

HUB-UB



**WELCOME TO
THE MAGAZINE OF
THE BEACON ROADS CYCLING CLUB**



Edition 01/14

www.beaconrcc.org.uk

July 2014

IN THIS ISSUE

Page	Article & Author	
3	Ed's Ramblings	
4	Does anyone have an earlier copy of HUB-UB?	
5	And what of the future?	
6	Governance of the Beacon (an insight to how the Club works)	
7	Egypt and Back by Tricycle	
10	A Glimpse of the Past	
	RETRO ARTICLES & WRITER	Date first published
11	50 th Anniversary Road Races - Eric Hogg	Aug 1996
12	All Types of Cycling – Folding stuff – Dave Cox	March 2001
13	President's Address – Trevor Shipway	July 2002
14	Ed's Ramblings - Eric Hogg	Sept 2003
15	Nutrition for Cycling – Dave Cole	Nov 2003
17	Rear View – Back Pedaller	March 2004
18	Beacon Colours	May 2005
19	Multi National Champ Ruth Eyles	Sept 2005
20	Celebrating Success with The Beacon	Nov 2005
21	Memories of Early Beacon – Roger Shayes	March 2006
22	Retirement Thank you - Trevor Shipway	March 2008
23	The Cheshire Cat Challenge – Jason Hogg	July 2009
25	Staying with Mateo – Alan Nicholls	Feb 2010
27	Abnormality on LEJoG – Philip Whiteman	Jan 2012
30	Stop Thief – Oscar Hopkins	Aug 2012

ED'S RAMBLINGS

In 2016 the Beacon Roads Cycling Club will be celebrating its 70th Anniversary. For many of those years members have enjoyed a 'journal', 'newsletter' or 'magazine' rejoicing in the name of HUB-UB. The earliest copy I have is for the winter of 1956 -7 and is Vol. 5, No 1, the first edition having been published some 5 years earlier in 1951. In it the first Decade of the club is celebrated with the story of how the club was formed followed by highlights of the following 10 years. It makes fascinating reading and provides us with an insight into recent history as well as celebrating the successes of the club in those early days.

Since then HUB-UB has been a regular feature of club life but on an intermittent basis, usually when we have a willing volunteer to edit it. The job of editor fell to me when our son Jason went off to university in 1992 having been editor for the previous year or so. Since then I have attempted to publish HUB-UB on a regular basis but have to admit that the task became harder in recent years. The catch 22 is that in order to publish on a regular basis I need articles and on occasions getting people to submit something has been a bit like pulling teeth. **And here's the real catch** - those who had been regular contributors ceased to write stuff because we weren't publishing on a regular basis. Indeed one contributor posted a message to that effect on the Message Board and I can't argue with him, he makes a valid point. Unless we produce issues on a consistent basis we are unlikely to have people wanting to read it or contribute articles.

And that is probably where we are now! Some members have never seen HUB-UB and are unaware that such a publication exists whilst others may have heard but not seen the magazine. Equally I've had comments from members saying that they have missed reading HUB-UB and would welcome its return.

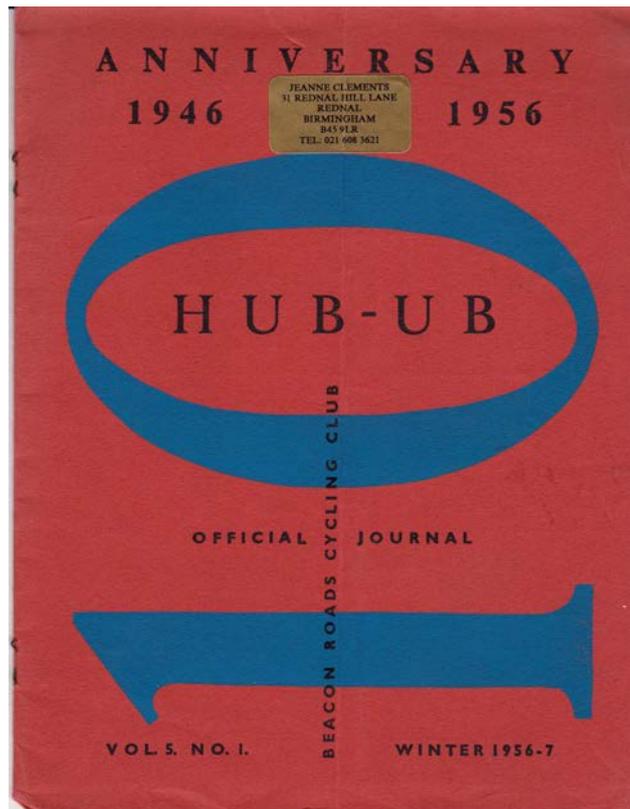
Which brings me to the key point - do members want a club magazine or is it superfluous in the current climate? I am an admirer of the Beacon Bulletin; it's a very professional publication and together with the Message Board keeps members fully informed of current events. In that context they do a splendid job and I wholeheartedly commend them. HUB-UB is a different publication, designed to capture the essence of club life with more detailed stories about the events and people who make the club what it is. The articles can be serious or humorous, controversial or entertaining, the main thing is to capture the spirit of club life for both the present and future.

In this edition I have included some articles that have been published in previous editions and made some suggestions about what we might include in future editions. However, in the final analysis, HUB-UB is YOUR magazine, it is YOUR contributions that count and as I have said on many previous occasions, you don't need to write a grammar perfect article; just give me the bones of the idea and I'll help turn it into an acceptable read.

So there is the question; do we continue with HUB-UB or has it come to the end of its useful life? Please let me have your thoughts, comments and suggestions either via the Message Board or by emailing me at gladeric@sky.com

Eric Hogg, Editor; July 2014

DOES ANYONE HAVE AN EARLIER COPY OF HUB-UB?



HUB-UB 1956 – 57

Published in the winter of 1956 -57 the Cub President was Jack Clements and the 'Hon Editor' was John Cooper. In those days we even had an assistant Editor – B Wilson Esq. Interestingly, the Editor included the following note which I believe captures the spirit of HUB-UB in those days and which is perhaps equally relevant today: -

EDITOR'S NOTE

“When I sat down to write this magazine, I realised that the task was a difficult one – difficult to know what to put in and equally difficult to know what to leave out. Although many achievements have gone by unheralded and many events have been passed over unmentioned, I feel that this is the Beacon story put into a fairly accurate perspective, whether it is a new story or merely a collection of reminiscences.”

The rest of the magazine was devoted to a summary of the achievements of club members during the first decade of the club and it is interesting to see that in one club event in 1954 there were 12 women who took part. Whilst not wishing to single out the achievements of one individual it would perhaps be remiss not to mention the star of 1954, one David Duffield, whose exploitations on a tricycle brought a new dimension to the club and who went on to become a well respected commentator and broadcaster for all things to do with cycling - Chapeau David!

So there we have it – a slice of Beacon history that still lives courtesy of that edition of HUB-UB. What will members in 50 years time have to remind them of the history of the Beacon?

Ed

AND WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Assuming we continue to publish HUB-UB one of the changes we must make is to convert to an electronic version which we can either send out to members via email or include on the website (or both). Whilst we can control the costs of printing to some extent the one cost that continues to rise and is now extremely expensive is postage, hence the requirement to move to the electronic version. However for those without Internet access, or who simply prefer a traditional paper copy we will retain the facility to print a hard copy and post it out, so no one needs miss out on the magazine.

