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THE MAGAZINE OF  
CHESTER & NORTH WALES CTC  
CAER A GOGLEDD CYMRU



**IN THIS EDITION:**

*All the usual features including:  
Reader's favourite rides & tours  
Technical tips  
Bikes & Bits for Sale  
Brain Teaser etc etc.*

**PLUS**

*John rides the Paris Brest Paris  
'The Ferguson Interview'  
On the Campaign Trail*

*And so much more!*



**Spring 2016**

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 Always a good read!

*The views and opinions expressed in 'The Link' are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, Chester & North Wales CTC or the policies of the CTC National Office*

**Front Cover:**

Stopped off at Bangor to see the Dee looking a little bit 'angry'!



*The Editor .....*

A lot going on at the moment within the 'Link World'!

Experimenting with the new formats and already into the larger A4 size which appears to suit most people - have now changed the external and internal designs - hope you like it! Let me know if you have any ideas, we're always looking to improve things for the general good! Just let us know if we're heading in the right direction to give you the publication you want! Remember that The Link is a magazine **for** the members by the members!

Bringing the Link up to these new designs and content etc does however bring with it a few 'challenges', the main one being is how we can make it economical to produce. With the full page A4 version with 36 pages weighing more than the smaller edition (would do really, wouldn't it, what with twice the paper!) This extra weight brings it into the next postage band - £1.19 against the original £0.54.

We've already managed to save over 30% by using a new printer but there's still a financial deficit to account for. We can get over it in a couple of ways, reduce the A4 version down to 16 pages instead of 36 to get cheaper postage or by changing the pricing structure.

From the membership feedback we believe we now have the best format so far and that the way forward without prejudicing the quality would be to regrettably, put the price up to 'balance the books'.

The easiest way would be to leave the £10 subscription as it is but to supply 3 copies in future instead of the usual 4 - how does that sound?

So ..... anyone renewing their subs after this edition will receive three copies for their £10. The members who have just renewed will still get their four copies of course.

The other little 'challenge' we have within the 'Link Team' is that this summer, Sarah & I are planning to sell up here in Rossett to relocate to live in Southern Spain - anyone fancy a cheap holiday, you ask?

Now this won't make any difference to the production of 'The Link' as a computer and Internet is the same the world over but there are one or two considerations to take into account.

I obviously won't be able to collect subs etc so any future payments etc will need to be paid to Colin Bell, our esteemed Treasurer. The biggest impact however, and my biggest worry, will be the fact that I won't be able to meet up with you on rides, enjoy the 'banter' and get a 'flavour' for what's going on in the UK so I will need to rely on your input more than ever in the future. In an effort to 'bridge' this issue, we will need a 'Link Co-ordinator'. Have a look at page 34 and see if you can help - all offers appreciated!

See you on the road .....  
 Martin



*So what's in store for you in this edition of 'The Link'!*

A Message from Your President .....	4
Technical Tips no:1.....	5
Our Facebook reports .....	5
And Bruce also writes .....	6
When is a triple NOT a triple?.....	6
The Velominati?.....	6
Letters to the Editor .....	7
'On the Campaign Trail' .....	9
Café of the Year .....	9
'On the Campaign Trail' with Mark Jones.....	10
Lost Your Bottle?.....	11
Group Riding ..... more thoughts!.....	11
Message from John Pegum.....	11
My Blue Bridge to P-B-P .....	12
Stop Press from Lowri.....	15
Congratulations .....	16
Audax News .....	17
Cycling Recipes .....	18
Technical Tips no:2.....	18
Smile, you're on Camera! .....	19
'Where to next' with David Matthews? .....	20
Caption Competition .....	21
Kit Choice .....	22
Bits and Bikes .....	23
Brain Teaser .....	24
Lucky to be here? .....	25
'My Ride' with Glynn Jones .....	26
Two wheels to Three .....	27
The Link History Lesson.....	28
The Ferguson Interview.....	29
'Where to next' with Ann Taylor?.....	30
'On the Campaign Trail' with Welna Bowden.....	32
Bren Bikes.....	33
Help required! .....	34
My Bike - Member's Machines .....	35

## A message from your President .....



I begin to write this on the day that the newspapers tell us that, thanks to the effects of El Niño on the other side of the world, England has experienced the warmest winter for well over three centuries and England and Wales together, the warmest for almost ten years. Yet, whichever side of the border we live, we will all remember a season of damaging storms, heavy rain and flooded roads – in fact the second wettest winter for over a century. It has often been the sort of weather when the hardest thing about a ride has been making the effort to put on one's kit and get the bike out of the garage. No doubt many a wintry, windy and wet weekend has been spent indoors planning rides and tours in the expectation that 'things can only get better'.

### New Beginnings

Still, we got off to a good start. Our New Year's Day Meet at Churton, a few miles down the road from our former venue, the Carden Arms at Tilston (which has changed ownership) was a great success. I counted almost 50 of us – including a couple from as far afield as Rhyl – enjoying their hotpot and the usual friendly company of their fellow cyclists. We were made very welcome and I hope we will find the White Horse at Churton an acceptable long-term replacement for the Carden Arms. Our New Year's Day Meet means, of course, presentation time. Donning my presidential chain of office, I was happy to present the Tourist Competition Trophies to our 2015 winners: our Secretary Lowri Evans and the male winner, Paul Mills. Well done to them both – even though this has almost become routine for Lowri, it doesn't take off the gloss on the determined effort

she puts in. This year, however, was the occasion for a unique presentation to a unique man, viz. a special commemorative certificate to Harry Watson. Sadly, after many years, Harry has decided to call it a day on leading rides, most notably for the group which bears his name: Watson's Wanderers. I paid tribute to the quality of Harry's leadership abilities: he always seems to know the best route to take, and the best viewpoints – not to mention his unrivalled knowledge of the pubs of Cheshire and North Wales!

### Café of the Year

That chain of office was dusted down again a few weeks later in order for me to present the Café of the Year Certificate for 2015 – voted for by you, the membership. The winning café was the Meadow Lea Farm Café at the Mickle Trafford end of the Greenway. The team there was 'absolutely thrilled' (their words) to be recognised in this way which makes worthwhile all the work in reminding you, the membership, to



actually vote! A winning café is not eligible to compete again for five years and this means that your collective powers of discernment on café qualities will have to be put to the test to search for another winner for 2016. The Awards Committee has also decided to extend the closing date for this competition by a couple of weeks until 15<sup>th</sup> January. This will perhaps mean that forgetting to vote because of all the usual Christmas 'goings-on' will be a little less likely. One can only hope!

### Missing Link(s)

I was contacted some weeks ago by a cycling group based in Flintshire to enquire about the 'missing link' on NCR5. Now, I appreciate that many young and fit cyclists enjoy the challenge (and the scenery) of that part of the Route which

crosses the northern tip of the Clwyds and avoids the traffic on the coast road. However, for the less fit or less adventurous, the 'missing link' along the coast between Mostyn and the Dock Road Car Park, Connah's Quay which could potentially provide a traffic free cycling route, is a glaring omission. This Flintshire group which includes a number of women was puzzled why the gap exists. I pointed out that CTC and Sustrans have been aware of this anomaly for many years but that what one might call 'vested interests' have thwarted progress.

As our Right2Ride officers will tell you, it is a constant (and often a losing) battle to improve conditions for cyclists, as witness the A540 in Wirral and the fight for safe access to Conwy. However, there are occasional victories for common sense. The idiotic proposal to close the route over the Barmouth Bridge met with huge protests (thanks to all involved!). The 'stunning views...as you cross the beautiful Mawddach' (Sustrans) would have been lost to cyclists but more importantly so might cyclists' lives when forced to take a lengthy on-road detour.

### A Rose by Any Other Name

And now as we prepare for the onset of (we hope) decent cycling weather for spring and summer, further controversy rears its head. We have now to consider the proposal to alter the name of CTC to something more appealing to the 'modern' cyclist. I'm sure this will lead to a lively time at the AGM in Derby on 7<sup>th</sup> May. I have seen many changes in my two-thirds of a century membership of the Club, and I can see the need to swell the numbers of younger members. There is a much greater emphasis nowadays, it seems to me, on cycling as a means to fitness and an increased competitive side to leisure riding (as evidenced by Sportif and Audax type rides). What is also striking (especially in big cities) is the return of the practice of cycling to work. Once, cycling to work, school or the shops was the norm. I'm glad to see its return.

But whatever type of cycling 'grabs' you, the important thing is to get out there and enjoy it! As I said at the New Year Meet, 'Make the best of it because, one day, you won't be able to.' **Mike Cross**



**Bruce Graham writes .....**

## What ideas do you have to make life just that little bit easier?

### **Cable fraying - brakes & gears**

We've all seen those dirty frayed cable ends .....

New bikes with cable end ferrules certainly look neat and tidy but during your maintenance and lubrication it's necessary to pull back the cables through their outer sheaf.

Easier said than done when after time the inner gets frayed by unwinding individual strands and then see if you can push back the inner if you've pulled it out!

So ..... when you buy a new cable, choose the nipple end (pear or barrel) and before cutting off the unwanted end, measure the cable and solder about an inch (25mm for our foreign friends!) along its outside and then cut across the centre of this soldered section.

Grease it up and voilà (also for our foreign friends!) no more frayed cables in the future!

Also will be worth investing in a proper set of cable pliers to make that 'clean' cut.

*Ed: I think I'm a bit 'ham fisted' and seem to overtighten cable clamping fixings on brakes and mechs sometimes shearing the odd wire strand and leaving it 'hanging out'! Bruce's soldering tip would work on this for me as well. Thanks Bruce!*



### **Our Facebook reports .....**



**John Ferguson**  
31 December 2015 at 18:25

The Chester and North Wales CTC comprises of 8 sections.  
New riders always welcome.  
Contact details and information on our weekly rides can be found by visiting our website



#### **Chester & North Wales CTC**

The views and opinions expressed in articles appearing on this Website are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or Chester and North Wales CTC.

CTCCHESTERANDNWALES.ORG.UK

In 2015 the Chester and North Wales Facebook page had 316 postings generating 1008 comments.

The variety of subjects ranged from postings about rides, route closures, items for sale, events plus many more.

The three items that attracted the most comments were: -

- A) A rider looking for group that rides 60 to 100 miles.
- B) The potential closure of the Greenway to allow 5k runs to take place each Saturday.
- C) Where to find Daffodils in bloom for a photo for the cover photo of the Link.

At the start of the year there were 141 members and by the 30<sup>th</sup> December, this had grown to 186 members.

If you want up to the minute information about what is happening in our group or have any queries regarding rides or events why not join us?



**John Ferguson**



- I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather:  
Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car!

- Light travels faster than sound:  
This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak!



Reference page 28 in the last edition about Alan & Marina's e-Bike.

"The Less Fit Cyclist" aged 81 - Me!

Can recommend this Gtech bike which was sent (as their advertisement promises) on 14 days approval.

It's great to ride and has no controls - the only switch is on the battery and the power comes on as soon as you pedal away from a standstill. The weight is about the same as a normal cycle with a saddle bag and looks like a real bike. Mudguards can be fitted as well as lights, prop stand and comes supplied already built up.

The Gtech customer service website contains answers to all common product-related queries.



The 26-36-48 ratios seemed just right when riding up hill and down dale but the excess wear indicated that I was obviously spending a lot of time riding in this middle ring.

This was brought home to me when riding Audaxes with our old mate Terry who uses a 30-40-50 Tiagra triple. Looking at his riding style it was obvious he hardly ever used his 50 tooth ring concentrating mainly on his 40 tooth with the 'bale out' of the 30 tooth for the steeper hills. So in effect Terry rides a 'double' carrying the 50 tooth just for show PLUS losing out on the extra gearing options.

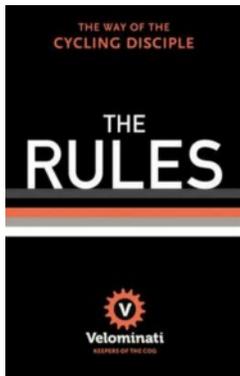
To this end; this is why I now run a 22-32-44 tooth combination on both my touring bike and also my Audax bike. This gives me two rings to play with during normal riding with the 22 tooth 'granny' for those 'almost walking' hills.

In the Ed's note after Steve's article I mentioned my 'Mountain Climbing' bike - this is fitted with my old touring 26-36-48 triple (with a new middle ring I hasten to add!) I built it this way because I wanted the larger 48 ring for those faster events and for 'playing with the team'! See what you think!

The moral of the story? Have a long hard think about how you ride your bike before committing to fitting a triple front chainset!

Reading Steve's really interesting article about gearing in the last Link got me to thinking about things until the 'penny dropped'!

When Sarah & I did a long tour in 2014, I wore out the middle ring of my XT triple chainset.



## So what do you know about 'The Rules' and the Velominati?

I mean everyone knows that the the correct number of bikes to own is **n+1** While the minimum number of bikes

one should own is three, the correct number is **n+1**, where **n** is the number of bikes currently owned.

This equation may also be re-written as **s-1**, where **s** is the number of bikes owned that would result in separation from your partner.

**This is Rule #12**

Then there's **Rule #7**

Tan lines should be cultivated and kept razor sharp.

Under no circumstances should one be rolling up their sleeves or shorts in an effort to somehow diminish one's tan lines.

Sleeveless jerseys are under no circumstances to be employed!



These are just a few of the 'Rules for Cycling', some 'tongue in cheek' and some just really sensible by Frank Strack.

If you want a really good laugh have a look at the Velominati website, there's nearly a 100 points of view, opinions and 'one liners'!

<http://www.velominati.com>

And of course **Rule #27**

Shorts and socks should be like Goldilocks .....

Not too long and not too short.

(Disclaimer: despite Sean Yates' horrible choice in shorts length, he is a quintessential hard man of cycling and is deeply admired by the Velominati. Whereas Armstrong's short and sock lengths are just plain wrong.) No socks is a no-no, as are those ankle-length ones that should only be worn by female tennis players.





**A regular topic for 'the Link', so now is your opportunity to tell us what you REALLY think!  
We have 1700+ members in our area all with their own opinion on matters, so tell everyone what you think, what irritates you, your good ideas etc.**

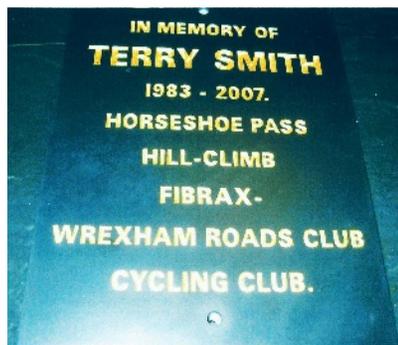
### Those were the days .....

