



SWANNING AROUND

The North Bucks Road Club Newsletter
December 2004



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Editorial

Welcome to the new look Club Newsletter, under new Editorial management! I intend to try and keep this newsletter running at a reasonable frequency, ideally monthly, perhaps bimonthly. But this depends on a steady flow of submissions from the membership, so get writing. Email any contributions to me at r.d.saunders@open.ac.uk.

I have various plans for this newsletter. Firstly, to match the new information age, I plan to circulate it by email, as a pdf file, and secondly, I shall add copies to the Club web page, when I get around to re-jigging it (see report on Club AGM below). Circulating the newsletter in electronic format allows members to see the newsletter in glorious technicolor.

If we can keep this rolling on a monthly basis, we could see adverts for stuff, suggestions for how to improve club life, announcements, etc. But this will all require assistance from the members, in the form of contributions. So pull your fingers out and hit those keyboards!

In the meantime, this issue has several interesting articles. We have a report from Gerry Oram on our second attempt at the Duo Normand, and an article on stretching for cyclists by Lindsay. Lindsay, as most of you will be aware, is going to begin an MSc in Sports Science at Wolverhampton University next year - with any luck we will hear more from him in the future! I think his keen interest is reflected in this article.

Robert

Annual General Meeting

The NBRC Annual General Meeting was held on 10th November at Harley Hall. Some of the important discussions are summarised below. Actually, you must be warned that these are my recollections, and I may have introduced some errors!

Insurance Policy and the Lease on Harley Hall

While the rent of Harley Hall is really quite modest (I seem to recall it's £3 per week), we are apparently responsible for maintenance of the fabric of the building. We were quite shocked to hear that the insurance policy on the building has a £1000 excess charge on repairs due to subsidence. This is quite topical, since the building does appear to be suffering from subsidence. Ian Stokes expressed an interest in seeing the text of the lease and the insurance policy so he could cast a professional eye over them.

Membership of Associations

As last year, there was an extended discussion of

whether we should remain members of the CAs that we currently belong to. Objections to membership mostly stemmed from the difficulty in arranging cover for our marshalling commitments arising from CA membership. (I must apologise at this point for failing to ride the NM&H CA '100', which turned out to be our NM&H CA marshalling commitment this season - I was ill). The upshot was that we have withdrawn from the NM&H CA, but remain a member of the Norlond Combine for 2005. We are members of the Northants and District CA, because (a) this is free, and (b) there is no marshalling required (though I must confess that this seems a little selfish!). Ian Stokes rode most of the events in the N&DCA series this season, and reviews it in this issue. Later in the meeting Steph proposed we (re?)join a Women's cycling association, and this was accepted.

CTT Handbooks

Members are responsible for ordering their own Handbooks, since the Club made a loss on the bulk order this season.

Club Website and Newsletter

I volunteered to take over the helm of the Club Newsletter, and to relaunch the website. See the Editorial for more comments on this. I think it makes sense to integrate these two activities.

The Road Racing and Time Trialling Secretaries reported on the year's racing (see below and page 6).

Road Race Secretary's Report

Gordon Batcock

The Club had a reasonable year, starting with the senior team riding well in the Easter 3 day event in Ireland. Congratulations to Leigh Smith, who came second overall and obtained his 2nd category licence.

The Club promoted two events this year, both of which were well run. Thank you to all those who helped: marshals, tea makers and officials.

Next year we are promoting two races. The LVRC race will be in August and a day of cycle racing, to be held on 18th April at the Bowl, and which will include the Andy Hardy Memorial Trophy Road Race.

We have 14 club members who have taken out membership of British Cycling. This is two more than last year. I feel that more members should belong to a cycling organisation (such as BC or CTC), so that they are covered by insurance and have legal representation in case of an accident.

Club Dinner 2004

You will all no doubt have noticed that the Club Dinner has not happened! The good news is that Ian Stokes has taken on the job of organising it. Those of you who attended the AGM will be aware that we decided that we would have the dinner some time in early or mid of January.

