

**KINGSTON  
WHEELERS**

**THE Hub**

[www.kingstonwheelers.com](http://www.kingstonwheelers.com) **OCT 2006**



**European special**  
**Mountain Madness**

**L'Etape suffering!**  
**Race reports - big wins!**

**WINS  
& PBs**

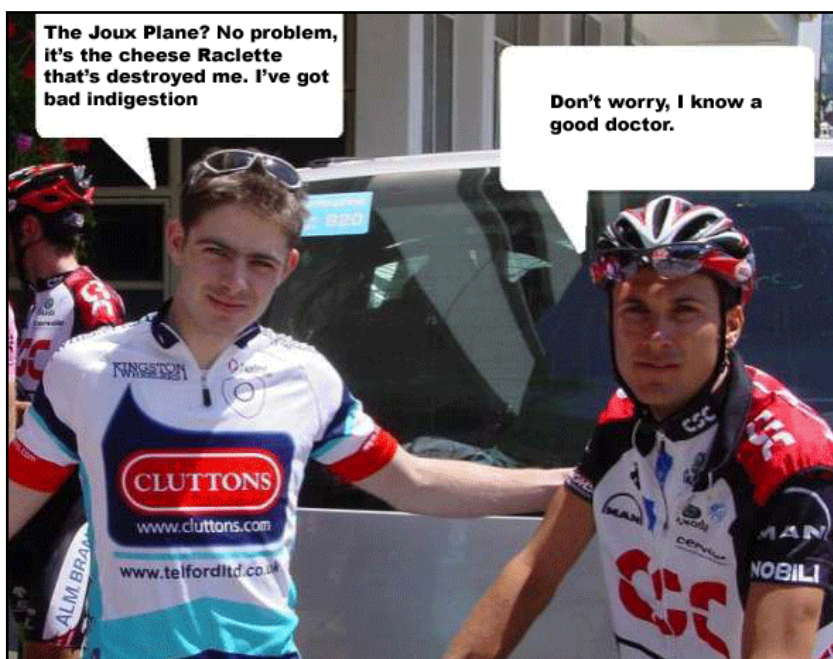
**BYE, BYE 2006**

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**THE Hub**

**Editor:  
Narayan Peralta**

**Design / Build:  
Andrew Harvey**

## What's left?

**Fri 27th October**  
Club Curry Night

**Sat 11th - Mon 13th**  
**November**  
Munich 6, Germany

**Sun 3rd December**  
Annual lunch and prize presentation

## Contacts

**Club run**  
Mike Hughes  
020 8399 8366  
Mark Briers  
020 8549 5838

**Sporting 14**  
Peter Anderson  
020 8979 6435

**Curry Night**  
Richard Williamson  
020 8398 0333

**Club Kit**  
James "Mackers" McVey  
07775 942501

**Surrey League Racing**  
James Beaumont  
07811 338844

**Subs/Membership**  
Dave Wylie 020 8542 6095

**Press/Publicity**  
Narayan Peralta 07811 408562

“The weather was atrocious. Heavy rain & strong winds made the going tough, the cobbles slippery.”



APR

## Tour of Flanders

**On the weekend of 31 March to 2 April, 10 club members made the annual trip to Flanders in Belgium to take part in the Tour of Flanders randonnee on Saturday (and to watch the pros do it properly on Sunday!).**

The Tour of Flanders randonnee is 140km long (though a few

hardened fools attempt the full length 258km parcours), which together with the 10 miles ride to the start and back adds up to a whopping 110 mile day. It features all 17 climbs in the pro race, half cobbled and half tarmac, including the famous Koppenberg (22%) and Muur (20%) ascents. There are also numerous flat cobbled sections and one down-

hill cobbled section (ouch!).

On the day itself the weather was atrocious for the first 2 or so hours, with heavy rain and strong winds making the going tough and the cobbles slippery. It cleared up in the afternoon with bright sunshine, though conditions were still a bit treacherous and it took a couple of hours of riding to fully dry out (my shoes

still smell from that weekend - Ed!). All club members made it round the course in one piece, particular mention should go to Russell Seekins, Keith Aldred and John Reay who tackled the course for the first time. From personal experience the combination of cobbles, thousands of mad belgians, getting overtaken by riders on shopping bikes shouting Flemish obscenities and a slightly fuzzy head from the local brews the evening before always ensure that the randonnee is a bit of a shock to the system the first time round.

Andrew "Harv van Harvegem" was slightly subdued in the evening as conditions ensured that he didn't make it up the Koppenberg, a first for the Wheelers cobble-meister. Those of you who watched the race on Eurosport would have seen most of the peloton following suit on Sunday, with numerous riders getting off and pushing their bikes up the climb. How we enjoyed that! Rather predictably, Tom Boonen of Quickstep won the pro race in a one-sided sprint finish. From our vantage point



on the Muur in Geraardsbergen, we also saw the women's pro race featuring Nicole Cooke and also a couple of junior races. We also had a surprise time-traveling visit from Eddy Merckx who rode up the Muur. Those of

you wanting to find out why so many aspiring pros are encouraged to go and race in Belgium should come along in 2007 and experience cycling there for themselves.

NARAYAN PERALTA

## Münich 6

James "Mackers" McVey and five other club members head for the Munich Six Day Racing on the weekend of 11-13 November.

Usually it's the Ghent Six but Will Meers has probably been barred from the velodrome. Look out for the slightly edited report in the next Hub!



**It was 3.30 am when we left Long Ditton to meet up with the 50 other members of the party at Gatwick for the annual sojourn to the Hotel Uyall in Pollensa.**

Although an early start to catch the 6.00am flight it did mean we arrived early and had time to put the bikes together and have a good afternoon ride to Formentera. Its nearly always windy and usually mountainous as the first afternoon reminded us.

This year there was only Dave and Glynis and myself and Jenny from the Wheelers joining riders from Sigma sport, Evans, Kingston Phoenix, Festival, SWRC and the Clarencourt to name a few. The riders were divided into smaller groups from an ability and safety point of

view. For our sins, Dave and I found ourselves in the A group which included the likes of Gary Dodd who rides for Sigma at elite level and Dominic Harrison who rides for Evans.

