



“The Hub”

August 2017

Editorial:

What's the obsession with wearing black? - A dangerous choice!

Fashion v Safety? The answer to the question depends entirely on your attitude to these two facets but this piece is here to highlight a very serious point. While marshalling at a recent road race near Brentor I was part of a group of 3 marshals who were positioned on a dangerous junction where traffic speeds included exceeding the speed limit. After the turn onto the more major road the riders road away from us into a heavily tree - lined section where any riders in black became completely invisible except for the outline of their yellow numbers. *The brighter the sunlight, the darker the tree section became. The riders were no more than 50m from us.*

We all agreed that those in black were putting themselves in un-necessary danger. Cyclists are often rightly critical of some car drivers but we mustn't be “the pot calling the kettle!” Stay safe.

Bike Treasure Hunt & BBQ - Saturday 19th August

Time for a different Saturday morning with 5, 10 & 15 mile routes available for all ages & abilities. Mostly on cycle paths or quiet roads with some other roads on the 15. It's all about finding the answers, not the speed at which you ride. Entry is £5 per person to include BBQ (Hot Dog, Burger, Salads, soft drinks, tea/coffee). A “Goodie Bag” and Certificate will be given to all children who take part. Sign in at Teigngrace, TQ12 6QN, signed locally, from 1030 to 1100h with BBQ available from 1200h. Entries needed with payment by Monday 14th August to Pat Ash (07989 147788) or Linda Simpson, Phil Stocker or Paul Martin. Organised by the Social Committee and kindly hosted by Pete & Shani Adams. See poster on page 24.

Bike Maintenance - Course C

Following the 2 highly successful courses staged in May and June I have arranged with Simon at Colin Lewis Cycles for another 3 dates in September, Fridays the 8th, 15th & 22nd. 1800 - 1900h at the shop, £5 per session payable in advance.

Feedback from the previous courses has been very strong, “the training is first class”, “took away the fear of not being able to get the tyre back on. I can do it now.” “Great sessions. Really well delivered. Good choice of relevant topics at right level. Real confidence booster.”

If you would like a place on this course please email news@mdcc.org.uk First come first served.

Thank You

Once again a big thank you to this month's contributors, Ken again has come up trumps with 3 inputs. A great new input from Dave Rushton with the first of his 3 part cycling world travels, David & Caroline's fascinating account of their very recent ride through France, 3 high profile women racers, 'Killer', Ruth & Jenny plus others.

For all members, never hesitate to send me possible material, I can never have too much and the more diverse the input the better for everyone.

The next issue will be out at the beginning of October so let's be hearing from you, how about A Ride London Experience piece from one of this year's entrants?

Paul Martin - news@mdcc.org.uk

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Colin Lewis & Tom Simpson - Le Tour on Mt Ventoux - 50 Years On.



Colin recently travelled to France and the famous Mont Ventoux for a 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the death of his then Tour de France team mate Tom Simpson, who tragically died when nearing the summit finish on 13th July 1967. There follows a resume of Colin's career up until that year. Many thanks to Ken for writing this. The picture left shows Colin (L) with Tom in Cologne at the start of Le Tour in '67.

Colin relates: "Around 200 people gathered at the Tom Simpson Memorial near the summit of Mt Ventoux exactly 50 years to the day that he died. I was very pleased to have been able to attend this event as I was Tom's room mate and 'domestique' during the 1967 tour which started in Cologne. We were members of the GB team of 12 riders, only 3 of whom survive to this day. The others are Vin Denson & Barry Hogan. Only 3 of the GB team completed the 1967 tour (Colin was one of them). Recent changes to the memorial had brought it closer to the road to make it more prominent and accessible. The Commemoration included moving speeches from his wife, Helen, and youngest daughter, Joanne." Joanne has recently finished a book about her father. An extract was recently published in The Times, see <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-tour-ignores-dads-death-they-dont-want-the-negative-images-6k250g6px>

Much has been written about Simpson's career and demise, a lot of which can be read online.



L to R: Wife Helen & daughter Joanne during the ceremony, the main Memorial & the plaque added this year.

COLIN LEWIS - MID-DEVON CC (Part 1 1960-1967)

Colin joined the Mid-Devon in 1960. He turned up on Friday at the club's meeting place which at that time was in Abbotsbury. It was usual at the end of the meeting to have a mini-road race back to Torquay with a sprint for the 30 signs between Scotts and Lawes Bridge. Trying as hard as we could we could not drop him. As we eased up to say farewell Terry Gibson said "He's not bad. He may stick around for some time" and he has.

In his first road race in 1961, based at Yelverton, he left all the hard men of the time (Chris Barretto, Cliff Morrish, Dave Collins, Dave Smith etc.) standing, as he won 3 minutes clear of the chasing group. This was early season and due to snow at Princetown the course was changed to an out and back x 4 between Yelverton and Tavistock. The chasers could see him twice each 10 mile lap and even working together could not close the gap.

When he was entered for his first time trial at the end of the season, the club's Middlemarkers 25 (a time trial for riders who had not beaten 1 hour 4 minutes), the records show that he won it in 1hr 2 mins 22 secs.

At around this time Colin had taken a bet that he could get into the team for the 1964 Olympics.

Colin went from strength to strength and when the Danish team pulled out of the **1963 Milk Race** (The Tour of Britain) at the last minute, a Commonwealth team was formed and, as a Welshman, Colin was invited. He was told on Wednesday to be in Blackpool by Saturday evening. This he did as the 'intrepid train traveller'. Along the way he held the Green Point's jersey and finished 7th overall – not bad for a last minute call up.

This performance earned him a trip to the **Tour of East Germany**. He crashed out on a cinder track and most of the field took their chance and rode over him.

He was placed fifth in the **National Road Race Championship**. The reward for this was selection for the National Team in the **1964 Milk Race**, where he took the race leader's Yellow Jersey on a hard stage 1 that took in the Snake Pass and finished in Buxton. He then lost the jersey the next day with a time penalty - allegedly for swearing. The GB team was the best in the race winning the team prize. Arthur Metcalfe was the winner. Other riders in the team took the Point's Competition and the King of the Mountains and Colin was fifth.

When the teams were announced for the **Amateur World Championship Road Race** and the Olympic Games in Tokyo, Colin made it on to the list for the Worlds but not the Olympic games. The bet had been lost!

In the World Championship a break formed, Colin got into a 15 strong break, with one big guy doing huge turns at the front. When the bunch pulled the break back, the big guy jumped away again. Colin regrets that he did not follow him, as he went on to win by 31 seconds. It was none other than Eddy Merckx. Colin was 10th and 28 seconds behind the Bid Ted.

One of the selected riders for the **Olympic Games** was Peter Gordon the 1963 National Road Race Champion. 30 miles into the 1964 National Championship wearing his National Champion's jersey Gordon retired. This gross error of judgement meant that he was dropped from the team. Colin was the replacement. The bet was won!

Tokyo proved a challenge. Even in 1964 traffic was a problem and the humidity was at a level no one in the British team had ever experienced before. The GB team held their own competition when training. It was for the "Yellow Braces". Sprints were fiercely contested and Colin was tied for the title on the day of the race. The well-drilled Italian team dominated the race with Mario Zanin winning a hectic sprint. If you look at a film of the finish you will see a small group sprinting to one side of the road away from the main bunch. Amongst them are the GB team members going for the final accolade of the race – "Winner of the Yellow Braces" – winner Colin Lewis.

Following the Olympics Colin wrote to Le Voix du Nord outlining his cycling prowess. Colin had six proposals from teams to join them. From the 6 he selected UV Vannes based in SW Brittany. Early in 1965 sent his suitcase ahead. Then with Roy Hopkins and Tim Franks for company he rode to catch the ferry out of Southampton – they stayed overnight and rode back next day. On arrival in France he once again became the 'intrepid train traveller' – taking 8 hours to get to Vannes.

In his first race he took the climber's prize and finished in third place. This he followed up with 4 wins. He lived on the primes that he won. He rode the **Tour de L'Avenir** (then an amateur Tour de France) and finished 22nd. It was not long before he was a wanted man and Cuenod Boreal signed him up. With them he went off to all parts of France, Spain and Belgium and won six races in their colours.

He returned home to take the bronze medal in the **National Road Race Championships**. This performance was good enough to ride for GB in the **Amateur World Road Race**, where he came in 21st.

In **1966** he was selected for the **Commonwealth Games** in Kingston, Jamaica. He was one of the favourites but it all went wrong as Peter Buckley, riding for the Isle of Man, clipped off as the bunch made a 360 degree turn round an oil barrel in the road centre. Buckley made it alone to the finish and the title. This jumping clear on a tight corner was a tactic often used by Colin to win many races.

After another ride in the Tour de L'Avenir, when he was 38th, an offer came from the Athletic Club Boulogne-Billancourt – At the time one of the most prestigious clubs in France and the nursery for many of the top riders of the sixties, seventies and eighties. Simultaneously he was offered a contract by Frank Westall of the UK based

Condor Mackeson team. Colin signed for them. In hindsight he admits that joining the ranks of the British professionals was the biggest cycling mistake he has ever made.

The structure of the **1967 Tour de France** was of national teams. Great Britain was one of the invitees with a 12 man team. At that time Tom Simpson was the top rider with Barry Hoban as second best. The other riders selected were there to support them; Colin was one of those cast in that role for a race that was 3,400 km long and one stage of 300 km – check out the distances of current tours.

Colin was unaware of the tragic death of Tom Simpson on Mont Ventoux until after he finished. The next day was spent mostly in procession as the riders had little appetite for racing with Barry Hoban being ‘gifted’ the stage win. Next day the racing resumed and Colin battled on to Paris and the final finish line. Ironically his winnings for the 3 weeks came to £340.

