



BOTTOM GEAR

The OFFICIAL Voice of the SWRC

December 1998

Editor

SWRC sponsors

Issue 13

Tony Sayers

Evans Cycles/Technical Sales(London)Ltd

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HILL CLIMB 1998

From our vantage point, at the bend, near the top of the hill this event was as exciting as ever; the cries of the spectators (and there were quite a few) urging the participants to find that extra ounce of energy that would make the difference between a respectable time and a coveted placing in the first three. This event is almost as popular (if not as popular) as the 2UP Series at the beginning of the season. The main difference being the ratio of spectators to participants - it is almost embarrassing being one of about ten fit (?) Cyclists watching our equally (?) fit comrades actually representing SWRC in this inter club event. Let's try for a larger entry in 1999 - maybe a few practice rides would help persuade some of us to make the effort?

Scott Bugden just missed out on repeating last years success in this interclub event with Epsom CC. Scott came in second with a time of

2m 58s - the winner from Epsom CC completed the climb in 2m 42s. I am afraid I did not manage to get all the times of all the other SWRC riders who took part, but those I did get are listed below:-

Scott Bugden	2m 58
Paul Foster	3m 18
Keith Bugden	3m 22
John Harris	3m 23
Ken Dolman	3m 28

Apologies to those whose times I have not listed or for any that I have reported incorrectly. One whose time I know I have forgotten is new member Gavin (sorry Gavin) - a valiant first effort.

* * * * *

SLIDE SHOW PART II

Back by popular demand, Paul Carpenter (Snappy to his friends) has kindly agreed to give us another slide show. This will take place in the club room on 16th March 1999 and will be entitled "Tour de France & Spring Classics, 1998". There will be a charge of £3 per person which includes club night subs and is open to members and 'friends'. The turnout of 'friends' last year could have been better for this entertaining evening and I hope you will spread the word amongst the local cycling fraternity to swell the numbers this time around. The Show will start at 8.30 pm sharp.

Winter 1998

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EDITORIAL

The AGM on 6th December marks the end of another season - or does it? It is certainly time to reflect on the years successes, failures and what might have been, for the club as a whole and all of us individually. Although the racing and time trialing season has drawn to a close there will still be the regular club runs to look forward to (just to stop you getting too stale). There is also the annual football match against the fire brigade team this weekend (6/12/98) and a mountain bike time trial organised by Gary Smith, also for this weekend. And, hey, what about the Christmas shopping bike ride on the 16th, or the winter Roller Racing competition. Didn't we have a mince meat pie evening with a couple of fun quizzes last year? Will we be starting the group turbo training evenings in the new year? What do you mean, "I haven't even been told about these!". Although we try to give advance notice of all organised events in advance through 'Bottom Gear', it is only a quarterly mag after all and if someone says "Why don't we organise", or "How about some of us getting together for....." we can't let it pass, can we?

Undoubtedly, the best way of keeping in touch with what is going on (or, more to the point, what is about to go on) is at the club room. Even if you can't make it every week, an appearance once in a while should keep you in the picture - Keep you in the picture, that's right, didn't some of us get together for a 'photo opportunity' late in the season, and wasn't the picture published in Cycling Weekly?

Even if you, personally, didn't have a very good season, take heart from those members who did. Read elsewhere in this mag about the successes of Scott Bugden and Ruth Hutton to name but two, and what about our band of Surrey League regulars? - not a bad turnout there either.

As I have said, we do try to give as much notice as possible of organised events etc. In this edition we have

given dates (even if not full details) for the 2UP competition, a training weekend (sorry, this one's to Eastbourne, the one to Majorca's already fully booked), a SWRC organised Veterans Race on the Hillingdon circuit, another SWRC event (Road Race) on the Ellens Green circuit and A SWRC Randonnee in May. But, please don't wait to be told - ask!

Caught on the Web - Having been told I had made a mistake in the reporting of Jo's forthcoming entry in the Canadian Ironman competition in the last edition of Bottom Gear I was embarrassed, yes, but not unduly worried about repercussions, after all Jo was safely back in New Zealand (not Australia as I led you to believe) and no one had her address to send her a copy, did they? I hadn't counted on the 'World Wide Web', had I? Once back on home turf, Jo decided to look us up via Ian Maylin's web pages. Not only did she read a copy almost as soon as many of you did, back came a chastising E-Mail, just as quick. I take it on the chin and hereby apologise profusely to Jo. I don't think that Jo has taken it too much to heart though, because she has kindly sent us, all the way from NEW ZEALAND (via the internet) an account of her astonishing endeavours which I have included in this edition for you to sweat over whilst

lounging in your favourite armchair watching the rain through the window.

On with the mag!

