



BOTTOM GEAR

The OFFICIAL Voice of the SWRC

July 2001

Editor

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Web Site

Issue 23

Tony Sayers

Evans Cycles/Tippetts Honda Ltd

www.SWRC.org.uk

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INTER-CLUB EVENT SUCCESS

South Western Road Club were the winners on the total time for the first five riders. It seems a long time since we have been able to boast of such a success (and this without a Bugden in sight!). Our lads did us proud in the A3 inter-club event against Kingston Phoenix RC, Kingston Wheelers and Weybridge Wheelers on 8 April as the results below show:-

Paul Alderson	1st	24:54
Paul Foster	3rd	25:58
Graham Mathias	4th	26:07
Barry Harwood	7th	26:21
Tim Wildenberg	13th	28:12
Tony Ellis	17th	29:24

SWRC	2hr 13m 32s
KPRC	2hr 19m 32s
WW	2hr 24m 59s-
CCW	less than 5 finishers

KINGSTON FESTIVAL OF SPORT

Some of you will already be aware that the club applied for and has received a grant of £300 for the purchase of turbo trainers. As a quid pro quo we agreed to take part in the Kingston Festival of Sport 12-19 May by opening up our normal Saturday club run on 19th May to other interested cyclists (not that we have ever refused any likely looking candidates who have 'just turned up'). It was somewhat disappointing then, when not one rider turned up at Cobham car park at the allotted time. Peter Wright's request for us to make any strangers welcome and give them some encouragement especially on the hills was superfluous. I can't believe there are no interested individuals out there because the regular Saturday Club Run is still the most usual route into the club for new members, so I can only assume that the Kingston Festival of Sport is not advertised in the best way.

We wish to thank Peter for his efforts in obtaining the grant and Luciano Cycles for 'doing us a deal' on the turbo trainers.

Summer 2001

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EDITORIAL

Please accept my apologies for the late issue of this edition of Bottom Gear. At one point I was concerned that submissions were low and then I found myself under pressure at work. Still, it is finally here and, thanks to a recent submission from Nick Mills on their Peru trip, I have more than enough material and I have had to keep some bits back for the Autumn edition. I must plan next year not to be putting the final touches to the mag during the Tour - how can anyone be expected to operate a mouse to pull graphics into columnar text in a template document whilst Lance Armstrong goes storming away from Jan Ullrich and the rest of the peloton on the lower slopes of Alp d'Huez?

From the work point of view, I now find myself based locally at Hampton for the next 6 months (instead of East London) and I fully intend to make use of this to get the next edition out in 2 months time to pull publication dates back on programme (so you won't have to wait too long to find out just how many times Gary did manage to fall off in Peru).

Please don't be shy. Any contributions, however large or small (many of our members with our feet still on the ground would like to hear about your recent cycling holiday or your first road race just as much as we enjoy the escapades of the more adventurous). Drop me a line at 37 Endway, Surbiton, Surrey or e.mail me on tony@tsayers.freerve.co.uk

Tony

From your undercover roving reporter

First win in 2001 for SWRC? (on four wheels!) - Our treasurer, Dudley Samuels, was spotted earlier this year burning up the tarmac on some fat slicks whilst trashing the opposition in a go-cart race, on an indoor circuit, (ex - Bus garage), in Streatham. He was very impressive as he tore around the circuit like an angry bee to win by several seconds. If he can transfer this

killer instinct onto two wheels, then someone's going to get stung!!

Redhead goes off-road - continuing a recent trend for someone to have a spill each week on clubruns, Geoff (lunch club) Redhead took a nasty tumble whilst descending from Polesden Lacey in early March. Your reporter watched in amazement as he overshot a bend, climbed up the grassy bank, bounced along the ridge and then, just as I was about to congratulate him for 'holding it', he fell down heavily onto the road. ~~Fortunately, although the bike needed minor surgery, apart from the usual cuts and bruises Geoff's worst injury was a badly sprained wrist, which is actually quite devastating for him, as he won't be able to hold a pint mug for a few weeks!~~

UPDATE:

Initially thought to be just a sprained wrist, Geoff's injury was unfortunately identified, after a couple of trips to the hospital, as being a BROKEN wrist. Your 'undercover' roving reporter subsequently begged me to amend the above item before it went to press and to wish Geoff a speedy recovery (obviously suffering pangs of guilt for making light of the incident), but what the heck - he dishes the dirt, he gets the come backs - Ed.

Never mind inflation - Deflation is the problem - Another unfortunate trend during February and March on the club runs has been the number of punctures suffered by participants. On consecutive Saturdays a total of 11 punctures were endured! Our route-master, President Maylin, has been heard to mutter something about riders using inappropriate tyres for winter riding!

DP

Cycling or the Lack of it in Rio

I can get fit here I thought.

As I moved into our apartment in early November & out of those awful hotels

with their 3 course meals, beer & wine & their bars full of lonely expat. guys passing the dreary evenings away drooling over the beer & the "beautiful Brazilian girls". No, none of that for me, for as you all know, I'm not into good food, wine or women..... fitness is my fix!!!

Having experienced a short time in Rio before actually moving here, I'd decided to leave my bikes in the UK & buy a mountain bike to keep fit. A very sound decision. We'd been advised that there could be an issue with Customs if we brought in anything other than used personal goods & as I queued for two successive days in temperatures exceeding 35 degrees Celsius to release our paltry shipment containing not even one bike, I was well pleased with the decision.