He came home for the **National Road Race Championships**, which were held in Essex, seven days after the Tour ended. He **won this by over 3 minutes**, one of the biggest solo winning margins in the history of the Championships.

Part 2 of Colin’s story will be in the October edition of ‘The Hub.’

Womens Racing

‘Killer’ still 2nd in National Ranking - RACE REPORT HSBC UK NATIONAL XC MTB ROUND 4



I had missed the round 3 race as this had also been in North Yorkshire a few weekends previously and it just isn’t possible to do everything! So I was needed a good race again to maintain my 2nd place standing. It was a long journey up to Dalby and the rain held off until it was time for the practise lap! The course had lots of single track and some interesting big drop offs down big rocks. There was one section in some woods that was muddy, rocky and steep; and after falling off this twice in practice I made the decision that a quick dismount and slide down would be the best option when racing!

Luckily race day was dry, and I am always pleased when the morning has finished dragging out and I can finally line up on the start at 1pm. It was a strange race because after the initial few minutes we entered single track and all the jostling for places was done, and I spent the next hour and a half riding solo! The course was quite twisty and meant that there were few places when you could see anyone. It is difficult to maintain a hard pace when appearing to be racing yourself! In past races I have let the speed drop after the first lap and aimed this time to maintain a consistent pace throughout. In the pits they told me on my last lap that the leader of my age group was a good distance in front and the lady behind was a good distance behind me so all I had to do was stay on the bike, not have any mechanicals and

finish!

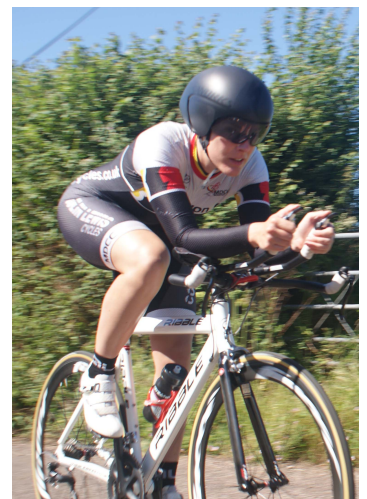
And that is what I did. Probably not an awe inspiring performance but definitely “job done” and another second place. There is one more race in the series in August and the National Championships at the end of July which will be the next target.

1st in her First 100 mile TT - Ruth Burrows writes...

I joined MDCC in early 2016 and, after some encouragement and advice on how to overcome my nerves, I soon completed my first time trial – the sporting Lustleigh / Teign Valley route normally held over the Easter bank holiday.

I didn’t do too badly on my road bike with my cycle jersey ‘flapping about in the wind’ (I find it really claustrophobic having a jersey zipped all the way up when I am exerting myself, so I tend to unzip it even if this means it puffs up with air!) but didn’t really find my time trialling legs until later in the summer when I took part in a host of club 10’s at Clay Pits, Dartington and Budlake. Next came my first 25 in September 2016 which I completed in 1:00:14 – I was really happy with my time and I noticed that I actually managed a higher average speed than in the shorter events.

Over the course of the winter I followed some of the training programs you can print



off the British Cycling website. I also invested in some velotoze overshoes, a skin suit (with round low neck to prevent the need for unzipping!), a TT bike and an aero helmet (in that order). My mission, with my lovely new equipment, was to complete a 10 / 25 / 50 and 100 in 2017 so that I had a base line to work from.

So – I picked a 100 course at random, basically one which fell on a day that I didn't have any prior engagements and wasn't too far way. In speaking to Conrad the week before the event I learnt that the course I'd picked was a tough one, but I quite like hills and I figured that if I could handle this one, a flat course would be okay too. In terms of preparation – I had fallen ill with glandular fever in April – which pretty much knocked out my March and May from training, but I did manage to get back on the bike in May and do one or two 10's – I seemed to have benefited from a rest more than losing too much fitness during my time off the bike.

Because the event was about 1 hour 45 minutes drive from our home and I was due off at 6.05 am, my boyfriend and I decided that it was best to find a place nearby to sleep overnight (in the boot of the car!) as opposed to driving up in the morning – which would've meant a 3 am wake up. So we left home at 9.30 pm the night before in the hope that a late arrival would invoke an exhaustion that would result in a solid few hours kip. But when we arrived, the stillness of a humid night meant that not only was it boiling hot, but that the noise from a wedding band could be heard from afar. We laughed about how ridiculous our weekend was turning out to be before eventually drifting off at about 1.30 am. At 4.50 am the alarm clock went. We waffed down some bircher museli, a litre of pre-made macchiato (Aldi's finest), and a weird sausagey egggy tortilla wrap I had made for us the night before. Then we got dressed, in the boot.

I didn't have time to put my over shoes on because, despite already being there, I managed to run a little late. I got to the start point as no. 2 was setting off (I was 5th) so I soon wheeled myself up to the yellow start line and stared at my Garmin whilst waiting for the ten second count down. 0 miles down, 100 to go.

As I got underway I noticed that the power meter I had borrowed from my boyfriend was producing some ridiculous stats. 470 watts plus. So the advice I had received on power zones went straight out the window and I rode on feel. At this point I appreciated that the course was 5 laps of 20 miles – which made compartmentalising the event into smaller sections really easy. I saw the course as a square (it wasn't square!) and calculated that 5 laps with 4 sides meant I could count down from 20 each time I completed a 'side'. The event in total had 4000 ft climbing, so I tried to power up the climbs and relax more on the flat to give me a rest. I felt good, but I had passed all the riders in front of me within the first half a lap which I hoped didn't mean that I was going too fast and that I would burn out – I guessed I would find out as time went by, so I just kept on peddling and eating and drinking even if I didn't feel like it so that I didn't bonk or collapse in the heat.

What followed is slightly blurry as I tend not to remember most of the time I am out on my bike (so I am perhaps not the best person to write a report!) but I do remember it going pretty quickly considering it took me over 4 hours, and that during the first four laps there were distinct moments I felt both horrendous, elated, nauseous and in pain from a growing headache I'd got from both the heat and the load of sugar I had been ingesting. It was a bit of an emotional roller coaster, but I was surprised that I felt okay. I had expected it to be much worse. I was therefore interested to note that this general feeling of 'okayness' was replaced very quickly in the fifth lap by a psychological battle with myself. During my third lap I was happy to have 'one slow lap and one faster lap' remaining and I was confident that my last lap could even be my fastest lap (the first three had been within a minute of each other so at least I was consistent!)

Ten minutes into the last lap the usual doubts started to creep in: 'why am I doing this', 'if I go slower nobody will know', 'I can't be bothered', 'yadda yadda yadda' – this is quite normal for me and it is the main issue I hope to overcome as I get more experienced. So instead of listening to my inner monologue, I told myself that these thoughts were caused by the fact that I should've packed just one more energy gel to keep me energised to the finish, and that it was getting on for 10 am so the heat was really picking up. So it was natural to feel like this. I told myself 'it's okay if you can't speed up, just don't slow down'. So that's what I did.

I crossed the finish line in 4:36:46. I was first women by nearly 20 minutes and 12th overall of about 30 riders. So next time – sub 4:30:00 !

My aims for the future are to be experienced enough to minimise silly mistakes like not taking in enough energy gel, to get a power meter so I can accurately track and learn more about my abilities at different distances, and to build on my ability to shut off from the way I feel when cycling hard for a long time – I want to stop. I will be very proud when I can finally say that I have ridden to 100% of my ability the whole way through an event and knowing I couldn't of gone even a second faster.

Tour of Cambridge and illness - Jenny Corser reports

I started this year cycling for the club and did a few rides with the women's race team. I managed to win my first crit, my first TT, come third at Modbury RR, and second in a Westpoint crit.

I joined a cycle race team, Team RGB, while maintaining my membership of MDCC. MDCC is a fantastic club and I have great respect and high regard for the members. (especially those who have pushed me in the right direction with my cycling!)

After coming 6th in Bristol south RR, and another local crit win, racing for Team RGB, I had some national races and was pretty nervous for these! In the Tour of the Wolds I was with the front group then unfortunately crashed. Bedford three day was a fantastic experience. On the first day I won all of the sprints to take the green sprints jersey. Unfortunately there was a large crash just in front of me at the end of the first day when two women collided. I couldn't avoid the carnage and ended up in A/E.

Then it was the Matrix tour series. The biggest strongest field I'd ever raced against. Racing against not only Britains best but Olympians with gold medals.

This is where it started to go wrong for me. I had right calf pain. I'd been driving all over the country to get to the races and thought I had a muscle strain. My performance was poor. I felt tired. I thought it was just me but I got steadily worse. Until finally I gave up and came home exhausted and cycled with a group of club riders on a Thursday morning. They saved my life.

I was told by them that there was something 'definitely wrong' with me. And it sounded like I was 'cycling with one lung.' And to go see a doctor... (haha)

Turns out that was exactly right.

I went into hospital had a scan and had multiple pulmonary emboli throughout my right lung, for the right calf, that turned out to be a dvt not a muscle strain.

So a bit of a long story but to get to the point of this article. 2 weeks after the diagnosis of clots throughout my lung I had the Tour of Cambridge. I was hoping to qualify for the worlds in France. I'd entered a year ago and booked accommodation.

Everyone can have their ups and downs and illnesses. I guess a measure of resilience is not what happens to you but how you respond to it and it turns out I wasn't the only unwell person...

I was doing TOC with MDCCs Ruth Burrows. She had glandular fever, and had 4 weeks off the bike. She'd deferred her entry to TOC, but agreed to go up for the weekend anyway. Neither of us sure whether we would actually cycle or not, but hoping to enjoy the cycling atmosphere!

