

# Anfield Circular

*Journal of the Anfield Bicycle Club (formed March 1879)*

## Runs List

### March

- 7 Old Ma's Cafe Gatesheath
- 14 The Goshawk Mouldsworth
- 21 Calveley Arms Handley
- 28 Cross Foxes Overton Bridge

### April

- 4 The Druid Llanferres
- 11 The Plough Christleton

### 17-20 Church Stretton weekend

- 25 Red Lion Parkgate

### May

- 2 Old Ma's Cafe Gatesheath
- 9 Parish Rooms Coddington  
(Committee 1130)

- 16 Nets Cafe Denhall
- 23 Royal Oak Bangor-on-Dee

### 25 Anfield 100 Shawbury HQ

- 30 The Griffin Trevalyn

### June

- 6 The Britannia Halkyn
- 13 The Plough Christleton
- 20 The Red Lion Parkgate

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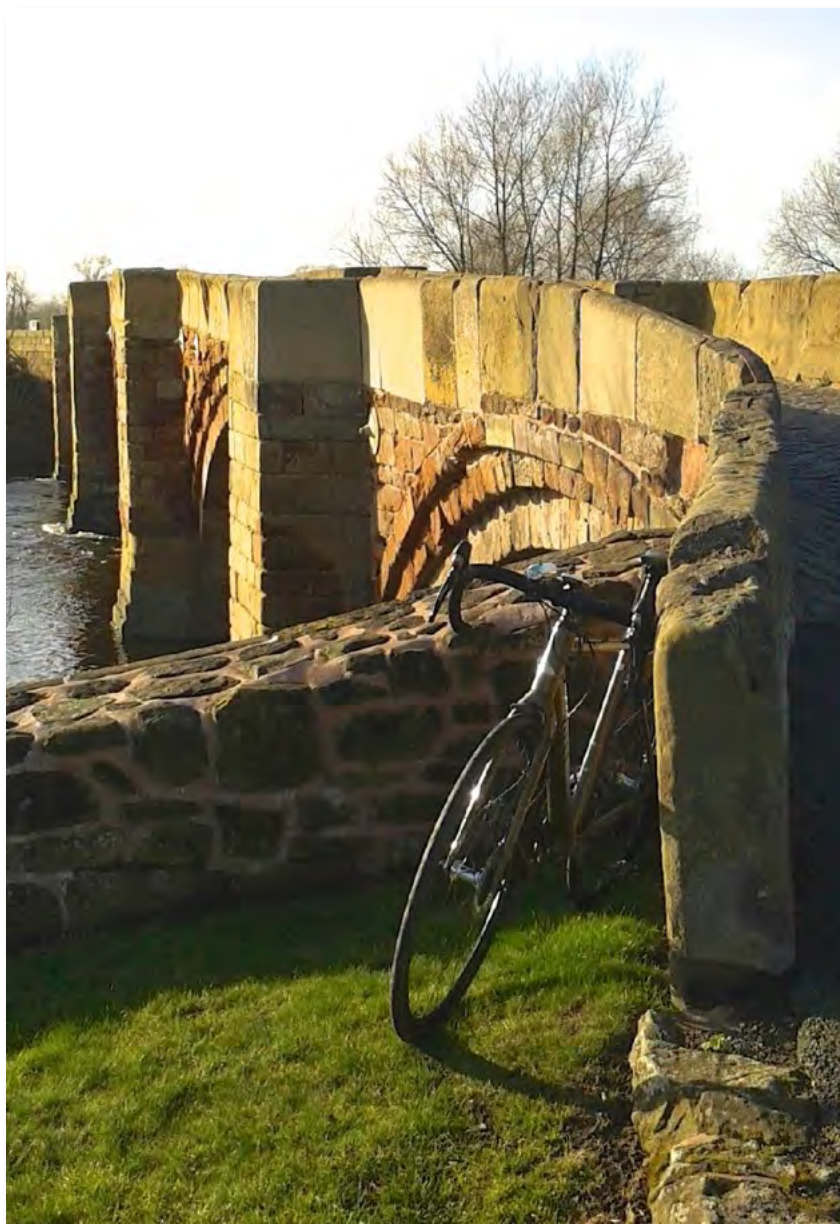
**Hon Treasurer** Phil Mason

**Editor:** David Birchall

## Church Stretton Weekend

### 17 - 20 April 2015

Revised plans mean the venue for the weekend will be the Longmynd Hotel, Church Stretton. The area is wonderful cycling country. Group rides are planned on Saturday and Sunday. If you can spend even a day with us, we would be delighted to have your company. Please contact David Birchall.