On the Tuesday we left the hotel sharp at 9.30 and headed for the Puig Major climb, then Soller and the Orient, this was a very hard mountainous 90 mile ride which took nearly six hours. Our group began to split on the first climb and Gary Dodd was in a class of his own. We regrouped at Soller for a brief lunch stop by the harbour which was relaxing before the climb back out of Soller via the Orient and back to Pollensa for late afternoon. After the usual shower and drinking plenty of recovery drink it was time for a quick siesta. At 19.30 we would meet in the bar most nights for a San

Miguel or two (no Leffes out here, and I did look hard!) and recount the day's activities with the various groups, both cyclists and walkers. We were on the second sitting for dinner at 20.15 and we tended to be in the restaurant very fast as we were always hungry. The restaurant is buffet style and the food is very good generally and you can eat as much as you wish, however it is important to balance your intake as you will easily come back over weight. This is the first year I have lost weight, but it was a fine balance to ensure you ate the right amount.

This year I took Wednesday as a rest day as I have found previously I get very tired towards the end of the week and it wrecks me for the few weeks following the return to the UK. Jenny and I walked into the old town of Alcudia which is a walled city and had lunch in a courtyard restaurant which was excellent, it was great taking a relaxing day off the bike.

On the Thursday I decided to go for a ride on my own and as I had never conquered the Collobra before, due to a broken collarbone/viruses etc. I decided this was my day to do it. Whilst getting the bike ready I met Gary Dodd who was going out on his own but I tactfully suggested we went our own ways as I probably would have lasted until the first climb at his pace. I set off up the Puig Mayor climb to the Luc monastery and on to the viaduct where you branch off to descend the Collobra. I stopped briefly



“it was where they filmed the movie Sinbad the Sailor due to the spectacular unusual scenery”

to check the weather as it was a rather grey day and it had been raining earlier, however I decided to take the plunge and begin the descent, it is absolutely breath taking I do not remember how many hairpin bends there were, but it must have been thirty or forty. As I was reaching the bottom Gary Dodd came up behind me and we had lunch together in a café overlooking the sea, it was very relaxing, until it dawned on me I was about to start the ascent with the strongest rider in our party. I suggested we ride at our own pace, which was a good job because after 1/2 mile he had gone. It must have taken me forty minutes or so to complete the climb but it was worth it. Apparently it was where they filmed the movie Sinbad the Sailor many years ago due to the spectacular unusual scenery. Once you reach the viaduct it's basically a long descent nearly all the way to Pollensa. Another great day's cycling clocking sixty two miles most of it climbing or descending.

Friday was the official rest day for everybody so a group of us went to Palma by bus, unfortunately I had a migraine all day and did not fully appreciate what a nice city it is. It is definitely worth a visit, even for a week-end break.

Saturday was back on the bike again going to Valdemosa, Deia and up the Puig Major from the Soller side. This ride is very mountainous but the scenery is absolutely stunning along the coast line to Deia. We stopped at the village shop in Deia and bought some baguettes and a few local cakes and devoured these in the bus shelter and took in the atmosphere (Richard I thought you didn't do "shopping"? - Ed!). If I lived anywhere else I think Deia would be the place, but I suspect very, very expensive. Dave, Tony from the SWRC and I decided to set off for the awesome Puig Major climb before the others to have a steady ride at a good vets pace. We managed it in just under the hour and it was hard, particular-

ly on the lower back. Dominic did it in 48 minutes and Gary in 43 minutes. Once at the top its mainly descending all the way back to the hotel. We clocked up 93 miles that day and devoured the buffet in the evening.

Sunday was our last day so we had a flat 57 mile ride to Petra which is an attractive town with a village square where hundreds of cyclists congregate for a spot of lunch and to soak up the sun. The afternoon was spent packing the bikes ready for the early departure on the Monday. That evening some of us went out with Gary Smith and his wife for an excellent local meal around the bay from the hotel, it was very reasonable and the food and service was spot on.

It was a fantastic week and I would recommend it to any one who likes cycling or walking in a warmer climate at the end of April. So come on you Wheelers join us in 2007, Gary will be taking bookings in October time, so I will keep you posted.

RICHARD WILLIAMSON

## Why join the Kingston Wheelers?

- A £30 sized hole in your bank account, every year
- A well organised year-round weekly club run
- Get to know all the lanes (and cafes - Ed!) in Surrey
- Weekly club nights and "First Monday" event nights
- Trips to the Etape, Marmotte, Flanders and Mallorca
- Annual drinking weekend with "drunken-will" at a velodrome somewhere in Europe
- Tech tips from Crazy Larry (7 bikes and counting!)
- Riding buddies in Richmond Park
- Winter MTB rides

...and much much more



“The first climb took us up to the Mont Selev cable car station looking down on Geneva at 1100m”



## Touring around Lake Annecy

MAY

**Club members Keith Aldred (K2), Keith Shepherd (K1), Dave Irving, John Reay and friend Mike Smith flew to Geneva in May for 5 days.**

The airport has a convenient left luggage for 5 euros a day; vital for storing the bike boxes.

Assembling the bikes on the airport concourse provided the usual amusement for fellow travellers.

I thought the on-line weather reports looked good but others were not so sure. It certainly

looked promising but you never know once you are in the mountains.

Dave had taken some good natured stick over his Garmin GPS on the club runs but once we were free of the airport environs he led us faultlessly through housing estates, car parks and along cycle tracks to the French border. We stopped to stock up on bananas in the town centre market and had our first experience of cycling between trams down the middle of the road; slightly unnerving.

The first climb took us up to

the Mont Selev cable car station looking down on Geneva at 1100 metres.

A quick look at the view and continued to gain height along the ridge up to 1360m and lunch at a restaurant looking down at Lake Geneva

The first descent of the tour took us down to Le Cruseilles (800m). John and myself had reached the bottom without Dave which was unusual as the Roberts Descent Team stick pretty close together, whereas K1 and Mike like to take in the scenery. After 10 minutes we

“We were beginning to panic until we found a bar open in Ugine before the final few km”

were hoping it was a puncture and nothing more serious. A phone call confirmed a puncture at the top for K1.

Down to Groisy at 550m and then up, with Mont Blanc in the distance. The route followed undulating countryside and down to Menthon St Bernard near the lake. Our rather quirky accommodation proved to be a 20 minutes walk to the nearest village with some restaurants and the first couple of those were closed already: you always risk missing out in provincial France if you leave it too late. We finally found a pizzeria and ate outside.



Metres climbed 1428m

Day 2: Up for 8.30 breakfast and away to Talloires and down to the lakeside. If Dave had had his way we would be climbing up to 1100m but he was outvoted and we followed the lake and then a great cycle track to Faverges.