* * * * *

SHEAR TORTURE - (My title, not Jo's)

Having recently returned from my two month sojourn overseas, I'm in the mood for reminiscing, so the following is my promised article for 'Bottom Gear'. Firstly though, I'd like to say how much I enjoyed riding with you guys. It was so cool to be able to have such an endless choice of routes to take and I was reminded of how great the Surrey/Sussex area is for cycling. (The cafe stops were great too!) I am going to find it so difficult to remain enthusiastic about cycling over here when the only options for long rides are "out and backs"!

I left New Zealand at the beginning of July and headed straight to Germany where I was to compete in the Ironman held in Roth on 12 July. I stayed with a wonderful family over there and was joined a few days before the race by my good friend Pauline Carter (whom many of you will know). It was great to have her there, not least because I could have a full conversation with someone in English! Unfortunately, on the

LOST IN THE TRANSLATION

Have you ever bought something made overseas and struggled with instructions not quite successfully translated into the Queen's (or anybody else's) English?

After buying some equipment over in France this year, an anonymous member used the French instructions to assemble his new acquisition and was then dumbfounded to find the following English (?) translation overleaf. From the instructions can you work out what our member bought?

"Be careful! Don't forget to pinch the hook's end, after they are in good position. The big rod gets up at the bottom of the back". Apart from missing the name of the item from the end of the second sentence (which sort of gives the game away), these are the full instructions

STOP PRESS: Anyone following Bob Maylin through the lanes on one of the club runs this winter should give him plenty of lead just in case one of his mudguards comes adrift

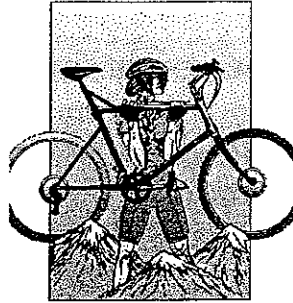


Tuesday before the race, my family insisted in taking me ten pin bowling. Whilst it was great fun, I should have known better as it aggravated a back/hip injury I have had, which subsequently forced me to withdraw from the event after the bike ride when my left leg had totally seized up and I was unable to run. It was really disappointing as it was an event I have always wanted to do and is the fastest in the world (however, on race day, the conditions were terrible - cold and raining - so no-one was breaking any records!).

From Germany, I went straight to London where I took a while to get over the race and had to have quite a lot of chiropractic treatment to get my back/hip right. I had to restrict my running for a while but, it was still wonderful to have the opportunity to train full time, even if only for six weeks. I can see how much difference it must make as you get the chance to rest and recover between sessions, rather than stressing out and trying to fit everything in with a full time job. I headed to Canada feeling really confident that my training had gone well, particularly my cycling and running. The event is held in the town of Penticton, BC, which has a population of 50,000. I was actually staying with two other Kiwi friends in a ski resort up a mountain about 40 minutes drive from the town. It was a spectacular area and the weather was fantastic every day - in the mid 30's. In fact they had had such a good summer that they had a problem with bears coming down really low searching for food, and I was actually lucky enough to spot three bears during my stay and managed to get a couple of photos fairly close up. Goodness knows what I would have done if I had come across one on a run - apparently, the secret is to take someone who is slower than you so that the bear will get to them first! Anyway, on to the race

For those of you who don't know, an Ironman consists of a 3.8km (2.4 mile) swim, 180km (112 mile) cycle ride and a 42.2km (26 mile) run. You may think not many people would do such a crazy

event but such is the popularity that the 1999 Ironman Canada is already oversubscribed - and they accept 1700 entrants! (and there was me thinking of getting in an early entry - Ed). People pay for the pain! Because I was racing



as a professional, we are given a separate start line for the swim which is great for the good guys but not for those of us who aren't great at swimming, we always end up getting swum over by the fast age group men, so it can be a pretty frightening experience out there. I was a bit disappointed with my time of 1:07 as I am usually around 1:03 but in the overall scheme of things a few minutes doesn't matter too much, so I didn't let it worry me - and I was pleased to see a few professional women were actually behind me! I was feeling pretty good for the first two hours of the bike and felt like I was on for a good one. However, although I didn't realise it at the time, I made the major mistake of not drinking enough electrolytes and this was to catch up with me later in the day. There is a major climb of 11km on the course which I didn't find too much trouble but this is then followed by several hills which do eventually take their toll. Even though I wasn't feeling that flash because it was so damned hot (reportedly up to 40 degrees at different times on the course) I did pass some other professional women who I normally wouldn't be in the same time zone with so that really spurred me on - they were suffering too! I got off the bike in a total time of just under 7 hours which was well off what I had been aiming for but on such a difficult day times were obviously a lot slower than usual. Usually, I can run between 3:30 to 3:40 for the marathon in a Ironman and I felt confident of going faster than that with the way my training had been going. I felt really good to start with and felt like I was flying past

other competitors, however, at 10 miles I started getting really bad cramp in my calves and quadriceps. At that stage I realised what an idiot I had been with not paying enough attention to my electrolytes so started throwing down the drinks which the race supplied. Unfortunately though it was a little late to make any difference so I had to shuffle through the rest of the run with straight legs, not being able to push off with any power at all. The aid stations were 1 mile apart and usually they seem to come up really quickly but on that day it just seemed like forever between them. Funny though, there were an awful lot of people who were suffering and although I was shuffling along I still managed to pass a few!

