

The Club Autumn weekend was to Cheddar and on a dry but overcast morning, Dave Lesser, our leader, Dave Brown, Martyn Williams, Gordon Kay, Ken Sheldon, Alastair Goldie, Fran “pink” Harvey and Chris Vasey set off from the Square 20 mins late. We had to wait for Andy Jarvis who had forgotten that you cannot attach luggage to an ultra light racing bike, especially for a Club tour.

We took Sustrans route 41 along the pleasant lanes to Slimbridge where Dave L had a puncture conveniently close to the café where breakfasts were enjoyed. It was then on to Thornbury where we met Malcolm Taylor and all breakfasted again as this was the “official” breakfast stop. .

We headed for the Clifton Suspension Bridge and with Dave’s magnificent navigation got straight there. The weather was gloomy and overcast but the bridge and its views are still impressive. We headed west and during the descent of Wraxall Hill, a narrow twisting road, Martyn saved Chris from crashing into a large lorry by nudging it back on to its own side of the road with his shoulder. Apart from some dirty marks on his jacket, no harm was done, thank goodness. We reached lunch. Most pubs we called at had ceased serving lunch but with Gordon’s local knowledge we found a pub with a Carvery which was still serving.

Suitably refreshed and fed we headed on to Yatton to pick up the Strawberry Trail. This is a dismantled railway now made into a cycle track so it made for easy cycling although the surface was rather rough. It passed Thatcher’s cider farm at which we stopped to sample its wares. The cider was good but they didn’t like us taking photos so we didn’t linger. We followed the trail through some pretty countryside that would have looked much better in sunshine, but at least it wasn’t raining. We were rather late and followed the trail into Cheddar in the dark to find our B & Bs. These were very comfortable. The evening’s entertainment was a very good meal in the Riverside Inn in Cheddar, which we can all recommend.

Saturday saw another gloomy and this time drizzly day, which was a pity as Dave straightaway took us up a long, long hill to

Shipham. The idea was to view a hill where he had picnicked as a young lad. Through the mist we saw the outline of the hill and wondered why weather in the past was always so much better. The villages we passed through were quite pretty and we then headed for the sea. But first we had lunch at a Country Park where everyone was trying to get out of the drizzle and damp. Their bacon baps were delicious. We reached the golden sands of Burnham on Sea where a sand castle was built and then demolished by naughty Martyn. The weather did brighten up a little and hinted at Burnham’s potential.

Our next stop was a cider farm where we sampled and saw Dave trying to empty an enormous barrel, but couldn’t as it would have taken far too long! The cycling was easy here as we were crossing the Somerset levels, but was less so on the climb up to Rudgley where we came to Wilkins Cider Farm. We were made very welcome with biscuits and cheese all washed down with delicious Somerset cider. Once again, it was dark by the time we got back to the B & Bs! That night we went to the pub to watch England win the semi final of the World Cup and then celebrated the victory afterwards.

The next day we started the journey home minus Chris who needed a long lie in as he was too tired. We cycled through the Cheddar Gorge which is really quite spectacular when you stop to admire it (and catch your breath). The National Hill Climb was to be held there two weeks later, so we knew what the riders had to fear. For those interested it is a bit like Fiddlers Elbow in distance and gradient.

The weather was now much brighter and we enjoyed 19 miles of glorious Somerset countryside but with a sense of “I’m not quite sure where we are but I think we are going in the right direction!” This was resolved when we stopped and saw a sign which indicated that Cheddar was only 10 miles away! Never mind, for we were led to a very friendly pub called the Druid’s Arms at Stanton Drew. We had a very good meal and afterwards went to visit the standing stones and circles which were hugged and loved. All this merriment was however, taking time and Ken decided he had to get back to Gloucester so off he went by himself.

Martyn saved Chris from crashing into a large lorry by nudging it back on to its own side of the road with his shoulder.

The rest of us carried on to join the Bath Bristol cycle path, which proved a joy to cycle along. No traffic; only lots of people of all ages out cycling along it enjoying the freedom. At Bitton station we stopped for afternoon tea and to watch the trains. It was then we realised that we still had 50 miles to go and it was 4.30 pm!

Our route back was along the cycle path which took us over the M4 and I think the M32 and busy dual carriage ways and back into the countryside north of Bristol. It was then onto the A38 where

we decided that in view of the time and safety as it was now nearly dark, we would form a chain gang and go flat out for Gloucester. Andy very nobly led all the way, but we all kept up, Fran enjoyed it so much that she wants to do time trials next year (she should do well too).

We got back to Gloucester about 8.15, once again finishing our ride in the dark, having had a very enjoyable weekend thanks to Dave's organising. For the record we cycled 75 miles on Friday and Sunday and 40 on Saturday.

Report of Years Racing

Darren Jewell & George Unsworth

After a great season Gloucester City has again got reason to be proud of improvements in both individual and team performances. Some of the best performances came from George Unsworth. His 50 mile time of 1 hr.50 mins. improved his best by 4 minute and was enough to win the Cirencester event. Two other great rides meant that he finished 26th in the British Best All Rounder competition. He achieved a sub 4 hour 100 mile ride in very windy and wet conditions and followed this by doing a personal best in the Welsh 12 hour event, improving by over 10 miles to record a finishing distance in excess of 250 miles.

Rupert Denny, at only fourteen the youngest member of Gloucester City, has improved vastly again this season, knocking nearly 2 minutes off his ten mile time. He reduced it to 24 minutes and 28 seconds on a slow course in the national school boy ten mile event in which he improved by 30 places to finish just outside the top 25. Even more impressive is the fact that many of the people who beat him were as much as two years older. With two more attempts possible at this event things look very promising for the future.

