



CTC North Hampshire

January - April
2010



on road
off road
leisure rides



Something for everyone

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Welcome

Another year has gone and some of us will be planning for 2010 already. I've got two rides in mind that I'd like to complete next year. The first is an off-road ride along the Ridgeway: there was an article in a recent edition of the CTC magazine which inspired me to take another look at a really good route that is close to home. The web site www.nationaltrail.co.uk/ridgeway has lots of information on the route and local accommodation.

My second challenge ride is the A272 which is brilliantly described in Pieter Boogaart's book "A272: An Ode to a Road". The Alton group usually only crosses over or rides short sections of the A272 but I now have the incentive of family living at the Eastern-most end of the road. So, in the summer, I'll cycle the 100 miles through Winchester to Heathfield – shorter than the car journey around the M25 and much more enjoyable.

Hopefully we've seen the worst of the winter weather and we can look forward to longer days and turn plans into reality. Then we'll be able to put away the overshoes and the waterproofs and start looking for the first green shoots of spring.

Once again our ride coordinators have put together a full programme of rides, including, for the first time, a faster paced ride in addition to the moderate pace Alton Saturday rides. All CTC North Hampshire members are welcome to join any of the rides – just turn up and pedal!

Enjoy your cycling – Andy

Ride the Rockies June 2009 – Part 2

The last edition of the magazine described the first few days of David's epic ride – here's the concluding part.

Day 3 in an Eastward direction included a really big climb up Monarch Pass (11,312 feet), which I approached with

considerable apprehension, involving as it did some 3000 feet of climb over 9 miles.

However I was relieved to discover that, whilst it was a long hard haul, it was nevertheless manageable. I felt very pleased with myself at the top, but was put firmly in my place when I spotted 3 or 4 paraplegic participants (with those strange laid-back bikes with the pedals at chest-level for actuation by hand) who had also clearly whirled their way up the long climb.



After the photo of me holding my bike aloft in triumph (only in America...), and a burger and chips with, I exaggerate not, John Denver's "Rocky Mountain High" being played by the local DJ on the summit, the 18-mile dive down the other side was a wonderful, if dangerous reward – a couple of guys crashed and were laid out on the tarmac as we went past, with medics attending to them. A bit sobering... this was on Interstate 50, a busy highway, with ginormous trucks so typical of America thundering by, perilously close, all day. Salida was the overnight resting place, where the team enjoyed a great Mexican meal overlooking a lively river where the local kids were tumbling and rolling in their kayaks in the evening sun.

The ride North on Day 4 was one of mental lows and physical highs – perhaps the low point of the event for me, morale-wise, with a steady long, punishing (60 miles) relentless climb up to Leadville, the highest city in Colorado at 10,152 feet and with a history of silver-mining. As you might imagine, the air was pretty

thin, and the ride proved a real slog up a very busy and narrow highway, albeit in continually superb countryside, and cheered on by fellow riders.



Our campsite on arrival looked out on the most amazing back-drop – snow-capped mountain peaks as far as you could see all around, most over 14,000 feet high: just mind-blowing. Thankfully it was not as cold as we had feared for this altitude over night, so we did not awake to ice on the tent. But it was cold at 5 a.m., when we tended to rise each morning! This was, in some ways, the most testing aspect of the adventure - having to crawl out of the sleeping bag before it was light, with aching limbs, and then ablute, strike camp, packing for onward transport to the next destination, finding one's bike (kept in an outdoor secure "bike corral") then grabbing some breakfast. There were community-supplied breakfasts each morning – of varying quality and choice – somehow I cannot convince my body that pancakes and syrup, burritos and hash brown is what I need as fuel. But again you just had to keep feeding the boiler – goodness knows how many calories I burned that week!

The organisers provided “Aid stations” every 12 to 18 miles along the route, where there were portaloos, free Gatorade drinks, fresh fruit, plus various forms of hot and cold food to buy. (It will not surprise my fellow Saturday-afternoon CTC friends that peanut butter and grape jelly sandwiches were my favoured option!)

