

VTTA North Midlands

The racing year: 2022

Wednesday 23rd February

At the very top of the first page of open events in the 2022 Handbook are listed the Ely & District CC 25 on 13th Feb, followed last Saturday by the Coalville Whs 10. As I recall, here in Buxton it snowed for much of that day. Surely the season hasn't started already?

It appears that it has! And North Mids' riders Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) and Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) were in action on the sporting A10/34 between Griffydam and Osgathorpe, taking in Breedon-on-the-Hill. What brilliant place names.

It was really cold, wet, and proper windy. Andy reported some sections of block headwind and others in which he spun out. He had a testing time, with a rear light failure and consequently a late start. I might have been inclined to give it up as a bad job. But these two are hardcore.

Finishing in 5th place, Ady recorded 23-36. Andy did 24-22 for 9th spot. Joshua Knowles was quickest on the day, in 22-10, with Andrea Winkless fastest woman in 30-20. A tough course on a tough day.

More North Mids vets emerged from hibernation at the weekend, riding Sheffrec CC's 2-up 25, Matlock CC's hilly 25, and the M&DTTA 10.

Wednesday 9th March

Sheffrec CC's event was cut to 13.2 miles, due to roadworks. Nevertheless, Saturday afternoon's fresh north easterly across the exposed roads around Hatfield made for a tough test. Daryl May of the promoting club teamed-up with Adam MacHan to record 31-56 for 5th spot, at a shade under 25mph. Dominic Watts (Veloviewer) rode with Robert Fowler, recording 35-14 for 13th place. The fastest pairing was brothers John and David Brearley, in 28-22, averaging almost 28 mph, whilst the quickest mixed pair was Sarah Lewthwaite and Matthew Asquith in 32-59.

Matlock CC's hilly was run off over the full 25 miles. Although it probably felt a lot further, given the hills. And, it was really cold and windy, with a puddle on Moor Lane out of Youlgreave that was more like a pond. There were excellent performances by North Mids riders: Allan Wailoo (7 Hills CC) 2nd in 1-06-57, Steve Gibson (Peak RC) 3rd with 1-07-07, and Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) 6th in 1-08-09. David Fellows, winner of last year's Buxton CC mountain time trial, opened his current season with a win, in 1-03-22. Kelly Murphy rode strongly to record 1-10-02 as fastest female.

In the M&DTTA 10, on the J2/3 course in Cheshire, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) got her season started with 33-51. There were no super-fast times, as there was a tough headwind all the way up the A50 towards Knutsford. Junior rider Harry Jordan took top spot overall from Toby Williams by just 1 second, in 22-08. Anna Weaver was just ahead of Lucy Rogers, with 25-06, to win the women's event.

Wednesday 16th March

Returning to the J2/3 course in Cheshire for Saturday's M&DTTA 10, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) was not far off three minutes faster than the previous weekend, recording 31-12. Jack Levick was quickest, with a 30 mph ride, in a blistering 20-00, one minute quicker than Alistair Ribbands. Lucy Rogers was the fastest woman with a strong ride in 23-52.

Also on Saturday, Steve Gibson (Peak RC) rode the Hull City RC 2-up 25 with clubmate Phil Holwell. The event was run between Beverley and Driffield in the East Riding of Yorkshire, on the edge of the Wolds. Results are not yet published, but hopefully should be available for next week's e-mail.

Wednesday 23rd March

In last Saturday afternoon's 10 on the V212 course south of Boroughbridge, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 24-41 whilst Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) was not that far behind with 25-05 and finishing as 2nd fastest woman. Maddie Leech did a stunning ride, smashing the women's course record, with 21-58, aged just 18. It was a day for young riders, as junior Matthew Cole was quickest overall, in 20-25.

Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) rode to a fine 1-10-59 for 11th place in Pendle Forest CC's Circuit of Ingleborough, averaging just over 22 mph on what is a really tough course. It was very windy, with a block headwind to Settle, crosswinds to Ribbleshead, then a fast ride back to Ingleton. Former BBAR Richard Bideau from the promoting club was fastest on the day, with 1-03-10, whilst Joanna Cebrat was first of the women, in 1-20-17.

Steve Gibson (Peak RC) had a cracking ride in the RTTC National Road Bike Championships on Sunday morning on the A46-based A25/34 course, south of Newark, with 57-35 to win his age category on what was a cold and windy day. Phil Williams did a storming ride with 52-34 to top the leader board. Tamsin Miller was well ahead of multiple national champion Alice Lethbridge, with 1-00-17.

There is a nice-looking forecast for this coming weekend's events!

Thursday 31st March

What lovely weather it was for racing last weekend, albeit with some very cold mornings.

Stretford Wheelers 10 was held on Saturday afternoon on the J4/20 course north of Holmes Chapel, running towards Knutsford. Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) did 31-57. Maddie Leech was 8th overall and fastest woman, in 22-23, which is very rapid on that course. Alistair Ribbands was quickest of the men, in 21-04, having already had one win and a 2nd place on this course this year.

Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) and Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs) were separated by 14s, with 24-15 and 24-29, respectively in Coalville Whs 10 on the sporting A10/34 near Breedon on the Hill, on Saturday, whilst Mick Allen (Team Jewson) rode 27-12. Ollie Hucks did a fantastic near-30 mph ride, with 20-21, to win the men's event, whilst Alison Fovargue was quickest woman, in 25-37.

On a very chilly Sunday morning, Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) made a strong start to his season; 3rd overall and fastest vet on scratch in Crewe Clarion Whs sporting event held over a shortened course near Audlem, south of Nantwich, with 32-24. Ryan Mullen's brother, Sean, topped the leader board with 29-26. Keri Parton was fastest woman, in 35-41.

Thursday 7th April

Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) usually takes a few races before he's firing on all cylinders. However, in his first race of the season - Withington Whs 25 on the tricky J2/9 course in Cheshire, last Saturday - Keith placed 4th overall with 54-56, fastest veteran, and not far behind the quickest ride of the day, done by Alistair Ribbands in 54-16. And Keith won Matlock CC's '5' on Tuesday evening. A really solid start! In her first 25, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode 1-20-20, whilst Lynsey Astles was fastest woman, in 1-06-39.

In Vive le Velo's 10 on Sunday morning, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 24-27. It was a very cold morning, but on what is now one of Yorkshire's faster 10 courses: the V7113 around Market Weighton. Riders from the promoting club won both the men's and women's events: prolific winner

Adam Duggleby clocking 19-16, whilst Louise Scupham continued a fine run of form which saw her come 2nd and 1st in her previous two events of the season, to finish in 23-24.

Thursday 14th April

Last Saturday's 10 on the A46-based A10/3 course, promoted by Melton Olympic CC, saw the three teammates from Lindsey Roads CC - Keith Ainsworth, Stuart Wells and Andy Thomas – finish in 21-07, 21-07, and.....21-07. Uncanny or what!? Joint 14th place too. Michael Gill produced a superb 19-00 to record the fastest ride of the day, in what were tough conditions; cold with a stiff crosswind. Amber Harding was quickest woman in 21-54, averaging over 27 mph.

