



Quarter Wheeler

2015 Issue 1

Dinner

The magazine of the Hounslow & District Wheelers

**Bumper 20
page dinner
issue**

Club News including:

Racing achievements 2014
Racing calendar 2015
Meet a Member:
Nic Stagg is in the hot seat

Roadster riding in the 21st century

'Retroman' Chris Lovibond
reports on riding a vintage BSA
light roadster and pays tribute to
the remarkable Marcel Planes



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Ride 100
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Photo: Philip Shrimpton

L'Ariegeoise Cyclo Sportive



Photos Maindru

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"never again!"

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

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London to Brighton Off-Road

Simon Morris describes his experience

When do you know you said something stupid? My wife says every time I open my mouth, but the truth is (in this case), it's when my good friend Frank asked me one simple question "So Simon, I have done the London to Brighton on road and the Manchester 100 ride with you, when are you going to do an off-road ride with me?". Of course, there I am thinking mountain bikers aren't proper cyclists, so I reply "Let me know when and I'll be there". Frank responded very quickly with "Saturday week; London to Brighton."

My first problem is not only have I never ridden a mountain bike before but I also don't own one. Could I put knobbly tires on my Boardman road bike and do it with that? That's a good idea I thought to myself, until I looked on YouTube at some previous footage and realised that it's never going to happen. Next plan of action; I'll look on eBay and buy myself a cheap second-hand mountain bike that I can use for the event. Take a trip down to Frome in Somerset to look at a Carrera Valour 24 speed for £132. It's in perfect condition and I hand over the money. I'm ready to go!

That evening donning my cycling gear I go out for a little 4 mile spin to test the new equipment. What can I say? £132 gets you £132 worth of bike and all of you reading this will realise that it will buy a load of rubbish. So I sold it on eBay for £194 (at least I covered my costs). The only damage done was the injury I sustained whilst riding that short distance. After visiting Halfords and Evans desperately seeking a mountain bike, I eventually decide to purchase a Boardman 650TB, 27.5" wheels, 27 gears, lockout suspension and hydraulic disc brakes. I now have precisely 6 days until the event, so it's time to start practising. I managed to clock up about 25 miles but mainly on the road with only a couple of trails conquered, not really the preparation that I needed for what I was about to face.

September 20th 2014, my wife Diane gave Frank and I a lift to Roehampton to start our 77 mile challenge. The obligatory photographs are taken and after a quick check of the equipment we are off. It takes us about 20 minutes to be briefed and work our way through the start gate, where this off-roading appears really easy. We begin with a mile downhill on tarmac then into Windsor Park still riding on the roads and this is how the route continues for about 8 miles. Finally as we approach Kingston we reach a tow path; at last we are kind of off road and this continues along the Thames through Walton, Shepperton and Weybridge. There is a strange feeling of recognising places you know from a completely different perspective and then through Byfleet and Wiseley until eventually after 28 miles we get to Clendon. This had only taken one hour and 50 minutes; we hadn't needed to rest yet and with only 2 miles to the next stop we were feeling very comfortable.

The next 2 miles were going to prove to be the section that nearly killed me off, as we were about to make our way through the woodlands. There were tree roots, tree stumps, uneven ground, bikes stopping in front of me and people falling off. I couldn't get any momentum whatsoever and with every push of the pedal, my front wheel hit a tree root while my rear slipped on another root. The injury that I sustained the week earlier on the Carrera is now really killing me and my leg feels like it's on fire. I look ahead and all I can see is the continuation of this woodland and, not knowing how long it would go on, I'm beginning to feel really demoralised. I start to think that I won't be able to complete this challenge. The track went up a steep incline and I remember screaming in pain at one point as the lactic acid in my leg really took hold. I'm now sweating, feeling very giddy and physically exhausted. What had only been an hour felt like a week but thankfully, as we turned the corner, there was the rest stop. As I pull in, I see Frank who has the chicken pieces there waiting for us; these were quickly demolished along with a couple of energy gels and an energy drink. It still took a good 25 minutes to recover and start to feel like I had anything else left to give - this was not good as we weren't even half way!

Frank and I re-mounted our bikes and we set off for the next 47 miles; it must have been comfortable for at least 200 yards when we turned left back into woodlands! This time though it was even worse as we started to climb Shere Hill.



Photo: Diane Morris

The track was wet and slippery with tree roots causing problems, as well as broken up rocks and just the sheer incline, on a couple of occasions I rode so slowly that my bike came to a standstill and I toppled over - still attached by the cleats. The only reason this didn't cause me huge embarrassment was that a large proportion of the other riders were doing the same. We finally managed to get to the top of Shere Hill where we then attacked a technical descent and at this point I pass a rider who has come off. He is surrounded by others and as I get nearer I can see he has snapped his right leg and realise just how serious this is. Although I am in pain, there is no way I'm suffering as much as him.

The next part of the ride became quite strange. There were no real major hard parts as we were just riding on towpaths and trails, however because of the physical state of my body (the first part of the ride still taking its toll) stupidly Frank and I didn't realise that Cranleigh was actually the next rest stop and we therefore missed it! So on through Rudgwick, Itchingfield and Southwater until eventually, after 55 miles, we reached West Grinstead and had a well-earned cup of coffee. We continued with the fear of knowing that both the South Downs and Ditching Beacon were still lying ahead of us and it is only when we get to Steyning that I realise we are not going to be climbing the hill out of Arundel. 65 Miles done, we pullover, take some painkillers and apply some deep heat to the thighs in preparation for Ditchling Beacon. I had ridden it earlier in the year on the 'on road' version of this ride, although on that occasion I completed it. I must say it was probably one of the hardest hills I've ever climbed and I remember thinking that it wasn't a hill - it was a wall! Thankfully, on that occasion, when we got to the bottom we turned left and took a slightly easier incline up to the top. The off-road version, however, is not so friendly. It goes straight up at an incline of about 30% which felt more like 45% to my now dying legs. To add to the problem a stream, that had previously wound its way down the middle, had left a trench which crisscrossed all the way down and at points was about a foot deep. There were raised manholes, broken rocks and just normal loose surface. I tried my hardest, but after about a third of the way up, the beacon had beaten me and I had to get off. I tried to push the bike up and realised my handlebars were above my head height and my legs were killing me just walking. When I try to remount and start riding again, I constantly either wheeled or lost traction. After about 40 minutes on finally reaching the top of the beacon I met up with Frank again who, to his credit, had managed to ride all the way to the top. This however had taken its toll on Frank legs as well.

The next 2 miles were on tarmac at an incline of about 2%. The measure of just how bad Frank and I felt showed as we rode this section reaching a top speed of 6 mph and, as we turned the corner to go up a steep incline, I will not repeat the words that came out of my mouth. I tried my hardest but as my legs failed me and I found myself taking another breather. Thankfully this was the last hill. By now I really didn't feel like I could go on, but knew that if I stopped for just 5 or 10 minutes I wouldn't actually manage to get back on the bike again. I was feeling very lightheaded and very disorientated descending from the Beacon - just trying to focus on the track, but to me the two tracks had blurred into one. My whole body was shaking and I couldn't see the track properly and so couldn't avoid the holes or lumps. This just added to the pain I felt, but finally after about 3 miles we arrived in the town of Shoreham and most importantly - onto tarmac. We took a steady ride along the seafront, just trying to keep the momentum, trying to keep the wheels turning and trying very desperately to look as if we had enjoyed ourselves when we were welcomed by Diane and all the other supporters. After we crossed the line with medals now around our necks, I dropped my bike to the floor and collapsed next to it. Diane came and found us; by this point I didn't even have the energy to give her a hug, I just remember saying "never again, never again!".



So back to the original question "when do you know you said something stupid?"

The answer for a cyclist is when you say "never again, never again".

Who cares to join me on London to Brighton off-road this year?

Jill Bartlett reports

April 2014.....a text from Jo 'we need you! Trying to get in as a mixed team as no more solo places available – what do you think?' It turns out that Jo, Nic and Andrew were up for this ride. I was not so sure. Patsy and Rachel had done it the year before and it sounded a good event, but I know it's an early start as it begins in the Olympic park – that's miles away! It's the other side of London somewhere! Also I wondered if I wanted to pay £48



The Prudential Ride 100 (aka the torrential ride 86)

Jill Bartlett, Jo Wells, Nic Stagg and Andrew Caldwell – team Hounslow!

to enter, and then you had to have insurance with British Cycling (crafty) as they were organising it. I had insurance with CTT so another challenge. I was offered someone else's insurance – not such a good plan. Anyway, the deadline was looming and still not that bothered, but telling myself it would be a good experience, and nice to represent the club and all that. Entry done. That's it then.

Over the course of the next few weeks I received emails saying 'ACTION REQUIRED open this or lose your place'. Feeling rather press ganged, and having not read the information, I kept scraping by filling in the relevant information as necessary in the nick of time! But I was still not sure what it was all about. How could we decide which car we were taking, who was driving, if we were driving, which route we would take into London and which car park we would use when it was only May? The list went on. I knew Patsy had stayed over last time – more expense. I bet you get a crap night's sleep then, as well. I understand that the organisers have a massive task on their hands and have to have plenty of information in advance, but I was having a challenge getting my head round it.

