

The Signpost

Darley Abbey

**Magazine of the
Derby Mercury RC**



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Editorial

First let me apologise for the late issue of the magazine. The reason is simple; until a couple of weeks ago I had absolutely nothing to put in it.

That's not to say that there's nothing going on. On the contrary, anyone who's been to the clubroom recently will know that the club is thriving. There are lots of people about and they are taking part in all kinds of races, audax rides, training rides, charity rides, holidays, touring and some very successful kids events. If you've done something interesting, different, impressive or amusing or if you want to encourage others to join you why not communicate this to the rest of the club membership (now over 200!) through the pages of your magazine?

On the topic of communication, our club has a web site that is the envy of many other clubs. It is accessed by lots of people, both club members and others. In fact many new members have joined us after accessing the web site. A much used part of the site is the forum, where, in the true spirit of free speech, club members, and non-members too, can say pretty much what they like. However, there is a down side to this. It is easy to get carried away with a debate or exchange of views and forget that anything posted on the forum can be read by anyone and everyone. Obviously it is

unacceptable to make personal attacks on an individual but we should also be aware that the club can be damaged by such exchanges. So next time you are about to post something on the forum, before you hit the send button, ask yourself if you're happy for everyone in the world to read it and if everyone will interpret the words as you intended.

OK, that's enough preaching for now.

I'd like to thank all those who rallied round and produced the material for this issue of the magazine.

Let me also draw your attention to the item by Sarah Todd on her attempt at the Three Peaks Cyclo-X to raise money for research into ME (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). I'm sure she would appreciate all contributions. How about pledging an amount for completing the event and a bonus if she beats her target time of 5 hrs?

Dave Ellis

Cover Photo: A stylish dismount by Chris Bradley during the 'Sleepless in the Saddle' 24 hour mountain bike event.

Go Ride - Interim Review

Comments from our Go Ride Coach, Jim Crew on the situation as of early August 2010.

Someone said to me today - "I hope Go Ride is around in 3 or 4 years time, when mine are old enough"

My answer? I hope its around in 3 or 4 years time too. I think it will be. Even if British Cycling (BC) pull the plug on funding - which is always possible due to cuts higher up the food chain - they have embedded the principal of go ride (lower case as to me it just means go ride your bike - not something that needs national advertising or higher level help) so the volunteers at ground level are now in place. If coaching courses dry up due to lack of funding at BC to actually run the courses, and councils cant afford to fund training to pay for the courses - then clubs will need to generate their own cash to send people to be trained.

I reckon at £1-50 per child per week, we could at least break even after the 1st year (15 kids per week average, 8 months (34 weeks) of the year (train with lights until deepest darkest winter - Heanor do it, so why not?) = £765 per year (don't get too excited Avicé - not yet anyway).

It could be even more if we did a few Go Races - as we have done on a couple of Tuesday evenings - but we could do a weekend. We may get 50+kids? This would need volunteers though.

Costs? To train one coach per year ~£300, first aid course every 3 years £150. How many resources do we need? What do 50 cones cost every 2 or 3 years to replace the ones the kids ride over every week?

We advertise locally to get our own supply of kids - parents think its great having proper

cycle coaching - its not Cycling Proficiency - and they might pay more than £1-50 a week too (I don't mind if some can't pay - so long as parents aren't just using us, the kids can train with us for free, but there has to be some payment eventually).

As soon as we book a venue for an event things start to get expensive, but we have the clubroom from 6-30 on Tuesdays and we don't use it before 8 pm once the evening time trials are finished for the season - so there's a slot that we could use to get the rollers or turbos in. Just a thought, but we would need someone to run it - any volunteers?

The kids and parents could stay for half an hour afterwards for a cup of tea and a wagon wheel - then they feel part of a club - and while we may seem like a big scary cycling club, with elite bike racers (!!!!!) we're only a group of ordinary people doing something we enjoy. Once they've spoken to us once, they're in and I think we (and other cycling clubs) have something that more popular sports can't match - we're mega cool (my 18 year old daughter is no bike fan, but she says if it ain't football, then its good and she grudgingly says cycling is right up there).

