

THE 24 HOUR FELLOWSHIP



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The 24 Hour Fellowship

Founded 1960

President: Lynne Taylor-Biddulph

The Fellowship's Officers:

Chairman: Mike Broadwith

Secretary: John Hassall

phone: 01754 502226

e-mail: annjohnhassall@outlook.com

Treasurer: Bob Richards

Journal Editor: Pete Bishop

phone: 01752 215762

phone: 0771 778 5760

e-mail: bobthepoke@gmail.com

e-mail: P.Bishop@exeter.ac.uk

Competition Secretary: Nigel Briggs

'phone:

e-mail: nigel.briggs@btinternet.com

Enquiries regarding membership should be made to the Secretary.

Subscription enquiries and renewals to the Treasurer in January

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You will notice that postal addresses are not included in the contact information for officers above – this is because keen cyclists have been targeted by burglars, who've 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, or give them a call.

The 24 Hour Fellowship's AGM will be held at 11am, Saturday 2nd November at Hilton Village Hall, Derbyshire. All members are invited to attend.

Introduction to Journal no. 130

Dear Fellow Members.

It was gratifying to receive various emails and letters from you, saying how pleased you are to see that the Journal is up and running again - all editors like favourable reviews!



Congratulations to **Adam Wild** of GS Metro on becoming the new National Twenty-Four Time Trial Hour Champion, with a new competition record distance of 546.36 miles, which betters Graham Kemp's 2019 record of 544.32 miles by 2.04 miles. At Adam's average speed of 22.765 mph (including stops) that equates to Adam being around five and a half minutes 'up the road' on Graham Kemp's ride.

This year I was at the Mersey Roads/National Championship 24 as marshall and spectator/bystander, a rewarding experience, and one which resulted in my coming away with plenty of 'material' from which to put together an event report. This does occupy a fair few pages of this Journal. Next year I aim to ride the event again, my 6th time of being on the start line; 2025's report will be shorter as a consequence (I promise you).

I feel things are starting to come together with the journal, it has been heartening to get not only the encouraging 'thank you for taking on the continuance of the journal' messages but also contributions – articles, words, photos. Many thanks to all of you who have contacted me. I think we all know we are unlikely to see a return to the membership numbers of yesteryear, but hopefully the Fellowship can continue to exist, and the Journal is, I feel, key to that continued existence; your contributions are thus crucial.

Best wishes

Editor Pete Bishop
Exeter Wheelers CC

The 2024 24 Hour Part One; Preview

Of the 65 entries received there were 3 tandems, 1 tricycle, 16 road bikes and 49 TT bikes. Fifteen of the riders were females. The average age was 47.8 years, the youngest being **Adam Holt** of Chepstow CC at 20, one of the 27 debutantes on the start list, whilst the oldest competitor was 86 year old **Bryan Highgate** of Fareham Wheelers. The youngest female rider was **Bethany Spencer** of George Fox Cycling Solutions at 21, the eldest female being 70 year old **Kathryn Smith** of Sleaford Wheelers.

There were three Fellowship members riding - **Rob Rix, Richard Parrotte** and **Bob Richards**. Only one of them would make it to the finish.

In terms of possible podium places, the women's event looked particularly open, with none of the big hitters from recent years present for the 2024 edition – a changing of the guard perhaps; there is that flux and flow of riders over time. In particular, no Christina Murray - someone at Farndon on the morning of this year's 24 said she was concentrating on 'a 24 Hour in the USA' (I am not sure if the additional information about it being titled "The World 24" was serious, or an ironic reference to how the U.S. calls one of their baseball competitions 'The World Series' when it only features themselves and Canada and possibly Japan now...). Or perhaps Christina had been wanting to perform well in the National Inter- Services Road Race Championships which took place just a few days before this year's 24 and had adjusted her training accordingly, ruling out the long and steady of long TTs and accompanying training - I had marshalled down at Brentor on the S.W. edge of Dartmoor on the Wednesday afternoon prior to the 24 for the Inter-Services Road Races, where she took 8th place in the women's event.

The highest placed female from last year riding the 24 this time round was **Amy Hudson** of Derby Mercury CC, who in last year's atrociously wet conditions managed 394 miles on a road bike to take 3rd place behind Murray and **Joanna Cebrat**. In kinder conditions Amy was likely to go much further. On paper the best bet for top spot looked to be 50 year old **Michelle Lindley** of Poole Wheelers, for although she'd never entered a 24 before she had completed both the 12 Hours she'd done, in 2021 and 2022, and only a month earlier Michelle had finished on the podium at the Welsh National 100 on the R100 as third best woman rider. A 24 Hour is as we know, however, a different beast. Speaking with her before the off Michelle expressed a degree of apprehension over her first 24 Hour – she said she knew she was going well at present, but wasn't at all sure if she would go well for 24 Hours....

For the men's title in the National 24 we had no **Robbie Mitchell** this year, but **Mark Turnbull** (Torq) who had finished 2nd only 8 miles behind Mitchell last year was there. Then there was **Michael Hutchinson**, Arctic Aircon, who made his 24 Hour debut last year, finishing fourth. Perhaps with the benefit of experience, and some focussed training he might be able to challenge for the title ? He's won all the other CTT national titles after all (save the Hill Climb), or could it be perhaps the passing years (he's 50) would preclude such a victory. Against that we'll remind ourselves that the 2006 event was won by a 50 year old, Mick Potts of the Derby Mercury, on 486 miles and in whose honour there is the Mick Potts Memorial Prize at the Mersey Roads 24, awarded to the rider aged 50 or over with the greatest mileage. So maybe . . . ?

Another rider to consider for the Men's title was **Lee Williams**, ex-North Hampshire CC now FTP ('Fulfil The Potential' – not my favourite name for a bike club but at least FTP run events unlike most other non-geographically located 'internet' 'clubs', and indeed FTP ran last year's Road Bikes Only National Time Trial). Lee had, like Mark Turnbull, been runner-up to Robbie Mitchell, this time in the heat of 2021 with 504 miles v the 521 of Mitchell. Lee has been riding plenty of events this year, so his fitness was sure to be good. This would, though, be his first 24 hr since that 2021 runner-up spot. As a longer-odds outsider Cornwall's **Tim McEvoy** (FTP) was a consideration – he'd been twice winner of the National 12 Hour (2021 and 2022) and goes better in 12s than in 100s so maybe he'd go better in a 24 than a 12 on that reckoning? Tim had ridden a 24 previously, as a Newquay Velo rider, in 2014 when Jon Schubert became National Champion down in traffic-busy Sussex, on that occasion Tim was 11th, but he's a stronger rider nowadays.

On the CTT webpage for the 24 Hour a few days before the event 'Spindata' predicted that **Adam Wild** of G.S. Metro would run out winner, and by a good margin. I daresay some of you who are older riders might wonder what exactly is this 'Spindata'? Here's a précis from their website -

www.spindata.co.uk/about : A score is given to each TT rider's result based on the time recorded relative to the results of other riders. Every Wednesday evening Spindata picks up the start sheets for forthcoming events from the CTT website and predicts the results for all the riders who have a previous result scored on Spindata. The rankings are updated taking into account new results. Spindata works pretty well in its predictions of placings. It does best for such as 'tens' and 25's, because riders are doing more of those so there is a bigger and thus more reliable dataset for Spindata to extrapolate from. However, with comparatively few long distance TTs (100 miles & plus) taking place this means fewer relevant results for Spindata to cross-reference from – and of course 24 Hours are a different thing completely. As an illustration of the limitations of Spindata in this respect, it was predicting **Michael Hutchinson** to

finish down in 5th or 6th place in the 24 Hour, until the result of the only TT he's done since last year's 24 Hour came in – an 18:58 in a Cambridgeshire 10 mile TT on the E2/10 course a week before this year's 24. As a result, Spindata had overnight promoted him up three or four places to a predicted runner-up position in the forthcoming 24 Hour. I think you get the drift there.

Back in 2020 **Adam Wild** became National 100 mile Champion and a week later National 12 Hour Champion, but he has had a few years out of the game (maybe due to the pressures of studying to become a Medical professional ?) So, a 27 year old who has only ridden half a dozen TTs in the last three years to win the National 24 Hour? On the other hand he had finished third in this year's National 100 but even so

One category that would, sadly, be missing for only the 2nd time in the history of the Mersey Roads (or possibly the National 24?) was Tricycle – young **Rose Price**, who was on the start sheet and (again on Jim Hopper's machine) was DNS due to illness.

The tandem section looked interesting – three teams, with one female-female, one mixed and one male-male.

The mixed crew was husband and wife **Steve Massey** and **Laura Massey-Pugh** of the Derby Mercury, who were a definite possible for fastest tandem overall – they broke the tandem record for a circumnavigation of the world riding 18,000 miles in 180 days. You can read about them on various websites including at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-63836669 and www.guinnessworldrecords.com/news/2023/11/married-couple-overcome-challenges-and-motorcycle-crash-to-set-epic-tandem-bike-record-761429 180 days of averaging 100 miles per day is strong stuff, and no doubt they rode much longer distances on individual days when road conditions allowed and necessity demanded. Clearly tough tandem cookies.

The all-female tandem was womanned (have I just made this word up?) by **Brigid Night** and **Sarah Murray** of Frodsham Wheelers and Clwb Beicio Egni Eryri respectively. This was their first TT as a tandem team. Of the pair, Brigid was the more experienced: together with Hannah Fawcett of Liverpool Braveheart she'd ridden an impressive 252.8 miles in the Vive le Velo 12 Hour in Yorkshire earlier in the summer, setting a new national female tandem record for a 12 Hour. Brigid had also ridden the Mersey Roads 24 Hour in 2022, when she and her companion Christopher Hanson-Jones completed 334 miles.

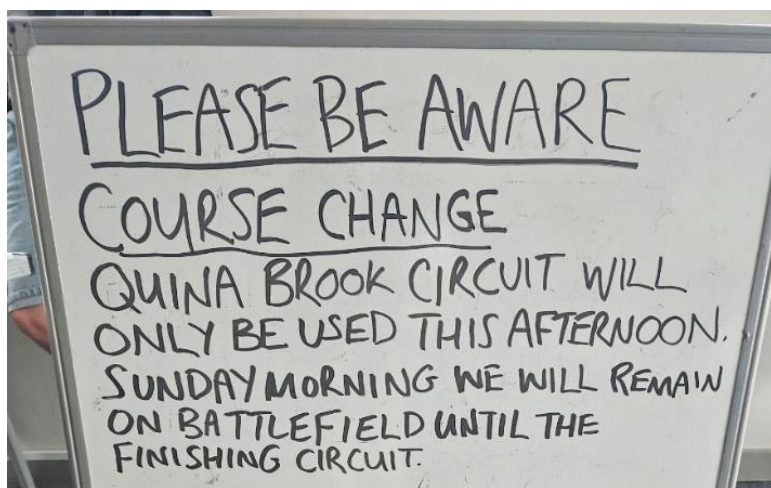
The all-male bike in the category was manned by seasoned Scottish tandemists **Donald McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter**, riding for the Flying Kippers CC. It would be their fifth time on the start line of the Mersey Roads 24 since

2016, and they'd finished every time, managing 428 miles in 2018 – one of the two times they'd won the tandem prize; clearly a force to be reckoned with.

In the VTTA stakes, 70 year old **Kathryn Smith** of Sleaford Wheelers has been setting age records this year, with a 217 miles ride in the Vive Le Velo 12 hour the month before.

As ever for TTs and even more so for long distance events both the weather and the course would have their say - in email correspondence with **Bob Richards**, the Fellowship's treasurer a few days before the event, I had said to him "You lucky riders – the weather is set to be ideal for this weekend!". Not too warm, no rain predicted, with just a gentle breeze daytime, and very still overnight. By the eve of the event the forecast had changed a little, to show light rain from Saturday 10 a.m.'ish through to mid-afternoon, but overall still kind in comparison with other recent rain or heat affected editions.

Less helpful were the course changes, which had had to be managed by Jon, Sam and the rest of the Williams family and Mersey Roaders - oh dear, those rolling hills to Battlefield and back would need to be ridden many times . . . speaking with Jon at Farndon I learnt that it had not been intended for there to be so much Battlefield but the (current) normal afternoon roads of Prees>Tern Hill>Espley>Shawbirch>Espley>Shawbirch>Tern Hill>Prees were for the 2nd year running unavailable due to roadworks, and then, on the eve of the event it had been discovered that there were further roadworks elsewhere on the course – riders arriving at race HQ (and also via Twitter/X) were met with a notice by the sign-on desk –



This course change would mean Prees>Battlefield>Prees (with an extra spur added via Wem & a bit) from early afternoon to teatime, Quina Brook until 10pm'ish, then around 12 long hours of Battlefield and back as an extended night circuit, before riders were sent north to the finishing circuit on the outskirts

of Wrexham from 10am'ish onwards. Cripes. Lots of uphill and down dale to and from Battlefield, a 'sporting' 24 Hour in CTT parlance ! Whilst weather conditions were looking kind, without any of the faster flatter smoother roads of Espley etc featuring then it was hard to see anyone breaking any records.

To be continued

A Tale of an Also-Ran – my 2023 Mersey Roads 24 Hour,

by Rob Rix



Rob at a previous Mersey Roads

The following piece was never intended to be used for publication, and I am writing this report – summary & conclusion - 2 days after the 2023 Mersey Roads event. The prime reason for writing is so that I can make a clear and concise record of how the event went for me and how I feel following the effort. More importantly, though, how can I improve on my performance should I make a further attempt at this discipline at some time in the future?

Firstly, I will deal with how I feel and what affects the 24 has had on me physiologically. As I write it is now 54 hours since I climbed off my bike, and I am at last starting to feel a bit more like 'me'; I had made the mistake of going straight back to work on the morning after the event - really I should have stayed off work and recovered a bit more. What drove that fact home to me was that my

standard of work on the Monday was well below normal - I put that down to fatigue and also to the effects of dehydration. Post-race, I have felt decidedly woozy and spaced out, and my pee was very dark. I think my electrolyte/mineral balances were all together out of sync despite taking on board 2/3 bottles of water/electrolyte tablet mix during the event in addition to other fluids.

