddie) and our fellow cyclists. People have come from England, Scotland, Wales, South Africa, New Zealand and Canada for this challenge and will prove to be an entertaining group to ride with.

The Alpine Raid is “supported” not “guided”, a shock to the system for me as it is in effect an Audax! I had been expecting a rider to be leading us. We have been given paper copies of maps, an Itineraire, and a card to get stamped at various locations en route. The concept of riding a bike whilst trying to follow instructions on a piece of paper with a very small font size is lost on me. I know some of you hardened Audax riders will recoil in horror when I say that, but I’ve never wanted to ride with a clipboard on my handlebars or stop every two minutes to read a bit of paper in my back pocket. Thank heavens for my Garmin.

The Garmin routes supplied for this trip left a little to be desired. However, if you can handle a few diversions and wrong turns, and a sprint down the motorway, they will get you to the end point each day. Oh, apart from Thursday as they changed the hotel.

This picture ▼ shows the Alpine Raid route (in kilometres)...but in reverse order! So we start from the right and finish on the left!

Day 1 - Sunday, July 25

Thonon les Bains to Notre Dame Bellcombe
73.93 miles, Elevation gain 8,838 feet, 5,376 calories



Our first day of cycling the Raid. A complicated set of instructions, and there’s much confusion and getting lost by everyone, and many doing different chunks of the course, or extra miles!

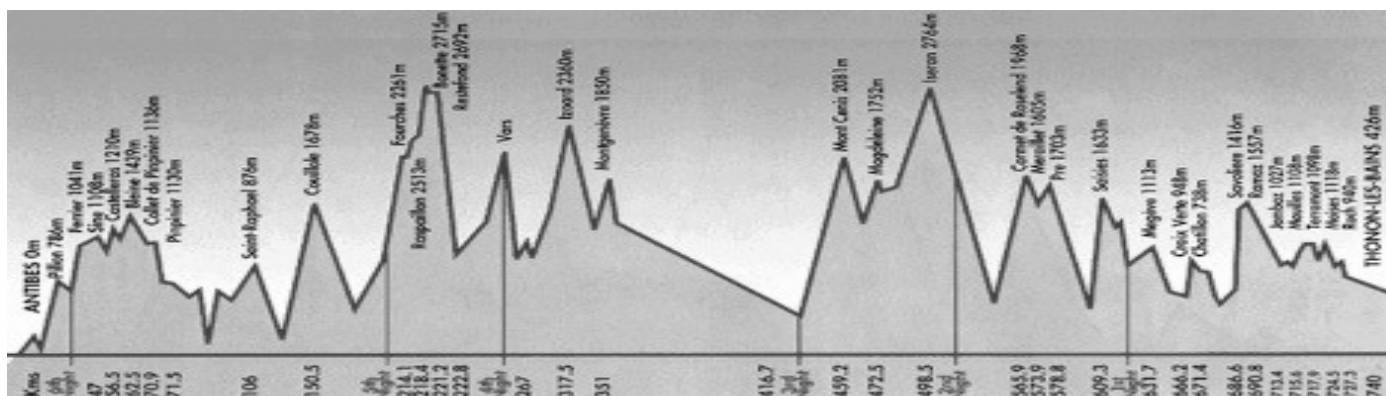
Some Cols along the way to Notre Dame...

- 1 Col Des Moises
- 2 Col De Terramont
- 3 Col de Jambaz
- 4 Col de la Ramaz
- 5 Col de la Savoliere

I was reliably informed by Charles Carraz, AKA King of the Mountains, that the first



When we stopped for a spot of lunch after four hours of cycling, Charles informed me that last time he did this Raid, this was where he had started cycling from, as he’d had a “technical” leaving Thonon les Bains.



The Squirrel

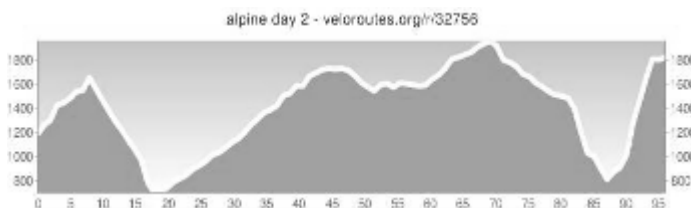
No wonder it had been an easy day for him!

The hotel at Notre Dame Bellcombe was not to my taste: a little too “rustic” and basic let’s say.

The local speciality sausages weren’t for me at dinner either, so that became the first omelette of many for me this holiday, being a bit fussy; and many more for Charles. Vegetarians aren’t really appreciated in France.

Day 2 - Monday, July 26

Notre Dame Bellcombe to Val D’isere, 66.23 miles, Elevation gain 10,356 feet, Calories 5,603



Tour organiser Andy advised me that if I’d found the first day hard then I would really struggle today...Oh joy!

We start by completing the climb up Les Saisies. We had stopped last night half way up this Col, and it wasn’t easy starting straight into a climb.

Cols for today are:

- 1 Les Saisies
- 2 Col Du Pre
- 3 Col du Meraillet
- 4 Cornet de Roselend
- 5 Val D’Isere

A tough day but do-able. Allan and Charles are contesting the sprints for the village sign-posts when they are riding together, but I don’t get much of a look in on these unless I’m devious!

