

The West Surrey Cyclist



October – December 2012

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WHAT WE ARE

CTC is the national cycling charity. It campaigns for both road and off-road cyclists. Membership includes third-party insurance, legal claims advice, travel and technical guidance, on and off-road route information, and a bi-monthly national magazine. It has 70,000 members and affiliates and is the oldest and largest cycling body in the UK. It has a network of local groups of which CTC West Surrey is one.

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CTC West Surrey history & archives website:

<http://homepage.ntlworld.com/chris.jeggo/wsdahist/histarch.html>

WELCOME TO OUR WORLD

As you can see, you have a new editor; though I'm only sat in this chair until someone else steps forward to fill the post on a more permanent basis. Please form an orderly queue.

Despite the supposedly temporary nature of my appointment (it's worth remembering that income tax was introduced as a temporary measure in 1799 to finance the war against Napoleon) I haven't been able to resist the temptation to tinker with the layout of some sections of the magazine. I hope you approve of the result but if you don't, I'm sure no one will object to your indulging in some queue jumping.

When I was on the committee, we occasionally discussed making the magazine available electronically at some stage in the future when the editor could cope with doing so. Provided the committee has not subsequently decided against this idea, it is my intention to send a copy of the next issue of the magazine by email to anyone who wishes to receive one. Please contact me if you do. If you do so by the end of October, I shall send you a copy of this issue, so you'll see all the photos in colour.

DON'T JUST SIT THERE, WRITE SOMETHING!

All contributions are welcomed by the editor. Please send them to editor@ctcwestsurrey.org.uk.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Bill Thompson

Wow! What a spectacle. After a failure in the Road Race things got better and better, and the crowds! Who would have imagined at least a million people turning out to watch a bike race. But of course they do just that on the continent, whereas here cycling is very under-publicised, soccer, golf, darts, snooker and tennis get the time on the box. I cannot understand why Sky, who promote one of the most successful pro teams, normally only give sparse cycling comment in their news programmes.

My other big moan concerns the presenters. I find these hand-flapping, head-wobbling creeps hard to handle, the only exceptions being Boardman and Porter, or stick to Sky where you only hear the presenters.

I also felt that the women were under-publicised. As usual they did better than the men and their riding styles were superb; pity that Victoria Pendleton had the two issues but she took the judges' decisions with grace, pity our professional footballers couldn't follow her behaviour.

I have recently moved to Reigate, a very nice town with a large, well-organised bike shop in the middle. There are clubs in the town and in Redhill which adjoins Reigate. My problem has been that when the removal men disgorged my boxes, which they had packed perfectly, into the flat and the garage, I had tried to be a clever dick and had put my bikes into the garage first. This meant that they were inaccessible and that had to be my excuse, along with the bad weather, for not getting out on the road.

Nevertheless, I do intend getting out and joining up with the group when the coffee stop is to the East of Woking or, as many know, I am quite happy to load the bike into the car and have a motor-assisted ride.

I know that you will all join with me in thanking Claire for the sterling work that she has performed as Editor. I will also be looking for a replacement, no great intellectual qualities required, no great cycling prowess needed, seniority and good attendance would be the main attributes.

THE BICYCLE ICYCLE 70km RIDE 1st APRIL 2012

By Mark Waters

The ride attracted 18 people, twelve of whom were West Surrey riders. These were Peter Hackman, Matt Carolan, Clive Richardson, Helen Juden, Chris Juden, Huw Hitchin, Chris Jeggo, Anne Etherington, Bob McLeod, Chris Boggon, Roger Philo and Mark Waters, the organiser. We also welcomed riders from further afield: Peter Weston & David Funnell (West Sussex); John Beer & Alex Nowicky (SW London); Mike Batchelor (West London) and Denis Crampton (Bracknell).

All completed the course, except one, with the first riders home completing the course in 3 hours 55 minutes, which, interestingly, was identical to the two previous years. It's a fabulously scenic route, if a bit hilly. Fortunately the weather didn't make our bicycles icy; in fact the sun shone out of a clear, sunny sky, although a couple more degrees of heat would have gone down well.



The picture shows a few of us relaxing after the ride. That's Mike Batchelor in the foreground, who won the CTC Tourist Competition last year – a great achievement requiring considerable dedication over the whole season.

50/35 MILE RELIABILITY RIDES 15th APRIL 2012

By Roger Philo

The day was cool and breezy, but unlike much of April, dry and sometimes sunny. There were 16 starters in all, although, in a complete reversal from last year, this was 12 from the Farncombe start and 4 from the Pyrford start. My thanks to Rico Signore and Dane Maslen for running the Pyrford start.

