

THE SQUIRREL



Christmas 07



A WKWARD G RUMPY OLD-

M EN, AND WOMEN

No, not really! But only 29 members present? What can we do to persuade more of you to come? You don't have to do anything you don't want to, just vote to show you agree or not with what the Club is up to. You could have been our new Social Secretary, but we are sure you will be happy to welcome Louise Eden to that post. We haven't checked her dart playing skills though...Or did you not fancy being the new Touring Secretary? John Carberry has stepped into the breach (a large one). He *is* good with maps though, and is already making impressive plans for delegation. Keith Wilkinson agreed to stand again as

Vice-President, and this was unanimously accepted. What about PRO? Stuart Kay has relinquished the chore of being Auditor in favour of this post. His first question at his first committee meeting: what does the Club want to promote? A good question; do *you* have any suggestions? Daniel Laffley replaces Stuart as Auditor with Keith Stacey. Yes, Europe is now meddling with Seamons financial affairs. Ooh la-la (sorry, Daniel, English humour).

Membership now stands at 124 members, of whom the biggest age group is the 51-60 group. There were 2 propositions: the change of club colours was ratified, and the recommended use of LED lights in club evening events remains as per the Handbook. Your Chairman expressed thanks to all the members who contributed to the continuing success of the Club, notably those who organized or helped with the Dinner, those who organized or helped with our racing events, those who organized or helped with our social events, and special thanks to our webmaster and to our magazine editor. Keith Stacey proposed a vote of thanks to your hard-working Committee. Then we had tea and biscuits. What more could you ask?

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Just a quick note to remind you about the Club Standards. Please send your claims to Mike McConville by the end of the year. As per the last Squirrel.

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Cover: Ian Udall winning this years Hill Climb.

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BITS AND BITS



Just how many Cramptons are there?

First there was Nick, then Matt, then along came Robert, followed by Jessica, and now, according to recent results in the Cycling Weekly, Rebecca. Just in case there are any more Cramptons lurking in the ramparts of Homestead Crescent JP has come up with the answer of keeping the family together on the club run. It should minimize punctures too!

There is absolutely no truth in the rumour that we are changing the Club emblem. This follows the unfortunate accident involving our Vice-President, Captain Wilky, when he collided with a squirrel sustaining serious injury to his elbow.

But take heart, Keith, as recently reported on national TV, in an effort to reduce the population of the said furry little brats, a pub in Crook, near Kendal, is now including "squirrel pie" on the menu

Anyway, as our Treasurer quite rightly

pointed out, our club emblem is a RED squirrel.

The Gentleman's Fund, in memory of Geoff Horrocks.



Geoff on Galibier in 1989

Further to an item raised at the recent AGM it was decided to remind members of its origins and function.

Following the death of Geoff he left most of his cycling equipment to the Club, consisting of 2 racing machines and a Dave Hinde tandem. Most of the equipment was sold and the proceeds used to set up the Geoff Horrocks

HARTLEY WARDS OFF CARTWRIGHT 1942

D. K. HARTLEY won the Manchester Centre N.C.U. Championship "25" recently in 1-3-54, beating C. Cartwright, of the Manchester Clarion, by 59 sec. The event marked a new departure, for it is the first time that the Manchester Centre have promoted a road event; but, unfortunately, the support expected was not forthcoming and the trial only attracted thirty-four entries. Times taken at the half-way turn showed Hartley to be in the lead with 29 sec. in hand over Cartwright, in 31-45; the next fastest being T. G. Horrocks and K. F. Davis level in 32½ min.

First place in the handicap went to K. Davis, Cartwright taking second, K. Redford was third, his sixth prize in seven week-ends, and Bamforth, who again improved a full minute, was fourth. Nine riders failed to start, and T. White returned times for twenty-two finishers, the following being fastest:—

	h.	m.	s.
1. D. K. Hartley, Dukinfield..	1	3	54
2. C. Cartwright, Manch't'r Cl	1	4	53
3. T. G. Horrocks, Pyramid..	1	5	33

Gentlemen's fund, in memory of Geoff who was a true gentleman in every sense of the word.

The committee decided that the fund could be used to assist riders with their travel expenses when competing in National championships. Geoff was a formidable rider in his day (40's-

50's), both in local time trials and on the now defunct Fallowfield track. It was felt that he would have been more than happy to assist riders in this way, thus enabling them to travel far and wide and so broaden their horizons. Members are therefore reminded that claims may be made to the Committee for their approval for any expenses incurred when competing at national level.

Please could all trophies be returned to Mike McConville by the end of the year, cleaned as per Jim Boydell's instructions.

"We extend a warm welcome to this month's new members: Rob Arnold, Michael Watson and Basil LeRoux. We hope you enjoy your time with us. Happy pedalling."

A reminder to members who might have changed their address and or telephone numbers to make sure that Carol has the details for inclusion in the next handbook.

ARMOUR BEATS HARTLEY 1942 In Manchester and District T.A. "25"

SCOTLAND'S fastest beat England's best in the Manchester and District T.A. "25," when J. Armour returned 1 hr. 3 mins. 36 secs. to D. K. Hartley's 1 hr. 3 mins. 52 secs. As times indicate, conditions were far from good, and the Scotsman's ride over a strange course must be one of the best of his career. At the half-way turn he had 20 secs. in hand, at 18 miles he had increased the margin to 35 secs; the Dukinfielder made a big effort to reply to the challenge, and although the gap was reduced he could not find enough to beat the Scot. All other rides sank into insignificance before the battle of the giants, best of the remainder being T. G. Horrocks with 1 hr. 7 mins. 8 secs., which gave him second handicap—Armour with a minute taking a well-deserved first. R. A. Bamforth, one of the very few to register an improvement, qualified for third handicap, the next three places being filled by E. F. Hulme, G. Smith and Hartley respectively, there being six handicap awards and a fastest loser, which went to L. Cooke. Of 77 entries seven did not

start, and only 50 completed the distance. R. J. Austin was timekeeper and returned the following leading times:—

Name and Club.	H'cap.	h.	m.	s.
J. Armour, Auchterderran Wh.	1	1	3	36
D. K. Hartley, Dukinfield C.C.	scr.	1	3	52
T. G. Horrocks, Pyramid R.C.	4¼	1	7	8
R. A. Bamforth, Altrincham Ravens C.C.	4½	1	7	16
L. Cooke, Abbotsford Park R.C.	3½	1	8	17
K. Redford, Altrincham Ravens C.C.	4	1	8	24
T. M. Livingston, Dukinfield C.C.	4	1	8	29
J. S. Yates, Preston Wh.	2¼	1	8	32
H. Starkie, Nelson Wh.	4	1	8	32
E. Lees, Abbotsford Park R.C.	5¼	1	9	40
L. Davies, Abbotsford Park R.C.	5	1	10	16
L. Lightfoot, Burslem Olympic Wh.	4½	1	10	24

Cafes in Cheshire:

AJ's near Henbury, on A537 Macclesfield -878 738
Astbury Garden centre. A54, Congleton
Audlem – Priest House Café opposite church -660 436 – good food
Beeston -- Lock-gate Café on A 49, good
Blakemere Craft Centre: A556/A49
Blaze Farm, Wildboardclough on A54 -977 677, excellent, choose a nice day.
Booseys Garden Centre, one-way system Middlewich.
Booths, Knutsford, A50 warm in winter!
Brereton Leisure Sales, off A50 towards Sandbach. Slow.
Bridgemere Garden Centre.
Buxton, lots.
Candle factory Burwardsley – follow signs from Beeston.
Cat and Fiddle café Peak View, below pub, small.
Chester Road: Elvis's – transport café. OK.
Chester: cafes along river side.
Coffee Tavern, Higher Poynton, near Middlewood Way Station, Shrigley Rd.North.
Common Barn Farm, Rainow, Lamaload – follow tea-pot signs.
Congleton Garden Centre, Rose Farm, 865 612. Good.
Cotebrook A49 572656. Not for groups "twee".
Dagfields, near Wybunbury
Davenham, Shipbrook Organic Farm, closed Mondays 675710. Al fresco!
Delamere -- Station Café
Deli in Holmes Chapel.
Dones Green – Transport Café A 49 North Acton Bridge –607 776-cheap!
Eddisbury Fruit Farm, bottom of The Yeld, end of track from Delamere:533702
Goostrey Country Leisure, off A50 755695.
Goostrey Trading Post, hot drinks and sandwiches open 7 days.
Great Budworth Ice cream farm, limited opening times.
Hassall Green: on canal, not for groups, bit slow, bit twee. "
High Legh Garden Centre, A50, good.
Hills garden Centre, The Wysteria café, A50 Allostock, small.
Hollands Nurseries on A536 Gawsworth to Congleton (Dighills Fm)879 679
Holt Garden Centre
Hopley House, Middlewich A530 to Nantwich – 690 630 - excellent.
Kingsley The Wishing Well.
Lavender Farm, Dunham Town 740876, good value, bit of a barn.
Linmere Visitors' Centre, along track from Delamere Station. V.good.
Little Chefs: Adlington, Middlewich, and Monks Heath.
Loch café on A41 out of Whitchurch.
Malkins Bank Golf Club, near Hassall Green, not keen on groups.
Malpas the Fire Station
Manley windsurfing centre: 490720, east of Dunham-on-the-Hill.
Meerbrook- Tittesworth Visitor Centre 3 miles east off Macc.Leek road. Gun Hill:998 602
Nantwich Marina, A534, 637 528
Oakmere- Wyvale Garden Centre on A 49 5 miles North of Tarporley
Paddock Farm has re-opened, Upper Hulme, The Roaches road, Meerbrook, Leek.

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Parker's Garden Centre: Mottram St.Andrew.

Poole craft centre, Aston-Juxta-Mondrum,not open Sundays: 639553

Poplar 2000 m-way services: A50 663850.

Pott Shrigley, the Coffee Tavern, back road to Lyme Park, closed tues.

Prees Heath- Numerous Transport Cafes in this Area A49/A41 roundabout.

Radway Green – Garden Centre, west of Alsager on B5077 just after lights on right

"

Red House farm, Dunham Massey – good, busy on Saturdays

Rudyard – to be checked.

Spinney caravans, A50, Cranage - 752 688 – good, slow.

Summertrees, Kelsall, Sandstone Trail – bit pricey, slow.

Tattenhall Ice cream farm. Follow signs from Beeston 498 598 – excellent

Tatton Park, Knutsford."

The Chase craft and antiques, next to The Boot and Slipper, Wettenhall: 624613

The Potting Shed, Upper Hulme, just off the Leek road, Axe Edge - good

Two Mills- Eureka Café North of Chester on A540 –352 736 – excellent.

