

Acorn Newsletter August 2007



Sherwood Cycling Club

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Another new member to welcome this month is Chris Lee who happens to be Chris Pearson's brother-in-law.

RACING NEWS

In Jon's Open 10 on 30 June Matt Shaw did 23:39, Craig Watson 24:30, Simon Hookway 24:49, Martin Edjvet 24:55 and Steve Walsh 27:24.

After doing 4:15:54 in the BDCA 100 to become Club 100 Champion, Dave Woodward followed up in the 50 with 1:59:03 in the N. Notts event. Martin rode the 50 as well and did 2:8:09. Woody did a better, but slightly slower 1:59:07 in the API Metro 50. Martin did 1:0:27 and Steve 1:5:24 in the Melton Olympic 25. Giles White was our only rider in the Sleaford Whls 25 with 1:00:49.

Paul Fostun was first in the Under 16s races at Mallory on 3 and 17 July while brother Matt took 5th in the seniors.

CLUB 25-MILE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND HALFORD TROPHY 22 JULY 2007

Road works at Cromwell meant a last minute change of course based on the A10/20. Despite a small entry of 6 riders, there was a close battle in which Matt retained his title and the Albert Sharp Memorial Shield just ahead of Giles who had the compensation of taking the Halford Trophy as best on handicap.

Name	Actual Time	H/cap	Handicap Time	Acorn Points
Matt Shaw	1:00:24	SCR	1:00:24	6
Giles White	1:00:53	0:45	1:00:08	7
Craig Watson	1:04:39	4:00	1:00:39	2
Martin Edjvet	1:04:51	3:30	1:01:21	1
Simon Hookway	1:09:31	2:30	1:06:59	1
Lesley Cliff	1:20:15	20:00	1:00:15	4

It looked like some good handicapping by timekeeper Wayne.

CLUB RUNS

Saturday Club Runs leave Lowdham at 9.45 a.m. Sunday runs meet Shearing Hill/Burton Rd junction at 9.00 a.m. leaving 9.10 a.m. Wednesday runs meet at Lowdham 9.15 a.m. prompt.

CLUB NIGHTS

Meeting at the Arnold & District Victory Club, Church Drive East, Arnold. As you head from Sainsbury's in Arnold towards Arnold centre Church Drive East is the first road on the left. Click this link for a map or view <http://tinyurl.com/ykzvku>

The next club nights are on Mondays 20 August and 24 September from 7.30 p.m.

ACORN POINTS TROPHY AND CLUB BAR

The latest position shows a tight battle for the Acorn Trophy between Craig and Giles. With just the Skegness race and the Lighthouse 25 left to sort things out.

Craig Watson 32; Giles White 29; Nigel White 19; Matt Shaw 18; Martin Edjvet 14; Matt Hemsley 10; Darren Hodgkinson and Simon Hookway 9; Anton Newell 7; Paul Monaghan 6; Alistair Simpson and Lesley Cliff 4; Mike Hankin 3; Dave Ashcroft, Ian Hales and Tony Pickance 2.

Name	Circuit TT	'25'	'10'	BAR Speed
Nigel White	24.473	25.316	28.059	25.950
Matt Shaw	24.291	24.834	26.106	25.077
Giles White	23.825	24.637	26.316	24.926
Paul Monaghan	23.599	24.344	26.125	24.689
Craig Watson	22.706	23.981	25.192	23.960
Martin Edjvet	22.052	23.130	24.096	23.093
Mike Hankin	22.381	22.494	23.936	22.937

We are less likely to see major changes in the Club Best All Rounder competition.

EVENING TENS LEAGUE

With just three events left the Handicap League is very hotly contested with Woody on 35, Gisli on 34 and Chris on 33. The Fastest League is more or less settled for the leading places.

In the Juniors only Paul and Matt have competed with Paul having ridden more events to lead both sections. Clashes with the Mallory Park events have curtailed their participation.

You may notice a couple of blips in a couple of riders' otherwise fairly consistent times. First Gisli recorded a 23 in a string of 25s. This was when he borrowed Nigel's TT bike instead of his standard road bike.

