

# NBRC



## LONDON WELCOMES TOUR OF BRITAIN.

**London hosts its second premier cycle event of 2007 at Crystal Palace.**

Most NBRC activities, see you getting up at some ungodly hour then travelling miles to a remote location in the pouring rain. However reporting from the prologue of the ToB couldn't have been further from this. A relaxing Sunday morning with the in-laws, then a 5 minute scooter down the road in the glorious sunshine to Crystal Palace.

The event was very well organised, if a little under attended, plenty of free parking at the Palace & lots of freebie goodies being readily passed about. Unfortunately the mother in law managed to polish off the whole can of Red Bull (Passed out by Eon) before i realised what it was, no wonder she had a spring in her step throughout the entire day. We arrived in plenty of time to catch the Bob Chicken race & even heard Mr Corley & MKRC being mentioned over the tannoy, unfortunately NBRC didn't get the same coverage, maybe next year. Malcolm Elliot romped home to first place, which at 46, saw competitors half his age off, i wonder if he has the same diet as Swiss Tony.

In a stark contrast to the Tour De France prologue in Central London, we were able to get right on the barriers at the starting house without difficulty, obviously the word that Nell & Myself were editors for the prestigious NBRC Newsletter had got out. We even stood next to a certain Andy Tennant (of the GB squad's) mum, who later thanked us for the pictures of her son speeding down the start ramp.

It was obvious to see who the stars were, with Linus Gerdenman, Mark Cavendish, Geraint Thomas, Ian Stannard & Ben Swift receiving rapturous applause from the crowds. None more so than Mark Cavendish, who sped down the ramp in the closing stages to reap a convincing victory, much to the delight of his home crowd.

I was genuinely surprised at the level of attendance, however it was nice to see the hardcore road cyclist engaging in conversation with regular house holders who had nearly be drawn to the event by intrigue alone. Perhaps the next David Millar has been motivated to grab the Lycra, brandish the razor & head out into the English winter, with nothing his trusty (or rusty for that matter ) steed, heart rate monitor & ipod for company.



# PHOTO BOOTH



## Tour Of Britain Prologue

From Top :- Mark Cavendish leaves the start ramp, Only to finish with all 3 jerseys at the end of the day, Yours truly helping the police with their enquiries

*Once upon a midnight dreary,  
while I pondered weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious  
volume of forgotten lore,  
While I nodded, nearly napping,  
suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping,  
rapping at my chamber door.  
'Tis some visitor,' I muttered,  
'tapping at my chamber door -  
Only this, and nothing more.'*

Well it is Halloween after all & i couldn't resist a bit of Mr Poe. Anyway back down to business & what a couple of months it has been. Firstly I now have the honour of being club captain, I'm not sure if this is so much a choice as a lack of options, but I am humbled (for the first time in my existence) by your faith in me & shall endeavour to serve the club to the best of my abilities. Now if only I can keep up with Dick Selley on the club runs, must have a word at his local opium den, to have his prescription reduced.

Nell & myself were also voted back in as newsletter editors, again a lack of options came into play. Although at the AGM it was commented on the first issue, that NBRC had gone from The Telegraph to 'Loaded magazine. Thank you Mr Saunders for that comment, we were rather hoping for a cross between The Chap & FHM but can live with Loaded. Rina mentioned The News Of The World, but I have absolutely no idea what that is, perhaps someone can enlighten me.

Well we have had a bit more time to prepare this one, so hopefully we can drag ourselves up to the lofty standards of antique caravan & farm machinery monthly, with this issue. unfortunately or fortunately depending upon your perspective, there will be no 'crimes & misdemeanours section in this issue.

I also took part in my first (& second) open time trial event. But was quite surprised that they didn't shut the A1 for myself. Must have a word with the minister of transport I thought to myself as the 50th lorry rustled past my plus 4's. I'm saving the full report for the next issue, just in case.

Nice to see that a few of you have grasped the competition by the throat & are sending us your pictures of interesting cycling people & NBRC kit in interesting



places (see pages 6 & 8).

