

**A Very Merry Christmas from Mid Devon Cycling Club**



# **“The Hub”**

**The Newsletter of Mid Devon Cycling Club**

**December 2018**

**Harry & Robin’s Christmas Presents - Olympic Bronze & World Gold - Chapeau Guys!**



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## Harry Birchill - Youth Olympics Bronze Medallist

The two weeks in Buenos Aires at the Youth Olympic Games flew by. It was an amazing experience being part of Team GB and it was all made totally unreal by topping it off and bringing home an Olympic Bronze Medal with my Team mate Sean Flynn. This involved five consecutive tough days of racing and where I managed to win two out of five events!!...the XC Eliminator and the Criterium.

The Opening Ceremony was an impressive celebration of sport, diversity and gender equality which attracted a huge crowd of 125,000 to the centre of the city to the Obelisco for what appeared to be the biggest street party ever!!

Six days followed of various interesting workshops, training, visit's to recce the courses and set up for the 5 days of racing, socialising, eating and sleeping in the Olympic Village. It was then time to put everything together that I've learnt and trained for in the disciplines of Road and XC Mountain Bike. The TTT and RR events helped us to settle in to the event.

The XC Eliminator was a power course, in which I managed to win all of my heats and the final, in what was an incredibly close race throughout! The XC Short Circuit was held on the same course with my legs feeling the effects of that win the day before.

The last day, in which Sean and I were sitting in fifth place overall at the start, was the Criterium which was a circuit of 16 laps in which every fourth lap was a sprint lap, which again proved to suit me well and I managed to win!! meaning with the points gained we finished in Bronze Medal position overall. The medal ceremony was something else and something I'll never forget.

The closing ceremony the following day was as impressive as the opening ceremony. On returning home I was welcomed by and celebrated with family and friends.

What an end to my first year as a Junior...and hoping that my second is as fun and productive!!

Thank you MDCC for all your support. Harry



## World Champion x 2 - Chapeau Robin!

It's that time of year again. Yes time to take on the best in the world at the UCI 2018 Masters Cyclo-Cross World Championship. Time to test body, mind and bike against, not only fellow competitors, but also against the unforgiving cruel white sand of Zilvermeer, Mol in Belgium.

One 40 minute cyclo-cross race once a year to decide the Masters World Champion in the 60 to 64 year age group. Ten months of training and preparation to take on riders from all over the world including USA, Japan, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Italy, France to name a few. This is it, no second chance. Yes I won the title last year but this is so different; no longer a quiet outsider, the element of surprise has gone! Huge pressure to deliver mainly from inside my own head. I have struggled with fear of failing all season; negative thoughts during races; constantly thinking this is not good enough!!



As usual we arrived at Mol on the Thursday, the day before the race. My race crew consisted of Lester Young to cover pit duties and Nick Blight who was racing in the 35 year age group on Saturday. Nick did most of the driving. Thursday afternoon was spent trying the sand and loosening the legs after a long journey. The course was very similar to last year- oceans of soft fine white sand- energy sapping to ride through- so difficult to run through in cycling shoes. I was pleased to ride through the sand but kept telling myself it will be so different in the race; riders in the way and the effects of accumulative fatigue will result in more running and less riding!! One run stretch is 90 seconds of running in deep unstable sand carrying the bike.

On the day of the race I astounded Lester and Nick by taking a nap late morning with the race starting at 3pm. Experience must count for something!

Random gridding for the start. OMG I'm pulled out as number 1!!!! Pressure really ramps up. This year we will start 2mins behind the 55yr age group giving us a clear run at the course. On the start line the last 30secs before the whistle took an age. Off we go - I make a good start no problems. On the second straight I was passed by several - jeez - what's happening? First time past the pits and I'm now back in 12th place. Lester shouts diplomatically 'long way to go - don't worry' I knew what he meant...fantastic experienced advice...invaluable!! I tried to settle and ride my own pace and do my own race. Struggling to catch any breath...don't let this race get away!!

The course rode loads harder than last year. The beach was not firm but resembled a sucking sponge making progress tough. The sand was unforgiving - miss a rut and the bike stopped very quickly; many riders going over the bars. My golden rule - get off the bike before you have to!! Saves a second or two and with 40 dismounts in the race it can add up.

After the technical wooded and horrendous devils drop and dune section I am now in the top 3: me, Van Londen from Holland and former multi national cx champion and pro cycle racer from GB Chris Wreghitt. Chris passes me again on the flat section. We cross the long 90 sec run and then race through the flat to finish the first of 5 laps. I think our front 3 have a small gap. Really struggle to keep pace with these 2 they are so fast.

