



Quarter Wheeler

2012 Issue 1

Winter/Dinner

The magazine of the Hounslow & District Wheelers

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Please contact me if you have any comments or would like to suggest news or an article for the magazine.

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From Hounslow to pro: Wouter Sybrandy interview



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"The descent in the wind on gravel strewn roads was scary stuff"

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Wouter Sybrandy interview

By Simon George

Wouter Sybrandy is an established UK-based professional cyclist with the Sigma Sport-Specialized team, riding the big UK races along with a few key European events. You wouldn't guess that only 6 years ago he rode his first ever club run and joined the Hounslow and District Wheelers. He remains a 2nd claim member of our club and a familiar face as he still takes part in a few club runs and club time trials.

Being Dutch, Wouter had always cycled, but didn't do anything seriously sporting until the age of 18 when he rode the sportive version of the Amstel Gold with a friend, both on their town/mountain bikes. They loved it so much they came back the next year on road bikes. After that Wouter went to university at Royal Holloway which limited his cycling: for the first two years, lacking secure storage, he left his bike at home. In his final year he brought the bike over and found that he loved riding around the area. The next natural step was to ride with a club. Wouter admits he had no knowledge of the UK club scene. "I just came along on a club run to Marlow and the rest is history I guess".

He joined H&DW in 2006 with the intention of getting to know the area and riding his bike more, but was soon persuaded to enter a few time trials by fellow club members, since "everyone really seemed to be into racing". He also heard about Hillingdon where he was introduced to road racing. It's important to him to remember that "without the encouragement of the H&DW members I probably wouldn't have started". Still living nearby and with friends in the club, he likes to come back for the odd club run and club event when his racing schedule permits, because "I always enjoy the atmosphere".

As a 4th cat road racer, Wouter found he could win races easily and quickly progressed. How did he find his route to the top? "Every time I moved up a category I started training harder and improved to be competitive at that level. I've been doing that all the way to UCI continental level now where I still manage to be competitive."

His results got him a place on the Agiskoviner team for 2007, and then Sigma Sport from 2008 onwards.

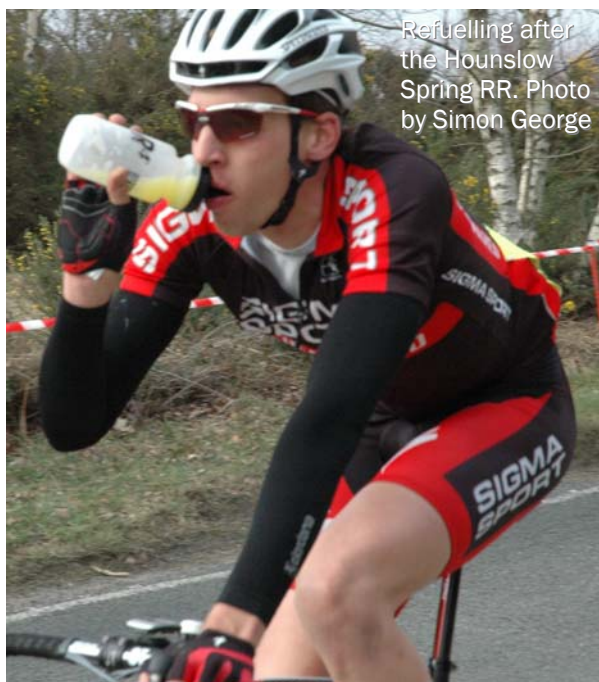
Wouter was working in the city of London as a derivatives trader, when he got the opportunity to become a professional cyclist. He decided to put the city job on hold in order to focus fully on riding his bike. So what motivated him to swap a decent living for a much smaller cyclist's salary? "It

was all about avoiding that feeling of regret later in life", he says. He did not want to feel that he missed his chance and be left wondering what could have been. He still keeps in touch with his old job by working a couple of days a week.

Now cycling has become a job, does he have any other hobbies? "I've used my spare time to set up an online car tyre business, www.mywintertyre.co.uk, which is a really interesting project to work on and is now slowly starting to generate a bit of money on the side". Apart from that he tries to go skiing at least once per year during the winter off-season, and plays the occasional round of golf, but really doesn't find much time for other things.

Wouter's 2011 season included riding rounds of the Rudy project TT series, Premier Calendar and Tour Series, plus the Olympic Test Event, the Irish Rás and the Tour of Britain. The year started well with few good placings including a top 10 in some of the early-season Belgian pro races, tough top-level international events. Time trials were not his primary focus but his wins include several early-season hard rider's events and three rounds of the Rudy Project series. In the Rás he took third from the winning break in the uphill finish of stage 6 and placed 9th overall. He helped his team to 4th overall in the Tour Series (team mate Steve Lampier won the sprints competition) and won the Guildford Criterium for the second year in a row. "Overall this season has been a confirmation of my capabilities" says Wouter. "It would have been nice to get a big win and I was really close a couple of times."

He points to his performance in stage 7 of the Tour of Britain as his highlight of the year. It was the longest stage of the race, 200 km from Bury St Edmonds to Sandringham Estate. "Two riders got away about 10 km into the stage and I rode across with three others. It was the right combination of riders as everyone was fully committed to the break and no-one missed a turn. The gap grew to about 7 minutes and we kept it at that for a long time. It was nice to hear that HTC put their team on the front but couldn't get the gap down in time and eventually gave up the chase. Unfortunately for me, I punctured with 20 km to go, a crucial stage in the race, and with the others trying hard to stay away, there was no waiting. After a long chase I did eventually get back to the group, but I'd made a big effort so my chances of the stage win were spoiled. It was a big shame, and I will



Refuelling after the Hounslow Spring RR. Photo by Simon George

Wouter's Palmarès

- 1st East Yorkshire Classic Premier Calendar 2009
- 1st Guildford Criterium 2010 and 2011
- 2nd BTTC Seniors 2008
- 2nd BTTC Espoirs 2007
- 3rd An Post Rás Ireland Stage 6 2011
- 3rd Ryedale Grand Prix 2010
- 4th Dengie Marshes Tour 2011
- 6th Tour of Britain Stage 7 2011
- 9th An Post Rás Ireland Overall 2011



Wouter leads Jeff Marshall in the Redmon GP des Gentlemen. Photo by Chris Lovibond.

always think of what could have been, but that's racing. I didn't have a puncture all race so it was very unfortunate but there's only one thing to do, which is trying again next year."