Steve Gibson rode Darlington CC's 25 on Sunday morning, finishing just over the hour in 1-00-18, albeit on his road bike. Marcel Schubert was top of the leader board, in 50-52, whilst Sophie Heighton was quickest woman in 1-09-28 and not yet a junior.

On the much faster V236/1 course, VTTA Yorkshire ran their 25 on the A168/A19 around Thirsk, also on Sunday morning. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) was well under the hour, with 58-22. Rob Barnard (Team Cystic Fibrosis) was also under, just, in 59-47. There were two exceptional performances by the fastest man and woman: George Peden finishing almost five minutes ahead of the field, in 46-57; whilst Abi Smith was 5th overall, with 53-50. What times!

Nice weather is forecast for the Easter weekend. Honestly!

Wednesday 27th April

Two weeks' report in one.

Last weekend saw the year's only event on the A10/14A course, on the A1 between Long Bennington and Great Gonerby. Not long ago this was a well-used course on Saturday afternoons and evenings. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) had a rapid ride, finishing in 20-59; doesn't that read and sound so much better than 21-00 or 21-01! Clubmate Anthony Nash recorded 22-22, which also scans well. Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) rode 23-29 and Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) did 26-22. It was a tough day, with a strong wind. Richard Oakes was quickest on the day, in 19-36. Unfortunately, no women started.

In the Manchester & District Ladies CA Invitation 10 for men, on Saturday, Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) was 4th overall, in 22-19, also in very windy conditions, and with the wind in an unfavourable direction for the J4/20 course. David Williams did the fastest ride, in 21-05. In the Women's event, Lucy Rogers was quickest, in 24-33.

Also on this windy Saturday, Otley CC held their 10 on the V212 course which runs parallel to the A1(M), south of Boroughbridge. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 24-25. Fast man Adam Duggleby won the men's event by just 1 second, in 19-46. The women's event saw a superb ride by Abi Smith, recording 21-56, which would have been good enough for 5th place in the men's event.

Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC), Paul Heggie (Birdwell Whs) and Patrick Giblin (Rotherham Whs CC) rode Sunday morning's Team Sheffield 10 on the O10/5, recording 25-35, 27-25 and 29-41, respectively. It was cold and there was a very tough headwind to the turn at Worksop. Ian Guilor was quickest, in 21-35, whilst Josie Smith was just outside a 25 mph ride, with 24-05, and fastest woman.

The previous Easter weekend was blessed with good weather.

On Bank Holiday Monday in the Manchester BC 10 on the Chapel-en-le-Frith bypass, J10/1, Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) did 24-45. Tracy Gregory and Anne Haslam, also Buxton CC, rode 30-47 and 31-27, respectively. Junior rider Amy Loftus was quickest woman, in 25-02, whilst Gavin McCloskey-Lambert was fastest man, in 20-40.

Easter Sunday morning was Vive le Velo's 25 south of Bridlington, won overall by Adam Duggleby and three minutes faster than the next rider, in 49-32. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) was well under the hour, in 58-43. In the women's event, Louise Scupham was quickest, in 59-32.

Easter Saturday saw the VTTA National 15 mile Championships take place on the J15E course near Knutsford. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) had a very rapid ride, with 32-57, for 8th place on actual time. Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) did 35-37 for 20th spot. Richard Oakes took the men's championships on actual and standard, with a ride of 30-28. Deborah Moss also won both categories for the women, in 35-37. The weather conditions were excellent for the time of year, which is more than can be said for the road surface in that part of the world.

Also on Easter Saturday, Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs) rode 22-29 in Sleaford Whs Charity 10, on an out and back course to the south of Sleaford. Jack Levick did the quickest ride of the day, with 19-50, whilst Evgeniya Righini-Brand was fastest woman, in 26-16.

On Good Friday, Mick Allen (Team Jewson) set a new National Age Group Record at 15 miles, aged 75, with 35-19 in Cambridge CC's event on the fast F2/15 course. Mick took a 54 second chunk out of the previous record, set by Ron Back. Nice one! George Fox had a very quick ride, at an average speed of 31.5 mph, and well clear of the rest of the field, in 28-34. Laura Davies was fastest woman, in 33-08, a shade over 27 mph.

Again on Good Friday, City Road Club (Hull) held their 10 on the V714 course between Gilberdyke and Howden, scene for the National 10 Championships in August. Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) did 23-23, just a smidgeon faster than Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) in 23-27, whilst Patrick Giblin (Rotherham Whs CC) rode 29-19. Jack Levick took his first win of the weekend, in 19-50, equaling his time the following day. Beth Grogan was quickest woman, in 25-06.

Finally, in Buxton CC's mountain time trial, on Good Friday, and Round 2 of CTT's Merlin Cycles Classic Series, Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) took to the hills of Staffordshire for two laps of a course between Longnor and Flash (reputedly the highest village in England, at 1519 feet). In contrast to last year's rain-lashed event, the weather was good, although with an unwelcome headwind on the most exposed stretch across the tops. In the category open to any bike, Andy was 6th male vet on actual time and 2nd on standard, with 1-03-34 for the 22 miles. In that category, Paul Pardoe was fastest, with 57-48, with quickest woman being Christina Wiekak, in 1-04-18. Tracy rode the road bike category, finishing in 1-33-47, and in which Jude Taylor was fastest with 56-31, with quickest woman being Anna Weaver in 1-09-31.

Thursday 5th May

Nice weather for racing last weekend.

On Saturday afternoon, Rossington Wheelers 10 on the O10/1 between Hatfield Woodhouse and Blaxton saw some very quick rides and a good turnout of North Mids vets. Although closer inspection reveals that it was 9.5 rather than 10 miles.....nevertheless, there were still many fast rides. Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) placed 5th with 20-15 at an average speed of 28.2 mph, club mate Andy Thomas just five seconds slower in 20-20, and Andy Nash (also, Lindsey Roads CC) riding 21-47. Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) did 22-03, Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) 22-22, Paul Mapletoft

(Kiveton Park CC) 22-58, Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC) 23-12, Mick Allen (Team Jewson) 23-22, and Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) 23-29. Jack Levick was quickest overall, in 18-52, whilst Cheryl Simmons was the quickest and only woman in 26-44.

Tracy Gregory warmed-up for Matlock CC's 10 early on Sunday morning (start time 07-32), with a slightly later start of 8-02 on Saturday morning in Manchester Wheelers 10 on the J2/1 between Chelford and Knutsford. Still, it's a bit of shock to the system to be riding 10s at that time of day. Tracy did 33-26. Alistair Ribbands continued his strong start to the season, with the win in 20-37. Lucy Rogers was fastest woman, in 24-02.

Early on Sunday morning, with the first rider off at 07-31, Matlock CC held their 10 on the A10/16 between Darley Dale and Bakewell. It was chilly, but with drying roads and little wind. Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) was just one second behind the winner and team mate Tom Thornely who made a superb return to racing in his first event after a serious injury last Summer. Buxton CC were out in force for this event, with Andrew Stokes riding 23-02, Chris Lea 23-39, Miles Haslam 25-36, and Tracy Gregory 31-10 on her road bike. Fastest woman was Buxton CC's Liz Batt, in 25-41.

