

GLOUCESTER CITY CYCLING CLUB



Spokespiece

Spring 2025

SPOKESPIECE

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The Newsletter of the Gloucester City Cycling Club



EDITORIAL

It's now summer, though after the sunniest and driest spring on record it has felt that the season began early this year. It suited us cyclists very well, with the evening TT's off to a great start (as our rising star "Abu" demonstrates above), the Club runs being well attended, and off road opportunities aplenty beckoning.

Unfortunately we have seen an unusual number of injuries, mostly what are politely called "single vehicle incidents". We send wishes for speedy recovery and in this issue feature a few safety related items to keep the issue fresh in mind.

As I write, the Giro d'Italia has just finished. You may recall that it began in Albania so the story of cycle touring in that country is very timely. Club touring is featured in the piece from Abergavenny, perhaps the closest destination we've ever used. Toby had to replace horizontal distance with vertical to maintain the challenge! Finally we feature a couple of pieces from our racing members.

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Contributions for the next issue please to Spokespiece@gmail.com by August 30th

Albania

You know you're in a foreign country when the first two items on the breakfast menu are *Calf's head stew* and *Calf's tripe stew*. We had crossed the border from Greece earlier in the day at Konispol. We waited with a few cars, a French camper van, and a couple of German motorbike riders on big Harley Davidsons. Everyone was milling around by the offices to the side. We did some milling too, then presented our passports at the non-EU window. They were studied for a while then stamped and handed back. We were in!

After a breakfast, devoid of calf, we headed to Ksamil. The ride was a joy, beautiful scenery, masses of wildlife, with the added entertainment of the chain ferry across to Butrint.

We were definitely a novelty; kids called out "hello", drivers waved enthusiastically and tooted horns, one guy smiled and clapped as we went past, we even got a nod from a lad riding a motorbike with a wooden pallet under his arm, and a lovely wave from the old lady sitting on top of a pile of scavenged goodies on the back of a three wheel scooter.

The town of Ksamil is diverse, with classy looking new hotels mixed up randomly with well maintained older homes, some pretty basic blocks of flats, building sites, and little vegetable patches and olive groves. A maze of winding tracks and roads; chaotic but fascinating. There were very few tourists, the bars and restaurants being sparsely populated by local men. We spent a few nights in Ksamil so we could see the archeological site at Butrint, but after a couple of disturbing incidents (ask me in the pub sometime) we were pleased to move on.

Saranda is a scaled up version of Ksamil. There is a pleasant pedestrianised walkway along the front with shady seating and palm trees, but otherwise it's mile after mile of hotels and apartment blocks in various stages of completion. There didn't appear to be much regulation of development for it seemed random, with ugly buildings in unsuitable places.

A brief history

Albania has been settled since prehistory, the Greeks, Romans, Venetians, and Ottomans all claimed territory over the millennia. It first became a single country when king Skanderbeg led a unified Albania against the Ottomans in the 15th century. A large square in the centre of Tirana is named in his honor.

The history of Albania through the 19th and 20th century is complicated and violent, the country being regularly invaded or partitioned by its more powerful neighbours. The country finally achieved independence when liberated from Nazi occupation by partisan fighters at the end of WWII. The leader of the partisans, Enver Hoxha, went on to create a brutal communist dictatorship that lasted over forty years.

We visited the "Communist Terror Pavilion" in the excellent National Historical museum in Tirana, which documents the lives of some of the many brave people who resisted the Hoxha regime and suffered the consequences. The exhibition was mercifully short on graphic exhibits and English translations, but the scale of suffering was still clear.

We are all fortunate beyond measure for our time and place of birth.



We didn't fancy staying, and as Triss was keen to cut out some of the worst of the mountainous coastal road we opted to take a bus to Vlore. This involved considerable confusion and stress but we managed to get ourselves and the bikes on a bus that turned out not to go to Vlore after all. Eventually (after a collision in the mountains with a wild horse) the driver dropped us at a traffic island by a busy roundabout in the middle of nowhere. We had to reassemble the bikes with curious motorists beeping and waving. We were actually much closer to Fier than Vlore so we cycled there.



