



**Bedfordshire  
Road Cycling  
Club**

# The Bedfordshire Cyclist

**Issue 117**

**January 2021**

## Editorial

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With so many restrictions on what can be done, where it can be done and with whom, it is a tribute to the Club that there is anything to report at all. We have here a summary of 2020, hoping that we will

soon be back to normal and have enough material to return to bi-monthly editions.

My grateful thanks to those members who rallied round to enable this edition to be published. TAB

**A happy, healthy  
and mile-filled  
New Year to you all!**

**Special points of  
interest:**

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Membership of the Club is open to all interested in cycling. Further information is available on the Club's website [www.bedsroad.org](http://www.bedsroad.org)

Information on subscriptions is on page 3.

**Deadline for copy for next edition.  
Monday 1st March 2021**

**PARKING AT THE CLUBROOM**

We have agreed with our neighbours not to park opposite their entrances. In fact it is not always our members who are responsible but never-the-less some "NO PARKING" signs have been obtained, which we hope you will observe.

## Diary of Events

**Unfortunately, due to restrictions applied during the pandemic, it has not been possible to plan very far ahead. The table below is our normal schedule and may not apply at the moment. Please check before attending any function.**

<b>Tuesday Evenings</b>	Social ride from Clubroom ( Contact Ian McDonnell for details)
<b>Wednesday Mornings</b>	Wecyle Wednesdays meet at Barkers Lane entrance to Priory Park. 09.30
<b>Wednesday Evenings</b>	Family ride from Clubroom ( Contact Ian McDonnell for details)
<b>Saturday Mornings</b>	Go-Ride sessions. Various locations, based on Priory Park. 0.900
<b>Sunday Mornings</b>	Club-runs leave from Swan Hotel at 09.00 (check web site)

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A picture from more stable times, showing Club members at the opening of the new Club headquarters, which were purchased by members through fund raising activities and the sale of life membership. The ex-army hut, heated by a coal fire, lit by hurricane lamps and with chemical toilets, was erected by members on waste land in Cambridge Road and was dedicated to Club members who lost their lives in World War II. The Memorial Plaque is now displayed in the present Clubroom in Cardington.



## CLUB MEMBERSHIP

### SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE ON JANUARY 1st

Joining Fee**	£ 5
Senior 18+	£20
Couples	£25
Family (Couple +under 18's in full-time education)	£33
Junior (16-17 yrs)	£ 8
Juvenile (12-15 yrs)	£ 6
Under 12 years old	Free
60+ on 1st January	£10

\*\* Applies to new members and existing members who renew after 31st March .

Members who have not renewed by 31st March are presumed to have resigned. They will need to re-apply for membership after this date.

Membership Secretary:- Graham Laming.  
Subscriptions may be renewed in person by contacting Graham at the Clubroom,  
By bacs on line via the Club website,  
by post to :-  
Membership Secretary, Bedfordshire Road C.C.  
Southill Road, Cardington, Bedfordshire,  
MK44 3SX  
**Please make cheques payable to 'Beds Road C.C.'**,  
Or by Bank Transfer to :-  
Lloyds TSB, High St, Bedford. --  
Account Name Bedfordshire Road Cycling Club  
Account No. 01293926 - Sort Code 30-90-66  
Please use the reference **Joe Bloggs-subs\*\*** so that we can identify from whom and why remittance was made.

\*\*Change to your real name (some people didn't)

## Magazine distribution

### Please read carefully.

Members for whom we have no e-mail address will continue to receive the magazine in the post.

Members for whom we have a current e-mail address will receive an e-mail containing a link to the Club web site, where the magazine can be read or downloaded. If this does not happen it means that we do not have your correct address and you should contact the Editor as soon as possible.

Members with an e-mail address, but who prefer to receive a paper copy, can still do so by contacting the Editor (details on back page.)

### British Library

A copy of this magazine is kept in the British Library and forms an important part of the Club History. It is vital therefore, that accounts are as complete as possible. Would you all please send results, reports and stories to the Editor so that a true picture of Club activities is recorded. (See back page for addresses)

**Deadline for copy for next edition. Monday**

### **Ladies Captain's report**

Covid 19 has hit us all in many ways, occasionally with a hint of a silver lining.

