

MUDGUARDIAN



the club magazine of the
HERTFORDSHIRE WHEELERS

2020/21

MUDGUARDIAN 2020/21

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Editorial

by John Pearson



Are you going stir crazy whilst under house-arrest under the latest Lockdown restrictions. Is it as amusing as glancing in a mirror to see that your 1970s hairstyle is returning? (*was the mullet really that popular? It would have added several drag-minutes to your times!*) Or are you “sneaking” out to find some motor-free miles within your notional exercise limits. I believe there is no specified limit to either time or distance, just that your rides should be “local” whatever that means. Have you had a cheerful “advisory chat” with your local friendly copper?

2020 was a very strange year and one wonders if it was *unique* and when we will ever return to what we used to call “*normal*”. Our sport was not alone in being badly affected, not least on the official and international stage. Expected successes by riders training for years to bring Olympic medals home from Tokyo did not materialise and now events postponed to this year are also under threat. But the World Champs. and the three great European Tours were actually held, late in the season (controversially), with at least one British success, hence my choice for the cover picture.

Our thanks are due again this year to several regular contributors and a few new writers who are very welcome. As usual there is an eclectic mix of touring tales (few racing), trials and tribulations ... with just a sprinkling of humour which I hope will keep you warm and amused. And once again, I would like to praise your club officials who have done their best to keep us in touch with what’s possible and been happening in the club and elsewhere in the interests of all cyclists.

I must not forget to acknowledge the late Johnny Helms who gave me permission a few years ago to use some of his cartoons. Although not issued in time for the “festive season”, I hope you agree this MUDGUARDIAN is still a good read to warm you up during the colder months.

As usual, there may be some controversial points of view, expressed by me or other members, elsewhere in this issue. Please do not hesitate to make contact with me or the Club’s other official outlets to express YOUR comments on these issues – whether in agreement or otherwise – or indeed any other cycling-related matter – so YOU can have your say on the Wheelers’ website Forum.

AGMs and REPORTS from our affiliations: Brief summaries by JRVP



Herts. Wheelers ~ because of Lockdown restrictions not allowing gatherings, the club AGM for 2020 had to be held in digital mode. Nevertheless this was well supported. A summary appears later in this magazine, but the full Minutes, courtesy of Graham Knight, have been published on the club website.



ECCA AGM alternative summarised from ECCA website easterncounties.co.uk
Due to Covid 19 the ECCA Committee have decided on the following:

Season long competitions in 2020 were abandoned with no trophies for any remaining Champs. events and where those remaining did go ahead they were stand-alone events. **Medals and awards** for each event will be sent to recipients at a later date. **Lunch and Prize Presentation** due 7th February 2021 is cancelled.

Marshalling duties based on remaining events, could not be calculated, so 2020 duties carried over to 2021.

All clubs who paid their 2020 sub. will have a free year for 2021 and remain members until the 2022 fee is due, without further payment.

Because of Government’s Coronavirus restrictions the Exec. Committee has decided, under Rule 11, that they **will not hold a 2020 AGM**. Annual Reports will be published later.

2021 Programme of Events. A proposed list has been prepared (*1st May – 17th Oct*) and can be seen on their website link. Volunteers to organise any event are welcome. After many years promoting events **Dave Nock** is retiring, so his three events need new organisers.

RACING REPORT 2020



by Sam Ball

Firstly, many thanks to Gareth Wignall for his time as Racing Secretary and helping me with taking up the role as Herts. Wheelers Racing Secretary.

2020 has not exactly been a vintage year for racing, yet some events did take place. As a result this year's Racing Report is understandably brief. The 72" **Restricted Gear** event took place before the general lockdown in March and the other events were able to go ahead once lockdown restrictions were eased.

Unfortunately the club time trial league competition was unable to proceed as only the 9th and 10th time trials were able to be raced.

The winners of the 2020 awards are as follows:

Old Skool Cup '10'	Alex Powell	25.55
72" Restricted Gear '10'	Gareth Wignall	26.18
81" Restricted Gear '10'	Alex Powell	25.34
Hill Climb (men)	Alex Powell	02.56
Hill Climb (women)	Clair Gopoulos	04.22
Out of Season BAR	Alex Powell	55.33
<i>(best aggr. of Res. G. '10s and HC)</i>		
Scrubbers '10'	Brian Hill	30.30
<i>(fastest rider in the 81" Res. Gear who has not raced this season)</i>		

Well done to Alex, Brian, Clair and Gareth for winning their awards this year.

Thanks to the timekeepers Peter Bloomfield, Bob Brown, Graham Knight and Bri Wignall and especial thanks also to Lee Mason who organised the signs on the courses.

A full schedule of club events has been applied for 2020 and there are plans for another time trial introductory session in February or March with a road bike category to encourage more members to participate before they consider the purchase of expensive racing equipment.

And when the Covid lockdown restrictions can be relaxed there is still the possibility of an introductory session to track racing later this year at Gosling Stadium, courtesy of Welwyn Wheelers in thanks for the club's donation to their refurbishment.

Finally, we are always looking to make the season better for our riders. How could we improve next year? Any and all suggestions to racing@herts-wheelers.org

Thank you for 2020 and hope to see you all again, at the SIGN ON in the coming season.

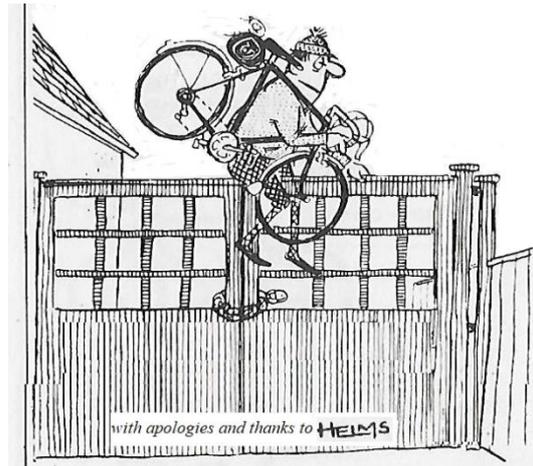
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Clubruns Cup

Since the Government lockdown restrictions for Covid were imposed for the majority of 2020 and backed up by restrictions imposed by our insurers with British Cycling last year's club-runs competition was suspended and remains so for the foreseeable future. This will be reinstated as and when these general restrictions are relaxed. Watch the club's weekly newsletter and website for details.

The Guilty Delights of Lockdown

by
Graham Knight



Lockdown began on the 23rd March (whatever Matt Hancock might now claim). “Stay at home” said BoJo ... but we were allowed one period of exercise each day. Nothing much was specified about this exercise, there was no time limit, just advice to exercise near your home if possible. I did this, walking on the paths along the Lea and the New River, but so did lots of other people and not all of them cared very much about social distancing. However, my initial forays on my bike showed me that, once away from settlements, it was rare to encounter anyone at all. There was the occasional cyclist but, since most cyclists’ speeds are in the same ball-park, it is fairly unusual to meet one going your way. Hence most I met were heading in the opposite direction so that encounters were fleeting and decently distanced. I concluded that riding through the countryside was very unlikely to spread the infection and as long as I avoided falling off I was unlikely to trouble the NHS.

It was not hard to find the motivation to ride. At the start of lockdown temperatures were in the mid-teens but, as April got under way, they rose to the high teens and mid-twenties. Many days included long periods of unbroken sunshine with light winds. May was much the same but with the temperatures nudging up a couple of degrees. With nearly everything shut down, the roads were mostly empty - there were just a few private cars and delivery vans. All this, plus the fact that I had a new bike to ride, meant that I was enjoying probably the best cycling I have ever had in the UK.

My memory has conflated many of the rides I did back then but one does stick in my mind. It included a favourite road of mine from the start of the B1039 near Audley End and up to Great Chishill. I included that road in several rides at that time but, looking back at Strava and some weather records, I think the one I remember must have been on April 23rd. It was sunshine all the way with the temperature peaking at 24^{oC} and a gentle breeze from the north-west. I set off through Widford to Stortford then joined the B1383 through Quendon and Newport. I quite like riding on B roads - they tend to favour a steady pace and pot-holes are a bit less prevalent than on the lanes. They tend to be busy though, but not on that day, I had the road more-or-less to myself right the way up to Audley End.

The climb up to Great Chishill is just shy of 7 miles long with a height gain of 259 feet, an average of 0.7% - so it's hardly l'Alp d'Huez. It does get a bit steeper near the top though and, important to me, the top really feels like a top with expansive views whichever way you look. On that day, with the wind behind and a decent road surface for once, it was glorious. I met one rider descending towards me, but that was it.

I chose the descent to Barley past the windmill, so I got the views to the north towards Cambridge, and then set off back south on the B1368. I was enjoying myself so much I even forgot to get cross about the irritating drag and dreadful road surface on the approach to Barkway.

The whole ride was 50 miles in just over 3 hours – a very fast pace for me, yet I never felt I was pressing hard. I have ridden the same route several times since without getting near that speed. It was a magical day!



Photo courtesy of Great Chishill Windmill Trust

Magical, yes – but in such disturbing circumstances. The pandemic really has been so uneven in its effects. For some, like me, the effects have been minimal and there have even been benefits. For others the stress and suffering has been truly dreadful. So, yes, lots of wonderful bike rides but tinged with a sort of guilty gratitude that I was able to enjoy them.



***Does this patisserie
display take the
biscuit?***

*discovered
by
John Cannon*

PRIZE CROSSWORD

by
Janet & John Pearson

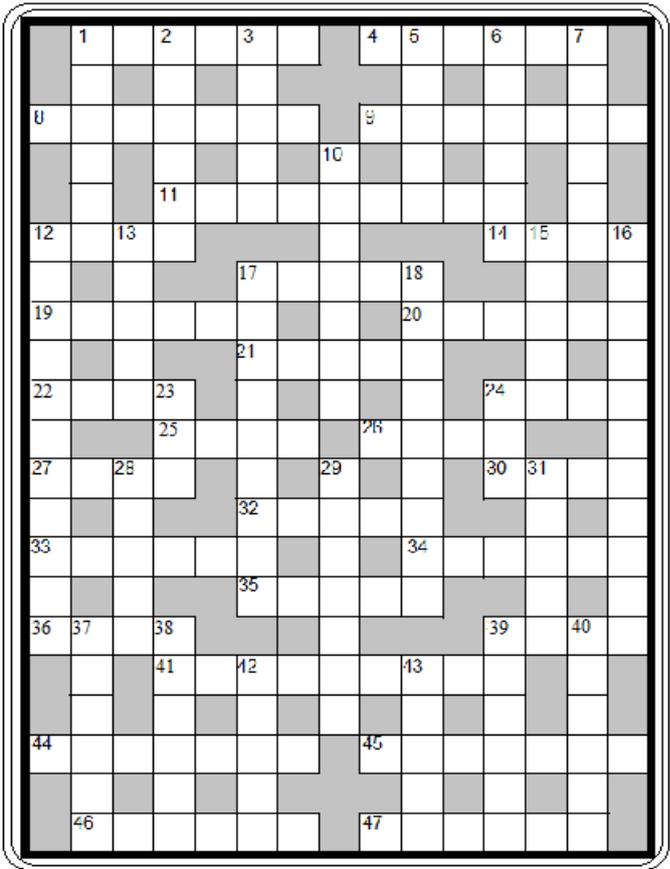
Several clues are cycling-related and **eight answers** can be found elsewhere in this magazine.

A suitable Prize to the first Herts. Wheeler to give John the correct answer by 31st March 2021.

The solution will be posted on the club website in April 2021.

Clues Across

- 1 Suited to a non-amateur for gain? (6)
- 4 He provides race commentary on ITV4 (6)
- 8 Herts. source of river that flows to Wash (7)
- 9 + 12 ac. Rude or welcome, it needs to be heard (7,4)**
- 11 Rider penalised for missing the start time (9)
- 12 *see 9 above*
- 14 Winner's ribbon can open old window (4)
- 17 Hertfordshire river that rises near Standon (5)
- 19 + 3 Bob's "small" holiday place (7,5)**
- 20 Junction marked for adults only (1,5)
- 21 Be prepared to look for talent (5)
- 22 Queen of the Olympians (4)
- 24 Forename of a World champion (4)**
- 25 US tour usually raced in last week of July (4)
- 26 The one at 16 is very slippery! (4)
- 27 Steal the old devil (4)
- 30 Island bay, popular for colourful sands, but not visited at Easter 1954 (4)**
- 32 Tudor navigator who had a famous drum (5)
- 33 Crescent-shaped (6)
- 34 Used to be a third part of Yorkshire (6)
- 35 Sounds like the goat will try again to deny (5)
- 36 Can do (4)
- 39 Nosy left out from Houston base (1,1,1,1)
- 41 American "invention" for riding where we used to ride any bike over "rough stuff" (9)
- 44 Red light situations (7)
- 45 Penultimate score shortened in a net game (7)
- 46 Describes anything a day before (6)
- 47 Editor's 3rd forename from Normandy (6)



Clues Down

- 1 Crushing partner for mortar (6)
- 2 Maybe he rode to Wigan Pier from Wallington? (6)
- 3 *see clue 19*
- 5 Expression peculiar to a language (5)
- 6 Can be taken off only if you took them with you (6)
- 7 Old stuff – not necessarily veterans! (6)
- 10 Ineos 2019 Giro winner comes from this country (7)
- 12 A chain cabal becomes an old drinking festival (11)
- 13 Large ship makes bib-shorts more comfortable (5)
- 15 Clinton Hill from east Bucks. also settled east of Stevenage (5)
- 16 Latin name for best kept large village in Herts. (6,5)
- 17 Spectator could be a mixed up wait-er (9)
- 18 Outgoing and freely emotional (9)
- 23 British organisers of long distance rides (1,1,1)**
- 24 A bonny production from Bri and Gareth (3)
- 28 The paths here may be great for "flat" cycling, but are not fast nor advisable for large groups (5)
- 29 Racing Sec. converted to BMX (3,4)**
- 31 German firm that makes device for producing 43 (5)
- 37 A tourist-favoured bay - Kent East or NSW (6)**
- 38 French floors in a tall building (6)
- 39 Master of the Mint famously moved three laws (6)
- 40 South-east Asian city missed musically? (7)**
- 42 Eager change to be of the same mind (5)
- 43 Copy that might use a 31 (5)

JACK EASON

1925 - 2013

An Audax UK Legend

An AUK journal tribute discovered

by

John Cannon

Truly a great character, a great bike rider and an enthusiastic allotment holder.