So back to the UK in early December for the AGM and house packing!! (Oh yeah I hear you say.....). D packed up the house over 4 days, I came home one lunch time to 'help' took off my boots in the hall..... & yes you're right they were packed. The only other faux pas which David Wright ever so, ever so kindly sorted out was the packing of the door opener for our fireplace. They packed it & David made a new one. On 14th December having disposed of our worldly goods into storage & our dog, Meg to Simon & Gail, we 'gaily' set off for our 13 hour flight to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil or so we thought. However VARIG (the Brazilian Airline) & my secretary had other ideas. There had been a 'screw up' with the booking and we had to leave 6 suitcases at Heathrow & decamp back to Gail & Simon's home for the night. Fortunately they & the dog were pleased with this situation!!!! Finally we left the UK on 15th December after arriving at the airport three and half hours early and refusing a payment of £ 300 each not to fly that night (you must be joking). Brazil really is very popular at that time of year as things warm up to Carnival, - Can there be any other reason?

So Xmas, New Year and January were



spent setting up home, endless parties, getting to know the place & blitzing the shopping centres to get what we needed to settle down as quickly as possible. Our home is a three story penthouse with our own petite pool, a beautiful view over the lake Lagoa, a fridge stocked with beer which invites relaxation than racing, especially as the temperatures to date have often been over 40 degrees Celcius with very high humidity. Mid to late February is time for Carnival and Samba. It was an amazing experience and something never to be forgotten. We were lucky enough to be invited to the Sambadrome (like a football pitch with a road straight through it) to watch what must be the culmination of all that's wonderful in processions. Floats that were unbelievable, costumes that must have taken months to make and some of the worlds most beautiful people (the occasional few just painted gold or silver and nothing else...!!!). Each of the six Samba schools per night has its own song and themes & they are allowed 70 minutes to Samba down the Sambadrome to their tune with penalties of dropping down to the lower league if they exceed the time!!! Come Dancing will never be the same again!! These processions were held on three consecutive nights with the best going into the finals on the following Saturday night. Carnival is televised & each local area has its own procession in the streets & the whole experience lasts for around two weeks.....escape carnival if you live here? No way Jose! Much too exhausting to think about cycling.

Rio is sandwiched between the sea and the mountains and is one of the world's biggest tropical cities and one of the most densely populated places on Earth. Remember the statue of Christ, which you always see on the TV and Sugar Loaf Mountain (as featured in one of the James Bond movies)? Well we live beneath Christ. (The Redeemer), or the Dude as we affectionately call him & have a view of Sugar Loaf. There are some enormous climbs locally but some are cobbled and difficult to cycle to from

home and care needs to be taken security wise in most areas. Five of our people have been held up at gun point!! It is alleged that Rio is the fifth most dangerous city in the world although it doesn't seem as bad as some places I have been to.

Towards the end of February a young man thoughts turns to bikes? Very sad particularly in Rio!! I opted to buy a CALOI Mountain Bike for around £ 350 which is fitted with a Shimano Acera Group Set and looks the part (bar ends, fat tubing, siren!!) especially for a 'poser' - who me? The siren is used to make pedestrians move as they are more dangerous than the cars. We also bought a bike for D too so she can join the crowds & me 'strutting our stuff' around the Lagoa, Ipenema & Copacabana. As I am ambidextrous I can cycle AND ogle at the same time. Nice Combo. D hasn't mastered that yet. She can only do one or the other!!

Had a special saddle fitted with a hole in it ("good for the prostate you know") & having spend many years on Turbo's, TurboMatics and Flites I must say the new designs are very comfortable. Special handlebars, toe clips, pump and battle cage were all fitted to my 'poser' specification. Cycling in Rio is not easy as the roads are full of traffic, badly surfaced (British understatement) and conditions are dangerous. There must be a consultancy position for Bob Maylin here. He would have a field day as they don't seem to use chippings.....! So the only thing for it is to ride around the lake we live by, with what seems like 2 million people walking it, especially on a Sunday. Not much fun I know but in the evenings it's not too bad. I try to do the 7.5km lap 4 times a couple of evenings a week. On a weekend I now have a 30 mile round trip. The outward route takes me south along the Atlantic Coast towards a town called Barra which has many kilometres of beautiful beach backed by mountains. Breathtaking. The return route is inland over a very tough climb & the finale is to go along Leblon, Ipenema,

Copacabana & home via Lagoa with all the distractions they have!!! I often need to pinch myself to realise I am paid to be here!

If you think that cycling is a minority sport in the UK then you should see Rio. There seems to be a reasonable cycling scene in São Paulo but in Rio its almost non existent. Through D's gym (shot herself in the foot with this intro!) I have met a racing cyclist who rides for Cicle Rio and he is desperate for me to join their club. He (nick name Troglo?) rides a Pinarello Paris and others in the club have Bianchi's and Colnago's. I proudly sport the colours of the SWRC which are at least unique in this part of the world .. so don't say I never think of you. There is little market for Evans & probably less for Tippetts!! Jordan gets dropped on his mountain bike & they disappear on their 8kg. exotica. That's my excuse!

Now to the good bit.... Trogs sorted me out a second hand racing bike an immaculate Colnago Dream with Record 10 speed. The dream continues. Absolutely beautiful in Rabobank colours at BR\$ 3500!! (approx. £ 1200). So the following week I went to pick it up, choose new Sidi's and a few other things that are needed to complete the pose. Was advised that I would get a good rate against the US \$?? Pardon? US\$'s not the Brazilian Rials which we had agreed on. Misunderstanding I'm told. "Portugese/English language problem"! Some problem. Anyway on seeing the bill the bike was US\$ 3,500 (£ 2415). Seems like 'screw a Gringo week' had arrived. Needless to say I am still riding my mountain bike!! Poor old embarrassed Trogs has offered the use of his second bike, a Pinarello Stelvio which I will take up. He has already changed the cranks to 172's as everybody out here seem to ride 175's. Its fitted with Shimano STI's. How can an 'old' Campag man use such funny things?? Give me ERGO-levers any time. However any port in a storm & a Stelvio is as good a port as any!



June holds a visit to the UK and I will pay homage at the local cycle Emporia and get what I need to be a local Rio racer, so when I return here I'll ride with the Cicle Rio club who meet at the ungodly hour of 0700 hrs on Saturday and Sunday mornings. Two weeks ago they met at 0605 hrs!!! Remember I had trouble in getting to Cobham car park for nine o'clock on Saturdays.