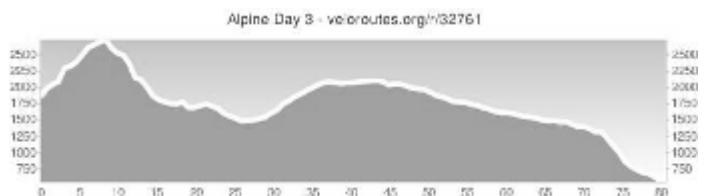
A decent hotel at Val D’Isere, but the choice we were offered for dinner was pig’s cheeks or omelette...That’ll be another omelette then. They did change their mind and swapped the cheeks for tartiflette which I think was well appreciated by most.

Next day, we were given a good, hearty breakfast choice too. This was usually the best meal of the day.



Day 3 - Tuesday, July 27

Val D’isere to Susa 5 0.66 miles, Elevation gain 5,505 feet, Calories 3,569



What a gorgeous day’s riding...eventually.

We started from Val D’Isere immediately climbing up the Iseran (2764m). We had been warned that it was extremely cold at the top. So... it got colder and windier, and I added layers as I climbed up.

At the top the lady who stamps the route cards had not arrived so we layered up even more to start the descent.

As we turned at the top and started the descent, I could not believe how cold it was, an icy wind cut right through me and I felt desperately cold. I was looking for somewhere to lie down and die. But thankfully as I inched lower it gradually warmed up.

(Please note I'm not very hardy and the boys coped admirably)

The contrast in weather today was amazing, as was the scenery. This was a day for some tough climbing but also some magnificent descents. We had a great lunch stop at the top of Mont Cenis, admiring spectacular views.

From Col du Mont Cenis we then descended across the Italian border, and as I crossed the border Charles appeared alongside me and shouted "Welcome to Italy", what great timing!

The descent to Susa was awesome, a beautiful town surrounded by mountains and many old fortifications from when the borders of France and Italy had been contested.

Cols bagged today

- 1 Col de L'Iseran
- 2 Col du Mont Cenis

Day 4 - Wednesday, July 28

Susa to Vars Saint Marie

72.85 miles, Elevation gain 10,917 feet, Calories 5,614



With the accumulating fatigue, and the effort of holding a Franglais conversation with a cyclist whilst climbing the Izoard, the miles took their toll. Nearing the top of Izoard I suffered a little, it seemed to get steeper near the top.

I spoke my "French" and the French cyclist spoke his "English". We managed very well, each wanting to practice. I needed an opportunity to do more than just ask for a salad or omelette.

A great descent through a fabulous gorge, interrupted only by Charles breaking a spoke and then riding on a comedy warped wheel!

Then Vars was like the last straw! I thought it would never end, and the fatigue of four

days in the Alps really hit me. Near the top I spotted Charles mending a puncture overlooking a tremendous view of the valley. He mended his puncture and then overtook me to the hotel.

From Susa:

- 1 Colletto Di Meana
- 2 Colle Delle Finestre
- 3 Col De Mont Genevre
- 4 Col D'Izoard
- 5 Half way up Vars to Saint Marie!

This was by far the hardest day for me. I'd been bitten twice on the Genevre...I'm sure there's worse places to be bitten though!

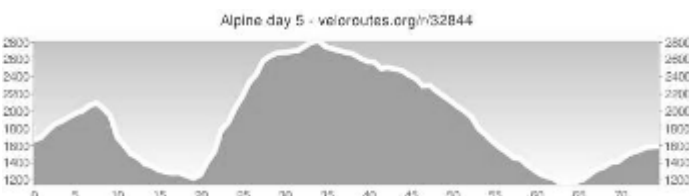
I finished the day exhausted but stayed awake long enough to get some badly needed food down me, just.

Poor Allan had to carry both our bags from the van to our room and from the room to the van most days as I never had the strength left to carry them!

Day 5 - Thursday, July 29

Vars Saint Marie to Saint Etienne

53.17 miles, Elevation gain 7,974 feet, Calories 4,280



I woke this morning not feeling much better for a night's sleep and had grave concerns about making it around today; I had never felt so tired. Perhaps it wasn't just me, though.

Another technical. Charles has a puncture and a ripped tyre wall this morning before we even get started!

We rode straight out on to Col de Vars and I went into auto-pilot to turn the pedals.

- 1 Col De Vars
- 2 Col De Restefond
- 3 Col de la Bonette
- 4 Col de la Raspailon

Col de la Bonette, at 2,802m, is the highest Col that we climbed, and it had great views from the top.

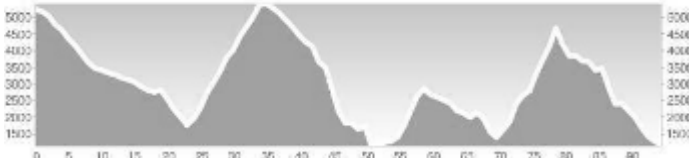


It was a much quieter climb than some we'd done...apart from the pesky sheep, in fact loads of them.



Day 6 - Friday, July 30 (Allan's birthday)
 Saint Etienne de Tinee to Grasse
 111.81 miles, Elevation gain 10,170 feet, Calories 6,913 (I have earned a Big Mac)

Alpine day 6 - velouroutes.org/h/32856



Today started with a slightly technical descent which left me right near the back, and then a long, fast, gentle descent where we almost time-trialed down to our turn off junction where we met the support van.

