

BONK!

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**East Sussex
Cycling Association**

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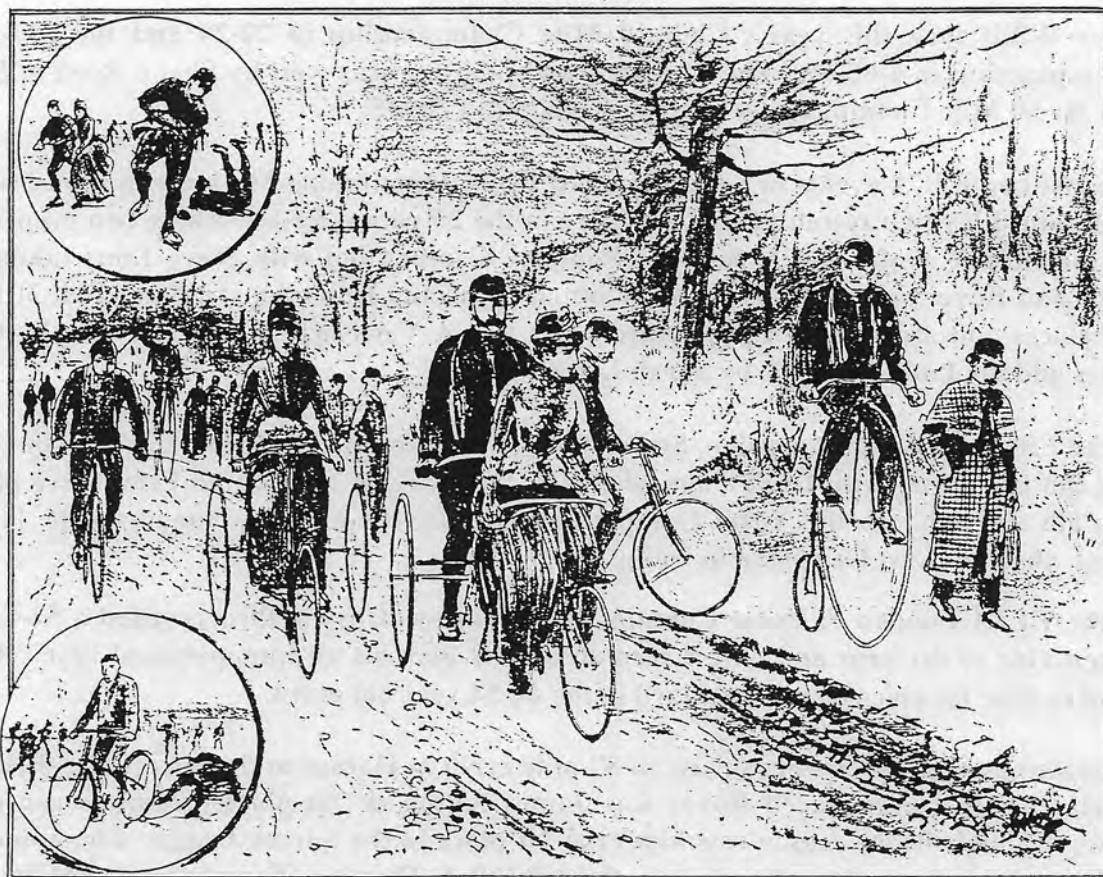
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"Bicycling News" Cartoon.

JANUARY 12th, 1889.



Riding in the New Year

EASTBOURNE ROVERS / PHOENIX CYCLES

Writing about the Rovers rides in the last issue of BONK took us to about the third week in August, so I shall now fill you in on what has happened since then.

The Rovers 25 mile record of 52-40, set only a few weeks ago by Steve Willis, was smashed by James Dear with a sensational 52-28, which took 8th place in the Essex Roads event won by Shaun Yates in 49-26. In the same event the Club team record was lowered by over two minutes to 2-40-23. James was backed by Jon Sharples in 53-15 and Steve Willis in 54-40 and their performance was good enough to take 1st team in the event. Fourth man for the Rovers was Simon Prior in 55-56.