Racing here tends to be criteriums along the beach roads which makes Surrey Leagues's seem very attractive. So remember even though I have 'tour man' tan on my legs & arms I do miss cycling in Surrey and Sussex - just ask D, I think I might have mentioned it once, twice or three times.....

So, watch this space for news of the only SWRC member in Rio's 'Cicle Rio' Club.

Tchau
David Jordan

FIRST OF THE SEASON

The hard men of cycling started their campaign early to get a PB's at various distances in Time Trialing - a type of racing not for the faint hearted (i.e. road racers).

The 11th March arrived which brought together the formidable pairing of Cannon and Samuels in an attempt to beat their previous time for a 2 Up 20 of 49-29 which was set back in October 2000 - is this a club record - I ask myself.

On went the warm clothes and off we went. The course covered the same road as the club Open 10 - giving Paul an ideal-spying mission. As we rolled upto the start I punctured and we frantically managed to change the tube and start on time. We tore down the first 5 miles like there was no tomorrow at 31 mph with some ease. This led us into a false sense of security as we battled for the next 10 miles into the wind-reducing our speed to under 20mph on many occasions. It was that hard a couple of speed merchants caught us for 2 mins at the

10 mile check which was good but they then went onto take a further 5 mins out of us in the next 10 miles.

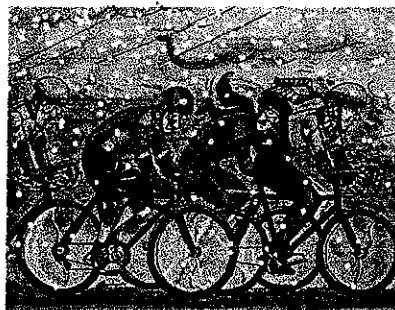
The final turn could not come quick enough as we tried to power down the last 5 miles with what energy we had left - which was not much. We finally reached that well deserved sign the "finish" a 52-12 not bad due to the windy conditions especially as the winners from Team Clean could only clock a 42 which equates to a 53 for a 25 TT.

Not a bad day at the office but we will be back in October to go for a PB (and a club record !)- if anybody else wants to join us then please do , it's in the RTTC hand book - October 2001.

Dudley

TRAINING WEEKEND

Twelve members braved a very windy Saturday on the outward leg of the training weekend to Southsea in May. Even the usually reserved Bill McCombe was heard to utter some expletives about the weather when he finally arrived on the steps of the Sea Crest Hotel. The trip out had taken over an hour longer than anticipated and all riders were exhausted when they arrived after cycling against a strong wind for so long.



After an enjoyable evening meal and a good night's sleep the riders set off for home with trepidation (and a stomach full of breakfast). The weather did not look too promising! They need not have worried unduly, getting caught by moderate rainfall a few miles from home.

Many thanks to Geoff Redhead for organising the event yet again, even if it does seem that he has no control over the weather. What will the venue be for next year's Training Weekend? Will Geoff himself be fit enough to take part? Watch future editions of Bottom gear for more news nearer the time.

E.MAIL NEWSLETTER - UPDATE

The circulation list for the monthly e.mail newsletter composed by Peter Wright is increasing steadily (current circulation 44). Edition No.6 came to a screen near you on 10th June. If you have the facilities and want your name added to the list, please contact Peter on peter.wright@bacs.co.uk.

Recent editions have included, notification of a further of our popular 'Curry Nights'; late breaking news of British Eurosport's decision to televise the Giro after all, details of 'cycling orientated' websites and news of the successful 'Open 10' organised by Dudley Samuels on our behalf - See separate report in this mag.

THE MAGNIFICENT SEVEN

What do us enthusiasts do when we are not on our bikes? Watch the pro's of course racing on their bikes. Seven members recently went to Italy for the second week of the Giro d'Italia. They managed to see three different stages, a start, finish and mountain stage. Dudley Samuels also managed to arrange a personnel tour of the Pinarello factory for them all. Peter Wright comments, "The event organisers kindly sent the riders round twice to climb the Passo Pordoi. They came through fairly fast the first time and just a bit slower the next time round. Obviously since our return the drugs story has hit the headlines and the sport is again reeling. No doubt it will be a difficult Tour de France for the organisers and riders with the media out for more blood."

SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB

Midsummer 2-Up time trial Date: Tuesday 26th June 2001 Course: GS292 - Hungry Hill Time keeper: Jeremy Nason

Number	Names	Start time	1st lap finish time	1st lap time	Finish time	Actual time	Position on time	Handicap*	Handicap time	Position on handicap
1	Roger Jackaman	02:00	20:27	18:27	39:37	37:37	5	09:27	28:10	2
2	Bill McCooomb	04:00	23:09	19:09	42:12	38:12	9	05:02	33:10	7
3	Dudley Samuels	06:00	24:34	18:34	43:36	37:36	4	08:40	28:56	3
4	Mandy McDonnell	08:00	26:50	18:50	46:09	38:09	8	03:38	34:31	9
5	Ray Watson	10:00	28:42	18:42	47:38	37:38	6	02:50	34:48	10
6	Paul Cannon	12:00	30:56	18:56	50:02	38:02	7	06:37	31:25	6
7	Tony Sayers	14:00	31:35	17:35	49:31	35:31	2	02:03	33:28	8
8	Wayne Sayers	16:00	34:25	18:25	53:11	37:11	3	05:59	31:12	5
9	Graham Mathias	18:00	34:44	16:44	51:44	33:44	1	06:10	27:34	1
10	Trevor Jones	19:00	37:15	18:15	55:50	36:50				
11	Barry Harwood	20:00	39:47	19:47	59:57	39:57				
12	Tony Forrest	22:00	41:45	19:45	02:05	40:05	10	09:27	30:38	4
13	Chris McDonnell	24:00	40:29	16:29	57:28	33:28				
14	Mark Packman									
15	John Harris									
16	Ken Dolman									
17	Keith Bugden									
18	Dave Bugden									
19	Paul Foster									
20	Peter Wright									
21	Geoff Redhead									
22	Ted Collins									
24	?? Pearsons									