I must say we have been inundated with articles from literally tens of people, well 3 to be exact. V poor show chaps, after all I am nearly the conduit on this one, your chance to share your moments, nags, regrets & just genuine tall tales rests upon an email. So unfortunately we need to name & shame a few. Well then Mr Steve Abraham's, I managed to get Russell to organise a special shipment of Bolivian parchment, to satisfy the needs of your lengthy article, but alas no article has arrived. (Triathlon) Martin, what happened to the article of Triathlon training, not that we should imagine, you could coax anyone else to dip a toe in Brogborough Lake at this time of year. At the time of writing this I'm still waiting for Mr Selley to supply his two (as promised) liablus articles. On the subject of this we would just like to state for the record that the Editors except no responsibility for the content of the articles printed & objects in the rear view mirror are closer than they actually appear.

So on that note i shall extinguish my candle, place my quill upon the walnut burr of my writing desk & retire to the master boudoir, where Mrs Nell awaits.

Enjoy!



## First right at the border By Brian & Chris.

Buoyed up with the success of previous trips to France, we hatched a plan to ride from North to South, Caen to Bilbao. This sent us off into a flurry of researching routes, and places to visit. Various practice trips and kit selections and having the wheels rebuilt twice and we thought we were prepared. This being a holiday we decided to make it as easy as possible, so loaded the tandem with the best part of 40-kilos of camping equipment, one pair of trousers, two t shirts, a compass and we set off to rough it for 3 weeks.

We were hoping it was not a sign of things to come when the car nearly got swept away in the floods driving down to the ferry. We headed off on Friday 19th July to enjoy the beginning of summer, which turned out to be the wettest since Noah built his Arc.

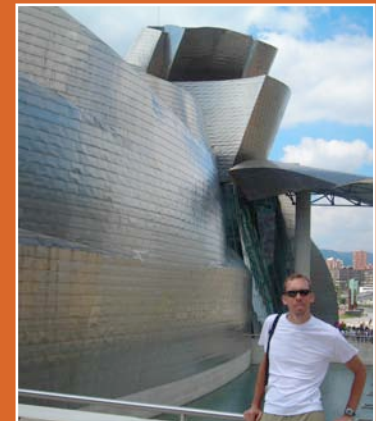
We arrived in Ouistreham (Caen) and on passing through passport control the officer commented on our plans to return from Bilbao and that this was not a holiday! Within 500 yards we were off on our bike again and making what would be one of the many visits to the tourist offices of France for some local info on where to go. We followed the canal, paid our respect to those whose journey had ended at Pegasus bridge and took the obligatory photo. The cycling started off great with a flat route and covering plenty of miles. After what would become the usual town navigation nightmare we

headed out into the countryside and the open road. The weather that had blighted our journey to the port caught up with us and a violent thunderstorm found us retreating in a bus stop and boiling up a cup of tea and watching the Tour de France through someone's window in the street opposite. Soaked to the skin we whipped out of the camping and booked into a hotel in Flers and enjoyed a nice meal.

Over the next few days we noticed the landscape changing from fields of corn, sunflowers and then on to the vine yards of Normandy. The weather was very changeable, but one thing we could not understand was why, which ever road we took the wind, like a rather annoying relative was ever present. This obviously slowed our progress and daily mileage varied from 60 to 80 miles. Despite our study of the maps before leaving, it ended up just being a case of keeping South on the compass, and finding the nearest campsite once our legs had given up, or we needed beer and food.

The French were very helpful, probably more out of pity due to our madness of riding across France with a very heavy tandem, than anything else. On day 4 looking for directions, Brian got chased across the road by a dishevelled man wearing a bright yellow tea shirt and waving his arms and saying 'your the same as me'. Make of that what you will! We established in the end that he was cycling to Portugal mainly camping rough and taking getting close to nature a little too far, judging by his odour. We

## TRIP PIX



Almost as high as the Ashridge tea stop

did admire the fact that he would knock on peoples doors and just ask to stay in their garden and usually ended up getting a bed for the night, but his linguistic skills were an obvious advantage. That night we headed for Chateaux Guibert as it sounded so quaint, unfortunately there was no Chateaux, and Guibert had apparently left, but we did find a beautiful quiet campsite over looking the river at Mareuil Sur Lay Dissais.

