SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB

BOTTOM GEAR

The OFFICIAL Voice of the SWRC

February 2001 — Issue 22
Editor — Tony Sayers
SWRC sponsors — Evans Cycles/Tippetts Honda Ltd
Web Site — www.SWRC.org.uk

Spring 2001

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* Is this a record ?
* Next stop: Australia.
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* End to End - One man's story.
* Trophy Winners.
* Never too old!

DEAR GLORIA

We have something new in this edition. After receiving several letters from troubled members we have sought the services of our very own 'agony aunt'. Look out for her (?) Column - "Ask Gloria" on page 6.

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REMINDER

I am reliably informed that there are some of you out there who have not paid your subscriptions for 2000/ 2001. These were due on 1st November 2000 and, if you haven't already paid, please take a moment now to pop your cheque in the post to the Treasurer, Dudley Samuels, 20 Florian Road, Putney, London SW15 2NL. Better still, why not drop in at the clubroom one Tuesday evening and pay Dudley in person - he is there most weeks.

The, very reasonable, current rates are as follows:-

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

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RICHMOND PARK

Some of you will already be aware of renewed proposals to 'reduce the environmental impact of traffic in Richmond Park'. The Royal Park's Agency are undertaking a public consultation on a range of proposed options and we (South Western Road Club) have written to express our concerns on some of the measures that may be taken (e.g. speed humps, pinch points and granite or stainless steel studs), whilst at the same time welcoming the proposed reduction of motor vehicles through the park.

Many thanks to our new Social Secretary, Amanda McDonnell and Ian Maylin for drafting the letter, a copy of which will be posted on the club room notice board.

HOT NEWS AND GOSSIP EVERY QUARTER

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EDITORIAL

This is the first edition of Bottom Gear for the 2001 season. As such it is packed with details of just a fraction of what is on offer - 'What might be' rather than the end of season tales of daring do and 'What was'. The only way of turning the 'what might be's' into the memorable 'what was's' is to start filling up your diaries and 'Get stuck in!'. You only get out what you put in.

Soap Box Time - I suppose one of the reasons I like putting together Bottom gear is that I have a captive audience and it gives me the chance to have the occasional 'rant'. Compatibility, does it exist? Over the past few years I have succumbed to sound advice (or was it just fashion advice?) And converted my trusty eight speed down tube shifters to 'ergo' power. This required paying extra for 9 speed levers to be converted to 8, but what the heck, 8 speed is more than enough. On reflection, not a bad move, the ability to change gear whilst out of the saddle chasing down riders many years my senior in the LVRC events has been a boon. All then goes well until, low and behold, my wheels are shot and I need replacements. Nine speed is all that is on offer (unless you want to go to ten with a special chain and requiring a new rear mech). I am assured that my existing rear mech will cope with 9 speed and all I need to do is re-convert my ergo levers to 9 speed. Conversion parts £34 (what, £34 ?) - yes, I am afraid so. Again all goes well for a while until due to various components wearing on my old 'winter hack', I decide to transfer my old 8 speed rear mech to the 'hack' and buy a 'proper' 9 speed mech for the racing machine - I deserve it! The dealer then informs me that I will need to buy the last year's (2000) model of rear mech because the new (2001) model is not compatible with the previous 9 speed, but instead has been made compatible with 10 speed - WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

I feel better now - On with the mag.

ALL KITTED UP

Sock it to 'em - Just when you thought you had a full set of club kit, along comes something new. Ian Maylin has negotiated a supply of AIR.E.ATOR cycling socks, complete with SWRC logo direct from De Feet in the grand ol' US of A. After some heavy international bargaining by Ian, we are able to offer these top quality socks to members are the knock-down price of £5 a pair (usually £9 in the shops). Don't delay, on the first club night these were on sale, Paul Foster (The SWRC Gentleman's Outfitter) shifted no less than 20 pairs.

Sweatshirts - Following popular demand, Geoff Redhead has obtained a further supply of quality club sweatshirts. These are in navy blue with the SWRC logo embroidered in yellow cotton on the left breast. These are in short supply and, at only £15 a piece (available in a variety of sizes), are too good to miss.

Kit Out - A great opportunity for both new (and old) members to get kitted out, Paul Foster (Gentleman's Outfitter, by Appointment) held a 'Club Kit Night' on Tuesday 13th February where all articles of kit were on sale at the usual reasonable prices. - I hope **YOU** didn't miss out?

EXTENDED TEA STOP IN JAVA

I don't know how many of you will remember Richard (Scriven) who came along with us on a club run one Saturday early last year? I will refresh your memory. It was Richard's mobile phone we used to call Robin Chipperfield's wife and an ambulance (not necessarily in that order) after Robin and Sabine had a 'coming together' on the way back from St.Ives tea rooms near Lingfield.

