

On the 24th March three Gloucester City CC riders took part in the Hereford and District Wheelers 25 mile time trail. The event was won in 56m 17s by Rob Wood of Echelon Cycles, one of only two riders to break the hour. Andy Palmer finished with 1:07:09, inside the top 15. John Murphy's time of 1:10:13 placed him just outside the top 25. Christine Colquhoun finished second quickest lady. Also racing on this Easter weekend were Darren Jewell and George Unsworth who took part in the Northovers vets 2 up 10 mile time trail on the A38 between Highbridge and Weston. Despite never having raced together before, the pair produced a great time of 22:17 to finish 5th, only 38 seconds behind the winners Colin Parry and Jason Streather of VC ST Raphael.

The 29th march hosted the VC Sevale 10 mile time trail. The course itself was particularly tough and this wasn't helped by the terrible weather. The winner was top road racer, Paul Dring of Echelon Cycles, with 22:37. Andy Palmer was Gloucester City's top rider on the day with 25:34 which gave him a top 20 place. Simon Witts was pleased that long hours on the bike in winter gave him 26:14. Graham Denny finished just inside the top 30, his ride aided by a more aerodynamic position on the bike. Rupert Denny rode well but, died in the final stages of the race and finished with a disappointing 27:36. Others to ride were Chris Udall (28:45) and Sally Bartlett who struggled in the wind and rain but still finished second lady. On 30th march Darren Jewell rode the Army Championship 25 mile time trial, missing the hour by seconds. The winner was Richard Prebble, a former Gloucester rider now riding for GS Strada in 52:30.

The 5th of April was a blustery day for a time trial but that didn't stop all 84 starters from finishing. The top spot was closely fought as Michael Loader of Yeovil CC missed out by only one second to Ben Anstie who won with a time of 21m 15s. George Unsworth and Darren Jewell produced outstanding times, George with 22:37 and Daren with 22:51. With Guy Preece's 23:02 these earned Gloucester City the team prize. Not far behind was Andy Palmer (23:11). Veteran John Murphy beat his standard time based on his age by 8 minutes flat.. Other Club riders were Rupert Denny, beating his personal best with 24:22, Graham Denny (25:34) and Chris Udall (26:00). All three Gloucester City women rode

superbly in the harsh conditions; Liz Clegg achieving 27:40, Christine Colquhoun 28:08 and Sally Bartlett 29:38.

The Club continued their good run of early season results in the Bristol South CC 25 held on the A38 on the 12th April. The event was won by Bill Moore of Artic Rochford (56m 39s) by 11 seconds from Jeff Jones, Chippenham CC. Top Club rider was Darren Jewell who finished 9th with 59m 45s to beat his previous best on this course by over 1 minute. Next up was Guy Preece, 10th, with 1:0:9. Andy Palmer's 1:1:48 was almost two minutes quicker than last season. Simon Witts, riding his first 25 for over 12 years beat his PB by over 2 minutes with 1:4:52. The next day Darren Jewell travelled to Bedford to ride the quick F1 course. On a cold windy day the event was won with a 55:49 by Sam Barker. Darren finished 21st from a field of over 120 riders.

On the 19th April two of Club riders took part in the Warwickshire Road Club 10 mile time trial held in cold and windy conditions. Bill Moore from Artic Rochford won with a super fast 21m 45s. Guy Preece was the Club's top rider with 23m 36 s, just missing a top 15 place. Andy Palmer (24 m 36s) placed 30th out of a strong field of 80 riders. On the 20th of April five riders from Gloucester city CC took part in Acme Wheelers 25 mile time trial held on the super quick Gleneath course in Wales. Darren Jewell improved his previous best time by over a minute to 57m 6s, earning 20th place. Next Club rider was Andy Palmer whose 58m 36s was his fastest for two years. John Murphy's 1:2:2 placed him well inside top half of field. Also riding were Christine Colquhoun and Liz Clegg who both beat 20mph on this cold and windy day.