The introduction of 35 mile route options from both starts did not result in a large switch to the shorter rides. There were no takers for the 35 mile route from Pyrford and only two for the 35 mile route from Farncombe. The former switches the coffee stop to Cranleigh, before heading to Alfold and Loxwood and across to re-join the 50 route at the end of the road through Drungewick. The latter leaves the existing 50 route at Hambledon and goes via Chiddingfold and Shillinglee to join the Pyrford 50 route at Plaistow. As these 35 mile routes take little extra effort, I shall retain them next year despite the low take up.

I didn't ride either route myself on the day, having been round all the routes in the preceding weeks. So, for me it was a gentle ride via Bramley, the Downslink and Shamley Green to coffee at the Lucky Duck, Shere and thence to the Kings Head, Holmbury St Mary, to await the finishers. All 16 starters completed their rides. The Village Shop and café at Kirdford helped us once again by looking after the stamp and pad and providing refreshments to those who wanted them. Those of you cycling out that way on Sunday afternoons might like to note that they are now open until 4pm on Sunday.

AUDAXES FROM ELSTEAD ON 13th MAY 2012 (Stonehenge 200, Danebury 150 and Elstead 100)

By Nick Davison

The weather was once again pretty good with some sunshine and mainly dry roads, although there was some flooding resulting from heavy rain earlier in the week: details of a diversion were handed out for the Stonehenge 200k near King's Somborne. However, no accidents were reported.

The village hall next door was running Surrey League races during the morning and afternoon, but this only really affected the departure for the Elstead 100k where riders were faced with a cavalcade of riders and support vehicles preparing to start. The main problem was parking for all the competitors with one rider nearly giving up for want of a parking space.

Three Japanese riders were notable for their enthusiasm in taking photos of the countryside and getting lost in the process such that they only just made the time limit. The Watercress Festival at Alresford did not clash this year although some riders missed the exotic food.

Entries were up marginally from last year [2011 in brackets]: entries 74 [72], finishers 54 [57]. About 60% of entries were by Paypal which reduced the administration but the organiser was not counting on a huge increase in the cost of stamps in April. Any suggestions for improvements next year are welcome.

Ed: reports of the Summer Navigator, the 75-/100-mile Reliability Rides and the Tour of the Hills will appear next issue.

20 YEARS ON

By Liz Palethorpe

In the absolutely torrential rain 23 hardy cyclists met at The Maltings, Farnham for a celebratory ride. 20 years ago the weather was perfect, beautiful and sunny and 12 cyclists with 2 babies on the back set off on the inaugural ride. This ride was repeated in the pouring rain taking us up Castle Street and Old Park Lane where in the good weather the views are fantastic but not today just mist and rain. Then past Lasham Gliding Club via Well, Long Sutton and Herriard and on to The Golden Pot for lunch. At



last the weather cleared up and downhill most of the way back to Farnham for cake and bubbly. Here's to the next 20 years.

FROM THE FILES OF THE WELFARE OFFICER

Dear Welfare Officer,

I recently spent 2½ weeks in France, doing a 90km ride each morning to improve my cycle fitness so as to be able to keep up with the Woking Midweek Wayfarers' group that I attempt to cycle with. Yesterday I put the results of this effort to the test for the first time and was very satisfied by my significantly improved fitness and speed, but was horrified to discover that some swine had taken half the rest of the group on a cycling trip to the Massif Central with the result that they were all super-fit and I was still struggling to keep up. Could you please investigate this matter and take appropriate action against the perpetrator of this fiendish plot?

Yours in desperation,

An exhausted cyclist

Dear fit cyclist

Firstly, may I assure you that I take all such complaints extremely seriously, and will investigate fully on your behalf.

From personal experience I know the frustrations that such experiences can create. Only recently, I "led" a cycling trip to the Massif Central (which is a huge, not to say Massif, coincidence in view of your own reference) and spent the entire holiday watching the disappearing Lycra clad backsides of "my" group whenever we reached a hill - which was frequently. I tried to find solace with someone more than 10 years older than me, who I thought I could trust, but in the end I thought that even Bob was patronising me, and only staying at the back to provide me with a modicum of comfort.

Anyway, enough about me, I will investigate your complaint with great rigour, but I am sure you will appreciate that the Massif Central is a large area of a large country, and I fear the chances of finding out who led the trip are remote. However, you can rest assured that if successful, I will take appropriate action against the so-called leader, for instance by banning him from leading any further Wednesday rides. You will then be left at the tender mercies of such pedestrian cyclists as William, John F, Nick etc.

Yours from the back of the peloton.

