

THE SQUIRREL

St Mary's
RYE.



The CROSS
ALDRISTON.



CROWBOROUGH
HEATH

SEPTEMBER 2004

EDITORIAL

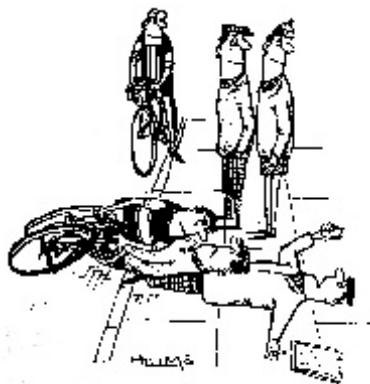
Imagine you're driving along in your car and the steering fails causing you to crash. You are badly injured and the car is damaged. You then find out that this has happened to several of your friends who have the same car and it has happened in other parts of the country. Do you think that any car manufacturer would be allowed to get away with it? Would the Consumers' Association and the media be kicking up a fuss. You bet. So why is it that a bicycle component manufacturer can get away with it. You'll find the details inside along with a bit of advice. Anyone for a class action?

2005; Forty years on since Keith Stacey won the BBAR. Thirty five since I last promoted a National Championship. Well Keith and I are back in harness and next year we are promoting the National Championship '10' series for Juniors, Ladies and Men. We'll need a lot of help and the commitment of club members and I'm sure we'll get it. Read all about what promises to be a fantastic weekend inside.

It's now more than ten years since I took over the magazine and I've really enjoyed the involvement in all aspects of club life that are necessary to reflect our many activities. However I now find other demands on my time and there will inevitably be less available for the club. This therefore is the last issue that I will produce for the foreseeable future and I've tried to include all events up to Christmas. So, that's three months to see if anybody else wants to try their hand at a magazine or a news-sheet. I hope there is as it would be sad to see The Squirrel just curl up and die. What any potential editor will inherit is a great pool of contributors, to whom I offer my sincere thanks for their efforts over the years, and access to some of the many and varied activities that provide the source material. It's all there just below the surface and just needs a good miner to dig it out.

Inside this Issue

Page 3	All over the Baltics.....	John Mercer
Page 5	Meet Your Clubmate.....	Sián Grainger
Pages 6/22/23/24.....	All your snippets	
Page 7	Tourist Trophy 2004.....	Dave Barker
Page 7	President's Piece.....	Carole Pardoe
Page 8	Un Tampon, s'il vous plait...	Tim Mitchell
Page 10	Letters	
Page 12	Three Cols.....	Dave Matthews
Page 14	Ou est Colmar?.....	Jim Boydell
Page 16	La Voie Vert.....	Jim Boydell
Page 18	Wicklow 200.....	Dave Matthews
Page 20	Alpe D'Huez 2004.....	Jim Boydell
Page 21	Shorts and Longs.....	John Carberry
Page 26	2 wheels aren't enough....	Carole Pardoe
Page 29	Fun Ten.....	Jim Boydell
Page 30	A Bit over the Top.....	Dave Matthews
Page 33	Testing Times.....	Jim Boydell
Page 36	All the Clubbuns until January	



5...4...3...2...1...Go

Cover: East Sussex Haunts by Frank Patterson.

'The Squirrel' is the magazine of the Seamons Cycling Club. Editor—Jim Boydell, 44Winchester Drive, Stockport, SK4 2NU. ☎ 0161 442 6370 or e-mail Jim.Boydell@btinternet.com. Club website at www.seamons.org.uk from where the on-line version of this magazine is available in PDF format.

All over the Baltics



A rural scene in Estonia

The Baltic countries are largely flat, with open fields, lakes and forests. The main roads are busy, the minor roads are dirt, with either ridges from grading or deep sand, and the intermediary roads often do not go where you want them to go. This can make the cycling some of the least interesting in Europe.

So why was the tour so enjoyable and successful? It's not just about the bike. First we had a very good group of 14 people aged between 40 and 73. We all got on and had a lot of fun. None of us knew just what to expect, and we enjoyed finding out together. Cycling through a country is one of the best ways of doing this. There were several highlights, fortunately occurring quite frequently. On the first few days we saw something of Baltic agriculture. There were no hedges or walls, and the cows were tethered to stakes. Women milked them by hand out in the fields in the evening. Although there were a few tractors, much of the work was still done by horses. We saw two horses pulling a hay cutting machine, and men with pitchforks loading a horse drawn hay wagon.

The tour was organised by a Lithuanian travel agency. They booked all the hotels, provided maps and details of the route, and arranged bus transfers over long dull sections. They also provided cycling guides for half the time. This made our CTC leader largely redundant- a position he seemed entirely happy with. The hotels were adequate. Rooms were good and en suite, but most of the hotels were built in the Soviet era, and it showed. The food we had at

lunchtime at roadside restaurants was generally better than that we had at the evening hotel, and service was often pitifully slow. It is difficult to change from Soviet to Western ways.

Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania, and we spent the first morning exploring the attractive medieval centre, before cycling to Trakai. This is a 14th century castle on an island in a lake, and was the major strongpoint in Lithuania. It was ruined, but was beautifully rebuilt in Soviet times, much to Khrushchev's annoyance. After visiting a fine Baroque monastery, we moved towards the Baltic's outstanding geological feature, the Curonian spit. This is a 60 mile long sand spit built up by wind and waves over the years, enclosing a large freshwater lagoon. We took a one and a half hour boat trip to the Southern end of the spit, and then cycled up the length of the spit to cross the river to the mainland by ferry. This was an excellent day, and several people took the chance to swim in the Baltic. Your correspondent remained dry.

After cycling along the coast to Lithuania's major beach resort, we turned inland, eventually reaching a hotel on a lake. This involved some miles along a dirt road, which was both ridged and sandy: very hard work. We cycled 67 miles this day, the most we did on any day of the tour. The hotel was hosting a Lithuanian Conservative Party Congress that weekend for about 2,000 people, most of whom were camping. Apart from the inevitable speeches, there was a lot of folk dancing in traditional dress. Although it was raining, some of our more lissom members

The Squirrel

joined in. Next morning we visited an abandoned Soviet underground nuclear missile base with a local woman guide. Dressed in military fatigues, she was rather reminiscent of the notorious Lyndie England, who terrorised the Iraqi prisoners. The visit was both frightening and fascinating. There were four underground steel lined silos, 22 metres deep and about 7 metres wide. The base was built by 10,000 Soviet soldiers, and was manned by soldiers from Asia so that they would not be reluctant to fire the missiles at European targets. It must have cost hundreds of millions of pounds to build.

Our next visit was to the Hill of Crosses, which was either inspiring or macabre, depending on your point of view. The hill is a little knoll just off the main road to Latvia. Locals had planted crosses on it to commemorate the fallen in a 19th century rebellion against Tsarist rule. Further crosses were planted in the 1950's in memory of Lithuanians deported or killed by the Russians. The Russians responded by bulldozing the site several times, but still more crosses were planted. Now the site bristles with crosses, planted about six inches apart, and with little crosses hanging from bigger ones. Most of the crosses have names on: I doubt if they did in Soviet times.

The next day we spent the day in Riga, the capital of Latvia and the largest Baltic city. It has a fine medieval centre surrounded by some impressive Art Nouveau buildings. But the most interesting visit was to the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. This goes into precise detail of just what happened in the occupation by the Soviets in 1940 after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact had divided Eastern Europe in to spheres of influence, the Nazi invasion of 1941, and then the second Soviet occupation from 1944-1945 to 1991. The details are horrific.

Latvia and Estonia were invaded in the early 13th century by crusading knights from Germany and Denmark. The Germans founded the cities and towns, provided the merchant class, and developed large estates. The locals had a very subservient status: a 19th century Riga German newspaper editor said "to be both Latvian and educated is an impossibility". The Germans were thrown out after the 1919, but some of the estates have been preserved. We visited a couple, and stayed in a converted distillery on a

third.

Finally, we reached Tallinn, the Estonian capital, after a ride along the north coast, with great views of the city over the bay. Tallinn is a very attractive medieval city, with the city walls largely intact. It was largely German, and was a member of the Hanseatic League, and was governed by Lubeck law. The Medieval Gothic Town Hall was outstanding.

Prices were variable but cheap. Beer was usually about £1 per pint, and we had soup and a main course for under £2. The beer was good in Lithuania, but got more and more dire as we moved north. It was the usual problem of a lack of hops. But the reputation of Estonian beer was partly saved by an Austrian designed brewpub in Tallinn. And I must recommend an orange-based liqueur called Vana Tallinn, which was both cheap and enjoyable.

The weather is the major topic in many cycling articles, and it was only after printing the first draft that I realised that I had not mentioned it at all. The Baltic countries are on the same latitude as Scotland, and although the winters are very cold, the summers are warm. Temperatures were similar to those of an English summer at 15 to 20 C, very pleasant for cycling. We had plenty of rain, as did most of Europe this summer. We cycled 500 miles in a fortnight, doing 50 miles most days.

I feel enormously grateful that I was born in England, and not in central Europe. Understandably, the Baltic countries have rushed to join the EEC, and plan to adopt the Euro within two years. The EEC was developed to reduce the possibility of European war. It is worth the occasional bureaucratic nonsense if it can do so.

PROPOSITIONS

Got anything to go on the agenda at the AGM? Make sure it gets to the secretary by **Friday, October 22nd**. The committee will have two proposals 1) All riders in evening club events to carry flashing rear LED lights. 2) Reverting to Constitution Rule 6 which insists all members are FULL members of CTC or BC and have to attend the club room to show the appropriate membership card.

Meet your Clubmates

Quiet and studious? Hmmm! Well, those who know our first clubmate of this issue maybe wouldn't think of those words first. Then again not many would be aware of her academic background and of her origins in rural Devon. After a number of years with the touring section, the racing bug seems to be burrowing in and this season saw her become the best attender at the club '10's' with 16 out of 17. Quite a feat knowing some of the weather we've had. Find out all about **Siân Grainger**....

When and Where were you born? December 25th, 1960 in Tavistock, Devon.

When did you start cycling and what was your first club? Wasn't allowed to ride a bike when I was a kid, so am making up for lost time with the Seamons—my first club.

What is your favourite touring area? Dartmoor, Peak District and Shropshire Highlands.

What is your favourite meal? Something vegetarian and wheat free!

What were you like at school? Quiet and studious enough to get good 'O' & 'A' levels. I came to Manchester to do post-graduate research after gaining my BSc at London university.

What kind of books do you read? Herman Hesse, Daphne Du Maurier and Mary Webb. Currently reading Kim Stanley Robinson.

What kind of music do you enjoy? Big fan of R.E.M., Neil Young, Led Zep, Radiohead and Pink Floyd.

And your favourite type of TV programmes? Decent comedy i.e. Red Dwarf, Blackadder, Father Ted and old black & white movies.

Which newspaper do you read? The Guardian.

What's your ideal holiday destination? Somewhere hot and hilly or cold and interesting such as the Arctic, Iceland.

Do you have any hobbies? Following the Mighty Green Army (Plymouth Argyle FC) and looking after my pet gerbil! Loud rock music and all things geological and geomorphological.

Who would play you in a film of your life? Sigourney Weaver in a Ripley v Aliens sort of way.

What is your greatest fear? At the moment - old men driving with a caravan in tow!! Still got the cuts and bruises. Seriously though, anything happening to my family.

How would you describe yourself in a Lonely Hearts ad? Ageing Rock Chick seeks good climber to ascend Stairway to Heaven.

What is your favourite training ride? Macclesfield to Buxton via the Cat & Fiddle. Failing that the turbo listening to good rock music.

What is your most unpleasant characteristic? Over-obsession with training, rock bands and football. Not to mention paranoia (allegedly).

Which characteristic do you most dislike in others? Intolerance.

Who would you most like to have met and why? would loved to have coffee with Dapne Du Maurier and Mary Webb to discuss some of their female characters and storylines. Fascinating.

What was your most embarrassing moment? It really is too embarrassing to put in print! You'll have to ask me.

Four words to describe yourself? This Wheel's on Fire.....