The Tour of Britain made a big impression on him: the huge crowds of people at the roadside showing their support, especially on stage 7 when his dad also came to see him race, and the final day in Westminster. In the ToB peloton he was in the company of the then current and future world champions (Hushovd and Cavendish) plus several Pro-Tour teams who were in the race to win. The chance to see them close up was an eye opener. "It makes you realise that cycling is more like a job for the top guys, with so many races there is a lot of routine involved, they are fully focussed on getting team success in each race they do."

Showing his appreciation of the team work involved in cycling, Wouter observes "Different riders have different talents and as a team you have to make sure you use them at the right time." From the teams he competes against regularly Wouter singles out "Rapha Condor Sharp, for their really impressive team effort in last year's Tour Series".

Wouter rode the second act of the Etape du Tour in July, from Issoire to St Flour (208 km). He was the 4th rider to finish what became an epic ride due to the extreme weather conditions which saw over half the participants unable to finish. He confirms it was "cold and miserable, the temperature

dropped down to about 5 degrees and it was blowing a massive gale head on. It was also a very different way of racing, very different to road racing and without any support. I had to stop for a few minutes to get my jacket sorted as it was getting too cold, but with no following vehicles I was on my own behind the lead group and after I'd caught the group, 3 had gone off the front and unfortunately never saw them again. Despite the weather it's a great event, over 200 km from A to B on closed roads with stunning scenery, highly recommended."

Wouter's success is founded on hard training which he has always planned himself. "I've never had a coach as I'm always fitting my training around work, which makes it hard to follow set training programmes. I do train with a power meter now, which makes it a lot easier to put a bit of structure in each training ride. With the help of Google I can make up quite a few training sessions. I'm not a big believer in a lots of hours on the bike. To prepare for the Tour of Britain I focussed on short, peak power sessions as races are decided in 2 or 3 key moments when you need to be able to dig really deep." In general he tries to "mix it up a lot, with longer rides mixed up with short (turbo) session, hill sprints, interval training, etc. It makes training a lot more interesting, and you don't get bored with doing long rides all the time."

What's his favourite route for a long ride? "It has to be from Twickenham, where I live, down to the Ashdown Forest; nice and quiet Surrey Lanes to get there, some big climbs

and the best roads in the area through the Forest, and a very tough route back across Kent."

In the early years he was inspired by the pros he saw on TV: "Jan Ullrich was my favourite rider and I always liked watching style of racing of Vinokourov too". But now his influences are closer to home. "It's more the riders around me. When someone beats me in a race, I look at where and how they won it, and how I can improve to make sure I win the next time round."

As a professional Wouter enjoys access to the best bikes and equipment, but he knows the cyclist is still the most important factor for a top performance and for him the bottom line is reliability. "It's nice to ride equipment you can trust and to know Specialized make some of the best stuff around means you can't use your equipment as excuse. But I started racing on a cheap and heavy aluminium bike and never had a problem racing on that, so it's also what you're used to. The most important thing is to have equipment that doesn't let you down when you're racing."

Like many cyclists, Wouter is still seeking that elusive ideal position on the bike, but finds he is pretty adaptable. "I'm always adjusting my bike to find the perfect position but haven't found it yet. Having said that, I'm pretty easy in jumping from one bike to the next and just be comfortable on that. Some people get really anal about saddle height and cleat/pedal position, but I've ended up switching pedals and saddles every year due to sponsorship arrangements and always got used to them fine after a while."

In 2012 Wouter will again be riding with Sigma Sport and his race programme is likely to be similar to this year. He knows that time trials are his strongest discipline



Name: Wouter Sybrandy

Nationality: Dutch

Age: 26

Rides for: Sigma Sport-Specialized

Twitter: @Wouter_Sybrandy

Nickname: the Flying Dutchman, coined by Hugh Porter upon winning the East Yorkshire Classic

Best thing about being a pro cyclist: being able to eat as much as I like!

Worst things: not being able to party the night before a big race and driving up and down the M1 far too often

Favourite piece of kit: my Powertap wheel

Left: Wouter savours the view from the top step of the East Yorkshire Classic podium in 2009. Photo courtesy of VeloUK.net.

Stuart Stow's Super Season

By Chris Lovibond

Stuart Stow has had a brilliant 2011 season with a complete rewriting of his ten and twenty five mile personal bests combined with considerable success in the Reading Track League.

Stuart started off the season with Dave French (Weybridge Wheelers) as a racing companion and rival, both choosing to time trial on fixed, an arrangement that must have helped enthusiasm. He used his 'Planet X' track bike modified for the road simply by changing the bars to a 'clip on' TT set up and with the addition of a front brake. Initially an 84" gear was used, but this was increased to 88" by May.

The first road event (Farnham 10, 5th March) produced an unspectacular 24.56, but by the end of the month he had made a 15 second improvement on his 23 year old 10 mile personal best by recording 23.18.

This was a surprise, but even though it might have seemed to others that something a bit special had happened, it took Stuart almost two months to try to apply his new found speed to a 25. "I thought I just could not get my head round the distance". This still seemed to be the case on May 15th in the High Wycombe 25 when he finished in 1.3.00 against the winner's 52.23 (Adam Topping). Clearly not up to the standard we were coming to expect; possibly the decision to ride gears, although perfectly reasonable for the Ski Slope course, had worked against him.

For the Farnborough and Camberley 10 (11th June) he was back on the track bike, now up to 88" and this yielded another p.b. of 22.58 - the fastest ride he'd ever recorded. It was now obviously time to have another go at the 25 mile jinx, and on July 10th in the Farnham RC event on the H25/8 course he finally broke the hour barrier - actually he shattered it with a time of 57.31. Two things stand out as unexpected, first that a rider with a long experience of time trialling should achieve this for the first time at the age of forty six, and second that when the time came, he did it on fixed.

Stuart's own description of this ride: "This 25 course is made up of two circuits of the 10 course, which I'd been riding all the year, with the extra 5 miles tagged in between. I rode the first 10 like it was a 10, and if it had been a 10, it would have been a new p.b. My intention was to ease up slightly and check my time as I started the final 10, but it slipped my mind as I passed the start point, so I just went as hard as I could without really knowing how I was doing. The final two miles were agony, and being unused to the 25 course I was not certain where the finish was but when I came round a bend, saw the timekeeper and looked at my watch, I was astonished at the time shown." Average revs were just on 100 rpm.



Stuart Stow by
Chris Lovibond

Although more p.b.'s followed, getting down to 22.21 and 56.00, that first sub hour ride must have been the high point of Stuart's time trial season.

