

the link y Cyswilt

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

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK

In this edition

Read about:

The latest campaign news

Steve Jones talks 'saddles'

Dave Matthews rides across France

Mike Frith's unfortunate 'episodes'

Which bike camera should I use?

plus all the usual features including:

Reader's favourite rides & tours

Technical tips

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Winter 2016

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

Front Cover:

Decisions, decisions;
although all directions make
for a good ride!

Photo: Andy Polakowski



The Editor

Well, here we are again, another packed edition of 'The Link'.

We have loads of different topics which I hope will appeal to all the different fields of interest within the membership.

I'm glad that we appear to have a bit more 'reaction' in us with respect to wanting to enjoy our cycling and not be threatened by irritable drivers or plagued by poor road conditions.

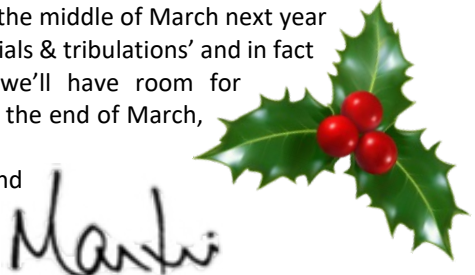
We are getting more interest in 'on-board' cameras and as you saw from the last edition of 'The Link', having accurate video records do actually work in getting something done. Let's keep the momentum going - I hope that the camera article by the 'RecumbentTrikeRider' will help.

I think that this time of the year is just the time to reflect on the past twelve months and to plan for the next year's projects. I hope that the Ride Reports from Joe, Dave and Doreen in this edition will give you an incentive to try it yourself. Believe me, travelling by bike in the UK and foreign climes is well within all our capabilities - the rest of us just want to read about it!

I'm anticipating producing another edition around the middle of March next year so please send all your ride information, photos, 'trials & tribulations' and in fact anything you would like including - I'm sure we'll have room for everything, big or small. If you can get it to me by the end of March, we'll fit it in!

That just leaves me to thank you for all your help and interest over the past year and to wish you all:

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year !



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

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As another cycling year draws to a close, it is time for reflection. We can not only look back on our own individual cycling activities over the past twelve months and look forward to next year; but also reflect on happenings both in Chester and North Wales CTC and in the wider world of our parent organisation, Cycling UK. Indeed, the replacement of 'CTC' with 'Cycling UK', while welcomed by most members, does take some getting used to. However, agree with it or not, the change does seem to have acted to invigorate the whole organisation with a renewed sense of purpose in its mission to further promote riding a bicycle as a 'normal' human activity.

Whether the 'powers that be' will ever do much more than pay lip service to encouraging cycling, to me, seems open to question - particularly in view of some of the battles that our Right to Ride Officers have had to fight over the past few years. I have in mind recent 'skirmishes' in North Wales where the Welsh Active Travel Scheme, at times, has seemed to be more of an Inactive Travel Scheme. Then, at a lower level, there are those articulate, motoring middle classes who dislike cyclists and do all that they can to hinder, if not prevent, cyclists' legitimate use of the roads in their neighbourhood. Only recently, I heard of an ugly incident in this vein which took place not far from where I live.

Guildford

The old order changeth: yes, changes at the top have also seen the ending of the office of CTC Councillor and its replacement by Cycling UK Trustees, brought on by our change a few years ago to a charity. Councillors represented individual regions of the country but in recent years it has been difficult to find

volunteers to take on these posts. Trustees have a different function. We have been well served by past Councillors but are now saying thanks and farewell to Gwenda Owen representative for Wales. Gwenda will not be continuing as a Trustee. However, Welna Bowden removes her Councillor's hat (or should it be helmet!) and replaces it with that of a Trustee's. A 'local' newcomer as a Trustee is Dr Janet Atherton OBE, a member of Wirral's Bicycle Belles whom we congratulate and welcome. I also note the departure of Emeritus Professor Peter Cox OBE who relinquishes his post as Chair of Cycling UK's Board of Trustees. Those of you who took part in our 75th Anniversary Rides in 2014 will recall that he came from the Midlands especially to join us in our celebrations. We wish him much more time to enjoy his cycling now he does not have the burden of Cycling UK administrative chores.

Denbigh

Back in September on a lovely sunny morning some rose early and headed for Denbigh where the 4th Stage of the Tour of Britain was due to start. Their purpose was not so much to watch the famous professionals on their bikes (although glimpses of the famous were obtained!) but to staff the stall promoting Cycling UK set up by our Secretary, Lowri Evans. (Needless to say, Lowri was there that morning ahead of all!) In terms of interest in C&NW CTC and matters cycling shown by passers-by, including local councillors and other officials, it was not an unsuccessful morning.

Tilston

Another 'first' for us this year was to welcome Paul Tuohy, CEO of Cycling UK. He came with wife Wendy to sample, for the first time – and we hope not the last – the quiet lanes of Cheshire and also to meet many members present for our annual lunch and presentation at Tilston War Memorial Hall on September 25th - see page 16. It was good that he found time to chat to some of our 'activists' who do so much for cycling at a local level. I subsequently received a very nice letter from Paul thanking us for our hospitality.

Caterer Mrs. Harvey and her team set out the room in a very welcoming manner (tablecloths and flowers – for

cyclists!). They served an excellent lunch, ensuring that nobody went away hungry! A feature of these occasions is for me to present the President's Trophy. This year's recipient was Reg Waud in recognition of the painstaking work he did over restoring the CTC 'Winged Wheel' which as readers may recall is on display at the Wirral Transport Museum. Reg had, in the past, played his artistic part in the design of our cycling tops, so his award recognises that, too.

Some readers may not be aware that the President's Trophy was donated to us by Mrs Mills, mother of Graham, my predecessor as President. Graham died suddenly and unexpectedly in 2007. Iris Mills lives in an old people's care home in Rhyl and is not in the best of health. However, she has received a full report of the occasion together with a photograph of the Trophy being presented to a surprised Reg, so we keep in touch with her and thank her each year for her generosity.

Manchester

A number of us set off for Manchester in early October for the Cycling UK Annual Members' Get Together (no more the Annual Dinner!). This event aimed, we were told, to 'celebratemembers and volunteers colossal efforts to Get Britain Cycling over the last year'. There were seminars on topics such as the Space for Cycling Campaign, member groups and off road cycling. Guest speakers included some whose cycling exploits were beyond the dreams – or capabilities – of most of us. Whether their achievements would encourage a cycling newcomer to ride to work on a wet winter's morning is, however, an open question.

Perhaps more impressive were the three young men, joint winners of CUK's Young Achiever and Volunteer of the Year Awards: Charles Stevens and Will Hsu. They cycled the Silk Road from Beijing to Tehran – a distance of some 10,000 miles. Tom Hibbs was another worthy winner. Through bad luck Tom was homeless and at rock bottom in 2015 but with the aid of cycling and encouragement from other cyclists got his life back on track.

As far as we were concerned, it was pleasing to see that Craig Steeland, representing the Chester Cycling Campaign was there to receive special recognition for the work it does in and

around Chester. C&NW CTC is a group member of the Chester Cycling Campaign and others of us are individual members. We know only too well the dedication of this small band of cycling activists in our area. The other Awards of note are becoming almost an annual routine. Once again, Chester and North Wales CTC were announced as the proud winners of the Annual Tourist Competition; so let us congratulate Paul Mills, first overall, and runner

up Terry Davies (pipped at the post, as they say, by only one point). Almost needless to say, our Secretary Lowri Evans was the 'leading lady' competitor as well as being third overall. Warmest congratulations to all of them.

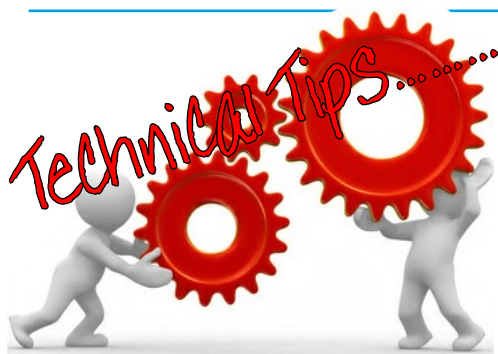
And finally (yes, really!)

On a sad note I record the death of Trevor Hargreaves who died a few weeks ago. Trevor, a quiet and unassuming member of C&NW CTC over many years and for a time our Treasurer, is well

described as the complete gentleman. (His Obituary may be found elsewhere in this magazine.)

With the festive season about to break upon us, it is my pleasure to wish all of you and your families the very best for Christmas and the New Year – with, I hope, many happy miles awaiting you in 2017. I look forward to greeting friends, old and new, at our New Year's Day Meet at Churton.

Mike Cross



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

Now, most people know about this 'get you home' trick but just in case you don't this will remind you about carrying the right sort of spares when you ride.

If you can't fix it yourself then you'll have the bits for someone else to help out.

This particular 'fix' had to be initiated by my old Audax mate, Terry Knight who came unstuck when touring in Ireland during the summer.

His chain broke, and on its escape route broke off the gear hanger - ouch!

Not a big deal if you're carrying a spare connecting link (especially those with Shimano chains) and a chain breaker tool either separately or as part of a multi-tool.

So review the upcoming terrain and decide which gear you want to ride home in, then just shorten the chain to suit the front chainring and rear cassette gear you have decided upon. Ride home gently because on lots of modern bikes now with vertical frame dropouts there won't be provision for tensioning the chain. Sorted!

So, in your saddlebag along with your 2 x inner tubes and tyre levers you'll need to carry these plus a few extra tie-wraps. You'll see why the tie-wraps in the next 'Tech Tips'!



8, 9, 10 or 11 speed?
Make sure you carry the right one for your transmission!



Just a Thought

- * Doing nothing is the most tiresome thing in the world because it is impossible to quit and take a rest!
- * You have to pay twice for cigarettes – once when you get them, and again when they get you!
- * The young close their ears to our advice and open their eyes to our example!
- * People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel!



'Meet the Team'

Well, before my 'desertion' to foreign climes we set up a team of 'like minded' individuals who would be able to cater for all the needs of a local magazine and all its readers. After all, what's the good of you reading about all the local exploits on the Costa Blanca - you'll soon get fed up with that!

So, Janet Jones in Wrexham, Colin Bell and Tony Swannick on the Wirral stepped in to fill the breach and gratefully accepted they were too! So, who are these people? What are their credentials? Read on:



Janet writes

My name is Janet and I'm a MAWIL, although I do prefer the term I found on the web - 'MARG'

- Middle Aged Riding Girl! -

Don't think I can get away with 'Girl' anymore though!

My first bike was a chopper, borrowed from my friend's brother to keep up with my friend, Nan, on her rather sparkly, drop handle, 10-gear Raleigh. Not that I was jealous of course! She dropped me on many occasions as we rode the back lanes of Pentre Bychan and Legacy.

My next bike was Nan's mums; it had been used for many years as a trellis for weeds. I cleaned up the rusty frame and with some help installed new tyres, chain and handlebar grips and it was good to go so now I stood a chance of keeping up with Nan!

I then progressed to a brand new fold up shopper- style bike bought at an inflated price from Kay's catalogue!

Finally after a brief spell in my 30's riding a £99 mountain bike from Halfords I decided perhaps cycling wasn't for me.

The big (well maybe it's not so big) 'four-oh' loomed and I needed a hobby. Taking a look in the mirror I decided something to get me fit would probably be a good idea. I tried running, or, more accurately, dragging myself around, puffing and panting at a rate slightly faster than walking but soon decided this was not my idea of fun.

My brother-in-law, a keen cyclist, suggested my sister and I got bikes and he would show us the ropes. My first 'proper' bike, a hybrid, took me many miles and on lots of fun and charity rides and it wasn't long before I was hooked.

George, my (then) teenaged son, began to show an interest and we started

cycling together after my sister put her bike aside due to an injury (not bike related). George and I cycled to Cardiff and back in four days in 2011, it went so well we decided to do Land's End to John 'O'Groats. Supported by my husband in a camper van we did End to End in ten days in August 2012.

George went off to Carlisle University in the September and I found Wrexham Reivers.....and I have been a member of CTC/Cycling UK since then.

Please don't ask me any technical questions because anything even vaguely mechanical still baffles me. I can sort a puncture and oil a chain but as far as bikes go I'm still a novice. I'm learning constantly and pick up something new every time I go out riding.



And there's Colin

As a young child I was always on my bike, I never went far as I was not allowed

to!!

Once I reached the age of about ten I was allowed to go further and would make myself some sandwiches and off I would go for the day with one or two of my friends

Parkgate and Ness Bird Gardens where regular stops, as I became stronger the further I would go, Thurstaston, West Kirby and Talacre Beach became regular destinations.

I then left School and became an apprentice Bricklayer at Handbridge Technical Collage in Chester, I also had an evening job in a Fish & Chip Shop in Rock Ferry so for three days of the week I would cycle to Handbridge then straight to Rock Ferry and home at the end of the shift about 35 miles.

After serving my time I passed my driving test and the bike sat in the shed for years

until about five or six years ago when I decided to get back on my bike, I found a group call the Wednesday Riders and started riding with them, I started with a slower group to start with and built up to the faster group who I still ride with now.

I also became a ride leader two years ago and I quite enjoy leading the harder\longer rides, I sometimes add a couple of miles to the scheduled route and take some of the group who would like to ride a little faster, we still meet up at the same destination to socialize with each other.

I cycle to my Caravan in Aberdyfi when I can about 92miles and I have cycled the Wild Wales challenge ride twice.



And of course, Tony!

As my retirement date of 31st of October 2014 approached I had

concerns as to how I would spend my new found freedom. After spending many years as a self-employed Electronics Technician where I was fully occupied with my work, I wasn't sure of what I would do to fill my time when retirement arrived.

One Thursday evening when I was out at our local with my friend Colin Bell he suggested that I come along on the Wednesday rides from the Eureka Café. I thought this would be a good idea as it would provide something to look forward to each week and although I hadn't cycled very much since my youth I was sure that I was up to it.

I duly got myself a Hybrid bike, helmet and the all important lycra gear and cycled round to Colin's house and from there on to the Eureka Cafe where I was introduced to a lot of very friendly strangers.



We set off on the ride at a fairly brisk pace (for me!) heading for Okells Garden Centre.

I was fine along the Dee path and as far as the river front at Chester but after that there was the steep climb up to Boughton and from then on it seemed like a never ending series of hills, Colin had omitted to tell me that the outward route was about 25 miles!

By the time we reached the venue I was shaking and my legs were like jelly and I was really suffering, so on the way back Colin took me back via a short route and I arrived home safe but exhausted.

After a few more rides when I gained more strength in my legs and my general fitness improved. I began to really look forward to the weekly rides and meeting such a great crowd of cycling enthusiasts, in fact it's hard to imagine retirement without my weekly cycling fix! I also intend to get out on other days

when my backlog of house tasks is completed.

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200 Points APM Coefficient?



Alan Johnston formerly of the Birkenhead North End Cycling Club, moved over to Southern Spain and now regales us with wife's Marina's long and continuing, varied cycling experience.

Racing

Time trialling in Bury Clarion, she knew after she passed the timekeeper, that she had broken a club record. The certificates were presented months later, at the club dinner. Similarly, in the Clifton CC, she knew the 'Place to Place' records were hers, when told by the timekeeper. Confirmation, again, came at the club dinner. Personal bests at distances up to 100 miles were displayed on result boards, near the finish and days or weeks later on result sheets.

She was a cover girl on a Morecombe Crits Programme. But the photo had been taken during the previous year's event, so there was an interval of 12 months before she knew.

