

We have already mentioned the evergreen Dick Bowes in the winning Club team with Harry Reynolds and Pete Janes in the 1955 Isle of Man and he came second in the Club's Open Road Race in 1956. Also the Bicycle Polo Team's dominance of their branch of the sport almost to the point of perfection. The long distance men continued to record minor successes. Stan Bray, near veteran, could only manage 443 miles in the 1957 National 24 hour event, but improved the following year coming second in the Mersey R.C. event, missing first place by a furlong to Cliff Bates (South Lancs. R.C) with a new Club Record 455.7 miles. A new member, Alan Owen, already with a fastman's reputation in Lancashire, moved to Birmingham and joined the Solihull to get 'hooked' on the 24 hour lark! Along with Dave Cane, a most enthusiastic hard-riding tourist, they won the Booth Team Shield in the 1960 Mersey 24: Alan came fourth 445.65 miles, Stan Bray on trike 396.83 miles a new V.T.T.A. age record and Dave Cane a good first effort 391.5 miles.

A surge of tricycle racing followed, centre round Howard Bayley, an ex-Midland C. & A.C. rider who, after an illness and demob from the R.A.F., joined the Sols and became dedicated to three wheels. Not surprisingly he soon polished off all the existing Club Trike Records and in 1961 made up a team with Ray Richards, no mean performer on three wheels, and Stan Bray, which dominated local tricycle events ending the season with the R.T.T.C. National Team Records at 100 mile and 12 hours, the latter needing two attempts as in the Coventry C.A.A. event they were just yards short on a day of gale force winds, but later in the season in the Oldbur

event they made no mistake totalling 684.79 miles, which record stood until 1976. Howard smashed his recent Club Record with 239.5 miles, Stan Bray 223.1 and Ray Richards 222.5 miles.

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There was bitter disappointment to follow before these records were ratified by the R.T.T.C. The course for the M.C.C.A. 100 miles which had been in use for many years and accepted for Championships, on checking was found to be a few yards short due no doubt to road alterations over the years. Even at walking speed each rider could have covered the extra distance and still given a total team time well inside the old record - but such are the quirks of fate, and the standards of accuracy of records passed by the R.T.T.C. and the various Road Records Association. It will be a sad day if and when business pressures result in any lowering of standards. With 401.72 miles in the Mersey R.C. 24 hours, Stan set up a new V.T.T.A. Age record, becoming the first 'over forty' rider to top 400 miles on a trike.

A big revival in touring cycling developed due to the EVENING DESPATCH MYSTERY RIDES organised by Bill Oakley, of the Cyclists Touring Club, sponsored by this Birmingham newspaper which put up prizes and a Silver Trophy for the Club with most members completing the course. This was planned by Bill but only indicated by clues published in the Evening Despatch a few weeks beforehand, to enable entrants to go out in evenings and at weekends to find the clues and hence work out the route which as might be expected meandered through the very best of the countryside to an arranged venue where teas were provided and the prizes awarded. So,

starting from a suitable spot around Birmingham, hundreds of cyclists were set off with their clue cards, any main road crossings well marshalled and checked by local cycle dealers and members of the C.T.C. Tea was in a large marquee. They were most enjoyable affairs and numbers increased year by year until police objections, that it was dangerous with so many hundreds of cyclists of all ages, on all types of machines, concentrated in one area. The Sols won the Trophy in 1959 and 1961 with 40 and 39 entries.

The time trial scene was dominated by Bas Keogh during most of the period under consideration, winning the Club B.A.R. in 1959, 1960 and 1961 as well as the Oldbury 12 hour in 1959 and 1961, also most of the Club Championships, even the Track 5 mile except when Trevor Bayliss annexed it in 1959 but Bas gained the M.R.R.A. 100 miles record with 4-16-13.

Cyclo-cross was becoming organised, the British Cyclo-Cross Association was formed in 1959, and riders like Alan Winters, Ray Richards, Albert Moss and Dave Mountford were getting placings in more and more Open events, worthy successors to those early members who had enjoyed the Club Cross Country Race.

It could not be long before more major honours came the way of the Solihull C.C.

A BUMPER CROP : 1962-1967

April 23rd 1961 on the Alcester Road, the K36 course, a Club 25 miles was won by Bob Richards, his first win, in 1-03-01, Nothing very startling in that. Amongst the other up and coming riders we read, Alan Richards 1-3-53, Trevor Bull 1-4-35, Anthony Taylor 1-6-29, Steve Lloyd 1-7-24, but what's this? G P Webb 1-12-34 (10 minutes late start)! Getting the results ready for publication it was realised that if this were correct, this youngster in his very first race, had actually produced the fastest time of 1-2-34! Memories of the meteoric rise of Basil Francis flooded the minds of older members - had we witnessed the birth of a future World Champion? The times of his (contemporaries) fellow riders indicated that in any case the Club had got a new crop of young potential 'stars' who were displacing the old ones.

