

Issue 588

March 2023

# Cranks Volume 49

The magazine of  
**Deeside Thistle Cycling  
Club**

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**Current Membership 529 (541)  
SCU Membership 289 (302)**

## Editorial:

The UCI Cycling World Championships come to Scotland in August of this year. It could be the biggest event ever in the history of cycling. Though centred on the Chris Hoy Velodrome in Glasgow the Championships will cover a variety of disciplines hosted at diverse locations throughout the country.

I know of several members committing themselves to helping; Brian Gourlay, Chris Smith and Dave Walton to name three. There may be others who have put their names forward.

This is an amazing opportunity to get involved with the top end of our sport. Though I'm anti-elitism and avoid hero-worship isn't it great to get the chance to rub shoulders with the best in the world? Remember the euphoria, the excitement, of last year's Tour of Britain in Aberdeen.

Who knows, participation at this level of our sport might be so enthralling that you decide to make more of it. It could easily be a stepping-stone to future career opportunities. Tasks to be done are as diverse as the locations; marshalling, timekeeping, commissairing, may be what you expect but there are many other jobs.

If you are keen and can arrange time to suit then go [here](#) for further information

## PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra to play it – *H.E. Luccock*

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](mailto:knockies@deeside.org)

## Youth and Junior Update

Attention turned to the Glasgow velodrome at the weekend of 11/12 March with 14 youths and juniors competing. Saturday saw the third round of the Monsters of Track series take place while the British Cycling Youth Omnium was on Sunday

*Lyndsay Aitken*

## Spring Bunny 25TT

I'm organising the Spring Bunny 25TT this year, 2nd April. Full details are in the sign up link: <https://www.cyclingtimetrials.org.uk/race-details/26097>.

Enter now. Would be great to get a decent turn out. It's a low stress event and we welcome both TT and Road Bikes and all abilities

*John Alexander*

## Future Pros

The wider club membership don't always see the results of years of investment by the club and young riders parents in the youth side of the club.

This is a [YouTube](#) episode from a very well-known British elite rider on his involvement with a development team of young lads.

Elliot is one of ours and it's good to appreciate where he is on his journey in cycling.

There are other young riders, from the club, in a number of disciplines who are 'going places'. Watch out for them too.

*Neil Stables*

## Spring Classic Reliability Trial

### Get this in your diary

100mls or 100km on Sunday 30 April. The weather is guaranteed as are refreshments en-route.

Planning is ongoing but think about Echt Hall as HQ and Tullynessle Hall for the food stop. It will only cost a £5 to help cover hall and food.

Pass the word round to watch out for details as they emerge.

*Alan Campbell*

## SCNEG Update

**Provisional Calendar for Scottish events in 2023 is [here](#).** Dates may change and events be added.

### 1/ Presentation of 2022 championships.

The presentation of the 2022 regional championship trophies will be held after the Bob Souter 10 mile in Pitmedden on 16<sup>th</sup> April at Café 48. This is a chance to honour all those BAR champions and road race champions etc from last year. This is the first presentation we have been able to hold since 2019.

### 2/ Time trial group

A new whatsapp group has been set up to promote, organise and coordinate resources for time trials. This will mirror the one set up a few years ago for road race development. If you want to be included in this discussion group, please get in touch.

### 3/ Women's development

We are still looking for someone who will come on to the SCNEG development group to help us look at women's cycle sport and racing (in all disciplines) to see how we can develop that over the next few years. Again, if you are interested in helping out with this development please get in touch.

### 4/ Limitless

The new British Cycling Limitless programme starts soon, and it is hoped that the local clubs will be involved in cooperation with Disability Sport Grampian with sessions for those on adaptive bikes and help with pathways and sport opportunities for all those with disabilities.

### 5/ Strategic development and succession planning

It's been some years since the original SCNEG strategic plan was put in place by the group and Peter Clark. At the 2022 AGM this was discussed, and it was agreed a new strategy is required to take us forward for the next five to ten years. Over the next few weeks, we will be putting together a meeting to start to put together the bones of what that looks like. If you have ideas about where you think the sport should go in our area this will be the meeting you need to attend. Look out for invite.