She was one of the BNE riders in a line-out at Manchester Velodrome. High in adrenalin, as they all were, she was only training so there was no coverage in the Manchester Evening News.

Touring

In the pre-sportif days, when tourist trials were popular, she completed 50 miles in 4 hours and 100 miles in 8 hours several times and has a file full of certificates which were presented shortly after the event or posted later. She has attended CTC birthday rides at Canterbury, Croft, Malton, Lancaster, and Whitchurch, with fond memories, but no official documentation. On a much grander scale, she has participated in Big Bike rides in all, but one, of the states of Australia being interviewed for the daily newsletters. In Australia she featured in a report with a photograph in the Adelaide Advertiser. She rode the end to end of New Zealand, and collected the certificate at the light house at North Cape, when she arrived there.

On a tour of Portugal, we learned next day that we had been to the most

westerly point of mainland Europe at Cabo de Roca. We retraced to collect a certificate.

She rode the Lands End to John o'Groats route with her friend Doris. She did not claim a certificate.

Recent Revelation

We have lived in Spain for almost ten years. Eight kms from our front door is the Sierra Cabrera range rising to a height of 900 meters. It has some testing ascents. Steep hill signs are rare in Spain and there are none on the roads of the Cabrera, so we have not known how severe the climb was that we rode up. We have no certification of our achievement, but thanks to the Belgian national cycling coach, who



was interviewed by a Sol Times reporter, we now know it registers 200 points APM coefficient. **Alan Johnston**
Ed: have you heard of the APM Coefficient? Is this a 'foreign' thing?



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.

To: Julie Rand
<julie.rand@CyclingUK.org>
Subject: Polite high viz tabs

Hi Julie – can you suggest who in campaigns team to advise if we have a view on wearing of these tabards? Link below shows recent local group ride which has provoked heated debate on Chester and North Wales Facebook – pros and cons of impersonating a police officer. We should have closed it off – IMO – since some are now threatening to walk away from CTC etc. if members continue to use them.

Much appreciated

Janet

Secretary Two Mills (Wirral) part of
Cycling UK

Hi Janet

We don't have an official view on these as we don't know whether or not it would be [classified as a criminal offence](#). I doubt that it's ever been tested in the courts.

Having said that, there is some [academic evidence](#) that people wearing such vests are given more room by over-takers.

Perhaps this would be a good question for Paul Kitson to answer in Cycle magazine?

Ultimately, we always advocate freedom of choice by individuals as to whether or not they adopt a particular item of clothing as long as it isn't breaking any laws of the land.

Kind regards

Julie Rand

Member Group Coordinator
Cycling UK



Ed: Now this is interesting - look what I found on the internet from another group of 'Two Wheelers' taken from the MotorCycle News website!

Motorcyclists can join POLITE force!

Published: 14 June 2013

Motorcyclists can join POLITE force

Motorcyclists have been told they can legally wear a high-visibility vest that resembles police uniform.

The yellow bibs have the word 'polite' printed on the back in large capital letters, along with a strip of blue-and-white crosshatching similar to designs traditionally worn by police.

Cyclists in London already wear them to get drivers to give them more space, after Met commander Bob Broadhurst said they were not illegal. Now the Met has said motorcyclists can wear them too.

A spokesman said: 'It does not look like a police uniform. It is merely a high visibility jacket so would not be illegal. It is illegal to impersonate a police officer, so

that would mean claiming to be a police officer. Nowhere on the jacket shown does it even say police.'

The full message on the bib is 'Polite notice think bike'. The makers admit there is little difference between the chequered strip on the bib and blue-and-white crosshatching used by police.

Nicky Fletcher, MD of Equisafety, said: "In 2010 we showed the head of ACPO for the mounted section and they cleared it, they said it was fine to use."

Fletcher said the design was not similar to police uniform. "Police uniform doesn't have 'Polite notice think bike' on the back," she said.

The firm's website quotes one cyclist as saying: "Sometimes it's like a force field around me when I'm on my bike as cars don't seem to want to get too close to me."

Equisafety, in Wirral, Merseyside, has won a contract to supply its POLITE range to cycle firm Raleigh, but Fletcher said the bibs were not marketed for motorcyclists.

She said: "We don't make them for motorbikes. We only make them for cyclists and horse riders at the moment. We know there is a market for motorbikes but we don't think they're strong enough just yet."

The bibs are on sale at www.highvisibility.uk.com





Lowri Evans


Lowri's Demerara
Crunch Biscuits

Demerara Crunch Biscuits

Following a request after this year's AGM the recipe for the crunch biscuits is below. The recipe make about 40 biscuits.

Ingredients:

6oz of marg or butter

4oz soft light brown sugar

8oz SR Flour (original recipe uses plain flour so it could be used instead of SR)

About 1 table spoon of demerara sugar

Pinch of salt

Method:

1. Weigh out the fat, soft brown sugar, flour and add a pinch of salt.
2. Work together in a bowl until the ingredients as all mixed together.
3. Split the dough into 2 pieces. Take half and roll it out into a sausage shape about 10" long; repeat with the other half.
4. Sprinkle the demerara sugar on a board and roll the dough in it so that the edges are all coated.
5. Wrap the dough in cling film or foil and put it in the fridge until it is firm (about 30 minutes).
6. Lightly grease some baking sheets. Cut the dough into slices about 1/4" and place on the trays allowing room for spreading.
7. Bake for about 10mins at 150°C (fan oven).

(As the biscuits are small there isn't much time between cooked and over done; time & temperature may need adjusting slightly to allow for variations between ovens)

Ed: Another one of Lowri's incredible recipes. How can she stay so slim cooking such things. I've put on a pound just reading about it!



Jane Marshall

Jane spotted these while on a trip to Munich!

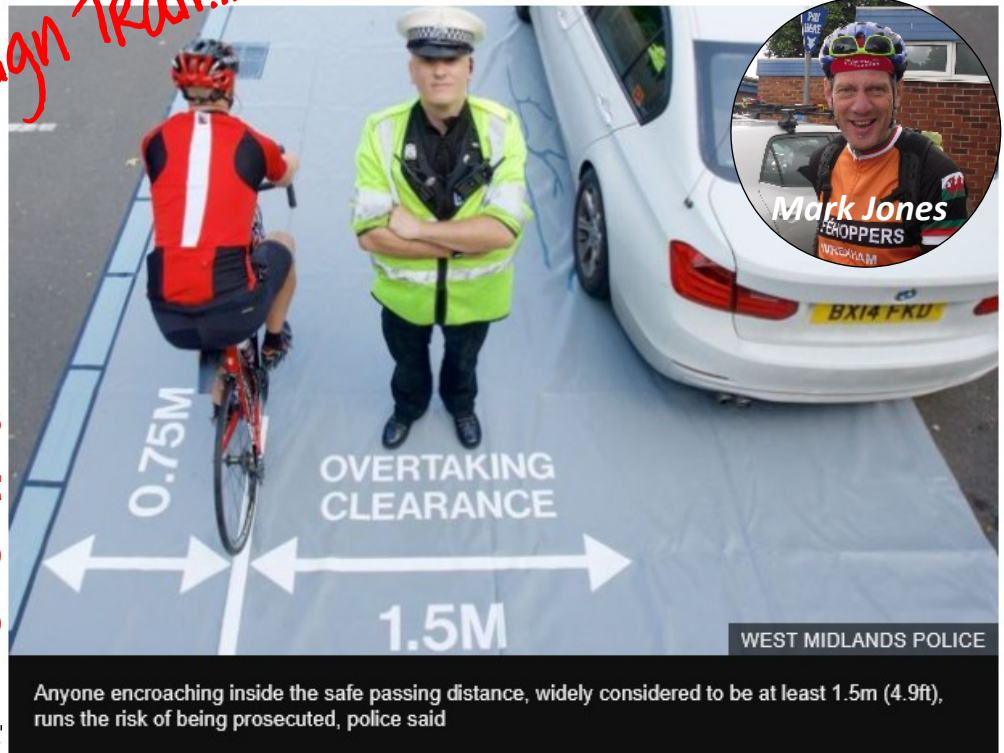
6 seater 'conference bikes' ?





On the Campaign Trail.....

West Midlands Police target drivers too close to cyclists



Anyone encroaching inside the safe passing distance, widely considered to be at least 1.5m (4.9ft), runs the risk of being prosecuted, police said

Mark Andrew Jones and Chris Smith posted in Chester and North Wales CTC.



Mark Andrew Jones

17 October at 20:43

Good to see the 1.5m passing space initiative by West Mids Police on the One Show (BBC1) this evening



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Yet here in Spain and indeed in France & Germany the emphasis is on the side of the cyclists and

This is a typical road sign in Spain and did you notice?

Look how the sign shows two cyclists riding two abreast yet in the UK it appears that most road users don't even know about Rule 66 in the Highway Code

"Rule 66 states you should never cycle more than two abreast, and ride in single file on narrow or busy roads. This means cycles are perfectly legal to cycle side by side on most roads in the UK"

Question: Education or Legislation? - Discuss!



Saw this and it just made me laugh!

I guess the British sense of humour is different to the Spanish? (or perhaps it's just mine?)

Cycling south on the main road between Denia and Calpe I couldn't resist stopping and taking a snap of this hoarding on a roadside factory building.

"Proud of my bag" ?

When I started to think of a suitable caption to go with it I was stumped because none of the thoughts going through my head could be put to print, well, at least not in a magazine such as this!

What could YOU put to this caption?

All contributions appreciated!



Tony Swannick sent this in:

Hi Martin just got this which relates to a genuine cycle purchase,

Text message from someone buying a bike.

8.45am 'Bike still 4 sale?'

8.59am 'Yes '

9.15am 'What is the lowest you'll go on it.'

9.30am '2mph, Anything else and you will fall over!'



Reminds me of my brother who was a butcher in Dewhursts in Dunstable.

A man came into his shop (a complete stranger) and asked:

"Have you got pig's trotters?"

"Yes of course" my brother replied.

As quick as a flash, the man said:

"OK Porky, I'll have 4 lamb chops!"

They then both had a good laugh! **A true story!**



This is the section in 'The Link' where you've tried out a piece of kit and like it enough to tell your fellow riders.

We've been using these recently and and what with the great price and the unbelievable capacity for holding air we're pleased. Don't seem to have to pump them up as much as others.

Went for them originally because both Sarah & I use fairly deep rims and these tubes come in 48mm valve length which is just right and not very common.

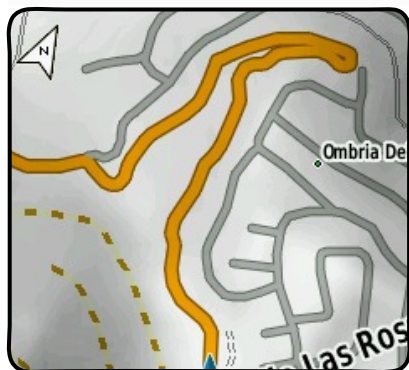
Had one or two punctures with them but no more than normal and not really sure if it might be the Michelin ProRace 4's not being tough enough or the very sharp flints and the small nail that had worked its way through!





more thoughts!

*My secret is out!
Caught 'red handed'!*



Fellow riders couldn't understand how I could descend so quickly down the long descents we have here in Spain, it was like I could 'read' the upcoming corners!

That was until they noticed that I was often glancing at my Garmin on the way down so in fact I actually was!

Of course, I just selected maps on my Garmin so I could see whether a hairpin bend was coming up or if it was a more gradual bend, rather useful when descending at 40ph+!

My secret is out!



Quick and cheap upgrade for a lighter hill climb bike.....

Column inches (and yards) have been given to the importance of 'marginal gains' when competing.

Many people spend lots of time and money up grading their bikes so that they can climb hills as quickly (and painlessly?) as possible.

Photos below show how the C&NW CTC hill climb organiser was able to rapidly shave significant weight (1% stone) from the bike in moments after riding out to the event start.

(In spite of this massive weight saving, strange as it might seem, I was still just off the pace of the event winners!) **Lowri Evans**



- * It takes more love to share the saddle than it does to share the bed!
- * If you want to complain about the pace being set by the Runs Leader, you better be prepared to lead the group yourself!
- * Young riders pick a destination and go... Old riders pick a direction and go!
- * Keep your bike in good repair: cycling shoes are NOT comfortable for walking!
- * You'll know she loves you if she offers to let you ride her bike; don't do it and she'll love you even more!
- * Well-trained reflexes are quicker than luck!



You Fell Off Your Bike-How?

Flipping through recent copies of the Link magazine, I came across the excellent articles from Steve the Paramedic on First Aid aimed at cyclists. This got me thinking that it might be of interest to Link readers to read about prevention rather than cure. Rather than dwell on those incidents we are sometimes not in control of, such as collisions with motorised vehicles, I thought a more light hearted look at a few of those areas where we could help ourselves might help.

A number of these have been from personal experience as I've journeyed over the past 12 years or so from being a rock climber to a road cyclist. Most of them have involved pain and one or two a trip to A&E for me, as well as others.

I use clip-less pedals

My first experience of cycling came as I was beginning to become disillusioned with climbing and bought myself a mountain bike to keep fit. As a new sport once I got into it I was keen to get



'on trend' and started reading various MTB magazines. At the time all the tips for beginners were extolling the benefits

of clip-less pedals, so after a bit of research Shimano SPD's became my pedal of choice.

My first experience of these was more embarrassing than painful. I remember riding up one of the steep roads up to Moel Arthur, in the Clwydians, when I saw a van coming down the other way. Trying to get my foot out of the pedal was a failure and as the van showed no signs of stopping I had no option but to fall over into the hedgerow. Fortunately the banking was fairly steep so the driver of the van was at my height as he looked out to see that he had missed me. Embarrassment and inexperience were the only reason that I gave him a look that I thought said 'I do this all the time on narrow roads.'

After getting home and slackening the springs on the pedals, I managed to get into a system of only unclipping my left foot and putting that down if I needed to stop. This worked well until I was riding along some of the fire roads in Delamere Forest when I stopped suddenly to take in the view, completely forgetting my system. The result of this was an egg shaped lump on my knee for several days later.

Even after becoming used to them, clip-less pedals have haunted me since. With the experience of riding several thousand miles a year I'm still prone to the odd error. A couple of years ago I was in a group riding to Llanymynech and came to the traffic lights in the centre of the village. I unclipped my left foot ready for the stop and promptly over balanced and fell on my right side. There were no injuries just another lot of embarrassment. In fact this way of falling off the bike contains more embarrassment potential than serious injury, unless of course you are unlucky enough to fall under a truck.

Fixed wheel bike riders have their own issues with unclipping from their pedals, as anyone mentioned in the last issue of the Link article on fixed wheel bikes will tell you.

I took my hand off the handlebars

Most cyclists in the UK are aware of the poor state of our roads and the number of potential hazards there are, especially on poorly maintained country roads. And most cyclists are aware of the unwritten rule of not letting go of the

handle bars unless they can see clearly the road ahead.

However, in the heat of the moment we sometimes forget this rule with potentially severe consequences. My own experiences in this area are mixed. A few years ago I had a scare



Mike Frith



when I rode the Route des Grande Alpes with a couple of friends. This I thought made me an experienced rider, so heading for the Col de Galibier I decided I needed to take off my rain jacket. I had done this a number of times before without stopping and riding down a fairly wide road with no traffic I thought this would not be a problem. This time though my watch snagged on the jacket sleeve and I found myself riding down a gradual hill at close to 20 mph, with both arms stuck behind my back. A few moments of panic ensued as various scenarios flashed through my mind (none of them ending in a good way) until my hand freed itself and I was able to get the jacket off. Needless to say I've not tried that again even though (or maybe because) I am even more experienced.

