



# BOTTOM GEAR

The OFFICIAL Voice of the SWRC

December 2001  
Editor  
SWRC sponsors  
Web Site

Issue 25  
Tony Sayers  
Evans Cycles/Tippetts Honda Ltd  
[www.SWRC.org.uk](http://www.SWRC.org.uk)

## IN THIS ISSUE:-

- \* World Masters
- \* End to End Perspective
- \* Follicly Challenged Rpt
- \* Summer Alps Trip
- \* Update from Rio
- \* Time Trial Results

### A.G.M. HIGHLIGHTS (and lowlights?)

Attendance at the AGM in December could have been better, with only thirty or so members turning up. In case you were one of those who had a good reason for not attending, I have included some of the main items below for your information.

David Wright was elected President and Peter Wright (no relation) was elected as General secretary. They replace Bob Maylin and Ray Watson who both wished to stand down from these posts respectively. Paul Ramsden has taken up the mantle of Track Secretary and Geoff Redhead that of Press Secretary. Mark Packman was formally elected by the floor to continue the job of Road Race Secretary - one he took over from Ian Maylin who emigrated to Ireland during the summer. There have been no changes with respect to the posts of

Treasurer, Social Secretary, Club Runs Secretary, Mountain Bike Secretary or Newsletter Editor. I am sorry to say that no volunteers came forward to take over from John Harris, so we are in the unfortunate position of currently having no Time Trial Secretary for the coming season. However, John has already booked our TT Events for 2002 and the committee have the authority to co-opt any suitable volunteer who may come forward, so if you think you could be that person, please make yourself known to Peter Wright (after first having an off the record chat with John Harris to find out what is involved, if you wish).

Two new awards will be introduced specifically for our female members next season; one for Time Trials and one for Road Racing. Full details will be published in due course.

Membership fees have been increased by £5 in each category (the first increase for many years). The current fees are therefore Junior Racing £15, Senior Racing £20, Family Membership £25. Anyone who has not yet paid their subs (they were due on 1st November 2001) should send the appropriate amount to Dudley Samuels (20 Florian Road, Putney, London SW15 2NL) as soon as possible. Dudley can also be found at the club room most Tuesdays.

# Winter 2001

**HOT NEWS AND GOSSIP EVERY QUARTER**

**ORDER YOUR COPY NOW!!!**



# SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB



## EDITORIAL

All of a sudden the articles came flooding in and here we are again with another bumper edition. I did consider holding some of your masterpieces back for the spring mag, but I thought what the heck, the contributors have taken the trouble to write the articles (and get them in by the closing date - Well done and thank you). It may not seem that long ago that the Autumn Bottom Gear was dropping on your letter box? You're right, the last edition was late, but thanks mainly to the bumper crop of interesting new articles mentioned above (plus one held over from the last edition - my apologies go to Paul Ramsden for that one), we should be back on track with this edition. Since I have not held much back this time, I ought to warn you that the Spring edition may end up a little short. It tends to be the most difficult one to fill in any case and you all seem to have penned out your summer/early autumn exploits in double quick time. Still, I would like to be proved wrong and there is still that article on the epic Surrey Hills ride in September I am waiting for?

Enclosed with this newsletter you should find; the latest Club Runs list; the Annual Report, and a poster/invitation to our annual dinner/prize giving in February. I have included this list because I have heard that one of you at least did not find his or her membership card in with the last edition and has possibly thrown it out with the discarded envelope.

I would like to repeat an earlier apology to all of you who received my December e.mail reporting a virus that turned out to be a hoax. A case of panic management getting the better of me I'm afraid. Still we live and learn.

\*\*\*\*\*

## WORLD MASTERS 2001

### **Day 1 Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October**

Came up yesterday to stay at my parent's house as it is only 40 mins to the track from here plus they are away for the week on holiday. So this is the 'team camp' for the week as Mark and Anna Fraser are coming up this

afternoon and staying for the championship week.

Went down to the track this morning for an open training session. At the sign on was an Australian gentleman with his back to me (the accent gave it away!) complaining that his name was not on the start sheet. After his finger went down the alphabetical list to the CI region I realized it was none other than Danny Clark, one time top banana of the six day scene. He looks just as fit as he ever was, though minus the bushy moustache these days.

The South African, Australian and USA teams have got their team 'corals' sorted out already. They really look like properly organized national squads, same team strip etc. But then that's probably because they *are* properly organized national squads! If the Australians and Americans ride as good as they talk (very loudly too!) then they will be the winners at these championships. Funny how the top riders like Ian Hallam and Danny Clark just get on with it. A pace line soon developed on the stayers line and boy was it fast! If the points race is going to be like this, it is going to be tough.

The championships kick off tomorrow with the kilo TT, my main targeted event. Hopefully I will get somewhere between a 1.12 and 1.16 to get near the top 20. If I feel fast I will skip the pursuit on Tuesday so as not to blunt my speed for the sprint and points later in the week. But if I 'bomb out' then it will be a case of 'what the hell' and I'll ride all four championship events. As I haven't had a race for seven weeks now, I have no guide as to my form. Hopefully the extra hard training will see me through.

As Chris Boardman says, when you are on the start line, all you can do is be the best that you can be. Here we go.....

### **Day 2 Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October.**

Had a bad night, as it was very stormy outside with rain being lashed against the windows. A good introduction to Blackburn weather for Mark and Anna! Got up around 8.00 am and we

decided to travel down to the track to get there for 3.00pm.

Even though the sign on for the 1km finals wasn't until 6.00 pm and 6.30pm for Mark, I knew from experience at the national championships that you needed to get down there early just to get a space in the infield to warm up. So sure enough we got there with plenty of time to spare and wandered around the infield saying hello to all our various friends.

Got my bike checked out after Mark and myself fretted about our 'positions' this morning. I had made a mistake of just checking out the BCF technical regulations without also checking the latest UCI regulations. You would think they would be the same, but no! The UCI regulations, applicable for all World Championships have other hidden 'extras'. This meant that whilst we were both 'in' as far as our aero bar positions were concerned, the lowest point of my bars were too low. I checked and re-checked but the problem was that being a 'smaller' rider means that my head tube length is short and hence with normal bars and normal stem, the position is deemed too low by UCI rules! So I decided the best course of action was to get the bike checked at sign on so as to make sure the bike would not be rejected when it was being fitted into the start gate. Phew, passed easily! Had the bike checked and the lowest point of the bars wasn't considered. Maybe I know the UCI regulations better than the UCI commissaires!