In addition this is my last year as chair of SCNEG and so we need to look at who would like to take this role on and motivate the future of cycle sport in our area.

*Colin Allanach - [colinallanach@aol.com](mailto:colinallanach@aol.com)*

## NEW BC Pathway for Coach Training and Development

You will all be aware that we have a constant need for new Coaches. The Coach education process of recent has been lengthy, costly and bureaucratic to newcomers. None of which has helped you help us.

We have just had a webinar with the relevant team at BC and the new pathway will be rolled out this year. This will be radically different, far more online, modular and cheaper. There will be a basic introductory course, Activity Leader, then Trainee status and a formal Coach award. After this will be Performance Coach and even Chartered status for those wish to complete the whole process.

Full details will be shared shortly - but after 12 years of my own CPD and training in this domain it feels like a refreshing and timely change. Anything that enables more people to come and put more Youth and Juniors on bikes the better for us all...

*Sam Long*

## Commissaire Opportunity

Ready to start the journey to become a commissaire? Events don't run without them. Want to be part of the wider biking community.

Find out more about becoming a commissaire and the training you undergo here. [Trainee Commissaire course \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](https://www.britishcycling.org.uk).

If anyone's interested, please contact [volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk)



To get things moving, the MidSummer Beer Happening has put tickets on sale for its hugely popular Cycle Sportive, so cyclists can get on their bikes now and book their places.

Starting and finishing in Stonehaven's Baird Park, home of the Midsummer Beer Happening, with four different routes to accommodate all abilities of riders whilst providing all a rewarding challenge

### Routes

Gravel route	40 miles
Undo	55 miles
Redo	62 miles
Dinaedo	100 miles

So, get Thursday, June 15th to Saturday, June 17th in your diary now – but that's not all.

Here's another Save The Date card for your calendar – daily tickets and weekend packages will be on sale very soon from January 27th.

Robert Lindsay, organiser of the Happening, said: "Just like everyone else, our volunteers have been busy working hard putting together this year's Midsummer Beer Happening in Stonehaven. After all, there's nothing like looking forward to midsummer to drive away the bleak midwinter blues.

"In fact, we're so excited about how it's shaping up we wanted to give everyone the great news about when and where it will be – look for our stunning marquee in Baird Park again.

"Other Happening fans – old and new – won't have long to wait until they can start grabbing their tickets for the glorious three-day event which is a celebration of the best in beer, food, and music, staged in a purpose-built marquee.

"The Happening 2023 is shaping up to be the best yet," he said. "We will have more than 150 beers hand-selected from the finest breweries, plus ciders.

Robert said that last year, the first Happening since the pandemic, was a glorious return with more than 6,000 guests joining in the party and raising £65,000 for local charities in the process.

"A high bar that has been set, but we're aiming to make this year's Happening simply unforgettable. So, get those dates in the diary and we will see you this Midsummer."

For more information about the Midsummer Beer Happening in Stonehaven and to book places for the Sportive, to be held on Saturday June 17, go to [msbh.co.uk](https://msbh.co.uk)



## New Members

The following new or returning members have joined in recent weeks.

1388	Ben Gowland	Stonehaven	46
3098	Kirsty Woodley	Stonehaven	15
3099	Sophie Henderson	Stonehaven	5
3100	Rurik Gowland	Stonehaven	14

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](http://www.deeside.org/members) or to email [members@deeside.org](mailto:members@deeside.org) asking for information.

### Total Endurance Winter Talks

We are pleased to be able to restart our Free winter training Talks

Click [here](#) for more information on each of the topics and to book your place

All talks are on a Monday evening from 19:00 - 20:00

We will be announcing dates for our 1/2-day swim and run workshops very soon so keep an eye out for dates

## First Aid Course 12th/13th April 2023

Garioch Sports Centre Inverurie

As part of our next phase of Club Support we are to again partner with Grampian Training Services for them to deliver an HSE recognised first aid course for club reps at Garioch Sports Centre Inverurie.

Course - Emergency First Aid at Work-on the 12th and 13th April 6.30pm-9.30pm each evening. Limit of 12 delegates.