*Winter club-runs - Bangor on Dee, and high tide Parkgate*

## Ann Pickles

Not all Anfield gatherings are happy ones. Our meeting today, at St Matthew's Church in Buckley, was to attend the funeral of Ann Pickles, wife of Tony and mother of Chris. We were witness to a truly fitting dedication to Ann who, in her time, had been chorister, bell ringer and Sunday School Teacher at the church. Members of the Anfield who attended the service were David and Mary Birchall, Keith and Pippa Orum, Geoff Sharp, Nigel and Alison Fellows, Ben Griffiths, Bill Graham, Dave Bettaney, Peter and Geraint Catherall, John Whelan, Jayson Rees Hughes, Lee Nichols, and Graham Williams. On behalf of the Club may I express the sympathy of all members and assure Tony and Chris of our continued support.

PC

## Racing Round-up

Graham Thompson

**WCTTCA 25** - 57:30 Prees course (10th).

**Birkenhead Vics 2UP** - 22:28 (with Steve Hall - Wrexham RC) Farndon course. *We were 2nd overall on time but won the open event prize (as the Team from Walsall, who beat us, won the Vets prize).*

**Birkenhead NE Go Ride events 2014** - the children took part in this series at Bebington Oval riding for the mighty Anfield BC: Matthew 4th (Under 10s); Toby 2nd Silver (Under 8s); Charlotte 1st. Gold (Under 6s).



**YOUR ABC NEEDS YOU.**

**Anfield 100 Monday 25 May 2015**

Volunteers are wanted for this year's special event which will host the National Vets' 100. We would really appreciate help at Event HQ (Shawbury Village Hall), or at the start / finish, or marshalling. Please reserve the date and let Nigel Fellows know as soon as possible.



*Moses Orme defies the high tide at the Harp Inn, Denball - Club-run 21 February*



## Clubruns

### Coddington Parish Rooms

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**29th November 2014**

As Nigel and I collected the key, we saw David driving past. We followed him to the Parish Rooms where we found John Lahiff waiting. Over the next 15 minutes Ben, Bill, Phil Mason, Dave Eaton and Tony and Chris Pickles joined us. Much discussion ensued until it was time for sandwiches. Then it was off to the Calveley Arms to meet up with the Twiggs. As Nigel and I arrived, Stuart, his daughter, mother and sister were just leaving. Mike had not been up to coming out. A short chat and it was time to go home. Good to see Stuart and family and a useful meeting.

PC

### The Britannia, Halkyn

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**6th December 2014**

‘We’re early but we can admire the view’ said Nigel as we arrived. ‘Hang on, there are people going in and there are a lot of cars’ I replied. We still took in the crystal clear views over the Dee estuary. Inside, the venue was set up for a Christmas Fayre. The conservatory was full of stalls. So, it was into the bar where we settled ourselves at a long wooden table. Soon, we were joined by Geraint and Dave Bettaney (both on bikes) followed shortly by team Pickles (bikes on car roof ready for Llandegla). Last (how unusual) to arrive was Bill, also on his bike. Dave Eaton was seeking help and advice on making one of life’s most important decisions. What will my next new bike be? Armed with catalogues and magazines it was a bewildering choice. I suggested he write his choice on a piece of paper and pop it in the Santa Post Box on the ledge behind him. However, he thought that it would not be easy to get the bike down the chimney.

PC

### The Plough, Christleton

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**13th December 2014**

On this frosty day Christleton’s under-11 footballers were Christmas partying in the bar at midday, and spreading rapidly throughout the pub it seemed. So we bagged a table as far from the mayhem as possible, and hoped for the best. It was especially good to see Geoff Sharp and Keith Orum, Keith now walking unaided and on the way to recovery. He had spun miles today - but not a spot of mud, not a thorn, not a patch of ice had come between him and his exercise bike.

The only actual cyclist was John Courtney, hoping for a frost-free afternoon. But for the rest of us it was strictly no-cycling. Tempting though the morning’s sunshine had been, black ice ruled out two wheels, not that such conditions would have deterred once upon a time. Editor Birchall walked the mile across Christleton to the Plough, with Club mascot Wilber the Jack Russell for company. After lunch, Team Pickles and John Whelan were heading to cycle shops. John commented he’d used up all his inner-tubes during the last couple of weeks, so was re-stocking. There must be a way to bring hedge-trimmers to account.

