



Nomads News

www.hitchin-nomads.net

The news letter of the Hitchin Nomads Cycling Club

When Clive sent an email round asking for guest editors, I jumped at the chance. What a great way to get new blood into the news, to provide something different and to remove that dreaded publication deadline from Clive. Each editor will no doubt create a flavour for the news that reflects their interests and personalities – I hope you find my musings interesting, and amusing.

Secrets of the stars

Ever wondered what makes the superstars of cycling different from us mere mortals? I have. So, on your behalf I decided to dig out my contacts book and conduct some very probing interviews to discover their secrets. Here are the replies they gave me.

Jamie - Lance (yes, he of the miraculous cancer recovery) – to what do you attribute your success?

Lance – It has been widely quoted that I have answered my critics with the secret of my success being down to spending six hours a day in the saddle pushing, myself so much I cannot walk when I get back. What is less well known is how that started. I used to go cycling with your club in the early 80's. There was one rider, Graham "FK" Hurst, who would lead runs. He was always adding on loops, trying new routes, so much so that often we had no clue where we were or where we were going. Once, cycling from Letchworth to Stotfold, I knew something was wrong when GH decided to do a loop round Grafham water before we stopped. I never intended to do six hours, but boy did I enjoy my jubilee pancakes when we stopped. No one ever failed a drugs test on jubilee pancakes!

JT – Thank you Lance. Now, Sir Chris, how did you become such a fantastic sprinter.

Sir Chris – Thank you for asking me. Many people will have read about my life story, how I started doing BMX, developing an incredibly high cadence and doing sessions at Meadowbank until my legs and lungs were bursting. The real skills were actually learnt on the roads around North Hertfordshire. I would ride out with a bunch of riders in yellow and blue. They would potter along, enjoying the scenery, chatting about the latest news in the comic until a town sign, then bang – the focus changed, the elbows sharpened, and the jersey pulling and the switching all started. Nothing was more important than being the first past the sign. At times there were a over ten riders sprinting, all over the road we were. One of the senior riders, Paul Stanbridge I think, described us all as "young ooligans", a menace to other road users. But secretly he enjoyed the spirit, the excitement and the spectacle. Anyway, we often have a dozen sprints before the café. And then a dozen more on the way home – I tell you it was harder than taking on any of those German or French sprinters. The loser would have to buy the teas and being a Scotsman, well it is enough for you to know that is where my motivation came from. It never occurred to me that it might lead to numerous gold medals later. Rumour has it you have a young Scots rider who is equally adept at sprinting to avoid picking up the tab. Rode nearly 250 miles in 12 hours simply because it represented better value for money than riding 240 miles!

Jamie – Wow, another training secret that has its very heart in the old fashioned "clubruns". Victoria, was it the same for you.

Vicky P – No. I used to go out with my Dad, Max. I would lead everywhere, with him sat right behind me. I would try and drop him, but he is a tenacious rider, and uphill, on the flat, out the saddle, no matter how hard I rode he was always there. I would look round and he just had this big grin on his face.

JT – I have seen him race, and yes he digs in and is very difficult to drop. That determination must have really spurred you on.

VP – Definitely. It got easier when we stopped going out on the tandem.

So, there you have it. The secrets of what made the superstars of today and recent years the riders they are.

Can science teach us anything going faster on a bike?

I found this interesting article on the web – food for thought.

“Why does a golf ball have dimples – to help reduce drag and make it travel further. The dimples on a golfball change its aerodynamic properties when compared with a smooth ball in such a way as to change the flow of air around the ball from laminar flow to turbulent flow. The effect is to reduce the separation region behind the ball and so lessen the drag. If this works for a golf ball, could the same idea be applied to cycling? I found it could. The greatest effect would be achieved by applying the theory to the parts of a cyclist that exhibit the most dynamic movement through the air. This means the legs. But how to create the dimples? Specially constructed clothing, not unlike that which is to be banned for the swimmers could be used. This would work, but is likely to also be banned and so have little long term merit to justify studies, so I found a simple way of creating the dimple effect. By lowering the core body temperature the human body develops goose pimples. These have exactly the same aerodynamic characteristics as the dimples of a golfball. Under laboratory test conditions, I managed to prove that cyclist with goose pimples creates less drag and so can ride faster for longer. There is a problem. At the temperature where goose pimples are formed for the average rider, there is a greater gain to be had by applying a warming ointment to the muscles, as a warm muscle will generate greater power. There is a cross over point though at which the goose pimples do provide the best return for the rider. My tests showed this to be when the ambient air temperature was in the range 5.75 to 6.25 degrees centigrade. Anecdotal evidence supports this as I have seen cyclists in shorts in late autumn and early spring, previously I thought

