



THE SQUIRREL

Spring/ Summer 2010



Editorial

By John Carberry

In between the biscuits and tea-drinking at our last committee meeting, the discussion turned to matters of culture.

Not culture exemplified by the arts or creativity but something much more important: club culture.

Most people will have an opinion about what sort of club we are, especially if provoked by articles in the Squirrel.

Are we a sports club, a social club, a welcoming club, an elitist club?

We are all these things, probably; a hotch-potch of moods, attitudes and levels of commitment and interest reflecting the fact that we're a club made up of people, of individuals.

We would all agree, of course, that we are joined by a common interest – cycling.

But is there more to being a club member than simply enjoying riding your bike and paying your subs?

If you join a gym you are paying for a service. Your transaction enables you to use facilities. There is no passion or soul in that exchange, it is a commercial arrangement. You don't care who's sweating next to you or if they're going to make it to the end of their session.

What's different with the club is that all of the services are provided by volunteers. Their transaction is not commercial, it is not soulless. They do it because they care about the club and because they understand that a club is more than a collection of individuals with a common interest.

Without these volunteers the club would just be a name; a word, not a feeling.

Paying your subs buys you a membership to the club – if you want to truly belong to something it takes more than cold cash.

If you care about your club, take time to remember why you joined – and see if there's anything else you can give.

Contents

- 3 Meet your clubmates
- 4 From the President.
- 5 Llangollen the easy way
- 6 Majorcan meanderings
- 11 What is this thing called, love?
- 13 The come-back king
- 16 Dinner dance deliberations
- 17 Off the rails with the RAT run
- 20 Testing times
- 20 It's not about the bike
- 21 California wheeling
- 23 How Seamons was formed
- 24 Is stretching before exercise counter – productive?
- 25 Short & longs
- 27 Photo round-up of Spring 2010
- 28 Javea been here before?

Welcome to the bunch

A warm Seamons welcome to the following: Sally Cowan, Sheila and John Craig, Hannah and Daniel White, Valentina Almeida-Baldwin, Matthew Hodson, David Walker.

And a welcome back to Colin Hale, Simon Williams and Dave Attwell.

Thanks to all, (well almost all), existing members who took the trouble to complete the new membership form.

If your conscience is pricked, get in touch with Mike Brooks to set your record straight!

There are a few who have not yet renewed their membership – the presumption is this is an oversight! Again, give Mike a call.

Meet you clubmates... Basil Le Roux

Loud and opinionated, loyal, focused and fun. Basil leRoux introduces himself

Basil is perhaps best known for his major contribution to the Montgomery weekends, plotting on his laptop ice-free routes to Emily's cafe.

He has savoured the rigours of the Pyrenees Etape and the much-feared Fred Whitton sportif – see photo – so club runs to Buxton are just an hors d'oeuvre.

What will be the icing on the cake?

When and where were you born?

June 27, 1975. Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa.

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

Seamons, about four years ago. Started mountain biking, got a road bike to do some extra training and the rest is history.

What was your first race?

Buxton 33 in 2008. Only lasted one lap before a puncture.

What was your first win?

Every morning I get up...on a serious note, the club 25 in 2009 (if handicap is taken into account).

Which performance do you rate as your best?

2009 Fred Whitton in 7.10, taking 60 mins off my 2008 time.

What is your favourite meal?

Fish and vegetables.

What were you like at school?

Sporty, studious and fat!

What kind of books do you read?

Non-Fiction.

What kind of music do you enjoy?

All.

And your favourite type of TV pro-



Basil LeRoux climbing in the Lakes

gramme?

Factual or sport.

Which newspaper do you read?

Times and Telegraph. I am not sure the Squirrel is appropriate to put down that many!

What is your ideal holiday destination?

Anywhere I can be active.

Do you have any hobbies (apart from cycling)?

My work.

Who would play you in a film of your life?

Bill Murray.

What is your greatest fear?

That I don't achieve all I want to.

From the President

By Keith Stacey

Socialising in the sun

As last some warm sunshine on our backs. It seems to have been a long winter but a good start to spring has seen a welcome increase in numbers on the social ride, with new faces appearing each week.

Congratulations to Darren for getting this run off the ground and to the team of helpers who are foregoing their Sunday club run to lead this new group.

Welcome also to the riders who are making up the group, we hope you will soon become full members of the club and enjoy all of the other activities that we have to offer.

Halfway solution

In the last edition of the Squirrel, and on the members' forum on the web, we have had much debate about numbers on the half-day run.

This problem has been partially solved, in

the short term at least, by Phil and Mike taking out some of the fitter, social ride group (and anyone else who wishes to tag along) going usually to the same place as the half dayers but at a slighter steadier pace.

After-dinner questions

On the social front, the annual dinner was thought to be a great success by all who attended.

However as the premier event on the club's non-cycling calendar it was disappointing that less than half of members attended. And of those that did, many did not bring along their partners.

To try and interest more participation a questionnaire has been drawn up and I would ask all members to complete it and hand it to any member of the committee.

May the sun continue to shine and may the wind be always on your back.



"Riding a bike is everything to a cyclist. The friendship and camaraderie you have with other cyclists... To a cyclist, it was the be-all and end-all of your life."

- Tommy Goodwin, double bronze winner in the 1,000 metre time trial and the team pursuit in the 1948 London Olympics.

Meet you clubmates...

How would you describe yourself in a Lonely Hearts column?

I am not lonely so would have no need to describe myself...but if I was forced to, then "happily married, not looking"!

What is your favourite training ride?

Anywhere with hills, particularly Buxton and Hope.

What is your most unpleasant characteristic?

Being perfect is difficult, but I can be loud and opinionated.

Which characteristic do you most dislike in others?

People who let their talent go to waste.

Who would you most like to have met and why?

Winston Churchill...enough said.

What was your most embarrassing moment?

I am not sure the Squirrel is appropriate to put down that many!

Four words to describe yourself:

Loyal, focused, committed, fun.

Llangollen the easy way

By John Carberry

It wasn't the sun-washed shores of the Med by any means, but sitting outside the cafe at Lake Vyrnwy in the glorious spring sunshine you certainly got that holiday feeling.

After the usual car park confusion at Bala, the tourers had set off for a Friday run to Vyrnwy as an appetiser to their traditional weekend in Cerrig.

Lake Bala was mirror-flat under a sky of unbroken blue as we headed up the Milltir Cerrig for our faraway lunch.

The hill folds still held the snow in patches but you could sense that spring was all around you, hiding in the bushes.

Up at Vyrnwy, where the reservoir was decidedly choppier, we bumped into another rider. He was on a proper tour with panniers and everything. Show off. We took his photo and wished him well as he headed south.

We headed for the cafe.

After lunch it was around the lake and over the Hirnant, dodging more snow, a bit of ice, and, in some cases, badly driven cars on our way back to Bala.

On the drive to Cerrig we passed the first of the ride-outs in the shape of Johnny Pardoe, head down and well into his rhythm as he tackled what looked like a headwind.

It was tales around the bunkhouse fireplace after Lynda filled us up with a giant tea and some mega puddings.

Day two of the tour was the traditional (so long as it's not raining) trip to Conway.

Grey skies had covered the blue but at least there was no hail this time!

Since last year some of the touring section must have been abducted by aliens as there was no – that's right NO – complaints about which cafe we went in. Straight for the posh, expensive one.

In one case, so fond was their memory of the place they repeated their order from the previous year. Like I say: abducted by aliens and replaced with replicas who are



The Cerrig weekend 'Likely Lads' in Snowdonia

perfect in every regard, except one...

Ice creams by the seaside followed lunch for most. But not for Roger Haines. He'd excelled himself with a teetering tower of tea loaf (bara brith actually, but that's harder to alliterate), plus sandwiches and scones. This was described on the menu as a Welsh tea. No, I'd never heard of that tradition either. And I've got a Welsh O-level.

The run home included a foolish excursion up the side of a stupidly steep hill. Alan Thompson made us do it. He's never allowed to suggest a route again. For the sake of missing out the tedious drag from Betws to the bunkhouse, we endured nigh-on two miles of painful ascent. Even Roger was sweating by the top and had used up all three tiers of his lunch.

Back at the bunkhouse Dave Barker had rolled in, also claiming to have enjoyed his ride out from Alti.

More massive dinners followed from Lynda and another night of fireside chats and chuntering.

Sunday is the traditional rest day on the Cerrig weekend when the tourers decide the weather's too bad to ride and we all drive to Llangollen to welcome in the other bunch.

Not this time. The sunshine was back and we were left with an excuseless sky.

Llangollen the easy way...

Back on the bikes for an unprecedented third day of riding, we rolled along the A5 at a steady pace.

Things went a bit awry at Corwen. First, we dropped John Hurley (well, technically, he dropped us as he went off the front in search of a field/hedge).

Then it was more toilet mayhem when we turned off the main road (and out of John's sight) to use the public loos in the village.

Turns out these were modern and required money. We all chipped in a piece of the 20p and reasoned that we could take it in turns if we held the door open for each other once we'd bought our entry.

Nope. JP got stuck and set the alarm off.

We got him out but it made everyone very nervous that they might now be trapped forever in a toilet in Corwen.

The cafe and finish line at Llangollen were the usual blur of riders and confusion for the tourers but I think we made a good welcome for the bunch.

Outside the cafe, more sunshine really picked out the club kit as we lined up for our photoshoot, much to the bewilderment of all the non-cyclists passing by.

