



OREAD MOUNTAINEERING CLUB MAGAZINE

JULY 2020



**An Oread meet at Stanage in 1965 – no social distancing evident then!
Photo Gordon Gadsby.**

Editorial

A glimmer of hope in this issue with the re-start of some walking meets and a look forward to the next Boundary walk in September. The latest relaxation measures announced from 4 July are likely to make it possible to reopen Heathy Lea to pre-booked family/social groups of our own members. If you would like to take advantage of this, contact Hut Booking Secretary Michael Hayes to discuss what is possible.

This issue has a similar mix to last month with some nostalgic photos and memories plus lively accounts of the many ways people have been keeping active over the last three months and a cycling article from Nigel that makes me feel exhausted just sitting on the sofa reading about it!

Hope you find something in here to enjoy and keep those articles and photos coming in because there definitely will be an August issue this year. Looking forward to hearing from you all. **Copy Deadline 23 July**

Forthcoming meets 2020

The meets programme for the coming year is temporarily suspended but will restart as soon as we can. Some limited walking meets are now possible. Michael Moss. Email for Meets Secretary remains oreadmcmets@gmail.com

Wednesday 1 July Walk Earl Sterndale Area Stuart Firth

Now it is possible for people to meet outdoors in groups of up to six for socially distanced activities the monthly Wednesday walks programme can restart. Anyone interested in joining us must contact me in advance so that I can ensure we comply with the regulations.

Stuart Firth. Email: stuartmfirth@btinternet.com tel: 01629 581653

Wednesday 5 August Walk Goyt Valley Area Stuart Firth

Contact me as above if you would like to come along.

Sunday 20 September Peak District Boundary Walk Langsett – Low Bradfield Pip Leach



I am writing this article in mid-June, while we have 'easing' of restrictions, 2m distancing, no more than six people meeting outdoors and no car sharing, unless from your own household. By September, who knows what the advice will be? Will restrictions be eased further, or will there be a second wave? Obviously there is a need for flexibility. The plan will change as necessary to comply with the regulations.

The route is 10.5 miles, 1,346ft/410m ascent, from Langsett to the pretty village of Low Bradfield, passing through Bolsterstone, there are some lovely views along the way and a couple of road sections, if this affects your choice of footwear. When I did a recce, pre-lockdown in March, it was really muddy underfoot (after our incredibly wet winter) of course it will have baked hard in the spring sunshine and then got wet again in recent rain.

Personally, I'd rather avoid public transport, and bus routes, to connect the start/finish require going in to Sheffield and a change of bus, so I think shuttles, of sorts, will be needed. If I am unable travel in anyone else's car, I will use my bike, as I did for the recce. It's a great bike ride, but not for the faint hearted, as it goes up the Strines road, used in the 2014 Tour de France, with killer hills! My suggestion, for those who can share lifts and can do a shuttle, is to meet at Low Bradfield at 10.00am (Dark Peak Explorer map OL1 GR SK 263920) there is ample parking on the bottom edge of the cricket ground. A couple of footbridges take you to a village hall and some public toilets, a bit basic and may/may not

be open. Cars then need to be taken to the start at Langsett. Those who did the previous section may recall, there is a water authority car park (free but I'm not sure if it's open) just off the A616, go over the dam, turn left (GR 211004) I would like to make the official start just outside the Bank View Café, the one with Tour de France 'King of the mountains' red polka dots on it! It may or may not be open for anyone wishing to have a cuppa. (Opening hours currently 10-3). We start by walking over the dam, opposite.

We will need to follow the current guidance at the time as regards numbers and social distancing. This is a shame, as our walks are normally so sociable, but there again, people naturally fragment into twos, threes and so on, as we go along.

In terms of lunch stops, depending on time, there is a short diversion to the trig point at Salter Hills (249973) it has superb views. Alternatively, there is a bench on the way in to Bolsterstone, just after the track turns to a lane, or as you descend the steep hill, after Bolsterstone, on the right. Both benches have sufficient grass around to keep a 2m distance.

Please let me know if you are thinking of coming along, nearer the time, so I can ponder on the logistics. If you have transport sorted amongst yourselves, that would be great, if you need transport, let me know, but we'd have to see nearer the time if we are permitted to travel in each other's vehicles with masks!

Really looking forward to seeing everybody,

Pip. Email: pippasleach@gmail.com tel. 07941 395856

BMC Membership cards

Most members will have received an email from Jane Thompson <jane@thebmc.co.uk>

Date: Mon, 1 Jun 2020 at 15:49

outlining the process for sending out membership cards and Summit magazine this year which are both different in 2020 due to the challenges the BMC is facing during the coronavirus crisis.

Club members will be emailed with details about how to access their digital membership card later this month. This card will show their name and personal BMC membership number in the same way as the regular cards do, and it will be valid to be used in retailers and with partners to gain the many discounts on offer to members.

