

NEWFORCE

Spring 2015 Issue 135





Editorial

By Keith Whitten

Welcome to the spring issue of Newforce. The snow picture opposite was originally going to be on the front but the more I looked at it the more wrong it felt. Spring has to be about rising temperatures, brighter days and hope for a fresh new year.

That picture was taken on the only snow day we had locally this winter and no doubt to the frustration of the fatbike owners it occurred on a Tuesday when most of them were at work and turned out to be more a snow-couple-of-hours. Tuesday being my day off gave me the opportunity to get out and have a play, so that's what I did. It was fun while it lasted but before midday the snow had all melted and the trails were back to being just wet.

As I write this I'm eagerly looking forward to the weekend the clocks change and we get proper light evenings. We're into a drier spell and a lot of the trails are starting to take on their summer persona although it's a little ironic that with drier trails and warmer temperatures the mud that does find it's way onto your bike from the still wet sections has time to dry during the ride and becomes far harder to clean off at the end than full on winter slop that falls off at first sight of a hosepipe.

Of course the weather could change to pretty much anything at the drop of a hat here in England but the clocks changing is for me, the final milestone in the banishment of winter. Others have been the first ride home from work without lights, the first ride of the year in shorts, leaving work with the sun still in the sky. Every time I get to do something that hasn't been possible since last autumn it's a step towards the warmth and light of a good summer's day when everything seems so much easier.

It's the time of year when plans are made for summer trips and grand days out. Of course the British weather has a history of ruining the best made plans but those plans have got to be made, just in case we're blessed with one of those classic summers that people talk about for years afterwards. If one of those did turn up it'd be such a shame to waste it.

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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 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 9th June

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.

Spring Rides List

Sunday 19 April 2015 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 Slufers and back across Stoney Cross to Minstead.

Sunday 03 May 2015 Whitchurch – all day
(town centre at ref SU 463 481)

Designated pub: somewhere in Whitchurch; (but the Bell Inn is remarkably close to the 2nd car park mentioned below).

There are a couple of public car parks within 100m of the grid reference which is the mini-roundabout in the centre. If you are coming in northwards off the A34 there is one car park next to the silk mill approx 75m before the roundabout in the centre and if that is full there is another car park approx 75m along the C class road named Bell Street that is the 2nd exit off that roundabout. There are some good hills to be had in this area and the last time we rode here about 2 years ago, it was a ride along Watership Down with some significant climbs. We could do parts of that route again, or we could keep to the north west of the town and ride in the St Mary Bourne area.

Sunday 17 May 2015 Standing Hat, Brockenhurst
(ref SU 315 036)

Designated pub: One of the Brockenhurst watering holes
TBA

This start point is situated about a mile as the crow flies, north east of Brockenhurst Station. This is a good location to start from because there is the choice of heading into the Standing Hat Inclosure with its labyrinth of well surfaced gravel tracks which make up the very large tract of forest in the Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst and Beaulieu triangle whilst the southerly direction has all the joys of Diltons Farm and the windswept perimeter track of Beaulieu Airfield or a hack along the old railway track and the pleasures of plugging through Setthorns Inclosure.

Sunday 31 May 2015 Micheldever Woods
(ref SU 529 363)

Designated pub: Northbrook Arms at East Stratton

We could ride the rolling ridges above Micheldever and the Candovers and link up with the Oxdrove above Alresford or we could head out westwards towards South Wonston and Sutton Scotney and not forgetting the tracks in Micheldever Wood itself. Whichever way we go there are good tracks, nice downhills, and interesting single track.

Sunday 14 June 2015 Godshill (ref SU 170150)

Designated pub: The Fighting Cocks at Godshill

Directions to the start point are to get to the Fighting Cocks pub at Godshill just east of Fordingbridge, and then follow the road to the side of the pub. It goes downhill and through a ford before climbing up the other side of the valley. The road twists sharply at the top of the hill and the car park is right at this location.

From here sensible choices are southwards towards Pitts Wood and Hampton Ridge, Hasely, Holly Hatch and Linwood or northwards through Godshill Inclosure, Hale, Bohemia, Lover and maybe up towards the Pepperbox or looping back eastwards via Bramshaw Telegraph.

