

# NEWFORCE

Spring 2019 Issue 151





**Did you know that we have a club Facebook group?**

The intention is to run it in parallel with the established message board on the club website to give a more immediate news feed or means of members contacting each other. In recent months the group activity has been increasing so if you haven't joined yet and you have a Facebook account, please do.

To find the group just search for New Force MTB.

**Front cover:**

The Claerwen reservoir in mid Wales on a very unusually warm day in February. A day that was only slightly spoiled by rounding a corner to find some old guy soaking up the sun in just a running vest and underpants.

**Back Cover:**

One from the 20th January new members taster ride.

# **Editorial**

By Keith Whitten

Welcome to the spring 2019 issue of Newforce.

Who'd have thought that the New Forest (and the rest of Hampshire) would have joined in with 'dry January'? For the first couple of weeks of the year we were treated to most of our favourite trails being far more pleasant to ride than we've any right to expect at that time of year. It was a nice little post-Christmas bonus. Shame it didn't last, although mid February did give us a few days of very unseasonably warm weather. That coincided with an invitation I received to go to ride bikes and celebrate a birthday with friends from up-country. The venue in Snowdonia was quite a significant drive but turned out to well worth the effort. The picture on the front cover was taken on a solo ride I did on the Sunday of that weekend in the Elan Valley, about a third of the way back home for me. It was genuinely T-shirt and shorts riding weather, in mid Wales, in February. It was only the second time I've been there and both have been flying visits but I'm very keen to go back as it looks like there's plenty of exploring to be done. Looking through the archive of club photos on Flickr.com it looks like some other members of the club have also ridden there. Perhaps it's time to organise a return trip?

For this issue snow has become the theme. We only had one rather half hearted day of it here in the south of England but several club members including myself found far greater quantities of it further afield and have been good enough to spend a bit of time at their keyboards telling us about their trips or have at least provided a photo or two.

If you read the minutes of the committee meeting you'll see that this very magazine is the subject of some debate. The printing costs are the club's largest single expense and later this year we will be considering a proposal to move from paper copies to PDF. If you have any strong views on this please let us know.

And that's all from me for now, It's time I got this off to the printer.

Happy riding folks.

# Your Committee

Committee meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every third month at the New Forest Inn at Emery Down. All club members are welcome to attend and raise any points or questions.

Chairman	Roger Shephard roger.shephard@newforce.org.uk 02380 392696	
Secretary	Allan Knight allan@newforce.org.uk	
Membership Secretary	Martin Wheat membership@newforce.org.uk	
Treasurer	Ian Taylor	
Ride Leader	Susan Marsland susanm@newforce.org.uk	
Newsletter Editor	Keith Whitten keith@newforce.org.uk	
Website Editor	Jack Lawry jack.lawry@newforce.org.uk	
Other Committee Members	John Hawkins Linda Hawkins Eleanor Rutter Dean Johnson Clive French Sue Marsland Steve Samways	Steve Keith Malcolm (Max) Streeton Stu Rogers Karen Clark Nick Clark Mike Tomlinson

The next committee meeting will be **Tuesday 11th June.**

## **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.

We organise regular rides, fortnightly on Sundays and weekly on weekday evenings.

We organise multi day trips to other areas to experience some of the best riding this country has to offer.

Full conditions of membership and how to join are published on the club website under the 'The Club' tab.

## **Membership Fees**

Individual	1 year	£17.00	2 years	£32.00	5 years	£75.00
Family	1 year	£25.00	2 years	£45.00	5 years	£100.00

## **Riding With Us**

Anyone who is competent on a bike is welcome to ride with us although we would politely request that you become a member if you ride with us more than twice.

Cycle helmets are compulsory on all club rides.

Please dress appropriately for the likely weather conditions.

You are advised to bring a drink, particularly on warm days

Ensure you are equipped to deal with punctures, preferably by carrying a spare inner tube or two. Mud and patches aren't a great combination.

Check that your bike is in good working order before the start of a ride eg no cracks in the frame, splits in the tyres, worn out brakes etc.

Finally, please carry emergency contact details — just in case something a little unplanned happens.

## Our Organised Sunday Rides

Planned Sunday ride venues are published on the club website and in the newsletter. They generally follow the pattern of two in the New Forest area and one outside, anywhere within an hour's drive from Southampton. A short description of the likely route will be included along with the designated pub or cafe for post ride socialising.