My other failure to heed the unwritten rule was on a 'Training Camp' (more of which later) when riding with a group in Majorca. The details are a bit complicated but I was in the lead as we came to a slip road that joined the main road we were on. I looked to my right saw the road was clear and turned and waved the group on. It was at that moment I hit a ridge in the road going over the bars and ending up with road rash and bruising down my hip and arm. The rider to my left was more unfortunate, he took the same trip over



the bars but ended up with concussion as well as road rash and a taxi ride to the nearest hospital for a scan.

Another friend riding in an overseas sportive had a similar experience. It was the first time he had experienced spectators by the road cheering on the riders, so riding through a small village he got carried away when he saw a group of young children waving so he waved back. Yes you guessed, it was at the exact moment he hit a pothole and took the trip over the handlebars, resulting in a cracked pelvis. He said afterwards that the children must have felt a bit guilty as they stayed with him until the ambulance arrived.

I was looking behind me (but the problem was in front)

Looking behind is one of the most common actions we carry out on a bike. For instance looking out for traffic when turning, looking to see if the group we started riding with are still behind. But it's wise to keep in mind that sometimes the real problem may be in front of you. I have been in a number of groups where riders have either run into the back of each other or had near misses due to someone turning round just as the riders in front have stopped. Riding onto the grass verge with the potential of a fall is also quite common.

The most unusual event I've witnessed under this heading though was one day when riding the canal towpath from Ruabon to Llangollen. We had decided



on this, as our planned route over the Panorama turned icy as we got higher. Thinking the canal towpath offered the safest option to Llangollen we had turned around and headed for the canal.

Riding along at an easy pace enjoying the view there was suddenly a shout and large splash as one of our riders rode into the canal. He had apparently looked behind veered to the right and gone into the canal, which is probably one of the most extreme examples of the problem of looking backwards. In case you are thinking it must have been a soft landing into the canal, it wasn't. The rider involved hit his knee on the stone edge of the bank as he went in and endured a period off his bike until the swelling went down.

I was on a Group Ride (see also I went on a Training Camp)

Many Group Rides I go on have the potential for falls and accidents. The mix of riders of differing abilities/experience, riders new to the group, riders wanting to prove something to others or other riders trying to catch up the group after being left at a junction all have the potential to cause accidents. The most common of these in my experience is the touching of wheels, which can cause multiple riders to fall.

It's the problem I'm most focused on when I ride in a group. Generally the rider in front will stay upright with a touch of wheels from behind, whereas the rider behind will fall. This has the potential consequence of bringing others down with them. In this situation you not only run the risk of a painful fall and embarrassment in front of your companions but also the wrath of the other riders you've brought down. Definitely one to avoid like the plague.

There are other potential areas of falls, some of which I've touched on but include sudden stops without warning, not signalling potholes or obstructions to those behind.

I went on a 'Training Camp'

Known to wives and girlfriends as a 'holiday with a bike,' this is an area ripe for falls and injuries and has similar issues as Group Rides but in a more intense environment. The first thing to keep in mind is that your riding companions are not necessarily your friends who are looking after your best interests and safety. They are generally intent on grinding you into the dust, no matter how, to prove they are a stronger rider than you!

There is no better example of this than on the first ride of the Camp, which

generally starts with the words 'shall we go for a short ride to try out the bikes?' This will start easily enough but will soon degenerate into an all out race to decide the pecking order for the week. I once came back from one of these rides, in Majorca again, absolutely shot after trying to keep up. One rider was not so lucky as he was shunted into the gutter



and off the bike. He was pretty badly cut up and bruised and when I took some first aid dressings to his room it looked like a scene from MASH, with tissue paper covered in blood scattered everywhere!

Most accidents here are due to speed and riders over estimating their abilities. I've found over the years that **there is a fine line between having the time of your life and ending up in A&E**. I learned this lesson (but have often forgotten it) in my early days of cycling when riding mountain bikes. Through some intense efforts I became quite good at riding downhill, until one day at Coed y Brenin, feeling invincible, I over did it and came down heavily on my hip. I was badly winded and could hardly move my leg. After recovering for a while, with no one about I managed to stand over the bike pull it up under me and ride one legged along the fire roads back to the car park. I eventually drove the 50 miles or so home (fortunately it was an automatic car) and get my wife to drive me to the hospital. There was no serious injury, but 4 hours in A&E and 4 weeks off the bike in considerable pain made quite an impression on me.

And although I've tried to make this a light hearted approach to the topic, I hope you get the main message - that it's a lot better to **avoid the accident in the first place**.

Mike Frith



'My First Big Win'

We had about a mile and a half to go. Seven of us had forced a break and opened up a gap. We kept the pace high, taking turns on the front.

At a mile to go, the speed increased and another gap opened up, three of us away, the other four dropped.

We carried on working together, each doing a turn on the front. When we came to the last half mile, things got a bit 'twitchy', I stayed on the wheel of the guy in front of me and although he kept flicking his elbow for me to come through, I refused, as did the rider behind me.

We were rapidly approaching the finish line and getting ready for the big effort. The guy in front realised he wasn't going to get any help from us and would be forced to lead the sprint out. He went for the long sprint, followed by me and rider number three.

By now we were going 'eye balls' out, right forward on the front of the saddle, elbows out, head almost on the front tyre and mouth wide open to take in as much oxygen as possible, sweat stinging the eyes.

The line was getting ever closer and I'm thinking: "Do I go now or wait?"

A little voice in my head kept saying: "Wait, wait, wait, not yet!"

I could see the finish up ahead but now the voice in my head screamed: "Now, now, go now, give it full gas, go, go, go!"

I stood up on the pedals, head down, elbows out and came off the wheel in front, me giving it everything I had left. The number one rider was slowing as I shot past him. Number three tried to come around me on the outside but he had left it too late. I held him off and crossed the line a full wheel in front of him. I sat up and 'freewheeled' one arm in the air.

I'd only done it; I'd only gone and bloody done it! I'd bagged my first 30mph sign!

The first three were joined by the other four and we made our way to the café stop at Llanwrst, followed a couple of minutes later by the rest of the club.

One of the more senior club members asked:

"Alright, who got the 30mph sign?"

"I did, I did, I got it!" I said, all excitedly. "OK", he said, "you can buy the teas!"

For months after, at every café stop, I used to bring the subject up: "Remember when I got the 30mph sign at Llanwrst?"

This was until the club riders eventually got really fed up with it. All sorts of things were thrown at me, bits of bread, cake, screwed up tissues. "That's it", one of them said, "we don't want to hear about that bloody 30mph sign ever again!"

I did think about going back with a hacksaw and really claiming that sign but I thought better of it, but I did go back with my box Brownie and took a photo of it!

Happy memories of club runs in the 50's and B.L.R.C. days

Glynn Jones



"Momma" Rides

Sept 3rd 2016

Once again we were unlucky with the weather which remained wet, cold and windy into the afternoon---to the extent that some 137km riders turned back from Chirk rather than continue.

Fortunately the weather relented later on, which allowed the 200k riders to dry out on their return from Llanfynydd.

There were a large number of DNS due to the bad weather, so well done to those riders who turned up and persevered in the cold and wet.

We should also give our best wishes to Brian, Old Ma's husband, who was in bed with an infected knee and possible blood poisoning at the time of this event. Brian has always been a stalwart supporter of our event and cycling in general, so our best wishes go to him for a speedy

recovery. Thanks go to family members and cafe staff who rallied round to help us from 7:15am to 9:30pm on the day.

Pistyll Packing Momma 209km; 3500m ascent

A tough ride made worse by the conditions. Tim Rusbridge of the Macc. Wheelers came off on the notorious s**t slide near the waterfall. Fortunately there was no injury to himself but the rear mech. on his bike was damaged and he could only select one gear which then kept jamming. Considering that Tim had ridden from Macclesfield to the start, finished the ride within time and then rode back home (arriving at about 02:00) this is definitely the heroic ride of the day!

17 finishers (no DNF) with John Wikie being the sole C&NW CTC representative. A special mention is also due to Seamons CC from Altrincham who fielded 7 successful riders---part of their quest to achieve the difficult 200km audax "Round the year challenge"

(a minimum 200km audax ridden, at least once a month, consecutively for 12 months).

Momma's Mountain Views 137km; 2000m climbing

No views today, just murk and mist. 22 riders set out---16 finished the ride successfully with 6 DNF. (No accidents---just fed up with the conditions). 3 finishers were declared as C&NW CTC; David Bennett, Terry Davies and Paul Mills. Well done to all those who persevered to the finish.

Momma's Leafy Lanes 50k; flat

A wet day out on this relatively easy ride. 9 riders started and finished; the 3 C&NW CTC riders were Phil Blackman, Glennys Hammond and Dave Statham. Well done to all for riding on such a challenging day. Special thanks go to the staff at Old Ma's, Margaret Matthews (handing out brevet cards at start) and Glennys Hammond (car park and photos)

On again for Sat Sept 2 2017. Let's hope for decent weather!

David Matthews



Along with another 450 plus people I attended the Birthday rides in August. While there I took the opportunity to interview

Peter Mathison the event coordinator.

At what age did you start cycling?.....

I grew up in Prenton, Birkenhead and started riding aged 4. By the time that I left the Wirral five years later there were very few lanes that I hadn't explored with my older brother. I was very proud when I completed my first 50-mile ride when I was eight.

Was it a cycling family?.....

Yes, Mum and Dad used to cycle out to North Wales or Cheshire most weekends in the 1930's. In those days the top Chester road (A540) was full of cyclists with very few cars to bother them.

What is your most memorable bike?.....

Aged 14, I was living in St Alban's. I took an Easter Holidays job in a nursery. The owner told me that the pay was 1s6p per hour. I managed to negotiate a rise to 1s 10p per hour if I could beat the boss hoeing to the end of each row. With the money I saved I bought a Claud Butler with laminated lugs, pencil stays and alloy wheels & fittings

Was that the start of a lifelong interest in cycling?.....

Not really. I discovered motor bikes, girls and beer when I was 16, only returning to cycling after moving to Solihull with my family when I was 36. For a number of years I was secretary of the Birmingham D. A. Southern section.

Was that your last move?.....

No, in 1990 I settled in Shrewsbury and joined the Shropshire & Mid Wales CTC eventually becoming a National Councillor where I was appointed to represent Council on the board of CTC Cycling Holidays and Tours.

So that is how you ended up becoming the Birthday rides coordinator?.....

Yes. It was becoming increasingly difficult for local groups to organise the event as we moved to the current format with accommodation, campers & caravanners and entertainment all on one site. There were many years in the past when there were no Birthday Rides.

How easy is to find venues?.....

Very few sites offer all three types accommodation. Also we are very aware of costs. Some give us a decent price for a basic package but then ask for thousands of pounds extra for all the additional things that we require, such as a large room for entertainment complete with a bar, plus a room for our daily film shows.

The camping or caravan package seems expensive.....

We have had that comment made a number of times, the reason is that we

have to put in the infrastructure (toilets, showers and often water) for just six nights. This includes waste pump outs. A permanent site spreads these costs over a number of years.

What about your team?.....

Obviously I couldn't do this on my own. Jim Maynard the M.D. of CTC Cycling Holidays and I are looking for venues 15 months ahead. John, Allan and Bill are very involved not only on the week but also in the preparation.

What is your biggest frustration?.....

The fact that even though I tell people that we are all volunteers this message doesn't seem to get through. CTC Cycling holidays and tours do not have **any** paid employees. The 1,500 riders that go on holiday each year through our organisation all benefit from the work of numerous unpaid people. Any profit that is made is handed over to the CTC / Cycling UK for the benefit of all members.

Note

On a personal note I have been to the last five Birthday rides and would recommend them to everyone. At £350 half board this year, with over 25 routes plotted by the local group, entertainment every evening and great company you won't find a better cycling week away anywhere.

John Ferguson

So Readers, who would you like to hear about? Contact John with your requests!

Presidents Ride and Lunch - September 25th



The event was a great success with over 40 riders attending the event. Many riders got wet riding to the start, however the weather brightened up in time for the photo call and riders dried out on their ride to lunch at Tilston. The ride was attended by Paul Tuohy (Cycling UK CEO) and his wife Wendy who rode the event on a tandem. During the day they both made the most of the opportunity to chat to local members.

Mrs Harvey and her team provided an excellent lunch in the Tilston Memorial Hall. Mike Cross gave a short speech and presented the Presidents Cup to Reg Ward. Reg Ward was surprised and delighted by the award for his work.

Thanks are due to Mike Cross for his excellent organisation of the event and to John Ferguson for checking the routes.

Following the event there was publicity for C&NW CTC with an item in the Cycling UK's *News Clips* and a piece in the News Page of the Cycling UK website; both mentioned how much Paul Tuohy had enjoyed the event.





3 - Way Split Roscoff to Nice 1441 Km Audax UK "Permanent" Ride

In 2014 I successfully completed an extended "Manche-Med" Audax UK permanent ride, in France from Ouistreham to Gruissan (near Narbonne). Once at the Med, I then cycled back through the Pyrenees to my friends' house at Montmaurin some 60km SW of Toulouse. The ride measured 1600km overall and gave me a taste for long, solo, unsupported rides in France. The knowledge and confidence



gained on this ride set me planning to follow the more difficult (due to big hill ranges after Montlucon) 1441km "Great French Diagonal" in 2015.

This latter route starts at Roscoff in Brittany, crosses the Loire at Ancenis (big bridge), then continues through the Auvergne to cross the Rhone south of Valence (small bridge). The course then follows remote hill roads from Crest to traverse the north side of Mt Ventoux, the Verdon Gorges and then visits the remote hill village of Greolieres above Nice. From here a 45km descent leads through the scenic Gorges du Loup to the finish.

As in 2014, my arrival at the Med was to be followed by a return route northwest through the Pyrenees to stay with my friends at Montmaurin once more --- giving a total distance of approximately 2000km. The ride was to be solo, unsupported again, which brings its own special challenges and rewards to a non-french speaker in a big, lonely land.

The whole ride, Roscoff-Montmaurin, was planned to take 3 weeks (allowing

for a rest day at Nice and a pause at Tarascon to climb in the Pyrenees sans luggage). Unfortunately, as with many of the best laid plans, I was thwarted a couple of weeks before the start. Whilst attempting to re-train too quickly after a springtime bout of flu, I damaged the soleus muscles in both my calves. This injury needed at least 4 weeks to clear up which put the whole schedule out of joint.

So the plans were revised to take advantage of Organiser Simon Jones' rule that allows this perm to be ridden at Tourist standard (14 days max) in 1, 2 or 3 stages over 3 years. The original departure date was put forward for a couple of weeks while the injury cleared up. I then planned to complete the first 320km of the route to the Loire at Ancenis---before turning south towards my friends' house. This strategy would allow me to arrive in Montmaurin on the original planned date, albeit by a route reduced to 1000km due to my late start.

The remaining 1121km to Nice would have to wait until 2016.

June 12-15 (midday) 2015

Roscoff to Ancenis 320km - mostly flat
So after the enforced delay, and hoping to regain fitness on the ride, I embarked on the train journey from Chester to Plymouth, followed by overnight ferry to Roscoff. Next morning I managed to oversleep on the ferry and scrambled to leave with groups of other cyclists.

The weather in Roscoff was wet, miserable and misty and the route ahead less than obvious. Fortunately one of the English cycling groups leaving the ferry was headed for my first stop at Morlaix (22km) and invited me to latch on as they knew the way. I just about managed to hold on to their wheels in my unfit state, weighed down by a rack full of luggage.