Next we explored some of the wonderful Divjake-Karavasta National Park, an important wetland wildlife area, then made our way through the port of Durres to the capital Tirana.

We spent three enjoyable days in Tirana. It has all the elements of a modern European capital city, eye-catching architecture, leafy boulevards, intriguing public art, acclaimed museums, restaurants of all cuisines, plus of course crowds, noise, and too many cars



The atmosphere in Fier was very different to Ksamil, there were families, groups of men, groups of women, lots of young people, all having a stroll round or a drink in a bar. We were probably the only foreigners as this is not a tourist area. It was so nice to just be part of a social community.

Heading north from Fier the cycling was easy, with no big hills, pretty good surfaces, considerate drivers, and nice scenery.

At coffee stops the first question was frequently a friendly "Where are you from?", younger staff being keen to practice their English. Conversations were often translated for the rest of the clientele (in rural areas usually all men) who were eager for the gossip, which prompted much discussion and additional lines of friendly inquiry. We had lovely long chats in cafes and learned much about life in Albania, discussed the rights and wrongs of joining or leaving the EU, and got tips on places we should visit. It was a joy, they were such nice people, but we were reminded how fortunate we are. The average monthly wage in rural areas would just about cover what we'd spent on bar-bags and panniers.



For our next stop we had booked an intriguing room for the night in the castle at Kruje. The trouble with castles is they build them on top of hills. This one was 500 meters high along a road at 5% to 15%, followed by 50 metres of pushing through narrow steep cobbled alleyways (Triss has my utmost respect and gratitude for days like that) but the view made every millimetre worthwhile. We could see Tirana (20 miles away) and Durres (30 miles away) and we looked down on the planes landing at Tirana's airport.

The castle was built by Skanderbeg in the 15th century, and the hotel rooms are in small huts crammed into the ruins. For lunch we sat at a table which perched rather precariously on top of a section of the castle wall. Neither English Heritage nor the Health and Safety Executive would allow anything even vaguely similar in England.

A poor choice of route leaving Kruje resulted in us inadvertently cycling through the middle of an active quarry. The drivers of the huge dumper trucks were very considerate in the circumstances.

Bunkers bonkers...

Enver Hoxha became convinced that Albania would be invaded, either by the 'imperialists' to the west or the 'soviet reactionaries' to the east. He ordered a network of bunkers to be built across the country. Planning began in 1971 and 173,371 bunkers were built between 1975 and 1985 – one for every 11 citizens.

As the bunkers are virtually impossible to demolish most of them are just derelict, but many have been adapted for other purposes; museums, play equipment, artwork.



After leaving the quarry we took SH1 through Mamuras, Sanxhak, Lac, and Zejmem. Some great Scrabble scores there, but not many options for getting lunch. Eventually we stopped



outside Caffè Tradita in Lac. Although they didn't do food, Geni, the owner, said they could get us something. Three guys were sitting at a table with Geni and invited us to join them. Ben had escaped one of Hoxha's political prisons in the '70s and is now based in America, Michael is the town mayor, Geni is Kosovan and spent several years in London seeking asylum before being rejected and sent back. Mario ordered takeaway pizza for us from his phone.

We sat for nearly an hour talking. Life is not easy for ordinary Albanians, they work extraordinarily hard for relatively low wages, but such is the Albanian dedication to hospitality they wouldn't let us pay a single Lek towards the drinks, or even the pizza they had ordered specially just for us.

They had invited us to join them so we were their guests, so it was unthinkable to them that we should pay anything. Finally we gave them some money to be passed on to a deserving local, a compromise preserving everyone's honour. Extraordinary kindness from people who were just interested in talking to us.

