

THE SQUIRREL



MAY 2003

EDITORIAL

A couple of weeks ago I wasn't sure just what this issue would contain but, as I have come to expect, the contributors have come up trumps once again. On behalf of all those who read the magazine may I record my sincere thanks to those who take the trouble to write articles and supply photos and other information. Even if you are not of a literary bent there is nothing to stop you jotting down those priceless comments that seem to be a feature of club life in general and our club in particular. I always look forward to receiving them, whether by e-mail or scribbled on a piece of paper.

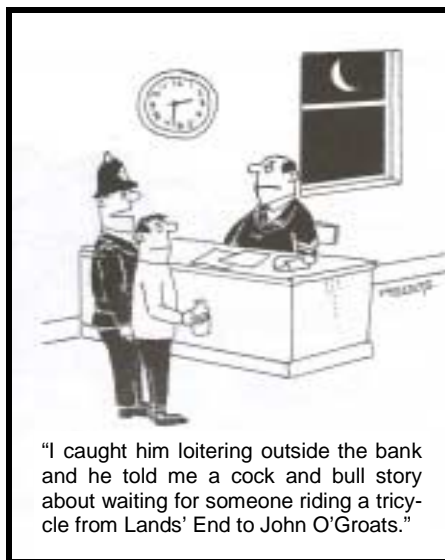
There is enough 'doom and gloom' available on TV and in other publications and it is always the intention to keep the offerings you find here in a lighter vein. There is no getting away from the fact though that our place on the roads and in the strategies that decide on road policies gets ever more marginalised. It certainly makes me ache for the days when traffic was lighter and drivers more civilised. So, no apologies for devoting a couple of pages in this issue to matters of great import to cyclists everywhere. Please do read them, digest their contents and make it a resolution to do something, anything, to secure our present position and maybe influence the future of this great pastime.

Spare a thought for poor Mark Bailey. His long planned three month trip to China couldn't have happened at a worse time. Despite the outbreak of SARS he went anyway (leaving a very worried mother behind) but the situation in the area he was visiting deteriorated so much that he was forced to return home. Hard luck Mark but welcome back.

A new life member is not an everyday occurrence and deserves a mention. It is a bit embarrassing though when it is the editor himself. May I say a heartfelt thanks for the honour bestowed upon me and to all those who have taken the trouble to speak to me personally. It means a great deal.

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Cover: Hieland and Heather by Frank Patterson. A glorious place to be at this time of year. 'The Squirrel' is the magazine of the Seamons Cycling Club. Editor - Jim Boydell 44, Winchester Drive, Stockport, SK4 2NU. 0161 442 6370 or e-mail Jim.Boydell@btinternet.com Website <http://www.seamons.org.uk> On-Line mag available (in colour) in PDF format via the website.

BITS & BITS

IT'S A GREAT RELIEF to see that Vera Blease is well on the mend after the motor accident that wrecked their car. The neck brace that Vera has had to wear has been the most frustrating part of the episode but it looks as though she is starting to pick up the pieces of her life again which must be a real relief to all her family. We wish her well in her continued recovery. Reg, meanwhile, had an injury of his own to contend with and it happened to be one of the more frustrating ones for a cyclist. While outwardly having no sign of injury he had acquired a fractured sternum, the only remedy being rest and taking extreme care. Best avoid a Seamons clubrun then. Still, he regularly attended the doctor's and on each occasion asked the familiar question, "Is it OK to ride my bike now, doc?" For week after week the answer was "No." As Reg observed "I never did tell him the bike was locked to the railings outside."

BACK OUT ON THE CLUBRUN some time later, Reg was enthusing about his replacement car, a Ford Escort that, in Reg's words "has everything." "It's even got a CD player" he continued "but what that's worth I don't know as I've never mastered the one in the lounge." You can see what Vera's had to put up with can't you?

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE TOURING SECTION bunch, it's Cap'n Wilky who's causing a stir with his new frame and bang-up-to-date equipment. Well nearly. You can't beat the habit of a lifetime and some of the kit did come off one of Keith Bailey's racing bikes. Mind you nobody turns a nose up at a bit of cast-off Dura Ace do they? Talking about his new acquisition before it arrived he reported that it would have "Clicky levers and everything." It's good to see that Wilky is getting to grips with the technical lingo of modern equipment at last.

THERE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN a communal rush of blood to the head in the touring section with new bikes and equipment sprouting like daffodils in

the spring. Some of it lasted just about as long as we found out on the run to Beeston. John Thorogood was out on his new Giant which caused a bit of consternation to anybody riding behind. For years John's pannier mounted saddlebag has leaned at a precarious angle and the group has built it into the collective psyche, compensating for the vertical. This latest bike though carries it absolutely plumb which throws all the calculations out. It's very weird, but by way of compensation he has managed to get his rear mudguard crooked. Nevertheless we only managed to get to Davenham before the first of two punctures saw off a brand new 700x25c tyre and tube. Next week he was out on his old faithful complete with heavy duty tyres and that bloody crooked saddlebag.

IT WAS THE SUNDAY AFTER the Science in Sport guy had been up to the clubroom to give his chat. Armed with high-tech laptop and projector we were bemused as he launched into the chemistry of food, drink and additives and the effect on the body. Some were lost early on and others stayed the full course but none of it stopped the trip to the Old Market Tavern later for some 'non-approved' liquid intake. Still, he did some good business (via Neil's BikeShak) and no doubt everybody learned something. Well, I know they did because when we got to the pub at Charlesworth guess what proved to be the most popular item that was ordered? Straight in at number one from absolutely nowhere. That's right from never, ever being ordered at a Sunday lunch stop, pushing roast beef right down the charts; Yes, folks, it's your actual oily fish, your mackerel, full of all those gooooooo fatty acids, that omega 3 fish oil. A new leaf? Maybe, but at Nantwich a week later the roast beef was back at number one.

MAYBE SOME OF OUR MEMBERS should be taking advantage of the BikeShak workshops mentioned elsewhere in this issue, particularly if there is one devoted to the function and maintenance of Campag's Ergo levers. Twice in recent weeks

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riders have been spotted with the tell-tale gap between brake lever and gear shifter that indicates the quick release mechanism hasn't been reset after removing a wheel. OK, anyone can make a mistake but it was the bemused look on the faces of the riders that indicated they hadn't realised those pesky little buttons were hiding under those rubber hoods. And, unlike another contributor, I never even mentioned their names.

DAVE YATES MADE another visit to the clubroom to deliver a well received talk on frames and frame building. Unlike the previous time, which was primarily about the method of construction of steel frames, this one covered the more general aspects of frames such as choice materials and their properties, pluses and minuses. Very interesting it was too and not too difficult to discern Dave's fondness for good old steel, particularly for touring and audax frames where comfort is paramount. Also not too difficult to determine his reticence about chrome plating which can be disastrous for the tubing if the pre-chroming polishing is done too enthusiastically and the acid-neutralising not enthusiastically enough. Which is not what your scribe wanted to hear. Let's face it, if they did chrome plated side-walls on tyres he'd probably have them.

OUT FOR THE FIRST TIME in a while with the half-day lads (the serious racers thankfully absent), I was tucked neatly on Keith Bailey's rear wheel and every time the road went uphill there were the most horrendous cracking noises from the bottom bracket. Normally this wouldn't be a major concern as you'd just whop a new sealed unit in and end of problem. But this was a Dolan carbon frame and the threads in carbon are notorious for failing. The words of Dave Yates echoed in my head from the previous Friday..."If you've got a carbon monocoque and it goes faulty just throw it away..." Ouch! This sounds expensive unless Keith goes for option two. Get a new, high quality sealed unit - and then glue it in and hope for the best. Any other suggestions to Keith Bailey.

Another feature of modern frames also struck me as I sat looking at the back end of the Dolan—how little clearance there is between the brake bridge and the tyre. I'll swear there was more daylight between my old flint-catchers and my racing tubs. "Flint-catchers? What the?"

WE'RE CONSTANTLY being warned about the perils of fast food and it's maybe time that Gareth Blease started to take notice. His wasn't a beefburger, chicken nugget or cola related problem. Oh, no. Nemesis almost struck Gareth in the form of a packet of crisps, whether ready salted, smoky bacon or cheese flavoured I know not. Whilst riding in the 100 in 8 at the end of April, Gareth was off the back tucking into the fat-laden snack with both hands off the bars when he hit a pot-hole. Only 'bike handling skills of the highest order' (Gareth's words) prevented a potential incident. You'd have to be impressed though as Gareth had dropped off to answer a 'call of nature' and was busy trying to regain the swift moving bunch whilst riding no-handed and munching. All that after just completing a near ten mile stint at the front. Mind boggling! Or there is another less flattering explanation. Maybe he just didn't want to share them round.

JUST IMAGINE YOU'RE RETURNING from a holiday (say, possibly Scotland) and you've left the drive home (in, say, your motorhome) as late as possible to get maximum value from your break. You chug into your drive after midnight on Sunday with all the other homes around you in darkness. You're trying to be as quiet and considerate as possible and one person turns to the other and says "I think you've got the key to the house." Which, incredibly, is exactly what the other one was going to say. So, you get out and look in 'the usual place'. Nope. You search everywhere in the vehicle. Nope. You deliberate momentarily on waking up the 80 year-old neighbour who has the spare key. Nope. Finally, reluctantly, you draw the curtains, get into your jim-jams and camp in your own front garden. Hoping and praying that you don't open the curtains in the morning to the early risers or the milkman. Oh, and thanking your lucky stars that you're not in a Fiesta. Of course, when you wake up the next morning, open a bleary eye and spot a small bag swinging on a convenient hook close by, you remember exactly where you put the keys (for safe keeping).

DAVE BARKER is now to be seen riding the late Geoff Horrocks' much loved Benotto on clubruns. Not owning it though as Don Andrews pointed out as he 'guested' on a recent Sunday outing. "Remember, Dave, you're only acting as its guardian" said Don. Better look after it well, Dave.

Meet your Clubmates

Indomitable. That's as good a word as any to sum up the attitude of this edition's first clubmate. It's no surprise that Eileen Sheridan was chosen as a person to look up to as they share some characteristics. Single-minded, self-reliant, resilient are but a few. A good grounding with the now-defunct Levenshulme Clarion meant that she kept returning to the sport after periods away but it wasn't until she was 50 that the racing really started and she's kept it going almost without a break for the next 32 years. During that time she set two National vets records solo with a 26 minute '10' at 62 years of age and a '25' of 1.08.38 but it was on the tandem that the longest standing records were made with either Bev Chapman or Vin Fitzgerald. Despite waiting for a knee operation she has still managed a couple of hundred miles on the tandem and even more solo on the turbo in 2003. Come forward the plucky and petite Wynne Clarke....

When and where were you born? Burnage, Manchester on 31st Dec 1919.

When did you start cycling and what was your first club? 1930, 12 years old, with the Levenshulme Clarion of which my father was a member.

What was your first race? No early racing at all but many reliability rides in Derbyshire. Then the war years curtailed any racing ambitions.

What was your first win? A handicap award in the Altrincham Ravens '10' in 1944 before marriage, children and work stopped me again. I didn't have another go until I was a vet.

Which performance do you rate as your best? It's got to be beating the hour on a tandem (at 69) with Bev Chapman (67) to set a new age record of 59.06. Those were the days.

What is your favourite meal? Any type of chicken dish.

