

# NEWFORCE

January 2014 Issue 130









# **Editorial**

By Keith Whitten

Welcome to 2014. This is the first issue of a new year and the magazine has a new editor. For those of you who haven't heard, it's me, Keith, assisted by Martin Wheat. My first job must be to thank Robin for his work over the last two years and wish him an enjoyable retirement. I'd also like to thank him for his patience with my barrage of phone calls and texts, mostly starting with the words "how do I.....".

I've enjoyed writing for the magazine over the years and one or two of you have even told me you've enjoyed reading those articles, but don't worry I won't mention who you are. So when Robin announced that he was stepping down I decided it was time to volunteer myself for the job. Now, those of you who know me will know that my workload, running probably the best bike shop in Totton, is quite seasonal with the busiest period being March to September and November to January being the quietest months, when I can even expect to occasionally have a little time on my hands. With that in mind you could expect this January issue to be as good as it gets from me.

Or should you?

The editor's job is not to singlehandedly write the whole magazine, it's to motivate and coordinate the contributions of others. That means you. Without your contributions the magazine's content is limited to my own experiences and the ramblings of my own bike-geeky mind and I'm not sure the world or even Newforce is ready for my autobiography yet.

Content doesn't have to be limited to biking. I know that a lot of you participate in other sports; adventure racing, climbing, sailing and so on. You could tell us a bit about them, whether mountain biking helps them or do they help your biking or general well being? If you're unlucky enough to have suffered injuries, caused by either training or accidents, have they affected your riding and if so how have you recovered? We're a club of people as well as bikes so writing something that tells us a little

about you and your experiences (those at least vaguely related to bikes), why you ride, what you get out of it and what sacrifices you might have made for your riding is all good.

But let's not forget the bikes. If you ride a bike with a bit of history or that's a bit unusual or special (even if it's only to special you), I'm sure I can find space for it in these pages. Be warned though, if none of you are forthcoming with material for this feature I've got enough bikes of my own to keep it going for at least a year!

To encourage your regular contributions I'm starting a couple of new features. The first of them in this issue is Forest Witter which is a collection of very short contributions on a given subject each issue. Surely everyone reading this can find time once every three months to write one sentence and mail it to me? The second will be a poll or vote each issue, sometimes on serious subjects, sometimes just a bit of fun although I've yet to work out the full detail of how to go about that one. Between the two of these we may even learn a little more about the make-up of the club. ***If enough people join in.***

Enough of the nagging. It's a new year and a rather wet one as I type this, but it's the time of year that plans are made and we all start looking forward to longer evenings and warmer weather. That may still be a few months off but until then we'll all get on with making the best we can of the current conditions, looking for the driest or firmest lines and remembering which trails hold up best to the seemingly incessant rain. Or maybe just having a giggle slipping and sliding about, trying to stay upright and make progress. Whatever the weather brings us I'll be riding as regularly as I can get away with. I hope I'll see plenty of you out there.





# newforce

## 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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Steve Keith, Max Streeton, Eleanor Rutter, Robin Knight

# **newforce**

## **Club Policy & Ride Aims**

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

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

**Fortnightly Sunday rides, Thursdays nights plus adhoc 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 11th March**

**All welcome!**



## ££ CLUB DISCOUNTS ££

The following shops offer a discount  
on presentation  
of your membership card

### **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

### **Gone Biking Mad**

97 Station Road

New Milton

### **Primera**

183 Bournemouth Rd, Parsstone

244 Charminster Rd, Charminster

### **Perfect Balance**

**Cycles** 87 Junction

Road, Totton tel:

02380 871777

### **Hargroves Cycles**

[www.hargrovescycles.co.uk](http://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

402-406 Holdenhurst Rd, B'mouth

**"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.**



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:allank@newforce.org.uk)***

# Ride Calendar

**Sunday 05 January 2014      Farley Mount, Westwood      (ref SU 420 292)**

*Designated pub: The Dolphin, Hursley*

Sometimes we meet at Crab Wood picnic area and sometimes we meet at the Monument car park. This venue is halfway between the two and is at the junction of the Crab Wood/Monument road with the road coming from Hursley and Standon on the A3090.