*Handicap times calculated as the sum of half of 140% of the age related handicap time for 10 miles as set down in standards times published by the RTTC. © SWRC 2001

South Western Road Club Open 10 - H10/8 (A31) on 5th May 2001

Promoted by:-

Luciano Cycles, 174 Central Road, Worcester Park, Surrey KT4 8HQ
0208 330 3141 (Phone), 0208 330 2018 (Fax)

Results (top placings and SWRC riders only):-

Position	Name		Time
1	Neil Friedrich	North Hampshire Road Club	23.03
2	Richard Burch	Sotonia CC	23.20
3	David Gilham	Hounslow & District Wheelers	23.38
4	Gary Buckett	P.N.E.C.C	23.52
5	Stuart Grace	A.C.Stratos	23.54
6	Liam Terry	Bogner Regis CC	23.55
7	Terry Evans	P.N.E.C.C	24.05
8	James Lamb	Charlottesville CC	24.06
16	Chris McDonnell	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	24.44
18	Gary Smith	Evans Racing Team	25.03
20	Graham Mathais	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	25.08
23	Paul Cannon	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	25.20
24	John Harris	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	25.28
31	William McCombe	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	26.01
32	Ken Dolman	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	26.10
34	Peter Wright	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	26.18
35	Trevor Jones	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	26.19
39	Mandy McDonnell(L)	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	26.50
43	Cedric Crooks	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	27.08
44	Robin Chipperfield	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	27.12
45	Tony Ellis	SWRC - Tippetts Honda/Evans Cycles	27.22

A special note of congratulation go to the two junior riders on the start sheet, Neil Friedrich (1st) - 17yrs and Liam Terry (6th) 16yrs - well done lads.

Dudley Samuels would like to thank the Time Keepers, Marshalls W.I of Bentley (for the cakes and Teas) and last but no means least the riders. "See you next year".

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Although the full listing (and details) of all the club time trial events for the whole season were included in the last edition of Bottom Gear, I have included a reminder of the dates below along with other club events over the next few months. As I have said before, the list is not exhaustive and details of other last minute activities can always be obtained from the club room on a Tuesday evening:-

5 Aug	TT 25ml Interclub	2 Sept	TT 25ml Interclub
7 Aug	Midsummer 2UP second round	8 Sept	TT 10ml Interclub
18 Aug	TT 10ml Interclub	16 Sept	TT Hungry Hill
?? Aug	Curry Night (Italian Style)	15&16 Sept	Boulogne Randonnee
22 Aug	TT Hungry Hill	7 Oct	SWRC Surrey League RR
		18 Oct	Hill Climb



TRANS-ANDEAN CHALLENGE

Yes, it has finally arrived, and well worth the wait if I may say so. I am sure this will be especially good news for the mid-week club run and the 'over the hill' gang riders who have been suffering the verbal version from Gary Smith for the last 8 months. The bad news is, however, that Gary will no doubt continue to 'dine out' on the back of his escapades in Peru for some time to come.

20/10/00 Friday Heathrow Airport.

Well here we all were gathered together at the usual ludicrous hour of the morning that anything to do with cycling seems to entail, for a shuttle flight to Amsterdam en route to Lima. Seems KLM operate a bit like our club runs; spend half the time going in the opposite direction to the intended destination (three hours later we were back at Heathrow only 10Km up). The flight was uneventful, stopping as scheduled on the Caribbean island of Aruba. Three or four hours later, on the approach to Lima, the aircraft dropped down to the level of the Andean peaks and then started dodging in between them! This ensured we had an excellent view for half an hour or so of what we were scheduled to spend nine days crossing in the other direction. I started to think two weeks in Aruba would be a lot less painful.

At Lima Airport we were met by Trailbreak/Amazonas Explorer representatives who took us, together with an assortment of bike boxes to the hotel in Lima where we were to spend the night prior to catching a flight to Cusco in the morning. It was difficult to guarantee flights to Cusco after midday owing to the reduced visibility. Cusco is at 3,400 metres. Word of our arrival had obviously gone before us because Trude Mostue the TV vet was on hand at the hotel in Lima in case Blobby got sick.

21/10/2000 Saturday.

09:30 saw the fifteen who had

gathered together in Lima and all the associated bike boxes loaded onto an Aero Continental flight to Cusco. This flight ensured more views of the Andes, but only the low ones, from a very efficient airline. On arrival at Cusco Airport we were greeted by huge signs for Inca Cola and children with no teeth. Little did we know that we would be building up a relationship with Inca Cola in the near future. We kept our teeth though.

The bikes arrived safely at our hotel, the Centenario, and we spent a few hours unpacking the bikes and pretending to be relieved that they had arrived in one piece. Paul Cripps, the group leader, took the precaution of removing our tickets and passports before he briefed us on what lay ahead in the next nine days!

Late afternoon we went for dinner early (due to jet lag) where we had a choice of Guinea Pig or Llama. The meal took so long to arrive we reckon they had to organise a hunting party and when we finally got out it was dark.