This was a stage in Richard's life when he had really got the 'cycling wander lust'. He was preparing to join an ex-colleague (also named Richard (McL.)) and his brother Andrew who were in Japour part way into their epic journey (Cycling and Kayaking) from London to Sydney. They had set off From Greenwich in September 1999 and were originally planning to reach Sydney late in 2000. Richard (S) took 3-4 weeks off work in March last year to join Andrew and his namesake for a 'cycling leg' of their journey including crossing the Himalayan mountains. I think Richard will agree that, once back at work (with a wonderful, once in a lifetime, set of photos to paw over) he really had trouble settling back into the daily routine. It was very shortly after this that Richard took the huge decision to 'take a year out' and put his career on hold for a while. He handed in his notice and headed off to join his friends Richard and Andrew (McL.) once more. The extracts below are taken from just one of the many e.mails (this one sent in Oct. 2000 from an internet cafe somewhere in Malang, Java) to his family and colleagues back home. Sit back and dream of what might have been.....if only:-

"Hi to one and all. Trust you're all fantastic, and that the Autumn nights aren't drawing in too quickly for those in the UK!

Those who've checked the website recently will possibly have seen Richard's (that's Richard McLaughlin's) story of our last couple of weeks in Java. All pretty spot-on; but I guess that not all of you will have internet access, and that's not all that goes on out here.

Now with our visas extended, granting us a license to loiter in Indonesia until 29 November, we're frantically planning our route through Indonesia, and our fast exit to Australia. We're still no nearer obtaining a boat that

will shepherd the two kayakers to Australia yet, so any suggestions/contacts would be much appreciated. Our plan is to walk the streets of Bali, preying on wealthy yacht owners with far too much charity and time on their hands than they know what to do with, and ask them to donate their services to us - not much of a plan really!

I think I last wrote a long one in Bogor, having been overawed by some fairly large winged fellahs (space bats to you), and was heading off to Jakarta once more. The rest of the team, including Dean who borrowed my bike for the two days, headed off over the Puncak Pass to Bandung - our next rest day. That meant that I hung around in Bogor for one more day, before having to make an early start into Jakarta on the second day.

It was always going to be an awkward one, and despite the one liner that glosses over my experience in Rich's official report, it turned into a bureaucratic nightmare. We'd waited two days to obtain the necessary letter of 'support' from the first Indonesian Immigration office, and 7 hours, 4 taxi journeys, two other buildings (and countless offices within each) the visas were finally obtained for the five team members out here. This involved forging everyone's signatures, keeping several (and there were bloody hundreds of them!) Immigration Officials behind for two hours after closing time, paying 1,000,000Rp for the five visas (just under one hundred quid), ducking and diving between two monstrous storms, and getting just a little bit sweaty around the edges. An absolute nightmare of a day, and one I'd have swapped quite happily for the cycle ride over the Puncak Pass and on into Bandung. Oh well, still full of beans!

Following a day of rest (sort of) in Bandung, the four of us took off on our four day journey towards Wonosobo. On the first day, we changed our minds (there's a surprise) and decided to try and make it there in just three days. This meant 105km, 155km and 95km (with the last 10km strictly uphill) - knackering! Despite feeling that I'd never make it even half-way on the second day, a welcome lunch stop of our favourite noodles (hmm!! tasty), I recovered to just about 100% and stormed on ahead. Something felt like it just clicked, and everything since has felt perfect in the legs-going-round department. The following day saw some tired cyclists plodding along towards Wonosobo, knowing that there was going to be a climb of some 600m up to our next rest day - but didn't know it would be 10km long! I felt so good, I just had to go for a 2km sprint uphill on my own, and then waited with drinks for them all. Not trying to blow my own trumpet too much, but it just felt so good to be able to cycle like that again.

The stop in Wonosobo was absolutely glorious. Although less than 1000m above sea level, there was a distinct and welcome change in the climate. The temperature had dropped significantly, to a point where it was more than refreshing to take a dip in the hotel pool - brass monkeys! We'd managed to wangle a couple of rooms in another swanky hotel through Fabrice Burtin (Novotel Marketing guy). We were treated like royalty by the owner, Ms. Ibu Ita - absolutely fantastic place. Sadly, both Andy, and then Richard took the opportunity to be ill. Andy was being sick, and then slept for most of our 36 hour stay, whilst Rich took on a fever of some description.

We still all managed to make a trip up to the Dieng Plateau to sneak a look at some 2000 year old Hindu temples, before heading up to the geothermically active area just round the corner - bubbling mud pools, steaming craters and fabulously coloured mineral lakes - and not the slightest sign of regard for safety in sight! Apparently a German guy got a bit too close to the edge of one crater and slipped in; boiled German in under 10 seconds, or so we heard! One of the guides touting for trade on our arrival took great delight in showing us a photograph of the guy after they'd hauled him out - not a pretty sight!!

