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Cranks

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The magazine of
Deeside Thistle Cycling Club
Sponsored by:

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Current Membership 603 (600)
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Editorial:

It's years since an emergency meeting was called for all of the local cycling clubs. The issue at that time was the dearth of youngsters enrolling in our clubs. From that meeting a youth group formed with the aim to develop an interest in our sport and as the youngsters progressed, they could choose which club to join.

That group evolved into Grampian Tigers and eventually started to operate out of Stonehaven. Another contingent, led by Ashley Pearson, sprouted wings and became the Deeside's youth group.

It has grown to about 100 strong and is led by a dedicated team of elected officials and parents. They travel to events throughout the country on a weekly basis and are respected wherever they go. They compete in all disciplines from road and track to cyclo-cross and downhill. There is seldom an event which doesn't have a Deeside youngster on the podium.

Several of these youngsters are now at an age where they are vying for, and winning, National Honours in their own categories.

Those fears I had when calling that meeting in Echt Hall all those years ago; when I thought our sport wasn't going to be able to replace the aging talent; would seem to be unfounded.

PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

Success isn't a result of spontaneous combustion. You must set yourself on fire - Arnold H. Glasow

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@deeside.org

Falling Leaves

The Falling Leaves Autumn Classic Reliability Trial will be on SATURDAY
25 September 2021

It will follow an undulating route of 100 miles or 100km (**yet to be confirmed**). It is definitely not a race - a social ride in groups.

You are invited to submit your entry now to members@deeside.org.

Please specify whether it's the 100 Miles or 100km route you wish to ride and whether you wish to go with a Slow, Medium, or more Sporting group.

Catering will be limited due to the restrictions of Covid19 but more info nearer the time. **HQ is confirmed as Echt Hal**

Alan Campbell

DTCC Midmar RR 25/08/2021

A big field made a dash for the line in our end of season RR organised by Mark Walker and Greg Quinn. Veli Mati Raikkonen, of Granite City, took the spoils.

Result Men Cats 3/4

1 Veli-Matti Raikkonen GCRT 3laps in 01:21:44, 2 Ryan Bunyan TR @ 1sec, 3 Ray Wilson RBSTH, 4 Fergus Robinson HRP @ st, 5 Jamie Liversidge DTCC @ 2sec, 6 Mark Walker DTCC @ st, 7 Ian Russell Una @ 4sec, 8 Martin Reynolds KR @ st, 9 Daniel Long ECC @ 5sec, 10 Mark Madigan ECC @ 6sec, 11 David Paterson LCC @ 7sec, 12 Chris Main DTCC, 13 Kyle McIntosh, Una @ st, 14 Richie Sim MFCC @ 8sec, 15 Marc Roberts ECC @ 10sec, 16 Jamie Chree UA @ 13sec, 17 Richard Harris Una @ 14sec, 18 Alan Smith YCC @ 16sec, 19 Stuart Gordon DTCC @ 19sec, 20 Scott Davidson MFCC @ 34sec, 21 Chris Petrie AWCC @ 36sec, 22 Stuart King YCC @ 6:27, 23 Ewan Gronkowski YCC @ 6:29, 24 Steven Sharp EN @ 6:31, 25 Ross Macmillan DCC @ 6:33, 26 Kyle Mowbray EN @ 7:00, 27 James Merry NEU @ 8:00, 28 Nicholas Moir ECC @ 08:02, 29 Innes Jamieson DTCC @ 8:05, 30 Alexander Bond FCC @ 8:06, 31 Peter Davies EN @ 8:06, 32 Lewis Coffin DTCC @ 8:07, 33 Jamie Taylor UA @ 8:13, 34 Andrew McDonald UA @ 8:23, 35 Stephen Wilson EN @ 8:27, 36 Iain Macleod KR @ 11:51, 37 John

Alexander UA @ 13:04, 38 Christopher Ashton DTCC @ 22:44

Result Women E/1/2/3/4

1 Lorna Breetzke ECC 3 laps in 1:30:26, 2 Victoria Smith AC @ 3:37, 3 Harriet Wilson TR @ 4:43, 4 Arianne Holland FV, 5 Kate Richardson Una @ st, 6 Erin Murphy DTCC @ 4:44, 7 Isla Long DTCC @ 4:48, 8 Ruth Quigley UA @ 13:58, 9 Rachel Hardman UA @ 20:20

Youth and Juniors Activities

Two Deesiders made the trip to South Wales to take part in a 2-day stage race at Pembrey. Arabella Blackburn and Thea Aitken completed 4 races over the weekend (prologue time trial, 2 x crit races and a 20 min sprint). Arabella placed 2nd on GC and Thea 14th. Meanwhile Jacob Smith was placed 9th in the Tour of the Mendips with Erin Murphy performing well in the female counterpart where she also placed 9th.

A 15 strong contingent headed to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Headquarters in Cambuslang for the Ignite Crit hosted by Clydesdale Colts. There was strong racing from all the DTCC youths with plenty of green on the podiums. See [here](#).

The Spokes Autumn Dash took place at Lochgelly with 2 days of racing for the Youth As and Bs and support races on the Saturday for the category C, D and Es. It was great to see more of our younger riders taking to the track with 10 DTCC youths competing in the 12 and under races. DTCC Junior, Erin Murphy, was also racing this weekend, Erin was in Kincaig for the 70km Sally Anne Lowe Memorial Race. Erin placed 3rd overall and became the Scottish Junior Road champion. Scottish cycling's report on Erin's race can be found [here](#).

Young People's Panel Selection

Two Deeside Thistle members have been selected for the second Scottish Young People's Panel.

The official announcement on 24 August that Ailsa Long and Molly Evans had been selected is here: <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/article/20210823-Scottish-Cycling-announces-its-second-Young-People-s-Panel-0>

Both girls are a credit to your club, and we look forward to working with them over the next two years.

Fraser Johnston

Club Branded Aluminium Water Bottles

We have purchased a stock of club branded, high quality, aluminium 750ML water bottles which feature a handy carabiner for attachment. Cost is only £5.00 per bottle. Go [here](#) for more information and to order yours.

UK School Games

Last weekend Deeside Thistle youth riders Elliot Rowe, Arabella Blackburn and Evie White represented Scotland in the UK School Games finals held at Loughborough University.

The cycling events were run on an inter-regional basis with Scotland competing against the other British Cycling regions - Wales, Ulster, Eastern, North East, North West, South, South East, West Midlands, East Midlands, Central and Yorkshire.

Each team consisted of 4 boys and 4 girls and races were held over 3 days on the velodrome, a crit circuit and a closed road circuit.



The team met up with team manager Christie Pollock at a hotel on the outskirts of Edinburgh early on Thursday morning for the long drive south for the opening ceremony. Bikes and kit went separately with Evan Oliphant, who was coach, mechanic, driver, rider support and everything else for the weekend.