What were you like at school? Average I guess. I don't remember having any great problems.

What kind of books do you read? Catherine Cookson type fiction.

What kind of music do you enjoy? Trad Jazz, piano recitals—but not too highbrow.

And your favourite type of TV programmes? Comedy, sagas and sport. Can't stand 'soaps'.

Which newspaper do you read? Must confess, very 'lowbrow' - The Mirror.

What's your ideal holiday destination? Spain.

Do you have any hobbies? Apart from cycling, crosswords and reading. I don't know whether learning lip-reading and signing counts as it's become a necessity for me.

Who would play you in a film of your life? Eileen Sheridan, the former End to End holder and until last year the 1000 mile holder. She had so much courage and was an inspiration to others.

What is your greatest fear? Ending up in an old people's home. Well I am 83 but like to feel free to please myself how I live.

How would describe yourself in a lonely hearts ad? Elderly lady requires toy-boy to do odd jobs.

What is your favourite training ride? Don't mention training rides! Have you ever been on one with Bev Chapman? Need I say more...

What is your most unpleasant characteristic? Getting upset too easily.

Which characteristic do you most dislike in others? Impatience and intolerance.

Who would you most like to have met, and why? Any one of the Three Tenors. I think their singing is awesome.

What was your most embarrassing moment? Not quite getting the hang of 'Look' pedals and finishing on the floor in front of friends. (I think Wynne was in her late seventies at the time—Ed)

Four words to describe yourself ? Now past my best (but still trying to look forward not back.)



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"Dear Tech Support,

I am contacting you as a last resort. Last year I upgraded from Girlfriend 7.0 to Wife 1.0 and noticed that the new program began unexpected processing that took up a lot of space and valuable resources. No mention of this phenomenon was included in the product brochure. In addition, Wife 1.0 installs itself into other programs and monitors all other systems' activities. Applications such as Training Night 10.3, Boys Night Out 2.5 and Saturday Afternoon Racing 5.0 no longer run, crashing the system whenever selected. I cannot seem to keep Wife 1.0 in the background whilst attempting to run some of my favourite applications. I have attempted to go back to Girlfriend 7.0 but Uninstall does not work with Wife 1.0.

I'm desperate. Can you help me?
Thanks, Desperate User."

"Dear Desperate User,

This is very common problem that plagues men who make such an upgrade, believing that Wife 1.0 is merely a "Utilities & Entertainment program. Wife 1.0 is an OPERATING SYSTEM and is programmed to run every other application.

If you attempt to purge Wife 1.0 and return to Girlfriend 7.0 hidden files will cause Girlfriend 7.0 to emulate Wife1.0 so nothing will be gained. Once installed, Wife 1.0 cannot be un-installed, deleted or purged. Some users attempted this only to find that their own hardware becomes totally useless. Use only in extreme circumstances as this is not for the faint-hearted.

My advice is to get to know Wife 1.0 really well and also suggest you read the entire section regarding General Partnership Faults (GPFs) in the manual. You will learn it is your responsibility to fix all faults or problems regardless of the cause. The best course is to establish familiarity with the command C:\APOLOGISE. You will hopefully find that Wife 1.0 is a great system, although requiring very high maintenance. Additional software is advised, specifically: Flowers 2.1, Jewellery 6.0, Chocolates 4.2 and Posh Frocks 5.0.

The publication of this article at the time of Robin Haigh's impending marriage is purely coincidental. Probably.

SEAMONS CC "TOUR OF THE BERWYNS"
SATURDAY May 31st 2003

The Tour of the Berwyns is thought by many cyclists to be a classic.

During the 90's, it was run from the Helsby/Frodsham area in late March; the central hilly section from Corwen to Chirk providing a stiff test of early season legs and lungs.

In 1999 the event was moved into July, starting at Helsby with an improved route to Corwen ascending the aptly named "World's End" above Llangollen.

Unfortunately, the event did not run in 2000 as the Organiser decided to retire. However, the locals' could not allow such a good event to fade away and after much discussion in the Seamons' club bunch, it was decided to resurrect the ride--- but adding further improvements.

After much preparation and planning, the inaugural Seamons CC Tour of the Berwyns rode out on 1 June 2002 on one of the most gloriously sunny days of the year.

The event now starts at the elegant, rural Willington Hall (a riding centre and hotel) near Kelsall, where parking, free tea and toilets are available. Quite a change from the station car park at Frodsham used originally! The route then joins the World's End variant at Aldford and continues on to Corwen, where refreshments are laid on at the Central Hotel. The original route is then followed over and through the scenic Berwyn mountains, via Llangynog to the café control at Chirk. The original return route from Chirk is extensively revised to be more in keeping with the scenic quality and calibre of what has gone before. A stiff but short climb leads to an undulating route through west Cheshire and onward to an elevated control stop and refreshments at Burwardsley. Then a further 21K of Cheshire's beautiful, undulating lanes leads to the finish at Summertrees tea rooms. After your celebration tea and scone, it is a short downhill ride of 2K to the start point at Willington Hall.

Last year about 45 riders took part and confirmed that this is an Audax event to treasure. So why not find out for yourself by joining us on May 31st to ride our wonderful lanes and hills.

Dave Matthews

BIKESHAK NEWS

Extracted from Neil Walton's March news sheet..

Night Rides: These have proved very popular and are continuing well into the summer months as follows.....May 1st Delamere; May 15th Hayfield; May 29th Macc Forest; June 12th Strines; June 26th Clwyd. All rides are on Thursdays so contact the shop for further details.

Workshops: The first one will have taken place by the time this is in circulation but phone the shop for further details, to book a place or suggest a topic for inclusion, like say (off the top of my head) Ergo levers.

National Bike Week: This is from Sat 14th June to Sun 22nd June. BikeShak are organising a Fun Ride down the Trans-Pennine Trail on Thursday June 19th. Meet at the car park down at the end of Atlantic Street at 6.15pm and the ride is to The Railway at Heatley with a treasure hunt thrown in to make things interesting. Phone the shop nearer the time if you are interested so that Neil can get an idea of numbers.

Check out the website at www.bikeshak.co.uk for details of any special offers or contact the shop on **0161 929 9355** for details of the various events referred to above.

These events come hot on the heels of our first clubnight down at the Bikeshak. The tempting



prospect of 20% off all equipment purchases saw the shop buzzing and the tea and biscuits went down well too as we closed the clubroom for the night and decamped to Oakfield Street. Rumour has it that the Science in Sport products were 'flying out', tourists included. It looks as though things may well be hotting up on their runs as the summer season approaches and those distant destinations beckon.

CLUB CLOTHING

Harvey Maitland still has stocks of club clothing available with short sleeved tops in various sizes for the coming summer months. Also in stock are long sleeved tops (full length zips) and skinsuits in various sizes. Medium bibshorts, a large thermal style top and large Gamex cape make up the remainder. If you're interested then contact Harvey directly.

Now we have a new supplier we can order limited quantities of clothing, rather than having to place a large order, so if you have any specific requirements then don't hesitate to get in touch with Harvey on **0161 928 6050** in the evenings



BEYOND THE FRAGMENTS



Friday 14 March - the fragments come together

Ten of us are in the bar of the Royal Oak, Hurdlow (or Sparklow). There is a blazing log fire, the pints are plentiful and the pub food is superb. The mood is one of mutual sympathy, rather than point-scoring. Paul Smith admits to having had a hard afternoon into the headwind on the Cat. It sounds like things were even worse for Gareth over Dumbers. I start to feel a whole lot better. Maybe it isn't just me after all. Memories of the previous painful couple of hours slowly recede.

Sunset at the top of the Cat looked absolutely stunning, a just reward for a long, laborious grovel. But looks can deceive. Nothing had prepared me for the wind-chill over the summit. It was perishing. Then the mind started playing funny tricks. I knew it was going to be rough across the windswept moorland to the Axe Edge road and sure enough it was. But I had managed to convince myself it was then straight down into the shelter, and safety, of Dowall Dale. The exposed undulations over Dalehead therefore came as a nasty surprise before the descent into peace, quiet and relative warmth. The Glutton Bridge and Crowdecote climbs completed the warm-up.

Then onto the Ashbourne road in the dark and a different sort of problem. In the moonlight a white track snaked across a silver meadow and up over the horizon. Very beautiful and romantic, except that if it was the wrong track, I was setting off on a wild goose chase - the last thing I needed at that point. Over the top it was a relief to see, down to the left, a cottage, three cars in the yard and some figures milling around. The good news was that it was the Seamons; the bad news that they were about to set off back up the hill on a three mile jaunt to the nearest pub.

Which is where we came in. Wilky, Gordon Peake, Roger Haines and Andy Wright had driven out. John and Peter Coles and John Thorogood met at the Bleeding Wolf and took their time riding out via a lunch stop at Blaze Farm, above Allgreave. It was great to hear that Reg had continued his rehab by accompanying them to lunch before returning home. Paul, Gareth and I rode out separately in the afternoon.

That ought to have been enough excitement for one day. Of course it was not. There remained a hair-raising ride back down the High Peak Trail in the dark after a pint or three. Then the last arrivals finished up locked out of the cottage; it took ten minutes shouting and pebble throwing before we got in. Finally a Caving Club member arrived, complete with wife, dog and a massive

roll of carpet on the car roof. Wife and dog caused no problems, but the carpet had to be unloaded before it got soaked with dew. Mercifully he decided not to lay it that night.

Saturday 15 March - Most of the fragments stick together most of the time.....

If you've not sampled the delights of a Wilky DIY weekend, you need to know that breakfast is one of the high spots: as much orange juice, cornflakes, tea, toast and marmalade as you can shovel down, all for 50p a throw. Talk was of setting off down the Tissington Trail to Ashbourne after which it all became a little vague.

The first bit was misty and very cold, but the sun was starting to break through by the time we reached that glorious spot where the Trail loops round close to the cliff edge and leaves you looking straight down into Dovedale. At Ashbourne it was obvious that yet another beautiful day was in prospect.

Then we were off on a trip into the unknown, destination a PH on Wilky's OS map at Church Broughton, a pub and a village of which he and we knew absolutely nothing. The circuit provided a perfect contrast to, and respite from, the rigours of the Peak, typically English, green, gently rolling pastoral, very Izaak Walton. Sutton-on-the-Hill has to be one of the better hoaxes among English place names. The Holly Bush was excellent. Luckily we arrived just before opening time and were able to colonise an area round the fire. By 12.15 the place was heaving. It was at this point that the first fragment fragmented. Paul was with us for just one night and a half day ride, then back to Hale. For the rest of us gently rolling pastoral lasted until we crossed the Ashbourne - Belper road at Hulland Ward, then it was down to a ford and up an absolute swine on the other side. Welcome back to the Peak

The next fragmentation saw four deviants hurtling down into Wirksworth, while four true followers accompanied Wilky towards the High Peak Trail. Mobile phones have their uses at such times. A rendezvous was agreed. Fine, except that only three of the deviants showed up. In a matter of a few hundred yards since the last sighting, Peter Coles had disappeared without trace. Finally it was decided to push on. As on last year's Meerbrook weekend, the Trail was a

super way to end the ride. No hills in hilly country; a low, setting sun accentuating lights and shades; and at the end of the line the Royal Oak, and the promise of more pints and more home-made pies. The only doubts - what are we going to do if Peter doesn't turn up? - were resolved when he did turn up a quarter of an hour after us.



