



The official Team Cambridge Newsletter – October 2009
(Incorporating Mud Munchers Monthly)
(Incorporating Tarmac Terriers Tribune)
(Incorporating Angie’s Antics)



A Mud Munching Mayhem – Special Edition

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Team Cambridge Training Diaries

The Mud Hamsters

Simon (Lightning) Bowden:- running his LED rig sourced from a market stall in Shanghai or somewhere, a couple of evening rides confirm his pace. Favourite for the distance.

Kevin (Floats like a Butterfly) Parker:- Well lit, coming on to form with his balance and handling skills well to the fore. Fancied on good going.

Andrew (Hamster) Hammond:- Not seen on the gallops lately, let's hope he's put in some turbo time. Won at recent outing (on the horses, not a bike).

The Mud Munchers (not the B team!)

Paul (Daddy Log) Millard:- From a wooden hut somewhere in Milton, his lighting rig fashioned from an Enigma machine and two Duracell bunnies turned night into day – makes one proud to be British.

Steve Kee-O:- He's been as rare as an Irish snake this season, but Si spotted him in the forest so we're confident of an appearance... If he hadn't bought that dodgy battery from Jeff, yer man might have spotted Simon!

Mark (29er) Tallack:- With his shed time vastly exceeding his riding time, he should be a cert for the cleanest bike award. Nearly everyone I meet on a mountain bike knows him, so he must have been out recently.

(Champagne) Charlie Tallack:- Nearly new discs and wheels have brought the old-skool Salsa into the 1990's – who needs a Large Hadron Collider full suspension frame when it's ankle deep mud? Having now secured some decent lights, should at least avoid getting dropped, lost and falling into despair.

Take the Sloe Road...

Well chaps, after many years of fiddling about on bits of bridleway here and there, the pressing need to get fit for D2D forced me to drag out my 1:50,000 Landranger and join nearly all the bits together. And, it made for a great leg-busting morning. Let me say this just once: if you ride this on rigid forks then wrist-ache can only be due to one thing!

The Route

I won't go into too much detail, so as not to bore the time triallists among us (Wot, no roundabouts?), and also to avoid the risk of over-use and overzealous landowners. In fact, all of the route is nearly legit, on proper bridleways or unclassified roads. There is only about a couple of miles of tarmac in over two hours riding, and in this part of the world that can't be bad. I guessed the mileage to be about 20, and Google Earth says 21.37. There's another loop that adds 7 miles of off-road and another 4 on tarmac to return home, with a last little 30 metre leg-snapper of a climb to finish off.

The second loop is similar to the first, with wide tracks for the most part and nothing unduly technical for a lumbering oaf like me. However, you can cover some decent mileages and for long stretches you'd be hard pressed even to hear any traffic. There's some worthy longish climbs and similarly long fast downhill – if you prang it on this hard-baked clay, you know it's gonna hurt!

A couple of hard sessions on this route, and anyone could show those full-suspension fairies at Thetford how to ride cross-country!

The Route in Detail

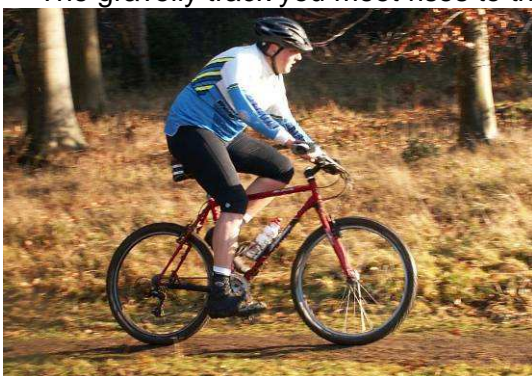
Leave CCT's mansion and head for the water tower at the East end of Balsham, then sneak down the farm track/ footpath down the hill to the West Wrattling – Bartlow road. On tarmac to the Roman Road at Mark's grave, then via the corner of Borley Wood to the Linton road. The bridleway has been ploughed up on the first part, so I consider it OK to use the farm tracks which are wide and firm.

