

GLOUCESTER CITY CYCLING CLUB



WINTER 2021



SPOKESPIECE

Winter 2021

The Newsletter of the Gloucester City Cycling Club



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By May 8th, 2021

EDITORIAL



Another year, another lock down but this time the weather is not as good as last spring. See, for example, the pictured efforts of Colin Edmonds to ford the Frome at Stanley Downton after January's heavy rain, rain that was followed by snow and ice. Despite this, we are lucky to be able to carry on our preferred sport and for those who can't face the weather there is always the turbo and now a new edition of Spokespiece to pass the time. Before you start reading it, though, take a moment to thank members who are key workers and are unable to ride because they are keeping the rest of us watered, fed, well, and, soon, vaccinated.

Thanks go to them all.

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National 100 and National 12hr Championships 2020

The National 100 Championship was promoted this year by the West District Committee, of which I am a member. We put considerable work into finding a course in the District worthy of a National Championship.

I was very proud to see the number of entries from the Club – I would guess, and am sure Ted could confirm, that it was a record for the Club to have so many members competing in a National Championship.

In all honesty I did not expect to race in 2020 and so did very little riding. Most of my daily exercise was running but when I knew we would be having some racing I tried to cram in some endurance rides: Severn Bridge rides and a 147 miler over the Gospel Pass and a good few flat out eleven mile circuits incorporating Upton and Horsepools Hills made up the training.

I had an issue at start of the 100 when the zip broke on my jersey so I made good with half a dozen safety pins. My plan was to attack it and go hard from the start, but keep the gears down and, it being a rolling course, pedal up the climbs. When I started it began to rain; it became hard to see through my visor so at the first turn I discarded my helmet. On this leg (Royal Wotton Bassett to Malmesbury) one is riding back towards the start and it could be discouraging being overtaken by riders cycling to the start from the H.Q! LOL..... but with my experience and age I just kept 'chilled'!

I must admit I enjoyed the course and event - Anthony Lake and Daryl Stroud had passed me before the 50-mile mark and were both riding really well.

I thought District Secretary Tom Cox was my main challenger for the 65-69 age group title, which was another reason I thought to keep the gears down so that when we passed each other I would appear to be going well! When we passed each other he did not appear to me be enjoying it on a climb to Tetbury. I chuckled to myself as I was spinning along and smiling at him (tactic). Next lap he was not to be seen. I must

be honest and admit I considered packing at 50 miles when I saw my time BUT I was enjoying the event. On completing the two circuits it was time to turn left at Malmesbury for the final 10 miles. I crawled up the MOUNTAIN from Malmesbury roundabout towards Wotton Bassett. Luckily, a member of the Chippenham felt sorry for me, stepping off the pavement to give me a push. I picked up my pace and, like every finisher, was pleased to see the timekeeper and the line.

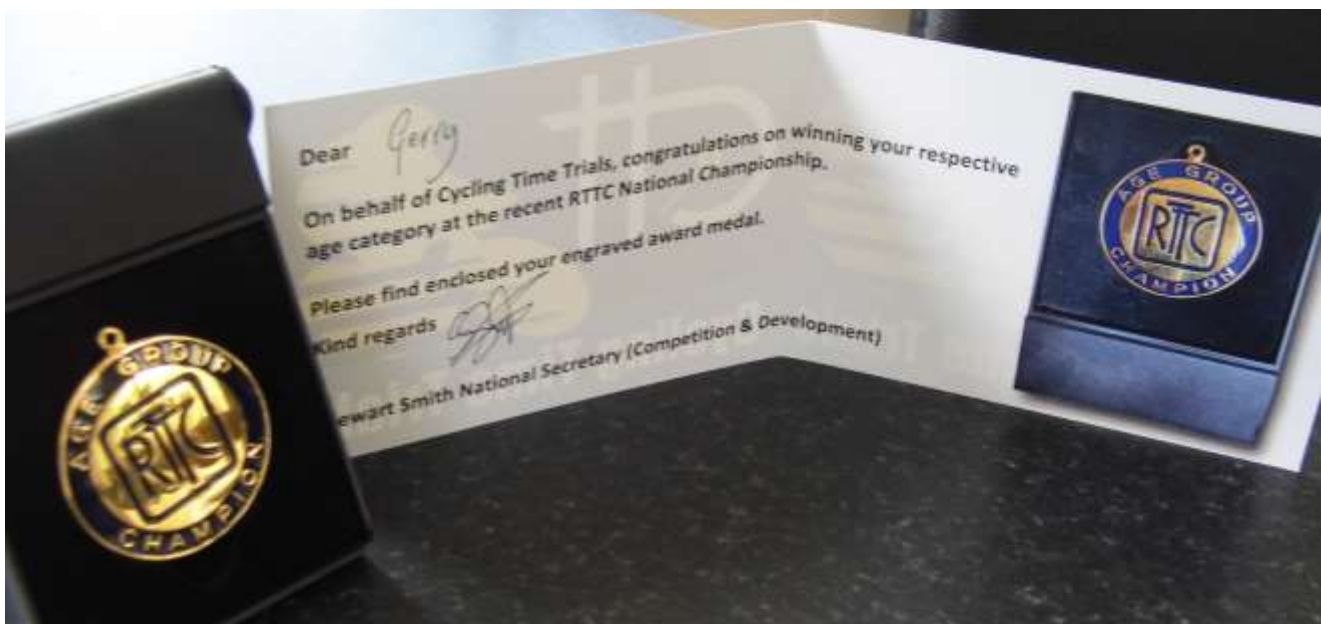
I won my age group title, beating Bob Jones from Cardiff by 5 minutes. It was the second time I have won the 100 and my plan was to see if I could retain my 12hr title the following week.

