



Newsletter

Hours of leisure
Miles of pleasure

G'day & thanks Mike!

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In the last Newsletter we featured Mike Clucas, a former top GCC rider who had



Mike telling us how easy it isseejust do it like this .. and it's not even my bike!

emigrated to Australia but had returned for his parents' 50th. While here he hired a bike and rode GCC races and other local races – just to remind us of his previous and current form. Mike replied:

I've just read the September newsletter. Thanks for the flattering words about me.

I must say that I felt humbled by the sheer enthusiasm of your welcome when some of you met me on my recent visit. The Gravesend Cycling Club is a lot more than just another cycling club, its sense of camaraderie makes it something that is truly very special.

When I went on the club run I was made equally welcome by people who were barely born when I left for Australia, as I was by people who raced with me in the 80s. That in itself is a massive endorsement for the club as it stands today. I wasn't judged by how fit I looked or what kind of bike I had, I was simply welcomed like an old friend because I wanted to come for a ride. The more people you can do that to, the stronger the

Club will become.

When Don Bardoe saw me again at the VTTA event his face lit up just because he'd recognised me. I was humbled almost to tears by my reception, and I'd like to send a big thank you to all of you for making me so welcome. I should also say a very special thank you to Ian Stone. I swear he was old when I was a teenager, but his love for the sport and the club is something that has stuck with me for thirty years. To see him again at the club 10, recovering from a stroke was deeply moving. One smile and a nod said more than some people can convey in half an hour, I wish you all the best Ian.

I had no idea that some of my records still stand to this day, but I bet Ian remembers them. Something really clicked for me during the early 80's and quite frankly I was it's funny how some rides stick in your mind, but even now, more than thirty years later I can practically recount every mile of the (58.27) juvenile 25 record in 1981. All my club records were set on a steel 531 bike with normal drop bars, one chainring and very basic components. I had a really good skinsuit made for me by the wife of a local bike shop owner, but no other aero aids because they simply didn't exist yet. The juvenile record was set on what would now be a near suicidal course on the A2. I couldn't afford new tyres, so I rode on second hand Clement silks that I had repaired myself. Unfortunately the back one punctured near the turn, but I was lucky to grab a spare off someone who was following another rider in their car. I must have been going well because my bike only had one chainring and a 4 speed, 13 to 16 cassette (to save weight). Some of those climbs are quite significant, and I clearly remembering going up one of the steeper ones in the 14 cog and thinking "that's not normal, but it's probably good." On the way back from the turn, trying to make up time after my puncture, I hardly got out of my top gear, I just span it like a windmill for all I was worth.

It doesn't matter what standard we achieve on the bike, we all live for days when everything just seems to fall into place, and that was one of them for me. The equivalent ride today with all the aero gizmos and no puncture is probably somewhere nearer a 52 to minute ride. For a 15 year old, that's still pretty good I guess.

What does all this mean? It means that you shouldn't take the Club for granted. It's not one of those "You've got to weigh your food and use a powermeter" type clubs, but I'm sure nobody will be thrown out if they put in the work and start winning everything in sight. For me, Gravesend CC remains the lifeblood of club cycling. It's the place for people to learn the sheer joy of sharing experiences on the road, and long may it continue to flourish. I hope the new velo park (or whatever it's called) provides a magnet for new members, and that some of you recognise this opportunity and really work it to make the Club grow further.

As you can see from my experiences, every interaction with new or potential members can last a lifetime, so please recognise that, and help the club go from strength to strength. Regards, Mike

Racing Results

Some results from the end of the racing season.

18/9/11 Hnslow & Dist Whs H25/8
A Gibson 1.03.06

KCA Q25/10
S Hunter 1.06.44 (1st 25mTT)

Time Trials

4/9/11 Alton CC H25/8
A Gibson 1.02.54 course p.b.

25/9/11 Epsom CC G25/53
A Gibson 1.02.50

Sportif

4/9/11 Kent Cycloportif 130km/81m

Kate Savage 5hr 08.50
Adrian Dennison 5hr 09 54
Alan Teale 5hr 14 .47

Triathlon

31/7/11 Olympic Distance, London

S Hunter 2hr 27.28 7th in 50-54 age group (198/1400)

Swim 1.5k 29.18; bike 38.7k 1.00.32; run 9.8k 50.59

my bike time was top of my age group so as you can guess I was wooping chuffed!!!!
(That's what riding/training with a good club does for you!)

