

## **FARNHAM ROAD CLUB NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2010**

**From the Editor:** The newsletter will arrive a little late this month as I have been away. The season of evening events will have come to an end and we can reflect back on another good season for the Road Club. Back in June several members participated in the Crondall Triathlon, with Richard Williams and Paul Charman completing the cycle leg and Rob Allen and Andy Smith taking on both the cycling elements and the running. There have been a number of local charity cycling events, the LIDBA from Liphook, The Farnham Bike Ride and the Phyllis Tuckwell ride all seeing participation from members. Four club open events have had the usual high quality of organisation from Andy Smith, Deana Rice, John Cook and Paul Charman with assistance from a number of other club members who have taken on the tasks of Marshalls, Spotters, Pusher Offs, Tea Persons and Timekeepers. Without them no events can be run. Farnham has been fortunate to have a number of younger members who have improved dramatically as the season has progressed culminating in a win at the London West GHS Finals. Well done to Matt Davies, Sam Jackson and Tom Fricker.



The picture shows the boys with their medals. These performances qualify them for the National Finals to be held in September. The Etape de Tour saw both Gawie and Ian Howard in action; more from them later. There have been some updates to club records, with Gawie Nienaber setting a new 10 record with 20.30 on the P613 course in July. Mike Rice and Jo Fricker have set a mixed Tandem mark at 22.33 and Deana Rice and Jo Fricker set a ladies Tandem Record of 26.10. Gawie and Richard Williams have also been taking part in Sportive rides and Paul Barber was our sole representative in the Surrey Hills event a 72 mile ride with 7475ft. of climbing. His effort qualified him for a gold standard award. Fantastic efforts from them all. The news letter will give details of the AGM, The Four Way Trophy and the Club Dinner. Yes it is that time again! Happy cycling.

Colin

## **Annual General Meeting of the Farnham Road Club**

This is the formal notification of the Annual General meeting of the Farnham Road Club. This will be held at the Leverton Hall (At the rear of the Church) in Wrecclesham on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at 2.00pm. Items for the agenda should be sent to the Secretary, Jim Parker Timber Lodge, School Lane, Lower Bourne Farnham GU10 3PE by the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2010. The club now has over 50 members and it is hoped that there will be a good turn out. No participation no grumbling!

## **The Four Way Trophy**

The event this year will take place on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> October, starting at 10.00am. You should gather at the pond in Bentley for the time trial. For this you have to state your expected time be it fast or slow, for the ride from Bentley via the Jolly Farmer at Blacknest and then through Binstead to Holybourne village. Riders then move on to Holybourne Church where the Hill Climb will take place. A standard time will be set and the winner of this section is the one nearest to that time. For the serious minded a second run will be made at the hill and the fastest one up will be the winner of the Hill Climb Cup. The show moves on to the Froyle road, where a free wheel contest takes place and riders should secure one crank to the frame; an old fashioned toe strap is ideal for this. The fastest down wins. Moving on to the Lower Froyle Hall the first part of the pace judging takes place on the circuit from the start. The circuit is ridden in both directions and the winner is the rider that comes closest to the first circuit time. The results are compiled and the winner will be awarded the Tankard at the Annual Dinner in December.

## **ETAPE DU TOUR 2010-the Road from Pau to the top of Tourmalet**

To ride in the Pyrennees one needs to come prepared for all weather, and be grateful if the gods of weather keep the rain at bay. Gorgeous weather greeted 10,000 Etapistes on the start line at 7 am on Sunday, 18 July. Not so for the professionals, who stood on the same start line 3 days later for the start of what was billed as the decisive stage of this year's Tour. They were faced by pouring rain and temperatures below 10 Celsius.

Two of us, Ian Howard and Gawie Nienaber, were representing Farnham Road Club in the Etape of 2010. For us, temperatures would range upwards of 30 Celsius, which is not a lot of fun when you are on the Tourmalet and still have 10km of climbing ahead. Notwithstanding the prospect of good weather, Ian , starting his first Etape, insisted on riding with rain jacket and gloves in his back pocket. The only water we would experience on the day would be the approximately 6 litres of water we would drink, plus the occasional splash of water down your back offered by spectators on the Tourmalet to overheated cyclists grinding their way up to hairpin turns discouragingly looming still many 100s of metres of vertical ascent above them.

