

# NEWS DE LAUNE



***JAMES LYON IN ACTION  
RIDING THE 10 HOUR ENDURO***

**EVANS**  
CYCLES.COM

**SEPTEMBER 2008**



CLUB NIGHT  
SECOND MONDAY  
OF EACH MONTH

Camber Tennis Club  
Dulwich Common SE21 7EX

1889 DE LAUNE 2008  
CYCLING CLUB

### **PRESIDENT**

#### **ROY SAVERY**

Fairwinds  
Goatsfield Road  
Tatsfield  
TN16 2BU  
01959 577745

### **CHAIRMAN**

#### **JOHN ARCHDEACON**

19 Trinity Cresent  
London SW17 7AG

### **SECRETARY**

#### **NIGEL SCALES**

14 Bellingham Road  
Catford  
London SE6 2PT  
020 8698 5977

### **TREASURER**

#### **VAL PEACHEY**

63 Beverley Road  
Barming  
Maidstone  
Kent ME16 9DU

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **BRIAN SAXTON**

26 Serviden Drive  
Bromley  
Kent, BR1 2UB  
0208 290 1013



### **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

Just back from Charlie Carlton's funeral, which took place at Lewisham Crematorium on Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> August. His adopted son, Eddie, arranged for a Humanist, Billy Jenkins, to conduct the Ceremony. Everybody thought it went well, and was a fitting farewell for Charlie.

For those who do not know what Charlie did, he joined the Club on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1947, and was a good Club member taking positions as Social Secretary and News Editor, and was Transport Manager for at least seven racing members for about 15 years. He even found time to race himself, mainly on a tandem with Mark Ballamy, and they still hold a 50 mile tandem team record! It was Charlie who found the De Laune Club Room at Choumert Road. He organised members into collecting tons of paper and raising money from the salvage when the old Church hall was demolished to fund the re-development, and it is largely through his efforts that our Club is in the strong financial position that it is now. A truly great member who did so much for our Club, who was made an Life Member in recognition of his services.

The month began with a good bike ride to commemorate Max Dods, followed by a barbeque at Malcolm and Linda Adam's house. Great ride and great company and food.

On a lighter note the 7<sup>th</sup> (and ignoring the training) I met our son at Earls Court for the Beer Festival. A great time was had by all, hic. hic. Hic!!

On Sat. 9<sup>th</sup> August Alan and Jean Rowe celebrated their 40<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, along with many family and friends (including many De Laune members and other cycling clubs). A terrific time was had by all. Congrats to you both – what a great couple and a great party.

The OMA 10 was on Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, on the Harrietsham Course. Full results will be elsewhere, but Brian Dacy won the OMA Trophy on Age Standard. There was a good turn out of Members, and after the Event we went to the Service Station for a good breakfast and a laugh.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> the new Hog Hill Circuit was opened by Boris Johnson. You may have seen this on TV, as it made the News. There was one race for anybody who wanted to ride on the day, and yours truly rode, and was by far the oldest (but, sadly, not the fastest) rider. The circuit was terrific, and very hard the amenities are first class. This circuit will be used a lot.

As I write (or, actually, as Gina types), we are keeping a close watch on our new housemates. Stanley the Lurcher dog, and Reuben the Doodle (Dalmatian x poodle cross) arrived today. Stan is 4 years old, and Reuben is 4 months. Both have only lived in kennels before, so joining us in a house is a BIG learning curve for them. Hopefully, we will still have a home left in a few weeks' time!

Talking about home, it is the Hill Climb on Sunday, 5<sup>th</sup> October, and there is such a thing as a FREE LUNCH. As many of you know, we live very near to the venue, and you are welcome to join us for lunch after the event BUT IT WOULD BE VERY HELPFUL IF WE HAD SOME IDEAS OF NUMBERS. Please e-mail me if you think you will be joining us (no penalties if you don't turn up, but please don't bother to let me know if you aren't coming).

Finally, many congratulations to our European Masters Track Champion, Brian Dacy, who won four races – brilliant Brian!!!

**Quote for the month:**

“You can achieve anything you want in life if you have the courage to dream it, the intelligence to make a realistic plan, and the will to see that plan through to the end.”

# Val the Peach – your new Treasurer -

## My cycling/De Laune pedigree



My greatest claim to fame within the club was the fact that I was the first lady member of the De Laune Cycling Club. I officially joined the De Laune in March 1976 – within a month of ladies being accepted into a previously all male zone.

I had, however been ‘associated’ with the club since 1959 – my father Sam Lawrence being a member and a good friend of Fred & Di Peachey. It was when I joined forces with Tony in July of 1959 that my interest in the club developed. At the time my first claim club was 34<sup>th</sup> Nomads, unofficially the sister club of the De Laune.

I remained a second claim member when Tony and I relocated to Maidstone in 1965. It wasn’t until Claire, our daughter, was born late 1972 that I took on a greater inputting role into the club. At that time working ladies had no employment protection when the family came along, I opted to be a stay at home mum but found I needed a bit more to occupy my mind other than child rearing, training/racing, and studying for an Open University Degree and of course, supporting Tony in his racing exploits, which many of you know or have read about in the Century Awheel. So for the next few years we took on the editorship of the De Laune News.