Rides will aim to leave at 10am unless otherwise stated. Most are planned to finish by 1pm but a few will be designated 'all day rides' with a stop for refreshments part way round.

The ride locations are set at committee meetings and if you know anywhere good to ride in the local area that you think we have neglected please tell us.

To aid finding the start location we recommend using **[www.streetmap.co.uk](http://www.streetmap.co.uk)** along with the grid reference supplied.

The Sunday rides usually attract enough riders to split into two or three groups dependent on ability and enthusiasm.

## The Club Newsletter

The club newsletter is published quarterly, usually a few weeks after each committee meeting. All contributions written or photographic are very welcome, indeed essential for it to keep going. If any ride has stood out for you in terms of enjoyment, triumph over adversity or something unexpected that has happened, please write a little about it and send it to the editor. If you participate in any other sports or hobbies please tell us all about them via the newsletter. In short, anything that might be a topic of conversation in the pub or café is worth putting into print and telling the rest of the club. The club is as much about socialising with like-minded people as it is about riding bikes so the newsletter content is most certainly not restricted to just biking stories.

# **The Evening Ride Groups**

The evening rides are generally smaller, typically 4 to 10 persons and at some point long, long ago we adopted the 'curry scale' to grade the various groups:

## **Madras.**

This name has been recently revived by a group basing themselves to the north of the New Forest and typically riding on occasional Wednesday evenings for 2 to 3 hours at an enthusiastic pace. Details can be found on the bulletin board.

## **Jalfrezi.**

This group rides on Thursdays from various locations in the southern and mid Hampshire area usually with a brief mid-ride stop for cake consumption and a social in the pub afterwards. Pub stops mid-ride have been banned from this group by decree. Ride lengths are from 2 to 4 hours dependent on weather, ground conditions and how lost they get. Start locations are usually published on the bulletin board on the Monday before.

## **Tikka Masala**

A shorter, tamer version of the Jalfrezi. See the bulletin board for the start location each week.

## **Korma.**

Usually Tuesday nights. A shorter steadier ride with more emphasis on enjoying the scenery and company than breaking records or shredding the gnarr. Start locations will be posted on the bulletin board.

**Keep an eye on the message board or Facebook group for other more spontaneous outings.**

# Autumn Rides List

Ride notes provided by Roger Shephard

**Sunday 14 April 2019**

**Martin** (ref SU 058 193)

***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 ridgelines 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 28 April 2019**

**Hatchet Pond near Beaulieu followed by a BBQ courtesy of George and Caroline, with address details being revealed to BBQ attendees at the end of the ride.**

**(Ride start location at map ref SU 359 017)**

***Designated pub: There isn't one, it's a BBQ but please bring your own drinks.***

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 in mud and other unspeakable mixtures of slurry. Or 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).



**Sunday 12 May 2019**

**Stansted Forest, near Emsworth – All Day or ½ day Ride(ref SU 755 111)**

***Designated pub: Day ride – so it will be a mid-ride lunch stop***

This ride start point will give us easy access to parts of the Sussex Border Path and the Monarchs Way, and is perfect for exploring the undulating landscape between the South Downs Way from QE Park to Harting and the A27, Havant to Chichester stretch. There are some great trails, picturesque Sussex villages nestling in the downs and one or two delightful pubs that we could choose from for our after ride refreshment if you are not doing the full day outing. The route will most likely be east towards Kingley Vale then northwards to the SDW, west towards QE Park and then returning southwards to Stansted Forest.

Easy travel to and from guarantees maximum ride time but the hills will probably not be advisable for participants riding for the first time with the club. Newbies would be better advised to join us on an in-Forest ride where the options for a gentler introduction and a more readily available escape route present themselves.

**Sunday 26 May 2019**

**Wootton Bridge (ref SZ 250 997)**

***Designated pub: The Rising Sun, Bashley Common Road (approx 1 mile south of the car park).***

This start point can take in Wilverley Inclosure, Holmsley, Brownhill, Setthorns and the old railway line between Burley and Brockenhurst and any number of loops can be added to this basic framework and distance can be easily altered to match the composition of the various ride groups. No really nasty hills but lots of good fast tracks.

The ride will be suitable for newcomers with no major hills and the tracks are forgiving and the surfaces hold up well, although there can be some persistent sticky patches even in the driest of conditions.

