

FARNHAM ROAD CLUB

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2008

From the editor: The season got off to a good start with the 'Bacon Sandwich Runs' on Saturday mornings throughout March, all being well attended. Tuesdays continued with this theme until the weather took a turn for the worst and for the second year running an evening event had to be cancelled due to the heavy rain. We were soon back on track again with fields of over 30 riders. At the first 25 I was a little worried that the last rider would need lights but all ended without problems.

Two open events have already been successfully run by John Cooke and Deana Dibnah. Well done to them both. In the Saturday 10 the club outright 10 record was broken twice during the afternoon. Firstly by Ian White reducing it to 20.52 and then Gawie Nienaber (Harvey Neighbour) blasting round in 20.51. There were also great performances from Richard Williams (63) 22.51 and Ian Windall (73) 25.46.



Ian White

In the Ron Wickerson Memorial 10 run by Deana Tony Gibb a professional with the Plowman Craven Team put in a magnificent 19.51 on a far from brilliant evening. He was followed by team mate James Millard in 20.16. For the club Rob Allen teamed with Chris Birch of Farnham Cycles on the tandem for a 21.09, followed by Richard Williams on 24.22 and Lee Boyman beginning to return to form in 24.25. Full results are on the club website.

Over the first May bank holiday a good party of club members visited the Isle of Wight for the the racing and some socialising. A report features later on in the newsletter.

Good and bad news on the injury front. Bad news is that John Cooke is in plaster and out of action as the result of an Achilles heel problem. Good news is that Peter Thomas is recovering from back problems and has started to ride again and John and Rosemary Knight have ventured out again following their various problems and Jim Brown is fighting fit again following a hip replacement. **Colin Mitchell**

WEBSITE: In case you have still not found the club web page it is at www.farnhamroadclub.co.uk please have a look. It contains all the club events with the results as they become available. Recently added have been the Club Records and a new button on the menu marked 'Courses', where you will find details of the 10 course and soon, hopefully, details including a profile of the 20 course which has been downloaded and sent to me by Andy Smith. It seems that the latest generation of on bike computers are able to record a host of information. If there is anyone who has any information that may interest club members and those logging into the site from all around the world (true), please pass them on to me, either in person or e-mail to mitch56@btinternet.com

TWO YOUNG ATHLETES IN SPAIN

By Paul Barber

Two finely tuned young athletes from Farnham Road Club, Paul Barber and Nigel Bicknell recently returned from a week's training camp in Spain run by Graham Baxter Sports Tours International.

The hotel had recently been used by the Lotto, Quickstep and Liquigas teams for their training and boasted a purpose built bike shed for well over a hundred machines and a fully equipped workshop: truly impressive support for our modest efforts.

Up to 350 miles were covered in the 6 days by the 17 participants, a high proportion of it upwards! A reasonable level of fitness was needed to survive the week or be dropped.

Ride leaders included Sid Barras, former British Professional National Champion and winner of more than 300 races including a stage of the Tour of Switzerland. During the week Sid reached the age of 60: we felt very honoured to be treated to a coffee at the morning stop especially when he pointed out that Yorkshiremen are notoriously mean! He is now the youngest age in his group and intends to contest it at the World Masters Championship.

He was looking very lean and mean as he sailed past everyone on the mountain climbs with absolute ease grinning at those he passed as if to say “You can’t catch me.” Before riding back down to offer encouragement to his followers!

On one run in along the wide seafront boulevard lined by palm trees, he came from behind the group in a flat out sprint, chin on the handlebars and bum in the air rapidly chasing down the front runners. Back at the hotel, he was on a high because it had reminded him of so many similar finishes which he had contested: it had been a great spectacle for us lesser mortals.

The long spindly one at least managed to reach the top of one of the 10 km climbs in second place on the day he was wearing his Farnham Road Club shirt, a true incentive if ever there was! Depressingly, on one such 10 km climb I was told that Tom Boonen used it for his training except that he did it 5 times in succession.

One day somewhere outside the coastal town of Benicassim where we were based, in a fairly desolated area was a flat road, perhaps a couple of miles long, bordered with orange groves on both sides and particularly uninteresting except that on each day when the riders came through, sometime between 1 and 3 pm, the road was lined from beginning to end with a large number of “Professional Ladies”. Their presence completely mystified everyone: middle of the day, sunshine, nowhere near habitation, and oranges not ripe for any pickers to be around, empty road, no sign of any business. (They had heard about the young men of Farnham Road Club). It did give Sid an excuse for one of his sprints from behind shouting “Ok lads I’ve negotiated a deal!”

The 400 room hotel was also host to coachloads of Spanish pensioners during our stay, apparently entitled to a 5 day holiday each year courtesy of the Spanish government. Queuing for one of the two working coffee machines at breakfast

was an even greater challenge than a professional cycle pelaton: those little elderly people were absolute masters at pushing with their elbows. By the time we sat down for breakfast, we felt we had had enough exertion for one day.