Luckily, by the time we were due to leave Wonosobo, both R&A felt well enough to make the 60km journey to Borobudur - probably the most visited Indonesian location, aside of Bali. An absolutely spectacular Buddhist monument amongst the greenery of the Javanese landscape. This has got to have been the highlight of my current trip so far; certainly the most spectacular cultural taste; the Hindu temples of Dieng Plateau paled into insignificance next to this beast of a structure. Tim and I stormed on up there at 5:30am to see the sunrise, only to find that the gates didn't open until 6am - breakfast then! We were also appalled and horrified to learn that we'd be expected to pay the princely sum of 37,500Rp (about three quid), and given that we didn't know exactly how amazing this place was, and that we're all trying to look after our pennies to ensure we make it financially intact to Sydney, we took an alternative route! There was a hotel within the grounds of the temple etc., and we'd managed to blag our way in upon our arrival the previous day by visiting the hotel in a vain attempt to locate Dean (this was our pre-arranged rendez-vous point, that went horribly wrong!). We'd also bumped into the elephants (a first for me), and their Mahouts (keepers, owners, trainers etc.). At 6:15am after Richard and Dean had paid their exorbitant entrance fee, Tim and I convinced the guards on the gate that once again we would be going to look at the hotel! - Fools!! We whizzed around to the

elephants, watched them being prepared for their day as tour guides

for the rich and well heeled (more later) and left our bikes with them for safe keeping. We then walked casually past the next set of security guards, who were more interested in asking what country we were from and comparing their stature with the 6 foot 5 inches of Tim (again!), than asking for tickets! And what a blag it was. The eight floors for us to explore were absolutely fabulous. There were several photos and video footage taken, and a very long time taken to explore the delights of the intricately carved stone temple - absolutely amazing. The time that must have been taken to create such a marvellous structure was mind-boggling. I just hope the photos do it justice.

Before our departure we'd been advised by a New Zealander the previous night that it was well worth our while whizzing up the hill to the Amanjiwo Hotel that overlooks the Borobudur Temple - and itself a spectacle of architectural extravagance. He wasn't wrong (although he could have warned just how much hard work it was to reach it)! It was built about 3-4 years ago by an American, and is absolutely, ridiculously(?), luxurious. We were shown around the place by one of the bell-boys - one of the cheap 'apartments' - which go for $650 a night!! We weren't allowed to visit the Presidential suite as it was occupied, but it has had such guests as Princess Di (I think) - going for the spritely sum of $2250 per night!! In such a poor and economically repressed area of the world, is this right?!

Right or wrong, we had the privilege of bumping into the Manager's wife, Olivia, a delightful English lady (well, Welsh as it turned out), who was fascinated by our expedition, and suggested a few options for our touristy bits, and also for getting over to Australia. Far from concrete, but everything crossed!"

Richard

We will leave Richard there, about to set off for the 'easy' 43km ride to Yogyakarta, the cultural centre of Java. If space permits in the next edition of Bottom Gear, I may include a further extract of this or another of Richard's reports. However, if your appetite has really been whetted, you can always visit the expedition's official website at www.humanpower.freeserve.co.uk, which also includes maps and photos covering all stages of the journey to date. I am sure we all wish the lads the best of luck with the remainder of their journey. - Ed

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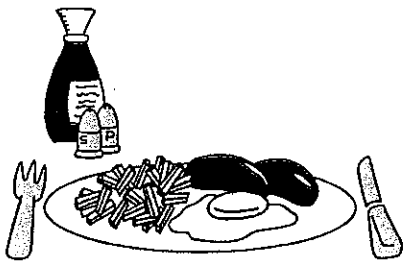
HAVE WE GOT A RECORD?

I recently received this anonymous submission for Bottom Gear:-

"On Sunday 10th December 2000, Geoff Redhead, Ted Collins, Denis Pascoe, Dave Pinder and Pete Sturton



met in Epsom High Street for a ride. However, due to the weather rapidly deteriorating, they decided to abort a long ride and settle for a shorter tea stop destination. This decided, they then set off on a 25 yard - yes 25 yard !, ride to a cafe in the High Street ! Is this a record for the shortest tea stop destination ever? Either way, it must certainly qualify as a contender for the 'Soft Tart' team award!

After downing a, well deserved, all day breakfast with copious amounts of tea, they then felt fortified for the six mile journey home - although two of the aforementioned had actually driven to Epsom !!

No amount of bribery could prevent this sorry tale from being exposed."

Your anonymous 'front line' reporter

(For personal security)

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DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY

Just three weeks before the annual club dinner and trophy presentation, your committee were very seriously considering having to cancel the event due to lack of support (only 30 to 40 tickets had been sold). The only reason the evening was saved was because to cancel and repay ticket holders, the restaurant and disco would have cost more than to continue. Plan 'B' was then put into effect and members of the committee rang around the membership to try to drum up more support. In the end, the evening went ahead with 68 attendees. That is the bad news.

