

THE 24 HOUR FELLOWSHIP



Journal No. 129

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The 24 Hour Fellowship

Founded 1960

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Individuals and Senior Citizen: £10 Family: £12

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You will notice that postal addresses are not included in the contact information for officer's above – this is because keen cyclists have been targeted by burglars, who become only too aware of the value of some of the bikes that we have in our possession ! If you need to send something by post, drop the relevant officer an email and they'll be happy to supply postal addresses to members.

Introduction to Journal no. 129

Dear Fellowship members.

Last year we found ourselves in a parlous position, with the possibility that there would not be another 24 Hour Road Time Trial in the UK bringing into question the continuance of the 24 Hour Fellowship itself.



An Extraordinary General Meeting was held in early spring of 2023, where we received the good news that for the foreseeable future a 24 Hour event would, thankfully, remain in existence, and with this information members voted that the Fellowship should also continue.

Other business of the Fellowship conducted at the EGM, which I myself attended, included the continuing search for a new editor of the 'Journal', as since the loss of John Taylor there had been no editor and hence no journal. As I have some familiarity with the formatting of documents for printing I volunteered to take over as editor, an offer that was eagerly accepted by the committee members. What have I let myself in for?

I must admit that I hadn't realised that I'd need to come up with a lot of the content myself, and I know for sure I simply do not have the depth of knowledge regarding 24 Hour TTs or the contacts within the world of UK long-distance cycling that John Taylor had, but I will do my best to make a go of it.

I will, however, need your help – I urge as many of you as possible to put fingers to keyboards and get some 'copy' to me ! Remember, the 24 Hour is like all road time trials – the experiences of all riders (and helpers, volunteers etc!) are valid, not simply those of the select few who make it onto the podium. TTs are all about our own private battles, and we can all feel interested, moved and inspired by the experiences of our fellow riders whatever their 'wattage'.

I should like to thank Fellowship secretary John Hassall and also Bryan Griffiths for putting together some words for me.

Thanks also go to non-members Ian To and Ingeborg Oie for engaging with me regarding their 2023 record-breaking 24 Hour Mixed Tandem ride. I hope

you enjoy the resulting piece. I am sure that like me you will feel admiration for Ian and Ingeborg's never-say-die attitude as they faced no end of technical issues, due to the wet weather, all of which that they had to overcome in order to continue riding. Their breaking of the record was a close run thing, to be sure.

In 2023 I was a participant in the 24 HOur, although I did not finish . . . details of my DNF will end this edition. In 2024 I intend being there as a volunteer/marshall, which will also enable me to put together a better account of the event, as when you are riding you are largely unaware of the ongoing battles, unless I suppose, you are a front runner not an also ran like me (or 'also ran, for a bit, then stopped'...). Meanwhile, please accept that my account of the 2023 event is somewhat sketchy, and in part derived from the CTT report of proceedings. It'll have to do.

Best wishes

Editor Pete Bishop

Exeter Wheelers CC

The 2023 Mersey Roads/National Championship 24 Hour Time Trial.

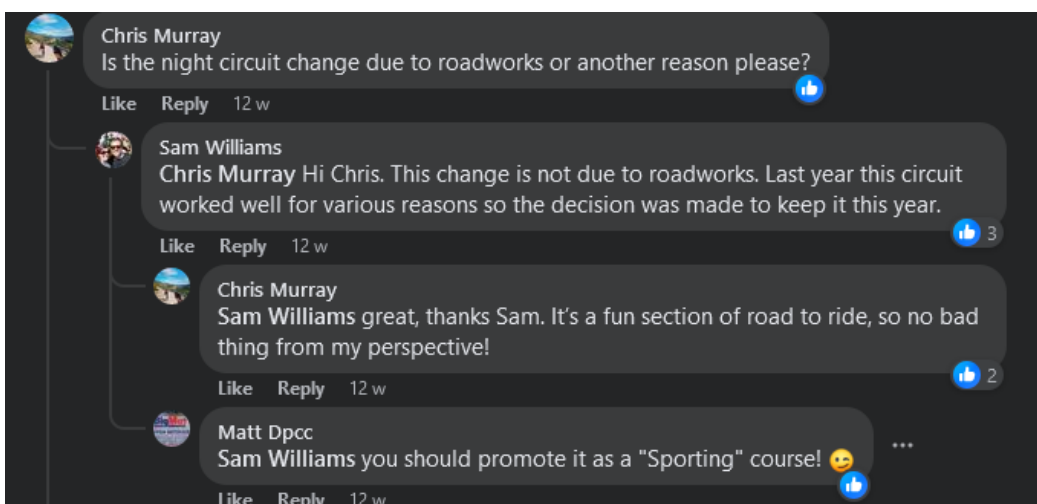
Heavy rain and breezy conditions were features of the 2023 National 24 Hour Championships held by Mersey Roads CC.

The rain starting around 3pm on the Saturday afternoon, a couple of hours into the event, and continued until at least 4am. At times, especially at the end of the evening and during the hours of darkness, the rain verged on biblical.

The course was altered, twice, in the run up to the event. Firstly, it was decided that the night circuit route, the established out&back dog-leg of around 20 miles from Prees to Espley via Tern Hill then back to Prees, should be changed. The large number of heavy lorries now using the section between Prees and Tern Hill during the night was the consideration; when the change was announced, some riders did comment on how vulnerable they'd felt at night in previous years on this section, with those very large lorries speeding by. The situation would also have been made worse this time with the darkness hours being very wet – spray-filled air and puddles of

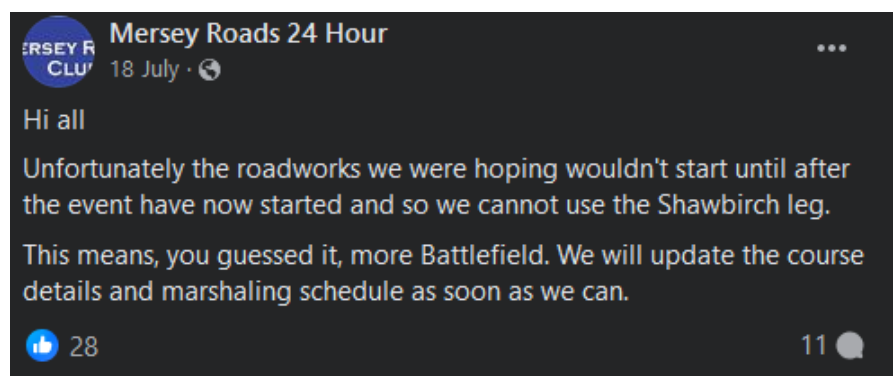
rainwater would have made the issue of passing lorries even more of a danger for the riders.

In place of the Prees to Espley and back 20 mile 'circuit' the new night circuit was the 'Battlefield' leg. For the uninitiated the Battlefield leg is a 14 mile leg running SSW from Prees on the A49 down to Battlefield, then returning NNE on the same road back to Prees, and repeat as per time allows. 28 miles there and back. It is of a very different nature to the Espley night circuit, being rolling countryside and also being single carriageway all the way. Some riders like it, others don't. Marmite is the word. There is no doubt, however, that its hilly nature reduces riders average speeds compared with the Espley night circuit.

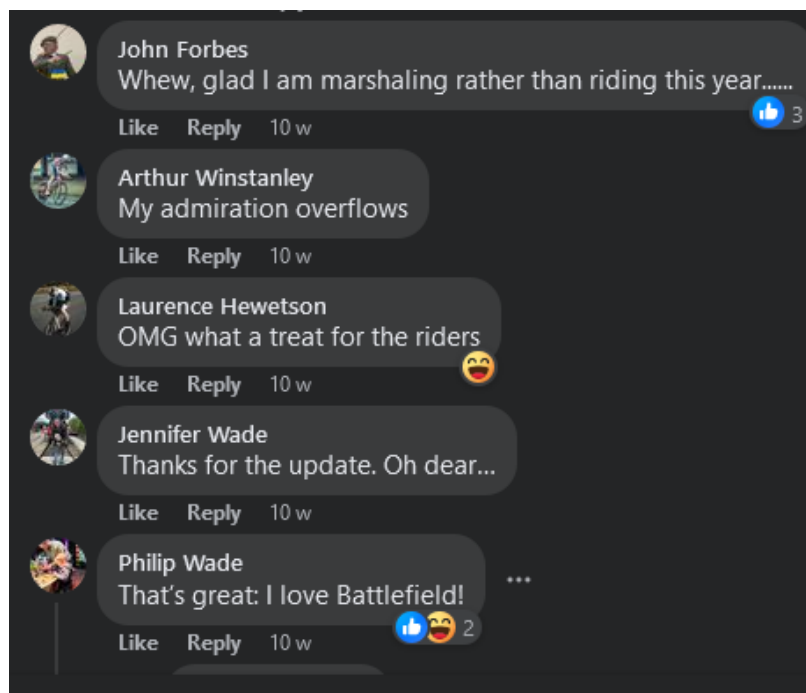


An excerpt from the Mersey Roads 24 Hr Facebook page

Anyone who has organised a bike race on British roads will be aware of the issue that is roadworks. Organisers contact local Highways to ensure the route will be clear on the day, and that any existing roadworks will be completed, and either struggle to obtain clear and concise information from the authorities, or worse still are told roadworks are planned but not in the timeframe of the event, or roadworks are on the course then they'll be gone by the day of the event, only to find that roadworks started/still on the course and the event a couple of days away. This occurred at this year's 24 Hour, causing the loss of the SSE out and backs to Shawburch via Espley..... a change of route was required at late notice



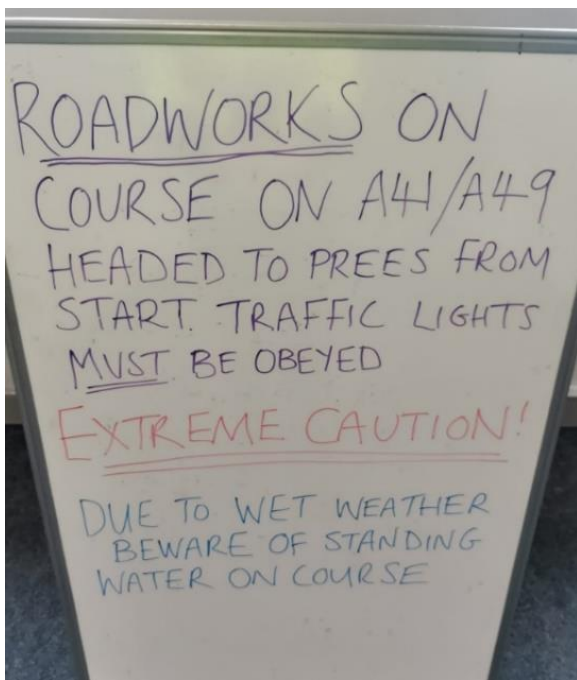
Exchanges on Mersey Roads Facebook captured the 'marmite' feeling amongst those concerned:



Weather conditions are always a big factor in both expected and completed mileages in long-distance TT events, and the forecast became steadily worse as the weekend approached. This, combined with the presence of many repeats of the Battlefield out&back with its inclines and its poor/slow road surface meant that there was little chance of any mileage records going this year you'd think . . . but as it happened one record was indeed broken despite the adverse conditions.