The ride back for the tourers followed the beautiful side of the valley, past Carrog to Corwen again, with dramatic vistas behind and bleating lambs in the fields alongside.

The contentment of the long-distance cyclist had to come to an end but the week-



Climbing near Lake Vyrnwy

end had given us more rides to savour (apart from that bit near Llanrwst) and more memories for the fireside archive. *Meanwhile...*

...Llangollen the hard way



Robin Haigh wins the sprint for the Llangollen sign, with Martin Wiggan second and Keith Stacey and Charles Carraz a fraction behind.

Bike Week update...

The club is hosting two family rides and two social rides in Bike Week (June 19-27) and you are invited to be part of the fun.

Family rides on June 19 and 26 will be around ten miles in total, using the Trans Pennine Trail and stopping at the Star pub, Lymm, en route.

Members and their families are welcome to join or be part of the marshalling team needed to keep the riders on course, deal with punctures or pitch in with simple mechanical repairs. The plan is for riders to go off in small groups so there could be people all at different points on the route.

The social rides will take place as normal on June 20 and 27. Darren's also looking for volunteers here as the rides may be more popular than usual.

Meanwhile, if you're free later on June 20, Darren would be grateful if you lent a hand at a roller session at Worthington Park, Sale.

The hotline to help him out is:
07803513098

Majorcan meanderings

By Ed Baldwin

The family holiday turned into a secret training session for Ed Baldwin, with three random cycling encounters making it a break to remember.

Ed takes up the story of his trip to Majorca and a stay in Port de Pollensa.

On the trip from the airport Janet explained that she had seen an increasing amount of cyclists as we neared the destination: "It must be popular with cyclists," she said.

"Oh no!" I thought, do I admit just how popular? I sat up and looked at mountains and watched the roads for cyclists, my holiday had begun. Like a kid wanting to jump in the pool, I wanted to get off the coach, climb on a bike and hit the road.

We arrived at our hotel and made our way through the cyclists to reception. Janet was very good about the whole thing and I promised to only cycle Monday, Wednesday and Friday; the other days I would devote to her and Valentina, a promise I stuck to.

We settled in to our room, a lovely corner suite overlooking the sea at the Pollensa Park Hotel, and went for a walk into the port. It was lovely, I had been given plans, maps and a recommended shops and restaurants list from Dave Mac and Chris Scholes, it was almost surreal to be able to make all this a reality.

I had arranged to collect a bike from Bruce at the Pro Cycle Hire shop, a Giant, all aluminium with Campag Centaur 10 sp 39/53 and Kyserium wheels. The bike was perfect, it felt like it was made for me. I have always been a Shimano man (Simplex and then Mavic in the old days) but I wanted to give Campy a proper try.

Back at the Hotel I met Louise Eden and Dave. I knew they would be in Pollensa Park around this time and when I saw them I was very pleased to see them. They were there on a week with Stuart Hall training camp. Stuart also arranges very reasonable airport transfers in Majorca and trips follow-



Ed Baldwin briefly turns pro - in the peloton ing the Tour de France, check out his web.

I didn't know it at the time but it was Louise and Dave who would really make my holiday special in the cycling sense. They invited me to ride with their Stuart Hall group on the Monday for a long, steady ride. I didn't hesitate and accepted the offer.

Sunday I had promised to spend the day with Janet and my youngest daughter Valentina, (my other daughter Amber had decided to stay at home and look after the house. She is very trustworthy).

The idea was to go to Pollensa town and have a look round the market. The reality was to look out of the window at the lashing rain and strong winds and watch Countdown.

Monday arrived and I kept my promise of going for a bike ride. We met up at 10am and set off for a ride.

As many of you know, Majorca is fantastic cycling country – the scenery, the polite motorists; I had to check my pulse on the

Majorcan meanderings...

monitor just to make sure I wasn't already in heaven.

The ride was long rolling and a very steady 17-18 mph, a pace I was unfamiliar with back home but enjoyed nonetheless.

We rolled through Alcudia all the way up to Manacor, Vilafranca de Bonany and stopped at Petra for lunch. Petra for me was amazing, I am familiar with the Scorton cafe near Garstang being a busy, bustling, cycling cafe but this...this was like an electric pylon full of migrating starlings: the square was full of cyclist, all chatting, all languages, all types of cyclists.

I sat down with my new pals and Sean Kelly walked past me. I said: "Hi." He said: "Hi" back.

Oh my God, dialogue with the great man himself.

This man had practically shaped my childhood, influenced some life choices, had been plastered all over my bedroom walls when I was a teenager.

I watched where he went, allowed him time to settle and order. Then I went over.

"Sorry to trouble you, would you consider it rude if I asked to have a photo with you?"

"No not at all," said Mr Kelly as he got up. He grabbed my hand and shook it. I could feel the power. Those Cinelli 65s must have taken some stick in their time.

I had my picture taken and we had a brief chat. He gave me some tips and explained the meaning of life but then told me not to tell anyone, so, sorry can't pass that on.

From Petra we travelled north west through Loret de Vistalegre, Sencelles, Binissalem, Lloseta up to Selva where we met a climb, Selver Gorge.

I decided to let Dave, Louise, Stuart and the other 16 or so in our group head on up this steady hairpin-infested climb at their own pace as I wanted to admire the scenery and really soak up the moment.

This was my first proper climb, different

from Fleet Moss or Kirkstone Pass, this was my first continental as-seen-on-TV climb. I could re-live the Herrera/Millar breaks; anyway if anyone needed assistance, I would be there for them.

As always I kept my promise of not overtaking anyone, no-one at all, not even a girl on a mountain bike with sandals on, I was gutted. A Chav might have described me as "Devoed."

How can I be so bad at climbing? I arrived at the top where everyone had waited, ordered food and coffee, finished and were zipping up their gilets for the descent.

Stuart said that it was all downhill from here. I pointed out that it was all downhill for me the moment we hit that bloomin' mountain.



Sean Kelly imparts the meaning of life

I redeemed myself on the descent and tackled it fearlessly with the finesse of a downhill skier. Non-climbers have to learn to make up time somewhere.

I got back that evening really satisfied with my day and feeling really glad to be alive and well.

Not wanting to go on too much, we enjoyed Alcudia Old Town on Tuesday as a family.

Wednesday, my next ride, I had upgraded my bike to a full carbon, top-of-the-range Massi, with Chorus carbon 11 and Fulcrum 3s. Mark Cavendish's dad had just returned it. Really? What is this place

The ride was flat, through Santa Eugenia,

Llucmajor and back, it was a long steady ride without a stop until Muro. From there back to the hotel, another lovely ride, the bike was a good ride but not greatly different, the price to buy would have been massively different.

Thursday was spent in Picafort again another really good day but not cycling related.

The Friday ride was a day planned in the mountains to watch the International Tour of Majorca, with a ride out through Inca, Alaro, Bunyola up the Col de Soller.

I tackled the Col de Soller very well, safely taking shortcuts round the bends and hanging on to someone's wheel.

I got to the top of this mountain really pleased with myself, obviously conditioned from Monday's agony, the rest day, and the easy ride Wednesday and so dismounted to position myself to get a good view of the race.

A small cafe at the top was probably where we were having lunch. The rest of the riders arrived and re-grouped and it was decided to drop down and have lunch in Soller.

I then had it explained to me that this was not the climb of the day. There was a bigger one later on. Interesting.

Soller reminded me a little of a pretty Swiss town. We had a really tasty baguette in Soller Square, watched a wedding take place and then filled our bottles from the Fountain providing mountain spring water from, apparently the monster we were about to climb.

I was briefed...the "Puig Major." We would watch the race from the top of that. We had to get a move on as the race had started and wasn't too far away, this would be great, watching the pros on a real mountain stage.

I climbed most of this climb on my own, with unbelievable views and scents from the citrus fruit farms. This once again felt like a special moment in my life, and I really did take it steady on purpose.



*Two Ed's are better than one?
Ed Clancy & Ed Baldwin*

As I neared the summit, about 15 minutes from the top, motorbikes and cars started to whiz past me with the life-and-death urgency of a volunteer marshal in a pro bike race.

This urged me to press on, I started to eye up vantage points in case I got pulled over but I remained composed as I had noticed the press photographers dotted along the road, my "poker face" involuntarily fixed in a suffering position to look like I had been going at the current speed all the way up.

On reaching the summit I received a large round of applause, I enjoyed it, any embarrassment had been left at the top of the Col De Selver on Monday.

It was freezing at the top of the mountain and we wrapped up as best we could as we waited for the pros to come. They did arrive, a Columbian, as you would expect, then a few more with some Brits and the Raleigh team, then a few more again, then all the cars, bikes and more. Then nothing.

After a while we decided to head on down the other side of the mountain, take a shortcut and watch the finish in Port de Pol-lensa.

Again I decided to enjoy the descent and take in some hairy corners with some of the other fast descenders of the group. Next thing, a whistle - it was a large group of riders from the tour. Crikey! I was soon swallowed up along with a couple of pals in this smallish peloton.

Majorcan meanderings...

Talk about intimate, my handlebars were practically touching handlebars of other riders. Then came the realisation: "I am in a pro race! I have made it!"

One of my pals then spotted Ed Clancy, "Mr. Clancy!" he exploded, surprising even himself at his own volume. "Go on Mr Clancy, go on!" Ed turned and smiled, it was great!!!

