

The Squirrel

March 2021

Retro Edition

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Inside This Edition

The Magazine of Seamons Cycling Club

17th February was a very sad day for Seamons as this was the day that we lost our Club President and former Chairman Nigel Harrop.

It was very clear that we all loved Nigel for the great person that he was, all the big things he has done for the club and all the little things too.

Immediately all our thoughts were with his family and very close friends. He played a big part in our lives as a cycle club member, we can only imagine what a fantastic husband, father and friend he will have been too.

As word went round, the shock of Nigel's passing seemed to

touch everyone we know in cycling, Nigel was an all rounder in cycling, always had an encouraging word, a helpful tip or simply great company .

The loss among the racing fraternity is huge. Nigel was one of the most prolific race organisers, covering all bases and guiding anyone who was organising a race themselves. His safety planning and preparations were thorough, being second to none.

It was great to see Nigel racing in the TLI road races as he enjoyed racing so much.

On a club run Nigel always seemed to be the protagonist. Wondering about where to go?

When Nigel turned up he would always suggest somewhere... perfect lets go, he knew how to get there too. If someone had a puncture he would proudly lend out his Master Blaster to get the job done quickly - non of this messing about with a micro pump. Sometimes he would pump it up for you whilst you pack away, so, we can all get to the cafe quicker. He loved the cafe stops and wouldn't want to miss a minute.

All of us lucky enough to have been on club runs with Nigel will have great memories him and we are grateful for those times.

Donations in memory of Nigel to
British Heart Foundation <https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/SomeoneSpecial/NigelHarrop>



What does this hairy spider have in common with hairy cyclists? Turn to Audax Corner



 **Will Seamons 2021 Road Race Go Ahead?**

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**18+ Two Men/
Honeymoon Suite/
€5 for photo**

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Tour Rider Memoire

**AND MUCH MUCH
MORE INSIDE**



This weeks guest editor
Eduardo Baldini



Pictures taken by
Nikki Ball

A couple of Pictures (TOP L&R) of Nigel in a 20 mile breakaway with top rider Ray Pugh & Roger "The Power" Gardiner (AKA The Neutron) in the Saighton Road Race. Roger rode his races using a HUGE gear at low cadence & couldn't sprint for toffee (so I'm told) so Nigel knew he was in with a chance of the win. Sadly, just like most of the Tour De France breakaways, they got caught just before the end of the race. (The middle picture may be from another race)

Below are just some of the many many tributes left on Facebook in memory of Nigel

A great roadman, a trusted club member, a fellow cyclist and friend. Such a sudden shock to all. Thoughts and prayers to his family and all who'll miss him. He brought me back to road racing when I joined the club. Enjoyed a 2-up once on the February Nova event. Remember him saying it was the closest he'd ever come to packing in cycling. Always good humoured. Sad Day for the club, for TLI racing and all his club friends.

That's such a shock. I'll always remember him sweeping past us on the line at the top of the garage climb in Majorca. He'll be really missed. Thoughts to his family.

Shocking news. Unbelievable. The club won't be the same without him. RIP Nigel. God bless.

Just cannot believe it. We are both so very sad. A wonderful person who will be very sadly missed by so many. We send our condolences to his family.

Taken too soon. Lovely bloke who loved his cycling, the roads won't be the same without his bobbing style, happy smile and witty banter. He will be truly missed. Love and best to his family at this awful time.

Such sad news. What a delightful man. My thoughts are with his family.

So very sorry to hear this sad news. Nigel was in the shop only last Friday for a brake cable and was telling me how he was looking forward to getting out this week with the milder weather forecast. Sincere condolences to his nearest and dearest.

Absolutely shocked...Nigel persuaded me to have a go at racing again and we had many laughs along the years. My sincere condolences to his family, he will be greatly missed. RIP...Nigel.

So sad, can't believe it. When I joined, I knew so little, and I learnt so much from him, RIP nigel

I'm really sad and shocked to hear this. He was a true gentleman, a leader and an all round good guy.

Oh gosh. How terribly sad. A lovely guy, and great clubman.

Nigel talked me into riding the Stallard series in 2009. We had a good laugh travelling around the county flying the club colours meeting up with faces from the past at the various events. RIP NIGEL

Absolutely shocked and saddened to hear this. Seamons have lost a great cyclist and ambassador. Sincere condolences to Barbara, Amy and Jack. We will miss him.

So sad and shocked to hear this news, I can't find the words to express. RIP Nigel.

What a shock, and what a loss. Nigel was an exemplary chairman and a superb organizer. A great asset to the club, and always good to talk to. Our deep sympathies to his family.

Seamons CC Evening Road Race

If the governments roadmap and the related British Cycling's Way Forward, meet the anticipated timetable, the Seamons Evening Road Race will be able to go ahead on the 22nd June as planned, subject to sanction of TLI Racing

The Seamons Evening Road Race takes place each year at the end of June under the rules of TLI Racing.

The last two editions have had to be cancelled, one due to roadworks and the last one due to covid restrictions.

For 2021 the race has been scheduled for 22nd June, and if the timing of the governments roadmap out of lockdown is achieved we can be pretty confident that it will go ahead as planned.

Seamons will be able to do their bit in support of cycle road racing, more particularly it would be to honour the enthusiasm and dedication of our past president Nigel Harrop, who we sadly lost only recently. As well as having a significant input to our club during his time as Chairman and President, Nigel was National Secretary and a key authority in TLI Racing. Therefore, as well as the personal loss of a friend and colleague, with his passing we have lost a great deal of knowledge, experience and organisational skills.

In the past 3 years I have assisted Nigel in the administration of our evening race, but I now face the task of organising it with little personal experience of doing so. I therefore trust and hope that Seamons members will rally round and help to make this year's event a success.

Any volunteers willing to help on the day with marshalling, sign-on and catering etc would be greatly appreciated, as well as help in preparation and organisation of the event.

The race takes place at 7 o'clock in the evening, with a couple of hours before and after to organise and pack up. Siddington Village Hall will be the Head Quarters for the event.

Ok, that is my main task put in place.

Siddington Village Hall

Race HQ

Coffee & Cake

Guaranteed

I now just want to say how excited I am in anticipation of being able to ride out again with groups of friends now that we have signs that the lockdown restrictions are finally being relaxed. I hope you are just as excited, and I look forward to seeing you all soon, and maybe for coffee and cake.