We had a similar experience a couple of days later. We waved at a couple standing by a cow in a field. A few minutes later their car pulled up alongside us. They waved enthusiastically and the word 'coffee' was heard several times. They drove slowly with us behind, when they turned off they beckoned us to follow. A few minutes later we were sitting on the veranda of their lovely house. With the help of Google Translate and their nephew Leo and niece Angela we establish they were Giuseppe and Lisa who shared their smallholding with two pigs, lots of chickens, impressive fields of vines (from which they make wine and raiki), beans, potatoes, watermelons, and much more.

When they are good...

Albanian roads: to paraphrase Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, when they are good they are very good, but when they are bad they are horrid.

90% of our time was spent on roads like the Rruga Lezhe – Vau i Dejes. Beautiful smooth tarmac, stunning views, hardly any traffic; in short, cycling paradise. Cycling around town could be challenging. There would often be cars parked along both sides of a narrow street. If the locals want to pick up a morning coffee and byrek they stop in the middle of the road with the engine running and hazard lights on. If the traffic doesn't reach a sufficient degree of mayhem by itself then the local constabulary dispatch an officer to stand in the road, blow a whistle and wave a lollipop baton around. We had no idea which baton motion meant stop and which go. To judge by the traffic, no one else did either.

Roadworks were another eye-opener. Often there were no signs, no traffic control, no barriers, no cones, but everyone patiently shared the drivable bits, smiling and waving at the mad cyclists picking their way through the madness.

They type “a do rrini per drek” into my phone, it means “will you stay for lunch?”. Before long we were tucking in to pasta with sauce, boiled eggs, homemade cheese (white and crumbly, similar to Feta), a massive dish of some kind of cheese pie, then a most unusual dessert called Kabaif. All were made from wonderful fresh local ingredients and delicious. With most of the day’s ride still ahead of us we had to leave sooner than we really wanted, they insisted we take a huge box of pie and their excellent homemade cheese with us, and gave us roses to decorate the bikes.

What can you say about Albanian hospitality? They were a lovely family and made us so welcome, such a pleasure to meet them.



Our final stop was Shkoder, the “city of bikes and rain”. No rain fortunately but plenty of bikes. The special status bikes have here means the locals ride on either side of the road, as if there wasn’t enough traffic chaos already you have to watch out for cyclists wobbling towards you on the wrong side of the road.

From Shkoder It was only a few miles to the border with Montenegro and the next stage of our travels, a new country, new language, even a new alphabet. Albania was a great unknown and we had arrived with trepidation, but left with sadness. We were endlessly impressed with the beauty of the landscape, and even more by the welcome of the people. Do go if you get the chance.

235 miles & 9823ft in 11 days

Simon & Triss Pollington



Between trips, Simon has been busy establishing a route library for the Club. Using Ride With GPS as the host, we have a Gloucester City CC Club Account. It allows multiple administrators (typically ride leaders) to create and manage the route library using advanced route planning tools. In addition, all Club members get the benefit of paid RWGPS features such as voice navigation and offline maps in the mobile app, advanced turn notifications on TCX files, and PDF Maps and Cue sheets. Individual Premium membership to use these features costs \$80 a year so it is a valuable benefit for our members to be able to plan and use GPS routes. The Club library now has about thirty routes, all sorted, tagged, and added to collections based on location. In the library:

- Route NAME: If the route goes to a specific cafe then the name of the café is the route NAME.
- TAGS indicate 'Road' or 'Gravel' and may include any major features such as 'Bridge Loop'.
- There is a COLLECTION for each destination we ride to, i.e. towns and villages
- LOCATION is the name of the destination town. It is used to view or sort the Route library.

For more information on how to use or contribute to the library read more on the [Ride With GPS](#) site, and feel free to ask Simon about it.

Club Tour to Abergavenny

Toby Wooldridge et al

Day One Friday 8 April 2025

Six riders departed the Square and used the subway to cross the busy A40 to join the path to Highnam. The roads in Highnam are surprisingly pot holed for a residential area. All then went via Whitehall Lane, which is well known to be potholed but, on this occasion, thankfully dog free. Emma decided busy traffic was preferable to potholes and dogs.