In 1982, at the AGM, Tony and I were granted Life Membership for services to the Club, it came totally out of the blue, I can remember shedding a tear or two in car on the way home. A mixture of shock, pride, and how on earth do you cap that.

As though to go full circle in 1984 when our daughter Claire (now Claire Silvester) showed an interest in competition it was the De Laune she joined. Winning the local GHS heats and qualifying for the National Finals for 3 years in the colours of the De Laune. She actually won the Club Junior BAR, beating all the boys in 1990. Her greatest flag flying episode was when she was National Best All Rounder Junior Champion for girls in 1990, a very proud moment but a bit nerve racking making her acceptance speech on the National RTTC Dinner and Champions Night.

Although both of us joined the Southborough & Dist Wheelers and all 3 of us the San Fairy Ann – a Maidstone based Club – none of us have really ever left the De Laune, its like a magnet.

**WHAT A**



**!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

Photo taken at Headcorn this morning. (10th August) Roy was not in the photo as he was in the toilet relieving him self. Well that's what he calls it



## “KAY’S REPORT”

How sad it was to hear of the death of my old club mate Charlie Carlton. When you join a club someone takes you under their wing. Charlie was my wing.

Charlie introduced me to racing; jazz clubs, weekends away, and drinking beer. Charlie was a one-off. He would have a list of time trials we would ride and mostly on the Bath Road. He would say it is no good going away for a short distance event (25 mile TT) we have got to ride 50, 100 mile and the odd 12's. That was Charlie he loved riding his bike.

He would have us riding an event at, say, Portsmouth then riding back to London and, in the evening, he would meet us at Camberwell Green for a meal and then we would go to the pictures. Guess what? We would all fall asleep in the back row! I could fill the DLN with stories about Charlie.

On Sunday the 10<sup>th</sup> of August we had one of our Park & Ride club runs from Yalding Kent. First stop was Headcorn for tea and cakes followed by lunch at the Unicorn pub at Marden. The weather was good. I would like to thank our President Roy, Steve Carter Smith, Lenny Brown, Mike Valentine, Dave Burfoot, Ken Legge, Pat Conner (a prospective member) and Terry Deeley who insisted on riding 100 yards in front of the bunch (to get to the cafe first!) for all turning out. You will notice that all the above are old members. It was a pity that we did not have a few younger members out. If you are under 50 you are a young member in our club!

Another good turn out by our members for Malcolm and Linda's BBQ at Herne bay. This year I decided to go on the club run. Well it was a club run at the start and then it was survival of the fittest. I wish I had gone on the walk. The best thing is that after your shower you always come away with a better towel than the one you went with. Thank you Malcolm and Linda.

The Old Members 10 is always keenly contested by the old boys! This year was no different. The winner was Brian Dacey. He does not look 70 - but he must have done at some time. Brian took three gold medals at the Vets European track championships last month. Well-done Brian. I hope the editor has all the results in this edition.

What have we got for you next month? The club Track Championships at Herne Hill on Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> of September. We need helpers and riders to make this event a success. The day after we have got the Autumn 25 on the fast G25/53 (Horsham) course. First man off 8.30am. Again we need helper for this event.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of September we have the Down Hill competition at Tilburstow Hill, Godstone. The format will be the same as last year. We meet at the bottom of the hill at 10am. We then go for say a 20-mile ride finishing at the top of Tilburstow Hill at about 12am. You then free wheel down the other side as many times as you like. I think we have got a bit of competition this year as the Dulwich Paragon has given us a challenge. We should be OK as long as we get Terry Deeley out of bed!

If you remember last year we had a good turn out for the KCA Reliability Trial. The date for the next one will be the Sunday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of Nov. Let us have a good turn out again from the club. I will give you more details in due course.

All the best Kav.





*European Masters Champion (70+)*

*Sprint*

*Pursuit*

*Points Race*



**BRIAN DACEY**



**POINTS RACE**



**SPRINT**

## HAMPDEN EQ-K



## BERNARD PALASTANGA

Two days after last years Memorial Service at Newnham, I received a telephone call from a Rachel Quirke. Rachel's daughter Emma (aged 12), had decided that for her course work she would write about World War II but would concentrate on her

Great Uncle Bernard. Emma then logged on to 'Bernard Palastanga' and it came up with the De Laune CC News. Rachel then contacted Brian Saxton, and Brian knowing that father (George Wood) had for many years been trying to trace the Palastanga family but without success, gave Rachel my number.

From here on it's father's story:

Bernard, Reg Howard and myself were school friends living at Barnes Castlenau Council Estate and almost next door to one another. (Slightly digressing, Ted Pinchen's sister moved in next door to my family, and those of us who remember Ted, he was a very active member of the De Laune).

