

NEWFORCE

Autumn 2016 Issue 141





The Isle of Wight ride fast Group 18th Sept

Clockwise from top left:

1. I'm going to need some help with this
2. I think the hangover's finally gone
3. Please tell me this is the last climb



Editorial

By Keith Whitten

Well wasn't that good then! A dry and often warm summer that started early and hung on well into September. My own personal measure, how many times I've ridden down to Milford on sea for a swim, suggests it's been one of the best in recent years. Many of the club rides have coincided with the best of the weather as can be seen in most of the photos in this issue.

Unfortunately whatever the weather does in the next few weeks, I won't be riding in it. Towards the end of the Isle of Wight ride I let enthusiasm overtake ability on a descent through the woods and made a bit of a mess of taking off from a small jump. I made an even bigger mess of the landing and am now nursing a broken rib. The usual joke to accompany such an injury is that 'it only hurts when you laugh'. Well that's not completely true. It hurts to cough, sneeze or do anything that involves breathing deeply. Or involves twisting or turning your upper body. Oh well, hopefully the rest will do me good and in a month or so I'll be fit, fresh and raring to go.

Thanks to Martin Wheat's research we now know that at the end of April next year the club will be celebrating it's 25th anniversary. See his piece in this issue for more on how our club was started. If any of you have any ideas on the best way to mark that occasion please pass them on to any of the committee. It should probably involve riding our bikes somewhere in the Forest. And maybe drinking a beer or two.

The next issue will as last year, take the form of a calendar for the forthcoming year and should be with you before the end of December so if you have any photos you are particularly proud of please pass them on to me. Any snowy or frosty scenes for the winter months will be particularly welcome. If you would like a spare copy or two to give to a biking friend please let me know.

Your Committee

Committee meetings are held on the second Tuesday of every third month at the New Forest Inn at Emery Down. All club members are welcome to attend and raise any points or questions.

Chairman	Roger Shephard roger.shephard@newforce.org.uk 02380 392696	
Secretary	Sue Marsland susanm@newforce.org.uk	
Membership Secretary	Allan Knight allank@neforce.org.uk	
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Newsletter Editor	Keith Whitten keith@perfectbalancecycles.co.uk	
Website Editor	James Davenport james_davenport@hotmail.com	
Other Committee Members	Ian Taylor John Hawkins Linda Hawkins Eleanor Rutter Dean Johnson Clive French	Steve Keith Malcolm (Max) Streeton Stu Rogers Karen Clark Nick Clark

Robin Knight -- stepped down as of June 2016
Ashley Denham -- stepped down as of June 2016

Club Policy & Ride Aims

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

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

We organise regular rides, fortnightly on Sundays and weekly on weekday evenings.

We organise multi day trips to other areas to experience some of the best riding this country has to offer.

Full conditions of membership and how to join are published on the club website under the 'The Club' tab.

Membership Fees

Individual	1 year £15.00	2 years £27.50	5 years £65.00
Family	1 year £22.50	2 years £40.00	5 years £90.00

Riding With Us

Anyone who is competent on a bike is welcome to ride with us although we would politely request that you become a member if you ride with us more than twice.

Cycle helmets are compulsory on all club rides.

Please dress appropriately for the likely weather conditions.

You are advised to bring a drink, particularly on warm days

Ensure you are equipped to deal with punctures, preferably by carrying a spare inner tube or two. Mud and patches aren't a great combination.

Check that your bike is in good working order before the start of a ride eg no cracks in the frame, splits in the tyres, worn out brakes etc.

Finally, please carry emergency contact details — just in case something a little unplanned happens.

Our Organised Sunday Rides

Planned Sunday ride venues are published on the club website and in the newsletter. They generally follow the pattern of two in the New Forest area and one outside, anywhere within an hour's drive from Southampton. A short description of the likely route will be included along with the designated pub or cafe for post ride socialising.

Rides will aim to leave at 10am unless otherwise stated. Most are planned to finish by 1pm but a few will be designated 'all day rides' with a stop for refreshments part way round.

The ride locations are set at committee meetings and if you know anywhere good to ride in the local area that you think we have neglected please tell us.

To aid finding the start location we recommend using **www.streetmap.co.uk** along with the grid reference supplied.

The Sunday rides usually attract enough riders to split into two or three groups dependent on ability and enthusiasm.

The Club Newsletter

The club newsletter is published quarterly, usually a few weeks after each committee meeting. All contributions written or photographic are very welcome, indeed essential for it to keep going. If any ride has stood out for you in terms of enjoyment, triumph over adversity or something unexpected that has happened, please write a little about it and send it to the editor. If you participate in any other sports or hobbies please tell us all about them via the newsletter. In short, anything that might be a topic of conversation in the pub or café is worth putting into print and telling the rest of the club. The club is as much about socialising with like-minded people as it is about riding bikes so the newsletter content is most certainly not restricted to just biking stories.

The Evening Ride Groups

The evening rides are generally smaller, typically 4 to 10 persons and at some point long, long ago we adopted the 'curry scale' to grade the various groups:

Vindaloo.

A fast paced, strenuous Thursday night ride with no avoiding the more challenging terrain and obstacles, usually with a fairly lengthy pub stop and a late return.

Madras.

This name has been recently revived by a group basing themselves to the north of the New Forest and typically riding on occasional Wednesday evenings for 2 to 3 hours at an enthusiastic pace. Details can be found on the bulletin board.

Jalfrezi.