After a soggy coffee at Morlaix, but grateful for the company, I reluctantly headed off on my own into the wet mist and a fairly long first hill. Eventually the gradient relented and the ensuing descent led me to lunch in the favoured Audax cafe known as a bus shelter.

Fortunately the weather cleared up pm, so I had a pleasant ride to stay overnight at a chateau (which had seen better days) at Perret near Silfiac.

The weather continued unsettled for the next couple of days as I rode mainly flat, boring roads to Ancenis. Here I picked up a control stamp at the



David Matthews



lunchtime cafe stop, before crossing the Loire on the huge but narrow bridge. Shortly beyond the bridge I turned south towards Toulouse, leaving the route eastward to Nice for another year.

Jun 9-12 2016

Chester to St Malo to Ancenis 206km
Mostly flat

June 13-17 2016

Ancenis to Bertignat 603km; 3100m ascent.

Having looked at various mechanised travel options for returning to Ancenis via Nantes, the strike prone French air traffic controllers and petrol delivery drivers persuaded me to take the safe arrival option of train to Portsmouth and overnight ferry to St Malo. I then cycled down to Ancenis in two stages of 100k each over rolling hilly terrain.

The weather was generally showery and cool during the day and monsoon like at night. These rainstorms were a feature of the wettest early June in France since records began and regrettably were a foretaste of worse weather to come.

I arrived in Ancenis on a gloomy Sunday night when, in accordance with French tradition, all restaurants are shut. Fortunately, after a long walk into town, I eventually found a Turkish Kebab shop which was doing a roaring trade as the only food outlet around.



My schedule to reconnect with the audax route next morning gave time to admire the wide and very full Loire River, swollen by weeks of heavy rain.

June 13 2016

Ancenis to Rochefort-sur Loire 95km; mostly flat

Soon after midday I left the identical cafe



that I had arrived at from Roscoff 12 months before and set off on a short 45km half day ride to my hotel at Rochefort-sur Loire.

Navigation should be very simple---cross the river by a very narrow foot/cyclepath (too close to the roaring traffic---scary!) then head east by keeping the river on the left.

Unfortunately, weeks of rain had caused the Loire to flood many of the minor roads---in some places up to 4 metres deep! There were signs at most road junctions denoting "inondee" forcing an inevitable, confusing route east on the few roads still clear of the floods.

Eventually I came to a large bridge which crossed the wide river back north and thus my route then became "keep the river on the right and you can't go wrong".

Some 10km later I arrived at a major road with signs pointing north to Montjean. This didn't make sense as I should have been way beyond Chalonnes at this point. Eventually the awful truth dawned on me that when I had apparently crossed the Loire, in fact I had merely crossed a swollen parallel river and had been riding in the wrong direction for some time! There was no option but to turn round and retrace until I eventually arrived at Rochefort after some 80km.

My overnight stop here was at the Moulin Geant or giant windmill. This hotel did not pop-up on my phone when I looked for directions. Fortunately I found a local guy with good English who directed me onto the road towards Beaulieu-s-Layon, some 7km distant uphill, explaining that the hotel was just to the right of the road.

I kept on riding uphill looking for the hotel, figuring that a giant windmill was likely to be high up above Rochefort to maximise the available wind and difficult to miss. Eventually I got to Beaulieu with no sign of the hotel and getting rather prickly after my "long, short half day" ride with no end in sight. To cut a long and painful story short, the hotel was eventually located late in the evening. It was back down in Rochefort, hidden along a rough track behind a new housing estate which screened it from view. A few signs would have helped to avoid much frustration, unnecessary climbing and an eventual distance of 95km for my "short, flat 45km" ride!

June 14 2016

Rochefort-sur Loire to Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine 119km; 200m ascent

Morning dawned bright and clear as I followed minor roads around the Loire to Gennes after 37km. Beyond Gennes there is a 15km stretch of fairly major road D751 to the lunch and control stop at Saumur. I was not looking forward to riding amongst all this traffic. However, just outside Gennes, the route was barred for major reconstruction all the way to Saumur. The friendly road crew allowed me through the barriers onto this stretch which gave me a traffic free ride on perfect tarmac to within 2km of Saumur. Merci French Routes! Once in town I reconnected with "Manche-Med" at the same cafe stop used 2 years previously.

After lunch I headed east again feeling very much like a cycling softie as I was accompanied by many leisure riders following the gentle cycle paths along the river. Once the Loire had been crossed at Candes -St-Martin the leisure groups were left behind and I continued through to my hotel stop 40km further on at Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine.

The Logis Hostellerie de Cheval Blanc on the Av. General de Gaulle at Candes has

all the ambience of a classic old style French Hotel. Bicycle and stage coach parking is in a large complex at the back of the hotel. As I arrived at the Hotel, already wet from a rain shower during the previous 5km, a massive storm opened up which kept me pinned in the garage for a good half hour before I could safely transfer to the hotel entrance some 200m distant.

June 15 2016

Sainte-Maure-de Touraine to Mers-sur-Indre 140km; 600m ascent

Today's route re-connected in part with "Manche-Med" route, riding through the Brenne. This is one of my favourite parts of France---beautiful, wooded narrow roads, flanked by freshwater lakes that are home to many bird species making the only audible noise in this remote area.

The weather stayed fine until Lothiers some 40km from the finish. As I progressed towards the village of Mers-sur-Indre through an increasingly remote and lumpy region, the rain turned from drizzle to pouring. Once again I had trouble locating my overnight stop---this was resolved by my optimised technique of ringing the establishment and asking, in perfect Franglais, to be guided in.

June 16 Mers-sur-Indre to Coutansouze



128km; 1000m ascent Washout!

This is the day I started to lose the plot due to the frequent mega-rainstorms and an ever more painful saddle region caused by continually riding in damp/wet shorts (as the weather prevented me from getting any clothing properly dry).

Breakfast was accompanied by a huge rainstorm crashing down outside. This



relented to a normal downpour by 9:30 so I resolved to ride 13km to La Chatre to gauge progress in the difficult conditions.

Once in the town the rain cleared up a little as I negotiated the busy traffic filled roads to escape uphill through the usual out-of-town shopping complex and continued 11km towards St Sever s/Indre.

The first proper hills of the Massif



Central now come into play leading to the next control at Montlucon, which is entered following a long descent. Prior to Montlucon I had another long delay near Boussac, attempting to shelter under a few trees whilst another massive rainstorm hammered down for about an hour.

The previous delays for rainstorms caused me to leave Montlucon town centre much later than planned, during the evening rush hour---up a steep climb of 10km to Commentry surrounded by cars and buses. Most unpleasant!

The commuter mayhem extended a further 5km to Colombier where it seemed I would have some clear roads to cover the last 20km to my hotel. Unfortunately the rain had not finished with me yet and another huge storm crashed down for 30 minutes whilst I sheltered in an old shed behind an empty house.

By the time the rain stopped, around 6:30pm, I was feeling wet, tired and very hungry as I struggled up yet another long hill. Beyond La Loge with 10km to go, the sun magically appeared to give a beautiful clear evening. The improvement in the weather coincided with leaving the main road to follow

small, remote narrow roads which eventually, after a final 5km climb, landed me at an immaculate Logis hotel in the middle of nowhere. The time was 8:05 pm and the restaurant closed at 8:30pm---so I had a mad scramble to store bike, unpack, shower, wash clothes and tumble in to the dining room for last orders.

June 17 2016

Coutansouze to Bertignat (Ambert) 121km; 1300m ascent

The day started well enough as I climbed up and down through forested roads beyond Coutansouze followed by a pleasant descent to Ebreuil at 20km. The sky was overcast but at least it wasn't raining as I climbed beyond Ebreuil to eventually descend to enjoy "Plat du Jour" in Maringues some 38km later.

The route beyond Maringues leads over a couple of lengthy climbs towards a well graded, wooded descent on the D906 through a steep valley which disgorges into the small market town of Ambert.

My accommodation was booked in Bertignat some 15km before Ambert. Accordingly I swung off the D906 at Pont de David just before the small village of Vertolaye, crossed the river, and started up a steep climb to the village. Six km, 300m ascent and one hour later I reached Bertignat village in a really tired state---and late evening yet again. The locals in the village square then told me that the hotel I wanted was 5km back



down the hill on a different road; just the news I needed!!! So I descended as directed, but arrived back at the main road at Vertolaye with no sign of any hotel on the way. So I did what I should have done in the first place and phoned the hotel for guidance---which led me to

a whole new area of Bertignat. Late again---and the usual rush to get a meal before the dining room shut.

(I now realise that the term Bertignat refers to a hilly region noted for relaxing holidays, with the village at its centre. Future cyclists looking for accommodation beware!)

June 18 2016

Bertignat to Montmaurin (car assist)

In the morning I realised that my increasingly painful saddle sore had become infected and there was no way I could continue the ride. In truth I had become tired of the constant bad weather and late arrival at hotels---so resolved to return home and come back to Bertignat to finish the third stage of the route later in the year, once the weather and my health had improved.

My host rang the local taxi driver so he could take me 100km to Clermont Ferrand airport where I would collect a hire car to drive back to my friends' house at Montmaurin. I could then rest up before booking my flight back to UK.

When the taxi driver was eventually located he was found to be away on holiday in Nice. The weather had been so bad locally that he had taken his wife for a short holiday to get away from the rain---but it was constantly pouring down in Nice also. This news made me feel a lot better about packing now and leaving the trip to Nice for some future time.

In the absence of any local taxi or other transport, mine host offered to drive me to the airport himself---for which many thanks. I collected a hire car at the airport and then drove 500km to Montmaurin---followed by a flight home two days later.

Roscoff-Nice audax perm score to date:
Roscoff-Ancenis 320km; mostly flat 3.5 days

Ancenis-Bertignat 603km; 3100m ascent 4.5 days

Subtotal: 923km; 3100m ascent 8 days
Bertignat-Nice (To do) approx. 530km; 6500m ascent 6 days max.

September 6-8 2016

Chester-Nice-St Etienne -Bertignat 61km; 500m ascent



September 9-14 2016

Bertignat to Nice 602km;
6500m+ ascent

September 6-7 (midday) Chester to Nice



to St Etienne (plane + car)

This trip now put me in the last chance saloon for completing the ride to audax tourist standard.

Bertignat, where I finished riding in June, is situated rather remotely in the Massif Central. This necessitated a somewhat complicated travel plan to pick up the ride again.

Day 1 saw me fly from Liverpool to Nice, hire a car and drive to a hotel near Nice airport (which had agreed to look after my bike bag until I returned in a week's time). The bike was built up in the hotel room and luggage sorted so that I could start cycling immediately after dropping off the hire car at St Etienne railway station next day.

Day 2 travel began at 7am when I left the hotel to drive 500km to St Etienne. The plan was to arrive at noon but a crash on the motorway and route finding problems in the city delayed my departure until 3:00pm. Loading my bike out of the car was not helped when I found that a full bottle of orange juice had emptied itself into the bag containing my cycle clothing and helmet, resulting in a horrible sticky mess and no drink for the ride. Not a happy start!

September 7-8 2016

St Etienne to Bertignat 61km (cycling)
700m ascent

St Etienne is situated in a large bowl like depression, surrounded by motorways. After the first hour of attempting to climb out of town on my loaded bike, avoiding the motorways and being

forced to descend back towards the town centre, it became apparent that I was not going to leave town on two wheels. So I returned to the train station to hire a taxi to get me out of the place.

It was late afternoon by the time I returned to the station and still had to travel some 50km, mostly uphill, to get to the overnight stop in St Atheme. Given little choice in the circumstances, I negotiated a fee of 60 eu for transport to St Bonnet le Chateau, 30 Km beyond the city and well clear of all the busy main roads. From here I endured a 17km steep climb with the hot sun directly on my back. This hard climb eventually led to a 5km descent through woods to the Hotel. Once again I arrived just before the restaurant shut and had the usual rush to get showered and fed.

Next day started with an easy grade climb over the Col de Pradeux 1196m followed by a pleasant descent to Ambert. There was time for a restful coffee stop here in the sunshine---a double first.

I then enjoyed a lazy al fresco lunch in a barn at the side of the road during the 6 km climb up to Bertignat, prior to an early arrival at my Chambre d'hôte! A restful, recovery day at last!

September 9 2016

Bertignat to Le Chambon sur Lignon
113km; 1400+m ascent.



Today was my 72nd birthday which mine hosts celebrated by hanging a good wishes banner in Dutch language over the breakfast table.

The special birthday breakfast delayed my departure until 08:30 but I then made rapid progress for 16km on the

level stretch between Ambert and the control at Arlanc.

Shortly beyond Arlanc the climbing started in earnest for 18km up to Craponne-sur Arzon (not a pretty place!) followed by a further 22km of rolling countryside before descending to meet the Loire once again at Retournac. I spent a lazy half hour here watching the ducks floating on the river---in retrospect a time delay I could not really afford.

Beyond Retournac there is 200m ascent over 13km to get to Yssingaux---a small town with a big supermarket. I was getting tired and hungry by this time, so bought food bars and a bottle of Coke which I consumed sitting on the floor of the rather grand entrance foyer.

Yssingaux was filled with cars rushing madly to get families to their Friday evening shopping. In the midst of all this traffic mayhem, and misdirected by new road signs, I lost the correct route leaving town along the rural D103. This error became obvious only when I found myself descending on the main D105 which travels a circuitous 6km extra to get to the next town, Tence.

Realising my route finding error, I spotted a right turn leading back to the D103 along a minor "white road". I really should know by now that these roads are inevitably steep and confusing. Shades of Bertignat misdirection all over again as I toiled up steep slopes for 5km until I eventually emerged, shattered, onto the D 103. By this time it was starting to get dark as the road climbed ever upwards. When I eventually arrived in Tence the locals were enjoying their evening aperitifs outside the local cafes---whist boy racers showed off their skills by screaming round the streets in hot hatches. All rather unnerving for a tired cyclist.

After so much climbing from Retournac, surely the slopes must relent now---but no such luck! In the semi-darkness, the road to Chambon looked even steeper than the climb to Tence.

A couple of kilometres up the climb I received a call from the hotel to check if I would arrive that night. Be there in 10 minutes I lied, as the slopes continued ever upwards.

Eventually I rolled into the centre of town to search for the "Hotel de la Plage". I was directed east from the



crossroads at the centre of town and after 2 km gradual descent eventually arrived at La Plage with absolutely no sign of any hotel. Lost and late yet again!



There is a supermarket opposite La Plage where two families were loading up their cars with the weekly shopping. On enquiring as to the whereabouts of my hotel, they informed me that I had been standing 100m away from it in the centre of town and had been sent off on a wild goose chase.

By now it was 8:30pm and I was totally shattered, lost, hungry and un-amused by the misdirection. Seeing how tired I looked, the two families very kindly rearranged themselves in the two cars and took me back to where I had started in the centre of town. Very much appreciated!

Once in the Hotel I checked what time the restaurant closed. "We don't have a restaurant" was the reply! That was all I needed to hear! Fortunately there was a pizzeria still open in town, where I was just in time to get a belated birthday meal.

A memorable birthday on one of toughest days of this whole ride.

September 10 2016

Le Chambon sur Lignon to Crest 108km; 100m ascent; 1000m descent

Next morning I cycled gingerly out of town past "La Plage", hoping to ride myself into a rhythm gently after the previous day's difficulties. Fortunately the initial climb was easy for 11km up gentle slopes to St Agreve.

Beyond St Agreve the road enters the valley of the Eyrieux which allowed a

spectacular descent for 80km all the way down to the Rhone at La Voulte-sur-Rhone. This descent is well graded and gave me the breather I needed before tackling the increasingly difficult hills ahead.