Congratulations on another great magazine. I like the A4 format and the new layout.

Several interesting articles this time, the one I really liked was the one about 'St Winifred's Well' at Woolston. I first visited the well many years ago and have visited it several times since.

Another favourite spot we used to visit on the Vets 100 was 'Milverley Church' – a lovely old wooden black & white church on the banks of the River Severn.

Another point of interest – we all visit the Ponderosa Café at some time or another and especially at Christmas for



the Wrexham Reivers Christmas Dinner but next time have a look at the plaque by the front entrance commemorating 'Terry Smith' – an old friend of ours. Terry organised the Open Hill Climb on the Horseshoe for nearly 25 years - worth having a look!



Congratulations to Celia Watson on becoming 'President' of the Fellowship of Cycling Old Timers. Well done!

By the way – a quote for you to ponder:  
"You can't buy happiness, but you can buy a bike – that's close enough!"  
**Glynn Jones**

### Dealing with vehicles/rubbish ...

I read with interest the article in the "CYCLE" October/November 2015 issue, titled Digital Witness.

Having been knocked off my bike by an errant motorist who managed to get his side of the story over to the Police before me (I was in the back of an ambulance) and subsequently losing the claim argument, I bought an Action camera. My camera is now firmly strapped, very visibly to the top of my helmet.

During the course of 2014, I followed a case at Chester Crown Court where an individual had, using an Action camera filmed himself committing some truly horrendous dangerous driving on Public roads.



He tried during the course of proceedings to have the matter dismissed using the argument that the Police had not used the N.I.P, Notice of Intended Prosecution correctly.

For certain road traffic offences, a Notice of Intended Prosecution Pursuant to Section 1 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act has to be served, this can be verbally at the time or by post. Typically, these offences are speeding, failing to comply with traffic signals etc. The obligation is upon the prosecution to have issued and dispatched the Notice in order that it arrives with the registered keeper of the vehicle within 14 days of the offence.

However, much to my surprise it turned out the Prosecution have a "Get out clause". Without going into all the ins and outs of the Law, the Judge threw out the application to dismiss, saying that the lack of proper service should not be a bar to prosecution. He allowed the

case to go ahead. The offender changed his plea to guilty.

In September of this year I had a very close encounter with a Hay Wagon, I still do not know how I managed to stay on my bike. The video footage was put onto a DVD and delivered to the Police Station with a formal complaint.

I heard nothing for a month, then a Constable called at my home handed back the DVD and said the Police could do nothing with the evidence. I had not

phoned it in at the time of the event and the DVD and letter had lain on the Inspectors desk, he had been on leave. It was now out of time.

Not quite the outcome I had been expecting. However, as mentioned above I was aware of the "get out clause" "The matter was returned to the Police with advice on how the 14 day rule is not a bar to prosecution, they have now agreed to pursue the matter.

I learnt a few valuable lessons. It is quite apparent that certainly in my area the Police really don't like dealing with cyclists and their video footage. It would be very interesting to see if there is a Force policy on such matters? I will be asking the question of senior officers in due course.

If you are involved in an incident it's as well reporting it as soon as possible via the Police 101 line. I know that sounds like common sense. In the case of the

Hay Wagon, I cycled home, put the video footage on a DVD and then spent the next 3 days trying to see an Officer to make the complaint.

That's the issue of video footage as far as the Police are concerned, however the other prosecuting authority is the County Council.

Farmers! And the County Council! Leaving our roads covered in mud,



thorns, mangled county council signs and raw animal effluent!

I have complained long and hard at Denbighshire County Council and their lack of positive action against those farmers who regularly make our roads dangerous and at times all but impossible to use with a cycle. (see DVD, lots of examples).

We have four local farmers in our area, with large farms, they have all the equipment, needed to clean a road after their farming operations. They often leave our roads covered in thorns, raw sewage, floods and mud.

One particular farmer every October covers one road in mud, sometimes it's too deep to even use a car on this road. I wrote to the Council in September of this year and forewarned them. To my astonishment the road was swept as the ongoing farming actions went on. The road was left in its best state for years; I thought I had finally managed to get the Council to take positive, firm action against an errant farmer. I was about to thank the Council when I discovered that it was the Council that had cleaned the road and it was I, the rate payer who was paying for it! The Council excuse for not making the farmer pay? They did not know which farmer had done it!

Another local farmer carried out operations on a patch of land by the public highway in September of this year. That stretch of road never used to flood,

it does now. Again I contacted the council whose first response was they could not find the area I was talking about, they did not think there was a problem. When I sent them photographs showing the work being done they replied with they did not think there was enough evidence, but would write to the estate and remind them of their obligations. (see attached copies)

Both the Police and the County Council I feel now refuse/avoid these "small" prosecutions. They cost a lot of money, time and effort for little obvious gain. It is that mind-set that "We" have to change before we see a change in our roads.

I don't know if you are aware of the article in the

Daily Post of the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2015. I have included a copy of the on line edition. The attitude of the Denbighshire County Council spokesperson gives a good indication of how they view the FillThatHole.org website. I personally feel that attitude should be challenged at National level. The FillThatHole website is a national website, it has been given a large amount of money by the Government, the contempt Denbighshire have for the web site is indicative of their attitude to cyclists in general. I know for a fact that the Leader of the Council Huw Evans has a very low opinion of cyclists and has said so in community council meetings.

**Robert Davies**

*Ed: Have a look at the 'Smile, you're on camera' section for some of Roberts photo's etc. The video footage of the Haywagon is available on YouTube:*

*<https://youtu.be/kBKM BK85YDI>*



**Re: The Big Ride**

I read the various letters in the Winter 2015 Link referring to Chris & Jane's article "The Big Ride" and I hope the subject is still open for comment. Generally I agree with the sentiments expressed by Dave Mathews and Graham Hind.

However, whatever one's point of view on the Gaza conflict surely few would disagree that the children are innocent

victims and action to raise funds in support of their plight, can only be described as praiseworthy and worthy of support. So chapeau to Chris & Jane for their efforts.

I was disappointed that there were no comments from you Mr Editor supporting the decision to print the article presumably as submitted. There was little doubt that certain parts of the article were likely to be contentious and perhaps offensive to some as turned out to be the case. I trust there are many subscribers including myself who are not in favour of a placid and quiescent magazine which is afraid to deal with contentious issues but surely such contentious issues should at least be cycling related. I do not believe that the Link should be allowed to be used as a platform for the promotion of political points of view which have no bearing on cycling and suggest that such phrases as "we shouted abuse at Downing Street at Cameron" and "we can all boycott Israeli Goods" are a step too far, irrespective of whether or not one agrees with the authors point of view. I suggest that at least these phrases and perhaps one or two others have no place in a local cycling magazine and could have been edited out without detracting from the main objective of the article.

My request to you Mr Editor is that you clarify if future issues of the Link are to contain more articles with contentious political content unrelated to cycling or may we continue to expect a Link more akin to that described on the Group website as a "a light hearted round up of cycling news".

**Brian Lowe**

*Ed: I've always maintained that opinions are a subjective matter. My opinion is balanced? Your opinion is balanced? Who's to say? I think the membership should choose for themselves so I decided to include everything as long as common decency was maintained. Censorship is a tricky path to tread and the balance will prevail naturally.*

*As a matter of interest: out of the 140 copies sent out, we had 5 written/verbal objections and 4 written/verbal approvals - that tells you something?*

*The Link is for the membership by the membership and not just the opinion of the Editor.*

# On the Campaign Trail.....



Now, when you read Rob's letter and the 'trials

and tribulations' he's been through, doesn't it make you want to do something about it?

Have a look at Mark Jones' 'campaign' laid out on the next page.

Mark's doing something about it. Can't we, as a 1,700 strong group, lobby the CTC to instigate a campaign 'with teeth'?

Don't you really mind riding through cow effluent, risking broken bones or getting punctures from thorns on wet cold days or even waiting for those that have? How about we compile a 'standard' letter/petition to send to the

necessary authorities (Council, MP, Police?) with as many signatures as possible to try to 'kick start some action'?

What about a 'standard' type email similar to the 'Write to your local MP' automatic email that seems to work well with a very easy method of individually sending - just a couple of 'clicks'?

CONTACT The Link with your thoughts and together we'll try to work out a campaign that everyone's happy with and achieves results.

# Cafe of the Year.....

## !! Meadow Lea Farm Coffee Shop !!

Meadow Lea Farm Coffee Shop, situated on Station Road, Mickle Trafford, has become extremely popular since it opened in 2014. The café is in an ideal position at the end of the Greenway where cyclists and walkers come from a wide area for a variety of refreshments, including home-made cakes and hot snacks. Members of Chester and North Wales CTC voted the Coffee Shop 'Café of the Year 2015' for its excellent friendly service and a menu well suited to the

needs of active travellers. Barbara, who owns the café acknowledged the support of many cyclists.. She was delighted to receive a framed certificate on February 3<sup>rd</sup> which is now proudly on display in the café. Barbara is pictured here with two of her staff, Anna and Sian and some of



Photo by Glennys Hammond

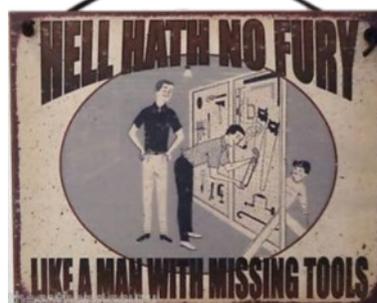
the riders who attended the presentation being presented with the Certificate by Mike Cross, President of C&NW CTC. Previous winners of the

Award are Walk Mill Bakery and Café and Tilly's Café, Bunbury.

**Glennys Hammond**



"I guess it's time to get a new bike when they steal your lock but leave the bike."





To: Robert Walsh; Terry Boland  
Subject: State of the cycle path  
between Rhosrobin and Llay (B5425)

**Dear Councillors,**

I am a keen cyclist, a member of the Cyclists' Touring Club and British Cycling and a freelance cycling instructor delivering Bikeability courses to schools in Wrexham County Borough Council.

Today I was riding home from Park CP School in Llay and I was using the shared cycle path which runs on the right hand side of the Llay New road towards Wrexham. The path has been redesignated as a shared path in an attempt to keep cyclists safe by removing them from the busy B5425.

Tonight I had my third puncture on this cycle path; on Saturday one of the CTC riders had a puncture on the path and last month my friend Kath had a puncture. The path is a constant topic of discussion at meetings of the cycling clubs I attend. Many riders are now losing faith in the path and are resorting to riding on the the road to avoid punctures.

The path is regularly covered in twigs and thorns, but of more concern is the regular covering of glass which appears to have been deliberately smashed onto the shared path.

Tomorrow I intend to ride to Llay to finish the Bikeability course. I would normally recommend that cyclist use well designed cycle paths but the problem with this path is that it is constantly causing puncture problems for cyclists. This will lead to cyclists using the carriageway and to possible frustration of motor vehicle drivers who can see a cycle path provided for cyclists but not being used for reasons unknown to them.

Is it possible to instigate regular cleaning of the path? Does it constitute a safe route into and out of Llay? If so shouldn't it be kept in better condition.? Do the

police or PCSOs take action against people deliberately smashing glass onto the path?

The path is well used by our cycling clubs, but I can see that some of our riders will chose to use the road rather than risk punctures.

I'd be grateful for some action to be taken to keep the path clean and to promote its use for cyclists.

Best Regards **Mark A. Jones - CTC**

**Hi Mark,**

Thank you for your email.

Am sorry to hear about the punctures yourself and other cyclists have endured whilst travelling up and down Llay New Road.

I did ask for this path to be cleared at the beginning of December and it was done. However, the windy weather we have experienced means that tree debris is blown back very soon afterwards. Broken glass has been an issue too for the past few weeks. Both our Streetscene department and Police Community Support Officer are aware of the problem.

I have forwarded your email to our Streetscene department and will endeavour to clear this path as soon as possible. Let's hope the weather is kinder to us as well.

Totally agree with your comments about cycling on the road.

Any further problems then please let myself and Terry know.

Best wishes, **Robert Walsh - Councillor**

**Dear Cllr Walsh,**

First, many thanks for your reply regarding the cycle path and passing it on to the Streetscene department.

Our club rode to Llay on Tuesday and the path was still covered in broken glass - mainly from the cemetery through to Llay Miners Institute.. All the cyclists from our Club are now riding on the carriageway as opposed to the share cycle path as none of them have confidence they can ride on the cycle path without getting a puncture.

It is my firm view that this path should be designated a safe route and cleaned regularly for the use of cyclists. If the road was left in such a condition to constantly cause punctures to motorised traffic I am confident that action would swiftly be taken.

As you are aware the Welsh Assembly Government passed the Active Travel (Wales) Bill last year to encourage cycling and walking. I am sure that this means more than just passing resolutions in the Assembly and discussions at council meeting - but actually involves taking action to promote cycling, encouraging safe routes that can be used by cyclists and walkers, and promoting all the health benefits that go along with it. By making the cycle path on the B5425 a safe route more people may be encouraged to use it.

I would suggest that the path needs cleaning regularly - say every two weeks, and the local PCSO need to monitor the path for unwanted broken glass to assess if cleaning once every two weeks is sufficient.

I look forward to some action being taken to improve the situation.

Best regards **Mark A. Jones - CTC**

**Cllr Walsh,**

I thought I'd update you on the Rhosrobin - Llay cycle path.

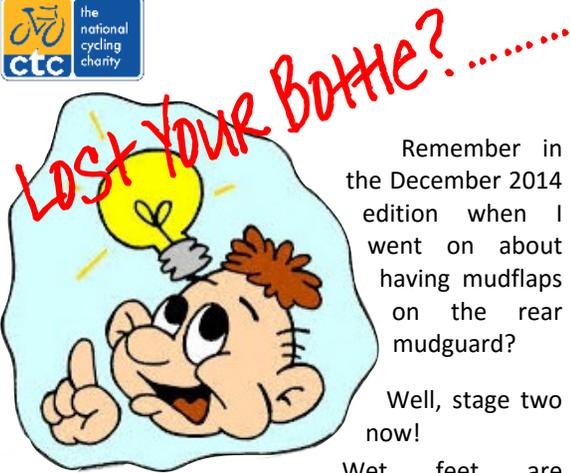
It seems your call to Streetscene has been successful - in part. Its great to see that the path from the road (Park Road) turning into the landfill site right through to the Miners Institute has been cleaned and is in generally good condition - although someone had broken a Budweiser bottle near the bus stop near opposite the cemetery. Thank you for your efforts in getting this part of the cycle path cleared.

