

The West Surrey Cyclist



**January – March
2016**

Issue 121



WEST SURREY CTC 2016

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WHAT WE ARE

CTC is the national cycling charity. It is the oldest and largest cycling body in the UK, promotes all forms of cycling, and has championed the cause of cycling for well over a century. Its network of local groups, of which West Surrey CTC is one, has 70,000 members. Membership includes third-party insurance, a cycling-related legal helpline, and a bi-monthly national magazine.

CTC headquarters: Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9JX.
Phone 0844 736 8450.

CTC website: www.ctc.org.uk

West Surrey CTC website: <http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/>

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Friday 1st January: Traditional New Year's Day gathering from about 10:30, but now at **Squires GC, Badshot Lea** as Seale is under new management and will be closed.

11th-14th February: The London Bike Show, ExCel, London.
See <http://www.thelondonbikeshow.co.uk/>

Sunday 14th February: Bicycle Icycle (70km) 9.30 4 Quarry Hill, Godalming, GU7 2NW For event details and booking form see website in New Year. See <http://ridewithgps.com/routes/1038768> for route.
Mark Waters 01483-414307, markw48@gmail.com

Saturday 5th March: Our annual dinner and awards presentation, to be held at The Princess Royal, Runfold, Farnham; booking in advance required. See the article in the magazine for full details.

Sunday 8th May: 35/50 mile Reliability Ride, start 8.00 – 9.00 from Crown Court car park, Godalming, GU7 1EE (SU970439). Roger Philo 01483-233381, roger.philo@virgin.net

Sunday 5th June: Stonehenge 200, Danebury 150 and Elstead 100 from Elstead Village Hall starting at 8.00, 8.30 and 9.00 respectively. Nick Davison 01428-642013 stonehenge200@westsurreyctc.co.uk

Sunday 24th July: 75 and 100 mile Reliability Rides.

Saturday 30th July: RideLondon FreeCycle on traffic-free roads in London. See <https://www.ridelondon.co.uk/events/freecycle/> for details.

Sunday 31st July: Registration for the ballot for places for the next Prudential RideLondon-Surrey 100 is nominally open until 8th January, but will close once 100,000 registrations are received. See <http://www.prudentialridelondon.co.uk/events/100/> for details.

Sunday 21st August: Tour of the Hills and Tour of the Greensand Hills.

More details of the July and August events will appear next issue.



The magazine and rides lists are available on our website:

<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/the-club/magazine/>

<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/rides-and-events/ride-lists-downloads/>

FAREWELL TO YOUR WORLD

As announced six months ago, this is my last issue as editor of the magazine. As things stand at present, it could well also be the penultimate issue of The West Surrey Cyclist as no one has so far stepped forward to replace me. There's an article by Mark Waters on the subject immediately after this. By the time you read this there will be less than two months before the Committee will have to take the decision to administer the last rites to the magazine if someone hasn't volunteered to be editor.

During my first two years as editor I was often in the envious position of having an excess of material, so could carry items forward from one issue to the next. In contrast the last year has seen a massive shortfall in material. Had I not thrown various articles together at the last minute or continued to bore you with my GPS burlblings, you would have been receiving very thin issues. I have often been frustrated when I've heard people telling and retelling a cycling story at coffee stops but not then bothering to write a couple of paragraphs for the magazine to give the story wider circulation.

*Given the paucity of submissions for most of the last year, it's somewhat bizarre that in the last three months I have received so much material that I have been able to prepare not only this issue but also much of the next, which will be the final one unless a new editor steps forward. **If someone does come forward to enable the magazine to continue, something that many of you claim to want, it's important that you provide him or her with the support needed, namely an adequate supply of articles, letters and cycling anecdotes to fill the magazine.** If the same lack of material that I have faced for most of the last year were to continue, I can guarantee that any new editor would quickly throw in the towel. Contrary to what you might assume, however, that's not the reason why this is my last issue, though I certainly wouldn't have put up with the situation for much longer.*

It has been apparent to me for over a year that I have no sympathy with the direction CTC is taking under its current Chief Executive and that I therefore do not wish to continue to support it financially. Consequently when my current 5-year membership expires in January, I shall not be renewing. This does of course mean that I shall not be riding with you next year, but before you get too carried away with the celebrations, I

should warn you that it is my intention to turn up at your coffee stops from time to time to say hello. The Sunday All-Day Riders in particular will have to become accustomed to yet another 'ghost' (cf Julian Allen's blog of 13th July 2015) appearing and disappearing at coffee stops. One or two of you might even be rash enough to want to join me for the occasional ride, perhaps on a day other than Wednesday or Sunday when the club ride has been (or looks like being) cursed with bad weather. If so, let me know and I'll keep you informed of my plans.