Then, the start time popped in on an email – what time? It's like entering a race and turning up, bleary eyed at some silly time. Our start time was 0715, but you had to get in your cage for your wave between 0615 and 0645. So, working backwards, that means we have to park at 0545, ride 5 miles from our car park to the Olympic Park, so that means leaving Staines at 0500, which means leaving home at 0445, which means getting up at 0415. Blimey – I don't often get up that early for a race these days! Isn't this supposed to be a social, fun event?

Emails arrived explaining how to avoid saddle pain, when to do hill repeats, what to put in your pockets, how to recover, how to corner faster and where to buy extra padded shorts. This isn't a race is it? Check with Jo, Nic and Andrew....well, the boys will ride together and Jo and I will ride together. Do we have to cross the line as a team for us to count as a team? I trundled along still fairly blissfully ignorant to the whole affair. I really didn't know what it entailed other than a horribly early start. Oh, and now we have to go and collect our numbers in London before the event. That's handy if you are not staying up there. Not realising there was a 2 day cycle show beforehand which would be good to go to anyway and collect the numbers at the same time. If only I had actually read the magazine they had sent with all these tit bits of lovely interesting information in it!

In the end, Jo kindly offered to collect the numbers. Ah, but if you are not collecting your own number then you need to provide your passport, last 3 months bank statements, payslips and inside leg measurement, to confirm your identity. Oh dear me. I called round to collect my number from Jo. I was quite excited now, as I had read the magazine provided at last! It was all in there to get you into the swing – sounded great fun!

But, the rot was setting in. 2 days to go and the weather forecast was horrendous. Hurricane Bertha, bless her, was on the way! Now, imagine coming down those Surrey hills in the rain with a pack of people who only ride once or twice a year. Now we all know that Jo does not do downhill out of choice, but downhill in the rain – no chance! I understand that Nic wasn't keen, either. I must say, I was beginning to wonder about safety. The rain wasn't pleasant, but it's not so bad on your own or in a small group. I left Jo's house agreeing to liaise the next day.

I got my bike ready with relevant stickers, numbers, chip etc. Getting well into it now! Then it struck me 'what if Andrew didn't want to go either?' How would I get there? Our start time was too early to catch the train and get there on time. You had to have your 'travel plan' submitted weeks ago, and my car was not registered in the car park. That would be tragic now! I text Andrew and he said he was up for the ride whatever the weather. The arrangement was that I would travel in Andrew's car and we would all meet outside Staines before travelling in convoy into London.

Jo was seriously back-tracking by Saturday evening, and in the end I agreed we might see her at the meeting point, we might not, but I was going with Andrew anyway – let's just enjoy it – we've paid for it now! If the others didn't want to go, that was their decision. As long as we didn't have to all be there in order to qualify to start then that was OK!

Sunday 10th August – 0415 – alarm rings..... Off we go!

Just do it – ignore the time – focus on breakfast, clothes and getting to Staines to meet Andrew. I was first there – very unusual. Andrew was on his way, but a text from Jo confirmed she and Nic were not venturing out as there was a swarm of wasps in her bedroom. That excuse has to go down as one of the best I've heard for a while!

Bike swap into Andrew's car and off we went, getting to Finsbury park car park in good time. We saddled up and off we went to the start, soon joining many others heading in the same direction along Whitechapel High Street and out to the Olympic park. So many bikes were on the road there was a bit of a traffic jam and it took longer than we expected to ride 6 miles.

We followed the coloured zones towards ours and plenty of loos were handy on the way through. We just made it into our start zone in time and shuffled along with the others to the start line. Heavy rain was forecast but so far we had remained dry. Half an hour to go. It was very well organised with 28,000 people to get started the system worked well. Then I spotted a guy in front of us with his pockets stuffed full of gels. I could count 20! Blimey, no wonder he was the shape he was. How long and how hard was he planning on going, I wondered!?

'Announcement over the loud speakers' – 2 minutes for us to go. It started raining! As scheduled! Quick change to rain top and off we went. The rain top never came off! We had closed roads, something I had never experienced. It was awesome – whizzing along the Limehouse link on the wrong side of the road. We emerged at Tower Hill and saw the start of the poppies. Amazing, but nothing like the end result.

The rain continued, and I continued on with Andy making good progress through the crowds nipping in and out was fun and exhilarating. The rain continued as we went over Hammersmith flyover – just bikes, no cars! Into Richmond Park, round the easy way and out to Kingston. Crowds now gathered on the roadside to cheer us on, even as the rain got heavier people were still there with their banners, pom-poms, rattles and endless encouragement. It made such a difference. We were in Walton on Thames now, and I recognised a familiar back view as I approached – it was Patsy! A quick chat about how wet we were getting and I had lost Andrew. Ah well, there were so many on the road it was



difficult to spot him. We had sort of arranged to meet at Newlands, anyway. I was looking forward to the stop – It marked half way. As I rode up to Newlands Corner, it looked far more like a river than a road – water pouring down. My feet were at the sloshing stage by now. Felt like I had a bucket of water on each foot, but, luckily, I wasn't cold!

I pulled in to the car park and headed over to the outside tea stall. Water under the canopy was ankle deep and people were squashed underneath out of the rain, although everyone was drenched anyway! I got a cuppa, ate something that was lurking in my pocket and then headed off to the loo. I decided to take advantage of a spare top I had in my bag and put it on as a 'dry' base layer. That was relative, I suppose, but it felt good for the first 5 minutes. I thought I had 50 miles to go and a couple of big hills. Leith hill and Box hill, so I wanted to be prepared. I had made fairly good time so far (it has taken me longer to race a 50 on occasion!) and I had to look at my watch twice when it said 0945 – not usually up here this early – but then I remembered I had left at 0715! The advantage of the crowds on the roads, and the roads being closed, is that you get towed along to a certain extent.

I realised when I came out of the loo I had totally missed the tables of sports drinks, bars, general food that were set up for us. I had had enough but popped something in my pocket in case I got stuck up the hill in the rain until nightfall.

Off down the hill, I had not found Andrew – think he was being a serious (or sensible!) person and not stopping for long! It was really a case of just getting it done now, but I felt OK having spent far too long at the stop. It seemed that this was serious stuff for many people who barely stopped. The fact we had a chip on our bike to record the time seemed to make it in to a race, which I hadn't realised. I thought it was just a social fun ride. That was what I was doing, anyway.

However, I got the bit between my teeth and found some great wheels to follow. The crowds were still cheering in the rain and the camaraderie was great. I got to the first hill and there was a sign pointing straight on instead. No! There was no hill to do – they had taken it out for safety reasons. It was disappointing in a way having got myself all ready. Although there had been talk of it before the ride we had missed the announcement at the start. Box Hill was also removed, so it was head down through Leatherhead, Kingston and homeward. Wimbledon hill was all there was! But the sun was coming out for the last few miles – lovely!

I could work out the time now, and joined in the racing spirit as we zoomed along the embankment. 'I could get under 5 hours at this rate even with a relaxed long tea stop and clothing change!'

We turned from the embankment towards Trafalgar Square and round past Admiralty Arch. I know how they felt in the professional race now heading through the cheering crowds towards the overhead clock ticking down! 4.59.47 – just in! It was about 86 miles in the end. Ok for a fun ride! Medal received and I shuffled off to get my 'goodie bag'. Despite the conditions being extremely wet thanks to the remains of hurricane Bertha, and roads like rivers with constant whistle blowing and marshalling around big puddles, it was a well organised event and great fun to be part of.

I had agreed to meet Andrew back at the car if we got spilt up, so I headed back, loaded the car, and was home by 3pm – not much longer than a club run day (oh, but I don't usually get up at 0415) – the day was still young!!

Born to Ride

Racing secretary Trevor Gilbert recalls his racing career

I am surely not the only person who has a close friendship with a particular member, but when it comes to racing you hate his guts. Why? Because he always beats me and he has gone and done it again. For a very long time I have considered writing about my experiences on two wheels - always put it off. Why you may ask? Well put it like this; consider my achievements against the best of the 'Hounslow' (National Champions, BBARs, Record Breakers, Milk Race Riders, Divisional Road Champions etc) and I would be very lucky to be in the top two dozen.

Who is my nemesis? A chap called Roger Sewell - all his PBs are faster than mine. His latest 'up yours' is to write an article for the Club Mag, 'The First Fifty Years'; very interesting and humorous, but in front as usual! Some years ago along with the lovely Pam (Mrs S) and his step daughter they moved north to live near Inverness; the rides kept coming (sometimes south of the boarder). Why has he now moved south again? Perhaps frightened that, had Scotland voted for independence, he would not be allowed a visa? But with luck I might win yet; how can that be? Looking for somewhere to live he picked a village called Sutton Bridge, Lincolnshire (in the middle of the Fens) which is only three miles from Long Sutton where I was born. "So what" you might say; well I can tell you that when the winter winds blow from the north pole through 90 degrees direct from the Russian Steps, there may not be signs of frost but it feels like minus 30 so no training until March, if you are lucky. That is why I escaped south to be a student in 1955 and apart from holidays never returned; will soon be 50 years.

