

NEWFORCE

Summer 2015 Issue 136





Above: Lunchtime at Bike Park Wales

Below: Somewhere in the Purbecks



Editorial

By Keith Whitten

Welcome to a rather mountain flaoured issue of Newforce. Sue and the gang have been to the South Downs, Jerry , Steve and Phil have been to the Lake District and I have been to the French Alps.

Back here in Hampshire the days are now long and warm and the trails are mostly dry so what possible excuse could there be for not getting out on your bike? Well actually I do have an excuse for forgoing my usually unmissable Thursday evening rides, but you can read about that elsewhere in this magazine.

At the time of writing the south of England is having a notably dry spell and many local trails are absolutely bone dry. Those of us who care about such things have removed our mudguards to give our bikes a lighter and more summery look. Trails that just a few months ago would have elicited the response "you won't get me taking my bike down there" (or less polite versions) are now fair game. Downhill sections are now at their fastest but not necessarily their most furious.

That last point was well illustrated on a late May Jalfrezi ride. The usual highlight of the route we rode that evening is a descent near Farley Mount that runs along a fence line at the edge of a wood with ruts and roots and is just about as long as descents get down this end of the country. On that particular evening James and I went off flat out from the top determined to do justice to the superb riding conditions. We were fast. We know that because we both had Strava running which told us at the end of the night exactly how fast we were. But, when we got to the bottom we both agreed that it hadn't really felt that fast or as exciting as usual. Replacing slippery ruts and roots with predictable traction meant that for seemingly long parts of that descent we were just sitting there, rolling along, waiting for the next corner with time to let the mind wander. Don't get me wrong, it was a great night to be out riding but on that particular section, compared to winter conditions there just seemed to be something missing.

Never mind, this is England, it's bound to rain again before too long and that's what's so good about living in this neck of the woods, the variety of conditions we get to experience through the year. The endlessly dry and baked trails of California and southern Europe? I'm sure they're fine for a week or two, but for a lifetime? Give me ENGLAND.

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Your Committee

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

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Club Policy & Ride Aims

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

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

Fortnightly Sunday rides, Thursdays nights plus ad-hoc trips and events

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

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

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

Safety First

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

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

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

Committee Meetings

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

At The New Forest Inn, Emery Down from 8pm

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

Next meeting is: Tuesday 8th September

All welcome!

Finding The Ride Location

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

The search box asks for the **location**

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

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

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

Future Rides

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

If you have a suggestion—let us know!

Ride Reviews

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

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

Photos on the web...

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

Please email Allan at allank@newforce.org.uk

"Hot" Vindaloo, Madras and Jalfrezi

characteristic- strenuous & technical riding

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

"Medium" Tikka Masala

characteristic- moderately strenuous & some technical riding

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

"Cool" Korma

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

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

"Family Rides"

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

And yes, we have named our groups after curries!

Ride Locations

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

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

Ride Times - Sundays

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

Summer Rides List

**Sunday 12 July 2015 Near Picket Post at Verely Hill car park
(ref SU 195 050)**

Designated pub: probably somewhere in Burley or Ringwood TBA.

Whilst this is the first time we will have ridden from this particular car park as a starting point, all the usual Burley area highlights are on offer with Castle Hill always a good choice for the energetic ones, but with the added possibilities of Crow Hill, the Smugglers Road, Bisterne Common and Dur Hill. For a gentler ride, it is suggested that the old railway line through Greenberry bridge is a good choice.

**Sunday 26 July 2015 The Ship Inn, Owslebury – Ride and BBQ
(booking essential) (ref SU 511 233)**

Designated pub: The Ship Inn

We will park at the pub by arrangement with the Landlady and ride out along the trails taking in some of the South Downs Way in all probability, and most likely heading out towards the Cheriton area before returning for a well-earned snack and drink in our own dedicated barbecue area with a small marquee reserved for New Force in the event of rain. Please note that the cost of £10 per head must be paid either to Sue Marsland or to the Club paypal account and attendance notified to Sue by no later than the weekend before the event.

Sunday 09 August 2015 Shackleford, all day ride to the Devil's Punch Bowl area

(Shackleford is a small village south west of Guildford and just north of Milford on the A3.

Centre at ref SU 934 454)

Designated pub: somewhere on the way round the day-ride route TBA.

