



NEWSLETTER October 2021

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The summer sun is fading as the year grows old...

History teaches us that crises beget innovation and thus it was that our Social Secretary, Sue, came up with the idea of

A SUMMER SOCIAL

to fill the social vacuum created by the loss of our annual social/dinner/prizegiving with a COVID-safe, high summer outdoor event. All we needed was an outdoor venue and we were grateful to Chris and Paula Dyason for putting their splendid and



spacious garden in Histon at the disposal of the club on the last day of July.

Our genial host

This being an English summer, spaciousness sufficient for a marquee, or large gazebo was a necessary precaution but in the event the weather remained largely benign and around 50 members

enjoyed a splendid spread of sandwiches and cakes and the challenge of recognising people's actual faces without the aid of the



usual distinguishing features of bikes, helmets, sunglasses and so on. **Above, the snapper snapped. Davey Jones guards the food.**

A fair number of people rode to the event,



resulting in a good deal of sartorial variety. Most members may not be aware that Chris and Paula are the UK's foremost

specialist growers and suppliers of day lilies, of such celebrity indeed that there are times when you can barely open your copy of *Country Life* without seeing one or both of them smiling from its pages,



though Chris insists that Paula is the real expert and he the mere labourer – all sounds a bit D H Lawrence to me.

Chris's specialist skills appear to be in innovative building design, witness this



ingenious first-floor patio door feature for a bedroom for unwelcome guests (left).

Following the success of this year's experiment, Chris and Paula have kindly agreed to repeat it next year. If you weren't there, you missed a great afternoon, so make sure you sign up in 2022.



CLUB RUNS

Throughout the pandemic, club runs have remained a vibrant aspect of club life and the booking system has been such a success that it may well be here to stay.

Will Lockhart writes about one of the more intrepid recent forays:

Stowmarket to Sizewell

A small group of intermediate riders, tired of cycling on the same old roads, made their way to Stowmarket, most of them by train, then headed east to Sizewell. We passed through Framlingham on the way out, clearly a popular stopping place for many



local riders but we'd only been going for an hour so we kept moving. A major advantage of cycling in this part of Suffolk

is that the absence of nearby large towns and a good network of minor roads meant we encountered very little traffic and almost completely avoided A roads.



Sizewell is best known for the nuclear power station there, but in fact it's a very pleasant part of the coast. There's a café right on the beach, Sizewell Tea, which at the time of writing was doing takeaway lunches, cakes and drinks - very friendly and efficient they were too.



As we queued up to order, we learned that earlier that morning there had been a good-natured protest about the proposed development of a third reactor, which had dispersed shortly before we arrived.

We sat on the grassy bank overlooking the shingle beach and the North Sea, with our refreshments, and enjoyed the late September hazy sunshine.



The sound of waves breaking gently on shingle was starting to get quite soporific, so slightly reluctantly we got back on our bikes and headed back to Stowmarket, the return route taking us past Snape Maltings, a complex of Victorian buildings which have been converted into shops, places to eat, and a concert hall.

My route planning had been pretty good so far, but just outside of Wickham Market we hit a stretch of byroad which in places was quite well covered in sand although most of it was rideable. It didn't go on for very long, fortunately, and we soon had our wheels back on tarmac. As we made our way back to Stowmarket along the quiet Suffolk lanes threatening clouds appeared on the horizon, but satisfyingly the first drops of rain only started to fall just as we arrived back at Stowmarket's railway station.

Stats: 110km, 650m of climbing, just over four hours of riding.

Link to the route:

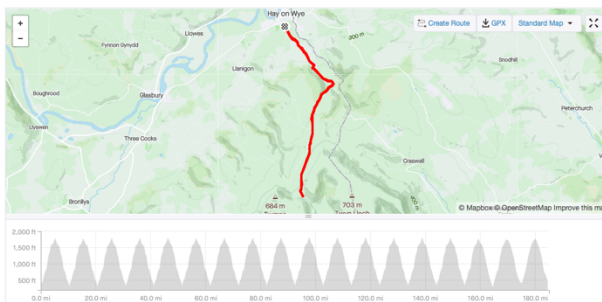
<https://ridewithgps.com/routes/37576733>

Strava:

<https://www.strava.com/activities/5986969490>

WHAT HAS HALF A MILLION FEET AND ONE SORE BUM?