There are some terrific tracks in this area. Parnholt Wood has a great downhill run which leads to Kings Somborne. From here it is possible to take the Test Way up to Stockbridge and circle out round Crawley almost reaching Wherwell not far from Andover before heading back via Sparsholt and West Wood. For anyone looking for a shorter trip, you could do worse than ride around the many trails in West Wood itself perhaps linking up with some sections of the Clarendon Way.

**Sunday 19 January 2014      Beaulieu Road Station      (ref SU 349 063)**

*Designated pub: The Drift*

We have not started from here before but we have travelled through on numerous occasions. Obvious choices are Denny Wood, and the triangle between Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst and Beaulieu. Less obvious choices are back towards Longdown, Deerleap or down towards Dibden Purlieu. No doubt some of our Ashurst and Waterside members will have some route options for us.

**Sunday 02 February 2014 Whiteparish (the doctor's surgery car park) (ref SU 246 236)**

*Designated pub: The Parish Lantern*

The map reference given is the centre of the village. The doctor's surgery is close by and can be found about 50 metres along from the main junction in the middle, on the road leading back towards Landford. The general plan is probably to head northwards to the area bounded by West Tytherley, Pitton and the Winterslow villages and discover the bridleways and woodland tracks. Volunteer leaders for a particular route will be most welcome.

**Sunday 16 February 2014 Bakers Hanging, Ringwood Forest      (ref SU 129 058)**

*Designated pub: The Fish Inn (by the narrow stone bridge on the old road westwards out of Ringwood town centre, just before joining the dual carriageway).*

This is a good starting point right on the edge of Ringwood Forest which leads to a network of gravel fire roads and some interesting woodland tracks in the forest itself. There is also some north shore close by the car park for those who want to ride that style of track, and the Forestry Commission has been busy building some bike specific trails in

**Sunday 2 March 2014**                      **Stockbridge**                      **(ref SU**  
**355 352)**

We will meet up in the High Street of Stockbridge and we can head out to Stockbridge Down, Chilbolton radio telescope, Barton Stacey and Bransbury in one direction; Wherwell, Hazel Down, Danebury, the eastern perimeter of Middle Wallop airfield, Kentsboro, Oklahoma Farm and Georgia Farm in the other direction. There is plenty to keep us occupied.

**Sunday 16 March 2014**                      **Milkham Inclosure**                      (ref  
**SU 217 103)**

This start point is highly recommended and is situated just off the southern end of the old Stoney Cross airfield. The obvious routes from here are through Red Shoot and Linford from where the tracks diverge towards Rockford Common and Abbots Well in one direction or down towards Picket Post and Burley in the other direction. Burley Outer Rails, Bolderwood, Ogdens, Holly Hatch; all of these are within striking distance.

**Sunday 30 March 2014**                      **Rufus Stone**                      **(ref SU**  
**270 127)**

There are numerous possibilities from this location. A quick trip through the A31 underpass at Stoney Cross leads to Minstead which opens up the whole of the area around the Canadian Memorial, the Portuguese fireplace and Millyford Bridge, whilst heading out northwards you will find the golf course at Kings Garn Gutter and thus on to Fritham and all that lies be-

yond. No shortage of opportunities whichever way you look and a variety of hills or rolling fire roads whichever takes your fancy.

**Sunday 13 April 2014**  
**176)**

**Bishops Waltham**

**(ref SU 554**

***Designated pub: To be chosen on the day***

With a start in the centre of Bishops Waltham, we could choose a route that leads up towards the top of Beacon Hill near Exton before turning north west and heading for Lane End at which point we could turn north east for a loop around Cheriton and Tichborne depending on weather and timings. Then it's back via Cheesefoot Head, Old Down, Baybridge House and Bigpath Farm before topping Stephens Castle Down and dropping once more to the valley floor and back to Bishops Waltham.