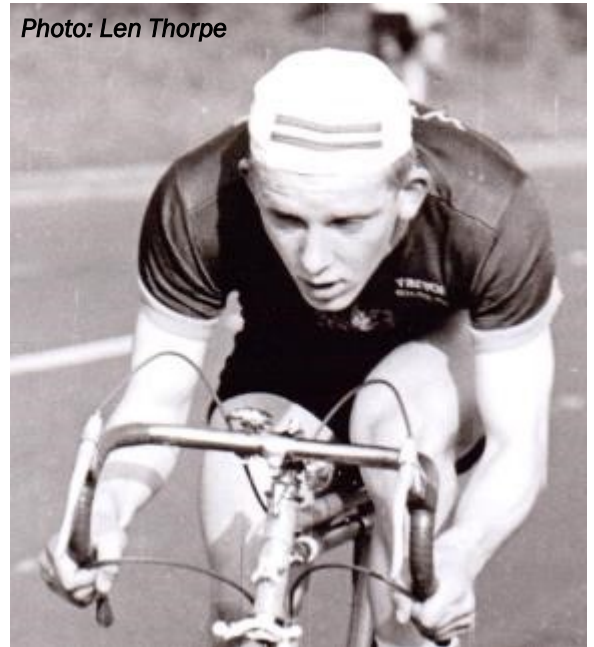


Photo: Len Thorpe



February 58, nr Wisbech Rd

Both my parents were cyclists (Jim and Joyce), dad raced and was fairly good in his backyard. Mum rode club runs etc (known her do over a 100 miles in a day many times) and we holidayed on bikes. She told me that she was riding her bike until about six weeks before I was born so, nearly born in the saddle bag; I passed the 'start line' of life in December 1938. As I have said many times the best thing about dad was he always encouraged, never demanded. He once said (I was in my 30s) he was glad that I took up his sport but would have been disappointed had I not taken up any sport. So like most little boys - do I follow dad into his sport; the world of time trialling and join his club the Wisbech Whs CC? He raced before the Second World War, starting again in 1951 when he was 40. I left the Start Line for the first time in 1953 age 14, did 1-11-26 beating one rider. To make things interesting dad suggested

something (like a phone box, mile stone etc) where if I could reach it first he would give me a week's pocket money 2s 6p (12.5p today). Many times I had the designated object in sight thinking pay day had arrived, when the Devil pounced and I lost. It took about three years to get the first pay packet. Not sure how many pay days I had, but dad never won again, I went to college in 1955 so all bets were off.

Even in those days most Open Events were won under the hour; by then I had done 1-6-22 (only 15 then). Left home with big plans to join the 'under the hour' club and thought with more experience it should be possible by my 21st birthday. Joined the High Wycombe CC January 1957 - a very friendly bunch, plenty of club runs, YHA weekends with several club TTs plus a few open events. The plan still looked on; did 1-3-22 that season. The next year (1958) was a bit of a damp squib - no PBs. The only ride of any note was a Tandem '50' on a heavy pre-war Claud Butler machine with 1 & 3/8 inch wheels. John Willson had a 2-14-XX and I had 2-15-13, expecting do about a 2-7 or 8. Imagine our complete and utter surprise when we were given 1-57-24 (not sure I believe it even in 2015!).

The plan nearly worked in 1959; it became a year when it would seem I could do no wrong. 29 events brought 15 PBs and 5 club records. H.Wycombe to Aylesbury & back; 34 miles 1-27-23, 2x'10's fastest 24-11 (PB), '30' 1-14-42 (PB), tandem '30' with John Willson 1-10-08 (PB), 2x'50's (PBs) fastest 2-06-58, tandem '50' with John Willson 1-55-55 (PB) just to prove that last years' ride was not a fluke, 5x'25' (PBs).

Other than the obvious, the '25's were an odd set of rides. On the Thursday night/ Friday morning (26th March) I joined my Wisbech mates and rode down to Herne Hill Track (120 miles), met my Wycombe mates, rode to Nazeing Youth Hostel (Epping Forest; 40 miles) and after the track meeting on Saturday rode the 35 miles to Biggleswade (B&B). On Sunday rode the St Noets CC '25'; very windy, punctured lost interest (1-11-22) and then rode to High Wycombe sitting behind big Bill Spicer (another 60 miles). Monday got a lift to Pangebourne Lane (west of Reading) to ride the Actonia CC '25'. Felt a bit tired, certainly not like racing, complained the bike was a bit dirty and went for a walk!! On my return found that a club mate had wiped the bike clean; 'b.....r' I'll have to ride now. Set off (not much enthusiasm) but after about 1.5 miles the

doom lifted and finished in 1-03-02, a 20sec improvement!! (27 miles) But all was not over! After the event I set off to ride the 140 miles back to Long Sutton; staying at Houghton Mill YH arriving home on Tuesday in time for lunch, the last 40 miles covered. All this was done on 68 fixed, (raced on 81) not forgetting the mudguards, saddlebag and sprints & tubs on brackets fixed on the front hub spindle; total only 552 miles!

The next record came in the High Wycombe Open in May, (Pangbourne Lane again) 1-02-22. 17 days later the Wycombe evening event was a bit of a surprise, the West Wycombe/Thame course being about 1.5mins slower than P/Lane; 1-2-22. End of May another Wycombe event; 1-2-16. Went home for the summer holidays, rode the Notts Whs '25' on a recognised fast course and did 1-00-33, (only 3s short of C/ Record) - plan going well only 34s and one year to go!

Two weeks later I took part in Hull Thursdays' '25' where Billy Homes held the Comp Record; 55-49 on the course (he was a great rider in his day; he won the Milk Race in 1961, also the 50 record in 1957). Was this the day? The weather was kind, very little wind and it was warm; all felt good until I saw the result board; a PB 1-00-25 and C/ Record by 5s - the 'finish line' is getting closer. Except it wasn't, I returned to H/Wycombe only to discover that Colin Hughes (a junior) had, 4 days before done 59-48, so no b.....y record — no first under the hour. Naturally the first thing I did when I saw Colin was shake his hand and congratulate him, but to say I was disappointed puts it mildly, inside I was seething with rage. So close but it might as well have been a fortnight! Dad had always said "there is always another day" but it was a long time coming, 1971 in fact, only 22 years later but that is another story.

The least said about 1960 the better; 1961 was fairly rewarding, however. First I switched to gears and was told I would do no good on them! Obtained '10' C/Record 24-08 and decided to have a go at the BBAR. No Wycombe rider had ever qualified but fortunately my club mate, Jack Thomas (formally of the Mersey RC) who had ridden many '12's & '24's in the 1950s, promised to help and advise with his wife Margaret. She had helped Jack many times and so I felt I had a good back up team. The Wycombe '12' record was 238.00 and, as was the tradition in those days, I set about getting the miles in; did a 2-9 in the Charlottesville '50'. The '12' was to be the South Western RC on the west of Reading course on 23rd July. 2nd July PB '100' 4-33-59 course Pangbourne Lane, 9th July H/Wycombe to Buckingham & back, 68 miles, took about 9mins off the record with 2-58-12. Sunday 7 days to go; Maidenhead '50'; 2-11-46 - no comment! Wednesday 4 days go; did about 120 easy riding (looking back after the '12' don't think this was the best plan). Thursday night; evening '10' 24-13 (only 5s short of PB) so no loss of speed before the Big One. Believe it or not I had no schedule; Jack was convinced I could do well over 240 and, as warned, I expected to suffer and slow for 45/60mins at some point but pick up on the finishing circuit. The first '100' took 4-52, reaching the start of the circuit at 205 miles doing just on 20mph, unfortunately no pick up, the 1st circuit of 16 miles took 60mins and I finished with 236.642 miles - no record but a PB! The support team were superb, always close and once they were just driving past when I punctured - a quick change and little time lost. The best though was, when asked "did I want anything?" - "Yes an ice cream" - miles from any shop and thinking there was no chance - one ice cream appeared 5minutes later! Did a '100' 4-25-43 C/Record (PB) in September, no BBAR cert - too slow at 21.815 mph (22.000 mph is required). I was club BAR though - so you doom setters, gears suited me fine!

Not much to say about the years 1962 to 65, rode in dribs and drabs, all that effort and no BBAR. I met Tina, my first wife in 1961 and married in 1963.

Roger's total of 1500 events puts my 801 really into the shade, he did not include evening events, I did about 150. The plus on his CV is that he has finished a '24'; I never got on the S/Sheet. I was born only 50 yards from the North Road '24' course and used to go with dad in the middle of the night to see these giants of time trialling. Had always hoped to join them but it never happened! Medical problems brought a big 'can't ride any more', but believe me I really do miss the cut and thrust of racing and the camaraderie of the club run, but pleased to hold the watch. Keep riding Roger, looking forward to reading about more fast times.

Well that's it for now Trevor.



High Wycombe Open '25'
10th May 1959



Charlottesville '50' April 61

The 1911 Century Competition, Marcel Planes and Riding his BSA in a new Century.

Retroman Chris Lovibond reports

Fig. 3 Front cover of *Cycling* 6 December 1911.



Now that Tommy Godwin's Year Mileage Record is under attack, (Google: yearlong time trial) this long delayed article may have renewed interest. Since there may be some of you who were not readers of *Cycling* as long ago as 1911, I will start with a reminder of the Century Competition and the man who won it.