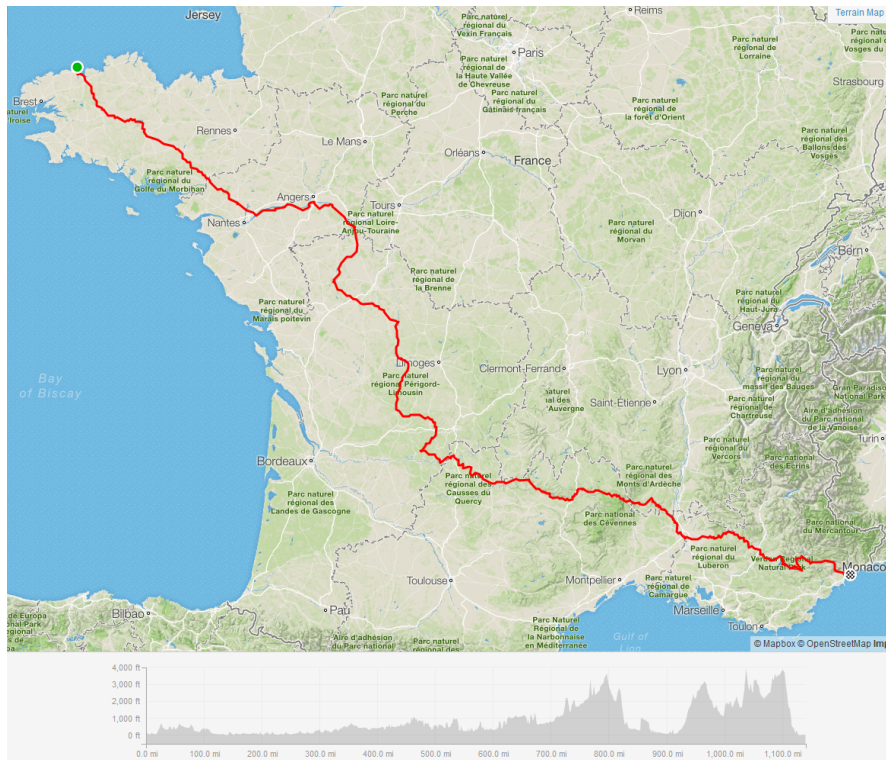
Well we both ended up cycling, and doing quite well. We both qualified for the worlds in Albi France, Ruth took 3h24 to do 126km and I took 3h26. We were both in top 20.

It was a fantastic day of cycling, and lovely to go to an event with MDCC and Team RGB! Certainly was fun, and I'd encourage all to give similar events a go. I'm not sure I can recommend racing 2 weeks after multiple pulmonary emboli, or 4 weeks after glandular fever, but guess it's life. You take your difficult decisions, make your choices, find your peace with yourself and ride your bike.

Manche to Med – A Middle Aged Adventure - July 2017

with David and Caroline Twigger

Having enjoyed cycle touring in the UK and France many years ago, and now that our boys are all old enough to be left at home for an extended period, Caroline and I were keen to get back to touring with a tent. Or at least I was, and Caroline kindly went along with it to shut me up. This year we both celebrate the same significant birthday, so a tour would also serve as a birthday adventure treat. Santander to Roscoff was the first thought, not least because it made logistics easy, but an enthusiastic recommendation for a route from Roscoff to Nice from CTC friends sold us on that idea. The route is from a fantastic book called 'France en Velo' by John Walsh and Hannah Reynolds and runs from St Malo to Nice. Rather than trudge over to Portsmouth for a ferry to St Malo, we went from Plymouth and joined the book route east of Nantes. Going from Roscoff also has the advantage, I think, of making the overall Strava route look rather better, which for those who ride with Caroline will know is an important factor.



One of the things I like about these sorts of holidays is the planning - the need to make kit decisions, fettle the bicycles and to research and buy various exciting extras. Caroline took her CX bike, pimped slightly by the addition of a rack for her panniers, stronger 32 hole touring wheels and slightly lower gearing (but still only 34 front/32 rear, which given the weight of the bike and kit and the hills in the south didn't exactly make for easy uphill riding). I used my trusty old Claud Butler Dalesman tourer with front and rear panniers. Because we were camping we were reasonably well laden, with my bike and kit weighing something like 35+kg and Caroline's about 10kg lighter. Having been used to riding a light road bike the first day or two felt pretty strange on the laden bikes as the way they handle is very different; they accelerate much slower and are significantly harder to get uphill. But once you get used to it, accept that you'll be going slower, ride at a very comfortable and

easy pace and take more time to look around you, you forget about the weight and the fact that you're carrying all you need for a long-distance ride becomes a joy.

The route that the authors of *France en Velo* set out is very well researched, following quiet scenic country roads, avoiding big cities but visiting the prettier villages and towns. We chose to take 16 days for our trip, which meant an average daily ride of 70 miles – longer in the north where it is flatter, but shorter as time went on and the route got hillier. These daily distances suited us very well, but with the faffing that accompanies camping, the need to reprovision once or twice a day and eating out in the evening (the cooker was ditched at the last minute to save a little weight), we had no 'chill' time, which probably isn't everyone's idea of a holiday. We hadn't booked any accommodation except for our last night in a hotel in Nice, and stayed in a wide range of campsites, from those that were just a farmer's field with a loo block to ones with kids clubs and swimming pools. All of them had room for us and were generally very clean and quiet. If a campsite had a restaurant, we generally ate there for convenience and to save our legs any more effort.

The first three days of our journey were mainly off road along an old rail track *voie verte* and the Nantes Brest canal. A lot of our Roscoff-Nice route followed major rivers, which provided some of the most peaceful and quiet riding as well as some incredibly dramatic views, climbing and descending through gorges. The first main river we followed was the Loire, with vineyards covering the surrounding hills and where we joined the route described in the book. Caroline had notes about the villages and areas that we were going through on her handlebar bag and for the next few days virtually every little village seemed to have a note that it had a chateau or abbey built in the 11th or 12th century. All that is except for a poor place called Brion, the notes for which read simply 'not much – a wc'.



There followed 300 miles or so of easy cycling through the Loire and Poitou-Charentes regions, through fields of wheat, corn and sunflowers until we got to the Dordogne and cattle joined the scenery. Next we followed the Lot river for 120 miles or so, up to its source on the Massif Central, which along with the Ventoux and Verdon areas of the Maritime Alps was one of our major climbs. Whilst on the Massif Central, we suddenly moved into the south of France and very quickly the countryside went from being green to quite arid, and the temperature increased. Annoyingly for us, we should have picked up the northerly Mistral wind here, but very unusually we had a southerly headwind.



Once off the Massif Central, we followed a series of absolutely stunning gorges leading up to the southern French Alps. Firstly the rather busy Gorges de l'Ardeche, where we camped in the gorge right next to the river. Quite stunning. Next the Gorges de la Nesque which led up to Sault, below Mt Ventoux. Then on to the Gorges du Verdon, which were much quieter and involved a category 1 climb to get to the top of followed by a ride along a road with incredible views way above the river, with numerous stone tunnels and arches to go through. The Gorges du Verdon are apparently second only in size to the Grand Canyon. Finally we went through the Gorges du Loup

and had a fantastic long descent into Nice.

On one long and hilly stage along the Lot, we cycled into the village of St Geniez d'Olt. The road to get across the village was closed by barriers, but we asked the gendarme and were allowed through, assuming that there was a fete or some other local event. As we headed out of the village on a mission to keep plodding on, I noticed a big yellow bike in a square down a side street. We stopped, had an early lunch and 45 minutes later the Tour sped through the village, with us furiously allez-allez-allez and hup-hup-huping. An incredible stroke of luck for us, but unbelievably poor planning on my part not to realise we would be crossing paths with the Tour.

We had very few issues with the bikes and the tools rarely emerged from the panniers. The only real problem we had was as we were riding right beside the Rhone heading for Chateauneuf du Pape along what seemed to be the hottest and bumpiest road ever, when my rear tyre burst through the sidewall. Fortunately I carried a spare tyre. A few days earlier we were able to help out a family of Dutch cyclists after the father broke his chain, presumably trying to demonstrate his awesome manly power when climbing, but ending up very nearly significantly damaging said manliness. As I wielded the chain rivet tool, an elderly French lady popped out from the house we were based outside. She filled our bottles, talked about the Tour de France and made my day when we told her we were heading for Nice by exclaiming 'Oh-la-la!'.

Getting the bikes back to the UK proved to be hassle free. We carried two CTC bike bags with us, which are basically big tough plastic bags, then took over a sizeable part of Nice airport for a few hours whilst we applied cardboard and tape to delicate bits of the bikes and popped them in their plastic bags. The baggage handlers were fine about them, and they arrived in Bristol unhurt.

We had an absolutely superb couple of weeks, covering a little over 1,100 miles, and further cycling tours are definitely on the agenda for future holidays.

Ed: Well done guys on a fantastic trip and a great write up with fantastic pics. Many thanks.



California Dreaming with Dave Rushton

Writing this article started with a dodgy "selfie" I posted on the club's Facebook page; taken while riding out in California. It wasn't long before Paul Martin contacted me asking if I would write something up about my cycling experiences over there for the club newsletter. Not only did I agree to do it, but in a moment of madness, I actually volunteered to write three articles over the next three issues. Why? I'll explain shortly.

Most of you won't know me, so I'll write a quick introduction. I joined MDCC late last year after the demise of my local club. Family and work commitments mean that I haven't managed to join in for any of the club rides yet, although I have ridden the Dartmoor Classic a couple of times. Growing up, I had two loves, cycling and flying. Once I realised I would never make it to the pro peloton, I turned to aviation and that's where the work side of my life becomes relevant. For the past 25 years I've been a commercial pilot for a certain well known British airline. Almost 20 of those years have been spent flying to longhaul destinations beyond Europe. Around ten years ago, I started getting back in to cycling again and it dawned on me that I could use some of my free time while "down route" to get out on a bike, both on and off the road. I started out by hiring bikes, but with a decent bike costing more for a day's rental than a car, I have now invested in bike box and regularly take my bike with me instead.