**Sunday 27 April 2014**  
**193)**

**Martin (Day Ride)**

**(ref SU 058**

***Designated pub: the nearest pub is The Compasses at Damerham, 4 miles south east towards Fordingbridge.***

The village of Martin is situated to the south of the A354 road that runs from Salisbury to Blandford Forum. For most of us, the village is probably most easily reached by heading north-west for eight miles or so out of Fordingbridge passing through Sandleheath, Damerham and Tidpit before arriving at Martin. Approaching from this direction, the car park can be found by taking a left turn in the village itself onto a dead end road at the end of which will be found a car park at the foot of Blagdon Hill. For anyone who cares about these sort of things, the area where we start has been used as a location for Dr Who and Torchwood episodes so although the car park looks small, it is bigger once you are in it. We shall meet at this car park and head out for the bridleways and ancient drove roads which criss-cross Cranbourne Chase. There will be some challenging uphill, fast downhill and panoramic ridgeways in this delightful area.

THE NEWSLETTER IS  
PUBLISHED QUARTERLY  
THE NEXT ISSUE IS APRIL  
DEADLINE FOR ARTICLES IS  
APRIL 15TH  
IF YOU HAVE ENJOYED ONE  
OF THESE RIDES  
SEND IN A SHORT REVIEW....PLEASE!



## **EVENTS CALENDAR**

These are non-club organised events that some of us are expecting to attend. 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.

### **May 16th to 18th Heaven of the South,, ENTRIES SOLD OUT**

Some of the Vindaloo riders will be at this non-competitive event in Gloucestershire.

### **July 12th to 13th London to Brighton Night Ride.**

Keith Whitten will be taking part in this mass charity road ride for the British Heart Foundation.

### **July 26th to 27th Bontrager Twentyfour 12.**

The Vndaloos will be out in their Sumo suits riding in this 12 or 24 hour race held at Newnham Park just outside Plymouth. Expect a trackside campsite and Craig's disco through the night.

### **August 22nd to 25th. The Big Bike Bash**

A number of Newforce members are on the organising committee of this charity event held at Avon Tyrell on the western side of the New Forest. Any voluntary help will be much appreciated and no doubt rewarded with a free beer or two. Or just pay your money and enjoy the party.

### **September 5th to 7th SSUK.**

Annual gathering of UK singlespeeders, this year somewhere near Cannock. Details can currently be found on Facebook if you search for 'SSUK14' or [www.ssuk14.co.uk](http://www.ssuk14.co.uk). If you want to be in with a chance of winning something worth having start growing your beard now.

If you are going to an event not listed here please send the details to the editor in time for the next issue and you may have some company there.

## **BIKE PARK WALES**

<http://www.bikeparkwales.com/>

By John Hawkins: with extracts from Stewart's account of the day  
Opened August 2013 / Visited 2 November 13

I have just spent a very wet and windy Saturday [80mph gusts according to the weatherman] at this new trail centre near Merthyr Tydfil, South Wales. [3 hour drive each way, with a coffee stop from Winchester]. Went across with two of my mtb pals from Winchester: Gary [Spesh, Stumpjumper], Stewart [Santa Cruz, Tallboy] and me [Spesh, Epic]. Essentially three full suss XC bikes and riders and in truth we were probably under equipped and under skilled for this trail centre!

We arrived just before 10:30 and the car park was pretty full. It appears (and the cafe certainly sounded like) it is attracting a lot of locals. We had some good riding at Bike Park Wales. From the car park and cafe, initially a muddy section followed by about half an hour climbing on "Beast of Burden" mainly in the granny ring to the top, where all the different descents start from – [currently] two blue, two red and two black.