In the remainder of this issue you will see some of the past articles and ideas for future articles and if you have any suggestions please don't hesitate to get in touch. One advantage of going electronic will be the ability to include more photographs. Colour printing can be quite expensive particularly if there are lots of photos and care has to be taken in resizing photos to maintain reasonable file sizes. With an electronic version this becomes much less of a problem and we can easily introduce many more photos and illustrations. So one thing you can do is to ensure that you take and save photos of club (or your) cycling activities wherever possible, just in case you do decide to write that article.

I am aware that there are some of you out there who are more than capable of writing interesting articles; I've seen examples on the message board. HUB-UB provides a vehicle for sharing your experiences on a more permanent basis and maybe in 50 years time someone will be reading about them and understanding a little more about how things worked in the second decade of this century and the sixtieth decade of the club. Moreover, by including the photos thy will have a visual impression of what club life was like all those years ago. Why not have a go? We all have a tale to tell whether humorous or instructive and most of us like to see our work in print (even if virtual) with acknowledgements, and you might just achieve a place in the annals of the history of the Beacon Roads Cycling Club.

Last but not least in this look to the future let me just say that after 23 years of editing HUB-UB I am more than happy to hand over the reins to someone who has better skills and fresher ideas than I do. I keep trying to think of ways to improve the magazine but I'm no expert on writing and publishing and even less so on the use of desktop publishing software. So if there is anyone out there who fancies giving it a whirl please contact me and I'll be delighted to hand over the job and support you in any way I can.

I look forward to receipt of your ideas for future editions (if there is a demand for future editions).

Eric Hogg

Editor – HUB-UB

GOVERNANCE OF THE BEACON

OK, we know most people join the Beacon because they want to ride their bike in the company of like minded individuals and that the Club is one of the best in the district (if not the country). Nevertheless we need to recognise that the club doesn't run itself and that behind the scenes there are a number of volunteers who help with the smooth running of the club and its events.

We are fortunate in having many members who regularly turn out to help with the events we run. The 'Little Mountain' is a first class example of people volunteering to turn out in whatever weather to ensure the success of our events. However, on the basis that you can never have too many volunteers I would urge anyone who has not yet assisted at an event to do so at the first opportunity.

The next tier of support is those who actively organise events, whether club or open, and give up their time to ensure that the rest of us can participate in a range of activities put on by the club. Amongst these events are the audaxes, sportives, time trials, circuit races, road races, cyclo-cross, track events, training and coaching sessions and of course, not forgetting the all-important social events. So, there is a lot going on, all of which need someone to ensure they are properly organised and run to the high standards that has become a feature of our events.

Overarching these volunteers is the club committee who ultimately are responsible for the management of the club and taking it forward to ensure our members have the best experience possible. Although we try to maintain a 'light touch on the tiller' the committee does have to deal with a number of issues, most of which never come to the notice of members other than in a positive context. Recent topics include the issues surrounding the supply of club clothing, coaching, safety and etiquette on clubruns, ways of attracting new members and of course, arrangements for our 70th anniversary year.

In addition to the above the committee is also responsible for the financial management of the club and ensuring a consistency of organisational quality for all events. Headed by the club's president, the committee is run by the Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and a number of other officials elected at the AGM, which is held each December. The committee meets 6 times a year and whilst the responsibilities are not particularly onerous we do need a regular supply of volunteers to support the club at this level.

So there it is; that's how the club works and if you are not already involved in any of the volunteer activities I invite you to do so as soon as possible. It is only through the efforts of our volunteers that we can maintain our reputation for organising some of the best events on the calendar and being proactive in promoting this wonderful pastime and sport of cycling.

Eric Hogg – Chair Beacon RCC

EGYPT AND BACK BY TRICYCLE

The story of a 5,500 mile tricycle ride from south London to the far south of Egypt and back

Springtime 1963 is just over 50 years ago. I was about to leave the Upper Sixth form at grammar school, ready to study Archaeology at university in October. The whole world of the classical civilisations of Greece, Rome and Egypt was within reach; just the challenge for a teenager mad about cycling. This is the story of an unforgettable journey to the Mediterranean by three cyclists and also the story of one teenager's discovery of different cultures and how to deal with disappointments and personal crises.

Looking back on the hectic two-month period for getting visas (Egypt, Yugoslavia), student card and the required jabs (Malaria and the ominously named Yellow Fever), all the while planning a "must see" route to visit the most well-known sites and working long hours as a petrol pump attendant to raise some money, I ask myself did I really do all that on my own? The answer is: not quite. Two old friends – Alan from the YHA Local Group and Bruce from a local cycle racing club – heard of my plan and threw in their jobs to join me. Bruce shared my unusual choice of mount: a racing tricycle with good carrying capacity. Alan had a more conventional touring bicycle. We shared out the tent, cycle spares and cooking equipment.

We left England in May 1963, accompanied for a day by Bill Hens from our cycle shop. Our main priority was to visit the amazing rock-cut temples of Abu Simbel before they were drowned forever in the rising waters of Lake Nasser. Between London and Abu Simbel we had little knowledge of the land or the conditions for cycling. Every day was an adventure.

The first geographical feature to conquer was the Channel. We opted for the British United air ferry, wheeling our cycles through the space between two cars on their way from Lydd to Le Touquet, and admiring the view of the Channel through the gaps in the floor. It was my first flight.

We camped daily, usually making a hearty meal of pasta or risotto, washed down with a litre of wine. Breakfast was sweeter and fruitier, with milk, bread and jam, sometimes eggs. Shopping for bread and cheese lunch was one of the opportunities for meeting people. I don't think we saw any other touring cyclists.

We soon got into a rhythm: rising at 6 a.m. breakfasting and striking tent, riding with occasional breaks to 1 p.m. then lunch and more riding and looking for a suitable camping spot for supper and sleep.



The days passed. We managed to find time to look around us as we cycled on: Reims, the moving WW1 Armistice site at Compiègne, Basel, Zurich, the St Gotthard tunnel, Como, Venice, Trieste, all passed under our wheels. In good spirits and feeling fit we crossed into Tito's Yugoslavia. When we sipped Turkish coffee and nibbled baklava pastries in the shadow of the marvellous bridge at Mostar, we felt we had left Western Europe behind.

In Yugoslavia, brushes with the police or army were numerous. Clearly we were not supposed to be cycling or, worse, wild camping in a Communist state. More troublesome to us were the sections of the Belgrade to Saloniki motorway where we were firmly told cycling was banned. The alternative network of stony cart tracks was muddy and rideable only with difficulty.

Even worse followed: a bridge swept away and replaced by a home

made suspension bridge, the wires of which were not even wide enough apart for the tricycles.

I still have terrors about this bridge. Even to have seriously considered using it shows my immaturity. I might easily have fallen off on the slippery planks, to be away swept away by the river torrent. By complete chance there was a small railway station right behind, which took us and our three cycles on to Skopje, capital of Macedonia. Four weeks after we rode through Skopje, an even worse danger occurred: an earthquake with heavy loss of life and the destruction of the historic city.

After 5 weeks we reached Athens. The Parthenon and the other buildings of the Acropolis were just as wonderful as their photographs. We treated ourselves to a couple of nights of Youth Hostel accommodation and café meals, before heading off to Piraeus, the port of Athens. We took the wheels off the trikes before boarding – and one wheel rolled over the side but miraculously didn't fall into the water; it had dropped onto a ledge. Another disaster averted.

After the 40-hour ferry voyage to Alexandria we set off at 3 p.m. on the 140 mile road to Cairo, slept by the road, and arrived just after noon the next day. I think there must have been a tailwind, and the road, through the Nile delta, was quite flat, but we were still rightly pleased over our record ride. It was a good sign for the trio's morale as we faced the uncertainties of our journey to the south of Egypt.