The National 12 was held up in Wrexham on a really hard course that I don't enjoy. We discovered on the day that the course had to be changed due to a lorry crashing into a bridge so the hardest leg, which originally had to be ridden once, now had to be ridden four times.

I had no issues with my back on the bike when I rode the 100 but knowing this course had a very rough surface on one leg I decided to build another bike where I could fit a suspension seat post -this proved a bad decision, as after 130 miles I had to climb off suffering from severe lower back ache. I hate quitting in a 12.

Both events were won by the very talented Adam Wild – I was blown away with his winning ride in National 100 (3.28.50) and in the 12hr he had a tremendous tussle with Brian Fogarty only going into the lead in the last 20 minutes. Winning with 294 miles, just 1 mile further than Brian. Adam is just 23. It's good to see young riders competing in the longer distances. I thank the Club for the support it gives members to ride the Championship events and am keen to race in 2021. I offer congratulations to all fellow Club mates who competed in the 100; I wish you fast and safe rides in 2021.

Keep Safe, Gerry MacGarr



Five go to the North Coast 500

Elena Eustace

During an easing of COVID restrictions, I was lucky enough to travel to Scotland in August to undertake the North Coast 500. Armed with bike-packing bags, flapjacks, and somewhat limited training, I joined four equally bonkers friends from University to take on this challenge.

The first day started with a flat sprint out of Inverness before tackling the infamous Bealach na Bà, seventy miles into the ride. This climb (the only 11/10 in 'Greatest Cycling Climbs'!) was made even gnarlier by baking sun and an onslaught of campervans and caravans. Even before we began I had been apprehensive of the climb, knowing that gaining over 2000ft in less than 6 miles was going to hurt! My fears were rightly placed, with my legs well and truly on fire during final the 20% hairpins. However it was all worth it for the stunning views at the top (and the massive dinner I consumed at the hostel on the other side!).

Over the next three days we cycled along the gorgeous west coast of Scotland. These were hilly days, most notably when we cycled 88 miles from Letters to Rhiconich and gained over 8200 feet. These relentless undulations were made harder by the midges, which would swarm around our heads when we went too slowly up these steep climbs. The scenery was spectacular, which more than made up for our tired legs.



There were occasions where relentless headwinds threatened our moral, but by cycling single file and taking turns on the front we were able to make rapid progress.

Due to the rural nature of our route, we had to plan our lunch stops and dinner plans well in advance. This sometimes meant we were carrying couscous, tins of beans, and peppers strapped to our bikes for well over 50 miles!

On the east coast of Scotland we were greeted with fog, rain and a strong headwind. These fortunately subsided and we

were once again blessed with quiet, winding roads. Our route deviated from the coast and we used the route of Global Cycle Network by detouring inland to Lairg. Despite us ending away from our finish point in Inverness, these gorgeous and remote roads were well worth the extra miles.



Overall, our North Coast 500 turned into the North Coast 621. It was an epic bike-packing adventure which I can thoroughly recommend to everyone. By not camping we were able to pack lightly, which definitely made all the difference up steep climbs. I chose to ride my aero road bike, which although is not designed for touring, was extremely fun to ride especially on steep descents and tight corners.



Viaduct Hunting in the Leadhills

Alastair Goldie

This summer Liz and I drove up to Troon on a route which takes us past a sign pointing to the Leadhills and Wanlockhead. Every time we pass it I recall the time I cycled there in my youth but this time my wife said “Why not go and see the Leadhills that you are always going on about?”.



Wanlockhead is the highest village in Scotland at 1531 feet and is situated in the Leadhills in South Lanarkshire. The Hills are marked above with a “house” symbol.



This story, however, begins in 1958 when as a schoolboy I went on a Youth Hostelling holiday by bike to the Leadhills to explore a disused railway that crossed a magnificent viaduct.