We stuck to the various blues [with only one short attempt on a red], which were fast and flowing, yet still pretty technical (for us cross country types). Blues were described as "*providing challenges for the average rider*" - well, that made us feel pretty average! These were good runs with nice berms to hold you on the corners but plenty of obstacles [tree stumps etc] to negotiate and despite the weather and obvious extensive use, the tracks were pretty grippy and generally holding up well. It is quite exposed at the top, and with the blustery weather, it was difficult to stick to the track, getting blown off course with the strong gusts. My Epic has 100mm travel and I was bottoming out on some turns, dips/bumps even on the blues. The short red we attempted was far more rocky and less a prepared track with berms.

The uphill "Beast" is mapped at 4.6 km and the down hill blues [of sections with various names] link to give about 5 km back down to the cafe [red and black considerably shorter and hence steeper] We managed only four runs during the day, with two each on each blue and the second run was swifter / easier with some knowledge of what was coming up ahead.

What was, I felt lacking was a change of option to the route uphill and we chose to ride short portions of "Beast" plus mixed it in with various pieces of fire road. I felt that "Beast" itself could probably have been labelled red and not once, of the four times up did we ride the full length without a bit of fire track. We saw other XC riders on the up but only two with downhill bikes and they were in for a long long push. I would not recommend a hardtail bike at all for this bike park, plus it would be a real challenge stepping up, for example from a Forest of Dean blue to ride up the supposedly blue "Beast" and back down again.

The cafe did good, reasonable value biker food but seemed short of toilet and shower stuff which might be expected from a new facility. Plus there is a bike shop / maintenance on site which might be useful.

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Not sure how this new venue will knock on to effect Afan and other centres [fewer visitors at the older centres?], but clearly this place is enjoying some success. Long travel bikes and full face helmets / armour seemed popular and are recommended on the website. The uplift service [£30 per day] seemed to have queues and was popular, plus probably necessary for the all mountain and downhill bikers. If you want some challenging, or very challenging (red or black!) down hills, this is the place to go. The up-hill is a bit of a slog, so I can see the attraction of the uplift service. For long rides though, this isn't Afan with W2 or Skyline routes or the natural trails of the Brecons, Long Mynd, Exmoor and so on.

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# **The Future's So Bright I've Gotta Wear Shades.**

By Keith Whitten

A few thoughts on how bikes may change in the near future

Mountain bikes are great. Really they are. Since their inception in the late eighties there's been rapid evolution and diversification into specialist roles to the point where since the mid noughties they have been very good indeed. Pretty much any high end bike from the last five to ten years if in good, well maintained condition, is still desirable, saleable and most importantly, useable. This isn't what the manufacturers want. They want us to be drooling over the latest quantum leap in two wheeled technology and mortgaging our nearest and dearest to get it into our possession. But the truth is that for those last five or ten years those leaps forward have been rather small. It's true that there have been some genuinely useful developments such as through axle forks and dropper seatposts that have been widely regarded as 'a good thing' but disc brakes have been stopping us reliably for the best part of fifteen years, SPDs have been keeping our feet on the pedals for even longer and suspension has for the last ten years at least, been allowing mere mortals to ride at silly speeds over the kind of terrain the pioneering heroes of the sport would likely have tackled with a high degree of mincing on their lightly modified beach cruisers.

The wheel size thing over the last few years suggests to me that the bike companies are starting to get just a little bit desperate. Twentyniners came along and offered a distinctly different experience to twentysixers as just about anyone who's owned or ridden one will agree. Whether they're actually better or not is very much a personal decision, influenced by where you ride, what you expect of your riding and probably just as much, whether or not you think they look good. I remember reading an interview with Oli Beckinsale a few years back in which he said he'd ride a twentysixer or a twentyniner as his sponsors asked him to. He didn't expect his results to differ. The recent trend for the inbetweener, twentysevenpoint-five, 650B or 'wishy washy' wheel size appears to offer no benefit at all and must even have given the marketing men a challenge. Just how do



you praise the virtues of something that's both a bit less smooth rolling than a twentyniner and a bit less nimble than a twentysixer? But once a couple of mainstream companies had jumped on that boat the rest seemed obliged to follow and now we have yet another size of tyres, tubes and rims for the bike shops to stock.