However the section from Glan Llyn Road to Park Road is still covered in shards of glass and there was a lot of fresh hedge and tree cuttings left on the path and the road. Hedge cuttings left on the path and road pose a hazard to cyclist - blackthorn in particular has extremely hard thorns which can penetrate most cycle tyres, so once again can I call on your position as a councillor to tackle this issue.

Perhaps you may suggest to the council that if they make a provision for use by residents and visitors (in this case a cycle path) then there should be a plan in place for repair and regular maintenance.

Many thanks for your continued help in getting this cycle path to a condition that cyclists will have confidence in using it.

Best Regards **Mark A Jones - CTC**



Remember in the December 2014 edition when I went on about having mudflaps on the rear mudguard?

Well, stage two now!

Wet feet are bearable but COLD wet feet are another dimension so an easy fix ....

Recycled the corner from our last plastic milk container into a FRONT mud flap which keeps a lot of



the road surface water off my feet and real easy to do!

Mind you .... have to drink my tea without milk now for a bit!



**Hey Team - wait for me!**



Just one or two comments on group rides where the front half of the group get across a roundabout etc. and are sometimes a little 'remiss' on remembering their mates in the back half! These 'unfortunates' then have to go like crazy to catch up .....

## Message from John Pegum

Dear Mike,

I would like to thank present day active members of the Chester and North Wales CTC for the honour of being awarded the current years holding of the President's Cup.

I had my first ride with what was then the Chester Section of the Liverpool

DA. The meal place was at the Crown Inn, Llandegla. It was a happy coincidence that, recently, I found myself having a meal at the Hosta Café, Ledsham when a group of members of Chester and North Wales DA arrived. I was able to talk to them including a lady who had joined recently.

What a marvellous coincidence! I was able to celebrate my 80 years membership of CTC with current members present.

My great granddaughter, Florence, is five months old but she has already travelled



by bicycle (pictured). This bicycle is a rare sight in the UK, being made in the Netherlands. It is only available from the sole distributor in Cambridge.

I am sure that the Chester and North Wales CTC will continue to prosper.

**John Pegum**

Page 11



# My Blue Bridge to P-B-P .....

**(Paris-Brest-Paris)** This is a 2-part story about how our own John Wilkie overcame all odds to ride the 'signature' event in the long distance calendar - Paris Brest Paris. In this second instalment, after all the prep work, that day has arrived .....



Rider & organiser, Mike Wigley, mentioned RTY BR (Round The Year) where each month for twelve months you do a 200k+ ride (BR) and RTY AAA twelve months of hills, my weakness; I needed to practice and improve, it seemed logical. Then one day he said are

words from a Army training instructor in my head, "If it is easy anyone can do it, so if its hard, push harder, if its tough, be tougher. Go,Go,Go!" With a few expletives!

So I got serious, professional even, I used and reused every bit of information I had been taught, I studied food, drink and equipment. I know from experience how to push myself, the resting was harder, but important as my preparations. Drinking a 500ml of fluids before a ride, one bottle every one to two hours maximum, energy gels, bars and protein bars, spread out between meals, protein with whey milk shakes after rides, leaving my leggings on for compression for at least an hour after a ride. 'Minimal gains' said the guy who designed my bikes. So with my Garmin, not only to save time on route, with reducing stress, and also to measure my performance, always striving to find my rhythm and

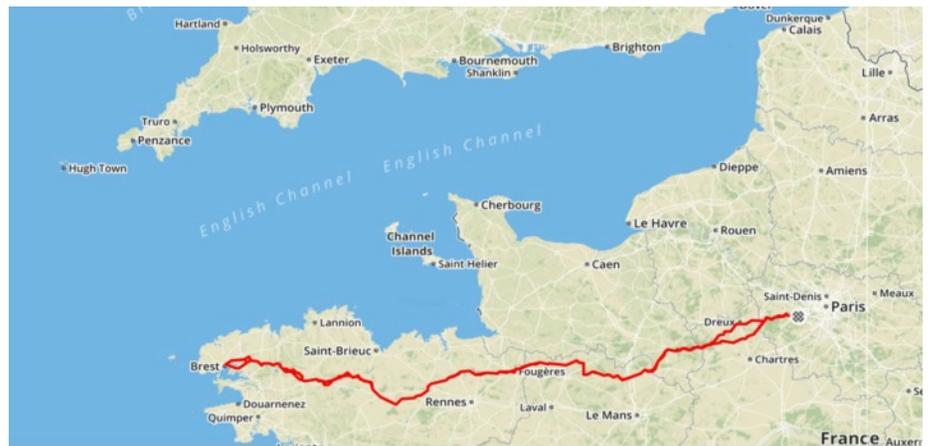
pressed the button, I paid the fee, I'd entered the PBP - 17:30 start on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2015. It was official, yet I still didn't believe I was going to go but the stress was immense. I needed a plan.

I used a recommended website, yacf.co.uk, to get an overview and insight, then to ask specific questions, finally checking with my trusted cycling guru & buddies. It was the thought of having to come back and say, "I didn't finish" that was so scary, it would be like letting them down, breaking a trust or belief.

PTSD means I am stressed, it's just a matter of how much. So with a list of lists, I started. The bike, Boardman Pro Carbon, upgraded wheels and seat, serviced and checked by the lads at Halfords, complimented by all cycling magazines. SPD pedals and shoes, easier to walk in with distance to cover at Controls. Lights with power packs and



you doing the PBP qualifiers? (He explained. In France, every four years and 1230 kilometres with 5-6000 riders). I never believed I was actually going to do it, never mind finish it, even after entering the 200, 300, 400 & 600 kms qualifiers. Doing the qualifiers only confirmed one thing, I wasn't up to it, each distance such a mental challenge, as physical, so I never thought I'd do the event. Unfortunately people talk, cyclists more than most, so every ride was 'how's the training for PBP going?' I needed to know the answer. So with



pace, as I once had when I ran and canoed competitively in the Army. I used set routes each month as templates, one from Blacon down the Millennium, to Mickle Trafford via Frodsham, up through Hatchmere and Delemere, right on the A556 to the A51 and right again on Wicker lane, to return via Mickle Trafford and the Millenium. The first time for the 30 miles and 1200ft climbs, was a difficult three hours plus, now it is comfortably, inside two hours.

As I was checking out the PBP website, reading the ins and outs, a qualifying page of rides came up, so I filled it in. Then a list of available slots came up, I

spares with batteries. Front bar bag, with gels, snacks, glasses, basic first aid plus tablets for, drinks, Imodium, Rennies, Paracetamol and eye wash, 50+ sun cream and chamois cream, all used and needed. Top bar bag, with more supplies for washing/cleaning but mainly power pack and batteries. Rear bag, with change of clothes and two extra layers, one for rain, one for cold nights. Plastic wheelie and bin liner & thermal blanket, for sleeping. Bike multi-tools and Leatherman tool, plus spares, including cable for brakes/gears, ties, tape, tubes, repair kit and oil, not all used but most. Two drinks bottles and

pockets with, money/cards, scarf, hat and spare gloves, along with the kit I wore and my new sunglasses from a French Decathlon.



I couldn't risk being with, or relying on other organised groups. I couldn't take on the responsibility of looking out for other's safety. So I decided to drive myself, go by ferry and camp. I drove the whole way, never above 60mph or 100kph, staying calm enjoying the journey, when I arrived in torrential rain, I found a quiet and basic hotel! What a result that was, two riders turned up French & Belgium, they spoke a little English, I don't speak French, so we went for a meal together in town, cyclists together, what a wonderful memory. One had done five events, the other two, "go off slowly and build up" & "exercise your neck regularly, eat, drink and rest at all Controls" again, great advice from fellow cyclists.

Now a whole week off my bike, then officialdom with check in at the velodrome, bike checked, numbered & tagged, along with my own leg tag!

Then ..... the next day.

Nothing prepared me for the huge numbers of cyclists, the masses of groups, the varieties of language and countries represented. CLOSED ROADS! Only because no vehicle could move, for the supporters and families, only out numbered by spectators, everywhere you looked, with hundreds of cyclists, in each segment from A-Z, set off in timed spaces, adding up to thousands, a human cycling army, meandering and

flowing like a river towards Brest, all being cheered enthusiastically .... Just watch 'YouTube'. The French are awesome and love cyclists. The overwhelming memories, from the whole event are of the French people, 24 hours a day, everywhere, supporting, cheering and encouraging. Including the drivers of vehicles!

Early hours of the first morning, I thought I must be hallucinating, I heard children's voices, "Allez,Allez,Allez" I couldn't see anything it was so dark in the countryside, then I see three children, hanging out the bedroom window of a remote farm, it gave me a refill of energy and power, plus a massive surge of emotion. The next farm, had a big hand written sign next to a table, with water and cakes left for passing cyclists, something I got to see and use, time after time, as so many families had done this all along the route, all for free! Barbeques, parties and gatherings, any excuse it seemed to stand or park to support the riders of the PBP. The Controls, along with "The Secret Control", were all the same but different, hoards of cyclists coming and going, all different but again the same, after one or ten of the 2500 volunteers, point you in the right direction, no matter the language or state of mind of the individual, you park your bike in the racks, fill your water bottles at the taps or barrels, then "beep-beep" as you walk or shuffle past the sensors, happy

tongues. Sit down and share a smile, all comrades, all fellow cyclists, shoes off, food in, the first faces I recognise are not people I know from Audax UK, who I do see and ride with later, no, I see the French & Belgium cyclists from the hotel, like long lost family, it is so good to see them; the clock ticks faster at Controls and time flashes by, an hour gone, equal to 25k further down the route, but remember, listen, learn and finish, it's the first Control and you've still got 86 from a total of 90 hours to use. Outside is even more congested, more people, more cyclists, more spectators, more noise, its good and relaxing to turn the pedals again, heart rate, cadence & speed, check, now enjoy the spectacle, the views, being part of this magnificent event. Still can't believe I'm here!

From time to time, a group or rider is caught, or you are passed, to join or not to join? It is difficult, so many are organised, clubs and groups together, from every country on the planet. Alone, but a cyclist amongst a world migration, to a French coast. In front and to the rear, every bike and piece of equipment, a mass of a magnitude to tilt the country so it goes downhill? No chance, no one told me about the hills, over 6000 metres climbed 'down' to the coast, some are so long, some so steep, just watch the tyre valve come around, just head for the next post or tree, don't look too far ahead, it hurts your eyes, turns legs and brain to mush.



When someone points out the coast, I realise I haven't slept, 30 hours have passed, 615k covered, I actually feel

smiling faces on both sides behind tables, welcoming gesticulation, to stamp and sign your brevet card, always with a kind word. Then you look and see food, everywhere, so another queue, volunteers all over, feeding cleaning and answering questions, in a thousand

smug for a second, then reality hits home. I have to get back but at least I'm ahead of schedule. Queued for an hour for a bed, wrong one, got a token for a shower and directions to the right queue, much longer, eventually I get directed to a room , four hours I say to

the man with a clock and plan of beds and rooms.

Then 40 minutes later I'm woken, alerted and shocked, a door being opened, lights ablaze, noise I don't understand. Every sense in confusion, fear and anger start to take hold, then I realise where I am! After my room mate settles, I try and fail to relax, so go for my shower, change into clean and fresh clothes.

I feel pretty good, eating and drinking,



but 'café legs' has a whole new meaning as I start back to Paris.

It's better in the dark, the cool, I don't like the blistering heat of the day, so sleep 12-1, hiding in the shade, I rest at all Controls, eat and drink. Is it adrenalin, fear of failure, or plain stubbornness that rotates the pedals? Maybe all together, anything to turn the pedals to the next Control. Sometimes it hurts, really hurts, I'd stopped to sleep, it was so hot, I took shelter under a tree, it was damp, I had my black plastic bin bag, my thermal blanket, I woke thinking I was on fire, realising it was the sun that had moved into my shelter, I got up watching bikes pass, mine had fallen from the fence, I picked it up and packed my gear, had a drink and started to ride. It was only a small gradient up to the main road and route back, yet I struggled to get going, I was in a low gear, I pushed harder and for the first time had really negative thoughts, it was so hard to turn the pedals. Had I hit 'the wall'? Had I reached my limit? "Bonked" in cycling terms. I pushed and pulled each pedal, strained and struggled like never before, after an hour or so I had done only ten kilometres, just ahead was a family and a

table of drinks, cakes and goodies, mainly happy smiling faces. Refreshed and refuelled I moved my bike ready to ride on, but the rear wheel skidded, the brakes locked on. On inspection the caliper was bent, the wheels black from rubber. Fixed, cleaned and released, the pedals turned with such ease and the pain disappeared and I laughed out loud! It must have been when the bike fell earlier, tired and sleep deprivation, that

I could deal with, until the next Control.

They were all Italians that surrounded me, as we left the Control, the club colours, flag and language obvious, so I asked if I could join on the back, yes was the answer, the pace crisp and serious but easy enough for me to take turns in front,

thirty kilometres plus, hour after hour, until a hiss, a puncture, a crash as I hit the edge of the road with a rider hitting me. Once they helped their rider and all were ok, they left, from the Citroën van with flashing lights parked behind me in the road, a nod from a French man, as I took off the front wheel and checked the bike, he started to chat in English and remove the tyre, no levers! Asked for the spare tube and handed it back, ready for a blast from my Co<sub>2</sub> and it was done, I was ready to go and thanked him, a fellow cyclist but he was out driving that late night. I realised the front mech was damaged. I had to stop at the bottom of several hills to change by hand, then climb and change back again, until the second Control, because it was an hour's wait for first aid and an hour for a mechanic who could not help. The two gentlemen of senior years, at the next Control took a while but fixed the lever, the time wasted over that evening and morning was a negative and disappointing, yet I was able to continue, me and my bike still worked. I met a few different riders, from senior regulars, to lightweight, stripped down time chasers, with helpers in mobile homes, massage

chairs and food at the ready, after they had jogged through the Controls and passed the queues.