22/10/2000 Sunday - Macchu Picchu

There was a choice. The loonies went for an acclimatization ride but we went to see the walls at Macchu Picchu. The helicopter ride was noisy and not very interesting apart from the landing, which was like something out of MASH. The ruins were set on the edge of a 1500m cliff and had been discovered before they fell over it, unfortunately. Our big mistake was going to Peru before they did (fall off). If you want to spend three hours looking at stones piled up between 9 and 15 degrees so they don't fall down good luck. You might like to think about getting out more though. We then had a four-hour journey back in a Tourist Train. Still it had cold beer served by a charming young lady from a trolley and we bought delicious Corn on the Cob with huge niblets from a trackside vendor. The train descended into Cusco on a switchback, a sort of hairpin bend system for trains. By now it was dark and the signalling system seemed to consist of a series of

bonfires, one at each set of points. Back in Cusco we discovered that we had made the wise choice. The people who went on the training ride got caught in a storm and ended up riding back through sewage. Dinner that evening was interesting. We all went to a restaurant called the Grill Bar for more local grub for tourists which was OK and a Pan Pipe band which was not. Dougie, the mechanic bought a CD of the band as a prize for the last rider into Puerto Maldonado, our destination on the other side of the Andes nine days away.....

DAY 1. 23/10/2000 Monday Cusco to 3740m Campsite (Windy City)

Low Point 3015m; High Point 3740m; Distance 40.3m; Time 3:40.

Everyone feeling very frisky as we went pell-mell through town. I don't think the locals had ever seen anything like it and I was very suspicious of some of the bits on the road after the stories from yesterday. We soon found ourselves on an amazing cycle path down the middle of a dual carriageway which was littered with old cars, dogs, smelly women, turds of various origins and so on (the cycle path that is, not the dual-carriageway). Jane reported that Raymond wished he had bought a suspension seat post. Rather early in the ride to come to that conclusion we thought but little did we know (again).

Anyway we spent hour or so descending on quite a good road after the "cycle track" finished and then some Smart Alec decided it was time for a bit of off-road. Trouble is we went through a cactus field and it was incredibly hot. Very many people punctured on thorns (think hypodermics) and fixing punctures with no shade at midday in 40°C was no joke. Bit more exotic than thistles though. Back to tarmac eventually and lunch overlooking a lake. Raymond particularly remembers a white statue of Jesus here with arms outstretched over an external cemetery with multi-story coffin stacking facilities. Saving space I guess. Very pleasant but the effect was spoilt by discovering loads



more punctures when we returned to our bikes, your correspondent not excluded.

After lunch and a short descent, we turned left at a junction signposted Puerto Maldonado and started a two day climb on the only road to Puerto Maldonado. Shortly after we started climbing the tarmac ran out and was not to be seen again for eight days, 500Km and no flush toilets (it's a bog Jim, but not as we know it). The road was very quiet now; we only encountered four lorries and a bus during our climb to 3740m and camp. It was very barren, relieved only by some well exposed bedding and folding features in the rock strata.

Camp that night was awful. It was basically a hole on the outside of a hairpin bend, stony and windy. Describing it as bleak and desolate would not do it justice. Our tent was pitched on a specially selected extra stony patch with special stone garnish, just under the spine, where it hurts.

Lying in my bag that night with sleep at least as far away as my perfectly serviceable bed in Kingston, I said to Blobby (with whom I was sharing) "What the ***** hell have you let us in for?????". Well, it was his idea!

Phil, from Trailbreak the English end of the operation, was making a video. When I saw the video he had managed to capture footage of small whirlwinds in the vicinity of our camp. This footage had been taken on Tuesday morning as we climbed higher up the mountain from camp.

DAY 2, 24/10/2000 Tuesday Campsite (Windy City) to JULILUNCA via URCOS ABRA

Low Point 3490m; High Point 4100m; Distance 30m; Time 3:40.

Started the day by completing the climb to the top of Urcos Abra (Abra means pass). This was a total of 19 miles of which we had done 9 prior to camp in Windy City. That left 10

miles to the top at 4,100m where there was a good photo opportunity with views back down the road which looked like snail trails or the Calobra (Mallorca). There was also the chance to have your photo taken with the local talent, i.e. a toothless old lady, for one sol. I was quite intrigued by some abandoned holes in banks on the side of the road that must have been used for habitation of some sort. Not the Hilton!

From there we dropped to CCATCCA off-road with big sweeping turns and the truck following us. So did the jeep but it lost a wheel. A dog chased me but it couldn't catch up as I was on a fast descent and on the front. It must have given some of the following riders some trouble though judging by the shouts. Phil was taking video at frequent intervals and quite by chance managed to film Dougie coming off his bike when his seat-pin broke. He bent the handlebars with his groin but appeared to be undamaged, at least that's what he claimed!

At 3,500m (Ccatcca) with a low point at the river crossing there of 3,490m we waited for the truck and had lunch in the square. Kevin entertained the locals, quite a few of whom had turned out to stare, by pulling wheelies and doing track-stands. After lunch we did a bit more off-road and then when we rejoined it, I was bitten by a dog. I didn't manage to get the thing, but Paul managed to hit it with a stone. I was a bit worried that the dog might have caught something from me but Raymond said it was still running around OK. So that was good especially when Paul reassured me that not many dogs in the area had rabies. As a result of this everyone became very cautious about these animals. For a while when we encountered them, which was quite frequent, we set up a barrage of stones that would have knocked out a tank. Apparently the dogs are intended to guard the cattle but I don't think they would last long on One Man and his Dog.

Blobby fell off for the first time crossing a stream and Raymond

continued to wonder about buying a suspension seat-post. We climbed steadily to LLAGA LLAGA at 3895m and then dropped to camp on a football field at JULILUNCA. That night it rained. And it rained and the temperature dropped. And the tent started to leak. I had my second night without sleep and discovered that my cigars wouldn't stay alight very well due to the altitude. I realized this meant things were getting tough and I probably hit my low point. It also marked my last day with dry feet for five days and the end of warm weather for a similar period.

DAY 3, 25/10/2000 Wednesday JULILUNCA to MAHUANI

Low Point 3750m; High Point 4000m; Distance 19m; Time 2:53.

Rain stopped but remained cloudy and misty. Gary fell off before even leaving the site (fall 2). Choice of road or single track to Ocongate. Single track began well then turned into steep walk over boulders and carrying the bikes - crampons would have been useful. Ended with a river crossing over a rickety bridge through which Martin fell, only being stopped by his bike getting wedged between the slats. More on bridges later.



