

THE SQUIRREL

Summer 2016



FROM THE EDITOR

Having spent many years avoiding the editor's chair, it has been a rare privilege to occupy it.

However I said in my report to the AGM in November that having been reluctant to take on the role, I now find myself sad at the prospect of giving it up

But the time is right for someone else to have a go so I'm handing over the dictionary and notional keyboard to Keith Stacey and Steve Stoddart..

It's fair to say the Squirrel has become much harder to produce recently, despite advances in technology which make it technically easier. The rise of Facebook, and, to some extent, the changing culture of the club mean it's become much less relevant to Seamons.

That's not to say it isn't valued by those who are familiar with it or who recognise the sense of tradition that it carries.

For those who don't know, I've now left the area and while I would like to carry on as editor, I have to accept that it would be more difficult to

produce – not least in reminding people of the copy they promised but haven't provided. Ahem.

Keith's ever-capable hands will pick up where I'm leaving off, ably assisted by designer Steve.

I'd like to place on record my thanks to everyone who's supported the magazine, and in particular regular contributors such as: John and Carol, Gordo, Dave Barker, Dave Matthews, Eddie.

The magazine has been an important part of club life and it would be a shame to see it disappear, so I'm glad it still warrants a team to look after it.

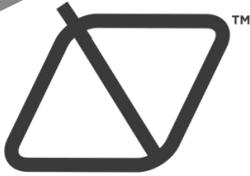
Thanks for your support – and the nice things you've said about the magazine.



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MEET YOUR CLUBMATES... Steve Stoddart

From my first tricycle in the early 60s, and a Raleigh kid's bike once I could stay upright, I advanced to one of Alex Moulton's very first bikes with front and rear 'suspension', it was my first proper bike and as we lived in Bradford on Avon at the time I guess my dad thought he was doing the right thing supporting a local bike manufacturer. My first drop bar racing bike was a Coventry Eagle 5 speed yellow, steel and very heavy, but it felt so much faster than the Moulton. My first long, solo ride was planned and debated with my dad over a few days, and was around 15 miles, to a friend's house the other side of Trowbridge!

Where and when were you born?

April 1958, Aylesbury.

When did you start cycling?

See above.

What was your first race?

A local club 10 back in 1985 on Chelford, which at the time was a combined event, run by Stockport Clarion, Abbotsford Park RC and Cheshire Roads I think.

What was your first win?

A Manchester Wheelers 25 limit event on the Byley circuit, I clocked 1.03.13 to tie with ex-Seamons member Richard Williams. We had a hail storm halfway through the event and it was cold, it was May 8th 1999.

Which performance do you rate as your best?

Riding to Anglesey and back over a weekend, just after getting married! I rode there via Capel Curig and rode back along the coast road mostly, with a gale force tail wind all the way home, probably one of my fastest solo rides!

What is your favourite meal?

Anything Indian, but I also enjoy a good Chinese.

What were you like at school?

Good at English, art, architecture and maths, not necessarily in that order. My dad was a



teacher so I had no excuse not to be good at at least one subject, and it turned out to be English.

What kind of books do you read?

Biographies, thrillers, anything cycling-based.

What kind of music do you enjoy?

My favourite rock band is Led Zeppelin, but I like pretty much anything except jazz and folk. I take great pleasure in putting on something from the 70s and 80s really loud to annoy my son and daughters!

And your favourite type of TV programme?

Dramas, and dare I say it... some reality TV!

Which newspaper do you read?

The Daily Mail – but only on Saturdays.

What is your ideal holiday destination?

Greece, Spain, anywhere sunny.

Do you have any hobbies?

Walking our 2 dogs and chillin' with the family.

Who would play you in a film of your life?

Mike Read, the DJ - people used to say I looked a bit like him!

What is your greatest fear?

Heights and confined spaces.

MEET YOUR CLUBMATES... cont

How would you describe yourself in a Lonely Hearts column?

Old gimmer seeks young slimmer!

What is your favourite training ride?

Delamere, via Acton Bridge and back through Little Budworth and Tatton Park.

What is your most unpleasant characteristic?

Leaving hair in the wash basin after shaving!

Which characteristic do you most dislike in others?

Selfishness, rudeness and greed.

Who would you most like to have met and why?

John Bonham, I always wanted to play the

drums when I was younger and he seemed to be able to hit them harder than anyone else, which I thought was hugely impressive.

What was your most embarrassing moment?

Not had too many but I was riding down Pennys Lane to the start of a 25m TT near Northwich in the 80s after it had been raining for days and I somehow ended up leaving the road and riding through mud on the verge of the road, I arrived at the timekeeper looking like I had just ridden a cyclocross event, (I had come off too!), and the timekeeper and pusher-off were incredulous that I was prepared to start the event! I can't remember what my time was but there was some mickey-taking at the finish too.