After leaving school, the three of us purchased a Hercules cycle which cost £3.10s.0d., which we paid back 2/6d a week. We would ride out most weekends, some 40/50 miles into the country, eventually deciding to join a Cycling Club. At the grand cost of 4d we bought 'Cycling' (the cyclists Bible) and there we found a number of Clubs requiring members and we 'plumped' for the De Laune CC., even though it was some miles from Barnes. We telephoned Ken Hill for further information and as instructed we turned up the following Thursday at The Red Cow Public House, which was adjacent to the Lambeth Fire Brigade HQ. We duly arrived at 7.30pm and entered through the side door to be greeted by a passage FULL of cycles to which we added ours (never mind 'elf & Safety in 1938 but we were next door to the Fire Brigade in case of an emergency!!) No doubt looking like 3 little orphans, we were met by Ken Hill who introduced us to some 30-40 other members who were playing cards, other games or just chatting, it was all very friendly. The Card School consisted of Beefy Russell, Fred Hooper,

George Francombe and 3 others whose names escape me.

The following weekend, the Club met up at The Windmill Pub, Clapham Common for the Sunday Club Run, where we met other members who were not at the Thursday night meeting. I must say we found our first Club Run quite daunting, though we were used to the distance we were NOT used to the speed!!! We felt quite out of place with our cycles and decided then and there that they must be changed. I went for a secondhand 'Russ' while Bernard and Reg went for the 'Claude Butler'.

A year later in the September the War began and members were being called up at a fairly quick rate. Bernard volunteered for the RAF to train as a Pilot, but as he found difficulty in landing he went on a course to be a Navigator, which he passed with Honours. It was to be some time before we met up again.

Just by chance in 1941, I too had joined up by this time and was in Nottingham, and I called in to have a drink at 'the Trip To Jerusalem' PH and Bernard was in there. Obviously we had some catching up to do and I asked him if I could borrow his text books as I was doing a similar course in navigation with the Fleet Air Arm. A few days later I received a parcel from his mother enclosing the books. His mother had moved from Barnes to the Bo-Peep Hotel at St Leonards, Hastings. Her brother owned the Hotel, and as Bernard had a sister some eight years younger, Mrs Palastanga felt it would be safer.

I continued to meet Bernard at the Nottingham pub, and one evening he told me he would be flying the following night so we arranged to meet up two nights later. I duly arrived but could see no Bernard, and assumed that he was up at the bar as the rest of the crew were there. I asked his New Zealand Pilot where Bernard was, only to be told about the horrific time they had had, returning from a raid. On their way back to base the Pilot received a message that a German fighter plane was closing in, so he put the Lancaster into a very steep dive and managed to lose the German plane. When he tried to contact Bernard, to plot their course back to base he received no reply. The Pilot could only assume that somehow Bernard had lost contact with him and had wrongly assumed they had all baled out, so he did the same, somewhere over the Zeider Zee but with

fatal consequences, as you can read in the De Laune book.

After the War, I tried to return his books and contacted his mother and sister at the Hotel, but they had moved on. I tried the local press and all other contacts but without success. Now we are back at the beginning of this story when the telephone call arrived. Bernard's sister Margaret is alive and well and living in Sandwich, and I have been in regular correspondence with her. Margaret had no idea about the Memorial at Newnham Church, and has since been to visit the village, the Church and the Pub. I quote from one of Margaret's letters ' I wanted to write to you again when I had actually seen the memorial at Newnham.....a lovely sunny day which showed the memorial up so well. We were all very impressed with the condition of it and unbelievable to see Bernard's name inscribed, all so beautifully preserved'. It is also the family's intention to attend this years Remembrance Day Service, and I am looking forward to meeting them all. I hope you enjoyed my trip down memory lane, and 70 years on I am still a member and thank you to all those that helped me celebrate this milestone on the 29th June.

GEORGE WOOD

### **DOES ANYONE REMEMBER THIS EX MEMBER**

Morning Tony,

You have been around the De Laune CC for maybe 50 years. Copied the following from an entry in the CTT Forum. Regards, Doug.

This morning in Cheadle I was starting to lock my bike & was approached by this elderly chap. "I like your bike." He said, "Have you been watching the Tour de France ?" "When I was in London I was a member of De Laune CC, are they still going?" he said. I confirmed they were. From what I gathered he was quite fast & rode Time Trials & Hill Climbs. Told him I rode Time Trials, "Do they still have them?" he said.

He was a guy maybe in his 70's his name Derek Brook.

Wondered if any "old timers" on the board knew him or remembered him.

Started off today in a grouchy mood, this encounter brightened my day

# MY THOUGHTS

**Don White**

It is with great relief that Val Peachey has been persuaded to take over as treasurer. I know she will do a great job and I am sure she will bring many new ideas from her long association with the San Fairy Ann. This is very evident from the great deal of thought that went into her recent article.

Undoubtedly unless there are fundamental changes, and not just a lot of hot air, the Club will not survive the next decade. It never has been purely a racing club and the backbone was weekly club runs which always proved eventful. There was, of course, the racing side often including weekends away, maybe staying at Guildford which was once the country HQ and you could bet there would be high jinx. Holidays were often spent on touring at home or abroad. I will not dwell on the past any more except to mention the majority of our long serving members owe their allegiance to the comradeship built up through this era. The odd couple of circuits around Richmond Park and then packing the bike back in the car to go home is not the same.