Ian has now arranged this for **7th January 2005**.

The NBRC Annual Dinner and Prize Presentation will take place at Henry's Table Restaurant, Furzton Lake, Shirwell Crescent, Milton Keynes on Friday 7 January 2004, time 7.00pm for 7.30pm.

Tickets will be £15 to 18, no concessions, especially for fast veteran OAPs.

Price includes a two or three course meal. The menu is on page 9 - please contact Ian with your choice, ideally before Christmas).

Dress to be smart casual or Assos. Please contact Ian Stokes on 01234 240140 or 07770 960984 or Ian.M.Stokes@btinternet.com to book your places.

Relieve those Xmas holiday blues by joining your cycling mates. Make sure you ride the New Year's Day "10" for an early prize!!

Heretical Suggestions

Here are two suggestions for the Club. This is intended to cause a bit of discussion, so write to the Newsletter (r.d.saunders@open.ac.uk) if you want to respond, or have some suggestions of how to make the club more active!

1. Saturday clubruns!- Well, why do we only have 'em on Sundays?
2. Get rid of the Committee! - Well, why don't we deal with business ets at the weekly club nights? Maybe more people would come along if there was business being discussed. We could shift club nights to Thursday to avoid clashing with League events.

Dear Santa!

This letter was delivered to Harley Hall by mistake this year, instead of the North Pole.

Dear Santa,

I have been a good boy all year. Please send me 6 tubs for Christmas as I had loads of punctures this year.

**Give my love to Mrs Santa, and the elves,
Love from Robert**

What do you get as a gift for someone who has everything - An Original Cartoon!