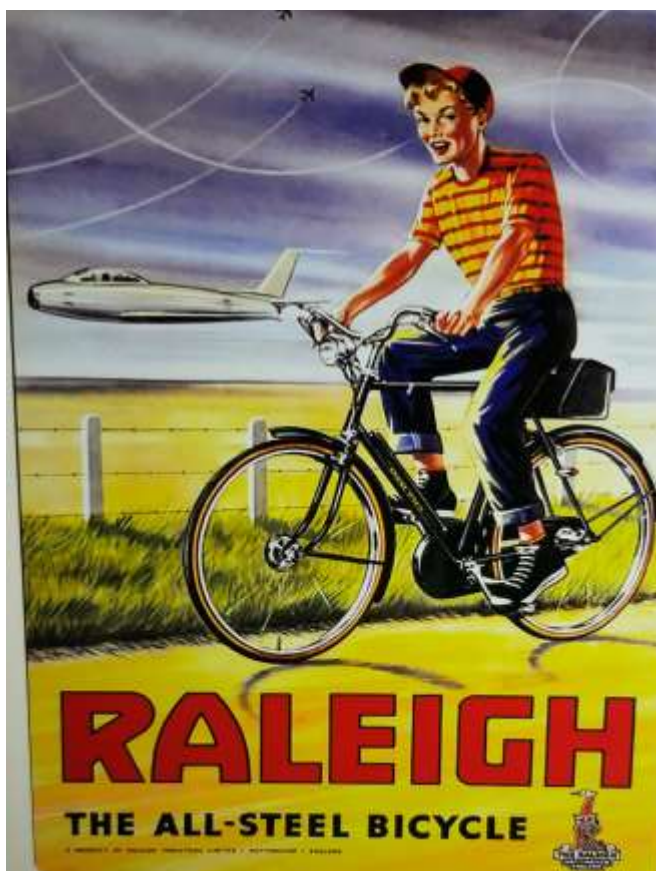
As our recent journey was very much on the spur of the moment, I did not have much time to research the old railway line and the viaduct, let alone its exact location. All I could remember was struggling along a muddy , overgrown track and the magnificent red sandstone viaduct with lots of arches.

My quick research discovered that the viaduct was built by Sir Robert McAlpine in 1891 (no less) and was made of concrete with 8 arches on a curve. McAlpine also built the Glenfinnan Viaduct now better known

for featuring in the Harry Potter Hogwarts stories, but that viaduct is white and the viaduct I remember was red, and certainly not built of concrete, was my mind playing tricks?



I also discovered that the viaduct was used until 1939 and was demolished by explosives in 1999 as it had become unsafe, but I hoped that there would be some trace of it for me to find.



The bicycle I had back then was a Raleigh Superb of which I was very proud. It had a sit up and beg frame, cable brakes, dyno hub complete with standby power to keep the lights on when you stopped and the luxury of a Sturmey Archer 4, not 3, speed gear. It had stainless steel spokes, enclosed chain guard and a built in lock. It must have weighed a ton but I don't recall having problems over its weight.

I had calculated that the viaduct had spanned Elvan Water, a tributary of the Clyde near Elvanfoot, and that was where the old railway line joined the main West Coast line.

We left the M74 at Junction 14 and stopped at Elvanfoot. Sure enough there was the river, the west coast mainline and the outline of the old Leadhills branch. We drove to where I thought the viaduct had been and was able to make out an embankment on either side of the river but they were not as tall as I remembered, but at this stage we could not make out any other location.

We followed the B7040, which more or less followed the route of the old railway line, but I was not convinced that the location we had found was the right site. There obviously had to be a bridge to span the river but an eight arched viaduct did not seem right.

The scenery was magnificent and I marvelled that I had cycled these mountains all those years ago. We reached the village of Leadhills, where there is now a heritage line. To my surprise it was narrow gauge but I was convinced that the old railway was standard gauge, again was my mind playing tricks?



Luckily there was someone around whom we could ask. He confirmed that the line had been standard gauge but that narrow gauge line was cheaper and easier to maintain. I then told him of my journey in 1958 and he was able to tell me that the viaduct was, in fact, concrete. Sir Robert McAlpine had insisted that it be faced with red bricks to improve its appearance, reassuring my earlier memories.



To my further delight he pointed to the nearby signal box (above), which was built using terracotta bricks recovered from the old viaduct (left) when it was demolished. I was astonished and delighted at finding such a happy end for my story.

Our guide was further able to confirm the viaduct's location at Risping Cleuch, which is about quarter of a mile off the B7040, but as we did not have time to go back to find it I shall save that for my next visit north.

Autumn Tour to Leominster

Ian Wareing



big ride on Saturday. Two day trippers joined us. One set off from just outside Leominster and chased us down, only to puncture within 200 yds of our back wheels. He hit a pothole while drafting a tractor, so didn't deserve any sympathy! We all met in Leintwardine, and rode off. Bishop's Castle was our first stop, where we declined food in the pub, wanting to push on, but as the beer was so good the stop extended, and after plenty of liquid, we chose to buy sandwiches & Snicker bars from the Spar shop and then ate them in the churchyard.

The original plan of cycling along the top of the Long Mynd was deemed too ambitious at 72 miles and 5,000', so we diverted to go

Friday began with the riders from Abbeymead ironically being held up by a new cycle lane at Oxtalls campus as they crossed Gloucester to rendezvous in Highnam. At Highleadon, one rider realised he had left his mobile phone in Highnam and had to return. After this, the group settled down and made its way through Upton to reach Norton Garden Centre, just as the Ludlow bound group was leaving.