The volunteers were absolutely awesome and what really makes you laugh is when they tell you that you are looking good when you know you must look like death with coke, water, sports drink and squeezies all over you! Seeing a few people throwing up at the side of the road did make me realise that maybe I wasn't too badly off though!

I eventually managed to get to the finish in 11:09 (almost an hour slower than the best time I have done) so it was really disappointing but I was determined to get at least one finishers shirt out of the trip. A lot of other people had suffered too and in a race where they usually see 150 go faster than 10 hours, this year there were only about 25! What I found amazing though was that as I crawled in to the finish there were still people just finishing off the bike ride and setting off on the marathon - now they were in for an extremely long day! I really admire people who do Ironman when they know they are going to be lucky to make the cut off time of 17 hours. I certainly wouldn't do it if I thought it would take me that long - it must be so much harder than doing it in 10 hours, they are on their feet for so long.

Anyway (not that I really cared about the final result after what I had been through) I managed to get 9th professional which was quite a surprise,



however, some age group women passed me in the last few miles and I was actually 15th woman and 180th overall. So not a top 10 this time I'm afraid but I am pleased I made myself finish. There is nothing I hate more than "professionals" who pull out simply because they are not doing as well as they think they should be! It was honestly the hardest thing I have ever done and it's been many years since I have had to walk down stairs backwards after a race, but I certainly did for a couple of days after Canada! Somehow though I managed to dance the night away at the party the night after the event!

So, last week I returned to work and reality and I can tell you it wasn't easy! I am going to slowly get back into training as I must admit I have been lazy since crossing the finish line. I haven't made any definite plans for racing yet but a return to the UK next year is not out of the question. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, particularly the cycling, so I hope to be back some time to join you all on club runs and maybe a few races. Thanks for being so supportive and also to Bob for the bar end (yes, I did look at it and think of SWRC and I'm sure it helped me get through the hell ride!).

Jo

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TWO UP TIME

Hot off the press, I can confirm that the dates for the 1999 2-Up Series have been set as Sunday, 14th March (first round) and Sunday, 28th March 1999 (second and final round). For those of you that are new to the club, it is worthwhile noting that this very popular event is the start of the 1999 Time Trialing season. Not that this should put you off even if you do not see yourself as a regular 'Tester'. The emphasis is as much on 'friendly get together' as serious competition.

Just pick yourself a partner (preferably one who will not tear your legs off) and add your name to the start sheet which will be posted in the Club Room in the New Year. The handicapping

CHRISTMAS MTB RIDE/SHOPPING TRIP

As the regulars at the Club Room will know, our good friend Martin Saunders has been organising regular mountain bike rides these last couple of months. Not to be out-manouvered by the winter weather or the wifely demands for 'a help with the shopping', Martin has arranged a combined MTB Ride cum Shopping Trip for December.

This Christmas 'Fun Ride', on Sunday 13th December, starts at 9.30am from the car park of the William Morris Pub at Colliers Wood (yes, that's right, Colliers Wood - everyone knows there's plenty of off-road opportunity around there (?)). For those of you coming to the start by car, it is recommended that you park in the Sainsbury's Sava Centre car park near by. The ride is only 16 miles (see, I told you there was plenty of off-road - Ed), so there will be plenty of time to meet up with wives or girlfriends after the ride for some pub grub and a visit to the local Abbey Mills for Christmas shopping.

As with all of the mountain bike rides at this time of year, it is advisable to ring Martin during office hours the day before to confirm that it hasn't been rained off. Martin's telephone number is 0181 673 3744.

committee will then, from past performance times, as much insider information as is available and a great deal of guess work allocate your 'Team' a handicap. The winners of the event will be the pairing who achieve the best handicapped time for both rides combined - I hope that's clear?

In the past we have had many pairings of male and female riders with even mums and sons taking part on mountain bikes. Last year 13 teams entered and the eventual winners on handicap were the very worthy pairing of John Harris and Mark Packman (and haven't they done well in their first year of Surrey League since then). The fastest pair in both rounds were Dave Bugden and his son Scott, but because they had done very well the year before they were 'awarded' a starting handicap even they couldn't overcome.

Appetite wetted? Then put your name down for 1999!