For those members requiring a physical card they will need to contact office@thebmc.co.uk. Please note that there may be a delay on posting such cards due to staffing levels in the office.

No mention was made as to how to proceed if you don't have email. Probably best to write to British Mountaineering Council, The Old Church, 177-179 Burton Road, West Didsbury, Manchester M20 2BB

The next issue of the Summit magazine will be a digital-only edition, and BMC club members will be emailed directly during June with access details. All other editions of Summit are always available for club members to access digitally via this link -www.thebmc.co.uk/summit-magazine-free-to-download-for-all-members.

Member's Corner

Does anyone fancy a regular short walk with friends?

Shirley Wainwright writes:

I would love to get out more with the Oread but these days I cannot do the distances or match the speed of the Monday and Wednesday walking teams. Are there others who, like me, would enjoy three or four miles at a gentle pace in good company, in varied surroundings? If you are interested please be in touch and as soon as things return to something like normal we can give it a whirl. Shirley Wainwright. Tel 01159 279384

The Wikipedia Adventure Nick Moyes

Here's an idea for everyone:

...having watched all those mountain films and documentaries and finished off the wine, if you find you've still got time on your hands in the months ahead, why not think about contributing something worthwhile to articles about your favourite mountains or notable mountaineers on the world's greatest online encyclopaedia - Wikipedia?

Perhaps you've looked at some of its mountain-related articles and found their content a little lacking? Or maybe you've spotted a few typos in them? Well, Wikipedia is the encyclopaedia that absolutely anyone can edit. Its six million articles have been built entirely by volunteers, and that includes people like you and me! So why not help out to make it even better?

Between us Oreads, we must have innumerable books, guides and mountain journals that are perfect as 'reliable sources' of information to help update or enhance those pages. Even on articles relating to alpine 4000m peaks, it's surprising how many still don't have details of first ascensionists or information on the key ascent routes and classic lines. Many glaciers, mountain huts and famous alpine guides still don't have articles about them at all, yet these are usually notable enough to merit a Wikipedia page of their own. Perhaps you could be the one to help create or improve it! By way of example, neither Martin Moran nor Joseph Vallot yet have their own Wikipedia page - though I'm working on fixing those two myself.

Or maybe you have one or two really great photographs you'd love to make available to help improve an existing mountain article? So long as you own the copyright, and they have encyclopaedic merit, you can easily upload these on Wikipedia.

As a long-time Wikipedian myself, I would be only too happy to help anyone over the coming months who would like to learn how to edit and enhance articles, or to upload their images. Of course, you don't actually need me (or anyone else) to help you do that; you could simply dive in and get started at any time. There are many help pages for anyone wanting to learn how to edit. Such as [Help:Getting Started](#), or even our interactive tour called '[The Wikipedia Adventure](#)'.

But a bit of extra help and support never goes amiss. So please let me know if you'd be interested in contributing to Wikipedia, and would like some guidance. I can offer help and support by email, Skype, or directly on my 'talk page' on Wikipedia itself. I always recommend registering for a free anonymous Wikipedia

account to edit from, although absolutely anyone can make changes to Wikipedia without needing to be logged in at all. The good edits will be kept, but mistakes a beginner might make can be simply reverted, with no harm done to the encyclopaedia.

To show you some of the things you could do, here is a selection of mountain-related articles I've created on Wikipedia over the last few years:

- [Aiguille de Bionnassay](#)
- [Andy Nisbet](#)
- [Émile Rey](#)
- [Géant Glacier](#)
- [Mont Blanc massif](#)
- [Marco e Rosa Hut](#)
- currently under construction: Martin Moran (climber) - does anyone have a good photo of him?

We even have 'Project' spaces where editors can focus on specific type of articles. E.g. [WikiProject Mountains of the Alps](#) or [WikiProject British and Irish hills](#).

So, just get in touch if you'd like to learn more about contributing to what is now, for many people, the first place they go to for reliable, encyclopaedic information.

Nick Moyes email: nick@moyes.plus.com Skype: nick.moyes5

Past Times and Old Friends

Dinner memories from Bob Pettigrew

The two recent newsletters featuring our Annual Dinner “Guest in Residence - Tony Moulam of the C.C. have proved entertaining. I unearthed these old Rollei shots by me (next page) with the exception of the one of me taken by the great Gadsby. Burgess is receiving his decorated chamber pot courtesy of Paul Gardiner, Moulam, Nat Allen and me are making speeches, and the pantomime troupe are in full swing. I think it was a ‘seventies dinner when Moulam was chief guest? Longland was also present but didn’t speak.

Tony Moulam responded

“ Your pics are from the 1970 21st Annual dinner.

