



Nomads News

www.hitchin-nomads.net

The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

Editorial

For this edition we have a superb article from Jamie reporting from the front line of the Emitremmus ride. I had the perfect excuse for not joining them, apart from the fact that I wouldn't be able to keep up with them, it was our granddaughters first birthday and she had a party on Sunday afternoon.

Frank is arranging the pre-Christmas lunch at the Green Man, Stanford. Please let him know that you will be attending as soon as possible.

Frank is also bringing to our attention the lottery fund grant that is going to be voted on who will benefit from the grant in a TV programme to be broadcast in December.

My question is why can't the powers that be fund things properly instead of relying on people gambling to make ends meet?

My thanks to David Rossall for submitting a good touring article.

My apologies, I forgot to include the Non Nomads on the club hill climb result sheet.

Clive

Charlton Hill Climb October 21st

Andy Saunders	1:16:6
Neil JJ Fraser	1:34:11
Jamie Tomlin	1:43:9
Neil R Fraser	1:49:7
Nick Senechal	1:53:8
Toby Blyth	2:10:4
Nick, Jamie & Luke Senechal	6:01:6
Non Nomad: Rob Hemming	1:34:6
Non Nomad: Alan Stanchan	1:35:0

Timekeepers: David Ledgerton

Frank Turner

Pushing Off: John Houghton

Clubrun luncheon

A reservation has been at the Green Man PH at Stanford (at the crossroads between Clifton and Southill) for 25-30 diners to attend after the clubrun on **23rd Dec 12.30 sit down.**

Booking is less formal than in previous years as the management do not need meal choices to be reserved in advance. The options are turkey, lamb, pork, or beef roast, plus vegetarian options. Childs portions will be available. The cost is **£6.95** for starter and main course plus **£3.50** for dessert.

Order and pay on the day.

In order to get a separate room we need to have at least 25, please let me know if you are coming as it is felt that we should give the chef a pretty accurate indication of how many there will be.

Frank Turner

Note For Your Diary

December 12th 20:15	Club AGM at the Letchworth Settlement
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Emitremmus

To celebrate the end of summer time four brave souls from Team James met at the Fox at 8.45. The weather is going to be awful and with three others there is no opportunity to wait for next year.

So off we go to the start.

When we get to the start in Stevenage James C complains about being hot and sweaty. I point out to him that doing over 22 MPH into the wind may, just may, have something to do with this. We refresh with teas and chat with the other Nomads and connected parties (Welwyn Wheelers..boo..hiss....).

We set off with Group A. Within 50 metres some poor rider has punctured. The start is about as organised a Nomads club run, with riders starting to get spread over the roads. We negotiate Stevenage and Aston more or less as a group. A small stop to refit James C's water bottle and Ray's pump. We get going again and repass riders who have overtaken us. We go take the wrong route. After retracing and getting back onto the route we rerepass riders. They probably didn't realise the Nomads was such a big club, thinking it is different riders each time.....

We make good progress, more or less together, chatting to other riders offering words of encouragement and admire the various bikes on show. T junction - must be left. 200 yards up the road we learn we have gone wrong and pssssss. Jamie T punctures.

5 Minutes to change tyre (tried out my new tyre levers - worth every penny that Shorters didn't charge me). Turn around again, pass riders we rerepassed earlier - this is getting silly - if you see an old gent in a rapha waterproof you might like to reassure him that there were not 24 Nomads out on this ride.

The weather is getting worse, but the wind is with us and we make good progress. James S is starting to feel it (brave rider, unable to get out for a few weeks and then chooses to join the powerhouse that is James C, the young hooligan that is Jamie T and the everpeddling Neil James F for a 70 mile jaunt). We more or less hold it together for Saffron Walden.

Refreshments are consumed washed down with jolly banter (most of which is not really suitable for a family publication).

We set off. First to the top of the hill out of Saffron Walden gets.....to the top first! Ouch, I regret trying for that, my legs have seized up and still a long way go. Into the wind. I start to have thoughts about Shackleton and his epic journey but maybe I am just blowing this up out of all proportions. We manage to keep going making more or less OK time. Sort of keeping together (does 500 yards apart at points count as together?). Then pssssss, this time its James C. We stop outside a pub with another puncture mending group (repairing the third puncture on the same wheel....me thinks they may have

missed something in this...once its a thorn, twice its bad luck third time its because you didn't do the job properly the first time). The other group gets going before us. James sorts his puncture, inflating his tyre with a pump that was stolen from an action man - pah who says size etc etc etc. Off we go. Down the road we pass the other group repairing another puncture on the same wheel.

Next stop Reed. Tea, coffee and lucozade. All very welcoming. We are on the home stretch. But now we have covered a fair distance, the weather is poor and the temptation to go straight home is there. But hey, I can resist everything but temptation. So as ever a close knit group off we go. The few hills we have to cover on the way back splits us up so that the group is never one again. Coming through Sandon we find a lady has fallen off her bike. No obvious reason why. Maybe the Victorians were right and its not good for a ladies health for her to ride a bike. Other than perhaps a trike. Anyway, Wallington, Baldock and Letchworth. Back home. We cut short from the official route but still clocked up a hard, but enjoyable, 70 miles. A packet of pork scratchings are my reward when I get home. As recommended by the Official Lance Armstrong Guide to Fitness (at least I think it was). Till next year.

Jamie Tomlin

LOADSAMONEY FOR CYCLING!