Cost- The cost will be £35 per person payable in advance once we confirm the allocation of a place.

More information on the course content is available on the GTS web site with a link below.

<http://grampiantrainingservices.co.uk/emergency-first-aid-at-work-course/>

The courses are accredited First Aid Industry Body (FAIB) and Federation of First Aid Training Organisations (FOFATO).

## Coaching Courses

Those members keen to get involved with coaching can find details of upcoming courses and funding opportunities on the SC web site. Go here:

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/coaching>

## Trainee Commissaire Courses in 2022

British Cycling have released a number of online Trainee Commissaire Courses in 2022.

Circuit	x 3 courses
MTB XC	x 2 courses
MTB Gravity	x 1 course
Road	x 3 courses
Track	x 1 course

If anyone is interested, they should get in touch with Colin Esslemont (SC Regional Commissaire Coordinator) on [montyebicycleworks@btinternet.com](mailto:montyebicycleworks@btinternet.com) & Ashley Ryan (SC Event Workforce officer) [events@scottishcycling.org.uk](mailto:events@scottishcycling.org.uk) and we can arrange for them to link up with an active official to chat more about the role and send on sign up links.  
*Colin Esslemont*

## Spond Guide Update - Group Codes

If you are already registered in Spond and in one DTCC group, you can join another with these links (or use the "Enter Code" option in the App).

<b>DonsideBunch</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ">https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ</a>
<b>Banchory</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/TYLWP">https://group.spond.com/TYLWP</a>
<b>DTCC MTB</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/MRFCH">https://group.spond.com/MRFCH</a>
<b>LeggartTerrace</b>	<a href="https://group.spond.com/AGTNP">https://group.spond.com/AGTNP</a>

Click on the group(s) you want to be member of, and the ride admin will accept you.

Link to PDF Spond guide: [http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC\\_Spond\\_and\\_Ride\\_Leader\\_Guide.pdf](http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC_Spond_and_Ride_Leader_Guide.pdf)

Link to PPT Spond guide: [http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC\\_Spond\\_and\\_Ride\\_Leader\\_Guide.pptx](http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC_Spond_and_Ride_Leader_Guide.pptx)

*Peter Smart*

## Sunday Banchory Rides

The rides will start 10:00 am (sharp) from Banchory Townhall (carpark opposite town hall). The rides will be published on SPOND, and we would ask you to sign up for the ride via SPOND, so we know who is riding and we have your emergency contact details.

You can download SPOND on your smart phone or access any computer or tablet via: <https://spond.com/welcome>.

To join the Banchory Rides group please sign up via: <https://group.spond.com/TYLWP>

There are other rides through the week and sometimes adhoc meetups, so it is worth joining. The route will be published on SPOND and will always include a coffee stop. Distance is around 50 miles.

We will try and run two groups. Espresso and Latte. Espresso will be a ride aiming for 18 to 20 mph average. Latte will be no drop ride riding at the pace of the slowest rider, but hopefully around 16 mph, or slower if needed. Espresso will set off first, anyone dropped from Espresso can drop back to Latte. If we do not have enough for two groups, it will be a no drop ride. All levels of rider welcome



## Winter Rides

Donside Bunch Winter Rides take place Sundays from Kintore. Plans for this winter are two groups:

Steady (15/16mph) - 2.5hrs

Faster (17mph+) - 3hrs

Pitch yourself into the correct group and it'll be a no drop ride.

Usual rules - mudguards preferred, and front and back flashers strongly recommended. Rides will be managed through [SPOND](#). If not already registered on SPOND go [here](#)

## Saturday Morning Group Rides - Leggart Tee

Over autumn and into winter, the Saturday morning group rides from Leggart Terrace will start at the later time of 09:00. Alan Campbell will take a steady group on the ride while Steve Brechin will lead a slightly brisker group if numbers allow.

The 54mile/87km route, known within the club as The Chairman's Classic, takes in some of the best climbs in the local area. You can view the route here: [The Chairman's Classic | 86.7 km Cycling Route on Strava](#).