Sunday 28 June 2015 Bar End –park and ride, Garnier Road, Winchester (ref SU 487 281)

Designated pub: The Queen Inn, Kingsgate Road.

A good central location from where the route might be southwards along the Itchen Navigation where it passes St Catherine's Hill before turning eastwards up Plague Pits Valley, then onwards along the Dongas tracks for Hazeley Down, Morestead, and Cheesefoot Head and the South Downs Way, Milbury's Inn and the general area near Cheriton.

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 Cheriton, Flower Pots pub
(possibility of BBQ – TBA) (ref SU 582 283)**

Designated pub: The Flower Pots Pub

We have ridden from here a few times now. We usually make use of the field at the back of the pub for parking on the basis that we will spend lots of money at the bar upon our return. If we do not benefit from a BBQ, there is limited availability of Sunday Lunches (with a need to pre-book) but bar snacks are readily available. We could head north towards New Alresford and pick up on the Oxdrove network of tracks or we could stay southwards and take in parts of the South Downs Way and the tracks around Brockwood Park and Bramdean.

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.

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



Thursday 20th February 2015

By Keith Whitten

The date won't mean anything to most of you but for four of the Jalfrezi riders it was this winter's 'Wet One'. The rain certainly wasn't of biblical proportions but it was enough to put most folks off riding that night. For the four of us that did get out there was no question about it, it was Thursday night and we were going to ride our bikes. We started as we meant to continue, riding the 'interesting' trails, not wussing out and spinning round hardpack and roads. The evening was spent slip-sliding and slaloming round ever larger puddles, feeling for grip on wet roots and on one particularly wet and muddy downhill, ploughing our way through the slop carving turns a little like skiers do.

At the midway point we stopped to shelter under the eaves of a toilet block and enjoy our portions of Eleanor's fantastic cake. That was the only time the cold made any headway against us. The sloppier the trail, the harder we worked and the warmer we stayed.

After three hours we returned to the pub we'd started from only to find the doors locked due to a lack of business. At half past nine! Once word gets round that they're doing that I don't think their future will be too rosy. Never mind, there was another pub not far away that we could go to for our usual post ride debrief. By that time, ironically the rain had actually stopped, although it started up again in plenty of time for my ride home.

It's rides like this one that form the strongest memories, usually more so than the dry comfortable ones. Those of you who were there, you know who you are and thanks for the company.

Ride pictures on the following pages supplied by Tim Wheeler









Baggy Trousers

A kit review by Keith Whitten

I'd had these trousers sat in my wardrobe for a year or so before I thought about using them on the bike but through the winter I thought I'd give them a try on one of my Tuesday morning rides home from helping my wife set up her stall at Hythe market. The fabric's a light, thin polyester, same as a lot of swim shorts, which doesn't soak up moisture to any great degree and does do a very good job of blocking out wind chill. There's no really long story to cut short. They worked. The fit (for me at least) is good enough that when sat on a bike there's no undue bagginess at the front and no exposed 'builder's bum' at the back. The waist elastic stops them falling down without feeling like they're cutting me in half. They have pockets in conventional places, hips and thighs and elastic drawstrings at the ankles that can be tightened to stop them flapping into the cranks or just to keep cold draughts out. In fact those drawstrings appear to be the only weakness I've identified with these trews as the excess when they're pulled tight looks a little vulnerable to getting caught on the undergrowth if used off road. Otherwise they've proven to be an excellent choice for casual riding on colder days and those occasions when you just don't want to turn up in lycra. I very happily rode in them on the recent trip to Bike park Wales where it was sunny but still quite fresh at the top of the hill.

Another great feature is that they are convertible with a couple of zip off sections on each leg so if the weather warms up while you're out you can wear them as three-quarters or shorts and better still the removed bits fold up small enough to stash in the thigh pockets.

So after a page of singing the praises of this wonder garment you're probably wondering in which emporium of bling I found them and how much they cost. The answer to that is that I picked them up from the clothing stall at Hythe market and paid the princely sum of ten pounds. Last time I looked the stall was still selling them in both the black that I bought and now arctic camo colours. I may have to buy myself another pair.

