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CRANKS

Volume 47

The Magazine of
Deeside Thistle Cycling Club
Sponsored by:



Tierney Strachan
PROCESS CONTROL ENGINEERING

Current Membership 593 (635)
SCU Membership 318 (340)
Scottish Cycling's Largest Club

Editorial:

This is the third issue of Cranks since the lockdown. Little did we think the curtailment of our hobby would last this long. And it's not over yet. Those who control things are keeping a close eye on the little bug and are likely to extend any restriction if the recovery is not as planned.

Few stories over the time have emerged where cyclists have been criticised for not following the rule and that's a good thing. Though now that some situations are being eased, and it's possible to make more journeys, we must continue to adhere to diktats.

The upsurge in folk riding bikes has meant that local authorities are building pop-up cycle lanes to help separate the cyclists and pedestrians. Our sensible use of these could be for the good as they might well remain in place making town riding a much safer exercise.

I've dutifully isolated myself for the proscribed 12 weeks (age related) with bike rides from home the only time I've crossed the front gate. The isolation has given me the opportunity to "tidy up". A vast amount of accumulated paperwork filled many black bags. Over 50 years of broken bike bits filled umpteen rubbish bins.

This week the re-opening of re-cycling centres has meant the black bags are gone; my first non-exercise crossing of the kerbside; the bins of redundant spares have still to go.

I'm hoping that the centres will start to accept metal rubbish again before I get the time to re-inspect the bins and question whether something should be dumped.

PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

"Meet the future; the future mode of transportation for this weary Western world. Now I'm not gonna make a lot of extravagant claims for this little machine. Sure, it'll change your whole life for the better, but that's all."

**Bicycle salesman
in Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid**

Do you have a view on life? Why not submit your favourite few words of wisdom for public consumption in this exclusive corner of your magazine. Send now to Sandy Lindsay, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ or email Knockies@aol.com

Coronavirus Update

Statement from Scottish Cycling

[Statement regarding physical activity during COVID-19 as of 29 May 2020.](#)

Following a statement from the Scottish Government and the launch of [Scotland's Routemap Through and Out of the Crisis](#), the guidance on sport and leisure activities is changing.

The Scottish Government statement of 21 May 2020 advises that Scotland will be taking a phased approach to varying restrictions. From 28 May 2020, Scotland will be moving into Phase 1. You may exercise outdoors as many times each day as you wish and for as long as you want. Cycling activity should only be on routes that you know well and are within your ability level.

- Permitted to travel short distances (broadly within 5 miles) to start your ride. However, we continue to advise that you start your ride from your home.
- You can ride outdoors alone, with those you live with or with one other household at any one time, maintaining social distancing of at least two metres at all times from those in the other household.
- If meeting people from another household, you should meet only in small groups - no more than 8 people in total at a time, and you should not meet people from more than 1 other household each day.
- You should continue to maintain a distance of at least two metres from anyone you meet whilst out riding, stopping and waiting for people to pass when necessary. This is particularly important when riding on narrow paths and trails.
- You can sit and rest outside before, during and after your ride.
- If you are showing coronavirus symptoms, or if you or any of your household are self-isolating, you should stay at home.
- Indoor sport facilities must remain closed at this time.
- Unmanned, open facilities such cycle pump tracks may be used, with strict physical distancing in place. Please check with the facility operators prior to use. Please also respect any restrictions or physical distancing measures that are now in place. Further information on the guidance and use of MTB trails, pump track and skills loops is available [here](#).
- One to one coaching is permitted if it is outdoors, physical distancing can be maintained, and is with members of your household and/or members of 1 other household. A coach should not deliver training to more than 1 household at any one time or provide training to more than 1 household per day. When participating in training or coaching, where possible, avoid touching surfaces and sharing equipment and touching your mouth and face.
- We are currently seeking clarification on specific aspects of this guidance in relation to traveling to coach as a work activity and will publish this guidance as soon as we are able to do so. Current British Cycling guidance on coaching is available [here](#).
- Club activity and group coaching remains suspended at this time. Further information on the suspension of activities is available [here](#).

We would also continue to encourage cyclists to:

- Ride responsibly – ride within your ability level. High risk exercise (that may result in injury and require medical care or emergency services support) should be avoided.
- Be prepared - consider what tools and spares you need to carry with you so that you are self-sufficient, including maintaining good personal hygiene at all times.

Scottish Cycling remains in regular dialogue with sportScotland, British Cycling and the Scottish Government with regards to the phased resumption of cycling activity. As such, we will provide more detailed guidance in relation to possible events and activities within each phase shortly. We will also continue to provide updates and information to all clubs, coaches, event organisers, commissaires and our membership as the situation evolves.

Scottish Cycling fully appreciates the impact of COVID-19 on sport and society as a whole.

We remain committed to highlighting the mental, physical, and social benefits of cycling and cycle sport and are available to support our members, clubs and volunteers during these challenging times.