I am experiencing underlying pains in my front thighs and have some degree of skin splitting between my legs -either side of my scrotum area, to which I am applying liberal smears of Savlon antiseptic cream. I had experienced considerable shoulder/neck/back pain during the event but have been applying Ibuprofen gel to the area with very good results.

From a mental point of view, I have mixed feelings about my performance; on the one hand I am happy with finishing and beating my standard time by a couple of miles whilst on the other hand I am disappointed at not cracking the

300 barrier. Over the years I have ridden 24's on five occasions, and finished twice. My most recent attack on the 24 before this one was in the super-hot event of 2022 when I had to pack at 7 p.m. due to swollen feet.

During the event my mental low point came at about midnight, on the run back from Battlefield, when the rain and wind were at their worst. I can distinctly recall feeling a sense of vulnerability riding in such adverse weather conditions. Had the night been a little more pleasant, then I may have simply soldiered on with a further lap of the Prees - Battlefield leg, but I must record that my decision to rest/shelter was made on safety grounds and not solely through fatigue. On my return to the car, I told John (my support driver) that I had made an executive decision, he said "what . . . to pack it in?" to which I had replied no "to rest a while." As it was, I was off the bike for almost 3 hours desperately trying to sleep in the car. However, I did not sleep a wink, and if anything, the pain in my shoulders was made worse by trying to recline in the car seat.

It truly took a good deal of mental resolve to get out of the car and climb back on the bike, with the rain still falling and the wind still blowing. The good thing was that my re-start time was with the coming dawn and every pedal stroke took me nearer and nearer to morning daylight. Once I heard the birds start singing, I felt almost good ! However, that drag back up to Prees Island really knocks it out of you. Thank goodness the course switched back to the Quina Brook circuit later in the morning – I found that section far easier to cope with.

Later in the day that my vision went totally awry. I was struggling to make visual sense of the road layout with the white lines converging and criss-crossing. Again, I put this down to a combination of fatigue, dehydration and low mineral levels.

After I had completed my last Quina Brook lap I was then directed on the road up to Wrexham, and on to the finishing circuit. This proved to be a real test as I was one of the last to finish the preceding section and I was worried that I would not make the finishing circuit before my time was up.

I stopped at the side of the road to have a drink and something to eat (Malt Loaf and Water). Christine Minto and her son stopped and asked if I needed assistance and assured me that I only had a couple of miles to go to the finishing circuit. That simple assurance gave me such a lift, albeit temporarily; just to know that somebody had got my back meant a lot. Once I was on the industrial estate, I hit the wall big style and had to climb off again and have another drink and a couple of minutes rest as I don't think I could have steered the bike, pulled the bottle out of the cage and kept control all at the same time.

Having restarted, I slowly rode on the next time keeper and ended the effort. There was much cheering and clapping from the crowd on the hill - thank goodness ! It was all over! When I checked my speedo, I saw that it had stopped working at a recorded mileage of 250.85 and that was officially recorded at 249.55. My bike trip computer ceased to work on the long dual carriageway section of the finishing circuit however the data showing at the time of its failure was 250.85 miles ridden at an average speed of 13.7mph and a maximum speed of 31.2mph all in a ridden time of 20h 10m 49 secs thus making my time of the bike of 3h 49m 11secs and rendering my average speed at 12.44mph.

So, how can I improve on what has just gone before? Having no control over the weather there is nothing I can do on that front. What I can do is to attend to the elements of nutrition, clothing, equipment and lighting. All of these might only give incremental improvements but cumulatively may culminate in an overall improved mileage, and maybe a chance to cracking my PB of 355miles.

Nutrition

During the race I consumed 4 bread/cake sandwiches filled with ham (protein) cheese (protein & fat) beetroot (fibre) with a small amount of mayonnaise to act as an added lubricant. In addition to these I also ate 4 Soreen bars with butter and cheese, 4 flapjack bars, 1 creamed rice carton and 2 bananas. I drank both plain water and a dilute electrolyte replacement drink although I doubt that I consumed enough of the latte., I also drank hot tea and cold milk. Quite well into the race, maybe at 15hours or so, I drank 1 can of BCAA Amino Hydrate drink which did have a reviving effect albeit short-lasting in effect. Gels for me are hard to get down and even harder to keep down.

Clothing

As the race progressed, I became aware of crotch discomfort. I had chosen to wear my bright blue bib-shorts with a full chamois insert. This proved to be a mistake for whilst the first hundred miles or so were OK once they became wet the section between my left inner thigh and scrotum became very sore and I was conscious of continually pulling the leg hem down to relieve the chaffing. I did change to shorts with a synthetic insert at about 11 a.m on Sunday morning. A much better plan would be to change the shorts much earlier in the race. Having rode in the daylight section of the Saturday in my usual hard-shell helmet I found that it caused discomfort to my forehead just above my right eye. My old Giro helmet was a much looser fit and did not cause any

pain, however because of its generous fit it tended to slip forward and slightly impede my forward vision in the dark. I noticed that after a few hours I was experiencing some discomfort from the sleeve seam on my wet long-sleeved top where it made direct contact with the arm rest pad of my tri-bars.

Equipment

Generally speaking, I was quite happy with my bike set up and function. My only real complaint was with my tri-bars. My riding position was too "Head Down" to maintain for prolonged periods and consequently quite dangerous given the prevailing weather conditions. I found that later in the event I was having to ride in an almost upright position due to shoulder pain. Since returning home, I've subsequently elevated the bar extensions to a new height, having extended the front brake cable sheathing to allow the alteration. I will try this ne higher position in short distance TT's to see if it is any more comfortable. There is also of course the alternative of riding a road bike in future 24 attempts.

Lighting

My front lights even though I had two of them were not up to the job in the rainy conditions. Some of the other competitors has lighting akin to WW2 searchlights on the front of their bikes that were so bright that they could see the pot-holes in the adverse weather conditions that dogged the night section. I must invest in a better lighting system if I am to have another try at this lunacy that we call the 24.

Footnote

For the better understanding of the reader a few details about me:- I am 76 years old and have undergone double hip replacement surgery 5 or 6 years ago, prior to the surgery I had about 4 years off the bike. I have raced since I was 15years old and have primarily been a 'trackie' - a long distance solitary effort in that discipline would be c. 4000m rather than 24 Hour! I found my way into 'testing' when I turned 40, as my sprinting days, really, were behind me. On the testing front I managed to drop my 10 mile & 25 mile times down to 22 mins and 55 mins, but those days are well behind me now. I'm not one for moving with the times, and have always been one of the "Pedal as Fast as You Can for as Long as You Can" types - no Garmin or Strava, no Watt Bike or Zwift, just pedal and then pedal some more !

The 2024 24hr Part Two: at Race HQ & Start Line

My day had begun around 8.30am, riding up from my (dismal) digs near Chirk via Overton and Bangor-on-Dee to the race HQ at Farndon. I wanted to get there before the forecast rain started, and indeed clouds were darkening over the Welsh mountains over to the west as I rode northwards. Rain looked to be imminent, as I arrived at Farndon.

At race HQ in the village's well-appointed Community Club premises there were at 10a.m. as yet no riders, but already present were Jon Williams and other members of the Williams family, and it was good to chat, especially with Ruth, who told me of the battles women riders had had to be allowed to ride the 24 Hour and other events. A subject for another article to be sure.

Riders and their support team members began to arrive after 10.30am. It was pleasing to catch up with some people I'd met before, and make new acquaintances. Andrew Askwith was good to speak with, not riding this year but there to marshall and generally support the event. Soon to be a 60+ vet, Andrew notched up two 420 mile-plus rides in the Mersey Roads 24, in 2022 and 2023. At the other end of the TT scale, Andrew also rides likes to ride the end of season hill climbs, and rode last year's National on The Struggle up in the Lake District. Good news is that he has now signed up to become a member of the 24 Hour Fellowship. Hurrah. It was also good to meet Ray Retter, who like myself hails from Devon. It was interesting to hear of his farming roots in the county. At the sign on desk Liz Taylor and her daughter Lynne were handing out copies of the wonderful all-encompassing BIG book that is John Taylor's "The 24 Hour Story", essential reference for anyone with any interest in the world of riding against the clock for 24 Hours and of long distance standards such as LEJOG. I also left a pile of 30 or so copies of the Fellowship's Journal 129 from earlier this year out on the adjacent table, and they were eagerly snapped up . . . next year perhaps they should only go to debutants ? It will be interesting to see if we get any new members as a result of journals being circulated.

Outside the sky was still overcast but it was not raining.

Time passed quickly, and it was soon near 5,4,3,2,1 GO time, so I made my way down to the start, where riders were beginning to mill around. I didn't see anyone on turbo trainers warming up . . . but Jim Hopper said to me that he had seen riders doing so in the past, much to his amusement and derision. There was the usual vibe of excitement and apprehension . . . each rider wondering "What will the next 24 Hours hold? How deep will I have to dig?" All those long long hours of training over the previous weeks and months, all the

preparation carried out in the days beforehand to make sure that every conceivable eventuality could be met by each rider and his or her support team, all of this had come down to the now, and to the next 24 Hours.

Edwin Hargraves, his trike on the verge beside and behind him, was doing the honours as start timekeeper for the umpteenth time. In the absence of Rose Price on the Hopper tricycle, the first rider off was 76 year old **Rob Rix** of Southport CC, whose piece on his 2023 experiences in the 24 Hour you will have seen in this journal - he was back to see if he could improve on things and have an altogether better and more satisfying race than his 2023 outing.

Off at no. 8 was **Sue Satchithananda**, one of a trio of riders from Crewe Clarion Wheelers. I remembered Sue from last year, battling through the rain, in her first ever 24 Hour. The two other Crewe Clarion's riders were both 24 Hour debutants: **Maryjane Watson** and **Stuart Day**. Maryjane, 60+, confessed she was nervous, with traffic a major issue for her; *"I hate traffic, I really do, it scares me"*. She was also concerned that she would get lost. I did my best to reassure her, telling her that once the evening arrived it would get quieter, the night even much more so, and that there would be plenty of marshalls to ensure she stayed on course. Maryjane had one of those dinky little neat crash hat 'wing mirrors' attached, to give her visibility of what was coming up behind (**Adam Wild** ! Whoosh !!!) which made her look a bit old school sci-fi . . . The third Crewe Clarionier, 51 year old **Stuart Day**, was riding fixed gear (about 52 x 17, I believe) and tri-bars – not a common set up, but why not? The Crewe support crew (the Crewe crew) were awesome – more of which later.

Geraint Catherall of Anfield BC was also early off, for his umpteenth 24, on a metal bike, not the only one to choose such a machine.

The Fellowship's own **Bob Richards** was no. 14, he'd been feeling optimistic about the 24 earlier in the summer, training had gone well, and he was looking to put a short run of DNFs in 24s behind him . . . then he was hit with Covid and it had all gone wrong. This had happened only ten or so days before the 24 Hour, he didn't feel great, although a decent-feeling midweek ride had given him the belief that he had bounced back sufficiently for it to be worthwhile to at least give it a go.

The first of the three tandems to start were **Brigid Night** and **Sarah Murray** off at no. 21. Both were smiley and chatty before the start . . . but would they be so by the time the race ended? I can tell you they were. And throughout the 24 Hours. After the event, Brigid got in touch, and told me of how her and Sarah got together for their 24 Hour:

"Sarah and I began cycling on the tandem together in mid-February of this year, after I plucked up the courage to ask her if she wanted to ride tandem in a 24 Hour event. It was



early on a cold and wet Sunday morning, yet despite this, unbelievably she immediately said YES ! And this was despite her never having ridden on the front of a tandem before, nor having ridden a time trial longer than 50 miles. However, Sarah had had experience of 24 Hour running events, and cycling a “24” was on her ‘bucket list’ . . . but hitherto she had been put off by the idea of being out on her own through the hours of darkness – so being on a tandem: ideal solution!”

A light drizzle put in an appearance for a few minutes, you’ll note starting timekeeper Edwin’s umbrella up in a picture or two, as he sought to keep his paperwork dry. And for precipitation that was it, the rest of the weekend was dry and warm, aside from the night, which was decidedly chilly in the wee small hours before the dawn on Sunday.



Nick Clarke of Arctic Aircon, had been part of AA’s winning team previously, with a 500+ mileage (528) which gave him third place in 2019. He’d been 2nd in 2018 and 4th in 2017. However, it didn’t need a genius to predict he’d not get anywhere near such heights this time round – he was riding a (small-wheeled, folding) Brompton . . . which demands the question “Why . . .?”. Well, as it happens Cycling Weekly featured a piece about him after the 24 Hour, which you can find at :

<https://www.cyclingweekly.com/news/the-only-bike-i-had-was-a-brompton-the-one-id-been-run-over-on-meet-the-man-who-rode-367-miles-in-24-hours-on-a-folding-bike>

The 2nd of the three tandems was off immediately after Nick, the mixed machine of Derby Mercury husband and wife **Steve** and **Laura Massey/Massey-Pugh**, the round-the-world-tandem-record couple – would this translate into a big ride in a 24 Hour? Neither rider had done a TT of any sort before, and indeed a little inexperience showed when someone spotted they didn't have lights fitted and Steve said *"Oh, it's okay, they're with our support crew, we'll put them on later, when it starts to get dark"*. . . . erm the error of their thinking was made clear to them, and there was a scrabble round for lights from bystanders – someone lent them my rear light and someone else a front light. And I learnt something there and then about CTT and the lights requirement – rules state that you must have lights fitted and working when you start, but what is not said is that they have to be functioning for the full duration of your ride. Obviously a 24 Hour would of course require lights to be on and working between the start and end of lighting up times as per Highway Code, but if you were riding a shorter daylight TT you could even, I believe, remove your lights once you'd got going. The rule allows, I was told, for those occasions when through no fault of your own your lights pack up during a TT, although IMHO if they do, then with modern lights that'll almost certainly be your fault because you forgot to charge the bloomin' things fully beforehand. Anyway, Steve and Laura trundled off on time, thanks to the quick thinking and kindness of others.



**Amy Hudson of Derby Mercury.
Edwin in background, pondering Times crossword.**

Another husband and wife pairing in the race were another Derby Mercury couple, albeit on separate solo bikes. These were **Kyle** and **Amy Hudson**, both in their late 20's and both on road bikes. This was Kyle's first 24 Hour, and as far as I can tell his first TT. His wife Amy rode last year, and was third in the women's classification on 396 miles. I asked Kyle how he felt Amy and he would fare: *"Well, she'll smash me at any rate"* said Kyle. Amy was off 9 minutes later. Speaking with her in the start line area, I

asked her how she felt she'd go, given that the conditions were so much better this year than last. *"Yeah I want to do more than 400 mile. Who knows,*

might I even win the women's category? That's a big ask, though, on a road bike, versus all those on TT machines".