Finally I'd like to wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year, remind you all to take care when the weather eventually becomes icy, thank everyone who has contributed articles, letters, etc to the last 14 issues of the magazine, and blow a raspberry to those who could have done so but didn't!

THE FUTURE OF THIS MAGAZINE

A lot of members – certainly those who subscribe in one form or another – will be aware that Dane is retiring from his post as Editor of *The West Surrey Cyclist*; indeed this will be the last magazine he edits, following nearly four years in the job. May I raise a hearty cheer right away for all the work he has put in to ensure the continued success of our club magazine. Thanks, Dane, very much!

So on to the future! As things stand at the time of writing, the magazine doesn't have one after the next issue: no one has popped their head above the parapet and expressed an interest in having a go, even on a temporary basis – not yet anyway!

This really is the last chance to put yourself forward and ensure that *The West Surrey Cyclist* continues to exist. The Committee, at their last two meetings, discussed the matter at great length, with the following facts and comments being worth noting here for readers to consider.

The West Surrey Cyclist was first published 30 years ago, in 1985, and has been published continuously since then.

Subscriptions for the printed magazine have been on the decline for quite some time; we're currently down to having 49 printed. A further 37 copies of the magazine are sent out by email in PDF format (some of which go to

people who also receive a printed copy). Not all copies go to paying subscribers. There is therefore an indication here that there might not be enough members wanting a magazine to make it worthwhile producing one any longer.

That said, there are still members out there who don't use a computer and who consequently still need a printed Runs List, at the very least, if they are to participate in club activities. The Committee guarantee that, whatever happens, people who require a printed Runs List will continue to receive one (subject to payment of a nominal fee).

Once a decision is made to terminate production of the magazine (i.e. if a new Editor isn't found), the 'infrastructure' which exists to ensure the production and distribution of the magazine will become defunct, and this will be very difficult to resuscitate. Actually producing the magazine is in fact just part of the process.

Consequently, if someone out there is still toying with the idea of taking on this enjoyable and rewarding task (being Editor!) then now is definitely the time to step forward. If you do, then you may be assured of assistance from the outset on any aspect of the task which you might be worried about, so please don't feel that you will be on your own.

There are people out there who we can urge to write articles; there are people who can assist with any technical or computer 'challenges' you might have, for example getting the layout sorted, or knowing just how it needs to be laid out before being sent to the printer. And there are people out there who would be pleased to offer suggestions as to the content; some people might only want to do the job if they were given complete editorial freedom, whereas others might want some advice – it's up to you, but there are a lot of people out there, I'm sure, with more than enough ideas; this includes Dane, who would also be willing to continue writing articles for the magazine.

Do bear in mind that there is a likelihood that, over time, the number of paper copies requested may continue to dwindle away, but conversely the online readership is likely to increase. The more imaginative and entertaining you can be as an Editor, the greater the number of readers you will attract.

This then is the final call..... If you have any questions or would like to be the next Editor of this splendid publication, or know someone who you

think could be encouraged / coerced to come forward, for even just a year to give it a go, please contact Dane (phone 01483 721856 or email editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk). **The deadline for volunteering is the 14th February 2016 – the day of the Bicycle Icyle!**

Please note: given the current likelihood that this is the penultimate issue of *The West Surrey Cyclist*, we have not sent out renewal reminders to those people whose subscription expires this issue. If a new editor comes forward, these people will receive a subscription renewal reminder with the next issue and that issue will then be paid for out of any subsequent renewal.

Mark Waters (Chairman)

A final word.... By sheer coincidence, so much material has been submitted for his final issue that Dane has been able to put together most of the April-June issue which will be issued by the Committee as a parting 'salvo'. I encourage everyone reading this to write something – whether it's just a swift 'farewell, West Surrey Cyclist, it was good knowing you all these years' – or something with a bit more depth to it. Let's make the very final issue good and fat, and one to remember and retain as a keepsake.

LETTER COLUMN

Poor little wasps

I have been stung into action and feel I must protest at your anti wasp editorial. I do wonder if the number of attacks you have suffered are not due to pheromones that you are producing. Perhaps you should try and get some treatment for it.