Day 1 – Track

The team was up early on Friday morning for a coach trip to Manchester for the track sessions. The nearby Derby velo is currently being used as a covid vaccination centre so was unavailable.

Each rider entered 2 events as well as the team pursuit where all riders rode against the clock at the end of the day.

In the girl's races Arabella and her partner (Sarah Johnstone from ERC) picked up superb 2nd place in the team sprint. Arabella followed this up with 5th place in the Keirin final. She had clearly brought her sprinting legs with her.



The first endurance event was the scratch race. Evie finished 12th with her teammate (Erin Boothman from East Kilbride) in 7th place in the field of 24 riders.



Erin and Evie, inspired by Katie Archibald and Laura Kenny's fluoro helmets in Tokyo, put on a pair of matching pink Velotoze and combined for a surprising 2nd place in their first ever madison.

The final race for the four girls was the team pursuit, where they put in a disciplined ride to claim another excellent 2nd place.

The boys team battled well throughout the day consistently finishing towards the front of the races, but without any podiums. That changed in the final race of the day when Elliot and team matched the girl's earlier performance taking a fantastic 2nd place in the team pursuit.



At the close of play, team Scotland headed back to Loughborough in a commendable 3rd place (bronze medal position).

Day 2

A busy day of racing on the Loughborough University campus awaited the riders on Saturday.

The racing started early in the morning with an individual hill climb to set the seedings for the street sprints later in the morning. The street sprint is a 4-rider race on the same twisty climb.

After a series of heats and finals all riders were ranked, and points allocated for the team competition. A little extra

pressure was added knowing that the racing was shown live on YouTube.

The standout performance was by Deeside's own pocket rocket Arabella, who convincingly won the girl's event. All the more remarkable as Arabella is still a youth B.

In the boy's events Jamie reached the final, finishing with a bronze medal with Elliot in 12th place keeping the points tally ticking along.

The crit racing started after a short break for lunch. Three full gas 15-minute races for both the boys and girls. With little recovery time between races and each race covering multiple ascents of the climb, this was a test of endurance as well as sprinting.

The team scoring was complicated! Each team's top individual result in each race counted to the team points. However, each rider could only score in only 1 race. So, if you won race the first race you had maximised your points for the team. Your choice was then to rest or work for teammates in the following races. All very confusing for the riders, never mind the parents watching online trying to work out what was going on. Gridding also appeared random to add to the happy confusion.

The racing was fast and furious from the start, with the Scottish contingent always near the front of affairs. The hours of practicing cornering at Lochgelly and Knockburn gave them a visible advantage over some less experienced teams.

The standout performance from team Scotland on day 2 was Elliot almost taking the win in the 3rd boy's race. This is well worth a watch on YouTube if you want to see the skill level of our young racers.
<https://youtu.be/ZOp6gwUivpQ>

Solid performances from all riders raised Scotland up the team standings and into 2nd place at the end of day 2.

Day 3

The sun was shining on the final day as the riders and crews headed into Leicestershire for the road races on the Slawston circuit. At 1hr 45mins for each race these were longer than the usual British series races and a world apart from the 30 minutes Scottish youth races. For many riders this was the first time they needed to carry food and grab bottles in a race.

The girls were first off at 10:45, just as the temperature started rising.

A 6.6km circuit with a draggy climb every lap. The race started gingerly with riders seemingly worried about their legs in the latter part of the race.

The field gradually whittled down every lap until a group of 20-25 girls remained with 3 laps to go. Big attacks over the next couple of laps split the field with a group of 4 strong girls getting clear to establish a 1-minute lead.

The reduced peloton down to just 12 riders, including Arabella, Evie and Erin. Unfortunately, with 2 laps to go,

Erin punctured and lost time. The break stayed away, but Arabella again showed her sprinting prowess winning the bunch kick for 5th. Evie crossed the line in the same time in 11th place.



The boy's race was the typical smash-fest, with relentless attacking from the gun. Jamie, as instructed, successfully competed for the prime bonus points before dropping back and eventually being pulled with other dropped riders.

The other three remained active throughout with Corey launching a huge final lap effort in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to bridge to the break. This allowed Cormac and Elliot to sit in and finish towards the front of the bunch sprint in 11th and 12th respectively.

Totting up the points and Scotland held onto 2nd place, with each rider, coach and manager presented with a silver medal.

From Slawston it was straight back on the coach for the long drive to Edinburgh arriving back at, midnight after a couple of short detours into Leeds and Newcastle to drop off the Yorkshire and North East teams.

A fantastic weekend racing where the DTCC youth riders all contributed to the successful Team Scotland performance.

Kelvin Whyte

Scottish Downhill Championships

The club had 7 Youth and Junior DTCC riders (and coach Jonathan) racing at the Scottish DH Championships at Fort William.

Practice Day

Heavy rain overnight on Friday set up the track nicely and grip was in plentiful supply as the first practice laps went in. With several of the older riders nailing the motorway and Tiso jump, parental nerves were certainly going to be tested over the weekend. A few practice sessions over the summer meant our gang were up to speed on the brutal World Cup track pretty quickly, meaning the riders were able to concentrate on specific features.

Freya had an off midway through practice, just after the deer fence dropping into the woods, and opted to sit out the afternoon. Everybody else escaped generally unscathed,

although wrists and fingers were taking a hammering on the rough track and huge jumps.

Whoever said practice makes perfect obviously didn't mean bikes and some fairly heavy duty maintenance was required overnight.

Race Day Practice

More rain greeted us first thing, but a bright and breezy day left the track in reasonably good condition. Final practice went off without a hitch, with most riders opting for a single lap to preserve bodies and bikes.

Finals

Quick summaries - full results on Roots and Rain soon.

Finn W: Two good runs, couple of mistakes higher up but happy to get a race in after 2 weeks off the bike.

Torquil: Shipped a chain at the start of the motorway first run, but still managed two solid runs and some stylish air.

Daniel: Smashed it, getting faster throughout the weekend and nailing more and more of the motorway.

Theo: In his words - "Solid progress compared to last weekend". Sub 6 minutes and faster each run.

Matthew: always the perfectionist, two very fast runs for the quickest Deesider of the weekend.

Kian: A big slam in practice and a first lap puncture could have taken the wind out of his sails but nailed a good final run.

Freya: recovered well from her practice fall, going 20 secs faster on her final run and getting a surprise podium.

Jonathan: No need for the AK today either - sailing over the river gap giving him his fastest time on this course.

Next up for the gravity gang - SDA Round 4 at Glenshee in October.

Gordon Watt

Level 2 Mountain Bike Leadership Course

I'm running a Level 2 British Cycling Mountain Bike Leader course in Dundee on 9-10 Oct 21.

If you know anyone that would like to do one of these courses, would you be able to forward this email on them?

The link below gives all the details required but please feel free to contact me directly if there's anything else you would like to know.