It was also apt that the Taylor brothers, Albert and Frank, had designed a new title block for the magazine incorporating the new Clubroom at the newly built Knowle Community Centre, which had become the Club's H.Q. after a short spell at the Boat Inn, Catherine-de-Barnes, when Eric and Freda Walker had given up catering at Oak Farm in 1958 and the Club lost its old home. Although the Club offered to share in the building costs and to invest part of its 'Building Fund' in the venture in return for a permanent booking (one per week), the K.C.A. refused, (to the writer's mind, an unfortunate decision). This new 'block' raised some anti 'Letters-to-the-Editor', but at least it publicised where the Club was to

be centred - it was good advertising - something the Solihull has always tried to do through its enthusiastic members. Dave Cane, the 1961 Runs Secretary, had got enlargements of "AIRNEY PAIRKINS" and RUNS LISTS displayed in shop windows around Solihull. A Mrs Taylor with a son crazy on cycling had seen one so sent along 'Ant' Taylor. Trevor Bull at a Solihull School, likewise joined, when his father Geoff, himself an ex-member of the Birchfield C.C. noticed his son's interest in cycling. As for Alan ("Nipper") Richards, he can claim an enthusiastic father who pushed his son into doing 100 in 8 Reliability Trials at 12 years of age, which fortunately did not destroy his enthusiasm. He can also claim to have beaten G P Webb in the Club's 1961 Junior Best All-Rounder by the smallest possible margin!, but more of these future 'stars' later.

The Social branch achieved a scoop, when Ian Shaw of the Speedwell B.C., who had cycled round the World, agreed to give an Open Slide Show of his experiences at the Clubroom on Saturday 24 February 1962. It was a full house, with Pete Burton, an accomplished pianist, providing music of the countries visited, during the interval. A profit resulted so this was the start of regular annual open slide shows, usually by the Taylor brothers who explored the European countries by cycle, taking slides and films each year for their holidays. The Midlands Counties Cyclists Association and the Midlands Region of the Tricycle Association generally put on their Prize Presentations during intervals, and having shared the Midland tickets, they also share the profits.

One sad event this year. Arthur Houlston, one of the four Founder Members, the Club's polo playing goalkeeper, whom it was claimed - "turned slow bicycle riding to stop!" - caught a mysterious virus, was only ill for two days and died aged only 56. He had loyally supported Club activities, especially marking out the course since the inception of the Cycling Cross-Country event. Once, when a new organiser failed to inform him of the date of this annual 'chore' he was most hurt, and dashed round late at night to do the job. A valuable lesson here for all new officials - don't forget your older helpers!

Spring! and the sap was certainly rising. Under Derek Shuttleworth and Michael Hunt, the Touring Section developed as never before. Janet and Valerie Hunt as Clubroom Hostesses welcomed the many new members on Thursday evenings as well as attending the weekly runs and racing. Michael also produced a most stimulating series of TOURIST QUIZZES for several years in the magazine, the answers being given the following month, and as a dedicated 'non-racing' cyclist he rode Tourist Trials and was undoubtedly, along with Derek, responsible for the Solihull C.C. eventually promoting an Open Tourist Trial on the lines of the CYCLISTS TOURING CLUB'S National Competition, for which Cyril Lovegrove donated a Cup.

Almost every week during 1962 one or other member achieved some success, while the Invitation Scratch and Ladies Open Twenty-Fives for the B.S.A. Trophy and Ladies Bowl continued to attract the best riders in the country, although it was becoming noticeable that more star performers either had the

effrontery to request appearance money, (which they were most vehemently refused!), or declined the entrance-free invitation to pit themselves against the country's best just for the 'Olympic Principle' - the honour of having been selected and ridden - so to help cover organisational costs and encourage entrants to bring their Club teams, an Open 25 was run in conjunction with the Invitation event. One year, 1965, even an 'Overflow' event was necessary, incorporating Juniors and Veterans!

In the 1962 event Graham Webb did us proud tieing with Les West (Tunstall Wheelers) in 57-24 (K14 Course Record). In sixth place R Cromack (Southampton University) 59-18, who, on moving to Birmingham to teach Physics, promptly joined the S.C.C. - a first rate grafting on the Solihull stock. The legendary Beryl Burton, O.B.E., won the Ladies' Bowl with 1-6-58. Now all was ready for the bumper crop!

Trevor Bull, who had strong track leanings, was selected for the Empire Games where he came sixth in the 1 kilometre Time Trial after winning the Salford Track Championship and coming third in the N.C.U. Divisional Junior Sprint.

Howard Bayley specialised on the tricycle becoming National Road Champion with many wins and placings, including the Mersey 24 hours in which the Club gained the Booth Shield Team Award for the third time, Stan Bray fourth 445.81 miles, Dave Cane 423.91 miles and Howard 417.37 miles on three wheels, a new Club record.



Graham Webb.

Vinse" - the motto woven by himself into his woolly continental, which roughly translated means "He conquers all who conquers himself". How Howard lived up to this in his hard training and riding?

An excellently thought-out article in favour of the Junior B.A.R. (won by Ant Taylor), turned out to have been written by himself, and didn't his subsequent career confirm his views? The digs at 24 hour races raised a storm of criticism in READERS' PARLIAMENT in following issues of AWHEEL. The impression that one gets of constant discussion and communication of ideas between members with differing interests is correct. It was and is a vital factor in maintaining the liveliness and growth of a Club. Still in 1963 the R.T.T.C. did not allow any advertising on racing clothing at this time, but there was no longer the rule to have PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL on all Time Trial Start Sheets. Some regarded this as slow progress, others deplored the decline in responsibility. The M.R.R.A. set up Standards for Ladies to try and encourage girls to attempt records. As regards Club organisation, Graham Kelly put on the Open Invitation Scratch 25 miles T.T. - Les West winning the Invitation event in 56 mins 36 secs and G Hyatt (Saracen R C) the Open in 57-54. The Club's Open Road Race was won by D Harrison (Manchester Wheelers). Club records were broken at nearly all distances as Roy Cromack and the 'Black Raven' contended, the latter twice breaking the 25 miles, the second time being the fastest 25 of the year 54-3 in the Brentwood R.C. event but the Competition record eluded him, likewise in the 30 miles. By the end of the year, Roy had captured Bas Francis's Solihull