WO

HISTORY OF THE WOODEN CRANK

By Richard Ellis

As the present holder of the “Wooden Crank” it is befitting that I write this article about how it all started, and how the past and present fellow cyclists have merited this prestigious award, and the rather hilarious and embarrassing reasons for such recognition.

The idea of this award was apparently conceived by Harold Coleman whilst tinkering in his workshop around 1980 – he had to wait until 1999 to be given this award when he was responsible for navigating a group of Midweek Wayfarers onto the motorway in Portsmouth.

There are in fact three other years when faulty navigation led to the awarding of the Wooden Crank....

Keith Parfitt (1982) : responsible for leading the start of a sponsored ride in aid of the White Lodge centre, he managed to turn the wrong way as the riders left the gates of the centre.

Chris Greening (1986) leading a weekend tour in Dorset, took the group along a lane containing “at least 100 yards of farm manure and impenetrable hedges” then wading across a morass where most riders had to take their shoes and socks off. A gallant David Pinkness produced 2 plastic bags and rubber bands, and carried Helen Gill + bike across this morass....Chris says that it led to the start of their romance and subsequent marriage.

Alan Holbrook (2004) failing to complete the 50 mile reliability ride due to a navigation error only a mile or two from the finish.

Bike repair problems were responsible for further hilarity.

Roger Philo-Phil Hamilton-Geoff Taylor (1991): This intrepid trio stopped to help Rory Fenner who had broken both brake cables. Each thought the others had removed the bits of old cable – and all were somewhat puzzled by the difficulty of inserting new ones.

However bad cycling was (and still is!) the most popular way to win the Wooden crank, sometimes with unforeseen consequences.

Chris Avery (1994) first DA rider to use clipless pedals – inevitably fell off into the mud.

Ian Callaghan (1995) another convert to clipless pedals who managed to fall off three times on a 75 mile reliability ride.

Peter Callaghan (1996) managed to get entangled with a rope loop hanging from a tree whilst on an off-road “rough-stuff” event – the loop snagged over his handlebars and extension – swinging his bike up – and loss of rider.

Keith Chesterton (2001) broke not one but both elbows in biking accident (ooouch).

John Ostrom (2002) had the inaugural feat of falling off his cycle into the Basingstoke canal – this feat was repeated by me plus bike, cycling into Wey navigation last year whilst avoiding a couple of elderly walkers.

Rico Signore (2007) riding into concrete post whilst reading a map.

Geoff Smith – Senior (2008) also riding into a lamp post in centre of deserted 30ft wide & smooth cycleway.

Seemingly simple forgetfulness has been also a good way of winning the Wooden Crank over the years.

Ken Bolingbroke (1983) turned up a week late for the Annual DA dinner.

Clive Richardson (1985) drove back from a cycling weekend in Shropshire – leaving a wheel, mudguards etc at the Youth hostel.

Paul Holmes (1987) led a group Sunday ride to Oakhanger in order to take part in a Hill climb event but got his timing wrong – everyone had already gone to Red Lion for lunch and the “jobs-worth” timekeeper would not be persuaded to leave his pint and allow these late entries. The 1987 report says “at 12 noon on the Hill only 2 people had turned up and at 12.30 the event was cancelled as 6 people are required to make up an event.”

Marguerite Statham & Bill Inder (1988) turned up for slide show one week early.

Don Jones (2005) for losing his rear bag.

Barry Rolfe (2010) for coming out on a club ride with cycling shorts inside out (no doubt the padded variety?).

John Pugh (1998) managed to get his shoes and socks swamped by the sea off the Isle of Wight.

Bizarrely – as a fitting tribute to the popular Bill Wellings in 2000 – he was given the award for leaving us soft southerners in West Surrey for rigours of living on the Wirral peninsula in Cheshire and facing those bracing westerlies and doubtless even more rain.

Thoughtless theft was also the final focus of yet another way of additionally winning the Wooden Crank.

The West Surrey magazine (circa 1997) tells the story of “Fingers” Bolingstoke pocketing someone else’s wallet in a respectable Waitrose coffee shop in Godalming – to the consternation of the assembled cyclists who fell into a shocked silence.

Yes! The accused when asked to empty his pocket did have the wallet! To the surprise of the assembled audience however, Ken then pulled out another but identical wallet - his own.....

Now the question is – who will win the Wooden Crank this year? – and earn the undying fame – or ridicule of our fellow cyclists? Certainly that person or persons can be guaranteed to be a topic of conversation though not commiseration over the next year – well it makes a change from all that technical talk and chatter about climbs, challenges, computer record miles and suchlike.