One rider explained that if we rode at a pace, helping each other we may be able to finish in three days, it sounded insane, but I thought, that's for me! It actually worked, as a small peloton of eight to ten riders, kept together for the last two Controls and we all helped like the United Nations but with one aim.

I had no idea why the pace kept climbing, until a English rider told me how close we were to finishing.

All of the cyclists that helped me from day one, all rode with me in spirit, when I rode the Paris-Brest-Paris, 1230 kms and 11,000+ metres of climbing.

All of their knowledge, tips, encouragement and good will pushed me, none more than my 'go to' guy Martin Brooks, supported by his lovely lady Sarah. How many times I have totally relied on him, I cannot count, from sitting behind his skilled, easy style, hiding and resting from the wind on an Audax, sitting in his garage come bike shop, being taught how to use my Garmin and BaseCamp software, or



reading his blog describing in detail his and Sarah's awesome rides. As he rides with all C&NW groups, does many Audax and rides with Chester RC, I do get to see him, always supported by Sarah. I always ask his advice and opinion, always getting an enthusiastic, knowledgeable

and honest reply. Once on the PBP, listening to a rider at a Control, stunned, I took a photo, looked around, yes I'd done it.



discussing all the reasons why he was packing in, negatives looking for a place to settle in my brain, I looked at my route sheet, Martin's voice popped in my head,

"It's only 80k to the next Control, you can do 80K can't you? - just one Control at a time".

So I put my shoes back on, got dressed and headed out alone, into the cold and dark for my bike, smiling, all the way to the Finish. I remember standing there,

Into the velodrome, brevet card stamped, happy but desperately tired cyclists, the great French people organising and encouraging, the shower and into clean civvies, then sleep in the back of my MPV in a underground car park too tired to move. Sitting in a café, rain pouring outside, riders still finishing as I started another meal and another hot drink, alone

but surrounded by cyclists who were predominately English, the emotion flooded into my head, heart and eyes, the poppy on my bike outside, a reminder. I thought of all my friends of past who could not be here, those that had got me here, it was just too much, so I went to the gents, washed my face and came out proud.

I have now done 30 plus Audax, including 10 AAA's. The PBP 1230k (16/08/15) in 77hrs 45min.



AAA RTY & BR RTY. (1 ride each month for 12 months)

From my first Audax in late 2014 I have ridden 17,000+ kms in my first year of cycling.

A lot of motivation, encouragement and support, from a lot of special people, who fashioned yet another cyclist, who is grateful and humbled by their efforts, I hope my efforts show my respect and gratitude. **John Wilkie**

*Ed: If you look in the dictionary for the definition of 'motivation' I think you'll find a photograph of John - I take my hat off to him.*



## April 21st 2016

**First Aid evening presentation by Steve Evans MBE, SRPara, MCPara** at the Bike Factory, Chester. (Doors open 6.30pm for 7.00pm). Steve Evans is a cyclist and also a Paramedic Training Manager. After realising the

lack of first aid skills amongst cyclist he set to work researching cycling injuries and then produced a cycling specific presentation. The presentation will last for approximately 1½ hours covering minor injuries through to major injuries.

Please email [daveparry@thebikefactory.co.uk](mailto:daveparry@thebikefactory.co.uk) to confirm attendance. (If you have no access to email please contact Lowri Evans 01824 705709 who will pass on your details)

See page 16 ref: Steve Evans!!

**Also, another date for your diary! Saturday 30th April 2016 CTC Cymru Treasure Hunt & Map Reading** from Cross roads Cafe, Trefnant.

Cafe open from 9am.

Treasure Hunt start between 9.30-10.00; Map Reading start at 1pm.

Details will be on the C&NW CTC website or contact Lowri Evans 01824 705709 or [lowri.1evans@btinternet.com](mailto:lowri.1evans@btinternet.com)



*Congratulations .....*



**Steve Evans MBE** was honoured in recognition of his life-saving 'Don't Walk Away' campaign which educates young people about the risks of alcohol and how to look after each other.



UK radio and TV and in the Press.

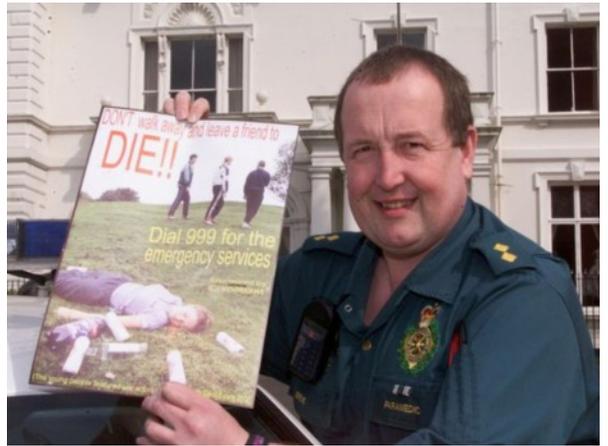
As well as advice on what to do in the case of emergency, the campaign also teaches about the dangers of under-age drinking and choking and hypothermia, and how their bodies 'are not ready' for alcohol.

He said 'Don't Walk Away's' reach is now 'massive' with achievements including the teaching of 5,000 children in Salford alone, leading to at least one life being saved.

Steve has also been working with 17 street pastor teams in the North West including in Widnes.

He has started talking to young people about drugs, too.

One of the myths he is keen to bust among young people is that the paramedics will call the police if they find a child drunk.



He had no idea an honour was in the pipeline.

Steve said: "It came out of the blue and I'm quite shocked really.

"I've been running the campaign for 14 years.

"It's gone worldwide which is weird and wonderful.

"And to think that someone thinks it's worth an honour is unbelievable."

Looking back to the encounter that started it all, he said: "He was abandoned in a playing field, his mates had walked off and left.

A paramedic from Runcorn whose crusade to prevent young deaths from alcohol has gone global has been named in the New Year's Honours list.

Steve Evans was made an MBE in recognition of his 'Don't Walk Away' campaign, which was inspired by his own experience when he was called to treat a boy of about 12 years old in Widnes who had been left sprawled on his back by his friends after too much to drink.

If the youth had vomited he could have choked and died.

The campaign, set up in 2001, has now expanded from the UK and is being run around the world as well as featuring on

A Cabinet Office spokeswoman said 'Don't Walk Away' is approved by the Department Of Health, the Home Office, the Department For Education and forms part of drug education for 9-11year-olds.

Steve, 60, joined the City Of Liverpool Ambulance Service as an Ambulance Cadet in 1971 and became a paramedic in 1989.

He is also the author of a book now in its third edition that teaches how to read heart rhythms and is used by student paramedics, nurses and doctors.

With vast experience he now trains the next generation at North West Ambulance Service.

"I thought I'll do something about this.

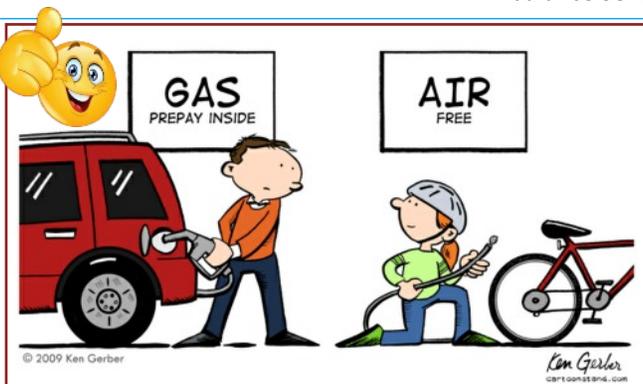
"He was just lying on his back.

"He wasn't even dressed for the weather, it was February.

"He would have choked to death if he had thrown up."

The Cabinet Office spokeswoman said: "He has demonstrated consistent drive and enthusiasm, locally, nationally and internationally to raise awareness and reduce risks of harm, particularly for young people."

*Ed: Well done Steve! Makes the time he gave us writing his run of articles on 'Cycling First Aid Advice' in past Links all the more appreciated!*



Found on Twitter:

"..... then again, nothing sounds like a helpful suggestion when shouted from the window of a car going 40mph!"



## Eureka Audax/C&NW CTC Rides – Sat. April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2016

Eureka Cafe on the Wirral has been sheltering, supporting and serving cyclists since the 1930's. It is so famous, it has several documentaries to its name giving an outline of the history of the cafe and some of the many personalities associated with it. The following rides use the cafe as a base for the start and finish.

**"Eureka Excursion"** 200k  
This ride is based on the Peak Audax "Eureka" route---but starting at the Cafe itself and visiting the beautiful village of Ellesmere at the southern point. The route then heads off to Tilly's cafe at Bunbury, followed by Congleton & Lymm (thus avoiding the Manchester conurbation),

before returning through Great Budworth to the Wirral. A generally flat ride with many interesting, scenic lanes.

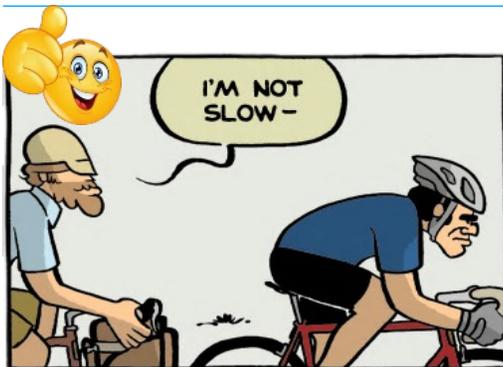
**"Tea in Prospect"** 130k  
rides out to Prospect Tea Rooms near the Llangollen Panorama (one big hill to reach the cafe) and then

returns on mostly flat lanes via a lunch stop at Tilly's cafe at Bunbury.

**"Two Mills Twirl"** 60k is an introductory ride visiting Cleopatra's Cafe in Holt, followed by a return to the Eureka cafe through Aldford and Mickle Trafford.

*Full details of these good value rides, low cost entry, entry forms, route sheets (with car parking arrangements if required) are available at [www.audax.uk.net](http://www.audax.uk.net).*

*Entries on-line using PayPal or through the mail now available until closing date (subject to reaching maximum numbers allowed---see website) of 19 April 2016. No entries on the line on the day!*

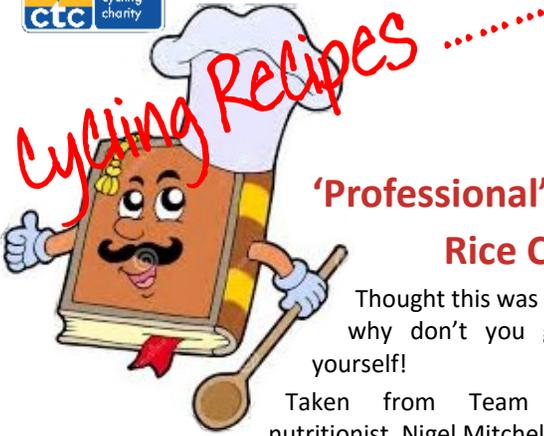


**We called into 'The Old Priest House' Coffee Shop in Audlem the other day to pick up some more 'Training Food'!**

- The evening news is where they start the programme with 'Good evening', and then proceed to tell you why it isn't!

**Paul Mills saw this at Birkenhead Bus Station!**

**Anyone got a spoke key?**



## 'Professional' Rice Cakes

Thought this was really good so why don't you give it a go yourself!

Taken from Team Sky's lead nutritionist, Nigel Mitchell

"Part of the rice cake's popularity is that it's a vehicle for both macro-nutrients (in this case, carbohydrate) and micro-nutrients (all the little things with complex names that your body needs to maintain metabolism).

You can load it up with other ingredients, sweet or savoury, although caution in your experiments is advised – our attempts at an egg curry rice cake ended badly.

Any ingredients that might compromise the rice cake's structure, such as nuts and berries, can be incorporated by layering rice on to a baking tray, followed by a layer of the ingredient, followed by another layer of rice and pressing down firmly, making a 'rice cake sandwich' that should hold strong".

Here's the recipe, as developed by Nigel:

500g short grain rice (Arborio or pudding rice). Not quick cook, and don't wash it.

Cook in a rice cooker with 1 litre of water, two tablespoons granulated sugar, ¼ teaspoon of cinnamon, vanilla, or nutmeg for flavour.

Cooking time should be about 20 minutes, making rice that isn't too soggy.

Don't take the lid off during cooking.

Leave the rice to rest for five minutes.

Add two tablespoons coconut oil (which, despite its name, is a solid substance and not an oil) and 250g of cream cheese – chocolate Philadelphia is a favourite at Team Sky.

Mix well.

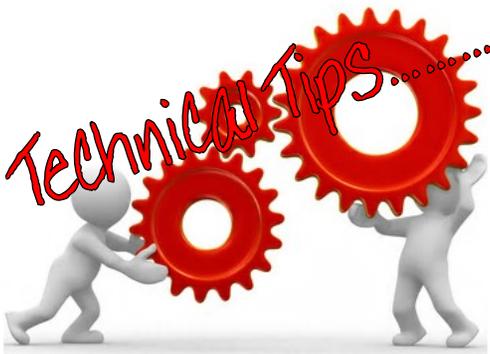
Lay out on cling film on a baking tray. Fold the cling film over the slab of rice to create a parcel – fold while the rice is still hot so it stays sterile.

Leave the tray to cool, then put in the fridge overnight.

The next day, unwrap the parcel of rice and cut into energy bar-sized chunks.

Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Do not reheat the rice cakes.



## Making a 'Chain Hook'

Older riders have probably used one of these cheap tools – younger riders may not have even heard of one!

Easy to make – I use an old spoke, about 8-9" long (200-230mm for those younger riders) with a bend at each end, a piece of wire coat hanger will also work.

This is really handy when replacing a chain at home or even out on the road.

Change to the middle or small ring and the small cog on the back and then thread the chain through the rear mech (derailleur) and over the cassette. Now hook this end of the chain onto one end of your new 'special' tool. You can now hold the tool to stop the chain slipping back through the rear mech and also use the other end to hook onto the other end of the chain and guide it through the front changer.



Readjusting the 'hooking' position of the tool will now allow you fit the 'Quick-link' easily without the whole lot slipping through into the grass.

Makes it so much easier!

Glynn Jones



And then of course, there's always the continual issue of thorns, mud and cow muck to contend with caused by the fact that people just don't want to clear up after them - more photos from Rob.