It is possible that the stories he told and those told about him are all true.

I'm not sure exactly where Jack lived but it must have been within a 20 mile radius of Little Dunmow, to give the reader some idea of his starting point for most of his rides.

A member of CTC, he regularly attended their club nights but never rode a club run preferring their open reliability events and Audax type rides, in the slowest times for fun. With a small radio and a bunch of flowers on his handlebars.

Although conscripted into the RAF in WW2, Jack did not see active service because the war ended soon after he was stationed. He maintained "They taught me to fly aeroplanes for free. We had a big party when the war ended, came home and had another big party and that was it."

He regularly did a cycling tour of Scotland and he usually rode non-stop from home.

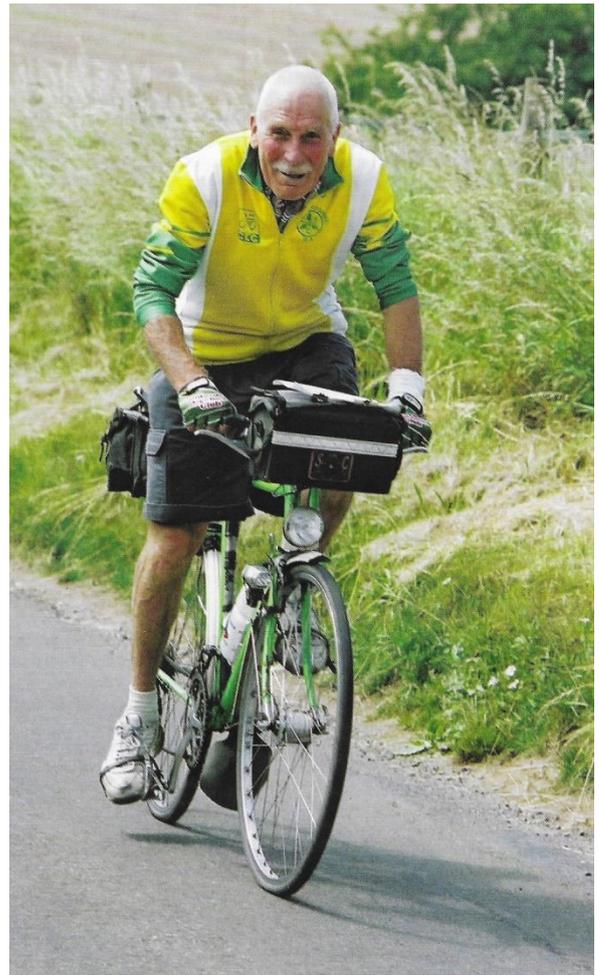
Many people thought that his bike and choice of clothing made riding more difficult for him – he never tried to argue about it, he just found it much more fun to play along.

Jack rode the Cotswold Corker late 1990, starting about 50 miles from home. As usual he rode steadily, munching bits of food from his bar bag, thus saving time at the controls. At the finish of this early season hilly event he simply signed off and rode home. He rode to almost all the starts of his events, which sometimes involved an all-night ride. He kept a piece of **Karrimat** cut to fit the bottom of his saddle bag, so if he wanted to sleep in the comfort of a bus shelter, he could sit on it with his yellow cape tucked around him to keep him warm.

Riders often used to say they had passed him, only to find him waiting at the control, puffing on his pipe. At one *arrivée* with 20 minutes in hand, he said "damn't, I could have filled my pipe again."

The well recognised shed-green bike, "not pea green", was not just one bike, but several; they were clones of each other. There was the everyday bike, the best bike, the off-road bike, the mountain bike, the long distance bike, the summer bike and of course the winter bike.

He joined AUK in 1993. Then a pocket radio with headphones replaced the handlebar set up and flowers.



Jack in his CTC colours

When asked what he did for a living he would always reply “burglar”. He was in fact a Radio engineer at British Aerospace.

In 1996 he was one of the first Brits. to ride Boston – Montreal – Boston, a 1200 Km event in the USA. There were 9 flying the flag for English eccentricity, including Mark Brooking on a trike and Steve Abraham on a fixed. At the finish the Americans criticised his non wearing of lycra shorts. “Oh yes, I got these in the war” he said. “What ‘Nam’, they asked (*referring to the Vietnam action of 1960-70s*). “Oh no ... the second WW”. They all seemed to believe him, as he maintained a straight face. When he applied to ride B-M-B for the third time, he provided for the required identification a picture of himself aged three on a trike in the back garden, with a note, “I’m a little older now and I have a big boy’s bike”.

Jack was always cheerful with a very good sense of humour, he had a set of jokes he liked to use. One was in reply to anyone who commented that he was old, was to tell them he had a pacemaker fitted. Noting the reaction, he went on to say that he turned it up when he had to go up hills, always keeping a straight face. Whenever anyone asked how he was going, the reply was usually “struggling1”. Like hell he was, he seemed to struggle with such little effort.

A favourite practical joke involved a salesperson who did a demo at a CTC club night for movement detection alarms and how they could be used for cycle security. As the demo went on the salesperson asked for a bike to show how it could be used. Jack immediately volunteered his. He pointed it out and someone went to fetch it - and an alarm went off. “One pound fifty” Jack said. “I made it this afternoon with stuff from Maplins”. The salesman was trying to sell something at well over £30. It was all done with great humour and good spirt, but Jack had demonstrated there was often no need for expensive or elaborate solutions.

His “aliases” were legion. When he rode London – Edinburgh - London in 2001, he signed on as Jeffrey Archer, just after the infamous author had been sent down and incarcerated in Ford Open Prison. In the 2003 Paris – Brest - Paris he was involved in a crash. When the paramedic asked his name, he answered “Napoleon Bonaparte”. Unfortunately, the French medical folk did not understand that sort of humour. His Audax card was withdrawn as he was obviously concussed. He had considered the best bit of P-B-P was the ride to Paris and he inspired others to do the lovely extended prologue with an overnight ferry, hotel in Evreux and a finally gathering at the “Purple Hedgehog” in Trapps.

One of his less-appreciated habits was when Jack emptied one of the men’s dorms with his snoring after a pre-Christmas dinner at Ivinghoe Youth Hostel.

He was encouraged to join the 300,000 mile club, but said was not interested because he had easily done double that at the least.

With partner in crime Karl Hrouda, Jack enjoyed the Sicily No-stop 1000 km, finishing a day late, but having had a great time. He joked “I thought it was going to be flat!”

Efficient bike lights and GPS came too late for Jack in his later years. His eyesight was failing with age and this often caused him to go off route and then too slow for the AUK time limits. This was one of the main reasons that he liked events in Wales and Scotland ... for easier and more familiar navigation.

His interests outside of cycling included jazz and rock’n’roll. At CTC club dinners he would be on the dance floor all night. He liked to tinker with electrical stuff, repairing things in his shed and spending a lot of time on his allotment. He was also a radio ham.

He was not a great one for keeping in touch. He never had a phone and he used payphones if he ever needed to phone someone. Consequently, nobody could phone him!

We have not mentioned his vast achievement in competitions within the AUK organisation. On one end of season awards occasion, he said “They only gave me the **veterans trophy** because I’m an old man”.

He made every event he rode that much more enjoyable.



Thanet Cycling (the Viking Trail)

by
Janine Wignall

The 32-mile Viking trail is a shared use path around the Isle of Thanet in Kent. The route is also regional Route 15 of the National Cycle Network. The route passes through Pegwell Bay, where a replica Viking ship marks the place that it's believed the Vikings first landed in Kent, which gives the trail its name.

Twice I have ridden the **Viking Coastal Trail**; once, on a hot day in 30° C and the next time when it was only 2° C. Anticlockwise or clockwise over this route, it makes no difference, unless there is a biting arctic wind into which you are riding. Most of the route is on either promenade, shared paths or quiet roads. The coastal section hugs the coast which for me is its biggest attraction, as you get to ride sections that cars cannot reach. There is very little ascent, so it is suitable for all abilities. Although the majority of the route is off road, the surface is suitable for road bikes.



a cooler day with Reculver on horizon



Botany Bay

Take your time and allow a whole day for the ride if you can.

What it is not is a fast course to be achieved in the least possible time. You have to remember it is a shared route and in high summer you may even have to dismount in some busy places. It is a route to enjoy. There are historic sites like the Roman fort at Reculver, the site of the now disused hovercraft station at Pegwell Bay, pretty harbours at Folkestone, the impressive Turner Contemporary art gallery at Margate, Morrelli's Gelato in Broadstairs plus plenty of coffee and lunch stops. At Cliffs End the route turns inland along quiet country roads back to Reculver.

This corner of Kent is well served with friendly cycle routes. The **Crab and Winkle** line runs from Canterbury to Whitstable using a disused railway route. Don't be fooled by this, as they must have had two engines to pull the train up some of the inclines on this route. Much of the section is on trails through woodland, a bit like Woodhall Park estate paths. You pass numerous cherry orchards too before arriving in Whitstable famous for its oysters. Continue along the coast through Herne Bay and then Reculver before returning to Canterbury. In Canterbury you will find well signposted cycle routes using quieter roads to get you around the city.

Sandwich is a pretty town situated on the River Stour. You could have coffee here before heading to Deal for fish and chips on the sea front. Again, there are cycle routes and quiet roads to be found, there is also a mining museum and at Betteshanger Park mountain bike trails as well as a 2-mile tarmac section through the park.

Remind you of anyone?

Onion Johnny

*Suggested
by
John Cannon
with a little research from the web*

Onion Johnnies were Breton farmers and agricultural labourers who travelled on bicycles selling distinctive pink onions door to door in Great Britain and especially in Wales.

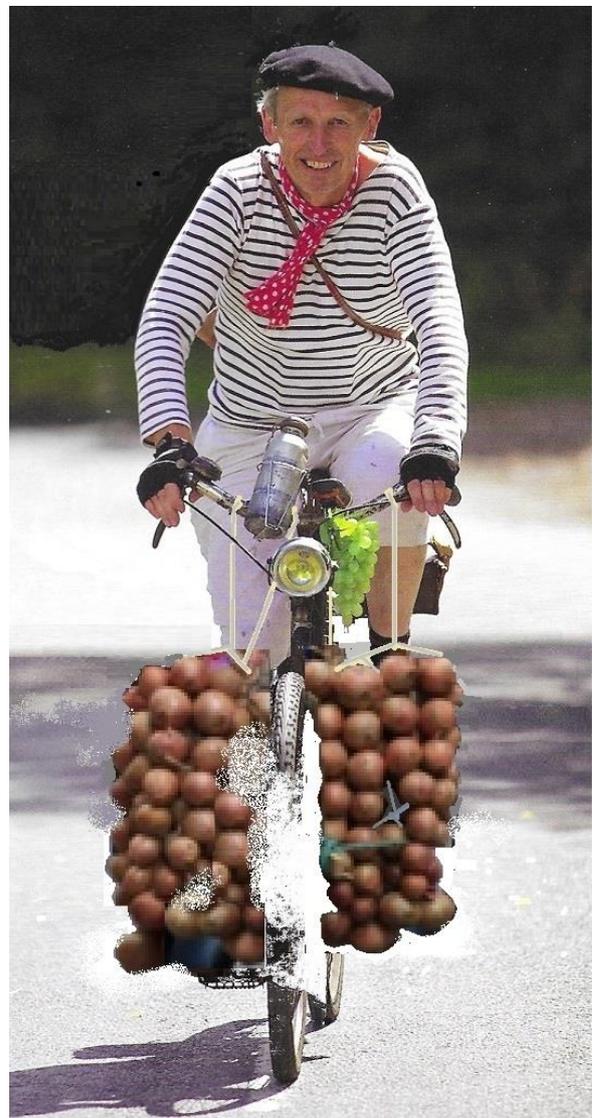
(Sioni Winwns in Welsh)

They adapted this nickname for themselves in Breton as *ar Johnniged* or *ar Johnniged*.

Declining since the 1950s to only a few here and there, the Onion Johnny was once very common.

With renewed interest since the late 1990s by farmers and the public in small-scale agriculture, their numbers have recently made a small recovery.

Dressed in striped Breton shirt and beret, riding a bicycle hung with onions, the Onion Johnny became a stereotypical image of the Frenchman and was possibly in many cases the only contact that ordinary British people had with France and French people.



*Apologies for the blurred front wheel ...
that's how we found the picture, more or less!*

Cycle Connectivity in East Herts. and West Essex

cycling routes strategy- check out the latest planning proposals

*by
Valdis Belinis*

Proposals to improve cycling provision in East and South East Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire County Council is inviting public consultation on a proposed Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) which is a strategic spatial transport plan, developed in discussion with key stakeholders including local planning authorities.

The Eastern Area (EA) GTP area covers a small portion of the county comprising Bishop's Stortford, Sawbridgeworth and the surrounding rural areas.

The identified interventions for the EA GTP have been grouped into 37 "packages". There are several packages which include interventions designed to improve cycling provision. Package 17 is of particular interest as it focuses on cycle connectivity between Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport.

The overarching aim of Package 17, **PK – 17 Bishop's Stortford - Stansted Airport Cycle Connectivity** is: **A new cycle route linking Bishop's Stortford and Stansted Airport which minimises conflicts with traffic and facilitates a healthier way for employees to get to and from work at the airport.**

A corresponding South East (SE) GTP has also been developed along the EA GTP and covers the towns of Hertford, Ware, Hoddesdon, Broxbourne, Cheshunt and Waltham Cross.