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LVRC EVENTS 1999

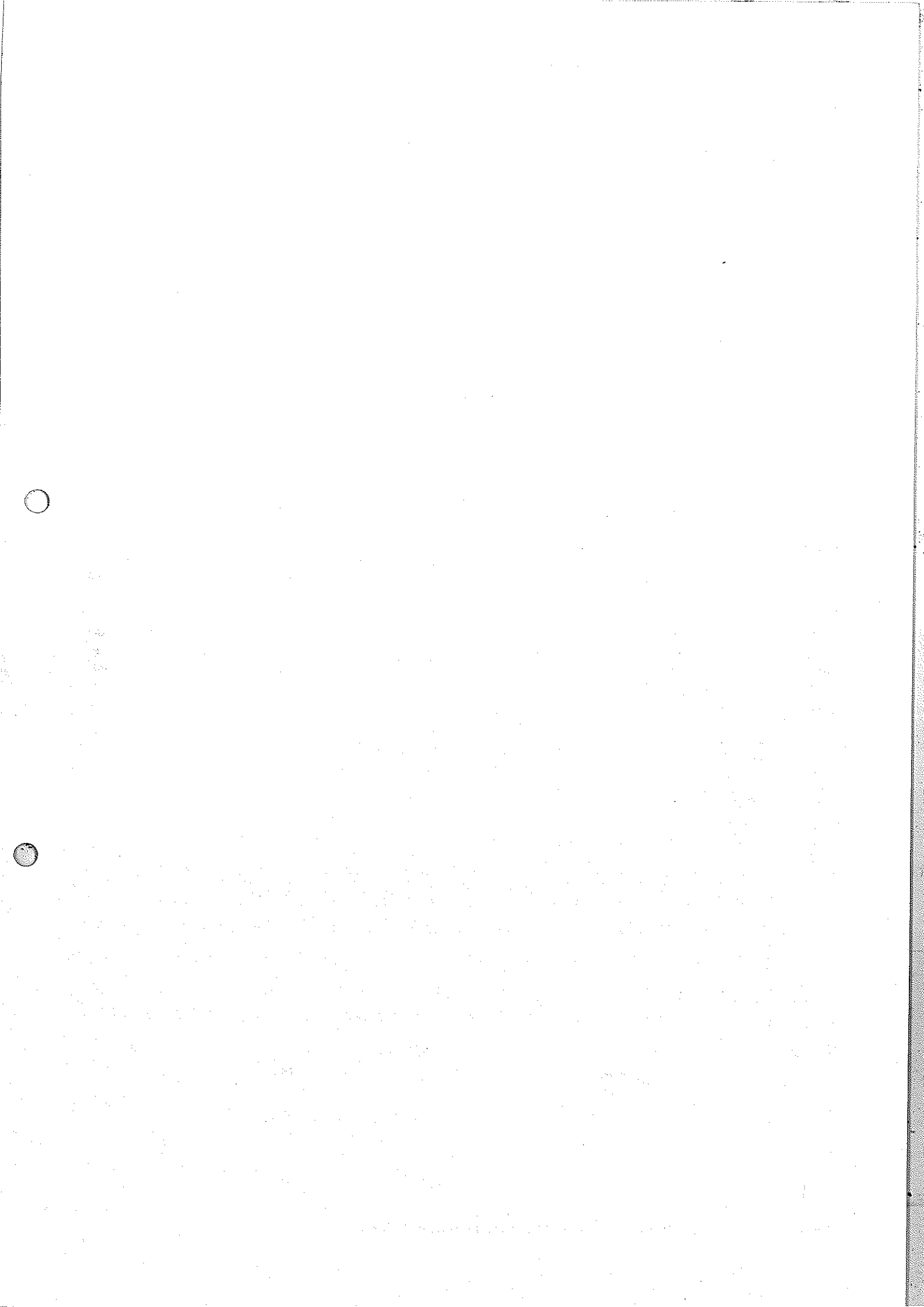
It was a very disappointed committee which heard, on 26th November, that Region 9 of the LVRC would only be

holding one Road Race in 1999. We all knew that there were organisational problems for next year and that any events would be held on the Goodwood Circuit to save the problem of having to organise so many marshals. SWRC had already agreed to provide marshals for at least one event, but this offer, it would appear, was not enough. The reason why the number of events at Goodwood has been reduced to one single race is still not entirely clear.

However, due to the persuasive powers of Ray, our General Secretary, and the willingness of our Social Secretary, Geoff Redhead has already stepped forward and arranged an additional event through the LVRC in the name of South Western Road Club. This event (The South Western "Follically Challenged" RR) will take place on Saturday 17th July 1999, on the Ellens Green Circuit.

More details will be available from the Club Room in due course.





SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB

**ANNUAL DINNER &
TROPHY PRESENTATION**

SATURDAY, 16th JANUARY 1999

7.30 for 8.00pm

GUESTS OF HONOUR:

MR. & MRS. TONY DOYLE O.B.E.