We arrived there ten minutes after the leaders thanks to me, then started the climb up Col de la Couillole; a long but beautiful climb with a village built high up onto the hillside.

I passed quite a few of our group on the way up, which was pleasing.

Today's Cols:

- 1 Col de la Couillole
- 2 Col de Saint Raphael
- 3 Collet de Pinpinier
- 4 Col de Bleine

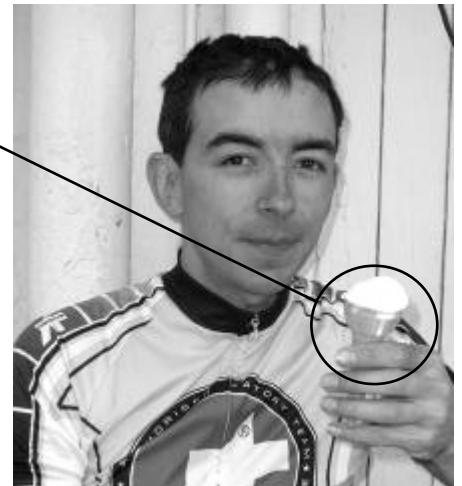
- 5 Col de Castellaras
- 6 Col de la Sine
- 7 Col du Ferrier
- 8 Col du Pillon

Birthday ice cream for Allan...



Smaller ice cream for Charles...

That night, another technical, Charles's chair at the dinner table collapsed under him...



Day 7 - Saturday, July 31

Grasse to Antibes
 23.61 miles, Elevation gain 645 feet, Calories 1,530

Alpine day 7 - velouroutes.org/h/32850



So it was the last day, with a short but scary ride to Antibes. Not for the faint-hearted.

There didn't seem to be a nice or safe road to be found, and the Garmin route provided

seemed to suggest we take the motorway!
The route was not easy.

Anyway, not a great ride to Antibes and we all got split into groups by traffic but got there safely eventually, even if by different routes.

We stopped to refuel at Antibes viewing the yachts in the harbour, and then set off for Nice where our final hotel was.

It amused me that two of our new friends from Lancashire appeared not to have grasped any French and one of them struggled to ask for a coke, but was ably assisted by Charles. Then the other Lancashire cyclist said in a loud, broad Lancashire accent to the French waitress: "I'll have same!" You had to be there.

When together, Allan and Charles had been contesting the sprints for each village sign. The biggie was to be the sign for Nice.

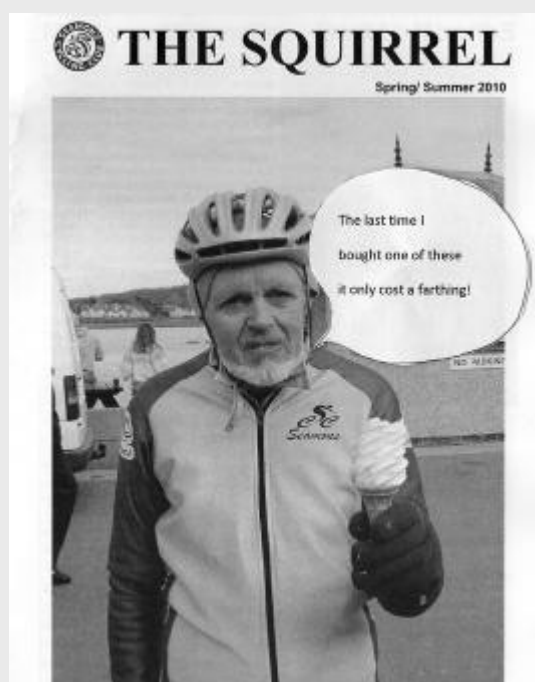
I take no pleasure in informing you (actually that's not true at all), I take great pleasure in telling you that I got the final sprint sign for Nice, the "Champs-Elysees" of the trip, and gave a Cavendish salute in triumph. The five salute, not the two-fingered one.

"Lord Nelson, Lord Beaverbrook, Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Anthony Eden, Clement Attlee, Henry Cooper, Lady Diana, Keith Stacey, vi har slått dem alle sammen, vi har slått dem alle sammen [we have beaten them all, we have beaten them all]. Maggie Thatcher, can you hear me? Maggie Thatcher [...] your boys took a hell of a beating! Your boys took a hell of a beating!"

They were naturally gutted at their loss, and it doesn't get better than that!



Caption competition Last Squirrel's cover inspired an *impromptu* caption competition. Apologies, once again, to John Coles...



Testing times

By Ed Baldwin

M&DTTA 2010 points competition

At the time of writing, Seamons were third placed of 28 teams, a comfortable 165 points ahead of fourth placed Manchester Wheelers.

Charles Carraz is sitting 3rd, with 230 points, and Roy Myers and Dan Snape are contributing 151 and 155 points respectively.

Paul McAllister gave 100 points to the team prize and Dan Mathers 94 points; Phil Holden, 58; and Malc McAllister, 39 points.

The top three looks like this:

Congleton CC	710
Warrington RC	673
Seamons CC	536

Looking back

Phil Holden has had a spectacular season so far, being the only club member to compete at all distances/times and has the club's best result of year in the 24-hour: 337.92 miles.