Or so we thought. Bruce delivered us a bombshell; he had tired of the journey and wanted to stay behind, maybe even go home. In our base at the Youth Hostel we discussed what could be done and decided to split up amicably, dividing the equipment accordingly. Bruce found a modest role as a Youth Hostel volunteer helper, at least until we returned from the south.

Alan and I now set off up the Nile Valley, on what turned out to be the adventure of our lives, despite painful disappointment. The water level of the Nile at Abu Simbel was too low for us to land. 30 minutes before the steamer left for the Sudan our passports previously stamped "Seen on departure for Abu Sombol" were marked "cancelled". There seemed to be no practical alternative, short of hiring vehicles for an expedition.

It was ironic that, while we were away, UNESCO announced that funding had been secured to dismantle the colossal Abu Simbel statues and re-erect them at the top of their cliff. (Years later, Alan travelled in comfort to see them.)

As we headed north, back towards Cairo we found ourselves the recipients of outstanding hospitality. Again and again, as we passed through a village we would be invited to join men enjoying a roadside glass of tea. This would lead to our cycles being brought indoors or even upstairs, and an assumption that we would be given bed and breakfast. English speakers, such as students and telegraph operators, would come and translate for us. These were the most heart-warming experiences of our whole journey.

The final leg of our journey started with our return to Cairo, where we spent many days in the Egyptian Museum and one visit to Giza's Pyramids and Sphinx. The Tutankhamen treasures in the museum are

world famous, but there are many other exhibits of fine statues and papyrus to be seen, not to mention the huge open-air temple complexes in Luxor and Karnak that we saw in the south.



When we had studied the last hieroglyphics it was time to meet up with Bruce for the last time and return, this time by a different route. Landing in Athens we pressed on over the bridge, which spans the Corinth Canal and followed a route around the Peloponnesus, to Mycenae, Olympia and Corfu. Italy was our next destination, starting at sea level with Brindisi and finishing at the summit of the Great St Bernard Pass (2469 m), passing through Pompeii, Naples, Rome, Florence and Pisa on the way. In late August we rode through northern France and celebrated our last night camping on the roadside by cremating most of my threadbare clothing.

On the last day of our journey we joined Bill Hens and other cycling friends, watching a bicycle race in Forest Row in the rain. At first they were suspicious of two bearded and bedraggled strangers, but they soon recognised our voices. There was much to tell.

Alan and I think of our adventure every year. Realistically, it could not be repeated. Yugoslavia destroyed itself in the 1990s in a terrifying civil war and the wounds are still raw.

Egypt and other Arab countries may be heading in the same direction. The Mostar Bridge is no longer the symbol of communities living together in the Balkans in harmony. International passenger shipping no longer sails, as an alternative to air travel. The road network has been vastly upgraded to satisfy the needs of motor transport. And rail companies do not carry tricycles any more.

27 December 2013
Howard Boyd

Article originally posted on the Message Board by George on behalf of former Beacon member Howard Boyd.

A GLIMPSE OF THE PAST

The previous article about the ride to Egypt is an example of the sort of article that would be ideal for HUB-UB. As we were not in publishing mode at the time George very kindly included it on the message board and it has attracted interest and positive comment. It represents what we are looking for in terms of articles in that it is interesting, informative and has a Beacon element to it. Of course we can't all go on an expedition like that but there are lots of other stories that are worth recounting and capturing for the entertainment of members.

In case you feel you couldn't write an article or you're not sure of what sort of article might be interesting I have on the following pages taken a selection of articles from previous editions of HUB-UB and republished them in the hope they will provide inspiration.

If your response is positive the intention is to publish four times a year – January; April; July and October.

So if you want to see future versions of HUB-UB please submit your articles and/or ideas by the end of September for the October edition.

Enjoy reading the articles in this edition and I look forward to receiving yours in the next couple of months;

Please send to: -

Eric Hogg, Editor HUB-UB via email – gladeric@sky.com

Or post your hard copy to me at: -

10 Hanbury Wharf Park
Hanbury Road
Droitwich
WR9 7FB

50th Anniversary Road Races

Sunday 7th July dawned sunny and warm, heralding a good start for the road races.

A different course and HQ based on Cookhill gave a new dimension to our traditional 'fish and chipper' style race via the introduction of that terror of all unfit 3rd Cat racers – hills. The big question was 'would the course be hilly enough to avoid the traditional blanket sprint finish?' Nev Billington had been persuaded to act as Chief Judge again, mainly on the strength of reassurances that the nightmare of all Chief Judges, the 35 mph, ten riders over the line in ½ a second finish, would be avoided.

So it was with fingers, and everything else, crossed that I watched the 43 starters in the 3rd Cat event roll out at 9 am in bright sunlight. They made a fine sight with bright coloured jerseys, spokes and chromed bits of frame (yes really – Ed) glinting in the sunlight and the deafening click, clacking of clipless pedals as the field rode out behind the lead cars.

Alas for poor Nev; 40 miles later those who had survived were still all together and hurling themselves at the finish line for yet another closely contested sprint finish. Much conferring by the judges eventually sorted out the first six across the line with everyone else placed equal seventh. By now Nev was in the early stages of a nervous breakdown and facing the prospect of more to come in the 2nd & 3rd Cat event. Pam Billington was reported to be wrapping cold towels round his head and making soothing noises.

11 am – the sun is still shining and it's time to roll out the 2nd and 3rd's event. This time a full field of 60 riders clattered off down the road in hot pursuit of the lead cars. A couple of minor crashes kept Tony Shardlow, our first aid man, in business and my plan of checking out all the marshalls was disrupted by having to pick up a couple of riders who had suffered impact punctures. Fortunately we had the use of a Toyota van, courtesy of Clark's Motors and it was no trouble to stuff riders and bikes into the back.

By the final lap Nev was visibly more relaxed and Pam had put away the tranquillisers she was planning to slip into is drink. The reason? A break (what!) had developed and looked like it might stay away. The relief was clear as two riders hove into sight to fight out the finish. In fact everyone was so relieved that the judges almost forgot about the peloton, which was chasing hard on the heels of the break Just in time they realised and we managed to place the first ten riders.

The Winners?

3rd Cats - Richard Hill, Coventry RC; **2nd & 3rd Cats** - Jayson Rees-Hughes, Select Racing Team

No Beacon riders were placed this year but congratulations and thanks to all those who rode - better luck next year lads!

Finally as event organiser can I offer my sincere thanks to all of you who helped out this year. It wouldn't be fair to single out any one individual but I am fortunate in having a team of "hardy annuals" who help out each year and can be relied on to do their bit with the minimum of fuss. You all know who you are and my special thanks to you. Hope you can help out again next year.

Eric Hogg, Event Organiser

First published – HUB-UB August 1996

ALL TYPES OF CYCLING 3

THE FOLDING STUFF – ORIGAMI WHEELERS

This is the last of a trilogy exploring the more obscure aspects of cycling to be found amongst Beacon members. The original folding bikes were probably the mythical BSAs dropped for parachutists during the war with their looped double-tubed frames and my first two-wheeler was a tiny solid replica of this design.

There are simple folding bikes (Klappprads in German), usually shoppers, with one hinge dating back to the sixties and the Dawes King Pin (perhaps there's one in the back of your shed?) was the best of these. By folding in two to form a bulky, heavy and awkward package these bikes will go into the boots of cars, caravans and boats marginally more easily than a normal bike. However their performance means they never became more than utility vehicles. Moultons with their small 17" wheels, suspension and demountable frames have a following all their own and make excellent touring bikes which will fit into small cars. However, they don't so much fold as split in half and leave you with two half bikes to carry along with your luggage.