We then spent the next three hours waiting and warming up on the rollers watching heat after heat of the TT finals.

The older riders get it easier, as they only need to ride over 500m and 750m. My age group would be the first to ride the full 1km distance. I say easier, as from previous experience you can get up to maximum speed at 250m and then hold it for the next 250m. After then the build up of lactic acid starts to take an increasing effect and you can do no more than continually ask your legs to keep going



round whilst feeling your speed slowing. The last 250m take an eternity as by then you are on full 'auto pilot', just wanting the pain to stop.

And so it proved to be once again! After watching some of the stars of my age take to the track, such as Coltman, Hibbert, Pyatt, Baker etc, it was my turn to sit at the start gate. Nothing more I could do now. Training done, warm up done all I can do now is go with what I have got.

After the standard 15 second count down, the gun goes bang and the gate opens. The first 150m is done out of the saddle, though smoothly round the banking, to hit top speed at the entry to the second banking. Exiting the second banking you then move to the aero bars as you pass your station for the first time then hold your speed as long as is possible. For myself this lasted my normal 500m and then the fight to the finish began. Unusually I felt smooth over the final 500m though I could feel the speed dropping alarmingly. Normally I would expect to be fighting the pedals all the way, but not this time. Got the bell for the final lap ahead of the rider on the opposite station, which was a good boost, and then held it to the line. A 1.15 was a second slower than I had hoped for but a second faster than the nationals, and got me, just, in the top 20 which was the secondary target. So all in all not bad as the standard this year has definitely gone up with the top 10 all doing below 1.10.

A late night finish because by the time Mark finished, we didn't leave the track until 9.45pm and didn't get to bed until midnight. I therefore decided to scratch from the pursuit tomorrow, which I had more or less already decided on. Roll on the sprint heats on Thursday.

### Day 3 Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October

Rest day today as I have decided not to ride the pursuit. I really feel like I need it as well as late nights and me don't go together, even if I have a lie in the day after. For some reason I have picked up a dry cough. Probably because of the maximal effort

yesterday in a very dry atmosphere. Hopefully this is not a sign of a respiratory tract infection as it is the last thing I need right now. So just 30 mins on the rollers today to keep the legs slack and supple.

### Day 4 Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October

Another rest day, official this time as there are no events in my category at the velodrome today. 30 mins on the rollers again to stay supple as I am going to need it for the sprint tomorrow. Decided to watch La Course en Tete starring big Ted (Eddy Merckx) for a bit of extra motivation.

### Day 5 Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October

Sprint today. Fortunately this started in the morning with the qualifying 200m flying TT which suits me as I hate waiting around all day for events to start.

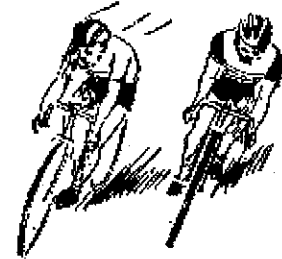
Got up early and got down to the track in plenty of time to ride the bankings as part of my warm up. Waited for the seedings to be worked out for the qualifying and I am going off in 6<sup>th</sup> place. Watched everybody else have their turn. Most opted for winding it up off the top of the banking coming into the home straight, then using the gradient of the track to spiral down to reach the black datum line right on the 200m mark. This is exactly what I plan to do but maybe be out of the saddle coming round the top of the far banking.

Lined up for my turn and went. Came out the far banking and started to wind it up. Sat down just after the finish line. I thought I would pick up more speed on the back straight but instead just managed to hold it to the line for 12.8 which was 0.5 second slower than I thought I would get. This put me in 18<sup>th</sup> slot so I will have to ride off against some of the fastest riders.

Got Dave Robson and Takeuchi of Japan in round 1. Robson already has silver in the kilo TT so is particularly fast. Lined up for round 1 with my planned tactic being to get up the track and dominate for as long as is possible.

From the start I got up the banking as far as possible which worried the

Japanese rider no end as he kept turning round. Robson wound it up immediately so that I couldn't use the gradient to my advantage later so I had no option but to drop down to get on the back so as not to be dropped. Robson then wound it up all the way to finish but we just couldn't get round.



Through to the repechage. Drew against Lovick from Australia and Harter of Germany in the next ride. Again decided to use the track to my advantage as much as possible and rode straight to the top of the banking. Harter had the same idea and followed me up. I decided to go coming out of the far banking on lap 2 but Harter dived underneath just before I was going to jump so I had to drop down to hold his wheel. Into the last 100m I thought I would come past them both as Lovick and Harter bounced off each other with myself being pushed up to avoid a collision. However, they stayed upright and Lovick held it to the line. So out of the sprint and slightly disappointed with my 200m time. Not racing for what has actually been 7 weeks, has definitely robbed me of my edge. Something I will take care of next time.

Still, an early finish today so home for a shower and dinner with the points race tomorrow. 120 laps of pain, oh goody!

### Day 6 Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October

Points race today. So down to the track again in the late afternoon for the sign on, though I don't suppose we will be on the track until 8.00pm.

Warmed up yet again. Actually if there is one thing getting to me, it is the constant need to warm up and warm down, even on the days that I'm not riding. I must have done 50 miles on



# SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB



the rollers by now! Still, I don't feel quite as keyed up for this one as it is a class field and I am just sticking in there for as long as possible.

Roll off from the start and got into the middle of the bunch. With points every 10 laps the pace will rocket and then drop occasionally. Unfortunately there was no easy start as my friend John Haschka decided to make the best of it and try an acceleration from the front. This woke everybody up and from then on it was fast, with riders starting to get shelled out the back. I tried to keep contact with the main bunch all the way and was doing ok after about 60 laps when I got left by a quick acceleration but jumped onto Alastair Taylor's wheel (he being national pursuit champion in this category). Unfortunately he didn't have quite enough to close the gap again but when he swung off, I sprinted through and got back on. Not for long though as another attack pushed the speed back up to the limit again and this time there was no way back after losing 50 metres. So dropped by half way which was ok as the field had been thinned out by this time to just the top dozen.