It was then quiet and familiar lanes to Birdwood, passing some of Colin's friends polishing their black limousines for some serious business. Banishing these dark thoughts, we enjoyed brilliant sunshine, bird song, and little traffic as we passed through Flaxley and climbed up to Mitcheldean and down different routes to Lea and Pontshill where we met Terry. Twisting and turning through Bill Mills and on to Walford. Near here we saw the a beautifully ploughed field with its furrows making a delightful pattern. I didn't realise a ploughed field could look so good.

Breakfast was taken at Kerne Bridge's Dot and Hen café at after which we tackled the cycle path from Symonds Yat to Monmouth. It is a rough surface, but cycling alongside the river Wye took one's mind off it. It was here that we had our only mechanical when Colin's rack stay came loose. With Zip ties and some adjustments he was able to continue, but carry only one pannier, Toby kindly volunteering to carry the other.

We didn't stop in Monmouth, instead taking to lanes via Dingestow and Raglan. Crossing the A40 brought back memories of time trials, from when some people were younger. Lunch was taken at the Beaufort Arms and a couple of riders went off to see Raglan Castle, which looked magnificent in the clear blue sky. The route had been undulating but felt more up than down so the leader, to lessen the pain for his fellow riders, decided to go round the hill instead of up and over and also to see Clytha Castle. We managed to see Clytha Park but missed the castle as we were descending so fast. What should have been a flat run into Abergavenny following the Usk turned out to be surprisingly hilly, or was it just that were getting tired?

A quick change and an excellent Italian meal arranged by Emma. We were here joined by Jason and Paul.

65.31 miles 3,673 feet of climbing.

Day 2 Low miles on high roads

A leisurely departure at 9am saw the group without Jason but supplemented by the arrival of the President. This was the mission: two big climbs. First up, The Tumble. After a short gentle drag, we hit the slopes and the two steep hairpins. Here we were joined by a Porsche club outing – the cars roared off into the mountains in the blink of an eye with an ear-splitting noise. Traffic after that was reasonably light as we all plodded up in low gears. The climb is around two miles and, for the Captain at least, his first ascent of this fabled mountain road. He was not disappointed.

A brief stop just above the tree line for photos (aka respite) and it was onwards on gentler gradients to the top. The sign claims over 500m, which is fake news: it's actually, per the OS surveyors, 490m. You have to go to the radio masts to



reach 512m. Which we didn't! Nevertheless, photos duly having been taken it was a fast descent to Blaenarvon and a discrete right, easily and almost missed. Litter alongside this road was a disgrace, so much so that our two riders equipped with 'Gravel Bikes' took to Sustrans path NCN492 – and reported it was passable for any machine. Rats, missed that one.

The road descent to the heads of the valley far below was exhilarating, and we soon regrouped in the out of luck town of Brynmawr for our scheduled morning stop, the most insalubrious Homestead Café. Still, with tea at £1 and a toasted hot cross bun at 80p, there were no complaints. You get what you pay for!

Distance covered: 9 miles!



The President assured us of the next leg, NCN46 – well surfaced and passing interesting former mines and newer housing estates. Easy to become misplaced, and we were for a while, but ended up on track: the B4560 Llangynidr Road – and the next mountain to climb.

This proved to be an easy (relative to the Tumble) affair, topping out at 518m – a helpful tailwind was appreciated. Two riders spun off to the east for a minor road and an interesting (and a bit hair raising, Ed.) off-road descent to the valley, rejoining the main group. The descent was an exhilarating affair for the senses with fabulous views north to the Usk valley.





Regrouping, we proceeded up the valley and abandoned the original plan in favour of a convivial hostelry at Llangynidr, The Coach and Horses. A road/fell running race was passing through, the runners looking somewhat the worse for their efforts. We on the other hand were fresh (really?) after only 19 miles, probably the shortest ever tour ride to a lunch stop!