*Ed: Who's going to be the next cyclist to break a collar bone, arm or hip? Hope it's not me as I've been there and done that already! Believe me, it hurts, ever such a lot!*

This was that 'close shave' Rob Davies was writing about in the 'Letters Section' and as you can see, it really was close!  
Makes my 'coming together' with the B&Q lorry on my way to the Eureka the other morning seem comparatively 'tame'!

See Rob's film footage on YouTube  
<https://youtu.be/kBKMBK85YDI>



Riding through Whitchurch this 'hero' decided to reverse out in front of the group and not content with that, stopped and then had another go at the rest of us!

See the footage on YouTube  
<https://youtu.be/q2f-rPbWxPM>



Our 'illustrious' van driver decided to start off from the kerbside with an immediate right turn without indicating. Must be really difficult to concentrate on your mobile phone with other road users about!

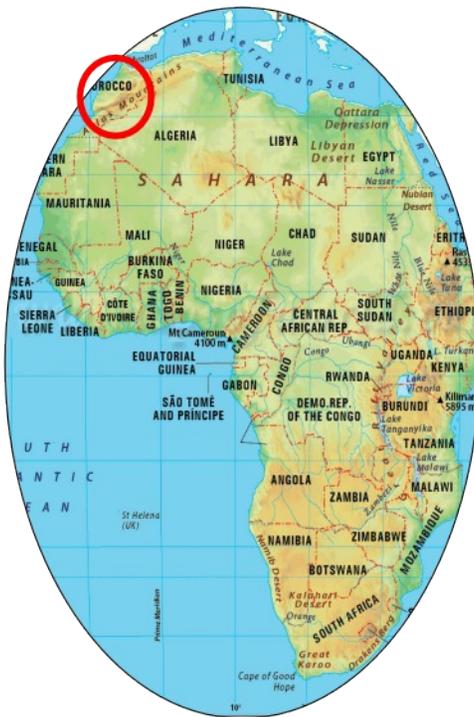
I ended up going into Dodleston Village Hall carpark with him!





## 'My Moroccan Road Trip'

Having enjoyed several holidays riding in the Alps and Pyrenees after retirement from the world of work, in March 2014 the time eventually arrived to fulfil a long-held ambition to visit the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. It is necessary to



visit in early spring or the autumn to avoid the 45/50°C temperatures experienced during the summer. My ambition to visit the Atlas was first stirred during my mountaineering days in the 60s and 70s when it was apparent that a number of well-known British hill



walkers were moving out to Morocco to find pastures new, following their extensive exploits in the UK. Having walked and climbed in most parts of

Britain by the mid-80s, I was looking to follow in the footsteps of these pioneers. Then cycling intervened and gave me a whole new set of geographically more conventional challenges until I finally revisited my "let's go to the Atlas mountains" ideas of 2013.

Rather than plan all the details of my first visit, it was decided to join one of KE's seven day, fully supported, road cycling trips – 'The Tour of Toubkal'. This 700km, 6,500m ascent route departs from Marrakech to describe a southerly clockwise road route around Mount Toubkal at 4167m, the highest mountain in North Africa.

The following notes give a flavour of the ride – which I would describe as a great new experience if not always a traditional holiday. Comprehensive details of the route and associated arrangements are available on the KE website.

The first barrier to the circuit is the high pass of Tizi n'Tichka at 2,260m following an initial motorised transfer out of Marrakech to Taddert hamlet at 1,670m. The reason for this transfer is twofold: firstly to escape the Marrakech traffic; and secondly to allow time to get to the first available overnight stop, 103km beyond Taddert at Quarazate. Throughout this ride there tends to be only one possible road and one possible location for the overnight stop – especially beyond Zagora at the edge of the Sahara desert. Roads vary from occasionally smooth to very rough, although the Moroccan people are gradually improving the worst of them. Minimum 25mm section tyres are recommended.

You will have seen much of Quazarate at the movies for this is where 'Lawrence of Arabia' and the Spaghetti Westerns were filmed in the surrounding rugged landscape. There are still some plastic forts up in the hills, left over from the scene sets.

We stayed in a beautiful hotel at Quazarate, as we did at Agdz (day 2) and at Zagora at the edge of the Sahara desert (day 3). All ten of us had our

photos taken at the famous sign pointing across the desert indicating 'Tombouctou 52 days', which is the time it takes by dromedary. (There are no camels in Morocco!).

We returned up the fertile Draa valley to Agdz in the support van, to enable the



timely connection to the road to the small town of Tazenakht at 1,398m for our next overnight stay. Beyond Agdz the route gets into very remote hill country and some very poor roads.

Lunch was the usual tajine, bread, and salad prepared by our excellent,



multilingual guide Mustapha at the back of the van. No cafes in these parts! Tazenakht is a transit town on the main inland highway, some 200kms east of the large port at Agadir (a kind of downmarket M62 service area). The hotel here was a shocker – dirty and cold.

We were kept awake all night by packs of dogs fighting in the street outside until dawn – at which time the Mullahs chimed in with their calls to prayer. All of us were tired next morning as we set off for 120kms riding into a block headwind blowing straight in from the Atlantic at Agadir. We eventually arrived at Aoulouz

feeling shattered, before one final short climb to a beautiful hotel. A lovely hotel but no hot water. Still, it was clean and the food cooked by Mustapha once again restored our spirits.

The penultimate day's ride took us over the Tizi n'Test summit 2100m, back in the direction of Marrakech. This pass is well graded with a good road surface and cafes. A very long 1,650m ascent in beautiful scenery that had more of an Alpine air than the rest of the trip.



To complement the Alpine atmosphere, after a long descent from the pass we stayed in a 'gite' at Ijoukak, a small village lost in the folds of Mount Toubkal. Here we followed our established routine of showering (often tricky due to dodgy plumbing), eating at 7:30pm, and bed at 9:30 (no alcohol, no internet, no mobile phone signal, too tired to have a party!). Then up at 05:45, breakfast (bread, eggs and fruit) at 07:00 to be on the road at 08:00.

The final day involved some lumpy roads including a 300m climb to the town of Asni which is used as the base for trips up Mount Tubkal. Following Asni, it is all downhill through a few towns to Marrakech. In one of these towns I came across the first roundabout of this trip. As I entered the roundabout a car passed me very close forcing me into the kerb, then indicated left just beyond, suddenly slammed his brakes on and turned right about 1m from my front wheel and stopped. There is no intent in these actions – it's just that Moroccan drivers are not used to dealing with bikes.

Back in Marrakech we had a hotel room for the afternoon to get changed and pack the bikes. A quick trip to the airport and we were back in Manchester by midnight.

All in all a fascinating trip in observing a different culture and lifestyle from our own in the developed West. A great experience and well worthwhile. With especial thanks to Mustapha and his two helpers who looked after us so well during the whole of the trip.

**David Matthews**

Caption Competition .....

*"Listen up Riders! We're going for a long ride now; it's cold, so hands up anyone wanting to go to the toilet before we head off?"*



*but I'll bet you've got a better caption .....*



*Kit Choice*

Thought we could have a section in 'The Link' where you've tried out a piece of kit and like it enough to tell your fellow riders.

So, as a 'kick-off' here's a couple of items that Sarah & I have been testing, see what you think!



Over the years I've felt the need to ride with a forward facing camera mainly for safety reasons - you wouldn't believe the number of near misses I've had while out on my bike! Elbows clipped, legs rubbed down the side of vans, tractors that drive straight at you on narrow lanes etc etc. Non cyclists wouldn't believe what goes on.

Nowadays, it has an extra purpose, yes, that's right 'Smile - you're on Camera'!

So ..... when I heard about the new Cycliq Fly6 rear facing camera and combined rear light, I jumped at the chance - in fact both Sarah & I have one on the back of our bikes. And, for an HD camera, cheap at £99!



The battery lasts for about 5 hours and continually records good quality video until the memory is full. It then overwrites so anything behind is recorded automatically without having to touch it.

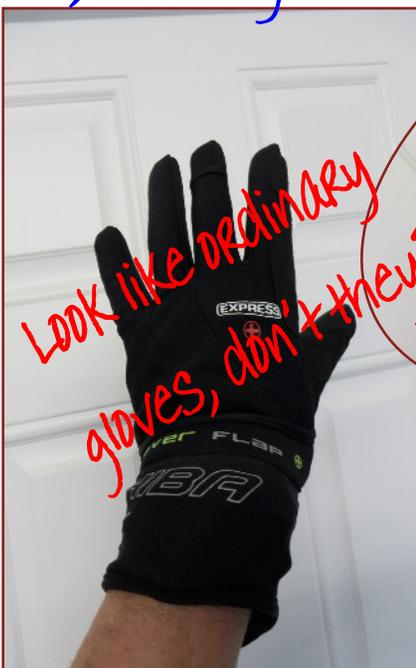
In the event of an accident, when the bike is dropped or laid over, then the current footage is saved for posterity - could be useful for litigation?

The camera also has three rear light modes with three degrees of intensity on each and it's really bright!

These two pictures are an example of the footage recorded - one a bright day and the other is a really wet day, but both clear enough! - that is, you can read the car number plate!



*Now, what do you wear on your hands if it looks like rain?*



*Look like ordinary gloves, don't they?*



Tucked inside a little pocket on the back of the wrist of these winter Chiba Express Plus Gloves is an attached fold-out waterproof ¾ overmitt that works very well. When it stops raining, just fold it back into its own compartment!

# Bits and Bikes .....



## the 'Bits'!

**Shimano Sora Compact Chainset .... 50/34 ..... 175mm cranks - £30**

This came on a new bike, but I normally ride 170mm cranks so I replaced them. They've only been used for a test ride and are therefore like-new.

**2. Lidl Cycling Shoes - Size 42 ...£10**

I wore these a couple of times but they're too big. They're sized as 42 but are more like a size 43.

**3. Cycling Weekly - Free!**

I've got all the Cycling Weekly's from 2010 to the present day. Anyone's who's interested in them can have them for free, otherwise they're going into the recycling bin.

If you're interested in any of these items then send Steve an email on [sjbuy@outlook.com](mailto:sjbuy@outlook.com) or contact the Editor.

## & also the 'Bikes'!



Won't be able to take this to Spain with me so regrettably I have to sell my Dawes Super Galaxy 531 Touring bike. It's early '90's and I've had it for the past 8 years meaning to refurb it during those long winter evenings.

Finally completed it and it's in superb condition. It's 21½" centre to centre and 22½" centre to the top of the seat tube. The top tube is 22" and it has a 14-28, 6 speed Shimano block with a Thun triple crankset with 28-38-48 chainrings and is in great condition. The rear mech is Suntour controlled by Shimano indexed downtube shifters.

The 27 x 1¼" MA2 rims/Campagnolo 32 spoke hubs have hardly been used.

I've fitted new tyres, a new KMC chain and replaced all the gear and brake cables along with new bar tape - **£300**



Sylvia writes in and tells us she's decided to 'hang up her bike clips' so her reliable 531 Coventry Eagle needs to go to a good home. It's an 80/90's model fitted with glorious Shimano Arabesque equipment and an impressive drilled Stronglight double chainset with a 5 speed block on the back.

The 27 x 1¼" tyres are nearly new on Weinmann alloy rims. It's 20" centre to centre and 21" centre to the top of the seat tube. The top tube is 21".

Sylvia also has two pairs of cycling shoes (size 41 & 42) as well as helmet, shorts and tops along with a C&NW CTC cycling jacket.

No reasonable offers refused as all donations to go to the 'Blind & Partially Sighted' Charity.

**Please contact the Editor for more details or offers!**



Can't take my 'toy' to Spain either!

It's a genuine Dutch bike - it even has the Dutch bike shop sticker on it. I replaced the brake cables as I've converted it to be ridden in the UK - the front brake is now on the right handlebar. It's 23½" centre to centre and 24¼" centre to the top of the seat tube. The top tube is 22"

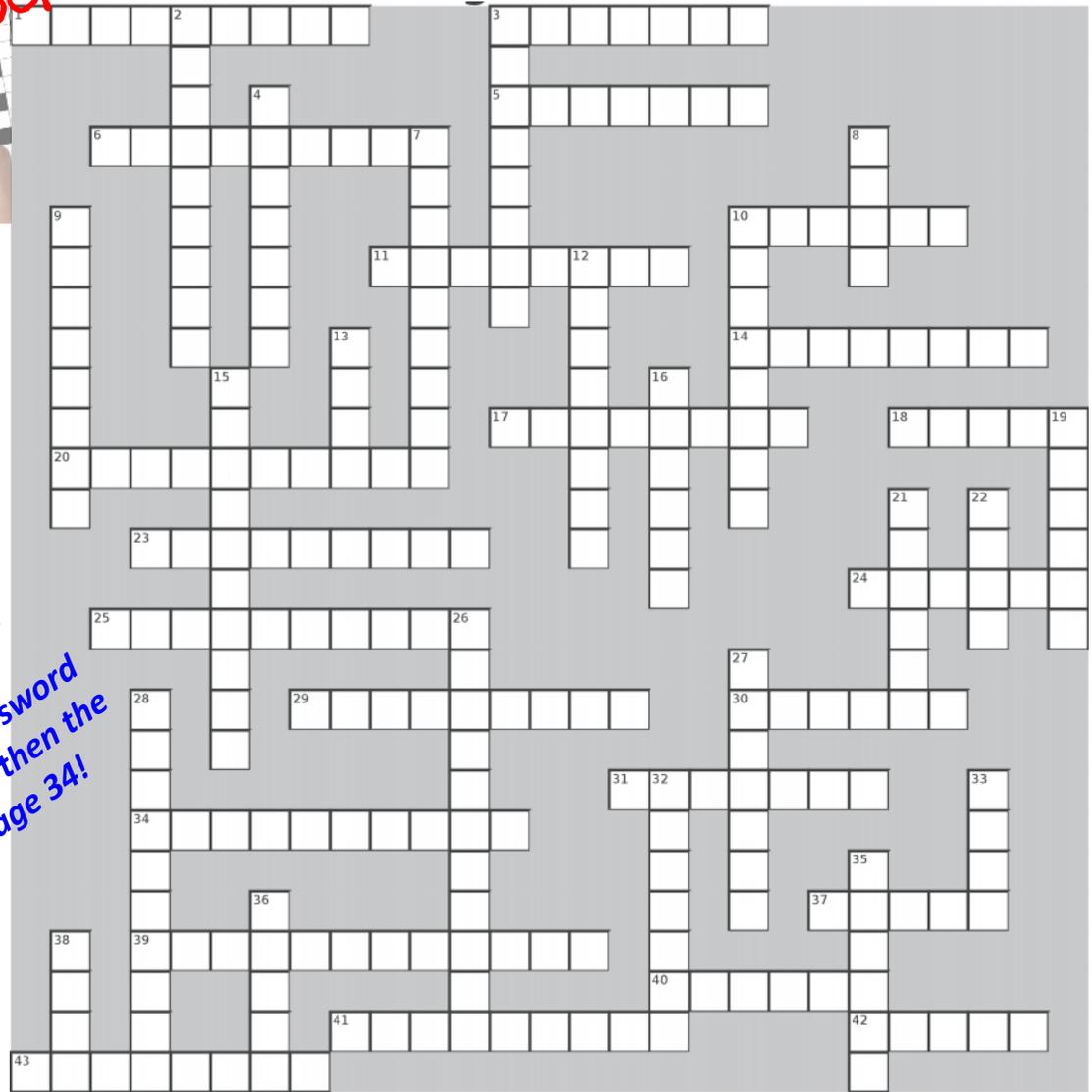
It has 700 x 35 wheels with good tyres and is fitted with the normal Dutch accessories - a bottle dynamo on the front wheel which powers the front and rear lights and the rear wheel security lock as well as a foldaway prop stand.