The Competition, announced in December 1910, offered a gold medal to the rider completing the greatest number of 100 mile days during 1911. This contest was aimed at 'hard riders' rather than actual racing men, and was only open to amateurs. The gold medal was said to be worth £5, which I believe would be somewhere between £500 and £1,000 today, so it would hardly have been much of a reward for a year's very hard work, but even so the amateur provision caused problems in 1912.

The winner was Marcel Planes, a penniless 21 year old Londoner who completed 332 centuries. This would have been an impressive achievement for almost anyone, but Marcel's lack of money was an additional handicap. He used an

unsuitable bike, a Mead roadster which was not in great shape to start with and after the first few months had become an almost unrideable wreck, its frame splinted together with string. Towards the end of the year his friends were concerned that he might be brought to a halt by his bike becoming impossible to ride and offered him a loan machine, but Marcel said he preferred to stick to 'his old pantechnicon' as he called it. Fully equipped for the road it was said to weigh 45 lbs. The bike wasn't his only problem: just think how it would be to ride nine consecutive centuries 'without a farthing in your pocket' as he said he did.

I should say at this point that most of my knowledge of this subject comes from an excellent article by Roger Bugg in the Veteran-Cycle Club's *Boneshaker* magazine, and it was this account which formed the basis of my own project: to ride two consecutive 100 mile days on a roadster. This was intended partly as a tribute, but also because I was curious to know just how difficult a feat it would be to do this on a bike like Marcel's. Because the *Boneshaker* article is so good I have only given the bare bones of the story here and I recommend anyone interested to get hold of the original issue of the magazine.

I had to borrow a suitable machine. The first I tried was a 1940's Raleigh which was very hard work. One 11 mile trip across London left me thinking the task was impossible: when I got off it I expected to see smoke rising from whatever it was that was making it such hard work, but I couldn't find anything particularly wrong with the bike. However, when I mentioned my plan to Roger Bugg, the Planes expert, he very kindly offered me a BSA light roadster which originally belonged to Marcel and suggested I might become its custodian. A machine



of exactly this type had been offered as first prize in another 'Cycling' competition, and although there seems no doubt that he acquired this BSA new in 1913, it is not clear exactly how or why he came by it. Whatever its origin, it seems that he used this bike for the rest of his life and it was eventually donated to the V-CC after his death in 1967. This proved to be a far better machine than I had expected and, to be honest, made the job relatively easy. We must remember that this machine is greatly superior to the Mead that the man himself was riding in 1911. This bike has not survived and although Meads were once widely advertised it seems that there are few in existence today. So far as I can gather a reasonable comparison between the BSA and the Mead would be something like comparing a thoroughbred lightweight and a 'shop racer'.

For my own rides, as some of you have seen, I made a few little alterations: saddle, pedals and so on, but I've retained as much as I could, including the 48 x 20 gearing. I would have preferred to get the handlebars down another inch or so, but this would have involved shortening the brake rods - a modification which could not be easily reversed. Compared with my normal semi modern lightweight the BSA did take a bit of getting used to, but after the first few dozen miles I actually began to like it.

I did the two consecutive days in July 2011. The first was a Hounslow club run from Staines to Lasham and back. This is not a very hilly route, which was just as well since the BSA's gearing (47", 62" and 83" with 7" cranks) is not ideal for club riding. I found it was reasonably comfortable to sit on a wheel at 18 - 20 mph on the flat, rolling along on the 83" top, but maintaining a good pace uphill when that top gear became too much was a stressful experience. Shortly after the lunch stop, feeling I should keep something in reserve for the following day, I left the club run and went my own way. At this point I checked my (modern) speedo and it showed an average of 16mph on the move - about 4 mph more than I would normally manage by myself on this bike.



The next day I did one of Marcel's rides. It seems that he had a fairly limited number of routes which he repeated again and again; I guess they were based on milestones reading 'London 50' or just a little more, and these would be his guarantee that his day's work had amounted to at least 100 miles. Woolhampton and Brighton are two other examples of his destinations. On this particular Monday I went from home in Willesden to Dean Street, Soho where he lived in 1911, and from there to Tempsford on the A1 (familiar to all F1 users) where, on the West side old road near The Stuart Memorial Hall, a milestone still reads 'London 51'. From there I went back to Willesden via Hitchin and St Albans, since the A1 proved to be a nightmare to ride on during a weekday afternoon. The whole day's ride amounted to about 117 miles, and I can't claim to have been sorry to get home.

As experimental history the obvious flaw in what I have done is that to equal two days of Marcel's riding I should have used that dreadful Raleigh and not stopped in any cafes, but this would have been beyond my capability. However, I came away from the experience knowing that when it comes to riding a hundred miles in a day, a machine dating from 1913 is not necessarily a great handicap.

Having done a few miles on Marcel's BSA I now appreciate that this 'light roadster' style of machine does have real benefits, perhaps the best of these being that, under normal circumstances, one is absolved from any pressure to ride fast. However they do require a different, more relaxed style of riding than that normally practised by Hounslow members. While hard conditions, like headwinds, must be endured with patience using that rather low middle gear, given any sort of favourable circumstance, distances can be covered in comfort with surprising speed. Naturally, this only works when the machine is correctly set up for the rider - a rare condition for roadsters in recent decades.

For me, there is a special interest in trying to recapture the way bike riding was in those golden days before the Great War, partly because some of my introduction to cycling came from my Grandfather who was active as a track rider from 1905 - 09. But originally I saw the riding as a journalistic project in which my main theme would be to ask: just how necessary is modern kit? I now feel that question is very unlikely to appeal to magazine publishers whose main source of income is advertising from people who want to sell expensive new bike equipment. So today you have in front of you something you are not likely to read in the cycling press anytime soon.

There was a sad but interesting aftermath to Marcel's story because in early 1912 he was accused of professionalism since it appears he accepted some help from Hutchinson Tyres in return for giving them a testimonial. This led to him being cold shouldered by his club, and more or less cut off from club cycling until he joined the V-CC in the nineteen fifties. I feel this story, and the damage it may have done to the concept of amateurism, is important but beyond the scope of this article. It needs consideration in the future.

By way of conclusion can I say that I hope you will read what Jeff has to say about his experience with this same BSA.

Retroman's veteran BSA Light Roadster

An account by your Hon. President

Chris. Lovibond's quirky penchant for anything old, traditional, rusty & knackered, especially old bikes is well known to most of you by now, so you may not be too surprised to learn that he has tried in a subtle way to convert me to his way of thinking about these things. He recently asked if I would carry out an assessment of one of his relics of a bygone (not for him though) age, the aforementioned 101 year old BSA Light Roadster he has acquired.



Photo: Chris Lovibond

In a weak moment I acquiesced to his request and in no time at all Chris delivered this ancient machine to my house together with some notes on its use and disappeared again just as quickly, before I could change my mind about this task. Off he went with Sabby to the Isle of Mull for a holiday, leaving me to compile a report of my impressions of his pride and joy. Well, I thought, how can I best do this ?

So I needed to make a comparison between riding my very nice Hinde, ultrafoco and carbon road bike which is bright blue, shiny and lightweight at about 16-17lb, and his ancient piece of black painted steel (which is similar to an old bike my granddad used to ride about on in the 1940's delivering the boots and shoes which he had repaired!). It would not look out of place on the Antiques Roadshow.

I started by weighing the thing. It was double the weight of my Hinde at about 34lb! There were two concessions to modernity that stood out:-

1.) It was fitted with Lyotard steel platform pedals and Christophe toeclips with Binda toestraps. So, I would have to wear cycling shoes with slotted shoeplates, which went out with the arc. Luckily I still had an old pair of Sidi shoes with slotted plates which I acquired from Ed Green two years ago for the Eroica Strada Bianchi retro ride on my own restored 1960's Gillot machine.

2.) The saddle, a battered old Selle Italia Turbo-Gel with the foam padding bulging thro' here and there, and contained within the nose of the saddle by multiple layers of black PVC tape.

The 'seat pack', if you can call it that, was one of Chris's trademark untidy bundles of 26 inch inner tubes wrapped loosely in a supermarket plastic bag and held under the saddle with another Binda toestrap. I dread to think what Alfredo would think of it if he were still alive! The saddle was fixed on top of the very uncharacteristic and only shiny item on the BSA; a NEW one inch diameter alloy seatpin! Oh Chris, how could you? The wheelbase checked out at 44 inches, compared to my Hinde at 38.5 inches. There was a gap of 4 inches between the seat tube and the rear tyre!

I set off to check how it rode compared to my Hinde,

The first thing I noticed was how twitchy the steering felt, with me sitting bolt upright, but I was surprised how well it rolled along the flat roads, despite its weight and worn chain, the 26 x1 1/4 tyres giving a very comfortable ride. I have to say I felt a little conspicuous riding along in my lycra kit. I really felt as though I should have been wearing a bow tie, a deerstalker hat and a tweed hacking jacket !

I found it tricky to effect a U-turn in the narrow lanes I was using for the test as my knees seemed to get in the way of the swept back handlebars. The rod brakes worked surprisingly well on the Westwood rims, but the back pedalling brake was tricky to use and as Chris himself said to me he would not want to rely on it to descend an Alp! Nor would I. As I rode along I noticed that my right ankle clouted the R/H crank at each revolution of the 7inch steel cranks, my clean white ankle socks cleaning the grease off the end of the bottom bracket axle and polishing the crank! The reason soon became obvious, the right hand crank was over an inch further out from the centre line of the frame than the left hand side — not good. I tried the three speed Sturmey Archer AW hub gear which gave the equivalent of 46in. bottom gear and 82.7in. top gear and it worked well, no trouble, with the leverage of the 7inch cranks, but with a steady ticking noise from the hub when in second and third gear. When climbing a hill the lowest gear was needed no doubt due to the weight of the bike but also because I found it impossible to 'honk' out of the saddle due to the short reach to the swept back bars, so on this bike one needs to sit down and 'dig in.'