### Dysart Arms, Bunbury

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**20th December 2014**

An unexpected consequence of a Garmin is that it saves past ride details to its memory. It’s very disheartening. Over the last six weeks it has recorded a consistent average speed decline. Today, into the strong headwind, it notched up another low. On the plus side, Cheshire looked good under mid-December skies, sunshine one minute, rain the next. And the views from the high lanes east to the Pennines and west to Wales were wonderful. Team Pickles reached the Dysart Arms at the same time as me. We found a table by the fire; and the food and coffee were just what we needed. The chat - about bikes and holidays - was enjoyable too, and time flowed easily. Then as we were about to leave, Bill Graham arrived, and so the chat continued a while longer. Shame more didn’t support the last run before Christmas.

**Red Lion, Parkgate**

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**27<sup>th</sup> December 2014**

Boxing Day ended with a snowfall, the first of the Winter. By Saturday morning, the snow was frozen, which ruled out cycling, though not the club-run. There were only six of us - Mike Hallgarth, Peter Catherall, Nigel Fellows, Geoff Sharp, John Whelan, and David Birchall. Or seven counting Stephen Marriott (son of the late Frank Marriott - and Nigel's brother-in-law), who had travelled by train and bus from Milton Keynes. There was not a bike to be seen, but the chat was 100% cycling, and absorbing.

The Welsh hills, white with snow, were sharply etched against grey skies, until blotted out by a squall. Sweeping across the marshes, it hit Parkgate just as we were leaving. And so ended the last ABC club-run of 2014.



*Parkgate panorama*

**Old Ma's Cafe, Gatesheath**

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**3<sup>rd</sup> January 2015**

It was a wet start for the first club run of 2015. Both Nigel and I agreed that there would be no-one out on a bike. As we arrived at the cafe we were therefore surprised to see a couple parking their bikes, and Mr Birchall was already there, awaiting our arrival. The three of us entered and ordered our refreshments. We were soon joined by Team Pickles and the conversation began in earnest. David is after a new bike and was wondering if road shifters would work with mountain bike gears. We then went on to discuss David's inflationary habits regarding tyres. He had recently had an explosion whilst inflating a new tyre resulting in a hole in the tyre. Close examination of said tyre led us to the conclusion that the tyre had been faulty and David was not to blame. The techie session being concluded, we all made our way home.

PC

**The Druid Inn, Llanferres**

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**10<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

It was another no cycling Saturday, thanks to the gale sweeping Deeside, and, at least for me, a stubborn cold, which ruled out riding. I guess the high winds were enough to put off others too. But Nigel Fellows, and Team Pickles still met at the Druids where the food and welcome are very good - with excellent homemade game soup and sandwich on the menu. We chatted about letters to MPs and their bland replies. 'Drafted by flunkies', said Tony. 'Careful' said I, 'that was my job once'. Wiggle's refusal (now resolved) to replace the defective tyre cropped up; the mysteries of measuring modern frame sizes was another topic; as was the beautiful road bike (weight 4.5 kilograms, price tag £10,999) seen in the Chester Bike Factory. No use for wintry Cheshire lanes though - no mudguards, no sale. In contrast the same shop was selling a mountain bike with 4.8" wide tyres on 10cm rims. Ridiculous. Listening to all this was Club mascot Wilber the Jack Russell, safe under the table ever hopeful that a crumb might head his way.

**Nets Cafe, Denhall**

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**17<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

How frustrating the weather this winter. Today it was frost and ice. It was gloriously sunny as well which made it even worse. But with no chance of the temperature rising, walking shoes replaced the bike. It's only a short walk from the bottom of Denhall Lane to Nets. When I arrived, great storm clouds to the north dominated the view of the Welsh Hills across the marshes. Last to arrive, I joined Keith and Pippa Orum, Geoff Sharp, Nigel Fellows, and two Catheralls. The chat flowed easily, but no one bettered Pippa's story of the Massey Ferguson tractor abandoned, shiny and new, in a West Cornwall field forty years ago. It is still there now, rusting and decayed, the subject of a painting by Pippa.



*Storm clouds over the Dee - the view from Denhall, Burton*

**Royal Oak, Bangor on Dee**

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**24<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

My new winter road bike arrived by post from Germany on Wednesday and today was the first chance for a proper ride. It was also the first Saturday of 2015 free from snow, ice, or gales. It was in fact a pleasant day, most unusual. The new machine, though light, is twice the weight of the Bike Factory's 4.5kg super bike, but at one-seventh the price, with mudguards - a bargain.