The true cult of the folder depended on the invention of bikes that would fold quickly into packages that were light and compact enough to carry into buildings, stick into supermarket trolleys or fit into luggage racks on trains and coaches. The first I tried in the 80's was the Bickerton. This was a British invention crafted in aluminium, which was amazingly light and compact but with a willowy ride and a tendency to fall apart at the seams.

In California, the Taiwan made Dahon took off and has been sold under licence by many other companies including briefly by Dawes as the Metropolis. Neat and reliable but not much fun to ride, it is sold in large numbers worldwide and Dahon now have a range of folders of various sizes and configurations. However, it is the Brompton, designed by Andrew Ritchie and made in London, that has become to folding bikes what the Reliant Robin is to three wheelers. There are at least two of us in the Beacon that ride them and at any folding gathering (more about these later) in the UK the Brompton outnumbers other designs by 3:1.

The sheer brilliance of the Brompton's basic design has made it the benchmark for folding bikes for 10 years or so. It folds in less than a minute so that the 16" wheels are side by side, the rear pivoting underneath and the front section, including fork, folding back. The handlebar stem clips down and the long seat pillar slides down. Folded it is a compact package that holds together and fits in a bag or a suitcase. Weighing around 25lbs it can be carried or slid along on little jockey wheels. It fits behind the seats on inter-city trains and is strong and stable enough to cope with years of commuting. The limitations of the Brompton are an upright riding position and its 3 or 5 speed hub gears. But you can ride it all day and comfort is ensured by a simple elastomer based rear suspension.

When I first tried a Brompton outside Roger Page's old shop in Cotteridge it felt like a kid's pavement cycle, but you soon get used to it and apart from commuting it has been on trips to America, climbed a mountain pass in Tuscany, encircled the Isle of Wight and enlivened trips to Rhodes and Cyprus. All of this on a machine that can be put in a bag and taken into hotel rooms, left with the coats at functions or taken directly into meetings or an office. There is a really neat briefcase style "front pannier" which just clips on the front and is in itself a good reason for using the Brompton to go to work or the shops.

Article written by Dave Cox and first published in the March 2001 edition of HUB-UB

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

I first joined the Beacon in 1953 having cycled since my early teens. Like everyone else at that time I elected to join a local club and had a choice of three.

I chose the Beacon because I wanted to ride alongside, or perhaps just behind, a member who had become something of a local celebrity by regularly taking first place and leading the club to a team victory in short and middle distance time trials.

On my first club night I was almost afraid to speak to him, but on contact I found him most approachable and easy to get on with. He was modest and most helpful with advice on training and racing, guiding me through my first year of competition.

The following year he offered me the exclusive use of a pair of high quality sprint wheels and tubulars, to be used for the whole season. I was, to say the least, overwhelmed that he had chosen me, as there were at least another eight juniors of equal ability in the club at that time. Naturally I jumped at the offer because new wheels were not on my agenda, having committed all my spare cash to the purchase of a new lightweight frame and months of extended credit.

Considering all equipment was paid for out of his own pocket, and he was by no means wealthy, it was a remarkable gesture and I can truthfully say that any modicum of success I achieved during that season was due to him. I will not forget his kindness.

Then, soon after I joined, a new face appeared at the clubroom and although in his late teens he had no interest in racing whatsoever. We younger members found this most peculiar bearing in mind there some were club members who, even though they were almost thirty, were still able to race.

However it turned out that he was an excellent tourist and after winning several touring competitions at local and national levels he earned both our respect and admiration.

You see, in those days you joined a club because you wanted to belong to something a bit special. I cannot begin to describe the pride and excitement of wearing the Beacon club name and colours in my first massed start circuit race.

By contrast there are now clubs, not a million miles from here, who boast a string of sponsors and attract some riders who flit from club to club just to save a few pounds on clothing and equipment. Let's face it these people are little more than the sandwich board men we used to see walking up and down Corporation Street in the 1950,s advertising the local cheap eatery.

And remember the loss of sponsorship has unfortunately seen the demise of several clubs around the country.

Oh, I almost forgot, the two club members I mentioned earlier were Norman Adams and Oscar Hopkins.

I know you will enjoy the other articles in this newsletter after my whingeing.

Finally, a very special mention to all who made donations and helped with the running of the Open 10 on 29th June; it was by far the most successful one yet and I thank you all for your tremendous contributions.

Trevor

Originally published in the July 2002 Edition of HUB-UB

ED'S RAMBLINGS

What a great summer it has been; apart that is from when I was involved in the most challenging four days cycling I have had for many years. Yes, I am referring to the C2C ride that I did with Tony (Spider) Webb, Dave (King) Cole and of course 'El President' Trevor. Now don't get me wrong, I am extremely grateful to the guys for inviting me and it gave me a goal to train (??) for. I just wish a) they'd have told me they all had triple chainsets with 'granny' rings, b) I'd have realised how hard it was going to be and trained a lot harder, and c) the weather had been a little kinder (like a short break in the rain on the last day).

In addition to being underfit, overweight and overgeared I also managed to: - split the rear rim going through Rubery on our way to Longbridge station; buy a new wheel with a block that refused to cooperate and kept jumping out of gear; and two miles into the ride, loosened the fixing on a temporary bridge for my front teeth and rode the rest of the way with no front teeth. The latter caused much hilarity with my travelling companions; especially on the evening they ordered 'spare ribs' as a starter at dinner.

For me however, the worst moment was the evening we had finished and went to the 'Revolution' vodka bar for a pre meal cocktail. There I was, surrounded by young nubile, females, most only half dressed, and couldn't even smile at them much less engage in conversation. Of course, even if I had my teeth it wouldn't have made any difference, but you can dream can't you?

Encouraged by the good summer weather and motivated by my need to attain some fitness for the C2C I have managed to get in a few miles this year. Not as many as I would have liked but it is a start. I did invest in a carbon fibre seat post for the aluminium framed 'Ribble' and I am pleased to report that it has made a difference to the comfort of the ride. All I need now is to lose a couple of stones in weight and get a few more miles in and I shall almost be ready to come out on a clubrun!

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Hub-Ub, I know it has been a long time coming but until a few weeks ago I was thinking I might have to follow through on my threat to start recycling (no pun intended) articles. However, I think we have an interesting magazine to entertain you this time and I look forward to receiving more articles in time for the next edition, which will be the ***'Dinner and Prize Presentation' edition at the end of November.***

By the time you read this the outcome of the hill climb will be known. This used to herald the end of the racing season and beginning of the social season and I am sure many of you will continue the tradition. I wish all the riders the very best, I think you are all mad but it takes all kinds doesn't it?

Eric Hogg (Editor)

Originally published in the September 2003 Edition of HUB-UB

NUTRITION FOR CYCLING

The science of sports medicine has progressed significantly during the last twenty years and anyone interested in improving their cycling performance will be familiar with terms such as aerobic threshold, VO_2 max and lactic acid threshold. In addition to investigating the accurate determination and application of these parameters scientists have also made massive increases in their understanding of sports nutrition.

Sports nutrition is the topic of this article, in particular the question every Club Cyclist must have asked themselves: -

"How far can you cycle on a plate of beans on toast?"

The answer to this question depends upon a number of variables, such as the number of calories in beans on toast, the weight of the rider and the speed travelled.