Our ladies have grown in number, gaining several new members. We've seen ladies hitting the racing scene for the first time with appearances by Carmen, Lydia and Cindy, as well as old favourites that can't stay away. Mim, Jo, Emma, Julie, Rebecca have been out there spinning their wheels.....Until we all got locked down again.

BUT No we don't roll over, we do what we can to stay in the game and love our sport.

Mim holds regular turbo training sessions via Zoom making sure you are all sweating hard enough.

Then we've also embraced the Zwift racing scene. Several ladies race, not only yours truly but, Lydia, Gwen, Beth and Jo Woodcock are making regular appearances, keeping BRCC at the top of our local virtual TT League that John Curtin host. Great thanks to John.

Hopefully all this sweat and toil on the trainer will translate to wins on the road. There's a few in that list that I'm sure won't be able to resist trying their new found power out on the tarmac.

If you can't get on the road come Zoom with us. You only need to go as hard as you fancy, nobody can see if you're even pedalling! Hope to see you any Wednesday you're free. (See the Facebook events page)

Let's hope we can be back out there sporting our colours as a team in the Spring.

Until then enjoy this rather strange season as best you can.

*Mim.*

### **Men's Captain's Report**

A summary of Road Racing for the year.

#### **MK Bowl Spring Series**

7<sup>th</sup> March

BRRT rider Enrico Cacciatori managed an excellent 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the first 3/4 crit of the Spring Series held at the MK Bowl. A great start to the season for him.

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#### **BRRT Spring Classic**

8<sup>th</sup> March

BRRT hosted their 2/3/4 Cat Spring Classic Road Race on 8th March which was 6 laps around the Gt Barford circuit.

Although it remained dry, conditions were tough with a strong cross wind.

There was a break after the first lap involving around 10 riders which stayed away for the rest of the race which, was won by youngster Craig Rogers from Cambridge University CC. Simon Norman was the first BRRT rider to finish in 18<sup>th</sup> place with Wayne Tunnah and Adam Gross finishing in 29<sup>th</sup> and 36<sup>th</sup> respectively. Well done fellas.

It was great to see so many volunteers from the Club and the Race Team supporting this event.

This was one of the only local road races to happen in 2020 before lockdown, so chapeau to all involved for making it happen.

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#### **Dulwich Paragon Tournament of Road Racing**

12<sup>th</sup> Sept 2020

Pete Shaw from BRRT competed in the Dulwich Paragon Tournament of Road Racing, which consisted of an omnium-style programme of road races around the cyclopark in Gravesend, Kent.

The races were short but intense lasting around 15 minutes each.

Pete managed 11<sup>th</sup> in the two lap TT and 7<sup>th</sup> in the Scratch race and just missed out on making the final in the sprint race.

At the end of the day, Pete finished an impressive 12<sup>th</sup> overall – a great day of racing.



*Pete in full flight*

**National Closed Circuit Champs**

12<sup>th</sup> October

With little time spent on his TT bike, Simon Norman finished an impressive 32<sup>nd</sup> on the Thruyton Circuit amongst a hugely competitive field. The race was won by John Archibald of Ribble Pro Cycling

with close friend of the team, Ash Cox finishing 7<sup>th</sup>.

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**National Hill Climb Champs**

25<sup>th</sup> October 2020

After a few decent results in the previous weeks, Thomas Robb rounded off his hill-climb season at the National Championships in Streatley, Berkshire. The climb was 800m in length at an average gradient of 13%, which maxed out at 25.9%. Thomas rode brilliantly and finished the brutal climb in an awesome 3:04.04 to finish 152<sup>nd</sup> from a strong 213 field. Great work Tom!

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**New BRRT riders for 2021**

BRRT are pleased to welcome some new fire power to their road race squad for 2021:-

- Matt Baker from Team MK
- Steve Wood from Team MK
- Chris Stuart-Leach
- Stuart Gough from VCRT
- Cameron Foster from TBW23

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BRRT would like to wish young Alex Norman a fond farewell from the race team and a huge congratulations for earning a place in the *JRC Shutt-Ridley* squad for 2021. A fantastic achievement and an ideal place to continue his development. We look forward to him beating his dad in the very near future!! Well done Alex.