After an excellent breakfast, they managed to navigate through Worcester and on to the Teme Valley route supplied by the Ludlow group so as to meet them in Tenbury Wells, for an extended liquid stop. The final run into Leominster was disrupted by a puncture, but was otherwise uneventful.

The accommodation was basic, and it must be said that Leominster has little to offer. However, a good Indian meal, and a greasy spoon breakfast. saw us ready for a

round the bottom of the Long Mynd to Church Stretton, for another liquid stop. The "easy option" proved to be also 72 miles and 4,600'!

Final refreshments were partaken in Leintwardine where the excellent pub allowed Fish & Chips from the chippy next door to be brought into the garden.



Church Stretton welcomed us, amongst others!



Local riders know what gearing is needed for the Burway

Those staying in Leominster then had a team trial home from Leintwardine.

Sunday saw very tired legs, and a unanimous vote for the easiest route home.

Coffee in Hereford, and beer in Woolhope and Newent wrapped up an excellent weekend. No cycling on Monday!

Autumn Tour 2020: Ludlow or Bust

Toby Wooldridge & Alastair Goldie

2020 will go down as not the best. The Spring tour to Ludlow, a change in tradition from the Welsh borders, was 'cancelled'. Due to the 'situation', which I am refusing to name. But you know what! And if you are reading this in many years to come and are unaware of the reference, look it up on whatever research engine is relevant to your time!

Anyway, summer passed and autumn loomed with restrictions relaxed. We took advantage of the 'good' weather and took an opportunity to spread a little happiness / money by bringing the Autumn tour forward into September, before any further lock-downs were imposed. Ludlow was back on the agenda!

Two groups were arranged, although the fast boys, not fast on arrangements, failed to secure accommodation in Ludlow, opting for the salubrious Leominster instead (see article on page 8). The Tourist group had made bookings in town, with five together and Paul Bridges elsewhere.

Otherwise, the tour was on traditional arrangements: Friday early(ish) depart; Saturday circular(ish) rest day ride; returning on a 'flat' route home. Three days, three leaders = three very different rides. Perfect.



Friday. Dull and gloomy leading, eventually, to lighter and warmer conditions.

Colin led the way, departing at 8am and heading to Worcester. Coffee, or more exactly a late and Covid-secure breakfast, was taken at the St Peter's garden centre. A good job had been done to re-arrange the process and service was fast and smooth. The only incident worthy of note on the journey was Colin's assistant, Alexa or whatever, attempting to send us down a dubious bridleway. It was not suitable for pannier-laden bikes. We all revolted, much to the annoyance of Alexa, who went quiet for a time.

As we prepared to depart the fast boys arrived, looking a bit flustered after a delayed start. We agreed to meet up at lunch. So, on to Worcester and cycle routes to Diglis down by the river: a police road block stopped our progress, although John Winn almost made it through. We diverted through the marina

using knowledge acquired by the Captain, only to be held up by a narrow boat. A little sun at this point was welcome and photos were taken. Onwards, over the canal at the junction with the Severn, along the front to St John's Bridge and the many, many swans. Crossing the Severn, as the Three Cities riders would, we took to the cycle path alongside the river. Whilst this was pleasant, it ended ignominiously on the very busy A443 without a facility to cross the carriageway. Great cycle provision planning! Eventually we forced our way across and zipped along for a few busy miles, hanging a left onto lanes, bliss, at Hallow Heath. This section of the route was wonderful – great countryside, quiet, a real tonic. Through large well-ordered orchards (apples for Bulmers) to Shelstey Beauchamp and a tremendous descent to cross the river Teme. Keeping to the valley road, our 'short cut' proved to be a private road, very much shut by the substantial gates. Shame.

A gloriously roller-coaster of a road took us to Tenbury Wells and our lunch destination. Good timing, it was 1.30pm and all were thirsty. Excellent beer and cider was enjoyed along with food (chips, mainly). Refreshments were mildly interrupted by the arrival of the fast boys. We took the opportunity to recharge our glasses to be social, at a distance of course.

Our route took us back over the Teme into town, then west on the south bank to Little Hereford: many signs to this establishment, but it was so small we missed it! Lanes onwards to reach our destination of Ludlow:



Alexa attempted to send us up a steep footpath: a helpful local suggested this was entirely inappropriate and unnecessary, so a quick reversal took us back to road and into town. We dropped Paul off then the remainder of us continued to Gravel Hill and our B&B. This proved to be quite excellent: bikes

housed inside the 'garage', nice rooms, and an area to rest up prior to supper in town, just a 10 minute walk. Perfect. 65 miles covered.

Saturday. Out and Back

Traditionally known as the 'rest day' – only because luggage need not be carried. Take note John Winn:



Toby had the pleasure of leading, and after a sumptuous breakfast we were joined by Paul B. The route was north-east to start with, keeping inside England to honour Welsh rules. A short stretch of A4117 was followed by a long stretch of B4364 which seemed to be largely uphill. The sun was breaking through, and views to the east towards Titterstone Clew Hill (see cover picture) were spectacular. At 533m it certainly rules the area – with the radar station globes being prominent. A descent to Burwarton was quite welcome – with its interesting pub, The Boyne Arms, and an enviable Coat of Arms.

