

NEWFORCE

Autumn 2015 Issue 137





Above: Big wheels and an even bigger beach
Below: You're always among friends on a Newforce ride



Editorial

Welcome to the Autumn 2015 issue of Newforce. By the time you read this the nights will be drawing in and more and more of the evening rides will be done in darkness. For those of you riding with lights for the first time it will be a new and exciting experience, for others it will be like driving at night, you put your lights on and get on with it.

Owning a bike shop and getting all your goodies at trade prices I used to tell people, doesn't mean that you spend less on bikes, it means you spend more because the cheaper prices are so much harder to resist. However, in recent years I've shown a bit more self control and the following tale is a good example of why that change has occurred.

During the summer I managed to find a rather good deal on a set of Shimano XT brakes from one of my suppliers. The plan was that they'd go on my 29er and the existing brakeset, XT from 8 or 10 years ago would go on my son's bike as his rear was well past it's sell by date. That plan existed right up until I attempted to fit the new ones. For a week or so I'd been taking a peek in the box every day and getting warm and fuzzy feelings looking at the shiny bits inside. Come the day I found a little spare time to do the swap I removed the old front brake, opened the box with the new one in, lifted it out and..... Hold on, this feels heavier than the one I've just removed. I didn't have any scales to hand but when I balanced a pair of handlebars on the workstand and hung the brakes from either end the proof was there to see. Each time the bars tipped towards the new brake. Well they're not going on the 'best' bike, and it's not as if the old brakes were in any way failing to stop me when I wanted them to. Looks like they're going on my winter bike then.

So, another reminder that newest and shiniest does not always equal best, a train of thought which quickly led to my old Orange Evo2. Bought new in 1999, I loved that bike and had some fantastic rides on it that I can still clearly remember now. It had 27 gears, disc brakes and a reasonable suspension fork, just like many, many other bikes sold throughout the noughties. I sold it after four years in the pursuit of greater bling and as far as I know it's still giving good service to it's current owner. Would I be enjoying my riding any less if I'd kept it? Would I be struggling to keep up on an outdated bike now? I suspect that the answers to both those questions is "no". But I would have had a bit more spare money in the meantime. The brake episode was also what prompted me to feature Liz's bike at the back of the magazine. I'm sure she'll forgive me for saying that it's the polar opposite of bling but I don't remember any rides where we've had to retrace our route to pick up bits that have fallen off and I don't recall ever hearing her complain about how much it's holding her back. And what do we think of most when remembering those rides that stand out above the others? Is it how wonderful our bike was or is it more likely the scenery, the trails and the company we had on that occasion that made it special?

So the moral of this story must be that if you've got a half decent bike and a bit of spare cash kicking about don't take the money to your local bike shop or trawl the web for more shininess, go to your local travel agent and get yourself a ticket to ride the bike you've got somewhere you've never been before, somewhere a bit special. If you're feeling really flush buy several tickets and treat a friend or two! On a personal level maybe it's time I quit the bike business and opened a travel agency. I like the idea of trade price holidays.

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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 for mountain biking.

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

Fortnightly Sunday rides, Thursdays nights plus ad-hoc 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 8th December

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.

Autumn Rides List

Sunday 04 October 2015 Appleslade Inclosure (ref SU 183 092)

Designated pub: The Red Shoot Inn - for the Beer and Cider Festival

We have used this car park only once before as a starting point but it was very successful. The added attraction this time is that it is a short way from the Red Shoot Inn and the ride has been timed to coincide with a beer and cider festival. Recently, a group of us stumbled upon a similar event, and not only were we greeted by a bewildering array of barrels on stillage racks but there was a hog roast as well, so refuelling after the ride could be quite comprehensive.

For the ride itself, we could start with a sharp rise, but on cold muscles this is not recommended so we might make our way across Ibsley Common (soft, gritty sand and a little bit of a slog) towards Abbot's Well and Hampton Ridge and then circle around Amberwood and Sloden Inclosures, Splash Bridge and Broomy Inclosure, then Milkham Inclosure and back via Red Shoot Wood and finally come down the hill we didn't start with.