Phil's powers of persuasion have to be highly commended as each year he has a dedicated team of feeders and helpers in this event. This year his team was headed up by Mike Brooks and John Barry, who both deserve a mention.

Any support in this event is appreciated and the support team also appreciate the support they have had throughout this event. Mike McConville's barbeque is always a popular destination and he and Beth made all very welcome.

Charles Carraz holds this year's club best in the 12-hour with 249.61 miles, and again a special mention to the helpers and feeders.

This year Malc McAllister, Phil Holden and Dan Snape also need congratulating for their efforts competing in this event.

Dan Mathers has the 2010 club best in the 25, 50 & 100. (56:41, 1:57:54 & 4:12:16) Paul McAllister's time of 22:05 for ten miles is good enough to be the best produced by



Ian Holmes in the Club 10 Championship

a Seamons member his year.

Wednesday tens

Wednesday evening's 8.75-mile TT has been a burster this year and our fastest rider was Charles Carraz with 19:37. We have been blessed with good weather on the Wednesdays and only had the odd, light shower very occasionally.

The turnout at this event has been outstanding, with several editions "over subscribed."

The car park at the Kilton has been filled to capacity several times and a real social scene has developed there, ending with competitors and spectators eagerly awaiting the results to be read out by the club's very own town crier Roy Myers.

This TT has been the event of choice from people entirely new to the sport to the experienced rider edging out his top-end speed. Some non-members have enjoyed this showcase event so much that they have decided to join the club.

We have built some useful relationships too. For example, North Cheshire Clarion have offered marshals and any help they can for future events.

As cycling does so much depend on volunteers in all areas, the Wednesday event has also been a useful tool to give budding time-keepers the opportunity to learn the art in a controlled environment. Again we must thank the volunteers who have week in week out marshalled this event. They have done a truly outstanding job, so much so that I have even read praise on other club websites about them.

Next year we may make some changes to the Wednesday TT, the changes proposed are:

- 1 Making it a full ten miles
- 2 Each club rider has to marshal at least one event.(we have offers from other clubs too)
- 3 Allocating club members the first 30 places.

These changes are up for discussion.

Open 25

Our Open 25 (J2/9) was another success this year, with stiff competition to the event itself in the guise of the faster Lyme Open 25. In the end, we managed a field of 109 riders and only lost one Seamons rider, Dan Snape, to the lure of the Lyme event.

We had good weather offering a steady breeze and good road conditions, which was a blessing as a steam and traction engine show at Astle Park produced a large area of mud on the exit of the event. Trike rider Malc McAllister (above) had the honour of being the first man off. Malc managed a 1:22:32 to win the handicap.

The club fielded 16 riders, which on paper looked impressive. There were, however, a couple of casualties for the Seamons starters: Basil LeRoux phoned to say that he and his wife had recently been blessed with a new born and so he had other, more important duties, understandable. Next was Dave McIlroy. His apology followed: dodgy



stomach. Too much paella probably. Ian Holmes turned up without his shoes (we have all done that) and after a rally-car-ride home he returned and managed to start at a later time, but then punctured. Sometimes it's just not your day.

My favorite of the day was Dave Williams. All that training, preparation and focus and then find yourself lost on the way to the start line.

A dozen Seamons riders finished: Charles Carraz was the first Seamons rider with 57:48 to give him 12th place.

Paul McAllister, 59:14, in 18th; and Roy Myers 59:21, 19th. Harry Streuli was 37th, 1:03:22; Simon Williams 38th, 1:04:47; then we have 56th Phil Holden, 1.08.30; 57th Graham Lockett (V), showing his son who is boss (while he can) by one second 1:08:29 and 58th ...his son Joe (J) delivered 1:08:30 showing promise in what is to come.

67th Alan Chorley, 1:11:46; 69th H McKenna, 1:13:07; 70th Sally Cowan, 1:13:31.

Our Louise Eden, (riding under Maxgear RT) won the ladies event with 1:07:09

The winner overall was Rob Partridge (Endura Racing), who (at time of press)

Testing times...

was the leading British rider in the Tour of Britain, with 52:53.

His pal and team mate Rob Hayles popped down to HQ to mix and offer a bit of support.

Rob H said they were away on a training camp after the TT for the Tour of Britain team selection.

Second was Rapha-Condor's Matt Cronshaw with 53:41 and third Anthony O'Neill, Deeside Olympic with 54:21.

We had another professional competing, Richard Handley from Team Raleigh, who was hoping to hone his top-end speed and possibly beat Rob Partridge in the event. Unfortunately he punctured at 12 miles. He later explained that he had 29.89mph average on his speedometer. Another few notches and we may see him out on one of our club runs.

The constant message I got from all the riders at the end of the day was: "I got held up by about a minute by a tractor."

I looked at this and thought about knocking a minute off every rider but the same positions would result with several PBs, so times were left as they were.

The HQ was a busy hub of activity with Mike Brooks and Keith Stacey constantly updating the results board, and an ever-growing cluster of riders eagerly watching the positions change.

The riders and staff were very effectively (and profitably) looked after nutritionally by Vera and Kerry Blease, and Beryl Stacey with a constant conveyor belt of tasty sandwiches, cakes and cups of tea.