they must be mad, but now I know why. They instinctively knew that it benefited them.”

This article may explain why Ray is often to be seen in shorts in November. For those who are interested, the scientific paper was written by a Dr Uve Bienhaad.

The Chiltern classics

For the past three years I have stopped coming out on Nomads club runs in January. This has been deliberate. Whilst the fast and the furious of the club target real racing in the summer, I have always peaked a bit earlier. In late January and throughout February a series of reliability rides known as the Chiltern Classics are run. They start at various locations, including Hemel Hempstead, and typically cover 100KM through the Chilterns. Each route is different. The rides are hard. The hardest is the first, the Harp Hilly Hundred. This includes Bison Hill, Ivanhoe Beacon, Aston hill and others. There are no scheduled stops. They are hard, as a lot of the riders are using them as base training for their road season. The secret is to get into a group that has a suitable pace that you can manage for three hours and just sit there. They are fun. They give a great sense of achievement when you finish. The only down side is being run at this time of year they are susceptible to the weather. Last year some of them were snowed off. They also start at 9.00, which means an early start to get there on time. To be able to do this I find the best training is to spend three hours in the saddle at a gentle pace and with no tea stops. Also helps remove the Xmas excess. If you haven't tried anything like this I wholeheartedly recommend them. The last in the series, organised by CC Luton, is maybe the “easiest”, if only because the weather should be better.

The Beds Road also run similar reliability trials, all of which are basically a big loop around Bedford. Their website shows shorter rides on 14 Feb (44 or 59 miles) – why not treat your valentine? – and 28 Feb (further details to follow but last year this was 55 or 75 miles). Word of warning – they may show different start times depending on the length of the ride – make sure you are ready for the earliest start time shown as last year everyone left at the together. Irrespective of the ride they were doing.

Midweek racing

OK, who thought this was going to be about events held at places like MK bowl, Crystal palace or Hillingdon. That is for the keen riders in the summer. No, what I mean is real racing, racing where the true hard riders gather. In a pub. And go nowhere. Very quickly. Roller racing. An organisation called Rollapaluzza have been reigniting the fire that is roller racing, including a winter series held in London pubs.

For those who don't know, roller racing takes place on two (sometime four) sets of rollers, which are linked to a big "clock" that shows how far the riders have pedalled. This enables various formats of racing to take place over various distances. The race lengths are typically short – often 500 metres, sometimes 1,000 metres (endurance!). The Rollapoluzza events use bikes fixed to the rollers – in theory no falling off – with a set gear. The gear is relatively low for rollers, being 84". The trick is to spin those legs. But how fast do the legs go? To win, you need to average over 200 rpm – from a standing start. If you have spent the winter riding fixed and enjoyed some fast steep descents I bet you will have hit around 150 rpm, now add on a third again. Just make sure you screw your knees back on afterwards.

The racers were largely drawn from the world of the London courier – their personal style and dress sense making this abundantly clear. I initially felt like an interloper, as I have neither tattoos nor piercings (yep – both the ladies and men), but once the objective becomes getting the legs going round this did not matter. In the bars it is not always clear who is actually riding as lycra is strictly optional as some riders opt for jeans or mid-length trousers. But as soon as they walk the cyclists stand out. Or rather hobble out. Cyclists have one of two walks whilst wearing cycling shoes. The first style is to walk as if wearing a pair of high heels (so I am told), except the heels are missing. The alternative is to walk with more of a waddle but with your buttocks clenched, clenched in a manner that suggests you sense some lower bowel movements but are afraid to let go just in case it turns out to be more than you might think!