But if that is not the case you have my sincere apologies. You have described in great detail the pain that you have suffered but there has been no mention of what harm you have inflicted on these poor dumb insects. If just for a moment you could put yourself in the position of a poor innocent wasp flying along in the sunshine wondering where it's next meal is coming from. Can you imagine the shock and fright it would suffer to be confronted by something the size of a barn door when YOU suddenly come roaring down a hill with complete disregard for any insect in your path. It's

obvious the sting it gave you is purely down to severe shock and not a personal attack on you.

As for the incident involving the ice cream. I know that ice cream is one of your favourite indulgences. Can you imagine being brushed aside by some monster just as you were about to take a lick. You would be furious I'm sure and would immediately take revenge just like the poor little wasp.

I have no sympathy for persons like John Murdoch who take their scones smothered with jam outside, simply to torment tiny wasps who think that at last they are being rewarded for all the good they do in controlling parasites and pollinating plants.

I am looking forward to meeting up with Paul Holmes, if he can drag himself away from Inverness, so that we can have a good natter about your anti wasp attitude.

If you should think that I have written this just to reduce the number of articles that you have to write yourself for this magazine you are mistaken.

Having got that off my chest I can carry on reading your otherwise excellent production.

Bob McLeod

A quick rummage on the internet reveals that wasps have an average flying speed of about 15 miles per hour, i.e. faster than my average cycling speed, so any collisions between me and a wasp are as much the wasp's fault as mine. It seems to me that if a wasp can't see something as big as me coming, it really shouldn't be allowed out on the roads.

Another club member mentioned to me that he'd seen an item on TV in which a fruit grower had said that there had been more wasps around last summer than usual and that they had done severe damage not only to his fruit crop but also to his fruit pickers! That certainly ties in with my experience. Just days after completing the previous issue I had my fourth unwelcome cycling encounter of the summer with a wasp. This one had to cling on very firmly to the hair on my arm in order to administer its sting. I think this says much for a wasp's outlook on life. If I found myself up against a very much larger 'hostile' presence, I'd scarper, but for the wasp mindless violence is the natural response.

Curse that chain

I was recently in Yorkshire visiting a friend, and we met a group of local CTC riders from his Club. One thing that they were talking about was chain rotation, and how they were fed up with it because they couldn't get it to work. It was the Club of the skipping chains! What had started this off, I gathered, was the response to the Question of the Month in the August/September edition of *Cycle*.

This response by the new Technical Editor was wildly inaccurate and very misleading. Just to make sure of this I have checked with other like-minded cyclists, who agree – we can't all be wrong!

The article in *Cycle* states; "At less than 1% chain wear, the chain, if clean, will still run smoothly on the sprocket teeth. Sprocket wear will have been low and a new chain will ride the barely-worn sprocket teeth without jumping."

This is not only incorrect, but is incorrect by an enormous margin, so I am sure is causing problems for CTC members all over the country. A chain at only 0.5% wear will certainly have caused sufficient sprocket wear that a new chain will not run without jumping. From experience, I would say that even 0.25% is pushing your luck, and may well not work...

Chain rotation will only work if the rider changes chains every few hundred miles. This is quite a hassle, and explains why not many cyclists can be bothered with rotating chains.

The article, in stating that 1% wear is OK for rotating chains has obviously not been written from experience. I would guess that the Technical Editor has simply copied it from some article that appeared in some cycling magazine years ago. I have written to Dan Joyce, the Editor of *Cycle* to point out the problem, and suggest that he printed something in a subsequent issue as a correction. He has chosen not to do this, and indeed did not even reply to my e-mail.

CTC I am sure will continue to be seen throughout the UK as standing for Curse That Chain, though hopefully not in West Surrey.

Paul Holmes

I suspect it's more likely a case of different personal experience than no personal experience. It will presumably come as a surprise to you to learn

that I have been rotating chains fairly successfully for quite some time. Between late 2009 and late 2014 I covered about 30,000km on my Dawes Street Spirit using three chains, rotating between them about every 2500km (I've no idea how much wear this represented). I've been considering why I might have had so much more success than you and the other cyclists you have spoken to. Various possibilities occur to me:

1. A greater willingness to accept some chain skipping. There were times, especially during the final rotation of each chain, when I did suffer some chain skipping, but mainly only when I was careless and allowed myself to finish up in a high gear at a low cadence.