I'm sure the whole club and all the participants on the day would like to thank all of the volunteers who helped make the day fun, safe and special.

The marshals and volunteers were made up of new and old club members and also family members, and also non-members,



Roger Haines riding a club 10, old school

and I hope their reward is knowing they have done something good and helped people have a good, fun memorable and safe day.



▲ *Unsung heroes - marshals shun the lime light*
TT gives a different meaning of 'carbon footprint' ▼





Bev Chapman remembered

Obituary

By Johnny Pardoe

It is with sadness that I report the death of former veteran club champion and record holder, Bev Chapman.

Bev started cycling in the 1940s, racing with Manchester Wheelers, before joining the Altrincham Ravens. He eventually joined the Seamons in the late 1970s on his return to cycling.

In the late 1940s Bev was one of the elite short-distance riders in the country who had beaten the hour for a 25.

Remarkably, 49 years later and at the age of 74, he was the first rider of his age to break the hour. A couple of weeks later he was to break the 30-mile age-related record with a 1.12.00.

He was a former club vets champion at ten, 25 and 50 miles, and still holds club vet's records at ten, 25, 30 and 50 miles. He also held many VTTA age-related records on solo and tandem with Wynn Clarke.

Bev was always meticulous with his preparation and appearance, and believed in long, hard miles on the road backed up by rollers in the cellar. He would always arrive well before the start of an event, checking the conditions and ensuring his equipment was up to standard.

Bev was an extremely competitive rider, often finishing an event completely exhausted.

I have some very happy memories of training holidays spent in Calpe, on the Costa Blanca, with Bev and the late Geoff Horrocks.

In 1989 we met up in the Alps to watch the Tour de France, an experience Bev treasured for the rest of his life.

Bev was always very proud of his former son-in-law Robin Haigh's racing achievements. Of course, his own son Michael could turn a nifty pedal. He is a former club junior champion.



His cousin, Roger, a long-standing and very active club member in the 70s and 80s donated the RW Chapman Trophy, which is competed for in the club ten points series.

One of Bev's proudest achievements was receiving the Stretford Sports Personality of the Year Award in the late 90s. This came as a complete shock to him as all who knew about it were sworn to secrecy.

Outside cycling, Bev had a passion for quality cars, once owning a Rolls Royce which was too big for the garage and had to be sold almost immediately. This was followed by such gems as an Aston Martin DB4, Jaguar 3.8, Lotus Mark 2, and believe it or not, a Ferrari!

By complete contrast, he took up falconry and decided to invest in his own rat-catcher, a golden eagle called Cleo!

Bev Chapman remembered...

As you can see, Bev enjoyed a long, varied and interesting life, so was always good company.

But for me, by far his greatest achievement in cycling was the 59-minute 25 at the age of 74, almost 50 years after he first broke the hour. To quote Bev's words: "Marvellous".

Bev will be sadly missed by all who had the privilege and pleasure of knowing him.

Best Clubman 2010

At the start of summer, the leading positions were:

1. Mike McConville	166
2. Reg Blease	161
3. John Verbickas	153
4. John Barry	148
5. Phil Holden	146
6. Ed Baldwin	135
= Malc McAllister	135
8. Dave McIlroy	130
9. Dan Snape	129
= Tom Dyer	129
11. Alex Smith	127
12. John Hammond	124

A tale of two weekends

by Gordon Peake



Seamons' go a 'Bridge Too Far' into Anglesey... while Eleven Go Mad in the Cotswolds

I'm intentionally poor at keeping track of "being away" with the Seamons or where our house decorating is up to. There is a relationship!

This habit started over a decade ago as a Seamons guest at Millom in the Lake District. An invitation I couldn't resist, which soon led to membership and a jolt in life-style generally. Appearing in public in Lycra being the hardest to adopt.

Despite numerous declines to John Carberry's annual invite to Spain, I find myself in Alicante airport for the sixth or seventh year on the trot. Why? – It's "top messing"! This year's calendar may result in some future radical downsizing.

Since Christmas we've had Seamons weekends in Cerrigydrudion, Anglesey, Cotswolds, Bishop's Castle and York on top of the week in Spain. All brilliant may I add, and everywhere but Cheshire!

When asked why I've always declined the Montgomery weekend, I can only reply, "December! – short days! – weather gamble, TIME!"

So when Karen and I had a week away "together" recently, and she asked if we were taking the bikes. I replied: "No! We are having a holiday!" and promptly loaded the bikes anyway. As it happened, we never turned a pedal, and busied ourselves doing more normal pursuits: Bodnant Gardens, Conway Castle, Anglesey, cliff-top

walking, watching the sun set in the Conway valley and reading books on the patio with the legs slightly raised. Is all that normal?

I suspect there has been an extra weekend away slipped into the Seamons tourist calendar this year already, but the weather up until July was stunning – so who's counting?

I/we ended up on all of them. I would hate to bore you with all the detail but I'm always tempted to fill the squirrel with my take on the events.

First off is Anglesey. With 24 hours before the squirrel deadline I'm informed Dave Barker's already done a write-up. How dare he! Just because he organised it all.

