


Issue 562 January 2021

Cranks

Volume 47

The magazine of
Deeside Thistle Cycling Club

Sponsored by:



Tierney Strachan
PROCESS CONTROL ENGINEERING

Current Membership 604 (664)
SCU Membership 302 (349)

Editorial:

Will our sport ever be the same again? Losing the 2020 season was bad enough. Now it appears 2021 will be slow in starting, if ever.

Restrictions imposed after Christmas means that any organised activity is not permitted to go ahead. Any exercise should be done from your home with no driving to a collection point. Groups are non-existent with exercise only allowed with one other and social distancing maintained.

To help us get through this crisis please follow the rules.

The media is regularly guilty of sensationalising stories. And though it might stimulate interest would it not be far better to give a true account?

Just last week when we'd a wee peck of snow and after a few days of icy roads the news told us that the councils were in trouble. This winter they'd already used up half the quantity of salt and grit that they'd used last winter.

Little doubt the fact is correct. However, last winter could hardly be called winter with few days and nights below freezing and little snow anywhere. That's the main reason there's been a greater call to grit our roads and I'm sure, with our changing climate, the gritting is still below average.

Be sure to rinse your bike after you've been out.

PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

Remember,

today is the tomorrow you worried about yesterday

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

Following last Monday's announcement by the First Minister, Scottish Cycling has updated the COVID-19 guidance to reflect the latest Scottish Government legislation and sportscotland guidance. **Please take care to follow the rules, to not offend.** Go here: <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/article/20200313-Scottish-Cycling-Coronavirus-COVID19-Guidance-0>

Chairman's Message

2020 was probably the strangest and most difficult year in the club's history. Events cancelled, no races, no Evening league, being unable to have group rides or café stops. We have missed the social interactions that these events bring. As well as actually cycling, cyclists love to talk to other cyclists about cycling.

We have had to adapt to new ways of keeping in touch. The club now holds committee meetings online, subsequently having more concise and hopefully productive meetings. There has been a great team of people working in the background to keep the club running during this time. There have been fantastic online talks, Zwift events (some even raising funds for charity) and those involved in the youth group keeping this going when they were allowed to run this again.

2021 may well be just as difficult in some ways. However, as we know there is light at the end of the tunnel. At the end of this there will be events and races that I am sure we will be excited and enthused to be involved with. And I hope that we can count on members to help out.

Why not join us at the online AGM on the 29/01/21 to celebrate all those who have worked hard behind the scenes to keep the club running and organise the online events. It's also your chance to volunteer and to contribute ideas.

In the meantime, there will be more online talks and Zwift events for all to enjoy.

Best regards and safe cycling.

Andrew Harrington

Roadside Maintenance Session on Zoom

Total Endurance is holding a Roadside Bike Maintenance session on Zoom on 27 January. It is free and Deeside members are welcome to join. You may sign up on this link:

[Bike Maintenance Class: Road Side Maintenance & What's in your saddlebag](#)

Resumption (not) of Club Activities

With COVID-19 restrictions tightened from Boxing Day it has been decided no Group Cycling Activities will take place until Tier 4 restrictions have been lifted. Depending on updated Guidelines from Scottish Cycling arrangements for U18s may differ and are being reviewed.

SCNEG Update

Aberdeen city sports guys have been in touch. They are looking for someone to assist with their bid for the regional facilities fund bid. They have the opportunity to install a good bit of cycle facility in the city (think bike park). If anyone is interested in helping them develop this, please get in touch with me on - colinallanach@aol.com and I can chat to you and point you to the right guys in the city.

I know that SC have been in touch with race organisers about this year's calendar. Unfortunately, that has circumvented the process of sorting out regional dates, so we have no idea what the regional calendar looks like at the moment. A few folks have told me they are putting on events but not many. If your club is considering putting on an event can you let me know.

Now that we are in Tier 4 please familiarise yourselves with the restrictions that brings. The guidelines are [here](#). Hopefully, we are out of this before the 2021 season gets into full swing.

