

Issue 600

March 2024

Cranks
Golden Jubilee
Volume 50
 The magazine of
Deeside Thistle Cycling Club
 Sponsored by:

MPH
 Melnoah Plant Hire

Tierney Strachan
 PROCESS CONTROL ENGINEERING

Current Membership 524 (529)
 SCU Membership 282 (289)
 Scottish Cycling's Largest Club

Editorial

It's the end of the line. Will I miss the monthly search for content to fill this magazine? Or will the relief that I'll be able to get an extra hour or two doing other things supersede that? Time will tell.

The 50 years spent preparing the monthly issue hasn't been wasted. Editing stories and sorting results on a regular basis gave me a lot of satisfaction (even if not enjoyment). But the last few years have proved more difficult. There's been less competition and organisers of events don't send through the results as a matter of course. Though members will still undertake epics (expeditions) the stories don't come to me. More and more I've had to rely on my own limited experiences which are also drying up.

Other methods of communication have surpassed the worth of the humble news-sheet and requests for a new leader of this production have drawn a blank. It's time to draw a line under it.

I do believe that having a club magazine does provide members with a worthwhile communication tool but up to date alternatives on the Internet have taken over.

I'll do my best to continue the dissemination of club information through the weekly Deeside Notes.

PHILOSOPHER'S CORNER

Curious to know:

What's on your bucket list for the next era?

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

Vol. 1 Issue 1

Editorial:

This is the first issue of our club magazine. We hope that within a few months it will come to be part of our normal club life with each edition looked forward to. It should serve many functions – as a means of keeping in touch with events past, present and future, giving members an opportunity to voice their opinions and hopefully, as a first-class recruitment platform.

For a venture such as this to be successful, the participation of the whole club is necessary. As a result, members are expected to make contributions which, if suitable, will be printed – subject to the usual editorial censorship, of course. It is hope that submissions will far exceed requirements so that there is no difficulty in maintaining an easily read and interesting publication.

It will gladden the hearts of all that the magazine is free to members of the Deeside Thistle Road Club! If there is a demand from outwith the club – from other clubs or individuals – a charge will be made to them. Of course, nothing is entirely free and to cover the cost of publication nominal charges are to be made for the use of the "For Sale" and "Wanted" sections.

What about a title? The editors have their own ideas, but it is your mag, so why not put your suggestion on a piece of paper and give it to one of the editors?

HOODUNIT!

In the traditional season curtain-raiser, the ADCA 10TT on the first Sunday in March, Edmond Hood from Kennoway romped home the winner by a few seconds from Deeside member, Sandy Lindsay

E Hood	KRC	26.21
A Lindsay	DTRC	26.25
G Lawrie	CCC	27.13
G Hislop	DTRC	27.21
R Smith	DTRC	29.26

WHEELER WINS

In our first event of the year, a 10TT on the new North Deeside course, held on the afternoon of Sunday 17 March, an entry of 19 let Bob Cowie (Wheelers) twiddle to a convincing win.

R Cowie	AWCC	26.09
A Lindsay	DTRC	26.18
M Robertson	DTRC	26.30
N Gatt	DTRC	26.32

A complaint was made to our Chairman immediately after the event concerning one of our riders who raced while wearing unregistered colours.

This should be taken as a warning that the SCU is now a stricter regime which will frown on and take action against any contravention of its rules.

A rider must wear his club's colours or black in any open competition.



Deeside Thistle Cycling Club, SC053168

We are pleased to tell you that our application to become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) has been successful.

OSCR is satisfied that our organisation meets the charity test and the legal requirements for being a SCIO and has entered it in the Scottish Charity Register.

This means we now have charitable status under the [Charities and Trustee Investment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#). Our charity number is SC053168.

John Sands has masterminded the registration, and you will be kept updated as things progress.

ADHD Workshop

Following on from a successful (fully subscribed) ADHD workshop, we've arranged another one for the **26th March 6-8.30pm (Virtual MS Teams)**.

The session will be run by the ADHD Foundation, and I've included the outcomes of the course below.

Please complete the sign up below if you'd like a space (you will then be sent the teams link prior to the 26th)

Groups are more than welcome to sign up multiple people from within your organisation.

Sign-up - <https://forms.microsoft.com/e/JRCjdprYfH>

Outcomes of workshop

Strategies for support in sports settings- including support for executive functioning, communication, session planning, inclusive practices, mental health vulnerabilities, memory, organisation, and support for self-management.