Refreshed, it was homeward bound: first over the canal, then the Usk on a tiny bridge. A cunning right / right had many fooled – but the resulting lane was quite superb. Sadly, all good things come to an end: the A40 into Crickhowell was a little busy. Here, over the Usk for a final time, and then followed a series of merciless short, sharp climbs. Descending again to the canal, we opted for the easier way – towpath. What a feat of engineering is the Brecon canal, clinging to the steep hillside, and with a fairly good surface for touring bikes.

Another error: the leader thought it a good idea to finish the ride on the old Abergavenny to the Valley Heads railway. This involved a very steep climb – most were forced to walk. Then onto the rail bed for a gently sloping track all the way (virtually) to base camp. And yes, over the canal – which we could (some say should) have remained on. Point taken for next time!

A small diversion to the Bridge Inn (on the Usk) for refreshments completed the riding for the day. How far? Maybe 38 miles...

Day 3 Homeward bound

Sunday was grey and cold when we set off. We had planned to use a route chosen by Komoot to Chepstow that we could follow on Alastair's Garmin but first we were going to check it against an OS map so we knew where we were going and what we should expect. Unfortunately, the co-leader slept in and a check was unable to be carried out. At various junctions we stopped and reviewed the Komoot route. It turned out to be a very scenic route but included three major climbs where perhaps one would have been sufficient after Saturday's climbs. Off we went with a strong tail wind along very pleasant lanes via Llanellen and Usk passing Llancayo windmill. We crossed the Usk on a magnificent iron bridge that looked like a miniature Sydney Harbour Bridge and then through Alice Springs – where were we!



We were following NCN route 42 which took us to a real steep, long and unforgiving climb at Pen y Cae-mawr. Some were obliged to walk, and a few grumbles were duly noted at the top. But the view north was spectacular – even a little sunshine on the distant mountains. So on to Shirenewton via a delightful descent and a short climb. This presented us with a splendid vista of the Severn and the Quantocks in the far distance.

Then another classic descent / climb just before Chepstow – the arrowed climb at Mounton. The run down to the Severn Bridge was idyllic with the wind behind us but getting cooler. We had coffee at the Aust service station, which is now not much more than the Portakabin that AliG remembered from the past. The older establishment with its views over the Severn and the bridges seems to exist but is not accessible. The Captain was not impressed with the offerings.

Route 41 took us to Ham where we again met Jason. We sat in the sun but the temperature dropped, and though snoods came out they were not enough to keep us warm. We adjourned to the saloon in the Salutation Arms. The temperature had dropped from 18°C to 13°C.

It was then back to Gloucester where we discovered it had rained - fortunately not on us.

63.16 miles 2881 feet

Too close?



At a meeting of the Gloucestershire cycle forum Robert Vestey of the County Constabulary gave a frank and informative talk about close passing and 20mph speed limits. Here are some of the interesting points he raised on close passes. I shall report on speed limits at another time.

First the bad news. Close passing is not a criminal offence. The Highway Code (rule 163) states “You should...leave at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds of up to 30mph and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds” but in the Code “should” indicates a recommendation; only “must” indicates a legal requirement. The offence that may have been committed is driving without due care and attention, also known as careless driving.

Factors a court would consider in culpability in relation to such a charge include:

- Excessive speed or aggressive driving
- Carrying out other tasks while driving
- Tiredness or driving whilst unwell
- Driving contrary to medical advice
- Factors indicating harm include:
 - Injury to others
 - Damage to other vehicles or property

National police guidance is that dashcam or cyclecam footage needs to show evidence of an inconvenience being caused, whether to the camera user or other road user. Typically this would mean some kind of avoiding action such as the cyclist having to swerve or an oncoming vehicle having to brake. In many cases footage doesn’t clearly demonstrate any of these. In consequence, many close pass incidents do not meet the threshold for a successful prosecution.

