

ROAD RECORDS ASSOCIATION WINTER NEWSLETTER 2011

AGM and Luncheon 2012

The AGM will be at Harding's of Aylesbury College, Oxford Road, Aylesbury, HP21 8PD, on Sunday 19th February 2012, at 11.00am, to be followed by the Luncheon at 12:45. Doors will open at 10:45.

Lunch Tickets cost £17.50 each.

All propositions must be sent to the General Secretary no later than 31st December 2011.

Please see enclosed booking form, Menu and wine list, select your choice of meal and wine and return with cheque to Den Mills no later than January 31st 2012.

OBITUARIES

Syd Parker passed away on May 10th, aged 95.

He was one of our oldest record breakers.

A full Obituary is included with this newsletter.

The following Checkers passed away this year.

Herbert Lee in January.

Mark Nixon in May.

Mary Harvey on 21st August after a long illness.

Chris Whitlock suddenly in August.

All had given the RRA years of loyal service.

The Committee send their condolences to the families and friends.

RECORD BREAKING

James Cracknell and Jerone Walters attacked the 12hr, 24hr, E-E and 1000 mile tandem bicycle record. They started at 3am on Saturday 1st October. They kept a steady 19 mph average speed for most of the first 24 hours, gradually dropping to 16 mph in Scotland. The attempt was abandoned at Golspie.

We had hoped to receive a notice from David Harmon and Magnus Backstedt for a 25 mile tandem bicycle attempt, but this will not now take place in 2011.

OUTSTANDING SUBS

At the moment around £500 is still outstanding in unpaid subs. If your subs are outstanding, you will have received a reminder by e-mail or post - please be kind enough to send your subs to Tim.

Please note that if you pay 4 years subs, then the 5th year is free. This saves you money, and reduces the effort and costs for the RRA

TIMEKEEPERS, OBSERVERS, COURSE MEASURERS

The current lists of Timekeepers, Observers and Course Measurers is getting rather short.

The Committee would like to invite Members to apply for any of these positions.

Perhaps some of you know of someone, not in the RRA, but very able to do either job. We are particularly interested in trying to find some new people to fill these places. **Please note that the job of Observer normally entails following and reporting on a record attempt at all times. It is not the same as a Checker, who would normally be at the road-side.**

HANDBOOK UPDATES

Updates will be issued, with the Spring newsletter, after the AGM.

ALL MEMBERS AND CLUBS

If you move, have a new phone number, change of club secretary or Treasurer, or new e-mail address, **please remember** to notify the Gen. Sec.

Geoff Lonsdale, a health update.

Many of you will know Geoff Lonsdale and the help he has given over the years on E-E Record Attempts.

Recently, Geoff underwent very serious surgery to remove a brain tumour. He is still undergoing chemo, and gets very tired. He has been out on his recumbent occasionally and recently received a mileage certificate from the TA. 163 miles in a year is not much, but given Geoff's circumstances it is brilliant.

I am sure everyone will wish Geoff a full and speedy recovery.

If anyone wishes to send Geoff a message, this can be done via the Gen Sec who will happily forward them to Geoff.

NEWSLETTER & AGM by E-MAIL

The RRA is keen to communicate with its membership by e-mail. Many thanks to all those who have already signed up to receive the newsletter electronically. You are all helping to make my job easier as Gen. Sec.

If you would be prepared to receive communications in this way, which could also include items relating to the AGM, plus the added bonus of receiving record attempt updates as they take place, you are encouraged to contact the secretary at the e-mail address below.

E-mail allows a quicker and more efficient service, but is quite optional, and the paper alternative is still available.

IF YOU WISH TO BE ADDED TO THE LIST WILL YOU PLEASE E-MAIL THE GENERAL SECRETARY AT:-

brianedrupt@blueyonder.co.uk

RRA website.

The RRA website underwent a revamp and new look recently. The new site went live on 17th July. Please visit the website to get the latest info on any possible Record Attempts.

Both Edinburgh RC and Mid Shropshire Wheelers now have the RRA newsletter on their websites.

REGIONAL INFO.