A little later on Sunday morning, Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) rode her first 25 of the season, Darlington CC's event on the T254/1R alongside the A1(M), taking top spot as fastest woman, in 1-05-11. A good morning's work! Marcel Schubert of the promoting club put in the quickest ride, in 52-28.

Thursday 12th May

Last Saturday the main events for North Mids vets were Sheffrec CC's 25 on the O25/11 at Hatfield Woodhouse, and the Dukinfield 50 on the J4/9 near Middlewich in Cheshire.

In the Sheffrec event, Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was 4th overall in 53-48. Not far behind was clubmate Keith Ainsworth, recovering after a bad accident but still taking 6th place with 54-23. Keith rides the VTTA National 50 Championships on Sunday. Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) was just over 27 mph, in 55-22. Allan Wailoo (7 Hills Cycling Club) did 56-39, Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs CC) 57-48, Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) 59-19, Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) 59-34, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) 59-39, Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC) 1-01-47, Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) 1-01-54, Paul Heggie (Birdwell Whs) 1-06-42, and Patrick Giblin (Rotherham Whs CC) 1-11-52. Overall winner Andrew Whiteley finished in 52-12, whilst Maria Mulleady-Kershaw was fastest woman in 1-06-57.

Dukinfield CC's 50, a classic event with past winners including Dave Lloyd, Darryl Webster, Ian Cammish, Mark Lovatt and Andy Wilkinson, had good conditions. 17 Celsius, dry and mostly sunny, with just a light northerly wind. Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) was not far short of his fastest time on this course, finishing 3rd in 1-50-35. Clubmate Chris Lea wasn't quick enough to ensure that Buxton CC took the team prize, with 2-03-00, whilst fellow Buxton rider Tom Thornely, on the comeback trail, won the event in an impressive 1-48-51. Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) did 2-08-41. Tracy Gregory rode her road bike in her first attempt at 50 miles, recording 2-47-25. Lucy Rogers was quickest woman, in 2-05-38.

Mike Allen (Team Jewson) continued his good run of form in Saturday's ECCA 25 on the F2A course near Cambridge, recording 58-41. John Wingfield did a 31 mph ride, fastest on the day, with 48-15. Laura Davies rode an average of 27.5 mph to finish as fastest woman, in 54-38.

In Sunday morning's Drighlington BC 25 on the fast V232/1 course between Dishforth and Knayton on the A168/A19, Rob Barnard (Team Cystic Fibrosis) rode 59-06. Jack Levick almost matched John Wingfield's ride of the previous day, with 48-27 for the overall win. Emily Martin did a rapid ride as fastest woman, in 55-51.

Stockton Whs CC promoted a sporting 23 mile event on roads to the west of Middlesborough, also on Sunday morning. In the road bike event Steve Gibson (Peak Road Club) was 3rd in 55-48; an impressive 24.7 mph. Rob Carter was quickest in 52-22.

Thursday 19th May

In an impressive return after a bad training accident, Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) was close to winning the VTTA National 50 Championship in South Wales on Sunday morning, on the R50/1B course. The top three men were separated by just 31 seconds on standard, Keith losing out to Chris McNamara by just 14 seconds and recording a Vets Handicap Result of 1-37-22 and an actual time well under 1-50, for 2nd place on standard. Angela Carpenter won the women's championship, with a handicap time of 1-30-30 and an actual time of 1-49-24, which is a course record and also breaks the Welsh record by more than 2 minutes. The full results are yet to be published.

The Vets Handicap Result is based on Standards Tables but presents them as age adjustments which can be subtracted from a rider's actual time to give a Vets Handicap Result. In the case of distance events, 12 and 24 hours, the adjustment is added to the actual distance. A way of understanding the Vets Handicap Result is that it presents what each rider's time would have been if they were a 40 year old e.g. a 60 year old rider effectively gets a 20 year adjustment.

Earlier in the weekend, on Saturday afternoon, Birdwell Whs promoted their 10 on the O10/1 at Hatfield Woodhouse. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) was a fine 4th in 21-31, Mick Allen (Team Jewson) rode over 25 mph, just, with 23-59. Also riding was Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC), finishing in 24-29. Elaine Simpson was the fastest woman, in 25-34. Andrew Whiteley was quickest overall, in 20-17. In the road bike event, Dominic Watts (Veloviewer) finished in a rapid 24-03.

On faster roads in Melton Olympic CC's 25 on the A25/34, on the A46 south west of Newark, there were some very rapid rides – aided by warm conditions with light winds. Will Perrett was quickest, in 46-13; average speed 32.5 mph! Is that the fastest 25 of the year? Gretchen Zoeller was quickest woman, in 1-05-54. From the North Mids, Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) did 55-59 and Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) 1-10-29.

Ravensthorpe CC's 10 was held on the V511 course between Bubwith and Barlby, on Sunday morning. The course was shortened to 8 miles. The times are superb! Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) 19-18, with fastest male being Mark Wolstenholme, in 17-13, and fastest female Sarah Foulds with 21-46.

In a result just in, from Saddleworth Clarion CC's mountainous event last night, across the Pennines from Greenfield to Meltham and back, Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) rode 59-06 to complete this very demanding course in a shade over 18 mph. The fastest ride on the night was that of Jude Taylor, who did 47-23 at an average speed of 22.8 mph, which shows just how hard is this course. Martha Tibbot was quickest woman, in 1-00-04.

Thursday 26th May

There was a strong turnout from the Lindsey Roads CC in Lincoln Whs 10 on Saturday afternoon. The event ran on the B1398 on top of the ridge north of Lincoln, roughly parallel to Ermine Street on the A15, but on much quieter roads; course code C10/28. Stuart Wells placed 3rd overall, with a sub 21

minute ride, in 20-56. Andy Thomas and Keith Ainsworth were in the low 21s, with 21-13 and 21-23, for 5th and 8th spot respectively, whilst Anthony Nash did 22-31. Andy Newham, from the promoting club, was a little quicker, with 22-18. Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) rode 24-16 and Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) 27-22. Fast man Jack Levick was quickest on the day, in 19-32, and Nicole Wells was fastest woman, in 25-43.

Saturday evening saw the City Road Club (Hull) 25 on the V734 between Gilberdyke, Howden and Spalding on the Moor: flat, although exposed, but fortunately winds were light. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) was well under, in 58-53. Fast man Adam Duggleby broke the 30 mph barrier, with 49-32, although Espoir George Wood was not too far behind, in 50-14. The next rider was just under 56 minutes, which shows the quality of the fastest two rides. Fiona Sharp was the quickest woman, in 59-21.

