

Reverting to the tradition, we booked Brecon for the 2007 edition of the Spring Tour. The bookings rolled in and we had eighteen up for the challenge. The routine is simple: three days away, two nights in a B&B, cycle to the destination, taking in a late breakfast and wholesome lunch; an evening of entertainment in the stage town; luggage left at the B&B for an easy and restful Saturday ride (maybe) followed by more entertainment; then a simple return home taking in lunch and refreshments somewhere. So, you have the picture: now details

Getting there: the Friday ride.

We (well, most of us) grouped early at the Square and set off under a damp sky, collecting Pete Lloyd near Highnam as we passed nightmare traffic flow into Gloucester (I understand this is a daily occurrence, not healthy for the individual or the planet). Off we trundled with a tailwind of limited help through Birdwood, finding John Barnes near Blaisdon. We were now at full complement plus one: for Friday morning guest Mrs Denny was keeping an eye on two of her men folk. We proceeded in disorderly fashion, taking three climbs of note to the highest point in the Forest (Ruardean Woodside) and a delightful descent to the Wye, then an excellent 5 ½ mile traffic free route along the river into Monmouth on the old railway and a dart through town with good navigation by Neville to Mitchel Troy and breakfast at Millbank.

We continued on the quiet old A40, reliving the various races that take in this section of road, to Abergavenny where there was some problem as the planned road was being rebuilt. Mrs D set off for her train home; we forced our way through and eventually, after some lost time and almost lost riders, found our way over the River Usk and to The Bear at Crickhowell: a fine establishment. Good food and ale and wine were enjoyed (by Chris V. and Richard C. in particular, who insisted on trying a variety of liquid refreshments).

Then a split in the ranks: a number of softies (led by the ex-Captain and Social Secretary I understand) kept to the valley, whilst the main pack took in a decent climb followed by a cracking descent back to the valley road (yes, the hill was entirely superfluous!) then the classic pass of Bwlch on the A40 where we lost fast descenders Martyn and Chris. The lumpy road past Llangorse lake led us to Brecon at around 5.45pm.

We had an interesting evening meal in a local bar (rather on the cool side) where we were joined by Ann Barnes, having arrived via petrol-powered four wheel transport. Some, I understand, went on to check the nightlife. The sensible ones went to bed.

Saturday: The rest day.

A rest day only in as much as there was no luggage to carry. We had a delayed start due to the Calder brothers faffing. The plan was: hills. The Brecon Beacons were loitering nearby, and it seemed a shame not to check them out. So we did. We started together, with day riders Malcolm and Claire fresh in from Gloucester, setting off in search of contours. They were soon located, and we perambulated along some nice lanes with a disturbingly strong and cold tailwind. Heading roughly west we crossed the pass and descended rapidly towards Swansea.

A number of our mature riders called a halt and turned for home before losing too much height. The remainder pressed onwards and downwards, taking an early lunch at Ystradgynlais: a classic Welsh town spelt in a difficult manner. Merlin's coffee stop was the (only) place, and was a snip: Chris could not resist a blue YKD – nice!

Suitably replenished we made the most of the tailwind to Glanaman and then turned NE into a worryingly strong wind to cross back over the Beacons. What should have been a gentle climb was turned into a nightmare slog. Chris, fuelled by WKD, kept it in the big ring and powered upwards with ease. The rest of us plodded. The rewarding descent into a very different valley in style still required effort. The three pubs marked on the map and proposed as the lunch stop were all ex-pubs: oh dear. The three fast boys continued into the valley bottom and we did not see them again until the evening – though I understand they did locate some liquid refreshment in the village. Meanwhile a reduced group took the correct turn to the last chance saloon – which, much to the relief of all was open and still serving food. Phew. We enjoyed the spectacle of many Red Kites wheeling in the sky and noted a sharp squall so delayed our departure accordingly. Eventually we had to leave – and caught some hail on the way to the A40 at Trecastle, after observing some Wild Wales horse rounding. A romp into Brecon saw a number of riders being shelled out the back – but not Claire, who hung on all the way. Malcolm, where were you! A few called for a tea stop in town to grab the bonus point, quite right too.

The evening demanded a better venue so we went to The George and had a splendid meal and many drinks to relive the rigours of the day. Some drank more than others...

Sunday: The return.