to Warwick and back (Bas led the Reunion Run!), pushed Bas Keogh's 12 hour record up to 254.7 miles; 100 miles to 4-14-36 and turned Graham Webb's 50 miles 2-0-5 into 1-58-35. Howard had the Trike 50 down to 2-15-36; Ant Taylor the Stonebridge to Daventry and back 2-12-58 while on the track Trevor Bull held the National 880 yds in 56.8 secs the 1,000m; Cromack the 4,000m Pursuit in 5 mins 20 secs; Junior Pete King won the Divisional R.R. Championship. Altogether another glorious year - the best yet? queried the AWHEEL November editorial.

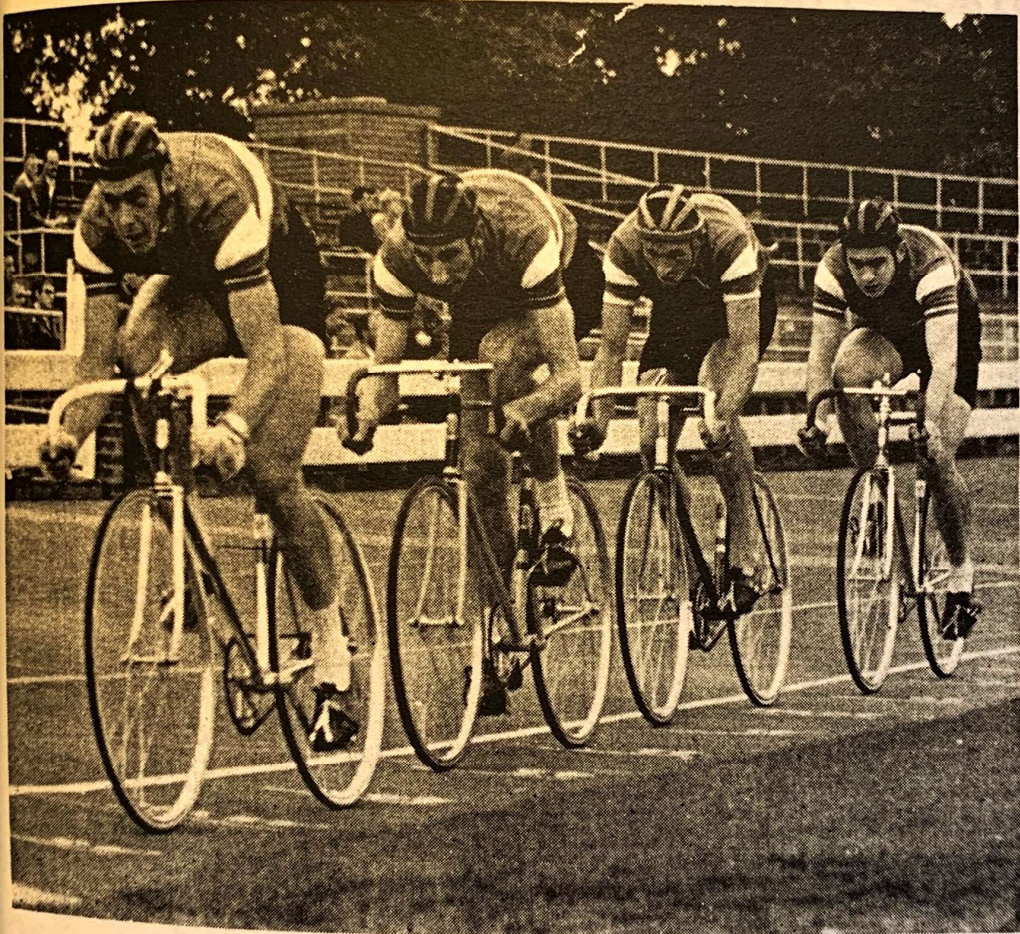
How could it be better? Yet 1964 was to prove it possible. All the racing stars scintillating more brilliantly although the January editorial complained about "selling the Solihull Spirit for a mess of pottage" referring to a problem besetting the sporting world in general. Do we want a world champion at any price? That we could and can produce World Champions is certain, as witness the achievements of Tommy Simpson, but look at the price he paid for it!

It may be perfectly alright for a few to forego Club pleasure - cycling in order to get to the top as long as the big majority are able to keep Club-Life going, but if the very existence of Club-Life with its health and happiness for ALL is to be prejudiced so that few can reach the top, then we must give deep and serious thought to whether we want to become the Bill Posters and Sandwich Board men of the business world? Such was the agonising during the 1960's about sponsorship, professionalism and amateurism, which continually filled the Letters to the Editor columns, sometimes overflowing into hostility resulting in the breakup of Clubs,

but the Solihull weathered these storms, possibly because of its safety valve, READERS' PARLIAMENT, which allowed members to publish their views and get them discussed.