The first task is to determine the calorific value of the "beans on toast". The table below gives a value of 435 calories:

Food Item	Calories
2 slices of white bread	189
1/2 oz of margarine	102
7 oz of baked beans	144
Total	435

In order to calculate how far these 435 calories will transport a cyclist we can use the table below, developed for "Bicycling Magazine" by James Hagberg Professor of Kinesthesiology at the University of Maryland. The table gives the coefficient of calorie consumption for each average cycling speed.

Speed in MPH	Calories/lb/min
12	0.0426
14	0.0512
15	0.0561
16	0.0615
17	0.0675
18	0.0740
19	0.0811
20	0.0891
21	0.0975
23	0.1173
25	0.1441

This data has been used to produce the spreadsheet below, which gives the distance travelled at different speeds for cyclists of various weights.

Speed in MPH	Cyclists weight in lbs											
	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220
12	18.57	17.02	15.71	14.59	13.62	12.76	12.01	11.35	10.75	10.21	9.73	9.28
14	18.02	16.52	15.25	14.16	13.22	12.39	11.66	11.01	10.43	9.91	9.44	9.01
15	17.62	16.15	14.91	13.85	12.92	12.12	11.40	10.77	10.20	9.69	9.23	8.81
16	17.15	15.72	14.51	13.47	12.57	11.79	11.10	10.48	9.93	9.43	8.98	8.57
17	16.60	15.22	14.05	13.04	12.17	11.41	10.74	10.14	9.61	9.13	8.69	8.30
18	16.03	14.70	13.57	12.60	11.76	11.02	10.37	9.80	9.28	8.82	8.40	8.02
19	15.44	14.15	13.07	12.13	11.32	10.62	9.99	9.44	8.94	8.49	8.09	7.72
20	14.79	13.56	12.52	11.62	10.85	10.17	9.57	9.04	8.57	8.14	7.75	7.40
21	14.20	13.01	12.01	11.15	10.41	9.76	9.19	8.68	8.22	7.81	7.44	7.10
23	12.92	11.85	10.94	10.15	9.48	8.88	8.36	7.90	7.48	7.11	6.77	6.46
25	11.43	10.48	9.68	8.98	8.39	7.86	7.40	6.99	6.62	6.29	5.99	5.72

Table showing distance in miles, cycled on one plate of beans on toast (435 calories)

Anyone who knows me well will realise that, being careful about money, I immediately felt a need to consider how this translates into the cost of travelling by bicycle compared to the cost of travelling by car.

You can see from the table that for a cyclist such as myself, weighing 150 lb. and travelling at 14 mph a plate of beans on toast will take me 13.22 miles. Now you're all probably asking yourselves what is the cost per mile of such a journey. Well the average price of beans on toast in the cafes that the Beacon visits is £2.50. **So the cost per mile is 19p.**

Now that I've analysed all that information I have to confess I find it all rather worrying. It seems that what I thought was a healthy inexpensive form of transport is costing me more than driving a motorcar. In fact I am forgoing the luxury of travelling in my Ford Fiesta which travels (just) faster than 14mph and costs me 13p per mile, in order to wear myself out on a ludicrously expensive-to-run bicycle.

So unless I've made some serious miscalculations, one of my main beliefs about cycling, that it saves you money, is completely misguided. My well-ordered world is in tatters – roll on next year!!

David Cole

Original article by Dave appeared in HUB-UB in November 2003

REAR VIEW (by Back-Peddaller)

Towards the end of last year, Oscar cleared out his loft, and deposited with me a large bag of old (and somewhat musty) papers. Subsequent investigation revealed this bag to contain back copies of Beacon Newsletters, going far back into the mists of time. Together with various other historical artefacts in my possession, such as Club Records, Committee Minutes, event results, and press cuttings, I now have the opportunity to regale (or bore) you with historical facts and figures - always informative, hopefully interesting, and occasionally humorous.

Taking my lead from those time-honoured columns in local newspapers, I shall aim to produce for this, and subsequent editions of Hub-Ub, some brief glimpses of Beacon club life 10, 25 and 50 years ago. Occasionally I may also suggest to our Editor that some noteworthy articles are reproduced wholesale.

I should say right now that copies of recent editions of Hub-Ub are a little sparse, so if anyone has squirrelled away copies of this erudite organ, and also copies of Club Dinner menus, and is willing to have them preserved in the Club archives, please contact me and I'll see if some gaps can be filled.

Right, here goes

10 YEARS AGO

Hub-Ub, March 1995:

Clothing was in the news (again!) and Paul Deane was the lucky man in charge. Costs quoted included s/s jersey £28; bibshorts £34; and skinsuit £52. Compare these prices with current prices and you can see what a great job Paul has done, and what a bargain you get, with the latest kit.

25 YEARS AGO

Newsletter, Spring 1980:

John Patston wins the Little Mountain TT with a time of 1hr 30 mins. John Hitchcock (where did he go?) was best placed Beacon rider with 1hr 38mins.

Steve Jones crashes in Belgium with painful effects, but is reported as still selected for the Milk Race, and on target for selection for the Moscow Olympics.

50 YEARS AGO

Committee Minutes, January 1955:

Jack Clements is Club President; Mavis Deathridge (now Williams) is Magazine Editor; Tony Benfield (now living in "stockbroker belt" south-west of London) is Club Captain.

There is mention of a proposed meeting between the LVRC, NCU and RTTC to discuss amalgamation (nothing new there, then!)

Nev Billington gives notice of his intention to attack the Rubery-Romsley-Bell End-Rubery Club Record. It is noted that the Club has a panel of FOUR qualified timekeepers on which to call.

First appeared in HUB-UB March 2004

Another revamp of the Beacon Club Kit



May 2005 - The new club colours on display

WELCOME TO HUB-UB

Congratulations to our Multi National Champion - Ruth Eyles



Champion Ruth after her victory in the National '50'

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BEACON ROADS CYCLING CLUB

Edition 03/05

www.beaconrcc.org.uk

Sept 2005

CELEBRATING SUCCESS WITH THE BEACON

Not since the heydays of the 70's has the Beacon had cause to celebrate success at national competition level; now, all that has changed thanks to some stunning rides by Ruth Eyles

RTTC National Team Competition Records

- 1972 - Ladies 10 miles (June Pitchford, Chris Goodfellow, Margaret Gordon-Smith)
- 1972 - Ladies 30 miles (June Pitchford, Chris Goodfellow, Janet Crowther)
- 1973 - Ladies 50 miles (June Pitchford, Chris Goodfellow, Janet Crowther)
- 1975 - Junior 10 miles (Steve Jones, Rob Murray, Pete Taylor)

RTTC National Solo Competition Records

- 1975 - Junior 10 miles (Steve Jones)

RTTC National Championships

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1972 - Ladies 100 miles | 1 st June Pitchford |
| 1972 - Ladies 100 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1972 - Ladies BBAR | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1973 - Ladies 25 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Gordon-Smith) |
| 1973 - Ladies 50 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1973 - Ladies 100 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Gordon-Smith) |
| 1973 - Ladies BBAR | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1974 - Ladies 25 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1974 - Ladies 50 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1974 - Ladies 100 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Janet Kelly) |
| 1974 - Ladies BBAR | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Crowther) |
| 1974 - Mens 24 hours | 1 st Rod Goodfellow |
| 1975 - Ladies 25 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Gordon-Smith) |
| 1975 - Ladies 50 miles | Team (Pitchford, Goodfellow, Gordon-Smith) |
| 1975 - Junior 25 miles | 1 st Steve Jones |
| 1975 - Junior BBAR | 1 st Steve Jones |
| | |
| 2004 - Ladies 100 miles | 2 nd Ruth Eyles |
| 2005 - Ladies 50 miles | 1 st Ruth Eyles |
| 2005 - Ladies 100 miles | 1 st Ruth Eyles |
| 2005 - Ladies Welsh 100 miles | 1 st Ruth Eyles) and Welsh Competition Record |
| 2005 - Ladies BBAR | 1 st Ruth Eyles |

First appeared in HUB-UB – Nov 2005

MEMORIES OF EARLY BEACON

As we progress towards our 60th anniversary later this year Roger Shayes reminisces about the early days

I first became aware of the Beacon Roads C.C. in 1956 while I was a member of the Dartford Wheelers. After a couple of weekend visits and a club dinner it was suggested that I might like to join the Beacon boys and girls for a few days Youth Hostelling in Wales. With eight seasons of racing behind me, ranging from quarter mile handicaps through one hundred and twenty mile road races to twelve hour time trials I felt that a potter through the Principality would present little difficulty.

