

AWheel

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SOLIHULL CYCLING CLUB

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REGISTERED GO-RIDE CLUB



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Front Cover: Graham Webb

Rear Cover: Under 16s looking like they are on a Club Run during the Circuit Race © Christian Bodremon

Editor's Corner



Another edition sadly reporting on the death of an old SCC member, Graham Webb and as I've found out quite a legend!

Summer holidays are upon us, circuit leagues are finishing and CX season is fast approaching, Ed here has decided to register for this year's West Midlands Cycle Cross League so no doubt tales of woe will follow in future editions.

We've been busy at the track this year with coaching sessions well attended. Diary constraints have meant I could only attend one of Paul Mann's Wednesday nights but that was enough for me to be convinced to see a doctor! Well would you believe it, not only had I got a chest infection requiring two rounds of antibiotics, I've also been diagnosed with asthma but what a difference that little inhaler makes...thanks for the push guys!

A special thanks must go to Mick Edensor who along with his band of volunteers organised the highly successful final round of the West Midlands Youth Circuit League, as Guy Elliot stated "It was impeccably organised. You and your team thought of everything and have set a new benchmark! Well done to you all!"

I hope you enjoy this edition, you'll find reports covering several SCC hosted events, an epic tale of adventures in France plus the usual success stories and dates for your diary.

Safe Riding!

Rocky



Send copy to:

editor@solihullcc.org.uk

Letters to Ed

A big thank you to everyone that came out and supported this year's Cream Tea event, at Kington & Dormston Village Hall on 9th July.

As ever, the event was very well supported, not only by our own club members but a large number of riders from other clubs, including the Saracen, Beacon and Redditch.

This year's attendees also included an unknown chap, who arrived early having fallen into a ford, a motorcyclist and 3 horses! Three new markets to explore for next year!



Additional thanks also to Susan Blackman for her delicious chocolate creation, Jenny Tonry for her flapjacks and cheese scones and Roger Cliffe for his tray balancing skills!

The event was very successful, in terms of raising much needed funds for Manisha UK, the Nepalese schools charity, of which both Sue Hearn and I are Trustees. Thanks to the generosity of riders and locals on the day, in addition to a number of individual donors, we raised £1013 including Gift Aid. As you can imagine, this amount of money will have a massive impact on the lives of the Nepalese children we support. Many thanks once again.

Steve Tonry

Thank
you



I wanted to pass on my thanks to two members of your club.

On Saturday I was riding along Benton Green Lane, Berkswell. Two cyclists, a man and a lady, let me know that they were approaching from behind well before they were 'within range' of spooking my pony.

I thanked them as they passed and they responded too. I saw 'Solihull CC' on a shirt.

If you can work out who they are (?), please could you pass on my thanks again for their consideration. *Ed says: Was this you?*

I must say that most cyclists in the area do alert me to their presence if approaching from behind. Just a "Bike!", whistle or a cough is enough. Horses tend to be spooked if surprised so any such consideration is very welcome.



Kind regards

Louise Wiseman

A big 'thank you' to all the Solihull Club members who chose the Tour d'Ilmington as the coffee break on the 2nd July. It was great to see such a good turnout of Club members. The Rotary organisers would like to thank all the Solihull cyclists for supporting this event and for their generous donations.

There was a record number of cyclists riding the two courses and over £3,000 was raised for local Rotary charities and good causes.

Again, thank you all for your contribution to the success of this event.

Bob Armstrong

Cycling WEEKLY Letter of the Week

I read with interest that Bradley Wiggins is training 7 days a week for the rowing at the next Olympics. I am sure he could make a top pair with Froomey. He may need some bulking up after the tour but they will both have excellent endurance. Our Saturday run was discussing who should be cox and the only sensible choice was Nairo.

Russ Perry

Another Ironman in the club

Just to know I've taken part in the Outlaw long triathlon (2.6m Swim, 112m Ride and 26.2m Run)



I've represented the club to say thanks for the support on the cycling for the past two years and I've also the SCC top!

Leonardo Ferrari



I thought you might like to know that last weekend, I rode the 2000m. Individual Pursuit (75+ Age Category), at Newport Velodrome

Having won Gold in 2016, I am very pleased to say that I was successful in winning the Gold Medal, thus retaining my National Title.

Bob Richards

Ed says Well Done All!

Road Race Win

In only his third ever road race, 17 year old junior rider Harrison Knight took victory in a sprint for the line in the lanes of Inkberrow following a race full of incident. Riders can only race on the roads in the year they turn 17 and they take part in senior races. 79 riders rolled out of Inkberrow Village Hall including three from Solihull CC - Harrison Knight, twin brother Jacob and Gary Blackman.

A third of the way into the race, Harrison attacked off the front and stayed away for approx. 6km at one time making a 43 second gap on the rest of the field but with the strong head wind on part of the course, he realised the attack was to no avail and settled back into the bunch which was getting smaller due to the pace and one or two crashes at the back of the field.