There was going to be plenty of climbing and I think Dave was

thanking us later on the trip.

It was a Thursday and the place was swarming with cyclists: didn't they have jobs to go to? We had avoided the climbing for long enough and started the grind up to the Col du Marais at 843m We stopped in a small village to replenish our bidons in the fountain and purchase a beer from the local shop. We then twigged that it was Ascension

Day and the start of a 4 day holiday and the fantastic weather had everyone out on their bikes.

Losing some height towards Thones we turned off onto a nice b road and started climbing towards the Col de Aravis via Manigod. Unfortunately I wasn't enjoying it that much

as my back was playing up and I had to dismount a couple of times for a stretch. The others were out of sight and I finally rounded a bend to see David waiting with his camera to capture my suffering.

It was lunch where we re-joined the main road between Le Clusaz and the Col de Aravis and hopefully I would feel better after some food and a stretch.

Another 4km took us up to the Col at 1486mts. and as we were taking a few pics and putting on jackets for the descent about a dozen Dulwich Paragons bowled out of the restaurant. A quick greeting and we were off in different directions.



“Stopped for a beer at the Refuge du plan de Laie where Armstrong’s name was still on the tarmac”



We followed the Gorge de l’Aronidine down to Flumet. We were going to follow the main road to Ugine but it was closed and so we climbed up to 800m again. We stopped to take the view and enjoyed the descent which made the uphill effort seem worthwhile. We were beginning to panic until we found a bar open in Ugine before the final few km. Coming into Albertville along the main road we had good directions to the hotel. Really nice situation just out of town with the snow covered mountains as a backdrop.

The patron didn’t look like he was expecting us but I could see our names in the book and they weren’t that busy. He let us keep our bikes in the breakfast room overnight.

We decided to eat in the hotel and went for a stroll after. The town looked a bit dead for a former winter Olympic venue.

Metres climbed 1912m

Day 3: Great! A buffet style breakfast and we could eat outside in the sun at 8.30.

Staying at the same hotel tonight meant we could leave the heavier items of luggage behind; not that we carry much. Dave, me and John manage with a handlebar bag. K1 and Mike use rack bags. We managed to persuade Mike to ditch the panniers a few trips ago!

A nice easy warm up through rolling countryside via Villard-sur-Duron to Beaufort at 844m for a coffee. We won’t mention Mike’s u-turn in the high street; the woman driver looked too shocked to sound her horn.

The Cormet de Roseland sign said ouvert; we hadn’t been too confident at this time of year.

There were very few other bikes around as we climbed above the snowline to the Col de Meraillet beside a lake. Took in the view for a minute, threw a snowball at Dave and we were off. I was struggling again before

lunch and only just managed to overhaul a couple of Germans on fully laden mountain bikes as the rest disappeared.

Stopped for a beer at the Refuge du plan de Laie (1830m) where Armstrong’s name was still on the tarmac from the 2002 Tour. I am sure the pass hadn’t been opened for long as the smell of newly linseeded decking was strong. A couple of kms of gentle climbing to the top. A German motorcyclist obliged for the picture in front of the sign.

The descent, initially long and sweeping (reached the tour top speed of 48mph) gave way

to 180 degree hairpins where we were held up by a Porsche Carrera 4! Stopped at Bourg St Maurice for lunch. John recommended the tarteflette, a local potato dish with cream and cheese. Lots of carbohydrate but possibly not the lightest of dishes for a day in the mountains. Bourg St Maurice for Lunch

We climbed up from 900m to 1230m with the valley road to



“K1, me and John managed a few breakaways for village sprints”



Aime below us.

Descended to Aime and back to Albertville via Moutiers stopping for an early evening beer where John, who knows a thing or two about wind from his sailing, lectured us on anabatic and katabatic winds going up and down valleys due to temperature differences. We were supposed to notice it down to Albertville, but it didn't seem too bad.

I noticed that the Col de Madelaine was still closed at just under 2000m so we were fortunate to get over the Roseland.

Our suspicions of the previous night were confirmed when having decided to eat in town we had problems finding a decent eatery. Having eaten finding a bar that was open proved beyond us; pretty poor for a Saturday night. Back to the hotel bar for a nightcap and a game of table football by moonlight.

Metres climbed 1912m

Day 4: Breakfast alfresco again. We travelled southwest out of town along the D201,

a lovely B road, to St. Pierre d'Albigny. K1, me and John managed a few breakaways for village sprints. K1 asked for a steward's enquiry as John let us think we were in St. Pierre d'Albigny when we were passing through hamlets before the main town. Still they all had red bordered signs and John had obviously been studying the map - Not There Yet!

Nice coffee at bottom of Col de Frene climb. I decided to go the drugs route and popped a couple of ibuprofen for the back. We agreed to regroup at around 690 metres and I had Dave in my sights. I sprinted past him and had enough time to whip the camera out for a shot of him suffering for a change. Carried on to the Col and watched most of the Sunday cyclists travelling in the opposite direction. Down to a village for lunch, can't remember the name. Tarteflette again - we never let a spot of hill climbing spoil a good lunch. Past Arith and up to Cret de Chatillon at 530m. Again we stopped half way to regroup and as we carried

out I remember Dave shouting out the altitude intervals from the GPS. John had disappeared as usual but the lunch had gone down and I felt OK. We stopped at the top overlooking Lake Annecy for a few beers and then descended down a fast newly surfaced road through the Forest du Cret du Marre.

The usual 5 minute wait by the Roberts descent team while Keith and Mike took in the scenery. Dave's satnav proved invaluable again as we picked our way through Annecy on a busy Saturday evening along the cycle path beside the lake and up into the suburbs to our final hotel.

After an evening meal at the hotel we took a cab into the town centre. Annecy was as lively as Albertville was dead. Now we knew a fellow lecturer of Keith's would be in town with his wife and as we strolled across the path beside the lake a shout from a bench and there they were. They showed us the route to the old town for a few Leffes.

Metres climbed 2118m

Day 5: The last day and a bit easier on the legs. Lovely countryside but slightly anticlimactic after being in the mountains. East through Rumilly and Frangy, we were looking for a suitable lunch stop (beer and food are never far from our minds). After a detour due to a bridge closure we found a nondescript road side bar where the patron took some persuading to accommodate us. We had probably the best meal of the trip, isn't that often the way things work out? I really was

stuffed, luckily it was a relatively leisurely ride into Switzerland and around the perimeter of the airport by cycle track almost up to the departure lounge. We have had to jump over fences at some airports to get near the departure lounge on a bike.