Cycling post Olympics is right up there due to Wiggins and Cav. - even more so than Pendleton and Hoy - although they help too. If they could see Swadlincote boy Dave Clarke winning Prem Calenders (like he did 2 weeks ago) and then turning up for the club 10, then the kudos ramps up even more. Ditto Rob Sharman. ditto Rob Hayles (playing the mouth organ while he was riding the British Nationals) and Dean Downing - Harry spent 2 days with them last week at the next stage up from Go Ride at Forest Town track and Darley Moor - what other sports offers kids the chance to be coached (and shouted at - in a nice way with Rob) by some of the best riders in the country ?

Talent Team of old was different - it cost a lot

of money to take a handful of the very best kids in the country to regular training camps. If the funding dries up - what's left? Worse than nothing as most kids got nothing anyway, and the few who were creamed off have lost all their support so they're in limbo (I think commercial coaching / sponsorship could come in here - but then we're in the realms of only those who can afford it get the coaching - and look where tennis ended up. Shaneze Reade wouldn't have made it as a tennis player when she was slumming it in Crewe).

Also we're very lucky to have Notts and Derby Cyclo-X - its a social event , we can race in it, our kids can race in it, people see 20 Derby

Mercury jerseys racing and want to know more (massive pulling power of our splendid kit). It gives us something to aim training at - eg - quote "in 5 weeks time you'll be able to use all this in a race".

If we were to brainstorm the perfect event for getting kids (and adults) into cycle racing - we couldn't beat Notts & Derby Cyclo-X.

That's about it really. Is Go Ride in the club healthy? Between 15 and 25 kids every week says it is. Will it be around in 5 years time? Don't bet against it.

Walking With a Tandem

By John and Margaret Welch

It was the last day of our tandem trip from Guingamp, in Brittany, to Auxerre where we were to be collected the next day by the European Bike Express (and thereby hangs another tale). We made all the correct turns and crossed the l'Yonne River by the bridge that was on the right road to the pick-up point.

We stopped to take photos of the impressive view of the medieval town and then realised we were opposite an Ibis hotel. This would be a convenient place from which to explore the old town and to continue on the morrow to the bus. So we went to book in.

Yes, they had a room, and yes, they had a garage for the tandem, although this would be an extra 10 euros. We deemed this to be worth it, the alternative being to leave it outside on a busy road.

We unloaded the tandem and asked the

receptionist - where is the garage? She spoke very little English but the directions were - Outside the door, turn left and the garage is down the street. Collecting two keys, one for the secure area and one for the individual garage, no. 4, we went out of the door, collected the tandem and set off down the street.

At about 50m there is a large, brown double gate. Tried both keys but neither would open the gate. Wandering with the tandem a further 50m or so along the street there are no other gates.

Turning around, I walked the tandem back to reception to request further instructions. There is some discussion between the receptionist and another lady employee, who then accompanies me and the tandem to turn left outside the hotel and down the street to the brown gates. She tries both keys in the gate, again without any success. Looking through the gate it is obvious that this is the front garden area of a private house. So the three of us, the French lady, me and the tandem return

to the hotel.

It is now obvious that no-one present knows the whereabouts of the garage. The receptionist disappears into the office and after some minutes she beckons me in and offers me the telephone. She has called someone who knows where the garage is and can speak sufficient English to explain to me.

Following the instructions, three of us - the French lady, me and the tandem turn left leaving the hotel, walk down the street about 250m to a bank opposite the Leclerc supermarket, turn left around the bank and in 20m there is a grey door. The small key operates the up and over door giving access to the secure area. The French lady returns to the hotel and I wheel the tandem in to find the door to no.4 garage is already open. Being of a trusting nature, I wheeled in the tandem and slammed down the up and over door. The door did not close properly, locking only at the top right hand corner, so inserting the key into the lock I tried to reopen the door. It would not reopen despite my best physical efforts being applied to both key and door, sometimes simultaneously.

My thoughts go along the lines of, to-day is Saturday so it is unlikely that anyone will be available to fix the door to-day, and to-morrow being Sunday there is no chance. But I need the tandem out to go home to-morrow. So it is back to reception, this time without the tandem.

Fortunately, when I arrived there was a coloured gent behind the desk. He spoke good English and had at one time worked at this hotel but was now a pastor. I explained my dilemma and he agreed to accompany me back to the garage. Between us we managed to spring the door open, I removed the tandem and he went on his way. I slammed the door on no.4 garage and walked the tandem back to the hotel. On arrival I went behind the desk and dropped the key to no.4 garage into the waste bin, much to the horror of the

receptionist, who quickly rescued it. She then offered me the keys to garages nos.2 and 3.