<https://www.ancrum.com/level-2-mountain-bike-leadership-award-training-2-day>

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SCNEG Update

I hope everyone has come off cloud nine after the TOB last weekend. How fantastic was that? I must admit the Wheeler lobsters made my day. Ace job. The council have already been in touch and want to make it a whole weekend next year with a crit races on the Saturday and a sportive.

Date fixing

Thanks to those that came along to the date fixing meeting the other week. It looks like we are back on track to have a varied season of road races, TTs, a couple of youth races and some non-competitive adventure events in 2022. I'm particularly pleased that the evening road race league is looking good and that there will be a woman's category. Along with a woman's championship road race and the team-based time trial event we are starting to even up our events.

I would still like to see more youth stuff though. Just two events on the calendar at this point hardly gives the youths the experience they need to develop. I'd also like to see some of the newer clubs think about putting on an event. There is plenty of experience in the region to help you.

This is a reminder that you must register your event with Scottish Cycling by 3rd October through their google sheet on the links attached. If you are adding an event (of any type) let me know and I'll add it to the local calendar.

Here's our proposed calendar for 2022:

05 Mar	Youth Crit	YCC
22 Mar	RKL RR	DTCC
23 Mar	Mount Keen Challenge	Roy
03 Apr	25TT	DTCC
21 Apr	Evening RR	YCC
12 May	Evening RR	VC
08 Jun	10TT	YCC
18 Jun	25TT	YCC
30 Jun	Evening RR	DTCC
8Jul	NE 250	Roy
9Jul	NE 250	Roy
10 Jul	10TT	DTCC
21 Jul	Evening RR	TEN
13 Aug	Jolibar RR	DTCC
21 Aug	Youth Crit	YCC
04 Sep	ToB Start	
11 Sep	TT Champs	TEN
18 Sep	Classy 10TT	AWCC

Colin Allanach colinallanach@aol.com

2022 Events Calendar Compilation

It's that time of year again when we need to start thinking about next year's calendar! Firstly, we'd like to say a massive thank you to all the event organisers and clubs who organised, or are still to organise, events in 2021 – as volunteers, you are the backbone of our sport and your hard work is appreciated by all competitors and especially Scottish Cycling!

During such unprecedented times with the prolonged suspension of racing during the Covid-19 pandemic, Scottish Cycling are extremely grateful to all event organisers for supporting the return to racing in 2021. For some of you, there may have been other additional unexpected challenges (weather, roadworks and much more!) throughout the event organisation process, however for those events that did not run, we hope you are still inspired to host the event again in 2022.

We are fortunate to work with all levels of event organiser; from Go Ride Racing, Sportives, Regional, Scottish Nationals, British and beyond, across a wide variety of cycling disciplines, from organisers of only one event to those who are putting on a different event each week!

To help the Events Team at Scottish Cycling compile a national events calendar that is timely and accurate, the first step is for us to work with our Club Development Coordinators (CDCs) and the volunteers within the Regions to develop the regional calendars. For the 2022 process, the event organiser will submit their event requests via an online Google form to support the efficiency of the process, which you can find the link to, below.

General Guidance

- Please submit all event requests via the online Google form [here](#) by **3rd October 2021**.
- **Please note this form will not register your event, you must complete the registration process once your event date has been confirmed by the Events Team.**
- The Events Team are here to support you as part of this process and throughout event registration – don't be afraid to ask!
- Until the event dates are confirmed by the Scottish Cycling Events Team directly with organisers, all events dates are only requested and remain provisional.
- Following confirmation of event dates, all events should be registered by Christmas 2021.

As a team, we are very excited to begin the process for 2022 and are committed to supporting our Event Organisers to bring together the 2022 calendar in a timely manner, and to deliver another year of fantastic events in 2022!

If you have any questions at all, please let us know at events@scottishcycling.org.uk.

The Scottish Cycling Events Team

New Committee Members

Deeside is looking for members to join the committee. We are several people short. In particular we need someone who enjoys social media and would be interested in helping with this.

No experience is necessary as new ideas and enthusiasm are always welcome. Any younger members with fresh ideas? Help us to guide the club through the current year, the 2022 season and beyond. Meetings are held digitally every two months and you will recognize a few well known faces.

Please feel free to get in touch with any questions on chairman@deeside.org or knockies@deeside.org

Coronavirus Update

Following the recent announcements from the Scottish Government, that most of the restrictions imposed during the Coronavirus lockdowns, have now been lifted, Scottish Cycling will no longer publish updates to their Guidance document.

The document is available here: <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/article/20200313-Scottish-Cycling-Coronavirus-COVID19-Guidance-0> and now indicates where we are with taking part in competition and involvement with social gatherings.

It is important to remember that Track and Trace requirements are still in place and for the foreseeable future a record of those attending organised events must be kept.

We use Spond to record this information and details are below.

SPOND Guide for Riders and Ride Leaders

What has been established through SPOND will help leaders arrange outings with greater benefits for participants. It could be the way forward and certainly helps ensure that those who are taking part are club members.

Please find below a link to the SPOND Guide for riders and ride leaders that Andy Kerr, Neil Stables and David Stewart have put together. It shows you how to Register for SPOND and how to request membership of a DTCC Group. It lists the various Groups which are already in place, and these will be added to as more official runs re-start.

Link to [SPOND Guide](#)

Sandy Wallace

One of Scotland's top long distance riders over many years, and the guru behind Sandy Wallace Cycles, has passed away. Sandy, the guiding light behind umpteen riders' success, attracted talent from many areas to his club - including quite a few from the Aberdeen area. He'll be sadly missed.

Jonathan Copp

Female Athletes Needed

I am recruiting female cyclists (mountain bike, road and cyclo-cross), aged 18-45, for my online study (COVID friendly). This study is so important for female athletes and is the first study of its kind.

This project will complement the research already being conducted within the department and Mountain Bike Centre of Scotland.

Due to the current pandemic, this study will be observational - where athletes will be monitored from around the world for 3 consecutive months. This is an easy study to complete and will not interfere with training, but only provide more education about optimizing training and recovery.

Please contact robyn.aitkenhead@napier.ac.uk

Robyn Aitkenhead

North Coast 500 Completed

An awesome and memorable challenge for charity.

Best days were over the Bealach to Applecross and a glorious tough ride from Ullapool to Scourie with many steep hills. Most unpleasant the ride down the A9 into Inverness.

I'm still hoping to get some donations for Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH) who support children and young adults exposed to anti-social behaviour such as bullying.

The money raised will help to train adults who work with young people so they can live free from bullying and harassment and give encouragement to reach their full potential. Please give generously to support RespectMe and help our young people to avoid suicides and build a better future that does not tolerate bullies. Just giving charity link: <https://lnkd.in/dhDY-FJ> [[lnkd.in](https://lnkd.in/dhDY-FJ)]

Alex Strachan

Pactimo Club Kit Order Has Arrived

Pactimo kit order is now available to collect from Tierney Strachan, 12 Greenbank Place, East Tullos, AB12 3BT.