[Updated statement from Scottish Cycling regarding physical activity during COVID-19](#)

SCNEG Update

You will all have seen the latest update from SC as we are in phase 1 of the release from lockdown in line with the Scottish Government road map. In general clubs have been abiding to the guidelines which is good as we wouldn't want to have criticism aimed at us at this time. The general perception of cycling seems to be positive at the moment.

I'm still not sure if we will get any racing this year but if sanctions are lifted and anyone is considering putting on an event I would appreciate if you can let me know, just to avoid any event clashes.

If we are allowed to do something later on this year then I will try and run the Regional TT champs at some point.

The Grampian Regional Officer position for Scottish Cycling has been put on hold until lockdown is over.

Over the next few weeks you will see more and more pop up cycling lanes being put up by the city and shire councils. These are temporary lanes to make space for social distancing; the infrastructure is not going in for us cyclists, they are just a byproduct of creating social distance space.

However, since they are putting them in place the council will also be looking at compliance and usage numbers. If we want permanent infrastructure we need to show that we can use them and that the numbers justify permanent measures. As an example, on Beach Boulevard segregated cycle lanes are going in which is great, but the Esplanade paths will apparently be for pedestrians only. Stay safe

Colin Allanach
colinallanach@aol.com Chairman SCNEG

Club Clothing - Collection and Shop Opening

For those that ordered kit back in March - apologies for the wait - your kit is now available to collect from the premises at the end of this note. Slightly different process though. We are not receiving persons at our reception.

Please ring the bell at our Goods-In door, and announce that you are here to collect Deeside Kit with your name. Wait outside the door and your kit will be brought to you. If the small roller shutter door is closed - please ring the office number 01224 295000. If the gates are closed, we are closed, simples.

Our policy is that non-essential personnel may NOT enter the building - so we have no facility for you to try on. If you are in any doubt about the sizes you have ordered, I suggest you collect soon as then you will have the opportunity to purchase at the next shop opening...

I can probably post out to those that want it. Let me know and we can see what we can arrange. You can easily buy postage online and send it to me; I'd need to give you weights and dimensions if you want to do this. I'm hoping you don't all request this though as getting to the post office is a bit more work presently.

AND

The Pactimo Club-Kit Shop opened on Friday the 5th June, and closes on Monday the 15th June.

A reminder - we need to sell our existing stock of club clothing which shows the old logos. So if we have stock (and I appreciate it is limited) - then please contact me to purchase this stock rather than ordering through the Pactimo shop window. See [here](#) for our stock lists (note Pactimo is the current kit supplier). Some price reductions may be offered...GSC Skin Suits now reduced to £20 each!

Garments with previous logo designs will be reduced by 20%.

Some other notes from Pactimo:

- Ascent bib shorts now come with shorter and longer compression band. Please check the length you want when buying this style of bibs. The default is the shorter length (only by about 2cm).
- The Alpine style will replace the Ouray jacket for winter wear.

Garments should be with us late July.

1. Before buying please check whether you could use any of the existing Pactimo or GSC club stock (stock-list [here](#) and on the club website).

2. If you are using a Visa Debit, you should inform your bank otherwise your purchase transaction may be blocked by your bank as believing to be fraud. Pactimo are a US based clothing company and so many banks will block the transaction to protect the client. When banks are informed prior to placing the order then usually transactions go through without incident. Visa and Master card are accepted but NOT American Express. VAT is now included on the garment prices.

3. ENTERED ORDERS CAN'T BE CANCELLED. If a wrong size is entered it can be altered BEFORE we close the team store but not after the store has been

closed. Contact me if you need support in this activity though clubkit@deeside.org

4. The club carries limited stock to allow swaps if garments are the incorrect size. Also we are able to provide a limited 'try before buy' to confirm sizing - again please contact me to arrange.

Instructions to access the shop window:

Note the following link ONLY WORKS DURING THE SHOP OPEN PERIOD above.

Enter <https://teamstore.pactimo.com/stores/select>

Input "deeside" as the team password.

Note you will only gain access whilst the shop is officially open.

The system will ask you to register / login and then the shop goodies will appear...

Any queries contact me on clubkit@deeside.org

Jon Strachan, Tierney Strachan, 12 Greenbank Place, East Tullos, Aberdeen, AB12 3BT / Tel.: 01224 295006 / 07740 685167
Jon Strachan

Some Reminiscences of an Old Pedaller

The lockdown has given me lots of opportunities to be out on the bike on deserted roads. I have really enjoyed that and since I have been riding solo it has given me lots of opportunities to think back to my early days on the bike in the early 60s.

Aberdeen had a typhoid outbreak in 1964 caused by corned beef from Argentina being infected at the canning factory. The Aberdeen supermarket which sold it also contaminated other meats which used the same slicer. It was a serious outbreak and the schools were closed for a few weeks. Nobody died but many were in hospital, Aberdeen was effectively cut-off and there were restrictions on gatherings etc. I checked my cycling note book for that year of 1964 and see I rode my first 25 that year. I was a schoolboy.