Thank you in advance

Barry Armstrong
Road Race Secretary



TLI National Road Race Champion Leading The Bunch



Martin Wiggan alongside Seamons current Senior Road Race Champion & 4 x Cyclocross Champion Edward Baldwin outside Siddington Village Hall

Seamons Celebrity Corner

Do You Know Your Clubmates?

An In-depth Interview with Ronan O’Cualain

We online chat with the man that is Ronan O’Cualain

For security reasons where and when were you born?

...And your PIN?

College Hospital Galway in the middle of a heatwave in 1976.

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

A few of us from the village where I grew up used to cycle for fun, just on the roads, traffic was quiet back then. Kelly and Roche were our heroes. There were no cycling clubs in Connemara anyway, it was either rowing (currach racing) or Gaelic football and nothing else. Seamons was/is my first club

What was your first cycle race and what was your first win? (We understand how it is with Ade & Alan so the win can be a tombola or a raffle)

My first race was a Seamons Wednesday 10, I managed 27.42. I'm waiting on Ade and Alan to retire for my first win!

Which cycling performance do you rate as your best?

M&DTTA 100m from 2018. I came tenth. On the day, the course was shortened to 92 miles, the weather was hot, I lost my bottles (literally, not metaphorically) halfway in, and my Garmin gave up. Before that race, I used to think of TT racing as something tantalising, where you need a perfect combination of weather, legs, and luck to succeed. After that race, I realised it's all in the head. That ride gave me a lot of confidence going forward.

Which oven hob ring is your favourite and why?

My favourite oven hob ring is...top left of course

What would you have as your last meal if you found yourself on Death Row?

Any type of fish, with potatoes and green veg

Nothing to do with the last question but what were you like at school?

Quiet, and underachieving. It was strict and religious and not much fun. We did not do any sport worth talking about. I remember most of the week being taken up with RE and discussions about the soul. And all in the Irish language.

Again not related to the last question - Do you read books? What kind of books do you read if you do?

I like detective and spy novels. le Carré and Philip Kerr are big favourites at the minute.

What kind of music do you enjoy when the wife, kids and neighbours are out?

Biggie and Tupac, Sasha and Digweed on the turbo. Dylan, Neil Young and Springsteen in the car.

We never judge at Seamons but which newspapers do you read?

Local newspapers, and read the Times, the i, and the Guardian if they are to hand.

What is your ideal holiday destination and who would you take - if this wasn't being published in the Squirrel?

Italy is awesome, we got married there, and have lots of fond memories of the place...

Like most people reading this cycling is your main occupation; do you have any hobbies?

Any family time is a good time.

Who would play you in The Hollywood Blockbuster - Ronan O’Cualain - The Movie?

I would like to think Channing Tatum, but my wife tells me it's David Tennant.

How would you describe yourself on a 'One Sentence' Dating App?

Unavailable!

Describe your favourite training ride bearing in mind the previous questions limitations?

Anywhere in the general direction of Delamere is a favourite at the moment, Frodsham, the Yeld, and Acton bridge I like a lot.

If you had one, what would you imagine was your most unpleasant characteristic?

I can be impatient and stubborn, and tend to go quiet when under stress.

Because this is 2021 what characteristic do you *most like* in others?

I like those who are a "people person", being able to stop, chat, connect, have an interest and listen.

Remembering this is going in a magazine published on the World Wide Web, what is your most embarrassing moment?

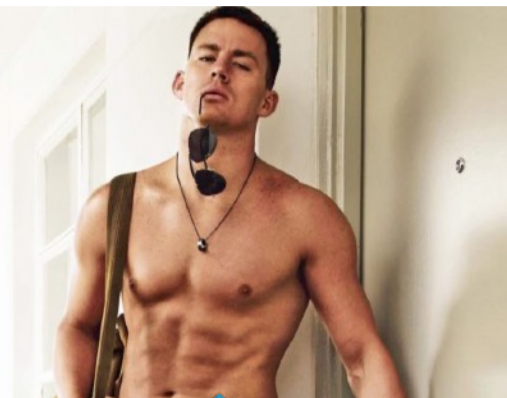
On the bike - a Seamons club ride home to Altrincham, I decided to take off on my own for a sprint. I got down from the first bridge at a decent speed, but failed to negotiate the corner very well and ended up in the hedge, while the rest of my clubmates steamed past me. Off the bike, I'm not telling.

Have you ever secretly wanted to own a pet shop? ...and why not?

No, not at all, I have three monkeys in my life (Ellen, Bronagh, and Emmet), and they take up most of my time and effort, and have no desire to add to this collection!

Reaching out to you one last time before we socialise this interview, are there any words or catchphrases that really bug you in meetings at work?

I am sick and tired of the words "GLOBAL PANDEMIC"



In the movie a focussed Ronan gets ready to put his skin suit on at Goostrey Village Hall



Thank you for taking the time to do this interview Ronan, you are a star and a true gentleman. You sound like the sort of man who has the good things in life pretty sussed.
The Editor

Tip Top Corner

Corners are popular

Notice board & chit chat

GOOD NEWS - Monday 12th April

Restaurants and pub gardens will be allowed to serve cyclists sitting outdoors; cyclists can meet in a group of up to six riders from different households; a maximum of two households can meet to form a group of any size (depending on the size of your household, probably keep the max at less than a thousand if you are cycling due to motorists)

Monday 17th May

Hospitality venues can seat customers indoors; parties can be made up of a maximum of six people or two households of any size; groups seated outside must be smaller than 30 people (no half sizes please)

Monday 21st June


All restrictions will be lifted (covid related that is, it doesn't mean you can walk into a bank, fill your boots then trot down to the Pinarello shop without getting arrested)



I don't cycle myself, I came free with this newspaper template but my choice of shirt makes me look like I belong

Audax Corner

Where the miles turn into smiles and the banter's done at a canter



Phidippus Audax (see front page) is a hairy jumping spider that comes from North America. Like a Tourist it is known to think ahead and plan its route but it can also jump 10 - 50 times its own body length... Don't worry, they are well under a metre long.

END OF THE WORLD FOR PROSPECT TEA ROOMS

IT IS VERY SAD to report that Linda, who has run the Prospect Tea Rooms for at least 20 years has finally decided to retire. I have thanked her profusely for all the help and cups of tea she has brewed for cyclists in the past and wished her a very happy retirement.