Poor Kav doesn't seem to be having much success with his day trip to the continent with the fare paid.

The De Laune is one of the most wealthiest clubs in the country, subscriptions are low, clothing is heavily subsidized, in most cases entry fees to races are paid, there is an excellent regular monthly magazine and a web site second to none.

So why are we not attracting a regular flow of new members?

The answer in one word is traffic. In London, on average, one cyclist is killed every day and this takes no account of serious accidents. The plain fact is it is dangerous to ride here and certainly no responsible parent would allow a youngster to do so without being chaperoned.

The solution must be:-

(1) Move our base out of south London possibly in the direction of Kent where there are old established roots. This is not as drastic as it might first seem as most of our members now live out of the immediate area and whether it is to a meeting or a venue they have to get out their car.

(2) We need to think boldly including finding a new comfortable HQ out of South London (a Sports Centre?) where we have sole use of part once a month. Cost should be a secondary consideration the emphasis being on attracting new members. If there is storage space available, so much the better, as Brian Saxton cannot be expected to always be used as a warehouse for equipment.

(3) As Val mentioned, communications are essential to keep members fully informed of what is happening including decisions by the Committee. Regular reports in the press, not necessarily entirely on racing, are likely to be published if they have a local appeal and bring our name to the fore.

(4) To have a specific meeting place and time for club runs. Since no longer in London these should prove more popular in attracting local riders. How about an invitation run maybe to the Continent which could be publicised by a paid advert?

(5) There is a need for someone being responsible to answer queries from prospective new members and then initially to take under their wing before making introductions.

Perhaps a small sub-committee would be useful to sieve through new suggestions. It is not going to be an easy task but decisions have to be made for the long term future if the Club is to survive.

## Club Open 25

### Fred Peachey Memorial

Entries were a little slow coming in this year, by the time the closing date came I had 56 aspiring competitors with a promise of 20 or more from phone calls. The day after the closing day all promises were fulfilled and a host of others as well, probably as a result of my last minute badgering. We finally reached 99, so to make up my numbers to 100 Tony entered and volunteered to be number 1.

I had checked the course was free from any obstructions late on Saturday afternoon when I picked the hall key up. All was just fine. The day dawned bright, sunny, warm and thankfully wind free. Just what we needed after last years floods. Clearly set fair for some good times to be recorded.

My usual trusty crew of helpers who regularly marshal, run the tea bar, cope with the signing on and board writing up namely Stack, Kav, Tich, President Roy Savery, Alan Constable, Ann & Mick Hartley, Len Brown,



Beryl & Don White, Linda & Malc Adams, Jean & Alan Rowe, Vi & Geoff Sinnett all took their places at their allotted times and battle commenced.



Brian Wright kept an eagle eye out at the hall just to make sure no riders crept down to the start in anything but the proper racing attire, I don't think he was very busy thankfully. Brian Waller and Mike Peel tossed the riders away from the timekeeper down the 'gift hill' start and the event was under way.

Special thanks to Stack – how he fits all the signs, numbers, jackets etc into that tiny van I just don't know. I am glad that he took all the above paraphernalia home again as it would never have fitted in our car with bikes, bags, result board etc. Thanks also to daughter Claire who acted as the waitressing service, administering cakes and drinks for all the marshals scattered around the course. She later 'manned' the mobile phone receiving times from the finish timekeeper and relaying them to Malc on the board. And Tony, for keeping me stocked up with refreshments during the pre-event organisation – listening to me talking to myself and/or the computer through hours of typing, and generally helping with envelope filling.

I have already extended thanks from the club to the three timekeepers Kath Mephram at the start, Paul Mephram at the finish both of VC Elan/Harry Perry Cycles and Peter Baker of San Fairy Ann who took the riders times at 10½ miles. All three have already been booked for 2009.

Now down to the nitty gritty – the racing. Fastest club rider on the day was James Lett in 58.16 who is the Club 25 Champion for 2008. James was pushed all the way by Jon Archdeacon who finished in a personal best ride of 58.31. Third placed rider was Dave Haggart 1.5.44 who com-



**CLIFF PENDELTON**

plained he just couldn't get going. Sarah Archdeacon also recorded a personal best ride of 1.12.42. It was her first attempt at the distance so well done Sarah, you now have a target to go for next time. Last but not least – looks as though Clif Pendleton is enjoying the delights of the French cuisine a little too much these days – Clif thundered round in 1.20.30. At least a Peachey got into the awards – Tony - who led the San Fairy Ann vets team on standard, joined by son in law Ian Silvester and Clive Nye.

All in all, an extremely good day out. I have received numerous congratulatory e-mails on the marshalling, refreshments and general friendly atmosphere in the hall after the event. So give yourselves a great big pat on the back.

Just for the record the overall winner of the event and recipient of the Fred Peachey Memorial Cup was a Paul Mill in a time of 54.12. This trophy must almost have a regular place on his sideboard having won it 5 times in the last 9 years. Local lad Joe Tucker was the fastest Junior in 1.0.42 and takes the Johnson Trophy.