Peter Coles sends this picture with the rather alarming story that the bear had previously swum a protective moat with the aid of a log and then scaled a fence. Only the intricacies of a flip-down bike stand and a stubborn mudguard seem to have come between him and a quick getaway. Those members who keep getting drawn towards Chester (it's happened again since the last issue!) should 'bear' this in mind and keep well clear of the

Daniel Laffly took part in the 100Km version of the Bikes Events Charity ride which starts and finishes in Wythenshawe Park. He set himself a target of 4 hours for the 62 mile course and sponsors would only pay if he beat it. Happily he finished in 3-53-40 on a glorious day to add to the coffers of Christie's Hospital. Well done, Daniel.

THEIR BEST '50'

Congratulations to Reg and Vera Blease who celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary on September 11th. As was often the case in those post-war car-free days, couples met through cycling clubs as did Reg & Vera through the Seamons. Fifty years on it enabled them both to get out of riding the Fun Ten last Saturday - good planning or what?

MIXED FORTUNES

It's been a month of highs and lows for Siân Grainger. After taking the handicap award in the M&DLCA '10 with a personal best of 28.55 she entered our own Open '25'. Whilst out investigating the course she was knocked off her bike by a caravan as it tried to overtake climbing up Chelford railway bridge from the

island. Anyone who knows this road will be immediately aware that there is just no room to overtake safely with a seven-foot wide caravan behind. Although the lady passenger came back to see how Siân was before she was taken off to Macclesfield hospital, the 'gentleman' never left the driving seat. Such touching concern!

Fortunately Siân was 'only' cut and bruised, with no important bones broken, but her confidence has been badly dented. We wish her well and look forward to seeing her back out with the club.

TRACK NIGHT 2004

First there was, then there wasn't and now a bit of good news - it's back on again. A cancellation means that the club has been offered a session on the night of Saturday October 2nd. Yes, it's unfortunate that it is the night before the Hill Climb Championship, but beggars can't be choosers. Contact Dave Barker asap on **0161 282 7296** to book your spot at the velodrome.

Contact Steve Booth on **01925 752933** to enter the hill climb. Once again we'll be having a get together in the Ryles Arms after the hill climb where a choice of roast chicken, roast beef or vegetarian will be on offer. Price yet to be confirmed but contact Roger Haines on **0161 928 6522** to book your place.



Family Greenwood show the way on the Tatton Park Cancer Charity Ride

TOURIST TROPHY 2004

Our own Audax promotion, the Tour of the Berwyns, went off without a hitch, thanks to Dave Matthews' immaculate organising skills and the contributions of a small but very effective group of helpers - Carol Pardoe, Margaret Matthews, Keith Wilkinson, Roger Haines and Clive Rock.

This year we had seven who finished inside the limit - most spectacularly Dan Mathers who got back to Summertrees alone, fastest and inside the previous 'record'. Not that this is a race, of course, but whatever the official ethic may ordain, we all know about the kudos attached to finishing first and fast, and most of us harbour secret ambitions to be 'up there'. Do you imagine Gethin Butler potters round just inside the time limit.

In addition there has been quite a bit more Audax activity. Dave Matthews has completed several 200 km events, while Dave Barker has recently secured his third Super Randonneur award. The big ones were the South then North 600 km from Alfreton and the Plains 400 km from Poynton. In July thirteen of us got round the 100 in 8 without mishap, mechanical or medical, - lucky for some. Our biggest stroke of good fortune was to stay dry. We were hemmed in by black storm clouds for much of the day and stretches of flooded road indicated how close we had been to getting seriously soaked.

The biggest turnout was for marshalling duties on the Cancer Research ride from Tatton Park. Twenty five or so of us somehow got a motley collection of riders and machines round the Mobberley, Morley Green and Ashley lanes without too many of them getting lost. There was nothing we could do to prevent some painful hammerings being taken. On occasions like this you do start to appreciate things that we take for granted, such as a reasonable level of fitness and a satisfactory working relationship between rider and machine.

During the summer there have been three weekends away in Dentdale, Shropshire, and at the York Rally. It appears that good times were had by most if not all.

By early September, Dave Matthews had collected 13 points, followed by Roger Haines

and Dave Barker on 8, Gordon Peake on 7, Sian Grainger 6.5, and Andy Burns and Keith Wilkinson 6.

The rest of the programme

10 Oct Flintshire Challenge, Mold

17 Oct 200/160 km Audax, Holmes Chapel

December Montgomery weekend

19 Dec Winter Solstice Audax, Bredbury

plus any further weekends away, off road rides etc

PRESIDENT'S PIECE

As my two years as your President draws to a close I would like you to know how proud I have been of the Seamons CC, in many different ways. We have had some great racing results from our racing men, notably Paul McAllister and Dan Mather, not to mention the 24-hour finishers, Phil Holden, Rob Morton and Dave Tickle. We have had some great tours, ranging from Robin's Montgomery weekend, the Dent Youth Hostel weekend, York Rally, Cheshire 2-day, and Bourg d'Oisans. There have been some phenomenal long and hard Audax rides from Messieurs Matthews and Barker, and the Club has been active on the organizing front with the M&D "100", the Seamons Open "25", the Berwyns Audax, the Tatton Park charity rides, and the Club road-race round Lach Dennis. Then we've had the velodrome nights, the fancy-dress hot-pot, and the Annual Dinner.

John and I have been privileged to get out to a good number of these events and enjoy the Club atmosphere, and especially we've appreciated the comments from other clubs on our achievements. Even in France we are now known, as dropping by at the famous cyclists' hotel near Venosc, Bourg d'Oisans, for a drink and sit and watch the Tour in their memorabilia barn, we noticed all the club jerseys from all round the world hanging up in the roof; "I think you should have a Seamons jersey", I said in my best French. The owner agreed, so we gave him mine. You must go and see it!

Thank you, Seamons, for another year of good fun and good cycling.

Carole Pardoe



Un Tampon. s'il vous plaît?

The Tale of the Raid Pyrenean ...

Tales like this are often difficult to begin. Thursday afternoon in Biarritz perhaps? or maybe a Friday afternoon ride through the Basque country. I guess all the best stories begin at the beginning.

Morning at the Campanile Hotel in Hendaye, forty-four British blokes and forty-four very nice bikes gather in the car park for an obligatory photograph. The plan? To ride from Atlantic coast to the Med coast across 18 cols, in 100 hours.

Monday. Luckily the weather seems OK, I set off in summer kit with arm warmers. Setting off at 9am will give us until 1pm on Friday to finish. The first day's ride took us from the coast about 100 miles inland and was a good chance to find out who rode at my level. The early pace was high and was forced each time the road rose. Unfortunately the road rises a lot as it twists along the sinews of the Basque Corniche. Talk was inevitably about bikes and gears 'do you have a triple?' being a constant refrain (yes, 29-39-53 and 25-12). The group was mixed: triathletes, hardened audax men, club cyclists, students and even two septuagenarians.

The first carnet stop was arrived at and I enquired in my very best French 'un tampon s'il vous plaît?' Having been told this was what to say I thought I was going to be the butt of the peloton's joke. As it was, I was astonished when my card was stamped, my water bottles were refilled and questions were asked about our plans.

After the café stop the peloton split into smaller groups and I found myself with five other lads who would become my companions on the road ahead. With only one large climb (Col D'Ossquich 500m) it was a pleasant jaunt through the back roads of the Basque country. Beautiful river valleys took us further and further inland and the mercury began to rise.

Support from Graham Baxter's was provided in the shape of a transit van filled with water, figs and bananas but today we found them only once. The policy was to wait for the last man who would not arrive in Oloron-St-Marie until 8 that evening. Pasta for tea and a hotel with a swimming pool. Sleep was difficult as the Aubisque and the Tourmalet were being served tomorrow.

Tuesday, another 100 miles, bum and legs seem OK, breakfast was passable but spartan - an early stop for food will be required. Get the bike from the hotel ballroom, after all we are in France, step outside: 35 degrees, oh no.

The day begins well and the six of us set off almost last and cannily use this to avoid any map reading duty. Today no one is flying. Never before have I ridden up more than one Col in a day and today sees two monsters. Two riders failed to start this morning and two of the lads I'm riding with had dropped out last year on this day. We meet the transit van at the bottom of the Aubisque: water, bananas, figs, water, water and some more water. The Aubisque is great, there is even a downhill section through a village. At the top a group of Flemish pensioners cheer us on, well at least into the café for some more crêpes. I made a note to myself here to write to the café at Beeston and ask if they could put crêpes on the menu.

Down the Aubisque, through blind snow tunnels my descending skills were tested to the full, I even begin to enjoy going round hairpin bends. The Col du Soulor passes virtually unnoticed and then we are going on the flat again. We wait for those who do not like descending and agree to stop for lunch at the foot of the Tourmalet.

We had been warned that leading to the Tourmalet is the 15Km Gorge De Luz which rises imperceptibly to Luz St Sauveur where lunch will be...only its closed. Up the Tourmalet 5k, 10k 15k. Stop for lunch again, only they have no food, citron presse, aupa, aupa, up, up, allez, allez. Get attacked by flies and then the road ramps up. Only 3 k left and at last the summit. Lion bar, cake, drink but I know it's too late. I feel awful. Thank you, thank you its all down hill to St Marie de Campon, the town forever synonymous with Eugene Christophe and his broken forks and thankfully the end of day two for our party.

Again we wait for tea, the last man turns up at nearly 9 o'clock, in that time I have found a shop and undertaken some serious carbo loading (crisps and beer)..The Tourmalet has reaped its terrible harvest and we are now 34.

Day three and I am worried, my training has seen weekend club-runs and Saturday rides but never have I ridden three hard days in succession. But today is beautiful, the Col D'Aspin rises through shaded pine forests and herds of cattle, the weather is great, cooler, more English and again we set off late.

The lessons of yesterday have been learnt. Stop to eat, and so we do, three times today and however good Blaze Farm is, crêpes on the Peyresourde are better. Having met a French Cycling Club en route who have persuaded their wives to follow with water, *and beer, wine and whisky*, our outlook changes and to some extent and I really began to enjoy the ride. The highlight of the day for me was that the road signs had gone I no longer knew how steep or how high each climb was, psychologically this was a great weight lifted.

We stopped at the Fabio Casartelli memorial on a 17% stretch of the Col Portet D'Aspet, thankful that this was the steepest road on our journey and that within twenty minutes we would be descending again. Despite the descent being tempered by our knowledge of this terrible accident I was pleased to be flashed by automated 'Rappel' signs.

If you are ever in this part of the world call in and say hello to Nick at Bike Pyrennes. Along the valley road we went towards Massat and I spied a pal pulled in, this is it I thought, day 3 completed. No it was Nick's Bike lodge and Everton had stayed there earlier in the year. Beer was provided and a good hour was lost chewing the cycling cud before we went on to the hotel. Good food and a real feeling that we were going to finish.

Day four and my undercarriage is sore. Today we have the last big climb up to Andorra and over the Puymorens, this is the longest single climb topping off at 25 miles (miles not kilometres). The weather is not brilliant today and it proves to be the only day I need my rain cape, just to keep the chill off while climbing. I get the hang of eating enough and begin to wonder how on earth anyone could ride the Tour.

The last 3 climbs pass by pretty well and then we reach the summit of the final climb. Below us

The Squirrel

is a 35 mile descent into Prades. The entente cordiale that had been called at some point on day one was ripped up as the CC Bordeaux tried in vain to drop six plucky English lads on this plunge down to sea level. An undeclared intention was made clear as I was passed on the inside whilst swinging out of a hairpin bend. Relax the voice in my head said as I edged closer and closer to the 60mph mark.

Thursday night and England get knocked out of Euro 2004 but all thoughts are on David Millar and the race for the sea tomorrow. The general agreement was to set off together the next day and race for it, breakfast was to be at 6.30.

Breakfast seemed quiet as I ate and eventually put my kit on the coach. Getting my bike from the garage it dawned on me that most had gone already. The next two hours were awful. 40kph out to the coast, past audax riders who had stolen a march on us but soon a train of twenty were flying. Feeling bad about avoiding the front I went through for a turn to be told in no uncertain terms to get back, the speed had dropped. 'Left at the roundabout' someone calls, left we go and straight onto a motorway. 'It's only one junction, go for it'. So we do.