Now the good news. The County Constabulary recognizes that close passing is an issue and is acting. Where the police judge that a pass was dangerous (which is about 50% of the cases brought to their attention) an advisory letter is sent to the vehicle’s registered keeper. Experience with speeding, where a similar approach has been adopted, is that reoffending rates drop significantly in consequence. If there is sufficient evidence of driving without due care and attention (about 35% of cases) action is taken against the registered keeper, many of whom plead guilty. Note that it isn’t necessary for the video to identify the driver. Of the cases that get to court only 3% go to a not guilty trial, the rest are resolved beforehand.

A record breaker's season, so far

A late start to the season this year. I decided for a few reasons I would not do the Hardriders' series. I was involved in a road traffic accident after leaving the AGM on October 2nd 2024. My VW Transporter was written off as a result and I suffered quite bad whiplash and back injuries. This led to a big delay in my winter training, but also a healthy profit for The Pelican and The Thatch whilst I recuperated! I was also tired in 2024 by May/June so thought I would start later this year.

By January I'd finished physiotherapy so began training and cut out the booze. I ditched the TrainerRoad platform because it left me burnt out last year and decided instead to do my own thing, which involved a load of mileage and taking it easy.

Race 1 - R15/5 29th March

A shakedown ride. I'd lost weight and decided it would be nice to beat my veteran standard record but also felt no pressure. Quite a windy day but still, I managed some good power, rode well and ended up with 31:20 and 4th overall, 2nd place V50 and set a new club outright record and club vet std record. Funnily enough I'd put a target time of 31:20 in my Training Peaks plan!

Race 2 - R25/7A 13th April

A course change due to roadworks at Usk found us riding half the Welsh 50 course. It's a bit bumpy in places with, according to my aero sensor, a decent headwind for 60%. I didn't really have a target time but figured anything under 56 would be good. Came in 5th with 53:01.

Race 3 - F11/10 4th May

I'd originally planned to do the WCA25 but after two course changes due to roadworks it was moved to the course I'd done three weeks before, so I decided to cancel and head to the fast 10 at Tring for something different. I was feeling under the weather, and it was a tough day with a very strong crosswind. The consensus was that everyone was about a minute off pace because of the conditions. My target was 19:30 going into the event but I ended up with 20:16, 16th overall and 1st place V50 again. I was very pleased with the ride as I was only a minute off 7-time World Champion in his age group Richard Oakes, a big thing for me to do. The current road bike 10-mile record holder George Fox did a 19:07 on his full TT bike so again I felt I had done a great ride. Both those guys are usually in the low 18's there.

Race 4 - D30/11 18th May

I entered this late as I had nothing else booked until mid-June and hadn't done a proper 30 before. It's a single carriageway course up above Telford that looked a bit bumpy but wasn't as bad as it appeared on the map. I'd modelled the event at a high 1:04 and Spindata had me in the high 1:05's. Final time was 1:05:18, 5th place and fastest V50 again. Although I rode well I misjudged the last few miles. Wind was a factor again as I'd calculated my effort based on weather prediction - idiot! Very pleased with the result, which set a new club vet std record and also took the outright club record set in 1992 by the awesome rider that is Adrian Rowley. I'm still in awe of how he managed such a time back then. Hats off to him and My apologies for taking the record off you, sir.

Next I am looking forward to the F11/10 on June 14th and then the National 50 at Abergavenny on the R50/1B on June 30th. I hope to see some teammates out at those events. We have a really strong team across various age groups and it's great to see the fear in the eyes of some of the teams that have been quite dominant in recent years.

Tim Radley

Centre Court and back

The Tennis and Pickleball Club is an important facility in the Chalford area for the members and the community. I am a Pickleball member. My family also play, as well as Tennis. The club is run by volunteers and I am passionate about improving facilities for all members and giving something back to an amazing club. With improved facilities we would then be able to offer wheelchair tennis and other open court programmes, allowing us to be more inclusive to those in the community.

On Saturday 24th May, I cycled from Chalford Sports and Social Club to the Centre Court, Wimbledon and back to Chalford in the same day. I set off with Daryl Stroud at approximately 3am.. The route took me through Swindon, Newbury, Reading, Twickenham to Wimbledon and back. I have chosen this as it is the flattest route.