Anyone who has read this far, especially riders who have not yet achieved times like these, will be asking: "how did he do it?" It's never possible to be certain, but the answer probably is to be found in the other 'compartment' of the Stow season: The Reading Track League. I think its best to rely on Stuart's own account of this:-

"I only started the track season at Reading as a bit of fun. I hadn't ridden track for over 25 years when I used to go every Monday night with the Feltham Road Club. The format was much the same this time around, 2 categories, A and B riders and many event types. I elected to ride in the B's as the A's looked too useful.

I rode every event I could that first night and went for a break in the 20k at the end of the night. This is easy I thought as they pulled me back after 9 laps. I hung in and got placed in the sprint. My confidence in sprinting is greater than that of endurance so I was sure I could place. The following weeks got tougher as others caught up fitness wise. But I was starting to get results in the 10 lap scratch and the 20k.

So I focussed on those, but still did the sprints and derny events when they arose. I found a good tactic for the 10 lap that no-one seemed to be able to go with, I'm not

(Wouter Sybrandy interview — continued from page 3)

but his biggest ambition is to win a round of the Tour Series or the Elite Criterium Series. This would complete the set with his national time trial series and Premier Calendar wins. He would also love to get a stage of the Rás after coming so close the last few years. He feels he has improved every year so far and thinks there is more to come but is also realistic. "I am under no illusion that I am probably too old to get on a professional continental team, but it's nice to be racing at this level and still get paid for it."

Wouter's love for cycling seems to be founded in the pleasure of riding through beautiful countryside in good company, something he has in common with most of us and that will ultimately stand him in good stead when the time comes to return to full time work. Meanwhile he is making the most of the dream opportunity to ride his bike full time and see how far he can go. It's nice to know that Hounslow & District Wheelers helped to get him started.

Finally, any tips for the rest of us, from the man who did a 55' on the West of Windsor club course this year? "Just go as hard as you can for an hour, especially on Drift Road where there's normally a head wind so you can gain most time".

going to say what it is in case any of you reading this end up riding there next year. But it worked, and secured me the 10 lap cup 3 events from the end of the season. The 20k was different, that went to the wire, and in the last track night of the year I was 1 point ahead of one of the Palmer Park youngsters. It didn't work out quite as planned. He won and I got second, which gave us equal points and a share of first overall. Well, he is 30 years younger than me so I thought I would let him have the win.

I did a couple of the derny races and loved them, again I haven't ridden behind a derny for 25 years. In the second race I said to my derny pilot: 'just stay with every move and blast the last lap'. He did exactly that, and because I knew I could sprint it worked out. Apparently the last 200m was one of the fastest they'd seen.

The league had secured the services of Sir Steve Redgrave for the presentations, it was a good evening to end a great season.

I would urge some of you to give it a go. Experience on the track is necessary so get along to some of the coaching that goes on."

Stuart also found time to score a few road race points, and the moral I draw from this account is that mixing different styles of racing is often the basis for success. Let's hope for another good season in 2012.

Best all round Champion

My BAR season, by Chris Lovibond

Sometime in July, Paul Holdsworth casually mentioned that since he was not going to ride a 12 hour time trial this year there would be no Hounslow Senior BAR champion. You could do it he said. I think we both thought this was a joke.

The 12 was the crucial sticking point, but with the idea in my mind it did occur to me that I had already had one day which involved almost twelve hours riding. This was the second day of my own 'Marcel Planes Tribute Rides' which were two consecutive 100 mile days ridden on Planes' own 1913 BSA roadster (see spring 2011 issue - Ed). The second of these days ended up as 117 miles and took most of twelve hours: starting fresh and riding a sensible bike I was confident that, even though I wouldn't really be racing, I could get a few more miles in.

At this point I had ridden no time trials at all, and with the season having passed its mid point it seemed unlikely I could fit in the necessary rides. However, the handbook showed that the Anerley 50 on the 7th August and the Kent CA 12 on the 4th September were both possible. It was only when I realised that the Yorkshire CF 100 on the 14th August fitted in with a pre-arranged visit to Thirsk (next to the event HQ) that I realised I was, as Elwood Blues would have said, 'on a mission'. Any 25 would make up the set.

I realised
I was on a
mission



Suffering on the finishing circuit. Photo by Zoe Lovibond.



A four-year-old's view of a long distance time trial: Chris with helpers. Photo by Jacob Lovibond-Wood.

I did not find the 50 easy or pleasant, as my time of 2.26.46, on a good course and with a reasonable day demonstrates. I can't say I felt very confident about the 100, but on the morning at least I felt as fit as I could reasonably have hoped and after 50 miles of fast dual carriageway I was 4 minutes faster than I'd been the week before in the Anerley event. The final 40 miles were markedly different, consisting of lanes reminiscent of Ermine Street and Chilton Foliat combined with a rising wind. However I survived without total collapse to finish in 4.57.46 - probably as good as I could have hoped for.

I've never seen myself as a 12 hour rider and it took me about ten years to recover from my only previous attempt (221 miles in 1987). I had to keep reminding myself that all I had to do was to get to the finish time-keeper and that the actual distance covered was of minor importance. This 12 did not go perfectly; chaotic would be a better word.

Much of the course is on the Kent marshes in the Lydd/Romney/Camber Sands area. This certainly has the benefit of extreme flatness, but the featureless marsh is an easy place to get lost and is subject to strong winds off the sea. Both caused problems. Anyone who steps forward to run a Twelve deserves much honour and I think it's fair to say the organisers made the best of a very difficult job. They were faced with unexpected road works and new one way temporary traffic lights which resulted in a hurried change of finishing circuit on the day of the event; this clearly upset the marshalling arrangements.

I got badly lost twice and on one occasion came back to the course to find a gaggle of four or five competitors stopped on an unmarshalled corner debating which way to go. This, combined with rain interfering with my handlebar computer, means I don't know how far I actually went, but I don't think any stretch of the imagination could get my mileage up from the 183 I was credited with to the 200 I had hoped for.

It is important to have support for a 12—ideally experienced helpers like Jeff, Martyn or Trevor (who got me through my 1987 ride). However I did not ask for help from the experts because I wanted to involve my grandson Jacob who, apart from this one day, would otherwise probably never see a long distance time trial. Children Zoe and Joe did their best, but but they were a little on the late side in finding me — it was 2pm before we finally met up. I cannot claim this really slowed me down a great deal, but I can tell you I was very pleased when they did turn up!