Serious map reading, serious drinking

Sunday 16 March - doing what comes naturally: the fragments fragment.....

Readers of the John Carberry column might conclude that Wilky loses club-mates through sheer carelessness. Events this day suggest that we are hard-wired to go our own ways and do our own things irrespective of Wilky's plans. With five riding back and four going out for a ride before driving back, you might have thought two groups would have covered it, or, with a bit of ingenuity, just one for the first couple of hours. No chance.

Gareth started the rot. Those of us who managed to stagger downstairs, bleary-eyed, at 7.30 were startled to find a muffled figure muttering something about getting back to see his Mum before going home. The sun was barely up, there was a thick frost. Only sheer iron necessity would have tempted me out in those conditions. We found out afterwards that the last thing Vera was expecting at 9.45a.m. was Gareth hammering on the door.

This left four to ride back together. Actually, no it didn't. As soon as Coles J (and I) mentioned Youlgrave, Coles P (and John Thoro) made their excuses and left to take the direct route back. Somehow this twosome then managed to get detached from each other, but still arrived at the Bull's Head in Moberley no more than five minutes apart.

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Not to be outdone, the car-assisted four split 3:1. Roger met Siân who rode out over the Cat. The other three went down the Manifold Valley and found some more lumpy bits round Calton and Ham en route to lunch at Tissington (a miscalculation - it's about the only dry village in Derbyshire). The proposed afternoon ride was insufficiently lumpy for Andy, so they split again.



The open spaces - what it's all about.

Rob Morton had spent the weekend at Hartington hostel (with forty women, if the rumour-mongers are to be believed). He arrived at the cottage at 11 am to check out if there were any takers for a ride home. The place was deserted so he rode back on his own. Which just about sums up a fragmented Sunday.

Don't be misled by the jaundiced tone. We all had a great weekend. Many thanks to the Orpheus Caving Club, to Peter Coles who was our contact man and to Wilky for organising it.



It's not all blue skies and pastoral splendour on a Wilky-DIY weekend.

TOURIST TROPHY 2003

On a recent touring section run to Chester, Fred Foster was complaining about dead legs, lack of oomph on the hills, etc. Further enquiries disclosed that the previous day he was up at 3 am, for a 6 o'clock start at Meltham, near Huddersfield. 'Butly's Brid Trip', as the ride is billed in the Audax handbook, presumably carted him off to Bridlington and back and included 6,000 feet of climbing. The 310 Km, or 194 miles, took 15 hours and Fred got to bed at midnight. He has also completed three 200 km events, one of them in January with Gethin Butler, Chris Hopkinson and Jimmy Froggatt for company. Fred is back.

Dave Matthews has also been getting into the groove again with three or four Audaxes and an appearance in the Club Audax ride to Llangollen and back. On a fantastic day, ten left the station, seven got to Llangollen together and nine rode back, with mileages ranging from the 80s to 130, depending on who joined in where and for how long. Gordon Peake set a personal best for a day's ride.

Not all Fred's and Dave's rides qualify. Dave and Andy Wright lead with three points, with Fred, John Coles, Gordon and Dave Barker on two

TOURIST TROPHY PROGRAMME

- 4 May** CTC Anniversary Ride, Maeshafn, Mold
- 9-11 May** Club Weekend, Craven Arms
- 17-18 May** Cheshire Cycleway 2 day, Cheadle
- 17 May** Plains Audax, 400km, Wood Lane
- 31 May** Seamons Tour of the Berwyns Audax, 204 km, Willington Hall
Cheshire-Cambrian Audax, 600 km, Poynton
- 15 June** Snake Pass/Mam Tor Audax, 200/150 km, Holmes Chapel
- 20-22 June** York Rally
- 22 June** Cheshire Cycleway Rides, 135/100/95/50 miles, either Christleton or Kerridge
- 20 July** Manchester-Blackpool (check date)
- 3 Aug** Saddleworth Audax, 208/170/113 km, Uppermill
- 10 Aug** Four Counties 100 mile ride, Kinnerton, Chester
- 24 Aug** Wild Wales, Bala

plus Club weekends, car-assisted rides, etc; see Touring Section programme.

They Train In Spain



Last November seems a million years away. There I was sat with a cup of tea in one hand and Cycling Weekly in the other. Usually at that time of the year it takes about 10 minutes to read but this particular edition featured a training camps article, with various companies, commencing in the new year. Having never been abroad before (OK there was a works 24 hour booze run to Calais, but I don't think that counts!) and having a virgin passport I started to think of Spain in mid March and having a bash at cycling on the continent.

I came across a Graham Baxter feature, read it and before you know it, was on the phone to their office in Yorkshire for the necessary information. A few days later the usual brochures slipped through the letter box. I mentioned it to Simon, my brother, and faster than a quick trip to Eddie McGrath's, the deposit and the completed paperwork was in the post. There were three options available ~ seven, ten or fourteen day camps. Never having done this we decided on the seven day package.

The departure date duly came and at 5.30 am one cold March morning I found myself fighting

with this massive attaché type bike box with all other bits and pieces through the departures at Manchester Airport. A short time later Simon joined me and within a couple of hours we were airborne and flying high over the Pyrenees southbound to Alicante on the Costa Blanca. The flight itself was problem free but it did feel like a Club 65 ~ 80 holiday with the majority of passengers coming from the other side of the Pennines. Indeed, it was akin to a coach trip from Barnsley if you get my drift!

On arrival at Alicante we were met by a very overcast and cold day. Then there was the wait for the bike boxes coming off the aeroplane. Guess who's was last? Never mind, it was entertaining watching our 'grey power' flight companions literally fighting with each other for baggage trolleys. Ankles were being rammed left, right and centre. And they talk about today's yob culture!

We met Graham Baxter and his entourage, loaded our gear and boarded the coach for a forty minute journey to Altea about 6 miles north of Benidorm. The complex we were staying in was called the Albir Gardens and was a mixed

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complex of self catering apartments, which we stayed in, and the hotel with rooms. We arrived about two o'clock, got to our room, unpacked the bikes and after checking them over took it easy for the rest of the day.

Sunday, the next day, after breakfast, saw a briefing from one of Graham Baxter's staff. The ride that day would start about 11am. In all there were about 150 people at the training camp of all nationalities from Canadians, Americans and other Europeans. Eleven o'clock came and everybody duly mustered at the front of the hotel. There were to be three groups. Group one ~ elite and first cat riding about 70 miles non stop, group two ~ slightly slower riding about 60 miles non stop and group three riding about the same distance with a café stop. Guess which one we plumped for!

There were all sorts of dream machines present from top of the range Treks, Pinarellos, carbon Giants (in abundance) to a guy from Basingstoke who brought his own bike which he had built ~ more on that later. Talking of Treks ~ it was like a Lance Armstrong groupies convention! They had everything. Not just the bikes but the finest detail of the United States Postal Service were on display from tops to socks. And I thought Star Trek and Dr Who fans were strange!

Talking of groupies, every rider had to tie a card to their frame with personal details should anything happen. Sure enough, a chap from West Yorkshire riding a USPS Trek with all the attire wanted to be known as ~ wait for it ~ LANCE! And that's what went on his card proudly displayed should he come a cropper. I did actually talk to the chap on one occasion but when he started talking of his cycling specific diet that his coach had instructed him to undertake I quickly dropped back and rode elsewhere. He was one definite person to steer clear of for the rest of the week.

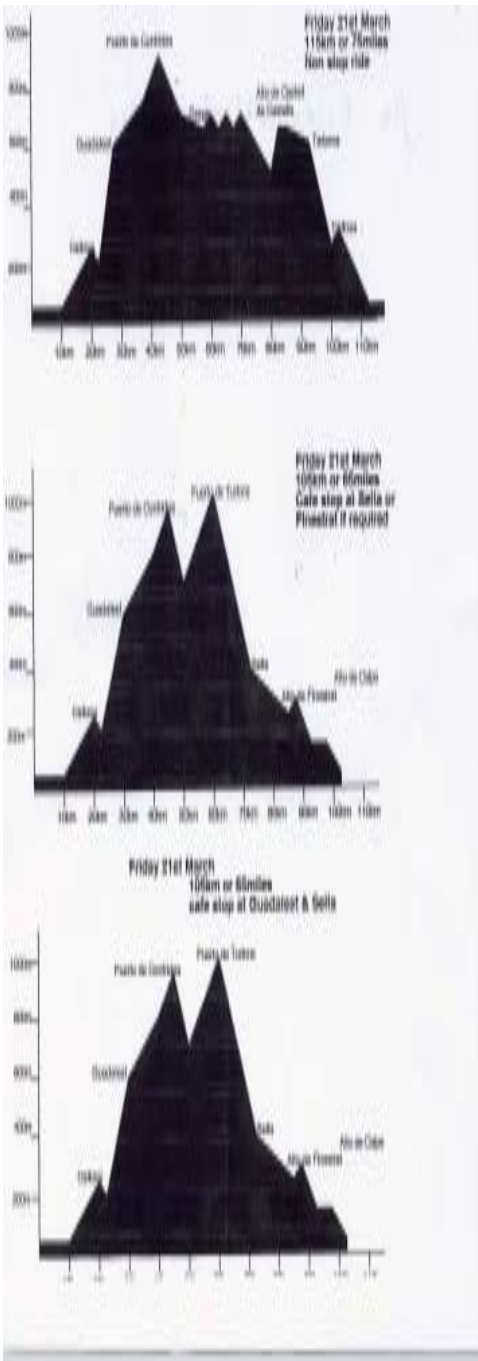
Just after 11am we set off in group three for a short introductory ride for the first day. The weather was sunny with the occasional cloud but was nice and mild. I have to say I was completely surprised by the drivers when riding in Spain. On the first day we were about 30 strong and drivers would patiently sit behind us waiting for a good place to overtake. Indeed, coming up to roundabouts drivers would actually give way to

let you get by and on many occasions pedestrians would stop and clap encouragement as you passed by. What a great atmosphere to ride in!

Each group was led by a guide to show you the way, with the knowledge that if you dropped off the back the group would wait for you before going ahead. I must say that if anybody did drop off that never happened. God knows what happened to some of the riders ~ probably they are still riding around the mountains trying to find Altea! The café stop was picture postcard stuff, a trendy place with a backcloth of palm trees and the Mediterranean sea lapping against the shore. Whilst at the café on the first day an African street trader appeared with dozens of pairs of fake Oakleys at bargain prices. Two pairs were quickly purchased at a bargain price of 15 euros or £10 in real money. About five miles from the hotel as usual the pace suddenly started to pick up and the usual death before dishonour mentality set in. The road leading to and from the hotel was the main N332 coast road which was a rolling switch back type road with a great surface hence the daily fast run in to the finish every day.

I mentioned the guy who built his own bike frame. Whilst in the bar one night he explained that he worked casting bronze statues for sculptors. This was not to be missed, a bronze framed bike. Surely cutting edge technology and a steal on carbon and aluminium frames! The next day we met as usual in front of the hotel. Our friend with his home made special in all its glory presented for inspection. To say it was a special was an understatement. Gold, black Dedacciai aluminium tubing, carbon forks and carbon seat stays. TIG welded with a superb paint job. A sight to behold and a credit to its rider. It just shows with a little dedication and perseverance what can be achieved.