Nathan Monk



Together we rode 215 miles at an average speed of 15mph and raised almost £2500. Thanks go to my sponsors and my supporters, especially Daryl, who rode all the way with me, and Simon Witts who turned up for a morale boost as the day grew late and the legs grew weary.

HOW TO WEAR A CYCLE HELMET CORRECTLY!

I have seen one or two people in our club with ill fitted helmets and thought this guidance was worth sharing. Firstly make sure your helmet is the right size. If you are unsure what size, you should wear.

Get a piece of tape, or tape measure. Put this all around your head. See sizing guide. If should you be in between, go up a size.

Once you measure and get your helmet, a good helmet should be a good fit. And to know this, place your helmet on your head, the front should sit two fingers about your eyebrows. No point a helmet not sitting correctly, as if you were to come off, the helmet isn't going to protect your head.

Smith Helmet Sizing	
Size	Head Cicumference
Small	51-55 cm
Medium	55-59 cm
Large	59-63 cm
Extra Large	63-67 cm



Adjust the straps to sit on your head as the pictures show.

The side straps should be in a V shape around your ear. For the chin strap, should be able to get one finger between your chin and strap. Once you have your helmet fitted correctly, you shouldn't need to re-adjust it.

Marie Cook

Continuing the safety theme

This season several members have suffered cycling incidents that took them to Accident & Emergency. Amongst the injuries I have heard of are: broken collarbone, fractured pelvis, broken rib, broken leg, and fractured vertebra. Fortunately, all are on the way to recovery. Poor road surfaces have been a contributing factor in at least some of these incidents so keep your eyes peeled and perhaps consider switching to wider tyres and lower and more accommodating tyre pressures to give yourself a better chance of surviving those bumps in the road.

Should the worst happen to you take a beat before getting back on the bike and remember that 112 as well as 999 can be used to call for help. In areas of poor coverage you can also text 112 for help. Include details of the incident and, if you can, use [What Three Words](#) to give the emergency services a precise location. There's a phone app and a website.

Should the worst happen to you on a ride and you are found unconscious it's worth making sure that you have emergency contact details with you. The Club offers a free tag and card to members. If you want one take a look at [In Case of Emergency](#) under the members tag on the Club website.

Malcolm Taylor



For Garmin users there's another way to display your contact details. Here's how to display your name and phone number on your Garmin Edge:

1. Attach unit to a PC
2. Open startup.txt
3. Type your message below the instruction <- Type your message on the next line ->
4. Save the file.

The startup message is then displayed to the person turning on your Garmin Edge unit. This could also be useful should you leave it in the café.

Thanks to D. C. Rainmaker for this. A fuller description of the process is on his [website](#).

The Perfect Safety Bicycle of 1876

In 1874, Mr. George Shergold of Gloucester began to design and build a low-wheeled, 'geared up' bicycle with front steering, chain transmission, and rotary rear-driving. By 1876, his remarkable creation was arguably the world's first safety bicycle. Unfortunately, he never received the recognition he deserved and passed away in Gloucester Workhouse in July 1903 at the age of 75.

Mr. Shergold was not a cycle manufacturer but a shoemaker by trade. The design of his low-wheeled cycle stemmed from his need for a chair to climb onto the late 1860's 'boneshaker' style bicycle that he rode. When his new safety bicycle was constructed in 1876, it originally had iron tyres. It was only in 1877 that Mr. Shergold was able to afford rubber tyres and rode his safety bicycle from Gloucester to Birmingham. Between March and September 1880, advertisements appeared in *The Gloucester Citizen* stating, "The Perfect safety bicycle, new invention, great speed, goes easily, made to order by the inventor, Mr. G. Shergold, 1, Clifton Road, Gloucester."

The original 1876 Shergold Safety Bicycle is housed in the Science Museum Group collection.