Hit the next sand section for running and commit all to go to the front; don't think my lungs appreciated the importance of this commitment. My running is clearly better than the other two. Breathing and lungs well out of

control..lept back on the bike to ride the spongy sand and stay in front....now is time for all those zone 5 turbo efforts to kick in...I can suffer and still recover really quickly...to go again and again....done it in training....so do it now!!! Through the dunes again no let up..this is it simply go as hard as possible....here again 90 more secs of sand running...running feels like slow motion...only the 2nd lap...wanted so much just to stop and lay in the sand!!! Hurting all over...distress so bad can barely coordinate to remount the bike let alone cycle. Lester can see my pain and is really vocal..'.excellent, good boy Robin!' Nectar to a struggling body...got to keep same pace...don't give the chasers any hope!! 2 laps down....but feel completely spent...felt so easy last year!! Commentator announces me as leader...just the fillip you need. Into the 3rd lap.

Around to the dune area again...quick glance...no one close...yeah!! Nick is patrolling this area giving me encouragement. He tells me I'm making ground while running and to keep my knees pumping high - just wait til he tries it the next day!!! Down the devils slide and into the dune..a complete leap of faith no brakes.. And as soon as you hit the sand take no chances leap off the bike straight into running. Forcing the legs to run faster than they want to...no time to slow...really running scared.

Passing the pits again...half way through race....starting now to get a rhythm and get myself under control...Lester confirms a good lead and to control myself! Easier said than done. Into 4th lap..just think one section at a time...treat each section with care...don't get ahead of yourself...the Mol sand can take you at anytime. Just get it done..no risk- no trying to ride to be clever..no showboating!! One lovely moment as I remounted from the sand and I shouted 'leader' at the rider in front. He then turned and gave me the most almighty helping shove down the course!!! Never happened before. It was much appreciated. Absolutely trying now to blast the easy flat sections...stand and give it everything out of the saddle - legs feel great while cycling! Great support from all around the circuit. From all nationalities in all languages. Love the 'Bravo, Bravo!!' and the 'Alle, alle!!'. Keeps you going.



Last lap and a fantastic lead. Just keep going. No mistakes, even ran all the dune section to ensure no mishaps. Going well going to win..AGAIN!!! Crowd really appreciative clapping and cheering. Lester now letting his hair down telling me to enjoy the last 'quarter' lap!!! Time for 'me' now down the last deserted area to the dangerous concrete steps, I do all my own shouting!! Yelling loudly as I race!! Don't care anymore - unreserved excitement and celebrations down the finish straight. My arms waving giving it the 2 finger victory salute. Commentator joins in...'Robin Delve from Great Britain retains his Rainbow Jersey to become World Champion.' An awesome race in which mind, body and bike came out on top. Not a negative thought in the race. Can't wait to be faster next year!!!

Robin Delve

## BBC Children in Need Rickshaw Challenge - Harry Parker & the killer smile!



6 young people were thrown into a new world of 'Media Glare' for their 400+ mile, 8 day journey from Calais to Manchester for the 2018 Challenge.

There was the usual appalling weather and many hills but Harry Parker didn't stop smiling throughout in helping to raise over £4.5 million for the charity.

Prior to the event Harry again joined team 'Parker' at the club's Quiz Night and was presented with a Dartmoor Classic(DC) race jersey and DC 'Goody Bags' & T shirts for his fellow team mates and crew.

The Saturday after the event Harry, a season ticket holder with his Dad, was the 'Half Time Guest of Honour' at Plymouth Argyle's home match where he received prolonged and enthusiastic applause from the whole crowd as he walked around the

pitch after being presented with his team shirt by the Club Captain, Gary Sawyer, centre and leading star, Graham Carey, right.

Well done Harry, we are all immensely proud of both your efforts and how you conducted yourself.

## Clay Pitts Clearance

Hi Ken and Paul,

Great to hear that this job is all done. I just wanted to thank you both for your initiative in deciding we could do this job, and for enthusing enough of us to do it.

It's just what we should be doing and will be of huge value to club members and many others too.

All the best,

Celia

**Cllr Philip Bullivant, Teignbridge District Council's Portfolio Holder for Recreation and Leisure, said:**

"On behalf of Teignbridge and everyone who uses the paths along Kingsteignton's Clay Pitts Way, we would like to offer a massive thank you to the 34 volunteers from the Mid Devon Cycle Club who worked tirelessly over a three-week period to clear the vegetation from the path.

"The path is now much wider and has improved safety for cyclists, walkers and people using mobility scooters. The quality and life of the path has been extended because plants growing through the hard surface of the path have been removed, preventing it from deteriorating."



## National CX Championships, Irvine, Scotland & European Masters, Holland - Robin Delve reports



First time ever top of the podium in a National Trophy CX race....Irvine 2018. Jon Galway 2nd and Chris Wreghitt 3rd.

I did have one or two problems at the National Trophy CX at Irvine on Saturday including riding into a pile up in the sandpit. I was wanting to get away in a hurry but the other guy was quite prepared to take his time. Kept my mouth firmly closed while desperate to disentangle our locked together bikes. Just to mention it was a blind corner into the pit!! Took the win so all went well in the end. Lesson: stay calm!!!