One criticism of Switzerland; the town signs are useless for spotting for the sprints as there

is no red border to make them stand out. Dave was sprinting for anything rectangular on top of a pole just in case.

We were all feeling a bit weary at the end. We started doing these continental trips to celebrate our 50th birthdays and because we seemed to have covered most of the Cotswolds, Dorset and Wiltshire over the last 25

years. We have been lucky with the weather on our 5 day trips but constant sunshine without 30degrees and sitting outside a bar at 2000m with summer gear on takes some beating.

Metres climbed 1082m  
Total climbing 8660metres.  
Distance approximately 500kms  
KEITH ALDRED

## Time Trial report to date

**The club 10 series held between May and August was a great success. Averaging 17 riders participating with some very good times being set on what is best termed a sporting course.**

Andrew Bye did a stunning 21:48 on 3rd May and 12th July. Other notable rides in this series were Chris Salt with a 22:02 on the 9th August, James Beaumont's 22:12 on 28th June and Adam Page's 22:25 on 26th July. Keep up the support and to newer members they are the ideal starter events into racing.

Regarding the club designated time trial series the events have been receiving varied support, the early season events being most heavily supported with more recent events being up and down. Naz Peralta was the winner of the event this season from Ian Beston in second place. For the final points table please see the clubs website. We will rethink the calendar for 2007 based on what people want, to encourage more Wheelers to ride together. If you would like to suggest an

event to be included next season please let me know.

Kingston Wheelers competing in open and club time trials so far this season are: Naz Peralta, John Reay, Iain Marshall, Rupert Bole, Dave Wylie, Leffe Richard, Andrew Melbourne, Colin Gray, Gafyn McMillan, Ian Beston, Jack Haswell, Tarik Djeddour, Andrew Bye, Chris Salt, Graham Sheridan, Delboy, Will Meers, Stewart Martin, Lawrence Smith, Alan Sherman, Chris Jenkins, Thorsten Klassen, James Beaumont, Andy Lack, Adam Page, Charlotte East, Mackers and Mark Briers. If I have missed anybody I do apologize. This is certainly the largest number of riders we have had racing in TTs for many years.

Notable rides this season are Andrew Bye 53.50 winning the Hillingdon 25 on the 30th April. James Beaumont 2.00.34 in the SCCU 50, a 22:10 in the Charlotteville 10, Will Meers with at least three sub-hour rides with a 57.28 PB just recently and a 21.47 ten, Jack Haswell 8th in the Lea Valley 25 in 1.03.36, 9th in the Farnham 10 with 22.27

and 10th in the Crabwood 10 (50+) in 22.14, Dave Wylie at 59 with a short 59 on the Bentley course and a 22 minute 10 and Adam Page with a 22:34 on the Q10/19 course and a 23:00 in the a3crg '10' on the A3.

Ian Beston, Naz Peralta and Gafyn McMillan all set pb's for both 10 & 25 miles this season. Naz and Gafyn both broke the hour for the first time at the North Hampshire 25 in July on the A31 course with 59:49 and 59:26 respectively. A few weeks later in the Charlotteville 10 all 3 set new pb's, Gafyn with a 23:06, Naz with a 22:55 and Ian with a 22:54. The following day Ian also broke the hour for the first time on the H25/2 'Ski slope' course with a 59:31. He improved on both of his pb's recently on the Andover course with a 22:20 '10' and a 58:34 '25'. Gafyn also recently produced another pb on the H10/8 course with a 22:32 beating both Will Meers and Adam Page on the night - a tremendous ride!!

To all members keep up the good efforts!

I BESTON / R WILLIAMSON

# Alpine

comeuppance?

JUL

**Lance was wrong. It's ALL about the bike. Or that's how it feels, having recently joined Kingston Wheelers cycling club and signed up for a hellish day of pedalling in the Alps.**

Never have I spent so much time orbiting the indifferent deer in Richmond Park, or rubbing manically at oily marks on my once pristine bike frame. What possessed me?

Not only am I attempting a

real 187km stage of this year's Tour de France, it ends on one of the most infamous and daunting climbs in that strength-sapping race, L'Alpe d'Huez. Do four revolutions round the park at top speed do this task any justice by way of training? I doubt it. Not even repeated ascents of Box Hill's three mini switchbacks are much good as preparation - and you can't stop for coffee and a sticky chocolate bun on the Alpe's Hairpin 15.

There's a word which looms

larger as I strain to increase my cadence up Sawyers Hill, 'hell-for-leathering' it as best I can, towards the horizon. This multi-syllabled term warns and mocks me in equal measure. And as the fateful day draws near, I can finally make it out, "comeuppance".

It could be the title of a film about great cycling failures - the sorry flip side of 'Overcoming'. Although I anticipate nothing 'great' in my forthcoming disintegration. Because I'm bound



“it ends on one of the most infamous, daunting climbs in that strength-sapping race, L’Alpe d’Huez”

to crumble as soon as the alpine highway angles itself upwards, which worrying development will inevitably take place tens of kilometres before the dreaded Alp rears up nightmarishly ahead.

By the time I’m sweating and wobbling up the slightest French incline, going spectacularly backwards in real terms, as the other jet-propelled Etappers fly past me, it’ll be far too late to have regrets about missed - or neatly avoided - training opportunities.

It’s a deeply moralistic pur-

suit this cycling lark. Ullrich waits for Armstrong after the latter falls coming into contact with a spectator’s bag in the Pyrenees in 2003; Eugene Christophe, a star from the Tour’s infancy, receives a ten minute penalty, despite heroic solo efforts to repair his broken forks, because of minimal help from that bellows boy (but rules MUST be adhered to) and dopers now are routinely rounded up and expelled from the sport.

So what sort of reckoning can I expect, a lazy trainer,

whose philosophy has less to do with calculating heart rates and getting the miles in - and much more to do with the credo, ‘I’ll make it somehow, by the seat of my Lycra pants’?

On the principle that you get back roughly what you put into something, I’m now fatalistically convinced of one terrible truth. I know precisely what form my Etape comeuppance will take - the worst possible kind. It will have four wheels not two, known universally as the broom wagon.