Today's route to Bangor-on-Dee led from Christleton, to Tattenhall, Carden, Shocklach and Worthenbury. Lanes all the way, but they were in a dreadful state - potholed, muddy, and wet. Despite the mudguards on arrival at the Royal Oak the bike no longer looked shiny and new. Tony and Chris Pickles must have known. They had brought a 'new-bike' gift - a can of Silicon Shine spray for future protection on muddy rides. Thank-you - it works a treat. Homeward President and editor rode in each others company to Holt, where Bill turned west to Kinnerton leaving me to return to Christleton. An enjoyable ride, forty miles for the day.

**The Griffin, Trevalyn**

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**31<sup>st</sup> January 2015**

To misquote Napoleon (the *Animal Farm* one, not the Corsican) 'Four wheels good, two wheels better'. Not on a bitterly cold day when anything may come down from the heavens. So, it was that Nigel and I reached the venue at the same time as Jim Gibson and Mr Birchall. We grabbed the table by the wood burner. Next were John Whelan, Ben Griffiths and Tony Pickles. Tony's beer-battered-onion-ring-topped beef-burger was not only a sight to behold but a feast to savour. As we were about to leave, Bill Graham appeared. Defying the weather, he was on his bike. Well someone has to believe in Napoleon. The Griffin is a wonderful old fashioned pub with good ale and food and we were all made very welcome.

PC

**Miners' Arms, Maeshafn**

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**7<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

To avoid confusion, it is beholden on me to invoke the Aston-Martin Clause. Henceforth, David Birchall will be referred to as DB1 and David Bettaney DB2. Thus it was DB1 who gave me a



lift, and DB2, on bicycle, who we passed just before Maeshafn. Geraint was already by the large log burner. The central heating had failed and the fire had only just kicked in. We joined him, but when Team Pickles arrived we decided to move to a larger table. Good job - next arrivals were Chris and Elaine Edwards who had abandoned an ascent of nearby Moel Famau, due to ice.

The conversation drifted round matters Scottish. Rather, they centred on that wonderful drink distilled up there. There were many tales of imbibing heavenly malts and this could be the beginnings of the Anfield Whisky Club. Bill Graham, last to arrive, had changed bikes before leaving home (he's not the only one with more than one bike) and then realised that his cleats did not fit. It made life interesting and helped him to forget the cold. There was still plenty of snow lying around Maeshafn. An excellent venue and convivial company. What more could one want?

### **The Plough, Christleton**

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**14<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

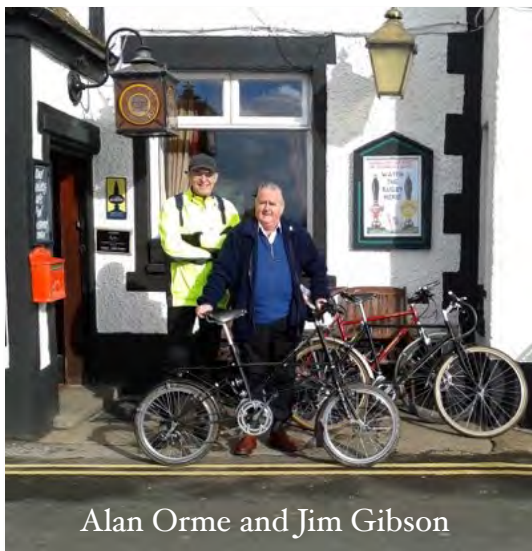
A good turnout at a friendly pub with good food. John Whelan's winter Dolan was outside when I arrived, so I locked my winter Canyon to it for security. Inside were Nigel and Alison Fellows, Peter Catherall, Geoff Sharp, Keith Orum, and Jim Gibson. We learned that Jim had spent the morning exploring the geography of his new Cheshire home on his winter Moulton. He reported finding the Packhorse Bridges (where otters live), and Hockenhull Platts very muddy. Next arrivals were Tony and Chris Pickles. We thought that was it, but then in walked ... Peter Jones. He was a keen ABC man once. Though it is 50 years since we last saw him, the conversation continued from where it left off in 1965. He was another on a winter bike, but let slip there was a new carbon fibre framed machine safely tucked up at home awaiting better weather.