Warm down (again!) and another late finish.

We lost the third member from our Olympic sprint team today, but fortunately John Haschka has accepted to ride with us in the qualifying round tomorrow. Only the top 4 teams got straight through to the final, so it is going to be fast.

## Day 7 Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October

Last day today and an early start to get down to the track for the sign on. Got there in plenty of time, only to discover that not only had the sign on be mover back an hour (so could have had an extra hour in bed!), but also we have been put into the wrong category, with the +135 years. Still got chance to ride the Manchester boards again for the last time this season which beats warming up on the rollers again which is getting very, very monotonous.

We are now in heat four and the other teams are almost all recognizable as

containing present or ex world champs in, so we will need a miracle to qualify as one of the four fastest for the final. A lot of the teams previous to us seem to be having problems with the start gate but it is not surprising as they are 'pulling' on 1 rather than waiting for the gun when the gate is released. Chesterfield Couriers, on before us got a false start because of this so we had to sit and wait a bit longer in the holding area.

Our turn to start. The order being John off first followed by Mark then me for the last lap. John starts off steadily which is no bad thing as plenty of teams lost their third rider from the off due to too rapid a start. Mark picked up the pace on the second and I held on the last lap to get a time of 57 seconds. Not bad really as the Chesterfield lads did a 55 and they would have ridden together before. If we got a second chance we would sure do a 55, just from the fact of getting used to riding together in the same formation.

So end of the championships. It has been a long week, 7 days in total with a lot of waiting around between events. This has made it difficult to focus as you are waiting and waiting then bang, you're on. The easiest event from this perspective was the points race as you knew you had a long way to go, rather than only a handful of laps at absolute maximum. Not sure if I would want to ride the whole week again. Maybe just two specific events. Go in, ride and get out. The other thing I need to do next time is race right up to the championships. However when they are in October, they are six weeks away from the end of the track season here in the UK, so I would possibly need to pick some circuit races or something as a substitute.

Still it was a good experience and great to be announced by Hugh Porter as "in the home straight, representing Great Britain, is



Paul Ramsden". I could get used to that bit!

Paul Ramsden

I am sure you would all like to join me in congratulating Paul, Mark and John on their splendid efforts - Ed.

\*\*\*\*\*

## UPDATE FROM RIO - (or Ageing Racer in the Tropics)

You will remember in the last issue I had just borrowed a well used Pinarello Stelvio with Shimano throughout. I finally agreed to buy it for £470 which was generous as I needed to change a number of things before I could use it. After careful inspection I decided to renew the chain & cassette as I was struggling on 39x23 on the climbs as they are steep, long and hot. The Dura Ace cassette was 12/23 so I went for 14/25 which is ideally suited for here. I have enough trouble with 53x14 but I must admit I do use it fairly often on the flat so beware!! New saddle, LOOK pedals and tyres (all colour matched) almost bring the bike up to date. Tried to change the bottom bracket but no Shimano spares so ended up with a new Daytona chainset and cartridge!!

So off I went on the training rides (weekends only) as the evenings are dark and the traffic is intense. I must say that I suffered greatly to start with as there is no steady riding. We are either dawdling or on the rivet at 30 mph. The change of speed killed me and I got dropped as we sped along the Atlantic Coast between Barra and Recreio. During July this masochistic pleasure continued with me riding the Mountain Bike around Lagoa twice a week in the evening as training for this torture. 40 miles of training, dodging, walkers, runners, other bike riders, skate boards... not ideal. So I along with a like minded Gringo decided to join a gym and go 'spinning'. We should have done it in July but didn't get round to it until September after our first races had commenced.

After considerable nagging by the club riders I decided to ride my first race in mid August which took place around a



technology park. I am classed as Master C which is anybody over 50 years of age. I am trying to do a Redhead and get a Master D group. However recently with the aid of spinning I have been beating some Master B riders!!! The race was 60 kms at the unusual two speeds .... dead slow and flat out with sharp corners and so after 40 kms I was shot off. However they had underestimated Jordan's cunning and experience!!!!!!!!!! I was then caught by the beginners who were riding smoothly and lined out. I jumped on the back and started to shout at them (in English) to 'change regularly and don't change speed' (nothing changed there then!!) and lo and behold we caught the B/C group. I got 14<sup>th</sup> place in the sprint.

My appetite was wetted. Next race was in September on the Rio-Teresopolis road and was 58 km of undulating territory. Again Master B & C were to ride together. For this I had shaved my legs and had just started the spinning classes. So I thought I would give them hell. The event was on a motorway which is slightly different to the Surrey lanes!!!! We rode out to the term escorted by a motorbike and a couple of cars and turned over a motorway bridge. At that point all hell broke loose & I struggled to hang on and with 10 kms to go I got dropped. I did however manage to get 3<sup>rd</sup> place in my age group and get a medal!!

Spinning had now started in earnest and I must say a one hour session can reduce one to a groveling wreck. I am not sure if it's my 'professor' or the young things clad in tiny bits of lycra. But it is an experience.

The next event was close to the International Airport and is in a



Military Zone with watch towers & concrete walls. The roads were closed for us!! Wow, imagine that in the UK? It was 50km and I got 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Master C Class. Another medal.

Next the first of 2 Mountain Climb races. This was 13<sup>th</sup> October and was 5.3km up to the Statue of Christ the Redeemer. What a climb!!! I was heard to gasp his name a number of times up the climb I can tell you. I thought it was a time trial but we all started together to my surprise. However it soon became a time trial as I went out the back. I am now using a heart monitor and I found it a useful way of controlling my enthusiasm. At the finish it showed 174 which according to my age means I am either mad or overdoing it!! Most of the 'old boys' didn't ride.... I wonder why?? Anyway I got second place & a silver medal.

Onwards and upwards .... Back to Rio/Teresopolis road. This time combined Master B & C over 78km. I felt good, was in the thick of it and with 10km to go got in a break and with the finish in sight I jumped and thought 'I'll show em'. However I tried to jump a second time but my legs seized and I rolled over the line for 3<sup>rd</sup> place again. However I beat a number of Master B boys including TROGS whose fault it is that I am back racing anyway (that will teach him)

The final Mountain Climb, this time 9.4km up through a tropical forest. You all think Alpe d' Huez is hard well let me tell you..... It was hot, over 30°C and I suffered like a dog but I did manage to drop four Master B lads including TROGS and just got pipped for 2<sup>nd</sup> place. More medals. More spinning.

