



Nomads News

www.hitchin-nomads.net

The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

Editorial

Hi folks

Family ride 12th August

It was nice to see Nick Senechal with his wife Ann and children Luke and Jamie, also their weekend guest Stephie and her daughter Annie. Also in the group were Steve Smith and his daughter Gemma.

We started off from the Oasis swimming pool car park at Bedford and rode as far as the Danish Camp where we had our refreshments. Nick has proposed that we have another club family ride in September so watch this space for details.

My thanks to Steve for his Captain's corner article and congratulations to Steve and his stoker Paul King for their tandem record ride.

I have included in this Nomads News the article that I received from Dave Wentworth about his day out at the Tour de France.

I had originally intended bringing out a Nomads News Special of the Tour but with only one article it seemed a bit pointless, and with a suggestion within the club that the Tour is really outside the remit of the Nomads News I decided to pass on the idea.

So Mid August and its time to get the 12 hour entry form in. For me there is always a buzz of expectation of what the weather is going to be like on the day and whether I have enough miles in my legs to be able get round the 12 hour.

Results

Briercliffe 10

Tuesday 31st July

Neil JJ Fraser	24:41
Andy Saunders	25:02
Andy Herbert	25:18
David Ledgerton	26:38
Paul Riley	27:51
Clive Collins	28:17

David Rossall	29:28
David Summerell	29:43
Frank Turner	31:29

Timekeeper: Richard Bland
Pushing Off: Tony Furby

Hemel Hempstead 10

Saturday 4th August

David Ledgerton	24:35
Dave Wentworth	24:50
Paul King	25:29
Steve Robinson	DNF

Briercliffe 10

Tuesday 7th August

Neil JJ Fraser	24:52
Andy Saunders	25:45
David Ledgerton	26:24
Steve Robinson	26:47
Nick Senechal	27:57
Paul Riley	28:10
David Summerell	30:00
David Rossall	30:06

Timekeeper: Frank Turner
Pushing Off: Tony Furby

Finsbury Park 25

Course F1

Sunday 12th August

David Ledgerton	1:01:17
James Cornell	1:01:53

Anglia Velo 10

Course B10/3

Sunday 12th August

Tandem

Steve Robinson / Paul King	21:20
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Briercliffe 10

Tuesday 14th August

David Ledgerton	27:06
David Rossall	30:08

Timekeeper: Frank Turner
Pushing Off: Tony Furby

Club Runs

August

19 th August	St Albans
26 th August	Grafham Water 09.00 start

September

2 nd September	Moggerhanger Hall
9 th September	Toddington Garden Centre
16 th September	Barneys Café Hertford
23 rd September	Frosts Garden Centre Wavendon
30 th September	Welwyn Sports Centre

Icknield 12 Hour

Just to remind you the 2nd September is the 12 hour time trial run by the Icknield RC.

This is a big event to run and involves in excess of a 100 people. Hitchin Nomads are called on every year to support the event. So if you are available then mark the date in your diary and wait for the call.

Clive

Captains Corner

It has hit me this week that the season is beginning to draw to a close already, just as I feel I'm really getting my racing legs as well!

With only one more evening ten to go we should start this week with congratulations to Neil JJ Fraser who looks like winning the trophy. Congratulations Neil, in particular his short 25 minute ride on the night they resurfaced the road stands out as an awesome ride!

However, July/August's rider of the month award has to go to John Harrison for his ride in the North Mids & Herts 100. John may not have been pushing the guys in the top 10, but I take my hat off to him for finishing the distance despite not having raced much this season – well done John.

An honourable mention also goes to James Cornell who battled an unpleasant wind in the club open 25 to miss going inside the hour by just 10 seconds. A sure sign that he is in sub-hour form given a half decent day.

For those who haven't checked the forum on the website lately I suggest you drop by in the racing section to have a look at the debate on what we should do with the evening 10 course next year. Opinion seems evenly split as to whether we should keep it as it is or look to introduce a flatter and faster course. I would welcome your views either by email or on the forum as to what you would like to see next year.

Finally, a call to arms for all those who want to help us retain the Interclub trophy. The Interclub 15 is on Sunday 16th September followed by the 30 a week later. Can you email me if you want to ride please.

That's it for now. The fast late summer days are still to come so hopefully there is still time for a few of us to update our personal bests before we start thinking about needing warmer clothing!