After a near twenty-year interlude, the bicycle was purchased by James Wareing, Managing Director of the Gloucester City and County Cycle Company, and put on display in their shop on Westgate Street. Mr. Wareing's claim in October 1899 for Mr. Shergold to be recognised as inventor of the first safety bicycle was picked up by the local and national press and would dominate the pages of the cycling press for the next twelve months. The debate during 1900 over the authenticity of the claims sparked significant criticism from rivals such as Mr. Harry Lawson, who were eager to stake their own place in history. In November 1901 though, the contents of Mr Wareing's home and cycle business, including the Shergold safety cycle, were sold at auction as part of a voluntary liquidation sale.

A public subscription in July 1900, in which Mr. Wareing offered to accept donations to create a Shergold Testimonial Fund raised only enough for Mr. Shergold to receive the sum of five shillings a week for two years before he was forced to seek refuge in the Gloucester Workhouse.

Mr. Shergold's place in history has been largely overlooked, as despite the existence of his machine, it was dismissed on the grounds it did not achieve public and commercial success.



Building The Replica

In 2024, Mr. Phil Walters (pictured) of Minchinhampton was inspired to create this replica safety bicycle to highlight his county's role in early bicycle design and to honour the ingenuity of Mr. Shergold.

Despite its weight, rod steering, and high gear, Mr. Walters describes it as quite a comfortable cycle to ride. The tempered steel spring beneath the saddle effectively absorbs road vibrations, whilst the suspension leather saddle, lauded by the cycling press in 1900 for its modern design, stands as a tribute to the innovative craftsmanship of its shoemaker creator.

In Memoriam

Dave Mundy died after being involved in an accident with a car whilst out riding the Elmore loop. Many of you will have known or seen Dave out sporting top quality accessories on his latest bike, purchased from his favourite shop, Cheltenham Cycles. Dave was a former manager of Halfords whose love of bikes took him back there as a cycle mechanic after retirement. He stood out amongst the crowd, always immaculately dressed on the bike or the dance floor. He spent many of his days riding with local clubs, most recently Stonehouse Wheelers, and frequently entered the Great Weston Ride, a 58-mile ride from Bristol to Weston-Super-Mare, a favourite area. I have known Dave for many years, and we celebrated our birthdays within a few days of each other – he was the older by five days! We met through Gloucester City Cycling Club and spent some great times together. He encouraged my wife and I to go on a cycling holiday to Empuriabrava, the Bay of Roses, in Spain, where he delighted in showing us the area and his favourite routes. Dave was 79 and leaves his wife Helen. Paul Bridges



Rob Doman died of a heart attack while cycling in Lanzarote on 17th February. Rob was a popular member of the club who participated across a wide range of club events, and he will be missed by many.

Rob lived a peripatetic and interesting life, having lived in a canal boat and more recently spent much of his time converting and then using a Highways Agency van, complete with hi-viz regalia. He would park it in the pub car park before a ride, ready for a drink and a rest afterwards.

He was a good man in a crisis, with much experience of first aid, which came in handy when a club mate fell and broke his pelvis.

Before taking this holiday in Lanzarote he had been excited at passing his 66th birthday and qualifying for a free bus pass. Alas, he never got the chance to enjoy it.

He leaves his partner, Deborah.

Phil Hogsflesh was active in the Club around the turn of the century, winning the Dan Knight Trophy in 1994, the T.G.Hall handicap race in 1996, and the Three Cities Tourist (now Roadman's) Trophy in 2004.

He passed away on 22nd May after a short battle with renal cancer, leaving his wife.

Some members will remember meeting **Barry Hoban**, who has died at the age of 85, with Phil Griffith in Luchon for an entertaining evening's conversation. He was a pioneering figure in UK road cycling and was twice the National pursuit champion. He won 36 races in a long career and held the record for most stage wins by a British rider in the Tour de France – eight – for over 30 years. He also held the record for most Tours completed by a British rider, which had stood at 11. After retiring he worked with Phil in Yellow Ltd., the Club's sponsor for many years.

