



# Nomads News

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

The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

## Editorial

Charity giving is very much a personal thing where we tend to support charities that have touched our lives. In my case if I see a Life Boat collection box I tend to find a pound to put in it, only because I spent a couple of years of my youth at sea.

This is the eleventh year that Ann and I have ridden either our own bikes or the tandem around the churches in September and we are well aware that supporting a charity whose main aim is the upkeep of churches wouldn't be the highest priority on most peoples charity giving.

So many thanks for your support over the years. This year with a couple of post ride contributions we have raised just over a £1000.

Congratulations to Mike Toddington for his silver medal in the British Columbia senior games hill climb. Galloping up a 2k hill in under 6 minutes in the 70 to 74 age group makes this scribe feel a little off the pace. Well done Mike and thank you for flying the Nomads colours in Canada.

Keith's Paris ride is the way to enjoy your cycling, mixing alcohol and cycling with moderation on the alcohol front in my book is getting close to the ideal world.

**Don't forget to put your name forward to Neil for the Interclub Hill Climb on the 11<sup>th</sup> October.**

Clive

## October Clubruns

4 <sup>th</sup> October	Royston
11 <sup>th</sup> October	Woburn
18 <sup>th</sup> October	Ware
25 <sup>th</sup> October	Whitwell

## October Club Events

11 <sup>th</sup> October	Interclub Hill Climb HQ Streatley
18 <sup>th</sup> October	Autumn Hilly
25 <sup>th</sup> October	Charlton Hill Climb

## On a Journey with Bluebell

The day of the sponsored bike ride dawned with a clear blue sky and a light breeze from the north. Just perfect. We set off on Bluebell to be at All Saints' Willian for 10 am to start our ride around the churches. We rode to St Paul's where there was a buzz of activity because of their participation in the Heritage Weekend for Letchworth Garden City. It was here that someone jokingly said that the stoker on a tandem sits back and has a rest. We put him straight! It is surprising how many people don't realise that the two sets of pedals work in unison, if the pilot is pedalling so is the stoker.

We then cycled to Baldock where after visiting the three churches we rode to Radwell and then on to Caldecote. The last time we visited St Mary Magdalen at Caldecote we were able to go inside but we were sharing it with the pigeons. This year there were lots of people there both cyclists and walkers, and when we went inside we found the church transformed, having been restored and redecorated and well worth a visit.

We called in at St Vincent in Newnham where we saw some ancient paintings on the walls, and then we set off for Ashwell. We saw that all the crops had already been harvested, and the fields were very dry. The only two crops we saw were sugar beet and sweet corn. After visiting the three churches in Ashwell we stopped for lunch which we enjoyed in the pub garden while watching some children playing Pétanque.

After lunch we cycled off to Hinxworth where we saw three cyclists enjoying a picnic, who we had previously seen at Caldecote. The young lad told us how on one very wet year he had literally got stuck in some thick mud and had to be rescued. We too had been caught in a cloud burst that year.



Our next church was Edworth and here we again met the walkers

we had seen at Caldecote. They were a youth group from Baldock and were doing an eight mile walk visiting the churches. We next cycled over the A1 and made our way to Langford. We then turned to a southerly direction visiting Clifton, Henlow, Arlesey, Astwick, Stotfold, Norton and so to Letchworth to visit our final few churches.

What a wonderful day and journey it had been. Meeting lots of people, each one on their own journey; meeting friends, meeting people and making new friends. We managed to visit 28 churches and cycle 38½ miles.

A very big thank you to everyone who has sponsored us, you have helped us to raise an amazing £1003 for the Beds and Herts Historic Churches Trust half of which will go to the Restoration Fund at All Saints' in Willian.

Ann & Clive

\*\*\*\*\*

### **British Columbia Senior Games Report from Mike Toddington**

Hi Clive,

Just a note that the BC Seniors games have now concluded and I am happy with the results bearing in mind that I have not raced for about 6 years and the rest of my age group (70 -75) were riding competitively on a regular basis, I did not have any false hopes of winning medals.