Consultation on the SE and EA GTP closes on 28th February 2021.

The consultation material and supporting documents are online and your views can be provided through an online survey at:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations

Revival of the Ordinary Bicycle

by

John Pearson

with some ref. to recent “media” coverage



A new demand for the Ordinary, popularly known as the Penny-Farthing, has been one of the more unusual but interesting cycling crazes during Lockdown. These Victorian bikes were the main machines for road and track sportsmen in the 1870s and ‘80s before the arrival of the more familiar framed Safety Bicycle with chain drive, gears and brakes. Yet, lately the revived Ordinary is selling out faster than manufacturers can produce them.



modern racing... with helmets

95% of people who want them are middle-aged men, although there are a few women. Many buyers have dreamed of riding one since their childhood. As they are harder work than normal bikes, they are ideal for staying fit.

A recent convert, broadcaster Jeremy Vine, has been spotted often atop of his new “high-wheeler” by his neighbours in Chiswick and he has said he does rides of “more than 12 miles” to Buckingham Palace and back.

However, early machines were not equipped with brakes, so some modern safety fittings are now required. 19th c. advertising used to recommend new riders that when in doubt they should steer close to the verge or hedge “for a softer landing”. But the “elf + safety” lawyers have advised bike shops to be a lot more aware of bike construction and use regulations these days.

They were never designed with today’s busy traffic in mind. But the modern-day versions are much safer than Victorian editions and are priced around £1300 for sizes ranging between 48 and 56 inches in height And there are children’s versions for about £200. *To decide which is best wheel size for you, divide by 2 and add preferred crank length to your inside leg and shoe height. You may need to add an inch for racing or deduct an inch for hilly riding. BUT it is best that you get a proper fit at the shop!*



*What the well-dressed man-about-town should wear!
Did this really come with a monitor?*

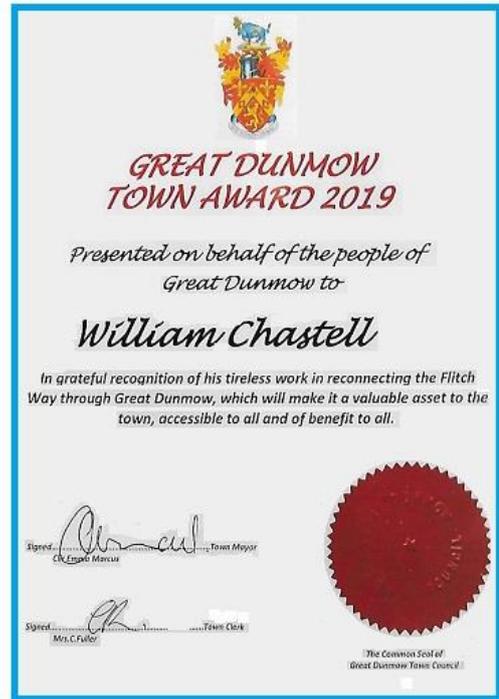
Bill and FWAG

*A tribute to one of our most senior members for his dogged persistence in persuading the “powers that be” to provide better access for safe cycling
(edited by JRVP*)*

In the Spring of 2019 William Chastell was awarded Great Dunmow’s annual Town Award for service to the community, recognising his unstinting work with the **Fritch Way Action Group**. He had been nominated the previous year but was the runner up.

He had retired from the position of Chairman but continued to attend the monthly committee meetings and continued to lookout for suitable candidates to join the group. One recent recruit is a valued member (*Valdis Belinis*).

Fritch Way is a bridleway built on the track bed of a dismantled railway that ran between Bishop’s Stortford and Braintree. This was demolished across the whole width of Great Dunmow for various development and major road works. The FWAG project was to construct a new bridleway to the south of the town to connect the severed sections and restore continuity. And in addition another track was procured and constructed to connect this bridleway directly into the town centre, terminating at the war memorial in High Street.



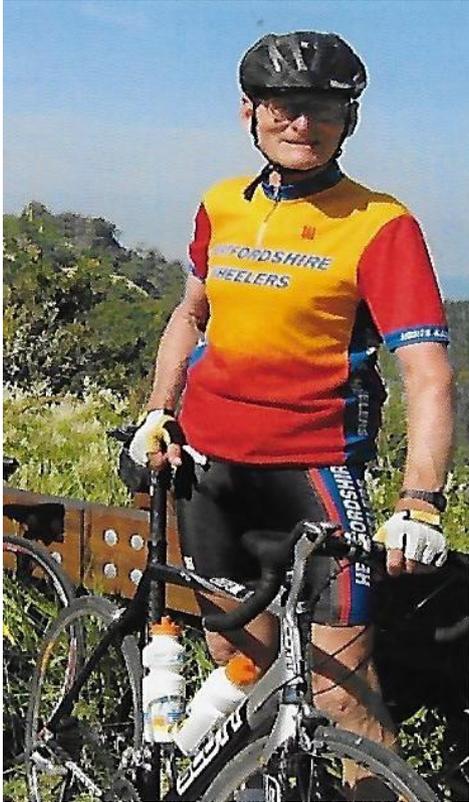
Fritch Way Action Group



Left to right: Lesley Gillman, Membership Secretary; William Chastell; Sarah Hodgson, Secretary; Sandra Reynolds; Sandra Lloyd, Treasurer; Valdis Belinis, our most recent recruit.

This involved many negotiations with local businesses and landowners; some were very co-operative, others less so. But eventually some compromises were reached that were agreeable to all interested parties, funding was obtained from various sources and work has been carried out to a good standard. And work is still continuing to improve access for all cyclists and other uses of the Flich Way and its connections.

At the Civic Service and award ceremony, with his wife Rita and son Bob in attendance, William gave a rousing speech encouraging everyone to continue the work of FWAG to complete their project.



*Note * if your interest has been aroused, especially if you may feel you can help, a more detailed description of Bill's achievements with FWAG is available.*

Contact Herts. Wheelers club treasurer Valdis.

Bill's involvement with FWAG started from a challenge made to him by his pals in the Tye Green Indoor Bowls Club, Harlow after a friend had asked him for directions. He found there were as many as 6 villages in Essex called Tye Green. They challenged him to ride his bike to all of them in a day. This took many weekends research to devise a reasonable route and he discovered several places in need of safety improvement and one village under threat of demolition for the expansion of Stansted Airport. But a route of 101 miles was established and a few charity rides were held in the first decade of this century that included Family Fun rides of 23 miles and less and using the Dunmow Flich Way. These involved campaigners from Stop Stanstead Expansion and some assistance from Herts. Wheelers, all of which was detailed in previous issues of **Mudguardian** 2005 and 6.

William Chastell 1935 - 2021

As we were sending this journal to the printers, word reached us that Bill had been taken to hospital last week and sadly passed away on 6th February.

Bill first joined the club in 1977 and was made a life member in 2015. Many will remember him as a kind and always considerate companion on club runs. Bill often gave up his time to help the club including, most recently, refurbishing our race signs each winter. He was active in several local causes and organised a number of charity events.

A fuller tribute to Bill and his many activities within and outside the club will follow.

Going out to Play

by
Sam Ball



You may need to learn a new language!!?

Despite the lockdown in 2020, anecdotally it was another year that has seen an increase in cycling. Considering that a lot of people were furloughed from work and the weather was good in the Spring and Summer, I'm guessing people wanted to gain the most benefit from the mandated 1- hour daily exercise during the first lockdown. Out of curiosity, I had a little dig into the numbers with a Google search. Among other things, I found out that the yearly spend that Brits make on cycling has been increasing since 2013 (the Olympic effect is continuing to ripple out, it would seem) and e-bike sales continue to grow too.

During this search, the most thought-provoking statistic I found regarded the cycling demographic. According to *Finder.com* (a consumer price-comparison website), the age group with the highest ownership/access to a bicycle is 5 to 10 year olds, at 83%. I was a bit surprised. It's not the age range I would've guessed, I'll admit. But then again maybe it shouldn't be such a surprise. Being in a cycling club probably obscured my judgement. Maybe I exist in a bit of a cycling 'echo-chamber', expecting most cyclists to fall within an older age-bracket. For example, if someone was to join Herts Wheelers it's highly likely they are much older than 10, they'll have access to a bike and can already ride it. But when you actually think about it, this is not where cycling begins for most folk.

Having just celebrated a very different Christmas from previous years, however, I did notice at least one thing that remained the same. There is almost *always* at least one kid on the street riding up and down on a new bicycle on Christmas morning. At the age of 4 or maybe 5, it's almost a rite of passage to ask the jolly guy with the beard for a bike. And it always makes me smile to see kids playing outside with a new bike (or roller skates or whatever) on Christmas morning.

See, the thing is, for all of us the bicycle starts off as a *toy*.

But I don't mean that as a negative. Since prehistory, toys have been an important (and fun) way for kids to learn. Indeed, most children's bikes are still found in a toy shop, alongside other playthings. I would suspect that most parents do not think of a kid's first bike as a piece of *sports equipment*, if for no other reason than that the child is expected to outgrow it and move on to something bigger.



Like a lot of children, my nephew got his first bicycle when he was 4. This was a couple of years ago now and he learnt to ride it in the park behind my mum and dad's house with encouragement and help from me, my brother and his dad (my other brother). There were no stabilisers involved as he had a 'kick-along' bicycle beforehand so he already had pretty good balance.

15 minutes was all it took for him to get going under his own steam. He loved it. His enthusiasm reminded me of riding a BMX round the same park with my brothers and friends when we were (much) younger.

As a cyclist nowadays, it is very easy to get obsessed with data. How far you have ridden, what average speed, what power output up that hill – there are many ways of tracking our rides and effort every time we go out. But seeing my nephew pedalling around the wide tarmac path surrounding some flower beds in a local park just looked... *fun*. He had no way of knowing how fast he was going or how far he'd travelled but that didn't matter. He was just enjoying himself. And I'd quite forgotten what that was like, and yet instantly recognised it in him. And I wanted to join in. Of course, this would not be a *Mudguardian* article if it was not a story that involved getting another bike.

The first problem with going riding with a 4-year-old is a matter of scale. There is a considerable size difference between my bike and his. So I decided to scale down (seeing as he couldn't exactly scale *up*) and set about searching for a BMX. Adult size BMXs use 20" wheels and a quick search on eBay turned up a cheap, unbranded BMX that I picked up from someone in Hertford, for £15. So, the next time my brother and I were at my mum & dad's, we all went to the park and it was clear that my nephew loved having someone else to cycle with. There are smooth tarmac paths that go across and around the entire park (not just the flowerbeds), so it is perfect for kids learning to ride.

But now this is where the story begins to diverge from my own childhood experience. A few years back, the council had decided to build some skating ramps in the park. There was never anything like this when I was young, but I think it's a great way to encourage kids to be active and ride bikes and skateboards etc. My nephew had a go at riding up and down some of the shallower ones, but he was still a bit small to have the confidence. Not so Uncle Sam (egged on by my brother). I decided to give it a go, but just with some simple drop-offs off the smaller ramps. All well and good, but I was not convinced of the suitability of this particular bike for doing any sort of tricks or ramp-riding. I was worried it would break and result in a horrific injury. As a child, we are all fearless. As adults, we know how bad it is to wait for hours in A&E with broken bones.

Still, it was great to ride around the park with my nephew. Of course, it wasn't what you'd call serious cycling, but instead just a bit of fun. You could even call it *playing*. And that got me thinking about my own approach to cycling. When did it stop being 'fun', and instead become a 'sport'? Not that they are mutually exclusive, of course.

When I asked my cycling comrade Lib Rocco he defined fun riding as '**t-shirt** rides – riding a bike (any bike) around simply for the hell of it; wearing a t-shirt instead of cycling lycra, not worrying about specific equipment or having a particular target or route. Seemed like a good enough definition to me. I wanted to have some fun. But if that fun was going to involve ramps and half-pipes, I definitely wanted a BMX that was more likely to be built for the task.

As ever in these tales, eBay again came to the rescue. Oddly, the bike - a Mongoose BMX - was in Sheffield like my previous eBay purchase (a steel Bianchi that I built into a commuter – see *Mudguardian* issue 2019/20) and it also cost a similar price – only £30. I collected it one evening when I was working in Doncaster. It was in good enough nick, just a bit of a clean and some new inner tubes were all that was required. Mongoose have been making BMXs since 1974, in California. Here was a BMX with a bit more credibility to its name.



At this point, there was an interesting twist that meant that my BMX odyssey turned a definite corner. On my commute to work in Watford, I would ride past a relatively small parcel of land between the B&Q hardware store and the Ebury Way cycle path. By late summer in 2019, the land had been fenced off and diggers were visible.

New housing, I suspected. But no! Unbeknownst to me, this parcel of land was being built into **Oxhey Skate Park**. My brother-in-law (who is a skateboarder) showed me an online newspaper article about it and the ‘birds-eye’ view photograph of the site looked familiar. Lockdown had delayed it opening until July 2020 but, sure enough, next time I rode to work, there it was, freshly built and free to enter.

Well, now this is what I needed. I’d lob my BMX in the back of the car and I could get to the skate park for about 7.15am, meaning I had an hour before driving to work (which was only about a mile and a half away). When I visited for the first time with my trusty Mongoose, there was no-one ... absolutely deserted. I had the whole place to myself. There are all sorts of structures to ride on and there is a café too. It is really well designed and laid out and there is something to suit all age groups and abilities. The half-pipes looked way too big for me, so I started with the skate bowl. With smooth edges that allow you to roll in easily, this bowl is great fun. It took some time to build the confidence to ride around the inside correctly, but I got there. I suppose the best way to describe it is to imagine rolling a ball around a large mixing bowl, with the ball flowing around in arcs up and down the sides of the bowl. That is what you aim to achieve on a bike or a skateboard. The original skate bowls were designed for skateboarders to mimic the flowing lines of surfing waves. It’s not aggressive, but quite smooth and chilled. I soon discovered that this kind of riding requires using all sorts of upper-body muscles which I was not used to. It really is quite a workout.



