



CTC North Hampshire

May - August
2008



on road
off road
leisure rides



Something for everyone

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Welcome

I'm not sure what the weather is doing at moment – I have already been out cycling in shorts in brilliant sunshine on a bike with no mudguards and a week later there were three inches of snow on the lawn.

CTC North Hampshire members have already done a number of events this year, starting with the Watership Down 100km in January, the Phil Hampton, reported on below, and the Dorset Coast 200km which included cycling through Poole in a blizzard. I'm hoping that real Spring and then Summer weather is going to arrive soon.

We have put together a really good selection of rides going to village fetes, exploring Berkshire and Wiltshire and a "Dusty Bike Day" organised by Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership. Off the bike we are holding our annual BBQ, all are welcome and we are organising a long weekend in the New Forest, details on both below.

Our members are also busy planning their cycling activities which include Lands End to John O'Groats and mountain biking in the US – look out for pictures on the web site later. The Rides List has lots of events taking place in the Hampshire area over the summer suitable for everyone from first time riders and families to hardened long distance aficionados.

And finally we're holding our first "North Hampshire Cyclists' Big Meet" social, on Wednesday 18th June, turn up at 7:30pm for drinks and chat at The Chequers at Well. Happy cycling – Andy

End-to-End

Lands End to John O'Groats – a journey that is a challenge and maybe an epic however you do it and however long you take. The first recorded end-to-end was by a Cornishman, Robert Carlyle, in

1879 who walked from Lands End with a wheelbarrow which he used to transport his suitcase.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable holders of the end-to-end solo cycle record is John Woodburn who at the age of 45 took 1 day, 21 hours, 3 minutes and 16 seconds, breaking the record by 96 minutes. The DVD "2 Days and 2 Nights" documenting his ride is a "must see". Some CTC Hampshire members were lucky enough to see the DVD recently and to meet and talk with John afterwards. Everyone was impressed by his strength of character, his determination and his capacity for hard work. He said that he was riding forty miles each evening after work in preparation – not that hard you might think – but this was in the middle of January!

This summer, two CTC North Hampshire members, Alan and Caroline will be riding the end to end. Their route planning and training is already well underway but the weather will remain an unknown. They will be using a bike mounted GPS to help route finding so, hopefully there won't be too many "discussions" about the which way to go. Like all end-to-end riders they are hoping for a favourable tailwind, with dry days that are warm but not too hot – quite a tall order for the British summer!

I'm sure that everyone on CTC North Hampshire wishes them success.

Andy

Phil Hampton

Janice stepped in at the last moment to run this year's Phil Hampton Memorial Ride – our thanks to Janice and also the team who provided the much needed food and hot drinks.

This year's ride took place on 22nd March amid swirling horizontal sleet, occasional rays of glorious sunshine and biting cold winds.



The poor weather conditions did not, however, deter 30 brave souls from setting out to ride the 33 or 50 mile route round the hilly Hampshire countryside. Local riders were joined by others from Winchester, Midhurst and Guildford, and at the finish at Medstead Village Hall, once everyone had warmed up again with hot drinks and soup, many declared they had enjoyed the ride despite the cold, and I believed them.

Although the number of entrants was below that of previous years, we still managed to raise a grand total of £182.75 for the Cyclists' Defence Fund, with £81 of that being donated. This event is also part of the CTC Tourist Competition, with all riders gaining points towards this annual competition. For more information on this, see the latest edition of "Cycle" magazine.

The date for your diary next year will be Saturday 21st March, when a warm, sunny day is guaranteed!

Cycling Is Good For You

We all believe that cycling is good for you – things have certainly changed since the peloton handed round cigarettes to each other! Here are some of the studies that actually demonstrate the health benefits and should make you feel good as you cycle.



A study in Copenhagen, carried out over a 14 year period, found that cycling to work (an average of three hours cycling per week) decreased risk of mortality by about 40% compared to a sedentary control group. This study involved 30,000 people. The study took

into account age, health status, and socio-economic factors such as education. It also found that older people gained even more from physical activity than younger people.

In Perth Cycling 100 was a year-long program which free bikes were provided to 100 commuters who volunteered to replace some car trips to work with bicycle commuting. The participants' health was monitored before and after the trial. The study found that the cyclists' physical work capacity and aerobic fitness improved. They also experienced significant reductions in "bad" cholesterol levels and significant increases in "good" cholesterol". They also lowered their risk of heart attacks and strokes.

