

DE LAUNE CYCLING CLUB

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De Laune News **September 2001** No. 830 -72nd Year

www.delaunecc.org



**President John Kavanagh & Brian Saxton
At
Tom Simpson's Memorial**

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The Presidents Reports on the Tour, part two.

After watching the first two days of the Tour in the Pas De Calais, Brian Saxton, Tich Shambrook, Gordon Gibbons and I, set off down to the South of France to watch the Alpe d'Huez climb and the Grenoble hill climb time trial.

We decided to spend a few days in Provence and visit the memorial to Tom Simpson at the top of Mont Ventoux. If you know the climb you will know that it will be bright hot sun with miles of visibility, or low cloud with rain and no visibility. We got the latter.

I have visited Toms memorial many times but well wishers are leaving memento's at the foot of the memorial (see picture) and it looks like a rubbish tip. Water bottles, tubs, a racing vest, a pair of trainers are among the many things just left. Thank goodness Tom is not buried up there.

As a group, we are very interested in wine, and visit most of the caves just to sample ! Well we stopped at little restaurant in Chateauneuf and decided to have a light snack. We thought as we were in the Chateauneuf, we would have a cheap bottle of the local wine. On the wine menu was a bottle Chateauneuf du Pape at 40 FF (say £4) and one at 140 FF (say £14) We decided on the cheaper one, as it was only a snack.

Stax did say he thought it was a little bitter, but what could you expect for £4 . As we had our snack with our wine, we were all getting a little light headed and talking very loud.

Tich noticed it had a 14% alcohol content and was bottled in 1980. Yes you have guest right, we had a bottle that cost £40 and not £4. We did not read the wine menu properly. Thank goodness we did not go for the 140 FF bottle.

On Tuesday the 17th July we decided to go up Alp d'Huez and see the riders come up. If you want to get to the top by car you will have to go up the day before as it is one big traffic jam. We managed to park, and only just. We were about one mile from the start of the climb, and like hundreds of others, we walked up the climb.

Well I say walk, it was more like a road race. Tich and Gordon got shot out of the back after two miles, and Stax and I got dropped by a German couple about two miles from the top. No respect for age at all.

Lance Armstrong came up with Ullrich and his group about two minutes down. The rest of the field could have walked up faster. You could see by the expressions on their faces that they had enough of it.

After about one hour we managed to walk to the bottom, but could not get the car on to the road due to the heavy traffic, so we decided to have a meal in the village. We came out of the restaurant at about 9 p.m. and still had a job getting the car out. It was hell ! The next day we watched the hill time trial which started from Grenoble, about half a mile from the start. (we did not go up the hill this time)

As I have said, if you are a cyclist and have not seen the Tour, you must make it at least once just to taste the atmosphere.

P.S I was hoping to have two international riders competing in our old members 10 on the 30th of September, but both cannot make it. John Darroch who will be coming from Thailand on the 4th of October has asked for a late start, and Clif Pendleton

who would have come from Chambéry, France, told me a job in Russia has come up ! Excuses, excuses.

What a fantastic weekend for the De Laune. On Saturday the 4th August we had the club track championships at Herne Hill, this was in conjunction with the Bec CC and the Norwood Paragon.

Thanks to Alaric our organiser, I have not seen so many club jerseys in one place for a long time. What a good turn out for a club event. If you wanted to get in to the final you had to go through qualifying heats!

Alaric did ask for support from our older members. You could not get support from older members than Les Pyne and Bill Miles, and both on bikes. I like the shorts Bill.

Brian Saxton decided to give a £5 preme in the 5-mile event. Well he gave the note to Alaric who announced to the bunch that the next lap would be a £20 preme lap. Yes he had given a £20 note and not a £5 note. The last I saw of Brian was running behind the bunch in the back strait shouting "no, it's only a fiver " Too late. Well done Alaric and I hope you have got the results in this issue.

Sunday the 5th of August. The Kent CA and Vets 12 hour championship. We had a team of four. Alan Rowe, Terry Deeley, Malcolm Adams and Charlie Curthoys. Guess what, all finished. With no long miles in their legs to talk about, they did so well to just to finish. Good support from wives and club members who would not allow them to pack if they wanted to.