The N&WHCRRRA now has a website.

www.nwhcrra.org.uk

Northern RRA has a new website.

www.nrra.org.uk

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COMMITTEE

Ralph Dadswell, Alan Davie, Jean Edrupt, Audrey Hughes, Den Mills, Keith Robins, John Taylor, Bob Williams,

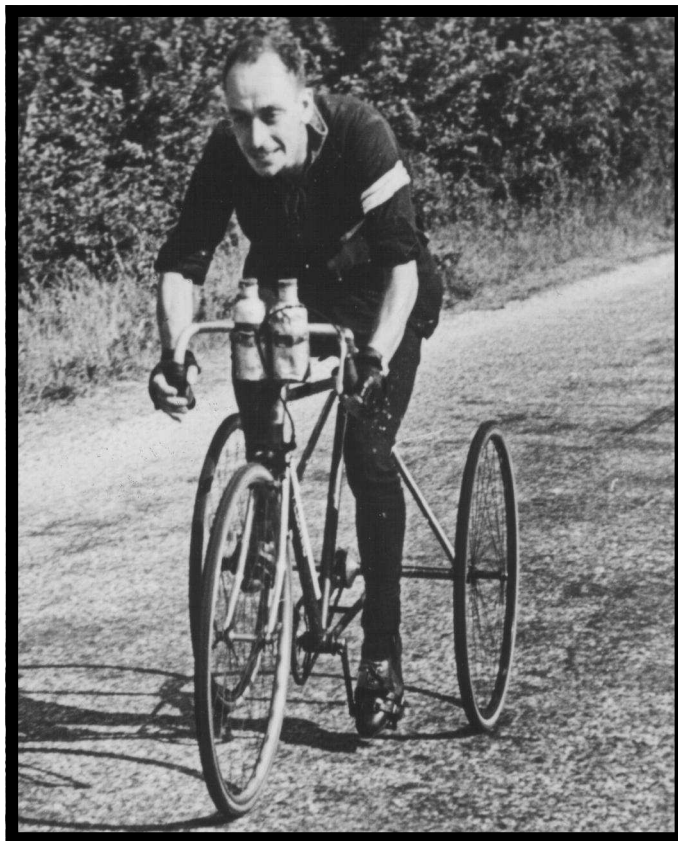
Syd Parker 1916-2011

RRA records held.

1938 London-York Trike	10.24.00
1938 12 hour Trike	230 miles
1939 London-Bath Trike	11.55.23
1947 Land's End-John o'Groats Tandem Trike	2.22.41
1947 1000 miles Tandem Trike	3.12.45

On Tuesday 10th May one of our oldest 24 hour time-trials and Road Record Breaking members, Syd Parker, Ealing Paragon CC, passed away aged 95.

Syd took his first two tricycle records, the London – York and 12 hour in 1938, and the London – Bath and back in 1939. With Jim Letts he set his last two records, the End to End and 1,000 miles on a tandem trike just after the Second World War in 1947. His other love was time-trials, being particularly good at the longer distances of the 12 hour and 24 hour, gaining the trike 24 hour competition record with 391 miles in 1948, these are just some of the highlights of his racing career.



Syd attended many R.R.A. and T.A. functions over the years, and one of his last big outings was the T.A. Dinner in 2008 where he received an ovation alongside John Arnold. After being unwell and hospitalised since late 2010 with breathing problems, Syd seemed to be recovering well, only to succumb to the hospital bug M.R.S.A. in his final weeks. With Syd's passing we have lost a very valuable link with our past cycling history. Our thoughts go to Mary his daughter and her family at this time.

Syd Parker: one of the last links to our pre- and post-war past. Over the last six years Syd supplied me with lots of details, not just of his own racing career but also of the time-trial and record breaking scene before and after the Second World War. His 24 hour time-trial recollections went back to the Catford '24' of 1936, riding 388.6 miles on a bike. At that time he rode for the Ealing CC, but later became a leading rider for the Ealing Paragon CC. Sid Ferris won that event with 418 miles. The war intervened and Syd was called up for duty until 1946. Soon after the war he regained his fitness quickly and set to preparing for the End to End by training with Jim Letts on the tandem-trike for nearly a year. Syd's wife Ivy, an experienced secretary for the Red Cross, arranged most of the sit-down feeds and stops by sending about 80 letters to club-folk on route, as there were very few telephones in those days. One of those stops was in Newton-le-Willows, at the home of Phil Johnson, father of T.A, R.R.A and 24 Hour Fellowship member Mike Johnson.

A large table had been laid out with big bowls of cornflakes and other cereals, brown and white bread sandwiches, coffee, tea, and soft drinks. Considering there was food rationing due to the war years, it was a marvellous spread. Syd told me that the generosity of club-folk in donating their spare food rations and petrol coupons, not only for the riders, but also for the helpers throughout the length of Great Britain, was overwhelming. Mike said that when Letts and Parker went through in 1947 he was six years old, and his dad's house was regularly used as a sleep, rest and feeding place for all End to Enders' at that time, due to its location on the route. Mike remembers being turfed out of his bed on a fair few occasions for a tired rider to have a sleep, and when Letts and Parker stopped, it was probably his first recollection of seeing a tandem-trike. Nearly 60 years later at an RRA triennial lunch at Hatfield, Syd re-introduced himself to Mike and said "I was the 'stoker' on that tandem-trike and I remember your dad Phil telling you to have a good look at our machine, as you'd probably not see another one in your lifetime!" Syd went on to say that he and Jim were still chuckling about that remark well into the Scottish Highlands. A short while after the End to End and 1,000 mile record, Syd's daughter Mary was born.

