

NEWFORCE

Autumn 2019 Issue 153



New Force MTB



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.



Above: Dry and dusty is finished for this year

Front cover: Remember this?

Back Cover: Bye bye

Editorial

By Keith Whitten

Welcome to the autumn 2019 issue of Newforce. As I write this we're having a bit of a wet morning here in southern Hampshire. It's the first one for quite some time and I'm sure there will be a good many people with agricultural concerns saying that it's long overdue. They're probably right. It has been a predominantly dry summer locally and that was something that became a topic of conversation on one of the recent Thursday night rides I attended. One rider stated that he was riding straight through stuff that most other times of the year he'd have to ride round, just because he could. My contribution was that without puddles to wiggle round, some of the trails we regularly ride just felt a bit tamer than I remembered them. If the current weather forecast is correct then the coming week or so will see the wet/dry balance starting to be restored; many of us will refit the mudguards that were removed for the summer months but hopefully we won't in the long term see a swing too far to the wet side. If we do though, isn't feeling for grip and keeping forward momentum in difficult conditions just another skill to master? Earlier in the year a friend visiting from Australia told me that when it rains over there no-one rides off road because they know it'll be dry again in a day or so. Over here we usually don't have that option for six months or more of the year, but aren't that let down under missing out on something? The British winter gives a whole different aspect to riding bikes off road or at least makes us appreciate the summer rides even more. Besides, if you do take a tumble when it's really gunky at least your landing's going to be a bit softer.

Since I wrote the above we've now had a whole lot more wet mornings. And days and nights too. Summer's most definitely over, but that does mean that by the time you read this we will be in the run up to both the club Annual General Meeting and the Club Christmas Dinner. All members are very welcome to attend either of these and in the case of the Christmas Dinner please read the message board and respond to book your place.

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 Steve Samways	Steve Keith Malcolm (Max) Streeton Stu Rogers Karen Clark Nick Clark

The next committee meeting will be the Annual General Meeting at
8pm, Tuesday 10th December.

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** 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 is occasionally used 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 (but they do sometimes happen on special occasions). 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 10 November 2019

Swinley Forest (again) ½ day ride (ref SU 877 661)

Designated pub: cake and coffee at the Visitor Centre

If you missed the chance to ride this venue on our visit in March this year, well here is an opportunity to gauge the going in winter conditions. See the listing for 3rd March for details of the likely route and refreshment options for today's ride.

Sunday 24 November 2019

Wilverley Plain (ref SU 253 007)

Designated pub: TBA

This is the car park that we would use for the Wilverley barbecue site but if that one happens to be a bit full, there are a couple more in very close proximity but it should be under too much pressure in November. The choices from here will be familiar to most of us:- Burley, Holmsley and Dur Hill to the west; Setthorns, the railway line, Brockenhurst to the east; Ober Lodge, Rhinefield and the Ornamental Drive to the north.

Sunday 08 December 2019

James Hill car park for the Christmas ride and lunch

(Ride at ref SU 283 083 whilst the The Swan Pub is at ref SU 291 081)

Well, here we are again so soon after having started from here in October. We have decided to repeat the success of the 2018 Christmas lunch ride starting and ending at this car park and then making our way to The Swan just down the hill from Emery Down. There is adequate parking at the pub so the usual thing is to change at the cars and then drive the short distance to the Swan Inn car park for a festive lunch in the company of our riding chums. There are options here for drier routes than in lower areas of the forest.

Sunday 22 December 2019

Moors Valley from Three Legged Cross (ref SU 096 051)

Designated pub: Three Legged Cross Inn

This is an opportunity to sample yet more delights of the Moors Valley and Ringwood Forest area by starting from the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate as we did in February this year. You will find the start location by driving to the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate roughly opposite the entrance to the Moors Valley Country Park. We will use the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate general kerbside parking and its entrance is at SU 096 051. Although the intention is to visit the Three Legged Cross Inn after the ride, please do not use the pub car park and abandon your car for 3 hours, it will be frowned upon by the pub management.

There are plenty of trails we can ride without repeating February's routes.

