



Nomads News

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The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

Editorial

We are still with the Icknield 12 hour for this edition of the News.

To be honest I could bore for Britain for hours on end talking about 12 hour time trials, I like Richard, feel they are a very special event.

Richard's article is great news for the event, but bare in mind this will only be on yearly basis so the 12 could be abandoned any time after 2008.

As Richard has stated in his article the event needs our support not only through the feeds but also needs our support as riders. We, as a club made up 20% of the riders that started the event this year which is a great statement for the club.

This year we had 6 entries to the event, I am wondering if we could better that number next year

There is an interesting article from David Rossall in this issue about Audax Permanent rides, which you can ride with friends or by yourself but the beauty of them is that you ride at a time of your choosing.

We have another race report from Dave Wentworth. Thanks Dave.

Interclub Series

With four events of the interclub gone a rough guess is that we are 35 points behind the Beds Road. We are unable to be specific until Beds Road give us the results of the 15 and 30 (18.5) time trials.

We will need a strong entry for the hill climb on the 7th October to make up the deficit. So guys it depends on you. It's possible for us to win the interclub trophy.

Please email Steve to let him know that you are able to ride the hill climb.

Clive

The 12 hour is Dead, God Save the 12 hour

The future of the 12 hour time trial in this region is in our hands, while that may seem a daunting prospect, I see it as a great honour.

With ever declining numbers of entrants into the Icknield 12 Hour and the number of people required to assist remaining well in excess of a hundred the organiser, Gordon Hart, had decided to call it a day after this year's event.

Peter Tasker, a member of the Icknield RC and chairman of the CTT London North District Committee suggested to the committee that it proposed at the national council AGM a motion to do away with the BBAR Competition in its present form, in favour of a shorter course BBAR, that would in effect kill the 12 hour Time trial off completely because without the BBAR Competition even fewer people would want to ride the event.

I could not support the idea, saying I could support an additional parallel short Course BBAR but could not be part of putting a nail in the coffin of such a great event, if it died naturally because nobody wanted to ride a 12 anymore that would be a different matter but I couldn't help it on its way. Others on the committee supported my view.

I believe this made Gordon, who has run the event for over thirty years, think again and he approached me and asked that, if Hitchin Nomads would take responsibility for the feeding arrangements, he would run it for at least one further year. I explained the situation to our committee and they gave me the authority to agree to Gordon's idea.

Over the years the number of feeds has gone down from twelve to just five and two of those are taken care of by regulars who have been looking after their own feeds for years,

so we will only take responsibility for three, that doesn't mean we will necessarily have to man (or woman) the feeds completely but coordinate, supply and organise others who will be available to help.

Gordon is redesigning the course to simplify it so that fewer marshals and signs will be needed, the finishing circuit will be reduced therefore fewer Timekeepers would be needed.

So please, let's count on the support of as many Nomads as possible to help and as many as possible to ride the 12 next year and keep the great event going.

In the words of Barbara Day **VIVA Le 12 Hour!**

Richard Bland

My first 12 Hour Ride

Throughout the year I had considered riding the Icknield 12. Clive had told me what a great event it was and Neil had told me it wasn't that difficult. Despite this, I was still nervous about committing to do it; I had never ridden this far and was concerned whether it was possible for me given back problems and various other feeble excuses. If I started it, I would have been really disappointed not to finish so I had to be in the right frame of mind to get to the start line. I don't quite know how the decision was made but in the end I convinced myself it would be a good idea to give it a try. I'm still not sure whether this was the right decision.