I think the oldest rider was probably about 25 years old. There were many teenagers. Nobody apart from the timekeeper arrived at the event in a car. We changed at the end of Leggart Terrace at the hedge on the river side of the road. The pungent smell of embrocation was everywhere at events in the 60s and 70s. It was quite normal to ride to the event with your Carradice canvas saddle bag attached to your saddle and take it off for the event. Nobody would have even have thought of taking a water bottle.

That 25 course wasn't used much. It started at Leggart Terrace and went straight out the South Deeside Road to beyond the Durris/Crathes Bridge. A dead turn and then back to the start. The Slug road did not have priority at the bridge in those days.

According to my notebook the UK comp record for a 25 was 54mins 23seconds (held by Bas Breedon). I recorded 1:11:10 having taken my mudguards off my Sun Manxman. Price £28 19s 6d — aye the whole bike — still have it.

Earlier that month I rode a 27.23 in a ten and noted that Neil Bannerman - who is an Aberdeen Wheeler and still

visits our Evening League each year, had won with a 25.23. Time trials were very much the thing in those days.

The other aspect of cycling was youth hostelling and riding all over Scotland on the bike you raced on. The South Deeside road has changed little since those days - apart from Riverside of Blairs - and a massive increase in traffic, of course. The Mill Inn hill seems steeper somehow.

A legendary meeting place for club cyclists was at Blairs ferry on the south Deeside Road where the operator, an older woman by the name of Belle, ran a shack dispensing teas and coffees as well as home bakes. (First place I ever had a coffee.) She also had a rowing boat to take you over the Dee. (Blairs ferry was on the riverside of the south Deeside road about 400 yards east of that new development).

A house was built on the site of Belle's about 40 years ago and is currently for sale.

We would hang about at Belle's and set off to the town as it was becoming dark. There would be a scrappie for the 30mph sign at Leggart Terrace of maybe 25 riders - often right across the road. Then we would split up and I would head up Anderson Drive to the top of Midstocket Road with guys like Alan Gibb - our legendary pusher-off and classic car enthusiast. No helmets or specs in those days. I didn't have proper cycling shorts until I left school. And the chamois was real chamois - and often extremely uncomfortable. No bib shorts then. No overshoes either. No Lycra. If your mum knitted you a jumper you had to wear it.

Another element of cycling in Aberdeen in those days was track cycling at the old Linksfield stadium on summer evenings. This was definitely not a velodrome.

The track was a cinder running track with no banking. There were iron railings adjacent. Health and safety hadn't been invented - but it always looked like a serious accident about to happen! I would appreciate if some old-timer would give us their recollections now about Linksfield. Fixed wheel bikes suitable for the track were quite normal then and were ridden on the road and in TTs with a front brake. I can't imagine that Linksfield required the front brake to be removed but I may be wrong.

This week I did a 100 mile day and pretty much followed an old 100 mile reliability ride we did in February in the 1970s. We went all the way out the South Deeside via Strachan to Balmoral/Crathie and had a great plate of soup in a layby then proceeded back to Aberdeen - quite often in frost and snow, of course.

This week I came back over Queen's View because riders today do have the normal ambition to seek out quieter roads and also, let's not forget, have much lower gears than back in the 60s and 70s.

Hills like The Lecht and Cairn o Mount were a significant challenge when the largest sprocket might be a 24 and the chainring might be a 46. Zigzagging to reduce the gradient was often essential especially with a full saddlebag for a week away. Happy memories.

And still fun after all those years!

Alan Campbell

Midsummer Beer Happening

Midsummer Beer happening - The 2020 Midsummer Beer Happening is not and all those who have registered have been advised. Entry fees will be refunded but folk are being given the opportunity to continue to support the charity aspect of the three-day event. Robert Lindsay, the organiser, thanks everyone who has already indicated they are happy to continue helping the fund-raising difficult time. 100% of the donations will go to Stonehaven Men's Shed, a vital support network for men in the Stonehaven area.

Those of you minded to be part of the fund-raising are invited to go [here](#) where you may donate any sum that you wish

Letter:

Sir, It was inevitable in current circumstances that Robert Lindsay would have to cancel his much-appreciated June sportif, which is a highlight of our local calendar.

I hope as many Deeside Thistle CC members as possible will ask Robert to transfer their entry fee to charity as set out in his email. The event and the Beer Festival have raised the staggering sum of nearly £200,000 for local charities since starting in 2009. Last year alone raised £50,000. Unlike other sportives this is not done for profit. Robert runs these for the community including the cycling community.

Robert, a successful businessman, has very much taken over the reins from his late mother, Mary and Mr Deeside, Sandy Lindsay, who were pioneers in organising these types of events for charity.

I hope we of DTCC can help.

Thanks, Alan Campbell Hon President

Banchory Bikes

Pete Kneeshaw has retired. His shop, Banchory Bikes, has transferred to Sam. Sam is a great bike mechanic and apprentice of Pete's so we'll all be able to go there for bike surgery, chats and the coffee machine is staying.