Utkinton Rose Tree Garden centre, over A49 Cotebrook, st over crossroads to Utkinton, uphill on right. Very cheap, good food, good for groups 548 653

Venetian café, Poole Marina, closed Tuesdays and winter till March. Mon Oct 29 2007 to Sun Mar 13 2008: Open Fri, Sat & Sun only; 10:00 to 15:30 (except shut between Mon 17 Dec to Thu Jan 31 inc)

Wheelock Hall Farm A534 –747 583 very good

Wincle Minn, Bosley – weekends only in summer, sign on road, very good. 940 658

Wizard Tea-room, Alderley Edge.

Not Cheshire!

Cheddleton

Chestnut Centre, Rushup Edge.

Flagg, Derbyshire

Garth, above Llangollen: The Prospect tea-rooms.

Grindleford Station, Derbyshire.

Hartington

Hayfield.

Hope, Castleton

Ipstones, Staffs.

Llangollen, Country Kitchen, opp. car park.

Longnor, the Craft Centre, excellent.

Longsden

Moneyash

Rivington Barn

Rudyard Lake

Southport

Tideswell, Derbyshire.



Cardboard work of art, better not ride it in the rain!

THE LOYAL TOAST

Forgive me for bringing up the thorny subject of the Loyal Toast at the annual dinner but it is several years since this issue was raised at our Annual General Meeting and we have had quite an influx of new members in the intervening period. First a bit of background; some time ago a proposition was made at the AGM that we should dispense with this tradition. The reason given by the proposer was that this was now an anachronism, that there were those in the membership who were opposed to the monarchy and the club was, or should be, apolitical.

A heated discussion ensued and after allowing all interested parties the opportunity to have a say, a vote was taken. The fact that the Loyal Toast is still spoken tells you that the vote was in favour of retaining it. It was not an overwhelming, rather a significant majority who opted for its retention. Since then most people have stood for the toast and I can't ever recall a guest not having done so.

I confess that I never understood the 'political' element of this argument inasmuch as there seems little difference in the support for the monarchy between the various established political parties but obviously those who favour a republic might disagree. These thoughts occurred to me whilst watching the first programme, recently aired, about the monarchy, or more accurately the Queen. What struck me most forcefully was the absolute respect she engenders throughout the world. It has been suggested that one of the main reasons that we are still regarded as a major power is because of just that reason and that on the death of the Queen our standing in the world will diminish dramatically. To hear someone of the political persuasion of Germaine Greer making just such a point on Question Time came as quite a surprise. In a humorous aside she suggested that 'they' would never let her die and would just keep bolting new bits on to keep her going.

The other thing that struck me was the Queen's incredible energy and constitution. A four day visit to America with the itinerary and engagements that she completed would defeat most people and the Queen is over 80 years of age. She came across as engaging, knowledgeable, humorous, patient and a wonderful ambassador for the country. In the eyes of some however she does have one insurmountable defect. She is the Queen and the titular head of a monarchical state.

I think it a great shame all members can't find it in themselves to put aside their feelings about this subject and at our showpiece social occasion stand together to show respect for a remarkable lady. If that is too difficult to do, can I offer one last thought? Could we all stand out of respect for our fellow club members? The decision to retain this few seconds of tradition was taken democratically and it would be good to see a generosity of spirit that enables us all to stand in unison. Thank you.

FUN TEN

When this event was first introduced, the idea was to get as many of the members out together at the end of the season, both racing and touring, for an afternoon that had a more social feel to it. The serious racers could have a go, there could be some humorous combinations but at least it would get us all together. Roger Haines has done a great job over the last few years to put the 'fun' into the event and he will be missed now he has relinquished the job of social secretary. Our Chairman, Harvey, stepped into the breach this year and did an excellent job.

It has to be said however that the support from the racing lads (and lasses) has never met our expectations and it was suggested this year that maybe the early September date was just too early as the racing calendar still has some way to go. The question is, would the event be better supported if it was moved to late Sep-

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tember or early October? One of the attractions at the moment is the (usually) better weather earlier in the month and the ability to socialise outside but we have had bad days and the management at The Kilton seem happy to let us use an area for our post event celebrations. What do other members think?

Or, how about this: A season ending 'Two-Day' with the time trial on the Saturday and the Hill Climb on the Sunday. Both run as stand-alone events but a special prize for the overall. Would that encourage more members to take part? One thing is obvious; the hill climb is very well supported, the fun ten less so. Maybe a bit of cross pollination would help.

A MARKED MAN?

A coincidence or what? First of all we have the leader of the Best Clubman competition in a comfortable position and fending off all comers. Then the fates conspire against him and, when in sight of the finishing line, November turns against him. Family commitments means he misses several clubruns and even a clubnight and all of a sudden the picture changes.

Then one of the main challengers gets knocked off his bike by mysterious lady driver whilst riding locally but suffers no worse (thankfully) than a black eye. Could it possibly be a hit-woman? After all, the stakes are high and some people will stop at nothing. Just one snag though: She got the wrong man. I should watch your back if I were you, Peter Coles!

AUDAX V SPORTIVE

What's the difference between an audax and a sportive? This is a genuine question because I'm confused. The regular cycling magazines constantly refer to Sportives but never an Audax. I know that there are certain rules regarding Audaxes (though these seem to have been

relaxed) but are there any for Sportives many of which just seem to be races without all the formalities? Maybe somebody can enlighten me but in the meantime can I offer the following suggestion regarding our own three long (er) distance rides. At the moment the '100 in 8' takes place 3 times a year, late April, mid summer and mid October. I suggest that to add a bit of romance to these occasions we take a leaf out of the continental pro cycling calendar and give the first and last a name rather than the more prosaic '100 in 8'.

'Primavera' (Springtime) has that element of Italian style for the April event and maybe lift the Tour of Lombardy's 'Falling Leaves' for the October event. The '100 in 8' can be retained for the mid summer ride as the '50 in 4' is for the one at Easter. Do the early and late rides have to be exactly a hundred miles? Not necessarily, and this opens up the possibility of maybe a different route for one or both of the events. There would still be a time limit to give that achievement feel to the ride and a certificate as at present. We could even call it a 'sportive' or 'audax'. Remind me again, what was the difference?

AN ATHLETE'S TEN?

I've often pondered, in the light of the UCI rules on the Hour Record, what it would be like to see just how much the times on the weekly club events would be affected by everyone using a conventional road bike. That would mean no tri-bars, no fancy wheels - just spoked, no aero helmets. How many seconds would that make over the distance of our course? Who knows?

It would be interesting to let the series run for a few weeks so that general fitness is achieved, then in, say, early July to nominate one regular rider to ride his proper TT bike whilst all others ride a road bike. Hence a comparison could be made that would take into account the variable weather conditions that this course is subject to. Go on, give it a

FESTIVE PUZZLES

go and satisfy the curiosity of those of us who never raced on a modern TT bike as to just how good you really are. Dare anyone have a go?

HARD ENOUGH?

It has always surprised me that more of the half-day riders haven't felt the desire to ride the Tour of the Berwyns. After all, with 20-30 riders out with that group on a regular basis there is obviously an attraction in the more demanding ride, certainly from a pace point of view. Well, how about having a go at something of a longer duration where maintaining a good pace is also intrinsic.

In 2008 the Berwyns adds another string to its bow when a shorter, less hilly, version joins its bigger brother so there is no excuse. Both events are on the same day (Saturday May 17th 2008) and you can choose from either 135 Km (84m) or 208 Km (130m). For several years Steve Booth recorded the lowest time but Club BAR's Dan Mathers and Ian Udall have tested themselves over its leg bending miles in the last couple of years. How would you fare?

It would be really good to see a huge club turnout on the day with our great new kit in evidence all over Cheshire - and a bit of Wales as well!



Mouldy logic

The one mince pie you didn't eat on Christmas Day has grown an interesting new form of mould – one that doubles in size every day as the organisms in it divide. By New Year's Day the mince pie is completely covered in mould. On which day was it half covered?

Rudolph in the woods

How far can a reindeer run into the forest?

Pet likes

I asked for a pet for Christmas – and was really surprised when I received an assortment of snakes, birds, cats and rabbits! Altogether I counted 15 heads, 6 wings, and 38 legs. How many snakes did I get?

The half-empty bottle

You have, unaccountably, a half-empty wine bottle left over from your celebrations. Or rather, it's roughly half empty. Without removing the cork, using only a ruler, how can you tell exactly the proportion of wine remaining in it?

Present dilemma

Under my Christmas tree are a number of presents. All except two are for me. All except two are for my brother. And all except two are for my sister. How many presents are there?

Answers on page 31

Q: Why couldn't the bicycle stand up on its own?

A: It was two tired.

Touring in the Berwyns---Bala Lake and hills in mid December 2007



The Bob Richardson Memorial Run

Sunday September 23rd, a healthy number of tourists set off for Chester. I wasn't on top form, and I can neither remember the route or numbers setting out. However it was a fine day and a pleasantly uneventful ride out. No punctures, in fact little to laugh at all. I do recall lunch in the riverside café, with its fifties décor – ageing skiffle group posters and memorabilia. By the time we ate there were 16 of us. One ate and shot off before someone volunteered to take the group photo. I was determined not to be the shortest one on the pic for once, and managed to levitate nicely. (See pic). Bob was keeping the weather dry and apart from the not uncommon rumblings about the pace, the day went without a hitch.

(Continued from page 21)
dale.

Always fastidious about getting to the published destination; like Northern Moor's Shackleton in his resolution to return with the same number of people who started out; open-minded when it came to stop-offs in Knutsford or elevenses, his leadership will be missed. From now on it's become the cycling Soviet Roger always wanted it to be.

While the lunch stop for the day is predetermined, the route to get there is decided by the collective assembled outside Rackhams.

Who will lead the ride is decided by the most effective criteria: who actually knows where we're going, do they have a map? (John Pardo is not allowed to offer his services.)

Of course, it's all good for a certain Gordon Peake who can now arrive as late as he likes safe in the knowledge that we'll all still be there waiting for someone to tell us it's time to go!

Tourist Trophy

TOURIST TROPHY 2007

No change after the Montgomery week-end. Gordon Peake survived a late challenge from John Pardoe to hang on to the Trophy.

Leading positions:

1. Gordon Peake	8
2. John Pardoe	7
3. Keith Wilkinson	6
John Carberry	6
Reg Blease	6
6. Dave Barker	5
Peter Coles	5
Roger Haines	5

Events for 2008

Early season local Audax and reliability rides; club week-ends; 50 in 4; April 100 in 8 (27 April, provisionally); off-road rides; car-assisted runs; club tour to Spain.