Sunday 18 October 2015 Swinley Forest ½ day ride (ref SU 877 661)

Designated pub: cake and coffee at the Visitor Centre

Swinley Forest is an area of Windsor Forest located between Bracknell and Bagshot to the west of the A322. Cycling is permitted on hard tracks and within a specific expert mountain bike area. It is a condition of cycling within Swinley Forest that you must hold a cycle permit if over 16 years of age and we must comply with the requirements of English Nature. The forest is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week with access available from a number of entrances. The car park is at The Look Out Discovery Centre which not only is the source of Day Permit purchase, but has toilets and cafe is open every day except Christmas and Boxing Day from 10am to 5pm. Whilst the Swinley Forest Map showing the boundaries of the areas available to ride is available to purchase from the Visitor Centre if you are not familiar with the land but whenever we ride there, we make our own way around usually guided expertly by Carolyn. There are purpose built singletrack trails within the Expert Mountain Bike Area but these are not marked on the Forest Map so it is a case of finding a likely looking track and riding it.

Sunday 01 November 2015 Breamore near Fordingbridge (TWO rides offered today) (ref SU 159 179)

Designated pub: Bat and Ball at Breamore

Please note that we are no longer able to use the car park at the Museum but will assemble in the car park of the Bat and Ball pub. **The idea is that we will set off as two discrete groups.**

One group will be led by Dean Johnson for a vigorous $\frac{3}{4}$ day excursion reaching up towards Salisbury before returning to Breamore. Join this group only if you are prepared to ride for a long time and you have the fitness to maintain a lively pace for the duration of the outing.

The other group will be led by one of our Medium paced group leaders for a more usual $\frac{1}{2}$ day probably going up towards the gallops for a circular route taking in some sweeping tracks and ridges with fine vistas.

Please come properly prepared for the group you intend to join.

Sunday 15 November 2015 Burley (opposite cricket pitch) (ref SU 214 028)

Designated pub: Queen's Head in the centre of the village

Castle Hill is always a good choice for the energetic ones, whilst the old railway line beckons for those who want a gentler ride. For those who want a change, then Bisterne Common offers an escape from the usual New Forest tracks. All these options have reasonably good surfaces where the seasonal weather does not bring too many disadvantages to progress. It is possible to take in Dur Hill where it forms a perimeter track right on the edge of the Forest boundary but this will be slow going. In the other direction, there lies the chance of Burley Outer Rails tracks and onwards to Bolderwood; these tracks of course are typical Inclosure gravel surfaces which will roll reasonably well.

Sunday 29 November 2015 Micheldever Station (ref SU 518 428)

Designated post-ride pub: Northbrook Arms, East Stratton

This ride will start from the Railtrack car park (now charging to park on Sundays so bring some coins for the meter) at Micheldever Station which is to be found nestled in the crook of the junction between the M3 and the A303 trunk route to the west country. It is 3 miles north of the village of Micheldever itself and is most easily reached by following the A33 from where it splits off the M3 at the Winnall junction at Winchester (junction 9). This junction also serves the A34 to Newbury and both A roads run the same course for half a mile before the A33 splits off to the right.

The ride can head off northwards towards Whitchurch and Laverstoke or go south and west towards Sutton Scotney, Barton Stacey and then northwards to come back via Whitchurch

Sunday 13 December 2015 Christmas ride and lunch (ref SU 275 079)

Designated pub: The New Forest Inn, Emery Down – Christmas lunch. (Pub @ SU286 084)

The best start point is the car park just 1/4 mile along the road from the pub in the direction of the Portuguese Fireplace. It has worked alright for us each time we have ridden from here and parking is at a premium at the pub. We simply leave the cars where they are and walk along the road. Starting from here we have a choice of the Reptilliary, Rhinefield, Bolderwood, Burley, Minstead and so on; all good stuff and just right for working up an appetite.

Sunday 27 December 2015 Beaulieu Road Station (ref SU 349 063)

Designated pub: Drift Inn

For the first time in the Club's history there is not a ride on 26th December but on the Sunday after Christmas instead. This is the "NOT the Boxing Day ride" to ride off the turkey but it is still not designed to be a test of stamina or speed, just a chance to shake off the excesses of the festive season. Obvious choices are Denny Wood, and the triangle between Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst and Beaulieu. Less obvious choices are back towards Longdown, Deerleap or down towards Dibden Purlieu.

