

Newforce e-newsletter

Issue 157 Summer 2021



Welcome to freedom. Freedom from all the last year or so's Covid restrictions. For us as a club it means freedom to meet in unlimited sized groups, freedom to finish the ride with a well earned pint or a coffee, freedom to share lifts to and from our rides. But do you still feel a little apprehensive about entering any public building without a mask? Do you still feel little uneasy if anyone near you coughs? And do you make a big effort not to cough yourself for fear of what anyone near you might think? We've taken some big steps towards normality but it'll be a long time before we can all say our lives are back to what they were before April 2020.

Enough of that. It's summer, a bit of a mixed one as many UK summers are and looking at the Facebook activity, many of us have been on our bikes enjoying it. If you haven't joined the Facebook group 'New Force MTB' please do so. There has been much debate at committee meetings as to whether Facebook or the forum on the club website is the best means of communication but currently they appear to quite evenly used and anything important will for now most likely be posted on both.

I'll now issue the regular reminder for you to take photos on the rides and either send the best ones to me or post them somewhere public as it's not that long before I'll have to start on the 2022 club calendar. Some written submissions to fill out future editions of this newsletter would also be very welcome. They don't need to be epics, just the short stories that you might recount in a conversation with friends. Also, if there's something other than cycling that you're passionate about, let us know what it is and tell us why you enjoy it. Yes, we're a cycling club but surely there's more we can talk (and write) about than just bikes. The next issue will be due around the end of September if I can manage to be a bit more efficient than I have with this one. Until then Happy Riding, it's summer, the rains warmer.

# Cycle Industry Update

By Keith Whitten

I'm afraid it's not good news. Parts are still in very short supply. This morning I was looking for replacement for a broken Sram GX 12 speed shift lever and found that the UK distributor is showing the first availability as late April 2022. Cassettes have no availability from any of my suppliers across all speeds and ratios although if you ride a singlespeed most of what you are likely to want *is* currently available. Many brake parts are also unavailable.

Below is an extract from the most recent email I received from Moore Large, one of the larger bicycle and parts wholesalers in the UK:

## Supply & Order Management

The current supply chain challenges are showing slim to zero sign of stability until at least 2024. Lead times continue to extend and most major manufacturers are reporting Q4 2023 as their next available production slot, with the most popular items not available until 2024.

Shimano are notoriously the most unpredictable supplier, although with sight of the global picture, their situation is completely understandable.

Assembly factories are only provided with an "after month x" date so a date may say "after January 2023" although this could mean February or perhaps September! Shimano are also suffering with the pandemic, remaining closed in Malaysia, according to a close source and are set to temporarily close down other factories shortly.

With exception to Tern & Wethepeople, our bicycle assembly factories are managed entirely by ourselves putting us in a stronger position when catering for our domestic market. Our objective over the next few years is to de-risk supply bottlenecks or reductions where possible by collaborating with the most reliable partners. You will therefore notice many family & leisure products equipped with Microshift and Clarks components of at least like for like quality.

So if you want to keep riding your bike over the next few years, look after it well and try to minimise wear and tear. It's arguable that some of the shortages will be due to retailers increasing their stock levels and so depleting the distributors. In which case you may find what you need with a bit of searching online but having read the above I'm of the opinion that leaving your spares purchases to the last minute is really not a good idea.

# Newforce Committee Meeting Minutes

Held via Zoom at 8:00pm on Tuesday 22nd June 2021

Attendees:

Roger Shephard, Eleanor Rutter, Sue Marsland, Karen Clark, Ian Taylor, Martin Wheat, Jack Lowry.

Apologies: Steve Keith, John & Linda Hawkins, Nick Clark

The previous minutes were accepted as a true record.

## 1. Club Secretary

Vacancy not yet filled. It was agreed to pass the minute taking parcel at each meeting with the anointed minute taker organising the following meeting and venue.

## 2. Rides

The removal of limits on social contacts has been put back to 21st July. It was decided to continue with the existing arrangements for the next two rides i.e. people will be asked to post their intent to ride online. Max 30 people in groups no greater than 15, up to 5 non-members per ride.

4th July – Ashurst Riders to be asked to register via the BB up to 30 max

18th July – Bishops Waltham Riders to be asked to register via the BB up to 30 max

1st August – Whitchurch Ride format TBD

15th August – Moyles Court Ride format TBD

29th August – Martin Down (Car park at SU 037 201 on A354) Ride format TBD

12th September – Purbeck all day Ride format TBD

26th September – Hatchet Moor Ride format TBD

10th October – Marlborough Downs all day Ride format TBD

24th October- Farley Mount Ride format TBD

7th November – Moors Valley Ride format TBD

21st November – Whiteparish Ride format TBD

Riders to be encouraged to take turns at leading the groups during a ride, under the supervision of the ride leader, to encourage more people to come forward as ride leaders.