There are no details on the route for this ride. However, there are many good tracks between the Hog's Back and the Devil's Punch Bowl and around Rushmoor and Frensham Ponds, so any route will be worth turning up for and a good ride is assured.

Sunday 23 August 2015 Longslade Bottom (ref SU 269 002)

Designated pub: One of the Brockenhurst watering holes TBA

This location is right by the old railway line that runs from Brockenhurst to Burley so the opportunities are quite varied. Setthorns Inclosure, Wilverley, Brownhill and Holmsley in one direction and North Weirs, Ober Lodge, Rhinefield and so on in the other direction or perhaps a bit of Bashley and Ossemsley.

Sunday 06 September 2015 Isle of Wight – all day from Lymington (ref SZ 333 955)

Designated pub: Pub lunch on the ride followed by the Bar on the Ferry

This will be a day ride starting from the Lymington ferry terminal and starting on the Island at Yarmouth and it will be a fun day out. Whatever happens, the choice of riding is excellent, the views from the ridges are stunning and the pubs are friendly and welcoming. Remember to bring loads of money for the ferry, the pub, the catering facilities on the ferry and most importantly, a selection of coinage to feed the meter at the car park exit barrier or your visit to Lymington could be longer than you planned. **TIMINGS AND OTHER DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED**

Sunday 20 September 2015 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 04 October 2015 Appleslade Inclosure (ref SU 183 092)

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

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

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

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

Designated post-ride pub: cake and coffee at the Visitor Centre

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

**THE NEWSLETTER IS
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY
THE NEXT ISSUE IS JULY
DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES IS
SEPTEMBER 30TH
IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED ONE
OF THESE RIDES
SEND IN A SHORT REVIEW....PLEASE!**

Competition

By Martin Wheat

Is it just me, or do we all see riders around us as competitors as well as like-minded friends? Do we all test ourselves against others or against the trail every now and again during a ride, for a few moments satisfaction if the result is what we hoped? Looking to extend that satisfaction, the real test of performance is a race, and sooner or later one ought to give it a go for it offers much beyond a position on the finish sheet. I've done it for ...

- A change of surroundings

Rides with the club take us to some fine locations around our area, and weekends further afield. Other events provide a focus for riding with commitment over unfamiliar terrain – there aren't many rocks or big hills around here – where the organisers have set out a good riding challenge over ground they know.

- Challenging the skills

In competition, that extra commitment will help you hop a log or leap a ditch that you'd normally negotiate on foot, especially if the rider in front has just done it. Exhilarating when it works and your skills just took a step forwards.

- Strength

The obstacles we meet riding off road mean we seldom keep persistent pedal pressure – but with racing you have a reason to power on for extended spells, and experience the joy of measuring an effort to best effect.

- Days out, and more

There's great variety of events to choose from, from a Race that'll normally be finished within an hour and a half to two hours, through Enduros and Sportives (not a race, but a gold time is nicer than a silver!) that can be as long as you like. There is always a buzz around the concourse. Make a weekend of it and go camping: give yourself the space to pre-ride the course at leisure; there may be pasta parties and music; get to know other competitors whom you may see repeatedly.

- Achievement, whatever that means to you

If the top of the podium is the only place you're happy then likely you'll be making training a priority, like the guy who usually won, but supported by riding over 300 road miles a week, plus aerobics sessions – in February!

Alternatively, you may be happy to stretch yourself as an incidental to the rest of life, and regard club and pub rides as sufficient training. Sounds good to me. Then an occasional high finish is a bonus on top of all the rest.

Whichever, have a great time riding.

Not Riding On A Thursday Night?

By Keith Whitten

It was in mid 2003 that I first joined this club and ever since then I've been a regular on the Thursday night rides. So regular that in the first ten years you could probably count on your fingers the number that I missed. Last summer however that changed. I found something with an even greater draw than riding bikes off road and drinking beer.

What could that be? The answer is Touch rugby.

For the last couple of seasons my son has been playing for Tottonians and once the season has finished they run touch sessions on Thursday nights for 6 or so weeks over the lightest part of the year. Daniel, my son wanted to go and on that first night I was the only one available to take him. When we got there it was immediately apparent that this was no small gathering. There must have been the best part of a hundred there for it, from 13 year-olds to veterans and as I was missing a night's riding I decided that joining in would be far preferable to sitting on the sidelines watching. Everyone paid their pound and the teams were allocated on a largely random basis although I found myself lumped in with a bunch of lads more than 30 years my junior who all seemed to know each other very well. Even in their mid teens they were still older than I was when I last played. In fact I couldn't recall ever having played the 'touch' version of the sport at all. A little nervously I quizzed a couple of my team-mates as to the rules of the game as we headed over to our first match.