Mark Heady

Neil Fachie's Book

Aberdonian world champion, Neil Fachie's book is on Amazon for only 99p. Here's the link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Earn-Your-Stripes-insights-business-ebook/dp/B087RN1D8K/?tag=earnyourstrip-21>

Colin Allanach

VOLUNTEERS

Please consider helping your club. You can register your interest in volunteering here: http://deeside.org/?page_id=721

Scottish Cycling Youth TT Championships

I have decided that we are unable to organise or promote the Scottish Cycling Youth TT Championships event in NE Scotland. The reason for this is that I do not believe the event will be welcomed by people of Methlick.

Having large numbers of cars and people arriving from all over the UK will not be practicable, and while the risk might be low, we cannot practically manage social distancing for this event.

Given that the Tour of Britain was due to be in the local area, and has been cancelled, we do not believe people will understand why that was cancelled, but we would go ahead and run a national youth championship.

It is with great regret that I am unable to support running the event this year.

Simon Stromberg

Zwift and Strava Participants

Many folk are continuing their involvement with cycling on Zwift, Strava and other media platforms. Some of these events are being promoted by your club.

Many of the participants will be non-club members. Perhaps if they were given the nudge they might realise that clubs are able to offer a broadening of their involvement.

If you are a virtual cyclist and are in contact with any of those non-members you should feel free to pass on club details. This is the page to go to: http://deeside.org/?page_id=29 or tell them to drop a note to info@deeside.org

DTCC Instagram and Facebook

I am having some success in getting people looking at the above. The club's [Facebook](#) page reached 8500 people this last week and had 1700 people "engaging" with it. Instagram account now has nearly 200 following in just a week.

My idea is to get the pages "visible" by regular posts (this week's quiz for example). Then, when the time is right, we can start to mention what we are doing and when.

To do this, I need photos, lots of them - preferably with folk in DTCC kit, but not essential.

- touring photos
- TT photos
- gravel photos
- CX photos
- MTB photos
- road race photos
- youth photos
- vintage photos
- anything I've missed photos???

Note that sending these in is agreeing to allow them to be used on DTCC Facebook and Instagram pages. Please send yours to: me on ajkerr2014@gmail.com *Andy Kerr*

Gravitate North-East

2020 has been a very unusual year for everyone. An unprecedented global pandemic has meant that life as we know it has had to change. Sadly, many people have been impacted physically, financially and emotionally. Our thoughts are with those who are still dealing with the fallout from the ongoing virus situation. As a charity, it took us a while to make sense of the current state of affairs and figure out how to keep our vision moving forward. Like many of you, we have had to find new ways to communicate and our board of trustees are once again holding monthly meetings by video conference. Rest assured, we are continuing to progress the Durris project through these difficult times. Read on to find out what we've been up to.

Fundraising

Our 2020 fundraising campaign got off to a great start, with a significant cash injection coming from the BP Coast to Coast fundraising ride. Thanks to all those who participated and donated. Your efforts and generosity are hugely appreciated.

Another big boost to our campaign came from the individuals and businesses who bought into our investor and donor packages. You can find out more about these packages [here](#).

Additional funds also came from fundraisers and public donations. Find out more about them [here](#). Massive thanks to all those who have either set up their own individual fundraising campaign or submitted a donation. It wouldn't be possible to move the project forward without you.

We started the year aiming to raise £150K which will be used to progress key pre-construction elements of the project. As it stands currently, we are sitting just shy of the £50K mark. This has been a fantastic achievement, however, given the COVID-19 situation, we haven't felt comfortable pushing fundraising over the last couple of months. We are conscious that many businesses and individuals may be struggling financially at the moment, so we didn't feel it was particularly appropriate to actively promote our fundraising campaign in the short term.

However, with that said, it's worth noting that we have observed a massive upsurge in people cycling and enjoying the outdoors in recent months. It's great to see something positive coming out of all this. Perhaps when it's all over, more people will realise the importance of getting outdoors and connecting with nature, which we're sure will help our cause in the long run.

If you are one of those luck people who have not been negatively financially impacted recently, or have used additional free time to get out on your bike and enjoy our parks and forests, please consider donating to our 2020 fundraising campaign and help to push us over the £50K mark. Your donation will help us to deliver an important community asset that will benefit us all for years to come.

If you are interested in becoming a member of Gravitate North East and would like to play an active role in the most exciting thing to ever happen to adventure sports in the Aberdeen region, please visit the [membership](#) page on our website to find out more.

Planning Studies

In our last letter we discussed all of the key pieces of work that must be completed so that we can progress with submitting an application for planning permission in principal. These were:

- Site Mapping
- Ecology Study
- Forestry Study
- Drainage Study
- Historic Environment Study
- Roads and Transport Study
- Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment
- Household Consultation
- Public Consultation

We are delighted to let you know that mapping of the site is almost complete and detailed, layered CAD drawing have been created. These show the various different zones for mountain biking, adventure sports, parking, roads and infrastructure. We'll be uploading the finalised maps to our website soon so please keep a look out!

