



## **CTC SHROPSHIRE MEMBER GROUP** **ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

One of the main focuses of the last twelve months has been to improve the Member Group's publicity materials and publications. This year has seen the launch of the new website as well as new style rides lists and club newsletter. A lot of hard work has gone into these and hopefully members will appreciate the improvements.

At last year's AGM the committee asked for members suggestions for events. A number of these suggestions have been realised through the year including a cycle jumble, bicycle maintenance workshops and a freewheel competition. The committee would like to thank those who organised these events and those who took part, for making them a success.

Thanks are also due, as always, to all our rides leaders, without whose commitment there would be no rides programmes.

### ***GROUP RIDES***

#### **Shrewsbury Midweek Rides**

The "Midweek" group meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays and is organised by Sally Ralphs.

On behalf of the mid week riders, Sally would like to thank Bryan Roberts for his work over the previous five years in planning and co-ordinating a variety of rides which has enabled this group to thrive and grow.

For the summer programme (long, warm days) two B rides a month were scheduled, one on a Tuesday and one on a Thursday. Generally they were well received as they gave stronger riders the chance to have a longer distance ride and at a faster pace. On one or two occasions, the B and C rides were amalgamated and this proved satisfactory too.

Three car assisted rides were arranged, with Lake Vyrnwy proving very popular and the Mawddach Estuary trail day attracting about 12 riders. No one turned up for the car assisted ride from Ludlow to Leintwardine, although Sally enjoyed a solo sunny day's ride in north Herefordshire and later joined the group at Craven Arms for the ride home.

During the coming winter and early spring (shorter, darker days) Sally has kept the B and C destinations on the programme the same but the leaders will be able to choose their own routes for their speed and distance. Some of these rides may be combined as conditions dictate.

The Christmas dinner this year will be held at The Tontine Inn at Molverley on Thursday 16 December and there are still a few places available.

The mid week rider numbers are healthy – they all enjoy getting out of the house - and sometimes there are as many as 18 people out on a Tuesday. The average seems to be 11 on a Tuesday and 9 on a Thursday.

More importantly, everyone has a really good time.



### **Wrekin Cycling**

The organiser of the Wrekin group is Steve Holloway.

During 2009-2010 Wrekin Cycling have continued to meet every Sunday morning outside Wellington Leisure Centre. Over the past year, the rides list has offered cycling to a variety of destinations across Shropshire. On some occasions they have ventured beyond the county border and explored further parts of the UK.

The average number of riders per meet has been around 8 although recently there were 15 out on a sunny but cool morning. New or experienced cyclists joining the group are always given a warm welcome by the regular riders.

It has generally been a slow year for attracting new faces. However, two new cyclists have recently joined them as a direct result of one of their regular riders, whilst out on a mid week jaunt, chatting to them about the fun benefits of riding in a local group.

A special mention must go to Alan Jones, a resolute and unfaltering member of the group who turns up in all weathers and occasionally finds that the rest of them have not been brave enough to venture forth into blistering showers or blizzards. Alan always has good encouragement for new members, telling them, "stick with me at the back and I'll look after you". That said, he also steps in politely to 'show the way' when some of the regulars get a bit lost while 'leading' the ride.

For the coming year, members have requested the return of social evenings to be included in the rides list. The group have duly responded and will continue to enjoy cycling around the Wrekin and the delightful, quiet lanes of Shropshire on full stomachs.

### **Freewheelers**

The Freewheelers group is organised by Bill Dorrell.

Over the last twelve months there have been 7 A rides (5 of which were car assisted), 42 B rides (1 of which was car assisted), 17 C rides and 34 D rides.

Attendance averaged over 15 each Sunday with a maximum of 23 riders. The maximum number for an A ride was 6, for a B ride was 18 and for C and D rides was 12.

Adverse weather affected some rides last Winter, with the ice and snow causing the cancellation of two Sunday rides, which were converted into local walks instead. More recently the heavy rain at the start of October stopped some rides in the morning, although a small group put together an afternoon ride to Home Farm, Attingham instead.

The group have had a handful of new riders join them, some of whom have continued to ride regularly, and also gone on to become rides leaders this Summer and in the latest Autumn/Winter programme. The latest programme of rides started at the beginning of October and is attracting up to 18 riders each Sunday.

Many thanks to all who volunteered to lead rides, in particular Claire Ashton, Peter Croft and Marion Guy for their car assisted rides. Thanks also to Oz and Marion for their help in setting up the rides list and to Ken for turning the programme into an attractive and easy to read finished article.