So, once again, out the hotel door, turned left and wheeled the tandem down the street and into the garage secure area. Tried the key into garage no.3 but was unable to get the door open so turned my attention to garage no.2. In with the key and I felt the mechanism click over, but still the door would not open. I then noticed some arrows made with a marker pen on the door indicating that the knob should be twisted. Tried this to no effect so turned the key again, then turned the knob and bingo, the door opened. So I closed the door, locked it, unlocked it and opened it again, and again, and again. Finally convinced that the door was working, I wheeled the tandem into the garage, slammed the door down, locked it, unlocked it, opened it again, closed it, locked it and went away.

We went to explore Auxerre, had something to eat, had a good nights sleep followed by breakfast then went to collect the tandem. Opened the door to the secure area and then unlocked the door to garage no.2. With a feeling of great relief, the door opened and I wheeled out the tandem. I closed the garage door and out of curiosity I tried to open it again, and it wouldn't open. But I couldn't care less, and feeling very relieved, I walked the tandem back to the hotel for the last time.

From literature in the hotel room I found that Ibis hotels offered a free nights accommodation if there was a problem they could not solve within 15 minutes. We more than qualified and so had a free nights lodgings.

York Rally

By Scott Savage

Each year, coinciding with National Bike Week in the 3rd week of June, there is a cycling rally in York. The rally is held in the centre of York Racecourse, the Knavesmire, and has been going since 1945. At one time York Rally was the highlight of the cycling year for many cycle tourists. The rally is still big but has to compete with lots of other events nowadays so is not as popular as during the 1950's when the popularity of cycling was at a high.

In days gone by many people cycled to and camped at the rally but nowadays with the rise of motorised transport, caravans and campervans are more popular. There is still a hardcore of cycle campers though. I cycle to York but to save carrying camping kit for the 100 miles from Derby, I stay in the Youth Hostel which is just a short ride up the bank of the river Ouse.

Why go to York? There are rides from the rally, of various distances, which tour the local countryside. At the centre of the rally is an arena with grass track racing, a cycle stunt show, various cycling organisations have tents or marquees and there is a large trade area where you can buy all sorts of components, accessories or clothing. There is also a cycle auction for any unused bikes and a saddlebag sale for offloading any cycling bits gathering dust in the garage. There is also the social side. The rally is a good chance to meet up with cycling friends old and new, and to find out where they have been or are going.

My first rally was the 'New Millenium Rally' in 2000 and I have been back most years since. I lived in Coventry then so cycled the 140 miles up to York with some others who were regular visitors. I remember that ride as being tough. South Yorkshire is flat which means long periods on the saddle.

The 100-110 miles from Derby is much better and I now have a route which includes a couple of café stops.

York Youth Hostel is a well appointed city hostel. There is a restaurant, bar, washing and drying rooms and a cycle store. It is a short walk from the city centre and during the rally attracts a number of cyclists. All the people in my dorm this year were cyclists.

Mercury members that I saw at York this year included Avice and Geof Sleath, Margaret and John Welch, Joy Potts and Dave. Jim Hopper and Jim Crew had ridden to York via Lincoln as part of the York Arrow which is an Audax event for teams. The winners being the team that can ride the furthest distance to York in 24 hrs! They clocked 270 miles.

The grass track racing this year included the National 800m Champs on the Saturday. Unfortunately the weather was not conducive to standing outside too long so I did not see this. On Sunday the weather was much improved and after attending the cyclists service at the York Minster I joined the procession back to the rally.

As I ride to York I take a couple of days off the bike recovering ready for the ride home. For those who are strong enough or travelled by car there are rides of various distances that go out on Saturday including the 100 mile Ron Kitching Memorial CTC challenge ride. Ron was big in the cycle trade and a stalwart of the rally who came from York.

People who stay on the rally site have complained that the facilities are quite basic. To this end it looks like the rally could be relocating possibly to Harrogate in a couple of years.