Four words to describe yourself

Rubbish at time trials!



At the shop astride the bike my dad would never let me own! (PS: this bike is not mine either!)

AN INVITATION TO EXPLORE

by Rob Gibson and Richard Cooper

At this time of year, many people reflect on their cycling season.

For some, the highlights of 2015 include our Explorer rides; driving somewhere new and cycling off our beaten tracks.

Our trip around Rivington took us on the Lancashire Cycleway with views out to the Irish Sea.

The route from Clitheroe through the Trough of Bowland to Feizor in North Yorkshire was so good that we did it twice (thanks again, Bob!), with the climb through Gisburn Forest being particularly rewarding.

We also visited Holmfirth, taking the Woodhead Valley road from Glossop and then up and over Holme Moss, which still had Tour de France graffiti on the tarmac.



Gordon (21 years his senior) helping Rob over the top of Holme Moss.

And we toured the area around the Welsh border, cycling around Beeston Castle to the cyclists' café in Chirk.

Feedback from these trips was positive, so thanks to all who came out and made the rides enjoyable. Particular thanks also to those who offered lifts and carried bikes for fellow clubmates who might not have been able to make it.

So it only seems right that we look to do it again.

As before, the intention is to drive somewhere that is about an hour away from Altrincham and then to cycle between 50-70 miles somewhere we wouldn't usually be able to get to.



The summit of Holme Moss.



Chirk.

Oh, and that there's a cycle-friendly café about half-way round!

information on Facebook for details of routes and destinations.

The dates that we've circled on the 2016 calendar are:

15 May, 12 June, 10 July, 14 Aug, 11 Sept

Save the dates, and look out for more



En route to Feizor.

PORRIDGE IN PROVENCE

By Carol Pardoe

It was 38 degrees. We would have to set off early to do Ventoux. We did. Early enough to enjoy the shade of the trees on the lower slopes, climbing from Sault, and the smell of the lavender fields. Chalet Reynard and meet up, John carried on, I nibbled a honey butty and a nutty bar. “Only” 6 km from here to the top, the famous moonscape where the heat bounces off the rocks.

From Chalet Reynard to the Tom Simpson memorial is 13 bends. I know this because I have climbed it many times, (50-something now for John). Counting the bends helps to take your mind off the suffering as you try and remember how many you have done. Remember, every right-hander is an odd number. Apparently Tommy Simpson died on the 13th stage, on the 13th bend. You are always shattered by the time you get to it, but you mustn’t stop, that’s for on the way down. And don’t look up!

I could see a slight shadow from a small tree ahead, I promised myself a stop. But two other cyclists were there. I said in French, I think: “Can we share the shade?” (On peut partager l’ombre?) It made a pleasant, brief break, then onward and upward. I could see John’s bike two bends above me, his chrome forks glinting in the sun. Who else would have chromes forks on Ventoux?! We went over the top and down to the viewing point, where you can see as far as the Alps on a clear day. Beautiful.

Two years ago we drove up and slept at the top in our campervan so we could watch the sun rise over the Alps in the distance. When we woke we were surrounded by other vans all doing the

same. We all stood in awe looking over the edge as the sky turned orange and lit up the valleys, and no-one spoke. It was a magic moment shared.

Chips! Yeah! Again the search to sit in the shade, and linger as we delayed our descent into the oven below. The météo said, “chaleur écrasant” – crushing heat – and it was. I had a cold shower when we got back to camp.



Montbrun is a delightful medieval town on a high hill, through the lavender fields and over a mountain. The plane trees in the ancient square afford soothing shade, and the water in the fountain was super cool. The climb back up to Aurel was so hot I unashamedly dunked my feet in the fountain – bliss. We were now riding with permanently wet scarves round our necks, over which we poured cold water at every opportunity. It helped. On the hot climb I tried

really hard to recall the bitterly cold ride we had in Scotland over the mountain from Achnasheen, in April. The rain turned to snow as we climbed, and when I tried to look at my computer to see how many miles we had to go, my goggles were iced over. Question: which is worse, extreme heat or extreme cold? Discuss!

As John was doing yet another climb of Ventoux, I took myself off through the lavender fields to the small village of Revest-du-Bion, and sat under the chestnut trees for my coffee. An intriguing sign on the tree said: “Parking prioritaire pour les retraités”: priority parking for the retired. What a great idea I thought, I must take that idea back to England. A passing local

PORRIDGE IN PROVENCE cont

saw me looking and came over. “It’s just a joke,” he said. I was so disappointed.

