

NEWFORCE

Winter 2015 Issue 134





ABOVE: Why the long face? — Because I had to stretch the photo to make it fill the space!



Editorial

By Keith Whitten

Welcome to the winter 2015 issue of Newforce. I hope you all had a good Christmas, it certainly looks like those two reprobates opposite (club chairman and treasurer) did! My own Christmas was slightly marred by a dose of that particularly vicious man-flu bug that was going round but I did manage to drag myself out for the club Boxing Day ride. My near constant coughing will probably be long remembered by the others who were there.

On a brighter note, at the beginning of December I tagged along to Global Fat Bike Day - the Swanage gathering. Riding my only-slightly-tubby Surly made me a bit of an interloper but I wasn't the only one and amazingly the chosen day turned out to be one of the very few completely dry and sunny ones in recent months. The day proved to be fantastic example of the truth that if you gather together any number of relative strangers on not very serious bikes in the sunshine they can't fail to have a great day out. Well, those that didn't fall off and land on their heads did, but more of that in the report I've included in this issue.

Now I have to confess that in between magazines I don't check my Newforce email particularly often. When I do, sometimes there's nothing there, sometimes there's a few spam mails and occasionally there's even a contribution for the mag. The last time I checked I was genuinely surprised though. The mail that caught my eye may have been more spam if you're being strict about categorisation but it was from a company offering MTB trips to Iran. Not a destination I'd have very quickly associated with mountain biking but the French company offering the trips appears to have experience in Morocco. The mail triggered a few memories; Top Gear went there a few Christmases ago and declared it to be full of very nice people and Mark Beaumont in his account of his round the world record ride also wrote that the country exceeded his expectations. I am now well and truly intrigued.

Finally, if you can think of a suitable caption for the cover photo please send it to me and I'll include it in the next issue.

Cover photo courtesy of Stuart Rogers

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Your Committee

Committee meetings are held regularly. If there are any points you wish to raise please feel free to contact any of the Committee Members and the point(s) will be discussed at the subsequent meeting. Alternatively come along to the meeting yourself and join in with the discussions

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Club Policy & Ride Aims

As a club we want to encourage people to share our passion with mountain biking.

We welcome new members to participate and contribute to the Club.

Fortnightly Sunday rides, Thursdays nights plus adhoc trips and events

We meet as a friendly group to ride together, once a fortnight as published on the web-site.

Members group together for ad hoc trips, or attend organised race/randonee/challenge rides.

Please refer to our published Conditions of Membership - and enjoy your cycling!

Safety First

We require cycle helmets to be worn on all Club rides: be prepared for weather changes and carry

- A drink
- Puncture repair kit / spare tubes
- Emergency contact details in the event of an accident

We also request that you take the time to ensure that your cycle is in good working order before the start of the ride, eg, no cracks in the frame or splits in the tyres.

Committee Meetings

These are held on the 2nd Tuesday of every third month

At The New Forest Inn, Emery Down from 8pm

All members are invited to attend—it's your club so come and have a say on how it's run!

Next meeting is: Tuesday 10th March

All welcome!

Finding The Ride Location

We suggest use of **www.streetmap.co.uk**

The search box asks for the **location**

....using our ride location references for example:-

Farley Mount is SU433293 so enter this in the search box, click the 'Landranger Box' and then click 'search'

- you will then see a map and an arrow pointing to the location
- to increase or decrease the scale of the map click on the buttons
- by changing the scale you will see where our ride is in relation to other land-

Future Rides

The ride locations are set at the committee meetings. These generally follow the pattern of one ride 'in Forest' and two rides 'out of Forest'.

If you have a suggestion—let us know!

Ride Reviews

We always welcome members to write a short review, so after your next ride or cycling holiday, why not just 'pop pen to paper' or 'fingers to keyboard' and let us know how it was for you!

**Email your stories to keith@perfectbalancecycles.co.uk
Or use the 'Private Message' function on the bulletin board**

Photos on the web...

To promote our varied mountain biking activities we encourage Members to submit their cycle related photos for publication and linking to the newforce website.