Three Peaks Cyclo-X Race: Raising money and awareness for M.E

By Sarah Todd

Three Peaks of Yorkshire: Inglebrough, Whernside, Pen-Y-Ghent, a bike and me; the idea being to ride, scramble, climb and run (ahem, walk) the route alongside three- or four-hundred other people. The Three Peaks Cyclo-X is one of the most famous Cyclo-X races in the world, dating back to the fifties, and is notorious as being one of the hardest.

The winners complete the circuit in around 3 hours, with the slowest taking up to 6 or 7 hours to complete; my aim is 5 hours (send out a search party if I'm not back after 7!). The ride starts off clambering up Inglebrough and if previous photos are anything to go by, riders tend to be bike-carriers before too long, hauling themselves up, clinging onto grass and walls for support. After a grassy descent with numerous hidden dips we then attack Whernside. The descent off Whernside seems to be the hardest; it's rocky with big ridges for water drainage and tends to be slippy in the wet. After riding along the road to Pen-y-Ghent we then muster any energy remaining to drag ourselves up it, trying to avoid riders descending (we go up and down the same way which could be interesting).

I've wanted to complete the race for years, but due to the nature of the course riders must be at least juniors before they are allowed to participate, at which point I'd started university. I was then unfortunate enough to be diagnosed with M.E (also known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) which kept me off the bike (and anything else remotely energetic) for four years. It was unclear if I'd ever fully recover (many don't) but luckily I slowly started getting better and as I started cycling once more (trying not to let my pride take too much of a hit as an old man cycled past me on a sit up and beg bike!), I started to think about the possibility of racing again. Over the last 2 years I've been fortunate enough to make a

good recovery and have begun to dust off my old racing bikes. Last year I had a dabble in the Notts and Derby league and decided to aim for the Three Peaks this year, to fulfil that old dream. My Dad was also unfortunate enough to suffer from ME for a number of years and he too has made a reasonable recovery. Therefore we've entered as a Father/Daughter team to show that the illness hasn't beaten us and we will race again.

M.E is a strange illness that many people don't understand, and it has a lot of stigma attached to it. I've been one of the very lucky few who have made a good enough recovery to return to reasonably normal living and I'd like to draw attention and improve awareness about it, so as part of completing the Three Peaks I'd also like to raise money for one of the main charities supporting people with M.E, Action For M.E. The charity campaigns for better research, services and treatments for M.E sufferers (the cause and cure are still unknown), so if anyone would like to sponsor me I'd be very appreciative! I'll write up a race review in the next magazine to let you know how I get on. I can bring sponsorship forms to the clubhouse over the next few weeks or you can sponsor me at the following site:

<http://www.justgiving.com/Toddy-does-the-3peaks>

For more information on the Three Peaks see:

http://www.3peakscyclocross.org.uk/race_info.htm

And for more information on M.E see:

<http://www.afme.org.uk/default.asp>

Thanks very much!

Sleepless in The Saddle 2010: Not so dirty weekend

By Dave Banks

In an attempt to break the countrywide drought I tested my St Swithern like influence and decided to enter a 24 Hour MTB race, Sleepless in the Saddle. Normally this would guarantee heavy rain and floods. I had to recruit a new team, after the rain and Somme like mud of 2008 SITS (Noah's 2 by 2 team won the mixed pairs in that one) since the old team all came up with excuses like 'I'm still cleaning my bike' or had arranged to be out of the country. The new team comprised, in addition to myself, Chris Bradley, to do the run at the start, Lee Blades for the night shift, Pete Turner to bring up the average age so we could class as a vets team and Merve Bradley as team manager to remind us what day it was.

The forecast looked a bit poor for the weekend so I dug out the mud tyres but the light showers barely damped down the dust.

I am not sure we were the best prepared team; I had glued my bottom bracket back in to stop it creaking and Lee had a hole corroded in his forks.

Chris gave us a flying start, coming in 5th in the run and handing over to me in the top 30 after the first lap, which meant that we all had clear rides, avoiding the bottle necks in the single track.

Jim Crew and family came over for a family outing and Jim, Harry and Isobel came back to stay the night and help out.

During the afternoon we took it in turns to do single laps. We had estimated that each lap would take 45 minutes but found that we were closer to 40 minutes. After a few laps our position was around 10th overall.

The course was a mix of wide bumpy tracks round field edges, fast single track with some

great bomb hole drops and then some sections of very narrow single track between the trees which required a lot of concentration. There was no mud - even the water splash was just a damp trickle and towards the end of the event some sections became very dusty and the steeper descents rutted.