AB Hargreaves and Alf Bridge were joint chief guests and I (As usual at the time) represented the CC. Derrick, receiving his chamber pot, was President I was responding to your toast to 'Guests and Kindred Clubs'.”

Tony has also pointed out a couple of errors in last month's copy of his speech.

It was Jack Longland, not Mac, who first called me AJ squared. The A.B. referred to was Alan Hargreaves, not Alf Bridge, although I knew him well too. Anyway that dinner doesn't seem 21 years ago!



Last month Jack Ashcroft shared the very first newsletter of the club, June 1953

Here is a further article from that newsletter. This was hoped to be the first of a series. The editor requested "Any member wishing to contribute a "Profile" of a friend is invited to submit it to me. Not more than 400 words please!" Ed.

Your current editor would also be delighted to receive similar profiles of fellow members!

Profile: George Sutton.

The man who, in 1949, gave birth to the Oread and, in the doing of it, discovered that although he had been delivered of a persistently tiny baby it was, equally persistently, a noisy, argumentative, and troublesome one and, above all, remarkably virile for its size. It is apt that he should be President in a year when a fine growth of membership has lent some authority to the original and still extant virility.

A man whose life has been a constant search for the solution to a series of unusual and highly original problems. Of the earlier of these, little is known, beyond the fact that they appear to be connected with the more dubious parts of Rangoon, Singapore and other points east of Bombay.

More latterly there was an attempt to penetrate into the mountainous parts of New Guinea, followed by the founding of this club, and the conception of an Oread expedition. It is no small thing that George Sutton inspired, planned and led a mountaineering and scientific expedition to Arctic Norway in 1951 which has been described by an authority as, "one of the most efficient of small British expeditions of more recent times". In 1952 he led the British Spitzbergen Expedition with a party of five Cambridge Scientists. If in Lingen he had produced a lyric, in Spitzbergen he achieved an epic.

Somewhat gaunt in appearance and ascetic by nature, (he was once called "a learned old gentleman") he is, on any kind of rock as a second, the answer to a leader's prayer. On snow or ice he is apt to be a different person, and only thoroughly happy when leading. Once led a horrible ice pitch on N.E. Ridge of Nevis and had to give a top rope to several following parties – wrote delirious letters to his friends on the subject.

Is alleged to have saved Bob Pettigrew's life in a bog – but has now almost succeeded in living it down.

It is good to know that our President has, in the field of mountaineering, his biggest problem yet to solve, but, whatever the outcome, he might be remembered as the man who could in the misfortune of 1950 write - "The North and be damned", and I'm damned if we weren't.

Lockdown Tales and good times remembered

Fun in the sun Neil Weatherstone



Once the lockdown restriction was lifted that allowed travel to other locations for exercise. I thought it would be a good idea to head to my nearest gritstone crag for a scramble about with my children in the mid-May sunshine. It has been a long while since I last bothered to climb at Carver's Rock at Foremark Reservoir. It is a bit short and was oddly bolted at some point. The rock was warm and a few easy lines were climbed and scrambled, but most fun was had on the nearby rope-swing. No actual photos of the scrambling, but it was just good to get out and touch warm rock. I've always thought of Carvers as a miniature version of the dark peak, a small island of lowland heath and heather with a gritstone crag, somehow surrounded by a sea of woodland.

Permitted Exercise Mike Wren

Late April 2020. A circumspect foray.

OK, so we are locked down, and avoiding humans.

At first, living in the countryside, with a pleasant garden, and quality footpaths radiating in all directions, we can get used to this and sit it out, and keep away from potential sources of infection - "them English" as the character Samuel



Lapp in "Witness" may have put it.

Online grocery deliveries are now regular, so smugness is enhanced.

But what about excitement?

Naturally, when constrained for periods, and it's been a month now, one pines for a bit of "yee-ha".

Black Rocks area has for me always been a ready source for a quick bouldering fix in a spare hour or so, from when the kids were little.

With the advent of MTBs, Sheep Pasture

Incline descent became another, thanks to the convenient Matlock line.

But we are locked down, and not using public transport!

Hang on! We *are* allowed out once each day for exercise!

It's April 24th, and a quick look at the OS map. It looks straightforward from

home, approaching via the ridge above the Ecclesbourne valley, and returning via the canal path. The only concern was folks on the canal path...



So, not such a big deal by proper cyclists' standards, but as Barrack Obama used to say, "Yes we can!"

In the event, the trail was deserted. Railway slab looked inviting, but no rock shoes in the bag for obvious reasons.

Lunch (with anti Virus beer) was taken at the winding house view point, where a passing dog (Percy) was reluctant to socially distance, despite his owner's repeated instructions. He was however very polite and

patient, and earned a bit of sandwich.