As the other half of the FRC duo, I was starting my 6<sup>th</sup> Etape. My last Etape was in 2008, when the finish was also a mountain top, then the Hautecam, with the Tourmalet the 2<sup>nd</sup> last climb of the day. Which meant that we climbed the Tourmalet from East to West, unlike today, when we were due to climb it West to East. The other big difference was the weather. The Etape in 2008 started in pouring rain-and it didn't improve much during the day. The descents are the worse in the wet and cold. Not so much due to slippery road surfaces - in fact, I've seen far worse crashes on the descents of dry Etapes as riders seem to take much more risk in the dry - but the freezing temperatures cause shivering and numb fingers - neither of which are conducive to safe or smooth descending. Also, the prospect of punctures is much more likely in the wet.

But none of this in this year's Etape - no swirling mists to hide the valleys, no mountain peaks clothed in cloud. And when the weather is good the Pyrennees are truly beautiful - fewer jagged peaks and less spectacular, perhaps, than the Alps, but much more serene, green and unspoilt.

The gun goes at 7 a.m and we are off. Not quite like the start of a "10", given the 1,000 (or 1,000s) of cyclists who are all slowly stop-starting their bikes to the start line. Actual time gets recorded via your ankle transponder when you cross the start line, and at least at that point you are actually riding.

The key to riding a mountain top finish Etape comfortably - at least between the climbs - is to hook up with a group that will keep a good pace without forcing you into the red. Forget about the fact that 181 kilometres of riding lie ahead of you. Rather, think about it as a ride in two parts: the first part is to get to the bottom of the last climb. The second part is the last climb. So the first part is about pushing yourself hard enough to make up time in the first part - whether you are riding for a standard or simply to avoid the cut-off times and hence the broom wagon. The second part is about survival on the last climb. Then time becomes irrelevant - even if you wanted to, you won't be able to go any quicker.

So it was quick from the outset. It takes a few kilometres to find a group that suits your own pace - if your own group is too slow, just wait for a faster group to come by and jump onto the wheels. We hit the bottom of the first serious climb, the Col de Marie-Blanche, at 54 km in less than 1h30.

I had a lower start number than Ian (who started in the middle of the pack) and Ian had to dismount when riders in front of him got in trouble already on the first small climb of the day about 20 km in. The Etape does have a high percentage of riders who do not finish on the day - about 30%-40% are caught by the time cut-offs. This is part of the spirit of the race and even with a high start number, it is possible to get through the bunch fairly quickly.

The Col de Marie-Blanche is a steep 10 km ascent with some steeper ramps thrown in for good measure. One settles into a rhythm, in and out of the saddle, and just push on. I was riding 12/25 in the back with a compact (50/34) chain set. On the Tourmalet the smallest gear came in very handy.

Feeling a little less fresh (and that part was not going to get any better) the well-stocked and efficient feed stop shortly after cresting the Col helped to retard the fatigue. Continuing the descent, at least two riders had come off heavily and were being tended to at the side of the road. The medical sheet at the end of the Etape usually testifies to the fact that the descents require skill to be taken quickly.

Pushing on to the bottom of the Soulor, the second serious climb of the day, at about 100 km. The first 10 km of the full 25 km climb is at less than 5% and is in the shade, so there is the opportunity to admire the unfolding meadowed valley. But then one hits the steep and un-shaded section-after which it is a slog. Eventually you crest the hill and then start an 8km descent. I pulled on a gilet and descended, almost alone, trying to ignore the sheer drop on the right of the road.

Of course, the great sensation of the Etape is the feeling of closed roads. And this is particularly true when descending, as one can take the corners in the (reasonable) assurance that there won't be a car coming up the other way.

Coming off the descent I joined up with a small group and we set off at pace for the last section of flat before the last climb of the day. And then, after 5 Etapes unaffected by crashes or mechanicals, I encounter both of those in one incident. Taking a gilet off in the saddle requires one to take your hands off the bars and as I was doing so I touched a wheel (of course it was the other guy's fault) and I came off. Sufficiently spectacularly so that the spectators a little way down the road starting clapping when I eventually got back on to the bike. (Not that they rushed to my assistance.) My stem had twisted, and hubristically I didn't bother carrying a multi-tool with me (a note for the future - don't do that again) but I could ride, albeit lopsidedly, to the next feed zone where a visit to the Mavic stand soon put the Cervelo right, while the nurses at the Infirmiere took a little longer to patch me up.

And finally we came to the brute that is the Tourmalet. Starting the climb bruised and a little battered was not ideal, but soon the heat and the incline (the percentage of which is sadistically announced on a little board every km of the last 20 km of the climb-that is, when the steep part starts) reduced the earlier crash to little more than a faint distraction. As I was grinding my way up the interminable climb, the last 10km or so above the tree line, I was grateful for one of the many differences between the professionals riding up this hill 3 days later, and me doing it now-and that was, I could stop, whether to admire the view or simply to get my breath back, whenever I wanted, without becoming the laughing stock of the peleton.