Please email Allan at allank@newforce.org.uk

"Hot" Vindaloo, Madras and Jalfrezi

characteristic- strenuous & technical riding

We always have enthusiastic Members ready to attend for a fast-ish tour, usually with a pub stop either half way or at the end. So don't forget to bring a little beer money out with you or be prepared to wash everyone else's bikes afterwards. If Eleanor's out on the Jalfrezi night rides then expect a stop half way to scoff some of her truly wondrous baking.

"Medium" Tikka Masala

characteristic- moderately strenuous & some technical riding

To suit a medium ride we have regular Members in attendance to offer a less demanding pace.

"Cool" Korma

characteristic- smooth & non technical riding - potentially suitable for novices

A shorter, steadier ride with more emphasis on enjoying the scenery and company than breaking records.

"Family Rides"

We are trying to involve the family and youngsters and need your contribution to organise events: rides will depend on ability, using easy tracks with plenty of breaks and tea stops! These happen on an ad hoc basis so if the weather's looking good and you're taking the kids out don't be shy, post on the message board.

And yes, we have named our groups after curries!

Ride Locations

Watch the Bulletin Board and Rides pages on the website for details

If you are not sure about coming along or need directions to the meeting place give someone a call: phone numbers on the inside front cover of this newsletter.

Ride Times - Sundays

We meet at 9.30 am and try to leave prompt at 10am, back by 1pm usually, or later for day rides.

Winter Rides List

Sunday 08 February 2015 Martin (ref SU 058 193)

Designated post-ride pub: tbc

Designated pub: the nearest pub is The Compasses at Damerham, 4 miles south east towards Fordingbridge.

The village of Martin is situated to the south of the A354 road that runs from Salisbury to Blandford Forum. For most of us, the village is probably most easily reached by heading north-west for eight miles or so out of Fordingbridge passing through Sandleheath, Damerham and Tidpit before arriving at Martin. Approaching from this direction, the car park can be found by taking a left turn in the village itself onto a dead end road at the end of which will be found a car park at the foot of Blagdon Hill. We shall meet at this car park and head out for the bridleways and ancient drove roads which criss-cross Cranbourne Chase. There will be some challenging uphill, fast downhill and panoramic ridgeways in this delightful area.

Hints and tips: Can be slippery on the chalky Cranbourne Chase tracks but other tracks will hold up well especially the ones along the ridges.

Sunday 22 February 2015 Wilverley (ref 254 006)

Designated post-ride pub: tbc

The riding can take us around Wilverley itself with some interesting tracks known only to the initiated and of course there is a wide choice of tracks beyond this including the old railway line for the gentler paced riders amongst us. This could be extended around the edges of Avon Tyrrell and Bisterne Common. In another direction lies Bashley and the northern edges of New Milton. Or we could venture north towards Ober Lodge and the area around Rhinefield.

Sunday 08 March 2015 Farley Mount, West Wood (ref SU 420 292)

Designated pub: The Dolphin in Hursley.

Sometimes we meet at Crab Wood picnic area and sometimes we meet at the

Monument car park. This venue is halfway between the two and is at the junction of the Crab Wood/Monument road with the road coming from Hursley and Standon on the A3090.

There are some terrific tracks in this area. Parnholt Wood has a great downhill run which leads to Kings Somborne. From here it is possible to take the Test Way up to Stockbridge and circle out round Crawley almost reaching Wherwell not far from Andover before heading back via Sparsholt and West Wood. For anyone looking for a shorter trip, you could do worse than ride around the many trails in West Wood itself perhaps linking up with some sections of the Clarendon Way.

Sunday 22 March 2015 Ashurst (Happy Cheese) (ref SU 335 103)

Designated pub: The Happy Cheese

This ride starts from the car park adjacent to the pub and there is ample free parking available so there shouldn't be any problems for those of you arriving by car. Some of you living locally will no doubt cycle to the start point. From here we can go through Woodlands, on along to Lyndhurst, Boltons Bench, Denny Lodge area and back by a circular route taking us through Deerleap or of course go the other way round taking in "the Wire" and other popular Thursday points of interest. After all that exertion we will probably want to have a refreshing drink in The Happy Cheese.

Sunday 05 April 2015 Bishops Waltham (ref SU 554 176)

Designated pub: TBA

With a start in the centre of Bishops Waltham, we could choose a route that leads up towards the top of Beacon Hill near Exton before turning north west and heading for Lane End at which point we could turn north east for a loop around Cheriton and Tichborne depending on weather and timings. Then it's back via Cheesefoot Head, Old Down, Baybridge House and Bigpath Farm before topping Stephens Castle Down and dropping once more to the valley floor and back to Bishops Waltham.