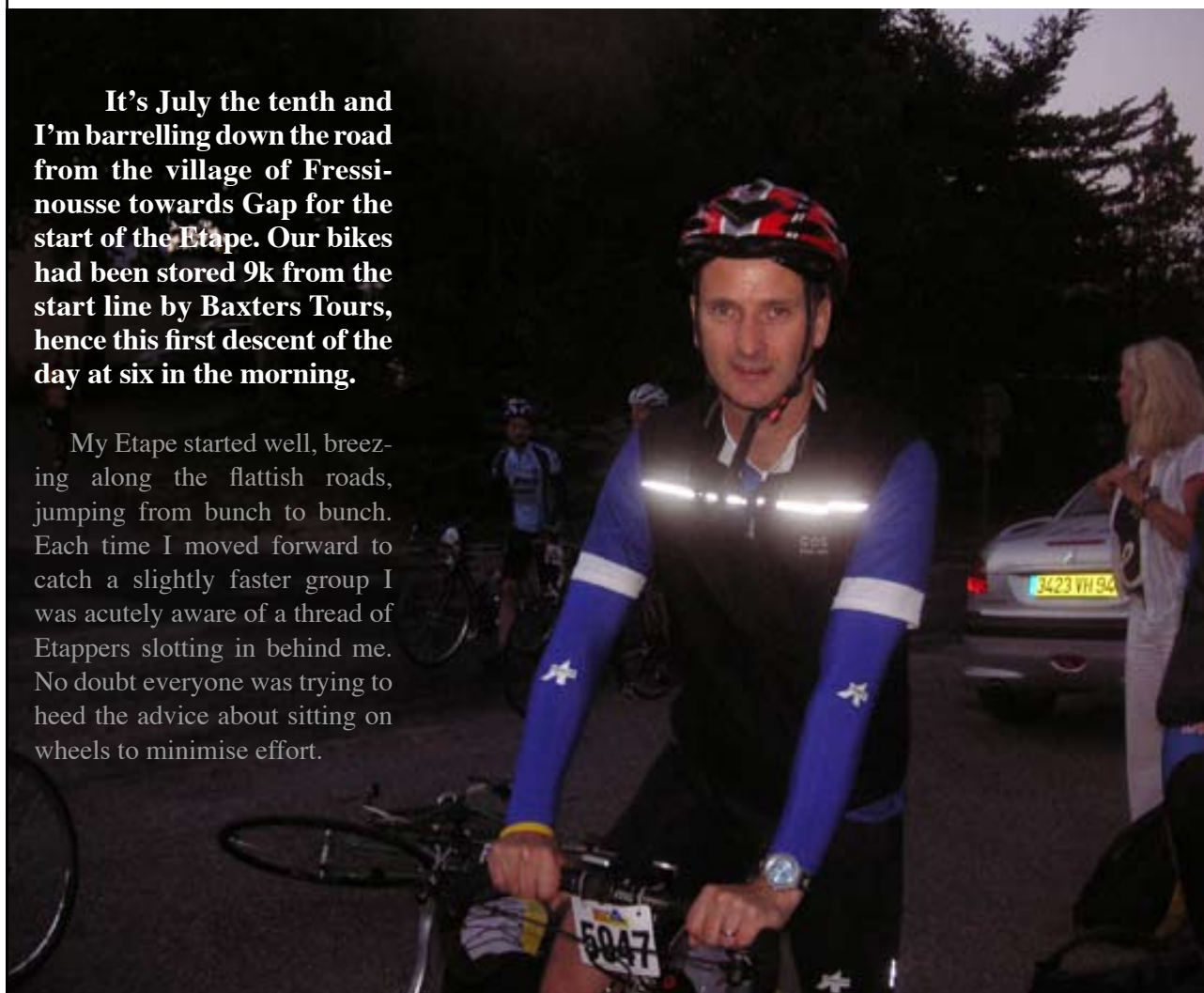
IAIN MARSHALL

## Part 2 - Day of reckoning

10/7

**It’s July the tenth and I’m barrelling down the road from the village of Fressinousse towards Gap for the start of the Etape. Our bikes had been stored 9k from the start line by Baxters Tours, hence this first descent of the day at six in the morning.**

My Etape started well, breezing along the flattish roads, jumping from bunch to bunch. Each time I moved forward to catch a slightly faster group I was acutely aware of a thread of Etappers slotting in behind me. No doubt everyone was trying to heed the advice about sitting on wheels to minimise effort.



“I took the stomach cramps and hollow feeling as a sign that the bonk was just around the corner”

At this stage the weather was glorious, bright and airy; complementing the stunning views perfectly. It didn't yet feel like we were all rolling out on what would be an epic day.

I bumped into fellow Kingston Wheeler Rob and we hit the wall of walking riders at the first feed stop together. I held the bikes and Rob fought his way in to get water and food. It was chaos, but nothing like as bad as what was to come later.

When we passed the first elimination point in very good time, I was feeling confident that this might be easier than I'd anticipated. Deluded as ever.

Approaching the Izoard was when I first noticed the temperature rising. I'm thankful for the fountain in the first village where I replenished my bottles and had a legitimate reason to stop pedalling upwards for a moment.

But it was starting to get a little surreal now. I recognised someone's distinctive Audax UK cycling shirt and sure enough it belonged to a rider I'd met on L'Etape du Thanet, an Audax ride billed as perfect training for this event, except that in Kent you don't get mountains. I fell into conversation with a fellow Scot from Inverness who couldn't understand why he'd been the only cyclist partaking of a wee dram the night before the ride. Then I touched someone's wheel just before the Casse Deserte. Equipped with a triple chainset he'd been going incredibly slowly and I couldn't slow down in time. I came crashing down but no damage was done.

Chapeau to the spectator who

called out to us in French, “just two hundred metres to the top”. But the feed stop round that bend on the summit of the Izoard had been ransacked. It looked like a besieging army had just left to storm a city, leaving all their rubbish (in this case empty water bottles) behind. I did what everyone else was doing and queued up in the small souvenir shop to buy water. Of course they'd run out too and I had to settle for two cans of fizzy Perrier. None of this was good enough for the middle aged French cyclist who jumped



the queue in front of me, before walking off contentedly clutching an ice cold can of Heineken.

I tried to curb my phobia of descending and hit 42mph coming down the Izoard which is fast for me. I don't know how many other Wheelers noticed the cyclist being attended at the side of the road quite near the top. He was wailing and keening in raw pain.

With the worst of the three mountains conquered, I thought I would be fine.