On through Linton, past the cricket pitch and towards Little Linton, then hard left across the A1307 and up the gravelly climb past Camgrain up to Catley Park. At the top, jink left-right and then down a sheep-track cum stream bed towards Crave Hall Farm. This bit is the most likely to get muddy in winter, but this year it has been dry and firm going throughout. The next bit is tarmac by-road, scarcely used except by stockbrokers en-route from Waitrose to their weekend retreats.

Hard left at a side turn bring a stiff climb on tarmac to a solitary former farm. Not much farming here, judging by the posh cars and plummy voices praising this year's crop of sloes for the sloe gin, oblivious to my presence on the other side of the hedge...Perhaps hedge funds have been redefined for the new world economy?

A wide grassy bridleway leads under the power lines to the peri-track of Hadstock Common aerodrome, where the old control tower remains to await the return of the Eighth Air Force. Following the concrete track round to the road, crossing over brings you to the area called Bowsers, once the technical area of the aerodrome. Another farm road brings you to the edge of Ashdon.

The gravelly track you meet rises to the left, then steeply downwards to the edge of Bartlow,



near where the old railway route crosses the road into the village. Go into Bartlow, turn left at Blackditch Barns and right at the crossroads, along the road towards Shudy Camps. A left turn onto a bridle way takes you onto the Harcamlow Way, towards Cardinal's Green. Don't turn off too early though, or you'll waste ten hard minutes grinding up a grassy track only to get redirected by the (very polite) gamekeeper on his quadbike. Doesn't make much difference to the partridges though, 'cos they still get in the way whether you're on the right route or not!

The top bit of this stretch is fun the other way going downhill, as it's a gravel filled V-shaped path that you can ride as fast as your nerve will allow. For the sake of this route though, it's uphill and not too bad as the gravel keeps the mud at bay in winter. In Cardinal's Green, the road and the inhabitants are as sleepy as you'd want on a Sunday morning, until you have to cross the A1307 again to get into Horseheath. Do this with care, unless your loved ones are keen on roadside flower-arrangements...

Just off the road, the bisected lane has an option favoured by horses, that is a 3 foot drop into a muddy patch of hoof-prints. If you want technical, try this, otherwise duck under the overhanging hedge and ride the tarmac path to the road. In Horseheath, ride on the road up past the church, until just before the top of the climb you reach the Roman Road again. Turn left, and it's a wide and fast grassy trail all the way back to Mark's Grave, with some really hair-raising downhill and a couple of short climbs to pay for it.

Across the road, the Roman Road continues all the way to Cambridge, but after half a mile there is a horrible rutty bit which is impassable in winter. Luckily, a right turn at the beginning of this brings you onto another well-kept track leading right back to Balsham.

Stop Press!

Team Cambridge Mud Hamstering gains a mascot!

After all those weeks of training and preparation (eh?) only one thing was missing from our team outfit (besides the race jerseys & lights!) and that had to be a real live mascot.

However, by chance I was driving home from work one evening when I spotted a little white object in the road – too slow to be a mouse and with no tail. I picked it up and took it home in my lunch bag, before a door-to-door search for the owners revealed that this albino Russian hamster had been “set free” by its owners. Out came the hamster cage from the loft, following the departure of its previous incumbent after a full and happy life of shredding curtains, carpets and most other soft furnishings, and he, she or it is enjoying her new home at a (hopefully) safe distance from the puppy.

As we don't know the name of this creature, he she or it has been variously called “Lucky”, “Sumo”, “Snowy”, “Sooty” or “It's not staying!”

However, for the purposes of this exercise he, she or it shall be called “Andrew” and will become an inspiration to all those who aspire to pointless expenditure of energy in the middle of the night.

Bottoms up!

(Champagne) Charlie Tallack



Mud Sweat and Gears Sunday 20th September 09

Well it all sounded so nice on the website when I entered the race.....

“Incorporated within Havoc on the Hill off-road family bike day Sportessex and Trailnet in conjunction with Langdon Hills Country Park, Gateway Cycling and Essex Cycling Club are proud to present round three of the Mud, Sweat and Gears British Cycling Eastern Region MTB Series. Langdon Hills Country Park is an ideal venue for mountain biking: offering a scenic combination of woodland, open fields, forest paths and singletrack. The varied terrain offers pleasant surroundings for the recreational cyclists whilst providing a physically challenging circuit for the competitive riders.”

