



CTC North Hampshire

September - December
2008



on road
off road
leisure rides



Something for everyone

Contacts

www.nhampshirectc.org.uk

Frank Pote: frank.pote@onyxnet.co.uk

Andy Watson: andrew.w.watson@btinternet.com

Andrew Heaton: Andrew.Heaton@uk.thalesgroup.com

Welcome

What do you think – is cycling undergoing a resurgence? Mark Cavendish won four stages in the Tour de France and in the Olympic Games GB cyclists have succeeded beyond expectation in track and road events.

I believe that the change is much deeper reaching all the way from leisure to competition and from school age to retirement. For example, chatting at our local village fete I found out that an informal group had been set up to explore the local lanes and that it was proving very popular with the older residents. Out on the tracks and roads in Hampshire I'm sure to see other cyclists whenever I go out; in fact I'm surprised if I don't see someone.

This edition of the magazine is devoted to the cycling experiences of CTC North Hampshire members and it does show what a diverse lot we are. If after reading about these rides you'd like a real challenge have a look at Bob's Isle of White off-road ride on the rides list.

Some of the cycling press has commenting on whether different "tribes" of cyclists wave to each other – roadies ignore mountain bikers and vice versa. I wave to everyone, regardless of the bike they're riding, or whether they're wearing lycra or baggies. I hope that you do the same – it may be just the encouragement someone needs.

The CTC North Hampshire AGM will be held on Sunday 2nd November at Upton Grey Village Hall, starting at 10:30am. Everyone is welcome: it's your chance to find out what has been happening during the year and to volunteer to help.

And finally, the response to the photographs published in the last edition of the magazine was amazing – within a couple of hours the mystery town was identified as Haslemere by two readers. The pub in the picture, the King's Arms, is now known as the White Horse and apparently it's almost impossible to see for 4x4s! Andy

Charity Ride USA Style

The local, Florida newspaper, the 'Caloosa Bell' read: "Fun bicycle event for fellow snowbirds. Tour De Friendship, \$35 registration fee includes breakfast, rest stops with fruit and water, lunch afterwards, a souvenir t-shirt and a good feeling by helping the homeless in Immokalee: www.immokaleefriendshiphouse.com." After four weeks on my knees grinding and painting the boat decks, it sounded like a Sunday off.

March 30th, 7am, after getting up late, an 80mph drive from the boatyard, along the 40 mile dead straight flat road. It has a 55mph limit, but I only passed one pickup and one huge truck loaded with oranges. There was a heavy mist over the Everglades, occasionally encroaching over the road.



Rogers Ranch was the start. About 150 cars trucks and vans parked in a massive field, and all with bikes. I had expected lots of fat American old folk with old beach cruising bikes, but in fact there was every flash road bike you can imagine, carbon forks and frames, and all the lycra to go with them. The options were, 16, 32 or 64 miles. The previous Sunday I had ridden 20 miles on my VERY rusty folding Dahon ATB, so I knew that 31 were possible.

Sign on and pay, didn't know my Zip Code, but collected the nice tee-shirt. On to breakfast: all kinds of fresh fruit, fresh baked warm bagels, three types, with 6 kinds of spreads from peanut to strawberry cream, several types of pure juice, cheese and ham,

three types of coffee, or of course bottled water. I was pleased that I had got up late!

8am start for the fast lads aiming for 64, about 40 of them. 8.15 and I was gathered under the picturesque live oaks, with around another 50 riders, and thankfully spotting just one or two other new ATBs among the new road bikes, a few other ageing folk, and one teenager. I edged to the front trying to get into the newspaper photographer's lens: vain is the word!

"One two three go" said the lady with the microphone, and right out of the gate we rode, single file, me about 5th, and with three Sheriff's Cars, sirens blaring and shrieking, 15mph through three sets of red traffic lights, a right turn on to Camp Keias Road, and the first 5.6 dead straight flat miles. I think I stayed about 5th, and by the time we reached the first water stop at 10 miles, on Pope John Paul road, the average had stayed on 15.5mph and I was pleased to stop. There had been NO scenery, just brush, swamp and small cyprus palms, miles and miles of flat nothing, though by now the mist had cleared. But suddenly, here in the middle of nowhere was what looked like a Hollywood set. A very futuristic church, fountains galore, green lawns and landscaped lakes and canals, walkways, paved and fancy cobbled streets, band stands, empty parking lots, a big closed and empty school, and sites for a university, administration buildings and everything except houses. Called 'Ave Maria', it was the strangest, biggest hopeful development I have ever seen and must have cost billions.



The church was only open 10 'til 4, seven days a week, but no sign of services, and as it was still only 9 o'clock I concentrated on the free food. Boxes and boxes of bananas, mountains of energy bars of all types, two makes of bottled water, and as much Florida Orange

Juice as you could drink or carry away, all in ice boxes of course. It was all rather serious, only four riders were resting, and none felt like talking to me. Strange accent and a funny bike!