So where have I been riding? My favorite destination is the San Francisco Bay Area. With most routes being easily accessible from the downtown areas of San Francisco and San Jose, it is a cyclist's paradise on the roads and in the dirt. If you are going on a cycling holiday here, a guide book would be a good investment as the ride options are practically endless. One of the most popular routes is to ride over the Golden Gate Bridge and into the hills of



Marin County north of San Francisco. As soon as you cross the bridge you can turn left and climb up Hawk Hill on Conzelman road for some great views of the bridge and the city. Once you've got your photos, head back down past the bridge into Sausalito. Feeling hungry? This is a great place to stop for lunch and watch the world go by. Too many glasses of Californian wine with your meal? Don't fancy the climb back up to the bridge? You can always get the ferry back to San Francisco and call it a day. To continue riding from Sausalito, head north on the bike lane towards Mill Valley and work your way up to the Panoramic highway. Enjoy the views as you keep climbing north and then west until you reach the Pantoll campground. From here you can keep climbing on Pan Toll road and Ridgecrest boulevard to the top of Mt Tamalpais, locally known as Mt Tam, for a fantastic view of the Marin headlands and San Francisco to the south. You can also ride various shorter or longer loops,

descending and climbing through the redwood forests and passing through Stinson beach and Muir beach on the scenic Shoreline highway. With a different view around every bend, you'll barely notice how tired your legs are getting. When you have had enough, find your way back to Mill Valley and the bike lane back to the city.

Another very popular riding area is in the Santa Cruz mountains to the west of San Jose. Here you will find many famous climbs (at least on Strava that is) such as Old La Honda, La Honda, Kings Mountain, Page Mill, Alpine and Redwood Gulch roads. Some of these have been used by the Tour of California, so you'll have to work hard for a KOM! Using Skyline boulevard, which runs along the top of the ridge, you can put together any number of different rides. For longer distances, cross Skyline, descend down to the coast and use the old stage coach road to connect to a climb back up to Skyline from the west. Once again the views from the top are spectacular and the descents, winding their way down through the redwood forests, make all the climbing worthwhile.

The highest point in the bay area is Mt Hamilton at 4,265 ft. At the top is the Lick astronomical observatory and you can ride the Mt Hamilton road all the way up to it. This is a serious HC climb, 18 miles long and over 4,000ft of total climbing, but it is easier than it sounds and a must do ride! There are two ridges to pass over on the way to the top so the climb is broken down into three sections with a couple of short downhill breathers in between. The gradient is around 5-6% for most of the way, but unfortunately the steepest and longest section is 3rd climb, occasionally

hitting 9%. It is a category 2 climb all on its own, but you've come this far..... can't give up now! After taking in the views of Silicon Valley and a well earned rest, I'm sure you can imagine how much fun the descent is.

If your legs have had enough climbing, there are some flatter rides to the south of San Jose. In the eastern foot hills of the Santa Cruz mountains, the McKean and Uvas roads wind their way south past three reservoirs to the town of Gilroy where you can stop for a coffee. Return to San Jose by the same route or work your way back through the towns of San Martin and Morgan Hill further east. Morgan Hill is the HQ for Specialized bikes and they have a small museum there that is well worth a look.



If you're a mountain biker, you must ride the trails of Marin County. According to the Americans, this is where mountain biking was born. Head over the Golden Gate bridge into Marin county and follow the "roadie" left up Conzelman road. About half way up, at a roundabout, you'll find the Coastal trail head. Starting here you can ride miles of single track and dirt fire road routes, only touching asphalt to cross the odd road. If you continue in a generally northern direction on the trails, it's possible to ride up Mt Tam on the Old Railroad Grade fire road. The most devoted among you can't stop here. Descend Mt Tam to the north and find your way to the base of Pine Mountain fire road to the north of Alpine lake. Most of this can be done off road if you have an allergic reaction to being on them. Ride up the hill to Cascade Canyon fire road, otherwise known as the "Repack". Now you're about to ride a bit of mountain bike history. The legendary Repack is commonly accepted as the location of the first downhill mountain bike races. In the late 70's, the likes of Joe Breeze, Gary Fisher, Fred Wolf and Charlie Kelly raced rigid steel framed road cruisers with oversized tyres down this trail. Why is it called the Repack? These early clunkers only had coaster brakes. The rear hubs would get so hot from all the braking that the grease would melt and vaporise into a contrail of smoke. After a couple of runs down the Repack, the hubs would need to be..... you guessed it, repacked. When you get to the bottom, ride into Fairfax and follow the bike lanes back to San Francisco..... or ride back up for another go!

Also worth mentioning for mountain biking is Henry W. Coe park, the largest state park in northern California with 86,000 acres of wild open space. Here you will find miles and miles of single track to explore. It's found in the southeast corner of the bay area and you will need a car to get there. However, the remote location and the rugged terrain mean you can ride all day and rarely see another soul. Make sure you are completely self sufficient for water, food and mechanicals, as you are very unlikely to get any help once you leave the visitor centre. Bike camping is also possible here on a first-come, first-served basis.

Before I move on from the bay area, there's a couple of points worth mentioning. The Caltrain system is an excellent way to get to the start of your ride. This train service runs regularly between San Francisco and San Jose with train cars specially designed to carry bicycles. It is definitely worth using to expand your ride options. Second point has to be the weather. Yes I know this is California and the climate is generally temperate and mild throughout the year. What you do need to watch out for are the dramatic temperature changes. On the same day it can be in the 30's and rising in the valley and the inland hills, while on the coast and low-lying areas of the bay the coastal breezes can keep the temperatures in the low teens, especially if there's coastal fog. So, do your homework before you set off and be prepared.

Next in California is San Diego. This city doesn't offer anywhere near the variety of the bay area, but there is still plenty of riding to do. Most of the locals seem to ride up the coast to the north, stop for a coffee at one of the many cafes, before turning south to head home. There are various different routes you can take. I found the Garmin heat maps very useful here to work out the best routes to use. Google maps is also very good for working out where the bike lanes are when planning a ride. Most rides up the coast usually involve a climb up Mt Soledad near La Jolla. It's not a massive climb, but worth it for the views of San Diego and the coast. For more great sightseeing, take a short ride south to Loma Point and the Cabrillo National Monument. If you like your rides completely flat, there's a bike lane that runs almost all the way along Coronado island (it's not actually an island). Head southeast out of San Diego, past the massive naval base using the bike lanes. When you get to the south end of San Diego bay, look for the Bayshore Bikeway and follow it, traffic free, all the way back up the other side of the bay to Coronado. Ride back the way you came or take a quick ferry ride across to San Diego. You'll have gained a grand total of 50ft elevation in around 46 miles. If you do want to hit the hills, there are some good climbs to the east of the city in the Cuyamaca Mountains. You will have to negotiate a bit of traffic on the way there and back, but it is worth it. My

personal favourite is Honey Springs road, a 7 mile category 2 climb at a 5% average gradient. If you want to extend your ride further there are plenty more quiet country roads out that way.

Last on my California list is Los Angeles. I have never been brave enough to venture out on the roads here. The logistics of my hotel location and the vast urban sprawl of this city made any attempt at finding safe quiet roads to ride almost impossible. However, for a leisurely chilled out ride, you can't beat it. The Marvin Braude bike path runs the length of the beach from Redondo Beach north to Venice Beach, Santa Monica and beyond. That's over 20 miles each way if you ride the entire length. Get yourself a laid back beach cruiser at one of the many bike hire places and enjoy the SoCal lifestyle for a few hours.

That's it for my cycling experiences of California. In the next issue, I'll write about some other excellent destinations in the USA that I've managed to ride. You might be surprised by one or two of them.....

If you would like any additional information about any of these rides or the GPX files, please contact me through the club or look me up on Strava (I'm David Rushton, Tiverton).

Pic 1 - Top of Mt Tam looking south to the Marin Headlands, Sausalito and San Francisco with the Panoramic highway on the ridge in the foreground.

Pic 2 - Top of Mt Hamilton looking west across the two ridges to San Jose and Silicon Valley. The Santa Cruz mountains are in the distance.

Ed: Great work David, you have a superb writing style. We look forward to parts 2 and 3.

A Trip into Deepest Gers, South West France with Ken

On a cold and wet January day I said to Ann "How do you fancy a couple of weeks in a gite near the Pyrenees?" To my surprise as she has not ventured far from home since her eyesight became a real problem her reply was "Yes that would be nice but I do not want to rush the driving. We need to take our time in getting there and back."

I had recently seen a programme on eco-friendly buildings in the Gers, a department in the SW of France and within easy reach of the high mountains but is a much less hilly. I was not able to find the eco-friendly place so I had to resort to the internet. I went to "Gites de France dans le Gers". By screening out the large gites with swimming pools, maid service etc. we were able to find an interesting gite in a village called St Ost, population 98. The Castel Vidouze had two gites. Both were in converted dovecotes (pigeonniers) and were 3 stories high. They were used as a means of keeping the pigeons till ready for the table. We booked the Gite Malvy for the last two weeks of May. Malvy was a villager who was one of the 10 or so fatalities in the First World War.

To accommodate the strictures of a gentle drive down and back overnight stops were booked near Tours and Bordeaux then near Saintes and Rennes on the return trip. Crossings were to be from Poole to Cherbourg and from Roscoff to Plymouth.

On the ferry out we bumped into Ian and Wendy Moore, Exeter Wheelers. For many years Ian was the promoter of their ever popular 4 Firs TT with Wendy manning the canteen. Pleasant conversation made the 4 hours pass more quickly. We had a trouble free drive to the hotel in Vaas and a good night's sleep.