Under starters orders - Gisburn Week-end away

BEST CLUBMAN 2007

It's tight at the top. A couple of week-ends away in November for Reg Blease has meant that a gap has opened up between himself and Peter Coles. So it's now down to Peter's mates to make sure he gets home safely from the OMT on Friday and Sunday nights in December.

Leading positions at the end of November:

1. Peter Coles	242
2. Reg Blease	235
3. Mike McConville	226
4. Phil Holden	208
5. Keith Stacey	190
6. Keith Bailey	182
7. John Coles	179
8. Ian Udall	162
9. Dave Barker	159
Tim Seddon	159
Gordon Peake	159
12. Dan Snape	150
John Verbickas	150
14. Allan Blackburn	147
15. Jim Boydell	144
16. Roy Myers	133
17. John Pardoe	129
Malc McAllister	129
19. Dave McIlroy	127
20. Alan Thompson	125



HILL CLIMB AND FREE-WHEEL

Ian Udall took top spot again winning in 2 minutes 56 seconds, only 2 seconds ahead of Paul Smith, with Charles Carraz coming 3rd in 3 minutes 05.

The ride of the day was in my opinion young Robert Crampton, flying up the hill in 3 mins. 23 secs, finishing in 5th place, just behind Martin Wiggans (of Montgomery Madness fame). Keith Bailey was fastest Vet in 3 mins. 25 secs. Just beating Nick Crampton. Our President Reg Blease briefly came out of retirement on such a lovely autumn day, and got to the top in some style. What an inspiration he is.

Somehow Adam Rycroft's name got missed off the provisional Finishing sheet, thus earning him the title of the Invisible Man. Carol says it is nothing personal Adam, she will make it up to you somehow.

It was great to see 2 ladies taking part, with Claire Burt fresh from her Pyrenees exploits taking the honours from Sara Blackburn. Sara was obviously in some discomfort, enduring great pain in her leg during and after her effort. This resulted in major surgery later in the

week. We all wish her a speedy recovery.

Cath Schofield was out still recovering from a contretemps with a car leaving her with a broken wrist. In all 5 ladies were counted on the hill.

Such was the glittering array of competitors that the photographers were literally tripping over each other in an effort to capture the action. The 2 Johns were suffering from temporary "close-down", a technical term for the camera turning itself off, I am told, while Karen was experiencing "digital delay". Darren in the mean time, with enough technical equipment to open his own shop, ran out of memory. But between us, rest assured that there will be enough images for the website, the Archive, the Dinner display AND for the Squirrel as well.

One of the most coveted trophies in the Seamons collection, the Free-wheel trophy, was keenly contested, with Tim Seddon, reportedly carbo-loading for a week beforehand, coming out on top. Edward was elated to come 3rd. He said he was more than pleased to be in the top three of anything, and he is now in strict training for next year.

Altogether a very sociable day with 47 mem-

bers counted at the top of the hill, and 32 sitting down for lunch in the Ryles Arms after the event.

We even received a membership application on the day from Rob Arnold. Carol was heard to ask the assembled gathering, "can anyone vouch for the integrity of this person?" "Yes," said Peter Julian, "he's got a nice set of wheels." That's it then, he's in, subject to ratification by the Committee.

Thanks to Carol and Roger for booking the venue and taking names, and to Harvey for collecting the money, and acting as back up vehicle on the hill. Thanks especially to Roy Vernon and Mike McConville for the timing, and to everyone who supported the event.

The Ryles Arms made us feel very welcome, and even waved us off saying "see you again next year".

CLUB HILL CLIMB RESULTS

1. IAN UDALL	2.56
2. PAUL SMITH	2.58
3. CHARLES CARRAZ	3.05
4. MARTIN WIGGANS	3.12
5. ROB CRAMPTON	3.23
6. KEITH BAILEY	3.25
7. DAN SNAPE	3.29
8. NICK CRAMPTON	3.33
9. ADAM RYECROFT	3.34
10. MARK WATSON	3.25
11. ALLAN BLACKBURN	3.44
12. NIGEL HARROP	3.50
13. NIGEL KELLY	3.51
14. CHRIS SCHOLES	3.57
15. GARETH BLEASE	3.58
16. CLAIRE BURT	4.13
17. EDWARD BALDWIN	4.31
18. PETER JULYAN	4.49
19. MALC MCALLISTER	5.02
20. SARA BLACKBURN	5.09
21. REG BLEASE	6.00
22. PETER COLES	6.51

TRAFFORD CYCLING FORUM

After a long gap the Forum is up and running again. The first meeting was in November and was largely an exploratory one.

Since then we have been asked to comment on proposals from engineering consultants for improving the Trans Pennine Trail in Trafford. Several sets of detailed comments have been sent in.

The next meeting is on 21 January. There is no formal membership and meetings are open to all interested cyclists.

If you are interested please get in touch.

David Barker

282 7296

cyclistdavid@hotmail.com



Dennis Poyner - completed the end to end this year.

The Pyrenean Raid



When people ask us where we've been for our holiday this year and you tell them you've cycled 720Km, 18 Cols from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean coast in a week, I suppose they can be forgiven for looking at you as though you are slightly mad.

Day 1 – arriving in Hendaye

We arrived in Hendaye early Saturday afternoon and checked in at the Campanile Hotel. As we ate dinner at the hotel restaurant that night, there was definitely an air of apprehension; it felt like the calm before the storm. At the end of the meal, Ian handed out our numbers for our bikes and our Carnet de route, it all began to feel very real.

Day 2 Hendaye to Arrette 143Km

It was still dark when we woke, and there was a mixture of excitement and nerves as we had breakfast. It was quite cool as we set off from Hendaye at 8.15am, a rolling start along the coast line to San Jan Delz. We climbed our first Col – Col de St Ignae (169m ascent) one down only 17 to go! The landscape was very Basque with red topped roofs. We climbed our second Col, Col de Pinodieta, in quick succession. Most of us mistook the next climb up to Helette as the second Col, almost 100 meters

higher, it wasn't actually a Col, so it didn't even count! We stopped in Helette for lunch, big 'cepe' omelettes with frites, they were really good. We set off from lunch with the third and fourth Col of the day still to follow. We re-grouped at the top of the fourth and final Col of the day before a rolling finish to the hotel. It was a hard first day not really from climbing but it was the longest in terms of Km. We cleared the local shop of chocolate milk (apparently as good as any Powerbar recovery drink) and having cleaned up, enjoyed a good meal and a really good night's sleep.

Day 3 Arette to Argeles Gazost 242Km

Day 3 was hard, the first climb was the Marie Blaque, 9Km which got slowly steeper, finishing with a gradient of 15%. We all set off, soon to be stretched out up the mountain, it was a hard climb, and when a local farmer passed us on a rusty old racer, in bulky jacket, trousers and trainers, it didn't make it feel any easier! At the top we had tea and biscuits with the cows clanking next to us, very chocolate box. Then it was a long, really long descent, we stopped briefly before tackling the Aubisque. It's a great climb, probably my favourite and it was good to pass all the places we'd had to stop the previous year (realising not only now how much the heat had got to us last June but also we're probably a bit fitter now too). We stopped briefly at the ski station, sharing a gel and pushing on past some mad German tourers with massive panniers – how and why? We had lunch at the top, big door-stop sandwiches, crisps and Coke and took lots of photos. Then it was a short descent (through some short tunnels which were a bit hairy) and then up the Soulor. Another quick photo and another long, long descent to Argeles Gazost. We're now 242Km into the Raid.

Day 4 Argeles to Luscan 383Km

If yesterday was hard, today was harder, we started out early leaving the hotel at 8.15 for

the long slow drag up to the Tourmalet. I was already in my lowest gear and had nowhere to go. I thought maybe my back brake was stuck as we crawled up, approaching the biggest climb of the week. It was fairly grey and cold which seemed fitting as the mountain loomed. The ascent was long and hard but finding a rhythm Phil and I went on, reaching the top couldn't come soon enough (again passing some lone tourer weighed down with all his belongs, which just makes you feel just a bit rubbish as you and the van with all your kit in goes by). We stopped at the top for a hot chocolate and grabbed a newspaper from the basket in the Cafe for the descent. We began the climb up the Aspin, stopping mid way for lunch, omelette and frites (again). I felt pretty low as we set off, even lower by the time we got to the top and really rubbish at bottom, I seemed to crawl along the flat to the Peyresourde, and then from somewhere seemed to find my legs, having been well and truly dropped at the bottom it was nice to pass almost everyone on the way up, it was by far the hardest day.

Day 5 Luscan to Tarascon 509Km

Today I got my legs back, we left Luscan and climbed the Col des Ars, a pretty 6Km tree-lined climb at an average 4%, was a good ease into the day, then the Col de Beret (although it didn't count) before turning right towards the Portet d'Aspet and the monument to Tour rider Fabian Casartelli, only 4Km but at 17% in places its steep, we stopped briefly at the top, re-filling the water bottles in a fantastic fresh-water trough, before the long descent and then a fast flat to St Girons for lunch, taking turns on the front we seemed to hack along a good pace. Today's lunch was pretty awful, re-heated frozen omelettes with frites! Then another one of my favourite climbs the Col de Port, my legs had returned and with ipod on, I actually felt as though I was riding up the mountain rather than just getting up. It was another long descent to Hotel Taurascan (you actually had to brake to

stop at the hotel, my kind of hotel), another good night's sleep.

Today 6 Tarascon to Prades 638Km

Today was many things and not many of them good. We started out from Tarascon and up the Col de Malmare, a long but easy gradient which got the legs ticking over. I felt good as we started out and pushed it up the climb, we stopped at the top for tea and chocolate cake so far so good, then we seemed to descend for ever! And I started to bonk. I stopped for a gel, nothing happened, I'd pushed it too hard on the climb. As we arrived in Axat, I punctured (which kind of summed how I felt) but it was the lunch stop and Phil (bless him) set to and fixed the puncture, while I just sat and felt wretched, lunch was again ... I'm sure you can guess. I really wasn't in a very happy place but with the last Col to go, there was no choice, it was back on and upwards again. It was hot too as we started back out, the Col de Jau came fairly quickly, I plodded along and we re-grouped for the final 11Km. Phil and I potted on, it was a horrible climb, not pretty at all and there were loads of flies! The weather changed and started to get cold, then the mist and you could barely see a bike length in front. Eventually the tree line disappeared and we could hear the odd clank of the cow bells, so we knew we must be near the top, and then best sight in the world, the Range Rover, we'd done it, 18 Cols! We didn't stop for long, just to pull on a top and started the descent. As we descended out of the mist, we came across some grazing sheep, I slowed before a huge white furry mountain dog leapt towards me barking. I soon sped up with Phil laughing loudly behind, they were harmless enough but they didn't half make me jump. We continued to descend, passing through some beautiful villages and arriving in Prades. A hot bath and Powerbar recovery drink were never so good.