Now, where was I? Though the mileage each day was less than the previous, Day 5 was the big one – Independence Pass, 12,095 feet, if you please. After the energy-sapping slog of the previous day, stirring ourselves to get going with still aching limbs was a battle on its own. It is however remarkable how quickly things



improve once you get the legs spinning again in the early morning sunshine, and the climb turned out to be less dramatic than our earlier challenges, albeit very long – 3,000 feet climb over 17 miles. Again the scenery was just stunning – the views all the way up and at the top were, as they say over there, “awesome”, with snow on the ground and a cold wind to welcome us on the summit. The drop down the other side was an invitation to hooliganism, 45-

50 mph and I was being overtaken by others; it was crazy, exhilarating and pay-back for the long climb, and on many hairpin bends I blessed the fact that I had disc brakes! The posh ski-town of Aspen was our destination, with a beautiful campsite at the high school. The advice to visitors included warnings about grizzly bears visiting the tents at night, so not to leave any food about...

Final day was a breeze: 40 miles, all downhill and on a totally traffic-free bike path (a converted former railway line) with smooth tarmac. A leisurely start (8 a.m.!) and we just cruised along in the sunshine – everyone was in “end of term” sort of mood, and we returned to Glenwood Springs where we were all welcomed as if we'd just won the Tour de France. We loaded up the cars, changed into shorts and T-shirts and enjoyed the end-of-event open-air party - beers, great chicken and shrimp rice food, a few speeches and the grand draw for the expensive bike – I didn't win.

Speaking of bikes, I omitted to relate to you, in the above, the entertainment value, not to say occasional ridicule, generated by my trusty aluminium-framed, Californian-assembled Marin hybrid bike. I found myself surrounded by the most amazing examples of state-of-the-art, often 100% carbon fibre, all-bells-and-whistles bicycles worth an absolute fortune (in the multi-\$'000s bracket). For example, one of our team had a superb Oseo bike with an all-up weight of, think about this, 16lbs. My vélo weighed in at 42 lbs. It became affectionately referred to as “that old tractor”, and drew admiring (?) remarks from bikers as they flew past, along the lines of “Mmm, nice fenders...” At least I didn't get a muddy stripe on my back when it rained!

“Would you do it again?” came the question from my sister. Errr, we..e..ll... It was without doubt the most physically and at times mentally demanding thing I've ever done (my wife has for years dismissed my interest in biking as mental ...), and it's a great feeling of achievement to have succeeded and I feel truly blessed to have been able to do it. Based on this event, and there are apparently similar such events throughout the summer, Colorado appears to

nurture a faintly insane sub-species of man-(and woman) kind with the most intensely competitive drive for peak health and cycling fitness (shades of the Sunday CTC group?), which leaves one just shaking one's head in disbelief. That said, the enduring memories are of the sensational scenery, and the open friendliness and camaraderie of everyone just everywhere, whether fellow participant, volunteer, event staff or state patrol policeman. A great advert for the USA. But do that again? ...are you kidding? Not till next year, anyway... I suppose a lighter bike might make a difference? Hmmmm...
David Craig

Cycling History

The January 2009 edition of the magazine got as far as 1818 in the evolution of the bicycle and human powered vehicles. In 1851 William Sawyer, who lived in Dover, exhibited his four-wheeled, treadle driven carriage at the Great Exhibition in London. This carriage had driving wheels at the front and smaller steering wheels at the rear. It was claimed that a speed of 8 mile per hour could be easily achieved helped by the lightweight (70 pounds!) construction.



A New Venture for Alton Saturday Rides

In response to growing numbers on the Alton Saturday rides over the past year, we're trialling a new format for some of the rides in 2010. On the first Saturday of each month there will be a faster-paced ride as well as the usual moderate-paced one, which hopefully will accommodate the varying cycling speeds of the riders who come out. Both rides will be led and will leave at the same

time from Alton Community Centre, so at the start you can decide which ride to go on. If this is judged to be successful then we can make it a regular feature, but if not, then we'll continue to offer a single led ride on all Saturdays as at present.

Please direct any queries or feedback to Janice, thanks.

CTC Tourist Competition 2009

The results of this year's competition are out, and Mark Beauchamp narrowly missed achieving first place with 124 points, equalling those of the winner who was chosen after tie-breaker rules were applied. Mark also qualified for a Gold medallion in the national Mille Miglia competition by cycling over 3000 kilometres in competition during the year, so well done Mark!



Congratulations also to the following North Hampshire riders who achieved national placings in the competition:

- Andy Watson, tied 96th place with 60 points;

- Peter Hall, tied 213th place with 42 points;
- John Spooner, also tied 213th place with 42 points;
- Caroline Brodie, tied 278th place with 36 points.