This group rides on Thursdays from various locations in the southern and mid Hampshire area usually with a brief mid-ride stop for cake consumption and a social in the pub afterwards. Pub stops mid-ride have been banned from this group by decree. Ride lengths are from 2 to 4 hours dependent on weather, ground conditions and how lost they get. Start locations are usually published on the bulletin board on the Monday before.

Tikka Masala

A shorter, tamer version of the Jalfrezi. See the bulletin board for the start location each week.

Korma.

Usually Tuesday nights. A shorter steadier ride with more emphasis on enjoying the scenery and company than breaking records or shredding the gnarr. Start locations will be posted on the bulletin board.

Autumn and Winter Rides List

Sunday 02 October 2016

Abbotts Well

(ref SU 177 129)

Designated pub: the Foresters Arms is ¼mile along the road from the car park.

Abbotts Well is nicely situated on the western end of the Hampton Ridge path leading to Fritham and the north edge of Stoney Cross. At Fritham it is possible to double back through Sloden Inclosure and via Splash Bridge pick up on Linwood and Ibsley Common before circling northwards to return.

The other start option is to head north through Blissford and Godshill to take in some of the stickier tracks on offer in the Godshill Inclosure near Woodgreen and onwards to Hale, then perhaps a return through Hamptworth to Bramshaw Telegraph. From here it would be a route through Eyeworth Pond, Fritham and Hampton Ridge to get back to Abbots Well.

Sunday 16 October 2016

Whiteways Lodge roundabout on A29 north west of Arundel (ref TQ001 108)

Designated pub: probably the café in the car park (there might be some big motorbikes to look at as well because it is a popular rendezvous for the Sunday morning biking fraternity– i.e. middle-aged men in leather, not Hell's Angels)

This is at the top end of Fairmile Bottom where the road splits to either drop down Bury Hill heading north or down into Amberley heading north east. As such, it is on one of the node points of the SDW so you can expect grand views from the top of the ridges and swift descents followed by grinding back up again. It's chalk territory so a bit slippery in the wet, but superfast in the dry. Well worth a visit.

Sunday 30 October 2016 Cranborne Garden Centre
(ref SU 054 129)

Designated post-ride pub: the Garden Centre has a nice tea room but if it's a pub you want, there are a couple of good ones in the middle of the town just a few hundred yards away.

The club has ridden from Cranborne quite a few times now and on the last two visits we used the Manor House car park when the Garden Centre accommodated us. However, the Garden Centre is under new ownership so we need to check if they will still accommodate us. If the answer is yes, then it's no problem, we just park as far up the end of the car park as we can to allow garden shoppers to park near the retail outlet. If the answer is no they will not have us, then we will find alternative parking and publish the details on the forum, so keep your eyes open for confirmation of yes, it's the garden centre or no, it's off-site somewhere close.

If they don't do this again, then we'll sort out some alternative parking on the day. There are some good hills and interesting tracks in all directions out of Cranborne so an interesting ride is assured.

Sunday 13 November 2016 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 other popular Thursday points of interest. After all that exertion we will probably want to have a refreshing drink in The Happy Cheese.

Sunday 27 November 2016
(ref SU 420 292)

Farley Mount, Middle car park

Designated pub: The Dolphin in 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 11 December 2016 James Hill car park, followed by Christmas lunch at the New Forest Inn Christmas ride and lunch
(ref SU 283 083)

Designated pub: The New Forest Inn, Emery Down – Christmas lunch. (Pub @ SU286 084)

The best start point is the car park just 1/4 mile along the road from the pub in the direction of the Portuguese Fireplace. It has worked alright for us each time we have ridden from here because parking is at a premium at the pub. We simply leave the cars where they are and walk along the road. Starting from here we have a choice of the Reptilliary, Rhinefield, Bolderwood, Burley, Minstead and so on; all good stuff and just right for working up an appetite.

**Monday 26 December 2016 Garnier Road Park & Ride, Winchester
(ref SU 487 281)**

Designated post-ride pub: The Queen Inn, Kingsgate Road.

We have ridden from here a few times now on the Boxing Day ride, shaking off the turkey and other excesses. It can be quite cold and more than once we have had to endure sub-zero temperatures, so be sure to arrive prepared for a Spartan experience. There are a number of options from this starting point but it is possible to ride 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. Or, if our local guides choose to take us in the other direction, it will be Compton Down, the fringes of Flowerdown, West Wood Farley and other points of note.

Whichever route we end up taking, the Queen Inn offers a warm welcome on our return.

**Sunday 08 January 2017 Royal Oak pub, 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 Slufsters and back across Stoney Cross to Minstead.

Sunday 22 January 2017 Burley (opposite cricket pitch)
(ref SU 214 028)

Designated pub: Queen's Head in the centre of the village

Castle Hill is always a good choice for the energetic ones, whilst the old railway line beckons for those who want a gentler ride. For those who want a change, then Bisterne Common offers an escape from the usual New Forest tracks. All these options have reasonably good surfaces where the seasonal weather does not bring too many disadvantages to progress. It is possible to take in Dur Hill where it forms a perimeter track right on the edge of the Forest boundary but this will be slow going. In the other direction, there lies the chance of Burley Outer Rails tracks and onwards to Bolderwood; these tracks of course are typical Inclosure gravel surfaces which will roll reasonably well.