2. Avoidance of low cadence. For any given speed the force transmitted by the chain will be greater the lower the cadence is. Higher forces will not only tend to accelerate the rate at which the chain stretches, but will also be more likely to cause the chain to skip if it is worn.

3. Greater use of large cassette rings. This is a consequence of the previous point, but introduces another reason why the chain might be less likely to skip, namely that the force it is transferring to the cassette is potentially spread over more teeth, though if the wear is bad enough perhaps that wouldn't apply. It might also be the case that with a large ring a chain that starts to slip off one tooth has more chance of being caught by another tooth before it has the opportunity to skip noticeably.

I know that you mostly ride bikes with only a very limited range of gears, so you must frequently be applying a much greater force via the chain to a much smaller cassette ring than I do. As such it's probably not surprising that you find that even small amounts of chain wear cause skipping, but what of the other riders you have spoken to? I can only speculate that they tend to ride in a higher gear and with a lower cadence than I would. At one time I used to aim for a cadence of 90, but these days I tend to drop to about 80. Even so I've noticed on club rides that many people ride with significantly lower cadences.

Finally I should admit that since I replaced the entire drive train at the end of 2014 the chain rotation on my Dawes Street Spirit has not been progressing quite so smoothly – there has been a greater tendency for some chain skipping when I'm in one of the higher gears, but as in the past I can minimise this by avoiding having too low a cadence in those gears – so I'm considering dropping down to 2000km per chain rotation.

ANNUAL DINNER 2016

The annual dinner, which was resurrected a few years ago, will be held again in 2016, and once again it will incorporate the presentation of the awards. There will be no guest speaker this year, but instead there will be a surprise “performance” by one of our talented members, assisted by their friends; I can assure you that this is not to be missed.

Date: Saturday 5 March 2016

Venue: The Princess Royal, Runfold, Farnham, GU10 1NX

Time: 7.00 for 7.30

Menu

Starters

Ham broth with crusty bread

London porter smoked salmon and caper beurre blanc terrine

Spiced roast cauliflower with quinoa and spring onions

Crispy lamb breast with rice noodles

Mains

Braised beef with kale, horseradish and celeriac mash

Roast hake with creamed leeks, crushed potatoes and spinach

Pan fried chicken breast with champ, roast swede and white wine gravy

Spring vegetable and orzo pasta fricassee

Dessert

Banoffee cheesecake, toffee sauce

Baked chocolate mousse with passion fruit

Rhubarb crumble, custard

Selection of Jude's ice-cream

Two courses £16.50 per person

Three courses £22.50 per person

You will note that we will be returning to the Princess Royal in 2016, which should continue to give members an excellent value for money Club Dinner, avoiding the substantial room hire charge which the Mill have now introduced. It means that we have been able to maintain exactly the same meal cost as last year.

Booking

The favourable pricing is dependent on members supporting the event in good numbers. Therefore, to enable me to enjoy Christmas without worry, I would appreciate it if you would book NOW, upon reading these details. Please e-mail me (johnmatsouthview@btinternet.com), advising your menu choices. I will then advise you how to pay by electronic transfer direct to the Club's account; a full refund will be provided if you cancel more than 2 weeks before the date of the dinner.

John Murdoch

NOTES FROM THE AGM 2015

By Nick Davison

Our AGM was well attended on the 14th November. The existing officers and committee members were re-elected with Chris Juden remaining as our President and Rico Signore as our VP.

Two motions were carried: to enable proxy voting in case of two candidates being nominated prior to the meeting; a new trophy for Audax Points with inclusion of points for 100k events and above.

The Golden Crank was awarded to John Child for his outstanding contribution in producing the club's website. The Wooden Crank was awarded to Roger Philo, who cycled for three days in the Yorkshire dales, and then broke his hip by slipping on a wet path as he was putting his bike away.

The expectation that members will carry next of kin information on their bikes was explained and the free issue of information tabs from the One Life ID website was described.

It was announced that the club magazine would cease early next year unless a replacement for the current editor, Dane Maslen, was found.