When the Berwyns Audax rides are back on, there is to be a revised route---which may well return to the original over Worlds End as Prospect tea rooms are no longer available.

As these rides are Audax, I should be able to arrange them at short notice as and when lockdown rules are relaxed--- probably starting from Duddon Village Hall as in 2019. Watch this space.

David Matthews February 2021



Photo AAP

ICU TRIES TO BAN TRUMP SPONSORED TEAM

It was reported yesterday in a 'Cyclist Tri-Harder' magazine left on a coffee table in Grasslands, that the ICU, (cyclings controversial mason-like club once owned by Lance Armstrong) will try to ban Trump's Road Team - TRM, TRUMP/RALEIGH/MACGA from using hypodermic needles.

During his visit to the U.K, Trump insisted on taking tea with The Queen as it had been on his tick list ever since he was voted into the White House by Putin.

During the tea slurping session, with chocolate covered Hobnobs, sneaked in directly from Boris's bottom drawer, our Liz, took a big sip, sat back letting out a long satisfying "Aaahhhhhhhh" and commented - "you can't beat a good cup of tea - It's what made

this country great - How does one take his?" she said to the man with a tan.

Trump, looking round the room valuing all her artwork because Britain should belong to Donald, he noticed that the paintings were all of victorious British battle scenes, depicting triumph after triumph.

Queen Elizabeth, or 'Beth', now re-christened by Trump, pointed out that the American troops had enjoyed a British cuppa whilst visiting the U.K during WW2. An insider said "you could see the cent drop with Trump," continuing to comment, "Donald Sr, drifted off into a haze whispering - that's why America won World War Two." Immediately upon Trump's return to Trumpton U.S.A (AKA The Whitehouse), he set the country's top scientists - whom he had personally taught everything they know about science - on to a new formula he had 'geniusly' invented on the flight home. It was a shortcut to defeating every cycling team that got in the tyrants team's way, a distant ex-friend reported. It's going to 'Make American Cycling Great Again'. Trump has been miffed ever since Lance had all 7 of his Tour titles stolen by the

Waiter: How do you like your steak sir?
Me: Like winning an argument with my wife.

Waiter: Rare it is then sir.

My wife is blaming me for totally ruining her birthday.

Totally impossible because I didn't even know it was her birthday.

ICU. Trump's lawyers had really, looked deep and hard into Armstrong's victories finding no evidence of cheating whatsoever. Instead lots of evidence showed that Lance had actually been teaching first aid from a St. John's Ambulance hand book showing riders how to save lives with standard 3 step roadside blood transfusion practices. He also encouraged his riders to become better and more honest people.

TRUMP POWER - The Controversial Formula - estimated to be over 1000 times stronger than regular a Yorkshire Gold tea bag is intended to be routinely injected into the veins of every member of the riotous Republican's road cycling team super boosting cycling power, endurance and to enhancing cycling combat ability. Trump said to an unreliable distant source "You can't beat a good cup of tea or the people who take it." This new formula is scheduled to have its first test on approximately 1000 ordinary Republican citizens in Washington on the 5th January 2021. The results will be published later in the year.

Reporter Unknown or in Hiding

Top Tip Corner

It is often said by track cyclists

“What other sport can an amateur compete on the same battleground or get right up close to the stars as Cycling?” Some listeners wrote in to share conversations they had with other people who also think they might have an interesting hobby.

What other sport can you compete alongside the pros other than Match Fishing? I remember fishing a match in the late '70s alongside top Pro Fisherman Ivan Marks, he was on peg 20 and I was peg 19. To think that his match winning keep-net of Silver Bream could have sniffed at my maggots before moving on to bite on his game changing aniseed flavoured Blood Worm. Blumming marvellous. That aniseed was like the difference that ribbed aero socks & ceramic jockey wheels make in a TT - they practically win the race for you!

What other sport other than Time Trialling do you get motorists leaning out of the window shouting encouragement to you at the top of their voices whilst you're out on the course giving it everything? In the past some of these drivers, particularly tradesmen in white vehicles, have made very thoughtful gestures such as, to try and pass a nice cold milkshake as they drove by. It did make me laugh when it happened to me, the poor guy didn't realise that it's difficult to catch anything whilst using tri-bars; the milk shake hit me square in the face.



Here You Go Mate Drink This! - You're doing Great



Ivan Marks Lands Yet Another - Photo John Ellis - Canal & River Trust

A Few Race Tips

Peace of mind and confidence in your bike can all the difference. Make a habit of filling in a checklist before your races. Make it in three sections 1. Pre race 2. The race 3. After race. Completing this list will give you a calm, confident and relaxed start to the race day and reduce the chances getting flustered instead of focussed.

Include your race licence and have coins with you in case of parking. Snacks, drinks, recovery food, tools and spares etc.

Remember clothing to keep you comfortable going to the race.

Take spare kit for unexpected changes in climate on arrival and a fresh base layer for after your warm up.

Give yourself something to look forward to if you didn't win, which is likely for some. Clean, comfortable and warm clothes for going home, maybe take a flannel and flask

with warm water so you can wash yourself down, especially if it was a cold & wet day.

Look after your chainring and cassette teeth by replacing your chain regularly. A brand new chain on a worn cassette can slip.

You might think that your bike works fine and you've got away with it this time but it's when the pressure is on and speeds are high when it could fail, bringing you and others down hard.

Not too long ago someone in a local race was hospitalised for a week by being brought down by one such very apologetic 'new chain/old block' rider.

Look at the equipment used by the people who beat you. You can pick up great tips and cheats on improving your bike without spending a fortune. If nothing else sometimes it'll remind you that it's not about the bike (unless you are going for the hour record) and a little more training and a little less cake wouldn't go amiss.



Story Of The Week



In December 2018 I had an idea to arrange an Alpine cycling trip for the coming September for women (not quite as many miles or as much climbing as the Tour de Mont Blanc that Stephen arranges). Paul Barber happily agreed to be our Directeur Sportif as long as he got in his own TDMB the week before. For many and varied (all valid) reasons, I couldn't get enough female cyclists so in the end we comprised 6 women and 4 men, which worked brilliantly. From Seamons CC there was Jeanette Barber, Phil Holden, Ashley Cress, Brynn Hodgson, David Hole and Jackie Deardon plus Jackie's sister Jenny and three women from Ruthin Cycling Club – Merian, Margaret and Ros. What a fantastic group of cyclists – we all got on so well together and had an absolutely brilliant time.