European Masters Cyclocross Championships in Holland, November 2nd. Competed in 60 to 64 age group. Extremely fast tough course with sand sections, steep banks, singletrack, bridges and needing to dismount 7 times per lap....fast and furious for just 30 mins. Found myself outpaced at the start and down in 12th but once into my stride I recovered to a respectable 6th place. Not overly pleased but hey....6th in a European championship!!! The sand was brutal.

### National Cyclocross Trophy Series Round 3, Crawley - 10th November

National Trophy Round 3 hosted by Crawley Wheelers. Well done to all who raced in the Vet races. Special mention to Catherine 'Killer' Kilburn for totally smashing it and getting her 1st National Trophy win in the Vet 50s. Also congratulations to Robin Delve for 2nd place in the Vet 60s.



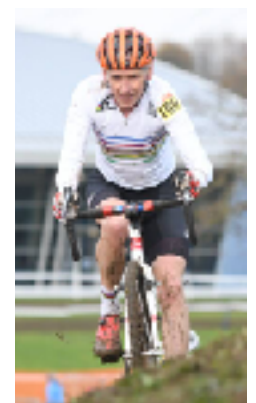
### National Cyclocross Trophy Series Round 4, York - 24th/25th November

A fantastic weekend for Mid Devon C C at Round 4 of the National Cyclocross Trophy Series at York. 3 PODIUM FINISHERS!!!! 4 members made the 600 mile round trip to the York Sports Village.



Catherine Kilburn got the event off to a great start by gaining her second win in the series this year. 'Killer' now has a very good chance of winning overall in the Women 50+ category.

Robin Delve was in the next race the new 60+ category for men. Robin grafted away to come in 2nd but importantly in front of the current series leader, and hence regain the Blue Jersey of the Series Leader.





Jackie Shute competed in the ultra competitive Women's 40+ category finishing a credible 15th.

A huge thank you to Lester Young for his pro pit duties, his encouragement, for sitting in the back of the van for 600 miles and for evening up the male female balance!!

On Sunday Harry Birchill rode a great race to finish 2nd in the Junior section...a brilliant result.

Well done MDCC ...3 podiums and brill commitment.



## Youths Section - Rob Woodger reports..

### Round 5 of the SWCX Escot 21<sup>st</sup> October



MDCC had 8 youth members at Escot in the 5th round of SWCX, The age range was from under 8's to under 16's across 3 different courses depending on age group, these were the most challenging of the season so far in very good weather conditions for the time of year.

Maddy Woodger 3rd in the under 8 girls  
 Matt Holmes 1st, Bayley Woodger 3rd, Jacob Start 4th and John Sharp was 8th in the under 10 boys  
 Ben Goldsmith was 4th in the under 12 boys.  
 Solomon Drury 3rd, Edd Selwood came in 8th in the under 14 Youth  
 Callum Start came 3rd in the under 16 Youth

### Round 6 of the SWCX Barnstaple 28<sup>th</sup> October

A windy day in Barnstaple made it difficult for all riders that made the trip.

Under 8 girls Maddy Woodger 2nd  
 Under 10 boys Matt Holmes 1<sup>st</sup>, Bayley Woodger 3<sup>rd</sup>, Jacob Start 4th  
 Under 10 girls Ellie Birchall 3rd  
 Under 12 girls Aine Graham 4th  
 Under 12 boys Henry Birchall 3<sup>rd</sup>, William Birchall 5th  
 Under 14 boys Edward Selwood 3<sup>rd</sup>, Angus Graham 9th  
 Under 16 boys Callum Start 4th



### Round 7 of the SWCX Falmouth 18<sup>th</sup> November



On a dry windy day at Falmouth on a challenging course for all age groups, with six MDCC riders racing on a mud free course.

Under 10 Matt Holmes shows his strength again winning in great style, Jacob Start showed his consistency with another 4th place and Bayley Woodger came in 8th after have a mechanical after a great start.

Under 12 Ben Goldsmith came in 9th in a large strong field, on a tricky course.

Under 14/16 Boys raced on a very hilly and difficult course in strong winds, Solomon Drury came in 4th and Ed Selwood 5th in the under 14's. Callum Start showed good form coming in 3rd to keep the pressure on others in the overall standings.

## Time Trialling - Conrad Moss reports...

Dear Committee members,

I wanted to drop you all a note out to offer my gratitude once again for the financial support that I received for the 2018 race season.

Some of you may recall that my goals for 2018 were based around the National BBAR competition, which comprises riding 50,100 miles and a 12h against the countries top riders up and down the UK.