2015 Fritham

(ref SU 230 140)

Designated pub: The Royal Oak at Fritham

From here you can ride along the RUPP leading northwards from Eyeworth Pond and from there, onto the track that leads towards Hale before turning back towards Fordingbridge and picking up on Hampton Ridge to get back to Fritham. Other options from this starting point are eastwards through Kings Garn Gutter and circle down through Minstead and Bolderwood for a ride with some ups and downs. Alternatively, Hampton Ridge itself can take you through to Hasley Inclosure and thence to the Red Shoot Inn and Milkham Inclosure before riding back through Slufers and back across Stoney Cross to Minstead.

**Sunday 03 May 2015 Whitchurch – all day
ref SU 463 481)**

(town centre at

Designated post-ride pub: somewhere in Whitchurch; (but the Bell Inn is remarkably close to the 2nd car park mentioned below).

There are a couple of public car parks within 100m of the grid reference which is the mini-roundabout in the centre. If you are coming in northwards off the A34 there is one car park next to the silk mill approx 75m before the roundabout in the centre and if that is full there is another car park approx 75m along the C class road named Bell Street that is the 2nd exit off that roundabout. There are some good hills to be had in this area and the last time we rode here about 2 years ago, it was a ride along Watership Down with some significant climbs. We could do parts of that route again, or we could keep to the north west of the town and ride in the St Mary Bourne area.

**THE NEWSLETTER IS
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
THE NEXT ISSUE IS JANUARY
DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES IS
DECEMBER 31ST
IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED ONE
OF THESE RIDES
SEND IN A SHORT REVIEW....PLEASE!**

Minutes from The Annual general Meeting

NewForce Annual General Meeting

Venue: the New Forest Inn, Emery Down

Date: 9th December 2014

Present: Roger Shephard; Ian Taylor; John Hawkins; Linda Hawkins; Allan Knight; Eleanor Rutter; Nigel Aiken; Steve Keith; Martin Wheat; Karen Clark; Nick Clark; Stu Rogers; Keith Whitten; Clive French

Apologies: Sue Marsland; James Davenport; Robin Knight

2013 AGM minutes, matters arising: none, minutes accepted

Election of Officers

After due process the following officers were elected

Chairman: Roger Shephard

Secretary: Sue Marsland

Membership Secretary: Allan Knight

Treasurer: Nigel Aiken

Access Officer: Barry Collier

Newsletter Editor and Compiler: Keith Whitten

Assistant Newsletter Editor and Compiler: Martin Wheat

Web Site Editor: James Davenport

Committee Members:

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Membership Report: Allan reported that membership is down and that for the last two years more people have left the club than joined. There are 142 members, made up of: 22 shops,

10 family and 110 single memberships.

It was decided to distribute the remaining cards/leaflets to bike shops. Anyone able to do this to e-mail Ian who will arrange to get the literature to them.

Treasurer's Report: to follow

It was agreed to leave the Membership fees unchanged

Web Site: It was agreed to pay the recommended hosting costs including the spam filter.

Date for the next AGM: 8th December 2014

Dates for committee meetings in 2015: 10th March; 9th June; 8th September; 8th December

AGM Report

Web Site Report:

Activities and Event for 2014:

New website went live earlier this year after the previous hosting company experienced a hosting failure and the automated backup became corrupt. Thus the backup of the website was not able to be restored.

DIY web server was setup, using cloud hosting, to enable new website to go-live with email hosting included for a cost efficient budget. The website worked fine though the SPAM and anti-virus support for email caused the database to fall over. Therefore this caused intermittent failures to email and occasionally the website also failed.

A new hosting provider was sought. The website and email hosting has been transferred to a new provider who so far has been reliable and I

have not heard of any outages concerning email hosting. However we do not have a SPAM filter enabled against the hosting service to newforce.org.uk email address may suffer from SPAM. Below are the current hosting costs including an optional add-on for SPAM filtering. My recommendation is to have SPAM filtering enabled though this is an additional expense though this may be subject to being put forward as a motion and voted upon by the committee?