Michael Coleman describes a self-inflicted ordeal



The answer is my year on a bike. Having been challenged to write an article about Everesting, I thought I'd spare you a pedal-stroke-by-pedal-stroke account (there were lots!) and treat you instead to a summary of what Everesting is, why it is (or why it was for me), where it was, and what it's like to do one. Be warned: this story has many ups and downs so if you're not up for the ride it's time to get off now!

Everesting is a one-day ascent of 8,848m by repetitions of a single hill. For me that meant 18 ascents and descents of Gospel Pass near Hay-on-Wye from 5.15am-11.15pm on June 19th. Six blocks of three, interspersed by stops for salty crisps, cake, coffee and electrolyte drinks at Drover Cycles café, conveniently located at the foot of the climb.

I had a vague idea of 'why' before starting (something about bucket lists and the fancy kit you get to buy from

everesting.cc) but a much better idea after: a clearer distinction between real limits, imagined limits and consciously chosen limits.

At a far younger age, I remember thinking I might just manage a 100 mile ride someday but definitely no further. Then one day I did that on a flat course before collapsing in a heap. But what was that about when, 25 years later, the GPS clocks up 185 miles 'just' as a by-product of Everesting, and the training includes 200 miles to and from the Chilterns, up every hill worth mentioning and four times up Whiteleaf? If that imagined limit was so wrong, how many people in our everyday lives wrongly think our 100km club runs would be beyond them? And before we all get too smug, what else do we imagine we can't do elsewhere in our lives?

Progressively increasing training is everything of course, along with the belief in what it achieves, hence the half million feet of climbing. From 10 ascents of Royston Heath in February (at that time an exhausting 1/16th of the total ascent finally needed), building up to 20 midweek Chapel Hills each week, and half-Everesting three times on Holme Moss (21 ascents each time) in April/May, the progress, and weight loss, was clear. A projected time of 16h in February progressively shrank to 11.5h by May despite ascending 8x as high. But Gospel Pass is another story. Its fluctuating gradient doesn't provide the welcome recoveries you might imagine, but is instead like Everesting on the consistent inclines of Holme Moss before adding another 60 miles on the flat. The twisty,

narrow descent with suicidal wild horses slows it down even more so the final ride came in at 15h plus 3h of total rests. If you want to Everest quickly, don't do Gospel Pass, but if you want wonderful views, great cakes and friendly chats from people who understand your plight, there's nowhere better. If, of course, you want to Everest at all!

If it was events on the bike that exposed the imaginary limit, it was a conversation off it that clarified real and chosen limits. In the calorie stop after ascent 12, I bumped into Alex Hill – the first person in the UK to do a double Everest. On any other day, the notion of double Everesting would be unthinkable to me, even if the idea of doing a single Everest had been cooking for a while. But in that context, with the word 'can't' necessarily buried somewhere very deep, questions of 'Could I?' and 'Would I?' get a consideration they wouldn't normally get. And every conversation on this topic starts with 'Why?' and ends with 'What's next?'

Everesting.cc lists many people older than my 57 years who have Everested – up to age 75 even. So with enough training who knows? But this is where the chosen limit comes in. If double Everesting were possible at all, the training needed would take too much time, be too exhausting for too many weeks, involve too many other sacrifices and not even be good for health. Amid the inevitable cries from my family of 'thank god he's finally realised!' there is something profoundly important here. Mental limits protect us from our true limits for our own safety. But we can

choose them consciously based on evidence, or imagine them far lower than they really are.

Most Everesting articles tell you it's as much about psychology as physiology. That's very true because without the right mindset it probably isn't possible. The concept of '*Look at what you've done, not at what you haven't*' is something I've always needed more of in other parts of life, but as a key to Everesting it's completely indispensable. After 3 ascents, and with a mouth full of Drover Cycles cake, I enthusiastically texted my wife to report on progress. The reply of: "Only 15 to go!" wasn't quite what I wanted to hear, but at that moment it was water off a duck's back. Just onwards and upwards!