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 main gates are closed, we are closed, simples.

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 if necessary. You can easily buy postage online and send it to me; I need to give you weights and dimensions if you want to do this.

Jon Strachan

jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk

Sarah Rowe – Reflections on the Olympics

The Olympic Games is over but we'll only have to wait for three years for its return in Paris. Team GB's performance was above all reasonable expectations and even matched the brilliant performance in London 2012, but this time without the home advantage. GB excelled in so many sports such as athletics, rowing, sailing, equestrian, swimming, triathlon and of course cycling. GB is the world's top cycling nation and for cycling enthusiasts of a certain age, that is something we never dreamt could happen!

We should enjoy our current national sporting success but it's also a good time to look back.

25 years ago, Sarah Phillips, now Sarah Rowe, told me that she'd just got the news that she'd been chosen for the British squad for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics for the road race and time trial. Not long after her return from competing she was the victim of a speeding motorist whilst she was doing some early morning training; the accident ended her sporting career.

In August 2021, Sarah, who is indisputably Deeside's top cyclist, agreed to share with me her memories about Atlanta 1996 and her views about the current cycling scene. Her deep love of cycling comes across very strongly and she gives up huge amounts of time to inspire the next generation to enjoy cycling in all its forms, racing or just riding for fun.

MW: What are your memories of Atlanta 1996? As the years have passed, do you feel differently about its significance?

SR: It was special but it was just another race and a stepping stone to the next race but unfortunately for me there wasn't another race. The Games Village was something different for me but I was competing against the same riders that I rode against in France, Germany, Belgium or wherever. The cycle racing was the same and it was all part of a journey that I was enjoying. Other people at the time saw it as something more significant and said "once an Olympian, always an Olympian" but it just went whoosh, right over my head! Subsequently I value it more, that could be an age thing; you realise that it'll never happen again. When the kids were young I never thought about the Olympics. Sometimes it was hard to watch races as it brought it all back but now that my kids are into racing and I'm involved in coaching I am more aware of my past achievements; people in the cycling circle do maybe give you more respect as somebody who's done it.

I wish I could remember more of the actual race. In my head I put myself back onto the circuit and my main memory is that it was extremely wet and very slippery with crashes happening all over the place and I was

*telling myself "I want to finish **this** race, I really want to finish **this**!" (She did and came in with the leading bunch in 19th place.)*

MW: This year's woman's road race was won by the Austrian Anna Kiesenhofer. The absence of race radios completely changed the outcome of the race. What's your view of race radios?

SR: The race was brilliant. To be honest I don't like the radios. I'm willing to move on with a lot of things like power meters but race radios take away the skills, the excitement, thinking on your own two feet; it takes away the individuality of riders and the impulse that some riders have. Instead, it can be a forced impulse by some team managers or a restraint of a rider's natural impulse and that's a shame. Being traditional you had to look for the motorcycle outrider with the blackboard, hope that the time was accurate and sort yourselves out – problem solving on a bike!

MW: Atlanta was a low point for GB Olympic success with just 1 gold and a total of 15 medals compared to 65 medals, with 29 gold this year in Tokyo. Lottery funding has had a huge influence on GB success, how does that make you feel?

SR: I could sum it up in one word, envious! One of the difficulties that I experienced was being picked to ride an overseas race for Team GB and being expected to pay my own travel costs to the point of departure, for example Portsmouth. That was a heck of a journey with trains and taxis just to get there and I was already a few hundred Pounds down before I even met the team! It's very different now and the individual doesn't have these costs. Upon meeting them you'd get handed a piece of dodgy kit which might or might not have been washed since the last race and might still have food in the back pocket! That wouldn't happen now.

I would put on new Competition tubulars for a big race or tour. If you punctured, they would give you a cheaper tub and then ask you to hand it back at the end of the race. Another one I remember was a race in France on a horrible wet day. There was a crash, my bike was damaged and so I got the spare bike. The bike was so old, the old-fashioned cantilevered brakes didn't work. It had toe clips and straps and my Time shoes were strapped in and there was no way they were coming out. The bike was about 4 inches too small for me and it was horrific with brakes that didn't work. When you look at the spare bikes now, they're top-notch machines.

I had some injury problems but there was no support and you just had to pay to visit somebody local – thankfully I was supported by Peter Wilson and Ron Coutts.

In terms of psychological support, I remember that about five days before the Olympic road race we had our first

and only session with the team psychologist. He sat the women's team down and said that he wanted us to write down all the things we don't like and do like about our team members! We just looked at him! We'd raced together for years and had a strong bond; we didn't want to do this and didn't do it! He subsequently tried the same exercise with the men and they just walked out of the room. I was so disappointed and shocked by it and still am. We were a tight unit that had raced together for years.

Today it must be amazing to be in the GB team. I was chatting to (Scottish road & track cyclist) Anna Shackley's Dad. She's in the SD Worx team which is the best current women's team. Her Dad agreed that she doesn't probably realise how lucky she is and to her it's just part of her sporting journey but to be in that team with those top riders is phenomenal.



MW: *Despite GB's sporting success at the elite level, participation in exercise and sport is still low in the UK with 1 in 5 of 10 to 11 year olds being clinically obese. How can the legacy of Olympic success be fed down beyond the elite riders and into the general population?*

SR: It's become an exclusive sport, which I don't like. The equipment that some youngsters are using is unreal. One of the lads in a recent pursuit race had a set of handlebars that cost £1600, unbelievable, the whole bike

was worth over ten grand and that's a track bike with no gears or brakes. Even at club level everybody has carbon bikes.

We need more local cycling events in poorer areas so that people don't have the cost and time of travel. The nearest closed roads place for Aberdeen youngsters to race is Lochgelly which is two hours away. There's not enough help for kids and parents who cannot afford it.

I was at a British Cycling meeting recently and the topic of barriers to youth racing was discussed. The feeling was that youths should all use the standard track bikes for track league and could use the hire bikes a bit like the keirin in Japan. We need a level playing field. Just now it's hard to tell who's got the legs and who's just got the equipment.

It looks glamorous at the top-end but as far as healthy life choices are concerned and enjoying cycling for reasons other than racing we're just not getting there and that's a shame.

MW: *A lot has been written about the horrific accident that ended your career and I don't want to go over that again here. You've never fully recovered from the physical injuries caused by the motorist who "didn't see you" but I wondered how you've managed to cope with this mentally?*

SR: I think initially I just buried myself in my rehab and just got on with it. At that time I was lucky to have Mick Fowkes as my coach. He was not only an outstanding coach in the build-up to the Olympics but he also gave great support to me after the accident for which I am forever grateful.

I found it difficult to watch races. Sometimes I do feel bitter but not in a way that hangs over me – it disappoints me that I can't ride hard with the DTCC Youth. It's not bitterness because I can't keep up, I can accept that but it disappoints me that I can't share my knowledge and experience with them on the road. I can ride with the DTCC Youth if we just go on a coffee shop run but I'd love to be able to ride in amongst the training groups on the road and offer advice. Some of my GB teammates are still racing but that doesn't bother me, I just wish I could get in the mix on the road and help the kids develop their skills.