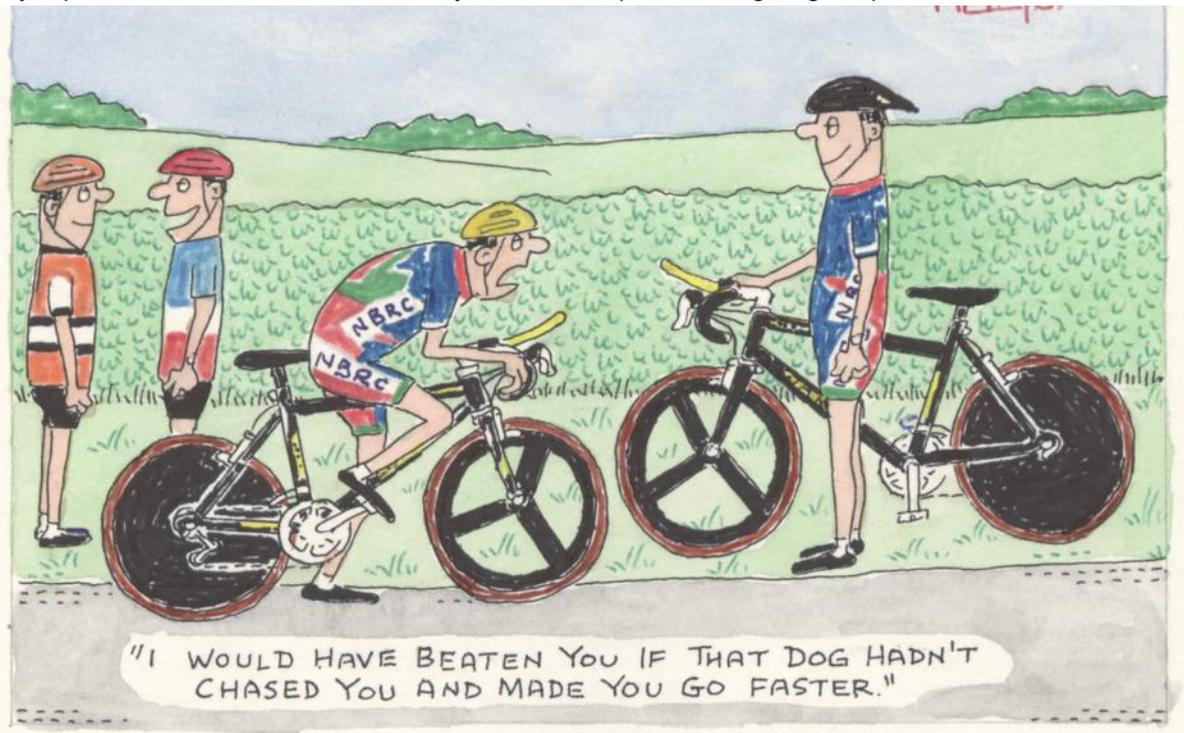
by Kevin Stokes

This was the question I posed for myself, at my brothers latest birthday. Luckily I had been reading cycling weekly and came across the article on Johnny Helms, suddenly I had a flash of inspiration, I got online to try and find out how to get hold of him, but all my searches on google only came up with his books, no websites or e-mail addresses.

Undaunted I then knew who to contact, yes you've guessed it, your favourite cycling magazine (Cycling Weekly if you guessed wrong), who promptly replied back that as I was a fan they didn't see a problem in giving his phone number.

I promptly phoned him and asked him if he did commissions, which he said he did, I then outlined what I wanted, and filled in some of the cycling history Ian and I have, the final thing he asked for was a description of our bikes (easy), and Club jersey, not easy on the phone (you try it), this was finally resolved by sending a picture through the post.

The result is here for all to see, plus my brother is still talking to me, now what am I going to get him next year.....



Total Effort:

The Duo Normand 2004

by Gerry Oram

It was just before mid-day, the sun was directly overhead and the temperature had hit thirty. A couple flashes from the camera in front of us and then the countdown, cinq, quatre, trois, deux, une. We both focused on the road ahead that climbed out of the Normandy village of Marigny. The Duo Normand's motto is l'effort total. We didn't know it at that moment, but this would neatly sum up our race.

Back in March, Robert had Emailed me to say he had entered us (again) for the Duo. I had mixed feelings about his unilateral action. After all, I had suffered terribly in 2003 and held him up in the process. It's one thing to have a bad race, but to ruin someone else's race is immeasurably worse and I still wasn't wholly over it. I suspect this is why Robert had gone ahead and entered us - knowing full well that I would probably have second thoughts. We could still have pulled out but, let's face it, it was far less likely once I saw our name on the Duo website.

Unlike 2003, I had enjoyed a successful season and by the time of the Duo in September, I had secured fourth place overall in the Magic Dragon Series and collected numerous second and third places and even a win in open time trials. My confidence was much higher than in the previous year and my preparation was much improved. Robert had also shown good form in the weeks leading up to the race. The heat on the day, though, did worry me and I couldn't forget how painful that cramp had been in 2003.

In the line of riders waiting to mount the start ramp, Robert and I were debating the merits of starting on the big ring (a 57 in Robert's case, 56 for me) or the inner ring. Robert's switching to the 57 ring in readiness had an immediate impact on the French pair who were starting a minute in front of us - they were completely psyched out and this was one of those moments when I wish my understanding of French was better. Nevertheless, just before climbing the steps to the start we had a change of heart and flipped over onto the inner rings. Well, the start does go immediately uphill.

Zero! We were off and so too was Robert's chain - almost. I could see people screwing up their faces and hear remarks in French and English as the crunch of gears behind me broke through the noise of the carnival atmosphere that embraces Marigny on Duo-day. The same had happened the year before. That time, I stopped to see what had happened to Robert. This time I knew I could carry on, so I did but with a cursory look back through my legs to reassure myself that he was still upright. Robert sailed past before the top of that first easy climb exclaiming: 'it always does that in the little ring'. 'I know' I replied, trying to appear unconcerned.