Onwards and downwards to Cleobury North and Ditton Priors. Here we located a coffee halt opportunity, quite unexpected, in an interesting building that was constructed of concrete panels – the first of its type and pioneered in the locality post WW1 to facilitate rapid house building. Unusual industry in the countryside.



Post rest, we forged onwards on a road that kept switching from smooth to very rough tarmac for no apparent reason. A steep descent near Monkhampton followed a most enjoyable high-speed section on the B4368. Reason: tailwind. Little scenic lanes to Linley Brook and a bit of main to Much Wenlock. This was our first target for lunch – a little early and anyway the village was packed. Some confusion on the exit from the metropolis added a mile to the route, but in due course we found the correct road. Maybe Alexa could have helped...

We now embarked on a long but gentle climb on the B4371 onto Wenlock Edge. Slightly



disappointingly the views were limited by forest, but at the top there is a viewing point which we made good use of. The view NW was quite spectacular in a non-dramatic sense. A further disappointment was finding our next likely stop was an ex-pub. As was the next at Longville in the Dale. Oh dear. We pressed on uphill and, joy, my last planned point of refreshment was still functional. The Royal Oak at Cardington was open and doing well.



Good beer and, yes, chips all round. We sat in the sun and felt good. Communications with the fast boys had been intermittent, and we now heard they had abandoned in Church Stretton – probably they became too content in a hostelry.

No matter, it was time to make our way to CS – a gentle climb and exciting descent to Comley and so into town. We took in the diversion up the dead-end valley to Carding Mill where the honey-pot had attracted many people. However, the little ford

was forded without incident; ice creams were enjoyed, and the leader and Les made use of a track to then descend rapidly from Burway Hill into town to regroup.

A decent slog up the B4371 had us puffing, but the sun and views were worth it. A series of complicated turns on little roads took us to a fabulous hidden valley at Middlehope on the southern end of Wenlock Edge – like stepping back in time. Lovely and out of a niggling headwind. However, back in the valley there was no hiding as we continued south to Stanton Lacy, through the racecourse, across the railway and the Teme to Bromfield. Here we picked up a Sustrans route through a private estate: Oakly Park. A strange place, and well worth investigating. Traffic-free too. Out via Priors Halton and Ludlow to be greeted by a splendid view of the castle. We took a little back road that popped us out by our selected evening pub, The Church: great navigation and no Alexa! 75 restful miles.

Another enjoyable evening of pies and ale followed – must recharge for the journey home!

Sunday Back to Gloucester

Paul joined us for breakfast as his digs did not provide it, so well nourished we left Ludlow in good weather. Our route from Ludlow involved a fast descent to cross the River Teme and that naturally concluded with a long haul with luggage up out of the valley. Being fresh and well fed we were soon making good progress via Overton and Richard's Castle. This little village is always disappointing as there is no castle to be seen.

We made swift progress along the B4361 with very little traffic about and soon reached Leominster where its one way system managed to separate the group, the leader leading them the wrong way through the one way system. We emerged unscathed and continued on going really well so much so that we almost missed the coffee stop at Withies, near Withington, but the Captain insisted on calling for refreshments.

It was too early for a lunch stop at Mordiford so it was on through Fownhope and two massive climbs to Brockhampton, the second of which involved walking for some. It was then

down and along the Wye to Hole in the Wall. This was a very scenic part of the journey and the steep climbs were briefly forgotten, only to be remembered as we climbed back out of



the Wye Valley. It was then on to Bollitree Castle and another steep hill from Burton Court to Aston Crews. This latter steep hill necessitated some dismounting to admire the views! Refreshments were taken at the Penny Farthing, a pub we pass many times on Club rides but seldom use. We were made very welcome and intend to revisit it in normal times.

The final stretch, marred only by an explosive puncture for Toby, was through Box Bush and Longhope then via Blaisdon and Huntley and back to Gloucester with 60.69 miles cycled and 3579 feet climbed, not bad with luggage.

A really enjoyable tour and doing it 3 weeks earlier than usual meant better weather and worth considering for future tours.

SUBSCRIPTION ISSUES, AND A CHANCE TO SAVE £20
The Membership Secretary has advised the Committee that there are several members whose membership is due to end for non payment of subs and who will need to reapply should they wish to remain members of the Club. Club rule 5.7 says "Subscriptions fall due on 1st October of each year and must be paid by 31st December. Any Club member whose subscription has not been paid by the 31st December shall no longer be a member of the Club. Any Club member whose subscription has not been paid by the 31st December shall be required to re-apply for membership." Reminders have been sent to those at risk, If they wish to continue their membership they must act.