In between the two Hudsons the third tandem had set off, manned by the Scottish pair **Don McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter**, of Flying Kippers CC. They were business like; they knew it was going to be tough; they knew that they would have to be tough in return.



A pair of Flying Kippers

One of the possible high-achievers, **Tim McEvoy** of FTP was away shortly after. I know Tim is a fast rider, as like me he lives in the south-west and I'd seen his times on various results sheets locally. Tim lives in Cornwall, whilst I'm in the next door county of Devon, though I had not met him in person, or not knowingly, before. *"Hello Tim, I'm from the south-west too, I'm from near Exeter"*. He looked at me mock-askance, and said *"Exeter? Nah, that's virtually the north"*. I might add that Tim's poor geography here (north of Cornwall there is no land until Ireland, just sea) aligns, to his detriment, with his inability to navigate successfully through Exeter earlier in the summer during an RRA record attempt. He also got lost in Taunton during the same attempt, which he subsequently abandoned. And I am going to deliver a plot spoiler now and let you know he didn't complete the 24 Hour this year either – went off course and ended up in Anglesey perchance? I am being deliberately unfair – he probably was just a little sensitive to my mentioning 'Exeter' after that failed RRA, and anyway isn't it part of your support team's remit to ensure you don't go askew? Also, Bridgit and Ian Boon had told me of Tim that he is a sound and interesting chap, and I should make the effort to find time and place to talk with him sometime, with a view to a Journal piece.

Adam Wild of GS Metro, on no. 35, the 'Spindata' favourite, looked sleek and speedy, in the way that those in the prime of life (27) and on a modern TT bike can look. Fast B*\$tards.

A rider making his 24hr debut and off at no. 47 on a metal bike was 45 year old **Andrew Walsh** of Audax UK. Andrew had found my email address I think via the Fellowship's web pages, and gotten in touch earlier in the summer - he explained that having previously been exclusively an Audaxer and 'Randoneeur' and indeed completed PBP, he'd been branching out into TTs over the past few years, the longest a 50 miler. I had suggested that he took a look Brian Griffith's '24 Hour Manual' on the Fellowship's web pages, which whilst written a few years back was still valid. Andrew had replied "Yup, already done that, very useful". Here's some background on him being on the start line for this year's 24, taken from his extensive cycling blogs website:

"I had been in a motivational hollow off the back of my 2023 Diagonale, goal-less, working a lot of hours, travelling to the US, putting on weight, dealing with the serious illness and later passing of my Mother, a cancer diagnosis for my widowed Father and the general ebb and flow of being a Dad to teenage kids... cycling seemed un-important and a luxury that I hadn't been able to indulge. However, I realised throughout April 2024 that I needed to cycle, I was giving too much to work and not enough to myself and maybe getting back riding would help me level up the balance.

I started by climbing back into my commutes, 25Km each way to the office, and oh how easy it was to see how much fitness I'd lost. Horrifying really. I did the commutes regularly twice/week and after a while felt some strength returning. I also started going out on Sunday mornings with my mates down to the café in Oundle. It was a pleasure to cycle with them again and to my surprise I wasn't getting my legs ripped off every week.

The 27th/28th of July was the date I had in the calendar for the RTTC National 24 Hour TT Championship (Mersey Roads), and with all that had gone on recently I genuinely had no intention of riding it, but I was still keen on just going up to experience the event as a spectator or to volunteer as a helper. However, on the way home from work on one of my commutes in early May I started to think differently. I thought if I really want to experience the event why not just go up and give it a try racing? No big build up, no big training miles just go up and give it a bash with the primary goal being to start and finish? I somewhat socialised the idea with a couple of mates on the Sunday ride and of course my friend Jim Churton. None of them said I wouldn't be able to do it or scoffed at the idea... which gave me some encouragement to pursue it."

Of course, with all these riders, as they roll away from the start line you wish them good luck, in fact everyone, riders and by-standers alike, are offering each and every rider doing their very first pedal strokes away from the start line "good luck" and other messages of support. Heart-warming stuff to be sure. Nothing quite like it.

Multi-Champion **Michael Hutchinson** was off at no. 60, and I asked him how he felt he might do, to which he replied *“Not great, I’ve only done three 4 hour+ rides in preparation, maximum 6 hours, I’ve got problems with my back etc etc . . . ”*. As I really don't know the man, I had no idea if this was the usual 'get the excuses in beforehand' approach that we all are guilty of from time to time, or whether he was simply being frank.

Three minutes later at no. 63 was **Greg Elwell** of VTTA Yorkshire. I'd met Greg first at the Vive Le Velo 12 hour last year, and also a few weeks later at the 24. He'd started 2 minutes before me at the 12, and was my minute man for the 24 Hour, where he went on to do 459 miles. Greg had done 270 miles in this year's Vive Le Velo 12 Hour, so he was clearly in good form. Speaking with him, he allowed it to be understood that he was hoping he could manage 500 miles this weekend in the, with the kind weather, plus he felt he could push that bit harder, and maybe take fewer and shorter stops... off he rolled.



Young Adam Holt:
“This suddenly feels like a really really stupid idea . .

Youngest rider of all, 20 year old **Adam Holt**, Chepstow CC, in a natty skinsuit with pink body nervously awaited his start time of 14:08. I think he was the most anxious of all the riders I spoke with. He really had no idea what to expect. I said to expect periods when all he wanted to do was to get off the bike and just STOP ! (or possibly the other way round). But **don't**. Keep going. And once you are on your way to the finishing circuit you are to all intents and purposes THERE ! And when you have finally

completed your (first) 24 Hour you will feel great. He still looked like a rabbit in headlights, with several shotguns pointed at him.

Chris 'Hoppo' Hopkinson, veteran of so many long distance TTs, the weekend's penultimate starter, was sporting green hair – such a shame that crash hats are now compulsory, as it was thus hidden for the duration. A popular character, there were exhortations of “Smash it Hoppo !” from the remaining bystanders.



And last off was no.70 **Mark Turnbull** of Torq, and that was it – all the riders were now out on the road, each rider set to fight their own individual battles – “and now it goes as it goes, and where it ends is Fate” as classical Greek tragedian Aeschylus wrote, probably about cycling but possibly about Agamemnon.

There had been seven DNS, all of whom had dutifully made their apologies to the organisers, bless their non-cotton aero socks. It was now time to head down to Prees on my trusty old steed to see how things were going

To be continued

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 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 Hassall, 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 culling items from very early editions and reprinting them 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, too agreed to carry on with these duties.

The 2024 24 Hour event then came in for discussion. Jon Williams will be continuing as the event Sec 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 20m/h 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 affect upon the event. The Promoter 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.

The 2024 24hr Part Three: at Prees 'Hub'

Have you noticed how much the term 'hub' is used these days? It's become an in-word. Universities have their 'Student Hubs' where undergraduates can get academic guidance and pencils, villages have 'hubs' where coffee mornings and monthly floggings of infidels who traverse the land on only two wheels are held, and then there are computer hubs that manage networks, etc etc. All well and good, but let we bicyclists tell you that according to the Dictionary of Etymology a hub is "*the solid centre of a wheel,*" 1640s, of uncertain origin,[.] a wheelwright's word, not generally known or used until c. 1828; it reached wider currency with the vogue for **bicycling**." Hub. See, it's OUR word, thank you.

I think the term 'hub' fits, though, for Prees Heath, for its where many support teams pitch camp, gazebos aplenty, and it's where the riders hurtle round the large Prees roundabout, like NASA interplanetary exploration space craft whizzing round one of Jupiter's moons, to then be sling-shotted off again into outer space i.e. the long intergalactic blackness that is the A49 between Prees and Battlefield, and back ... bravely going where etc etc and all that . .

"Set the controls for 52 x 14, gas mark 5, warp speed 0.0002 to the -10⁹ Scotty!"

"Och the cranks cannae take it cap'n, it'll need to be 39 x 19"

"Make it so! & smoke me a Flying Kipper, we'll be home in time for Christmas!"

My route down to Prees from HQ took me through the curiously named hamlet of Shocklach, which apparently means 'Goblin Stream', where I passed the now closed-down village pub, The Bull. When I am Prime Minister I will make beer bought from supermarkets expensive, and beer bought in a pub cheap, for a local pub is a place of social interaction, community spirit; pubs engender positive mental health . . . I suspect that the currently skewed pricing in favour of supermarkets is ploy by government to keep us at home and prevent groups of people gathering down at the local, where grievances might be aired and revolution planned . . . e.g. pesky cyclists fomenting social unrest, demanding the right to be able to ride in safety on UK roads, for example.

I was riding slowly south, and stopping to check directions on my 'phone when I noticed a rider approaching and this turned out to be Edwin (Hargraves), now done with being starting timekeeper, and also heading down to Prees. He was on a trike. Edwin, I am sure will not mind my saying, is no spring chicken (nor I), but as he led me through various lanes and byways I was aware of having to try much harder than I had been planning . . . but there we go, Edwin is a previous winner of the Mersey Roads 24 (1998, 462 miles), so no slouch. We passed near Malpas, then headed into the centre of Whitchurch where we visited a proper old bakery shop, I bought this and that including a large Eccles Cake, with which, outside the shop, I had a near-death experience. Have you ever tried saying "Help I can't breathe" when you are unable to breathe? That we can't do so is definitely a design failing if Intelligent Design is how we are as we are. I must check my warranty. Thankfully I was saved from kicking the bucket by Edwin bashing me firmly on the back. A couple of passers-by watched it all play out and tutted that I'd left some soggy remnants of said Eccles Cake on the pavement for birds to eat. We then negotiated a network of cyclepaths and bumpety lanes, whilst discussing the music of Olivier Messiaen and trying to agree on which BBC Radio Three presenters were the most annoying, and Edwin was also keen to give his opinion as to which songs Taylor Swift was going to feature in her encore at Wembley next month, and whether or not she'd wear her blue sparkly shoes or the green ones. Not all of this is true. Then all of sudden we were there, Prees Heath, the Very Hub of The Mersey Roads 24.



Some of the support teams at Prees Heath, awaiting their riders' return from their afternoon trips down south to Battlefield and Wem.

When we arrived, 4 o'clock or so, none of the riders had returned to Prees but were still on the roads south between there, Battlefield and Wem. It would be interesting to see who made it back to Prees first. These are the first few to appear, all of them the faster riders who had gobbled up those who started ahead of them – it's just analog wristwatch timings so only accurate to the nearest minute.

First up the road was **Adam Wild**, arriving at 4.18 pm, then:

Lee Williams + 3 mins

Joe Gorman + 4 mins

Tim McEvoy + 5 mins

Mark Turnbull + 9 mins

Michael Hutchinson + 14 mins

Mark Turnbull, we later learnt, had punctured at one point.

Michelle Lindley was first female rider back to Prees, at 4.39pm, then female road biker **Sien Van Der Plank** at 4.46pm (+9), looking composed and smooth in her action, followed by **Sue Satchitananda**, number 8, at 4.52pm (+33). **Amy Hudson** came past at 17.06 (+7) - husband Kyle was being caught by Amy, but not battered – he was only a couple of minutes behind her time-wise.

Gradually more riders appeared, some had done more Battlefield + spur than others, so it ceased to make sense my recording times as I had no idea who had been routed where when. I thus relaxed and chatted with support teams and, if and when they stopped, riders.

Everyone who has been at a Mersey Roads 24 talks of the great atmosphere at Prees roundabout and its immediate environs during the event, and rightly so.

I spend considerable time chatting with the chap looking after The Flying Kippers tandem, he was called Chris. His being there had been a slightly last minute arrangement due to someone else dropping out at short notice. Chris, however, had been very pleased to step in, and instructed me to specifically mention that one of the reasons he was more than happy to do so was due to Donald of the 'Kippers having proved to be great friend and source of strength, when Chris had had a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition crashing into his life a while back, so it was his way of expressing his thanks.

At Prees, over the past few years the area around the roundabout has been developed/smartened up, a plush (but soulless) large café (good fish and chips, mind), and there is the all-night petrol station where you can get food and coffees should you need them at any time of the day and night.

At one point in said café (a bit like a MacDonald's in some ways, but isn't) there were I believe four generations of the Williams family present, all tucking in. Outside, I sat and chatted with Chris, plus another Amy, the partner of rider number 11, **Joe North** of Audax UK. Joe has had plenty of experience of long distance events, having done PBP plus LEL. Amy told us that Joe was known to some of his cycling friends as 'Road Kill Joe', as he liked to make the most of certain food-gathering opportunities presented to him when out riding at home in Scotland. Chris meanwhile works in the pharmaceutical industry, and had some horrifying stories to tell of how venal the industry is, with little concern for anything but short-term profits, and scant regard for what would best aid humanity in the longer term. Amy concurred with all this, her knowledge informed by her suffering from a rare and very unpleasant connective tissue disorder called Ehlers Danlos syndrome. Her partner Joe was one of six riding as 'Audax UK' members, and there were other keen Audaxers, in the field - they

of course get 1 Audax point for every 100 km ridden in the 24 Hour, provided they manage at least 360km. Audaxers talk in kilometres, I notice.

My scary Close Encounter with Grim Reaper Disguised as Eccles Cake was now safely in the past, and later in the evening I enjoyed a large and fine fish and chip supper.



Flying Kipper one-man support team Chris is also involved with local wildlife surveys, and we both commented on the plummeting populations of insects, which is scary stuff, declining biodiversity being one of the big three 'existential threats' facing human society. Ironically, after we'd both been recalling the hordes of stripy yellow and black Cinnabar Moth caterpillars we used to

see on ragwort as kids, now all but vanished, what should I then find on some ragwort next to the road, but one of those stripy fellows, the first I have seen this year. One caterpillar, does not, however, make for a spring. Jeremy Clarkson probably thinks 'Biodiversity' is a washing powder for synthetic coloureds.