Also showing that age has no boundaries in this tough sport, 67 year old John Murphy recorded personal bests in events from 10 mile distance to the longer distances of 50 and 100 miles. John won the 100 mile championship in his age category and set new club vet standard records for 10 mile @ +9mins22sec and 100mile @ +1hr36min46sec.

Toby Wooldridge and Andy Palmer also had an excellent season last year with new PB's over 10, 25 and 50 miles. Toby was also was the third counting member of the winning western division

team in the long distances BAR. His wife Anne also enjoyed success, finishing second lady in the season long western hard riders' series and taking part in America's "Furnace Creek" race which was over 500 hundred miles long over hard terrain and to finish third lady.

Chris Vasey has concentrated recently on the ten mile event and twice beaten the 21 minute barrier this year. His fastest ever 10, at 20.29, is also probably the fastest 10 set by a Gloucester City member since the early 1990's and particular impressive considering his veteran status. His 2nd fastest time 20.47 was recorded on the U46/10 at Cirencester showing that local courses can be fast. He has been in the top 10 for most of the events he has entered this year and achieved this year's quickest club time for a 25 mile event with a 54:39 ride.

Darren Jewell has enjoyed one of his best seasons to date, knocking 3 minutes off his 50 mile time and in the welsh 12 hour beating his personal best by 10 miles to record 246 miles. He improved his placing in the British Best All Rounder competition by 20 places from last year. It will be a good a fight for top spot in the Welsh 12 hour next year between Jewell and Unsworth.

Guy Preece has had another improved and consistent season being the only rider to be in the winning team at every one of the eleven occasions when Gloucester City won this year. He has also improved his 10 mile time to a short 21 minute and took part in his first 50 and 100 mile event with two great rides: sub 2 hour for the 50 and 4 hours 14 minutes for his first hundred.

Sally Bartlett, Guy's younger sister, has in her first season of racing not only ridden club events

but in many open events as well. She has beaten the 30 minute barrier several times and with her enthusiasm is sure to improve next season. Her achievements won her this year's novice prize.

Andy Palmer has had a fair amount of success after starting racing quite late in June. He has not only improved his ten mile time to 22 minutes and ten seconds but has also been a member of the winning team for Gloucester a number of times.

Paul Bridges and John Flint have set PB's at 10 miles with Paul improving dramatically on his PB for the 25 time, will he break the hour next season? Other improvers were Graham Denny and Gordon Johnston. They improved at ten and twenty five mile distances and are training hard for next season.

Finally, in this round up of achievements the City have won the inter-club event between Severn/Dursley & Bristol South for the 3rd time in succession.

Looking at the courses, the K courses for the Midlands area offer a few good quick options

which seem to be over looked considering that they are not that far away. The local U courses for West, in particular the U47 and U46, usually offer a quick time with the least amount of travelling. The Welsh R courses particularly the 25's can be very quick in the right condition however in bad conditions they can be tough. The F courses of London North DC are notoriously quick in good conditions if you don't mind spending the petrol money to get there and not having much sleep the night before! The P courses in the South are also very quick but again take a bit of reaching. More information on these courses can be found in the Cycling Time Trials Handbook available from the General Secretary from January or ordered through the CTT website.

Congratulations to all who have set PB's last season. All in all this has been another great season for Gloucester City that proved us one of the strongest clubs in the western division. Hopefully the club can improve even further in 2008 and gain more PB's.

Gloucester City Open Time Trial Results — Members Times

10 Mile TT	Time	Course	25 Mile TT	Time	Course
C Vasey	20.29 PB	P613	C Vasey	54.39	P613/25
G Preece	21.29	U47	G Unsworth	56.50	U18C
G Unsworth	21.50	U47	G Preece	58.05	U18C
T Wooldridge	21.57 PB	P613	D Jewell	58.44	PB F1
J Murphy	22.08 PB	P613	J Murphy	58.53	PB R25/7
A Palmer	22.10 PB	U47	T Wooldridge	59.39	PB P613/25
J Flint	22.36 PB	P613	P Bridges	1.01.22	PB P613/25
D Jewell	22.42	U47	A Palmer	1.01.56	PB U18C
S Evans	23.16	UC706 (chelt club course)	S Evans	1.02.00	U72
P Bridges	23.23 PB	P613	D Dowdeswell	1.04.15	U18C
M Horsman	23.34	P613	G Johnston	1.05.26	U18C
D Dowdeswell	23.59	UC703 (Club Course)	M Horsman	1.05.47	P613/25
G Johnston	24.03 PB	UC706	R Denny	1.07.25	PB U18C
A Wooldridge	24.08	P613	N Lockwood	1.12.55	K16/25
R Denny	24.28 PB	V714 (Yorkshire)			(Winner D. Barnes 53.55)
C Udall	25.14 PB	K33/10R			
N Lockwood	26.34	U47			
S Bartlett	29.00 PB	U47			
50 Mile TT	Time	Course	100 Mile TT	Time	Course
G Unsworth	1.50.15	PB U46/50	G Unsworth	3.58.21	U46/100
C Vasey	1.57.15	U46/50	G Preece	4.14.02	PB U46/100
G Preece	1.58.24	PB U46/50	D Jewell	4.19.38	U46/100
D Jewell	2.01.17	PB P885/50	J Murphy	4.22.41	PB R100/8
T Wooldridge	2.05.32	PB U46/50	T Wooldridge	4.23.37	U46/100
J Murphy	2.06.14	PB U46/50			
A Palmer	2.08.50	PB U46/50			
D Dowesdwell	2.11.30	K33/50			
			12 Hour TT		
			G Unsworth	252.673	PB R12/95
			D Jewell	246.923	PB R12/95
			T Wooldridge	229.625	R12/95
			John Murphy	216.81	??