Trevor Bull was in the Great Britain Pursuit Team riding in the World's at Paris and Olympics' at Tokyo; Roy Cromack rode in the World's Individual Pursuit and Graham Webb, along with D Harrison, Les West and D Woodings, represented Great Britain in 100Km Team T.T. at Zolder in Belgium as well as taking the bronze medal in the R.T.T.C. 25 miles Championship, and winning the Invitation Scratch 25 in 56-24 (Event Record) and backed up by Cromack, third 57-24 and John Tall 59-29 won the team award for the Sols. The Open 25 was won by V Nicholson (Rebel C.C) but the Sols took the team here, Roy Gordon, Barry Moss and Dave Lucas. The Ladies Open 25 was won by Janet Crowther (Corsham R.C) 1-9-30. The Open Road Race was won by Albert Hitchin (Falcon Cycles). The winner of the Club Junior B.A.R. was Paul Plowman, showing promise of the Webb class, but he disappeared from the scene without ever fulfilling it.

The Touring Branch made its mark with John Hunt winning the CTC Map-Reading Contest to gain one of the SHAW-BLAKELOCK Trophies, another one for the Divisional Team Pursuit Championship being brought to the Club by Bull, Webb, Cromack and Dave Lucas. The Club's Open Tourist Trial was won by Derek Shuttleworth with Chuck Elvin third and the Sols taking the Team Award with Valerie Hunt best lady. Truly 1964 was a "Golden Year" - 164 Open wins - in spite of no 'Golds' from the World or Olympic Championships.

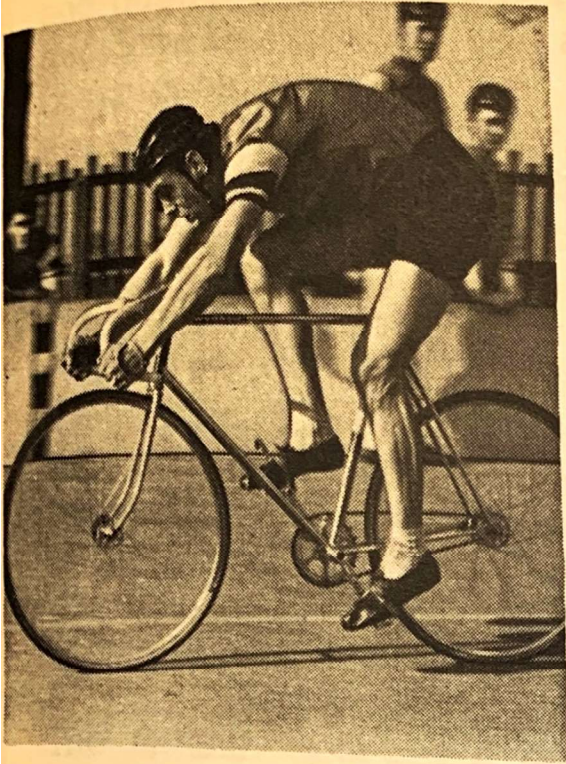


Trevor Bull, Graham Webb, Roy Cromack and
Andy King. National Team Pursuit Champions

1965

In 1965 this fruiting continued with Bull Sebastian and breaking the long standing 1 mile track record of Frank Southall as well as Sid Patterson's professional record. Cromack, best British rider in the Grand Prix de Belgium, took the R.T.T.C. National 10 miles record and came third in the 25 miles Championship, just beating Webb into fourth place, finishing on a broken frame. Andy King won the National Junior Sprint Championship. Howard Bayley, the bearded tricyclist, again won the National Tricycle B.A.R. and the Road Championship. Anthony Taylor was gaining placings and wins in Open T.T.'s, while new names were coming into prominence - Barry Moss, John Monk, Roger Storey - with Open R.R. wins and that amazing character, Lutz Durlacher, saved as a child from the German Holocaust and brought to England, was selected for the Maccabiah Olympic Games for the fourth time, although approaching veteran class. In all branches of the sport, Open wins and placings and Divisional Championships flowed into the Club. No other cycling club in the country could challenge the Solihull's virility at this time as talent and competition bred more 'stars'. Members were beginning to take it for granted, officials were finding it a strain, how long could it continue? There seemed to be an endless supply of up and coming stars.

Throughout 1966 racing successes continued and the 'golden trio' scintillated even more brightly. The newer buds were also adding their share to the crop. Mick Bennett, later a successful professional, showed his potential winning the Club's Junior B.A.R.



Trevor
Bull



ohn
lonk

and pushing Trevor Bull in the 1000m Sprint and 5 mile Scratch to take the Junior Track Championship from other gifted riders like D Holmes, Steve Tonry, M Rutter and M Eccleston, but the established stars had not relinquished their positions yet.

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John Monk selected for the Tour of Britain showed exceptional climbing ability in the mountains finally coming twenty-sixth while his contemporary Barry Moss almost had a restful season coming second to John in the R R Championship with 6 Open wins, including the Club's own Open Road Race, organised by Harry Reynolds.

The AWHEEL sported a new title block showing four different aspects of the sport. The editor called for a temporary replacement as he had been awarded a Shell Fellowship necessitating a year away from home, and the ever-faithful Mal Lawton stepped in. Geoff Bull was doing stalwart work for the track, having organised the Open Meeting at Salford Park where Andy King took his second successive National Junior Sprint title with such verve that no one doubted but that he would make it a hat-trick as he was still young enough, but this was 'counting the chickens before the eggs had hatched'!