2016

Sunday 10 January 2016 Farley Mount, Westwood (ref SU 420 292)

Designated pub: The Dolphin, Hursley

Sometimes we meet at Crab Wood picnic area and sometimes we meet at the Monument car park. This venue is halfway between Crab Wood and the Monument at the junction 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.

At this time of year there will be some mud to contend with unless it's frosty so some of the tracks might be a bit slippery. There will be some deep ruts to negotiate but don't let that put you off; count it as a valuable lesson in staying upright.

Sunday 24 January 2016 Abbots Well (ref SU 177 129)

Designated pub: the Foresters Arms is ¼ mile along the road from the car park..

Abbots Well is nicely situated on the western end of the Hampton Ridge path leading to Fritham and the north edge of Stoney Cross. At Fritham it is possible to double back through Sloden Inclosure and via Splash Bridge pick up on Linwood and Ibsley Common before circling northwards to return .

The other start option is to head north through Blissford and Godshill to take in some of the stickier tracks on offer in the Godshill Inclosure near Woodgreen and onwards to Hale, then perhaps a return through Hamptworth to Bramshaw Telegraph. From here it would be a route through Eyeworth Pond, Fritham and Hampton Ridge to get back to Abbots Well.

Sunday 07 February 2016 Hatchet Pond near Beaulieu (ref SU 359 017)

Designated pub: Turfcutters Arms

This is Hatchet Pond itself, not the model aircraft car park. This location can take us around the perimeter track of the old airfield, perhaps taking in Diltons Farm without getting up to our axles in mud and other unspeakable mixtures of slurry. There is a loop via Beaulieu around the fringes of Langley, Blackfield, Holbury and Hardley before turning southwards and heading back towards Hatchet Moor or if neither of those routes takes your fancy, there's always Hawkhill, Ladycross, Woodfidley and Denny Lodge on the north side of the B3055 road (the road between Beaulieu and Brockenhurst).

Newcomers might enjoy this ride location, there are no major hills to contend with (well I don't think so, but that's just my view) and the tracks are mostly well surfaced and at this time of year will hold up well.

**THE NEWSLETTER IS
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
THE NEXT ISSUE IS JULY
DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES IS
DECEMBER 16TH
IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED ONE
OF THESE RIDES
SEND IN A SHORT REVIEW....PLEASE!**

**Club AGM Tuesday 8th December 2015, 8pm
New Forest Inn, Emery Down.
Open to all club members.**

Shackleford Day Ride: The Medium group

By Sue Marsland

Puttenham Common near Shackleford, Guildford, was a new start point for a Newforce ride, Roger had been passing a week or so before the ride and chose the upper car park which was easy to find and had great views over the Surrey Countryside. A small select group of riders turned up (quality not quantity!?) with three heading off on a shorter fast group day ride and 8 of us set off for a more relaxed medium group ride.

We started off on bridleways and some single track through the bracken and trees on Puttenham Common before heading off towards Tilford and Frensham. The tracks on Frensham Common were deep sand and hard work but by the time we had finished our sand riding skills were greatly improved. At Frensham Great Pond we joined the families enjoying the lake and had a welcome coffee and snack stop. We then set off around the pond, and on towards Grayshot. As we were making good time we did a diversion up (and I mean up) onto Ludshott Common and down a great, rocky gully to Wagoners Wells – Ok the wrong path but worth the extra distance back which took us past the beautiful wooded ponds that are the Wagoners Wells. We then headed to Grayshott and a well deserved lunch in a pub garden.

After lunch we headed to the Devils Punch Bowl taking the rough, stepped gully down into the Punch Bowl and out towards Thursley, several miles of technical stony downhill. We then had another chance to tryout our sand riding skills on Hinkley Common followed by a short road section and finally on uphill tree covered tracks to the car park. We did 48km with 700m of climbing and had a very enjoyable ride in the sunshine, well worth the extra miles of driving to the start point.

Doing It Without Wheels

By Eleanor Rutter

I sometimes think something must have been missing in my childhood, because I seem to be attracted to all things muddy in my adult life including Mountain Biking. Since having a midlife crisis about 10 years ago I have entered most of the muddiest obstacle course races about including Tough Guy, Tough Mudder, Commando Challenge, Grim , Turbo X , Brutal 10 , Judgement Day , Hell Runner, The General to name but a few.