I also caught up with the colourful support crew that were there to service the needs of the three Crewe Clarion riders. **Stuart Day**'s wife Janine, plus helpers John and a couple of others were definitely 'up for it' – their paraphernalia beyond food, drink, spares etc included a dinosaur costume (TT Rex !) which Janine donned from time to time, and some antics with carrots and sticks (the real thing) waved in front of their riders as they re-started after a stop. They also had music, both recorded and their own improvisations on kazoo. Things like this generally bring some welcome distraction to tired riders, whether it's your support crew or another's. Sometimes, however, when you are tired, struggling and going grumpy, such roadside frivolity becomes less fun to encounter than you'd think; *"Grrrr, Bl**dy annoying people, all jolly and having a good time whilst here I am feeling ill, tired, in pain, want to throw bike in river Dee etc etc"* I feel there is room in UK cycling for a new club, Curmudgeonly CC. President to be Mr. Ed Reardon. I'd join.

The Flying Kippers were living up to stereotypes – on one of their stops their chosen sustenance to take on board was 'tatty scones' – Scottish potato breads, whilst another time it was porridge. **Don McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter** were in for the long haul without doubt, they knew full well that the forthcoming hours would be long and hard, and had in fact elected to avoid knowing the time, or the number miles completed, until late in the race. Just pedal.

By now the riders were on Quina Brook, a welcome break from the long Battlefield & back legs, and were passing through frequently. I timed the riders on one of their laps; Adam Wild was lapping fastest at around 31 minutes.

When you are out there, riding a 24 Hour, the road feels quite empty, the gaps between riders wide, whereas when you are stopped beside the road it is surprising how thick and fast the riders come and go, especially then they are doing the Quina Brook circuit. Curious place name, Quina Brook. I just tried to find its origin, but failed. It's only one letter away from the grain called 'Quinoa', which I will continue to pronounce 'Kwin-o-ah', rather than what I gather is the accepted way 'Keee-nwah'. Pah. Curmudgeonly CC, we pronounce on English pronunciations too.

The day was moving on, the sun was setting, and soon I would need to be up at the perimeter of the roundabout, to carry out my marshalling and time check duties.

To be continued

An email received from a Fellowship member -

Good morning Pete,

I shall be marshalling at the turn off for this new leg. Although not flat it is not as severe as the bottom of the Battlefield leg. I do know the roads as I have frequently used them on visits to Edwin's or on long distance rides. This turn was also a spot where John Arnold used to bivvy during night legs. My helpers always looked after him, and plied him with warm drinks and grub.

Once, on the section after Wem, outbound, somewhere we came across a pub renovation. The workers had knocked off for the weekend and as a joke they had adjusted the pub name, which was in big letters high up on the building end. The pub was named after some local bigwig I assume, as it was named The "Bigwig"s Arms. The last part of the name, Arms, was adjusted - the S being moved next to the R and then the M being rotated 90 degrees anticlockwise on the end. This did amuse us for the rest of the night.

Mass education is a wonderful thing.

See you on the day.

Jim.

Correspondence with Hugh Culverhouse.

Not long after last year's 24 Hour I received an email from Liz Taylor:

Hi Pete,

Someone who used to send John info for the Journal was member Hugh Culverhouse, the one legged cyclist who lives in Germany. I am sure he would send you a write up of his 24 last year. He is having a hip operation in February so rode the 24hr last year (2023) in memory of John, as it was probably his last 24 because of his forthcoming surgery. I am sure he will be delighted the journal is still going on.

All the best to you Pete and let me know if there is anything you need.

Well done on the journal.

Liz (and Lynne)

During my abortive 2023 24 Hour I had seen Hugh out on the course, and not knowing anything about him I wondered what the story was behind a cyclist with only one working leg competing in the 24.

So, after Liz's message, when sending out number 130 I popped a hand-written message into the one destined for Germany and Hugh, suggesting he might like to get in touch, and received an email a few weeks later. Since then, we've exchanged a few emails, and in them Hugh has said he'd be pleased for me to update those who know him or of him about his ongoing treatment, so here are some abstractions from Hugh's emails (below).

For those of you who know nothing of the determined and spirited being that is Hugh, here's some info from a forum website:

Hugh had been a runner, but while competing in the national championship cross country race in 1971 he suffered a stress fracture to his left hip; after several operations over the next four years, it become obvious that he would never regain the use of his left leg - a break in the blood supply to his hip joint had caused

necrosis. While his left leg does articulate, it will not weight bear; on a bike he has a non-rotating crank to provide parking space for his left foot, whilst as a runner he uses a crutch and a stick, running his fastest marathon 3 hours 21 minutes.

As a cyclist, in the early 'Eighties, Hugh set the Land's End to John O'Groats record for a one-legged ride, completing the 847 miles in 3 days and 4 hours. His best 24hr TT was 394 miles. He has also ridden the Race Across America covering the over 3,000 miles in 13 days and eleven hours, another of his records for a one-legged athlete.

3rd May

Dear Pete,

We met briefly at last year's 24. In the meantime, I have received your first attempt at editing the 24 HF Journal. As usual, I read the Journal cover to cover and enjoyed it all, well done.

The deterioration in my hip condition during 2022 and 2023 was dramatic, and further major surgery was planned. In January 2024 during surgery, it was established that my femoral bone was no longer usable (bone degeneration) and the (top) half had to be totally replaced. This was done. However, a tumour was found in the bone. I am still in hospital, now going through chemo treatment. The op wound on the thigh is also still causing problems. I hope at least to get home for a few days next week before I have to return to continue the chemo. I haven't been able to cycle, even one-legged, since December, and no running (on crutches) since last September. My long-suffering (normal) right leg is now untrained uselessness! I will need until Autumn to get going again, but at least the new artificial femur should enable me to continue as before. If I never race again, I can feel happy going out on that cold and wet 24 after over 50 years of competition as a Disabled Person. But never say never!

I thank you so much for your Journal efforts which helped me pass some of my seemingly endless time in this hospital in Munich.

Best and appreciative wishes,

Hugh Culverhouse

Weybridge Whs CC

Munich, Germany

20th July

Hi again Pete,

The 24 Hour is approaching, and this has prompted me to write again. Guess where from! Yes, a hospital bed again!

My health development has not been good, but hope remains. The thigh has still not healed and I remain on a drain, which prevents normal activity. I'm back in hospital – it was first the orthopaedic ward as my leg was getting painful and blood values went berserk, and now the oncology ward having chemo#5 in a cycle of 4 days every 3 weeks. I will probably need 8 sessions, which won't leave a lot of the pleasant cycling season left for me. When I have been home, I've tried to work on the home trainer, max 18 mins, and it exhausts me. I can now remove my drain for the duration and shower afterwards.

The long term prognosis is very unclear. I now have the drain since April and there is no sign the fluid secretion will ever stop. A 3rd sarcoma is growing in my thigh after the first 2 were removed surgically. The drain (internal healing) indicates that no further surgery is feasible. The 3rd sarcoma is shrinking due to the chemo, and after time, usually the smaller left-over growth is removed surgically. As this cannot happen with me, I envisage chemo in some form for a long time to come. If nothing succeeds, then we are left with amputation, which doesn't worry me as the leg has been nothing but a hindrance for 53 years. Fingers still tightly crossed!

What led me to come to Germany, you ask. In short - work! I always wanted to work in France for linguistic reasons and landed a software development job in Paris in 1981. I was given a customer for ATM development in Munich (Siemens). I was then often in Munich on business trips and I got on very well with my German colleagues. French was the business language fortunately, as my German was as good as zero (O level). In 1984, on a business trip, we had a few after-work beers together, and my boss then promptly offered me a job at Siemens in Munich! I hiccupped my acceptance, moved to Germany, met my German-wife-to-be in 1987 and have never looked back. I now have dual citizenship. To my annoyance, I was not allowed to vote in the Brexit referendum as I had been out of the country for more than 15 years. I still feel that I was one of the few in the know about Europe and should have had 10 votes!! But Cameron the idiot decided!

All the best and good luck at the 24. Please pass on my best regards to anyone who knows me. You can also freely pass on my news as expressed in this mail.

Hugh

26th August -

Dear Pete,

It is time I sent you a health update as well as a sporting update. I have now completed my report on last year's 24 Hour, and will send it to you soon once my son Patrick has proof-read it.

The health news is not good, I am afraid. But at this stage, I am free of metastases (Metastasis = the spread of cancer to other parts of the body), and so should have some sort of future ahead of me. However, my leg has still not healed from the April operations, and

although I am at home apart from chemo treatments, I still have to drag a drain around with me all the time. I've devised ways of getting the tube out of the way so that I can at least use the home trainer, but chemo exhausts me and I can only manage 15 minutes a day on the home trainer. With some help from my son, I did get out on the road a few weeks ago, only 4 kms, but it was such a joy for me to be out there again. As my son is a busy young man, I have not been out again, but I hope he will be available again soon. I was very nervous on the bike and totally lacking confidence, particularly starting and stopping one-legged. It'll come back!

The rate of growth of the tumours in my thigh last March/April was sadly dramatic and is now being held back by the chemo. My 7th session of 8 starts on Thursday of this week and I stay at hospital at least until the Monday afterwards. There is a 3 week cycle between sessions, and my time at home is appreciated by my activities are very restricted. A 2km walk with my wife is now an achievement, although in reality it is nothing! Because of the rapid reappearance of tumours on my thigh and because am at present free of metastases (i.e. still in good health), the source of the tumours has to be removed. However, further surgery on my leg is impossible and the top orthopaedic and oncology doctors at my Munich hospital have decided there is only one solution: a full amputation. Sadly, I agree! They have also said that they want to remove the left half of my pelvis which sends shivers down my spine. Will I ever be able to cycle or run again? I will need to be creative, but I am sure I will find a way. But racing seems now to be out of the question, which means last year's 24 really was my swansong. I do not want to believe it yet, and I will assess my situation after the amputation, scheduled for October.

What do I think of Germany at present? Difficult question! I was so disgusted by your strange Brits voting for Brexit that I took out German citizenship. We have some difficult problems to resolve here, after the murders in Solingen last week. Germany has some catching up to do -

You are welcome to pass on any information I have written in this mail: I don't do "data protection"! But I also do not use FB or any other mass media application! So I have little fears of putting my foot in it!

Wishing you all the best, and many thanks for all your efforts,

Hugh

27th August

Hi Pete,

Chemo#7 starts on Thursday, and the final chemo#8 will start on Sept. 19th. My docs are threatening to do the amputation fairly quickly after the last chemo, i.e. maybe early October, which in a way is fair enough as I do not want any more tumours to start growing once the chemo stops. At the moment, I am free of metastases and so theoretically fit. Let us hope it stays that way.

All the best,

Hugh

P.S. I used to so enjoy John's rants in the Journal. How about keeping the trend going??!!

Not an easy read, and you can only marvel at Hugh's strength of mind. I'd suggest that the fortitude that got him through various long-distance events despite his disability is what is also helping him now. Hugh's piece on his 2023 24 Hour, plus a retrospective from him on his sporting life, will appear in the Spring 2025 issue of the journal. Oh and yes, I think I can manage a rant or two or three or four.

Hugh's contact details:

email: hugh.culverhouse@t-online.de

Post: Unterhachinger Str.89 D-81737, Muenchen, Germany

The 2024 24hr Part Four: The Night Shift.

This year I got round to volunteered myself for some 24 Hour (night shift) marshalling. The race organisers had kindly put me down for Prees Roundabout, to give me a good vantage point from a race report point of view. I duly reported for duty around 10pm, taking over from Edwin Hargraves and others. I was then officially'ish initiated into the dark art of being a marshall/time checker. Many of you reading this might wonder what exactly we write down?; "*Rider no 4 – socks class badly with (slack and flappy) club jersey. Also, needs to be more smiley*" perhaps ? No - actually we get given 2 x A4 cards with grids on – on one, when a rider encircles the RAB turning point we simply write down the time and the rider's race number, and then we have a card with all the rider's numbers down the left and against each individual rider we transpose their lap times across from t'other sheet. Sounds easy eh? It is until two or three riders appear at once, and only one of them shouts their number, and you can't see their numbers on their back because the light is poor, then it becomes more testing. Sharpen up lads and lasses !

At the roundabout, also on duty with me was John Forbes, who I had not met before, and we were joined by the irrepressible and irreverent Jim Hopper. Andrew Askwith was also floating about, and donning high-vis he stationed himself on the far side of the RAB so no-one would vanish off the first RAB exit and end up in Wolverhampton rather than back to Battlefield. We suspected

that some riders might have preferred the Wolverhampton option by now, however.

At one point a police car pulled up by Andrew, and we could imagine the conversation

“'Ello 'ello, 'ello, and what's going on here then might I ask sir?”

“It's a fair cop guv, we is well guilty, as we is engaged in the running of a bicycle race, what we know is Contrary to British Values, as set down by New Labour in the 'noughties, which values expressly state that it is only motor vehicles what should have the right to pound UK highways”

Have I got Andrew's Yorkshire dialect right I wonder?

But seriously, you'd think that there would have been some communications sent to police out and about in the area rearding the race, given that the authorities would have been notified by the organisers months ago.

Most of the riders dutifully shouted their race numbers as they passed, and our favourite was number 11, **Joe North**, aka Roadkill Joe – he shouted “Legs Eleven” each time he circled the roundabout and I suspect elsewhere on the circuit. The Bingo Numbers concept should definitely be taken up by all time triallists – **Adam Wild** would thus have been “*Jump and Jive, thirty five*” for example, **Nick Clark** on his Brompton “*Dirty Gertie, number thirty*”. Some, though, wouldn't work; it'd be hard to imagine for example no. 31, the veteran Scots pair on the **Flying Kippers** tandem shouting “*Time for Fun, thirty one*” as they passed at 3am, knackered and having no fun whatsoever and with no fun on the horizon for many a long and painful hour, or 50 year old veteran **Louise Glysen** of Buxton CC at no 16 claiming “*Sweet Sixteen, Never Been Kissed*”.

Some riders failed to shout their numbers, and some in response to an appeal from us of ‘*Number Please !!!?!*’ would respond with “*Thank you*”. . . .

Hmmmm. One rider, who we saw a lot of as he was going faster than everyone else, did not shout his number once, not once, all night . . . this was super speedy **Adam Wild**, who didn't “*35 jump'n'jive*” his way round the roundabout but came in fast, smooth and close, twin lights shining – we learnt to tell it was him by his line, his lights and his speed.

