

1929



1999

SOLIHULL CYCLING CLUB
CELEBRATES
70 YEARS



SUNDAY MORNING at the "BARLEY MOW"



1929

SOLIHULL

1999

CYCLING CLUB

This publication celebrates the 70th anniversary
of the formation of the Club.

Inside we endeavour to remind you,
or inform you, of a variety of aspects
that have made the Club what it is today :

The Club's Who's Who ?

Club Events, Promotions & Weekly Activities.

Recent History – the last 20 years.

The current programme of Club Rides.

Our canalside Clubroom, and where to find us.

– and, through photographs and explanatory words,
you may find this a passport to the innermost secrets
of life within this unique organisation.

Tucked away in the middle we have

A WORLD EXCLUSIVE

– a pictorial extravaganza devoted solely to one of
the inimitable activities of the Solihull Cycling Club.

* * * * *

I can understand your concern

It's a bit unnerving, isn't it, that a complete novice to the Solihull Scene should be writing about what's happened in the Club during the past 20 years? Especially when he's a Coventry Kid. Thankfully, other people have been doing most of the writing, albeit in various formats: Committee minutes by the Gen. Sec.'s, news by various editors in "Awheel", other entries in the magazines by a whole host of contributors. As back-up there's the coffee-stop chat sessions. And before that we had Stan Bray: As present-day editor of "Awheel", I have to admit that Stan's 50-year history book has been an invaluable work of first reference for finding out about the Great and the Good from years up to the Club's golden jubilee in '79.

Please accept I've done this because I've had a lot of pleasure since first turning up at "The Pickwick" one autumn Tuesday back in '91. The roads, and particularly the lanes, of England and Wales and Scotland and France and Germany and Mallorca and Spain, have provided many hours of enjoyment since that memorable day. Finally - and this should have come first - I'd like to acknowledge the help, the patience and the support which I've had from many club members in getting this all together. In particular I must mention John Moore, Harry Reynolds, John Monk, Frank Wells, Fred & Margaret Towers, Margaret Gordon, Mal Lawton, Guy Elliott, Trevor Bayliss, Pat & Paul Langley, Roy (Photographer) Foster, Bob & Joan Thornton - as well as numerous other individuals whose words have all registered. Finally my thanks to Phil Rosenbloom, whose "Clubroom Comments" regularly help fill in the bits I miss.

All I can hope for now is your tolerance.

Tolerance regarding my various mistakes and misunderstandings,
my glaring omissions and oversights. They are not intentional.

Thank you

Barrie Goodyer

THE SOLIHULL CYCLING CLUB WHO'S WHO ?

Club President : TOMMY GODWIN

Immediate Past President : JOHN CORDWELL

Joint Vice Presidents
and

Honorary Life Members : ERIC ARTHUR
MAL LAWTON
FRANK WELLS

Other Vice Presidents : TERRY CAMPLIN
SID CLARK
JOHN HALL
JIM JINKS
BOB MAITLAND

Other

Honorary Life Members : MICK BENNETT
CHARLIE BROWN
"BAZ" FRANCIS
JOHN MOORE
HARRY REYNOLDS
ALBERT & FRANK TAYLOR
MARGARET TOWERS

Club Chairman : FRED TOWERS

Club Secretary : MARGARET GORDON

In the next few pages we try to give you a little of the background on each of these sterling characters