The total number of points achieved by all North Hampshire riders together put us in tied 9th place in the team event with CTC West Kent. We could improve our position next year with more participants, so do consider entering some of these events when planning your next year's rides. There are over 400 qualifying events held over the whole country, and the full list will be published in the New Year in Cycle magazine and on the CTC website at www.ctc-competitions.org.uk.

Bromptons on Trains

Using a full size bicycle for commuting on South West Trains is very hard because of the peak time travel restrictions. One option is to use a Brompton which, as a folding bike, is allowed on trains at any time. South West Trains has introduced a Brompton hire scheme.



For £2 per week season ticket holders can hire a Brompton for a year and use it to make the journey easier. There's more information at www.southwesttrains.co.uk/bromptonbikes.aspx.

Sue Coles – Sports Award

Our congratulations to Sue Coles – one the most enthusiastic and hard-working members of CTC South Hampshire – who has been awarded a Winchester District Sport and Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) sports award for Female Service to Sport.

These awards recognise the achievements and efforts of Winchester's top sporting athletes, coaches and volunteers. As well as celebrating potential stars of the future the awards ceremony was also a perfect opportunity for the public to show their appreciation

for those who have put so much personal time and effort into helping others to get involved in sport at a local level.

Sue is again organising the Watership Down 108km Audax event. This is always a popular, if tough, first event of the season. CTC North Hampshire will be out in force and everyone will be hoping for dry roads, sunshine and no ice! For more details go to the CTC South Hampshire site – www.southhampshirectc.org.uk

Freewheeling & Pace-judging Competition

The pace-judging competition was held in September between Upton Grey and South Warnborough, and the rider who completed the three-mile circuit in both directions with the smallest time difference was the winner. This year it was Robert Watson with a time difference of only 2 seconds, closely followed by Frank Pote in second and Peter Hall in third place.



The pace-judging was followed immediately by the freewheeling competition, and this was won by Frank, with outsider Bernard coming second and Nigel Hooker in third place. The overall winner of the two competitions was Frank, with Robert coming second and Nigel in third. They were presented with their prizes afterwards at tea at Lasham Gliding Club by Dan, who organised the event despite having a broken leg. Thanks to him, and congratulations to the winners.

Two Books for the Enthusiast

If you are interested in the history of cycling then there are two books that should be on your reading list.

“Campagnolo: 75 Years of Cycling Passion” – the title says it all. This book traces the history of Tullio Campagnolo and his passion to create the best cycling components. It describes his moment of inspiration on a freezing mountain pass when he couldn’t change wheels through to the creation of Tour winning equipment made from super-lightweight materials. The book is superbly illustrated and brings to life an almost forgotten era of continental cycling. Written by Paolo Facchinetti and Guido P. Rubino and published by Velo Press: ISBN 978-1-934030-37-0.

“The Golden Age of Handbuilt Bicycles” is an unashamedly French homage to the art of bicycle building. This is a coffee table book for cyclists filled with detailed images of artisan bicycles that are sometimes close to being works of art. The first bicycle in the book is the splendidly named “la Gauloise” which was made in 1909 and features two chains. The heyday of French construction was during the 1950’s when chrome was the fashionable “colour” and the bicycle was truly “La Petite Reine” – literally the “Little Queen”. This book shows them off like jewels. Written by Jan Heine and Jean-Pierre Pradères and published by Rizzoli: ISBN 978-0-8478-3094-7.

For more cycling related books have a look at the Bicycle Books’ web site at www.bicyclebooks.co.uk/default.asp. They certainly live up to their description of “Specialist Sellers of New, Out-of-Print and Collectible Cycling Books”.

Bike Boo Boos

So, have you ever been stuck miles from home with a broken changer / chain / frame? Well the web site bikebooboos.com has all the information you need to fix your failed equipment. Suggestions include tying your frame together with rope and inner tubes and putting a stick in the rear derailleur to fix it in one gear. If all this fails then you can fashion your now redundant pile of bits into one of the bicycle sculptures created by the author of the web site. For a real course on bike maintenance you could book on a CTC training session – see www.promtb.net/courses/maintenance/front.htm.



Don't Forget!!

CTC North Hampshire’s annual lunch will be held on Sunday 24th January 2010 at the Grange Hotel, Alton. The lunch is always popular and all are welcome. Last date for booking is 9th January – contact Janice on 01420 80783.

