

# DE LAUNE CYCLING CLUB

FOUNDED 1889



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James Lyon in control

# DE LAUNE NEWS

# August 2003

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[www.delaunecc.org](http://www.delaunecc.org)

OFFICIALS			
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## THE PRESIDENTS REPORTS

Just back from 7 days of following the tour with my good friends Tich Shambrook, Stax, and Gordon Gibbens. It was hell but someone had to do it. Someone had to report if the wine and food is up to scratch. Well it is and, to prove it, I have put on pounds.

First day the plan was to go straight to Vouziers and watch the riders come through the town but we felt we had to have lunch and a few beers (not the driver I might say) and as they were due to come through at about 2pm we had plenty of time. Guess what? due to a tail wind the riders came through 20 minutes early. All we saw was the police marshals being picked up. We always have a plan B. 'Go straight to the hotel at Reims and watch the finish on the telly'.

In Reims we thought we would have a nice glass of wine and remembering the £40 bottle of wine we bought by mistake in the village Chateauneuf du Pape a few years ago, we decided to be safe and buy the wine by the glass. We decided to have a glass of Kir (white wine with cassis) I remember the lady saying Kir Royal and we said yes, that would do.

Kir Royal is champagne with cassis. We should have known that Reims is the capital of the champagne country and we got the best champagne. Yes you guessed it - it cost us £7.00 per glass. Will we ever learn?

Next day we would have no cock up's. We would go straight to the start of the team time trial at Joinville. After parking the car we had a long walk into the village. Not only did we find a good spot to watch but also it was a restaurant. We sat out side with our jambon and glass of the red stuff. Tich complained about the car fumes but you cannot have everything.

That night we stopped at Macon. We had a lovely meal at our hotel. I do like good food with a nice table setting. Fresh flowers, spotless cutlery and a nice clean white tablecloth, I did notice red wine stains on my white bed linen! Could they be doubling up?

The next day we made our way to Annecy in the Savoie. On our way we had the invite to call in and see our old club members, Cliff and Kay Pendleton who live in a village called Belmont Tramonet, and not far from Chambery.

Kay did us proud. All we expected was sandwich and a glass of wine. Well we had the full Monty. A four-course meal that was delicious. Cliff never stopped pouring the wine (not for the driver) as he had a cellar full of it.

After a lot of nattering about old times, Cliff now wants to come to the UK to ride the OMA 10 in September! We will see. Thank you Cliff and Kay for your hospitality it was appreciated by all of us.

Next day the tour was finishing at Lyon, so we would give it a miss and go walking in the Alps. We made our way to Avoriaz. This is a place the De Laune Saga Ski team train in the winter. We wanted to see what it looked like without the snow! Grim is the word for it.

At night we went into the old part of Annecy for our meal. Those of you who have not been to Annecy you have missed one of the best parts of France. I can only explain it as a small Venice. It has a large lake with a lot of canals. It also has a lot of restaurants, which are covered in flowers in window boxes.

For the meal I had a nice foie gras with fine herbs (I sound like David Duffield) this was after Tich moaned about the goose being force fed with bread crumbs and corn. He is getting like an old woman. Stax who can only say 'Cat beer s'il vous plait' in French. He will look at the menu and say I will have what he is having.

Sunday was going to be our big day. The climb up Alpe d'Huez. The climb would start late in the afternoon. We only had about 30 miles to the start of the climb but we left our hotel at Grenoble early morning to avoid the traffic. Well, we should have left two days before!! The traffic came to a stand still and with 20 miles to go the police closed all roads. This was after the police sent us off on a 20-mile detour away from the race!

My mobile rang. It was Nigel Scales, our new member who had cycled out from Grenoble on his bike (no problems) asking when we would arrive at the climb! So it was plan B again. Back to the hotel to watch it on the telly. Do you know what, I have watched more telly on this holiday than any other!

Do you know also that you could take good photos with a digital camera from the telly? I no longer say 'this is the photo I took at the start of the stage or this is the one on the climb' I say 'this is the one I took from the Ibis hotel telly at Macon or this one from the telly at Novotel at Grenoble'

When I got back home I had a phone call from Nigel who was still in France. He told me he had come off his bike coming down Alpe d'Huez and broken his arm and has ended up in hospital. He informs me that he has relatives in France so he is OK but apologises for not being around to do his marshal duties. And this is from a new member. Bless him. Hope to see you soon.

