



# Quarter Wheeler

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.



2021

Getting together again as Covid goes into retreat!



Club camp



For more information about Hounslow & District Wheelers visit our web site: <http://www.hdwcycling.co.uk>



# Hounslow & District Wheelers Ron Brown Memorial 100 mile TT Sunday, 1st August 2021

*Report: Chris Lovibond*

The 2021 Ron Brown 100 was run off successfully – no small achievement in these difficult times.

The winner was Mark Smith (Crawley Wheelers) who recorded the fast time of 3.37.12 which gave him a clear margin of five and a half minutes over runner up Eddie Allen (Redmon) whose 3.42.52 was just eleven seconds too good for third placed Alex Donger (Oxonian) who finished in 3.42.53. Mark also won the previous Hounslow 100 when it was last promoted in 2019.



Mark Smith



Eddie Allen



Alex Donger

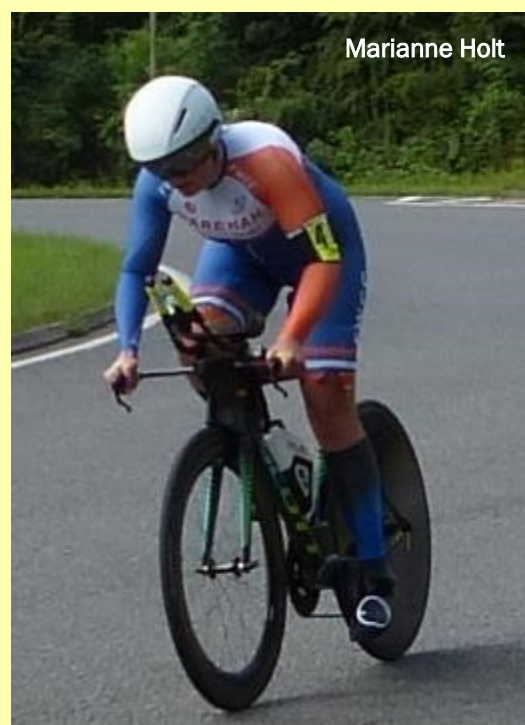
In the women's event Marianne Holt (Fareham Wheelers) took the honours with a creditable 4.11.05. Second place went to Louisa Cooper (Bournemouth Jubilee Wheelers) with 4.40.00.

In conversation with Mark Smith after the finish, his enthusiasm for this event and time trialling in general shone brightly; like many other good time triallists he has come to the discipline as a vet after many seasons of road racing and cyclo cross. After a good start to this year's season he said he had suffered a minor illness a few weeks ago which had interrupted his progress and he had even considered not starting in this event because he was unsure of his fitness. As we can all now see, his form has returned.



One concern Mark did mention was that although his own club is very active, many members saw riding open time trials as an elite activity – I'm afraid this may be a common belief and I hope that anyone reading this will note that with most open time trials currently under subscribed these events are literally 'open' to all.

Marianne Holt is in her fourth season of time trialling but this is her first year of attempting the longer distances, for which she is pleased and a bit surprised to find that she has a talent. After gaining eighth place in the women's National Championship with 4.17.6. this ride has given her a six minute improvement of her personal best. Her own description of her style is 'diesel', and she is looking forward to the 4th September when she will ride the BDCA 100. I think we can expect further improvement!



Marianne Holt



Ian Greenstreet &  
Rachael Elliott

Although the numbers do not show it, perhaps the most outstanding ride of the day came from the lone tandem entry. This was crewed by Ian Greenstreet and Rachael Elliott (Newbury Road Club) and their time of 3.46.51. was good enough to take the second place on vets' plus (+1.04.13.). This time looks good but not brilliant – it is only when you hear the details that it becomes impressive. They punctured, rode on the rim for at least three miles to where their car was parked near the start and then had to inflate the tyre on a spare back wheel, put the new wheel in the tandem and then adjust the brake; their guess is that they lost ten minutes, but this seems a conservative estimate. It should also be mentioned that the tandem was the first to start at 7.14 am when it was still fairly cold and there was almost no traffic on the road. It seems very likely that without these problems they would have been very near to the mixed tandem competition record.

Ian Greenstreet has already had a long and creditable time trial career, while Rachael Elliot started in 2011 and rose steadily winning the Circuit TT Championship in 2017. Then in early 2018 she tragically suffered a stroke which damaged her eyesight and this meant that, apart from all the other difficulties, her only option in cycling was the back of a tandem.

Fortunately she had a ready-made partner in her friend Ian and it seems they are an excellent match for each other on the tandem – they now hold comp. records at 15, 25, 30 and 50 miles. Rachael's power output has not been diminished by her health problem, and she believes that her relatively slight build makes her an excellent fit behind Ian, giving a good aerodynamic shape. Whatever the explanation she is great example of some one who has shrugged off adversity.

Finally mention must be made of the organiser, Bruce McMichael who, like all race promoters this year, had a hard job made much harder by the problems arising from the pandemic. All the competitors I spoke to praised the organisation of the event and we can only hope that the same team will be back for 2022. Mark Smith certainly does – he is hoping to complete a hat trick of three consecutive victories.

# Ron Brown Memorial 100 mile Time Trial (cont'd)

## Results

### Solo Event

Pos	Rider	Squadra/Team/Club	Cat/	MPH	Actual
1	Mark Smith	Crawley Wheelers	M B	27.62	03:37:12
2	Eddie Allen	Redmon CC	M Sen	26.94	03:42:42
3	Alexander Donger	Oxonian CC	M Sen	26.92	03:42:53
4	Liam Somerville	Bike Jockey CC	M Sen	26.65	03:45:06
5	Edward Hales	London Dynamo	M A	26.46	03:46:47
6	Kevin Baker	Velo Club St Raphael	M A	26.07	03:50:11
7	Daniel Ryan	North Road CC	M Sen	25.88	03:51:52
8	Edward Renwick	Oxford City RC	M A	25.63	03:54:06
9	Phil Wilks	Sotonia CC	M Sen	25.60	03:54:23
10	Jay Hookins	BJ cycling	M Sen	25.37	03:56:31
11	Mark Bradley	Bristol South Cycling Club	M D	25.23	03:57:51
12	Colin Parkinson	South Western Road Club	M D	25.06	03:59:23
13	Gary Lock	New Forest CC	M A	25.04	03:59:38
14	Duncan Emery	Twickenham CC	M B	24.89	04:01:01
15	Paul Winchcombe	Chippenhams & Dist Wh's	M E	24.33	04:06:34
16	Pete Christensen	Alton CC/Owens Cycles	M A	24.20	04:07:58
17	Benoit Bely	Walden Tri	M B	24.10	04:09:00
18	Julian Lockwood	Primera-Teamjobs	M D	23.96	04:10:27
19	Craig Nilsson	Rye & District Wheelers CC	M Sen	23.94	04:10:39
20	Gareth Wood	Hart Veloce	M C	23.92	04:10:48
21	Marianne Holt	Fareham Wheelers CC	W A	23.90	04:11:05
22	Billy Dyer	BJ cycling	M C	23.72	04:12:55
23	George Turner	VTTA (Lon & Home Counties)	M A	23.38	04:16:39
24	Ian Neville	Hart Evolution Race Team	M D	22.99	04:20:57
25	Richard Mellor	Team Bottrill	M C	22.46	04:27:12
26	Nick Burton	Newark Castle CC	M B	22.02	04:32:28
27	Neil Langley	Hampshire Road Club	M B	22.00	04:32:45
28	Gordon Hobbs	Verulam CC	M C	21.66	04:37:03
29	Luhan Bely	Walden Tri	M 18	21.63	04:37:20
30	Paul Couldridge	Phoenix Triathlon	M B	21.56	04:38:19
31	Louisa Cooper	Bournemouth Jubilee Whs	W Sen	21.43	04:40:00
32	Paul Walker	Phoenix Triathlon	M C	20.44	04:53:34
33	John Isard	Hampshire Road Club	M F	20.38	04:54:21
34	Gary Martin	Westerley Cycling Club	M E	19.73	05:04:08
35	Peter Horsfield	Redmon CC	M G	19.20	05:12:34

Mark Smith



Marianne Holt



### Tandem

Pos	Rider	Squadra/Team/Club	Cat/Grp	MPH	Actual
1	Ian Greenstreet	Newbury Velo	M D	26.45	03:46:51
1	Rachael Elliott	Newbury Velo	W A	26.45	03:46:51

# Hounslow Good Friday 25, 2021

Chris Lovibond

The first green shoots appearing in Spring, though modest in themselves, are a sign of greater things to come. So it was with our Good Friday 25 – a small and humble event, but it offers hope that club time trialling can come back after a bleak year.

