



Newsletter, January 2012

Edited by Matt Flynn

Dear all, I return once more as the editor of this illustrious publication, hence the fact it is late....again!! You will also note that it is not quite up to the professional standard of Mossy's efforts, mainly because his wouldn't just let me cut and paste the format and that is pretty much the limit of my IT ability.

Clearly I have managed to blag the "quiet" time of the cycling year once more but non the less there is still plenty to report in and around our ever expanding club.

TROPHY NIGHT

We had the new look Mark Weston style Trophy Evening back in November. Now the original idea of the trophy evening was for a simple cheap night that all could attend and that would leave the Christmas dinner evening open as a more sociable event without all the time being taken up by award giving. However, this was a Westie production so let's face it in the words of the man himself it was always going to be LARGE. The evening was very well attended with around 100 guests and I probably even knew half of them.... It was without doubt a success, the meal was very tasty, even if Westie's time estimates were a little optimistic, the awards giving itself was very entertaining with Mark on top form, the band were great, but the highlight had to be Matt Toone's 4 pints of Aspall cider dancing routine which you can all view here if you haven't already seen it <http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10150460338449083> obviously I look brilliant in that video... ☺

I tried to get a list of the Trophy winners from Wesite but the tool doesn't have one, so here's my best guess...

Road Race Trophy :	Jonny Shuster
BAR:	Andy Leggett
Senior TT:	Gavin Moore
Veteran TT:	Kevin Norman
Debenham 20:	Andy Leggett
ICA Top Points:	Chris Leggett
Off Road:	Laura Sampson
The Ladies Award:	Emma Beard
Rookie of the year:	Giles & Victoria Sharp

The Presidents Award:	Graham Bacon
John Adams COB Trophy:	Graham Bacon
Riders Rider:	Laura Sampson
Club Person of the year:	Paul Moss
Honk Award:	Gary Buckle
Half Wheel Award:	Lee Bark

The evening really was a great success so our thanks go to Mark Weston ably supported by Joe Alexander et al and as a lasting image of the evening I give you the Toone Dog...



Architect + Aspalls = Hilarious!!

RACE REPORTS

Now despite the winter weather there are those who are racing at this time of year, mainly in the off road disciplines of our sport. I think everyone now knows the Sampsons, after Laura's success at the awards night, if they didn't already know of them due to their successes at cross country mountain biking.

Here are the latest reports from Laura & Andy on their adventures:

Thetford Winter Series Round One, Brandon

"We have both decided to compete in the four hour races for the Thetford Winter Series this year, having done the two hour ones for three years running (obviously 2 hours was too easy.....Ed). We knew it was going to be tough but we had been training for between three and four hours for the last two months so we both felt pretty fit and ready to tackle it.

Luckily the week leading up to the race was dry which meant that we wouldn't be taking our 9-speeds, thank god!! Before the race we chatted to Wil Kitcher, another Stowmarket club rider. He was racing on his single speed, fully rigid!!! Why?? Total nutter!! After wishing him luck we got ourselves ready to race. (Wil was unable to ride over Christmas due to having a bad back...any one wonder why???? Ed)

Waiting on the starting line there was, as usual, only a few women five in total for the four hour, about 15 in the two hour race. Of course, in Andy's group there was a huge number of men eager to start racing!

The difference between racing in the two hour and the four is that you just cycle at top speed for two hours. We knew that we would have to pace ourselves now that we were in the four hour race.

The race started, ladies setting off first, only four more hours to go! The course was great, using many of the trails on the Brandon side that we train on. Andy came speeding past me, he was in a fantastic position and told me that I had a good lead on the other women. Two hours soon came round and that's when it hit me, that we still had got to do another two hours!! The time between two and three hours felt like it would never end and having gone up the Plumb buster hill five times already was a real killer and we knew that we would be climbing up it a few more times yet.

The weather stayed dry and was fairly mild. The four hours was creeping near and looking at my Garmin, I knew that I was going to get over the finish line before the four hours and that I would have to do another lap! Oh my god!!

Andy finished the race a fantastic fourth completing eight laps in 4.02. I also completed eight laps in 4.21 and came first (Interesting to note that despite doing the 4 hour and "pacing herself", Laura's first 4 laps would have seen her win the 2 hour race by over 9 and half minutes....just saying, Ed). Wil Kitcher completed four laps in the two hours race, putting in excellent and consistent lap times on his fully rigid single speed!! We were both really chuffed with our results and looking forward to the next race on the first weekend of December. Hopefully another dry one as the race is over Mayday side that doesn't hold up quite so well in the wet.