At La Voulte-s-Rhone the wide river is crossed by a narrow bridge which appears to carry a cycle path only--- but to my alarm also permits cars which are not too keen on giving way to bicycles.

Some 5km beyond the river at Livron-s-Drome I came to a very busy road junction at the N7 which was heaving with all manner of traffic. Fortunately this road is soon escaped by turning east along the D93 which could be followed to my hotel just outside Crest, after a pleasant, quiet 15km journey.

September 11 2016

Crest to Mollans -s-Ouveze 90km; 800m ascent

Today's route headed south out of Crest to the first col of the day at 386m. A pleasant, sweeping descent then led to Puy St Martin and subsequently my coffee stop at Cleon-d'Andran 20km. It was Sunday morning and the cafe was full of locals relaxing with the Sunday papers whilst watching motorcyclists riding by on their weekend outing.

Beyond Cleon the route continues south through to La Begude-de-Mazenc where the traffic disappeared east/west along the main road from Montelimar. The climbing now started again through an increasingly sparse area whilst I started to feel the heat as the temperature rose well into the late 20s.

Whilst descending from the main col at Aleyrac 481m the temperature rose further, the landscape became ever emptier and I started to get rather hungry and thirsty. My consequent anxiety level was increased further when a wasp banged tail first into my face during a fast descent at a time when I could not take my hands off the bars to assuage the pain. Eventually, 30km beyond La Begude, I arrived at the small town of Taulignan where I was able to get a large, watery salad and refill my water bottles at a rather basic cafe.

By now the temperature was in the mid 30's which made onward progress very hot and tiring on the unsheltered road. There were a few trees about so I made progress by riding for 10 minutes then sheltering until I had cooled down sufficiently to continue. In this manner I rode slowly onwards for 15km until reaching the welcome 4km descent to Nyons which allowed me to cool down a bit--- followed by a long recovery stop in one of the many large cafes in the centre of town.

At the cafe stop I started thinking about the next day's ride which involved a considerable amount of climbing around Mont Ventoux. This would be rather unpleasant, if not dangerous to my health, if tackled in 30+ degree temperatures. Accordingly I texted my Chambre d'hôte, Les Parrans to order a very early breakfast next day, whilst confirming that an evening meal would be available this Sunday evening. Les Parrans came up trumps and looked after me in fine style during my brief stay.

September 12 2016

Mollans-s-Ouveze to Oraison 106km; 1500m ascent

The early section of this route, north of Mont Ventoux, was familiar to me from an outing in 1989 when I rode the 255km French Audax "Tour de Comtat Venaissin". This tour starts at Roussillon well to the south and ascends the



mountain and all of the cols around the area before returning to the start point. It is a fantastic ride, one of the best ever in my experience, and still remains clear in my memory 27 years later.

This morning I set off at 7:00am in the cool dawn light to embark on 25km of steady climbing up into the high valley at



the back of Mont Ventoux. Eventually I reached a T junction where the road turns right up to Aurel, avoiding the historic village of Montbrun some 2km to the left. However, I was in need of refreshment at this point and could not risk running out of supplies in the remote upland area. So I reluctantly turned left and managed to re-supply at a System U express store just outside the village. The modern store was a real contrast to the historic village---but tired, cyclotourists can't always be choosers



and I still had too far to ride that day to indulge myself by visiting the town further up the hill.

Heading back south east, up yet more slopes, I was encouraged to encounter a road sign for Provence- Alpes region. This was the first concrete indication that I was slowly approaching my journey's end at Nice---although there was the small matter of 250km and the Verdon Gorges still to come.

Beyond Ales and St Trinit I entered a high plateau marked out by lavender fields---another sign that I had entered the Provence region. Somewhere in the midst of this lonely area I entered the small, isolated village of Revest-du-Bion and chanced upon an excellent restaurant, Les Marronniers, for lunch. This was indeed a lucky find in such a sparsely populated area.

The high plains continued for several km beyond Revest before commencing a long descent through Banon and on to Forcalquier after 40km. Forcalquier was the first noisy town I had been exposed to for a couple of days and I found it an unpleasant culture shock. The noise,

heat and traffic got much worse some 11km beyond at La Brillane where it was necessary to cross the busy D4096 and A51 motorway at a very confusing and dangerous roundabout system at rush hour time.

Some distance beyond all this mayhem I arrived at my hotel on the far outskirts of Oraison. This Logis hotel is well situated as it would allow me to escape the traffic next morning as I headed south and then east to the Verdon Gorges.

That night a huge thunderstorm unleashed itself---memories of June but everything was dry again by morning and the weather remained fine throughout my onward journey to Nice.

September 13 2016

Oraison to Comps-sur-Artuby 94km; 1500m ascent

The night time storm had cleared the air by morning as I rode 20km up the valley of the Asse in cool, fresh weather to a cafe stop at the small village of Bras-d-Asse. Beyond here I joined busy roads which, after several climbs, eventually led to Moustiers-St-Marie---gateway to the Verdon Gorges.

The Verdon Gorges are the largest in Europe, containing massive rock walls toward 1000m in height. As a former mountaineer I am well aware of its status as one of the top ten climbing locations in the world. This reputation had attracted me in more recent times to cycle around the perimeter and the Crest road to enjoy the stunning views into the canyons.

Foreknowledge of a route can be a two edged sword. I knew the way round the gorge but was only too aware that lugging my heavily loaded bike up the 500m ascent from Moustiers-St-Marie to Col d'Ayen 1032m at the highest point of the gorge traverse would be no easy matter.

Eventually I crossed this high point and descended a short way to the climbers' Mecca at La Palud. Here I grabbed a quick Coke (3eu50!) before descending onwards to the key road junction at Pont-de-Soleis where a subsidiary road kicks back right alongside another series of gorges. My recollection from previous visits was that this next road was mostly downhill to Comps-sur-Artuby some 16km distant. How the memory can play

tricks! The road climbed ever upwards, often steeply, until eventually I followed a short descent in the failing light into town and my hotel.

This hotel stay is possibly the only time that an evening meal cost more than the remainder of the bill. I was so tired and dehydrated by this time that I had to select the only dishes that I felt able to stomach from the a la carte menu, rather than the set menu. An expensive indulgence that restored my spirits ready for the next, and final, day's ride.

September 14 2016

Comps-sur-Artuby to Nice 91km; 900m ascent; 1400m descent

The previous day I had never really lost any significant height from the Col d'Ayen, so was expecting to leave Comps by a steady downhill ride. Yet again, I should have known better than to relax, as the road soon started climbing again up to the Col de Clavel 1060m.

17km beyond Comps the road turns right at Logis-du-Pin into a beautiful, rolling, wide upland valley that extends for 30km---eventually arriving at an insignificant, barren spot containing a roundabout and a road sign. Insignificant spot maybe, but the road



sign indicates the right turn to Greolieres and Nice. It's all downhill from here!

The road initially descends for 7km through a stunning gorge containing several natural rock tunnels before reaching Greolieres. The village is a bit of a tourist trap for outdoor types and has an excellent cafe where I had time to enjoy a lazy lunch---at last!

Just beyond the village there is another welcoming road sign pointing downhill for 45km to Nice. This road descends



through the spectacular Gorges du Loup before entering the city outskirts at Cagnes-sur-Mer. From here it's



just a question of surviving the traffic for 5km before getting on to the large cyclepath that follows the seashore to central Nice. A further 10km east and then north leads on to the city centre for the last control stamp.

Once the bank receipt was safely tucked away with my brevet card I returned 3km to my hotel, retrieved the bike bag, packed up and flew back home the next day.

Strangely, I felt little emotion on entering Nice. I think that the ride had been too long, had too many logistical challenges and was generally too hard to fully appreciate the achievement. That feeling will surely come with time.

Dave Matthews

Ed: Wow - what an achievement! Chapeau!



Now then we, as cyclists, know that the most important thing in our cycling world is a good cuppa and a piece of cake. Has to be good value as well and the cafe has to be warm in the winter so

Which is your favourite? Voting is important so the Committee has extended voting up to January 15th, 2017!

So, call, speak to or scribble your favourite cafe nomination and give it to Glennys Hammond or Mike Cross of the Awards Committee or you can email web@ctcchesterandnwales.org.uk or tell - every nomination will be most appreciated!



Cycling UK

Eryri Thursday Group Club Camp Wed-Thurs Oct 5-6 2016

We had organised a couple of days camping in June on the Llyn Peninsula but it was rather wet, as we had enjoyed the experience we said we must do it again

Rachel, one of our members helps run a campsite at Brynteg Anglesey so she invited us there.

Rachel has entered the 2017 London Marathon in aid of an Epilepsy charity so it was decided that the money that we paid for camping etc would go to sponsor her.

We agreed to meet before lunch on the Wednesday then go for an afternoon ride through the lanes to Llanerch y Medd old Station for tea & cake. There is hope of reopening the railway there, as a commuter line to Bangor possibly using Heritage trains, as the rails are still in place.

Rachel offered to cook a meal for us in the evening and she would do a spag/bol and the rest of us would take along puddings & wine, what a wonderful feast this turned out to be. Some intrepid members went for a paddle in the sea first thing in the morning they came back hoping chilblains would not mar their day.

Next morning was to be a regular Thursday ride, so sixteen of us set out for the ride, and being October the lanes were very quiet just the odd tractor along the way. First we stopped at the 'Pound shop' at Brynrefail run by the local community. Coffee and the wonderful home-made cake etc was originally a £1 but now £1.50, the result of inflation! Our route took us over Mynyth Bodafon, which was quite a climb. We then circled

round Llyn Alaw with a nice little 'up & down' route with lovely views over the lake to arrive at Llanerch y Medd station again, where we were made very welcome for our lunch. At this time of year we have a job to find cafes open.

After a long climb up Llanerch y Medd high street, we had a leisurely ride through the lanes back to camp, a lovely sunny day but a cold wind.

That evening we had a nice meal at the California Hotel a short walk from our camp.

It was quite a pleasure to get up in the night to visit the camp loo as there is no light pollution in that part of Anglesey so the stars were a 'wonder to behold'.

On Friday morning, some of the campers had to go early so the rest of us went for a ride to Red Wharf Bay. We rode round the huge holiday complex there and then down the hill to



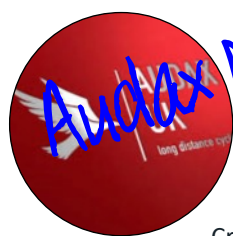
Doreen Lindsey



the beach café where we enjoyed more coffee & cake. The climb back wasn't as bad as we thought and one of the highlights of the trip was watching a red squirrel scampering in the trees.

Doreen Lindsey





Corwen Autumn Audax 2016

There I was sat at the Corwen Manor Craft Centre: brevet cards all ready, controls on standby, routes checked but where were all the cyclists? The weather forecast was good so why had no-one turned up? Luckily it was just a dream I had in the week leading up to the event. In reality the weather was a bit 'iffy' but most of the entrants arrived and everyone seems to have enjoyed their ride.

The Clwydian

Twenty four cyclists left on this demanding route in light drizzle and twenty one finished in dry but windy conditions. Three had abandoned near Mold: one due to a mechanical issue and two because they were not convinced

mention two from Atherton Manchester not far from where I used to live. There were two declared Chester and North Wales CTC members and one Two Mills member. The "away" riders were very complimentary about the route and waxed lyrical about the scenery which makes me think I should be looking at the scenery and not my Garmin when I'm out.

The Clwyd Gate

There were twenty seven starters on this route and twenty six finished.

One abandoned at Pensarn after struggling with a bad leg. As there are three big climbs between there and the finish I can't say I blame him. The weather was again wet at the start but improved over the day. I heard it was quite misty on the Horseshoe Pass

which some found a blessing as the full climb was hidden from view. Times varied from 7h20 to 9h51. There was a good turnout from the Midlands as usual and four declared Chester and North Wales CTC members.

The Bala Mini Bash

There was an excellent turnout of thirty on this ride which I was pleased to see as I was considering

dropping it after the disappointing field of seven in the equivalent event in July. I now realise that a lot of people enjoy this ride because of the autumn colours although the punctures from hedge trimmings are not so welcome. Times ranged from 2h29 to 4h38 and ages ranged from 12 to almost 80. The

Anglesey contingent was at full strength and in fine fettle and one rider had travelled from

Haverford West. One rider emailed me subsequently to say this was only his second audax and after his first he had decided they were not for him. However



Vicky Payne



the weather would improve. Times varied from 10h39 to the full value rider who clocked in at 10.06pm two minutes before the cut off in a time of 14h.06. As always I am in awe of the distances people travel to take part in the event with riders from Hastings, Southampton, West Yorkshire and Bristol not to



he had tried again and found this event to be what he expected an audax to be and had thoroughly enjoyed it.

I am happy with the way everything went and hopefully everyone who took part feels the same. Even though this is the fifth year I have run this event I still see things I can improve on. Thanks to everyone who took part hopefully I'll see you all again next year. Thanks to everyone at the controls. Thanks to our Lanterne Rouge Neil Matthews for the lovely photographs he took which I have attached. And finally a big thank you to my husband Graham for being such a support not only on the actual day but in the preparation and aftermath.

Vicky Payne



* I was out on my bike this morning when I saw a parked AA van. The driver was sobbing uncontrollably and looked very miserable.

I thought to myself that guy's heading for a breakdown!

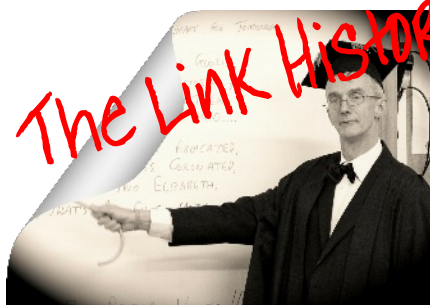
* I always turn to the sports section first. The sports page records people's accomplishments; the front page has nothing but man's failures. - Earl Warren

* The more you sweat in practice, the less you bleed in battle. -Author Unknown

* Winning is overrated. The only time it is really important is in surgery and war. - Al McGuire

* If winning isn't everything, why do they keep score? - Vince Lombardi

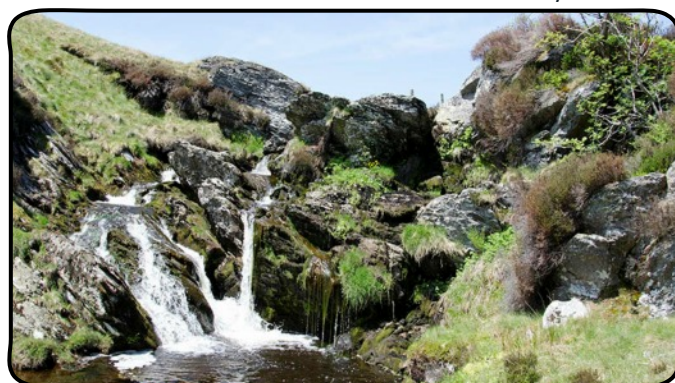
* Finish last in your league and they call you Idiot. Finish last in medical school and they call you Doctor. - Abe Lemons



Desperate Courage

A supplement to David Ackerley's article in the last edition

It is normally a pleasure to cycle in the scenic Ceiriog Valley, whether it is as a prelude to attempt the famous crossing of the 'Wayfarer Track' to meet the Dee valley upstream of Corwen, or to slog up and over Church Hill out of Glyn Ceiriog village and drop down to Llangollen. I have happy memories of doing both on more than one occasion. One solo rough stuff crossing of the Wayfarer was to celebrate the birth of my eldest daughter



– and that was many years ago now. I didn't need to celebrate her birth with champagne: the fine, clear fresh air on the beautiful tops of the Berwyns was wine enough. Some years prior to that, on a beautiful April evening, I can recollect pushing my bike up over Church Hill for the first time and then descending to Llangollen to the sound of church bells echoing in the valley below.