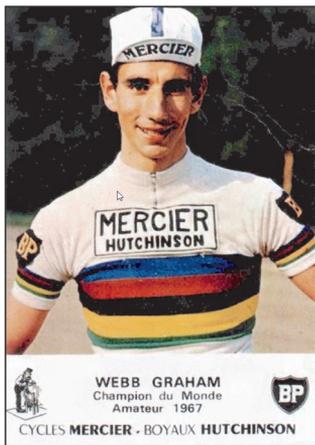
With 7 miles to go, Harrison had kept quiet in the peloton and made his way to the front of the bunch at the finishing straight and timing his sprint to perfection, crossed the finish line a bike length clear of 2nd place. Jacob Knight finished 14th, 1 and a half seconds down and Gary Blackman just behind Jacob in the bunch.

Harrison said "I've done a lot of training recently and felt strong today but I realised I couldn't do a solo ride in the wind so took a breather in the bunch and made sure I was well positioned to sprint for home. I am very pleased with my performance today."



Graham Webb 1994-2017

Former Solihull CC member and the 1967 amateur men's road race world champion Graham Webb died in May at the age of 73.



Graham, who lived in Flanders for much of his adult life, was best known for his winning ride at the amateur World Championships in which he had been working for team-mate Peter Buckley before he was dropped from the winning breakaway. He took the lead inside the closing kilometres to score his famous world-beating victory.

Graham was also a three-time British national champion on the track in the early part of his career.

A Birmingham-born racer and Solihull CC member he turned professional with the Mercier BP Hutchinson team in 1968.

He became a fixture of the racing scene in Belgium in later years and was inducted into the British Cycling hall of fame in 2010.

A Few Tributes to Graham

There can be little doubt that Graham was the most talented rider the club, and perhaps even England, has ever produced. In 1967 he won the World Amateur Road Race Championships in Heerlen, The Netherlands, with this being in an era when riders from the Eastern Bloc did not turn professional and so were incredibly hard to beat along with strong riders from the traditional cycling nations.

Guy Elliot

Club President

Graham, in every sense of the word, was a true inspiration to me. It was spotting him (in his Lutz GB track suit) racing up and down Stoney Lane in Sparkbrook that ignited my interest in cycling. Living in the street adjacent to mine, he encouraged me to join the Solihull CC along with my friend Barry Bullivant (now living, and still cycling, in Australia) and sometimes we even rode together on Thursday nights to the clubroom in Knowle, a truly very painful experience.

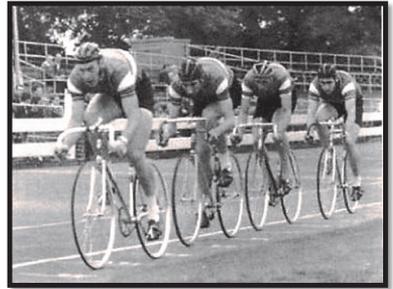
The memories of Graham will stay with me forever as he was, without probably really knowing it, instrumental in shaping my life's pathway

A true gentleman, amazing bike rider who, in the face of tremendous hardship, became a World Road Champion.

RIP Graham

Mick Bennett

My abiding memory of Graham, was wishing him good luck for the Worlds, when Mick and I raced in Holland and getting home, at the precise moment he was on the box, crossing the line, having won it. I also recall Tommy G's Monday night madisons, where Webby was paired with Trev and the very strong team pursuit squad of Webb, Bull, Cromack and King. Barry Moss later replaced Andy King.



I also recall Graham attempting a club trike record. Can't remember the distance but he was unable to negotiate the turn in the road, dismounted, turned it round and got back on. He still got the record!

Steve Tonry

On researching Graham's early days my favourite story is when he entered his first race aged 17, a 25-mile time trial. Unaware of what he was supposed to do, shy and not understanding why competitors were starting individually as opposed to together in a bunch, he waited until he was called, by which point, he was late for his allocated start time.

Wearing a T-shirt and pumps, Graham set off under the impression that he had to catch the riders that had started ahead of him in order to win. He was hampered initially as one of his pumps fell off and he had to wait for cars to pass before being able to return to collect his shoe and continue. Graham later commented that "I quickly caught someone and waited for him. And he was telling me 'clear off, clear off' – very unsociable, I thought. I rode on, went round the turn in the road, came back; and the chain jumped off between the block and the frame. I had to undo the back wheel, put the chain on, do up the wheel nuts and carry on."

The following Thursday evening, Graham found out that he was the winner of the race and had ridden the 25 miles in 1 hour 1 minute and 31 seconds. Had it not been for the penalty of the late start and mechanical trouble, he would have broken the hour on an ordinary sports bicycle; at a time when to ride 25 miles in less than an hour was still the dream of most experienced cyclists.

Ed



West Midlands Youth Circuit Races

150 riders congregated at the 9th and final round of the West Midlands Youth Circuit Series held at the Tudor Grange Circuit in Solihull on Saturday in wet and cold conditions that resembled an Autumn day

With the first race for the Under 8s starting early in the morning, the wet weather had set in and the surface of the course was very wet. This didn't deter the youngsters who rode 15 laps around the circuit with four of



the 8 Solihull CC riders in their first ever race. Solihull's Teddy Wright put in a tremendous performance to come in 5th place and finish the series of 9 races in 5th overall.

