



# Nomads News

[www.hitchin-nomads.net](http://www.hitchin-nomads.net)

The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

## Editorial

Well that's the Tour over for another year, for me it lived up to expectation, and to see Sastre go by was amazing, his speed was mind blowing and that rider who hit the sign post and broke his bike in half, just picked a new bike and off he went, pure theatre.

Next up are the Olympics; we now ask the question has Mr Cavendish recovered enough to perform in the Olympics in the same way as he did in the Giro and the Le Tour?

It looks as if the Interclub is beyond us this year.

Congratulations to Steve for completing his first 50. This from a man who has always said that he wasn't able to race further than 10 miles. So Steve, next season 100 and the 12-hour?

Don't forget the 12-hour at the end of the month, Richard Bland needs all the volunteers he can lay his hands on.

Currently I have no details of the Children's ride on the 24<sup>th</sup> August, I will send the details as soon as I get them. I will send the details as either a news flash or in the mid-month newsletter.

The club results are a little behind at the moment because David has been busy with our middle markers event.

My thanks to Richard for his article, I think the club owe him a vote of thanks for all his time spent setting up the F1 for mid-week use, for certain I think I will have a dabble on the F1 next year.

Clive

## Race Results

### Interclub 30

20<sup>th</sup> July

Scott Edwards	1:33:49
Nigel Tooke	1:38:24
David Summerell	1:49:59

## Middlesex RC 50

27<sup>th</sup> July

Paul King	2:10:25
Steve Robinson	2:10:27

Winner

Paul Holdsworth 1:51:33

This rider also rode a 50 on the E2 course the previous day and recorded 1:45:59.

## Hitchin Nomads Open 25

3<sup>rd</sup> August

Richard Palmer	00:58:41
Clive Collins	01:05:46
James Spence	01:05:48

Congratulations to both Richard and James who both recorded PBs on what was less than a perfect day and Clive hasn't seen a 1:5 since 2000.

## Race Report

### Middlesex RC 50

27<sup>th</sup> July

Sunday morning was my first ever attempt at a 50, and it was a perfect day with almost no wind.

The course was flat and pretty quick, but light traffic meant that it wasn't as fast as the day before on the E2 when Michael Hutchinson managed a competition record of 1:35! To put into perspective that is 5 x 10's in a row at 19:05!!

I managed to finish it, which was my first aim and was really pleased with my time of 2:10:27 for 14<sup>th</sup> place. Paul King took a very short detour off course and lost some time and managed to just pip me with a new PB for him of 2:10:25.

Cheers  
Steve

## August Clubruns

August 3<sup>rd</sup>

Village Bistro Little Paxton

August 10 <sup>th</sup>	Toddington Garden Centre
August 17 <sup>th</sup>	Van Haage Garden Centre Great Amwell
August 24 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Children's Ride TBA</b>
August 31 <sup>st</sup>	No Club Run

<b>August 31<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Icknield RC 12 hour The Nomads have taken on the responsibility for the feeding in the Icknield RC 12 hour this year. Any help that you can offer would be appreciated.</b>
-------------------------------	--

### **Fast 10 Course**

You may all remember that last year there was a lot of discussion on the club finding a new "fast 10" course, finding one that would have been both fast and safe enough to be accepted by the CTT London North District Committee proved allusive. I then remembered that I and a couple of other Nomads used to have winter training rides up and down the well lit section of the A1 between Wyboston and Astwick in the dark after 8:00pm when the road was amazingly quiet.

I thought what better fast 10 course than the F1b/10 and discussed the possibility of using it with Peter Tasker the Chairman of the CTT London North District Committee who pointed out that it was in the handbook that no events were allowed on the A1 mid-week. He agreed that if I did traffic counts and the results were acceptable the District Committee could write to the National Secretary and apply for permission to use the course on an evening for a Club 10.