**Sunday 09 June 2019**

**Danebury Hill**

**(ref SU 326 377)**

***Designated post-ride pub: somewhere in Stockbridge; to be decided***

Danebury Hill can be reached from Stockbridge by following the High Street westwards through the town (A30). Just as you leave the town boundary, the road turns sharp right and climbs a steep hill. Just as the hill starts to swing round to the left, the road to Danebury Hill can be taken off to the right for a mile or two. The venue is clearly signposted off to the left of this road. We can ride around the eastern perimeter of Middle Wallop airfield before heading westwards via Kentsboro, Oklahoma Farm and Georgia Farm and then turn southwards at Over Wallop. Following on will be a sharp rise up Whiteshoot Hill near Broughton and then it's Kings Somborne (Horsebridge) and the Test Way all the way to Fullerton where on a hot day a call at the Mayfly pub is a must, and on a cooler day is still a possibility. Then it's a mere jaunt up Hazel Down and Charity Down to return to the car park.

Alternatively we could ride off in the opposite direction towards Longstock, Stockbridge Down and Chilbolton. A grand outing.

**Sunday 23 June 2019**

**Purbecks – All Day Ride plus weekend camping for those who want to spend longer in this delightful part of the south coast.**

**Ride start location (ref SY 955 827)**

We will meet at the Norden Park and Ride just off the roundabout approximately ¼ mile before the castle car park at the National Trust Centre at the base of the castle mound just before Corfe village itself. From here we will ride around the Purbecks region, stopping for lunch at a convenient watering hole, taking in the sights and generally making a day of it without trying to achieve any distance records, the emphasis being on having a fun day out with friends.

This ride is not recommended for newcomers where hills and distance may prove to be their downfall. For our regular attendees, the tracks are reasonably good although there are some chalk ascents and descents that will get slippery if they get wet.

**Sunday 07 July 2019**

**Happy Cheese, Ashurst (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 then at the end of it all, a visit to The Happy Cheese.

**Sunday 21 July 2019**

**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.

04 Aug	Isle of Wight, from Lymington ferry
18 Aug	Moyles Court, New Forest
01 Sept	QE Park
15 Sept	Blandford
29 Sept	Boltons Bench, Lyndhurst, New Forest
13 Oct	Farley Mount, Winchester
27 Oct	Emery Down, James Hill car park, New Forest
10 Nov	Swinley Forest
24 Nov	Wilverley Plain, New Forest
08 Dec	Christmas Dinner, Shawford
22 Dec	Moors Valley
26 Dec	Beaulieu Road, The Drift Inn, New Forest

# Committee Meeting Minutes

(Selected points)

## March 2019 Meeting Minutes:

### Club Rides 2019

Blandford – Meeting point to be agreed – **Sue Marsland**

We generally have 2 medium groups plus possibly a slower group, as well as a fast group each ride.

Do ride leaders need some training? Should leaders appoint a backmarker to make sure no-one gets left behind? For further review and discussion.

Extreme weather & ride cancellations – it has been questioned whether we should run a ride if there is a weather warning in place. It was considered untenable to make a last minute decision as it would not be possible to notify members. Consensus is that it should be a personal decision by the ride leader, and for individuals covered under the 'ride at your own risk'. **Allan Knight** will check the club insurance to see if offers guidance.

### Trips away:

22 September – Amberley – South Downs Bunkhouse – confirm is **Steve Samways** organising?

June 14-16 – Peak District trip fully booked.

June – **Steve Samways** to extend an open invite to join the Trailbreaks trip

### Membership

Stable at 103 memberships

**Martin Wheat** to setup confirmation emails for new members & renewals via paypal.

### Magazine

**Keith Whitten & Jack Lawry** to get alternative printing costs. Consider allowing printers advertise in the magazine to reduce rates.

Magazine pdf's to be made available on the website – **Jack Lawry**.

Review success of above & consider replacing hard copies at 2019 AGM.

Possibility to offer an option of web or hard copy.

Run in parallel until next AGM

Referendum to be held on print copy magazine vs electronic – will need to be promoted in the magazine and on the website.

How do we manage it that only club members can vote?

Facebook page to be advertised in the magazine – **Keith Whitten**

### **Website**

Sue Marsland reports new members joining rides via facebook

**Martin Wheat** to automatically set up new members for Forum access – **Jack Lawry** to provide access and instructions to Martin please.