### **Thursday Evening Rides**

Lisa Rowley organised the Thursday evening rides around Shrewsbury.

There were 15 rides in the programme this year from May to August and all 15 were ridden. The weather was wet on one of the evenings and showery on another but generally okay, which probably helped with the number of people turning out. There was no family ride this year.

Over the summer period the Evening rides attracted a total of 206 people over the 15 rides, averaging out at 14 people per ride. The maximum on any evening was 19 and the minimum was 7 on the wet evening. The average number is up on the two preceding years; in 2008 the average was 8 and in 2009 the average was 9. The total number of riders for 2008 and 2009 were 124 and 129 respectively, so this year has seen quite a healthy increase.

A total of 231 miles was ridden, giving an average ride distance of 16 miles each week. The average speed was 10.2 mph (which is in keeping with what it should be). There were 7 new riders, including 2 ladies and a father and ten year old son. All of the new riders, except one, came out on more than one ride. Most of these had heard of us either through the internet or the rides leaflet.

230 leaflets were distributed to bike shops, the Quarry (upstairs and downstairs), the TIC in Rowley's House and elsewhere. The leaflets were similar to 2009's but in a narrower, folded format which seems to work better in leaflet dispensers/displays. Thank you to Ken Knight for producing and printing the leaflet.

Numbers have been good this year – there have been quite a few new road bikes on show which has meant riders coming out more and some occasional Thursday riders are now more regular Thursday riders.

Thanks to all the leaders – Malcolm, John & Hazel, Ozzy, Sally, Bill, Sue, Paul Glanville and Jenny Leese for doing a great job and making Thursday evening's enjoyable.

Lisa will continue to organise the programme for 2011 but would then like to step down.

### Saturday Group

The Saturday Group have no published destinations for their rides as they are weather dependent. Tacking against the prevailing wind, and seemingly able to keep finding new lanes to ride, they make for a lunch venue, and then come straight back with a following wind! They usually get about five or six people (not always the same faces and including a new regular). Sometimes there are as many as ten for the 50+ mile rides. The group are a friendly bunch, with Martin Beardwell being the guiding light, both as leader and co-ordinator. As he has just gone into hospital for a hip replacement, everyone wishes him a speedy recovery and quick return to cycling.

## *CYCLE EVENTS*

### Audaxes

The audax year began, as usual, with the **Long Mynd** rides, organised by Ken Knight. Although bitterly cold at the top of the Burway, the weather generally was not too bad for these early season events. Seventy or so made it round the 100k course with the six mighty climbs and a larger than usual entry of 30 took on the shorter but hardly less hilly 50k route. One rider, Gordon Jones, wrote the story of his ride, which was published in *Arrivée* (the Audax UK club magazine) and reprinted in *Wheelmarks*. His introductory remarks were:

*“Picklecott village, hidden in the heart of the Shropshire countryside, is a must visit for any tourist who wants to see the British countryside at its best but the silence that greets you in this sleepy village fools you into a false sense of peace and tranquillity, that is until its secret is unleashed - The Long Mynd 100k.”*

The Long Mynd rides have certainly built a reputation over the years and it's good to see them getting some national publicity! Ken is retiring from organising this event next, and handing over to apprentice Andy Seabourne.

It was a fine, sunny day in May for the **Three and Four Rivers** audaxes organised by Edwin Hargraves. 22 riders completed the Four Rivers (200km) and 61 the Three Rivers (160km). The current HQ at Sundorne sports village isn't ideal and so next year's event, which will be held on Easter Saturday, will start and finish in Wem. The Three Rivers route will have minor modifications and the Four Rivers route will have a new control at The Bog Visitor Centre.

John Hamilton's **Snowdon and Coast 400k** in June was a scenic outing from Upton Magna into the Snowdonia national park and down to the coast at Aberystwyth. 38 riders set off from Upton Magna on a pleasant sunny day and all of them finished, some of them with more time to spare than others! But that was just a warm up....!



Probably the hardest ride on the Audax calendar, the **Mille Cymru**, organised by John Hamilton, took place over four days at the end of July. The 1000km ride was organised as a series of three loops returning each night to control in Llanwrtyd Wells.

The first day, saw the riders setting off from Upton Magna and into Snowdonia, visiting Llanberis and Dolgellau, before arriving at Llanwrtyd for some well deserved food and sleep after 356km. The second leg was a lumpy loop of 311km, around the Pembrokeshire coast, stopping off at Pendine, St Davids and Cilgerran. Day three was a 231km loop around the breathtaking heart of Wales, visiting Llandoverly and Aberystwyth. All that was left then was a 127km dash back to Upton Magna in time for a cooked breakfast – easy!