I'm aware we haven't had a regional AGM so I'm looking to do that early in the New Year, probably on-line somehow.

I seem to have blagged my way on to the SC board. We will see how that goes. I'm there to try to:

- a) Develop co-operation and closer bonds between cycling organisations at National and Regional level
- b) Ensure regional competition level is not lost
- c) Develop progression system for youth cycling
- d) Represent our part of Scotland

Stay safe, let's hope for a better 2021 *Colin Allanach*

Notes for Cranks

During 2020 my ability to find material to fill the pages of your monthly magazine, Cranks, has gradually become more and more difficult. With the Coronavirus curtailing most of the regular activities there has been little to write about and some months I've had to dig deep.

The January 2020 issue reached 143 pages. This issue has made it to 94.

You may be able to help. I'm sure there are many of you who have been involved in all sorts of things during lockdown which might be of interest to others. How about penning a few lines and sending it through to Knockies@deeside.org.

Affiliation to Scottish Cycling

We are delighted to let you know that the affiliation for Deeside Thistle CC has been approved for 2021. Your affiliation number is 111293.

Scottish Cycling appreciates Deeside Thistle CC support through affiliation. The impact of Covid-19 on Scottish Cycling and the sport has been significant. Your support will ensure that we can continue to meet the needs of members, clubs and the community in the year to come.

We have been overwhelmed by the number of clubs who have gone above and beyond this year to play their part in supporting their members and their communities - never before has the positive impact of sport in society been so evident.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all clubs for their commitment in ensuring the safe return to organised sporting activity. The seriousness with which clubs have approached this has demonstrated to the Scottish Government that sport can operate safely and responsibly, and we hope that this enables organised activity to continue.

Through completing affiliation, you have demonstrated that you meet the Minimum Operating Standards that we have introduced this year.

The Minimum Operating Standards are being introduced so that we can work with clubs to ensure that clubs have the requisite policies and procedures in place to create a safe and equitable environment for cycling. We plan to continue to review and develop these standards over the coming years to ensure that both your club and your members are safe and supported.

Full details of the Minimum Operating Standards can be found [here](#). While the full standards will not be in place until 2022, we would encourage all clubs to begin the process of understanding and implementing the standards in advance of this.

Scottish Cycling is here to support you and your club in meeting these standards, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us by emailing ClubDevelopment@scottishcycling.org.uk

On behalf of the Scottish Cycling Team, I would like to thank you for your affiliation and hope that you and your members enjoy a safe and successful year.

Craig Burn, CEO, Scottish Cycling

CTT Events 2021

See below a link for a list of events proposed for 2021 Handbook

Can you all please note that we will be compiling a Short Distance BAR in 2021 but we will not be asking the organisers for the district levy of £1 as was proposed and accepted for 2020.

Attachments available for download: [CTT Scotland 2021 Events](#)

Deeside Thistle CC Annual General Meeting

Your club's Annual General Meeting will take place on-line on Friday 29 January 2021 from 7.00pm. Members will be supplied with a link to join the meeting. AGM papers will be published on-line. This is your opportunity to get involved with the running of your club. If you are keen let us know. We are especially looking for someone to take on the role of posting suitable items on social media. See below for greater detail. If that's your interest get in contact on knockies@deeside.org

Social Media Expert - We feel confident that within our membership there is a person or people who might apply their social media skills in aid of the club. This might suit some of our younger members and could make a really good CV item for those future influencers... *'developing the DTCC brand – digital assets, educational material, general marketing and events promotion'* perhaps?

A couple of people could share the role. We're not looking for a big-time commitment; just an hour or two here and there, to keep a friendly and welcoming ethos front and centre to our social media presence by the following:

- Creating content, posting short snippets about what's happening in the club in general to the membership, acting on information from key members (youth, racing, social, committee)
- regularly review the DTCC (members only) and Deeside Thistle (open) Facebook pages, Twitter and Instagram pages, and generally keep the content fresh and varied
- copying this content to the news section of the club website
- and we're open to suggestions on other activities which would be interesting to the membership and keep the pages engaging.