*Matt.*

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**GoRide Report**

The Go-Ride journey through 2020 has been one of stops and starts. The arrival of the pandemic obviously brought all our sessions to a halt, and it truly was a time of confusion and almost interminable

waiting. Once the lockdown had ended, Bedford Council and British Cycling both had extensive requirements for the resumption of active sessions - maximum numbers of participants and minimum distancing between those participants and also hygiene facilities. No longer are anti-bacterial wipes the sole preserve of the first aid kit!

From a coaching perspective the hardest thing to deal with is the distancing. At its core, British Cycling want our coaching to be about race ready skills. Keeping riders spaced apart, removes a significant part of that competition-like environment. There are many skills that can be worked on, but they lack a certain edge. Many of the riders' favourite activities have close control and tight proximity at their centre. King of the Hill, and the introduction to Madison style hand-overs, were in the most well received sessions of 2019. King of the Hill still gets regular requests to be brought back.

The full return of sessions in September, was a logistical jigsaw. The aim to keep bubbles as distinct as possible, was by no means a simple one, especially with the slightly random way many of the riders attended, be that because of other commitments or self isolation situations. But we persevered, and it was enormously rewarding to get the riders back. Getting free time on a Saturday morning was nice for a while, but giving up those mornings again was so much better.

A new level of restriction holds us for the time being, and currently it's a struggle to see a quick route out of Tier 4 or 3. We will, of course, be ready to get sessions back up and running as soon as we are allowed.

*Peter.*

### **Chairman's Report**

There is no doubt that the past year has been exceptional and challenging for all. The measures taken to counter the Covid-19 virus has shaped what we as a club have been able to provide in terms of rides and events.

The year started off relatively well with social rides through January and February and the two sets of Reliability Rides in February, which were very well attended, and Clubhouse Turbo sessions run by Mim Taylor, our Ladies Captain. We had our annual 'Awards' dinner in February at the Cochin in Bedford with many trophies handed out. Alas this was our last social event.

In late February and March, we ran headlong into strong winds which curtailed many of the weekend rides and then a full lockdown and cessation of group activities in mid-March as a response to the increasing Covid threat.

From April onwards our Ladies Captain, Mim Taylor, organised and ran weekly Turbo sessions via Zoom (over internet conference styled calls) and these have now expanded to include race team events and an inter-club virtual league run on Zwift.

There is a good showing on these inter-club events hosted by John Curtin with many regular riders competing for BRCC. Thanks to Mim Taylor, Lydia Swift, Gwen Warren, Jo Woodcock, David Heath, Oswin Grady, Ian Woodcock and many others keeping BRCC at the top of this league. Turbo sessions will no doubt continue in this format into 2021 so keep a look out on our Facebook pages for training and racing sessions.

In July restrictions saw some relaxation

allowing TTs to start up again. The Evening League and SPOCO TTs were organised in a 'Covid secure' fashion and were very well attended despite no 'push off' and entry fees having to be dropped into a barrel.

In August there were roadworks in Old Warden and the village now has a 20 mph speed limit set through the village which we feel means that our traditional 11.3m TT is no longer viable. As a result, we are exploring several alternative routes and will announce these before the next TT season.

In August we were able to run our Open 'Charity' 25m TT which received record numbers of applicants with 143 applying for 120 places. By the end of the event, 117 riders had competed with Ash Cox claiming a new record of 48:30. The club raised £750 for charity with proceeds split between:-

Sue Ryder St John's Hospice, Moggerhanger & 'Beads of Courage' Children with Cancer UK. From August 'Socially Distanced' group rides of up to 6 riders started up again. We have been able to run our Tuesday and Wednesday evening rides and our Saturday and Sunday rides following ever changing restrictions, 'on and off' over the last 6 months. The tier 4 restrictions imposed in December finally put a stop to our group rides.

Congratulations must also go to Charlotte Lawson (known to most of us as 'Sebastian ThePony' or 'Lotty 123') for a fantastic set of riding stats for 2020 of 11,796 miles (19,044 km) and over 120,000 m of climb (13 Everests) with just short of 1000 hours in the saddle. Chapeau. The Race Team has managed a number of events, but these have been severely

restricted due to the Covid situation. Hopefully TTs and road races will be back in the new year.