**VENUE: SURREY HILLS HOTEL
CAPEL, SURREY**

£23.50 PER PERSON



PLACES TO BE BOOKED THROUGH
GEOFF REDHEAD BY 2nd JANUARY
(Cheques with booking please, made
payable to 'South Western Road Club')

For those wishing to stay overnight, double (£39.50 en-suite)
and single rooms are available in the Hotel

SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB - ANNUAL DINNER & TROPHY PRESENTATION

To: Geoff Redhead, 11 Hillier Road, London SW11 6AX Tel: 0171 350 0925 or Mobile 0836 357535

Please reserve the following places at The Surrey Hills Hotel on 16th January 1999, for which I enclose a cheque, made payable to South Western Road Club, to the value of £ (£23.50 per person):-

Names:

1.

Address:

2.

3.

4.

Tel No:

Please advise if vegetarian, or other special dietary requirements.



BOULOGNE 1998

This year the annual pilgrimage to Boulogne in September was undertaken by no less than 51 riders in the group organised by Geoff Redhead and Martin Saunders (there's that name again, and he's not even a member - Quick, somebody sign him up. Ed). The group comprised of only 11 South Western members this year (excuses were many and varied) and 40 members and friends of the Co-op Youth Club with which Martin and Geoff have been associated for many years. I understand that this is the 12th year Geoff's daughter (Sam) has gone with him to Boulogne to take part in the event and now at 18 Geoff feels it may be the last. Other members of South Western (namely Bill and Margaret Squirrel) have also been taking part in the event for several years and travelled under their own steam so to speak, but more about that later.

With such a large party, it was necessary that we were split up in two hotels which, due to a confusion over bookings, turned out to be three hotels. My wife and I, along with many others, stayed at the Hotel Alexander, a regular haunt for the group, but now sporting a new proprietor. He had obviously been informed we were a cycling party and, no he didn't mind us storing our bikes in the basement. However, the look on his face as bike after bike was wheeled through his lobby to the basement stairs was a sight to behold. The coupe de grass being Geoff's new red and white U.S. Postal Service machine (minus wheels) which was parked on (yes, on!) one of the armchairs in the lobby while Geoff, not wishing to let his bike out of his sight, sorted out the confusion over rooms.

The evening meal at the restaurant (organised in advance by Martin) was most enjoyable. Although it was quite crowded and noisy with such a large party, the food was good, the management pleasant and sociable, the service acceptable under the circumstances and of course, the company enjoyable. To the best of my knowledge, there were no mistakes in

the orders and no inflated bills. I was most impressed too by the children from the Youth Club who each paid for their own meal with a 'Head of Table' collating the individual amounts and settling up the bill - many a group of grown ups could have taken a lesson here.

The following morning the younger members were shepherded through the town to the start - although some needed a knock on the door to bring them around from a sound sleep all were ready to set off at the allotted time. As agreed, the SWRC riders allowed Geoff a start so that he could accompany the Co-op group for the first mile or so. Martin and Bob Lees were to "Top & Tail" this group all the way around the shorter 50km course. Differing from last year, the first climb had been extended to take the riders up to the ruins of a castle which supposedly held a fete (5 out of 10 for the Fete). As we found out at the lunch stop, the shorter route had meandered around in the valley under a cloudy sky whilst those on the longer ride spent much time along the misty ridges in the cloud itself. A mid-morning coffee stop (and comfort break) at the second check point on the longer route, in a small picturesque village had been most welcome (Has anyone seen any of the photos taken by the stream yet? Or have you all, like me, still got the film in the camera?).

Thanks to Geoff's road marking skills the day before both groups managed to find the slight detour to the lunch stop with those doing the short route getting there slightly before the rest. Another marvel of organisation - Half way around a randonnee and Martin manages to organise a three course lunch (the main course being generous portions of pork or chicken with roast potatoes and veg) with wine. South Western Road Club, Gourmet Division ?

After the lunch we all set off together with the grown ups cajoling the, by now fairly tired, youngsters (and some of the mums) the 15 or so miles to the finish. It was on this stretch, whilst travelling

along a road through one of the woodland areas, that the only mishap of the day occurred. One of the youngest riders, Bethany, veered off line slightly and took down Geoff with her. She was shaken and a bit bruised whilst Geoff sustain some life threatening minor cuts and abrasions which needed most of Bob Lees' supply of elastoplast. Bikes straightened and eyes dried we made it to the finish with no further incident. Not one of the fastest randonnees I have ever done, but certainly one of the most enjoyable.