There were no after effects of the ride, due no doubt, to the very upright riding position. No risk of an aching neck after a ride on this bike! And surprisingly I found it to be quite an enjoyable experience sitting up so straight. It was even possible to see over hedges and low walls at times. It felt similar to a Dutch town bike which Bill Carnaby, Mark Silver and I rode around in Appeldoorn a few years ago, whilst at the World Track Champs there.

Chris has ridden this veteran BSA relic on some of our Sunday club runs and has kept up the pace despite its shortcomings. He is obviously made of sterner stuff than the rest of us. He is, after all, 'Retroman'! But I will be sticking to my own bikes, thanks.

Jeff

FROM THE MEMORY ARCHIVE

After a lifetime of cycling in many parts of the world, many stories can be told of incidents, peoples, cultures and adversities and to write about them helps to bring them back to the surface of the mind. That of course will be a pleasure for me. Whether it will be a pleasure for you is for you to decide.

January/February 2002

Angkor Wat

My friend Lyndon was taking a CTC tour to SE Asia, covering much ground I had already visited. Very kindly he allowed me to join the tour in Siem Reap close to the world heritage site Angkor Wat in Cambodia. This in itself was alone worth the trip. The site of Khmer capitals covering 400 square km in total, contains many relics of the past glories of the former Khmer empire including the huge Angkor Wat temple – probably the most famous tourist site in SE Asia. The walls of the temple are covered with carved tales of the many wars with the neighbouring Thai people. Disputes and tensions survive to this day.

We left Siem Reap by ferry through the huge Tonle Sap lake joining the Mekong river into Phnom Penh. If any of you watched Sue Perkins excellent series on the Mekong, this lake was featured in the first programme of the series. Formerly a major source of freshwater fish providing the livelihoods for thousands, it has now virtually been cleared of fish by modern fishing methods licenced by the Cambodian Government.

Phnom Penh

Our arrival in Phnom Penh was something of a disaster. We arrived at our hotel to find it had been largely burnt down by rioters the previous night. A popular (and rather stupid) Thai singer/actress had voiced her strong opinion that Angkor Wat should still belong to Thailand. Over reaction seems to be second nature in some parts of the world. The hotel we had booked was owned by a Thai company and managed by a Thai national. That was enough in the heat of the moment to burn the hotel down. The manager fled to the airport leaving the staff and residents to defend the hotel. This was one day before we arrived! Fortunately the riots had also frightened most other tourists away and we had no trouble finding



A journey through Cambodia and Vietnam Clive Williamson remembers

A touching and honest account of his adventures

Angkor Wat
Cambodia



Photograph:
Bentley Smith Flickr

alternative accommodation.

Ho Chi Minh City

The group and I parted at Phnom Penh airport, the group flying home, their tour being at an end, and me flying to Ho Chi Minh City to start my tour in Vietnam. Alone, with no-one to watch your back means greater care – a lesson I learned very early on at Ho Chi Minh airport when I had my bar bag stolen whilst exchanging currency. The bag contained my camera and my mobile phone, so I have no photographic record of the trip. My arrival coincided with the start of Vietnamese New Year (aka Chinese New Year) and these days celebrations consist mainly of riding round the streets showing off your latest motor-bike. The Vietnamese have graduated from foot to bicycle to motor-bikes. Next comes the car followed by chaos! They take as much care and pride in their steeds as you do with your latest £5000 titanium job!

My plan was to ride away from the

coast to Da Lat in the Central Highlands spending a few days exploring the area before returning to the coast at Phan Rang, then continuing up the coast to Da Nang where I could pick up an internal flight back to Ho Chi Minh City. Best laid plans etc...

I left Ho Chi Minh City by the coast road, starting early to beat the heat. I was aiming for a small village, Long Khanh, about 80 miles distant. I was soon caught by a young student who was cycling from the University to his home village on the coast, a distance of more than 100 miles – without food or money! He proved to be very helpful to me. I needed to get some sun cream quickly before the sun grew too hot and after three attempts managed to find some. It is not much in use in Vietnam and is very expensive when it is. We reached Long Binh where I was turning towards the Highlands and went our separate ways. The lad wouldn't take money but I gave him some food and hope he survived OK.

Long Khanh

The nature of the terrain now changed from gentle undulations to a generally upwards incline, with some nasty steep interludes just to stop you getting too complacent. I was heading for a village called Long Khanh where I understood there was a B&B. Accommodation there was, B&B there was not. You don't get breakfast out there in the sticks and to call what I slept on a bed was an insulting exaggeration. A filthy sheet to sleep on, but fortunately too hot for a cover. The 'toilet/shower room' would have stretched the skills of an advanced diploma plumber. The proprietors had been in Canada for a while and spoke a few words of English. My complaints were met with 'this isn't Canada' as if I needed reminding of that. But that's cycle touring for you – rough with the smooth.

Obviously hungry after a hard days cycling I wandered around the village looking at the few 'restaurants'. Clearly an extremely poor village with culinary offerings reflecting that status. I chose the least wretched looking and didn't enquire too closely about what I was given to eat. As I ate I watched with some amusement a woman manoeuvring a large motor bike on to a small knoll next to the restaurant. The bike was far too big and heavy for her, and no one (me included) went to her help. Eventually she managed to sit astride her status symbol and sat silently surveying the village scene, speaking to no-one and no-one speaking to her.

As I was finishing my meal a young girl came and sat at my table offering me an apple! Do they know the Adam and Eve story in Vietnam? The girl was in her late teens and was much taller than typical Vietnamese girls. She was wearing nothing more than a body stocking, was very attractive and was clearly the local prostitute. Also it later turned out, she was the daughter of the woman on the motor bike. She was trying to persuade me to make use of her services, and indeed she wrote something in Vietnamese in my little notebook. I was later able to work out from my dictionary what she had written. During the French colonisation of Indochina they had changed the Vietnamese script to Roman script that is used in the west. She wrote 'I will protect myself so you will not become a father'. The reason she wrote that will become clear.

However at the age of 71, after an 80 mile ride with full load, mostly uphill in mid-thirties temperatures, Marilyn Monroe in her prime could not have tempted me.

The girl disappeared a couple of times to (seemingly very briefly) service clients and on one occasion she brought an envelope back with her. The envelope bore Australian stamps and contained a letter addressed to the girl. She gave me the letter to read and it became clear that the correspondent was the girl's father. The girl had no idea what the letter said, and I, not speaking Vietnamese, had no way of telling her. He had enclosed some money and had promised to come and visit her. The letter was two or three years old, and obviously was the last time he had contacted his daughter. He must have been working on one of the many infrastructure projects Australian companies were involved in and probably the girl's mother had become his consort while he was there. I felt sorry for the girl. She was actually quite sweet and not crude at all, and she was desperate to make contact with her dad. She was locked in a life style she obviously hated and there was no way out. Should I have taken down his address and written to him myself to explain her situation? As a father and Australian national, he could have taken her to Australia and a new life. I was tired and not thinking straight. Maybe I could have changed her life.

But I didn't!

Bao Loc

Early the next morning I set off for Bao Loc, a larger town with real hotels and decent restaurants, at 70 miles a slightly slightly shorter distance than the previous day. The road was thick with motor cycles, mostly young couples taking off for a few days in Da Lat during New Year festivities. Many times the bikes slowed down to my pace and the girl on the back always asked me the same question. 'Are you a grandfather?'. I had two at that time and that seemed to satisfy them. It seems the ultimate objective in life for a Vietnamese man is to become a grandfather! The road was similar to the previous day without major climbs, but the hills of the Central Highlands loomed in the distance, and it was clear that the following day was going to be a tough one.

Having started early I arrived at Bao Loc in good time to have a look around the town. It is quite a prosperous town being in the heart of a tea growing and processing industry. Tea is freely dispensed wherever you go. With a selection of good restaurants I managed to make up for the 'greasy spoon' fare of the previous evening. The guide book indicated there was a catholic church in the town and I found that a new one had recently been built alongside the old one in a walled compound. It was pleasing to note that in communist Vietnam, a catholic residue still remains from the century long colonisation by the French. Unfortunately not everyone had absorbed the Christian message! As I started to walk towards the exit gate I was surrounded by half a dozen youths. They were packed closely around me blowing cigarette smoke in my face and grabbing at my clothes trying to locate my wallet. I managed to hang on to my body belt containing all my valuables and walked steadily to the gate. As soon as I was outside the compound they all disappeared. A gatekeeper, who must have seen what was going on, looked fixedly the other way. The next morning as I set off on the day's ride, I saw one of the lads sitting on the ground near the compound smoking a cigarette and staring gloomily into space. At least he'd had a bit of excitement the previous day!