Friday 27th May

A result just in, from Wednesday night's SPOCO event promoted by Rutland CC on the O17C which starts in Stoney Middleton, climbs the dale and then tackles the stiff pull up to Litton, followed by a blast down to Miller's Dale then up again for the long climb to the A6 at Taddington, a super-fast descent to Ashford in the Water, the drag up to Hassop and, finally, the little kicker up to the finish above Calver. Trevor Mayne reports that: "it was a cool, breezy evening but the showers had already stopped. The westerly wind wasn't a huge factor as riders were quite sheltered in the trees up the first long drag from Stoney Middleton, then we were blown back along the A6 which was virtually traffic-free". Hat's off to those who stayed on the extensions all the way down the A6 descent.

Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was fastest of the North Mids vets; 5th overall in 45-37 for the very hilly 17 miles. He was followed by Steve Gibson (Peak RC) 47-32, Trevor Mayne 53-24, Gordon Wordsworth (of the promoting club) with a near 3 minute PB despite being on his road bike, and Gary Clarke (Rutland CC) 1-04-41. Andy Nichols, winner of the Buxton CC Mountain Time Trial in April, was a minute ahead of second-placed rider Andrew Whiteley, in 42-30, at an average speed of 24 mph! There were no female finishers.

Wednesday 1st June

Saturday afternoon saw Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) riding the Northampton & District CA 25 over a sporting course to the south west of Cambridge. Keith did 55-25, 9th and just a few seconds slower than his time in 2021, of 55-19. At that rate he'll still be under the hour on this course at age 108. We look forward to 2067's report. 'Youngster' Ashley Cox rode superbly to record 49-08, fastest on the day by close on three minutes. Anastasia Bowler was quickest woman, in 58-57.

Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) tackled Richmond CC's mountainous 23.5 mile event on Saturday morning. Starting just west of Richmond the race heads up Swaledale as far as Grinton, then chops uphill on the long and steep climb across Grinton Moor (relabelled 'Cote de Grinton Moor' for the 2014 Tour de France, over which Jens Voigt led the way, solo), finally taking in a lengthy descent back to Richmond. What a cracking course! The T243. To be sought out or.....avoided. Andy was 8th in 1-03-47 at an average speed of just over 22 mph. Pro Harry Tanfield set a course record of 52-24, an average speed of almost 27 mph. Stephanie Stephenson was fastest woman, in 1-15-17.

East Bradford CC promoted a 15 mile event on the A168 south of Boroughbridge on Sunday morning. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) was 6th in 34-43, whilst Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 37-15. Josie Smith was fastest woman in 37-08 and Joe Wilson was quickest on the day, with 31-26.

In the 5th round of the Merlin Cycles Classic Series, on a sporting 28 mile course to the west of Penrith, Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear) was 4th Vet, in 1-10-16; the fastest being Marcel Schubert in 1-06-36, with Rachel Brown quickest woman in 1-18-02.

Wednesday 8th June

Well, that was a windy bank holiday weekend for racing!

Starting early on Friday morning and escaping the worst of the wind, was the Anfield BC 100. A classic race, on a demanding course in north-east Shropshire. Miles Haslam (Buxton CC), first North Mid vet to complete a 100 this year, recorded 4-34-12; a PB. Fastest of all was Tom Thornely (Buxton CC) continuing his impressive comeback from serious injuries in an incident last year, with 3-45-15. It was close at the sharp end of the event, with the top three riders separated by less than a minute. Champion in the National 24 on these roads in 2021 and 2019, and comp record holder at 24 hours, Christina Murray was the fastest woman, in 4-17-30.

The ride of the weekend, however, was that of Kate Allan in the Cambridge CC 50 on the F2/50 near Cambridge. This course uses a 6 mile stretch of the A428 between Madingley and Caxton, repeated four times, roughly east-west, on a well-surfaced and wide dual carriageway. But with a fresh to strong easterly wind this was a stern test, with a 6 mph and 4 tooth difference out and back. Remarkably, Kate Allan, a former triathlete, rode the 4th fastest time ever by a woman, in 1-45-58, for 7th place overall. She's down to ride the National 50 at the end of the month and Hayley Simmonds 1-42-20 comp record could be under threat, either from Kate or perhaps 2021's National 50 champion Joanna Patterson. Also making-up the field in this Saturday afternoon event were Chris Lea (Buxton CC) and Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs), finishing in 1-59-11 and 1-59-19, respectively. Despite the wind, Matt Smith was one of two riders under 1-40, in 1-39-09, the other being VTTA 50 Champion Chris McNamara; both many minutes in front of the 3rd-placed rider.

Also afflicted by the wind was Saturday afternoon's VTTA East Midlands 25 on the A25/34 on the A46 south-west of Newark. As with the F2/50, there is little shelter. As a consequence, Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) was exactly three minutes slower than his last outing on this course, recording 55-21. Club mate Andy Thomas did 56-22. Sheehan Quirke (VC Veldrijden) rode 58-30,

Anthony Nash was uncharacteristically over the hour in 1-00-19, whilst Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) was four minutes or so down on her usual times on this course, in 1-04-22. Tough conditions, so hat's off to all those completing the event. Grant Bigham was fastest overall in 51-43, whilst Fay Barrington was quickest woman, in 1-03-03.

The wind hadn't abated by Sunday morning, meaning a hard ride for those in the Drighlinton BC 10 on the A168 dual carriageway between Dishforth and Thirsk. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) battled round in 22-30. Incredibly, George Peden did a near 32 mph ride, with 18-49. Josie Smith also rode strongly as fastest woman, in 22-28.

I would like to say that it looks less windy for the coming weekend. However.....

Thursday 16th June

Yet another windy weekend just gone. Heatwave tomorrow, Friday, then cool and breezy again for this coming weekend. Not ideal for fast times! Never mind, there's lots of the season still ahead and the midweek events last night and tonight had lovely weather.

In Yorkshire Road Club's 25, on Saturday afternoon, promoted on the rolling V235 south of Boroughbridge, strong winds made for a tough event. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 1-01-

05. Marcel Schubert was two minutes ahead of his nearest rival in recording the fastest time: 52-20. In-form Josie Smith was the quickest woman, in 1-00-22.

Manchester & District Ladies CA 10 was held on the testing J4/20 course south of Knutsford, with a mix of rural lanes, A50, and B-road to the finish, with plenty of holes and rough patches to dodge. Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) did 28-42, a PB, placing 7th from 13 finishers. Lucy Rogers was a minute clear of Claire Harrison, with 23-38, to win the event.

In Witham Wheelers CC 10, the Lindsey Roads CC trio of Stuart Wells, Keith Ainsworth and Anthony Nash were convincing winners of the team prize in placing 1st, joint 2nd, and 6th, respectively, with 21-19, 21-33 and 23-04. Nice one! The Saturday afternoon event, on the C10/10 out-and-back course on the A15 south of Sleaford, was plagued with strong crosswinds. At least it stayed dry. Ellen Inglis was the fastest woman, in 25-49.

Early Sunday morning it was the BDCA 25 on the A25/11. Usually, this course – the A50 dual carriageway between Etwell and Uttoxeter - sees winning rides under 50 minutes. However, even former men's BBAR winner Richard Bideau was thwarted by winds stronger than forecast, with a tough headwind out to the turn, although he still produced a rapid ride to win the event overall in 50-12. Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) had a ride as strong as the wind, with a fine 53-36. Emily Martin was two minutes ahead of 2nd placed woman Keri Parton, with a powerful 55-44 for her third win of the season.