**The lottery are offering £50,000,000
For a good cause.**

**There will be a public vote on the TV in
December.**

**Sustrans are hoping to win and needs your
help.**

**Please go to www.sustransconnect2.org.uk,
or call 08450581373,
or text CONNECT2 to 80010,
to register your details.**

**More bums on saddles means possibly
more members. Better cycling provision
means more bums on saddles.**

**Please do your bit.
Thanks Frank.**

November Club Runs

November 18 th	Lassiters café Harpenden
November 25 th	London Gliding Club

December Club Runs

December 2 nd	Hare Street
December 9 th	Forest Centre Marston Vale
December 16 th	Royston Sports Centre
December 23 rd	Moggerhanger Hall + Club Lunch, Green Man Stanford
December 30 th	St Neots Café

Back to Bala

Emitremmus Warm up

We were visiting my mother-in-law in Llandudno, and I had orders to take my bike! My instructions were to take myself off for the day, so that the ladies could go shopping without me getting in the way. But where to go? I spent some time looking at a route to Betws-y-Coed and back, but in the end it was an easy choice - drive down for a ride based on Bala, decades after I last cycled around there.

There were five of us, Venture Scouts, who chose cycling as our activity for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. [In the end, club life and racing took over and the DofE got nowhere, but that's another story.] Richard's family owned a holiday home in north Wales, so the Unit used that as a base for cycling and walking, and our first long ride was to get there, across Cheshire, through Oswestry and up the Tanat Valley. Derek's legs gave out at 50 miles; innocent of the techniques of pushing a fellow-rider, we were pulling him with a scarf tied to his bars when, mercifully, the walkers in the equipment van came by and rescued him. Then my wing nut stripped with five miles to go and the van had to come back...

Returning to Bala, thirty years later, I suspect that little had changed, but somehow I remembered less than I expected. As I headed out, it was one hairpin that I knew of old. The rest of the climb went on and up, then across the moors, but that and the long valley-side descent to Llangynog did not seem as familiar as it should have.



Into the Tanat Valley and Penybontfawr, where one way you see the hills falling away into the Cheshire plain, and another you look up into Welsh mountains. This was where that nut had failed all those years before.

I don't think Bob was that pleased at being dragged back out of the holiday home to rescue me in the van, but he worked in a bike shop, and miraculously had just the right replacement in his spares box. I couldn't afford quick release, and wing nuts were the next best thing. That evening, after he had also trued my wheel, I declared that I was off to do the last five miles I had missed, and a few of us did a short loop back down the valley and up. Sadly, I hit a fallen branch and bent my wheel a bit - I did nearly manage to jump it, as I explained to Bob while he trued it again...

For a Cheshire rider, a Derby Mercian was one of the dream bikes. I took my first one on the final trip to Hirnant, before university and real life took us our separate ways. That time, we set ourselves a 100-mile route out from Cheshire out over the Horseshoe Pass. Really, though, the bike was too big, and I could not keep it. A year ago, when the chance came to get another Mercian, this time in the right size, I couldn't resist. Kitted out now with a triple instead of racing gears, it seemed fitting to return on the same brand.

The climb to Hirnant was also expected, yet unknown. It was only when I got into the village that I recognised the Old Rectory where we had stayed in the late 1970s. I sat on a stone wall opposite to eat my lunch and admire the autumn colours.



It must have been on that initial visit to Hirnant that we decided to hold our first, unofficial, time trial. Over the hill, round Lake Vyrnwy, and back. The result was pretty much expected, and set the tone for later races under RTTC rules - Richard first, Peter second, I avoiding last place.

Heading up that same hill after lunch, I realised that this was in fact the ideal compromise Nomads club circuit! A small mountain pass, with 1 in 7, for the sporting course advocates, combined with a pancake-flat loop round the reservoir for the others. Anyone for a 200-mile ride out on a Tuesday night?

On another visit, our attempt on the Bwlch-y-Groes had much the same result as the time trial. Richard got all the way up, Peter pulled a foot out at two-thirds, and I stalled half way and had to walk a few yards, but I wasn't last.

I had hoped for another try, this time armed with 28*27 instead of 40*28 (and now with rather more around the waist), but time was pressing and I headed for a repeat of the Vyrnwy circuit instead.

It's strange riding around reservoirs - you think you are nearly there, and then three more inlets appear and you find there are several miles to go. On that first time trial, however, a tower marked the one-mile point, which helped both then and now.

There was no time to repeat the whole time trial course back to Hirnant, so I retraced around the lake to the minor road to Bala. This didn't mess about - straight up at 1 in 7, and keep going at nearly the same to the top. Only crossing the cattle grid and breaking out of the tree line did it begin to level, before first dropping steeply, then descending gently



for miles through the Penllyn Forest. There has been leisure riders around the reservoir, but it was here that I saw my only club riders of the day, heading upwards.

It was when climbing the other way up this road that Richard had told tales of previous family visits to Hirnant, and of spectacular crashes descending the forest tracks on beaten-up three speeds. Pretty much what was happening at the same time in Marin County really, except that we didn't go on to invent the mountain bike.



Emerging from the Forest, I had views over Bala, and stopped to take my last photo. It was at this point that I discovered the slow puncture, but I was able to make it down the hill and back to the car before it went flat. Then back to Llandudno to see the results of the shopping expedition, and home for the Emitremmus.

One day, I may try the Bwlch again.

David Rossall

Media Watch

The BBC Top Gear motoring programme on 11th November has proved what we as cyclists already knew. The bicycle is the most efficient form of transport in London.