I still treasure the memory of grinding up the Bwlch y Groes, my tyres slithering on rain swept slate chippings while I tried to stay within groping distance of Norman Adams' saddlebag. They tell me the road has been resurfaced during the last fifty years but I am strangely disinclined to revisit that delightful spot.

By 1960 I was a fully paid up Beaconite and was one of the seventeen thousand employed by the Austin Motor Company at Longbridge. It was there I became closely acquainted with Neville Smith. Nev was a founder member of the Beacon and had been very influential in several matters. He had all the minutes of early meetings, these being recorded in Royal Air Force exercise books. Although he had not been supported in his choice of club colours (scarlet and gold) he had been responsible for designing the club badge. It was based upon a trade union badge that he had in his drawer at work. I saw it but apart from remembering that it was one of the major players (TG& W?) I forget the details.

Nev also had strong views as to how the road side of our club programme should develop. It must be remembered that when the Beacon was founded in 1946, cycle racing in Great Britain was split between the National Cycling Union and the newly formed Road Time Trials Council on one and the rebel British League of Racing Cyclists on the other. Many riders in the 1940's (Nev and I among them) wanted racing as it was practiced in Europe, but the NCU threatened to suspend sine die anyone who became involved with the League. Down in Kent some of us sneakily competed under both codes, but the

founding members of the Beacon were mainly focussed on time trailing, so supported the RTTC and the NCU.

So Nev took another approach. The most prestigious time trial in the world at that time was the Grand Prix des Nations. Held over one hundred kilometres it was contested by the top roadmen who were invited to enter. It was not by chance that the Beacon's first open promotion was the Mountain Time Trial that covered a distance of sixty-two and a half miles, or one hundred kilometres. Nev wanted to have the event sponsored by a national newspaper such as the Daily Mirror with top riders, British and foreign, invited to ride. This was a bit too rich for most of the club, and in fairness to them it should be remembered that there was a wide spread distrust among older riders about commercial activity in our sport. While being quite happy to accept prizes from local bike shops and jewellers, volunteer officials and amateur riders were uncomfortable with being part of something perceived as professional involvement.

The Mountain TT flourished for many years with top time trialists and amateur road men taking part. It was whispered that some of the big hitters were invited to take part and that there expenses were defrayed but I have found no confirmation of this. As one of the supporting cast I, and thousands like me, paid the entry fee and savoured the delights of groaning up seemingly never ending inclines, then plunging wildly down all too brief descents before repeating the process all over again. We old lags did the whole 100k but the combination of serious road races and softer life styles of the rising generation caused entries to decline. To attract the more effete riders of today the distance was reduced to thirty something miles and the event renamed the Little Mountain. Very nice I'm sure, but it's not the same as in our day.

Roger Shayes

First published in HUB-UB March 2006

A THANK YOU FROM TREVOR

I would like, through Hub-Ub, to thank everyone for the kindness shown to me after I retired from the Presidency of the Club. It was, for me a wonderful surprise on the night of the dinner to have so many words spoken to and about me by so many people, in fact at one stage I thought they must be talking about someone else. George and Avril's speeches were both kind and amusing and I thank them sincerely. This was followed by the presentation of cut glass wine glasses, suitably engraved to record my years as President, which left me deeply touched.

In January, Jane and her team of Tony, Ann and Dave Cole and Debbie and Paul, organised my official 'leaving do' at Waseley Country Park café. From start to finish this was a night of total enjoyment and one that Judy and I will always remember with pleasure. There were so many friends there, some who I have known since I first joined the club aged sixteen, all braving the dreadful weather. My oldest friend, Alan Nicholls and 'bestest' mate, Dave Hughes paid amusing and different tributes to me, both omitting any of my past indiscretions.

Paul recorded the music for the evening, indulging me with mainly Frank Sinatra music at the same time boring everyone else. To make it even more special, our daughter Nicola travelled from Berkshire to be with us. Thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

It did not end there, a couple of weeks ago, Dave Hughes presented Judy and me with a beautiful photograph album recording in pictures that wonderful night, it is truly lovely. In addition Paul presented me with three cd's of the music played on the night. What happy memories.

My nineteen years as president were not only an honour, but also a pleasure, and I feel privileged to have met so many nice people and to have made so many friends. I will continue to support everyone in any way I can and I thank for electing me to join that elite group of vice-presidents.

Trevor



First published March 2008

The Cheshire Cat Challenge 2009

When a mate of mine at work challenged me to ride the Cheshire Cat Challenge in December last year, I thought 'what the heck, it can't be that hard once over the Mow Cop Killer Mile', so signed up for it. Sometimes ignorance is bliss!

Now living in London only really replicates the flat lands of the Cheshire Plains rather than the rolling countryside of the Peak District but on the first Sunday of the year in bitterly cold conditions I rolled out on my fixed wheel bike to begin training. And so it went on with a mini training camp back in Birmingham to allow me to train on some hills. Come March, I began to add to my weekend training rides by riding to work and soon found my fitness levels returning but would it be enough to get me round the medium route? With the end of March rapidly approaching, only time would tell.

By this time my mate at work who was supposed to be doing the ride with me had to pull out leaving me to face the prospect alone. So on the 29th March on a dry, cold, clear and sunny day and with the support of my parents and godparents I rolled out of the start in Knutsford into the unknown.

With the first third of the ride on fairly flat roads to ease me into it gently I felt the training in the countryside around the Capital was ideal, but all too soon Mow Cop came into view and tension began to rise. At a mile long and a 25% gradient at the top to say it was tough would be an understatement but there was no way I was going to walk as I wanted the medal being awarded to those who rode all the way up. So in the lowest gear I had, I ground my way up the mile long straight climb only to find at the T junction at the top it carried on and on and on.

All too soon I was in Knypersley heading for the climb to Biddulph Moor and Rudyard. Now as I said, my godparents were out to cheer me on and they just happen to live at Biddulph Moor so I had some idea of what to expect and carried on grinding away in the little ring.



Jason on Mow Cop

The Macclesfield Forest 'Walk'



The next few miles passed by in a blur of ups and downs with little flat to recover properly and only a few glimpses of the countryside when the fixed stare on the road ahead would allow. By the time I reached Macclesfield Forest the weather had warmed up nicely with the sun feeling warm on the back but ice still present on the road making for an interesting ride up the steep hills through the forest. Negotiating my way round the ice and other riders weaving across the road I managed to make it out of the forest in one piece. As I said, ignorance is bliss, if

I'd known how hard this climb was I would have had second thoughts about doing the ride. After the event many riders said they had found it even harder than Mow Cop.