The good news is that, as I am sure most of those who attended will agree it was one of the best club evenings ever due to the hard work of Dave Wright and his wife Penny and not least of all the Disco DJ. I for one did not think I would ever see all but a handful of SWRC members dancing a conga around the room only to be further encouraged into an impromptu Limbo Dancing session, followed by a team version of the Virginia Reel with ever changing partners - Great stuff!

The prize presentation was kept short and simple with no speeches (much to the delight, I suspect of some of the 'partners' who thought they had been dragged along just to hear someone other than their other half waxing lyrical about the joys of the sport). A full list of prize winners is given elsewhere in this edition.

Back to the first paragraph - In order that the committee can seriously consider and prepare for next years event, if indeed we decide to hold one, we ~~would like~~ need your views. Please pass your comments on to the General Secretary, Ray Watson or e.mail them to me (at tony@tsayers.freeserve.co.uk) and I will be glad to pass them on.

SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB

CLUB TIME TRIAL EVENTS FOR 2001

HONDA TIPPETTS EVANS

Date	Day	Time	Course	Distance	Interclub	Competition
18 March	Sunday	09:15	GS292	22km	P. S. Parkinson 2-Up	
01 April	Sunday	09:00	GS292	22km	P. S. Parkinson 2-Up	
08 April	Sunday	07:00	G10/24	10 miles	Kingston Phoenix, CC Woking, Weybridge Wheelers	
06 May	Sunday	07:00	G25/18	25 miles	Epsom CC	[H]
12 May	Saturday	07:00	G10/56	10 miles	Epsom CC	[P][M]
23 May	Wednesday	19:30	GS292	22km		[H]
10 June	Sunday	07:55	G25/18	25 miles	Epsom CC	[P]
13 June	Wednesday	19:30	GS292	22km		[P]
23 June	Saturday	07:00	G10/56	10 miles	Epsom CC	[M][H] *
26 June	Tuesday	19:30	GS292	22km	Midsummer 2-Up #1	
11 July	Wednesday	19:30	GS292	22km		[M]
17 July	Tuesday	19:30	GH41	1 mile	Midsummer Hill Climb	
25 July	Wednesday	19:30	GS292	22km		[H][M]
05 August	Sunday	07:15	G25/18	25 miles	Epsom CC	[M] *
07 August	Tuesday	19:30	GS292	22km	Midsummer 2-Up #2	
18 August	Saturday	07:00	G10/56	10 miles	Epsom CC	[H][P]
22 August	Wednesday	19:00	GS292	22km		[P]
02 September	Sunday	07:00	G25/18	25 miles	Epsom CC	[H] *
08 September	Saturday	07:15	G10/56	10 miles	Epsom CC	[P][M]
16 September	Sunday	08:30	GS292	22km	Bill Reed Vets Memorial	
28 October	Sunday	10:30	GH41	1 mile	Hill Climb	

*Prompt starts essential as other events run on the same course immediately after ours.

COURSES

G10/56 Rusper/Horsham/Gt. Daux
G25/18 Pease Pottage/Southwater
G10/24 Cobham/A3
GS292 Hungry Hill
GH41 Ranmore - Hill Climb

See the club website, www.swrc.org.uk, for course maps

COMPETITIONS

Position	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th.....		10th	11th	12th
[H] Handicap points	7	5	4	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
[M] Memorial points	10	9	8	7	6	5	etc	1	-	-
[P] Points competition	10	9	8	7	6	5	etc	1	-	-
Interclub points (ECC)	12	11	10	9	8	7	etc	3	2	1

For all Club Competitions a riders five best performances are counted.
For Interclub events with Epsom CC six positions are awarded to each club.

ENTERING EVENTS

Prompt pre-entry of all Interclub events is essential to allow start sheets to be planned.

All Interclub events with Epsom CC must be pre-entered by contacting Dave Bugden ☎ 020 8641 1975, e-mail d.f.bugden@btinternet.com, at the latest, by 1700 on the Wednesday prior to the event

The P. S. Parkinson 2-Up series must be pre-entered, at the clubroom, by Tuesday 13th March 2001.
The 8th April 2001 Interclub (A3) must be pre-entered by Monday 26th March 2001 by contacting John Harris ☎ 01737 360184, e-mail sjharr26@aol.com.