Next morning, shock, horror, John has eaten all his Weetabix. He can’t share my muesli because it is too crunchy for his few remaining teeth. So we had porridge! It was a real treat, with lots of yogurt and honey. And the sun wasn’t properly up yet, so we didn’t melt. We decided to head off in search of cooler climes – the southern Alps near Barcelonnette.

Only 32 degrees, “respirable”. Our usual spot under the walnut tree. Our usual friends from Paris – 20 years now we’ve been meeting up, very “cordiale”. Tomorrow we will do the Cayolle.

Tomorrow is 33 degrees, and it’s not till we get up to 2,000 metres that the air becomes more bearable, apart from the swarms of flies which

are biting, through our shorts! The descent is brilliant, 27 km all downhill, with a very agreeable break at the cafe-bar in the hamlet of Fours St.Laurent. Jean-Paul is pleased to see us again, his mother now aged 94 still doing the cooking. We enjoy a lively multi-lingual coffee with Belgian, Austrian, Dutch and Italian cyclists, and motorcyclists.

A British cycling couple turned up in a campervan – we don’t see many British on this campsite. We were soon chatting. They too had done Ventoux the week before, and they

described meeting a female cyclist under a tree, who looked just like me! It WAS me!

Pra Loup is a ski-station just a few miles up the valley, where there is a Tour finish in a few days’ time. We go and inspect the climb. It is short, not too steep, and with fabulous views. Campervans are already setting up at the side of the road. Tour day arrives, lots of bustle in town, we prepare a picnic and set off for the climb. The

publicity caravan is great, music and goodies non-stop, I was sharing the shade of a tree with another granny – we were both at pains to explain to each other that we were only collecting the Tour goodies for our grandchildren. So we shared all our bootie, I reached up the slope for the high landing ones, she rescued what landed in the ditch. I can’t believe I get so carried away. John and I ended up watching the Tour in the

bar, it was so hot on the climb.

Market day, crushing heat, storms in the mountains. I sampled lupin seeds, greek olives and fresh garlic cloves which didn’t leave any trace, but were yummy. The talk was of a bad landslide, caused by the storm, which had blocked the main road out of the valley. Luckily we had no plans, so the three days it took to clear did not affect us. But it was bad for business as delivery vehicles couldn’t get through from Italy.

A temporary narrow dirt road was created for



PORRIDGE IN PROVENCE cont

light vehicles, so we were able to get through. We camped on the St Paul campsite, at the foot of the Col de Vars. It is a hard, steep, not-too-long climb. I let John do it. He said: "Never again." A much shorter and very dramatic climb is just up the valley of the Ubaye, over the Pont Chatelet to Fouillouse. We do it every year to visit the tiny bar at the end of the dead end, and to sample Madame's tarte aux framboises. But her husband, a retired mountain guide, had just died and her son has taken over. Madame was delighted to see us, and invited us into her house for coffee. We had a good chat about the world – local produce versus imported, small shops versus big, Aldi versus the local market –

I tried to translate for John, he was very patient.

On the way down we passed a local workshop making wooden toys, and now a bar. We stopped. Pick your own herbs for your tea, how novel. We did; very nice. There was a small shaded platform with a heap of musical instruments near the tables. Help yourself, the lady said. I told her I only played acoustic guitar. Then as we were supping our tea a car drew up and the driver produced a guitar from the boot. "Votre guitare, madame". Argh! No pressure then. One girl had already played a beautiful classical piano piece, so I felt I must make a good show for the British. I played a simple blues piece, then a Tom Paxton song, but I forgot the words, so I just kept singing the first verse and hoped no-one would notice. They

applauded! What a lovely idea for customers to make their own music, as well as their own tea!

Next mission – Galibier. We camped in La Grave and rode up the climb of the Lauteret, with the La Meije glacier our backdrop. It is a

magnificent view, and hard to take your gaze away to watch the road. I could see John was on form, so I said you carry on, and I'll just amble up at my own pace.

The cafe on the Lauteret faces La Meije, so we had lunch gazing at the view. Chips again, and a massive omelette. Downhill afterwards, thank goodness.

But now, how to get to Bourg d'Oisans? There had been a landslide blocking the Chambon

tunnel in April, and the mountain is still moving. They are building a single track road on the opposite side of the Chambon barrage, but it will not be ready before November. The effect on the local economy is dire. Workers living in La Grave were having to be helicoptered down the valley to work.

