

# NEWS R/S/C LETTER

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December 1957.

Dear Clubmates,

Here comes the end to another year - not one that shines out as memorable for the club but that is as a result of loosing some of our best riders and a loss of enthusiasm on the part of the rest. Still, every club has its ups and downs doesn't it? Yes of course they do! Well we are in the trough of one of the downs and we're on our way up.

What would be a good thing this winter, if possible, is to arrange a club outing to a pantomime and a smashing club beano down to Southend by coach. I'm sure we would see a lot of members who haven't been to the clubroom for ages.

By the way, did you go to Les Warner's lecture at Battersea the other Friday, it was very good wasn't it? I must say I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of it including the tea and cakes in the interval. I don't know anything about photography but there were certainly some wonderful views. I think Les must be one of the brothers they don't talk about.

I hear Graham Collins is in Cyprus - best of luck Graham - we're looking forward to seeing you again.

May I wish to all fellow club members a Merry Christmas and sincere best wishes for 1958.

Bill Morgan.

Gaunt are the trees which bore the wealth  
Of leaves whose shreds we lock  
So often on the dusty road,  
Far from the cooling brook  
Now glassy stares its icy face,  
Where hardy rovers ride  
With hearts still warm as every year  
At each Christmastide.

Bill Morgān (Snr.)

DON'T FORGET THE CHRISTMAS MORNING RUN - TIBBETS CORNER 9.30 A.M.

RUNS REPORT

Lately club runs have been well attended with quite a number of new faces - one of whom has still got my old jumper.

More people are wanted as runs leaders so as to get as many different places to go as possible.

B.M.

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THE IRISH LETTER

Tullymucclescrag, Parish of  
Ballyraggett,  
Near Ballysluggathey,  
County of Kilkenny,  
Ireland.

Jinuary the 1th.

My Dear Nephew,

I haven't sent ye a letter since the last time I wrote to ye becase we have moved from our former place of livin' and I didn't know where a letther would find ye; but I now with pleasure take up my pen to inform ye of the death of yer ownly livin' uncle, Ned Fitzpatrick, who died very suddenly a few days ago after a lingerin' illness of six weeks.

The poor fellow was in violent convulsions the whole time of his sickness, lyin' perfectly quiet and intirely speechless - all the while talkin' incoherently and crying for wather. I had no opportunity of informin' ye of his death sooner, except I wrote ye by the last post, which same went off two days before he died; and then ye would have postage to pay. I am at loss to tell what he death was occasioned by, but I fear it wasy by his last sickness, for he was never well ten days together during the whole of his confinement; and I believe his death was brought about by his aitin' too much rabbit; stuffed with pais and gravy, or pais and gravy stuffed with rabbit; but be that as it may, when he brathed his last, his dacther give up all hope of his recovery.

I needn't tell ye anything about his age, for ye well know that in June next he would have been just seventy-five years old lacking ten months and had he lived till that time would have been just six months dead. His property now devolves to his next of kin, which all died some time ago, so that I expect it will be devided between us; and ye know his property, which was very large, was sold to pay his debts, and the remainder he lost at a horse race; but it was the opinion of iverybody at the time - that he would have won the race if the baste he run against hand't been too fast for him.

I niver saw a man in all my life, and the docthers all said so, that observed directions or took medicine better than he did. He siad he would as leve dhrink bitter as sweet if it only had the same taste, and ipecakana as whisky punch if it would put him in the same humour for fighting. But, poor sowl! he will niver ate of dhrink any more, and ye haven't a livin' relation in the world except meself and yer rwo cousins who were kilt in the last war.

I cannot dwell on the mournful subject any longer, and shall sale me letther with balck salin was and put it in yer uncle's coat-of -arms. So I beg ye not to brake the sale when ye open the letther, and don't open it until two or three days aafter ye resave this, and by that time ye will be

well prepared for the sorrowful tidings. Yer old sweetheart sinds her love unknownst to ye. When Jerry McGhee arrives in America, ax him for this letter and if de don't brung it from amongst the rest, tell him it's the one that spakes about yer uncles death, saled in black.

I remain yer affectionate ould Grandmother,

Bridget O'Hoolegoin.

## END-OF-YEAR REPORTS

### From the Treasurer

It is customary for me at this time of the year to give you a brief review of the Club's profits and losses on its activities during the past twelve months, and, in doing so, it is very gratifying to note that we have kept expenses down to the minimum this year and that the Club has made a small profit of £2.