Being quite a big circuit you did not often get stuck behind people in the single track and everyone was very courteous about moving over, although the faster riders often took the excuse to have a breather if they got caught behind a slower rider.

For the night stretch we agreed to switch to double laps. Chris's first double lap was in the light but I had to ride through the dusk and it was completely dark when I finished. Dusty conditions are usually the most difficult as you ride into the woods - it suddenly becomes very dark and your eyes cannot adjust.

Most of the time we were overtaking slower riders, however halfway round my second lap someone had the temerity to overtake me up one of the long drags. He got a couple of hundred yards away from me but I could not let him get away and by the long flat stretch towards the end of the lap I got onto his wheel. When he slipped a gear on the next climb I attacked and got clear and finished a couple of hundred yards up, probably not important in the overall result but it was fun to have a bit of a head to head race in the dark.

It was all going smoothly until Chris's second double when he hit a tree and cramped up but still managed to keep going reasonably. I then went out and put my rear mech into the back wheel and got it ripped half way round the wheel. I quickly pulled it straight and set off, trying to work out how many gears were still working (about 3 more than a single speed, always look on the bright side). With Jim's help and an all night bike shop by 4 am I had an almost fully functional bike again.

Lee and Pete switched back to single laps.

Lee stripped the remaining teeth off his middle ring, another visit to the bike shop got this sorted out. They had the pleasure of riding through the day break which is always the best time to be riding.

At 7 am we switched back to single laps and were lying 9th team overall, 6th in our category and 1st vets team. It was turning quite warm and sunny and we were turning out consistent laps, still at around 40 minutes.

I passed Mike Hall a couple of times. He used to ride for DMRC but has moved to South Wales. He was riding as a solo; last year he was second, this year he was aiming for better. When I first passed him he was only 10 minutes down on the leader but the last time I passed him he had blown and was going very slowly and unfortunately he had to pack with only half an hour to go, unfit to continue.

Towards the end it was getting a bit tight on time to get Pete out on his last lap but Lee put in a storming lap to hand over with 10 minutes to go so Pete got the pleasure of finishing us off and shaking the hand of the legendary organiser Patt.

We had gained one place in our enthusiast male category but a couple of mixed teams had overtaken us, including the might of the British Army who just got ahead on the last lap.

The final position: 11th Overall, 5th Enthusiast Male team and 1st Veteran team - not bad for a group of roadies!

36 laps in 24 hours 37 minutes 57 seconds.

Thanks to Jim and Merve for their help and to the team for keeping it going.

Comments from the team:-

Pete Turner:

In the team event we finished about 20 minutes behind the 4th placed team and 16

minutes ahead of the next team (2nd placed vets) so no pressure on me during the last lap
Split times for each rider (all based on 9 laps)
Lee 6:00:54, Dave 6:01:16, Chris 6:09:44
(but allow 4 minutes for the run at the start)
Pete 6:26:03, which should add up to
24:37:57 for 36 laps. Lee just pipped Dave with a storming last lap although Dave takes the honour for fastest lap of the day (37:03)

From a personal point of view, it was great to be involved in a proper team event as cycling (particularly racing) can be a very solitary occupation. So thanks to the rest of team, not forgetting Merv. B and the Crews, for all their support during the weekend.

Can we get another team out next year?
It's a great event and would suit some of our 'cross riders as the course is not too technical (as long as it doesn't rain).

Chris Bradley:

It was a great weekend for our team! Good campsite, all pitched together as a team - thanks Dave for sorting that out. Merv and Jim kept on top of the timings and changeovers so we never missed a beat there.

Plenty of tea on the brew at all hours kept us going, for me personally a curry and pie at 3am hit the spot after my second stint of double laps where I crashed then blew big style on the last lap. Quite amazing how much riding tempo off road takes out of you when you up the distance. I was not expecting to crack! Lesson learned. Back to decent enough times the next lap out.

A little fun at around 3.30am when Dave came back in with trashed rear mech, luckily a trip down to event village to the open bike shop (at 3.30am) got him a mech and the guys got it sorted. A little later Lee was off to buy a chainring when he came in with fewer teeth than he went out with.

