

influences in binding the thriving Club together. It was so successful, with a short service conducted at the Solihull Congregational Church by the Rev Goodfield then 36 adults with numerous children and even babies in sidecars or on wickerwork baskets on tricycles enjoying the short ride round local lanes and back to the Clubroom for tea, that the idea was continued by other Founder members, Ivor Goodman in 1948 and Arthur Houlston 1949. Early member, Norman Lees, led the 1950 run and each year until the late 1970's without miss older members were invited to join in to see how their old Club was doing.

Amongst the Senior racing activities there was a tendency towards more mass-start racing and it seems that an abnormal share of bad luck dogged our riders throughout the season, yet in Time Trials Maitland, Bowes and Ted Jones annexed the Competition 50 miles Team Record 6-16-39. Bob came second again, in the National Hill Climb up the Winnats Pass and improved from third to second in the British Best All-Rounder. He was also third in the Invitation Scratch 25 impeccably organised by Roy Day; won by C Cartwright (Manc.Whs) 59-13.

The Solihull had five riders selected for the Paris - London 3 Stage Race; Maitland, Bowes, Moreton, Tommy Kempshall and Ted Jones. This event was won by George Flemming (Belle Vue C.C) from F Decanali (Fr) with Bob Maitland fifth, Jones twenty-eighth, Bowes thirty-first and Moreton thirty-fourth; Kempshall retired unwell after the first stage Paris to Lens. They all suffered punctures and mechanical troubles.



Paris - London Road Race 1952. Maitland leads Geoff Poole and George Fleming.

perhaps the highlight of all time for the Club was the selection of the Club team, Maitland, Bowes, Moreton and Jones to represent England in the Isle of Man International. This was most probably the first time a Club team had been selected to represent the country? In the event, a series of accidents put out most of the British riders, Dick Bowes gamely winning the sprint for tenth place 1 minutes behind Baldassari (Fr), the winner, in spite of a crash leaving him with a buckled wheel. Bob Maitland was selected for the World R.R. Championship and Ted Jones for the Swedish 6-day Race both riding and finishing.

Amongst the more mundane matters of 1947 it was reported that many members were not paying their "Club Pennies" at the Clubroom, so an Attendance Book for members to sign was instituted! (Human nature it seems, doesn't change much!) A collection was made for Audrey Busby who had been seriously injured in the Ladies' 25. Behaviour on Club Runs, now flourishing under Bernard Randle's guidance assisted by John Moore, was strictly supervised and two younger members who shall remain anonymous were asked to resign as they had shown no improvement in response to warnings by the Club Captain. They appeared before the General Committee, appealed against this request and after stating their case, were allowed to remain members after giving an undertaking to obey Club Rules.

There were only six members registered with the N.C.U. for mass-start racing but the coaching scheme proposed by Ken Topliss and Dick Bowes resulted in a series of lectures at the Clubroom on training, equipment, tactics and feeding given by Dick Bowes, Bob

Maitland, Stan Bray and Ted Overbury. The organisation of a mass-start event at Dartmouth Park was cancelled because the Parks Department would not grant permission for an event over 25 miles!

A superb article "WANDERLURE - THE ART OF CYCLING TO SEE" by Tom Bassindale in AWHEEL, illustrated by first class photographs of a cycle-camping tour of Ireland, ran for nine installments and accounts of the Club Runs under the general heading of TOURING TATTLES shows how flourishing the non-racing branch of the Club was. Ron Dowson contributing his regular "MY BIT" for several years.

1948 - Olympic Year

The strained external atmosphere of N.C.U. - League rivalry even antagonism continued, perhaps one of the earliest manifestations that the post-war world was very different from that of pre-1939, marked by a slackening of discipline and rejection of authority, but the Solihull flourished within this atmosphere, thanks to its all-round enthusiasm and sound Club Spirit in spite of disagreements breaking out from time to time. Roy Day's criticism of Club H.Q. which naturally annoyed Eric and Freda Walker, who had worked so hard to make Oak Farm a Cyclists' mecca known all over the country, bubbled up during a bread and cake shortage when the price of fancy cakes had to be increased. In fact we were lucky to get any at all! Resignations were tabled on both sides. Thankfully a Special General Meeting resulted in ill-informed criticism being corrected so good sense prevailed and resignations withdrawn and the Club went on from strength to strength.

Arthur Hobson and Les Bailey were welcomed back to the fold after their short experience of League Life, which apparently lacked any social side.

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But it was Olympic Year and the cycling events were to be held in England. Thirty five members applied for N.C.U. Mass-Start Licences. Amongst the new members were D Russell, a promising junior and Cyril Starkey, an experienced, near veteran time-trialist from the Eleanor R.C. Cyril Constable was appointed Training Organiser; Gordon Wheeler, Polo Secretary; John Moore assisted by Ted Schilling took over organisation of the Runs and as no one would take on the Mass-Start Secretaryship that ever loyal Clubman, Dick Bowes, volunteered. This year it was Vic Martin's turn to win the Birmingham Centre Junior Mass-start Championship with Derek Jarratt winning the Junior B.A.R. A phenomenal Junior, Pete Bowler, beat a Bas Francis Club Record - the Solihull to Warwick and back - with 1-2-46, although later Bas regained it. It seems a shame that Pete's cycling potential was never realised as he eventually entered the Police Force where he made a successful career for the benefit of the community. Another cycling-talented junior of these days was Les Willmotts, who left the Club to join the Midland C. & A.C. and later broke the Competition 100 mile Record.

Bowes and Maitland were selected for the Olympic Road Race and Bob won the National Mass-start Championship leading our team of himself, Dick Bowes and Tom Buckley to the team win, and with Harry Gardiner replacing Buckley we won the Birmingham Centre mass-start championship in the same way. Maitland

and Dick were selected for several International events, the former having an amazing run of being the first Englishman; second in the Grand Prix at Dison, third at Matching Green Olympic Trial, sixth Isle of Man, Twelfth in World Championship at Valkenburgh; twenty-sixth at Montlhery and sixth in Olympic R.R. Our "stars" were shining amongst the best in the world. What of the "lesser lights?" Art Hobson won the club track championship, but a new name Lutz Durlacher was the Hill Climb Champion and won numerous track and roller events - indeed a new member to watch!