Unsurprisingly, after a long period of inactivity our start sheet was limited to eleven, but in spite of the bitter North East wind and the hilly nature of the course there were three very creditable performances.

Tim Budd, fastest with 59.59 showed that he has now developed into a formidable time triallist, probably with the potential to win open events in the near future. Standing at the roadside on Hawthorn Hill I did not need a watch to know that Tim would be fastest, although in fact both Dave French (1.0.49) and James Cadman (1.0.56) were within shouting distance.

Tim's ride took every award on offer: first on scratch, handicap and vets' plus, but it's worth noting that 61 year old Tony Cosstick's 1.10.56, done on a road bike, would have put him within 16 seconds of the best plus using the pre 2012 VTTA standards, as opposed to a near seven minute deficit on the current table. Although it would not have affected the result in this case, I really think we should consider going back to the old standard plus table, at least for club events. I have reported far too many time trials in the past ten years where the winner on scratch is also the vets' standard victor – surely the point of vets' standards is to give the older riders some motive to compete, and when non-vet riders are a rarity this problem is even more acute.

Until recently even the prospect of any racing this year seemed doubtful, so any current performance must be seen in the light of a lack of motivation for early season preparation.

All those involved on Friday wish to thank the organiser, Bruce McMichael, for his determination to make this event happen in spite of the current difficulties and uncertainties.

## Result

### Hounslow Rides

Tim Budd	59:59
James Cadman	1:00:56
Tony Cosstick	1:10:30
Bruce McMichael	1:14:43
Mark Silver (trike)	1:22:06
Jill Bartlett	1:22:41

### Other rides

D. French	1:00:49	Weybridge Wheelers
F. Frizzarin	1:08:01	Waldy Wheelers



Tim Budd



James Cadman



## Inter Club 25 mile TT, 9th May

INTERCLUB 25 RESULT CC001 West of Windsor.

	Name	Club	Time
1st	Chris Holmes	TCC	53:25
2nd	Gareth Williams	TCC	54:23
3rd	John Franklin	TCC	55:27
4th	Tim Budd	HDW	58:10
5th	David French	WW	58:34
6th	Nic Stagg	HDW	58:46
7th	Mark Coombe	TCC	59:23
8th	James Cadman	HDW	59:31
9th	Rich Berry	TCC	1:00:31
10th	Ragnaar Laan	TCC	1:00:42
11th	keith Griffin	TCC	1:06:32
12th	Jared Banham	TCC	1:08:24
13th	Zoe Calder (L)	TCC	1:15:05
14th	Claire Thompson (L)	TCC	1:16:07
15th	Jill Bartlett (L)	HDW	1:16:36
16th	Rob Bell	TCC	1:22:46
17th	Francis Jacques	WW	1:28:55



## Earlier Starts

As many members are aware the 2021 Interclub 25 had problems with 'recreational' riders on the course.

In the past it would have been hard to imagine the situation where groups of riders, some of which appeared to be club runs, would ignore a time trial taking place on the road they were using. However, this is what happened at the Interclub - it must have been obvious to all concerned that a time trial was being run: there were the riders in racing kit complete with numbers, marshals and signs all over the place. I was on the roundabout at the end of Drift Road near the golf club and I saw at least three sizeable groups, riding two or more abreast, looking like cycling clubs but not behaving like club riders.

You would have thought that in this situation these people would have considered the possibility that they themselves might one day want to take part in a time trial, and that they would be annoyed by groups of riders blocking their path and causing potential danger to everyone. The very least they could have done was to ride in single file, but really they should have made every effort to find somewhere else to ride. No one would claim that time trialists have any particular right to use the road in a special way and we do not expect any extra consideration from motorists, but surely one ought to be able to expect basic good manners from others who are riding bikes for pleasure.

The photograph showing a competitor about to try to overtake a disorderly gaggle of non competing riders on Hawthorn Hill is an example of the behaviour described above. It is impossible to believe that those riders did not know they were on a TT course in the middle of an event.

Unfortunately there is no obvious way to explain to these anti social people that they are being both inconsiderate and rude, so the only remedy seems to be to start our events earlier. Just how much earlier is not yet certain but, as we know, it's normal for groups of cyclists to meet about 9 a.m., and they would not usually meet somewhere as 'countrified' as Drift Road, so maybe just half an hour would be enough. Personally, I fear an hour may be necessary, but we shall have to see how the 2022 season progresses.

Chris

## Autumn 25 19th September

Mark Silver (Trike)	HDW	1:17:23
John Franklin	TCC	0:57:00
David French	WW	0:59:47
Ragnaar Laan	TCC	1:04:50



# RESULTS

Evening 10s



## 13th May

David French	Weybridge Wh's	24.16
Kieron McKenna	Waldy Wh's	28:00
Ben Rostron	Waldy Wh's	29.52
Robert Bell	Twickenham CC	32.53
Fred Frizzarin	Waldy Wh's	32.55*
Francis Jacques	Weybridge Wh's	37.22

\* Off course

## 20th May

Rob Massey	Viceroy's	23.27
David French	Weybridge Wh's	23.50
Andrew Hedges	PTT	25.29
Rob Jenner	Waldy Whs	28.06
Bruce McMichael	HDW	29.54
Ben Rostron	Waldy Wh's	29.56
Andrew Shute	Waldy Wh's	30.02
Vinh Lam	Serpentine RC	30.16
Richard Nash	Hillingdon CC	33.32

## 3rd June

Tim Budd	HDW	23:52
Fred Frizzarin	Waldy Wh's	25:38
David French	Weybridge Wh's	25:45
Andrew Hodges	PTT	26:35
Vinh Lam	Serpentine RC	27:42
Bruce McMichael	HDW	28.56
Richard Nash	Hillingdon CC	31.30

## 24th June

Tim Budd	HDW	23.42
Andrew Hedges	PTT	26.16
Damien Mair	PTT	27:38
Bruce McMichael	HDW	28.58
Richard Buckham	TCC	30.40
Robert Bell	TCC	32.46

## 1st July

Tim Budd	HDW	23.43
Fred Frizzarin	Waldy Whs	25.01
David French	Weybridge Whs	25.02
Andrew Hedges	PTT	27.12
Vinh Lam	Serpentine RC	27.13
Damien Mair	TCC	28.13
Bruce McMichael	HDW	29.25

## 8th July

Fred Frizzarin	Waldy Whs	26.02
Mark Silver (T)	HDW	32.41

## 22nd July

David French	Weybridge Whs	23.34
Kieron McKenna	Waldy Whs	27.20
David Denham	Waldy Whs	29.06
Bruce McMichael	HDW	29.51
Richard Buckman	TCC	32.19



## Club Captains report (as at January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022)

The last 8 months, since we restarted our Sunday club runs following the pandemic lockdown in March 2020, have seen low numbers on some of our rides. The best showing we've had is 9 riders. 15 different members have taken part.

As the restrictions eased and a club run once again became a viable proposition, we decided to start group rides with shortish non-stop rides on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May '21, with a westerly loop of approx. 36 miles. However, the 'best laid plans oft times go astray' and we had to abandon on the morning as it was very wet. Not a very promising start. The following week we held our inter-club 25 West of Windsor so there was no club run.