Note: All costs are per annum

1.56205 USD / GBP

	USD	GBP
Hosting	59.40	38.03
Daily Backup	19.99	12.80
Flickr Photo Hosting	25.00	16.00
SPAM Filter (optional)	19.99	12.80
<hr/> Total	<hr/> 124.38	<hr/> 79.63

The last photo album to be posted to the Newforce Flickr site is December 2012. Could we please have some more recent photos?



Taking It A Little Slower

By Arnold Morton Ember

Once a week I am usually in the situation of having to make my way home in the morning from a location eight or so miles away from my humble abode. I won't go into detail here of why I find myself in that position so often but I usually plan for it by taking a bicycle with me so I can make the journey a pleasant ride through some of the quiet lanes of the New Forest.

Now, the morning that provided the inspiration for this piece was forecast to be cold in the extreme and my circulation to my extremities not being the greatest, I decided to ditch the bike and walk home. I'm no stranger to walking as it allows me to combine a jolly good motorcycle ride with the peace and tranquillity of an amble through some out of the way location.

I set off and before too long left the village I had started behind and entered the Forest proper. Around that time the clouds parted and the sun came out to shine on the frost covered heathland the lane was taking me through. On a whim and as time was not too much of an issue I decided to go the scenic route and follow some trails that appeared to be heading in the right direction. I would need to rely on my strong sense of direction and navigational skills to get me home that way but I was sure I was up to it. The peace and tranquillity of the sunlit, frost covered Forest was astounding and without the requirement to keep upright and heading in the correct direction on two wheels my mind was free to wander.

I carried on blissfully for some distance until in one of the lower laying areas the ground became quite rough and had it not been frozen would have been quite boggy. It was whilst carefully picking my way past all these obstacles to efficient progress that I spotted tyre tracks. I was aghast at how far they were from the Forest Cycle Network. The poor devils that left them must have been hopelessly lost. I honestly expected to find the remains of one of them half buried in the trail ahead. I knew I was taking a big risk on that route, attempting it without stout walking boots or trekking poles and not wearing a single item of tweed, but to go there on bicycles must have been an ordeal of epic proportions.

As I strode onwards a plan formulated itself in my mind. A senior member of the club needs to be appointed to liaise with the Forest authorities and propose that in all such remote locations there be erected permanent signage giving contact details for our club. That way all the poor lost souls that find themselves in such places with their bicycles will know that there is a better way and in future they can join us to be guided through the very best of the Forest without ever having to traverse such difficult terrain again.

We could be jolly well saving lives you know.









A Typical winter Ride?

By 'A Club Member'

Imagine the scene: typical of a situation comedy, or the stereo type of a night out with the lads / lasses.....one person leaning in to another slurring that they care / respect / love the other. Well it is not like that but recent ride events emphasise why I (we??) enjoy riding in a group of like-minded folks.

The weather was foul: winter rain and strong winds after a night of rain, but we still had 11 turn out! Riding along the conditions deteriorated as we passed beyond familiar waymarks and features – and we all pushed ourselves through the unfamiliar “swampy ” tracks leaving no one behind. There came a gate we needed to pass through and the puddle was perhaps 10 foot either side and at least 1 foot deep! Not a word of complaint. Someone waded in to open the gate and a few valiantly tried to ride, some more successfully with just wet feet, others opting to safely wade through. Then shortly afterwards there was the hedge clippings and the inevitable punctures! No worries we mucked in with assistance and pumped / packed up / generally encouraged (read that as took the micky- enjoyed the craic!). With time pressing on there were questions of how far back? But the route had been well considered ... a longer first half and many options for a quicker / shorter return. None the less the easier gravel tracks were dismissed by all and the rooty - muddy - challenging tracks were agreed unanimously and wholeheartedly. The lead / back riders swapped about as the particular rut chosen line / weariness took their toll, but in any case we all arrived back at our start at the expected time and ready for the beer stop: which is where we came in on this topic.

Snowdon

By John Hawkins

Over the Christmas period I was asked by my sister (whether seriously, or with some puzzlement why we ride mtb I do not know) for my favourite ride of 2014. My immediate reply was my trip to Snowdon during October.