The Go-Ride squad led by Brian Hill and Peter Coblenz have managed to keep up the Go-Ride events and training where restrictions have permitted. Many Thanks. During the latter half of the year the club saw a number of new riders joining and joining in, some new to cycling and others looking for fresh routes and a chatter on the move.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to have any other social gatherings and the clubhouse has been quiet since the doors effectively closed in March. So what else has happened or is in development ...

### **Results, Trophies and Awards**

I am pleased to publish the winners of this year's Time Trials, SPOCOs and BRCC Trophies in various tables attached (links) and as below. Congratulations to all those taking part and of course to the endeavours of the winners

Many Thanks to the organisers, Graham Laming & Oswin Grady and the many helpers, without whom the events could not go ahead.

Special Thanks to Mark Gray for his continuing support to these events and in recognition of this, Mark is awarded the Ron Bousted Memorial Shield.

Thanks also to Steve Smith and Graham Laming for recording and compiling the results and to Steve for putting together the documents at the links below.

2020 BRCC Trophy Winners - as below  
Evening League & SPOCO Results -

**<https://www.facebook.com/groups/729513847084533/permalink/3647673668601855>**

Individual TT Results - [https://bedsroad.org/el\\_live\\_rank.php](https://bedsroad.org/el_live_rank.php)

Winners of the 2020 BRCC Trophies

6 - The "Chattell" Cup - Fastest Club 25

Grant Orsborn - 00:54:32

10 - The "Georges" Attendance Trophy - Senior SPOCO

David Crane

11 - The "Roy and Phyllis Marston"

Ladies' SPOCO Trophy

Cindy Taylor-Carter

12 - The "Woodford" Cup - Club 50

winner Grant Orsborn - 01:50:06

18 - The "Roy Marston" Trophy

Contribution to the club

Miriam Taylor

19 - The "Beatrice Halylock" Memorial Trophy (Ladies 25 Charity)

Miriam Taylor - 01:07:13

21 - The "Arthur F. Pinnock" Memorial Shield (Gents 25 Charity)

Matt Donovan - 00:56:13

28 - The "Phillip Moore" Memorial Trophy - SPOCO Winner

Oswin Grady

33 - Evening League – Male Winner-

Gary Patmore

33 - Evening League – Female Winner-

Miriam Taylor

38 - Best Male 10 - Evening

league Thomas Robb - 00:22:34

39 - Best Female 10 - Evening league-

Miriam Taylor - 00:27:42

40 - Ron Bousted Memorial Shield -

Services to TTs for the year

Mark Gray

### **Club Accounts**

Many thanks to the Treasurer, Jackie Popland, for administering and presenting the accounts and to Charlie Walker, of TaxAssist Accountants in Bedford, for reviewing the Club Accounts.

The accounts can be seen in full here...

Observations: -

The club lost £2,556 over the 2019/20 accounting period.

Sales income is down on the previous year by approx. £2,800, largely due to Covid-19 causing the cancellation of many of the TTs and also a reduction in membership fees received as many members either didn't re-join or re-joined late (Jul onwards) and took advantage of the 50% reduction.

The Clubhouse lease had to be renewed this year which involved an additional arrangement fee of £900 and although the lease has been secured for a further 10 years, the cost has increased to £2400 pa. The overall loss is not currently seen as an issue despite losses over the past 2 years with sufficient funds to cover expenditure for a number of years regardless of income. It should be noted that a reduction in the value of the club account was advised following the audit of the club account in 2017/18 as, at that time, the club account was very healthy.

### **Membership & Fees**

Although we have shown a financial loss over the past 2 years, we have decided to maintain Membership Fees for 2021 at current levels. This will need to be reviewed next year given the uncertainty of our ability to raise additional funds in 2021 at events such as the Reliability rides.

Annual fees are:

£20 / £25 / £33

Senior / Couple / Family.

£8 / £6 / Free

Junior 16 to 18 / 12 to 15 / 11 & Under.

50% discount For those 60 and over

50% discount if Joining from 1<sup>st</sup> Jul

If joining Oct – Dec A full membership

is valid until the end of the following year. Full details on the BRCC website [https://www.bedsroad.org/join\\_online.php](https://www.bedsroad.org/join_online.php) Fees are due again from 1<sup>st</sup> January and I would ask you to support the club again for 2021.