By the time the Under 10s started, the rain had stopped but the course was still wet. Until the youngsters reach 13, boys and girls compete in the same races, but their results are reported separately. And so it was Ella Tandy and Holly Saunders lined up with Sam Brownsword, Patrick Keely and Max Kilroy. Ella lapped all the other girls during the 16 lap race and having won 4 of the 6 races, coming 2nd in the remaining two, took Gold in the Race Series. After the race Ella said "I felt very excited for our Solihull race. It is a track that I know very well which helped, especially with the rainy showers. I was a bit nervous because I wanted to win the Solihull race the most out of all the series."



The Under 12s race was won by Emyr Truelove, an Abergavenny rider. Our three

Solihull CC riders did themselves proud with Max Saunders coming 10th, Ben Woodhouse 11th and Jack Alexander 18th. Max Saunders loves being on the front of a race and he was pleased with the way he rode. Max said "At about the half way stage, a Lyme rider and I decided to go off the front and we worked together off the front for about two laps but then got caught by the pack. I had attacked the front in a couple of previous races and wanted to give it a go on my home track in the final race. I like being on the front and it's exciting."

Five Solihull CC riders started on the grid for the U14s, with new Solihull member Jack Fothergill taking 2nd in a sprint finish after 28 laps, behind Kieran Riley of Langdale Lightweight Racing Team from the East Midlands. Conor Jones also performed well finishing 7th, his second highest result all summer. It was a fast paced race and those who couldn't keep with the pace were out the back and lapped.



The last race of the day was the U16 boys and it proved to be the fastest and driest of the day. Solihull CC has a number of riders in this category and Jacob Reid was the stand out rider for Solihull over the 45 lap race. He attacked from early on along with two Halesowen riders. The 15 year old Solihull rider who only a few days before completed a 10 mile



Time Trial in a very quick time of 22 mins 57 secs is inexperienced at circuit racing and worked a lot on the front, which meant he tired and eventually fell back into the bunch and allowed the two Halesowen riders to get away. A very good effort by Jacob.

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© Mike Adams Photography

Harry Reynolds, who presented both the medals for the race and the trophies to the series winners, said “I am very proud of Solihull CC and the circuit at Tudor Grange. It is all I had envisaged when I first had the idea of a circuit in the borough some 10 years ago”

Mick Edensor, the organiser of the event said “There is an awful lot of time and effort that goes into



© Christian Bodremon

organising and running this event. It wouldn't be possible without the fantastic team of volunteers who give up their time to make sure the day runs like clockwork, and today, run like clockwork it did! The best part though is knowing that all the children who raced today gave 100% and were still smiling at the end!!”

Ed says Well Done Mick same again next year.

Results for the Solihull riders as follows:

U8 girls Rose Neely 3rd, Charlotte Cooper 4th

U8 boys Teddy Wright 5th, Matthew Hitchmough 9th, Daniel Brownsword 11th, William Garner 4th, Seb Rogers 13th and William Mansell 14th

U10 G winner Ella Tandy, Solihull CC, Holly Saunders 3rd,

U10 B Sam Brownsword 11th, Patrick Neely 14th, Max Kilroy 14th

U12 B Max Saunders 10th, Ben Woodhouse 11th, Jack Alexander 18th

U14 B Jack Fothergill 2nd, Conor Jones 7th, Jacob Jones, 15th, Oliver Tandy 18th, Joshua Pearson 24th

U16 B Jacob Reid 14th, Nathan Edensor 15th, Tom Withers 16th, Alexander Harper 17th, Jordan Hall-Wallace 22nd

Success for Stuart

For five Wednesday evenings in May, Solihull Cycling Club hosted a circuit race at Tudor Grange Circuit. Called No Frills Racing, it is a great spectacle with 40 riders racing round the Solihull circuit for just over one hour. Riders come from all over the region to take part and with the circuit only taking 40 riders, some weeks riders were turned away as too many turned up to race.



Most weeks the average speed was 25mph + and riders from University of Warwick, Dynamic Rides and Mammoth Lifestyle Racing Team were winners on one of the evenings, but on Week 4, Stuart Jameson from Solihull CC took the victory with a fine sprint for home which started 150 metres before the finish line and was won by several bike lengths. The pace was fairly quick from the start, evidenced by the number of riders who were out the back of the bunch. This pace continued throughout with a number of attacks off the front which all came to nothing as the group closed each one down so it went down to the final sprint. Jameson is no stranger to podium finishes having won a Pinvin Road Race earlier in the year but this is the first time he has tasted victory in one of the No frills Races. His Solihull team mate Jacob Knight came in 6th in his first No Frills Race having been the rider who chased down many of the attacks during the race.

Stuart was then on the podium for the 6th time this season when he won a silver medal at the LVRC National Circuit Race

Championships at the Milton Keynes National Bowl. Chris Burns from Buckinghamshire won Gold and Jarad Millar from St Albans took the bronze in a race that attracted more than 55 of the country's best Veteran Circuit race riders from clubs as far north as Manchester and south as far as London and Cardiff. The race was littered with incident with the first crash taking place after 3 laps with one of the race favourites going down heavily. Stuart said afterwards "I closed a number of attacks and was happy for the race to come back together knowing I had a good chance in any sprint". With 5 laps to go the final attack was brought back and the race came down to the final sprint.