In the Essex CRA 50, Simon Prior was unlucky not to crack Cliff Sharp's 1970 record of 1-52-37. His time of 1-53-35 was recorded in spite of a few vital seconds off course, a handlebar assembly loosened by a pothole and a puncture near the finish,

This year's Evening Series was won by Steve Willis, who won the tiebreaker for 1st place. Runner-up was Paul Delani with Shaun Reed 3rd, Simon Prior 4th and Jon Sharples 5th. Clive Willis took 6th place and was also 1st Vet, closely followed by Colin Jones. 1st lady was Marina Tullett with Katy Oxborrow 2nd and Sarah Lade 3rd. By the end of the series the new 10ml course record stood to Paul Delani in 21-30 and the 14.07ml circuit record was held by Steve Willis with an impressive 32-27.

Steve Willis took this year's Club 10 Mile Championship in 22-24 and the 100 Mile Championship in 4-05-59. The 25 Mile Championship was won by Shaun Reed in 58-42 and the 50 Mile Championship by Jon Sharples in 1-58-15.

The last two ESCA events in September saw Colin Jones taking 5th place in the 10 with a 24-13 and Lloyd Grayston taking 4th place in the 25 with a 59-19. These two events saw the conclusion of the ESCA Best All Rounder Competition with Steve Elms taking 1st place and Rovers riders Steven Willis, Simon Prior and Colin Jones taking 2nd, 3rd and 4th places and also the 1st team award. The ESCA Veterans' B.A.R. was won by Colin Jones and the Ladies' B.A.R. by Sarah Lade.

In the ESCA Points Competition, Steve Willis was the winner with 76pts. and Colin Jones was the runner-up with 64pts. Jon Sharples, Shaun Reed and Simon Prior were placed 7th, 8th and 9th. In the Team Competition, the Rovers took the honours with 117pts, 11pts. ahead of East Grinstead in 2nd place.

In the VTTA London & Home Counties 25 at Marlow, Clive Willis recorded a 57-44, his fastest ride of the year and only 8 seconds slower than his all time personal best. It was good to take 1st place on age standard in the 40-54 year old event.

In September the Rovers organised an 87 mile event at Horam in the Surrey Road Racing League series. Best placed Rover was James Sutton in 7th place. James's consistent riding throughout the season saw him take 1st place in the Surrey League Championship and gives him the option of a place in the A.S.F.R.A. Flanders Team if he decides to take up the option when he leaves Brighton University next May. James also wins the Club Road Race Championship, with Shaun Reed the runner-up and Simon Prior 3rd.

Only joining the Rovers at the end of 1995, Jon Sharples has made a spectacular improvement this season, winning the Rovers Senior B.A.R. with rides of 53-15, 1-53-05 and 4-04-29 and an average speed of 26.413mph, which is the highest ever recorded in the Club's 103 year history.

After a closely fought battle, Steve Willis was runner-up with an average speed of 26.362mph and Simon Prior 3rd with 26.358mph. All three were ahead of the previous highest winning average speed. Colin Jones took 4th place and Charles Robson was 5th.

In the Vets B.A.R., Charles Robson finally beat off the challenge of Clive Willis to win for the 19th time with a plus of 54mins.43secs. Clive recorded +52-01, Colin Jones was 3rd, Dave Cox 4th and Graham Lade 5th. Sarah Lade was unopposed in the Ladies' B.A.R., which she won at an average speed of 20.938mph.

1989 Club Champion and ex-Rover Andrea Winchester, now Andrea Pogson, took 3rd place in this year's National Ladies B.A.R. Her rides of 56-06, 1-52-02 and 4-07-35 gave her an average speed of 25.906mph and her 50 mile time would have been a new Club record, so I am sure Cliff Sharp's 1970 record of 1-52-37 will be beaten by one of our lads next year.

Talking of lads, a new young rider by the name of Harry Featherstone has recently moved to Hailsham with his wife Lilian and both have joined the Rovers on the 1st November, so we are all looking forward to another record breaking year in 1998.

Now I am up to the present and the ESCA Reliability trial is upon us. The Rovers have 38 riders entered out of a field of 162. Only Lewes Wanderers with 41 have more. I need not write any more, as you will read the result in this issue of BONK, so I will now hand you over to BIG EARS for some hot gossip.

STATMAN

If you're easily offended, do not read on! There were many complaints about some of the comments made in the last issue of BONK. All I can say is "tough". People that complain will get an extra paragraph in the next issue.

If we don't win the East Sussex Reliability Trial Shield, it's because of Andy (Big Bird) Hillman and his chums James (Smiler) Sutton and James (How's my hair?) Dear. They are all going to the Ghent Six Day. Rumour has it that they are all going to sleep in the same car (a Fiat Uno) - what a friendly scenario! Graham Lade is also going but he has a better idea staying in a five star hotel/massage parlour.