Thank you once again everyone who came out or helped in any way and to all the riders who make all our hard work worthwhile.

Val the Peach

**←← Is this why some rider went off course was Alan dozing ??????**

## FRED PEACHY MEMORIAL "25) Results & Awards

### Scratch

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Paul Mill</b>	<b>Team Edwards/Elite Cycling</b>	<b>54.12</b>	<b>£60</b>
<b>and recipient of the Fred Peachey Memorial Trophy for 1 year</b>				
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Andrew Meilak	ODSL.com Racing	54.15	£50
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Lee Turner	SigmaSport.co.uk	54.15	£50
4 <sup>th</sup>	Christian Yates	InGear Quickvit RT	54.50	£30
5 <sup>th</sup>	David Pollard	InGear Quickvit RT	55.25	£25
6 <sup>th</sup>	Phil Bull	VC Elan/Harry Perry Cycles	55.59	£20
7 <sup>th</sup>	Garry Banfield	Kent Cycles RC	56.02	£15
8 <sup>th</sup>	Nick Varley	Sydenham Wheelers	56.41	£10

### Juniors

<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Joe Tucker</b>	<b>Medway Velo Club</b>	<b>1.0.42</b>	<b>£25</b>
<b>and recipient of the Johnson Trophy for 1 year</b>				
2 <sup>nd</sup>	David Godden	Ashford Wheelers	1.1.49	£20
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Jake Butler	InGear Development Squad	1.2.21	£15

### Ladies

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bernadette Henry	Greenwich Tritons	1.4.42	£25
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Coralie Glaunes	Greenwich Tritons	1.8.37	£15
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Sarah Stewart	Greenwich Tritons	1.9.15	£10

### Veterans on Age Standard

1 <sup>st</sup>	Shay Giles	VC Deal	+18.38	£60
1 <sup>st</sup>	Alan Brown	West Kent RC	+18.38	£60
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Bob Stapley	Epsom RC	+18.27	£40
4 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Pollard	InGear Quickvit RT	+16.14	£30
5 <sup>th</sup>	Phil Bull	VC Elan/Harry Perry Cycles	+16.12	£25
6 <sup>th</sup>	Andy Burrows	hanet RC	+14.37	£20
7 <sup>th</sup>	Mick Walker	VC Elan/Harry Perry Cycles	+14.32	£15
8 <sup>th</sup>	Christian Yates	InGear Quickvit RT	+13.41	£10

### Teams - Scratch

1 <sup>st</sup>	InGear Quickvit RT	Yates/Pollard/Roberts	2.50.27	£15 ea
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Kent Cycles RC	Banfield/Bee/Bradford	2.55.44	£10 ea

### Teams -Veterans on Age Standard

1 <sup>st</sup>	InGear Quickvit RT	Pollard/Yates/Roberts	+42.26	£15 ea
2 <sup>nd</sup>	San Fairy Ann CC	Peachey/Nye/Silvester	+32.34	£10 ea



## ***JAMES LETT CLUB 25 MILE CHAMPION***

### **LATE NEWS**

I took part in the Brighton Excelsior CC 25 on 3 Aug. Course was G25/93 and the weather was appalling.

I came in 50th in a time of 1:16:07. The winner was David Pollard of In-gear Quick Vit in a time of 56.38.

Simon Lowe

## VTTA (Kent) 10 - 2 August

## KCA 12 Hour - 10August

## OMA '10' Result - 16 August

Winner Ken & Dot Fuller Trophy     Jon Archdeacon

## Runner up

Brian Dacey

21

## Ten Around Kirroughtree 10hr Endurance MTB Race



The Scottish organising group No Fuss Events have gradually and quietly been getting bigger on the MTB scene for the last couple of years. Starting with just one or two biggish but niche events they've progressed into a whole plethora of activities. The Ten Series is a collection of three 10hr races, one at Ben Nevis, one at Kirroughtree near Dumfries and the final round up in the wilds north of Inverness.

Kirroughtree is one of the Scottish trail centres that forms part of the '7 Stanes' network of man-made routes all over Scotland. This one is characterised by its swooping singletrack descents and tough fireroad climbs. At last years event I'd finished 5<sup>th</sup> in spite of riding most of the race with 2 cracked ribs(!) so I had high hopes again this time round. The day before the race I was busy fitting a new set of suspension forks to my bike (ignoring the general rule of "never race on new kit"), they were a test set that I was due to review for a mountain bike magazine.

I was staying with friends at a nearby B&B and we got down to the race site early on Saturday morning for our preparations. I'd managed to park my car right next to the edge of the course, which meant that getting spares and food would be easy – just reach over the tape, grab what I needed and go. The race started at 9.30am and I got a decent start as the field charged off up the first fireroad climb. The first two laps were uneventful; I maintained a reasonable pace and was well up in the top 10 of the Solo category, beginning to settle down into a pace I could keep for the duration. Unfortunately disaster struck on lap 2 as my rear disc hose sprang a leak after it caught on a passing rock. I rode the last of the lap with no rear brake as all the fluid had leaked out over the pads and the rotor, contaminating them to the point of uselessness. Amazingly I had all the spares and parts needed to do a running repair back at the car but by the time I'd fixed it and re-bled the brake I was effectively out of contention for the podium places.