Magazine PDF's to be made available on the website – **Keith** to send latest to **Jack Lawry**. Is it possible to monitor how many views the PDF gets?

**Karen Clark** has offered to assist with moderating the Facebook page. **Jack Lawry** to provide access.

Forum housekeeping: details of any memberships expired more than 3 years to be deleted. Posts older than 1 year to be deleted. Trips and Charity Rides pages can be removed as they don't get used (or duplicated in the General forum) – **Jack Lawry**

### **AOB**

Ride leaders to be reviewed. Add Penni & Steve. **Sue Marsland** to advise who leads rides currently. Action **Allan Knight** with CyclingUK

We need to get authorisation from ride eaders for their name and address to be sent to CyclingUK (GDPR) – **Allan Knight**.

Steve Samways proposed an alternative method for membership management (outsourcing). **Martin Wheat** confirms he is happy to continue with current method.

**Steve Samways** has arranged a few social events for club members – working well via Facebook – Thanks Steve!.

Sue Marsland suggested we encourage people to bring a First Aid Kit on rides (and know how to use it). **Eleanor Rutter** to do an appropriate article for the magazine.

# Health Matters

By Keith Whitten

In early February I had a bit of what I decided to view as 'good' news.

Whilst spending a night in hospital being investigated for an unrelated problem I was found to be quite significantly anaemic. Iron deficiency anaemia (IDA) for those of you who know more about these things than me. Now that's good news because it means there's a definite reason I've been finding riding and most strenuous activities more like hard work over the last few years. I'd put it down to a combination of not riding at the same intensity as when I used to be a regular on the Tri-club rides and having had rather more birthdays than I'd like. Neither of which I was in a position to change.

It turns out that I've been doing everything with about 40% less haemoglobin running through my veins than the rest of you. My doctor described it as permanently training at altitude. At the time of writing the NHS is still trying to find out where it's all going but they did give me an intravenous top up which has at the last test got me about half way back to normal levels. I've certainly noticed the difference. Compared to just a few weeks ago it now feels like I'm riding an e-bike. When riding or running I genuinely feel ten years younger. I'm *really* looking forward to getting a full measure in my veins.

Since that top up I've noticed a few other effects. I've started working up a sweat on winter rides whereas previously I'd hardly felt any perspiration at all, presumably because I am now able to work harder. At night, sleep seems to have been far better quality with much more regular dreaming.

It also struck me that the rapid performance boost I've experienced over the last month probably isn't too far different to the experience of athletes who dope. Several times I've found myself wondering how I might go about persuading doctors to give me another dose of that iron infusion. If it's only going to get me back to normal levels it can't be doing any harm. Right?

The real moral of this story is that if you are feeling a bit off the pace for no apparent reason then don't just ignore it or assume there's nothing that can be done to change it. It's easy to think you're making too much fuss about something trivial and getting in the way of genuinely ill people, but maybe it could be a hint of something a bit more serious but hopefully treatable. We live in a first world country with a free health service so why should you put up with not being at your best? Despite what you may hear or read in the press about the NHS, compared to what's on offer in many other countries they really are rather good.



Looks good but it didn't last long



Cub secretary Allan Knight and friends on their





their annual winter trip to the French Jura

# My trip to the Yukon

By Eleanor Rutter

Sitting having a coffee with a paramedic friend of mine in September last year she mentioned that she had signed up to be a medic/marshal for the Montane Yukon Arctic Marathon and would I like to join her. Never one to turn down an invitation I said yes of course I would (without really giving it any thoughts at all). Annual leave granted at work, CV sent off and accepted and GULP I am off to the Yukon.

Next thoughts were where is the Yukon,

It is the smallest and westernmost of Canada's three federal territories

It has the smallest population of any province or territory in Canada, with 35,874 people

The territory is named after the Yukon river, the longest river in Yukon

No other place in North America gets as cold as Yukon during extreme cold snaps

We were going to be there at one of the coldest months (February) so I started gathering up my kit, mainly by trawling through E-bay and Facebook outdoor



selling sites. I brought a very nice ex-army arctic sleeping bag that was obviously made for someone well over 7 foot tall but better too long than too short, lots of merino wool base layers and a pair of boots guaranteed up to -30 Celsius ( not really ideal when I then realized we were going to be facing temperatures of -45! )

The race itself is described as “quite simply the world's coldest and toughest ultra-race”. It follows the Yukon Quest trail which sets off the day before the runners and is of the world's toughest Sled Dog Race covering 1000 miles from Whitehorse in the Yukon up to Fairbanks in Alaska.