Each night the following day's runs would be placed on the notice board giving details of climbs, distance and possible café stops. Group one and two stayed true and went without any café stops. Type of rides seem to alternate each day between easy coastal roads of round about 60 miles, to very hilly, neigh, mountainous climbs of the same distance. It's been said before that you really cannot appreciate the gradients that riders race up when watching it on television. However, riding them as we all know is a totally different thing, especially on the continent.



Climbs were steep and seemed to go on for ever (see profile) but on the other hand the roads were superb with fantastic bends and surfaces for fast descents complemented with great views.

The weather at this time of year can be changeable but we were fortunate with dry conditions and, more importantly, dry roads. The brief was that if it rained prior to a ride then it would be delayed for an hour or so. Roads become so slippery in the wet that the risks were too high for groups to venture out. The riders varied enormously in ability from one completely overweight chap called Dave, who had obviously pushed himself into his lycra outfit, to the very fit group one lads. We rode one day with a group of French Canadians who I must admit were perhaps the most boring anti-social people I have ever come across. "Done much racing?" Answer "Nop." "Keeping up with the training?" Answer "Nop." After a few more one syllable answers I concluded that they were still suffering from jet lag and decided to channel my power of conversation elsewhere.

The encouragement and friendliness amongst the Brits though still shone through. 'Fat' Dave one day was struggling on one of the climbs when group one went past shouting words of encouragement and praise. 'Fat' Dave certainly earned a lot of respect and admiration for mixing it with far fitter riders.

Meals were on a self service basis where you could help yourself to as much as you wanted. At breakfast I would polish off a full English whilst the more serious group one lads were going continental with a sliver of cheese, crackers and slices of meat. I thought I'd got it all wrong but the rides each day had given me quite an appetite. Simon was of the same opinion which cleared my conscience for that extra sausage or rasher of bacon waiting to be eaten!

Guest riders turned up in the middle of the week. None other than Matt White of US Postal and Neil Stephens, ex-Festina. The USPS groupies were in their element and it was like watching mother goose with her goslings all in a row! Both riders were very approachable and very easy to speak to ~ both rode with each group and in the evening there was a question & answer session from each guest. Stevens or 'Stevo' as he was called would wait or hang back

The Squirrel

for the slower riders. As he said, " I can ride as slow as anybody." He was a really nice guy and really laid back with his approach to life. One day Stevo and another young semi-pro living and racing in Spain were leading the group back to the hotel. A half day pace was about right until again about 2 miles from the hotel everybody started looking at each other and twitching about.

Now you must remember that Stevo used to lead Ja-Ja out in sprint finishes in his pro days but that didn't stop the lads. Just to say you've beat Neil Stephens in a sprint to the hotel had to be going through everybody's mind. Then it happened. Half a mile from home and it was like the Red Arrows bomb burst. Cyclists accelerating in every direction as fast as possible. I don't know if Stevo knew that this was expected (I'm sure he did) or whether he was surprised, but whatever, he just maintained his steady pace and rode in a few seconds later. Words like " Been there, got the T shirt " spring to mind.

There were other question/answer sessions with other guest appearances from dieticians to the spokesman from SIS. The training camp was also heavily promoted with SIS products.

Did I enjoy it? Would I go again? The answer's yes. I certainly didn't know what to expect but I anticipated some hard riding and hard socialising akin to the Montgomery weekend. I was wrong. OK, there are riders of different abilities but it is exactly what its called ~ **a training camp**. Whatever your level of fitness you will certainly come back fitter but it is scary when group one go past you like you're stood still! Having said that they did lead lives like Trappist monks ~ watching what they ate and definitely having no alcohol. I can hear you all gasping and standing back in horror!!

One thing that was completely overlooked by me was taking an over-gearred bike. There was nothing in the brochures to suggest what gear ratios to come with so you can imagine the raised eyebrows when I turned up with a 21 cassette when it was recommended by word of mouth that at least a 25 cassette would be needed to get round ~ again look at the profiles and you will understand. That apart there were no real problems. On the whole you can see that the Baxter empire has it finely tuned to what is a well organised itinerary.

How much did it cost? As a first timer on one of these foreign training camps I probably went the most expensive way. The cost for the week was just under £500. Bearing in mind that everything was done for you ~ insurance, flight, airport transfers, accommodation and meals (breakfast and evening meal). Seasoned cyclists that have gone abroad before have the experience and knowledge of how to do it on a cheaper budget. As a first timer I would suggest that a Graham Baxter type package is the best option.

How long would I go for? A week is too short as it seems to be compacted in travelling, unpacking, riding, packing and travelling home. A fortnight for me is too long and has to be considered only by the fittest of us. Next time I think I'll go for ten days. In that period you would be able to pick and mix between several days on the bike and a few days off enjoying the local amenities.

Of course not forgetting the most important thing ~ several pints of Guinness ~ oops, I mean CARBO LOADING of course!

Story and Photos by Richard Williams

YORK RALLY 2003

The York Rally takes place over the weekend of 20/22nd June and once again some stalwarts will be riding out on the Friday and back on the Sunday with a 'rest day' on the field on Saturday. Some will stay in a local hotel, others will be taking tents and caravans and if you want to be sited with the club contact the Pardoes as soon as possible. There they will visit the trade stands and take in the various sights like the unusual machine below. You think it's not that unusual? Then look to the right!



LATE NEWS

Second claim member 16 year-old Matt Cramp-ton, rode exceptionally well down at Herne Hill where he took on the big boys and rode away with the prestige 'White Hope Sprint' and an elimination race at the Good Friday meeting. A week later and he became British Junior Sprint Champion at the velodrome (with the only 200m rides inside 12sec) and took silver in the Kilo with a 1.08. Congratulations Matt. (Pity CW got the wrong photo in the first case and spelled his name wrong in the second!)

BEST CLUBMAN 2002

If you managed more than 100 points....

1 Roger Haines 248	2 Keith Stacey 235
3 Reg Blease 225	4 John Coles 213
5 Peter Coles 205	6 Dave Barker 205
7 M McAllister 190	8 Jim Boydell 186
9 John Pardoe 157	10 Keith Bailey 155
11 Tim Seddon 154	12 Carol Pardoe 143
13=Gordon Peake141	13= Keith Wilky 141
15 Phil Holden 140	16 H Maitland 132
17 E Robinson 121	18= Gareth Blease 114

RWC POINTS 2002

The season long competition for the R W Chapman Trophy ended with a convincing win by Gareth Blease who got points in every event. The top twelve were as follows....

1 Gareth Blease 247	2 Paul McAllister 194
3 Tim Seddon 179	4 Dave Bates 175
5 Chris Siepen 155	6 Pete Devereux 150
7 Steve davis 145	8 Alex Young 142
9 Dave Fox 136	10 Malc McAllister 111
11 Roy Myers 106	12 Dave Attwell 91

Best first year rider award went to Paul Stringer with 51 points in his first season riding with the club. This year's events are now under way with a new organising team in place so please do your best to turn up, either to ride or help. Steve Booth (01925 752933) will be delighted to hear from you, particularly in regard to the Club Championship on **May 21st**. Competitors can enter on the line for this one but offers of help are very welcome in advance.

BEST CLUBMAN 2003

With four months of the year already totalled up the current standings are as follows.....

Roger Haines 82	Dave Barker 77
Phil Holden 75	John Coles 69
Jim Boydell 69	Peter Coles 67
Keith Stacey 67	Tim Seddon 65
Andy Wright 65	Reg Blease 60
Keith Bailey 57	Malc McAllister 57

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Welcome to the new members who were accepted at the last committee meeting...

Dave Alderson, 24 The Gables, Brooklands Rd, Sale, M33 3SU, 07734 054908;

Allan Blackburn & Sara Blackburn, 9 Blakeswood, 167 Oldfoeld Rd, Altrincham, WA14 4HY, 927 7198 ;

Nick Frost, 44 Brown St, Altrincham, WA14 2ET, 941 4648;

David Simper, 23, Ellesmere Rd, Altrincham, WA14 1JG, 928 0635

Welcome also (belatedly) to Dot Young who is now a social member in her own right. We hope you all enjoy your time with us and look forward to any contributions you can make to the future of the club.

Stuart Kay is in the process of re-locating to the North East and we wish him well with his new business venture. Contact details not available as yet but he intends to remain a member.

Steve Booth, our excellent webmaster, has a new e-mail address. You can now contact him with bits of news, results and details of forthcoming events on 01925 752933 or :- steve@booth6.force9.co.uk



CLUB DINNER 2003



Numbers were slightly down this year but we still had 130 members and friends 'to dinner' as once again we honoured our champions at the Cresta Court hotel. A change of menu to lamb (what no chicken?) and sticky-toffee pudding seemed to go down very well and the meal as a whole was well received with extra vegetables if requested and a cheese platter to boot. Then on to the prize presentation and the special awards that are the centrepiece of the evening. This year we had several new faces to grace the photos. Long standing member, Roger Haines, took his first ever trophy, romping away with the Best Clubman Award and partner, Siân Grainger took her first Reg Herbert Ladies Trophy after completing a first ever '100'

mile ride. before adjourning to the bar and the excellent photo display 'A year in the life of the Seamons' prepared once again by John Pardoe. On with the dancing and the evening finished in the early hours of the morning, once again testing the resolve of all to get up for the next morning's clubrun.

Top Photo: from left, Siân and Roger take their first awards. Tim Seddon, Chris Siepen and Steve Davis bagged virtually all the racing trophies between them.

Middle Photo: All smiles now for Peter Bell, a far cry from those last few miles across the lumpy bit of Cheshire to the finish of the Tour of the Berwyns that earned him the Hammering of the Year Award.

Bottom Photo: Jim Boydell is presented with Honorary Life Membership in the company of others so honoured. From left, Bob Hill, John Pardoe, Bob Richardson, Jim Boy-



TOURING SHORTS &

L O N G S

Touring section veterans are used to seeing John Thorogood hunched over his up-turned bike fixing yet another puncture. It's at this point that much fun is had by mean-minded commentators pointing out the little maintenance and cleaning jobs John might consider next time he gets home. So the day he turned up at Rackhams with a new machine was cause for celebration. For the first time in, what, a decade? Mr T had a finely fettled, fully functioning machine. Now, while his clubmates like John, the Gods do not. With the bike barely out of the shop and just ten miles down the road on its first club run, it's upside down, wheel out having a puncture fixed.

A shredded tyre was diagnosed as a likely contender for the blow-out. Theories for the cause ranged from over-use or glass on the road to rubbing against the frame or brake blocks, or something. Poor John, each time he returned to the shiny new machine, he found a puncture. Rim tape seems to be the culprit and John's promised to get it looked at. At which time he will no doubt be pleased he's bought a new bike.

He might have the legs that can take him from London to Edinburgh and back but Dave Barker's love of the bike is clearly limited to the cycling and suffering part, not the tinkering and mending part. The tourers had re-grouped at the top of Cloud Side, chatting in the warm sunshine, when it was pointed out that the quick-release on Dave's brake lever had not been re-set properly. Cue puzzled looks and furrowed brow from Dave. "Quick release? What do you mean?" After closer inspection, Dave looks up, pleased with himself: "Oh, is that what that is?"