The wind had not abated and it proved to be a strong and cold 'on the nose' affair all the way home. Another delayed start allowed the Faffing Calders to join us; then off down the A470 to Hay and a determined sprint for the England sign, won by Toby making good use of his local knowledge: Rupert the young pretender was most put out, and went off the front for the rest of the ride to bag as many signs as possible. But there was only one England sign – probably counts for 100 points? We observed a large contingent of old timer cyclists enjoying the tailwind (for them) whilst we battled into it. A tricky section after Bredwardine led to the

Continued Page 7

planned tea stop near Sutton St Nicholas after 45 miles. Shockingly, it was closed! Plan B – the pub at Lugwardine – had no food. Hmm, panic setting in. Plan C – The Yew Tree at Dormington –was only serving carvery, and you had to sit outside: too cold! Theo checked the Moon at Mordiford, and this proved good. We decamped and were made most welcome, so tucked in. The local Wye Valley Ales were much appreciated, but probably did not help on the next leg of the journey.

Following the feast, we took the big climb into the magic triangle: Dave S failed to select the correct gear and gave us a demonstration of a disorderly dismount. This is something he still has to perfect! Thanks to fine navigating we eventually made it to Much Marcle, but not before Neil C. managed to puncture. A Spring Tour without a mechanical was too much to hope for, I guess. A simple route home concluded the weekend and riders peeled off to their homes.

All in all, around 210 miles covered (the Stonehouse/ Stroud contingent can add at least 20 onto this!) and plenty of fun, not much rain, rather too much wind. Still, for Wales in March, this was a result!

Best Faffers	The Calder Brothers
Most unlikely drink	Cris vasey (WKD for late breakfast)
Most village signs	Rupert Denny
Best sprint sign	Toby Wooldridge
Least luggage carried	Ann Wooldridge
Most luggage carried	Toby Wooldridge
Best red face	Ann barnes
Most impressive rider	Claire Taylop A40 15 mile sprint

Press Secretary's Report**Darren Jewell****The racing season for Gloucester CC has started in the great way it finished last season, 2006**

.Not only have we won the team award no fewer than three times in open events, against teams like Bristol South, Bath and Chippenham we have also won veteran prizes with great rides from John Murphy. The up and coming youngster Rupert Denny has improved this year from 26.42 to 25 12 for 10 miles. His dad, Graham has come on in leaps also and is down to 24.07. It won't be long before he hits that magic 23 minutes. Ann Wooldridge is competing most weeks in the hard riders' series and has usually been second or first lady. Chris Vasey has been in the top 10 in every event he has ridden so far this year and produced some great rides, for example at Andover in March where he was only just over a minute behind Michael Hutchinson multi national time trial Champion. Guy Preece has again this come up with some great results getting in or close to the top 10 most weeks and is the only member of the club to have been in the wining team all times. after a slower start to the year George Unsworth has started to get some solid results and did a great 10 of 21:50 at Cirencester. In his first season Andrew Shipton is down to 22 minutes already. It has been really great to turn up and see anything from 4 to 10 club mates at open events and the club events too have been well attended . Also welcome is Guy's sister, Sally, racing not only in club events but also open ones. It won't be long before she breaks 30 minutes. Here are a couple of recent race reports to illustrate the Club's success:

On Sunday 22nd April, the Gloucester City Cycling Club team, sponsored by Rudy Project, won the

Dursley promoted 26.3miles hilly time trial. George Unsworth was the leading Gloucester rider home in 1.14.15, earning 5th place overall, with debutants to the course Guy Preece completing the circuit in 1.18.30 to finish 8th and Andrew Shipton 1.20.36 to take 12th. The three combined times pipped Bath CC by 1min45sec to take the first team prize for Gloucester. Rob Pears won the event for Bath CC in 1.10.02. Ann Wooldridge did 1.36.08 (5th lady) and Christine Colquhoun finished 7th lady in 1.42.24. Astrid Wheatcroft won the ladies event for Severn RC in a time of 1.24.54. Other Gloucester competitors included Toby Wooldridge 1.26.01, Mike Horseman 1.28.55, Neville Lockwood 1.43.42.

Five members of Glos City CC took part in the Gillingham and District Hilly last Saturday 17th March. The weather was fine and dry but windy on the return leg. George Unsworth claimed 12th place out of 63 competitors with a time of 48.05. Mike Horseman finished 39th in 56.12, John Murphy was 2nd V over 60 recording a time of 56.22 for 41st, David Boddy did 59.13 for 47th and Christine Colquhoun was 2nd Lady Vet in 1.03.28 for 53rd. Rob Pears of Bath CC won the event in 43.27.

I wish everybody well with their season, whatever their goals.

I am pleased to see that we have a men's team in the National 10, consisting of myself Guy and Chris