This is due in no small way to the hard work and diligence particularly of Fred Parsons in not only finding a new venue for the annual dinner but also in making a profit from it of £1.6.6 - the first for many years. Also due to him, and backed up by his wife Lucie, we made the very useful sum of £22 on our promotions at Battersea Town Hall. We are also greatly indebted to the efficiency and enthusiasm of our Assistant Social Secretary Brenda, and her friends, in collecting for us at the Clubroom £27.5.10, against the cost of £32.17.6. It's as well to point out here that the Clubroom charges went up in August to 15/- per evening; that is another £6.10 a year, so I hope attendances will be maintained and possibly increased to offset this in the coming year. In running the 12hour, Bill Reed did well to keep the administrative expenses, £46.8.4, inside the income of £46.17.6, and had we had a full entry, I am sure we should have shown a profit on this too.

Our 97 members have paid £39.5 in subscriptions - a decrease of 7/6d on last year, and we have reluctantly struck-off six members for non-payment. Our sincere thanks to those who donated £8.5.6 to the funds.

Subscribers to the "News Letter" were 59 against 66 last year, and a loss of £3.14 is shown, though some of this is held in stocks of materials.

Printing and postage expenses were kept to the same level at £16. Due to higher costs, medals and engraving were £30.10.6 as against £25.14.7 in 1956. Club events having been poorly supported this year, entry fees came to £5 as compared with £7.17.6 in the previous season, and standard attempts are also down to £1.13 as against £2.7.

Cash in hand and at the bank amounts to £71.16.5, so we face another year financially sound, but I do urge you to let me have your subscriptions now! - (yes, they became due on December 1) - to enable me to meet the Club's commitments.

"Every mile a smile" in 1958.

George Oliver  
Hon. Treasurer

From the Time-Trial Secretary

Of the six Club events that were proposed, the "50" and "30" were cancelled through lack of support. Entries for the four "25"s were as follows:

March 3 (Medium Gear)	-	6	entries
March 24	-	15	"
May 19	-	9	"
July 7	-	6	"

The average number of entries per event is fewer than during last season, due no doubt to fewer members racing and to the fact that some have been serving in H.M Forces.

Jim Dabbs is Club Champion, with an average speed of 21.613 m.p.h, and he also takes the "100" Trophy for the fastest ride of the year at that distance. Reg Smith is runner-up in the Club championship. The "50" Trophy was won by Brian Morrison with a ride of 2.9.53: he also ties with Phil Parkinson for the Handicap award.

Although entries were down on last year, members started fairly keen but entries for open events etc. dropped after August. I hope that next season will see this rectified, and that we have more members racing.

Finally, my thanks go to Brenda and her friends for marshalling in all the Club events that were run. Without their help we should have been in a very sorry state for marshals on some occasions.

David Laws  
Han. T.T Secretary

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From the Mass-Start Secretary

The South Western's road racing during the 1957 season, although starting full of promise with more Licence holders than in 1956, suffered heavily in the collapse of our racing activities. We were well represented in the early season events, but members gradually dropped out of the competitive field until approximately half-way through the season when only one Club member (David Laws) was still racing. Being a lone rider, he then wisely decided to ride only in time trials.

The only bright spots in the season were Phil Parkinson's performance in the Kingston Phoenix R.R 90 miles at Chobham when, on a rainy day, he was fifth, and completed his list of qualifying performances for his 2nd-Category Licence; and Jim Dabbs' ride in the tour of Norfolk 2-day road race at Whitsun, in which he was the only member of our team to finish. This was a fine performance, particularly when one remembers the weather conditions last Whitsun and the fact that our team was hopelessly outclassed by such riders as Owen Blower and Bill Seggar. 6

The following is a list of events in which S.W.R.C members competed during the 1957 season:

<u>March</u>	<u>Spring Crit.</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Lancing R.R</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>Metro R.R</u>
B.R. Morrison - 10th	P.S. Parkinson - 22nd	K.J. Verco - 12th			
K.J. Verco - D.N.S	B.R. Morrison - 24th	D.F. Laws - 15th			
W.T.W. Cory - D.N.F	J.C. Dabbs - D.N.F	P.S. Parkinson - 20th			
		J.C. Dabbs - 20th			

<u>May</u>	<u>Ravensbury Prem. R.R</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>Cowfold Cirt. R.R</u>
P.S. Parkinson - D.N.F		B.R. Morrison - 23rd	
K.J. Verco - D.N.F		W.T. Squirrell - D.N.F	
D.F. Laws - D.N.F		W. Morgan - D.N.F	

<u>May</u>	<u>Thornton Minor R.R</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>29th Wheelers R.D</u>
R.A. Maylin - D.N.F		B.R. Morrisson - D.N.F	
W.T. Squirrell - D.N.S		K.J. Verco - D.N.F	
W. Morgan - D.N.S		D.F. Laws - D.N.F	