TOMMY GODWIN - CLUB PRESIDENT

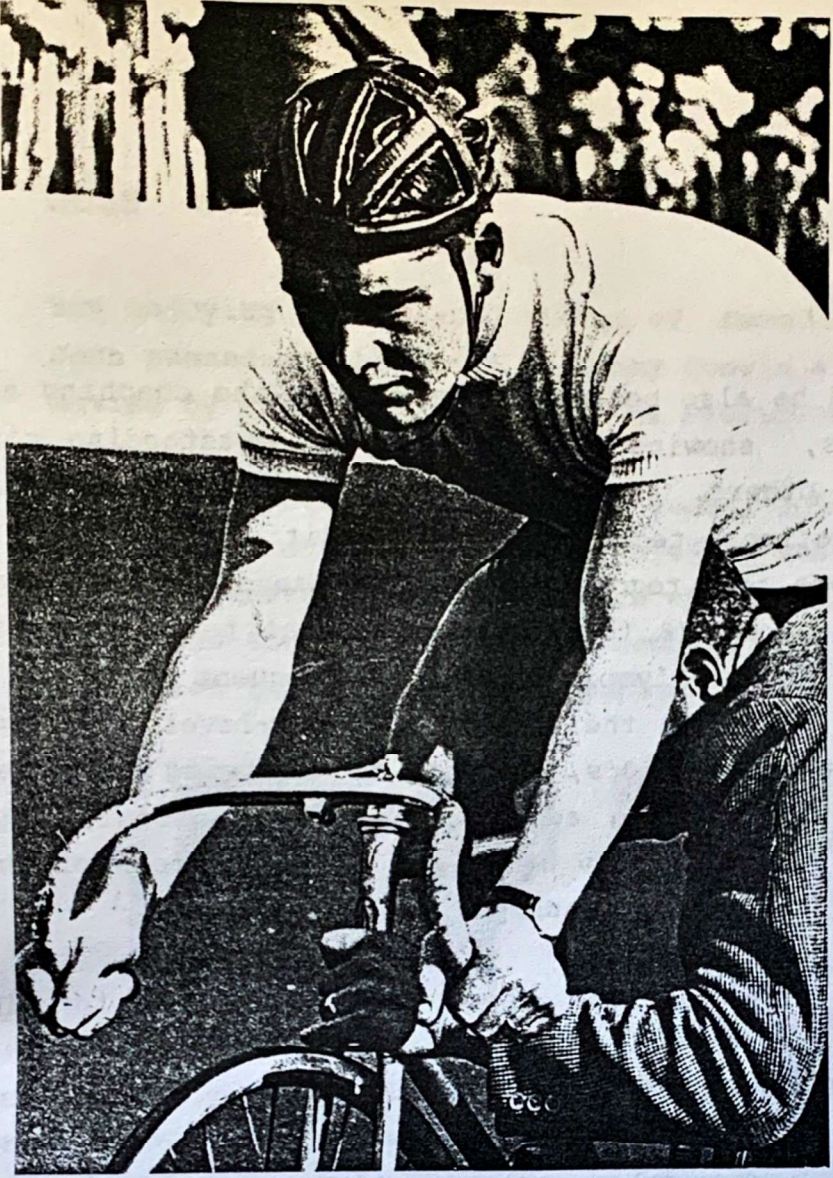
Tommy Godwin is without doubt one of the major figures to have graced the post-war British cycling scene. He was one of the stars of the golden era of track racing, went on to become the National Coach, and was a key figure in the national cycling arena over many years.

Born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, of British parents he grew up in an American schooling system in which the strong emphasis on competitive sports had a strong influence on the development of his positive and professional attitude towards all sports.

After the Godwin family returned to England during the American depression, he had his first taste of cycle racing in a grass track event at the Wrenson Sports Day, taking third place on a £5 bike borrowed from a work colleague. This was after falling off it at Camp Hill on his way to the event, trying to cope with a fixed wheel for the first time!

It was the start of an illustrious career in which he won many national championships on grass and hard track over distances ranging from 5 to 25 miles. This was an era in which he was in competition with all-time "greats" including Reg Harris, Lou Pond, Wilf Waters, Alan Geldard, Dave Ricketts and others.

This was literally a golden period for Tommy, for he won outright the three most prestigious (and valuable) solid gold trophies ever available for competition in British cycling; the BSA Gold Column, the Muratti Gold Cup and the BSA Gold Vase. This feat alone required nine victories against the cream of the British track scene of the era.



Tommy Godwin
 Rover R C,
 at Halesowen track.
 July 1st - 1950

The highlights of this great career came in 1948, when Tommy collected two bronze medals in the London Olympic Games, in the 1000 metres time trial, and the Team Pursuit (together with Ricketts, Waters and Geldard). The bronze in the 1000TT represents the last medal won by any Briton in this Olympic event.

By now Tommy had married Eileen, daughter Kay had arrived, and he was beginning to plan for the future. This resulted in him retiring from competition in 1953 and opening a bike shop in Kings Heath that became a mecca for cyclists for many a year.

During this period he also became interested in the coaching and training of riders, showing straight away an outstanding gift for motivation of others, to add to an extremely professional approach to preparation, technique and competition. These qualities were soon recognised, and he moved from working with local riders in 1957/8 to managing national teams in 1959, and then on to Worlds and Olympic teams in subsequent years. He also started many of the first national-level coaching activities during the early 60's, leading to him being appointed National Coach in 1962. In addition he worked closely with Geoff Bull (father of Trevor) to start the first editions of the week-long national track championships.