So our first club ride of 2021 was on 16<sup>th</sup> May: a non-stop southerly loop of about 36 miles, on another damp day, to the Clandon area in which 6 of us took part. The following week a non-stop south easterly ride of about 45 miles out towards Mytchett saw 9 of us get a good soaking as it was again very wet. Arrived home like a drowned rat. Ho-Hum. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of June, eight of us did our first group ride with a stop for coffee. A ride of about 45 miles over the Hogs Back to Seale. Since then each club run has included a stop for 11's's. Much more sociable. On 4<sup>th</sup> July the ride to the Herb Farm at Sonning Common was called off due to torrential rain. At the end of June, when six of us got to Jacksons café in the California country park, Finchampstead, we found it rammed with families and loads of kids. We could see that our chances of getting served were slim, so we were 'out of there' and came across a really nice café in Wokingham town Centre - the Yolk café. So I have since replaced California with the Yolk Café on our list of rides - a lucky find. As the ride to the Herb Farm at Sonning Common in July had been called off we decided to try it again on October 17<sup>th</sup>. To our dismay, after quite a hard ride, we arrived to find it now closes on a Sunday. It did lead, however, to a real 'find' in Twyford, as (thanks to Jill's mobile) we came across a great café. This was the BIA Hub: a bike shop/ café with workshop and training facilities owned by a South African lady who invited us to bring our bikes inside! The coffee and cake were really good too. I have added this excellent venue to our list of destinations for the future. On 8<sup>th</sup> August, 3 of us, Jill, Les & I, braved another very wet ride which we cut short, ending up in Ivy Cottage (my house) where Linda made us coffee. On 31<sup>st</sup> October, the last counting ride of the season, the planned ride to West Clandon was called off due to the torrential rain and high winds.



**The Clubman Trophy** is awarded to the club member who participates in the most club runs and for riding or helping with our weekend time trials - one point is awarded for each attendance. So, of the 24 club runs listed between 2<sup>nd</sup> May and the 31<sup>st</sup> October four were rained off, leaving 20 rides to count for points toward the 2021 Clubman Trophy. New member, Les Saunby has, according to my records, scored 18 points to my 17, since the first counting ride on 16<sup>th</sup> May. Jill Bartlett lead the ladies with 10 points - so, my congratulations to Jill and Les.

The 2022 season began on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Since then there have been 11 rides to count. With one ride on 28<sup>th</sup> November abandoned as it was just too cold. The current club run points situation stands at Les Saunby - 9 points, and Jill Bartlett - 7 points.

As the Deep Mill Diner at Great Missenden has closed for good, I have replaced it with a new venue, The Village Store and Coffee Shop, in Hughenden Valley, Bucks. I hope to list

it for later this year when the weather improves. I have to thank Bruce McMichael for standing in for me on a Sunday when I have been away. Bruce has volunteered to lead the ride once a month in future, for which I am grateful.

I have now finished creating a GPX file of a suggested route for each of the rides shown on the accompanying list of our ride destinations, mostly loops out and back on different roads.

Thanks to Ian Kirk's efforts with our club website we now have a reference to the Strava route file against each ride listed, which of course can be loaded onto your Garmin / Wahoo digital GPS device so then anyone could lead one of these rides.

I would be interested to hear members views on some thoughts I have had for future club rides listed below.....

1. Would anybody like to volunteer to lead a ride to their favourite café, perhaps?
  2. Could anyone suggest alternative rides / destinations?
  3. Would an earlier start than the current 9.15am be worth considering?
  4. Would shorter non-stop rides say once a month be of interest?
- (Both 3 & 4 above would enable an earlier return)
5. An occasional midweek ride?
  6. Saturday rides occasionally? (busier roads though)
  7. Take our bikes in the car to a start point say 20 miles away to enable rides on different roads; Hampshire for example?

See you on a ride soon

Jeff (jeffm41@gmail.com)



## List of Sunday club ride destinations & approx. distance there & back from Staines gpx route files available for each destination

<b>Surrey</b>		
Compton	Watts Gallery Tea Shop, Down Lane, Guildford, GU3 1DQ	46 miles
Cranleigh	Nottcuts Garden Centre, Guildford, GU6 8LT	53 miles
Farncombe	Hectors on t' Wey, The Boathouse, Catteshall Rd, Surrey, GU7 7NH	58 miles
Farnham	Manor Farm Tearoom, Seale, GU10 1HR	46 miles
Henfold	Henfold Lakes & Fisheries, Henfold Lane, Beare Green, RH5 4RW	53 miles
Hindhead	Cookie Bar, 1, Royal Parade, Tilford Rd. Hindhead, GU26 6TD	61 miles
Milford	Secrett's Garden Centre, Chapel Lane, Milford, GU8 5HU	55 miles
Mytchett	The Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett,	40 miles
Newdigate	Tanhouse Farm, Rusper Rd. Newdigate, RH5 5BX	62 miles
Shere	The Dabbling Duck, Middle Street, Shere, GU5 9HF	43 miles
Tilford	The Rural Life Centre, The Reeds Rd, Tilford, GU10	54 miles
West Clandon	Clandon Park Garden Centre, The Street, West Clandon, GU4 7RQ	45 miles
West Horsley	Squires G. C. Epsom Rd. West Horsley, KT24 6AR	51 miles
<b>Oxfordshire</b>		
Henley	Toad Hall Garden Centre, Marlow Road, Henley, RG9 3AG or The Chocolate Theatre Café, 13 Thameside, Henley, RG9 1BH	52 miles
Turville Heath	The Barn, Turville Heath Farm, RG9 6YL	55 miles
<b>Berkshire</b>		
Arborfield	Lockey Farm Café, Sindlesham Rd, Arborfield, RG2 9JH or Henry Streets Garden Centre, Swallowfield Rd. Arborfield, RG2 9JY	49 miles
Hare Hatch	Sheeplands Garden Centre, London Rd, Hare Hatch, Twyford, RG10 9HW	39 miles
Sonning Common	The Herb Farm Coffee Shop, Peppard Road, RG7 9NT (now not open on Sundays)	53 miles
Twyford	The BIA Hub, Waltham Road, Twyford, RG10 9EE	41 miles
Wokingham	Billingbear Golf Club, The Straight Mile, Wokingham, RG40 5SJ	41 miles
Wokingham Town Centre	Yolk café, 44 Erleigh Rd. Wokingham, RG1 5NA	
<b>Buckinghamshire</b>		
Bourne End	Flowerlands Garden Centre, Hedsor Road, Bourne End, SL8 5EE	39 miles
Hughenden	Village Coffee Shop, Coombe Lane, Hughenden Valley, HP14 4LD	54 miles
Marlow	Wyevale Garden Centre, Pump Lane South, Marlow, SL7 3RB or Court Garden Café, 3 Pound Lane, Marlow, SL7 2AE	40 miles 41 miles

# MEET A MEMBER



This issue, our Club Chairman - Graham agreed to be the subject of our 'Meet a Member' item.

My name is Graham Davis aged 65 and I have been a member of the Hounslow and District Wheelers (HDW) since 1999. I was Club Captain for many years and am currently Chairman and Membership Sec.

Having parents that were cyclists in their early days of marriage my father was keen to get me cycling, firstly on a children's trike then on home built bikes. My first taste of cycle competition was when I took part in the scout's cyclocross competitions in my teenage years, unfortunately not winning much but it was great fun.

On reaching the age of 16, mopeds, motorbikes and cars became my passion and cycling took a backseat for many years. In my late thirties I had the chance to cycle from Cherbourg France to Le Havre over three days along the Normandy landing beaches. I was accompanied by two friends with just our bikes, panniers and a single burner stove. It was epic and my love for touring cycling began.

I started a small cycling group in the early 90's called West Thames Wheelers which was a splinter group from the Staines Ramblers. Two of our current HDW members, Ron Jones and Peter Sprake, were members of this club and some of you know Terry Moody who was also a regular. We would meet once a month for an all day ride and I also organised cycling trips to France and Holland. Then, in 1999, Peter and I bought Condor Italia road bikes and were looking to do more road cycling. Peter had been a member of the HDW in the 70's and he knew that the club cycled from Staines Bridge so Peter and I joined the HDW and that's how I became involved with the club.



In June 2001, the year of the Foot and Mouth epidemic I embarked on an unsupported cycling tour staying in B&B's from Lands End to John O'Groats completing the journey in eleven and a half days with a total mileage of 947 miles. The first three days I was accompanied by Peter Sprake and later on in the tour I met up with Roger Sewell and stayed the night at his abode in Dingwall. I was very fortunate to have a friend who took me to Lands End in his car then drove to John O'Groats to bring me back, but there was one condition - I had to climb Ben Nevis with him. We had to climb the next day as the weather was not favourable later in the week - there are not many people that have cycled LEJOG and then the next day climbed Ben Nevis.

In September 2010 I cycled JOGLE (John O'Groats to Lands End) accompanied by five others including Patsy Howe (your magazine editor) and a friend who flew from Perth Australia. This was the reverse of my LEJOG route and so total mileage was around 950 miles. We rode over 100 miles every day for the first 6 and were left with just 56 miles to complete on the 10th (final) day in order to get to Lands End before the Visitor Centre closed!

