

Issue 596

November 2023

Cranks

Golden Jubilee

Volume 50

The magazine of
Deeside Thistle Cycling Club
Sponsored by:

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Current Membership 567 (582)
SCU Membership 295 (295)
Scottish Cycling's Largest Club

Editorial:

Arabella Blackburn and Elliot Rowe have been selected to join the Great Britain Olympic Development Squads. Elliot, who has already spent a year in GB colours is currently in Europe exercising his talents riding the track.

Both these riders, during their development with our Youth Group, have gained National Championship titles, so it is no real surprise that they have been rewarded with the selection.

Our Youth Group is undeniably successful and weekly returns indicate that the riders are on a par with the best in the country. Much of this success is only possible because of the dedication and hard work from the team of coaches that oversee the training sessions.

Led by Sarah Rowe, herself an Olympian of the Atlanta Games, parents and club members have enrolled as coaches. Arabella and Elliot are proof the knowledge that is being passed on creates champions.

Who'd have thought the first tentative pedal revs of our newly formed Deeside Youth had the potential to be at the forefront of GB cycling.

Also in the spotlight is Ava Luce. She has been elected to serve on the Scottish Cycling's Young People's Panel giving our young members a voice at National level. And Olivia Poole has the overall lead in the National CX Trophy Series. Can she be another National Champion?

PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

The Wright brothers flew right through the smoke screen of impossibility - **Charles Kettering**

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

Racing Update

05 November

It was the third round of the Scottish Cyclocross Series at Fife College in Dunfermline. Notorious for its leg sapping mud, conditions were surprisingly dry with the course taking much longer than normal to cut up. Sadly, though it's the last ever Scottish Cyclocross event to be held at the venue which I'm sure will make many of the die hard CX'ers shed a tear, whilst their bikes breathe a sigh of relief. As usual DTCC had a strong contingent down racing in amongst the large and hotly contested fields.

The Youths & Jnr section had 13 riders on the start line. All of whom put in sterling performances. Notable mentions however to the following riders who made it onto the podiums.

U14 Girls - Zara Main 1st
U16 Girls - Melanie Rowe 1st Emma Campbell 2nd
U16 Boys - Ollie Carter 3rd
Jnr Female - Arabella Blackburn 1st

DTCC also had 6 riders from the senior section racing. Again, a big congrats to Isla Long (Senior Female) and Dave Ogden (Vet 40) for both finishing 3rd in their respective races.

12 November

Round 4 of the CX National Trophy was held down on the South West coast in Torbay this weekend. Olivia Poole the current U14 Girls series leader was the sole representative of DTCC.

A 1200-mile round trip and wet muddy conditions which has become the norm at these events, Olivia wasn't in the mood to give up her leader's jersey and made sure she used all her skill and strength to take the win and further extend her series lead.

Meanwhile at Chatelherault Park in Glasgow, Ross Eastough (U16B), Eva Murphy (U16G), Zara Main (U14G) and Calum Campbell (U12B) all took to the start line for the Clydesdale Colts Winter Cross race. On what was a beautiful frosty morning on the south side of Glasgow, the sun soon thawed out the ground which provided the perfect amount of mud to challenge our young riders.

The organisers provided a challenging course that the DTCC riders tackled with precision and power, ensuring they showcased their abilities which they continue to develop at Thursday evening Knockburn coaching sessions.

Eva and Zara both won their races, Ross taking a well-earned 2nd place and Calum had a big smile on his face after being rewarded with a top 10 for his efforts.

Chris Main



Scottish Track Championship...

DTCC had 8 Youth/Juniors racing at the Scottish Cycling National Track Championships in Glasgow on 11/12 November. For riders with limited access to the facility they all rode brilliantly and brought home a number of Championship medals.

It was a great experience for the youngsters especially for those riding at this level for the first time. They all learned a lot which they will now use to help them to continue to develop.

The club brought home 8 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze medals.

It was also great to see a couple of our alumni riders this weekend with Evie White racing for Alba and Calum Smith taking time away from his studies to come and support the youngsters.

Scottish Cyclocross Championships

Deeside Thistle cycling club is hosting the Scottish Cyclocross Championships at Knockburn loch on Sunday 26th November!