Again I hope the lads will give us the full results when they come to hand and perhaps a few stories on how it felt to be in the saddle for 12 hours. Well done.

Kav.

I have forwarded this mail from Southwark Cyclists for inclusion for the DLN.

Although I did not know Brigitte, I often cycle along Borough High Street passing the site of the accident. Brigitte still has many friends in Southwark Cyclists who have taken this opportunity to remember her and her work for all cyclists.

With events such this, and the death of De Laune members on active military service, it gives me the chance to reflect on how lucky we are to still be with our family and friends.

Yours faithfully
Quil Forbes

Dear Southwark Cyclists,

Last year on Monday October 23rd 2000 one of our most active members Brigitte Robinson was tragically killed by a lorry. This year Sunday October 21st 2001 a memorial service will be held at 10am at St.James the Great in Peckham.

Regards James

Co-ordinator (Chair), Southwark Cyclists - 500 member branch of the London Cycling Campaign

020 7528 1297

020 7528 1297

KCA 12 Hour Result

Charlie Curthoys	219.114	
Alan Rowe	213.664	+23.014
Terry Deeley	193.769	-2.720
Malcolm Adams	186.516	-1.141

CONGRATULATIONS TO JAMES LETT & HIS BRIDE



[Change of address](#)

Roller Racing 2001

The rollers season is just around the corner. This year,

My new address is
11 Avondale Rise
Peckham
London SE15 4AJ
020 7639
5532 020
7639 5532

bucking recent trends where we haven't been promoting, De Laune will be hosting 2 events. First event is a Belgian evening on Friday 26th October, with racing, fine food and Belgian beer! Then comes our leg of the South London roller league on Thursday 22nd November. More details next DLN...
Alaric

Alaric

O.M.A. NEWS

I AM SORRY TO HAVE TO TELL YOU ALL THAT I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO BOOK A VENUE FOR A LUNCH IN SEPTEMBER.

CHARTHAM PARK GOLF CLUB HAS AGAIN CHANGE OWNERSHIP, AND THE CLUB HOUSE IS NOT AVAILABLE DUE TO BUILDING WORKS. ANOTHER CLUB I TRIED IS BEING SOLD AND THEY WERE NOT TAKING ANY BOOKINGS. MARK

VETS BAR.

Peter Jenn gave me some of his results at the Club Open '25' so I thought I'd best set too and see how he and Alan are faring in the competition.

PETER JENN

10 Miles Redman CC G10/56 22 44 (Club Age Record)
Redman CC G10/57 22 10 (Club Age Record)*

25 Miles ? E72/25 56.57 De Laune G25/45 1.01.23

This gives Peter an average speed of 26.0592 MPH His age standards at age 57 are:

10 Miles 29 06

25 Miles 1.14.55.

This is an average speed of 20.3205 MPH. This gives him a +5.7387MPH

* THIS EVENT MAY NOT QUALIFY, AS I BELIEVE THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A PRIVATE, ALTHOUGH PETER SAID HE THINKS THERE IS A RESULT SHEET. I WILL HAVE TO HAVE THIS CONFIRMED.

ALAN ROWE

10 Miles Gravesend CC Q10/30 23.31 (club Age Standard) Woolwich CC Q10/24 24.32

25 Miles De Laune CC G25/45 1.03.52

29th Whls G25/18 1.03.32

Alan's average speed is 24.22674 MPH, His age standards at 62 are:
10 Miles 30.16
25 Miles 1.17.45

This is an average speed of 19.5653 MPH
This gives him a + 4.7021 MPH.

This means that Alan has got to get his finger out this year if he wants to give Peter some competition.

I have also got qualifying times but don't want to see them in pint just yet. I am hoping that. Roy Savery will also quality this season. More next month.

Thoughts of our 12 hour riders 7 their helpers.

"DON'T BLAME ME"

by Malcolm Adams

A SCHEDULE IS WRITTEN, IN EXACT DETAIL,
AND WORKING WITH THIS, MY HELPER CANNOT FAIL!!