It's a no drop ride and all are welcome. Email Steve Brechin on [DTCC-Banchory.Saturday@outlook.com](mailto:DTCC-Banchory.Saturday@outlook.com) or look for us on [Spond](#).

Please consider the use of mud guards on your bike until we get into the better weather again.

## 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.



[ZWIFT.COM](http://ZWIFT.COM)

## KNOCKBURN LOCH MANAGEMENT

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



## 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 Representative

North Aberdeenshire	Rod	01467 623317
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## 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 mls.

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. LIGHTS

### Runs

The full calendar of runs is available here: <https://ctcgrampian.org.uk/runs-list/>

### 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.

### 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>

### 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.

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

- a) What level/type of rider are you?
- b) What kind of rides would you like to see the club put on?
- c) Where are you located and where do you predominately ride?
- d) Do you have any qualifications?
- e) 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](mailto:mtb@deeside.org)

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### 25 Years Ago

#### Editorial

Here are a few historical notes. In March 1974 it was suggested that the Club could produce a monthly newsletter containing topical articles, race results, etc. It happened. In April of that year issue number one appeared. Unnamed, the masthead remained blank for a couple of months while a competition to get a suitable title ran its course. Could a better title than Cranks have been thought of?

In those early months a triumvirate edited the few pages. Keith Ford, who is still with us and occasionally, officiates at events, Colin McPherson and myself. Keith produced a few hilarious paragraphs and if I've got time before this goes to bed I'll dig one out of the library.



Each month efforts are made to have interesting notes for members. This month is typical. Sarah Phillips tells us about her efforts to bring more female cyclists within the fold, Daniel Ritchie is surveying the racing men to help decide how our sponsorship for 1998 is to be distributed and with Mary Lindsay and Nobby Clarke I've helped to compile the evolution of Club Record Performances.

Each month during our Silver Jubilee 25<sup>th</sup> year I hope to delve into issues from our first volume to make some comparison with what things are like today. Will I be able to do the same in another 25 years time for the Gold Jubilee Volume 50?

### Club Kit Arrival

The latest Pactimo kit order is now available to collect from Tierney Strachan, 12 Greenbank Place, East Tullos, AB12 3BT. Normal office hours apply. Please ring the bell at our Goods-In door and announce that you are here to collect Deeside Kit with your name.

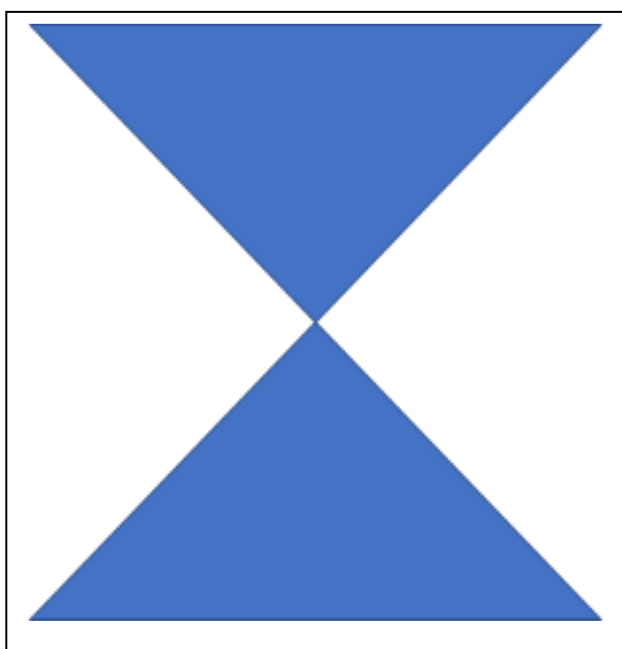
If the small roller shutter door is closed - please ring the office number 01224 295000. If the main gates are closed, we are closed, simples.

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 need to give you weights and dimensions if you want to do this.