Those taking the road reached the village much earlier and had time to shop, Gary and I getting bargain coats for £8 each which we intended to use as pillows although we actually ended up wearing them to sleep in. Gary treated everyone to coffee on discovering they cost 5p each (we thought at first they were £1.00 each).



Mind you the state of the toilets was reflected in the price of the coffee I am reliably informed.

The rough track/road then climbed gently for 10 miles until we reached a concrete bunker situated next to a raging river, which turned out to be the



local spa. Here we had lunch and asked the spa-man if we could use the baths. After finding it would take three hours to fill, we continued another five miles to our next campsite, the football field of Mahuani. By this time it was raining hard and, just to complete our drenching, we had to cross a couple of deep fords. Once settled we boarded the truck and, perched on sacks of yams and bananas, wedged between diesel drums and under cover of tarpaulin, bounced back to the spa. The concrete hole now contained two feet of hot, vaguely sulphurous and dubiously clean water but it was the first wash since Cusco and, along with a few beers, eased the aches of hours of rough riding. Bliss! We had an audience of local children quite bemused at the sight of semi-naked white gringos, even more so when some brave souls decided to take a dip in the freezing river.

After our swim we discovered it had stopped raining and the sun even came out. Life couldn't get much better. Back to camp and a briefing on the next day which was to take us to the highest altitude of the trip. We were warned that any symptoms of altitude sickness:— disorientation, severe headache or breathlessness and

nosebleeds would mean being put in the truck and taken back to a lower altitude as quickly as possible. As this sounds like one of my regular hangovers I am a concerned about telling the difference. This is our highest camp and my cigars won't even light at such heights!

DAY 4. 26/10/2000 Thursday MAHUANI via HUALLA HUALLA PASS to QUENKO

Low Point 3500m; High Point 4760m; Distance 31m; Time Not logged

After a four-pancake breakfast we set off for the high point of the trip. Literally. Given cocoa leaves to chew on and some charcoal stuff to activate them. Apparently very good to relieve altitude symptoms, however tastes awful, makes your mouth and tongue numb, so you dribble, (like a good shot at the dentist) and stains lips, teeth and gums green! On top of this a steady climb up a quickly deteriorating track to our highest point, 4760m. We took it in stages, stopping at 1 hour intervals then every 30 minutes then every 10 minutes Lunch at the top in the lee of a shrine cum church, posed for pictures then after a quick snowball fight we found we had just left it long enough for the skies to darken and the rain begin.

The descent was very rocky and extremely cold, we were in thermal tights and mitten-territory now and as we were all soaked to the skin these did not work very well. Some off-road detours but ultimately a fast and frantic hair-pin plummet through mud and potholes to reach our next camp at Quenko. This was located by the river and was very scenic but God alone knows why the place had a name. There was nothing to distinguish it from the surrounding saturated vegetation except a couple of miserable looking fields. Perhaps Paul our leader was making it up(?) The landscape changed markedly once we crossed the top of the pass. Before the road went through fairly open valleys or was on plains. Now we were following river sections more closely

and the valley sides were closing in. Entertainment at the camp was provided by part of the road opposite having disappeared into the river leaving trucks to negotiate the remainder of the route balanced on half a wheel. Most of the trucks consisted of a lower portion carrying petrol and an upper deck crammed with people, animals and food, none seemed particularly concerned with their precarious perches on top of a few thousand gallons of gasoline. When the rain held off quite a few seemed to enjoy a nice cigarette to make the day go with a bang! Our vicarious enjoyment of the predicament of the trucks opposite was reduced when we realised our own transport had to go that way and by the resumption of the rain. This was no joke, our gear was still wet but so far there had been enough sunshine to get things dry by the next day.

DAY 5. 27/10/2000 Friday QUENKO to CADENA

Low Point 1000m; High Point 3500m; Distance 40m; Time 3:28

Another choice of off or on road but as one seemed to be just a wider version of the other there wasn't much in it. The plan was to meet in the village of Marcapata. I took the road which it turned out was being repaired. We encountered one digger that had fallen towards the river, it was surrounded by workers, scratching their heads and looking at it lying forlornly on its side. One of the snippets gleaned was that a Polish guy built the road by using local Indian labour. In order to get them into the jungle he had to chain them up. Thought I'd pass this on.

At Marcapata were more hot springs so another dip was in order. After our dip we had a pell-mell descent round a series of hairpins which must have taken us down quite a height. The rain began again but the temperature and humidity were beginning to rise with our steady drop in altitude. The scenery was becoming more tropical with tree ferns and banana plants in abundance. This was the beginning of



the Cloud Forest or High Jungle. At the end of hairpins we reached the river and went through a gorge with some magnificent thrust features and huge sheets of mica which reflected like glass. The reflections may have been due to it being high grade mica; more likely it was because it was wet. The feeling of isolation was incredible. Lost Horizons could have been filmed here.

Slightly more prosaically our lunch stop was at the side of the road after we had cleared the gorge and a passing truck driver stopped to take a photo of these "loco gringos". There were more people about now presumably because the climate was slowly improving as we descended. Paul informed us it was another 12 miles to camp so off we set, 17 miles later no sign of camp or of anyone else for that matter. The "road" was now in a very bad state with many fords, most fairly shallow and rideable but occasionally very deep. Jane rode into one only to soon find herself waist deep and had to be rescued by Raymond from being swept into the Amazon (well a tributary of it, that's a certainty around here).

We encountered more road works along this stretch and another JCB in trouble; this one had capsized completely. I say capsized advisedly, by now we had encountered so much water from above and below a Pedalo with a large umbrella would have been my transport of choice. As the road working regime appeared to consist of dredging up the river and dumping the gravel and boulders on the road or wherever the road was thought to be I started contemplating whether the stream section would give a better ride. After I fell off in the road works I figured at least the water might cushion my fall, after all how much wetter than totally saturated can one get?

