



BEDFORDSHIRE NEWS



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FROM THE EDITOR

PAT OWEN

In the last edition of the newsletter I commented on cycling's improved national profile and I'm putting together this edition following Bradley Wiggins' success in the 2012 Tour de France. It's not often that cycling is on the front pages of the national newspapers or first item on the TV news, but this win seemed to capture the imagination of many, even those who profess no interest in cycling – and then we have the Olympics!

Despite the unpromising start to the summer, members have continued to support our organised rides, though participation in evening and starter rides has been disappointing this year – the weather may have a lot to do with it, of course. Some of us have taken part in cycle events/challenges and these are reported on in this edition.

If you haven't already, I hope you will put the date of our fundraising quiz in your diaries. As explained in April, it takes place on the 24th October at the White Horse in Newnham Avenue in Bedford. We are looking for teams of between 4 and 6. Tickets are £5 and this includes a ploughman's supper. White Horse charity quizzes have a great reputation and are always fun. So come and have a good night out and raise money for your local CTC (and the NSPCC). Contact us if you need more details – I am keeping a list of those who would like to take part (don't worry if you are not in a team yet, as that can be sorted out later).

It was a dull and cool Thursday 17th May when we assembled at Thurleigh for the 2012 Circuit of Bedford.

A couple of dozen or so riders were setting off on the CoB and I was in a group of 4 that left at 9-20. Richard and Neville had both done the ride several times before, about 5 and 8 respectively, but for Trevor and me it was our first time, but then, everything has to be in life! We were passed by 5 or 6 riders before we reached Sharnbrook, so we weren't the fastest, but it's not meant to be a race, more an endurance ride in my case.

The weather improved a bit by mid morning, but then deteriorated when we stopped for our sandwiches in the playground in Houghton Conquest. We stopped here to have a rest before tackling London Lane, or, as I was informed, "maggots hill" because of the odours! Suitably refreshed we set off again for the drag up the hill which was rather bumpy. None of my group dismounted, but another couple had done so for some reason. We

crossed the A6 without any dramas and pushed on through Haynes towards a tea stop at the Shuttleworth Cafe. Suitably refreshed again, and personally feeling that I had my "second wind" we passed through Ickwell and then Moggerhanger, where we used the light controlled crossing of the A603 for safety, then Blunham and Gt Barford passed under our wheels. We were then into the wilds of Colesdon and Staploe, where there was in information control. Bushmead X Roads and Colmworth – where school children waved at us – brought us to the B660 and then back to Thurleigh at 16-30.

We then heard that a gentleman who had set off at the same time as us had arrived back at 15-03 and he is 85 years young! We felt admiration for him. I recorded 65.7 miles for the Circuit, and by the time I got home to Bedford a total of 77.9 at an average of 11.6mph
A good day and many thanks to Trevor Randall and his good lady for all their efforts and organisation.



Chris, Neville, Trevor and Richard, photographed at Thurleigh at the start of the Circuit of Bedford on 17th May.

Car assisted, we aimed for the free car park at Meadow Lane; and this opens up a cycleway of 11 miles, which you share with buses on a guided track. 10 of us did this ride in April and managed to dodge the rain.

What can you say about a cycleway? Only the lack of vehicles and you don't have to change gear very often. When you come to cross a road there are traffic signals to operate. The countryside around has lakes at the St Ives end, fields and woods later on.

11 miles down the track, you arrive at Impington where the Railway Vue public house serves sandwiches, coffee, beer etc. But a mile further along, the lane leads to Histon where there is a village green, pond, trees, seats and even an old pump – just right for a picnic.

The return journey is much the same and, if you're lucky, there might be a tail wind.

BRIEF NOTES ON LEJOG**PAT OWEN**

- Completed on 9th July – 1014 miles in 23 days, using Dawes Horizon Tourer.
- Weather atrocious for most of the time.
- Followed mainly the CTC Bed and Breakfast route, with deviations on to Sustrans cycle paths, especially in Scotland.
- Nobly supported by husband Steve, driving Motorhome, providing hot drinks, Wagon Wheels and Kit Kat and encouragement when required.
- Training on Bedfordshire 'hills' does not adequately prepare you for what awaits you, especially in Cornwall and Devon. But you're fitter at the end than at the beginning!
- Can highly recommend Sustrans' routes 1, 7 and 77 in Scotland (excellent paths, well signposted). Worth purchasing *Scotland, The National Cycle Network* by Harry Henniker for full details and maps.
- Biggest disappointment: arriving at much recommended cafe in Tibetan monastery in Eskdalemuir, just as it closed.
- So far have raised nearly £600 for Marie Curie Cancer Care – if you wish to donate, the website is still open: www.justgiving.com/Pat-Owen

FOR SALE

Ladies' TREK hybrid bike (7100 FX), 21 gears, 44.5 cm, bought in 2003 but still in good condition. Offers around £40. Contact Pat