Across the Cat and Fiddle and with Manchester Airport in view, the final few tough hills of the Peak District were in sight and would soon be over, so I pressed on. Soon the roads began to flatten out and small lumps were soon swallowed up as I towed a group along and eventually broke away from them just in time for the pinnacle of the ride, the cobbled climb of Swiss Hill in Alderley Edge. How Pros race up these in the wet and cold of Spring I will never know, but taking advice from the organisers I sat in the saddle, held the bars wide and powered up in my lowest gear again cresting the top after a seemingly ending 'just round the corner and it'll be over feeling'.

The last few miles back to Knutsford passed by in a blur as fatigue took over and turning the pedals became harder and harder but before I knew it the finish was in sight and I crossed the finish line to a great sense of achievement. Collecting my medal for riding up Mow Cop made it all worthwhile and the pain in the legs soon eased.

I have to admit it has been a long time since I have used my lowest gear for such long periods of time (and all this with a compact chainset) but it felt good to finish. Would I do it again? Of course I would, the countryside up that way makes it all worthwhile after the flat lands of London, so roll on 2010.

Jason Hogg



Jason with coveted medal for riding all the way up the
'Mow Cop Killer Mile'

Ed's notes

Jason completed the 66 mile route in 4hrs 36min 04sec

Congratulations to the other Beacon riders in the event: -

Max Allen who completed the 66 miles in 5hrs 17min 28sec and Simon Deighton, who did the 102 mile ride in 6hrs 53min 09sec – a cracking ride given the terrain and time of year.

First published – July 2009

STAYING WITH MATEO

I came out of the steep left hand bend at the very moment that a white Mondeo emerged carelessly from the lane on the left. I braked sharply, swerving out, and Luke Naylor, on my wheel, narrowly avoided a pile-up. "Christ, Bob," he shouted, "you'll have us both on the deck. We're well clear of the chasers, lets not foul it up now."

Recovering our rhythm, we rounded the bend and saw the long, fearsome, climb stretching ahead of us, twisting tortuously up and over the mountain. I tensed momentarily, relishing the adrenalin rush, and anticipating the suffering to come with masochistic exhilaration.

Out of the corner of my eye I could see Luke's shadow lurking speculatively behind my right shoulder, looking for a chance to attack me. Dream on! Luke's a tryer, but he knows full well I can hammer him in to oblivion anytime I like on hills like this, hills that go up and on forever. He was hanging on tenaciously though, so I upped the pace a little to discourage him from trying to 'jump' me. Then I put in a sharp spurt on a steep, hard, bend and Luke's shadow began to slide from view. A quick glance confirmed that I'd got a gap, so I spurred again and the gap widened: a bike length, then two and then I heard Luke swear and I knew he'd gone. I allowed myself a brief sweaty grin and settled in to a steady, rhythmic, cadence.

The road was climbing across open moorland now and it was a stinking hot day. Rivulets of sweat escaped from under my helmet and ran, stinging, inside my shades, in to my eyes and down my cheeks, Glancing back down the road, I could see Luke, a good minute behind, and no sign of any chasers. If I could get another minutes clear before the top, there was no way anyone was going to catch me on that ultra-fast eight mile stretch down to the finish. I eased for a moment, and took a drink, then fished an energy bar from my back pocket to keep the 'knock' away.

My concentration had lapsed when I'd eased up and I was mentally waving to the crowd from the podium when I heard that ominous metallic 'ping' of fast-moving, board-hard, tyres behind me. I looked back in disbelief, expecting to see Luke making a desperate effort to pull me back, but saw instead a tall, dark lean guy in a green jersey. His long slim legs, seemingly impervious to the severity of the gradient, were punching like pistons as he rapidly closed me down. "Come on Bob," he grunted, "on my wheel, stay with me." Despite my dismay at being caught napping, I made a monumental effort to latch on as he powered past, and clung there like a leech.

I knew at once that I was in for a good kicking. The guy oozed class and was making the climb look so easy. But I was puzzled; I'd never seen him before, although he obviously knew me. He looked sort of Latin, Italian or Spanish perhaps, but I was positive there'd been no foreign riders at the start. And how'd he chased me down so quickly, completely out of nowhere? One minute I'd had the race won, and the next I was fighting to stay in contact. I cursed myself for my laxity.

The climb dragged on and the strange rider was maintaining a remorseless tempo. I was suffering now and had to dig deep on the steeper sections to stay there. Red-hot pokers were piercing my thighs, a violent pulse was thumping in my head and my lungs felt raw as I gulped for air. My companion glanced behind without easing the pace. "Keep it going Bob," he said, "you're doing fine."

I was groveling now, but fixed my gaze on that relentlessly turning back wheel and frantically willed myself to stay there. Then, just as I was about to 'blow', I saw the summit a hundred or so yards up the road. There was a group of spectators and officials waiting, and there was no way I was going to get dropped in front of an audience! The spectators were clapping, and shouting encouragement. "Up, up, up. Keep it going, Go, go, go. Come on Mateo, come on Bob." A tall blonde girl ran alongside us for a few seconds, clapping and shouting. "Stay with Mateo, Bob," she cried, "stay with Mateo." Mateo, this guys name was Mateo. Italian for sure then, though I still couldn't understand what he was doing here.

We topped the climb and Mateo eased up for a moment. "Good effort, Bob," he said, "but we're not there yet. The descent will be difficult if we are to stay clear and the chasers will leave us for dead if they catch us. Stay close, and follow my line through the corners."

Mateo was as impressively efficient on the descent as he'd been on the climb, fearless in to the corners and accelerating hard out of them. I'm not great on descents and this road hugged the side of the mountain, with unfenced precipitous drops. I was panicking on the bends, braking to avoid over-shooting, and then having to chase hard to bring Mateo back. He was maintaining an incredible pace and I was suffering nearly as much as on the climb and kept losing touch. "Hang on, Bob," he gasped, easing up for me, "don't bottle it now."

But I couldn't hold on much longer. I was on the rivet and falling apart. The throbbing was back in my head; I was sweating buckets and had developed a feeling of intense anxiety. My body was shouting for the pain stop, but I knew, with a strange certainty, that I had to stay with Mateo

We were frantic through the bends, now, eyeballs-out on the straights. The sun had gone, replaced by a surreal twilight and a bitter wind was whipping through my jersey. As we hurtled recklessly through the gloom, the bike found every rut and pothole and wracked my body with still more pain. We rounded another bend and I could just make out the road disappearing in to a dark tunnel about half a mile ahead

I glanced nervously behind and was alarmed to see a group of riders, determinedly chasing us down. There was an air of menace about them, and I knew instinctively, that they meant me dreadful harm, and my anxiety escalated to irrational, abject, terror. Mateo had seen them too. "We're almost there Bob, " he gasped anxiously, "but we must stay clear through the tunnel."

We hurtled in to the tunnel entrance with the chasers closing fast. Terrified, I changed up a gear and made one last, despairing, out-of-the-saddle sprint through the darkness. I could hear the tyres of the pursuers swishing behind me, heard their rasping, desperate, breathing, but suddenly there was daylight ahead and with a huge, lung bursting effort, I shot out in to sunlight- only to find the road blocked by two stationary police cars, blue lights flashing.

Dismounting I looked round fearfully for the chasers, but there was no sign of either them or of Mateo. But there were two ambulances on the corner, and a small crowd was milling around a white Mondeo, the same car that had almost decked me before the climb. There was a badly damaged bike beside the Mondeo, which, with detached curiosity, I recognised as mine. Luke was sitting on the pavement, grey-faced, and wrapped in a blanket. The rear of the Mondeo was badly damaged and the rear window completely shattered. I walked, unchallenged, to the car and saw a body, sprawled across the back seat. Then, with the dreadful realisation that the body on the seat was mine, I felt myself lose consciousness.