*Best Regards, Jon Strachan*  
([jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk](mailto:jas@tierney-strachan.co.uk))

### For Sale

- 1 An Alba team bike used last season is now for sale. It's a size 56 Trek Emonda SLR7's (eTap). If anyone is interested or wants any more information, they can contact Bob Lyons on [bob@alba-rt.com](mailto:bob@alba-rt.com)



## Historical Reminiscences

### (Part 54)

Only 10 miles have been covered today but I retraced about a mile when Alastair punctured so for my diary I'll call it 12. This morning we left Chhandra Lodge at 10am and arrived in Biretanti at 1pm. Only 3 hours cycling. The total climbed today is 860 feet which gives a gross of 10100 from Kathmandu. Goodness knows how long this counting the feet will continue. Alastair has an altimeter on his bike but it involves remembering to take readings.

All afternoon we sat in the heat. I bought more Omba fruit. They really are tasty when ripe. Just my luck they'll probably give me stomach problems. Ate a cheese sandwich and had a cup of coffee around 5pm and at 7.20 we're working on the bikes by candlelight. Tomorrow will be the first real day off road.

As the evening progresses it gets cooler.

Once the bikes were to our satisfaction we returned to the veranda overlooking the river. There are six tables but we sit alone.

This place will decay like so many others we've already seen. It is a shame for all the buildings are tidy and colourful. Now trekkers can bus to Chandrakot in the morning and walk straight through Biretanti to Hille further on the trail, or even to Ghorepani, our destination tomorrow.

Looking through the lodge register there are only two names from last night and none the night before. And tonight we're the only guests.

Other trekkers will bus to Baglung and walk up the Kali Ghandaki to Beni to join the traditional route at Tatopani.

Government intentions may be good opening up new areas in this way and bringing new wealth to the poorer hill farmers but it can have a retrograde effect on places like this.

For dinner I ordered Veg Cheese Spring Roll, Fried Potatoes and milk tea.

Like Naudanda there is no electricity early in the evening. In fact, this evening there has been no electricity at all. At Naudanda it came back on at 8.00pm. Here in Biretanti the clock has ticked round to 7.43. We wonder what will happen.

Our tea (milk tea - small pot) has been delivered and I can hear a pressure cooker across the trail. The light continues to come from a candle as the evening progresses.

We planned for the next day. Books say it is 9 hours from here to Ghorepani. Chhatra doesn't know the area and admits it. We're a little worried. Phakta doesn't seem to have the same judgement that Chhatra has but they are both happy to ask and no doubt we'll get to our destination in due course.

The tea is horrible. The rain stopped.

Maybe soon we'll be able to see the mountains.



Once setting the world to rights and drinking coffee which tasted like tea we retired at 9.35pm.

Midges everywhere.

It's 50 plus years since I cycled down to visit my pal in Knowsley, St Helens. We rode round to see his near neighbour, Keith Boardman and on a fine spring day regaled each other with tales of the road. Keith's infant son, oblivious to the adult talk, pushed himself around the garden on his trike. Little did we suspect a generation on this bairn would become a World Champion and record breaker.

I was in a conversation recently about dry-stane dyking. It's an art form that can be a right jumble, just thrown together, or expertly built with every stone mating closely with the one beside, above and below.

Scotland has a wealth of these dykes, all picturesque in their own way, whether tumble down or standing a metre and more high, robust enough to let you clamber over.

Some dry-stone walls date back thousands of years to the Iron Age and Skara Brae but most date to the agricultural revolution of more than two centuries ago. There may be sinister undertones of Highland Clearances; the oppression of the Common Man; yet they have a beauty all their own marching across our hills separating estates; surrounding fields in our glens; lining roadways.

In the late twentieth century the development of massive farm machinery meant that small enclosed fields were impracticable and uneconomic so farms dug ditches and bulldozed the dykes away. What a travesty. And maybe short-sighted for the removal of dykes opened up the fields to the effect of wind. Newly ploughed fields with a March gale blowing across sees the top-soil disappear out to sea in clouds of dust.

There are also consumption dykes which were created to absorb the land-gathered stones during breaking in of new farmland. The best and biggest is on our doorstep at Kingswells and there is even a path atop it.

Fortunately there is one local estate which prides itself in the dry-stane dykes with repairs an ongoing task. Next time you're pedalling around Dunecht check out the uniformity of the walls by the roadside.