Some Club members are also members of Cycling UK. One key benefit of that membership is third party liability insurance, under which you are covered up to £10 million for any claims made against you for damage or injury. Now that Cycling UK has ceased its concessionary rate for senior members, they must pay the full ordinary adult membership of £48, an increase of £20 per year. This increase can be avoided by taking Affiliated Membership at a cost of £28 instead. Although this does provide the same third party cover, it excludes Cycle magazine, legal helpline and voting rights. You may opt for Affiliated membership when you receive your membership renewal letter. You will need a unique club code, obtainable from the Treasurer.

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Gloucester City Cycling club took place on 6th October, 2020. Due to Covid19 restrictions the meeting was a virtual one, attended by nineteen members. The committee had deferred any constitutional changes, recognising that full and proper discussion was difficult in this format and will hold an EGM when physical meetings are possible. It is hoped that this will be before the racing season begins, as one change mooted was to the qualifying events for the Judd Trophy (Best All Rounder). Restrictions on meeting indoors, and the fact that so many of our trophies cannot be awarded this year, meant that the Committee reluctantly cancelled the Dinner and Prize Giving. A summary of significant items follows:

Captain's Report

The club rides were progressing well and the battle for both the Dancey Trophy and Bruce's Bonus was tight. Then along came the pandemic lockdown, and both competitions were suspended. Winners were declared based on points at mid March:

Dancey trophy winner: Neville Lockwood

Bruce's Bonus winner: Mark Beddall

Racing Secretary

Many open events were cancelled this year, and the Committee elected not to hold the usual evening 10's. Some members took the opportunity to ride other Club's mid week events instead. The Club awarded fewer trophies than usual this year because of those cancellations, and because the Committee decided not to seek nominations for those trophies awarded by vote. Winners were:

A.G.Faers Memorial Trophy (Fastest 100): Wayne Mayer

The Halford Cup (Fastest 50) Daryl Stroud

The Limbrick Cup (Fastest 25) Daryl Stroud

Fastest 10: Wayne Mayer

W.G.Gray Veterans' Standard Trophy: Daryl Stroud

Pete Read Memorial Trophy: Daryl Stroud

Treasurer's Report

The Club is financially sound with overall funds increasing by £603.47 to £7861.16. The Club's main income is from Members' subscriptions and sale of clothing, both of which are down on previous years.

Archivist's Report

This year I have spent a lot of time copying the hand written memoirs of founding member Felix Oehl on to computer. They give a fascinating insight to club cycling in Gloucester in the days before the Great War.

Election of Officers

Most incumbent Committee members were re-elected, with Daryl Stroud replacing Anthony Lake as Racing Secretary. Roger Whittle was appointed Safeguarding Officer. Other major roles were as follows:

President: Malcolm Taylor

General Secretary: Ian Wareing

Treasurer: Alastair Goldie

Captain: Toby Wooldridge

Kit Secretary: Ken Sheldon

In this last role, Ken noted that the font on all new kit has been changed to Arial Black, that we are now able to order Women's fit sizes as part of a batch with Men's fit, and the range of items with a minimum order quantity of five has expanded.

A full copy of the Minutes of the Meeting is available from the General Secretary.

The Trials and Tribulations of a competitive cyclist

John Murphy



My story starts in mid-2019, after I entered the National 12-hour Championship in Norfolk. Some weeks before the event I entered a 15-mile TT in the same area and over part of the 12 course, thinking that this would help me. The 15 went well, though I did not try too hard. I was more than surprised when I got back to the event H.Q. and was informed that my time for the 15 miles was a national age record (I was 79) and to send my time details to the National recorder. A few days later my good friend Ian Lindsay did all the computer details for me, as I am not particularly good with the internet. Some weeks later, I recorded the fewest miles I have ever covered in all the 12-hour Championships I have competed in over the years. Then, in December, I was informed that my 15 mile record had been broken by a Midlands rider that I know very well.

In January 2020 I travelled to Ireland by car and ship; my

sister had organised celebrations for my eightieth birthday. It was a wonderful trip, though it did involve a lot of late nights and driving. On our way back and just before the ship docked in Wales the Captain spoke over the intercom: "The main road to the M4 is closed, due to an accident". Thinking that I could avoid this hold up I found a road to go round it. Unfortunately, all I found was yet another delay, which lasted a long time. I got back to Gloucester and some time later had a bad turn that resulted in being taken to Gloucester Royal's A&E department. I was suspected of having a heart problem as my pulse was only 39 bpm. I tried to explain to the paramedics that my pulse was always about the same as that. I spent the night on a trolley in A&E, then was taken to a ward. For the next few days, I underwent all sorts of investigations only to be discharged with "See how it goes". Three to five days later I developed what I can only describe as a bad case of flu. Back in January I did not associate what I had with the Covid-19 pandemic to come, but who knows?