Finally, in last week's Wednesday evening hilly (mountain?) 12 mile time trial between Barlow Common, Baslow and Holmesfield, there were separate events for time trial and road bikes. In the former category, Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear) rode almost 21 mph average, with 34-33, whilst Allan Wailoo (7 Hills CC) finished in 35-44. Andy Nichols did the fastest ride of the evening, in 32-24. In the road bike event Dominic Watts (Veloviewer) recorded 39-22, with James Mckay quickest, in 33-00, whilst Sonia Insley was fastest woman with 47-59.

Friday 17th June

More on those midweek events now, mostly with very nice weather for racing.

On Wednesday evening Peak RC promoted their hilly time trial on the O17C between Stoney Middleton, Litton, Miller's Dale, Taddington, Ashford in the Water, and Hassop. A beautiful, but demanding course. In the time trial bike category, Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear) was 2nd to his team mate Andrew Whiteley (43-28), with a very rapid 44-33. Allan Wailoo (7 Hills CC) had a strong ride, in 46-11. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) improved almost four minutes on his time two weeks ago, with 49-54. Rebecca Lineker was quickest woman in 55-32. The road bike category had a much larger field: Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon) placed 10th with 49-29 and Dominic Watts (Veloviewer) was 14th in 51-06. Jude Taylor was quickest, in a stunning 41-57, over 24 mph on average and a course record for a road bike! Hayley Moore was quickest of the women, in 56-52.

Mike Allen (Team Jewson) has been making trips down to the mid-week events on the rapid E2/10 on the A11 south west of Newmarket. Last week was a windy one, in which he recorded 23-36. However, the previous week had fine weather, and Mike rode 22-31; a new Group Record at age 75. Well done Mike. Matt Smith was fastest overall, with 18-21, whilst Laura Davies was quickest woman in a fine 20-33.

Friday 24th June

Saturday afternoon just gone saw mixed weather conditions; breezy but not too windy, showery, and cooler than of late. In the Manchester & District TTA 50 on the J4/9 course – 4 laps of a testing

circuit in the Byley, Northwich, Middlewich area of Cheshire – Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) was 1st vet and 5th overall in 1-52-09, despite not being on top form. Alex Royle did a storming ride to finish fastest rider of the day, in 1-46-19. Jasmine Holmes was quickest woman, in 2-03-58.

Much further south in Hemel Hempstead CC's 10, the weather was much the same as that up north. This event used the fast F11/10 course on the A41 south east of Aylesbury. Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) did a very fine 20 minutes dead, whilst Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) was close with a similarly-fast 20-06. In the women's event, Sally Turner rode 20-45 (29 mph average speed) for the win, whilst in the men's field junior Josh Tarling did a stunning 18-08, just over 33 mph average speed!

Early Sunday morning and Sowerby Sunday Club promoted a 10 on the V210. Starting on the lane between Rainton and Dishforth before joining the A168 dual carriageway, and turning at Thirsk, this is potentially a fast course. However, despite a promising start to the day the north-westerly wind rose rapidly to blunt finishing times, making the final two miles something of a torment. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) rode strongly to record 21-38 for 6th place. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) also had a good ride, 17th in 22-37. Chris Lea did a forgettable 23-13, but nevertheless enjoyed the trip. Josie Smith continued her good run of form, as fastest woman in 22-51. Bevan Jones was quickest on the day, in 20-25.

The premier event of last weekend was the RTTC National Circuit Championship, held on Sunday morning on a sporting course consisting of three laps of lanes near Aylesbury, for a total distance of 28 miles. Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear) was 10th in 1-04-31. Chris Fennell lifted yet more silverware with the win in 58-28. Jennifer George won the women's event, in 1-06-12.

In a result from the previous Thursday, in Buxton CC's 10 on the J10/1 Chapel-en-le-Frith bypass, Andrew Stokes of the promoting club had a fast ride, with 21-27, although pipped by the phenomenal Dame Sarah Storey who set a new women's course record of 21-21. Chris Lea also rode, recording 22-19, along with Alan Cooke (Peak RC) 22-43, and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) who took a huge two and half minutes off her PB, with 26-15. Alastair Ribbands and Alex Royle duked it out at the sharp end of the field, with Ribbands coming out on top by just 5 s, with 19-50. The weather was perfect!

Thursday 30th June

Mike Allen (Team Jewson) made another trip to the fast E2/10 course last Wednesday evening, recording 23-34. Jackie Field was fastest woman in 22-41, whilst Sam Brown was quickest overall, in 19-22.

On Saturday, North Mids vets were busy in the Salford CC and MDLCA 25 on the J2/9 in Cheshire. We shall say no more about the road surface. As for the wind; a fresh southerly turned south west as the event proceeded, meaning that it was a relief to leave the A50 and turn east on Twemlow Lane; twists, turns, manhole covers and sunken road notwithstanding. In the women's event Anne Haslam (Buxton CC) did 1-13-57 in this her 2nd 25, whilst Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode 1-15-39. In the men's race it was close between Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) and Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) who finished in 54-42 and 54-55, respectively, with Mat 1st vet overall and Keith 1st vet on standard. Other Buxton CC riders included Andrew Stokes in 57-54, Chris Lea 1-00-54, and Miles Haslam 1-02-28. In-form Alex Royle won in 52-26.

A fairly quiet weekend for events, with the exception of the RTTC National 50 Championships held on the A168/A19 dual carriageway between Crathorne and Dishforth. Anyone out and about last Sunday knows how windy it was, and most of us know how exposed is that dual-carriageway. What about Kate Allan's win in the women's event then, 1-44-55! Chris Fennell lifted yet another Championship, in 1-37-38.

Thursday 14th July

Firstly, to the weekend before last's results. What a windy one!

Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) won the newly-introduced VTTA Closed Circuit Championship in the TT bike category and was also 6th on scratch, with an actual time of 21-05 for 10 miles consisting of four and a bit clockwise laps of Goodwood Aerodrome. The event ran on Saturday evening, with some sections of the course very exposed to the wind. Excellent riding Keith! Angela Carpenter was well ahead of the rest of the women's field, with 22-20.

In the Yorkshire Cycling Federation 50 on the Saturday afternoon, fresh crosswinds made the going tough on what is far from a fast course – the V150 south of Boroughbridge. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) was 10th in 2-06-02, whilst Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) did 2-12-28. Marcel Schubert rode superbly to finish more than 12 minutes (!) in front of the 2nd placed rider, with 1-46-28. Jan Scotchford was quickest woman, in 2-13-32.

On the far quicker roads of the F2/50 south of Cambridge, Chris Lea rode the Finsbury Park CC 50, also on Saturday afternoon, and also contending with a fresh wind, but from the south west, which allowed for some decent shelter at times, recording 1-55-18. The race attracted in-form Chris McNamara, quickest overall by almost 5 minutes, in 1-36-11. If you think that's fast, he did a 1-34-07 last weekend.....Kim Barfoot Brace was the fastest woman, in 1-55-55.