People ask me why and to be honest I cannot really answer but all that I know is that at the end of every race my self-esteem has been bolstered , I have made loads of new friends and my body is full of endorphins, and their ability to make you feel oh-so-good. When your body is subjected to certain stimuli like sex, food or pain, your hypothalamus calls for endorphins, and the cells throughout your body that contain them heed the call. When endorphins lock into special receptor cells they block the transmission of pain signals and also produce a euphoric feeling -- exactly like opiates. So maybe that's the answer maybe I am a secret drug addict who does not do drugs.

In any race there is no obstacle that you have to do and if you don't fancy it just go round it and you can always give the marshals a false reason why you are not doing it , I am totally useless at monkey bars so have been known on the odd occasion to declare a rotator cuff injury just to avoid it, but saying that I normally have a bash at most things , my record is 3 bar swings !

So if any of you out there are looking for that little bit of extra fun in your lives I would definitely recommend at least one obstacle race in your life , but I can assure you , you will never look back and will be signing on the dotted line for the next available one, and if you fancy a chum to do it with give me a shout.

Pictures on following pages:

Opposite: Eleanor milliseconds away from getting even filthier.

Centre pages: Yes you can ride on sand WITHOUT a fatbike.









The Big Bike Bash 2015

Written by Ben Simpson, this piece first appeared on the Pedal Planner website (www.pedalplanner.co.uk)

As we approached Avon Tyrrell on Friday afternoon we were greeted by a smiley-faced volunteer, leaning on the tailgate of a 4x4, sipping a pint of beer. Our two-minute conversation with him set the tone for the weekend ahead. Rather than the all-too-often experienced and curtly-delivered “do this, don’t do that” reception that you get from some event officials on arrival, we were left in no doubt that the stock answer from these guys was going to be “yes”. Can I camp here? – Yes. Can I ride this trail? – Yes. Can you put on a unicycle race for me? etc.- all yes.

For the uninitiated (as we were), [Big Bike Bash](#) is a fantastic celebration of bike-orientated family fun held every August Bank Holiday at [Avon Tyrrell](#) Outdoor Activity Centre in the New Forest. Though the central theme is undoubtedly fun times on two wheeled pedal power, without ANY biking it would make a very respectable music festival, or beer festival for that matter – I think I lost count at 20 when gazing at the different real ales and ciders on offer, and we were treated to no less than 14 different bands and live music artists over the weekend. So if that sounds like your kind of thing read on to hear more about the event...

Big Bike Bash – it’s a Shore thing

This was to be Josh’s (our four year old’s) first cycling festival and certainly the first time he’d done any “racing”. We had a relaxed Friday afternoon; with the tent up in the “camping with a view” field, we set off for the main arena via the top section of the XC trail. On arrival, Josh spotted the Shore Trax course laid out the grass in front of the main house, demanded to be set free of the trail-gator, and set about teaching himself the art of riding wooden berms and whoops. This proved to be his staple entertainment the entire weekend – as happy there as Daddy was making his next selection from the beer tent. The backdrop to the event sign-on was an impressive stack of crates

containing an array of cycling goodies; all donated by generous sponsors for event prizes, raffle prizes and crowd pleasing “throw-aways”. This, in combination with the friendly and efficient team, put us in a great mood, and the event hadn’t even started yet!

Sitting outside our tent we were treated to a fantastic sunset as we tucked into “camp casserole” and red wine; meanwhile the bands on the main stage struck up their tunes and Josh had already made friends with our campsite neighbours and was happy as Larry charging round after a frisbee until it got dark.

Let’s race!

A count-down to 10.00 on Saturday morning made things official – Big Bike Bash 2015 was officially underway. And with the first event on the jam-packed programme being the under 7s XC race, it was Josh who took to the start-line first. No pressure little man! Despite this being his first ever “event” and the fact that he was very much at the lower end of the age/ size range of his fellow competitors, he was undaunted and really enjoyed it, which I think says a lot about the friendly nature of the ‘Bash’ and the volunteers herding the young riders under the start / finish arch.