The first few kilometres were tricky, going directly into a headwind and a little technical. I didn't feel at all good and wondered if 2003 would repeat itself. I didn't know it at this moment, but Robert, too, was feeling bad

in these opening kilometres. Suddenly, we rounded a corner to see our minute pair in front of us. Robert lead us straight past in a flash. I glanced at my watch (I don't carry a computer anymore as I find it either too depressing or frightening depending on whether I'm going uphill or down). It was only five minutes into the race and we had just caught a pair for a minute. I started to feel better.

We flashed past both the kilometre signs that counted down and quite a few other pairs as we began to pile on the power. The changeovers were much improved from 2003 - it was something we had identified as a problem area and had worked on quite hard. Eventually, we had decided in favour of the front man moving off rather than the rear man coming through. A dress rehearsal the previous day had reinforced our lessons from earlier in the season when we had ridden - and won - three two-up events in five days. The only hiccup was Robert's insistence on going off-course. As we approached a sweeping left-hand bend with a junction on its apex Robert, leading at that point, went straight on as both myself and the marshal cried in our respective languages to turn left. Robert used the international language of expletives to vent his anger then claimed that the marshal was obscuring the sign pointing left. Personally, I think that Robert likes to have something to be grumpy about after each race and, therefore, manages to get held up at a roundabout or go off-course. There were no roundabouts on the Duo Normand, so his options were obviously limited.

We belted across a causeway that crossed an exposed section of marshland and turned left at the end (successfully). We were halfway into the race, going well and with no sign of cramp. This was the very spot where it had first come on in 2003. More kilometres flashed by, more pairs watched the Saunders/Oram train whip by them. We were flying. Into the village of Feugères and the real climbing began. The wind was now on our backs but unhelpful on this terrain. We climbed out of the village a little sluggishly as our legs had to adjust from the faster riding to out-of-saddle climbing. It got steeper on the long climb to Le Mesnilbus, but now we were adjusted to it and both still riding on the big ring. Robert swung off the front on the climb, looked me in the eye as we crossed and gasped and spat out the words: 'heart-rate 193'. 'Bloody hell', I thought to myself, 'he'll blow at that level'. I looked down to see my HRM showing 185 (Robert usually operates at about ten beats higher than me). I was only five beats below my absolute max and we were both well above our respective thresholds. I did a stint on the front, trying to push the pedals round and remain seated, which I am sure is more economical for me, but instead of dropping the HRM rose to 187. 'Christ', I thought, 'I'll explode in a minute'. Yet it felt sustainable. I moved off the front and gasped to Robert to keep it steady. It seemed to be sensible regardless of how it felt.

We topped out at the highest point of the course - seven miles of climbing now behind us - and descended towards Marigny. Just before re-entering the village is a sharp left-hand corner at the bottom of a very fast descent. Robert had left me on the front on the descents, so that we would at least still be together at the bottom. Also, I found it easier to descend without another rider in front or beside me. At the bottom of this,

the fastest and most serious descent, was an ambulance. I was just thinking of a joke along the lines of 'well, they heard I was coming' when I saw the crashed cyclist sat on the verge complete with neck-brace and arm in sling. Glancing across the corner confirmed that nothing else was about and so I cut across the shortest angle. I eased off the front and uttered to Robert as he came alongside me: 'well, that's another pair we've beaten'.

It was a hard drag up into Marigny and we rounded the village-square under the grandstand at no great speed (although watching others later on, I suspect we were relatively impressive). There then follows an eight-mile out-and-back section before the course finishes back in Marigny. This section is quite tricky because it is a single carriageway road and coned along the centre to allow the race to go in both directions at the same time. This would not be a problem but for the following cars that can take up the entire carriageway and get in the way. The road climbed steadily back into the headwind. It was a real grovel and the earlier effort was now taking its toll. We descended from the top to the turn at a T-junction and immediately back onto the climb from the opposite direction. This was the final piece of climbing - tired bodies were forced into one last great effort. Then, it was one hell of a blast down the hill and along the flat final kilometre into Marigny to finish under the grandstand.