The contestants choose to race the 430 mile, 300 mile, 100 mile or marathon distance either by snow mountain bike, cross country ski or by foot. They all have to pull a pulk or plastic sledge with all their kit that they will need for the race weighing up to about 34 kg. This includes sleeping bag and mat (essential to ensure that they are insulated from the ground), tent, stove and gas and all their food for the trail.

Our starting town was called Whitehorse named after the frozen peaks of water on the river Yukon which looked like white horses rearing up. When we got there we met the other volunteers who were all English and from a wide variety of backgrounds, from outward bound shop manager to high rope expert (she cleaned wind turbines). The first few days we got to meet each other and prepare for the race, checking in all the athletes and performing kit checks to ensure that they had all the necessary equipment to stay alive and safe while on the trail.





We were able to squeeze in a couple of fun things in our time off before the race. I hired a fat bike for a couple of hours and pootled around a leisure trail along the river Yukon, it was great fun riding in the snow but at the end of the 2 hours I was happy to give it back as my fingers were so incredibly cold. Most of the chaps who ride out there have heated handlebar covers which in retrospect seemed like a very good idea. We all took a trip out to Takhini Hot Springs; these have been in operation for over 100 years. There are 2 pools 36 Celsius and 42 Celsius. We went in the evening and spent a fun hour there enjoying the hair freezing experience, but the dash from the pool back into the changing rooms was not a pleasant experience..

My first duties were going to be at a location called Dog Grave Lake (a loyal dog died there and was buried by its owner in 1918 and a tombstone erected) . This was about 55 miles into the race. It was described as a remote checkpoint and after a 4 hour skidoo ride I can agree with that, the novelty soon wears off. We arrived to set up camp including a cooking tent, a sleeping tent for the helpers and a medical tent. The long drop loo was already there.

All the athletes have to come into the medical tent on arrival to be checked over for frostbite and trench foot which was my responsibility, not ideal as I am not a lover of feet! Trench foot is easy to cure, they just sit in a warm environment for an hour or so to dry it out but frostbite needs evacuation to a hospital. Interestingly with frostbite you only thaw them out if you can get them to a



hospital within 2 hours for ongoing treatment. We had a chap that came in overnight with a frozen toe but we had to keep him frozen until the following morning when we confirmed his evacuation. The main issue with frostbite is if you thaw them out they must not refreeze as the body cannot recover after 2 freezes and will always result in amputation whereas there is a good chance of recovery after one freeze. Once checked over in the tent they are chuckled out and given a hot meal and hot water and sent on their way along the trail.

The next checkpoint I arrived at was in a truckers café where we slept on the floor under tables but it was warm and snug and they make the most famous cinnamon buns that were the size of dinner plates and were amazing. Further checkpoints included a very nice garage with a wood burner the size of a bath that belted out heat like I have never experienced before, a sports hall which was ok until the locals decided to come and use the running machine while we were all asleep and finally the most amazing place called Pelly Farm.

This was a farm that had been in the same family for over a 120 years and was completely off grid with no mains facilities at all. It was an organic beef farm with a large chicken shed, the heating for the chicken shed came in the form of the bull. He had to stay inside otherwise his testicles ran the risk of freezing as they were very low hanging. If it got very cold they just added another cow into the shed to heat it up. The farmer supplemented his income by trapping over the winter and selling off the pelts which were hanging all over the place.

This was definitely an amazing experience and I think I would do it again in a year or so but at no stage did I think to myself I would like to do the race. It is the most harsh unforgiving environment with no room for error at all. Last year one of the athletes got separated from his sledge and GPX tracking device and ended up with such severe frostbite he had both his hands and feet amputated.

But if anyone fancies an adventure I would definitely recommend it and if you really fancy it let me know and I will give you the details of how to go about it



# Lulea - Ice Roads and Snow Trails in Sweden

**How much can go wrong on one four night break**

By Keith Whitten

OK so the subtitle might be a little bit sensationalist, I'm not sending this back from the afterlife or typing it with my tongue after losing all fingers and toes to frostbite, but a few things didn't go quite as planned to varying degrees.