Worst still, I'm told this while dripping wet and trying to control involuntary shivering in the Ryles Arms after the wettest Sunday morning ride out I can remember. Dave, in complete contrast, was warm and dry in woolly civvies with the car parked outside. He saved the moment by making sure he got served his dinner last! Thanks Dave. Oh and thanks for the Anglesey weekend as well. Definite "top messin"!

So now I'm back on the PC ripping up a page-and-a-half and re-jigging my bit on the Cotswolds too. All my own fault – I should have checked!

However I must mention early on the Saturday ride in Anglesey under, Mediterranean blue skies, we reached a crossroad with signposts to: Llanfachraeth Llanddyfael Llanfflewyn Llanrhyddlad Llanfaethlu Llanddeasant and Llanfairynghornny. I kid you not. Of course you'll all be familiar with this crossroads – after all, it is on the Sus-trans No 5 Route! Not surprisingly, we went the wrong way for 50 yards. The next sign was similar and no more helpful. With care you can end up at Llanbackwhereyoustartedfrom. Church Bay doesn't warrant a sign until you reach a lane that doesn't go anywhere else and you can see the church spire anyway.

I'll leave the rest to you Dave.

Six weeks after Anglesey we descend on: *"Flagstone Farm – In the heart of the natural beauty of the Cotswolds between Stow on the Wold and Broadway. Six delightful barn conversions set in an idyllic 12 acres of fields and woodland, rich in wildlife with superb views over the North Cotswolds countryside."*

Their website words, not mine. However it does merit the description and is ideal accommodation and reasonably priced in this notoriously expensive area. A 'blind' booking gamble by Andy Burns that paid off.

A contingent of 11: six returns, five missing from Anglesey but five others gained. All accounted for apart from the Barkers who were in France. These things happen!

Proper place names like Chipping Camden, Guiting Power, Snowhill, Upper Rollright, and Lower Slaughter. Not a "Llan" or any throat clearing required getting directions around here.



"Is it me, or has it all gone a bit 'Patterson'?"

A keen foursome got there early on Friday and got a leisurely local 25-miler in before the rabble descended. Whilst enjoying another "in-house gourmet nosh" all around one big table. I pondered the difference between the all-male contingent in Millom, some 11 years ago, and the ambience of a more balanced group on this occasion including five ladies. The food's certainly improved! I now even take a glass of wine with dinner. Far more civilised, and befitting our age and Cheshire status. Oooh!

Johnny Coles, who rarely chats and eats at the same time (he's too well mannered),

A tale of two weekends...

suddenly declares to the assembly: "I think I'll go and do my first drop"! The room went silent. Did he just say what I thought he'd said? Do we really need to know? A diplomatic coaching of the truth revealed he meant his eye drops. Well that's a relief. We thought...Never mind.

Saturday, and another meteorological phenomena. More sunshine! We all set off together to "explore the Cotswolds".

First impressions – they are a lot lumpier on two wheels than four. Destination – a snaking route to Winchcombe. Most of you will know that the western edge of the Cotswolds is a steep escarpment down to the Severn Valley.

Winchcombe I remember is at the bottom and there is the inevitable climb back up. So, noticing one or two red faces at the top of Naunton Bank, I promptly lead a split for an early lunch in the Farmer's Arms in Guiting Power.

Ham salads on the back lawn with local Donnington Best Bitter. Spring water recipe with local hops and water driven machinery etc. Real ale heaven! Anyway, it was too hot to contemplate punishing ourselves!



Reg & Vera Blease - off to Upper Slaughter

The braver contingent carried on over the ridge and got the 40 mile loop in, including Reg and Vera on the tandem. A commendable feat in this terrain. Vera was glowing with achievement at the finish but she'd

had doubts on the climb out of Broadway to Snowhill. Slaughtered in Upper Slaughter! (It's a white knuckle descent by the way! Worth a go if you're in the area.)

We self-catered and enjoyed an evening's barbeque courtesy of our resident pyromaniac Andy Burns. He always finds an excuse to set fire to something. All sorts of salads, olives and nutty bread appeared on the picnic tables thanks to the ladies. All aptly illustrated already on the photo section of the club website. Among the photos you'll also notice the inevitable "ford" challenges which abound in these parts. Lovely weather so lets get our shoes soaked? Led by Mr Burns who's Lancashire not Cheshire of course.



Andy fords - Lower Slaughter

While some fell foul of Andy's enthusiasm to act daft, I managed to restrain myself as a single pair of dry cycling shoes is preferable to damp feet all weekend. They never dry out till about Wednesday!

Sunday was even warmer. The hard core set off north-east for Shipton on Stour. A flatter terrain with more potential mileage. Within minutes Reg reappeared for another final brew? A puncture prior to the farm gate had one of Pete Devine's posh tyres giving him grief, (again!)

So eventually, half the group got a 55-miler in, while the "more sensible" set off for a car-assist walk. We explored a circuit of the Warden's Way and the Windrush Way, lunching at Bourton on the Water. Sounded ideal – and it was. A dragonfly haven.



▲ *Pete Devine's tyres prove... tiresome (geddit?)*

The view from the bridge ▼



New kids on the cassette

The club continues to welcome new members to the bunch. Since the last edition of the Squirrel, membership secretary Mike Brookes has been very busy.