The Welsh weather gods were kind - of the 100 entries, 73 started and of those 53 finished (all within the allowed time limit). The first rider finished at 13.55 on Sunday afternoon (having completed the first 900km non-stop in 44 hours), the last finished at 08.57 on Monday morning with 3 minutes to spare! Many thanks are due to the thirty helpers who made it all possible. John says he may run the event again in four years time – when he's had time to forget how much hard work it was!



The audax year ended in September with the **Discovering Shropshire 100k** and **Beyond Shropshire 200k**. This year, there was a change of start venue to Rodington Village Hall, which worked very well. The routes are now well established with controls at Rays Farm and Acton Scott on the 100k, and at Ludlow, Crossgates and Little Brampton on the 200k. This year numbers for the 100k were higher than usual, but slightly lower on the 200k. In all there were 95 starters, with only 3 failing to finish. Many thanks to Linda, who spent the whole of Friday afternoon baking!

Thanks to all who have helped with these events. The efforts of many people, are what make these events a success.

### **Easter Tour – YHA Thurlby, South Lincolnshire**

The Easter Tour was organised and led by Sally Ralphs.

Seventeen cyclists made the journey from Shropshire to south Lincolnshire on the Thursday before Easter and all went well until they returned from the pub that evening to find that the volunteer warden had given them the wrong entry code for the front door! Fortunately, they were let in eventually!



Sixteen of the riders stayed in the hostel. Richard chose the comfort of a longer bed in a local B&B.



Although the forecast for Good Friday wasn't encouraging, most of the group set off for Rutland Water, the largest man-made lake in Europe, set in the smallest county in the UK. After a prolonged morning coffee/lunch stop, they started round the south shore on the cycle track, doing battle with fishermen and their 4 x 4s on the way. The destination was Oakham, a lovely unspoilt market town, where they each found their own lunch spot (and a butcher selling local pork pies). The group set off for the return from Oakham following the western edge of the reservoir to turn north, when Phil had a major chain jam. It was decided, as it was now raining and becoming quite cold, to split the group, with some riding on while those helping Phil continued to work on the bike. All made it safely back to Thurlby.

On Saturday the group had a short-ish ride to Folkingham, mainly because Sally had seriously overestimated the distance involved. It did, however, give them all a better idea of the geography of the area which came in useful the following day.

The plan for Easter Sunday was to cycle to Grantham via Clipsham Yews then Colsterworth, the home of Sir Isaac Newton. There is a very good pub in Colsterworth but, when the group arrived for morning coffee, Sally's heart sank as she saw that it was shut. The landlord however, had seen them and welcomed them in with coffee and nibbles. Some of the group decided to stay on there for lunch (accompanied by a jazz band).



The ride seemed to be very long – it was – and the group were getting hungry but their route into Grantham along the canal brought them into the town and to the Angel and Royal Hotel, an historic pub on the old Great North Road.



When they left Grantham, they missed a turning which would have saved them from cycling along a main road and a dreary route home. However, Sally recognised some of the village names from the previous day's cycling and they were able to find a more interesting and quiet way back to Thurlby.

The hostel at Thurlby is highly recommended. It's small but cosy and the area is very different from Shropshire with interesting architecture and villages to compensate for its lack of stunning countryside views.

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### Day of Rides

The Day of Rides was co-ordinated by John Nowell.

The Day of Rides took place from Upton Magna on 25<sup>th</sup> July, the same weekend as the 1000km Mille Cymru. There were four classes of event - 45k and 75k Butterfly rides (organised by Marion and Claire), 10+15mile Family Rides (organised by Bill), a Freewheel Competition (organised by Bernard) and a Pace Judging Competition (organised by John and Peter).

13 riders took part in the **Butterfly rides** (some of whom were back in time for the Freewheel competition in the afternoon) including one of the retiring 1000k audax riders who seemed happy with a somewhat shorter route!

There were 14 takers for the **Family Rides** including 3 children who went slightly off the route provided by Bill to enjoy ice cream at Roden.

After lunch the **Freewheel competition** included some of those back from the morning rides and anyone else who could be rounded up from the village hall. 18 riders took part down a short course at the back of Haughmond Hill with pusher-off Claire even removing the chain on her fixie to have a go after everyone else had gone down.

Overall winner was Steve, first lady was Anita and after some disqualifications for rule bending, Ollie emerged as first junior.