Jenny and/or Jackie wrote a blog each day, and it is wonderful, amusing and captures how we felt. She has given permission for it to appear in the Squirrel magazine.

Day 0. M/cr Airport to Chamonix. (7 miles and 700ft climbing): A fraught taxi journey found us in the bar sipping G&T by 9am as we contemplated the challenge ahead with excitement & trepidation. Our mutual motivational session came to an end and we sat and sipped in satisfied silence. My phone buzzed into life with an ill-timed NHS text inviting me to an "End of Life" seminar.... can't help wondering if this was a bad omen.

Finally arriving at our chalet in Servoz, late lunch was laid out and the party immediately divided into munchers & menders. A 100% gender split.

Bikes assembled and bellies filled, we took the bikes for a test drive to see if anything fell off - parts or persons. Just 7 miles or so of the first part of tomorrow's route.

FOUND IN BAR at 9AM WITH G&T - END OF LIFE TEXT SENT

Day 1 Servoz to Orsieres (53 miles, 8000ft climbing; Col de Montets, Col de Forclaz and Col de Champex): Beautiful morning but chilly until the sun managed to rise above the mammoth mountains (noon!!)

The first climb to Les Houches was despatched quickly and an uneventful descent into Chamonix. A fairly stressful ride through the town with tyre-popping pot holes and wheel snatching cracks in the road, and the seemingly chaotic progress of a peloton of 10 trying to follow a Garmin through a town centre.

The 2nd climb of the day took us to the Col de Montets. The hard-earned descent was taken at such speed that I missed a photo opportunity at the Swiss border and sailed straight through along with the 9 other cyclists.

The third climb to the Col de Forclaz seemed to go on forever and our eventual arrival at the summit was rewarded with a plentiful and varied food bounty from our Directeur Sportif's boot. Beautiful scenery, clanging cowbells...

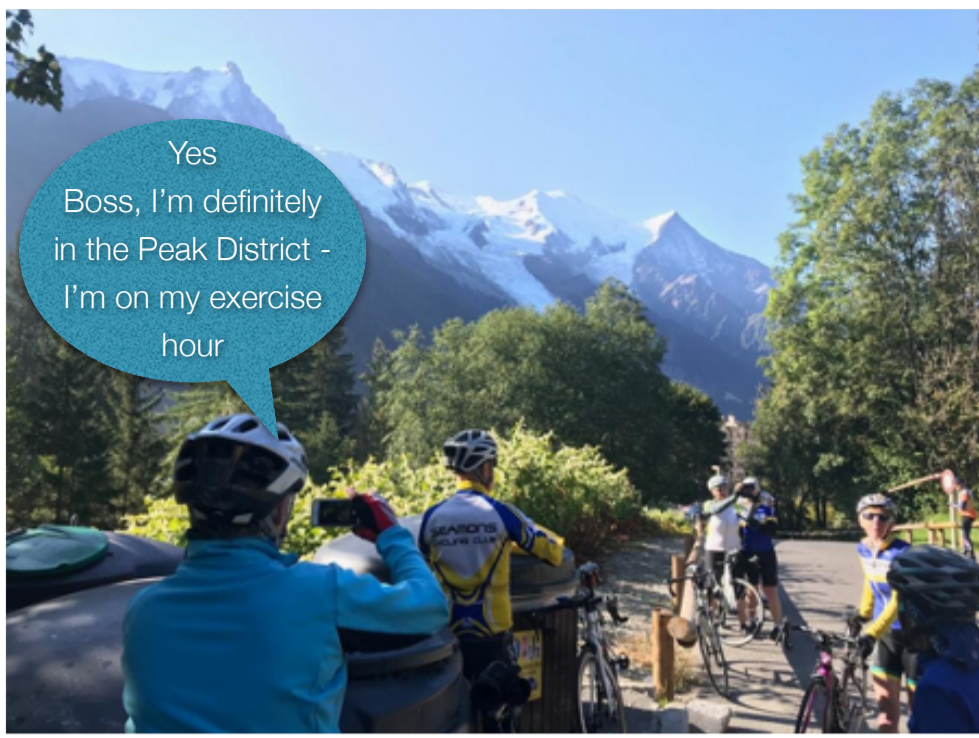
The descent into Martigny was stunning. It was hard to take our eyes away from the view to concentrate on the potential for sudden death that a long mountain descent provides. However switch backs, sheer drops and concrete blocks forced our attention back to the road.

And then the beast of the day, the climb to Col de Champex. The 8 mile long climb was tortuous. The switch backs were endless and the view wasn't even able to offer a spirit lifting distraction. It seemed impossible that a hill could go on for this long. Was this the direct climb to heaven?? It certainly felt like it at times. Our ever attentive Directeur Sportif was a very welcome sight offering sustenance and replenishing our bidons. After an eternal amount of climbing I made an error of judgement in asking our trusty Directeur if I was near the top. His hesitation and inability to meet my eye confirmed my worst fears....

Eventually, after 3 days of climbing the summit was reached. The rest of the peloton was waiting in a cafe and gave a huge cheer as we cycled passed nearly missing them. A quick coffee and the promise of "downhill all the way" for 12 miles or so. Another thrilling descent into the village of Orsieres, our home for the night.

Today's ride powered by croissant, ham & cheese baguette, half packet dextrose sweets & Love Hearts, Snickers, salted peanuts, bananas, Orangina....And now for some beer ...

Direct Climb To Heaven Powered By A Croissant



Yes
Boss, I'm definitely
in the Peak District -
I'm on my exercise
hour



Hey!
Is that a Squirrel or a
Marmot?



At last - I finally get
control of the radio



We know
nothing about
the Jacuzzi

We're
just here for
the cake

Day 2 Tour of Mt Blanc. Orsieres to St Didier (58 miles, 7800ft climbing; Col de Grand St Bernard): Early start to enjoy a brief 200 metre descent followed by a 16 mile climb. The Mon - Fri traffic was replaced by herds of Mazzaratis, Ferraris, Porches, motorbikes. The road snaked up the mountain with many tunnels one of which was 3 miles long and had our nerves in tatters. We reached our carer, formerly known as the Directeur Sportif and he soothed our nerves with goodies and reassured us there were only 5 more miles to the top of Col de Grand St Bernard ... What he failed to mention was the energy sapping lumpy tarmac and vicious headwind.