We have a series of fun support races planned for under 12s, 10s and 8s - come and try your first race on easy home terrain - it's not everyday we get the champions in Deeside.

The race will be on grass and dirt track, hopefully with some mud!!! It's perfect for a mountain or cyclocross bike. We will also have some of our youth coaches available on the day to help and answer any questions.

The link to sign up is here, <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/.../2023-Scottish-Cyclo..>

Everything you need to know will also be explained in the race manual. Age categories are as follows:

- Under 8 - born in or after 2016
- Under 10 - born in 2014 or 2015
- Under 12 - born in 2012 or 2013

You don't need to be a member of Deeside Thistle Cycling Club, but you will need to register with British Cycling to enter but it's free for youngsters.

Don't want to race - then come and spectate or volunteer on the day.

Ava Luce

Congratulations to Ava Luce on being selected to represent DTCC Youth and Junior on the SC Young People's Panel. Let's support Ava to help all young riders enjoy our fantastic sport.

Arabella & Elliot

Congratulations to Arabella Blackburn on being selected onto the Great Britain Cycling Team (GBTC) Olympic Development Squad (ODS) where she will join Elliot Rowe for his second year.

Both of these riders regularly attended Deeside Thistle Youth and Junior sessions, and both went on to claim a British Champion's jersey whilst representing the club.

They have a busy and exciting year ahead attending regular training camps and representing GB in races. We wish them the best and look forward to following their progress!

Read more about it here:

<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/.../%2020231105-Great...>

Sarah Rowe

Total Endurance

We are excited to launch our dates of Winter Talks and Workshops, and all are available for booking. The first talk focuses on winter training and aims to give you some practical advice on how you can optimise your winter training to make improvements needed for your event(s). The talks have a maximum capacity of 20 people and are free to attend. The workshops have a maximum capacity of 5 for the bike maintenance classes and 6 for the run/swim workshops You can book your space for any of the talks at this [link](#).

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/.../Trainee-Commissaire-course).

If anyone's interested, please contact volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk



Scottish Cycling Badge of Honour

Scottish Cycling is welcoming nominations for its prestigious Badge of Honour accolade, which recognises the contribution and achievement of individuals who have shown exceptional dedication, made a remarkable contribution or given an outstanding performance, through a lifetime dedicated to the sport of cycling in Scotland.

If there is anyone you wish to nominate, please do so via this link:

https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/article/20230831-Badge-of-Honour-Nominations-open-for-2023-0?fbclid=IwAR3bonwxaVbKVEy_4GZdD3dAgtRIQnZKNGrxfb7fvTwl_bh7HSKB79syUMs *Ewan McArthur*

New Kit Bag

I have been working with the Montrose Bag Company to come up with a new and improved Deeside Thistle Kit Bag. The version 2.0 bag incorporates improvements fed back from youth riders and new products that the Montrose Bag Company offer.

The last kit bag made for the club was in 2015, with a good number of these still being used to date. It gives an example of the robustness of the bags made by the Montrose Bag Company.

I personally have used a Montrose Bag Company bag for the last 12 years of offshore travels and despite a few scuffs from un-friendly helideck personnel, it is still waterproof and as strong as the day I got it.

The new bag is based on the original design but with some improvements. The original bag size of 66cm x 30cm x 30cm remains, there are 2 end pockets that are 10cm wide and a central pocket of 46cm wide giving the following capacity of 9L + 41.5L + 9L. Please see pictures [here](#).

The new bag will be in the same waterproof material however in a turquoise green colour with white Logo patches. There will be a netted pocket inside the lid of the central compartment, and it will have a double rucksack strap. It will have a side pocket and a clear card holder.

Each bag can have an individual rider's name printed beneath the club's wings logo on the end panel. The full club logo would be on the side panel opposite the pocket. This bag will cost £88 per bag based on an order quantity of 20-50 pieces and the current lead time is 6 weeks from the point of order. I appreciate that this is not an insignificant amount to spend on a bag. However, from my experience with the bags from the Montrose Bag Company they are very hard wearing and should last a long time. If you are interested in getting a bag please comment [here](#)
Russell Macnamara

KNOCKBURN LOCH MANAGEMENT

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

Youth Free Membership

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

New Members

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

3130	Josh Ewart	Banchory	10
3131	Karen Young	Torphins	59
3132	Sebastian Matonti	Torphins	8
3133	Theo Rhodes	Banchory	12

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.