My brother-in-law visited with his children on a weekend and he told me it was very busy, mainly with parents and their children. However, early on weekday mornings it was much quieter. If the weather was dry, I would visit before work, but it would not always be completely deserted. A handful of other skateboarders, of a similar age to me or older, would also visit the skate bowl before work to get a bit of a “session” in at the start of the day. I was the only person on a BMX although one guy turned up once on a dirt-jump bike.

As we began to recognise each other on subsequent visits, it felt like a little fraternity, with nods of acknowledgement between us, each waiting our turn to ride the bowl a few minutes at a time.

I enjoy riding the skate bowl, but I wanted to improve my skills to have a go on the half-pipe. Another resource that was not available when I was younger is **YouTube**. We truly live in the Information Age, where practically everything there is to know is available online. And there are plenty of videos demonstrating BMX techniques. Two skills are necessary for the half-pipe: **dropping-in** to start riding and **getting air** in order to get out again. Now, “dropping-in” sounds much like a **drop-off**, but trust me, at 2 metres up on the half-pipe, it felt like an entirely different prospect. Oh, how I wished for the fearlessness of youth. The first problem, besides the height, is that whereas a drop-off is ridden

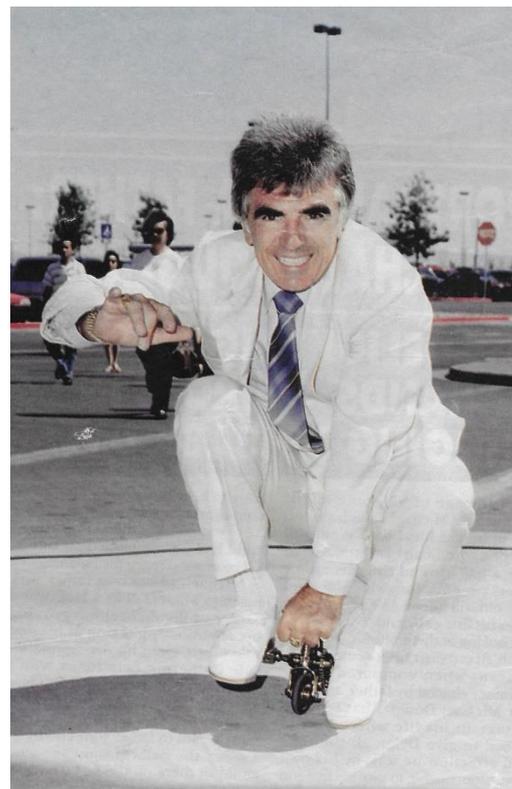
head-on so that a bit of speed and a pull up on the handlebars is really all that's required, dropping-in requires riding slowly *alongside* the edge, then pulling the handlebars up whilst pivoting the whole bike 90 degrees over the edge before dropping (not rolling) into the half pipe. I watched lots of videos and prepared myself to try it.

But unfortunately, that's where the story has got to so far. Winter and further lockdowns have prevented me from visiting the skate park. So, I haven't tried the half-pipe yet. My nephew is still riding his bike, but Lockdown also has prevented us from riding together in the park at present. Understandably, Watford council closed the skate park for Covid safety reasons (despite being open-air) and, although I sneaked in for a couple more early morning visits in late 2020, it was getting too cold in the mornings and the autumn dampness was resulting in some loss of grip on the super-smooth concrete. I sensed that an injury was likely and called it a day before an A&E visit was required. I didn't want to have to explain such an absence to my boss. No doubt he would ask why I hadn't grown up....

#####

This is NOT a toy! Could you ride this Amazing Engineering?

"discovered" by John Cannon amongst his extensive magazine collection



WHEELY SMALL

French-born Charly Charles is a big, big name in the world of miniature bicycles. For over four decades he has been breaking records – usually set by himself – as he searches for a smaller and smaller ride. The min mount shown here was recently (1983) unveiled in Las Vegas where the creator took it through its paces on a demonstration run. If secure parking for this bike is a problem – its tiny frame is clad in 24 carat gold – he can always put it in his pocket!

The 12 DON'TS of CHRISTMAS

by
Bob Harrison

Hi everyone, It's your highly popular Welsh correspondent back again. We realise that Herts. Wheelers are a bit new to cycling, so we are giving you some sensible advice about riding together!*



Here are 12 reasons why you SHOULD NOT ride directly behind someone on the Sunday club run. Don't ride behind someone if that person ...

- 1 has no mudguards, especially when riding down a lane filled with cow pats.
- 2 suffers from flatulence and/or has had a heavy Tandoori the night before.
- 3 has a head cold and or double pneumonia and clears his nose without warning.
- 4 has such a massive bulk you cannot see any riders, let alone the road, ahead.
- 5 suffers from sudden bouts of vertigo and throws up at every bend.
- 6 has not closed the quick release on his front wheel and does wheelies a lot.
- 7 has forgotten his spectacles and/or has poor vision and has left / right confusion.
- 8 just had 8 pints of Greene King and likes to ride no hands.
- 9 has a split in the rear of his lycra shorts.
- 10 only speaks Welsh and does not know where the hell he is meant to be going and does not understand cycling gestures.
- 11 is ordering kit on Ebay whilst riding no hands.
- 12 is unfamiliar with SPD pedals and has a tendency to fall in front of you whilst crossing the ford at Much Hadam.

NB you will see that the above refers to male riders. This in no way implies other genders are excluded from this advice, simply that we believe other genders have more sense!

These tips are printed in the Swansea Wheelers handbook (Bible) and are regarded as excellent advice for the beginner. So keep your distance, don't touch wheels and stay safe.

Editorial note *for the self-conscious among you, especially those from beyond The Marches: we were told that Swansea is the **heart of cycling in the U.K** (see 2019/20 issue of **Mudguardian**) this famous club was actually founded in 1931 ... three years **after** Herts. Wheelers.

AND of course this advice does not supersede current Covid Lockdown restrictions

Cycling in Vietnam

by

Janine Wignall



December 2019 I found myself facing Christmas on my own as my family were either working or travelling elsewhere. As I had two weeks holiday I decided to look for a cycling trip away to some winter sun. After contacting a number of companies that sold cycling trips eg., Exodus, Skedaddle Cycling, I found a trip to Vietnam that I could join with Exodus.



They booked the flight and met me at Saigon airport and then took me to the hotel in Saigon (Ho Chi Min) where the rest of my group would be arriving the same day. That night we went out to dinner together and as the evening progressed we found out who had been on similar trips and where. There was a range of ages and abilities but, despite what they all said, we mainly rode at cat 5/6 speed in the days ahead.

On the first day with temperatures in the thirties we were glad to find the first part of our journey was by coach especially as the roads out of Saigon were gridlocked with mopeds and motorbikes.

Before our trip we were requested to submit our height so that bikes could be found and set up for us and we were each introduced to a suitable machine on our first day. These bikes became our own for the whole trip. They were all Giant MTN bikes with road tyres. You could have taken your own bike, but none of us had. But you could bring your own shoes and some did. All other cycling gear we brought with us. We had a coach which accompanied us and a truck for the bikes, the mechanic and our guide rode with us and the drivers stayed with us too to act as sign posts or to hold up traffic at junctions.





We had snack breaks and lunch breaks with all food being supplied. Lunches were in roadside cafes or restaurants. All food was Vietnamese and very fresh, with our guide explaining the different dishes and we were soon using chop sticks (but not exactly like the locals).

Our trip was 16 days cycling from Saigon in the South to Hanoi in the north. The trip also included an overnight train trip to link to kayaking at Ha long Bay and another boat trip to an island nature reserve staying in beach side villas. The amount of cycling increased as the trip progressed, with some

days involving a few miles of steep climb to get through a pass in the mountains. By day 3, many parts of my body had decided a walking holiday would be a great idea. I can't remember how this changed, but I persevered and loved every part. Cycling gave us a great way to see Vietnam. The roads were quiet and well made, there was only one puncture the whole trip. If you had any problems the mechanic was there to fix it. If we wanted to stop to take photos, it was easy being on the bike. Vietnamese people were just going about their work and lives which are very different to ours so we took lots of photos.



The people work very hard, with most work being very labour-intensive, we saw very few mechanical aids. The land is intensively farmed, but individual fields are small and the families use a local co-operative to sell their crops, which are bought by the government. Oxen still pull carts, and rice is planted and worked by hand.



The routes we rode were mainly traffic free, with the main company being scooters and motorbikes. If something larger was behind you they “bibbed” you, not to get past, but to let you know they were there. Junctions were the same as crossing the road as a pedestrian; you put your arm up and you carried on going, as other traffic gave way to you. There are zebra crossings in the cities, but it was easy to cross the road everywhere, as drivers just adjusted their speed and drove round you like

shoals of fish avoiding a large rock.

Junctions with lights had a countdown timer on an overhead gantry, so you knew when the lights would change.

As you rode through villages, children came out to wave to you and call out “hello”. All the people we met were very polite; there were no mad or dangerous car drivers and everyone was patient and respectful.





Hanoi (capital city)



Imperial city of Hue (former imperial capital)

Our guide showed us many historic sites along the route and described many details about life in Vietnam on the daily coach sections. His family were from South Vietnam and are still being persecuted by the government for siding with the Americans during the Vietnam War (not that they had a choice). Vietnam has been invaded by many nations in the last 1000 years, and so there are French, Japanese, Chinese, and Vietnamese architecture, traditions and legacies.



Hulang Bay



These are just some of the lanterns that are all over Hoi An ... all year. It is an amazing city.

In conclusion, the climate is perfect for cycling, you will see many amazing sites. Vietnam is a beautiful country and the people very friendly.

Pro Tour Team Sponsors Quiz compiled by JRVP

Do you know what the EF in EF Education First stands for? No, it's not Education First, so you can stop moaning that the commentators are repeating themselves. See below and answers on page 45.

Yes, I know that some of you never follow the road racing scene, but I am willing to bet that most of you managed, this year at least, to watch some TV coverage of the major Tours.

AND is there any one of our readers who does not know that there was a British winner of the Giro this year? I bet that most of you can recall most, or even all, of the teams' names.

But can you name the **main sponsors**, their **nationalities** and what their **main businesses** are?

No prizes; but try to complete the quiz without referring to the internet. A point for each country and business (some teams have more than one sponsor and from more than one country); total 52 points. Answers are on pp 45, 46. Some may surprise you.



AG2R - la Mondiale

- 1) country
- 2) business



Astana

- 3) country
- 4) business



Bahrain-McLaren

- 5) country
- 6) business
- 7) business



Bora-Hansgrohe

- 8) country
- 9) business
- 10) country
- 11) business



CCC

- 12) country
- 13) business



Cofidis

- 14) country
- 15) business



Deceuninck-Quick Step

- 16) country
- 17) business
- 18) country
- 19) business



EF Education First Pro Cycling

- 20) country
- 21) business



Groupama-FDJ

- 22) country
- 23) business
- 24) business



Israel Start Up Nation

- 25) country
- 26) business



Jumbo-Visma

- 27) country
- 28) business
- 29) country
- 30) business



Lotto-Soudal

- 31) country
- 32) business



Mitchelton-Scott

- 33) country
- 34) business
- 35) country
- 36) business



Movistar

- 37) country
- 38) business



NTT

- 39) country
- 40) business
- 41) business



Team Ineos

- 42) country
- 43) business
- 44) business



Trek-Segafredo

- 45) country
- 46) business
- 47) country
- 48) business



Team Sunweb

- 49) country
- 50) business



UAE-Team Emirates

- 51) country
- 52) business



Quid est revolutio semper factum est pro nobis?

by

Andrew Buckingham

Yes, what has cycling ever done for us?

I've been thinking about this a lot of late. Not so much because of Covid, but more because of the changes, good and bad, that I've become aware of that are either directly or indirectly due to cycling.

It was no more than 7 years ago, over a meal with friends, when the topic of cycling came up. I mentioned cycling the East End to Southend charity ride for Rayner (*I can't remember quite what the charity was about**) with a bunch of work mates. Each of us rode our own heavy, old-fashioned, ill-maintained steeds. Add to this, each of us were heavy, ill-maintained cyclists to set off on a 60 mile jaunt through Essex. It should have been 50, but they moved the finish line!

There we were, an intrepid group of derring-dos. We smoked, ate everything we could grab and laughed at the skinny, cycle-clothing-clad, serious types who were breezing past us on the hills and leaving us for dust on the flats. Oh, how we laughed between coughs and wheezes. I didn't so much dismount as fall off in a heap. But we all did the ride and had great fun doing it. Anyway, you get the picture.

Back to the dinner discussion with said friends. Here I am, even heavier than before, no longer a smoker (I quit decades ago) suggesting that my friend and I (he's a big guy) sign up for the London to Brighton overnight charity ride. "OK, you're on" ... so the planning started.

Off we go, doing some serious training of 10 miles here and there. It did get easier..... I thought.

My son and then my daughter's partner upped the ante by signing up and doing some serious training, as in 40 to 50 mile rides and at some speed.

One month before the fateful day, I'm cleaning my car and I hear an almighty crash followed by groaning. My cycling friend, who lived a few houses away, has fallen from his ladder and now has a bone poking out of his elbow, bleeding all over the place. He was hurt really badly.

Fast forward the night of the event and my friend, sans plastered arm, decides to be our road crew and follows us through the night all the way to Brighton driving with one arm and a crooked other stirring the gear box. We completed the event and thoroughly enjoyed it.



finish line of the Bucks Bumps sportive

No longer laughing at those speed kings in their lycra and expensive bikes. This was the stuff any discerning cyclist just had to have. Hello Wiggle, here I come!!