The day came round and I had managed to convince Clare to support me, which was a very generous time commitment on her part (thanks Clare). After having made some adjustments to my time trial bike to make it as comfortable as possible, off I went in the September sunshine. "Nice and easy does it" was my strategy for the first half, although this message didn't really seem to get to my legs which propelled me down the A1 at 23's. "**This is easy**" I thought to myself as I passed the 100 mile marker at 4hrs 50. It started to get a little tougher over the next hour or so but nothing un-manageable. I fancied myself to do something pretty impressive today. All of a sudden with about 6hrs 30 gone, it all went wrong; the zip left the legs, the back was hurting along with almost every other part of

the body and I was struggling to push the lowest gear on the time trial bike. Luckily, or I'm sure I would never have finished, Clare had my road bike in the car as a back up. I got on, engaged the small chain ring and things felt a little better but still no power. Neil, who started 3 minutes behind came past as I changed bikes. Then Neil stopped for a rest and a re-fuel and I went back past. Although things were tough, I thought I must be doing OK if I was broadly keeping pace with Neil.

I was struggling; groveling into a strong Westerly breeze wind with the speedo showing single figures when Neil came past me with some words of encouragement when I really needed them (thanks Neil). Neil disappeared into the distance and I decided to ride my own race and just make it to the finish. Surely my second wind would kick in a minute? It never came. I was pretty close to calling it a day at this point with about 4 hours to go. I didn't know which of the other Nomads were still going and thought it would be pretty bad form to lose the team trophy for the club so decided to press on.

This was the first of many mental battles won and lost over the rest of the ride. In the end, the finish line was in sight and I had clocked up 215.94 miles, most of these in the first half but at least I had finished which was after all, the primary objective.

The experience was unforgettable for good and bad reasons. The memory of all the suffering is now starting to fade, with the positive memories of the day prevailing. It was a fantastic experience, made all the better by the tremendous support received from all that came along to lend encouragement. Congratulations to all that took part and let's hope this event is run again - I could probably be tempted!

James

Devonian Lumps and Bumps

Here's a report of my first attempt at an Audax Permanent. For the uninitiated, these are set routes, and you can register to ride at a time of your own choosing, using till receipts from cafes and shops as a record of your riding times.

The ride would have been hard on one leg, but fortunately the tyres wore out on my fixed

the week before. It's not that I would have tried riding 100km in Devon on fixed - I'd have fallen off on the first hill. However, having decided that the work bike tyres were beyond further use (cue a trip to SJS Cycles on the way to the holiday...), I rode my Mercian tourer for a bit instead. It was thus that I discovered a creak, which turned out to be a cracked crank - much better on a 5 mile trip to work than to have a crank fall off miles from home in Devon!

We had good weather all week, but the Tuesday was especially fine. I found the start in Honiton after a bit of searching (just because I came from the opposite end of town). I wasn't sure whether to expect the staff at the cafes that were used as controls to know about the Permanent or not; in the event it was not, but they seemed happy to help anyway. There was a slight gotcha in that only one of the receipts I obtained came from a till set to within 20 minutes of the actual time, but I was going plenty slowly enough to avoid appearing to arrive at one control before leaving the last!

The route started as it meant to go on, out of Awliscombe. The rewards came equally quickly as I approached Blackborough, with the first of a whole series of spectacular views, in this case in the general direction of Exeter.

Approaching Ashill, I met a small tractor - but the lanes were still too narrow for us to pass, and I found myself "reversing" even on a bike. Then on to Uffculme. At the first control, I spotted what was obviously a bike box, marked "GB triathlon team", accompanied by a fit-looking owner apparently waiting to be picked up - I never found out whether he was heading for a major championship. I also had a bizarre incident with a driver who, while not apparently disabled, hit the horn to have me move and let her into a disabled parking space. The strange thing was the second, completely unoccupied, disabled space next door; why did she particularly want the space where I was standing? I never found that out either...

I wasn't setting the world on fire with my times (never meant to), but the next section was probably the slowest. I hadn't bothered with lights, or to make an early start, and I

began to wonder whether that had been wise. Still, I had been looking for a ride that would be different from the normal Hertfordshire fare, and it fully met my expectations. I had already done more 1:7s in a morning than in the previous five years.

The second, and bigger, tractor I encountered was ahead of me. This one was a little faster than me up the hills, but slower elsewhere, so we played a kind of tag for a bit, and I watched as its wide trailer cut its way into the narrower verges.