Thursday 26 December 2019

Winchester South Park and Ride at Compton (approx. ref SU 472 261)

Designated pub: The Bridge Inn, Shawford, south of Winchester – (Pub at ref SU 475 250)

This is a change from anywhere we have tried before. We thought it would be nice to ride outside the forest and to sample the delights of a Boxing Day venue that we have previously only used for a quick summer thirst quencher. The obvious choices for routes are Compton Downs in one direction, Twyford Waterworks in another direction and parts of the western end of the South Downs Way. All good stuff and just right for working up an appetite for a snack and a drink.

Sunday 05 January 2020

Abbotstone Down(ref SU 584

361)

Designated post-ride pub: The Woolpack at Totford if it's open, or possibly the Globe on the Lake, Alresford.

This popular starting place can be reached by taking the B3046 northwards out of Alresford (towards Basingstoke via the Candovers), passing through Old Alresford before climbing uphill through a spinney. The car park is at the top of the hill. From here the ride may well take us along the Oxdrove towards Upper Wield and Bradley before climbing through Nutley Wood to arrive on

the downs above Dummer. A return trip through Breach Farm and the Candovers takes us back up the Oxdrove and thence back to the car park. This ride is always a lot of fun and well worth joining in.

Sunday 19 January 2020
250 997)

Wootton Bridge

(ref SZ

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 02 February 2020

Fritham

(ref SU 230 140)

Designated pub: The Royal Oak at Fritham

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

Sunday 16 February 2020

Cranborne (meeting at Sixpenny Brewery) (ref SU 066 133)

Sixpenny Brewery Holwell Farm

Holwell, Cranborne. Dorset, BH21 5QP – see the Sixpenny Brewery website for a location map

Designated post-ride pub: The Sixpenny Tap at the brewery.

The club has ridden from Cranborne quite a few times and we have used the Garden Centre car park and visited their coffee shop afterwards. But this time it has been suggested that we park at the new Sixpenny Brewery which has an easily accessed car park, so if you want to know more then visit www.sixpennybrewery.co.uk for details.

There are superb trails around Cranborne with a mix of Stone Age burial chambers and fortified earthworks, and Roman roads to be discovered, all set in beautiful rolling landscapes with some significant hills and some spectacular views to be sampled. Always a satisfying area to ride in.

Sunday 01 March 2020
(ref SU 335 103)

Happy Cheese, Ashurst

Designated pub: The Happy Cheese

This ride starts from the tarmac 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, but please do not park in the gravel car park area which is exclusively for the pub patrons. 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 in the anti-clockwise direction taking in "the Wire" and other interesting trails. Whichever way we choose, at the end of it all will be a visit to The Happy Cheese.

This ride is being advertised as **especially suitable for newcomers and beginners** and one of our groups will be catering for the appropriate speed and experience levels

Sunday 15 March 2020
(ref SU 164 083)

Moyles Court

(ref SU 164 083)

Designated pub: The Alice Lisle

This is a popular location situated at the Moyles Court sand pit. From here most of the available routes start with a short sharp rise but once that is out of the way, there are options for rolling on across Rockford Common (firm going) towards Linwood, the Red Shoot and Milkham, or taking a course over Ibsley Common (soft, gritty sand and a little bit of a slog) towards Abbot's Well and Hampton Ridge. We might even make a foray westwards across the River Avon and have a thrash around Ringwood Forest, Boveridge Heath, Ashley Heath and Horton Common, all well worth a visit.

Committee Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the Newforce committee meeting of 10th September 2019 held at the
New Forest Inn

Present: Roger Shepherd; Steve Keith; Eleanor Rutter; Martin Wheat; Ian Taylor; Keith Whitten; Stu Rogers; Patrick Summers
Apologies: Sue Marsland, Nick and Karen Clark, John and Linda Hawkins, Allan Knight, Steve Samways

1. Rides

It was felt that attendance at committee meetings had been affected by the decision to plan rides 12 months ahead. It was decided to revert to planning rides 3 months ahead which it was felt would also allow for better information on events that coincided with ride locations. It will also result in a single A4 format for the magazine which will reduce print costs.