Unfortunately I miss the cut so to speak and roll into Cerbere at 11 o'clock, not an unrespectable eighth. As the coach was just outside the town there was not a sprint to talk of just a realisation that we had, as the advert says, *just done it*.

A celebratory meal of paella and wine was ordered as some of the party literally dipped their toes in the sea to complete the coast to coast. At the meal talk turned to a girl who I spotted on the Aubisque, another of the party said he'd seen her on the Peyresourde and yet another said she was actually a he. It seemed that on our journey we had all, at some point, spotted the Angel of the Pyrénées

If you ever do this don't get the coach home and consider going with Bike Pyrénées, waiting each night for your evening meal is a pain, especially when you know food and drink are the way to recovery. With the support vehicle, rightly, waiting for the last man it meant I only saw it six times throughout. I got in at 10pm on Sunday night and began talking to my wife about the Raid Corsica. She was not impressed...

Letters

Hi Jim,

Don't know if you are still on these e-mail addresses but just thought I'd drop you a quick note. Can you pass on to the boys at Seamons if you still ride with them? Thanks

I did Lanzarote Iron Man again in May and have qualified for World Champs in Hawaii in October.

Swim 58 mins (5 mins slower than 2002 but they finally seem to have got the distance right! Always been short in past. First man out in 50-51mins which sounds right.)

Bike 5 hrs 54mins (16 mins better than in 2002 but wind was kind this year plus some of the roads have been resurfaced and are lovely and smooth)

Run 3hrs 17 min (9 mins faster than 2002 although I grovelled the last lap!)

Total time 10 hrs 16 mins (vs 10 hrs 36 mins in 2002) for 47 place out of 850-ish so I am off to Hawaii again!!

Only small problem was that my HED Aero rear wheel started to disintegrate about halfway round the bike course!! The metal rim snapped in 2 places. When I took the tub off afterwards the wheel literally fell apart. Front wheel is pretty knackered too so am ordering some new race wheels. Was lucky to get back to Puerto Del Carmen in one piece!

So yes I am off to the sunshine in October, still can't quite believe it.

Let me know what you have been up to?

Regards
Mike Little

Hi Jim,

Just received the Squirrel June issue from someone, Carol I expect. Excellent as ever.

Also It was great to hear that Theo Parsons is still alive and well. I remember the all chrome track bike he built for me. The cost was £17.10s.

I went for a job with him once during the school holidays when he had a shop near where Quicks are now. He said there was no money in making frames and I should do something more rewarding. I expect he was right despite the price of frames these days. I don't think a frame with the name Andrews could compete with Colnago, Pinarello or Tommasini!

I saw the oblique reference to me as Mr. Y thanks for the mention. The car is actually a Volvo C70 convertible and the colour is not silver and not gold. It's called, in the usual over the top ways car companies call their colours - moon dust. Anyway we have been having some lovely 'topless' drives in the Chilterns enjoying the really warm days we have been having recently. It's great being retired being able to pick your days for a ride or a drive and I have got in great shape for an old'un.

I did make a foray up north on 6th June to ride the Polka Dot Challenge run by Manchester Velo. A bit of a last minute thing, 5 Verulam members had already entered so Lesley and I came up for the weekend stayed with some old neighbours in Wilmslow. It was a good day, really warm and as I got to grips with the Snake and Winnats, Lesley took the opportunity to see some old friends in Timperley and Sale. I did see Dave Matthews struggling up Chinley Head and had a brief chat on the ride but no other Seamons.

The Verulam mirrors the Seamons in many ways Perhaps we should twin! We have about the same membership, the same colours and the same grey haired old gits doing most of the work. We also have a 'nearly' 10 on a hilly circuit 9.3 ml course. Young guys are still getting round in 21.30 and we have several very promising juniors doing 23's We also had Gethin Butler as our guest of honour last dinner. And most significantly we both have a BAR winner. Ours is Stan Miles winner 30 years before Keith. Stan is 91 and still riding regularly.

Finishing with best wishes to you and all at Seamons and remember the old saying - Not everyone can be a great rider but everyone can have a great ride!

Cheers,
Don Andrews

From Graham Trunks (editor - Northern Wheel)

Dearest Carissima

Thank you for the new Squirrel - another superb issue. I do hope production difficulties will be easily resolved.

However I must refer to the item on page 16 under the heading "A Pedaller's Poem". The composition "Dust If You Must" was published in the Summer 2003 issue of Northern Wheel (page 98) and is quite unique in that I rewrote verses one and three to give the piece a cycling connotation. I am, quite frankly, disappointed that the first four verses appear to have been 'lifted' in their entirety from the Northern Wheel and then put in The Squirrel without so much as a nod, a wink, or a kiss my ****! (only joking). The original "Dust If You Must" appeared in a women's magazine circa 1995 and was reproduced on velum to be presented, upon the occasion of her hysterectomy, to a friend of ours who then gave us a photocopy which has been lying around our house for yonks until I rediscovered it in early 2003. Squirrel readers should be told!

Regards

Mario Trunkollini

P.S. The friend made a full recovery.

(A suitably grovelling apology has been made to Signor Trunkollini, who, this year at least, has proved to be more adept at poetry than winning bunch sprints. Or am I getting him mixed up with



Gun Hill - French Style?



Three Cols

La Classique du Cyclo Club en Ubaye

When our children were younger, we used to go for family holidays to my friend's house in Bonnieux, some 50Km south of Mount Ventoux. This was an ideal location for exploring cycling on Ventoux and around the Verdon Gorge on the occasional day off from family duties. At the far Eastern end of the Verdon Gorge, north of Castellane, the map shows an obvious challenging route around the cols of Alpes Maritimes. In spite of many cunning plans to ride these cols, it proved to be an expedition too far from Bonnieux. So I parked this as a challenge awaiting the opportunity to ride it at some distant time in the future.

The route was confirmed as a worthy expedition when I read the article by John and Carol in a Squirrel of 1997/98 vintage entitled "The Longest Day". Their longest day was spent on precisely the cols I had identified on the map, though travelling in the opposite direction from Barcelonnette. The gist of the article was that but for the magical fortifying properties of chicken butties and Mars bars against the rigours of the cols, they may well have been absorbed by the mountains never to return!

I have kept the "Longest Day" article ever since as a stimulus to train hard through the winter and maybe get to attempt the ride. Finally the opportunity arose in 2004 to attempt the Col d'Allos, Col de Cayolle and Col des Champs whilst Margaret and I were on holiday near Draguignan in Provence.

It was up at 5am to drive to Colmars and start up the Col d'Allos 2240m at 8:00am. Initially the gradient was reasonable up to the Ski station of Allos. On the initial slopes I stopped to take a photograph of the upper reaches of the col whilst a helicopter thwacked around overhead. "Just like the Tour" I thought when suddenly 12 Francais des Jeux.com riders in full kit, accompanied by a team car, swept round the bend. This seemed just as much a coincidence as when I found myself in Chambéry in 1989, unaware that the World Champs were taking place just down the road. However a strong reality check confirmed that the real Tour was in Central France, and I had witnessed a B team training run.

I should have mentioned earlier that my departure for this ride was rather hasty and as a result I was very short on food. In spite of the

years waiting to do the ride, several distractions arose whilst I was preparing and the essential energy bars were forgotten. Here was a second unwanted chance to emulate John's other longest day on these cols when he nearly bonked out due to lack of food a couple of years ago, and awarded himself the "Hammering of the year".

When I got to the top of the Col d'Allos I was welcomed by a member of the Cycling Club D'Annecy who was comfortably installed by the café cabin with about 10 of his mates. "Would you like some chocolate?" he asked me in perfect English. Then, "Would you like a sandwich?—an orange? More chocolate?" Throwing aside my English reticence, the bonk problem was temporarily resolved as the contents of the team support van were brought to my aid.

I was introduced to the best cyclist in their club and asked how old I thought he was. This was obviously a trick question, so erring on the older side I guessed at 65 years. "No you are wrong--he is 75 years was the delighted reply". The Seamons Creep of the Year award goes to who best identifies our equivalent rider!

Heading north from the uninspiring summit of the Allos, I descended about 500m and suddenly the most stunning view of the Alps opened up. Then it was down a classic, exhilarating, alpine descent for 20 k to Uvernet – Fours, just north of Barcelonnette. A sharp U-turn here gets you on the stunning approach road to the Col de la Cayolle 2327m through a spectacular river gorge. The only disconcerting note in all this remote beauty was that I was getting thirsty and hungry again, with no known prospect of replenishment. A lot of calories were going out and none were going in--a kind of reverse obesity.

More in hope than anticipation of finding sustenance, I continued climbing up the gorges. After about 15k, a form of salvation was found in a shuttered, medieval building with a very faded "Restaurant" sign on the front. Feeling I had entered a time warp, I ordered a sandwich. This eventually arrived courtesy of a Lurch look-alike from the Adams family--a huge chunk of baguette with a slab of cheese and of ham wedged inside it. The accompanying drink was purest water from the village standpipe nearby.

Thus fortified and truly back in the 16th century, I continued to climb. The gorge petered out into steep upper slopes with bridges criss-crossing the river. Eventually I arrived at the desolate, windy and cold summit of the Col de la Cayolle, took a couple of photos and rapidly descended to the South.

As on the Col d'Allos, arm warmers and a jacket were just sufficient to keep me warm enough to keep control of the bike through the many bends, made more difficult by the bumpy road surface. After a 20k descent to St Martin d'Entraunes, it was sharp right onto the Col des Champs for the return to Colmars. The sun was well out by now, so it was time to bake rather than freeze. The road reminded me of my least favourite road in all the world--the Col de Telegraph. All the elements of heat, no shade, monotonous gradient, tiredness were there, as I experienced on the Telegraph last year, with the added bonus on the Col des Champs of being short of food and water yet again. However, by riding for 30 mins and resting for 5 mins in several stages, I eventually made the summit. From here it is a long descent down a very bad road surface back to Colmars, the car and somewhere to eat and drink (lots!).

Carol later gave me a cycling guide to this area describing this route as "la classique du Cyclo Club" of the Ubaye region. The distance is given as 124k (77.5m) from Barcelonnette with 3340m (11,000ft) of climbing. The route certainly is a classic, with a concentration on height gained/km that must rank with most rides in the Alps. It was

CLUB AGM

This will take place on **Friday Nov 19th** starting at 8.30 pm. Any propositions from members have to be with the secretary by **Friday October 22nd**. to be included on the agenda

Most of the committee have agreed to stand again but the position of TT Sec is still unresolved and we would encourage someone to come forward. We are also looking for a new editor to produce a news-sheet or magazine. Carole Pardoe's two years as President comes to an end and



Où est Colmar?

"We never seem to learn, do we?" Words that Johnny Pardoe uttered in a recent article. Well, no, we don't. Dave Matthews makes the same point in his 3-Cols Alpine article. You don't have to be attempting a grand Alpine marathon to come unstuck though as it can happen on a two hour 'tootle'. To me it can anyway.

Dee and I were on our way to meet up with the myriad Seamons contingent down at the Alpe D'Huez but had detoured to renew our acquaintance with the Alsace on the way. The weather, beautiful on the crossing, had deteriorated as we headed east across France and as the blue skies disappeared behind us in the rear view mirrors, the omens were not good. This was reinforced as we approached Nancy heading for the tunnel that would cut out the major climb over the Ballons d'Alsace. "Route Barré", "Fermé au 2007", and finally the dreaded "Déviation". Normally so well organised the 'déviation' shows the French to be the malevolent equals of the British. Good at pointing you away from where you want to go and then abandoning you to your own devices. Not too bad in England where you understand the language but in France and with a 17 foot caravan behind it's not quite as easy.