Another tip from a Geraint Thomas and Steve Peters podcast was: '*Once you've made the decision, motivation doesn't come into it, you just get on with it*'. So when a group of touring cyclists, who rode with me on ascent 8, watched me turn around at the top and asked "Isn't that demotivating?" they may as well have asked me in Welsh. I had no connection with that thought. Even if I completely agree that touring is more fun, that's comparing apples with oranges. And other tips were equally useful: that *you can choose to focus on beautiful countryside or focus on pain*; that *deep but sustainable breathing is a simple, basic pleasure*, and that *failing to relax, or ever doubting the outcome, wastes energy you simply cannot afford*. This was deep stuff, made essential by the challenge, with benefits that go well beyond cycling.

Fully recovering took about 2-3 weeks, and while extreme fitness does not, and probably cannot last, an underlying level does. Three months on I couldn't do it now. But it was fun chasing my daughter's e-bike up a 250m Welsh hill on holiday, even if two months earlier she might have had to chase me. Descending a Welsh mountain on foot, however, was a whole different experience. Big muscles in the 'wrong' places first ache, then they get sore, then around ¼ of the way down the mountain they become seriously painful! Various family members found it either amusing for me to be the one holding up the party for once, or irritating for slowing down their mountain goat descents back to the house where the food was.

Definitely no regrets though. Slowly, the legs are returning to a normal shape, and hopefully the psychology lessons will stick for good.

If you want to give it a go, give me a shout on michaelcoleman28@gmail.com. I can give lots more tips on hydration, nutrition, pacing, choice of hill and more. Just don't ask me to do it with you!

CLUB TIME TRIALS

The continuation of a full programme of evening club events, some timed by Strava, some timed by live human, some shared with Newmarket C&TC, has been one of the triumphs of the last two seasons and one for which we owe a lot of thanks to the energy and creative thinking of Assistant TT Secretary Will Burton. This year, we were even able to run championships –

well, two of them at least – the 25 falling victim to road works.

Newly crowned 10 mile champion, Chris Hoole shares his impressions:



Photo: Davey Jones

As a newcomer to the Cambridgeshire cycling scene, having moved to the county in March 2020, just a week before lockdown 1.0, I was very pleased finally to have the opportunity to join and ride with the Club this year. I'm also still relatively new to time trialling, after taking up the sport just two years ago, following one too many road race/crit crashes. Cambridge offered the perfect opportunity to explore this new challenge. I'm certainly still progressing with a lot to learn, but I've been amazed by the organisation and commitment of Will and the Club, providing me and other riders with the opportunity to test ourselves against the clock on a weekly basis. And, whilst I haven't ridden as much as I would have liked, the availability of regular organised rides has allowed me to improve

throughout the year. I was very surprised, but equally honoured, to win the club 10, and very much look forward to riding and helping more with the Club next year. Still a lot to do if I'm to break the elusive 20 minute barrier!

The other individual club TT championship decided this year was the Hill Climb and this went to one of the perennial top performers on Beechwoods, James Ward in 1 minute, 44 seconds, by 5 seconds from Will Burton.



Photo: Davey Jones

ROUTE PLANNING

Will Lockhart shares his tips

Planning a cycling route, even on roads that you do not know, can be done relatively easily using freely available online tools. My favoured website is

www.ridewithgps.com (RWGPS) - you'll need to sign up for an account, but their free 'Starter' package is enough to get you going; the paid for accounts come with more bells and whistles, but they're mostly not essential. The one thing you do get with paid accounts which is useful are advance turn notifications. I won't attempt to give a full tutorial here, there's help available from the website itself, but here's a brief outline.

You can jump to a particular area by typing it into the 'Enter location' box at top right, e.g. "Cambridge, UK". The planner defaults to somewhere in the USA. Click to select your start point, then click to add to your route. You can just click on your planned destination, e.g. a café stop, and have the entire route calculated in one go - which happens instantaneously. You can adjust the route by clicking on part of it and dragging it onto another road, but this will sometimes result in almost the entire route changing. You can use control points to stop this happening; change the 'Click action' to 'Control point'. Now when you click on the route, this will add a control point which locks the route at that specific place. You can use a pair of control points to restrict any changes you make to the route to be between those two control points. Click on a control point to remove it. Just remember if you want to go back to adding to the route to change the 'Click action' back to 'Add to route'.