The final race was a time trial which was three laps of a 4km circuit. Again it was hotter than anything, even at nine O'Clock in the morning, I had even ridden in the UK. The Elites would do 5 laps. I was up against my arch rival Vilmar Soares who is almost ten years younger than me and

a useful rider. I started 2 minutes in front of Vilmar and checked him at every turn. He didn't seem to be gaining on me ... "Keep it going" I kept saying. Last turn looks close ... give it everything .... finish. Vilmar finishes ... we check times. I seem to have beaten him by 7 seconds and 20 seconds faster than TROGS .... Fantastic. TROGS is now planning how to beat me next year & he is a physical training professor!

I got a gold medal round my neck & stood on the podium, shook hands, didn't get kisses from good looking girls but I suppose at my age I should just be happy to get a medal.

Now we are in the 'Social Season' with the first races of 2002 thought to be sometime in February next year. I will continue spinning and see where it gets me. We now have 3 gringo's signed up and racing and potentially a fourth one joining after Xmas. We could be a force to beat...!!

DJ

\*\*\*\*\*

## ROAD RACE SEASON 2001

2001 was a relatively quiet year for the club on the road race front. There were the usual faces participating in the Surrey League throughout the year. The club's best performance came from Paul Alderson who amassed enough BCF points to take him from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> cat. Many of these points came from two 4th places in September at Rusper and Norwood Hill. Well done to Paul. Also of note was Lindsay Ruocco who seemed to be racing at least once a week for 8 months, picking up placings and going up from 4V to 3V in the process. Congratulations to him too. Further points were racked up by Keith Bugden, John Harris, Ray Robinson, Ken Dolman, newcomer Philip Meredith and myself.

Our own Surrey League race at Alford in October, organised by Ray Robinson and Graham Bromley, took place in probably the worst weather of the year - pouring rain, driving wind



and distinctly chilly temperatures in the afternoon, though mercifully drier in the morning. Nevertheless a field of about 20 rode for over 2 hours in the afternoon, all of whom should be given a medal. Almost as heroic were the marshals who spent 5 or 10 minutes of every 25 standing in the rain to ensure safe passage of the riders. Not to mention the motorcycle escorts, captained by Roger Jackaman, and lead and tail car drivers Geoff Redhead and Gary Smith. The morning race saw four SWRC contestants – Harris, Dolman, Ruocco and myself – with best place (7<sup>th</sup>) going to Lindsay.

The LVRC race, organised in style by Geoff Redhead in July, was run off in much more congenial summer weather. The morning race (over 50s) saw the old legs of Roger Jackaman, Bill McCombe, Ray Watson, Bob Maylin, Brian Amsdell and Tony Forrest taking part, and, by special entry, the much younger legs of Mandy McDonnell in her first ever bike race. All acquitted themselves well. The afternoon race for the over 40s saw good rides from Keith and Lindsay. (Next year I shall be eligible for this race – something I have decidedly mixed feelings about!)

My own high point of the season (and we are speaking *very* relatively here) was the Surrey League handicap at Charlwood in June. Again in heavy rain, I was away for over 4 laps (out of 5) in a small break of three. We were only caught by the fast men with half a lap left, leaving me in the bunch with a top 20 place and first 3<sup>rd</sup> cat on the nasty uphill finish. For a short while I thought a podium place was on the cards – but there's always next time.

Special thanks to Ian Maylin who stepped down in July as SWRC road race secretary after 4 years. He is replaced by yours truly, who is looking forward to handing out license application forms by the truckload next year and seeing you on the start line. I know there are several recent joiners to the club who are keen to race next year. And I would urge

anyone with even half-decent form to give it a try – it will make you lean, mean and keen.

Finally apologies to anyone whose name I have left out here. I've collected few statistics and have written this largely from memory. You are more than welcome to write an article on your experiences.

Mark Packman

\*\*\*\*\*

## THE FOLLICLY CHALLENGED

"Tremendous marshalling", "I felt really safe", "Thanks for a great race". Time and again riders commented to Dennis 'The Fox' Pascoe at the signing on desk sometimes seeking me out to re-iterate how happy they were with the SWRC.

2001 was the 3rd F.C. and with 97 starters the most successful. Good marshalling is without doubt the key to a well run race as those of us who have had to brake hard on a corner losing contact with a speeding peleton due to a 'marshal' allowing a car through!! Know only too well. We had so many starters in the morning race that 2 groups had to start 5 minutes apart. The 'D' group (55-59 years) had riders from 28 clubs from as far apart as Newbury, Eastbourne and er.. Willesden. 'Notables' on the line were Shay Giles (Team Clean) Dave Nie (Liphook CC) Roly Crayford (San Fairy Ann CC) Bill McCombe, Roger Jackaman, Paul Foster, Robin Chipperfield; Graham Sykes, Ray Watson, Tony Forrest and Gary Smith. All from that well trained Sun, Wine & Restaurants Club! Also from the SWRC, and adding a touch of class to the whole affair, were Ruth Hutton and Mandy McDonnell who both 'starred' on the front. Ruth even managing to put daylight between herself and the men at one point despite being neither follicly challenged or mature enough in years. A two man break went away early on but (with our ladies help!) the two were caught on the last lap and, as Paris-Tours winner Richard Virenque did later in the season, Richard Abbott

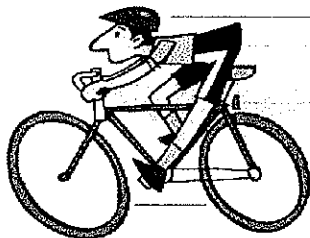
(Didcot Phoenix) having dropped John Leitch (Festival RC) won with the pack snapping at his heels. Dave Nie (Liphook CC) riding 'down a group' as he is 61 came 2nd with Eric Martin (Velo Club de Londres) 3rd. Although members of our team were constantly seen on or near the front through the lead car's rear window (mine!) the best recorded placings I have are Robin Chipperfield 11th and Bill McCombe 14th. Gary's computer averaged 24 mph... but he was 'allowing' others the limelight at the front of the bunch!!