Come the day and the weather was breezy, a southerly wind, which kept temperatures up, but no rain yet as the first rider, Charles Kitson of the Banbury Star Cyclists' Club, clipped himself into his pedals and rode off at 13:09 hrs. This was Charles' 2nd 24 Hour attempt – his first was last year 2022, when he became 60 with age comes wisdom; do these bonkers things whilst you can. Charles was DNF last year, which must've steeled him to complete this year's event, despite the weather, which he duly did.

The start line officials had a total of 10 riders missing from the start sheet, no doubt the inclement weather figured in the decisions-making of these missing riders, although we do know that stalwart Ray Retter, 77 years old, was absent through a health issue – hope things are improved for you now Ray.



Roadworks again reared their ugly head, this time for the outward southward journey to Prees from the race HQ at Farndon, on the Whitchurch Bypass. The presence of traffic lights did allow, however, some brief exchanges between riders at times as they waited together for the traffic lights to turn green.

"It's not raining yet..."

"It will do!"

"Well, good luck anyway!"

"You too! Cheers!"

The southward journey down to Prees and then on to Battlefield was all against the wind, and as the first riders were ascending and descending the gradients between Prees Heath and Battlefield the rain began, light drizzle at first then as the afternoon wore on it grew heavier.

By the time riders were on the 12.6 mile Quina Brook circuit the weather became positively 'Götterdämmerung' at times i.e. 'Twilight of the Gods' . . .

The rains continued throughout the night, varying in intensity between 'quite heavy' and 'very heavy'. Thankfully the southerly winds prevented the riders from getting too cold. If there'd been heavy rains and a cold northerly then it would've been a different kettle of fish, of that there is no doubt.

Robbie Mitchell was going well, looking to regain the title he'd won in 2021, a weekend when conditions were at another extreme, that time being very hot, a fact reflected in only 37 of the 68 entrants that year completing their 24 hours riding. Robbie's distance in 2021 was 521 miles, and for a while it looked possible he might beat that this time despite the weather. Mark Turnbull (Torq Performance) and Tim Welsh (Cambridge CC) were both going well, so Robbie could not afford to relax if he wanted to regain the title.

Robbie rides for Auchencrow Thistle CC, a fine name for a cycling club if ever there was one.

Riders were much relieved that Sunday morning brought about a change of conditions, although by now much damage had been done, and around a quarter of starters went DNF, virtually all of them packing in the wee small/long/wet hours of the night.

Thankfully, with the dawn, the rain clouds by and large moved off, a chance for riders to change into dry kit that wouldn't immediately get wet once they got going again.

From the off Christina Murray (Army Cycling) was looking peerless in the women's category, and she eventually rolled out winner by over 40 miles versus her nearest challenger Joanna Cebrat (360 Cycling), as Christina continued her run of winning in the 'odd years' . . . 2019, 2021 and now 2023.

2019 and 2021 had seen Christina break competition records in both of these two years, but, as she said afterwards "This year that was never going to be because of the weather".

Joanna Cebrat was 2nd in 2022, and 2nd again this year, but only 6 miles fewer miles than in 2022, so I'd call that an upward trajectory, given the revised course and the rain and the wind.

Also going well throughout was Amy Hudson of Velo Bavarian, looking cool and in control on her road bike. Amy was riding her first time trial, so 'chapeau' to her as she kept the pedals turning and clocked up 394 miles to gain a podium place third in the female section, a fine debut.



Robbie Mitchell and Christina Murray on the podium.

Scot Robbie Mitchell maintained his momentum, and became National 24 Hour Champion for the 2nd time, with a performance arguably better than his victorious 2021 ride. Considering the fact that there was twice as much elevation to be managed this year than in 2021, together with the challenging weather, his final distance of only 2 miles less than in 2021 was hugely impressive. If I was a betting man I'd maybe get down to Mr Paddy Power's betting shop and put a few quid on Robbie getting a third Champion's medal next year. He did at least admit that the conditions during the night were . . . 'grim'.

Time trialling is about private battles, against our previous performances or if you're very good versus others for a podium place. Usually, a rider who finishes lower down the results table will have pushed themselves every bit as much as those who finish 'in the frame'. Mention within this respect must go to finishers Hugh Culverhouse, of Weybridge Wheelers, the only para-cyclist in the event, on his adapted bike, and 71 years of age to boot, and to Rose Price of Born to Bike – Bridgtown Cycles. Rose was riding Jim Hopper's trusty trike, and did it proud going five miles further than her only previous 24hr of 2022.

Thanks go to Mersey Roads CC for running the event, especially the Williams family and also to all the other individuals in the background working to ensure the event runs smoothly. Given the duration of the event there's a lot of work for the marshalls and timekeepers, this time out in the rain. Thanks go to all these fine people.

Results of the Mersey Roads/National Championship 24 Hour 2023

1	Robbie	Mitchell	M	Auchencrow Thistle CC	519.37
2	Mark	Turnbull	M	TORQ Performance	511.12
3	Timothy	Welsh	M	Cambridge CC	501.54
4	Michael	Hutchinson	M	Arctic Aircon RT	486.65
5	Christian	Geldard	M	North Hampshire RC	478.69
6	Chris	Murray	F	Army Cycling	465.38
7	Joe	Gorman	M	Arctic Aircon RT	463.48
8	Doug	Hart	M	Ilkley CC	462.91
9	Greg	Elwell	M	VTTA (Yorkshire)	459.99
10	Chris	Hopkinson	M	API/Anglia Sport	454.94
11	Gareth	Jones	M	Clevedon & District RC	442.57
12	Neil	Lauder	M	Arctic Aircon RT	437.01
13	Andrew	Askwith	M	Vive Le Velo	429.69
14	Joanna	Cebrot	F	360cycling	419.23
15	Adam	Rogers	M	Eastbourne Rovers CC	418.55
16	Robert	Tomlinson	M	Sotonia CC	404.34
17	Jonathan	Pontin	M	Addiscombe CC	396.11
18	Amy	Hudson	F	Velo Bavarian	394.25
19	Nigel	Briggs	M	South Pennine RC	386.83
20	Shaun	Hargreaves	M	Audax UK	386.61
21	Ian	Ryall	M	Audax UK	385.20
22	Angus	Swanson	M	Stirling Bike Club	370.62
23	Hollie	Labunsky	F	Port Talbot Whs CC	365.16
24	Ben	Cox	M	Fibrax Fenwicks Wrexham CC	356.63
25	Roger	Squire	M	Fibrax Fenwicks Wrexham CC	347.16
26	Lawrence	Webster	M	Aberdeen Wheelers	336.47
27	James	Rees	M	SKCC	333.87

28	Philip	Jones	M	Peterborough CC	329.15
29	Jez	Willows	M	Sherwood CC	325.84
30	Geraint	Catherall	M	Anfield BC	303.38
31	Carolyn	Chambers	F	North Argyll CC	295.69
32	Corinna	O'Connor	F	Audax UK	293.77
33	Sue	Satchithananda	F	Crewe Clarion Wheelers	284.28
34	Rose	Price	F	Born to Bike - Bridgtown Cycles	270.20
35	Joseph	North	M	Audax UK	269.81
36	Hugh	Culverhouse	M	Weybridge Wheelers	262.31
37	Rob	Rix	M	Southport CC	249.55
38	Charles	Kitson	M	Banbury Star Cyclists' Club	236.78

italics = road bike ***bold italics = tricycle***

There were 10 DNS and 12 DNFs

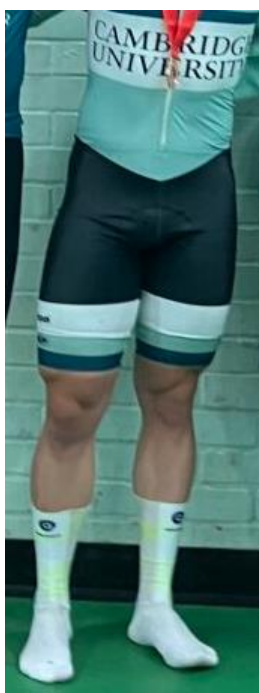
Given that the 2023 edition might have been the last ever 24 Hour TT, it is possible that there were more entrants than might have been expected, as some may've entered thinking it might be the last chance they'd ever get to ride a 24 Hour. It will be interesting to see how numbers hold up for 2024 and beyond. It might also be the case that if the Battlefield out&back is the new standard night circuit then some riders will feel that getting a new PB might be a tough call, which might negatively impact future entry numbers. Time will tell.