His life-story too is of interest. Briefly, born in Germany of Jewish extraction, he was rescued and brought to England when his parents were killed in the Nazi persecutions.

The Club still ran its own 12 hour as an inter-club event with the Warwickshire R.C. which was won by one of the "Rabbits" or "Four Musketeers" as Ken Humphries, Doug Osmonde, Ken Topliss and Stan Bray became labelled, because of their rivalry and dedication in pursuit of the Club B.A.R. The latter, seemingly, put out by a fractured skull picked up in the Birmingham Centre mass-start Championship six weeks before, surprised with 220 miles to win just enough to take the Senior B.A.R. as well.

Recall it was Olympic Year with the Road Race being held at Windsor Great Park on Friday. That was tomorrow! With a shock, this thought struck one Thursday evening at the Clubroom, for with two of the Club's members selected there were no plans for going to support them. As soon as this was realised, the Solihull Club Spirit awoke! Vic Brown,

Stan Bray and Frank Wells dashed home to pick up food and primus stoves and with Derek Jarratt, Harry Gardiner, N Mobbley, Dave King, C Foulkes, N Wood and J Reeves set out at 10.30 pm. to cycle down to Windsor. Arriving at the Great Park in the early morning they found the British 'pits' merely bare boards compared with those of France, Holland, Belgium, Sweden, and Italy, which were gleaming with tools, spare wheels and manned by mechanics in white overalls. They endeavoured to make the British pits look presentable by spreading out their own useless tools and cleaning the touring bikes just in case they might do as spares should any of our riders experience trouble. It was all they could do and wish them good luck as the Duke of Edinburgh started the race. The selectors that morning had put in the team C S I Scott of the Marlborough C. & A.C. with Dick Bowes as first reserve, much to our disappointment. Perhaps it was to avoid the charge of picking an all Midland and North team - Maitland (Solihull C.C) and Tiny Thomas (Yorkshire R.C) as 'Scotty' was very popular with Londoners.

In the event 'Scotty' did a wonderful job preventing the World Championship team winners - the Italians - getting up to the breakway of Voorting and Faanhoff of Holland and Johannsen of Sweden, showing them a thing or two from his track experience, when, fed up with his delaying tactics, the three Italians tried to run him into the crowd! So we forgave the selectors for omitting Dick. Bob and 'Tiny' rode their hearts out to finish sixth and eighth and we were proud of them, as we were of Howard Wing of China who hopelessly outclassed, rode all the cycling events for the true Olympic principle, the

honour of having ridden. A special Olympic issue of AWHEEL in red, white and blue sold out of its 650 copies.

However the world was changing its ideas, to win was more important than having raced. The God of Mammon was displacing the God of Goodwill. Such sentiments found a fertile soil in the so-called Continental style of racing, where the weeds of unscrupulous advertising could flourish or National pride be exaggerated out of all proportion as in Russia or America. The former by drafting its athletes into the army for full-time instruction, the latter awarding University Scholarships for full-time athletic studies. The "writing was on the wall" for the Olympic concept of Sport.

The bud of long distance racing which had been dormant since Eric Walker's Club Record of 365 miles in the North Road event of 1936, blossomed in 1938 when Bernard Knight had broken this record with 399 miles in the Mersey R.C. event backed up by Fred Baker 386 and Sandy Sandford 363, giving the best team distance but there had been no award for this.

Now ten years on much had happened. Bernard returned to health after six months intensive hospitalisation, necessitated by his P.O.W. experiences, where the Geneva Convention regulations for the care of P.O.Ws was ignored, and forced labour and marches over the Carpathian Mountains had reduced him to a mere six stones, was raring to go. At times he had had to jettison everything except two photographs, one of his wife the other of the Club, and while in Stalag XXID he received letters through the Red Cross from Clubmate

Sandy Sandford, containing accounts of Club Runs illustrated by Sandy's vivid sketches which had further strengthened his determination to survive.

At last, free, fit and well, he persuaded George Juggins, who had that wonderful first 12 hour record, and tourist "Wagger" Brown, to back him up in the Mersey 24 hour again. You would have thought he would have had enough of suffering and hanging on! But no, he was rewarded by a grand third place with 406 miles, a new Club Record, after two punctures in the last hour, behind the winners 412 miles (H Okell, Mersey R.C). In tenth place, George 379 and twelfth, the ever-smiling Wagger 369; good first time efforts, not enough to beat the Mersey R.C. for the team but enough to prove it could be done. This branch was bearing fruit.

But this is moving on too fast. 1948 needs completing. A flourishing Family Section, under the guidance of Eric Walker and Frank Wells, held monthly runs with babies in sidecars, kiddiseats, even baskets on tricycles and junior-backs on tandems.

Everything seemed perfect, then a sudden storm struck in the December, with the resignation of eight members at a committee meeting: Bob and Muriel Maitland, Vic Martin, Ron Murray, Roy Day, G L Green, D A Feasey and J H Brown.

Members had been aware for several months of plans to form a new club centred around the personalities of Bob Maitland and Roy Day, but whether it would affiliate to the League or not and exactly what the reasons for the "breakway" were, was not clear, though such

was Bob Maitland's popularity that it was feared that a very large part of the Club would follow, including the mass-start team, so that the Club would be seriously affected.

Bob wished to renounce his Life Membership but hoped to remain friends with the Solihull C.C. when in membership of the newly formed, N.C.U. affiliated, Concorde R.C.C., in which the ideal of every official being an active racing cyclist was envisaged. By a curious coincidence, eight new members were elected and it was proposed that membership of the Solihull be limited to 300 (it actually stood at 273 with 61 new members having been elected during the year), indicating that perhaps some members were now aware of the dangers inherent in large clubs.

MAINTAINING STANDARDS : 1949-1953

What an exciting challenge? How would the Solihull C.C. fare with the loss of one of its senior and two of its junior stars?

There was not long to wait.

Fortunately it soon became clear that the majority of the members were not slavish hero worshippers. The talents of Dick Bowes and Dennis Moreton remained with up and coming riders, like Tommy Kempshall and Billy Wells ready to fill the gaps, while in the Time Trials sphere, Basil Francis' talent remained with such as Bob Foulkes and Vic Kent representing new shoots, for the Solihull C.C. was by now too big a tree to be irreparably damaged by the loss of a twig. In fact, this acted like a pruning. With some plants it is necessary to cut back one years' fruiting stems in order to encourage new fruiting, and this is just what happened to the Solihull.