An epic attempt on the Road Record Association and Midland R.R.A. 12 hour and 24 hour Tricycle Records using a Midlands course centred on Catherine-de-Barnes by Howard Bayley was blighted from the start by rain and gales adding to the handicaps of using such a course rather than the accepted straight out ones when wind assistance can be expected. It can be summed up in the words

of Howard at the start, "As an amateur with a job I've only got this weekend free, so I go!" and Alan Tomkins set him off and timed him to say at the finish "I've never seen an epic of suffering as time after time the wind swung against him and torrential rain drenched him". It was an occasion never to be forgotten with the rider covering 228 miles in the 12 hours held by Dave Duffield with 239 miles and 431 miles, almost equal with Pat Kenny's RRA distance done on a route down from the north, enough to put the MRRA record 'on the shelf' by 60 miles but failing to beat the National record by the smallest permissible margin quarter of a mile! Perhaps it was some small consolation that a fortnight later, under the worst conditions in the history of the event, Howard won the Mersey 24 hour with 462.12 miles on his solo bicycle. Tourist Derek Shuttleworth came fourth 420 miles but the Sols lacked a third man for the team this time.

The blend of Youth and Experience was highlighted in a list of over 20 members singled out for special mention in the 37th Dinner Special Issue of AWHEEL, of members other than the 'stars' who had shown outstanding loyalty and efforts on behalf of the Club; 5 Juniors, 5 Veterans and 8 Officials.

In the Manx International Barry Moss and John Monk riding in the leading bunches with the likes of Hugh Porter, Les West, Metcalfe, and Bettinson, finished, John sixth with Barry just behind. In the newly instituted Junior Championship 25 miles, Mick Bennett came fourth 58-40. Ray Richards organised the

National Cyclo-Cross Championship in Highbury Park, Birmingham, sponsored by the DAILY TELEGRAPH. M Stallard (Wolverhampton Whs), son of the famous Percy Stallard, was favourite for a fourth successive win from the 80 entrants. Having had a rider in the first three on three previous occasions, and won the team title once, the Sols were not without their high hopes carried by Mick Shakespeare, Barry Moss and Roger Storey. It was not yet to be - John Atkins (Coventry R.C) regained his Championship from Roger Page of the Edgbaston R.C. and Mick Shakespeare was the Sols best at sixteenth - there were failures! The organisation of the event received the highest praise from the Birmingham Parks Department, Daily Telegraph and the British Cyclo-Cross Association.

The 1966 Invitation Scratch 25 was won by the Competition Recordholder (54-04), Pete Bennett (Barnet C.C) in 56-14, leading his team to victory over the Solihull C.C. whose 'star', Graham Webb, was riding his first event of the season due to getting married, yet finished eighth in 57-27. Imagine this for a first outing of the season!, and what loyalty too. Supported by John Tall 58-58 (12th) and Ant Taylor 59-20 (13th).

Webb was selected for the Individual Pursuit in the World Championships at Frankfurt; Trevor Bull for the Empire Games 10 miles (winning a Bronze) and in the National Pursuit team. The three 'stars', supported by Andy King, took the National Team Pursuit Championship for the second year in succession and from the sublime to the ridiculous, even the Hobo Run was flourishing, as reported by Ken Humphries!

The Golden Trio gave an amazing display of talent and dedication in July 1966, organised impeccably by Tommy Godwin at Salford Park on a cool far from perfect evening, when they set up two National Records. First Trevor Bull, the true trackman in those days, attacked the long-standing one mile record of E V Mills 2mins. 1.2secs. His 1min.59 secs. also beat the longer standing professional record of W J Bailey, 2mins. 56secs.

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So much for starters.

By now the relatively small crowd of spectators, mostly Clubmates, gathered to enjoy such a feast, were really excited as the Black Raven was set off on his attempt on the 1 hour Track Record held by Les West. Steadily pushing his high gear he hardly varied in lap times although the breeze got up and it grew colder as spectators yelled encouragement and banged the side boards. 4 seconds off Roy's 10 mile record; 40 seconds off West's 25 miles record! Could he maintain this pace? Although tiring he became the first to top 27 miles and added over a lap, 583 yards to be precise to the Hour Record. He had really made it look easy. Older members recalled Bas Francis's attempt on this record when held by Charlie Marriner and the World Records set up by H H Hill, E V Mills and Paul at the Vigorelli Track in Italy. Surely Webb deserved a crack at those, but no Fund was ever started to pay the expenses which would have been involved.

Roy Cromack who had won the National 10 miles Track Record in record time, 22mins. 0secs. at Herne Hill, and had had the honour of receiving the Cup from Jacques Anquetil, the French Tour de France Star in 1964, as if to

crowd the evening and compensate for losing his 10mile record to a Clubmate by 4 seconds, obliged by winning the 20 miles Roadman's final event. What a competitor!

A letter from a very promising youngster summed up the advantages of belonging to a Club which provided all-round activities, early in 1967 :-

Dear Editor,

I would be very grateful if you could publish this letter, as a record of my appreciation of the Solihull C.C.

After a great deal of indecision I have at last come to the almost 'heartbreaking' conclusion that I will be unable to continue racing for at least another two years, even though I had planned a blitz on the National Junior B.A.R. and also a two month tour of the Continent this year. The reason is the considerable burden of the 'A' level courses which I am now undertaking, which involves obtaining high grades as I am hoping eventually to get to Cambridge University.