Five minutes later on the start line the 'E', 'F' and 'G' groups (60 to 70 plus years) sped away led by our own Roberto Maylin (we're riding on the left, I must be in England) plus SWRC friends from the (not very) over the Hill gang John Orwin (Festival RC) and Jim Harwood (Clarencourt CC). Both of who broke away immediately with Len Benton (Anglia Sport) and Brian Hawkridge (Woolwich CC). On the last lap the four became 3 when Len Benton broke away to win on his own. Jim Harwood was 2nd with John Orwin 3rd, all in the 'E' category. The winner of the 65-69 group was Brian Hawkridge, a charming convivial guy who sadly was hit by a motorist in the autumn and killed while cycling. He rode all 3 F.C. and he was always full of enthusiasm and thanked us for running the race well. The 70+ category was contested by two riders from the 21st Century Airsports CC Ray Venus aged 73 and Eric Clark 74! An astonishing performance from both with Ray taking 1st place. Both morning events went without a hitch and the riders were further protected by 2 motorcycle marshals, friends of Roger Jackaman (Paul McKinney and Mike Tett) who later jumped on his machine to marshal the afternoon race with Mike Tett 'performing' for us again. We are lucky to have Roger and friends to give up their time to help on the F.C. Marshals on motor cycles raise the professionalism of the race to a much higher level.

The afternoon race is contested by riders from 3 age groups A(40-44),



B(45-49) and C(50-54). These "younger" riders take no prisoners,



give no quarter, and risk all for their groups £15 first prize! We had Ken Dolman, Lindsey Ruocco and Keith Bugden ready to mix it with riders from as far apart as Essex, Herts and East Sussex. At the start briefing I informed the riders that in the unlikely event of the road being blocked we would show a black flag from the lead car being driven by Bob Maylin. A car breakers yard is on the circuit and a delivery by a huge car transporter blocked the narrow lane. Bob duly waved the black flag in front of a 4up break.....with little effect.. After all a £15 first prize is more important than risking life and limb!! 20 seconds later the bunch appeared and the road was packed with cyclists weaving through gaps that weren't there..... Later that evening I called in on Keith Butler and he said that the commissioner in the following car should have turned round and driven back round the circuit and stopped the race. Re-starting it with the breaks original time gap if possible. Useful advice if it happens again.

Further unwanted drama was provided in the shape of 2 'shunts' when first a couple of Twickenham riders touched wheels, one shedding much blood. The other occurred when I was following in the car only to see 2 bikes fly up in the air! After the debris had cleared one traumatised rider lay moaning in the road semi conscious. The ambulance had just finished cleaning up the previous accident but the new 'victims' injuries were so serious an ambulance had to be summoned from Guildford General. A broken collar bone and suspected fractured skull was diagnosed later. Anyway back to the race, despite our lads Stirling work on or near the front

the 'A' (40-44) group result was 1st, Peter Dickason (Twickenham CC) 2nd John Shand (Gore Bike Wear) 3rd Mark Jones (GS Stella). Cat. 'B' (45-49) 1st Ron Hewes (Harlow CC) 2nd Colin Bateman (Festival RC) and 3rd Steve Ferris (Farnborough & Camberley). Cat. 'C' (50-54) 1st Dave Worsfold (unattached) 2nd Paul Fox (also unattached) and 3rd Terry Divine (Glendene CC).

More SWRC riders take part in the F.C. than any other road race during the season and if members are not riding they are helping with the organising. Particular thanks go to Ray Robinson who puts the flags/signs out, organises the finish, lapboards etc and is constantly on hand with ideas and advice. Also to Nick Baker who especially bought forward the purchase of a digital movie camera to accurately record the finish with freeze frame. Drawing up the results for each category. As mentioned also Roger and his pals using their experience from marshalling the Kelloggs Tour. And last but not least the huge army of SWRC members who also gave up their day to ensure traffic was stopped on all the corners, drove cars, and helped with signing on etc. Dennis Pascoe, Ted Collins, John Harris, Andy Swanson, Sabin Gaztelua, Les Balon, Bob Lees and Roger (from the CTC Wayfarers) Nick Mills, Mark Packman, Chris McDonnell, Tony Sayers and finally my dear father and mother (84 years young), Norman & Ruby who helped Katie Rapley with the teas/refreshments.

Next years race is on July 6th (Saturday). I look forward to seeing you at Ellens Green for another action packed day!

Geoff Redhead

**STOP PRESS:** A full listing of LVRC events for 2002 is available from the club room.

\*\*\*\*\*

### END TO END

What was your favourite moment of the 2001 cycling season? Armstrong's third consecutive Tour victory in

perfect form? Zabel's fourth Milan-San Remo in five years? Perhaps Virenque's amazing 2s win in Paris-Tours after a 242km breakaway? Jalabert's renaissance in the polka dot jersey at the Tour? Or David Millar's stage wins at the Vuelta? I could list more contenders but for me it was none of the high-profile professional achievements. Instead it was for once a ride on the domestic stage - Gethin Butler's epic Land's End-John O'Groats ride in September.

Butler set three records on his ride:

- i. 24 Hour record of 509.3 miles
- ii. End to End (840 miles) record of 1 day, 20 hours, 4 minutes, 19 seconds
- iii. 1000 Miles record of 2 days, 7 hours, 53 minutes, 7 seconds

These figures are amazing but let's look at all the stats a bit more closely to get a better feel for the effort involved in this ride.

The first 100 miles were done a couple of minutes inside four hours. Most testers dream of such a time. Compare this to the very respectable times this year of 4h20m and 4h30m (or thereabouts) of the club's Paul Alderson and Ken Dolman. But Gethin had another nine 100s to go.

The last 160 miles (having reached John O'Groats) was ridden at an average speed of 15.4mph. This was after he had done 840 miles, with virtually no sleep for two nights. How many of us have actually done a ride of 160 miles? Think of how you feel after the longest club runs of just over 100 miles and run off at pretty much this speed. Could you do another 20 miles? 50 miles? 840 miles?

The average speed for the entire End to End was 19.1mph. Compare this to an early season chain gang of 35 miles on a windy night when we might be lucky to average as little as 21mph. A bit faster but that's half a dozen people doing through-and-off for just an hour and a half.