The feed station at Briancon was a melee. I had to rest my bike on the ground, on its side,

and watched in horror as a tetchy French cyclist nearly stomped over the spokes without seeing the bike at all. The only comedy moment of the day was the chorus of multi-lingual expletives which soiled the air when we turned into the cliff face that was the road out of Briancon. Nasty little surprise that one.

It had been a mistake to focus on the Izoard being the toughest climb. The gentler-sloped Lautaret was equally tough because of the build-up of heat and its seemingly endless length. I got sick of staring up at that tunnel on the top of the road without it getting any closer. An alpine 'newbie', I also thought for one stomach-knotting moment that we had to cycle up the incline to the right of the tunnel - which in fact leads to the peak of the Galibier.

I was using the need to take on fluid and bite into my energy bars as a feeble excuse to stop for a quick rest all the way up the Lautaret. Back in the saddle I was going OK and kept catching and overtaking the people who'd just passed me while I was stopped.

Rob and I bumped into each other again at the top at about 2.45pm. I took the stomach cramps and hollow feeling in my guts as a sign that the bonk was just around the corner, so I sat for fifteen minutes and ate a ham sandwich purchased from the café at the summit - it was just like Box Hill with slightly better views and without the OAPs. Hard as it was to swallow, the sandwich undoubtedly saved my Etape.

“There were bodies everywhere and walking wounded wheeling their bikes pretty aimlessly upwards”

With an hour to get to Bourg d’Oisans before the broom wagon I hit the descent and threw caution to the wind. What an amazing ride that is. Flying through those tunnels down the side of the gorge.

After another chaotic food station experience, I approached the bottom of Alpe d’Huez in a group, cursing the whole way under my breath, as I thought the elimination car would stop us at any moment. I hit the first ramp up to Hairpin One at about two minutes past four.

This is where the invading army of cyclists I’d seen earlier started to resemble a routed force, in defeat and disarray. There were bodies everywhere and walking wounded wheeling their bikes pretty aimlessly upwards. I joined the throng and tried to keep pedalling but the psychological battle was almost over and I soon joined the foot soldiers, telling myself I’d remount at the next bend.

I still had my secret Lance Armstrong plan up my sleeve. Stand on the pedals, stay loose and emulate his 2001 romp up the hill. You can tell how suc-



cessful this strategy was, by how long the climb took me! Ninety five per cent walking and five per cent cycling I fear. But I was determined to finish and kept going. I was never tempted to sit down and wait for the buses which started passing us after about Hairpin Nine. By the fourth last bend, I spied an official photographer up the road and got back onto the bike for the final push. I passed a stricken cyclist who asked me to find his Sport Tours rep and get them to send help because he couldn’t move his legs - at all.

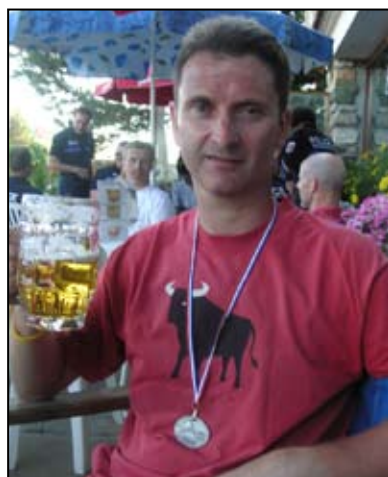
Speeding up (a little) through the ski resort as the gradient eased, I did get part of that Armstrong plan just right. I crossed the line to a surprise medal (it was after 6pm) with the classic Lance face on - a dead Elvis grin.

Lessons learnt: Short of doing two hundred repetitions of Box Hill wearing a specially heated suit every weekend, the only training which could pre-

pare you adequately for the conditions encountered on this year’s Etape, is to do the actual course in advance. Or at least ride other, very similar events, in the same area. I had enough distance in my legs beforehand but not enough proper, sustained climbing. A 202km Audax I did in the Brecon Beacons, in 25 degrees of heat, came the closest to replicating Monday’s conditions but it was still not sufficient. The other thing which would have helped was different gearing. I will definitely have a compact fitted the next time I tackle anything like this. On the plus side, at least the Alps is no longer an unknown quantity. I’m going to know whether or not my training’s going well or I whether I’m not doing enough now, because I have a clear idea of exactly what’s in store. Those ADH hairpins look a lot less steep in photographs.

Etape 2007? Bring it on.

IAIN MARSHALL



# Free & Single

**When 26-year-old Andrew Bye isn't competing on either his Sigma Sport Olympia or Bianchi time-trial bikes, he's often on his Specialized Langster single-speed for daily commutes to Kings College Hospital, where he's a physiotherapy student.**

This 2006 version was the first to be officially released into the UK, having won cult value from unofficial US imports. Even priced under £400 before the end-of-season discounts, with free shades and helmet deals thrown in, the Langster represented fantastic value and promised bags of fun whether