THE HELPER WAS NOT ARRIVING UNTIL JUST BEFORE EIGHT.
SO I HAD TO RELY ON THE DRIVER, LYN. MY SOUL MATE.

OUTSIDE THE BULL' LYN WAS TO BE FOUND
AND FOOD IS TAKEN FIRST TIME AROUND

"SUNGLASS AND MORE FOOD, AT THE END OF LAP TWO, IF YOU PLEASE"
I SAID, AS I TURNED LEFT, STILL RIDING WITH EASE.

NOW NEXT TIME AROUND I WOULD GO STRAIGHT THROUGH,
IF ONLY BEFOREHAND LYN HAD KNEW.

BECAUSE SHE HAD DECIDED SUE WOULD HAND UP FOOD AND
SUNGLASSES,
DOWN THE LANE AS HER HUSBAND PASSES

I DON'T GO THAT WAY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN THERE?"
SO I RIDE STRAIGHT PAST, IN DESPAIR

WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, DEAR OLD ROY JUMPS IN HIS CAR,
AND HANDS UP WHAT I WANT BEFORE I'VE GONE TOO FAR

LYN CHASES IN CAR TO WHERE SHE THINKS I NEED HER AGAIN,
BUT SHE SHOULD HAVE STAYED PUT, SO HER JOURNEYS IN VAIN.

FOR NOW WE PASS ON THE ROAD AND SHE MUST TURN AROUND,
SO SHE GOES INTO A LAYBY AND GUESS WHO SHE FOUND?

IT WAS MY HELPER. WITH A CAMERA HELD HIGH,
FOR HE THOUGHT THAT MY PRESENCE WAS NOT YET NIGH.

LYN SAID I HAD GONE THROUGH AND THAT HE SHOULD HAVE MET HER
AT THE HALL,
SO A CHASE WAS ON TO BE AT MY BECK AND CALL

NOW I KNOW NOTHING OF THESE GOINGS ON,
AND WAS RIDING ALONG WONDERING WHERE THEY HAD GONE.

I TOOK OUT MY MOBILE AND GAVE THEM A RING,
I CAN'T GET THROUGH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ' B' THING'3

"WHAT DO YOU WANT 7" THEY SHOUT, WHEN THEY CATCH ME AT LAST,
I SAID, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE NOT BEEN GOING THAT FAST".

THEY FOUND A CONVENIENT PLACE TO STOP, BUT NO FOOD IS AT HAND,
INSTEAD. AS I PASS, A CAMERA IS PANNED

I CURSE UNDER MY BREATH AND SHOUT, "FOOD, IF YOU PLEASE!!"
IF I DON'T GET SOME SOON, I'LL BE ON MY KNEES.

WELL TIME FLIES BY WHEN YOUR ENJOYING YOURSELF,
AND ALL THIS EXERCISE IS GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

SO TO THE IVYCHURCH CIRCUIT AT LAST I ARRIVED,
WONDERING WHAT NEXT MY HELPER HAD CONTRIVED.

I KNEW THAT I WAS UP ON MY SCHEDULE BY TEN MINUTES, OR SO,
BUT ABOUT SUCH DETAILS MY HELPER DIDN'T WANT TO KNOW

"DON'T WORRY, WE'RE WITH YOU, JUST GET ON WITH THE RIDE"
"I WISH YOU WOULD S TICK TO MY INSTRUCTIONS," UNDER MY BREATH
I SIGHED

I FINISHED ONE CIRCUIT, NO HELP CAN BE SEEN,
MY INSTRUCTIONS ARE CLEAR, OUTSIDE THE PUB THEY SHOULD HAVE
BEEN

AROUND THE CIRCUIT I CONTINUED RIDING,
I WAS NOW TAKING A BIT OF A HIDING.

MY DRINK WAS LOW AND MY BOTTLES WOULD SOON BE DRY,
SO OUT CAME MY MOBILE, "WHERE ARE YOU?" I CRY.