For me, it was a one-way east-west ride having fixed a lift home. The Garmin recorded thirty miles, average 14.28mph, air temperature 5C, and lots of calories burned, the equivalent of a family pack of Weetabix if you can believe it. Clearly it's a hungry business this cycling.

### **Red Lion, Parkgate**

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**21<sup>st</sup> February 2015**



Alan Orme and Jim Gibson

There was snow on the ground when I woke up. But then Buckley is a law unto itself. As Nigel and I descended Aston Hill, we went through the wardrobe door and entered Narnia. Parkgate basked in sunshine and was full of twitchers. It was not the filming of the sequel to High Noon. Neither was it a nation of twitchers eager to film a rare appearance of the Lesser Spotted Yuk Yuk. The moon was at its perihelion and we were awaiting a very high tide. Inside the Red Lion were Keith (out on a bike again), Geoff Sharp, Jim Gibson and Peter Jones. We were soon joined by John Courtney, David Birchall, Alan Orme and John Whelan. Team Pickles were out too but with Parkgate full, they gave up and retreated home.

All conversation ceased as we watched the tide come in, very fast. Within minutes, mudflats had become a raging torrent of water. An amazing sight, and one not to have been missed. The excitement over, Nigel and I trudged back through the biting wind to the car. Two wheels were better than four on "The Day Of The Twitchers".

Homeward there was more excitement for Alan Orme and Editor. They were caught in a succession of violent hailstorms sweeping down the estuary, and had to wade through the tide by the Harp Inn, so high was the water. Their bikes needed careful de-salting at the end of the ride.

## *e-Clips*

- As reported in the December Circular, thanks to the ABC's website, the BBC's '**Who Do You Think You Are?**' production team requested a contribution about Thomas David Husband Reid, a Liverpool cyclist active in the 1890s. He never 'belonged' to the ABC, but his membership of the North Liverpool Bicycle Club and the Everton Bicycling Club brought him in to contact with the ABC socially. As a result there was enough background to build a picture of his character. He edited the Northern Wheeler (*'an 1890s cycling magazine for toffs'*), a bound volume of which is in the archive. A tourist not a racer, he rode a 'safety' from Lands' End to John O'Groats in 10 days, and from Paris to Madrid. Through his editorials he supported the ABC against the National Cyclists' Union (who outlawed competition on the road, the greatest cycling controversy of the time).

Filming took all day at Knutsford's Courtyard Coffee House, with support from Glynn Stockdale. The celeb, who was a real star and lovely, decided her grandfather had mixed with a racy crowd, rubbed shoulders with millionaires, spent too much money on cycling, and neglected his wife. Your correspondent is now waiting phone calls from RADA (darling), film maker Steven (*'the archive will make you millions'*), and Derek (he filmed *Last Tango in Halifax* at the Courtyard). What surprised the production team (and me) was how well the ABC archive illustrated the cycling world Tom Reid inhabited. All very well, but your correspondent's credibility will probably be in ruins, when the programme is broadcast, such outrageous things passed his lips. The cutting room floor is his only hope and refuge.

- One of the enjoyable things about Christmas is that it provides the opportunity to catch up with news from 'exiles'. A card from Rod and Lesley Anderson reported that Rod is 'getting in miles': *Sunday afternoon and just back from a bike ride to attend to Christmas cards. Today's ride was a test of a newly fitted chain, cassette etc following a disastrous ride last weekend with a broken chain, and a chain tool that was inoperable with cold fingers ... had to call out Lesley to rescue me as darkness fell!*

## *WCTTCA Annual Dinner 2014*

It was a new venue for the event, Cheshire View, just down the lane past the Plough in Christleton. Geraint collected Nigel, me and then Bill and on to our venue. Here David Birchall, Keith, Pippa and Geoff were awaiting us. It was nice to see Keith up and about and more mobile again. With about a 100 people attending, the venue was ideal - food and service excellent.

Then it was on to the after dinner speaker and the presentations. Before the main prize giving, I presented an inscribed glass plaque to Gill and Brian Morrison (below left) as a thank you for timekeeping the Anfield 100 for the last five years. Then Keith made a tribute speech to Bob and Ruth Williams before they received the CTT Certificate of Merit (centre). Finally, it was on to the main presentations during which Geraint received two certificates (right). Last was the prize draw and Bill won a new tyre and tube.