Sunday 05 February 2017 Three Legged Cross pub, near Verwood
(ref SU 096 051)

Designated pub: Three Legged Cross Inn

This is a new-ish starting point for the club, in lieu of the cramped parking at Bakers Hanging on the road to Verwood from Ringwood. However there have been a few Jalfrezi style outings starting from here. You will find the start location by taking the road to Three Legged Cross and the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate in close by the entrance to the Moors Valley Country Park. We will use the Woolsbridge Industrial Estate on-street kerbside parking. The turning into the industrial estate is at SU 096 051. Although the plan is to visit the Three Legged Cross Inn after the ride, please do not use the pub car park and abandon your car for 3 hours, it will be frowned upon by the pub management.

The intention is to ride the usual mix of tracks in the Ringwood Forest environs.

Sunday 19 February 2017 Linford Bottom near Ringwood (ref SU 182 072)

I had to go back to 2014 and before that 2008 to find the last times we rode from here. If you are coming from the Southampton direction, take the A31 westwards all the way to Ringwood. At the bottom of Poulner Hill you take the slip road off and turn back towards Southampton, get on the eastbound side of the dual carriageway and go back up Poulner Hill again. When you get almost to the top of the hill, there is a nursery/garden centre on the left. Go past this and then take the next turn left onto a narrow side road to head towards Hangersley and Shobley and ultimately to the car park at Linford Bottom. The routes available are across Rockford Common, Linwood, Ibsley Common and on towards Abbots Well or perhaps southwards via the underpass at Picket Post towards Burley Street, Dur Hill, Bisterne Common and Holmsley.

A dry period will give you a mixture of rutted horse –hoof stutter or dry sand that challenges directional control and needs a good push on the pedals whereas a wet, soggy period will give you a squelching, slippery track surface or a gritty grinding paste guaranteed to make you rush to the shop for new brake pads next morning. You will also need to pedal with a bit more vigour over this terrain. This early in the year there is no guaranteeing which way the dice will fall.

Sunday 05 March 2017 Hatchet Pond near Beaulieu (ref SU 369 017)

Designated pub: Turfcutters Arms

This is Hatchet Pond itself, not the model aircraft car park. This location can take us around the perimeter track of the old airfield, perhaps taking in Diltons Farm without getting up to our axles in mud and other unspeakable mixtures of slurry. There is a loop via Beaulieu around the fringes of Langley, Blackfield, Holbury and Hardley before turning southwards and heading back towards Hatchet Moor or if neither of those routes takes your fancy, there's always Hawkhill, Ladycross, Woodfidley and Denny Lodge on the north side of the B3055 road (the road between Beaulieu and Brockenhurst).

Newcomers might enjoy this ride location, there are no major hills to contend with (well I don't think so, but that's just my view) and the tracks are mostly well surfaced.

Sunday 19 March 2017 Bishops Waltham, Dukes Mill car park
(ref SU 554 176)

Designated pub: TBA

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 02 April 2017 Rufus Stone
(ref SU 270 127)

Designated pub: probably not The Sir Walter Tyrell. More likely The Green Dragon at Brook

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

Sunday 16 April 2017 Goodwood – all day ride
(ref SU 896 113)

Designated pub: Lunch stop

This has been last used in September 2013 so is overdue a visit. There is plenty of parking at the map reference; it is a popular barbecue/picnic spot. More to the point, there are lots of trails around Singleton, Charlton and East Dean with opportunities to take in large chunks of the South Downs Way around the Graffham Down and Bignor Hill districts. Lunch will be taken in during the course of the ride but the venue has yet to be decided, as has the actual route.

Sunday 30 April 2017 Martin , car park
(ref SU 058 193)

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. 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.

Hints and tips: Can be slippery on the chalky Cranbourne Chase tracks but other tracks will hold up well especially the ones along the ridges.

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.

22nd-23rd October 2016

Newforce Surrey Hills weekend

At the time of writing there are still overnight places available. Alternatively it would be quite possible to leave home early and just join the gang for either of the days riding. See the message board for more details.

13 November 2016

New Forest MTB XC

This will be a 2 hour cross country race held at Avon Tyrrell Actiity Centre.

There will be prizes for highest placed male and female riders, also fatbike and singlespeed categories. See www.british-cycling.org.uk/events for entry details.

January 2017

Entries Open for Uptonogood, which will take place in late June.

This event is billed as a celebration of mountain biking and has a variety of signposted rides through the North Wessex Downs followed by a party with beer, cider and live music.

Spring 2017

SSEC2017 will be held in Scotland.

We don't know exactly where or when yet but if the organisers can do anywhere near as good a job as the Slovenians did this year it'll be one not to miss. You won't even need a real singlespeed. Bikes can be converted for the weekend or just bodged with gaffer tape. That's how it was in Slovenia.

September 2017

SingleSpeed UK will be held up in the Lake District. This one's promised to be a 'back to basics' event with some riding, a party with plenty of beer and basic camping facilities ie, a tap in a field.



Above: Lee Quarry

Below and overleaf: More from the Wilton Ride









Two Countries, Three Ferries, Several Beaches.

By Robin Knight

Local radio station, Wave 105, were advertising a big day out. In conjunction with Brittany Ferries, the offer was a cheap day in France. Ashley thought it would be nice to have a day in France with his wife, but she found her passport had expired. So he resorted to asking the Vindaloos!

I was the only person available, so we booked ourselves and bikes onto the Fastcat from Portsmouth to Cherbourg and back for the bargain price of £28. The timings would give us about eight hours in France to explore.