Day 6 Prades to Cebere 724Km.



Our last day! In some ways it felt like it had been a long journey, in others liked we'd only just begun. We set off and stayed as group, snaking along as it started to rain. It almost added to the sense of drama, as we'd been battling along for the past 6 days. It was nearly all down hill and so the pace was fairly quick. Then as we got onto the coastal road, the end felt so close; the 'race' began. It was great fun just hacking along, up and down, up and down along the coast. We arrived in Cebere with such a feeling of achievement but also quite sad it was all over. Taking off our shoes we all (well nearly all) jumped into sea, having left the Atlantic coast 6 days ago we had arrived at the Mediterranean. We had lunch in a great restaurant on the front, got our final stamp on the Carnet and enjoyed mussels and frites with a beer!

I'd do it all again tomorrow!

Force puts brake on bike bobbies

A police force has banned officers from patrolling on their mountain bikes on health and safety grounds.

Cheshire Police has taken away officers' bikes until they pass a national cycling proficiency course.

"Everybody Up?" – Don't ask me!

Our touring section has a long-standing tradition of being able to accommodate a varying number of riders, styles and abilities. Not only varying week to week but hour to hour.

Let me illustrate!

Sunday 9th Sept 07. 9am Rackhams. Destination – Tattenhall. Decision made - 100 in 8 route out! Nine riders set off. (9)

By Dunham lights two had already disappeared, including the route proposer, Reg? Our president and Pete Devine had headed for Tatton Hall to meet/collect Peter Bell. An arrangement made late on Friday night after a couple of beers, no doubt. - Pete B had actually said "See you at Tattenhall", some 30 miles away! (7).

Next to go was Daniel Laffy who peeled off for a half day run. (6).

Taking a banana stop, on the bench at the top of the climb at Acton Bridge, a tandem appeared, carrying Karen Blenkinsop & Steve Hargreaves. (8). They soon set off in a slightly different direction (6).

Just prior to Delamere, Reg & Pete D re-appeared (without Pete Bell). (8). Jim Boydell tried to explain the mix up. I recollect overhearing his three varying and lengthening explanations. At Tattenhall the tandem had sneaked the lead and just been parked up amongst some 30 bikes-What a sight! (10). Inside sat the Pardoes, and guess who? – Peter Bell. (13). Dinner was served, (and it arrives very quick at the Ice Cream Factory), and amongst the blur of blue, white and gold yellow – in walked newly weds, Mr & Mrs Darren Buckley also be-decked in club colours. (15). The Birkenhead Road Club in red tops, now outnumbered, soon frittered away, including some gent called Boardman. Who? (Nice bike though!). The Tandem two, and the



Buckley's had their own plans, so the peleton was now eleven. (11). Pete Coles didn't linger and maintained a blistering pace 300 yards in front. 2 miles up the road, under Beeston Castle, Pete swung left without the traditional stop and re group, at turns. No look-back, or response to shouts! The rest swung right towards Bunbury, deciding Pete was "ploughing his own furrow" that afternoon. (10). Things remained steady through Church Minshull, although a passing motorist attempted to reduce our size, missing Jim's right elbow by inches. (Just another aggressive motorist making a completely unjustified and dangerous gesture!). Just after Middlewich we swung right for Goostrey. Pete B left us for Warrington. (9).

Next to go at the A50 crossing, the Pardoe's, with a few hundred yards to reach "Chez Pardoe". (7). At Mobberley Jim branched off for Stockport (6). The Bleeding Wolf saw Mr Coles senior, Alan T, and John Verbikas heading for an early shower. (3). The remaining trio headed for a well earned de brief at the OMT. Here we re-joined Pete C and Roger H, (newcomer today) dressed in civvies but claiming to have "been out". (5)

9-7-6-8-6-8-10-13-15-11-10-9-7-6-3-5.

I think that totals 16 variations over the day, involving 16 different Seamons members over

some 70+ miles..

Is anyone ever sure "Everybody's Up"?

Don't ask me!

A healthy, accommodating, variability one might think. Nobody actually unaccounted for. Of course it isn't always such a mish-mash. This was a particularly good day!

It all adds to the ambiance of the Tourist Section!! Long may it be so.

However, leading such a laissez faire group for ten years is, at the very least, "meritorious". One can only salute Captain Wilkie for his diligence and uncomplaining dedication. His step down from Tourist Secretary, back to the ranks is his decision. If democracy ruled he would never have escaped. Thanks Keith for the decade of Saturday night map studying and making it so much easier for the rest of us.



Whose Legs ??

True grit – Wild Wales 2007

Yes, the chips were down, on every highway and byway courtesy of Gwynedd County Council, just in time for the Wild Wales Challenge. 90 miles of non-stop ups and downs from Bala and back lay ahead, but a gritty ride like this was a challenge we had not anticipated.

Just short of 500 riders set off along a smooth tarmac road towards the bottom of the Milltyr Cerrig, but a sneaky detour sent us on to a very minor road, instructions were ENGAGE LOW GEAR NOW THIS IS A SERIOUS CLIMB. It was. I failed to negotiate the sharp turn and took Sue with me on to the grass verge. Sue went back and took a run at it. My first walk of the day. I was not alone. A 10 year old boy came dancing up behind me, “this is good, Dad, are there any more hills like this?” Grrr! Dad looked suitably apologetic.

The Milltyr Cerrig was a doddle after that, although I did hear a voice behind me saying, “I’m just stopping to take an energy tablet”. Have an Eccles cake, I cried. The swoop down to Llangynog was brilliant,



the back lane to Penybontfawr a joy, then some more serious climbing, I was ready this time but foiled again as riders were falling off in the grit or running out of gears. The rider in front of me tried to stand up to climb, ground to a halt in a heap of grit, then fell off slowly and rolled back down the hill towards me and everyone else. We all had to dismount, it was

a good excuse. He was alright.

Our first control was at Llanwddyn, 22 miles – is that all? - good hot tea, lots of chat, banana and cake, then off and up again to hunt out the first gated turn to the left. We hesitated, so did hundreds of others, we can’t all be wrong. Clatter of granny gears and up we go again. Fantastic views and the sun is shining! There is a wonderful lack of cars, thanks to the narrow and very steep lanes.

A dramatic 20% descent takes us into Llanfair Caereinion, we give the pub a miss (too many Macc Wheelers sat outside), but we miss the chip shop. A long drag and I’m hungry, and I’m sure my back tyre is going down. Regroup at the top. “Look at my back tyre”, “Oh yes,” says Gregg, “it’s blue”. I am not amused. JP gives it the ping test and everyone is happy except me. Another 20% descent cheers me up, fabulous views, green, green, green. We are all running out of water now, and there is nowhere to stop. Carno comes into view, but where is Fred?! We all stop and sit on the warm wall in the sunshine. JP produces a flask of hot tea! It goes well with the ham and cheese butties, a chocolate coated flapjack and another banana.

Talerddig, “turn left by the telephone box.” We know the quickest way is straight on, but we go left, and yes, up again. Actually, I don’t care any more, my bike’s going into granny gear automatically, and my legs don’t seem to belong to me any more. It was a beautiful road.

On then to Cemmaes and the lovely back road through Aberangell to Dinas Mawddwy, gently undulating, lovely views. Control in Dinas, hot tea, cakes and chocolate bars, 75 miles. The route does a loop to the right, up again, but lovely and quiet, just a babbling brook. Our instructions say: “Proceed along this road and ascend Bylch-y-Groes. It’s not that easy. We have all gone quiet.

JP disappears ahead, “to take photos”, with Greg in hot pursuit. Sue is determined to ride all the way, and nearly makes it. Most people are reduced to walking eventually, and Barry and I admire the scenery –

quite stunning in the late afternoon sun. This is the longest ride Barry has ever done, he is in unknown territory, both in body and the location, and he is clearly enjoying himself. Well, that's what it's all about! At last the top, it's my Eccles cake moment, and now we descend steeply to Lake Vernwy. We could have gone straight down to Bala, but principles and the route sheet dictate otherwise.



Bwlch-y-Groes, Wild Wales 90 mile Challenge

There is another climb. The Hirnant. How cruel, just when you thought you were safe. Now it's my Kendal mint-cake moment. More riders walking, or drooping at the side of the road over their handle-bars. Mike Roberts and I are in nice small gears, in deep conversation, recalling the early Wild Wales rides going back to the first one in 1984. Am I really that old? Yes! But what is this bearing down upon us? A convoy of 4x4's, the road's a bit narrow, they slow down for us, how kind! Then they cover us in dust so we can't breathe.

Over the summit and down, down, down, a super swoop, down and down all the way into Bala. More hot tea, cake and biscuits, compare stories with everyone else, then ride back to camp, and yes, it's up again! But we don't care, we feel good, we did it! Our thanks to the Merseyside CTC D.A. and to the organizer Ian Bulmer for their excellent organization

Christmas is weird. What other day of the year do you sit in front of a dead tree and eat candy out of your socks?

Details of the 2008 Seamons CC Dinner and Prize Presentation:

Cresta Court Hotel, Altrincham
Saturday February 9th, 2008

Start 6:00pm

Dinner 6:30pm

Guest Speaker

Disco

New Style Raffle - no need to bring prizes

Tickets available from Nov from Louise Eden and Sara Blackburn

Ticket Price: £23

N.B. No need to bring tombola prizes this year !! A new style raffle is being organised where everyone will be entered into a draw with the chance to win one of 10 quality prizes.



The SWINGIN DOOBRIES
At the 2007 Club Dinner



Luxury In Gisburn Forest

The Gisburn Forest trip on the last weekend of September, was sparked off by Andy Burns. He came back from a “survival weekend” learning “how to keep your matches dry” and “live on worms”. He raved about this recently converted, million pound conversion, farmhouse and barns.

Survival rule 1. Find a luxurious hostel !

He wasn't wrong. Stephen Park is ideally situated in a clearing in the heart of Gisburn Forest, it oozes comfort, with three lounges and about 40 beds, with rooms from 2's to 6's. (See Blackburn Map Ref SD 746 561). As hostels go – it's posh!