"DON'T WORRY WE'RE BEHIND YOU, WE WILL PASS AND STOP AHEAD,"
GOD!! WHY CAN'T THEY STAY EXACTLY WHERE I SAID?

WELL I SOLDIER ON SUFFERING WITH A STRAIN IN THE LEFT LEG,
PLEASE LET ME MAKE IT TO THE FINISHING CIRCUIT, I BEG

THE LAST CIRCUIT OF IVYCHURCH I AM ABOUT TO START,
LYN'S GETTING HERSELF A COFFEE, BUT MY HELPER IS PLAYING HIS
PART.

HE IS OUTSIDE THE PUB, HAVING A CHAT,
I WANTED A SPONGE, BUT THAT IS THE END OF THAT.

A ('OUPLE MORE HOURS SLOWLY PASS BY,
I'LL BE GLAD WHEN IT IS OVER, I CANNOT DENY

ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY MILES HAVE NOW BEEN COMPLETED,
I, AT THIS POINT, WILL NOT BE DEFEATED

NOW I HAVE BEEN RIDING ON ONE LEG, FOR MANY A MILE,
BUT WHEN I PASS THE MARSHALS, I PUT ON A SMILE.

MY HELP I HAVE TOLD TO STAY WHERE THEY ARE,
FOR THE FINISHING CIRCUIT IS NOT THAT FAR

AT LAST, THANKS TO MY HELPER'S PLEAS,
I AM TURNED ONTO THIS CIRCUIT, ALMOST ON MY KNEES.

NOW IT IS AMAZING WHAT HAPPENS TO BODY AND MIND,
WHEN EVERYONE IS CLAPPING AND BEING SO KIND

FOR SUDDENLY I'M FLYING, THE FASTEST I'VE BEEN ALL DAY,
AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME, HIP HIP HOORAY"

SO IT IS THANKS TO MY HELPER AND TO LYN,
BUT THE VETS TEAM PRIZE, THE DE LAUNE DIDN'T WIN

HELP!! I NEED SOMEBODY, HELP!!

As told by Alan & Roy

THE FIRST CIRCUIT IS FINISHED. THE RIDER IS BACK AT THE BULL'.
ELEVEN MILES HAVE PAST, AND HIS DRINK BOTTLE IS STILL FULL.

HE SEES HIS HELPER WITH A NEW BOTTLE IN HIS HAND,
BUT ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE ROAD AND THAT WASN'T PLANNED.

ANOTHER CIRCUIT WITHOUT A FRESH DRINK THE RIDER KNEW HE
COULD LAST,
SO HE SHOUTED 'DON'T WORRY" AS HIS HELPER HE PAST

SECOND TIME ROUND HE HOPES HIS HELPER WILL GET IT RIGHT,
AND IN DUE COURSE THE HELPER'S CAR WAS IN SIGHT.

HOWEVER, HIS HELPER IS ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE ROAD STILL.,
AND TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, HE IS NOW AT THE BOTTOM OF THE
HILL.

A FRESH BOTTLE THE RIDER DID GET AFTER A CHASE,
SO NOW HE COULD GET ON WITH THIS LONG RACE

ANOTHER CIRCUIT WAS COMPLETED WITHOUT FURTHER ADO,
BUT WHERE IS HIS HELPER, HF HASN'T A CLUE

SO HE CONTINUED AND WONDERED WHEN HIS HELPER WOULD NEXT BE
SEEN,

AS HE WOULD LIKE A SPONGE TO MAKE HIMSELF FRESH AND CLEAN.

NOW AS HE RETURNS TO 'THE BULL' FROM THE OTHER DIRECTION,
HIS HELPER SHOULD BE WAITING WITH FOOD FOR HIS COLLECTION.

THE RIDER COULD NOT BELIEVE WHAT HE SAW NEXT,
HE WAS, I CAN TELL YOU, RATHER PERPLEXED

WHY HAD HIS HELPER CROSSED THE ROAD TO THE OTHER SIDE,
AND SO ONCE AGAIN PAST HIM HE DID RIDE

IT MUST BE SAID AT THIS TIME THAT HIS HELPER WAS DOING HIS
BEST,
AND WITHOUT HIM THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD FINISH THIS TEST.