The National Forum for Coronary Heart Disease Prevention in the UK has noted that regular cyclists often enjoy levels of fitness more typical of people ten years younger than they are. The eminent epidemiologist Professor Jerry Morris has reported that cycling at least twenty miles a week reduces the risk of coronary heart disease to less than half that of the population as a whole. There are further benefits in terms of improved lung and respiratory function, avoidance of obesity and osteoporosis, and even improved mental health and well-being. Morris has concluded that 'among the common physical activities, cycling comes nearest to an ideal form of exercise'.

So there you are – on your bike!

BBQ reminder

We will be holding our annual BBQ again on Saturday 30th August. This is the weekend after the August bank holiday so more people may be able to attend. All CTC North Hampshire members and their families are welcome and in the morning there will be a ride up to Newton Valence village hall from Alton.



The BBQ starts at 12:30 and this year Jackie has volunteered to help organise the event. Jackie does need helpers to set out the food, cook, serve and make salads – so if you can help please call her on 01420 86815.

Book Review

"The Rider" a novel written Tim Krabbé, a chess playing Dutch cyclist is absolutely engrossing. It recounts the Tour de Mont Aigoual cycle race during which he recalls bike racing legends and evokes perfectly the physical torments of racing, the tactics, the drifting of the mind and the desire to win.



The book mixes the cycling absurd with the truly realistic: if you've ridden a bike you'll appreciate the story, the emotions and the concentration. The book's chapters follows the race's 137 kilometres and you'll have to read it yourself to see if Tim Krabbé won.

"The Rider", Tim Krabbé, Bloomsbury Publishing

Right to Ride Info from Heather

Heather Rainbow, our Basingstoke Right to Ride representative has agreed to be a spokesperson for potholes in Hampshire. We all know why potholes are dangerous to cyclists and we can help get problems fixed by reporting them on www.fillthathole.org.uk. This site lists a total of 350 hazards for Hampshire and shows that 151 have been fixed over the period from January 2007 to now. So it seems that some action is taken although there is a significant backlog. As cyclists we need to keep the pressure on at all level of Government and lobby our representatives to ensure that the roads are safe for all.

Cycling in the fifties

The 1940s and 1950s were a very different time – post war austerity, rationing and very little traffic on small roads. Signposts were only just being re-instated after their war-time removal to impede any invading forces. In these conditions cycling had a golden period and for many the bicycle was the only way to get around or to head off into the countryside. The photographs are all from Janice's family albums.

Janice's father belonged to the Southern Roads cycling club which was based in south London and they rode in Surrey, Sussex and Kent in this period. The first photograph is entitled "At



Ridgeways, nr Devil's Punchbowl" and was taken at an elevenses stop – which included the opportunity to light up a pipe.



"Lost outside Canterbury", taken around 1940, is annotated as follows – "Bill Moy (now dead), Jim & Lucy Marshal, Arthur Burgess, Charlie Hart, George Bartlett". Janice's father is the second figure down from the top. There are still some roads like this

in the Kent, and indeed in Hampshire, although it's harder to escape the noise of modern living now.

The last picture is "The Kings Arms" in an unknown High Street somewhere in South East England, probably taken in very early Spring. Please let

the editor know if you recognise the town. The scene is so very different from now. People are chatting by the town cross; a dog is walking sedately in the road. Apart from the single parked



car there's no traffic and the solitary cyclist has the road to himself.

Boucle Guegonnaise

In France the bicycle is sometimes called "*la petite reine*" – literally the little queen. For local communities the bicycle is still queen and they organise race events that attract large entries and large crowds. *La Boucle Guegonnaise*



– or the Guegon Circuit is held in Brittany each year at the end of March and we were lucky to see it just after the Easter weekend. It was the 23rd event and the build-up in the newspapers promised a

field of over 200 riders with elite competitors and a Belgian semi-professional team.

The morning weather did not start out well and the forecast was for wind, sharp showers and perhaps sunny intervals so the riders were likely to have a hard time on the 157km course. We picked a spot where we could watch the race come past by on the banks of the river that runs through Josselin; a very pretty town with a dramatic castle and lovely cycling along the river.