The club has many members who know they are capable of riding a respectable 100. Just how many could be confident of finishing a 12 is more debatable, but if I can do it there must be plenty of others who could do better. A 12 is a different experience from the shorter distances - it's racing, but not as you know it. Forget about intensity of effort, just think about spending a whole day doing what you like doing — riding your bike.

I really don't want to win this championship again in 2012, but thinking again about the events of the 4th September I am tempted to try next year to get to that 200+ mileage. Well, that's how I feel in the centrally heated comfort of Winter with the 12 season a long way off. Let's hope that if I do ride it will be partly to give a club mate at least one person to beat in next year's senior BAR.

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The Tandem 100

By Jill Willis

Last Sunday I rode the Farnham Christmas 10 on the Tandem with Paul. It was 3 degrees with a strong cold North West wind. It was the first time (apart from a quick practice run) I had been on the tandem since the 100 last May and all the memories came flooding back! Sunday was grim: much too cold, and, according to Paul, much too slow with our winning time of 24.00. At least we won £20 and a box of chocolates. (Oh the prizes in this game are amazing – I don't think I would make a living out of it!) I suppose it was slow when the solo winner managed 21.25! How can they do this on such a cold day, when I wore ski gloves to race in and still did not over-heat!? But I also wondered how I managed 100 miles racing on the back of the tandem with such a driven racer shouting various things as we went along.

Whose idea was it anyway?

Well, in the summer of 2009 Jo, Paul and I were on our way back from a 50 near Newmarket. We were discussing the club records and the mixed tandem one came up. Jo said 'why don't you two do it?' Suggesting I do it with Paul. 'Ok then' I said, madly. It wasn't until a few months later I thought about riding on the back of a tandem with someone who could historically beat me on solo by an hour in a 100 mile time trial. What if I can't keep up? Not sure there is a choice? What if I just blow up and can't go anymore? Will Paul just keep pedalling as my legs just flop about as I lay prone on the back of the bike? Would he notice?

As with most daunting challenges – eating an elephant, for example – I needed to break it into small chunks.

I needed the confidence to see how it felt at all to be on the tandem with Paul. I had plenty of experience with Mark Silver who would ask 'Okay on the back luvie?' as we circled a roundabout in a race. I was not sure the dialogue would be quite the same.

So, we entered the Farnham Christmas 10 last year which found me stuck on the M1 in the snow for 7 hours trying to get home in readiness for an event that was inevitably cancelled.

Next try – a 25 at Farnham. A ride beforehand found the saddle so uncomfortable I could barely do 20 miles. So,



Brent Skinner
hands up a bottle.
Photo by Neil
Holdsworth.

we made a few adaptations and rode out to Farnham, rode the 25 in 53.22 and rode home. 89 miles – at least I could now do nearly 100 miles in the saddle. I don't recall too much communication on the bike during the race but all that was about to change on the 50 that came as the next test a few weeks later.

We drove to Pirbright and rode from there, rode the 50 in 1 53.50 and rode back to Pirbright. This gave us chance to discover a few little 'issues'. Better now than during the 100. For example, I found that Paul hated it when I reached for the water bottle, as he said it made the bike unstable, so I tended not to drink and whilst racing kept thinking 'better not drink'. Not a fabulous plan but I survived. During the race, however, shouting could be heard from the front such as 'use your bloody legs', 'too slow, too slow', 'pedal harder', 'come on, come on' and other non printable comments about my strength or lack of it.

Part of me was thinking that I was a bit scared that I would run out of steam, so may have been saving a bit of energy, the other side of me thought 'bloody cheek, I am trying my best, sod off!', after all, this is supposed to be fun, isn't it?

I was not going to do a race and be shouted at, so I think it was made quite clear that if there was any abuse in the 100 I would get off there and then!

Mind you, this is probably what makes a winner and is the difference between our two mind sets. To be so driven and focussed, to put so much anger into the road, it's like Paul is a jockey whipping a horse to go harder. I can imagine he is just as hard on himself when he races alone. It has been a fascinating experience to be on his shoulder this season and to see how he operates in race conditions. Paul seems to me to be a totally different animal on a racing bike. That quiet shy little guy becomes a lion in for the kill.

The 27th of May arrived - the alarm went off at 0600 – then Brent phoned to say he was at the HQ already and where were we?! I reminded him it started at 0700 and he was too early, but at least he was there! A generous helper on hand and, as ever, keen to assist with such enthusiasm.

Drinking was obviously a concern, so I decided to be self sufficient and carry my camel back so I knew I did not have to reach for bottles or worry about my drink; I could just slurp when I fancied it.

That left me free to take bottles from

Brent for Paul as we rode. I also had a picnic on board as well in a little black bag that fitted on the handle bars. I had chopped up bits of energy bar (Rob Gil-mour's advice – saves having to rip a bit off with your teeth – always a challenge) and found some lovely energy sweets which were like soft wine gums – a yum-my change, plus a few gels up my skin suit leg. Trouble with that is having rubbed some embrocation on which someone offered me on the day, (try anything, I thought!) the gel tends to slip down and poke out the bottom of the leg, as you get a bit sweaty, eventually dropping out on to the road (what a waste!) if you don't notice it in time!

We did not ride to the event this time (yes, Paul went in the car!) and we met at 0700 for final preparations.

Number on and loads of wee's later we set off for the start. The weather looked OK, not too warm but a westerly looked likely. No surprise. I had to have one final wee, of course, de robed of arm warmers which our kind helper took care of, a quick gel and with '3,2,1 have a good ride' we were off. Head down and no moving about for 4 hours at least.

Well, the record stood at 4 and a half hours. I would have been happy with 4 hours when we first started the project, but Paul insisted we would easily break 4 hours – something that I couldn't imagine. Having done the 25 and 50, I was a bit more confident. Get a good 25 and 50 in and we would be Ok. If we did 1.55 for a 50 then we just had to hang on for the second 50. Hmm, it's never that simple but a good thought!

We passed our minute men after a couple of miles – that felt good as I don't generally pass that many people anyway, let alone after 2 miles. I think we beat them by over an hour in the end.

Quick turn at the Farnham roundabout and someone had turned one of those big industrial fans on for us to ride unto. Well, that's how it felt anyway! What a grind, and that was from the back!