We have three new members to welcome to our club. Caroline Wright, Nick Butler and Lee Snowsill, a warm welcome to all three. If you are new to cycling and want advice, have a natter with any of our committee who will only be too pleased to help you, and not forgetting Brian Saxton who will kit you out, at a price!

He informs me that he has a lot of gear he wants to clear, old vests etc. He told me he has half a dozen partly worn jock straps in De Laune colours he wants to clear. The mind boggles.

I have heard on the grape vine that a lady who has just had a baby has applied for a new racing licence. I wonder who that is?

A lot of members have been asking 'What ever happened to Cliff Steel?' Cliff is back in circulation. As I reported, Cliff damaged his arm in a race a few months ago. At the same time he bought a house that had to be gutted to be lived in and on top of that he started a new job. Well the arm is OK, and he moves into his house in two weeks and he still has a job!

Your committee will be organizing a Belgium night at the end of October at the Blackheath club room and Cliff and Carol have agreed to cook one of their continental specialities. If you remember the last one, for about a tenner you get a three course meal and lots of wine plus cycle roller racing. It was a sell out. Look out for details.

Got to go now and get back to the telly. I will be glad when the tour is finished.

Kav.

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Due to the change of my broadband ISP, I have a new email address at home. Please delete the existing .attbi.com address and insert my brand spanking new

[glbirch@comcast.net](mailto:glbirch@comcast.net)

The old attbi address will work for a few months, but you might as well make the change now!

Sorry folks for any inconvenience

Garry Birch

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## Saab-Salomon Mountain Mayhem 24hr MTB race, 21st-22nd June 2003



Formerly known as the Red Bull 24hr, sponsorship for by far the most popular mountain bike event on the UK calendar has now passed into the hands of Saab and outdoors equipment supplier Salomon.

For the fifth year running, the race was held at Sandwell Park Farm near Birmingham on the summer solstice weekend. Once again, De Laune had two teams, imaginatively named A and B, consisting of James' Lett, Lyon and Peckham and Ross Fryer, the honorary non-James in the A team, with Bill Wright, Cliff Steele, Simon Pamplin and Chris Fitzer in the B team. All except Chris had done the event before; in fact Chris stepped in at the last minute when Andrew King couldn't make it due to his PhD commitments.

Helping the teams out were Tig, Cliff's wife Carol and James Peckham's dad, John, who supplied us with a huge van and tent complete with generator, lighting, jetwash and microwave - luxury! We got the campsite set up on the Friday afternoon and headed off for a course recce. It was pretty similar to previous years, a 10-mile lap with a mix of open fields and wooded singletrack, although it was very bumpy and would favour lightweight, short-travel full suspension bikes. The weather was fantastic, hot and sunny with the result that the course was very dry and dusty. The course may have been similar, however the event was far bigger with 249 teams in our category compared with last years 188. We all knew we were going to have some stiff competition if we wanted to better last

years 2nd place result for the A Team.



The race began at 2pm on Saturday with a Le Mans style run of about half



a mile to get to the bikes. James Lett reluctantly volunteered to run and got a good start, picking his bike up from James Peckham and getting out onto the course in the top 40 or so. Being the new boy on the team and not really knowing the score, Chris had foolishly said that he would do the run for team B but he also came through highly placed in the field James Lett came through in about 45 minutes and handed over to James Lyon. We'd worked out our strategy from experience gained over the previous years and had settled with a 1,2,3,4 format up until nightfall. All of us were averaging about 42-44 minute laps early on although James Lyon turned in a very quick sub-40 lap on his first time out. The A team had settled into the top ten, meanwhile the B team were moving steadily up around the top 40 mark. Everything went well up until dark when the new



strategy of 1,2,1,2,3,4,3,4 came into play. This gives two team members the chance to get a decent amount of sleep while the other two swap laps. James' Lett and Lyon took the first stint, riding alternate laps through until about 4.30am then James Peckham and Ross Fryer took over riding duties until about 8.30am when we reverted back to the 1,2,3,4 format. For Chris in the B Team it was his first time of night-riding and after his first lap, he came back with a grin like a Cheshire cat, enthusing about the experience.