We decided on the scenic route: over the Galibier, over the Télégraphe, over the Glandon. Ninety miles instead of twenty. We slept in the car park in Bourg d'Oisans for a couple of nights, while we strategized. From the car park we could see the ribbon of road leading up to Villard Notre Dame out of the back of Bourg, so decided on that for a challenge. It is very steep, ten per cent most of the way, little more than a narrow ledge with a spectacular



PORRIDGE IN PROVENCE cont

sheer drop over the side down to Bourg, and nice shady trees. We had lights for the tunnels, pitch black, freezing, and dripping cold water. I heard the echo of footsteps behind me – I too was walking, but John was riding ahead, I could just see his light. It was a walker, she said she was glad to see my light, and was following it. Then we realized we could use our mobile phones as torches! Quelle bonne idée!

After ten kilometres we came to the tiny hamlet of Notre Dame, and a very welcome bar, looking across to the summit of Les Deux Alpes. A young couple arrived after us and commented on our Brooks saddles. We didn't get his name, he was Basque and it was impossible to pronounce. He was quizzing us on a sportif he had entered, and what gears he needed to do the Alpe d'Huez and the Sarenne. Small!

Our route continued upwards, turning into a stony, rocky path. Beautiful views. I walked again. We were glad we had our honey butties and cake, it took hours going over the top and down the other side to Villard Reymond, and to another very welcome bar. The descent is brilliant, very quiet, and twisty, coming out on the climb up the Col d'Ornon, but we turned down back to Bourg and another bar. Oh, and the bike shop...

A shower was now much needed, so we booked into the Colporteur campsite, and there was the Basque couple again. They invited us to join them for some music. He had his violin, I had my guitar, and John his harmonica. We had a good session, he was really good playing classical guitar as well.

Next morning there was that sun again. We headed up the Bélarde, through Venosc, hoping for cooler air higher up. Slightly. More stunning views with snow capped mountains

and the rushing river beside us. I stopped in the bar in St Christophe, coffee and read the newspaper, John carried on up to the top, then back down to join me later. The news was dominated by the Calais refugee crisis, which made us rethink our return, which luckily we hadn't booked. We were advised to take the Dunkirk crossing.

Twenty kilometres south of Calais we always stop in the small town of Tournehem, where we have got to know madame, the "patronne" of the bar, over the years. It is a very traditional "estaminet" or tavern, where local cyclists meet, with traditional wooden games to play, newspapers, magazines, food! and a warm welcome from madame. A nice last memory of France. A la prochaine.

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CLUB HILL CLIMB

By Johnny Pardoe

Pictured dancing his way to glory in the club hill climb is the man known affectionately as 'Pencil' by his riding companions – John Spearman.

Less elegant participants are Karen and Dave literally leaving it all on the road. Oops.

Proving that pies do matter, well that and a good position on a free-running machine, was Rufus who managed to shade the competition to take the freewheel prize. (He's pictured elsewhere in the magazine).



Pics courtesy of Johnny Pardoe.

VAMOS CYCLING IN THE ALPUJARRAS, ANDALUCIA

By Dave Matthews

Cyclist magazine ran a feature regarding this area in an issue dedicated to Spain's hidden roads.

My own ten-day visit in early April 2015 endorsed Cyclist views that this is a great area to visit with fantastic, empty roads.

I stayed with Sarah and Gary Williams at their comfortable town house in Cadiar, which is a 2.5 hour drive (provided by Vamos) from Malaga airport. They provide guided/paced cycling trips (Gary is a really fit guy) or unguided (as preferred by your ageing correspondent) into the surrounding hills.

Accommodation is villa standard with the advantage of a bike workshop on site, evening meals with unlimited beer and wine provided at an extra cost of €20 per meal and a free clothes washing service provided by Sarah. The house accommodates up to 10 people with a mix of single and double rooms.

Whilst I was staying a number of club groups were also in residence and provided excellent company in the evenings, once they had recovered from the daily thrash of 70k to 120k



Vamos Cycling Townhouse.

with Gary. (Longer options are available – but remember that there are no flat roads in this area!)

Overall, a super holiday in an area that deserves to be more widely known and is ideal for early-season club training. Web site is www.vamoscycling.com and there is more information in the November 2013 edition of Cyclist referred to above. Best map is Michelin Espana zoom 124 Costa del Sol.



Typical Alpujarras road.



On the cork road 18k climb.

REMEMBERING OUR CLUBMATES

By Johnny Pardoe



A perfect autumn day dawned for the Bob Richardson memorial ride to Chester.

Various groups made their way via various routes and it was good to see President Reg Blease there too, on his bike, a very good friend of Bob's.

We think Bob, a Founder Member of the Seamons club, would have been very pleased and proud to see so many of us turn out on what used to be his favourite ride.