My trip was inspired by Olov Stenlund's posts in the UK Fatbike Club Facebook group and his blog 'Bike Life In Swedish Lapland'. His home town of Lulea is the largest town in the far north of Sweden and is situated on the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia. Due to the massive input of meltwater from northern Scandinavia the water there is the most brackish (low in salt) of any true sea in the world. The salt content is 0.3 percent, compared to the 3.5 percent of the major oceans, which means that combined with the viciously low winter temperatures the sea there freezes far more readily than anywhere else. The whole area around Lulea is a mass of promontories and small islands, many of which become connected by ice roads from late December to March or April. The roads are officially opened to motor traffic once the ice reaches 50cm thickness and are monitored and maintained by the local authorities. Tracks on the snow show that snowmobiles go a lot further and everywhere in between. Lulea city centre is on one of the headlands and the ice road encircling it is designated for non-motorised traffic only with council provided kick-sleds being free to use. In the last few years the Dutch have used those ice roads for a large speed skating contest where recently one skater set a new world speed record of 93kmh!

To get to Lulea I flew from Gatwick to Stockholm and then on to Lulea. To get to Gatwick I took my motorbike which meant I could park for free right outside the terminal. The traffic on the M23 was heavy and the hour and a bit I'd allowed over the satnav estimate started to evaporate. Changing out of my riding kit and stowing it in the top box ate up more time and having to check in at the airport after being unable to find a link to print my boarding card online at home meant I was rushing to get to boarding. That's how I managed to leave my phone in the plastic tray for the X-ray machine whilst going through security. Something I only realised once I was on the plane and the door was shut. I managed to call it with my old work phone and was at least assured that it would be taken to lost property.

The flights were as tedious as flights are and but by teatime I was in Lulea. Olov had offered to pick me up from the airport but without my smartphone I didn't

get his message that he was running late. Thankfully he turned up just before I got on a bus and took me to the room I'd booked through Airbnb.

The following morning I went to collect the hire bike I'd booked. It's location was half a mile across town according to Google maps but when I got to that area I could find no trace of the operation. I called and was told that they are now in one of the surrounding villages five miles away but have been struggling to get Google to update. A number 9 bus would get me there. Trying to get on the bus was when I discovered that the local buses don't take cash. I had plenty of Krone in my wallet so why bring a card out? OK, I'll walk. A couple of hours later, having seen a good portion of snow covered Swedish suburbia I had a bike, a Surly Ice Cream Truck fitted with a nice pair of 45NRTH Dillinger studded tyres.

After a quick play on a snow covered frozen lake nearby I headed off to have a look at the nearby Unesco World Heritage site of Gammelstad Church Town before returning to Lulea via a hiking trail. Olov had told me that they had had record breaking amounts of snow and on the trail it was several feet deep. In the town earthmoving equipment had been employed to shovel it into piles sometimes bigger than the surrounding houses. Provided I stayed on snow compacted by snowmobiles I could make progress. If I strayed to the side I would quickly sink knee deep. The trail took me through a nature reserve, all of





which was rideable and brought me out at the back of town close to the Facebook data centre which was far from being a tourist attraction and looked anonymous, heavily guarded and almost fortified, but I took a couple of selfies in front of it anyway.

Day two (Friday), the sun was shining brightly and I got to take a proper ride on the ice roads. After riding the town centre circuit including the extension out to a small island with a café I headed off to the Island of Hinderson. With the sun out and the wind behind me it was a very pleasant ride. Four or five miles of bare ice and another fifteen on urban trails and forest tracks covered in compacted snow each way might not sound too much but in those conditions it was plenty to keep me occupied for a large part of the day. The studded tyres meant I could ride securely and make gentle turns even on the slickest ice and my map promised a café at the furthest point. Visions of a large hot chocolate in snowy surroundings filled my head as I rode. When I got there however, the café was closed. According to a couple of locals, for the first winter in many years. The first café had been a bit too soon after breakfast to stop at so by then I was a bit hungry. The two tangerines I'd put in my pack had to do. By the time I'd slogged my way back over the ice into a stiff headwind and ridden another few miles of urban cycle tracks (also snow and ice covered) I was very hungry. Max Burger to the rescue.

In the evening, after a proper meal I went for a short walk round the park at the





tip of the headland in the hope that the northern lights might be seen. They weren't out to play but I did see a pair of arctic hares out on the ice.