MW: *It's been hard to find a time for this conversation because it seems like you're a full-time but unpaid coach now and it's a great example of somebody putting something back into the sport. You work hard with the younger riders and it's bringing results. Amongst your team are your own children Elliot and Melanie. How do you manage to walk the line between being a pushy parent or a supportive parent? It must be difficult?*

SR: *I think it's easier because I love all aspects of cycling and it's not just about the racing. It's always been about enjoyment and my parents had that as they carried on cycling well into their 70s and 80s. It's important that they enjoy what they do and if they enjoy racing then that's fine, however, if they just want to ride then that's fine too. They know that I can talk sense about cycling because of my experience but they also know that they don't have to take my advice if they choose not to. The problem is that some parents are pushy but they don't really know what they are talking about – that is difficult to handle as a coach!*

MW: Finally Sarah, who are your cycling heroes? Eddy Merckx or some other star?

SR: *I'd definitely say my parents, they always cycled for fun, when they were young it was a poor man's sport. Their love of cycling has had a big impact on me and I hope that it gets passed on to my kids. I was influenced a lot by Jimmy McGinty of Regent CC in Glasgow. The McGinty family took me under their wing and they became family friends. At the time there wasn't as much riding here in terms of big chain gangs as there was down in Glasgow. I got a lot of mentoring from them, not in a coaching way but by just living in that environment. Another rider was Rita Montgomery from Johnstone Wheelers, she was the top woman in Scottish cycling when I started and she held all the time trial records - she took me under her wing right from my first race. To be like that to a young rider who was coming in to take her records was just amazing and people like that have had a big effect on me.*

MW: Thanks for an interesting interview Sarah, it's great to have your heroes close to home and you are certainly one of my heroes for putting so much back into the sport.

Footnote: Indisputably Deeside's top cyclist? Here's Sarah's palmarès in terms of time trials: Scottish Champion at 10 & 25 miles in 1988, 1990 & 1991. Scottish records at 10 miles with 22:43, 25 miles with 57:18 & 50 miles with 2:00:51 in 1990. RTTC success in England as 50 miles champion in 1992 and second by one second in the 25 miles championship in 1992. She was 25 miles champion in 1993 and 10 miles champion in 1995.

Malcolm Wilson

Notes for Cranks

My ability to find suitable material to fill the pages of your monthly magazine, Cranks, becomes more and more difficult. It troubles me more than a little that some months Cranks seems to fill up with my personal notes. That's not the way it should be. There should be a good cross-section from others in the club. How about penning a few lines and sending it through to knockies@deeside.org.

Ellon Wheel Sports Park

Ythan CC are actively pursuing a new wheel park in Ellon and have a survey available to gauge interest. They are keen to get your opinion.

The wheel park will consist of a pump track for mountainbikers, a skate/bmx park and a road-based cycle circuit (a bit like Knockburn). I know you might not have many members in the Ellon area who will use it, but we are hopeful we can attract people into the town and use it for combined training sessions and races.

Link to survey: [Ellon Wheel Sports Park Survey \(surveymonkey.co.uk\)](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/ellon-wheel-sports-park-survey)

Colin Allanach

Situation Vacant

Knockburn Loch is looking for someone with coffee shop experience to assist for the remaining 4 weeks of the season in the first instance. Working days are Friday, Saturday and Sunday. If you are interested, please contact Bert on bert@mphltd.co.uk

Funded eLearning Course

An incredible funded eLearning course on how to respond to a sudden cardiac arrest is now available. This has been put in place from UK Coaching following recent events at the Euro 2020 match game where Christian Eriksen unfortunately collapsed due to a cardiac arrest.

The occurrence of the medical emergency in a live sporting environment has brought the reality of sudden cardiac arrest, on the pitch, in the park, on the kerb, to a stark reality.

This free online course will equip you to know how to respond to a sudden cardiac arrest and learn how to save a life. This is a great opportunity to equip yourself to get involved as it is not only beneficial for the sporting context but also in everyday life.

All information for the course can be found here: https://www.ukcoaching.org/courses/elearning-courses/sudden-cardiac-arrest?utm_source=eshot&utm_campaign=sca&utm_medium=email

Gill Thayne

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](#)

Synopsis of Meeting

A Finance and Management Committee meeting took place on-line, on Monday 23 August 2021. In attendance were Andrew Harrington, Sandy Lindsay, Alan Campbell, Colin Esslemont, Sam Long, Laura Sarkis, Peter Smart, Jon Strachan, Mark Walker, David Walton and Steve Walton.

Agenda

- 1 **Apologies** – Neil Stables
- 2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** – Accepted as correct record
- 3 **Business Arising from Minute**
 - a) **Social Media Person** – Still no offers from members to assist though Andy Kerr does post messages regularly. The Chairman is to put out a plea on Social Media
 - b) **LED Display** – It has not been possible to locate a suitable display. An enquiry is to be made at National Council
- 4 **New Business**
 - a) **2022 Events** – Recent requests for members to submit events for inclusion in the 2022 calendar had only drawn one response, Andrew Ramsay with a RR at the end of June. Mark Walker is to attend the date fixing meeting on 01 September and hopes to have several organisers by then. He and Laura Sarkis are to prepare a simple guide to organising
 - b) **Reliability Trial** – Alan Campbell is to organise the Falling Leaves Reliability Trial on Sunday 26 September. He envisaged problems with catering arrangements and use of halls but it was suggested that pre-prepared packaged food might be the answer
 - c) **Increasing Visibility at Events** – It was agreed that flashing lights, front and rear, will be used in Evening League Events from 2022. The possibility to increase the visibility of vest colours is to be investigated
 - d) **Club Design** - The club design is not to be changed in the short term. However, fluorescent yellow tops for winter wear are to be investigated
 - e) **Evening League Awards** – Due to the major changes in the 2021 Evening League it was agreed that new arrangements to recognise winners in the various categories is necessary. The organisers were thanked for running a re-vamped and successful league under difficult circumstances
 - f) **Youth Report** – Scottish Cycling's Accelerate and Activate programme has contributed £13,500 to employing Sarah Rowe as a Youth Development Officer. The Youth Membership is still buoyant with a waiting list of 20 for the MTB section.