Please get in touch to put your name forward, or just to find out more – no pressure at all. Contact me on lsarkis4@gmail.com *Laura Sarkis*

Ride The North

Half price places available for anyone interested in fundraising for #TeamAC.

Aberdeen Cyrenians is a local, independent charity that has been tackling homelessness for over 50 years. We provide valuable support and assistance to individuals and families that are homeless or at risk of losing their home. Tickets can be purchased through the following link:

[Ride the North for Aberdeen Cyrenians Tickets, Huntly | Eventbrite](#)

CLUBMAN OF THE YEAR

Presentation of Awards

Each year your Club has a celebration where the various Club Champions and Award Winners are presented with their trophies. This year things are different. There have been no Championships to celebrate so, consequently, no winners to fete. And all the restrictions in place prevents a function being held.

That being said, we do still have a reason to celebrate accolades being awarded to some members. These are the Club's Member of the Year Awards which are decided upon by your Club's Committee.

We have three Awards:

- The **Mary Lindsay Award** shall go annually to the member who has made a significant contribution during the year within our Youth section
- The **Dave Anderson Award** shall go annually to the member who has done the most for the Club during the year exclusive to competition
- The **Alan Campbell Chairman's Award** shall go annually to the member who the current Chairman feels has made a significant contribution to the Club during the year exclusive to competition

After careful consideration, the Mary Lindsay Award is to be presented to **Gavin Baxter**. Gavin has worked tirelessly with the Off-Road section of our Youth Group and even with the stringencies placed on organising any activity has still managed to keep the MTB riders active and focussed.

Several names were considered for the Dave Anderson Award. Simon Stromberg and Andy Kerr on a regular basis both devote a lot of time to ensuring members with the facilities can take part in Zwift competition, Jon Strachan for maintaining the club's clothing facility. The fourth name in the frame is **Sandy Lindsay** who is to receive the award for his commitment to club communication and administration.

Lastly, the Alan Campbell Chairman's Award had no contest. For his unstinting efforts in engineering the revamping of the Club's website, for starting the process of transferring the club's admin to Office 365 and for managing the regular Zoom interviews, this Award is made to **Peter Smart**. Peter's quiet and diligent application has ensured that the club has regularly supplied high quality items of interest for our members.

The 20th ranked Zwift rider in the World is one of our newest members - [Zwift Power - Christopher Ashton](#)

Annual Subscriptions

Some members have still to pay their Annual Subscription. Are you one of these? We hope that you'll continue to support your club through and out of Covid-19 and now that we are entering the new Club year please go here to renew yours: <http://deeside.org/join/>

- or do a Bank Transfer to TSB Sort Code 30 10 01, Account No 00802182
- you can telephone 07867 857221 when a card payment can be taken over the phone
- you may also pay your fees by cheque (made out to Deeside Thistle Cycling Club) and sent to Sandy Lindsay, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ

You may have children and spouse/partner listed as members so don't forget to include them when renewing - or if they are not already listed now's your chance to get them on the club register.

Fees are as follows:

Over 18	£23
16 – 18	£12
Under 16	£ 7
Spouse or partner of an existing member	£ 2
Each child (under 12) of existing member	£ 2
Associate member	£ 7

Updating Information

Most members have already replied with requested details, but others are still waited on. If you've not replied please let me have the below - **this, even if you think the information I have is correct.**

Due to the current situation with the Covid-19 pandemic it may be a requirement for NHS to contact members. Though the club does have a comprehensive record of club member details this is only guaranteed correct at the time it was submitted to me (**sometimes years ago when you may not have had a mobile phone and addresses, and mobile numbers do change**).

In order to meet our responsibilities please reply to info@deeside.org with your up-to-date details - this should include other members of your family who are also members:

Name:

Address:

Post Code:

Date of Birth:

Email Address:

Home Phone:

Mobile Phone:

Emergency Contact Name:

Emergency Contact Relationship:

Emergency Contact Phone(s)

Sandy L

Zwift Sunday Club Endurance Ride

Created and administered by Simon Stromberg

We now have a Sunday Club Endurance Ride on Zwift, with different groups at a different pace. Details [here](#). This is run in partnership with ZwiftScotland group.