<u>June</u>	<u>Kingston Ph'x R.R</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>Surrey Sec. Junior Champ.</u>
P.S. Parkinson - 5th		R.A. Maylin - D.N.F	
J.C. Dabbs - 8th			
D.F. Laws - D.N.F			

Tour of Norfolk 2-Day R.R

<u>1st Day</u>		<u>2nd Day</u>		<u>Gen'l. Classification</u>	
P.S. Parkinson - 20th	J.C. Dabbs - 12th	J.C. Dabbs - 31st			
B.R. Morrison - 26th	P.S. Parkinson - D.N.S	P.S. Parkinson - D.N.F			
J.C. Dabbs - 27th	B.R. Morrison - D.N.S	B.R. Morrison - D.N.F			
D.F. Laws - D.N.F	D.F. Laws - D.N.S	D.F. Laws - D.N.F			

B.R. Morrison  
(ex) Mass-Start Secretary

FASHION NOTE

"Either knickerbockers, knee-breeches, or trousers may be worn. Trousers, however, are certainly the least suitable, as having no support at the knee they are sure to slip downwards and drag. The gaiters adopted by the C.T.C have their advocates, but they are hotter than stockings. Riders with abnormal calves will do well to tone them down with wide and somewhat baggy knickerbockers, but the youth with attenuated limbs should encase them in pretty closely fitting breeches."

Badminton Library - Cycling  
1887

## BLACK MOUNTAIN MEMORY

What, I wonder, do most people think of when one mentions South Wales? Cardiff and coal mines, perhaps, singing miners and slag heaps: and yet tucked away in that corner of this island lies a wealth of unequalled scenery, some of it wildly beautiful, but tempting only to those with a genuine desire to seek-out and explore the remoteness of its high hills and quiet valleys. It was with such a desire that some of us adopted the motto "England Forever - Wales for Easter" this year, and although the full story of our Welsh wanderings has yet to be told in print, I am tempted - mainly because of a memory jogged by a recent article in a cycling magazine - to tell you of Easter Sunday 1957, and of our few hours amid those bewitching heights - the Black Mountains.

It was already a little on the late side when we left Llangattock: packed lunches (sandwiches for ten) had to be waited for; Bill decided at the last minute to call at a local shop and buy a bottle of "pop" to help the sandwiches down later on; and George developed spindle trouble, which looked like preventing him from getting far enough to deserve the sandwiches anyway. But at last we were climbing out of Crickhowell, away from the wide valley of the Usk, along the dancing, twisting, lane that flirts with the early miles of the Grwyne Fawr stream to Pont Newydd and a little beyond. Now sweating, now swooshing, now stopping (any excuse) to have a chat with a Welsh shepherd gathering in his Easter-bleating lambs, we pedalled our crocodile concertined way through countryside heavy with Spring and green with promise. On our left hand, their purple slopes frowning as grey clouds overtook the early morning sun, rose the Black Mountains; and as we turned towards the north to face them the narrowing trough of the Vale of Ewyas stretched down to greet us like some crooked finger beckoning us to the remoteness of the mountain heart. On the previous day, a day smiling with the good-nature of Spring sunshine, we had marvelled at the grandeur and solitude of the Brecon Beacons; and now the Black Mountains were to cast their own similar spell.

The sombre ruins of Llanthony Abbey had us off the bikes to linger a while "gazing on memorials", and no sooner had we left the village (what there is of it) than we were brought to earth once again by a resounding explosion from John's tyre. It was a major repair job, too. Tubes to change, tyres to swap, and the usual quantities of "goo", patch, and canvas. And to add to the tribulation large splattering blobs of rain began to whisper on the hedgerows, and things to the north began to look decidedly gloomy. It was not to last, however, and by the time we had switchbacked a few more miles to Capel-y-ffin those ahead of us were decape-ing, and anxious talk of lunch was on their lips. Capel-y-ffin: I wonder if those of us who were fortunate enough to be there that day will ever forget it.