There are 20 Youth coaches at various levels to look after the 100 or so Youth riders. Parents of Youths are to be tasked with making commitment to organise activities. Indoor instruction is likely to be delayed because of Covid19 and it is possible that a satellite group will be set up in Aboyne

- g) **Race Kit** – It is possible that there may be a request to help finance a replacement generator for the SCNEG Timing Kit

5 Next Meeting – 04 October 2021 at 7.00pm

A Lindsay (Secretary) 24 August 2021

Coach Education courses

Course	Location	Start	Booking Link
L2 Track	Glasgow	18-Sept	www.britishcycling.org.uk/event/s/course/details/6639
L2 Road	Lochgelly	30-Oct	www.britishcycling.org.uk/event/s/course/details/6640
L1	Edinburgh	20-Nov	www.britishcycling.org.uk/event/s/course/details/6641
L2	Glasgow	11-Dec	www.britishcycling.org.uk/event/s/course/details/6642
L2	Aberdeen	08-Jan	www.britishcycling.org.uk/event/s/course/details/6643

I would also like to highlight the bursaries that are available for young people and females to progress through the Coach Education pathway. You can apply for British Cycling bursaries [here](#), and for sportscotland subsidies [here](#).

Hamish Cowton

hamish.cowton@scottishcycling.org.uk

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

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.

Club Mountain Bike Rides

There's long been a need to hold regular mountain bike rides for club members, but the question was how to achieve this. As with everything there will be a wide range of abilities, bikes, fitness and locality within the club so one ride group won't satisfy everyone, every week.

Rides will vary in who they are catering for, who they will suit. Technical one week or cruisy XC tours the next, etc. This will have to be the way until we 'staff up' with leaders to take on different levels of rides.

With all that in mind can you comment if you are interested with the following:

- What level/type of rider are you?
- What kind of rides would you like to see the club put on?
- Where are you located and where do you predominately ride?
- Do you have any qualifications?
- Would you be interested in leading a ride?

You can register here <https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ> and comments, please, to Neil on mtb@deeside.org

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](https://www.zwift.com)

New Members

The following new or returning members have joined in recent weeks

3026	Richard Thompson	Fyvie	42
3027	Jack Lowdon	Aberdeen	9
3028	Olivia Poole	Inverness	10

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/members or to email members@deeside.org asking for information.

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>

25 Years Ago

CLUBROOMS

Your Club has not had to move very often. Since the 60s it has been at St Ninian's Church, Woolmanhill Drill Hall, St Nicholas Congregational Church and most recently at SAC Building, King Street. One evening was spent in the Beach Ballroom and a few nights in a dancing school.

The SAC Building has been renamed and handed over to a new authority. The hall in which we met is being revamped to become a tiered lecture room. This almost precludes our use of it. Worse still, Aberdeen University, the new owners, have indicated that rent for that accommodation for our use, for circuit training, will exceed £100 per session. It is a bit more than we can afford.

Having exhausted the search a year ago, within Aberdeen, when we last went looking for space, the enthusiasm to muster energy in the middle of the holiday season wasn't there. At the start of July, we left SAC. Having nowhere to locate Club equipment it was left behind. Considering the incident with the competition rollers it was a big risk to take. A few days ago, I went back to the SAC (MacRobert Building). The room with our equipment has been cleaned but fortunately the cupboards remained untouched. I was able to rescue our stock of Maxim, PPS and clothing.

Some six or seven weeks have passed and a few folk have come forward with ideas. Each has been considered and until the occasion arises when decisions can be made a stop gap measure has been put in place.

Garlogie has for a number of years been an excellent place for starting and finishing events. In many ways it is far more popular than Clubrooms in Aberdeen. The hall at Garlogie has been often used as a race headquarters. Enquiries were made and we have been offered the use of the hall as a temporary measure on a Wednesday evening.

The first date we will meet at the hall is Wednesday 18 September 1996 at 7.00pm. It is hoped that there will be a good turn out on that night to appraise the situation.

Race Calendar 2022

Are you willing to organise an event next season to help re-establish cycle competition?

Contact Colin Allanach on colinallanach@aol.com



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

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

Following guidance from our Covid 19 Officer, Rod Adams, the following has been agreed to ensure that our runs will operate in a Covid secure fashion.

Our risk assessment has been uploaded to the CTC Grampian website: <http://www.ctcgrampian.org.uk/> and participation in club rides will be subject to all participants having familiarised themselves with, and agreed to comply with, the terms of the risk assessment.

To be Track and Trace compliant, we are asking all participants to arrive with a small (business card size) paper with their name and contact details. These papers will be collected by the Ride Leader at the start of the run in a plastic bag and held securely for 21 days, before being destroyed. This requirement will be incorporated into the risk assessment and displayed on the Runs list page of the club website.

"No ticket, no ride"!

In addition, all riders continue to be required to carry a Next of Kin card in the event of an accident. These are available from the Ride Leader and/or Secretary.

Newcomers: We welcome newcomers, particularly on the 'Try Cycling' and 'Morning' runs. You do not need to be a member of the Cycling UK to join our runs, but after 3 runs you would be expected to join Cycling UK.

Runs start promptly at the time stated. Distances are calculated from the meeting place. Bring spare inner tube, puncture repair kit, tools, wet weather gear, some food, drink and LIGHTS where relevant. It is recommended that all cyclists carry a First Aid kit.

Try Cycling: rides are intended for those who have not been on the saddle for a while and for those who want a quiet ride around Aberdeen.

These are easy rides followed or interrupted by a coffee stop, families are welcome.

Morning Runs: These runs are at a relatively slow pace and are usually about 25–30 miles long. A coffee or picnic stop will usually be made.

Full Day Runs: These are all-day runs intended for experienced cyclists. A coffee stop and lunch/picnic stop will be made. Distances and speeds vary as outlined below:

Slower Full Day Runs: Slowish pace. Distance normally 30-45 miles.

Medium Full Day Runs: Moderate pace. Distance normally 45-60 miles.

Faster Full Day Runs: Fast pace. Distance normally 60-75 miles (* runs are longer).

Pub Runs: Start prompt at the time stated, to reach the pub by 21:00 approximately. LIGHTS

Runs

September

Thurs Sep 16	09:30	Thursday Run	Airryhall	Library,
Destination to be decided, morning ride with coffee stop.				Cindy
Sat Sep 18	09:00	Gravel Ride	Airryhall	Library, coffee at
Durriss Forest, lunch at Kirktown Garden Centre,				Alberto
Sat Sep 18	09:30	Slower Full Day	Brig O Balgownie,	picnic
coffee at Foveran, picnic lunch at Monymusk				Tom S
Sun Sep 19	09:00	Faster Full Day	Parkhill Bridge,	Dyce,
picnic coffee at Inverurie, picnic lunch at Alford				Adrian R
Sun Sep 19	09:30	Morning Run	Leggart Terrace,	picnic
coffee at Chapelton of Elsick				Gordon
Sun Sep 19	10:00	Try Cycling	Duthie Park,	Riverside
Drive, Short easy rides, all welcome.				John C
Thurs Sep 23	09:30	Thursday Run	Airryhall	Library,
Destination to be decided, morning ride with coffee stop.				Dave H
Sat Sep 25	09:30	Medium Full Day	Westhill Shopping Centre,	
picnic coffee at Midmar, picnic lunch at Tarland				Alan
Sat Sep 25	10:00	Try Cycling	Seaton Park,	Don St
Entrance, Short easy rides, all welcome.				John P
Sun Sep 26	09:00	Faster Full Day	Westhill Shopping Centre,	
picnic coffee at Inch, picnic lunch at Fyvie				David B
Sun Sep 26	09:30	Morning Run	Airryhall	Library, picnic
coffee at Kinellar				John S
Thurs Sep 30	09:30	Thursday Run	Airryhall	Library,
Destination to be decided, morning ride with coffee stop.				Cindy

Open Races

If you have been taking part in any Open Race up and down the country, I'd welcome a short report.