PARIS – BREST – PARIS: 1230km, 16-20/08/2015

By John Gillbe

Background

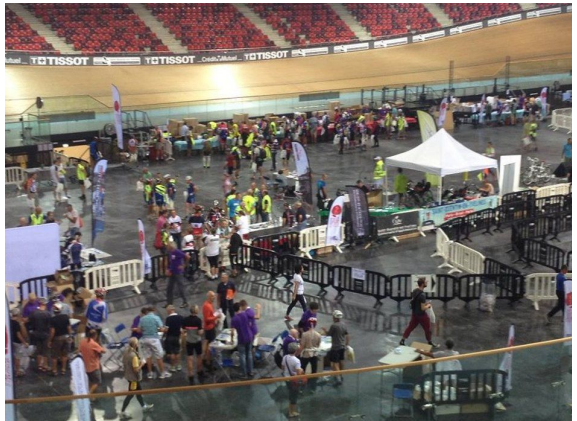
BPB is one of the oldest regularly organised bike rides still in existence, the first edition having been in 1891. Because of its length it was a professional only event, and held once every 10 years. The last pro event was in 1951, but since 1931 there has been an amateur randonneur event – i.e. not a race – generally every four years. This year's edition was the 18th of that series.

The long history makes the event a classic, and many long distance cyclists aspire to complete it within the permitted 90 hours.

My family persuaded me that it would be worth raising money for a charity, despite my protestations that I would have been doing the ride anyway. And that family have been huge in their support leading up to and during the ride. Son and son-in-law have ridden whole, and chunks of, the qualifying rides with me, daughters have fed me in unlikely places at unlikely times. During the ride they've been texting me, knowing there was little likelihood of reply, and exchanged no less than 101 messages on the family WhatsApp group – to which I had no access until after the event. I turned the pedals, but it was a Team Gillbe success. The generosity of supporters, who pledged over £1,000 for Guildford Street Angels, was another significant factor that kept me going.

The ride

The route is now from the south-west outskirts of Paris rather than the centre, but starting at the National Velodrome does have its own cachet. We collected our ride documentation (after mandatory bike inspection) from the central service area within the velodrome on Saturday 15th August. Huge numbers of volunteers meant



Central Service Area in the National Velodrome

that the queue moved pretty fast. There was a terrific atmosphere in the town of Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, with all the cafés full of cyclists of many nationalities – I think 60 was the number mentioned. French comprised less than half the 6,000+ starters.

We had a restful Saturday evening eating out and then watching a rugby



World Cup warm up match between England and France – England won a scrappy game 19-15. Sunday morning was also spent quietly, though the butterflies in my stomach were getting pretty noisy. My start time was 6.30pm so we went into town to see the “stars” – 80 hour time limit – start in groups from 4pm. I’d failed

In the pen, waiting for the start

to book a meal at the velodrome so we enjoyed a good dollop of pasta in the town centre to watch the speedies go past. That failure turned out to have been a good idea as we learned from a very unhappy English guy that the organisers of the official meal had run out of supplies. This, and a similar feeding shambles at the finish, were the only blots on an otherwise brilliantly organised event. Masses of cyclists were eating (mostly pasta) and drinking (mostly beer) on a warm sunny afternoon.

In PBP the word “cyclist” covers a very wide range of vehicles: most are standard single-person road bikes, but I also saw tandems, recumbents of different styles, tricycles (single wheel at both front and rear), tandem tricycles, recumbent tricycles in all-encompassing fairings, bikes adjusted for one-legged cyclists and a handi-cycle. All the aforementioned at least had a seat, which is more than can be said for a fleet of Elliptigos – basically moving cross-trainers. The variety has



An Elliptigo

always been there: in the 1891 first race a car was permitted to take part, but didn't do very well because of reliability issues.

The 90-hour group were sent off in groups of about 250 every 15 minutes from 5.15pm, and we were well-directed into the right pen about 30 minutes before the off. It was pretty warm – especially dressed up in night gear as I didn't want to stop for a clothing change too early. There was lots of chatting: “have you done PBP before” being the commonest intro question. Lots had, lots hadn't. Nationality could (with good knowledge) be deduced from mini flags on our frame numbers. It came as a bit of a surprise when Luke, who I cycled The Race Against Time with in 2006, recognised me and called across. There was entertainment over the PA system, nicely compèred, and then we were off.

Slightly to my surprise there were lots of riders not carried away by the release of tension, and so it was relatively easy to settle into a fairly relaxed speed. Nonetheless, the food stop at Mortagne (140km) came soon enough, and I had a hot dog and beer served by a delightful young lady, who was positively skipping from task to task. The volunteers were terrific without exception in my experience, always encouraging, polite, and appropriately quick given the perception of time pressures.



