



Nomads News

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The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

Editorial

What a contrast in the weather for the start of the season!

For the Spring Hilly it was cloudy but with some sunny intervals, but for the two up team time trial it was raining with a strong wind.

Our rainfall measure at home recorded 29.5mm of rainfall up to lunchtime Sunday.

We still had four riders prepared to face the elements and make up two teams to ride in the conditions. Well done gentlemen, but there may be some in the club that may doubt your sanity.

Hopefully the weather will be a little kinder next Sunday for the medium gear. Although I heard the phrase 'Stiff Northerly' used in the forecast for the weekend. Last year it blew a gale and I recorded a 1:27:54 so I am hoping to better that time this year.

I will be at the top of the hill at Great Offley on Good Friday along with Richard Bland and one or two other Nomads to give Tony Perkins (off at 8.44) and David Ledgerton (off at 9.17) and maybe our new member Jason Stuart who is at the time of writing is 15th reserve in the Welwyn Hilly. Also ex Nomad Rob Hemming is riding off at 9.54.

My thanks to Jamie Tomlin for his definitive good café guide.

Whatever you are doing this coming weekend, may I wish you all a Happy Easter. Clive

Racing Results

Congratulations to our second claim member Phil Lisher who was first junior with his ride in the North Road Hardriders

Spring Hilly

The first event of the club calendar saw 8 riders face the timekeeper and the two laps of the Whitwell circuit. Andy Saunders completed in 51:48 to win and beat his time of last year by 6 seconds. As the results below show competition for the top three places was close! **Lets hope this is a taste of the season to come.**

David Ledgerton

Andy Saunders	00:51:48
Steve Robinson	00:51:50
Andy Herbert	00:51:52
Paul King	00:52:53
Mike Webb	00:54:09
James Spence	00:57:37
Toby Blyth	00:59:06
Neil R Fraser	01:00:31

Timekeeping/Pushing Off: David Ledgerton

Two up Team TT

Steve Robinson Paul King	1:12:58
Andy Saunders James Cornell	1:14:02

Timekeeper Pusher Off David Ledgerton

March Club Runs

March 23 rd	Café Bliss Bedford
March 30 th	Burwash Barns

March Club Events

March 23 rd	Two Up Team Time Trial
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Audax

March 30 th	Start of Summertime Start at Costello's Café Fairlands Valley Park Stevenage. Three distances available 63k, 115k and 210k. Sign on for 09.30 for a 10.00 Start.
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April Club Runs

April 6 th	Moggerhanger Hall
April 13 th	Riverside Garden Centre Bayford
April 20 th	Forest Centre Stewartby
April 27 th	St Neots Cafe

April Clubroom

Club kit will be on sale at the clubroom from
20.15 April 16th

CTT Planner

Event	Date	Closing Date
Beds Road F1B/25	13.04.08	01.04.08
Team Cambridge F16/25	19.04.08	08.04.08
Team Milton Keynes F5/20	19.04.08	08.04.08
Southgate F20/10	20.04.08	08.04.08
St Ives N1/10	26.04.08	15.04.08
NorlandTT Combine F5C/10	27.04.08	15.04.08

Jamie's Café Guide

First there was the Michelin guide, then Egon Ronay and now there is the JT! A cyclists guide to local refuelling stops used by cyclists. This guide is written by cyclists for cyclists. Before I put forward my comments allow me to spend a few words thinking about why we cycle. For some it is the health benefits it provides, for others the ability to get out in the fresh air, some see it as a way of displaying their strength and others because, well because they can. Whatever is the motivation cycling has one benefit that all can enjoy. Cycling burns up energy and this requires fuel. And to do this you need more than gels and isotonic drinks. You need FOOD. And you need more food than if you don't cycle – I think therefore I am and I cycle therefore I eat! And I eat lots. This is my qualification, my expertise to pass judgement. Agree or disagree with whatever I say, the only way to reach a conclusion is to go head to head and try all the cafés. Repeatedly.

What are the attributes that determine whether a café is good or great? For me the qualities are a mixture of location, building, food and the welcome the staff provide. I have this time picked out three of my favourites, each is different and each is a favourite for a different reason.