I have not had a bad career so far, despite last Season's spate of accidents and I feel that my successes have been largely due to the Club and its members, especially Geoff and Trevor Bull. The story might certainly have been different if I had not joined the Solihull in the first place, and met so many people who have given me both advice and also a great deal of confidence and keen-ness.

Thank you all for a happy, memorable,
two years. Hoping the Club will
continue to thrive.

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Yours sincerely,

Christopher M Plant

(Chris was Club Junior Mass-start Champion in 1966 but clearly did not let possible glamour in the future cloud his views. This is always a difficult decision for anyone with sporting talent. Undoubtedly this was the Solihull's loss. - Ed.)

So the AWHEEL under its new editor featured repeats of Touring pictures on the front covers giving a refreshing look to it.

Geoff Bull reminded members of six more names left out of the list of those congratulated for their work for the Club who in his opinion typified the 'Solihull Spirit'; Frank Wells, Dick Bowes, Trevor Bayliss, Harry Reynolds, Ray Richards, and Graham Kelly, but disapproved of such lists precisely because they were 'endless' in the Solihull!

In Time Trials, the names of 'Nipper' Richards and Mick Bennett appeared frequently at the head of affairs, although John Tall managed to hang on to the Club 25 Championship. Chris Moseley with John Monk, Barry Moss, Roger Storey and Pete King dominated the Road Race results - for sadly all good things come to an end - and this year 1967 was to see the end of the five years' bumper crop occasioned by the Golden Trio.

Roy & Joyce Cromack moved to a new job in Yorkshire. Trevor Bull and Graham Webb were feeling they had exhausted the amateur sphere and were thinking of turning professional. It was as if there was to be some natural pruning. Rumours were rife but quickly killed by explanations of the resignations of Cromack, Webb, Bull, Steve Lloyd and Sheila Bray an ex-magazine distributor. Webb and Bull moved to the newly formed Birmingham R.C.C. formed from a union of the famous Rover R.C.C. and Wyndham R.C. feeling that Tommy Godwin could perhaps help their aspirations. Webb went on to the Continent, was selected for the World Championships and won the Amateur gold, before turning professional, while Trevor Bull soon followed into the pro ranks. Steve Lloyd transferred to the neighbouring Shirley Road Club nearer to his home, and Sheila Bray was getting married to John Greatwood (Dulwich Paragon) so going to live in London.

How did the Club respond to this pruning? New shoots were given a chance to grow.

The way was now open for the many rising riders to show their talents. Ant Taylor became the time trial star with the bronze medal in the R.T.T.C. 50 miles Championships with 1-55-42 after a season of numerous Open wins in course and event records at 25 and 50 miles, confirming his star status by capturing Roy Cromack's Club 50 record with 1-52-51 also the 30 record 1-6-58.

'Ant' whose hero was, Raymond Poulidor, the professional road racing star, strangely excelled in Time Trialling and showed prodigious determination over the next few



"Ant" Taylor, the first man to bring the 100 mile record inside 3-50-00, in winning the Yorkshire Century event with 3-46-37 in 1969. This stayed on the shelf for 7 years and 54 under-four-hour rides until 1976.

years, not the least in taking advantage of a turn of family fortunes which removed the immediate necessity for him to have to earn his living. Where most would have relaxed and gone prematurely to seed, Ant dedicated himself to a hard training programme of over 300 miles a week with the British Best All-Rounder his aim.

The young Mick Bennett won the B.C.F's Junior Road Race Championship as well as the Club Junior B.A.R. Track Championship and in the Divisional Pursuit team which came third nationally, challenged on road and track by Steve Tonry, with six open wins. John Reeves, Richard Travis, Maurice Rutter and Ian McQuaig also had wins. The remaining established stars continued to shine. Barry Moss was selected for the Tour of Britain and with John Monk had several Open wins. Tricyclist Howard Bayley all set for a second win in the Mersey 24 hours on his solo was struck down by illness and had to settle for a courageous second place with 457 miles to Robin Goodfellows (Beacon R.C.C) 475 miles but he won the National 100 mile Tricycle Championship for the third successive time.

There were many veterans (over 40 years old) who kept the Club's colours in the news: Tom Tall, Alex Wullum, Ron Lingham, Neville Greg, Bill Massie, Tom Kempshall, John Moore, Stan Bray and that evergreen star of the 40s and 50s, Dick Bowes.

The Club was still in 'good heart' and invited Graham Webb, World Amateur Road Race Champion as guest of honour to the Annual Dinner. Most unfortunately it clashed with a professional racing engagement so we did not meet Graham until he came over to England and won the Crystal Palace Professional Race.

Membership was high, over 150 and competition in Club events more open than ever. Tony Herraty won the Open B.A.R., Gladys Weeks (Newton) the Ladies B.A.R., Graham Kelly the Club B.A.R. Eddie Bray the 12 hour Trophy, and Roy Gordon the 100 miles.

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The cycling world was shocked by the death of Tommy Simpson while riding the Tour de France and the Club mourned the passing of 'CAP', Sid Capener at 95, the Grand Old Man of Cycling, a Vice President who had beaten 2 hours for 50 miles on the track in 1903!