PC





## *Riding the Johannesburg 947 Challenge – John Moss*



John Moss managed to hold on to some of the ‘fitness’ he managed to get during his 2300kms of cycling in Ireland and UK last summer. He writes:

Once back I've had a lot of work, but tried to get to the dam so I can cycle during the day then work in the evening, even so with meetings disrupting that I idea I still rode 90kms non-stop the week before to see if my legs had the distance as they packed up at 70kms last year. I was OK. I started at 7.55am in the ‘corporate’ group (entry paid by Mitsubishi). There wasn't a bunch to get into, in fact they started very slowly (uphill) - probably that was a good thing. So it was another time trial!

I had a bottle of power aid which I finished off, only to find out afterwards that it is supposed to be diluted 5 to 1! Anyway it seemed to work.

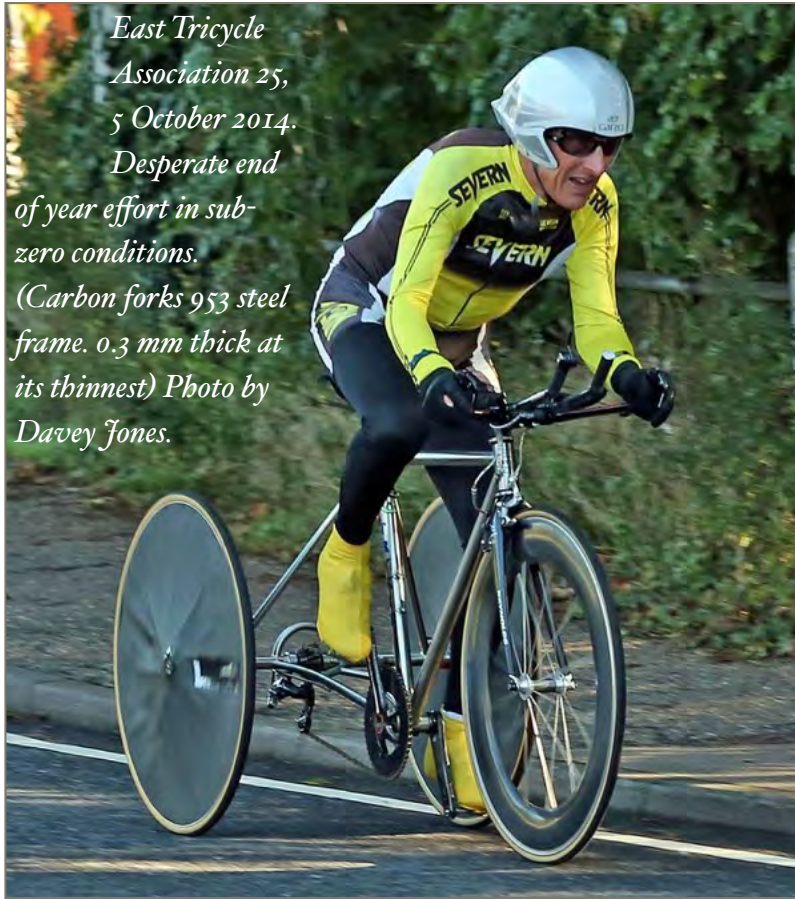
Generally I felt good despite the tough finish this year which added 500 metres of climbing. I sat up after crossing the timing pads only to hear the announcer saying it was 1km to go. After crossing the real finishing line, I should have known the first pads weren't the finish as there wasn't any banner (or people) I got cramp and had to be lifted off the bike.

Time - 3hrs 36min 37sec; overall position - 6101 (out of 21632); age group - 40th out of 249 (which means there are 39 old sods who went faster than me); group - 45th out of 491.





## Worried well, or in need of a MOT? – John Thompson



*East Tricycle  
Association 25,  
5 October 2014.  
Desperate end  
of year effort in sub-  
zero conditions.  
(Carbon forks 953 steel  
frame. 0.3 mm thick at  
its thinnest) Photo by  
Davey Jones.*

My 2013 season started with personals at 10, 25 and 50 miles. Unfortunately they were personal WORSTS, not bests, but this did not worry me unduly. After more than five decades of time-trialling I had perfected the art of excuse making; all I needed to do was to plug away and times would improve.

But an article by Dennis Oram in the Spring issue of the West Vet Journal made me think. He described how through 2010 his performances had tailed off; how in 2011 they got worse; and in 2012 how his first rides were still much slower than expected. At this point, he went for a check-up and was diagnosed with bladder cancer. He stressed that, apart from his time trial results, there were no symptoms. No doubt the treatment he then received was much more effective than it would have been with a later diagnosis. I spoke

to Dennis recently and he told me that it turned out that the cancer was not the cause of his slow times, which still have to be explained. But at least those slow times got him to get the check-up which led to his early treatment.