What ADHD is and isn't, including up to date research, key features, diagnostic criteria, comorbidities, executive functioning impairments, emotional dysregulation, and the different presentations of ADHD, including gender.

Any questions please get in touch. **Audra Booth**

Email: audra.booth@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Coach Clinics

Cycle Aberdeenshire, as part of Live Life Outdoors/Live Life Aberdeenshire and in conjunction with Aberdeenshire Clubsport, is delighted to present their "2024 Coach Clinics".

The Coach Clinics are open to coaches from **all sports**, so that they can hear, discuss, and converse, allowing them to take away learning points and experiences from an experienced elite coach.

The winter 2024 programme features the architect of Scotland's first elite Women's cycling team, as Bob Lyons, Team Owner, and Manager of the Alba Development Road Team. Bob will tell the story behind the creation of a team that has set a new bar in women's elite sport in Scotland and the UK.

Open to Coaches/Deliverers from all sports!

Sessions will be held at the following venues.

Ellon Community Campus 7pm Friday 22nd March 2024

Inverurie Community Campus 7pm Wednesday 27th March 2024

Join us for an evening of discussion and insight into elite sport, with a special Q&A session to allow you to learn from the Alba RT experiences and apply it within your own club/sport setting. Light refreshments provided, to book your place please visit: <https://forms.office.com/e/w2FfRfL56V>

Audra Booth Community Sport Hub Officer

Coaching Opportunities

Bookings for the 2024 Coaching course calendar are now live and can be found here [Introduction to Coaching \(Activity Coach\) \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](#) but to summarise, on what's happening in Scotland.

Introduction to Coaching

- Multi: Callendar Park, Falkirk
 - Online: 4th/18th/25th Apr (7-8pm)
 - Practical: 27th Apr
- Offroad: Chatelherault Country Park, Hamilton
 - Online: 23rd/30th Apr, 7th May (7-8pm)
 - Practical: 11th May
- Offroad: Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore
 - Online: 21st/28th May, 4th June (7-8pm)
 - Practical: 8th June

Reminder there is the **sportscotland** subsidy which can be applied for by filling in this form [sportscotland - Subsidy Application \(office.com\)](#), and the British Cycling Ignite and Flying Start bursaries which can be applied for here <https://forms.office.com/e/jY7SQBHRt2>



CYCLE SPORTIVE TICKETS OUT NOW!!!

As part of the Midsummer Beer Happening in Stonehaven, each year we organise one of Scotland's friendliest and fastest growing cycle sportive.

The DINNAEDO (100m), REDO (68m), UNDO (52m) and GRAVEL EPIC (40m). Held on Saturday 15th June 2024. Starting and finishing in Stonehaven's Baird Park, home of the Midsummer Beer Happening, in waves from 8.00 am with a complimentary Buff, entry to beer festival, a beer on us and of course sore legs.

This year we are offering an Official Sportive T-Shirt to remember your day. Your ticket already comes with a buff and unique glass for the Happening but now you can add the T-shirt to wear as a badge of honour!

[TICKETS HERE](#)

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 \(britishcycling.org.uk\)](http://www.britishcycling.org.uk).

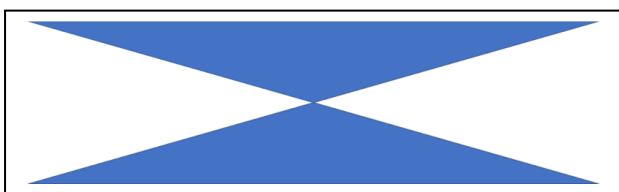
If anyone's interested, please contact volunteer@scottishcycling.org.uk

New Members

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

3148	Barry Gibson	Westhill	41
3149	Simon Laws	Aberdeen	44
3150	Adam Laws	Aberdeen	9
3151	Luke Laws	Aberdeen	7
3152	Graeme Simpson	Inverurie	45
3153	Fiona Simpson	Inverurie	44
3154	Euan Simpson	Inverurie	6
3155	Cameron Simpson	Inverurie	9
3156	Andy Greig	Aberdeen	56
3157	Gillian Whitfield	Banchory	45
3158	Jonathan Whitfield	Banchory	45
3159	Isla Whitfield	Banchory	10
3160	Callum Whitfield	Banchory	7

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.