From then on I relaxed a bit and took the opportunity to really enjoy the excellent course. The weather had been kind and the course, being mostly man-made hardpack drained very well anyway and was riding fast. It was the sort of trail that begs to be ridden harder and faster, rewarding good line choice with extra speed as the bike flew round the berms and skipped over the rock steps. The new forks had bedded in very quickly and were a huge improvement over the ones they'd replaced, much plusher and stiffer. I was stopping each lap now to get food and water, no longer particularly bothered about my finishing time. Various friends were racing too, occasionally I'd see one of them either on course or back at the car park refuelling or fixing their own mechanical problems.

The atmosphere was great, the good weather and excellent race course seemed to bring out the best in everybody – the course was so good that riders were desperate to go out for another lap to make the most of the fantastic 2-mile singletrack descent to the finish. In spite of my encroaching tiredness I managed to do 8 laps (82 miles) in just over 10hrs, which I was pleased with, given that I'd wasted nearly 40 minutes fixing the brake problem. I finished 19<sup>th</sup> in the Senior Men's Solo category and still managed to win a bottle of whisky for my efforts! An excellent course and I'll be back again next year hoping for a better result!



Kirroughtree, Home to some of the best technical singletrack in the country is also a favourite family venue with a wide range of trails, seasonal café and a great kids' play area.

## HAVE BIKE – WILL TRAVEL"

### A cycle tour to end all cycle tours!!

It was in the late spring in 1959 that we finalised our plans for a tour in France, but it was not until a rather chilly Saturday morning in September that an advance party of five met at Brixton Town Hall to set off for Newhaven where we embarked for Dieppe. The sea crossing was on the choppy side and Bill Smith turned a rather green colour, spending most of the voyage in "The Heads" (nautical term).

However, the grey cliffs of France were soon in sight and Bill managed to be first ashore. The crane began to work and we soon saw our bicycles, five of them tied together and swinging through the air in a spectacular movement, but they landed safely, with a sigh of relief from us.

We checked through Customs and set off for Rouen, stopping on the way for a snack, the first of many experiences in French cafes. John Preston quickly ordered up wine, (he can do that in any language) then someone mentioned egg omelette, which Madame produced. John Dods seized it, only to discover that it was meant to be shared among all of us! Being still hungry we asked for something more and after much interpretation, up came sausage and gherkins! John suggested more wine, but was shouted down.

With this food fortifying us, we pushed on, encountering what Bill called 3rd category climbs and a multitude of horn blowing French motorists. We reached Rouen in the early evening and enquiring for the youth hostel, a motor-cyclist came to our aid and escorted us "in line" to the very doorstep of the hostel. During the night we had our first encounter with mosquitoes and most of us were itching like mad in the morning.

We set off for Paris (132 Kilometres) and Bill mentioned 2nd category climbs. I think he must have been on the "saggy" side. Incidentally, you old-timers, Bill pushed a 68" fixed gear and was first up the 'mountains' on several occasions. We rolled into 'Gay Paris' in the height of the Sunday evening rush period and made our way to the Youth hostel, where we had booked in advance, only to find that our booking had been taken because we arrived so late! The warden gave us the address of another hostel and having asked the way of several gendarmes, we found it. Here the warden, who spoke no English, handed us forms to fill up and sign, but they were all in French and Bill was afraid that we might be joining the Foreign



Legion or the French Communist party! But a kind English miss came to our aid and we soon had the matter put right.

Next morning we made our way through the grey mist of the Bois de Boulogne, past the horse racing track at Longchamps, home of the French 'Derby' (Grand Prix de Paris) and on to L' Arc de Triomphe for our rendezvous with Alan Rowe and Alan Constable who had come through on the night train from London, having, ridden in the Club '50' on the Sunday morning. We found them, appropriately enough, reading an English newspaper and Alan Rowe told us that missing two days of his holiday had not been in vain, having done his personal best in the '50' and clinched the club championship.

The other Alan looked like, one of "The Chelsea Set" with his up and coming beard, which, he resolved not to shave until he reached home again. Being hungry again, we soon found a cafe with a convenient menu shown in French on one side and with an English translation opposite. We all chose steak and chips; John Preston had wine, but the rest of us chose coffee.

As we were not due to leave Paris until that evening - by train for Avignon - we had some hours to spend in the city, but we, failed to see most of the accepted sights. We had a glimpse of the Eiffel Tower, for example and we managed to find the Unis Sport shop, but it was closed. So we wandered around in true De Laune fashion, window shopping. As the day wore on, we got more and more into the holiday spirit and the more rowdy element (all of us) tried jousting with the long French bread - bought for our night's refreshment (we were obvious loafers) but this jousting ceased abruptly when a loaf was broken over Mike Jenner's head.

We duly reached the Gare du Lyon where we registered our bicycles through to Avignon at the cost of only one shilling each for some 600 miles, and then at 9p.m. we boarded the train with our food, wine and beer.