So what are the bike companies going to do next to tempt us to open our wallets and to make life difficult for the service industry?

We now have headsets in internal, external, one and one eighth, one point five and mixed flavours and bottom brackets have seen a number of press fit standards introduced in the last few years. So is there any part of the bike left for the manufacturers to mess with? Sorry, I meant to say develop and improve. How about the chain? Could that be next for the 'new year, new standard' treatment? The half inch pitch (the distance between successive pins) has been the same pretty much for ever. If that's what was best nearly a hundred years ago then surely it can't be right for today's riding? There are plenty of other standards in regular use for industrial applications so a new pitch standard wouldn't require a huge amount of re-tooling. A shorter pitch, say 8mm, would give roughly fifty percent more teeth for any given chain ring diameter and thus allow closer ratios at the cassette. For example, 32:16 would become 48:24 which gives the same ratio but one tooth more or less on either of the rings would make a smaller difference than with the current size. Shimano used the name 'Microdrive' in the nineties so maybe this development could be called 'Midget Motion' or 'Dwarf Drive'? Roadies would love the new standard, being able to tell each other that they spent one point something-or-other percent more of their ride at optimum cadence. Believe me, if you go to Beaulieu tea shop some time around half past eleven on a Sunday morning and find a table somewhere near the fast group you will overhear conversations dissecting riding to that degree. Alternatively the new standard could be translated into a weight benefit with tooth counts remaining as they are now but with rings, cassettes, freehubs and mechs all being

miniaturised. Of course a development like that would result in products that wouldn't be serviceable with existing tools so the requirement for bike shops the world over to invest in additional tools would be a bonus for the tool manufacturers. The smaller chains would most likely be pioneered on road bikes but sooner or later transfer to mountain bikes, maybe driven by cross country racing in the drier parts of the world, and once someone wins a race using one, will be touted as 'the thing to have'. As with all new developments 'Titchy Chains' would first be made available as a premium product (at a premium price) before filtering down to the price points that most of us are likely to bite on. Once the masses and by that I mean those of us without sponsors to pay for replacement drivetrains every three rides and team mechanics to fit them, get their hands on 'Little Links' it may be discovered that in muddy going they clog rather badly. Oh dear. But never mind, it won't be long before some bright spark decides that a size somewhere midway between the new and the old standards would clog a bit less and still be lighter than clumpy old half inch. Of course advertising copy writers will ignore that it would still clog more than traditional half inch and be not quite as light as 'Diddy Drive' but hey presto, another standard is born, and once a few high profile bike brands are persuaded to fit it as original equipment all 'decent' bike shops will be obliged to invest in spare parts and tools to work with yet another new standard. Another round of easy sales, for the manufacturers at least.

Whether the general public rushes to get their hands on the new 'Critical Cogs' is another matter. At the time of writing the first twenty-seven-point-fivers have been available from mainstream manufacturers for a year or so but I've yet to see one on the trails and I don't recall any of my riding friends stating in the post ride pub that their lives won't be complete without one. However, like the evolution from seven to eight speed and then on to nine and ten speed chains and cassettes and all the rest it'll be original equipment on new bikes and reduction of choice and support for the old standards that eases any new standards into general acceptance. Whether we like it or not.

So yes, with manufacturers competing ever more desperately for our cash the future for the consumer at least is very bright. Perhaps blindingly bright. For those in the bike trade, having to keep stock and tools

for all requirements, there's an old Chinese proverb that springs to mind. "May you be cursed to live in interesting times".