I would just turn up with my mountain bike ride round the woods for two hours and then head home. WRONG. What they failed to mention was the lung bursting, leg ripping climbs that seemed to be nearly vertical! There were three such climbs on each lap. On one of the descents there were so many tree roots it was like riding down a staircase!

Warm sunny conditions made for a dusty dry course that created the inevitable fast start. I managed to hang on to Simon B's back wheel for half a lap then I decided that he would do better with out me! (yup dropped again) I went on to complete 6 laps in around 2 and a quarter hours to place myself 60th out of 107 finishers. It sounds a bit better if I tell you it was 30th in the senior category.

Simon Bowden did his usual good performance racing round to complete 7 laps to give him an overall placing of 25th and tenth place as a vet. Also riding his first MTB race was 13 year old Jake Bowden. Jake, proudly showing the wounds received the previous day from a skateboarding accident collected a few more knocks and bruises on the way round but still managed to finish his 40 minute race in sixth overall and claim 4th placed juvenile. Well done Jake.

Report by Kevin Parker



Tarmac Terriers Tribune

EAVTTA 10 miles TT E/2 Aug 15th

Just three club members on the start sheet for this event, there was a strong south westerly wind blowing which made for a slow slog out to Four Went Ways Alan Kidd rode the course in 24.12 with Tony Clarke recording 27.01 followed by Sue Clarke in 28.27. Winner of the event was not recorded.

National VTTA & ECCA 30m Championship E2/30 Aug 30th

A bright sunny morning with a strong south westerly wind blowing which made a hard ride to the turn, but fast on the way back. Alan Kidd recorded 1.12.57 for the 30 miles with Tony Clarke riding in 1.19.28. Sue Clarke the only other club member competed in 1.24.25. The winner was Peter Balls (West Suffolk Whs) 1.03.16

Victoria Pro-Lite CC 10.2m TT E1/10a Aug 29th

Our intrepid reporter records that for once it was a nice day, mostly sunny but there was however a brisk westerly wind. Tony Clarke did a 27.29 with Sue Clarke riding the course in 29.42 Second claim members Sue Fenwick (Crest CC) rode to a 26.47 and Nick Jackson (CCC) 23.55. The winner was Paul Smith (PCA Ciclos Uno) with a time of 22.05

ECCA 12 Hour TT E2/12 23rd Aug

This was the first twelve hour TT that Tony Clarke had entered in many years. The event started at 5.31am with Tony having a start time of 06.18. With the temperature at around 27 degrees C and the wind getting stronger and stronger Tony began to struggle particularly as he was becoming to get saddle sore. After 100 miles and 5hr 25 mins Tony decided to climb off he said that he just couldn't face another 6 and a quarter hours in the saddle. This means that the Team Cambridge BBAR Trophy remains unclaimed for another year.

Angie's Antics

Like Rossi, Angie's training started after she had been with us for only four days. Until she had been fully inoculated she had visited places like Tesco's, garden centres, and the Grafton Centre. She has since been on two busses and watched trains at both Huntingdon and Cambridge stations. We spent a weekend at Sandringham with her in the caravan, on the Sunday we went to Hunstanton where she was introduced to a crowd of motorcyclists. She was completely unfazed by all the noise. Last Saturday she was one of five guide dog puppies helping to raise funds at the Pumpkin Fare at Soham. She is already learning to Sit & wait and do Down & stay's.



Very Apt



Sit and wait

Off He Goes!



Good luck to 'Le Stick' (Ian Millard) off to University for a while.

Forthcoming Events

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| Oct 3-4th | Dawn to Dusk MTB event Thetford Forest |
| Oct 11th | Hill Climb Barrington Hill 10.00am |
| Oct 18th | Team Cambridge Open 10m TT Barton 8.30am |
| Oct 19th | Cheese & Wine evening Tony & Sue's Milton 8.00pm |
| Oct 26th | Circuit Training Starts Perne Road 7.30pm |
| Oct 26th | Committee Meeting Perne Road 8.30pm |
| Nov 23rd | AGM 8.00pm (please attend) |