According to Robert's computer we entered Marigny at around 43 mph. A traffic cone wobbled in the road after

a following car had brushed it. I hesitated as I watched it wobble and, for the only time in the entire race, lost Robert's wheel and at that sort of speed, a slight hesitation is all it takes. However, I was quickly back and the momentum took me straight past Robert and over the finish line just in front of him.

It was a while before either of us could climb off our bikes and even longer before any meaningful conversation was possible. (*Do we ever have meaningful conversation? Editor*). The effort had been massive. Our time of 1hr 22m 18s was almost two minutes faster than last year - and this on a much harder day when most other pairs went two minutes slower. It was quite a long wait for the results, during which time we watched the bloodied and broken limping in. It seems that the sharp left-hand corner had claimed a few. Eventually, the results appeared on the board and we were fifth. We had passed through the first time check at 20 km as the third fastest pair. By the next time check, taken as we returned to Marigny (43km) the eventual finishing order was pretty much sorted out, although in the final 12 km (the out-and-back leg) we had taken some time back from the winning pair. Although disappointed not to finish in the top three, we knew that we had ridden strongly, working well together and right at the absolute physical limit - something that the information stored in the HRMs would later confirm. It was a total effort and that's all you can do - at least until next year.



A combination of steely determination and barely concealed hysteria on the start ramp!

Time Trial Secretary's Report to the AGM

by Leigh Smith (slightly edited by the Editor)

Club Events

The attendance at club events has been about the same as last season on average, though it was good to see some new faces turning out to give it a go. I feel, as I am sure other members do, that the events are too varied, and that we need to have some regularity on the fixtures list (see below for the 2005 programme).

Special thanks are due to Tony Farmborough for doing such a good job with the timekeeping this year, what would we have done without you?

Open Events

The club organised two open events this year. Phil Sinnett ran his 10 mile TT on the F5a/10, which proved as popular as ever. Well done, Phil, and thanks to all those who helped out on the day.

The club also took its turn in organising an ever popular Rudy Project Round in September, efficiently run by Ian Stokes who did an excellent job, supported by many club members turning out to help. Well done to you all.

Club Championships

Once again the club championships were held over two laps of the Astwood circuit. We had 13 riders taking part, and club members took 1st three places in the senior and vets competitions. The hill climb was well-attended, with 15 riders competing. Unfortunately the underfed Team MK riders took the top three places. (*What bounders!*, Ed)

The 2005 Season

I have assembled a new fixtures list for the 2005 season, which uses fewer courses overall, in which 8 are league rounds (best 5 will count). I hope this simpler format will be more regular and encourage people to turn out more often. At the AGM, we decided to shift some of the summer A5 events to a 7.30pm start to avoid heavy traffic.

Club Fixtures 2005

Day	Date	Time	Course	Info
	1/1/05	1000	F5a/10	New Year's Day '10'
Sat	26/3/05	0900	F5v/10	Astwood
Sat	2/4/05	0900	F5a/10	A5(D)
Wed	6/4/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford (League round #1)
Wed	13/4/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood
Wed	20/4/05	1900	F5a/10	A5(D) (League round #2)
Wed	27/4/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford
Wed	4/5/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood (League round #3)
Wed	11/5/05	1900	F5a/10	A5(D)
Wed	18/5/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford
Wed	25/5/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood (League round #4)
Wed	1/6/05	1930	F5a/10	A5(D)
Wed	8/6/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford (League round #5)
Wed	15/6/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood
Wed	22/6/05	1930	F5a/10	A5(D) (League round #6)
Wed	29/6/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford
Wed	6/7/05	1900	F5v/20	Astwood (Club Time Trial Championship 20 miles)
Wed	13/7/05	1930	F5a/10	A5(D)
Wed	20/7/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford (League round #7)
Wed	27/7/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood
Wed	3/8/05	1930	F5a/10	A5(D)
Wed	10/8/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford
Wed	17/8/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood (League round #8)
Wed	24/8/05	1900	F5a/10	A5(D)
Wed	31/8/05	1900	F5u/10	Stony Stratford
Wed	7/9/05	1900	F5v/10	Astwood
Sat	17/9/05	0900	F5x/H	Three Locks
Sun	25/9/05	0900	F5z/H	Bow Brickhill (Club Hill Climb Championship)

Note that some of the midweek events (the June and July A5 events) are held at 7.30pm rather than 7pm. This was agreed at the AGM in response to concerns about traffic levels on the A5.