Cheers

Steve

Race Reports

Anglia Velo 10

Sunday 12th August

The desire to set a club record saw Steve Robinson and Paul King venture out to the wilds of Norfolk on Sunday 12th for the Anglia Velo 10.

The record we were chasing was the mens tandem 10 record which surprisingly had never had a time set in all the years the club has been going.

The fact that we only had to get round to set a record took the pressure off somewhat, but we wanted to also set it at a competitive level, which made the fact that it was a nice calm day more pleasing.

The B10/3 is an excellent flat course that is not dissimilar to the E2 in that it has slight rises and drops but nothing too bad. The tandem also suits these types of course as the extra power of two people helps with the longer drags.

After a strong start where I was struggling to keep the bike in a straight line we really got it together and hit the 5 mile point in 9 minutes 50 seconds, but with the headwind

still to do I wasn't getting too excited about the final time just yet.

I resolved not to look at the watch on the way back and was overjoyed when we crossed the line to see that we had clocked 21:20. Over a minute quicker than we thought we were likely to do on the day.

We were well beaten by the fastest team who powered round in 19:36 but even so for our first race (and only second ride) on the tandem this year we were more than happy.

Next plan is to train some more and race the tandem more to see if we can dip below the magical 21 minute mark next year. Here's hoping!

Steve

Hemel Hempstead 10 – F12/10 4th August

We have another event with a Nomads team in it – Yippee. Me, David Ledgerton, Steve Robinson and Paul King. A team prize maybe? With Team Milton Keynes, Team Sanjan Design and Blue Sky Cycles riding I reckon I stand more chance of breaking Comp Record. Maybe some strategically placed drawing pins would help!! But one has to live in hope.

Wednesday – the forecast looks good, but which way will that wind blow? The Beebs Look East forecast on Wednesday evening indicates 9mph from the West. It's looking good – but as usual will it last???

The last three weeks have been far from perfect preparation for this event – that attack of gout, a virus that had me sat in two jumpers and still shivering for two days, a couple of slow race days and then some really hard training rides this week. I've also lowered the bars another half an inch on the TT bike just to see if I like it. So, who knows what race day will bring!

Saturday starts overcast and windy from the Southwest - again. Midday and no change. I leave home and within 5 miles the cloud is breaking. By arrival at the HQ, no cloud to be seen and it's now hot enough to encourage me to park in the shade under the trees.

I go for a ride to see how bad the wind is – last time on this course I made the mistake of using the disc in the rear – not a good idea in a strong side wind. This time I'd come prepared with the spoked wheels as well. I

decide that the wind is more tail wind out rather than 90 degrees across the course – and ride the disc and tri-spoke.

Those lower bars feel OK and have the effect of rolling me forward on to the nose of the saddle and also move my hold on the tri-bars further away. Not used to sitting on the nose of the saddle though!!

I was determined to go for a fast start today. Click, click, click – 4 cogs in under half a mile, the speed is up to 25s already. HR hits the lower red line within a minute. Fantastic start. Alas, at the first RAB – just half a mile from the start – I had to stop almost to a stand still or DNF by being DUC (Dead Under Car). Two starting efforts within 2 minutes – that hurts! The first 2.5 mile split was 6:12 – fast for me, especially after avoiding the DUC. I was having a problem with sweat coming down my face from under the helmet – I normally wear a bandanna but decided not too because of the heat – and need to keep wiping it away from my eyes. Contact lenses and sweat are not a good mixture! Then 5:38 for the next 2.5 miles. The third split was 6:34. That's over 3.5mph slower – considering the first 1.5 miles after the turn is down hill it gives a measure of the head wind we hit after the turn. Or, to put it another way – a measure of the tail wind to the turn!! The last rise up hill has me struggling as we come out of the shelter of the high hedges and I slow to just over “evens” – in that half a mile I lost a course PB. But if the legs just won't push any more and the HR is above your upper red line, not a lot you can do about it! It's called giving everything and being totally stuffed!

At the finish I've done a 24:50 – just 13 seconds off a course PB – but I have to pull over for a short recovery period. David beat me by doing a fine 24:35 – well done David, superb ride. Paul did a very good 25:29 – only 35 seconds away from a PB. Steve was given a DNF - he eased-up after the turn.

Note of interest for the four riders – by the time I arrived home the wind speed was just about zero!!

Oh, that team prize – we nearly did. We only needed to improve just short of eight minutes and we'd have done it. Never mind chaps, as they say – if you're not in it

Well, my next “open” event is not until September 1st. Four weeks to get the speed back in my legs - if I make it that far! Planet Blib calling Dave’s legs – get ready for one last push, those pesky intervals and 5 mile circuits are a coming!!!