For many years I have been going to Majorca in early May cycling with several other HDW club members staying in rented accommodation and enjoying the beautiful cycling terrain, it's well worth going to if you want some warm sun and some decent miles in your legs to start the season off.





I have also been to many Tour de France races and have cycled some of the stages. The one I remember the most is getting up at 3am to cycle the 55km individual time trial course at Besancon with Jeff Marshall and Tony Cosstick, then on finishing, washing in the local river as we were camping in a public car park with no facilities. It was amazing to watch the elite riders, a few hours later, cycle the same route, although our times were not anywhere near theirs. Then in 2017, together with Simon Graham and our wives, I visited The UCI Road World Championships which were staged in Bergen, Norway. A great experience,

In May 2018 Dave Howe, Chris Evans and I cycled the Wales End to End starting at Holyhead and finishing in Cardiff three days later. Much of the route follows National Cycle Route 8. As you can imagine the terrain was quite lumpy and my bike didn't have a triple!!

Later that year, Dave Howe and I attempted an unsupported, 7 day, End to End of Portugal, starting at Faro in the south and finishing in Chaves in the north. We thought at the end of September the temperatures would be just right for cycling..... how wrong we were. Temperatures were in the 30's and we'd also underestimated how hilly the terrain was. On day two we abandoned the attempt, hiring a car and jumping forward every two days, then cycling routes from our hotel. We had a great adventure and learnt a lot, vowing to one day return and allow ourselves more time to complete the challenge.



Portugal



Malin Head

2019 was the Ireland Head to Head, seven of us undertook the challenge of cycling up the west coast of Ireland and what a superb event it was. It starts at Mizen Head in the south and finishes at Malin Head in the north. The stunning scenery, the "Craic" and fantastic pubs made this a memorable trip.

This year myself and nine club members undertook the West to East cycle route across Wales and England starting at St David's Point and finishing at Lowestoft, Ness Point. Another great cycling trip.

Well I wonder what 2022 will bring. I know plans are already being drawn up for 2022 and in a few years time I might have to write another article for the magazine. Whatever you do in cycling enjoy it and many thanks to those who have helped me create such superb memories.



# ROGGO'S RAMBLINGS

## REMEMBERING TREVOR

One hour, six minutes and five seconds was the time it took me to ride my first ever 25-mile time trial and I have had phone calls longer than that from our dear departed Trevor Gilbert. It was never so much a conversation as a 'listening service'. I didn't mind it was good to hear him even though most of his stories were repeated over and over and he would ALWAYS start a subject and veer off it with another tale and then another, often never getting back to the original theme. He loved the Hounslow and District Wheelers and was so proud to be a member, he was a better rider than I was, even though in the end, my best rides were all faster than his. I was a few years



behind him and we raced against each other rarely but I'm sure he beat me every time. He had great respect for the 'greats' of the HDW but he idolised Martyn and that would be evident from our chats. I was lucky enough to speak to him in June just before my racing started for 2020 and I was hoping to tell him that I had managed to 'get inside' that year but that didn't happen until September 20th. In my last conversation with him he finished with his 'famous' tale about beating the hour on the F1 course (for the umpteenth time of course!). I was so well versed with it that I can recount almost word for word the whole story. It was a very windy day and he flew out to the turn and struggled into a strong headwind back. Not certain of his starting seconds on his watch he knew he was close to his target but wasn't sure. He asked Marilyn to find out the time and when she came back he said, "What have I done?" She replied, "You're not going to like this, it's fi...." "That's it" he interrupted, "As long as it's inside"

Rest in peace Trevor but my one lasting best memory will always be at the Hounslow's barbecue some years ago. He was in his usual (over) talkative mood and was sitting with myself, Pam and Suzanne, who was sitting next to him. Suddenly after a long, relentless monologue Suzanne (who some of you will know would never say boo to a goose) seemed to be getting more and more agitated jumped up and shouted, "Will you shut up!" and stormed away. Pam and I were suitably embarrassed but Trevor never faltered and continued to chat as if nothing had happened. That's the Trevor we all knew and loved. I can never forget him especially as I now live just two miles from where he was born and raised and the tiny cottage is still there visible from the main A17 whenever we go shopping.

So 2021 has been a strange year still with racing starting in April, Easter Saturday, and what a day it turned out to be. Cold and windy I never got going and finished after a really hard struggle in 1-10-33 my slowest 25 since 1998. Was this to be the year that I retired? Of course not, three weeks later I did 1-00-18 on the fast F2/25 course on the A428 near Cambridge. No longer do I train 'fast', all rides are normally done with a few friends at 15 mph to the local café for tea and cakes but 200+ miles a week gives me strength and that allows this old man to push big gears and control my breathing. June 5th I got 'under' with 59-29 so it was looking promising for the season. It was, however, very strange Covid restrictions were still in place and there was no chat and socialising at the races, put number (if not a disposable one) in the bucket, sign out and go home. Rather depressing sometimes as there was no result board and didn't know exactly your time until result was published. Towards the end of the year some mixing was allowed but I still wore a mask in the HQ and kept well away whilst in conversation with anyone. Last race of the season was late September and I achieved 58-16, not too shabby for this (74-years) old chap. Leisure riding for this year will just top the 11,000 miles all done on the windy and flat roads of Lincolnshire!

Whilst writing this load of old baloney I went onto Faceache and 'Legends of the RTTC', sorry Jeff but there it was, a result of the Colchester Rovers 25 on the E72, a very creditable ride of 55-55, 7th place to Roger Queen (55-00). Now, does Jeff remember? Probably because that was the event when the legendary B.B. beat ALL the men with 55-00. I would never get anywhere near Jeff or Beryl, however I found comparing our times in later years became interesting.

	Beryl	Roggo
10 miles	21:25	21:29
25 miles	53:21	54:21
50 miles	1:51:30	1:53:00
100 miles	3:55:05	4:09:56
12 hours	277.25	248.839

"No contest". I hear you say and, of course, you are right but..... Beryl never finished her 24-hour and her best 30 was 1-08-36 whereas old big-head here has done 1-05-47 so two out of seven isn't too bad. I presume Jeff is six out of seven as he has never ridden a 24-hour ("Shame", I hear me shout)

As many of you will know, originally (1963), I joined the North Road Cycling Club as all my family were members so, although I met all the Hounslow brigade over the years I never joined until the 1980's even though I lived in Heston all the time. This year has seen a sad decline in that famous old club as, at a committee meeting one evening, they decided to cease printing our trusty North Road Gazette and taking it to an on-line edition. The magazine had been going since 1903 but the members never had a chance to vote on the issue at an AGM and suddenly it was gone! "Progress" I hear some say but, unfortunately, a lot of the members are in their 80's and 90's with no access to a computer to print off a copy. Despite my protests it was not considered to be important and so several members who have been loyal to the Club for over 50 or 60 years have been 'forgotten'. Some have received no explanation and have been completely ignored. The glorious past that the NRCC enjoyed has not so much been consigned to the history books but to the waste bin. The committee has decreed that it will be a 'modern thinking' club and so anything relating to old ideals will be purged. It is a very sad beginning of the end for a once illustrious club. Sorry for the rant about something that is of not much interest to you but after all those years it is rather depressing.

Very sorry to hear about the passing of John Howell, we had some interesting battles with Vet Standards, needless to say he won most of them. After his accident he went into indoor rowing and, being the athlete that he was, became quite successful. A lovely man.

So to the future, 2022, hopefully will be a much better year for everyone and I wish all Hounslow and District Wheelers' members the very best and truly hope that I can meet up with some of you sometime in the next year.

Roger Sewell

## CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Do you have a favourite bike? Why not write about it for a future issue?

Do you have a question (or solution) for our regular FIX IT item?

Tell us about your racing career.

Describe a ride, sportive or race that made an impression (good or bad)!

Send photos, poems or funny stories - we want to hear from you!

Queries or contributions to Patsy Howe (editor) [patsyhowe@live.com](mailto:patsyhowe@live.com)



## Book Review

### A Golden Age of Cycling

*Charles James Pope, edited Shaun Sewell*

This book gives an insight to a lost but attractive era of cycle touring, but it has many flaws.

Let us begin with the problems. The production looks OK superficially, but just a first glance inside tells you that the cyclists on the cover illustration have nothing to do with the style of riding practised by the author; they are racing men, Mr. Pope was very much a tourist. This may seem a petty criticism, but it suggests the editor did not really have a feel for his subject.