Time Trial Secretary, Graham Kelly, together with John Moore and Bas Keogh formed a sub-committee and organised the prestigious Invitation Scratch 25 for 1967. They tried out the idea of running it in categories, but a worthy rider Brian Hayes of the Oldbury C.C. won in 58-54 so maintaining its standards on a very hard morning. Unfortunately the Ladies' Open was not run, but the Open Road Race, (R. Lee, thornhill C.C.); Open Cyclo-Cross, (M Stallard, Wolverhampton R.C.C.) and Open Circuit Race, (Ian Hallam, Beeston R.C.) all produced notable winners.

Elected most promising member of the year, John Bassett later emigrated to Australia and Eric Arthur the ever-loyal Treasurer was elected an Honorary Life Member. President Noel Brealey, upon his retirement to Christchurch, resigned as President, a most serious loss to the Club at a time when a firm hand on the helm was never more needed!

The slow decline of the conventional Club runs and Social activities continued in 1968 in keeping with the times in general, made worse by the loss of Derek and Valerie Shuttleworth, who left to go and live near Ross on Wye, which district benefitted by their tourist enthusiasm, but Ray Richards offered to keep weekly runs going and the Hobo Run was held with Road Racing enthusiast John Monk elected Chief Hobo for 1969. Bas Keogh as General Secretary was encouraged to streamline committee meetings, but the suggestion that only officials be allowed to attend was widely rejected. Another serious loss was Star Tricyclist, Howard Bayley, who moved to Tetbury, but Stan Bray had returned from London and Steve Tonry was elected most promising member for his superlative rides including the fastest 10 miles of the year!

Ant Taylor came second in the National 12 hour Championship with 267 miles, a new Club Record, recorded the season's fastest 30 miles 1-7-15, and excelled by coming second in the B.B.A.R. Not quite these yet! How could he make it?

Barry Moss and John Monk were selected to ride in the Tour of Britain, the former gaining a second place in Stage 14 and finishing 41st overall, earning selection for the Peace Race, and the latter unfortunately retiring after showing up very well in the mountains, but he was selected for the Manx International. Up and coming Mick Bennett continued to progress to sixth place in the Tour of Israel.

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On the organisational side, the Club's Road Race was changed to an event for professionals sponsored by Davenport's Brewery and organised by Pete King. The 30th Invitation Scratch 25 was won by J Mummery (Polytechnic C.C) in 56-37 from D Kenny (Elizabethan C.C) 56-59, and the National 25 miles Champion, Ray Ward, 58-12 leading the Oldbury C.C. to a team win. Cyclo-Cross was increasing its attraction for members with Roger Page being selected for the World Championships and Mick Shakespeare as first reserve, Roger coming fourteenth.

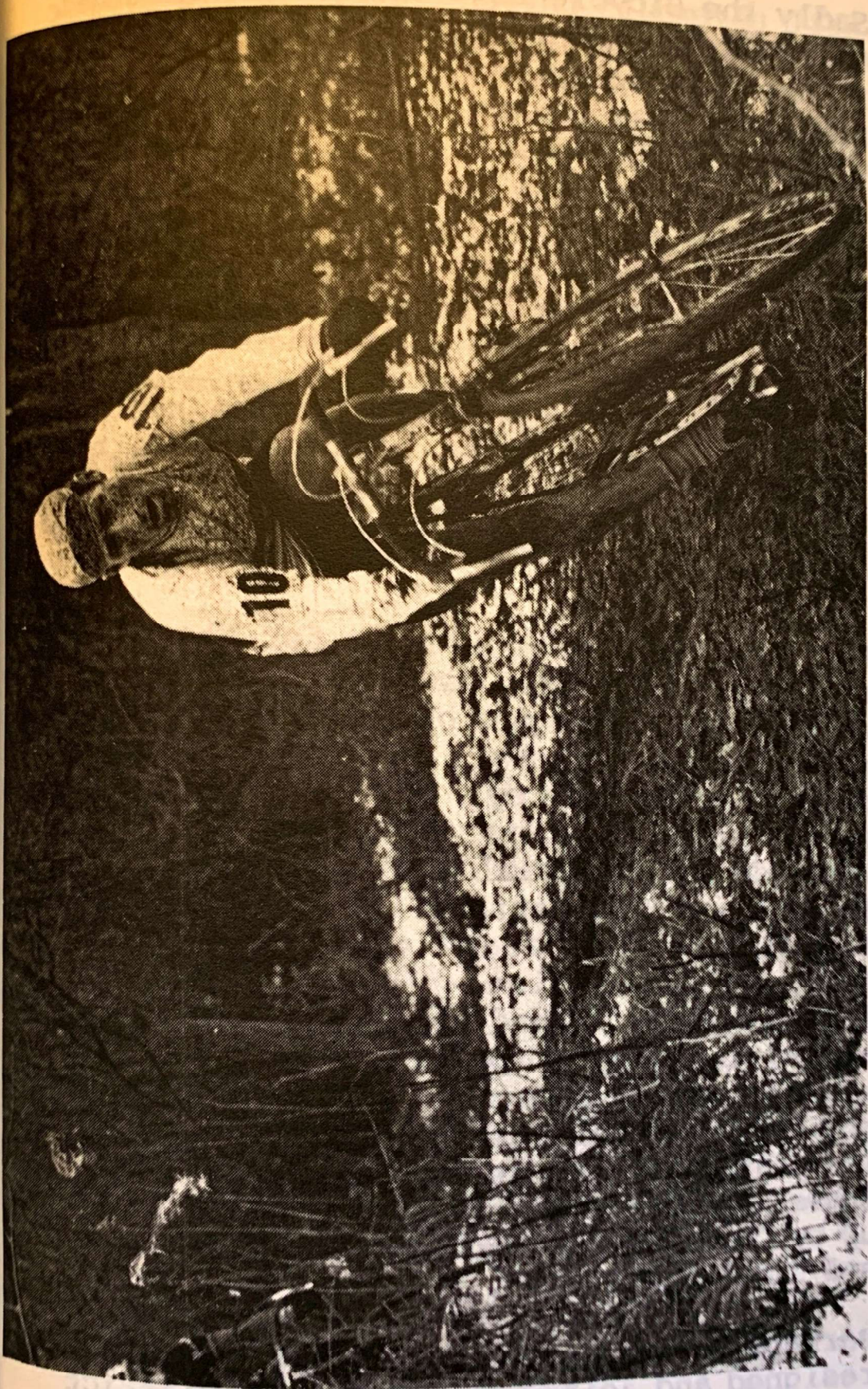
Veteran Tom Tall won the Club B.A.R. thanks to his completing a 12 hour indicating the lessening interest in long distance events by younger riders.