Anyway back to the chase, Raymond's mountain bike skills in recognizing tyre tracks persuaded us we were still on course. Five miles later as the landscape flattened and the valley

opened out the camp emerged to everyone's relief except a rather irate turkey whose patch we were invading. But then Blobby arrived and started eyeing up the Turkey which promptly vanished (I made that up, not the Turkey but Blobby's bird fancying). The truck also got drenched in the fords and the rain allowing diesel in the boards to soak into Raymond and Jane's rucksacks and sleeping bags, that and with the now sticky heat bringing out the bugs made for them an uncomfortable, nauseous night.

This was the first camp where it was warm enough to consider bathing in the river. It wasn't that warm so I washed my feet, much to Blobby's relief, but a few hardy souls made it all the way. We saw fireflies for the first time on the trip and the toilet tent was set up in the densest piece of undergrowth available! What we didn't see were any snakes although we subsequently discovered that the area was infested with them; a few were not venomous apparently.

I drank two beers (Cusquina) and really enjoyed them because they were still cold enough to be pleasant and the weather was warm enough (and so was I at last) to make them pleasant. This camp was a first location wise. So far we had always camped on football pitches apart from the first night in Windy City or by streams. This camp combined proximity to water with the advantage of the relative flatness of the pitch. So far the toilet tent and its associated hole had been located on the penalty spot much to our amusement; this camp also broke with that tradition.

Ed:- Due to lack of space, we will leave Nick and his companions pitching their latrines and return to their epic climb in our next edition.

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SWRC RANDONNEE MAY 2001

For the third year in a row, the SWRC May Randonnee went off without any major glitches. Once again, the

signing of the route (carried out by co-organisers David Wright & Bob Maylin over a 5½ hour period the preceding Friday) was excellent and commended by many of the riders - to the best of my knowledge, only one lone rider actually veered off the official route.

Just days before the event, David Wright was understandably worried because pre-entries were in single figures. However, the weather at the weekend turned out to be the best of the year so far and, by the time the first riders were setting off at 9.00am, Cobham car park was bustling with riders. Some chomping at the bit as they waited their turn to go, others hastily assembling machines withdrawn from their cars, signing on or paying the almost obligatory 'last call of nature'.

For those of you that like statistics, we had a total of 89 Entrants (5 of whom DNS). Of the 84 who rode, 35 completed the full 85-mile route and 38 opted for the shorter (but still challenging) 50 mile alternative. 9 riders did not actually cross the finish line although at least 3 were seen within spitting distance of Cobham car park and presumably decided to go straight home. Those of you familiar with randonnees will be aware that Gold, Silver or Bronze awards are gained according to the riders age and the time he or she took to complete their chosen route. Despite one or two 'brevit' cards not handed in at the finish and a few abandonments (I promised not to mention my wife by name) I am busily printing out 35 Gold, 20 Silver, 11 Bronze and 5 Commendation cards (for those determined to finish even though they were outside the time limit). **Useful Tip:-** The knack of getting a Gold award appears to be being mature in years in the first place and then hanging on the back of a group of younger riders by your proverbial finger nails.

I mentioned David and Bob at the beginning of this article, but apart from marking out the route, David co-



ordinated the whole event, started the riders on their way and, with Penny his wife, acted as roving marshal and sign collector on the day. Bob manned the first Check at Hydestyle, did some sign collecting and did the last stint at manning the finish. Other regulars on duty were Ray Watson who, with Penny Wright, manned the sign on desk; David and Janet Bugden who provided tea and home made cakes at the Ellens Green check point on the return leg and, apart from collating the results, yours truly manned the furthestmost Check at Amberley (which basically means that I sat in the sun all day in the tea room gardens drinking tea and sampling too many cakes).

Although the above stalwarts were glad to be on duty to make the event possible, it would be nice to think that a few volunteers might come forward next year to enable at least some of this years team to take part. I leave it to your conscience.



ALAN TAKES A TUMBLE

SWRC member Alan Clarke was knocked off his bike while on a solo early morning training ride on Sat 2 June. His was hit by a car coming out of a side turning near Gomshall. Alan believes he was unconscious for about 15 mins as he only came round after the ambulance men arrived from Guildford. He says he was lucky to have had his helmet on as both sides of it were crushed. He broke a collar bone and has other cuts and bruises. The police have advised Alan that they will be prosecuting the car driver. Alan has BCF membership and their solicitors are already on the case.

We wish Alan a speedy recovery, who says he'll be wearing his new helmet on every ride from now on.

AUSTRALIA OR BUST

You may remember, in our last issue, I gave you an extract of one of the 'messages from home' from Richard Scriven, a fellow cyclist who joined one of our Saturday club-runs as part of his 'warm up' before he set off to join one of his ex-colleagues and his brother (Richard and Andrew McLaughlin) who were in the process of a very challenging, year plus, London to Sydney cycling/canoeing trip. The previous extract was from Richard Scriven whilst they were travelling across Indonesia. The one below, towards the end of their epic journey crossing from Indonesia to the Australian mainland:-