Over 10 miles, on the E2/10, Mick Allen (Team Jewson) rode 24-58 on the wind-blasted Saturday. Alex Doherty was fastest overall, in 19-19, whilst Becky Ridge was quickest woman, in 22-16.

Closer to home, in Rotherham Wheelers 10 on the O10/5 at Cuckney, Steve Gibson (Peak RC) was 7th in 22-07, whilst Paul Heggie (Birdwell Whs) recorded 26-28. Ian Guilor was quickest, in 20-30, with Rebecca Lineker fastest woman in 23-27.

Further east, in Witham Whs 25 on the C25/22, which runs out and back south of Sleaford before veering east into the Fens, Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) did 57-29. Jacob Storey was well ahead of the rest of the field, with 51-08. Georgia Lancaster, junior, was quickest woman, in 1-03-55.

On the Sunday morning, Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) teamed-up with clubmate Steve Gibson, and Andy Eagers & Tony Grassby, to ride the Hinckley CRC 4-up 25 on the K41/25 course, which is just over 2-laps of a mixture of the A5 and lanes east of Lutterworth. Tony Grassby was dropped early-on, committing the remaining three riders to finish (4-ups are hard.....) which they did in 57-12 for 2nd place. Team Jewson were quickest, in 54-05, with the Coalville Whs women's team being fastest in their category, in 1-07-07.

In last week's midweek 10 on the E2/10 promoted by the East Anglian VTTA, Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) was 6th on scratch and fastest on standard (beating the formidable Richard Oakes), in 20-17 (29.6 mph average, on a windy night). Mr Oakes was fastest on scratch, in 19-20. Hannah O'Brien was fastest woman, in 22-35.

To last weekend's races: Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) won Saturday afternoon's Bossard Whs 10 on the F15/10E course, based on lanes to the south west of Bedford, in 21-04. Always a significant achievement - to win an open event. Nice one! Linda Dewhurst was quickest woman, in 24-48.

On the R25/7 course, based on the A40 and the A449 dual carriageways between Monmouth and Usk, Keith Ainsworth was 8th overall, in 51-26. The event was promoted by Ross on Wye & District CC, on Sunday morning. Conrad Moss was quickest overall, in a superb 46-31, almost two minutes faster than 2nd placed Chris Gibbard. Angela Carpenter was fastest woman (by miles), with 53-32.

Also on Sunday morning, Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) became the fastest North Mids vet over 100 miles this season thus far, with 4-14-54 in the National Championships at the north west edge of the Lake District. The weather was really good! The superhumans at the sharp end of the men's and women's field were both about five minutes ahead of their nearest competitors, with Jake Sargent recording 3-23-39 to Tom Hutchinson's 3-28. Ride of the weekend though, if not the season, was that of Jo Patterson. 3-36-31. Comp record by 5 ½ minutes. And this isn't even a particularly fast 100 course....3-36-31 is close to 28 mph average, or put another way, 10 consecutive 21-39 10s.....You have to feel sorry for Kate Allan, who also did a superb ride, in 3-42, and just a few seconds outside of the previous comp record held by Alice Lethbridge. However, that was blown away by Jo Patterson's ride, as were the times of all but ten of the men's field.

Friday 29th July

Later than usual, due to emergency surgery for an obstructed small bowel, but all sorted now! Macclesfield Hospital were brilliant.

Anyway, to the racing:

The top event of last weekend was the National 24 Hour Championship, promoted as usual by the Mersey Roads on a sporting course in North Shropshire. This year a last minute course change meant that the hilly section between Prees and Battlefield had to be covered multiple times. The weather was fair on Saturday afternoon but through Sunday night rain set in and the temperature dropped significantly. Showers and then rain persisted through Sunday and to add insult the wind really got up. Tough conditions on a tough course. In his first attempt at the distance, Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) battled through to record 377.7 miles and 18th place. Nick Tarmey was over 40 miles clear of the rest of the field, winning the men's championship with 516.56 miles, whilst Steph Mottram rode a fine 445.82 miles to take the women's championship by 20 miles from Jo Cebrat.

Last Saturday, Sherwood CC held their 10 on the popular A10/3 course, based on the A46 dual carriageway south west of Newark. It's a fast road, but is very exposed to the wind, and on the day it was stronger than expected. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) had a cracking ride, with 20-29 for 10th place at an average speed of 29.3 mph. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) and Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) rode strongly to finish with 21-11 and 21-29, respectively. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs), Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) and Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) were only a little slower, in 22-01, 22-14 and 22-15. Mike Allen (Team Jewson) did 24-49 and Paddy Giblin (Rotherham Whs CC) recorded 28-37. Joshua Giddings was just one second ahead of 2nd placed Ashley Cox, with a super-fast 18-31 (32.4 mph!), whilst Adam Duggleby was in an unaccustomed 3rd place, albeit with 19-07. Rebecca Lineker was fastest woman, in 23-22.

The previous weekend, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode the Seamons CC 25 on the J2/9 in Cheshire, finishing with a PB, in 1-15-05. Claire Harrison was quickest of the women, in 1-02-11, whilst Alistair Ribbands recorded his 10th win of the season, with 53-30.

On the Sunday morning, Shaftesbury CC held their classic 50 mile event, but relocated from the E course to the F2/50 due to on-going roadworks. The F2 is a 6 mile stretch of dual carriageway south of Cambridge, meaning that in a long event, such as a 50, attention needs to be paid to catching and being caught by other riders. The road surface is, however, lovely. It was a hot one, with 15 riders DNF. Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) posted an excellent 1-45-34 for 9th place. Chris Lea finished in 1-57-28, whilst Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC) got his COVID-delayed season underway with a 2-15-27. The amazing Kate Allan was fastest woman, in 1-44-28, and 5th overall. Tom Hutchinson, 2nd in the previous week's national 100 championship, was four minutes ahead of his nearest competitor and finishing fastest with 1-37-23.

Also on Sunday morning, Rob Gibson (Amicus 13) rode with teammate James Rhodes, and Chris Evans (not that one), in the Tuxford Clarion 3-up 25 on a sporting 2-lap course between Tuxford and Sutton-on-Trent, finishing 4th in 59-25. South Normanton CC were the fastest team, in 54-43.

Finally, two weeks ago last Wednesday, Sheffrec CC held their hilly time trial on an out-and-back course between Chesterfield, Baslow and Owl Bar. A tough one. Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was 2nd in 45-18 but only to his teammate and hill climber extraordinaire Andy Nichols, who did 43-56. Rebecca Lineker was fastest woman, in 56-58.