Then my front tyre developed a slow puncture. I limped a few hundred yards to the B3190 and changed the tube while taking in the views down towards the turn at Watchet. And then the descent of course - miles of it to enjoy.

Helliker's cafe near the sea front had an unusual window display. Barbie and Ken dolls, some with photo-masks, were set up as an "I'm a Celebrity" scene. It did well in attracting the attention of passers-by, even with the Mercian in the way.

I had checked my tyre thoroughly, but it was flat again after lunch. Although the thick tread of Marathons means they hardly ever puncture, when they do there is quite a lot of rubber to hide the flint. Re-crossing the A39, the tyre went down for the third time in spite of an even more thorough inspection. Only this time I did find the offender - and then by looking round the outside instead of the underside.

By this time I was really concerned about light, and had given up all hope of making the target time and scoring my first-ever AAA points. However, just as promised, the return leg was faster, and I began to hope that I would at least avoid the ignominy of calling for motorised rescue. It didn't seem too long before I reached the third control at Milverton, and I was really enjoying my ride.

The significance of the reference in the route sheet to signs at Wellington to "Monument" had escaped me. Then I saw it on the hilltop ahead and caught on. Still, we weren't going all the way up there, were we? The route sheet was clear, so I didn't bother checking the map, or I would have known. I'd spent a while looking at the route in advance

of course, but searching out and memorising the biggest hills is not good psychology!

In the event it was the one I found most challenging, and the little 1:5 switchback at the top nearly finished me off, leaving me light-headed. The main reason of course is that the rest of me isn't light; I go down hills like a paving slab, sometimes freewheeling ahead of others who are pedalling. I go up hills like a paving slab too...

The descent into Hemyock was one of several that showed up my lack of confidence in my Tektro brakes. Not sure whether it is the brakes themselves, or cowardice developing from age and no longer having regular access to the Peak District. Still, some hills had gravel and sudden turns, and were perhaps not quite the places to be matching the 45mph downhill speeds of which you occasionally read.

The climb out seemed to drag on, but actually it was only a mile and a half, and then there was a long flattish section past Dunkeswell airfield. By now I was fairly sure of making Honiton in the light, but still concerned about the ride back up the A30 to Upton and our holiday cottage. In fact, a final steep drop took me back into Awliscombe, and I made the final control (with the checkout till again showing the wrong time) and headed home just in time for safety.

It was only afterwards that I got around to calculating the time allowance. I'll have to wait for the organiser to confirm, but I think I made it by ten minutes inside the allowance for the route.

Permanents are a good way of using someone else's local knowledge and getting a bit of a target for your ride at the same time. I'll certainly try another if I get the chance.

David Rossall

**Race report –
NORLOND 25
Course F1
9th September**

The version of the F1/25 used starts in Tempsford, turns at Sandy RAB, heads north to Buckden RAB and retraces south to finish at Tempsford.

Saturday I went out for a pre-race-day ride and felt horrid, the legs just didn't want to do anything and I felt totally drained - so I wasn't sure what Sunday morning would bring. I had to get some carbs in me so had a big pasta lunch on Saturday - then went out in the evening to a local carvery.

As I leave home I need front and rear fog lights on the car – it's a right old pea-souper. But five miles down the road it's clear – thankfully. The morning has little to zero wind but at 12°C it's on the chilly side for my lungs. During my turbo-based warm-up I start off with two t-shirts on – it's still chilly. Really need that inhaler this morning, where is it – at home! Never mind a 25 should hurt my legs more than my lungs.

Because of the chill in the air I decide to put that “hot stuff” on my legs and arms. I can't get the top off the darned thing, I try my penknife – no good. The chap parked behind me can't shift it. The only option now is an axe – but no one has one in their car. Some people just don't come prepared do they! I end up putting extra quantities of the “warm stuff” on instead. Half way though my warm-up and the arms are burning and I have to get off the bike and wipe “the warm stuff” off.