From daylight we just had to keep it smooth and a good pace to win the Vets category, 20

mins advantage was a nice gap to keep the pressure down. But we kept it honest and moved up a place in the Enthusiast Mens cat also late on.

As Pete has said, everyone put the effort in, luckily we had no major disasters, the weather was really kind keeping the course dry, bumpy and very dusty all weekend but nice and rideable in all areas. If it was wet I bet it would be hell out there! The team were knocking out really consistent fast laps, all the help and shouts from the supporters spurred us on no end.

I have to say it was nice to finish mind, legs and back were quite sore by the last lap. We must go back next year to defend our title.

The rest of you up for it? I will make sure I am fitter for sure.

In terms of stats, very impressive and consistent, if I had not lost 4 -5 mins when I blew up I would have had a good set also. Dave and Lee really were neck and neck. Pete did a great job after all his efforts in previous weeks to be up there too.

I make it we did 288 miles in the 24 hours, not bad for off road!

So come on next year? Warm up with Enduro 6 in May, maybe go for Mountain Mayhem in June, then push it on with SITS in August.

A Trip to the Alps

By Sarah Todd

In possibly the wettest week since records began an intrepid group of Merc riders (see photo) headed to the Alps (led by Mr "It'll never rain" Kilgannon) for a "holiday". As we creaked up the Ventoux in freezing rain and hail I'm not sure many of us were convinced this was actually a holiday, but let's not be pedantic. Despite the rain it was a brilliant holiday enjoyed by everyone, with some great cycling and good times to be had by all...

Upon arrival we were 10 very relieved cyclists when we realised our beloved bikes had made it in one piece at the hands of SleazyJet. We were based in Bourg d'Oisans at the foot of Alpe d'Huez and within easy reach of Les Deux Alpes, Le Col De La Croix De Fer, Le Col Du Glandon and within a short drive of numerous others.

So on the first afternoon we had an easy 'breaking in' run along the shelf ride as it's commonly known (up to hairpin 6 of Alpe d'Huez then turn off and climb gradually along a road winding itself up the mountain, not advisable for those with vertigo). This was a nice awakening for Rob and Martin who were braving it on 39-29 groupsets, but were still manly proclaiming these gears were perfectly sufficient.

After the second day I'm not sure they were quite so convinced however; we conquered Les Deux Alpes in the morning (and even had lunch outside in the sun!) and then had a shot at Alpe d'Huez in the afternoon, when the weather felt it had been too kind to us and decided to throw it down. A kind bunch of French cyclists became our new best friends after offering to drive Steve K back down to pick up our transport when we'd arrived at the top, shivering and wet. This was to set a cruel precedent for the rest of the trip; slog it up a



Team Mercury: L to R: Mark Gray, Steve Kilgannon, Robert Slater, Kevin Cunniffe, Stephen Harrison, Alan Sheldon, Debbie Hamp, Richard Marshall-Clarke, Sarah Todd. (Martin Wimpenny not present for the photo).

big mountain, get very wet and extremely cold, to the extent that riding back down the other side became more of a torment than a treat. Hats off must be given to Steve H who somehow climbed Alpe d'Huez after the biggest burger and chips the cycling world had ever seen!

Tuesday dawned to yet more rain and a quick car journey to the bottom of the Col du Telegraf, a warm up to the day's main ride; the formidable Col du Galibier. We evidently reached Valloire on the French 3 hour lunch break and every place in town was shut, so we filled up on tasty gels and bars (yum yum!) before hitting the Galibier.

The beast was pretty much as bad as people make it out to be and most people were probably very relieved to get near the top and find the road to the very top was closed due to avalanche risk. This meant riding through the tunnel and avoiding the last few hundred metres of climbing. Unfortunately I rolled up about half an hour after everyone else and someone from another trip was pointing all her

riders up to the top and said all her guys had gone up. Well, it seemed daft to go that far and not actually make it to the top so off I pootled. By the time I got to the café I think they were about to send out a search party, but when Rob heard I'd gone up to the top he felt obliged to go and get his bike and ride up there too (or he'd have never heard the last of it)!