Day three. More ice roads, another island (Sandön this time) and another closed café at the far tip. I was expecting this one to be closed as the road to it was barriered from half way across the island. The last mile or so didn't appear to have even been cleared of snow all winter but enough snowmobiles had been through to compact a narrow but rideable path. Sitting on the front terrace of the café in the sun with another two tangerines was pleasant enough.

To vary my return route I chose to ride a snowmobile track running along the shoreline. I could see houses in the distance that I had taken a side road down to on my way out. About a hundred metres along that track my rear wheel sank through the snow stopping me rather promptly. My foot went straight through the snow too and I quickly found that between the snow and the ice there was about a foot of water. Cold water. Although the Gulf of Bothnia is too landlocked to have tides, the action of the wind can alter the sea level by up to three metres. For comparison the tidal range at Calshot is between 2.3 and 4.6 metres depending on the moon phase. The previous few days of southerly winds had caused a small rise in the Lapland area which had flooded over the ice where it met the coasts. So there I was a couple of hours from home with my right boot full of icy water. After very carefully getting myself and bike back upright, dreading any other parts of me going through the snow layer I rode back to the



café as quick as I could to remove my boot and wring my sock out. The boots, my old army boots, now 34 years old and still good, were designed with similar eventualities in mind and were only minimally absorbent and the socks, a recent promotional offer from On One were merino, so by the time I got home my wet foot was thankfully only a little colder than the dry one.

Before nightfall I had to take the bike back and whilst I was in Lulea a slow thaw had started, hitting the town faster than the countryside. There was a lot of slush and standing water and with the amount of snow piled up everywhere it was obvious that the coming weeks were going to be pretty messy. I'd been out on the bike for most of the three days but as I neared the end I was still looking longingly the snowmobile trails. Just one more? I'd had three days of exploring, each day setting off with half a plan and only myself to worry about, just seeing what was round the next corner or down that interesting looking track to the side. Most often it was more pine trees and snow but sometimes it was something more; a big green ore carrying ship cutting through an icy channel between the islands and a couple of heavily decorated underpasses looking like school art projects being just a couple of examples. Eric, from the hire company gave me a lift back to town.

Then on the Sunday it was time to come back home. Nothing actually went wrong or failed to deliver that day and to be honest all of what had done in the previous four days was pretty minor compared to the woes of one family somewhere about five miles north of Lulea. On that first day, a half dozen doors up from where I collected the bike, I passed the still smouldering remains of a house. Literally burnt to the ground. Now the owners of that were people with *proper* problems.



# Events Calendar

These are events that are either connected with the club or that members will be participating in.

## **6th-7th April 2019, Battle On The Beach, Pembry, Wales.**

Entries are now full for this event but several club members will be going, as much for the party as the racing.

## **3rd to 5th May 2019, Singlespeed European Championship, Italy**

The Italians have finally got themselves out of the bar and opened up entries for this event. The race itself is not likely to be anything too serious with far more effort being put into the social riding and partying.

## **25th to 28th July 2019, Twentyfour12**

This annual 12 and 24 hour event near Plymouth will incorporate the UK Fatbike Championship which will be a six hour race.

## **23rd to 26th August 2019, Singlespeed UK, Comrie Croft, Scotland**

For 2019 the event is going up to the other end of the country and will be held somewhere near Glasgow. Maybe a good opportunity to take in some of the Scottish borders trail centres in an extended trip?

## **23rd to 26th August 2019, The Big Bike Bash, Avon Tyrell**

Charity weekend of bikes, beer and bands at the Avon Tyrell activity centre on the western side of the New Forest. Volunteer helpers are always appreciated.

## **4th to 6th October 2019, Singlespeed World Championships**

The Slovenians have got the worlds for 2019. They did such a good job of hosting the European Champs in 2016 that an entry for the 2019 worlds is highly recommended. It will be far more than just a bike race.

## ££ Club Discounts ££

The following shops offer a discount with your membership card:

### **3C Cycles**

3ccycles.co.uk

179 Barrack Rd., Christchurch, BH23 2AP.

Unit 4a, 16-20 South Street, Hythe, SO45 6EB

01202 486278

02380 840765

### **Boost Bike Hub**

boostbikehub.co.uk

2-4 Brookley Rd., Brockenhurst, SO42 7RR

01590 624204

### **Bournemouth Cycleworks**

bournemouthcycleworks.co.uk

1143-1145 Christchurch Rd., Bournemouth, BH7 6BW

01202 424945

### **Cycle World Wessex**

cycleworld.co.uk

36, Thornhill Park Rd., Southampton, SO18 5TQ

373 London Rd., Portsmouth, PO2 9HJ

02380 471140

02392 666500

### **The Forge Cycleworks**

forgecycles.co.uk

Unit 12D The Furlong, Ringwood, BH24 1AT

01425 482797

### **Hampshire Trailer and Roofrack Centre**

hampshireroofracks.com

Solent Business Centre, 343 Millbrook Rd., Southampton,  
SO15 0HW

02380 333111

### **Hargroves Cycles**

hargrovescycles.co.uk

150 Commercial Rd., Totton, SO40 3AA

Also in Chichester, Fareham, Swindon and Winchester.