I’m indebted to Chris Jeggo the club historian for these memorable stories relating to the Wooden Crank and identifying the previous and present recipients of this award. See

http://homepage.ntlworld.com/chris.jeggo/wsdahist/wooden_crank.html

Ed: spurred on by Richard's article I read this and discovered that one award not mentioned by Richard particularly amused me: Hamish Smith (1984) for driving his car into the garage with the bikes still on the roof.

UPDATE ON NEW CYCLING JERSEYS

By Mark Waters

Firstly, apologies to all that this process has taken so long. This is due to various factors: firstly, I didn't want to produce a jersey that wasn't liked by at least some people, so I worked up some designs and then asked for comments in the hope that some preferences could be detected - it's not

easy to achieve this. This all took time.

The company who supply the preferred design offer the chance to include several logos. Since there appears to be no original artwork for the current logo, I set about designing another and asked for comments. There were quite a few differences of opinion, so it was back to the drawing board.

On top of this was keeping the committee appraised of developments, plus several trips away by myself, plus other jobs to do and now I've just been away for all of August.

The final design both for the jersey and logo now needs to be agreed by the committee and samples obtained to confirm colour preferences and check on whether Owayo's sizes are fairly standard or trend towards large or small. We hope this won't take too long. I'd like to think that we will have jerseys available for the AGM, but we'll have to work fast to achieve this.

So.... you'll see that it's a long process and again, my apologies for this. Whether, at the end of all this, any more people will be happier with the end result than if I'd just taken a punt at a design I liked and went ahead with it - I believe this is what was done with our last jerseys - we may never know!

Here (but only in b&w) are the (almost) final designs are for both the jersey and the CTC West Surrey logo.



Ed: If this issue had been available by email, anyone receiving it that way would have seen these designs in colour (in fact you can receive this issue by email if you sign up to receive future issues that way by the end of October). For more news about the new club jerseys see the back page.

CYCLE TRIP TO THE MASSIF CENTRAL

By William Lowries

Tour members: John Murdoch (leader), Ian Young (driver and support), Peter Hackman, Nick Davison, John Findlay, Bob Mcleod, Don Gray, Geoff Smith, Robin King, William Lowries

Friday 8th June: We drove to the start of our cycling tour in 3 cars, with bikes inside and out. It's a long bash down to Clermont Ferrand, about 550 miles and we arrived at 7pm local time. We knew we were nearly there when we could see the mountains of the Massif and the bulk of Puy-de-Dome, a volcano (last eruption 5760bc) whose summit is 1415m high.

Saturday 9th June: We set off about 9am, straight into a long gradual climb of about 7km, in the direction of the Puy-de-Dome. To the immense disappointment of most (especially Bob Mcleod) we were unable to climb it as cycling on it is quite severely restricted. Something to look forward to on another trip perhaps? From Orcival there was a long and quite hard climb up the Vallée du Chausse which has 2 massive volcanic rocks, one on each side, known as Les Roches Tuiliere et Sanadoire. We reached a viewpoint at the top, from where we could look back North and see the valley between these rocks. Then a cold but exhilarating descent down into Le Mont Dore, where we stayed the night. 50 miles, c2000m of climb.

Sunday 10th June: The day started with a brisk 7km climb out of Le Mont Dore followed by a super, fast descent (at this point the roads were still dry). We stopped for coffee in Besse and from this point on it rained, almost all day. Had lunch in Condat, where Ian met us with sandwiches he had bought for us in Le Mont Dore. We were in a little patisserie/bar, where the lady in charge very kindly let us eat the sandwiches inside, despite us dripping water everywhere. As we were leaving, she also very kindly gave us some fruit tarts, which were very welcome – as Don put it, “nothing like a tart at lunchtime”. From there we had a rather wet and cold 30km to cover to get to our hotel at Murat. 57 miles, c1500m of climb.

Monday 11th June: Late breakfast at 8am (a concession as this was a “rest day”, i.e. we didn't have to get ourselves to another town so cycling was “an option”, one of John Murdoch's favourite phrases). John had hurt his back so didn't ride. He, Ian, Bob and Robin went geocaching in the car. As far as I can gather this is a mysterious pastime best described as a treasure

hunt with the aid of a GPS, although I am sure there is more to it than that.

The other 6 of us went cycling on a route which seemed particularly hilly, firstly up a col called Pas de Peyrol at 1589m, above which was the Puy Mary at 1787m. It was a tough climb with the wind in our faces for much of the way, and very cold. At the summit, a café provided us with welcome coffees and then a large tureen of Oxtail soup plus bread and grated cheese (Which poor Geoff could not enjoy as he is vegetarian). There we met a chap who we'd seen at the bottom and who had cycled up on a mountain bike with big panniers. He was in the process of "collecting" 100 cols. Sadly eventually we had to leave the warmth and shelter of the café and brave the freezing descent which seemed to go on and on. Then there was another big and steeper climb up to Col du Perthus and then an easier and warmer descent, followed by another climb required because the road to Murat went through a tunnel on which bikes were not allowed, then a fast gradual descent into Murat. 40 miles, c1600m of climb.