All other SWRC only events can be pre-entered or entered on the line (subject to RTTC maximum numbers)

The entry fee for all club and interclub events is £1.00 per rider (This includes the levy to the RTTC)

SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB

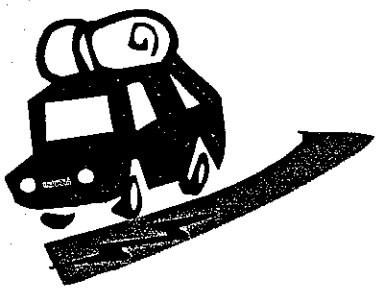
TROPHY WINNERS 2000

Senior Time Trial Championship	Championship Trophy	David Bugden
Fastest 50 Mile Time Trial	Alfred Knowles Memorial	David Bugden
Fastest 25 Mile Time Trial	Frank Slinger Memorial	David Bugden
Fastest 10 Mile Time Trial	Syd Parkinson Trophy	David Bugden
Club Time Trial Series	Memorial Trophy	Paul Foster
Points Award		David Bugden
Handicap Award		Paul Foster
Hill Climb Championship	Hill Climb Trophy	Keith Bugden
2 Up Series	P.S. Parkinson Memorial	Mark Fraser + Anna Fraser
Senior Road Race Championship	Sammy Austin Trophy	Alan Clarke
3rd Cat Championship	3rd Category Trophy	Paul Alderson
Veteran Road Race Championship	Veterans Road Race Trophy	Lindsey Ruocco
Veterans Time Trial Championship	Veterans Trophy	Paul Foster
Bill Reed Event (Standard)	Bill Reed Memorial #1	Paul Foster
Bill Reed Event (Fastest)	Bill Reed Memorial #2	David Bugden
Veterans Hill Climb Championship	Veterans Hill Climb Trophy	Keith Bugden
Most Meritorious Performance	F.W. Robinson Memorial	Mark Fraser + Anna Fraser
	Sams Tankard	Janet Bugden
Fastest '10'	Gold Medalion	David Bugden
Fastest '25'	Gold Medalion	David Bugden

TRAINING WEEKEND

This year we intend to repeat last year's popular Training Weekend to Southsea. Organiser, Geoff Redhead has still to finalise some details, but the date has been set - 28th & 29th April. Make a note in your diary and keep a regular look out on the club room notice board for further information (once the notice goes up, the limited number of rooms tend to go like the proverbial hot cakes). If you haven't come with us before, please give it a try, you will not be disappointed. Apart from the rides down and back on Saturday and Sunday (breaking for a well earned pub lunch) there will be the Saturday evening meal (with suitable amounts of wine) and the chance to chat with the other riders and back-up crew.

STOP PRESS: Geoff has now booked the Sea Crest Hotel for one night on 28th. The cost of £50 per person includes a bed for the night (2 people sharing a room), an evening meal on 28th and breakfast on 29th. Anyone wishing to go should send Geoff a deposit cheque for £20 (made payable to G.Redhead) as soon as possible. As per last year, it is intended to take a back-up vehicle. If anyone with a large car of their own (it will need to carry overnight luggage for about 20) or willing to drive a Volkswagen 'Transporter' provided by Geoff, would like to offer their services, they should contact Geoff as soon as possible. Apart from free petrol, the



cost of their overnight stay will also be found.

ASK GLORIA

1. Saddle Sore - "Dear Gloria, I have found my new saddle to be a deal less comfortable than my old trusty 'Rolls'. When I suggested to my wife that I was thinking of buying another one she hit the roof. What can I do?" - name and address supplied.

"Member, If your wife has a bike of her own, transfer the new saddle to her machine and take her for a (long) romantic ride in the country. After a few hours in the (your) saddle, she should share your views and you are home and dry. On the other hand, if your wife doesn't ride a bike, give up trying to make her see reason. You will just have to save your pennies and pay cash for a new saddle when she is not looking"

2. Tandem or Not - "Dear Gloria, I have been thinking of buying a tandem for my wife and I to use on some cycling trips this summer, but the thought of gaining more horse for not much extra horse power is putting me off at the moment. What should I do?"

"Member, If there is no chance of you improving your own horse power, stick to solo machines, wait at the top of every hump in the road and accept the grumbling. On the other hand, I suppose there is no chance of getting a smaller 'horse'?"

If you have a question for Gloria, please send it to her care of the editor, 37 Endway, Surbiton, Surrey, KT5 9BT.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Whilst the club time trial series gets a page all to itself, you might like to know of these other early season dates when, even if the club has not actually organised the event, a strong club contingent will be involved (the list is not exhaustive). Speaking of time trials, anyone wishing to take part in the P P 2Up Series and who hasn't already found a partner, should make themselves known to other like minded soles on a club night soon. If you have never done a time trial before, this is the ideal way to give it a try. Whilst I would be the last to suggest that many of those who take part do not take it seriously, there is a fair contingent who enter 'just for fun' or an early season 'airing' (even mixed teams on mountain bikes have been known).

As always, more news of these and other events can always be found on the club room notice board:-

18 March	2 UP Round 1
1 April	2 UP Round 2
28 - 29 April	Training Weekend to Southsea
5 May	SWRC Open 10
13 May	SWRC Randonnee
19 May	LVRC event at Chobham
9 June	LVRC event at Chobham
17 June	Junior Invitation Ride
24 June	Micky Ayliffe 4UP
6 - 9 July	Tour de France trip

the list goes on .....