The 2023 24 Hour Fellowship Long Distance BAR

Nigel Briggs has kindly taken over the role of 'Competition Secretary' from Tim Carpenter for the Fellowship, and has duly pulled together the results making up our Long Distance Competition for 2023.

	Name	Club	24 Hr	12 Hr	100	av. mph
1	Timothy Welsh	Cambridge CC	501.54	283.06	4:4:25	23.01
2	Christian Geldard	North Hampshire RC	478.69	260.74	3:51:48	22.52
3	Gareth Jones	Clevedon & Dist. RC	442.57	262.63	4:6:10	21.57
4	Andrew Askwith	Vive Le Velo	429.69	254.93	4:21:4	20.71
5	Greg Elwell	VTTA (Yorkshire)	459.99	210.73	3:58:11	20.64

6	Nigel Briggs	South Pennine RC	386.83	220.4	4:41:0	18.61
7	Hollie Labunsky	Port Talbot Whs CC	365.16	227.74	4:41:2	18.51
8	Jez Willows	Sherwood CC	325.84	230.58	4:31:57	18.28
9	Philip Jones	Peterborough CC	329.15	219.02	4:30:52	18.04
10	Roger Squire	Fibrax Wrexham RC	347.16	197.17	5:6:20	16.83
11	Geraint Catherall	Anfield BC	303.38	183.66	5:54:23	14.96



Congratulations to Tim Welsh for his victory in the competition.

If this Tim Welsh is the same one who also rode/rides for Cambridge University CC then he definitely has the legs for cycling - each thigh is about the size of his waist – heck, the power in those !

If not Tim's legs, my apologies, $2 + 2 = 5$ etc.

The following table is the **2023 Fellowship's Veterans' LBAR** based on Age Adjusted Distance/Time:

	Name	Club	24 Hr AAD	12 Hr AAD	100 AAT	AAT av. mph
1	Christian Geldard	North Hampshire RC	500.95	271.14	3:44:34	23.40
2	Gareth Jones	Clevedon & Dist. RC	480.19	280.26	3:53:34	23.02
3	Andrew Askwith	Vive Le Velo	484.49	280.7	4:2:4	22.79
4	Greg Elwell	VTTA (Yorkshire)	485.20	222.52	3:49:56	21.62
5	Nigel Briggs	South Pennine RC	457.00	253.51	4:15:52	21.21
6	Philip Jones	Peterborough CC	407.62	256.11	4:2:15	21.03

7	Jez Willows	Sherwood CC	380.64	256.35	4:12:57	20.31
8	Roger Squire	Fibrax Wrexham RC	388.06	216.35	4:52:33	18.24
9	Geraint Catherall	Anfield BC	328.59	195.45	5:46:8	15.77

All riders in the above tables obviously rode the Mersey Roads/National 24 Hour as that was the only 24 Hr taking place. Looking at who rode which 100 and which 12 Hr events in their counting rides, we see the following:

	Name		12 hr		100
1	Timothy Welsh	National	D12/1	Southern Counties	G100/61A
2	Christian Geldard	Welsh CA	R12/16	Hounslow Whs	H100/88
3	Gareth Jones	Welsh CA	R12/16	Welsh CA	R100/9
4	Andrew Askwith	Vive Le Velo	V381	SCCA & WCTTCA	D100/8
5	Greg Elwell	Vive Le Velo	V381	Anfield BC	D100/8
6	Nigel Briggs	National	D12/1	Hounslow Whs	H100/88
7	Hollie Labunsky	Welsh CA	R12/16	Welsh CA	R100/9
8	Jez Willows	Vive Le Velo	V381	National	B100
9	Philip Jones	National	D12/1	Hounslow Whs	H100/88
10	Roger Squire	National	D12/1	SCCA & WCTTCA	D100/8
11	Geraint Catherall	National	D12/1	SCCA & WCTTCA	D100/8

The National 12 Hour was run by WCTTCA & LTTCA, whilst the National 100 was run by CC Breckland.

I feel 3rd placed LBAR rider Andrew Askwith deserves special mention as not only did he ride over 40 CTT events in 2023 but he included TTs at completely the opposite end of the spectrum from 24hr, 12hr, & 100, riding 15 hill climbs to finish the season, one of which he rode on the afternoon of a day on which he'd already ridden a 25mile TT ! He also finished in top ten in his age category in the National Hill Climb on Nick 'o'Pendle in Cumbria at the end of October. Hats off, definitely. He probably also spin bowls for Yorkshire, and plays up front for Doncaster Rovers, in between darts for the local pub.

The available events for the 2024 edition of the Fellowship LBAR are these:

24 Hours:

27 th July	Mersey Roads Club	D24 Cheshire & Shropshire
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12 Hours:

9 th June	Vive le Velo	V361 East Riding, Yorkshire
18 th Aug	CC Breckland (the National)	B12/8 Norfolk
18 th Aug	WCTCA & LTCA	D12 Prees etc (Shropshire/Cheshire)
1 st Sept	Welsh CA	R12/16 South Wales

100s:

19 th May	North Devon Velo	S12/100 North Devon
26 th May	Hounslow & District Wheelers	H100/88 Farnham/Alton
27 th May	Anfield BC	D100/8 Shropshire
16 th June	ECCA	E2/100c Cambridge
16 th June	Dundee Thistle	WE100/01 Brechin/Forfar
30 th June	CC Breckland	B100/8 Norfolk
30 th June	Welsh CA Championships	R100/9 South Wales
7 th July	SCCA & WCTCA (the National)	D100/8 Shropshire
14 th July	Southern Counties CU	G100/61A Sussex
11 th Aug	Bristol South CC	U86/100 Wiltshire
1 st Sept	Tyneside Vagabonds (inc. VTTA Championship)	M100/10 Northumberland

Good to see a 100 mile time trial down in my neck of the woods, Devon. I had vowed never to do another 100 mile TT but after encountering North Devon Velo's Roger Sheridan at a South-West Cyclo-Cross League event recently I promised my support for this one. The S12/100 course is all undulating single carriageway, it won't be fast, but it's a nice road, much of it along the river Taw valley.

Thoughts from compiling the 24 Hour Fellowship Long Distance BAR Table – Nigel Briggs

This is the first year that I have compiled the Long Distance BAR tables which has given me the excuse to look at the results a little more closely than I have in previous years. This year there were three 12 hour events, eleven 100 mile time trials and the '24'.

I had assumed (for absolutely no definite reason) that most riders in the '24' would also compete in a '12' and a 100 however it was soon apparent that this assumption was wrong. Possibly a lesson in the value of assumptions! Out of the 38 solo finishers of the '24' 13 riders completed a 12 hour event and 15 riders completed a 100 mile time trial with 11 riders completing all 3 events and thus qualifying for the Long Distance Bar. 9 of these qualified for the Veterans Long Distance BAR. Or, put another way, of the solo finishers 21 did not ride a 12 hour or a 100 mile time trial. I was surprised by these figures which led me to look a little deeper into the results. I have used the 24 Hour Fellowship web site's results and the CTT results. Any mistakes in the numbers are mine and I apologise if there are any however the overall picture should not change. The information is only based on 2023, previous years results may paint a similar picture, if anyone has done such an analysis it would be interesting to compare them. I am not attempting to draw conclusions from these numbers but merely present them for interest. Someone may be tempted to undertake a wider analysis.

On the 2023 24 Hour start sheet there were 60 solo riders, including 1 tricycle, and one tandem pair. Of the solo entrants there were 45 veterans, 14 seniors and 1 espoir. The tandem pair was mixed senior. 20 riders on the start sheet were first time 24 hour riders (or more correctly they had no previous entries in the Fellowship's database). On the day there were 10 DNS's, 3 of which were first time riders, 9 were veterans and 1 a senior.

There were 38 solo (including the tricycle) and the one tandem pair who finished the '24', with 12 DNF's, 2 of which were first time riders. The solo

finishers consisted of 29 veterans, 8 seniors and 1 espoir, made up of 8 women and 30 men. Of the 8 women who were on the start sheet, all started and all finished, 5 of whom were first time 24 hour riders.

Following on from my initial findings about the proportion of finishers who also rode a '12' and or a '100', I determined that out of the 60 solo entrants 20 did not enter any other open time trial during 2023. I can not decide whether this observation is telling us anything or not! It would be easy to start drawing conclusions from far too little information, however it may initiate conversation.

My congratulations go to all the riders on the Long Distance BAR table and to all those who took part in the counting events. Many thanks to all the promoters and helpers of the events.

Nigel Briggs

Previous Fellowship Journals: Number one, 1961.

Upon becoming editor of 'The Journal' I was given a box of previous journals, indeed *all* the previous journals, so I thought it might be interesting to dip into them, and to then reflect upon how some things have remained the same and other things have changed in the world of 24 Hour TT's and other long distance events.

The Fellowship commenced in 1960. It was December the 18th that seven individuals met up at Bickenhall, between Coleshill and Solihull. The seven individuals were Nick Carter, Les Heald, A. Jones, Cliff Bate, Jack Spackman, Dave Cane and Sid Genders. The 24 Hour Fellowship was formed, those present resolving that: "*The objects of the Fellowship are to foster the spirit of 24 Hour riding and further the interests of this phase of the sport*".

Subs were 5 bob . . . 5 shillings, or 25p in 'new' pence.

The first 'Journal' was 3 typed Foolscap pages, which were then duplicated and posted out to members (at 3d or 1p postage per). For those not as old as me 'Foolscap' was the standard paper size for documents back then, and was slightly narrower and slightly longer than the international standard A4 which has since become our standard size. Research has just revealed to me that 'Foolscap' was so called after the 'Fool's Cap and Bells' watermark it traditionally came with in its early days.

The Fellowship first journal was published in 1961, although it wasn't entitled such, it was referred to simply as 'The Newsletter'.