I will outline this below, but over the last days I also feel that for a single day ride I would add the Brecon Beacons "The Gap" Saturday ride, several of the Tuesday korma rides, Dereks relatively recent ride (Where the streams had somewhat increased overnight after his recce ride! Linda, some may recall, was dubious about some parts but admitted afterwards to enjoyment of this ride.) and chasing Steve Keith around on a couple of trips (pushing me out of my usual relaxed ride). The Snowdon trip was not a newforce event. I went up with a few of the guys I bike with from Winchester. Travelling up on Friday morning we undertook the Marin Trail on the afternoon. This ride advertises itself as the oldest trail centre type track in the UK and I have long wanted to do this. Well worthwhile and in my view a good preamble to the main Snowdon event. The tracks are not difficult – generally short sections of techy stuff with roots and lots of rocks linked by fire roads. The rocks got us in the right frame of mind, away from our usual Hampshire XC trails.

Snowdon itself is restricted by a voluntary mtb ban over the summer: hence the trip during October when the bridelways become open for winter, to all. We took the Llanberis track upwards over a period of over two hours. It was tough. We did not ride all of it. Certain parts are relatively easy, although all is uphill some steeper than others and the path is well defined gravelly natural ground. Elsewhere the path has been laid out to help erosion problems with stone blocks: some rideable with a continuous stepping action, but others more hazardous. Other parts were just too steep for us to ride but might be possible for fitter persons (and on a less busy day with numerous hill walkers to avoid an additional problem). Also it was bloody freezing cold with gale force winds.

The way down we took the Rangers Path (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ype4P9f5org>) [this is not me] which runs off to the north side of the peak and was tricky in parts; some was rideable gravel (look at 2 minutes in the referenced youtube) even if steep, other parts are rock

gardens which I was not willing to ride (look at 9 minutes in the referenced youtube). (It is pretty remote and up a mountain, even though close to habitation, should you damage / break yourself or your bike!). This also surprisingly took a couple of hours because there is one stretch over a grassy path where you would need to be super human not to walk. We completed the ride with a tea shop stop and taking turns with security watching the bikes. (Who carries a padlock up Snowdon?)

The Sunday was in my view a harder day than the two previous.

Probably because of weariness and the type of ride. We did the trail at Penmancho over three hours of non stop riding. Unlike Snowdon the climbs are not too steep and there is no excuse to walk and have a rest. Really good fun technical trail but remote and no café or facilities nearby so you need to be prepared!

We stayed at the Swallow Falls Hotel outside Betws Y Coed, which I can recommend if you fancy the trip.

Glad I did Snowdon but unlikely to do it again, whilst I would consider the trail centres again. About 5 hour travel each way, excluding a coffee stop on route.

*The **Marin Trail** is a proper (Red) mountain bike trail in every sense of the term. Big climbs, big descents, brilliant singletrack and truly awesome scenery make this a trail to remember.*

*The **Llanberis Path and the Snowdon Ranger path** are two (Black and Double black respectively) mountain bike trails on Mount Snowdon in Snowdonia, North Wales. Mount Snowdon with an elevation of 1085 metres (3559 feet) makes it the highest peak in England and Wales. Both paths have a voluntary bike ban. This means from 10am to 5pm from the beginning of May until the end of September there is no riding. These paths are shared by walkers so for the best ride and to avoid the conflict please respect the ban.*

Penmachno Trail (combined Loop 1 & Loop 2)

This has got it all - 30km of (Red) fast descents, flowing singletrack, technical riding & boardwalk plus views across the Snowdonia mountains.

You Know You're A Proper Mountain Biker When.....

- Your lawn has developed a noticeable hump where you wash your bike down after rides.
- Your wife frequently pours cold water into her coffee on Friday mornings because you've unplugged the kettle to charge your lights.
- You no longer worry about stripping off in the middle of a car park.
- While colleagues are bothered about a bit of drizzle, you don't consider anything less than a monsoon as proper rain.
- You can tell 15 different types of animal poo apart by taste alone.
- Your partner knows where the filter is on the washing machine, and routinely empties it of all the accumulated mud, leaves and small twigs without mentioning it.
- When purchasing a house, one of the most important criteria is where the bikes are going to live.
- When choosing family holidays you look on the local OS map first to see how many "pink dashed lines" are around the location - then you think about how to make the rest of the family to really want to go there!
- If forced by OH to walk in the countryside you use the opportunity to scope out new trails, frequently carrying air handlebars (which you wonder might be better wider)
- Your "bike wardrobe" cost more than your regular one and is considerably more hideous.
- You see an attractive member of the opposite sex on a bike and realise you're trying to work out what tyres they're using