Could it be that my slow times were due to more than high winds and 'off days'? Was something wrong which only showed up when riding against the clock? I'd noticed my pulse readings had changed over the winter. I'd always found getting up to a race pulse rate demanded effort and concentration, and that as soon as I eased off the rate dropped quickly. This was particularly so when training on rollers. Not that winter: getting a high pulse rate was effortless, and having reached that high rate it would stay there even if I soft pedalled. And I knew from the gears and cadence that my power output was much lower than previously needed for a high pulse rate.

I decided to see my GP. But put it off. Why? Well first of all explaining why an OAP failing to beat evens over 50 miles on a tricycle could mean that something was wrong was going to be difficult. I could see a 'worried well' note being attached to my file. And even if I did get a check-up, I was unlikely to be offered more than a lifestyle and background questionnaire, a weigh-in, and cholesterol and blood pressure tests. Still 'see GP' was on my 'to do' list with a star as 'must be done soon' item.

But I did not need to make that appointment. All my best rides have been done three or four weeks after completing a tour. By the end of June, Maggie and I had pedalled home from Toulouse on our tandem. Early July therefore should have been a time for gentle recovery rides followed by intensive training. But I felt lousy - pain across chest and shoulders. All I wanted was the couch, not the saddle. So there I was slouched on the couch when Maggie put her head round the door and said she had rung NHS Direct and they wanted to ask some questions. Things moved quickly. A paramedic hooked me up to an ECG machine, studied the results, and looked concerned, it seemed there was an abnormality:

‘You need to go to A&E.’

‘OK we’ll go now. Maggie can take me.’

‘No, I’ll order an ambulance.’

Within the hour I was on my second ECG, followed by all sorts of tests which showed I had an ‘atrial flutter’ where the top of my heart was beating, to no useful effect, four times faster than the main beat. I needed to see a specialist. The doctor was a bit confused by my case. Apart from the last few days I was obviously fit, if not in time-trialling terms, then at least compared to Joe Average. So, for example, I was able to tell him that no, I did not struggle to climb stairs! And yes I really had just cycled back from Toulouse! I was an untypical flutterer.

What had caused the pain? It was shingles which had wiped out my summer - though with no lasting effect. And I suppose it was a good thing in that it had resulted in the check-up. But what of the flutter? It seems those with a lifetime of exercise are more prone to it, so we might expect veteran time-trialists who have been riding since their teens will be at higher risk.

Once an atrial flutter is diagnosed there is good news and bad. The good is that daily doses of warfarin reduces the risk of a stroke. Even better there is a treatment called an ‘ablation’ which allows you to give up the warfarin and ride your bike as hard as you like. It works by cauterising part of the wall of the heart. The bad news is that if you live in England you are likely to wait a long time for NHS treatment. So I went private which enabled me to come off the warfarin and resume training. My pulse is back to normal, it’s hard to raise it to racing rate and it drops as soon as I lose concentration.

After that 2013 summer off the bike I was greedy for miles and in 2014 spent a total of twelve weeks cycle camping: five in New Zealand, three in Scotland on the tandem, and four in France.

2014 time trial results were not as good as hoped but were a lot better than 2013. I managed 4:50:10 (trike) for a hundred, something that would have been inconceivable in 2013, but still off the record for my age (4:40:49), which I had thought should be mine. It seems likely that at least part of the problem in 2013 had been my atrial flutter, but this was not the whole story. The heavy touring programme was way over optimal for time-trial preparation. And when I did feel I was getting going, on more than one occasion ‘stuff happened’ to make me DNS.

Also it could just be that ageing is playing a part. The new VTTA standard tables suggest slowing with age accelerates after sixty. So, for example, between 40 and 50 a male tricyclist is expected to slow by 5:14 over 50 miles, and between 50 and 60 by slightly more at 6:01, but between 60 and 70 the equivalent figure increases to 9:47. These figures, based on the fastest times by anyone anywhere anytime, underestimate age differences on slower days, slower courses and slower riders. Most riders can expect to see increases in times with age greater than those suggested by the VTTA standards. Part of the reason for my disappointing rides in 2013 may have simply been due to an ‘over sixties’ accelerating decline. Of course there are some very fast OAPs, but I suspect that as we get older the dispersion of times – the difference between fast and slow riders of a given age – also increases.