Another impediment to data gathering were the tales told by Jim Hopper and John Forbes, highly amusing and truly distracting. I contributed with my own tale of misconception of an Italian bicycle-related nature, which I will try to remember to include in my editor's postscript. (*oops no space – next time*)

It was disconcerting to discover just how busy the roads remained, late into the evening. We all know that the road from north of Prees down to the

motorways through the Midlands are heavily used by lorries. It was definitely VERY unnerving being on the outside of a roundabout as heavily-laden 'rigs' came up from Espley direction, as for a few moments, as they swung around the RAB, leant over, lights ablaze, they were heading straight at us – a failure in a braking system, a lapse of concentration by a driver, a shifting load, and we'd've been dead. It was like a weird version of reverse 'chicken'.

In E.U. countries heavy goods vehicles are not permitted to use public highways between midday Saturday and midnight Sunday. Sadly our nation follows the U.S. model of '24/7' – commerce before people – so British drivers don't get a break at the weekend, and nor do we. There will be a slight reduction at weekends here, as around 20% of lorry drivers on UK roads at any given time are E.U. drivers, and are bound by E.U. rules.

From time to time we'd see the lights of riders coming up the road from Battlefield direction, get ourselves all set, only for them to pull in beside the encampments and vanish into gazebos, to be administered to by their support teams. Sometimes there was music and laughter, most times not. It was as if there was a party going on and our names were not on the list.

Jon Williams had asked me, back at HQ, what time I packed in last year's wet wet wet 24. About 1.30 a.m. "Ah" he said, *"of riders that pack , the vast majority do so between 1 a.m. and 4 a.m. At work (hospital) we describe these hours as 'The Dead Hours' – these are the hours when more patients die than at any other time"*.

The Dead Hours were certainly not dead as far as big lorries went – plenty of them continuing to swing around the roundabout.

Sadly, however, there were riders who whilst not actually expiring, were going DNF. **Richard Parrotte** of Shaftesbury CC succumbed to problems with an ankle, and **Bob Richards**, of the Royal Navy and Royal Marines CA (team winners in previous 24s) was finding that sadly the covid he'd contracted earlier in July had taken its toll, and he had had to stop. One of the tandem teams, the Derby Mercury mixed machine of **Steve** and **Laura Pugh/Pugh-Massey** had also had to pull out, one or the other of them having serious comfort issues. They were in a sombre and depressed mood, very disappointed, we were told. Par for the course for DNF'ers; you build yourself up, and something lets you down. **Tim McEvoy** had also packed, and so had **Joe Gorman**, both of whom had been going well. It was also sad to note that the oldest rider, **Bryan Highgate** ('Sid the Cyclist') of Fareham Wheelers, the oldest rider at 86, had abandoned.

The other two tandems were still going - "Go on Kippers" and "Keep it going Sarah and Brigit". The all-female tandemees were a real glow-in-the-dark

delight, not due to any lighting they were equipped with, but simply their spirits – as they slowed ahead of the roundabout they could be heard CHATTING and LAUGHING and as they passed they would always say “Thanks !” and have big smiles. I almost exclaimed “*What are they ON !*” but I didn’t which was sensible because Jim H or John F would’ve have responded with something like “*It’s a tandem Pete, you stupid t**t*”.

One of the bursts of music we heard was from Brigid and Sarah’s support crew: So [said Brigid afterwards], support team Suzi planned the Cabaret for the 4am lull. This involved her dressing up in sequins, the car decorated in fairy lights and dancing to a carefully chosen playlist blaring out of a speaker:

Our Cabaret theme tunes included:

Cabaret - *Lisa Minelli*

Up all night - *Secondcity, Rafhaella*

Bicycle Race - *Remastered 2011, Queen*

Things can only get better - *D.Ream*

Girls Just want to have fun - *Cyndi Lauper*

Does your Mother know – *Abba*



We had a few hours running up to the Cabaret when we chatted about what it would be like and then chatted and laughed about it afterwards”



Prees Heath roundabout in the early hours of the Sunday morning - lights, music, bikes, pain

Adam Wild was steadily increasing his lead. Some folks, early in the night, had voiced concern that he'd not be able to maintain his effort, had gone out too fast etc, Well, he was still bombing round.

The night was cold, and mist was swirling around in the air before dawn, then slowly the darkness faded, and lo and behold it was easier to read rider's numbers. 'Legs Eleven' **Joe North** was still calling out as he was going round, and number 66, **Adam Rogers** of Eastbourne Rovers (A footy club name surely?!) had by now gotten his left arm number up the right way and was no longer 99. Bravissimo.

5.30 a.m. and myself and John Forbes, who had been an excellent companion, were relieved by Christine and Phil Minto. I stumbled back to the land of gazebos, tents and vans, where the lovely Crewe Clarion made me a very welcome cup of sweet hot tea, bless them.

A less hopeful snippet was that the youngest rider, 20 year old **Adam Holt**, had gotten off his bike and had said he was not getting back on.

Amy and Kyle Hudson were still not that far apart. I had heard the Mrs Hudson recording a short video clip on her phone, the gist being that "Nope, not going as well as hoped, but press on". The Flying Kippers' support team of Chris was still there and attentive, and the **Flying Kippers** Donald and Mark were still pushing on doggedly or possibly dogfishedly. Here are some time sheet excerpts from the night circuit **Adam Wild** is no. 35, **Lee Williams** 65, **Mark Turnbull** 70, **Christian Geldard** 55, **Michael Hutchinson** 60.

31	22.06	23.54	DNF			
33	22.34	00.37				
34	22.44	00.41	2.29	4.31		
35	22.36	23.47	01.02	2.17	3.32	4.52
36	22.09	23.55	1.45	5.32		
37	22.40	01.01	2.38	4.15		
38	22.50	00.58	3.08	5.43		

50	22.32	23.45	01.08			
51	22.43	00.47	2.30 2.35	4.34		
52	22.49	00.29	2.29	4.25		
X 53	22.36					
54	22.19	23.57	1.24	3.01	4.42	
55	22.10	23.32	00.46	2.50	4.19	
56	22.21	00.01	1.48			
X 57						
58	22.23	00.00	2.14	3.57		
59	22.38	00.16	2.00	3.44	5.30	
60	22.12	23.39	1.15	3.12	4.52	
61	22.04	23.51	3.29			
62						
63	22.36	00.00	1.27	3.04	4.57	
64	22.24	00.23	2.38	4.49		
65	22.06	23.24	2.12	3.36	5.05	
66	22.43	00.18	2.07	3.54	5.41	
F 67	22.09	23.33	X DNF			
68	22.22	23.54	1.35	3.15	5.17	
69	22.43	00.34	2.29	4.27		
70	22.30	23.55	01.26	2.48	4.14	

Eventually the sun rose above the mist, all smiley, and its warmth slowly took effect, lifting the temperature and the spirits of riders and support accordingly. At 8.30a.m. I had a hot chocolate from the petrol station and tried to sleep. Managed five minutes. Grrr. At nine a.m. I headed off, up to the finishing circuit on my bike, where I would find out which riders had made it, and which had succumbed during The Dead Hours.



Sunrise on Prees

To be continued

A Poem for Legs Eleven a.k.a. **Joe North** of Audax UK, a.k.a. 'Roadkill Joe':

On a Bird Dead in the Road by *George Barker*

What formerly flounced and flew its fantastic feathers
now lies like a flattened old leather glove in the road,
And the gigantic wheels of the articulated juggernaut lorries
pound down on it all day long like the mad will of god.

The 2024 24hr Part Five: The Finishing.

The journey from Prees via lanes then the A525 Wrexham road to the finishing circuit seemed to take me long time – my previous two times along this bit of A525 had been when I had been actually riding the 24, a very different circumstance. I was also not trying very hard this time. I thought maybe those in the race might pass me before I reached the circuit, but I managed to arrive ahead of them by a few minutes, and positioned myself on the short sharp slope half a mile or so from the start of the circuit.

First onto the circuit was **Andy Halpin** of Band of Climbers CC, just after ten a.m. The British Cycling club web page for the club states that “Band of Climbers CC is a cycling club for those who love to climb”. CTT cites they have seven members, and they are linked with the a business of the same name - Band of Climbers, who run mountain cycling tours and sell cycling kit. They have not yet run a time trial event. Sort it out BOC CC !! Andy was going steady and continued to do so; he finished tenth with 405.31 miles, the best road bike performance of the race.

Next to arrive was Derby Mercury's **Amy Hudson**, at 10:13 a.m., giving her three and half hours or so of tired tired riding around a trading estate. All that fun and all for only £40 entry. Bargain. Actually, tough work, but we all know what a lift we get when we are on that circuit. Before I left Prees I had seen her and her hubbie **Kyle Hudson** arrive close together at their feed station, chatting to and encouraging each other, ahh sweet. At that point Amy was at least 9 minutes up on hubbie. She increased this lead over the last few hours, and come stop time had just managed to break the 400 mile mark, which she was very pleased about as for much of the race that didn't seem possible. Her 402.66 miles secured the female silver medal, and on a road bike to boot. Kyle appeared on the circuit 6 or 7 minutes after her, and he went up the short rampy slope like Fabian 'I push very hard on the pedals' Cancellara riding a TDF short prologue, and he did this each time up the hill, but must've slowed down elsewhere - continuing to lose time on wifey to finish on 394.72 miles.

Good to see that all three of the Crewe Clarions had made it through the night, **Stuart Day** on his fixed wheel machine ground his way up the hill, and Clarionettes **Maryjane Watson** and **Sue Satchithananda** looked tired but were doggedly pressing on. Stuart finished on 412 miles, ninth place, a great first 24 hr ride, Sue on 350.72 in 28th place, and Maryjane had got neither lost or run over and completed 268.01 miles.

A surprise was that young **Adam Holt**, the Chepstow 20 year old lad, who last I'd heard had dismounted and wasn't going to remount, had resumed – lovely to see him on the finishing circuit, an emotional moment as clearly he'd gone

through it. Adam finished with a 400+ distance, for 16th place on 401.35, which must've given him enormous satisfaction as just the concept of finishing had clearly seemed to be an impossibility for him for a time. The race, however, must've taken a real toll on him as I don't recall having seen him back at HQ after.

The other very young rider **Bethany Spencer**, 21, was still hanging in there, but had had a steady slowing down during the course of the event – at the start of the Quina Brook circuits the previous evening she was showing an average speed of c. 18.5 mph; this fell away dramatically and her final AVS was around 11 mph, her final distance 262 miles. I imagine she felt very fed up as it got harder & harder & harder to maintain any decent speed, but she bravely stuck to the task right to the end.

The rider who finished third overall in the female category, **Rebecca Mason** of Malton Wheelers, was going steadily, ending on 394 miles, and so was pre-race favourite the Poole Wheeler **Michelle Lindley**, who would emerge winner of the female category on 429.19 miles, and in doing so set a new 50+ age record, beating Lynne Taylor-Biddulph's 404.42 of 2019. **Kathryn Smith**, aged 70, was still there, moving inexorably onwards to claiming a new 70+ age record for a 24: 349.63 miles.

Of the fast cats and kittens, **Adam Wild** of GS Metro had emerged onto the finishing circuit first, and was lapping at around 23 minutes for the 8.18 miles. He was a mite slower than **Mark Turnbull** of Torq, who was taking a minute less on average for the 4 laps I recorded, but the hare was not going to be caught: Adam had built up an uncatchable advantage earlier, and in fact was over 50 miles up on Mark by then. Turnbull finished third on 490.64 against winner Wild's 546.36.

Lee Williams (FTP) emerged little later onto the circuit, and whilst I don't have any lap times for him he was looking strong – and indeed he finished runner-up, the only other rider to break 500 miles, on 520.98. His FTP team mate **Christian Geldard** took 4th on 469.81.

Arctic Aircon's **Michael Hutchinson** was clearly not going to finish in the medals this time, if his lapping around 25 or 26 minutes was anything to go by, and whilst Jesus may've said to Moses 'Come forth', Michael came fifth, on 455.71 miles, and lost his beer money.

Bystanders and support teams continued to cheer ALL the riders on, some of which were looking truly half-dead as they struggled to keep the pedals turning you know the thing; "*DIG IN*" . . . and meanwhile you're thinking "*I can't effing well dig any effing more, I'm effing well ALL DUG OUT and have*

been for the last x effing number of effing hours thank you very much!!".
Curmudgeonly CC, it's the future.

It was unpleasantly hot in the last few hours. Some riders I hadn't seen for ages - those who started their final Battlefield circuit (28 miles of it) not long before the cut-off time (about 9.30 a.m.) appeared much much later onto the finishing circuit, just when you'd thought maybe they'd gone DNF. It was thus very pleasing to see that **Rob Rix** of Southport CC, and at 76 the oldest rider now out on the road, was still there, a late arrival on the circuit. He said after, in reply to my email to him congratulating him on finishing: *"Thanks for the kind wishes, very much appreciated. There were times when I thought I would not make the finishing circuit but managed to pass 4 time keepers before the called out "STOP" Sorry I didn't get to chat after the event. Best wishes. Rob"*.

Legs Eleven, number 11, **Joe North** of Audax UK was still hanging on in there, although when I heard him pass a timekeeper he only managed to croak '11'; where were the legs? THE LEGS HAD GONE.

Le diagonaliste **Andy Walsh** of Audax UK was one of the last riders onto the circuit at nearly midday, lovely to see him and cheer him on his way to 12th on 403.31 miles, just when was thinking he'd gone AWOL. I spoke with him afterwards, and he was very pleased with his distance, as he had secretly hoped to break the 400 miles barrier and had indeed managed to do so.

Sadly, **Greg Elwell**, hoping for a 500 mile ride, had disappeared, probably some stage during The Dead Hours, and was not to be seen. DNF.

Meanwhile, the two remaining tandem pairs were keeping it rolling, and yes **Sarah Murray** and **Brigid Night** (Clwb Beicio Egni Eryri /Frodsham Wheelers) were still smiling and pedalling, or possibly just grimacing and pedalling, as they moved to the new female tandem record for a 24hr, at 356.90 miles.



