

FARNHAM ROAD CLUB

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2007

FROM THE EDITOR: The club had a very successful year with numbers at the club events increased and the open events being so successful that as many as 80 riders were turned away from the Open 25. Jim Parker hopes that next season he will be able to increase the number of riders by making separate events for tandems, women, fastest 120 and then the next fastest separately but all running consecutively (if you see what I mean!). Individually, regular riders enjoyed good times and a number took part in Audax and Cyclo Sportive events. The end of season highlight was an excellent performance from Gawie Nienaber who took a podium position for the second year running by winning the bronze medal in the British Time Trial Championships, Masters E category, which was held in Cheshire. Hopefully you are all stimulated by these performances and are well into your training programmes. I have already spotted Joanne Fricker, Michael Rice, Deana, Lee Boyman and Richard Williams, on the road. *Colin*

Gawie playing to the camera!



ANNUAL DINNER AND PRIZE PRESENTATION

Paul Charman the chairman, social secretary and all round good egg, has been busy with the arrangements for the dinner. This year it will be on Saturday 1st December 2007 at the Squires Holt Restaurant on the Hogs Back as you go towards Guildford. The proceedings will commence at 6.30pm for a 7.00pm start. Tickets are priced at £18 per person, this will include a drink on arrival and live music, and can be obtained from Paul on 01420 475709. Please book early and bring all your friends. We need a good turnout to make the event a success. Tickets are selling fast so act quickly.

The Treasurer's 2007 Tour de France

A kind invitation to Kent for the weekend of the Tour in England was an exciting prospect having only previously watched the race when it came to Hampshire in 1994.

As the day approached, we started to plan our day in London en-route. Sue was going to leave me in Hyde Park to watch the prologue and go shopping: 6 1/2 hours later she was still with me, caught up in all the colour and razzmatazz, grabbing freebies thrown from the cavalcade and saying how much she had enjoyed it! I later discovered that a contributory factor to Sue's interest had been the sight of so many bronzed young men. I am now under serious threat that that she and my daughter are going to wax my legs while I am asleep and apply fake tan! We had arrived at the Albert Memorial Gate to find the crowd already 3 deep on the corner at the turn, 3 hours before the first rider. Instead of walking the course, we grabbed a place at the barrier on the westward leg.

My amateur observation was that Wiggins was the fastest of those who covered the westward leg on the north (wrong) side of the road. Throughout the day, a noticeable south westerly had been blowing and several teams during their warm ups had been trying both sides. Cancellara and other leaders had come up the south side under the spectators noses taking full shelter from the crowds, brushing the barriers and taking a huge risk that no-one would put an arm or camera out.

And so on to Kent where the narrowness of the lanes and the size of the potholes as we tried to find a good vantage point, made me think that the Surrey and Hampshire roads weren't so bad after all. Millar and the breakaway group passed us with an 8 minute lead sitting up and looking even more relaxed than a Farnham Sunday morning ride: clearly they had given up the struggle. The bunch went by and we leapt into the car for a second view elsewhere but that was not to be, thanks to a level crossing gate on a branch line which remained closed for almost 10 minutes and on a Sunday afternoon too!

That, I thought, was the end of my TdeF but a week later, with Sue's mother poorly and our 18 year old daughter chopping and changing her holiday plans, it was suggested I went to France to see some more. Initially, I thought not but I had always wanted to see a mountain stage and, hesitatingly, changed my mind. What was retirement for? To do some mad spur of the moment things and anyway the weather was awful so why not find some sunshine.

With only a few days notice, I had to pay the earth for a ferry crossing and made my way to a b and b in the Dordogne. With the help of my Cycling Weekly stage guides and Monsieur Michelin, mindful of the rapidly approaching Tour of the Surrey Hills, I headed for the final mountain stage 16 in the Pyrenees and the valley from the foot of the Col de Marie-Blanche to the finish on the Col d'Aubisque. The crowds were huge and, as I took the bike out of the car, I wondered how far I would get: the road was already closed and there were barriers and gendarmes everywhere. However there were still people walking down the road, so I pedalled gently down it and the gendarmes were totally relaxed. I picked up speed and after a few miles and much encouragement from the crowds I spied three other riders ahead of me in yellow shirts: strength in numbers should help my cause I thought. They were three Irishmen riding the stages for charity. As we rode up an incline and turned into the main street of a town lined with hundreds of applauding spectators (Some will do anything to get noticed! Ed.), one observed to me how privileged he felt to be riding through them.