A short message to all Hastings & St. Leonards Cycling Club members who don't seem to get a write up in the BONK magazine. As Jon (Pocket Rocket) Sharples has done so well under the Rovers guidance (Club BAR Champion for 1997), you can all join Eastbourne Rovers. We don't mind. You are all welcome. Is it true that John Hollidge of Hastings was Sussex Track Champion some years ago? John Willis is not convinced. Comments are welcome.

We are sorry to hear that Mark Cruttenden fell off a roof breaking both his legs. He has been given a new lease of life. Metal pins and plates are holding his legs together. Mark (Bionic Man) Cruttenden should improve in time for next season. Someone should tell Mark that mucking around trying to be Father Christmas is not a good idea, especially on slippery slate roofs. We wish you a speedy recovery.

The Ups & Downs of the East Sussex Reliability Trial. Max Norrell says he`s never seen Charles Robson smile so much especially when it starts raining just before the start knowing that we have a gruelling 45 miles to ride.

I must say with great satisfaction that we have beaten the Lewes Wanderers. Luckily for us their name suits, as they were wandering all over the place except back to the finish. They even had marshals to point them the way round as well as 42 riders to our 38 on paper. Our riders were more reliable on the day and that`s what counts. Well done to all those Rovers trojans who took part and conquered the Robson course.

The names that follow are the sad b.....s that let the Club down and their excuses. Jon Sharples "I`ve bought a new radio alarm and it went off but it didn`t wake me up until it was too late". Dave Cox rang to say he could not make it because he had a cold, but really he was too upset due to Chelsea losing 0-1 to Blackburn Rovers. Boyd Johnson went to a night club Saturday night and couldn`t push his new friend out of bed. Neil Fordham dressed up as a policeman, passed Max at Polegate in a car, laughed and wished him good luck. Mark Brittle had the builders in. Mark Corliss overslept.

Paul (Flapper) Simmons` ears have got even larger after being pulled round the Reliability Trial. Paul is the only person we know who actually has to fold his ears down to fit in his aero helmet.

Paul (Kamikaze) Charlton has been told to take up downhill racing. This man has no fear trying to go down hill with no brakes, no control and somehow ends up in a ditch after trying to climb a telegraph pole. Paul, brake blocks are only £1.80. Shaun Reed was caught giving Paul maintenance tips just before his (Paul`s) crash. Paul, please do your skewers up properly in future so we can all feel safer. Shaun, please leave your tips at home and have a good look at your bike. I have booked you both in for cycle proficiency tests at a local junior school after Christmas. Good Luck!

James Brickell had to ride round part way with a broken saddle, until, passing someone`s house, he was caught in the act pinching a saddle off his girl friend`s bike.

Group 6 of the Reliability Trial would like to thank Clive (Edgar) Willis and Harry Featherstone for all the help in getting us round. We could see their tyre marks in the road.

Stuart Davis, the hill climber, was shouting "Don't do this to me Tim. Don't do this to me Tim". We didn't know what he was on about until later on. Tim was found to have a puncture.

Steve Willis nearly got the Bonk after Checkpoint 3, as Roy (Mr. East Sussex) Humphrey ate half his energy bar.

Max (ex Clubrun Champion) Norrell said "I've got a Yorkie bar. Does anyone want a chunk? Too late, I've eaten it all. My bike's getting dirty. I'll have to strip it down and give it a clean when I get home." Max spent 2 hours looking for his Cateye cordless computer when it fell off his bike on the way home. Richard Shipton said it will be no good anyway as I've run over it and it flicked off into the hedge. Max found it without a scratch on it and it still works.

Steve (Simply the Best) Willis now takes the title of the Clubrun Champion from Max as he spent the whole ride off the front trying to catch his dad up, who went off in a twosome with Harry just like when Harry met Sally.

That's all folks!

EARS

EAST SUSSEX CYCLING ASSOCIATION - 1997 RELIABILITY TRIAL

There were 162 entries for this year's Reliability Trial. An even bigger entry than last year of 41 riders from Lewes and 38 from Eastbourne ensured some stiff competition for the Rally Shield. My apologies to Ian Landless who was mistakenly placed in the 3-35 group instead of with the 3-10's.