And finally. Here's a maybe more realistic prophecy. 2014 is going to be the year of the Fatbike. For years Surly and one or two even more niche companies have been quietly selling them in small numbers to those lucky enough to live near great big beaches or daft enough to enter any of the classic Arctic long distance races. But in the latter half of 2013 there's been a glut of alternatives arrive from On-One, Charge, Genesis and even Specialized, all trying to persuade potential owners that they can be ridden on 'normal trails' too. Surely sometime in the not too distant future a purchasing executive from a 'very large toy retailer' will cross paths with one and when he gets back to the office he'll be straight on the phone to his Pakistani bike manufacturers. By the following Christmas every branch will have them stacked in the aisles and built down to a £299 retail price.

## **Fatbikes – What's the point? By Ashley**

### **Short history taken from the web:**

A Fatbike is a bicycle with over-sized tires, typically 3.7" or larger that are designed for riding on soft unstable terrain such as snow and sand. These bikes are built around frames with large forks and stays to accommodate the wide rims required to fit these tires. Fatbikes were invented for riding on snow and that is their most common usage, however their utility has expanded to include sand and desert riding, bogs and mud as well as riding that is considered normal mountain biking. The original Fatbike tires were the SnowCat rims, created by Simon Rakower of All-Weather Sports in Fairbanks, Alaska. Simon was involved with technical support aspects of the Iditabike (later IditaSport) race, which started in 1987. He started hand making extra wide rims for participants by welding two rims together and cutting off the middle ridge. Soon after, he decided to design a 44 mm rim from scratch: the SnowCat. These icebikes remained local until Surly Bikes released the Pugsley, the first Fatbike that spread beyond the local icebike concept.

### **My Fatty**

Ok we don't get much snow and the local beaches are stony, so why buy a Fatbike? I had a few good reasons. The On One Fatty is aimed more as a trail bike than for riding on snow/sand so it can be used anywhere a regular MTB can go. People that have ridden them say how much fun they are and once its rolling its fine. It is also relatively cheap for something so niche. I bought the rolling chassis which comes with wheels running 70mm wide rims, 4 inch tyres, frame and fork. From there you can add other parts you have laying around – they sell a fully built version at £999.99. As the rear hub is extra wide at 170mm as opposed to the standard 135mm the bottom bracket is wider at 100mm rather than the standard 68/73mm width. This is so the cranks can clear the wider chain stays. So this was needed as an extra purchase. I have changed the tubes as it came with downhill tubes the new ones are 300 grams per tube lighter than the factory ones which are really heavy and take up a lot of room in the Camelback. I can drill some large holes in the rim to save another 250 grams per wheel. They also look good so a project is on the cards and will end up looking like the below pic. (The picture's actually



inside the back cover, cos black and white would make it look a bit pants—EDITOR)

### **The Ride**

I built it ready for The Big Bike Bash and as I was marshalling it seemed like a good idea to have a comfortable ride for the three day's following people about. You run a very low pressure, about 6-15 psi. I'm running 10-12 as I normally have road ride to the beginning and end of a ride. First I noticed how it smoothed the bumps out and once moving how well rolling off road (the overall height of the 26 inch wheels and tyres is about the same as a 29er). Riding uphill was a bit slower but you can ride a much straighter line as roots, holes are not an issue. It does compensate this a lot and also the grip is fantastic, so loose gravel etc. is much easier as well. General riding around the Forest (on the official cycle network of course – EDITOR) is great. Its plenty fast enough to compete with my fellow riders until I take a more rooty option, then it does have the edge due to being able to go where I want J. Rode at Swinley recently and the Fatty was great. The grip into the berms was ace, also the landings from the jumps were very cushioned and with just under 25 miles of riding it was certainly a good workout.

### **Fitness**

I also wanted a way to get a bit fitter without making any lifestyle changes so a bike weighing about 34 lbs sounded like a good option. You do need to have a good fitness level to keep it moving and having ridden a singlespeed for years helps as well. Once you are into twisty single-track you forget it's a bit heavy and start to appreciate how much fun it is. I am planning to ride it in Wales/Quantocks at Christmas time so hopefully I will get up the climbs ok – I'm sure the downhill part will be ace. Looks like no need for an FS anymore as well.