We turned left under the 16 kilometre banner to start the ascent of the Col d'Aubisque but a short way up a gendarme stopped us at the entrance to a village and told us to dismount. That I thought was as far as I was going to go. We started to walk up the high street behind the crowds but looking behind me I saw one of my new companions lying in the road with his bike. He had been slow to dismount and the gendarme had grabbed his shirt and pulled him down: his leg was cut and grazed from top to bottom and his hand damaged but he had not retaliated because he thought he was being arrested! At the top of the high street we negotiated another gendarme to walk on up the mountain but no sooner had we threaded our way through the crowd and back on to the road than a third gendarme grinned at me saying "Roulez, Roulez" and motioning us to ride up: surprisingly inconsistent treatment. Up and up we went, around the hairpins under the welcome shade of the trees, catching a group of about 12 riders, all wearing black New Zealand kit, in the process. I really recommend a ride up the picturesque Aubisque from the West to any of you who are ever in the area. The encouragement from the crowds was amazing: kicking hard through one particular steep hairpin, I was greeted with cries of "Allez Contador"!

Finally when I was about 6 kilometres from the top, I was on my own when a line of gendarmes across the road sadly brought my ride to an end as I was ordered to dismount. A second line higher up led me to conclude that the summit was full. However, after a few metres I found I had been stopped just short of a huge amphitheatre of hundreds of people and temporary commentary boxes on a wide open hairpin bend. To my amazement there, high in the Pyrenees was a giant France Television screen where I was able to watch the race unfold over the Col de Marie-Blanche and up the valley on to the Aubisque which I had just ridden. Surrounded by Basques and Spaniards, my ear drums nearly parted company from my head when Contador and Mayo attacked and broke clear. Then there was all the clatter of helicopters, the sound of cheering rippling up the mountain and a muted applause as Rasmussen led round the corner. When the crowd saw him win on the screen he was, however, greeted with whistles and jeers: it was as if they knew he was doping or perhaps he was just the wrong nationality. Up they came, in ones and twos, sixes and sevens, and finally about half an hour later the remnants of the peloton with the broom wagon in close attendance.

The descent with thousands of pedestrians carrying their picnic equipment, children and assorted bicycles was simply dangerous. A short way down, everyone was directed off the main pass down a dusty track for the several miles to the bottom, much steeper and exceedingly slippery on the hairpins: red hot wheels and visions of taking out a whole family and all their picnic boxes down the mountainside. The ride down the valley though, past the motionless queue of cars and camper vans, was a just reward.

The next day saw me heading for stage 17 and the category 4 climb of the Cote de la Montagnere, South of Cahors, and a taste of a great French occasion. Crowds were camped out by the roadside for the day, even on the flat boring bits: picnic tables and gazebos were everywhere. One man I spoke to, taking his rods from his car, was going to do a few hours fishing in the river before joining the many members of his family at a long line of tables by the

roadside for lunch and wine. Then it so happened that the Tour would pass at about 5 o'clock! This was the stage where Millar was again in a break which pulled out a 10 minute lead.

I rode up the climb, surprisingly categorised at all as it was short (no more than half a mile long) and straight, almost to the top: thwarted by crowds and barriers. Again I had a taste of the French approach. A middle aged couple beside me had two back packs: one full of their provisions and the other empty. By the end of the afternoon and much running, she had filled that second one with freebies from the cavalcade: shirts, hats, food, coffee beans, sweets, drinks and even detergent!

Stage 18 saw me ride to the top of the much longer category 4 climb of the Cote de St. Cyprien: a longer version of Box Hill. I rode back and watched in the heat about half way up before heading off for a 2 1/2 hour ride of my own.

Stage 19, the 55 kilometre time trial, was watched on a grey day at the final time check. Leipheimer blasted past over a minute quicker than the next man leaving me wondering whether he too was doping and how quickly he might cover our H/8 courses. Contador was bobbing and looking decidedly uncomfortable defending his yellow jersey but he was successful nevertheless.

And so ended an amazing experience which I would thoroughly recommend to you all. On the negative side, I had never been away on my own and hate my own company so what about a club trip to the Tour in 2008?

Paul Barber

Club Runs

These continue on each Sunday morning from the Farnham Sports Centre at half past 8. Please contact Jim Parker 01252 722861 for more details.