Measure the performance by the equivalent times for a 25 at Gethin's



average speeds for the first hour, the first 12 hours and the first 24 hours. These times work out to 59m30s, 1h4m45s and 1h10m40s. Many of us would be satisfied with these times for a single 25. In fact Gethin did 1, 11 and 20 consecutive 25s at these times respectively. Even at his average speed for the entire End to End (equal in distance to almost 34 consecutive 25s) you get a passable 1h18m.

24 Hour record of 509.3 miles. How far could you do? Has any club member ever done a 24hour ride? Again, and roughly speaking, take a 100+ mile club run taking in full about 8 hours. Triple that and you get only 300 miles in 24 hours. But could you maintain that modest pace for one whole day?

End to End (840 miles) in 44 hours. A couple of years ago SWRC's Graham Mathias did this ride. He took (I vaguely recall) two weeks with a couple of rest days – let's say ten days, for the sake of argument. Still an impressive 84 miles each day. But with sleep, rest and marital comforts each night in his camper van.

1000 miles in 56 hours. It's not easy to get a feel for this distance. My best comparison here is to the longest drive you've ever done. For example, I travelled from London to John O'Groats this summer in a hired camper van. We could only average 60mph and trundled up the 700 miles (with breaks) in 15 hours. It seemed to take forever. At the same rate, 1000 exertion-free miles would have taken us nearly 22 hours.

Whatever way you look at this, the mind boggles at Butler's performance. All sorts of questions come to mind too. How does one train for a ride like this? Keep the legs turning hour after hour? Stay awake? Go to the loo? Recover afterwards? Ever sit down again? Ride home?

Let's also mention Lynne Taylor who set a new women's End to End record of 2 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 21 seconds. She left Land's End the day

before Butler, but that day made a huge difference. Whereas Gethin had mainly dry weather throughout, Lynne rode in the rain for all except five hours, but still pushed on to break the existing record.

These are astonishing athletic achievements, especially given the lack of reward involved – no financial compensation, no future security, no public recognition (amidst acres of newsprint and wall-to-wall television coverage of football minutiae, I saw only a couple of tiny newspaper reports). And for me both had the edge on what was a slightly dull and predictable pro season.

Mark Packman

\*\*\*\*\*

## E.MAIL SNIPPETS

The following snippets have been hijacked from e-mails sent by Ken Dolman to other members that I thought you might find of interest.

### **MTB ride Sun. Nov.4 - Q.E. Country Park to Amberley (S. Downs Way)**

This one was sent to Jeremy Nason who made enquiries about the ride:-

Thanks for message...it sort of went well...5 turned up at start and within 5 minutes, due to a lot of confusion, we all became separated! My friend Malcolm was out in front thinking he was chasing us, Paul Gadd and Bob Frewin were following but not so fast, as they were waiting for me and Alan Parkinson who had got lost looking for Malcolm! Meanwhile Alan and I regained the route, while Paul and Bob went off-route and ended up going mostly by road to Amberley! Malcolm met up with Dave Wright at Cocking and when nobody else turned up for a while, went on to Amberley where finally we all met up for a well deserved cuppa! Going back was incident free (almost) and the weather was beautiful, but the whole ride was a bit of a long slog and a bit ambitious distance-wise...Alan clocked 50 miles (including maybe 3 miles off-course) while Bob reckoned he'd done 59! I

think the next adventure will be a little shorter and we'll try harder to stick together.



This one from Ken to Dudley, another TT enthusiast:-

### **100 miler - August**

Well, what can I say. Pretty disappointing, really. Even though getting up at 3.30 am, I only made it to the start line with 30 secs to go, so the adrenaline was already bubbling. Weather - cold and windy. Start off with 9 miles heading north, wind behind, going like a dream :- 27 - 30 mph, round the turn and into the wind for 25 miles. What a grind! After about 25 miles it starts to rain. Round the turn, I'm pretty wet but looking to improve my average on the way back for 16 miles. Instantly I'm doing 38 mph and I've only got a 13 sprocket and I'm pedalling so fast it makes me dizzy.

That speed doesn't last as you can imagine (more like 23/24mph) Up to the turn at 50 miles - 2.16 - not bad.... still sort of on schedule. By now I'm pretty wet through and not looking forward to the next 25 miles slog into the wind, especially as there is a long grinding hill immediately, followed by undulating, exposed wet 'A' road...no fun at all! Round the final roundabout, and looking forward (in a way) to the last leg back, but find it disappointing in that the wind, although behind, didn't seem to make that much difference, although better than previous 25! By now, I'm completely and thoroughly soaked to the skin, the road is like a river, lorries pass by too close in either direction drowning me with spray, anything that can ache on my body does ache, and my vision is getting blurred with all the water and muck in them. Finally pass the finish line in 4.43 something. It's over. Back to the changing rooms - about 10 mins away - and I'm shivering and my



teeth are chattering like a drowned rat. Not a good day at the office. Winner was Ken Platts in an amazing 3.55 considering the conditions. Tales from the changing room.... "worst conditions ever..." "that was hard..." "I nearly gave up..." "that was the hardest one I've ever done..." etc. About 10 DNS and about 12 DNF. Say no more.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Our Trip to the French Alps Summer 2001

We've been to the French Alps for the past three years, passing away three weeks each time in a mixture of effort cycling over the cols, walking over the mountains and just plain old relaxing, feasting on croissants, steak and the finest cheeses and wines (not quite all on one plate!). This year, we weren't sure whether or not we would make it as Chris has come off his motorbike the week before and broken three ribs. Camping and a few Tour length stages were not quite what the doctor ordered! Here's a summary of some of the things that we got up to and a bit about that area.

### The Bourg D'Oisans area

We spent about a week camping in Bourg d'Oisans, a small town at the foot of the famous Alp D'Huez. This is about 15 miles east of Grenoble on the N91. It's overlooked by mountains on all sides and you get that fantastic feeling when you peek out of your tent in the morning and see bright sunshine (usually!) and pine forest, then mountains that just go straight up. It's in Les Ecrins National Park and we saw red squirrels, eagles, chamois and little brown beaver-like animals called "Marmottes" in the mountains. There's a big glacier just down the valley - La Meije and after about half a days walking you can be at the snowline. I loved the mix of hot sun, clear air and also cool winds that you get in summer at high altitudes. Bourg d'Oisans is France's cycling Mecca. For once you'll find that you are in a place where cycling is the national sport, rather than reserved for few mad fools and those not able to afford a car. Men in Lycra is normal and locals

cheer "Allez! Allez!", rather than "Get out of the bloody way" or worse!