A shortage of mattresses at Carhaix

On through the Sunday night (with a three course meal at the first control at 4.30am) and it was good to meet up with Jane twice during Monday. She supplied baguettes so that I could miss out the next stop. The weather stayed very pleasant though the wind was going round to be cross-head – not so good. But daylight brought a new surprise – the number of spectators along the road, and particularly in towns and villages. They were all giving huge support, especially at the tops of hills. The bike-themed decorations were out too, and this generation of atmosphere meant that the next reason to smile, wave, shout thanks back or give a high five (dangerous with some of the kids) was never far away. I don't always find

it easy to stay positive on long rides but the spectators made a real difference and completely swamped niggles in hips and knees that came from time to time. One negative surprise was that those visited by the puncture fairy appeared not to be offered assistance by other riders. I was glad not to suffer once from such a visit, or indeed any other mechanical mishap.

I stopped on Monday night after 500km – a bit further than originally planned as everything seemed to be going pretty well. My major problem (which will come as a surprise to those that know me well) was an increasing inability to eat fast, but I managed to consume a nice bowl of soup, pasta and a pudding before two hours sleep on one of the mattresses provided for a small charge.



The motorway bridge across the estuary before Brest

Tuesday was quite a hard day, primarily because the approach to Brest took us over the high point of the route (350 metres) and was generally quite hilly. There was mist on the hill tops to start with, but the low cloud was breaking up as I crossed the estuary just before Brest which I reached at 9.30am. The motorway bridge looked spectacular, and this was one of the few occasions when lots of cyclists stopped to take photos. Coming back

from Brest was a huge lift, but I had mistakenly thought we took the same route both ways, re-crossing the estuary before the long climb. After wondering what had happened to the estuary it was a nice surprise to find myself at the top of the climb. It was also good to see loads of cyclists still on the outward leg.

After the top of the hill we were helped along by a cross-tail wind which gave some good relief. For some reason a head wind makes my saddle

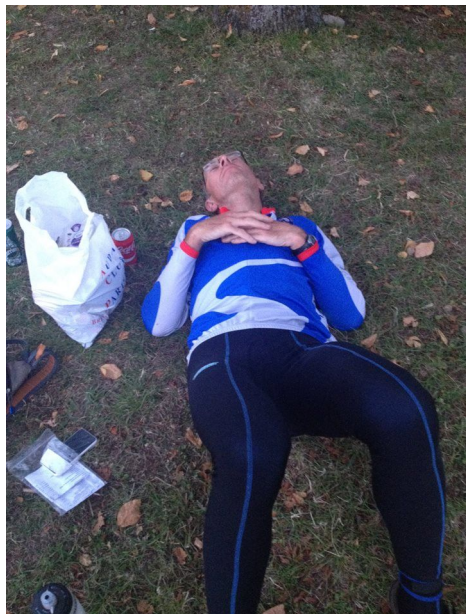


Huge bike park at Carhaix - now where's mine?

area feel the pressure more, and it was glad of the relief. The day got better and better, and finished with a beautiful sunset so I carried on later into the night than I had planned, enjoying the calls of the owls and other nocturnal wildlife. Loads of riders had inadequate front lights and tried to piggy-back into my beam (thanks to my Exposure Toro). I was enjoying the night airs by myself however, and so slipped off into the darkness without them. One of the delights on this leg was the “postcard garage” where some locals were serving coffee, hot chocolate, water and food for free, hoping that we will send a postcard in return. There were a number of similar stalls along the ride, but I tried to keep on the move as every stop destroys momentum. Sadly, there was nowhere warm to sleep at the Quédillac control (840km) which significantly reduced the quality of my 1½ hour sleep.

Although I got going early on Wednesday I needed to power nap quite often. (It is very useful to know that if I start feeling sleepy I can get off, have a bite to eat, snooze and be on the road again in 40 minutes.) Eating wasn't getting any easier as a result of cumulative fatigue, but it was great to meet up with Jane again firstly at Fougères (920km). She had passed me earlier while I was sleeping by the roadside. And the end was beginning to feel within reach. I reached the Villaines control (1,008km) in mid-afternoon and the reception was mind-blowing: hundreds of locals

clapping and cheering and making a huge celebration of the 1,000km mark. It brought tears to my eyes and I nearly risked a hands-in-the-air celebration. As ever the control volunteers were wonderful. I spent a relaxing hour with Jane, trying to eat as fast as possible, before heading off again for the last 220k.