At the February committee meeting 17 new members were elected and 4 names held over because they had not fulfilled the compulsory three attendances at Club functions aimed at giving new members and "The Club" a chance to see if they were mutually suitable. So growth was still taking place. At the 1949 A.G.M. energetic Secretary/Treasurer, Eric Walker, had handed over the Secretary's job to ever-cheerful Charlie Brown, and the Treasurership to Bob Griffiths, an accountant by profession, leaving everything in a very healthy condition: one of the largest Clubs in the country, 275 members (36 still in the

Forces), £358 in assets, the Club magazine making a profit, having sold out the Special Olympic Issue, an all-round nationally famous club, very active in all branches of the sport and pastime of cycling. The prestigious Invitation Scratch 25 miles Time Trial had been won by Cyril Cartwright (Manchester Clarion) 59-27; in mass-start racing members selected for International events; Polo, the team reached the National Final the first time a provincial team had cracked the Londoners hold on this game!; a Social side that had put on Dances, and Club Parties under Gladys Weeks' enthusiastic initiative, while the Touring Section, under John Moore's leadership, had enjoyed A and B runs, accounts of which were written up for TOURING TATTLE in AWHEEL, with a prize for the best given by the President, Noel Brealey, who also gave an award for the best run as voted by participants - the President's Prize Run.

An Easter Tour to Wales, Whitsun Tour to the Peak District, 100 in 8 hours; 200 in 18, Hostel weekends to Ludlow, Astwell Castle, Hay on Wye, Crickhowell and John Moore's favourite, Heol Senni, indicate the wide activities of this branch.

Eric Walker refused Vice-Presidency, preferring to remain an Honourary Life member and of course a Founder member, but Tommy Hawkes, having been forced to retire through arthritis, was elected an Associate Life Member.

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1949 proceeded under its new officials. A letter from Albert Lusty (Midland C. & A.C) and Secretary of the Midlands Road Records Association, the body formed in 1892 to certify claims to records set up in the Midlands, pointed out that no member of the Solihull C.C. had ever held an MRRA record. This jibe fell on fertile soil and was soon to be rectified. Amongst the new members who later achieved some prominence in the Club were Stan Middleton, D H Gardener, A Richards and Jim Houghton, while the resignations of Vice President Eric Dewar (who was becoming active in his original club, the Shirley R.C.) and Pete Hughes were accepted with regret. The Polo Section was instructed to field the best possible team in any game carrying a title or honours to the club (when Manchester put us out of the National Cup in the first round), for with a dozen or so keen players, rivalry to get in the team was intense. John Jarratt took over as Polo Secretary when Frank Wells resigned the task through pressure of work.

Open Events and Press Secretary was Bernard Randle, a big fellow with the ability to think big ideas and carry them out and his organisation of the Invitation Scratch and Ladies 25s were new 'highs' with J Simpson (Midland C. & A.C) winning the former in 59-09 and Eileen Sheridan (Coventry C.C) winning the newly presented BSA BOWL, obtained by President Brealey in 1-6-10, although had E Horton (Coventry R C) not started 50 secs late she would have won with a Competition Record. As it was the Coventry C.C. trio, E Sheridan, M Capell and J Bayliss set up a Competition Team Record. The June issue of AWHEEL was a special and was used as the

Start Sheet for the Scratch 25, in which Bernard Randle had written a magnificent review of "Under the Hour" rides.

Back in September 1948 "Airney Pairkins" a jovial Brummie cyclist cartoon created by Ted Schilling had started his naive and oft-times hilarious adventures in the AWHEEL and were to continue for six years, monthly. A tremendous achievement by a very active and keen member, who was chiefly interested in touring but had shown outstanding ability on the rollers. Impressive, coloured covers adorned the Christmas issues, the work of an early editor, Dick Borneman, and Gordon Gage. These and other special issues were sold as Cyclists Christmas Cards to raise money towards printing expenses for a 30% increase in printing costs brought the magazine into the red. Three members were suspended for pacing in Club 25.

The roots were sound, what of the crop?

International honours came through Dick Bowes who was selected for Britain in the World Championships coming ninth, the first Englishman, also for the Isle of Man, where once again he was first Englishman across the line in fifth place.

Nationally, this year, 1949, the 24 hour Championship was the Mersey Event. Bernard Knight persuaded George Juggins to ride with him again and a novice at the distance, Stan Bray, to make up the team. On a very hot day Bernard had chain trouble, lost his Club Record but his dream was fulfilled when the Solihull C.C. became National Team Champions: Stan Bray fourth (422 miles), George (409 miles) and Bernard (402 miles) The Club's long distance branch had borne good fruit.

In the National Mass-start Championships, Dick came fifth; third in the Goodwood Trials but won the Grand Prix de Geizira while coming second in the Birmingham Centre Championships leading our team into second place, like himself behind Bob Maitland and the Corncorde R.C.C. Undoubtedly Dick missed having Bob as a team-mate and "Oscar" was not fit either this year.

Cyril Starkey won the Broad Oak C.C. 12 hour, came second in the Beacon Mountain Trial and backed up by Dick Bowes and Doug Osmonde the 'Sols' took the team as in the previous year. This was Cyril's year, ending up twenty-third in the British Best All-Rounder Competition, as well as winning the Club B.A.R. The Junior B.A.R. was won by R M Goldsmith.

However it was on the Track that improvements came. In the National Team Pursuit Championship Bob Foulkes, Art Hobson, Bas Francis and Alan Rickman reached the quarterfinals after putting out the previous years champions. There was a large crop of Club Records, Bill Thomas annexing the 100, 50, 30 and 25 miles Tricycle records to add to Bob Foulkes' 30 miles 1-13-6, Stan Bray's 24 hours 422 miles 3 furlongs. Bas Francis' Solihull -Warwick and back 1-0-40, Barbara Walker (Forces Secretary) riding with her future husband Derek Jarrett gaining the mixed Tandem record 1-2-16. Betty Bragg set up a new 30 miles 1-27-11 and the ever loyal Gladys the 100 miles in 5-39-31. Art Hobson reached the finals of Birmingham Centre Individual Pursuit.