Andy had booked it, so he needed good numbers to cover the costs. So word went out inviting anyone interested in cycling (*of course*), mountain biking, walking, mountaineering, fungi hunting, tree hugging – whatever! An opportunity to get friends, wives, husbands, partners, offspring etc to taste “club life”. With club members and friends we eventually got 20+ to commit. Circumstances brought this tumbling to 15 with a week to go. 15 be-

ing the minimum to cover costs for “exclusive use”. With Mr Carberry choosing to stop Saturday night only, it was really 14.5. Non residents - John's mate who joined us for Saturday ride. Plus, the Pardoes “Winnebago” down the valley somewhere.

We also needed to self cater or venture out to eat. The nearest hostelry was a few miles away and unknown territory, so Andy, Sue and Karen (Peake) planned mass feeding. Sue and Karen took charge but Sue was hampered by an unfortunate tooth abscess, thing. (Sods Law). I think Sue and all will agree Karen took the helm and did us all proud. Now you know why I always carry a few extra pounds. (Lbs not £'s). It even sparked a debate on what constitutes Sheppard's Pie and Cottage Pie? Well Roger, I've checked and there's nothing in the club constitution on this topic.

Friday am. Saw a healthy group meet at The Saracens Head for the ride “out”. Route towards Horwich, Rivington with lunch at the “Top Lock” at Wheelton. Wilkie's secret curry and ale retreat! Then on through a large cemetery near Blackburn (interesting!), and into the Ribble valley. Cheered, “a la tour”,

(Continued on page 22)

Shorts and Longs – December, 2007

I've heard squirrels described as "rats with good PR agents". I think even that description would be too kind in the opinion of our erstwhile runs leader.

Being a cyclist, you encounter all kinds of hazardous riding conditions ranging from a poorly surfaced road to inclement weather to angry motorists, all conspiring to do their worst.

But how do you explain being felled by a squirrel?

Making his way home after the club run, Wilkie claims he was "confronted" by the rodent. He managed to twitch his way past its first dart in and out between his wheels but he was not prepared for its apparent retreat to turn into an instant counter-attack.

Crash! Wilkie's on the deck.

Tough as you'd expect a seasoned touring section member to be, Wilk picks himself up and rides home.

He shuns hospital until the following day when the unbearable pain and basketball-sized elbow told him it was time to go to casualty. Arms were bound in slings and joints pinned with the latest titanium (I hope) and after a short stay in hospital he was back at home in front of the telly.

Thankfully, he'll be reading this in fine fettle. While the NHS may have managed to fix his elbow, they have offered no treatment for the embarrassing twang he must feel each time he's asked to describe how the club mascot was his downfall.

The trip to the Trough of Bowland was a real treat for everyone who was able to make it. An excellently organised weekend away took in some great cycling, great food, and great fun – thanks to the collective efforts of the Burns' and the Peake's.

While some of the riding proved too tough for some of us with bad knees (brought on not by cycling but by dancing, it seems) there were good excursions on both the Saturday and the Sunday.

At this point, it would be remiss of me to not

mention the Pardoes and their, err, "map". Now, it wouldn't be fair to call JP a man who is set in his ways but he is clearly more comfortable when things are tricky or difficult, like they used to be in the old days.

Not for him the clarity of a modern OS map.

No, he relies on Bart's.

The map he produced was so old it was handwritten on leather, with big "there be dragons here" graphics at the edges where the ground had yet not been charted.

I exaggerate of course but it was a real challenge – character building actually – to focus on the blind-point place-names all mashed together on the page.

Seeing where you were going was bad enough even before you had to read past all the pen marks traced over previous rides.

I'm still not convinced they were made by the Pardoes but were on there from the map's previous owners.

As we examined the map to find our route home, the route took in a Roman road.

I swear it said: "Due to open in AD47".

Still on the subject of not spending money recklessly, Gareth Blease cut quite a dash at the hill climb.

Not for him the latest line in Lycra.

Nope, it's tracksuit bottoms and old-school cycling tops.

Of course, the downside of this was apparent when Gareth turned his back on you.

Your eyes instantly focused on his bum, drawn there as if hypnotised. Two brightly-coloured, kidney-shaped patches had been sewn in to "disguise" the holes in the track-suit.

None too subtle, the only advantage I could see was that passing motorists couldn't fail to spot you and give you a wide berth.

The touring section has of late become even more a bewilderment of old folks let out for the day.

Gone is the iron rule of Wilkie, whose strict regime kept us all in order over hill and down

(Continued on page 10)

The Squirrel

(Continued from page 20)

through several villages, by the schools kids pouring out. They all made the hostel intact.

Karen, myself, Andy and Sue, loaded our cars with bikes, other peoples bags and a mountain of food. Surely 28 pints of milk was OTT? Well it all got drunk. Friday pm was spent dining, wining, and debating pie, relaxing as stragglers arrived. The last, our friend Ros, had overshot and rang us at 10pm- "lost in Skipton". All safely gathered in, and plans for Saturday were discussed and firmed up.

Saturday – Mass breakfast preceded several alternative trips:

1. A road run to Wray via Dunsop Bridge and The Trough of Bowland – sounds steep!
2. Off road going straight over the moors of Hard Hill and various Fells to also lunch at Wray.
3. An "easier ride" setting off a bit later and as it turned out - bit off more than planned (See Karen's contribution).
4. John and Barbara Coles went hill walking in Ingleborough.
5. One person was seen picking up a good book and coffee cup waiting for the sun to warm up a bit more!

The two Wray groups stuck together, (well almost) as far as Slaidburn, a quiet village that Roger and I were to get more acquainted with sooner than expected. Then the on and off road groups split and I went off roading. A mile out of Slaidburn I heard a "tic tic tic" from the rear wheel. I pulled up to inspect, saw nothing, and set off in pursuit - something definitely wrong! To my horror the inner tube was bulging between rim and tyre like a boiled egg. Well that's me knackered! Now on my own, no phone signal either. Tucking the hernia back, I chanced about 3 psi pressure and started to creep back towards Slaidburn and the six miles back to base. Soon Roger re appeared with his dodgy knee, he wasn't planning a full run and turned back to find me. In Slaidburn the "Hark To Bounty" doors were open despite only just turned 11am. The coffee smelt good, but look at these hand pumps! We had to kill an hour before they started

lunches. Hek, how do fill a whole hour? Then the sandwiches were huge and needed washing down. No longer in a rush to go anywhere, or do anything, we relaxed in the sun. It was reminiscent of times I'd spent with Roger in our late teens. We got a few smiles from passing "serious looking off roaders" just setting out. Ok, it was a bit early to be sat outside a pub, but you have to make the best of things when fate's against you.

Back at base I had a new tyre in the car (why?) and a faulty pressure gauge. The 55psi reading was actually 80psi plus. No wonder it bulged. I dragged Roger away from a local druid who he'd engaged in chat, a smashing old bloke called Guy (well he came from around here – Gisburn! – Move on!!). We set off for a ride around the forest. Very soon another pub appeared amongst the trees. Hek! Fate again! We were making the best of a spoiled day. I thought I'd give the girls a ring for a progress report. Karen Sue and Ros had followed Andy's suggested route and ended up miles away in Gisburn town. "Any chance of picking us up?" Errr-no! "Are you in a pub?" Errr-Yes. (How do they know?) Err, one question at a time please! Why they thought we weren't in Wray, some 20 miles over the hills I'll never know. The best we could offer was directions and encouragement. Our consciences pricked, we left the pub, but 10 minutes later got a return call from the girls. "We've reached the pub but it's just closed – where are you?" Could things get any worse, I asked myself? I peddled back and led them the shortest route to base. - Well at least we've got plenty of time to sort dinner, I thought – don't say a word. The girls had actually picked off a very tough 25 miles of lanes compared to our 8 jolly miles.

The "on and off roaders" all completed, but I don't know much about that. The Coles's, (first to bed), moved rooms from the one directly above the big lounge, they'd chosen on Friday to the quieter West Wing. There were plenty of spare rooms upstairs and three lounges downstairs. One lounge, previously unused, was directly under their newly chosen

room. "Shall we?" "No no Roger, that wouldn't be funny at all".



Sunday – The on roaders went south to Chipping I think, you'll have to ask them. The off roaders set off around Gisburn Forest. The Coles set off in the car towards some mountain peak in heavy boots. The girls (still recovering from Saturday and tooth trouble) set off for a lengthy stroll around the forest. Everybody had done enough on Friday and Saturday, so it all started very gently. You

know - time to chat to other riders about techno bike stuff, (well I just listen).

Time to admire the view over Stock Reservoir. Time to admire the late butterflies, sing a song etc. Even Keith (not an off road devotee) admitted, "This is ok". I was still only totalling "12 miles" after Saturday and feeling as frustrated as a substitute on Cup Final Day. I needed to let off steam! I diverted off up hill, as far as the trees went and managed to get Andy joining me. Sunshine, mud, tree roots, other bikers – the usual cocktail of fun. One thing I do miss since joining Seamons is off roading or "playing out" as we called it. The Forest Gangs met up for a late but smashing pub lunch at Tosside and it was warm enough to sit outside.

Dispersal: A gentle forest track ride back to rendezvous and pack all the bikes, in the cars, (including the "Friday ride outs") Then dispersal before the sun disappeared. A Great place, "different" company and guests, good food – overall a smashing weekend and we didn't get wet!



SALTER FELL – THE SATURDAY OFF-ROAD RIDE

This being a touring section run, two things had to happen. We had to get lost; and we had to lose at least one member. Everyone got to Slaidburn intact (just five miles from Stephen Park) but normal service was resumed almost immediately afterwards. First, on exiting Slaidburn, we noticed that the river was on our left where it shouldn't have been. A smart U-turn sorted that one out. Next Roger's knee started playing up (something to do with unaccustomed exercise - bike-riding - the day before). Six became five. Then we lost Gordon, just like that. One minute he was with us, the next he wasn't. We later found out he was on his way back to Slaidburn with a monster egg of inner tube sticking out of a slit in his tyre. An unhappy chain of events with a predictably happy outcome. Roger and Gordon had a lovely day in the pub in Slaidburn but five became four.

There was Andy Burns, organiser, navigator and constant supplier of boiled sweets; Andy's mate, Alan, a guest who'd come up from Urmston for the day's ride; Pete Devine, a virgin mountain-biker trying out one of Andy's best bikes; and Dave Barker who had almost lost touch with the pleasures and pains of mountain-biking in the wilds. Salter Fell provided a pretty good reminder.