Ashley spent a fair amount of time in the week leading up to the trip studying maps to find a route we could ride, and as fatbikers, this needed to include a fair bit of beach. We also had the issue of getting to and from Portsmouth. Craig was asked if he would mind dropping us off at the ferry port on the Saturday morning, and being the really nice friend he is, he said yes. Then we mentioned we needed to check in at 06.45... Pick us up at 05.45 on your day off please Craig! He did.

Cycles have to check in with the cars, so we lined up as the sun was just beginning to show itself, checked in and were ushered through to security. Two blokes on fatbikes roused either suspicion or interest from Border Control – we are not sure. We were taken to a shed, asked a load of questions (mainly about the bikes!) strip searched, x-rayed and let on our way. It seemed a little odd as we were only in shorts and t-shirts. Our bikes had well stuffed frame bags that were ignored!

Once on the Fastcat we found a seat close to the front bar and settled in for the 3 hour crossing. As we set sail the Captain warned of a choppy sea. This makes for an interesting motion on the ship that seems to affect around 50% of the travellers! We settled down with a superb breakfast of packaged sandwich and Fosters. Most around us used the little white moisture resistant bags! This caused us much amusement!

Arriving in France we quickly jumped the queue and shot through Border Control. Ashley had planned a route west along the coast from Cherbourg with a slim hope of making it to the tiny port Omonville-La-Rouge. We would need to cross Cherbourg first, and a tarmac cycle path took us all the way avoiding the traffic mainly.

A short while after disembarking the ship we rolled onto the first bit of beach. The sand seemed somewhat exotic, different, exciting and empty! The morning was warm and sunny but there was hardly a soul in sight! Beaming smiles filled our faces as we raced down the beach, weaving occasionally to leave interesting tracks in the sand. We found our way round a couple of small headlands before heading down the final bit of beach towards two large objects Google Maps had shown on

the beach

About a mile away we could see these large objects, it wasn't until we were quite close we realised we had just stumbled across a fallen Millennium Falcon from the Star Wars movies! Really rather cool!

This was the end of the beach. The rest of the route would take us along a cliff path. First we needed to ride a long steep hill to the start of this path. Arriving at the top, a stunning view point, we could clearly see a path for several miles leading to the port of Omonville-La-Rouge in the far distance, and lunch at a little bar / pizzeria google maps is showing. The path looked undulating, twisty and fun. It was all three!

Rocky descents that reminded us of the Quantock hills, steep ascents, little bridges over streams and nothing flat at all for around 5 miles. It's a shame we shouldn't have been cycling on this path according to the signs, but it was absolutely superb! Even towards the end as it started to rain, we couldn't stop the grins that started several hours before.

On reaching Omonville-La-Rouge, we quickly located our intended stop, now a rather fancy fish restaurant full of suited Saturday diners! We opted to sit outside under a small canopy nearly large enough to keep the now persistent rain off and enjoy a couple of ice cold Kronenberg's and a large bowl of frites. Watching a rain radar, we planned our departure carefully. Our route back would follow our route out exactly. We had three and a half hours before we needed to check in for our return Fastcat. It had taken three hours to get to Omonville-La-Rouge! Not much room for error, or dinner!

The rain had left the trail rather wet, and the showing rocks slippery. This added to the fun of the ride. We found some of the little, steep, rocky ascents on the way out impossible to ride. These became slippery, fun, rideable descents on the way back. This whole route had a better flowing feel in the return direction, something highlighted by the time taken.

Re-tracing our wheel rotations along the beaches, just a bit closer to land due to a higher tide, we sped along with a now brisk tailwind. On the outskirts of Cherbourg that wind brought the next batch of rain. Crossing the town towards the side of the ferry port, we got soaked through. So we found a small bar / pizzeria and had a beer and a pizza, with time to spare after our rapid ride back. Light rain was falling as we made our way to the Fastcat, we had nearly run out of dry clothes! Hang some on the bikes for the 3 hour crossing was the plan, as we needed some for the trip home. Unfortunately all the inside bike leaning areas had been filled with motorcycles, so our prized fatbikes were left uncovered at the rear of the ship by the dustbins – nowhere to dry clothes, so we took them inside! The handrails turned into clothes lines.

The crossing was smooth, it seemed most of the passengers had seen us riding at some point and wanted to chat about the bikes (as normal for fatbikers!) and

the bar served a very nice chilled beer. After a fabulous day we were almost looking forward to the next part of our journey – the ride home from Portsmouth!

Once again Ashley had a route planned to perfection. Ferry terminal to Gunwharf, catch the third ferry of the day to Gosport, round the military bit, onto the beach to Warsash, (with a stop for a beach side kebab at Lee-On-The-Solent), along the path to Bursledon, down into Hamble, beach to Woolston, over the Itchen bridge and back into Southampton.

The route is great, the majority we have ridden in stages in the past. Not attempted as one ride, especially departing Portsmouth at 22.30 after a long ride in France! And the strong wind blowing in from the west..... not ideal!

We just missed the Gosport ferry and had to queue up for 15 minutes with a load of rather drunk Welshmen at the end of a night in Portsmouth before finally taking our third and final ferry of the day. A quick blip on the road and we dropped onto the gravel beach. The tide was out, but this didn't really help. My legs were screaming, my head was in denial, all I wanted was a taxi, but having spent a fortune on French priced beer, I had to continue to ride. Pick a gear, turn the pedals, repeat.

It took around an hour to reach the kebab stop at Lee-On-The-Solent. I was glad of the rest, but really needed a sleep rather than food! Kebab eaten, we set off again into the headwind. At least we had left the rain in France, and the night was pleasantly warm!