On numerous evenings throughout the early part of the year I sat in lay-bys at different positions on the course between 8:00 and 9:00 pm counting cars for ten minutes in one direction and then ten minutes in the other. At first I was counting on Thursdays but was disappointed with the results, I came to the conclusion that the supermarkets were stocking up for the weekends or something so I began counting on Wednesday evenings instead and I came to the conclusion that the traffic was comfortably within the acceptable limits. I rode the course a couple of times to get a feel for the conditions as a cyclist and

was perfectly comfortable with the traffic and of course this was in the dark as well.

To be absolutely certain of the conditions being acceptable firstly to the District Committee for their recommendation and then the National Committee for their acceptance I asked for a limited entry of twenty riders starting at 20:10, so it would be all over by 21:00 well within the lighting up time of June/July.

I submitted our application letter to run the events along with all of the traffic counts to the District Committee who accepted the case and applied to the National Committee. After some time and a bit of a push from Peter Tasker they came back but said no!

I was very disappointed, the reasons they gave I thought a bit weak and I felt they had just taken the easy road by saying no, They had homed in on just a couple of the ten minute periods where the counts had come out a bit high, but these were on the northbound side before any rider could have reached that stretch, the other reason given was that I had done the counts in the dark and that it might be busier in the summer, well that was it for me, I've been driving up the A1 to North London and back for over twenty years and these people were telling me what the traffic was like!

I did a further traffic count around the time we were planning to run the event, just to prove my point, then I responded with the thought in my mind that if I never had anything to do with the CTT again I didn't care and pointed out various things including questioning why have District Committees when local knowledge counted for nothing.

Well although too late for this year, the outcome was that it has become a District decision and so early next year I'll be counting cars again and make the same case to the London North District Committee and hopefully they will endorse the application again and we'll have a few good PBs at 10 miles in the summer of 2009!

Richard Bland

### **CTT Reminder**

**16<sup>th</sup> Aug      Shaftesbury CC 25      E2**

17 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Beds Road CC 25	F1B
24 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Redbridge CC 25	E2
30 <sup>th</sup> Aug	Team Sanjan Design 10	F2A
31 <sup>st</sup> Aug	Icknield RC 12 Hour	F1/12
6 <sup>th</sup> Sept	North Middx & Herts 25	F10
7 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Norlond TT Comb 25	F1
13 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Northants & Dist CA 25	N1C
14 <sup>th</sup> Sept	Icknield RC 10	F1B

**Points Table after 4 Events (final 2008 event is the Hillclimb on 5th October at Sharpenhoe Clappers)**

Event	Date	BRCC	IRC	HNCC
10 miles	20.04.08	489	417	410
25 miles	29.06.08	67	132	181
15 miles	06.07.08	189	91	76
30 (32) miles	20.07.08	173	66	27
Running Total to Date		918	706	694

### Alpine Holiday

Earlier this year my sister Barbara and her husband Keith invited me to watch the Tour de France from the roadside on stage 17 at Alpe d'Huez.

Every year they take their camper van to the continent around the middle of May and return around the middle of August. They travel around looking up old friends and taking in the mountain stages of the Giro and the last mountains in the Tour de France and then onto the San Federel the first week in August.

This year the Tour was going to Alpe d'Huez as the last mountain stage in this year's Tour and that is where my sister and her husband were going to be. They booked their pitch at the campsite in Allemond the first week of May. It was now down to me to get myself there, the choices were car, plane or coach. I settled for the European Bike Bus which was going to pick me up from the South Mimms service station at 11.00 Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July and drop me off in Grenoble at 04.00 Sunday 20<sup>th</sup>, where my sister would pick me up and then we moved onto Allemond which is just down the valley road from le Borge-d'Oisans that is at the foot of the Alpe d'Huez climb.