Financially the Club made a loss this year and there were arguments about profits from the CYCLISTS' CALENDAR being given exclusively to the Magazine Fund. Mal Lawton, who had edited the AWHEEL during Stan Bray's absence, as well as all his other efforts on behalf of the Club, was fittingly elected an Honorary Life Member. Planned to stem falling membership, the Supporters Club was changed to Social membership for 5/- per year and one member was suspended for one month in connection with the Dinner accounts. These money matters, in spite of committee meeting being held at the home of Alex Wellum, who also kindly provided refreshments. A proposed Tommy Simpson Memorial 25 was cancelled by organiser Alex Wellum with full publicity by advertisement in CYCLING which ensured that no entries were received so no-one was inconvenienced yet the R.T.T.C. saw fit to exact on the Club a most savage sentence of suspension from promoting Time Trials for 12 months.

As with all such unreasonable penalties it did the reputation of the R.T.T.C. most harm and stimulated the Club to greater efforts to maintain the integrity of the sport in the following year 1969.

In order to maintain the continuity of the Invitation Scratch 25, the organiser wisely made use of two facts: (a) the rules allowed up to 4 clubs to run an Inter-Club event with up to 120 riders; (b) it so happened by good chance that at that time possibly 80 of the best 25 milers in the Country were members of the Merseyside Wheelers, the Cardiff Ajax, the Oldbury & District C.C. and the Solihull C.C., so invitations were sent out to these Clubs and in due course the event was run off on the hilly K8 course in the Worcester area producing a win for Willi Moore (Merseyside Wheelers) in 56-27 with Ray Ward of the Oldbury second in 57-01 and D Blount (Oldbury) third 57-08 to take the team. The Sols John Tall, so often third man in the winning Club team, kept the flag flying in fourth place. So continuity and honour was saved! Sadly the Ladies event could not be run.

The highlight of year (1969) was the National Cyclo-Cross Championship held in Highbury Park, Birmingham, organised by Ray Richards, sponsored by Tower Cycles for our own Barry Moss won from the favourite Roger Page and both were selected for the World Championships. They were backed up by Denis Boyle to take the Team medals as well. In the Schoolboys Championship the Solihull's Neil Jauncy gained the Bronze Medal.



Barry Moss, 1968/9 National Cyclo-Cross
Champion

Sadly the Bicycle Polo section was disbanded. Considerations about buying a Clubroom frequently engaged committee meetings, reflecting the dissatisfactions at the Knowle Village Hall where it was getting difficult to get volunteers to make tea and serve drinks as well as get the table tennis equipment, billiards and rollers put away each week, members leaving it to the patient loyal Eric Arthur. In spite of the membership reaching 100 by July, there was still much concern over finance and two Junior members were appointed to the Committee in an attempt to get new members interested in their Club and so maintain the 'Solihull Spirit'.

Bas Keogh, a keen worker for the Club, several times Club Champion and Secretary, unfortunately resigned on leaving the country and such loyal members seemed increasingly difficult to come by. More cheering signs were the increasing attendances on Y.H. Weekends and at Social events reported by Bob Powell and Tony Herraty. Mick Bennett was becoming a top class rider in line for National selection. In spite of these hopeful signs it had been a difficult year administratively, partly due to so many members who had been elected to official positions not being able to serve throughout the year, thus throwing additional burdens on those remaining. Little wonder it was summed up by Chairman, Ray Richards, as "a difficult and frustrating year".

Perhaps it was ironical that Ant Taylor had resigned and joined the Oldbury & District C.C. in order to get that little extra challenge he needed to reach his ambition - the B.B.A.R.! Instead of being praised for a

25 mile win in 55 mins having clubmates like Ray Ward who could regard it as slow - such was his dedicatin, thus he became the first man to beat 3 hours 50 minutes for 100 miles, doing 3-46-37 and win the 1969 Best All Rounder Competition, also selected and riding in the World Championships Team Time Trial at Leicester, only to return to the Solihull C.C. for 1971. Of equal interest, was ex-member Roy Cromack (riding for the Clifton C.C) becoming the first man to beat 500 miles when winning the Mersey. R.C. event with 507 miles, a record which stands to this day (1985). To recall that he once said that long distance riding was not racing!