Finally we rode into Warsash. During the day there is a little pink ferry to nip you (and bikes!) over to Hamble, but not at one o'clock in the morning, as it was then! We had to follow a path alongside the river all the way up to the A27 at Bursledon before dropping back down to Hamble. This seemed like miles, and wasn't helped by a diversion into a dark boatyard with very little signage!

Rolling into Hamble, we knew this was the final stretch, a route along the beach we ride regularly, and one I had had a crash on just ten days before! Then it happened. 2am and Ashley had a puncture. We were both rather tired, knew we were about an hour from home, and as Ashley changed his tube, conscious we were being watched! Someone in a house nearby was standing in a porch, with a yapping dog just staring at us! Must have been the sight of the fatbikes!

Sometime later the Itchen Bridge loomed, tall, steep and unforgiving. The last hill on my ride home, this needed to be completed. It was. Southampton was relatively quiet, except for the occasional person, and the noise from a late night club as we trundled through at about 3am.

I finally got in at 3.20am, Ashley reporting an arrival about 15 minutes later.

It was a truly epic, exciting, fun, and knackered day (and night) out. Sign me up for the next one!

Selborne half-day ride

(4th September)

By Paul Berry

Maybe you've heard of "The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne" even though it was written over 200 years ago. Gilbert White is celebrated as the world's first ecologist. He raised awareness of the richly varied wildlife and bird population, including the Great Bustard which we'll mention later.

More importantly he spotted the richly varied MTB opportunities ... "The soils of this district are almost as various and diversified as the views and aspects. The high part consists of a vast hill of chalk, rising three hundred feet above the village."

Well the plan was to nip round a 30km circuit which would be reasonably dry after the long hot summer. In practice our British summer had recently delivered a massive downpour, so there was no shortage of fresh mud. Tree roots are more interesting when they're wet and slippery, especially when adjacent to a long drop down a steep hill.

Local landowners added a bit of spice with stern Keep Out signs across our route. Just near Oakshott the bridleway ended at a stile with a stiff warning to keep to marked footpaths. Dutifully obedient we found the path led into a field with no exit. Twelve bikers fanned out across the field scouring fences for signs of a stile. Turns out the path was re-routed along a narrow path with barbed wire each side and head-high nettles in between. At the end, a sign facing the other way announced Footpath Closed. Well thank you very much, you Great Bustard.

Riding up a steep chalky track turned into a rock-climbing expedition. The pot-holes were deep enough to swallow some riders, so it was a cautious search for toe-holds on the greasy chalk, passing bikes to one another. Then at the crest we met a convoy of 4x4's coming the other way. So that explains the hu-uge pot-holes.

Yet despite the setbacks and stop-starts, it was an interesting and fun ride. Somehow all the challenges made it a bit of an adventure. On a clockwise circuit of the country around Selborne Hanger (that vast hill of chalk) we had gorgeous views across East Hampshire, about 500m of ascent, fast sweeping descents through woodland, picturesque cottages and villages, cautious slow rocky descents, and the Selborne Arms at the finishing line.

Many thanks to Sue for organising and leading. It really was like herding cats at times.

New FORCE origins

By Martin Wheat

Part 2 – Why and how the club began.

While it is hard to be precise about many of the details from so long ago, some things are clear.

19th Feb. 1992: An article in the Echo notes riders of mountain bikes being ‘up in arms’ against a ban on cycling in the Forest - that the Forestry Commission (FC) had decided to apply to cyclists the by-law banning two-wheeled vehicles, who would have to stay on gravel tracks (135 miles of them) or face prosecution and a maximum fine of £100. Erosion from the ‘cutting action of rough tread tyres’ was quoted as the reason, and the FC would be erecting ‘no cycling’ signs at ‘pressure points and main road entrances to the Forest’. It also commented that the ban was “the first major row between the conflicting ‘access versus conservation’ lobbies since (national) park-status was announced”.

“Cycling on Forest Roads Only” signs appeared at the road entry points to the Forest and “no cycling” from some car parks.

Among us cyclists there was a strong sense of outrage at the evident unfairness of the ban, singling out just one recreation group on the grounds of their damage. This long predates the (patchy) habit of dog-walkers collecting pooches poos, and the impact of shod hooves was obvious – three fox-hunts a week thundered through the forest in their season, and a heavy hunter is the only thing I have ever seen capable of carving into the surface of a gravel track.

April '92: Anthony Pasmore, a verderer, remarks in his Lymington Times “New Forest Notes” that contrary to their earlier inactivity on addressing the damage being done by mountain bikers, the Forestry Commission (FC) have erected signs at the road entry points to the Forest, but complains that there is no enforcement.

Charlie Smith, resident in New Milton with a lifelong history of cycling in the Forest, was alerted through social contacts and visited Arthur Barlow, Deputy Surveyor (the local head) of the FC to find out what was meant. Charlie understood that the “Forest Roads” are forestry access tracks for timber extraction, and are sometimes just loops in the woods offering little joy to riders. They have nothing to do with the traditional routes through the forest connecting villages and isolated dwellings, though in places they may coincide. He soon contacted the British Mountain Biking Federation and quickly became its local access officer.

Under the banner of the BMBF, Charlie organised an open meeting for cyclists with the intention of forming a local off-road cycling club to negotiate with the Forestry Commission. How we learnt about it is unclear, but articles in the

Lymington Times (on the day and probably also previously) and the Echo, and word of mouth through cycle retailers and their customers played their part.