The Dutch have a fascination for the area and we met loads of Dutch people, maybe it's on account of coming from such a flat country, that they yearn for the mountains so much. Most of them have the life ambition of cycling up Alp D'Huez and we met one couple attempting it on the traditional "sit up and beg" heavy steel bikes, complete with basket and stand, but lacking any semblance of gearing.

### Rides in the Bourg D'Oisans area

Famous Tour de France climbs that you can do from Bourg d'Oisans are Les Deux Alpes (1645m), the Col du Telegraphe (1566m), the Col du Galibier (2642m), the Col de la Croix de Fer (2067), the Col du Glandon (1924m) and L'Alpe D'Huez (1850m) and the Col de Madeleine (1993m). Other slightly less famous rides in the area are the Col d'Ornon (1367m), La Berade (1713m), Auris en Oisans (1610m) and the Col de Sarenne (1989m). These are all really pretty and a bit lower than the famous peaks. It's easy to get into the habit of "ticking off" the main cols, but after a while, you'll realise that it's worth checking out some of the less popular alternatives. The Col de Sarenne, for example, offers a much quieter descent from l'Alpe d'Huez. You avoid the tourist buses and it is a much more scenic route. There's an extra 200 m of climbing, but it's well worth it for the beautiful descent into the Romanche valley through beautiful, quiet (if rather bumpy) lanes. I could tell that Chris was feeling those on his ribs - Ouch!

A variation on the main l'Alpe d'Huez climb is via Villard Reculas, again this is a very quiet road that climbs through pine forest, it is not as arduous climb as the main route as it reaches the top in 22.3 km as opposed to 15.2 km if you start at le Bourg d'Oisans and do the classic 21 hairpins. One road we would highly recommend is the D211a that hugs the sides of the Romanche Valley some 300 m up giving stunning views over le Bourg d'Oisans and the

surrounding area.

We drove down to the Alps, so that we had the flexibility of being able to drive to a good place and then do the ride, rather than cycle touring. Seeing cycle tourers loaded down with tents and sleeping bags made me glad that we hadn't opted for that. Most of the rides are straight up and down as it's difficult to do circular rides, unless you are VERY fit and/or willing to stop overnight en route. I think it's hard enough just getting myself and a few spare inner tubes up to the summit, let alone luggage too! A notable exception to the "straight up and back down option" is "La Marmotte". For those of you that don't know it, this is an organised randonnee, run in either the first or the second weekend in July. It is one of the best and hardest day rides there is, with about 185kms and 5500 metres of climbing. Starting from Bourg d'Oisans, you climb three main cols - the Col de la Croix de Fer, Col du Telegraphe and the Col du Galibier. You have a long steady descent down the Lautaret (N91) back to Bourg d'Oisans, before deciding whether or not you have the energy or madness to attempt Alpe d'Huez.

### Cycling La Marmotte Route

We were in France in September, so we did our own Marmotte rather than the organised ride. The first year we did it with an overnight stopover in Valoire, a ski resort just past the Telegraphe, or more significantly, just before the Galibier. The second year, we did the route minus Alpe d'Huez and this year, we decided to try and do the whole thing, despite Chris' broken ribs. The first Col (Croix de Fer) was quite straightforward. We took it easy and felt good when we stopped for lunch at the summit. The descent into the Maurienne Valley and even climbing up the Telegraphe was, well OK. It was the Galibier that was the killer for me this year. I remember watching Chris cycling off into the distance, the weather seemed to get hotter and my legs wearier, even on the gentler lower slopes. At some point, I realised that I couldn't really



speak or focus properly and had a chewy bar. I forgot to mention earlier that we had forgotten our "energy drinks" (well that's my excuse anyway!) We finally made the summit, only for me to puncture on the descent - bit of a scary moment. My contact lenses also have a worrying tendency to blow out of my eyes onto my shades during highspeed descents, which adds a further thrill to the experience. Nearing our campsite the temptation to stop was enormous, but somehow, we mustered our last reserves to struggle up Alpe D'Huez to complete the route in about 9 hours of cycling.

### **Cycling Le Mercantour**

Le Mercantour is a hard day ride in the southern French Alps setting out from Guillaumes. It's about 195kms and 4400 metres of climbing up the Col de la Cayolle (2326m), descend into Barcelonnette, then climb the highest point in the Alps, at the Col de la Bonette (2715m). The route continues over the Col de la Couillole (1678) that is lower but very tough at the end of the day, and finally the Col de Valberg (1668m). It's less than the Marmotte and when we did it, the weather was pretty grim and we were woefully underprepared - lessons for next time! Freezing descents, with a pair of armwarmers on is not good!

### **Mount Ventoux 1909m (Provence)**

We fancied a change of scenery and some warmer weather, as it was getting worse in the mountains, so we headed towards the Ventoux for a few days. Notorious as the mountain on which Tom Simpson died during a Tour de France stage, this extraordinary place has a special fascination for British cyclists. It's an easy climb from the east, but much harder from the n-w or s-w. The relentless southern sun beating off the lunar landscape famously makes the climb very arduous. This is one huge mountain that stands out on its own in the flatter surroundings of Provence. Although not as high as some of the highest alpine passes, you start from a lower level. We ascended 1600m in 21 km from Bédoin via Chalet Reynard.

I clearly remember the smells of lavender and herbs as we descended into Sault. The area is quite touristy and as campsites in the area didn't seem to be up to much, we stayed in a hotel in Malucène. It is a good idea to pre-book as we just showed up and had one of the last few rooms. We climbed the Ventoux from Malucène via Bédoin - the slightly harder route and descended into Sault. The first part of the climb is through vineyards and olive groves at reasonable gradient of about 3-5%, however as you pass by the small town of Saint Estève the climbing really begins in earnest. The next 10 km are at an average of 10%, this is probably the hardest stretch of any climb we have experienced in France, you climb through sweet smelling pine forest until a crossroads at Chalet Reynard where the landscape becomes bleak white limestone, with the observatory tower on the top appearing tantalisingly close, yet still some 6 km away and with just under 500 m of climbing left. From the top we descended back to Chalet Reynard and this time we took the road down to Sault. You could just head back to Malucène from the summit, but we decided to take an interesting diversion through the Gorges de la Nesque. This route is about 100 km back to Malucène and with the obvious exception of Mont Ventoux is mostly flat and very pretty cycling along the Gorges. Cotes de Rhone is the wine to drink in the area and you can even buy a bottle of "Cotes de Ventoux" as a souvenir of your ride.