The other was Andy Proffitt's slow (for him!) 23:19 – this was on his standard road bike. The interesting thing is that he used a power meter and his average power was slightly higher doing this slower time than when he races his TT bike!

It makes you think!

The last ten is on 14 August.

	3 July	10 July	17 July	24 July	Act. Pts.	H/C Pts.
Verity Butler					2	6
Lesley Cliff	31:28	30:28	32:20	30:40	10	25
Cameron Davis		29:56		29:19	5	14
Chris Draper		27:53	27:01	26:38	10	33
Martin Edjvet			24:54	25:51	10	22
Ian Hales	24:35	24:15	23:52	24:27	18	27
Mike Hankin	25:53	26:46	24:37		10	21
Matt Hemsley		26:07	26:04	26:35	10	20
Darren Hodgkinson					9	13
Gisli Jenkins	25:20	25:47	23:44	25:22	13	34
Phil Marren					4	3
Paul Monaghan					31	16
Anton Newell				26:33	7	18
John Phimister		25:27		26:32	2	1
Tony Pickance		27:30			5	7
Matt Shaw	24:32	23:36		23:10	44	18
Phil Shaw		25:46		24:46	7	12
Rob Stevens				26:00	1	0
Mick Swords					5	8
George Thackray				27:02	1	0
Peter Thouless					2	1
Pete Walton		24:03		24:17	12	3
Craig Watson	24:20	24:10	23:49		23	18
Giles White		23:14	23:04		52	24
Nigel White		21:56	22:39		60	11
Nick Wight					3	2
Dave Woodward	23:59	24:01	23:35	23:43	37	35
2nd Claim						
Andy Proffitt		23:19		22:01		
Juniors						
Matt Fostun					18	11
Paul Fostun		26:34			27	23

YOUTH HOSTEL WEEKEND 6/7 OCTOBER 2007

Mike Wragg is organising Youth Hostel Weekend, hopefully, at Castleton YH for the night of Saturday 6 October. See the Forum for details.

SKEGNESS RACE SUNDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2007 7.30 A.M.

The annual classic 75-mile time trial is the next Club Event on the calendar. The start has been moved slightly to the lay-by at the end of Whitworth Drive – where the new A612 meets the old Burton Road just before Burton Joyce. I will also take a supporting club run starting about 7 a.m. but using a quieter route for the final part.

Paul Wilson has booked a coach to carry non-riding members, friends and supporters and to bring back the riders and bikes. If riding there you can put your bag with your kit change on the coach. The fare is just £10 (£5 under 16). Bring your family and friends along for a day out at the seaside! Depending on the wind we get into Skegness around midday giving an opportunity to get fed and watered (with a game of crazy golf) ready for setting off back at 4.30 p.m. – back to Nottingham about 6.30 p.m.

I will collect bookings on a first come first served basis.

SHERWOOD C.C. (O.F.SECTION) GENEVA TO NIMES BY WAY OF THE ALPS AND VENTOUX

All good things must come to an end and this will probably be my last full mountain cycle abroad. The stress of leading groups of old men with deteriorating control of bladders and bowels together with my back, knee and weight problems were all taking their toll. I discussed my problems with my personal physician and fellow club mate, Dr. Joe Spoilspout. He told me what I already knew and didn't want to hear, but of course he was correct and I would like to publicly apologise for swearing at him. After 3 months abstaining from alcohol, chocolate, crisps and peanuts, I could still not be described as svelte but was at least more prepared for the demands to come.

My team this year consisted of Terry "le petomane" Taylor. He had trained rigorously for the trip and had managed to get down to just 3 toilet trips per night. Unfortunately on these nocturnal visits I suspect he took a horse in with him, as this is the smallest animal that could possibly have made those toilet noises. I never actually caught him however, despite checking the toilet floor each morning for hoof prints.

The other member of the team was Darrell Stocks. His career in the hotel industry combined with a conviction for under age drinking in Doncaster made him the ideal food and wine guide. It is solely down to Darrell that after 550 miles through the demanding French countryside including 25 Cols that I returned weighing more than when I left.