On the ride to the start my legs do not feel good at all – they just don't want to go round at any sensible sort of cadence. Just before the off, my minute man is stood behind me – “see you at Sandy” I say. “That's only 2½ miles” comes the response. “Yeah, I'm happy with that”.

I get to Sandy, the legs ache already – not a good sign. Turn and I'm at the 3 mile mark as he passes me. With 3 miles to go I might have chased him but at 3 gone forget it and he slowly disappears into the distance. Past the start area at five miles and my splits are 6:34 and 6:07. The next split shows 5:58 – that's getting better. Next split is 5:43 – now happy. At the 15 mile mark my average speed has slowly crept up and is just on 25mph. First split after the turn is 5:56 - it's looking really good!! Then I start to suffer with splits of 6:19 and 6:10. Both calves are starting to cramp in the last mile - the thighs don't feel too good either. I'm on the limit. The final split is 6:00.

After slowing down after the finish I start to feel the same warming sensation on the legs as I had on my arms during warm-up. I get back to the HQ and wipe it off – they are still burning. On the way home I had to have the air-con on minimum blowing down on my legs and my long shorts pulled up as far as possible!!

Oh, my final time – a 1:1:04 (I think), my best since 1985 and my 10th fastest 25 ever. OK, it was a good day and I'd have been better pleased to “go under”, but that'll suit me fine. In the last three weeks my “last 22 seasons” PB has gone from a long 1:8 to a short 1:1 and I've claimed two 1st place Handicaps. Yes, I'm well chuffed with the way the 25s have gone so far. One more to go in two weeks time, but I doubt if I'll go better than Sunday – on the limit in perfect conditions will take some beating. Maybe I'll ride more of them next year!!!

Dave Wentworth

Sponsored Ride 2007

Our tandem came out to play for the second time this year on a cool, cloudy day. The forecast the day before had been for wall-to-wall sunshine, the clouds surely didn't see it!

Our route started at St Paul's in Letchworth, from where we cycled to Baldock to visit the three participating churches, and then to Radwell. This year All Saints' Radwell was open and we were able to go inside, it is a lovely little church. From there we cycled to Norton, following which we visited the remaining five participating churches in Letchworth.

And then on to All Saints' Willian, beautifully decorated with flowers, which was very busy not only welcoming cyclists, but also preparing for a concert the same evening. From there we cycled to both Wymondley villages, then to St Ippolyts and then it was time for lunch.

After lunch we visited the eight participating churches in Hitchin, plus a brief visit to Ickleford. We then cycled to All Saints' Willian, which was on our way home.

A very big thank you to everyone who has sponsored us. You have enabled us to raise over £1,200 for the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Historic Churches Trust, half of

which will go directly to All Saints' Willian Restoration Fund.

Ann and Clive Collins

Club runs for October

7 th October	Willington Garden Centre
14 th October	Country Homes & Gardens Melbourne
21 st October	Emily's Tea Rooms Whitwell
28 th October	Brinfield Garden Centre Goffs Oak

Media Watch

From the question and answer column in Cycling Weekly.

Q

I'm a keen novice just starting out. Any tips for getting stronger?

A

In the words of the greatest cyclist of all time, Eddy Merckx: “Don't buy upgrades; ride up grades.”

Alternative Winter Training

As some of you may know since I retired I have developed an interest in growing my own vegetables.

I retired a year last May and immediately started to dig on my son's allotment in Hitchin. This March I had the opportunity to dig on the allotment of a friend who is a member of our club. The season has been a reasonable success, but also failure, in so far as the potatoes were knocked out by blight, but my onions were a great success plus my leeks and sprouts are doing well.

As of September I now have two halves of allotments in my own right in Letchworth plus I am still digging my son's allotment.

So if anybody would be interested in growing their own vegetables for next year there is land available on our club member's allotment in Letchworth to develop for planting next spring.

If you are interested please contact me at the above e-mail or phone.

Clive