LOOPING AROUND ROSSENDALE

By Karen Poplewell

Towards the end of summer, Andy and I took part in the Mary Towneley Loop MTB challenge, an annual event organised by the Rossendale and Pendle Mountain Rescue starting in the small town of Waterfoot.

It's a 47-mile, off-road route across beautiful, exposed moorland and includes stretches of the Pennine bridleway. Having ridden around Calderdale in very windy conditions, we agreed in advance to start the event only if the weather looked favourable. Despite early fog, the forecast blue skies soon appeared and with very little wind, the weather was pretty much perfect.

Following the safety briefing, 221 riders were jostling for position on the road – I think they knew what was coming: after a very brief spell on tarmac, we hit a tight single-track climb, bringing all but the very front of the group to a halt. Conditions underfoot were not ideal; 24 hours of rain on Friday/Saturday meant lots of mud and our spotless bikes were soon caked in the stuff.

After 18 months mountain biking I have come to appreciate the many different types of gate. The perfect gate opens away from you, without effort and then closes behind, all by itself, with a loud, confidence-inspiring clunk. Bad gates are heavy, wide and scrape along the ground. They don't shut properly and have pieces of frayed string which loop around ancient stone posts. The MTL has many varieties of gate and the majority of them come very early into the ride! Riders were still bunched together and without words, a system soon formed: Rider One opened and shoved the gate wide, Rider Two sneaked through, Rider Three gave the now closing gate another shove etc. Occasionally a missed push would leave the gate slowly closing



in front of you. GROAN! "Sorry mate!" came the cry from in front.

The route isn't overly technical but it is LONG – by far the longest ride I'd attempted off-road – and we decided not to stick together but to ride at our own pace. After the initial bottleneck, I fluffed my restart and by the time I was rolling again, Andy was almost out of sight. An hour later and the group were very strung out – at times I couldn't see riders in front or behind me. The small blue MTL signs were not always easy to spot and I occasionally lost confidence that I was on the right track. I missed one turn, of course a descent, and had to retrace my steps, climbing back up to re-join the route. If you ever do this ride, I would highly recommend loading up your Garmin with a route in advance.

The halfway point came on the outskirts of

LOOPING AROUND ROSSENDALE cont

gorgeous Hebden Bridge – RPMRT had set up a well-stocked feed and mechanics' station. I refilled my hydration pack, had a posh biscuit and quickly carried on, wanting to keep the momentum going. It was getting warm by now; the switchback climb out of Hebden was shaded and pleasant but I realised my back wheel was washing out – a dreaded puncture! Why couldn't it have happened five minutes earlier at the mechanic station? I made a real mess of fixing it – chasing the tyre around the rim; I'd get one side on and then the other would pop off – stuff of nightmares! I tried for ten minutes before giving in and asking for help from a passing rider (loads had passed me by now!) Once inflated, I then had to get the wheel back in but the skewer wouldn't engage (it screws directly into the frame unlike a traditional skewer). I just couldn't get it in and again, frustrated with myself, I had to ask for help. Finally, 30 minutes later, I was back on my way.

The next part of the ride was reasonably familiar as we'd ridden it in reverse, earlier that year. As Stoodley Pike came into view on the left, I knew

that we were soon going to be riding on pack horse trails.

You can feel the history in these ancient and beautiful trails. You can SEE the grooves that have been worn into the stones by many thousands of journeys. It was on the pack horse trails that I finally caught up with one of my earlier rescuers – he also had a mechanical, which left him with just two gears. But, he was local and knew where he was going, so I latched on. It turns out he didn't know where he was going, and we almost missed the next check point! Thank goodness we spotted it because waiting for me there was Andy, eating pizza.

A super-steep push came next. Andy told me that he'd been a bit worried about me being on my own and hadn't enjoyed riding on his own too much either. Better to reform Team Poppinson and finish off in style. More questionable signage had a few of us scratching our heads again but we decided that if in doubt, the correct trail was probably the steep uphill one. "Effing Mary Towneley should be shot!" said one.

The miles very slowly clicked by and with around ten miles to go, we were feeling good and opted to skip the feed stop. Something which I later regretted. In preparation, I'd read an excellent article about the MTL, which told me that at a certain point on this ride, I would wish I'd never been born. However, I couldn't remember at which point of the 47 miles I should expect to reach that level of desperation. At around the 40 mile



LOOPING AROUND ROSSENDALE cont

mark, as we joined Rooley Moor Road, I knew that this was it.