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>

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*

Sunday Banchory Rides

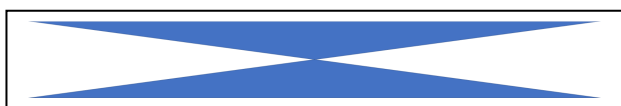
The rides will start 10:00 am (sharp) from Banchory Townhall (carpark opposite town hall). The rides will be published on SPOND, and we would ask you to sign up for the ride via SPOND, so we know who is riding and we have your emergency contact details.

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/IYLWP>

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



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.

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

**we are
cycling
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

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/>

25 Years Ago

SERVICE TO SPORT AWARD

At the recent Aberdeenshire South Sports Council presentation of awards in Stonehaven Nobby Clarke received the Service to Sport Award.

Nobby came to the Northeast in 1978 and joined our club soon after. He helped found the Wyvern CC and managed the Welsh Commonwealth Games cycling team to Canada in 1978.

Over the years he has coached, managed and officiated in many and varied roles from Club to National level.

He thoroughly deserves this accolade bestowed on him.

Club Kit Arrival

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

For Sale

- 1 a) The bikes are Project One custom built Trek Emonda SLR6 eTap and we have 10 available. Sizes range from 47 to 56
- b) We are selling some of our training wheels, 8 sets available. Very lightly used, Bontrager Paradigm Comp 25 Disc (160mm rotor included), RRP £350 – selling for £150 per set
Further info contact Bob on bob@alba-rt.com
- 2 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.

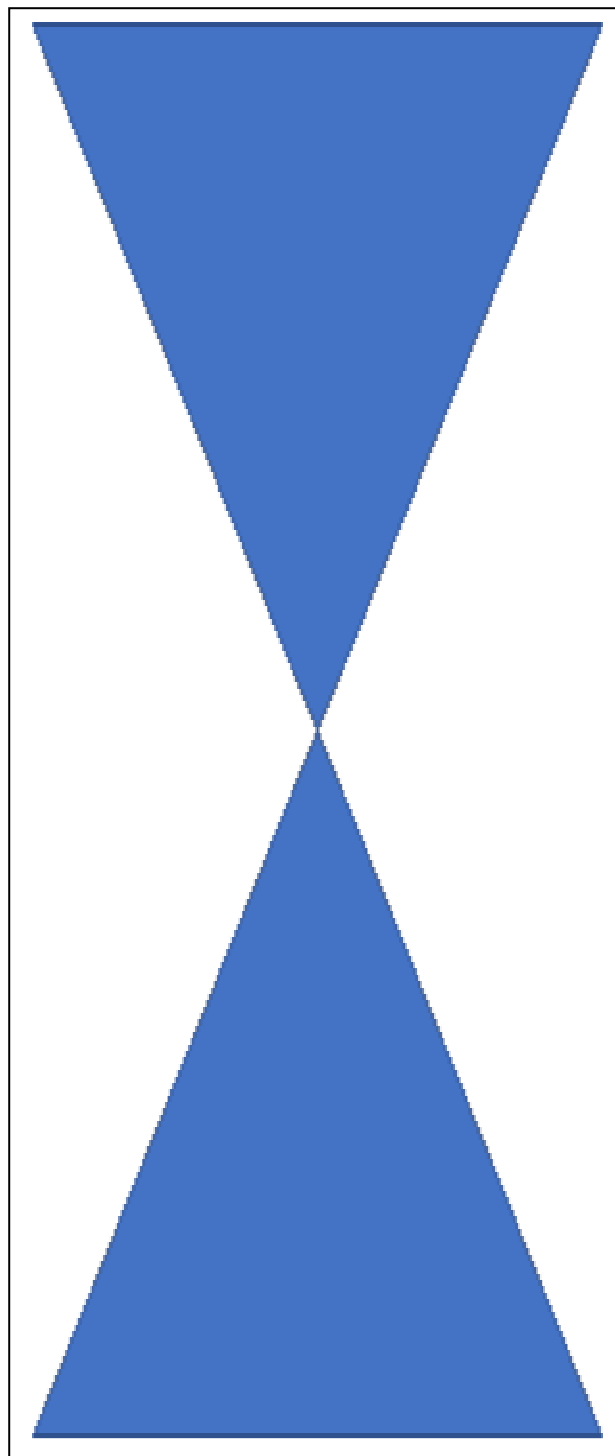


Photos available and for further info. contact Phil Kelman - philipkelman@aol.com.