It's in pretty good condition and would make someone a great 'popping to the shops' bike!

Was thinking of asking **£75** for it or near offer - what do you think?



Have a go at this crossword but if you get stuck then the answers are on page 34!



**Across**

1. Bicycle race individuals ride separately for elapsed time
3. Large fast pack of riders
5. 100 mile bike ride
6. Fat valve
10. I track my rides on \_\_\_\_
11. Manoeuvre for jumping obstructions
14. Tyres also known as sew-ups
17. What you do when a dog is chasing you
18. Ride close behind the big guy
20. Blow snot
23. Closed circuit street race
24. Your 'leather' recliner
25. Closed circuit race with dirt, trails and obstacles
29. Front gear
30. Ride fast and hard
31. Diagonal paceline for crosswinds
34. Most common mountain bike brake
37. To mash on the pedals as hard as you can
39. World's most popular race
40. Plastic fantastic
41. Pinch flat
42. Part on the bottom of your cycling shoe
43. Large abrasions from asphalt

**Down**

2. Section of trail difficult to ride because of rocks, roots, steep drops
3. Single file of riders, taking turns pulling
4. Rear gear cluster
7. Bike for riding in a reclined position
8. Free stuff from manufacturers
9. Misleading name for pedal-and-shoe system
10. Fully suspended mountain bike
12. Front suspension but no rear suspension
13. Blowing up in mid-ride
15. Thing that moves your chain to change gears
16. Skinny valve
19. Two riders
21. Rider who considers trails to be for the weak and feeble
22. Flying over the handlebars
26. Trail just wide enough for one person
27. Act of riding on the rear wheel only
28. Stopping the bike while remaining on the bike
32. Crank spin rate
33. Low riding position for aerodynamics
35. Bike mechanic
36. Ride in them when an aero tuck is important
38. Charm or icon worn by a biker or attached to the bike



*Lucky to be here .... ?*

My name's Ken and I love my cycling. I'm 71 years old and I really want to be out and about (with my many cycling friends) on my bike when I am 81. Having been a footballer (of sorts) and a marathon runner I have been trying to get fit for most of my life, and cannot resist "having a go"! We all know of the many hazards that face us every time we get on our bikes. We know full well that we must properly maintain our bikes and equipment as a fall which is our own fault and was avoidable (if only we had done this or that) is so annoying, this happened to me recently but I got away relatively lightly.

In the second I found myself going over



my handlebars at speed and heading towards the tarmac head first (courtesy of worn cleats) I thought now you've done it good and proper. But in that second I got something right...my helmet. My head thumped into the roadway with all 70kgs of my bodyweight behind it, I had all of the usual - skinned hands, hips, legs and broken ribs plus one broken helmet. Thanks to my relatively cheap helmet I was able to get back on the bike and ride to the brilliant café "Cleopatra's" in Holt who were so kind and helpful. I know that without my cycling helmet I would most probably never have ridden again, not to mention the pain and distress I would have had to endure.

As things turned out thanks to that helmet and painkillers I missed only one ride. Newly kitted out with pedals, cleats and top of the range helmet I still feel confident enough to "have a go now and again".

That's my recent story anyway, but what I want to do in this article is to have a look at "Helmets", and how we view them.

I can say to you that your life could depend on your helmet so be aware of the following -

- (a) All of the reputable manufacturers recommend that your helmet be replaced every 5 years.
- (b) You must regularly check your helmet for any signs of damage, especially after you have crashed – if you find damage, the protection provided is compromised so the helmet should be replaced.
- (c) Ensure that your helmet meets the safety standards having exceeded the minimum impact tests results that would give you the protection you need when you need it most.

You must see in the inner helmet two letters "CE" and the code EN1078 then you know that you're good to go.

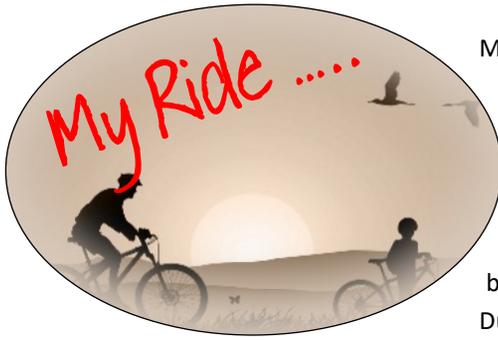
- (d) Before you do go out, I want you to check the adjustment, firstly, is your helmet the right size and does it fit snugly? It must be comfortable; if there is a retention system at the back of the helmet, have you made that adjustment so that your helmet stays where it should? Have you adjusted the straps properly around your ears? Have you adjusted the chin straps so that you can place just two fingers between the straps and your chin? This to ensure that you get protection to the side of your head in the event of a crash.
- (e) After a wet ride, clean and dry your helmet storing it in a warm dry place.

So you need a new helmet? I am not an expert, but having spent some time

choosing my new helmet I would like to share with you what I have gleaned from my enquiries:

- (a) There are two types of helmets Road and Mountain, the road helmets are generally lighter and better ventilated. The mountain bike helmets have more protection having to contend with stones and twigs.
- (b) I am now aware that there are different head shapes i.e. round, long, oval, oblong, big, small and that different helmets (even within the same manufacturer) suit specific heads, so it is a must to try before you buy.
- (c) I found that some helmets felt comfortable straight away and did not float about when I shook my head, one or two felt and looked as if they just sat on top, some came too far down my forehead. Once I had narrowed down my choices it was just a matter of colour and style.
- (d) Whilst choosing my nice shiny "KASK" Vertigo 2.0 that cost four times more than the helmet that saved me when I crashed out, I felt that I needed a helmet that I could wear a cap or head warmer under in the very cold weather and would adjust snugly in the heat of summer. This was not an easy ask, should I buy two -probably but not an option, so I made the choice with which I felt most practical.
- (e) Cost, well, what can I say? £30 - £200 and you generally get what you pay for. You can even get helmets with built in pulse meters for instance. Some of the helmets I looked at had real style and outlandish designs – that is a personal choice but please ensure that the front side and back protection is there.

Just a final word on helmets, a couple of weeks ago I was with my friends on our way to "Old Ma's" when we were joined by two riders one of which was not wearing a helmet. I found that I could not ride on his wheel or even close, giving him so much room he probably thought that he must have BO! This was just in case I made a mistake and brought him down knowing what that could mean for him! **Ken McDonald**



## A 'Reivers' Ride

I usually lead two or three rides for Lowri and the Wrexham Reivers most years; one near my birthday in April, one in the summer and usually one in November.

The November ride takes on a local flavour and I include a few points of local history. I prefer a small group of 6-8 riders but last November over twenty 'tagged along' which actually turned out OK. I thought this ride might be of interest to other 'Link' readers.

We left our base at the Espresso Café in Gwersyllt and headed towards Rhosddu. I led them around the side streets into Spring Road for the first stop at no.6. A blue plaque on the wall tells us it was the birth place of John Godfrey Parry-Thomas (April 1884 – 3 March 1927)



who went on to become an engineer and racing car driver. He liked speed and built a special car to attempt breaking the then current land speed record.

He bought a second hand Higham Special for £125 and proceeded to install into it, a 27-litre V-12 aero-engine from a First World War bomber along with a 4-speed chain drive Benz gearbox. He renamed the car **Babs** after his niece.

In 1926, he took the car to Pendine Sands and broke the record set by Malcolm Campbell with a speed of 171 miles per hour! Campbell came back with a speed of 174 mph so on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of

March 1927 Parry-Thomas set out again to re-take the record!

On the second high speed run, a drive chain snapped at 170mph causing what was thought at the time, fatal head injuries. The wrecked car was buried in the sand by his friends.

During the subsequent recovery and restoration of the car in 1969 by Owen Wyn Owen of Capel Curig, it was found that this could not have been the case and that it was more likely that Thomas had been killed as a result of the injuries he sustained while the car rolled and slid along the beach at more than 100 mph.

Leaving Spring Road we turned into Rhosddu Road where we had a quick stop at no.2 – 'The Dissenters Cemetery'. If you were not a Catholic or CofE then you couldn't be buried in the usual cemeteries. The land was donated by Daniel Lloyd, a Puritan from Abenbury around the 1650's. A memorial to Morgan Llwyd, a Puritan who was buried here, was unveiled by Mrs. MarIn 1960, the headstones were removed and placed around the wall to form a garden at the Morgan Llwyd

Memorial Park.

Carrying on into the town, we turned into Argyle Street, stopping at no.3. A ceramic plaque on the wall underneath the archway tells us that William Low formed the Channel Tunnel Company in the 1860's.

At his office in Wrexham, he drew up plans for a tunnel under the channel. He bought land in Calais and Dover and started tunnelling on the English side. Tunnelling was stopped at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war. The Westminster Building, on which the plaque is situated, was built as a dowry for his daughter.

Moving on through the town, our next stop (now number four!) was in Mount Street to view another plaque – put there to commemorate the birth place of 'Balaclava Ned', Edwin Hughes. His claim to fame was that he became



famous as the last surviving member of 'The Charge of the Light Brigade', October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1854. He died in 1927

at the age of 97 at his daughter's home in Blackpool where his grave has recently been restored. He was a member of the 'Balaclava Commemoration Society'.

Progressing along Mount Street and Caia Road, we took a cycle path along the old Wrexham to Ellesmere track bed (yet another point of interest!). This takes us through Hightown to Kings Mill to a quick stop, no.5.

Kings Mill as the name implies belonged to the Crown, all farmers on that side of Wrexham paying a tythe to the Crown for grinding their grain. This side of the town was known as 'Wrexham Regis'. The mill on the other side of town at Pentre Felin was owned by the church (Valle Crucis Abbey). This side was known as 'Wrexham Abbott'.

Cycling up the hill towards Marchwiell we took a right towards Erdigg until we came to a triangle in the road where three roads met – now stop no.6! This is known as 'Reynold's Grave'. Legend has it that Reynold was a local highwayman who was caught and



hanged from an oak tree and then buried in this triangle of land. Lowri asked if he also invented 'bike tubing'! On through Erdigg Park where we headed for Bersham to stop at no.7



Bersham Mill. This was originally part of Wilkinson's Iron Works, founded in 1754. It was here that the first boring machine was perfected and used to bore out cannon barrels as well as piston barrels for steam engines.

From Bersham, we climbed up to Nant Mill (stop no.8) and our third mill using the water of the River Clwywedog for power. This mill was part of 'The Plas Power Estate' owned by the Fitz Hugh family and was used to grind grain and power a butter churn.

We then climbed up through the 'Nant' to Coedpoeth and then to Brymbo where we stopped for lunch at the Brymbo Visitors Centre – very much recommended!

The original plan was to carry on through Ffrith and Llanfynydd to

Pontybodkin and Pontblyddyn and the lanes to Llay.

The weather was closing in so we cut the ride short and left Brymbo and then down 'The Steps' to the Hollybush, Llay and home.

About 25 miles with several stops but too cold to stop for long. I think (I hope) everyone enjoyed it – I know I did!



**Glynn Jones**

## Two wheels to Three ....!

**Alan Johnston writes** .....

Over the years, I have had many bikes. I started with a Hercules 3 speed hub gear roadster bought to go to school. I realised that a bike gave so much freedom and pleasure, that I have always had one, and ridden throughout my life.

difficult, as some means had to found to prevent it from rolling away.

I soon found like minded enthusiasts on Tees-side. Three from Darlington, one from Stockton and two from Houghton in County Durham. In the winter, after the end of the racing season we met. We rarely had a starting point, but met at youth hostels for weekends. The competition was to cover the greatest distance from home to the hostel. If it was south, then the Houghton riders had an advantage of 20 miles, so individually we found detours to compensate.

On Sunday, we would all ride together. Sometimes we rode as peloton. There was little traffic, the challenge was to seek the outside position, in the centre of the road, where the camber had least effect on machine. The rider on the inside was 'fighting' the camber. In-line riding involved taking care not to ride inside the wheels of the rider in front. In addition to the physical effort, considerable concentration was required.



Example Trike Conversion Kit

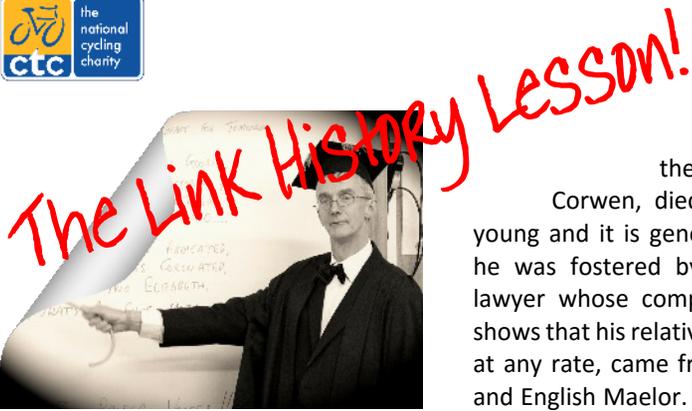
*The attached photo, (sorry, but it's not very clear) taken March, 1957, was at Thormanby, North Yorks on the A19, the eastern parallel to the A1. Note the sartorial elegance – the Yorkshire flat cap, hand knitted continental sweater, lace-up cycling shoes and large diamond pattern hosiery. On the trike - mud guards front and rear, dynamo and dress guard for front wheel.*

I ride in all weathers and discovered that even on ice and snow, a trike would see me safely on the road. Even in adverse conditions, I could go as far as I wanted.

