



Newsletter of the Cycle Club Bexley

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Well, hello there! It's been a while since your last newsletter, in fairness, I have had articles well under way, along with news of upcoming events, only to sit and watch Boris on TV unravelling all of our plans. We have seen our club runs decimated with various restrictions ranging from household only, two people right up to a group of six – as of 20th December the South East has been put in to Tier 4 Lockdown measures which has knocked us back to two people cycling together.



August allowed for six people to ride together

I am pleased that I have had contributions from Roy Canning, Malcolm Strickland and Paul Blacker, which have helped to deliver a little light entertainment for us all, filling a couple of pages along the way. So, for now, I wish you, our friends and families, a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

TRAINING WITH JO will return soon. Jo has undergone serious surgery and is, judging from her Strava activity, adhering to the recovery program to the letter and will be back on to bike training in around another month. If you haven't read her previous training tips, visit the club website and have a read – they are short and to the point and well worth taking onboard.

2021 MEMBERSHIP FEES

You will be delighted to learn that, as not much happened in 2020, the committee has agreed that members haven't had value for their £12.00 investment, all current paid-up members will therefore have their membership extended until December 2021. Let's hope matters improve soon so that we can all enjoy a full calendar of social events, races and championships.

A little something from Roy Canning....

I saw it when I was riding in France some years back. I wondered how this road got the name, but I think I worked it out.

No doubt the sign-writer at the council depot, in front of the blank plate, paint brush at the ready, turned to his boss to ask the name of the road he had to write. His boss walked over to him while saying, "Oh, it's the Rue du...." and then he stubbed his toe. Too late the damage was done!



A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

So, what's all the fuss I hear, it's an Ordinary Bicycle isn't it, and you lot, well you all ride safety bicycles don't you?

The Penny Farthing, so called because of the different sized wheels, was only popular from 1870 to 1880, and really only until the safety bicycle commercially popularised by John Kemp Staley's 'Rover' safety bicycle in 1885. Is it original? I get asked, of course it is, my 50" front wheel was made 2 years ago to original designs of old. Is it hard to ride? well it's just like riding a bike, once you've done it....



“Why oh why oh why Mr Blacker?” I hear you ask, well it’s fun, pure unadulterated fun. When pedalling down the road the toots of cars are accompanied with smiles and thumbs up (not fingers). There’s little point in pulling over to let the car behind pass, as inevitably they have their phone out and are recording me, a sight they’re not used to seeing. You can’t go anywhere fast, but then who wants to. Kids look and point, and not because I’m wearing Lycra.

Usually when I ting-a-ling my bell to warn pedestrians that I’m behind them, when they turn around there’s a huge double take as they realise, I’m sitting 5 feet in the air looking down on them. The view over peoples’ heads and hedges is very unfamiliar, and I’ve ridden roads many times on my solo I don’t recognise up high.

“How’s the weather up there?” is a common question from fellow cyclist, and well done, good on you.

The gearing leaves enough to be desired. I can manage hills, although not Old Terrys Lodge just yet. And going downhill, whilst I do have a tiny back brake that’s about as much use as a fart in a thunder storm, it’s ‘fixie’ back pedalling. Start at the top the speed you want to be at the bottom is my mantra, and there’s no shame in walking with a Penny.

The obligatory waistcoat sets me off, but I’ve always got a Bexley top on underneath.

To answer the question you’re all asking – YES! I intend to do some open 10s, I’m going to pick nice flat ones to start with, as potholes can mean ‘head plants’!

I am not alone though, in the Garden of England, locally there are 3 of us, Les and Graham (who rode up Terrys Lodge on his a few weeks ago) and myself attracting all sorts of looks as the ‘London bus - wait for ages then 3 come along’ happens for people.

If you see a Penny Farthing out and about, remember the equation for all cyclists of owning bikes ... N+1.

For all you oldies out there, yes I am OL 19s 10 & 3/4d short of a quid.

Up the Bexley!