We breathed a sigh of relief as we rolled onto the flower bedecked campsite at Herrlisheim

and settled in. The weather refused to improve however and five frustrating days were to elapse before the bike would get a proper airing. OK, we **were** on the famous "Route des Vins", the castles and villages were as immaculate and picturesque as we remembered but that necessary ingredient was missing. Then one day it was there! The sun gradually burnt off the clouds and by dinner time it was looking settled. "I'll go out for a couple of hours this afternoon," said I confidently. "Have you got a map?" enquired Dee. "Nah, I'll just write down the names of the villages, it's all well signed, no problem."

I set off at 2.00 pm and headed across the Autoroute towards the Rhine with my bottle full and a banana, 'just in case'. All went well, the roads were quiet and in fact nowhere seemed to be open. Actually, nowhere **was** open. It soon dawned that it was Bastille Day - the day the whole of France shuts down. Completely. Down through Hirtzfelden and back over the autoroute to Ensishheim, Merxheim and up into the foothills of the Alsace regional park. Climbing up, there was just one tricky right hander to spot to head back for home. The map had shown it as a T-junction; it wasn't and I missed it. The climb turned into a descent and within a few minutes I'd lost all the height gained and as I hit a main road I realised the error. What to do? Turn

round and go back up the climb? Turn right to make up for the previously missed turn? I chose option two and as the village of Lautenbach receded into the distance the road started to climb. Imperceptibly at first but then getting steeper. A small sign on a post depicted a bike and the words 'Le Markstein' with '15Km' inscribed underneath. The significance of this was to become apparent but took several, increasingly steeper, kilometres to really register. Whatever 'Le Markstein' was it was definitely 'up' and I hadn't got a clue where I was. The banana had gone and the bottle was well down as I emerged from the shaded lower slopes into the heat and the long longed-for sunshine.

"Character forming" I kept saying to myself, "This is character forming." One consolation was that it should be mostly downhill on the way back, but which was the way back? Then suddenly I rounded a bend and emerged seemingly on top of the world. Imagine the Cat & Fiddle, but nearly three times the height, on a summer's day. The views east over the Rhine valley, far below, to the Black Forest in the distance. To the west the land fell away to the lush valley of the Moselle. And on the top? Every man and his dog on a 'bank holiday' out. Roadside stalls, a café and kites everywhere.

I stopped at the first stall, a guy selling home made cakes and confectionery. Before I could speak, a small cube of cake was proffered - le dégustation - and accepted. "Monsieur, où est la route à Colmar?" "COLMAR?" "COLMAR?" The raised voice and tone of incredulity told me I was in trouble. He took another look at me, got a knife and cut off a huge wodge of cake and offered it with a stream of much-too-fast French. I gathered the gist of it was "Rather you than me pal but I think you're going to need this." Worse still was the way he then pointed back down the fifteen kilometres I had just climbed. "Non, non" said I shaking my head. He had another think and came up with an alternative. It would be 'meilleur' - better. Drop down this road a bit then take the first right and a small climb up to the top of the Col du Platzerwasel from which it would be all downhill. I wasn't too keen on the 'small climb' bit and headed off to the café across the road to get the bottle filled up. I asked for directions again, just to be sure. The response was the same. "COLMAR?" but so were the directions and I set off. The 'first on the right' turned out to

be the equivalent of maybe turning down the Goyt Valley but I was too wary by this time and asked again. "NON, non", it was the next right and an exhilarating descent followed the mercifully short climb.

How quickly your mood can change! As the kilometres disappeared under the wheels on the beautifully surfaced switchback road so the strength seemed to come back. A sign for the climb to 'Le Petit Ballon' didn't tempt me though and I was soon heading for Munster and another that told me that Colmar was a mere 15 Km ride away. Another eight after that would see me gratefully in through the campsite gates. It was 7.15 pm. The 'couple' of hours had stretched to over five and the thirty miles had become over seventy with a climb to more than 1300 metres thrown in.

"You were a bit longer than I thought," said Dee, "Where've you been?"

"I haven't a clue" said I, collapsing into a chair in the awning, "Pass me the map and I'll find out."

Story and Photos by Jim Boydell



The welcoming campsite entrance

GOT ANY IDEAS?

With the winter evenings approaching we're looking for ideas for Friday nights. Apart from the usual darts and TT competitions there will be a quiz night and an indoor sports night (time to practice on the mini-bikes!). Any volunteers to put on a night with a difference will be welcomed. The (newly sanded) floor is all yours...



If you're ever in Burgundy, hammering down the A6 take time out to have a look at the 'Voie Vert' or 'Green Way'. Come off the autoroute for Chalons sur Saône and head for Givry. This puts you at one end of the route which is reserved for walkers, skaters and cyclists. The disused railway has been immaculately surfaced, passing through vineyards and attractive medieval towns as it winds its way down towards Mâcon. About 40 km in length it's great for families as it is gently undulating with plenty of interest. The sloping side of one cutting has been turned into a climbing wall - typically French. Most of the old stations en route have been converted to bike hire sites - some are even electrically assisted and there are campsites dotted along the way. A group of 7-8 year old schoolchildren were riding the whole route camping every 10-15km, supervised by three teenagers. Could you see that happening in the UK? It probably explains the great confidence most French people seem to have. Independence and responsibility from an early age are much undervalued in our society.

Two campsites I would recommend are at Cluny, right at the south end of the route and Cormatin, about 15km north. Cluny is on the outskirts of a small town with the remains of what was the largest abbey/cathedral in the world. When St Peter's was built in Rome it was designed to be just that bit bigger so it would be the largest and a visit to the site is fascinating. Cluny has a good market and the campsite, right on the cycle route, has a good pool. Up the road, Cormatin is



nothing more than a village but it has a couple of good restaurants, a wonderful and unique Chateau and - The Musée du Vélo ("Unique en France"!). Most cyclists could spend a full day in here. It's not particularly large but the exhibits are varied and wonderful with as big an emphasis on the racing side of things as well as the development of Le Vélo. The 'patron' speaks no English but that doesn't stop him wanting to explain everything to you in his beautifully restored barn-like building.

Whats' there? Cyclists' pistols for warning off (shooting?) aggressive dogs, records made by cycling stars of the past (think footballers and teams releasing records), hundreds of bottles of wine, each with a cycling connection. Badges, medals by the thousand and bikes, bikes and more bikes take you from the earliest days of the 'hobby horse' right up to the present day with some wonderfully weird efforts on the way. How about a bike where you pedal forward on the flat, then when you reach a hill, instead of changing gear manually you pedal backwards - and keep pedalling backwards. Another where the seat tube doubles as the barrel of a pump with a long flexible connector exiting just above the bottom bracket and the handle appearing out of the centre of the saddle. It's all there.

We intended to stay on the site at Cornatin a few days and stayed over a week. This really is unspoilt France and the cycling on quiet, well surfaced roads is great. The Voie Vert largely follows the river Grosne but if you venture out of the valley there are some rewarding climbs to about 400-500 metres into the rural heartland of



France. The villages here are not geared to tourism and you'll find bar/tabacs for coffee and a sandwich, but not much else. And that's just how a lot of real Francophiles like it.



PHOTOS

Main Photo: The Voie Vert as it crosses a 'main' road with the Musée du Vélo in the background.

Previous page: Wine, wine, wine and every label worth reading.

This page: top - cyclists' pistols for use on aggressive dogs and - motorists?

middle - Milk delivery. With a steering wheel and gear levers like a car someone obviously had a longing for something better. Not sure about the steel (yes and unpadding!) saddle

bottom: So you thought bike boxes were new? This lockable wicker version illustrates how valuable bikes were considered in early days.



The Squirrel

Many years ago my cycling friend and co-Audax rider Mel Green went over to Ireland to ride the Wicklow 200. The route takes in the beautiful and hilly Wicklow area south of Dublin, varying direction and climbs from year to year. The ride was originally run as an Audax Ireland event but is now organised by the Irish League of Veteran Cyclists. The ride proper is 200k, with a 100k shortcut option.

Mel came back from Ireland raving about the fantastic route, the friendliness of the people and especially the Guinness fuelled craic.

As a result of Mel's recommendation, I was determined to get over to Ireland to attempt the ride some day, and in 2004 everything came together.

Our daughter Ruth moved to Dublin in 2003 and around the same time I made contact with a long lost 2nd cousin who lives in the city. Another reason for the trip was to allow my wife Margaret to visit her best friend who lives down south in Wexford. We resolved to put together a long weekend that took in visiting friends, cousins and our daughter---and allow for the Wicklow 200 ride to be included.

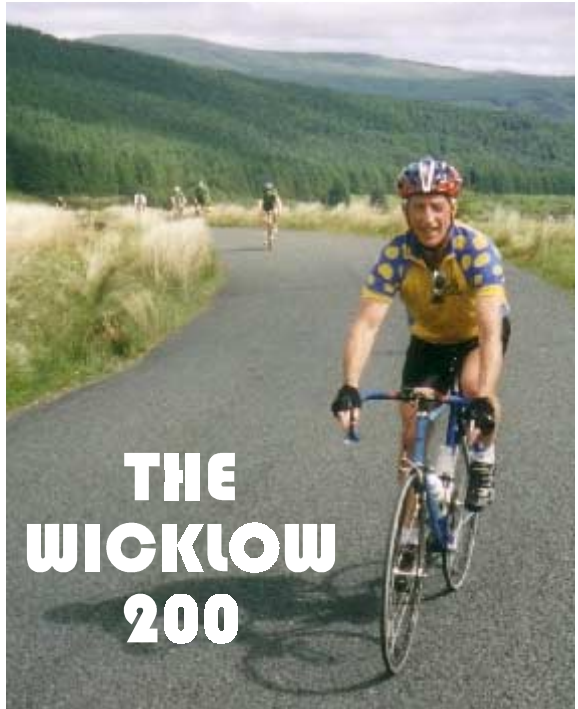
A month after booking the boat, Ruth announced she was leaving Dublin for Southern England---just in time to avoid us in Dublin. However my cousin, who lives only one mile from the start of the Wicklow 200 at Donnybrook, offered to put us up for the weekend.

After we had spent Saturday morning touring Dublin, Margaret drove down to Wexford and left me with cousin Rowena and her husband James.

James is a car enthusiast and delighted in taking me on another tour of Dublin, firstly in his open top 1950 Daimler sports car (called most appropriately "The Duchess") and then in an Isetta bubble car. Both rides were fantastic fun and it felt just like riding ahead of a Tour de France stage, with everyone waving at us as we went by.

On Sunday it was early rising at 05:15 to cycle to the check in at the RTE buildings for 06:15.

The event has grown in popularity since Mel's day---there were around 300 riders then. This year they closed the entry at 1600 riders. Part



of the reason for this increase in interest is undoubtedly the growing popularity of "etape" type rides.

The start, 1 mile from the check in, was cunningly controlled by not letting us know where it was. This prevented excessive bunching on the main N11 out of Dublin. However by pretending to be Irish, I snuck into a small group and got away at the earliest time of 07:00. The first few Km were an etape type experience, patrolled by the Garda using a van flashing blue lights at the main junctions.

Eventually our bunch got onto minor roads and the mobile escort faded away.

The weather was chilly and had been threatening rain. As time went on the clouds parted and the temperature rose to the extent that we soon got etape type high temperatures and dehydration became a possibility. The terrain changed from "lumpy" to steep and the snake of riders entered the beautiful, green and remote Wicklow hills area.

First stop after 65K was at the small village of Rathdrum where it was only too easy to chicken out and take the 100K option back to Dublin.

The 200K route turned left and up into the Wicklow hills to cross Slieve Man. Then a long descent was followed by riding easier roads north and then east to the second control by the huge reservoirs at Valleymount. (130K).

It was getting really hot now, so I filled up the Isostar and water bottles, ate a couple of the free butties and headed back into the hills to Sally Gap. This is another spectacular part of the ride rising to 500m in tremendous scenery.

Once over the gap, you think it's all over. Not quite as there is still a vicious ascent up Luggla before a long steep descent back to sea level near to the Sugar Loaf Mountain. Once round the back of the Sugar Loaf, there are more lumpy bits around Powerscourt before an exciting ride along the bus and cycle paths of the N11 to the finish at RTE.

Overall this is a great ride in a beautiful area. At the finish, you know that you have had a big day on the bike. The closest comparison back here would be the Tour of the Berwyns or "The Clwydian"---but the Wicklow 200 felt considerably harder.