LANDS END - JOHN 'O' GROATS

It had been an ambition of mine to do an "End to End" for a few years but there was always some reason, or excuse, not to do it. Last winter, I made a definite decision to go for it - Now or Never, so to speak!

After numerous phone calls organising accommodation and long evenings route planning, I found myself heading towards Lands End in our campervan with my wife 'Nicky' and 18 month old daughter 'Sally', who were my support team.

On the 19th May 2000, I left Lands End with the worst butterfly's in my stomach that I'd ever known. I was excited but I'd never done anything like this before; 17 days of continuous, solo cycling.

The first 2 to 3 days were quite hard, as expected. Cornwall was very hilly and a maze of country lanes, but the south westerly wind helped. North Devon seemed even more hilly, a succession of 1:5 hills took it out of me and I was glad for the relative flatness of Somerset, even though it poured with rain that day and my

morale took a beating.

The next day was a cycle across the Severn Bridge, an experience in itself. I crossed the Welsh border and then enjoyed a scenic ride along the Wye Valley towards Ross-on-Wye. It was then off to Hereford and then Leominster, where I stayed at an excellent Bed & Breakfast; a real home from home which, combined with the fact that I had covered a third of the total distance, boosted my morale.

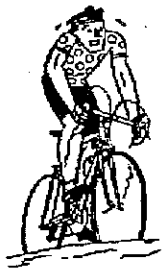
My route took me to Much Wenlock and towards Ironbridge, an interesting town, with a nasty climb out of the Gorge. The next stage of the journey was one that I wasn't looking forward to; it was hard to pick a route that avoided busy roads and large towns. I crossed the Manchester Ship Canal and then headed towards Preston.

After Preston, things got quieter again and it was off to the Lake District, passing through Lancaster. There was an horrendous hail storm just outside Kendal, which was so bad that I had to stop and take shelter because the stones were hurting my legs. Then there was a long hard climb up Shap Fell (a taste of things to come !!) followed by a gentle ride down into Penrith.

I followed the Eden Valley, a beautiful part of the country and very quiet (everyone must have been in the Lake District). I reached the Scottish border, which was a significant milestone. The next town was Langholm and then off towards Eskdalemuir. The roads were really quiet and all I could hear was the whirring of my bike gears and bird noises that I've never heard before! Eskdalemuir is meant to be the wettest place on record in the UK, so I must have been lucky!!

There were a few hills to climb before I reached Edinburgh and then it was a frustrating search for the cycle path to lead me over the Forth Road Bridge. The other side was quite busy and built up, but I was soon leaving it behind and heading for Perth with a lunch stop at Scone Palace.

After Blairgowrie, it was off towards the Grampian Mountains. This was the hardest part of the trip, but in retrospect I'm glad I chose that route. There were some long steep climbs such as the Devils Elbow, but also some amazing scenery around the Spittal of Glenshee and Braemar. There was still snow on the mountain tops and it was June; it was surprising how cold it got at the top. The climb just kept going but I seemed to have achieved quite a good fitness by then and I like a good hill climb!



The next town was Grantown-on Spey and then it was across exposed and windy moorland before heading towards Inverness via Cawdor Castle (of Macbeth fame). I crossed the Moray Firth and the Black Isle, which is hillier than it looks on the map. I then joined the A9 for a few miles and was glad to leave it - I'm quite used to cycling on busy roads but this road was really dangerous; fast traffic, lots of HGV's and not much space!

I made for Lairg via Bonar Bridge and the roads were now much better. The road from Lairg to Bettyhill via Altnaharra is one of the most memorable - beautiful scenery and undulating roads, so quiet that you can hear the stream babbling away at the side of the road. This was interrupted by the odd logging lorry, which is quite big business looking at the scenery in places, and a couple of RAF jets sweeping past. The road heading east out of Bettyhill was like a roller-coaster, very hilly with a barren landscape. However, the road started to level out towards Thurso and the views of the Atlantic Ocean were amazing.

Leaving Thurso, there was only 20 miles left and I found myself riding as if I was in a time trial - something was pulling me towards John '0' Groats. I was counting down the distance now; 5 miles, 4.5, 4 etc. etc. and before I knew it, I was turning into the car park at John '0' Groats. The feeling of relief and achievement was great and I couldn't wait to meet Nicky & Sally and call some friends. I had cycled 1017 miles and raised about £1100 for the NSPCC.

I would recommend an 'End to End' to anyone who enjoys cycling. Looking back, I think it was psychologically harder than physically. Maybe this was because I cycled solo and my morale got very low at times, mainly due to the weather. When I finished, I said I enjoyed it but wouldn't do it again but now, after a few months reminiscing, I'm not so sure - Anyone interested ???