This & That

Kate writes about her sportif:

I did the circuit of Kent cycloportive in September. It was a 130km ride starting from Sevenoaks. The start and consequently the finish was quite hilly - the last 2 miles included a very steep section called One Tree Hill, which is the climb up from Underriver. The middle section was quite flat and exposed going down towards Tenterden. This had its own challenges as it was quite windy with a head wind on the return section. My time was 5 hours 8 mins which was a silver classification for my age group so I was quite pleased but I was aiming for 5 hours..... Always the optimist!

~ A very good turnout at the AGM – 15 members – and that included 5 new members. Well done. I hope it is the sign of things to come

~ We send **Roger Wilkings** our best wishes. **Ian Stone** is on the mend, slimming down and following Dorothy's instructions to the letter! Does he have a choice? **Mike Coulter** is now walking, albeit with a decidedly heavy list to port.

AGM Update

A good turnout of 15 for the AGM, with 5 new members present, hopefully augurs well for the future.

Mike Coulter has taken over as Secretary, Andy Sangster continues to be the Asst Secretary, Jason Tibbs will be the Club Runs Coordinator and also coordinate kit orders. Auditors are Graeme Moir and Roger Stevens. Tony Mack continues to be the BC representative. Although Ian Stone, the Treasurer, was not able to be present the accounts were in good order, £1611 in credit.

The issue of timekeeping for the Evening 10s was raised as was the certification of another official timekeeper for the Club.

Insurance and security of Club trophies was discussed. Photographing trophies, trophy valuation and winners signing for trophies were all discussed and action to be initiated.

Tony Mack's proposal for GCC to set up a Go Ride section did not have a seconder although it did stimulate debate. His second proposal of GCC taking active measures to use Cyclopark was adopted. Mike Coulter's proposal that second year membership subscription is included in the purchase of a Club jersey was not carried and the his proposal that Club members riding Open events was changed from 'must' to 'are expected' to wear GCC Club clothing.

The Racing Programme was discussed – changes suggested to first two and last two events of season. Meeting only countenanced possible changes to first two depending on other Club/Open events in the area. Keith Ward had previously suggested trying the first two 10s on a Sunday morning in order to take new members in the Club Run out to see what a 10mTT was like.

Club Nights. The viability of continuing with Harden Hall was discussed. A change of day was favoured and it was to be investigated whether Harden Hall would be available on alternative days. Summer Club Nights were favoured after an Evening 10.

Tony Mack gave an update on Cyclopark. The Pavilion would not be finished until May 2012; the 'running' of Cyclopark was being undertaken by a trust as a suitable outside organization could not be found; events were not taking place – mountain biking and S E road racing as well as the BC Go Ride coaching.

Len's Walks

We have had two walks so far – one from Trosley Country Park led by the great man himself, and the other from Hollingbourne, led by Graeme Moir. 7 on the first walk and 5 on the second – still more than race Opens for GCC!!!! The Dirty Habit hostelry in Hollingbourne is well worth a visit. Not only has it a nice *olde worlde* feel inside but there are a series of printed walks of varying distances available too.

December's walk is being led by Colin & Mo Pearson – further details to come.

January 8 Mike Hickie
February 5 Mike Coulter (tentatively)
March ? Pete Lloyd

All walks start at 10am and all welcome – even if it is just for the 'social' in the hostelry afterwards.

Alpine appeal

Mike and Jason had a sortie to the Alps find out if the hype matched reality – it sure did! Marvellous scenery, riding and atmosphere, and, if you haven't been – go! I am certainly looking forward to repeating the trip or going to the Pyrenees.



It was a short trip, 2 days traveling there and back and 4 days cycling, going down on the Monday and returning on the Saturday. Jason was kind enough to take his van which made the whole operation of managing the bikes and luggage so easy. He has converted the van so that the bikes go in upright with a front skewer mechanism to lock the front wheel in. A10hr drive later and we were in our accommodation just outside the small town of Bourg d'Oisans, at the foot of Alp d'Huez. Our hosts were Dutch and they catered for the skiers in the winter and the cyclists in the spring and summer. They had a good knowledge of the climbs and their possibilities and had a large array of cycling jerseys in an outside lounge area – one from the Bexley. Also each evening they gave us a weather forecast for the next day – important as the weather can be very different between valley bottom and mountain top.