Less friendly (!) was the race etiquette in the “eliminator” race on the Sunday, where I joined 34 other grown men who should know better, sharpening their elbows in this event designed to maximise the chances of contact and crashes – which it did very effectively. I never knew laughing was possible when you are gasping for air, but somehow it is...

Orderly Disorder

Robin and his enthusiastic yet incredibly laid-back team of volunteers have mastered the art of orderly disorder – the weekend schedule was jam-packed with different events, but that didn’t stop the guys laying on extra events and categories on the spur of the moment. And given that they started with over 30, this was no mean feat; what it does mean is that there truly is something for everyone, from 3 year-old wobblers, to super sporty Dads and everyone in between. From the completely

ridiculous (inappropriate bike race, lake jump), to a little bit tipsy (Pint to Pint race), to a little bit serious (XC, gravity, night race, hill climb) to a little bit skillsy (wheelie, track stand, limbo and bunny-hop competitions), whatever your preference there is something for you.

The Spirit of Big Bike Bash

This was an oft-used expression over the weekend by the tireless duo compering on the PA system; from the outside it is hard to explain what the “spirit” is, but you certainly feel the magic of this event when you are there... Something which puts everybody in a great frame of mind is undoubtedly the generous spirit of the BBB organisers and traders.

In addition to the great value for money of the event entry itself, and the quality and value of the food and drink on offer, these are some of the other things that we noticed... Two ladies tirelessly painting faces all day, both days – *“just stick a donation in the tin”*; a pair of kids spending hours happily making and handing out balloon toys; the guy running the arts and crafts stall refusing to take money for a plaster of Paris model that Josh managed to break before painting it; the guy running the catering van who gave me back my tenner because he was running out of change – *“pop back and give me the money tomorrow if you remember”*. At festivals we’re all too accustomed to being taken advantage of as a captive audience, but Big Bike Bash is the very antithesis of this, and boy what a difference it makes.

So, top marks from us for this event. It sold out this year, and despite the slightly dodgy weather, everyone we spoke to was talking about returning next year – so if you fancy it we’d advise [booking early](#)...

Our thanks to Robin and the team for a great weekend; not only do you guys put on a great and great-value weekend, you also manage to raise £10,000 for the [UK Youth](#) charity in the process, made possible only by a lot of hard work by the team and the generous donation of prizes donated by the sponsors and the bands giving their time. We salute you all.

Island Dreaming

By Allan Knight

Some rides go down in history as ‘a Proper Day Out’. What determines a proper day out is subjective, but generally revolves around route, company and weather. Getting these three right together at any one point in time is no mean feat, but it does happen from time to time. So if you want to up the chances of this, one place seems to hit the spot every time we head there – and that’s the Isle of Wight.

Perhaps its because its renowned for getting the sunny days in, or the fantastic views from the downs, or just the relaxed way of life on the island. I think its because taking the ferry ‘overseas’ makes it feel like a mini holiday!

And so it was again for the 2015 outing to the island, on a spectacularly bright and warm day in early September. I rolled up to the ferry (having dumped the car in the free spaces past the roundabout) to be greeted by Steve Keith. “Oh, I’m glad you’re here”, he chimes, “You can lead today!”. Thanks Steve!

We hopped on the ferry, which was still quite busy with late-summer holiday-makers, for the half-hour trip to Yarmouth, and hit the café for coffee and second breakfast. On the way over, the Captain pointed out the start of the Cowes-Torquay power boat race as these racing boats shot past, plumes of water shooting up behind, being chased by TV camera helicopters. Amazing to think that they would get to Torquay and back quicker than we could pedal round half the Island, the winner averaging 90mph!

On arrival, we split into two groups, and I lead our bunch up the cycle route towards Freshwater, passing the start of an Isle of Wight Cycling Week event. Strangely, we hardly saw anyone from the event after this despite it taking a similar route to us, except for a few lost souls who we pointed in the right direction. After following the river Yar and skirting Afton Manor, we picked up our first bridleway proper, the bulk of Compton Down looming ahead of us.

I gave the troops a break here, turning East at the bottom of the Down, skirting the golf course and through the notorious brambly muddy bit (which actually wasn’t too brambly or muddy!) before picking up the trail down through the woods to Shalcombe. This can get quite muddy too, but I noticed a nice looking singletrack off to the right which looped around avoiding the worst of it. Having held the gate, I was at the back, so when I rejoined the main track I caught up with Tanya with bike upside down fixing a puncture. Being the gentleman I am, I let her take the muddy tyre off before I offered assistance!