The race then took a slight incline and I got dropped, but my new mates hung on. Funny how things go, another 300 metres and I rolled up to find them being unceremoniously receiving a good telling off in the native tongue by a couple of policemen on bikes. I think that a rider had informed his manager over race radio. We carried on, thinking that was that and then got caught by another group, we pulled over immediately.

Rolling back to Port de Pollensa we picked up a pro cyclist who had been dropped and had the knock: Bernhard.

We gave him a lift back, getting a move on to try and get him back within the time limit, it wasn't going to happen and he would be disqualified anyway but still the idea of it made me do a few serious turns at the front.

With Bernhard safely delivered back to his team coach we ended the day at Tolo's. It was here that Ed Clancy and the rest of the GB/Motorpoint team were having their post-race pasta.

I was thrilled that he remembered seeing us in the "peloton". I obliged and let him have his picture with me. He was very friendly and a true gentleman talking to me about my stay on the island.

I finished the last few days of the holiday with the family and had an absolutely fabulous time. I returned the bike, again, good kit but did not make me go any faster .

The fact that this had been the coldest week in Majorca at this time of year since 1941 did not ruin my holiday one bit, I never even noticed.

Gonna ride a classic?



Dave Barker is organising what have become established Seamons classics – the Tour of the Berwyns and the Llangollen Panorama Audax.

Plucky riders have the choice of the full 205km Berwyns route or the one that cuts the corner off at Llangollen and is a mere 133km.

Both challenges start from Willington Hall, Kelsall on Saturday, May 15, where there is car parking and pre-ride refreshments.

It's an 8am start for the Berwyns and an 8.30 kick-off for the Panorama. The £5 entry fee includes a £2 voucher for post-ride food/drinks.

The Berwyns route goes via Garth, Corwen, Milltirr Cerrig, Llanrhaeadr, Chirk, Tilston and finishes at the Farmers Arms, Kelsall.

Riders of the Panorama take in Garth too but then head straight for Llangollen, Chirk and Tilston, also completing at the Farmers Arms.

To enter either event, please contact Dave at **221 Dane Road**
Sale
M33 2LZ

via email at: cyclistdavid@hotmail.com
or try the phone: **0161 282 7296**

Entry forms are available online at www.audax.uk.net and the closing date for signing up is May 11.

Good luck!

What is this thing called, love?

By Anonymous

When Sunday coincides with Valentine's Day there's a dilemma for those with partners.

To ride or not to ride? (Stop it! We're talking cycling here).

At one time, Valentine's Day only involved unattached youngsters and enabled a romantic approach with certain protected anonymity – the unsigned card tested the water with less chance of rejection.

As if! Half the cards would turn out to be hoax anyway – or were they? Next day at school we'd all lie about how many cards we'd got! Anyone over 25 getting involved was deemed a bit weird.

However, card manufacturers and various other interested retailers have managed to inflict, across all age ranges, yet another reason to extort more of our hard-earned cash, in exchange for a pretty piece of cardboard, a red envelope and some chocolates or "forced flowers" from a greenhouse, either of which are unlikely to last more than a couple of days.

I've heard that some couples are even "spending the day together"! Come on, what's wrong with these people?

Add this to: Christmas cards (both ways = x2), birthdays (x2), wedding anniversaries (x2), Mother's Day, Father's Day, Easter (x2), Valentine's (x2), first date anniversary, get well soon, happy vasectomy etc etc etc.

That's at least 12 occasions without trying too hard.

This list doesn't even include all those outgoing cards to friends and relatives and nowadays even work colleagues.

So, on average, every four weeks your living space fills up with cards intending to enhance your day but ultimately reminding you: the clock is ticking!

It's no wonder we all need a blue and green bin to accommodate the phenomenon. The expense, the trees – let's not even think? "Bah Humbug!" I hear you say.



Suitably saccherine image ripped from web

True romance is surely more sincere?

If you really want to show your partner unrestricted devotion – buy them a new bike.

Or go one further. Suggest your partner let's you spoil yourself with "another" new bike - now we're talking a display of true, unconditional love.

If you buy for them, create the time and space for them to ride it. When Match of the Day is on TV, perhaps? And if they really get the cycling bug, include Champions League and any mid-week matches?

Failing that, suggest riding around to see the people they're always on the phone to. If all else fails, try: "Ever thought about we get a tandem luv?" But beware the obvious pitfall.

I ask: Is this a recipe for perfect harmony or is someone about to shout "puncture"?

So it was good to see Valentine's Day didn't affect the club turn out on Sunday, February 14. No massacre!

Partners should rest assured they weren't forgotten. In fact they kept cropping up in conversation all day.

PS – We really, really do love you.

M&DTTA prize lunch



Winning smiles from the Seamons M&D prize-winners.

Congratulations to: Ian Udall: third in the Middle Distance Championship.
Dan Snape: Lilian Heald Trophy for 1st Handicap in "100".
Ian Udall and Robin Haigh: Team Champions in M&D "100".
Mel Bailey: Best first-year rider and winner of the Wagstaff Trophy.

All are pictured with club president Keith Stacey.

Racers required

A date for your diary is Tuesday, June 29, when the Seamon's Evening RR is staged, under the rules and regs of TLI Cycling.

It's on the Allostock circuit from 7pm, with the HQ at Allostock Village Hall.

There are three, 35-mile events, each run five minutes apart. Entry is open to all aged over 16, with races categorised by age.

There is NO entry on the line and we will allow a maximum of 80 riders to take part.

Last year's event was a great success and with your help this year's will be

Event organiser Nigel Harrop says: "The future of "grass roots" road racing – and by implication time trialling – is under threat from police and highways authorities.

"You can do your bit by visiting BC's Facebook campaign, 'Keep Cycling on the Roads' and leave a message of support, not forgetting to mention TLI Cycling!"

If you want to help Nigel with the road race, visit the racing section of the members' forum.

And if you wish to compete, go to the NW mainland section of the TLI Cycling web-site at www.theleagueinternational.com to see the region's event calendar and entry details.

Many thanks in advance for your support.

The comeback king

By Dave Matthews

The audacious exploits of the Audax expert—PART ONE

The basis of this challenge is to complete a minimum 200k validated audax rides (either in an event or a “permanent”) in each of 12 consecutive months. Start date is optional, to suit.

A “permanent” is a recognised audax route which can be ridden on a day other than the event, so long as you get appropriate proof along the way: dated receipts from shops/PO/Bank/garage etc.

In August 2004 I had already completed a sequence of five qualifying events and resolved to attempt to complete all 12 by February 2005.

This would involve night riding during the shorter months – but having been a member of Audax for 15 years, I decided it was about time I consolidated my credentials with a little night riding.

All went well through to early December, when I faced my first real night riding/cold weather test.

The chosen route was the “permanent” Lichfield-Wem-Lichfield 200k, which I started from the Travelodge at Rugely.

This ride was eventually completed within time, despite not being able to find the Lichfield control early in the morning, getting lost in the lanes in the evening darkness and virtually running out of front lights on the final stretch through Cannock Chase.

Lessons learned were to carry spare batteries for my lights, and preferably to have some foreknowledge of the tricky bits of the route encountered in the dark.

So far so good – ten rides completed and two to go. Unfortunately, my health broke down at Christmas and as a result I was unable to ride a bike again until July 2008,



Dave Matthews - King of the audax comeback

when I returned cautiously to the fray, overweight and unfit.

My first 200k come-back ride was in September 2008; the permanent Chester-Bala-Chester which was ridden on a beautiful sunny day after one of the wettest summers on record.

Unfortunately I then got a tooth infection in October which meant I had to start the sequence all over again in November.

Bearing in mind the lessons of December 2004, and in particular the advantage of already knowing roads ridden in the dark, I

The comeback king...

elected to ride a selection of Mike Wigley's Cheshire "permanents" during the winter months of 2008/09.

These routes have the advantage of passing close to my home near Chester. Thus I can use local start/finish points, which allows me to ride well-known lanes during the hours of darkness.

As a retired person, the "permanents" also give me the advantage of selecting ride days with reasonable weather forecasts during the winter months.

Once recovered from the tooth infection, I rode Mike's Holt, Mere and Eccleshall 200k randonees through November, December and January 2009 without too many dramas and was well set for completing the RRtY sequence through the kinder months of 2009.

In February, fate struck yet again when I managed to strain knee ligaments following a bizarre incident in the Mold section CTC bunch.

As a result of this injury I lost the ride sequence and had to start again in April 2009.

The timing of this restart meant that I would have to repeat the winter rides again. What a delightful prospect!

During April, I was on a family visit to Melbourne Australia. I took a bike along without any expectation of riding long distances.

However, contact with the good folk of Audax Victoria led to me riding the 200k Bay

City Roller event with them (see last Squirrel).

Looking forward from April 2009 to March 2010, and after essential consultation with my wife, it seemed that it would just be possible to fit the last two of a 12-month sequence of qualifying rides around my younger daughter's wedding in the February and our return to Australia in March 2010.

Well, the calendar spaces were there (just). All I had to do was complete the rides!

Once I had recovered from jet lag after the

long flight back from Australia, I embarked on my new series of 200k rides in the UK.

