



# Maidenhead & District Cycling Club News

May 2009



## A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

SO I was intending to get a newsletter out every month and fell at the first hurdle. It's been three months since the last one ! Thanks for all the positive comments on the last newsletter, and also a big thanks to those who volunteered to contribute to future ones. In this issue we have articles from Andrew Payne and Paul Hartigan.

The racing season is now well underway, with our two open TT's now long gone, and the Thursday evening 10's underway. MDCC are also back into road racing, with Andrew Payne (pg 3) as well as Andrew Richardson and Nigel Shurben (pg 7)

Club nights are starting to take off at the new venue of St Luke's church hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month at 8pm. We have had a steady stream of new members coming along and a smattering of regular members. I encourage all members to come along and say hello, and most evenings we have something going on. Last week it was a bike maintenance talk for our newly formed Ladies Section.

I would also like to make a plea for volunteers to come forward to help run the club and its numerous organised activities. At present all of this falls on too few club members, which, as well as limiting what we can commit to, also means that we run significant risk of disappointing members should one of the few organisers be indisposed.

As a club that is run by members, for the members (we have no paid officials) it is the responsibility of all members to contribute to the running of the club. In addition, it's thoroughly enjoyable and a great way to get to know other members.

We are not necessarily looking for a full time commitment, if every member gives just a little of his/her time then it will make a big difference.

Bye for now, until the next newsletter. I won't leave it so long next time,

*Paul*

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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

HERE are just a few of the opportunities available. Contact Peter or Paul if you can help:

- Start and Finish Timekeeper for Thursday 10's (Full training will be given)
- Spotter for the Finish Timekeeper. Calls the rider numbers out as they finish, and a good way to work up to full timekeeping.
- Pusher-off for Thursday 10's.
- Do you have any special skills or knowledge that you are willing to share at a club evening, or in an article for the newsletter?
- Volunteer Coordinator. Organising the other volunteers to make sure we are not left short-handed.
- Clothing Coordinator. Monitoring clothing stock levels, gathering members clothing orders, placing clothing orders, and distributing goods when they arrive.



## CLUB EVENTS TO WATCH OUT FOR

### Track Events

Our Club track training sessions and championships will be held on the following Wednesday evening sessions, 8pm-10pm at Palmer Park. We will also be running other training events on the evenings, including Goride for all levels, so don't be put off by the fact it's a championship event.

June 10th Track Training Session

June 24th Club Sprint Championships

July 8th Club Points Championships

Please come along and join in these free activities that the Club subsidises to the tune of £60 a night. It's your money so please make it a worthwhile expenditure for the Club.

### Time Trials

We have three BIG Club 10's in July that we would like to be fully supported by Club members. All on the Bath Road, Maidenhead Thicket Course H10/2

**July 16th Thursday 7.45pm. Club Charity '10' in aid of the 'Mobility Trust.'**

This is our first Charity event for some time and so would like to make it a great success in raising money for state of the art wheelchairs for those who have lost much of their mobility. All entry fees + generous donations are going to the Charity based in Reading.

**July 23rd Thursday, 7.45pm The Timberlake Tankard Handicap.**

The only single day handicap event we run so everyone who rides has a chance to win the Timberlake Tankard. It takes place on exactly the 140th anniversary of Henry James Timberlake's race on the Bath Road between Maidenhead Toll Gate and Bath Cottage, on the old road, just by Westacott Way roundabout. Henry was a Club member and early champion of the sport. We will be placing a wreath on Henry's grave earlier in the day.

**July 30th Thursday, 7.45pm Club '10' Championships**

The one all our fast men want to win. What about some of our new members upsetting them and producing the winning ride. This year and not before time there is also a separate Ladies '10' Championship for our growing number of women members.

**August 11th, Tuesday, Inter club '10' against High Wycombe CC**

They beat us last year on the H10/2, our home patch. This time it's away on the Longwick course by Princes Risborough. The course record is held by David Millar. I'm sure some of you can take his time apart to give the Wycombe a good thrashing.

Remember riders of all ability compete in this event so we want you all on top form!

### Club Nights

June 26th, Friday, 8pm -10pm, St Luke's Church Hall

Maidenhead & Dist CC CEEPO Bike Launch

A fantastic opportunity to try out Club members Mike and Reiko 'Trees' CEEPO Triathlon and Time Trial Bikes. These beautiful carbon fibre Tri/TT bikes are the ultimate in a new streamlined design, wind tunnel tested at Boeing's Japan Labs. Mike is bringing a selection for you to try. Just bring your own pedals and try them on the road, roller or turbo.