From Shalcombe, we took the right-hand track up through Brighstone Forest. Well, all except Jerry who had stopped to fiddle with his gears and took the left hand track. At the top of the long drag we waited. And waited. As ride leader I was made to feel guilty enough to ride all the way back down to find him, at which point he appeared at the top. Ho hum!

From here we picked up the Worsley trail, out in the sunshine with a tailwind, rolling along the chalk tracks on top of the Downs, sparkling blue sea to our right. Not a bad way to spend a Sunday! At Cheverton we diverted on to the Chevy Chase track for a quick blast of swoopy twistiness before the wide, fast grassy blast down to the road.

Following this we worked our way up to Chillerton Down, past the TV mast for a bit of vertigo-inducing gazing at the top (no-one working up there today), then along and down the steep descent past the old quarry to Garstons. A quick snack break here, while we watched a few of the IoW Cycling Festival riders struggle back up the escarpment we'd just come down. Far better our way!

A bit of bridleway bashing across the top now, with the red brick tower of the old Whitecroft asylum to our right (purportedly one of the most haunted places on the island, and it has a few!), and then a blast down the tree-tunnel gulley which is the Shepherds Trail to Carisbrooke. Skirting the town to the South East, we took the killer climb up St Georges Lane to St Georges Down – a real granny ring grinder even though its on tarmac! Past the golf course and turn right onto a bridleway with a nice fast, loose, stony descent through the trees before it opens out (watch out for the pothole on the left!) and over the main road. From here it was a steady climb out of the Merstone valley to Rookley, and a quick scoot down the road to the Chequers Inn for lunch!

And a pleasant one it was too, sitting in the sunshine in the garden, drinking cider (or other beverages of choice for the un-initiated) whilst scoffing pub grub. James had the unusual choice of a lemonade dressing on his salad, deftly delivered by the waitress, which was none-the-less finished off by a ravenous Steve!

Finally we dragged ourselves away from the pub (Jerry was getting impatient, I was just getting settled in) to pick up the lowland bit of the Worsley Trail before a rather uncomfortable climb, having just finished lunch, back up to Chillerton Down. Fortunately, Tanya's tyre had gone down again, so we had a breather at the top and admired the view (of Steve's backside as he, this time, did the honourable thing and pumped Tanya's tyre back up).

Back along the Worsley Trail, Limerstone Down followed by Brighstone Down, Mottistone Down and then Compton Down, the climbs now starting to be felt in

our legs, we dropped in to Freshwater. However, the sun was still shining, the day still young, and enthusiasm exceeded energy, so we decided to have a cheeky ride up the huge grassy expanse of Tennyson Down too. Fortunately there are some very useful benches around the monument which we flopped on to, hearts pounding and lungs bursting after chasing Russell to the top. Russell won, but then he's probably got 20 years over the rest of us!

Continuing on to the Needles Battery, overlooking the Needles themselves with the lighthouse perched on the end, really felt like the ends of the Earth – funny to think that we were stood on the old top-secret rocket testing complex, where the only all-British rocket and satellite were developed prior to its launch in 1971.

Now, legs were really starting to complain (well, mine were anyway), so we dropped down to The Needles Park at Alum Bay to pick up the road for a couple of miles back to Yarmouth. On another day, we could have dropped down to the coast through the holiday village (and a bit of beach riding for the Fat-Bikers amongst us) but time was getting on, and we had a ferry to catch. This we duly did, more coffee and flapjacks consumed from the café, and I think the consensus was that it was a Proper Day Out – the Isle of Wight had delivered yet again!

Day & Night Enduro, Queen Elizabeth Country Park

By Allan Knight

I could hear the baying of the crowd of hecklers standing alongside the trail, even above the sound of the wind in my ears. Their torches appeared as pinpricks in the dark canvas of the wood, narrow beams of light highlighting low branches and grinning faces.

My focus shifted straight back to the spot of my own lights on the trail ahead. Instinct, rather than any cognitive process, registering that cheering crowds always accompanies a good crash spot ahead. My field of vision, a glowing circle some five metres into the blackness, showed dark loam, exposed tree roots, and... nothing!