Tuesday 12th June: I was greeted by a flat front tyre, the first of several for me. We set off in cloud almost straight into a big climb. As we got higher the rain became heavier and the wind stronger. After lunch the weather improved and we had an exciting descent on drying roads through trees to a lake. We all stopped as the trees opened up on our right to give us a spectacular view of it. At one stage today we saw 4 kites and 2 buzzards overhead, presumably looking for any cyclist stragglers to pick off. 60 miles and 2080m of climbing – a great day. I had 2 more punctures though, one in the back wheel while at the top of a hill, fortunately it was not raining or too cold, and the other in the front when only a few hundred metres from the hotel. So I had 3 tubes to mend tonight.

The hotel Garabit is on the shores of a lake and overshadowed by the Garabit Viaduct, built of wrought iron by Gustave Eiffel (of Tower fame) in 1884 to take the railway across the gorge. A very impressive sight and piece of engineering. A good and convivial meal in the hotel tonight.

Wednesday 13th June: started with a good climb to pass just under the viaduct, followed by some good fast flattish riding, and then after a slight climb I succumbed to yet another front wheel puncture. Maybe grit was getting into the tyre through a small slit. Then a fast but cold descent to a tiny village called Paulhac where we found a café and had coffees etc, then noticed a wood burning stove and all huddled round it to keep warm. The young lady who was serving was very helpful and offered to do quiche and

salad for us, plus a mushroom omelette for Geoff. She said it never got very warm there as they were still at 1000m altitude. More descending and then we were into a long hard hot climb which went on for about 45 minutes, with a stunning gorge down on our right. After this we had a series of exhilarating fast descents most of the way into Le Puy en Velay. 60 miles, c1700m of climb.

Thursday 14th: So far I had selflessly taken virtually all the punctures for the group, but now Bob's bike started suffering and there was speculation that it was just left too close to mine and the effects were contagious. However, his had a different cause. He had new wheels just before the trip and it seemed that the rim tape was too narrow or badly fitted and it was this which caused the problem. Today we rode along the gorge of the upper Loire, downstream. This was flat, fast riding, although some of us took it at a measured pace, conserving our energy for the hills we knew were coming in the afternoon. After a coffee stop, Bob and Robin decided to cop out and take a short cut so they got to the destination quite early in the afternoon. The rest of us had a much longer and hillier route. After stopping in Retournac to buy some provisions for a modest repast, we climbed steeply up to Château d'Artias, a ruined castle on a hill, where we sat and ate our lunch in warm sunshine, with superb views of the Loire valley to the South and West. Today was the first really warm day, probably in the mid twenties and I for one got through quite a lot of water.

The last 12km or so of today's ride was beautiful, riding along a wooded river valley, but it was uphill all the way, starting gradually and becoming steeper. A fairly gruelling climb, but eventually we reached our destination, La Chaise-Dieu, a small town and the site of an abbey founded in 1043 and the highest in France. We were staying in self catering chalets in parkland. The chalets were well equipped and comfortable and Don and others prepared a very fine meal of pasta and salads plus cheese and various other garnishes, then a couple of tarts for pudding but sadly no custard for Bob. As if in judgement for complaining about lack of custard, Bob's front tyre promptly went down with an audible hiss. It was the same problem, dodgy rim tape. Bob managed to refit the tape and sort it out (or so he thought). 80 miles, c2260m climb.

Friday 15th June: Our last day's riding! Another bright morning but chilly for our open air breakfast. One of the highlights today was a gradual descent along a wooded valley where the road snaked along beside a river

in a series of gentle S bends. Geoff, John F, Peter and I took this as fast we could, which was really exhilarating, particularly as it seemed to go on for at least 5km. Just as we were about to set off after our lunch stop, Bob's tyre went down again – the same issue. It was solved with the aid of some sellotape scrounged from the café patron.

So far today's ride had been more downhill than up, but in the afternoon it became hillier and we climbed to a succession of pretty hilltop towns. It also became pretty hot – nearly 30°C. We got into the hotel in Royat about 4.30pm. 70miles, c1400m climb.

So overall, I make the total distance 420 miles, and the total height climbed 12,500m. Phew!!

All in all, a splendid tour, with superb scenery and riding. Our grateful thanks especially to John Murdoch our leader for all the hard work in organising it, and his impeccable navigation. I'm sure we all look forward to the next jaunt.