- 3 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) Handmade plywood bike stand. £30 each. Three available immediately. Contact Andre Bergh on andre.k.bergh@gmail.com
- 4 a) I have moved to a smaller frame now (old age shrinkage) and I am selling a Boardman CX Team medium to suit 170-178cm. Good condition. SRAM Rival 11 speed, 44T front and 11-42 cassette. Hydraulic disc brakes, new 40 Schwalbe Smart Sam tyres. £375 ONO
- b) Second set of wheels if interested for winter rides. Gipiemme Roccia wheels fitted with 25mm road tyres. £150
- c) Also selling a new set of Pyro duathlon plates £70 Contact: Richard Burton: 07786081582
- 5 To clear 5 retro bikes from my collection to make new space – classic bikes ready for Eroica / Etape / Sportive events - ANY OFFERS PLEASE:
 - a) A **1961 DAVE DAVEY** Racing / Time Trial Bike. 22" Reynolds 531 tubed frame. Comes in White in very good condition – a classic in full Vintage Spec and detailed history. Rebuilt with original 1969 Strada/Nuovo Record Campagnolo. Was presented in the 'Classic Lightweights News' in Vol 1 Issue 65 on Sept Oct 2016 and probably the only one in Scotland. Around £850 ono.
 - b) A **1993 ALVES** Racing / Time Trial Bike. 21" Reynolds 653 tubed frame. Comes in Blue in good condition - in full Spec and detailed history. Built by Charlie Ralph of Alves Cycles, based near Elgin and mainly Campagnolo Record / Rally (Nuovo Record) & SR. Around £550 ono
 - c) A Scottish Championship **1990 DAVE LLOYD** (Ex Neil Brown) Racing / Time Trial Bike. 22" Columbus SLX tubed frame with Columbus Foderi Laminati Front Forks (with an unblistered chromed front fork and 12" chromed rear forks). Comes in Light / Dark Blue in very good condition - in full Spec and detailed history - in original Shimano Dura Ace AX 7402 – 1988/89 3rd Generation Groupset. Around £950 ono
 - d) A **1980 EDDY MERCKX** (ex-Mike Brown) Racing / Time Trial Bike 56cm Columbus Cromor tubed frame, with full chromed front fork and 12" chromed rear forks. Comes in Blue in very good condition – in full Vintage Spec and detailed history. Bike built 1982 - in original Campagnolo Chorus – 1982 1st Generation Groupset. (It's a rare Strada Frame - Number 187 of only 1000 ever made by Merckx 1980). Around £1500 ono

Anyone interested? – let's know and I'll put the full details on Gumtree. Contact kenny.walker@tinyworld.co.uk

- 6 Road Bike - [Trek Madone SL 7 AXS GEN 6 Size 52 Road Bike](#)
- 7 New condition, 2021 Orbea Ordu M20 LTD, Hydro Disc brake TT bike, many upgrades, inc Disc rear and 100mm front wheel. S/M or M/L (spare frontpost). £2400. Details: [Upgraded Orbea Ordu M20 LTD Hydro Disc TT Bike.docx](#). Contact Bob McGraw on robert.mcgraw@virgin.net



Historical Reminiscences

(Part 66)

About a couple of miles north of Stonehaven on the Slug Road is the Inkbottle. This is an old lodge house at an unused entrance to Ury Estate. Beside it is a small bridge over the Cowie Water.

The bridge had fallen into disrepair. The local council set to on repairs. They'd strip off the road metal down to the bridge arch. Then repoint and reinforce the arch before remetalling. All this necessitated closure of the road.

The Slug had been my commuting and training road for years. The closure of the bridge meant a signposted detour of many miles or get off to negotiate a way through Harris Fencing barriers followed by a risky carry over the open arch.

Though game enough to do this when the workers were not present, if they were there with their pneumatic drills, it was a different proposition.

I complained to the council. Within days scaffolding poles began to form a Bailey bridge. My routes were secure. I used it once.

A day later, a storm hit. The burn flooded and swept the structure away. It wasn't rebuilt.