Surrey and Hampshire County Councils are perhaps not so bad after all. Some of the Spanish potholes, broken roads and debris were appalling: punctures were rife. One long stretch through a village which we passed most days unshipped my chain and buckled my rear wheel on separate days. In contrast, there were brilliant new stretches of tarmac in the middle of nowhere, perhaps some quirk of the EEC funding

Returning through Valencia airport there was the inevitable opening of bike boxes to make sure all those tubes were not rocket launchers or rocket propelled grenades.

Oh For the tranquillity of the A31!

Isle of Wight 2008

By Andy (Smudge) Smith

As a newcomer to the club and an Isle of Wight virgin, I set off on a sunny Saturday morning heading for Portsmouth with my partner Julie and our 4 month old son Toby. A friendly welcome on the ferry by the other Farnham riders and their families set the tone for the weekend.

Our base was in Freshwater which was a short trip across the Island where Paul had booked some superb accommodation. Their quality and location, to the beach and cycling HQ, was spot on.

I was given a pre-race drive around the course by Geoff and Chris during which I had a sudden realisation of the task ahead. The course was not much dissimilar to the one on a Welsh mountain bike marathon I had done the previous month. Needless to say, the search for viable excuses was well under way!

Saturday Night 12

At the sign-on for the Saturday evening 12, which was in fact just short of 13 miles, the high turn out of Farnham riders was very apparent, 9 in total which was 25% of the field.

A sunny, warm and breezy evening made for a pleasant ride with a good performance from Richard Williams posting the best Farnham time. The rest of the team finished not too far behind, with good rides from everyone.

There was great support around the course from Julia, Izzy, Stella and Julie. Everyone one was spurred on by the great encouragement from Jim and Thelma at the top of the first and last hills shouting at us.

Sunday Morning 23

It was an early start for the 23, which was just short of 24 miles, on an overcast breezy morning.

Another good performance by Richard saw him back to HQ as the first Farnham rider with the rest of us bunching up behind. Chris Newman had an excellent ride, and despite a puncture on the very fast stretch at the end, Andy Weller was hot on his tail.

The tandem boys had an excellent ride that should help them save some money at the end of the season.

We set off for the evening meal feeling very assured by a confident Paul that the pub was a short trip down the road. So off we all set, following Paul and his sat - nav, taking in the very nice scenery the island has to offer. After a good 45 minutes as the daylight disappeared and we passed signs indicating that we were getting no further away from the starting point questions were being raised by the convoy.

With the atmosphere becoming increasingly strained in the lead car, and Andy Sturt questioning Rob's map reading skills, we gave up and stopped at the nearest pub. By the way, that is the only time Paul and Rob were to lead anything on the Island the whole weekend, no offence.

Monday Morning 46

The last Time Trial of the weekend was a 46, again nearer to 48 miles. The weather was dull and drizzly thus the road was pretty slippery.

The last 2 days had taken its toll on people's legs but we still had 8 Farnham riders in the race, which was a tremendous effort!

There were plenty of punctures namely Andy Weller early in the race, also Rob and Paul on the tandem near the end of the first lap. Izzy and Julia did a sterling job providing team car services handing out the spare wheels. Despite this everyone finished the race.

Well done to Mike Rice who improved on last year's times in all 3 races, this bodes well for this season.

Excellent performances too from Deana earned her the prize for 2nd overall lady.

After a much-needed long soak in the bath it was the traditional trip to Rob's parents for excellent tea and cakes. The banter and mickey-taking was flowing

well with a good deal of it aimed at one of the riders owning a pair of pink Croc shoes, no names mentioned, good effort in all 3 races from Dave Rapley though.

A superb weekend was finished off with a trip to the pub for a “couple” of pints. Many drinks later we made our way back to the chalets via the kebab shop, which was the scene of another challenge. Who could finish a Mega Chicken kebab with all the trimmings!

I would like to say a special thank you to Paul for his exceptional organisational skills and keeping the whole trip hanging together. And of course his better half Stella for all the help she gave to Julie and Toby.

Open 25 on Sat 14th June

Jim Parker is still keen to hear from any member who is willing to help him with this promotion. It is on the usual course but this year there are several categories and more help is needed. Contact Jim on 01252 722861.

Subscriptions

Just a polite reminder that you must be a first claim member of an affiliated club, to ride in Open Events. If you ride for the Road Club and you have not paid your subscription this will be the last newsletter that you receive. Contact the treasurer right away.

Copy

Thanks again to those who have contributed to the newsletter. Once again I need items for the next issue which will be out at the beginning of September. Don't be shy tell us about your tours ,racing, training or visits to other events or rides. E-mail me at mitch56@btinternet.com or by post to 1 Azalea Avenue, Lindford, Bordon, Hampshire GU35 0YD. All items are most welcome. Colin