My heart rate was looking like it does on a 25 – not sure it would keep this up, but I felt okay. The first 25 was over in 55 minutes. '4 of those will do' I shouted, happily waving to Ron as he recorded the time. Oops sorry, I forgot, I have to take this more seriously – no time for waving. In fact, as the event went on, I could barely look up to acknowledge anyone. It was amazing how I waved enthusiastically at Mark and Jo on the roundabout at about 65 miles, the next

time we passed was a different story. Just hang on, eyes closed, deep breathing. Hardly sounds like a bike ride does it?

We passed 50 miles at 1.55 – on target, although it had taken us an hour to do the second 25, and continued that way until the end. Each drag from Farnham to Chawton was dreadful – full on in to the wind – I thought – 'half an hour of hell' each of the 5 times we did it, at least a small respite followed on the return leg. We nearly ground to a halt on the section from Holybourne to Chawton; rough road, uphill, into the wind I knew Paul found it tough as well as he tried to encourage me 'if you want to get under 4 hours you are going to have to push!' But why does a tail wind never quite make up for the head wind? I guess you are stuffed from grovelling into the head wind by the time you get to the tail wind!



Jill unwraps the emergency back up energy bar for Paul. Photo by Chris Lovibond.

Fuelling can make or break an event like this, and to see a helper ready to pass a bottle is a real treat and breaks the monotony. It's something different for a few seconds! Whoopee here's Brent and Neil!

I haven't mentioned any rude or aggressive shouting have I? Well, there wasn't anything too nasty so I decided not to get off. The dialogue was generally good between us, and I think we enjoyed it really in a perverse sort of way. We knew we had to be nice to each other, and in a way you develop a sympathetic dialogue together to get through. There is no point in wasting energy on falling out in an event like this!

I think Paul realised that to get the old girl round he had to be supportive if he wanted any sort of stoker's advantage! – comments such as 'I am not changing down again' sort of encouraged me to try and get it right, and another favourite 'stop rocking!' Perhaps that was when I was having a snooze.

Eventually I felt needed at 85 miles I was so excited to have the upper hand for a minute or two at least! Paul was hungry! A little voice asked 'do you have any bars?' Stoker to the rescue! Ha ha! Good thing I had allowed a spare few goodies in my little picnic box. There is a photo of me unwrapping a bar (still sealed as it was only a spare) which looks as if I am enjoying the day out and the picnic. In fact I was preparing it for my driver – can't have him running out of energy. I did feel quite relieved that even the very fast boys need some fuel sometimes.

We had a ritual each of the five circuits to help relieve our undercarriage, which is another thing that relieves the boredom. We are not practiced enough to stand up on the tandem yet! Heading down to the Holybourne roundabout on the return where we could free wheel 'lift up' was the shout. Bliss even if only for a moment.

I sometimes wonder what I think about on a long race. Part of the time you find yourself calculating what might happen, but sometimes it all gets mixed up. Mind you, after 2 to 3 circuits on the Farnham 100, and how long it takes to do the dreadful leg and the not so dreadful leg makes it fairly easy to give a rough guide to how you will finish. It was tight all the way to get under 4 hours as it was far from a good day. In the end we got to Chawton for the last time it was 3 hours 45 – blimey we had 5 miles to go. We crossed the Holybourne roundabout for the last time, head down and then a brief peep out as I opened one eye from behind Paul 'is that the end (please!)' I shouted in a panicky way. 'yes, that's it' phew, (Trevor, I have never been quite so pleased to see you!) we had done it in 3 hours 56 minutes and 22 seconds. We had broken the club record and set a new National Vets age record into the bargain.

We went very slowly back to the HQ (uphill!) and I peeled myself off the back of the tandem and lay down on the floor.

Ah! Notes to self: 'do not try to lay down with your aero hat on' and 'remind me to give it serious thought if we think it's a good idea to do it again next year'.

2011 Racing Round-Up

By Trevor Gilbert, Club Racing Secretary

Photos have been credited in previous issues

With Paul Holdsworth taking a sabbatical from long distance time trials the club has a new Best All Rounder (BAR) champion in Chris Lovibond. With Chris being a better wordsmith than yours truly I will leave it to you to read his own account of his BAR-winning campaign. However, on behalf of all club members I would like to say a big well done to Chris for accepting and accomplishing the challenge at such short notice.

Ride of the year is surely Nic Stagg's One Hour Track Record of 24.775 miles. Achieved at Reading Track on one of the hottest days of the year, he added 91.5 yards to the 42 year old record. Now this may not seem much, but having ridden on the track (mainly Reading) many decades ago myself, I can assure everyone that there is no comparison between a road time trial and 86 laps on a track. Nic organised the whole enterprise himself. Out of respect for the previous holder he rode a traditional style machine, thus making a direct comparison of the two records possible. Congratulations on such a successful ride under difficult conditions, Nic.



Nic's accomplishments do not end with the hour. He recorded a record '10' of 20m08s for a new Club Veterans Fastest Record (only 3s short of the Club Record!). He won the open '25' with 54m45s and led the winning team with Robert Gilmour and Damian Poulter, plus the team in the open '10' with Paul Holdsworth and Robert Gilmour. A PB of 53m20s in the last 25 of the year (London Vets at Marlow) rounded off a very successful year for Nic.

In between the open events, Nic won the Club Events Championship (fastest average time for two '25's and five '10's in club events). His winning average of 26.052 mph is the second fastest ever,

this is in spite of the fact that the '25's and some of the '10's used to be on the faster Thorpe courses in the past, rather than the more sporting courses we use now.



Joanna Wells is the club ladies champion (BAR) at 24.391 mph for the 14th time. She is still getting faster with a PB at 25 miles in 1h1m15s (a Lady Veterans Fastest Club Record). She is also Ladies Club Events Champion (same conditions as the men) with an average speed of 21.462mph, her 11th win of this championship. With Jill Bartlett only marginally slower at 25 and 50 miles, Joanna may find it a bit harder to keep her titles in 2012.

Jill Bartlett had a fine and fast season, finishing second in the Ladies BAR, Club Veterans BAR and the Ladies Club Events Championship. A PB of 1h02m34 at 25 miles helped her season. Without doubt



Jill's ride of the year was her PB by 13 minutes at 100 miles. Her time of 4h28m22s is a Ladies Veterans Club Record and is the second fastest ever ladies '100' for the club, only 2m12s short of Gill Clapton's record of 4h26m10s, achieved when Gill was 2nd in the Ladies BBAR in 1971. These results along with 2h09m48s at 50 miles have given Gill 19th place in the Ladies BBAR at 21.148mph, the highest placing by a Hounslow member for many years.