Back to the present day. I'm now significantly lighter (albeit with some Covid-induced timber), smaller, fitter and dare I say it, happier for my cycling.

My son is just amazing on a bike and is now a fulltime mechanic. And the same goes for my daughter and her partner; both are good cyclists.

I've met and made more friends since joining the club than I could have imagined.

Probably annoyed a few along the way too, but not intentionally.

The surrounding area in all directions is no longer a stranger to me. I feel I know some of these lanes and small towns better than the place I live in. My list of bikes has grown and I'm very happy building them and taking them apart.

Worryingly my wife urges me to cycle during those times when I'm feeling a little "can't be bothered". I'll have to check if we have a milkman now!



a ride to Clavering Lakes in healthier times

We have recently moved to a new home and the area is directly related to my cycling. When we were considering a move, my wife said "you know some nice places. Suggest where we might look for a new place to live" The rest is recent history, but suffice to say, we moved, and I have a whole lot of new roads to explore.

So, I think I'm fortunate, in fact we are all pretty fortunate to be able to do what we do.

Sure, we get laughed at, called MAMILs etc. We get shouted at and abused by other road users, sadly knocked off as well. We get filthy dirty, soaking wet and then other times, slowly cooked. Our bikes need constant fettling. Our tyres puncture easily and can sometimes be a pig to fix when you are freezing cold, soaking wet and don't have a valve core tool (I do now!)

I suggest that most of us have lost weight, are fitter, have low resting heart rates, can cycle quite prodigious distances that people admire (or think we are crazy) and ask how can you be so fit?

So: **quid est revolutio semper factum est pro nobis?**

You know the answer to this. But what have the Romans ever done for us?

quid romanos unquam pro nobis?

Thanks to you all for the great times past and good times to come.

Ed. Note * *The Dave Rayner Fund* was set up 1995 in memory of a popular Bradford cyclist who died tragically, only 27. The Fund helps young riders to start a racing career on the continent. There are a number of annual fund-raising rides and other activities, including the **Dave Rayner dinner**. The first was held in 1995 in Bradford and has attracted well-known guest speakers from the cycling world such as Miguel Indurain, Bradley Wiggins, Mark Cavendish, Eddy Merckx. David Millar was the first beneficiary of the fund who went on to turn professional with Cofidis and to winning several stages in the three great Tours and is now on the excellent ITV4 commentary team. More recent beneficiaries who have joined the professional peloton include Adam Yates and Dan McLay.



F4 '25' 1966

The North London Loop

*A famous training bash late of
the 20th century as reminisced*

by

Rod Taylor

Memories.....recently I've been having a clear out of all my paperwork, letters, receipts, magazines and photographs, much to the delight of my wife Chris. It soon became apparent that the biggest pile belonged to everything that related or had to do with cycling. Old memories and thoughts returned as I arranged them into some sort of year by year order, and it got me thinking....when did this interest in cycling all start?

Looking through the pile in front of me, I decided that 1964 was my watershed moment in cycling. Before then I was used to riding bikes, but now aged fourteen I began to learn more about the world of cycle clubs and racing. Facts, figures and distances became important to me; racing as a schoolboy you were restricted to a 76.2 inch gear and 86.4 as a junior, whether it was ten miles or twenty four hours. These were the days when you turned in the middle of the road at the halfway point during a time trial, where you nailed your shoe plates onto the bottom of your Detto Pietro perforated Italian cycle shoes, and wore woollen shorts with chamois inserts.

As a child I discovered that a tricycle with solid tyres could take me beyond the front gate of our house in Edmonton onto the pavements. Soon I would be riding my first two wheeler single speed bike with 18 inch wheels and rod brakes. I know this because I've found an entry in one of my parents notebooks 'Rod's 1st bicycle April 1958 No.42861T'. After that it was another single speed, this time with 20 inch wheels. One Sunday around 1960 I rode from Edmonton to Hertford and back with my friend Keith Trevallion, I was made aware that his was a bigger bike with 24 inch wheels. As it turned out he didn't reach Hertford, along the way he turned back saying something about having to return home for his Sunday roast, I had a little smile to myself.

Christmas 1961 was spent with my family aboard the SS Orion bound for Sydney as Ten Pound Poms (Google it if you've never heard about it). For some reason life in Australia didn't suit my parents, we stayed a while, moved around a bit until finally returning to the UK, this time on the SS Oriana. Inside one of our ten shipping crates was my bike; it held the honour of going all around the world without a pedal being turned.

Eventually we moved to New Southgate, by now the bike was too small for me, so my father and I went to Halfords in Edmonton and came away with a brand new Halfords 3 speed sports bike. It was in blue and white with 26ins wheels, as it was bought on a higher purchase agreement it meant that every Friday evening I would cycle down to Edmonton along the North Circular Road to pay off about ten bob a week.

Many miles followed, it was now 1964, I was attending Christ's College Finchley where I found other pupils there that were into cycling. That summer Richard Painter and I spent a week cycling and touring around East Anglia reaching as far as Sheringham. I had fitted my bike with drop handlebars and toe clips; Richard had sold his lightweight Italian race bike and bought a new Moulton, one of those single speed models with a back pedal brake. Couldn't fathom out at the time why he would give up his race bike for a Moulton, but that was Richard, he liked the bike and we had a great tour.

At the end of the summer I sold the bike and bought a second hand fixed wheel Dave Davey track bike from his shop in Harringay for £17/10. On the top tube was the name **Sid Pateman Whitewebbs C.C.**, it was a frame he had built for him in 1960, I met him some years ago and he told me that his fixed wheeled bikes earned him extra money when he raced on grass track whilst doing his national service

Having a proper lightweight with Reynolds 531 tubing and 10 ounce tubulars on lightweight sprints, was a great feeling. At that time if you wanted a road bike there were only two choices of wheels, sprints with tubs or 27 inch wired on tyres, 700c wheels that we ride today weren't an option at that time.

Later I joined the Barnet C.C and heard about the **North London Loop**. These were mid-week sessions during the season where you would meet up with other like-minded cyclists at the Cambridge roundabout on the North Circular Road. It was an evening training run, basically a chain-gang bash up the A10 on mass. At times there could be twenty or more of us steaming north to Hoddesdon, over "the Heath" to Hertford, across A414 to Hatfield, then down the Great North Road A1000 to Potters Bar. From there you screamed down Stag Hill, through Cockfosters to finish in a sprint for the Southgate sign.

Once the Hertfordshire Constabulary stopped us somewhere around Hoddesdon. Having a mass of riders belting through their country roads weren't considered appropriate, so they decided on the following strategy. Four of us were sent off first, then after a timed interval another four were dispatched, and after that another four and then we were gone. What they failed to grasp was that they had effectively turned this into a team pursuit, we loved it.

Monday nights on the Great North Road at the bottom of Archway Road in London was another venue, thinking back now it was madness, but at the time it never bothered us. Monday nights was when convoys of lorries made their way out of the city up the A1 heading North. These weren't the 42 ton DAF and Scania monsters of today, they were still pretty big, but 10 ton A.E.C, Bedford and E.R.F flatbed lorries with tarpaulin loads tied down by ropes. You would be at the Archway Tavern, waiting on your bike for one coming along Holloway Road, and when they turned into Archway Road it was your cue to jump them. As they changed down through the gears to tackle the gradient and before they went under the infamous suicide bridge (google it), you were tucked in behind, caught in their slipstream and matching their speed all the way up past Highgate tube station.

As the road levelled out they picked up speed, you'd be pedalling like mad until they'd gradually pull away. No problem you'd just wait for the next lorry for your chance to jump them as they slowed through East Finchley. This routine would continue through North Finchley and Whetstone drafting behind one after another you reached the top of Barnet Hill. Once past the High Street the street lights were non-existent, the lorries gathered speed and they would disappear into the darkness of the Great North road towards Potters Bar.

Many, many memorable rides and events followed :

1966 Swansea to London in 18 hours on an 81 inch fixed (before there was a Severn Bridge)...The Yorkshire Three Peaks Cyclo Cross.... South Downs Way....Downs Link.... Whitehaven to Newcastle Coast to Coast....London to Cardiff.... London to Bournemouth to watch the start on the Tour of Britain.... Downs Link....Tower Bridge to Severn Bridge off road along the Thames and Kennet and Avon Canal with my wife Chris and then we rode the Sustrans Devon Coast to Coast.... Neolithic Coast to Coast – Holme Next the Sea to Lyme Regis along the Peddars Way, Icknield Way, Ridgeway and Wessex Ridgeway 300 miles on reputedly the oldest road/ track in Britain....six of us from the club rode Lands to John O'Groats on lanes and back roads covering 1,700 miles

Last time I rode the Dave Davey was on the track at Gosling Stadium when John Lee (Icknield Road Club) was warming up for one of his many record attempts, his latest being breaking the hour record for a ninety year old on an open track.

Graham Knight writes ...

The "Mudguardian" magazine was first published in 1952 and has continued unbroken since then. In 2019 John Cannon, who featured in the very first edition, presented the club with a disk containing scanned versions of the very earliest issues. These are available online together with some of the more recent ones

see <https://www.herts-wheelers.org.uk/about-us/mudguardian-archive>

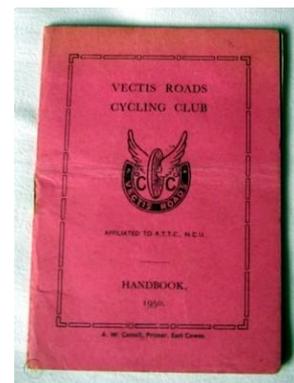
There is some fascinating reading here! The article below is taken from the **July 1954** edition and relates an Easter trip to the Isle of Wight. The participants took in not only riding there and back but seemed to have occupied most of the intervening time in racing. The participants included **Sylvia Wybrow**, who in a year later would be a member of the British team in the "Women's 5-day Tour Feminin Cycliste" in France (see **October 1955 Mudguardian**). Sylvia still holds several club records. Also on the IoW trip was Merv Player, a seriously good time-triallist, who is still a member and riding his bike as COVID allows.



*The British Ladies team at the Tour Feminin 1955.
L/R. Daisy Franks, Joy Bell, Eileen Gray, Sylvia Whybrow, Beryl French, June Thackray
and overall race winner Millie Robinson."*

EASTER ON "THE ISLAND"

*by
Merv Player*



There were five of us who started the long ride down to "Pompey", en route for "the Island". I was quite surprised myself that all five of us reached our destination. After I'd punctured for the third time, I quite expected them to set upon me at least.

However, to go back to the beginning, the five (Audrey, Sylvia, Bob, Les and Merv) left Enfield at the awfully early hour of 6.0 a.m., and proceeded to do a "steady evens" along the North Circular. On arriving at Kew Bridge Les decided he knew a short cut to the Portsmouth Road. We decided we had better ask one of the "locals" the way after we'd crossed the Thames for the second time however, and

we were soon "back on course". Eventually we reached Esher and promptly stormed a convenient Cafe, as we felt that a good breakfast would come in useful!! The proprietor was quite surprised at having us drop in on him at that time of the morning, and it took quite a while for our bacon and eggs to arrive; in fact Les was making some tentative remarks about "whether the chickens had gone on strike or something" when the B. & Es arrived.

After disposing of the B. & E's and several cups of "char" we proceeded on to the Portsmouth Road. On reaching it Les and Bob went "up front" and proceeded to set a cracking pace and we were soon roaring past other various sized bunches all going to the Island. Everything was going fine and we'd managed to get through Guildford OK (despite Bob wanting to go up a 1 in 4 hill for no apparent reason) when there was the ominous sound of air escaping and it wasn't a "slow" either!! We all inspected our irons with fingers crossed and I proceeded to change my tub (just my luck). Everybody else sat around and made remarks on the merits of a certain make of tubular with yours truly keeping quiet. By the time the tub was changed we'd been re-passed by quite a few bunches. We soon got going again however and were just moving nicely when we reached the bottom of the climb up to the Devils Punch Bowl at Hindhead. Les and myself had a glorious prime up the steep and long climb and managed to pip various others doing likewise. On reaching the top we stopped to have a look at the Punch Bowl, wishing we could have a drink and also remove our track suits as the day was getting very warm by now.

A few miles after Hindhead, I had my second deflation, this time conveniently outside a café. Needless to say everybody piled in and started to devour coffee and toast, which was very welcome by this time. We were just settling down when Sylvia suggested that we should get on the road again as she was riding at Pompey at 2.30 and the clock wasn't waiting for us. After "the boys" had consulted the map we decided that we had plenty of time to make Pompey at the pace we'd been making up till now. Sylvia and Audrey now went up the front and the pace really warmed up, with first Audrey "half-wheeling" Sylvia, and vice versa. We eventually reached journeys end at about one o'clock despite another puncture, our progress being greatly helped by being mixed up with some boys doing "bit and bit" as we neared Pompey.



*Of course, she could fix it herself,
but she didn't want to hurt their feelings!*

enquiries we gathered that the other girls in the event were riding gears about five inches bigger than hers, so we had to work out some tactics. Despite being under-g geared, however, Herts. Wheelers managed to get third place, which made it worth the effort of getting down there in time. After watching the rest of the meeting we set to and made the track iron roadworthy again and made for the ferry and the Island.

Pompey reached we located the track and then retired to the nearest café for sustenance. Emerging from the Cafe at a later hour we walked to the track and got Sylvia's iron ready. With all the Herts Wheelers mechanics working furiously this did not take long, despite Les trying to see if he could blow Syl's tubs sky high!! Luckily for us Sylvia's event was not until the middle of the programme so we were able to have a bit of a breather and watch some of the racing. When the time came for Sylvia to do her stuff we'd had a chance to survey the opposition and after some

We had a real sprint to catch the ferry by about a wheel. The party were soon taking photos of everything in sight and didn't have a chance to feel seasick before we pulled up against Ryde Pier. We were met on the pier by Jack and Pat who had come down later in the day. They had been looking for the digs "for hours" they said and couldn't find them. However the girls said they knew the way so with all "the boys" following faithfully we set off. After going through a maze of streets that would make Hampton Court Maze look easy we weren't surprised that Jack and Pat hadn't been able to find them. We even got off course once! We arrived eventually and were very glad to get inside and have a rest. However, in the words of the old saying "there's no peace for the wicked" and we were soon being dragged around the town again.