2020 start points

05/01 Abbotstone Down
19/01 Wootton Bridge
02/02 Fritham
16/02 Cranbourne – Meet at the Sixpenny Brewery
01/03 Happy Cheese – advertise as a beginners/newbies ride
15/03 Moyles Court
29/03 Bishops Waltham

Please come to the next meeting with suggestions for the following 3 months.

2020 Spring Weekend

A decision needs to be made on the location at the next meeting. A poll to be put up on the forum - Ian

2. Membership

A report has been circulated separately – currently 106

4. Magazine

Articles needed by 20th September.

An article from someone who went on the Peak District ride – Nick C?

Patrick to contribute a 'Whistler' article.

Eleanor to write an article on first aid.

Keith to get a quote from Hobbs printers for the magazine.

5. Website/Social Media

There was no report on enabling Karen Clarke to adopt a Moderator role for Facebook posts.

It was felt an open FB page, similar to DRR, in addition to the current closed page would help promote the club. Ian to raise with Jack.

6. AOB

CB reported that CyclingUK may now need Ride leader names, though previously they showed little interest. Action: Allan Knight. Ongoing.

First Aid ER can arrange for a trainer if there is sufficient demand. RS will post in the forum to see what interest there is. Ongoing.

Xmas meal at The Bridge, Shawford ER to organise.

More fliers at next meeting – Ian

Next meeting: 10th December 2019 at 8pm at the New Forest Inn, Emery Down.
NB we may not have use of the upper room due to Xmas bookings.

Singlespeed UK 2019

By Keith Whitten

Another year, another Singlespeed UK, the event that isn't really a race unless you want it to be. And if you do you certainly don't shout that out too loud.

This year it was up in Scotland at the Comrie Croft venue. Comrie Croft is an outdoor centre about an hour's drive north of Glasgow with mountain biking trails, hiking and both cabins and camping facilities. The event was held over the August bank holiday weekend and along with Annette, my wife we took a couple of days extra sightseeing to justify the distance travelled.

As usual the Friday night was spent catching up with distant friends over a beer or two and the race was on the Saturday, at the very civilised time of 2pm. It was four laps of a four and a half mile course with the usual run to your bike to start. The course was brutal. Brutal with a capital B, a capital R and capitals for all the rest. Of those four and a half miles a mile and a half was climbing and almost everything flat or downhill was rocky, rooty or both. Some of you reading this will have ridden at Bike Park Wales so if I say that most of the course was just as bumpy the bumpiest bits you'll find there you'll see that it really was the sort of terrain where you'd appreciate good suspension. I rode a fully rigid singlespeed, albeit with fattish tyres.

You may also remember that over that weekend England recorded the hottest August bank holiday on record with temperatures in the low thirties. Scotland was just as sunny but had to make do with the low to mid twenties. Perfect riding weather and as there was the promise of water stations round the course I opted to ride packless to allow a bit more cooling airflow across my back.

I had a good run to my bike and heading up the first climb was in the top ten out of the ninety or so that turned up. From the top of the climb onwards the afternoon was an exercise in managing the pounding through my hands. Sweat made the grips slippery and several times I felt myself struggling to hold on over some of the bigger hits. The views from the top of the hill were fantastic but had to be savoured in little more than quick glances away from the trail in front of me. Two and a half hours after starting I completed all four laps and was one of only ten to do so. My average speed of little more than seven miles per hour might not be very impressive in our area but up there it was good enough to net me sixth place, thankfully without the huge blisters that some people were showing on their hands. In the warm sunshine the beer table at the end was very welcome.

The evening brought the prize giving, a plentiful hog roast and live music, all washed down with some fine ale. The band were a tamer bunch than those that have appeared at previous events but after the afternoon's battering up in the hills most folk were more than happy to take it easy sitting round the fire pits with beer and good company.

Sunday morning it was time to pack the tent up and head back to Glasgow to rejoin Annette for another day's sightseeing, this time out of town, in more warm sunshine before the big drive home on the Monday.



The New Forest XC race at Avon Tyrell 13th Oct 2019

By Pete Dobson

I didn't really know about a lot about this race beforehand, I just knew I wanted to do it because I like a good XC race now and again, and to justify (still) owning a relatively little-used posh carbon race/marathon bike. And also because I was really going to do this last year too but changed my mind at last minute because of the weather! (In actual fact, it wasn't a lot different this year...)