This is a wide, steep and long, long Bridleway – a mix of gravel, small loose rocks and cobbles. It goes on and on. Did I mention it's long? Having now run out of water, I had one of those moments when you just want to be back home, but you know that if you don't keep turning the pedals, the torture will never come to an end. The eventual crest and following downhill were bliss! We knew we had a steep climb back to HQ but as that was on tarmac; nothing more to worry about. We knew we had done it!

The display of cakes at the end was amazing! We also got a goodie bag – cleaning stuff for Andy and a buff for me (matched my bike). Our official time was 6hours 25minutes - exactly one hour more than my ride time. The quickest on the day was around 4.20. The last to come in was around 10 hours. Amazingly, a runner completed the events a few hours quicker than the slowest rider.

When I was riding up Rooley Moor I thought: "Thank God I never, ever have to do this again!" But a few days later, I was already coming



around to the idea of having another go and getting under 6 hours. 2016 maybe?

If you're interested in giving it a try, more details here: <http://www.rpmrt.org.uk/mary-towneley-loop/>



CAFÉ CORNER

By Café Queen

The club's very own Queen of the cafes has been out and about doing the hard work so you don't have to, checking out the best cyclist-friendly pit-stops the length and breadth of the country and even further afield.

She gives a good report of Cafecito in Prestbury: "It's on the main road through, you can play their guitar or fiddle, while you eat. Very pleasant. You can ring ahead if you think it wise: 01625 408062."

Further on at Chinley you'll find the Tea on the Green cafe. "Nice," is the royal proclamation.

If you don't have many friends, then the Whitegate Station on the Whitegate Way might be ideal: "Good prices, good food, small groups, 11am-4pm. Run by volunteers. Open every day," is the dispatch from the herald.

"For something a little more twee, the Gardener's Cottage at Tatton Hall is a delight. On the cobbled square at the far end, through the archway of roses. Take your mum!"

Our regal patron offers sage advice for anyone



feeling a bit bonky – or a bit frisky: "If you are running out of energy for the last few miles home, or stoking up on the way out, try the Tall Trees garden centre on the A50, on the straight bit after the Grasslands turn heading north; bacon butties, Monday-Friday."

There's also a handy reminder if you are up for a midweek ride and heading for Nantwich: "Remember the Venetian cafe is closed on Wednesdays."



But she warns of getting ahead of yourself at Beeston. After only relatively recently reviving, the cafe by the bridge is no more: "It's closed and up for sale," she says.*

Back out on the A50 there is the Seven Sisters farm cafe, serving 'yummy hot waffles' which have had a proven restorative effect; so they're as good as sports nutrition. Queenie revealed: "They revived my grandson, Tom, while we were riding a 35-mile sportive. The warm-air hand dryer was very welcome too as we were soaked. But they don't do anything savoury. Hot



chocolate with marshmallows also good recovery!"

You might need a map to find the cafe at Aysgarth Falls but her highness describes it as: "A fantastic place to stoke up before the climbs: massive scones, cakes, toast, top-ups on tea and coffee. And don't miss the George Inn in Hubberholme, on the way to the Fleet Moss

* Ed's note: a sign outside now says it's closed for refurbishment but no opening time is given.

CAFÉ CORNER cont

climb. Very friendly host, he insisted on giving us the leftover brownies that his wife had made that morning."

In Cumbria, there's a regal recommendation for the Station cafe at Haverthwaite: "Real chips, home-made soup, and in January, roaring log fires."

If that's not far enough north for you, CQ recommends a place on the Isle of Mull. "There is a very welcoming cafe opposite the port of Craignure, where the ferries come in from Oban. Venison burgers to die for." You can't get better than that; royals know their deer!

Over in France, you can literally have had your chips at the top of Ventoux, described as 'super' by the Royal One. "Downhill all afternoon," she added.

Similarly at the top of the Col du Lauteret, John (King John, to those in the know), can vouch for the enormous omelette and mountain of chips. "He'd also been up the Galibier that day," she

confided. "Luckily it was downhill all afternoon again."

Bon appétit!





L to R: Ade Hughes in full flight!; Martin Wiggan riding a superb '12' hour in July; the 100k Tempo group enjoying the sunshine in Goostrey; Chris Seipen, Ed Baldwin, Dave Barker and 'young helper' brave the wet conditions at the finish of the Club's road race; Nigel Harrop looks like he's enjoying this road race, resplendent in his new club kit!



ANNUAL CYCLE

Seamons is a club with a strong sense of tradition rooted through the many years of its existence.

As current members, it is our role to honour these traditions in the spirit of the club – and to create new ones to reflect ‘our’ club today.

Many of our traditional events form the rhythm of our club year and Rob Gibson’s been looking at some of them.

If you’re new to the club – or an old hand who wants to try something new – get your calendar out and put some of these dates in your diary.