We flew to Geneva and stayed the night. We set off up the first Col in the rain but by the time we were on the Col de Bluffy the weather was better and we cycled up the more demanding Col de la Forclaz, overlooking Lake Annecy, in the sunshine. I can't remember the Col de Tamie so it can't have been very difficult and we arrived at, and stayed in, Albertville just before the thunderstorm that lasted most of the night.

The following day we only had 1 climb but it was the 26km.ascent of the Col de la Madeleine. Not as hard as I expected except that it was very cold at the top with a slight drizzle that was nearly sleet. We stopped briefly at the top in the restaurant but instead of having some hot food we had a tart of mixed myrtles and suffered from the cold on the descent until we hit the warm air again. We arrived at the bottom in the village of La Chambre and couldn't get a room! Fortunately the tourist office found us a Chambre D`Hote in a close by village. Our evening meal with the family was a 4-course affair with aperitifs, a main course that included wild boar sausage that even Dr.Joe would have allowed me and finishing with a home made digestif called Galopi, explaining the no smoking signs scattered liberally around the house.

The next day started with the 22 km. climb of the Glandon and with the last 3 km. averaging between 13 and 14% it was the hardest climb of our trip. We still took the couple of miles detour to capture the Col de la Croix de Fer, where to dark mutterings, I persuaded my men to go back down the mountain out of the cold before we stopped. We managed to find a place for a hot meal, half way down, just before I was lynched. We descended almost to the bottom of the mountain where we took the minor road and

demanding climb around the back of Alpe d`Huez coming out in Huez village and descending to Le Bourg D`Oisans for a 2 night stop. We can thoroughly recommend this route to anyone who hasn't tried it.

Up until this point of the trip I had thought that Darrell was the most normal team member that I had cycled with. Preparing for our night out he put on some light turquoise, spandex, bloomer type underpants. (Rohan Reeperbahns). He explained them away as being amazingly quick drying, hardly surprising, as no bloke would ever dare hang them on a line. I think he bought them from an advert on an adult channel.

Next day was the standard route up the Alp, followed by the Col de la Sarenne returning after another stiff climb by the attractive single-track road round the Alp and descent to our hotel.

The next two days were spent on the edge of the Vercors, by way of the Col d`Ornon and then cycling through the surprisingly long but not steep cols of Provence. At one photo stop we agreed that it was not possible to put these views into words so I won't try. The smell of the Lavender fields was just like my living room when I've been told to do the cleaning but instead I've fallen asleep and sprayed furniture polish around at the last minute in the vain hope of escaping a tongue-lashing. For most of the second day we could see the summit of Ventoux in the distance. It seemed to be saying "Come on if you think you're hard enough" and we were.

We arrived in Malaucene to attempt the classic route and booked into a hotel for 2 nights. We met some Australians in the bar (nothing new there) who had just cycled down. It was very cold and windy on top, we were informed, and the weather report was for worse weather to come. Sitting in the restaurant that evening I was slightly apprehensive both about the weather and the ascent, Terry was doing his breathing exercises ready to sprint up the mountain and Darrell had just fallen in love with the stentorian young woman Maitre`D whose bottom and bust seemed to have been formed in exactly the same mould. Was I not proud of my team?

6 o'clock the next morning we were awoken by a thunderstorm and I don't mean Terry. It was raining hard during breakfast but by the time we got our bikes out it was clear. We took the undulating road to Bedoin and stopped briefly at the market to take in the smell of the herbs and celebrate Terry's 100th banana of the trip. He cycled off to do his extended route and Darrell and myself set off in the bright sunshine at a more sedate speed. I found the next 14 km. quite demanding, many of them having an average gradient of 10%, but after a brief stop at Chalet Reynard, the last 6 km. of moonscape, although looking tough, were covered quite quickly and we were complimented on our speed by a cyclist we passed. (A first for me) Brilliant views from the top, and then, one of the best descents of the holiday. We celebrated at the bottom, having achieved all our original targets. It now only remained to reach Nimes for our flight home.

