

The Annual Report of the Shropshire CTC for the Year 2013



Introduction

The Shropshire CTC has had another successful year providing an extensive range of rides to its regular members as well as a number of social events. Our membership numbers have increased according to nationally provided figures but we have attracted few new members to our regular rides. New committee members have been hard to find and the present committee feel that there is an urgent need of an infusing of new blood and new ideas to take the club into the future. Therefore included in the introduction to this report is an urgent appeal for more committee members, and more ideas on how to publicise our club, widen its range of activities, and attract new especially younger members. All existing committee members would welcome being approached with ideas.

A big thank you is in order for all those who have helped run the club during the past year including rides organisers, rides leaders, and all other volunteers.

Group Rides

Midweek Rides

John Cooper has organised these rides initially with the help of Rob Jones and Jenny Milne.



This report is based on Tuesday & Thursday mid-week rides between October 2012 and August 2013, as I think that gives an overall picture throughout the seasons. I would like to thank all ride leaders and also those who stepped in to lead at the last minute.

Both Tuesdays and Thursdays have had good turnouts. The average number of riders for Tuesdays was 11, with a maximum of 23, and for Thursdays, the average was 10 with a maximum of 15. Most of the B rides were on Tuesdays as this seems to be the traditional pattern.

Only three or four rides were cancelled due to ice or snow.

I have adhered to the traditional venues, mainly to ensure that we are certain of a mid-day meal in a pub or cafe.

I have come to realise that a lot of forward planning is involved with the rides programme! Ideas for new rides, preferably from first hand experience with



suitable eating places, would be very welcome.

Wrekin Cycling

Steve Holloway again undertook to manage these rides.

Wrekin Cycling (CTC Shropshire) meets every Sunday morning outside Wellington Leisure Centre and our rides programme continues to offer a variety of led routes across the quiet back-lanes of Shropshire and beyond.

We pedalled off last autumn with a ride to the 'big breakfast charity event at Cheswardine Village Hall. The hearty breakfasts on offer were devoured by our hungry cycling group and all monetary proceeds went to the local church at Cheswardine. The event has become so popular (or our appetites have) we are now on the Church warden's auto e-mailing list for future events.

Even more popular was our 2012 Christmas ride-out and lunch at Roden. Thanks are once again extended to Paul Rapson for keeping us organised and well fed.

Maintaining the food theme, social evenings are also included on the ride program every couple of months. These 'grub nights' are well attended and a good time is had by all. We had a superb skittles evening at Bridgnorth in June. Thanks must go to Kevin Read-Jones for this event and Rita who generally books the table reservations.



Back to riding bicycles, we introduced a series of evening 'Introductory Rides' on the first Tuesday of the month and 'Open Club/Introductory Rides' on Sundays during the summer months. We also linked in with Telford & Wrekin Council during National Bike Month in June. As a result we saw a number of new faces over the season but alas, only a couple have remained as regular riders. Welcome, (or should it be congratulations?), to Jane & Peter from Shawbury who are still with us

and riding stronger week by week (too strong some might say...for those of us "just having a bad headwind day!").

We continue to extend a warm welcome to any new or experienced cyclists who wish to try club cycling at a non-competitive level. Our self-disciplined group riding approach ensures no one gets left behind or shoots off way-out in front.

A statistical snapshot of the rides program over the previous twelve months (2012/13) indicates:

- During the autumn/winter months: C grade rides were the most popular.
A rides = 0%, B rides = 15%, C rides = 63%, D rides = 15%,
Riders Choice = 7%
- During the spring/summer months: B grade rides were the most popular.
A rides = 8%, B rides = 42%, C rides = 38%, D rides = 12%.

The sustainability of our cycling group and rides program is dependable on those cyclists who staunchly turn-up every week, those who volunteer to lead rides, book tables & arrange socials or even those who shout-out encouragement to other cyclists we may see out on the road to "come and join us". Without shouting too loudly, because I know you are a modest lot, thank you for all your help and support.

Freewheelers

The organiser of this group is Bill Dorrell.

On each Sunday throughout the year we aim to put on a selection of rides of differing distances, speeds and duration. Our A rides can be up to 90 miles at up to 14 mph; B rides up to 70 miles at 10 to 12 mph; C rides up to 50 miles at 8 to 10 mph and D rides up to 30 miles for the morning only, at an easy pace.

Over the last year we have put on 6 A rides, 36 B rides, 16 C rides and 27 D rides.

Attendance for each Sunday averaged only 12, lower than the 16 of last year. The B and C rides were the more popular rides, both averaging 9 riders per ride, the A and D rides averaging 6 each.

Two rides were car-assisted, to recently resurfaced canal towpaths and one was car- and train-assisted, making use of the Severn Valley Railway. Another planned car-assisted ride to Snowdonia had to be cancelled because of adverse weather, as did four other rides, the culprits being snow, ice and heavy rain.