Zwift Sunday Club Endurance Ride

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

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.



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).

DonsideBunch <https://group.spond.com/WWDYZ>
Banchory <https://group.spond.com/TYLWP>
DTCC MTB <https://group.spond.com/MRFCH>
LeggartTerrace <https://group.spond.com/AGTNP>

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

Link to PPT Spond guide: http://deeside.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DTCC_Spond_and_Ride_Leader_Guide.pptx *Peter Smart*

Donside Bunch Rides

Mostly starting from Kintore, these will vary in length (and sometimes start time). Make up of groups will depend on who attends on a week-by-week basis.

For those who are venturing outside for the first time or returning after a break/injury etc, there will be a shorter/steadier (sub 3hr) ride posted every Sunday. Can't guarantee a leader for that ride but will attempt to get a volunteer on a weekly basis.

All rides will be posted on [SPOND](#). The more people that sign up for the steadier ride, the more chance of it being a success.

Donside Bunch - Winter 2023/24

Winter base rides started on Sunday 5th November from Kintore Primary School at 0900hrs. Pre Xmas we will keep the rides to max 3hrs and will start to build distance in the New Year.

As much as is practicable, these will be group rides. It would be great if we could get numbers for a steady and faster group.

Coffee stops will be planned if the weather conditions allow. Flashing lights front and back are encouraged (why wouldn't you!). Mudguards are preferred. Get yourself ready for a successful 2024! *Andy Kerr*

Wednesday / Friday Banchory Rides

Town Hall at 1000. Check on [SPOND](#) if you are able to. Rides on Friday are to Ballater. Best to book table at Brown Sugar via FB Messenger. Rides on Wednesday are to 'somewhere else', usually about 80km/50mi.

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 meetup, 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

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 or look for us on [Spond](#).

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



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>

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:

- 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

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)



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/>

Synopsis of Meeting

A Finance and Management Committee meeting took place on-line, on Monday 13 November 2023. In attendance were Andrew Harrington, Sandy Lindsay, Sam Long, Margaret McMillan, John Sands, and Steve Walton. Agenda

1 Apologies – Gavin Baxter, Dave Carson, Peter Smart, Neil Stables and Mark Walker

2 **Minutes of Previous Meeting** – Accepted as correct record

3 **Business Arising from Minute**

i) **SCIO Constitution** – The proposed constitution is being updated to cover members under 16 years of age. Bank accounts have also to be rationalised.

Cultural contacts have to be looked at

ii) **Ally Ross Award** – It was agreed that an award of £200 per year be made to a suitable candidate in the youth group

iii) **Club Championships** – Those members who have made returns of performances during the 2023 season and qualify for the various Championships will be published in December Cranks

4 **New Business**

i) **Equipment at Garlogie** – Work to re-establish the Beam Engine Museum at Garlogie Hall is ongoing and access to the area where we store equipment is required. This area has been tidied and various redundant and damaged items discarded. Specific questions regarding the usefulness of items like CB radios are to be asked with a view to moving them out of the store **Action A Lindsay**

ii) **Member Management** – A suggestion that the Club register of Members could be managed on SPOND is to be investigated **Action S Long**

iii) **Youth Update** – A promotional video has been prepared to advertise the Youth group. Parents are to be asked if images may be used.

Elliott Rowe and Arabella Blackburn have both been selected for GB squads. Olivia Poole currently leads the National Trophy CX Series.

Prices at Knockburn are increasing. An effort is to be made to forestall this and to try and get financial support from external sources

There is difficulty in recruiting new riders to the Youth section. This reflected in other groups throughout the country **Action S Long**

iv) **SCX Championship at Knockburn** – This will take place on 25/26 November. Volunteers are required

v) **Annual Affiliation to SC** - Before the affiliation is put in place Welfare returns have to be completed. The date for this is to be confirmed

5 **Next Meeting** – Annual General Meeting 12 January 2024 at Echt Hall. This will be followed by refreshments

2023 Time-Trial Champions

Senior BAR	Jim Robb
Vets BAR	Jim Robb
Womens BAR	Margaret McMillan
Vet Womens BAR	Margaret McMillan
25 Champion	Andrew Yule

25 Years Ago

CHANGE OF SPONSOR

For eight years Positioning Resources has been involved with our Club. In that time the benefits derived are difficult to measure. There is no difficulty in counting the sums handed over, the clothing purchased on our behalf and sold on to generate income but the full support and that which makes it immeasurable is far wider ranging.