A new branch sprouted towards the end of the season. Lutz Durlacher had won the Club half-mile track Championship (Foulkes the 1 mile and Hobson the 5 miles), then he went hill climbing winning 5 open events and 1 second.

So all in all there was no doubt that standards had been maintained if not improved and at the Dinner, guest Frank Urry, well-known tourist and cycling writer whom the club had presented with a sketch by Gordon Gage in celebration of his 75th birthday, made the point in his speech "Tradition! - you are manufacturing it!" and President Brealey was master of staging such shows in public. Dick Bowes was presented with a plaque in appreciation of the tremendous amount of work he had done for the club but perhaps the highlight of the Social season was John Moore's staging of a slide-show CYCLING IS FUN by none other than Rex Coley ("Ragged Staff") which raised £23 but gave the lecturer the surprise of his life when he was met at the railway station by a dozen hoboies, members of the Solihull C.C. having a dress rehearsal for the next day's annual Hobo Run.

In this twentieth year, 1949, it seemed as if all members, including many new juniors who were to shine in the following years, rallied behind the officials, seemingly inspired to keep the Solihull at the top. Cyril Starkey, an experienced time trialist, transferred from the Eleanor R.C. bringing a strong challenge to Bas Francis, Bob Foulkes, Vic Rudd and Arthur Hobson who had been 'keeping the flag flying' in top class events. With a second place in his first Mountain T.T., the

Beacon 62 miles around the Clees, Dick Bowes fourth, it only needed the backing of Doug Osmonde to replace non-starter Art Hobson for the Sols to take the team for the second year in succession. This inspiration was followed up with wins in the Mersey Mountain Trial, R Kirby making third man. Meanwhile Harry Gardener and Colin Cobill were backing up Dick Bowes, and Betty Bragg, setting up a Ladies Club 30 Miles Record and Gladys Weeks a 100 miles Record, were supported by Margery Cooper and Phyllis Goulding.

Founder Member, Arthur Houlston, Polo Team Goalkeeper, of whom it was said "He had reduced the speed of a slow bicycle race to stop!" led the Reunion Run to Tanworth in Arden, via Lapworth and Packwood House, back to the clubroom for tea. Stan Hill and John Cordwell put on dances which helped to keep the coffers full. The organising ability of Bernard Randle was indicated by his running of the Invitation Scratch 25, won by Jack Simpson 59-08, and the Ladies 25 in which another soon to be nationally famous name appeared at the head of the list leading the Coventry C.C. to a competition team record. Eileen Sheridan. This ability was to blossom during the next few years.

It was members' enthusiasm for successfully gaining standard medals in Club and Open events that during 1949 had put a severe strain on the finances so Time Trial Secretary, Ken Humphries, had little difficulty in getting these standards updated at the A.G.M.: for example: Bronze 25 1-10-00; Silver 1-5-0 and Gold 1-1-0 while at 24 hours the Silver standard was 400 miles and Gold 430 miles. Track standards were

also tightened, e.g., 1000m s.s. Bronze 1-26;
Silver 1-23; Gold 1-20 or 440yds f.s. 30.8
29.2, 28.2.

The magazine had set new records of 550 per month for a Club magazine, so although costing £51 for the year was considered well worth it as Club advertising, circulating amongst the 273 members, all local secondary schools; Youth Clubs and the Midland Youth Hostels and even being sold to non-members. Cyril Constable replaced Ron Dowson as Chairman, Waggar Brown continuing as General Secretary with a new Minuting Secretary, Rita Shepherd, who had won the Ladies' Attendance Prize. Ken Humphries got Doug Osmonde as his Assistant T.T. Secretary and Harry Gardener looked after the massed start affairs with Bob Foulkes as Track Secretary.

The above items give clear indication of the bubbling enthusiasm in the Club at this time. Even the 'blocks' used for the many magazine illustrations were hired out to other Clubs to earn some income towards the cost of new blocks. However this did result in one parcel of blocks going astray after use by the West Kent D.A. of the Cyclists Touring Club, but they sportingly paid for the loss. On the other hand the bankruptcy of a Shirley Cycle Dealer who advertised in AWHEEL resulted in only 3d. in the pound being recovered for his year's advertisements! In the February 1950 issue of the magazine a new title block, designed by a previous editor, Dick Borneman, appeared, Margery Cooper having taken over as distributor from Eileen Mortimer, and Jim Houghton, a strong hard-riding member with a most characteristic sense of humour, which resulted in some unique articles in the magazine, looked after the Touring side of this "coming-of-age".

The special celebration was the 21st Birthday Ride to Yarningale Common, followed by a party back at Catherine-de-Barnes, bursting at the seams with a cake and 21 candles, cut by President Noel Brealey after the candles had been blown out. Feasting over, an "Old Tyme Music Hall" entertainment was organised by John Moore who also contributed excellent "Touring Tattles" to the magazine as well as sportingly taking over editorship of two issues to enable the editor to have extra time for the training for the National 24 Hours Championship.

All this enthusiasm clearly showed that there were no lasting ill-effects of the "split" and friendly discussion about it continued with letters to 'READERS PARLIAMENT', this being the answer to the remark overheard at the finish of an M.C.C.A. 25 miles event when the SOLS had almost swept the board of awards - "How do the Solihull C.C. do it so regularly?" Free discussion maintained the SOLIHULL SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP. Of the girls, Audrey Knight came second 1-11-31; Betty Bragg eighth 1-14-43 and Phyllis Goulding 1-15-4 to take the First Handicap team backing up the men who led by Bas Francis first 1-2-6; fourth Bob Foulkes 1-3-56; fifth A Hobson 1-3-58, took first team. 18 other riders amongst them annexed the first Handicap team.

G E M Harris of the Herne Hill Supporters' Club, sent a poem about the 1950 World Championships in which Dick Bowes had ridden; having stayed with "Goff" whenever riding selection events down London area. This new contributor, under the nom de plume "YABBERGABBER" became a regular contributor

and close friend of the Club, eventually presenting a silver trophy for the best article in AWHEEL during the year as selected by members' votes, even proceeding to win it himself three years in succession, such was his talent for telling a cycling tale in rhyme.