Mike and Reiko will be riding them at our '10's' if you want an advance look. More details nearer the time but do look at their CEEPO website.

## MY FIRST ROAD RACE

By Andrew Payne



On Sunday 22nd February I decided to skip the club ride from the Bir-dhill Golf club and take a plunge and do a road race. The event chosen was the 1st round of the Surrey League championship held on a close circuit at the old MOD Chertsey facility. Having never raced before this put me in the Cat 4 event along with all the others who had never raced or those with a racing history but had failed to gain the minimum points for move up to a Cat 3 race.

The actual location of the site is about 4 miles south of the A30 at Virginia Waters by a small village called Longcross. The section of the site used for road racing is part of a vehicle test facility. Some of the sections look more suitable for testing tanks instead of car. The road race circuit is a 2 mile loop of fairly good tarmac (just 1 large pot hole on the racing line). Approximately 1.3 miles of this is in the shape of a 'U' and flat. The rest of the loop includes 4 high fairly sharp bends including 3 short but sharp rises. For those that have been riding with me will know bends going downhill are NOT strengths of mine. For the track riders the bend in the

'U' is banked but is only marked out with a single white line.

The running of the event was more laid back in terms of timing than some off our club evening 10's. I think this was caused by the mild dry day attracting 80(ish) riders for the Cat 4 race and the sheer time it takes to complete the signing on process. The scheduled race start time was 10am, but the riders were called to order nearer 10.15. The published race distance was 30 miles (15 laps). As this was the 1st race of the season the organisers decided the 1st 5 laps would be done at controlled speeds. So the riders were split into 4 groups of 20 and escorted around the track by elite riders at an increasing pace to ensure everyone gained some experience of group riding and knowledge of the track. This was all fairly sedate with the speed generally kept below 25mph or slower.

With the 5 laps completed all the riders re-grouped on the start line for the final briefing. The main point of this was to stress that the majority of crashes happen on the straight and caused by riders not checking what was happening around them while changing their racing line.

As the flag dropped, I rolled over the line near the rear of the peloton. Going round the bottom of the 'U' the peloton was doing a lazy 20mph. Going down the back straight I moved down the outside of the peloton to be somewhere in the top 20 going into the bendy bit for the 1st time. Despite feeling comfortable doing about 28mph around the 1st sweeping left hand bend, I was deeply unnerved by the number of riders flying by on both sides at over 30mph. Leaving this bend left me feeling uncomfortable as the group went up a short sharp rise, allowing me to pull back a few places only to hit an equally short sharp descent with another left hander at the bottom. Bottling out I ran wide on the bend as the remaining riders shot by. Another short sharp rise on a right hand bend led to the final descent and a sharp left onto the main straight. With the vast majority of the other riders powering down and round onto the straight, I found myself about 50m adrift from the rear of the peloton.

A couple of elite riders were bringing up the rear to provide assistance as required. After a short discussion about leaning more into the bends, I was given a hard shove and by the end of the straight I was just about in contact with the back of the peloton as lap 2 started. Going round the bottom the 'U' the peloton was doing around 25mph, which felt relatively easy with the drafting affect. Travelling down the back straight, this lap I decide to hang around the outside rear of the peloton, which seemed a nice safe place with plenty of get out options. Just as well as somewhere to the middle or inside of the peloton was a shout and screech of brakes and about 15 / 20 riders rapidly slowed, with some leaving the tarmac to try out their off road / gravel riding skills. I didn't look,

but believe all riders stayed upright. Going into the bendy bits for the 2nd time I was firmly at the rear (but not last) with plenty of space all around me. Again another hard sprint to re-catch the peloton on the straight and I started to wonder why I was bothering as the lack of bottle on the bends was making the racing extra hard work.

In to the 3rd lap one of the elite riders offered to lead me through the bending bits. This helped, but I struggled with confidence to fully lean and keep pedalling, so I was faced with my 3rd sprint down the straight to re-catch the peloton. Going into lap 4 I decide to complete the race and do my best to improve round the bends. During laps 5,6 & 7 the pace significantly lifted with no one getting away off the front. Going around the bends on lap 7 & 8 I was getting slightly better but also re-assured to see other riders having similar problems to myself. Some riders were now also starting to struggle down the straights. During laps 8 & 9 I was surprised by the total lack of pace, as no one wanted to take up the running at the front. By now I'd also struck up a friendship with another Andrew who was equally having problems on the bends and we were anticipating a major pickup in pace at the bell for the last lap.