122 riders reported at the start and all were warned of slippery leaves in the lanes. There were more lady entrants this year and a trike and some tandems completed the course. 40 riders decided not to start.

Eastbourne turned the tables this year with 32 successful riders and are this year's winner of the Rally Shield. Last year's winner, Lewes, was second with 30 successful riders. Crawley again filled third spot with 14 successful riders. You will find the full result on page 6. 14 riders recorded times that were either too fast or too slow and 6 failed to record a time.

The 102 successful qualifiers will each receive a Certificate. These will be presented at the E.S.C.A. Luncheon & Prize Presentation at Framfield on Sunday, 4th January, 1998.

EAST SUSSEX CYCLING ASSOCIATION
1997 RELIABILITY TRIAL

RESULT

The following riders were successful in completing the Reliability Trial in their chosen time and are each eligible for a Certificate:-

EASTBOURNE ROVERS CC (32)

2-45 John Taylor; 3-10 Harry Featherstone, Simon Prior, Stuart Davis, Tim Wells, Shaun Reed, Max Norrell, James Brickell, Glenn Cook, Alan Rolfe, Graham Reed, Paul Charlton, Clive Willis, Steve Willis, Paul Delani, Paul Simmons, Colin Jones; 3-35 Dave Dunbar, Andrew Parsons, Roly Wickham, Andrew Stobbart, Colin McKee, Graeme McKee, Katy Oxborrow, Stuart Medhurst; 3-55 George Henty, Ken Miller, Paul France, John Armstrong, Stu Greenway, Brian Reed, Robert Norman.

LEWES WANDERERS CC (30)

2-45 David Pollard, Nigel Siberry, Pete Roberts, Clyde Cooper; 3-10 Dave Stace, Peter Burgess, Colin Homan, Larry Limpus, Paul Limpus, Paul Hunt, Graham Jeffs, Trevor Wright; 3-35 Peter Gates, David Wells, Ian Landless, Geoff Baker, Peter Dye, Dave Marchant, Paul Cooper, Steve Chittenden; 3-55 Keith Newsam, Tony Gale, Roger Gorringe, Ken & Iris Stevens, Robert & Heather Wimble, Tony Longhurst, Paul Gibbons, Barry Fowler.

CRAWLEY WHEELERS CC (14)

3-10 Mike Crossett, Alan Hale, Phil Blagden, Bernard Simpson; 3-35 Marina Bloom, Mike Bloom, Richard Griffin, Philip Smith, Paul Lippett, Dave Boorsma, Anthony Fawcett, Keith Edgar, John Double, Bruce Anderson.

SOUTHBOROUGH & DISTRICT WHEELERS CC (7)

2-45 Jimmy George, Martin Yardley, Colin Nightingale, Mark Nightingale; 3-10 Les Hayman, Peter Watson, John Watson.

EAST GRINSTEAD CC (6)

3-10 Graham Tulett, Bob Taylor, Andy Seltzer, Steve Dennis, D. Baird-Murray, Paul Winkley.

BRIGHTON EXCELSIOR CC (4)

2-45 Alan Robinson; 3-10 Peter Parsons, Charlie Parsons; 3-55 Chris Beckenham.

REGENT ROAD CLUB (3)

3-10 Alan Morris, Mark Avis, Mark Walker.

WORTHING EXCELSIOR CC (3)

3-10 Richard Shipton, Alan Cooper; 3-55 Dave Hudson.

CYCLISTS` TOURING CLUB (2)

3-35 John Blackman, Andy Seviour.

VERULAM CC (1)

3-35 Steve Burgess.

EAST SUSSEX CYCLING ASSOCIATION - 1997 RELIABILITY TRIAL

Organiser's Notes

I used to ride round the course the Sunday before the event, but this year, once again, I had to go round in the van as I was also delivering trophies back to Mick Burgess. It was unseasonably warm and the main hazard was the lanes some of which were totally covered in leaves. There was only a small puddle where you cross the River Ouse before Fletching. Back at East Hoathly they were playing tennis on the public courts as though it was summer. I saw Bob Wallace at the King's Head with the seating plan for the lunch and made my way home.

On the morning of the Reliability Trial, I left home a little before 0700. There was no frost, the roads were dry and there was blue sky above and I looked forward to a gloriously sunny morning as promised by the weather forecast. By the time I reached East Hoathly the roads were wet and on the way up to collect Roy I had the wipers on. Back at East Hoathly we were greeted by menacing black clouds and then came the rain, which just lasted long enough for each group to go off in it and make life very difficult for me trying to take photographs. The camera kept getting wet and the lens kept fogging up. To make up for this bit of rain, we were treated to a beautiful double rainbow, which I captured on film but I am not sure if it will reproduce in BONK.