Still all a bit a mystery but I could kind of work out it was as many laps as you can do in 2 hours, so I couldn't (obviously) be seen to lose (always a concern!), and there was no point putting any actual racing tyres on given the rain we'd had, probably the knobblier the better!

I got there in due time to register, and saw loads of regular guys with regular bikes and tyres, with Camelbaks and baggy shorts (although I think I'd draw the line at the latter for a race in the mud!) and realised I probably wasn't going to lose anyway. There were a few "racing snake" types too of course. And I wasn't all on my own as there were two New Force ladies there helping out! (Susan G and Ros).

Over to the start line and I was right, it was as many laps as possible in the time, making this possibly what used to be, at least, called an "XC enduro" rather than "race" if one is pedantic... And then it started, I'd raced here before for the Big Bike Bash, that was 6 years ago but I think I still recognised most of it. It's a great fun two and half mile circuit making good use of what's there with flowy bits, some short sharp climbs and some seriously slippery descents. Oh, and some wooden bridges.

The first lap is where you feel like are stuck behind other riders, but then also turns out to be your fastest (hmm... almost as if they are making you ride faster, not slower!). Having said that my first 4 laps were fairly consistent and under the 20 minute mark and I seemed in danger of doing my usual trick of getting to the finish line just the before the horn went and getting an elevated overall position from having an extra lap. But I was debating if I'd actually want to do that as it was getting tough... Maybe falling off on a bridge into a ditch on lap 5 didn't help, but I heard that horn go as I still had a minute or two to get round the lake and realised it would be just 6 laps after all. Finishing so close to the two hour mark also meant it was quite easy to claim an unused shower cubicle.

Free beer and a not-entirely-serious awards ceremony once everyone had finished was a final nice touch. All in all I really enjoyed this event, and it was

good to support some local grass-roots racing, I certainly hope to take part again next year.





**It may be wet but that's no excuse
for not smiling when you're riding
with Newforce**



The Big Bike Bash at Avon Tyrrell

A Volunteer's View

By Martin Wheat

700 people of all ages on a camping weekend with their bikes; competitions where having a go is more important than winning (well, for most of the participants); sunshine, beer and bands; run by volunteers and raising £thousands for UK Youth: a wonderful recipe.

If you want to climb, descend, dual slalom or cross country faster; hop higher, limbo lower; wheelie or track stand longer, ride slower in decreasing space; inflate an inner tube to bursting quicker; jump from a ramp with distance and style, into a mulch pit or the lake, then there's an event for you. From balance bikes to bigger bikes.

And when the day's riding is done – though often long before that – there is a busy bar, fast food and magic music. Side events include pottery and face painting, Avon Tyrrell's outdoor activities, and raffles.

Do you have to eat the fast food? – of course not: you can bring and cook your own at your camping place. Will the bands keep the children awake? – you can choose to camp far from it, and the late 'silent disco' helps.

This year the family joined in. It was super to watch our son and fiancée entering lots of events – on a tandem – though admittedly they skipped the bunny hop and wheelie competitions; daughter and her husband riding the pairs event; son-in-law racing pint-to-pint through the water pistol barrage put up by granny and grandchildren; grandchildren, inspired by others around them, going round and round on the Shore track. Do they want to go again? – you bet!

A Random Tandem at the ‘Bash’

By Rachel “Stoker” Jackson

We’d heard about the Big Bike Bash from the Tall One's dad who’s volunteered there for a few years. Previously, we’d been in Wales visiting the Young Ones for August Bank Holiday, so as they were to be at the Bash, we signed up too. And we’re very glad we did!

The Tall One grew up cycling around the New Forest, whereas I'm less skilled but add power, and together we make the Random Tandem; one of only 2 twicers at the BBB.

Arriving Friday gave us a chance to explore and try out the cross-country trail (by accident - we were aiming for the short track!) prior to racing on it, to see what, if any, obstacles were too large / narrow for us to navigate with our long wheelbase. Only two defeated us - a log pile (marked quick route) and an off-camber bridge where we didn't have the turning circle for the entry. Race time, here we come!