With 1 lap to go, Stuart looked boxed in and in trouble near the back of the peloton but it opened up on the outside and he was able to jump up to 5th wheel. On the final straight one of the teams launched 2 riders onto the front to lead out and Jameson jumped on to 3rd wheel. The front rider, the lead out man, took the riders to 150m before tiring and peeling off. The two remaining riders had gapped the field so it became a straight 1 v 1 sprint. Hitting 65kmh, Stuart had caught and was overlapping Burns but the line came too soon and Burns took the win by a half a bike length.

Stuart said after the race "I will definitely be back trying to grab the champions jersey next year & hope that Tudor Grange Track might host the event". "This is my second year back racing, after racing for Solihull as a school boy in the late 1980's!. My results are a testament to how vibrant and strong SCC is that I've been able to get to this level.



Women Get Separate Cross League Race

The new cyclo-cross season starts in the West Midlands on Sunday 3rd September at the Abbey Sports Stadium in Redditch, and for the first time in the Ridley-Lazer West Midlands Cyclo-Cross League (WMCCL), there will be an entirely separate race for women. Previously women and veteran men had a combined race. This is a welcome response to an increase in participation levels and the calls of many women league members over recent years. It's hoped that this move will encourage even more women to take part each week.

Why not give cyclo-cross a try this Autumn? The club is under-represented in both men's and women's senior categories, and cyclo-cross is probably the easiest way to start cycle racing. The courses are not as challenging as those used for mountain biking. Any mountain or disc brake-equipped road bike will get you round. If you want to have a go, we'll be running the usual mid-week cyclo-cross training sessions at Tudor Grange from mid-August.

The current list of WMCCL events for the forthcoming season is as follows. One or two more may be added.

- 3rd September Abbey Sports Stadium, B'ham Road, Redditch, B97 6EJ
- 10th September Pipe Hayes Park, Chester Road, Birmingham. B24 0HG
- 17th September Johnsons Coaches, Liveridge Hill, Henley. B95 5QS
- 24th September Heart of England Conference Centre, Fillongley. CV7 8DX
- 1st October Shelsley Walsh Hill Climb, Shelsley Walsh, . WR6 6RP
- 15th October Baggeridge Country Park, Sedgeley. DY3 4HB
- 22nd October Misterton Hall, Misterton, Lutterworth. LE17 4JP
- 19th November Baggeridge Country Park, Sedgeley. DY3 4HB
- 29th November Blackwell Court, Agmore Road, Bromsgrove. B60 1PX

Round 4 is the one hosted by Solihull CC. Sunday 24th September is a big day for cycling in Birmingham. There are also two big sportives in the area that day, but we're sticking with that date in order to retain our slot in the cyclo-cross calendar and fit with the Heart of England Conference Centre, which is a superb venue for cyclo-cross. We're hoping that members of this great club will, once again, help us to make this the best event of the season and a fabulous day out for cycling families.

Here's our schedule of events for the day:

08:00	Complete the course build (started on Saturday afternoon)
10:00	Under-8's race (10 minutes)
10:20	Under-10's race (15 minutes)
10:45	Under-12's race (20 minutes)
11:10	Course open for practice
11:30	Youth race (Under-16s) (30 minutes)
12:15	Men 50+ race (40 minutes)
13:05	Course open for practice
13:35	Women's race (40 minutes)
14:30	Junior Men, Senior Men and Men 40+ race (50 minutes)
15:30	Clear course and return equipment to Tudor Grange

We are looking for volunteers to help us on both Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th September. If you can help, please do. The more people we get, the less time each person has to devote to helping and the more time they get to enjoy the great racing. Even if you can only spare a couple of hours, your help will be greatly appreciated. Please contact me (gary.rowingparker@gmail.com) if you want to give cyclo-cross a try or if you can help at Fillongley.

Gary RP



Tommy Godwin Memorial LVRC C/D race

Sunday 4 June 2017

Race Report from Paul Mann

After missing out on this race last year due to 'Lead car' duties, I was looking forward to this year's race. I'd disappointingly punctured within a mile of the start of the National Handicaps the previous Sunday, but managed a chain gang and our BC No Frills race on the week leading up to the Tommy Godwin, so I was feeling strong and confident. My confidence was also helped by the fact that I got into a break in the 'Gerry Hughes' memorial 2 weeks previously and won my age category, coming 5th in the race.

Come race day, I was at the race HQ in Bearley for 7.30am setting out the tables and chairs whilst Ian and Russ were out putting up the course. I had already completed the most important task on the run up to the event – ordering and collecting all the cakes for the day!

With the race underway and 39 other riders around me, I set about looking for a small number of riders who I thought were a danger and would aim to get into a break. People like Martin Webster, Phil Rayner, Mark Hammersley, Craig Wilson, Graham Balshaw and Carl Moseley. The race stayed together for the first lap with a number of attacks that came to nothing. Then on the second lap of the six, coming out of Snitterfield and towards Wolverton, a rider slipped away and made a gap. At that stage I was near the front of the group and behind the wheel of the National D cat LVRC Champion, Graham Balshaw. I saw him change gear and get out of the saddle putting pressure on his pedals. I did the same and followed his wheel which took me right up to the breakaway rider. Two other riders came with us and as we climbed the hill towards Wolverton I noticed that Balshaw and myself were D cat riders

and the other three were C Cat riders. As we went over the top of the Wolverton hill, the 5 of us immediately started to work together in a chain, round to Langley, down to the A3400, back into Bearley and so on. A look back a number of times and there was no sign of a chasing group. We continued, putting in lap times of under 20 mins. With 2 laps to go the finishing line judges shouted that we had a 90 second gap and with a lap to go we had a 2-minute gap. On the final climb up Wolverton hill, one of the C cat riders who had been strong throughout the break, danced on his pedals up the hill and pulled away. Another C rider was dropped which left Balshaw, myself and the 3rd C cat rider. With a C rider up the road, myself and Balshaw sat behind the C rider for most of the rest of the lap and in the final sprint he was dropped and Balshaw pulled away from me to come second. I was 3rd in the race and 2nd in my age category. The following peleton came in a minute behind us.