There are a few lanes going north or west out of Slaidburn; one goes over the Trough of Bowland; another goes over Tatham Fell; the rest finish up as dead-ends when they hit the Bowland Forest moorland. We, of course, took one of these. A couple of granny ring climbs got us to the end of the tarmac and the serious stuff began, quite gentle at first on broken concrete then progressively more difficult as the concrete gave way to loose stones. There was the occasional tricky descent but mostly it was a four mile climb, draggy with a few steeper pitches. The usual mountain-biking dilemmas kept presenting themselves:

will I get up this one? if not, when do I give it best? will I get my foot out in time? where is the best landing area? Peter performed like a veteran; I was the raw novice.

Mostly it was a question of paying very close attention to what we were riding on, but when we could look up, back, left and right the scenery was stunning. The col between Hard Hill Top on our right and Wolf Hole Crag on our left was every bit as spectacular as the names suggest. At the top the contours provided a windbreak of sorts for a sandwich stop.

Then the descent began, fortunately firmer and greener than the climb. It took us down Salter Fell and through the Salters, High, Mid and Low. We were heading for the pub in Wray and Wray is three miles down the Roeburn valley from Low Salter.

In a well-ordered universe there would be a lane gently descending beside the river. In North Lancashire they throw in a 1 in 5 climb.

The pub lunch was therefore well-earned; and it matched all our expectations. As we were preparing to leave the road party arrived so we nearly had lunch together – par for the course in the touring section. Converting to roadmen for the afternoon, we returned via Tatham Fell and Stocks reservoir. Easier and quicker to write than it was to ride.

But on an Andy-led expedition there had to be a sting in the tale. Left off the road, down a steep, muddy, boggy slope; over a super-narrow footbridge complete with barriers which were designed to stop errant sheep and did an even better job on errant bikes; up the other side; finally into Gisburn Forest and back to Stephen Park, well and truly knackered after a great day out.

Thanks, Andy.



ringing the boys up to pick us up, (but we didn't want to spoil their day), or flagging down this tractor and trailer. We even contemplated ringing the AA, but decided to press on. We missed a turn and out came the map again. Back to the church and off up hill towards Paythorne. Made sure we didn't miss the next turn then it was, up, flat, up, flat etc with the ups longer than the flats. Sue managed to stay on most of the time whilst Ros and I did some pushing. Slogging up another hill my phone rang. "Where are you" asked Gordon. "Not

More Ups than Downs

Andy Burns sorted out a route for us. "It's downhill all the way to Gisburn, then back by a different route with short climbs and mostly flat bits" says Andy. Ros fancied a "pootle about", Sue was feeling a bit under the weather and the furthest I ever cycle is the annual Mobberley eight. So Andy's route sounded ok. The three of us borrowed Keith's map, set off, then stopped at the road to check on whether left or right. Left it was, and proceeded full of confidence. At the first cross road an ambiguous sign had Bolton by Bowland pointing into a field. Out came the map again. A car pulled up and a very helpful woman pointed us in the right direction – up the hill ! As a "downhill all the way" rides go this was definitely "up". We got to the top and found some more "ups" and a few "downs". Through Bolton by Bowland and more "ups". We flew down past a 14% hill sign, then up again to the main road. Ros was bringing up the rear peddling steadily.

We stopped for lunch in the best pub in Lancashire. Looked at the map, chatted, looked at the map again, more chat – we couldn't put the return off any longer. We thought about

sure, can you come and pick us up"? "We can't – we've had two halves of shandy"! They were at the pub in Tosside, on our route if we make it. We were in Wigglesworth heading in the right direction and thought we'd meet up with the boys and have a well earned drink. This spurred Ros on and she went sailing past effortlessly. Sue and I were still having trouble finding the right gears.

We arrived at the pub at 3.15pm, it was shut! I phoned Gordon who told us to turn up the track right next to the pub where he soon met us, and he and Roger led us back to Stephen Park. It was quite an achievement for three girls who in one way or another, weren't quite up to a ride like that. At the time it was not easy, and by Sunday decided it was a good day out but "thanks Andy", next time we might plan our own route. We will need some map reading lessons first.

My weekend highlights – getting everyone fed and good company.

Ros's highlights – 1. Being cheered in on Friday at 10.30pm and being handed a beer. 2. Seeing the hostel at the end of the "flat ride"! Sue's Highlight – Learning the value of Paracetamol.



“Somerset Goes Cycling Crazy”

“Somerset Goes Cycling Crazy” shouted the retrospective headline in *Cycling Weekly*, following the inaugural visit of the “Tour of Britain” in September 2007.

Well my bit of crazy was the coincidence by which I had unknowingly booked a holiday cottage in Devon at exactly the time when the Tour passed nearby. Shades of an even bigger coincidence when I booked the family into Anney in 1989, just as the World Championships were taking place in nearby Chambery. And an even bigger coincidence when I arrived at the top of the hill at the Worlds to be greeted with “If you’re riding one of my bikes, you had better come to the front with us”. It was Harry Hall with a party of friends who made me most welcome whilst the race unfolded to its fantastic climax which Greg

Lemond won by a tyre’s width.

But I digress---back in Devon in 2007 I studied the map to discover that Dulverton, north of Tiverton, looked like an ideal start point to cycle out north to watch the Tour at the main ascent of the day. One thing about the South West; parking out of season is always available in every village. Dulverton was no exception as I disembarked from the car and threaded my way through an alleyway to head north to Porlock Hill, 20 miles away on the B3223.

I should explain at this juncture (big excuse coming) that due to a knee injury and flu, I had not been on my bike for some time. Thus the first 50 minutes spent climbing continuously to the plateau of Exmoor came as something as a shock. Once on the summit, things got little easier as the road switched up and

down like a roller coaster.

Halfway across Exmoor I met the local Hunt--a grand site with at least 100 horsemen and followers. The hounds seemed to eye me up hungrily as I rode by, which left me wondering if cyclists were fair game instead of foxes on this crazy day.

I descended off the moor to Exford where the tour would pass through much later in the day. Exford seemed to be the jumping off point for the local cyclists, making the hilly return trip to see the tour on Porlock Hill and then back at the starting point.

There was a real stinker of a hill leaving Exford which caused a number of cyclists (who had not thought to fit a granny ring) to get off and walk. Once up near Dunkery Hill, the moor and views opened up to reveal a stunning seascape from Porlock to Minehead bay. There was a very relaxed atmosphere among the crowd on Porlock Hill when we arrived and temperatures were at a very civilised mid 70s F (low 20s C in French speak). There was lots of pre-tour activity as the marshals handed out KoM hats and Tour de France 07! badges. Then came a motor bike festival as hundreds? of Marshals rode by---apparently you need this many to effect a rolling road closure.

Eventually we spotted the race. Two riders had broken away and powered up to the hill summit 200ft above our viewing point. Then the bunch followed in good style and then a gaggle of riders sweated by in not good style. What a way to enjoy the bike, when you're off the back and knackered!

We then took the direct route to return to Exford over Exmoor, as the race headed out west before heading back to Taunton. We just got back through the lines of blocked cars round the village in time to see the back end of the race pass through Exford.

It must be said that Exford had really put on a show for the tour, with banners and bunting all around. The local shops were all very cyclist

friendly and a huge tent had been erected on the sports field by the locals, to feed the many visitors. After the race had gone through, there was an impromptu party on the village Green as cyclists recovered from the steep hills of Exmoor and relaxed in the sun.

The racers were probably in the shower by the time I raised myself sufficiently to get back to Dulverton, reversing my route from the morning. Suffice to say that my lack of fitness made itself known in several ways as I ground my way back over Exmoor to the final long descent to the car and holiday home.

Crazy day? Well it was fun and maybe it is slightly crazy for cyclists to get such a warm welcome in the UK. Well done Somerset!

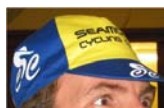


As seen in Cycling Weekly

Club Clothing available from Tim Seddon
Long sleeve Jersey in Thermasquare Full zip
£32.35

Windtex Jacket (Windscreen High Fabric)
£58.20

Supa Roubaix bib tights with 3d Elastic pad
£43.00



Cotton Caps £4.70



BRIEF ENCOUNTER

It had started off as an ordinary clubrun, no different than the hundreds of others that had gone before. A good pace, good company and the satisfying whirr of well-pumped tyres on tarmac. Only the weather was a letdown, not exactly miserable but in the category “could be a lot better.” Heavy clouds rolled across the sky and the threat of an early summer downpour was never far away. Then Tchk – Tchk – Tchk and a glance down revealed a twig wedged between mudguard and tyre.

“Carry on” I shouted, “I’ll catch you up.”

Pulling into the side of the road I tried to remove the cause of the trouble but it proved a bit more resistant than I thought. Glancing up, back from where we had ridden, the sky was a glorious blue and the prospect of finishing the ride on a fine evening was enough to raise the spirit as I continued tugging.

“Damn and Damnation”

“Oh dear” said a deep sonorous voice, “Oh dear.”

I looked up to find an elderly man peering down at me, standing astride a bicycle of similar vintage. I’d not seen him coming in either direction and there was no other way he could have got there.

“Where on earth.....” (his laugh interrupted the sentence) “did you come from?”

“Where on earth indeed” he replied, a smile on his lips. “I suppose the answer is anywhere but probably everywhere.”

My turn now for a silent ‘Oh, dear. Just what I need. A nutter’. Best policy in such circumstances is to humour him.

“Well, wherever you’re from you’ve brought some very welcome sunshine and warmth with you, so thanks for that.”

“That’s what they always say” he sighed “As if that’s the only thing that really matters about this place. Still, I suppose if you’ve spent your life round Manchester it’s probably a big deal.”

“This place?” Looking round for some indication that would make ‘this place’ somehow significant, but not finding it, “what about this place?”

Again the strange smile and now he turned his head and take in the surroundings. No word was spoken, he took his time and finally held my gaze. The look seemed to say “Well, go on then take a really good look about you.” I found myself doing just that and, yes the sun was shining, the sky was now quite cloudless, the colours in the hedgerows seemed more vibrant and – was it my imagination – the nagging, chilly headwind now a warm and gentle tailwind. All in the space of a few short minutes the whole day had changed.

My lack of comprehension must have been written all over my face and he laughed out loud. Feeling that something needed to be said, all that came to mind was “Well, any cyclist welcomes a tailwind, particularly a warm one.”

“I thought you’d notice that” he replied “It’s the first thing they all notice, the tailwind. Hardly surprising though, as it’s always a tailwind.”

This was starting to get seriously weird as, with a final tug, the twig pulled free. I made ready to throw my leg over the bars when he stopped me dead in my tracks.