Thanks for reading. **Laura and Andy Sampson.**

Thetford Winter Series - Round 2 - Mayday - 4 December 2011

Once again a sell out for the Thetford winter series race. It was great to see some other Stowmarket Club riders. Wil Kitcher was once again racing the two hour on his fully rigid single speed bike! Jonny Shuster went along as his pit crew (That's the way Kitch' rolls, 2nd Cat road racers as his crew....Ed) and he offered to pit crew for us too, which was a bonus, thanks!!

The weather was dry and had been for a while leading up to the race. Andy & I had ridden the course a few weeks prior to the race and already knew that riding up the double shocker was going to be tough in the four hour.

As usual, there was a large field of men eager to start racing and there was only three women in the four hour. The women set off first and within the first 15 minutes I was told by the leading male that I had quite a good lead, this spurred me on to ride harder. The great advantage of riding the four hour race is that the track is clear until you start to meet the back markers from the fun category. Unfortunately, this was at the point of riding up the double shocker where some people were having to walk.

Luckily, the weather continued to stay dry throughout the race. It was a tough course as there were some long drags, although not that steep and of course the double shocker. After riding up it eight times it hurt! Andy did it nine times!

The race ended with us both getting great results. I came first and had lapped the 2nd place women and beat the other by two laps. (Again Laura's pace would have seen her comfortably win the 2 hour race as well...Ed) Andy was so close to coming in 3rd place, it was a sprint finish to the end, however, the other bloke just had that little bit more left in the tank. Unfortunately, Wil only completed 1 lap as his bike suffered a broken chain (see Wil's report below....Ed).

The series point standings at the end of two races, I am 1st and Andy is 2nd. The third round is taking place at Thetford, Brandon on Sunday 29 January.

Brass Monkeys series - round 2 - Tunnel Hill - Sunday 18 December 2011

Andy had entered me into this race alone and I was competing in the 2 hour. The kids came along with us and Dean had made a 'Go Mummy' banner, how sweet!!

As we arrived the temperature was only about 4 degrees and all the puddles in the parking area were frozen solid, it was going to be a chilly one! There was no time for me to pre-ride the course so I would just have to wait and see! As I was warming up, back at the starting line people were queuing up. What I didn't realise was that it is a mass start so I ended up being about half way back. The race started with a crash just in front of me but luckily I was able to ride around it. The very start of the race was a steep hill, not like the Thetford races where you have a good amount of fire road to spread out the field.

I kept behind another lady rider who had put in better lap times than me in the mixed pair races that Andy and I did last year. She is local to the area and so I thought it would be best just to stay behind her for the first lap as I hadn't pre-ridden the course. The course was certainly testing, with plenty of climbs, bomb holes and steep drop offs. Towards the end of the first lap the leading lady lost traction on a muddy corner and came off. This was my opportunity to go in front. Andy and the kids cheered me on as I rode past the start/finish line. Luckily the course went near to the start/finish line again about a mile into the lap so Andy was able to keep me informed of where the 2nd place lady was, she was only 10 seconds behind.

As the course was jam packed with steep climbs, the lap times were longer than that of Thetford races. Each time I passed the start/finish line I had my very own cheering party that spurred me on and put a smile on my face! At the end of my second lap I had built up a good gap between me and the 2nd place lady. I was determined to win and beat her! The weather kept dry and the sun even came out. The majority of the course had held up well but there were some sections that were muddy with deep puddles.

At the end of the race I finished 1st with a four minute lead. I was so chuffed with this result! Andy has entered the 3rd round of the Brass Monkeys series. Unfortunately for him, the course climbs for about 4 miles, I'm so glad he's doing that one and not me! We will let you know how he gets on.

Thanks for reading. **Laura and Andy Sampson**

I now give you Wil's version of Thetford, Rd 2.

Thetford Winter Series Round 2
Mayday Meadow, Sunday 4th December
'Shake and Bake'

Righty, having read Mrs Sampson's sterling race reports recently I thought I might have a crack at writing one myself. Excuses in first, I'm dyslexic (ok, I'm not but I should be so I get the parking badge), I'm doing this at work when I should be 'working' and....well, if you've heard me talk you'd think English isn't my first language (he is from up North....Ed). So with that out of the way, on to the race.