For Pete the Pot and the other smokers in the touring section, lunch is not lunch without a decent custard-drenched pudding and a fag afterwards. However, with no pub for lunch on the run to Hope, smokers were exiled to outside the café. As he enjoyed the first few pulls on his trademark roll-up, Peter's pleasure was interrupted by a customer objecting to his befouling of the atmosphere. Poor old Pete. The name of the café? The Woodbine. Obviously not named for the classic unfiltered cigarette beloved of Andy Capp.

On the run to Nantwich, Peter was nearly without even a doorway to stand outside. It took the tourers about three tries to find a pub that could accommodate the half-dozen of us with food. Roger Haines wondered if there was some discrimination at work: "Is it because we are cyclists?"

After much talk of a tourers' competition in the club tens, a big turnout of the saddlebag brigade was expected at the first time trial of the year. Not so. Three riders from the tourers made the start, with a couple of others marshalling. Most noticeable by his absence was Keith Wilkinson, sponsor of the Touring Ten Tankard. His excuse? Err, he was in the pub!

However, just two days later, there was a good turnout from the tourers for a different trial of strength and endurance – the Moberley 8.

Keith even got a ride in before hand. Guilt, obviously.

Report by John Carberry

THE BUCK STOPS HERE

It was a fifty-six mile round trip from Glentroof, north of Newton Stuart in Dumfries and Gallo-way. We couldn't believe we were on the main road to Girvan, it was so quiet, maybe two or three cars in half an hour. The tandem trike was coping well with the rolling hills, and brought waves and smiles from the people in the few villages we passed through. Turning off the main road in Pinwherry we rapidly ground to a halt up a 25% hill, which appeared from nowhere. JP was not happy to be reduced to walking. The sign at the top of the hill, as you looked back, said 30%!

A pleasant, meandering ridge road, bedecked with violets and primroses, gradually dropped down to the river at Barr, where we found a seat and had a hot drink from our flask, and a honey butty or two. More waves and smiles. Another climb now waited for us, I don't know how we got up it, I kept shouting "Up," ie stand up on the pedals, John seems to sit down till the last minute, but on a tandem you both have to do the same. We upped and did it. The descent was brilliant, I kept sticking my head round to feel the wind in my face, and see the view.

More rolling road, and a bit of a struggle into the wind - at least I was sheltered on the back, but it was still hard work. Then the sign for Straiton, where we planned to have a picnic lunch before turning back for Glentroof. But our eye was caught by bikes leaning up outside a café - a



café, in such a small place. It was called The Buck. The lady was very welcoming, and the cyclists were very friendly, telling us about their club-runs from Ayr, and club-runs to Arran, and about the Girvan three-day which would pass this way on Easter Sunday. The lentil soup was excellent, and the caramel shortbread, and the large cappuccinos, and we still had our picnic.

Well fortified for the longish climb out of the village, we headed off into the sunshine, keeping a look out for the memorial on top of a hill, as recommended by our new cycling friends. We found it, a great picnic spot, with wide panoramic views of the hills all around, "In memory of David Bell, who knew these hills so well." We felt we knew the hills *very* well. The descent back to Glentroof was an uninterrupted ten miles of cycling bliss, smooth tarmac, down and round, hills stretching away to the left, deep conifer forest to the right, and a warm, sunny spot next to the camper-van waiting for us when we got back for afternoon tea.

Story by Carol Pardoe

DIARY DATES

These dates may well appear in other places but here's a summary of the important ones for the next few months.....

MAY 9-11th Club Weekend at Craven Arms
21st Wed - Champs '10' Bear's Paw
31st Sun - Tour of the Berwyns

JUNE 3rd Tues - Champs'25' Monk's Heath
(not as in handbook) at 7.00pm

7th-15th National Bike Week
14th Sat Family Ride from Atlantic St. at
2.00pm along the Trans Pennine Trail
15th Sun Experienced ride Burwardsley

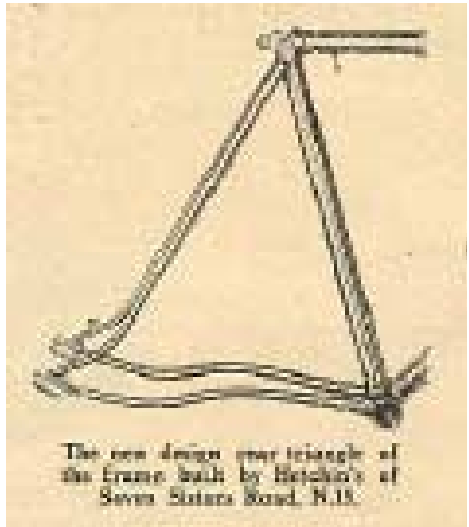
20-22nd Weekend to York Rally
JULY 6th Sun M&DTTA '100' Champs (morn)
20th Sun 15 mile Cancer Charity Ride
circular route from Tatton Park
26th Sat '50' Champs (evening)

AUG 10th Sun Club Road Race Byley Hall
23rd Sat Club Open '25' Cranage
24th Sun Wild Wales Challenge - Bala
31st Sun '12hr' Champs - Prees

THERE'S NOTHING NEW!

In 1935 Hetchins introduced the 'curly stay' model of frame. It was claimed "that this design absorbs shock, transmitted through the bottom bracket, without loss of rigidity." That may well have been the official line but the fact that the rules of amateurism prevented anybody in NCU events being identified if a frame maker's name was decipherable in a photograph may have had something to do with it. Almost seventy years on and modern frame makers tread the same path with alloy and carbon fibre and it's probably as much to do with fashion this time around.

In the same 1935 edition of 'Cycling' there was the following report about the agenda of the UCI "A further proposition is that in the professional road championships only one rider be permitted from each nation." and that "the athletic side of the championships should transcend any financial considerations and that this limitation should prevent the unedifying spectacle of contestants in races for individual titles sacrificing their own chances for those of a compatriot." Well Mr Cipollini (and his *eleven* little helpers), I think that puts you firmly in your place in the eyes of a governing body that we might have had some respect for.



THE CHARLESWORTH RUN

Another one of those runs where you're never too far from home yet you get back sublimely knackered. A day of continuous ups and downs including Mellor and Werneth Low (and that treacherous concrete section of 1 in 4) saw many walking (or slithering) the odd few yards. Nemesis for Roger nearly came however in the form of a monster platter. His face was a picture when it was



BOMBING DOWN TO BOURG

This year the contingent of Seamons members heading for the Alpe d'Huez should reach record numbers and everyone there will have taken a different approach. John & Carol (motorhome) and Jim & Dee (caravan) have pitches booked right at the bottom of the climb and welcome visitors on a 'first come -first served basis' in their awnings. Paul Smith is on his way by 'bikebus', Dave Barker flies to Geneva and rides down, Stuart Kay drives and camps, Dave & Margaret Matthews drive and B&B and Keith Bailey's clan -

brought in and he manfully struggled on before eventually admitting defeat.

Pictures by David Simper



If you're that desperate to read about cycling on the Costa Blanca, read last year's two-part epic by Allan Phelan about the "Six Amigos". It's all there: the wonderful scenery, the long descents, the day-by-day detailed account of six intrepid Seamons riders abroad. Fantastic, inspirational stuff.

No. This is a more personal account of my first cycling trip abroad. Perhaps it should be entitled *It Could Happen to You!* First of all, the boring statistical profile:

The riders: John Carberry (the organiser), Peter Devine (the organised) and myself (the unlucky).

The location: fantastic three-bedroom villa with private pool, in Javea, on the Costa Blanca coast. Great holiday town with lots of good eating (and drinking) places surrounded by some brutal-looking hills.

The plan: ride every day and get stacks of quality miles in.

John kept walking around with a heart rate monitor talking about a training camp and showing off the beautiful graph he would fill in every day about mileage, riding time, maximum speed etc – yawn! Peter and I talked about having a nice time, finding the best food and wine and limiting John's keenness.

The bikes: hired Orbea racing bikes that ap-

It's Not About The Bike (well not much)

peared more suitable for Cheshire — i.e. 53/39 with 13 to 23. About as useful as a chocolate fireguard.

Now to the more interesting bits:

Burgled on the night of day one. Villa broken into. John lost £100 in Euros, a camera and two bananas. Took half a day to report to police and to get a crime report. At least it limited the riding for the next day. John says he might not claim for the bananas.

Day two: I had four punctures; severely pissed off and changed the highly inappropriate 20 section tyres for some 23 folders we had with us. This did not work.

Next day: Four more punctures before lunch. Diagnosed faulty rim tape and retired to nearest bar to revive spirits. Bit of good luck – the bar-



Are John and Peter getting a little *too* friendly?

man had a role of insulation tape. No more punctures.

Day Four; got to elevenses without incident. Not long after felt very ill and returned to villa. John and Peter had great day in lovely warm, sunny weather, much talk of heroic cycling. B*st*rds! Still felt terrible the next day. Decided to have a rest day (just like the Tour!) Felt a bit better by mid-morning and decided to do a bit of sight-seeing in the hire car. Very bad idea. Within 15 miles I managed to smash the car into a parked vehicle, which in turn banged into another car. No one hurt but spent half a day dealing with "excited" Spaniards and non-comprehending hire car operators. Realised later this was the morning of April 1st. Car removed as undriveable and hire firm not willing to replace. Sorry John and Peter, but did arrange taxis. Found much needed solace in Rioja.

Next day: bad hangover but nothing worse.

Next day: John and I managed to hire another car from a different source. Felt like criminals.

Next few days quite boring and incident free, just some great rides.

Last day found great sea-front restaurant, three courses for 8 Euros, with good food and a free bottle of wine each. Managed two and one removed unopened. Noticed that breakfast was from 3 Euros and again included a free bottle of wine! Why do you find these places on the last day?

End of the last day: John lost/had stolen a very nice and expensive pair of cycling sunglasses – go on add them to the insurance claim.

Postscript: despite the above had a great holiday. John and Pete got in just over 400 quality miles and I must have done about 300. Great scenery and riding and 39 x 23 was fine – got up everything. Would I go again? – Yes but not sure if I will be asked!

Story: Keith Wilkinson Photos: Peter Devine

WELCOME TO OUR NEW LIFE MEMBER

At the club dinner in February founder and life member Bob Richardson, on behalf of the club, bestowed life membership on retiring club president Jim Boydell for his outstanding services to the club.

Many readers of this magazine will be aware that Jim has been the editor for several years, refining it until it is now one of, if not the finest cycling club magazine in the country. You may also know that he has run the club mid-week 10's as part of his role as club time-trial secretary for about ten years but his contribution to the club and the sport go well beyond even these major efforts.

For several years Jim has been a member of the Manchester and District Committee of the Road Time-Trials Council and he is a member of the Manchester and District Time Trial Association. With the demise of the last club organised 100 mile time-trial the MDTTA at Jim's suggestion decided to run a 100 and Jim has promoted it ever since a major promotion requiring over 50 marshals and numerous hours spent course planning.

It is not only as an organiser that Jim has made his name in the club. A glance at the club handbook will reveal just some of his time-trial achievements dating from the early 1960's. His most outstanding competitive rides are probably his 5th place in the British Best-All-Rounder competition in 1965 and his winning ride of 263 miles in the Manchester Wheelers 12 hour in the same year.

He has been an inspiration to many young riders; I know he took me under his wing when I started racing and encouraged me all the way. Life membership is a fitting recognition to Jim for his outstanding contribution to the club and the sport.