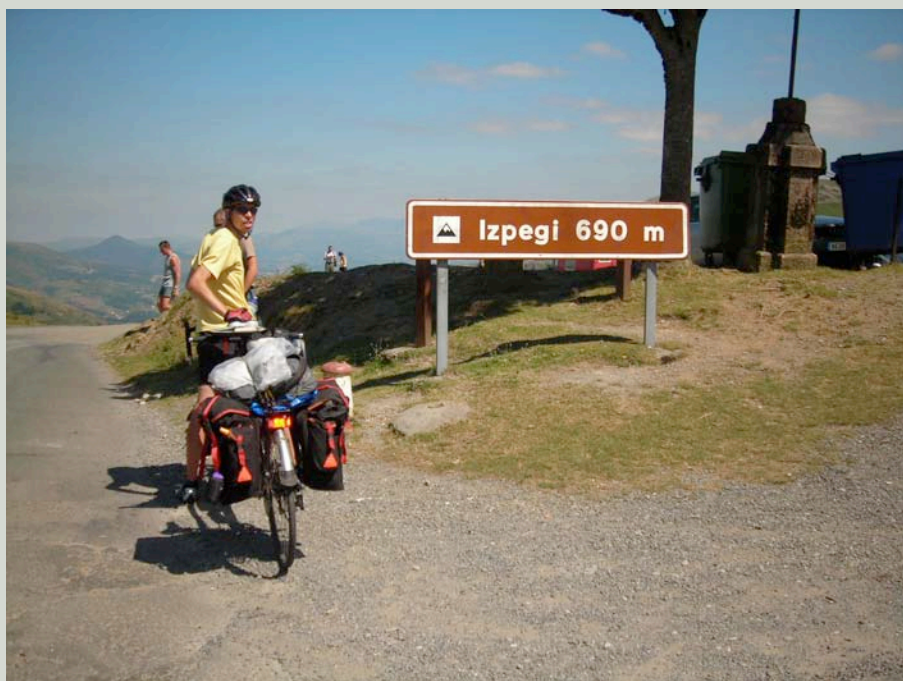
As this was supposed to be a holiday our daily routine meant not a particularly early start and by the time we had packed up the tent and loaded the bike it was a fairly late. By day 5 we had made 306 miles and decided to stay on the island of La Rochelle, once we had managed to get through the cycle barriers at the bridge, which were not designed to let tandems through fully loaded and it would have been easier to lift a baby elephant.

We joined lots of other holiday cyclist in the sunshine which would have been good, but if you have ever ridden a fully loaded tandem slaloming round small children weaving across your path, people suddenly deciding to stop and negotiating those who only ride a bike once a year, as you can imagine there were lots of screams from the stoker who thought we would end up in the hedge.

By now we decided that a trip to the laundrette might be good after 5 days riding in the same clothes. Campsites will always save spaces for riders so there is no need to ever book, but getting to know people can be limited, if you smell like a dead badger.

After a variety of reactions from people, laughing out loud at us, lorry drivers clapping as we struggled up the hills in the rain and hearing people say 'tandem', in between a short foreign phrase we thought ourselves fairly unusual, but there's always someone to outdo you. We met a family on triple with a trailer on the back, reminding us of the articulated lorries in Australia. Brian's comprehension of Dutch was limited, but a conversation of high school French and their daughters primary school English along with lots of gesturing we established that they were just as daft as us.

The French drivers were excellent giving us lots of room or waiting behind for a clear space, but one thing we did not prepare well for was the need to take on food. A few times we would be enjoying the scenery and passing through quaint villages and realise suddenly we were starving, but if you have ever tried to find somewhere open on the middle of the day you would be hard pushed, but amazingly you could always get a blue



rinse at the Coiffure. The noodles were always there as an emergency, but a baguette and brie was much more enjoyable.

Day 8 and we arrived ready to cross the Gironde, and were pleasantly surprised to find the municipal (council) camping inside the walls of the medieval citadel. Our evening walk came across an excellent live band, too many overpriced ciders and a slow start the next morning. That was the nice thing about touring and not planning, you came across sites and experiences you never expected.