Here, in Thyangboche, Yak trains continually jangle in. More and more tents are erected. As darkness begins to crowd out the distant ends of the campsite, I've counted more than sixty pieces of canvas, green, yellow, and orange, pitched around the lodges. Hundreds of people throng the area. It is hard to believe that so many people have been on the trail. Crows (cacs) glide low, flying silently among the tents. Ignoring people completely they perch on the backs of yaks.

The temperature is falling dramatically.

Right up until too dark to see, youngsters have been walking in a train, carrying water in plastic barrels from a stream well down the mountainside. Their little bodies are dwarfed by the swaying, unstable, nearly full containers of water. This water is to provide the needs of the monastery as well as the lodges.

Before supper, the monastery was visited. It is a cold, quiet place. A notice at the door says that permission is needed before photographs may be taken. The notice also said to remove shoes. Inside the building, monks sit in rows facing a square, flag bedecked pedestal. Dozens and dozens of Thankas cover the walls and hang from the roof. Dovecotes in the walls house hundreds of prayer books. At the far end of the rows of monks the lama sits on an elevated throne. Around the room dozens of small flames burn from candles or kerosene lamps, monks chant ritually, long, alpine like horns drone; occasionally cymbals clash, drums are struck and bells ring. Young monks rush around administering to the needs of the older brethren who sit cross-legged on low staging. Repeatedly monks rise and leave the room. On their return they kneel and bow three times towards the lama. Regalia, fancy shawls, and headgear are delivered by the young monks to several of the seated men, obviously

of a higher rank than the others. The extra clothes are put on for a few minutes of further chanting, read from prayer books set on the staging in front of the monks. Liquids are handed to the seated monks and symbolic foods placed in front of them.

One of the young monks dashing around tending to the needs of others is the one we'd met outside Namche Bazar. Obviously, he liked his bit of fun and practical joke for every time he moved behind the flag adorned pedestal, out of sight of the lama, he made faces and gestured at the monks blowing the horns, in an effort to distract them and get them to laugh.

This evening "Survival Aids" folk have taken over our lodge. Many of the tents belong to them but a number are complaining about the cold and have forsaken the comfort of their canvas lodgings for the equally dubious comfort of our smoky lodge. They are complaining bitterly about the lack of adequate feeding from their porters. Since they are now eating food in our guesthouse, they are obviously helping the economy of the region, but it also means that conditions become extra-crowded for us.

Today's target is Periche, but first, we must visit the monastery again. Yesterday, neither of us had the courage to ask if we could take photographs or the brass neck to do so without authority. Rising with the sun I looked outside. The mountains are limed with light, everywhere is covered with a thick frost. It is very cold.

Our next overnight stop is only four hours away so there is no need, this morning, to leave in a hurry.

From the monastery we went round behind the building to where we'd heard there was an exhibition of Sherpa culture over the centuries. Thyangboche is in the heart of Sherpa country and the exhibition details how the people came to live in that area and how it is managed.

Before setting out folk were seen to be swarming in from north and south. A Sherpa attracted our attention. Appearing excited, his animated speech and gestures made us approach him. It turned out that only a few days previously he had stood on the summit of Everest. Still intoxicated with jubilation it gave him delight to tell his story to anyone who would listen. There was less excitement for a climber who arrived sitting astride a yak. Both of his feet were heavily bandaged, frostbitten. He feared he'd lose his toes.

When planning our routes, it was suspected that, from Thyangboche there'd be more cycling. Our fear now is that we'll be able to climb too quickly and thereby be more liable to mountain sickness. Tonight's stop, Periche, is at well over 4000 metres where problems are likely to be even more serious.

Leaving Thyangboche, and many of the trekkers, behind, a swift descent along a path bordered with trees, preludes a gradual climb towards Periche. A wind, fresher than it has been, blew from the rear, helping us on our way.

On one of the more difficult parts of today's route a queue of Sherpanis were met carrying a cake built in the shape of



a white chorten. Other goodies on trays and several vacuum flasks were also being carried. Alastair, following at some distance, also met the girls after they'd reached a chorten and it appeared they were having a party.

The Diamox we're taking is causing a lot of finger and toe tingling today. I pee a lot.

During the progress to our new height many encampments are passed, some small, others much larger. These are, presumably, trekkers stopping to acclimatize. There are many, many foreigners. Often, they ask the question how did we get the bikes through Jorsale? The full story is not now told, as it's getting boring. Instead, we give the succinct answer that a special permit had been obtained.