I'd had quite a good result in the first round at Brandon, riding a rigid single speed because I'm an idiot. In fact it was good enough to get me gridded. Anyone who has ever done a Thetford Winter series race will tell you this is massively helpful as you don't have to fight your way through the bottle neck that ALWAYS occurs when people sit up at the first bit of Single track for a drink and some Jellybabies. In addition to my new found 'waltz past everyone to the front' status, I also had Chief defector Jonny 'Youth' Shuster as my pit b1tch. Armed with numerous bottles of energy drink, gels, and the new One Direction album on his iPod, Youth was ready to

take my jacket at the start, shout 'Show me your War face' as I went past the pits and generally just be a superstar, which he did with vigour.

So the start – I got a good one. Good enough for third into the first corner, which scared me slightly as my position normally involves **at least** two digits. I'd made the note to go with gears this time as I'd been spinning out at the previous race on a gear that would have let me ride up the side of the Willis building. It was definitely showing its benefits, right up to the point when the gears started skipping. Brilliant. As expected I expertly gave up position after position and slowly drifted down the field, wanting to blame the gearing but not helped by my lack of fitness (have you actually given up smoking yet Kitch???? Ed) and the fact that the boys at the front were sat at 25mph. More excuses.

I'm not sure if it's me but the Thetford races have definitely got less friendly than they used to be, with a LOT of swearing going on at each other. Sad as I've always found them really friendly in the past. Anyway, friends are for losers and I had to push on. End of the first lap, ~~Harry Stiles~~ Jonny was there with a bottle and gel which I didn't need, disappointment in his eyes at the fact that I was now lounging somewhere around 8th position. Understandable but not unexpected. My gears were skipping a lot at this point and being the well trained mechanic that I am, I pushed on without bothering to examine why I couldn't hold any gears.

Fair play to the Thetford MTB crew, the first two courses have been brilliant and combined with the excellent weather meant high speeds and muchos fun. Well, fun for those that were a) fit and b) had a bike that worked. Into the bomb hole I sportingly put an elbow on someone and pushed past ('if you ain't first, you're last' – Ricky Bobby) and got myself lined up for the big sprint out the other side. At which point my chain snapped, my feet blew off the pedals and I 'connected' with the top tube of my less than forgiving POS mountainbike. Handily the bloke behind me helped the situation with the line 'You've snapped your chain mate' which obviously made the whole situation MUCH better. After throwing my bike back into the bomb hole in a tantrum (I bet you didn't throw it as far as I threw mine when my chain snapped in a winter series race some years back....Ed), then having the walk of shame to go back and collect it I pushed back to the pits for a bacon baguette and to see how everyone else was getting on. Still, at least my family hadn't made the special trip to see me race....oh....

The Sampsons were on fine form (in the 4hr Cat!), Andy looking mega fast as always and Laura had such a massive margin on the 2nd place girl that she stopped for a chat about why I was stood looking mardy in the pits and not on my bike trying not to be sick. She wasn't even out of breath! I'm sure there were other Stowmartians there as well (I saw Graham in the pits and I'm almost certain I caught sight of the Silver Fox Mr Moss) but at this point I was in such a bad mood, all I wanted to do was cut my bike into small pieces and have another bacon butty. Apologies to anyone I missed.

So, all in all not a brilliant one results wise for me, but a fantastic course and (bar the swearing) a really good atmosphere. Would be good to see other Stowmarketeers there and if you do come to the next round (which is at Brandon – THE best course) can you bring me a Powerlink?

Cheers
Kitch

Well as you can all see there has been a good bit of Stowmarket action up at Thetford, so much so that your esteemed editor (and of course off road secretary....Why???) has actually manned up and entered the final round...best stay off the pies and get training.

Speaking of which I did manage to organise a trip to Cannock between Christmas and New Year and rather than bore you with my version of it I will hand you over to Mr Mark "Yogi" Ormond...

Mountain Biking at Cannock Chase

It was a wet and windy day, but our illustrious off-road secretary had arranged a day out at Cannock Chase, so off we went. Unfortunately, club attendance was low, consisting of Matt Flynn, Duncan Harrison, Jim Studd and myself, along with 4 of Studdy's mates. (The Sampsons were supposed to be coming, but I think they got scared about riding with some one as good as me.....Ed)

Having recently bought a nice shiny new mountain bike, I was keen to put it to the test. Little did I know – it was me to be tested much more than the mountain bike!

We arrived at Cannock and put on waterproof gear. Flynny only had shorts and jersey, being unable to think at 7.00am when we left his house, so had to borrow something slightly waterproof from Studdy. As we set off at high speed down the first track, over a wet, narrow, wooden walkway, I quickly realised I was out of my comfort zone. I pottered carefully along behind the experienced bunch of mountain bikers.