We were over half way by this point and only one week into the trip. The next part of our journey saw a change in scenery with an excellent cycling path through pine forest heading to the Basin D'Archachon. A quick decision in the rain to get the ferry to Dune Pilat ( the tallest natural sand dune in Europe)

we had not anticipated that it involved going down a slippery gang plank to a very small craft and having to unload the bike to physically lift it over the side. But the real fun was yet to be had, on disembarking we had to haul the bike up 15 sea weed covered steps which any cyclist wearing cleats would appreciate and then loading the bike on the very busy pier much to the amusement of the crowds who would not give us any space.

We camped at the base of the sand dune and climbed up, which gave a true feeling to the expression burning calves. Took the obligatory photos and waited for the sunset which would have been fantastic if it had not been for the clouds.

The cycle paths in France are excellent although sometimes a little narrow to pass people and directions are not al-

ways obvious and you can sometimes end up slightly lost and having to go on major roads, but that can mean good speeds on straight roads and ending up in totally different places. The campsite at Mimizan was a nice surprise. We were offered a pitch by the lake which we took the chance would not be full of mosquitoes and ended up being a better view than you would get from a 5 star hotel, with a fantastic sunset and a sunrise with mist gently rolling over the lake.

Next day we followed the usual routine, pack up the tent, consumed as many pain au chocolat and pain au raisin as possible and set the compass to South. This part of France is fairly flat which was quite useful as the temperature had finally improved and we were establishing a very nice bike tan, which was a little embarrassing when we attempted to go for a swim at the next camp site. Brian exposing his body was short lived as he was ejected from the pool for wearing illegal shorts. No that was not his leopard skin thong, although that may have been more suitable, as it is illegal to swim in baggy shorts. (& so it should be. ed)

We were well into the trip by now and carrying on along the coast. There were plenty of people out for their Sunday club run, but with 1000 kilometre legs and cruising at 20 miles an hour on this juggernaut of a bike we were not the easy picking that the club cyclist thought we would be and had a few good races which from the strained expressions and nods of resignation, the crest fallen club racers where resigned to drafting and the liviathon sped on-!!

We were now heading for the Basque country and the climbs were getting a little steeper, but the scenery was a little more dramatic. Taking advice from an earlier encounter with travellers, we headed for Camping al la ferm. It was supposed to mean camping on a farm, but we think it meant camping on a hill. The place was called Urt which we think translated mean't hurt. Up on arrival Brian's technical skills were called on again and he did his Saint Brian the fixer of all things Velo. The evening was spent with a Basque couple mending their wheel and gears, while Chris consumed all the red wine and kept up international relations.

Next day we headed into Bayonne and came across the Fete. Not only being very obvious because of the tandem, we stuck out like a shopper bike on a club run because the whole population was dressed in white t-shirt and trousers with red neck tie. We also nearly lost the tandem as a little old man in a home made cycle jersey wanted to swap his 1920's racer for the tandem. Unfortunately our French did not stretch to advising him he may be better off selling the bike and putting it towards dental treatment. We decided to head off and do some more hills and ended up in St Pee. We came across a true farm campsite complete with cows, goats, ducks and dogs, which is very cute until they wake up at 5 am and you have been the previous night watching the locals in their rather strange strong man festival, which involved grown men trying to rupture themselves doing acts of great physical strength and pointlessness and then a 3 mile walk back in the dark after a few beers. A little tired, but excited to be finally crossing the border into Spain we headed up our first real climb. Now this was only 602 metres, but unless you have cycled on a fully laden tandem you will not appreciate that going up hill is a time for reflection. As you can imagine the ride down took a blink of an eye only pausing to don our coats in true tour style. Where was the man with the news paper when you needed him.

The next climb over the Pyrenees involved a 670-metre climb with spectacular views at the top. A good days cycling and ending up in St jean de pied d' Port. Now the intention was to hit a few more hills the next day, but a chance conversation with a British couple touring in an MG and a large flagon of wine prompted a rest day, and a chance for Brian to swap tyres and generally tinker. Although we were proud of our achievements we did admire the pilgrims who were walking to Santiago a journey of 600

kilometres by foot. They were quite obvious to spot even without backpacks, hobbling around.