There will be different groups formed on ride each at a different pace. Regrouping at top of KOMs.



ZWIFT.COM

Zoom Interviews

A number of successful Zoom Interviews were conducted during 2020, notably that with Pippa York, Allen Peiper and Isla Short as well as in depth discussions on mechanics.

We'd like to continue these, so your input is welcome. What type of Zoom would you like to see next, to cheer and motivate us in these times? Tech/ nutrition/ coaching, current top-flight riders, past champions, etc?

Let us know. Contact Laura on lsarkis4@gmail.com

Club Kit Order

Pactimo kit orders may be collected from Tierney Strachan, 12 Greenbank Place, East Tullos, Aberdeen, AB12 3BT. 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 telephone the office number, 01224 295000. If the main gates are closed, we are closed.

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, let me know and possibly we can do a swap or refund.

I can post out to those that want it. Let me know and I 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.

Any queries contact clubkit@deeside.org *Jon Strachan*

To a Mouse

(Hardly a cycling ode but with appropriate sentiments for today)

Robert Burns

*Wee, sleeket, cowran, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickerin brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee
Wi' murd'ring pattle!*

*I'm truly sorry Man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!*

*I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve.
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin wi' the lave,
An' never miss 't!*

*Thy wee-bit housie, too, in ruin!
It's silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell an' keen!*

*Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary Winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel coulter past
Out thro' thy cell.*

*That wee-bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Has cost thee monie a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the Winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!*

*But Mousie, thou art no thy-lane,
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an' pain,
For promis'd joy!*

*Still, thou art blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But Och! I backward cast my e'e,
On prospects drear!
An' forward tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!*

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**

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 refer to it. It will also be highlighted to new members.

New Members

The following new or returning members have joined in recent weeks

2990	Harry Grahamslaw	Banchory	13
2991	Christopher Ashton	Aberdeen	32

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.

KNOCKBURN LOCH MANAGEMENT

John Huston Knockburn Site Manager, Knockburn Loch, Strachan, AB31 6LL
info@knockburn.co.uk, 01330 822234 / 07741314999
www.knockburn.co.uk. You can like us on [FaceBook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#)

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>

Zwift and Strava Participants

Many folks 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. 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: <http://deeside.org/join/> or tell them to drop a note to info@deeside.org

25 Years Ago

THE GRAEME OBREE WEEKEND

In the history of cycling there has only been one Scottish World Champion. Robert Millar has been 4th in the Road-Race, but Graeme has been professional pursuit champion twice - in 1993 and again in 1995 as well as twice holding the highly prestigious one-hour record. But being a champion, even World Champion, is not enough to guarantee a successful weekend.

When Graeme recently became sponsored by SCOTOIL, our chairman, Alan Campbell, asked Ian Davidson of SCOTOIL (who is now one of our members) if Graeme could do something for us in Aberdeen. The answer came quickly - yes, certainly. Ian Davidson immediately threw the resources of SCOTOIL and public relations experts behind the venture. Anyone of the 160 plus people in the hall that Friday will know that the sound and visuals were highly professional and a credit to the sport. But even that does not guarantee success. Yes, the added ingredient, of course, is the Graeme Obree personality and that guaranteed the build-up was entirely justified.

Graeme is a highly engaging, personable, articulate and humorous individual. In particular he took us through the feelings that he encountered when the UCI banned the Obree tuck position.

Even without a coach, team of doctors, equipment supplies, training sessions in the sun, etc, etc, etc, he has proved that someone from Scotland with the dedication and talent can make it to the very top.

An ordinary guy but extraordinary in the way he used his talents. Clearly someone who loves riding the bike - a real cyclist.

The following morning Graeme led a training run on a wet day and spoke to all the riders until the last few miles when he allowed his legs to do the talking. He dropped everyone comprehensively - and he was on his mountain bike!