The tour was well and truly on.

Avoiding Edinburgh at all costs, for even though all claimed the ability to ride safely in traffic, some had yet to prove it. We turned south through Kirkliston Industrial area and zig-zagged round the outskirts to Fairmilehead.

Soon we all realised how hard was this area as the road reared and dropped and the two newest to touring, Elaine and Kevin, laboured a lot.

Because the tour had not started until late, almost 3.00pm, the first day's food was bought, near closing time in Penicuik.

Bikes stacked with food we continued south climbing steadily to Leadburn and a long, long descent to Peebles. Peebles negotiated in the early evening, a brief stop taken at Horsburgh Castle repaired some hunger knock in Kevin.

Then descending to Yarrow Water a wind assisted last few miles took us to the junction for the hostel.

Over mild roughstuff a sign on a gate was eventually located and in due course a welcoming party greeted us at the door of Broadmeadows, Scotland's first hostel. An unknown, but friendly native, made us a quick cup of tea. Day one over. Shot! Six hours of genuine effort.

From Hawick we followed the Newcastleton road to Hobkirk where the Carter Bar road was joined. Climbing steadily the heat rose too, until riders began to peel off, fatigued from the unaccustomed exercise and distance.

From Carter Bar we headed into England descending magnificently through Redesdale Forest along the bank of Catleugh Reservoir and onto the Roman road from Corbridge.

Soon Once Brewed appeared. A purpose built hostel, it stands next to an information office and near some of the best preserved Roman remains at Stangate. On then to Dacre Bank and over the Scales to Keswick.

The hostel is a converted hotel, with a catwalk along the River Derwent. Gaping holes made it seem unsafe as bikes were leaned against a precarious railing.

Settled in and overfed we did the town. Directly opposite the hostel across the river, Kevin and Robert found the tennis courts and courting chastisement went on without paying. Later in the evening, in the gathering dark, they challenged me to a game and I'd soon to admit defeat missing the ball more often than making contact.

Wheels slipping, the Newlands climb was completed over the shoulder of Knott Rigg and a hairy descent to Buttermere followed.

Looking south-east along Buttermere Fell a tremendous climb through Honister Pass could be seen. At the top of this pass, at 1200 feet, was a YH and many slate quarries, that night's resting place. Most people cycled to the top, albeit with some difficulty, and looked with scorn on the motorised tourist who couldn't make it.

Looking eastwards, the Fells of Borrowdale beckoned. Leaping aboard our bikes the first taste of the descent on Honister Hause scared us all with squealing brakes and bikes sliding sideways on corners. We passed, white faced, through Seatoller and Borrowdale.

Retracing along Derwent Water we climbed to Ashness Bridge and Gowder Crag and on to Watendlath tarn. Here a man sat behind an easel, painting in watercolours, the hills in front. After a friendly word of admiration, greeted with unnecessary modesty, the cyclists passed through a gate and onto a rough track to Rosthwaite.



In Grasmere there are two YHs and after going round in circles for a long time we eventually located BH, our destination. With time to fill in most of the party went for a roughstuff race round Grasmere Water and returned to the village to eat ice-cream, apple-tarts, drink coffee and wonder about the progress of Colin Gray.

It was supposed that Colin had the day off and might have taken the train to Carlisle had the railways not been on strike. Being Colin he might cycle all the way but as the hours went past there was still no sign.

5am! Colin G, eyes heavy with sleep, having toured the streets of Grasmere for some 2 hours had eventually located the YH. In the dawn he curled and slept in the corner of the bike shed. From Aberdeen he'd come by fish lorry to Kendal, dropped off at 1.00am and cycled to Windermere and via Ambleside to Grasmere. He'd not failed the party.

On these tours it is always the rule that whoever is ready for bed last should put out the light. This honour fell to Colin. Now, it's a bit difficult finding your way through a maze of beds to your own in the dark and Colin had decided to take a bed close to the switch and further, to make it easier to find his bed, he wouldn't even leave it, instead putting the light out from the comfort of his top bunk.

Carefully balancing himself over the end of the bunk he reached out with a probing toe to rest his distant digit on the light switch. Click, and the light was out!