‘THE STATESMAN RIDE 2020’ by Malcolm Strickland

It may be known, that Kent members of the TA would organise regular rides throughout the year. With each member suggesting in turn a route to follow. Usually incorporating a pub lunch at the end and/or at least

one café stop along the way! These are normally open for others to join in with or without a trike. Typically, CCB members some wearing both hats. They are very sociable affairs and the pace is steady with the emphasis on enjoyment. They tend to be held in East Kent where roads are a bit quieter and have numerous lanes to explore including the Romney Marsh which is quite good for being level! With the sad passing of CCB member Owen Harden last year, whom lived in Ramsgate and organised rides around his Isle of Thanet district, and as I live a few miles West of this area, John ‘1066’ Hastings asked if I would like to arrange a ride for the group in this area using ‘The Rising Sun’ pub in the village of ‘Stourmouth’ as a base? The venue is familiar from past exploits and are welcoming to folk such as we for lunch, (*with additional liquid assistance*), especially as it’s normally a quiet period midweek!

I know the roads well around there and quickly linked up several interesting twisty lanes to take us on a devious route to Sandwich for a coffee stop and return via a route about 90% different to that on the outward leg. In total, about 19 miles. (Some of it even incorporated part of a National Cycle Network route). The proposed date was to be 25th March and so the pub was booked!

Alas, something called Covid-19 got in the way a few weeks before and this amongst just about everything else was cancelled or postponed or temporarily closed as precautions to combat the spread of the virus. Determined NOT to let this tiny infective agent defeat the mighty CCB/TA faction 😊 I monitored the situation through the following months in the hope things would improve.

Lo and behold due to statistics showing such an improvement. All social areas were gradually permitted to re-open! Even then ‘our pub’ was only opening Thursday to Sunday and to assist their logistics, meals had to be ordered in advance of attendance. Get in quick I thought before it goes pear-shaped again.

After consulting with John, we earmarked Thursday 29th October. *If the Italians can run ‘The Giro’ in October then no excuses for the CCB/TA hardened vets not to ride in this month too!!* He helped spread the word amongst potentially interested parties. If there was more than six of us then technically, we would have to ride in split groups and of course dine in the same way.

Eventually eight ‘States persons’(!) subscribed to the gathering with three attending the lunch only, Roy Canning, Tom Wakefield and June (*as a ‘Stateslady’, of course*). So, no problem with the cycle activity part that saw the remaining five ‘Statesmen’ turn out on a wet but mild day with a brisk south-westerly. Our John and Trevor Oliver (San Fairy Ann/TA) on their trikes with Mick Morris, Tim Wardlow (Medway

Velo/TA) and yours truly as ride leader wending our way along muddy, puddled lanes.



Café Stop. Trevor, Mick and Tim enjoy their coffee whilst John Hastings takes centre stage.

The 'Beach Hut' café, Sandwich, whom had been requested to anticipate our arrival, was reached. Then not only finding I was the only one to bring a lock! (How many years have these blokes being cycling?!) Fortunately, it was a cable type which secured all the solos to a wall ring. It was felt the trikes wouldn't be such a 'nickable' item given the technique required to ride away on them..... I couldn't possibly comment 😊 I also gave out spare masks.....no names....these were carried 'just in case' for such an eventuality, to gain entry in to the café! (ex-Boy Scout see.....it never leaves you). The rain had increased a bit more by now but still quite tolerable due to the temperature. After a hot drink and a snack for some....no names... We set off around the one-way system. Being half term, Sandwich Town was quite busy even in the poor weather, then took the road to 'Woodnesborough' and the only real climb of the day; turning sharp right at the top, the route provided wind assistance back to the pub. (I think of everything!).

On reaching the hostelry, puncture free. We joined our three clubmates and had a splendid meal....(with additional liquid assistance)....and a good natter. Even though Coronavirus restrictions meant being on two socially spaced tables (4:4) and the waitress in charge made sure we didn't wander about and wore masks when we got up from the table for any reason. *Hey ho!* The worst of the rain had passed over while we were inside too! At least we had managed to have a cycle social when so many long-term annual examples had been prevented in the county this year. Take care all. Stay safe.