Welfare Officers

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

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.

Have you paid your Club Fees? Go here:
http://deeside.org/?page_id=29



Britain's National Cyclists' Association

Working for all Cyclists

Newcomers are welcome particularly on the Morning/Slower Full Day runs.

Medium and Faster Full Day runs are for the more experienced

For more information visit our website:

<http://www.ctcgrampian.org.uk>

Chairman	John B	01224 571984
Secretary	Sheila	01224 639012
Runs Co-ordinator	John S	01224 790269
Social Secretary	Heather	01224 699399
Treasurer	John C	
Membership	John T	01224 639012

Right to Ride Representatives

South Aberdeenshire	Vacant	
Central Aberdeenshire	Vacant	
North Aberdeenshire	Rod	01467 623317
Aberdeen City	Jean	01224 315222

Runs Co-ordinators

Try Cycling Rides	Moira D	
Morning Runs	Cindy	01224 310719
Slower Full Day Runs	Heather	01224 699399
Medium Full Day Runs	Sheila	01224 63901
Faster Full Day Runs	John S	01224 790269

Synopsis of Meeting 04/01/2021

A Finance and Management Committee meeting took place on-line, on Monday 04 January 2021. In attendance were Andrew Harrington, Sandy Lindsay, David Eastwood, Sam Long, Laura Sarkis, Peter Smart, Neil Stables, Simon Stromberg, Mark Walker, David Walton and Steve Walton.

Agenda

Apologies – No apologies

1 Minutes of Previous Meeting – Accepted

2 Business Arising from Minute

- a) **Annual Trophies** – Recommendations for the Mary Lindsay Award had been passed to the Youth section for consideration and a recipient selected. The Annual Chairman's Award had been decided. The Dave Anderson Trophy was discussed and a recipient confirmed. An announcement of the winners will be made in January Cranks and on Social Media. Last year's

winners will be contacted to have the trophies returned for engraving

- b) **Events Calendar 2021** – Aberdeen Exhibition Centre is to be contacted re the use of its carpark as a possible race circuit

3 New Business

- a) **Annual General Meeting** – The AGM will take place on-line on Friday 29 January 2021. Members will be supplied with a link to join the meeting. AGM papers will be published on-line. Existing Committee Members are to be invited to continue in post and the general membership is to be asked to volunteer/nominate for election

- b) **Support for Club Activities** – Deeside Thistle Zwift competitions have been held successfully for three years and in conjunction with Moray Firth CC attract competitors world-wide. Various types of high-quality competition take place. It was agreed to continue to support this and a budget is to be prepared

- c) **Social Media Posts** – A job description is to be prepared for the tasks surrounding the updating of information on the various club Social Media outlets. This will be distributed to the general membership

- b) **ZOOM Interviews** – A poll is to be posted on Social Media, through Monday Notes and Cranks asking members to suggest topics for future ZOOM Interviews

4 **Any Other Business** – None

5 **Next Meeting** – AGM 29 January 2021, 7.00pm

CORONAVIRUS

Stay Safe Stay Home

Follow the rule on social distancing

Wash your hands often

Do your bit to help keep it at bay

Historical Reminiscences

(Part 28)

Alfredo Stephanini, aka Freddie Stephen, edited the *Scottish Clubman*, a magazine devoted to Scottish motor-sport. Freddie also made ice-cream to a secret recipe.

In the late 19th century, the story goes, the Guilianotti family moved from Italy to Stonehaven where they soon established a confectioner and ice cream parlour. Though Freddie made the ice-cream his mother was the proprietor.

I got to know Freddie as long ago as the early 1960s. Before cycling took over, I'd a passion for motocross and car rallying and Freddie gave me access to events throughout the north-east.

Another string to Freddie's bow was freelance reporting and press photography. Once starting to compete I'd head out after the cycle race to Guilianotti's on Evan Street in Stonehaven where Freddie let me have access to his office. There I'd phone results through to the *P&J, Evening Express* and Anne Horne.