At last, after a 2km stretch when the finish was tantalizingly in sight but required a last teeth-gritting push, the exhaustion is replaced by relief, and a good dose of gratitude, for having completed.

I rolled down the hill and at La Mongie, the ski station 4 km down, picked up the finisher's medal and, to add insult to injury, had to face another climb (admittedly not very long) to the food tent where the organization gave a welcome bag of food to the finishers. Ian, who crested the Tourmalet to finish about 40 min after me, couldn't bother to climb for his bag of food and continued without stopping to our meeting point another 25 km or so down the valley where a very patient Judith had been waiting at the bottom of the descent with transport to drive us back to Pau.

In closing, for those of you who plan to tackle next year's ride, a few words on preparing for the Etape.

It is said as a rule of thumb that a rider should have about 6,000 km in one's legs to manage the Etape well. By this, I would venture, is meant that one should have a base of some years of uninterrupted cycling to build the endurance, with 4-5 long rides (100 miles+) in the 6 months preceding the event. Now for many of us this is not feasible. Voila, the value of time trialing. Take Ian as an example. He was invited to participate less than three weeks before the event. The fact that he has a distinguished long-distance racing pedigree and in the months before the event had regularly raced at or above threshold heart rate level meant that he comfortably finished in silver medal time, even though he had done no specific training for the Etape. (Not that this is to be recommended). In my case, I rode the Highclere sportive, which is about 125 miles, in early June and did a 100 mile training ride 2 weeks before the Etape in and around the South Downs. Otherwise, regular efforts at or above threshold in Time Trialing at a variety of distances. An efficient way to get fitter faster. And if one's hill training is restricted to 500 metre ascents rather than 15 km climbs the TT effort helps to replicate the effort of climbing.

Gawie Nienaber  
August 2010

**Farewell** This is my final newsletter as from the AGM I have decided to leave my duties as the Newsletter Editor and as a Timekeeper, in order to take up a place on the club "backbenches". I hope to be seen occasional on my bike and will also be pursuing some other interests. Good luck to everyone and thank you for all the help you have given me. COLIN

**FOR SALE** A set of 52/42 front TA chain rings, mounted on 1990 Shimano Dura-Ace FC7402 170 NE cranks. Two seasons of use only. A modest offer will secure the lot. Contact Paul Barber 01256 862376.

Farnham Road Club  
Dinner , Dance and Prizegiving 4<sup>th</sup>  
December 2010

Whilst you may not yet have packed away the sun cream it is time to look forward to the Christmas social scene. What better way to kick off the Christmas festivities than dance the night away at the social occasion of the year – the Farnham Road Club Dinner and Dance.

We have researched various venues in the Farnham area and believe that Potters International Hotel will exceed our expectations.

We will have our own room and disco to dance the night away and a sumptuous three course dinner. Your committee has decided to subsidise the cost of each ticket to reduce the price for the evening to only £25.50 per person and £20 for those under 18 years of age.

We will start the evening early with arrival at 6.30pm and dinner served at 7pm.

Don't forget to let Jim Brown know what times you have done during the season (no need for you to do so Rob).

The Potters International Hotel can be found on the Farnham to Farnborough road on the left hand side. The full address is Potters International Hotel, 1 Fleet Road, Aldershot, Hants GU11 2ET.

All you need to do now is book this in your diary and then let me have your numbers as soon as possible.

I promise not to cash any cheques before the week of the event.

Please send the attached sheet to :-

Paul Charman,  
51 Liphook Road, Whitehill, Bordon, Hants GU35 9DA  
Telephone 01420 475709

I would like to attend the Farnham Road Club Dinner and Dance at Potters International Hotel.

I have indicated below my guests and what we would like to eat.

A cheque for £            is enclosed. This is calculated as follows Members and Guests    X £25.50 per person and £20.00 for those under 18.

Name.....

Guests.....

Honey Roast Parsnip Soup  
Prawn, Apple and Celery Salad  
Tomato Mozzarella and Basil Salad and Olive Oil  
Smoked Salmon and Prawn Roulade with lemon and Dill Creme Fraiche

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Turkey with Stuffing and Chipolatas  
Roast Beef with Yorkshire Pudding  
Medallion of Pork with mustard and chive sauce  
Broccoli and Brie Filo Parcel (V)  
All of the above served with Roast Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables

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Christmas Pudding and Brandy Sauce  
Chocolate and Orange Torte  
Lemon and Lime Syllabub

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Coffee and mints