Mike Hayler was up the lane ensuring tidy parking. Ron and Marion Ball, replacing the otherwise engaged Den Funnell, arrived in good time, picked up Ken Griffiths, and departed for the Piddinghoe Checkpoint where they were met by Cliff Sharp, another new recruit. Soon after the last group was despatched at 0920, Roy and I were on our way. The rain stopped on the way down to Newhaven and was not to worry us any more. There were quite a few riders at the Piddinghoe triangle whilst we were there.

The gates were closed at the Cooksbridge level crossing, so I had time to nip out and take a photo. Then on to Newick passing riders all the way. When we reached Newick we decided to continue on the course down the lane "liable to flood". It was indeed flooded right across the road and the river was right up to the underside of the bridge. We forged slowly ahead without mishap and thought how the riders would enjoy it.

Mike Hayler was in position at the Fletching Checkpoint with a bright yellow sign at the T-junction, one at the Checkpoint and another at the A272 warning drivers. He was helped by another new recruit, David Matthews, who lives in Fletching and had warned the Churchwardens of visiting riders. Roy and I did manage to get time for a quick cuppa and we saw Mike giving rum-faced tea, or was it coffee to a needy rider. The Ken & Iris, Robert & Heather Tandem Club arrived, the latter with 11 1/2 month old Isabelle perched on the back - the youngest ever to go round the course in all the years I have been organising. Another tandem was reported to be in trouble with a split front tyre, but they managed to arrange their own rescue.

Two Eastbourne riders who had broken away from the bunch steamed past - the Clive & Harry Show! Roy and I pressed on down to Uckfield and then into the lanes behind Roy's. Mick Rabbetts was on duty as Safety Officer at the blind right turn shortly after Pounsley protecting riders from unseen Land Rovers.

When we reached Deryk Greenway, who was in charge at Checkpoint 3, we found he had moved back to the Southern Aviaries entrance as they were closed for the day. The Clive & Harry Show went by and a little later the main Eastbourne bunch. As we had seen them veer off course a little earlier, it was a relief to know that they had realised their mistake. One of their riders was using a telegraph pole as a brake!

We realised that nearly all the riders were ahead of schedule due to the mildness of the morning and so we too had to leave early to get back to East Hoathly. Even so the C&H Show was there ahead of us! We got into position outside the King's Head and soon started taking cards. Due to the shorter course, we were out there for a shorter time than usual, which was rather nice. We had time for a drink and checked the Hall, where Christmas decorations were going up especially for us.

Good support from Brighton Mitre meant that 39 of us sat down to lunch at 6 tables. The carrot and coriander soup went down well and the raspberry pavlova was especially memorable. The Pub Quiz was won by Chris Beckingham with 15 as the correct answer. He and 4 runners-up each won a bottle of wine. Much lively conversation ensued and I hope that a good time was had by all.

With us at the lunch was Mike Hayler, who will be promoting the National 24 Hour Championship, mainly in West Sussex, on the 26th & 27th June, 1999. He is going to need lots of volunteers to help with marshalling and feeding. If you would like more details, please contact Mike Hayler at 44 Parkway, Ratton, Eastbourne BN20 9DX (Tel: 01323 505130).

Finally my thank to the team that makes this event possible - Roy Humphrey, Ken Griffiths, Deryk Greenway, Michael Rabbetts, Ron & Marion Ball, Cliff Sharp, David Matthews and last but not least my thanks to Esther Carpenter for producing the route details, check cards and certificates and loads of publicity in BONK.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and will now hand you over to our Special Correspondent:-

A Day On't Tandem

Having been asked to write an article on the ESCA reliability trial for Bonk by Sir Robson himself, how could I ever refuse such an offer?! The most challenging part, however, is trying to think of a suitably silly name for myself - Crank Spanner, Spoke Nipple, Tyre Lever, Pabal Bigons, William Hickey?