Going down the back straight for the last time with a tail wind at a lazy 22mph, made me think now was my chance to attempt to sprint off the front. However, after a few moments to think about it I didn't feel confident of being clear of the peloton on leaving the bendy bit, so I stay put at the rear. I did safely negotiate the bends and also past a couple of riders. Was I getting better or were they struggling with the pace? Going down the straight I had a half hearted sprint and passed a number of riders, but saw little point in really trying hard, as I was at least 150m away from the main action at the front of the race.

At the riders briefing the race director was hoping to be able to place all riders. I've currently not seen full results, but I believe I finished in the bottom 25% of riders. Not very impressive, but I'm pleased that I completed the race. I would do it again if a number of other club riders were going along to race.

My bike computer reckons I completed the race in 53mins 4 sec at an average speed of 24.5mph. My max speed was 34mph.

Teachers' assessment C+. Andrew is willing to put the effort in on the easy parts of the course, but needs to show more commitment on the technical parts if he is to reach his potential in racing.

## TIME TRIALLING UPDATE - HILLY 30 AND FIFIELD 15



*A cup of tea, a sticky bun, and a massage. Heaven!*

MDCC's two early season open time trials took place in March and April, starting with the Hilly 30. This year it attracted only 39 rider, of which 30 took the start. It couldn't have been the weather that put them off this year as it was a beautiful sunny and warm day, which was appreciated as much by the marshals as the riders. The winner was Ray Hughes (Clarence Wheelers) in a time of 1:09:09 with MDCC's best finisher being Peter Weir with a time of 1:13:50 A big thank you goes to all those who helped the day go smoothly. A number of rider complemented the club on our organisation.

A month later, on 11th April the Fifield 15 took place on another sunny and warm day. This time we had a respectable 51 entries, of which 48 took the start. Winner on the day was James Stewart (Kinesis KUK) in a time of 31:18 with fastest MDCC rider being Chris Heape in 34:36 Fastest Lady was Catherine Essex (Kings Lynn CC) with a time of 36:33 Again a big thank you must go to all marshals and other helpers who made the day a success, including Sports Masseur Robin Allan, who laid on free massages at the HQ afterwards.

## MORE TIME TRIALLING - THURSDAY EVENING 10'S

We are now well into the Thursday evening 10 season with 9 of the 24 events having already taken place. Chris Heape has set the fastest time in five of the nine events, although Peter Weir popped up last week and took half a minute out of Chris. For us mere mortals, however, the 10's are really about the season long handicap. Of course I would say that, given that I am currently leading it !

The way that the handicap works is that you score one point for each ten seconds, or part thereof, that you are faster than your target time for the course being ridden. Target times are set by calculating the average of your times for the course in the last season. In recent years we have typically had a runaway winner (actually, last season Joe Francis run away with all the trophies) so, with the aim of producing a closer competition we have changed the rules slightly for this year.

The scoring system rewards riders who have made a significant improvement over the winter, but their ability to score highly in each event for a whole season allows them to run away with the title. This season we will be recalculating riders' target times at the mid-season point, after the 10 on 18<sup>th</sup> June. This breaks the season into two halves of 12 events each. Riders will only score points in their nine best events in each half season. This has been done, not only to close the competition up, but to allow riders to help out at events, even if they are competing for the handicap.

So, has this made for a close leaderboard so far this year? Unfortunately, not so far, since yours truly is having his best season in a long time. But don't worry since we are now at the nine event mark and I will probably only add a handful of points over the next three 10's. Others, such as Vince Dewey, who have ridden fewer events so far, could close the gap significantly by scoring highly over the next three events.

What is clear is that I will find it difficult to score many points in the second half of the season, when the handicaps are recalculated. Hopefully this will make for a nail-biting end to the handicap...

...with me winning it by a close margin.

## GO RIDE UPDATE - FUN FOR ADULTS AND KIDS



*Kids and Coaches at Cox Green Leisure Centre*

MDCC's 2009 go-ride coaching programme got off to a flying start during the Borough's Sportsbug Fortnight promotion, as we were given use of a car park at Cox Green Leisure Centre on two consecutive Saturdays. By a combination of Sportsbug advertising and word of mouth (thanks Peter) we managed to attract over a dozen children to take part.