The 'touch' version of rugby has been thought up to allow players to keep up to speed in the summer months when the ground is too hard to allow full contact. Six a side and played on a quarter (or thereabouts) sized pitch with tackles only requiring the player with the ball to be touched by an opposing team member it becomes very fast paced. Each team is allowed six touches before they lose possession and after each successful touch play stops whilst the tackling team retreat 10 yards. The first player in possession cannot score and will lose his team possession if he is caught still with the ball which leads to there being lots of passing and dodging and weaving through the opposition. Games are five minutes each way and at the end of the evening after five or six games the winning team gets their first drink free in the bar. How civilised.

On that first night I played my team won, although I'm not going to claim too

much credit for that. After a couple of sessions I felt I'd just about got the hang of the game and few weeks later I even scored my first try, but by far my favourite moment came from one of this years games. On that night one of my team-mates was Sam, a 15 year-old friend of my son. As we walked across to our first game he pointed out several members of the senior team in the opposition and said to me, "we don't stand a chance against that lot". Within a couple of minutes of the start I had the ball and as I was about to get touched by Jamie, one of the seniors, I lofted the ball over his head and into the arms of Sam who then had a clear run to the try line. The vision of Jamie's wide open mouth and eyes following the path of the ball, just out of reach, will stay with me for a very long time. We won that game and during the evening Sam and I worked together on the wing, resulting in several more tries, which contributed to our team to finishing as overall winners. The following week Sam referred to us as 'the dream team'. Praise indeed from a fifteen year-old for someone who not that long before had been feeling excessively old and clueless.

It would be nice if these sessions didn't clash with ride night but for a few weeks in the summer the lure of good natured competition and moments like those above is great enough to tempt me away. The first sessions of the year do serve as a reminder that the cycling I do through the rest of the year is by no means a complete exercise and result in very achy legs for several days afterwards.

Pictures Opposite:

Top: Spotted trailside near west of Winchester, near Farley Mount. The brass plaque is a later addition naming the airmen.

Bottom left: Mid May one of the Jalfrezi's favourite pubs, the John O'Gaunt in Horsebridge was damaged by a fire. Their intention is to reopen at the end of August.

Bottom right: Spotted in Whiteparish during their village fete week when many houses had manikins placed by the roadside in various entertaining costumes and poses.

The picture in the centre-spread is from a group trip to Wales and those on the following page are from the club trip to the South Downs which Sue has been kind enough to write an account of.









At any other time of year either of these photos could have been the centre spread, but this is the summer issue and there's no way I'm granting that privilege to pictures of leaden skies, bare trees and heavily dressed riders at this time of year.

Well done to everyone who was there though.



EASTER WEEKEND WITH NEWFORCE [2015]

Organised and Documented by Sue Marsland

Cyclists / Walkers: *Caroline [not Monday], Carolyn [Saturday], Clive [Monday], Debs [not Sunday], Derek [left Sunday] George [Sunday], Helen [not Friday], John E [Saturday], John H, Linda, Pen & Paul [left Sunday], Sue*

Sue set out early in the New Year to entice club members to consider that the weather *would* improve and Easter could be a time to look forward to cycling and walking; a good reason to continue to keep vaguely fit during the wet and wind! Her enthusiasm has not dimmed and she has the magic touch to plan a great long weekend away; this one was no exception giving the flexibility for 'coming and going'.

She managed to keep up with our various choices with people to-ing and fro-ing with a core crowd staying for all the four days.

Our base was a YHA hostel: South Downs. It is a comfortable, converted, refurbished Sussex farmhouse and barn buildings - opened by the Queen [no less] in 2013. It is marketed as a wonderful rural retreat for city slickers. We did not meet the latter but the hostel was full which can only be good for the YHA. It is actually on the route of the South Downs Way [SDW] meaning one can [and we did] easily have a 'no car' day.