Anne lived in Glasgow. She'd been a formidable competitor in her day. Folk were terrified of her, but she had uses. Her day job also involved the papers and she'd pass the information on to National dailies and the cycling press.

I got to know Vi MacDonald when still at school. She was a local councillor in Stonehaven and her husband managed the TSB branch.

Charged with the task of sourcing adverts for my school's annual magazine the TSB came up trumps and Vi delivered the copy to me.

Once departing the haloed shrine of secondary education, I remained in contact with Vi and when I asked her to recommend that Stonehaven Council back a cycle event in the area, she heartily agreed.

The first event took place during the *R W Thomson Rally*, a weekend of events commemorating the genius of Thomson.

Robert William Thomson, born in Stonehaven in 1822, invented the fountain pen. That pen may be a bit archaic now but just ask Alan Gibb what I always had in my pocket.

Which reminds me of the night I spent in the quarry on Beattock Summit. Soaked and frozen, having tried to sleep through a snow-storm with nothing to protect me save for my trusty oilskin cycle cape, to my dismay I discovered my *Quink* charged *Parker Sonnet* had disappeared.

The pen was only a small part of Thomson's inventive life and most importantly for the world today he designed and built the earliest pneumatic tyres.

The cycle event sanctioned by Stonehaven Council, took riders round several laps of Swanley. An 11-mile circuit it is quite lumpy, though nothing dramatic, first on the Slug, then to follow the narrow winding road past Swanley and past the cottage I lived in.

Riding those roads every day would give me a distinct advantage. I knew every corner; every climb and I'd use this local knowledge to good effect at the right time.

On the third lap, a few of us in the leading group had just passed Snob Cottage, swept down the rapid descent past the Tentyhillock sign, see-sawed over the humpbacked bridge and lined up for the sharp left hander at the Clachanshiels road-end.

This was the moment. Kicking hard I'd make a break. The climb past Bossholes would see me establish enough distance to ride home alone and victorious.

Into the left hander the adhesion provided by Thomson's invention failed. Sliding tangentially, I eventually hit the tarmac and continued, bouncing over the grass verge underneath a spikey fence. *Steve MacQueen* had nothing on me as I came to a halt, limbs gouged and raked by the barbed wire.

The storm came late. Tearing winds blasted horizontal spicules of ice against my face. Pinpricks of blood appeared on my cheek. A shielding hand could only stop so many of the stabbing shards. Ecstasy. Those last few miles home were tough.

The storm blew itself out overnight. The morning dawned calm with everything hidden under a deep blanket of snow. Corniches curled over the tops of dykes. Through a sheltered forest where the snow lay less deep white stuff fanned out from the brake blocks. Then drifts, hedge high, blocked the Slug as I headed to work. Nothing else moved.

The drifts, brown, with wind-swept debris from fields, were packed rock hard and supported the bike.

A massive blow-out in the front tyre on the steep side of the Slug from Cairn Monearn saw me limp the few miles to Ian Marr's shop at Kirkton of Durris.

It could have been the speed of my descent and the centrifugal force in the rotating wheel that caused the tyre to expand and allowed the tube to climb out. It could have been bad luck. The four-inch split proved it wasn't just a snake bite or splinter of glass.

Ian Marr's shop has gone; the counter chopped to firewood, the shelves relegated to an outhouse, the space reclaimed as a living room.

These country shops were a Godsend. Before the days of the supermarket and the Open All Hours Coopie, folk relied on them for everyday provision. They'd sell tins of Spam, tins of prunes, Tilly lamp mantles, candles, pink paraffin and myriad other things necessary to survive. They have gone. They always closed on a Wednesday afternoon, and never stayed open beyond 5.30 in the afternoon.

Ian unlocked the door for me and though no tubes were stocked he did have a sheet of rubber patching and a tube of glue.

Then there was the time when heading home from the club, a Friday night reveller driving a Mini, nearly took my front wheel away as he dived across me. No doubt going to a late-night party, he accelerated along the lane leading to Auchlunies House just south of Ardoe.