No longer riding on wafer thin tyres and shaving my legs, I have adopted a rather slower riding style of late. To this end I have become good friends with two trustworthy, long distance riding lunatics of the Lewes, affectionately known as the Two Ts. The three of us manage to dream up some pretty outrageous ideas that generally involve huge amounts of effort, stamina and stupidity - so riding the ESCA reliability trial seemed rather a tame challenge. Tony L decided to change all this in what can only be described as drastic measures, managing to break six ribs, his collarbone and badly bruising a hip joint in a motor cycle accident back in September.

Deciding not to be my tandem partner two days before the event was a bad move on his part because some gentle persuasion came into force - a large hammer, a cordless drill and an array of sharp looking kitchen implements soon changed his mind - he thanked me profusely as we left Uckfield at 8.00 a.m. in the pouring rain. I also managed to drop a classic comment - "I've never piloted a tandem before". It went very quiet at the back so we wobbled our way between the puddles.

Well, I suppose I had better tell some tales about the event. As everybody knows, anything you have to pre-empt always guarantees a wet ride this time of the year, so no surprise to be drenched before the start.

Group two soon had its ranks ripped apart by the hot pace set by John Galsworthy and Sally Thorpe on their tandem. A battle for road supremacy raged between the Wimble tandem and ourselves as we struggled for traction on the verge - Robert cowered under a barrage of expletives from Heather as we steamed on up the road! Finally we caught the Galsworthy tandem, sailing past on the big ring going up into Glynde. Nearly wiping a Morris Marina off the road going down the other side was unintentional but got the adrenaline flowing. Next came the only bit I disliked - the A27 and A26 to Newhaven - horrible roads, horrible choice - don't do it again!!

Struggling up through Lewes our pace was beginning to slow down. I enjoyed the next bit, all well known roads to me with pleasant scenery. Once again we had managed to catch the speeding Galsworthy tandem. Riding so fast on their way to Newick the front tyre had spontaneously combusted and the pair were reduced to walking for help. Got very wet feet at Fletching and arrived at checkpoint 2 to be told we were the first on the road. The floods didn't seem to slow the faster groups down, as they thundered past us just afterwards without a mudguard in sight. Keith Newsam had blown up already.

Riding up through Uckfield And Framfield is all well known to me again so no nasty surprises on the hill front. We were now using the little ring more and more and I managed to completely derail the chain as we turned up towards Hadlow Down - so we walked that bit!

Having plenty of time after checkpoint 3 we decided to take a detour to The Star at Waldron for an alcoholic supplement - vital to every keen cyclist's diet. We managed to divert at least half the field round this route (I hope nobody got lost) which I found quite amusing. Not as amusing as Barry Fowler falling off outside the pub, attracting everybody's attention as a patient van driver waited for him to pick himself up out of the middle of the road. The van driver turned out to be a long lost Wanderer - Jim Farrell, who wasn't a bit shocked at seeing Barry laying in the road outside a pub, but that's another story. Taking our leave from the pub we cut a dash back to East Hoathly managing to finish on time in bright sunshine, completing another fuss free ride.

So thanks to Charles Robson and everybody who helped out to make the event run smoothly. And maybe next year we will have better weather to attract a few more of the rain-scared Wanderers out of hibernation!!