Thinking of keeping away from any chance of visiting Chesterfield A and E, the descent of the incline was taken very slowly (Good these disc brakes!). This was an enjoyable exercise in control and balance, and I was able to prolong and savour the experience, with splendid panoramic views rolling by. A more satisfying outcome than my first descent some years ago, the week I bought the MTB, when the hell-for-leather pace resulted in smashing the back wheel on a kerbstone across the trail. (Full suspension would have been nice!)

I acquired the slow concept in childhood; we lived near a steep hill with a main road at the bottom, and achieving the slowest descent was a sought after goal among us kids who survived it.

The few people on the canal path were as keen on avoiding contact as me - wide berths all round. Passing the silent Holly Bush on the way home was unsettling, but beer in our own garden was a consolation.

The ride provides a good energetic carbon neutral afternoon out.

Roger Larkam will remember cycling up the incline on the ride from Derby to the Black Rocks December Wednesday Meet many years ago.

If you do the route in reverse, riding up the incline provides a good workout, and the road descent to Belper then gives a gloriously prolonged and serene freewheel.

When times move on, rock shoes in the bag recommended, or possibly not if done in reverse.



Catching up on the Boundary Walk Pippa Leach



Since lockdown restrictions eased, Rachel and I have caught up on some sections of the PDBW, travelling separately, of course.

This was on the Tittesworth to Wildboardclough leg at the crossing of the River Dane. We had to make it a circular walk, to get back to the cars, a long day but the weather was truly amazing.

8 June: Not So Far From The Madding Crowds Peter Amour

Yes! A resumption of activities for the Monday Group Walkers, a mix of Oreads and friends.

The full quota of the socially distancing six was met. A further three walkers also

arrived, we recognised them, denied knowledge of them and put them into a second, distanced group. T'was noticeable there was no dissent - footballer Martin O'Neill once asked Cloughy why he was banished to the second team, Clough's reply "Because you're too good for the third one son". I guess they'd heard the story.

We left Bonsall, climbing through the churchyard, and took the virtually deserted green lane towards Ember Farm to see only a lone mum and infant. Choosing a woodland path we exited to take the great eastern views over High Tor and beyond. A second green lane brought us into the vicinity of Masson Lees Farm, with a short zig - zag we crossed the tarmac leading to Matlock and descended through old mine workings to then follow the contours towards Jughole Wood. Prior to reaching the woodland Derek Chatto took to stroking a Jersey cow - if wasn't for the stiles I think we'd have had bovine company all day such was the affinity between the two of them.

A lunch stop was soon hinted at by Jean Bingham, Mr Bingham clarified the hint as "We don't an option". I gave way after another 300 yards just to let her know she wasn't on a golf course.

Food consumed we turned south to take the fields of mown pasture through to Upper Town and on to Bonsall where we had veteran Paul Gardiner, son Douglas and his friend Paul catch us up - fancy seeing them there, what a coincidence! I enjoyed the legwork, it was good to meet again after what seems a long time. We look forward to more - away from the madding crowd

Does 400 matter? Nigel Briggs

I started my affair with the '24' in 2015 when I rode my first 24 hour cycling time trial. The concept is simple, you start riding at your given start time on a defined route and you have 24 hours after which time the total distance covered is determined, the winner is the one who has covered the greatest distance, simple. I had no ambitions of winning (I have at least one foot in reality), my first aim was to complete the event and I thought 400 miles would be a worthy target distance to cover. In 2015 I finished with a distance of 386.91 miles. I tried again in 2016 and finished with a distance of 398.53 miles it was closer but still tantalisingly short of 400. 2017 saw my third attempt in some dreadful weather conditions, 379.27 miles covered, still falling short. In 2018, due to various reasons, I did not ride my usual events in the first part of the year and to be honest I just could not face the training miles required, my heart was not in it, so I didn't ride. It did mean we could see the Tour de France in the Alps, something that we had not been able to do previously due to working as teachers and term times.

Not riding the '24' in 2018 was useful as I realised that 400 miles did matter and I would have to try again.

I did not expect to ride in 2019 as we had been in New Zealand in the first part of the year and I had not ridden the 'winter miles'. Towards the end of May I was feeling directionless, and felt something to aim for was missing. Janet suggested that maybe I should think about the 24, I initially dismissed it as I had not done any preparation, but it did get me thinking. I had seven weeks, maybe I could

start to ride some longer distances, see how I felt and take it from there. Talking to Pete (my son) he asked me what I had got to lose? If I rode and reached 400 great, you've done it (but just think what you could have done with some training), if you don't well you hadn't trained so what did you expect? Somehow I liked his logic and the rides were going reasonably well so why not? I entered the event.