On Wednesday we drove down to the Ventoux after the weather promised us some sun in the Provence region. Unfortunately it neglected to tell us that the Ventoux has a microclimate of its own and

by the time we'd reached Chalet Reynard the fog and rain had settled in. Seeing more than a few feet in front of you was impossible and many of us were too cold on the way back down to even stop and pay our respects at the Tommy Simpson memorial. Steve H had by this point perfected the art of finding a convenient bus stop to shelter in when the rain really poured, but I think he realised that he'd be sheltering for a long time if he waited for the rain to stop. I felt very smug with my



Rob, Kevin, Sarah and Martin at the Tom Simpson Memorial on Mont Ventoux.

30-29 gear combo as Rob started to concede that *maybe* a compact would have been nice, but only maybe. We went for the old-school trick of stealing a load of old newspapers from the café at the top to put down our tops but even that wasn't enough. Back in the town at the bottom the weather was lovely and we sat out for drinks, a very bizarre experience!

By this point the grimpeur match between Mark G and Steve K was forming; with Steve finally winning the climbing competition 3-2.

We headed for the Col D'Izoard on Thursday, in another attempt (and failure) to miss the rain. This did seem to be one of the most pleasant climbs for views (although that might be just because I was supporting that day and saw the view from the car), but the final few km were an absolute killer, snaking steeply up to a barren, open hill top. We were very grateful for the fantastic lunch at the Refuge Napoleon at the top of the Izoard; a wonderful French assortment of warm fresh bread, cheese and cured meats.

Upon our return we were greeted to culinary delights of our own: Mark's special pasta bake, which proved a big hit, as did Rob's 'extra hot' risotto later in the week; all great cycling grub! Other interesting goings-on in the house included an unsettling explosion in Skins fashion being modelled around the house as the week progressed. Clearly this scared Rich and Al who proceeded to drink copious amounts of alcohol every night and still rip up the mountains, leading Al to be crowned 'EPO Alan' for his climbing prowess.

The Glandon and Croix de Fer were our next targets, with Kev and I proving that slowly

wins the race as everyone else missed the turn (see photos with Kev and I 'leading' Rob and Martin up) and we gained a nice head start on them. These two climbs are essentially just one that splits at the top, but what a climb! About 30km long, with one section measuring 17% it was a nasty day's work. It's also hard to get settled into a rhythm, going up and



Sarah, Rob, Kevin and Martin on the Croix de Fer.

down with false flats and no constant gradient.

However it was worth it for the wonderful Tartiflette in the restaurant at the top. Mmmm.

On Saturday we were met with, surprise, more rain. So people chose to do their own thing, with some of us riding the Col d'Ornon (not a Tour climb but a pleasant one nonetheless, averaging a 'mere' 6%) and others the alternative route up to Alpe d'Huez (setting off as if to climb the Glandon / Croix de Fer, but turning off and coming out in Huez village). This was definitely not one for those scared of heights, but was a beautiful route, giving great views of the road going up Alpe d'Huez.

On the last morning a few of the guys did a handicapped time trial up Alpe d'Huez, with

Martin completing it in an impressive 56 minutes. The grimpeur match between Mark and Steve K, who had been battling it out all week was finally laid to rest with a 3-2 victory to Steve. Debbie was the winner of the downhill competition though, impressing the blokes with her descending ability throughout the week.

By this point the weather decided just rain wasn't enough and it snowed on us. A strange way to finish our summer holiday! All in all a very pleasant time, and many thanks to Steve K for organising it.

Cols conquered:

Alpe d'Huez,
Les Deux Alpes,
Col du Telegraf,
Col du Galibier,
Mont Ventoux,
Col du I'Zoard,
Col de la Croix de Feu
Col du Glandon
Col d'Ornon
Alternative Alpe d'Huez route.

Inter Club TT with Matlock

by Jim Crew

In the name of a bit of friendly competition - and to encourage some travelling up and down the A6 to ride each other's courses - we thought this might be a good idea. Ideally we would have used one flat and one hilly course to give everyone a decent chance, but we chose the two courses so as to minimise travel. Matlock's flat 10 starts at Darley Dale (a good fastish course up to Bakewell) and our Long Lane course is a bit far off for their riders to make in time for an early evening start.

The format was a points system, to reduce the chance of one rider doing a blistering ride and skewing the results. Their 3 best seniors / vets vs our 3 best. One Matlock vs one Merc lady, and the same for a youth rider. Lowest points total for the 2 legs wins.

Leg 1:- Matlock Long Hilly 10.3mile course, Thurs 29th July.