RIDING AROUND

With Geoff Smith (Editor 2000-2010)

WELCOME aboard, Dane Maslen, and thanks to Claire Hooper for your diligent editing, quirky pictures, and scrumptious recipes in 2011 and so far this year. Note to Dane: Make sure you commission Claire for more of both. Like many of us West Surrey lot, she just needs a little bit of encouragement to contribute to the mag...

What I am now about to relate is not so much gleaned from Riding Around as Posing Around. I have long been prone to posing, never more so than on that most memorable of days, Wednesday August 1st 2012. Talk about puffed-up parading, West Surrey riders Neil Eason, Keith Ricketts, William Lowries, and myself, did cycling proud, perhaps not quite as much as Bradley Wiggins but it certainly felt like it.

This great day started with a routine Midweek Wayfarers run to Bocketts Farm for coffee. Everyone seemed fairly nonchalant about the prospects of the upcoming Olympics time trials, perhaps thinking we don't want to go mob-handed to any of the local vantage points.

So small groups drifted off in various directions, and I was fortunate

enough to link up with Neil, Keith and William to make haste for beautiful downtown Cobham. Crowds were massing and I spotted a cop. Would he perhaps know of a pub on the route where we might base ourselves? Indeed so. Actually, he got it wrong; he directed us up the road to the posh Loch Fyne fish restaurant, but great joy awaited us.

The manager and staff obviously knew top Lycra-clad class when they saw it, and directed us to the best table in the joint. Actually and pertinently it was outside the joint but in just about the best position imaginable to enjoy the women's and men's time-trials. I do not exaggerate. Flowers on the table? – Check. Parasol overhead in case of a sudden shower? – Check. Armchairs with cushions to comfort our scrawny bottoms? – Of course. Add in beer, fish and chips, and cappuccino and this indeed was the lunch stop of our dreams. No wonder we preened and puffed out our cycling jerseys.

On the next table were some likely cyclist lads who had left Birmingham at 5.30 to get to Cobham (by car) and likewise could hardly believe their luck. They had tied on Union flags at the roadside railings, all of three feet away, to bag a place and were happy to share it with us. We naturally complimented their leader on his very fetching albeit temporary Wiggo sideburns. Yes, all was set for a great afternoon.

By the time the time-trials started the whole area was jammed full. We and our new pals had arrived at bang-on the right time and we all had enormous fun throughout the proceedings.



Our vantage point took in a roundabout and about 300 approaching yards of the route. Our neighbours wielded smart phones and were able to access full details of the riders on the internet as they set off plus BBC coverage. I will never know for sure, but I like to think their running commentary and background info was as good as the professionals.

One serious point concerning watching the actual racing: I reckon I could tell the serious contenders from the rest just from my position in Cobham. The early riders, both men and women, seemed to me to be slower by my

actual sight of them whizzing past. Some freewheeled down the small incline approaching the roundabout. One star actually braked as he took his line around the roundabout. Of course, when it came to Wiggins, there was this incredible sense of purpose and speed on a bike like you have never seen on the open road. Wishful thinking? – Maybe, but I truly think I could identify the serious contenders just by eye from my spectator's position.

So there it is. That is how my companions and I saw the Gold being won by Wiggins. The bill when it came was not cheap but what price the facilities and occasion? The management team are planning to put up some pictures of their part of the event. So we will be back to take a look, making sure there are some special dining offers available when we do so.

THE OLYMPIC ROAD RACES

While your new editor was out cycling (on the Saturday) and cowering indoors to avoid getting wet (on the Sunday), *The West Surrey Cyclist's* intrepid team of reporters were out watching the Olympic Road Races from various vantage points.

Men's Race

Richmond Park (Don Gray): Richmond Park was our chosen vantage point to view this once-in-a-lifetime event and we were in position at around 8am, breakfasting whilst leaning on the railing. The atmosphere was one of excited anticipation; after all this was one of the first Olympic events and we, as spectators, really didn't know what to expect.

Everyone was so friendly! Chatting across the railings to fellow spectators on the other side of the route we found out their backgrounds, interests and expectations; it was almost as if we were establishing friendships rather than whiling away time until the main event. We did have an excuse however as Claudia, with a healthy five months under her belt and dressed in a very fetching 'Team GB' baby-grow, attracted a lot of favourable interest. She's been a cycling enthusiast since her Mum (our daughter Jessica) rode with her on the Etape last year when she was the tender age of minus two months!