George Ritchie, Managing Director of Positioning Resources is quiet, unassuming, and never suggested that more be provided by the Club in return for his sponsorship. This led to an easy relationship that



over the years bore many worthwhile results in the field of competition.

When George first became involved Club Membership was around 150. Today it exceeds 220 with a high of 234 in 1996. Whether or not this increase came through an organisation made more attractive because it was sponsored is not known. It might have happened anyway. What is sure is that many members feel a sense of belonging and our organisation is far more than just a group of racing cyclists. It is very much a large friendly organisation that tries to cater for all types of cyclists with varied cycling interests.

From shortly before George's original connection with the Club we were hailed as the biggest and best club in Scotland. One year in particular we took more National Awards than any other group in Scotland. In recent years we have been seen as one of the most successful and best organised in Britain. Not every year sees huge successes, but it is now expected that more than one member will take the long walk annually to collect some sort of prize at the National Award Presentation.

For Sale

- 1 a) Airborne - Carpe Diem in red (aluminium frame) 19" centre to top tube. Set up as a winter bike (although it can make a great cyclo-cross bike) New Sora 9 speed with Ritchey WCS cranks. Shimano Dura Ace wheelset and new Selcof stem and Planet X bars. SKS mudguards. Great condition. £400 secures
 - b) Planet X Stealth frame set (blue) in large. Comes with seat pin, TT bars + risers and front mech £150 secures
 - c) DT Swiss R20 wheelset. Used as backup wheels when I was going through my Everesting phase so, not much use. £150 secures.
- Photos available and for further info. contact Phil Kelman - philipkelman@aol.com.
- 2 a) Indoor cycling fan, 8.5" dia with variable speed control. Mountable on your Garmin mount. £80 each. Three immediately available and a further 9 to be assembled on request
 - b) Hand made plywood bike stand. £30 each. Three available immediately

Contact Andre Bergh on andre.k.bergh@gmail.com

Annual Subscriptions

Our Club year runs from October to October so it is time to renew your membership - please go here:

<http://deeside.org/join/>

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

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

Fees are as follows:

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



Historical Reminiscences

(Part 62)

Looking back on the time it's quite embarrassing to realise that it still stands as the Scottish Road Records Association's straight away 100-mile performance. In open competition many riders have eclipsed that result, and our own club record has superseded it by over 10 minutes.

Nevertheless, in date I suppose it did mean something.

Throughout the country record aspirants were desperate to find roads that started reasonably high and had a decent descent throughout. What better road than that from the Devil's Elbow and down Deeside?

The road had been measured and from the county boundary at the ski-tows it was 25 miles to entering the Pass of Ballater and 50 miles at Banchory Ternan Church. Word spread.

Pete Crofts came north in 1971 and smashed the Road Records Association 25- and 50-mile records. He went away smiling and was featured on the front cover of Cycling Weekly. Timekeepers had taken his time entering the Pass of Ballater and at the church. Just to mac siccar they recorded a further time a few hundred yards on at the Scott Skinner pub. To make sure everything was above board the RRA asked me to go out and check the authenticity of the distance.

I too, and it was the only time ever, made the front cover of Cycling Weekly - Yokel from the Hinterlands of Aberdeen Scuppers Record Attempt!

The measured mile is on the Drum straight. And once this was checked I headed out Deeside and up to the ski-tows. The measuring went smoothly – only something was awry. Into the Pass of Ballater and at Balmenach farm road end the rev counter clicked past 25 miles. Oops. Keep going until Banchory Ternan Church. Again, a problem. The rev counter clicked away and didn't get past 50 miles until the sawmill entrance at Silverbank. A return to the measured mile confirmed the standard used as correct.

The RRA stripped Crofts of his 50 time but because he had gone through the 25-mile point, they gave him an estimated performance of 47.00.