Graham Mathias

MISSING TACKLE

Annual stock taking by ever vigilant Ray Robinson has shown that the club are missing 2 red flags and 1 fluorescent yellow marshal's jacket. These have obviously gone astray at either the Follicly Challenged LVRC event in July or the SWRC organised Surrey League event later in the year. Is it possible that one of our band of helpers at either of these events clears out the back of their car even less often than I do and hasn't yet noticed the extra colour in their vehicle? Or, maybe you have noticed one of the offending articles and have moved it into the garage for safe keeping. Either way, if you do find any of these items in your possession, please contact Ray (tel: 01403 822977) as soon as possible rather than waiting to return them at our next event.

Thanks

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After TT's there's always mountain biking ...

During 1999 with my form on the road hitting an all time low I decided that variety might be the only answer. Having become aware of the trail rides sponsored by Evans, I took my

daughter to the South Downs ride. Suddenly she realised that mountain biking is vastly different from riding around Richmond Park. It may be the last time she joins me! Undeterred I decided to ride the Cotswold event in the summer with a friend. The weather was fine and who should one meet but a fellow SWRC member – Alan Parkinson. He bravely rode the Expert's course and completed the 35 miles in a shade over 5 hours while I only accepted the sporting challenge of 28 miles which took my friend and I three and a quarter hours to ride. The seed had been sown ...

I had the good fortune to work from our Californian offices before Christmas and therefore at weekends I headed over Golden Gate Bridge to a mecca for mountain bikers.

To those readers not familiar with the local geography Mount Tamalpais was my destination. A century ago The Mount Tamalpais and Muir Woods Railroad was established and was described as the crookedest railroad in the world with 281 curves in its 8¼ miles. However it offered excellent views across the Bay and out over the Pacific (now enjoyed by mountain bikers) and in its heyday being so much fun to ride, the railroad attracted a lot of tourists from San Francisco.

The construction took place in 1896 and the trains were pushed up the hill with the engine at the back. It took one hour and ten minutes to get to the top (2,500 feet above Mill Valley) – I've only managed about 2 hours on each of my different ascents. Ten years later engine-less gravity cars were added and they coasted down to Muir Woods. By 1930 the railway had seen its day and the area was only brought to life again with the advent of Gary Fisher and friends.

The town of Mill Valley itself is an absolute joy for bikers with Saturday mornings buzzing with cycles of all descriptions and the local coffee shops doing good business with coffees, teas, muffins and more.

For reference I have hired MTBs from 'Start to Finish' in Mill Valley who charge US$7/hour or US$30/day for hard tail bikes, more for full suspension machines.

Jeremy Nason

JUNIOR INVITATION RIDE

Energetic organiser, Geoff Redhead is in the process or arranging a Junior Invitation Ride. This will be open to school children over the age of 13 living or attending school within an eight mile radius of our normal club run starting point of Cobham. The event is currently planned for 17th June and, nearer the time, Geoff will be asking for many volunteers to assist in shepherding and generally minding the youngsters on their ride. Please look out for further information on the club room notice board and give Geoff your support.

YOU'VE GOT MAIL

In January, thanks to the organisation of Peter Wright, our Press Secretary, the new SWRC e.mail Newsletter hit the streets (or should that be screens?). Issue 1 included an invitation to the first Curry Night of the year, whilst Issue 2 included reminders of the trips abroad to France in early July and Belgium in April. It also included an invitation to partake in free samples of that age old cyclist's favourite nosh - home made bread pudding. On this occasion, it is Peter himself who has done the 'wheeler dealing' to acquire a modest supply of the aforementioned delicacy made to a treasured family recipe, which will be (or probably by the time you read this 'was') available to club room attendees during the whole of February.

If you are on e.mail and are missing out on these timely updates and late breaking news, drop Peter a line on peter.wright@bacs.co.uk

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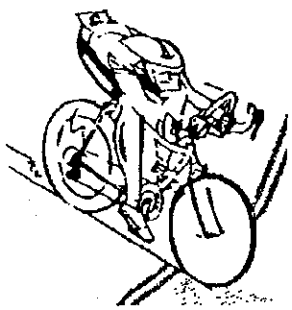
CLUB OPEN "10"

As you may, or may not, know Dudley Samuels is organising, on behalf of the club, an Open "10" time trial. This is to be held on the H10/8 Course on the A31 at Farnham (Bentley By-pass) on 5th May, with the first rider off at 2.00pm. We are hoping for a large entry in the order of 100 riders in total with at least some of whom coming from the club. This is where you start to come in. Anyone interested in taking part and who has not beaten 23:00 for a "10" to date should contact Dudley as soon as possible. The cut off time of 23:00 has been deliberately set to allow some of the less than elite riders to have a go on a fast course for once. If you are not wishing to ride, there is no need to feel left out. For an event this size many helpers will be needed to ensure that things go as smoothly as is now expected from a SWRC event. Helpers are required for marshalling (x3), timekeeper assistants (x2), start & finish markers, a scribe and road sign monitor. If you feel you are able to offer your services, please also contact Dudley as soon as possible.