We had an idea of the climbs we wanted to do but planning when to do them, taking into account the weather did raise some problems. We reckoned that as Alpe d'Huez was nearest and would take least time we could fit it in as and when, even doing it on the last Saturday morning if necessary.

The first day had fine weather so we decided to try one of the further climbs – Col de la Croix de la Ferre as one of the hotel staff said it had good scenery and the roads were quiet – both of which were true. 4.5hrs, 62 miles later and having climbed to 2067m we were back after a fantastic ride. Initially from the hotel to past Bourg d'Oisans when you have to turn off the valley road is was flat, and for a short while thereafter, but it soon start to rise – then for the next 2 hours and 18 miles it was uphill!! Not totally, there were some downhill sections, but these were shortlived.

I remember cresting a rise, the road leveling off with a lake to one side thinking we were nearly there, only with disbelief to register the signpost was saying another 11km to go! Fortunately the road leveled for a while and then a downhill section before heading upwards to the Col in the distance.

The scenery was tremendous – high mountains, lakes, alpine fields with cows and sheep, the green of the fields contrasting with the blue of the lakes and sky and white of the clouds– thankfully it was nice weather. No traffic and reasonable road surface. Thankfully too there was a cafe at the top where we sat in the strong sun and replenished our energy stores. Other cyclists came as well as a lot of motorcyclists.



The man himself soaking up the sun at the top. While sitting there I noticed the bikes in the sun so thought it might be better to put them in the shade. I moved mine then went to move Jason's to be stunned by the lightness of it and it was steel frame as well. Cheeky – not content with youth on his side he had no compunction in taking full advantage of technology as well!!

Descending was one aspect we were both a little circumspect about, especially if there was any sign the roads were at all wet. The first day there was not real problem, although we were both a bit tentative, ensuring the brakes were covered. On the descent the cows proved to be another hazard – Jason had just gone through when the herd started to wander over the road, blocking it.



The second day started wet but brightened up in the afternoon so we just did a flattish 34 miles in the afternoon. Day 3 was wet to start so we drove into Briançon along the Lauteret, passing the climb to the Galibier. Again the late afternoon improved so we went out, ending up climbing Alpe d'Huez.

Impressive and great to be riding the famous, or infamous, climb. Fortunately I had my Bianchi/Pantani/Mercatone Uno kit on so I was able to fly! I had gone through the starting point for the climb before I realized it so had to drop off Jason's wheel to retrace in order to start the watch. It was late afternoon so there were not many people on the climb and the weather was quite cool. The Alpe is famous for the 21 z bends and the signs at each bend counted them down. 90% of the way I was going well, as some stages seeing Jason at the next bend, but lost it slightly once entering the ski station at the top, as it is then still quite a way having thought that was it. Still I'll know for next time!!! Once stopped though it was cold, and just long enough to do gilet, and armwarmers it was down. Fortunately there were few people around to worry about lines being taken on corners but the cold started to make me shiver and consequently the bars to wobble, so I was very glad to get down. Certainly I want to ride it again just to 'savour' climb rather than just trying to do it as fast as possible. Also to take the camera.



Team Gravesend bus

The last day we were intending to ride the Galibier and Telegraph but this necessitated a drive to St Michel de Maurienne, park the van, ride both climbs and then return. We went via the Lauteret and Galibier – well at least it help me make up my mind. We stopped at the top in cold wind and snow lying about, carrying on to St Michel. I wasn't going to do the Galibier but was going to ride the Telegraphe with Jason, return for the van then pick up Jason at the top of the Galibier. In the event we both just rode the Telegraphe but with some effort. Nice coffee and rest and then had a relaxing lunch in the sun in the tourist town of Valloire.

I had a triple and rode the Croix de la Ferre and Alpe on 30 x 21/24 (38/32") and the Telegraphe 30 x 21/19 (38/42"). Jason had a compact 50/34 and used between 23-26 (39-35")

The gentle art of falling off. [A philosophical discussion???