Fully recovered we headed off to Pamplona in 36 degrees with three big climbs, the first being Puerto dipaneta at 1057 metres. With the marked climbs over 1000 metres we arrived a little tired to say the least. For those of you who may be considering a trip to Pamplona having seen the picturesque images of the running of the bulls, it does not quite live up to expectations and there is very little to see, I am not surprised the bulls wanted to run away.

We treated ourselves to a night in a hotel, possibly because after a hard days cycling and being told you have to turn around and cycle 10 kilometre out of town it sounded a better offer, also another opportunity to wash some clothes. Luckily the cleaner did not come in as she might have thought she was entering a Chinese laundry.

We escaped Pamplona and headed back to the coast, climbing out of the valley put us into the clouds. The ever present mist soaking us to the skin, but at least it was warm.

We finally started our roll to the coast discovering the cyclist utopia of the forever down hill. We admired the steady stream of club racers in their Escatell kit climbing the other way on their Orbias on our 45 minute descent.

We weaved away on an undulating road, in-between the rain storms and headed down hill only to round the corner and find workmen tarmacing the road. Typical Spain no warning signs, 200-kilos of tandem wet tarmac.....knife, butter mmmmm. We looked back to admire our handy work much to the constipation of the workmen. So with smiles on our faces we carried on our merry way knowing we

had left our mark on Spain. One should never be so smart as we had our just desert and a flat tyre in a sudden rain storm at the bottom of the hill. So to lift our sprites we cooked up Brian's sausage in the local park (well I've never heard it called that in my life, but i get the picture ed).

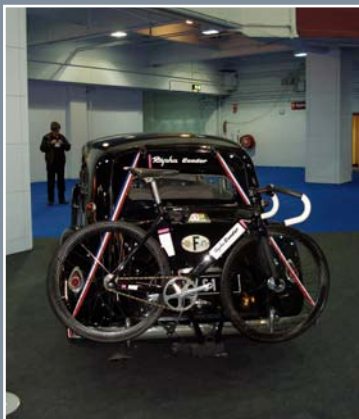
The coast of Spain around Bilbao is a beautiful ride and well worth a trip, but those campers among you be aware because for some reason all Spanish campsites have to have a 1 in 3 hill at their entrance, and watch out for the men running up in their underpants (another story).

We spent a few days meandering along the coast towards Bilbao stopping on frequent occasions to ask directions, and as we got closer and hit more inner city mayhem, the more we wanted to turn round and head to Africa, maybe on the next trip. If you ever cycle into Bilbao remember the port is actually about 10-kilometres out of the centre and head for the transporter bridge to cut out a very long and hazardous cycle. Also do not expect such a helpful response for directions unless you speak a little Spanish and take provisions unless you want to eat at 10 o'clock at night, as most restaurants do not serve until this time especially in small towns.

A fantastic experience, but as with all tours every journey is unique, different roads, different routes, different cultures and different people. We find cycle touring a fantastic way to see the world and for those out there thinking of making a trip, be it a weekend, week or a year. Plan a little, go with the flow, try to speak the language, people want to help, usually to much, but keep it fun, pack light and enjoy.



# BIKE SHOW 07



## Pictures from top :-

Rapha's impressive vintage Citroën, complete with all period TDF extras & for some reason a carbon framed bike. Re-released Paris frame, complete with wood rims. Tom Boonen's time trial bike with all the scuffs & scrapes only a world champion could acquire.

With the summer sunshine long behind us & the last race of the season out of the way, it can only be time for one thing, no not the Bow Brickhill hill climb, but the bike show.

Sad though it may seem, the summer is over & its time for the manufacturers to wow us with their new produce. Enabling all the serious roadies to dig deep for excuses on why they simply have to have a new bike.

Having spent a number of years tucked away in the dark recesses of docklands, it appears that cycling is to have a renaissance, with none other than Earls Court being deemed a big enough venue to host London's 2nd best event (after The Chap Olympics).

So one bright Thursday morning, we hot footed it down to London Village just in time for press day.