On the Monday we decided to ride up to the summit of Alpe d'Huez in the style of S&G

(sedate and gentlemanly). We trundled up, with me stopping frequently to take photos (365 photos for the whole week) and generally being gobsmacked by the views and the atmosphere and this was only Monday. We stopped in Huez village just above Dutch corner for lunch with my sister who isn't really built to climb hills riding her 23 inch gear milking the applause coming from the Dutch camper vans before joining us for lunch.

When we eventually reached the Alpe d'Huez village we rode through and onto the hotel complex where the stage would finish but on the Monday nothing had been set up although the barriers over the last 3 kilometres were in place. There is a podium in Alpe d'Huez, so it had to be done, having our photos taken on the podium. We asked the nearest person available who turned out to be a Swedish army rider in national colours and I have to say ladies from your point of view a 'hunk'



Having consumed a hot chocolate we made our way back to the campsite for our evening meal via the back road that runs from Huez village via Villard Reculas and drops you straight into Allemond. At this point I have to explain that any planning of the week was all down to my sister and her husband, all I did was put my brain in free wheel mode and ride my bike.

The plan for Tuesday was to ride a circular route over the Col de la Morte at 1368 metres and the Col d'Ornon at 1371 metres a total distance of 63 miles. My sister felt she should have a rest day so that she was fresh for the following day on Alpe d'Huez. We took just over 6 hours to complete the ride with a break for lunch on Col de la Morte.

The big day dawned this is what I had come to see, you see it on TV but I can tell you to be there on a fine summer Alpine day is something else. My sister was very firm in that we needed to make an early start so that we could pick a spot to our liking. We left the campsite at 09.00 and bearing in mind S&G we decided to ride up the back road which I have to say is a very pleasant ride because unlike the ascent from le Borge-d'Oisans it is sheltered by trees as far as Villard Reculas. On reaching Huez village that is 5K from the top of the climb at mid-day my sister noted a tall tree at the junction of the back road and the actual climb to Alpe d'Huez that would give us shade all day. My sister declared that this was the spot that we would view the tour from. It was a good choice because just where we parked our bikes at the junction a group of Dutch people had set up a TV set in a tent and were sitting outside under umbrellas with beer to hand. I also noted that a camper van had a large fridge stood on the road and connected up to camper van that was full of beer. I wandered about soaking up the atmosphere, I think some people may think that I am a little left field but when you see three Germans stripped down to only their national flag and a adult nappy it makes you wonder.

**I think most members of the club will remember Phil Anderson who was a tour rider in the 1980s. I asked him to pose with the Australian flag, which he readily did.**



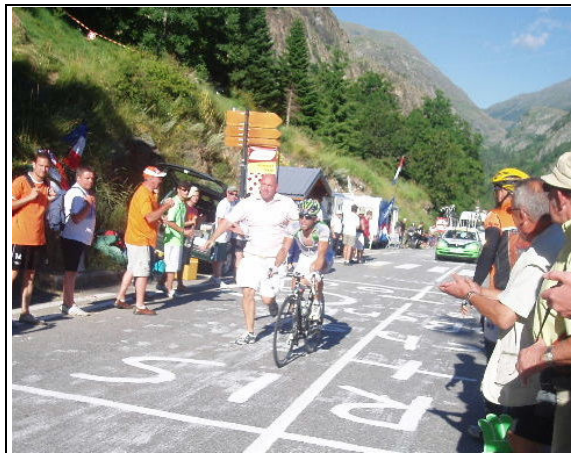
As I wrote in the editorial when Sastre rode by the speed was amazing, I set my camera on him in video mode and followed him from first seeing him through a 180° degree arc

until he was swallowed by crowd, the video lasts 6 seconds.

Of all the riders who I consider are all heroes one stood out possibly because he isn't noted as a climber, that was Erik Zabel, he came up that hill by himself in the zone and so, so smooth.

The main field had split into two auto buses the second of which you could see that the riders had very little left to finish, in fact one of the riders spat as he went by me and the amount of phlegm wouldn't have covered my thumbnail.