The organisation from Ian and Russ was as usual, excellent, ably helped by the timing chips and the motorbike marshals. A big thank you to the lead and following car drivers, the junction/road marshals (who were all shouting words of encouragement at me whilst in the break), Angela Cowan, Roy and Lyn Dale in the kitchen and all the other volunteers who helped make the race a huge success.

Paul Mann

Richard Blackman adds

Most folks know at least the gist of the Tommy Godwin story, especially if they are part of Solihull CC. I'm pleased to think that I'm part of that story, only a small part but nevertheless a part.

In our early teens Dave Harker and I used to ride in the holidays or on a Saturday afternoons, him on his Falcon and me on my Holdsworth, to the local 'cult' cycle shops such as Priory Cycles

and of course Tommy Godwin's in Silver Street, Kings Heath. At the time I didn't appreciate the full spectrum of the man and his cycling achievements.

Nowadays my small part in the story continues through competing (I use that word loosely) in the Tommy Godwin Memorial Road Race. The race seems to be growing in stature and difficulty, having been incorporated into the prestigious Percy Stallard series of LVRC races, which attracts the top and most competitive veteran riders in the country.

The race is run on the Bearley circuit and seems to get faster each year, especially on the first lap. The stronger riders pile on the pressure as soon as the neutralised section ends, the attacks start, Paul Mann flashes past as he makes his move, Nev's up there somewhere too.

This is compounded by the multiple kick-ups and then Wolverton! – the Queen hill. Hills aren't my thing and I need to get over Wolverton and have chance for some recovery before Rose cottage. But the pressure stays on at the front and I get blown out the back. To emphasise the point I get a Strava PR on the first main segment of the circuit.

The race goes by in a blur of grimacing concentration permeated only by hazy landmarks, a pothole on the corner, a marshal sitting in a deckchair grinning unsympathetically, a camera lens pointing, the finish line crew - 'come on Richard!'

So I race surf as the 'old boys' group comes past, though I'm not the only one shelled out from my race to take a ride on the back of their peloton. Nearly done now, on the last lap. Then the first of the 3 races passes us, the youngest group streams past and the peloton I'm with seems to gain shall we say a certain impetus from this, leading to a strong finish.

Richard Blackman

Coast to Coast France (C2CF) 2017

As some members may already know, a group of riders mostly from the (new) B and C rides, loosely linked together through a ‘virtual Strava club’ known as “Openroad”, have since 2013, organised a cycling weekend each May. With one exception, the routes included an element of riding between two coastlines over two days. In 2013 and 2014 it involved two versions of the UK Coast-to-Coast (C2C) – the classic Whitehaven to Tynemouth and subsequently the “Way of the Roses” route from Morecambe to Bridlington.

In 2015 the group opted to go for the Shropshire Challenge route (yes, no coast) and based ourselves in Ludlow for the weekend, with a shorter ride to Hay-on-Wye and back on the Sunday. Last year it was C2CW (Wales), following our own route from Cardiff to Llandudno with a stop-over in Newtown.



Coast to Coast 2014 – Way of the Roses

The overall format has remained more or less the same in that it has typically taken place over the early May bank holiday weekend with travel to the start on the Friday (some have been known to cycle it), followed by two days of riding and then returning home again on Monday. However, with the group now starting to run out of suitable UK routes we took the decision in late 2016 to look further afield and perhaps venture over to France.

St. Malo to Le Havre via Bayeux.

As always, the difficulties with this kind of trip centre on transferring luggage between each overnight stops, ensuring back-up support and getting riders and bikes back to their cars at the end of the ride. For the two UK C2Cs we used the services of companies specialising in supporting such groups – Saddle Skedaddle and Brigantes Holidays respectively. However, last year I was able to talk my (non-cyclist) son and his partner into driving a support vehicle that also carried our bags and additional spares. Fortunately he agreed to do the same for us in 2017.

The other key aspect of C2CF 2017 is that the continental, one-way trip needed to be based on returning back to the same UK ferry port as we would leave from. When one of the group pointed out that Brittany Ferries operates a service from Portsmouth to St. Malo and from Le Havre back to Portsmouth, and that the two French ports are about 175 miles apart, we had the makings of a plan. It wasn't long though after the initial itinerary was outlined that some else suggested that Honfleur offered a much nicer place to stay on the second night rather than Le Havre itself.