Please say hello to your new clubmates:

Sam Armfield	Alexander Fletcher
Hugh McKenna	Brian Goulden
John Menzies	Simon Barnes
Trevor Griffiths	Karen Popplewell
Phil Brydges	Will Griffiths
Jack Robinson	Alan Chorley
Stephen Halligan	Joanne Royle
Rob Cleary	Gillian Heathcote
Paul Savage	Harry Davies
David Hoyle	Thomas Turton
Scott Davies	Sandra Leach
Robert Edwards	James Lees
Jeannette & Paul Barber	
Neil Rothwell	

It's a beautiful area, off as well as on tarmac. However it was hot and no cooling headwind! Bourton came just in time to refresh us half way around. It's a very popular spot but worth a visit. It's definitely on the "Visit Cotswolds in a Day" coach circuit, but this bodes well for eateries.

Back along water meadows, through the Slaughter villages and a chance to cool the feet in the River Windrush. That's right Andy – you take your shoes off first!

Back at base we'd all had successful days and yet again mulled our stories over more homespun and plentiful food. Topics including the "obvious" merits of expensive puncture proof tyres!

One serious thing I've learnt. It's much more fun and relaxed when "we Seamons" take over a whole place, cottage, barn whatever.

The dedicated had got three days on the bikes in the bag, so Monday saw the bikes packed in the cars and some set off for a shorter circular walk from Bourton – the Oxfordshire Way this time.

Others decided on a few hours retail experience in the quaint village emporiums and lunch on the lawns along the picturesque riverside. The split was blatantly gender based. A re-gather (the advantages of mobile phones) and then the split for home around 3pm. Karen and I took the opportunity of a quick visit to Bristol to see our Grandchildren. Brilliant as that might be, it added an extra 130 miles to the day and we stumbled through our front door about 1 o'clock in the morning.

So what's next? Decorating! I've had the paint for the Hall, stairs and landing for six months. Maybe not. It's York Cycle Rally a fortnight later...

New cycle 'crash risk zone' signage? ... Painted with due care and attention...



Treasure Hunt

by John Carberry



Would-be pirates swashed their buckles, shivered their timbers and ended up splicing their mainbraces when they took part in a bank holiday treasure hunt.

It was a motley crew that assembled at Rackhams before setting sail on the high seas of Cheshire in their search for treasure, glory and the prospect of not-very-significant prizes.

Armed only with their wits, they braved at least four pages of clues that charted a course around Hale Barns, Ashley and Knutsford.

Their ordeal included the collection of various booty on the way, ranging from the simple (a fern leaf) to the difficult, depending how hard you looked, (a photograph of an alien).

More than a dozen rose to the challenge, pretending it was normal for grown-ups to dress as pirates on a Monday afternoon, as they sweated and cursed their way towards the finish in Mobberley.

First to arrive back were Darren and Katherine, complete with their daughter aboard, having cut off a corner.

Next in was Ian Dunning, making a single-handed attempt to circumnavigate the course.

As we prowled the widow's walk, well, sat outside the Bird in Hand drinking a pint, the scurvy rabble that mostly makes up the touring section slowly arrived home safe to harbour.

Mike Brooks had set himself a hard act to follow with shipmate Peter Coles after last year's effort (where he literally listed every animal he'd seen on the way round in answer to a clue).

Malc and Wynne dropped anchor with an "ooh, it was hard", rather than the standard pirate script expected.

But in the end it was a dead heat for first with Team Burns (Wilkie and Andy) tying with Team Craigie (Sheila, John and Ros).

With only a convincing pirate impression standing between first and second place (and an actual bottle of rum, courtesy of Mr Carberry Snr) it was the first time any of us had seen Andy shun the limelight.

Too scared to unleash his best pirate impersonation on the already bemused bank holiday drinkers, it was down to Ros to show how it was done. The picture only just about does justice to Cap'n Helliwell's frightening pirate burr.

With no rations on offer at the Bird in Hand, the whole gang hauled anchor for the Bull to take on provisions.

And there we found the real treasure, discovered by Karen Peake: the best steak and ale pie this side of Hispaniola.



"Socialism can only arrive by bicycle." - **Jose Antonio Viera Gallo**; but will it be on Campag or Shimano?

Shorts & longs

By John Carberry

As any serious tourer knows, the secret to getting all the way around is to carry a massive saddlebag full of everything and to always have a good lunch, ideally followed by cake.

Out on a run in the exotic climes of France I noticed that my two companions were finding it difficult to a) stop long enough to eat something substantial at lunchtime and b) digest whatever I had forced them to enjoy if we did make it into a cafe.

Most disappointing in the home of gastronomy.

Turns out they were a pair of Sportscinetologists; that cult of weirdoes who ride on gels and potions and stuff. And they were trying to recruit me.

Instead of having to remember the one time to eat – dinnertime – these two had about six different feeding times to keep up with so as to not upset their electrolytes, or something.

I let them stay well ahead of me to give them space to think.

Call me old fashioned but pies, chips, soup, Sunday roasts etc have been fuelling athletes for a lot longer than any of these new fangled gloopy things.

All those old records? Won by people eating proper food. Stuff you have to cook.

While stopped to take in a view, I noticed the sidewall of my tyre was split and a giant, rubber bleb was bulging out. Oh dear. (Well, more like “Oh sh**”, as we’d just arrived halfway down a 40mph-plus descent. Parp!)