The next question to address was what to do differently? In my three previous attempts I had covered similar distances, if I did exactly the same again, why would I expect a different outcome? Looking back through the data from previous attempts my pace seemed to drop off during the early hours of the morning, pre-dawn. Two contributing factors were my speed dropping (my claim was that I could not easily see it at night) and stopping too often and for too long. The rules of the event are that you are timed for 24 hours, but in that time you can stop to eat, or sleep, when you want to. Some people stop for a proper sleep during the night. I go for a number of short stops.

It has been all too easy for me to stop whenever I saw the support vehicle, have something to eat and drink and enjoy the company. As had been pointed out to me three minutes off the bike is one mile off the total! So the plan this year was to have the support at one place during the night and for me stop less frequently and, if I felt that I needed a stop, stop and have a micro sleep (Does five minutes count as a sleep?). The problem of not seeing my speed was solved by a change in the mount so the computer screen was illuminated. One excuse removed before I'd even started.

In 2019 the event started early afternoon on Saturday 20th July. In previous years we have travelled to the start on the morning of the event, however this year we packed the van and off we went to Shropshire on the Friday evening. Traveling over on the Friday gave a more leisurely start to the race. The HQ of the event is in Farndon near Wrexham, although the bulk of the riding is based around the Prees Heath Island (A49, A41). During the event most of the loops are centred around this island. For this one weekend of the year the Prees Heath Island looks like a mini festival, tents and gazebos pitched and support crews taking up residence. This year I again had my reliable support team of Janet along with Jeff and Sue Bowler (cycling club friends) through the whole event, Pete and Fi joining us late on Saturday night.

At the HQ before the start I have contrasting emotions. Through the morning riders and support roll up and get established; there is the obvious nervous anticipation, along with a reunion atmosphere as you bump into folk you have not seen for the last year. Jeff and Sue are very well known in the time trialling world and the shortest of trips can take Jeff ages as he meets up with old friends. There is no rush in the hour or so before the start but the nerves build. I'm conscious of eating and drinking while I can, but not too much! The first rider started at 13:01 then riders start at minute intervals. In the race it is individual riding, you cannot 'tuck in' behind another rider and ride in their slipstream. I was number 44 so 13:44 was my start time. In the lead up the bikes need to be sorted, the location of spares explained (two bikes for me with a

spare set of wheels for each bike plus spare bits and pieces), the different bags of clothes explained, and strategies run through. Finally, numbers are pinned on the jersey, pockets stuffed with food, tyres inflated to race pressures and bottles filled. At 13:35 it's time to go to the start.

At the start you slot into your number position and wait. All too soon you're on the start line. With 10 seconds to go, I turn on the computer. "Five, four, three, two, one - Away!" says

the timekeeper and I start pedalling. You have just under 24 hours now to ride. The start for me is a mixture of calm and excitement. This is it, you're on your way, there is no more training, it's for real. From the start you go about 100 m to a left turn and pass by the HQ, there are always spectators here to give a cheer, just don't get carried away, there is a long way to go.



I start with steady riding down to Prees Heath island where you get the first glimpse of the festival site. For the first few hours I ride at a comfortable pace that I feel I can sustain, loosely following heart rate. I use heart rate as a guide to make sure that I do not go too deep. In the first few hours I take any opportunity I can to gain speed but don't worry if I need to ease up to keep a 'lid on it' if it begins to feel too hard. I have to keep reminding myself that it is my own race and not worry if I am passed by a faster rider, or try and chase if I see someone in the distance.

After Prees Heath Island it's down to Tern Hill Island (A49/A53) and then to Espley Island. These three islands are all very familiar to me as all the '24's' I have ridden have been on the same course, my familiarity will only grow over the next few hours. This year the course went down to Shawbirch, on the outskirts of Telford, back up to Espley and back to Shawbirch again before heading back to Prees Heath. So far so good, from what I can (or can't) remember there was nothing to note so I guess all went well, I picked up some food and drink along the way and enjoyed the afternoon. Spectators were out, usually concentrated around the turns at the islands, they give a welcome cheer. One of the joys of this event is that the majority of spectators and supporters give a cheer to everybody, not just 'their' rider. Whoever the support comes from it is always appreciated and the next pedal stroke is delivered with a little more vigour.



Back to Prees Heath and the Festival site has grown, tents and gazebos pitched on all the available grass around the island, for me there no time to take in the sights but to turn left and head down to Battlefield Island, on the outskirts of Shrewsbury, and back to Prees Heath. Somewhat perversely I quite enjoy this leg, it's a little more rolling (understatement for hilly) and I'm not particularly familiar with the road so I enjoy the different views. Just before returning to Prees Heath I passed the 100 mile mark, well under way and just under five hours taken, all in all I am relatively happy.