We covered 80 miles the next day with several easy cols but could not find accommodation. We finally called in at a campsite and hired a 2 bedroom plastic log cabin for the night. Terry chose his own route the next day, anxious to clock up 1000km for the trip. Darrell and I took a more direct route along little used roads, still with long hill after long hill. I took the first few sprints for village signs until I had annoyed Darrell so much that he joined in. It then became a competition between his higher gears and my cheating. Don't let anyone tell you that cheating doesn't pay. As we approached Nimes the mood changed and it went quiet. We both knew that the sprint for the Nimes sign was the main prize of the day. Darrell wondered if he was in a suitable gear. I wondered if I shouted, "puncture" at the apposite moment whether I could delay him for long enough to take the sprint. As it happened our road was so minor that we entered the town without seeing a sign and thus are still talking to each other. We visited the Roman amphitheatre in Nimes before returning to our hotel for a meal.

The hotel allowed us breakfast early the next morning and after a 7-mile cycle into the country we arrived at Nimes airport. It was a very clean, well set out building used only by Ryanair. They probably call it Paris but it was very suitable for us. Just two flights a week to East Midlands and no queuing, as we were the only flight leaving the airport that morning. The plane wasn't full and the last 3 rows were blocked off, presumably so that no one was sat near the toilet door in case Terry used it. Well-done Ryanair. My only slight complaint was that the pilot introduced himself as "Jim". Personally, I like to be on more formal terms with anyone who has the power of life or death over me, but give Jim his dues. He kept us well informed, got us in early and managed to land first attempt. We were back safely and our trip was over.

Over the past 5 years I have been the self appointed team leader to quite a few of the senior cyclists from Sherwood, doing most of the major climbs in the Alps, Pyrenees and the Dolomites. Mad as hatters to the man, but magnificent team members, all of them. I send them my thanks. I am retiring now to have my tonsils plumbed in to a draught beer pipe. (Sorry Joe).

Bon Jovi - Dave Gartside (Director Sportif Saga Tours) Team Leader (Retd.)

KELVIN AND SERSHIN AT L'ETAPE DU TOUR 2007 by Sershin Djafer

Well...at 5:30 a.m. on Monday I rode my bike 6 miles through dark skies towards the usually tranquil village of Foix. From every turn other cyclists joined me and the many cars and mobile homes. By 6:30 a.m. 8,500 riders lined up in pens on the road of approx 1500 each. In front of me for 1.5 miles 4500 cyclists stretched to the start. Behind me for over a mile the other 4,000 riders waited patiently and apprehensively. The 3 days acclimatisation and settling in period before the big day had done nothing to settle my nerves as I had been suffering headaches and a little dehydration from the Friday when I climbed the first Col to see what it would be like...It had been between 35 and 40c all week during the afternoons. Additionally, all that everyone was talking about was pain; last years Etape when there were mass desertions on Alpe D'Huez when the temperature hit 40c; and running through every detail of this years course - Five Cols, 4,400 m of climbing, that's 400m more than last year, a new unknown 19km climb.

As the sun rose, the speakers placed throughout Foix made announcements in French and played gentle music, much to the joy of the local sleeping residents!

Le Grand Depart!

At 7a.m the race started - we're offnearly..... At 7:20 a.m. I eventually got to the start and my transponder beeped to start my own individual timer.

The start was amazing. Big crowds, fanfare, and closed roads. This was big news in the region making the front page of the press and attracting the local TV stations. Adrenalin racing around our veins, we shot off out of the village and the first 15 miles were on quiet country roads, then onto the motorway where I settled on the edge of a huge peloton cruising at a steady 25mph. Easy!

It was nice and cool in the morning and I actually clocked an average speed of 18 mph for the first 50 miles all the way over the first climb (a cat 2) Col De Port and to the first feed station at St Girons. Hmm Too easy! This feed station was big and chaotic. Hundreds of riders turning up every minute to a huge range of food spread out across a large area. Everyone trying to get away quickly, but what drink to grab? How much to take? What food should I take and where is it?

Out of St Girons and the road steadily began to rise towards the next Climb at Col Du Portet d'Aspet - again another Cat 2. Again, no real problems with this other than sapping a little more energy & a certain French gentleman whose hand I caught in my back pocket trying to steal my energy bars! My limited French couldn't express my feelings at this point so I reverted to some choice British phrases and a glare!