### **TT / SPOCO fees**

For each rider entering a Club TT or SPOCO, BRCC is obliged to pay CTT a fee. This rises from £3 in 2020 to £4 for 2021 (and £5 for Open events).

As a result, fees for the Evening League TTs and SPOCOs will be:

£5 Club Members  
£6 Non-Members

### **Club Kit**

We have worked with a local supplier and produced a new leisure clothing range featuring BRCC branding – a Polo Shirt and Hoodie, details of which can be found on our Facebook pages.

### **Clubhouse**

The clubhouse has had major repairs to its roof over the past few months and is finally scaffolding free.

### **Club Rules**

BRCC has a set of ‘Club Rules’ which we have been looking to update. Changes were presented to the AGM of 2018 and although agreed upon could not be voted for or ratified, as the AGM did not meet the requirements to form a Quorum. Unfortunately, none of the AGMs over the past 4 – 5 years have been attended by enough members to form a Quorum.

The revised ‘Rules’ will therefore be presented to the club membership via electronic means with a request to register a ‘vote’ **for** or **against** the rules changes. A variety of options will be laid out for voting, the primary method will be via a

poll on our Facebook pages with options for people to register a vote via email or post if preferred.

The Current and Proposed Rules are available at the links below. Paper copies can be requested to be sent by post for those without internet access.

### **Current Rules**

[https://www.bedsroad.org/Rules\\_2005.pdf](https://www.bedsroad.org/Rules_2005.pdf)

Proposed Rules... Link to be added.

Details of changes along with voting methods, timescales and numbers required will be communicated separately.

Changes to Club Rules include:

General changes - Spelling, grammar & layout to provide consistency.

Membership - Revision to process and discounts.

General Meetings - AGM & Special GM formats, dates and numbers required to form a Quorum.

Committee Members - Revision, addition & removal of roles, including detailed role descriptions.

BRCC Goods & Services - Addition of rules on BRCC branding.

Provision of good & services on behalf of the club or by club members.

Beds Road Race Team - Additional section on the instigation of the Club’s Race Team – BRRT

BRCC Trophies - Addition of new trophies & qualifying conditions.

Streamlining and simplification of existing trophy descriptions.

*Ian.*

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**Deadline for copy for next edition.**

**Monday March 1st 2021**

## **End to End**

### **Part 1 – The End of the Beginning**

It was 10.30pm on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September 2019. I found myself standing outside Cumberland Infirmary in Carlisle, wearing only surgical gowns back and front, and my cycling shoes. The wind (from passing vehicles, not me) caused the lightweight gowns to lift and flurry around me, maybe revealing more than was allowed without arrest, but the morphine had taken away any cares about that. It had also made the physical pain more bearable, and cast a jolly veil over the disappointment and anguish that I was feeling. I started to recollect how I came to be in this predicament...

### **5 Days Earlier – The Beginning**

I was sharing a table with a disgruntled couple on the midday Paddington to Penzance rail service. Whilst they did look as if they were naturally disgruntled anyway, they were particularly so today as when they booked their travel to their quiet weekend away, they hadn't known that they would be sharing an oversubscribed service with dozens of noisy, hyped up cyclists and their kit. We were all on our way to the start of the Deloitte Ride Across Britain, otherwise known as the bike ride from Lands End to John O'Groats. Nor did that couple imagine that the buffet car would have been emptied of everything by the time we got to Reading.

The train pressed on at a pace to Exeter St Davids, then hung a left towards the coast and some dramatic coastal tracks, but stopped at every single station on its way to England's furthest Southerly and most Western terminus. It is an excruciatingly long, slow journey, and that was going

downhill – the easier way.

The coach transfers collected us all, and dropped us at the Base Camp at Lands End. This was a sea of small tents, headed by a couple of marquees, and the water services area. Having registered, I was confused to find that I was in the Green Zone, because all of the tents were green. It turned out that whilst the tents were coloured, the zones were just labelled, and I found my numbered tent at the furthest point away. This had the benefit of being far from the excitement of the social areas, but as the zones would be rotated each day, I would have the lights and PA system blaring close by after tomorrow's cycling.