Power-napping at Mortagne-au-Perche

at about 5am. The outskirts, after a big hill, were absolutely dead... apart from one elderly couple on their doorstep cheering the riders by. Quite extraordinary.

Thursday morning saw light drizzle come quite early, but it wasn't cold. Then there was the long slog up the Rambouillet Forest. The hills on PBP aren't particularly big, and not particularly steep, but they do go on a very long time sometimes! This was one of the worst, but at least at the top there weren't too many more kilometres to go. The finish was back at the National Velodrome, which cyclists approached by a 5km closed cycle track with no-one on it, which was a bit of a damp squib. It did give an opportunity to shed reflective jacket (mandatory at night in France for cyclists, but very effective – I'm converted) and rain jacket. There was no clear finish line, but who cared? I was credited with a very acceptable 85 hours 59 minutes. Jane was there to meet me and after the usual card-

Lack of quality sleep on Tuesday night was having an effect, so the power-napping had to continue. Eventually Jane and I met again at Senonches, which she reached long before me. There was an informal café set up by locals, who entertained Jane as if she were a rider, and were entertained in return by her knitting. The locals really do turn out for this event: remember that the riders are coming by not for one hour but over a period of days. Eventually I made it to Dreux, and after a very good meal (I'd been told by an English guy earlier it did the best food on the route) of fish in sauce and mashed potato I hit the road for the last time

stamping I showered, shaved and recovered a bit before I was driven back to Morzine. The rain had got heavier in Paris after I finished, but as we went south-east the weather improved and we had a lovely sunny end to an amazing few days.

Afterword

I'm writing this on 23 August, which seems a good time to draw a line on the after-effects. Physically I survived pretty well. There are only three points of contact with a cycle: I've got a bit of numbness in hands and feet which may take a month or two to heal, and am still a bit tender in the saddle area. I certainly slept particularly well for several nights afterwards.

Would I do it again? Quite possibly.



The deserted final approach to the National Velodrome

MONTE CARLO BY BIKE – 4: OR BUST

By Derek Tanner

Day 28 and heavily advised to go home because conditions were becoming too dangerous for cycling we spent the day exploring our options. It was Saturday, the next bus was Monday. None of the other options were that inviting. Concentrating on matters to hand, we were more likely to starve if the wind won its battle to extinguish our stove.

The only sounds when we awoke were of people packing to leave. The wind had dropped, - “Elation”! Unzipping the tent door – “Depression”! The temperature had dropped below freezing. I sat for 20 minutes in the toilet with the stove between my legs before the gas was warm enough to make a cup of tea. Digging deep in the panniers for the “extreme weather clothes” we took the opportunity to day ride through the Gorges du Verdon. The “Balcon de Cavaliers Hotel” provided lunch, but despite the superb views it was too cold to enjoy it on the balcony.

After a night sleeping with the stove, we made an early start, hoping to

make some progress on the minor road running along the north side of the gorge. Once over the 1200m col it was a short descent into La Palud-sur-Verdon. The campsite on the farm at the outskirts of the village looked inviting. Tables and chairs were provided in a neat dining out area and the local supermarket provided all we needed for dinner.

From here we could “day ride” the “Route des Crêtes”. Not too busy, eagles soaring overhead, dramatic clouds in deep blue skies. Stopping at the viewpoint, a local told us to turn back as it was too dangerous for cycles! It was certainly “One Way” and there were no crash barriers or bushes to impede the view over the precipice. It was a descent to be remembered – If for different reasons (challenge or fear).

Our intended early departure was delayed after the lock jammed on the toilet, requiring the warden to break it open. A short descent out of the village and then climb to Ponts de Soleil, after which it was generally downhill following the river with views through rock tunnels and overhanging ledges. The autumn colours on the trees are now most prominent. “Coffee stops” have now become “Hot Chocolate stops” and the weather forecasts on the TV in the café is not looking too promising. The campsite facilities at Castellane were excellent, but the dramatic clouds that have been hanging all day have turned to rain.

Decamped to the (mud free) table and chairs outside the toilet for breakfast. We were pleasantly delayed by a woman touring from Hay-on-Wye. The only ones on the road to Comps-sur-Artuby, the photography was stunning through the gorge. Over the border into Var, a 13km descent then a 3km climb, the scenery is changing rapidly. We were the only ones on the municipal campsite that night, a bit depressing, but after walking up to the village and finding the restaurant, we were followed in by the local fire brigade – intent on a good night out. The restaurant was lit up like a Christmas tree when we left.