After Peter signed everyone in, the session got underway with a bike, clothing and helmet check. Then it was straight onto the bikes to have some fun with a variety of skills exercises. Everybody, riders and coaches alike, thoroughly enjoyed themselves and before we knew it the hour long session was nearly over. The grand finale was a relay race between Paul and Nigel's teams which got everyone, parent included, shouting encouragement. Honours were even with one win apiece.

The majority of the parents stayed to watch the session, and Peter and Malcolm did a good job of raising the club's profile with them. A good proportion of participants asked about follow on session, and we are in the process of negotiating the use of the same car park, and possibly the large playing field, for a series of sessions on Saturday afternoons through June and into July. Word of mouth is the way to attract participants so spread the word, or better still bring your own kids along and come to watch yourself.

## FUN IN FLANDERS

by Paul Hartigan



For the 5th time in as many years, the first weekend in April again found me with friends in Belgium, to take part in one of world's biggest cyclo-sportives, the Ronde von Vlaanderen, or Tour of Flanders. This event takes place on a Saturday, the day before the pro classics race, so most people do the ride, and then spend most of Sunday watching the professionals cover the same ground in a fraction of the time.

The sportif version comes in three flavours, 260km (hard), 140km (not bad), and 75km (what's the point?). Having completed both the 260km and 140km distances in the past, my recommendation to newcomers to the event is that it's well worth doing 'The Big One', if only for the bragging rights and sense of achievement. But if you return, the 140km route still gives you all of the major climbs, and misses out the first 120km section - a flattish and not-too-interesting trek out to the coast and back.

This year's 140km route covered 16 classic climbs, my favourite being the Koppenberg - 600m of classic pavé, up to 22% at its steepest. But all the climbs have a special feel, and make a real change from typical UK riding.

The whole event is brilliantly well run. With over 17,000 riders sharing the road, the marshals, motorbike escorts, feed stations, and traffic police mean that you just need to concentrate on getting to the next hill, and on to the finish.

On this trip, a friend, former GB Commonwealth and Olympic rider Emma Davies, who is based in Belgium, organised a couple of special treats for us: dinner with Phil Liggett and Paul Sherwen, and VIP tickets to the start race of the pro race on Sunday morning. Emma has now retired from racing, and now runs a bespoke cycle tours company, see [www.cobbledclassics.com](http://www.cobbledclassics.com) for more information.

Watching the pro race on Sunday, we zigzagged across the Belgian countryside. The first observation is that these guys are much, much faster than ordinary mortals. The second is that this a really tough race, with attacks going all the time. Stijn Devolder looked really strong and road a tactically great race - we watched the finish on a big screen from the comfort of a bar, the mixture of frites, mayo and Lefe Brun taking the edge of our tiredness from the day before.

I'll be organising a trip for next year's event, so if anyone is interested, get in touch.



## Clothing

Our new club jerseys have proven a hit with the membership and have been selling like hot-cakes. It's certainly nice to see a good number of members in club colours at the 10's.

We are running short of the club jerseys that we stock and so it is time for us to place another clothing order with our supplier, Impsport. Although members can order single items of clothing at any time, they will have to pay a 20% surcharge if less than 12 items are ordered. Now is the time to get those skinsuits, shorts, and other items in club colours.

By ordering jerseys for stock, together with individual members' items we can avoid the 20% surcharge, and, if the order totals over £750, we get an extra 10% discount.

An Impsport catalogue is available for download at [www.imsport.com](http://www.imsport.com), just click on the 'Online Brochure' link. Alternatively give Paul a call or collar him at one of the 10's or the Friday clubnights (2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of every month)

## Road Racing at Hillingdon

Well, not road racing as such, but circuit racing. Andrew Richardson and Nigel Shurben have made a move into circuit racing by entering the West Thames circuit race series at Hillingdon on Tuesday evenings, riding the 4th Cat race.

Although the races usually average between 23 and 25 mph, this has not been an issue for Andy and Nigel, with most races staying together to finish in a bunch sprint. Being a race for 4th Cats, most

riders are inexperienced at riding in a bunch, and in some cases, riding a bike, full stop. This results in some 'interesting' finishes to the evening's race.



*Circuit Race start at Hillingdon*

Best placing so far for Andy is 6th, with Nigel managing a 10th place. Clearly some work on sprinting is required for both of them. What would also help is a leadout train to avoid the last lap mayhem as people try to launch the sprint from 500m out!