Next, it was time to unpack and set my bike up. All packing was thrown into containers, to be taken up to the finish, where riders could fight over the best bits when packing their bike at the end. Then dinner, the briefing for tomorrow, and an early night. I managed to find my tent again, unpacked my sleeping bag and mat, and settled down for the night.

### **The First Leg:**

#### **Lands End to Okehampton**

As promised, the PA system fired itself up at 5am, along with its sodium light companions. It took me a while to do the same, but the sound of tents unzipping made me get up and wander round with the others, in a daze, wondering what we were doing here. Remembering pre-ride advice about time management, I grabbed my toothbrush and set off for breakfast. Without scoffing so many calories as to feel bloated, I ate, then cleaned my teeth and returned to my tent. Then followed the wrestling of my sleeping bag and mat, and other items I had taken out, back into my

regulation 90-litre 16kg bag.

After dropping my bag at the truck allocated to Green, I joined the queue and crossed the start line at 7.17 am. A gentle route along the coast took me to St Michaels Mount, but then, turning inland, the route became viciously spikey. Whilst the Cornish scenery is stunning, the first day became a baptism of fire, culminating in 1,000 feet of climbing between Bodmin and Minions at 100 miles, and then a miserable 600 ft climb along the busy A30 to the Base Camp at Okehampton. Here, the tents and marquees had miraculously re-appeared, and after racking up and checking over my bike, I grabbed my bag and staggered over to my tent. After a shower and briefing for the next day, and a dinner consisting of things that didn't need cutting, but could be shovelled straight down my throat, I went back to my tent. It was the first time that my legs had taken 8 hours of punishing riding over 110 miles and 9,000 feet of climbing, and they were letting me know about it. Lights out was at 10 pm, but mine had switched off long before.

### **The Second Leg: Okehampton to Bath**

Last night's briefing had set expectations for another 8 hour day of 110 miles and 7000 feet of climbing. It even warned us of the impending rain, but promised a proper bed at the end. Spikey lumps soon turned into steadier climbs and, as we entered The Quantocks, really steep and long climbs on wet roads and in drizzle. Before one of these, I had decided to have an energy bar. Not a bad idea, except that the hill kicked in sooner than I had thought, and I had to manage the climb while holding the still-wrapped bar in my teeth. This was par-

ticularly challenging, as I was recovering from a cold and having difficulty breathing through my nose. Later that morning, I was spurred on by a family that I grew up with in Swansea, and hadn't seen since 1980, and who turned out to see me as we passed above Exeter. I stopped for a chat with them - isn't it strange how we pick up with people after so long, as if we had only seen each other the week before? Jim, now in his 90s, was fascinated by the whole thing, having been a Cat 2 Essex County Racer in his time.

Moving on into Somerset, and dryer weather, (I know it was Somerset and the folks sitting outside a nice looking country pub offered me some cider "thanks, but I've got a Blackcurrant High 5 here"), the foot of Cothelstone Hill beckoned. I'd never heard of it, but it is a revered local climb that introduces another dimension to cycling, namely keeping the front tyre on the floor. After 56 miles of lumpy terrain, all you want is a 28% gradient (averaging out to 8.3% over 900 feet upwards). However, it has the welcome effect of making everything else after it seem flat.

Until, of course, Cheddar Gorge. The good news? It's after lunch and the right side of the next Base Camp, in Bath. The bad news? It's 85 miles into the ride and we were sharing the climb with the local Sunday afternoon leatherboys and bean can exhaust Fiestas, who also enjoy the twists and turns of this spectacular climb. Just when everything else is hurting, you don't relish the thumping and blaring in your ears as they fly past, allowing you only a couple of inches of their line. (I'm a petrolhead too, so I do understand. It just wasn't what I needed at the time).