But the Ceiriog valley has not always been a peaceful by-way throughout its history – far from it. This was true not least in the Middle Ages when the valley was thickly forested and looked very different. It was certainly not at peace when Henry II tried to conquer North Wales via Glyn Ceiriog and the Welsh princes, led by Owain Gwynedd, mounted a determined and successful defence against the English attack.

In fact August this year marked the 850th anniversary of this famous and humiliating defeat of the forces of Henry II. Henry was attempting to quell a rebellion and capture Welsh land which he had formerly occupied but which had later been regained by the Welsh. On the day of the battle, the opposing forces gathered in the dense forest without either side being able to manoeuvre and outflank the other. It was stalemate. In the end, an exasperated Henry decided on drastic action: he amassed an 'army' of woodcutters – some authorities suggest it was as many as 2,000 – and they hacked a path through the forest to enable the English to advance and their longbow men to shoot their deadly arrows at the Welsh. The Welsh were more astute. They had the great advantage of knowing the lie of the land. Owain rallied his men, it is said, by the already ancient oak tree at Pontfadog and they ambushed Henry and his men at what became known as the battle of Crogen.

The site of this battle can be found quite easily. It lies a few hundred yards below Chirk Castle some two miles from Chirk where the B4500 is crossed by Offa's Dyke. You can see it marked on the Ordnance Survey map as 'Castle Mill'. It was here that Henry almost met his end when he was attacked by spear wielding Welshmen. In fact so desperate was the struggle that the Anglo-Norman knights who commanded the English adopted the word 'Crogen' into their vocabulary to mean 'desperate courage'. (The name 'Crogen' is preserved to this day in 'Crogen Wladys' on the National (Offa's Dyke) Trail about half a mile north west of Castle Mill.)

So what was the outcome of all this slaughter? A dogged Henry persevered and the English fought their way up the valley with great loss of life, eventually setting up camp - on the top of the Berwyns of all places. This was an unwise move for, as the *Chronicle of the*

Welsh Princes records,

"There came upon them a mighty tempest of wind and bad weather and rain and lack of food". Henry and his troops were, almost literally, stuck in the mud with men dying of hunger and exposure. After a few days the English slunk back into England and Henry, having learnt a costly lesson and losing much of his royal authority, never attempted to invade Wales again.

However, for those of you who have never ventured on your bike in Glyn Ceiriog, make sure you do so. Remember to pause on your way at the site of the battle of Crogen, before pedalling further into this scenic valley.

There are many other traces of the valley's long history to see. Sadly the Pontfadog Oak, spared by Henry II is no more. This tree, formerly Wales's oldest, its 'National Tree' which was estimated to be between some 1200 and 1600 years old, was blown down in a storm in 2013, However marking your way there are numerous traces of Ceiriog's long industrial history in the shape of disused quarries; Chwarel Wynne (the disused slate mine); together with the route of the old valley-bottom tramway between Pandry and Chirk which crosses Telford's historic canal. And, in the opposite direction, when you are near the head of



the valley, food and a refreshing pint at the 16th Century West Arms at Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog are to be recommended. Then flex your muscles and set off over the Wayfarer Track – unless, of course, there is a 'mighty tempest of wind and bad weather'. 'Desperate courage' might not then be enough to see you over to Cynwyd!

Mike Cross

Draft Events 2017** Chester & N Wales CTC

Black = Events booked **Red Events = Organised by other Member Groups**

Blue = CTC Cymru and Green dates t (as at 27/11/2016)

1 st January	New Year's Day Meet White Horse Churton	David Matthews
Sunday 9 th April	Early Season Challenge	Janet Gregory Two Mills
Sat 22nd April	Eureka Audax Events (Choice of 3 distances)	Dave Matthews
Sat 21 st May	Tour of the Berwyns & Panorama Prospect Audaxes	Dave Matthews
Sunday 28 th May	C&NW CTC Map reading & Treasure Hunt - Frodsham area	TBC
Sunday 11 th June	Bob Clift Memorial Cheshire Cycleways (50 miles or 100miles)	Sue Booth & Chester Group
16 th June onwards	Ladies Weekend	Sue Booth
Sunday 2 nd July	Bert Bailey Memorial Vets 100	Laurie Mason
Saturday 15 th July	Audax events: Barmouth Boulevard, Brenig Bach & Bala Parade	Vicky Payne
20-25 th July	<i>Welsh Festival (4 days of rides) Ruthin</i>	<i>CTC Cymru</i>
27 th August	Wild Wales - Merseyside	Merseyside CTC with Warrington & St Helens CTC
Saturday 2 nd September	Momma Audax Rides (Choice of 3 distances)	Dave Matthews
Sunday 24 th September	Presidents lunch & presentation	C&NW CTC Resident
Saturday 7 th October	Hill Climb & Freewheel	Lowri Evans
Saturday 14 th October	Corwen Audax Events (Clwydian, Clwyd Gate, Bala Mini Bash)	Vicky Payne
Sunday 5 th November	CH&NW CTC AGM	C&NW CTC Sec

**At the moment this is still work in progress so check for updates before committing yourself!





Eastham Day Centre on the Rake, Wirral CH62 9AN is home to a popular cycle hub run in collaboration with Sustrans, the national charity that is helping to make more of our everyday journeys by foot, bike or public transport. The Hub meets

March 2017 so it's important to work with staff and volunteers at the Centre to establish skills and systems that will allow the project to continue beyond.

"We're looking for enthusiastic volunteers to help me repair and recycle bikes that have been donated" says Janet Gregory the project cycle mechanic. "You don't need to be an expert or hold formal qualifications, just an interest in cycling and knowledge of bike maintenance." Ideally, we are looking for someone who is able to commit to at least one morning a week. Volunteers will be offered training and

members looking for low cost bikes? Contact Janet for further information, 0771 928 2243 or visit us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/wirralcommunitycyclehubs

There are other bike recycling projects in Chester. **Blacon Bikes** is based in the Old Bacon Library, Western Avenue, Blacon CH1 5QY. Bikes that have been reconditioned by a team of volunteers are sold by the Chester Used Furniture Enterprise shop in Blacon. **Bren Bikes** is based at Live New Scene in Newton, CH2 2HH very close to the Greenway. It offers bike repairs, maintenance and servicing and sells a fantastic range of good quality, used second hand bikes. The project offers adults with learning disabilities, autism and/or mental health issues the opportunity to gain skills in bike mechanics and work experience. And of course, the **Big Bike Revival** is a social marketing programme promoted by our own national organisation, Cycling UK. It provides an opportunity to:

- Carry out basic repairs e.g. fix a puncture
- Cycle safely on and off road
- Donate your old bikes
- Buy a recycled bike
- Get advice about local cycle routes, clubs or activities

The programme is supported by the [Department for Transport](#) and by [Transport Scotland](#) delivered in partnership with [Bike Re-cycle centres](#).

Janet Gregory

every Friday and many Mondays, too. There are adapted and conventional two wheel bikes available so that people with a variety of disabilities can enjoy the benefits of cycling. Recent grant funding from the Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority and Veolia Community Fund is paying for a cycle mechanic to attend on a regular basis to repair, reuse and recycle bikes. That cash only lasts until

support and, a FREE lunch!

And even if you can't offer your time, why not donate your unwanted bikes or accessories? Eastham Centre is open every day, Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. We hold tools and repair stands if you need to work on your own bike. Please do spread the word amongst your cycling buddies – any keen mechanics out there, friends or family

CTC Two Mills (Wirral) Early Season Challenge ride 50 mile in 4 or 5 hours

This popular early season event challenges you to cycle the 50 mile course and to eat what is a generous lunch in either 4 or 5 hours. It is not a race. For those that would like a more sociable pace, there is also a shorter 50km route. Start/finish is Farndon Sports and Social club, Sibbersfield Lane, Farndon, Chester CH3 6NX.

From 1st January, 2017, you can register and pay online at: www.entrycentral.com/CTC-EarlySeason-ChesterTwoMills

The entry fee is **£13.50** (or £12.50 for CTC members) - see terms & conditions

Always a great atmosphere and a good day out!

Reminder



Reminder

Don't forget the New Year's get together **Sunday Jan 1 2017** It's once again at the White Horse in Churton.

The pub is opening especially for us (as it is

a Sunday) so it should be a really good do without interference from the outside world. Normal and veggie meals available.

No need to book - just turn up for 12:00/12:30!



Morecambe to Whitley Bay

My last bicycle holiday involved two weeks of long distance cycling that allowed little time for sight-seeing. I was determined this holiday would be less challenging with later starts every morning, lower daily mileage and ample time to stop along the route and visit places of interest to me.



The art-deco Midland Hotel in Morecambe

About a year ago my cycling adventures took me to Morecambe Bay where I promised to make a return visit and stay overnight at the art-deco styled Midland Hotel. Today I fulfilled that promise and



checked in for the night. My bedroom was amazing and even included a teddy! A beautiful circular staircase leads from the lobby in the centre of the hotel to the upper floor bedrooms where the landing

wall has a monochrome picture of the hotel

On the ceiling a spectacular painting features Neptune cavorting with a pair of mermaids whilst his son Triton looks on. According to greek mythology Neptune is the ruler of earth and Triton the ruler of seas.

An inscription surrounding the painting reads:

'and hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn'

Umm, how grim. I asked the hotel receptionist the reason for the inscription but he didn't know (or was so fed up at having to give an explanation that a denial was a quicker answer) so I looked it up on the internet.

The words are taken from a sonnet written in 1802 by William Wordsworth called: The World is too much for us. He compares mankind living a life of *getting and spending* with an apparent lack of interest in looking after earths natural resources. Centuries later, human nature has not changed.

Having learnt what the inscription is all about the mermaids seem out of context. Perhaps Zeus and Hades, the rulers of the heavens and underworld would have been a better match.

Day 1

After a hearty breakfast I started off from Morecambe at 11am. Morecambe is the starting point of the 'Way of the Roses' cycling route which opened in 2010 to celebrate the 15th anniversary of Sustrans. The route covers a distance of 170 miles and ends on the east coast in Bridlington, Yorkshire.

During my working life I had the misfortune to have attended a conference in Bridlington. The speakers were awful so I took myself off for a walk around the town and quickly realised the speakers I had deserted were more interesting.

For that reason this bicycle ride follows the 'Way of the Roses' as far as the City of York and then diverts away from Bridlington to a much better place: an ice cream palace in Whitley Bay, Tyneside – lovely!

The Sustrans route follows traffic free cycle paths or quiet roads that were a delight to cycle on. The first cycle path took me through avenues of trees from

Morecambe and over the Lancaster millenium bridge to reach a further tree-lined path that led into a country park at the far side of the city.



Joe Patton

During the afternoon the sun shone and as I reached the village of Hornby the temperature reached 21c. My last visit to Hornby was 6 weeks ago when cycling to John O'Groats. At that time my guided route took me over the steepest of moorland roads to High Bentham. Today's 'Way of the Roses' route took me over an easy to cycle hill.....if only I knew about it 6 weeks ago!



The start of my ride from Morecombe

I rested in High Bentham and enjoyed a coffee from my Stanley Thermos flask and decided to visit the famous Ribbleshead viaduct.

Cycling a further 18 miles I missed an easy-to-find turning to the viaduct and ended up at the entrance to Settle railway station.

It wasn't all bad news though. The station café held a treasure chest of ice creams and choc-ices. I hadn't eaten a choc-ice for ages and as today's cycling had covered 38 miles, the calorie trade-off seemed a harmless treat.

Day 2

A steep climb from the centre of Settle marked my ascent of the Pennines and I then enjoyed 10 miles of relaxing cycling along Yorkshire's undulating country lanes that were virtually traffic free. I only stopped once, and that was for sheep!



*Traffic free
cycling and a sheep jam!*



My route took me through the villages of Airtton and Malham to Cracoe. The village of Cracoe is the home of the real life 'calendar girls' who were members of the Womens Institute Knapely branch. Following a leisurely breakfast and an 11am departure todays journey would take me to York and then northwards by train to Yarm in Teeside.

The 30 mile trip to York was the easiest cycling so far. The weather was warm, the terrain flat and a tail wind resulted in effortless cycling along smooth tarmac roads through the pretty villages of Great Ouseburn and Linton.

They once raised money for leukaemia research by posing nude for a calendar. In later years the actress Helen Mirren did the same in a film of their story. Stopping for lunch in Cracoe I tried not to look at the local ladies with an 'I've seen you before' expression and failed.

A further tough climb from the village of Appletreewich took me to Greenhow Hill before a risky pot-holed steep descent into Pateley Bridge. Numerous cyclists have fallen and suffered serious injury along this road and I was so pleased that my pre-ride reading warned me to cycle slowly.

Downhills are usually followed by up-hills and from Pateley Bridge I made a final climb to the now derelict Fountain Abbey set within in a medieval deer park which provided a grand approach to my next overnight stay in Ripon.

From Ripon town centre I began to look for my guest house. The owners who were unknown to me were walking on the same side of the road. They correctly guessed I was their customer, introduced themselves, pointed to where I had to go

and then helped to take my baggage and bicycle inside – lucky me !

That night I walked to the town centre where every evening at 9pm a man blows a horn at 4 corners of an obelisk in the market square.

The tradition dates back to a time when Ripon householders paid a sum of money to the horn blower as the city gates were closing for the night. He and his team of watchmen would then patrol the streets and if their property was burgled before the gates opened the next morning he would compensate them from the money that had been collected. This tradition of payment and compensation then became the principle of home insurance.

Day 3

Following a leisurely breakfast and an 11am departure todays journey would take me to York and then northwards by train to Yarm in Teeside.

The 30 mile trip to York was the easiest cycling so far. The weather was warm, the terrain flat and a tail wind resulted in effortless cycling along smooth tarmac roads through the pretty villages of Great Ouseburn and Linton.



Models enjoying an aperitif in the sun

The models were manikin's dressed in 20s' clothing !

A few miles later I cycled past a junior school where the aroma of school dinners being cooked wafted into the road and left me feeling so hungry that the search for a double coned ice-cream began in earnest.

Close to the village of Linton I joined a path alongside the River Ure that changes its name to the River Ouse at the point where a small stream known as Ouse Beck trickles into it.

My route then entered the grounds of Beningbrough Hall and then rejoined a cycling path that took me to the York Minster where I brought a picture card to send to friends and the ice cream of my dreams. I sat by the river bank and enjoyed it.



The cycle path alongside the River Ouse into York

The River Ouse flows from York and eventually discharges into the North Sea at the Humber Estuary by the City of Kingston upon Hull.

I spent the next few hours strolling around York and visited the National Railway Museum followed by the 'Shambles' a street of antiquity .

From York I headed north to Yarm by train where I stayed the night and visited family.

Day 4

This morning I took the train from Yarm to Heworth, South Tyneside and cycled from Heworth railway station to the Angel of the North:

During my working life I made several visits to Gateshead and always admired the landmark 'Angel' , visible from the A1 when driving from Newcastle. To get a sense of the Angels enormity I rested Bessie against her toes.





The Angel was sculpted by Antony Gormley whose previous work (100 naked men standing on Crosby beach) I visited a year ago. The Angel is equally impressive.