02380 862011

<b>The Hub Cycleworks</b> thehubcycleworks.co.uk 105-107 Shirley Rd., Southampton, SO15 3FF	02380 226969
<b>Owens Cycles</b> owenscycles.co.uk Stoner Hill, Steep, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 1AG Winchester Road, Four Marks, Alton, Hampshire, GU34 5HQ	01730 260 446 01420 563 922
<b>Perfect Balance Cycles</b> keith@perfectbalancecycles.co.uk 87 Junction Rd., Totton, SO40 3BU	02380 871777
<b>Peter Hansford Cycles</b> peterhansford.co.uk 23a Hursley Rd., Chandlers Ford, SO53 2FS Bridge Rd., Park Gate, Fareham, SO31 6BX 91 Olivers Battery Rd., Winchester, SO22 4JQ	02380 266212 01489 573249 01962 877555
<b>Primera</b> Primera-sports.com 183 Bournemouth Rd., Parkstone, BH14 9HT 244 Charminster Rd., Bournemouth, BH8 9RR	01202 749674 01202 775588
<b>Sinclair Cycles</b> sinclaircycles.co.uk 9 Westcroft Parade, Station Rd., New Milton, BH25 6JG	01425 837071
<b>The Woods Cyclery</b> thewoodscyclery.co.uk 56 High St., Lyndhurst, SO43 7BG	02380282028

## **MEET THE CLUB MEMBER – ISSUE No 3 – SUE MARSLAND**

Sue is a committee member, ride leader and very much part of the Newforce furniture.



[How long have you been a club member and what positions have you held in the committee?](#)

A long time - so long that I can not remember - there are longer standing members..... but not many! I have been secretary and at the moment make sure that there are ride leaders for the medium group - please let me know if you

would like to give ride leading ago as we are always on the lookout for new leaders.

How long have you been riding off road? Have you lived and ridden in any other areas regularly? Do you have a favourite route locally or a favourite destination further afield? Are there any particular skills you'd like to learn or improve?

I was brought up in West Moors and as a kid rode with friends in the forest plantations on our road bikes - before the invention of mountain bikes... Bought my first mountain bike 30 plus years ago - a Rock Hopper. I remember washing it in the bath in my flat!

A few years ago I was working in Bexhill and joined a couple of clubs based that way and rode all along the South Downs - there is some great downland riding as well as some testing single track. I also like riding in Surrey Hills, the Purbecks and Isle of Wight.

Further afield I have been fortunate to be able to ride all over the UK. A few years ago the medium group went on a yearly A to B to C ride. We crossed Wales North to South, East to West. Crossed Devon from Plymouth to Minehead, and the Pennine Bridleway. Last year I did the Scottish off road coast to coast. I have also had some great trips to the Alps, Spain (3 times) and Slovenia I guess you could say I like riding anywhere and everywhere.

Your bike? Do you have more than one? Do you have a long term favourite or do you treat yourself to a new bike regularly? Is there one particular bike you're lusting over but can't justify or afford?

I own a couple of Scott bikes, a full suss and a hardtail plus bike. I tend to keep my bikes for 4 to 5 years

What else in your life competes with cycling for your time? Other hobbies, commitments?

I try and keep fit throughout the week with bmf outdoor fitness sessions and parkruns (approaching 50)

I attend a local church in Chandlers Ford - the 4pm service works well with the half day rides.

I have recently started training to be a search technician with Hants Search and Rescue (Hantsar) who help the Police search for missing vulnerable people.

Not only do I love mountain biking in the mountains but also walking and low grade mountaineering. This I have done all over the world, Europe, Central America, Africa and Nepal as well as in the UK.

How do you see yourself in ten years time?

If the knees survive, still riding and still a member of the club.