(See picture on next page)



*A quieter moment on Cheddar Gorge.*

As the ride approached Bath, the rain started again, and we were treated to a rising orbit of the target location before eventually being signposted onto the approach to Bath University – Base Camp 3, and a proper en-suite bedroom for the night. I checked my bike over, racked it, collected my bag, found my room, showered and changed, then had dinner. Again, anything easy to shovel in. Too late for my allocated massage, but it was my laundry day and also the first guest speaker. This was BMX World Champion and Olympic Track Cyclist Shanaze Reade. Shanaze was great, but the evening was hosted by a Deloitte Representative, whose skills at stretching time before lunch by labouring dull points at corporate conferences didn't bode well with a room full of tired and

well-fed cyclists, who, myself included, sloped off stealthily, and went to bed.

**The Third Leg:  
Bath to Ludlow**

The morning routine was established by now, I had organised the daily repacking of my bag and was out on the route earlier. Today was regarded as a rest day, being just 100 miles and 6,400 feet of ascent. It was raining again though, and we were an unwelcome addition to the slowed-up Monday morning rush hour as we descended from Bath, then gradually climbed along the outskirts of Bristol, before dropping down to the original Severn Bridge. The Severn Estuary was at its wettest and windiest, the ebb tide revealing menacing looking mud banks that threatened to consume anything that fell into them. I didn't hang around on there and pressed on to the other side. The Welsh Borders put up some challenging climbs, but we were all used to them by then and left them behind with relative ease. The terrain flattened out after that, and it was a straight run towards Ludlow, and Base Camp 4, at the Golf Club. Here was my first experience of the Drying Room, a specially heated enclosed hanging obstacle course of steaming bibshorts, jerseys and socks, all at nose level, from lines above and with their associated shoes mouldering on the floor beneath. Having managed to find a space for my own kit, I repaired for a shower and food, and made a mental note to collect it in the morning.

**The Fourth Leg:  
Ludlow to Haydock Park**

I figured that it would probably be better to go in the drying room before breakfast. I

couldn't be sure if the smell was actually the wet room, or a legacy of the Deloitte Cheese Extravaganza the previous evening.

Once out of the Shropshire Hills, this leg was going to flatten out. Riders were much more sociable by now, having begun to enjoy the routine and being able to relax on the easier days. I was finding amusement in some of the local village names, Diddlebury being one that I imagined always having to check my change in the pub or shop. It was a nice, sociable and gentle ride through the West Midlands, and into the Manchester Metropolis and over the Manchester Ship Canal, and most arrived at Haydock Park in good shape after 107 miles and 3,450 ft of climbing. I had really enjoyed the day, now being settled into cycling in light, and sleeping by night. The company was good, the organisation was brilliant, the food was great, everyone was friendly, helpful and respectful towards each other, and sleeping was easy. I hadn't enjoyed myself so much for many a year. Even the falling rain didn't bother me. And to top the whole thing, Dave Brailsford had popped over the Pennines from the Ineos Grenadiers camp at the UCI World Championships, as a surprise after dinner guest speaker. He is truly inspirational, his humour and encouragement lifting our spirit and enthusiasm even higher. He is also a similar height and build to me, has the same haircut and (at the time) glasses. I happily signed autographs on his behalf, afterwards.

### **The Fifth Leg: Haydock Park to Carlisle**

I woke to see that I needed my "wet shoes" to wade to the food tent for breakfast. No-one seemed bothered by the persistent rain, and took to the bow waves and spray

of the Manchester rush hour in darkness. Our lights seemed to attract the raindrops, illuminating them before they burst over our bikes and legs. We had been warned about the weather and busy roads in the briefing during the previous evening, and also the tram rails, which are particularly slippery in these conditions (and always easy for your wheels to fall between the tracks). But the warning would have been to take it easy in the morning anyway, as the daunting 1,370ft Shap Fell awaited in the afternoon. On the plus side, we would reach the halfway point, 490 miles, at the second feed station today, and cross the border into Scotland tomorrow. Whilst slowly working our way northwards to the other side of Manchester in the cold and wet, I was in conversation with another rider and we were disappointed to see that the chippy we were approaching wasn't open yet. Pie and chips would have gone down well at this point, although the atmosphere was drying and warming up, and the first feed station would appear soon.

A well signposted route is great at telling you where to go next, but not where you are, or where you have been. At the first feed station I reflected that we had ridden past Wigan and Preston, over the Ribble, and over to the left, through the mist, was Blackpool Tower. Also, that we were approaching the Lake District.