THE RIDER CONTINUED KNOWING HIS HELPER WAS AT HAND,
EVEN THOUGH NOT WHERE HE HAD PREVIOUSLY PLANNED.

THROUGH TENTERDEN AND RYE TO CAMBER THE RIDER DID GO,
BUT, IT WAS HERE THAT HIS HELPER WAS MUCH TOO SLOW

WITH BUCKET AND A SPONGE ALL A DRIPPING,
ACROSS THE CAR PARK THE HELPER CAME A SKIPPING.
HE WAS HALFWAY TO THE ROAD WHEN HE DID AN ABOUT TURN,
FOR THE JUDGING OF SPEED THE HELPER STILL HAD A LOT TO LEARN

FOR HE HAD REALISED THAT THE RIDER WAS ABOUT TO GO PAST
AND HE KNEW THAT HE COULD NOT RUN THAT FAST.

HE CHASED IN HIS CAR AND A SPONGE THE RIDER RECEIVED
BOTH RIDER AND HELPER ARE NOW MUCH RELIEVED.

NOW WITH ALL THIS STRESS AND HARD WORK,
WHO COULD BLAME THE HELPER FOR THE NEXT LITTLE QUIRK.

IT WAS AT THE LITTLE CHEF THE RIDER SAW HIS HELPERS PARKED CAR,
AND SO HE KNEW THAT HIS HELPER COULD NOT BE THAT FAR

CERTAINLY HE WAS RIGHT IN HIS SURMISE,
BUT ADMITTED LATER THAT IT WAS A BIT OF A SURPRISE.

FOR THERE WAS HIS HELPER HAVING BREAKFAST INSIDE,
THUS LEAVING HIM TO GET ON WITH HIS RIDE

TO THE IVYCHURCH CIRCUIT THE RIDER DID ARRIVE,
ONE CIRCUIT IS DONE. THREE MORE TO SURVIVE

"A SPONGE, FOOD AND A DRINK NEXT TIME AROUND, MR HELPER,
PLEASE",
FOR THE RIDER IS SUFFERING AND HIS PAIN HE WISHED TO EASE.

CIRCUIT TWO NEARLY COMPLETED, MANY PEOPLE ARE OUTSIDE THE PUB
THE RIDER APPROACHES AND LOOKS FOR HIS HELPER AND GRUB.

WHERE ARE YOU HE SHOUTS IN PANIC AND FEAR
HOW WAS HE TO KNOW HIS HELPER WAS INSIDE GETTING A BEER.

BY NOW SOME HUNDRED MILES HAD ELAPSED,
THE RIDER IS OK BUT HOPES HIS HELPER NOT COLLAPSED

FROM THEN ON THE HELPER GOT HIS ACT TOGETHER,
THUS ENSURING THE RIDER DOES NOT GET TO THE END OF HIS TETHER

THE RIDER SAYS THANK YOU FOR THE MASSAGE HIS HELPER GAVE,
TO RELIEVE THE CRAMP AND FROM MORE SUFFERING SAVE.

FINALLY, THE RIDERS 12 HOURS CAME TO AN END,
AND THE HELPER WONDERS WHETHER HE IS STILL HIS FRIEND

THE RIDER THOUGHT PERHAPS HE WOULD RIDE ANOTHER ONE DAY,
AND THIS IS WHAT TO HIS HELPER, DID SAY.

"I'M SURE YOU GAINED EXPERIENCE FROM YOUR DAY OUT,
AND IF I RODE AGAIN I COULD RELY ON YOUR HELP, NO DOUBT" !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

I DO NOT BELIEVE IT!!!