### **Overall**

The Fatty is a great fun bike to ride. It certainly puts a smile on your face. The grip is amazing, allowing for great loose climbing, the ride is very comfortable and going straight over things without slowing down is a hoot as well. There are some downsides. You need to ride it quite hard,

riding on the road is not nice, it sounds like a tractor and the rolling resistance is terrible but I don't ride much on the road anyway. It's not fast top end as it only has a 32/11 so not good for the long 70 miler mainly gravel tracks we sometimes do on a summer evening - I did race 2 roadies the other day and dropped one and sat on the wheel of another and when we stopped at a crossing the person I dropped said I was going at 25 MPH so it is possible to get some speed out of it ☺

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# Love Resurrection

By Allan Knight

What's old and grey and lurks at the back of the garage? No, its not our Chairman Roger (as far as I know!), but a rather nice steel frame and a box of bits. Its more than just a frame though, as this alloy antique and I have history – rather a lot of it.

It had been gnawing at the back of my mind for some time, that a pile of parts rusting in a garage is sacrilege to the cycle, blasphemy to the bike. Twenty years ago we had first become acquainted, its state of the art Tange Prestige Ultimate fluted tubing and first-generation XTR parts. Together we had travelled the country, hours and hours of ecstatic agony as I pushed body and bike to the limit, in race after race. And we achieved some results, in our own scale of things.

So now it was time to resurrect the old Kona Explosif, and perhaps to relive a few of those moments. Digging through the box, though, it was obvious this was going to be quite a challenge. After that season of racing, I'd been provided with a newer model, but it didn't have quite the same lustre of the first. The original was used as a training bike, then hung up for a while, parts borrowed for other bikes which came and went, then used as a winter singlespeed for a while before being thrown, stripped and soiled, in the bike heap at the back.

On the plus side, most of the original parts were still around. What was more surprising, was that they still worked! One marked difference being that modern parts are very disposable. A 1993 XTR rear mech, as I found, can be stripped down to every component part, cleaned & lubed, and reassembled.

It's a pains-taking task, but ultimately satisfying to have a perfectly

working component again.

And so it was with most of the bike – 8-speed XT thumbshifters carefully cleaned, Joe Murray Impact headset stripped and bearings replaced, Dia Compe cantilever brakes polished and set up. There were a few names to reminisce over too – Sugino Mighty cranks (60g lighter than XTR), Project Two rigid forks and a spare set of Rockshox Quadra elastomer suspension forks.

A few parts hadn't fared so well over two decades – the XTR rear hub was still in perfect order, but the rear Mavic rim had seen better days, worn wafer thin through braking in countless wet and muddy races, so was duly replaced. I tracked down a complete replacement front wheel and a new seatpost (which had snapped, requiring hours of carefully hacksawing the remainder out of the frame) – with the help of the Retrobikes forum.

And finally the frame – in a very sorry state after so much abuse, paint and decals scraped and peeling. So it was off to the powder coaters for a new sparkly white finish, and a replacement set of stickers courtesy of Retrobikes again. Fully assembled, its former glory reinstated, it was truly something to behold – skinny steel tubes glinting in the sunshine, setting off the absolutely-no-nonsense, race-me-till-you-die geometry. And then it was time to jump back on and ride. It couldn't be any old ride either, but a proper 90's style fast blast on flat tracks. A summers evening spin along the sea walls from Lymington to Keyhaven, the setting sun reflecting off silky smooth sea, yachts gliding effortlessly past as I would soon be on this fine steed.

Climbing aboard, I notched my ageing back into racing position, the long top tube and 130mm stem stretching me into a nice aero tuck. It felt as if my hands were almost touching in the middle with the super-narrow cut down titanium handlebars, as I wobbled off and clipped in. Putting down the power, the bike leapt forward, its super stiff frame and rigid steel forks directing every watt to the ground – and every bump straight back to my body. With gritted teeth and streaming eyes I sped off – oh how I wished I could sit up a bit higher! Back aching, lungs burning, arms sore, this bike is designed for one thing and one thing only – pain! It was just like the old days!