I pitched the bike hard left as the trail dropped straight off into the old quarry, between the row of expectant watchers, a sickening lurch downward across

slippery rain-wet soil, so steep I couldn't have walked it. My dropper was right down, weight right back, my shorts skimming the back tyre. Brakes eased to get some control over direction as my tyres skidded over the loose surface, speed rapidly increasing despite my best efforts.

Then suddenly in front of me a berm, ready to grab my sliding front wheel and pitch me head-over-heels down the slope, but I wrench the bars left again, slamming both wheels into the berm, getting some control over speed like a skier on moguls.

There's no let-up though, as the crowds cheer me through this first turn, into another drop to the right for the same again. This time, as I rattle over slimy roots, I twist and slide on the bike so much to have some control over direction, my feet unclip from the pedals. Both feet pop out, and I'm sat on the back wheel, hands still on the bars, brakes full on, chussing down into the next berm!

Another twist right and this berm stops me dead so quickly I hop back over the saddle and immediately kick left into the next drop – as a flash of green and blue, highlighted in the torch beams, appears from up the hill to the cheers of the crowd. The next rider is catching me, but only because he is tumbling bike-over-body-over-bike down the hill! I stamp on the pedals and drop onto the fire road, utterly relieved to have got the steepest section out of the way, but instantly focussed on the twisty singletrack ahead.

This was Stage 2 of the Queen Elizabeth Country Park Day & Night Enduro – an event consisting of four timed downhill runs over different routes, with a gruelling slog back up (within a time limit!) for each next one. And just to add insult to injury, it started at dusk, which quickly turned into a very dark night in the trees!

The event was organised by the QECF Collective, who voluntarily create and maintain the trails we all use at QE Park, as well as running a couple of excellent events each year. The events tend to mix existing trails (including some sections of the Red route in this instance) with a lot of stuff they create especially for the race.

Stage 2 had one particularly steep, rooty, loamy section, but otherwise all the stages were great, twisty, technical singletrack. Stage 1 started off with some pedally off-camber stuff before dropping into a superb flowy trail with a small drop off (there were no major drop-offs or jumps in this edition of the event, so no chicken-runs required!). After the steep bit on stage 2, it again ran into some nice singletrack with one particularly tricky off-camber hairpin which kicked uphill into the corner – get your line wrong or slide down the hill on the run-in and you were off and pushing!

Stage 3 headed the other way, back across the hill avoiding the quarry, and was quite pedally – more cross-country zipping and twisting between the trees before canting down for a fast, flowy section before the finish.

The final stage was effectively the last downhill run of the Red Route, nice and rooty, with a few minor deviations thrown in to spice it up a bit. After the final berms and the rocky shute at the very end of the Red, the course took us into the grassy arena at the bottom and into the timing tent, to be handed a nice cold bottle of beer courtesy of Hargroves Cycles! This definitely helped my by-now wobbly legs and arms (at least once my lungs had tucked themselves back in and my eyeballs had stopped vibrating!).

The Collective had done a great job of organising the enduro, tying it in with the QE Cycle Festival – there were manufacturers on hand with over 120 demo bikes to try out during the day too, and overnight camping for racers and taggers-on. I'd bought a full pit crew (well, the Vindies, actually, I never learn!), turning up mid-morning for cooked breakfast (they'd come down the night before). However they then disappeared down the pub, never to be seen again, while I ventured out to recce the course. They did re-appear for the after-race party, and I can advise that celebratory drinks were duly consumed by racers and organisers alike after a fantastic event.

Oh and the rider chasing me arse-over-tit down the hill? Our very own James no less – but he still didn't catch me!

QECF Day & Night Enduro Results (Fun/Men)

Pos	No.	Name	Team	Time	Behind	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
11th	35	James Pike	New-Force	15:53.45	+1:28.41	2:35.99 (14th)	3:18.07 (14th)	5:29.11 (12th)	4:30.28 (15th)
25th	34	Allan Knight	New-force	16:38.77	+2:13.73	2:56.44 (32nd)	3:42.40 (29th)	5:29.57 (13th)	4:30.36 (16th)
36th	33	Peter Dobson	New-Force	18:31.29	+4:06.25	2:57.01 (34th)	3:50.28 (33rd)	6:26.48 (37th)	5:17.52 (38th)



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The following shops offer a discount
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Brookley Road, Brockenhurst
tel: 01590 624204

179 Barrack Road, Christchurch
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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,
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183 Bournemouth Rd, Parsstone
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Bicycle Barn

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

Perfect Balance Cycles

87 Junction Road, Totton
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Hargroves Cycles

www.hargrovescycles.co.uk
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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,
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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.