On **30th April 1992** at that 7:30pm meeting in the Linden Hall of Lyndhurst's Community Centre, **your club began**.

A committee was formed. Bridget White took the chair, with Jacqui Green; Neil Rivers; Richard Vickery; Hilary Babbs and Warren Slevin taking Secretary, treasurer, race officer, social officer and events organiser respectively. There were seven others without portfolio, and Charlie Smith took on Access Officer duties.

The main aims were agreed:

- Negotiate with the Forestry Commission for cyclists' right of access to the New Forest;
- Organise and promote all types of cycling events, not necessarily in the forest: family rides; trials competitions; races;
- Represent cyclists' interests in future discussions with the FC or any other authoritative body;
- Once the right of access to the forest is gained, actively promote compliance to the terms, with all cyclists, so as not to jeopardise any future negotiations.

The fledgling club gave itself a catchy name: "New Forest Off Road Cyclists"
Bridget gave her address for membership applications.

On May 9th, the Lymington Times reported that 'over 200 cyclists' had attended and gave Bridget's address for membership applications.

The new committee met every other week and quickly produced a membership application form and a publicity flyer. Membership cost £2.50 for individuals and £5 for a household. Other aspects that mark the time as belonging to a different era are that the telephone STD codes (oh! That is "Subscriber Trunk Dialling") for Southampton and New Milton were 0703 and 0425 respectively. We distributed application forms in stamped (18p for 2nd class - now 64p, in case you didn't know) envelopes, and received subscriptions as personal cheques by mail. The newsletter was the only way we distributed information.

The first newsletter refers to the club as "New FORC" and told us that:

- over 70 memberships were paid in the first two months;
- Charlie had been presenting the FC with link paths across varied terrain, and they are slowly becoming more aware, but there is a long way to go;
- at a meeting with Roger Brake, the FC Recreation Manager, he told us that the New Forest had been under review running up to 1990, and a decision to make conservation the priority above recreation and forestry; that recreation had

to be controlled; that the explosion of mountain biking made them an obvious target, followed by dog walkers and equestrians as a slow third; that government and the verderers exert powerful influence;

- a race event in the Ringwood area is organised for 27th September.

All in all, a very promising start, but cycle access to the Forest was to become far more precarious.

To be continued.....

Three Trail Centres In Three Weeks

By Pete Dobson

My only definite plan this summer was I might get to do one trail at Brechfa on the way to the family holiday in West Wales. However I'd spent pretty much all of last summer, and most of the time up until this spring, recovering from a knee injury and I fancied a bit more! I'd loosely decided on a trip to Cwmcarn (as it was nearer than Afan) two weeks before Brechfa and thought nothing of all this until I found myself going up-North in the intervening week too - hence a trail center in a different part of the country each week for three weeks!

Cwmcarn

Traditionally a stop off for me on the way to other places in South Wales, I've been quite a lot, but none of that this year and now with its two trails, it made sense as a day trip. Having done it last time as Twrch then Cafall (for Strava-ing purposes, i.e. tackle the stages I'd already done with fresh legs, and lay down times to beat with tired ones), with no gap in between and the nightmares of leg-cramps and running out of water, I figured the other way round (and also the generally agreed best way) would be better and to have lunch in-between.

Leaving the M4 I drove through an unexpected rain storm, not such a promising start, and the place was oddly quiet too - not many mountain bikers or non-locals there, and food and parking seemed very cheap. But I set off and got to experience and enjoy Cafall properly this time, turns out it is a great classic Welsh trail after all, better and more natural feeling than Twrch and less obviously polarized between climb and descent. After lunch I started the Twrch, my legs this time feeling it on the relentless rocky climb. However, soon, things were starting to look a bit different - the trees had gone, it almost felt like a new trail.

With the climb eventually out the way, there was the black freeride section, the fun blast along the top of the hill next to the Scenic Drive, and then the push up the concrete ramp to... horror, a sign saying the final descent was closed! Although I'd been a past a sign at the bottom I don't think it would have helped me and it wasn't on any website either. Much disappointment, and down on the road, and what a lot of descending it was too. Eventually you can pick up the very last part but little consolation. With another downpour, no uplift running anymore on Wednesdays, I went home but on the bright side at least I wasn't still defeated by Cafall. I've since read about all this by the way, it looks like the tree disease and the closure of the Scenic Drive have left Cwmcarn in a bad way.

Lee Quarry

The next week at work, I unexpectedly found myself being summoned Leeds on my own. My parents live in Blackburn, just drivable from Leeds, so I could happily go and I wouldn't even need a hotel, I'd just need the whole of the next day off to go mountain biking as well as get home! I'd normally opt for the more traditional trail center thrills of Gisburn Forest but that was the wrong direction, and the other local spot is Lee Quarry which is not a traditional trail center any means - it's a barren rocky place with lots of trails, berms etc., a vague short "red" trail signposted round it, some black sections that really do mean Black, and an optional second quarry called "Cragg" a long slog over the moors. It's mainly about having fun, and given the terrain there's no very complicated decisions over what tyres, or whether to wear padding!

This time I as much research as possible, and indeed there are warnings (loss of funding, a landslide on the final descent no less!) but figuring I knew the place, they didn't sound so terrible.