The 'warm up' to the Big Ride was provided by a surprising cast... First there were the Police on their mountain bikes 'high-fiving' the crowd. Perhaps they were not as polished bike handlers as those international

riders who were to follow later; neither were they as swift (especially on the Alpine gradients of the more testing sections of the Park) but they looked as though they were enjoying themselves. Both cycle and motorcycle Police gave the impression of having a good time and they must have found the good-natured response from the crowd a refreshing change from their normal duties. Innumerable vehicles, uniformed and otherwise, powered or not, and with two or four wheels entertained us until the arrival of, firstly, the sponsor's cars and then the main course cars. All of us (and there must have been thousands just in our area of the Park) found the time until the Main Event passed swiftly. People were so polite and caring – the buzz from the Opening Ceremony the night before was very evident and everyone was content. There was no pushing or shoving; 'tiddlers' were invited to the front so they could see the riders and we all made space for each other.

Oh yes, and then there were the competitors. Seeing these Olympians was a fitting finale to an already memorable morning. Once they'd passed and we started gently move away I heard, for the first, but not the last time, a friendly farewell from our railing neighbours - "Happy Olympics". And so it proved to be...

Staple Lane (Peter Hackman): 5 of us, including our 8 year old grandson, cycled the 4 miles to our chosen spot; the first right-hand bend on Staple Lane. On arrival I retrieved the small stepladder from behind a hedge that I had locked up the night before; much to the amusement of the other spectators. We thought that we were early, arriving at 08:15, however one keen photographer had been there since 4:30am!

We spent the time waiting for the arrival of the riders chatting to other spectators, friends (Paddy & Claire passed by on the way to their chosen locations) & photographing one another. Meanwhile the children wrote encouraging slogans on the road.

Eventually the appearance of the helicopters heralded the approach of the breakaway group. We watched them swing into Staple Lane and race up towards us. In no time they had swept past and round the next corner. A few minutes later the main peloton arrived in a similar fashion and had gone. We managed to pick out Wiggo, Froome & Stannard in the general mêlée.

Riding home on the traffic free A25 my daughter-in-law remarked "Why

can't roads always be like this". Why not, indeed?

Staple Lane (Claire Hooper): For two hours before the race arrived at Staple Lane, the road filled up with hundreds of spectators, many busily chalking messages on the road. Some had brought radios so that we knew how the race was progressing. Finally, the helicopters overhead and the streams of official team vehicles showed that the race was near. The breakaway group surged up the hill, soon followed by the peloton. Something further up the hill suddenly slowed the peloton almost to a halt in front of us. Suddenly, they spread out to occupy all the road space and we spectators took a hasty step back into the hedges.

Headley (John Murdoch): Even though Olympic fever had not yet gripped the nation, after all the cycling road race was right at the start of the programme, there was no way that Elaine and I were going to miss out on watching the event. After all, there would no repeat opportunity in our lifetime.

We did miss out on getting tickets for Box Hill (no surprise there) but in the end that did not matter. We were still keen to watch on the Box Hill loop, so that we could see the riders 9 times rather than on one fleeting occasion, and a bit of planning took us by car to Leatherhead, knowing that the M25 would be open even if it crossed the route (or more accurately, the route crossed it). Then a shortish cycle ride to Headley, plenty of spectators even 2 hours before the riders were expected, but still ample opportunity to watch right by the side of the road. By seeing the riders 9 times, we were able to get some idea of how tactics were evolving as different breakaways occurred, although, even though I had a radio, we were not helped by the appalling coverage, with little knowledge of the gaps and how they were opening/closing.

Apart from the phenomenal speed as the riders rushed past on a sweeping downhill bend, my other main recollection was that every time the main peloton passed, it was the five GB riders at the front pushing the pace. So, after all that effort, it was probably no surprise that Wiggins, Froome, etc ran out of legs, and were unable to set Mark Cavendish up for his elusive Olympic medal, but we should not complain too much, as GB cyclists generally had a rather successful Games.

Incidentally, some of us were able to ride Box Hill after the resurfacing, and before the speed humps were reintroduced, quite a pleasure.

Women's Race

Staple Lane (Claire Hooper): Delayed by a thunderstorm, we stood on the corner at the bottom of Staple Lane. Motorbike police entertained the crowds with high fives. As the helicopters circled closer it became a race between the Olympic ladies and the rain clouds. There was no breakaway this time: the sharp bend only slowed the peloton slightly, then they disappeared up the climb, followed by a small group, some support vehicles and one girl desperately chasing. The lie of the land enabled us to see a peloton of white helmets, followed by support vehicles and riders who had been dropped, making their way ever more slowly up the hill until at last they disappeared behind the hedges.

Gomshall (Peter Hackman): I chose to watch the Ladies Race from Gomshall, reasoning that there would be plenty of shelter from the forecast heavy rain. In the event I was lucky; no rain fell on me during the 3 hours I was out.