You know you're a proper mountain biker [chick] when.....

Your internet history lists Wiggle, CRC and Evans Cycles, not Ocado, Tesco or Next.

You spend more on your cycling shoes than on your Jimmy Choos (guys reading this won't know that Jimmy Choos are THE designer shoes to have).

Your Christmas wish list consists of bike spares/components/tyres, not jewellery and perfume.

You prefer a mud pack on your arse, not on your face.

The way to your heart is for him to wash your bike, not give you a bunch of flowers.

You worry more about whether your clothes match your bike rather than your handbag.

There's more lycra in your wardrobe than any other fabric type.

You care more about the cleat type on your shoes, than the heel type. (What the hell is a kitten heel anyway?)

You replace your bike washing brush more often than your toothbrush.

You select your nail varnish colour to co-ordinate with your bike.

The watch you wear has GPS and a heart rate monitor but doesn't actually tell the time.

You'd rather be given a carbon full-suss than a diamond ring.

You find yourselves discussing psi's not PMT during the cake stop.

A romantic weekend away involves bike racks and trail centres.

The spare bedroom has a turbo trainer in it (also useful to prevent the mother-in-law staying).

You'd rather read MBR than Fifty Shades of Grey.

Your favourite bra is your sports bra, not your figure-flattering lacy Wonderbra.

The sports wash cycle on the washing machine is the only one you know about.

Upon hearing the word "computer", you think of your Garmin not your laptop.

You spend Valentine's Day on your bike.....without your partner

Compiled By **Penni and the Fillies**.

(Sounds like a good name for a band — I wonder what music they'd play?)

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

(a husband's point of view)

By Pam Ayres of course.. (and supplied by Penni)

The missus bought a Paperback,
Down Shepton Mallet way,
I had a look inside her bag;
T'was "Fifty Shades of Grey".
Well I just left her to it
And at ten I went to bed.
An hour later she appeared;
The sight filled me with dread.
In her left she held a rope;
And in her right a whip!
She threw them down upon the floor,
And then began to strip.
Well fifty years or so ago;
I might have had a peek;
But Mabel hasn't weathered well;
She's eighty four next week!!
Watching Mabel bump and grind;
Could not have been much grimmer.
And things then went from bad to worse;
She toppled off her Zimmer!
She struggled back upon her feet;
A couple minutes later;
She put her teeth back in and said
I am a dominator !!
Now if you knew our Mabel,
You'd see just why I spluttered,
I'd spent two months in traction
For the last complaint I'd uttered
She stood there nude and naked
Bent forward just a bit
I went to hold her, sensual like
And stood on her left tit!
Mabel screamed, her teeth shot out;
My god what had I done!?
She moaned and groaned then shouted out:
"Step on the other one"!!
Well readers, I can't tell no more;
About what occurred that day.
Suffice to say my jet black hair,
Turned fifty shades of grey.

On The Run, In The Forest

By Nigel Aiken

Previously, I didn't like running but now I'm quite keen. Most of the runners I knew, I had met through cycling, which they took up on doctors orders to rebalance their knees and sort their legs out. I had run on rare occasions before, as on the le Mans style start of Mountain Mayhem or when having a bash at the Totton [sprint] triathlon. There, I relied on my cycling fitness to survive the distance and dealt with the disaster area that were my legs the following day. In the summer of 2013, I thought it would be a good idea to learn how to run 5km properly.

My target was to do sufficient mileage to cross the threshold from beginner to a "runner of some description". Once that task was complete, the pudding would be proved by doing a parkrun. Parkruns are free, mass start, timed races over a 5km course on a Saturday morning. They can be found on Southampton common, Eastleigh, Winchester, all over the UK in fact and on most continents. In terms of training, if I wanted to cycle faster/further for a specific event, I had previously just tried to do as much as possible in the weeks before hand. As I knew nothing about running (other than the discomfort) I thought I had better follow a structured training plan which would help me avoid injuries and any resultant time off my bike.