*Andy & Nigel in the bunch at Hillingdon*

If you would like to get into circuit racing and are up for some MDCC teamwork, then contact Paul or Peter (details at the end of the newsletter) If you're not sure about your fitness or skill level then get in touch and we can arrange some coaching sessions on both counts.

Alternatively, why not come and support our members, and spectate on a Tuesday evening.

## New Members

We would like to welcome the following new members. We hope all our members will introduce themselves and give them any advice or assistance they may need.

### Linda Regel

Linda has ridden several of our Club 10's and now has joined us as a first claim member. She is focussing on our '10's' with the intention of getting her times down as much as possible with the aid of her coach. Linda has already taken over 2 minutes off her time this year.



*Linda giving Vince a pasting at the Fifield '10'*

### Neil Campbell

Neil has joined the Club to help him in his main interest of riding Sportives. He's already taken part in 1 or 2 this year and is building his fitness for the L'Etape du Tour, which this year finishes on the Ventoux. [France's answer to Christmas Common if you don't know the climb] He's also put in some good rides on our fast Club runs and got down to 25:59 in the Club '10'.

### Robert Tinn

Danuta's son Robert has joined after taking part in several of our activities over the last two years. We hope he has time to fit in cycling with all his other sporting activities.

He's already attended some of our track sessions and his 29:47 on the Shurlock Row '10' course puts him in the lead for the Den Hawkins Tankard for the fastest Juvenile '10'



Robert rides the boards at Newport

## Kate Hunt

Kate has joined us this year and is hoping to ride some of our '10's'. She has a busy schedule and her main focus is taking part in triathlons. Partner Chris Heape and Kate

have to juggle family life and their sporting activities but we hope to see her at our '10's' later in the year.

## Kaleem Sheikh

Kaleem's main interest at the moment is in social rides and he has been going out from the Clock Tower on Sunday mornings. He's also interested in joining our Sportive group that is now kicking into action.

## Gary Curtis

Gary joins us from Bude CC so that he can ride our '10's' when he's in England. He commutes here from the Czech Republic. He's also had a successful year taking part in indoor rowing and as his times show in his first ever '10's' he's got plenty of talent. He's down to a 25:39 already.

## Robin Smith

Robin has been welcome at our Club 10's for the last couple of years and has now joined the Club. His main focus is mtb and he takes part in the National MTB series. His aim in riding TT's is to build muscular endurance for high output in mtb events. He could obviously teach some of us how to ride TT's as he's already produced 23:10 on the Thicket course.

## Stuart Fuller

Stuart joined MDCC early in the year but has been too busy riding his bike to get out with the Club. He hopes to remedy this in June when he will be riding our '10's'. He is concentrating on Sportives at the moment and could be in with a chance of the new Sportive Trophy if he completes all the events he plans to ride. He also gets out regularly on his mtb.

## From the Archive - A Warning from History

In the last newsletter our members were introduced to George Herbert

**WHEN** I said recently that I could "think of no big, robust-looking girl who has ever succeeded at cycle racing" I was quite prepared to be reminded of exceptions to this generalization. From W F Slimmon, hon. secretary of the South-Eastern Road Club, comes a vigorous claim on behalf of club champion Joyce Brooker, winner of three open events this year and never out of the first four except when she finished sixth in the women's 25-mile championship. At 50 miles she has a ride of 2.18.7 to her credit, and, Mr. Slimmon adds, "she is definitely of the big and robust type." As I am one of those 19th-century survivors who still persist in wearing caps, I raise mine very respectfully and admiringly to Mrs. Brooker, with the explanation that I have not yet had the opportunity of seeing her on one of her rides. I think it is likely that there may be other examples of generously built ladies who perform creditably in the numerous time trials held all over the country; but the fact remains that most of the successes are achieved by girls who show no abnormal physical development. If I lay any emphasis on this point it is only to stress the suitability of cycling as a channel of athletic competition among girls in all walks of life. When a dainty little lady like Eileen Sheridan can swirl through 100 miles of drenching rain in 4.49.6, that is genuine front-page news for the daily papers—far more so, in my opinion, than the exploits of women swimmers and runners, who often exhibit signs of exhaustion that are never seen in cycling contests.

Stancer or GHS as he was known throughout the cycling world. Amongst the many cycling roles he took on, it was as the far-sighted editor of 'Cycling' that he is best remembered.

This article of his from 1949 uncannily predicts that Jordan is never likely to get under 30 minutes in our Club '10'.

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Phone numbers for the remaining committee members are on the club web site.