Next day it was almost all Autoroute to the hurley-burley of the Bordeaux Peripherique and to Villandraut. We had difficulty finding the hotel. This was because they had changed the name in recent years. The town is dominated by a large castle known as "the castle of Pope Clement V in 1305". His family name was Bertrand de Goth and he was born in the town. He became the first pope in Avignon and wanted to show the world how powerful the de Goth family were – a sort of early Donald Trump? It is in the heart of the Sauternes wine making region.

Our final drive was to the gite via the Condom Bandas Festival. This festival is over Friday, Saturday and Sunday. As well as the enthusiastic bands and choirs that come from all over the region there is a lot of drinking with sales only banned from 04:00 till 10:00 each day. To get into the sealed town centre we had to be body searched,



handbags and rucksacks peered into such was the level of security and a sign of the nervousness across France after recent terrorist attacks even in a town with a population of 7,250.



By late afternoon it was time to go and seek out St Ost. We drove up the wide flat valley of the River Baise. We passed through field after field of maize and sunflowers just emerging from the soil. To each side the tree covered hills rose some 150 feet above the valley floor. We were also reminded with large boards that we were in the land of the Veau Rose (pink veal) and where the calves stay with their mothers. In the centre of a long straight was a cross roads with the sign "St Ost". A right turn and up a short hill past the church and the Marie took us to the gates Castel Vidouze. We sought out Maryse Desangles who with her husband Vincent own this large manor house and associated farm. They have spent since 2004 refurbishing the buildings and made a fantastic job of it all. Marys showed us around Malvy and presented us with a bottle of Floc de Gacogne – a little like sherry – as a welcoming aperitif and then left us to

our own devices.

On Sunday it was necessary to stock up on perishables so it was by car to Castelnau Magnoac (pop. 750) but not before we had time to admire the view from 'our' garden. Across the fields in the distance, less than 25 miles away, were the partially snow covered Pyrenees. The peaks surrounding the Col du Tourmalet, Col d'Aspin and the Pic du Midi de Bigorre were fully covered.

The town has a museum dedicated to the Corps Franc Pommiès – this has nothing to do with the Australian slang for the English – It was named after General André Pommiès who led nearly 7,00 men in the area's French Resistance Army. They were responsible for keeping the border with Spain sealed and or letting escaping allied troops through to safety. Once France was liberated they joined the regular army and captured Stuttgart.

On Sunday the number of shops that are open is limited so it was off to the next nearest town, Trier-sur-Baise. We did not know but they have a Sunday market so all our needs were met and it was back to our new home to get well established. The drive back through the lanes enabled me to get a better lie of the land and general orientation. I was now in a position to get the bike into action if only for 2 to 3 hour rides.

My first ride began at 07:15 French time (06:15 UK time) so I dressed accordingly i.e. long bottoms, undervest, jersey and long sleeved top. In 20 minutes I realised that I was overdressed and regretting the choice of garb. On leaving the gite I had dropped down to the deserted main road, crossed it and the River Baise to climb a 1 km hill of sweeping curves through the woods to the top where there was a plateau of fields. Soon it was down again, over a stream then back up another 1 km. This was the pattern of this ride and many others. On all of these rides the snowy Pyrenees were to be seen on the horizon.

The main road that ran north and south along the valley floor was flat, open and in comparison rather boring. It was also pretty hard if you had a headwind for mile after mile (or should it be kilometre after kilometre).

Once or twice in an hour you would see a vehicle or a farmer in the fields up early making use of the weather to plough, harrowing, fertilize or plant seeds. Occasionally you would see someone walking or even running but generally you had yourself for company along with the odd deer, hare and above the raptors circling for food. The villages along the way were usually deserted and only a watch dog alerted the residents to the passing of a solitary cyclist.

Over the days, dressed more sensibly for the climate, I covered most of the roads in all compass directions and worked from a list of villages that I needed to pass through or close to in order to make up some form of circular route. The only trouble came when you got to a cross roads to find no signage whatever and no one around to ask. It did not matter too much – press on, avoid that big hill – and you will soon find a way back on route.

Once back at the gite and having got washed and changed we would go out for the morning to a nearby town, do our shopping or just browse before getting lunch at noon sharp. That is necessary as the best places fill very quickly and no lunch is bad news with Ann.

We went to Trier-sur-Baise for its mid-week market and having deposited our shopping in the car went back to Le Coin, our chosen eating place. We stepped out of the bright sunshine into the shaded cloistered area where the locals were having an aperitif. A voice rang out "That's Ken Robertson isn't it?" Shocked and surprised we went over and it belonged to John McKenzie who had moved out with Liz Perkins (mother of Andrew) some 15 years ago to live near St Gaudens (30 or so miles from Trier) and we had not seen him since. He introduced Jordan, now a MDCC member, and told us that there was a big race on very soon. It was the Ronde de l'Isard. It is a European Under 23 Cup Race. Among those entered was Etienne Georgi. Previous winners include Philip Deignan (2004), Kenny Elissonde (2011). In 2009 Jonathan Castorviejo was second and in 2010 Andrew Talansky was



third – top race.

We decided to go to the start of Stage 2, Salies du Salat, meet Etienne and wish him well for the race. On arrival in the town where I had stayed with Ralph Hitchens and Etienne's grandfather, Ron, some years ago on an eventful trip to see the Tour de France (but that is another story) we found the usual pre-race hubbub. The PA was in full swing with the speaker doing his best to generate excitement but as it was an hour before the teams were due to sign on we looked around.

Seated at a table was Raymond Poulidor, darling of the French public, the "Eternal Second". He raced in the era of Jacques Anquetil and when he retired he had to contend with Eddy Merckx. His palmaris for the Tour reads: - rode 12 times, second 3 times, third 5 times DNF twice and last rode it when he was 40. He is a remarkable man and a great cyclist who still rides regularly.

This year is 50 years since Tommy Simpson died on Mt Ventoux. Colin Lewis was in the GB team along with Barry Hoban and I was able to talk to him about that year which he vividly remembers. A kindly French lady then took a picture of us.

The teams were now arriving and we sought out Team Wiggins only to find that Etienne was at home doing exams. As compensation Team Zappi was there with James Davey so we surprised him with and listened to his woes as he was suffering with asthma so could not race in terrain that would have suited his talents.

The afternoons were hot and if not out and about were spent relaxing on the shaded decking, listening to one of Ann's listening books or watching the Giro d'Italia. For company we had Tigre, one of the farm cats who could hear a fridge door open from 800 metres. We also had 2 horses, 2 goats in the paddock over the wall with a number of chickens who would peck around the rose filled borders. All day long and through the night you could hear the croaking of the frogs that shared the pond with a dozen ducks. Despite their chorus it was a world of peace and tranquillity.

Our evenings were occupied with the preparation, cooking and eating of our meal followed soon afterwards by a good night's sleep. Maryse came by from time to time with eggs, strawberries, cocktails and of course if we wanted any cherries we only had to climb the ladder – all in all a hard life.

All too soon our 2 weeks were up and we had to pack up and say good bye. We were invited into the Castel and on a wall was a montage of family pictures. As well as 86 year old Grandma's wedding picture was the identity card of her husband who was a member of the Corps Franc Pompiers and as such must have been in perpetual danger of betrayal for several years.

On reaching our overnight stay in Brittany at Jurgon-les-Lacs we found a cycle race in full swing. It was a French Junior Cup Race, No. 2 in the series. Teams had come from all the regions of France for the race. It was on a fierce 10 km circuit with a hill similar to the one out of the Teign Valley towards Longdown. Inside 3 laps the field was in tatters and they had to do at least 10 laps.

To show how small a world we live in the person in the next seat on the ferry home was Roger Floyd, one time member of the Plymouth Wheelers and St Budeaux CC who was on his way home from a long weekend in France. Did Ann enjoy her holiday – she did or so she tells me.

Ed: Wonderful Ken, just love all the detail you've included and how do you manage to bump into so many people you know?

Tour of Cambridge - Chris Jones reflects on his first BC race...

I entered the 2017 Tour of Cambridge Gran Fondo as a qualifying event for the World Gran Fondo -this year taking place in Albi, Southern France. The event venue was held at the East of England showground, Peterborough. I stayed overnight at a local Travelodge I got to the site for 8am and with the race not due to start until 12 had time to prep bike - more of this in a minute - had a coffee on venue looking at the trade stands/vintage bike displays. There was an on-going commentary of events by David Harmon - who I think is one of the Eurosport commentators which kept a good vibe going. I had taken some new tyres & inner tubes to fit which I set about doing, struggling to get the front tyre over the rim a guy in car next to me who ran his own bike repair business came over -assisted with my efforts and in seeing that I was fitting Conti Gp4000 asked if I had realised that they were directional! - aghh no! Checking the rear wheel which I had already done there was a 50/50 chance that it was correct, it wasn't, so another battle getting it on & off rim, the rear was actually ok as a 25 mm which was much more compliant than the front 23mm. Off to start -gates opened at 11am, the queue was massive, finally got to my allotted M55/60 gate which already had about 175/200 riders ahead of me, the field was about 220 in this age group. I think the M19-30 had region 500. This was my first official BC race as I normally only ride a few of the club TTs and sportives.

Talking to some other riders at the start with stories of crashes & injuries at the first corner my "tactic/strategy" was to stay safe towards rear of peloton and then ride up through the groups over the 120km route.

First 3k along a straight main road (all closed) with peloton already splitting and I was pushing to get to mid field, first L turn into a country lane with lead group of 50 clear, I'm in 2nd group, next 75k on pan flat roads @ 35/40kph average in 2nd group. Slow to eat & take a drink, lose about 10 bike lengths off group and take about 15 minutes at max to bridge back. At about 90k/3hrs in, I'm beginning to feel it, its the first time I've ridden at this speed non stop and it feels like a giant time trial!

I've realised that bridging across to groups is virtually impossible with the groups riding at this speed so ride last 20k solo and finish in 3h40 with winner of M55/60 at 3h17. Outside of the race element you could also ride the event as a sportive and the time could still count as a qualifying time. My position was about 80th in race and 143 overall from 420.