Roger Stevens

In an ideal world, no one would ever fall off their bike, and the sun would shine, there would always be a gentle tail wind, and

However, when it does happen, is it better to fall off slowly or at speed ? The quick reaction is to say that the former must be preferable. Mike came off slowly and cracked his thigh-bone. [Hopefully he is recovered by the time you read this]. I had a similar fall about two years ago - taking a right-angled bend quite slowly, I ended up on the floor. Nothing broken, but in some discomfort for a couple of months. Conversely, a colleague at the 'Wednesday Caff' hit loose gravel at moderate speed and escaped with a grazed fore-arm and scuffed lycra. No long-term after effects.

Sporting cyclists often crash at speeds of 20 – 50mph and slide some distance, escaping badly grazed but nothing broken. In contrast, the 'slow-motion' bunch pile-ups can often result in broken collarbones.

Our [= Mike & Roger] theory is that the slow crash results in a direct impact, with the body taking the full force. In a crash at speed, the impact is mitigated by forward motion

- sliding along the road on your a*** !! Bad grazes and tarmac burn certainly, but not the bone-jarring dead impact, thus reducing the chance of breakages. [Unless you slide into an Armco barrier!!].

We naturally refuse to accept that old age is anything more than a minor factor!! Take care, stay upright. Safe riding.

Jacqueline Lewis writes about past member Don French, a member in the late 1950s, a friend of Ian's, as well as myself and many others. He lived at 68, Milton Road, Greenhithe. The following thoughts came to mind when we saw the devastation in Japan recently.

Although a sad tale, I thought I would enlighten members about one of the past members of the club, who was very active around the late 1950s, who sadly will not be with us to celebrate the Club's 90th birthday, due to his involvement with the building of nuclear power stations in Japan. Don French was a club member when I joined in the mid 1950s, so I apologise to all youthful members if this tale bores them, although it may give them "food for thought". Don was a Design Engineer being employed by a company in Erith (Kent). When he spoke of being offered the opportunity to go to Japan regarding the development of their nuclear power stations he was thrilled to have such a chance. Sadly little was known of the unseen dangers and recent events have highlighted such ignorance. He spent a long time explaining to us how nuclear power stations produced their power. I was not, nor ever will be, a supporter of this form of power and the following underlines my view.

Don was in Japan for a considerable period of time. His correspondence told us of the freezing weather conditions and the annoyance of having the radiation levels within him checked each day as he oversaw the construction work and commencement of operations. One thing that did give him some diversion was the stray dog, one of many, that befriended him. A kennel was promptly made, with central heating! I cannot recall how long Don was in Japan for, but when he returned the dog came also! It cost him a fortune! After quarantine it was a very comfortable and loving home for one lucky animal!

Sadly, for Don, it was not such a happy story. The dog outlived Don, who at a later date developed a weakness in his legs, which could not be identified. Even a stay in Guys Hospital could not identify the real cause. His health became worse, and he died in Guys on Boxing Day. Don's mother cared for the dog who lived to a good age.

Nuclear Power - No thank you Don.



Certainly not a cycle path in the Medway towns!! Bison highway a la Canada more likely.

GCC RACING PROGRAMME 2012

(to be confirmed)

(other Championship events to be designated once the SE Open events available)

March	4(Sunday)	10	Q10/24	1030
	17	10	Q10/24	1400
April	10	10	Q10/24	1830
	17	10	Q10/24	1900
	24	10	Q10/24	1900
May	1	10	Q10/24	1900
	9	10	Q10/24	1900
	15	10	Q10/24	1900
	22	10	Q10/24	1915
	29	10	Q10/24	1915
June	5	10	Q10/24	1915
	12	10	Q10/24	1915
	19	10	Q10/24	1915
	26	10	Q10/24	1915
July	3	10	Q10/24	1915
	10	10	Q10/24	1915
	17	10	Q10/24	1915
	24	10	Q10/24	1915
	31	10	Q10/24	1915
August	7	10	Q10/24	1915
	14	10	Q10/24	1915
	21	10	Q10/24	1845
	28	10	Q10/24	18.45
Sept	1	H/C(Snr Champ)	QHC/1	1400
	8	10	Q10/24	1400