The Shore-Track was also set up, and if our nephew (6) could do it, so should we. Unfortunately our timing belt bottomed out on the short humps, so we thought it best not to try again. Which was a shame as we had made it around without flying off the top of the berm.

So, on to Saturday....

The Tall One had won a balloon hat for being a good sport during the children's entertainment. Attempting to put it on over his helmet caused one of the balloons to pop, so it was refashioned into a sword. Being on the back (known as a stoker) means that the handlebars are a bit less essential for me, so I got the sword

We entered the 'fun' race and due to its name that's exactly what I intended to have. Bonking people with the balloon sword as we overtook them on the course. The Pilot had no idea as he was concentrating on keeping us out of the barbed wire.

Saturday also gave us the chance to check out the Gravity Track. We did a couple of laps of the Pump Track to warm up, and being encouraged by the group of young teenagers we were off and down it in a surprisingly short space of time. Doing a lap back up through the woods, we did it again a couple of times for the Tall One to learn the lines ready for Sunday.



Sunday came with an early start and a hill climb up the gravity track. Not finding anyone brave enough to race against us up the winding and lumpy course, we came both first and last in our category (but not last out of all the climbers). A turn around on the pump course and it was time for the downhill. Again we were riding solo, and our cheer from the crowd was second only to the cargo bike following us down the track.

Time for lunch and a couple of hours later it was time for the pairs race (which we technically won, but didn't as the commentator made us do two laps together). No balloon sword this time made for slightly better handling and we overtook some more this time around. The sprint finish had us both in stitches. As we exited the trees we saw a woman in pink approaching the copse relatively slowly and thought 'we can take her', so sped up... As we approached, the Tall One changed gears, which she heard and also changed up picking up speed... We hit the copse neck and neck, neither realising quite how narrow the route through was... Disaster averted through the internationally recognised communication of 'ahhh!!!' from both us and her, we pipped her to the post.

The day ended with pairs slalom, we could race this one properly due to there being parallel tracks. This was reasonably scary and not very good for the lawn as the best way to get the whole bike around the flags was to lock the back

wheel and slide it (and me) sideways. The person we raced against was very complimentary and recounted that during the pairs XC every time she thought that she was catching us through the twisty woodland, we found a straight section and took off in front again.

Unfortunately banned from the 'inappropriate bike race' by having proven that we could ride it well enough, we found a baby brother to our bike, which was not quite large enough for the both of us to ride but was quite effective if your legs were long enough to drape over the middle handlebars.

Monday came with the sad realisation that it was the last day and that we would have to go home and back to work the following day. It was once again a scorcher and so perfect weather for the planned activities - XC eliminator and the Lake Jump. We set ourselves up on 'Carnage Corner', aptly named from on the previous two days' short track races. It also allowed us to watch the competitors being drenched by all the water pistols + canon's without being in their firing line. ... and no – we didn't jump the tandem into the lake: the Bash provides bikes for that.



Singlespeed World Championships 2019

By Keith Whitten

Back in 2016 I went to the Singlespeed European Championship in Slovenia. I had a great time there; the country was a fantastic place to visit, the event was well organised and I made a lot of friends from various parts of the UK and Europe. Coincidentally it also took place the week of the original brexit vote and doesn't that seem a long time ago?

Three years later the Slovenians finally got their chance to host the world champs. To be honest the 2019 event was pretty much a carbon copy of what they gave us in 2016, which was no bad thing. The venue was the same (Camp Rut in Kobarid), the course was mostly the same and the bands in the evening were the same. Why spoil a recipe that works?

My own trip down there was a little different this time. Instead of flying I rode my motorbike down with my mountain bike going on the top of a friend's car. I had a night booked in Luxembourg and a couple of nights in the Austrian Alps where I had a day off from travelling to go for a long walk in the hills, the tops of which were freshly snow covered. That left an easy and fun couple of hundred miles of Alpine sightseeing to get to the venue in Slovenia. The ride back was a lot more rushed and after stopping early on the Sunday evening to get out of the rain in the Austrian Alpine town of Hallein, some way short of my target of getting past Munich, I set a new personal motorised distance record of 840 miles on the Monday riding back to my home in Totton.