The BC Seniors games are held on an annual basis at various locations around the province for athletes over 55 years of age and older. This year the games were held in Richmond which is a suburb of Vancouver. There are a variety of sports and the total amount of participants was over 1,000. As you know BC is a big province and some competitors travelled up to 600 miles or more to compete.

In the cycling events there were around 70 participants and the Men and Women categories were: 55 to 59, 60 to 64, 65 to 69, 70 to 74, 75 to 79, and 80 plus. I decided to ride all my races in Nomads Colours

The first event ( Sept17th) was the 18k (10 miles) Time Trial. A fairly flat course next to the airport but very windy and a few speed bumps thrown in for good measure.

Here are the results:

Gold Medal:	
Frank Ludke (Fraser Valley)	26.54
Silver Medal:	
John Smith (Vancouver Island South)	27.36
Bronze Medal	
David Emery (Vancouver Island South)	28.29
4 <sup>th</sup>	
Mike Toddington (Fraser Valley)	29.26



**Mike doing the business in the BC Games 10**

The next event (Sept 18) was the road race of 50 k (30 miles). This did not go so well for me because after about 10 miles I was dropped and time trialed the rest of the way passing some others in my group to a 5<sup>th</sup> place with an unofficial time 1h 22m 30secs and some distance behind the leaders.

The race results were:

Gold Medal	
David Emery Vancouver Island South	
Silver Medal	
John Smith Vancouver Island South	
Bronze Medal	
Reg Cicilino Vancouver Island North	

4 <sup>th</sup>	Frank Ludke Fraser Valley
5 <sup>th</sup>	Mike Toddington Fraser Valley

The final event (19<sup>TH</sup> Sept) was the Hill Climb, just over 2k (about 1 ¼ miles) from the beach area at sea level to the University of BC with 6% to 9% grades. I was feeling quite optimistic about my chances as I have been training on the mountains where I live and was feeling very good.

We started at one minute intervals and my minute man was John Smith who already had won 2 silver medals. During the climb I was gaining on John but did not catch him at the top. I did not take note of my own time but felt quite hopeful.

At the medal presentation Frank Ludke was called to the podium for the bronze with a time of 6m 14sec and John Smith called for the Silver at 5m. 57sec I was quite excited but the gold was called for a Robert Flieger with a time of 5m.14secs.

After the presentations I went to the time keeper who gave me my unofficial time of 6m.28secs. The last place in my group? I did not understand and despite being curious I did not dispute these results and put it down to experience.

Yesterday evening I got a phone call to tell me that a mistake had been made with the timing and that official results showed I had actually won the silver medal.

The Results were as follows:

Gold Medal

Robert Flieger (South Central BC) 5m. 14secs

Silver Medal

Mike Toddington (Fraser Valley) 5m. 36secs

Bronze Medal

John Smith (Vancouver Island Sth) 5m. 57secs

Things are now being sorted out and hopefully I will get the medal. What really disappoints me is that as I was riding in Nomads Colours, we do not have an official photograph of a Hitchin Nomad on the podium among the medals. We will just have to see if we can correct that and do better next year.

Notwithstanding the hiccups, the games were a lot of fun. In the games there was no sign of elitism just a lot of encouraging respect and good will between everyone. Of course in my group, we shared tall stories about what we had done in the past and how it was tougher in our day on those rough old bikes (sans technology) when cyclists were real cyclists.

I think I will enjoy keeping in with this crowd for my second racing comeback.

Best wishes,

Mike

### **Calais to Paris**

A week in Paris in August seems like a good idea, especially when the accommodation is free, (my sister lives there, and was "en vacances").

The only downside is that Paris to a 9 year old means Euro Disney. However, as Baldrick would say, *"I have a cunning plan. It's as cunning as a*

*fox who's just been appointed Professor of Cunning at Oxford University"*

The girls drive down to Paris on Sunday. Neil, my support vehicle takes me to Calais on Monday and drops me off. I cycle to Paris over 2 days whilst my support vehicle checks the way ahead and finds suitable watering holes. Perfect! Two days of cycling, 175 miles, and by the time we get there, Euro Disney will be a distant memory. Hurrah!

What could go wrong!

A 4:00am start on Monday morning with the bike already on the car and we were away.