Friday - cycling led by Debs [25 km 550m of climb]

Eight of us decided to meet up on the Friday afternoon and do a ride from Stanmer Park near Falmer, Brighton. It was a very damp and misty afternoon but in good cheer we headed up through Stanmer Park woods to open farm land and up onto the South Downs Way and west to Jack and Jill Windmills – we only saw Jack through the low cloud...

We then turned around and headed east along the SDW towards Ashcombe Bottom via Ditching Beacon it was then an undulating route back to the cars. We then drove along the A27 to the new Southdowns YHA Hostel and our first serving of tea and cake after washing our very muddy bikes and ourselves. That evening we walked to a local pub and had a very good meal.

Saturday - cycling led by Sue [42 km 940 of climb]

by Caroline

It has been a while since I have been out with Newforce and I was delighted to realise that not a lot has changed and several traditions are firmly held:

- always start cycling uphill [especially after lunch], the steeper the better
 - leaders get [ever so] slightly lost ... leading to ...
 - passing bikes over a barbed wire fence
 - the leader *always* takes us on a fantastic route
- tea, cake and more cake is available at the end of a satisfactory day's outing

Carolyn and John drove down to join us by 9.00 a.m. Two groups set off from the Hostel, a half an hour apart, in a easterly direction towards Alfriston. The advance party of Linda, Carolyn and the two Johns climbed the route steadily passing the red lion and white lion ponds up to Firle Beacon. Good views abounded [unlike on the Friday, when cloud cover prevailed]. Then onwards on an undulating path, past tumuli into the village where they were spoilt for choice for the [supposedly] obligatory morning coffee and cake. As King Alfred was believed to have burnt the cakes in Alfriston the examination of cakes on offer was paramount! The rearguard party arrived having had a tardy start, as the others drained their coffee cups, the decision was made to press on - after a quick personal drink and snack. We bustled about getting ready for the 'off' when Paul spotted a shop-window on the other side of the road which needed examination. No-one sadly, noticed he had buzzed off and the rest of us followed Sue out of the market square on a route away from the SDW. At the first T junction the question went round "Where is Paul?" Pen dashed back into Alfriston to find her errant husband, only to discover he had taken a horrid tumble onto the tarmac with blood coming from various limbs and in a slight state of shock. John H, who had followed Pen, reported back that Pen and Paul would not continue with the ride. Pen mopped up Paul and after a cuppa they sensibly took a slow ride back to the hostel for a quiet afternoon.

So then there were nine ... a salutary message learned: ALWAYS count. Onto Jevinton, then a sharp right to attack Wilington Hill to drop into East Dean.

There was a selection of lunch venues around the village green, on investigation we found out that the pub had an hour's wait and the cafes appeared full. We divided into two groups which did the trick, finding tables in separate places. We briefly contemplated sitting outside, although the sun had been out, actually at this break it disappeared and even a few spots of rain were felt in the cold air. However, in an hour all this disappeared and, after food, when the groups reunited the sun shone for a pleasant few hours riding in the afternoon.

We set off to find Friston Forest where we initially coped with a slippery, muddy single track before it dried and widened slightly. We continued through to the forest's SW corner at West Dean and Exceat. A stop to view a photographic exhibition and then onwards out to the open Downs again to head up to Firle Beacon and thence back to the hostel. Here we enjoyed the mandatory tea, cake and more cake, meeting up with Pen and Paul, we were relieved to discover the latter who, although stiff, was essentially fine. Carolyn and John left to go home after which the rest of us had a respectable evening meal at the licensed hostel.

Sunday - walking led by Sue

We awoke to sunshine and seven (Debbie, Derek, Penni and Paul decided not to walk) of us headed down to the coast to walk to Burling Gap NT cafe via the Severn Sisters cliff walk – a lovely morning with great sea and white cliff views. After a cup of coffee in the cafe we headed towards Beachy Head light house and then inland across farm land enjoying watching the new born lambs playing in the sun towards East Dean (again) and lunch. Back to the cars via a different route through Friston Forest [There is some great single track riding in Friston Forest with real bomb holes from the bombing of the area during WW2] After the walk we headed back to the hostel for tea and cake and then to another pub for a very good posh dinner and were joined by Clive.

Monday - cycling led by John H [30 km 515m of climb]

We awoke to find thick frost on the cars but a bright blue sky and heat in the sun

meant that the ice melted before Caroline and George set off for another coastal walk.