Stretching the Truth.

Is stretching a waste of time for the modern cyclist?

Introduction

Over the years, stretching has been credited with an ability to bestow a wide range of benefits, both to our general health and to our performance capacity as athletes. However, as time passes an increasing number of these benefits are being called into question. The purpose of this article is to examine two areas of interest: performance and injury-prevention, and to examine them specifically as they apply to performance cycling. I will also touch upon some of the research that has examined the relationship between running economy and stretching; firstly as it has an oblique relationship to understanding the subject, but also as this information could be useful to triathletes and duathletes who, although they are performance cyclists, have unique circumstances which they need to consider carefully as they weigh up the pros and cons of including stretching as part of their daily regime. This piece is not intended to discuss stretching's effects on our everyday health. The questions I am attempting to answer are: will stretching make me go faster and if I stretch will I become injured less often?

Does stretching really prevent injuries?

One of the most notable promises made by stretching-advocates is its ability to reduce injury-risk, but is this based in reality? Early research indeed appeared to show that stretching had a beneficial effect in this area³, but the research was misinterpreted. The study involved an 'injury-preventing intervention' which included ankle-taping, education and the exclusion of athletes with 'grave knee instability', as well as conditioning and advice from doctors and physiotherapists. Under these circumstances it is impossible to tell which of these specific techniques resulted in the large reduction in injuries demonstrated. More recently the information looks much less promising, and could even be interpreted as pointing in the opposite direction.

As Shrier points out¹³, there is little scientific basis for stretching's proposed injury-protection. Increased tissue compliance is normally associated with a decreased ability to absorb energy. Secondly, stretching can cause cellular damage which might act as a precursor to more extensive injury. Lastly, stretching has been shown to have an analgesic effect which might in itself contribute to a greater, rather than a lesser, risk of injury. These factors may have had something to do with Dr. David Lally's surprising discoveries when he surveyed up to 600 runners taking part in a marathon in Hawaii⁸. Of the runners questioned, injury rates were 35% higher in those who stretched. This increased risk of injury appeared particularly strongly in those who pre-stretched and, oddly, in Caucasian males!

Another study worthy of closer inspection involved mice¹. Now we know that mice are not men (!), but the

physiology of muscle-injury is essentially very similar⁹. In the Black study, mice were lightly anaesthetized and then had the muscles of one rear leg gently stretched for 1 minute. The other leg served as a control. This was then repeated on alternate days for twelve days. At the end of the twelve days, the mice were subjected to an injury-inducing eccentric contraction in both rear legs. The legs were then tested to see if the stretched muscle survived the injury any better than the control. The results were clear: the stretching routine had given no protection. One particularly important aspect of this study was that the stretching had been chronic, i.e. it had continued for a period of nearly two weeks and still had no protecting effect. Other studies have shown either no benefit¹⁰ or conflicting results⁷ (where injury rates correlated with both low and high measures of flexibility).

What about performance?

So what about stretching's promised benefits to performance? In order to explore this subject more fully we need to make several distinctions. Firstly we must distinguish between the effects of an acute episode of stretching and those of a more systematic, long term program. Secondly we must explore both a stretched muscle's ability to express maximum force, and the effect of more compliant muscles on economy of movement. This second point will allow us to distinguish between the effect of stretching on performance in sports where speed or power are paramount, as opposed to endurance sports where economy can play a critical role.