RELIABILITY TRIAL PHOTOS



Marion & Ron Ball



Harry Featherstone



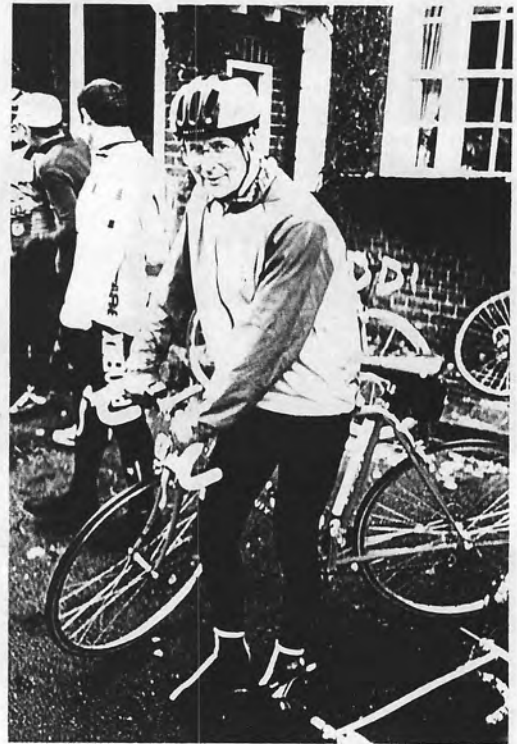
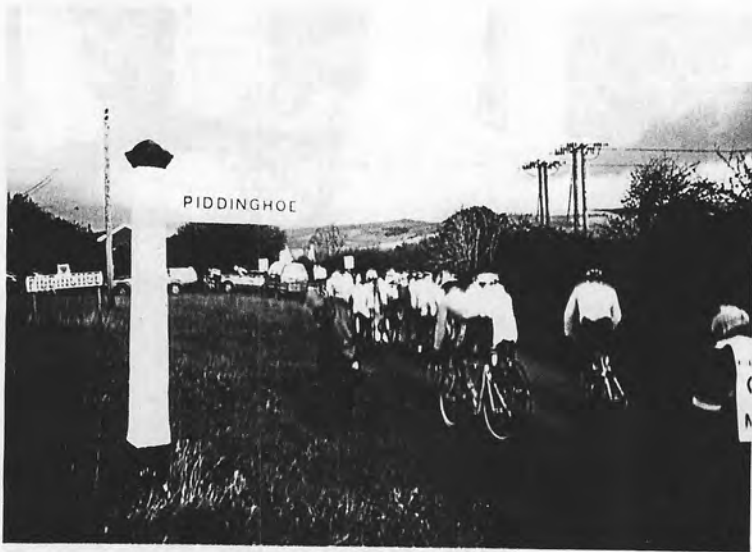
Heather, Robert & Isobel Wimble



Ken & Iris Stevens



Keith Balcombe & Peter Baker



Dave Dunbar



Mike Hayler

David Matthews at Fletching



Ken Miller

WILLIAM HOCKEY

Was I prepared to face a ninety mile ride to Midhurst on September 22nd? The question was posed by Ronny Rogers, one time Tour of Britain rider. "Well, yes" I said, "providing we don't exceed level two." So all aboard we met at Cuckfield; with Ronny was Kevin Bramham, still sporting those quite awful Central Sussex shorts. Kevin scales a trim nine stone four pounds now - I wouldn't say he looks emaciated but I couldn't see a shadow when the sun started to go down. Kevin spends long stints at the golf course but still has time to look at the occasional British Rail timetable (he was pensioned off from British Rail under the MacMillan government). Central were represented in strength that day. leader of the run that day was another ex/now retired B.T. worker (sorry, management) Mr. Rex Wells, who advises me that he has on the net over one hundred cafés and restaurants in Sussex to choose from when he goes out, whilst Rex does not race these days. I did notice tri-bars, a triple and good wheels, just a nice edge when yet another retiree, none other than your favourite bank manager Alan Robinson, who after forty years man and boy took the King's shilling and called it a day. Alan, winner of a hundred hillclimbs and a much favoured BAR candidate concluded that he welcomes a return to racing but felt that the preparation was quite daunting. Off we rode relentlessly to Billingshurst where we met up with 'Chloe' at the Little Chef. having been sent on a wild goose chase in the gents by Ronny, who complained about the absence of the soap dispenser, only to locate some, Chloe was not best pleased and expressed the verbal that she felt that cyclists' table manners were disgusting, quite apart from their other habits. We journeyed on to Midhurst via the awesome Bexley Hill, the name is enough to make grown men shiver uncontrollably. For those readers who have embraced this horror I say no more. At Midhurst we met the very lovely Mel, who was quite fetching and wished us all a long life and the food was nice to boot. back to Cuckfield at sixteens, some eighty four miles clocked, a very pleasant day. Thank you Ronny. On a lighter side Ronny tells me he used to go out with Barbara Windsor, the landlady at the Queen Vic and star of countless Carry On films. Ronny did say that this was in his teens, which in his case could be before Neville Chamberlain uttered those immortal words "peace in our time".