Another piece of exciting news is that the ecological survey and ecological impact assessment is also nearing completion. This has involved a habitat assessment, protected mammal survey and a breeding bird and raptor survey. We expect the final report to be on our desk within the next few weeks.

The next step for the Gravitate committee will be to decide which planning study to carry out next. Roads and transport was on the cards, however, with current reduced traffic levels it will likely make sense for us to focus our attention elsewhere. Please keep an eye on our social media to stay up to date on the latest developments.

Ride Etiquette Document

You are reminded that a paper detailing the etiquette to follow when on club/training runs has been prepared and is here for your interest. The document is posted on the club's website and links will start to appear on club publications so that you can make reference to it. It will also be highlighted to new members

Car Clinic Offer

A special offer has been made to companies who want to set up staff discount schemes for their employees which allows them to register their own details and get discount automatically when they visit Car Clinic. It has been a roaring success and I thought that maybe I should extend to include members of the Deeside Thistle. Please follow this link for register detail <https://www.car-clinic.co.uk/employee-discount/>
Sandy Wilson

New Members

The following new or returning members have joined in recent weeks

2970 Scott Benzie Inverurie 44

Any friend, family member, work colleague, who is interested in cycling but not involved with a club, should be dropped the hint to look at www.deeside.org or to email members@deeside.org asking for information

Spring Bunny TT Weds 10 June 1925hrs

Spring Bunny TT on Zwift with proceeds heading to Aberdeen Cyrenians and prizes sponsored by www.car-clinic.co.uk

Wednesday 10th June at 1925hrs

Enter Here <https://www.zwift.com/events/view/869998>

Donate here <https://justgiving.com/fundraising/springbunnytt>

Flyer [here](#)

The Bike Bus By Frances McGuffie

I've heard of double-deckers, omnibuses and the likes
But never have I seen before a bus that carries bikes.
I waited at the Stop one day, my bus did not appear.
A minibus was sitting there, with a trailer at its rear.
"BIKE BUS" a little placard read, "TRAVEL IS QUITE FREE".
I tried to hop on board but "No" the driver said to me.

"A Bike Bus is for bikes" he said by way of explanation.
"We want to turn this country into a cycling nation,
We must encourage cycling" is what the driver quotes,
"With a cycle path round Britain from Lands End to John
O'Groats."

There must be lots of snags I thought. How will the bikes get on?
How will they sit upon the seats or know how far they've gone?
Because they will be tired, they might forget to ring the bell
So when they reach their destination, how will the driver tell?
And, as all thinking people know, there's no such thing as FREE.
Who's paying for the petrol, and there's the driver's fee.

So when the Bike Bus trundled off I asked a passer-by
If he could tell me what it was and could he tell me why?
"The bus is for the cyclists – the trailer has a rack
To hold the bikes securely behind the bus's back."

"The reason is," the stranger said, "the track is incomplete,
The cyclists would have to ride for thirty thousand feet
Along the busy Euroroute with lorries nose to tail.
That's why there is a BIKE BUS to reach the cycle trail."
"So sixteen times a day," I say, "This bus goes to and fro
Filled with happy cyclists all healthy and aglow!"

"Not quite like that; six weeks have gone since first the bus was
seen.

To tell the truth the cyclists don't really seem too keen.
I'm sure it wouldn't be noticed if the driver went on strike.
For he's never had a passenger and he's never seen a bike."

Mountain Biking The Untold British Story

Phil Kelman has been doing some research on his chosen
interest and he turned up this gem:
<https://youtu.be/e6zbENQcwkk>. It throws a different light
on the development of the mountain bike. Well worth
watching.

KNOCKBURN LOCH MANAGEMENT

John Huston Knockburn Site Manager, Knockburn Loch,
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www.knockburn.co.uk. You can like us on [FaceBook](#) and
follow us on [Twitter](#)

Proposed Local Calendar for 2020

Links will be added to this list when events appear on the
National Calendar

| Provisional date | Description | Organising Club |
|------------------|--|-------------------|
| 09/08/2020 | Classy 10 (10 mile TT) | Aberdeen Wheelers |
| 13/08/2020 | Evening series 7 | Aberdeen Uni CC |
| 12/09/2020 | Falling Leaves | Deeside Thistle |

Youth Free Membership

Deeside Thistle Cycling Club is delighted to offer free
membership to new youth riders for their first year. If you
would like to take advantage of this offer please see:
<http://www.deeside.org/membership.html>

Prudential RideLondon 2020 Event Update

The 2020 Prudential
RideLondon festival of
cycling has been cancelled
and will not be rescheduled

What have you been doing during lockdown?

If it can be told to a wider audience why not get it
highlighted in your very own magazine
Drop a note to info@deeside.org and it could
appear next month

Historical Reminiscences

(Part 21)

The Tour of Scotland, sponsored by the Scottish Milk Marketing Board, first came to Aberdeen in 1967. It was a big event which took a lot of planning and organising.