Dave Wentworth

Missed opportunities

Two weeks ago I noticed an ECCA “Association” event start sheet on the CTT web-site. Just out of idle curiosity I looked at it and was somewhat miffed that they had accepted “non-association” entrants even though the CTT Handbook indicates otherwise. This meant that we could have entered - and probably got a ride – in the ECCA 10 on the E2. Just to make matters worse, when I mentioned this to Steve, I still had time to get an entry in the post – but it just didn’t register in my brain. Then, rubbing salt in the wounds just look at the weather for Saturday 11th August. Just perfect. Next year, I don’t care if the Handbook says “Association” or not – I think we should enter their events. You might get a ride, you might not.

Tuesday evening and I’m on the internet seeing what club event the North Buck’s have tomorrow night. It’s on the A5D – described as being “super-fast” on their web site and I must agree with that statement. Yep, OK, it’s a dual carriageway, loads of traffic but I’ll ride it. Now where is the North Buck’s club house? I barely got the MK street map on the floor and the door bell goes – on the door step is a chap in a cycling top asking if we know where a family lives. Jill says to him “You a cyclist then? My David rides for Hitchin Nomads”, “I’m in the North Buck’s”, “Oh” says Jill, “David is on the computer seeing where your event starts tomorrow night”. Jill shouts for me and this chap shows me on the map where the club house is. I’d have found it hard work to find without him. Now that’s so spooky!!

Wednesday evening I get home from work and have an early tea – yes, that pasta again. Legs feel great, weather is absolutely perfect – warm with an 8mph wind from the north that’ll blow down the 5.5 mile leg to the

finish. I feel absolutely fantastic and I’m really up-for-it.

When I arrive at the event HQ with my pound coin in-hand they are huddled around a map in the middle of the room – looks ominous! So I have a look and then ask – “Is this for tonight then”, “Yes, the traffic lights on the Abbey Hill RAB are operating full time”. I have a look at the course and have two concerns – they’ve made-up a course that’s not been approved and it’s got thirteen RABs in ten miles! I just come home and do a session on the turbo.

Two missed opportunities in a single week!!!

Dave Wentworth

Place to Place Records

I noted in the Cycling Weekly this week (August 9th) that Ralph Dadswell and his partner David Johnson failed in their bid to improve the End to End tandem trike record. They climbed off 10 miles north of Lockerbie with according to Ralph another 24 hours of riding but had overcooked themselves going over Shap and had nothing left in the tank.

This record has stood since 1954 and in my opinion is not likely to be beaten now because very few people actually ride tandem trikes and place to place records are becoming old hat.

Having said that, Ralph Dadswell and his stoker David Johnson are no slouches on their machine and when you consider they broke the records for the 12 hour and the 24 hour time trials and improved them to 277.78 set in 2002 for the 12 hour and 466.72 set in 2005 for the 24 hour, then there was really no reason to think that they would fail.

The club has place to place records which if anybody has a mind to are there to be broken.

There are four place to place records that are recognised by the club,

Hitchin to Biggleswade and return, record held by Graham Hurst 54 minutes 44 seconds.

Hitchin to Cambridge and return, record held by Tom Nimmo 2 hours 16 minutes.

Hitchin to Stamford and return, record held by Mick Pettifer 5 hours 00 minutes 45 seconds.

Hitchin to Great Yarmouth and return, record held by D Hammond 13 hours 55 minutes 35 seconds

Traditionally place to place records were set by going to the Post Office in each town, with Hitchin it would have been the Post Office in Hermitage Road which is now closed and riding to the target town Post Office then return to Hitchin. You are allowed to start anywhere on the route as long you go to both Post Offices.

I have spoken to Graham about his record ride from Hitchin to Biggleswade and back which he did on the 26th May 1983 and he said that he started in Bancroft rode up to the traffic lights and turned left into Hermitage Road and then did a U turn round the marshal outside the Post Office then returned to the traffic lights and turned right into Bancroft and then he was on his way.

He said that he did a lot of research into the sequence of the traffic lights so that they were green each time he approached them.

I also learnt that he had taken the record from Dave Wentworth who set the record at 55.30 on the 25th July 1982, which was an improvement on the previous record set in 1970 by John Clements of 55.56.

The killer fact of Graham's record ride is that when he got to Langford he was stopped by temporary traffic lights that were covering a road repair!