The remaining seven of us set off from the Hostel: this time with bright sunshine, 5 remaining from the original 11 participants, plus Clive (who joined us the night beforehand) and a local guest Lynne (who joined us that morning).

We set off promptly at 9.30am, John leading us (as the agreed weekend strategy to the West today) on the SDW over the railway line at the station of Southease, over the tidal stretches of the River Ouse and passing through the small village of Southease, heading towards Telscome. The track/ground was now dry and the sun was forecast to stay shining - perfect! The first couple of kilometres were reasonably flat: Lynne (the new lady who is one of John & my skiing buddies) had never ridden mtb in the daylight before. She was amazed to be reminded by how beautiful the scenery was sitting on her bike and looking around, (she had walked around there, but is relatively new to mtb and has apparently only done night riding with a few friends from her village).

The route got hillier as we went nearer to Telescome, diverted away from the SDW and climbing fairly steadily from river level to about 200m above Woodingdean on the outskirts of Brighton. On the way up John turned us right about 100m early on a farm track, instead of the bridleway up a very steep hill. Fortunately it was a short climb because when we got to the top Sue discovered (looking at her Garmin) that we had climbed the wrong hill. Back down we went and then up the next turning. I was puffing as usual at the back but managed to climb up this very long hill without getting off. Buzzards were amusing themselves and us, wheeling about in the sky, riding thermals. And the sound of Skylarks was incredible.

We were then heading more northerly to re-join the South Downs Way. For several kilometres we were cycling along a lovely rolling ridge grassy track: seeing quite a few walkers making use of the Bank Holiday. Outside Brighton,

at our furthest west point we saw about 10 guys all carry very heavy back packs and Lynne (with local knowledge) told us there was a paragliders area nearby. They were all very red in the face, and the highway was a long way below, but I guess they considered the journey was worth it to float over the hills catching the thermals and imitate the buzzards. We saw the guys a lot later doing just that.

We stopped for a snack before descending a lovely steep hill, a valley meander, then up and over another challenging hill. There are lots of names on the map called hill Swanborough Hill, followed by Castle Hill followed by Bullock Hill and even High Hill! Speeding southwards and definitely downhill finally, on our way to Rottingdean we took the wrong turning, ending up in a field of very confused sheep: luckily none with lambs. This error did take us on probably a dog walker footpath down a lovely long hill, but to a locked gate. We did the usual passing our bikes over the gate one by one and we cycled on the road a km to the shore. We stopped for elevenes, with coffee and cake looking out at the sea. The weather was just fabulous, after our stop we cycled along the prom avoiding lots and people walking and several bikers heading our way.

One noteworthy thing: we did see a bike going too fast, overtaking us and shortly afterwards crashing into a child on a bike. It seemed only the man was slightly hurt and although we did not hang around, John put the parents straight by confirming the fast rider was being stupid. At the end of the prom we cycled up a very steep road towards Telscombe Cliffs / Peacehaven rising from sea level, crossed the road and back to a bridleway. It wasn't too bad just a gradual hill rising to about 100m this time and then back to a small road where we passed Telscombe youth hostel (where we had stayed on a previous adventure to this area) .

It was then a quick couple of kilometres eastwards mainly downhill and finally north again along the river Ouse path, over the bridge at the end, over the railway then back to the Hostel. In all, 20 miles of lovely riding to conclude the weekend.

Riding In The Mountains

By Phil Hotston

I've spent many days over the past 15 years walking the fells of the Lake District, more often than not with my goretex coat battened down against the howling winds and rain. But due to family commitments I've not ridden more than a handful of days, Back o' Skidda', Whinlatter Trail centres several times - the easy stuff. So the opportunity to tag along with the Dorset Rough Riders when a weekend in June freed up for me was too good to pass up.