The eighth seat was taken by a very nice looking young Frenchwoman, who spoke excellent English, so we had to mind the language and jokes.

The train moved on and out came our cards, but we soon tired of playing and the train was not as comfortable as we had hoped, for a 10 hour journey. It was also occupied by thousands of French soldiers, accompa-

nied by some nice Alsatian dogs. We wondered if it might be a troop train and we had enlisted in the Foreign Legion after all. We tried to sleep and failed. Then someone brought up the subject of politics and we argued till early morning, while the Froggies knocked on the carriage walls in a vain attempt to quieten us. The train stopped at Valance where our French companion left us. The sun was rising and we had our first glimpse of the Alps and the Rhone Valley. So we got safely to Avignon, having, "enjoyed" about one hour's sleep. We felt weak and lousy - just how you feel after a time trial.

After repairing some slight mechanical troubles - the French railways had "pranged" John Dods' front changer - we set off without any breakfast to cover some 50 miles, to Aix (pronounced 'aches') en Provence. The road was relatively flat with only one first category mountain about halfway. Bill Smith, with his single fixed gear, was considered the weakest rider in our team (for him, it was French without gears!) but it was Alan Constable who saw the peloton disappearing in the distance and he had to be revived with grapes "borrowed" from a nearby vineyard. We took Aix en Provence by storm and got soaked in the first rain they had had for weeks, so we decided to stop the night, especially as John Dods reported seeing a Casino, (which turned out to be a cinema!) The two Alans said they did not smell right so we sought the Salle des Bains (public baths) and enjoyed hot showers and a change of clothes and then went on to the Youth Hostel.

Alan Rowe and Alan Constable were having a pretty hectic holiday - they had been up early on Sunday, riding in the '50', travelled all night to Paris, where they walked around most of Monday; another all-night train journey, a ride of 40 odd miles, then some evening sport which is best not written about. In all, some 66 hours with little or no sleep.

Morning soon came and we had only 30 miles or so to reach the French south coast. There were several hostels to choose from and we decided on La Ciotat, due south of our present position. This changed the plan of our tour as we had hoped to reach Nice, but this was now further east. It was early afternoon when we reached the Mediterranean and we were soon swimming in the warm and clear water, Dods being first in, with all

of us second and we spent the afternoon sun-bathing and figure spotting with John Dods' binoculars.

By the time we reached La Ciotat, the 600 miles we had travelled began to take their toll and fatigue was setting in. With diplomatic skill, Mike Jenner called a summit conference and it was decided by democratic vote that we should stay in La Ciotat for at least two days. Time enough to relax, recuperate and enjoy life on the French Riviera, which, after all, was our main objective!

The hostel was the best that we encountered in France; it was a clean, well kept villa that had obviously seen better times. The beds were allocated, one each, and our belongings stowed safely away and then we made our way to a cafe recommended by the Aubergiste. The language barrier made ordering somewhat tedious, but by using weak French and strong English a five course meal with, of course, wine, was brought forth. John Preston.

however, who preferred drinking alone to sharing a bottle ordered, in shattered French, "un bottle of that" and was well away for the rest of the evening.

Five courses heavier and 750 francs lighter we made a tour of the town buying postcards (clean) and window shopping. We returned via the same café, stopping for a night-cap (Sleep easy - Martini). As we came out, however, we found a five course meal on the pavement and John Preston, who was in pretty bad shape. We discovered, not for the first time, that J.P. plus alcohol, equals trouble. The café proprietor thought the situation was rather amusing as he swept poor John's guts down the drain, but we were rather more sympathetic and that night six De Laune cyclists and a "corpse" returned to the hostel!

The next day we all took our swimming gear to a small, picturesque cove not far from the town; by then Johnny Preston had recovered from the night before and was all ready for another "booze up". Only two of the party, by the way, escaped internal disorder (gut trouble). They were Mick Jenner and John Dods and everyone knows they have digestions like sewers, complete with man-holes!

In the short time we were at La Ciotat we made friends with a cafe proprietor and his son, Danny; they seemed to welcome us with open arms - "Voila ze English mugs". It was on our third day there that we agreed to help Danny retrieve his yacht, which had sunk in the harbour. With the engineering ingenuity associated with the De Laune C.C. we manoeuvred the rotting wreck until it was half in the harbour and half on the quay. Mick Jenner shouted orders which nobody obeyed and we began to attract a fair crowd, especially when a loud crack from the

bottom of the boat suggested that at any moment the whole thing might break in two. Still no-one obeyed Mick's orders, the danger was averted, and the crowd dispersed, disappointed.



De Laune Salvage Company at work

We were really looking forward to the dinner which we understood was the reward for our salvage work and most of us had not eaten a thing all day, in eager anticipation. You can imagine our disappointment when we discovered that lemonade was all that we were going to get.

Bill Smith suggested that we should push the boat back into the harbour and some of us were inclined to support him, but the thought of all the trouble we had in pulling out the stinking thing, made us change our minds. The days we spent in La Ciotat were most enjoyable; we came away with happy memories and hope to return some day.