I opened my eyes to see a blonde paramedic gazing down at me. It was the girl who'd shouted encouragement to me on the mountain.

"I've got a pulse, Mateo," she said, "he's back."

I swivelled my eyes, painfully, to look at the dark skinned, green suited, paramedic next to her, "Welcome back, Bob," said Mateo. "There were a couple of moments there when I thought you wouldn't make it."

Alan Nicholls

First published – Feb 2010

7,000 CALORIES AND ABNORMALITY on LEJoG

Over the years there have been numerous LEJoG rides by Beacon members – here's one with a difference!

It was pouring with torrential rain and we were riding into the grips of a head on and bitter north-easterly wind. Temperatures were in single figures which was an unwelcome shock compared with twenties of eight days previous. At least three of the riders were entering a state of mild hypothermia for which they would soon require the immediate attention of space blankets, food and hot drink. The destination was a desolate windswept location blotted with a grim abandoned shopping centre and its infamous closed and boarded-up hotel. The venue was soon to win the unsought after Carbuncle of the Year Award. After eight days, 923 miles and 66,478 ft of ascent, this was our ultimate destination.

Welcome to John O' Groats, Dump of the North.

The Beacon Five: Richard Greer, Trevor Richards, Mark Carter, Alan Weaver and Philip Whiteman were part of a twelve rider and seven person support crew contingent that had travelled from the equally forbidding Land's End in aid of Tidbury Green Scouts and the redevelopment of their hut. Whilst the LE and JoG may not have been inviting, the middle section certainly was.

Normal people riding LEJoG usually ride in one of two modes. The first is to ride the route as quickly as possible following arterial roads. The second takes the route at leisure using secondary routes. As so typical of cyclists tainted with 'Beacon' we were going to do it the difficult way. Organiser, Dave Harvey, chose to a route to be completed in a limited number of days, passing along the highest routes in between our departure point and ultimate destination. So rather than avoid Dartmoor, the Pennines, Yorkshire Dales, Cheviots and Cairngorm Mountains Passes at Glenshee and The Lecht, we went straight over them! But there is one clear advantage of such an abnormal approach to the LEJoG, we managed to experience some glorious views if not climbs. The views of Britain's upper moorlands could only be described as sublime – aside from Kielder in driving rain.

At just over 200km per day, there was little time for dilly dallying. We split into A and B groups for most of the journey, the latter party did no dawdling and were never behind too far behind the first. The effort to make good progress was aided by the excellent support crew provided by the Scouts. All in all there were seven Scouts, one minibus, two Land-Rovers and a large luggage trailer. When the minibus was able catch up with the speeding group of riders, we were provided with hot drinks and large volumes of food. At the campsite, the diet was porridge and tuna pasta (note – If I ever see tuna pasta again, I will feel violently ill). This support was luxury when compared with scant support provided to the many End to Enders who are generally self-reliant.

Accommodation was less than luxurious in order to keep the costs down. A mix of tents and scout-hut floors was the order for every night. There is nothing like a hard floor to stiffen the resolve, a few hours ahead of a 200 km ride over countless passes. Of course, some of us decided to take the easier option and arrange via our loved ones, local hotel accommodation with the added bonus of fluffy towels, en-suite showers and the devilling thought that our peers were stuck on a smelly scout hut floor. It also ensured that not all of us had to suffer the snores and flatulence generated by some quarters.

Bakewell Scout Hut came with its own entertainment, literally. A brass band, a masseur and a dozen smelly cyclists made an interesting sight. The accidental double booking by the local agent resulted in the surreal site of half naked cyclist being pummelled by a masseur at one end of the hut whilst at the other, the local bemused if not irritated brass band, were pumping out The Floral Dance at the other. The whole episode can only be described as surreal.

Serious incidents with regard to cycles were few and far between. The presence of Richard Greer and his excellent skills at bicycle maintenance resolved many quibbles that riders had with their bikes. Failures included two damaged rear mechs and one snapped chain, along with the usual punctures. Surprisingly, my own bike showed little wear. With an additional 500 km on top of LEJoG, the tyres and other components still have a lot of life left in them. It is too easy to over-estimate the amount the stress the bike will suffer over such a distance. Minus the fact my bike required a replacement chain, the only component requiring renewal was a single pair of brake blocks.

"SPRINT" was the mysterious call from a rider somewhere towards the back of the pack as we approached a feed stop. To suggest that there was not a competitive element amongst some of the riders would be an understatement. Alan's cheeky shout of 'sprint', which generated the sprint was equalled by fearsome attacks on some of the many long and steep ascents over the passes, on which Richard was often the strongest. Incidentally, I took all of the sprints!

Whilst LE and JoG are not the most stunning of venues, the event was worth it. Some of the stages were gruelling but the camaraderie and sense of achievement made the effort worth it. Would it I do it again? YES, and probably by riding LEJoG either in the mode of 'as hard as possible' or as 'touring as possible' or as both.

Many thanks have to go Dave Harvey of Tidbury Green Scouts and his team. Thanks should also be given to fellow riders who provided the necessary nuisance value to ensure my continued Victor Meldrew moments. Last and not least, Lisa who provided me with comfort upon arrival.

Philip Whiteman



Phillip at St Michael's Mount



Hideous weather in Northumbria near Kielder



All the LEJoG riders at John O'Groats

First published in Hub-Ub January 2011

STOP THIEF

It was a day that I decided to do something different. Many times I have ridden my mountain bike along the canal towpaths and on Sustrans' route 5 into the Sandwell Valley where there is plenty of single track to keep me happy if you know where to look for it.

I had never ridden on route 5 beyond the Sandwell Valley. So with time to spare I carried on, crossing a field to another canal, then over two bridges onto yet another canal, then through housing estates and parks into the centre of Walsall.

Now I would never recommend to anyone to go mountain biking in Walsall. However now that I was here I moved away from the town centre looking for a café for a lunch stop. I soon spotted three close together, avoiding chips with everything I chose the one with a large window and an empty table by the window. Leaning my bike against the window I locked it up and went inside and ordered a tea and a baguette. As I started to eat my baguette I glanced up just in time to see an arm grab my mountain bike lift it up and someone run off with it. I dashed out of the café nearly knocking someone over and ran up a side street. Seeing a couple coming down with a pushchair I shouted STOP THIEF but he had already passed them and turned left into a road behind the café and shops.

Now at 77 years old and running in mountain bike shoes, I knew that he would be faster than me, but running with a mountain bike can be tiring, so I thought that if I could continue to see him I might get it back. Rounding the corner I yelled at him DROP THAT BIKE. Eventually he looked round and saw that I was gaining on him so he stopped and GENTLY laid the mountain bike down and ran off as fast as he could, with me shouting expletives at him that I would never use in a street or anywhere else for that matter. By this time all the staff had come out of the café to see if I was alright and said how fit I must be, also the couple with the pushchair had come back to see if I had caught him.

They took my bike into the café and placed it by some stools, and said if I had asked I could have brought my bike inside. But think about it how many times have you taken a bicycle into a café?

After finishing my baguette off I made my way back out of Walsall on route 5 and into the beautiful Sandwell Valley with its many pools, lakes and wildlife where I spent some time before cycling back to Northfield on the canal towpaths and route 5 thinking all the time that I was lucky to be cycling back, and not returning by bus.

Locking your bike up will stop the low life from riding off with it, but it won't stop them running off with it.

OSCAR

First published in HUB-UB in August 2012