Jill teamed up with Paul Holdsworth to sensational effect on a tandem. Their first ride of a '25' was 53m22s and their second '50' was 1h53m20s. Best was at 100 miles where they really shone with a time of 3h56m49s: not only a Club Record but a VTAA age record as well. One can only speculate on how much more speed and records there could be in the future.



For the seventh time in succession Robert Gilmour won the Veterans Best All-Rounder, with +6.388 mph. His qualifying rides were: '10' 22m08s, '25' 56m20s +19m48s which also gave his 4th win of the Vets '25' cup, '50' 1h58m18s, '100' 4h21m52s +79m28s which also gave him his 6th win Arthur Hodges '100' shield. His wins this year include team places in the club's open '10' and '25'. Robert is living proof that hard training pays off and age is no barrier, so who is going to take up the challenge and try to knock him off his perch?

While having a somewhat quiet season by his own standards, Paul Holdsworth still managed to win a barrow load of club trophies. His main award is as Club Road Race Champion with 102 British Cycling points. His '50' of 1h52m50s and '25' of 52m20s are the fastest of the

year. Still finding time in a busy season for club events, Paul won the Midsummer '25' with 56m43s, took 2nd in the Good Friday '25' with 57m38s and won three other club event awards.



It's worth considering that Paul has ridden 20 '12's in 19 years including two rides at 278 miles, come second in the National '24' with a Club Record 475 miles, achieved 10 top-12 BBAR placings (the most by any club member) including 5th in 2007, has three times been in the BBAR winning team, and has scored numerous road race victories. Very few riders train harder than Paul and the weather makes no difference to him. Considering all this an easier season was well earned. Whatever Paul decides to ride in the future, surely further success awaits him.



After a few years of easier riding Stuart Stow has returned to serious racing. Consistent riding at Reading Track won him the VIA Trophy for a series of 10 lap events and joint 1st in the endurance competition, for which he has been awarded the Club Track Championship. Stuart has also been busy time trialling: although a veteran, he beat the hour at 25 miles for the first time with 57m31s, recorded four other rides under the hour and finished with a 55m16s PB! Out of

twenty '10's ridden, three 22m rides resulted in a 22m21s PB.

These days Loz Wintergold fits racing around family life, having two small children. Alice insists he changes the nappies and does the night feeds. Then there is the odd triathlon. So where does he find the time to do a '100' of 4h13m31s to win the Neville Wilkins Memorial Bowl? Impressive rides of 1h59m29s at 50 miles and a '10' time of 22m12s were also recorded by Loz.

Although he does his main racing as a professional with Sigma Sport-Specialized, Wouter Sybrandy remains a second claim member of the club and rides the occasional club event. He has the fastest evening '10' in 21m37s, won the Autumn '25' in 55m31s and the Hill Climb in 1m28.6s.

Paul Buckley won the Novice '25' Trophy in 1h7m45s along with 2nd place on handicap in the Midsummer '25'. Ted Wroxley won the Peter Young Memorial Shield as the junior with the most points in the evening '10' series (42 points) where his fastest time was 28m 51s. Patsy Howe is first lady and second overall in the clubman trophy with 42 points. Mark Lorenzi was third in the Hill Climb with 1m58.2s. Andrew Caldwell was first on handicap in the Autumn '25' with an adjusted time of 56m37s, and third handicap in the Midsummer '25' with 53m49s. Bruce McMichael took the first handicap position in the Good Friday '25' with 53m09s. Ian Chipman got first handicap in the Midsummer '25' in 49m20s. Mick Luke came second in the handicap classification of the Good Friday '25' with 54m20s. Brent Skinner came third in the Autumn '25' handicap with 56m48s. Brent also rode 10 miles in 24m21s, 25 miles in 1h00m30s. Damian Poulter rode several '25's recording a PB of 58m19s, did '10' miles in 23m19s and was also a member of the winning team in the Open '25'.

Our man in the North, Roger McSewell of Ross-Shire RC, managed only one ride under the hour this year, for which he had to come South (his words): 58m16s in the Farnborough and Camberley '25'. In North of Scotland CA events he recorded 2h07m22s and 3rd place at 50 miles, 4h33m08s and 2nd place in the '100', and 3rd in their BAR – all this aged over 60.

Last but certainly not least comes club president Jeff Marshall with his now customary end of season clashes. Teaming up with Paul Holdsworth to ride the Johnny Helms Memorial GP des Gentlemen 23.8 miles, they finished 5th on Vets



Standard and 8th fastest with 55m59s. That was on 9th October in Lancashire. The next weekend Jeff stayed in Surrey to ride the Redmon GP des Gentlemen 15 miles. This time paired with Wouter Sybrandy, they won on Vets Standard with +10m21s, with an actual time of 38m21s. Pretty good for a 70 year old! Members who joined the club more recently may not be aware just how good Jeff was in his younger days: 6 times top 12 in the BBAR, 2nd in 1970, 4 times first team in the BBAR. He broke the '50' record in 1970 with 1h46m05s but was missed out on official recognition because he started behind John Watson who set the new record at 1h43m46s before Jeff finished. Jeff's time stood as the 2nd fastest '50' for many years. Jeff also held a 1st category road racing license for a long time. These days he can still give many riders half his age a hard time on the Tuesday night chain gang and a beating in a club '25', but he is always willing to help other riders and give them the benefit of his deep experience in the sport.

Best wishes to everyone who takes to the start line this year: may there be many PBs or an improved license category.

VTTA BAR winners

Rob Gilmour has won the London & Home Counties VTTA BAR again, and Jill Willis has won the London & Home Counties VTTA women's BAR. There will be an article about this in the next issue of Quarter Wheeler.