I AM WRITING THIS BECAUSE I AM PIG REALLY PIG SICK,
I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHY BAD LUCK ON ME SHOULD PICK

I FORGOT MY SHOES BECAUSE MY AL ARM DIDN'T GO OFF,
I MEANT TO LEAVE EARLY, NOW PLEASE DON'T SCOFF

I GOT TO THE EVENT AND FOUND MY FRONT TYRE FLAT,
I WONDERED WHAT COULD HAVE CAUSED THAT

I MANAGED TO BORROW A SPARE TUBE FROM A MATE,
I THOUGHT TO MY SELF, HOW DO I GET INTO THIS STATE

I ASKED AROUND FOR SOME SHOES AND GOT HOLD OF A PAIR,
I THEN GOT TO THE LINE WITH HALF A MINUTE TO SPARE

I WAS SOON OFF AND ON MY WAY,
I FELT QUITE GOOD AND IT WAS A FINE DAY

I WAS GOING WELL AND WAS CLIMBING WITH EASE,
I HAD AT MY BACK A VERY SLIGHT BREEZE

I WAS FIVE MILES INTO THE RACE WHEN I HEARD A CLICK,
I THOUGHT "OH NO!!" AND FELT QUITE SICK

I LOOKED DOWN IN HORROR AT MY RIGHT CRANK,
I SAW THAT IT WAS COMING LOOSE AND ON THIS I DIDN'T BANK.

I HOPED THAT IT DIDN'T GET ANY WORSE,
I THEN WITH MY LUCK BEGAN TO CURSE.

I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHY THIS IS HAPPENING TO ME,
I WAS NOW RIDING WITH A WOBBLY RIGHT KNEE

I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED NEXT,
I CAN TELL YOU I'M EXTREMELY VEXED.

I HIT A BUMP AND MY TRI-BARS BEGAN TO MOVE,
I KNOW I SHOULD HAVE ENSURED THEY WERE TIGHT IN THE GROOVE

I FELT I SHOULD HAVE ABANDONED THIS RACE,
I WAS BY NOW BEGINNING TO DROP OFF MY PACE.

I WAS BY MY WATCH STILL ON AN O',
I THEREFORE DECIDED TO GIVE IT A GO.

I CAME TO A ROUNDABOUT, NO MARSHAL IN SIGHT,
I THINK IT'S STRAIGHT ON, OR IS IT TO THE RIGHT?

I KNOW I SHOULD KNOW THIS COURSE WELL.
I TURNED OFF TO THE RIGHT AND FROM MY BIKE FELL.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. I HIT THE KERB I THINK, I
I GOT BACK ON MY BIKE BUT MY CHAIN HAD A BENT LINK.

I HAD GONE OFF COURSE THAT WAS FOR SURE,
I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE ANYMORE

I GAVE UP AT THIS POINT, NOT THAT I WAS LOST,
I WAS MORE CONCERNED WHAT THE DAMAGE WOULD COST.

I SLOWLY RODE BACK TO THE EVENT HQ,
I HOPED I COULD MAKE IT WITHOUT FURTHER ADO

I KNOW THAT BY NOW YOU THINK I AM PART TO BLAME,
I BET YOU NOW WANT TO KNOW MY NAME

I HAVE DECIDED THAT YOU SHOULD NOT KNOW,
I BET YOU THINK I'M MR --- -

ANON (IN FEAR OF RETRIBUTION
SOD IT!! MALCOLM ADAMS

CLUB HILL CLIMB

As the annual club hill-climb takes place this month, I thought the following might be of interest.

The club held its first hill-climb in 1902 and there have been trophies for the hill-climb championship from 1932. The D P Knight Cup was succeeded in 1936 by a series of trophies presented by Jack Johnson, landlord of the Red Cow public house, which was the club's headquarters for a time. The Tomlinson Cup, presented by Dave Tomlinson, has been the hill-club trophy since 1972.

Eight hills have been used: Russell Hill (1902), Polhill (1903), Marlpit Lane (1904-05), Tilburstow (1906-29), Thaw Pit Shaw Hill (1930), Bagden Hill (1931-32), Brasted (1933-59), Titsey (from 1961).

I was chatting to Peter Baigent, who is a member of Blackheath Harriers and has a great interest in Knockholt and the surrounding area, having lived there all his life, about the various hills used for the hill climbs and he supplied me with what I think is some interesting information.