As the Fellowship was just newly formed, the content in the Newsletter was all written by secretary and treasurer Sid.

A stark contrast to the 21st century is that back in the 60's there were no less than FOUR 24 Hour TT's. John Taylor's excellent and BIG book 'The 24 Hour Story' tells us that the four events & their winners in 1960 were as follows:

Catford CC	EJ Stagg	Old Portlians CC	461 miles
Wessex RC	Bill Shearing	Salisbury CC	438 miles
Mersey RC	Ken Usher	Crouch Hill CC	454 miles
North Road CC	F. Burrell	Middlesex RC	477 miles

The North Road CC event was The National, and winner Burrell's 477.7 miles was exactly (to the tenth of a mile) the same mileage he'd won the National in a few years previously.

500 mile distances in a 24 hour were then a way off. However, that milestone was already in people's minds, as the Newsletter's writer says: *"Although you may not have actually put your thoughts into words, I know some of you are thinking secretly of that elusive 500 in 24, and wondering just how it can be done. We all know the magnitude of the task, but I'm confident there are men* among us who can manage it either this year or next, I think it's as close as that"*.

(*no mention of women at this stage! and indeed the term 'chaps' (with its old meaning of 'men') is the predominant expression used throughout the early Newsletters and Journals – we've moved on a bit since then).

Was 500 miles achieved in 1961 or 1962 ? No, but at the end of the decade 500 miles was achieved, by Roy Cromack at the 1969 Mersey Roads/National Championship event, where he broke the barrier with 507 miles. This was the event famed for the battle between Nim Carline and Beryl Burton, both eventually DNF'ing . . . but that's another year, another story.

Newsletter writer/Secretary Sid also puts out a call for contributions: *"Most of you have very definite views most aspects of 24 Hour riding, so why not write them down and send them along?"*

I echo that sentiment Sid ! A reminder that your contributions to this 63 year old journal are much needed – email them to me at P.Bishop@exeter.ac.uk or I'm 78 High Street, Ide, Exeter, EX2 9RW.

Sid then writes at some length on 'Feeding', which he recognises as playing a large part in a rider's endeavour to hit that elusive 500 miles. It makes for interesting reading. It is of course the case that medical and sporting knowledge has since moved on from the 'truths' he goes on to describe, but to me it all makes sense. Sid writes of how carbs are changed into sugars, which are then stored in the liver as glycogen, which is then released into the blood stream as glucose, delivered to the muscles where it becomes glycogen again and is 'burnt' (oxidised) to provide energy. Glucose level/percentage in the blood is generally 0.1% ... if it drops to 0.08% or below = bonk/hypoglycaemia; we all know about that don't we! It was reckoned then that 5,000 calories would suffice to ride a 24 Hour on, although Sid disagreed with that figure, believing far more was required. He also writes of how our digestion struggles once all our bodily resources are focussed on managing extreme muscular effort. Of course, at the time of his writing, the only energy drinks would be fruit juices with added sugar or honey.

In the year 1960:

1960 there were only c. 5 million cars on UK roads; that figure is now around seven times higher.

The Men's British BAR was won by Bryan Wiltcher of Zeus RC at 24.56mph. His distance for 12 hours was 267.8 miles. Interestingly, future Tour de France rider Vin Denson of Clifton CC managed fourth in the BAR, and indeed frequently featured in the competition in his early days of racing.

The Women's British BAR was won by Beryl Burton – I expect many of you would have guessed that. Her AVS was 23.74mph. It was the second of her astonishing 25 year consecutive victories in the Women's BBAR.

The Tour de France was won by Italian Gastone Nencini. It was national teams rather than trade teams, and GB featured Brian Robinson, Norman Sheil and Tom Simpson in its line-up.

Burnley FC won the football league, Wolves the FA Cup.

The farthing coin ceased to be legal tender – it featured a wren on it, was worth a quarter of an old penny, so there were 960 farthings to the pound.

The penny farthing:



Top of 'The Hit Parade' in summer of 1960 were hits such as "Shakin' All Over" by Johnny Kidd & The Pirates, and Ricky Valance's "Tell Laura I Love Her".

Cold War tensions and the Space Race were in the news; Gary Powers was shot down and captured over USSR whilst taking photos of military installations in his U-2 spy plane. The Soviet Union launched the satellite Sputnik 5, with the dogs Belka and Strelka, 40 mice, and two rats on board. The satellite returned safely to Earth the next day and all animals were recovered alive and well.

Those 24 Hour Fellowship winter meetings by Brian Griffiths

In the seventies and eighties the 24hour fellowship used to hold regular winter social weekends

I went to several, with our bases being variously at Bakewell, Shrewsbury and Aberystwyth, They were all hugely enjoyable affairs. I can't quite remember when I went to the last one, but I think it must have been back in the early eighties.

These gatherings were a chance to sit and chat at length with other twenty-four hour riders, and were always very popular. It was a generally accepted condition that you rode to the venue unless you had a really good excuse to drive there.

Without doubt the most memorable Fellowship winter gathering I went to was at the Cambrian Hotel in the West Wales seaside town of Aberystwyth.



Aberystwyth in the sunshine . . . what could possibly go wrong?

I set off from my home in Telford to ride the 84 miles to our venue about mid-morning and because the weather was so good I added a few extra miles to my journey taking me up to the one hundred.

When I arrived several members were already there, if my memory serves me well these included Ray Page, Ian Dow, Les Lowe, amongst other members.

After a most entertaining evening we woke to find that the ground was covered with drifting snow several inches deep, and ominously the snow was still coming down.

After a healthy breakfast we all had to prepare ourselves for getting home.

Some chose to take the train.

Some chose to cycle - our group of seven riders, donned out most suitable clothes, headed off toward the midland and home.

Getting out of the town was difficult due to the car wheel tracks in the deep snow, but further up the road a snowplough had made things easier. The wind was not at all helpful so our pace was significantly lower than we would have liked it to have been.

An hour passed, and things were getting decidedly worse. The driving snow made it very difficult to see ahead, and the cold damp air was chilling us through to the marrow. Progress was painfully slow. Just after eleven o'clock the welcome sight of Machynnleth came into view; the first eighteen miles had been accomplished.

It was tempting to stop for a warming drink, but we all agreed that it was essential to keep going whilst progress was still possible. The next stage of the journey through Cemmaes Road, Carno and Caersws was completed, with but with it feeling even more damp and cold than when we started, if that were possible, we were up against it. Despite the supreme fitness of these tough lads they were starting to suffer in the extreme conditions, and eventually when we reached Newtown it was decided that rather against our normal principles we would have to stop briefly to take on some warm refreshments.

A welcome brief respite for everyone, but with little more than half the journey completed, and just over three hours till darkness fell a brave return to damp saddles had to be made.

Between Newtown and Welshpool conditions at last began to moderate and the overall speed of the party began to creep upwards. Some

conversation returned, a sign of the relief that was felt as more and more miles were accounted for.

Beyond Welshpool, on the rise to Buttington, an increasing wind was causing the occasional drift to appear, which hindered our progress. The old fears returned as our speed was adversely affected. However, soon our hopes rose when a snow plough caught us up, attempting to clear the road of the dangerous snow menace. The snow was now tightly packed and often slippery in places, so great care now had to be taken. Some walked the most treacherous stretches of road,

We all stayed together as darkness began to creep in. Thankfully the snow had now stopped falling, and a brilliant setting sun appeared making it easy to follow the route.

Suddenly spirits began to rise when the faint distant glow of the Shrewsbury lights indicated that we were at last nearing safety.

It seemed like an eternity before our tired frozen party were beneath the street lights of Bicton on the outskirts of town, and there was great relief as the roads became almost clear and for the first time that day we were able to pedal normally to the railway station in Castle street.

What a relief. Some were home, but others still had a fair way to travel, and one at least elected for an overnight stay at Shrewsbury Youth Hostel.

Time has mellowed the memories of that awful day so many years ago. For those who endured the cold, the wet, the fear and the exhaustion it was no more than another conquest of man and their simple machines in the true tradition of the grand fellowship of cycling.

Needless to say I joined at least three from that same group the following year, again in Aberystwyth. Thankfully the weather played no tricks on us this time.

A new '24 Hour Mixed Tandem' Competition Record.

In my report on the 2023 24 Hour I wrote that despite the distinctly unfavourable conditions during the event one new competition record was set, this being the Mixed Tandem Record, which had stood for over 20 years.

Ian To and Ingeborg Oie rode 465.77 miles to claim that record – beating the previous one by just 0.85 miles, a close run thing.

Congratulations to both of them, a magnificent achievement.

I had first encountered one half of the tandem pair of Ian and Ingebord, namely Ian, when I rode the 2019 Mersey Roads 24. Ian was sporting an eye-catching black and white skin suit, sort of 'magic eye picture' in its appearance. He went on to finish 6th with a distance of 506.42 miles. I recall at one stage going up one of those Battlefield hills and Ian struggled to pass me (my view!) as myself and my less aerodynamic but much lighter 1980's bike went well uphill. He shouted something to me, and to this day I have no idea what it was – was it a statement of admiration or of irritation ?! I then bumped into Ian at the Swindon 'Snap Hill' hill climb of 2021, and chatted with him there briefly. The Swindon riders and helpers were a friendly bunch, but then, most cyclists are aren't they?

Anyway, onto the 2023 24 Hour . When I learnt that Ian and his partner in life and cycling Ingebord had broken the Mixed Tandem 24 Hour Competition Record I got in touch, and put some questions to the two of them. I thought it highly likely that they went through some anxious times during their record-breaking ride, and so their words below prove.

Q. Ian, you mentioned to me that you and Ingeborg are not only tandem partners but partners in life – did you meet via cycling, or was cycling just a shared interest, or has one of you converted the other cycling, especially in terms of cycling as a competitive sport?

A: We first met each other via ultra-cycling races, but it wasn't until I invited Ingeborg for a tandem ride, and then a multi-day tandem trip to Wales and so on that the relationship developed into something more. You could say the tandem brought us together.