Just to give one example of this weakness, page 270 has a mention of some one who “pushed up hill and downhill on a top gear in the nineties” You would have thought this needed no explanation, the ‘nineties’ here referring to inches, but the editor gives us a footnote ‘explaining’ that this refers to cadence, that is 90 rpm. Well, ‘if in doubt, leave it out’ would have been a good strategy here. If this were the only error it could easily be forgiven, but I’m afraid it is just one among many.

A more fundamental problem is that the book is a diary which does not appear to have been written for publication, rather more as a memory aid. The great majority of the content is about where the author made his very frequent refreshment stops, where he stayed overnight and what he ate. Places he passes through are usually described as ‘pretty’ or, rather too often, ‘very pretty’ – it seems the only place he really doesn’t like is Watford. It’s like a collection of holiday snaps which are mainly intended to remind the owner of an enjoyable holiday, rather than inform or entertain the viewer.

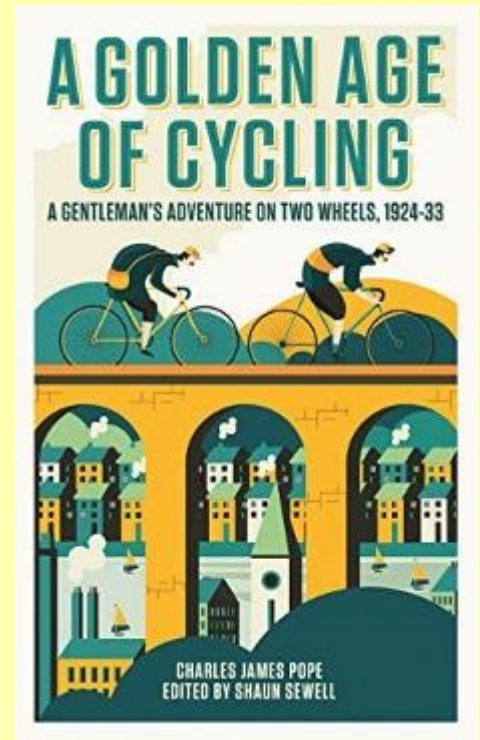
And yet even the dulllest holiday slides can reveal, unintentionally, matter of great interest, especially in the background – so it is with Charlie Pope’s diary. Just one example – a ‘cattle drover’ in South Wales told Charlie that he had once travelled as far afield as England, by which he meant Ross on Wye! The main attraction is the atmosphere of the time which comes across to the reader through small incidents, insignificant in themselves but when combined begin to give the reader a feeling of what it was like to ride on the roads of the twenties. This was a world where travellers expected to make frequent stops for refreshments, and these were provided by individual establishments which reflected the character of the area and the proprietor. There were no chain restaurants with tedious logos and factory produced food; this in itself made travelling more worthwhile and interesting than it can be today.

Pope lived in Hammersmith and generally chose to ride westwards – this gives an added interest to any west Londoner since he often uses routes that we might follow today. Twickenham, Maidenhead, Henley, Benson, Oxford – he refers to ‘the long pull up to Nettlebed’ which I’m sure will be familiar to many of us.

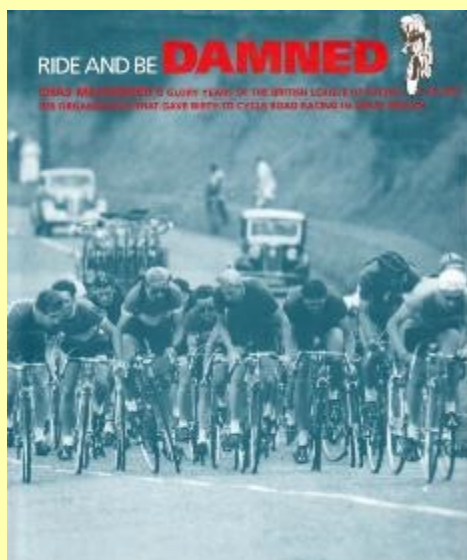
A frustrating aspect for many readers will be the skimpy references to the bikes that were used. He mentions a James, a Chater Lea and three Merlins, but says almost nothing about them. They seem to have been equipped with Sturmey three speeds, but even this has to be inferred from mentions of ‘a 48” bottom gear’, or ‘an 84” top.’ The editor suggests that Charlie was ‘a dab hand at roadside repairs, but my impression is he was not very interested in the bikes themselves – at one point he mentions that the Merlin needed some minor repairs and adjustments, so he took it back to the maker’s shop in Goswell Road. I guess most of us would have dealt with such things ourselves.

If you want to gain detailed knowledge of 1920’s cycle touring this book may disappoint you, but if you enjoy soaking up the atmosphere of this lost age, rather as the typical Sherlock Holmes reader does, then it has plenty to offer.

Chris Lovibond.







### Ride and Be Damned

*Chas. Messenger, Pedal Publishing, 1998.*

There are a number of excellent stories which have come out of cycle sport: the Coppi/Bartali rivalry, Christophe and his broken forks, Pelissier as a *forcat de la route*....and from Britain we have the NCU/BLRC conflict. The best aspect of our story is that everyone nowadays would agree that the good guys won.

For the benefit of any reader who does not happen to have already been immersed in the history of British bike racing over the past eighty years or so, it should be explained that the National Cyclists Union

(originally founded 1878) was a stodgy conservative body opposed to any form of racing on the road because it believed such racing would cause the government to act against cycling in general and the sport in particular. The British League of Racing Cyclists (founded 1942) was the exact opposite of the Union and believed (correctly as it turned out) that massed start road racing was not just possible but essential, and that the reduction of motor traffic caused by the war made 1942 an unmissable time to start a road race programme. The NCU tried to ban anyone supporting the League from the sport – hence the book's title. In brief it is an account of the rise of the League from one man's obsession to an organisation which was recognised by the UCI and effectively took over from the NCU.

Chas Messenger witnessed much of this struggle at first hand, so a great story from the pen of the man who was there: what could possibly go wrong? Why didn't *Ride and Be Damned* fly off the shelves and why is it worth re-reviewing today?

It's worth taking a look at the book's own story. It does undeniably have defects and was rejected by the main stream publishers; it only exists because Ron Gray took it under his wing and made it, in effect, a Pedal Club publication. It was financed by a subscription from club members (who probably never expected to see their money again) and was essentially an amateur production. It should be mentioned here that the book does not look amateur – it was designed by the Pedal Club's expert layout man, Ivan Dodd. A professional publishing house would certainly have been able to market the book more efficiently and so would have achieved far greater sales. In the end about half the print run was sold which meant that the subscribers did get their money back and even gained a small profit.

One of the defects of this amateur work is poor editing and there are some glaring faults: to give just one example, Victor Berlemont's name is spelt differently in two consecutive lines. However, a non trivial problem is Messenger's way of mixing accounts of the racing into the story of the politics. It would have taken radical editing to separate these two themes which are entangled in a way that makes the book harder work than it should be. It must be true that the League's successful promotion of big events like Brighton – Glasgow gave it the status and impetus to challenge the NCU so effectively, but the over detailed, blow by blow accounts of these races are a distraction from the politics, which are so complex that a sharp intellect is needed to penetrate them. Let's hope some clear minded person can use Chas's text in the future to simplify this story.

This brings us to the reasons why it seems worthwhile revisiting this book now. First there is a certain similarity between British Cycling today and the NCU in 1941. Although BC can claim international successes there is a strong feeling at the grass roots level of cycling that they are not well represented by the organisation which is only really interested in a small elite of potential medal winners. This is particularly noticeable as an apparent lack of enthusiasm for road racing at club level, eerily similar to the NCU, and it was exactly because there was a great desire and enthusiasm for road racing that the League came into existence. Surely it's a natural instinct for any sporting cyclist to want to race, preferably on the road.

A completely different reason for another look is that since its publication in 1998 a new generation of vintage bike enthusiasts has appeared and many of them are passionate collectors of the bikes and equipment which feature in the many excellent photographs. Here these bikes can be seen being used as their creators intended – in anger!