The stage scheduled for 17 July that year at 116 miles would take the riders from Arbroath, over the Cairn to Alford and get to Aberdeen via Dunecht. On the day, Danny Horton, riding for GB, took the flag

Months before it happened a bus load of hifalutin executives from the Milk Board and the controllers of the Scottish Cyclists' Union closely examined the proposed stages.

Probably quite a few of the officials, even if applying themselves, still found it a bit of a jolly.

Passing the bus parked up in the layby in Tillybrig Wood a mile from Dunecht near Craigenlow Quarry, with a row of blue blazers lined up against the fence, I doubted it was milk passing through their systems.

One winter a party of eight made one of their frequent trips to the hostel at Ballater. Eric, the warden, was down in the dumps at how the frozen pipes had burst as had the boiler in the cast iron stove. No longer available it may be that the charm of Ballater YH will go the way of the old smoky stove.

At Inverness YH my heart skipped a beat at the sight of Kate Pippa Plum silhouetted against the setting sun. She stood tall, elegant and beautiful.

At mealtime she sat alone, long, shapely legs poking out into the aisle between the tables. Picking my time carefully, nervous and trembling with excitement, almost failing to control the opened tin of beans in my left hand, I plonked myself onto the squeaky chair opposite her.

Shoving the tin towards her I asked, "*Want some?*" Of course she refused. Nothing else had been expected. Nothing daunted, "*Tea?*" A smile stretched across her lovely mouth.

Taking this as an acceptance, "*I'll get some*", bounding to my feet and headed for the stove, oblivious to the room, the obstacles, and went sprawling over those lovely legs, the can of beans fountaining and leaving streamers of orange fanning out over the floor.

On the Jack Taylor tandem, close to Broadford, the strength of both riders had torn the Williams chainset apart. The bolts securing the chainrings to the cranks had pulled through. The set was finished.

Not aware of the hidden gem of a bike shop between Kyle and Breakish I asked a couple of young local lads if they knew where a replacement could be found.

Enterprising, they offered to sell one second hand. The soft spoken islanders soon returned with what looked like a standard riveted chainset. Parting with some cash the boys were thanked for their help.

In a quiet spot on the road to Kylesku Ferry tools and swear words soon had a repair effected. Leaping back onto the machine good speed would be made.

The cranks turned ineffectually inside the chainring. The riveting had gone. The replacement was in worse condition than the original.

It wasn't a real race; a Reliability Trial of 100 miles in 5½ hrs. With a half hour stop for food at half way there'd be no problem.

Within a few miles the occasional spit blotted on clothes. Rain settled in. Climbing gradually from sea level soon sleet replaced the rain and the road now covered in slush proved too much for some. A sorry pile of bikes leaned drunkenly against the wall of a pub, the owners inside, soaked, frozen and recovering. One poor chap sat on a low wall, his machine discarded along with his footwear, in the gutter. He hugged wet, dead feet.

Riders from earlier groups were seen, heading back, disillusioned, white with snow, having been beaten by the weather.

Bikes were clogging with the ever thickening slush now turning to snow and chains slid on ice packed cogs.

At the turn only a 15 minute food break saw the depleted scratch group head for home. In line astern we followed the track marks of a vehicle and were led off the road where the vehicle had lost control and crossed the dyke.

Now on my own I settled into time-trial mode. Punching into the wind as the snow changed back to rain. Slush and grime sluicing over my legs, hunger starting to gnaw, it started to look like I'd be first home.

Topping the last rise a swift descent took me to HQ where a fast rider from an earlier group had already finished 15 minutes in front.

Torrential rain bounced off the road and strong winds blew us north. The tarmac ended at Auchavon and then just north of Tulchan so did the track. Climbing steeply on the Monega path little chance to cycle occurred and all was not well with Robert.

Near the 3000ft contour, gale force winds tore at our capes. Robert was fed a tin of Nestles Milk. At only 12 years of age he was stoic but rapidly deteriorating with the conditions so difficult. Howling winds, driving rain and poor visibility meant a hazardous trip along the Monega Ridge. Occasional breaks in the cloud gave fantastic views 2000feet down into the Caenlochan Glen.

A bothy on Glas Maol provided the shelter needed. Robert, once stripped and redressed in dry clothing, soon cheered up.

Crossing the shoulder of Glas Maol at 3318 feet we descended the Cairnwell Burn and had a wind assisted run into Braemar. Here, the weather station from the summit of Morrone, some 400feet lower than Glas Maol, reported wind speeds in excess of 90mph

In Wastwater YH sometime in the darkness with the building gently creaking as it settled, losing the heat of the day, a soft tap sounded close by my ear. The seconds dragged slowly by chipping at the night, creeping towards dawn. The tap came again. Stirring, I rolled over, tangled in my sheet sleeping bag.