Q: When did the idea of competing as a mixed tandem pair in the 2023 24hr first come into your mind(s) ?

A: I had participated in the 24hrs solo in 2019 and after that I had told myself I would never do it again, but doing it with someone is different and then there was the record which had been standing for 21 years...and then we were able to secure a great team of friends to support us, and also, fortunately, all the dates lined up.

Q: Knowing that the mixed tandem record had stood since 2002 (Mr and Mrs Dave and Eileen Brabbin, at 464.92 miles) did you have it in your minds that setting a new record was something to target?

A: The record was certainly a target and a motivating factor to prepare well for the 24. We secretly targeted the overall record, in fact, but we knew that that would take a 'clean run' and staying on the bike with minimal breaks, and that wasn't exactly how it played out !

Q: How did you prepare yourselves for the event?

A: In order to be a strong tandem team, it's not just about putting two strong riders on a tandem bike. We have done several multi-day ultra-distance events together, and in late May this year we won the pairs category at All Points North (c. 1,000km 10,000hm with 10 checkpoints around the North of England). We think all the time we've spent together fine-tuning the bike, our positions and our team work is as important as the physical training (for reference Ian clocks more than twice the miles that Ingeborg does in a year).

Q: Can you tell me something about your tandem?

A: We had been tandeming for nearly two years when we decided that a stiffer frame and better fitting bike was needed in our lives. We contacted Richard Craddock who is local (Worcester) and who is the man behind Filament Bikes. He was able to incorporate all our design ideas into the custom carbon tandem known as Lenny. He's got a nose cone, storage frame boxes, clearance for big tyres (36mm), space for big disc brake rotors (good brakes are essential!) and aerobars. Someone called Lenny a monster - we think he's a speedy beauty! He's been with us since March 2022.

Q: The Battlefield & back circuit – love it or hate it? were the gradients a welcoming change or were they an unwelcome hindrance to you in terms of maintaining your average speed?

A: Hate it! Tandem bikes are invariably slower than solo bikes on steeper gradients. We love rollers where you keep momentum over the top, but most of the Battlefield hills were just long enough that we slowed down to the 'tandem crawl'. Our average speed was so much lower on Battlefield than on Quinnabrook.

Q: The weather for most of the 24 Hour was awful - how did the rain affect the pair of you?

A: The most damaging impact was that all electronics broke down. Most catastrophic of all was the SRAM Etap shifting. We had to get out the spare tandem twice during the 24hrs. It also broke power banks, lights and one of our phones. The destruction and mechanicals during the 24 Hour included but were not limited to the following:

- Saddle coming loose,
- Arm rests coming loose,
- Etap blips failing (x4),
- Etap blipbox failing (twice),
- Front puncture,
- Rear sidewall exploding,
- Drive chain becoming twisted,
- Speedplay aero cleat cover falling off and getting stuck in the chain,
- Exposure light turning off (more than twice),
- Power bank drowning in water,
- Light cable ceasing to work,
- Smartphone dying,
- GPS mount snapping off, throwing the Wahoo onto the road at 30mph,
- 3 x Etap batteries dying,
- Left brake lever working loose,
- Quadlock mount for phone coming loose.

Q: What was your fuelling strategy?

A: We like fuelling on as much real food as possible. Our team pastry chef, Lawrence, had baked sausage rolls, quiches and moist chocolate cookies. Food rich in butter and fat works well for us. We called in to the team to buy double cream for our morning coffees!

Q: Were there any times when one or the other of you had to help the other through a rough patch and if so how did you do that?

A: Ingeborg: When I feel tired, I'm always uplifted by knowing that Ian's legs will get us there because they always produce more than twice the power of my legs.

A: Ian: After laps of Battlefield at night and everything breaking, it looked like achieving our target would be impossible and I was ready to stop. Ingeborg

is stubborn, however, and didn't want her only result at the 24 to be a "DNF" so it was only right that I continued to ride to get her a good distance. Then the sun came out, we took most of our waterproofs off, went to the toilet, had coffee and were flying along Quinnabrook! Suddenly our target was within reach again, even going up 12mins on the record at one point... until, the shifting broke again, the chain jammed, and we had to wait 15 minutes to get the spare tandem.

Q: How was the last hour for you both, knowing you were so close to the record?

A: The last five to six hours were a real rollercoaster. We were up on the record and then something broke, and we were behind, and then we fought back, and then, yet again, something else happened. We had to do sprint efforts up every lump and bump (passing Dr Hutch on one). It was intense until the very end. We were going flat out in the last ten minutes when we punctured, with a quick wheel change as luckily the team was there, and then our Etap blip box failed - we had to throw it away and ride around the last few miles in 54x11.

Q: Why is the tandem called Lenny ?

A: I can't quite recall why we called him Lenny, but here's a photo of him:



Finally Pete, just to say that our team is one of the key reasons for success, which is very much a team success (we only rode the bike, but they did all the fixing!). They were hugely motivating, too. And having two of my daughters there was also amazing.

Many thanks to you both, and again congratulations on your awe-inspiring ride, a fantastic achievement.

Position	Machine	Img	First Name	Last Name	Gender	Category	Club	Distance	Avg. Speed
1	TT Bike		Ian	To	Male	Vet	360VRT	465.77 Miles	19.407 Mph
1	TT Bike		Ingeborg	Oie	Female	Vet	360VRT	465.77 Miles	19.407 Mph

Tales of the unsuccessful & sometimes unexpected - by John Hassell

A warning, this article is not intended for those readers who think that a mileage in a "24" of less than 480 or even 450 was a waste of their time and effort. It is, though, definitely intended for those riders who aim, in the most part, simply to finish, but with the additional benefits of possibly doing a PB, or beating their Vets Standard or perhaps winning an age category. All of these aims, I would quickly add, being achievements in my view, that are not to be sniffed at.

The writing of the article was prompted by our new Journal Editor who was very disappointed by having to pack in this year's Mersey event. As I said to Pete, "There's always next year."

I have the not very impressive record of having completed eight "24s" out of a total of 18 started, and also of being a DNS on a quite a number of other occasions.

My PB is also equally unremarkable at 404 miles but I did have the delight some years ago of winning the Charlie Taylor Memorial Trophy awarded by the Mersey R.C. to the rider with the closest mileage to 351 +, {I think}, I did 352.

However, this is not about my very modest successes but as the title implies, my failures and the reasons for those DNFs, in the hope that others who like Pete climbed off will be encouraged to try again.

Firstly, let's get out of the way the rides where my reasons for packing were more or less than impressive. On at least four occasions it was madness to even start as I had just not done anything like enough training and or preparation. I'm sure I'm not alone in thinking before facing the timekeeper on the first of these 'efforts', thoughts along the lines of "I'll be okay, my core fitness is still good, I've done good times in short events, I'll just go nice and easily" etc.. Unfortunately, it became all too obvious very quickly that because of the underlying doubts that I wasn't really up to it, my brain, {if you can call it that}, quickly told my legs, in fact, more or less all the bits of my body being used to propel my bike, {not very quickly anyway}, that they needed to stop. So I did. Sadly, this experience didn't prevent from repeating the same folly, three more times.

One particular DNF was brought about by inadequate equipment preparation, compounded by the not very impressive navigation skills of one my of supporting cars, (usually have two vehicles in support, each with a crew of two). This is quite a few years ago, before the advent of rechargeable lights, and I hadn't checked sufficiently well that my front light was as secure on the old-fashioned bracket as it should have been. Needless to say, at a moment of extreme darkness, with no lights around I went over a level crossing with higher than usual railway lines. The light flew off and when I found it, after several minutes, the lens was no more. Annoyed, but philosophical (I can be quite good at doing 'philosophical' on occasion), I reasoned that before long the car would arrive. It didn't, or not for well over an hour. By this time all my 'philosophy' had long since gone, not to mention my body heat, along with all my enthusiasm for partaking in this totally blo*dy silly business of riding a bike for twenty-four hours. The crew of the car had let the petrol run low and then spent an age trying to find a petrol station, having eventually done so, they then couldn't work out how to get back onto the course in the first place and even when they did they had no idea where I was likely to be found on the course! The drive back to our caravan was completed in an icy silence.

Another DNF was much less pathetic, coming about through less than careful preparation and feeding. I had started well enough and feeling fine until the second circuit of Quina Brook. I suddenly felt sick and had to stop and leave some of the contents of my stomach by the roadside. I started again, very gingerly, was gradually getting going again when a repeat performance ensued. Earlier, I had tried for the first time an energy gel. I've wondered ever since if that was the cause of my downfall. After the second 'interruption', I began again, now moving very slowly. As slow as I was going,

it appeared to be the case that the van behind me didn't want to pass me. This was irritating the hell out of me, "why won't this pillock pass me?" I kept asking myself until I realised that the van in question was in fact the 'sag wagon'. Oh the humiliation! That was that, I slogged my way back to Prees to my waiting team who had been wondering why I hadn't appeared for what felt to them seemed hours, and to me days, and more or less fell off and straight into the car and back to the caravan.

My final two DNFs came about through the somewhat expected events I referred to in the title. On both rides, I was going very well, very well for me anyway.

The first of these was in 2017. I must have been riding for about six or seven hours, when the heavens opened, just as I started the Quina Brook circuit for the second time. By the time I reached the far side of the circuit I was absolutely drenched and I knew the car was still at Prees. By now the rain was biblical and standing on the road with large puddles on both sides. Several times I was covered in water from cars coming the other way. I was still feeling okay, even though soaked and I was thinking that a change of clothes, a bit of a rest, a waterproof and I'd be fine. It was still lashing down when I pulled up at Prees.