We have seen several new faces joining us, usually people visiting the area, but some have been fairly local and have continued to ride with us.

Our latest programme of rides started at the beginning of October. Many thanks are due to all the volunteer ride leaders who make the rides as different and interesting as possible.

Thursday evening summer rides.

Hazel Nowell has organised this group this year

We put on a 2-hour ride each Thursday evening for the fourteen weeks from 9 May to 8 August. The leaders were excellent. One of our club's most valuable assets is its stock of experienced and knowledgeable cyclists, who have the skills to put together safe and enjoyable group rides.

So, we owe thanks to Bill, Sally, Bryan, Jenny, John, Helen and Graham for giving their time and taking us on some really interesting routes. Oz and Malcolm had signed up to lead too – and would have been there, if they could. Special thanks also to Nick Taylor for providing back-up on almost all fourteen of the rides.

Numbers attending varied between 2 and 13. Single figures on the cold and wet evenings of May and June, increasing to about a dozen each week once the sun came out in July. Not the higher numbers of a few years ago, but enough to make for some pleasant rides.

We design the rides to attract new people to the joys of cycling, in the hope of increasing membership. In reality, groups were made up of existing club riders and 'Thursday Evening riders' from previous summers, who love coming, but who can't transfer to Sunday or midweek rides, because of other commitments.

The biggest achievement was to attract several of Shropshire Council's 'Women on Wheels'

riders and four of these have progressed to our Sunday and Tuesday rides. Their skills and confidence have increased greatly and we hope they'll go on riding with us.

So, a modestly successful series of rides. The aim for next year is to increase publicity and attract greater numbers.

Saturday Casuals

Martin Beardwell leads this group

The Casuals have not been frustrated too often by the weather and have managed to ride on more than 40 Saturdays in the year, meeting at the Red Barn at 9 30 a.m..

The formula for the rides stays the same: it is a social ride with the pace adjusted to the needs of whoever turns up on the day but all can expect to keep going without too many interruptions. Colleagues will peel off and find their own way home if there are conflicting duties and responsibilities.

During the very cold days it is likely that the ride will finish at lunchtime. Normally in the longer days we will ride about 30 miles to the lunch stop and return with a tail wind for the 15 - 20 miles home.

From time to time we may meet up for lunch with another of the Saturday groups.

Numbers vary from just two of us up to ten. I guess that four or five riders would be the average.

As ever the delight is the informality of a group of riders who enjoy getting together and riding for fun.

Cycle events

Audaxes

The Elenydd was held on Saturday 13th April and was a classic Audax event, a very hilly 300km from Upton Magna to some of the most remote country in Wales. It's not just the scenery though that makes this one of the most popular events on the calendar but the atmosphere at the controls and the TLC provided by the helpers. And this year was no different.



124 riders entered, 94 turned up to test their legs and spirits against the Welsh dragon and 87 successfully finished the event. The last two rolled in comfortably(?) with 5 minutes to go. At the opposite end of the field the first rider was back in just under 14 hours. The



course is clearly suitable for all types of machine as we had a tandem, at least one rider on fixed wheel, and a Brompton (hardly most people's choice for a hilly 300km ride) all complete successfully. The prizes for first trike and first recumbent remain as yet unclaimed.

Fortunately the Arctic weather and snow of March had abated before the day (when checking the route the week before we had to walk over the last remaining drifts on the mountain road to Tregaron and the snow banks were piled over 2m high beside the Elan

valley road!). The weather still had teeth though and added to the challenge as periods of rain and a strong south-easterly spiced things up over the mountain roads of mid Wales. Some payback was earned later with a tailwind up and over the Long Mynd on the final leg (a stage livened up by dodging the hundreds of frogs wandering over the roads - one rider went further than simply avoiding them by moving them to the side of the road until he realised the Sisyphean nature of his task – he'd probably still be out there now).

Thanks to Sue & Dave Cannell, Jim and Rose Churton and Peter Mathison for their help; John and Hazel who ventured into the depths of mid Wales to run the much welcomed checkpoint at the foot of the Devil's Staircase, fortified against the cold and rain only by our temporary gazebo and a thick blanket; and of course the controls at Shobdon Airfield and Rhayader; the ladies of the Tregaron Bowls Club and the Old Wheelwrights at Little Brampton, for providing the gold standard levels of service the event is known for.

A big thank you for John Hamilton for organising this event and supplying the above report.

Two, Three & Four Rivers 130-200km was held on the 1st June and we thank Edwin Hargreaves for this report.

Congratulations to all those who finished this year's events and commiserations to those who were unable to finish or couldn't make it on the day as once again we had fine weather if a bit of a cold wind. This year I had to put the event on the first Saturday of June to keep away from the Bank Holiday and commitments in May. The event does seem to attract good weather but all I will say for next year that yet again I will "guarantee weather". This year Pam Pilbeam came back from holiday to print my brevet cards. I am sorry the new cards for the 2 and 3 Rivers events were rather flimsy and I must say I much prefer the old design. Comments have been made to John Hamilton and he has samples of the cards. Many of you thanked me on the day or have sent messages of thanks. May I say that without all the help given very willingly by a superb team of helpers I would not be able to run the events.