Drifting back to sleep I was dragged awake by a tap, tap, a little louder, more insistent. Rubbing my eyes I listened to the sounds from the others in the dormitory. Pitch black, I could see nothing, only heard the sound of gentle breathing as they all slept on.

The tap came again, a demand in the knock. Now wide awake and senses alert I reckoned this must be the young females wanting to restart an unfinished conversation with the youngsters in my group.

Knock, knock, again it came. And a voice which seemed to say "*Waken up, will you?*" In the dark, trying to identify the location of the knock proved difficult. Slowly realisation dawned that it came from the corridor wall. Knock, knock! Those females had to be desperate. Knock, knock! It had moved to the door. Propping myself up on an elbow I hissed, "*Who is it? 'It's me,*" came back the fretful reply.

Out of my bunk I fumbled with the Yale bolt and opening the door to find Colin, resplendent in his drawers and bare legs. The smile on his face belied the fact he'd booped while going for a pee at 4.00am and locked himself out of the dorm.

General impressions suggested the tour was reasonably well organised, though some of the plans, like visiting the Kendalmint cake factory had come undone. Philip thought it was like a proper holiday, no place to place trudge, weather magic, people and places friendly, pubs great. Kevin thought it was hard but good fun; Robert said it was better than the previous year because more things were done.

And so to the last day; a kipper hanging in a sock on the washing line; Tony's clothes scattered among the geese; Douglas still trying to fathom out why he'd been asked if this was a mining village when he'd recommended a pub the previous night and told the others to take their pick between the lounge and the public bars; a sad farewell to the top YH and a burn-up to a small bike shop in Little Falkland to rebuild Hamish's collapsed wheel.

Burned brown and healthy, broke but happy.

Today's descent was a long one. As we came off the mountain we descended through orange groves and in Tatopani found orange trees in the centre of the town with very large green oranges.

From Ghorepani we've covered 13 miles in 8hrs 50min. Added to this is the climb of Poonhill which I estimate at 3 miles in 1hr 45min.

In Tatopani beer costs Rs80 a bottle. The lodge we're booked into doesn't sell food. Instead food was obtained in a restaurant across the street. Here the food tastes okay but the owner of our lodge, Namaste Lodge, also owns the eating place. In fact he seems to own half the village and we're told he monopolises the trade. As usual some beer was taken with our meal and in a semi-inebriated state we suggested to the young Nepali who served us that the beer should be charged to room 10 - our room being number 7.

Before darkness closed in we visited several other lodges. In one we were served by someone obviously not Nepali. She turned out to be a French doctor who is the only medical expert in the area. Her funding from a French

charity has ceased. She had hoped to set up a drug store in Tatopani for the Magyar people but with no funding it was unlikely to go ahead.

Food is a rip-off here. Not only does beer cost Rs80 per bottle but also nearly everything else seems grossly overcharged.

Sitting the next morning at a shaky table with a print cloth covering it, our tea has been served, sweet milk tea and we're waiting on breakfast. I've just had a glass of apple juice delivered. There are two inches of crushed apple floating on top.

Three planes have already droned overhead towards Jomsom. They look very high compared with those yesterday morning at the top of Ghorepani Pass.

Egg and potato and bread and tomato have just been served. I couldn't eat it all. The same Nepali waiter as last night places the meal in front of us. He laughs and kids us on that breakfast will be charged to room 10.

We seemed to cycle for miles on the gravel pan. Only a couple of times did we leave it. First to follow for a short time a trail which led through trees only to be led back to edge of the enormous expanse of the flood-plain and second to quickly get to the log bridges.

It was a fantastic feeling standing in the vast desert of gravel. Mountains tower each side of the valley and block the horizons north and south. Swirling dust obscures the light as the afternoon heads towards darkness. It was a private time and we stood a hundred yards apart. No-one else had come onto the gravel pan. Peering to the edge of visibility in the grey dust very few folk could be seen. Indeed, when the dust billowed and swirled in the strong wind, the occasional traveller disappeared and we felt completely alone.

The cursing women had sent us on the wrong side of the river. The foot traffic of the west bank didn't exist on the east where we were now forced to travel. Our pig-headedness wouldn't let us retrace and we continued blindly along the gravel pan in search of the log bridges as we approached Tukche.

Nearly opposite the town is a small village set high on the bank. It is unnamed. On our approach a crowd of children raced down to greet us. They pointed excitedly at the bikes and jabbered on about the wheels which may have been the first they had ever seen. Grabbing at the wheels they exclaimed in surprise when the knobbly tyres thrummed on their skin. They darted out of the way whenever we moved the bikes. Then their eyes travelled up and they fell about laughing at the sight of our hard hats. An adult came along and told us that the children laughed at the mushrooms on our heads.

Continuing, the going became more difficult until we were forced off the gravel where we cycled through trees along the bank. Directly opposite the town, its stacks of brushwood and masts with prayer flags clearly visible and fluttering in the wind, we saw a Nepali man crossing the rushing water. After wading each rivulet he lifted each foot horizontally in turn and allowed his short wellies to drain of water.