Etape Cymru

By Paul Buckley



Having seen Simon's efforts at the Dragon Ride I decided I would enter my first sportive, plumping for the inaugural Etape Cymru billed as the "UK's second closed road sportive" and as "spectacular" by none other than Geraint Thomas. 100 miles with 6191ft of climbing sounded like a challenge. The £53 entry fee didn't seem too unreasonable considering it was on closed roads and when compared to the extortionate price of recent triathlons I have done. The date was set for the 9th October and as long as I could achieve 12mph average speed then I would stay within the rolling road block. A few days before I received and email informing me that I had to register the day before. Not too much of a problem for me as I travelled north to my parents in Manchester but a bit of a headache for others. On arrival at registration I was then told that the "free" gilet, worth £20, would not be provided as the supplier had let them down so I received a £5 refund. Now maths is not my strong point but even I could see that this didn't add up. As soon as I left registration the heavens opened and stayed open all night. Waking at 4am in Manchester on the Sunday of the ride I could still hear the rain pouring down and was tempted to turn off the alarm and give it a miss. At 6am the rain had stopped so I packed up and made my way to an industrial estate in Wrexham arriving to find that the roads were dry and the skies were clear. I envisaged starting in waves to avoid jamming the roads up but instead was treated to a mass start. The first few miles

were along quiet country lanes, pretty much flat but very muddy in places. I don't think I have seen so many people with flat tyres! There were the inevitable riders who were treating it like a tour stage, weaving in and out but in general everyone rode at a steady pace. That is until the first hill.

As the road went up the pace went down rapidly with people dismounting in the middle of the road and walking. I managed to weave through them pushing bottom gear until the top but with the overhanging trees keeping the road damp and mossy getting out of the saddle just resulted in wheel spin. This set the scene for the rest of the ride and now the field was thinning out the pace picked up. We made our way along a freshly re-laid single track through a quarry with a sheer drop to the left before climbing again. The journey down into the valley could mean only one thing - a hard climb out of the other side. The start of the climb is marked by a switchback ford and with wet tyres I started the climb up to World's End passing plenty of walkers but staying in the saddle to avoid wheel spin. As you come out of the trees and reach the top of World's End the view across the Eslusham mountain is breath taking. On this day it was also very windy! Being blown across the road was a new experience and it wasn't to be the only time that day.

We descended off the moor and into Minera, my brakes warming up nicely and I pass the Langdela mountain bike centre. The next climb takes us through a village where the locals have come out to cheer

the riders on. It certainly helps as the road keeps going up and the false summits make me think it is some sort of cruel joke. Popping out of the other side we drop down into the first of three feed stations. Starting at the back means I reach the feed stop after most people and it looks like a plague of locusts has swept by. There are no gels or energy bars only energy powder and water for drinks. Now this might have something to do with the organisers not bringing enough but I also suspect that many people turned up with no food and took more than their fair share at the stop. I fill up my bottles and get away as quickly as possible hoping to make the next feed stop before the "locusts".

This section of the ride was pretty flat on closed A roads but the strong headwind make progress hard. Teaming up with another couple of riders we took turns on the front until the road went up before the descent brought us down to a T-junction. The mass of riders who had stopped here was a little concerning and it became apparent that someone had stolen the route marker. A group of riders gambled and went right before a motorbike outrider arrived and assured us it was left according to his satnav. The descent continued down to another flat A road before we pulled into another village for the second feed stop. Leaving the last one quickly paid off and there was plenty of cake left before the climb along the west tip of the Llantysilio mountain.

This took us back up onto the moor and



Please sign up to help!

Hounslow & District Wheelers have an excellent reputation for our open events. Last year over 60 members helped to organise and run these events, from marshalling to making the tea and many other vital roles, writes club president Jeff Marshall.

For 2012 we are launching a new initiative to encourage first time helpers. We feel it's an important and rewarding part of club life. Your role will be fully explained and you'll be working with an experienced team. Why not give it a try?

If you helped last year, we value your experience and commitment and would love to have you back again!

Please help us maintain the high standards this year by volunteering a little of your time to help.

Please fill in the form you received in the post with your AGM notice and return it to Patsy Howe, by the end of January.

Membership subscriptions due!



All members should have received a reminder to pay their subscription along with the AGM notice in December. Subscriptions for 2012 were due by 31st December 2011: £25 for first claim; £12 for second claim, over 65, juniors, juveniles and students; £10 for social members. If you didn't get around to it yet, please send your cheque to club treasurer, Martyn Roach.

Welcome to new members:
Andrew King (Veteran, 2nd claim)
Robert Jones (Veteran)

Correction: Autumn 25 Result

In the Autumn issue of this magazine the report correctly stated that Wouter Sybrandy won the Autumn Cup 25 club event. However, the accompanying results table incorrectly listed Wouter's ride as a private time trial with everyone behind him shuffled up one place. Club rules are clear that second claim members are eligible for club events. The mistake was editorial rather than a conscious contradiction of this rule. The editor takes full responsibility and would like to apologise for the error in the results table, any confusion or disappointment it caused readers and competitors, and any embarrassment on the part of those supplying the copy and results. Finally thanks to the vigilant reader who pointed this out.

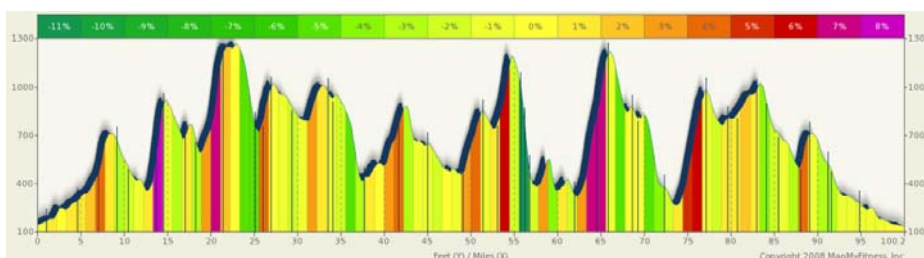


(Etape Cymru, continued from page 10)

gave me my second taste of almost being blown off my bike. The descent in the wind on gravel strewn roads was scary stuff and I was glad to get into the shelter of the valley. By this time I had got chatting to another rider who seemed to be of similar pace to myself so we decided to stick together. We rode through the valley and reached the bottom of the Horseshoe Pass. A prize of Mavic R-Sys wheels was on offer for the fastest climb of the day but as I am no Contador I decided to take it easy as I crossed the timing gate. The Horseshoe pass is the closest I have ever come to an alpine climb and it got my legs burning as soon as I hit it. As the road snakes up to the left you get a lovely view of the rest of the climb over your right shoulder. Well I would have done had it not been covered in mist. The light drizzle started to come down so with gritted teeth I spun up the hill cheered on by a few ramblers.

At the top of the climb the weather was horrendous so it was a quick stop at the feed station before donning the waterproof for the descent. The A road down as wide and open and lots of fun before flat roads led us towards the finish. Apparently the route had been reduced by ten miles due to signs being stolen but it still had a last surprise of another short, steep hill before the rolling roads took us back to the glamour of the Wrexham industrial estate.