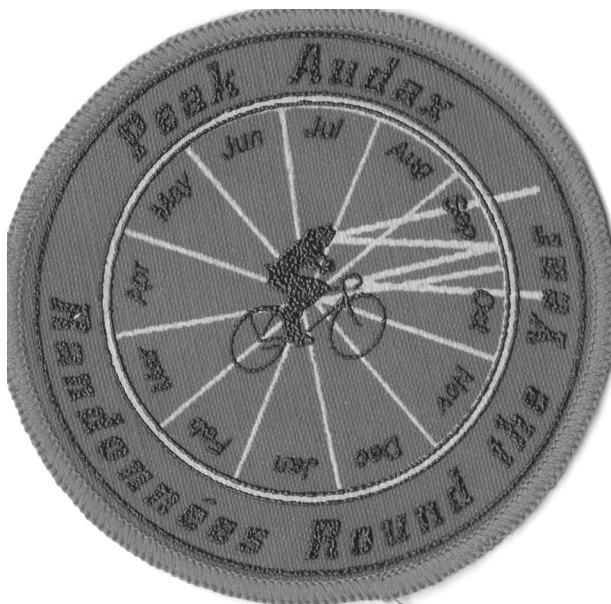
Following successful completion of Mike's permanent Newport and Eureka 200k randonees. in May and June, I entered The Hills and Plains of Cheshire 200k event from Congleton in July.

As I rolled up to the start, a long-standing back injury kicked in.

This caused some discomfort over the initial hilly section of the route and by the time I got to the 87k control at Lymm my back had seized solid.

As I climbed off the bike, the cafe crowd were intrigued to see me hobbling to a table looking like a modern day Quasimodo, still bent in the exact position used to pedal the bike.

After lunch I was lifted back onto the bike and continued in some pain until the route passed close to my home after 120k.



At this point I diverted to raid my stock of back liniment, which eased the pain and immobility somewhat.

I continued on with the ride as I was determined not to lose another 200k sequence and eventually finished back at Congleton after one of the more painful experiences of my life.

Following this ride I became even more determined to finish the RRtY after making such a big effort to finish.

Once I had received lots of sports massage into my back over the next couple of weeks, I was able to continue the ride sequence into August.

That month I rode the Three Counties- Four Leaf Clover 200k from Evesham, which looped out from base control into Gloucestershire, Warwickshire and then Worcestershire.

This was a really good scenic ride, enlivened at the time by tales from the super-hard folk who had just returned from the gale-swept 1,400k London-Edinburgh-London audax ride (which Dave Barker has ridden).

September's ride was the permanent 200k Chester-Dolgellau-Chester.

This ride was memorable for the constant head wind all the way to Dolgellau (fortunately blowing me back home), the mega hill up to Tabor on leaving Dolgellau and the last 50k ridden standing up.

All my own fault as I had fitted a new saddle to the bike which didn't feel too good after the first 100k. It was back to my trusty San Marco Rolls saddle once I got home!

At the start of October I had a short holiday in the Pyrenees. On returning to UK, my retirement present of a bespoke Burls titanium frame had just arrived.

I built this up on Tuesday, rode 25k on it Wednesday, and then took the bike with me to visit friends near Cardiff, prior to riding the 200k Gower Getter on the Saturday.

This ride travels out due west from Cardiff, through Swansea to a halfway point at the beautiful Worms Head Bay. The route then returns in almost parallel fashion back to Cardiff.

Well, the middle 50k of this ride is outstandingly beautiful – but the overall experience is marred by the fact that you are riding busy main roads for most of the remaining 150k.

Towards the end of the ride, our little group got lost in Cardiff in the Saturday evening rush hour, in the dark. This was a truly frightening experience as we got trapped in a maze of high-speed M4 feeder roads, with traffic whizzing all around us. But for the chance meeting with a local mountain biker who guided us out of the automotive mayhem, we could have been circulating Cardiff all night.

November's ride was the Mere 200 "permanent" which I started and finished in Wem.

This route is one of the more scenic of Mike's routes as it passes through rolling hills and tiny lanes in Shropshire, south of Cheshire.

Early that evening, as I rode down a narrow lane near Peckforton in the dark, an approaching car blinded and disoriented me by keeping its lights on full beam. My bike then clipped a grassy verge and threw me off onto the road alongside the car.

Fortunately, due to being completely disoriented by the eye-searing lights, I fell off the bike in a totally relaxed state (just like a drunk) and hit the ground without breaking anything.

The comeback king...

The motorist paused, saw me move to get up, and then just drove away leaving me to my fate lying in the narrow road. As the car had a “56” registration plate, I put this behaviour down to callous incompetence rather than yob maliciousness – but either

behaviour had the same effect on me!

Fortunately, bike and rider were sufficiently undamaged to continue to the finish at Wem.

This was to be the last of the “easy” rides before winter 2009/2010 kicked in with a vengeance! **... to be continued**

Dinner dance deliberations By Keith Stacey



Prize winners gather (L-R): Ian Udall, Dan Snape, Tom Dyer, Mel Bailey, Charles Carraz, Paul McAllister, Dan Mathers, Keith Stacey, Robin Haigh, Basil LeRoux, Jimmy Wright (Preston Wheelers)

It may seem a distant memory now to those who were there this year and even harder to remember for those who haven't been for years. Perhaps for those who've never been it maybe misconceptions that are in your mind.

What am I talking about? One of the highlights of our club's formal social calendar of course – the annual dinner dance.

In this edition of the Squirrel we're asking all members and their partners to take a few minutes to let the committee know what they think about the event.

Do you go? Do you like it? What could make it better? Do we need to have it at all? Does your partner go but dread it every year? Perhaps they can't wait to meet up with old friends but there's too much loud music?

Now's your – and their – chance to give feedback.

It's not the committee's event, it's the club's event – so get the kettle on, get your pencil out and fill in the questionnaire.

You will notice there is a questionnaire for partners too. If you can bear to share your Squirrel, please ask them to put pen to paper.

You don't even have to say who you are if you don't want to. Honesty and candour is more important than identifying who says what.

When you've filled it in, please hand it to any committee member or post it to:

Ian Udall
11 Neston Avenue
Manchester M20 3FJ

Dinner questionnaire - partners (continued)

14 Place the following in order of preference;

- (a) An evening function as now with dancing
- (b) An evening function as now without dancing
- (c) A lunchtime function

15 Have you attended a club dinner in the past ?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

If Yes how many?

- (a) One
- (b) Several
- (c) Lots

16 Are there any other comments you wish to make?

Comments

17 May we please have your name?

Name

Thank you for your assistance

Dinner questionnaire - partners

Please circle your responses

1 Did you attend this year's dinner?

(a) Yes (*continue below*)

(b) No (*go to question 12*)

2 Did you enjoy this year's dinner ?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

3 Would you prefer the function to start at:

(a) 6.30

(b) 7.00

(c) 7.30

(d) not bothered

4 Would you have preferred to have a guest of honour

(who would make a short speech)?

(a) Yes

(b) No

(c) not bothered

5 Did you like the venue?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

6 Did you enjoy the meal?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

Dinner questionnaire - members (continued)

16 Place the following in order of preference;

- (a) An evening function as now with dancing
- (b) An evening function as now without dancing
- (c) A lunchtime function

17 Have you attended a club dinner in the past ?

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

If Yes how many?

- (a) One
- (b) Several
- (c) Lots

18 How many years have you been a club member?

Years

19 Are there any other comments you wish to make?

Comments

20 May we please have your name?

Name

Thank you for your assistance

Dinner questionnaire - members

Please circle your responses

1 Did you attend this year's dinner?

(a) Yes (*continue below*)

(b) No (*go to question 14*)

2 If you have a partner did they attend the dinner with you?

(a) Yes (*go to question 5*)

(b) No (*continue below*)

3 Why did they not accompany you?

(a) Not interested

(b) Wrong format

(c) Too expensive

(d) Other reason....

Reason

4 Did you and/or your partner/guests enjoy this year's dinner?

(a) Yes

(b) No

5 Would you prefer the function to start at:

(a) 6.30

(b) 7.00

(c) 7.30

(d) not bothered

6 Would you have preferred to have a guest of honour ?

(who would make a short speech)?

(a) Yes

(b) No

(c) not bothered

Comments

Dinner questionnaire - members (continued)

7 Did you like the venue?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

8 Did you enjoy the meal?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

9 Did you like the music?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

10 Which of the following would you prefer? (circle as many as you like)

(a) No music

(b) No dancing

(c) Quiet music (as this year)

(d) Louder music

(e) Disco

(f) Live band

(g) Not bothered

Dinner questionnaire - members (continued)

11 Would you like to see any changes to the format?

(a) Yes (b) No

If Yes, what changes would you like?

12 When would you prefer the function to be held?

(a) November (b) February

13 Would you like a raffle or no raffle? (a) Raffle (b) No raffle

Please answer Questions 14 and 15 if you did not attend the function this year

14 If you did not attend this year's dinner please tell us why

Changes

15 What changes (if any) would you like to see to the function that would encourage you to attend in the future?

Changes

Dinner questionnaire - partners (continued)

7 Did you like the music?

(a) Yes

(b) No

Comments

8 Which of the following would you prefer? (*circle as many as you like*)

(a) No music

(b) No dancing

(c) Quiet music (as this year)

(d) Louder music

(e) Disco

(f) Live band

(g) Not bothered

Comments

9 Would you like to see any changes to the format?

(a) Yes

(b) No

If Yes, what changes would you like?