But what of the racing activities? Almost in contrast to the successes of "STARS" in previous years, Bas Francis, Bob Foulkes and Art Hobson won the RTTC National 25 miles Team Championship; Francis and Hobson again, supported by Vic Rudd, set up a Competition 30 miles Team Record. The 'stayers', in spite of their dedication and the support and help of dozens of clubmates on the day, with 8 entrants in the 24 hour Championship, met the superb Addiscombe C.C. team, coached by Charlie Davey, who set up a new team record of 1341.95 miles as Stan Butler (Norwood Paragon C.C) won with a new record individual distance of 458.95 miles. George Juggins fifth, 438 miles, took the Club Record off Doug Osmonde tenth 429 miles who had improved on it in his first ever 24; and ex-holder, Stan Bray, thirteenth 418 miles, made up third man, only Vic Brown 398 miles and Jim Winter 391 miles finishing out of the rest of the eight who had started with such high hopes. It was little compensation that their team total of 1284 miles had surpassed the distance covered by the Vegetarian C & A.C., the original holders.

Disappointment was Dick Bowes lot: twentieth in the World R.R. and second in the Isle of Man International, but Derek Russell signalled the new shoots of youth winning the N.C.U. Birmingham Centre Junior Mass-start

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Championship. Harry Gardener joined Francis, Foulkes and Hobson to get in the Centre Team Pursuit Final and Eighth Finals of the National, Hobson losing the Centre Individual Pursuit to none other than Tommy Godwin, Rover R.C.C., youthful Phyllis Goulding came fourth in the Ladies National Spring Championship. Even the Polo Section had John Jarrett selected for England and Tommy Watkins for Wales.

Criticism of the minutes of the monthly Committee meetings being too brief really reflects the amazing activity in the Club at this time. A new Club Handbook was selling well, as were the chromium plated Club Badges produced by Ernie Newton. Coming from a suggestion by Eric Walker, Norman Lees started an 'OLD SOLS' section, obviously referred to as the Old Souls, to enable older members to keep in touch through the magazine on payment of a smaller fee than normal subscription rather than drop out when age, ill-health or leaving the district prevented full activity. Founder Member, Arthur Houlston, Ken Humphries and Stan Bray were elected Honorary Life Members and Eric Walker presented the Club with a set of bound volumes of the magazine, to be held by the current editor, as a memorial to the members killed during the war.

All seemed too good to be true amidst the murmurs of external affairs such as the R.T.T.C. defining 'inconspicuous clothing' for time trials as shorts were permitted in place of the 'black from head to foot' alpacca and tights; also some criticism of the method of calculating the British Best All-Rounder on average speeds. Even the



Dick Bowes on his way to winning the first three lap Isle of Man International Road Race, 1952.

resignation of W E Baillie and wife on his demob, to join a newly formed Saracen R.,C., seemed trivial though it lost the Club a talented official as he became a well-known member of the R.T.T.C. National Committee some years later until his untimely death, run down by a continental juggernaut while out training in 1980.

Could it last?

It could and did with the added stimulous of 1951 being FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN year.

Amongst new members joining were H T Reynolds, T Bayliss, S Payne, Eric Seymour, T Hill, T Jones, Miss Rowley, B Beesley, L Berry, C Charlton, J Williams and Bas Banner, who all made their mark - some destined for National fame.

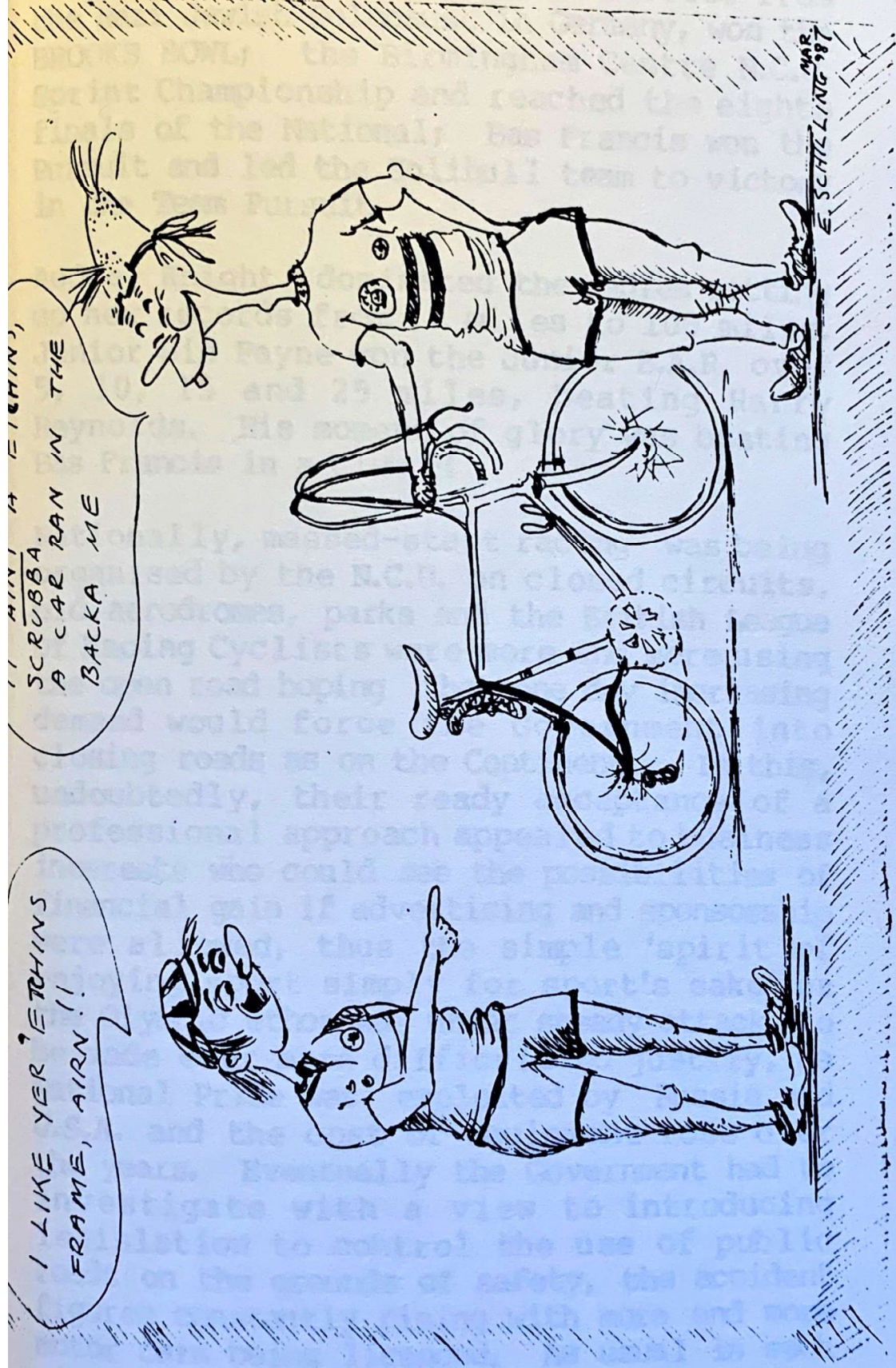
There were several outstanding achievements paramount being Dick Bowes' magnificent win in the Isle of Man International Road Race on the closed roads of the famous Motorcycle T.T. over a three lap race for the first time. A sensational last lap catching Les Wilmetts (Midand C. & A.C), once a Solihull Junior who had broken 100 mile Competition Record, who had been leading the breakaway bunch and boldly sprinting away up the mountain, over the top and fearlessly descending round Governor's Corner to win by the biggest margin to date. Compensation indeed for his 25th place in the World R.R. in Italy.