So my first sportive was completed in a riding time of 6 hours and 30 minutes placing me 394th out of 991. I have seen plenty of complaints regarding the organisation of the event ranging from valid ones regarding feed stops and signage to not so valid ones, such as people complaining it was too hard. I hope that these are just teething troubles due to it being the first time it has been held as the route was spectacular with some stunning views, tough but very enjoyable.



Fun crossword

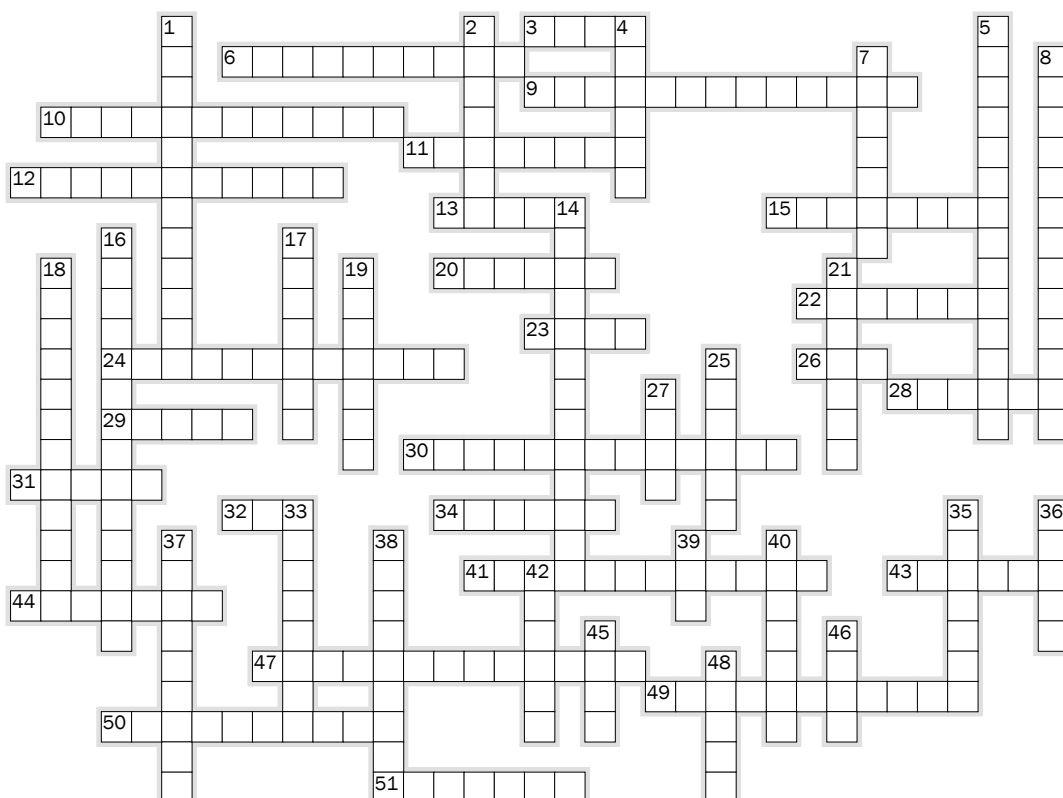
All the answers are connected with the club. This is just a fun crossword: no cryptic clues, no prizes. The solution will appear in the next issue.

Across

3. The traditional tyres of choice for racing (4)
6. Teamed up with 16 down to set a new club 100 tandem record (4,6)
9. Club's oldest member (3,10)
10. President of the club (4,8)
11. Type of cycling event currently enjoying mass popularity (8)
12. BBAR winner, 1968 (6,5)
13. Start/finish of club 25s, _ Road (5)
15. _ Corner, popular tea stop atop the North Downs (8)
20. The traditional units in which gears are expressed (6)
22. Club motto: Unitate _ (7)
23. The club record set at 24.775 miles this year (4)
24. Holder of the club 24 hour trike record (5,7)
26. Age category of most club members (3)
28. Club runs start from here (6) - after 51 across
29. Clive Williamson's expedition (5)
30. Club BAR winner, 2011 (5,8)
31. Marc Cunningham rode from here to Paris and back (5)
32. The successful outcome of a race (3)
34. Marcel _ whose bike was ridden by 30 across this year (6)
41. Site of the annual club camping trip (8,4)
43. Energy fruit (6)
44. A 100 mile ride (7)
47. Former long-standing editor of the club magazine (3,10)
49. Organiser of the club's Audax events (4,7)
50. Local closed circuit for racing and training (10)
51. Club runs start from here (7) - before 28 across

Down

1. Club captain and long-reigning clubman trophy champion (6,6)
2. Rob _, Vet's BAR for the 7th year running (7)
4. The local road racing league (6)
5. Winner of the autumn 25 and hill climb (6,8)
7. Iconic Surrey climb, dogged by controversy in relation to the Olympic Road Race (3,4)
8. Tea stop at Missenden (4,4,5)
14. Prolific timekeeper and organiser of the open 100 (6,7)
16. Holds the club 24 hour record (4,10)
17. Roger _, northern classics specialist, once a Hounslow member (7)
18. Club members often visit this big race in July (4,2,6)
19. Decade in which the most club members were born (7)
21. Club ladies champion (2,5)
25. Best ever time (6)
27. Type of suit you would wear in a time trial (4)
33. Current club hour record holder (3,5)
35. Location of all three of the club's open time trials in 2012 (7)
36. Popular club run tea rooms near the Hog's Back (5)
37. HQ for club 25s (4,5)
38. Designer of the new club clothing (4,5)
39. Usual length in miles of Thursday evening club time trials (3)
40. The reference rider(s) in a handicap competition (7)
42. A bicycle made for two (6)
45. Most popular first name amongst club members (4)
46. Keeps a bike in contact with the ground (4)
48. Link between shoe and pedal (5)



Your club committee

President

Jeff Marshall

Chairman

Jeff Marshall

Secretary

Bill Carnaby

Treasurer

Martyn Roach

Racing Secretary

Trevor Gilbert

Dinner Secretary

Ann Young

Captain

Norman Howson

Vice Captain

Graham Davis

Magazine Editor

Simon George

Press Officer

Chris Lovibond

Club Clothing Secretary

Jeff Marshall

Webmaster

Andrew Gillies

Committee Members

Antonio Ambrosino

Patsy Howe

Next Issue

The next issue will be published around May 2012 and will include news of spring racing. Please contact the editor with your contributions or suggestions. It's your magazine!