The campaign didn't start as planned, with my first 3 events being cancelled due to roadworks in Suffolk, and a disagreement between the VTTA and the S Wales DC over course use, so much of my early season BBAR campaign was written off, and then alternative events weren't possible due to be entered elsewhere.

My campaign started in earnest in July with the CC Breckland 12h in Suffolk. I had set out to achieve a minimum 300 miles, which was the number that I'd estimated would be necessary to achieve an overall top 5 placing in the BBAR along with my 50/100 potential.

The event was as straightforward as a 12h could be, for 6 hours, I was reigning it in, well above target, feeling great and energised, until in the space of an hour my hips simply gave way, and I was unable to complete any more than a minutes continual pedalling before having to freewheel. After persevering for an hour with several stops I had to concede defeat, and at the point I climbed off my avg speed was approaching 26.5 mph for 7 hrs, and 20 minutes ahead of the eventual winner.

There was still a good amount of racing to be done, and in the absence of a 12, I switched my focus to the National 2 distance BBAR (50/100).

In early September I rode the Welsh 100 championship, and recorded 3:28:00 for 29 MPH avg speed, lowering the course and Championship record by 9:40 before National champion Kieron Davies went 1 better.

My last event of the year was the Welsh 50 championship, which I won by over 3 minutes in a time of 1:39:39, the last 2 rides potentially my best ever performances on a tt bike, and leaving me 2<sup>nd</sup> in the National BBAR, with an AVG Speed of 29.5 mph second only to former World Tour Pro, and multiple national champion Marcin Biablocki.

To summarise my season.

- 10 open wins
- 2<sup>nd</sup> National BBAR
- Welsh 50 Champ
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Welsh 100
- 5<sup>th</sup> Welsh 25 Champ
- District 10/50 champ
- SW BAR Winner and Champ record
- S4/10 Course record x2
- S100/50 Course record
- Club records at 10,25,50,100m

Hopefully as well as a small degree of personal satisfaction, and with the achievements of the likes of the strong Junior contingency, along with other old timers such as our chairman the proud racing heritage of the MDCC is evident on the national stage.

The downside of such competitions is the qualifying events are so far afield, and racing 2.5h up the road in Wales is somewhat of a luxury by comparison. Without the financial support from the RSF then financially undertaking such a contest would not be feasible, so once again I'd like to reiterate my gratitude to everyone.

Regards,

Conrad



## Rider Profiles - C Group Club Rides - Helen & Craig

**Name:** Helen Anthony

**Nickname:** Zippy

**Bikes owned:** Specialized Ruby Elite & Cervelo S3

**How & at what age did you get into cycling:** I only started road cycling in my mid thirties. I have been a runner for most of my adult life and started cycling as cross training, which then led me into triathlons.

**How often do you train:** I try and get out 2-3 times a week but work dictates my spare time in the winter so I cycle more in the summer months. I also run 3-4 times a week and swim 1-2.

**Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older:** I mainly cycle for enjoyment so just go for long steady rides. When I have a triathlon coming up I add in some structured trainer road sessions on the turbo (my pet hate).

**Main successes:** I did Ironman Switzerland this year and completed the 2.4 mile swim, 112 mile bike and 26.2 mile run in 11hrs 29min. Have got close to 4hrs a couple of times on the Dartmoor Classic but not managed quicker yet.

**Future hopes/targets:** Would like to do some big cycle challenge events like Coast 2 Coast in a day, The Dragon Ride, Alp d'Huez

**What gives you the greatest buzz about cycling:** I enjoy the fresh air and been able to explore so many pretty parts of the county.

**Other interests, sporting & other:** Running, Swimming, Walking with my dog.

**Your cycling heroes and why:** All of the Tour de France riders, I find it amazing that they can ride at such a fast pace for such a long time.

**Advice to youngsters thinking of getting involved:** Go for it but remember to keep the enjoyment factor as a top priority.

**What do you think of MDCC?** Great club, easily accessible and caters for a wide range of abilities, ages etc.

**Name:** Craig Maberly

**Age:** 58 & some days I feel it!

**How & at what age did you get into cycling:** 10 years ago I was a motorcyclist until I had a scary moment when my hands locked on the bars for a second time in a week but this time I had my daughter on the back. Arthritis setting in, so I sold the bike the next day but still wanted a buzz.

Having watched the Tour de France, since I can't remember, I thought how hard can it be? So I bought a cross bike and attempted to go from home in Kingskerswell to Paignton, 10km. Well I made it to the sea then went up gas works hill, I say went up meaning I attempted! My heart was nearly going into cardiac arrest, if had been a horse I would have been shot. I got home eventually and went out again and again till I got fitter then bought a Giant Defy 2 and joined the club.

In with Ken & co I got even fitter and bought an Eddy Merckx Carbun and a Genesis Croix de Fur for the winter. I took over the running of the C ride just under 4 years ago with the views and hills the priority not speed. Downhills has to be a favourite of mine but having cycled around Switzerland with my best buddy Bernie and gone up Mont Ventoux, hill climbing gives the buzz as when you get to the top there is the downhill and the views.