As we near France Neil remarked, "I hope my new phone works abroad, I asked them to change it two weeks ago". Clearly my telepathic skills are not waning, because as you may of guessed, it didn't.

Neil sets me off on my journey about 8.30 French time, and disappears in search of a SIM card. Off I set on the route printed from here <http://www.gmap-pedometer.com/?r=3017485> . The first day would see me reaching Breteuil at 110 miles where I had booked a motel. A quick shower followed by a few beers, and then a slap up meal, "parfait."

Many of you will of course be aware of my fanatical attention to detail, and legendary sense of direction. You will therefore be astounded to hear that within a short while I was obviously heading in the wrong direction without a care in the world.

At Licques, a mere 12 miles into my journey, I had the bad judgement to accept the help of a clearly decrepid, near blind, and deaf Frenchman. Having reached a junction, I fished out the old swatch of maps from my jersey pocket, and was minding my own business. Fairly confident the way was straight on, when a kindly old gent offered to help. However, despite my perfect french, he really didn't seem to understand much of what I was saying. After much peering at the map he had sent me off in completely the wrong direction, and I was happy as a sand boy oblivious to the fact I was now heading directly for Roubaix instead of Paris!

I must admit to being a little confused when the towns I came across didn't appear to be the same as on my map, but you can't expect the French to get small details right all the time. After all lots of them can't even master English that well.

A short detour up a steady climb (which funnily enough seemed to be a recurrent theme when I was heading in entirely the wrong direction!) finally confirmed I did not have a clue where I was. In fact I was completely "perdu"

Soldering on I came across two men laying a driveway. "Je suis perdu" is a useful phrase in such circumstances, but it seems that most french people have no idea where they are either, so none the wiser I carried on. A short time later my jersey pocket beeped indicating contact with the support vehicle had resumed. A quick phone call indicating my approximate position appeared to reveal that, said vehicle had no map, so none the wiser I carried on.

Neil and I eventually met up and realised I was now about 25 miles east of my intended location, and at least 2 hours behind schedule the solution was easy. Put the bike on the back of the car and drive to where I should have been. Neil dropped me off, and waited a little way ahead to check I was on track. All was going well until I reached the end of a wonderful descent. Reaching into my back pocket my maps had vanished, "Merde!"



What else could go wrong? Surely my luck had to change, and it did. The rest of the day went well. We stopped for a beer and lunch in St Pol with a view of this clock tower.



**The support crew with a well earned beer**



**The beer, it tasted good even despite its name!  
(Remember your French accent)**

Onward bound, Neil phoned from ahead that one of the roads I intended to take was *very* busy, so I opted for a more scenic route into Amiens. 6:00pm saw me reach Amiens and Neil said it as an easy route straight through this small city. Well maybe it is in a car with sat nav, but it certainly isn't on a bike! One hour and something later I finally found my way out, having covered six miles!

Bruteuil was shut apart from the motel I had booked, but we did find a truck stop for chicken, chips, beer, and then back to the motel for sleep.

Day two was far less eventful, apart from cycling three times around Beauvais trying to find the correct way out all went well until Paris. This proved a bit tricky, but with Neil a little ahead we managed between us to get fairly near to the centre. At one point we decided it was easier for us to make our own way there so he waited in the bar at the end of the road where my sister lives.

Keith



**Je suis arrivee!!!!**

## **The Ultimate Time Trial**

Progress so far

Cyclist James Bowthorpe started off from Hyde Park on the 29<sup>th</sup> March to attack the round the world cycling record set by Mark Beaumont last year. James has set a schedule of 120 miles a day to cover the 18,000 miles in five and a half months and is due back in Hyde Park on the 13<sup>th</sup> September. If he returns on the 13<sup>th</sup>, he will have reduced the record by three weeks.

19<sup>th</sup> September

James has completed one hundred and seventy five days of his record attempt and with 18062 miles under his belt; he completed his ride at the gates of Hyde Park having broken the record by 19 days. This was an average of a 103 miles day for the five and a half months he was on the road.

His web site is:

[www.whereintheworldisjames.com](http://www.whereintheworldisjames.com)