“Well” he said “Aren’t you going to ask me where you are? Where ‘this place’ really is?” The smart answer eluded me and I was reduced to, with a hint of weariness, “Ye-e-e-s, I’m on the road from” His forefinger rose to his lips and silenced me mid-sentence.

“Just look,” and after a second or two”... properly. And ...listen.”

For the first time, no longer preoccupied with

The Squirrel

getting underway again, I looked around. And then it struck me. There was no noise from cars, aeroplanes. No mechanical sounds, no engines. Just birds, animals, the natural sounds that are now only experienced in the remotest parts of the country. This just couldn't be so, as the crossroads with a busy 'A' road was just round the corner. Yet it was completely, utterly calm and quiet. As a cyclist only one word could describe it. "This is heav... Oh, no I'm not dea...I'm just imagining this aren't I?"

He laughed out loud "The answers are yes, no and no."

"But how can I be here if I'm not, well you know? And you're not...?"

"Heaven's above, no" he roared "Not me, I'm just one of the many in 'the Great Bunch' (he did the inverted commas bit with his fingers) and of course at the moment, technically speaking, heaven is not above, but right here and now."

"This is it then?"

"For cyclists it is."

I smiled "Cyclists' Heaven!"

"Indeed. All you ever wanted, permanent sunshine", then as an aside, ("nobody to nag you about lack of mudguards and mud flaps"), a nice tailwind and every hill climb has another road round it if you feel like a lazy day. I think we've thought of everything."

"It's full of cyclists then, just cyclists."

"Lord, no. Oops sorry." He looked round furiously. "Not a word we're supposed to use."

And sensing that retribution was on hold, he giggled. "There are a few ramblers and walkers who've done a bit of cycling but it has to be said that most of the hardened walkers opt for the parallel place."

"The parallel place?"

"Yes, much like here but with no, and I'm quoting you understand, 'bloody cyclists frightening the life, (if they had one, that is), out of me silently from behind.'" He roared again. "It's not only motorists that can take exception to people on bikes."

"So, this is where cyclists end up then?"

"Not all of them, sadly."

I looked at him quizzically and he responded "Well, you know" and lowering his voice "Drugs".

"What, anyone who has taken drugs to, you know, go faster...?"

He nodded "And it's not just a two year sentence. It's permanent"

"How, permanent?"

"Well," his eyes drifted down to look at the ground "Down there permanent."

Nervously, forcing more levity into the words than I was really feeling, "Ah, Cycling Hell!" "Exactly. I couldn't put it better myself."

"Don't tell me; miserable wet and windy days, permanent headwinds, interminable climbs into low cloud, no views and not even a descent." I joked.

"In a nutshell. Got it in one. Except you forgot one thing. Jeremy Clarkson."

"He's there?"

"Well, a version that's pretty accurate is there. In all the essential parts; loud mouthed, aggressive, selfish to a fault, opinionated. He just drives around all day, very fast and totally unaware of anybody else on the road. Yes, I think we got him spot on."

"Apart from the drug cheats, and Clarkson, then all the other cyclists end up here?"

"No – and it depends what you mean by the term cyclist. Idiots, just because they happen to ride bikes, never make it. And believe me there are plenty of those around. No, this is really only for *proper* cyclists. People who care about the pastime and the sport, people who put something into the game, who support it in all its forms. You've been very lucky. You've been offered a glimpse and not many people have."

There followed a litany of those who would never make it to this hallowed place and then he paused for a moment, with a puzzled look on his face, before continuing "I don't pretend to understand how this happens, you know. This " He waved his arm about airily "It's a space – time continuum type thing apparently. It was explained to me once

but I never understood it. Anyway....”

It was obvious the conversation was coming to a close and there were so many questions yet to be asked. “What about bikes, what about...?” But he cut me short.

“Time’s moving on, but the bike thing. I would have thought that was obvious. You get to ride your most favourite bike of all time. So think about it carefully. Oh, I forgot to mention the cafés.”

“There are cafés?”

“Of course. How could you have a cyclists’ paradise without cafés? These here though, they’re to die for.” Again he burst out laughing at his own joke and for the first time I joined him.

I looked down to check that all was clear with the rear wheel, mounted the bike and turned to say goodbye but he was gone. The road was deserted and I was quite alone. Clicking into the pedal I was away and riding towards home. Within a few yards there was a change in the atmosphere and as I rounded the corner there was the group, one foot down waiting to cross the main road. By the time there was a gap in the traffic I was with them and we crossed the road together.

“Sorry about that, you must have been there for ages.”

“Sorry about what?”

“Well, having to wait for me.”

“We didn’t have to wait we’d only just arrived there. Ten, Twenty seconds at most.” This last was said with a puzzled look on his face. “Are you alright, you look quite pale.”

“No, really, I’m fine.”

“Well, you don’t look it. Not seen a ghost, have you?”

Smiling wanly, I managed a feeble laugh but no reply as we rode on in silence. The weather had changed once again and later, as I peeled off for home, the full force of the chilly headwind hit me in the face. There was much to think about. Was he serious about all those other things he’d mentioned that would prevent you making it to nirvana? It couldn’t actually depend on whether you had a proper

full sized pump, for goodness sake. Or wore full replica team kit.

I think he was joking about the mini-pumps but who can say. It clearly irritated him that these useless things were carried by one and all but as soon as they punctured it was “Anyone got a proper pump?” He was deadly serious about the team kit though.

As he put it “Would you like to spend the rest of your days riding alongside someone who was covered in advertising for US Postal or – God forbid – Discovery Channel!”

It happened to me and I suppose it *could* happen to you. So give some thought to the questions you might want to ask about what it takes to get in there. A word of warning though, just don’t get him going about carbon fibre frames. You’ll be there for eternity.

Solutions: (for quiz on page 9)

Mouldy logic: It was half covered on New Year’s Eve, when it was half the size it is now.

Rudolph in the woods: He can run halfway in. After that, he’s running out again.

Pet likes: 4 snakes. 6 wings=3 birds (3 heads, 6 legs). 12 heads and 32 legs left... Both rabbits and cats have four legs each; $4 \times 8 = 32$, so there must be eight cats or rabbits.

The half-empty bottle: measure the height of the wine in the bottle. Then turn it upside down and measure the height of the air space above the wine. This will give you the proportion of air to wine in the bottle.



Present dilemma: 3 presents, one each.

... STOP PRESS ... STOP PRESS
... .. STO

Montgomery 2007

The main motivation for turning up in Montgomery early on a wet Friday morning in December is to work out how many of your fellow club-mates are as daft as brushes. The answer is most of them; no surprises there then.

But just because it is a 'fun' weekend doesn't mean that we were out of competition. Oh, my word, no. The results of the Montgomery weekend are laid out below.

MONTGOMERY SPRINT SERIES

Stipperstones	.....	Martin Wiggan
Bishops Castle	.....	Martin Wiggan
Montgomery Town*	.....	Robin Haigh
Montgomery 30mph*	.....	Dan Mathers
Emily's Café	.....	John McIver
Montgomery Town.....	.....	Chris Seipen
Kerry Ridge	.....	Robert Crampton
Clun Town*	.....	Robin Haigh
Clun 30mph*.....	.....	Keith Bailey
Montgomery Town	.....	Robin Haigh

The series was won by Robin Haigh following a strong performance. However, controversy dogged the competition with on-going disputes over the relative merits of Town Signs against 30 mph signs. For this year only both contested results are displayed*. Seamons Committee are respectfully requested to table a constitutional amendment to clarify whether sprints are for town signs or speed limits once and for all.

BISHOP'S CASTLE – MONTGOMERY 10 MILE TIME TRIAL

1 st	.....	Ian Udall
2 nd	.....	Dan Snape

Course Details: Proceed from Bishop's Castle on B4385 to Mellington X-roads. Proceed

straight ahead over X-roads with caution. Continue to B4385 to an arbitrary telegraph pole short of the point where the Montgomery sprint starts, determined to ensure I win. The event secretary's decision is final.

PHIL HOLDEN'S CAFÉ RATINGS

Clun Star Inn	.....	5 pasties
Emily's	.....	4 pasties
Stipperstones	.....	3 pasties
Bishops Castle	.....	2 pasties

Hot water crust pastry products figures highly this year, cropping up in the least likely places.

Special mention should be made of the heroic effort made by Emily and her mother on Saturday to open up for 12 sodden cyclists and plying them with enough tea to float the Ark Royal; all this after feeding the heifers. The question of which smelled better wasn't broached. The heifers drank less tea.



**BARBARA WOODHOUSE PRIZE
FOR ANIMAL WELFARE**

Awarded to Ian Udall & anonymous bruised, barking dog.

**DARCY BUSSELL AWARD FOR
MODERN DANCE**

Awarded to Chris Seipen

Chris appears to have lost artistic direction after last year’s acclaimed “Falling off a bike in water” routine, but with no competitors this year, his interpretation of “Unsuccessfully negotiating a cattle grid at the bottom of a hill” to a packed audience at Asterton saw a win for the second year running.

**MICHAEL FISH FORECASTING
CUP**

Awarded to UK Met Office

**ALL WALES HEDGE TRIMMING
CHAMPIONSHIP**

The results are unknown, but it appears to have been heavily contested.

**NEIL WALTON POINTS SERIES
FOR ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE**

Nick Crampton.....	4
Allan Blackburn.....	3
Robert Crampton.....	3 ¹
Robin Haigh	3
Chris Scholes	3 ²
Dave Bates	2
John McIver	2
Chris Seipen	2
Dan Snape	2 ³
Keith Bailey	0
Louise Eden	0
Nigel Harrop	0

Dan Mathers	0
Ian Udall	0
Martin Wiggan.....	0

This year’s points series was hotly contested, but Nick Crampton singled himself out as the overall winner for sheer persistence – he wins a puncture repair master-class with Phil Holden standing over his shoulder.

Notes: One point for a puncture, two for a recoverable failure, three for a write-off.

1. points awarded for in-flight re-configuration of a rear derailleur into an interesting paper-weight.
2. points awarded for one free-style puncture and a distinguished contribution to the field of chain origami
3. awarded the Stockhausen Memorial Prize for contribution to modern music with composition ‘Repetitive clanking No. VII’

Competitors may like to know the slime-filled inner tubes are available now from Altrincham BikeShak at competitive prices, while stocks last.



-ADVENTURE CYCLING

AU REVOIR

As most of you will know, after almost 50 years in the club, my wife, Dee, and I are hoping to re-locate to the south coast. I can't, of course, ever 'leave' the club. As a Life Member that's unthinkable and I'll always be a Seamons rider at heart. The fact is however I won't be around to share all those wonderful miles on the bike, in good (the best!) company, the camaraderie and being part of what I consider to be one of the finest cycling clubs in the country.