Four Club riders started the Dursley RC Hard Riders' event on Sunday 20 April. This is the hardest of the twelve events in the series, and despite being run on a shortened course still had three serious climbs in its 23 miles. Riders started on the edge of Dursley, raced through Uley and up the long and steep Crawley Hill. This first climb needs to be taken carefully and the right choice of gear is essential. Riders then descended to turn at Eastington before retracing their way up Frocester Hill. Derek Dowdeswell punctured on the ascent. He carried on to the top on a soft tyre

where he changed inner tubes. This cost him 8 minutes but he continued to finish in a creditable 1.28.30. The race continues through Stroud, with riders returning over Selsey Common and two cattle grids. Toby Wooldridge pulled out all the stops for the final six miles of undulating road to the finish. His time of 1h 18m 55s gave him third place in the Gloucester team, behind Graham Denny, who achieved 1.17.41 on his local roads, and George Unsworth 1.07.58, 7th overall. The winning time was 1.02.45.

On 27th April six Gloucester City CC riders took part in the Swindon RC club hilly 24 mile time trial, the 4th event in the season long hard riders' competition. The event was run off in really warm weather with little wind. The winner was Jeff Jones from Chippenham CC with a super fast 53m 32s. Top Club rider was Guy Preece whose 58m 46s gave him 14th place. Darren Jewell's 59m 39s gave him 17th place. Simon Witts, riding his first ever hilly event, finished just outside top 20 with 1:2:39. Also representing the Club were Toby Wooldridge (1:4:9), Mike Horseman (1:6:50), and Derek Dowdeswell (1:12:9 after a puncture).

Ten Club members rode the Bath CC open 10 mile event on the 3rd of May. After modifications the course is now quicker than ever. This, along with good weather and a light wind, saw the course record smashed by John Tuckett with 19m 23s to win by over 40 seconds.

There were many good performances by club riders, the best of which was by 15 year old Rupert Denny who won his age group by over 1 minute, recording 22m 27s. This was also enough to break the Club's under 16 record for 10 miles set by former club Champion rider Alistair Scott back in 1990; three years before Rupert was born!

This surely must make him one of favourites for the school boy national event later in the year. Top club rider on the day was George Unsworth with 21m 13s which earned him a top 20 place in this high class field.

Darren Jewell just made top 25 with his second fastest ever 10 (21m 39s). Guy Preece and Andy Palmer tied with 21m 49s. Andy's time was a personal best and Guy's was the fastest on his new fixed gear bike. Another who set a new best was Simon Witts (22m 42s). Graham Denny beat his previous best by over 40 seconds and for doing so treated himself to some new wheels in the hope he can get down to 22 minutes! Other riders were Paul Bridges (24m 29s after a 40 second late start), Sally Bartlett (27m 49s, PB) and John Murphy, recovering from illness (24m 0s).

The following day Darren Jewell beat his best time for 25 miles to record 56m 39s at Bedford on the F1, earning 23rd place. Quickest on the day was Sam Baker of Planet X (51m 20s) who averaged almost 30mph and won by over 20 seconds. Guy Preece raced in the Clevedon and District Wheelers 25 near Weston where he finished 6th with a time of just 9 seconds over the hour on what can only be described as a hard man's course. It was won by Dave Kiddel of Clavier CC with a time of 56m 34s. As it was a bank holiday weekend there was racing on Monday too, in the hard riders' series event organised by Cheltenham and County CC and held over a 23 mile circuit around Guiting Power. The event was dominated by riders from Chippenham CC and won by Ben Anstie (58m 32s). Top Gloucester City CC rider was George Unsworth with 1h 2m 31s, placed 7th. Rupert Denny and Andy Palmer, both riding their first hard riders' event of the year, were just outside the top 10. There were also good rides from Graham Denny, Mike Horseman, Toby Wooldridge and Derek Dowdeswell.

Editor's note: In the last edition of Spokespiece Anne Wooldridge was wrongly credited as being second lady in the Hardriders' series. This honour belonged to Christine Colquhoun. I hope she accepts my apologies.