The event itself followed the regular formula of eat, drink and catch up with distant friends on the Friday night. Race on the Saturday and eat and drink some more, quite a lot more, with live entertainment on the Saturday evening.

On the Saturday morning we all assembled in the town square for speeches by the organisers and a representative of the mayor of Kobarid before returning to the camp to leave our bikes out of sight for the traditional rearranging and hiding to be carried out by the organisers. They did this with particular enthusiasm. We left a courtyard full of bikes and ran back to find it empty. Many were in the back of a large trailer and others were inside the various buildings on site or hanging from trees.

The race itself was a bit confusing. We were told at the briefing that we would be doing one long lap and two short laps but as the course looped several times through a refreshment tent in a remote field many of us weren't sure quite what



constituted a long or a short lap. There was one loop that started with a completely unrideable climb zigzagging up the side of the valley that I rode (no, pushed up) twice but should have only done once and the end of the course sent us in through the back door of the camp bar where we were given schnapps and beer. I assumed that meant I'd finished but as I drank my beer I was told that it was just the end of the short lap so after finishing my beer I went out and rode the loop to that bit again. It had some nice trails. One of the Irish riders went up the zigzag climb three times.

The first three finishers then had a decider to crown the champion. For this they had to find a beer bottle buried in a mound of hay and the first to open it and drink it would be crowned and get the winner's tattoo.

We then had a few hours free in the afternoon so I went with a couple of friends to have a look round the food and craft festival that was being held in Kobarid that weekend.

Saturday evening came and went with the previously mentioned food, beer and live music which was just as good as three years ago and capped off a fun but tiring day.

Sunday was time to pack up and start the long ride home but not before going on a white water rafting trip on the Soca river with several friends. The river, fed by Alpine snow-melt was no warmer this time than last but once again it was great



fun. And then it was definitely time to leave. Thirty two hours later after a thankfully only partially wet ride over the Alps and the monotony of northern French motorways I eventually got home at half past midnight on the Monday night, knackered but very glad I went.

Oh, and next year's event will be in Belgium, organised by the guy in the mankini who spent most of the weekend shouting "SCHNAAAAAAAPS"! As one of his countrymen said, "are you sure that's a good idea?".



My Story

By Caroline Clitter

In March 2016 I had a sudden attack of D and V and my husband was sufficiently worried to call my son-in-law (a doctor) who naturally couldn't make a diagnosis on the phone, but advised that if he continued to be worried, to dial 999. Previously I was very fit, cycling sometimes up to 100 miles a day and rarely ill. I did continue to be unwell and so he called an ambulance. In the meanwhile, he contacted a close neighbour to ask her to guide the ambulance into our drive, as our house is not visible from the road. So I was taken, with 'blues and twos' - no, I didn't know either [blue = the blue light on an emergency vehicle and the two tone siren] to Southampton General Hospital (SGH). There was no ambulance queue because the driver had phoned ahead to say we were coming and I was met by a doctor and nurse for admission into a ward. Various consultants came to look, several vials of blood were taken. MRI scans were carried out. Eventually a diagnosis was made as follows: – doctor speak - are you ready?

Pneumococcal meningitis complicated by micro haemorrhages:

ADEM* (acute disseminated encephalomyelitis) and venous sinus thrombosis

Seizure in the context of UTI September 2016

Spastic quadriparesis due to above.

*This is a rare inflammatory condition that affects the brain and spinal cord (at least the scan showed that I did have a brain!)

I was under the care of the consultant neurologist in SGH and remained in hospital for four months being nursed very carefully, being turned frequently to avoid bed sores (I was somewhat lacking in natural padding). My husband visited every day, although I was totally unaware of that and of everything else going on at that time. I can only remember one question, which I thought stupid at the time: 'can you lift your leg?' and because I thought I could, I thought it a silly question.

My husband was asked to look for a suitable rehabilitation centre for me and he visited several, choosing Peartree House near Southampton. On moving to Peartree I was still in a foetal position, unable to move and couldn't speak. The centre was well staffed with carers, nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The carers and the nurses worked on shifts and my visitors tell me all the staff were extremely friendly and cheerful. Days were filled with routine personal care; nurses dispensed medication three times a day, physios saw me every morning. To meet my hydration, nutritional and medication needs, a Peg

was inserted. This was an external tube going into my tummy which was removed at the end of December 2018 as I became stronger.