At HQ for the start: Rod Hughes of Wem Scouts, John and Jenny Leese, Jim Hopper, Pierrette de Selys (Michelle) & Shelagh.

At The Bog Visitor Centre: The volunteers at the Centre and Bill Dorrell. Malcolm Adams was unable to help as he is undergoing treatment for cancer. We wish him a speedy recovery.

At The Old Barn Cafe, Vyrnwy: Martin Beardwell and the staff of the cafe especially Bay & Ali.

At Llangower: Jim Hopper and Pierrette de Selys (Michelle).

At Llangedwyn Craft Centre: Maureen Wilde, Jonathan Blower and helpers from Llangedwyn and Brian & Gill Morrison.

At HQ for the finish: John & Jenny Leese, Jim Hopper, Michelle, Shelagh and Rose Churton.

Donations to Marie Curie Cancer Care You were all very generous with your donations and I will be sending a cheque for £400 to the Neath/Port Talbot branch in memory of Dave Lewis. Donations from the event are £252.25 and cash donations on the day came to £147.75. This included £10 from Leonard Wynn, a patient at Oswestry hospital where Mark Higgins works. The surplus to CTC Shropshire is £188.25.

Social Events

The club has put on several social events over the year. These are mainly in venues around Shrewsbury, are usually well attended and always entertaining and involve lots of happy and noisy talking. They allow members and their partners a chance to chat about matters other than gear ratios and ride speeds and distances! Events are publicised on the website and where possible in the rides programme and of course by the time honoured 'word of mouth'. Last year's Christmas gathering at the Hand and Diamond was great success and enjoyed by all who attended. This year's Christmas dinner is at the same venue on December 10th and bookings are now being taken. We hope to see lots of you there.



The Wrekin Group runs its own successful social programme publicised on their rides list. Members from afar are always made very welcome.

A big thank you is in order for all those who organised or helped with a social event over the year. We are always looking for more ideas for social gatherings and for members to organise them.

Publicity and Communication

Peter Lobban has continued to manage and improve the website – www.cycleshropshire.org.uk and now emails weekly ride programmes to those who have registered on the website. News and Blogs can be added by any member who registers on the site and Peter is always encouraging more people to contribute. We now have a clearer link with the National CTC website so new members can easily find our website from the national CTC website. There is now a welcoming message on the Shropshire home page of the National Website and a clear link to our own website.

Rib Fris, is editing Cyclenews in a very entertaining manner. Cyclenews is published in full on the website and can be downloaded from there. Abbreviated paper copies are also available. Sue and David Cannell have taken over the printing duties. Rob is always on the looking for more contributors, news and general information for Cyclenews.

Paul Charlesworth has very successfully taken over the compiling and editing of Wheelmarks and produced some very interesting magazines. Printing is now being done by Shropshire County Council which is more expensive than before, resulting in the Club having to subsidise the production costs. We have circulated a survey today to try and gauge the membership's opinion of how this should be dealt with in the future. Please complete a form and leave it with the secretary before you leave the AGM.

There was a lot of discussion at last year's AGM about how to publicise the activities of the club and how to recruit new members. This occupied a significant portion of all committee meetings over the year but with little outcome. We tried contacting most of the members who joined in 2012, we managed a very small article in the local papers, we put posters in the local bike shops, and decided none of us had the knowledge to try facebook or twitter. The National CTC has promised to put a welcome letter from local branches into new members welcome pack but this has yet to happen.. The only real conclusion we came to was that the club desperately needs a Publicity Officer. We also discussed exactly who we

were trying to reach with our publicity. We are also undertaking a couple of surveys to try and improve what we do offer,

Surveys

The committee are trying to gauge what members feel about club activities with 3 surveys.

The first involves Wheelmarks as already mentioned.

The second involved a Survey of Sunday Rides and a summary of the results has also been circulated at the AGM.

The third is not completed and tries to assess the views of ride leaders. If you regularly lead rides and have not yet received a copy of this survey, please ask the secretary for a form.

Easter Event 2014

There was no Easter Event this year.

Peter and Chris Lloyd and John and Hazel Nowell are organising an Easter Event next year. Kington Youth Hostel has been booked for three nights and a variety of rides will be offered as well as a walk or two for those not into cycling. There are places still available so do contact one of the organisers as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

President

Anita Crofts tenure as President finishes this year. She has been a very involved and hands on President who has regularly attended committee meetings and her experience and wisdom will be sadly missed. I am sure all the club members will join with the committee members in thanking her for the huge contribution she has given to the club.

Thanks

A sincere thank you is in order to Sue Collinson and Richard Newey who are standing down from the Committee and to Helen Gilmour for her work as Auditor of the accounts.

There are no other matters to report