So I went, and a surprisingly nice sunny calm day too (it's known for being grim and windy and I can certainly vouch for that!). Playing it safe (er.. as usual) I just followed the red signs, blasting round the familiar berms and chicken-runs next to the blacks, and did the optional detour to Cragg Quarry. Once you've got found it (not so obvious if I'm honest), it's another trail on top of a mountain, quite fun but pretty much relentless little hills and tables and berms. Back down though and the wedge shaped rocks by the side of the climb are for jumping, someone has even painted happy or sad faces on to indicate if the take-off is good (other considerations are sheep in the landing areas). Back at Lee Quarry there's a sketchy 1 km black trail down into the quarry itself. The qualifier is a random collection of very big rocks I've normally skipping out but the standard red is quite entertaining too, and there's no big bike-carry-out to get back on track, so I did that. Both still have a huge drop down a steep bank just to the left! And onto the final descent - steep rock steps, berms, tables etc. and the landslide

I'd read about was right at the bottom after most of the fun's over anyway. Time for another lap (it's too short otherwise), much the same as the first but without the Cragg detour.

Brechfa (part 1)

This one was all new to me, some mysterious forest in West Wales that few people got as far as, but with it on the condition of "one trail only" (being with my wife and child) the question was the red "Gorlech" or black "Raven". They don't even start at the same place, and to make matters more confusing it some were swearing by the blue instead. And even worse, the bearings of the rear wheel on my trail bike were so rough so it could have been the blue after all - on my hardtail! Somewhat amazingly though my local bike shop (that's the new Giant one) fixed it the day after I brought it in so much relief!

Despite deciding on the red, late in afternoon and with some nervousness, I ended up hitting the Raven trail instead after all (the start of Gorlech is much further away than I thought, we turned back!). A great trail, and quite challenging as you'd expect being a black. It's another natural feeling trail in a forest... with surprises. I was thinking between the single-track and the climbs that the compulsory drops, slabs, super-steep alpine style switchbacks and moments of hanging on for life wishing I'd left the Lee Quarry tyres on after all made it a "black", but one thing I wasn't expecting was near the end for the black "Raven" signs to disappear and be replaced by orange "bike park" ones. Yes it's a bike park with massive tables deep inside a "cross country" trail! The trail finishes rather abruptly though and you have to follow the car park signs back.

Brechfa (part 2)

It wasn't quite the end of Brechfa though, my bike got a bit use on holiday and as I had to spend money on tools I didn't bring with me (doh), it seemed ok to suggest a return visit to Brechfa to do the (red) Gorlech. Fortunately it does exist, and even better it's near a kiddies playground and a pub! It wasn't a great start though, already under time pressure, it was frustrating to take a right turn up an increasingly steep fire road that turns into nothing. It turned out it was the other right at the same junction which was far less obvious (be warned!). Back on track and things were going nicely. I think I preferred the more technical Raven though, and for most of it I needn't have worried about taking the hardtail unless I was doing the jumps but it's definitely worth doing for the legendary final descent and you then know what all the fuss is about! Again it finishes and you feel deep in the woods but it's a minor grumble, Brechfa is well recommended!

SingleSpeed UK Championships 2016

By Keith Whitten

This was held on the first weekend in September up somewhere near Coventry. I was the only club member to attend but it was a great chance to catch up with some of the folks from around the country that I only ever see at these sort of events. You'll never be short of someone to drink beer and talk rubbish with at a singlespeed gathering.

Rather than hash it all out myself here's something one of the organisers put on the official website a few days after the event:

Well that was an unmitigated success ! What a weekend! Everything we had control over went pretty much according to plan, even if the weather pixies were playing silly buggers for the duration of the race but it just made the course 'different' !

Friday setup went smoothly enough, with the bar being delivered and built....just needed testing it's a dirty job but I nobly volunteered my services ...

Folks started turning up quite early and the camp filled up well, seemed about the right size.... a few more square feet wouldn't have hurt. I tried the beer again just to make sure it was still ok.

A couple of rides went out in the evening, one serious-ish, the other a Dads & Lads ride to the nearest pub. A quick beer check at SSUK HQ proved the beer was still lovely.....

The barn slowly filled up as people arrived from further afield... including, the Dutch & Belgian contingent... beers were bought and consumed along with cheese, salami and the worlds hottest killer Pork Pie..... Luke Dixon was "Johnny Concrete" for about 20 seconds then turned into "Felicity Quicksand" for the next 20 mins after eating a hefty slice ... how bad can it be ? Turns out, pretty flippin bad ! Best have a beer to cool off....

Once the main party ended (we'd pretty much run out of beer) the apres party moved up field to the GT (Godiva Trailriders) HQ more , much more, beer was had as the hard core drinkers partied on till nearly morning.... much to some people's annoyance. Sorry :0/

Saturday was damp. Nay moist ! The rain started at the same time as the riders made their way to the track the usual bike hiding shenanigans made the start luck of the draw ... with some fast laps being put in before the deluge took it's toll of the trail making it slippery and hard to ride fast.

Well done to Steve Day and Sophie David for outstanding performances in less than optimal conditions and winning the SSUK Male and Female categories !

Back on site there was a great atmosphere as folks returned and commenced drinking again. The party was started by a brilliant bluegrass banjo band then the prize giving and raffle took place with plenty of very happy winners ! The band of the evening , Reward, came on and soon the dancefloor was HEAVING with sweaty, hoarse, inebriated singlespeeders. More cheese, salami, and Leannes fantastic hams were brought out and devoured.

Eventually the curfew kicked in with a great rendition of 500 Miles just as we finished the beer again. Turns out a little over half the people who attended Cannock in 2014 drank more beer than was consumed in Cannock..... some serious drinkers in the crowd , that's for sure ! Sunday was a sedate affair with folks packing up and saying their farewells.....