London gliding club, Dunstable

What a great location, view and building. A decent ride to get there, some hills and wonderful villages if you skirt round Dunstable. The building has a lot of architectural merit. Like me, it has seen better days but it is a place of beauty and elegance. As you climb the stairs to the serving/seating area you know that it will be a proper cup of tea served with a cheerful smile, irrespective of the weather and the puddles that you may leave on a cold

miserable February. The food is hearty, with both a good choice of snacks and more substantial meals. And all at a price which makes it worth the journey. Any downsides? Yes. Maybe, just maybe it is too close to Bison hill – if I have had a big stop the climb up Bison at the start of the way back can be hard work on a stomach full of tea and cake. I just need to remember the granny gear when I go there. Avoid Bison? No, God put the Chilterns there to be cycled up, to avoid it would be disrespectful. And its downhill the other side. How about using this as a base for a Sunday morning ride into the Chilterns?

Reed

This is a café, which I have been going to for 28 years. And it still has exactly the same tables, chairs and paint on the walls. Some may consider this a weakness but for me it is a bit like Dorian Gray, as the world around it ages it is timeless. And the food is still the same – nothing fancy just reliable toast, fry-ups, artery blockers. And they sell Eccles cakes! In the middle of winter after two to three hours of hard toil it provides just the right sort of grub to bring a warm feel to your stomach which will see you home. What are the downsides? If you time it wrong you will have to join a queue of 20 or so bikers, all head to toe in leather (they don't seem too unperturbed by a lycra clad cyclist, it is as much a curiosity than anything else) all waiting to order a full breakfast. This does have its plusses. Last time I was there, there was a gathering of motorbikes and sidecars taking place in the car park. There must have been around 25, many of which were from the fifties and sixties; beautiful pieces of British engineering all lovingly cared for. Until their old fashioned reliability lets them down on the way back! I am sure one of them was used in 'On the Buses'. A hugely entertaining gathering. Frank, you would have loved it.

Emilys, Whitwell

I have a favourite ride which takes me from Letchworth down to Welwyn on the back roads via Whitwell and Kimpton. Return via Welwyn North and Knebworth. Having done about 30 miles Emilys provides the perfect stop. It is just off the High Street and set in an old converted Barn. It is almost too smart for cyclists but they don't mind. In fact they positive encourage it, how many other cafés sell spare inner tubes and keep copies of

cycling magazines for their diners to read. In the summer it is wonderful to sit out in the sun. It is also a haven in the modern world as my mobile phone has no reception there...bliss. The food is great. Sandwiches, jacket potatoes and home made cakes. And in the winter their special offer, their winter warmer, is a jacket potato, a cake, a drink and a refill for just over £5 – beat that. And it's a great place to take your family with the farm next year being open to visitors.

So there you have it. Three of my favourites. The best architecture, the best motorbike gathering and the best value. Can you offer anything to challenge these?

Jamie Tomlin

Media Watch



This lady is 89 years old and lives in Malaysia where she decided to stand for election because younger people were not interested in standing in the election. In her words. "They just sit and complain and since no one I knew was willing to fight, I decided that I had to do it."

Her only form of transport is her bike.

If you are interested in further details, her supporters have set up a blog in her name. www.maimunbintiyusuf.blogspot.com

My thanks to old Bill Words for writing the first line of the ode.

Ode to the New Season

I wander lonely as a cloud
Riding my bike and singing out loud

Contemplating the coming racing season
Am I too old I have to reason

As I am the timekeeper facing
"Is this" I ask myself, "really racing?"

As I climb the hill to pass the Black Horse
I am riding OK but knackered of course!

I get to Southill as fast as I can
But still get caught by my minuteman

Now on my way to Growers
Northerly wind and groveling

At the Growers roundabout
I do a left hand down
Shuttleworth hill up ahead
I think with a frown

I attack the hill as best as I can
But I feel my heart will go off with a bang

I breast the hill and Old Walden in sight
So now I hurry to get back to the finish
whilst it's still daylight

Get to the last hill and I huff and I puff
And tell myself
"you silly old fool you've had enough"

Over the top and I begin to sprint
With my energy reserves almost skint

Over the line I shout my number
Timekeeper said sagely
"You looked like a lorry carrying lumber"

Go back to the timekeeper and check my time
Not as good as when I was in my prime

Return to the start to talk over the race
30.35! Blimey! I'm off the pace

Make a date to return next week
But need all of the season to reach my peak

I know, I know I'm glutton for punishment
But this sort of racing is pure nourishment

So as long as I can cock my leg
and ride my bike

This racing I really do like.