"I have looked into the question of when Polhill was constructed and, as I suggested, it was in the early 19th century. The new road, authorised in 1836/37 (6/7 William IV), was at the time considered to be a dramatic piece of construction. Leaving the old road at the Pratts Bottom turning, it ran through almost untouched countryside; it did not even follow a footpath, rejoining the old road again at the Rose and Crown in Dunton Green. Included in the route was the splendidly engineered descent of the chalk downs, which today bears the name Polhill. The Polhill Arms public house was built at the same time, presumably to support the traffic now passing along the new road.

Prior to this the Turnpike road, established in 1749, ran from Dunton Green to Knockholt via Star Hill, then known as Morants Court Hill, and thence down Rushmore Hill to Pratts Bottom, joining what we now know as the A21 to Farnborough. The earlier packhorse road passed through Chipstead and then up to Knockholt via a very steep ascent, known locally as Breakneck, passing close to Chevening House. This road was closed in the 1700s and only a footpath remains, hence the reason for two dead-end roads at Chevening Church and the one leading south from Knockholt Pound.

What we now call Old Polhill was part of the lane leading from Otford to Halstead via Twitton - it would have been too steep for carriages. For this reason it may well have

been used for hill climbs, particularly as it would have had much less traffic than the main road."

I would have thought that the vast majority of club members over the years would have at some time ridden up both Polhills, whether training, racing or just pottering, and some have even raced up Star Hill; others have pushed their bikes up Breakneck but only a select few have broken a training ride spending a few hours in the Polhill Arms discussing diets, training methods, tactics, equipment etc and perhaps having a game of darts, before wobbling back home.

Brian Saxton

'BACK TO RUSSIA' - Or 'Why I was not at the OMA 10, as expected'

I write this on response to urgings from Brian Saxton, and reminders from Kav, to put pen to paper about my experiences in Russia and/or France. My sincere apologies to those who will be bored by this, as I suspect I would. I have tried to keep it short but, in all honesty, that is not in my nature. As Kav says of me in my younger days " I remember you! You were very thin and you talked a lot" Sadly I am no longer thin- - - -

Passport control at Moscow Sheremetyevo airport was even more chaotic than I remembered, with only half the booths working and the content of two other incoming flights still waiting to be processed. However, past experience paid off as, with a couple of other veteran travellers, I rushed to join the Russian national ladies handball team as a passport control booth was opened specially for them. I left customs and was relieved to see a small man in the distance holding up a large envelope with my name on it, it also contained the tickets for the next part of the adventure.

The journey to Moscow's second airport, Vnukovo, was uneventful, except that we had to wait 15 minutes for the lifting of the closure of the motorway - the president of North Korea was visiting! I had forgotten just what internal flights in Russia are like; it was 18 months since I had left Moscow and, as the ancient airplane struggled to get off the ground on it's way to Rostove on Don, I reflected on the fact that this early 1980's model had flow around 2000 extra kilometres, every day, since I departed!

It was close to midnight, when I arrived at the Hotel Rostov, none of the hotel staff spoke English, but one of them made me a cup of coffee. The written information in the room was all in Russian, with the exception of the warning - in bold type, that if I had anyone else in my room after 11.00 pm., I would be charged for an extra night's accommodation! I managed to sleep some and was up by 6.45. Rostov is warm in August, so it was not too bad shaving and showering with cold water. Hot water in Russia tends to be supplied free in Russian cities but it is not unusual for this to switched off for short periods in the summer.

Finding the breakfast room was the next challenge, eventually detecting the converted bedroom from the smell of it. I have some Russian words but, on this occasion, not enough of the right ones and breakfasted on orange juice, coffee (with sugar whether I like it or not) and a small cake. Bread was not available unless I

ordered sausage as well! I had been assured that my lack of ability in Russian would not be a problem in Rostov, but I was beginning to see that life over the coming two weeks was going to be difficult.