These records are set under the rules of the Road Records Association.

As with Hitchin a lot of other towns are losing their Post Office from their town centres. I suppose if there was a call for a clarification of what was the town centre, then the club would have to consult the Road Records Association.

From now to the beginning of October is the time of year to be thinking about place to place records because you are at your fittest and you can get super fast days.

In the mood? Go on give it a go!!

Clive

Le Tour de France

For me this is my July soap opera with all its twists and turns of story lines and by lines.

All life is here the triumph and the tragedy the fun and sadness; if you were to ask a scriptwriter to write it up he wouldn't get close.

As usual we have the regular team of Phil Liggett, Paul Shewin, Gary Imlach and Chris Boardman bringing the whole event to life this year on ITV4.

This year's Tour feels very special with an unpredictability about the whole Tour and with a hint of darkness about it, with the Tour leader, as of 22nd, being under suspicion because of missed drug tests while out of competition, and now he does a very good 54 K time trial and at one point was travelling at the same speed as Vinokourov and catching his 3 minute man and he isn't noted as a time trialist.

So you could argue that the man is inspired because he is in yellow and that would have some effect, as we all know when we are doing a good ride, but all the same I have to wonder.

The positives for me were the two days in London. The Saturday had a real carnival feel about the day. I arrived at the prologue course about 15.15 and the crowds were four deep at the kilo to go kite. So I made the decision to walk towards Hyde Park, as I walked along the crowds did thin from time to time and I was able to get the odd picture, (not as good as Andy Saunders) but it does give you a flavour of the event. As I walked along every now and again I came to a large screen showing the action and I would stop for a few minutes and watch the action, and then I would move on.

I eventually got to the peoples village, which was an idea from the London organisers and the first time that it had been done on the Tour de France. There were a fair few stalls and all the cycling organisations were present and one or two bike businesses plus a line of refreshment wagons. Also there was a French market, which added flavour to the day.

With an hour and a bit of the prologue to go I wandered over to the big screen near the peoples village and sat on the grass to watch the rest of the programme. There was a superb atmosphere with the crowd cheering any rider who was on a ride, and when Cancellara broke 9 minutes that was amazing and the crowd cheered and clapped him.

I must be getting old because I was a bit slow to start on the Sunday and didn't catch a train until 09.20 that got me into Kings Cross just after 10.10 so I made the decision to go to the Tower Bridge to catch the Tour there. As I came out of the station and saw all the team coaches lined up, I thought, 'Oh good I haven't missed them.' Then as the team buses moved off it slowly dawned on me that I had missed them.

As the Tour team buses drove pass I was taking photos of them and as the last bus passed I realised that a couple with a young girl that were standing a little way up the road were people that I knew.

They were ex-Nomads Sue and Graham Hurst with their daughter Rebecca and they had also missed the passing of the tour. I asked them what they planned to do next and they said that they were going to take Rebecca to the Tower of London, what a good idea said I, 'May I tag along too? And they agreed.

It turned out to be a very nice day.

I'm not a donkey you know – or, Le Tour, Le Extraordinaire

Over twelve months ago Jill and me decided that we were going to see TdF in Canterbury. So on June 7th 2006 the hotel was booked. We knew exactly where the hotel was, and how far we'd have to walk to get to the course – and that was not very far!!

Fast forward to June 2007 and Jill really wants to do it French style – picnic table, parasol and base, chairs, picnic and a bottle of Champers “camped-out” on the side of the road. I use the term camped-out in the loosest sense of the word – Jill's idea is for me to lug all the gear the mile and a half in to Canterbury and set up “camp” on one of grass verges – no camping involved. Lord above knows how I'm going to fit it all in the car let

alone lug in to the City? After all – I'm not a donkey you know!

July 7th arrives. It's Prologue day and the day of our Grand Depart to Canterbury. Thankfully – although I must admit it was more by design than luck – I just couldn't fit all that gear into the car. Ten thirty and we're off. Two o'clock and we're at the hotel. Three o'clock and the car is unpacked and we're on our way in to the centre of Canterbury to do the first reconnaissance – map in hand, we've found the course. Most important considerations of where we're going to en-camp – toilets must be close by because we don't want to trek too far; city centre for food and drink; not too far from the finish; we want a reasonable view; we want to get the “atmosphere” of Le Tour.