We made the gruelling climb to the summit and enjoyed a coffee then exited the cafe into arctic temperatures and mist.

Once again we missed a photo opportunity as we sped through the Italian border. A very long 16 mile, freezing descent and we were down into Italy.

The euphoria of making the climb and descent vanished when we realised we still had 25 miles to go and 3 more climbs (albeit small ones). Our peloton started to split with the more fatigued progressing slowly taking advantage of many photo opportunities and singing a variety of songs but mainly "Whiskey in the Jar". The Directeur Sportif told us to get a move on, so we tried.... Really hard.

At last we arrived and our group leader spent an hour trying to explain to the hotel reception that we weren't couples and double beds were not appropriate. Although the two men who got the bridal suite with two double beds, two tv's and a Jacuzzi were thrilled.

Meanwhile, as we sat outside, sipping ice cool beers the village town hall bells pealed out an elaborate tune at precisely 5.38pm reminding us we were no longer in Switzerland.

Can't bring myself to think about tomorrow - I'm exhausted and rain is forecast.

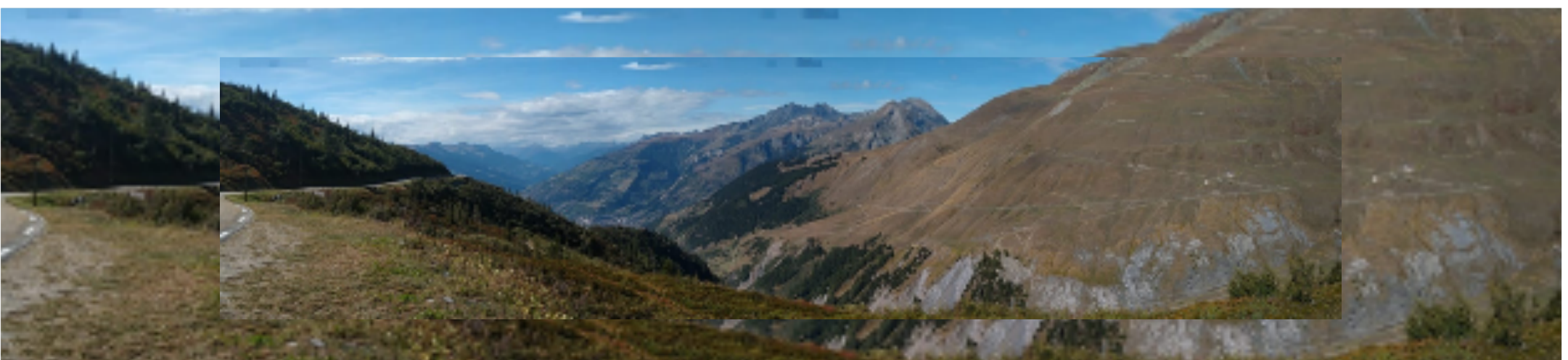
Today's ride powered by bircher muesli, banana, snack size Snicker x 2, salted nuts, ham cheese & gherkin baguette, Haribos, Cola - full fat

*Nerves
in
Tatters*

*Energy
Sapping*

*Two Men
A Bridal Suite
& Jacuzzi Thrill -
What Next?*

*...a Banana & a
Snack Size Snicker*





I had a snickers !

We need a sit down after all that, erm, cake ;-)



Cette Pâtisserie est-elle ouverte?

Gd. St-Bernard
2473 m
8114 ft
A.C.S.



Day 3, Tour of Mt Blanc. St Didier to Beaufort (52 miles, 7556ft climbing; Col de Petit St Bernard and Cornet de Roselend): The first climb of the day was 14 miles and started from the front door. For the first time the mountains were obscured by low cloud but we set off valiantly only to see the peloton vanish into the cloud as my sister's bike developed a mechanical problem. The Directeur Sportive was soon on hand to fix and dispatch. Unfortunately the issue wasn't quite resolved so I abandoned my sister and carried on to catch the others! However, this backfired badly when she then drove past me in the van!!!! Once she had secured the advantage she got out and started cycling again.

I Abandoned my Sister

We finally made it to the top, re-grouped, added layers for the freezing 14 mile descent. Another photo opportunity missed as we shot over the border back into France. As we left Italy behind, the weather improved and by the time we had reached Bourg-St-Maurice the sun was well and truly out. The temperature had increased by 20 degrees which led to many riders dropping layers into the van before the second 12 mile climb of the day. I was already in the right gear so I took full advantage of the situation and passed the strippers to head to the front of the pack.

Shot! Over The Border

The climb gradient varied and that combined with a body which had already spent 2.5 days in the saddle made it difficult to get into a decent rhythm. The km markers passed in an instant for the first 15 km but slowed to snail's pace (as I suspect did I) for the last 5. I seriously think the last one had been misplaced. I was told there were great views on the way up but my mind was elsewhere.

My Mind Was Elsewhere

At the summit we had photos and food and we added more layers for the 12 mile descent to the hotel. The descent was fast and a bit scary as the wind was gusting and the switchbacks were tight. Not much overtook us on the way down into Beaufort.

Dutifully Followed Him to His Room

During post ride drinks we dissected the day and discussed our aches and pains! It seemed we all had one thing in common and as luck would have it, one of the team had the solution/cream!! We dutifully followed him to his room as he handed out a blob of Sudocrem to each of us !!!

Only one more day to go and the rain is now lashing down as we bed down for the night. The forecast promises sunshine.

Paul, how about putting this kipper sandwich in the car for me for later?



How about putting it in your back pocket?



You said you'd packed the tea bags!



Day 4, Beaufort to Servoz. The final leg of our Tour of Mt Blanc (46 miles, 5500ft climbing; Col de Les Saisies): Never before have I described a 44 mile ride with 5,500ft climbing as an easy day. We even had a lie in to let the rain pass.

After applying Sudocrem to all points of contact some of us were hoping for a comfier ride today. The person that had also applied the Sudocrem to their lips and then asked if anybody had double dipped was feeling slightly nervous (not me btw)!