Well, we are nearly at the end of another uninspired season, it seems to go quicker and quicker as you celebrate another year on this earth. Apart from punctures, three this year, roadworks causing cancellation, two so far, and a whole selection of returned entries for having a plus of less than sixteen minutes for a twenty five for, life is particularly hard for middle aged press writers. However I did manage to squeeze into the Hounslow 25 on the ski slope H25/2. Lots of familiar faces this year, Bognor rider, Les Janman found himself with a spare weekend, Roy Fairchild gave us a 59 on his very expensive Bianchi with Corima rims. Now retired, he spent his life savings on some nice componentry. Bill Ollis, now rejuvenated as a member of Team Clean and enjoying the exalted company of young Sean, Tim Stevens, Dave Akam and Dave Redding, was clearly in a good mood as he trundled on his turbo, commenting that he was doing this as he didn't want a body like mine. Young Snapper was in attendance and he gave us a nice '5' for a personal (but he still can't beat his dad!!). Brian James of the Mitre rattled out another '5', not bad for a 67 year old vet. Met up with Sussex Nomad's rider John Woodburn, turning in a very workmanlike 54.46. Since I owed him a beer for beating me at the beginning of 1997 he led the way to a pub in the middle of nowhere. He couldn't get in there fast enough; however we did end up in Parcel Force manor for some pasta and wine. I also had to inspect John's shed, which is not, I might add, like Glen Longland's garage. This shed has featured in many conversations since its erection has led to many man hours away from training and racing and also neglecting Parcel Force's generous overtime rates. However, there it stands, a monument to man's ingenuity and personal endeavours. So beware, when you get into conversation with J.W., act enthusiastically when he mentions a certain building in his back garden.

Hill Climbs - Are they for the discerning triallist?

Having sampled the 'real' climbs in company with the S.N. I managed a club night with the yellow and green perils and was able to get an invitation to both the Catford and the Bec plus the National at Rowsley Bar in Derbyshire on 26.10.97. I was advised to pay attention to the Snapper who, I was informed, was highly fancied to supply a place in all three events.

The Catford is a nice little twister at Yorks Hill near Sevenoaks. On just about a perfect morning, in company with Ronny & Jill Rogers and some two hundred other clubfolk, I witnessed the Snapper quietly controlling a ride of some 2m 20s for 9th place, just edged out of 8th by Andy Seltzer by a fifth of a second. I was impressed. The Bec loomed up next at Titsey, just off Woldingham, where another horde of South London cyclists were in attendance. Favourite was Jim Henderson, fresh from his triumph on The Rake; true to form he cantered up the climb not too far short of course record. The Snapper gave us another creditable ride in 2m 13s, again giving best to Mr. Seltzer by another fifth of a second for 10th spot. The winning time being 1m 49.01s

On to the National, where we travelled up to Bakewell Y.H. three miles away from the climb, which gave both myself and the Snapper time to inspect the hill - not for the faint-hearted - nearly a mile with some vicious 1 in 4 corkscrew bends to whet your appetite. Snapper had by now caught the dreaded flu so his ride the following day was always going to be troublesome. Riding out to the start on a Derbyshire morning was a little fresh to say the least. However, a quick talk to the Green brothers, Jim Henderson and various members of the Worthing, North Hants and Centreville gave the necessary focus to the Snapper for a flu ridden attack on the Bar. Bill Beagley, the RTTC commentator gave the Snapper a nice introduction as he breasted half distance; a well earned 7m 8s gave him 67th position. He was actually fifty seconds slower than his ride the previous day over the same distance. Give him a further ten seconds for the occasion and his six minute ride would have seen him in the first twenty five. Next year maybe!

Saw Bob Maitland, Chris Walker and Pete Longbottom, all looking very trim. Warwick Dunford and Missis were walking up. Warwick said he would have ridden but Southborough was a little too far at this time of the year. The remainder of the day was spent pubbing and getting to grips with a monster Yorkshire pudding filled with beef at Harveys in Matlock, which I fully commend. We were joined by Martin Penfold and the very lovely Theresa Thompson, the third member of the Regent express. In convoy back to Sussex we finished up a superb weekend.

Snapper told me that his real ambition lie in a top three placing in the Sussex Hillclimb. Since November 2nd is a free Sunday I might get the last climb before training starts for 1998.

On another cold November morning I stationed myself near the summit of Kithurst, which thankfully was acutely short of the farming and doggy brigade. Snapper I learned was off at number 3, not the best of starts for a medal ride. At 4 minutes ahead the Snapper powered into view, having picked off his two front riders. With a few well chosen words of encouragement we watched him twitch out of our view for the final run up, passing Mick Kilby for a 4m 16s ride. This held up at the expense of Andy Seltzer's puncture and Dave Shepherd's over-gear'd block until number 30, Rowan Horner, nipped in in 3m 57s to take the winning time. The Snapper became the Sussex Hillclimb Champion with his second spot. I was impressed. Perhaps Sussex have found a natural challenger for National honours. Watch this space. Next year maybe!

W.H.