A few months later I had to visit Cheltenham hospital for an emergency eye operation. When asked beforehand whether I wanted a local or full anaesthetic I asked for the latter but was persuaded to take a local one, for mine was to be the last operation before the area was cleared to receive Covid cases, and it would make my recovery much faster. I was then wheeled down to the operating theatre. Two people were sticking needles all over the side of my head, a process that seemed to go on forever. After I was told "just three more, then we will be finished" I replied "Fantastic, then I can have my cup of tea and go home". "Oh no Mr. Murphy", I was told, "You have not had the operation yet". During the operation, which I would describe as being like 2001, A Space Odyssey, when Dave goes into hyper drive with fast flashing lights around him, I was constantly warned by the surgeon to stop wriggling my feet. It was definitely a day to remember.

Some weeks later, and feeling much better, I entered a 15-mile TT in Cambridge, as I thought of making a challenge on the age record. I trained hard for the event.

The TT was in the afternoon, so I requested an early start, not wanting to return home in the dark. A week before the event the organiser phoned me to apologise that he had forgotten the request and that I was no. 151 of 155 riders. Despite that I did go, and on my way to the H.Q. drove the course – it looked good, conditions were perfect. I went for a warm up before my start and after cycling out for about three miles the sky went black. Torrential rain and very strong winds developed and I got very wet on my way back to the car. I was then informed that the police had cancelled the event, the conditions being considered too dangerous. I packed up and drove home.

Not wishing to give up, I entered the National Championship 100 at Wotton Bassett. Thinking it would improve my chances of a good time, I drove over to the H.Q. the week before the event and cycled 80 miles of the 100-mile course, and really enjoyed my ride along the tough course. While seeking a parking place for the following week I met a young couple who said that I could park on their driveway all day, as they would be going out for the day. Because my preparations had gone so well I was feeling good about the event but the following Monday evening, after having had a bad eye problem the night before, I went to A&E. After waiting for three hours I left. At 2 a.m. on Tuesday I tried again but after a three hour wait was told they could not help, but gave me a phone number to ring at 8 a.m. I called, only to be told that no calls were to be made to this number during the pandemic. I was taking medication I had kept after my broken collar bone some years previously to relieve the pain. Still thinking I could compete I visited the emergency eye department in Cheltenham not once, not twice, but on the following Monday it was the *fourth* time and each time I was given a different diagnosis. This time, though, the problem was solved, and the specialist asked if he could take a picture of my eye problem for their training magazine as he had never seen such a bad case. But of course my chance at the 100 was gone.

Later on, I entered the Vets' National 10 TT at Newbury. Giving myself plenty of time to get to the event I got to Swindon to go on to the M4, which was unfortunately closed. After a long detour I got to the H.Q. still with plenty of time but was then told that I must take a marked route to the start as the M4 closure meant

there was too much traffic on the main road. The marked route was like going up and down Frocester Hill on a very bad surface, twice, but I got there in time and started. Remembering what I was told about the finish, that it was just after the last hill, when coming to the last part of the event I could see in the distance a person with a hi-viz jacket and a clipboard. I continued as fast as I could, shouting out my number as I passed, and then slowed to a walking pace. Later, and some way ahead, I noticed the real finish, which by now gave me my worst ever 10-mile TT time.

I did not want the season to end on a bad note, so I entered the Vets' National 15-mile TT near Battlefield (Shrewsbury). To avoid any problems my wife came with me and we stayed the night before in a Travelodge hotel. I'd been given an early start time, as requested, so next morning, again in good time, we left to drive to the event's H.Q. We got there in plenty of time as I had checked out the course and H.Q. the night before, to avoid any problems before the event. After waiting alone at the H.Q. I rang the organiser. "Did you not know", his wife said, "about the change of H.Q. and course, due to roadworks?". Unfortunately, the new H.Q. and course were a long way from where I was, but I did eventually find the H.Q. By now I was rushing as the start was a long way from the H.Q. but I made it in time. However, after the first few miles of the event, I was never going well and finished very tired, my worst 15 time ever.

I remember that famous day back in 1966 when the commentator said "They think its all over" just before Geoff Hurst made sure it was. With that in mind, I entered the National Circuit Championship in Thruxton on October 11th, hoping that the fat lady was already singing. I prepared well for the event and was feeling very good on the day. I went over everything three times to make sure I was forgetting nothing. A lovely morning, no wind – it looked like a perfect day. On a quiet road, driving through Marlborough, I was within 5 miles of Thruxton when I noticed a flock of pheasants, at least a dozen strong, in the distance. I started to slow down. As all TT people know, early morning driving will find birds in the road pecking at their breakfast, only to jump out of the way only just in time, but not with pheasants. Continuing to slow down I noticed in the mirror a car coming at me very fast and I

wondered why he was not stopping. It took me some weeks to get over the sight of this car ploughing into the back of mine and causing a lot of damage. One strange thing I can still see in my mind's eye is that, as I sat in my car in complete shock, the birds continued to cross the road. One in particular caught my eye; he had reached the other side of the road and turned his head to look straight at me. I really was expecting him to speak. He kept staring at me and I knew what he was thinking of saying:

"You egit, you thought it was all over. Na na na na".

The police were on the scene very quickly and sorted it all out, and fortunately there were no injuries to me or others.