Keith Stacey

CLUB ROAD RACE— SUNDAY AUGUST 10th

As part of the new North West League, Richard Potter will be promoting a road race on the club's behalf and is looking for volunteer marshals and catering staff. Please pencil the date in your diaries and contact Richard for details and with offers of help on **0161 928 8004**.

First Sunday In March

Long before I became a member of the club the first Sunday in March signalled the end of the winter training rides and the first competitive event. In those days there were no half-day Sunday runs, the racing lads would do over 100 miles each Sunday and a series of five or six "thrashes" would be held in January and February to destinations like Lancaster, St Asaph, Holt, and Ashbourne. These were training rides with a difference, it was every man for himself and no waiting for anyone. The series of thrashes always ended on the first Sunday in March with the Llangollen thrash and for this ride the first rider to reach the town would win the Llangollen trophy. Over the years it has perhaps become the most sought after crown in the racing calendar.

So to this years thrash. Pretty wide open with no clear favourite. Few members had expressed a clear intention of taking part so it was interesting to see who would turn up on the morning. During the week previously the weather forecast for Sunday had got steadily better although a few torrential downpours on Saturday afternoon were a bit of a worry. On the day, the sun was shining although a little cold first thing. Not to worry we would soon warm up! At Rackhams riders started to arrive. It was interesting to note the wide variety of machinery. Robin Haigh on his carbon Trek with four spoke wheels that were to give us some cause for concern as they creaked and groaned. Steve Davies on his ultra-light TCR with matching black wheels with yellow spokes, Tim Seddon on his Fort training bike (although pretty stripped for action), Keith Bailey on his Fort but stripped of mudguards whilst son Mark was on his Record equipped carbon Terry Dolan. Roy Myers on his Trek, Dan Mathers had forgotten what day it was and arrived on his mudguard equipped training bike complete with several pounds of caked mud, Ian Udall was on his race bike and I was on my Colnago. Colin Levy and Mike Little were on their training bikes but admitted they were not staying out all day.

Now for the excuses! Dan had spent a few days prior in the Scottish islands and had covered only a few social miles with his girlfriend. Mark Bailey was contemplating his three month trip to China later in March and even on the morning

was undecided about coming. Robin had been at work all night (but admitted he had had a good nights sleep!) Tim and Steve Davies had ridden a "10" the day before, Tim winning and beating Steve by one second. Steve (an engineer with Transco) really did have the best excuse because he had been on-call all night and had to attend to an emergency at 2 am when a pensioner called to say that her gas pilot light had gone out. Tim had said on Friday that he wouldn't be coming but when I asked him on the morning he said he was! And so we set off.

The main road as far as the M6 was very busy as football fans headed south for the League cup-final but it eased off afterwards, The first break came at the King Street roundabout when Tim slipped through before the rest of us were stopped by turning cars; it was short lived and we were soon back together, riding in twos and changing every few minutes. Despite the headwind we were clocking about 18's on the flat and it felt hard on the front. Already Roy was hanging about the back but everyone else was taking a turn. Until Kelsall. Robin wound it up and Keith B responded, soon we were up to 40 mph so the elastic started to s-t-r-e-t-c-h --- and snapped. Gone were Colin and Mike, but where was Tim? nobody saw him go. So the thrash was really underway. Up to Chester and onto the by-pass, single file now taking it in short turns at the front. The speed now at times up to 27 on the flat. At first everyone was sharing the turns although when Roy came through he went so fast we had to call him back. Left off the by-pass and left again onto the old road which would take us into Wales and up the dreaded climb of Marford, scene of many a decisive move in the past.

And so it was to be today. Steve set an early pace but the youthful agility and 'souplesse' of Mark soon took over as the speed didn't drop even though the road went up. Robin came by, wheels creaking, but whereas in previous years he would have launched an attack he sat down and climbed at a steady pace. Too steady though for Ian, Dan and Roy as they all lost contact. On the flat again and to the enormous traffic light controlled roundabout that would take us onto the Wrexham by-pass.

Looking around me I could tell that the pace and wind were affecting all of us. Steve's elbows were out (a sure sign of fatigue), Keith B was puffing a bit and Robin was certainly not as sharp as he has been in the past. Only Mark looked comfortable.

The wind was at times quite fierce but again the speed was between 21 and 27 mph so I decided to flex my muscles and although going through fast on three occasions, only Keith Bailey lost contact. We then passed Simon Williams who had set off alone.

Off the by-pass and now less than five miles to go. The first of the two short sharp climbs that follow are a real test after the speed of the by-pass, as the change of pace and rhythm can be hard to cope with; and so it was. I slipped off, but only by a few yards, Mark touched Robins back wheel and did well to stay upright, down the hill and a policeman controlling the road works waved us through, the pace picking up again. But then the cat and mouse game began. Robin and Mark, knowing they were the best sprinters, were loath to go to the front and Steve found himself there on the downhill run towards the finish. As we rounded the last bend Johnny P could be seen standing at the '30' sign (the Llangollen sign having been stolen so many times). Steve knew his only chance would be a long one, so off he went. The line out was Steve, Mark, Robin and me. I knew I could get past Steve and was feeling pretty good. Sure enough Steve paid for his efforts as we steamed past him, Robin passed Mark and was doing a Chipppo, I was gaining fast from the best position and hauled in Mark but couldn't stop Robin from taking his nineteenth Llangollen win. Mark said he cramped up. At the speed I was going I might even have caught Robin if the finish had been another fifty yards away (dream on!). 54 miles in 2hours 33minutes. Not a record but pretty fast against the wind.

We joined the half-and-a-bit section (who had set off at 8-30) at the café and were eventually joined by Ian, Dan and Simon but no sign of Roy. (not the first time we have lost him!). The Audax section arrived shortly before we were about to leave and we took over the café completely.

The ride home over the Horseshoe Pass and via Chester with a great tail wind gave us an average speed for the round trip of 114 miles of 19.6

mph. Another good day and we would all have a tale to tell. **Story by Keith Stacey**

Despite all the effort there was still energy left for the usual Seamons banter.....

Question to Keith Bailey- "Which sign do you go for, Keith?" Reply "I don't know, I'm never there." Roy Myers giving 'H's' view on the SIS products -"He says you've got to take it all with a pinch of salt." Spontaneous response from all round the table "But not too much."

KEEN ON THE WEB?

Here are some cycling related sites that might interest you... www.mbwailes.com
www.thepenninebridleway.co.uk
www.independent.co.uk/50best/
www.actifvacations.com

AUGUST MAGAZINE

The hawk-eyed will have spotted that the runs lists go through to the end of August. Holidays means that the next issue will necessarily be delayed, unless..... There is someone out there who would like to have a go at producing an edition of the magazine or even a newsletter to fill the gap. The editor of the Northern Wheel will certainly be hoping for some contribution from the club so if you're interested please contact me in the first instance.



Fancy the Alps? See page 19....

Track to the Top

Leaving school at 14 I went to work in Central Manchester in the printing trade and, living in Higher Openshaw, I cycled to work every day. This got me interested in cycling so I decided to join a club, the Clarion C.C. (does it exist today?) The Clarion had its origins in the Trade Union movement and interestingly owned a Clubhouse and a plot of land at Oversley Ford on the Wilmslow road. The Valley Lodge Complex (now called The Moat House) is situated exactly on the site of the old Clubhouse. How the Clarion came to own this clubhouse and plot of land would make an interesting story. It had a full time steward, bar and snooker tables and all our club runs finished here even though we still had quite a way to go to get home. It didn't seem so far in those days. How the Clubhouse came to be sold I have no idea, but if the Clarion owned it today they would probably be the richest cycling club in the UK.

My first racing was in 1946 on the Wades Green course near Warrington where my first 25 was done in 1 hr 12 min, a respectable time but not quite as good as I hoped for. I began racing in earnest in 1947, my first outing of the season being a 25 mile TT with a not very spectacular time of 1 hr 23 mins (must have been windy)! But later on in the season on the East Lancs Road I managed to a 1 hr 4 min which was a big improvement. Some of the big name winners of the events I rode in were Reuben Firth, Cyril Cartwright, and Ken Hartley.

On to 1948 and an early season 72" Medium Gear event in which I clocked a 1h 3m 42s which made me 2nd fastest after Cyril Cartwright. Cyril did a 1 hr 1 min and in fact I got down to a 1 hr 2 min later in the season - my fastest for that year. To modern racing cyclists these times will seem slow but these were very fast times when the National Record for '25' was around the 59 minute mark. Up to this point I hadn't done any track racing at all and it was at this time I was drafted in the forces for my National Service, which did change my life somewhat.

Stationed at RAF Compton Bassett in Wiltshire near Chippenham, I soon got my bike and joined the local cycling club, the Chippenham Wheelers, where I rode in assorted 25's and grass track meetings with varying success. I got my first taste of real Track Racing on Herne Hill where the RAF held their National Championships. The pursuit was held on a time trial basis which I duly won to give me my first big Championship and it also showed my strength lay in the shorter distance events and not in long time trials.

By 1950 I was out of the forces and back to earning a living and getting adjusted to civilian life. This is when I must have joined the Seamons although I have no records of this period other than memory. My family had moved to Hale so I joined the local club as it was nearer to home and seemed more a more progressive club than the Clarion.

It was at this time I started racing at Fallowfield, the appeal of which was twofold; one was the racing and two, the prizes. They had a points system, 3 pts for win 2 for second and 1 for third and at the end of the season these points were totaled up and, depending on how much had been taken at the gate, they were given a value. Riders were then paid out on this valuation, which stretched the definition of 'amateur' a bit but certainly had a lot of appeal to me - and many of the other performers who like myself were working class lads and weren't averse to winning the odd bob. In those days the track was surfaced with red shale and cycling was quite a popular spectator sport with good crowds at all the Tuesday night events, including a couple of bookies. The track had a banking of 30 degrees and racing could take place rain or shine. When it was resurfaced with a 45 degree banking the crowds started going down. With new tar macadam surface and 45 degree banking if it rained there was no performance.

This was also the heyday of Reg Harris. After the war in the fifties British Sport was in the doldrums and we couldn't produce any winners in

sport at all. Reg without doubt was the outstanding British sportsman of that era. He was probably the first truly professional British cyclist who could hold his own with anybody in the world and would draw crowds whenever he appeared. He was certainly something to see; as backmarker in the handicap sprint, a one lap race, he gave half a lap away to the slowest rider and would still win by a good margin.

My own favourite event was the motor-pace racing using five ordinary motor bikes with a specially adapted roller on the back. The bike had enormously high gears and riders started in single file with somebody pushing you along until you had enough speed to pick up your allocated motorbike. Once you had latched onto your pacer you were off and soon picked up speed. It made for exciting and spectacular racing and I excelled at this event, collecting many points.



Don Smith in hot pursuit....

I have no records from 1949 until I finished so I am relying on memory for this next part of the story. One of the highlights of the year was the Manchester Wheelers annual open meeting to which International stars came from all over Europe for this one day event. The highlight of this was the last race of the day the Murrati Gold cup, a five mile scratch event by invitation only. With about 6 laps to go 3 men broke away from the field, a Belgian called Raphael Glorioux, myself and a third person who was quickly dropped. I managed to hang on to Glorioux until the final 500 metres at which point he broke away and won the race with me completely exhausted in second place just ahead of bunched field. This brought me to the attention of the Olympic selectors and started me on the Olympic trail.