Finally, the **Pace Judging competition** involved a clearly marked out circular course from the village hall which had to be ridden without computer/watch/mobile phone (all bagged up and retained to discourage underhand tactics). The riders were expertly timed by Peter and had to go round a second lap to see how close they could get to their first time. In spite of our best efforts to persuade more people to have a go, there were only a handful of starters – possibly too close to going home time for many. Winners Marion and Ollie were only 8 seconds apart on their two rides - a remarkable result. Claire came second, Roger was third.

Prize winners in both competitions earned vouchers from Dave Mellor Cycles.

Much planning and preparation went into the day and John would particularly like to thank Marion, Claire, Bill, Ken and Marion, Peter, Hazel and Helen for their help.

### Cycle Jumble

The cycle jumble on May 1<sup>st</sup> gave CTC Shropshire members a chance to barter for cycling gear. It was a brilliant success with lots of quality kit and of course some junk changing hands with buyers and sellers both well satisfied. Rumour (or fact) says Ken was saved from 'having a hole burnt in his pocket' by another canny member who spotted his old Record hubs on offer at £2 the pair and snatched off the price tag just before a visiting London dealer snapped them up at £25. If there is enough interest, another event can be organised. In the meantime Steve suggests you go buy a bigger shed to store the junk...until next time.

### Bicycle Maintenance Workshops

The first bicycle maintenance course took place on the 11<sup>th</sup> April at the Bicycle Hub in Jackfield. 12 spaces were available for the full day course, at a discounted rate of £20 each. The feedback was very good so another date has been booked for 21<sup>st</sup> November. Members should book directly with the Bicycle Hub stating that they're with the CTC.

## *SOCIAL EVENTS*

### Slide Show and Photo Competition

The club held one of its occasional photographic competitions on a snowy night in February. The snow is significant because the show was held at Picklescott village hall and as the snow fell and the hills slipped under their deep white blanket Ken did begin to wonder if the fifty or so members would end up sleeping under straw in the neighbouring barn. The show was in an all new digital format with the photographs projected onto a big screen. The competition was arranged in groups leading to a knock out stage, rather as football does the world cup. Ken Knight organised the event and was slightly less fazed by the technology than most of the audience, but only slightly! Sue Collinson came out on top while Marion Knight arranged the supper with help from a number from the club. Sue's daughter got Ken out of the deeper of the technology holes he had dug for himself, and no one needed to be dug out of the snow!

## ***PUBLICITY AND COMMUNICATION***

Peter Lobban launched the new Member Group website, still at the same address, [www.cycleshropshire.org.uk](http://www.cycleshropshire.org.uk). Members are invited to register their e-mail address on the website to enable us to keep them up to date with the current news.

Ken Knight took over as temporary editor of the newsletter, "Cycle News." The newsletter is now printed by Ken and this has enabled a complete revamp. The introduction of colour and photos has been a real improvement. A permanent editor is still being sought. Anyone who is interested should contact Ken or a member of the committee.

Ken also continued to edit and print "Wheelmarks", the Member Group magazine. Members are encouraged to send in their contributions and share their experiences with the rest of the member group. The customary spring and autumn editions of the magazine had the usual range of entertaining articles. Thanks to our advertisers "The Bicycle Hub", "Stan Jones Cycles" and "Dave Mellor Cycles."

The "café and pub list" is a list of cycle-friendly lunch stops recommended by members and leaders. The latest version of this invaluable document is available on the website. Changes should be sent to Peter to keep the list up-to-date.

The "café and pub list", rides lists and newsletters can be downloaded from the Member Group website. The committee is intending to reduce the amount of printing done to cut down waste. Hard copies will continue to be available on request.

## ***DEVELOPMENTS***

The committee is looking into the purchase of club jerseys. A survey was carried out on the website to see which potential design members preferred. There was a slight preference for the mainly yellow design. A final design is still being worked on but it is envisaged that orders will be taken before Christmas for delivery in the Spring. At this stage only jerseys will be available with a choice of zip length. If popularity permits, other items may be made available at a later date. The committee has agreed to subsidise the price of the first order so the cost will be around £25. Payment will be required in advance.

## ***REPRESENTATION***

Dennis Raybould represented the Member Group on the committee of CTC West Midlands, prior to his death in January. Peter Crofts is the CTC Right to Ride officer for Shrewsbury. A number of CTC members attend the Shropshire Cycle Forum.

Thanks are due to retiring committee members John Hamilton and Ian Bartlett. Thanks are also expressed to the Vice-Presidents and to Phil Guy for being the auditor.

## ***OTHER MATTERS***

There are no other matters to report.

Hon. Secretary