As long as you have the routing type set to 'Cycling' the planner will generally try to select quieter roads, but because it also tries to find the shortest route it will

sometimes come up with a route that has lengthy stretches on busy A roads. Using control points, edit the route to avoid the A roads. I also tend to avoid B roads wherever possible, and instead stick only to minor roads. This is where it can be useful to refer to an Ordnance Survey map. RWGPS can display a variety of different maps, including satellite, Google and Open Street Map, but not the OS maps. However, those of you who regularly visit the club website will know from David McGaw's recent blog that OS maps are available on Microsoft's mapping site (maps.bing.com). Minor roads are drawn in yellow on OS maps, B roads in brown, and A roads in red, or green. Keep an eye out for byroads - which have red or green circular dots along their length - if you read the piece on the ride to Sizewell, the sand covered byroad was one obstacle I could have avoided at the planning stage.

Once I've got a route that I'm broadly happy with, I'll normally go and check it against the OS map to look for any problems. One slightly annoying habit of RWGPS is that it will happily route you down a bridleway or sometimes even a footpath. It's easy to check for these on the OS maps, as well as unbridged fords, and particularly steep climbs or descents. Another very useful RWGPS feature is that you can switch into Google Street View, and virtually inspect any part of the route.

Another useful online tool is www.roadworks.org (which redirects you to one.network, but I can only remember the first address). This allows you to check for upcoming road works, closures etc. It's

not perfect though - you can check for scheduled works today, or in the next two weeks, and you have to read the details carefully to check if, for example, a closure is night-time only, or to find the dates.

Inevitably your route will need to cross more major roads. It's worth spending a little time to find the best place to do this, even if it involves a detour. There are usually multiple options, and a direct crossing, or a short dog leg is preferable to a lengthier stretch on the main road. Street View can be useful here for checking if your intended crossing point has cyclist friendly features, such as a central reservation, or filter lanes, to get you out of the path of traffic quicker.

If you're planning a circular route then you can either generate two routes, one for the out leg, one for the return leg, but this isn't necessary. You can start by generating a route to, for example, the mid-point of the ride, or a planned café stop, and once you're happy with that, add the return part of the route. Probably the only time I would advise generating separate routes is when you want to retrace your outward route - since the outward and return routes will mostly overlap, it's difficult to edit the outward route.

You can save your route at any point, and save updated versions of it. You'll be prompted to give it a name when you do this. The final step is to export it in a format that your cycling computer will understand. Use the 'Jump to' menu to jump to your list of saved routes, and click on the name of the route you want to

export - this will show an overview of the route, and elevation profile. Under the 'More' menu, choose Export as file, then select file format you want. There's help on which format is needed for different devices. Newer Garmins use FIT courses, older ones TCX courses. There's help on what to do with the file to get it onto your device or you could upload it to Garmin Connect, and send it to your device from there. There are also instructions on how to get routes onto other computers (Wahoo, Hammerhead).

CX GETS UNDER WAY

Will Burton explores the mud

In spite of the fuel crisis, I was able to make the 80-mile round trip to Milton Keynes on 25/09 in order to race Velobants' CX in the City, part of the Central CX League. Initially I had only signed up to race the senior men's race, but after some persuasion, I converted my old touring frameset into a somewhat bodged singlespeed CX rig. On arrival at Campbell Park, which hosted a round of the 2014/15 CX World Cup, I assembled both my bikes and recced the course. Due to the early season weather, it was a dry and dusty course, with heavy grass in areas and thick, dry loam in others, a world apart from the dense mud I had spent my winter riding on. I lined up for the SSCX race and slowly chugged away at the start, diesel style (note to self, 50/21 is too hard!). Quickly I began to get a rhythm for

the course and was lapping "comfortably" around 6:15 a lap, grinding uphill and careering downhill, praying my cantilevers would stop me. I battled around the course and finished 8th from 12 singlespeeders, as well as catching some of the 50+ men who'd started 2 minutes ahead of us - always nice to get a catch!