The next day dawned rather dull but "the boys" weren't particularly worried as it was a "rest day" for them. Sylvia was again booked to "do her nut" in the afternoon on Sandown Promenade. After a hearty breakfast we made our way towards Sandown, pausing now and again to refresh ourselves. On reaching Sandown we again had the job of stripping down Sylvia's bike, with most of us hoping that her luck of the day before would hold. After we'd finished the iron we went to see the start of the "Grand Prix of the Island" as they rode through the town in procession before being de-neutralised and really getting down to it. Back then to the sprinting with myself for one marvelling how the riders didn't pile up with all the crowds around the finishing line. We then arrived at the Ladies Handicap event with Sylvia off 31 yards. I suppose Sylvia was hoping she would be able to add another cup to her collection, and so were we. However Sylvia's luck proved to be out that day and she was pushed out of a place in the scramble for the line. I think we were all as disappointed as she was but it's no use crying over spilt milk and so we settled down to watch the rest of the sprinting and also the other events. While the racing was going on Les went off to Ryde to meet Pete who had had to work on Saturday morning and so had come down by train from Waterloo.

When Les and Pete joined us, those who were riding in the massed start events the next day decided that they had better try "the circuit" so the three M/3 men, Bob, Jack and Merv set off to have a try. ~ "I never knew there could be so many Hills in so few miles! Bob and Merv were certainly glad they were only going around once, though I believe Jack must have liked the hills as he proved on the next day. After going round once, we decided it was enough and made off back to Sandown to meet the others, then making our way back to Ryde and the digs.

The boys and girls then set too and got their bikes into racing trim for the morrow, the girls riding in the Vectis '10', Jack riding in the four lap circuit event and Bob and myself the one lap.

The time triallists were up early and had left with their supporters, Pete and Les, before the "massed start wallahs" began to stir. Eventually Bob and I arrived on the starting line along with over a hundred others, myself for one wondering how the heck we'd be able to get up the first hill without at least one crash. The sun came out as we waited for the starter's orders and the day later proved to be lovely.

As the starter gave us the "off" everybody lunged on the pedals and quickly got strapped in and into bottom gear, then it was up the main hill, about a half mile of 1 in 4, with everyone honking like fanatics... Bob had a bit of rough luck on this first climb and only got half way up when he was pushed into the bank and brought to a standstill, though he soon got going again and finished just behind the bunch. For myself, I also *managed* to crash, though only a half mile from the finish, getting nicely stung in a patch of stinging nettles and eventually finishing about 20th. We had just finished when it was time for Jack to go to the starting line for his event.

Jack did four times as much as we did that day but seemed to enjoy himself. Though the King Brothers (who won the event) go at a very sociable pace, Jack left them after a bit. He also got mixed up in a pile-up but still kept going the full distance.

While the "boys" (for my part at least) were showing how not to do it, the "girls" riding in the '10' were showing how to do it. Sylvia improved her time of last year but was only fourth. Audrey also did a personal for the event and both beat the winning time of last year.



Merv in a supporting role

After the races were over we decided that we might as well make the most of a nice day and see part of the island. Starting off at a very moderate pace to Shanklin, we walked the hill on the other side of the town and eventually reached Ventnor where we lounged about on the beach for a while. It was soon time to move again and we started to make our way back to Ryde for the last time, realising with regret that we would have to start for home the next day.

Easter Monday proved to be a nice day with the sun shining again, and though the tail wind that had been so welcome coming down was still blowing, this time *against* us, we made good progress with Bob and Les up front. Guildford was very nearly reached by the time we decided to have dinner. The journey was uneventful except for being caught in a traffic jam at Windsor where we took the usual photos of the Castle. Soon we were going through the old familiar country again, Ricky, Watford (where we dropped Pete), Hatfield (cheerio Les) and so to our respective abodes. This was altogether a very enjoyable four days and the sort of holiday to remember. Though we didn't win *all* the awards, we at least had a try.

Farewell to former Wheelers

Dick Hayden 1933 – 2018

Richard (Dick) Hayden joined our club in 1949 and was a regular participant in Sunday runs and many of the club's long distance tours. In 1957 Dick married our club's ladies champion Sylvia (*née*) Wybrow (*see above*). When work and family commitments reduced their cycling activities they were still regular supporters of club dinner-dances and prize presentations well in to the 1960s. And many of our special anniversary celebrations, up to and early in this century, were graced by their presence and cheerful anecdotes.

Barbara Briffett 1934 - 2020

Barbara and Trevor Briffett joined our club from **Herts. & Essex Wheelers** in 1958 and were active members well in to the 1960s, when they rode a few club and open time trials and took part in club runs and most of our social events. They were regular attenders of the **East Herts. 40 plus** weekly rides and when Trevor gradually lost his sight, Barbara took on driving duties, so they could continue to join their lunches. They were still both keen jazz and dance enthusiasts and Barbara played clarinet for one or two local groups. They also frequently joined the twice a year lunches held by our club's **Totters** (*the small group of senior riders formed in the 1990s by our late president, Edgar Mascall for short, very slow, but convivial fortnightly rides*). Trevor passed away in 2015 and there was a tribute to him in the **Mudguardian** of that year.

A Ride from Hell

by
Tony dos Santos

*a report of a not-so-typical Cat 6 club-run
to Poppy's Café, Clavering*



WTH...OMG what a ride!

Now, Ware (boom boom) do I start!

We knew this ride might be a little wet as the forecast from the MET said it was going to tip down, with cats and dogs.

So as we are waiting, Graham Rogers turned up on his bike, he looked like he had been in a war zone, there was blood everywhere. His saddle was torn and his knee didn't look good. He said he had crashed by being caught in the gutter on the way! However, being the brave little soldier he is, Graham advised us that he could ride. As usual Marcia turned up at 9:29am!

We set off at 9:30am and Daniel advised where we were going, but didn't know how to get to Fanhams, so we guided him there and all was good. Along the route, Leigh's chain kept on slipping and coming off, more was to come!

Marcia decided to become somewhat unladylike along the route on a video! No it's not anything perverted you lot! For God's sake take your mind out of the gutter (sorry Graham are you having flashbacks about gutters and crashing?)



As we were riding along, I noticed that every time our illustrious leader looked back, over his right shoulder, he kept on veering right. As it was his first lead, I didn't say anything, although I did say to Marcia that he was going to crash if he kept on doing that. We kept on riding and soon Peter Eldon said his goodbyes, as he had things to do.

Daniel showed us his house along route and all was good. We were about a mile from the Café when disaster struck. Daniel looked over his right shoulder and Yes you guessed it, he crashed, straight into Lisa. She had a lovely pedal mark up her leg. It was not a very pretty sight, for both riders. Daniel wasn't hurt too bad but, upon inspection, we noticed that his right-hand lever was smashed to smithereens.

However, Daniel said he would go on despite his bike being stuck in 8th gear. Lisa (being another brave soldier) was ok, so we carried on.

We got to the cafe at about 11:30 am and we waited for service. And we waited and waited and Eventually we put our orders in and then we waited and waited and You get the picture.



At 12:45 pm we had finished the food and Marcia decided to advise us on video how hilly another ride had been. It made us all laugh. Sorry we can't publish the video (too X-rated for the public viewing).

On the way back, I kept on seeing fields of what looked like burnt crops, this was bugging me as there were green bits everywhere, so I stopped, looked and the brown plants had pods with "white peas" in them, I'm sure it's an alien invasion!

Riding along, Leigh's gears were sounding clunkier and clunkier, we got to

Barwick Ford (or is fjord), over the little bridge we went and "BANG" Leigh's bike gave up the ghost with a snapped gear cable. He looked up the hill and advised he wouldn't make it up the hill in 10th gear! Me, in my infinite wisdom said I'd get back to Allenburys and get the car and come and pick him up. We rode off, looking back at Leigh, who looked dejected.

Up the hill we went and yes, nothing more could go wrong apart from the heavens opening and being soaked.

Then one more disaster, Daniel was sitting on the side of road, a broken man with Cramps after riding in eighth gear for fifteen miles, we all told him to man up (total lie) and after five minutes the poor soldier, got back on his bike and shouted "let's go"!

We got back to Allenburys after one of the longest Cat 6 rides in history ... 42 miles; although Marcia advised me later it was 95 miles (total lie :-)

So I jumped in my car, only thinking of Leigh being stuck under a tree somewhere in what I can only describe as a biblical downpour. I started to drive off and something didn't feel right. Yes you guessed it, I'd left my sodden riding shoes on. I stopped the car and changed into my trainers. Then I went searching for Leigh, expecting him to have walked towards me. I got to the B. ford and there was still no sign, I drove up the hill, got to the crossroads, I looked right, I kept looking behind and in front. What I didn't do was look left. Oooooops. So I drove for about another mile and then turned around. I went back to the crossroads and there he was, a drowned rat, he said he was shouting and screaming on my first pass and I didn't see him. Poor bloke looked wet!

I dropped Leigh home. The saga was over. It was 4 pm and I was shattered. But, all in all, it was a great first lead ride from Daniel. Poor bloke, he didn't know what he'd let himself in for!

My apologies if I have forgotten anything; so much happened on this ride. Yet there had been not a single puncture!





TECHNOLOGY & EXERCISE 2020

**by
Claire Gopoulos**

Well, the biggest loss to me in March 2020, in terms of lifestyle change due to COVID, was being unable to go to spinning classes which I had been doing consistently after work 3 to 4 times a week for a number of years. My son, Yiannis, had already set me up with a turbo trainer and Zwift account but I really preferred to go to classes than do this at home on my own. All that changed in March 2020 when the turbo trainer, Zwift and all the associated technology became my new best friends!

As the weather was honestly so wonderful for much of the lockdown I managed to get outside cycling on many days with my husband, Chris, from his home in Kent. Cycling around the beautiful countryside there and for miles along the coastline, was absolutely wonderful and I do feel very lucky to have been able to do this during the lockdown period which was so difficult for many people. As I am sure we all appreciated, the lack of traffic on the roads made for cycling heaven in this period of time. In fact, I became so blasé about speeding around country roads without expecting anything coming the other way that when I did finally meet a white van (who was doing a similar activity in a much more dangerous weapon!) coming towards me, we both had to take serious avoiding action. Luckily I got away with it and proceeded with much greater caution thereafter....hope he did too!

However, I began supplementing outdoor cycling with Zwift sessions, starting with some of their training programmes like L'Etape de Tour, and quite quickly became a bit hooked on it. I did receive support and help from Yiannis in setting things up and some analysis of results etc. which all proved very interesting to me, if somewhat 'over my head' in some places! I have now ended up with a Garmin, heart monitor, cadence monitor and Strava account and spend ridiculous amounts of time analysing and comparing my performances!

In October Yiannis entered a team into the Red Bull Timelaps 2020, 25-hour race and invited me to be part of it. I was initially very honoured to have been considered for inclusion on the team until I found out that I just met the criteria, i.e. could cycle, had a turbo trainer, had Zwift and Strava and was available! Our Team comprised of 4, Yiannis, myself, Daniel and Emily. Apparently, there were 784 UK riders taking part and we collectively clocked 95,433 miles between us.



We did win a Red Bull Timelaps medal and a pair of Red Bull Timelaps socks each which I am very proud of! Yiannis came 5th overall in the team event clocking 304.42 miles in his individual effort which was, in my opinion, pretty good.



My front room was turned into a two turbo-bike area, for Daniel and Yiannis, and the sofas were used for necessary resting/sleeping in between cycling efforts. I was in an upstairs room for cycling and Emily was in her own home. It was a really exciting event to be part of and I couldn't help but get carried away with the event and trying to 'give it my all'. Handovers were very stressful (for me) as we needed to ensure our individual rides were uploaded onto Strava before the next cyclist started and with remote locations we needed to communicate by

mobile phone to do this – between downstairs and upstairs we just needed to shout! So honestly, it was totally exhausting, the 2am slot being my worst, although I found it very difficult to sleep between cycling bouts as a certain amount of encouragement to other team members seemed necessary on occasion.....and too much Red Bull does definitely 'give you wings'! However, I certainly got a technology lesson as well and there was complete panic at one point when my iPad ran out of charge as I was just about to start my session.



Later in the year I joined the club Strava group and was keenly following the weekly and monthly leader-board being positively competitive to try and ensure I remained somewhere on it!

I did the club Hill Climb in October and greatly appreciated the organisation put into this event by the Club which took account of all the COVID regulations at the time. I do believe that all the Zwift training helped in my fitness for this event.

All this leads me to conclude that the cycling technology available with turbo trainers and Zwift has been hugely beneficial to my fitness and in circumstances like 2020, with the restrictions we have had, can give us additional opportunities and be a positive experience for us all. For those in the over 50's age bracket like me, it demonstrates that we can, indeed, embrace technology and change the way we do things. I am very keen to take part in some Zwift races and take advantage of this opportunity further in 2021 and that is going to be one of my targets for this year.

Happy New Year to all club members and looking forward to seeing more of you on Club rides in 2021 once all the restrictions are lifted.

FUERTEVENTURA
2020
by
Bob Brown



Little did I know when I arrived on Fuerteventura in early January that the world was shortly to be swept by a new flu like pandemic commonly called Coronavirus. News had not yet spread from China, but it soon would. This was my thirteenth holiday in Corralejo, in the far northeast of this desert island, but the first time staying at The Corralejo Beach Hotel. Not quite as grand as it sounds but not at all bad.