10 minutes in and our 10 strong peloton reduced to 9 after an early defection by David. Depending on whose account you listen to about the "Scenic Route" some loved it, some might have preferred the defector's route and some would have hopped in the van.

However, we were all unanimous in our thoughts on the newly surfaced road "GRAVILLONS" skinny road tyres and 9% gradients.

At the summit of Col de Saises we sought refuge from the cold in the only open cafe but were refused entry and directed instead to the terrace, given cosy red blankets and served hot chocolate. We now resembled a SAGA advert rather than Alpine Cyclists. Regrouped and warmed we took the obligatory summit photo, layered up and started the descent.

Our final day presented us with a dilemma in that there was still a food mountain in the back of the van. Our Directeur Sportif, Paul, urged us to eat as much as possible. We gave it our best shot emptying the buckets of crisps and peanuts, chocolate bars, cakes and softening bananas into our mouths as if in a suspended calorie zone.

All the big climbs done and down to the final few miles of our challenge, final photos taken as we enjoyed the gentle descents back to Servoz.

Ashley & Jackie dropped off the back to capture a panoramic shot with unsuspecting French Madam. Ashley even tried to charge her €5 for the picture.

The final few miles gave an opportunity to relax a bit and reflect on our adventure. It's been really tough, hours of climbing have been painful at times, the reward of the descents, the beautiful scenery and the support and friendship of our group. We've had a great time, the weather has been kind considering the forecast so we feel very lucky.

As we made our final approach to our accommodation Paul was there with his camera to capture the moment we crossed the finish line like true race champions

*Sudocrem
Applied to Lips -
All Contact Points
Were Covered*

*Some Would
Have Hopped In
The Van*

*Ashley Tried To
Charger Her €5*

*We Crossed The
Finish Line Like
True Champions*



Who's round is it next?

Time to polish off all that Orangina?

me too, I'm after him

It's officially my round next but I'm keeping shtum

I always use a small glass so everyone assumes I drink less

I'm at the back so my boss doesn't recognise me

What a bunch of nutters

I'm sure Jeanette switched my glass?





WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF THE TOUR RIDER

By Keith Stacey

So, you have trained hard, rode a few races with some success, even rode a three day stage race. Then you get selected to ride a two week long stage race. (The Tour of Britain then known as "The Milk Race") .

Hang on, this is not Team Sky we are talking about. it's just a bunch of amateurs who have never raced together as a team before (in fact some of the team have never previously met).

The good news is that you will be provided with two team vests (one of which has to returned after the event). The rest of what may be needed you have to provide for yourself.

Then a letter arrives from the team mechanic "with a team of seven I think we will need three spare frames or complete bikes. One needs to be big and one small. We have both large and small chaps in the team. As far as wheels go please bring a spare pair with you as well as as many spare tubs {tubular tyres} as you think you will require. { hang on a minute' 1,400 miles in two weeks and fourteen stages, now how many tubs do I need? Answers on a postcard please)

...It would be advisable to bring three blocks { these were the precursor to cassettes and would at that time have a choice of seven cogs). One with a gear down to the low 40's for the mountain stages, and you may want to bring a close ratio block for the Team Time-trial. Spare chainrings are also handy".

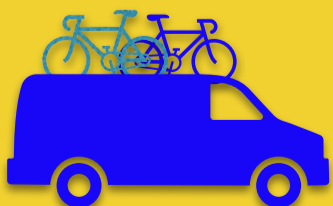
Another letter arrives from the team manager, he writes;" wives and girlfriends will NOT be allowed to stay with you at any time on the Tour. You may see them at the stage finishes, but it is requested that you are free of them by 9pm at the latest."

The event organiser writes to you;" in order to assist the Hotel Proprietors who will be accommodating riders, it has been decided to provide baths or showers at the majority of stage towns to ensure that riders arrive at their respective hotels in a clean condition. The name and address of the rider's hotel will only be disclosed AFTER the rider has bathed only".

ENJOY THE EVENT



Photo Credit: Cycling Weekly



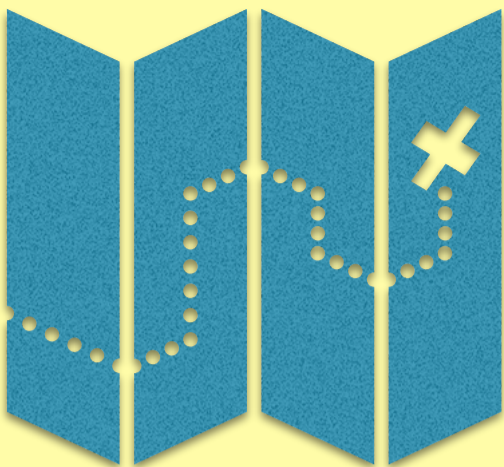
Archeologists Dig Up Some Fascinating Items from The Early Squirrel Era

before the current Squirrel editor's own parents were old enough to go to the shops on their own.

Photos sent in by Carol Pardoe

Archived Documents Considered Lost Have Been Found

Carol & John Pardoe have found a hoard of items during a recent tidy up including contents of a Club History box going back to 1949. Inside the box Carol found original committee minutes, membership cards, menus, results sheets, and exercise books with club members' racing results all neatly noted, also newspaper articles from