We could not have done it without the support of our families, friends and Club members ! Too many folks to name, I know I'll forget people cos I'm old and easily distract..... oh look ! a squirrel !

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and the willingness of you all to support a cause very close to the clubs heart, we've raised a phenomenal amount of money for the Leamington Stroke Rehabilitation Centre who're helping Dave Nowik with his continued road to recovery. The Merevale Estate will be getting a suitably large cheque to say thank you for the use of their beautiful woods.

Richard Munro has bravely volunteered running SSUK2017 in the Lake District which should be awesome !

From Matt, Craig, Graham, Dave, Spencer and me, Martin, we thank everyone who came and made SSUK2016 a rip roaring success, we couldn't do it without you all !

Yes, they really did do a very fine job. Following a Facebook conversation a few days before the event I was going to bid to host the 2017 event on the Isle of Wight but as the Lake District folks were far more organised I didn't contest their offer. There was a lot of interest in going to the Island in 2018 though, so if I get the go-ahead next year would any of you fancy helping out?

££ 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

Primera

183 Bournemouth Rd, Parkstone

244 Charminster Rd, Charminster

Bicycle Barn

63 Old Milton Road, New Milton, BH25 6DN. tel: 01425 616070

Perfect Balance Cycles

87 Junction Road, Totton. tel: 02380 871777

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

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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.

Hampshire Trailer and Roofrack Centre

NEW

Solent Business Centre, Millbrook Road, Southampton. tel: 02380 333111

Reader's Bikes

Nick Clark's Scott E-Bike

E Bikes – They are on a Charge for a Reason

Love them or loathe them, E-bikes are here to stay so this article aims to challenge your prejudices, explain the realities and see if they are actually any good as bikes. These Pedal Assist bikes have a battery and a motor but the motor only 'assists' when you 'pedal' which kind of explains the name. You pedal like a 'normal' bike and the motor adds a little power to make it easier. One thing to be aware of is that the assistance only helps up to 15.5mph so don't dream of blasting past roadies at 45mph.

This article will not dive into the deep technologies but rather focus on what it is like to live with an e-bike and specifically a Scott e-Genius. First the questions that you will get asked by everyone who realises you are riding an e-bike:

Q: What is the range?

A: About 40 - 50 miles of normal use

Q: How long does it take to charge?

A: 3-4 hours for a full charge but about an hour for 60%;

Q: Isn't that cheating? Well...

The Scott comes with a bar mounted controller to allow you to switch the amount of boost between Eco, Tour, Sport and Turbo so the first thing everyone does is switch to Turbo and fly off down the trail giggling like an imbecile. This is great fun but massively misleading for real world use and probably the cause of most of the anti e-Bike feeling cyclist have. It simply doesn't feel like you are really cycling and on twisty trails the boost is too much pushing you straight ahead instead of round the corner. This is correct in Turbo mode which is why you very rarely use this setting for normal riding, in fact you will probably spend 90% of your time in Eco or Tour modes.

Suddenly it feels like a normal bike – but better. The trails seem dryer and with less hills. The bike seems light and you can flick it around like you are fitter and stronger than ever before. You can ride for miles over any terrain, perhaps

changing to Sport to get up the steepest hills without losing pace. Occasionally I have stalled on a climb and then found it very hard to restart as I am stationary in the wrong gear without boost until I get the pedals turning but you soon adjust and select the correct gear early. This is the honeymoon period when everything is perfect and you just want to ride. You ride more often as you recover more quickly, you ride further as you get less tired, you ride with fitter friends as you have boost to help out – is there any downside?

The first is apparent as soon as you get to the till, all that electric stuff costs about £500 more than the same bike without it but let's ignore that for the moment. The main issue is the 15.5mph assist limit. This limit is hit quite easily and regularly when riding along flat trails or roads and it can feel like you are riding into treacle. The reason is that to get from 15.5mph to 15.6mph you need to put in all of the normal effort plus the effort that the motor was giving you so you suddenly see the rest of the group disappearing up the road ahead of you. Options such as 'chipping' the bike or fitting 'dongles' are illegal for public use and will invalidate your warranty so be aware before blowing £100+.

Range anxiety seems to be an issue when you first have the bike but unless you regularly do 50 miles plus in a single trip it really doesn't feature. Having said that, it has excluded me from a couple of bivvy trips where there was no overnight charging. I guess an extra battery is an (expensive) option there.

The only other down side I have come across is how exposed the controlling computer unit is. For some reason Scott have decided to put this on the top centre of the handle bars. This means you can't flip the bike upside down to fix punctures without unclipping the computer and leaving it on the side of the trail. Fortunately you won't ride far without realising this mistake. More worryingly if you go over the bars and break it, even just the plastic mounts, you have a long walk home and have to replace the whole computer for a couple of pennies worth of plastic clip.

So in summary, get over the feeling that you are cheating and those slow muddy winter trails can be ridden like they are dry, the draggy climbs become flat and the proper steep hills are a chance to flick to Sport mode and get your breath back. Riding an e-bike is just like riding a normal bike but a bit easier so try one, just not in Turbo mode.

Editor's note: Those of you who don't know Nick and are still sceptical about e-bikes should be aware that Nick does have a very badly damaged foot and would struggle to ride a regular bike any distance.



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.



The Wilton Ride 8th August
Aka Steve Keith's puncture fest