The ride to Da Lat was another 70 miler, and as anticipated, much tougher. There were two major climbs including the final ascent to the town. My (then much younger) Ribble coped well enough with the conditions. A Dutch couple I met along the way did not! They were riding typical heavy steel framed bikes carrying, it seemed, everything including the kitchen sink. I have met a number of Dutch cyclists during my various travels, and always, without exception, they made no concession to light easy touring.

Da Lat

Da Lat and its surroundings are a delight. One of the most popular tourist centres in Vietnam, particularly for the Vietnamese themselves. There are still strong French influences remaining with a fine cathedral and municipal buildings and much greenery with parks and tree lined roads. Its cool upland climate attracts

many from coastal towns in the summer. Many famous Vietnam writers and artists have settled permanently in the town. The fruit and vegetable market is a sight to see, full of colour and bustle – a sight for the sore eyes of a weary cyclist just completing a major climb!

My arrival coinciding with the New Year celebrations meant Da Lat was full, and it took some time to find accommodation – ending up in a private house letting out their daughter's bedroom (without the daughter) for the season. I did manage to find a nearby small hotel for the following two nights. The proprietress spent a lot of her time teaching her son the piano, not a scenario I was expecting when I came to Vietnam. She was very concerned about an 'old' cyclist travelling alone in Vietnam, a concern I supported after my experience in Bao Loc. But neither of us needed to worry because I had no further trouble of that kind on the trip.

The most memorable site I visited in Da Lat was the Hang Nga Art Gallery and Guest House. It is nicknamed the 'Crazy House', and was designed by Moscow trained architect Mrs Hang Nga. A counter culture gem, it has weird structures, caves, spiders webs and a concrete giraffe, inside which I had my tea. It probably only survives in the communist regime because Mrs Nga's father was a former President of the Republic, and she enjoys the high status that brings. A day trip out to the Thien Vuong Pagoda set on top of a 1 in 3 hill (which I walked!) rounded out my stay in Da Lat. Anyone planning to visit Vietnam should make sure Da Lat is included in the itinerary. A memorable town.

Phan Rang

I now turned east towards the coast at Phan Rang – 80 miles distant. A hilly undulating road, I was struggling and wondering if I would make it to Phan Rang that day, when my guardian angel joined me once more. This time it was in the form of yet another student going home for the holiday on his motor bike. He rode alongside me a little way and then indicated I should hang on to his shoulder. He pulled me in that fashion for about 20 miles up hill and down dale until we reached his village. We stopped at a bar in the village where of course he was well known. I bought a round (it was expected I think) and had some

kind on conversation with the locals. The lad gave me his sister's phone number in Ho Chi Minh City where she was also a student and apparently spoke good English, and was quite insistent that I call her when I went back through that city. The nature of that call was obvious, but I don't think a young man selling his sister in that way was unusual. The call was never made I hasten to add!

The road reached the edge of an escarpment with a view a good 20 miles across to the coast. The hard labour of the day was over and it was downhill all the way from thereon. While admiring the view I got chatting to a young Dutch couple. I got the impression that it was early in their relationship and they had taken 3 months off work to ride through SE Asia together to see if it would work. Anyway we rode on to Phan Rang together and decided to stay at the same hotel and spend the evening together. We went out looking for a suitable restaurant when, not looking where I was going, I walked into a post which had been placed (with evil intent in my opinion) right in the middle of the path. I fell heavily forwards on to my chest and hands. Result : Severe chest trauma and fractured wrist. Consequence: End of tour!

Nha Trang

The hotel staff were very helpful and advised me to take a taxi to Nha Trang, about 50 miles up the coast where there were medical facilities competent to deal with my injuries. The next morning I managed to painfully pack my bike for the journey, take my leave of my Dutch friends and taxi to a good hotel in Nha Trang. A doctor (Paris trained) quickly arrived and he took me on the pillion of his motor bike to his clinic for X-rays and general assessment. Apart from plastering my wrist he had no advice other than complete rest to build up strength for my journey home in about a weeks time. Even so I visited the clinic several times during that week. The doctor was really milking the insurance, and I don't blame him. He was clearly popular with locals and giving them good service.


There are plenty of worse places than Nha Trang to spend a week recuperating from injury. My hotel was close to the beach with plenty of good restaurants and bars. Not at all flashy like other resorts along that coast. It's

also lucky that I love reading. I read three books that week – a good selection was available at a backpackers book exchange store near the hotel. There were always bike taxis hanging around the hotel and I got to know some of them and had a few journeys into town and to the clinic – even had a go myself. The weather was superb and very relaxing – exactly what the doctor ordered. My journey home was uneventful. I had recovered enough to cope with luggage and bike. Nha Trang has a local airport and I was able to fly to Ho Chi Minh City and on to Bangkok and home.

While writing this I have been living the journey again, one memory triggering another and bringing home to me once again what a wonderful trip it was. I am convinced that this was partly due to the fact that I was alone. When you are with a group you tend to stay with the group – alone somehow you have more contact with locals and other travellers.

Recommended!

Footnote:

 Last summer Clive took part in the Prudential Ride 100 and completed the route despite the torrential rain, courtesy of the remnants of Hurricane Bertha. At the age of 83 he has the distinction of being the most 'senior' finisher. Ed

Photograph: Marathon-Photos.com



The Ariegeoise Cyclo Sportive 2014

One of the UCI international golden bike series

By Jeff Marshall



Photo: Brent Skinner

Brent Skinner and I rode the 20th edition of this event on Saturday 28th June.

This years 'special' 20th edition of L'Ariegeoise, which takes place in the stunning Midi-Pyrenees region every year, started in the town of Tarascon-sur-Ariege and eventually finished at the top of the very tough climb of the Plateau de Beille; a frequent Tour de France stage finish. Over 4600 riders took part.

The Ariegeois proper is 162k and climbs 3558m; over 1,200 'hard nuts' did this. The 'Mountagnard' option is 110k with 2542m of climbing & over 2,500 'wimps' did this, including us. Loads more did 'La Passejade' a randonnee; 73.5k, & 800m climbing.

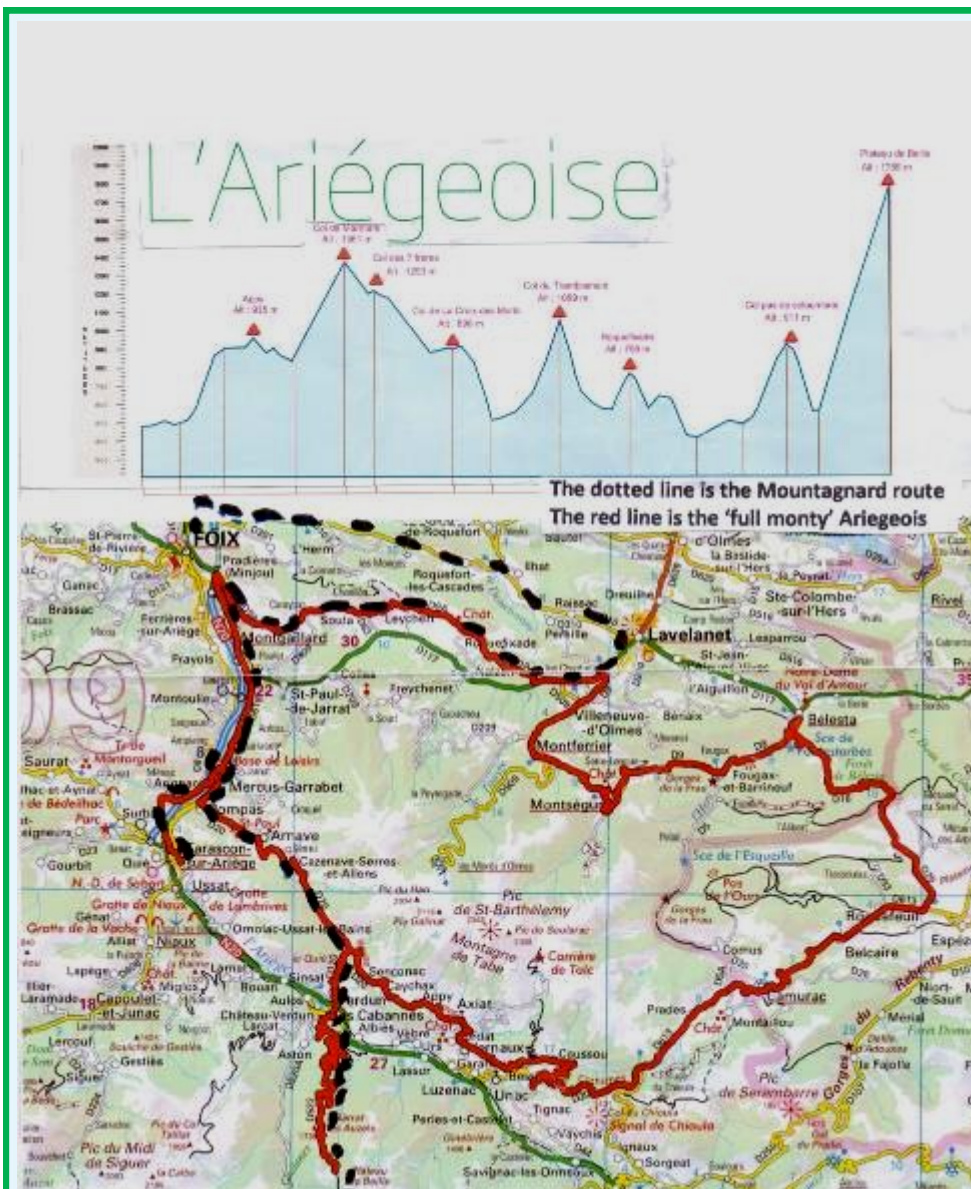
This annual event came to our attention due to its proximity to Les Deux Velos, a cycle lodge we have used on our previous club Pyrenean 'Tour' watching holidays many times in years gone by. The lodge is situated on the lower slopes of the Col de Port, near the small village of Biert and is now owned by a Dutch couple; Mark and Elma, great hosts who have improved it dramatically since they acquired it several years ago. Mark is a cyclist himself and so understands the needs of their cycling guests. Luckily for them, he is a very capable DIY man and spends the winter months improving the facilities and luckily for us, Elma is a GREAT cook ! It is perfectly situated for cycling in the Pyrenees, with easy access to many mountain passes. It was Mark who first piqued our interest in the Ariegeoise as he rides it himself every year and recounted his suffering to us whilst we were there in July a few years ago. We had previously emailed Elma, who had arranged our entries for us, the fee being 47euros. She also arranged for a local doctor to give us a health check and provide us with medical certificates.