After the usual attempts at organising an event meant for cyclists it appears that they've finally got their act together in coming up with a show which can be taken seriously by people who actually ride bikes.

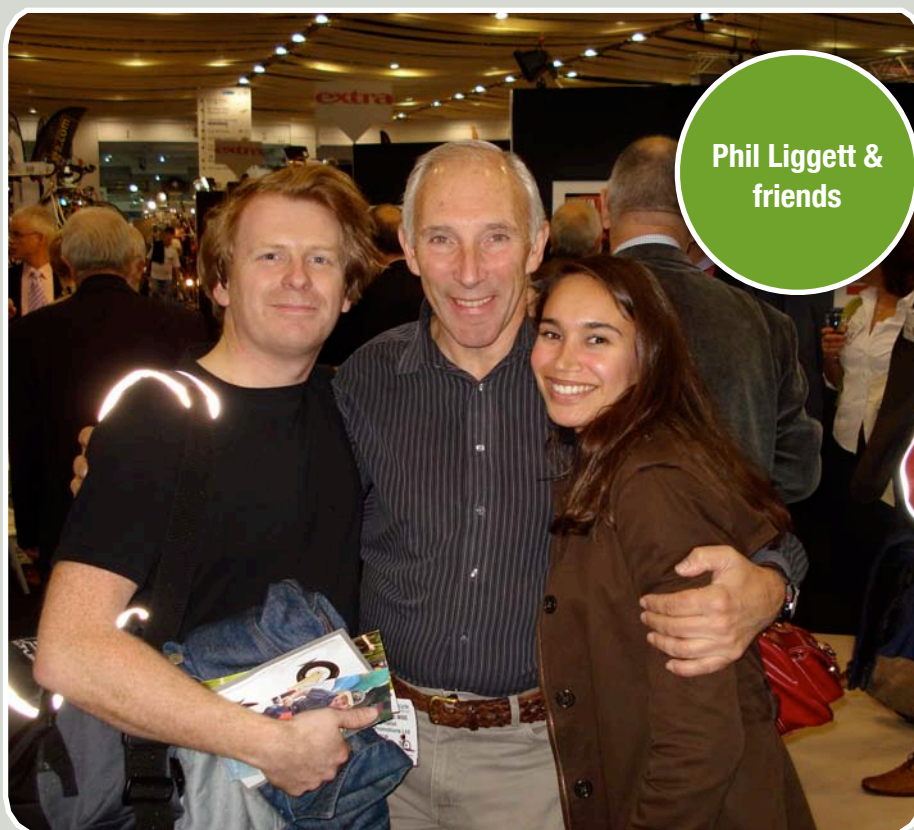
All the big names had the usual big stands, Trek, Specialized, Bianchi & even Raleigh. However most impressive for ourselves was Condor Rapha, who not only had a 1930's Citroën limo in full TDF trim but had a very impressive stand, featuring bikes old & new, with a couple of re-issues, including the 'Paris' frame.

Whilst on the stand & assisting in helping them enjoy their 60th birthday celebrations, we bumped into our old friend & TDF commentator Phil Liggett, who seemed over enamoured with my wife's name. Well I had to try an out do my Eddie Merckx picture of last year didn't I.

There was also a few team cars on display, although I was at a loss on how one would ever be able to mix a decent Martini inside one, with all of the bike paraphernalia lying about.

It also seemed that the press had come out in force, with all the major names, buzzing around.

As for the shape of things to come, well carbon fibre is still being pushed as the only thing for your bike, with frames now dropping below 800g. Sram where





making Shimano & Campagnola conspicuous by their absence. Speaking of which we spent a good 30 minutes looking for a Campag brochure for Swiss Tony, but to no avail. It did make us wonder if it was still being manufactured. Many of the big manufacturers were placing pro machines alongside their mainstream bikes, to show how little difference there is now. Another feature which is filtering down from the pro machines are the integrated seat posts for road bikes. They started to appear a few years back on TT bikes, now most companies are offering them on their range topping

road bikes. Viner have also found themselves a permanent UK distributor, after countless years of being brought over in small batches, who knows perhaps they can give Trek a run for their money.