- when you see a tyre track on a local footpath and can guess who left it based on their tyre choice and line
- Your wife doesn't mind you turning your head to watch as girls go past on bikes. She knows you're looking at the bike.
- Your shins are serrated
- when, faced with the challenge "I don't know which you love most - me or your bike!", your response is "which bike?"
- your life is dated by the bike you owned. "well i was riding the inbred back then so 2008"
- Spillage of the green Finish Line in your rucksack/hydration pack is not a catastrophe. It just means that your jam sandwiches will have a nice, classic scent on top.
- Your children are able to tell which parcels arriving at your house are likely to contain haribo.
- Your significant (and now heavily pregnant) other half cannot fit into the sun room as there are 6 bikes in it. She will naturally fail to see the funny side of the situation, When you say "It'll be fine when you slim down again".
- You're not bothered about the black section in your camelbak tube
- Driving anywhere new both heads in the car turn to look up a track going past and you simultaneously mutter "you could ride that".

This list was compiled with the help of the fount of all knowledge that is the singletrack.com forum. If any of you contributed to this—Thank you.

Global Fatbike Day Swanage

This report originally appeared on the Bikeradar website and was written by Matt Orton of MBUK. A number of Vindaloo riders were there and for your editor it was the first chance to have a proper play with a new movie camera. If you would like to see the finished film have a look at

<http://youtu.be/VKTN6Cqyt8>

Scraping the ice off the van for a two-hour drive to deepest Dorset on a freezing morning in early December doesn't conjure great hopes for a day on the beach. Today is a little different though. It's the third annual Global Fatbike Day. That's right, like all recognised minority groups, fatbike owners have their own day when they can ride their bikes with pride while raising awareness among first time fatbike riders and the fat curious.

Our horde of chilly fatbikers assembles at Swanage bike shop CharlieThe Bikemonger where we're greeted with coffee and bacon sandwiches. Last-minute fettling is completed and Charlie's fleet of test bikes is sized up for those without their own big-wheeled steeds. Once everyone is set, and with a rumble of giant tyres on tarmac, we descend through Swanage to the seafront for a group photo and a run-through of the rules for the day.

1. Don't piss off the locals
2. Don't ride off the edge of the cliff
3. Don't be a dick

So off we ride, on a motley collection of bikes you've probably never heard of and wouldn't expect to see outside of the Arctic Circle.

As with all group rides, the law of averages suggests there'll be a crash at some point, and today is no different. Some enthusiastic overtaking and an unplanned dismount headfirst over the handlebars results in a callout of the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance – whose services we're extremely grateful for. Luckily there's no serious damage. Ironically the crash is between the two 29er riders in the group, ensuring sympathy is thin on the ground. It's generally accepted that this wouldn't have happened had they been on fatbikes...

A brief pub stop to get to know each other and then it's onwards to the beach. It won't be hard for you to imagine the bemused looks we get from walkers as we plough through the loose, sandy paths between the dunes. There's no escaping us mountain bikers there any more! A couple of miles later and it's time for a fuel stop at the Dragons Village Bakery in Corfe Castle, before heading on for a little XC and a bastard hill climb (where we're lapped by an angry roadie who clearly doesn't appreciate us getting in the way of his Strava times – result!) on the way to the next pub.

And that's where we stay, watching the sun set from the beer garden of the Square & Compass while keeping warm with an awesome selection of local ales and mulled cider. Eventually it's time for the long night-time descent back into Swanage to get a bite to eat before hitting the party... but you really had to be there for that.