Automatic qualification went down to 120th place/3h35 time so I've missed out by about 5 minutes.

There is a rider recall if not enough places are taken up so I may yet be off to Albi.

Looking back at the event I did enjoy it but did find the flat high speed riding a bit boring with constant concentration on not crashing into the rider in front, I suppose I'm not used to riding this close to other riders.

It was quickly apparent that it wasn't possible for me to gain position from the rear of the field.

I will definitely enter again for next year, try to get to the front of starting pen and try to do full gas effort at start to maintain contact with front group. Get fitter and see what happen!

Chris Jones

MDCC Committee Corner

The Committee would like to make all members aware that you are invited to sit in on their meetings at any time. If you would like to raise a particular issue for discussion you would need to contact the Secretary, Annette Dentith at info@mdcc.org.uk with the details preferably a couple of weeks before. All meetings start at 1930h at Teigngrace Community Hall, School Road, Teigngrace, TQ12 6QS.

Meeting dates: Monday 5th August (St Michael's Church Hall, Kingsteignton), Monday 18th September

2018 AGM - Provisional Information - Saturday 6th January at Stover Golf Club, 1830 for 1900h start.

The current committee comprises:

Andrew Perkins	Chairman	Max Vautier	Vice Chairman	Annette Dentith	Secretary
Mark Sanders	Treasurer	Shani Adams	Pete Adams	Colin Lewis	
Liz Crawford	Membership	Mike Gratton	Road Racing	Jamie Horton	Sportives
Paul Martin	Newsletter	Liam McGrath	Welfare Officer	Sue McGrath	Social
Conrad Moss	Time Trialling	Andrew Parker	Young Riders	Ken Robertson	
Nick Roach	Off Road	Vacancy	Women's Officer		

Committee Profile - Ken Robertson

Name: Ken Robertson

Nickname: Ask the others – St Budeaux CC called me Die Furher

Bikes owned: tricycle (make not known), Raleigh Lenton, Dawes, Hetchins x 2, Holdsworth x 3 (1 still in the loft, Dave Russell, Bob Griffin, Ambrosia, Orbea, Cannondale – last 3 still in use

How & at what age did you get into cycling?: 3 years old in a red velvet suit on the pavements of North London

How often do you train?: No longer training but cycle Tuesday, Thursday, Sunday plus trips to shops etc.

Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older: See above

Main successes: 1st Evening Pursuit Race on Lemon Valley Circuit, Winning team member in Prix du Jumelage with Peter Georgi and son Alec. PBs of 57-38; 1-57-00; 4-06-10 and 255.187 miles for 25, 50, 100 miles and 12 hours respectively. In the top 40 of the British Best All Rounder Competition when there were over 180 qualifiers. Beat Richard Krajicek (Winner at Wimbeldon in 1996) by over 2 minutes in the 2014 Etape du Tour.

Future hopes/targets: To keep enjoying riding a bike

What gives you the greatest buzz about cycling?: Cycling on a dawn summer morning especially in France

Other interests, sporting & other: Cycling, Paignton Regatta, Quizzes

Advice to youngsters thinking of getting involved: Get involved, have a target and beat it.

Your cycling heroes: Raymond Poulidor, Eddy Merckx, Beryl Burton

What do you think of MDCC? The best

Committee Profile - Nick Roach

Name: Nick Roach

Age: 40

Nickname: wildcard

Bikes owned:

2017 Genesis Croix de Fer Titanium custom build (Dry day road bike)

2017 Giant Contend SL1 Disc (Wet day road bike, permanent mud guards)

2016 Specialized stumpjumper evo expert carbon 6fattie (Bike park and rowdy off roader)

2013 Felt 9 carbon Ltd 29er custom build (Off road race bike)

2012 Cannondale Ultra 8 custom build (Flat bar Commuter/gravel bike with Alfine geared hub)

2000 (ish) unknown jump frame custom built as singlespeed winter MTB

1992 Look KG111, fully restored as a road touring bike

How & at what age did you get into cycling?: Started with BMX track/street at age 7 or 8, first MTB at 10 or 11, never really looked back.

How often do you train?: No specific training as such, but ride 4 or 5 times a week, ~150 or 200 miles per week.

Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older: I find it takes longer to recover from crashes and hard rides as you get older...

Future hopes/targets: Getting more MDCC riders on podiums in CX, XC and endurance events like TwentyFour12

What gives you the greatest buzz about cycling?: Jumps and drops on the MTB, descending at ludicrous speeds on the road bikes.

Other interests, sporting & other: IT generally, running my business.

Advice to youngsters thinking of getting involved: No time on the bike is wasted, even waiting about in a carpark you can be working on balance, trackstands etc.

Your cycling heroes: Martyn Ashton, Nino Schurter, The Atherton Family, Peter Sagan

What do you think of MDCC? Really great, the youth cycling side is already creating the pros of the next generation (Birchill boys). Personally I love the social road cycling, and am pushing the MTB and CX side.

Member Spotlight - Women Racer Focus

Name: Jenny Corser

Age: 41

Nickname: 'JC'

Bikes owned: Original and first road bike (Cube), TT bike (Felt), Road Bike (Canyon) Team racing bike (Trek), Bike I'm selling that was a winter bike, but not used. (Cube)

How & at what age did you get into cycling: Just under 2 years ago- and look how many bikes I have now.

How often do you train: 5-6 x a week

Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older: 2 years ago it was a few times a week interspersed with running. Now its no more running, purely cycling. I do what my coach tells me to do!

Main successes: Not sure I've had any 'main success'. I did 22 races last year and won 9 of them. This year Ive won a TT, a couple of Crits, and placed second in three crits, 3rd in a RR and 6th in a RR, won a sprints jersey. But then Ive been unwell with a DVT and PE. Hard to cycle with one lung. I'll never forget the feeling of winning my first crit. It was a 4th cat only race. After that I was addicted.

Future hopes/targets: Working on recovery at the moment.



What gives you the greatest buzz about cycling:

1. The feeling when you are working as hard as you can and still holding it together (just) and everything is flying by. It feels like a state of flow, or near perfection. Machine and human body getting every bit of concentration and power, and going forward faster.
2. Working as a team and achieving things together with team work. Effort is individual but cycling is so much about co-ordinated efforts.

Other interests, sporting & other: Skiing. I love to climb mountains either on touring skis or in boots and crampons and then ski off them. Untracked and sometimes never previously skied lines. Descent is like the flow of cycling. A state of controlling what you can and going with what you can't.

Advice to youngsters thinking of getting involved: Just do it.

Your cycling heroes: Marianna Vos. Chris Froome

What do you think of MDCC? The best club.

Member Spotlight



Name: Catherine Kilburn

Age: oh no...52!

Nickname: Killer

Bikes owned: Scott Scale 29er, Specialized S Works CX – my favourite and used for EVERYTHING, Specialized Crux CX, Cube Agree Race, and the latest addition a Genesis Fortitude Single Speed – you always need just 1 more!

How & at what age did you get into cycling: I loved cycling as a child, but it was just around the local roads, then in my early 20's someone took me on a MTB for the first time onto the South Downs and I can remember loving the silence and yet the fact that we had travelled a long way up on the Downs and away from roads. I then did a couple of MTB races but this

was way before there was any kind of MTB'ing really going on. I won the womens races easily and each time finished 3rd against the men as well. There is a bit of "if only..." but as no MTBing scene really then, let alone women on bikes, I didn't touch cycling until my middle 30's when I started doing triathlons in the Netball "off season". This sport grabbed every hour I had and continued until my children were born when it became impossible to be a Mum, work and triathlete! I have picked up cycling again in the last 8 years, first just to ride socially and then started doing some local MTB races, then did a CX race and loved it and now onto National races!

How often do you train: I try to do a minimum of 3 "proper" training sessions a week on the bike as well as social cycling with friends, running and I still play Netball during the winter.

Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older: I didn't ever train with any real purpose and focus even when doing reasonably well in triathlons. I had the mindset then that training consisted of long steady miles for hours and that was the way to go, but over the last year have changed all this and now have a focussed programme based on heart rates and so working on high intensity sessions. This is good because the sessions are short and reflect the length of most cycle events I do and so I can fit them in around everything else but they are hard and test my attitude often!

Main successes: 2nd place at the 2016 National CX Championships in my age group, 2016 SW CX League 1st Grand Vet and Overall 1st Female, currently also in 2nd place after 4 races in my age group in the National MTB XC Series with 1 race to go.

Future hopes/targets: To finish 2nd in National MTB XC Grand Vet Ladies series 2017, get a podium place at the National MTB XC Championships 2017 and then aim for the 2018 National CX Championships

What gives you the greatest buzz about cycling: Freedom to be off roads and away from everything yet being physically active plus the competitive challenges when in a race.

Other interests, sporting & other: Playing netball.

Advice to youngsters thinking of getting involved: Have a go and grab all the opportunities out there. I am jealous for the opportunities that exist for kids now so they should make the most of them.

Your cycling heroes: The size of Chris Hoy's thighs and the Tour de France riders who everyday get up and ride

massive massive distances with big mountains added in!

What do you think of MDCC?: I joined at Christmas because I wanted to go to an event representing someone and not simply writing down “unattached” on signing on sheets. I also had seen everyone at the SW CX races last season and they were part of a team that I miss because I am really a games player at heart and enjoy the team comradery. Since joining everyone has been very helpful, and although as I live in East Devon I will not be able to make many of the rides I am looking forward to being part of the MDCC “team”. The club has also been really helpful with support for the National events. I am proud to put the MDCC red race shirt on and it compliments my trade mark red baggy shorts!

Member Spotlight

Name: Ruth Burrows

Age: 32

Nickname: I don't have one.