Now came the unexpected bit. Both of my support vehicles were there. The second crew, very concerned about the conditions, had unbeknownst to me gone around Quina Brook the opposite way and had seen me get covered by spray from passing cars. Anyway, as I dismounted and started to take off my wet clothes I heard the voice of my beloved telling me in no uncertain terms "Into the car with you, this is madness, you're stopping". All the other seven members of the team including son and three grown-up grandchildren rapidly concurred. "It's bound to ease up soon, I'll be fine." was my response. "Oh no it isn't, it isn't safe", came back from eight voices more or less in unison. "Lots of riders have packed already" said my wife Ann, followed by the killer comment, "And if you get back on that bike and carry on, I'm done with you and your bloody cycling."

Now this lady had been my greatest supporter over many years so that was that! Of course, the rain did ease up after about half an hour and then stopped completely not long after that!

My last DNF was the most annoying and disappointing of all. Again going well after about 11 hours, in fact going very well. I was even beginning to think about the possibility of perhaps a Vets award or age group prize, fool that I was. I was ahead of my anticipated schedule and still feeling good.

Having got to Ternhill, I was wondering where the support team in the car had got to again (same team and again clearly exhibiting less than brilliant navigational skills) . . . I was also beginning to feel the cold. I had just rounded the Hodnet RAB when yet again, first one and then the other of my front lights went AWOL! No choice but to get off and walk and wait for the car. After about ten minutes really feeling cold and uncomfortable now, and of course you dear reader will know how (un)wonderful it is to walk in cleats, I heard a shout from a car going the opposite way. Huge relief. Fortunately, the other team, consisting of my son & grandson, had realised that "Dumb & Dumber" had fouled up again and decided to come to my rescue. After a few more minutes, the car caught up to me and stopped. I very gratefully climbed into the passenger seat and accepted a cup of tea. I was thoroughly enjoying the tea and the rest when there was an almighty BANG! I was jerked forward, tea spilling onto my lap. We'll not dwell on the discomfort thus occasioned 'down there'. What on earth had happened! A rider riding head down had gone straight into the back of the car and he and his bike were sprawled across the road. As you can imagine, although not apparently seriously hurt the rider needed medical attention and his race was clearly done as his bike was in bits. I don't know how much the bike repairs cost but the repairs to the car cost over £400.

It was quickly decided that my son Adam, would take the crashed rider to Prees, and either get him medical attention there, and/or possibly take him on from Prees to hospital. Lewis, my grandson, would remain with me and get me going again and then wait for Adam's return or for my other car to find us. Adam therefore quickly drove off with the stricken rider. Unfortunately, too late, Lewis and I realised that he had also taken my spare clothes and lights with him! The other car also had spare clothes and lights but never did find us. We had no choice but to sit on the verge and wait! Adam eventually returned after about an hour and a half by which time both Lewis and I were shivering wrecks and my race was also done. So, one rider's carelessness had brought about two DNFs!

To balance all of the above, in all my other rides my bikes and lights performed perfectly and in that last event another rider with the same lights had the same experience after four hours even though they were supposed to last much longer.

The fact remains though that it is now nine years since I finished a "24" and to do so remains a major objective, indeed the main objective as far as my cycling is concerned. Unfortunately, at 78 years old, "there's always next

year" , can't realistically apply for too many times. Surely though, I can't have more disasters like the ones above again. Or can I?

The UK's other 24 hour cycling time trial event...

For many years now we've considered the CTT National 24 Hour Time Trial Championships as the *only* competitive 24 hour cycling 'time trial'-style event in the UK.

However, I have learnt via the cycling exploits of Aberdeen Wheeler Lawrence Webster, with whom I spoke before the 2023 National 24, that there is another 24 hour in Britain The Strathpuffer 24.

Event tagline - *"Freezing temperatures. 17 hours of darkness. Miles upon miles of gruelling terrain. A brutal mix of ice, wind, hail, rain, mud and snow and maybe, just maybe, a glorious Scottish winter sunrise"*

If non-cyclists, and let's face it, the majority of cyclists, think that riding on the roads of Cheshire and Shropshire all day and all night in the CTT 24 hour event is bonkers, then the Strathpuffer is 'super'** bonkers.

It takes place in countryside 20 miles or so north-west of Inverness, in JANUARY !

It is off-road. It is rough. It is rocky. It is muddy. It is hilly. There are lots of trees.

Competitors in the event are required to carry with them –

- emergency food supplies
- a whistle,
- a survival blanket
- an emergency light.
- a basic first aid kit.

I also found this rule, in block capitals:

THE USE OF CHAINSAWS IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN AND ANYONE FOUND USING ONE WILL BE BANNED FROM THE EVENT IMMEDIATELY.

Blimey. There are probably riders from 2023 still lost in the Strathpuffer forests now, unable to extract themselves, going round in eccentric and ever-decreasing ovals, living on grouse and wheeshtberries – if only they had a chainsaw handy, to clear a way out.

Fittingly, the 2023 event was won by Robbie Mitchell, winner of course of the Mersey Roads/National 24 later in the year. Hardcore.

Robbie Mitchell nearly mended my bike once, when I broke down in The Borders, in 2022, near Duns. A story for another edition.

The 2024 Strathpuffer took place on the 2nd weekend in January, and I will be pestering Sir Lawrence of Aberdeen for a report in due course.

** Has anybody else noticed that today's elite riders (Tour de France etc) generally only have one adjective and that is 'super' – super strong, super hard, super hot, super fast, super everything, dammit. Even Geraint Thomas, who should know his way around the English language by now, frequently falls back on 'super' !

Some tales are of success, some of failure – the editor's tale of 24 Hour failure.

I am at Prees Heath roundabout, Shropshire, the morning of Sunday the 23rd of July 2023. In darkness and rain I was searching for my support person Ken. I knew he was somewhere about, I'd seen him only 30 minutes earlier as I tried to get some food down me before heading off to Battlefield again in the National 24 Hour.

"I've stopped Ken", I told him, when I did find him in the damp and dismal gloom.

"Righto then Pete, what do you need you seem to have caught me unawares" he said as he made to hurry to the car boot for supplies, keen that I should be back on the road a.s.a.p.

"No Ken, I've stopped completely, I've gotten off, and, well, I'm not doing, not doing it anymore, I'm just not ". My words tailed off.

"Ah, right . . . are your sure about this Pete? Let's get you warmed up a bit, something down you, see what's what; stay there!"

I sat down on some covered wooden benching outside a now-closed pizza café, out of the rain. Within a couple of minutes Ken returned with a blanket and wrapped it around me, looking concerned.

"How're you feeling?"



“Bl**dy awful, guts bad, feel sick, can’t eat, am cold, am wet through. Hating it. I am not getting back on the bike, that’s that, I’m just not”

And that really was that. I changed into dry clothes, we roused driver Ian from his slumbers, and within half an hour were heading back through the rain, to the south-west and home.

This was the fifth 24 hour I’d started, and the first in which I’d packed. A humbling experience, bringing a period of reflection

and self-examination over the ensuing days.

Did I come to regret throwing in the towel? Only to a certain extent – I knew I had to have felt bad to have stopped. Overall, however, I felt disappointed and annoyed – a slight sense of shame but mainly disappointment and annoyance - the bl**dy weather was the main annoyance. The rain, and how it affected me, was 95% or even 100% of why I ended up packing.

Annoyance and disappointment also that having completed a 100 miler and a 12hr earlier in the summer, both of which were hot and tough, I fell at the final (24hr) hurdle, and so no placing for me in Ye Mighty 24 Hour Fellowship Long Distance BAR table. Grrrrr.



It is also annoying to build yourself up for something, and then your wheels fall off, metaphorically speaking.

Chatting to my daughter at the time I was planning my 24 Hour as part of a Fellowship LBAR she reminded me of what I've said after each and every one of the four 24hr's I'd previously done that “I WON'T BE DOING THAT AGAIN ! “ Well, you do don't you? She sent me a Whatsapp conversation we'd had after the 24hr in 2021. “Lock my bikes up” ... !

I had hoped that there might be other Exeter Wheelers prepared to ride the 24 Hour, to make up a team – emails went

out to all members, notices put up on our website and facebook page – nope ! I asked a few people personally; the replies were along the lines of “why would I want to do THAT?! I mean, I like riding a bike, but for 24 hours?! Nah”. So, just me then

End of May saw event one of my projected long-distance trio, a 100 mile TT on the H100/88, run by Hounslow & District Wheelers. The course was on the A31 between Farnham and Alton, back and forth 5 times, with the HQ at Bentley. I stayed overnight in Farnham, oo-er very posh place Farnham innit? Only my second 100 mile TT in the last 30 years.

Being 63, and on a road bike, I was going to be well down the final results page . . . my aim was to get round in less than 5 hours. This I managed, by 8 minutes, it was b* hard, and there were times when I had to ‘dig deep’, actually the last three hours was all digging deep as my speed dropped. It was hilly, it was hot and it was horrible. Great relief that my bike computer I had not set right re: wheel diameter (I don’t use Strava) and the finish loomed up nearly two miles early. Fantastic. An ill omen was how I could not eat after the first 3 hours, I survived solely on a few glucose tablets, the food in my pockets untouched. I tried chomping on energy bars, my tummy said “no no no no no!”

Two weeks later it was off to Yorkshire and the Vive Le Velo 12 Hour. If you tell people you are doing a 12 hr in Yorkshire folks assume it will be hilly. Nope, there is also the East Riding of Yorkshire, flatter than the proverbial pancake. A 23 mile loop, based around the village of Melbourne. The day was very hot . . . about 30 degrees C. It was fine for the first few hours, but by 10am the sun was up and strong, wowsers it was hot and exhausting, and there seemed to be a headwind 75% of the time. I had no target for the event, my first 12hr since 1993, when I had actually won the SPOCO SE 12 hour in Essex on my Vitus 979 – metal all the way including the wheels of course.