The group received two cups at the 'obligatory' prize giving ceremony. The South Western Road Club as a whole received a cup for entering so many riders (some of the mums/dads and non youth club riders chose to show allegiance to SWRC for the day on their entry form). And, poor Bethany forgot her tumble with Geoff when she was awarded a cup for being the youngest competitor, at only eight years old, to complete the event. A special award was also made to Bill and Margaret Squirrel who had recently celebrated their Golden Wedding and this being their 18th time of doing the event.

* * * * *

ON THE WEB

We reported on Scott Bugden's success in becoming Junior Surrey League Champion 1998 in the last edition of Bottom Gear, but you may be interested to note that, as a result, Scott was given a whole page on the Surrey League's Web Site. The page included three colour photographs of Scott and a run down of his successful year. I have attempted to reprint below one of the photos used in the article and hope, that by the time it has been down loaded, reprinted and then photocopied, it has not lost too much in the way of quality. It is difficult to say too much about the outstanding performance of Scott who's 72 points beat his nearest rival Tim Morley (37 points) by 35 points and the publicity and prestige this gives the club as a whole. Even in the overall handicap points listing, Scott made 4th place with 62 points. Adam Dallison Cat.1 (Pearson Cycles RT) came 1st



with 104 points, Ben Dallison Cat.3 (Twickenham CC) 2nd with 71 points and Allison Butler, Ladies (Norwood paragon CC) came 3rd with 70 points.



Once again - WELL DONE SCOTT

temperature before the first race I'd entered. The second one I missed out on was Shropshire which was a World Championship Qualifier. Unfortunately, I was knocked off my bike on the day before the race and ended up in hospital with a badly bruised arm and hip and a bump to the head.

The following week at the Windsor Triathlon, my wetsuit came undone in the swim and my hip was still sore on the run, so I didn't compete at my best. Two weeks later Danny and I travelled down to Southend for a race. Unfortunately, Danny's engine blew up and that was the end of that one.

At the first half distance Ironman race I attempted I would have had a good race if I hadn't gone wrong on the bike and did an extra 4 miles and therefore

adding about 15 minutes to my time. For anyone not knowing the distances involved in this, they are 2700m swim, 56 mile bike and a half marathon all run continuously.

The remainder of the season went pretty well except for the fact that at Bournemouth, I qualified for a World Championship place after coming first in my age group in a time of 2.10 for the Olympic distance (1500m/40km/10k m) but couldn't go because of some ridiculous B.T.A rules. I sent a detailed letter to

220 Magazine, explaining the situation and suggesting a change in the rules. This got published as Letter of The Month.

My main results were Bournemouth 1500m/40k/10k 1st in age group in a Personal best of

2hours and 10 minutes,

Dover 750m/20k/5k 1st Woman overall.

This race was perfectly suited to me as the bike ride was really hard and hilly and the run short and flat.

Hampton Court race series (bank holidays throughout the year)

4 races in the series consisting of 450m/12miles/5km.

I won the overall series and won a holiday to Mejave in France next year. Achieved woman's course record in a time of 58.13.

Guernsey Half Ironman.

2500m/50 miles/13.2 miles

This was my best race of the season.

1st woman overall and 6th (men and women)

My swim and bike went well which are my strongest sections, but I was pleased with my run time of 1.31 for the half marathon considering I had already been racing for over 3 hours.

My overall time was 4.26.

Hurst Race 27th September

400m/12miles/5km

1st overall Woman

Ruth Hutton

SWRC RANDONNEE

After the success of the Dave Nie Randonnee, organised by Pete Fordham, over the last couple of years, local Clubs were asked if they would be willing to arrange additional randonnees for 1999. Not being backward in coming forward, the South Western Road Club committee readily agreed to organise one such event.

The SWRC Randonnee will take place on Sunday, 16th May 1999 and will be run over two possible distances, the longest, for Cyclosporatives, being in the order of 80miles and the shorter distance, for Cyclostouristes, will be between 35 - 45 miles. Both rides will start from Cobham car park and the longer ride will turn at Amberley. The turning point for the shorter ride has yet to be finalized.

Further details and an entry form will be included with the next edition of Bottom Gear.

SOMETHING INTERESTING

I usually title this article "membership Reminder", but I'm sure when I do some of you don't even bother to read it. Own up those of you that have already lost interest!

In accordance with item 4 of the Club Rules, subscriptions are due as from 1st November 1998, so if you haven't already paid, please take a moment to pop a cheque in the post right now. You may wish to note that Rule 4 also goes on to say, "A member whose subscription is three calendar months in arrears shall be presumed to have resigned and shall cease forthwith to be entitled to any of the benefits of membership. Such a person may be reinstated only at the discretion of the committee."

For those of you who can't remember, the current rates are as follows:-

Senior Racing	£15 per year
Junior Racing (under 18)	£5 per year
Club Member	£10 per year
Family Membership	£20 per year
(residing at the same address - includes Racing Membership)	

SUCCESSFUL TRIATHLON SEASON FOR RUTH

I have competed in a number of triathlons this year and as the season progressed my results and luck got better.