I set off again but found the signs painted on the road were few and far between, lots of turns round this huge fancy development, and I thought I was lost. One nice looking blonde said her son had gone off in search of the route, but I did find it again quite soon. On the next 9 miles including a 6.9 mile straight, Oil Well Road, I passed, and was passed, by no-one, even when I had a back wheel flat and changed the tube. The 19 mile rest stop was manned (and womanned), by the 'Outward Bound Trust', and the young folk loaned me a track pump, as I only carried a useless short thing that took hundreds of 8" strokes even to reach 40psi. More bananas, energy bars and iced water which now was very welcome as the temperature was up to 86.

Turn right, north onto Everglades Road, and the headwind was immediately noticeable, with absolutely nothing to stop or break its flow except me. Now the road appeared to shimmer and roll into a big lake, but it was only a mirage of course. My average had dropped to 13mph and I struggled to keep it there, even noticing a slight incline and fall occasionally in the road, and still nothing to see. I started counting roadside dead birds, small orange and white snakes, and an odd racoon I think.

The end of that straight was the last rest stop which my computer said 24 miles, but the talkative old folk helpers, snow birds from Grandmas Grove RV Park thought it was still 11 miles to go!

A 45 degree change of direction brought the wind off my starboard bow for a time, and then I was back on the outskirts of town. At last I was overtaken by three middle aged roadies in all the gear. "Are you the first of the 64 milers?", I shouted. "I think so" replied one of them. I still had them just in sight as they turned into Rogers Ranch, and my average was still 12.5mph with a total mileage of 36.6, so I was well pleased.

Every bike I had seen looked brand new, and I joked at the state of mine. The free lunch was very sociable. As I piled my plate with all fresh salads, and two types of pasta, with a drink in my other hand, a lady laid a blanket over my arm so that I could sit in the shade on the lawn under the trees. "It has been sprayed for ants", she assured me. I had noticed a 'Bike Friday' tandem and rightly guessing the owners, who had done the 16 miles, sat by them. I had forgotten my fork so a young Cuban girl, Mercedes, rushed off to get one for me. Everyone was talking and this was really what I was hoping for, and had expected from the start.

Time to leave and a leisure drive back, cruise control set to 55, the windows wide open in the 86 degree humid heat, a great morning. By 1.30, back at the yard, and by 3 o'clock Maxolar was hauled up the ramp on to dry land, Only three more days painting and I fly back to home, Audrey, and my real road bike. Dave Moseley

PS: If you want to see a picture of Dave have a look at next article: Dave is in the centre of the second photograph.

Round the Island



The annual Round the Island ride is a regular May bank holiday weekend fixture for many cyclists from the South of England. The ride follows the well marked 100km cycle route around the Isle of Wight, alternating each year between clockwise and anti-clockwise directions. There is a 55km option that shares part of the route.

There is a certain ritual to the event, starting with the ferry over to the Isle of Wight. Many North Hampshire riders take their bikes on the car ferry from Portsmouth to Fishbourne – a journey of about 45 minutes. Cyclists outnumber every other type of passenger and there is a scrum at the ticket office as everyone buys their tickets.

The mass of cyclists are soon boarding the ferry, some riding and others cautiously negotiating the slippery metal deck. If you are competitive then it's best not to be first on otherwise your bike will be at the bottom of a six deep stack and all hope of a quick get-away will be gone.

Once on board the next stage begins with a queue for tea or coffee, usually with a sticky bun or a cake to make sure the energy levels are high. This is a chance to chat, look out the windows onto the Solent and across to the Island and catch up with cycling acquaintances that you've not seen for years.



The anticipation mounts as the ferry draws into Fishbourne and the more eager cyclists jostle for position to be first off! The first objective, once on the Island, is to get to the first checkpoint to

register and collect your card. Your card is stamped at each checkpoint, seven in all placed around the circuit. Entry is free and, unlike other events, you can start at any of the checkpoints: of course you still have to go all the way round! This year, 1,457 took part in the 100km ride and 207 in the 55km ride.

The Isle of Wight lanes are made for cycling and there is always a group to ride with and chat as you go. Although the various North Hampshire groups started at different times most managed to meet up at a checkpoint to exchange news and compare notes on the strength of the wind or the difficulty of the hills.

At the end of the ride with seven checkpoint stamps you get a free certificate. Collectors of cycling mementos can buy purchase an enamel badge of the Isle of Wight. Each year the colour scheme is different so they are truly unique. By now most are tired and ready to go home – the ferry awaits, with more tea and cake and a chance to plan for next year – the 25th anniversary! Andy

Reflections on Lands End to John O'Groats – Caroline Brodie & Alan Jacob

When Caroline first suggested that we make the 'End to End' our major cycling objective for 2008 we both agreed that it would be good to have all our accommodations booked in advance. Also having our luggage transported and some form of back up in the event of a major mishap would be really good. Caroline discovered that a small specialist company, Bike Adventures, covered all these requirements and also offered a superior B & B option that guaranteed your own room and bathroom throughout the trip. By signing up for their July fifteen day trip and paying a deposit before the end of January we obtained a worthwhile 10% discount. As part of the deal they also had two leaders who rode with us doing a 'sweep up' job and provided transport from Penzance to Lands End and John O'Groats to Inverness if required.