The last piece of the jigsaw is of course, devising a viable route with the longest leg being on the first day and with overnight and cafe stops at suitable points along the way. Hence Bayeux was chosen as the first stopover, which is about 100 miles from St. Malo, and had the added benefit of allowing us the possibility to ride along the Normandy beaches and take in some of the historical D-day landings sites on the second day. A rough costing was worked out and after holding our usual initial 'planning meeting' – i.e. an evening in the pub - it wasn't long before twelve 'Openroaders' had signed up. As in previous years I then set about doing the detailed route planning and making the necessary hotel, car and ferry bookings. We also chose to avoid either bank holiday weekend because of concerns about possibility of extra traffic.

The trip itself

Everyone had arranged to take their bikes to Portsmouth by car and after parking up at the ferry terminal (and a quick beer at a convenient ‘local’), we embarked – with the exception of the



Getting ready to embark

‘support team’ who went on as foot-passengers – through the regular vehicle check-in lanes and subsequently boarded along with the cars and other (touring) cyclists, each carrying our overnight bag the short distance to the ferry. Our bikes were stored and secured in a small room off the main car deck and

we departed on schedule for the overnight crossing.

Anyone who has travelled with Brittany Ferries will know their service is pretty good, with a choice of dining options etc., but our shared cabins were quite basic and a bit claustrophobic. Nevertheless, we disembarked on Saturday morning in St. Malo at 8:15am, and after picking up a hire car and loading it up with bags etc., the group were on the road by 9:00am.



A quick detour to Mont. St. Michel

Naturally, we’d been keeping an eye on the weather for about a week beforehand and thankfully the rain on Friday night had passed through as forecast. The south-westerly wind also seemed well-set for the day ahead – next stop Beauvoir near Mont Saint-Michel about 28 miles away. So favourable was the tail wind though and with the route being pretty much flat in the early

stages, we averaged over 18 mph and arrived well ahead of our anticipated schedule and quickly decided to take a detour down the causeway to the Mont itself, before then heading northeast to Avranches (42m) for a lunch stop. Despite a limited choice of cafes – somewhat surprising given the town is quite ‘touristy’ due to its links to Gen. Patton’s army’s liberation of the area, marked by a monument in the centre - we enjoyed a relaxed lunch and the first chance to try out our rudimentary French.

By now the afternoon was warming up nicely and after the customary shedding of layers and refilling of bottles we set off



Avranches

again, firstly through Villedieu-les-Poeles (55m) and then on to Torigni-sur-Vire (75 m) for a late afternoon cafe (or was it a bar?) stop, before dropping down in to Bayeux (98m) around 6pm. The countryside in that area of France was quite reminiscent of parts of the UK but with the added bonus of quiet, well-surfaced roads, although we did encounter a cycling road race coming the other way at one point, complete with support

vehicles and motorcycle outriders.

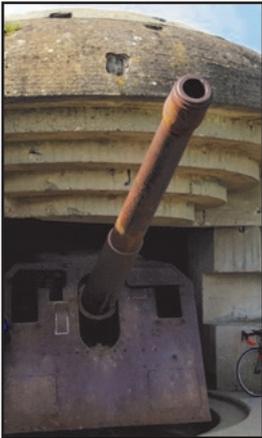
What also marked out the second part of the ride after Avranches was the amount of climbing involved. Including the rise up in to the town, about 95% of the 5,300+ ft we clocked up for the day was done during the afternoon. The maximum height is only 800ft but the constantly rolling hills, with some ‘warming’ assents and delightful down-hill runs, meant there were some quiet tired legs when we arrived at the



Bayeux Cathedral

Campanile hotel on the edge of the city. The favourable south-westerly helped keep the average for the first leg at a respectable 16 mph.

Our second day in France dawned wet and overcast although we had spent the previous early-summer evening ‘rehydrating’ and relaxing at a local restaurant. Bayeux is a very pleasant city with a stunning cathedral and medieval style architecture; however there wasn’t much time for looking around during our brief stay. The itinerary for day-two was a lot less pressured though, with the plan to spend the day time sightseeing and working our way along the 67 mile route to Honfleur. By the time we were ready to set off blue sky was beginning to appear, accompanied by our still favourable tailwind.



Batterie allemande de Longues sur Mer

A short ride due north took us to the former German batteries on the coast at Longues-sur-Mer, which hold a commanding position on the cliffs above GOLD beach.

A few miles east was Arromanches-les-Bains and an opportunity for us to look out over the remains of the D-day Mulberry harbours that stretch around the bay.

Now came the chance to take advantage of the pleasant westerly wind again and we positively flew down the coast in a very tidy group, first to a brief coffee stop and then after turning inland slightly, to the famous Pegasus Bridge on the Caen canal in time for lunch. The cafe and the Gondrée family hold the



Arromanches-les-Bains



Pegasus Bridge cafe

distinction of being the first place in France to be liberated on the night of 5th June 1944. The current proprietor Mdm. Arlette Gondrée-Pritchett (pictured) was just four years old at the time. Her greeting stunned us when she said she knew Solihull very well and even shopped in John Lewis! Apparently she lived in the Stratford area at one time but she was reluctant tell us precisely where. (a quick Google search will reveal all if you are interested).

After crossing the bridge itself our group continued to head up the Normandy coast and through some traditional French seaside resorts, with the only real climb of the day being the road out of Houlgate, before dropping down again to Villers-sur-Mer and on to Deauville.



An historic lunch stop

Another 10 or so miles and we entered the lively but very



Honfleur

picturesque port of Honfleur for our second stop-over.