As usual I rented a bike from Easy Riders, who's proprietor Stefan had become a friend. English by birth, he had lived on the island for over 20 years, married a local girl and now had two young sons. Little did either of us know what hardship was soon to hit him, his business, and his young family.

This time I hired a mountain bike, rather than my usual road bike. For those who haven't cycled on Fuerteventura, let me say that it's not the most ideal place for cycling. There aren't that many tarmac roads, and surfaces vary from perfect to downright dodgy. There's usually plenty of traffic on them, although I have to say that the standard of driving isn't bad at all (apart from British tourists in hire cars!). In the past I've done a mixture of road and mountain biking. This time, primarily because of ongoing roadworks around Corralejo, which had scared the hell out of me on my last visit, I opted for off-road this time.



Fuerteventura is a desolate island for the most part, but beautiful in the strong sunshine. All of the off road tracks are surfaced with loose grit, which offer an unyielding ride, as there is no rain to soften anything up. Freewheeling down one of these wide sweeping tracks can be utterly terrifying!

There are no trees out of the towns, and the ever present wind is a real problem. Generally blowing from the Northeast, it whisks you away from Corralejo and fools you into going a little too far before turning back into it for the final miles.

The off road tracks do offer a little

shelter from the wind, as they undulate and change direction frequently. But they are often brutal. The surface is often “corrugated” at 90 degrees to your travel.

Boneshaking! You definitely need suspension, a hardtail at least. Around town things are completely different. Miles of proper cycle tracks, although in the centre of town there is officially a 10km per hour speed limit. No-one seems to take any notice of this though, especially the growing band of electric scooter riders! And there’s the universal problem of ambling pedestrians preferring the bike tracks to pedestrian footpaths (don’t get me going!)



Anyway, I got my bike from Easy Riders, delighted to see them again, and off I went. I go to Fuerte with my widowed sister. She doesn’t cycle but is perfectly happy doing her own thing while I go off on the bike. Even in January the temperature is at least 18C, and is often in the mid to upper 20s. The sky is almost always the most brilliant blue! These tracks are generally pretty deserted in January, but you must always be on your guard, for you might suddenly be confronted by a huge truck on its way to or from a nearby stone quarry! Or a tourist in a hire car who is only just discovering that this isn’t a proper road. And then, if the surf’s up, a sudden convoy of assorted old vehicles on their way to the surfing beach.

This is my friend Veronika, who is Slovakian and who worked for Easy Riders, and actually issued my hire bike to me at the start of my holiday. Oh to be 28 again! She is a near elite level triathlete and escorts tourists on trips around the island on mountain bikes. But most of all she loves surfing!

On my earlier visits to the island, I became fond of a bar called The Seahorse Sports Bar in El Cotillo, a small former fishing village in the North East corner of the island. On my first visit, I had rehearsed how to ask in Spanish for a black Americano coffee and a sandwich. On making this request, the man behind the bar turned and called out to someone out back, in a broad Glaswegian accent “Eh, is an Americano a black coffee?”! Over numerous future visits I never tried Spanish in there!





All over the island there is little sign of any living creature on first sight, but over my many visits I did learn how to spot Egyptian Squirrels (wrongly called chipmunks by many tourists), and birds such as hoopoes.

Apart from a strong smell of pigs when passing through the tiny village of Caldereta, there's little evidence of farm animals, but in Lajares I did spot some donkeys!

I knew where to look, as I had discovered them on an earlier visit to the island. The first time that I stopped to say hello, I put my track mitts down on that wall, and one of the donkeys tried to eat them!

Just down the road from the donkeys is a café called Pastelo (cakes) and it was always calling out to me as I approached. A really nice young couple run it, but it is generally only the husband there.



He makes the most wonderful chocolate cake ... "tarte chocolat", and I have had this more than once.

And there was usually someone interesting to chat with whilst sitting outside eating it! I have chatted with Swiss, Swedes, Dutch, German, and others.

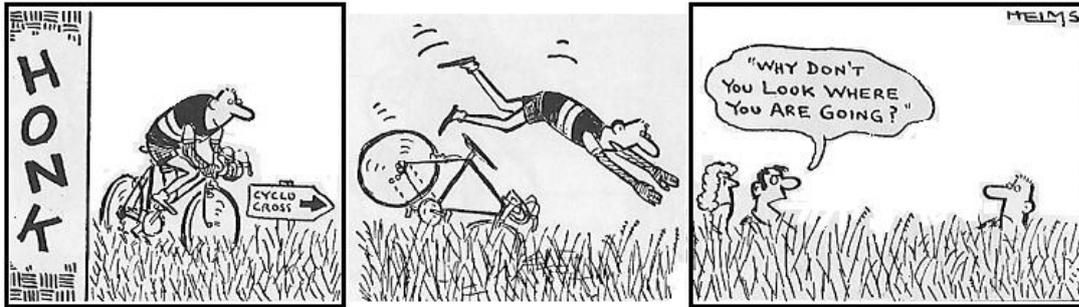
I never thought at the time that I wouldn't be able to go back there for the foreseeable future, but Covid and some ongoing health issues have put paid to that.

I'll just have to put up with trying to spot my friend Veronika in the newly released **Wonderwoman 1984**. She had a small part as an Amazon senator during filming on Fuerteventura in 2018.

Is a “ding, ding” really rude or a safety necessity ?

Another argument posed by JRVP

adapted from reference to a few websites and 70 years cycling experience*



with apologies and thanks to Johnny Helms and his appropriately-named muse

Ding, ding, bike coming past! Ding, ding, careful now.

Ding ding, excuse me and my two wheeled vehicle. Ding ding, look away from your phone and focus on the road you're crossing. Ding ding, ding ding! Is this annoying ... to you ... or me ... both?

Why are you angry? I have alerted you to my presence. I have a bell on my bike, but who would have thought that using such a simple bike accessory is so fraught with existential questions?

I used to commute by bike in London and in many other towns for years, mostly without incident. Mostly. Cycling in London is relatively safe and not as dangerous as some people believe.

I used to rely on my voice to alert others to my presence. It was usually effective and I did not need to re-position my hands to ring a bell. But now, to avoid town traffic and, when not in “quiet” lanes, seemingly too far for me to reach under lockdown regulations, I like to ride on “bike trails” and shared cycle paths. I no longer want to bark at people. True, I shouldn't have to, but the reality is we are still some way short of a cycling nirvana where folk have learnt to share and be aware of others' needs. So, until then, I still need to alert others to my presence with my “quiet” wheeled hazard.

Of course, most folk will probably see you coming before they hear you ... won't they????

Nothing says “bicycle coming through” more than a bell. It is universally known. At Mill Road, Hertford, there is a sign where British Waterways (now CRT) asks cyclists using the River Lee towpath to “*give a little tinkle*” to warn other path users of their approach. I don't wish to be a shouty man on a bike, but a polite cyclist with a bell.

But cyclists are not universally liked. Some reasons I understand (not obeying road laws); others I do not (sharing the road). So yelling is not good for our collective perception. Even polite yelling at folk is still yelling. Ding ding is better, yes? But it seems even the humble bicycle bell is not liked by some pedestrians, especially if they think the ringing is excessive.

Some folk consider ringing of bike bells is rude. Touchy lot, aren't we? Some people take offence at being notified of the presence of another. Do they feel the same about a car driver who beeps the horn when a pedestrian steps obviously into the road? Recent court cases have highlighted these very problems; everything to do with speed, braking capability, audible means of warning ... nothing to do with inattention or bloody-minded stupidity!

*I wrote a piece in the 2012 Mudguardian which described this problem. **Inattentional Blindness** refers to a very real and medically-researched syndrome that has been shown to be the direct cause in recent years of many serious and fatal accidents to pedestrians **and cyclists**. The research is not exactly new; in fact, the name was first coined during studies and experiments begun in the USA around 1992.*

But why do people get upset by the ringing of a bike bell? To some there are connotations of a lord or lady beckoning aside the commoners. Other folk just don't like being "dinged" no matter what the reason, a little like drivers who don't like being on the receiving end of another driver's horn beep. Or is it just the sort of people who don't like being asked to follow rules when they are breaking them? "Don't you tell me what to do ...!"

Should this prevent cyclists using bells? No, in fact, it's a reason to use them more. More riders using bells will do two things. It will normalise the sound by making the ding of a bell more commonplace and thus, more acceptable. More importantly, it will make pedestrians more aware of cyclists. Most pedestrians fail to look for cyclists when crossing a road; they simply don't expect them to be there.

*Note: * mostly adapted from an excellent website: humancyclist.wordpress.com;*

There are currently about 15 pages, over 20 messages, on this website. Most are from UK, London in particular. Others are from Canada, USA, Australia. Several riders are against the humble bell, mainly as being ineffective, some preferring to use larger warning noises (eg air klaxon); some prefer to use none. However, opinion amongst pedestrians is also divided. I have given just a few examples below:

1) **From a pedestrian** trying to understand the "rules" for using shared paths. I walk along a canal path with my two young children and our dog and recently have had a few bell rings which can be startling, but I always do my best to get out of the way. But, it is not an easy task trying to make a dog sit and children move to the verge in a short space of time especially when cyclists appear behind you quite suddenly. And on most occasions there has been no gesture of a thanks. Should I be expected to move? If cyclists are in such a hurry, can't they be the ones to go into the verge or at the very least slow down to pass? Please advise. I do find the bell ringing rude, particularly when they can see from a distance the struggle I am already having. I would agree with all the comments above regarding pedestrians that walk out on the road into oncoming traffic.

2) **Advice from Human Cyclist:** as a pedestrian you should have priority, not just on a shared path, but anywhere. Cyclists should slow down and be considerate when passing. They should also be polite enough to thank you. Some people believe ringing the bell allows them to pass no matter the circumstances, but the bell is only to alert pedestrians of a cyclist's presence. The cyclist must still take care when passing. But most pedestrians will be startled if a bike passes without giving any warning.

As a pedestrian on a shared path you should look to give way to cyclists where possible, but you certainly shouldn't feel rushed. I know cyclists in London use canal paths because there isn't a safe alternative or to avoid a busy road. If everyone was just more considerate it could work.

I'd suggest you try to make eye contact with the approaching cyclist and let them know you're aware of their presence and will let them by when you have the chance. The eye contact will hopefully slow them down and maybe, just maybe, they will recognise and treat you as human rather than an obstacle to pass.

3) **I agree with the comment about pedestrians having priority**, but neither they nor their dogs may be a careless obstruction. I'm not sure about canal paths, but generally on Scottish highways, bridleways or cycleway/footways (which is what so-called "shared paths" are in law), a dog should be under close control. If you cannot reliably make it sit and stay quickly, it should be kept on a short lead. UK Highway Code Rule 56 (sorry to use the code, but the official advice is in there).

4) **I have always used a bell** on mixed use trails as people tend to hear it as opposed to my voice – especially if I am winded or if the other person has head phones. Today on the Creeper Trail in Virginia, I was accosted by other cyclists because I used a bell. They knew I was there as I heard them say "another rider is coming". I used the bell anyhow and they yelled at me for not saying "on your left". Actually came after me, yelled "on your **left**" in my ear and stopped in front of me, so I had to avoid them again. I thought it extremely rude. (*I guess this is "right" in the UK*).

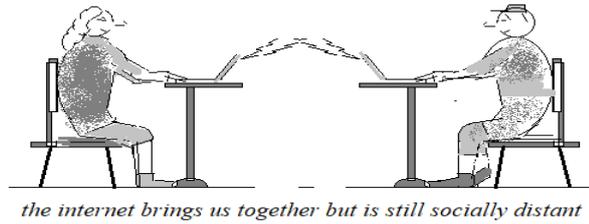
5) **I don't like the bike bell.** To me, it is putting the responsibility on the person in front of me not to hit them. Instead I assume everyone is a hazard; so I proceed with caution assuming everyone may stop and turn into my path. Smart cycling requires I always have a **plan B**.

S/he doesn't say what this plan is; I would assume it is to stop and give way!

I find that early use of my little Sustrans bell has just the right "tinkle" and that a short pause, then a wave and a thank-you are generally sufficient and often reciprocated.

There are many other websites that offer as many and varied views on this subject, not all by cyclists. What do YOU think? Do you rely on your voice? Do you have a bell or other mechanical warning and use it sparingly? Or do you avoid shared paths altogether and thus have no conflict with pedestrians, children, dogs, smart-phone zombies? And you never ride in town traffic either?

AGM summary 2020 *from* **Graham Knight**



*Adapted from the Minutes of the HERTFORDSHIRE WHEELERS AGM
Held at the clubroom at Allenburys Sports & Social Club on Sunday 17th November 2019
(These are NOT the official minutes - see details available to members on the club website)*

Due to the coronavirus pandemic this year's meeting was online with the following timetable:

Notice of meeting sent: 22nd October 2020

Details of committee elections and invitation for nominees sent: 16th November 2020

Officers' reports and accounts sent: 18th November 2020

Online voting opened: 22nd November 2020 Online voting closed: 29th November 2020 9:00 p.m.

No motions were accepted for discussion.

61 members voted ...

1. To confirm the Minutes of the AGM held on 11th November 2019 and deal with any matters arising
The minutes were accepted ... 61 for, 0 against.

2. Officers' Reports ... See below.

3. Treasurer's Report ... The accounts (see below) were accepted ... 61 for, 0 against.

4. Election of Officials 2019-20 ... There were no contested posts. See below for the 2021 officers and committee members.

5. To review Members' Annual Subscriptions ... Members were asked to vote on the following motion: Do you agree that 2020 subscriptions should be carried forward to cover 2021? The motion was carried ... 57 for, 4 against

6. Proposed changes to club rules ... Nothing proposed.

7. Any Other Business ... None

Herts Wheelers' AGM 2020 – Officer Reports Report from the Chair In the absence of a club Chair this report has been approved by the committee to summarise the club's activities for the year. Well, of course there have hardly been any club activities this year as a result of the devastating effects of the various restrictions that have been in place because of the Covid-19 crisis.