2 hours and 14 miles later, I had fallen off 3 times (once over the handlebars), Duncan had no brakes or front suspension, and we were all wet and cold. Quick strip off and change(except for Matt who was still lacking in suitable clothes) and into the café for something hot. Well done Matt for organising the day. Great fun, and very different to road riding. If you want to try out a 'challenging' mountain bike track, I can certainly recommend Cannock Chase.

Author: Yogi (*Mark Ormond*)



This was clearly not at Cannock....Yogi sort those socks out mate!!!

Apparently Mossy & Jonny have been racing in some Cyclo-Cross events, mainly carrying a bike that is not really designed for the conditions, but let's face it who really cares??? Ha ha only joking, as I understand it they have both been going well, but as they haven't sent me any results/I've lost their emails there isn't much I can add!!!

Now moving on to the road, there has been quite an active training ride/excuse to sit in a Caf' and eats loads of cake scene developing in the club. This seemed to originate from everyone's favourite domestique, Dave "the jock Strap" Clarke and has now grown in to a regular and well attended Saturday ride (see facebook for details of who and where each week). Tooney seems to have taken top spot as cake eater and even Rousey has been seen out consuming pureed cakes from a plastic cup whilst dribbling like all good geriatrics!!!



Chris and the Happy Jock, enjoy CAKE!!!

However there have been occasions when cake has been hard to find....

The Café stop that never was

A steady ride with a café stop – that's how it was sold to me. 91 miles and no café was the reality! Matt Toone suggested a few of us ride out to Essex on the bank holiday Tuesday after Christmas. "A steady ride, with a long café stop". What was expected to be a select group of fat blokes, quickly grew when people heard about the café stop, and 12 people gathered at the Crown at 9.00am.

Westie took the initiative, and left home without breakfast, to ensure he had room for a big fry up. Matt had suggested the Blue Egg café, but El-Presidente told us it was closed, so suggested the ideal café at Stisted in Essex instead. So far, so good.

Things started to go downhill when I got a puncture. They got worse when we reached Stisted and the 'open' café was in fact 'closed'. "No problem" says El-Presidente, "there's another café at the other end of the village." That was also closed.

A ride to Coggeshall to find lots of nice cafés (closed), a garden centre with café inside (closed), and a pub (closed), and Westie's stomach had become far more vocal than his mouth.(REALLY?????Ed)

Luckily for all, El-Presidente came to the rescue, and took us all back to his house for Christmas cake. Westie ate most of it, and half of the lemon cake, and as many chocolate biscuits as he could find in Alan's kitchen! Thanks Mrs Rouse for being so welcoming to a group of hungry, smelly, over-weight cycling nerds! (She is married to one you know Yogi??Ed)

Author: Yogi (Mark Ormond)

OTHER NEWS & EVENTS

I have been reliably informed that the club rides are still as well attended as ever, but have been far too fat and lazy to actually find out, I promise to try harder this year.

The ICA awards were also held at the end of last year and whilst I don't actually know who won what we can all see from the picture below that SDCC kicked butt!!



Graham Berry organised some Watt bikes during November for a bit of winter training. They are static training bikes, all linked together with a big screen in front of you so that participants can race against each other over various distances. Matt Rose was the don of power and sprinting whilst the rest of us just tried to make ourselves pass out or vomit over the longer distances, fun it was not!!! Graham informs me that we may be getting them again in February....Brilliant!!!

Miriam has organised another trip to Calshot Velodrome on the 21st January, I understand that there are 17 of us going, so that should be fun and I'm sure you'll be able to read all about the size of the splinters I get stuck in my backside in the next Newsletter!!

We have had a few new members join over the winter months:

November- David Page
Duncan Harrison
Ted Barber

December- 0

January -Neal Hughes

I'm sure you'll all join me in welcoming them to the club, we now have 98 members....maybe we will hit the 100 this year.

Well I think that that is probably enough of my inane drivel, sorry to anyone who wanted anything in that I have forgotten, I have the memory of a gold fish and seeing as I can't just pass this on to my secretary it has to make do with my amazing organizational skills and typing, which I think explains a lot.

It just remains for me to thank you all for reading and more importantly for being part of one of East Anglia's biggest, and we like to think friendliest, cycling clubs. It is all of you who make it what it is.

Take care and have a safe and enjoyable 2012 season.

Matt Flynn

PS Any captions for this photo from the trophy evening should be sent to who ever is editing the next Newsletter.....



Is it just me that thinks that looks wrong????