We must always try to find something positive, even when things seem to be going negative. As for example

when I was in hospital a man came into the ward very late and looked in a bad way. Next morning the specialist came to see him and said "Mr. Thomas, I have got some good news and some bad news for you". The man asked for the bad news first. "I am sorry, Mr. Thomas, the legs will have to come off." "What's the good news then?" asked the patient. The surgeon said "the good news is that the man in the bed next to yours want to buy your slippers". You must always try to find the bright side, so my sincere best wishes go to all my fellow cyclists. Be careful out there.

Life can get very difficult at times but we must never forget the good times and the friends who go out of their way to help, and without whom I could not have managed, especially my good friend Malcolm Grainger. I cannot thank him enough.

RIP
Malcolm
Prince

Malcolm Prince was always a cyclist, He nearly rode a bicycle before he could walk. He rode to school, he rode to University, he rode to see his girlfriend, he rode to work, in fact nearly the only time he used a car, a Daimler Dart was for the Tour of The Cotswolds cycle race.

At Oxford University Malcolm gained an Honours Degree in Languages, and he was a member of the University's Cycling Club. Upon graduation he joined the Gloucester City Cycling Club and became its delegate to the BLRC.

In 1957 Malcolm married the love of his life Pat. Pat, a member of the Avon Road Club and in August 2020 they celebrated 63 years of marriage. Once Pat cycled out to Dymock to replenish him as he was riding the Gloucester City Club's classic, the Three Cities. Malcolm won the event, but the Committee deemed that he was a second claim member and thus ineligible for the Boakes Shield. The Princes also rode a tandem.



One memorable outing was on Sunday 25th February 1962. The Gloucester City was promoting their 100-mile reliability trial, a circuit around the snow covered Black Mountains. Clad in proper cycling clothing of the era, tandems, tricycles, and bicycles set off from the cattle market in Oxstalls Lane. Needless to say, the Princes were the fastest tandem in 5 hrs 55 mins, just 3 minutes slower than fastest overall.

Malcolm was no mean racing man, with his heart in Road Cycle Racing. In 1956 he left Gloucester City CC to join the Severn Valley Cycle Racing Club. He represented that club as a rider in both time trials and road races, including representing the West of England in the 1956 Tour of Britain road race. He served both the SVCRC and British Cycling Federation (BCF) Western Division (of which he was a founder member) in almost every official capacity. As well as being the Western Division's Chairman for over twenty years, Malcolm chaired the Racing Committee, the Coaching Committee and the General Purposes Committee. He was awarded the Division Badge of Honour by the BCF National Council in 1994 for services to the Federation.

Malcolm was respected throughout the country as a senior cycling official. As a coach he was active throughout the year encouraging and guiding the members of the SVCRC. Activities include training with the riders on the road and leading circuit and weight training sessions during the winter months. He devoted a great deal of his time coaching the schoolboy, schoolgirl and junior club members in addition to the senior members. Many of the West Country's cycling stars have put their success down to Malcolm.

For many years Malcolm's major promotion was the International Tour of The Cotswolds Cycle Race. This was a British classic cycle race first held in 1952 and promoted by Malcolm from 1989 until its demise in 2001.

Malcolm will be remembered by his wife Pat, his son Ian, grandchildren, and too many cyclists to mention.

Ted Tedaldi & Neville Lockwood

And finally...

From the Racing Secretary:

The Club has proposed a new 10 mile TT course, from Chaxhill along the A48 to turn at Highnam Court and return. It has been allocated a provisional designation, UC50, and following a traffic count, risk assessment, measurement, etc. the course awaits CTT committee approval.

The race equipment has all been collected up and is now stored in my garage.

All the 2020 awarded trophies (see page 12) have been received. Engraving will proceed as Covid lockdown regulations allow.

From the Welfare Officer:

The Club's new Safeguarding Policy is now in force. Details and a form to report concerns can be found on the Club web site in the Members section.

From the Media Officer:

The Club now has an INSTAGRAM page. We already have 83 followers, mostly from other cycling clubs.

Some book recommendations

"Tough Women" is about adventurous women basically on their own, trekking, cycling, horse riding, swimming, kayaking and more. It consists of short adventure write-ups, twenty two in all. I am about half way through. I have found it a great read, but before you ask, there are only two minor sexual mentions, nothing to tickle your fancy.

However a good cycling tip for you those training under lockdown, probably five rides a week. To protect your face from the cold use, as the last of the nomads Cat Vinton was told, yak butter. ET

ISBN 978-1-78783-300-5 £9.95 Edited by Jenny Tough

An homage to "the world's oldest off-road cycling club" is "The Rough Stuff Fellowship Archive". This begins with a brief history of the Fellowship, founded in 1955, and ends with a reproduction of its Journal describing the first crossing by bicycle of the highest, longest, and toughest pass in Iceland. In between is a collection of lovingly curated photographs of people with bicycles, tricycle, and tandems in widely inappropriate places. A perfect book for dipping in on dark winter evenings. MRT

ISBN 978-0-99-54886-5-6 £28.00 Edited by Mark Hudson