So what did I learn from my first Global Fatbike Day? Fatbikes are fun. From serious mountain bikers but first time fatbike riders to seasoned fatbike racers, everyone enjoyed themselves. There were promises of selling hardly-used bikes to fund a fatbike and plans to sneak them past unapproving wives. In the words of Charlie the Bikemonger: "With most mountain bikers, half their brain is looking for more extreme terrain, the other half wants to buy things to make this extreme terrain easier. The two things are fundamentally opposed to each other. They buy a new bike and it replicates the same experience they've always had. As your bike gets more technically superior, so you need to hunt down more technical trails. Now, buying a fatbike is like having a dune buggy or monster truck – it's nothing like your normal bike and it allows you to ride places where no one else can ride and experience new things. It turns your familiar local neighbourhood into a fresh playground. Most importantly, it makes you look slim."

If you're unsure, curious or even think they're a complete waste of time, try getting your leg over one and see how you feel a few hours later...

Frame Bags or Backpack?

By Robin Knight

Through all of my years of mountain biking I have ridden with a backpack of some type. This has always been my preferred choice.

Carrying a litre of water, a spare tube, pump, multi tool and a selection of clothing in case of mid ride stop or change of weather. Also home to phone, wallet and sometimes my camera, it's always worked.

Over the past year I had noticed a fair number of fatbikers (as I am these days) tended to have a selection of bags attached to the bike, especially for longer trips, bivi's etc.

Having ridden on short rides and on the beach a couple of times without a backpack, I was surprised how nice it is to have no weight on my back so I gave it a go!

I started by buying a cheap frame bag, a seat pack and a top tube mounted smart phone bag that also had room for money and camera. These worked very well, meaning I didn't need the backpack any more. The only issue was carrying the water. A small bottle in the main frame bag would suffice for the cooler months, but a summer solution was needed.

A couple of months off road riding later and I knew this was the way I wanted to ride my bike. With Christmas on the horizon it was a great opportunity to upgrade my main frame bag and find a solution to the water holder issue.

In the summer I had met a lady called Judy, a fellow fatbiker and designer of recycled bike related products. Going by the name of BeerBabe, she produces all sorts of odd, and practical items made from bike leftovers. I had been taken by the look of her recycled innertube frame bags, custom made to fit your frame.

So, on December 25th, I unwrapped a fantastic quality bag made the exact size for my frame. It fits like a glove. It's plenty big enough for everything I want to pop inside, and has a really sturdy heavy duty zip. Perfect! BeerBabe also solved the drink issue, by way of a recycled innertube twin bottle carrier, fitting just behind the stem, with adjustable space for bottles either side of the top tube. I quickly decided one side would be home to the battery for my bar light in an adapted bottle, still leaving the other available for a bottle. Again perfect!

My top tube bag (I'm going ask Judy if she can make a one off!) and seat pack will be the next to get the BeerBabe treatment.

Will I use a backpack again? Maybe, but not in the near future, having nothing on your back is rather nice.

<http://www.beerbabe.co.uk/>



££ CLUB DISCOUNTS ££

The following shops offer a discount
on presentation

Cycle Experience

Brookley Road, Brockenhurst
tel: 01590 624204

179 Barrack Road, Christchurch
tel: 01202 486278

10-20 South Street, Hythe
tel: 02380 840765

Cycle World Wessex

36 Thornhill Park Road, Southampton
tel: 02380 471140

109a Winchester Road,
Romsey tel: 01794 513344

373 London Road, Portsmouth
tel: 02392 666551

Sandy Balls Cycle Centre Godshill,
Fordingbridge tel: 01425 657707

Primera

183 Bournemouth Rd, Parsstone
244 Charminster Rd, Charminster

Bicycle Barn

63 Old Milton Road
New Milton
BH25 6DN
01425 616070
bicyclebarn@btconnect.com

Perfect Balance Cycles

87 Junction Road, Totton
tel: 02380 871777

Hargroves Cycles

www.hargrovescycles.co.uk
150 Commercial Rd Totton
tel: 02380 862011

453 Millbrook Road, Southampton
tel: 02380 789160

10 City Road, Winchester
tel: 01962 860005

Also in Chichester & Fareham

Peter Hansford Cycles

91 Olivers Battery Road South,
Winchester tel: 01962 877555

Southampton Road, Park Gate

32a Hursley Road, Chandlers Ford

Ride

111 Commercial Road, Parkstone
tel: 01202 741744

The Hub Cycleworks

105-107 Shirley Road
Southampton

EVENTS CALENDAR

These are events that some of us are expecting to attend, some organised by the club and some not. If you like the sound of any of them please go along and increase the club presence. In the case of events involving an overnight stay it would be a good idea to contact one of the others going to ensure everyone can camp close together.