However several things merit a mention. To begin on a sad note, I have to report that Carolyn Alexander died this year. I know many members will miss her friendly company on club runs.

Pre-Covid the club held its annual lunch and awards ceremony at Mayflower Place in Hertingfordbury with over 40 members and guests attending.

Also before the Covid lockdown the club held one TT, then that was it until July. Ultimately six racing events were held this year; details are in the Racing Secretary's report. Another casualty of the precautions even before lockdown was a coached session at Welwyn Velodrome - maybe in 2021?

From the start of lockdown the committee informed members that club runs would cease and even riding in groups was banned. Individual club members were however able to continue to ride as a result of the freedom to take daily exercise (and Strava records some heroic amounts of exercise by some members during lockdown!) One result of Covid has been a significant move of club activity online. The club Slack workspace has become a far more important part of how we organise, keep in touch, support each other – committee discussions have been almost entirely on Slack. Also, early in

Lockdown, a few “club nights” were held on Zoom but, as there was a low attendance, they did not continue. Graham resuscitated the monthly Strava competition for the Hertfordshire Wheelers Strava Club and gave it a smart new look with extra analysis and a new climbing challenge while Richard Henderson produced a “Tour de Herts Wheelers” challenge with a set of rides posted on a Slack channel for members to tackle over the next few months. Also, as a result of Covid restrictions, the club will be awarding fewer trophies this year, just a few racing medals plus the Old Skool cup, the Scrubbers award and the BAR cup. None of the club’s other competitions could be properly run and will be deferred for this year and hopefully reinstated in 2021.

Eventually we were allowed to ride in groups again, although limited to six riders which led to complicated procedures to notify of rides and accept riders. For a brief period, groups of up to 15 were allowed, but then it all changed again and at the beginning of October, with the continual changing and uncertainty, the committee took the difficult decision to cease official club rides until further notice. Club members were still able, via Slack, to coordinate riding in informal groups of six. Now England has gone back into lockdown for at least four weeks, so even those rides have stopped and it is back to “individual exercise”! During the year your committee has attempted to keep track of the changing rules affecting our ability to ride together and to notify members accordingly. As the year draws to a close we are losing a number of committee members - Gareth has moved away to Scotland and has had to relinquish the role of Racing Secretary, Tony Howard has moved to Halstead and is giving up the Awards Organiser role and Marcia is stepping down from Membership Secretary after 5 years. I’d like to thank the three of them for all their hard work. Sam Ball stepped forward to take over from Gareth and was co-opted onto the committee as Racing Secretary. Here’s to a return to something like normality in 2021! Peter Bloomfield??

Report from the Racing Secretary ... shown on page 4 above.

Report from the Membership Secretary Marcia Carnegie ... At last year's AGM we reported 127 members including 27 female members and 13 life members. This year we have a total of 122 members. There are 27 female members and 13 life members as there were last year.

We welcomed 7 new members: Graeme Hill, Marisa Sharkey, Dean Park, Emily Chilton, Graham Rogers, Gemma Bassom and Ada Wignall. Two of these were returning to the fold after some years of absence and two were juniors (one very much so!).

The lock-down stimulated an interest in cycling and generated a flurry of membership enquiries. Unfortunately the near absence of club runs has made it difficult for prospective members to try us out and for us to determine whether they are a good fit to the activities we offer. We hope to make progress on this once the situation allows it.

Officers and Committee Members 2020-21 ... There were no contested posts so all those nominated were appointed. The committee is now as follows:

Chair	Peter Bloomfield	Membership Secretary	Tony Dos Santos
General Secretary	Graham Knight	Social Secretary	<i>vacant</i>
Treasurer	Valdis Belinis	General Committee Members	Marcia Carnegie,
Racing Secretary	Sam Ball		Danny Hood, Laura O'Shea, Barry Page.

2020 Pro Team sponsors ~ Answers to Quiz on page 24

The following information has been mostly gleaned from the website inrng.com

Ag2r La Mondiale - French social insurance company providing health insurance and pension plans to savers in France. Mutually-owned this has grown via mergers to become one of France's biggest insurance companies with 650 agencies across France. Sponsor since 2000 although the team began in 1992 as Chazal.

Astana - capital of Kazakhstan (it means "capital" in Kazakh) but the city has been re-named Nur-Sultan. The name lives on with the pro team and it rides to promote the country. Sponsor since 2007 born from the **Liberty Seguros** team which had been affected by Operation Puerto.

Bahrain-McLaren - backed by the oil-rich island in the Middle East. New for 2020 was the McLaren name but the sports car manufacturer, owned by Bahrain's sovereign wealth fund, has already announced it is pulling out.

Bora-Hansgrohe - German team sponsored by two *Mittelstand* manufacturers. Bora makes kitchen extractor fans and the firm has grown tremendously since it started sponsoring a team. Hansgrohe make plumbing parts like taps and shower heads. They have a German history since being founded by Herr Hans Grohe in 1901, although now the majority ownership is US conglomerate Masco. NOT to be confused with arch rival Grohe. Silent partner is Specialized, the influential bike brand which brought Peter Sagan to the team. The team started in 2010 as Team NetApp.

CCC - Polish footwear retailer with some manufacturing. Started in 1990s as *Cena Czyny Cuda* which translates as "the price makes wonders". Costs are kept low in shops where boxes are piled high with shoppers taking shoes themselves to try for size; thus fewer staff and more retail space. Perpetual sales adds to discount. Founder Dariusz Miłek is now a billionaire and CCC is one of the 20 biggest firms on Poland's stockmarket. Now international pushing into Germany, Russia and Switzerland, the pro team helps with marketing. Sprandi is a brand owned by CCC. Miłek sponsored the old BMC team back to 2006, the same year that the CCC team started. The 2020 team is the old BMC team with the old CCC team acting as development squad.

Cofidis - new in World Tour terms, but are an old team that was in the Pro Tour and has existed since 1997. Backed by a French consumer lending company which has expanded to offering loans in Spain, Italy and central Europe, the cycling team has proved useful as a marketing tool. Cofidis is now part of the Crédit Mutuel financial group which also owns online bank Arkéa, sponsor of the second tier **Arkéa-Samsic** team.

Deceuninck-Quick Step - Belgian maker of PVC windows and cladding, mainly industrial and offices, has sales across Europe and North America; market value of €270 million. Co-sponsor **Quick Step** seem Flemish but it belongs to company founded in Amsterdam called Mohawk Industries, a giant supplier of commercial and residential flooring. Czech billionaire Zdeněk Bakala is majority owner and funds the team. Quick Step's sponsorship began 2003 but is an assembly of mergers over years back to the 1990s.

EF Education First Pro Cycling - language education business started in Sweden, now HQ'd in Switzerland. Sounds repetitive but EF actually stands for *Europeiska Ferieskolan* not Education First. It is Swedish for "European Holiday Schools" because this is what founder Bertil Hult first named his venture, now big business making the family billionaires. Team has changed its name every year but bought by EF from its founders late in 2018 and now a more stable entity. Began as a junior development team in 2003, became a pro team in 2007.

Groupama-FDJ - 50-50 joint venture owned by its two sponsors; *très* French to say Groupama-FDG. Groupama is a giant French mutual insurance company – and rival to **Ag2r**. FDJ is short for *La Française des Jeux*, the French state lottery just privatised. They have committed to fund both men's and women's teams for several years. Team owner Marc Madiot is a keen patriot. He blasts the French anthem on the team bus on Bastille Day and keeps national champion's jersey free from sponsor logos. The team began in 1997 and has kept the same sponsor; in 2012 it was **FDJ-BigMat**.

Israel Start Up Nation - the result of the Israel Cycling Academy take-over of **Katusha-Alpecin** team, acquiring the World Tour licence to move the team up into the top level. NOT the Israeli state, it's financed by Israeli-Canadian real estate billionaire Sylvain Adam, a keen cyclist who recently migrated to Israel and who has been spending his fortune to promote the country. He part-funded the Giro's start in 2019. Madonna sung at the Eurovision song contest in Tel Aviv because she was being well-paid by Adams to do so. Adams bought Katusha which bought Oleg Tinkov's **Tinkoff Credit** systems team which began in 2006.

Jumbo-Visma have Dutch supermarket chain Jumbo – say Yumbo – and Visma, a Norwegian IT services company. The team's shot up the spending rankings, only a few years ago they were among the poorest. Jumbo is family-owned, growing fast across the Netherlands to become one of the leading food retailers and are now expanding into Belgium. The supermarket's payroll had been managed by a firm which was recently taken over by a Norwegian software and services firm called Visma... which has now come on board with the cycling team too after the connection was made at work.

Lotto-Soudal - the longest continuous team sponsorship in pro cycling, backed by the Belgian state lottery, with various name changes over since 1985. **Soudal** is a Belgian business making adhesives and sealants, a staple in DIY stores. Clever since you can buy Soudal products all around the world, but only Lotto tickets in Belgium. Despite the pedigree and the government backing this is still Belgium's second best team.

Mitchelton-Scott - winery in Nagambie, Victoria; business and team owned by Jerry Ryan, one of Australia's wealthiest people thanks to his Jayco caravan business – Australia's largest vehicle manufacturer since Ford and GM/Opel pulled out – and an astute investment in the Walking With Dinosaurs franchise. A lot of his wealth is ploughed into Australian sport, including this cycling team. Alcohol sponsorship is forbidden in France, but OK in the T de F because the winery is also a hotel and spa that caters for functions and weddings. Scott is a Swiss-American sports brand, registered in Switzerland, with a US heritage making bike frames also skis, ski poles and accessories for dirt motor cycling like body protection, goggles, etc.

Movistar - mobile telecoms operator belonging to Telefonica; Activities in Spain and Latin America as well as in the UK and Germany under the separate O2 brand. The longest surviving team in the peloton with a lineage going back to 1980 and the Reynolds team with José Miguel Echavarri at the helm for most of the time before handing over to Eusebio Unzué; now Sebastian Unzué.

NTT - Japan's national telecoms company. Several years ago it bought IT services firm **Dimension Data** and finally rebranded "Di Data" as NTT. Sponsorship remains connected to IT branch rather than the phones. Dimension Data joined 2016 and team goes back to 2008 as MTN, named after a South African telecoms co.

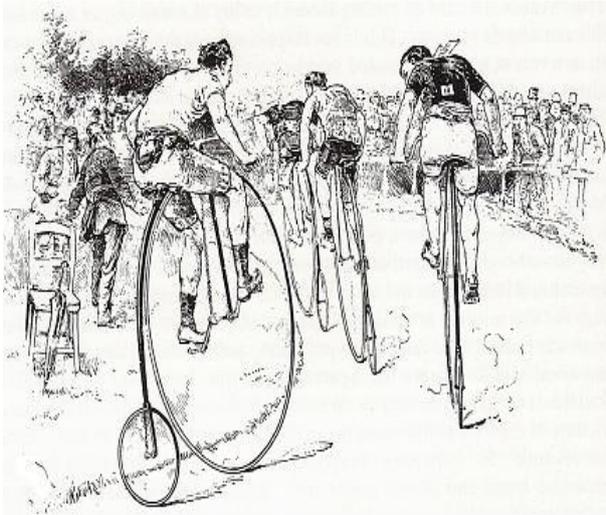
Team Ineos - new name for Team Sky after Ineos bought the team last spring. Ineos is a petrochemicals company making plastics; also supplies chemicals to make plastics; grown so big it now drills for oil and gas. It's a private firm owned by James "Jim" Ratcliffe, Britain's third richest person. He bought the cycling team for fun. He also has a sailing team, has bought French football club OGC Nice and is now a sponsor of the Mercedes Formula 1 team. The team began in 2010.

Trek-Segafredo – union of well-known US bike co. Trek and Italian coffee Segafredo, Italian coffee giant controlled by founder Massimo Zanetti since 2016. Signor Zanetti also responsible for hiring Vincenzo Nibali. The team began in 2011 as **Leopard-Trek**.

Team Sunweb - backed by European holiday tour operator part of the Swiss-Dutch Sundio Group, a Dutch company with HQ in Switzerland. Holiday makers in UK, Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands buy packages online to fly south to the sun. Turns over €600 million a year and takes over a million people on holiday. The team's DNA is Dutch, but they fly under a German flag, perhaps for the bigger market. Goes back to **Shimano-Memory Corp** in 2005.

UAE-Team Emirates - backed by United Arab Emirates, a federation of kingdoms, Abu Dhabi as capital, a close ally of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain mentioned above, another oil and gas rich state. Emirates is also the airline, a big blue chip global sponsor in a peloton of mainly minor and local brands. The team can trace itself back to the old **Lampre** team and beyond, but is gradually moving away from its Italian roots, although they are on Colnago bikes with Campagnolo equipment and retain eight Italian riders, down from ten last year. The team goes back to 1990 when it was Colnago-Lampre

***NB these details applied in February 2020.** Several team sponsorship changes have been announced in recent weeks, not necessarily due to the season's results that were undoubtedly influenced by a very unusual race calendar last season caused by the pandemic restrictions. Some teams therefore have new names for 2021.*



Don't just race away
Your club needs YOU
PLEASE DON'T
LEAVE IT ALL
to the event organisers
lend them a hand in 2021

Obviously, since Government Lockdown restrictions for the Covid Pandemic are still very much in force and supported by advice from British Cycling and Cycling Time Trials

We have not committed event dates for the 2021 calendar as yet ...

BUT please keep up to speed with the club's newsletter and the website

AND tell the organisers a.s.a.p. that YOU can help

And there may be marshalling commitments for our affiliation to E.C.C.A. (t.b.c. - keep an eye on the newsletter)

Tell Racing Sec. Sam Ball as soon as possible which date(s) YOU can help



**Women's World Champion
Road Race AND Time Trial
2020
in Imola**

Anna van der Breggen