Along with two other Newforce regulars, Jerry and Steve, I joined 5 Dorset regulars staying in the Patterdale area of North East lakes. Jerry and I travelled up early Thursday morning to acknowledge his burgeoning interest in fellwalking - we walked and scrambled up Helvellyn via Striding Edge and down again via Swirral Edge and over Catstye Cam - the well worn route for adventurous types. Meeting up with the rest for a pint and some food in the evening we were more than a little surprised to hear that the planned route for Friday given the excellent weather was to be...Helvellyn. Having seen it we knew that there would be a fair amount of pushing up and so it proved to be. The wiry walking types we passed on the way up the early slopes soon passed us again as we hit the steep switchbacks and all in all we arrived at the top in the same length of time as the hikers. Pausing for brief poem (Wordsworth of course) we set off down again and I can assure all readers that the walkers were left some distance behind this time. The descent off Helvellyn was technical and treacherous and we all dabbed a least a bit but then the mountain side opened out and the only restriction on speed was the ever thinning brake pads. We rode across the natural rock garden that is Raise before heading for Sticks Pass and a sharp turn right into the long and very technical descent through an old mining valley, below some local ski club runs. Southern rivalries soon got the better of us and the three Newforce riders disappeared off into the distance at racing pace to arrive back at the café,

order, rest and recuperate and start eating all before our colleagues joined us. Suffice it to say that I thought that Helvellyn would be the most nuts thing I would do on a bike this weekend, so a light trip around the Ullswater lake in the afternoon sounded the perfect antidote - how wrong could I be.

The lake may be flat, but the path that circumnavigates it is most definitely not, and it was carved by walkers, not cyclists, so rock steps are considered an advantage not a hinderance. Still in a for a penny, past the point of no return and all manner of other idioms passed through my mind as we struggled round a very challenging four miles to reach a welcome café. From here we found a link road taking us up the valley to Boredale Hause, the last bit requiring carrying of bikes again before a superfast descent down to Patterdale and time for tea.

Saturdays ride started in Ambleside and took in 24 miles of trails and bridleways through Langdale and Loughrigg and covered loose rock tracks, sharp climbs, fast downhills and some hardpacked cycletrails finishing with the stupendous views from Loughrigg Terrace across Grasmere. It wasn't a day ride though, so when the others headed back, Jerry and I went onto the North Face Trail at Grizedale Forest for a final 10 mile loop. As trail centres go (this is one of the oldest) it scores 2 stars only with many miles of forest trail linking up some short fast singletrack.

Sunday saw rain arrive with low cloud so plans to head up onto Hallin Fell were scotched and we repeated most of Saturdays ride including the terrace again before the long (6 hour) drive home. Memories remain of fantastic weather on Helvellyn a rarity in my experience and great cycling all weekend.

Cover Story

By Keith Whitten

The photo on the rear cover of this issue was taken between Morzine and Saint-Jean-d'Aulps in the French Alps. Both towns lie on the 'Route Des Grandes Alpes' which is the main route up to the Portes Du Soleil ski resorts from Thonon Les Bains on the shore of Lac Lemman to the north. In each of the three years I've been to ride in the Pass'portes du Soleil I've stayed at a friend's house in Saint Jean and the four miles of not-too-steep cycle/hiking trail between the towns has made a good warm up in the morning when you're riding it uphill and a great end to the day when you're rolling down it after a day in the mountains.

This year it had changed. Quite a lot. Normally in the spring the river is at it's liveliest with the warmer weather melting the accumulated snow from the mountains above, but in April this year the area was hit by six days of near continuous rain which along with the snow-melt added enough to the flow for the river to become the proverbial raging torrent. So much so that in places the road between the two towns was washed away as was a wire and boards footbridge that used to cross the river in the centre of Saint Jean. Further downstream a dam on the river was filled up to the point where fears that it might burst led to the evacuation of over a hundred homes down in Thonon where the river meets Lac Lemman.

To their credit the local French authorities had done a very swift job of rebuilding the road, with the jet black, fresh tarmac making it easy to see which bits were new, and when I was there in late June work was still ongoing to restore the riverside trail. In the photo, behind my bike you can see the tracks where the excavator had been crossing a (now) shallow point in the river and the work in progress on the opposite side to create a bank more resistant to times of greater flow. After taking the photo I decided that the path across the river beaten down by the excavator looked rideable and if you'd to see how I got on, you can at <https://youtu.be/MvsTGSRTCqk>. What you can't see in the video is that I left my helmet on the riverside and had to do a further two crossings to retrieve it.

Back here in the South of England we have floods too. But although the ground gets rather soggy and maybe in extreme cases a few people's houses get messed up, there's rarely any noticeable change to the landscape once everything's dried out. The next time you're somewhere a bit hillier and you pass a small babbling stream running down a valley, typical to such places, looking idyllic and harmless, perhaps pause to consider how different it might look during one of the once-in-a-hundred-years events when water and gravity combine in sufficient quantities to produce a step change in the never ending sculpting of our planet's landscape.