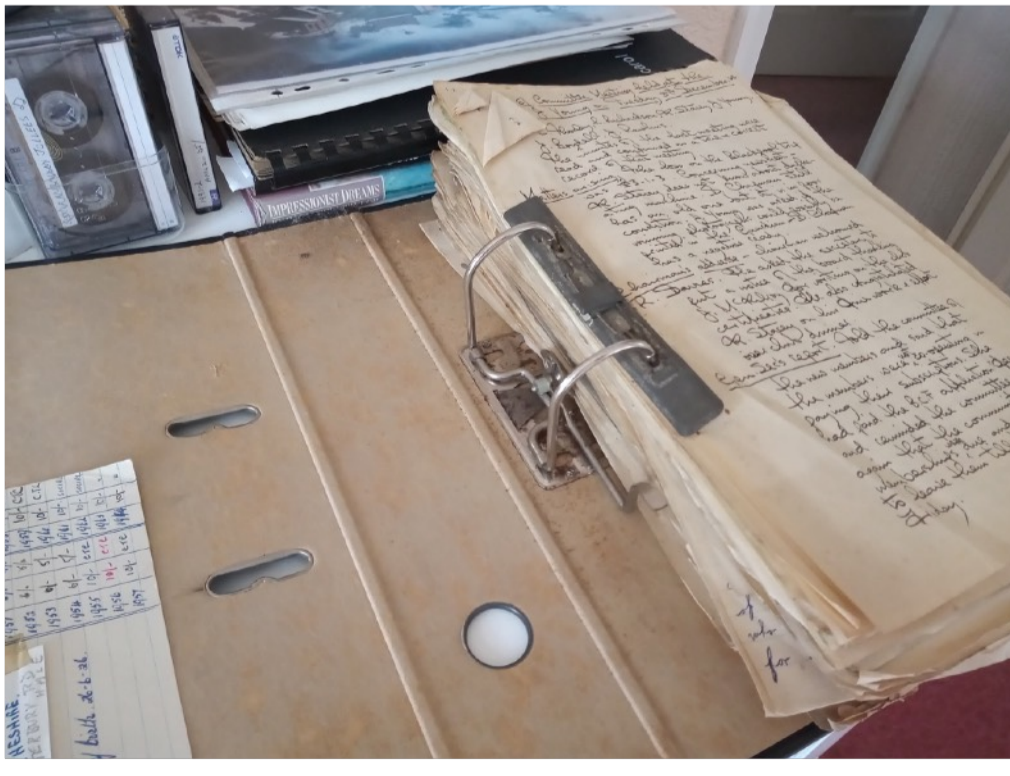


Below
The Haul Is Proudly Displayed For The Photographer



COLES, John C.
108 ~~Warrington Rd~~
~~Manchester~~
7 LINE RD
STRETFORD

Date of Birth	18-3-1935	1958	F.M.	
Date of Joining	15-5-1953	1959	10/- BLRC	
	1963	10/- B.C.F.	1953	3/6 + 5/- NCU
	1964	10/- B.C.F.	1954	3/6 + 5/- NCU
	1965	10/-	1955	6/- etc
			1956	6/- etc.
			1957	F.M.
			1958	F.M.
			1959	10/- BLRC
			1960	10/- B.C.F.



Year 1949

Number 126	Club jersey	2	3/6	7
	Road jersey	1	10/0	7
	Petty Cash Voucher			3/0
	Refund of Subscription of Month			5/0
127	Prize Money		4/6	9
	Rubber Band			18/9
	Caps Band			
Number 128	Owing to the N.C.U. for Handbooks			9/0
Number 129	Duplicating Equipment			8/6
Number 130	Elms Duplicate Co.			5/6
Number 131	Deposit for St. Margaret's Club Room			1/0/6
Number 132	One Pack of Playing Cards			3/9
133	Set of Draughts			8/0
Number 134	Use of Club Room			10/0
135	1 N.C.U. Affiliation			1/4/0
Number 136	2 Monthly Prizes for Club Dinner			3/0
Number 137	Two Tattlers of Olive Oil			3/0
Number 138	J.P. Green & Son			1/8/10
Number 139	Elms Duplicate Co.			4/6
140	Spices Ltd.			16/2
Number 141	One Exercise Book (A. Hill)			3/9
142	One Binder (A. Hill)			10
143	Postage and Postage			4/3
Number 144	Brian Johnson. Gifts from Mr. Ruffin			15/0
145	H. Richardson. Duplicator			1/10/0
	Books			6/6
	Pyralites			2/0
	Prizes			1/0
146	One Day N.C.U. Dinner			3/4/6
	Postage			1/7/0
				30/7/3

Minutes of the Club meetings from 1949. The cassette tapes, likely to be post 1949, were **not** found on this particular dig.

Treasurers notes in his exercise book, possibly written using a quill

WATTS IT ALL ABOUT?

By Keith Stacey

First we had “Training by the way you feel” then we had “Training with a Heart Rate Monitor”, and now we have Power Meters but what are they and how can they help?

Like any training method it is necessary to record the data but its more important to be able to understand what the data means. Heart rate monitors are a good guide to how hard one is trying and for checking on recovery. For this to be of any real use one has to do a maximum heart rate test first in order to be able to then work out the heart rate one should use for each type of training exercise. Unfortunately many riders did not do the max test properly so all the subsequent training was a bit hit and miss.

The information from a Power Meter is much easier to analyse and direct comparison can be made between riders of varying size and gender.

Power meters come in a variety of sorts. Some comprise a rear hub with the meter built in, other power meters are built into pedals and some into chainsets. It is also possible to buy an exercise bike with a built in power meter. {the aptly named Wattbike being the most talked about}. Fortunately the accuracy of all of these types of meters is regarded as being very good although some allow for re-calibration. It is therefor possible to directly compare the data provided by the different methods of measurements.

So what does it tell us and how do we use the power meter?

Obviously the meter measures ones power output (some devices even measure the different power produced by each leg!). The meter gives a constant readout whatever gear or cadence one is doing, but this drops to zero of course if one freewheels.

The first thing to do when the power meter is fixed to the bike is to do a test to establish ones “Functional Threshold Power”. This is the maximum power that one can expect to produce for a full 60 minutes. This will also be the benchmark to see how ones further training has improved your fitness, and the base to calculate the effort required for each training session.

Fortunately the test can be done in 20 minutes rather than the full hour but it is quite taxing. Although this test can be done on the road it is much better done on a turbo trainer.

The test comprises a ten minute warm-up in any gear that you can pedal at around 110 revs per minute with only minimal effort but without bouncing on the saddle. Then select a lower gear and ride easily for 2 minutes. Next select a higher gear, one that you can maintain for 20 minutes. It doesn't matter what your cadence or heart rate is. Your aim is to find the highest **average** wattage you can produce over the full 20 minutes, so save something for the last 3 minutes!

Now analyse the data, and this is where direct comparables become possible.

Take the average wattage for the full 20 minutes and deduct 5% (this is to allow for the fact that you have only done a 20 minute test and most riders would expect to loose about 5% of power over the full 60 minutes.

Divide the result by your weight in kilograms.

The result is your very own “Functional Threshold Power”. This is the number that can be used to directly compare riders and this is the number that you will want to improve on as the training programme progresses.