The biggest boom industry (if the show is anything to go by) is in the sportive area, with Trek now devoting a complete line of bikes under the 'performance fit' banner, as opposed to the more sporty 'pro fit'. Another encouraging thing was number of companies, who were making proper lightweight racing bikes for children. I'm sure we all remember our first racing bike at the age of 10, which

weighed about 30lbs & was way over-gear, which put many off riding bikes for the rest of their lives. Well now with people live Islabikes, there is an alternative to the usual Halfords & Cycle King (whoever they are) fair, i wonder if they'll be bringing out a fixed wheel, no brakes courier replica for a 9 year old, just a thought.

On the whole a good exhibition & for the high point, I'm afraid it has to be meeting the very friendly Mr Liggett, a true ambassador to the sport.

### NELL'S TIP OF THE MONTH.

### PROBLEM

### SOLUTION



**Ok so your down to your last summer jersey, just got in from a ride, but need said garment tomorrow. How can I clean it in time? will it ever dry?**

This is an easy one, clean the jersey in the sink, then lay it flat on a dry towel. Roll the towel up length ways. Then with a twisting motion wring the towel out. Unroll the towel, retrieve the jersey, which will now require just a light airing over the back of the chair & your in business. Just make sure the people you're riding with the following day aren't the same people who saw you in the jersey on the previous day. Or comments on your personal hygiene might be made.

## My Way Home

By Rina Brown

Before Easter in the early 50's, I left the Gosport, (Hampshire) youth hostel for the ride back to my home in Hendon. In order to get home at a reasonable hour I had to ride at a fairly fast pace.

However by the time i had reached Petersfield Hill, my pace had dropped a little, it was at this point that I was caught by a young man on a racing cycle. On the outside he seemed reasonably friendly, although he could have done with a good wash and a feed.

Any thoughts about him chatting me up, were soon displaced as he began talking of his girlfriend. He then introduced himself as Tom Simpson, which at the time didn't mean anything to me & I was more interested in my riding, so pressed on. I asked him were he lived & he said that he lived up north & was out on a training ride.

He then mentioned his intention of travelling to Belgium next year in the hope of racing. I was impressed by not only

the speed at which he rode, but by his hill climbing abilities. He was certainly faster than the NCU boys that i usually rode with.

We parted at Windsor & I continued my journey home. Imagine my surprise some weeks later when I read about his victory in the weekly cycling magazine. No wondering I was struggling on some of those hill's. We met some years later & he still remembered our ride together. The rest is history



Derek  
& Rina at the  
Marco Pantani  
memorial,  
Italy

## & last but by no means least a final word from our illustrious Chairman.

There now its all over again bar the shouting. The racing season has finished & we move seamlessly into the social season & that of course means the club dinner. The good news is that the club has had another successful season of racing & promoting events. These include not only club time trials but also association events & well received road races at the bowl & elsewhere.

Our time trials have attracted large entries from club riders & visitors, including quite a few newcomers. This being despite the foul "summer" weather we have been subjected to & on the emergency courses we have been forced into using for various reasons, when the established courses have become unavailable.

One of the advantages of riding personal bests has been that more members have spread their wings & ridden association events, well done to you all. The bad news was that Warren Stokes had a bad accident whilst training early in the year & has had to spend the summer getting his body repaired. Hopefully he will be back again next year breaking even more records.

The AGM has come & gone & it was re-assuring to see a good turnout. It is your club & you have a responsibility of making sure that the committee is looking after your interests.

The next big event is the club dinner on 10th November, we are limited to 70 places so we must have your bookings by 31st October, with payment made by this deadline. I regret that there can be no refund if you are unable to attend, unless we can find others who want tickets at the last minute.

Best wishes .....Bryan

**Want to express your view  
on absolutely anything  
(we're not fussy) ?**

Then simply email your comments to  
[alanandnell@hillsidebarn.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:alanandnell@hillsidebarn.orangehome.co.uk)  
all usual bribes & hostage exchanges  
accepted.



**Have an article / pix for sub-  
mission, or merely wish to  
complain about the vague  
shifting of certain (carbon fi-  
bre) STI levers, then....**

**NBRC NEWSLETTER**

**Needs you ! Yes you!**