George really started the ball rolling; first by making ga-ga eyes at the dear lady in the cottage by the church, and then - with a noise like the rattle of an empty cup - by asking about the possibility of tea for ten. And in less time than it takes to say "tea leaves" the ten of us had found a way round the great oak settle just inside the door, and had invaded the welcoming warmth of that Welsh kitchen. Sandwiches were soon spread over the table, as was a motley assortment of cups and saucers of all sizes; the settle braced itself to take about half-a-dozen of us, others found easy chairs, George - as usual - found a cat, and on an obviously never-to-be-extinguished monster of a range a black battery of bubbling kettles hung and spluttered in welcome impatience to fill the waiting pots. And we did not dine unobserved, either: for around us, in every conceivable corner and on every convenient shelf, gazed china dogs and china cats, "presents from Porthcawl", faded photos of faded faces, bacon bills and corn merchants calendars; while, above us, longing to be released from captivity and an age of head-bumping, hung a ham so dusty that even the resident flies had given it up as a bad job. Oh that I could write with a Welsh accent, for over all this eye-catching delight rose the sing-song, tell-tale voice of our hostess as she hovered in wellington-booted majesty (too old to posh myself up now, look you) to attend our thirsty wants. Tales of hard winters and lost flocks, she told us; tales of baking bread, of "my old man", and of the secrets of interior decorating. Yes, the kitchen was all her own work, the wallpaper had been put there with her own fair hand; and we gazed in bemused wonder at the way in which it followed a seemingly endless route - in one piece - over wall, shelves, doors, cupboards, ceiling, beams, and - to judge from some of the bumps - over the pictures too. Never has lunch passed so delightfully and so quickly, and never have ten people been so reluctant to venture outdoors again.

Once a rough delight for cyclists, the road from Capel-y-ffin to Hay-on-Wye has been surfaced and, in spite of its persisting narrowness, now attracts the pleasure-seeking motorist. So it was to quieter delights that we turned. Swinging left, the narrow lane soon lifted us high above the Nant-y-Bwch stream and past the Monastery - now a Youth Hostel, while on the green valley slopes the sheep dogs were working on the Spring lambs and the fields echoed with the bleat, the bark, and the commanding whistle. A surprise meeting with Reg Gammon sent us off in even higher spirits towards the waiting heights, and as we passed through the gate at the foot of his mountain retreat the road finished. A green track wandered away into the quiet distance. The mountains were ours.

It is a land of green and brown up there, of grey rock, and intense quiet. No cough of engine, no smell of exhaust, invades the Nant-y-Bwch; only the distant sound of the stream itself as it finds a way over rock and ledge in the deepening valley below, or the occasional champ and stamp of a wild and ragged pony that surveys you - a trespasser on his domain - with a rivetting, suspicious eye. Well defined - even rideable here and there if one isn't too occupied in standing and dreaming - the path threads its way round the shoulder

of Lord Hereford's Knob, and in one final surge lifts the traveller up to the edge of Rhiw Wen to stand spellbound at the view. For here the Black Mountain chain falls away in a precipitous sweep to the valley of the winding Wye, and as far as the eye can see the Radnor Forest stretches into the blue haze of the mountains of Mid-Wales beyond. Even on that grey afternoon, with only an occasional sneaking shaft of truant sun, it was an unforgettable sight.

Shortly after the summit, the track disappears for a while; and we found our various ways down that mountainside, tipped at an alarming angle, as best we could: some walking, some running (they couldn't help it), and others riding almost vertically across the steep green slope. With brake-aching fingers we were not sorry to find a reasonably surfaced lane again, but we still had a lot of height to lose and it flung us down and round a series of blind hair-pin bends that swept us into Ffordd-las in a haze of burning rubber and peals of laughter.

Tea in Talgarth, and a chance meeting with some of our racing men who were Easter-ing there, and then over the Pentre gap - Llangattock bound once more. Yet still our adventures were not over, for who could pass by Tretower without a glance at its famous fortified manor house, now in the process of superb restoration to some of its original glory. Disappointment first, when we found it closed: but fortune was smiling on us that day, and - as if out of the blue - the custodian appeared and, sensing our interest, he opened the place up especially for us to wander and to wonder in. We wandered a great deal, and wondered, too; at the glories of wood and stone that had withstood the ravages and changes of the years, and grown beautiful with age.

That grey day, too, had grown lovely with time, for as late evening wore on the sun escaped the clouds again, and when we once more took to the road - well positioned for the inevitable "bathroom stakes" - the sky turned pale gold over the summits of the Black Mountains.

L.W

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BECAUSE IT'S CHRISTMAS

"On Christmas Eve I hung at the foot of my bed Bessie Bunter's black stocking, and always, I said, I would stay awake all the moonlit, snowlit night to hear the roof-alighting reindeer and see the hollied boot descend through soot. But soon the sand of the snow drifted into my eyes, and, though I stared towards the fire-place and around the flickering room where the black sack-like stocking hung, I was asleep before the chimney trembled and the room was red and white with Christmas. But in the morning, though no snow melted on the bedroom floor, the stocking bulged and brimmed: press it, it squeaked like a mouse-in-a-box; it smelt of tangerine....."

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from Dylan Thomas