One morning I eventually spoke to my carer which created a lot of excitement! This was not repeated until a few days later. The OTs provided various activities, music therapy, small dramatic performances and even the opportunity to respond to small animals and stroke them. In addition, one day a pony came in! He had special soft covering on his hooves, so averting any possible damage to the floor. We also admired llamas and donkeys. I remember a duck making its very loud presence felt! The physios came to me every morning, then I had a session in their gym, occasionally twice a day, but at least once every weekday.

They worked me very hard! I think the physiotherapy was the most effective part of my time at Peartree.

I regained use of my hands and arms and kept my limbs moving. My legs were strengthened by static cycling. To help straighten my legs I had them put into plaster casts which were changed every few weeks. I had to travel to Oxford by ambulance for this treatment. They called it 'serial casting' and it *was* quite a drama. Surprisingly, I found the casts easy to tolerate; I even slept well. The illness has left me with the loss of a tooth, the loss of the tip of a toe (autoamputation) and a dramatic loss of hearing. In addition, some numbness in my fingers. Fortunately, my eyesight has remained good.

The food at Peartree was varied and good, with a choice of two different meals at lunchtime and a choice of three on the evening menu. Throughout this time I had many visitors, in fact I'm told one had to book a slot! My cycling group was particularly supportive. A particular friend came from Fareham once a week whose visits I enjoyed immensely. Her role in life was to cut my nails – it seems that no matter how ill you are, nails keep on growing! I was a resident for almost three years. I had a few 'practice runs' of being at home and then was discharged permanently in February 2019. I now have a full time carer who swaps with a colleague every three to four weeks. It works well.

We have our own vehicle, a WAV (wheelchair accessible vehicle) and we go out and about to the family, local events, the theatre and even the Norley Wood and District barbeque! The men-folk's muscles have been challenged by manoeuvring the chair over stony ground!

Two challenges are yet to be conquered: the hot tub beckons but I feel I need guidance to prevent accidental drowning! The second challenge is to complete a thousand piece jigsaw of seasonal garden birds!

Editor's note. Many thanks Caroline for writing this. It once again shows how fragile good health can be.

Events Calendar

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

01 Dec 2019, 05 Jan 2020, 26 Jan 2020, Gorrick Brass Monkeys XC Enduro

This popular endurance series in north east Hampshire has been running for a number of years now, with options for two, three or four hour races and various age brackets. At the time of writing the venues are yet to be announced. See the Gorrick website for more information

7th December 2019, Global Fatbike Day

There will be fatbike rides happening at various locations around the world with the closest to the New Forest likely to be Swanage.

20th June 2020, Coast to Coast in a Day.

This is a road ride but through some of the best scenery the north of England has to offer, starting at Seascale in Cumbria and finishing 150 miles later in Whitby. In a moment of possible over optimism I (your editor) have entered it. Was that really a good idea?

26th-28th june 2020, Forest To Sea Yoga and MTB, Llanidloes, Wales

This event was shared to the club Facebook page by Clive French with Steve Samways and Eleanor Rutter both listing as 'interested'.

££ Club Discounts ££

The following shops offer a discount with your membership card:

3C Cycles

3ccycles.co.uk

179 Barrack Rd., Christchurch, BH23 2AP.

01202 486278

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

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

02380 471140

373 London Rd., Portsmouth, PO2 9HJ

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

02380 862011

Also in Chichester, Fareham, Swindon and Winchester.