**Say something about your training & how it's developed as you've got older:** I cycle around 3 times a week roughly 170km with around 2500m of climbing

**Future hopes/targets:** I am hoping to do an 'Everest' in June 2019, if you do not know, it involves cycling up one hill repeatedly until you have climbed 8848 m in under 24 hours!

**Your cycling heroes and why:** Eddy Merckx, he did so much for the sport and still does and Bernhard Eisel because he just bangs out the miles and still is a great lead out man

**Other interests, sporting & other:** I like are rugby but if i was young again I would start cycling earlier and keep it up.

**What do you think of MDCC?** The club does keeps evolving and we have to have patience with some things but above all it brings a lot of fun to a lot of people.

## 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, Ian Myers at [info@mdcc.org.uk](mailto:info@mdcc.org.uk) with the details preferably a couple of weeks before. All meetings (unless otherwise stated) start at 1930h at Chudleigh Knighton Village Hall in the downstairs room.**

Next meetings: TBD after the next AGM

### Club Officials for 2018 as appointed at the AGM

Post	Holder
President	Colin Lewis
Vice Presidents	Ken Robertson, Ron Keegan, Ron Georgi
Chairman	Andrew Perkins
Vice Chairman	Max Vautier
General Secretary	Ian Myers
Hon. Treasurer	Mark Sanders
Time Trial Secretary	Conrad Moss
Club TT	Peter Adams
Road Race Secretary	Mike Gratton
MTB Secretary	Nick Roach
Press Secretary	Vacant
Membership Development Officer	Liz Crawford
Events Committee	Jamie Horton
Newsletter Editor	Paul Martin
Welfare Officer	Liam McGrath
Mid Devon Youth	Andrew Parker
Women's Officer	Michele Radant

## Sportive Committee + Social Committee = 'Events Committee'

At their recent meetings the need for 2 separate committees was discussed and a proposal to amalgamate was put to the main committee and approved for immediate effect.

The new 'Events' Committee just combines the membership and all 7 existing members are willing to continue into 2019.

The only recent event was another successful 'Quiz Night' where 50 people enjoyed the challenge, fun and delicious food. What was notable was the number of first timers replacing the regulars who were unable to attend. Despite the clientele change, no team could stop the 'Ken' train from rolling to another success. But never mind as 30 people went home with a prize.

The new committee has already met and agreed to continue with all this year's events but with more and more people making the Lands End 100 an overnight stay it was felt less than ideal to run a £400 coach for a dozen people. Next year we are looking to support the Taunton Flyer and/or Mendip Sportives with a coach.

We will also be looking to bring back two old favourites, the 'Freewheel Downhill Distance Challenge' and a 'Club Christmas Party' which may be a dinner and dance but no speakers or awards, which will stay with the AGM.

But don't leave it all to us, if you have ideas we want to hear from you.

In particular 2020 will see the 90th Anniversary of the club formed in June 1930. We want to celebrate in style so what are your ideas for all things 90 related?

Below shows the dates for what will be an exciting 2019 year for getting involved.

All, the best,

Angela Hanks, Jamie Horton, John Styles, Michele Radant, Paul Martin, Rose Parkhouse & Simon Fryer

### MDCC Events Committee - 2019 Key Dates: \* = Provisional

Saturday 5th January	Club AGM & Awards Evening, Stover Golf Club, 1900h
Sunday 24th March	Ride Back from Glastonbury/Street to Cranbrook, 75 miles, 3150' climb, various ride lengths available
Friday 29th March	Quiz Night, Stover Golf Club, 1900h
Friday 26th - Sunday 28th April	Brittany A trip to Perros-Guirec, 26 people
Friday 3rd - Monday 6th May	Brittany B trip to Perros-Guirec, 36 people
Friday 10th - Sunday 12th May	Brittany C trip to Huelgoat, 30 people
Thursday 20th June	Mid Summer Fish 'n Trip Ride to Silly Goose, Dawlish Warren
Sunday 23rd June	Dartmoor Classic Sportive
Saturday 20th July	Bike Treasure Hunt & BBQ - Ventiford House
Sunday 21st July	Taunton Flyer Sportive
Saturday 27th July	Mendips Sportive - maybe a 25% discount available with a block booking!
Sunday 4th August	Ride London 100
Sunday 8th September	Tour of Britain Ride
Saturday 21st September	Lands End 100

Saturday 28th/Sunday 29th September YHA weekend, Beer or Exford YHA

Friday 18th October Quiz Night, Stover Golf Club, 1900h

Saturday 7th December\* Christmas Dinner & Dance - Liverton House Hotel, Torquay?