As per all the long distance events we do, whilst there might be some internal mutterings along the lines of ‘Well this is most unpleasant, I’ll not choose to do THIS again in a hurry!’ I never felt like packing as I bashed my way round the roads of East Riding. My speed dropped, but I got round, and even feeling better in the last two hours as the sun’s heat diminished. Many people DNF’d.

A totally flat course can be more arduous than a rolling one – you don’t get a break, and it’s certainly not what a Devon lad is used to. The biggest hill in the Vive Le Velo 12 hr was the bridge over the Poklington Canal, amusingly named ‘Le Col du Canal’ by the race organisers.



Hats off to Vive Le Velo all round for their fine organisation, especially the 'unsupported rider' team of one, a bloke called Ed, who was brilliant at keeping tabs on your expected arrivals at his feed station. Food again a problem, after first 5 hours I was again on glucose tabs and 'FizzyFish' sweets. I felt I'd achieved in getting round when so many

hadn't, my modest mileage of 208 miles was of secondary concern.

The race organisers had had a dispensation (I think I am right in this) from CTT so that any riders not completing the full 12 Hours, would still be given a distance. This could be easily calculated as distances completed would be multiples of the lap distance as they would inevitably call it a day at race HQ where the finish line was. This did result in some curious average speeds on the CTT results sheet – here is a screenshot, omitting the riders names out of courtesy ! –

Male	Vet	Vive Le Velo	93.66 Miles	7.805 Mph
Male	Vet	The Tricycle Association (North Eastern Region)	70.24 Miles	5.853 Mph
Male	Senior	Barrow Central Wheelers	70.24 Miles	5.853 Mph
Male	Vet	Halifax Imperial Wheelers	46.83 Miles	3.903 Mph

If a rider did go at only 3.9 miles per hour for 12 hours it would probably be . . .
 . . very very tiring, and very very dull.

And so in July it was onto the Mersey Roads 24. I have noted a tendency towards pessimism in Met Office forecasts, but as time ticks by the rainy weather predicted 6 days hence becomes cloudy with showers to finally, on the eve, generally dry with only a remote chance of rain. This did not happen this time . . . the forecast for Shropshire grew worse and worse as the day approached. It was going to be very wet. Oh dear.

Friday 21st July 2023

It was teatime when we reached our digs at The Red Lion Coaching House in the village of Ellesmere, around 15 miles south of the race HQ. After we'd unpacked we went for a wander, found a fish&chip café, then retired to the White Hart pub in the town centre. The way to my support team's heart is via good ale, and the White Hart nearby was a friendly pub with good ale! I allowed myself a pint too.

Support teams are important. Their personalities, their organisational skills, their own cycling experiences make all the difference. I was very pleased that fellow Exeter Wheelers Ken and Ian had volunteered their services, although I do wonder if they opted to come and do 'support' in order to categorically escape from any possibility of having make up an EWCC team!

Another weather forecast check. And another. And another. Nope. no change. Rain rain rain. Black.

Saturday 22nd July

Good to chat with various people at the race HQ, some of whom were 24 Hour Fellowship members I had either met at the EGM back in March, or I had been in contact with via email. Bridget and Ian Boon were there, they were timekeepers. Bridget remains the only woman to have won a 24 Hour Open Time Trial, which she did in 1993. I know this very well – I was there! It was the North Road 24 Hour, and she beat the second placed person by a considerable margin – this I also know because it was me in that second spot! In my defence, I was beginning to develop the dreaded rheumatoid arthritis, which I didn't know at the time, but I knew I was down in terms of power. However, even if I'd been okay, she still would've beaten me, I have little doubt of that. I won £50 that day, the most I have ever won in a bike race . . . about £2 per hour. It was the last race I did before I got ill and didn't race again for over 20 years.

Anyway, back to 2023, and to the start line . . . 5...4...3...2...1..GO !

Clip in and get riding. I think all of us get a bit carried away in those first few miles, the adrenaline is there, all the hours of training, of preparation, the experience of just being there and part of such a remarkable event. And it wasn't raining . . . yet.

Heading south . . . headwind, didn't feel great, but what the heck, a long way to go and at least it wasn't raining yet. Grindley Brook and Wem roundabouts came and went. Traffic lights near the Wrexham road roundabout meant I had to stop, along with a couple of other riders, including 19 year old Rose Price, who was riding Jim's tricycle. Then down past Prees, and onto the Battlefield & back leg.

I'd only done the Battlefield & back leg once before, in 2019 - it was not available in 2021 due to roadworks - and I'd liked it – riding a road bike puts you at an advantage, briefly, when it comes to going uphill, and sure enough I caught and passed some TT bikes this time, who then passed me and vanished swoosh into the distance as the road levelled out or went downhill.

By this time there was drizzle. That was sort of okay. Down to Battlefield and back, felt okay, then another leg the same, average speed improving, legs feeling good!

Then onto the Quina Brook circuit. How do others find this section I wonder? I can't say I like it, apart from the smooth steady hill up past Prees village on the A49. I felt good – again, as the lower speed means that 'aero' doesn't come into it I always go past people on TT bikes . . . who then . . .swoosh !

On lap 3 of the 5 or 6 QB circuits I did the rain began to hammer down, and things nutrition-wise were starting to go wrong. My stomach seems to close down after a given period of 'giving it hell' on the bike. I had of course given nutrition much thought, relying on FizzyFish fruit jelly sweets and glucose tablets, with energy drinks in the bottles. This went more or less okay in 2019 and 2021, but this time . . a problem: my utterly useless rain jacket saw me become wet through and through very quickly, and I stayed wet – anything in my cycling jersey pockets became a) difficult to reach with a jacket over the top and b) gluey mush. Trickle feeding was out, leaving me to need to eat more at once when I stopped at Prees each time. This didn't work. My stomach was not having it. If I ate I had to force it down, and then I felt ill. Energy drinks don't work for me – after 6 hours on the saddle I struggle to er um 'micturate' i.e. have a pee, I think I just get too bruised in the er um

undercarriage area, the official term being 'pudendal neuralgia'. I end up desperately needing a pee but can't go. If it's hot and dry then excess moisture goes in sweat, but when it's downpouring cats'n'dogs and you're wearing waterproofs (ha!) then evaporation doesn't happen so you need to pee, and if you can't it's at best distracting and more accurately downright painful.

Out on the Battlefield leg into the darkness, around 11.30pm, I began to feel like stopping. Feeling ill. Sodden to the bone, cold, and not weak yet but weakening I kept going, to the turn, back again, ate some food, yecht, set off again . . . felt sick . . .felt the urge to just stop and turn back . . .kept going . . .stopped . . . turned round cycled slowly back to Prees . . . rider Greg Elwell of Yorks VTTA passed me "Well done Pete, you're going well!". Little did he know

So what to do next? 2024 will see me volunteering at the 24 hr, which will work well as far as writing a race report for the Journal will go, then, well, sometime in the future I will have to have another go, I just can't go out on a DNF.

We learn from adversity, and we learn from our mistakes . . . there would be things I would do differently now . . . when I next enter a 24 Hour, if rain is forecast I'll borrow a posh and expensive waterproof jacket, one that actually works and if rain that is set to last for hours on end is the forecast I'll go DNS . . . at least the organising club will get my entry fees, and last minute race marshalls are always needed !

Faster ! It's what we try to be, and it's also a book written by Michael Hutchinson.

The Men's Team Prize at the 2023 National 24 Hour went again to an Arctic Aircon RT team, this time in the form of team made up of Michael Hutchinson, Joe Gorman and Neil Lauder, totalling a distance of 1386.8 miles. Arctic Aircon/Tacx had won four times in a row, 2016 to 2019 inclusive, before kindly allowing Fibrax Wrexham and Dulwich Paragon to win in 2021 and 2022 respectively, there being of course no event in 2020 due to Covid19.

in 2016 the Arctic Tacx team consisted of Michael Broadwith, Jonathan Shubert and Tim Bayley. They set a new 24 Hour Team record with 1547.5 miles, an average of c. 516 miles per rider, beating the previous record, set in

1980 by a North Staffs St Christopher's CC team (John Cahill, Mick Coupe and Mick Parker) by over 100 miles.

I think all of us who looked at the start sheet for this year's 24 Hour and saw Michael Hutchinson's name down were interested in seeing how he'd do. It's been 10 years since he won the last of his staggering 56 British National Time Trial Championships, and he'd not ridden a 24 Hour before. He had won, however, the National 12 Hour in 2000 and 2005, with 293 and 285 miles.

For the record, because it is so impressive, let's take a quick look at Hutch's TT achievements:

56 British Time Trial Championships won at all distances with the exception of the National Hill Climb and the 24 Hour, BBAR just twice due to only riding a 12 Hour in 2000 and 2005, on both those occasions winning the National 12.

His 'PBs' stand at: 10 miles = 17m 45s, 25 miles = 45m 46s, 50 miles = 1h 35m 27s, 100 miles = 3h 23m 04s and 12 Hr = 293.23mils. And of course, we can now, as of 2023, add in his PB for a 24 Hour = 486.64

Readers of the Cycling Weekly will know that he also writes a nice article. His Twitter/X postings are also worth reading, especially his thoughts and re-postings of info on the subject of what a poor deal cyclists get in the UK.

He has also written a few books, one of which I've just re-read, this being his 2014 book 'Faster', which is a fascinating read. I'm sure a fair few of you out there will also have read it. For those who haven't it's worth getting hold of a copy, it's a joy to read – interesting and often amusing, and not once does the author write 'when I won (such and such)'. It's a hard line getting it right with self-effacement as all too often it ends up as irritating false-modesty, but Mr Hutchinson gets the balance right in this respect and indeed many others.

The book, in short, is an exploration of going faster on a bike. It's not, however, a 'how to' guide, but is an account of the author's explorations of the factors involved. Hutchinson writes with in-depth knowledge, and relates it to what the knowledge he acquired led him to then try. A lot of blind alleys, a lot of mistakes, but as some wise person said 'if you don't make mistakes you don't make anything'.