Around this time, his restless energy also resulted in him forming the Birmingham RCC, of which he is Life President. He also started to take a prominent role in local Rotary activities. Notable among many fund-raising projects was an End-to-End ride at the age of 60, accomplished with valuable back-up help from Frank Wells, from which he raised over £3000 for the Queen Alexander College for the Blind. He also started the Training School for Visually Handicapped Cycle Mechanics, and raised many thousands of pounds from the annual Milk Race crowds for the Stars for Spastics charity. A Rotarian of 34 years standing, he is proud to have been chosen as a recipient of the internationally recognised Paul Harris Award, given for outstanding work dedicated to the community.

A man of great purpose and honour, he stands as a wonderful example and role model for us all.

JOHN CORDWELL

Now enjoying the relaxed status of **Immediate Past President**, John passed on the baton to Tommy Godwin at the start of 1998, having by that time served in the Presidential role for nearly 20 years.

Joining the Club during the war years, John was elected as Touring Secretary in 1943. By 1945 he was handling the job of Social Secretary and as evidence at that time of his "pulling power" he took a party of 255 members and friends on a theatre excursion to the Birmingham pantomime.



JOHN CORDWELL IN CONVERSATION WITH THE LATE STAN BRAY
AT THE 1997 "OLD SOLS" LUNCHEON.

On the competitive side in 1946, John paired up with Les Bailey, recording a 4-30-36 time in the Oak Tandem "100", helping Solihull CC (Maitland/Bowes 3-56-42, Kempshall/Moreton 4-20-58) to the team win.

But the social side still occupied his energies through the late '40's, promoting dances to help add funds to the Club's coffers. John undertook the task of Treasurer during the early '50's, later becoming elected as Vice President before his long service in the Club's highest office.

On the purely personal side, we believe John lived for a time at the "Three Maypoles" (alias "The Pickwick", alias the "Cheswick Green Inn") - a strange coincidence, recognising the Tuesday Run meets there these days. John married fellow Club member Rita, who in her day was one of the very speedy ladies who regularly used to leave several suffering male clubmates "off the back".

In business John was M.D. of a factory in Birmingham which specialised in magnetic sorting facilities - an important factor in today's efforts to get the maximum benefits from material recycling.

The Club has been very fortunate to have enjoyed the genial and generous support from John over so many years.

Joint Vice Presidents & Honorary Life Members :

ERIC ARTHUR

Eric's great service to the club has been in his role as Treasurer, starting in 1961 and eventually terminating in 1991. It was for this reason particularly that he was elected to Honorary Life Membership in 1967.

Eric was always a "doer". With the Club cycle-polo team it was Eric who acted as groundsman, mowing the pitch and attending to the goal nets. In recognition of these efforts - which helped the visitors every bit as much as the home team - he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order from the national cycle-polo organisation.

Another way in which the Solihull club was indebted to Eric was in his constant presence on Clubroom nights collecting fees and often acting as unpaid caretaker, through three eras when the clubroom was held variously at Knowle village hall, then Woodbourne Sports Club and finally at Highgate football club.

MAL LAWTON

Mal has been a member of the Club since the late '40s and as a club junior in 1952 was already up to 2nd position in clubrun attendances (closely pursued, it has to be admitted, by one Barry James !) Only a year later and Mal had made it to top spot, winning the Pete Bennett Shield for his efforts.

1954 and he was a member, along with Lutz Durlacher, of the winning Solihull Club team in both the Midlands Cycling Clubs Alliance and the Worcester C.A. hill climbs.

Club riding and touring were always Mal's favoured activities and with all those miles in his legs he would occasionally turn in times good enough to shake the "regulars" from the racing fraternity, which is how in 1955 he won the Club hill-climb championship. Careful study of club track racing records shows the name M.F.Lawton winning the Vic Pegg 1 mile handicap trophy in 1960 (and again in 1973! - only a star like Lutz Durlacher could show commitment over as many years.)

But administrative activities were to occupy a lot of his time. He held the post of Club Treasurer from '57 to '59, was Magazine Editor from 1966 to '69 besides doing a stint as General Secretary, a role repeated from 1979 through to '84. It was in the middle of all this activity, in 1968, that Mal was elected as Honorary Life Member.