Brent booked the tunnel crossing for 9.20am as he was our driver and conveyed us in his new Superb. We left at 7am on Tuesday 24th but were delayed by a problem on the motorway and so missed our 9.20 train catching the 9.55 instead. We had booked accommodation halfway at the Hotel de la Foret, at Vierzon, arriving there after a 'fight' with his GPS through Paris. It was very warm, so we ate our meal outside, whilst watching the World Cup football from Brazil on TV.

Next morning we were back on the road after a hefty breakfast and had an uneventful day on the empty French motorways arriving at the cycle lodge, after passing through St Girons, on Wednesday evening.



Photo: Brent Skinner



On Thurs. morning we were impatient to get out on our bikes and as a warm-up for l'Ariégeois. Brent decided that we should attack the Deux Velos 2014 guests mountain time trial record for the climb of the Col de Port. We set off together but I could sense that 'Brentus' was really up for it and decided to let him go after about 5k. He made the summit in 39+ min. I joined him 2 min. later, 41+. Our times were added 'stig' like to the wall board in the 'Deux Velos.' Brent's time was 2nd fastest for 2014. Chapeaux Brentus!

Friday morning we drove over the col again, to Tarascon to register and collect our 'dossards', bags of goodies which included our 'chipped' numbers and a very nice 'maillot' with the Ariégeois logo.

Unlike Brent, who had a 34x26 bottom gear, I had been rather blasé about preparing my bike before we left home. So we then went searching for a cassette with a 28/29 cog. Shops were all shut. Moral – sort it out before you go in future. 39x26 would just have to do !

Saturday we breakfasted at 6am. Our host, Mark, left first to do the long one, closely followed by some friendly Aussies who were staying with us. We left for

the start at 7.00am. It was chilly up there. Over the col again to Tarascon, finally parking at Sinsat 9k south-east from the start. We had to get a move on back to the start 'pen' where we arrived in the nick of time, behind the whole 2,500+ 'Mountagole' riders. At 8.00 the flag dropped but it was 8.41 when our 'chips' registered with an audible 'ping' as we passed through the gate. We planned to stay together if possible. By now it was clearly going to be a beautiful day. We gradually worked our way through the mass of riders, and latched onto a young couple who were obviously triathletes and riding at our pace, the lady being a better rider than her male partner. We reached the 1st feed station at 42k in 2hrs.

53k later we passed over the Roquefixade climb (756 m), still moving nicely and passing other riders continually. We caught sight of our Aussie friends about here as we cruised past. At 12.30 we puffed over the 911m Col de Solembrie (max gradient 12%) At 12.45 (94k) we got to the 2nd feed at La Cabannes. The brutal 16k climb of the Plateau de Beille was ahead of us, with several stretches of 11% gradient.

As planned, we were still together with 5k from the top, when I finally paid the penalty for my overgearing. Terrible cramp suddenly gripped my right leg. I had to leap off and walk to clear it, as Brent pedalled his 34x26 smoothly on, finishing in 5h-21min. I crept in shattered 10min. later, in 5h-31min. At the finish I was stuffed: well actually we both were.

Many riders were still coming up the climb and some were hallucinating in the heat and 'all over the place' so for safety sake we had to wait for a large group to gather for the ride back down to La Cabannes behind a motorcycle marshal escort.

From there it was thankfully only 2k to the car at Sinsat and a relaxing (for me) drive back over the col, to Le Deux Velos where we swapped accounts with the Aussies. Last to arrive back was our host Mark who had done the 'Full Monty' and looked like it ! Unfortunately for him while we rested, he then had to help Elma with looking after us!



Brent

Next day, despite our fatigue and aching legs, after a big meal, a good night's sleep and a lie-in, we surfaced and after a hearty breakfast we set off in the car with our mountain bikes, for an off-road ride in the hopes of accessing the border with Spain at the top of the high mountains nearby. At over 2000m they are quite a challenge. Very high up, the weather closed in on us, so we had to zoom back down to the car and off to a coffee shop. What a pity!?

Our journey back home was a reversal of our outward route, stopping overnight at Vierzon, where we again ate outside watching another football World Cup game from Brazil.

We found out later that Brent had finished quite high up in his 50-59 age group and despite my walk near the finish, I was 13th of the over 65's.

We are planning to do it again in 2015, so if you are interested why not join us ? There is room in the car for two more **and it will not finish at the Plateau again until 2016!!**

Jeff and Brent (background)



Photos Maindru

Please help with events in 2015

Hounslow and District Wheelers have an excellent reputation for their 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.

This year we are again hoping 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.

Thanks for your support!

Signed

Jeff Marshall, Club President and organiser of the Surrey League Road Races 2015

First event this year is:

The Peter Young Memorial Road Race on Sunday, 15th March

Offers of help please to organiser:

Chris Lovibond chris.lovibond@gmail.com

Open and club events are listed on page 17
Please contact relevant organiser to volunteer

Photo
Joe Toscano



HOUNSLOW AND DISTRICT WHEELERS

Racing Calendar 2015



Open Events

Event	Date	Organiser	Email address	Closing Date
Road Race	Sunday 15th March	Chris Lovibond	chris.lovibond@gmail.com	Sunday 22/2
Open '100' TT	Sunday 24th May	Trevor Gilbert	trevorgilbert2013@gmail.com	Tuesday 12/5
Open '25' TT	Sunday 19th July	Bruce McMichael	mcmichael.205@tesco.net	Tuesday 7/7

Entry for the Road Race must be on a BC entry form see www.britishcycling.org.uk

Entry for an Open Time Trial must be on a CTT entry form see www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk

Audax 'London Sightseer' 100km Wednesday 24th June and Sunday 6th September

Entry on the correct form to Bill Carnaby, see Club Website for full details www.hounslowanddistrictwheelers.co.uk

Weekend TT Club Events

Event	Date	Organiser	email address	Closing Date
Good Friday '25'	Fri 3rd Apr 9.30am	Jeff Marshall	Jeff.m@ivycot.eclipse.co.uk	Sun 29th Mar
Inter-Club '25'	Sun 10th May 9.00am	Graham Davis	cycleman@ntlworld.com	Sun 3th May
Midsummer '25'	Sun 21st Jun 9.00am	Peter Sprake	ptsprake@aol.com	Sun 14th Jun
Autumn '25'	Sun 20st Sep 9.30am	Neil Ferrelly	ferrellyn@aol.com	Sun 13th Sep
Sporting '27'	Sat 17th Oct 2.00pm	Chris Lovibond	chrislovibond@gmail.com	Sun 11th Oct
Hill Climb	Sun 25th Oct 11.00am	Trevor Gilbert	trevorgilbert2013@gmail.com	Entry at start

Note: Chobham Common (course HCC 137) is used for the Circuit '18's (2 laps) and the Sporting '27' (3 laps).

Weekend '25's are on the West of Windsor course (HCC 001)

The Hill Climb is on Windsor Hill, Wooburn Green, Bucks. (Maidenhead / Beaconsfield) (course HHC 011)

Thursday Evening '10' mile Club TT's Chobham Common Course (HCC 083)

9th Apr	18.45	28th May	19.00	16th Jul	19.00
16th "	19.00	4th Jun	Road Race see below	23rd "	19.00
23rd "	19.00	11th "	19.00	30th "	19.00
30th "	19.00	18th "	19.00	6th Aug	19.00
7th May	19.00	25th "	19.00	13th "	19.00
14th "	19.00	2nd Jul	Road Race see below	20th "	19.00
21st "	19.00	9th "	19.00	27th "	18.45

Entry is **on the start line**, so please arrive in plenty of time to sign on, priority is given to **Hounslow Members**.