"We have made our arrival in one piece (just) into Darwin, Australia. As it turned out, we ended up using motor power to cross the Timor Sea. We also flirted dangerously with a Tropical Depression that developed into a full blown cyclone whilst we were at sea. It finally came to dawn on us that our captain was totally inadequately experienced to attempt the crossing as we found ourselves in 5 to 6 metre swells and our compass and rear awning were washed off the boat. At that point we found ourselves navigating using my personal handlebar mounted compass from my bike. We were also getting further away from Australia rather than closer. (Modesty obviously prevented Richard mentioning that fact that he, Richard McL and eventually the Captain himself all donned flippers and masks and went into the high seas to free the propeller that had become tangled with the line from the (by then) punctured inflatable dingy). Our fortunes changed for the better when the Coastal Watch plane picked us up and made radio contact. With at least one of our team members sobbing hysterically, as eggs, cups, saucers, loose water bottles and crew members flew asunder around the main cabin; all was certainly not well on the good ship 'La Boheme'. Wondering whether we would ever make it to Darwin the calm and measured voice of the Coastal Watch Radio operator

welcomed us into Australian Waters and within a few hours HMAS Launceston (pronounced Lawncesston in Ozzie-speak!) Was alongside us issuing calm instructions on our safest course to dry land. We had one more night at sea and managed to explain our growing fear for our lives as time passed at sea without seeming to get closer to Darwin. After deliberation on quite who should join HMAS Launceston, Dean (another friend along for part of the trip) and I were plucked from the ailing La Boheme and we left the rest of the team to make the 30 mile journey around the Cox Peninsula to the safety of Darwin Harbour.

As the two of us set foot on the solid steel of Her Majesty's Australian Ship, we couldn't help but have a wide grin of relief across our faces - and yet, at the same time we knew that the disaster was not over yet for Andrew, Tim and Rich. After some great tucker on board Launceston, we had a slightly lumpy night's sleep before reaching the sweeping expanse of Darwin harbour and the naval base. The efficiency of the navigators on the 'Flying Bridge' of this Australian Patrol vessel were in such contrast to the careless and amateur manner in which we had just arrived from Indonesia.

On arrival in Darwin, we were met by Customs and Excise who duly informed us that the latest news on 'La Boheme' 'aw yeah, I'm sure that went down last night?' - the post breakfast revelry was soon whipped off our faces and replaced with a deep rooted sickness in the pit of our stomachs. La Boheme had been grounded, holed, and all crew members had evacuated - SAFELY! What an arrival in Australia. Now that is one adventure we all wish that we had not had to live through - and we are truly grateful to be here."

This episode earned the team several mentions in the Australian press under such titles as "Nightmare voyage to Darwin" and a cartoon from the Northern Territory News which I have



reproduced here. Just before the end of their record breaking journey on ?? February 2001, The Sunday Times (14/1/01) at home devoted almost half a page to their exploits with the title 'British brothers head for world cycle record'.

If you fancy reading the full story of the ship wreck episode, or indeed other lesser 'narrow escapes' such as being shot at by Indonesian police or camping in blizzards, then visit their official web site www.humanpower.freemove.co.uk which apart from detailing experiences along their journey also includes some of their photos.



DEAR GLORIA

Since the first appearance of this particular column in our last edition, an e.mail has come flooding in:-

Dear Gloria - Since joining your club

some months ago my, until then apparently reserved husband, has started to disappear on his bike for hours on end of a weekend wearing nothing, but what can only be described as skimpy lycra. This from a man who admonished me some years ago for 'being too old' to wear a bikini even on a beach on a hot summers day. What I am trying to get around to is, "Is this a strange fetish he has picked up?" or, "Has he started going mad?"

Dear member's wife - Surely, this must be a wind up. There is absolutely nothing wrong with hubby's behaviour. Why don't you join us as well and 'get a life' ?

CYCLING SHORTS

SWRC Baptism - Paul Cannon's girlfriend Liz has quickly learnt of the trials and tribulations of being a South Western member. Liz was an occasional cyclist before she met Paul, but she is now the proud owner of a smart racing bike, which she rode regularly last year in the Surrey lanes and on two trips to France, and a Club member too. Unfortunately, on her first outing she fell off near Leigh, prompting Paul's sensitive comment that she could now call herself a proper SWRC member. Paul then got himself into more hot water by checking the bike for damage before turning his attention to Liz who was lying bleeding in the gutter. Where have we heard that one before?

Luncheon Club - A copy of the Luncheon Club 'Shortest Ride' article which appeared in the previous edition of Bottom Gear has (to the embarrassment of the participants I am sure) made it into the latest copy of Sou' Wester, the CTC SW London DA newsletter.

Editor takes a tumble (again!) - It was only a momentary lapse in concentration - honest guv! One minute I was cycling along minding my own business (daydreaming obviously) when there in front of me is Chris McDonnell standing in the road after stopping to help his wife Mandy with her puncture. Too late to avoid Chris, I caught him a glancing blow (knocking him to the ground) before I landed rather heavily in the gutter. Chris managed to cycle on with cracked or bruised ribs (one of those macho types who gives the rest of us a bad name!) whereas I ended up with another trip to the A&E department - this time with a broken collar bone and three broken ribs.

Winding Down (gracefully?) - It only seems a year ago that keen cyclist Geoff Redhead was trying to encourage me to "come out on the Tuesday chain gang" because he wanted to start up a 'B' group (which would of course include himself). Imagine my surprise then when, just the other night, he approached me with the suggestion that once again I come out and join him on the chain gang in the 'C' group he is thinking of forming. Knowing that several of you like statistics, I have spoken to a mathematician friend of mine who convinces me that in the year 2023, Geoff and I will be pushing our wheelchairs around in the 'Z' group.

Are we lost? - You bet we were. Out of our usual area on a short club run on the morning of the Open 10 at Bentley, we consulted the map for the umpteenth time and the following quoted phrases stick in my mind. "Well it's not on the map". "It can't be in that direction because we have just come from there". Even with the combined powers of experts Bob Maylin and Dave Pinder we were in trouble. You could tell this from the third and final quote, "I reckon, if we keep the wind in our faces and the sun over our right shoulder"

Teenagers' Ride Cancelled - After putting a lot of work and research into the ride for schoolchildren in the area, Geoff Redhead has had to cancel the event for this year. Promised advice and assistance from the CTC did not materialise in time despite several chase-up calls from Geoff. As the deadline approached Geoff was forced to transfer his efforts to the annual Follicly Challenged LVRC Event he also organises on our behalf in July - *News of this in our next edition (Ed)*