Next it is onto a section of the course that has made a deep impression on my memory, the Quina Brook circuit, this is a 12.62 mile circuit that goes through the village of Quina Brook. It is predominantly on country lanes and is used as a 'holding circuit' between the main sections. This allows riders to be gathered together in a small area before moving on to another section. This first visit to the circuit is prior to moving onto the night section. In all I did five circuits, adding another 63 miles to my total. Night fell, for me this means a stop to change into night riding clothes (warmer) and a good feed. Just before darkness I swapped bikes, going from my time trial bike to my road bike. The reasons for this are to be in a more relaxed position on the bike through the hours of darkness to ease aches and pains and it is easier to fit lights to a conventional bike.

A word about food, I have found real food to be the best option for me. When I stop cold lasagne is a favourite, along with salted peanuts, crisps and cherry tomatoes, usually followed by rice pudding and flapjack, with either tea or espresso coffee. On the bike food favourites are mini pork pies, cherry tomatoes, cold spaghetti and cheese 'cup cakes', and rice cakes. On the move I pick up a bag from the support team, load up my pockets with the food and jettison the bag when next passing support. The food is in individual bite size packages

wrapped in paper which is easy to unwrap (kitchen foil does not work). The paper gets stuffed up the leg of my shorts or down my jersey until I stop and have a clear out. We take a whole range of food as during the ride you get a craving for something and it's good to be able to satisfy them before the craving becomes all too consuming. When riding I just pull something out of my pocket and eat it, a sort of lucky dip, always a surprise! Particularly when you are hoping for a sweet rice cake and get a pork pie (with added mustard), it just means you have to try again! For drink on the bike I alternate between water, a sports energy drink and 50:50 flat coke water mix. As a pep I use espresso coffee but limit the intake as I have found any boost is followed by a dip. I also carry a gel, but these are for emergency use only. Experience has taught me that a high sugar diet leads to a degree of digestive discomfort and general lack of confidence! As you may gather, this event is as much about eating for 24 hours as well as pedalling!

So back to the riding, on the night bike, fed and in warm clothing after the 5th circuit of Quina Brook I am directed onto the night circuit, this was a 20.65 mile circuit on the A41 to the Tern Hill Island, onto the A53 to Espley Island and then back to Prees Heath and repeat. My support moved from Prees Heath to a layby just West of the Tern Hill Island and parked up for me to use as required. Riding through the night is an 'interesting' experience. Initially the traffic level falls, and the roads become eerily quiet. Well most of the time - at some stage through the night you get a couple of spells when there is essentially a convoy of lorries on the A41 on one occasion they are all going west and on the other they are all going East. I have found out that these pulses correspond to the crossings of a ferry to Ireland.

I did six laps, plenty of time to get to know the route. Most of the time you are riding in your own pool of light, the peace being broken when passing marshalls at the turn point where you shout out your number and get encouragement in return. Accurate records of when you pass are taken so that the exact distance covered can be calculated. Around the course there are other support teams parked up, all usually give encouragement. The surreal place is the Prees Heath Island, there are streetlights there that you can see beyond your pool of light. Then suddenly you burst out of the hum of high pressure tyres on tarmac to cheering, cow bells and people in fancy dress, you dip back into quiet as you go around the island, briefly back into the noise, shout out your number and slide back into the isolation of your pool of light. All very strange. On a previous year, Mark (my son) was helping support me and was watching the expression of drivers when they encountered a traffic island at 3 am that appeared to be hosting a rave. Strange sights in the Shropshire countryside! You see other cyclists when you pass them or they pass you, you exchange a few words as you pass and then you are alone again. You see riders (well lights) going in the opposite direction but with the best part of 100 riders spread around the 20 or so miles you are surprisingly alone.

On my 4th lap I took my night's rest, well ten minutes sitting having coffee and food before setting off again. Dawn was not the glorious sunrise and warm sunshine I have always hoped for, just dark grey to lighter grey, one day I may

experience the full sunrise experience. Once it was light I was back on the time trial bike, I could up the pace!



Breakfast at 5.30!

You get a rough idea when people are being sent onto the Quina Brook circuit again as the number of riders coming from Prees Heath begins to diminish. When I went back onto Quina Brook I had covered 123.9 miles on the night circuit, not at a fantastic pace but still going, total distance now at 289.82 miles. Only 111 miles needed to reach my target and about 6.5 hours to go, game on!

What better way to start a Sunday morning than riding round Quina Brook! I enjoyed another five laps. As the circuit returns to Prees Heath on the A49 there is a steady climb on the Prees bypass that gets steeper every lap, the only compensation is the descent that follows but overall it's not worth the effort! On one of the laps I stopped to change out of night clothing and have a cup of tea and breakfast, porridge, what else! At this point I had ridden 352.92 miles.

The final stage of the race is to ride up to the finishing circuit which is a nine mile circuit around the romantic setting of Wrexham Industrial Estate. Not the most picturesque of settings but ideal for this event as the roads are good with plenty of laybys and verges for support teams and spectators to gather and on a Sunday lunch time the roads are quiet.