At this point we were in a group of only five people, two of whom were marshals and one who turned out to be another English visitor. Her interest in the race was keener than ours; her partner was racing on France with VC Vannes and she was expecting to see him in the peloton with his two team mates. She recounted that road racing in France was tough and today was no exception.

The race came past, already looking wet and cold and we returned to the town of Guegon to await the peloton and to watch the six laps around the local area. The rain, wind and sunshine continued but this didn't stop the competition. On the penultimate lap a group of four broke away and the on the last lap one rider attacked on the last hill and finished the uphill sprint with an advantage of 14 seconds.

This was true local racing, well organised, entertaining and supported by the whole community – if only we could do the same in the UK!
Andy & Sarah

The King Alf Ride

On May 18th around fifty cyclists will take part in the first Hyde900 Wantage to Winchester Bike Ride. Details of how to enter are at the end. Hyde900 celebrates the history of Hyde Abbey in Winchester – a story closely tied to King Alfred the Great.

The 55 mile route follows the story of his life, starting at his statue

in Wantage, his birthplace. Crossing the downs new Lambourne, the ride passes near the site of Alfred's first victory over the Vikings which is still celebrated in the Hocktide festival at Hungerford. The last stage passes Alfred's final resting place at Hyde Abbey and finishes in the centre of Winchester.



This route crosses some of the most spectacular countryside in the west of Hampshire and although there are some hills the effort is truly worthwhile. Although this is a linear ride there will be informal arrangements to car-share and transport your bike from Winchester to the start at Wantage.

You need to enter as soon as possible: look on the web site www.hyde900.co.uk, email info@hyde900.co.uk or phone Jim Fraser on 01962 620989.

Annual Lunch

The annual CTC North Hampshire lunch was held at the Grange in Alton and was attended by a good number of cyclists and their partners. The more enthusiastic had even managed a full ride in the morning or cycled to lunch!

The food and service were very good and there was a good deal of head scratching prompted by the two-part quiz. The cryptic clues based on the London underground network proved especially challenging and team efforts seemed to be the best approach.

Our thanks to Janice for organising a really enjoyable occasion.

Le Tour du Mont Blanc

Mont Blanc is the iconic mountain of the Alps straddling the border between France and Italy. The Tour of Mont Blanc, or TMB,

attracts walkers, mountain bikers and road riders who all want to experience the stunning mountain scenery. The walking route covers about 180km in ten days, the mountain bike route 170km in five days and the road route 340km in five days.

Stephen, who organises the Petersfield section, rode the mountain bike route. There was over 7000m of climbing, but the long days and hard climbs were rewarded with views of lakes, meadows and waterfalls all set against the changing backdrop of the Mont Blanc Massif. If you're lucky you may see some unique wildlife – including chamois. The culture as well the scenery changes constantly; the route progresses through France, crosses the Italian border and finally returns through Switzerland.



When you finish this route you know that you have achieved something special. If you want to do it there are many companies that offer packages for walkers and cyclists providing guides, organising accommodation and moving on your luggage.

Open Sight – Charity Ride

Would you consider supporting Steve Geary's tandem cycle ride around Hampshire by joining in or sponsoring him? Steve is registered blind and his Tour De Hampshire charity ride, 14th July to 20th July, will raise money for Open Sight (Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind) to continue in supporting over 4,000 sight impaired people of all ages. For further

information and a sponsor pack please contact Robbie Beer Community Fundraiser Open Sight, 25 Church Road, Bishopstoke, SO50 6BL. For further information about Open Sight please visit www.opensight.org.uk.

September Cycling Weekend – New Forest

CTC North Hampshire is planning to hold an informal cycling weekend in the New Forest. This will be centred on Bransgore, just north of Christchurch and will take place between Friday 5th and Sunday 7th September. There will be organised rides to suit all abilities and a meal out on Saturday evening.



The New Forest is ideal for on and off road family cycling: there are quiet roads and tracks, small villages, heath lands, forest and quiet glades as well as free ranging ponies, pigs, sheep and cows. Lymington and The Isle of Wight ferry are nearby so a ride on the island is also possible.

There are lots of options for accommodation including camping at Harrow Wood Farm, B&Bs and a hotel in Bransgore. Details of accommodation are published on the web site or are available from Frank Pote (01420 83974 or frank.pote@onyxnet.co.uk). Accommodation will need to be booked individually.

If you are interested please contact Frank – numbers are only limited by the availability of accommodation so book early!