Bikes owned: Ribble TT bike, Planet X road bike and one half of an old tandem. I don't pay that much attention to bikes so I don't even know what model any of them are - my boyfriend finds them for me and I agree to buy them based on whether I like how they look and feel!

How & at what age did you get into cycling?: I have always cycled recreationally and as a mode of transport. I got into riding for leisure when I cycled with my brother during the Gloucester to Bristol leg of his Blackpool Tower to Eiffel Tower fundraiser back when I was 25. After that 32 mile ride I was hooked and promptly joined Bristol Road Club - at my first club run I turned up on a hybrid commuter bike with a backpack on and still managed to keep up!

How often do you train?: 5 times a week. This may include running, circuit training, turbo sessions or being out and about on the bike. I just make sure I have 2 rest days per week.

Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older:

My proper training still hasn't begun! I started training last winter after a number of semi-successful time trials. I followed the training programs that you can download on the British Cycling website to give me an idea of what I should be doing. I am waiting to buy a power meter so I can properly start to target how I train.

Main successes: None yet. I broke the female course record on the U86/100 earlier this month, but I think my main success has been taking the plunge and starting to time trial in the first place, which I would never have done without the encouragement from my boyfriend.

Future hopes/targets: My target for 2017 was to complete some TT's at 10, 25, 50 and 100 mile distances to give me a base line. I will see where I end up in the SWBAR and BBAR this year and I hope (with a power meter!) to be able to complete some strong winter training in order to set out and achieve some clear targets for the 2018 season.

What gives you the greatest buzz about cycling?: getting to places under my own steam - its a beautiful way to see and experience the world! I cycled from Paris to Rome in 2013 and I have so many wonderful memories from trips like this.

Other interests, sporting & other: Cycling is slowly taking over a larger and larger part of my life - its a good job my partner does it too or else I would never see him.

Advice to youngsters thinking of getting involved: Start now and don't stop! I wish I had joined a club a lot younger than I did, and whether or not you want to race its a great community to be part of - and who knows where it will take you.

Cycling heroes: There are plenty of everyday heroes out there who have overcome their own personal worries, fears and issues to ride / race / complete their longest distance... The small wins sometimes have the biggest impact - and you don't have to be riding the Tour de France to achieve them!

What do you think of MDCC? Such a supportive club no matter what type of cyclist you want to be. I race for Mid Devon with pride.



Section Reports

Off Road - Nick Roach writes..



The rain returned this weekend just gone, just in time for the 24-hour endurance race, the Pivot TwentyFour12 at Newnham Park (and after a decent dry spell, to the point where Bike Park Wales was actually getting quite dusty). We had some solid club performances at the event, amongst a tough crowd. (Robin Delve pictured).

Our round of the South West XC series up at Haldon went very well, even though it was a technical lap, with 30+ degree temperatures on the day. It was a great finish to the 4 SWXC rounds, with MDCC taking podiums in several races.

Leading us towards the fast approaching CX season, we have our 3 XC Summer Series races also at Haldon, on the 2nd August, 16th August and the 6th September. Entry via British Cycling or on the day. It would be

great to see a solid MDCC turnout for these, and if not racing, we could always use Marshals!

We would offer Massive congratulations to Harry and Freddy Birchill (Pictured), from their starting place in MDCC, both went on to win their respective races in the National Championships round at Cannok Chase recently, with Freddie already confirmed as series leader, and Harry looking to take a respectable second place after the last round in Mid Wales. The pair also claimed 2nd place in the 12-hour open category at TwentyFour12, just a lap behind the Torq team!



As mentioned above, we have the CX season rapidly approaching, we do still have a few Club CX bikes for hire at £10 per month, please contact Andrew Parker if interested.

Sportive Committee

We are approaching a busy time of year for your committee. Sunday 17th September sees the annual Tour of Britain Ride. The plan is to use part of the 2014 Devon stage by riding a loop of 79 miles, 6200' of climbing. Start Abbroom at 0800h then Bovey, Haytor, Widecombe, Princetown by which time you've done the hardest part of the climbing. Downhill to Tavy for a coffee stop at the Eastgate Cafe after 33 miles (a short stop where you'll need to buy your own drink etc). Then to Mary Tavy, North Brentor and Lydford where we'll join the Granite way to follow the old railway track to Okehampton, 53 miles, for lunch at the railway cafe (£5 per person drink, cake and/or bacon or sausage bap etc will be paid for). We'll then return home along the old A30 through Sticklepath to Whiddon Down then Moreton' and Bovey back to Abbroom.

There will be no limit on numbers but for planning we need to know if you want to take part by emailing Jamie at mdccsportives@gmail.com by 14th August.

There will be a reccie done on the route on Sunday 20th August, 0800h start from Abbroom, again email Jamie if you'd like to join that by August 14th latest.

We also need a driver(s) for the 17th September ToB ride and the YHA weekend on 23/24th September, there's free accommodation for anyone who volunteers this one. Again email Jamie.

Finally the Lands End 100 takes place on Saturday 7th October, we are able to provide coach transport to and from the event. There's a 10% discount code for entry to the event. As we need to book a coach we need you to

contact Jamie by 14th August to book your place. The entry code for your 10% discount is MDCCMDS2017 which will also cover jersey orders. We can only offer support for the 100km event or else there will be a lot of waiting around before the coach can return.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Jamie Horton, Phil Stocker and Paul Martin

Social Committee

Three events are coming up in the next 3 months starting with the:

Bike Treasure Hunt and BBQ on Saturday 19th August at Teigngrace TQ12 6QN. Sign on between 1030 & 1100h for your choice of a 5, 10 or 15 mile route for all ages and abilities. It's all about finding the answers and not the speed at which you ride. Mostly on cycle paths or quiet roads with some other roads on the 15. Entry is £5 per person to include BBQ (Hot Dog, Burger, Salads, soft drinks, tea/coffee). A "Goodie Bag" and Certificate will be given to all children who take part. Sign in at Teigngrace, TQ12 6QN, signed locally, from 1030 to 1100h with BBQ available from 1200h. Entries needed with payment by Monday 14th August to Pat Ash (07989 147788) or Linda Simpson, Phil Stocker or Paul Martin. Organised by the Social Committee and kindly hosted by Pete & Shani Adams. **Full poster available on Page 24, please promote with your family and friends and in your local area.**

Friday 29th September, 1830h at Stover Golf Club for the MDCC Quiz Night. The bar will be open all evening and the quiz will start promptly at 1900h. There will be 3 rounds before the meal break around 2015h when a 2 course hot buffet will be served. There will be 5 or 6 choices of main course including vegetarian followed by a couple of choices for dessert. The quiz will resume with another 3 rounds before ending around 2230h.

This will be a 'fun' evening in teams of 4 to 6, don't worry if you haven't got a team as we'll put groups together. There will be a music round in each half and there may or may not be some cycling related questions!

There will be at least 3 team prizes. Entry is £15 per person to include the food and quiz but no drinks. Spaces are limited so book early. Your money will need to be paid before the day but details will be given when you book.

Please email news@mdcc.org.uk to enter or contact and of the team as below.

Sunday 29th October - MDCC Club Runs for a free Coffee and Cake break at The Grosvenor Hotel, Torquay. Just note the date for your diary, especially Ride Co-ordinators. More detail in the October edition of The Hub.

Pat Ash, Linda Simpson, Phil Stocker and Paul Martin

VELOPARK VETERANS' GROUP - Ron Keegan writes...

It's quite an odd concept really, a ride that goes nowhere, but it's proving very popular with a bunch of super-veterans. Shortly to enjoy its eighth month, the Velopark Veterans' Group - or 'Bike & Banter' as Ken Robertson christened it - now regularly attracts about twenty riders to its twice monthly meetings. And, with a mailing list of over forty, who have participated since the January launch, there is a good mix as non-regulars and occasional attendees join the hard-core of over a dozen stalwarts.

While Ken's original idea was to bring some of the Mid-Devon C. C's. older members together, for a leisurely hour's potter around the Clennon Valley circuit, interest has now expanded to embrace a variety of unaffiliated cyclists. Some of these have previously been racing members of clubs, while others have been life-long independent tourists, with all moving to the South West from their original places of residence. This all makes for a very interesting mix, with life stories and cycling experiences being exchanged, both as the laps roll under the wheels and during the post ride 'cafe stop' outside Justin Mann's on-site kiosk.

The first few sessions did not live up to the original plan of a Velopark based social club run because, it being on a circuit persuaded some frustrated racers to be a bit too competitive. Thus, rather than sticking together, the group

quickly became fragmented, splitting into twos and threes, with the odd rider left to ride alone. However, by the end of February, order was established when Ron Keegan took it upon himself to keep the wayward speedsters in check by calling foul, with a referee's whistle, every time a rider crept off the front. Later, and to press the point of the need to ride as a group, Keegan briefly introduced an ear-splitting, high decibel horn, since when there has been almost complete harmony!

What may improve the group's harmony even further would be a better gender balance. With only a handful of women on the mailing list, it is rare that more than one or two turn up to ride at the same time. Of the men who regularly attend, MDCC's Steve McCormack is - at the time of writing - the undefeated champion, having ridden at every meeting since the start. Only an upcoming anniversary will interrupt his record.

The group now boasts four octogenarians; Ken and fellow club member Eric Barber, Tony Butler (ex Coventry C.C.) and Bob Kelsall (ex Tunstall Whs.). While at 90+, Pete Guthrie is now the group's elder statesman. In his prime and long after, Pete visited every U.K. Youth Hostel but, following a fall in more recent years, he was forced to give up cycling. He has however recently started visiting the Velopark, hires a recumbent trike and, assisted by his daughter Hazel, does a couple of leisurely circuits while the main bunch are engaged in their own activity.