Following his example the easiest bits were selected and waded through. Some were shallow, others scary. The

water flowed grey and fast. The bottom couldn't be seen and stones moved when stood on. As some of the streams deepened the bikes were lifted clear lest the force of the water swept us off our feet.

Into Tukche is a bridge which leads to the entrance of the town. Herds of goats were being led over the bridge and trekkers, following the goats, excitedly asked us where we had come from.

Eventually our entry to Tukche was made. It was through a labyrinth in the wall which keeps out the wind and dust.

In Tukche the roofs are flat. There is no need to pitch roofs for it never snows or rains. Only the wind blows. The buildings are joined together to minimise the effect of this wind.

On the west canyon wall are many caves some of which are consecrated as shrines. *Roughstuffer*

Welfare Officer

Club Welfare Officers are Ian Wilson and Anna Liversidge. They can be contacted by telephone on 07919 280656. The email address to use is welfare@deeside.org

SVTTA

Membership of the SVTTA: Solo £20.00 and £25.00 for couples. Standards: multiple attempts at all distances - £10. Details: <http://www.svttta.org.uk/downloads.html>

Club Clothing

A sizing facility is available for members who wish to order new club clothing. There is also a small stock of garments available for emergency needs. Contact clubkit@deeside.org. There is also a small stock of clothing with outdated logos at discounted prices.

Youth Awards Scheme

Clubs with youth cyclists have put together an awards scheme for the riders. This is a North East wide scheme so all the riders who take part will be able to work towards a series of certificates and badges as their cycling develops. *Colin Allanach*

Kintore Beginners - Sunday

Confidence and mile building for the less experienced every Sunday throughout the year. Target pace is 14mph, but can vary according to group make up. This is a social, no drop ride, building distance up to 60 miles. Currently at 40 miles, average speed of 14 - 15mph.

25 Years Ago

SARAH PHILLIPS WINS NATIONAL TITLE

Sarah Phillips recaptured the Scottish Women's 25 mile TT title at Dundee on Sunday 04 June. Her time of 58.21 gave her a comfortable winning margin of 3.51 over Liz Clark of Johnstone Whs.

It is 4 years since Sarah last competed for a Scottish title and her success comes after her recent record breaking ride at 30 miles.

Her performance at 30 miles of 1.11.28 means she now holds all Scottish ladies records up to 100 miles, at 10, 25, 30, 50 and 100 miles.



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Wild Cycle Pit Stop

Ever had a problem with or on your bike out Lumsden way? Here's how to rescue yourself. Contact the Wild Cycle Pit Stop on alexis.zafiroopoulos@gmail.com or phone 07977 4666889

For Sale

Items will appear here for three consecutive issues. If the item sells before the final appearance please contact knockies@aol.com so that the details can be removed

- 1 Giant TCR Advanced 0 Large. See [here](#) for details (1)
- 2 One of my work colleagues bought this [bike](#) for commuting and has found it not suitable for his needs. He is offering it up for free to a good home where condition is as new and will fit someone between 5'9" and 6 feet. Subject to self-distancing, viewing and or collection can be held at our office, JAS, Unit 7, Abercrombie Court, Arnhall Business Park, Westhill, AB32 6FE. Tel: 01224 766770 / 07590 010080, Email neil.howarth@jas.com (2)
- 3 Cervelo R3 - New bike build – 56cm – new components (excl. wheels & cassette are used). Delightfully light and nimble machine. £2,200 without, £2,450 with wheels & cassette. Contact Jon Strachan on jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk (3)

CORONAVIRUS

Stay Safe Stay Home

Follow the rule on social distancing

Wash your hands often

COACHED TURBO SESSIONS

Wednesday – Stonehaven Community Centre
11.15am to 12.15 (doors open at 11am)
31 Oct 2018 – 27 Mar 2019

Thursday – Knockburn Sports Academy
10.00am to 11.00am (doors open at 9.45am)
01 Nov 2018 – 28 Mar 2019

Weekly Progression – All Abilities Catered For

The sessions will be structured and progressive throughout the winter months. This is the ideal way to get fitter over the winter and to be ready to enjoy the spring and summer.

****NOTE** YOU NEED TO BRING A BIKE AND TURBO TRAINER!!**

Cost (Blocks are payable in advance):

BLOCK 1: 8 sessions in Nov/Dec - £48 (£6 per session) when paid in advance or £7.50 per drop in session

BLOCK 2: 12 sessions in Jan/Feb/Mar - £72 (£6 per session) when paid in advance) or £7.50 per drop in session.

For more information please contact:
SARAH ROWE (ABCC Level 3 and BC Level 3 coach) srowe2020@btinternet.com or 07970919453

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This small area has been reserved to persuade each member who has read this far, to invite anyone showing an interest in cycling to apply for membership of Britain's biggest cycling club

Membership Application

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Date of Birth:

Please complete and return to Sandy Lindsay, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ Telephone (01467) 681330 or email: Knockies@aol.com



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