It can be as short as Name and date of event, your performance, name and club of winner, the winner's performance.

A wee story about the event will be even more welcome. Send to info@deeside.org

Histerical Reminiscences

(Part 36)

Isobutylene isoprene rubber is a synthetic material, virtually non-porous, which is used to make butyl inner tubes. Get your tyres up to 100psi and they'll stay that way for days.

The top racing guys favoured natural rubber, latex, caoutchouc. It had far greater elasticity and, pound for pound, greater strength than butyl.

Though a joy to have the fine, thin-walled rubber nestling inside your lightweight silk cased D'Alessandro tubular tyres, the porosity of the natural rubber meant you needed to pump them up every time you went out.

Weight obsessed! You'd spend half a week's wage on the 6oz tub and pump air in until it compressed to 110 psi or more, then worry about the extra weight. Thoughts crossed your mind that helium, about 10% the weight of air, must be an option. Then again helium molecules would pass through the latex rubber far quicker than air.

The laborious business of pumping tyres each time you wanted to ride your bike had to be resolved. The soda-siphon Sparklet cylinders could fill tyres to pressure in an instant, but truth be told, it would mean increasing the weight of the wheel further and no one wanted the burden of trundling that extra gram or two around.

In 1984, on the high-altitude track in Mexico City, Francesco Moser set a new World hour record for the bicycle with 51.151km.

He rode a specially built machine which had several innovative aerodynamic features. The bike also had an enlarged rear wheel with a weighted rim. Maybe the scientists behind the attempt weren't thinking so much about the extra effort Moser would need to get the bike up to speed; more the increased inertia in the weighted rim and the centripetal force allowing the wheel to roll more freely!

Norman Shiel excelled at pursuit riding. I first met him at the Guinness School of Sport held at the Dunfermline College in Edinburgh. Given the honour of Assistant Coach to Norman, already at the top of his game and about to be appointed Canadian National Coach, my nervousness must have been obvious.

On the first morning we headed down to Meadowbank.

Norman got me to usher the half dozen young riders on to the track. Then he stood with his back to them and chatted away to me.

It was a head scratching 15 minutes as I observed the riders play around, swooping up and down the bankings. Eventually I bit the bullet and asked Norman what was happening, what we had to do with the lads. He smiled at me and said, *"I'm teaching them how to ride the track! Watch."*

So, I watched and gradually, without any verbal instruction, the six riders, who'd never ridden the boards before, got fed up playing and line astern, began to follow the black line.

"First lesson taught," says Norman.

Africa burned; at the end of the dry season spontaneous fires spring into life and rage in the bush. Teenagers provoke other fires by maliciously setting light to tinder dry undergrowth at roadsides.

Burning is a land management issue. June is the month when authorities and landowners burn the grasses and bushes that have been wasted by the sun and lack of water. By burning off the desiccated vegetation new green growth is promoted giving life to grazing animals and colour to the landscape.

It is now October and this is Africa. Ad hoc arrangements are often the only arrangements. Dense clouds of smoke still drift on the breeze and the crackling of branches releasing pent up energy deafens the sound of cicadas in the Acacia trees.

High on Nyika the air is clear. The horizon is etched finely against the storm clouds building over Zambia. It will be another two, maybe three weeks before the first rains fall on Malawi. At 2500 metres above sea level the air is cool even although this is Central Africa. The sun is a white orb, shimmering like a disturbed pot of molten metal. The light is intense, yet the heat is absent, and you don't know the effect until it is too late. In a few days dead skin will blister with pockets of sweat and peel like wet tissue paper.

Nyika is huge, a National Park, it is the biggest in Africa covering an area in excess of 3000 square kilometres. Rolling montane grasslands stretch to the horizon. Occasionally there is a patch of evergreen forest in a valley, whilst extensive miombo and brachystegia woodlands hide the lower slopes. Scorched black clumps show where the old plants have been burned. They are hard and unyielding. Fresh green growth contrasts and here and there a startling splash of colour shows where a flower has blossomed. There is little sign of man, or the effect of man.

Chelinda was established for the safari trade and supports a small community in the heart of this upland. Practically the only visible signs are the towering radio aerial and the tall evergreens surrounding the lodge and chalets. Dust roads meander across the rolling hillsides and down to dams in small valleys.

Folk tell you that there are no dangerous animals on Nyika. Then you hear a confirmed story about a lion killing an eland near to the small airstrip and Edward also tells a story which may have coloured with time.

Edward is the local caretaker in one of the chalets. He told how he'd arrived late in the afternoon at his chalet with new residents. Light was fading. Climbing the steep dozen or so steps to the shelf where the building is, the grass in

front of the chalet was just coming into view, he saw the shape of a male lion lying across the doorway. He rushed his clients quickly back to their car where they sat fearfully a long time. Eventually Edward took courage and circumventing the big cat he got into the chalet by the back door. Once inside he busied himself with lighting fires and other duties. Suddenly he heard the door open. The front door is a stable door, the top half opening separately from the bottom half. He turned and saw the head of the lion with its giant mane framed in the doorway. Fortunately, he is able to tell the tale.

Lions had also recently been seen at the Zambian Resthouse only a few kilometres away.

Hyena are endemic and it is claimed that Nyika has the highest concentration of leopards in Africa. There are also striped jackal.

A reed buck stands stock still in the reeds in the dam at Chelinda. It stares straight at me. Our eyes lock. I try to be as motionless as it but I can't hold the stare. I glance away and glance back. It has won. It has dropped its head and is grazing peacefully.

We left Chelinda and climbed the track through the montane forest to the windy wilderness of Nyika. Stretching far in front, the red dust road looked inviting as we freewheeled the early stretch. This belied the efforts needed to gain height. I'd laboured, wheezed, in the shade provided by the pine woodland and now, out in the open I hung over the handlebars recovering. Alastair had fared better, coping with the steep ascent.

Dust as fine as talcum powder exploded from under our wheels as we enjoyed the period of freedom before turning off the made road onto a game track. Little more than 20cms wide this track caused no end of problems. The hard, almost rock like, root balls of burnt African grass were unforgiving. Almost with every turn of the pedals, one foot or the other would snag on a clump and it became so exasperating that a lot of walking was done.

Black bush pig grazed unconcernedly on the slopes as we cursed our way onwards. Birchall's Zebra turned their striped flanks and looked over dusty, russet brown shoulders as we approached.