AGM

Fourteen members attended the AGM on Sunday 18th November. The Chairman acknowledged a good year for the club and the help that various members gave to the running of events. Paul Barber announced that the club had a healthy bank account and details were circulated to all who attended. Any member wishing to obtain a copy, please contact Paul. Members voted that the fees for Club events next year be raised to £1-50 for members and £2-50 for visitors to take account of the 100 percent increase in the levy we have to pay for each rider to the London West District. Affiliations were made to CTT and British Cycling and the London West Cycling Association. This enables first claim members to enter all open and London Cycling Association Time Trials. Anyone wishing to take part in Road Racing or Cyclo Cross please contact Jim Parker for licence information. Club subscriptions remain at the same rate as last year. Please remember that subs are now due and that to be able to enter CTT events from the 1st of January you must be a paid up first claim member of an affiliated club.

Club Nights

Regular monthly club nights will continue on the first Tuesday of each month at the Bull pub at Bently close to the 10 finish. The next will be on Tuesday 4th December from 8pm.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL

Next event is the Dinner on the 1st December and on Tuesday 1st January we will be at the New Year 10 starting at 11.00am. A full list of next year's events is attached and will appear on the website shortly: www.farnhamroadclub.co.uk

FARNHAM ROAD CLUB: CLUB & OPEN EVENTS 2008/9 PROVISIONAL LIST

DAY	DATE	COURSE	START	FINISH	RIDERS	COMMENTS
TUE	JAN 1/08	H 10/8	11.00	12.10	40	
SAT	MAR 1	H10/8	09.00	10.10	40	
SAT	MAR 8	H10/8	09.00	10.10	40	
SAT	MAR 15	H10/8	09.00	10.10	40	
SAT	MAR 22	H10/8	09.00	10.10	40	
SAT	MAR 29	H10/8	09.00	10.10	40	
TUE	APR 1	H10/8	18.45	19.45	29	
TUE	APR 8	H10/8	18.45	19.55	40	
TUE	APR 15	H10/8	18.45	19.55	40	
TUE	APR 22	H10/8	19.00	20.10	40	BG Trophy
TUE	APR 29	H10/8	19.00	20.10	40	
TUE	MAY 6	H25/8	19.00	20.40	20	
		H10/8	19.00	20.40	20	
SAT	MAY 10	H10/8	13.00	14.00	10	OPEN TANDEM
		H10/8	13.00	16.00	120	OPEN SOLO
TUE	MAY 13	H20/8	19.00	20.50	50	
TUE	MAY 20	H10/8	19.00	21.30	90	OPEN TANDEM
						OPEN SOLO
						Ron Wickerson
						2-UP PREFERRED
TUE	MAY 27	H10/8	19.00	20.20	50	
TUE	JUN 3	H25/8	19.00	21.00	50	
TUE	JUN 10	H10/8	19.00	20.20	50	BG TROPHY
SAT	JUN 14	H25/8	13.00	14.30	10	OPEN TANDEM
		H25/8	13.30	15.00	20	OPEN SOLO (W)
		H25/8	13.30	17.00	120	Fastest 120
		H25/8	13.30	18.00	60	Next Fastest 60
TUE	JUN 17	H25/8	19.00	21.00	50	CLUB CHAMPS
TUE	JUN 24	H20/8	19.00	20.50	50	
TUE	JUL 1	H10/8	19.00	20.20	50	BG TROPHY
						CLUB CHAMPS
TUE	JUL 8	H25/8	19.00	21.00	50	
TUE	JUL 15	H20/8	19.00	20.50	50	2-UP ONLY
						CLUB CHAMPS
TUE	JUL 22	H10/8	19.00	20.10	40	
TUE	JUL 29	H10/8	19.00	20.10	40	
TUE	AUG 5	H10/8	18.45	19.55	40	
SUN	AUG 10	H25/8	07.45	09.15	10	OPEN TANDEM
		H25/8	07.45	11.45	120	OPEN 2-UP
						OPEN 4-UP
TUE	AUG 12	H10/8	18.45	19.55	40	
TUE	AUG 19	H10/8	18.45	19.55	40	
TUE	AUG 26	H10/8	18.45	19.55	40	
TUE	SEP 2	H10/8	18.30	19.10	29	
THUR	JAN 1/09	H10/8	11.00	12.10	40	

CLUB EVENT ENTRY FEES: Farnham Road Club Members £1.50 each. Visitors £2.50 each increase due to 100% increase in the Levy to be paid on each rider.

Notes

1. "Open" Events in bold
2. "Open" EVENTS CAN ONLY BE RIDDEN BY MEMBERS OF A CTT AFFILIATED CLUB (SUCH AS FARNHAM ROAD CLUB) WHO HAVE SUBMITTED A CTT ENTRY FORM