Riding a mountain bike, off-road, at night is something that most people would regard as certifiable, however nothing can describe the feeling of rushing through the darkness, twisting and turning along the narrow tunnel of light that is all you can see, the ever-changing shadows passing by on each side at a speed that feels twice as fast as it actually is. By now the course was getting heavily rutted, braking bumps digging up the corners and dusty ruts forming, making things quite technical in places. Ross and James Lett felt the bumps worst as they were on hardtails. Ross commented that his arse looked like the Japanese Flag although after a lap of the course everyone looked like they'd been down a coal mine; the dust covered riders from head to toe. Fatigue was getting to everyone now - there seemed to be twice as many small rises and dragging climbs as there had been at the start, hills which on the first few laps riders had gone over in a big gear, hardly noticing, but which now became an interminable drag in a middling gear, the exertion etched on riders faces. Chris in particular was finding the racing getting to him after such a long time and began to suffer slightly although Cliff and Simon and Bill were still putting out consistent 46-48 minute laps for the B Team.



The pace began getting quicker again during the morning, riders putting in more of an effort now that the end was in sight. Ross went out for his final lap and managed to dig deep into his fuel reserves, attacking hard a third of the way round the course and pulling De Laune A two places up the results table. He handed over to James Lett who completed his last lap in a fraction over 44 mins, coming into the arena 12 minutes after the bell had sounded to mark the end of the 24hrs and holding onto 6th place for the team. De Laune B had also had a battle on their hands with only minutes separating many teams after 24hrs of racing. Final results: - De Laune A, 6th place with 32 laps in 24:12:13 and an overall average lap time of 45:22 De Laune B, 37th place with 30 laps in 24:32:01 and an overall average lap time of 49:04 On behalf of both teams, a huge thanks must go to Tig, who stayed awake for the whole 24hrs, co-ordinating 8 riders in 2 teams with endless good humour and support, Carol Steele for the fantastic food supplied at all hours of the day and night to exhausted riders and to James Peckham's dad, John for supplying the tents, van, generator, lighting and all the other bits and pieces that made the camping so comfortable rather than a hardship. We couldn't have done it without you.

James Lyon

All above photos from [www.bikemagic.com](http://www.bikemagic.com)

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## O.M.A.NEWS

### THE SOLE MEUNIERE WHICH RESULTED IN CORRESPONDENCE WITH HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH

Whilst on a car assisted cycling holiday in France in May this year Pat and I happened to book into a small hotel in a quiet area near Le Treport. All very agreeable, nice room, sea view etc. but, oh dear, being Monday no evening meal! Were soon assured by Madame that an excellent restaurant could be visited "just two minutes down the road". That's O.K. except having to drive out to a meal means limiting the amount of vino to be sampled but never mind will make up for that next day!

Well, after circuiting Le Treport three times this excellent restaurant was located, only to find that being Monday it was closed! Tummies beginning to rumble by this time.

About 130 metres along the sea front came to another very inviting local sea-food restaurant "Le Homard Bleu" with friendly staff, beautiful table linen, reasonable prices what a bit of luck the other place was shut!

Enjoyed well prepared Dieppe sole - and the appropriate amount of good white wine - plus extra portions of French frits. Spent a very happy evening chatting about how much we enjoyed our frequent trips to France.

We noticed that the Proprietor himself, who had been standing at the bar quite near to our table, served us with coffee. Then the bill arrived causing a little confusion - they had omitted to charge the 3.50 Euros each for the extra chips! We like to pay with plastic but know that when one questions the bill in France pandemonium arises, and we didn't want any mistakes to sort out when the Access account arrived later! So we said "We'll just pay the bill as it stands then when they return our card we will give them the extra in cash". So this is what we did, but when we presented them with the seven Euros and explained what they were for the proprietor came up and said in perfect English 'The chips were included with the dish you chose'. We were a bit taken aback and realised he must have overheard and understood our discussion about how to deal with the query!