Syd's cycling memories went back to the late 1920's, and his first Catford '24' took place just two months after Amy Johnson flew solo from Gt. Britain to the Cape of Good Hope and back, and a year before the 'Jarrow Marches'. Syd would also have been around in 1935 when Hubert Opperman was vying with Frank Southall for prestigious RRA records. Other famous men of the day Syd would have competed against were; Sid Ferris, Frank Shubert, Edgar Seeley, George Lawrie, Cyril Heppleston, Jack Holdsworth, Charlie Holland, Stan Butler and Bob Mynott.

My last known 24 hour result for Syd was in the North Road event of 1950 where he produced 410.3 miles on a bike for one of the best rides of his career. By this time there was a crop of fast 'all-day' trike riders such as George Lawrie, Cliff Prior, Albert Crimes, John Arnold and Dave Duffield. Syd said they were such exciting times.

Shortly after Syd's death I contacted his daughter Mary Coombs, a vicar's wife living in Bodmin, and she gave me some details of Syd's family life and background. He was born in Watford in 1916, but by the time he was fifteen he'd lost both of his parents. At that time it was thought that he might join relatives in Australia, but after cycling to work and back six days a week as a carpenter for Duples the coachbuilders at Hendon, he discovered cycling and joined the Ealing CC. He went to live with his aunt in Willesden and soon became embroiled in the camaraderie of cycling club life. Syd was one of the club's star riders, racing in Massed start events at Brooklands, also in France, and of course time-trials and road record-breaking. He won his first medal in 1926 at the age of ten, but not for cycling, he'd won it at the Watford and District school sports for the tug-of-war, his daughter Mary found the medal recently while clearing out the attic. During the Second World War he served with the Royal Engineers, helping to build Bailey bridges in North Africa, the Middle East, India and Italy. It was the love of cycling that brought Syd and his wife Ivy together in 1945, he was still in the Army stationed near Norwich, and rode with the Norwich Amateur BC. of which Ivy was a member. They married in 1946 and moved into their house in Southall, where he continued to live until the last few months of his life.

As mentioned earlier, Syd established the first Tandem-Trike End to End and 1,000 miles record with Jim Letts in 1947, the same year his daughter Mary was born, and later she was taken on club-runs in a side-car attached to her mum and dad's tandem. Syd was a founder member of the Ealing Paragon CC. in 1946, and continued to support the club throughout its existence. He was also a staunch member of the RRA, TA, FCOT, and the 24 Hour Fellowship, and his friend Cecil made sure Syd got to as many 'gatherings' as possible, where he would meet up with past record-breakers. He referred to Eileen Sheridan as his 'End to End Pal' (probably after spending many hours reminiscing with her about it!)

Apart from cycling, his other passions were; birds, steam trains, reading war-time accounts of battles, and watching TV programmes about antiques. He specialised in collecting postage stamps of the Seychelles, and although he loved flowers, he wasn't much of a gardener, due to having to walk with the aid of sticks for many years. During his last few difficult months he had tremendous support from his daughter Mary, her husband John, and grandchildren Rosalind, Rachel and Christopher. Syd was very well known in Southall, having lived there for 65 years and when Mary told people about his death, so many said "Such a nice man, such a gentleman". The details of Syd's family life were taken from a eulogy read by Bob Drew at the funeral. Mary and Bob composed it together with help from family and friends. In later years Syd always tried to keep in touch with the 'later generations' of record breakers and 'all-day' riders, enquiring what Andy Wilkinson, Gethin Butler, John Warnock, Ralph Dadswell, Marina Bloom and Lynne were doing and what their plans were. He wrote to Lynne and they swapped greetings cards and messages etc. as he's done over the years with Eileen Sheridan, in fact it was Eileen who broke the sad news of his death to me. With Pat Kenny's tragic demise in January, the T.A, the R.R.A, and the 24 Hour Fellowship have lost two of their toughest long distance time-trialists, and trike End to End road record breakers in five months. Syd and Pat will not be forgotten, as the legacy of their deeds and memories from past decades of long distance racing will surely live on through the history books.

John Taylor