I always have a surge of excitement when I am directed towards the finishing circuit, the end is in sight! So, it was with great relief that as I headed away from Prees Heath I was directed away from Quina Brook towards the finish. To be honest after five morning laps of Quina Brook I was beginning get a little tired

of the circuit and keen to see fresh roads.

It was about 17 miles to the finishing circuit and this year there was a different route, so I was on roads I had never ridden before although we had driven along the route. I was feeling good, I only had another 48 miles to go to reach 400 miles and over three hours to do it in. The morning was bright and, if I recall correctly, the anticipated wind was not as troublesome as I had expected. I was enjoying myself; life was good. When we had driven over the previous day, I had noticed that in one dip the road surface was broken and potholed, I thought I must make a mental note to keep clear. I reached the dip and kept clear of the left hand side keeping my speed up to carry me through the dip. Bang! In avoiding the holes my rear wheel clipped another small step in the road surface I had not noticed. Bother I thought. Almost instantly the hiss followed, and I was on the rim, my back tube punctured! I pulled up. No immediate panic, I'll call the support team. Working through the various numbers I had every one of them was 'unobtainable', garbled messages were left. I had a can of sealant with me and tried to fix the tube. It did not work, I succeeded in getting sealant over most of the wheel, the tube inflated and then went down again. I was beginning to get a little agitated as I began to think 400 miles might be slipping away. A car supporting another rider pulled up offering help. (A great feature of this event is the friendship and support you get from everybody involved). They offered me a wheel! As I was changing it Janet came along in the van. Brilliant! I will get my spare wheel, I thought. She stopped, "my wheels?" I asked. "Pete's got them" was the reply. I think I was possibly slightly less than understanding at this stage! I apologise. I fitted the wheel offered by the 'additional' support. It was not perfect, but it was more than adequate. They left in search of their rider, I asked Janet to ask Pete if he could possibly try and meet me with my spare wheel, well that was the gist of the request although it might have come out in slightly more robust language! I got on my bike and carried on, with only about 15 minutes lost. Maybe the injection of adrenaline made up for it.

I carried on towards the finishing circuit, Pete and Fi passed me and stopped up the road with my spare rear wheel and we switched it back in. (I don't know who it was that lent me the wheel, but I am very grateful, they did get their wheel back at the HQ). I got onto the finishing circuit with 370.26 miles covered and 2 hours 16 minutes left, 400 miles was very much still on.

A word of explanation here as to the finishing circuit and how the final distance is calculated. There are three timekeepers around the circuit at roughly three mile intervals. When you pass each one your time is recorded. You continue to ride until you reach the first timekeeper after your 24 hours is complete. The distance prior to reaching the previous timekeeper is calculated from the number of laps and sections you have completed.

For the final bit between the last two timekeepers your speed between them is calculated and from the time you passed the penultimate timekeeper the distance you will have travelled in your remaining time is worked out. What all this means on the ground is that you keep riding hard for a little over 24 hours!

The finishing circuit is an interesting place, spectators and supporters are

spread around the course, some parts are busy, and others are quiet. You always get a cheer and encouragement; cow bells are rung and clappers clapped.

One section is particularly popular, and you have maybe 100 m or more of road with people cheering you on (don't get the wrong impression, they are well spaced). I find it a double-edged sword - I feel I have to give a dig and try hard going past them but part of you just wants to be allowed to grovel along in your own world. On balance I prefer the cheers, it keeps me going! As you go round you see riders whose 24 hours are up and are sitting in various states at the side

of the road or trundling along at a gentle pace knowing their time is done.



Photo:
Martin Purser

At some stage I knew that I had passed 400 miles and started to coast, then the racer kicked back in. I still had some time left, I needed to use it! In long distance events time passes at apparently different rates at various times, in all of them I have found the last half hour flies by. Somewhere a final surge of strength is found and you try and cover as much ground as possible, panicking as the minutes slip by. My finish time, 13:44 approached, I passed the corridor of support with five minutes left, past the timekeeper who said, "keep going 44". I went through the 24 hour time and kept on going to the next timekeeper, eventually I got the welcome instruction: "stop 44". I swung off the road into a lay by and unclipped, put my foot down and stopped. I'm happy, 400 miles done, I'm lost in my own thoughts. Jeff and Sue arrive. I'm given a chair, I can sit down and relax, and something to drink, and Sue gave me some

nectarines, absolute bliss. I can't recall if I said it at the time but thank you, they were wonderful. My memory is vague, just a blur of warm contentment on a July afternoon. Other riders still within time are passing through, others stopped as their time was up. By chance (I can't claim judgement) I had stopped at the closest point to the HQ. It was just an easy roll of a mile back, it seemed a shame not to ride so I got back on the bike and trundled back. I found the van and had a cup of tea and a bite to eat, left over race food (the good bits), cake, more tea and fruit.