And Colin was stuck, balanced one foot on the bed and the other precariously on the top of a switch plate. It was dark and he couldn't find a footrest let alone the rest of his bed. The others drifted off to sleep and Colin wished for the comfort of a bike shed.

The first SCU National Mountain Bike Championship took place at the end of September 1991. Organised by Robert for the Deeside, some 240 riders participated in the series of events on the slopes of Tap o Noth, near Rhynie.

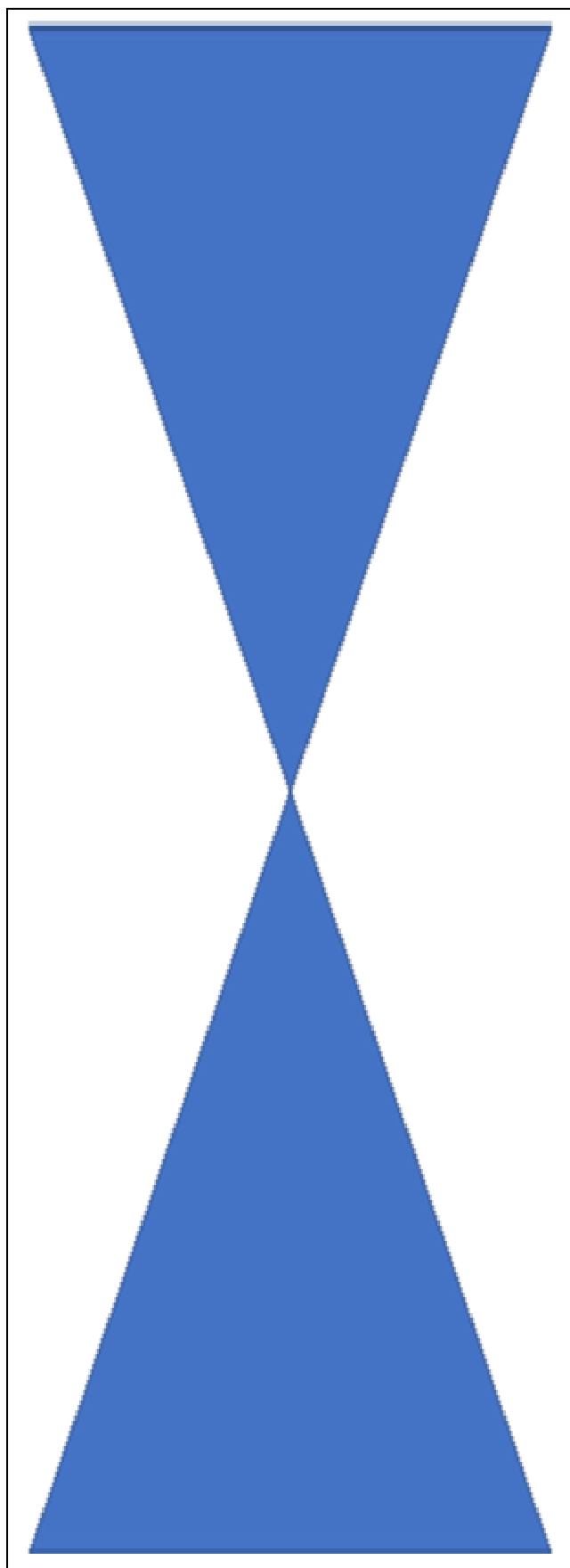
On the Saturday more than 80 riders who felt they could ride both days took part in a time-trial style hill climb to the top of the hill. This tested them sorely.

Once in the vitrified fort at the top of the hill they had a long wait until their time to descend came round. The descent was very much faster and also run time-trial fashion.

On the Sunday the Championship proper got under way. More than 150 riders in the various categories faced the flag. Riders commended the course. Others slated it. They all said it was harder than the Grundig Challenge at Aviemore. But then, this was the Championship.

The course included an ascent and descent of Tap o' Noth then a seven-mile trip round its perimeter. Youngsters did one lap, Ladies and Juniors two, while the Vets and Seniors had to slog round three times.

***Roughstuffer***



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