At the time, in 1957, I had a Bianchi road bike. I used it in time trials and road races, and I had every confidence in it. It was the ideal machine to covert to trike, using a Holdsworth kit.

Trike handling is totally different from a bike. Balance is not a problem. Camber and corners are, and need constant attention, but like riding a bike, soon become second nature. Dismounting was easy as it was possible to stop, before reaching down to release toe straps. Parking was more





## The Greatest Welsh Hero? Part 1

Who do you regard as the greatest ever Welsh hero? Maybe Nye Bevan if you are politically minded. How about the Welsh poet Dylan Thomas? He's not to my taste I must admit, though many Welsh people hold him in reverential awe. What about the hard man Geraint Thomas of cycling fame? If you are a keen supporter of Welsh Rugby you may well think that Gareth Edwards, Phil Bennett or J.P.R. Williams to name but three, fit the bill, but despite the undoubted claims of all such immortals, surely there is no one to compare with Owain Glyn Dwr, the last native Welshman to be named Prince of Wales.

Glyndyfrdwy in the Dee valley near to Corwen, died when Owain was young and it is generally accepted that he was fostered by David Hanmer, a lawyer whose complicated family tree shows that his relatives, or some of them at any rate, came from around Knockin and English Maelor. Alternatively, there is a case to be made out for saying Owain was fostered by Richard FitzAlan, the 3rd Earl of Arundel. Owain spent about seven years studying the law in London, but in 1383 he returned to Wales and married Margaret, the daughter of David Hanmer at St Chad's Church, Hanmer. Although David Hanmer became a notable senior Judge and an MP for Herefordshire, in the opinion of many, his greatest claim to fame is that he was Owain's father-in-law.

After their marriage

Owain and Margaret set up home, dividing their time between Glyndyfrdwy and Sycharth whilst having a family of about nine children; again the records are imprecise about this. At both these places the sites of their homes are now under the care of CADW. The following description of the Glyndyfrdwy site (OS Grid ref: SJ 125 431) is from CADW:

Near this spot at his manor of Glyndyfrdwy, Owain Glyn Dwr proclaimed himself Prince of Wales on 16th Sept 1400, so beginning his 14 yr rebellion against English rule. This mount, known locally as Owain Glyndwr's Mount, is actually the remains of a 12th century castle motte built to command the route through the Dee Valley. Like the motte nearby at Sycharth, it may have continued in use until the late 14th Century but Owain's manor is likely to have been in the square moated area across the field. This would have been

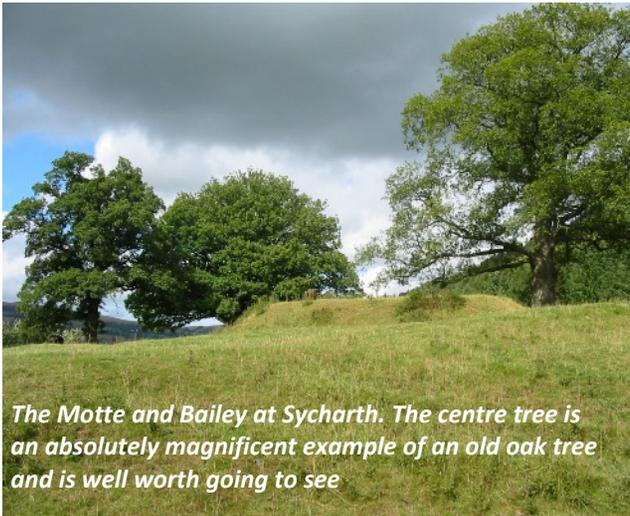
defended by a water filled moat, palisade and gate.

The site of Owain's considerable estate at Sycharth (OS Grid ref: SJ 205 258) now consists of a well kept motte and bailey on which his house would have stood, surrounded by a fish pond, dovecote, a mill, a farm and the buildings and hovels associated with his retainers. It is something of a mystery to me as to why he chose to live, at both sites, in a relatively modest type of wooden



Owain Glyndwr's Mount

fortress-cum-home which was becoming outmoded even though Sycharth, in particular, was described as one of the best houses in NE Wales having a slate roof; remember we are talking of times when advanced stone built castles dominated Wales and other wealthy families lived in stone houses. Could he not afford a more prestigious dwelling? Did he choose the motte and bailey to show his regard for his fellow Welshmen most of whom were impoverished? Whatever the reasons behind his choice, the homes did not last long after the rebellion took hold. The future Henry 5th, he of Agincourt fame, razed both the manors of Glyndyfrdwy and Sycharth and their associated buildings to the ground in the spring of 1403. Because of this Owain's family, retainers and headquarters were based on Harlech Castle until that was forced to surrender to the English forces. Thereafter Owain and his band of followers waged a guerrilla war in the countryside until the rebellion petered out in about 1415, after which Owain disappears from view. A brief description of English/Welsh history around the turn of the 15th century may help to understand the background of Owain's rebellion. At the



The Motte and Bailey at Sycharth. The centre tree is an absolutely magnificent example of an old oak tree and is well worth going to see

Details of the early life of many famous people from the more remote times of our history are often scanty, and Owain's is no exception. He was born around 665 years ago, though there is much doubt about the exact year and place of his birth. It is thought that he was born in 1349, though some say 1359, into a well-to-do Anglo-Welsh family based in the Welsh Marches. His father, the Lord of Glyndyfrdwy, who owned estates at Sycharth near Llansilin, in the hills to the west of Oswestry, the Teifi Valley and

end of the 14th century King Richard 2nd began to consolidate his precarious hold on the English throne by trying to break the power of the Barons and other nobles, including exiling Henry Bolingbroke, the future King Henry 4th. Owain moved up to Cheshire which he used as a base to increase his power in North Wales. He did this by removing the incumbent, mostly English, local rulers and installing his Welsh friends in their place. This went down very well with the Welsh, including Owain and his family, but the same could not be said of the English barons, who became more convinced than ever that Richard 2nd was a severe danger to their preferred way of life.

In 1399 Henry Bolingbroke returned from exile wanting his lands back, and raised an army to back up his claims. Rather naively Richard 2nd agreed to meet Bolingbroke at Conwy castle to talk matters over, but whatever the intentions of the protagonists, and Henry's were dubious, the outcome of the meeting was disastrous for Richard 2nd; he was arrested and deposed, and after being imprisoned at Chester and a spell in the Tower of London, he was moved to Pontefract, where he died in murky circumstances which are said to include the possibility that he starved himself to death. Most, but not all the Welsh were supporters of Richard 2nd as his father was Edward, the Black Prince, a former Prince of Wales and were definitely not fans of Henry 4th, as Bolingbroke became.

This was the start of difficult times for Owain as we shall see in part 2.

**David Ackerley**



- War does not determine who is right, only who is left!
- Did you know that dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish?
- My opinions may have changed, but not the fact that I am right!
- Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad!



**In this edition's interview we have with us, Janet Gregory Sustrans Wirral Project Officer.**

Janet's commitment to cycling is total going everywhere on her bike, when travelling further afield using the train to get her bike to her destination.

**What does your role involve?.....**

To get more people cycling, all ages and abilities. Sustrans believe that this will not only improve individual's health but also improve the health of the planet.

**How is this done? .....**

Since taking up my role three years ago, six cycle hubs have been established on the Wirral. These are community venues used to teach adults and children to ride, improve confidence and skills, with tools for maintenance jobs and bikes to borrow.

**How do you let people know what is available? .....**

Through the local press, radio and having a stall at all sorts of events. The 'Smoothie' bike is a great hit at these.

**Smoothie bike? .....**

This is a single wheel, static bike painted bright green with a food blender on the front. As the rider pedals the fruit and juice are mixed making a smoothie drink.

**Is it hard to ride? .....**

No, although because it has a speedo on it sometimes Dads want to ride faster than their children and it can start rocking. Blueberries seem to be the favourite fruit as they bounce around in the mix.

**Tell me about the Bicycle Belles .....**

I formed this group five years ago before I was a Sustrans employee. Some women are more comfortable riding in a female-only group. CTC gave us a small start-up grant. Sustrans also now support it

providing insurance and Ride Leader courses for the volunteer leaders.

**Is it popular? .....**

Our first ride back in 2010 had ten riders of which four of us were leaders. We now average over twenty. Thirty one women showed up recently. I was away that day! I am lucky that I have a strong core of volunteer leaders so we can split into smaller groups and meet at the café.

**Are NCN routes 56 and 70 on the Wirral your responsibility? .....**

Not directly. I co-ordinate our Sustrans volunteers in the Wirral, a dedicated group who turn up rain or shine each month to help maintain local cycle routes. We could always do with more!

Wirral Council play a leading role in securing money for major building works such as raising the level of the path over Bidston Moss and new off-road route to the side of Lever Causeway.

**Is Wirral Council bike friendly? .....**

Yes, however, with the reduction in funding they are limited in what they can do. A project is about to go ahead thanks to Highways England creating new cycle lanes at Jnc. 4, Wirral's M53 motorway with the major 'A' road at Clatterbridge. Sustrans play a hidden role by providing technical support at the design stage.

**What else does Sustrans do? .....**

They aren't just about cycling. They want to reduce the use of cars by promoting more walking and use of public transport. They encourage 'Share with Care' so on the Chester Greenway, which has become so popular, low-level speed humps have been introduced to slow cyclists as they pass through busier sections such as Blacon station. Obviously Sustrans are best known for the long distance routes but also give advice so that councils can develop safer routes to schools and produce local maps such as Cycle Wirral.

**Final message? .....**

Please support our work either by a regular direct debit or register as a volunteer. [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

**John Ferguson**



## Sierra Nevada Or Bust!

First published in the Chester Chronicle following a tour in 1998 with the Two Mills section

**'En coche, no, en bicicleta, es posible!'**



The barman at the hotel turned to serve someone else.

So that was it – end of conversation.

Here we were then, planning to take our bikes over reputedly the highest road in Europe and all I could find out was that 'it was possible'.

The road went over the Sierra Nevada from Granada to the Alpujarras. It was marked on the map as being surfaced almost to the summit of the Pico de Veleta at 11,000ft, but the descent on the other side was marked as 'unsurfaced' for about 20miles.

'I do know people who have been over' I said by way of encouragement to my eight 'companeros'.

'Well no – I can't actually remember any names, but I'm sure there was someone'.

I did not feel that it would be helpful to pursue this conversation so I played my trump card!

'If the track down is really awful, we can always go back to Granada'.

No-one said anything but they knew – and we knew- that most of us had set our hearts on going right over and retreat was not something we would do lightly.

I did not sleep well that night. I do not know which worried me most, the thought of the high altitude climb or the rough descent? I comforted myself with the fact that the 5,000ft climb from Granada to the Ski Station had proved to be remarkably easy with gentle gradients and plenty of places to stop for refreshment.

The next morning, the most important factor of all was in our favour – the weather was bright and sunny with no mist or clouds at all. The grey rocky curl of the Veleta looked so close, you felt you would be there in no time. I had to keep reminding myself that with our laden bikes, it was at least three hours away.

We each settled into a comfortable gear and pedalled up slowly, alone and with our thoughts. Soon we were above the untidy buildings of the Ski

Station and the observatory was getting closer.

Is there anything more dreary than a Ski Station without snow? We turned a



corner and there, wonder of wonders, was a van selling hot drinks! The vendor even provided tea with cold milk and he only charged us the equivalent of 65p!

The King of Spain should give that young man with the van an award for services

to humanity .... that tea really set us up for our assault on the summit.

Towards the top, the wind got very strong. As we zig-zagged up the double bends we were either pushed along almost out of control or brought to a near standstill.

We were also finding it more difficult to get our breath. In the end, I gave up and joined the walkers. I was rewarded by a sympathetic exchange with a lone Dutchman. For a few sweet moments there was a bond between us, a sort of mutual suffering.

At the top I joined the others. We left our bikes and fought our way against the wind to reach the peak. We stayed just long enough for the Dutchman to take a photograph and then quickly cycled down and over the ridge, anxious to see what was on the other side.

The start was not encouraging; the track was steep, rocky and loose. With laden touring bikes, we were obliged to walk but at least we were out of the wind and the sun was warm.

It was a good place to rest, eat and reflect. It was now early afternoon, if the track proved to be un-rideable for 20miles we were in trouble. We would run out of daylight – to say nothing of energy. Surely it would improve, and mountain tracks were always worse near the top ....?

I got on my bike and started to ride; gingerly at first, then with more confidence. It was more rideable than it

looked. Then it started to go up.

We should not have been surprised because the map showed quite clearly that the track climbed the side of Veleta's twin peak before descending.

I hoped and prayed that this was the last bit of uphill. I looked round and *everyone* was riding. Some were going faster than others but all faster than a walking pace.

Caution was the name of the game. I think we were all aware of the problems of an accident would cause up here. Soon we had the strange sensation of going uphill without pedalling.

We were travelling through a barren, rocky desert and we seemed to be the

only things alive in this wilderness. It was mostly free-wheeling but the constant vibration was trying. Those of us with drop handlebars developed a pain across the shoulders and the hands ached from holding the brakes on.

I stopped for a moment and looked at the landscape of brown rocks. There was



something not quite right about it – it seemed to be breaking up. I began to think it was some sort of hallucination brought on by exhaustion. I then realised that the brown rocks were not hard stone but soft and furry Ibex!

There were lots of the mountain goats, all shapes and sizes. I wonder what they made of us!

Shortly we reached pine trees and then forestry but the path didn't improve. A couple of punctures delayed us and we sent our two strongest riders on ahead to warn the Hostel at Bubion that we were on our way.



This took the pressure of the rest of us and we took our time. Nevertheless, when we reached the tarmac, our relief was tremendous.

We swooped down. Below us was a deep wooded valley. Bubion shone white and welcoming in the evening sun. The flat roofs and stalk-like chimneys looked more Arabic than Spanish – hardly surprising since this area was the last refuge of the Moors.