Beryl Burton came north the following year. She'd attempt to break the women's 50-mile performance and little doubt she was capable. Her time-trial best was just seconds slower than Eileen Sheridan's 1.55.00 straight out ride. What would she achieve? There's little doubt in my mind that she wasn't so much after the women's trophy but more the men's, which at that time stood to Derek Cottington in 1.39.23.

My memories may be a bit hazy, but they tell me that it was a fine day with hardly a zephyr disturbing the leaves of the trees. Ian Watson already streaked down Deeside. He was intent on taking the men's record before Beryl got her hands on it. Beryl quietly prepared her mind set for the effort ahead.

I'd the honour of sitting beside her in the picnic layby at the west entrance to the Pass of Ballater. She looked at her watch and smiled ruefully. *I don't think I'll bother, I'm going home*, she said.

Ian Watson went past in a welter of sweat on his abortive attempt. Realising his efforts would come to nothing and, if she started, hers too, she packed up and went home.

Dave Lloyd came north in 1974. He shot to fame as the top Raleigh professional who could cover 50 miles in 1.35.35. It impressed Peter Post. Then, less so when he found out it was one way, downhill and wind assisted!

Even if the weather and gradients have to be in your favour when going for one-way records, they still require top level fitness and only fall to the best riders.

Back in 1971 when involved with the Pete Crofts debacle I wondered in my naivety if it was worth the effort to go for the Scottish RRA 100 time. I'd looked at a possible route using Deeside, then through Aberdeen and north to Peterhead. A map measurement took the 100-mile point just into the town. I popped on the rev counter and measured from Banchory, through the centre of Aberdeen and north via Ellon towards the Blue Toon.

Now, it's hard to believe the stupidity, but just short of the finish I turned south through Cruden Bay to terminate the 100 miles on the top of Chapel Hill. I'd to get back to Stonehaven to donate a pint of blood and time was running out!

16 June 1971 dawned, warm with a rising south westerly. Conditions looked good. Support vehicle was a blue Cortina Mark I belonging to my sister. My father drove and RKL was the timekeeper. The bike was still the black Harry Quinn, the rear ends stretched apart a bit extra to accept the 6-speed 13-18 block. A single 57 tooth chainwheel would give me the gear I wanted. Of interest were the wee touches like Weinmann 500 brakes with arms drilled out and the down tube gear-lever carefully filigreed for lightness.

My best in time-trials stood at 4.20.11 and George Walker of Ivy CC held the straight away time of 4.11.36. Could I do it?

The first ten miles is at Braemar, and it passed in 16 minutes. The attempt was on. No hindrance of traffic lights through Peterculter to Aberdeen. Then in the city lots of club members had been detailed to man the controlled junctions. And they did. When I came in sight they manfully started jumping up and down on the rubber strips to get the lights to turn to green. Northwards with the wind in my favour and getting stronger things looked good.

Overtaking a funeral cortege heading towards Balmedie I knew things were in my favour. Then things turned sour. With about 3.45 on the watches and only 5 miles to go I turned onto the A975 towards Cruden Bay. It's hard to believe the stupidity.

Out of the saddle and struggling into the headwind I clattered down through the gears. Through Cruden Bay and climbed that mountain up Chapel Hill to collapse exhausted at the door to the church.

The bad news from the timekeeper was that I'd ruined my chances of getting well inside 4 hours; the good news was I'd still beaten George Walker's time with a 4.03.50.

That performance is now a bit of a joke and it's about time someone updated it.



When travelling in Nepal there is no way that great speed can be maintained. It always takes a long time to travel any distance. True, folk have run out from Base Camp in four days and, of course, many other amazing feats of endurance have taken place but to ordinary mortals not accustomed to the altitude, rough terrain or carrying heavy loads, pace has got to be slow. We are simply human and our problem rests mainly with the huge encumbrance of a clumsy bike – a bike is a thing of beauty, of grace and elegance. Believing that is easy when the machine is clean and light or speeding downhill with a following wind. Here, in Nepal, when lacking strength, the machines have grown heavy; they have lost their sparkle; we have lost a lot of our enthusiasm.