I complimented him on his knowledge of English and asked him how he came to speak it so well. He said his Father had kept the restaurant, which was then just a bar, during the war and the Royal Engineers were frequent customers in 1939 that was how he became interested in learning English. Being of similar age to myself we started talking about our wartime experiences, me a school boy in London and he in France. He told me that when our Forces returned in 1944 he became an interpreter for the British Army.

On saying goodbye asked for a brochure, he was delighted one also gave a very nice postcard with a picture of his restaurant saying 'Please send this to your Queen with my best wishes'.

It had really turned out to be a most unexpectedly interesting evening and he was very pro - British so I thought I would send his card and message to the Queen. On the 8th June I wrote to Her Majesty sending the card and greeting. Today 11th July - SURPRISE! I have a reply and thanks from Buckingham Palace! I feel really 'chuffed' as they say, because now I must book another trip to France no our friend in Le Treport will be so delighted to see this letter from Her Majesty.

Who could have imagined that a plate of fish and chips in France would have resulted in correspondence with the Queen! Most people have to wait until they are 100 for the privilege!

Peter Gunnell

*Peter how nice to hear from you again, thank you for your write up (it does not seem that you have mastered the art of the computer and the internet) and still using snail mail.*

*In 1976/77 (our 50th year) I was the president of The Rotary Club of Brixton, and at the time of our annual dinner I sent a telegram to H.M. Queen Elizabeth congratulating her on her silver jubilee, and received one back the same day so I received mine at the age of 45.*

*I was also in the official party lined up in the Oval Gardens, Brixton when the Queen made her visit (we were instructed that we wear dark suits). Also during the same year I was invited to lunch at the House of Lords and was seated next to the then Archbishop of Canterbury. Ed.*

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## TRACK NEWS TRACK

I think most people enjoyed the first Open Meeting at Herne Hill, that we have held for a while, except the junior from Halesowen who ended up in Kings College Hospital, however, he was able to return home after being patched up.

My thanks to Michael Moore for judging, Alaric for recording, Brian for the numbers, Mike for announcing, Evans for the prizes and all the other help from friends of the club.

Next year we will avoid clashing with the 24 hour mountain bike race and hopefully have some more De Laune riders entering. Also we need to see if we can obtain one or more sponsors for the meeting and advertisers for the programme so that the event breaks even.

The results were:  
BC National Junior Omnium League.-

1. N. Cooper (Reading CC),
2. A. Thompson (Swindon RC),
3. S. McManus (Glasgow Wheelers).

Open Scratch.-

1. B. Taylor (VCL),
2. R. Williams (GBCycles.co.uk),
3. J Scripps (VCL).

Open Devil.-

1. B. Taylor,
2. R. Williams,
3. J Scripps.

Open Sprint.-

1. B. Taylor,
2. J Scripps,
3. K Coffey (Bec CC).

Course de Primes.-

1. B. Taylor.

Ken Hill Memorial 33 Lap Scratch Race.-

1. B. Taylor,
  2. R. Williams,
  3. J Scripps,
- Lap Leader K. Coffey.

Youth/Vets Omnium.-

1. R. Williams,
2. P. Cattermole (VCL)
3. S. White (VCL).

Women's Omnium.-

1. Joy Nixon (VCL),
2. C. Pearce (Brixton Cycles),
3. C Larsen (Victoria CC).

On Sunday 3rd August we are holding our track championships at Herne Hill starting at 14.00hrs and we are sharing the venue with Bec, Brixton Cycles and Addiscombe. Events will include 500m Sprint, Pursuit, Handicap sprint and the Five Mile scratch.

Please come along and bring a picnic.

Track training is taking place on Saturday mornings at 9.30am for novices, and beginners and at 10.45 for all other categories, please come down and give it a try, you can hire track bikes.

The key holders for our container at Herne Hill are Bill Wright, James Peckham and myself.

Look forward to seeing you on the 3rd.

Jeremy White

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THE LAST DAY FOR COPY TO BE  
INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE IS  
WEDNESDAY 27 August 2003

THIS SHOULD BE SENT TO:  
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