I was on a bike that only had a seatpack and therefore no room for the usual tourer’s accoutrements which include a spare tyre or a “tyre boot”.

This being France, there was no way you’re going to find a Ginster’s pasty wrapper in the hedgerow.

What to do?

Obvious really. Get one of the cult to eat a gel and give me the empty wrapper.

In the time it took Hamish to squeeze the goo down I’d got the tyre off and was ready. One perfect, get-you-home repair. I thank you.

Maybe there’s something in Zip Vit after all. They certainly take up less space than a pasty.

Still on the subject of roadside repairs, I have managed to avoid getting a puncture in I don’t know how long.

Then on the run to Chester I got two. One in the back on the way to Rackhams (my best excuse yet for not quite making it all the way to the start), followed by a second in the front just after setting off after lunch.

You think that’s bad luck?

John Hurley’s been through about three seatposts in somewhere near as many years. Ouch.

New recruits to the club were treated to a typically tourers’ day out when the run forsook the published destination (with approval from the Touring Secretary, I hasten to add) and headed for Knutsford and the Great Race.

This once-in-a-decade event sees penny farthings race around the town’s Moor. And I thought we needed help.

To underline the sociable nature of the ride, we’d gone as one group with Darren’s section.

Well, I’m pleased to say we got at least as far as Seamons Road before we lost one rider, bailing out due to brake trouble.

And then we were all the way to Lymm before there was a split and Eddie was missing off the back.

As we regrouped down the road ever-helpful Darren and super-mechanic Reg scouted back to discover Mr Robinson had, in fact, punctured.

Eddie’s not the quickest of puncture menders so when Reg – founder member Reg, that is – rides up and explains that we don’t have to wait, Darren’ll catch us up, what are we supposed to do?

Loyally, “Darren’s group” waited, while the self-ish tourers buggered off to lunch.

When Darren did finally catch us up at Knutsford he explained what the actual message was.

“Please wait for me. I don’t know where I am.”

Oops. Still, it could have been worse. Imagine if he’d been leading a group of people we might become club members. Oh, err...never mind. I suppose they’ll now know what to expect.



CLUBS RUNS LIST

	Half day*	Tempo	Touring	Social
3rd Oct		Hill Climb		Riverside, Whatford
10th Oct	Delamere	Dagfields	Audlem	Wizard, Alderley
17th Oct	Dagfields	Astbury	Cheddleton	Dones Green
24th Oct	Meerbrook	Blaze Farm	Candle Factory	Grt Budworth
31st Oct	Tattenhall	Elvis's	Mystery Run	Mr P's, Handforth
7th Nov	Blaze Farm	Congleton Gdn	Barthomley	Harvest, Middlewich
14th Nov	Two Mills	Buxton	Buxton	Spinney, Allostock
21st Nov	Buxton	Ma's Kitchen	Rose Farm	Plantation Cafe
28th Nov	Congleton Gdn	Astbury	Algreave	Riverside, Whatford
5th Dec	Dagfields**	Dagfields*	Dones Green	Wizard, Alderley
12th Dec	Delamere	Elvis's	Christmas lunch	Dones Green
19th Dec	Carberry's Christmas Grotto & Christmas Curry (High Legh Village Hall)			
26th Dec	Impromptu	Impromptu	Impromptu	Impromptu
2nd Jan	Delamere Stn	Delamere Visitor	Blakemere	Impromptu
9th Jan	Meerbrook	Beetson	Higher Poynton	Riverside, Whatford
16th Jan	Two Mills	Rose Farm	Beeston	Wizard, Alderley
23rd Jan	Radway Green	Astbury	Hayfield	Dones Green
30th Jan	Castleton***	Radway Green	Gandys Brook	Harvest, Middlewich
6th Feb	Buxton	Cat & Fiddle	Alsagers Bank	Mr P's, Handforth
13th Feb	Impromptu	Impromptu	Frodsham	Spinney, Allostock
20th Feb	Dagfields	Nantwich	Mow Cop	Plantation Cafe
27th Feb	Beetson	Meerbrook	Spem Green	Riverside, Whatford

* Until Llangollen mudguards are required on the Half-Day club runs

** Montgomery Weekend

*** M&DTTA Lunch - Middlewich



For your diary

OCTOBER

Sat 2nd	SEAMONS Fun 10
Sun 3rd	SEAMONS Hill Climb, Freewheel & lunch
Sun 10th	WRC: Grand Prix des Gentlemen
Fri 15th	Deadline for AGM propositions
Sat 23rd	Revolution

NOVEMBER

Fri 12th	Annual General Meeting
Sat 20th	Revolution
Sat 27th	SEAMONS Track Night—Velodrome

DECEMBER

3rd-5th	Montgomery Weekend
Sat 11th	Revolution
Sun 12th	M&DTTA Xmas Fancy Dress 10
Sun 19th	SEAMONS Christmas Curry

JANUARY

Sat 15th	Revolution
Sun 30th	M&DTTA Prize Lunch

FEBRUARY

Sat 12th	SEAMONS Annual Dinner & Prize Presentation
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MARCH

5th-6th	SEAMONS: Cerrig W/E & Llangollen
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