Last year, Velopark staff introduced the recognition of age related flying lap records and until Pete Guthrie arrived the 90+ one was vacant. Now, he has set the standard with a ride of just over 10 minutes for the one and a half kilometre circuit; a phenomenal performance on a recumbent. Meanwhile, Bob Kelsall continues to amaze by improving his own over 80s standard and can now cover the distance at over 21 mph! He is however quite happy to drop down to about 15 mph for the 'Bike & Banter' sessions.

Although those just turned 40 are - in cycling terms - classed as veterans, the youngest members of the Velopark group are in their early 50s, with the average age about 70+. So, if you are in the age range, and feel you would be comfortable in such mature company, come and join us. Starting at 2:00 pm on the first and third Wednesday of the month, the August dates are the 2nd and the 16th, while those in September are the 6th and the 20th. Looking forward to welcoming you to the group.

Torbay Holiday Helpers Network - Can You Help?

I am writing on behalf of Torbay Holiday Helpers Network which is a charity based in Torquay providing free fun filled memory making holidays, to families who have seriously ill children, families who are recently bereaved – having lost a child or parent and to families who have a terminally ill parent.

On 3rd September 2017 we will be hosting our annual City to Sea race and Festival of Fun on Babbacombe Downs.

We are looking for volunteer marshals along our ultra and marathon route, both distances start in Exeter at 08:00. Would anyone in your club be willing to assist? As a 'thank you' we will offer each marshal from your club 50% off entry to next year's event.

The marathon route ends on Babbacombe Downs. Our ultra marathon is 34 miles and at Babbacombe the runners will be taken down Babbacombe Road to the Harbour before returning via the coast path to the Downs.

We have a variety of marshal locations and timings to suit:

- * Exeter to Powderham;
- * Powderham to Shaldon
- * Watcombe;
- * Petitor to the finish line

If anyone in your club would be able to assist this year I would love to hear from your members with their preference on area and what times they are available. I can then allocate a marshal location. Maps and instructions will be sent out nearer the event.

Many thanks for your support.

Best wishes

Helen Parsons

Volunteer

Torbay Holiday Helpers Network
Registered Office
16 Babbacombe Road,
Torquay, Devon, TQ1 3SJ

Registered Charity Number 1146245

Registered in England & Wales, Company Registration No.07690157

Peter Sandy & Harvey Alford

Peter Sandy, Somerset Road Club died suddenly at home on Tuesday 20th June. He was 86. Peter was well known for his finishing sprint and many Mid-Devon riders were often behind him when it came to the dash for the line.

Peter came from a long line of cycling Sandy's his uncle was a renowned grass track riders. Peter had been cycling regularly right up to the day of his death. In fact he had been out with his younger brother Brian that morning for their usual spin.

The club extends it sympathy's to his family.

Harvey Alford died on Friday 23rd June in the R.D. & E Hospital having been admitted earlier that day suffering with angina. Harvey was well into his 90s.

He started cycling during World War 2 and joined the Mid-Devon Road Club as it was the only active club in the area. The rest were more or less moribund till hostilities ceased. When he came of age for active service he reported to the recruiting centre. Despite being fit for the military he was one of those who 'lost the ballot' and was instead told he would have to work as a Bevin Boy. This meant he was sent to South Wales to work in the coal mines. As well as fighting men the country needed coal to drive the power stations.

He was billeted with the family whose son held the Welsh 25 mile record – probably a 1 hour 3 minute time. In his first time trial in Wales Harvey smashed it by nearly 3 minutes. Unfortunately Harvey then contracted pneumonia and was sent home. He returned to racing with the Mid-Devon RC winning the WAJ Best Memorial 25 in 1947.

As he lived in Exminster and the Exeter Wheelers were then back in action he joined them. He was a frequent winner setting course records along the way.

In the early 1950s he stopped racing only to return in 1958 riding for the newly formed Exe Valley CRC and rode for them for some years before the club folded.

One Sunday when I was a relative novice Harvey started 2 minutes behind me. At the 10 mile mark he came by only to puncture soon afterwards. I continued only to be passed some 800 yards before the finish. Harvey had changed to front tubular, pumped it up and still did a time of 1 hour 2 minutes. This was probably only 5 minutes behind the winner.

When Geoff Warren started up the Heron Racing Club / Cyclorama he joined them to serve as their treasurer. As a veteran was nearly always the winner of the veteran's prize. He was such a regular winner he deemed it an affront to his dignity if he was ever beaten.

When the Heron RC folded he joined the Camel Valley C & TC club as he was often in Cornwall in his caravan for extended weekends with his wife Mary. The time in the caravan got longer when he retired from his job as a salesman for car parts.

When retired and at home he used to go out on the same morning ride from Exminster to Dawlish Warren, back to Starcross, up the road towards Mamhead to turn before the Black Forest Lodge. It was then home after circling the Matford Roundabout – a distance of 25 miles and you could set your watch by him as he pedalled along so smoothly in his aged Heron RC top.

Harvey leaves a wife Mary and we send her our condolences.

Ken Robertson

Sportive, Audax & other events Calendar for 2017

The following list is not all inclusive and concentrates on a travel distance within 100 miles to access the event.

Entries/information available via www.britishcycling.org.uk/events, www.aukweb.net/events, justevents.org, www.ukcyclingevents.co.uk

Saturday 2nd September - Moor 2 Sea - Exeter Racecourse - 37, 63 & 112 miles, 0700h, £27-37

Sunday 3rd September - Audax - Utterly Butterleigh - 100km, Budleigh Salterton, 0900h, £6 &
Audax - East Devon Escape - 55km, Budleigh Salterton, 1000h, £6

Sunday 17th September - Cornwall Coast and Clay, St Columb Major, TR9 6DB, 0730h - 23, 44, 68 & 100 miles, £15 - £27.50. <http://www.cornwallcoastandclay.co.uk>

Sunday 1st October - Autumn Storm & Breeze Charity Bike Rides, Clyst Vale School, Station Road, Broadclyst, Exeter, EX5 3AJ, 30 & 55 miles - £15 & £20, <http://www.active.com/exeter-devon/cycling/autumn-series-2017>

Saturday 7th October - Lands End 100, Marazion, 0800h - 0845h, 45 miles, 100 km, 100 miles, £22.50 - £30, <https://www.eventrac.co.uk/listed-races/land-s-end-100-sportive>

Sunday 29th October - Audax - Dartmoor Devil - 100km, Bovey Tracey, 0800h & 0900h, £10

Club 10 TT 2017 Rota

Date / Sign On Time/Start Time	Venue	Timekeepers		Trainee Timekeepers		Marshals	
17.8.17 18:30/19:01	Dartington	1	Ken Robertson	1	Jamie Horton	1	Linda Dabbs
		2		2		2	Ian Dabbs
31.8.17 18:00/18:31	Clay Pits	1	Phil Burrows	1	Anne Simpson	1	Celia Atherton
		2		2	Paul Martin	2	Kevin Frost
26.12.17 09:30/10:01	Clay Pits	1	Ken Robertson	1	Paul Martin	3	
		2		2		1	

Club Ride Schedule - August - September 2017

All meet 0900h, Saturdays in car park behind Teignbridge Council Offices, Forde House off Brunel Road, Newton Abbot. Sundays at Abbrook Park, Strap Lane, Kingsteignton
Ride options: SS = Saturday Spin, S = Social, E, D, D1, C, B & A

Date	Group	Destination	Leader	Miles	MPH
05.08	SS	Haytor	Simon Fryer	30	11/13
06.08	S	Cheriton Bishop (approx 40 miles)	Jill O'Neil	30	10/12
06.08	E	Moretonhampstead	Jim Black	40	12/14
12.08	SS	Surprise	Steve Swann	30	11/13
13.08	S	Dunsford (Walled Garden)	Steve & Louise Swann	30	10/12
13.08	E	Killerton	Angela Hanks	40	12/14
19.08	SS			30	11/13
20.08	S	Buckfast Steam Railway	Mark Phare	30	10/12
20.08	E	Powderham	Paul Woolgar	40	12/14
26.08	SS	Brixham (Breakwater Cafe)	Rose Parkhouse	30	11/13
27.08	S	Orange Elephant	Penny Clapham	30	10/12
27.08	E	Sticklepath	Paul Martin	40	12/14
02.09	SS	Buckfast Steam Railway	Jim Black	30	11/13
03.09	S	Moretonhampstead (Central Stores)	Lisa Cassidy	30	10/12
03.09	E	Bovey Tracey	Peter Mason	40	12/14
09.09	SS	Powderham	Caroline Twigger	30	11/13
10.09	S	Powderham	Mike Radant	30	10/12
10.09	E	Blackpool Sands	Rose Parkhouse	40	12/14
16.09	SS	Dunsford (Walled Garden)	Jim Black	30	11/13
17.09	S	Broadsands	Jill O'Neil	30	10/12
17.09	E	ToB Ride	Caroline Twigger	40	12/14
23.09	SS	Blackpool Sands	Rose Parkhouse	30	11/13
24.09	S	Haldon Cafe	Michele Radant	30	10/12
24.09	E	Churston (via Dittisham)	Viv Crees	40	12/14
30.09	SS	Darts Farm	Nick Roach	30	11/13



Mid Devon Cycling Club (MDCC)

Summer Bike Treasure Hunt & BBQ

Saturday 19th August 2017

1030h start in Teigngrace, TQ12 6QN

Plenty of off road parking

Suitable for families - 5, 10 & 15 mile routes

Riders of all ability welcome, quiet route on cycle paths and lanes

Under 12s must be accompanied by a responsible adult

It's all about completing the course & finding the answers, not speed!

BBQ from 1200h, hot dog & burger, salads, soft drinks, teas & coffee

Entry £5 per person

Entries by Monday 14th August to Pat Ash (07989 147788)

or other members of the MDCC Social Committee Paul Martin, Linda Simpson or Phil Stocker.