So what does the number mean? Below is a table giving comparable power levels for riders of different abilities:

	Men	Women
Fair	over 2.40	over 1.99
Moderate	= 2.93	= 2.49
Good	= 3.47	= 2.98
Very Good	= 4.09	= 3.55
Excellent	= 4.62	= 4.05
Professional	= 5.15	= 4.54
World Class	= 5.60	= 5.00

Take the comparison of a large male rider weighing 80 kilos who has recorded 250 watts (after deducting 5%) this would give him an FTP of 3.12. Moderate on the above scale.

Then take a lady rider weighing 60 kilos who has recorded 200 watts (after the 5% deduction) This would give her an FTP of 3.33. Good on the above scale and winning this contest!!

Now when you hear that Froome has climbed Ape d'Huez with an FTP of 5.6 you know how hard you have to train.

An Introduction to Road Racing & Circuit Racing

In the North West of England we are very fortunate to have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of road racing events, from March right through to late September. Whether you are a complete novice, young or old there will be something for you to take part in. Events are usually held at the weekend but from Late April to July there are local evening races too.

Am I Fit Enough?

You never know until you try but as a general rule, if you are reasonably OK with the Club's Tempo groups or can generally manage the pace of the Half Day group, then you should definitely give it a go! The important thing is that you are able to ride at close proximity to other riders at a fast pace. Before entering a Road Race you should have developed your bike handling skills by riding regularly in a Club group.

In a Road Race everyone's safety depends on everyone else's competence

How Do I Get Started?

Let's assume that you have coped with the Club's Tempo or Half Day group rides, have a road-worthy racing bike (No Tri Bars in road races) and are aged 16 or over.

There are also events on closed (traffic free) circuits which cater for younger riders as well as those aged 16 and over.

The three main organisations that oversee cycle road racing in England are British Cycling (BC); TLI Cycling; and the League of Veteran Racing Cyclists (LVRC).

If you are under 40 years of age, you can join either BC or TLI Cycling. If you are 40+ you can join both of these and The LVRC.

Below is a brief guide to TLI Cycling and a website address, so you can find out how to join, access their Event Calendar, and how to enter.

There is additional information on the TLI Cycling National Facebook page.

TLI Cycling www.tlicycling.com

TLI Cycling support clubs to organise age-related Road Races, Cyclo Cross events and some Time Trials in the UK, particularly across the North of England.

It is an ideal way to get started or get back into the road-racing scene if you've had a long break, as competitors are placed in 5-10 year age bands.

Female riders (over 17) are allocated to an age-related group generally 10 to 15 years older than their chronological age.

The races are usually run in 2 or 3 age-related groups.

Membership (at time of writing) is free for Under 16s, £10 for Juniors (16/17) and £15 for everyone else. Race Entry Fees are around £10-£15 for most events.

All members have £10M of Public Liability Insurance for TLI Cycling events, and members aged 16 and over are also insured for general cycling apart from commuting.

Many of today's top cyclists have been, and in some cases still are very active TLI Cycling competitors. These include Mark Cavendish, Alex Dowsett, Matt Brammier, and Mike Cummings.

The older age categories include many former professionals and national champions who still enjoy racing for fun.

Full details of all TLI Cycling membership, events and activities can be found at

www.tlicycling.com

Why not try a race before the season is out.

Written and adapted for The Squirrel by Nigel Harrop

https://www.tlicycling.com/proposed_races

National Closed Circuit Championships, Marsh Tracks, N Wales.

Sat 29th May, Categories: Yth; WJ; D;E;F;G;H.

Sun 30th May, Categories: J(Male);S;M;A;B;C.

National Road Race Championships, Holt Circuit, near Wrexham.

Sunday 8th August, Categories: J(Male); S;M;A;B.

Sunday 15th August, Categories: WJ;C;D;E;F;G;H.

National Time Trial Championships, (Road Bikes Only)

Sun 12th September, Categories: all from Junior and Older.

Circuit: Farndon/Wrexham/Broxton. Distance TBA.

National Hill Climb Championships, DETAILS TBA.

The Changing of The Guard - Llangollen 2019

John Pardoe

**WET!
SO WET!**
How wet can you get?

Ten doughty Seamons riders set out, eight made it to Llangollen. After 28 victories since 1974, Robin this time opted for driving the other support vehicle. His face was a picture when we met up in the lay-by on the A556, obviously very pleased with his decision as we cheered the now soaking wet lads through – only another 30 miles to go! “I’ve got heated seats” grinned Robin, not quite loud enough for the lads to hear.

After 28 Victories since 1974 Robin opted to drive a support vehicle

He even added a little spice to the event by putting up a ten pound prime at the top of the Marford climb, where he waved the flag as Jeff Briggs – Hill Climb Champion – came sprinting through. Chris Siepen took the prime into Llangollen, and not for the first time.

Jeff Briggs
Hill Climb
Champion
Came Sprinting
Through

Basil had pre-booked a room at the very comfortable Cottage Tea-room café by the bridge in Llangollen. We received a warm welcome, and they seemed unfazed by the puddles all over the

floor, they even set up a fan heater. Carol produced a bag of towels, and Robin had the bags of dry clothes. The food was excellent, as was the service. Great idea, Basil.

Basil Booked A Room
Carol Produced A Bag Of Towels

Once again it was decided to give the Horseshoe Pass a miss on the return leg, it would have been freezing up there, especially on the descent.

Coming into Bangor Dan’s tyre gave out, the inner tube was visible, and Keith punctured at the same time. Carol crawled about in the back of the van to find a spare tyre – we have everything in the van, we just don’t know where it is. JP produced a flask of hot tea, plus the track pump. What more could you ask? (maybe a lift!)

JP Produced A Flask Of Hot Tea

Finally arriving at Cotebrook chez Dan and Gemma, the lads were treated to more dry towels and hot tea, followed by sausage casserole, prepared by Dan the night before.

One day we will have a dry, sunny Llangollen, although it wouldn’t be the same (says he from the comfort of the van).

One Sunny Day
We Will Have A
Dry Sunny
Llangollen

Well done to all those brave souls who took part, thus upholding one of the oldest of the Club traditions.

The Bunch On Marford Climb



Jeff Briggs Takes The Sprint - Robin Waves the Hi Viz Flag



Puncture On The Way Home - Chris looks like he's lovin' it



The Good Times Will Soon be Here Again

Binissalem In Mallorca.
Send in a picture of your favourite cycling place