(Who took the above photo or how we came by it, is unknown. Mick Jenner can be seen (with the jazzy swimming trunks); next to him is Bill Smith; opposite them is Alan Rowe. Next to Bill is John Preston, then Alan Constable. Who is in the water is also unknown.)

On the Sunday, with one week of the tour over we made our way to the next hostel

in Six-Fours. This can be described as a jungle, full of insect and reptile life. While trying to find the place; I (Mike Jenner) lost the rest of the party and landed up with two Italians who were also looking for this hostel. After much cyclo-cross, we located it and found the others had arrived and were looking for me.

Soon they returned carrying food of all descriptions and after some negotiations I managed to get a share and we went to the kitchen to cook it. The pots and pans were full of ants, thousands of them! One of the items on the dinner menu that night proved to be chicken noodle soup, with ants! In the dormitory we found a lizard on the bed, Bill knocked off its tail and it proved to be quite a playful fellow.

The evening's activities ranged from playing cards, with French francs - very profitable, talking with Yanks, Ities and Jerries etc, to preparing for the attack of mosquitoes. My sleeping gear included socks, pyjama trousers sealed with cycle clips, woollen jumper knotted at the sleeves, scarf and hat! Also I had an anointing with anti-mosquito paste. I managed to sleep without getting bitten! Earlier that evening one of the opposite sex took a fancy to one of our party, or was it the other way round? The facts never came out, so I cannot tell you much, except that she was a whole lotta woman! We also know he found romance - someone switched the light on!

Next day we turned our wheels towards home, making overnight stops at Aix and Avignon. This latter stage was the fastest of the tour, a burn up all the way with Alan Rowe and me taking pace from a lorry for the last 10km. Alan won the sprint to the Avignon sign and Gordon wandered in twenty minutes later, feeling sick. We found the hostel and the warden directed us to our beds, which much to our surprise, were under canvas in the back-yard! After shaving in cold water we cooked up a meal and the French certainly have some funny coloured baked beans. This hostel was situated in a most beautiful spot, right in front of the famous bridge of Avignon, with the Palais des Papes, an official French residence of the Pope, and the old city walls in the back-ground. At night this splendid scene was floodlit and reflected in the water of the River Rhone.

Evening found us at Avignon station in preparation for another hectic night on the train. We found our reserved seats and were soon on our way. Arrived in Paris, we washed and smartened up and then tried to find the United Nations Hostel - which had been recommended by a Commonwealth friend at La Ciotat.

After much map reading and argument, when diplomacy broke down and after I had to put in a sharp veto, we traced the place, only to find that it was only a temporary hostel and was now being used as a school, so we made instead for the place where we had stayed before; booked our accommodation, parked the bikes and dressed for town.

We made for the Metro, where we each bought a book of tickets (10 journeys) which can be used for any distance throughout the network of underground railways beneath Paris.

Following lunch we planned our final journey home. Gordon, not feeling too well, and Alan Constable decided to leave next morning- but the rest stayed another day. Then we paid a visit to "Unis Sport" the well-known Paris cycle shop, where we spent some 10,000 francs on equipment. Then we went to the Eiffel Tower and afterwards back to the hostel.

The gramophone was playing in the common room and the subject was cha-cha, whilst the objects looked rather like Parisian Left Bank types. The surroundings happened to be our dormitory and when the Warden came to stop the dancing we put down our beds and were soon asleep. The next thing I knew, Alan was shaking me to say au revoir, as he and Gordon left for London.

We spent the day sight-seeing, visiting many well-known places of interest. Evening took us to the Moulin Rouge, whilst two of the party went to a strip-tease show, but I took a walk along the Champs Elysee and a very impressive sight it was. We met at the hostel later, the strip-tease-goers arriving after midnight, to be caught by the Warden who told them in very polite French to leave in the morning, which in fact it already was!

Next morning we boarded the London boat train and were soon in "Blighty", but Bill and I were the only two to cycle back to London. Alan Rowe had a good excuse to travel by train as he had to ride in the Club "25" next morning and to our amazement he won it! This goes to show that you do not need to diet to be a champion!

**Acknowledgements to Brian Saxton, for kindly retrieving the appropriate DLNs for me. (first published 1960)**

**Alan Constable**



# DATES TO REMEMBER

## Diary Social/Club for 2008

Friday	7 Nov		Belgium Night	Blackheath Harriers
Sunday	16 Nov	10.30	Remembrance Service	Newnham

## Club & Inter-Club Events for 2008

Saturday	6 Sep	07.15	Interclub 10 Clud as above	Q10/19
Sunday	14 Sep	08.30	Autumn 25	G25/53
Sunday	28 Sep	12.00	Down Hill / Club run 10.00	Tilburstow Hill
Sunday	5 Oct	11.00	Hill Climb	GH/31 Titsey Hill

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**CLOSING DATE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE 24th SEPTEMBER**

Anything for inclusion please send to:

41 Mayes Close

Phone or Fax 01883 627809

Warlingham

E-mail [mark.ballamy@virgin.net](mailto:mark.ballamy@virgin.net)

Surrey CR6 9LB

Produced by **Mark Ballamy**

Distributed by **Brian Saxton**