Forever a real worker and willing helper in Club promotions, Mal is seen regularly at the signing-in table at events like the Reliability Trials, Randonnées, Vet's road races, Ragley Hall MTB races and so forth.

In the 1990's Mal held joint top jobs as Club Chairman and Treasurer, finally relinquishing in 1998, at which stage the Committee elected him onto the select band of Club Vice Presidents.

FRANK WELLS

One of our longest-serving members, Frank joined the Club in 1931 and by 1934 he was top man for runs attendance, 51 weeks out of 52. Before the '39 war started he went into the RAF, initially working as maintenance mechanic on Overstrand bombers which were then operating from Bicester airfield. During the war Frank was posted to the Middle East and based in Iraq.

After demob he became heavily involved with the Club cycle-polo team in roles as Secretary, as player and as referee, efforts which brought him the Service award of the national cycle-polo organisation.

At the time of the '48 Olympics, Frank was one of several club stalwarts who cycled down overnight to Windsor Great Park to provide "pit staff" support for the British road-race team - which included clubmate Bob Maitland.

Back here around the same time Frank was helping with the "family section" where various ages of offspring were taken out in sidecars, baskets, kiddy-seats or on tandems.



DURING THE "OLD SOLS" LUNCHEON IN 1997,
FRANK CHATS WITH BILLY WELLS AND ANOTHER FRIEND.

Through the '60's, '70's and '80's Frank has continued to be an enthusiastic fund-raiser as well as Dinner & raffle organiser - contributing greatly to the financial strength of the Club. In those days the membership of the Club was at times up in the 300's and Frank's work as magazine distributor helped cut down on a potentially monstrous postal bill. Out on the roads he could always be relied upon to assist as race marshall. On the administrative side Frank also served in the position of Club Chairman and - up until 1997 - as secretary of the Old Sols group.

Frank has always been a happy, friendly and optimistic man and from his diverse efforts through the years has been a considerable asset to the Club. With commitment throughout almost the whole run of Solihull C.C. history, it's not surprising to see Frank's name in the select band of joint Honorary Life members and Vice Presidents.

Other club Vice Presidents :

TERRY CAMPLIN

Terry Camplin began involvement with the Club due to friendship with the late Dick Bowes. Mr. Camplin managed a West Midlands light-alloy manufacturing concern in which the potential for production of aluminium-alloy cycle components for race usage led naturally to contact with Dick as the Midlands symbol of cycle-racing expertise. That contact brought Terry into the Solihull club and eventually into his present role as one of our Vice Presidents. His generosity is still apparent today in the guise of the Camplin Hill Climb trophy, which Terry presented to the club at the 1984 annual dinner.

SID CLARK

Now aged 84, Sid founded Clark's Cables in 1947. The company's early business was mainly destined for the cycle industry in the form of high quality coated brake and gear cables but later there was expansion into control and actuator cables for the motor industry.

Sid was a Vice President of Aston Villa football club but in a generous move to put something back into cycle sport he was also the main instigator in promoting, over a period of 10 years, the Clark's Cables Grand Prix. The Pro Race was the richest in the country with £1500 total prize money, lap prizes of £10 with an extra bonus of a £50 prize every 10th lap.

Flamboyant commentator Roger Shayes (complete with grey bowler hat) was always Master of Ceremonies and the event became a major feature of the Midlands racing programme, along with special competitions for Old Ordinary's ("penny farthings") and for veteran, junior and schoolboy categories. Many of these races were held in Cannon Hill Park and attracted thousands of spectators. In one notable year Keith Reynolds won the Schoolboy's event on the same day that dad Harry Reynolds took first in the Vet's race.