10 When would you prefer the function to be held?

(a) November

(b) February

Dinner questionnaire - partners (continued)

11 Would you like a raffle or no raffle?

- (a) Raffle (b) No raffle

Please answer Questions 12 and 15 if you did not attend the function this year

12 If you did not attend this year's dinner please tell us why

Comments

13 What changes (if any) would you like to see to the function that would encourage you to attend in the future?

Comments

Off the rails with the RAT runners

By Gordon Peake



In memory of John Dawson

It's not often the weather is bad enough to keep the dedicated off the bike. This year the weather has been a bit unusual and resulted in a couple of weeks' abandonments.

Inevitably, talk of alternative activities soon led to a revisit of "The **Real Ale Trail**" – a train ride to a series of pubs.

We'd done it some 12 months previously and really enjoyed it so the following Saturday was pencilled in, Sundays being sacrosanct and the weather could soon improve.

Word spread quickly, without the need of email or chat rooms; good old face-to-face and telephone!

A spontaneous arrangement that happened to attract various clubmates, but not an "official" event! Like our weekends away, it enables partners, friends etc to join in the club fun, resulting in a much better gender balance than is the norm. However, I was chastised by some the preceding Friday for not giving them the nod with sufficient notice to manipulate their attendance. Sorry – maybe next time?

The Rat Run has been on the CAMRA and good beer aficionados' runs list long before

Oz Clark and James May gave it a plug on TV.

Basically it's a visit to the buffet bars of Dewsbury (start), Huddersfield and Stalybridge railway stations (finish). There are numerous variations and diversions if time, inclination and a little footwork are used but today it's destination or bust.

Like Sunday runs you have to keep pace, avoid potholes or being dropped, and keep your wits about you. Stops aren't for punctures although they do have similarities even though they are more bladder than inner-tube based. The hard work is done by several trains, known to cyclists as the "The Durney".

A pre-start line study and print-out of timetables is an essential. The warm-up starts at Rackhams, naturally! – tram or train (via Stockport – interesting!) to M/cr Piccadilly.

Start sheets rustle on platform three as the peloton groups up from various directions. Fifteen Seamons have gathered, plus a handful of Friday OMT real ale fans brought in for their experience, style and pace-setting. Actually, I suspect we were really their guests as "John the Dog" (named for his four-legged companion) is usually responsible for setting up these excursions.

It's not an official run of course, no points, purely social and no Lycra in sight.

After the Depart Fictif at Rackhams, we're aboard the Pennine Express from Piccadilly's Grand Depart, bound for Dewsbury and the first control stop/hot-spot.

The journey out runs through all the fascinating bits of East Manchester alongside Ashton Old Road. The historic bits, new bits, canal and railway bits. Eventually leaving Ashton-under-Lyne and picking up the Tame valley we disappear into Marsden Tunnel under the Pennines. There's snow on the tops!

Yorkshire was bathed in midday sunshine

but it was bitterly cold as we stepped onto Dewsbury station and straight into the buffet bar.

All-day breakfasts plus all the usual available to eat, and a selection of real ales to die for. Moorhouses looked favourite.

A very popular spot for tourists and locals, so the seating arrangements were scattered. It was pleasant enough for some to sit in the beer garden, although I wished I'd put a base layer on (that's sportyspeak for vest!)

The bar is full of character and railway memorabilia (that's poshspeak for acceptable dust and junk!)

Real fires and authentic drafts (too hot by the fire and chilly away from it) with only the rumble of a steam train missing. 1950s nostalgia? Well worth a visit.

Puncture! All was going to plan when rumour spread that no trains were running towards Manchester (our route home) due to a broken track. Puncture indeed! This can't be fixed in five minutes.

Like most stations these days, Dewsbury appeared unmanned. The bar staff, whilst helpful, were happy to have us all trapped. They didn't really know about the train problem or care very much; they weren't stuck 30 miles from home, on the wrong side of the Pennines, without a bike or a plan B.

There is no call for an official "runs leader" on this run, after all we are all sensible adults. Cough!

In the confusion, chaos was about to break

out. Whilst absent in the loo we voted Mr Carberry as impromptu captain having all the right credentials, (ie an empty glass, and more pertinent – absent at the vote).

He set off to negotiate with locals and fellow RAT Runners (there are always others) and use his "local" knowledge from having visited Huddersfield at least once years ago.

Decision made – He led us further away from home! His plan B was: "Next train to Leeds!"

Leeds, a grand station with lots of trains but definitely not on our itinerary. Within minutes of stepping into Leeds, we found a train going to Manchester.

As we pulled out an official voice cried: "Tickets please".

Of course we hadn't a valid ticket between us for the Leeds bit. Step forward Mr Carberry. "No mate, and neither has anyone else in this carriage, and we don't want to be here on your train,

and we really want to be in Huddersfield by now, and it's all your fault."

The ticket man departed without another word (smiling). John can be very diplomatic and assertive. It's not just custard (or lack of) that brings out his hidden qualities!

Very soon we were back at Dewsbury on the very track we couldn't use. Then over the "patched rail" which you could only detect by the dozen or more day glow jackets staring under the train as we passed, which was a little unnerving.

Huddersfield station buffet bar is more down to earth but again specialising in nu



Proper beer

merous good ales. A mere pit-stop on this occasion, as we had time to make up. However, a step through the opposite door into the town square is quite rewarding and stunning.

We soon move on to Stalybridge as we are timetable dependant. What timetable I wondered?

Stalybridge buffet bar is the pie stop par excellence! World famous, in fact. Black pea country. Pie, peas and gravy in a bowl being the “must try” gourmet delight.

More memorabilia including steam train and station name plaques, one with Lymm station spelt correctly. Large pictures illustrating the steam age adorn the tall walls as we settle in the “Ladies Waiting Room”. Now unisex, draft free and tucked away from the comings and goings at the busier end. Heaven!

Stalybridge – Birthplace of the industrial revolution. (Yep – another one!) Home of the first brass band contest. Gateway to Saddleworth. Home of Fred Wood! (Who? - You may well ask but he has a blue plaque in his honour! A local hero – Google it!)

Actually, Staly-vegas as it’s known locally (waterside bars on the Huddersfield Canal actually) is err, ok. Suffering from the industrial revolution (which I think we lost).

The station bar however, is a delightful oasis just far enough away from the town centre turmoil.

Vera Blease, now into the swing of the run thought it was the find of the day as the ambi-

ance rolled back the years. Reg was warming up for a sing song. Time to move on!

In time honoured fashion the peloton eventually fell apart around Piccadilly Station, even before the sprint finish had time to be organised or contemplated.

Some dived on the Chester train (over-60s, free pass brigade – Roger, you can’t be 60!) Others descended to the tram. The lightweights headed home, leaving the dedicated to sprint for the line – The OMT.

I think the victors were Reg and Vera (the train has less stops than the tram!) However, by now it was beginning to resemble a Madison (and who can follow those!) All safely back and no mechanicals.

-

I am dedicating this account of our happy day out to the memory of John Dawson, owner of Fern the Labrador. Known affectionately to all his friends who frequent the Old Market Tavern as “John the Dog”, he died suddenly just a few weeks after this trip.

My condolences to Jan and family.

- GP

Real Ale Trail Top Tips

1. Choose a day with no home match at Old Trafford or Huddersfield.
2. Print off a train timetable from “t’internet” for reference.
3. Check out various websites – Google “Real Ale Train”.
4. A return “train” ticket from Alty may work out cheapest (never paid the same price yet!)
5. Do a Robin Hague – “Set your pace and don’t go off too quick”. No strict plan but avoid rice pud on this occasion.
6. Avoid club kit or any Lycra, you’ll only get laughed at, and avoid drinking anything more than five per cent strength.
7. Fraternise with complete strangers. It’s usually rewarding.
8. Don’t set off with a Plan B. It won’t work anyway. Improvise!
9. Reaching the finishing line is far more important than winning. Avoid peaking early or bonking at any time. (Perhaps rice pud could help?).
10. Be prepared for “senior members” to use their experience in the sprint!
11. Optional – but handy to have a grown-up with you!

Testing times

By Dan Snape

Well, the 2010 racing season is under way with a few members already getting some 10s and 25s under their belts despite the weather.

The results for the year so far are:

Abbotsford Park RC	10	J2/1	Charles Carraz	23:48	
Abbotsford Park RC	10	J2/1	Basil Le Roux	24:02	
Withington Wheelers	25	J2/9	Charles Carraz	01:00:42	
Withington Wheelers	25	J2/9	Roy Myers	01:02:21	
Buxton CC	33	J8/3	Charles Carraz	01:47:40	Mountain TT
Buxton CC	33	J8/3	Basil Le Roux	01:58:11	Mountain TT
M&DTTA	10	J2/3	Paul McAllister	23:23	
Altrincham Ravens CC	25	J2/9	Paul McAllister	01:02:19	
Altrincham Ravens CC	25	J2/9	Roy Myers	01:05:39	
Altrincham Ravens CC	25	J2/9	Basil Le Roux	01:06:20	
M&DTTA	10	J2/3	Paul McAllister	23:54	
M&DTTA	10	J2/3	Roy Myers	27:22	
M&DTTA	10	J2/3	Paul McAllister	23:55	

It's not about the bike

Club Development Officer's Report

By Darren Buckley

Club development officer Darren Buckley gives an update on the social rides, the Go Ride scheme and Bike Week.

Social rides have really taken off and are so much in demand we have now made them weekly.

We are regularly having to split into two groups, with a social, slower ride going to the planned cafe, and a yet-to-be-named "middle group" going slightly further afield and a little faster.