This posed the question: "...so I might as well leave my rain jacket on, then?" as most times I have been there before, there have been downpours of biblical proportions. On the contrary, the weather brightened up as we skirted the western fringes, revealing terrific views, along with great cycling. It wasn't too long before we found Feed Station 2 at Milnthorpe, the

exact halfway point of the whole ride. Here, my sister Cathy had come to meet

Deloitte party and the slowing tick of freewheels as riders paused to enjoy this special atmosphere.



It was a shame to leave there, given the effort it took to climb it and the tranquillity at the top, and the descent was over quickly as Penrith came into view along with an extra feed station due to the this being the longest day of riding, at 116 miles. The mood at Feed Station 3 was euphoric, everyone there having tackled Shap Fell and *summitting \Shap Fell*

me and brought a welcome flask of coffee and some Vicks rub, as I was still suffering with congestion after a cold the week before. She is a great and trusted support crew, and has a close affinity with cycling events, having been involved in the sport herself. I was very happy that she had come to see me. Little did we know that I would be calling on her help again, soon.

And so, on to Shap Fell. Starting from 50 feet above sea level at Milnthorpe, the terrain rose along a few spikes. We passed through Kendal, and at 80 miles into the day, the climb kicked in fully with the road rising in sections between 3% and 12% over the next 8 miles to the top of the fell. There was the usual noisy Deloitte party up there, celebrating each rider's achievement, or maybe just amusing themselves with the variety of gurning faces gradually, to crest this monster at 1,370 feet above sea level. There are fantastic views over the Lake District from here. Barnard Castle is due east, but the view over there was hazy. There was no sound but for the wind whistling through the electricity pylons, no life other than the



being delighted about it. We were all now excited about crossing the border into Scotland tomorrow, and so keen to get on with the last few miles to this evening's base camp at Carlisle. With energy levels boosted, and riding the waves of adrenalin, the long, lycra snake wended its way towards Carlisle, now focussed on a hot shower and dinner. It had been a day of four seasons

and the full range of emotions, and, for me, the most enjoyable yet. I noticed that a small group had taken to my wheel, and soon I was enveloped within it, grateful for the shelter and extra speed towards the finish. We were moving fast, in tight formation, and cooling air rushed through. Someone at the front braked, and damning cries passed down the line as it scattered, frantically. My front wheel came away from the tarmac, and the kerb came up to meet me very quickly.

*Steve Mussett.*

To be continued in next issue.

### In memorium

It is with great sadness that we record the death of three Club members. Our thoughts and sympathy go to Families and friends.

**Josephjne Lilian Tomlinson**

26th April 1930 - 24th September 2020

Josie joined St Neots and District CC as a teenager and was an active cyclist into her seventies. With husband George she spent many happy hours following her son, Ian Butcher, in Time Trials.



*Josie (Right) with lifelong friends Dot & Myrtle.*

**Mary Howard**

Mary joined the Club in the early 1950s and, although never a very keen cyclist, was active in the administrative side of Club life for many years.

**Peter George Hutton**

20th May 1929 - 21st November 2020

Pete was born in Bracknell, the eldest of three brothers. They were all keen on sport with Pete and Den (the youngest) taking to cycling. Being half-wheeled by Pete stood Den in good stead when he became semi-professional.

An apprenticeship with the Royal Aircraft Establishment in Farnborough and a degree at Cranfield earned Pete a post with the Aircraft Research Association in Bedford. Now living in Bedford he joined BRCC where he made lifelong friends. Among these was Rosemary Matthews, better known as Mary, who caught Pete's eye and on 4th October 1958 they married in Biggleswade, leaving the Parish Church under an arch of bicycle wheels held aloft by members of the BRCC. Peter leaves his much loved wife Mary, children Kay and David, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.



*Peter in his heyday.*



# Committee

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Website Home Page	Graham Laming	
Editor:-	Terry Bush	01234 857131
<b>Written magazine contributions to —</b>		59, Ridge Road, Kempston, Beds. MK43 9BS

To contact any Committee Member  
 Go to  
[www.book-to-ride.com/brcr\\_contact\\_us.php](http://www.book-to-ride.com/brcr_contact_us.php)

website:- [www.bedsroad.org](http://www.bedsroad.org).

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