Not far from there, somewhere between Stranog and Westside, I punctured. Of course, as often, I lacked the spare tube and, in the darkness, couldn't be bothered faffing with the repair.

So, climbing the dyke, I visited a wee derelict church just half a field away. There, I laboriously stuffed grass, twisted to rope, into the tyre.

The Mounth (Mountain) Roads, and there are many, cross the hills on the south side of the Dee valley. Some will have been there for a 1000 and more years; others maybe just a few hundred. But they are historically significant.

Edward Longshanks, the Hammer of the Scots, is reputed to have used the Cryne Corse Mounth from Drumlithie to Durris before he sacked Aberdeen in 1296. And later that year, returning south from the successful annexation of Kildrummy Castle, he is said to have left Deeside via the Firmounth which links Kincardine O'Neil with Glen Esk in Angus.

Then, in the Covenanted times, mid-17th century, the Marquess of Montrose brought 9000 men to Aberdeen along the Causeymounth, from Stonehaven to the Blue Hill at Bridge of Dee.

The Causeymounth is the furthest east, paralleling the main Aberdeen road. Its name comes from the causeway built across Hare Moss just north of Portlethen.

Furthest west is Cairnwell, the Devil's Elbow road, linking Braemar with Spital of Glenshee. In between these two are more than a dozen others used as drove roads linking the farms on Deeside, and further north, with markets in Angus and Perthshire.

The Stonehaven area is known as the Fatherland of Burns. Clochnahill, a farm just south of Stonehaven, is where William Burns, Robert's father, was born. Robert's grandfather and several generations before, farmed Bogjurgan on the Auchenblae road.

The Crynecorse Mounth was used as a drove road from Kirkton of Durris to the markets at Paldy Fair, Drumlithie. It passes close by Bogjurgan Farm. From here I'd often led parties of schoolkids on their first off-road experience.

Just above Cleughead, on the Braes o'Blairourie, half a mile into the journey we entered the trees. Getting them to stack their bikes tidily we sat in a circle.

Trying to create an atmosphere I asked them to be quiet, to listen. Could they hear the jangle of horse harness; the rumble of wagons? Listening intently nothing could be heard; not even a breath of wind in the trees. Then a gentle to-whit-to-woo broke the silence. Their heads turned as one, to see a baby tawny owl sitting watching us.

The German Bakery is passed and out of the town the Kali Ghandaki gravel pan spreads widely. Pedalling down onto it the vastness gave us, once again, a tremendous feeling of isolation yet all around are hundreds of pilgrims now heading south from Muktinath.

Some of the pilgrims can hardly walk. We'd already seen a blind man being led by a companion. Speaking with them we learn that they are brothers and have walked from the plains of India. A man carries his crippled wife.

Spotting a few Nepalis (Indians) well out on the gravel I changed direction from the beaten path to go to speak with them. Realisation had dawned that in the Kali Ghandaki is where fossils are abundant. They told me to search for the black stones and showed me how to open them.

Finding one I broke it in two - nothing. Then another was split, and another. One of the chaps showed me one he'd found. It had a gold trace in the centre. He showed me one with a fossilised ammonite.

Picking up another, smooth, black rounded stone about the size of a lime, I hammered at it. It split and falling open I found a perfect ammonite traced with gold. Of course, I was not fooled. Yellow coloured it might be but in truth it carried the name of *fool's gold*, iron pyrites. These fossils may be common, but I regard my find as one in a lifetime. As the searchers told me "*You find one with gold you be rich man.*"

Kagbeni is the fortress town from where trekkers head towards Muktinath and the Thorung La on the Annapurna circuit. A few, a very few, also head further north past a sign which says, "*Restricted Area - No Entry*".

Collectivism means poorly managed farming methods. Cycling from Novgorod to Moscow few tractors were seen

and implements were old. Much of the work is still done by hand. That aside, people appeared to manage with all the houses well cared for and each with well stocked gardens. Entrepreneurs sold produce and souvenirs by the road-side.