Easter Weekend Trip

A few years ago a small group of us did a mountain bike/walking long weekend over Easter. A small group of Korma plus are going to do the same Eastbourne Way this Easter. There is a new rather nice hostel which when I looked had space for this weekend approx £25 B&B a night.

There are several Mbike options including Friston Forest for those who like Swinley - (Ladies we did the crater run last year when passing through - as you can see a lot more to do) I may be able to talk a local into doing some guiding. For those not into this type of riding there is plenty of Downland riding linking off the South Downs Way.

For the walking there is the 7 Sisters to Burling Gap which is on par with the Dorset coast line.

See the message board on the club website for more details.

Pass'portes du Soleil

The 12th running of this 'Grand Randonné' in the French Alps will take place in late June 2015. Entry will open on the 13th February or thereabouts. You don't need to be a downhill monster to do this as the circuit can be easily completed on trails no more difficult than an average British red route. The views are however far more stunning than you'll get at any British trail centre.

Gorrick Spring Series

This popular cross country series returns with races on the following dates:

18 January, 08 February, 08 March, 22 March.

Race distances for most categories are usually planned to keep you riding for between one and one and a half hours.

See www.gorrick.co.uk for more details.

Race Results

Several Newforce members competed in the Merida Brass Monkeys series of races. Results as follows:

Round 1, 23rd Noember, Minley Manor.
Russell Speight 40th from 51 in the male 4 hours

Round 2, 14th December, Tunnel Hill.
Russell Speight 35th from 43 in the male 4 hours

Round 3, 4th January, Deepcut.
Daniel Whitten, 8th from 9 in the 14 to 17yrs male 2 hours
Keith Whitten, 12th from 51 in the Grand Veteran male 3 hours

A few notes:

The first round was held on a very wet and not very warm day. Anyone who completed 4 hours in those conditions deserves a medal.

Daniel was the youngest in his category at 13 years and riding in his first 2 hour race. He slowed drastically on his last lap but his tally of 3 laps in 3 hours 14 minutes would have placed him 42nd from 64 in the adult 2 hour race.

Next Time in Newforce

The next issue will be going out to you sometime towards the end of April, by which time spring should be well and truly with us. Longer days and light evenings are guaranteed. Warmer temperatures and dry trails? Time will tell. Will the fat-bikers have had any snow to play in? If they do get some then I'm sure there'll be some good pictures to be seen.

As always, all contributions are welcome and it doesn't just have to be about bikes. We are a club of people with lives beyond mountain biking so if there are any other pastimes or passions in your life that you enjoy and want to tell us about then please do so.

The deadline for the spring issue will be early April

Reader's Bikes

Dean's Travers Fat Race

Frame:	Travers Titanium Fat Race 18"
Fork:	Travers Carbon Fat Prong
Headset:	Hope Tapered semi integrated
Bars:	Ritchey WCS Carbon Trail Low Rise 740mm
Stem:	Ritchey WCS Carbon Trail 45mm
Seat Post:	Ritchey WCS Carbon Trail 400mm
Seat:	Ritchey WCS Trail, Carbon base, Ti Rails
Seat	Clamp: Hope bolt up
Rims:	Nextie Carbon 90mm / 32H
Hubs:	Hope Fatsno's Red 135mm 15mm F / 170mm R
Brakes:	Hope Tech 3 X2 Standard Hose
Rotors:	Hope floaters, Red 160 R 183 F
Chainset:	Middleburn RS8 Silver 100mm Shaft, Red duo spider, 32, 22 hardcoat rings
Bottom Bracket:	Hope Ceramic Red
Cassette:	Sram PG 1090 11-36
Chain:	Sram PC 1090
Rear Mech: S	himano Saint M820
Front Mech:	Shimano XT M786 Direct Mount 2 x 10
Shifters:	Shimano XT 10sp M780 + i-spec converters Problem Solver For 100mm direct mount mech
Tyres:	45 NRTH Husker Du 120tpi

Weight ready to ride is about 26lb

If you've spent some time and effort getting your bike just the way you want it or it's got a bit of history to it please share it with the club by sending the editor a picture and a few words about how and why you've done what you have.