I chose a spot beyond the railway arch thinking that the S bend would slow them down a little (some hope!) and that the arch itself would make a good backdrop.

The approaching peloton was, as usual, marked by the arrival of several helicopters and yet more police motorbikes. The police were obviously enjoying themselves; giving “high 5’s” to all and sundry!

All too soon and all too quickly the main group had arrived and gone. I didn’t even pick out a Team GB jersey, although my photos proved that one had passed right in front of me!

Shortly after the main group came the stragglers. I noticed that there was something odd about some of their expressions. It was only later that I discovered that some had come off descending Combe Lane. I now realise that their expressions were of shock!

Hyde Park Corner (Bob McLeod): My contribution will take longer to write than it took for the whole spectacle to pass my vantage point. I was at Hyde Park Corner for the women's race on the Sunday. I had walked along the park from the Palace listening to the commentary from loud speakers. I thought that the slight slope and bend at Hyde Park might slow them down and so be a better place to see the cyclists - of course it didn't. The numbers of police motorcyclists along the route was amazing. They

were clearly all on a jolly, having a great time sounding their sirens and waving to us spectators. I was able to shelter from the rain that came on, in a bus shelter alongside the barriers, until it was clear from the shouting of the crowd further down the route and the arrival of the helicopters overhead that I must move to the barrier to glimpse the three medallists flash by. Another occupant of the shelter was telling me that for the men's race the pavement had been packed at least 10 deep; of course it hadn't been raining then!

CTC WEST SURREY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM will be at 10.30am on Saturday 3rd November at The Bird in Hand, Mayford Green, Woking. There will be free tea and coffee before the meeting (if you want to avail yourself of this, please arrive early so that the meeting can start on time!). We hope that as many members as possible will come to the AGM and then stay for a pub lunch, choosing from the pub's standard menu, afterwards.

Motions for consideration at the AGM must be submitted to the secretary at least two weeks in advance, as should nominations - using the form on the back page of this magazine - for chairman, secretary, treasurer and rides' secretary (all ex-officio members of the committee), other committee members and auditor. Nominations for the honorary posts of president and vice-presidents can be made either in advance or at the meeting.

In addition to the election of officials and the consideration of formal motions the AGM gives members the opportunity to make and discuss suggestions, e.g. about our publications, our social, rides' and events' programmes, and how to attract younger participants. Bring along some good ideas!

Contact the secretary, Nick Davison, on email:

nickandmarion.davison@hotmail.co.uk

or by post:

The Bield, Mill Copse Road, Fernhurst, West Sussex, GU27 3DN

Nomination Form
Annual General Meeting of CTC West Surrey Group

I, _____

proposer's name

member number

proposer's signature

seconded by

seconder's name

member number

seconder's signature

nominate

nominee's name

member number

to be submitted for election as

Chairman / Secretary / Treasurer / Rides' Secretary / Committee Member / Auditor / President / Vice-President (circle as appropriate)
of CTC West Surrey Group.

I agree to my nomination as set out above

nominee's signature

date

The CTC West Surrey Group Local Rules require this form to be completed and submitted to the Group Secretary at least two weeks before the date of the Annual General Meeting

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 28th to Sunday 30th September: The Cycle Show, NEC, Birmingham. See www.cycleshow.co.uk.

Saturday 3rd November: AGM, Bird in Hand, Mayford Green.
Coffee at 10.00am. Meeting starts at 10.30am.

Tuesday 1st January: New Year's Day at Seale Craft Centre.
From 10.30. Go direct or leave from Godalming at 9.30.
Remember – all proceeds go to Farnham Hospice, so eat lots of cake!

NEW CLUB JERSEYS

Indicative orders have already been placed by many. If you have not yet done so but wish to purchase a jersey in due course, please e-mail John Murdoch (johnmatsouthview@btinternet.com) stating the nature of the jersey (short/long sleeve, etc) and size.

Deadline for next issue December 1 st . Get your cycling stories in to the editor now: editor@ctcwestsurrey.org.uk
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The editor welcomes contributions of all types – e.g. articles about cycling holidays, anecdotes about events on club rides, letters (serious or humorous) to the editor, product reviews, and just about anything else that you can think of – and lengths. Short items are useful for filling the gaps left by larger articles, so don't be put off making a contribution just because it will be short.

It is my policy to acknowledge all articles when I receive them. If you have not received an acknowledgement from me for a contribution sent either to me or to Claire, something has gone wrong: please send it to me again.

Front cover: Bradley Wiggins passing through Cobham en route to gold in the Olympics Men's Individual Time Trial (photo by William Lowries, who also provided the photo of Chris Froome in Geoff Smith's article).