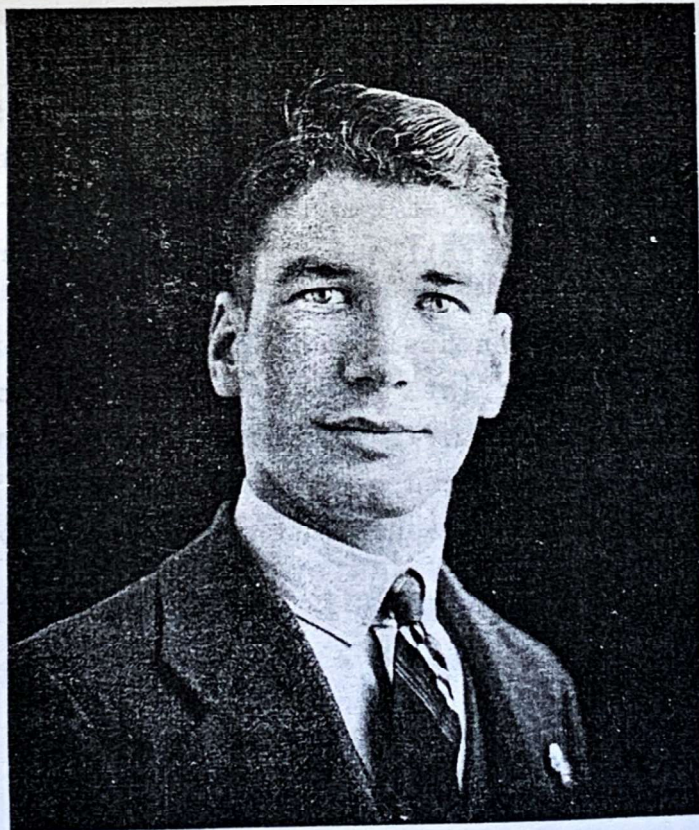
JOHN HALL

This is the gentleman who beats even Frank Wells' membership record ! By the time the Solihull Cycling Club was one year old, John Hall was already filling second place for the number of attendances on club-runs. Not surprisingly, by the third year John was riding as assistant Run Captain.

His spirit was already showing on the competitive front — he was one of three members suspended by the NCU for daring to ride at unregistered race meetings. During the 1939-'45 war John was one of 50 members serving in the Forces and it was 1946 before he was demobbed.

Remembered as "one of the Eric Walker team", John might be classed as a backroom boy, but one who contributed a great deal in the early days of the Club, and who features prominently in the album of historical photographs held by Frank Wells.

And even now, at each and every Club Annual Dinner and Old Sols lunch gatherings, John is always there - occasionally shaming other stalwarts by turning up for the lunch meeting on two wheels !



From the Frank Wells photograph album,
a 1930's picture of **John Hall** when he was Vice Captain.

JIM JINKS

Jim's was the friendly face who always made us feel welcome during the years that our clubroom existed alongside the Highgate United Football Club in Tythe Barn Lane. Jim was barman there, sharing that role with his main occupation as an industrial training officer.

Life as barman was not easy, because with the Tythe Barn headquarters being unoccupied at night, pilfering and vandalism were constant headaches. Despite that Jim safeguarded much of the Solihull C.C. kit over the years - like the roller-racing apparatus - by hiding it in the loft space of the clubhouse.

With the generous spread of the sports fields outside, the Highgate headquarters were always a favoured starting-point for our Club promotions; the springtime Reliability Trials, the summertime race promotions or Randonnées and - on the social front - barbeques and fireworks nights.

Solihull Cycling Club first moved into the Highgate Club in March 1986 and we continued there until the end of 1996 - a ten year association that only ended because for a variety of reasons there was a pronounced falling-off in clubnight support.

At no time did Jim's enthusiasm diminish and it was for this reason that as we went into the New Year of '97 the Club were delighted to elect him to Vice Presidency. Even with our move to the Earlswood clubroom it's been nice seeing Jim popping in, so we wish him continued pleasure and good health for the future.

Other Noteworthy Life Members

BOB MAITLAND

Bob is renowned both nationally and internationally. His name is a household word in cycling and he has made an immense contribution to the British Racing Scene.

He has always been a true competitor - and still is. *It's a sad admission but we've got nowhere near enough space to do justice to this unique character, but we'll make our timid and paltry effort*

Having joined the Club in 1940, Bob was soon making his mark along with a nucleus of young "racers" who were super-active wartime members. The 1942 club BAR T/T championship results read: 1. Maitland, 2. Bowes, 3. Moreton. Bob quickly became paired with Dick Bowes - and the rest of the country tried to follow.

By 1944 Bob had taken a personal 2nd in the National M/S championships and led the Solihull trio into 1st team position. 1945 and it was Competition Tandem 50 record, 2nd in the Invitation Scratch 25, 1st in the North Road Invitation 50, 7th in British BAR, 1st in the National Hill-Climb as well as leading the club trio to 1st team.

With the war over it looked as though nothing was going to stop the rise to further triumphs. Closed-circuit races, time trials up to 12 hour events, track racing, hill climbs - with such commitment it is hardly surprising that R. J. Maitland was selected to represent England at the World Road championships in Zurich, together with clubmate "Oscar" Moreton.