Albert Lusty's jibe the previous year was answered by Doug Osmonde, one of the Club's enthusiastic 'rabbits' who attempted the Midland Road Records Association Birmingham to Holyhead and back record standing to the credit of Frank Allen (Speedwell B.C). Under far from ideal conditions he annexed the Solihull's first MRRA record by 1 hour 39 minutes for the 301 miles of hilly roads. Showing what dogged determination can do, he also won the Club Best All-Rounder this season, but stimulated others to follow in this field. Cyril Starkey took the MRRA Birmingham-Oxford and back, pulverising Stan Bray's Club record over this course, then the 12 hours 241 miles 5 furlongs.

Wal Bailey organised a 55 miles mass-start under N.C.U. rules in Sutton Park, necessitating a 6.00am. start but it still attracted the very top class riders like Tiny Thomas (Yorkshire R.C) and Brian Robinson (Huddersfield R.C), the latter later making history as a professional on the continent with 5 stage wins in the celebrated Tour de France.

Other names still to play a part in our story were Arthur Illsley, A S Willington (Birchfield C.C), Bill and Bernard King (Coventry C.C), J Perks and Dave King of the Earlswood Road & Path C.C; Bob Maitland (Concorde R.C.C.) beat his ex-Clubmate Dick Bowes into second place by two lengths, unusual for a non-sprinter.

In the Time Trial sphere, the Club magazine was used as the Start Sheet for the Invitation Scratch 25 miles organised by Ken Humphries and won by Dave Keeler (Vegetarian C. & A.C) in a new Competition Record time of Road Race, 1952.



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FRAME, AIRN!!

MINI A FEIMIN',
SCRUBBA.
A CAR RAN IN THE
BACKA ME

E. SCHILLING '987

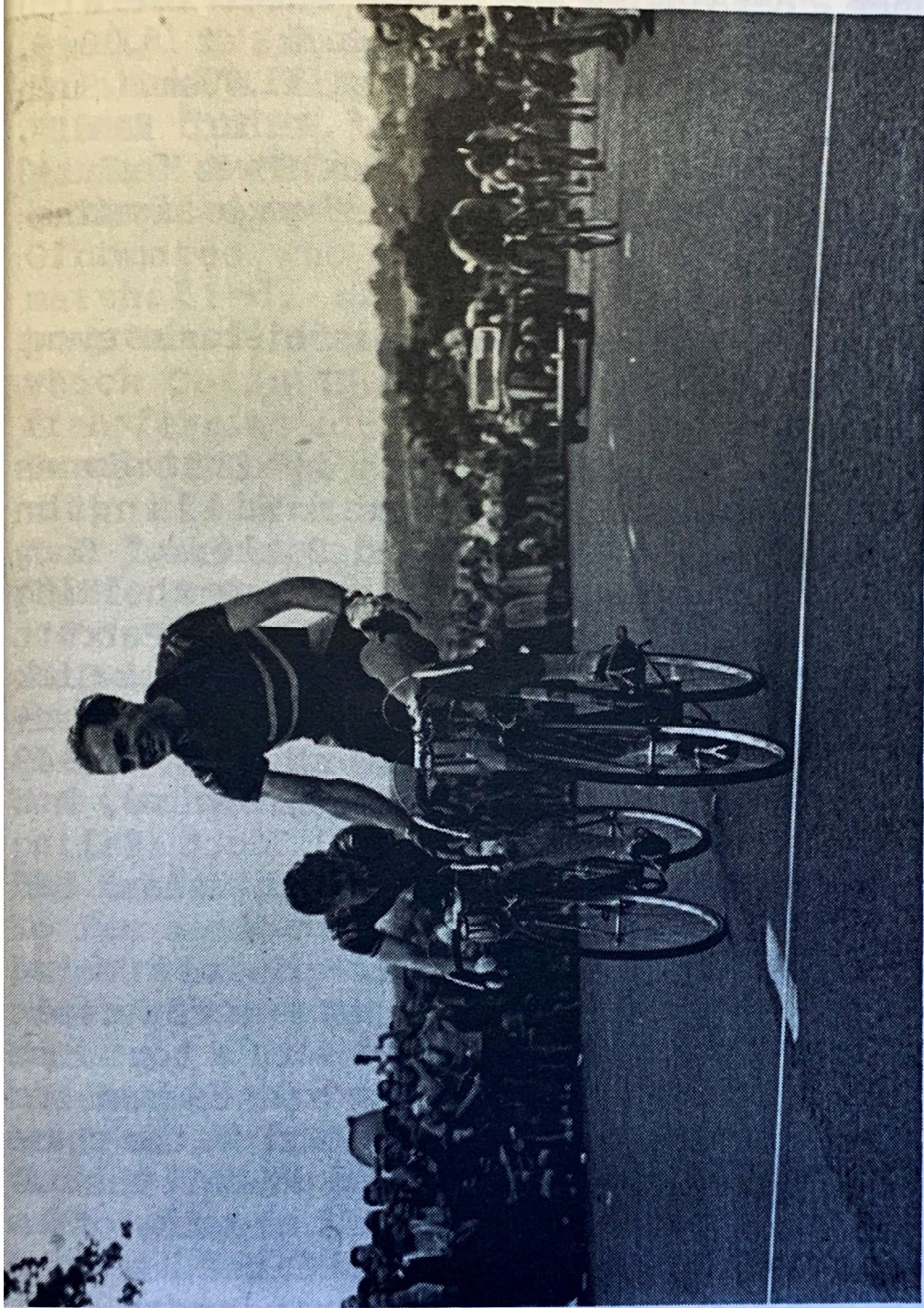
57 minutes - 15 seconds while on the Track, Lutz Durlacher, who had been rescued from the Nazi Jewish Holocaust in Germany, won the BROOKS BOWL; the Birmingham Centre N.C.U. Sprint Championship and reached the eighth finals of the National; Bas Francis won the Pursuit and led the Solihull team to victory in the Team Pursuit.