After a quick Guinness from the bar it was back uphill (groan) to my cousins house to watch England lose 2—1 to France in Euro 2004 (groan groan!)

Next morning, re-united with Margaret after her Wexford adventures, we caught the 08:00 boat back to Holyhead. Back at work the next day, it felt like we had been away for four years rather than 4 days as so much had happened in such a short space of time.

Story and Photo by David Matthews

CLUB ROAD RACE - BYLEY

The second road race in the Club's name but held under the aegis of the North West League took place on the Byley circuit on August 8th. Richard Potter once again took on the mantle of co-ordinator and had the added headache of overseeing not one, but two, races at the same time. It all went off without a hitch and we were blessed with fine weather unlike last year.

To complete a good day, Paul McAllister took 3rd place in the 2nd event, narrowly missing out on top spot. Christian House of the Great Britain squad dominated the elite event finishing alone with 10 seconds to spare over the bunch. Chris Siepen lost some spokes in the final sprint in this event when he was carved up and just missed a top ten placing.

Richard wishes to place on record his thanks to all those members who turned out to marshal and help, in particular to Jim and Hazel Hamman who did a great job on the catering.



The elite bunch powers into the finishing straight.

WHERE IS IT?

Or, to be more accurate "Where was it." The picture in the last edition was in fact the original Bleeding Wolf public house. The railway bridge is not the one you might imagine on Ashley Road but the one at right angles. The cross roads is viewed from Park Road. The photo was taken at the turn of the century and the building that replaced it is itself now in the process of being demolished/ renovated. It's hard to tell the difference at the moment. I was particularly taken with the rule that no gaming, fighting, quarrelling, swearing or drunkenness was to be tolerated. I thought that was precisely the reason that a lot of people actually went in pubs

Alpe D'Huez 2004



Once again we had a grand gathering at the Alpe d'Huez, with fourteen members and friends on various pitches at Camping La Piscine. Most had motored down but Dave Barker had once again flown to Geneva and ridden the rest of the way. Dan Mathers had given a lift to Paul Smith and invited a number of old university friends including Andy who had with us last year. Andy's brother had flown in from New York especially for the week but unfortunately his brand new Litespeed titanium didn't, finally arriving the day before he was due to go back. Yet another unhappy statistic in the unfolding British Airways and Bikes saga.

Add to that the Booth family who hiked across the Col de Sarenne, Dave Matthews who rode from the Col d'Ornon, Keith and Beryl Stacey who made it down from Annecy by car, bus and foot to get up the Alpe and Pete Devereux and son who camped (along with many others) on any spare bit of land they could find at Huez village itself, and you have a pretty good idea of

the chaotically wonderful lengths that people go to just to see the tour on this most famous of climbs. This year, of course, it was even more special. The climb was to be tackled as a time trial and the opportunity to see all the tour riders, so close up, individually and under pressure was irresistible to many.

Too many, I think. Some estimates place the numbers at about a million and I wouldn't argue. Tents actually on the road and motorhomes



Roughing it in the Boydell awning

perched on the most improbable combinations of bits of wood and rocks overhanging sheer drops wouldn't be most peoples' idea of a place for a good night's sleep. But many did and for four or five days at that. I wasn't alone however in thinking that this special climb has just got too popular and the numbers are too great for the campsites and the town to cope with. From the riders' point of view it must be an even bigger nightmare. Some action needs to be taken.

Nevertheless it was a great week with a unique atmosphere, some wonderful mountain rides and company that couldn't be bettered. Every cyclist should do it at least once.



Dave travels light on the road to La Berarde

TOURING SHORTS &

Ah, the great birthday tradition. In a bid to keep up appearances, the touring section will sometimes pretend it actually has an excuse to go to the pub after a run. A birthday in the bunch is one such occasion. The idea is that if it's your birthday you buy your mates a beer. (It is, of course, also a means of ensuring some riders get their hands in their pockets at least once a year.) Unfortunately, a dangerous precedent has now been set by Malc. Good for him, he dug deep to ensure those on the run to Hathersage could share in the celebration of his big day. Bad for him, he GAVE his beer money to Wilkie at lunchtime so he wouldn't have been there at the end to buy the drinks in person.

This could be bad news for those riders who might suddenly go absent around their birthdays. It was also, in the end, bad news for Wilkie. Over many years he's managed to convince himself that he does have some friends in the touring section. These would have been the same "friends" who said they would wait for him when he got split from the group. Held up by a helicopter (yes, a helicopter) carrying out a mountain rescue, Wilkie's heart was no doubt warmed by their offer. Illusions were soon shattered, however: "You've got the beer money," they said.

The rash of new bikes in the touring section has even spread to Dave Barker. After years beating up his old Graham Weigh, he decided that even giving it its second good wash wouldn't make it run better and it was time for a change. For a man who is prepared to take on the most testing of Audax events, nothing less than a George Longstaff is going to be right. But it would seem the upgrade in machinery didn't spread to an upgrade in accessories. Having spent money on a custom-build and a fancy monogram, Dave kitted out his new bike with his old saddle "pack". Care-worn would be a generous description. Old and knackered would be a more accurate one.

"It still works," said Dave. Good lad. Nice to see the tourers' mean streak rubbing off.

Mind you, Dave would have a long way to go to catch up with bargain-hunter extraordinaire Wilkie. He's been back to Aldi. He led the run to watch the Tour of Britain resplendent in a jersey of Seamons blue and yellow. Bought for less than a fiver, he was the envy of all who followed. Rolling into Horwich there was a serious suggestion we take a quick detour into the nearby Aldi to see if they had any in stock. Thankfully, what was left of our dignity remained intact and we decided to press on.

Meanwhile, having arrived to watch the Tour of Britain take on a King of the Mountains climb outside Belmont, dignity soon took a back seat. There was clearly too much time between finishing our lunch in the pub and anything of interest actually happening on the road. Slouching around on the hillside in the sunshine we must have looked like a colony of basking walruses. When the riders finally arrived, they flashed by on the big ring with barely a chance for the cheers to rise to meet them.

"It's just like sex," said Gordon Peake. "Two-and-a-half hours of build-up and it's all over in less than 30 seconds." Quite.

It was an epiphany. Not on the road to Damascus but on the way into York. At yet another map-stop to find the best way back to the city, the know-it-alls were soon back-chatting the runs leader. "Why are we going all this way around, why don't we go down here and on to the main road?" asked Peter Devine. "Look, if we wanted to get from A to B quickly, we wouldn't be on bikes would we? We'd be in cars. The whole point of cycling is the journey not the destination, isn't it?" Quiet descends. You could almost hear the bunch thinking.

Ah yes, philosophy and bikes. A combination only enhanced by the addition of alcohol!

L
O
N
G
S

WHAT A WEEKEND!

A date to put in your diaries for next year already! At the end of May 2005, the club will find itself promoting two 'Classics' on the same weekend. They couldn't be more different either. It's not through choice that this has occurred but Dave Matthews has worked hard to establish the Tour of the Berwyns on the Audax calendar and it's not easy to move these events and retain your entry base. His date of Saturday May 21st had already been applied for and approved when it became obvious that unless we, the Seamons, took on the promotion of the CTT National Ten Mile Championship there would be huge embarrassment for the Manchester district of Cycling Time Trials, of which both Keith Stacey (secretary) and I (Open Events Secretary) are committee members. This date had also been fixed for the same weekend and will take place on Sunday, May 22nd.

We will probably opt to run all three (men, women and junior) events consecutively on the Sunday morning and could expect to get about 300 entries if past years are any guide. Inevitably it is going to be a huge commitment and Keith and I will be relying on support from club members. With that many riders, if you add on their supporters and spectators, then it is not too fanciful to estimate that up to a thousand people could be present on the day. Nothing can be left to chance and we'll be looking for help with all aspects of a promotion that can bring a lot of prestige to our club.

I last promoted a National Championship in 1970, when Dave Whitehouse of the Shirley Roads Club took the '50' with a time of 1.54.16 on a course based Chelford and the A50 as now. Nobody thought such a time was possible 35 years ago on Cheshire's slow roads. Refreshments were provided from a caravan at the side of the A50 and I don't remember there actually being an HQ. It is also the 40th anniversary of Keith taking the British Best All Rounder title so if we want to bring our club's name back to national prominence again then there couldn't be a finer way. Unless we could provide a medal winner, that is.

The course to be used is one based on Nantwich and uses a brand new, beautifully surfaced, by-pass that (at the moment at least) is relatively

quiet. Only one railway bridge climb spoils the almost flat course - but that is over the Crewe Junction shunting yards which are quite wide. This year the course has only been used for club events by the Crewe Clarion and it is known that it was slightly over ten miles as the start/finish was altered to make it easier for the timekeeper. Despite this I understand Charles McCulloch has recorded 20.01 which leads you to believe that an 18 minute winning ride is on the cards.

Three hundred riders on the day will make it an early start for some and first man off could be as soon as 7.00 am. This means everything and everybody will have to be in place by this time. This is a real opportunity for all members to get involved with what is the most popular championship on the time trialling calendar. It would be the icing on the cake to be able to grace the event with a really fast team of riders

WHY DON'T YOU.....?

Having observed Dan Mathers' prowess in the Alps, accompanied by Paul Smith, riding 8 hours virtually non-stop over the Croix-de Fer, Télégraphe, Galibier, and finally the killer at the end - the Alpe d'Huez - we said, why don't you have a go at the "12", you've got the stamina. So he did, and he has. Robin and Keith shadowed (showered?) him all day with rice pudding, tea, fruit juice, butties and water - gallons of it - and were quite tired at the end of the day. Keith said they had to run miles to pick up his bottles/sponges because he took ages drinking or sponging, and Robin said Dan was enjoying his food much too much. Dan said his main thoughts all day centred round, "I wonder what I'll get at the next roundabout/junction?" We were all starving at the end of the day, although Robin said every time they saw us, we seemed to be sitting at the side of the road eating. Keith was looking forward to a "pig-out" at Prees because they hadn't eaten anything bad all day, so we all joined up at the end and ate lots of bad food, and propped Dan up so that he could eat lots of bad food as well, while we waited for confirmation of the results. 245 miles, 5th overall, winner of the Handicap. Brilliant, well done Dan, hope you're feeling better now...

Report by Carole Pardoe

BEARD CUP HILL CLIMB



Siân heads for top spot

The CTC Beard Cup Hill Climb is a fiercely contested annual event that is normally dominated by those fast ascenders from the Blackburn CTC. The one mile hill is a real challenge and heads out onto the moors above Diggle near Oldham and this year the Seamons (or more appropriately the Altrincham and Sale CTC) achieved two first placements. Siân Grainger was the fastest lady with a great time of 7.52.5

and Gareth Blease beat all comers in the tourist class (mudguards, saddlebag, lights etc in 6.23.4.

Two great performances considering that Siân is still recovering from being knocked off her bike and Gareth was up celebrating the night before his parents' Golden Wedding Anniversary (congratulations Reg and Vera). Are these the best racing placements this year?

Other creditable performances from Tim Mitchell in 6.27.4, Alex Young 6.44.6, Roger Haines



Gareth looks pleased with his prize.

ROCK ON!

It may be of interest to the 'Shropshire Lads' of the Seamons that our favourite tea place in Salop has received its due recognition at last.

The 'Bird on the Rock' tearooms at Downton on the Rock is the winner of the Tea Council's Top Tea Place 2004, with, as we know, forty different teas on offer. In addition to that accolade the 'Bird on the Rock' is No.1 on 'The Independent' newspaper's list of the fifty best places for tea in Britain, beating such luminary establishments as Betty's of Harrogate (2nd), the Dorchester (8th) and Puddleduck's of Stirling (36th) in the process. We sure know how to pick 'em.

The question now is of course, when the lads next visit Bird on the Rock will they get 'The Bird'? If the owner judges these two wheeled wanderers by the amount they are likely to leave in tips the answer is probably - yes.