If no-one shows up for the slower ride we adjust to a pace and distance suitable for those present; the aim being to keep the rides challenging for all.

Many thanks to all those who help coordinate these rides. Without you volunteers these rides would just not be happening.

If you want to help out, please contact me.

We are now registered as a British Cycling Go Ride club, which means we can work towards the Clubmark Award.

To achieve this standard, clubs have to show they provide facilities for children to get into and develop in sport.

As part of this, Dave Barker has taken on the role of welfare officer, Mike Brooks is the club contact and I am a Level 2 coach.

We have already started running sessions at Ashton on Mersey school for years 7-8, showing them basic skills such as braking, gear use and mass starts (well with four riders)...

We had four students attend over three sessions, although we had ten parental consent forms back.

Those started again after the Easter break and I am hopeful that attendance will improve.

Those who have come along have shown great promise and may be future members for the club.

We need new venues and groups for this to move forward. These have to be off-road, traffic-free environments, so if you have any ideas please get in touch.

It is about the bike

Bike week runs from June 19 to 27 and as well as expecting a busy time on the social rides, we are organising two family rides along the Trans Pennine Trail.

We'll need people to show the way and escort the social rides.

This is an important showcase for the club and for cycling and it will need some more helpers please.

The dates for the family ride are on page 6 but the social rides will be the usual Sunday outing.

We're also planning another roller racing night at the Old Market Tavern, so watch this space/website/forum for updates as they arrive.

Members volunteering to help with these event makes us the club we are.

If you want to put your shoulder to the wheel, please get in touch: 01928 730127

California wheeling on the Montrose ride

By John Verbickas

With the winter being the worst here for 25 years or so, and fed up with looking out at snow, I rang my sister in Pasadena.

"What's the temperature there?" 80 degrees in old money, I was told.

"I'll be over on Wednesday!"

After the worst journey ever (long delays due to snow causing me to miss my flight at Heathrow), I arrived 13 hours late having been routed to LA via Chicago.

Thursday was cool but clear and more like 50 degrees than 80 but still better than Manchester. Even with storms forecast for the start of the following week.

I picked up my hire bike from Velo Pasadena: a nice Time machine with Campag. As in the previous year, I started with a little ride, followed by a longer one on Friday and all was ready for the Montrose Ride on Saturday.

Saturday was clear but very cold, only about 40 degrees, and I had only taken my summer kit.

The Montrose Ride is a well established ride in the area. Every Saturday, starting at 8 o'clock, at Descanso Gardens in La Canada (about three miles north-west of the Pasadena Rosebowl).

It covers about 50 miles and riders join in at various points along the way, starting with around 150 and ending up with about 250 at Starbucks in Sierra Madre.



Where orange trees scent the breeze
I joined the ride at Trader Joes in South Pasadena. Having cycled about three miles, I was very cold already but as soon as they came past and the crowd joined in,

California wheeling...

it became a lot warmer.

It was very loud and colourful, all nations and creeds, all ages and all looked fit.

The roads were wide and fast and with a slight downhill we were spinning along at 25mph down Huntinton Drive (San Marino).

Through Arcadia and more riders joined in. With it being such an established ride, people had come out to shout and cheer us on and it felt good.

We seemed to go through traffic lights and stop signs without stopping, which scared the pants off me!

I tried to talk but could only gasp for air. Riders were coming past on both sides and soon we were in full flight down Arrow Highway and onto Cerritos in Azusa.

The pace was fast this Saturday as a ladies' team was using it for training – and of course the guys had to show them who's boss!

It calmed down about five miles from the end as the ladies had done their thing and tailed off but I was still hanging on in at the back, a complete wreck.

However, there was a sting in the tail with a gradual uphill finish at Starbucks in Sierra Madre.

When I arrived it was like a battle zone with bikes and riders all over the place.

A great cup of coffee washed down a clas-



Starbucks - the true treasure of Sierra Madre?

sic (I think) ride, complete with good craic with the riders, many of whom wanted to know about Seamons.

I enjoyed the ride back to my sisters at about 13 mph.

If anybody ever goes to Pasadena, try the ride; it's a great experience (scary though).

The storm started on Monday and lasted all week, the worst for 30 years with floods and mud slides. But wait, the following Saturday was very cold and clear (I had by now bought arm and leg warmers) and I did the ride all over again (glutton for punishment).

Monday it was more storms but it finally started to clear and as my break in the sun came to an end the sun came out to play and the mercury was back to 75.

I had managed five rides in the holiday (I suppose better than at home) and when I arrived back in Manchester, guess what? It was snowing!



Not quite 80°F, but a clear, bright day none-the-less; the Cerrig week-enders & the 61st Llan-gollen Run sun themselves briefly for the camera before the long, long ride home to Altrincham.



From the archive...

How Seamons was formed

By Bob Hill

This article was first published in the Squirrel in April 1956. This abridgement was published in the August 1963 edition.

The club was formed late in 1948, but the idea began some time previously. Bob Hill and Bob Richardson had been friends and keen cyclists for some time, when, in 1944, the army put a stop to Bob Hill's capers. By the time that he was demobbed there was a small band of enthusiasts meeting outside the Richardson residence early each Sunday morning.

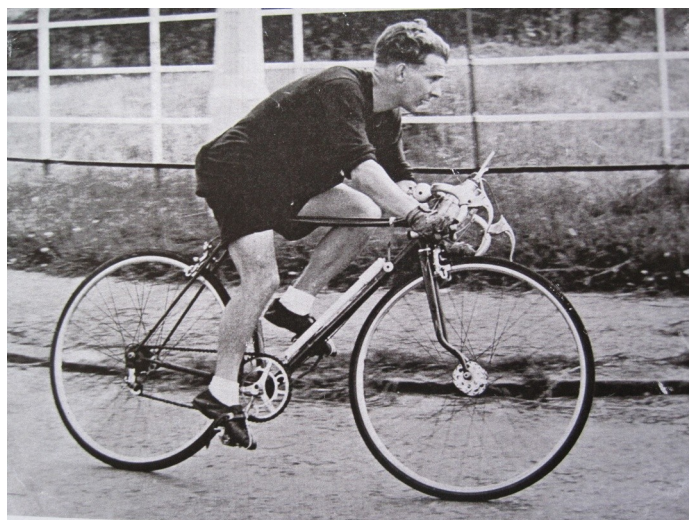
Members of that group were Bob R., Bob H., Frank Acton, Pete Baguley, 'Mad' Walton, and Ken Glarvey. Then others joined them; Jack Food (two weeks in bed after his first ride), Ray Holmes, Reg Blease and Roy Davenport.

During this period the two Bobs became members of the newly formed Seamons Moss Community Centre, where they met up with Alan Spence and Geoff Robinson of Altrincham Ravens. So following discussions on cycling, the idea of a cycling club within the Centre was born. Geoff Robinson made the initial move by calling a meeting of those interested in October 1948. Alan Spence was elected chairman, and Bob Hill became first secretary.

The Club grew from strength to strength but also had conflicting opinions and ideas with the management committee of the Centre. The trouble came to a head twelve months later, and consequently the Club left the Centre as a body, and the Toc H Club Room became our temporary HQ.

It was at this time that all prize money, won during the season by the lads, was returned to the Club funds, and with a subscription from all members the "25" mile TT Trophy came into being. Ray Holmes was the first winner.

From the Toc H we moved to the Parish Rooms behind St Margaret's Church,



The late Bob Hill riding at race pace

where we stayed for some considerable time until the move in 1955 to the Civil Defence HQ.

Of that group of founder members and first year members the only ones remaining in the Club are Bob Richardson, Bob Hill and "Ives" Irving. Also George Arstall and our president Dennis Chapman.

The remainder have either lost their enthusiasm or are now married and dare not come out on Sunday. Geoff Robinson is now settled in Canada, although he has been over twice. (He gave us an interesting movie show in May).

Best Clubman 2010

Leading positions as of early April are:

1. Mike McConville 62
2. Reg Blease 60
3. Peter Coles 57
4. Keith Stacey 56
5. Tim Seddon 55
6. Phil Holden 54
- = Malc McAllister 54
8. Dan Snape 53
9. Ed Baldwin 52
- = John Coles 52
11. Alex Smith 49
12. Dave Williams 47

Is stretching before exercise counter-productive?

By Sally Cowan

I recently read an article published in the Daily Telegraph that seemed to agree with what I have been taught on the subject of stretching. The course that I studied is fairly new, innovative and in my opinion ground breaking as it goes against a lot of historical teachings. However, it looks like this is now becoming more mainstream if the Telegraph are publishing articles using the scientific research. Having just attended my first club time trial where I saw lots of static stretching being performed prior to the event it led me to put pen to paper.

For the above title heading please read STATIC stretching before exercise is counter productive, hopefully I will be able to explain why and why it is better to dynamically stretch before a TT race.

Firstly I ask the question why do we stretch, and for most people the answer is, because everyone else does it, because is it traditionally done before any exercise class I attend, because I have been told to do so, because it is expected of me? It is a habit!

The reason we need to stretch is to address any muscle imbalances that our body has, to increase a range of motion at a joint, and to consequently improve our performance, reduce the risk of injury and make us feel better. It can also aid post exercise recovery. In other words we stretch to increase our function.

What happens if we over stretch? If a muscle is over stretched the joint that the muscle acts upon will have an increased range of motion, thus leading to an increased risk of injury.