11th October and 1st November - The Gorrick Autumn Classics

The Gorrick people have been organising races in north east Hampshire since 1992 and know how to put on a great event with classes for everyone from first-timers to experts.

5th December - Global Local Fatbike Day

This will be happening at various locations around the world, most likely including Swanage, courtesy of Charlie The Bikemonger. If it's anything like last year it will involve a bit of faffing about, a bit of riding round the Purbecks and a beer or two in the company of a good sized crowd of like-minded individuals.

20th to 22nd may 2016 - Singlspeed European Championship

The 2016 event is being hosted by the Slovenians close to the town of Kobarid in the Alpine foothills. The venue is little more than 60 miles from either Lubljana or Trieste airports so either a short transfer by taxi or a doable day ride. All the information for this event is currently on Facebook in very good English with a website to come when entries open. At the time of writing a return flight to Lubljana from Stanstead is £136.

Next Time in Newforce

The deadline for the winter issue will be the end of December.

There's always plenty to talk about in the pub or café after a ride so please try to get some of that typed out for inclusion in the next issue. Surely as the nights get darker and colder some of you will find yourselves with a little time on your hands and scribbling a contribution will be far more rewarding than watching another episode of Eastenders.

And please send photos to show too.

**Please email all contributions to me at
keith@perfectbalancecycles.co.uk**

Reader's Bikes

Liz' Old And Battered Peugeot

My old and battered Peugeot, bought second hand from Mick Ives' team, when both he and I were working at the CTC in 2000, as a race bike. I have no idea of the model, but it was meant to be an upgrade from my original Trek 7000 that I'd had since the early 90's as its geometry was all wrong for these new fangled suspension fork things. So the shiny new-to-me (to be fair as a small female bike it didn't look like it had been used at all) turquoise machine joined me in Surrey for my Wednesday night rides with the Dorking Cocks and away on the hills at weekends in the Lakes, Peaks and Wales. Probably several Polaris mtb orienteering events too. It did good service, had some new lighter Rock Shox fitted and then got put away in a shed for a couple of years whilst I lived in New Zealand.

As it started it was a lot less psychedelic than it is now. No green tyres, no pink handlebars, no yellow mudguards. It was the day to day off road machine that didn't quite get thrashed as I'm a girl and don't seem to beat up bikes like the guys, but still had heavy use.....until I went up to the 7 Stanes in the mid noughties for a long weekend with the Dorking guys and tried to ride over rocky terrain for a few days. My back complained hugely and I could hardly move at the end of the day, so it was time to admit that age was overtaking me and get a fancy new full suspension armchair of a bike that my tired bones could feel somewhat more wrapped in cotton wool over the bumps. The old Peugeot got moth balled again, until the next life change of kids arriving and needing an old bike to pull a trailer, clearly not a job for a nickable machine.

So once again the Peugeot came out and was reincarnated as a workhorse, but half of the bits of it had gone to be used for the other bikes by then, so it was scrabbling around in the back of the boxes of kit to make up a complete bike again. And small children love primary colours (that's not me by the way) and I had a yellow and red trailer to match, so why not add all the bright stuff that had been kicking around that wasn't nearly cool enough for 'real' riding. Hence the rather nasty combination of colours you now see, including some ancient (probably collectable by now) bright orange Marzocchi bombers that my brother kindly donated.

With the kids in tow, miles and ambitions were reduced, so eventually the full suspension bike fell apart and wasn't replaced, and I can't really claim that I'm a proper mountain biker any more, though I am trying to head back that way with nearly keeping up with Thursday night Jalfrezi rides, and I can't quite justify a new bike, so the Peugeot is back once again on the trails and being mocked as ever for its retro and rather unique look!!





Above: The Shackleford Ride

Below: The Isle of Wight Ride