Firstly let's examine the effect of an acute bout of stretching on short-term force production. In 2000, Fowles et al. examined exactly this and the results were less than encouraging⁴. After 1 minute of passive stretching they found that maximum strength was reduced by 28%! This reduction in strength gradually dissipated over time; however there was still a 9% attenuation even after an hour. This has dramatic implications for track cyclists in particular. However the news is a little better for those who engage in regular stretching, as there is some evidence that this may result in greater short-term force production¹¹.

Regarding economy, the news is bad again. Now this is primarily of interest to triathletes and duathletes, as economy-of-movement plays a far smaller role in cycling where our patterns of movement are fixed. However as I stated before I believe this is worthy of mention as it serves to highlight how misleading the subject can be. In two separate studies^{2,6} running economy has shown to negatively correlate with flexibility in elite and sub-elite runners. In both cases the explanation offered was that less flexible muscle-tendon units are more efficient at storing and releasing energy during the stretch-shorten cycle in running.

In conclusion

Where does all this leave us? Well hopefully it is clear by now that stretching does not deliver all that was promised. A large number of critical reviews have recently been carried out in this area^{5,12,14,15} and although there is some disparity in their conclusions there is certainly also a great

deal of common ground. Taking into account what we have already discussed, here are some ground rules for stretching as a cyclist:

1. Pre-stretching is a bad idea. It probably hinders performance, offers no protection from injury and may even increase the likelihood of injury occurring.

2. Although stretching probably affords no protection from injury in cyclic sports such as cycling and running, it may offer small advantages in performance for trackies (but don't forget point 1!)

3. Finally, if you compete in a multi-sport discipline that includes running you may want to reconsider your stretching routine- it may be slowing you down!

But it's not all bad news. If you want to avoid injury, there are things that you can do. Firstly, avoid large jumps in load during your training. This can be achieved by having a well-designed, periodised training program with sufficient time scheduled for recovery. Secondly (and thirdly and fourthly) warm up! Much of the early confusion around stretching was generated by the use of warm-ups in conjunction with stretching before exercise. Warm-ups really will protect you. Last but not least, psychology may have a part to play in our risk of injury, so ride safely and always remember: as cyclists we're much less likely to become injured than our poor cousins, the runners!

Lindsay Edwards 2004.

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Northampton & District Cycling Association - an association worth belonging to

by Ian Stokes

After the discussions at this year's AGM, I thought I'd put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) to tell everyone about my experiences this year (2004) riding nine out of ten of the N & DCA series, an association that I cannot recommend highly enough to anyone.

I set myself a few modest targets this year, one of them being to achieve a top ten place in the N & DCA Overall Championship. I had noticed the results for the 2003 series in "Cycling" at the end of last year, and saw one or two names there that I fancied my chances against. There are in fact five different sections, the overall, the veterans, the ladies, the short distance and the team, with varying numbers of events counting towards your points, according to the section. In the overall, the best of three out of a

maximum five short distance events count and the same for the long distance (20 miles and over). I actually rode nine of the events, only missing one "10" which clashed with a "25" on the E2.

Apart from the "10" on the N15/10 course near Tingewick, all are on less popular but relatively traffic free courses. I am mad keen on riding on fast courses, but I must admit the regular competition against the same guys at each of the events was extremely stimulating, even to the extent of riding in howling gales and driving rain - in the hope of course that you could steal a few points from other guys who perhaps wouldn't want to ride in adverse conditions. The trouble was that everyone thought the same thing, so you couldn't be a woos about it!!