Bob Richardson



The Shropshire lads (& lasses) tuck in

6.47.8 and John Barry (alias Andy Burns) with 7.32.1. The fastest ride of the day was from a Blackburn Junior with 5.44 and there was a total field of 53 riders,

This really is a lovely part of the north-west and well worth the ride out. If you are ever in Uppermill, the village next to Diggle check out the Church Inn on the hillside above the Village; great food, fantastic beer at £1.10 a pint and stunning views.

**Report by Keith Wilkinson
Photos by Gordon Peake**

GOT A 'BIG ONE'?

If you have then you should seriously consider getting rid of it. We now know of at least five people using this type of ITM welded stem who have suffered injury as a result of the stem breaking. Two of these, Robin Haigh and Roy Myers, in our own club. On this basis there must be a significant problem nationally. It is beyond belief that a car manufacturer would get away with this. Letters to Cycling Weekly have been ignored and there seems to be a conspiracy of silence within the trade, possibly because they are in the front line for any potential claims under the Sale of Goods act. We already know of one rider who has successfully sued a local cycle trader for over £3,000 which is a great shame as it is plainly not the dealer's fault.

It would be prudent to give all this company's welded products a wide berth until they admit there is a problem and that steps have been taken to rectify the matter.

DIARY DATES

Oct 1st	Club Top Night - Bring your old and not so old ones up.
Oct 2nd	Track Night at the velodrome Contact Dave Barker 282 7296
Oct 10th	Hill Climb up Withenshaw Lane Lunch at the Ryles Arms
Oct 23rd	Trans Pennine Trail with Mor- ton's Walkers
Oct 24th	Magical Mystery Tour
Nov 5th	TT and darts comps. start.
Nov 19th	Club AGM...8.30pm start
Dec 3/4/5th	Montgomery Weekend Contact Robin Haigh 283 0053
Dec 12th	Hot Pot & Fancy Dress Contact Roger Haines 928 6522
Dec 19th	Christmas '10' & Fancy Dress Chelford Carol Service

MORE LATE RESULTS

With both Tim and Roy curtailing their seasons due to illness and injury respectively, it's been left to Dave Bates, Paul McAllister and Nigel Harrop to carry the flag in the men's section and Siân and Claire Bridge in the ladies.

After Paul's great ride in the Club's own Road

Race to take 3rd place, it was back to time trialing and 3rd spot in the ABC Centreville '10' with a 22.16 ride. A mid-week trip to the Pimbo RR saw Paul take 8th before another trip up the M6 to the Kent Valley '10' on the 11th September and yet another 3rd place with 21.25.

Dave Bates' improving form and fortune can be seen from his results. In chronological order they are : Warrington RC '50' - 2.05.55, Vets '25' 1.00.34, Seamons CC Open (a hard day this!) 1.02.18, and a week later 59.39 in the Stretford Whs '25'.

Since returning from holiday Nigel Harrop has mixed both testing and bunch rides. In the LVRC events he has had two top 10 placings at Congleton and Preston and recorded a personal best '25' with 1.03.21.

Siân Grainger's end of season time trialing was cut short but not before she had taken the handicap in the M&DLCA '10' with a 28.55 personal best ride and the ladies prize in the Beard Cup hill climb.

Claire Bridge rode her first '25' in our own club's open and finished with a creditable 1.17.37. A couple of weeks later in the M&DLCA event she slipped back to 1.20.18.

Last Championship of the year is the Hill Climb which is now on

NO LONGER WITH US

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of two cyclists and supporters of the sport. Neither was a member of the club, but both were involved with us over a period of years.

Gerry Shepherd of the Team Spirit was a regular first choice timekeeper who held the watch at all our recent open events.

Dave Holt of the Stretford Whs used to ride our club tens on a regular basis.

Both were ever ready to help at the many M&DTTA events I organised, one with the watch, the other pushing off. Both will be missed. May I offer condolences on behalf of the club to their respective families and clubmates.

Caption Competition



Remember the picture? Well, we've had a number of entries, particularly after Roger went round twisting elbows up backs. So, here they are for you to peruse. A vote was taken up at the clubroom and the winner is..... well read them all first and see if you agree.

"The handicap secretary's methods were unusual but effective"

"Are you sure the Christmas Hot Pot is down this lane"

"Band on the Club Run"

"What kind of handicap race is this."

"You play it and I'll peddle it."

"There must be a better way to get to an audition."

"Where are those Seamons lads, they said to come and join the merry band."

"Drumming up support."

"Let's get back to bass."

"The whole family's musical, even the sewing machine's a Singer."

"Some riders take the hot pot fancy dress far too seriously."

And the winner from Mike Brooks "Tell the piano player to stop moaning, it's only an old upright."

Boom, Boom!!!

OPINIONATED - ME?

No, not me but the various contributors to the Cycle Engineers' Institute magazine. The late Geoff Horrocks was keenly interested in all aspects of cycle design and fabrication and a number of issues of this publication from the early '90's have passed via Keith Stacey into my possession. Boy do they hate alloy frames, carbon (they refer to them as plastic) frames and most modern refinements. There's plenty of vitriol for 'Cycling Weekly' and their kow-towing to the industry (see editorial - nothing changes). A lot of their ramblings are well justified but some have been proved spectacularly wrong. All are very entertaining when present day publications are so 'politically correct'. Here's a sample....

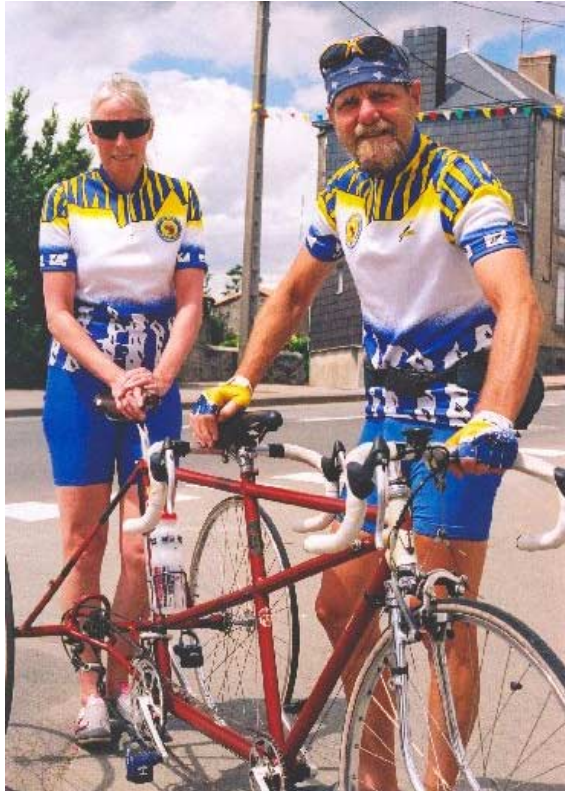
SW (Derby) Knowing both Cino Cinelli and Roy Cottingham and having been in both their works, I would state quite dogmatically that Cottingham is superior to Cinelli both in design and workmanship. Is that plain enough for you?

(Continued on page 28)

Two Wheels just aren't Enough

St. Marsault: Tricycle World Championship 2004

Frogs – every night as the sun went down, this massive chorus erupted from across the fields, filling the night air, but we never saw them. Our campsite was the village football field, so we had great facilities, with hot showers, and scraping racks for our muddy boots!



In the two days leading up to the event the field gradually filled up with tents and trikes, camper-vans and caravans. One couple had triked up from the Pyrenees, then there was a Belgian family, a Frenchman with his dog in a basket on the front of his trike, a French couple with a recumbent trike, called “un bent” in French, the English who had triked from St.Malo, and many other “pilgrims” with many stories to tell. The TA (Tricycle Association) fraternity are famed for their story-telling, and so good were some of the stories that we were in danger of forgetting the race altogether.

The local villages were not letting us forget, with posters of the event and pictures of trikes in all their shops and bars, and even a very flattering article in the local newspaper. We were, in fact, a novelty item in the village fête. Several of us decided to try out the 25 km course, a circuit through three or four villages, with some serious corners for the unwary tricyclist.

Race day dawned warm and sunny, and a game of rounders was begun. Again we were in danger of forgetting the race. I have noticed before that the tricyclist’s priorities in life are different from “normal” people’s. John’s main preparation seemed to be polishing the Higgins brass plate on the back axle and the rivets on my very old Brooks saddle.

And off we all set to the village, passing big signs along the road with splendid pictures of racing trikes to spur us on. No CTT warning signs anywhere...Pose for the local press, chat to the villagers, then face the time-keeper. I’ve never heard so much cheering at the start of a time-trial, and all the way round, through all the villages, cheering and clapping from the roadside, from people’s gardens, how fantastic. Whoops, we nearly missed a corner, there were so many people standing there it looked completely different from our practice – Lance

Armstrong had this problem, you know, on the Alpe d'Huez. We were catching riders, but not the ones we were after. Marshals were stopping the traffic on the roundabout – come to Chelford, we need you! – back past the chateau and the bar – but where did this hill come from? it wasn't there before, feeling sick, are these my legs? Over the brow, pound down to the village and sharp right, FINISH! 40 minutes and 41 seconds. The loud speakers crackle into life, the winners are Martin and Alison Purser in 40 minutes and fourteen seconds. Well, at least we got on the podium in second place, and our prize was two beautiful engraved wine glasses.

In the evening it was back to eating and drinking – another favourite pastime of the TA, I have observed. About 40 of us in the back room of the café-bar, lots of “pineau”, and apple cognac donated by Raoul – you took a sip and your lips burst into flames! The ride back to camp in the cool evening air brought us back to earth, a bit.

Sunday club run: about 30 trikes and tandem-trikes and the “bent”, all trundling along the narrow country lanes to a nearby village for morning coffee. The barman didn't flinch as we all trooped in, and just kept pouring. Meanwhile the church opposite came out and all the congregation stopped in amazement at the sight of our trikes “parked” between the church and the bar. “Mais qu'est-ce que c'est?” they were all exclaiming.

Lunch was back at camp, a giant picnic on the field, lots of beer and wine and more story-telling, guitar and singing and a game of cricket. The evening was the village “repas champêtre”, to which we were all invited. About 350 people in a massive marquee eating and drinking and being entertained with traditional French songs from a duo playing accordion and guitar. I got up with my guitar, John with his harmonica, Koj and Mike with their voices, and we sang two or three traditional English songs. Auld Lang Syne seemed to go down best, everyone singing and swaying, it was a great atmosphere.

Monday was farewell time and we all went our different ways, our way heading for the Pyrenees, Provence and the Alps. A la prochaine...

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Noel Mills, who suffered a severe stroke over ten years ago, has had another reversal which saw him admitted to Trafford General Hospital. He has now been transferred to Altrincham General in the Stamford ward for assessment if any old friends wish to visit him.

Both Mike McConville and his son were injured on their tandem recently when a motorist failed to see them (or just ignored their presence) near the Saracen's Head. This accident was a re-run of the one that caused such grief for Colin Redmond. Fortunately both are well on the mend and Mike has been getting back to grips with the half-day group.

Roy Myers was yet another victim of the ITM stem fiasco and his resultant injuries, sustained in a '25' whilst at speed, saw him admitted to hospital. Now recovered, the incident has severely dented his confidence and put a premature end to his season's racing. There's a lot to be said for the old forged stems.

Wynne Clarke is expecting to go into hospital again so they can have another 'crack' at her knee. The last attempt left Wynne worse off than before so let's hope they can rectify the problem well enough for her to be able to get the pedals round. It was good to see both Wynne and Bev out at the recent mid-week vets' '25' and still taking an interest in the sport.

New members are Peter Julyan, 45, Victoria Rd, Altrincham, WA15 6PP. 0161 980 3662 and Sophie Wood, 12, Oak Rd, Hale, WA15 9JA, 0161 941 3323. Welcome to you both and we hope you enjoy your time with us.

Richard Williams has had to change his e-mail address for the usual reason - spam clogging. He is now to be found at dicky.williams1@ntlworld.com.

Dave Matthews has also changed his e-mail to david@matthews9944.fsnet.co.uk

Although this may be the last magazine for a while, I'm still going to produce the club handbook. Will any members who have changed their address, telephone or e-mail addresses please let me know as soon as possible so that the 2005 issue will be as



WHO IS THAT GUY?