If anyone wants a copy, it's available at £12.99, just over half the original price, from this email:

[michael.clark37@ntlworld.com](mailto:michael.clark37@ntlworld.com)

Chris Lovibond, November 2021

# Long Coast-to-Coast ride

## The Planning

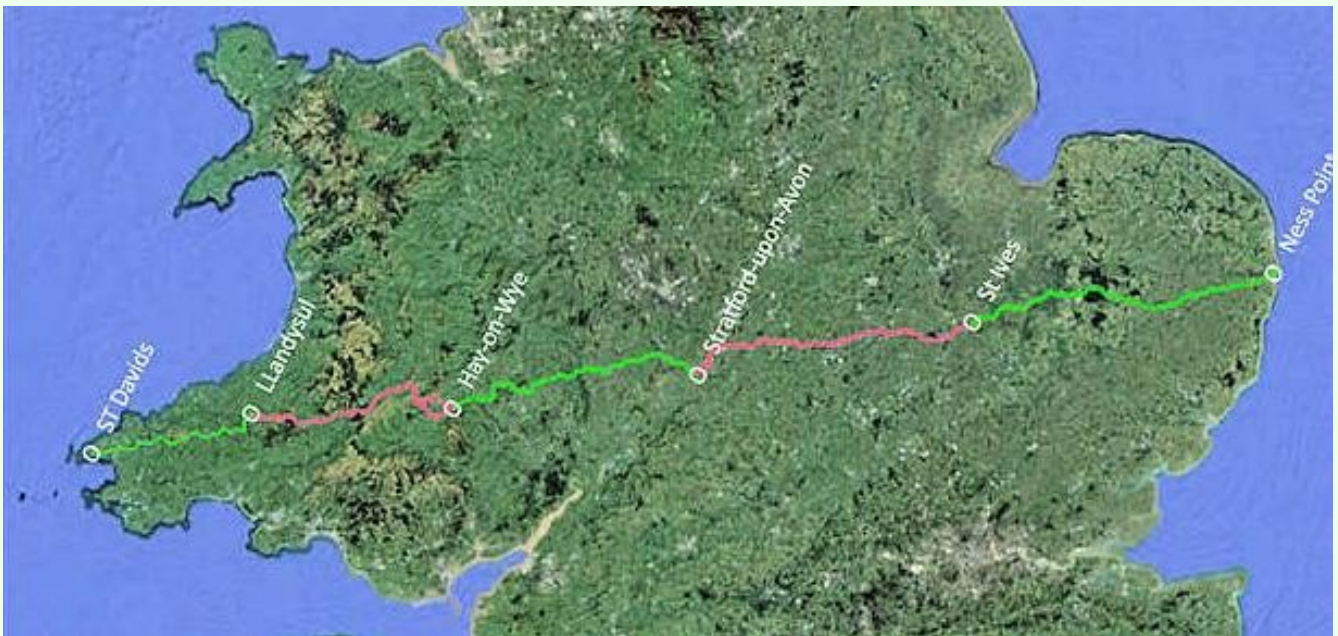
It was Andy Gibbon who suggested it. I was telling him about our ride on the C2C (coast-to-coast) route from St Bees to Tynemouth. "Why not ride coast-to-coast across the full width of the country, including Wales?" (Andy is a Welshman) And why not include a climb up the Tumble in Andy's home town of Abergavenny?

A quick look at the map showed that the easternmost point of the UK is Ness Point in Lowestoft, and the westernmost point of Wales is near St. Justinians, a few miles west of St Davids in Pembrokeshire. A straight line between the two is 303 miles long.

It is possible to ride from the start to the end point following Sustrans routes all the way but there is no direct Sustrans option. Instead I drew a straight line on the map and then used the 'add path' tool in Google Earth Pro to pick out a route as close to that line as possible, following the nearest minor roads, canal towpaths, byways and underpasses. Google Earth allows you to look at the map, click to add waypoints along any road or track, and use the street view option to study any junctions and look for underpasses or cycle lanes. Even though I tried to keep to a straight line, the total distance added up to 395 miles. I didn't deliberately seek out famous climbs like the Tumble, but as the line went across the northern edge of the Brecon Beacons and through the Malvern hills I expected plenty of ups and downs.

I may have underestimated how tough it would be riding across Wales, because I managed to persuade nine other people to ride it with me, all thinking it would be a nice holiday.

I divided the trip into 5 segments, the shortest day being 55 miles in hilly Wales and the longest being 95 miles in flat East Anglia, and made some small adjustments to the route so that it passed hotels in St Davids, Llandysul, Hay-on-Wye, Stratford-upon-Avon and St Ives, where I made reservations as soon as we had agreed the travel dates. It wasn't easy finding hotels with single beds. Sharing rooms was OK but I didn't think our riders would want to share double beds and I had to gamble on the number of rooms. At various times we had between 9 and 14 people planning to come and I never had more than 12 beds booked. Finally only 10 people made the trip.



Having planned for the actual riding, the next challenge was getting everyone to the start and getting them home from the finish. Graham Davis took charge of the transportation, booking a transit van for the bicycles and a 9-seater people carrier. It made economic sense to keep both vehicles for the duration of the trip, so six of the riders were named-drivers for the hire vehicles and we took turns to drive them. It may seem a bit 'soft' to have support vehicles and stay in hotels instead of carrying all our kit and riding every inch of the route like 'real cyclists', but our group wasn't in the first flush of youth, didn't have anything to prove, and just wanted an enjoyable holiday. So why not?



# The Delayed Long Sea to Sea UK from West to East

St.Davids in Pembrokeshire, Wales, to Lowestoft in Suffolk, September 2021

*Jeff Marshall*

Originally planned by Dave Howe for June 2020 but foiled by Covid issues, it finally happened in the first week of September 2021, after we'd all had negative lateral flow covid tests.

The participants were a motley crew of 10 retired men of a certain age, which resulted in it being termed "The Prostate Tour" or the wassing ride! There were, after all, numerous pee stops.



From left:  
Graham Davis  
Dave Howe  
Jeff Marshall  
John Math  
Bob Birt  
Andy Gibbon  
Gavin Kitchen  
Eddie Green  
John Marshall and  
above the angelic?  
Peter Bennington

## The riders:

1. Dave Howe, Sexagenarian, astride his Specialised. Dave is a modern day version of Natty Bumppo, James Fenimore-Cooper's 'Pathfinder'. Dave conceived the idea and planned the fiendish route, using a combination of his ancient Garmin GPS device and Google Earth, staying as close as possible to a straight line, West to East using very minor roads, canal towpaths, and byways. Well in advance, he sent us tcx files of the route for loading onto our GPS devices and set up a Whatsap group for communication on our mobiles. The ride profile in Wales has to be seen to be believed!
2. Graham 'gadget man' Davis, sexagenarian - transport manager, driver and facilitator, also occasionally on a Specialised mount (although it is not known how many miles he covered on it?!)
3. Edwin 'E-bike' Green, oldest of us all at 87, astride his Giant E machine (oft times referred to as 'smugface, as he whizzed past us on an upward gradient.) Ed - there were plenty of those!
4. John Marshall, septuagenarian and occasional emergency E-bike pusher - a bionic man with two new knees on his Boardman
5. Gavin Kitchen, my son in law, originally from the 'Toon'. The youngest, a child of 57 riding his winter Ribble with triple chainset. The 30 tooth granny ring saved the day as his cassette was way toooo small.
6. Andy Gibbon, sexagenarian, ex army Welsh friend of Dave H. who likes to wear a dragon on his shirt. Usually chose to ride 'shotgun'. Became known as 'Sarge' due to Gavin's sense of humour?
7. Bob Birt, octogenarian, aboard his Giant Defy. Mis-keyed by Dave H. as 'Bib' initially on the WhatsApp group - and it stuck. Provided us with a posh toolkit.
8. John Mathieson, referred to as 'Math, a septuagenarian mountain goat and lightest & lowest geared of us all on his Trek with 34 x34 gearing. Often declaring that he could not carry on, but usually reaching the top of the steepest hills first?!
9. Peter Bennington, on his Colnago with nice new Garmin 1030 plus. Christened 'Projectile Pete' by Sarge, on account of his habit of riding away on his own, blissfully unaware of the gap behind! He has always done that.
10. Me, octogenarian, cycling nutcase, appointed as mechanic for this ride by Dave, riding my new Ribble Endurance SLE disc with Sram eTap gearing. Nice! Referred to by the group as 'garmin Jeff' on account of the refurbished Garmin 1030 I was using, unbeknown to me at the time, not having all the maps installed, so I often overshot a turn. Ho- Hum!