Audrey Knight dominated the Ladies setting up new records from 10 miles to 100 miles. Junior Sid Payne won the Junior B.A.R. over 5, 10, 15 and 25 miles, beating Harry Reynolds. His moment of glory was beating Bas Francis in a Club 5!

Nationally, massed-start racing was being organised by the N.C.U. on closed circuits, old aerodromes, parks and the British League of Racing Cyclists were more and more using the open road hoping that one day increasing demand would force the Government into closing roads as on the Continent. In this, undoubtedly, their ready acceptance of a professional approach appealed to business interests who could see the possibilities of financial gain if advertising and sponsorship were allowed, thus the simple 'spirit of enjoying sport simply for sport's sake' or the Olympic ethos was under steady attack, to be made ever more difficult to justify, as National Pride was exploited by Russia and U.S.A. and the cost of equipment rose over the years. Eventually the Government had to investigate with a view to introducing legislation to control the use of public roads on the grounds of safety, the accident figures constantly rising with more and more motor cars being licenced. As usual in such circumstances, Governments prefer to discuss with one ruling body so there were outside

pressures encouraging the N.C.U. and B.L.R.C. to unite apart from the sport's internal problems such as who should select for teams and individuals to represent the country or which body would be recognised by the World Governing Body, the U.C.I. Unfortunately, union came, not without rancour on the part of stalwarts of each regime or smoothly, but in 1951 the N.C.U. decided that in the following year, they would hold mass-start races on the open road, having to accept the fact that there had not been a spate of accidents in League events. Government Regulations had been formulated, and thanks largely to Quentin Hogg M.P. (now Lord Hailsham), whose Father had founded the Polytechnic C.C. the rights of Time Trialists were safeguarded - organisers of such events merely being required to notify the local police who were given no absolute or direct power to control/ban events, other than the requirements of road safety and normal rules of the road; whereas mass-start events, or Road Racing as its exponents preferred to call it, had to obtain specific Police permission as to date, course and number of entries. How would this affect the still rapidly growing Solihull Cycling Club?

We were soon to see, for on Sunday, 29 June 1952, only 5 days after the N.C.U. re-entered racing on the open roads (it had withdrawn back in 1905), the Club had the honour of jointly, with the Birmingham Centre N.C.U., promoting perhaps the first ever N.C.U. Road Race (there was talk of a a prior one in the South but on a much smaller scale - Ed), on roads around Bassett Pole and Fazley near Tamworth, of 90 miles. To celebrate this momentous occasion the AWHEEL for July, No. 196, was brought forward and published in



Dick Bowes crossing the line before Bernard King to win the first Open Road Race under N.C.U. rules.

June containing the start sheet for a 60 miles event in Sutton Park at 6.00am. followed by the Big Event at 11.00am. Such was the organising talent of Bernard Randle, and almost prophetically Dick Bowes featured on the front cover of this 38 page magazine-programme.

Dick Bowes actually won this historic event and in a most dramatic way.

Missing the early break by Stan Jones (Concorde R.C.C), Arthur Willington (Birchfield), Henshawe and Butler of Long Eaton C.C. who were followed by the King Brothers (Coventry C.C) and Ken Parrott (Coventry R.C); on lap 4 out of the 5 Dick was five minutes down. All the best mass-start riders, like Alf Newman (1949 Champion), Bob Maitland (1948 Champion), A W Stanway (Macclesfield), C S I Scott (Ealing Manor) and J F Cockayne (Nottingham) had failed to bridge the gap. At the start of the last lap Dick decided to give all he had got and demonstrate what makes a top class mass-start rider as compared with a top class time trialist. How could he hope to beat his faster ex-team mate Bob Maitland in the chase to catch the leaders? But an attempt must be made else all was lost! Off he took, often reaching over 25 mph, confirmed by the following Commissaire's car, eventually shedding Maitland. The leaders, containing the two best sprinter-roadmen Bernard and Bill King from Coventry were within sight of the uphill finish when Bowes got them in sight, how he made it, caught up and found a second sprint when Bernard King latched on, emphasised by the state of exhaustion he was in for some time afterwards before being able

to receive the BAYCLIFFE SHIELD and a Hall Special M/S Frame presented by one of the Solihull's Vice Presidents, Joe Birk of PRIORY CYCLES, from the President of the N.C.U. M P McCormack, to the cheers of the hundreds of spectators including all Dick's Clubmates who had acted as officials; marshalled, and sold out the Special programme first at the early morning event in which Colin Charlton came second then transferring across to the Road Race, under Bernard Randle's supervision and of course with help from the Birmingham Centre : - A A Tomkins, Timekeeper M P McCormack; Chief Commissaire, T Mountford; Commissaires S T Cozens, I Cox, J Masters and D Moreton; Judges were Wal Bailey and W E McCormick; Machine examiner J H Holland; Number steward J Greeves; Competitor's Steward D Ellerman and Commentator C Wharrad.

The sellers of the most programmes was shared by Bas Banner and 'Tiny' Reynolds 152. One wonders what inspiration Harry Reynolds received that day in the light of his future career. Indeed, the Solihull C.C. had celebrated the Festival of Britain.