Sunday 15th December\* Mince Pie Ride

Saturday 4th January 2020\* Club AGM & Awards Evening

## Dartmoor Classic Sportive 2018 - Alec Robertson

(Why I thought it was a good idea, by rider 6246)

This year's vacation visit with my parents happened to coincide with my wife's big birthday, and as we enjoyed going to France to see the Tour de France for my last big birthday we wanted to do this again, especially as the grand depart was back in the Vendee and this would give us three chances to see the event – turned out we had 4 bites of the cherry.



Thanks to FIFA we had planned on spending some extra days this time around and it would be a good idea to participate in the Dartmoor Classic Sportive. I usually ride a mountain bike for pleasure so how hard would it be to spend a couple of hours around Devon when I can spend a couple of hours on a Sunday afternoon when my local temperature is 90 degrees in the shade. At least June in England would be cooler, and as 'Chairman' Ken said there would be 4000 others taking part at least I could wheel suck when I needed to. As a Junior Mid Devon rider and racer this ride would have been an evening training ride after work. Shouldn't be too bad, Huh.

*Training for Dartmoor on flat Florida roads.*

After Christmas, it was time to get a little more than my usual 15 to 20 miles riding a street/sugar sand combination on a Saturday or Sunday morning. The knobby tyres on the full suspension bike should provide some friction verses a road bike. So after some Google Earth investigations on

where it would

be safe to ride I started to increase my distance each week. The only drawback was the lack of altitude gain available locally, over an interstate bridge with 25 vertical feet gain was all that was available!

This really wasn't going to prepare me for getting up Doccombe from the steep side especially after getting to Beeter Cross. Each week I got in a longer ride with an average speed up to 12mph. Thanks to god, the normally windy month of March was extended, well extended, into June that meant the first 10 miles into a 20mph with 25mph gusts should be like riding uphill, shouldn't it?

Thanks to Hurricane Irma that someone tossed out with a rusty chain and rotted tyres. I upgraded to a Schwinn Cross-cut with new 25mm tyres, a definite improvement, but still with flat bars.

With my nephew in-law deciding to go mountain biking in April I secured my old Trek road bike and this really helped with the numbness in the hands as the mountain bike only really offers one riding position.

*Sorting out the bike.*

As we wanted to fly with 'carryon' baggage only, I needed to borrow a bike and also a helmet. I brought my own MTB pedals and shoes that we fitted on to the loaner bike on the day before the Sportive. I attached my computer and cadence sensor, so we are all good to go. Well not so fast, checking out the saddle height with a short spin up the road to assess the gear changing so I would be comfortable with getting into the small chain-ring and maximum cog on the cassette was majorly important. Coming back down to the house shock and horror came over me as the front brake was on the right. Who does that? Severe concentration is going to be needed as it was too late to remedy this problem. I just hoped I would not be too tired to remember the brakes were backwards and not to grab a hand full on a descent.

The next problem came to light when laying out the riding gear. I had forgotten the bike shorts. So off to JD Sports to get an emergency pair hoping they would be broken in quickly.

On the day of the ride, it was overcast when leaving Paignton, and there were signs it had rained. Well I wasn't expecting that as all the days so far had been hot (unusually so for England in June, I could have thought like

being home) and so I did not bring my rain jacket from home. An hour before the start my aunt collected me and she came supplied with a bowl, spoon, and a tin of Ambrosia creamed rice. If it is good for the pro's to eat rice for breakfast then it was good enough for me, especially as I usually do not eat breakfast. Besides I am only going to do 35 miles, right.

She delivered me to the entrance of the race course, and returned to collect the fan club – wife and mother who had been told to see the riders in Moretonhampstead and they could cheer us on. A bit of bleak information then came out that we were 'expected' to get there in 2 hours after we started. That did not sound too good as it was less than halfway!

So after changing shoes, filling bottles and herding up in the pen to be set off in a group of 200 the rain started nice and refreshing so we thought. It shouldn't be too hot getting up the hill out of Bovey Tracey. The compere issued the instructions to the herd, and off we go behind the pace car.

*Feels like a stage race on TV waiting for KM 0.*

As we move along the Kingsteignton Road the 'Chairman' starts heading towards the front, a cunning plan, so we can have the rest of the herd pass us as we start to struggle, and we **will** struggle.

Once the pace car spins around the Sandygate roundabout we turn left and pass the gantry with the timing device and just like the peloton on TV, a surge of speed and the keen riders are already passing us on the downhill. Various riders come by and chat briefly with the 'Chairman', yours truly just sitting behind heavy breathing, no way chatting is on the menu today. After the nice humpback bridge a gentle rise over the A38, now that's an altitude gain I can recognise.

As we leave Bovey Tracey we make an unexpected left towards Haytor, not what I had in mind. Then a cliff face up past the Edgemoor Hotel, time for that inner ring and maximum sprocket already, this was never this steep when I was 20 years old and 30 lbs. lighter, (how come Alberto make this look easy?) then more horror a right turn onwards and yet more upwards.