Wednesday 3rd August

Still awaiting the full result from the VTTA East Anglian 25 on the F2A/25 the Sunday before last, but Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) was 6th in a very rapid 51-06 and was only just pipped by Kevin Tye on standard by 2 seconds. We think that Nic Pillinger was quickest, in 50 minutes dead, but we await the full results. That is one fast ride by Keith though, at an average speed of 29.4 mph, which is also what he did in last Saturday's Rugby Racing CC's 10 on the K11/10T. It's a dual carriageway course, with a roundabout turn at half distance and just one other roundabout to be crossed in each direction, before finishing a 1/3rd of a mile up a B-road. There is, however, Knightlow Hill to negotiate each way. Hardly a 1st cat climb, but certainly enough to blunt the speed significantly for a while on the return leg. Nevertheless, Keith's time of 20-25 was good enough for 5th place. Caitlin Conyers was fastest woman, in 21-45, whilst Jack Rebours was quickest overall in 19-11.

The Cleveland Coureurs 25 on Sunday morning just gone was, unfortunately, postponed due to standing water on the course. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs), who was down to ride, is still trying to complete his first 25 of the year, having been thwarted several times now. Better luck next time Trev!

Wednesday 10th August

Firstly, a result from a couple of weeks ago; the Pendle Forest CC 10 on 'Levens' on the last Saturday in July. Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) was so close to breaking the 30 mph barrier for the 2nd occasion, finishing in 20-04. A great ride, and done in the rain. Deborah Moss was the fastest woman, in 21-47. Harris Hall is just a juvenile but was quickest of all, in 19-15.

And here's the full result from the VTTA East Anglian 25 that I mentioned last week, in which Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) was 6th in 51-06.

Last Saturday afternoon saw North Mids riders racing on the V235 and the O10/1. In the latter, Tickhill Velo's 10 on the Hatfield – Blaxton course, it was close between Keith and Ady, who rode 20-59 and 21-04, respectively, finishing 5th and 6th. Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) also rode, recording 22-57. Bevan Jones was fastest overall, in 20-26, whilst Rebecca Lineker was the quickest woman, in 24-17.

In the Otley CC 25 on the V235 south of Boroughbridge, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) did 1-1-09 for 9th spot. Richard Dean won the event, in 55-15.

Sunday morning and Yorkshire VTTA promoted their 10 on the V210 at Dishforth. This uses the A168 dual carriageway up to Thirsk and back. Once again, it was a headwind return, making for rather tough conditions. Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) was 5th in 20-56, whilst clubmate Andy Thomas was 9th in 21-18. Mike Allen (Team Jewson) did 23-54, another 25 mph ride, at age 75. Paul Heggie (Birdwell Whs) finished in 26-16. Marcel Schubert was the only rider under 20 minutes, with 19-26. Sue McFarlane was quickest woman, in 24-04.

As I write, Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) is in the last few miles of the epic London-Edinburgh-London ride. He left London at 5am Sunday, was north of Edinburgh late on Monday, and is due to complete the 945 mile route around 11 pm tonight. That is daily mileages of 285, 236, 193 and 231, including crossing the Pennines four times!

Thursday 18th August

Scorchio! Yes, it was a hot one for last Saturday's events.

Steve Gibson (Peak RC) won the Yorkshire Cycling Federation 15, in 35-46. Nice one. This was run on the old A1 south of Boroughbridge. Anne Haslam (Buxton CC) was the only female finisher, in 43-57. We await the results of the promoting club's 25, held immediately after the 15.

In Sherwood CC's 25 on the A46-based A25/34, riders had a helping tailwind to the southern turn but then had to endure scirocco-like conditions on the long exposed stretch back to Newark. Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) was 9th in 53-34 and clubmate Anthony Nash did 55-32. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) said that it was possibly the hardest time trial he has ever finished apart from a 24 hour! Nevertheless, he rode 56-46, to finally get a 25 completed this season. Alan Cooke (Peak RC) recorded 57-49. Three riders were sub-50, with Jack Levick the fastest, in 49-30. Elaine Simpson was the quickest woman, in 1-03-00. There were many DNS.

Mike Allen (Team Jewson) returned to his favoured E2/10 course, recording 24-54 in searing heat. Jennifer George had a cracking ride, finishing in 20-20. James Jenkins topped the results board, with 18-26.

In a result from yesterday evening, Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was 2nd in 1-55.5, just behind Tom Parsons' 1-52.8, in Team Sheffield's hill climb on the obscure Foxhall Lane on the western perimeter of the city. Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) was 3rd woman in 3-03.4, with Millie Skinner fastest in 2-31.5. Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) rode too, finishing in 4-06.7. There was a good field for a midweek hill climb, with almost 40 finishers.

Friday 26th August

Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) was crowned Vets Champion in the VTTA National 30 Championship last Sunday morning with a fine ride to record 1-04-15 and only 1-18 down on scratch man and former BBAR Richard Bideau. Keith was 4th overall on scratch, with a Vets Handicap Result of 57-32 (VHR uses age standards to adjust the time to that of a 40 year old). Deborah Moss was the women's winner in 1-10-52 and a VHR of 1-00-08. The event ran on the L308 at Levens, which is an extended version of the classic L1015 course.

The previous day was plagued by a fresh to strong westerly which saw riders battling crosswinds in the VTTA East Mids 25 on the A46-based A25/34 and the in Rutland CC 10 on the O10/1 at Hatfield Woodhouse. In the former, Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) was 8th in 53-23, teammate Anthony Nash did 56-28, Alan Cooke (Peak RC) 56-43, and Mike Allen (Team Jewson) 1-03-14. Richard Oakes

had another storming ride to win in 48-39, basically three minutes faster than riders placed 2nd to 4th. Claire Emons was quickest woman in 58-49. In the 10, Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) was fastest woman, in 25-10. Adam Duggleby was quickest overall, in 19-49, seemingly little-affected by the wind (why is that?). Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was 5th in 21-24, Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) did 22-52, Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) 23-19, Richard Walker (Bristol South CC) 23-52, Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) 24-10, Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) 28-14, Michael Weaver (Rotherham Whs CC) 28-20, and Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) 31-05.

In a late result from the previous Sunday, Bramley Whs 25 on the A168 dual carriageway between Topcliffe and South Kilvington, Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) was again fastest woman, and only just over the hour, in 1-00-01. Nice work! Paul Heggie (Birdwell Whs) also rode, finishing in 1-04-32. David Ashton was the sole rider under 50 minutes, with 49-41.

Fingers-crossed for all the North Mids Vets in the National 10 this weekend: Anthony Nash, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC), Steve Gibson (Peak RC), Ady Dench (Team Sheffield), Stuart Wells, Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) and Keith Ainsworth.

Thursday 1st September

The premier event last weekend was the RTTC National 10 Mile Championships on the V714 between Gilberdyke and Howden. There was a good turnout of North Mids vets, led by Stuart Wells (Lindsey Roads CC) in 21-02, with clubmate Keith Ainsworth (fastest in his age category) and Steve Gibson (Peak RC) not far behind, in 21-21 and 21-22, respectively. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was just under 22 minutes, with 21-57, whilst Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) did 22-40 and Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 23-12. The speed of the fastest competitors was staggeringly fast on this quiet single-carriageway course: an average of 33.6 mph for John Archibald, winning in 17-53, with Chris Fennell 44 seconds slower but still doing a tremendous time of 18-37 and 32.2 mph. Crikey! In the women's event, veteran Kate Allan showed the under 40s how to do it, winning in 21-09.