The web has an abundance of running guides for technique, stretching and training. Of the various training plans available, I chose Dr Barnardos 5km plan for beginners over 6 weeks, mainly because it was in an easy to print format and they do say – consult a doctor before starting a new exercise regime. It is a very similar plan to the ones from Bupa or Runners World etc which all seem to follow a similar philosophy. Although each plan is generic, they are also bespoke for the individual with definitions like "run at a pace where you could still hold a conversation with yourself". Talking to your self is of course the first sign of madness.

Let the training commence !

DAY 1: rest day. For someone that spends the day typing/mousing at a computer I didn't find this too difficult. It did reinforce the idea in my mind that tomorrow I was going running and I got my kit prepared and ready.

DAY 2: warm up, then 1 min run + 1 min walk, repeat 10 times: After 50

seconds of running I was looking forward to the relaxing (but purposeful) walk. The 1 min walks seemed to pass quite quickly. Towards the end of the 10 repetitions the purposeful walk was looking more appetising earlier in the running phase but I obeyed the stopwatch and got through it. After the last walk I had warmed down and recovered. 10 mins running wasn't like cycling all morning so was that it ? Maybe I should have been trying harder. Oh well, I thought, I can experiment next time.

DAY 3: Rest Day; Jesus H Navas !!! My legs felt like I'd cycled 200km. I avoided using stairs where possible. Apparently the rest days are the key, they allow the muscles to repair and get stronger.

Day 4: My legs were back to normal. And so the run/walking continued – day on/day off. On the last day of each week the effort level was raised with less walking and more running followed by two rest days. The following week continued day on/day off at the new workload. So the cycle continued, building in intensity. It wasn't all plain sailing, sometimes life got in the way and I missed a few days training in which case I went back and repeated the previous week to get back on track. Prevention of injury was paramount and I wasn't in any rush. Although each training session was fairly easy, the accumulation of effort over the weeks had a noticeable effect. Even with post run stretching I had various “growing pains” which shifted around different parts of my legs as the weeks passed.

Running in the forest was very pleasant. I mainly stuck to the gravel tracks which were softer on the feet than tarmac, less scratchy than heather and a lot quieter than cycling. Any deer I encountered seemed to casually ponder my intent until I was within 50m before they ambled off into the cover of the trees.

Week 8: The final training week began with my longest run, 2 x 15min runs with a 1 min walk in between. My left foot felt a bit stressed afterwards so I took it easy on the shorter mid week run.

Saturday, parkrun day : My foot still felt a bit wobbly so I took the parkrun on Southampton common at a very steady pace and made sure I got round without any walking and in one piece. I achieved an age grade of 65% which I was pleased with and was also surprised at how efficient the training process had been. The parkrun had a friendly atmosphere and was different to my running in the forest in that the tarmac paths were harder on my legs but faster than the

Forests all weather gravel tracks. I also had difficulty concentrating on my rhythm with the noise of hundreds of pairs of feet running nearby. I now appreciate that the common isn't flat but has a slight "incline" at the north end ! After that, in the remaining months of the year, I consolidated my training and did a few more parkruns. At this point I was hooked and began my ongoing quest to find out just how fast these legs can go. One of the best things about being a beginner is being "on the up" with continuous improvements in fitness and new PBs.

2014 was my first full year of running and consisted of chasing PBs on parkruns and following more of Dr Barnardos training plans for longer distance races - 10km, 10miles and finally in October, the Glasgow half marathon. All of which helped out with my 5km times too. At the culmination of every training program, I was very aware of the accumulated fatigue in my legs and could relate to the "taper period" at the end of each program, which allows the legs some recovery time before the day of the big race.

Running has given my overall fitness a boost, primarily because It has increased my activity level during the winter months. Its quick and easy to go out for a run in any weather and even easier once finished, to sponge down the trainers and throw the rest of the kit in the washing machine. There's no bike to wash and oil outside in the cold! Specific fitness improvements that I notice are that hill walking is now easier and my cycling season gets off to a better start in January with less heavy breathing on the hills. The enhanced leg muscles seem to be of little benefit on the bike except when standing on the pedals.