The season started off badly, I had a



TRAINING WEEKEND

I know we would all like nothing better than to jet off to sunnier climbs to take part in the Majorca Training outing. However, for those of you whose funds might not keep pace with their ideals, there is the alternative of an organised Training Weekend next March. (Of course this is also open to those lucky s!*ds who will be going to Majorca, but would maybe like a training session for the training session).

The outline plan is as follows:-

Sat 19th March, 1999 - Cycle from Cobham to Eastbourne (Transportation of toothbrushes and other necessary luggage can be arranged if required)

Sat evening - is left to your own imagination, but I am sure a meal and wine will be somewhere on the agenda

Sun 20th March, 1999 - Cycle return journey to Cobham and home

Please enquire at the Club Room or contact Geoff Redhead, nearer the time for further information on Hotels and departure times etc.

Please contact Geoff Redhead to register an interest by 14th January 1999, to give him an idea of numbers. Further information on Hotels and departure times etc. will be available from Geoff or at the Club Room nearer the time.

* * * * *

For a while now, I have been pestering Club run regular Dana Perry, for an article on how the club side of the sport differs over here from in the States. Dana's reply was to submit this article he wrote for his NY Club newsletter. One similarity I did notice is that articles in newsletters are full of friendly jibs and taking the pith - maybe, I could fit in over the pond after all!

THE NIGHT RIDE (STATESIDE)

"The trouble with the Rat Race is that if you win you're still a rat." Lily

Tomlin

I read with a mixture of nostalgia and relief about the demise of The Night Ride - NYC's infamous version of the Twickenam ride. Although I was far from being off the front on the night ride, I think my experiences of clinging on to the back gave me a unique perspective on the quality and safety of the ride. I rode at the back regularly for the past few years until I moved to Long Island and now London.

I suspect most riders from Manhattan will already be familiar with the ride. However, for the benefit of those who haven't experienced it, the average Ride went something like this: a late roll out start from Tavern on the Green at 7:30 - 8:00pm. If it was a nice night there could be anywhere between 50 and 100 bikers and would be dangerous from the beginning. As Mihael Ginghia once wrote, its a great place to show up and talk about yourself. The first loop is supposed to be slow. The first day of the ride last fall I saw a guy in front of me hit a jogger before we even made it to Wollman Rink (about 800 yards from the start)! The lower loop would then entail dodging horse drawn carriages. At 72nd street, to shouts of "Gate Up", we'd snake around the barriers intended to keep traffic out of the park. Then we start up Cat Hill. The funniest moment I recall from the ride is that while hammering up Cat Hill one night one biker cut off another in the middle of the hill going around 24 mph. The man who was slighted yelled, "Why don't you say something?", to which the other rider yelled, "How about Get Lost!" (Sorry Dana, I couldn't use your exact words - not in a quality mag like this - Ed) I couldn't help laughing and thinking how that was a typical New York comment.

At 90th Street again we would need to avoid the gates. This was a popular accident spot as many joggers cross here to go to the reservoir and aren't looking for a freight train without brakes barrelling at them from the dark. The back stretch was always fast on the way to the back hills. The down hill section was always dangerous,

especially since there was usually someone running or blading in the middle of the road as we came screaming past in the dark. On one dark night last year the pack was going down the hill at around 27 mph when we were confronted with a couple of policemen on horses just around the corner that we could barely see. The front guys slammed on their brakes, the guys in the back crashed.....

110th Street hill was one of the hard parts as the pack sprinted up the hill. Once over the top the lights were usually broken. It was hard drafting in the dark. I remember seeing the outline of a bicycle fly across the road in front of me like Laurent Jalabert's did in his famous crash on the Champs Elysees some years back. Physically, the next few rolling hills were harder since there was little time to recover. This is where most of the attacks took place. If it was early in the ride, there would be much swerving around joggers and bladers. In fact, it seemed that the attacks were strategically placed to box in those in back behind these obstacles.

The average night was like a hard video game, with many objects thrown in your path - joggers, bladers, dog walkers, slow bikers all at a dangerous pace. Oftentimes our laps would be 14 - 15 minutes (24-25mph). I was usually happy to hang on as long as possible. I always thought that the Night Ride was an accident waiting to happen. The last night I rode the Night Ride last spring before I moved, an inexperienced friend of mine joined me. I gave him a few pointers: "What ever you do don't crash, take wide turns, don't overlap wheels, watch out for gates, bladers, etc."

Ironically, three laps later he was cycling along after getting dropped and saw me emerge from the bottom of a pile of bicycles (nothing new there then - Ed). I've never seen anyone laugh harder at the sight of a crash! Fortunately the only thing damaged in the pile up was my computer.