For the journey to the Consultancy offices, an affable Irishman joined me. Des was working on a financial project, distantly connected with what I was to do. I will not go into details of my own consultancy project, other than to say that the impression I had from my new Russian colleagues was that "since I was such a clever fellow to be called a 'foreign expert' I could work out everything for myself."

I was very grateful to Des, who showed me where I could find some lunch that first day. However he failed to mention that this was the only meal of the day for him. I ate with him for the next three days learning to 'stoke up' at lunch time then share his evening regime of a five kilometre walk followed by lots of Russian beer and pistachio nuts. Des left for another project on the following Thursday. I lost a whole afternoon's work, whilst eight of us celebrated the completion of his project, with bread sausage cheese and three bottles of vodka.

After his departure I decided to work through lunch hours and dine in the evening, finding two restaurants that had some English on their menus. Southern Russians seem to be more out-going than their northern counterparts and I had some interesting experiences as various people either invited themselves to sit at my table or got the waiter to ask me to sit at theirs. However language is necessary for valid communications and I have only vague understanding of their intentions plus a bundle of Russian business cards and illegible hand written notes.

I had caught up with my work schedule on the final Thursday and was briefing the Russian consultants and a client representative for their activities over the coming week when, at 3pm on Friday, bread cheese and two bottles of Vodka were produced to 'celebrate' my departure. I protested that I would be back to finish the project but to no avail. I went to bed for a couple of hours before I went out to look for my evening meal.

My flight, Rostov to Sheremetyevo, was for 10.30 on the Saturday morning. When I arrived at the airport, I was slightly concerned to find that, 65 minutes before take off, check was not open and that there was no sign of my flight number on the departures board. My driver assured me that all was well and that in five minutes or so registration would commence. He then weighed my luggage and told me that I was 15 Kilos overweight.

At 40 minute before scheduled take off, I took matters in my own hand and found the flight announcer. I showed her my ticket to which she said firmly NIET! This followed by a very long story in Russian. I hauled up my Driver to listen - he wrote '11.30a.m.' on the front of my ticket; he then disappeared saying that he would be back shortly - or something.

As 10.30 arrived with nothing about Moscow in any of the announcements that I could understand, I went from one ticket kiosk to another, seeking someone who would understand either English or French. Eventually I was directed to one of the back offices where a lady understood English but answered only in Russian. From

her I discovered that my flight had been cancelled and that I had been transferred to a flight to Vnokovo , leaving at 1300.

I was not able to contact any one to change the airport at which a taxi driver will meet me; I hoped that he would have the wit to work it out. I was able to contact former Russian colleagues in Moscow to postpone our planned get together to later in the day. At 11.20 my Rostov driver reappeared to see me through check-in. I am fairly sure that he drew attention to my luggage being overweight and I got charged US\$10 for this infringement.

Having worked my way through three sets of security checks I climbed on to the bus to the plane; it is another one that should really be in a vintage collection. Above the normal seat numbers were large hand written, different, seat numbers. Even the Russians were confused but, near the front end, we decided that the hand written numbers must be the ones to use. After 10 minutes it emerged that there were not enough places at the back of the plane, so we all move forward three places. Chaos still reigns and another ten minutes pass before it is discovered that two people are on the wrong plane. Take-off, surprisingly, was only ten minutes late, Russians are good at crisis.

No driver waits for me at Vnokovo. While waiting for my luggage to come off the plane I started negotiations with a taxi driver and pull him down from \$140 to \$100 for what he claims is a 60 to 80-kilometre trip. I suspect that I am still being ripped off but at least we understand each other. My self-satisfaction at having sorted out transport was dented when, after we got into the car, the driver had to check the map to work out how to get to my destination. An hour and twenty minute later we arrived at the Holiday Inn and relative civilisation. It is 4.15 pm and my friends arrive as I do.

The rest of the journey back to Geneva and my home in France was relatively easy. However on Sunday 2nd September, as riders of the OMA '10' exchange excuses, I will be checking in for the second half of my Rostov project.....

Clif Pendleton 28.08.2001

THE LAST DAY FOR COPY TO BE
INCLUDED IN THE NEXT ISSUE IS
WEDNESDAY 26 September 2001

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