



BEDFORDSHIRE NEWS



No. 151 July 2014

EDITORIAL

PAT OWEN

What a summer it's been! The Tour de France, not only in Yorks but also more locally for us in Cambridge, preceded by the arrival of the Ladies' Tour in May. Not only that, but the weather has been good too, so no excuse for not getting out on the bike. There are short reports of the above events in this edition on the newsletter.

In the last edition in December, I asked members to let me know if they still required hard copies of the newsletter. Very few of you replied and I am concerned that there may still be members who do require a hard copy, but haven't got round to letting me know, so for the time being we will continue to send hard copies to those on our latest list – a total of about 70. Do please let me know if you *would* prefer to read the newsletter on the website.

Our committee remains small, with the result that members are required to take on multiple tasks. We would love to welcome new committee members – the more we have, the more we can accomplish for CTC Beds members. Why not have a think about it before the next AGM (in October)? If you would like to find out more about what the committee does, just contact one of us and we will be happy to explain.

I leave you with a thought about cycling cultures – my husband and I were lucky enough to spend a few weeks, travelling round Europe in our motor home during the early part of the summer and we frequently used our bikes not only to get from camp sites to shops and places of interest but also for the joy of cycling in unknown terrain. We were pleasantly surprised by how easy it was to put our bikes on trains in Germany – a suburban train had space for 24 bikes! We were also struck by the number of really good bike paths, especially in Germany, Austria and Slovenia. We felt welcomed as cyclists, rather than tolerated. Authorities (and motorists!) here have a lot to learn. Comments welcome.

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THE LADIES' TOUR IN BEDFORD

On the 19th March, CTC Beds' members attended an event at the Embankment Hotel in Bedford to launch the arrival of the Women's Tour on the 8th May. The 5 day elite stage race was to take place in the East of England and Stage 2, sponsored by the University of Beds, the Harpur Trust and BedfordBID would start in Leicestershire and finish on Bedford Embankment.

Unfortunately, the weather on the 8th May was cold and wet but, despite this, there was a good turnout to welcome the riders and there were no accidents on the on the slippery surfaces. Sustrans organised a Cycle Market Place, where visitors were able to have their bikes checked over, have them security marked by Beds Police, have an NHS health check and even buy a refurbished bike. CTC Beds shared a stall with CCNB (Cycling Campaign for North Beds).

TOUR DE FRANCE IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

Following the success of the Grand Depart in Yorkshire, the Tour moved down to Cambridgeshire for the final leg in the UK. Not wishing to miss out on the excitement, a number of CTC Beds members made their way to Great Shelford in Cambs early on the morning of Monday 7th July. Some of us parked in a nearby village and cycled the short distance to Great Shelford, which had really entered into the spirit of the occasion – the place was buzzing with activity, an accordionist serenaded café customers with French melodies and, to top it all, the sun shone!



The peloton, which was due to set off from the centre of Cambridge was not expected in the village until about 12.30, but we took our place on the roadside a couple of hours before in order to ensure a good view. The atmosphere was great and we cheered and waved flags at everything and everyone – the commercial ‘caravane’, throwing out goodies, police motorcyclists and the team cars. At last we saw them approach and then, in a flash of colourful lycra, they were gone! It was all over so quickly but at least we could say we were there.

PS Did you know that a Tour cyclist will burn on average 6,000 calories, three times as much as a normal person?

DAN ALBONE

My attention was drawn recently by our eagle eyed Promotions Officer, Chantal to an article in the Bedford Clanger about Dan Albone, from Biggleswade, ‘cyclist and inventor extraordinaire’. It prompted me to do a little more research on this fascinating Bedfordian.

Dan Albone, nicknamed Smiling Dan, was born in 1860 and was the youngest of 8 children. For his 9th birthday he was given a ‘bone shaker’ and this led to a lifelong passion for bicycles.

He won over 180 cycle races and in 1880 he began to make his own bikes at the Ivel Cycle Works in Biggleswade. In 1886, he developed the Ivel Safety Bicycle, which is viewed as a direct forerunner of the bikes we ride today. An established rider, Alfred Fletcher, rode Dan’s new bike in a 24 hour race and set a new record. The Ivel Safety Bike soon became well known and Dan was almost overwhelmed with orders. Not long after the Ivel, Dan produced a cycle, especially designed for women. Up until then few women rode bicycles, as tricycles were seen as more suitable. After Dan Albone’s invention, more women took up cycling.

Dan Albone also invented the first lightweight, practical and reliable petrol powered farm tractor in 1901, seen as his greatest invention. Dan died suddenly in 1906, at the age of 46. His company lasted until 1920.

If this has whetted your appetite about this local legend, you will find two very informative books at Bedford Central Library: *A Thorough Good Fellow*, by Kathy Hindle and Lee Irvine and *Dan*

Albone, Cyclist, Inventor and Manufacturer, by Ray Miller and Lee Irvine. The Higgins Museum in Bedford has an Ivel Safety Bike among the Great Bedfordians' exhibition. There is more information on: **biggleswadehistory.org.uk**.

RIDGEWAY SCHOOL, KEMPSTON

Earlier this year, CTC Beds made a donation of £250 to Ridgeway School, a special school in Kempston for pupils with physical disabilities, to help fund cycling related activities. The following is an extract from a letter sent to the committee by Graham Allard, headteacher at the school:

'On behalf of all the children and staff at Ridgeway a huge thank you to you, Neville and Chris and all of your membership for your kind and generous donation of £250 towards our school.

As I mentioned, we do cycle with our children and have an ongoing need to purchase equipment such as protective clothing and safety helmets. We also provide a range of fun activities and educational visits to our children, especially during the summer months and all your money will be used to support these opportunities.'

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

- There is a car assisted ride, starting from Barnwell Country Park, near Oundle on the 10th August. The ride is approximately 20 miles with a pub or picnic stop. Meet at Barnwell at 10 am. More details from Neville (see page 1).
- **AGM:** This will take place on Wednesday 15th October at 7.30 pm at the Friends Meeting House in Lansdowne Road, Bedford. Trevor Hughes will be the guest speaker and will give a short talk on, 'Stewarding International Cycling Events'.