The Night Ride was always a harrowing experience - it's almost as bad as riding to work in London!



The following article previously printed in the Rough Stuff Fellowship Journal, is reproduced here by kind permission of the author, 'Yorky' Thompson. Bob Lees thought it might provide a nostalgia trip for our longer standing members and also make interesting reading for the rest of us. Part 2 will be published in our next edition. - Ed

CYCLING IN THE '30s (By F.R. (Yorky) Thompson)

I had my first bike when I was 12 years old, a second-hand one which I paid 6/6d (32½p) for. At 14 I got my first new bike. My father, who died when I was 3 years old, had been a member of the Yorkshire Road Club - at that time I believe you had to be able to ride 100 miles in 12 hrs before you could join - anyhow he nearly had a bad accident whilst cycling and this put my mother off buying me a racing machine, so I got a Raleigh Tourist at £5/19/6, plus 5/- extra for chrome handlebars, 26 x 1¼ Endrick rims, side-pull caliper brakes and a single speed.

I now joined the CTC and started riding with the Bradford section of the Mid-Yorks DA. They had two runs each Sunday: the Social Section was the slower section and it was an unwritten rule that the runs had to do more than 80 miles. The other was the General

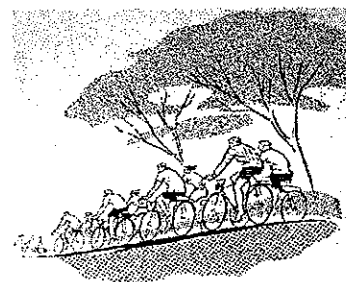
Section and these runs were always longer. The main meeting place was Lister Park Gates from which 95% of the runs started. I rode with the Social Section for about six months and then started going out with the General Section.

On one of my early runs I managed to buy a second-hand pair of dropped handlebars and started riding fixed wheel instead of the freewheel. Nearly everyone rode fixed gear, but there were one or two on single-gear freewheels or even on 3-speed Sturmey Archers. We had a few tandems - they were courting couples or married. At this time you never saw a girl riding solo. Black was the main colour of the bicycles and most of them were F.H.Grubb, F.W. Evans, Selbach, Stenton Glinder, Granby and Claud Butler.

Eighty percent of the club runs went into the Yorkshire Dales, which meant a 19 mile ride into Skipton and the same back after tea, so it meant on most club runs you did this ride every Sunday. There were no elevens's of threes's. We always stopped at Skipton, whether we were riding out or home. The other 20% of the runs went via Oatley. We had a runs card which gave both lunch and tea places, which meant that if you couldn't get to the

meet you could still get to the lunch place, this was always a bone of contention as some riders said that if you couldn't come to the meet on time, you shouldn't be on the run, others said it was better to come late than not at all!

Most riders took sandwiches for both lunch and tea, as it was only the rich members who bought their tea which cost 1/- to 1/3d. The meal places were mainly in public-houses; we also had a few cafes and farm-houses. The pubs always opened early at tea-time for cyclists, and we always had to leave before the official open time, which I think was about 7.30 pm. Most of the pubs had a special room for us cyclists. Tea was generally brewed in a big teapot and you usually got two cups each, sometimes three. Sometimes you got your tea in a pint pot! The normal price was 4d, a few at 3d, and one or two at 6d. If we got charged 6d and there was a place charging only 4d in the same village, we never went there again!



CYCLING SHORTS

On the right track? - Just a day after coming third in his class in the SWRC organised Surrey League event on 27 September, Ian Maylin blotted his copy book when he went over the handlebars after getting his front wheel caught in a gap between the concrete sleepers on a level crossing on his way home from work. Two days off work soon mended hurt pride and body parts and his trusty machine is currently being surveyed for an insurance claim.

Evans in need of back-up vehicle? - During the mountain bike ride the other weekend (13/11/98), Gary (Evans)Smith managed to break his chain. Not a back-up vehicle in sight, Gary had to borrow a link extractor from ever dependable Martin, which Gary then proceeded to break. Luckily one of the other riders had also brought an extractor with him which Gary managed to use successfully without further breakage.

Hillingdon 1999 - Following the success of the road racing event at Hillingdon organised on behalf of SWRC by Dave Pinder last year, Dave has kindly agreed to organise a similar event for 1999. The date for this event has just been confirmed as Monday 31st May 1999 (Spring Bank Holiday). Further details will be advertised in due course.

A good match? - Having just returned from the annual football match against the Fire Brigade, I can report that things went exactly according to plan - for the Fire Brigade that is. The final score was in the order of 6 - 0 (to be honest, I lost count). Our only excuse, apart from the fact that only half the team had any idea of how to play the game, was that we wore ourselves out running up hill during the first half. There are rumours that co-organiser John Bromley is calling for a drugs test for their team and some serious practise for ours before next years match.