We enjoyed another very ‘sociable’ evening in and around the Vieux Basin, which after the sun started to drop, soon became quiet as the early-season tourists drifted away. A local restaurateur advised the best time to visit Honfleur was June or September and madness of August was definitely best avoided.

Day three (Monday) was slightly different in that the only thing really left to do was cycle over to Le Havre for the afternoon ferry back to Portsmouth. However, rather than taking the most direct option (15m), the time available opened up the opportunity to ‘put a loop in’ and take a short tour of



Pont de Normandie

the countryside in the vicinity of the port. In the event the group split with five riders heading off at 10:00am, choosing a route east around part of the “*Bouches de la Seine Normande Natural Regional Park*” (46m), whilst the remaining seven riders left an hour later to take a slightly shorter (37m) route over the high-

level, but free to cyclists, “*Pont de Normandie*” and then on for a meander around the area north of Le Havre. Those on the longer route were able to avoid the other high-level road bridge (at Tancarville) by taking the free ferry across the river at Quillebeuf-sur-Seine.



Quillebeuf ferry

After rendezvousing again at the port and dropping the hire car off, we reversed the outbound process, and boarded the ferry back, to arrive back in to Portsmouth around 9:30pm and pick up our cars to head home.

Facts and figures

Day1: St. Malo to Bayeux: 98 miles. 5,322 ft. 16.5 mph avg.

Day2: Bayeux to Honfleur: 65 miles. 2,382 ft. 15.7 mph avg.

Day3: Honfleur to Le Havre: 46/37 and miles, 1,555/1,660 ft.
16.3/13.8 mpg avg.



The ‘*Dirty Dozen*’

(L to R): Mike Pridmore-Wood, Cliff Causer, Tony Plackowski, Colin Yeomans, Andrew McGowan, Bernie Wareing, Sandra Turner, Vic Fullard, Ian Spencer, Chris Ainge, Rick Parfitt and Ian Shirley.

Plus our back-up team; Martin Parfitt and Gintare Pepolyte.

Of course this kind of trip is not all about how far and how fast, but rather enjoying the companionship of the group, completing an interesting ride with a great bunch of friends and flying-the-flag for the club. I’d like to thank everyone for their support and help organising this year’s *Openroad* weekend away. The only question now is, “where do we go in 2018”?

By Rick (not The Leader) Parfitt May 2017

PS: If anyone would like more information on any of the previous trips or routes, please get in touch.

Dates for your Diary

- 6th September 2017** Club 5 mile scratch race
24th September 2017 Tommy Godwin Challenge
7th October 2017 Club hill climb championship
12th November 2017 Hobo Run 2017

Mike Pridmore-Wood writes that as Chief Hobo this year, apparently one of my tasks is to set the date. Johnny also tells him everyone meeting at the Clock at 9.00 as usual.



Picture from AWheels Edition 347 - February 1965

Harry Reynolds as Chief Hobo

- 3rd February 2018** Annual Club Dinner

Will be taking place at the Robin Hood Golf Club, St Bernard's Road, Solihull at 6.30pm. Full details and application for seats will be enclosed on November's AWheels.

The Tommy Godwin Challenge

24 September 2017



The event was set up in 2013 to honour the 1948 Olympic medallist, and Solihull CC president, Tommy Godwin and to raise funds for the Marie Curie hospice in Solihull where he spent time towards the end of his life. The ride starts and finishes at the hospice in Marsh Lane and over the last four years has raised £40,000 towards the running costs of the hospice.

This year we are delighted to announce that Danni Khan, former double junior world champion, and current member of the British Cycling Olympic Podium Programme, and Team Storey, has agreed to become the event's ambassador. Speaking at the launch she said she was honoured to be the ambassador of this hugely popular cycling challenge.

“I was lucky enough to meet Tommy and he was a great inspiration to me,” she added.

Tommy may have been a successful Olympic track cyclist, but he also enjoyed cycling in the Warwickshire lanes and, in later years, was always keen to encourage other cyclists, either established stars or total newcomers. With this event we aim to replicate Tommy's experience of enjoying the countryside on our doorstep together with his vision of encouraging young riders and others starting out on their cycling journeys.



This year we have added a 70km route to the existing 100km and 30km ones. The latter is especially suited to younger and novice riders. Apart from the routes, which

showcase the scenic nature of the area, there will also be a very warm welcome for you at the hospice. Here you will find loos, hot and cold drinks and wonderful homemade cakes on offer not to mention sports therapy from Clair Andrews and Charles Ward to help ease those tired muscles. All free but donations welcome! All finishers will receive a medal and photographs will be available for free download.



Kay Jones, Tommy's daughter said, "Tommy was a great inspiration to many young cyclists. This event is a great way to recognise his achievements, continue the Olympic legacy and raise funds for the hospice which provided such wonderful care to him over his last few weeks".

You can enter via the website www.tommygodwinchallenge.weebly.com, where there is more information about the event and Tommy.