It will be huge wrench, as well as a loss, as there is no doubt there just isn't the same club life in the area to which we are moving. There will however be new roads to explore (it's a lot hillier than most people think) and we'll be only a half hour from the Newhaven ferry. The local CTC group actually have weekends and day rides in France!

Over the last couple of years I have divested myself of the many roles in the club's organisation from my major involvement through the 1990s to the turn of the century. From 2004 when Peter Coles took over editing the Squirrel, Steve Booth, then Keith Bailey took on the club tens, and later when Mike McConville became Time trial secretary I've been gratified to see that the best club traditions are in good hands.

It is easy to think of the glory days of the club being in the mid-sixties. From those days, and before, we still have five (all life) members, four of whom are still regularly on clubruns. What's not realised, however, is that membership in those days rarely got above 30 or so. We now have about 120 and we get more people out on a Sunday than there were members then. As a club we must be doing something right.

It is beginning to look as though our move may be at the end of January, in which case I can't see that Dee and I will be at the Annual

Dinner. If that is so then you will have a fresh face to look at performing the Prize Presentation. After 14 years that's probably not a bad thing so you'd better all hope that nothing delays our move.

We will be back occasionally to visit friends, relatives and, of course, the club. Thank you all for your good company.

We shall be living (temporarily) at 19, The Chantry, Upperton Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN211LF Mobile No. 0770 995 4047



Jim playing table tennis in the club room

Beer better than water: Official

Almost exactly a month after we learnt that [drinking beer makes you clever](#), a Spanish boffin has proved that the golden grog is also better at rehydrating the human body after exercise.

Manuel J Castillo Garzón, Professor of Human Physiology from Spain's University of Granada, got a bunch of students to run around in temperatures of 40°C then gave half of them a half-pint of beer while the rest got the same amount of water.

The Spanish prof reckons the bubbles and carbohydrates in beer help quench the thirst and replace lost calories, according to *The Telegraph*.

Lager replaces Pimms in bike polo revival

New breed of enthusiasts reinvent sport that had British heyday in 1930s

Rachel Williams

Monday November 5, 2007

[The Guardian](#)

The pre-polo social scene on Brick Lane is not one the regulars at Cowdray Park would recognise. There are no designer frocks or upturned Ralph Lauren collars, and the scruffily hip spectators choose cans of lager over champagne and Pimms. Yet urban bike polo, which has sprung up in cities around the UK, has an unexpected heritage to rival that of its equestrian cousin.

Inspired by street players in New York, the new breed of enthusiasts are reinventing a sport that - despite its inclusion at the London Olympics in 1908 and the hundreds of teams that existed in its heyday in the 1930s - is largely forgotten in Britain. Six months after four friends got together at a basketball court in east London, dozens of would-be players frequently now turn up on Sunday afternoons.

The group started playing after one of them came back from Manhattan raving about a game he had joined in on the Lower East Side, where urban bike polo has been gaining momentum for several years, largely as part of the "fixed gear" scene devoted to the single-gear bicycles favoured by couriers.

But the Brick Lane players soon found they were not alone. Similar groups were also growing in Oxford, where they play in a car park using jumpers for goalposts, Manchester and Brighton.

In rural Kent the Oakenden Pedallers have been playing in the old style - on grass football pitches - for three years, after coming up with the idea in the pub and thinking they had invented it. Last month they all met at a mini-tournament in London. A Pedallers team, despite being that little bit more mature, and "playing in tracksuits", still managed to come second.

"When we first started we had bikes and nothing else," said Brick Lane regular Rakan Budeiri, 22. "We had no idea it had all this history. People went to charity shops and got golf clubs to use as mallets. Then they got broomsticks and attached bits of wood to them.



Bike polo in Brick Lane. Photograph: Christian Sinibaldi

The Squirrel

"We've slowly evolved towards the ultimate bike polo mallet, which is a ski pole with a piece of plastic tubing on the end, sometimes with a rubber handlebar grip added. Lots of people build their own bespoke bikes just for polo. They buy frames on eBay, or use rusty old frames they find in skips, and add parts salvaged from the street or bought at bike jumbles." Many of the players are creative and media types - graphic designers are well represented - but there are also a couple of investment bankers and a stockbroker. The low fixed gear is important: it allows players greater control on court and to pedal backwards. But it is not universal - one regular plays on a shopper and unicyclists have been known to turn up.

At the starting call ("Bicycles ready, pedals ready, go!") the teams of three race from opposite ends of the court towards the hockey ball waiting in the centre circle. Then it's whatever combination of nifty mallet work, clever cycling tricks and more underhand tactics it takes to get the ball in the goal. The first to five wins.

History

Invented in 1891 by retired Irish racing cyclist Richard J Mcreedy. Also popular in India, France and the US.

Rules

Only "like to like" contact permissible, ie bike to bike, flesh to flesh, mallet to mallet. Sticking mallet in spokes is ultimate no-no.

Tactics

Whip ball away from tackler by tapping it between wheels. Get in your opponent's way so they fall off.



Alan Rydout and Roger Haines, performing with The Swingin Dooberries

**On the next page's some collages by
Johnny Pardoe**

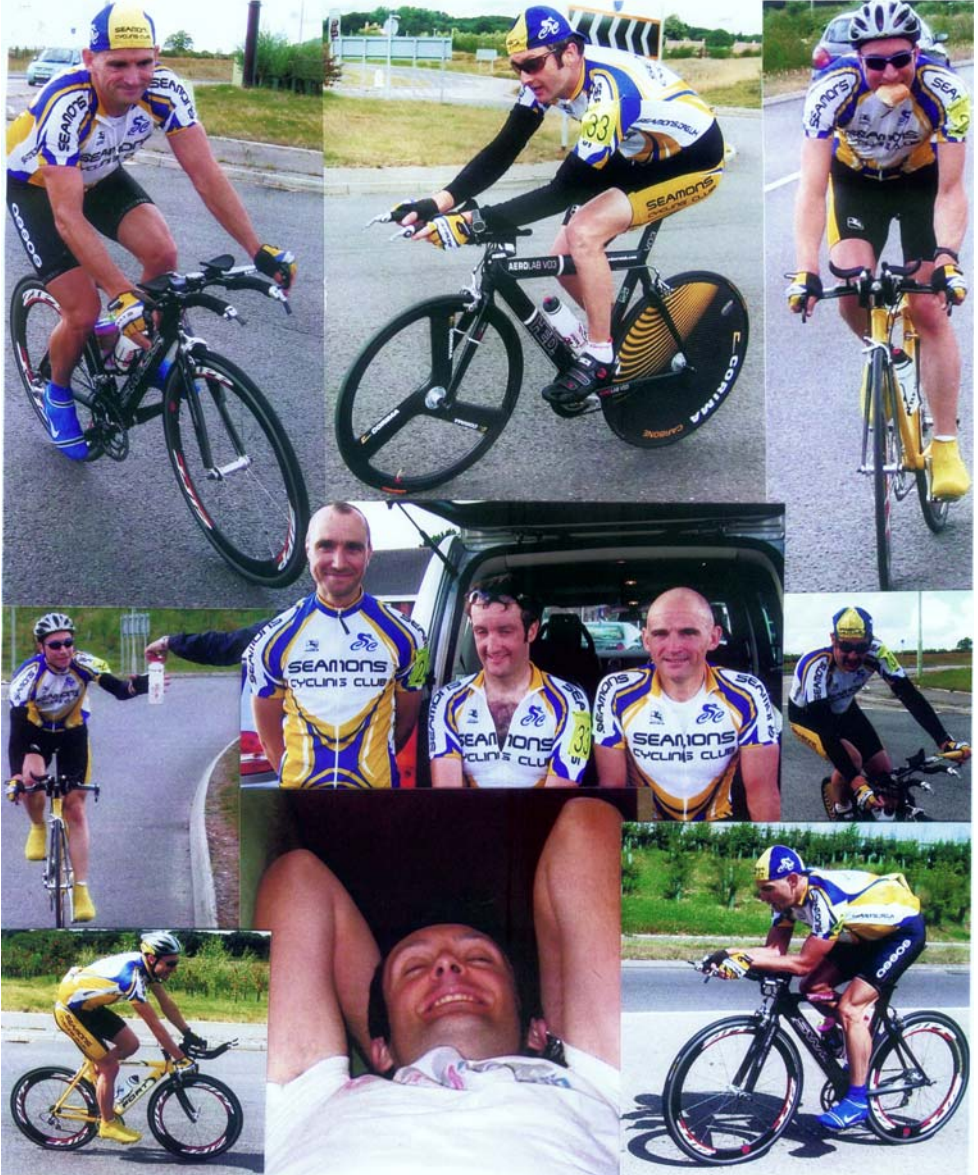
JP and That Map



Gisburn Autumn 07



TESTING TIMES



Featuring Ian Udall winner of the M.D.T.A. season long points competition, Dan

2nd in the West Cheshire 12 hour and Manchester B.A.R. The winning team with Alan Blackburn.





CLUBRUNS



DATE

HALF-DAY

TOURING SECTION

13 JANUARY	MEERBROOK	HIGHER POYNTON
20 JANUARY	DELAMERE	DELAMERE
27 JANUARY	RADWAY GREEN	ALSAGERS BANK
3 FEBUARY	BLAZE FARM	SANDIWAY (BLAKEMERE)
10 FEBUARY	ASTBURY - DAGFIELDS *	MOW COP
17 FEBUARY	TATTENHALL - PREES *	FRODSHAM
24 FEBUARY	TWO MILLS - HOLT *	WINCLE MINN
2 MARCH	LLANGOLLEN	BEESTON **
9 MARCH	DAGFIELD FARM	MEERBROOK
16 MARCH	BUXTON	TATTENHALL
23 MARCH	ROSE FARM	EASTER 50 IN 4
30 MARCH	PADDOCK FARM	BUXTON
6 APRIL	RADWAY GREEN	NANTWICH
13 APRIL	HARTINGTON	RAINOW (COMMON BARN)
20 APRIL	BEESTON	AUDLEM
27 APRIL	AUDLEM	PADDOCK FARM ***
4 MAY	HOPE	CHESTER

* LONGER DISTANCE DESTINATION FOR LLANGOLLEN TRAINING!

** TOURING SECTION START REVERTS TO 09:00

** CERRIG WEEKEND TO MEET THE LLANGOLLEN RIDERS

*** PROVISIONAL 100 IN 8

LAST LAUGH