The selection trials were held at various tracks around the country, Fallowfield, Herne Hill and Birmingham, with many cyclists doing their best to make it and many big names falling by the wayside. I decided that the way to make it further through the selection was simple; when the front man had done his turn at the front and it was my turn to go through, I would put on a burst of speed and if that man made the end of the bunch he was good enough to go forward. If he didn't then his trial was over and the selectors job was done for them. It may seem hard and not very sporting but I can't believe it's much different to-day. It's called the survival of the fittest and it's what top class competition has always been about.

So, after all these trials, the final one being at Herne Hill, I was told that I hadn't made it into the final selection. I was very upset as I knew there were people who had been selected who were not as good as me. There was a big outcry in the cycling press about the final selection because one of the main selectors was a member of the East Midland Clarion and it was felt too much bias had been given to East Mid Clarion people. Two or three weeks later, without anybody getting in touch with me, the team was announced in the Evening News and, miracle of miracles, I had been put back in the team. They had dropped not an East Midland Clarion rider but the mighty Cyril Cartright, ex-world individual pursuit finalist of 1949. To be fair to Cyril he wasn't any faster than me over the distance in question, but there were two people included in the team of six who were not as fast as either of us. So Cyril's bad luck was my good luck. Reading

The Squirrel

an article a couple of years back in a cycling magazine which Cyril wrote, it still rankles with him after all these years. Even he couldn't throw any light on what made the selectors change their minds. Cyril was certainly not the sixth slowest of that team by a long way.

Cyril Cartwright was in a way my hero, in that when I was in the forces doing my national service, Cyril had rheumatic fever and was told he would never cycle again. He proved the doctors wrong and fought back not only to start cycling again but to become the first Briton to reach the final of the World Pursuit Championship. His was an inspirational achievement to myself and many other cyclists of that era.

So having made it, the big adventure began. Never having been abroad in my life, foreign trips were now in the offing. First though there was to be a trip to meet the Queen at Buckingham Palace. I wasn't a royalist then and I am certainly not now but my mother insisted that I went and it was an interesting experience. There then followed a week's intensive training with the team at Cannock. This proved to be not a good thing for me as I was always a very hard worker compared with other members of the team who needed this training. I found that once the season started I did so much racing that rest was more important than training and my showing was not very good in consequence. The two top people, Alan Newton and Don Burgess, were both very talented cyclists but never trained very hard so they got real benefits and Alan went on to get a place in World Individual Pursuit Championship.

By the end of the week's training I was pretty exhausted but by the time we got to Finland for the 1952 Olympics I had recuperated and did a 1500 metre time trial faster than our selected man. The damage was done however and the problem was compounded by another situation that developed. The original team manager had resigned because the governing body would not insure him for accidental death whilst on trips, so we had a new man, a brilliant time trialist called George Fleming, who was an awful manager which probably showed in the results.

Returning from Helsinki I did change clubs and joined the Manchester Wheelers as the Seamons was mainly a road racing club and I wanted to more track work and the opportunities

it offered. One of my trips was to Denmark where they had a very good 45 degree tracks. Denmark was a sporting revelation to me with four superbly equipped tracks dotted about the country and very nice changing rooms, miles ahead of anything in the UK. There I did a 24 hour race on a track with my partner Bill Walsh. This was run in Madison style like the professional six-day events but the riders were all amateurs and there were periods when the race was neutralised. This was the last big event I rode in as by this time I had started a business making cycle jerseys.

I had decided that I was never going to make enough money in cycling or by working in the printing trade as a compositor, so I had the not very original idea of manufacturing cycling jerseys. Not knowing anything about the clothing business I had to find cloth and a manufacturer to make my products, this I did and Silkin Cyclewear was born, working from home to start with and then from premises in Sale. 1953 was not too far from the end of the war and even then this country had not recovered from the austerity of the war years so there was a market just waiting and Silkin took off. From cycling jerseys, shorts, track suits, on to men's casual jackets and a change of name to 'ALDON' (Donald, get it?)

Aldon ended up employing 300 people turning out 250,000 garments a year from three factories and selling to all the big names on the high street until I sold out in 1985. That however is another story. I have to say that after 1953 I did not ride a bike in competition again but I did ride to keep myself fit. I firmly believe that cycling is a wonderful sport for young and old and does not put strain on the joints like many other sports and even now in my early seventies, I can still go skiing.

Anybody who would like to contact me, my e.mail address is donald_smith0@talk21.com

BC MARSHALS

All affiliated clubs in the North West region of British Cycling are expected to provide marshals for prestige events. This year we have been asked for volunteers on two dates: Sunday June 1st (N/W Champs) and Sunday Aug 31st for the Tour of the Peak. Offers of help to Robin Haigh.

Meet your Clubmates

It's quite possible that most members have never met our second clubmate but he's been a loyal member of the club for many years and is always ready to offer his assistance at club functions when called upon. A mid-week ride to Summertrees is your best chance of a meeting as he is a regular at Barbara Bates' tearooms on his frequent rides in the area. Living in Warrington makes it that much more difficult to join clubruns but if they end up in his 'patch' then he will inevitably turn up to meet the group. Although he was never really involved in racing he has always been a hard-riding tourist and gobbles the miles up relentlessly whether locally or away on his solo touring jaunts. If your wheels do cross then stop and have a chat with affable **Clive Rock**.....

When and where were you born? 16th April 1933 in Leigh, Lancs

When did you start cycling and what was your first club? Late 1949 with the Warrington RC

What is your favourite touring area? Delamere and Shropshire.

What is your favourite meal? Any type of pasta.

What were you like at school? Average. I actually enjoyed myself.

What kind of books do you read? History, aircraft, war and adventure, detective stories.

What kind of music do you enjoy? Ballads, soul and classics.

And your favourite type of TV programmes? Documentaries, detective and sport

Which newspaper do you read? Daily Mirror and the Independent. Plus Cycling Weekly.

What's your ideal holiday destination? Torquay, Isle of Wight.

Do you have any hobbies? Reading, crosswords and DIY.

Who would play you in a film of your life? Clint Eastwood, naturally.

What is your greatest fear? Anything happening to my family.

How would you describe yourself in a lonely hearts ad? Tall, debonair liar.

What is your favourite training ride? Acton Bridge, Delamere, Summertrees, Oulton Park, Preston Brook, Daresbury.

What is your most unpleasant characteristic? None, perfect (but don't check with my wife)

Which characteristic do you most dislike in others? Know-it-all bigmouths.

Who would you most like to have met and why? Bernard Hinault. A strong determined character. A fighter.

What was your most embarrassing moment? Gracefully walking out of my daughter's front door for our granddaughter's christening party - and straight down a three foot deep hole for a water pipe.

Four words to describe yourself? Grey haired cycling fanatic.



Campaigning Issues

The full page report, "Call This *Justice?*" which appeared in *Cycling Weekly* on 1st February, 2003, highlighting the deaths of four cyclists and the lenient sentencing of the killer drivers responsible, makes very disturbing reading. Many readers will no doubt be troubled by it, but there will be those, like myself, having suffered life-threatening injuries, and also those who have lost family members or close friends due to driver error, who will be affected even more so. I know of some who have been so badly affected by their experiences they have consequently been forced, or have chosen to give up cycling altogether.

On Sunday, 29 September, 1991, I almost lost my life when I was hit on the back of the head by a metal pole protruding from the side of a passing wagon. I had just finished a road race and pulled into a lay-by only yards from the finish to talk with my son. There were plenty of witnesses including two police officers. The driver of the wagon only stopped when the police caught up with him a mile or so down the road. The driver was fined £100 and received three penalty points for driving with insecure parts. End of story for him ... he did not even turn up at court. And the number of times I have witnessed wagons in a similar life threatening condition since has been frightening.

For me, however, the story continued and four years later, still suffering from the effects of my injuries, I telephoned the victim's helpline of RoadPeace, the national charity for road traffic victims. I subsequently became a member to support their cause campaigning for safer roads for everyone and also justice for road traffic victims. In December, 1996, I wrote to *Cycling Weekly* to express my heartfelt concerns at the injustice when London cyclist, Thomas Gedrich, was killed by a taxi driver who deliberately drove into him. His killer was only sentenced to four and a half years' imprisonment. With this letter I had hoped to influence some sort of action by suggesting that everyone should protest to their MP and draw attention to the injustices and criminal standard of driving on our roads. I think the only thing I succeeded in doing was winning a saddle for letter of the week.

Now here we are six years on and looking at pretty much the same situation. The difference being that we are looking at four deaths and *Cycling Weekly* has devoted a full page highlighting the injustice. But what I see as much worse than these four deaths is that in the six years since Thomas Gedrich was killed, over a thousand other cyclists have been killed and the majority will have been under similar undignified and unjust circumstances. At worst their killer going totally unpunished and at best a seven-year prison sentence for a drunk driver, three times over the limit, for killing three cyclists and leaving seven children fatherless. Until we, as cyclists, do something more, the situation will only get worse and any one of us could be next.

I for one do not feel at all comfortable, having fought my way back from the brink and committing all my efforts to recovery, then to be constantly under threat from impatient, disrespectful and discourteous drivers who seem to do anything and everything other than concentrate on safe driving. And this is just not when I'm cycling, but even when I'm driving. It would seem that driving at legal speeds attracts just as much intolerance and intimidation as when riding a bike. I know from my own circumstances prior to my accident that the majority of cyclists just want to ride their bikes and are prepared to put up with the situation as other commitments don't allow for much more. But if we want a better deal for cycling all round I think the time has come... past, in fact... when we have to stand up and be counted. My own attempts to get a better deal for cycling have amounted to writing letters on behalf of RoadPeace to try and influence a change from the uncaring, inconsiderate "Jeremy Clarkson" style of car culture, to one more responsible. However, I would not expect anyone to do the same, for I do not enjoy it one bit. As a result of my experience I am driven to some extent by fear, because I believe that I'm fighting for survival.

I also race under the name of RoadPeace to try and promote their existence. With all due respect to other campaigning groups, RoadPeace probably has the greatest potential to get safer roads and justice for victims in that they have a RoadPeace Parliamentary Group committed to sup-

porting their efforts. This is currently made up of eighty MPs, six Lords and one MEP. With such a force to support us, I believe that the sport and pastime of cycling could do itself a power of good by unreservedly supporting RoadPeace. We need RoadPeace and it needs us. For any cyclist who wants to help the cause but has little or no time to spare, they can become a member of the charity with nothing more than a donation which they can afford. And if anyone can persuade their MP to join the parliamentary group, then all the better. I succeeded with my own MP, Ivan Lewis, and if anyone needs help and advice to try help persuade their own MP, I will be only too glad to help.

Six years ago, I said cycling is worth fighting for and fight for it we must. There is so much evidence to support us; health, environmental, economical transport, etc., etc. If cycling were awarded the respect and recognition it deserves it has so much more to offer today's troubled society than all the expensive anti-social pastimes which are so vigorously promoted. I am convinced that the most viable way for cyclists to have any chance of securing a fair deal in our car-orientated society is through RoadPeace. I hope readers will agree with me and give RoadPeace their support

I can be contacted at 1 Ashcombe Drive, Radcliffe, M26 3NL. Tel. 0161-280 6055.

Yours sincerely, Allan Ramsay

Cycling in Politics

The Club's activities may seem divorced from politics – after all we want to cycle away from that. As ever, however, the real world is never far away - transport policy trends will affect our activities. Immediately, we all notice the impact of increasing Sunday traffic levels on our runs.