In Moscow, the mayor is desperate to be remembered for improving the facade of his city. It means that churches are being repaired and roads maintained, museums are being made more public and dour Scotsmen are allowed to dance in Red Square. But what he isn't doing is improving public services.

The privilege was ours to be allowed inside the Burns Unit of Children's Hospital No9. It is dreadful. The charity for which Alastair and I were doing our little bit is rebuilding the laundry at this hospital. This is to allow bed linen to be cleaned and maintained at hand rather than disappear for months into a corrupt and inadequate service elsewhere. The building should be back in operation within three months. There are distressing shortages. Dressings, which here, would be discarded, are washed and re-used, often makeshift bandages must be utilised. Dressings are only changed weekly.

One mother allowed us to talk with her daughter. The family had been sitting in their living room in Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, when a stray shell came through the window. The girl was badly burned over all her body. Now past the worst, her cries of pain as her dressings were removed, brought tears to our eyes and made us wonder how some more help can be given.

Until the new states have gone through their period of transition to a new enlightened management it is unlikely that hospitals will receive more help than the minimum they are getting. It is impossible to comprehend the cost of improvements, maintenance of equipment, provision of drugs and dressings.

Roughstuffer

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 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 (1)
- 2 a) Cougar road bike: Red frame. Acciaio 18 MCDV6 H.T steel. 8 spd Dura ace groupset. Fir Quasar wheelset (Ultegra hubs). Tubular. Sis downshifters. Excellent condition. [Photo](#) (1)
b) Battaglin Road bike (silver/red) Steel. Dura Ace groupset. 170cranks 9spd sis shifters. Shamans clincher wheel set. 1 small scratch otherwise excellent condition. [Photo](#) (1)
c) Cannondale TT bike. Red. Campag Chorus chainset. Dura Ace rear mech. Dura Ace downtube shifters. Dura Ace brakes. Syntace TT bars. Time

clipless pedals. Look Ergostem (highly adjustable). Zipp 808 wheels. Excellent condition. [Photo](#) (1)
All bikes suit rider 5'7" +/- . Offers to Norman Hatton on norman_hatton@hotmail.com

- 3 16-inch Islabike, red. Excellent condition. Suitable for age 4+. Widely accepted as one of the best quality brands. Ideal for the young cyclist who has mastered the balance bike and wants to pedal! 50% of the sale price will be donated to charity. Cost £350. Sale price: £200:00. Contact Malcolm Wilson, malcywilson@me.com 07970 227548 (1)
- 4 Whyte T-129 RS - 2017 awesome trail bike in mint condition. Spec: Fork: FOX 34 Float Performance 29 110x15, Rear shock: FOX Float DPS Performance, Brakes: Shimano XT M8000, Drivetrain: Shimano XT M8000, Seatpost: RockShox Reverb Stealth (170 mm), Stem: Whyte Gravity Stem 40 mm, Handlebar: Whyte Custom 760 mm x 15 mm rise, Wheels: RaceFace ARC-27 with Hope PRO4 Rear Hub, Weight: 13.8 kg. Pictures and details on request. £1250. Contact Glenn Brown on glennrbrwn@gmail.com

Wanted

- 1 A couple of pairs of a V brake callipers that are laid round doing nothing. Just trying to get a friend's bike back on the road. Please contact me on richard4750@hotmail.co.uk (3)

Found

- 1 I found a pair of ladies black and yellow gloves at the Glassel junction some time ago. They can be collected here at MPH, Birchmoss **Bert**



Grampian Health Foods
Mon - Fri 9 am - 6 pm
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Sunday Closed
34 Market Street
Aberdeen

Ian Grant

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CORONAVIRUS
Stay Safe Stay Home
Follow the rule on social distancing
Wash your hands often
Do your bit to keep it at bay

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

Name:

Address:

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Email:

Date of Birth:

Please complete and return to Sandy Lindsay,
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Telephone 01467 681330 or email:
knockies@aol.com