At the middle of the day, we stopped at a single roomed tea-house to eat. Once again Chhatra seemed to know the occupants, grandmother, father, mother, and baby. Untypical, here was a genuine effort being made to stay clean. A bin, kept covered, was for rubbish. Utensils and crockery were repeatedly washed.

I ordered fried potatoes. Alastair liked the sound of a potato pancake. Made with grated potato, cheese, flour, water and spice it sounded appetising. Fried on an open pan, Alastair said it could have done with a little longer. Maybe now we are seeing properly the effect of altitude on boiling temperatures, and this is why the potatoes were cooked in a pressure cooker. Chhatra had a big plate of potatoes boiled in their skins. He offered one to me. I peeled it laboriously. "No problem," he said and showed me the Nepali way to peel a boiled potato. Grasping one of the small tubers in the tips of his fingers, he squeezed. The white flesh popped out of its skin. Easy, when you know how.

Arriving at the glaciated floor of the valley, where the village of Periche is sited, the afternoon cloud had rolled in, obliterating the views of Ama Dablam and Lhotse, which we've been told dominate the scene. The cloud is hanging low, perhaps only 20 metres above the flat valley floor.

While I relax in the lodge, Alastair seems uptight about the conversation going on around us. It centres on acute mountain sickness (ams). Neither of us shows any symptoms (we think).

With the dramatic fall in temperature during the late afternoon I've been forced to put on long johns and three thicknesses on my upper body.

As the light quickly faded, I went outside. Walls built with alternate courses of stone and sods surround the village. It is quite attractive. In the gathering dusk, yaks graze peacefully among the scrub. Vegetation has dramatically decreased since Thyangboche. As we left the monastery our descent through a forest of large bushes, berberis like plants, soon gave way to a low-lying growth, which at first glance is not unlike heather, but, on closer inspection looks more like juniper. It is on these that the yaks feed. The yaks are everywhere. Many slow-moving trains were met or overtaken today.

Stacks of yak dung are piled against the walls of buildings. Though there is a little wood, this has to be carried from lower altitudes, so yak dung is used to supplement this fuel.

Returning to the lodge and ordering supper I've given in to the Sherpa stew. Offered on many occasions I've always politely declined for fear it proved unpalatable, a heavily spiced dish. It surprised me. Instead of an uneatable native delicacy, it turned out to be more like a potato soup. Three bowls were eaten.

There are a lot of people in this lodge, some going, some already been. One girl is from Australia. She has lived in the area for two years and speaks fluent Nepali. Our words are still sparse. I feel a great loss not being able to understand their language.

In the flickering light I have seen someone arrive and is speaking to Chhatra. The word cycle keeps coming through and I suspect it is someone else wanting to try out the bikes. Suddenly I realised he is clad in khaki and has a distinct military bearing. Another setback. It transpired that he polices the area looking for trekkers going into the mountains without the special and expensive permits required. He'd spotted the bikes and knew the rule stated that bicycles were not allowed. Again, our pink slips were produced, as was our own "special" letter. Once more we got off. This close, probably only three days away from Base Camp, it did not bear thinking the bikes might yet have to be abandoned.

A Tilly lamp lights this lodge and a large stove made from an oil drum sits in the middle of the dormitory floor. The bunks are in two tiers, in a large L-shape. They are simply large platforms on which are laid the customary thin mattresses. Because of the cold, folk are already laid out on their mattresses or sit huddled up to the stove. As the number of folk is very large the accommodation in the kitchen cannot cope so food is brought through to the dormitory by a Sherpani. A feeling of bonhomie fills the room. Our porters have joined others in a card school. I'd have climbed onto my top bunk for some warmth, but a recent Diamox tablet is beginning to have an effect and the ladder looks more than a little precarious. Instead, I sit at a table near the fire. Chhatra turned from his card game and said, "You come best season. Weather is good." And then, about our future bed nights, "Labouche too high for good sleep. Gorak Shep also too cold." It looks as if our living conditions are to deteriorate.

Fancying myself as a reasonable long-distance rider I rode a few 12-hour events. One of my earliest, and best, took place on the Dundee course. Charlie Mather came along as support.

On the Easthaven detour the Level crossing gates were down. I stopped and waited patiently. Then Charlie appeared, grabbing my bike with the intention of climbing the barrier. I restrained him.

Instead, it gave me time to take an energy drink – slices of Mars Bar floating in melted ice cream. *Roughstuffer*

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