Then relief, this is where all that hormone fed beef and craft beer comes to the fore, time to descend like Romain Bardet, passing a dozen lightweights that passed me on the cliff face. That was a short lived joy, back to the granny gear up over the cattle grid. the 'Chairman' is in the lay by on the side putting on his rain gear. Good thing he has two, the rain was getting heavy and cold, but at least we got the new shorts broken in. We continued up with the lightweights passing us like they were on the flat. Damn it makes you jealous how they make it look easy.

The struggle goes on with little reprieve all the way to Beeton Cross, but now it's my time to shine down the 'Chairman's' 'least favourite descent'. No problem for gravity is on my side, just don't touch the brakes remember they're backwards and the road is saturated.

Arriving in Moretonhampstead it's time to stop and meet the fan club. Now I can chat for a minute, then set off to the left, wasn't expecting that turn. Apparently I wasn't the only one according to the fan club several riders did a U-turn to come back to make the intersection. We stopped again to get refreshments for about 10 minutes before setting off up the hill. Brain say 'Thanks for setting off up the hill'. Leaving Moretonhampstead and down to the bridge, oh my here we go again, granny gear and "see you at the top" I said, "no need for you to crawl up at my speed". So, on he goes and slow I go, I although I passed a couple of people to my surprise.

Upon reaching the top we rejoined and down we go through Docombe. "Be careful around the bend there is a pot hole on the corner". That's what retired people do; they count pot-holes I guess.

*The ride down the valley, the best bit considering.*

As I get down to Steps Bridge, a group of 5 'A' riders came by about 20mph, so let the aforementioned wheel sucking commence, I hop on the back of the line and we are zooming, by my standard, to the right turn down the valley. Across the bridge I think I had better wait as the 'Chairman' as he had waited for me at the top of the hills, and he has the puncture equipment and tools with him. After a couple of miles he catches me, when I'm halfway through the Clif Bar, with another group hauling ass, to which I hear "get on the bus, get on the bus, no time for eating". No problem it is flat and I got this, well so much for that, the hill up past Canonteign Falls is no hill to mortals, but it is to me. Off into the distance they go. One more mile and another line comes by, on we get all the way to Tappers Hill and here we go, granny gear time again, but what crawls up must speed down and so it was all the way to Chudleigh Bridge for a rest and traffic break.

Finally one more group comes by and so we speed through the clay pits to the finish gantry where the computer says just less than 3 hours. Not too shabby then, and not totally pooped either, so long as it is flat. Surprise! Left we go along to the Exeter Road roundabout and shock another damn hill. The descent off this one came with a painted mini roundabout that someone came unstuck on and was being attended to as we passed.

After coming through the back gate to the racecourse we headed indoors for some dry clothes and hot tea and a Medal.

*The relief of finishing cold and wet plus any other thoughts.*

In a way it was good it rained so we did not burn up, but why only for the morning while we were on the road and not the other 12 days when there was no one with air conditioning!

## MDCC Calendar Some dates and reference points for 2019

### MDCC Open Time Trials, Races & 'Events' Committee events, Sportives, Audax etc...

The following list is not exhaustive and mainly uses a travel distance within 100 miles to access the event.

Entries/information available via [www.britishcycling.org.uk/events](http://www.britishcycling.org.uk/events), [www.aukweb.net/events](http://www.aukweb.net/events), [justevents.org](http://justevents.org), [www.ukcyclingevents.co.uk](http://www.ukcyclingevents.co.uk)

**All MDCC Competition events are highlighted in Red, Sportive events, Social events in Blue.**

Sunday 16th December [MDCC Mince Pie Run](#)

Wednesday 26th December [MDCC Boxing day Time Trial 10 miles, Clay Pits, 0930h](#)

### 2019 - ? Provisional or 2018 date used as a guide

Saturday 5th January [MDCC AGM, Stover Golf Club, 1830 for 1900h start](#)

Sunday 24th February [MDCC Primavera Road Race, Hatherleigh - Cats E/1/2/3, Cats 3 & 4](#)

Sunday 10th March Mad March Audax, Exeter - 100 & 200km

Sunday 24th March [MDCC Ride Back from Glastonbury to Cranbrook](#)

Saturday 30th March 'Haldon Heroic' CX & MTB Sportive, Just Events

Friday 29th March [MDCC Quiz Night](#)

Sunday 31st March Up & Down Like a Yo Yo Audax, Cranbrook - 200km

Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th April [MDCC Totnes - Vire Stage Race - Cats E/1/2/3, Haytor, Velopark & South Brent](#)

Saturday 6th April [Totnes - Vire Support Races - All Cats except E/1/2/3, Velopark](#)