One of the difficulties about being the editor of the magazine is the effort needed to keep oneself out of the limelight. After all it's the club life we seek to reflect, not the ego of one person. To do the job well though you do have to get yourself involved in all aspects of the club.

Being at the majority of functions does put you in the frame, so I've tried to keep behind the camera and usually succeeded. If anybody picks up these issues in the future they may just wonder who I was.

So, here, for the first and last time is a photo taken on the Galibier in 2003 looking for all the world as though I might actually be enjoying it. Closer examination however will reveal the presence of a triple and nowadays 32x26 replaces 42x23. This tells the true tale.

Those that remember the heady racing days of the 60's might also remember my silver blue Merlin. Well, that's still it forty years on and still going strong. Pity the rider isn't!

(Continued from page 25)

SP (Leicester) Wood rims were made of ash, elm and hickory, then beech and maple in later years. They were never made of bamboo. You have been speaking to some incredibly ignorant person who has never ridden or seen a wooden rim.

G Cross (Walsall) The secret of fitting tight 700 tyres is plenty of French chalk or talcum-powder on the tube, a little soft soap on the tyre-beads and it's magic the way those tyres slip on and up into a good concentric position.

R Graves (Lewes) A simple answer would be bull****! Ask any old Buckshee Wheeler and he will tell you he kept his tyres really hard even in desert temperatures. That's not the reason your tyre blew off the rim. It just was just badly fitted. Put it on right. (See above)

New Boy (Sheffield) You are under a misapprehension; aluminium-alloy frames have to be made heavier than steel, the metal being so inferior for cycle frames.

Bobee (Kensington) You again! If your chain keeps falling off the chainwheel on your 5-speed bike, either your frame is out of track or the chainwheel teeth are not chamfered. Take the bike to your dealer and show him my answer!

OT (Fife) Yes, I saw the "Cycling Weakly" (sic) article by a so-called expert who didn't know the difference between an axle and a spindle and called the hub spindle an axle. I also saw the ad by Pete Matthews (the world's best wheel builder?) for clincher tyres. Very obviously he has never **seen** a clincher tyre.

See what I mean?

It's September It's Saturday and it's fun all the way!



Paul and Dan get Fresh Legs

It hadn't looked too good in the days leading up to this annual jaunt along the A50. Nobody seemed willing to commit themselves and the weather report wasn't too promising either. In the event eight pairs turned up with a tandem a tandem trike and the usual combination of ill-matched solos and the weather held good. As the various 'combatants' nervously circled the car park of the Kilton waiting for the start, most resplendent in club colours, a guy in an immaculate Rolls Royce turned the corner and jammed his brakes on. Suddenly there was someone who was even more nervous than the riders. What were all these strange looking people doing? What were these strange machines? Will my car be safe? You could almost see the panic in his eyes. Perhaps the strangest looking machine was Dan Mather's

tandem. Well, the machine was alright, it's just that it was designed to have someone small of stature on the back. Instead it had Paul Aldridge at over 6' 4". This had led to a special seat post being needed that was in fact longer than the actual seat tube of the frame. I don't know what the stresses are in such a post made of carbon, but if I were Mrs Aldridge, who was watching from the sidelines, I would have been panicking even more than the Roller's driver. Roger had done a splendid job rustling up some prizes (Thanks to Neil Walton at the Bike Shak!) and all competitors walked away with something. In true Roger tradition the faster you were the more bizarre the prize, culminating in a pair of squeaky plastic turkey legs for Dan and Paul. All part of the ploy to persuade people not to take this too



Waiting nervously for the start

The Full Unexpurgated Result.

- | | | |
|---|---|-------|
| 1 | Dan Mather/ Paul Aldridge (Tandem) | 18.16 |
| 2 | Gareth Blease/Alex Young (Solos) | 20.04 |
| 3 | Phil Holden/Mike McConville (Solos) | 20.20 |
| 4 | John & Carole Pardoe (Tandem Trike) | 20.44 |
| 5 | Roger Haines/ Gordon Peake (Solos) | 22.42 |
| 6 | Dave Attwell/Mike Wigley (Solos) | 22.52 |
| 7 | John Carberry/Peter Coles (Solos) | 23.28 |
| 8 | John Thorogood/ Keith Wilkinson (Solos) | 24.00 |



ABIT OVER THE TOP

I came into cycling as a mountaineer with a bad knee injury. The physio recommended a little gentle pedalling to repair the damaged tendons in the back of my knee.

Thus after some successful remedial work round the flatter parts of Cheshire, it seemed appropriate to ride my bike in the hills. I had no idea how to ride a bike on the flat, but years of hill bashing on two feet seemed to have a small carry-over into an adaptation to go hill bashing on two wheels. And cycling has two massive advantages for the ageing mountaineer---freewheeling downhill which takes the strain off worn out back and knee joints---and roadside cafes.

Around this time I was introduced to Audax by Mel Green, a well known habitué of the Eureka Café on the Wirral. The self sufficient spirit of Audax has much in common with mountaineering and I resolved to try one of their events. Sheila Simpson's "White Peak 100" from Eyam in March 1989 seemed to fit the bill. Here was two wheeled adventure in the hills on a pre-arranged route (so less work at home with the map). I duly sent off the entry form and received a route sheet in return. The route sheet mentioned something called the Audax Altitude Award and this event gave 0.5 point (only, as the Brevet Card sternly pointed out, if you finished within 6hours 40 minutes).

This event was blessed with some of the worst weather ever encountered on an Audax ride. The wind screamed horizontally across the Peak District, filled with a mixture of rain and sleet. Around 15 riders started and eventually there were 5 finishers with yours truly struggling in one minute inside the time limit. Somehow, Audax seemed a natural progression from the many storms I had experienced as a mountaineer.

For some inexplicable reason, this challenging experience led me to enter The Goose Eye Roses Grimpeur 200 with 2AAA points in May. Maybe I subconsciously needed a blow up or bust test for my bike, my formerly damaged knee, my brain and my enthusiasm for cycling.

It is a hard ride from Heywood over the bleak Lancashire moors with little respite from the climbs. These include the Goose Eye which is reputed to be 1 in 4 or worse. Early on I was a bit perturbed when my riding companion on Blackstone Edge started beeping. It turned out he had a heart rate monitor which warned of excessive exertions as he had a heart condition--but as he was a Doctor advised us that "everything would be all right". Then on the first steep descent, a couple of lads who only had a poorly maintained front brake on their bikes had a narrow escape from some deep ditches at the side of the road and decided to pack. Very wise in view of what was still to come! (Would they ever have been allowed to start in today's risk avoidance obsessed environment?)

By the first stop at Gargrave at 70Km I had settled into the ride along with three companions, including the beeping Doctor, at the back of the main bunch. We rode on together in an attitude of mutual support which eventually got us back to Heywood in the twilight.

This ride was the one, in retrospect, that got me hooked on Audax. The damaged state of my knee would never let me get back to rock climbing ---but here was an alternative route to the hills with similar demands of difficulty, self reliance, exciting descents and lots of uncertainty (in my case) as to the outcome. I was also most impressed by the determination of the two lads on imperfect bikes and the heart rate challenged Doctor to "give it a go" in spite

of any handicaps.

In June I entered the Cheshire Cycleway 220Km ride. Whilst navigating rocks and broken tarmac down Wildboardclough where the road and bridges had been washed away in a flash flood, I fell in with a group of riders from Seamons CC.

This led to my next level of cycling experience as by the end of the ride I had agreed to accompany their cycle tour to follow the Alpine stages of the 1989 Tour de France. Riding up the crowded Alpine passes, my companions from Seamons seemed to be better known than some of the Tour riders. It began to dawn on me that maybe I had got on the back of a very experienced group of cyclists and just maybe that explained why it was such a struggle for a novice to stay in touch. However their good humour never faltered with my struggle to keep up and slowly but surely I was learning how to ride a bike in the big hills.

Later that year we had a family holiday in Provence, near Mont Ventoux. This gave me the opportunity to ride my first Audax on foreign soil, the 240k Tour du Comtat Venaissin. Thanks to all the fitness gained earlier with the Seamons, I was able to ride this tour which included Mont Ventoux summit and many of the surrounding cols in the Ventoux area in half the allowed 3 days. Once the ride was registered back in the UK, I was allowed 1.5 AAA points for this effort.

So 1989 was my first year into serious cycling and the experience gained with Audax and the Seamons CC set me up for the cycling challenges ahead. It was also the year when I decided to go for the Audax Altitude award, requiring 12AAA points, over the next couple of years.

Things started well in 1990 with the Dalesman 200k, (worth just 2AAApoints in those days; now up to 4 AAA points). Then due to work commitments cycling was limited for a few years until I was back living in Cheshire in 1996 and started to build up fitness to tackle the hills again.

The first comeback attempt ended in disaster in March 1996 when I skidded off the bike on a

slippery Peak District hairpin near Monyash and ended up in Chesterfield Hospital with a fractured femur. After 6 weeks I was back on the bike again and by May was fit enough to ride the Peakland challenge and the Dales 140K. I can remember wondering if my femur would stay in one piece under the strain of the steeper ascents, but the inserted titanium rod and glue held things together.

By September I needed just one point more for my first AAA award and naively entered the 200Km Kidderminster Killer, worth 1 AAA point. Naïve because this ride is exactly what the name implies and actually was worth 2.5 AAA points. This was the last time I ever rode an event of such severity on a double chain ring. Triple rings for the triple A was the motto from then on! Definitely nowhere near fit enough for this ride, I struggled on into the twilight. I started to get a bit worried as I only had a primitive rear LED light on my bike with still a good 50 Km to go. Near Ludlow I met another rider even more shattered than myself--but he had lights. We then formed a mutual co-operation tandem with his front light, my rear light and a mutual determination to finish within the maximum time limit. Eventually, we made it to Kidderminster with 10 minutes to spare and my first AAA award was secured.

Once I had rested in a dark room for a few days to recover from the "Killer" the AAA planning resumed. Eventually after riding AAA events in France, Dorset, Shropshire, Peak District and Yorkshire, my first triple AAA award was gained on the Peakland Panorama in May 1998. Now having a real taste for the AAA and well located in Chester to visit the hilly areas, the second one came along on the Mow Cop 200k in April 2000.

Over the next four years I enjoyed lots more AAA events until finally, in January 2004 I needed just 3 AAA points to gain the coveted 9x AAA award.

Graham Mills "Aqueduct" 100k from Corwen is a favourite, so I rode this as a permanent on a chilly and dull day in February.

This left me looking for a worthy challenge to finally qualify for the 9x and Sheila Simpson's 200k "Cambrian" from Leominster to Machynlleth and back gave this in full measure. This ride summed up what the AAA is all about---beautiful scenery, quiet roads and possibly more hills than you ever want to see!

So finally, after starting out 15 years ago in Sheila's AAA Peak District blizzard, the 9x milestone was gained by riding Sheila's challenging Cambrian event to and from Leominster.

Whilst struggling over all these hills, one has time to contemplate the virtues and difficulties of the different Audax hilly rides---so here is a small selection of my own views:

- Most difficult 200K---The Dalesman at 4AAA
- Runners up 200k---The Kidderminster Killer ; The Cambrian and The Goose Eye
- Most interesting English 200k---The Dorset Coast which even includes a ferry ride
- Hardest 200k with no AAA points---The Hartside
- Hardest 160K---PROF Galibier-French Alps
- Hardest UK 160K---The 'Illy Imperial
- Most exhilarating 100k+---Verdon Gorge including the Crest road
- Most scenic 100k---the Brenig Bach from Corwen
- Hardest 100k---jointly the Dartmoor Devil and White Peak Super Grimpeur.

So there's my story of some of the great and not so great times I've had riding the Audax AAA

CLUB OPEN '25'

It was the best of entries, it was the worst of entries..... who wrote that? What the Dickens! We got the best entry of the year on Cheshire with over 140 received but the club itself could rustle up only three. With a full field and 10 reserves as well we ended up with 109 finishers, twenty of whom were inside the hour on a trying day. Best of the lot was last year's Guest of Honour, Gethin Butler with a stunning 53.11 - 2½ minutes too good for everyone else. Gethin gets two tickets for our dinner, good job he seemed to enjoy himself last year. Old friend, Derek Hodgins took the vets' award and the Warrington RC the team in a prize list that saw 20% of the finishers end up with something out of the £356.00 prize list.