As soon as the second autobus had gone through my brother-in-law wanted to be on his way but I insisted that I wanted to wait for the broom wagon. Well we waited and the crowd were all over road on their way home with the cyclists descending and with the gendarmes trying to keep control but I carried on standing in the middle of the road with the cyclists riding round me suddenly there was a cacophony of sound and the last rider came into view, it turned out to be Jimmy Casper and he was being pushed all the way to the top as one runner ran out of legs so someone else would take up the pushing. Unfortunately it was to no avail because Jimmy missed the time limit by 4½ minutes.



**Jimmy Casper being pushed up the Alpe**

It was time to make our way back to the camper van, I have to say that my brother-in-law was grumbling a bit because of all the crowds plus the publicity car were also using the back road. The road from Huez to Villard Reculas follows the contour of the mountain and doesn't descend until you are through Villard Reculas. Having seen the pros performing on the Alpe I was so high I think if I put my arms out I would have flown.

The descent down to Allemond was total magic, touching 40 MPH on straights braking hard into the hairpins round the hairpins with a whoop of joy I was out of the saddle to sprint up to speed again and so on all the way down until I got to the right turn for Allemond. I stopped here to wait for Keith and Barbara, very soon Keith turned up and stated that he had spent more time waiting for Barbara at the bottom of hills than he had at the top of hills, he said that Barbara descends like a centipede with corns.

The Thursday plan was to ride to the Col de la Croix de Fer via the Col de Glandon, Barbara started the ride with us but unfortunately she developed a pain in her side which if she keeps riding is persistent and the only way to relieve the pain is to stop riding. Barbara told us to carry on and she turned round and returned to the camper van. Keith and myself carried on to the top of both Cols. There is a bar at the top of the Col de la Croix de Fer, so once photos had been taken it was a cue for a beer. What I didn't realise about descending was the amount of concentration required, what I found was while on the Wednesday I was fine and descending well, on the Thursday while I was ok at the top of the mountain as I got towards the bottom I was (as my brother-in-law would say) creeping like a centipede with corns.

On the Friday we all took a short ride out to the village of Venoso where we had morning coffee in the hotel garden, then we toddled on a few hundred metres and found a picnic site to consume our roll and banana then we made our way back to le Bourg-d'Oisans to do some shopping.

I was being picked up by the Bike Bus in Tours on Sunday night, so Barbara and Keith's plan was to drive from Allemond to a camp site they had stayed at before about 25 miles from Tours on the Saturday.

We made good progress and arrived at our campsite at 16.30, we checked to see whether either of the two restaurants in the town were open on a Saturday evening. We found that one was due to open a 19.00, so we returned to the campsite and made ourselves respectable and returned to the restaurant and dined in style as you can only do in a French restaurant.

Sunday morning we went for a gentle ride of around 15 miles riding pass fields of Sunflowers to the town of Amboise on the

Loire river. We picnicked beside the river before exploring the historic town.



**I promise this is how I found this sunflower**

On returning to the camper van we drove a little closer to Tours and found a picnic spot for our evening meal, and then finally on to Tours to catch the bike bus that arrived at 23.15.

We made good progress to Calais and got on the 07.00 ferry. We were in Dover by 07.15 GMT, my first thought was would we meet the usual Monday traffic jams but my fears were unfounded because we had a clear run through what was for a Monday light traffic. The coach dropped me off at 10.15.

### Fact File

The cost of the return coach journey plus travel insurance plus fuel surcharge was £245.50.

The coach filled up with fuel at a BP station about two hours drive from Calais, they put in 900 litres on the way out and 817 litres on the way home at Euro 1.32 a litre.

This was the first time I had slept under canvas since I was 16. It took me most of the week to get myself organised and thinking back to last year and our trip to York when Richard, Paul and David camped in what was on the way home, appalling weather, I can only say chaps. Respect!

Richard, Paul and David probably know about the toilets on French campsites, just to say in the morning I would toddle off for a porcelain kiss.

Clive