Wednesday 10th April [MDCC Youth Series 1/6 + MDCC Novices Races for adults, Velopark](#)

Sunday 14th April Yeovil Sportive - 39, 56 & 109 miles, Beyond Events

Saturday 13th & Sunday 14th April New Forest Spring Sportive, Ringwood - 27, 67 & 81 miles

Friday 19th April [MDCC Teign Valley Sporting 23 Time Trial \(TT\), Chudleigh Knighton](#)

Saturday 20th April South West Development Races 1/4, Velopark - [follow on from MDCC Novice Races in 2018, these Go Races with involve separate Women's and Men's events preceded by coaching](#)

Sunday 21st April	Combwich Century Audax, Honiton - 160km
Friday 26th - 28th April	MDCC Brittany trip A - 3 day to Perros - Guirec
Friday 3rd - 6th May	MDCC Brittany trip B - 4 day to Perros - Guirec
Saturday 4th May	Dartmoor Demon Sportive, Exeter 25, 49 & 88 miles
Wednesday 8th May	MDCC Youth Series 2/6 + MDCC Novices Races for adults, Velopark
Friday 10th - 12th May	MDCC Brittany trip C - 3 day to Huelgoat
Sunday 12th May	Eden Classic Sportive, Eden Project - 35, 62 & 100 miles Velo Birmingham
Saturday 18th May	South West Development Races 2/4, Velopark - follow on from MDCC Novice Races in 2018, these Go Races with involve separate Women's and Men's events preceded by coaching Jurassic Beast Sportive, Bovington - 36, 63 & 100 miles
Thursday 23rd May	MDCC Open 10 mile Time Trial, Buckfastleigh
Saturday 25th May	Colin Lewis Grand Prix - All Cats, Velopark
Sunday 2nd June	Smuggler Sportive, Barnstaple - 20, 40, 50 & 80 miles Force Cancer Dartmoor Sportive - Okehampton, 62 & 80 miles, Beyond Events
Wednesday 5th June	MDCC Youth Series 3/6 + MDCC Novices Races for adults, Velopark
Wednesday 19th June	MDCC Open 25 mile Time Trial, Buckfastleigh
Thursday 20th June	MDCC Mid Summer Evening Ride to the Silly Goose, Dawlish Warren
Sunday 23rd June	Dartmoor Classic Sportive, MDCC
Saturday 29th June	South West Development Races 3/4, Velopark - follow on from MDCC Novice Races in 2018, these Go Races with involve separate Women's and Men's events preceded by coaching New Forest Summer Sportive, Southampton - 45, 69 & 97 miles
Sunday 30th June	Nello - Force Cancer Charity National Championships Closed Road 100mile Sportive, Norfolk
Wednesday 3rd July	MDCC Youth Series 4/6 + MDCC Novices Races for adults, Velopark
Sunday 7th July	Bridport Dagger Sportive, 32, 62 & 101 miles, Beyond Events
Sunday 14th July?	Devon Delight Audax?
Saturday 20th July	MDCC Bike Treasure Hunt & BBQ, Ventiford House

Sunday 21st July	<a href="#">MDCC WAJ Best Memorial Trophy 25, Buckfastleigh?</a>
	Taunton Flyer - Just Events
Saturday 27th July	<a href="#">South West Development Races 4/4, Velopark - follow on from MDCC Novice Races in 2018, these Go Races with involve separate Women's and Men's events preceded by coaching</a>
	Mendips Sportive - Street, 34, 63 & 96 miles
Wednesday 31st July	<a href="#">MDCC Youth Series 5/6 + MDCC Novices Races for adults, Velopark</a>
Sunday 4th August	Ride London 100
	Wiltshire Sportive, Westbury - 39, 56 & 100 miles - Beyond Events
Saturday 17th August	<a href="#">Paignton Regatta Races - All Cats, Velopark</a>
Wednesday 28th August	<a href="#">MDCC Youth Series 6/6 + MDCC Novices Races for adults, Velopark</a>
Sunday 8th September	<a href="#">MDCC Triple Trophy 25 Time Trial, Buckfastleigh</a>
	<a href="#">MDCC Tour of Britain Ride</a>
Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th September	New Forest 100 Sportive, Ringwood - 30, 59 & 100 miles
Saturday 21st September	Lands End 100 - Just Events
Sunday 22nd September	<a href="#">MDCC Haytor &amp; Widecombe Hill Climbs</a>
Saturday 28th/Sunday 29th September	<a href="#">MDCC YHA Weekend to Beer or Exford YHA</a>
Friday 18th October	<a href="#">MDCC Quiz Night</a>
Sunday 27th October	<a href="#">National Hill Climb Championships - Youth, Junior, Women, Men &amp; Vets, Haytor promoted by MDCC</a>
Sunday 27th October?	Dartmoor Devil Audax?
Saturday 23rd November?	Breakfast in Bampton Audax?