Sunday morning – breakfast is interesting. We've obviously got some of the press boys staying at our hotel – 8am is just too late for them to eat, they wanted to be standing on their pitch by now. Jill swears one of them ate his full English is two minutes flat!!

By 9am, a stroll across to the Old Dover Road – the route the riders will take. Chats with a couple of the many Police and Kent Highways bods on duty. Ten o'clock and the roads are closing. Two sodding great articulated lorries arrive full of barriers – both stop on a roundabout and one driver yells to the other “which way, do you know?” The final 3km were completely barriered as far as I could tell – that's a lot of barrier. Then a truck load of porta-loos comes in to view!!

By 10am the donkey was loaded with just two director's chairs and a rucksack – food and drink would be purchased from the city centre once we're en-camped.

We walk up and down and watch the whole thing being set-up. Barriers being put up by Kent people, advertising by Le Tour people, road sweepers by Canterbury City people, whistles and flags followed. We watch the “red kite” being unloaded – that arrives on the back of an articulated lorry with it's own hoist to lift the four bases into position before it's inflated!

By 10:30 camp is set-up – only five hours until the riders arrive but we are far from alone!!! All of the barriers are up, advertising

attached, roads swept – it's like a military operation. It has to be seen to be believed.

A head appears from over a garden wall – “what's going on then, I heard something about a bike ride today”. He lives 1200m from the finish and he doesn't know what's going on today! Not many of those around us are actually cyclists – most are locals coming out for the carnival. And even they have arrived 5 hours before the riders appear. Local interest and involvement is fantastic.

Team buses and cars arrive on a regular basis – all have horns sounding and arms waving at the gathering crowd who wave back and welcome them with vigour. The foot bridge from the railway station carries streams of people on a regular basis – the crowd steadily gets bigger and we have to defend our camp with firmness.

Two hours before the riders arrive and the publicity caravan arrives – it's a real carnival atmosphere and the crowd must now be at least five deep behind us. “Here, give me one” shouts a boy. “No, over here” shouts another. “Me, me” come the shouts. I've never seen anything like it - anybody would think they were giving ten pound notes away rather than beanie hats and sweets!!! Jill managed to get her hands on a bottle of TdF water – what a scoop! I'm saving it for next years ten on the E2. Oh come on, it must have magical powers – TdF riders drink it and look at their speed!!

It all calms down for a while but the crowd gets bigger and bigger, and oh, the crowd just carries on getting bigger.

I send a text to one of my friends who I know is watching it on Sky – “where are they”, “6 miles. McK and Cav have crashed out” comes the reply. Oh no, two of the best are out – disaster. You could now slice the atmosphere with a knife – sheer anticipation of what's about to unfold before our glazed eyes. Motorcycle outriders and the red commissaries cars arrive, the helicopters are overhead. Then this noise starts spreading up the road, “they're here” comes the shout. The boys in blue are on the front – closely followed by the boys from Quickstep and Milram.

Whoooooosh – they're gone in 20 seconds flat. Two minutes later word comes down

from the finish just 1200m from where we were stood about the remarkable win by that Australian Chap – well you know the rest.

An hour later and most of it's packed up ready for tomorrow's stage.

Was it worth the five hour wait? Well, let me put it like this – Le Tour, Le Extraordinaire!! What a fabulous weekend. What a fabulous event.

Dave Wentworth

I am writing this on the evening of the final day in the Pyrenees having watched the highlights on the television of what was a defining stage of the Tour and I am asking myself why do I feel so depressed?

The Yellow jersey held off all the attacks and won the stage but he is still under suspicion of taking drugs so his achievement is diminished.

Having written the two above paragraphs I didn't return to what I had written until Wednesday of this week and realised how emotional I felt at the time.

So it matters to me that our sport is seen as clean and that the powers that control our sport get to grips with those who are abusing our sport with their drug taking.

It really doesn't matter at what speed any stage is ridden at because the watching public cannot tell the difference between an average speed of 40K an hour and 45K an hour.

The high point of the Tour for me was the London start and the low point was that last stage in the Pyrenees, but overall I feel that the cycling world are beginning to take the drug issue seriously because they are beginning to find that sponsors are seeing cycling as bad news as the riders on the Discovery team have found where Discovery Channel have pulled the plug at the end of this season and their team won the tour!

It is possible to ride any Tour clean as Brad Wiggins demonstrated and teams are now monitoring their riders more closely so hopefully next year the Tour will go round France with not a single rider testing positive for drugs.

So roll on July 2008 for the next edition of Le Tour de France.

Clive