IS THERE LIFE AFTER THE SURREY LEAGUE?

On a summer's evening one Thursday in June '93, all five groups in the weekly Surrey League Handicap race had finally joined up and were sprinting furiously for the finish line on the Normandy circuit. Yours truly, in excited disbelief, had 'mad the cut' and was actually near the front when a young rider from the 'Hounslow' overtook on the left switching to the right as he did so ..... taking my front wheel with him!!

Carnage followed as five riders became airborne over me, accompanied by the familiar sound of oaths, twisting metal and torn flesh. As usual, my first thoughts were, "What's happened to the Roberts?", before I realized, I couldn't move my arm ..... The ambulance men relocated the dislocated shoulder and I was taken to Guildford Hospital. My younger club mates (plenty of scope there then - Ed) collected the bike, which now needed new 'top' and 'down' tubes, and drove my car back to town. I couldn't ride or drive for 2 months!! (did I hear someone say Wimp? - Ed)

Now, don't get me wrong, there is nothing better than a Surrey League Handicap on a summers evening after a days work, followed by a pint and a chat in the 'Surrey Oaks' (Newdigate circuit). Incidentally, the concrete pillar that Keith Butler stands on to note down the finishing order should be dedicated and inscribed in his honour. BUT, at the age of 49, I just knew that enough was enuff!! That is, unless your name is Bill McCombe (also Roger Jackaman I believe - Ed) in which case you can keep at it until you are 55!!

"What to do next?". Around this time, the League of Veteran Racing Cyclists was formed .... As if by magic. Instead of forking out approximately £50 for BCF membership, licence, Surrey League membership etc., the joining fee is only £6. Racing is in age category's 40-44 (A), 45-49 (B), 50-54 ©, 55-59 (D), 60-64 (E), 65-69 (F) and 70+ (G). Prizes are presented for each category and, most importantly, there are less crashes as there are not so many beginners and we all have a little more respect for our bodies (and bikes - Ed). There are 10 Wednesday evening rides at Hillingdon circuit this season (50 minutes plus 5 laps) starting at 7 to7.30pm. There are 3 road races in Surrey, 2 at Chobham plus our own 'Follicly Challenged' at Ellens Green Saturday 21st July. The format is 'ride one event and marshal the other' on the day. There are also 2 races in Kent and 1 in Herts, 1 in Essex and a multitude of events at Eastway with the last race on 30th September. A full event list is on the notice board at our club room as are licence application forms (or contact Bill Ollis, our Region 9 Registrar at 157 Cedar Road, Strood, Kent ME2 2JR Tel: 01634 721502).

Our own 'chain gang' on a Tuesday evening, from the club room at 6.30pm is perfect preparation for LVRC events. The Vets leave 5 minutes before those training for Surrey League and occasionally 'stay away' from them on the 33 mile tear-up thro' the lanes. For more info about the chain gang, phone me on 0836 350 0925.

Geoff Redhead

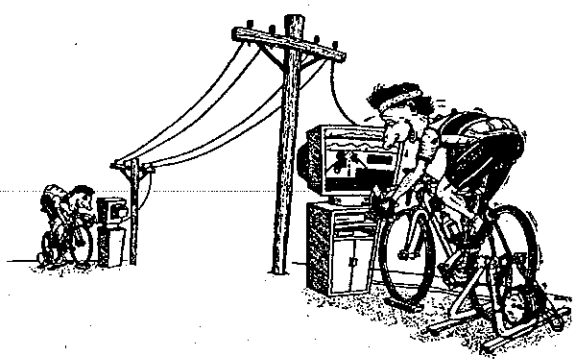
NEW MEMBERS

I would like to take this opportunity, on your behalf, to welcome the following new members to our ranks:-
Tibor Winkler (Kingston)
Neil Fuller (West Horsley)
Andrew Dowsett (Worcester Park)
Andrew Burbridge (New Malden)

CYCLING SHORTS

Hot night to remember - Seventeen hungry members joined out new Social Secretary for another successful Curry Night in January, this time in Twickenham. For those of you that like all the statistics, John Harris arrived late, Roger Jackaman was the last to finish his main course and Tony Sayers still refuses to let his hair down and was the only member who wore a tie all evening. We are all looking forward to further social events - keep an eye out on the club room notice board.

Turbo Training - Whilst the dark nights and the weather is not conducive to the regular chain gang contingent, there is a healthy (?) Take up for the Tuesday evening turbo sessions - no less than 8 members sweated (some not so proverbial) buckets last week. Maybe we ought to invest in a club mop?



Racing this season ? - If you are, I hope there is no need for me to remind you that you <u>must</u> race in current SWRC kit.

TTs, Changes to Entry Procedure - I have been asked to emphasise the need for inter-club TT entries to be made before the specified deadline (see full listing enclosed) and that entries should be made via David Bugden.