### **The Beaufortain area**

From the Ventoux, we went north to the Cornet de Roseland (1967m), described as one of the prettiest cols in the Alps. The scenery is different here as you go from mountains and forest through to Alpine pastures. The area is called Beaufortain in the Savoie region and is famous for its cows - big Jersey-looking ones called Tarentaise and brown and white ones called Beaufort. The milk of the two is mixed to make a type of gruyere named after the main town in the area - Beaufort. The area is also famous for its cured ham and dried salami type sausages - "saussicon

sec." It's also the place to go for a traditional fondue. So that's the end of my David Duffieldisms. Back to cycling.

The prettiest way of cycling the Cornet de Roseland is to start from Beaufort - you will already be at 745 m altitude and cycle through the pastures, by the wooden farmhouses and cottages and climb up to Col du Pré (1703m). You will gain 960 m in 13 km - an average slope of 7.5% but the bulk of the climbing is over the last 5 km with an average gradient of nearer 10%. From the summit of Col du Pré, you get great views of the Lac de Roseland with its barrage. After a short descent, you climb for another 6 km at a more forgiving gradient of 6.5% to the summit of the Roseland. Other rides that you can easily do from Beaufort are the Col de Saises 1650m and many of climbs up to ski resorts, such as Val Thorens (2340m) Courchevel (2000m) and Meribel (1800m) however many of these ski resorts are completely dead off season, we couldn't even get a cup of coffee within 10 km of the top of Val Thorens, so be prepared. You can also drive to Bourg St Maurice or Val D'Isere to climb the Col de l'Iseran - the highest natural pass in France at 2770m altitude.

### **Guidebooks**

We bought some really useful guidebooks called "Les Atlas des Cols Des Alpes" There are five books for the different regions in the Alps. These have each climb on a graph, showing the exact gradient and length, so that you know what you are letting yourself in for. They also indicate what state the road is in - quite critical on some routes and a star rating for the scenery. They are in French but have graphical representations of all the cols with average gradients expressed for every single kilometre. There is also a difficulty rating on each climb called the "Altigraph." This gives you the time for an "average" cyclist to do the climb. Once you know how you compare to this, you can estimate roughly how long a given ride is likely to take you.



# SOUTH WESTERN ROAD CLUB



## Other things to see and do

The area is also a very popular with hikers, termed "Alpinistes". Mostly, it's half a days walk to get onto the peaks and serious walkers stay overnight in hostels on the mountains called Gites D'etape. The GR5 route passes all through Beaufort and we did a couple of walks there, although they were both more serious than anything that we have ever done in the UK. Saw some middle aged Belgians coming off one ridge that was knee deep in snow. They were only wearing shorts and T-shirts, but then this is the nation that brought us the Tour of Flanders!

## Lessons learned

Some hints for SWRC randonneurs who may be heading for the Alps:-

- Tunnels - remember to take your shades off before you get to them. Some of them are very long and very dark.
- Weather - totally unpredictable. Pack waterproofs, suncream and longs! Make sure you have a decent tent to withstand the odd thunderstorm.
- Steak - impossible to stress quite how well done you want it, unless you have a vampire-like fetish for blood.
- Driving - It will be the underpowered Clio or Fiat that will attempt the fearful overtaking

manoeuvre as the blind bend approaches. The French must believe in a better afterlife or the will of God to drive like that.

- Hills - Check out the contours first for that "little walk" that you planned for your rest day.
- Get a triple chainset.
- Food - eat and drink lots. Keep drinking on your ride.
- French - have a go - it amuses the locals
- Teaching your wife to descend more confidently. Try this line "I think that there's enough rubber on your brake pads for the rest of this ride. I meant to change them, but you should be OK as long as you don't use them too much." It worked on me.

Amanda McDonnell

## CYCLING SHORTS

- **Surrey Hills Hardriders turn out** - Two of the three members who took part in this year's demanding Tour of the (Surrey) Hills Audax event (you may have read about it in Cycling Plus?), were the only two riders who turned up for the 1st December club run. Both commented that the weather was far less inclement than that prevailing on the Surrey Hills event. Discussing where the other regulars may have got to, the words 'softies' and 'wimps' were mentioned several times.
- **Surrey League Winnings** - Since your Road Race Secretary penned his 'resume of the 2001 RR season' we have learned that SWRC riders earned a total of £184.50 in Surrey League prize money. Paul Alderson gained the most ending up in 43rd position overall and Lindsey Ruocco achieving 94th position. I am afraid I don't know the positions of our other riders. As a club, SWRC came 26th overall out of 61 clubs. Well done one and all.
- **2002 Etape du Tour** - The course for this event has only recently been announced and it has already been identified by several members as 'one to go for'. Anyone interested in joining this 'outing' should make it know at the club room without delay. This is of course in addition to some of the other proposed events for next year mentioned in the previous edition of Bottom Gear.
- **Another Chance to 'Make that Trip Abroad'** - Chris and Amanda McDonnell are going to a training camp in Costa Blanca, Spain on Sat 2 March for 7 days (the same one that they went on last year with Sabin Gaztelua and Les Baillon). They were wondering if others from SWRC might want to join them and have asked me to include this invitation.

"There are various dates and two locations - Denia and Albir Gardens. It is the 7 day ladies and vets camp 1, at Albir Gardens, that we are going on. There's also a 10 day option and a later ladies and vets trip over Easter (but this costs over £100 more). The costs (7 days) are @ £129 flight + £249 accommodation if 2 per apartment or £219 if 3 per apartment + £35 travel insurance. If anyone would like to come with us, we'd be happy to do a joint booking, so we could arrange flights out together but would need to know by the end of January. There is more information about this and other Graham Baxter cycling trips on their website [www.sportingtours.co.uk](http://www.sportingtours.co.uk)"