If our body has the perfect level of flexibility it has enough range of motion to perform the tasks we ask it perform, ie its function, but the body also has enough stability to prevent any injury whilst performing that function.



A stretch in time?

The problem with static stretching is that it is predominantly done in only one plane of motion. The problem with static stretching is that it causes muscles to tighten rather than relax which is exactly the opposite of what is needed for physical activity. The problem with static stretches if they are held for 20 – 30 seconds is that they actually put the muscle to sleep, the static stretch weakens the muscle and makes it less responsive, the muscles will stay weakened for up to 30 minutes after stretching.

Scientists have found that the two common pre running stretches for the hamstrings and quadriceps may actually reduce performance by weakening muscles in the leg. Other studies have found that static stretching decreases muscle strength by as much as 30 per cent.

I would think that most competitors in a time trial race would want to have their muscles strong, awake, warm and ready to work and work hard.

So what should we do to warm up before a race? A correct warm up should loosen the muscles and tendons to increase the range of motion of various joints required for the activity to be performed and should warm up the body. The body's temperature should be raised during the warm up, warm muscles and dilated blood vessels pull

oxygen from the bloodstream more effectively and use stored muscle fuel more effectively. The best way to warm up is with dynamic stretches and a sports specific warm up.

Dynamic stretching involves moving parts of your body and gradually increasing reach, speed of movement or both. Dynamic stretching consists of controlled movements that take you to the limits of your range of motion. In dynamic stretching there are no bounces or jerky movements but continuous controlled movement

It has also been found that people who use more dynamic types of stretching, using more muscle groups, are more flexible than those who use conventional static stretching techniques, for example bending over and touching their toes. Static stretching simply forces the muscles being stretched to endure the pain of being stretched whereas with dynamic stretches, that work more muscles, the stretched muscle learns to extend while another muscle group is working.

We also have to ask how does our body function? Does it move in just one plane of motion? And the answer to this is no we move in three planes of motion, sagittal (forwards and backwards), frontal (side to side) and transverse (rotation left and right).

As our body functions in three dimension I would advocate the use of dynamic stretches in three dimensions. So why in a static stretch do we stretch the muscle in just one plane of motion? The plane of motion that you think a muscle works in predominantly isn't necessarily the plane of motion that that muscle is the strongest in. For example, the hamstrings most people believe that the hamstring's function is to bend the knee, ie work in the sagittal plane. However the hamstring functions at it strongest in the transverse plane as it's main function is to stabilise the knee joint. So if we stretch the hamstring in just the sagittal plane (the common hamstring stretch) are we improving it's function if it's main function is in the transverse plane?

It is true to say that motional stability = functional flexibility and this can be achieved prior to a race by using dynamic stretches. So a dynamic stretching session using all three planes of motion and a gentle ride on your bike before the start of the race should do the trick.

I prefer not to use static stretches but if you wish to do static stretching then I would advocate that you do so after you have raced.

Stretching addresses muscle imbalance, stretching can help with pain and discomfort, stretching can help with joint stability and mobilisation, but stretching should be done with knowledge and not just because I always do it and it has been done for generations! Stretching should be done at the right time and for the right reason.

Shorts & longs

By John Carberry

There's probably something slightly rebellious in the nature of most cyclists.

You can see this is true by looking around the club generally and around the tourers in particular.

If ever there was a bunch of mavericks who won't do what they're told or take orders from The Man it's the touring section. Ask Pete.

But there are certain rules that must be obeyed when on a bike.

You would have to become a full member of the Cyclorati to know them all, of course, but examples include: no black socks on display, if you're riding a road bike don't do it wearing a baggy top, no peaks on helmets, no talking about salad ingredients (particularly tomatoes) in the bunch. You get the picture.

I think there may be time to add another rule – no bobble hats while riding with the club.

While most people might assume such a rule was pointless – why ban something

Shorts & longs...

that no right-thinking clubman would even consider let alone actually do? The sad fact is it might be necessary.

Now, I'm not talking about knitted headgear in general. Indeed, some of the cycling specific headwear can be quite fetching if worn in the right conditions (Belgium in the winter).

Spotted with what can only be described as a flamboyantly exuberant pompom atop his hat at the cafe in Llangollen was one Mike Watson.

He had unashamedly teamed said "bobbler" with some crazy-looking sunglasses.

An unrepentant Mike said that it was a lovely hat and there was nothing wrong with it and he remained immune to further ribbing.

I wonder now whether it could in fact be cheeky PR stunt? You might not notice the Seamons jersey on a rider but, hey, look at that massive bobble on that bloke's hat. That must be a great club to join, they'll have anyone.

On second thoughts.

-

Further advertising for the club has seen the tourers ensure our fame is now truly global.

We've already got a great website to showcase the club.

Now interweb browsers can see us "in action", courtesy of Google Street View.

Google has finally posted up the pictures it took when trundling its Street View car around Sedbergh last spring.

The result is a lovely shot of the bunch riding towards it and waving. You can't tell we're on our way to the pub.

And if that wasn't enough, runs leader Pete has been snapped on his way home from work.

I wonder if there's any other group or organisation that can claim that? Two postings on Street View!

-

Never ones to give up, the tourers showed their commitment to the cause by ensuring there were still runs even when it was too icy or snowy to get out on the bikes.

First, two wheels were forsaken for two feet when we "enjoyed" a yomp around Dunham Park in the worst of the snow.

Then a couple of weeks later it was on to the trains for a very sociable run involving partners and friends all the way to Dewsbury. Read all about it in Gordon's excellent article.

And if you count some of the tourers' trip to Spain and the one to Cerrig then we really have done planes, trains and automobiles.

-

It was at Cerrig that we discovered a new hill, and we've now managed to give it a name.

On the run back from Conway some bright spark had suggested a slight detour at Llanrwst.

"It'll cut the corner off," was the start of the rot. "And it'll drop us right on the pub," was, however, the clincher.

So, left at Llanrwst it was.

On the map you could see the contours were close together but it looked like you were going mostly along them rather than across them.

How wrong we were. Sweating and honking was the order of the day as the short cut turned out to be a very long drag indeed. Just when you thought it was over, there'd be another up bit round the corner.

There will be badges produced shortly: "I survived Thompson's Folly".

Thompson was lucky he survived at all.



A photo round-up of Spring 2010...

The 2009 season's achievements celebrated, the long hard winter of eventually thaws...



Phil Holden & the Half-Wheel Trophy



The social rides kick off and very prove popular, while the racing starts with a quiet prayer.



And the half-day section turn out in increasing numbers. Summer 2010 is almost upon us.



With thanks to JP, Ed, Darren and the many other photographers recording club life.

Javea been here before? By Robert J. Morton

Destination Javea, Alicante, Spain, 19th March 2010

The prospect of cycling on smooth roads in the fresh Spanish air and warm temperatures is surely something to relish on a cold March day in England.

Javea is on the Costa Blanca between Denia and Benidorm. It has a superb rocky coastline with an amazing sea front promenade, complete with a breathtaking backdrop of hills and craggy peaks, the most obvious of which is the Montgo standing at 752m.

Seven cyclists from Seamons Cycling Club warmed to that prospect and accompanied John Carberry for an extravaganza of eight days cycling.

The villa where we stayed was well known as most of us had been at least four times before. There was Pete Devine, Dave Barker, Mike Brooks, Gordon Peake, Rob Morton, John Hurley and John Carberry, all seasoned cyclists and raring to go!

We arrived late on Friday evening at the villa owing to a few problems encountered when leaving Alicante airport in our hire cars. The lead vehicle left the airport in a southerly direction. Thirty minutes later we decided we should be going north!

Oh how we laughed when we realised that all the restaurants would be closed by the time we arrived in Javea.

However, we were lucky and one young Spanish waitress realised that the approach of several hungry men was a good thing and we got our meals. (Less sex on legs, more like wallets on legs I suspect!)

Saturday dawned cloudy but with the potential of being a good day. We set off about 9-ish to pick up our pre-ordered bikes from Eduardo at the Javea Bike Centre, full of excitement at the thought of being on the road within the hour.

Well, you know how relaxed they are in Spain so we were a little delayed in getting our pedals fitted and being ready to go! In



The only time the bunch stayed together all week!

the meantime we visited the bar across the road for our first coffee of the holiday... lovely!

With our pedals well and truly screwed on and tyres pumped up to maximum pressure we set off in the sunshine on our first ride – back to the villa (3.5 miles to be precise, just ask Dave Barker) to fettle our bikes.

A short session of saddle positioning and handlebar adjustment ensued and when the master computer had been fitted to John Carberry's machine we were ready for action.

What a wonderful sight to see seven cyclists all in club kit leaving the villa in neat formation – well until the road kicked up. Then it became more a straggle of cyclists. Right turn and a swift descent to the main road where we re-grouped. This would be our routine for the next seven mornings come rain or shine .

Our total mileage for the first half-day was 39 which included our customary visit to Calpe for some lunch.

The weather was cloudy but fine and we had no incidents to report. Later, we dined well at Scallops restaurant (special eatery for Brits on account of its cheap menu of all things fish and chip related). The meal



You can see our house from here. Gordo takes in the view towards Calpe. Note the helmet, Karen

deals at Scallops ensured we had our stock of wine and beer for the week – a bottle of wine is given with every three course dinner and there are always special offers on beer!

Sunday's events really changed the course of the holiday. On greasy roads owing to some overnight rain Pete Devine dropped his bike on a bend descending the Montgo into Denia.