Contact Sarah Adams 01564 702122 or sarahuadams@me.com



Email Update

Are you receiving our occasional newsletters? If not, we may not have your correct email address. Please let the membership secretary know if you have changed your email. membership@solihullcc.org.uk

Club Runs

Saturday

All runs commence at 9:00am

A run starts Dorridge Station

B Run starts Railway Inn Dorridge

Apple Pie Run starts Dorridge Village Hall

All rides have a coffee stop at :-

Studley Garden Centre,

Mappleborough Green

Thursday

DATE	A RUN	B RUN	C RUN	D RUN
		Led by Pete James	Led by Dick Law	Led by Trevor Bayliss
03-Aug	Dunnington	Lighthorne	Blackhills	Stratford
10-Aug	Wellesbourne	Dunnington	Mappleborough	Astwood Bank
17-Aug	Dunnington	Charlecote	Hunningham	Hatton Locks
24-Aug	Wellesbourne	Astwood Bank	Briar Croft	Alcester
31-Aug	Dunnington	Clifford Chambers	Alcester	Charlecote
07-Sep	Wellesbourne	Bidford	Kingsbury	Kenilworth
14-Sep	Dunnington	Wellesbourne TC	Dunnington	Blackhills
21-Sep	Wellesbourne	Lighthorne	Clifford Chambers	Stoneleigh
28-Sep	Dunnington	Bidford	Hoar Park	Alcester
05-Oct	Wellesbourne	Dunnington	Wellesbourne VC	Middleton
12-Oct	Dunnington	Astwood Bank	Briar Croft	Hunningham
19-Oct	Wellesbourne	Clifford Chambers	Wellesbourne A'fd	AstwoodBank
26-Oct	Dunnington	Blackhills	Wooten Wawen	Hatton Locks
02-Nov	Wellesbourne	Charlecote	Kenilworth	Blackhills

Runs Co-Ordinator Dick Law 01926 427200

A Run starts Dynamic Rides Hockley Heath at 9:15 am

B and C run start from Punchbowl at 10:00 am

Sunday

DATE	A RUN	B RUN	C RUN	D RUN	E RUN
06-Aug	Chipping Campden	Toddington	Talton Mill	Chaddesley Corb.	Dunnington
13-Aug	Stourport	Martley	Martin Huss.	Illington	Charlecote
20-Aug	Morton in Marsh	Moira/Conkers	Napton	Whickhamford	Shottery
27-Aug	St Peter's GC	Thurlaston	Whickhamford	Churchfields	Jinny Ring
03-Sep	Draycote Water	Beckford	Long Marston	Clifford Ch.	Hoar Park
10-Sep	Wyre Forest	Malvern	Jinny Ring	Battlefields	Wellesbourne
17-Sep	Newton Regis	Curborough	Lighthorne	Willoughby	Clifford Ch.
24-Sep	West Midlands CX Event				
01-Oct	Broadway	Ullesthorpe	Whickhamford	Lighthorne	Dunnington
08-Oct	Martin Huss.	Harlebury	Upton Snodsbury	Draycote W.	Astley
15-Oct	Battlefields	Whickhamford	Long Marston	Jinney Ring	Alcester
22-Oct	Ullesthorpe	Farnborough	Clifford Ch.	Evesham Ferry	Charlecote
29-Oct	Kineton	Shipston	Lighthorne heath	Kineton	Astwood Bank
05-Nov	Hartlebury	Blakedown	Battlefields	Dunnington	Shottery
Rides start from Clock Tower, Warwick Road, Solihull					
All runs start at 9:00am until 29th October when they start at 09.15 (A run excepting)					
Beginners E Run also available - Contact Alan Thomson 01216-808322 or a1492@hotmail.com					

Tuesday

		B Run	
DATE	A Run Coffee Stop	Coffee Stop	Pub Stop
01-Aug	Dunsmore GC	Draycote W. (PB)	Hampton Lucy
08-Aug	Whitlenge	Stourport	Feckenham
15-Aug	Churchfields	Whichamford	Barton
22-Aug	Beckford Silk	Heather (E)	Ridge Lane
29-Aug	Stourport	Churchfields	Flyford Flavell
05-Sep	Whickhamford	Chipping Campden	Ardens Grafton
12-Sep	Evesham	Fladbury.	Bretforton
19-Sep	Draycote W.	Dunsmore GC (PB)	Wellesbourne
26-Sep	Blakedown	Chaddesley Corb.	Broom
03-Oct	Pershore	Evesham TC	Ardens Grafton
10-Oct	Lighthorne	Long Itchington.	Hampton Lucy
17-Oct	Hoar Park	Battlefields (E)	Shustoke
24-Oct	Evesham	Pershore	Broom
31-Oct	Whickhamford	Chipping Campden	Barton
07-Nov	Kineton	Lighthorne Heath	Hampton Lucy
A Runs info: Mike Baggott mike.baggott@talktalk.net			
B Runs info: Dave Stephenson davidjks@icloud.com			
A Run is faster with coffee stop, starts from Reservoir pub at 9:15. Leader agreed on day			
B Run is an all day ride with coffee & lunch stop. Leaves Reservoir pub at 9:15 am			
		C Run Coffee Stop	
			Alcester
			Wellesbourne
			Hunningham
			Blackhills
			Stoneleigh
			Astwood Bank
			Middleton
			Hatton Locks
			Charlecote
			Kenilworth
			Mappleborough
			Stratford
			Blackhills
			Earlswood GC
		C runs info: Trevor Bayliss anntrev@talktalk.net	
		Starts Punchbowl 10:00	

Main Club Contact Details

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