Eastleigh Cycle Repairs

Jim Breal

07949 004591

Eastleighcyclerepairs@gmail.com

Facebook: Eastleigh Cycle Repairs

The Hub Cycleworks

thehubcycleworks.co.uk

105-107 Shirley Rd., Southampton, SO15 3FF

02380 226969

Owens Cycles

owenscycles.co.uk

Stoner Hill, Steep, Petersfield, Hampshire, GU32 1AG

01730 260 446

Winchester Road, Four Marks, Alton, Hampshire,
GU34 5HQ

01420 563 922

Perfect Balance Cycles

keith@perfectbalancecycles.co.uk

87 Junction Rd., Totton, SO40 3BU

02380 871777

Peter Hansford Cycles

peterhansford.co.uk

Bridge Rd., Park Gate, Fareham, SO31 6BX

01489 573249

91 Olivers Battery Rd., Winchester, SO22 4JQ

01962 877555

Primera

Primera-sports.com

183 Bournemouth Rd., Parkstone, BH14 9HT

01202 749674

244 Charminster Rd., Bournemouth, BH8 9RR

01202 775588

Sinclair Cycles

sinclaircycles.co.uk

9 Westcroft Parade, Station Rd., New Milton, BH25 6JG

01425 837071

The Woods Cyclery

thewoodscyclery.co.uk

56 High St., Lyndhurst, SO43 7BG

02380 282028



MEET THE CLUB MEMBER –

ISSUE No 5 – Penni (Pen) Harrison

How long have you been riding off-road?

About 8 years. I was relatively new to mountain biking when I joined Newforce in 2011, aged just 21 (winking emoji). I had a horse until 2011, and have learned that mountain biking is a much less expensive and less stressful way to get caked in mud and shite during the winter.

Have you lived and ridden in any other areas regularly?

I've never lived anywhere but Hampshire, however I've somehow managed to ride regularly in Wales.

Do you have a favourite route locally or a favourite destination further afield?

Locally, I really enjoy riding in the Purbecks and on the Isle of Wight. They seem to offer the longest and fastest descents in our region. I also love a good view after slogging up a hill (“**Hill**,” n. & v, def. “a mound of opportunity”).

The full South Downs Way is also a favourite local route which I've done in both directions and can't wait to do again..... so if someone could organise a SDW trip for summer 2020, that would be fab thanks, sign me up.

Further afield, I love the variety that Wales offers....but not always the weather.

Oh, and BikePark Wales of course, blooming love it there.

Are there any particular skills you'd like to learn or improve?

I'd like to be able to do a track stand, but being clipped-in is not a good place to start practising for that. I've recently been getting decent air at BikePark Wales and would love to have a crack at clearing a gap-jump before I get too old/infirm/wrinkly/weak/scared/incapable.

Your bike?

Is a lean mean racing machine which has never seen the start or finish line in a

race (embarrassed face emoji). It's a full carbon, full-sus Orbea OIZ M20 2018. It doesn't have much travel at 100mm, but that doesn't seem to matter, and it only weighs half an ounce and does have the delightful wall-climbing SRAM Eagle 10-50t 12 speed cassette.

[Do you have more than one?](#)

Erm, yes. But not as many as Derek.

I have a Giant Liv Invite carbon cyclocross bike which I bought for Rat Race's Coast-to-Coast multi-sport race across Scotland in 2016. It undoubtedly contributed to my win in that race, and is a bundle of twitchy bum-clenching fun to ride off-road.

I also have a lovely Giant Avail Advanced 1 carbon road bike (my "Rocket Roadie") which I used to ride loads, but for the last year (or maybe two) it has proved to be an ideal settling spot for garage dust and probably now weighs twice as much as it would dust-free (another embarrassed face emoji).

[Do you have a long-term favourite or do you treat yourself to a new bike regularly?](#)

If only! No, I'm in the income category which forces me to like the bikes I own for the long term, the very long term.

[Is there one particular bike you're lusting over but can't justify or afford?](#)

I saw a Cannondale Jekyll in action under a lady rider of my build earlier this year and since then I've wondered if it was the bike or the rider (probably both) which was 'special'. I've never ridden anything 'aggressive', so would love to have a go on one.

[What else in your life competes with cycling for your time? Other hobbies, commitments?](#)

Well most people know I'm a runner, but I don't let running compete with cycling, I just do both and end up permanently pooped.

My priority commitment is my fitness training business which takes more time than most people realise, but I love the work, and it keeps me strong and fit (and also permanently pooped).

One other hobby I have which may surprise some people is fish-keeping. I have 11 stunning koi carp in an above-ground garden pond with viewing window (think outdoor aquarium). Each member of my fishy family has its own character and personality. Yes really, fish do have personalities.

[How do you see yourself in 10 years time?](#)

Ten years older.