## The Vehicles

Ford Transit van for ten bikes and luggage. Drivers: - John, Dave and Gavin.

Mercedes people carrier for 8 of us. Drivers: - Graham, Andy and Peter

The rest of us were too ancient to legally drive the hire vehicles so we could ride every inch, if we wanted to. Six days hire of the vehicles was about the same cost as train and taxis would have been.

## Getting to the start point

At 9.30am on Wed 1st Sept, the 10 man team and vehicles assembled at Ivy Cottage, (my house) where all ten bikes were crammed into the tranny protected by blankets and cardboard. Eight bikes across and two horizontal across the top. Spares, tools and luggage packed around them. John and Dave in the van and the rest of us climbed in the Merc with Graham driving. We had a brief stop halfway (lots of wassing going on)

We arrived at St. Davids early afternoon and checked in to the St Davids Cross Hotel.

## A dip in the Irish Sea

We all changed into our cycling kit for a five mile ride to the Irish Sea, into which we had planned to dip our rear wheels.

However, we arrived there to find we were at the top of a cliff! There were hundreds of steps down to the beach but only four hardy (daft?) souls were game to carry their bikes down and up - the heroic? Dave, Gavin, Andy and Peter. They filled their bottles with seawater, staggered back up and generously anointed the rest of our rear wheels. Back at base, we then anointed our bellies with copious quantities of the local ale.



## Day I. Thursday Sept 2nd. St Davids, Pembrokeshire to Llandysul, Ceredigion, 57 miles

After a full Welsh breakfast we left the UK's smallest city promptly at 9.00am into a NE breeze and overcast grey skies. Peter and Gavin took the first turns driving the vehicles as far as the lunch stop. After less than 4 miles we turned sharp left after crossing the river Solva at Middle Mill, the lowest point of the day and then hit our first serious hill; narrow, steep with a loose gravelly surface. There was much crunching of gears as we all went for the biggest cog and those at the back of the group were stopped and had to step off. Getting started again on that steep narrow road was comical. The steep climbs continued, many with grass growing up the middle so our lowest gears were well used. We encountered very little traffic but at one point a large black car forced its way past us, with the driver shouting abuse about cyclists "blocking the road" and "you don't pay road tax". We were just beginning to get angry when we realised it was Peter in our people carrier! At Welsh Hook (12 miles) we crossed the Western Cleddau stream in the bottom of a valley. At Little Newcastle (17miles) we crossed the Afon Glan Rhyd in yet another valley bottom and ran into some mizzle as we climbed higher, but it came to nothing. We continued, steep hill, river valley, steep hill all day. Somewhere about here Dave H. broke his rear derailleur cable so had no option but to ride these hills in a big gear as far as our coffee stop at Rosebush, alt.270m where our vehicles came to the rescue with toolkit and spare parts. Dave and I replaced the cable without too much faff. We were still in the middle of nowhere, and the pub didn't open until lunchtime, but agreed to serve us when we told them there were ten of us for coffee 'n cake. We pressed on to Crymmych (means crooked stream) at 33miles, the source of the Afon Taf, where we had a good lunch at Caffi'r Garreg Las and changed drivers. Graham got in the Merc, Dave drove the van. We were on the southern slopes of the Preseli hills, and lunch was lying heavy on our stomachs, particularly on Eddie's who suffered an embarrassing emergency bowel movement, high up in the hills, which caused much hilarity, and ribald toilet humour. There were at least 25 climbs of significance totalling 4200 ft of ascent. The steepest came at 37 miles. At 39 miles we passed a junction in the middle of nowhere, signposted to Star and Bwylch-y-groes - a climb I did when touring in Wales over 60 years ago with one-armed Ron Brown. At 43miles a three mile climb topped out at alt. 320m, the highest point of the day. There was then, depending on your point of view, a magnificent, exhilarating or paralytically hairy, narrow twisty and gravelly descent of about 7 miles, ending in the river Teifi valley through Llandysul. Eddie had recovered and smugly passed everyone on a short hill just before town, only for his battery to run out around the next corner just a 400 metre climb short of our hotel stop. John went back to help push the heavy Giant up the rise to our digs and complained about it for the rest of the trip. The sun came out and the Gwesty Porth Hotel, in a scenic spot next to the river, was terrific value

and we certainly ate and drank well that evening. We also had a surprise visit from Bob's sister, Anne, who lives nearby and came in to have a drink with us before we made our way to the dining room. Pembrokeshire was behind us and we were now in Cardiganshire or Ceredigion as it is known now.

### **Day 2 Friday 3rd Sept. Llandysul, Ceredigion, to Hay on Wye, Powys 69 miles**

We left the hotel promptly at 9.00am after a whopping breakfast. Prompt starts were enforced by Sarge and 2LT Kitchen with 10 minute and 5 minute warnings so that even I was ready on time. John drove the van all day with Edwin as passenger (Eddie's internal batteries didn't recharge as fast as his bike battery, and he wisely opted for an easier day). Peter drove the Merc in the morning & Graham in the afternoon. The day started with a long steady climb. In fact in the first ten miles, eight were climbing, small gears the order of the day. We crested the highest point of the whole five days route at nine miles, alt. 408m (1339ft), followed by a lovely descent for eight miles to cross the Afon Cothi river. Our scheduled stop at 24 miles was not possible, as nothing was open so we had a coffee stop out of the back of the tranny, my bro' John who was driving did the honours. I lost count of the killer climbs and valleys at twenty-five. The NE wind was constant against us. We had a scheduled refreshment stop at 47miles at Builth Wells. Leaving Builth Wells, we followed the river Wye for seven miles and decided not to take the insanely steep climb from the Wye Valley road towards Llandeilo-Graban, Llanbedr and Painscastle (a beautiful climb that Dave thought would be fun after 56 miles!). Instead we followed the national cycle route 8 for the last 13 miles along the valley to Hay-on-Wye and the welcome sight of the Swan Hotel. We had climbed nearly 4700 ft since Llandysul and were still in Wales, now in the county of Powys (used to be Brecknockshire). There was almost no traffic but I have to say that the road surfaces on these roads in Wales were as rough as a bears arse, and were playing havoc with mine.

Quite a few ales were needed to anaesthetise our legs after all those Welsh conks!

### **Day 3, Sat.4thSept. Hay on Wye, thro' Herefordshire, Worcestershire to Stratford on Avon, Warwickshire. 81miles**

Despite old guys faffing about, we miraculously left Hay on schedule at 9.00 am after yet another hearty breakfast.

Andy drove the Merc and John was in the van. Even though we were leaving Wales we still had four significant big climbs ahead of us as we continued East and the NE breeze was also taking its toll. We were straight into a 3 mile, alt.120m (394ft) climb up to alt.163m.(535ft)



We stopped for coffee and cake after 24 miles in the Wellington garden centre. Leaving there, we encountered a closed road sign. We of course decided to ignore it and came upon a bridge at Walkers Green covered in scaffolding and barriers. Undeterred we carried our bikes round, thro' and over the barriers and continued on our way. Our route zig-zagged about quite a bit today as close to a straight line as was possible using minor roads, canal paths etc.

We crested the highest point of the day after 32 miles, alt.213m (700ft) at Pencombe, Herefordshire

Our scheduled lunch stop (57miles) at the Old Correction House, Worcester which was the lowest point alt.15m on our route today. We scoffed big club sandwiches and beers. The

drivers changed to Graham and Dave. The traffic increased somewhat as we headed into England. We avoided it by joining the rather rough Worcester & Birmingham canal path for six miles to Dunhamstead (my poor arse, by now I was riding out of the saddle as much as possible). On thro' Feckenham at 66 miles and Astwood Bank 69miles the last but one conk, alt.41m.(135ft) At 77miles we ascended the very last climb with a loop up to Wilmcote, alt.a mere 85m.(279ft) We descended into Stratford on Avon at 6pm the long way round (because Dave thought we'd like to go by Anne Hathaway's house!)

The Mercure hotel was bang in the centre of town, had no space for us in their car park and our vans were too tall for the NCP car park, so Dave and Graham had to carry bags a long way to the hotel. Fortunately we didn't arrive early enough to help them. We sank a few beers in here before ablutions. We hadn't booked the hotel restaurant, and Stratford was rammed with racegoers and football fans cos there was a lot going down in the old town today, so we ate at 'Ask', an Italian restaurant nearby, which mercifully had room to fit us in. It was very good, both food and drink. Very convivial. We were now in the East Midlands.