Alastair wheels his mount everywhere. I admire his efforts but cannot understand why he doesn't carry more. It must be hell to lift the bike over every stone, to have it constantly snag in undergrowth, to be continually battered about the ankles by the pedals. To be constantly twisted round while pushing must cause unnecessary fatigue.

I lift my mount and place it on my right shoulder. Once there I let it turn and rest across my back. This, too, is unnatural and soon the 15-kilo load on one shoulder causes pain. The pain leads to so much discomfort that the position has to be constantly changed. Over the days I've taught myself to place my forearm across the top of my head and hold onto the saddle. This helps to distribute the weight and shows me the benefit of a tumpi. Maybe I'll give one a try.

A short climb to the summit of the pass above Poyang saw us stop for more black tea. Now every tea-house is visited by us and this one had no more than a woven mat propped on sticks for shelter. A young woman sat on the edge of the precipice and wore a towel on her head. She crocheted away.

Always active, carrying water, clearing up, cooking, serving, these women fascinate me. Heavily clothed, head to foot, there is seldom a glimpse of bare skin, except occasionally round their midriff. Nearly always they wear jewellery. Through their noses there is often a ring.

Chhatra has said that a simple ring denotes an unmarried woman while an ornate one signifies she is married.

An eagle has soared from the depths of the Dudh Kosi valley. I watched it rise in a spiral on the thermals, which carried it past me at 3000 metres. It continued to circle upwards. Eventually I lost it in the glare of the sun.

From Poyang La Chhatra said that it would take two and a half hours to reach Surke, our next overnight stop. He is seldom far out with his timing, but he always gives times that the trekker will manage. Because I felt good it was my intention to show him that a bike can travel quite fast over his home terrain.

At the top of the climb the view north across the valley showed Lukla to be not far distant but it involved a major descent and another steep climb before reaching there. I put the bike on my shoulder and started to jog.

Surprise, surprise. It proved a much easier way to descend than walking down the interminable steps and forever stumbling. With the gentle trotting, body weight could be used to good effect. No longer did the heavy bulk have to be lifted and pushed over each boulder. Instead, it was allowed to fall and the speed of the descent controlled only by footwork. The experience exhilarated me. It was an exhausting hour and fifty minutes and I don't think I will do it too often, too many chances of catching my foot on a stone or a root presented themselves. It's a long way down.

During the trot down the never-ending steps I overtook a chap carrying two large tins of paint. Once again it fascinated me to remember that every item that these folk need and which cannot be grown or manufactured locally, has to be transported in, carried by someone for many days. This chap turned out to be the husband in the lodge where we spent the night.

The lodge is brand new, still under construction and here a very pleasant evening is being spent. Chhatra, as always, seems to know the folk and a lot of laughter is created by his jokes. Beam is very shy and though joining in the laughter, he does not contribute to the source. The wife is very talkative. She cooks well. Served to us are chips, cheese omelette, followed by Chapattis covered in jam.

Suddenly everyone went quiet as the door burst open and a military looking gentleman in a khaki uniform rushed in. Shining his torch around the room he barked a few questions. Replies came from the wife. These seemed to satisfy the policeman, as Chhatra called him, for he quickly left. Something is afoot.

Our curiosity aroused, quizzing Chhatra brought the information that the policeman was looking for a torch. A torch? We could not accept that. There'd been expressions of fear on their faces and the manner in which the officer had rushed in, peered around, and left, suggested that something dramatic had happened. Prying questions elicited the information that there had been a fight in Lukla. Seven people had been involved, including policemen. One man died after the fracas though not necessarily because of it. The policemen had been imprisoned and it seemed that others who had been involved in the fight were being pursued. In the darkness on the trail, I imagine it would be very easy to lie low, unseen for a good many hours. Further questions during the evening brought forth more information that the "died man" would be carried back to his village, 15 hours away, tied to a pole, by a team of four porters. For this difficult task a charge of Rs4000 would be made. I asked Chhatra if he would do the job, little more than a day's work, for that sort of money. He did not look very happy and said that if offered unlimited money he would not touch a dead body.

Time wore on and though the fun restarted it did not have the same humour, the laughter being a bit subdued. Eventually Chhatra took us outside and pointed up the mountainside to a cluster of lights heading back towards Khari La. That, he said, would be the porters already on their way. It appears he is afraid of death.

Roughstuffer

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