The other tandem, the Flying Kippers, were still airborne, but looking forward to crash-landing somewhere/anywhere once their finish time of 1.41 p.m. eventually arrived, which it duly did, and indeed **Donald McLean** and **Mark Leadbetter** rolled out the overall tandem winners on 374.45 miles. I imagine that when they reached the finishing circuit they allowed themselves to look at their watches and see how long they had to go.

As riders' finishing times began to arrive I rode down the course to the nearest time keeper, to hear various riders being told "Okay, you can stop now" and to hear various expressions of supreme relief. There was a last view of the Crewe Clarion support team, Janine husband of **Stuart Day** was in a layby and may've had a penguin costume on or perhaps I was becoming unhinged by then.

And then I rode back to HQ. Lots of tired but cosily happy riders gradually arrived. Outside the hall, in the warm afternoon air, I spoke with winner **Adam Wild**, before the final distances were calculated. He was fairly confident that he'd beaten the record; he believed he'd done 546 miles. I asked him how it'd been, and he said that the hardest bit was the final Battlefield leg/circuit, but other than that he'd felt surprisingly okay, with his race strategy and his support team working pleasingly well. I did try to convince him that actually he'd been DQ'd - for not shouting his number to marshalls on the night circuit . . . not for one moment did he believe me; he wasn't really meant to. I did, however, tell him "*But please, if there's a next time, shout your number!*". Jump'n' Jive, thirty-five, come on mate, I mean, it's TT etiquette isn't it? He explained that he had been so much focussed on his ride that he just didn't hear us. I said that actually, after the first couple of passes we knew it was him each time he approached - he was going faster than anyone else, and held that tight tight inside line. And he had twin front lights. But y'know, shout yer number !!!

Meanwhile riders and support crews were inside awaiting the official results: CTT officials working on laptops, a few sheets of paper, and after half an hour or so there we were, the results were posted up for all to see. Medals and trophies were awarded, people applauded, a nice vibe. Personally, I was pleased that **Adam Wild**, at 27, had won – a nice polite and friendly chap.

Amongst others I spoke with back at HQ Farndon was **Rebecca West** of Malton Wheelers, who expressed great delight with her third place in the women's classification on 394.08 miles, not something she was expecting at all.

Mike Broadwith was also there at a crowded HQ, but somehow I didn't see him – it would've been good to speak with the Chair of the Fellowship.



People slowly drifted away, home to wherever home was. I rode south back to my rubbish digs. I was tired. It was hot. I rode slowly.

It had certainly been an enjoyable weekend experiencing the 24 Hour from the side of the road etc.

I had thought beforehand that maybe during the race I would get to thinking *“Get me out there, I want to be on my bike and riding this not just watching others do it !”*, and whilst when riders were on the finishing circuit I felt a degree of envy I’ll admit that when they vanished off from the lights of Prees into the darkness of the night for yet another Battlefield leg I found myself thinking *“hmmm..... wouldn't much fancy that...”*

And the next day I returned home to the lovely Westcountry.

Results of the 24 Hour

RB = Road Bike, Blue = female rider, bold = tandem

1	Adam	Wild	GS Metro		546.36
2	Lee	Williams	FTP		520.98
3	Mark	Turnbull	TORQ Performance		490.84
4	Christian	Geldard	FTP		469.81
5	Michael	Hutchinson	Arctic Aircon RT		455.71
6	John	Lowe	Withington Wheelers		433.19
7	Michelle	Lindley	Poole Wheelers Cycling Club		426.19
8	Chris	Hopkinson	API/Anglia Sport		415.57
9	Stuart	Day	Crewe Clarion Wheelers		412.32
10	Andy	Halpin	Band of Climbers Cycling Club	RB	405.31
11	James	Rees	Audax UK		403.43
12	Andrew	Walsh	Audax UK		403.31
13	Amy	Hudson	Derby Mercury	RB	402.66
14	Steven	Abraham	Arctic Aircon RT	RB	402.51
15	Dominic	Smith	QN Racing	RB	401.94
16	Adam	Holt	Chepstow Cycling Club		401.35
17	Adam	Rogers	Eastbourne Rovers CC		399.84
18	Chris	Shaw	Fenland Clarion CC		396.68
19	Kyle	Hudson	Derby Mercury R C	RB	394.72
20	Rebecca	Mason	Malton Whs		394.08
21	Sien	Van Der Plank	New Forest CC	RB	390.46
22	Roger	Squire	Wrexham CC/Fibrax		375.88
23	Mark	Leadbetter	Flying Kippers		374.45
"	Donald	McLean	Flying Kippers		374.45
24	Rob	Powell	Abergavenny RC		371.7
25	Ian	Ryall	Audax UK	RB	371.51
26	Nick	Clarke	Arctic Aircon RT	RB	367.69
27	Ben	Cox	Audax UK		365.25
28	Sarah	Murray	Clwb Beicio Egni Eryri		356.9
"	Brigid	Night	Frodsham Wheelers		356.9

29	Andrew	Rawling	Westmead Team 88		353.17
30	Kathryn	Smith	Sleaford Wheelers Cycling Club		349.63
31	Sue	Satchithananda	Crewe Clarion Wheelers	RB	342.54
32	Keith	Luetchford	Buxton CC/Sett Valley Cycles	RB	336.48
33	Corinna	O'Connor	Audax UK		330.26
34	Louise	Glysen	Buxton CC/Sett Valley Cycles	RB	304.75
35	Cliff	Degraff	Velo Club Cumbria		302.57
36	Charles	Price	Derby Mercury R C	RB	295.51
37	Geraint	Catherall	Anfield BC		293.64
38	Joseph	North	Audax UK		284.94
39	Kevin	Wright	VTTA West Group	RB	272.11
40	Maryjane	Watson	Crewe Clarion Wheelers	RB	268.01
41	Rob	Rix	Anfield BC		264.35
42	Bethany	Spencer	Audax UK		254.14

Below are the intermediate average MPH's of riders at each stage, where **1 QB** is start of Quina Brook c. 6pm, **2 NC** = start of Night Circuit c. 10pm, **3 FC** = start of finishing circuit c. late Sunday morning, and **4 END** = riders overall MPH at end.

			Distance	1 QB	2 NC	3 FC	4 END	age
1	Adam	Wild	546.36	24.1	23.9	22.8	22.78	27
2	Lee	Williams	520.98	23.7	23.5	21.6	21.71	39
3	Mark	Turnbull	490.84	22.5	21.3	20.3	20.45	51
4	Christian	Geldard	469.81	21.7	21.4	18.3	19.58	49
5	Michael	Hutchinson	455.71	22.0	21.6	19.0	18.99	50
6	John	Lowe	433.19	19.2	18.6	18.0	18.05	55
7	Michelle	Lindley	426.19	20.3	19.8	17.8	17.76	50
8	Chris	Hopkinson	415.57	21.1	19.8	17.2	17.32	56
9	Stuart	Day	412.32	19.2	18.7	17.1	17.18	53
10	Andy	Halpin	405.31	18.9	18.6	16.8	16.89	43
11	James	Rees	403.43	19.3	18.4	16.7	16.81	46
12	Andrew	Walsh	403.31	19.6	18.7	16.7	16.80	45
13	Amy	Hudson	402.66	19.5	18.6	16.7	16.78	28
14	Steven	Abraham	402.51	16.8	17.0	16.8	16.77	49
15	Dominic	Smith	401.94	18.4	17.9	16.7	16.75	46
16	Adam	Holt	401.35	19.7	19.0	17.0	16.72	20
17	Adam	Rogers	399.84	19.8	18.2	16.9	16.66	49
18	Chris	Shaw	396.98	20.3	19.6	17.1	16.54	61
19	Kyle	Hudson	394.72	19.1	18.2	16.4	16.45	29
20	Rebecca	Mason	394.08	19.1	18.3	16.3	16.42	33
21	Sien	Van Der Plank	390.46	19.0	18.2	16.2	16.27	29
22	Rob	Powell	379.88	19.7	18.8	16.1	15.83	46

23	Roger	Squire	375.88	18.4	17.4	15.7	15.66	55
24	Mark/Donal	Leadbetter/Mclea	374.45	19.6	18.2	15.5	15.60	57/6
25	Ian	Ryall	371.51	17.7	17.1	15.7	15.48	58
26	Nick	Clarke	367.69	16.9	16.8	15.4	15.32	39
27	Ben	Cox	362.25	18.4	17.5	15.3	15.09	38
28	Sarah/Brigid	Murray/Night	356.90	18.9	17.4	15.0	14.87	42/5
29	Andrew	Rawling	353.17	17.6	16.8	14.9	14.72	63
30	Sue	Satchithananda	350.72	16.6	15.8	14.6	14.61	53
31	Kathryn	Smith	349.63	18.0	16.7	14.6	14.57	70
32	Keith	Luetchford	336.48	17.4	16.1	13.9	14.02	64
33	Corinna	O'Connor	330.26	16.4	15.7	14.0	13.76	51
34	Cliff	Degraff	310.75	15.6	14.8	13.2	12.95	59
35	Louise	Glysen	304.75	15.2	14.6	12.7	12.70	50
36	Charles	Price	295.51	15.3	14.8	11.8	12.31	63
37	Geraint	Catherall	293.64	14.6	13.7	12.2	12.24	50
38	Joseph	North	284.94	15.3	14.7	11.8	11.87	37
39	Kevin	Wright	272.11	14.5	13.4	11.1	11.34	63
40	Maryjane	Watson	268.01	12.6	12.7	11.2	11.17	61
41	Rob	Rix	264.35	14.1	13.1	11.0	11.01	76
42	Bethany	Spencer	262.74	18.5	16.0	10.4	10.95	21
	Joe	Gorman	DNF	23.5	23.3			39
	Tim	McEvoy	DNF	23.0	22.6			46
	Leon	Marshall	DNF	21.7	21.0			44
	Greg	Elwell	DNF	21.2	21.3			50
	Steven/Laur	Massey/Massey-Pugh	DNF	18.2	18.2			47/3
	Bradley	Woodruffe	DNF	18.9	18.6			27
	Richard	Parrotte	DNF	18.3	17.6			59
	Ben	McCreath	DNF	18.3				33
	Stuart	Edwards	DNF	18.3				59
	Nathan	Boyer	DNF	17.8	17.6			45
	Bob	Richards	DNF	17.6	15.6			67
	Brian	Hygate	DNF	15.1				86
	Robert	Tomlinson	DNF					52

Most riders showed an improvement in speed once on the finishing circuits; you stop less often, and you empty the tank !

D.N.S. x 7 = Chris Hall, Matt Jones, Ian Harcourt, Carolyn Chambers, Rose Price, Andy Gray, Damian Healy

There were 7 DNS and 14 DNFs – last year 2023 there were 10 DNS and 12 DNF – interesting that despite the conditions seeming kinder this year there were more who DNF'd than in 2023's Götterdämmerung deluge.

Interesting to see that not one single road bike rider packed.

The only female rider who DNF'd was on a mixed tandem, or to put it another way of the fourteen DNFs thirteen were men. Well done women !

Of the 27 debutantes, only four riders went DNF, two of whom were on the same machine (tandem), so only 3 bikes/4 riders DNF of the novices. Well done newbies!

Book review – The Cyclist Who Went Out In The Cold, by Tim Moore

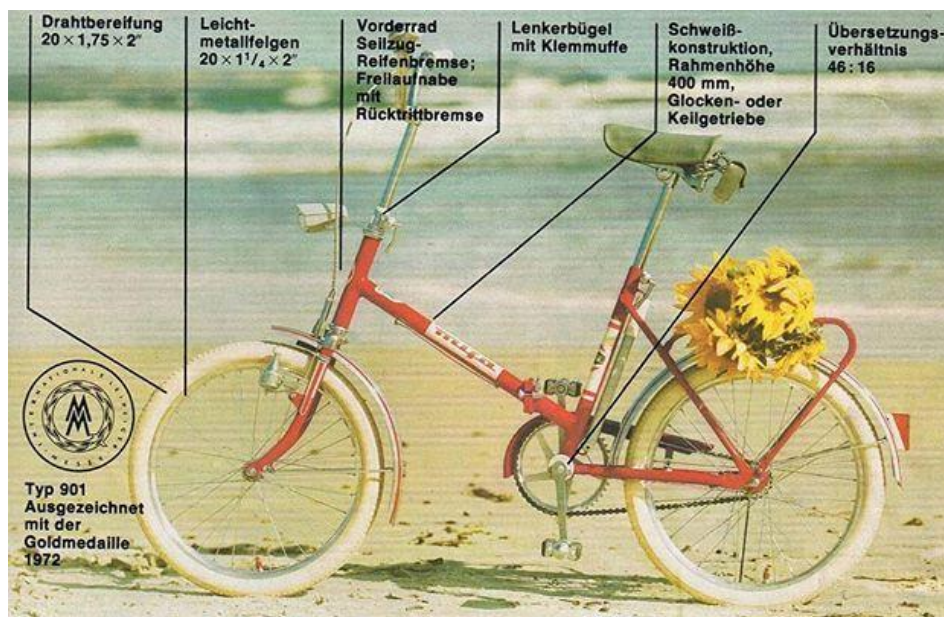
I was reminded of having read this book after seeing Nick Clarke on his Brompton at the 24hr this year; Big Man, Small Wheels....

Now, I always have my doubts when someone tells me 'You really must read/watch/listen to this !', but a few weeks after a friend had placed this book in my hands I set to reading it. And thoroughly enjoyed it. The title is of course a nod to the excellent 1963 Cold War espionage novel "The Spy Who Came In From The Cold" by John Le Carré.

Tim Moore, the author of the book is contacted by a newspaper; "What say you to riding and reporting back as first cyclist ever to do the newly-established EuroVelo Route 13 – The Iron Curtain Trail?"