#### Day 4, Sun 5th Sept. Stratford on Avon, thro, Warwick, Northamptonshire to St Ives, Cambridgeshire, 89 miles

We got away from busy Stratford on Avon promptly without incurring any fines for parking on the road outside the Mercure. By consensus, it was the least liked of the five hotels we used. OK but unremarkable. Peter drove the Merc and John drove the van. The terrain we were to cover today was getting less hilly, rather than flatter. We still had over 3600 ft of climbing ahead of us in the 89/90 miles to our destination. The NE breeze was still in our faces. Heading out we stopped at Warwick Castle for a photo opportunity. Then on to Royal Leamington Spa, where we passed by Gavin's old school, Myton High School and rode for two miles along the Grand Union Canal on the N.C.R.41. The rough surface played havoc with my sore arse! The road sloped mostly up to our first scheduled refreshment stop, a pub at 29 miles, The Old Plough in the small village of Braunston, Northamptonshire. It was a bad choice..... we were there for an hour and a half for a few beers and some crappy sandwiches. Not good, but, the sun was shining. When we finally got away from there, within two miles we had reached the highest point of the day alt. 167m(548ft)...near Welton. At 34/35 miles we crossed a canal, went left along the south side for half a mile then back over it again!? - the bikes having to be manhandled across them as they were not rideable type bridges. Immediately there was a bridge over another canal coming in at right angles. We were all bridged out, but roads ahead stayed at high altitude for the next twenty miles. We were still up at alt.120m (394ft). At 52 miles we reached our second scheduled refreshment stop near Wellingboro' at Beckworth Garden Centre. Here I abandoned & got in the van with John, who was driving that afternoon as my backside was torturing me.

The riders carried on from here, through Wellingboro' on really good cycle paths, making up for time lost at the pub (despite a long delay at Offord Cluny level crossing whilst waiting for six high speed trains to speed by). They passed



south of Grafham Water reservoir at 75 miles. It was undulating but generally downhill to Godmanchester and the Huntingdon area and then over the Great Ouse and into St Ives, where we settled into our digs, the Slepe Hall Hotel. It was a nice place. We slaked our thirsts with several beers. They were not doing food that day so Graham grasped the nettle and ordered a dozen large pizzas!... Pappa Johns delivered. It was a lovely evening for sitting outside, Pizzas, wine and beer, what more could a hungry touring cyclist want? We were now into Cambridgeshire.

#### Day 5, Mon 6th Sept. St Ives, through Norfolk and Suffolk to our destination, Ness Point, Lowestoft. 98 miles

Drivers; Graham in the Merc, Gav In the van am, & John pm.

St Ives is only 9m(29ft) above sea level. We were now in the flat country hooray! you can see for miles across the Fens. Only 2500 ft of ascent in 98 miles and easy peasy gradual inclines. It was a fine day. It was flat but road surfaces were rough. Peter was requested to ride on the front at a steady fifteen mph which he did to good effect. We headed out N & E for a couple of miles to Bluntisham at five miles, joined the River Great Ouse and over the smaller River Delph at seven miles, then N alongside the New Bedford river, then E to Witchford at fifteen miles then Ely at eighteen. Here we stopped to admire the magnificent Ely cathedral. Wow! Built by the Normans to deter the Danes & overawe the Saxons, it rises over the Fens like a galleon at sea. We stopped at the East end and took in this stupendous late Gothic pile, rebuilt after a collapse in the 14th century. (Detail taken from 'Europe's Greatest Cathedrals'..ed. )

We crossed the Great Ouse again at twenty miles, through Prickwillow then across the fens to Lakenheath 33 ish miles, where we stopped by the van at side of road and finished our cakes and last night's pizza. Yummy!? On to Wangford then Brandon & Thetford 44 miles. The highest point was at Magpie Green, Alt.57m. (187ft), just before Diss, Norfolk, our lunch stop at 60 miles. We had gained only Alt.48m(157ft) in 60 miles.! The Thatchers Needle was a great pub. Slick service, great beers and great food.





I abandoned here, unable to torture myself on that saddle any longer, despite lashings of Sudocrem. So I got in the van with bro John for the last 30+miles. The roads this far East in Suffolk were quite busy with traffic, a big contrast to those we had left behind in Wales.

The riders arrived dead on time, well, not dead, but on time as predicted by our pathfinder in his resume'.

We had reached Ness Point, Lowestoft and gazed out over the North Sea and we were Alt.7m(23ft) lower than our westernmost start point. You can't go any further without getting wet! Gavin, Dave & Andy climbed down and dipped their front wheels in the sea to complete the job. Ness Point is marked by a huge circular concrete 'dartboard' feature on which we assembled for a final photo

We changed our kit, packed all the bikes and bags into the van and set off for home feeling anticlimactic.

It had been very good.



#### Footnote:

We had not gone off course on the very complex 400 mile route right across the UK following Dave's course on our various gps devices, But in the dark, driving home, somewhere around Ipswich, there was a slight panic as John & Gavin, leading in the van, managed to miss a turning on the motorway but redeemed themselves by somehow contriving to get back on course without delaying our arrival at home. (John blames Gavin for gabbling in his ear at the critical moment).

# GP Jacques Fiolet 5<sup>th</sup> Sept 2021

(promoted by L'Olympique Hesdin-Marconne)



This is certainly an event which, in the normal way of things, HDW members would be unlikely ever to hear about, but last year I happened to be present as a spectator.

While we all know something of the Tour de France, even if only through television, I found it interesting to see how a non elite, club level race is run in France today



The course consists of 42 laps of a 2.2 kilometre course (making 92 kms). It is entirely within the town of Hesdin, which is closed to traffic for the afternoon; there are cobbled sections, notably up the small climb to the finish. There were 72 starters and it was clearly a hard fought race with about ten left in the leading break to contest the sprint. The race merited a report in La Voix du Nord which is the regional paper for the north of France.

This is the sort of event that most members have had experience of in England where, as we all know, these races are becoming harder and harder to run. I wonder if there would be any interest in an HDW trip to the 69<sup>th</sup> edition of this race in September 2022?

Although it's not a famous bike riders destination, The Seven Valleys (as the area is known) is excellent for cycling. It has well surfaced roads, little traffic and interesting terrain – you can ride along beside one of the rivers or climb across from one valley to another (hard going!). It is quite possible to ride from Calais (about 45 miles) or it's about an hour's drive. This is not suggested as a single day trip, but I should be able to arrange suitable accommodation in Torcy, about ten miles north of Hesdin.

Obviously this project would depend on the Covid situation at the time, but it's reasonable to hope that the situation next year will at least not be worse than it is now.

Let me know if you're interested.



Chris Lovibond.





## Club Camp 2021



No one likes to be a stick in the mud - unfortunately this was the fate of John (Keeper of the Flame) Marshall at the start of club camp.

Plenty of helpers to get him on the move again though!



The annual ride to Bath, via the Kennet and Avon canal tow path and the musical tunnel, with fish and chip lunch on arrival (above and right)



Left: Coffee at Mipo

Bottom Left: Coffee at Honey Street

Below: John Marshall tending the bonfire

Bottom right: Pewsey

Right: David Howe - Life at camp





# Club news & notes



Left and above:  
The annual 'around Basingstoke' ride



Riders out and about



## Club Strava Group (reminder)

Anyone wishing to join the club should search for 'Hounslow' in Strava and you will find the Club Group, you can then request to 'join the group' and one of our group admins will admit you to the secure group.

I am happy to answer any questions via email if anyone would like to know more.

Ian Kirk:  
[ianjkirk@gmail.com](mailto:ianjkirk@gmail.com)



## Your club committee

**President**  
Jeff Marshall  
**Chairman & Membership Secretary**  
Graham Davis  
**Secretary**  
Bill Carnaby  
**Treasurer**  
Martyn Roach  
**Racing Secretary**  
Bruce McMichael  
**(trophies)**  
Dave Sykes  
**Captain**  
Jeff Marshall  
**Dinner Secretary**  
Linda Williams  
**Magazine Editor**  
Patsy Howe  
**Press Officer**  
Chris Lovibond  
**Website Manager**  
Ian Kirk

## 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

Please contact the editor with your contributions or suggestions.  
It's your magazine!