CTC MEMBERSHIP

The club's constitution (Rule 6) states that all members MUST be members of the CTC or BCF. The BCF has now become BC and this will be altered for the next handbook. Over the last few years we have accepted members who just take the CTC's 3rd party insurance rather than full membership. This worked well enough though it does present problems for the treasurer. The CTC has now decided that the financial year for this insurance will be from October to September. Those who took this option will not now be covered from the end of September. Not only has the period altered but the price has gone up (to £12.00) along with a change to the actual type of membership conferred. These changes do not sit well with the club's (nor any other organisation's) financial year and the situation becomes even more difficult for the treasurer to control. Full membership for the CTC for adults is £32 but there are concessions. This matter will be on the agenda at the club's AGM and it is possible that the club will revert back to the original rule and insist on full membership for all. If you want to air your views on this topic then don't miss the AGM

**YOUR
JOB
IS
GIVEN
ALL
THE
KIND
DELICATE CARE
OF OUR EXPERT
CRAFTSMEN!**



So, somebody else has had their bike repaired by Roger.



TESTING TIMES



With a much depleted racing base this season (a variety of other commitments, illnesses and injuries having contributed to this) it is good to report that the short distance championships were well supported and that we have champions at all distances. So much so that the 24 hour was better supported than the 12 hour! Almost at the end of the season we persuaded a relative newcomer to time trials to 'have a go' at the BAR and in three weekends relegated last year's champion, Phil Holden to runner up. Still, competition is what it is all about and revenge might only be a season away.

Championship '10' - June 9th

Held a little later this year, we were blessed with a fine night and a good turnout. Some new faces greeted the start timekeeper, Steve Booth, but it was an old hand who took the honours. Paul McAllister cemented his claim to be the top short distance expert with his 22.13 ride giving him a comfortable cushion over Tim Seddon. Dave Bates proved, yet again, to be adept at getting among the medals. Pete Devereux again took the Vets Award with his +06.56.

1	Paul McAllister	22.13
2	Tim Seddon	23.00
3	Dave Bates	23.21
4	Dan Mathers	23.39
5	Richard Williams	23.51
6	Paul Smith	24.04
7	Keith Bailey	24.22
8	Pete Devereux	24.49
9	Nigel Harrop	24.59
10	Simon Williams	25.03
11	Phil Holden	25.42
12	Paul Aldridge	25.49
13	Dave McIlroy	26.16
14	John Carberry	26.25
15	Rob Morton	26.50
16	Gareth Blease	27.01
17	Brendan Coyle	27.35
18	Dave Tickle	28.02
19	Mike Wigley	28.37
20	Alan Thompson	29.26
21	Malc McAllister	29.43

22	Siân Grainger	30.01
23	Peter Julian	30.44

Championship '25' - June 30th

Another fine night, another good turnout and another opportunity for the same three riders to fill the same three top spots. Even the same Vets Champion. At least Paul Smith, more noted for his hill climbing, was able to put his new found speed to good effect with a personal best and the handicap.

1	Paul McAllister	56.38
2	Tim Seddon	59.19
3	Dave Bates	59.45
4	Dan Mathers	1.00.09
5	Paul Smith	1.01.13
6	Richard Williams	1.01.21
7	Roy Myers	1.02.30
8	Phil Holden	1.03.57
9	Pete Devereux	1.04.53
10	Nigel Harrop	1.04.57
11	Allan Blackburn	1.08.43
12	Dave Tickle	1.09.36
13	Brendan Coyle	1.10.18
14	Mike Wigley	1.11.00
15	Siân Grainger	1.16.11
16	Peter Julian	1.21.09

Handicap: Paul Smith....52.53
Vets Champion: Pete Devereux +17.00

It was a great pity that the ride of Dan Mathers was spoiled by the antics of a fellow cyclist out on a training ride, as it might just have prevented him getting inside the hour in his first ever '25'.

Championship '100' - July 3rd

Only two to scrap this out and it finished so close. Nigel Harrop in his first hundred got the better of last year's BAR, Phil Holden who at least had the satisfaction of being best vet.

1	Nigel Harrop	4.42.45
2	Phil Holden	4.43.22

The Squirrel

In the vets section the results were reversed with Phil's +50.23 bettering Nigel's +41.12. It looked increasingly as though one of these two would end up with their name on the DK Hartley Trophy. But which one?



'Never again Nigel' after his first hundred

Championship '50' - July 24th

A disappointing entry for this event from club riders saw Dave Bates profiting and taking both the Club and Vets Championships. Nigel Harrops fine 2.08.58 was a personal best and put him in pole position for the DKH Trophy.

1	Dave Bates	2.03.45	+30.38
2	Nigel Harrop	2.08.58	+22.00

Championship '24' - July 24th

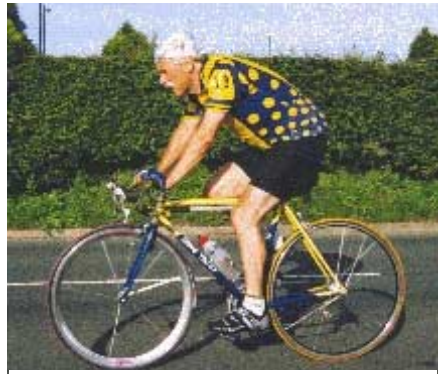
Now we know where some of the members were! After several years without any riders in a '24' hour ride, along came three at once. Phil Holden proved the best but suffered horribly through the night before running out as our double Champion.

1	Phil Holden	370.00	+23.6
2	Rob Morton	317.88	
3	Dave Tickle	303.85	

Vets Champion: Phil Holden

Championship '12' - Aug 15th

Chosen because the Lancashire RC were promoting the National Championship on 'Brock' and as a way of supporting the event we forsook our normal West Cheshire event. A great pity that two '12' hour events were on consecutive weekends as both suffered from lack of entries. Phil Holden was our sole entrant and his 219.85 was well down on last year's effort at Prees. No matter it gained him the Championship as well as the vets award with a +21.88. Would it make him the club BAR for the 2nd year running though. Read on...



Phil Holden - '12' & '24' Champion

As you can read elsewhere, a great ride round the Marmotte route in France by Dan Mathers convinced the old hands that he could certainly ride a '12' hour time trial. After all if you can ride the Glandon, Croix de Fer, Télégraphe and the Galibier before finishing off with a romp up the Alpe D'Huez, then a '12' shouldn't be too much of a problem. We convinced Dan to enter not only a '12', but a '100' and a '50' also. Considering he'd not ridden any of these distances before he was remarkably trusting. He came back from France and duly entered the three events. What we didn't know was that Dan had already entered a mountain bike '24' hour ride for the weekend before the '12'. So his programme on consecutive weekends was 1) 24 hour ATB ride. 2) West Cheshire '12' hour. 3) East Liverpool Whs '50'. 4) North Mids '100'. For someone who had not done any specific training this could have been a tall order but here's how it went...

West Cheshire '12' 244.98 miles for 5th place and 1st handicap.

East L'Pool '50' 2.09.18 and feeling a bit tired. North Mids '100' 4.19.00 and just outside the top '10'. This gave Dan an average of 22.261 mph and wrapped up the club BAR at his first attempt. Last year's champion, Phil Holden, had to settle for 2nd this year with a 20.539 mph average but can take consolation from his Vet's BAR. Congratulation to both riders for keeping the



Dan Mathers heads for the club BAR

club's name flying at the longer distances.

Phil lost out yet again in the D K Hartley trophy and we have a new name for that piece of silverware also. Nigel Harrop's rides of 1.04.55, 2.08.58 and 4.42.45 saw him home with 22.520 mph to Phil's 22.251 mph. Both are vets and here it was Phil who took the honours with a +3.155 mph to Nigel's +2.846 mph.

RW CHAPMAN TROPHY

This year there were 17 events to choose from with the best 13 to count. Paul McAllister didn't even need all thirteen to amass an unbeatable 236 points though Richard Williams got within a point with his full complement of rides. Best first year rider was Brendan Coyle with 141 points, just ahead of Siân Grainger, the best lady.

All the finishers:-

1 P McAllister	236	2 R Williams	235
3 P Devereux	180	4 R Myers	177

5 N Harrop	157	6 B Coyle	141
7 S Grainger(L)	139	8 P Smith	134
9 D Mathers	126	10 G Blease	118
11 T Seddon	116	12 S Williams	110
13 A Thompson	105	14 D Tickle	78
15 D Bates	74	16 M Wigley	71
17 C Bridge(L)	69	18 P Julyan	63
19 C Hale	62	20 J Carberry	60
21 D McIlroy	54	22 P Aldridge	52
23 M McAllister	51	24 A Blackburn	48
25 P Coles	35	26 C Levy	33
27 K Bailey	29	28 M McConville	27
29 D Attwell	24	30 R Haines	20
31 J Lambert	19	32 R Potter	16
33 P Holden	10	34 S Wood(L)	9
35 R Morton	6		

Thanks to all those who supported the events this year, to Steve Booth who timed most of them and the many marshals and sign-putters who came out in all weather.

THE REST OF THE SEASON

Just the club Hill Climb to come and it looks as though Paul Smith is getting some practice in as his name is appearing on various start sheets. Is anybody going to challenge and prevent him lifting his 3rd title in a row? Date : **Sunday October 10th**. Place: **Withenshaw Lane**. Time **11.00 am**. We will then repair to the Ryle's Arms for a roast dinner lunch (Chicken, beef or Vegetarian) at a cost of £7.95 - which includes coffee.

Not too keen on riding a '25' at Christmas? Well, this year there's no need to. The M&DTTA event will be over '10' miles this year, with both serious and fancy dress riders completing the same course at Byley. It's Derek Hodgins last promotion for the M&D so enter or come along for a great morning gathering and some mince pies.

Date: **Sunday Dec 19th**. Place: **Byley**. Time: **10.00am**. Entry Fee: **£6.00**. Entries close: **Tuesday Dec 7th**. See Jim Boydell for an entry form.

NEXT YEAR

Mike Brooks has offered to run the club's open '25' next year - thanks Mike - but we really need a Time Trial secretary to co-ordinate the club's



CLUBRUNS



	DATE	HALF-DAY	TOURING SECTION
Sep	19th	Two Mills	Two Mills
	26th	Beeston	Edgworth
Oct	3rd	Delamere	Alsager Bank
	10th	**** CLUB HILL CLIMB	WITHENSHAW LANE ****
	17th	Astbury	Meerbrook
	24th	Tattenhall	Mystery Tour
	31st	Buxton	Beeston
Nov	7th	Beeston	Hayfield
	14th	Meerbrook *	Malkins Bank
	21st	Summertrees	Allgreave
	28th	Cat & Fiddle	Rodeheath
Dec	5th	Marton **	Higher Poynton
	12th	**** CHRISTMAS HOT	POT & FANCY DRESS ****
	19th	Astbury ***	Summertrees
	26th	Impromptu	Impromptu
Jan	2nd	Beeston	Hatton Arms, Hatton

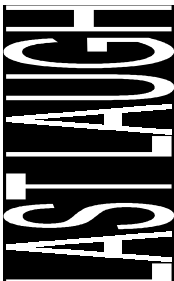
Club Hill Climb on Withenshaw Lane with follow on lunch at the Ryles Arms. Names to Roger Haines as soon as possible for the lunch and contact Steve Booth if you intend to ride.

* It's Keith Bailey's birthday!! And the cakes are on him so let's have a good and expensive turn-out. Everyone welcome! The more the merrier!

** Montgomery weekend also, over Friday and Saturday nights. That's three days riding. Can you take it in December?

Christmas Hot Pot Fancy Dress theme is Pirates of the Caribbean (Got that Mr Thorogood?)

*** M&DTTA Christmas '10' (Not '25!!) Use those fancy dress costumes again.



The placings are always sorted like this at the Seamons Road Race