

1876



1976

# ANNIVERSARY RELIABILITY TRIAL

This is to Certify  
that

1976

This year, members prepared to celebrate the Club's centenary. In January, Barbara Powell organised a dinner, attended by many distinguished guests from the cycling world.

The 'Open 10' in May had eight club entrants, including Maurice and Esther Carpenter and their two elder sons. By July, the racing season was in full swing. Peter Baker became the first Hastings rider to beat the hour, recording 58m 59s for 25 miles, and in the same week did his best 10 mile time of 23m 33s. Tourists, Dave and Audrey Morris, covered many miles at a slightly slower speed. By September, it was known that F. Baker and Jack Southenden had both finished in the E.S.C.A. Best All Rounder competition.

In October, members and friends held an anniversary lunch meeting, and on the same day, M. Carpenter achieved a time of 23m 44s for 10 miles. A week later, 12 riders completed 50 miles in 4½ hours in the Reliability Trial.

At the A.G.M. in November, Officers elected were: President and Chairman - A. Coleman. V. Chairman - R. Powell. Secretary - Mrs. E. Carpenter. Treasurer - D. Coleman. Press Secretary - D. Morris. Committee - J. Lawrence, E. Spray and P. Baker. It is notable that E. Spray resigned as Treasurer after 25 years in office.

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The possibility of forming a bicycle club for the district of Hastings and St. Leonards was seriously discussed by a few men in the bar parlour of the Old Swan Hotel, in the High Street of Hastings, one evening in the September of this year. These originators of the Club included F. Garrett (son of a well known doctor of Havelock Road, Hastings), E. C. Gilbert and T. Butchers, three, at least, who were active bicycle riders.

A more formal meeting, the one which actually inaugurated the Club, as recorded in the Club's first minutes book, was held at the Swan Hotel, Hastings, on Thursday, October 12th, 1876, and from this date the Hastings and St. Leonards' Bicycle Club set off with eight members. The first officers included F. Garrett as captain, although he was lost to the Club within a year when he left the district, E. C. Gilbert as sub-captain, William Carswell as secretary, and A. J. White, treasurer. Notices of the formation of the Club were published in the local Press. The "Swan", which used to stable and house the London stage coach, at a time when it was also the leading hotel in the town, became club headquarters and the starting place for the first club runs.

To establish the Club was no easy matter as there was little support at first, and for the first few months, the winter period when there would not have been much riding anyway, there were only four or five active riding members.

At this time it was considered necessary to have a club bicycle, partly to help attract recruits, and at the next official meeting, held at the "Swan" on Thursday, October 19th, E. C. Gilbert was commissioned to buy a wooden bicycle for the sum of fifteen shillings. However, Gilbert was unable to obtain one at that price, so at the next committee meeting, just one week later, F. Garrett was asked to buy a machine for not more than twenty-five shillings. But Garrett also was unsuccessful in the quest for a boneshaker, so it was left to the treasurer to get one, and eventually a wooden bicycle, bought for the sum of

*Eric James*

successfully

completed

50 miles

in

4-5 hours

Timekeeper.....

Event Secretary..... *P. Baker*

Lawson 'Lever' Safety Bicycle, 1876