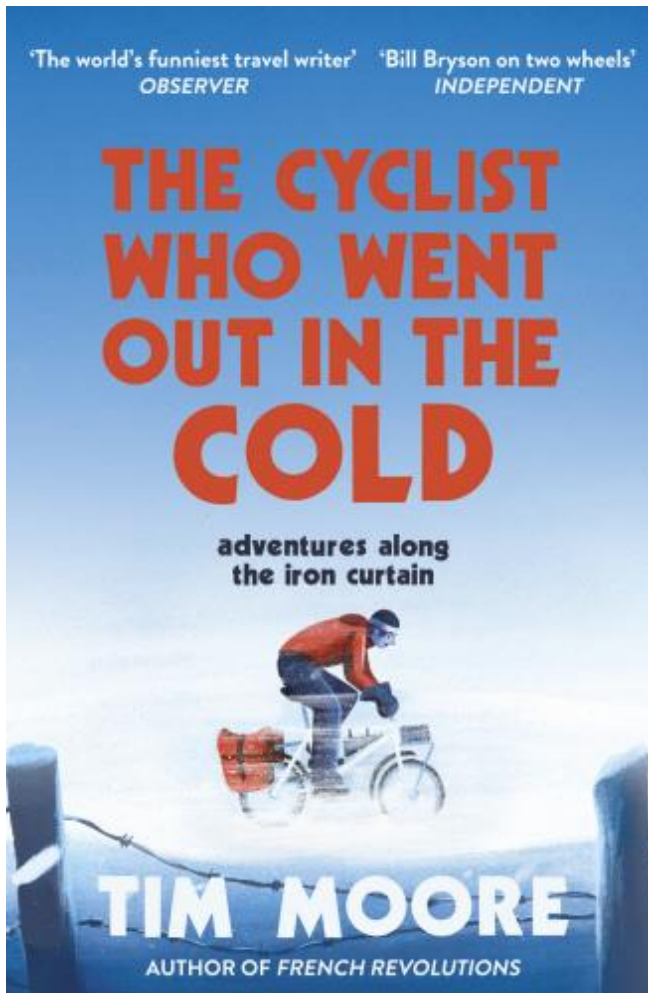
Not content with simply riding EV 13 Tim Moore chooses to do so on a 'period piece' – an East German shopping bike made in the 'eighties: a 'MIFA 900'. Around 3 million of these were made – think bike equivalent of a Trabant car. They were cheap and cheerful, sold in communist countries from Cuba to Vietnam, most especially in Eastern Europe. They were basic – usually just one 'spoon brake', that pushed down on the top of the front wheel, single speed, small wheels. Fine for nipping down to the shops in Leipzig for brot, milch unt zigaretten as long as you lived in Leipzig. And the shop was just around the corner.

Less good, perhaps, for riding 5,000+ miles through 20 countries on roads of variable quality. The author does cheat a little, opting for the luxury of a model with TWO gears, plus cheap caliper brakes, and he bolts a strut on to strengthen the frame.



Tim chooses to start at the 'top end' of the Iron Curtain, in Finland, in March.

He has a good way with words, describing for instance his fitting of spiky 'snow tyres' to the bike he says *"Fitting them required the motor-cycle gauntlets I had last worn 25 years ago whilst encouraging a fast and furious cat into his travel basket. Shod in these rotary maces, my MIFA exuded an improbable whiff of aggression, the sort of thing Mad Max's auntie might've ridden to the bingo"*.



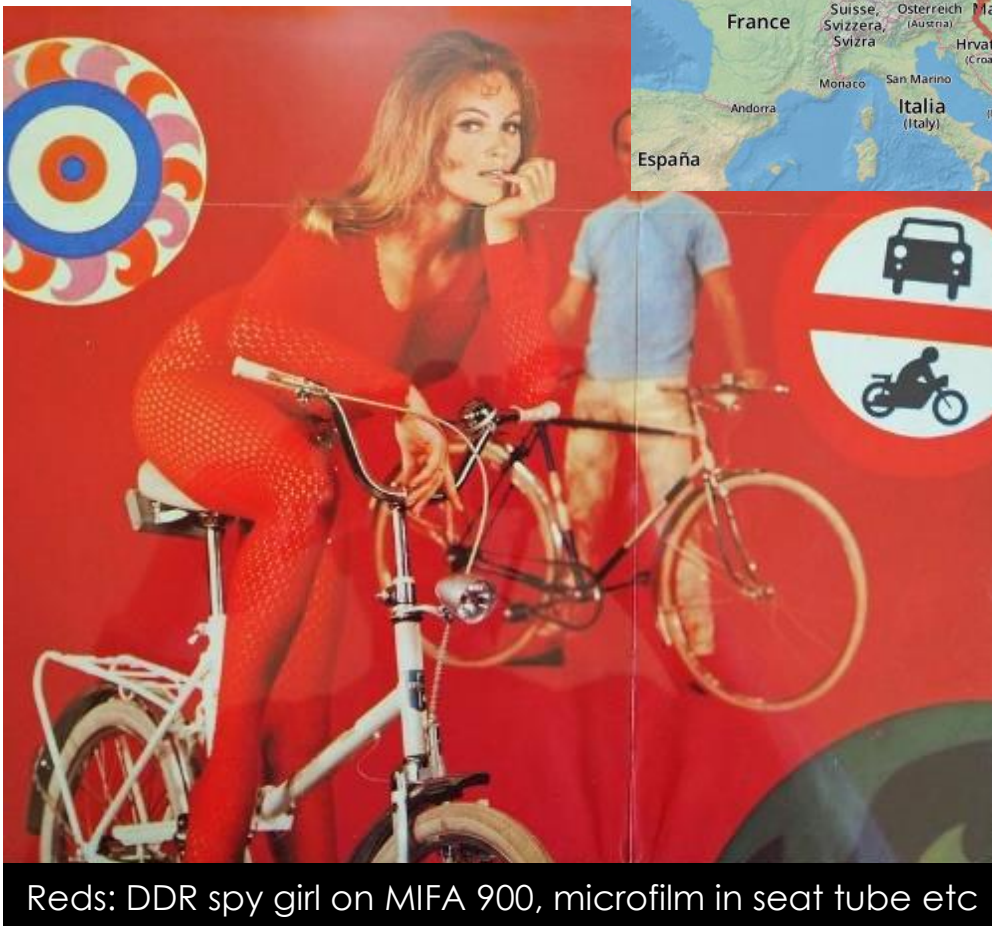
By March, the worst of the Finnish winter is normally over. Not in 2015 ... it was spectacularly cold. Roads were just ice and snow . . . for mile after mile . . . temperatures down to minus 22C. Slipping, sliding, Tim rode his shopping bike day after day after day ... on the first he averaged 5 miles per hour. That improved. A little. A thousand Finnish miles, characterised by exhaustion, terror (will I reach somewhere to sleep? find something to eat? or die out here!). And boredom. And cold reindeer burgers as fuel staple. A bad time was had of mending a puncture, as you can imagine. Russia also scary; roads in a terrible state, traffic feeling like it wants to kill you. The Baltic states are varied – he'd visited them in 1990, along with other ex-communist states, and the differences between then and now are sometimes great, often not. Soviet economic stagnation and 'foreign policy' took a terrible toll.

Travelling the 'internal border' that was the East-West German line leads him to visit the factory where his MIFA was made, still located on 33 Juri Gagarin Strasse in Sangerhausen, Saxony. They offer him the chance to ride away on an all-new 15-gear modern MIFA . . . they were missing the point. Czech lands are ridden, Austrian Danubian cycle paths, Hungary, Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Turkey. By now he is seriously fit, deeply tanned, and a stone lighter.

The journey was filled with surprises; bad ones when it came to officialdom, but also good: the warmth of humanity – *"I learnt to ask for more chips in Serbo-Croat, from a barman who went outside to look at my MIFA, then gave me a pat on the back and a beer on the house"*. And his MIFA 900 stood up the test - not once did it break down, and he only had that one puncture, back in Finland when he had his spiky snow tyres on.

The book contains many thoughtful musings on what it was like growing up in Cold War times, the fear we all lived with – in the mid-80's nearly half of UK adults indicated that they were resigned to a nuclear war within the next ten years - and how the mentality and outlook of peoples on both side of the Iron Curtain were conditioned by that fear, anxiety, and suspicion of 'the other'.

The author finally reaches the Black Sea, paddles in the water, and whilst there is great satisfaction on reaching the end point, he feels sadness that this journey of 8,558km is over – for three months his life had had such a heightened sense of purpose, with distinct challenges and rich colour (though just white and dark green in Finland). And you also feel sad because the book has been a great read that has filled you with admiration at resilience in the face of adversity, been interesting in its observations on modern European history, and has made you laugh too.



Reds: DDR spy girl on MIFA 900, microfilm in seat tube etc

Sarah Murray and Brigid Night; a new Women's Tandem 24 Hour record of 356.9 miles

After Brigid had got in touch a few days after this year's Mersey Roads 24 asking if I'd like some background on her and Sarah's participation in the 24 Hour, to which I of course said yes, she filled me in with some more information on the pair of them, and how their record-breaking ride had gone:

"We had such a fun time on our training rides, we pretty much chatted and laughed continuously on these ,and so the 24 was just like we'd been doing all along together. Because we didn't know each other very well at all before February, a lot of what we chatted about initially was background on ourselves to share with each other; our personal histories, filling each other in on sporting background, relationships, holidays and families. Another favourite is the telling of the epic sporting achievements that the people we know are planning or have achieved. Of course we did spend a lot of the training rides discussing the forthcoming 24 Hour, planning our approach, especially what food would work, and how we'd manage to get through the night. Our plans were subject to a lot of revision; with us being in the habit of chatting this was not a problem. We continued to chat about our plans, various tried and tested food options and the programme of entertainment that our brilliant support team had planned. The highlights of these included: Midnight "feast" of homemade chicken soup; Cabaret to keep the spirits high at 4am and the Breakfast treat...bacon butties. Then there's the great sporting memories to share that have been triggered by the places we pass or the cycling legends we see on other support teams like Christina Murray and Graham Man. We probably laughed most at the stories we shared about our most embarrassing moments ;-). Then there are the stories of danger and fear which of course also, for some reason, make you laugh a lot at. I don't know quite how a distant memory of having a very large boa constrictor wrapped round my neck came into my recollection but it did make us laugh a lot. I suppose knowing you obviously have survived makes this not in bad taste.

We both live in Snowdonia, so we always have plenty to share about the beauty of this and nature generally makes plenty to talk about. Riding Snowdonia's gradients during our training sessions also prepared us well for the endless "Battlefields". During the 24 Hour, we also enjoyed the beauty of the day and night.

We did, of course, each have times when we both felt absolutely dreadful but thankfully these didn't happen at the same time. I'd say I was bad for a couple of hours from 6am till 8am. I felt so sick. Luckily the bacon butty David earlier on in the afternoon and early evening whilst on the Quina Brook circuit. There was also the issue of my legs suffering with the route being Battlefield, a short break from Battlefield and then 12 hours more of Battlefield. This was especially tough with over 1000 feet of climbing with every Battlefield leg. Our tandem is like a tank and weighs nearly 25KG so we were really slowed by the

climbing despite being well prepared for hills after all those Snowdonia hills. However cycling in tandem is so good - however tough it is there is absolutely no way you are not going to push through it, there's no way you'll let the team down”.

Sarah's also replied to the question “what were the tough times?” -

“I had been really focused on making sure that I fuelled properly, as I knew that being under-fuelled was often one of the biggest downfalls when taking part in endurance events. So I had a good dinner the evening before, a decent breakfast and then an early lunch. Once we started pedalling, I was having yummy snacks every half hour, chorizo pies, pizza, chocolate brownies... This all resulted in me being significantly over-stuffed! Being folded over on the tri-bars was distinctly uncomfortable, and I knew I had another 20 hours to go! Luckily not eating for a good couple of hours put me back on track! 😊 And after that, coping with tired legs didn't seem so bad!”

Brigid mentions the challenge of hauling a tandem up hills, something I know very well – as I said to her in an email tandem riding is something I have done much of, mostly with my daughter as it was how I got her from A to B, firstly on an adult-front-child-back tandem then full-size tandem. There was also holiday tandem-riding with partner Emma, who has now sadly passed away, on hilly Cornish roads, diving down to a seaside cove then hauling ourselves up the other side. Pubs were visited; crisps, beer and games of cribbage. The child-back machine was resurrected when my granddaughter (who, blimey, is now 17 !) was of an age, for getting her to and from school, swimming, and host of other things together with a couple of holidays in Brittany.

My child-back tandem was made in 1989, by a chap called Chris Barretto of Plymouth – the front half was derived from a Raleigh Maverick MTB, the rear section from a BMX. BB shells to allow the 'eccentrics' were installed, plus lots of lovely braze-ons for racks, mudguards, gear mechs etc, and all nicely sprayed by Argos Cycles in Bristol, it was top notch.



The Barretto-frame child-back tandem. And Natalie.

I lost touch with the Barretto's in the early '90's when I had to quit racing.

More tandem stuff – whilst I am, on this day Tuesday 17th September, putting what I believe/hope to be the final words to this Journal, Brigid Night's tandem-mate at the Vive Le Velo 12hr, Hannah Fawcett, is at this moment just north of Aviemore. Hannah, with Ede Harrison, both of Liverpool Braveheart CC set off from Land's End at 6am on Sunday the 15th. The weather has been set fair, and although they might've liked a strong SW wind, it is calm, high pressure and mainly a lightweight tailwind. A strong SW wind so often brings with it Atlantic weather i.e. heavy rain. They might even arrive at John o'Groats without getting wet once. They are on course to set a record time for women's tandem for the End-to-End. They are then hoping to press on and establish a 1000 mile record for the category. They look to be going steadily.

Having recently become an RRA 'checker', late morning on Sunday I pedalled off to the A30 roundabout near Exeter to observe Hannah and Ede ride past – annoyingly I could not get a decent view or photo of them as a car was in the way, but they looked cheery and said something to me whilst I shouted “Good Luck Women!”. All I got in the way of a photo was of them riding away from me.



Hannah & Ede near Ide: Sensible Jerseys

Another chap was at the same roundabout, clearly looking out for them too, so we got to chatting – he was up from Plymouth, having done some RRA 'Checking' earlier in their ride. Eventually I asked him his name . . .

“Chris Barretto” he told me. Heck ! What are the chances etc.

“What !” said I, “You're the one who made me a child-back tandem frame for me !”.

It might even have been the first time I had seen him since he made it, certainly it was the first time I'd seen him for over thirty years! Then, as you do, we chatted about bikes, local riders, races, of old and of now. A lovely and a fitting encounter for the tandem-centric occasion.