From here I cycled towards Newcastle upon Tyne and joined national cycle route 14 towards South Shields where I reached the Friars Wharf apartments

Just over a century ago this area was occupied by the Friars Goose Alkali Chemical Works who manufactured bleach. The process involved condensing hydrochloric acid gas into hydrochloric acid that was then combined with manganese to produce bleaching powder. In those days bleaching was an important process in the wool, cotton, linen and printing industries:

- For textiles, bleaching made the product whiter.
- In paper mills the addition of bleach to pulp produced the whiteness required for paper.

At 6:30pm on the evening of Sunday July 26th 1891 the night shift commenced work. The foreman noticed the wall of a condenser was glowing red. It was on fire. Despite attempts to extinguish the fire it spread to other condensers that collapsed, spreading the fire and chemicals throughout the factory. A worker named James McCuskin, my fathers' mothers grand-father was entombed by the fallen debris. Rescue attempts to remove fallen



masonry by hand was slow, difficult and dangerous. Hydrochloric acid dripped on James and this, plus heat and fumes, resulted in 5 of 6 rescuers being killed and 2 others were seriously injured. Eventually a rope was used to try and pull James free but his foot was trapped and attending doctors were not authorised to amputate it. He sent those trying to rescue him away saying:

"No, no; if I am to die let me die in peace. Don't torture me anymore"

Father Fitzpatrick gave him the last rights of the Catholic church and James passed away at 8am the next day.

A subsequent coroners inquest recorded that James died from:

'Exhaustion, injuries to his spine and legs and asphyxia from the inhalation of hydrochloric gas from the accidental fall of a condenser at Friars Goose Chemical Works'

Three weeks later his wife died from a brain haemorrhage and their six children were now orphaned, including Catherine my father's grand-mother.

The incident and account of this story was thoroughly researched by my cousin Gerald, who even paid for a copy of the minutes taken from a board meeting of the companies owners. These minutes revealed that the Board of Directors cared little about the lost employees and bereaved families. Their focus was to get the works back to full production and protect the companies interests during legal proceedings. Has corporate behaviour changed over the years?

After pausing to reflect on those horrific events and corporate behaviour I continued through Jarrow to the South Shields ferry.

The ferry crossing from South to North Shields took 15 minutes and cost the princely sum of £1:50p. In the background are the cranes of Swan Hunter the shipbuilders. A large passenger ferry in the foreground is one of several that ply their way to and from Newcastle and

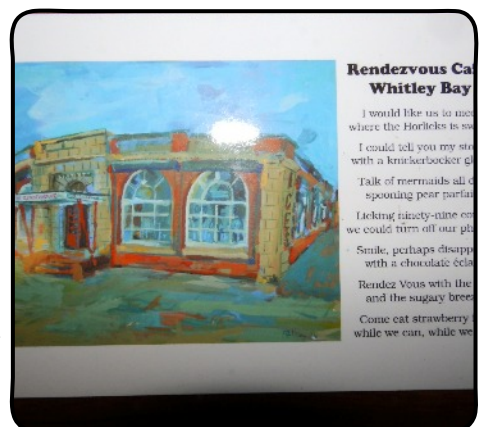
Amsterdam. An economy return can cost as little as £150 so I will remember this for future continental cycling adventures. Getting off the South Shields ferry in Tynemouth I wheeled my bicycle up a steep hill to the main road and cycled along to my destination, the 'Rendezvous (ice cream) Palace' at Whitley Bay.

I ordered a 'Strawberry Gelato' which was less creamy than most ice-creams and consequently not as full bodied.



There are plenty of other ice creams on their menu so I will have to return next year and try something else.

Having starting my bicycle ride from the art-deco Midland Hotel in Morecambe Bay it seemed apt to end it at another



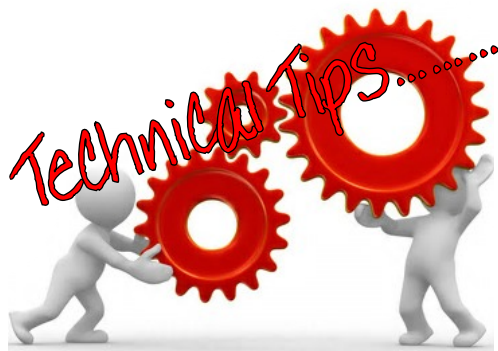
art-deco building, the Rendezvous café here in Whitley Bay.

I have really enjoyed this bicycle ride with its late starts and wonderful sights. My return to Wales took me along the national cycle route 72 into Newcastle city centre and the train home.

Joe Patton

For some more interesting adventures visit Joe's website:

<https://harlechjoe.wordpress.com>



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

So there I was just wondering why my freewheel wasn't making as loud a 'clicking' noise as before when descending down hills when suddenly there was no resistance to the pedals - no drive. Broken ratchet!

But, as a 'Link' reader you would have packed a few tie-wraps as per the suggestion in the first 'Tech Tip', wouldn't you?

So all you need to do is just tie-wrap the cassette to spokes and ride home very carefully - phew, that was close!



**"No good talking to him
Andy - he's not interested!"**

On our way to Audlem we met this tractor motoring towards us - he wasn't going to stop until we formed a road block and forced him to. The road was so narrow that there wasn't anywhere for us to go without getting off and there wouldn't have been time for that at his speed.

Now, I use a Garmin Virb Elite camera on my helmet (I can turn my head to 'eyeball' drivers, scenery etc) so I can video items for the Link and YouTube. The battery lasts about two hours and I carry a spare one - brilliant quality and good editing software to make great YouTube videos. It stores all the footage without wiping over.

However, I use a rear facing Cyliq6 Safety Camera on the seatpost of my bike which continually records video until the memory is full then it just overwrites the oldest files. If the bike gets knocked over then it permanently records the incident and doesn't overwrite. It's also fitted with a multimode rear light with three levels of intensity but

Don't take my word for it - have a look at the cracking camera review information submitted by 'Recumbent Trike Rider' over the next three pages - think you'll find it interesting!

Cyclist Safety Cameras

Why Use a “Safety Camera”?

While negotiating the many hazards of Britain's busy roads, more and more cyclists are opting to use cameras to capture careless, intolerant or intimidatory driving. Primarily as a personal insurance policy in the case of accident, near miss or other incident, good quality video provides an invaluable evidential record particularly in the absence of other witnesses when cycling alone. Some Police forces in the UK are now actively seeking such irrefutable evidence from the general public. One excellent example is “Operation Snap” recently launched by North Wales Police:

<http://www.north-wales.police.uk/contact/minor-incident-reporting/op-snap?lang=en-gb>

Even conscientious drivers make mistakes (as do careful cyclists), but inattention and carelessness at the wheel of tons of fast moving metal is a far greater hazard to the vulnerable and unprotected cyclist than it is to the driver of the vehicle.

What sort of Camera?

It's important to distinguish between two basic types available on the market. Ubiquitous are “sport” or “action” type cameras, typically the popular GoPro and similar which do an excellent job for their intended purpose. Ideal for short high quality action sequences, most however, have **major shortcomings** when used as a cyclist safety camera. Many stop recording without **adequate warning** in as little as an hour when their internal **battery becomes depleted** or the **memory card reaches capacity**. Some are bulky, particularly those needing a supplementary waterproof case.

An effective safety camera needs to be compact, lightweight, waterproof and have a good quality image. For longer rides it must be capable of running continuously **without intervention**. Ideally there should be **no need to swap or recharge batteries or replace memory cards**, even on an extended day ride.

Attaching a Forward Facing Safety Camera.

Helmet or headband mounting is nearly always going to provide a **superior evidential record** than if the camera is attached to handlebars. High up, on the head, a camera records virtually everything that the rider sees, particularly hazards approaching from the side. Mounted accordingly, video evidence will confirm that you did look right or left and did hand signal your intentions. During the aftermath of an incident, If the rider becomes separated from the bike, a headcam will still remain effective recording both sound and vision. Bullet type cameras are ideal for head mounting, being small, lightweight and unobtrusive. Rectangular cameras tend to be bulky and awkward and look somewhat incongruous stuck on the top of your head!

Attaching Rearward Facing Safety Camera.

Best located on the bike frame, seat post, rack, or on top of a rigid mudguard, a rearward facing camera provides effective evidential footage. Particularly good at identifying vehicles approaching or tailgating from the rear it is also excellent at capturing incidents involving other cyclists during a group ride.

Before you commit to buying any camera, use the table on the following page as a check list of essential features. Take care to verify that your choice is both practical and effective and suites your individual cycling lifestyle.

Fly 12 Combined
Front Light & Camera



Fly 6
combined
Real Light &
Camera

RoadHawk R+



Garmin Virb XE



Cyclist Safety Camera Checklist

Essential Features	Detail	Notes	
Waterproof, compact, unobtrusive and lightweight.	Ideally totally waterproof, (not just splash proof) and doesn't need a separate bulky outer case.	At least rated IP66, but better IP67 (i.e. capable of briefly surviving immersion in water).	
Longevity of battery run time.	Virtually all cameras have limited internal battery runtime (as little as an hour or wo). Many stop working without adequate warning.	Unless you only commute or ride for relatively short journeys, consider choosing a camera that (without compromising water resistance) has the facility to run on external Lithium Ion/Polymer rechargeable batteries.	
"Unlimited" video capacity by using continuous "Loop Recording".	Loop recording is where the camera records a series of fixed length files. When the card is full, the oldest file is automatically overwritten by the most recent.	Most cameras use solid state SD or Micro SD cards with a capacities of 32 GB or more. Use only fast (suitable for video) "Class 10" memory cards bought from a reputable supplier.	
Time and date stamp.	The camera automatically records time and date directly on the video image.	Important if video is needed for evidential reasons. Check regularly that the time setting is accurate.	
High quality image.	Minimum 720p, but better if HD 1080p. Higher resolutions will fill the memory card faster.	Each video frame is made up of "dots", 720p records 1280 across and 720 down. 1080p captures more detail with 1920 dots across and 1080 down.	
Fast frame rate for a judder free image.	Minimum 25 frames per second. Better 30 FPS or more.	High frame rates will fill the storage card more quickly.	
Wide angle lens to capture peripheral detail.	The wider the angle of view the better, 110 degrees or more. Many sport cameras have a narrower field of view.	Wider angle lenses tend to distort or "Fisheye" the image, not a big issue for a safety camera.	
Continuous sound recording.	Ability to record sound adequately.	Sound recording shouldn't compromise the waterproof integrity.	

Some General Tips:

Two cameras, (one facing forward the other back) is the best and most effective combination to capture evidential footage of all the events leading up to an incident and its aftermath.

To ensure the **headcam** captures what you see particularly at junctions, get used to moving your head (not just your eyes), towards potential side hazards! Glance to the side when you hand signal so that the headcam records your actions.

Don't forget a cameras will record your own misdemeanours, and the Police may use this to prosecute you!

Don't forget to switch the headcam off when you visit a public convenience!

For reliability always use high Class 10 quality memory cards from a trustworthy source.



Memory cards have a limited life span particularly when used to constantly record video. Replace immediately when unreliable.

Treat manufacturers claims for the runtime of the camera's internal battery with scepticism — their tests will have been carried out in optimum conditions. **Runtime may be considerably less in cold environments.**

Over time, repeated charge and discharge will progressively reduce a battery's capacity to store power. After 200 cycles the battery may only retain 70% of its original capacity. If you ride regularly and rely on a fixed internal battery, you may be faced with having to replace the whole camera!

Typical Camera Features Compared

Camera Make and Model	Waterproof	Internal Battery Runtime (Hrs)	Waterproof Lead for external battery	Best Resolution	Time Stamp	Loop Record	Sound Recording	Special external Waterproof Battery	Can connect to common USB Battery Packs	Attachment	Wi-Fi	GPS Log	Guide Price
Fly 12	Y	10 *	N	1080p	Y	Y	Y	N	N	H/B Mount	Y	N	£250
Fly 6	Y	6 *	N	720p	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Seat Post	N	N	£120
RoadHawk R+	Y	1.5	Y £10	1080p	Y	Y	Y	Yes £30 4.5 HRs	Y	Multi	N	N	£140
Garmin VIRB XE	Y	2	Y	1440p	Y	Y? **	Y	N	Y	Multi	Y	Y	£260

Notes:

*Camera run time will be reduced depending on light settings

** The loop record feature on the Garmin Virb XE is disappointingly inappropriate for use as a safety camera

What's my Setup?

I use two RoadHawk R+'s as they satisfy the safety camera checklist and operate with a high degree of reliability. Waterproof leads facilitate uninterrupted recording throughout an extended day connected to easily obtainable (and cheaply replaceable) lithium rechargeable USB battery packs. Setup is hassle free, simply connect a fully charged USB battery at the commencement of the ride and the camera will automatically start and continue to loop record until the power is disconnected.

The forward facing camera is helmet attached (using supplied mounts) powered by a lead to a water resistant neck pouch containing the battery (pouches intended for a mobile phone are easily obtainable from any outdoor shop). Tucking the bag under clothing keeps the battery warm and away from the elements.

Using the supplied mount, the rear camera is attached to the top of the rear rigid mudguard with the lead connected to a battery in a water resistant bag. USB battery packs can be bought in various capacities— a cheap 5200 mAh unit will power the RoadHawk R+'s for over 9 hours when new. The batteries are not water resistant so do need protecting.

The R+ cameras are designed to accept micro SD up to a maximum of 32 GB. I successfully use 64 GB cards to provide over 8 hours of continuous 1080p recording before the loop record feature starts to overwrites older files. Cards over 32GB do however need to be FAT32 formatted with special software to make them usable.

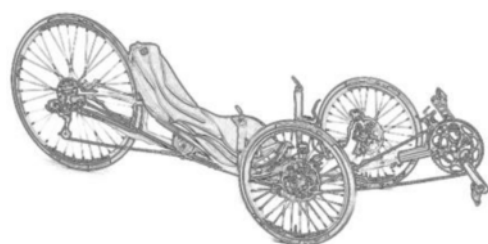
My YouTube review of 1080p RoadHawk Ride R+: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KhplJ71QXEI>

RoadHawk RIDE R+ availability: <http://cycle.roadhawk.co.uk/>

USB battery packs for extended runtimes are available cheaply on line from Amazon.

CYCLIQ Fly 6 & Fly 12: <https://cycliq.com/products>

Garmin VIRB XE: <https://buy.garmin.com/en-GB/GB/sports-recreation/action-cameras/virb-xe/prod165499.html>



RecumbentTrikeRider on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/RecumbentTrikeRider>

Questions, or if you know of a better camera:

recumbenttrikerider@gmail.com

the 'S' word

Steve Jones gets right down to the bottom of this topic!Saddles!



As a previous issue of The Link discussed the "F" word I thought I would continue the controversy and discuss the "S" word. i.e. Saddles

Cyclists love arguing about what is the best bit of kit and there are 2 subjects that provoke the most debate. The first is "Is Shimano better than Campagnolo", I won't be discussing that here, and the other is "Which is the best saddle".

Thanks to Darwin's theory of evolution we're all a different shape, which means we all have our favourite saddles and what works for one rider won't work for another or even what works for one rider mightn't work for the same rider on a different style of bike.

The saddle manufacturers try to cater for every scenario in their saddle ranges but this can give us too much choice; the Chain Reaction Cycles website lists 400 saddles!

Saddles are all approximately the same length but vary in width, shape, saddle rails and construction so I'll discuss these characteristics below.

Width

Some saddles are available in only one width whereas others are available in multiple widths. Saddle manufacturer tend to commission research that justifies their saddle's width and shape and there isn't a definitive way of discovering which width suits you other than trying lots of saddles, although Specialized and Selle Italia dealers have a foam mat that you can sit on and they then measure the distance between the indentations in the foam to identify what saddle you should be using in their product range.