Entry fees

Hounslow Members £3 per event (£2 Under 18). Season Ticket £20 (£10 under 18)

NON Hounslow Members £4 per event (£2 Under 18) Season Ticket £25 (£10 under 18)

Entry fees cover all events except Open Events. The Club strongly suggest you purchase a S/T as it saves time when signing on, you do not have to remember to bring money and gives excellent value

Thursday Evening Surrey League Road Races

4th June & 2nd July Kitsmead Lane Circuit 19.15 pm

event secretary Jeff Marshall jeff.m@ivycot.eclipse.co.uk E/1/2/3/4

Any Problems

Please contact the event organiser or myself **Trevor Gilbert** Club Race Secretary & Timekeeper

tel 01932 867724 mobile 07787 797564 email trevorgilbert2013@gmail.com

HOUNSLOW & DISTRICT WHEELERS

RACING ACHIVEMENTS 2014



British Best All-Rounder

Men	16th Nic Stagg
'50'	1 49 41 27.351
'100'	3 58 42 25.136
'12'h	270.670 22.556
	75.043
	Ave 25.014 mph

Club Best All-Rounders

Men	1st Nic Stagg	Ladies	1st Joanna Wells	2nd Jill Bartlett
'25'	53 41 27.942	'10'	23 40 25.352	25 05 23.920
'50'	1 49 41 27.351	'25'	1 03 29 23.628	1 03 57 23.465
'100'	3 58 42 25.136	'50'	2 10 22 23.012	2 13 12 22.523
'12'h	270.670 22.556		71.992	69.908
	102.985			
	ave 25.746 mph		ave 23.997 mph	ave 23.303 mph

Club Veterans Best All-Rounder

<u>1st Robert Gilmour</u> age 62/63					<u>2nd Nic Stagg</u> age 43					<u>3rd Stuart Stow</u> age 49					
	standard		riders time			standard		riders time			standard		riders time		
'10'	27	51	21	44	+ 15 18	26	13	21	31	+ 11 45	26	41	22	10	+ 11 18
'25'	1	10 57		56 34	+ 14 23	1	06 39		53 41	+ 12 58	1	07 50		55 38	+ 12 12
'50'	2	26 24	2	00 34	+ 12 55	2	16 59	1	49 41	+ 13 39	2	19 34	2	08 01	+ 05 47
'100'	5	13 43	4	24 24	+ 12 20	4	49 26	3	58 42	+ 12 41	4	55 34	4	24 53	+ 07 40
	Total Standard Time + 54 56					Total Standard Time + 51 03					Total Standard Time + 36 57				

Club Events Championship

1st Nic Stagg	2nd Stuart Hewlins	3rd Robert Gilmour
'25'	57 34 26.057	1 01 57 24.213
'25'	58 56 25.452	1 03 06 23.772
'10'	23 11 25.881	25 23 23.638
'10'	23 20 25.714	26 24 22.727
'10'	23 20 25.714	27 09 22.099
'10'	23 24 25.623	27 58 21.454
'10'	23 47 25.228	27 59 21.441
	179.669	159.344
	ave 25.667 mph	ave 22.763 mph
4th Richard Philp	5th Joanna Wells	6th Nikki Harris
'25'	1 09 13 21.671	1 20 24 18.657
'25'	1 09 51 21.475	1 23 32 17.957
'10'	27 40 21.687	32 10 18.653
'10'	27 53 21.518	32 19 18.566
'10'	28 29 21.065	32 59 18.191
'10'	30 22 19.759	33 29 17.919
'10'	30 34 19.629	33 31 17.901
	146.804	127.844
	ave 20.972 mph	ave 18.263 mph
	ave 20.836 mph	
	<i>Ladies Champion</i>	

Prize Winners Evening '10's

Fastest Rider	Wouter Sybrandy 22 05	Fastest Lady	Joanna Wells 28 33
Fastest Veteran	Nic Stagg 23 11	Veteran Best on Standard	Paul Holdsworth + 3 20

VTTA (Veterans Time Trials Association) Results

Category	Name	Position	Total Plus
BAR (25, 50 & 100 mile and 12 hour)	Nic Stagg	17th	54m 10s
3 distance BAR (25, 50 and 100 mile)	Nic Stagg	52nd	39m 13s
	Robert Gilmour	53rd	39m 12s
Short distance BAR (2x10 mile & 2x25 mile)	Roger Sewell	58th	57m 21s
	Robert Gilmour	81st	54m 40s
	Nic Stagg	95th	50m 56s
Short distance club BAR	Hounslow & District Wheelers	7th	2hr 42m 57s

Club news and notes



Meet a Member



This issue 'QuickNic' Staggs is the subject of our 'Meet a Member' regular item.

Overall results in 2014 include:
British Best All Rounder (BBAR): 16th
Veterans Time Trial Association (VTTA) BAR: 17th
Club BAR: 1st
Club Events Championship: 1st



Photo: Chris Lovibond

Nic Staggs is 44 years old and is mainly a Time Trialist, but does some road racing and track as well.

I asked Nic how he came to join Hounslow and District Wheelers?

"I first joined H&DW in 2006 after riding for B.A.A (British Airports Authority RT). I was granted dispensation to ride for them (didn't work at the airport but had a friend, Chris Stocks, who rode for them). The club disbanded in 2006 and I had a brief spell at Sigma Sport, then I got talking to Bob Wallace (a very old friend) who said "come out on a club run on a Sunday with us". I left the club in 2007 in order to ride for an Elite team (Spirit RT, based in Aylesbury) but unfortunately was let down (shall we say) and returned to the Hounslow at the beginning of 2010."

So how did he first become interested in cycling?

Having previously played football he was keen to participate in a sport where he would only let himself down if he didn't give it 100%. He told me that he first became interested in cycling watching the Tour de France one Saturday afternoon in 1985. That year he started riding with Clarence Wheelers CC and within 6 weeks of joining he was racing. He said "That's how it was in the 'old days' - in at the deep end, as they say".

I asked him about his racing history

He told me that his first time trial was a club event on the 9.2 mile, Gracious Ponds circuit. Having fallen off going up Fancourt he remembers recording a time of 29:11. Since then he has ridden over 200 sub 22 minute 10s and has only been outside the hour for a 25 once since 1988, recording 1:00:23 on a freezing Good Friday in 2011 - just 24 seconds but, he said, "it still haunts me".

Nic rode for the Swan Velo between 1998 and 2003 and was unbeaten in every club event he rode for them! He thinks that he has ridden over 1000 events, but can't be sure exactly how many. Nic also rode for a couple of other teams over the years and won quite a few open events on various courses, mainly in the south including the HDW "open 25" in 2011.

Nic has had a few encounters with famous names in the world of cycling, including a few scraps with Rob Hayles at the Reading track. He got in a break with Russell Williams and Chris Lillywhite (who won the Milk Race a few years ago) in (he thinks) the Archer GP and dropped them on a climb! He has trained with Tony Doyle (world track pursuit champion 1980 and 1986) and had an offer to race in France in 1988 which unfortunately fell through. He did 22:15 as a schoolboy on the U4 course (no tri bars and disc wheel in those days) and first got his name in Cycling Weekly in 1986 after winning the 1st handicap award in a W.L.C.A ten on H10/2 (recording 26:11, but had a handicap of 7:20!!).

Which would Nic describe as his best ride?

"I haven't done that yet, don't think I ever will, I'm never satisfied — I can pick holes in every race I've ever done!"

Then I asked him about his bikes:

He has a total of 19 — favourites being his TT bikes, a Colnago Flite (gears) and a Paké (fixed). He added "I love all my bikes:- an Olmo, Fondriest, Lemond, Gios, ALAN, Moser, Borghini, Norco etc

Favourite ride snack: "Clif bars (but not after 11½ hours in a 12)"

Favourite cafe stop: "Garden centre at the bottom of Newlands"

Club news and notes



Hounslow & District Wheelers welcomes new members

Nov 2014	Nigel Forward	1st claim	Vet
Dec 2014	Andrew McPhee	1st claim	Vet

Hounslow away from Home

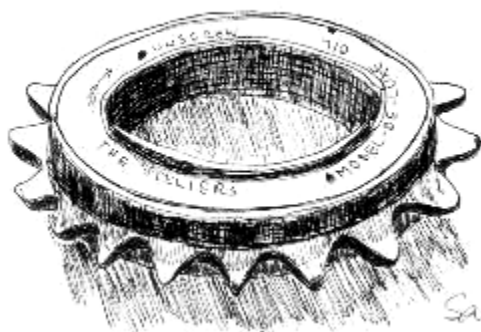
Keep your photos coming for the next issue!



Your Club Committee

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Jeff Marshall
Chairman
Jeff Marshall
Secretary
Bill Carnaby
Treasurer
Martyn Roach
Racing Secretary
Trevor Gilbert
Captain
Graham Davis
Vice Captain
Jo Wells
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Graham Davis
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Patsy Howe
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Chris Lovibond
Member Reps
Paul Holdsworth
Simon Morris

BIKE ART By Sabi



Jo & Nic
Sunny Florida
in December



Winter sun Dinton 8th Feb



Photo: Ian Harris

Distribution

This magazine is primarily distributed by electronic means. This saves the club time and money. If you're reading a paper copy that you received in the post and would be willing to switch to reading it on your computer or printing it yourself, please let the editor know.

Next Issue

The next issue will be published during the summer. Please contact the editor with your contributions or suggestions.

TEAM HOUNSLOW

Enquiries are being made in the hope of obtaining club entries for the London—Surrey Ride 100 on Sunday 2nd August 2015.

Please contact **Simon Morris** if you are interested in being part of the team(s)

sjm30@live.co.uk