With Bike Adventures providing route details all we had to do was

follow the instructions and ride our bikes. As far as possible main roads were avoided and as the ride was spread over fifteen days our longest day would only be 85 miles. Mind you, 85 miles into a headwind can be a long way!

Our route proved to be a real cycling challenge with some tough climbs, exhilarating descents, and even some flat roads! With 18 riders of differing abilities it was natural that we split into groups of similar standards. We rode mainly with Peter Masters from the Isle of Man and as on a number of occasions we arrived at our destinations early we became known as the "A" team. At approximately 9.30am on Saturday 12th July we set off from Lands End to discover that the west coast road was quite hilly. Eventually we headed inland to Bodmin for our first overnight stop and rest before tackling the hilly route over Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor.

We spent a lot of day three in the Devon and Somerset lanes which led us eventually to a long and steep climb over the Quantock Hills. The next day we crossed the Somerset Flats before heading into Cheddar and the climb through the Gorge. From there we headed to Avonmouth, The Severn Bridge, and Monmouth. Day five saw us heading through the Welsh Borders with attractive villages like Bagwy Hydiart, Bridge Sollers, and Staunton on Arrow. Staying mainly in small lanes we passed to the west of Shrewsbury, east of Chester, and then to Frodsham to complete day six. Our next objective was Clitheroe in Lancashire and our route took us west of Manchester and in rather wet conditions through Blackburn.

A wet start to day eight made the long climb onto the moors quite difficult. Caroline was obviously feeling strong as she flew up the climb and then stopped to take photographs of the rest of our struggling group! The poor conditions meant that we missed out on some great views but luckily, as the day progressed, the weather improved and we did get to see some fantastic scenery in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The three mile climb past Dent Station proved a real tester but fortunately only the first mile was at 25%.

Our overnight stay was in Kirkby Stephen which was our last stop in England before heading to the Scottish Border which we reached in a small lane as we crossed the River Sark. Riding ever northwards we arrived in Ecclefechan. Next morning we set off on a 85 mile ride that would take us through Lockabie, Moffat and a seven mile climb to enter the Scottish Borders Region, Biggar, Kirkmuirhill, and Motherwell. The first part of day eleven was spent on cycle paths along the River Clyde taking an east/west ride through Glasgow. Once we reached Clydebank we were soon out into countryside and heading to Loch Lomond, Loch Fyne, and Inveraray.

To get us started on day twelve we commenced with a 13% climb and the road continued gently climbing for a further seven miles. A long descent took us to Loch Awe to pick up the A85 to Cannel. From there we followed the A828 along Loch Linnhe to Fort William. The next day as we headed towards the famous Loch Ness we had to endure a seven mile stretch of gravel tracks with a few tricky descents. Soon we were back on proper roads and headed through Fort Augustus, Drumnadrochit, Dingwall, to end the day at Evanton on the Cromerty Firth.



The penultimate day saw us heading through Bonar Bridge and Lairg to the lonely Crask Inn for a lunch stop. We continued northwards to Altnaharra, along Loch Naver and the beautiful River Naver valley to Bettyhill on the north coast. Our final day took us along the coast to Thurso, Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of the mainland, and finally to John O'Groats

where Bike Adventures provided champagne to celebrate the completion of a wonderful cycling challenge.



I should mention that I did use my ride as an opportunity to raise some funds for St. Michael's Hospice. The amount raised was £1,037 which with gift aid on a large part of that sum meant that the Hospice will receive £1,245. If you supported my ride thank you very much.

Alan.

New Forest Cycling Week 2008

The 34th CTC New Forest Rally this summer was attended by a number of North Hampshire members as usual, and was held again this year at Roundhill Campsite near Brockenhurst. The wet weeks in recent years didn't deter the regulars or many first-timers from coming and the campsite was as full as ever. Fortunately this time the sun shone for us and enabled the hundreds of participants to enjoy rides to a variety of destinations such as Lymington, Lyndhurst, the Owl and Otter Sanctuary at Ashurst, Keyhaven,

Burley, Beaulieu, Christchurch, Eling Tide Mill and the Rufus Stone.



On Thursday the majority of campers crossed to the Isle of Wight where the disused railway track from Yarmouth to Freshwater Bay is always a popular route. Other activities taking place during the week included track cycling at Calshot, an evening time trial organised by the New Forest CC, a children's time trial round the campsite, a quiz, and a barbeque on the final evening. A hugely enjoyable part of the week

is revisiting favourite places, renewing old acquaintances from previous years, and also making new friends.

As from this year all those attending the week became members of the "New Forest Rally Cycling Club" which was registered with British Cycling for insurance purposes. Following a campsite meeting, it was

also agreed to register as a CTC group and a small committee was elected in order to comply with CTC rules. It is hoped that this will lead to greater support and publicity from the CTC in years



to come. Hopefully this will be the full extent of the increase in bureaucracy, and will not detract from what is, essentially, a sociable gathering of cyclists in a beautiful location, which attracts many to return to year after year.

Janice