Few folk were met, only a handful of people trekking with supplies to Chelinda. It is difficult to get to or from the plateau, a two or three-day journey by foot being required and it pleased us to be told that we were travelling well and could make Chakaka in a day. This came from Foster, a black Game Scout, armed with his M16. He went on to say that the road to Phoka Court had been washed away and it would take another two or three hours of hard travel from Chakaka to reach there.

Poachers are a problem, thus the reason for Foster who accompanied us on the trip. Coming from the plains of Zambia, poachers are killing around four eland per week. This is not sustainable, and facts given indicated that in 17

years the numbers on the plateau of this antelope, the largest in Central Africa, had decreased fivefold.

The roan antelope also lives on the plateau and may be less susceptible to the poacher since it is resident year-round. This is a hotchpotch of an animal. Its striking African mask of curved horns and large tasselled ears top off a face patched with white. Though the eland moves off quickly at our approach the roan will stand and let you come within metres.

Progressing over the whalebacked mountains some of the ascents were steep, so steep that frequent rests had to be taken. Fifty paces at a time were the order of the day before a gasping respite. At these stops incongruous sightings of flowers blooming colourfully among the charred clumps of grass were enjoyed. Nyika is home to 200 different species of orchid, some of them very rare and unique to the area. Protected worldwide, they cannot be harvested.

Termite mounds, also brick hard, and giant holes of the large hairy anteater, the aardvark, are everywhere. Traces of porcupine were seen and many small lizards. A Wattled Crane strutted its stuff while a Denham's Bustard drifted lazily across the rolling grasslands searching for prey.

Though very dry, some streams do run off the plateau. One large stream had to be crossed on a simple branch bridge. With bikes suspended to counterbalance we made it across safely.

After five and a half hours of struggling on the climbs and freewheeling the descents we reached the eastern border of the plateau. This forms the wall of the Great Rift Valley, the birthplace of man, and heralds the descent to Chakaka. Reaching Pata Stream and with only a few hours of daylight left we decided to stop for the night. Nyika is unique in Africa; because of its height it is almost free of tsetse fly and the malarial mosquito is virtually non-existent. The water is also clean.

So it was that we settled down to a night in the African bush safe in the knowledge that we'd survive. Foster built a ring of fire round the small campsite and while food cooked, hot beer sluiced over parched throats. Unknown birds called to each other as the sun collapsed in a blaze of red. As the evening cooled we wrapped ourselves in sleeping bags. The sounds of the African night lulled us to sleep.

It was my first time on Bennachie. Mither Tap poked invitingly into a clear sky as I took my bike up the Giant's Causeway.

Around the fortified summit a mini-climate caused a gale to blow and other visitors huddled in groups, sheltering from the wind.

One young woman looked at me, open mouthed, and asked if I'd cycled to the top. Squaring my shoulders, proud as Punch that I'd been noticed, I pushed my bike forward and would leap on to expertly descend through the boulders.

In mid-air, both feet off the ground, my right leg above the saddle, the wind caught my machine. Whipped out of my hands the bike cartwheeled away and I sprawled face first at the female's feet.

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 **Reduced price.** Giant TCR compact carbon frame TT bike, ONCE colourscheme. Size small, suitable for 5'6" to 5'11". Ultegra throughout, 9 speed cassette, 12 – 21T. Profile Design bar end shifters. Mavic Ksyrium Elite wheels, SPD pedals (if required), Cateye computer. Excellent first TT bike, £345 ono. dick.bird@ifb.co.uk Photo available (2)
 - 2 Carbon Cervelo P3 (2015). Size 51cm. Excellent condition - only used for racing, only 250km. Ultegra spec. Mavic Cosmic Elite Wheels. Brand new Adamo Prologue Saddle - never used. Price £1750. Contact Mike Adams - 07885 933360 (2)
 - 3 a) Eddy Merckx carbon TT aero frame (medium size). Fast Fwd disc tubular rear wheel and deep section aero tubular front. Profile TT bars. Conti Competition tubulars almost new. Campagnolo Super Record groupset 52/36 Chainset. Excellent condition £2000 (2)
 - b) Specialized Sworcs SL6 Tarmac high mod carbon Size 54. Rare paint job. Two years old. Sworcs finishing kit. Shimano Dura Ace Di2 groupset 52/36 Quarq Sworcs power meter Chainset. Enve clincher carbon wheels, Continental GP 4000 tyres. Very good condition. £3300 (2)
 - c) Bottechia Superlight team bike, high mod carbon, one year old. Size 51. Deda bars and stem, Campagnolo Super Record groupset 52/36 Chainset. Campagnolo Shamal Ultra clincher wheels. Very light. Frame in as new condition. £2500 (2) Please email; duncananderson01@gmail.com
 - 4 BMC Road Machine 02 2017 model. 54cms in red with carbon integrated seat post, aero alloy handlebars and stem. £500. Contact John on john_kunka@yahoo.co.uk (2)
 - 5 a) Merida cross900 hybrid bike complete with Merida fork, Shimano disc brakes and Shimano 3x9 gears
 - b) Whyte 901 26" wheel Medium hard tail mountain bike complete with Rock Shox Recon fork, Elixir 5 disc brakes and SRAM X7 2x10 gears
 - c) Whyte 901 26" wheel small hard tail mountain bike with Rock Shox Recon fork, Elixir 5 disc brakes and SRAM X7 3x10 gears.
- Call Rod on 01330 850610 or email rod@galanthus.co.uk
- 6 a) Cube Litening 56cm – fit someone around 5ft10in to 6 Ft. As new fitted with Mavic wheels and brand new Ultegra DI2. Never been used. £2,750 (3)
 - b) Scott CR1 -54 cm Time trial bike- Fit someone up to 5Ft 10in. As new - fitted with Shimano C50 wheels, Zip Aero Bars and Shimano 11 speed Dura Ace. £2,500 (3)
 - c) Corima Tubular Disk wheel fitted with 11 speed Dura Ace block with 3 spare tubs £575 (3)
- Contact Kenny Anderson 07711 524526

Ian Grant

Gardening: - Grass Cutting

General Tidying - Rotovation

Pressure washing - Tree Surgery,

Welding (electric) and small repairs

£9.00/hr or estimates

30 Schlattie Park, Bucksburn, Aberdeen

Tel (01224) 713033

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**Workshops, Musical Theatre,
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**Rhona Mitchell, BA (Hons), Dip S&D,
TQSE, LGSM, LLAM (Hons), MSTSD.**

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:

.....

Phone Number:.....

Email:

Date of Birth:

Please complete and return to Sandy Lindsay,
Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ
Telephone 01467 681330 or email:

knockies@aol.com

The Deeside Thistle Cycling Club publishes this magazine. The Editor is Sandy Lindsay MBE, Rowan Cottage, Inveramsay, Inverurie, AB51 5DQ. Tel: 01467 681330 / 07867 857221 – Email: knockies@aol.com