The book's chapters focus in their turn on the physiology of an athlete – blood, muscle, power, before moving onto the matter of fuelling in the next chapter. Then there's chapters on training, psychology and technology, before the final full chapter looking at the accident that is our genetic make-

up. He ends the book with a chapter entitled 'the never ending search', which is self-explanatory.

Throughout it all he writes with wisdom and wit, on all those 'marginal gains' that can be made, which separate first from second amongst the elite, or perhaps more accurately the elite of the elite. It's not that it's not applicable to those of us who are run of the mill or even very good 'club' cyclists, it's more that it's less relevant, but no less interesting a read for that.

I think all of us who put a number on our backs and put ourselves on the start line for a time trial are committed, some less than others, some more than others, and some much much more than others – the GB track racer Ed Clancy, for instance, volunteered to have his collarbones broken and then re-set to make himself narrower and thus more aerodynamic!

Hutchinson, in the chapter on training, points out that there can be such a thing as over-commitment; he cites some riders he knew who in a bid to go faster, packed in work, concentrated on cycling, no distractions, lots of training and almost without exception went slower . . . tired ! And of course as 24 Hour riders we try to ease off the week or two before the event . . . but I don't suppose I am the only one who has panicked and thought 'oh blimey I have overdone the restitution, it's three days to go, let's get out on the bike !'. I have found, however, that if I have more than a few days off the bike my legs sort of close down . . . I believe this is part of getting old(er).

The chapter on aerodynamics I found very interesting. Funny to think that at one time the most scientific way to assess a rider's best aerodynamic position on a bike was to take head-on photos of the rider in different positions, print the photos on paper, cut out the shape of the rider in those positions, and the picture that weighed less would be the one with less air resistance! Nowadays it's either wind tunnels, or, in the case of frames and other components, computer generated simulations. Of course, for many of us a 24 Hour is at the lower end of aerodynamic advantage – it is the case that air resistance increases at the cube of speed – at 18mph the advantages of aerodynamics are way smaller than the advantages at 25mph. This has relevance for the 24 Hour in that if you are a strong fast (younger'ish) rider then full TT is the way to go, if you are older rider who has no chance of winning anything, and are not likely to do a 24 Hour PB what with one's advancing years then why not ride a road bike, stay comfy, enjoy the experience !?



Hutchinson also touches on how weight was seen as the critical factor in speed 'back in the day', and is less so now, unless you are course riding hill climbs or the hillier road races. A book I enjoyed reading a few years ago was "I like Alf: 14 Lessons from the Life of Alf Engers". Alf was primarily a short distance racer, especially known for his exploits at 25 miles (National Champion 6 times in the late 60's early 70's, broke the record for the distance on four occasions,

bringing it down to 49:24 in 1978). He was also known for his drive to get the weight of his bike as low as possible using the 'drillium' method. Holes drilled in anything he could get away with that was within the RTTC rules and didn't overly risk the chance of a drilled component failing him on the road. There's a nice line in the book that says that the only preferred component to a drillium was one made of unobtainium ! And all the time he might've done better, according to the laws of aerodynamics, if he'd just had a haircut. I did read once that the East German's were experimenting with drilling holes in their riders to reduce their weight, and their air resistance – as reported by Alexei Sayle, so possibly not true.....



A severe case of the drilliums

Anyway, the 'Faster' is well worth reading, and a reminder of the pleasure we get from giving our all to something, to do our best at an activity which as he says is both 'so extraordinary and unnecessary'. Yes, the training is hard, and the self-denial of not accepting that invitation from your non-cycling mate to meet him in the pub for a pint or three is tough, but without the dedication we wouldn't get those highs, those times of immense satisfaction from having done well, however we measure that 'done well'. He writes "When I was at the height of my abilities there were moments when the only way I could describe what it was like was to say I felt like a thoroughbred horse at full gallop . . . a balance and rhythm that was irresistible and effortless . . . the involvement, physically and mentally, is total, because you've trained all of you for one task, and you've had the purity of purpose to do it without compromise . . . for a few moments you fell quite perfect". I think we've all been there at some stage in our bike racing lives, no matter at what level we compete.



Michael Hutchinson on twitter/X:

"This time next week I'll be starting the Mersey Roads 24, an event I've always wanted to do. Can't wait."

and afterwards:

"My first ever 24-hr time trial at the weekend, at the Mersey Roads 24. The weather was horrible, and it turns out that 24 hours is a really long time to ride a TT bike. But 486 miles, 4th place and Arctic Aircon RT won the team award. I sort of enjoyed it. Sort of."

"Awesome. It's hard enough to stay awake for 24 hours. Back next year for the win."



Minutes of the Twenty Four Hour Fellowship AGM 2024

Held at Hilton Village Hall on the 27th of January 2024

This meeting was held on this date due to the various officers' travelling difficulties on the original date.

The meeting was opened at 11:15 hrs with former Chair Jim Ithell taking the meeting as the current Chair could not attend.

The Secretary, John Hassall also could not attend due to home difficulties and so the minutes were taken by Jim Hopper.

Members in attendance were: Ruth Williams, Bob Williams, Jon Williams, Elizabeth Taylor, Christine Minto, Nigel Briggs, Phil Minto, Pete Bishop, Jim Ithell, Jim Hopper.

Apologies for absence. Lynne Taylor-Biddulph, John Hassell, Ray Retter, Brian Griffiths, Edwin Hargraves, Bob Richards.

The minutes of the last meeting were circulated and were agreed that they were a true copy.

The Secretaries report was circulated and there was some minor discussion before it was accepted by the meeting.

Due to the absence of the Treasurer there was no formal placing of the accounts, but verbally it was noted that financially things were reasonable.

The Treasurer did note that only one third of members had renewed their subscriptions.

At this point Jim Hopper notified the meeting that the Midland Road Records Association had been wound up and a portion of their accounts would be donated to the Fellowship. The meeting agreed that this item on the agenda was satisfactory in the circumstances.

The Competitions Sec. gave a detailed account of the Long Distance BAR. This had taken some time to compile and the meeting received it with thanks. The certificates are in the process of being completed and should be with the signatories very soon before being distributed to the competitors. A detailed breakdown of the results will be printed in the Journal. This report was accepted by the meeting.

The Journal Editor gave a full report about his work. A rough copy was there for perusal, but he was still looking for material. He was expecting to publish the magazine during February. With the shortage of articles he was re-visiting items from very early editions and commenting on them in the light of the passage of time as he considered that newer members would find these interesting. He has been given all the previous copies of the Journal by Elizabeth Taylor, which he received thankfully. The meeting accepted this report.

The election of the Fellowship Officers followed. As the current Chair, Michael Broadwith was not in attendance and he had not mentioned about stepping down, the meeting agreed that he should continue. The Secretary, John Hassall agreed to continue. The Treasurer, Bob Richards also agreed to continue. Nigel Briggs the Competition Sec agreed to stay in position. The Journal Editor, Pete Bishop, also agreed to carry on with these duties.

The 2024 24 Hour event then came in for discussion. Jon Williams will be continuing as the Race Organiser for this promotion. Other parties will be there to assist and observe prior to a transfer of the promotion. Due to other activities taking place on the finishing circuit this year's promotion will be held one week later than usual. This will be 27th/28th of July.

The speed limit of 20mph came up for discussion. This prompted much discussion and at present Cycling Time Trials are in the process of looking at it. It would seem that this does have little effect upon cyclists. As the 24 Hour Event only uses a very short section of roads in Wales there seems to be little effect upon the event. The Race Organiser is, of course keeping an eye upon this.

The date and venue for the next meeting was discussed. The present venue was agreed to be good, but Jim Hopper mentioned that other members who were not there may think another venue near to where they could attend may of interest. It was decided that for the 2024 AGM the venue would remain at Hilton, as the road system allowed for easy access, but a note would be placed in the Journal about this item. The date was agreed to be on the **2nd of November 2024** and the time at 1100 hrs.

The meeting was closed at 1205 hrs.

Afternote to meeting: Our thoughts go to Secretary John Hassall and his wife Ann, following Ann's recent diagnosis.

Editor's Endnote

So there we have it, Issue 159 of The 24 Hour Fellowship Journal. I hope it's been an enjoyable read, and that you're pleased that it is continuing.

Three points to bring to your particular attention from items within the journal:

1. As per the AGM minutes above, the Committee is open to suggestions of alternative locations for the holding of the AGM. Some of you might feel, for instance that a venue further south and east might attract more members to the AGM. All suggestions gratefully received.... including northwards and westwards of course !

2. Email, Social Media, Digital Content – how do members feel about this? Personally, I feel a printed Journal works well in that we are more likely to read through it as such than if it was 'digital content' to be accessed via PC, laptop or smartphone. I used to work at the edges of the world of print, and recall a Scotsman from one of the Universities north of the border telling a roomful of printy types "Och, the world of the paperless office will arrive at the same time as the paperless toilet". But we live in a changing world, and something to be considered are the possibilities and opportunities that 'Social Media' might offer us as a group. I'm not a big user of the likes of Facebook, but I do know how well it can work for groups, and individuals within groups, wishing to put up photos quickly and easily, and to swop news, so my personal view is that we ought to be considering it. It would certainly work well for the 24 Hour Championship weekend itself. It's also a good way, as is email, for getting information out quickly. What do you think?

3. Email of course is very useful even if just in an admin capacity – so, a reminder - if you are happy to provide our membership secretary with yours then that would help enormously with Fellowship communication and help keep costs down ! Royal Mail do a brilliant job but postage is not cheap. Rest assured that your email addresses will be used strictly within the GDPR framework as per <https://www.gov.uk/data-protection>

4. And finally – there will be another journal later in the year, and **it will need content !** Articles gratefully received, or indeed any letters, viewpoints, opinions and photos would also be welcome, in fact input from members is absolutely essential if the Journal is to continue. My contact details are inside the front cover.