After three years a car has to go through an annual test, yet the idea in most GP surgeries seems to be that a human body, even after sixty or more years, is more or less assumed to be OK until something is obviously going wrong. The check-ups that are available at most surgeries amount to finding out whether you are over-weight, smoke, drink too much or get insufficient exercise, along with the results of a few basic tests. An ECG would not normally be included, though, at my request, I now have one on the anniversary of my ablation. I would advise anybody with several decades of racing and training on the clock to ask their GP for an ECG scan every year or two. They can only say no. If they do say no and you have a smart phone then there are apps to measure yourself. However, even though these programs claim to be able to detect an abnormality, I would not feel confident without somebody who knows about these things looking at the recording. The last straw alternative would be to go private and buy a check-up.



## The Anfield Bicycle Club and WW1: Winning the Peace with Wayfarer

David Birchall

During WW1 gifts were sent regularly to members on active service. One of the recipients of the gifts was ABC member Walter MacGregor Robinson (the cycling journalist 'Wayfarer'). Though many know the name, fewer are familiar with the story of the man himself or the reasons why he is so fondly remembered.

Fighting in France far from *'the open road which we love so well'*, he mused that the scheme must have been *'suggested by the Angels'* for *'the man who may be called upon at any hour of the day or night to look Death between the eyes, and to glimpse Hell with the lid off'*.

Wayfarer was exceptional in that he was brave enough to express his fear for the dangers he faced. At the age of 40, with a wife and young child at home, he served on the Western Front in the Queen's Westminster Rifles. At first he wrote lighthearted letters about training. But one account stands out, serious in tone:

*On Monday I joined my Battalion and came at once into the Reserve Trenches. In a few hours time I expect to go into the Fire Trenches for eight days. Then follows a 'Rest' - (loud laughter) - and afterwards we keep on going round the mulberry bush.*

Within days, he was severely wounded, and stretchered back to England. Recovery from his injuries was slow.

After the war Wayfarer fired romance and adventure with his journalism and lantern-slide lectures on the **'Open Road'**.

In the Cyclist's Garden at Meriden, there is a seat dedicated to his memory.

The story begins on the last Saturday of March 1919, when a group of friends met for tea with the Anfield Bicycle Club at Rossett near Chester.

Their plan for the weekend was to overnight at the West Arms in Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog, and on Sunday to cross the Berwyns via the drover's track which climbs Nant Rhyd Wilym, going *'over the top'* at Pen Bwlch Llandrillo.

With dusk falling cold and frosty, the friends set off from Rossett towards their destination amongst the hills in the lee of the Berwyns. Under a clear starlit sky, Silver King lamps illuminating the road ahead, they made their way along the wooded valley of the River Ceiriog. But before they reached the inn, the stars dimmed and heavy snow began to fall.

Next morning, with snow covering the hills, local advice was against the crossing. The sun was shining though, and





there were blue skies, so, undaunted, the friends decided to 'venture forth', as they put it. Beyond the farm at Sych Cae Rhiw, where the track begins the long climb to Bwlch Pen Llandrillo, they encountered deep snow and drifts which made the route hard to find; and, worse, it was not long before the three travellers found themselves in the thick of a blizzard. In **Cycling** several weeks later, the experiences of that weekend were chronicled in an article titled **Over the Top** by "Wayfarer", one of the three friends who had shared in the adventure.

For cyclists emerging from the dark years of the war, the article was inspirational. Wayfarer's special place in cycling history stems from this and the many other powerfully evocative articles which he wrote in the 1920s and 1930s for cycling magazines including the **CTC Gazette**, through many lantern lectures, and some broadcasting. His approach to all aspects of cycling, fired the enthusiasm of countless riders. From 1924 to 1946 he was a CTC councillor, was elected a CTC vice-president in 1945, and was one of the first recipients of the Sir Alfred Bird Memorial Prize. He moved to Birmingham in the 1920s and lived there until his death in 1956.



*(Clockwise from above left) - Wayfarer's seat, and memorial, overlooking the Cyclists' War Memorial at Meriden Green; climbing Nant Rhyd Wilym 1993 (main photo); Wayfarer and W P Cook on the 1919 crossing; the memorial at Pen Bwlch Llandrillo, 1962 - replaced c1970 with a bi-lingual plaque following defacement of the original.*