The club’s first cycling event of the year is the ride to Llangollen, held on the first Sunday in March. This event marks the end of the winter training period and the beginning of the racing season. Those who aren’t in the bunch are encouraged to make their way to Llangollen early at a slower pace to see which rider arrives first.

Some even make a weekend of it and ride out on the Friday or Saturday, stay at a bunkhouse in nearby Cerrigydrudion, and then ride back via Llangollen on the Sunday. If you don’t fancy what can be a challenging ride in terms of distance and terrain – not to mention the need to do it all again on a Sunday – you can always drive to Cerrig.

The Llangollen run also marks the change of the season for mudguards and flaps, which can now be abandoned until the first Sunday in October

and our annual hill climb and freewheel (see the club handbook).

Easter Sunday is the date for one of the club’s ‘certificate rides’ where participants are rewarded with a certificate at the annual dinner (usually held around the first Saturday in February). The Easter Sunday run has traditionally been a 50 in 4 for the touring section: 50 miles in four hours; easily doable if you’re routinely out with the runs on a Sunday.



Come April, it’s time for the weekly 10s – time trials over ten miles – held every Wednesday evening, usually starting on the third Wednesday in April and running through into August. Participants compete for a points trophy which rewards consistency as well as speed. The 10s season includes a championship event on the first Wednesday in June.

Details of the course, currently using the A50 near Mere, are on the club website. If the exertion of an eyeballs-out ride is not for you, you might fancy marshalling or helping the time keeper and start crew for a more sociable end to your day.

The bookend of the 10s season has been the social event known as the Fun 10. Suitsuits, energy drinks and grunts are swapped for fancy dress, champagne (occasionally) and laughs (always). No qualifying rides are necessary.

There is also a club 25-mile championship, traditionally held on the third Tuesday in June, and an Open 25 event where anyone can ride,

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not just Seamons members. The latter is being held this year on 30 July, having moved from its previous September date to avoid clashing with another popular event – the Bishop’s Castle weekend (see below).

In June the club organises its road race; a popular and well-regarded event for racers and one where non-riders' contributions are as welcome as those trying to win it.

If steadier riding is your thing, you might want to consider Audax events. There are plenty to choose from either by looking at the www.aukweb.net site, or the club’s website (under Documents).

The club calendar includes two popular audax events – the Tour of the Berwyns and the Llangollen Panorama, 208km and 135km respectively. Audax events are measured in kms, a nod to their French roots, and are the opposite of sportives in that there is fastest time you are allowed to complete the course. No sign

and calves against some of Wales’ most spectacular scenery. The 2016 editions will be held on Saturday 21 May.



The spirit of the audax is alive and well in the club’s 100 in 8 event. This route can be ridden anytime but the touring section and others have traditionally held a formal 100:8 around the first Sunday in June. Complete the 100-mile course

in eight hours and you’ll have had a great day out on the bike in the summer sunshine, with the added bonus of a fancy certificate at the annual dinner.

The York Rally is back to being a more reliable annual event, now with new organisers. It is held around the summer solstice weekend. This event is described as "a real celebration of grass-roots cycling" and includes

everything from rides (organised and disorganised) to racing, time trialling, audaxes, family entertainment, singing, trade stands and saddlebag sales. Sociability is the name of the game for this one.

The touring section has been upholding the club’s tradition for a number of years but don’t let



boards for these rides, they’re old-school route-sheets and maps.

This year’s Berwyns and Llangollen are being organised by the club’s very own Super Randonneur (look it up and be impressed) Dave Matthews, although it’s not formally a club event this time, you are still welcome to pit your thighs



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that put you off. If you fancy a weekend of camping (or B&B-ing if you're squeamish) put 18-19 June in your planner. You can find out more by talking to any of the touring section or going to the rally's website: www.yorkrally.org. If



you are going, put 'Seamons Cycling Club' in the relevant section of the online booking form if you want to be near your clubmates. Or don't if you don't.



All members are encouraged to take part in a ride in memory of clubmates who are no longer with us. Named for Bob Richardson, one of our

founder members, the ride is to Chester – one of Bob's favourite runs – and takes place the second Sunday in September. You can see how popular it was this time from the picture



elsewhere in the mag.

September has been the regular date for a newer tradition – the chairman's 100. Usually held on the last Sunday of the month it's a fund-raising run where those who want to pay a nominal amount to the Chairman's chosen charity and complete the 100:8 course, or the 100km (63-mile) course.