The downhill was very fast - I clocked up my top speed of 52.6mph. Then, a reality check.

Le Crash !

As we hurtled down the mountain I could see the Gendarmes and a few medics shouting and waving their hands at a corner. Everyone started to brake hard. A French guy passed me on my left and he skidded. He lost control and went into the ditch on the left hitting the side of the mountain and being thrown up like a rag doll. His bike also hit the mountain, was thrown up into the air and back out towards me at head height. His front wheel missed me by about 3 inches. I don't know what happened to him as he landed behind me and there was still the matter of getting past another body on the up coming corner which was just laying their motionless....I was a little unnerved by this. There were sadly a number of crashes that I passed on the way round on the descents - a number of them looked extremely serious.

Into the valley and a grind against the head wind, another 20 miles to the next Climb of Col De Mente. This was a cat 1 and would be harder and longer than the last 2. I had a good social ride up this one with a

French guy called Serge who was married to a girl from Cambridge. At the top was the next feed station and a chance to get more water, stale cheese and ham sandwiches and some bananas. By now I had mastered getting food fast at the feed stations, by working my way around the back to the servers side and helping myself. Nobody said anything but I got the impression that they would have preferred if I stayed around the other side and fought for my rations with everyone else: - There were moments of cloud cover, but it was now getting very hot....and the hardest part of the ride was to come.

A reasonably fast down hill from Col De Mente and before I knew it we seemed to be at the bottom of the valley...

Well now it was the moment of truth. It's approx 12:30 and a sweltering 41°C at the bottom of this new 19km climb which used to be a goat herders track - The Col Deu Port de Bales. This was Hors Category, Kelvin's words from the night before were now ringing in my ears. "I predict pain!" he would say.

The locals were great. By now they were out in the villages spraying us with water as we passed and giving us water to try and keep us cool. They knew people were suffering...It was that hot that the asphalt was now melting on the road which made climbing even harder as my tyres were literally sticking to the road and picking up asphalt and grit.

All around me people were either walking up the hill with their bikes, or lying down beneath any shade they could find and waiting for the broom wagon & liquid... I'm not sure if they were asleep or passed out. I knew now that it was unlikely that I could achieve a silver medal time, and decided that I would just make sure I finish with a good bronze time and not get retired or swept up at the elimination points. I continued to climb avoiding as much melting tar as possible and eventually, after 1.5hrs, got to the top welcomed by the cool breeze that whistled across the top of the mountains. I stopped here and scraped all the tarmac and grit off my tyres before attempting to descend.

The descent was very dangerous with many twists and turns and no barriers to keep you from toppling over the edge if you overran a corner. This one I took steadily.

By now my average speed was down quite a bit, although I still felt energetic and I knew I had only 1 more Cat 1 climb to come.

Again though on the climb to col De Peyredourde the asphalt was again melting, even more people were either walking or giving up, and cyclist were weaving across the road to try and take the steepness out of the climb - more obstacles for me as I was still intent on going in a straight line. I felt quite good at this stage! Everyone around me was really suffering and I was only hurting a little bit. Honest. My left knee felt like it could go pop at any moment under the strain, but in terms of energy I still felt I had plenty. I counted down the kilometres ..

Le Finale !

Again, I descended reasonably fast, but took it a little steadier as I had visions of a valve blowing due to the additional heat, and associated tyre pressure, from the melting tar and hard braking. There were a number of valve blowouts from people that I knew (including Kelvin).

For the last few miles I went pretty fast and still felt great. In terms of the energy surplus at the end - yes I probably could have completed this at least half an hour quicker. But then I may have blown up in the heat, or worse crashed as well. So overall I'm very happy that I had a great day, really enjoyed the race and the views, and raised a little money for charity.

FIN

Would I do it again ?

Maybe. It's a real rush and I really enjoyed it. But with so many other riders around you there is a good chance of getting hurt very badly if you get it wrong, or if somebody else does!

[Actual times for the 196 km - Sershin Djafer 9:54:56, Kelvin Hepburn 10:42:00. They have official times as well, but actual times are more relevant. Ed.]