But I'm past all that, so I sold it, and relish in the benefits of modern bike geometry, components and suspension.

(Pictures of Allan's Kona can be found on the rear cover - EDITOR)

# Forest Witter

Here are a selection of short memories and quotes from members.  
This month about anything that brings fond memories of a past ride.

We barrelled over slippery rocks down Somerton Combe, Mike on my wheel, clattering and splashing on the wet trail. Then - OOF - and, nothing. I slowed and looked over my shoulder to see Mike, lying on his back in the mud, legs poking up through the bike frame, laughing manically to himself. I guessed he was OK.

ALLAN Quantocks, Christmas 2013.

December's last Tikka ride started with an hour and a half in the pub, and ended up with mince pies and mulled wine at the top of a hill.

CLIVE

New Year's Eve Korma involved lots of mud and climbing over through and round fallen trees, ending with a great feeding.

CLIVE

Pennine bridleway, summer - fantastic riding and company as ever, thanks.

JOHN HAWKINS

Long Mynd day two, spring - now how many circuits of this cow field is it we try? [before anyone says this back to me - oops!!!]

JOHN HAWKINS

Riding the cliff path near Barton on Sea on a warm summer's evening I was sure I could hear bagpipes. At the top of the next rise I saw the lone piper striding along the path towards me whilst continuing to play.

KEITH

A badger poking it's head over a bank and looking straight at us to see what was going on.

KEITH

A few years back I was leading a Thursday tikka night ride, with rapidly degenerating weather -pretty stormy. For the first time (prob ever!!)- I found myself at the front of the group with the others lagging behind. I put this down to my extreme fitness level rather than lightning hitting the top of the hill we were heading up!!!

NUALA

Whilst night riding along the edge of Southampton water from Eling to Hythe- there came the shout from ahead of 'mind the hole'. Upon reaching the 'hole' it was to find most of the path missing and Eleanor lying down on the beach at the bottom of the bank. It was rather a big hole!!

NUALA

(I bet the squeal from that manoeuvre was heard in the docks the other side of the water - EDITOR)



Now you've seen how it's done I'm hoping that more of you will be inspired to contribute your own memories of moments that have made mountain biking so much more than just 'riding a bike'.

Good memories are always welcome in this feature but additionally for the next issue please can you share with us some of your 'NEAR MISSES'. Times when you've thought "wow I was really lucky there" or just scared yourself rather more than you intended to.

# Reader's Bikes

## Anatomy of a Fatty

(This one's Robin's)

**On One Rolling Chasis 18"** (frame, fork and wheels bundle from On-one, rims drilled by Ashley and Robin to save weight)

**Chainset Raceface Turbine** (170mm as recommended by On-one)

**Brakes - Shimano XT**

**Rear Mech - Shimano XT**

**Front Mech - Shimano XT**

**Shifters - Shimano XT**

**Cassette - Shimano HG81 11-34 & chain**

**Chainrings - 32T Hope** (Halfords were knocking them out cheap)  
22T (doesn't everyone have an unused granny ring in their spares box?)

**Bars - Ragley Orange 25mm rise**

**Seatpost - Ragley black 31.6**

**Saddle - Ragley orange**

**Seat clamp 34.9**

**Rotors 180 / 160mm bolts adaptor**

**Stem ragley black 60mm**

**Grips - superstar orange**

**Tubes - Specialized 26 x 2.7 -3" x3** (loads lighter than the ones that On-one supplied)

**Singlespeed Chain KMC HX610 and 20T sprocket** (for the snot-fest that all off-roading round here is at the time of writing)

**Problem solver front mech mount** (needed due to the extra wide 100mm bottom bracket and eventually sourced from Charlie the Bikemonger when no-one else in the country had one)

**If you've spent some time and effort getting your bike just the way you want 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.**