The recent Verderers minutes were discussed and actions agreed on how rides would start.

Ian to look at a Google Cloud link, or similar, that could act as a repository for .gpx (and similar) files of ride routes.

### 3. Trips

The Brecons weekend is now scheduled for the 3rd-5th September.

### 5. Membership

Since the last meeting, we have 5 new members; 1 has lapsed and 1 rejoined, leaving us with 125 current. All members were notified by e-mail that we resumed membership subscriptions from 23rd May, and I added up to 14 months to all renewal dates. Reminders went to: 2 whose renewal date was before end of March, neither has paid, 5 whose renewal date was before end of May, 2 have paid, 4 whose renewal date is before end of this month, 2 have paid.

While we expect some attrition from peoples change of circumstance or enthusiasm, there remains a trickle of new enquiries. It'd be folly to try to predict where it will settle.

A simple, cheap effective digital membership card approach has as yet eluded me. I propose to post cards to all who have paid during lockdown and since, and continue to do that until we find something better.

## 6. Website

Jack explained the shortcomings of the site due to s/w updates and the technology moving on. It was agreed to define a 'barebones site' with basic functionality, currently seen as a BB/Forum (not necessarily the same as the existing), ability to take membership payments and static pages with a CMS for communication/information.

Ian to mark up a site map of the existing site for circulation and comment

Jack to look at off-the-shelf packages that would avoid the costs of a complete re-write.

## 7. Social

Nothing planned due to Covid restrictions.

## 8. Next Meeting

14th September 2021 – Roger Shephard to set up via Zoom or notify otherwise.

# Salisbury Plain

By Keith Whitten

This is an area I've for a long time regarded as being the pleasantly scenic route option when driving or motorcycling to south Wales, but had never actually stopped in for very long. In the last couple of years I've gone some way to making up for that. I know some club members regularly ride up there so for them I'll be preaching to the converted but if you're not one of them please read on.

Having sold my van a couple of years ago and agreed to share a car with my wife I've been occasionally looking for routes I can access by train and in April spotted that if I got off at Warminster I could ride almost all the way back to Totton off road. From Warminster there is the southern half of the Imber Perimeter Path to Chitterne where a mile of tarmac brings you to a byway that cuts south east along to the Monarch's Way above Salisbury and from Broughton you can cut across to the Test Way to head south and home.

I recced the route on my own that month and then repeated it over an afternoon and evening in early June with Phil Hotston, Bruce Pringle and Martin Wheat. With good weather it made a grand day out. The route was largely gravel byways and lanes with a few sections of singletrack, some of which were starting to get a bit overgrown by then. The riding was rarely very technical but the views more than made up for that. The Tally Ho pub in Broughton provided us with excellent Pizzas and beer which nicely broke up the 60ish mile total for the day, leaving us an hour and half's ride home. My Strava for that ride can be found here: <https://www.strava.com/activities/5448823329>

In mid July I had an entry for a gravel sportive up that way. Starting at Thruxton Motor Race Circuit the long route I elected to take on comprised 72 miles of gravel tracks and tarmac lanes between the start and the Avebury area again with just a few more technical trails. A few of the trails open to motor vehicles were quite heavily rutted which made for a few comedy moments. I chose my fatbike for the day as I really didn't fancy the battering my hands would get from going that distance on 700x38c tyres and it would be a good test of my assertion that comfort can go a long way towards making up for a lack of outright speed over a long ride. For the record my finishing time of 5 hours 45 minutes was 38<sup>th</sup> fastest of 181 recorded finishers. Strava here: <https://www.strava.com/activities/5610820820>

The last trip I'll mention was a motorcycle trip with John Dry who is I believe a past club member. It was most notable for the first trail we attempted which was so deeply rutted that the sticky out engine of John's BMW was catching the sides of the ruts and when I got off my bike to see if he needed a hand there was no need to use my Yamaha's side stand as the ruts were sufficient to hold the bike bolt upright. We sought out easier trails after that and finished at Bratton Camp, a popular viewpoint and paragliding venue above Westbury. Unfortunately a little too early for the ice cream van which we passed on it's way up there as we descended to ride home.