The group had split in the morning (half meeting Stuart Kay) so Pete, John Hurley and Gordon were in front on the road.

When the rest of the peloton arrived on the scene we were confronted with car drivers waving their arms frantically, shouting: "Slow down, zay are all falling off!"

Pete had taken a dive into the tarmac and had suffered bad cuts. One of the drivers, our Dutchman who warned us to be careful, had administered first aid to Pete so when he was admitted to Denia emergencia (E11 card came in handy) his leg had been well bandaged at the roadside.

The friendly nurse changed the bandage and Pete was advised "no ciclismo" for the next few days.

Stuart Kay, who was over in Spain attending to an overgrown palm tree in his garden, had joined us on this disaster. Things always tend to happen when Stuart's out.

This included a noticeable increase in pace when we were joining a road where a small three-wheeled vehicle, driven by Spain's largest man, had just passed.

We continued at our normal pace when all of a sudden there came a sudden surge from the front. A call from the back of "no racing!" went unheeded and we continued at this higher pace until we caught the three-wheeled tuc-tuc and tuc'd in(!)

We swept along in the slipstream of this vehicle, which was clearly struggling, as any sort of incline resulted in a dip in the engine note. Mike (being a musician) could detect clearly a 2 semi-tone change! It turned off eventually down a different camino and we carried on at a slightly increased pace with a cheery wave to the driver.

Despite all this excitement we managed a decent ride of 52 miles and I think we ended up in the Gurkha Palace that evening for some fine curry.

Monday was another disaster, for me anyway. I awoke with a sore throat and it was bad enough for me to decide not to ride. As it happened Monday was our first sunny, warm day so the riders were out in full summer kit.

I am told by the master computer that they managed 54 miles including a couple of stiff climbs through Lliber valley and Serra



Sunshine in the Lliber valley.

de Bernia, but as I told them, that's nothing compared to going up the Galibier.

I think we settled for Chinese in the evening as Pete had recommended a place that does an 'all you can eat' menu for nine euros. Needless to say that suited us down to the ground.

By Tuesday I was raring to go for a ride. It seemed I was only one of three as everyone else wanted a rest day and Pete was injured of course.

We actually reached our most westerly point in a village called Pego where we found a Bocado (sandwich) shop offering 71 types of filling. We also found Don Andrews who was enjoying a cycling holiday with friends, no doubt at a much faster pace than us. Apparently Don used to win the Llangollen thrash all the time before Robin reigned supreme.



Fancy meeting you here! Rob and Dave bump into ex-Seamons stalwart, Don Andrews (L)

It's strange how you bump into people in the most unlikely of places. We had a brief

chat and Don and friends set off on a grueling ride. Dave, John and I tucked into Bocadoillos and drank coffee reflecting on what a nice holiday we were having so far.

We arrived back at the villa much later than usual having set a record distance of 63 miles.

Pete's main function now was as our restaurant advisor. For this evening he recommended an Italian restaurant that he had visited before called the Grotto (Pete's got a friend who lives in Javea and he visits him so knows a thing or two about the place.) Despite the name and some questionable material used to decorate the ceiling, we had a good time and Pete survived for another night's dining advice.

On Wednesday it was cloudy. We had arranged to meet up with Stuart again and all our riders were out in force hoping that nothing untoward was to happen.

Stuart led us to a brilliant café at Els Poblets where we got the deal of the day which was coffee and a cake for £1.50. This thing about Stuart was starting to take a turn for the better. But not for long. As we returned to Pego for lunch, our café with 71 bocadoillos was closed. Qué pena! However we did find another cafe so all was well in the end.

We cycled 62 miles in total, which wasn't too bad considering it was cloudy, cool and quite windy. In fact with the jacket I wore I was being dropped on the descents owing to the wind-drag I was experiencing!

In the evening we acknowledged that we were in Spain and ventured into The Old Town for tapas. Of course there was some weird and wonderful food on offer but everyone was satisfied with Pete's choice of dining experience.

As the holiday progressed there were more coughs sneezes and complaints of sore throats coming from our riders. We put it down to the amount of pollen in the air. All the surfaces, including the pool (and some unused saddles), became covered in this yellow film of dust; it was playing havoc

with our cardio-vascular systems.

On day seven, Thursday, Mike was resting, John H. wasn't well, Pete was on his third change of bandages and Gordon did a half-day.

So it was just three of us who planned to ride the Col de Rates (673m). This climb is so popular with cyclists that there has been a system installed for self-timing called "Stoppomat". It's free, and it's a chance for a single rider to see how their time compares to others'. (Just in case any reader is thinking about having a go, don't – John Carberry and I set an unbeatable time so save your air-fare!)

We had an awesome day's cycling and we set a record of 71 miles, but were shattered at the end and needed a good feed. A second visit to the Gurkha Palace delivered much-needed sustenance and a liquid re-fuel.

It was clear on Friday that we were all ready for an easy ride, especially as the day promised to be sunny and warm.

We set off for Moraira, then Calpe for lunch where we always see the cafe owner who rode for the Kelme Team in the 80s. It's always great to soak up the sun and be in a relaxed mode taking photos etc.

However when we were returning to Javea along what we call 'the Jesus Road' the pace did go up when we caught sight of a veteran cyclist on his retro-steel bike (Campag-equipped of course). By then it was all downhill and a tail wind for the final push home to complete 51 miles.

When we got back to the villa Pete had been to the clinic to have his bandage removed and had received a clean bill of health to go cycling on Saturday...so the Denia Dash was on! (our version of the Llangollen thrash).

Saturday was the warmest day by far: 23 deg but the bikes had to be back at the shop at 1pm so a quick ride to Denia and back with a café stop was the order of the day. We made it back with minutes to spare.

You may remember that at the beginning our pedals were well screwed on. Now was the time for unscrewing! Three men hanging off the end of a pedal spanner was a sight to behold!

Well that was it – no more cycling and one more dining experience at Scallops to ensure that we got a free breakfast on Sunday (yes, more giveaways). We left the villa at 3pm on Sunday to catch our flight back from Alicante and this time there were no wrong turnings. Needless to say Spain was 'scorchio' on our day of leaving but we consoled ourselves by remembering Malc McAllister's famous quote: "It's just too 'ot"

As I complete this article I am stuck in Spain owing to tons of volcanic ash spewing into the air from Iceland so it may appear late in The Squirrel...sorry chaps...



And finally: thanks lads for a great holiday – Top messing!

Useless stats from the holiday:

- Miles.....402
on the master computer
- Wine consumed.....6 bottles
- Beer consumed.....lost count
- Tea bags used.....110
- Loaves of bread.....5
(not including Pete's special one for nice sandwiches)
- Punctures.....1



CLUBS RUNS LIST

	Half day Section	Touring Section	Social Section
2nd May	Blaze Farm	Paddock Farm	Dones Green
9th May	Beeston	Chester	Hills Garden Centre
16th May	Tattenhall	Hope	Wizard Cafe
23rd May	Astbury	Whitmore	Plantation Cafe
30th May	Two Mills	Longnor	The Spinney, Allostock
6th June	Castleton	<i>Impromptu</i> *	Dones Green
13th June	Dagfields	Ipstones	Middlewich
20th June	Meerbrook	<i>Impromptu</i> **	High Legh Garden Centre
27th June	Rose Farm	Monyash	Wizard Cafe
4th July	Buxton	100-in-8	Plantation Cafe
11th July	Chester	Grindleforth	The Spinney, Allostock
18th July	Blaze Farm	Southport	Dones Green
25th July	Tattenhall ***	Tideswell	Middlewich
1st August	Cate & Fiddle	Wrenbury	Plantation Cafe
8th August	Two Mills	19 Gates	The Spinney, Allostock
15th August	Poole Marina	Hatherton (Dagfields)	Dones Green
22nd August	Meerbrook	Hartington	Hills Garden Centre
29th August	Delamere	Parkgate	Plantation Cafe
5th September	Castleton	Mow Cop	The Spinney, Allostock
12th September	Chester ****	Chester ****	Dones Green
19th September	Nantwich Marina	<i>Impromptu</i> *****	Middlewich
26th September	Astbury	Newton Hall	Plantation Cafe
	* Stow-on-the-Wold Weekend	**** Bob Richardson Run	
	** CTC York Rally Weekend	***** Bishop's Castle Weekend	
	*** National 24-hour Championship		



For your diary

MAY

Mon 3rd	SEAMONS: May Bank Impromptu
Sat 8th	Dukinfield 50
Sat 15th	SEAMONS: Tour of Berwyns
Mon 31st	Anfield 100

JUNE

Wed 2nd	SEAMONS: 10 Champs
4th-7th	SEAMONS: Stow-on-Wold W/E
Tues 15th	SEAMONS 25
19th-20th	CTC: York Rally
Sat 19th	Bike Week: Family Run

JUNE (continued)

Sun 20th	Bike Week: Social Ride/Rollers
Sat 26th	Bike Week: Family Run
Sun 27th	Bike Week: Social Ride
Tues 29th	SEAMONS: TLI Road Race

JULY

Sun 11th	M&DTTA 100
Sat 17th	M&DTTA 50
Sat 24th	Mersey Roads 24hr

AUGUST

Sat 14th	SEAMONS: Open 25
Wed 18th	SEAMONS: Final 10 Dinner
Sun 22nd	West Cheshire 12hr
Mon 30th	SEAMONS: Treasure Hunt