Such brilliant riding inevitably stimulated all members. Bowes came third in the National M/S Championship was again selected for England in the Olympic R.R. in Helsinki and the World Championship at Luxemburg where he finished seventh. Lutz Durlacher set up a new national half mile track record taking a tenth of a second off the renowned W J Bailey's time of 57-6 secs. in 1908. He also repeated his win of the Brooks Bowl; won the Birmingham Centre Sprint Championship and with Bas Francis who was third in the Centre 4000 m. T.T. made the team with Vic Rudd and C Mills second in Team Pursuit.

Riding alone and upaced the M.R.R.A. Birmingham to Manchester and back record fell to Stan Bray, 8 hrs. 2 mins. 12 secs. who in the July also gained the 24 hour Record with 425 miles and Arthur Cooper, recovered from ghastly war wounds took the Tricycle 24 hour record with 336 miles. Ron Dowson organised the 24.

The Invitation Scratch 25 saw Stan, of the famous Higginson twins, Halesowen C & A.C. with Competition Record again 57.8 beating the holder Dave Keeler into second place. The first of his three successive wins.

Amongst all the junior activity Harry was again pipped in the Junior B.A.R. by B J Swindells (who later became the Universities Hill Climb Champion, though in fairness to Tiny he missed a good evening for the 5 mile due to night-school!).

"ESCAPE FROM STALAG XXID" by Harry Sandford was awarded the Best Article prize; well deserved, consisting of the letters with sketches, sent to Bernard Knight whilst a prisoner of war in Germany which he had carried round with him to keep his spirits up as he suffered slave labour. Other juniors, Tom Hill, Mal Lawton and Barry James were first, second and third in the Best Attendances on Club Runs for the Peter Bennett Memorial Shield. Bettina Moore took the Ladies award. Edna Bowes, who had taken over the magazine distribution from Margery Cooper for 1951 continued in 1952 and was to do so until 1954, a tremendous task every month getting out over 500 copies. Christine Marchant did a year's stint in 1955 before Edna repeated the 'punishment' for a further year. General Secretary and

Assistant were Ernest and Gladys Newton who also looked after the Forces Secretaryship still necessary in 1952, under Cyril Constable's Chairmanship. Ken Humphries, Open Events Secretary, was complaining about the difficulty in finding marshalls for time trials and support for Club Runs was giving cause for concern as more interest seemed to be flowing into Road Racing. Cyril Constable acted as a motor cycle marshall for the Tour of Britain. In retrospect it seems strange how 'continentalised' descriptions were adopted; Road Racing for Massed-Start, perhaps to avoid any associations with the type of racing that had met with such antagonism in the early part of the century and which led to the withdrawal of the N.C.U; Grand Prix; Kermess and Criterium events proliferated. But life in the Solihull continued normally with three marriages, of John Moore, Eric Seymour and Bob Page, while the older members were saddened by the passing of the Rev Goodfield, and amongst the new members Pauline and Sheila Chappell, Pat Cotterell and Jim Allcock made their mark.

In 1953 John Moore became General Secretary and bringing a more business-like leadership set out developing the "Solihull Spirit", co-ordinating the rather random if prolific growth of this sprouting tree. The ex-Touring Secretary and definitely NON-RACING man Bernard Randle followed his previous year's success as an organiser to put on the Club's first Amateur Road Race open to B.L.R.C. and N.C.U. riders of 109 miles as the CORONATION R.R., showing his talent for publicity as well, arranging for the Solihull Council to erect a rostrum from which the Judges could see to sort out the positions

and the Mayor of Solihull could present the prizes for all to see. What is more the police were most favourably impressed by the safety arrangements and perhaps it was only fitting that the King brothers of Coventry, Bernard and Bill, should take first and second places in revenge over Dick Bowes, fifth. Gerry Gordon was 19th.

To quote "CYCLING" - "The quality of the event from the standpoint of competition was such as seldom ever been seen on the English mainland".

To cap this B.J.R. put on the second round of the National Bicycle Polo Championship at Catherine-de-Barnes after the R.R., between Solihull C.C. and Clarencourt B.P.C. Needless to say, the SOLS won and J Bradley, T Watkins, E Walker, A Houlston, K Hughes, Sheasby and K Bradley reached the final only to fall to the as yet unbeaten Norwood Paragon.

However, if it was not a good year for Dick Bowes there were new buds to blossom. Harry Reynolds won the first National Junior Mass Start Championships, Brian Swindells away at University won the Universities Hill Climb Championship; Lutz Durlacher gained the Gold Medal in the Maccabiah Olympic Road Race. The Invitation Scratch 25 gave Stan Higginson his second victory with 58-9 and Christine Brown (South Shield Victoria C.C) won the Ladies Open 25 B.S.A. Rose Bowl with 1-7-28. As for Club events, Cyril Starkey won the Ladies 12 hour as well as the 24 hour again. The Junior BAR went to Tom Hill, Mal Lawton taking the Pete Bennett Memorial Shield for Best Attendance on Club runs, Pauline

Chappell the Ladies. With his first 100 Jim Alcock won the J W Bryan Cup, such promise unfortunately never fulfilled yet Arthur Stanley taking the Wally Jones 50 and Pop Maitland 12 hour Handicap trophies had more to give later, and most of the Birmingham Centre Track Championships came to the SOLS again. Phyllis Goulding won the Ladies Pursuit now reaching the notice of the National coaches.

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For the previous seven years the Solihull crops had been top class in spite of the decisions in the external cycling world as the N.C.U. and R.T.T.C. and B.L.R.C. tried to steer a course between the demands of sport on the road and the law of the land coincidentally attempting to define 'amateurs', 'professionals' or such hybrids as 'independents'. The causes of this were the new found freedoms arising after the war. Amongst many cyclists a kind of polarisation of interests between various permutations of the four categories, amateur, professional, road racing and time trialling took place. There was much switching of membership of clubs therefore as riders' interests changed but the S.C.C. suffered relatively little of this blight. Perhaps the only two outstanding losses were Vic Martin to the Concorde R.C.C. who became the 1954 Junior M/S Champion, and Les Wilmott to the Midland C & A.C. already mentioned as the 1950 Competition 100 miles Record Holder.

With hindsight one is tempted to say that you could not afford to cast yourself off from this lively democratic Club if you were an enthusiastic cyclist. One sad passing was the death of the late revered past President