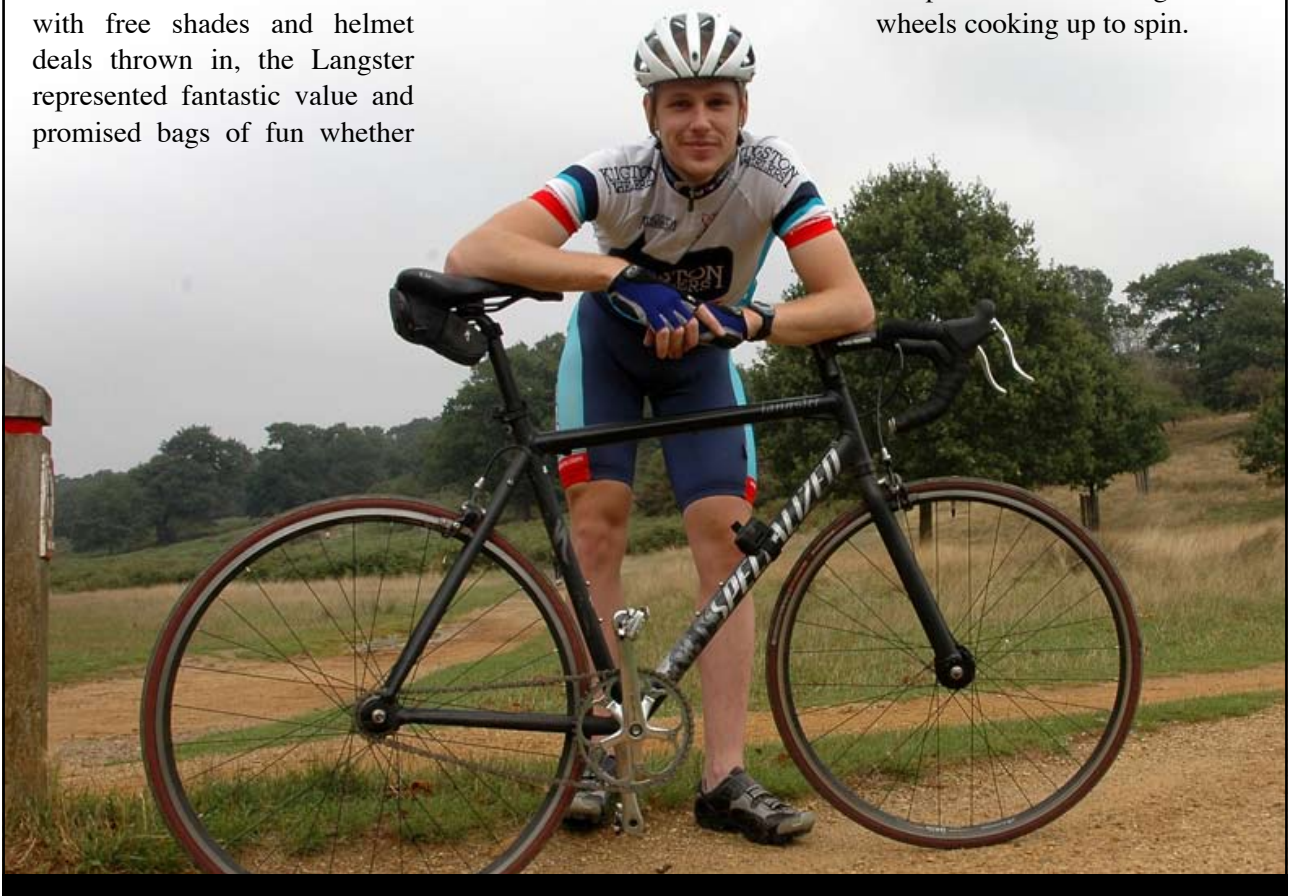
you switch the wheel over to a fixer or not. I know, because I snapped up a Langster too.

But I didn't bargain for interviewing an owner who takes his off road. That's exactly what Andrew had done in September for a full circuit of Richmond Park's trail in only 2 minutes and 8 seconds off his 25-minute PB on an aluminium-framed Merlin Rock Lobster mountain bike - with all the technical gearing.

When you're not used to single speed on the road, at the very first hill it's impossible not

to try giving the break lever an SIS-style nudge. It's also often a temptation to try claiming some hardman cool by faking fixer pedal action on the freewheel when there's an audience on the descents.

Six months from new in April, Andrew's 58cm-sized Langster could soon be geared up from the standard 16 rear toother for the 48T Sugino Comp chainset, despite difficulty setting off from standing without honking on the pedals for the first four revs. Andrew admits it can be a real pain in the knees to get those wheels cooking up to spin.



“The Langster is about bringing back some cheap thrills to your two wheels”

Joined by 14g stainless spokes disguised by a black paintjob, the Alex DA-16 double-machine wall wheel rims turn on 32-hole double-sealed hubs WARNING it contains nuts. Those wheel nuts mean don't leave home without a 15mm spanner to get the wheel out for any punctures.

And the standard Specialized Mondo slicks can be a pain for punctures, which is why Andrew has changed to the same firm's Armadillos. For £20 each, Andrew says expect good armoured protection that's much appreciated for the reliability of getting to work and back.

Andrew already knew how tough the Armadillos are, after riding them down to the Kevlar band on another of his bikes when the breaks had to be ap-

plied to spending from the student grant.

Despite press reports of the Langster having weak braking, which I can second from a few hair-raising personal experiences myself, Andrew is happy with the standard Tektro package.

The press warned last year that the bike's braking should be thought of as needing forward thinking along the lines of captaining a tanker ship, and that's no exaggeration as far as I'm concerned. My theory is the plastic lever bodies have too much flex, but Andrew reckons any problems might also be related to the Alex wheel rims' braking surfaces.

With both brakes, it would of course be an exaggeration to describe the Langster as a con-

tender for the track. But Andrew reckons it could be an effective hill TT training mount. To compete, it would need to lose some serious weight.

I've done that for comfort by already replacing the standard alloy seat pin for carbon. And I'm sure a pair of the Ribble-discounted ITM 4Ever Aero forks (only £66.95 in their sale) would be an improvement upon the stock Cr-Mo headed alloys.

Blow a few hundred more smackers on the wheelset and you could have a serious contender, but that's not the point of the Langster. The Langster is about bringing back some cheap thrills to your two wheels, and that's exactly what it does.

ROB LESLIE

## Road racing results



### **Kingston Wheelers prolific winner Cedric Klassen, the under-8 cat rider has won more than 10 wins this year!**

Andrew Bye dominated the Surrey League Dauphin Army CU 3 Day with 2 stage wins and the overall - see full results next page.

Richard Williamson won a recent LVRC race (over 40s category) at Eastway as well as the overall 60s category (through high placings in over-40s racing) at Hillingdon.

Crazy Larry won at Hillingdon and competed well with Andrew in the 3 day in only his first few races.

## STOP PRESS!

### **Our other top under-8 cat Anthony Anderson just crowned national champion!**

Anthony won this years Under-8s BSCA National hill climb championship in Dartford on Oct 7th. His time of 2.19 is a course record by 43 seconds!