But what makes the Rollapalozza events different is being held in a pub. I haven't ridden (too old, fat and past it), but some of the riders do drink

between rounds – typically it is qualifying first, as many attempts as possible, followed by head to head races – but no, er, accidents yet. The pub does mean an added attraction for the casual spectator (that's me) as I can enjoy a pint of bitter, or two, whilst telling myself I am supporting cycling. I have also visited a number of pubs I would not otherwise have been to, so it has expanded my cultural experiences of London. And what could be better than that.

The later events I have been to have included more regular cyclists, including some veteran track riders who have won national and international honours. Alas, they couldn't quite get their legs to go round as quick as some of the couriers. Its an age thing I tell myself, sipping a pint and nodding wisely at mentally predicting another winner. You can always tell that you are at the right venue, especially if you are one of the later arrivals, as chained up outside will be at least 20 fixed wheel machines, with three brakes between them!

Roller racing was big in the 50's, it even had a following in the 80's with the Mildenhall holding a winter league. I remember riding for the Nomads in events organised by the Welwyn Wheelers and Verulum. The Nomads even held an event one year. I have special memories of one event in St Albans, as I was fortunate to win the distance event, the prize being a cycling jersey. In all honesty it was a horrible jersey. That didn't matter, for a cyclist to win a jersey it made it feel like a real event. I had after all won prizes in the Mildenhall events such as kitchen clock, a carving set and a glass tumbler with glasses. All wonderful prizes for a fifteen year old!

Superstar in the making?

I won't tell you who they are, but I did hear about one rider who was on his turbo in the garage. At 5.30. In the morning! As Roy Castle would have said, dedication that's what you need. I shall be watching out for you this season, looking forward to seeing the benefits of this come through to your riding. Good luck.

Training weekend?

Anyone up for a stay at home training weekend? Heres how it works. We nominate a weekend – late February/early March? We have an organised ride on both Saturday and Sunday, both 3-4 hours long, try some bit and bit, try and visit some hills

we don't normally get to, but with no tea stops – maybe a stop at the end for a bit of social and to set targets for the season. The rides will be in a steady group, no heroics, to build endurance. I have suitable routes planned, routes that would be challenging. If we put a date in the diary far enough ahead it should help getting “permission” to ride from various other calls on weekend time. Anyone up for this let me know and we can set a date.
Jamie

The Ride Across Britain

If I hadn't told you about it already, I'd like to let you know that I'm training to do the end to end in June this year during national cycling week.

The Ride Across Britain event is being sponsored by my employers, and I've been lucky enough to get a place for the inaugural year. We'll be cycling from John O'Groats to Lands End covering, on average, 114 miles a day over a period of 9 days.

Over the next few months, I'd like to chart my training progress by writing a few short articles for the Nomads Newsletter. I'll also be letting you know how you can help support the GB Paralympics team that I'll be raising money for during the event.

Tim Wallis"

January Clubruns

17th January 09.30 start	Willington Danish Camp
24th January 09.30 start	Welwyn Sports Centre
31st January 09.30 start	Woburn

February Clubruns

7th February 09.30 start	Hare Street
14th February 09.00 start	Waresley Garden Centre
21st February 09.00 start	Esem Café Ware
28th February 09.00 start	Country Gardens Centre Melbourn via Royston Sports Centre

VERY IMPORTANT

Subscriptions

Your subs for 2010 are due in January

£15 per Member £20 for Families

**Please send your remittance to the Treasurer:
Nigel Tooke**

**Payments can also be made direct to the HSBC
bank account
Sort code 40 –28-14 A/C no 20615021**

**If you are paying by this method the payee
should contact or e-mail the treasure r to
confirm that they've made payment this way.**

Dinner & Dance Sat 6th February

So the date is set, the band and food are organised. If you haven't been asked for menu choices and payment by me, but want to come please contact me urgently. There is still just time to fit you in

Hitchin Nomads Awards Dinner

**Saturday 6th February
Northill Village Hall**

**Live Music
From The Strayhorns**

6:30 - 11:30pm