And sandwiched in between the Bob Richie Run and the Chairman's 100 is a weekend away in Bishop's Castle, Shropshire. This has been organised by the tourers but anyone's welcome. A sociable weekend to enjoy the town's traditional Michaelmas fair and steam extravaganza. Non-cycling partners often attend this one as there are plenty of off-bike

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attractions and things to do. Speak to anyone in the touring section if you think you might like to give it a go.

Another traditional event is the club hill climb, held on the first Sunday in October. This marks the end of the racing season, where riders give their all one last time in an effort to climb Withenshaw Lane in Sutton (just south of Macclesfield) as fast as they can. All members are welcome to take part, the event is held under the auspices of the Cycling Time Trials body, so this "Race of Truth" is just a rider against the clock, trying to beat their time from the previous year.

This is followed immediately after by the Club Freewheel competition – riders roll down an



The final annual event of the year is the Christmas Fancy Dress ride, and a Christmas lunch at Altrincham's Old Market Tavern. This is normally held one or two Sundays before December 25th.

Our annual club dinner, a celebration of the year's records, achievements and milestones, is usually held in February. This is where riders collect their awards and trophies, and is a chance to congratulate members on the year's cycling. This black tie event is held at Altrincham's Cresta Court hotel, and all members and their partners are encouraged to attend.



incline and see how far they can climb up a bank without pedalling! Great fun, and again, all members are encouraged to enter. There is often a post-ride meal at the Ryles Arms.

This marks the beginning of cycling's "winter", and riders are asked to have mudguards and flaps on their bikes during club rides until the Llangollen run in March.





CLUB RUNS LIST

	SOCIAL	50	TEMPO 2	TEMPO 1
7 Aug	Riverside - Whatcroft	Teggs Nose County Park	Blaze Farm	Blaze Farm via Goyt
14 Aug	Jodrell Bank	Cafe Chapeau - Marton	Rose Farm	Rose Farm
21 Aug	Henbury	Poynton	Aqueduct Ch. Minshull	Nantwich Marina
28 Aug	* Marton	Riverside - Whatcroft	Old Ma's Tattenhall	Old Ma's Tattenhall
4 Sept	Riverside - Whatcroft	Glebe Farm - Astbury	Meerbrook	Longnor
11 Sep	Spinney - Allostock	Bob Richardson**	Bob Richardson**	Bob Richardson**
18 Sep	Pott Shrigley	Grasslands GC - Peover	Buxton	Buxton
25 Sep	* Malkins Bank	Blaze Farm***	Tilly's - Bunbury	Tilly's - Bunbury
2 Oct	Dones Green	Hill Climb & Freewheel	H. Climb & Freewheel	H. Climb & Freewheel
9 Oct	The Wizard - Alderley Edge	Spinney - Allostock	Malkins Bank	Malkins Bank
16 Oct	Anderton Boat Lift	Willow Tree Cafe - Frodsham	Astbury GC	Astbury GC via Mow Cop
23 Oct	Jodrell Bank	Fairways GC - Sutton	Dagfields	Dagfields
30 Oct	* Aqueduct	Rose Farm - Utkinton	Blaze Farm	Blaze Farm via Goyt

	HALF DAY	TOURING
7 Aug	Meerbrook	Consall / Black Lion
14 Aug	Audlem	Nantwich Marina
21 Aug	Glebe Farm	Hartington
28 Aug	Buxton	Southport
4 Sept	Bunbury	Wheelton
11 Sep	Bob Richardson**	Bob Richardson**
18 Sep	Nantwich Marina	Buxton / BC
25 Sep	Blaze Farm via Goyt	Barthomley
2 Oct	Hill Climb & F/wheel	Hill Climb & Freewheel
9 Oct	Manley Mere	Dagfields
16 Oct	Longnor	Hayfield
23 Oct	Aqueduct	Bunbury
30 Oct	Peak View via Goyt	Sutton

* Longer Social run, not advisable for less experienced riders.

** Chester

*** via Withenshaw Lane

Notes:

All our rides leave from the front of Rackham's store in the centre of Altrincham every Sunday where you will have a choice of rides.

All rides are round trips starting and finishing in Altrincham. The above destinations are where the rides stop for a cafe break.

All above rides leave at 9:00.

The best place for you to keep up to speed with the runs destinations is the club website. The site can be refreshed more frequently than the magazine appears. If you don't have access to the club's website, ask a clubmate.

Footnote:

Sincerest apologies to all Members and Club friends for the delay in getting this latest Squirrel to you, it is quite some time since the last issue and hopefully the next one will be in production soon, so please forward your interesting stories, cycling tales and pictures to one of the committee or the Editor for inclusion in the next Squirrel.

* The last Sunday of the month the Social runs are longer and are not advisable for less experienced riders.

Cover image: Gordon Peake and John Craig