Twice Round the Clock // Mersey Roads 2024

Andrew Walsh, of Audax UK, who rode his first 24 Hour this year, has been mentioned already in this journal. Andy had gotten in touch with me before the race, and subsequently, as he said he would, he wrote an account of his Mersey Roads 24 Hour on his website, you can find the relevant page at <https://diagonaliste.com/merseyroads2024/>, which is extensive and worth visiting. There isn't space to include his whole piece, but to give you a taste here are his writings on the beginning and the end of his ride -

My primary target was simple and that was to start and finish the race. A lot can happen before you even get to the start line, and once there the race is tough, and you have to finish it to get a result. So finishing the race was my main goal.

The Veteran's Time Trial Association (VTTA) Standard distance for a 45 year old male was 359.72 miles, so here was my first distance target.

My unspoken target was 400 miles, and I think this went back to a conversation I'd had with Jim a couple of years ago where a 400 was something that I could potentially aspire to.

As expected, I didn't sleep particularly well on the Friday night, but I enjoyed lying down and closing my eyes as I knew it would be a while before I could do that once again. Breakfast was a large helping of porridge with sultanas, toast, fruit and coffee. We chatted together some more and got showered and before long we were completely packed up and ready to go. Leaving Jim's around 10:45 we drove up to the race HQ in Farndon via one of the main legs of the course (Battlefield to Prees Heath) and we could already see teams of supporters setting up their support camps. I was nervous and excited.

I arrived at the start line with 3 mins in hand and just caught the end of Amy Hudson (rider #48 & Amy Cycling Adventures) filming a piece for her social media stuff. Brief hellos with her, with Pete Bishop of the 24Hr Fellowship, with John Gallagher from Crewe Clarion and with Edwin Hargreaves (chief timekeeper) and then I was being counted down. 5, 4, 3, 2, 1... GO!

Start Line to Prees Heath

I started off easy for the first couple of left turns but once on the main road I opened up to cruising speeds and tried to stay on it. The road was a "heavy road" meaning it wasn't a great road surface and was pitted and pot-holed in several places. For the rises in the road I ensured my cadence was kept >90rpm so as not to work the leg muscles excessively in the early parts of the race. I was overly excited and had to have a word with myself to keep a lid on things and just ease back a touch, but it was great to finally be riding.

Andy then goes on to describe his experience of the many Battlefield legs both on the Saturday afternoon and the night circuit (including his crashing at Hadnall around 8am), plus of course an evening on the Quina Brook circuit.



Moving to the finishing circuit

As I approached Prees Heath roundabout for the last time a number of support teams were almost all packed up and some had already headed off to the finishing circuit. I recall John Gallagher holding a can of coke out for me to grab, but I declined to take it, not wanting the gas or the litter to deal with. Very kind of John though. Heading off to the finishing circuit the road surface was terrible and the road had a fair amount of uphill throughout. I was slowing quite a bit in this section and the road surface was getting to me. The desire to get to the finishing circuit was enormous and finally after around 14 miles I got onto it.

The boys had positioned themselves just past Time Keeper #1 (TK#1) and as soon as I saw them I pulled in for a brief stop, took on new bottles and more gels. I had 32 miles left to get to 400 miles and I had around 2 hours left until my time was up. So, I knew I had 4 laps (8.18 miles per lap) at 16s to do and then to get past TK#1 again to get the 400 miles. The race was certainly on and I had to get the job done. My arse and neck were now in agony and holding my head up with my grip on the aero bars was really challenging. I could put the saddle discomfort to one side but the neck difficulty was something else and I had previous with this kind of muscle agony (see PBP 2019). I had to choose when to use the aero bars and I saved this for the windiest parts of the course which seemed to be in between TK#2 and TK#3 up and down the dual carriageway of the most northerly part of the circuit. At other times I would be on the drops, the hoods or in extreme cases the elbow pads. I was ignoring the pain in my legs and just pushing as hard as I could.

The next time I passed the boys I could see that Jim's wife Rose, had joined the support team. This was so nice and I could see her giving it welly with her support for me, as were Jim & Roffey. The laps continued and I saw Mike Broadwith and Christina Murray in between TK#1 and TK#2 offering encouragement for all and support for Michael Hutchinson. Adam Wild's crew were also positioned around there too. Also along this piece of the circuit I saw members from Crewe Clarion dressed up as dancers and koala bears playing kazoos!

The finishing circuit was uninspiring, but varied. Overall, it seemed very windy and made me glad that I had my skin suit on. On my last lap I could see Jim, Rose and Roffey all going crazy shouting me on to keep going and get as far as I could. This was emotional and I loved seeing their encouragement for me. I continued to push as much as I could. I passed TK#1 for the 4th time indicating to me that I'd made the 400 mile mark... I kept pushing on as far as I could and got to TK#2 a minute or so before 13:47 (my start time) and so I had to keep pushing to TK#3 to ensure my 24 Hours had elapsed.

As soon as I shouted my number at TK#3 I was told I could finish, and with utter relief I pulled into the lay-by just beyond the time keeper. Roffey was already there with a chair set out for me which I gladly sunk into. I took my helmet off and sweat immediately started pouring into my eyes. Roffey got me a couple of cold sponges and I wiped my face with them which was extremely refreshing. The satisfaction of finishing was immense and Roffey reported that my Garmin had 652.44Km on it (405.49 miles). I knew this would come down a bit because I had to ride on further past my 24 Hours to TK#3 to be able to stop, but the realisation that I'd ridden over 400 miles was beginning to sink in. Jim and Rose arrived shortly after and were very pleased for me and full of hugs and handshakes. I was so very pleased with what I'd been able to do.

As I say, well worth visiting Andrew's bloggy-piece on his 24 hr, which can be found at <https://diagonaliste.com/merseyroads2024/> or put *walsh mersey roads twice* into your internet search and you'll find it.

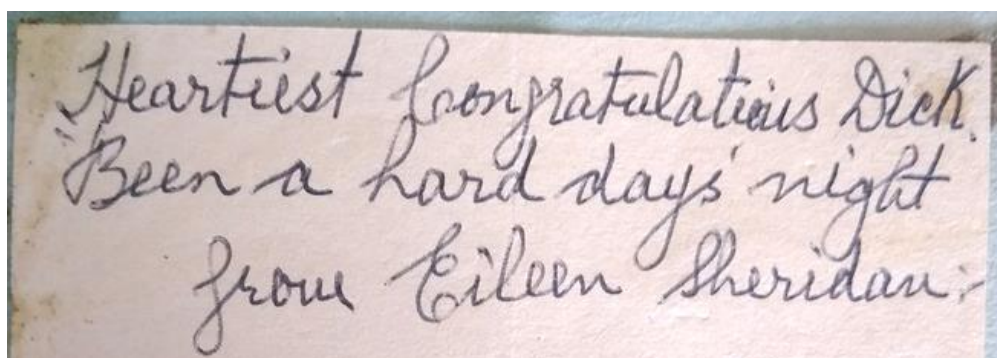
Editor's Endnote

So there we have it, Fellowship Journal 130. I hope it's been okay – being at the 2024 24hr in a non-riding capacity gave me LOTS to write about, I hope I haven't overdone the reporting there. You can imagine what it's like, you have the observations, the notes you make, the anecdotes, the humorous asides, and deleting them from the text is like drowning kittens, or like when you've planted your tomato seeds early spring, ended up with too many tomato plants, have given away as many as you can to friends, but others just have to go on the compost heap. Murdered.

Thank you to all of you who got in touch after Journal 129 went out:

Dick Poole sent me a piece about fellow 24 Hour rider and Dick's regular support person Andy Burnet, which will appear in the next Journal. Sadly, Dick also writes that his knees are now 'completely shattered' and that short walks are okay, but anything more than fifteen minutes is just too much. He wonders if it's all those cycling miles that may've affected them perhaps. Dick was of course the first rider to ride the end-to-end in less than 2 days, which he did in

1965. There's a decent piece about him to be found, including a good account of his ride, on Wikipedia if you search *Dick Poole cyclist wikipedia*



After his end-to-end, in 1 day 23hours 46 minutes and 35 seconds, Eileen Sheridan dropped Dick a line . . .

I was also contacted by Jon Shubert. He emailed me the text of a book he'd written (at present awaits publication) telling of his winning ride in the 2014 National 24hr down in Sussex and of the Central Asia and USA sections of his round-the-world ride that preceded that win. It makes for very good reading, so something from that will feature in the next issue. Thank you Jon.

Awesome time-triallist and previous Journal editor Ian Dow got in touch via email, with generous words regarding Journal 129. Ian did his degree and then his Ph.D at Exeter University in the same building as I worked back in the early 1980's (I went straight from school to working full time; too dim and un-self-disciplined for further education). In our exchange we found there were people we knew in common, from the University and Exeter Wheelers.

John Gills also dropped me a line, to say:

Dear Pete,

I joined the Fellowship in 1965 and rode a few of the 24 Hour events over the next few years and also helped club mates in various all-day races.

I was really pleased when Journal 129 arrived as I had wondered when John Taylor passed away if that was the Fellowship's death knell.

It was interesting to read Brian Griffiths memories of his Aberystwyth adventures, I went on most of these weekends, along with ones at Thorpe Cloud near Ashbourne and the Dorset ones held at the Museum Pub in Farnham, 'mine host' Owen Way being a member of Wessex RC. I called there a few years ago only to find it had gone really 'up market' judging by the cars in the car park, and the stables which we used to use as a bike shelter have been converted to en suite accommodation.

Very Best Wishes in the Editor's Hot Seat,
Yours in cycling
John Gills



Eric Tremaine (left), a previous holder of the end-to-end trike record and still the 24 Hour TT trike record holder (457.89 miles set in **1972**!), now lives in Canada. A copy of Journal no. 129 had crossed the Atlantic to Eric's home in Longueuil Quebec. Eric has emailed me a document with some nice pictures and words of his racing days, so that'll be in the next issue too.

"Hello Pete, I was pleasantly surprised when journal 129 popped into my letter box. Congratulations on your first edition. I appreciate the hard copy, preferable to online electronic versions. I enjoyed reading it after my second outdoors cycle ride of this year. I am still interested in 24's, although a lot has changed since I was competing. I left the scene in 1984. I hope you are successful in getting contributors for future editions.

Robin Johnson also sent an email, saying how pleased he was to see the Journal continuing, as did Phil Ashbourn, Roger Sewell and Martin & Alison Purser, so thank you all for your kind words and encouragement.

As I am writing this, Hannah Fawcett and Ede Harrison have just arrived at John o'Groats = c. 2 days 18 hours 51 minutes, setting a record for Women's Tandem End-to-End. I stayed up late, watching their progress via their online tracking webpage, as they neared their destination and then arrived. They paused with 3 miles or so to go, for five minutes or so, which had me wondering . . . I later learnt from Brigid Night was because:

"...The last 10 miles had loads of potholes and they stopped at the view point three miles from the finish so that they were safe to make the final decent.

Support team John did try to suggest they could continue to do the 1000 after a rest but they both agreed that was enough for this time!"

It was so exciting, what a massive achievement."

All being well there will be a full report of their ride in the next Journal.

Remember that the Journal can only survive if there are articles incoming – content needed for Journal 131 which'll be out in Spring 2025, all being well.

My email address is P.Bishop@exeter.ac.uk

It's now a few days later, and I've just come back from helping at our (Exeter Wheelers CC) Open Hill Climb. This was won by the current (2023 – 2024) National Hill Climb Champion, Andrew Feather. Nice for us that Andrew was there again, as he is an ex-member of our club, living in Exeter for a number of years, during which time, in Exeter Wheeler's colours, he made it up to 'Elite' category in UK road racing, no mean feat.

Also there today was Tim McEvoy, who DNF'd in the 24 hr this year, so I was able to ask him what led to him abandoning at that event: *“Digestion – I started to struggle during the Saturday evening, finding it hard to eat. I kept going, hoping that things would settle down, but they didn't, and after about 14 hours I decided to stop as I couldn't see me getting through this. In retrospect, maybe I could've had a break of two, three or even four hours, then got back on, as I wouldn't have to have done a lot more miles to have enabled our team (FTP) to get the team prize, but there you go, you do what makes sense at the time, and it didn't seem sensible to continue in any way”*

Interesting talking with Andrew Feather after the race. Knowing that he no longer takes part in road races, I asked him what he does out of the (short) hill climb season to maintain fitness – *“Not a lot, to be honest ! I allow myself to put on some weight over the winter and early part of the year, then over the summer get my weight back down, which I don't find hard. Hill climbs suit me as I don't have to do those long rides, I can just do short intense training sessions, lots of interval training”*.

It was a very wet hill climb, a river of water running down Stoke Woods Hill, riders very sodden - one rider said to me *“my cycling shoes now weigh more than my wheels”* !

So, to finish off – please remember that the Journal can only survive if there are articles incoming – **content needed for Journal 131** which'll be out in Spring 2025, all being well.

A couple further (important) reminders:

1. If you are needing to pay your subs then see inside front cover for how to. Please remain a member, or if you are reading this and are not a member please join us ! A tenner a year, bargain.

2. The 24 Hour Fellowship's AGM will be held at 11am, Saturday 2nd November at Hilton Village Hall, Derbyshire DE65 5GH. All members are invited to attend.

As per the highlit text in the Minutes of the 24 Hour Fellowship in this edition, the committee is wondering if the location of the AGM should be varied so that members who live further from Derbyshire might be encouraged to attend. Suggestions please !

Best wishes to you all, good health and good cycling,

Pete Bishop

Oh and my Italian language anecdote...

A few years ago I rode the length of Italy, on my lovely China blue Cinelli 'Supercorsa' steel bike. Before going I took the time to learn a fair bit of Italian, which came in very handy as I avoided big cities when there, and out in the countryside not many people spoke English.

With my smattering of Italian, I could for instance, tell someone "*la mia bici é bellissima, lei é Italiana*" = "*my bike is very beautiful, it is Italian*" ...

'Bici' is short for 'bicicletta' in the same way as 'bike' is short for 'bicycle' in English. The 'ci' in Italian is pronounced as we would pronounce 'ch' as in church.

However, saying 'bici' and allowing the 'ci' to sound too soft, so more like *bee-shee* than *bee-chee*, changes the meaning of the word this I learnt when re-using this phrase in conversation with an Italian chap back in England, who then, smilingly, informed me that in saying 'bee-shee' rather than 'bee-chee' I was **not** in fact informing people that "*my bike is very beautiful, it is Italian*". I was instead informing them that '*My willy is very beautiful, it is Italian*'. Oops.