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Andrew Bye, shown here in a previous stage race, puts it all right in the Army CU 3 day

AUG



Final Classification:

Andrew Bye	Kingston Wheelers	2	5:45:26	@	0:00:00
Ian O'Hara	Citihub	2	5:45:42	@	0:00:16
Gary Kristensen MBE	agiskoviner.com	2	5:46:17	@	0:00:51
Chris Barr	Army CU	2	5:46:24	@	0:00:58
Richard Mason	London Dynamo	2	5:46:28	@	0:01:02
Mark Jones	GS Stella	3V	5:46:53	@	0:01:27
Allan Ridler	Army CU	2	5:46:59	@	0:01:33
Wouter Sybrandy	Hounslow & Dist Whlrs	2	5:47:00	@	0:01:34
Sam Humpheson	London Dynamo	2	5:47:12	@	0:01:46
Ben Wilson	awcycles.co.uk	2	5:47:17	@	0:01:51

Stage 1:

Andrew Bye	Kingston Wheelers	2	0:04:36	@	0:00:00
Ian O'Hara	Citihub	2	0:04:38	@	0:00:02
Allan Ridler	Army CU	2	0:04:44	@	0:00:08

Stage 4:

Andrew Bye	Kingston Wheelers	2	2:30:43	@	0:00:00
Richard Mason	London Dynamo	2	2:30:51	@	0:00:08
Scott Merrilees	Twickenham CC	2	2:31:07	@	0:00:24

## Wheelers tackle the Pyrenees

**Naz and I set out on an end of season trip to the Pyrenees to try and bag a few cols. A bright and early 4am taxi greeted us on the Saturday and took us to a rather foggy Gatwick airport.**

There was the normal scramble to the check in desk and the inevitable hour delay to the flight due to the fog. Once we'd got off the ground, British Airways treated us to a fantastic breakfast, one soggy brioche roll that tasted of chemicals. After landing at Toulouse and a transfer to the B&B, we unpacked the bikes and went on a 30 mile loop around the nearby area.

Luckily the cooking at our B&B was much better than BA's and we dined on spaghetti bolognese and copious amounts of vin du table. We discussed with our hosts what kind of a ride we

would like to do the next day and they suggested various routes to take.

We got going fairly late on Sunday following a large breakfast and after I managed to get stuck in the bedroom due to the door handle falling apart... We started off steadily taking in the Col d'Ares and then conquered the Col de Mente. The steepness of the Col de Mente surprised me and made me wish that I'd got another gear – I really had to grind up it in 39 x 23 (the 25 wasn't engaging) whilst being consumed with jealousy looking at Naz spinning happily away on his triple (well, my cadence was in double figures at least - Ed!). We stopped at the top for a good fill before heading towards the Col de Portillon. Unfortunately the weather took a turn for the worst and it started raining, plus

from where we were, it looked grim at the top of the Portillon. We decided to head home.

Feeling quite tired after a hilly 55 miles we got chatting to some of the other cyclists who were staying at the B&B about where they'd been that day. A Yorkshireman by the name of Derek described to us (several times over the course of the evening) the Col de Mente as "a nice little climb. I did it in t'big ring...". Unfortunately he didn't endear himself to the rest of us and became known as Big Ring for the rest of the holiday.

On Monday we did 80 miles over the Col d'Aspin and the Col de Peyresourde which adversely affected our cycling on Tuesday, but proved very advantageous for our café-stopping. We suspect we may have broken the



“we would need most of the daylight hours for the 100+ mile round trip to the Tourmalet and back”

world record for most café stops on a 50 mile ride, with 5 stops in all. We still managed to take in the Col de Portet d’Aspet somewhere along the way (and stopped for an ice cream at the top) and taking heed of the monument to Fabio Casartelli we took the descent very steadily.

That evening, it was the chef’s day off, so we were booked into a poncy local French restaurant. Our friend from Yorkshire, who wasn’t particularly at ease with the French language and wasn’t able to read the menu, was outraged: “Pizza and chips? What? No, pizza and chips?! Oooh, I can’t eat any of this...!” Unfortunately for Naz, the French don’t understand vegetarians (but if they did, they’d probably be the best vegetarians in the world...), so he had to make do with an omelette – trouble was, it never arrived. Probably a good thing as the rest of the food was crap!

We took it easy on Wednesday, going for a flat 50 miles in the sun with a long luncheon stop



for good measure. This set us up for a huge ride on Thursday. We set off early, knowing we’d need most of the daylight hours to fit in the 100+ mile round trip to the Tourmalet and back. We took the same route out to the Col d’Aspin as we did on Monday and climbed that with relative ease (10 minutes faster than Monday’s effort), descended the other side before a quick café stop and then starting on the Tourmalet. We were suffering badly as we passed through the ski town of La Mongie due to a few gruelling kilometres at an average of 10%, so we stopped for a Coke before grovelling up the last 5 kms. We stopped for a quick photo before a very rapid

descent (54.5mph!) into Sainte Marie de Campan and then back over the Aspin. With about 2 kms to go before the summit, both Naz and I were practically dead and had to drag ourselves over the top before carefully descending into Arreau absolutely delirious with fatigue. A stop for a coffee with about 20 sugars did the trick and we were on the road again... this time along the flat; finally a summer of time trialing came in useful and we hammered it home, doing the last 25 miles in just over an hour.

Our final day was a joke, Naz and I were so tired we could hardly turn the pedals over, so we potted to a nearby town in



search of beer, food and bakeries. We found a café with a beautiful view of the mountains (and an even more beautiful paper factory) serving Leffe and Jupiler... it was like being in Belgium again! On the way home we brought up 400 miles for the week and with that a sigh of relief!

If anyone's interested in doing a similar trip, contact either Naz or me. We went with a company called Pyractif who cater specially for cyclists, recommending routes and even giving us GPS to use.

WILL MEERS



## Decomaster Classic - club hill climb championship

OCT

**Mark Gray collected the Decomaster Golden Roller on Sun 1st October. Conditions were wet with 30 riders competing including non-members on the club run for the first time.**

The course up Leith Hill proved challenging with several changes in gradient and slippery conditions. Mark Gray took the victory (and the coveted Golden Roller award) ahead of Ben Cousins, with Daniel Conway completing the podium.

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1	Mark Gray	5:20	
2	Ben Cousins	5:27	
3	Daniel Conway	5:31	
4	Daniel Siddick	5:42	
5	Andrew Harvey	5:46	
6	Gafyn MacMillan	5:52	
7	Naz Peralta	6:03	
8	Andy Lack	6:05	
9	Peter Hollyer	6:07	
10	Chris Jenkins	6:09	
	1st Lady	Sheila Hunt	7:52

## Kingston Wheelers TT Promotions for 2007

The club is promoting two new open time trial events in 2007. In addition to the 'Sporting 14' in February, we are now holding an open '10' on the fast H10/8 course on the A31 just outside of Farnham on August 18th at 14:00pm, and a open hill climb event which will

be known as the 'John Bornhoft Memorial Hill Climb'. This will be held on the HC42 course on Leith Hill Lane on October 7th at 11:00am.

We are intending to have some superb prizes and possibly sponsorship for these events in the hope that it will attract many

of the top riders in the South East and help continue to raise the profile of the club.

Please put both of these dates in your diaries, as I would like to see as many club members as possible at both events either racing or marshalling.

IAN BESTON