To get started with running, £100 would buy an outfit, running shoes and stopwatch, although you could easily spend more. Then there are the gadgets with heart rate monitoring, GPS and internet analysis of performance, or you could use one of the many apps for your phone, e.g. Strava. The ongoing cost however is on trainers, as a decent pair of running shoes will only last four or five hundred miles and you might want a few different pairs for on-road, off-road & Sunday best.

LEUKAEMIA

Some of you may already be aware that Keith Harris, a club member and regular rider and runner, was diagnosed with Leukaemia at the end of last summer. In the following piece he tells us about how it has affected him, the treatment he is receiving and the work of the Anthony Nolan Trust. The following was written in early March.

Hi all, just thought I'd update people as it's been an up and down 6 months since my initial diagnosis.

Some of you might remember I was diagnosed with CML and the outlook was pretty good, a few pills, a few tests here and there and pretty much life as normal. However, I've had a number of problems with the drugs either not working as well as they should and some side effects like awful muscle, bone and joint pain oh and some eye sight problems too. A lot of the time I was pretty good, I worked sometimes and got some DIY done at home, I even got a few rides in with a mate and felt so good for them. So after months off and on a number of drugs trying to get on an even keel it's all change.

I was having another bout of bone pain at the end of February so came in to hospital to get things checked out. After some tests including another bone marrow aspiration, comparing blood slides from the past few weeks it seems my leukaemia has mutated again and I now have ALL which has been a huge bombshell. <http://www.macmillan.org.uk/Cancerinformation/Cancertypes/Leukaemiaacuteleukemia/ALL.aspx>

I was allowed home for the night to sort a few things out see my wife and son before being admitted the next morning. So I've been here for over a month now, I've got my own room (which I've rarely been able to leave) and bathroom. I'm all set up here with a TV, music iPad etc. and have loads of friends and family visiting most days but being cooped up has been tough. The hardest thing is my son (2.5 yo) can't visit me, so it's Skype only.

I've had one round of chemo already which was not too bad, a bit like a bad hangover for a week, sickness, headaches off food etc. not terrible but unpleasant. I've just got over a pretty rough week post chemo though as I got a nasty infection and also got pneumonia, I just managed to avoid ITU. They were visiting and testing me every few hours for a couple of days before I started to improve before ITU outreach discharged me.

So it's going to be a rough year or two until I'm cured, there are a few sort of silver linings like with cml it was going to be life long treatment/testing etc. albeit fairly simple and pain free but after more chemo and a Bone marrow transplant (thankfully my brother is a donor match) I'll be cured for good which will be great. Just have to hope for no long term side effects from the treatments, fingers crossed.

My employers have been very supportive and helpful but full sick pay probably won't last the full time I'm going to need off, they've not sent me down the normal sick new route or required sick notes so who knows, they may stick with me the full course. They've been good so far.

So much time to think here.

Any of you local guys who know me are welcome to drop in, no visiting times here as such just come whenever, email/txt or something to make sure I'm feeling ok, there are going to be bad days ahead and possibly periods of stricter isolation. I should be home soon for a week or so break before my next round of chemo, which I'm so looking forward to.

I've always been a blood donor and even did platelet donations for years too and been on the Anthony Nolan BM register. So I don't feel so guilty about the bags and bags of blood and platelets that I've needed, maybe karma's kicked in with my brother being a match too, which simplified things a lot (match odds for him are only 25%). If he wasn't a match I'd have been hoping for a match on a uk or international register, the odds as I'm white British are about 95% which is pretty good.

I'm sure some of you are blood donors, but if not could ask you to consider donating and/or joining the the Anthony Nolan register or one of the other BM registers.

For those that think BM donation it's a nasty procedure, it's not, not any more. All they do now is give you an injection to promote stem cell growth, wait a few days then it's similar to just giving blood. One needle in your arm for an hour or two and it'll go into a machine separate off what they need and give you the rest back. Very simple and very low risk with next to no time were off work or anything, a big step forward from years ago when it was more intrusive and painful.

Anyway if any of you would consider joining a register or donating blood that it'd be amazing.

Tough times ahead but I'm going to fight with everything I've got. I've got too much to live for.

Thanks either way if you stuck with my ramble, I hope it makes some kind of sense.