Open and Association Events – 2012 – South East DC

Date	Day	Club/Assn	Dist	Course	Start	Fee
1 Jan	Sun	Southborough & Dist Whs	10	Q10/10	10.00	£8.00
10 March	Sat	VTTA (Kent Group) All Ages	10	Q10/22	07.30	£8.00
		VTTA Tandems	10	Q10/22	07.30	£16.00
11 March	Sun	Kent Cycling Assn (3 up TTT)	25	Q25/12	07.00	£24.00
18 March	Sun	Kent Cycles solos - 120 machines over 3 events (ie)	25	Q25/20	07.00	£8.50
		Kent Cycles (2-up TTT)	25	Q25/20	07.00	£17.00
		Kent Cycles (Tandems)	25	Q25/20	07.00	£17.00
24 March	Sat	Southborough & Dist Wheelers	10	Q10/33	14.30	£8.00
25 March	Sun	VC Elan Hilly	22	QS/7	09.00	£8.00
31 March	Sat	De Laune CC	10	Q10/24	15.00	£8.00
8 April	Sun	Kent Cycling Assn (B)	25	Q25/8	07.00	£8.00
9 April	Mon	Thanet RC (2up TT)	9.5	QS/3	08.30	£15.00
14 April	Sat	West Kent RC (ECCA BAR) internet entries	10	Q10/22	07.30	£8.00
15 April	Sun	Tricycle ASSN (SE) Tricycles only	25	Q25/8	08.00	£7.00
21 April	Sat	Catford CC (100 riders)	10	Q10/19	06.20	£8.00
22 April	Sun	Sydenham Wheelers (B)	25	Q25/8	07.00	£8.00
		Sydenham Wheelers Tandems	25	Q25/8	07.00	£16.00
29 April	Sun	Kent Cycling Assn (A)	10	Q10/22	07.30	£8.00
6 May	Sun	Wigmore CC (B) ECCA BAR	25	Q25/8	06.30	£8.00
12 May	Sat	CC Bexley	10	Q10/24	15.00	£8.00
		Tricycle Assn (SE) Tricycles only	10	Q10/24	15.00	£7.00
13 May	Sun	VTTA (Kent Group) (Kent Group Champs) All Ages	30	Q30/2	06.30	£8.00
		VTTA (Tandems)	30	Q30/2	06.30	£16.00
20 May	Sun	San Fairy Ann CC (B) (ECCA BAR)	50	Q50/11	06.00	£8.00
		San Fairy Ann CC (Tandem)	50	Q50/11	06.00	£16.00
3 June	Sun	Kent Cycling Assn (A)	50	Q50/11	06.00	£8.00
10 June	Sun	GS Invicta (B)	25	Q25/8	06.30	£8.00
		GS Invicta (Tandems)	25	Q25/8	06.30	£16.00
17 June	Sun	Kent CA (B) (VTTA Kent Group Champs)	100	Q100	06.00	£8.00
		Kent Cycling Assn (Tandems)	100	Q100	06.00	£16.00
		Tricycle Assn (SE) Tricycles only	100	Q100	06.00	7.00
23 June	Sat	Thanet RC (ie)	10	Q10/42	15.00	£8.00
24 June		VTTA (Kent Group) (B) All Ages	25	Q25/8	06.30	£8.00
		VTTA (Kent Group) (Tandems) All Ages	25	Q25/8	06.30	£16.00
30 June	Sat	San Fairy Ann CC	10	Q10/22	07.30	£8.00
		San Fairy Ann CC (Tandems)	10	Q10/22	07.30	£16.00

GCC CLOTHING

(as at Nov 11)

Road Jersey	(FZ/SS)	2	M	£39
	(FZ/SS)	1	L	39
	(SZ/SS)	1	4/L?	33
Bibshorts		1	2/S?	20
		2	M	44
		1	L	40
Skinsuit		1	4/L?	40
		1	M	66
Gilet		1	M	33
		1	L	33
Roubaix Jacket		1	L	49
		1	3/M?	45
Overshoes		5		12 pair
Armwarmers		1	M/L	14 pair
		5	S/M	14
Sweatshirt/fleece		1	M	15
Casual shirt(SS)		1	L	12

Clothing Manager: Derek Wright 01474 81447