The events are all promoted by N & DCA member clubs, but the same regular clubs seem to keep wanting to promote the same events, provide their own marshals etc, so the NBRC so far have not had to promote, even though we are a member club. Although the courses in theory should all be "N" course, they do move them around a bit, to suit some clubs a bit further out. All events are also open

Equipment Review



Well, here's something I came across while planning to set up a fixed wheel time trial bike. This is the Surly Fixxer, a device to convert a Shimano freehub to a fixed hub. It works with most Shimano freehubs, but not all so it's worth checking the Surly website before purchasing it. Essentially, the Fixxer replaces the freehub body with an aluminium body that does not freewheel, and to which you can screw a fixed cog and lock ring. Shimano freehubs attach the the hub shell by a splined fitting, and are held in place by a 10mm allen key bolt, through which the axle also passes. To fit the Fixxer, all you do is remove the axle, unscrew the freehub fixing bolt, drop off the freehub body, slot in the Fixxer, then re mount the axle. The Fixxer comes with a sealed cartridge bearing to replace the right hand bearings, and a numerous spacers, so the resulting fixed wheel can be used with frames of any rear spacing.

So why do I think this is of interest? Well, firstly it allows the reversible conversion of a geared wheel to fixed if you just want to try fixed, but also allows one to convert a Shimano compatible disc wheel to fixed (which is what I've done). A caveat - it's not terribly cheap, at £60! I got mine from Brixton Cycles. I phoned Phil Corley's to ask if they could get one (they are distributed by Ison's) but they declined to even bother to find out.

Robert

Club Dinner Menu: Please contact Ian Stokes (see page 3) with your choice

Roasted tomato soup & granary roll
Fruit medley with rasperry coulis
Salmon pate & multigrain toast

.....
Honey roasted shoulder of lamb accompanied by red wine & juniper sauce, green beans and butter mash

Grilled sea bass coated in garlic & herb butter with roast potatoes, honey parsnips & vegetables

Gammon steak with egg, pineapple, chips & vegetables

Char-grilled chicken breast coated in garlic & wine sauce, with cheesy bacon mash & green beans

Wild mushroom bake

.....
Mixed ice cream

Fruit pavlova

Cheese & biscuits

Chocolate surprise

& followed by coffee & mints

events, but you only get points if you are in a member club. I did try to get our Botolph Claydon event onto the list for 2005, but I was too late due to our member contact still being Gerry in Wales!!

So how did I do? Well in the hilly events, three of which were on different hilly courses from the Rockingham Forest Wheelers HQ at Middleton, I didn't do so good, although they're great courses, particularly the 45 MPH section down Dingley Dell. 20 years ago when I was a stone and a quarter lighter I would have stormed around these (believe it or not I used to be good at hilly events!!). In the longest event the 31 mile Towcester - Weedon course I did dreadfully, wasn't looking forward to it and basically just rode around. In the shorter or flatter events I did pretty well, beating many of the mountain goats by a fair margin. My favourite course was the F15/25 course starting and finishing near the Airship hangers at Cardington. It's a real combination of challenging hills and fast dragstrip sections on roads I know well from driving to and from work. Silly me though was concentrating so hard, that I actually went off course (a la Saunders) due to a stupid marshall just standing there and not pointing (the junctions look different from a bike!), losing probably 15 seconds, but those seconds ended up being vital. I lost 2 places to N & DCA riders as a result, and therefore a vital 2 points. The consequence was that I finished in 11th place overall, finishing only one point behind 65 year old mountain goat Bill Law of the Fenland Clarion CC, who is a damm nice bloke and the same age as my Dad! I did have hopes of making up the necessary points in the last event of the series on Saturday 12th September, but on the day I didn't do so well - basically due to the fatigue of a challenging new job, organizing the Rudy Project event and end of season jadedness.

I'm already looking forward to next year. It was great. This is an increasingly popular series which many of our riders could do well in. I don't mind being pushed down the order if the NBRC can storm in with the team prize, this year won by the A5 Rangers CC, and I can also feel comfortable taking my son, Warren, ride the same events (he'll beat me I'm sure!!)

Dear Santa!

This letter was delivered to Harley Hall by mistake this year, instead of the North Pole.

Dear Santa,

I have been a good boy all year. Please send me a set of SRM power cranks for Christmas.

Give my love to Mrs Santa, and the elves,

Love from Lindsay