A very damp night made for a lazy start, but from here we could ride the Gorges du Verdon from the eastern end. A sunny evening, satisfied with the day's ride, last night's restaurant was closed. In comparison the atmosphere in the Logis at the other end of the village was restrained.

A dark, cold, damp morning forced us to brew up in the washing up area. Packing the wet kit away – so that it would be usable again tonight – took till 10 o'clock, by which time it was turning into a really nice day. There

was an unexpected climb to turn into the military area that we wanted to cross.(advertised as another “must do” ride). It was memorable for the autumn colours as we came over the col and enjoyed the 6km descent into Bargemon. Most of the afternoon we descended through autumnal vineyards into Draguignan. Anne is beginning to feel the pace, so we found a room above a bar in the middle of town.

It was a noisy night, but it’s funny how you can fall asleep in the world’s lumpiest bed after the alarm has gone off. The tent is dry but the toilets blocked. The water in the shower is scalding. Applying a large dose of one to the other produced a sonic boom of nuclear proportions. We can almost see daylight down the toilet now, best not think about the unintended consequences on the two floors below.

After a gentle day cycling up through the gorges to Château Double we returned for another lumpy night in the grim over-priced room.

We have decided to head back to the coast rather than picking our way through the mountainous scenery. The TI in St Tropez gave us a local campsite list. The first we tried was closed. The second only accepted stays of at least 3 nights. The owner was from Birmingham and after some negotiation he let us stay on the condition that we did not mess up the “en pitch” bathroom, which would have been more than big enough to sleep in, but bearing in mind our 50 euro deposit we pitched the tent next to the sink in the “en pitch” kitchen area.

On the coast and back in “tourist land” the cycle track took us past vastly expensive villas towards Saint-Maxime, It's funny how soon you can start pining for “the hills”. After 42km we were overtaken by a cycling club peloton. Seeing one of the riders dropping off into the “Royal” campsite ahead, we guessed it was cycle friendly. It turned out that he was the owner. The site was mostly populated by German Campervans, but the facilities were excellent and we got a good rate. It gave us opportunity to sample the tourist offerings.

It was very damp overnight and Anne’s beginning to take an interest in the campervans and mobile homes. We borrowed table and chairs from an unoccupied one and after fresh bread and croissants from the bakers opposite we were helped to leave by a newly arrived campervan who (suffering near hypothermia) wanted our electric socket. We were now nearing Cannes. The ride along the Corniche de l’Estérel was uncluttered.

Thinking about a late lunch near La Napoule we passed a campsite where the reception was just opening. Another early stop, another afternoon sampling the local delights – we have now thrown the budget away.

It gets really cold in the early hours now. There is no useful sun before nine o'clock, but by midday the temperature can be in the twenties.

Our first impression of Nice is that the seafront cycle track is impossibly long. The Youth Hostel allows a maximum stay of 5 nights and they had rooms.

A quiet night in a warm, dry, firm bed. Breakfast cooked for us. Anne's stopped complaining that she is losing weight. How can anyone keep falling asleep so easily?

It's just under 30km to Monaco from here. We were pushing the bikes up to the Casino in Monte Carlo for the souvenir picture when the local policeman, brandishing his pistol, ushered us away. Returning to Nice via the "Middle Corniche" we stopped for celebration afternoon tea (budget blown) at a classy terrace restaurant in Èze before an effortless descent back to bed. The hostel must be full, there is another couple of cyclists in our room tonight.

Day 43 –Objective achieved! - Time to report back to "our advisers" in the West Surrey DA. They were so insistent that we should go. We never thought to ask how we got back home. Not to worry, the hostel will let us stay one more day. I am sure that an email will bring a fast, efficient and appropriate reply.



Deadline for new editor to come forward: February 14 th .
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See Mark Water's article for an appeal for valedictory articles. Anything emailed to editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk will currently still be delivered to the outgoing editor. He will forward them to the new editor if there is one or to the Committee (to be used to pad out the fairly thin final issue that he has partially prepared) if there is not.

Front cover: Hundreds of locals at Villaines-la-Juhel, clapping and cheering the riders to celebrate the 1,000km mark of the PBP.