Around the HQ there was a buzz that it had been a 'good day' and both the men's and women's competition records had been broken. Christina Murray covered 478.42 miles (Two other women also exceeded the previous record)

Graham Kemp covered 544.32 miles, the previous record holder Andy Wilkinson was there to congratulate him. I understand that Andy had been marshalling through the night, it's that sort of event! My achievements were somewhat more modest with a final mileage of 410.04 miles.

I was pleased that on my fourth attempt I had reached 400 miles. I would like to thank my support team, Jeff, Sue, Pete, Fi and Janet. I only had to pedal, they had to sort all the rest of it, thank you. Thanks also to others from the South Pennine Road Club who were out at the event giving support. Thanks to the guys who lent me a wheel, I hope I can return the favour some day. Thanks also to the Mersey Roads Club for promoting the event

For those that are interested in the event statistics. There were 80 solo riders and four tandem pairs who started. 64 solo riders and two tandem pairs completed the event. My position was 38th. 42 riders exceeded 400 miles with seven of those exceeding 500 miles. New men's and women's competition records were set. I was riding my bike for 22 hours and 48 minutes, that's an average moving speed of 17.98 mph (overall average of 17.09 mph) and I climbed a total of 2460 m. All in all it had been a good day for a bike ride.

I am left with one question, which only I can answer. Does 425 matter?

Hut Bookings.

TAN-YR-WYDDFA

Closed until further notice. We hope we may be able to reopen to members before too much longer.

HEATHY LEA

Closed until further notice. We hope this will change from early July.

All queries and outstanding payments should be addressed to Michael Hayes, the Hut Bookings Secretary: 179 Starkholmes Rd. Starkholmes, Matlock DE4 5JA Mobile 07771 700913. Email: michaelhayes6688@gmail.com

Information on Member Activities

Derek Pike and the Wilsons have new email addresses:

22derekpike@gmail.com

chriswilson.48@gmail.com or chris.wilson20@outlook.com

Jan Wilson: jan.lumsdale@gmail.com

Rusty's Puzzle Corner

Last month's puzzle solution:

Bell Hagg, a small crag on the Rivelin Road leaving Sheffield whilst travelling west, is an anagram of the words "L.G Gable Having trouble" (first eight letters)

and so this is the proposed meeting place and so the solution. Martin Lancaster sent a correct solution within a day or so (too easy). Snod and Ruth came up with an answer that would have been viable, based on Burbage South routes called Gable, Roof, Broken Wall etc of which I was unaware.

Stuart Firth entered into a dialogue with further thoughts on the octagonal table, ending with a generous acceptance of my solution. It is the main purpose of these puzzles to stimulate thought and communication and any response is always pleasing.

Snod comments:

Too clever for my own good with Rusty's last puzzle! I was thinking of Roof Route on Rivelin or Roof Route and Gable Route on Burbage South when it is an anagram – Bell Hagg!!

I spent many hours as a youth soloing at Bell Hagg, it was easy to get to and preceded the many bouldering walls in Sheffield. In the '60s and '70s it was very popular with Sheffields. It had an added attraction that Rance (Terry King) lived five minutes away. I would catch the number 51 Lodge Moor bus in town, usually an AEC Regent III with Craven bodywork, along with Gobbo (John Mountain) and Mean Jim (Jim Mallows) and we would go to Rance's house in the quaintly named Carsick View Road, where his mum looked after the waifs from the poor side of town. The added benefit was that Rance's brother had a whole room set up with Scalextric which we could play on.

It was a short walk across the golf course (where both his parents were members) to the crag where we could solo for a couple of hours before returning for tea and sticky buns – and more Scalextric. Life was simple in those days. I returned some years ago with Pete Lancaster and we thought it was looking a bit neglected.

Two years ago I went there with Gobbo and Rance and it had gone back to nature. My party piece, All Hallows, looked like a green velvet curtain. We did a token solo for old times' sake, and then adjourned to Rivelin, a crag where in the past we'd had some great times. Sadly no one knows the whereabouts of the photo of Rod the Odd Bod (Rod Moore) sitting on his Phillips Panda moped on top of Rivelin Needle that we'd somehow hauled up there.

I always have fond memories of both Rivelin and Bell Hagg. Perhaps with the lock down and closure of the climbing walls it may return to its former glories. I hope so.

This month's puzzle

Which of all the mountains (strict definition over 1500 ft.), in Britain has a height (using imperial units (feet) in accordance with the preferences of the vice president) such that the sum of the four digits is the greatest of them all. For example Ben Nevis at 4413 feet would score a mere 12.

John Green has probably done most of them, ranging from grassy humps in a place called Yorkshire to standing on tiptoe on Ben Nevis. I trust his diaries are in good order.

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