The complicating factor is, like tyre widths, saddle widths change with research and fashion. Up until a few years ago every pro cyclist rode 23mm tyres and 130mm saddles then research showed that 25mm tyres and 145mm saddles were more efficient so they all changed. None of this helps amateur cyclists who simply want a comfortable saddle they can ride all day.

A simplistic rule is that if you have your bars set much lower than the saddle then a narrow saddle is probably better, as it will prevent the saddle rubbing the inside of your legs, if you ride a Dutch Roadster with an almost vertical riding position then you'll need a wide saddle as much more of your body weight is on your backside and the weight isn't being shared with your arms. Unfortunately most of us ride in-between these 2 extremes and this is where you're best to experiment with different widths until you find one you're comfortable with.

Shape

This is where it gets complicated. There are flat saddles, rounded saddles, saddles with a cut-away, saddles with a groove and various attempts to "re-



invent" the saddle (See ISM saddles as an example of this).

There are endless permutations but generally speaking (before you start shouting I really mean "generally") they are as follows:

1. If you are comfortable with your sit-bones supporting all of your weight or



you like to move around on the saddle then you may need a flat saddle

2. If you like the pressure to be spread over a wider area and don't move around as much then a rounded saddle, with its larger contact points, may be better



3. If you don't want any pressure on your perineum then a saddle with a cut-away or groove may be needed

Saddle Rails

The main permutations are:

1. Material: They are made of steel, alloy, titanium or carbon fibre with steel being the strongest and carbon fibre the weakest but titanium and carbon fibre can be manipulated to provide more comfort in the ride
2. Connection Points: Some rails connect straight to the saddle base whilst others connect via elastomers to provide a small suspension effect that reduces vibrations from the road
3. Shape. You thought all saddle rails were round? Some saddles, usually high-end racing saddles, have oval rails and these won't work with all seat-post clamps
4. Length. You might have found the perfect saddle but then can't get your reach correct due to the short saddle rails. Brooks saddles are notorious for their short rails and some titanium or carbon-fibre railed saddles will have plenty of length but because of the fragility of the rails the clamping area is restricted to a short section that's marked in the middle

Construction

There isn't much variation in how saddles are constructed but this is the obvious section to discuss the niche world of leather saddles, such as Brooks. The vast majority of saddles are constructed by having a hard plastic or carbon-fibre base covered with padding and a man-made or leather cover. The exception to this is leather saddles, with Brooks being the most famous exponent, in which a solid piece of leather is stretched between the saddle rails to create a hammock effect.

The first thing to point out is that you shouldn't confuse a leather cover with a leather saddle, they're not the same thing. A leather cover is a conventional saddle that happens to be covered by a thin piece of leather and has none of the advantages or dis-advantages of a leather saddle.

Another thing to watch out for is saddles that are described as waterproof. A waterproof saddle is good for mountain biking or fitting to a commuting bike that is left in the rain but for everything else it means that there is nowhere for your sweat to go and on a long ride it's more likely to create damp shorts and chaffing. This leads us to the unique feature of leather saddles, in that they are breathable. As they don't have a solid base and with leather being porous it means that sweat passes straight through the saddle, so even in the hottest weather there will be no dampness on the saddle and there is less chance of chaffing.

The lack of a solid base means that the saddle eventually moulds to your own anatomical shape, but this does mean enduring the legendary breaking-in period as leather saddles contain no padding and rely on the natural flexing of the leather to provide comfort.

Each model of Brooks saddle has its own unique characteristics, but the most common models are as follows:

1. B17: Their most famous saddle and also the widest and softest. They have a short breaking-in period but can be too wide for a lot of cyclists unless you have an upright riding position. The width isn't always initially evident but as it breaks-in it will start to sag and then the saddle may become too wide
2. B17 Narrow: A narrower version of the B17 and surprisingly one of the hardest saddles Brooks make, I wouldn't recommend this as your first Brooks saddle as it would give the false impression that all leather saddles are too hard
3. Team Pro: This is a good general purpose saddle that suits most riding situations. If you've previously been comfortable on some of the classic 1990's racing saddles such as the Rolls or Regal then you'll probably be comfortable on this

4. Swift/Swallow: Similar to the Team Pro but the cut-away sides mean they're less likely to rub the inside of your leg. Brooks class these as their flagship models so you have to decide whether you are really committed to leather saddles before paying the higher selling price
5. Some of the Brooks saddles, such as the Team Pro, have women's versions which are shorter and a slightly different shape to the men's

I have used various Brooks saddles but my experiences have been mixed. If you're used to hard racing saddles then you mightn't notice the breaking-in period, but regardless of how the saddle feels it will eventually mould to your shape. My B17 Narrow had a very long (1000's miles) breaking-in period and it never really became truly comfortable.

When I fitted a Team Pro I found it to be immediately comfortable and I thought that I would never change it, unfortunately since the Foot and Mouth crisis Brooks have had to source the leather from younger animals and that has meant using a thinner leather which



will eventually sag (Brooks saddles have a tensioning bolt to take up the excess sag but it is largely ineffectual, especially on the wider B17).

Having searched the internet I discovered a lot of high-mileage riders, especially Audax riders, complaining of this as the sag creates too many pressure points on the saddle and makes it uncomfortable for long-distances but OK for short rides. My Team Pro acquired an irreversible sag at around 10,000 – 15,000 miles which meant I was no longer comfortable on long rides.

As much as I like the Team Pro I haven't replaced it with another one due to the high price and the longevity not being as good as I initially thought. Instead I've fitted a racing saddle with a cut-away that channels air through the middle of the saddle, this provides some

breathability but it's not as breathable as a Brooks.

As an alternative leather saddle Spa Cycles have their own versions of the popular Brooks models and, as well as being cheaper, their Australian leather is meant to be thicker which should mean greater longevity but a longer breaking-in period.

If you do decide to convert to a leather saddle then you will spend the first few weeks making small adjustments to your riding position. Brooks are taller than most other saddles so you will have to lower your seat-post and the short saddle rails can sometimes make it difficult to replicate the reach of your current saddle, which may mean getting a different seat-post to compensate.

A new Brooks is also very shiny so you may have to point the nose slightly upwards to stop you slipping forwards, although once it's broken-in you will then have your indentations in the saddle to hold you in place.

Some cyclists spend their entire cycling life looking for the perfect saddle whereas others aren't too fussy what they ride. If you are still searching then remember that with so many combinations available the right saddle has to be out there somewhere, but it may take a while to find it.

Steve Jones



Editor's Omission!

In the 'F' Word article in the last Link there were a

couple of glaring omissions (well at least one big one!)

On the list of fixed wheel riders somehow we missed the 'top' and the 'bottom' contenders!

Yes of course, we have Harry Watson covering at least 330,000 miles in 60 years and at the other end of the scale there is David Matthews with six months riding fixed on a Raleigh Lenton in 1951 before the bike was nicked from outside Heaton Moor Public Library! Apologies.



The forecast for the day was rain at 9am to be followed by heavy rain all day – not ideal for the planned events! In spite of this 13 brave Cycling UK members (and one non-member from Ruthin Cycling Club) signed up in the bus shelter at Llysfas. Once the stop watches had been set Mike Roberts drove to the top of the hill to set up the finish line and take the finishing times, riders rode to the bottom of the hill and Peter and Irene Dilworth sorted the starting arrangements. At this point it stopped



but most preferred to attribute it to the weather, waterproofs, and the fact that the starter was recovering from knee surgery so riders had to clip in one foot after starting rather than being held for the start.

The overall winner was Ben Hughes from Ruthin Cycling Club in a time of 6mins 48 seconds, retaining the title from 2015.

Second place, and 1st Cycling UK member was Steve Jones in 8 mins 2 seconds repeating his win of last year. Emily Larwood was 3rd overall, 1st Lady rider and 1st Junior taking only 8mins 38 seconds – it was great to see a young rider competing and doing so well (although it was no surprise considering her recent performances on the track). Ian Mason was surprised and delighted to be awarded the prize for the 1st Vet (4th place 9minutes 12 seconds). Ken McDonald was the 1st Super Vet (10min 27 seconds), Lowri Evans was 1st (and only) Lady Vet in 10 min 32 seconds and Sue Booth was fastest lady who was neither a vet nor a Junior.

There was slightly less coughing than the previous year after the hill climb (possibly a side-effect of the slower times?) so riders were able to arrive at Graigfechan with sounding as if they were suffering the effects of a 40 a day smoking habit. After attending to the important task of ensuring all meals were ordered at the Three Pigeons the Freewheeling competition commenced.

Unlike the Hill Climb where the first two places were the same as last year there were some changes in the Freewheeling. Roy Bunnell, the reigning champion, had come over to defend his title. If there had been an award for the cleanest bike he certainly would have won; all were admiring his gleaming Mercian. As it was Roy had to settle for 3rd place, possibly due to a wobble shortly after the start. Dave Statham returned to his winning ways with John Wilkie coming second to make his first appearance in the top 3. There was an unexpected result in the Ladies competition with Lowri Evans narrowly clinching 1st place from Sue Booth. Emily Larwood was the first Junior.

Thanks to Coleg Llysfas for use of the car park for the start (£10 in donations for parking were raised for the Air Ambulance), and to the Three Pigeons in Graigfechan for a warm welcome, tasty lunches and a venue for the presentation of prizes. Thanks are also due to all of the riders who came out to play even though it looked like being a cold and wet day out, and to the great volunteers Mike Roberts and Peter & Irene Dilworth who put up the warning signs, timed the events and recorded and checked the results. **Lowri Evans**



raining.

Riders set off at one minute intervals to tackle the hill; some were competitive enough to strip down for the most aerodynamic advantage, others happily rode up in coats and longs. All the riders recorded slower times than the previous year; it may be partly due to increasing age.





Chris Byrne thought up this great idea prompted in a way by the 'The Ferguson Interview'. Chris came up with these questions so that YOUR answers will allow the rest of us to get to know you better!

He's started the ball rolling with his own answers - now then, is this the Chris Byrne you know?



Chris Byrne



- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. How long have you been cycling? | 1. 12 years |
| 2. The best ride you have done? | 2. Coast to Coast |
| 3. Best holiday you have had? | 3. Top to Toe Italy |
| 4. Your two favourite songs/ music? | 4. Imagine (John Lennon) La Boheme (Puccini) |
| 5. Two best books? | 5. Ragged Trousered Philanthropists & Her Benny |
| 6. Who would you most like to meet present or past? | 6. Jesus |
| 7. What would you like to have achieved/ learnt? | 7. To play the Guitar |
| 8. What makes you happiest? | 8. Being with the Grandkids |
| 9. Favourite film? | 9. On the waterfront |
| 10. Do you enjoy poetry, if so what is your favourite? | 10. Yes, A Bottle and a Friend (Robbie Burns) |
| 11. Would you consider ridding an E-bike? | 11. Yes |
| 12. What single thing would make life better? | 12. No religion |
| 13. What's been your longest ride? | 13. 90 miles on the London to Paris |
| 14. Do you think there is life on other planets? | 14. Yes |
| 15. Which person throughout history or today do you most admire? .. | 15. Karl Marx |
| 16. What trait do you most admire in people? | 16. Honesty |
| 17. What do you think are your best attributes? | 17. Sense of humour |
| 18. If you could ride one of the tours which one would it be Tour de France, Giro, Vuelta | 18. T.O.F. |
| 19. Have you a favourite building? | 19. Speke Hall |
| 20. Have you a favourite piece of Art/Picture/ Statue? | 20. The Girl with the Pearl Earring |

For the next edition, Sarah Hamill has volunteered to answer the 'Twenty Questions' - watch this space!



TREVOR HARGREAVES 1930-2016

Trevor joined the C.T.C in 1948 and started riding with the Chester Section of the D.A. straight away and was soon winning their tourist events. He commenced his national service with the R.A.F. in 1951 and resumed his Involvement in the D.A.'s activities as soon as his service was completed, organising events as well as taking part. The first of the D.A.'s Veterans' 100s was held in 1967 and as soon as he reached the qualifying age Trevor began to take part, being for many years a group leader.

Trevor was one of the dozen or so stalwarts who kept the D.A. alive during the lean years from 1952, when an Extraordinary General Meeting was called which considered a motion to wind-up the D.A., and the late 1960s when a cycling revival in the D.A. area resulted in an influx of new members ready and willing to swell the ranks of those riding with newly formed sections. New people joined the D.A. Committee on which Trevor continued to serve into the 1980's being D.A. Treasurer from 1970-72.

In addition to his cycling interests Trevor was a keen photographer and model maker, having a well-equipped workshop complete with a milling machine and lathe.

From the time that the "Friends of the D.A." was set-up until its demise Trevor was a regular attendee on all of its outings and was its chairman for a number of years. **Ken Brown**

i ♥ my
bike
My Bike - Member's Machines

After Chris Boardman sold out to Halfords, (£21m apparently) the 'C' on the frames logo went, also a number of new models arrived.

Originally, my Boardman PRO SLR was white, . It's now silver.

Now don't get confused! (I also have a black 'C' Boardman).



**John Wilkie's
Silver 'Dream Machine'**

The standard specification of the 'white bike' was:

Shimano Ultegra 11 speed, transmission, brakes and wheels with Boardman fittings.

So, the best £110 I've spent on 'bike stuff', was the investment in a 'bike fit' with Richard at Pedal Precision, Manchester Velodrome. I changed the handle bars and stem with the lighter and more expensive Ritchey parts.

What a difference a 'bike fit' makes – Garmin stats don't lie!

Fortunately (or in this case – unfortunately!), I do a lot of miles, (10,000 pa) so new wheels were needed, mainly due to rim wear. I upgraded to 'Swiss Stop' blocks with subsequently less wear and much better braking. I went for 'HUNT' wheels, lighter and fitted with 25c tyres for a bit more comfort.

After two bottom bracket failures, a new 'Praxis' unit was fitted but then it turned out that the issue was a cracked frame.

No 'C' Boardman frames in white in my size at Halfords so a new 2016 Boardman, was offered, but this time in 'SILVER'.

All new cables, (black) plus my upgrades were fitted, including my new (black) Specialized Toupe saddle.

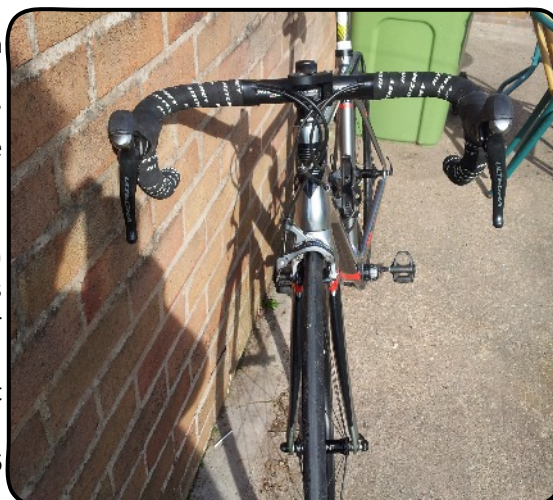
..... all done under warranty!

So I now have, a silver PRO SLR, 'Boardman' with all my new upgraded and lighter parts.

Halfords are awesome! Never have an issue they can't fix and James the mechanic replaces and services to the highest standard. The lads at the Sealand Road Branch 'price match' most products, and then with my British Cycling membership (from £21), I get an extra 10% off!

Did I tell you? ***I love my bike - It's shiny!***

(Ed: Nice one John - I agree with John, the best money spent on bike bits is definitely a 'bike fit')



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