2 hours later, after some Belgian frites and waffles, I slipped out of my baggies and into my skinsuit and went over to the start for the senior men's race. Already feeling a touch out of place with my 29er MTB, I felt even more so lining up next to pro road rider Matt Ellis from Saint Piran, a UCI Continental

Team. Imposter syndrome aside, I shot off the line (largely thanks to my easy MTB gearing) and made a couple of places up at the start. Thereafter I



kept a steady rhythm, suffering uphill, enjoying the bumpy downhills, and trying not to crash when dismounting, bunny hopping, or sliding down off-camber sections. I managed to complete 10 laps at the end of it, 2 less than Matt did, but again lapped consistently around the 6:10 mark with my final lap being my fastest at 5:55.

After a season mainly spent down fast A-roads in an aero position fretting about power and heart rate, CX was a welcome change and a great way to begin my off-season now that there's only about 3 races left for me this year. *(photo Blue Shark images)*

OPEN TIME TRIALS

The Club's - by which one means Chris Dyason's – third open promotion of the year, the Open 25 for the John Brown Memorial Trophies, took place on Sunday 12th September on the A428-based F2A/25 course between Madingley and Caxton Gibbet.

The week leading up to the event, was a white-knuckle ride for Chris, owing to a shortfall of volunteers for marshalling and other necessary jobs, possibly a consequence of volunteering fatigue after two previous promotions, but after a few sleepless nights for him, enough club members stepped up to the plate for the event to prove its usual, meticulously-organised triumph. We do have an excellent reputation for the quality of our open events, and that is down to Chris's hard work and the support our events get from the wider membership, which invariably comes good in the end, and for which we and all the competitors are grateful but I'm sure Chris could do without the anxiety.

The day dawned warm and sunny, with the merest of zephyrs, but it was from the NW -the least helpful direction - meaning a cross-headwind unimpeded by hedges on the way out, whilst what tailwind there might have been on the return never made it through the hedges on the north side of the carriageway. Pressure was high, too, so conditions did not promise the sort of speedfest delivered by last year's event.

There was much speculation as to how last man off, Marcus Christie, would perform.



*Photos:
Davey Jones*

A professional, and Irish time trial champion, known to have a monstrous engine, but an unknown quantity on this side of the Irish Sea, Christie had made the journey from Ballymena, equipped with Bradley Wiggins' old Pinarello Bolide, in search of a fast course to prove a point to the Irish Federation's selectors for the forthcoming World Championships.

He succeeded admirably, setting a new course record of 45:45, putting a full three minutes

between himself and the second man in a class field, and was duly

despatched to Flanders with Ryan Mullen to uphold Irish honour, only to be put firmly in his place, like the rest of the world, by Filippo Ganna.



Fastest woman was A3crg's Angela Carpenter, (above) who has been peerless this season, with 51:35, which also gave

her overall best time on veterans' standard.



Best placed Cambridge rider Adam Fisher (above) recorded a season's best 51:46 and led Martin Reynolds (below) and Andy Grant to the second team award behind the sponsored Drag2zero squad.



Among the male veterans on standard, Andy took second place and Colin Lizieri (above right) sixth.

Andy and Colin, with Ann Shuttleworth, also took the team award at the CC Breckland 25 in July.



In other races across the season, Andy followed up his National Veterans' 50-mile title with National Age records at every distance at which he competed, breaking the record twice at 10 and 50 miles. At the time of writing, in addition, he appears to have clinched the National Veterans' season-long short distance competition decided on the aggregation of veterans' standards over two ten and two 25-mile events.



Andy Grant (all photos Davey Jones except that of Colin, by Stuart Field)

FINALLY, PLEASE NOTE:

- If you have been racing this year and believe you have broken a club record or may have qualified as the winner of a club trophy, it is important that you contact the Records Secretary, Ken Platts, (there is a link on the *Contact us* tab on the web site), to ensure that your performance isn't overlooked.
- From 17th October, Sunday club runs will revert to their traditional assembly point at Addenbrookes, but the booking system will remain in force.
- The AGM will be on Monday 15th November and will be held online. There are a number of vacancies on the committee. In particular, we need: a trophies secretary (very much a seasonal job; nothing to do for most of the year); an off-road secretary, to represent the interests of cyclo crossers, gravel riders and MTB exponents, and we would be interested to hear from anyone who has the aptitude and skills to develop the club's social media presence.