££ CLUB DISCOUNTS ££

The following shops offer a discount
on presentation

Cycle Experience

Brookley Road, Brockenhurst
tel: 01590 624204

179 Barrack Road, Christchurch
tel: 01202 486278

10-20 South Street, Hythe
tel: 02380 840765

Cycle World Wessex

36 Thornhill Park Road, Southampton
tel: 02380 471140

109a Winchester Road,
Romsey tel: 01794 513344

373 London Road, Portsmouth
tel: 02392 666551

Sandy Balls Cycle Centre Godshill,
Fordingbridge tel: 01425 657707

Primera

183 Bournemouth Rd, Parsstone
244 Charminster Rd, Charminster

Bicycle Barn

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

Perfect Balance Cycles

87 Junction Road, Totton
tel: 02380 871777

Hargroves Cycles

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

453 Millbrook Road, Southampton
tel: 02380 789160

10 City Road, Winchester
tel: 01962 860005

Also in Chichester & Fareham

Peter Hansford Cycles

91 Olivers Battery Road South,
Winchester tel: 01962 877555

Southampton Road, Park Gate

32a Hursley Road, Chandlers Ford

Ride

111 Commercial Road, Parkstone
tel: 01202 741744

The Hub Cycleworks

105-107 Shirley Road
Southampton

EVENTS CALENDAR

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

4th to 6th September - Singlespeed UK

This year's event will be taking place up in Yorkshire and in a break with tradition there's going to be something for the try-hards. A six hour enduro in the afternoon. After the main semi-competitive ride. There will no doubt also be the usual fare of live music and cheap beer. Look for SSUK15 on Facebook.

28th to 31st August - The Big Bike Bash

This event is local, at Avon Tyrell and as in previous years will be four days of bikes, beer and bands with all profits going to the UK Youth charity.

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

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

20th to 22nd may 2016 - Singlespeed EC

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

Cyclists Fighting Cancer Sportive

It was posted in the last issue that Keith and Dan Whitten were riding in the Cyclists Fighting Cancer 100 mile sportive in the Cotswolds, starting and finishing at Stratford Racecourse. Along with a friend they all completed the event in a little over 8 hours. It was Dan's first ride over 50 miles but despite being obviously tired he kept going and was visibly very elated when he crossed the finish line. Most importantly they raised about £400 for cancer charities.

Race Results

No one appears to have gone racing in the last three months!

Next Time in Newforce

**The deadline for the autumn issue will be the end of September.
By that time plenty of you should have tales of epic summer rides and all
sorts of other stuff to tell. SO PLEASE DO.**

And please send photos photos to show too.

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

Reader's Bikes

Robin's 9 Zero 7

Frame & Fork: 9:zero:7 aluminium, 190mm rear drop-out spacing, 135mm front

Size: Medium

Wheels - Pair 1:

Hubs: Hope Fatsno, 190 R std QR, 135 F custom 10mm QR

Skewers: Hope 190mm R, Superstar superlight 10mm F

Rims: Robs'son 80mm, custom drilled to 40mm (730g)

Rim Tape: Surly 65mm

Tyres: Duro Big D 4" (1050g)

Tubes: Specialized 2.3-3.0" downhill, presta valve (185g)

Pair 2:

Hubs: Rear 9:zero:7 190mm, Front Surly 135mm

Rims: Robs'son 100mm, custom drilled to 40mm (810g)

Tyres: Chaoyang 4.9" (1270g)

Tubes: Schwalbe fatbike tubes (260g)

Chainset: Raceface Ride 120mm, 170mm arms

Chainring: Middleburn 32t thick/thin

Cassette: Sram PG1050 11-36 10 speed

Chain: Sram PG1050

Rear Mech: Shimano Zee Clutch, 10 speed

Bottom Bracket: Shimano Saint

Headset: FSA

Seatpost: Thompson Inline 440mm

Saddle: Charge Spoon Stealth

Stem: Raceface Ride 50mm

Bars: Ragley alloy low rise 740mm

Brakes: Shimano XT

Shifter: XT I-Spec 10 Speed

Seat clamp: Alloy

Grips: Superstar Exel Lock-on

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