Cromford Station - Lea Bridge - Lea Village - A615-Dethick - Lea Village again - A615 to Tansley, finishing in Matlock Starkholme Road.

6 Mercury riders turned out - Pete Johnson, Dave Banks, Nev Whitton, Jim Crew in the seniors / vets, Sarah Todd representing the club ladies and Harry Crew the Youths. Matlock fielded 20+ riders - so a good turn out on some decent looking kit.

Most of us had a ride round the course the week before with Mark Shardlow - good job for me as I would have got it very wrong. Its a tough course - with a long drag all the way to the A615 on the first circuit, then a loop back to the halfway point on the climb - repeat and

then finish down the fast (or not!) descent into Matlock. The descent near Tansley to start the second climb isn't easy - its a windy, narrow lane, much of it under trees so it's possible to lose time here.

A tough night, against formidable opposition on their own course. Pete Johnson was our best finisher, but Matlock took the top places. Harry beat all but one of their juniors - Arthur Green riding past his front door in Tansley. Harry also beat me - his Dad. I'd better get used to it.

1-0 to Matlock CC

Leg 2:- DMRC Windley Hilly 10.5 miles, Tuesday 3 August.

Back onto home turf the following Tuesday - and despite a strong Merc contingent of 26

riders, vs 14 from Matlock - we got rolled over again!

Best performance from a Merc rider - Duncan Putnam in 26-54. A good time, but Matlock's James Tucker did a course record 24-34. An awesome ride. Harry restored some pride in the junior ranks by taking a point with a pb 28-48.

Overall it was a great competition, ridden in good spirit and the defeat taken with good grace. Good to ride another course. And that 24-34 was just amazing - a great ride.

Let's do it again next year - we'll see if we can fiddle the points scoring to even things out a bit.

Dates and Venues for Notts and Derby Cyclo-X Events

18th September, Shipley Park

2nd October, Allestree Park

16th October, Alfreton

23rd October, Bingham

30th October, Bramcote

20th November, Sinfin Park (DMRC)

Diary

Events at the Club Room, St Matthew's Church Fellowship Room, Darley Abbey

Date 2010	What's Going On	Time
Tuesday 31 st Aug	TT Series, Event No. 20, Long Lane	6:30 pm
Tuesday 7 th Sept	Natter night (Abbey Pub after)	8:00 pm
Tuesday 14 th Sept	All you want to know about Cyclo-X	8:00 pm
Tuesday 21 st Sept	Rollers	8:00 pm
Tuesday 28 th Sept	Film night	8:00 pm
Tuesday 5 th Oct	Natter night (Abbey Pub after)	8:00 pm
Tuesday 12 th Oct	All you want to know about Audax	8:00 pm
Tuesday 19 th Oct	Cycle Maintenance, part 1	8:00 pm
Tuesday 26 th Oct	Natter night	8:00 pm
Tuesday 2 nd Nov	Natter night (Abbey Pub after)	8:00 pm
Tuesday 9 th Nov	Bangers and Mash	8:00 pm
Tuesday 16 th Nov	Cycle Maintenance, part 2	8:00 pm

Other Club Events

Sunday 26 Sept.	DMRC Road Race, Hanbury
Sunday 7 Nov.	Hill Climb and Freewheel, Pistern Hill
Saturday 20 Nov.	DMRC Cyclo-X, Sinfin Park
Tuesday 23 Nov.	AGM

Club Rides

Club Runs: 60+ miles at a medium pace. Saturdays and Sundays at 9:00 am. Meet at the A38/A6 roundabout, Derby.
Contacts: Saturdays - Kevin Cunniffe (01332 366807)
Sundays - Dave Banks, Clive Lockwood (see page 2)

Autumn Tints: 50 miles or less, easy pace, with lunch stop. Sundays at 9:45 am, meet at either Allenton (Arden News nr Spider Bridge) or Alvaston (Mercian Cycles) or Mickleover Nag's Head). Contact Derek Wilkins 01332 661613.

Training Rides: Tues./Thurs. 6:45 pm, Little Chef, Little Eaton. Contact Tom Butcher.

Mountain Bike Runs: A couple of hours thrashing around the trails in the Ticknall / Ingleby area. Monday evenings, 6:30 pm. Meet at the John Thompson, Ingleby. Contact: Dave Banks.