££ 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.

24th May - Cyclists Fighting Cancer Cotswolds Sportive.

Keith and Daniel Whitten will be riding in the 100 mile event and hoping to raise some money for cancer charities. It will be Daniel's longest ride to date and most likely a severe test of the father-son relationship.

14th June - Merida Summer Monkey

This cross country event has 1, 2, 4, and 6 hour options as well as incorporating the first round of the UK Fatbike Series and having a dedicated Singlespeed category. The singlespeeders get to race 4 hours and the Fatties 3. I guess those fatties need an easier ride! See www.meridabrassmonkeys.com for more details.

26th to 28th June - Pass'portes du Soleil

The 12th running of this 'Grand Randonné' in the French Alps will take place in late June 2015. Entry will open on the 13th February or thereabouts. You don't need to be a downhill monster to do this as the circuit can be easily completed on trails no more difficult than an average British red route. The views are however far more stunning than you'll get at any British trail centre.

25th and 26th July - Bontrager Twentyfour12

A number of club members will be competing in this event with options of 12 or 24 hours for teams or soloists. See www.twentyfour12.com for more details.

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.

Cyclists Fighting Cancer Sportive

As mentioned opposite I will be riding the 100mile option of this event with my 13 year old son Daniel. We are raising money for both CFC's own charity helping children with cancer and Macmillan Cancer Care at the suggestion of my wife Annette who has been receiving treatment for breast cancer for the last year and a half.

If you would like to help us meet our target of £250 please go to
www.justgiving.com/Keith-and-Dan-Whitten

All donations will be very gratefully received.

Race Results

No one appears to have gone racing over the winter this year!

Next Time in Newforce

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

And photos to show too.

Please send them to me at keith@perfectbalancecycles.co.uk

Reader's Bikes

Tim Wheeler's Salsa Spearfish

The Salsa Spearfish is my bike for bumpy trails. To be honest the El-Mariachi Ti hardtail is my favourite bike for all the club rides in The Forest and Winchester, but can be hard work on the faster, bumpier trails in the Brecons, Purbecks, and Rivington in Lancashire. I'm a total convert to 29 inch wheels; I don't do 'drop-offs' or 'Air', so the Spearfish with its simple, minimal maintenance, 80mm rear travel design seemed the logical choice for my style of riding. Another factor was that frequently there were used frames for sale online.

The bright orange frame and the white Stans Arch rims were Ebay purchases. I don't favour brightly coloured, attention-grabbing bikes, but I like a bargain, so I donned my dark glasses, bit the bullet, and handed over the money. The white Fox fork in the pic has been replaced with an unlovely tapered 100mm Reba. This freed-up the straight steerer Fox for the older El-Mariachi head tube. The drive-chain is a mixture XT and SLX – it all works well. The original shock was a Rockshox Monarch with no lock-out or platform feature. I've had no complaints, but I recently picked up a Fox RP23 which I've yet to try out. I'm hoping it'll be a better all round shock and the platform will firm up the rear when out of the saddle or on tarmac. Time will tell.

The Spearfish doesn't have the lively and joyous ride feel of the El-Mar Ti, but having said that, it is pretty decent, and gets the job done. It came to Wales for the first time last October and I can tell you that it went up and down the bumpy Brinmore Tramway and Talybont trails with considerably more comfort than the Ti hardtail did. Its short travel cross-country geometry were shown up when descending 'The Gap' trail into Brecon though. My buddy Mr. Nigel (riding his fancy 140mm Santa Cruz) left me way behind as I dragged my brakes and winced (did you mean to write *minced*? - Ed) all the way down.

Perhaps I've damned the Spearfish with faint praise, but the fact is I've been spoiled for bikes. The titanium hardtail is always going to be superior on smooth Hampshire trails, and the Spearfish can't compete with a longer travel trail bike on fast bumpy downhills. To be honest, the Spearfish is versatile. It rides comfortably on trails which would feel brutal on a hardtail, and it will out-distance a 150mm trail bike on smoother trails. It's a 'Ronseal' bike: it does exactly what it says on the tin (and that's 'All Day Marathon Bike').

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.