Things should be going cycling's way: the National Cycling Strategy (NCS) target of 8% of trips to be taken by cycle by 2012, set by Steve Norris as transport minister in 1996, was adopted by the incoming Labour Government in 1997. The new Govt's 10-year transport plan and new 5-year based Local Transport Plan system embraced transport integration and cycling within it. However, actual results are disappointing – Government has rowed back from integrated transport objectives, including targets to reduce reliance on cars.

It has been conceded that the NCS target will **not** be hit – cycling is flat-lining in most places, including where considerable cycling investment has taken place. The NCS's 'last chance saloon' is the English Regional Cycling Task Force, answerable to the National Cycling Strategy Board chaired by Steve Norris and charged with cajoling local authorities into action.

Locally this is opposed by the weight of priorities facing councils with stretched resources. Social Services and Education will always come before bike lanes. Highway priorities are distorted by the need to manage peak time congestion and relieve pressure on communities oppressed by traffic. Cycling has become a marginalized transport mode used by a minority of the electorate. Arguments that levels of cycling can increase in the medium term cut little ice.

Nationally transport policy had been dominated by growing congestion, fuel protests and Rail-track's collapse. The non-driving Steven Byers was replaced as Transport supremo by the pragmatic fixer, Alistair Darling. Since taking office Darling has diluted a number of integrated transport commitments, including that to reduce traffic levels. Cycling has declined from a marginal but useful 'soft' transport mode, to being shunted off for Steve Norris (a Conservative politician it should be remembered) to deal with.

Through all of this a number of road 'improvements' have been announced. It appears likely that the elements of the so-called Multi Modal Studies that will be funded will be principally road-based – although Trafford will benefit from Quality Bus Corridors under the South East Manchester Multi Modal Study (SEMMMS). Road improvements are unlikely to benefit club cycling: single carriageways are dualled, traffic lights and roundabouts are introduced – run routes and time trialling courses are lost.

Cycling's case needs to be made forcibly if it is to thrive. Requiring little extra infrastructure it offers value for money. Increasing cycling levels to 5% of trips would reduce congestion significantly. Club cycling offers a way to combat health problems, particularly obesity, heart disease and diabetes. The Club's campaigning role will be increasingly important.

David Simper



TESTING TIMES

This season was always going to be a bit of an unknown quantity having lost so many of our 25mph plus riders over the last couple of seasons. Robin Haigh (getting married, moving house), Keith Bailey taking time out (though still as fit as ever), Mark Bailey (A-levels then off to China), John Woodhouse (moving house), Dave Fox (not seen since last season then turning up on a start sheet in Warrington RC colours), Chris Siepen (again to the Warrington but he did at least tell us) and Richard Williams (never fully getting over his eye operations). So how would the small band of stalwarts remaining manage?

As it turned out, very well thank you! With team wins coming almost every week, some personal best rides and a new club record, our short distance riders have already done us proud – and it's still only April. So, numbers may be down (though we still managed nine entrants for the M&DTTA '25') but the quality is still high with Steve Davis, Tim Seddon and Paul McAllister scrapping it out for top dog, the advantage moving from one to the other. Let's start at the very beginning, in early March and the M&D '10's.....

March 1st M&DTTA '10'

The following day's Llangollen didn't deter a handful of members taking part in this season opener. Tim Seddon came out on top - just. His 23.19 was good enough to take 1st place outright but with Steve Davis breathing down his neck in 23.20 there will be no room to relax. Paul McAllister was not far behind in 5th place with his 23.37 and the trio took the team award with ease. In the 72" medium gear event Gareth Blease finished in 27.55, Malc McAllister 30.00

Nova CC 2-up '25' March 8th

'It's a tradition' said Steve Davis on the Friday night as he revealed he would be riding with Dave Bates in a Partington pairing. Eyebrows were raised. Dave has yet to get near top form and Steve is flying. So it proved, with Dave barely surviving the first few miles. Steve carried on to finish just outside the hour. Our other pairing of Tim Seddon and Paul McAllister didn't fare much better with Tim puncturing and the Paul going on to record a long 59.

M&DTTA '10' March 15th

Another great set of performances by the lads saw Tim again as first Seamons rider home in 22.53 for 4th place. Steve had to settle for 5th with his 23.03 but with Paul not far behind in 23.30, the club again took the team award. Roy Myers finished his first event of '03 in 27.02

M&DTTA '10' March 22nd

The 3rd and final event of the series saw Tim Seddon back up to 2nd place and an improvement to 22.34. Steve Davis, again one place behind closed up with his 22.36 and Paul Mc. again completed the 1st team award with his 23.09. Dave Bates (24.26), Ian Udall in his first race for the club (25.37), Roy Myers (25.47), Gareth Blease (26.25) and Dave Attwell (30.04) completed an excellent turnout

Kiverton Park '10' March 29th

You've got to travel to the other end of the M62 for this one but the drive is often rewarded with super-fast times. Paul McAllister is a regular on here, living on the north side of Manchester, and



Tim was in fine early form.

it finally paid off with a new Club record in 20.57. Something tells me that this won't last the year with the competition being so strong—but which of the three will break it?

Merseyside Ladies '10' March 30th

Peter Devereux rode his first of the season, finishing with a promising 25.51 whilst Dave Attwell rode his fastest in 28.38.

South Lancs RC Charity '10' April 5th

It had to happen eventually and for the first time Steve Davis got the better of Tim Seddon this season. Steve's 22.30 saw him take 3rd and Tim's 22.34 took 4th. Paul was back to Cheshire times with his 23.08 for third counter. Ian Udall improved to 25.07, just keeping Roy Myers (25.09) at bay. Dave Attwell (28.41) and Nigel Harrop (28.57) completed for the club.

Withington Whs Open '25' April 6th

Older members will remember this as the 'Novices' but it's now several events in one. In the open event section Tim Seddon took 2nd place with his 59.02 and backed up by Roy Myers (1.04.22) and Gareth Blease (1.06.33) took the team award.

West Cheshire '25' April 6th

Same day but over on the 'D' course and the times were coming down. Steve Davis recorded the year's fastest in 56.50 but Paul McAllister wasn't too far away with 57.23. Backed up by Dave Bates in 59.55 gave us the fastest club team time of the year but it wasn't good enough for top spot.

Macclesfield Whs '25' April 12th

You don't expect many personal bests in April and certainly not on the J2/9. Steamin' Davis is re-writing the rules at the moment and is running into a rich vein of form. His 55.38 for 2nd place was an exceptional ride and was over two minutes too good for our other riders. Paul (57.46) moved above Tim (57.47) by the closest of margins for 6th and 7th places and if there had been a team award would have taken it with ease. Dave Bates had mechanical trouble and slowed to 1.01.35 but Roy Myers improved to 1.02.25. Alex Young faced the timekeeper for the first time and finished with a creditable 1.08.56.

Long Eaton Paragon '25' April 13th.

A trip down to Uttoxeter and the A25 course for both Steve and Tim saw both improve marginally

on the previous day's times. For Steve it was another PB in 55.22 which was good enough for 3rd place. Tim was two minutes back in 57.18. The fact that the organiser, unbelievably, placed Steve only a minute behind Tim on the sheet did wonders for Steve's incentive but little for Tim's.

City RC (Hull) '10' April 18th

Would it be real 'Good Friday' for the hopefuls who travelled over to the famously quick V178? Paul McAllister had already set a new record in 20.57 only 3 weeks before so anything was possible. The day didn't live up to expectations however, despite providing season's fastest for Steve Davis in 21.19 and Tim Seddon in 21.31. Paul's 21.50 was almost a minute outside his previous ride on the course but the three of them set a new club team record in 1.04.40.

Mid Shropshire Whs '25' April 19th

Another tough day saw Steve slip back to 59.18, his slowest for some time. Tim wouldn't be happy outside the hour but he did close up on Steve in 1.00.35.

Weaver Valley '25' April 21st

This traditional Easter Monday event is held on the un-loved J4/5 course and the tough, miserable day didn't endear it to the entrants. Nothing much slows down Steve at the moment and his 56.55 was good enough for 3rd place. Tim just scraped inside in 59.57, Dave Bates slowed to 1.02.24, Roy Myers 1.04.20 and Alex Young 1.11.40

M&DTTA '25' April 26th

Tim Seddon's recent performances haven't sparkled like those in March and the suspicion is a viral infection. His decision to take a short rest might be wise but it almost certainly cost us the M&DTTA team championship award. Steve Davis again rode strongly and his 55.37 was only bettered by the rampant Duk's rider Jimmy Froggatt's 55.22. Paul Mc's 57.26 was almost his season's best and Dave Bates (1.00.35) saw him move in the right direction. Roy Myers (1.01.58) rode his fastest of the year as did Ian Udall in 1.03.39. Alex Young (1.09.16), Malc McAllister (1.11.56) and Dave Attwell (1.14.24) completed the club turnout.

Sheffield Phoenix '25' April 27th

There's just no stopping Steve Davis at the moment and a trip across the Pennines gave him another personal best with 55.12 for 4th place.

CLUB RUNS

DATE	HALF-DAY	TOURING SECTION
May 4th	Delamere	Audlem
11th	Malkin's Bank*	Paddock Farm*
18th	Tattenhall	Tattenhall
25th	Summertrees	Miller's Dale
Jun 1st	Cat & Fiddle	Whitmore
8th	Kingsley	Holmfirth
15th	Meerbrook	Burwardsley**
22nd	Poole Marina	Buxton***
29th	Beeston	Southport
Jul 6th	Marton****	Hathersage
13th	Malkin's Bank	100 miles in 8 hours
20th	Tattenhall	The Nineteen Gates
27th	Hope	Stone
Aug 3rd	Paddock	Ipstones
10th	Byley Hall*****	Tideswell
17th	Poole Marina	Whitchurch
24th	Kingsley	Parkgate
31st	Buxton	Hartington

***May 10th** Robin's Stag weekend to coincide with the trip to the Engine & Tender, Broome, nr Craven Arms. Contact Keith Wilkinson for details.

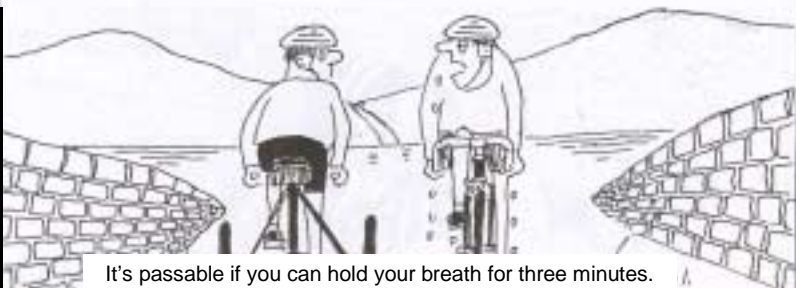
** **CTC Cycle Week Ride.** There will also be a ride down the Trans Pennine Trail on Saturday, 14th.

*** **York Rally Weekend.** There will a ride out to York on the Friday and back on the Sunday. Contact Keith Wilkinson for details.

******M&DTTA '100'** includes club championship. Volunteer marshals gratefully received.

***** **CLUB ROAD RACE** based on the Byley circuit. Marshalling duties for all!!

LAST LAUGH



It's passable if you can hold your breath for three minutes.