Malcolm

Thank you, Malcolm, I must have missed my invite 😊

So, that was going to be the end of the newsletter – three pages (that never sits well with me!). It was getting late, so I saved the mag and went to bed; that's when my mind got to thinking about all the rides that we, collectively and individually, had enjoyed over the summer, when the roads were quiet and the weather was warm and dry; so here's a bit more from my cluttered mind.

A PENNY FARTHING SHORT OF A SHILLING

I felt the need to add to Mr Blacker's account of owning a Penny Farthing – the following picture was taken on 16th August, Paul, along with Luigi and John (pictured) called in at the Pond View Café in Otford; across the road a couple of guys parked up on their 'Ordinary' Bicycles – something clicked with Paul, he was transfixed by these amazing machines. Fast forward one week and Paul was having a test ride atop a bike owned by Penny Les (yes, it even changes their name) and within a few more weeks he was the proud owner of his own big-wheeler. So was born, Penny Blacker. I do like to stamp a nickname on my friends!



I asked Paul about going downhill – apparently you have to decide to get off well before you want to get off as your only brake is the pedals, therefore, as you remove your feet from said pedals to begin the dismount down the two steps at the rear of the bike, the machine goes in to freewheel and gathers speed at an alarming rate as you try to clamber off the rear! Honestly, though, I do fancy having one myself!

CLUB RUNS

Exercise restrictions during these times of pandemia have see-sawed between family only and up to six people in a group. Early on, it was lovely to hear about club mates riding with their families, Angela and I dusted off our tandems and took to the empty roads, Pam took her musician son, Jordan, out for a

bike ride, he soon found out that mum, thirty-something years his senior, wasn't too shabby on a bike – he made an excuse for keeping the ride short!



Living closer to London than the rest of us, Luigi was taking advantage of the deserted city, sharing tales of deserted roads that are normally choc-o-block and Piccadilly and Oxford Circus with not another sole to be seen. These stories encouraged some of his other club mates to explore whilst we had such an opportunity. Luigi was up there again just a few nights ago, below is his photo of a deserted Trafalgar Square with London's Christmas Tree beautifully reflecting in the wet limestone pavement.



In summary, our bikes have been our saviour, our excuse to get outside, our excuse to socially distance. Please, stay safe everyone and adhere to the Government Guidelines, a vaccine is coming.

CALENDAR

This is where I would normally be listing social dates for the Christmas Buffet, the Roller Championships and the Annual Dinner and Dance – well, the committee has taken the difficult decision to cancel each of these events, for this year, due to the Coronavirus risks and restrictions. Likewise, the AGM is postponed until a date yet to be determined, therefore all committee members will continue in their posts until a satisfactory and safe meeting can be held. However, the future is bright:

2021 Evening 10 Mile Time Trial Series

First event on Wednesday 7th April 2021 through to Wednesday 18th August 2021

At the time of writing, it is not yet clear whether entries will need to be submitted via the CTT website or whether a less restrictive entry method will be allowed – we will be informed in due course.

2021 CCB Open 10 Mile Time Trial

Saturday 19th June 2021

Q10/24 Isle of Grain

Event HQ – Lower Stoke Village Hall

First Rider away at 15:00

Entries via the CTT website

2021 Hill Climb Championship

Stansted Hill, Sevenoaks TN15 7PH

Wednesday 25th August 2021

First rider away at 18:30

By the time the next issue of the Newsletter appears I should have news and dates for the various distance **TT Championships, the Triathlon and Mountain Bike Championships** and maybe whether we are likely to be able to gather for the **Summer Barbecue**.

Next Issue – Due March 2021



See you at the Postbox in Farningham at **10 o'clock** on a Sunday....soon.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!