The Hostel, built on the side of a hill, was attractive with flowers and fountains. Neither these nor the wonderful gardens of the Alhambra would have been possible if it had not been for that great rocky mountain we had just come over. In my heart of hearts I cannot say that it is a beautiful mountain but it had certainly been an adventure.

That we had survived it without accident was something to celebrate so that evening we did! **Ann Taylor**

**Ann warns:**

The track over the Sierra Nevada is, as its name suggests, covered with snow for most of the year. Even in the months of July, August & September, winter clothing may be needed. The track is easily rideable by mountain bike but should not be attempted in misty or cold weather. Lone cyclists are at risk at any time. If you have an accident, help could be a long time coming!



- Saddlebags can never hold everything you want, but ..... they CAN hold everything you need!

- Only cyclists understand why dogs love to stick their heads out car windows!

***Thought this was a really good idea when you're stuck miles from home!***



**Get-You-Home Top Tip!**

After a blowout on his front tyre, Rob Davenport rode half of July's Dark Peak Grimpeur 100km with a repair using two zip-ties removed from a nearby signpost. Apparently, the zip-ties don't actually touch the road, provided you achieve a suitable tyre pressure. And you also need to remove the brake blocks.

Rob thanks Robert Browning for coming up with the idea!

*Courtesy of the Audax UK magazine - Arrivée*





## Welna's Crusade!

Taking an established and very popular supermarket chain to task to sort out their cycle parking provision isn't a mean task but that's exactly what I did when I found out that Aldi was building a brand new store in Broughton, North Wales.!

I'm a regular Aldi shopper and had often visited the two stores in Chester, the one in Vicars Cross and the older one in Bumpers Lane, Sealand. The cycle parking at both those stores is very poor. Although it is fairly close to the entrance, the Sheffield stands have been squashed together which meant that there could only fit one bicycle to each stand instead of the usual side by side.

I took time and my phone camera to visit both these stores including a measuring tape to allow for clear evidence. I knew that I had to get my facts straight if I had any hope of getting Aldi's attention to get it right the third time. I wondered what other shoppers were thinking of my actions when I arrived by car only to walk over to the stands to take pictures and using a measuring tape!

The next step was to establish the current position in the country in terms of cycle parking standards. I work for the Local Government Association and we host the Planning Advisory Service, a number of the staff who I have worked with in the past and trust. It also helped that their Programme Manager is a keen cyclist. I booked a chat with her as soon as I could and the news wasn't good. Although Northern Ireland had developed its own national cycle parking standards, England has not yet done so. My colleague suggested that I do some research in terms of cycle parking (Google!) and use the results to pull together a coherent argument.

I was astounded to find that several cities had developed their own cycle parking provision standards, the most noteworthy that of Cambridge Cycle Campaign which was adopted by Cambridge City Council. As Wales Government has passed the Active Travel Act which forced Welsh Local Authorities to invest in a decent cycling infrastructure, it also helped that Flintshire Council was overseeing the new Aldi store in terms of planning. My

argument was forming and I used all of the evidence I could find to build my case.

Next was to find the right contact at Aldi which was not too difficult with Aldi's cooperation. I wrote the submission, including photos, measurements as well as sound research stating what the Active Travel Act implies, what other cities are doing and what Aldi needed to do. I also decided that it would be excellent to copy in Sustrans in the submission. This was a good move as their officer had contacts at Flintshire Council's planning department. Another recipient was our own very active cycle campaigner Roy Spilsbury. A final check over by my Civil Engineer husband dotted the i's and crossed the t's.

Aldi didn't agree to all of my requests. They will for instance not replace the existing substandard cycle parking at the current stores and it was only when the new Broughton store was opened that I had the opportunity to see if they had taken my submission seriously.

And they did! 'Hats off' to Aldi who not only provided spacious Sheffield stands (with more than the required standard space in between) but also built it under

to complain. As we say in cycling terms, 'there is safety in numbers'. The more who complain (with a clear argument, not just complaining for the sake of it) the more companies will take you seriously. In the email exchange between Aldi and myself, they told me that no cyclists had ever complained about the cycling parking at either the Bumpers Lane or the Vicars Cross stores, nor has any cyclist offered any feedback during the consultation period. I have since written to them offering my congratulations on the cycle parking at Broughton and also made the point that they should not wait for cyclists to approach them during the consultation period but instead reach out to organisations like the CTC to gather our views and input.

I'm not a natural campaigner so I'm immensely proud about my achievement on behalf of cyclists at the Aldi Broughton store. If you are interested in reading my submission to Aldi please get in touch. I'm more than happy to share. Let's get the supermarkets to sit up and listen, so keep an eye on new store developments and make sure you make



cover as well as locating it close to the front door. All of which were included in my submission. Sweet Success!

One thing that I need to emphasise though; if you are unhappy with provision, don't leave it to someone else

your case during the planning phase. It's easier for supermarkets to do something at this stage rather than later in the building phase. **Welna Bowden**  
**CTC Councillor North West and CTC Trustee**



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All of the bikes we have, have been generously donated by members of the public. Which we rely on, in order to give our work experience placements plenty of varied work!

Not only are we always in need of unwanted/unused bikes in any condition, but we are also happy to accept unwanted wheels, components etc too.

Also, we love to decorate our workshop with cycling jerseys! We have a lot already up, but if anyone has any interested and unwanted jerseys, then we would love to have them to put on our workshop walls!

So please search your garage for anything that you no longer use and/or need, and also, if you require a bike or a service/repair, then please contact us.

[www.facebook.com/brenbikes](http://www.facebook.com/brenbikes)

[www.brenproject.org.uk](http://www.brenproject.org.uk)

01244 313473 office

07975607688 workshop

[sfidler@brenproject.org.uk](mailto:sfidler@brenproject.org.uk)

Bren Bikes is a bike recycling workshop based at Live! New Scene youth centre in Newton, Chester. Bren Bikes is part of the Bren Project Charity (1111644) which offers work experience placements to people with learning and physical disabilities.

Here we take unwanted/unused bikes that are donated to us. We work through the bikes with our beneficiaries and decide whether the bike is worth recycling, or not. If so, we fully repair the bikes, stripping them down, repairing/replacing anything that requires this, and then selling them on,

with all sales going straight back into the Bren Project charity.

The beneficiaries come to us for an 8 week work experience placement, working on the bikes, listing them online for sale, dealing with customers etc, after which, we then offer another 8 week supported work experience placement outside of our workshop. We work with a large amount of businesses in and around the Chester area, who work with us to offer a further 8 weeks work experience.

The workshop has been set up since September 2015, and we sell high quality



*Help Required .....*

When Sarah & I escape to sunnier climes, we will need an enthusiastic 'follower' to act as a 'Link Co-ordinator' as obviously I won't be able to carry out all my 'duties' when we're 1,000kms away!

I will still be able to do all the design work necessary and the actual magazine editing but will need a 'liaison' in the UK.

So ..... we will need an enthusiastic person that will be able to:

- ⊕ Discuss new articles with contributors
- ⊕ Scan handwritten articles where necessary
- ⊕ Email articles and photographs and work closely with Editor
- ⊕ Liaise with local Printer on any issues
- ⊕ Collect copies from Printer when ready
- ⊕ Print envelope labels from Word file supplied by Editor
- ⊕ Address envelopes (sticking on labels!)
- ⊕ Insert magazines into envelopes
- ⊕ Post envelopes

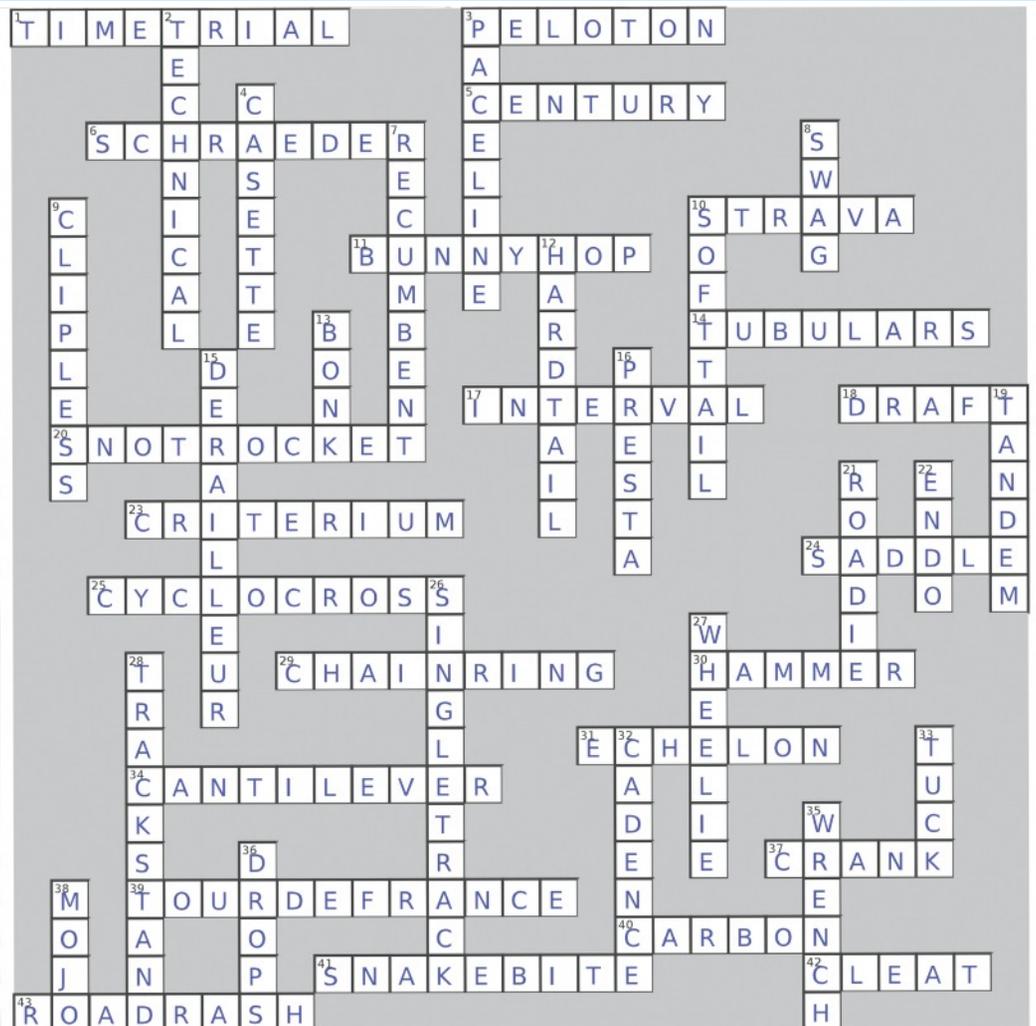
Obviously, the new Co-ordinator will receive help and support from the Editor and the other CTC Committee members as needed with initial instruction & continued help.

So ..... are you up for the cause? Give me a shout to discuss - it's really straight forward to help with 'The Link' and we will all appreciate your help. Please contact me via email or call on **07973-829836** - looking forward to hearing from you!



**Easy when you know the answers eh?**

**Let us know what sort of 'Brain Teaser' you would like in future editions? All ideas and suggestions welcomed!**



i ♥ my bike

*Member's Machines .....*

## 'The Windcheeter'

Get the 'low down' on Dave Statham's recumbent!



*The 'Windcheeter' pictured with Dave's Kirk hiding in the background!*

Dave first saw the Windcheeter recumbent in an article in a design magazine over fifteen years ago and immediately fell in love with it! 'No stone was unturned' until he eventually found a rolling chassis being sold by the 'Seat of the Pants Company' in Altrincham.

And the reason for the purchase?

"I haven't got one of these and I really liked the look of it" said Dave!

The Windcheeter is a Mike Burrows design and is easy to ride (or would that be drive?) being light on the steering and fitted with a single brake lever operating on both front hubs together.

The data:

1900mm length, 710mm width, 900mm high with a 1000mm wheelbase and a 635mm track.

The weight isn't bad at 15.8 kg for the basic machine.

The frame is based around a 6000 series aluminium spine bonded into sandcast and heat-treated LM25 aluminium lugs with Loctite 638.

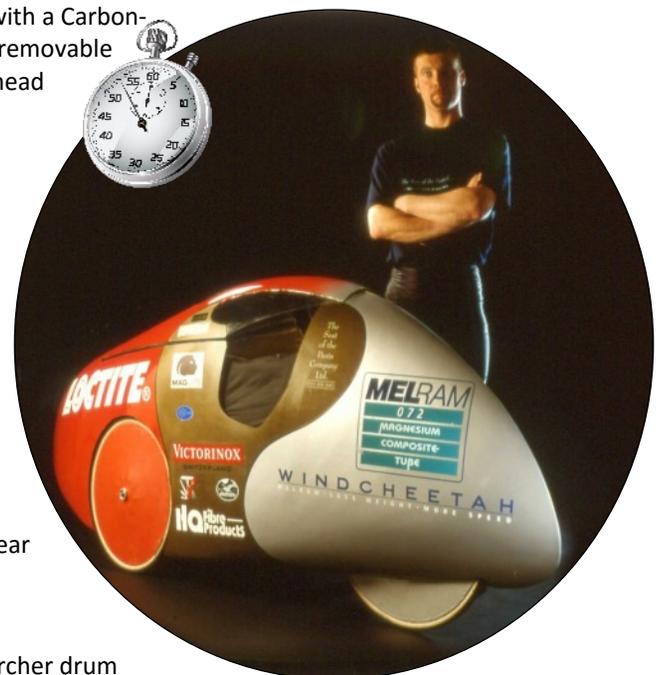
Comfort is maintained with a Carbon-kevlar bucket seat with removable foam seat cushion and head rest.

Front wheels: 17inch Moulton 36 hole alloy rims, stainless spokes & custom Sturmey-Archer drum-braked hubs.

Rear wheel: 26inch 36 hole alloy rim, stainless spokes & custom hub (zero offset).

Transmission: 9 speed rear block, triple chainring (Shimano/Stronglight).

Brakes: Twin Sturmey Archer drum brakes in the front wheels, "spoon" brake onto rear tyre as a parking brake. Single brake lever for both front brakes, gear lever on joystick.



Andy Wilkinson broke the record for cycling from Land's End to John O' Groats and completed the journey, supported, in: 41 hours, 4 minutes and 22 seconds also on a Windcheeter recumbent tricycle!

*This is Dave's 'pride & joy' so WHAT do YOU ride?*

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