The unique Paris to London race in 1947 saw Bob taking fifth place in a race beset with punctures and mechanical problems. That same year saw Bob as one of four Solihull members in the England "A" team in the Isle of Man International.

The Highlight of 1948 was the London Olympic Games with Bob and Dick Bowes selected for the Windsor Park road race team. Bob eventually came home 6th, this in a year when he also took 2nd at the Dison Grand Prix, 6th on the Isle of Man, and 12th in the Worlds at Valkenburgh.

By '49 Bob, along with his wife Muriel and other enthusiasts, had moved on to form the Concorde Racing Cycling Club. High-profile competition continued in subsequent years with selection for British teams in the Tour de France and the Worlds road championships. His trophy-bag includes an Olympic Silver, 3 firsts in the Isle of Man time trial, 3 National hill-climb titles and numerous place to place records. His Pembroke to London record has only recently been stolen from him, by some cycling upstart from Hampshire.

Suffice to say that, despite continued involvement to this day with the Concorde, Bob still maintains a friendly relationship with our club in his current role as Vice President, occasionally popping up on the occasional Tuesday run or out for a Christmas mince pie or two.

We can't keep track on all his moves, but you'll occasionally read a report or see a photograph in "Cycling Weekly" that tells you he's been on some commemorative ride in Italy or wherever. Having said that, a few of us were very happy to have his company with us on our End-to-End ride up to Cape Wrath and John O'Groats in 1993. On the notorious Bealach Na Ba pass in the Applecross Mountains - 2,050 feet straight up from sea-level - guess who was first man over the top ?! ?!

Other Honorary Life Members :

MICK BENNETT

Mick shot onto the scene in the 1960's, initially riding time trials but by 1967 he was winning Club junior BAR, junior track championship and hill-climb championship! As a youngster he is remembered as a very likeable "Brummie" who worked initially as a chef in one of the Birmingham hospitals.

Besides his other early achievements, 1967 also saw him taking the BCF junior road-race championship, besides performing well in track team pursuits.

By 1968 he was good enough to take 6th place in the Tour of Israel, '69 being eyed for National selection, 1970 riding Tour of Bohemia and the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games (and in-between times taking 2nd in Club R/R championship).

The big wins came in the first part of the '70's, winning the Antwerp amateur 6-day in '71, riding Tour of Holland and also taking bronze at the World's pursuit championships (Munich) in '72. In '73 he was member of the British pursuit team that virtually won gold against a German team that was involved in a crash on the final lap.

More genuine successes included, in '73, a National gold at 20km, silver at 1km, '74 competing in the Milk Race and taking gold for team pursuit at the Commonwealth Games.

In 1974 the Club elected him to Honorary Life membership and by 1975 he had turned professional, subsequently riding for Carlton-Weinmann then Viking.

Nowadays his involvement continues in the guise of Sport for Television. But he's not averse to turning the odd pedal - in 1995 he teamed up with Hugh Porter, Colin Lewis & others to celebrate Hugh's 55th birthday by riding the End to End to raise funds for charity.

CHARLIE "Wagger" BROWN

Charlie is one of those invaluable clubmen who over the years have ensured that the underlying reason for the existence of the Club - Cycling - is nurtured and taken care of for the lasting benefit of Members.

In this role he took over as Runs Secretary in 1945. A happy, jovial "Brummie", Wagger led runs with an ever-optimistic attitude claiming he was never lost - even though his followers often thought otherwise! Just like people such as Tommy Kempshall in later years, Wagger would be leading the way up some grotty farm track saying "Not far now, I've done this before, it's only round the corner....."

In no way connected but according to Stan Bray's history of the "First Fifty", around this time the club committee sanctioned purchase of a comprehensive set of Bartholomew's maps - just to ensure Runs leaders didn't get the Club lost!

Charlie was one of those people who undertook various jobs for the club but his great contribution was his popular character and his vitalisation of general club spirit and was always seen puffing his pipe *even on his bike*, just like a steam train.

All those touring miles meant "Wagger" was no mean performer in competition either. In '48 he helped make up the Club team for the Mersey Roads "24 hour" recording an individual 12th place on the finish sheet with 369 miles. In the following year he took over as Hon. Sec., this at the stage when the Club was one of the largest in the country with 275 members.

As a result of these activities Charlie was elected to Honorary Life Membership in 1952.