On Sunday, Darlington CC and VTTA North promoted their 50 on the old road adjacent to the new A1(M), essentially being two laps of a north-south course finishing at Catterick. Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) did 2-19-39. Marcel Schubert was quickest, in 1-47-39, and Molly Savill was fastest woman, in 2-10-01.

Three from Buxton CC rode the North Shropshire Whs 25 on the quiet D25/23T between Tern Hill and Shawbirch, enjoying the fine weather early on Sunday morning. Anne Haslam did 1-15-44, Miles Haslam 1-07-22, and Chris Lea 1-00-34. Grant, brother of hour record holder Dan Bigham, was minutes ahead of his nearest competitor, with 50-32. Deb Hutson-Lumb was well ahead of the rest of the women's field, with 1-00-28.

Thursday 8th September

The weekend's racing was dominated by events at either end of the distance scale: on Saturday, the VTTA North Midlands Group 10 Championships on the O10/1 at Hatfield, and incorporating the CTT North Midlands Championships; and on Sunday the RTTC National 12 hour Championships in S. Wales.

Saturday's event was run in warm conditions with only a slight crosswind – a bonus on this fairly-exposed albeit near-flat course. Organiser Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) led his teammates Stuart Wells and Anthony Nash to the CTT North Midlands District team prize with a rapid time of 21-19 and 6th place overall, supported by Wells' 21-24 and Nash's 21-42, which gained them 8th and 9th place. Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) was 15th with 22-21, Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) 20th in 23-17,

and Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC) 23rd with 24-17. Len Best (Matlock CC), Michael Weaver (Rotherham Whs CC), Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) and Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) recorded 26-36, 27-28, 27-54 and 30-05, respectively. In the tandem event, Ala and Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode a fast time of 23-51.

North Mids Chair, Peter McNally, awarded Group trophies to VTTA North Mids members, as follows:

Yvonne Twelvetree, Fastest Woman on Standard (+2-05), the 'Sheffield Central Cup'.

Gordon Wordsworth, Fastest rider over 70 yrs on Standard (+5-02), the 'Ron Blythe Trophy'.

Ala and Andy Whitehead, Best on Standard – Tandem (+3-19), the 'Watson Trophy'.

Keith Ainsworth, Best on Standard Overall (+6-54), the 'Cleethorpes Shield'.

Winning yet another prize, Keith was also fastest on standard in the overall event.

Quickest rider of the day was Neal Parkin, with 20-43. Elaine Simpson was fastest woman, in 24-55.

Reports from riders were very positive, describing a great event.

Sunday's 12 started wet, but after a couple of hours it began to dry-up. The rain returned in the closing hour of the race in the form of heavy showers. Fortunately, the temperature was fairly mild throughout, although there was a fresh southerly wind which was particularly pronounced during the middle part of the day. Far from perfect conditions. The course was largely based on the A40 dual carriageway in the Abergavenny and Raglan area, but with a challenging 44 mile out and return hilly leg to Hereford to be tackled in the early part of the day and including two sets of traffic lights to be negotiated in each direction and adding another random element to the race. The 16 mile finishing circuit was testing, with some sharp rises and descents on minor roads, as well as a long drag on the A40. You'd have thought it wasn't the course or conditions for big distances. But the calibre of today's 12 hour riders almost defies belief.

After just four months of racing and following an inspiring recovery from multiple serious injuries in a collision by a car last July, meaning that he only got back out on the road in March this year, Tom Thornely (Buxton CC) was only 0.5 mile off 3rd place, with a superb distance of 298.43 miles for 5th place overall; an average speed of almost 25 mph sustained for 12 hours. Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) rode just 5 weeks after completing the National 24 hour Championships, finishing agonisingly close to a 20 mph ride, with 239.86 miles. Top spot in the men's event was again taken by Tim McEvoy, with 304.62 miles, almost 4 miles clear of 2nd-placed Tony Jones. Christina MacKenzie won the women's event by just over two miles from Christina Murray, with 262.83 miles, in what was a hard-fought race.

Thursday 15th September

Keith Ainsworth (Lindsey Roads CC) finished his season in fine style by winning the blue riband event in the VTTA calendar: the National 25 mile Championship on Sunday morning. In a close result, Keith beat Andrew Grant by 9 seconds on standard, with a Vets Handicap Result (VHR) of 45-30 and an actual time of 51-01 to Grant's 53-34. That's an average speed of 29.4 mph, which was on a good but not perfect day - with a nagging headwind on the two west-east legs on the A428-based dual-carriageway F2A/25 course south of Cambridge. The day had started dead calm, with the start delayed by 30 minutes to allow fog to clear, but as the sun appeared so did the breeze. Angela Carpenter was way ahead of the rest of the women's field, with an actual time of 52-58 and a VHR of 43-19. Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC) and Chris also rode from the North Mids, recording 58-51 and 56-17, respectively.

The previous day, Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) and Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) rode Yorkshire Road Club's 25 on the lumpy V235 south of Boroughbridge, finishing in 1-01-11 and 1-01-29. Adam Duggleby was 3 minutes faster than any other competitor, recording 50-44. Helen Goldthorpe was fastest woman, in 1-05-55.

On Sunday evening, Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) rode Bolsover and District CC's closed road hill climb in the floodlight grounds of Hardwick Hall, finishing in 3-30, and oldest competitor at age 72 – as Snowden Sports reports: "Special kudos". Hillclimb specialist Emilie Verroken was the quickest woman, in 1-58, whilst Gregg Booker blasted his way to the finish in just 1-21 for the 615 m climb, topping the field.

More time trials and hill climbs for this coming weekend. It's looking dry but rather cold and breezy.

Wednesday 21st September

The weather stayed dry last weekend, but it was often rather cold and breezy.

Starting with Sunday's results, Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) won Birdwell Wheelers hill climb up Green Moor Road near Stocksbridge, in 2-26.2; thus beating a group of much younger riders. A very satisfying result! Sonia Insley was the sole woman rider, recording 4-16.5.

In the Yorkshire VTTA 25 on the V236/1 between Topcliffe and Thirsk, Adam Duggleby was one of two riders under 50 minutes, with a scorching 48-42 in decidedly chilly conditions with an awkward headwind to the top turn. Chris Lea was not quite 10 minutes off that pace.....with 58-16. Though Duggleby is a proper classy rider. Coming back from COVID, Mike Allen (Team Jewson) stopped the clock in 1-01-00. Fastest woman was Angela Hannon-Flaherty, who just pipped Mike, with 1-00-59.

Over in Cheshire in Stretford Whs 25, on the J4/8, a course where one feels trapped on the dead straight King Street, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode 1-16-54. Emily Martin had a strong ride, just getting under, in 59-57 as fastest woman. Sam Taylor was quickest overall in 54-53, but not very much faster than the 2nd-placed rider who was on a road bike, Mark Lovatt; six-time winner of the Tour of the Peak, Steve Farrell's apprentice (the roadman's roadman), and who has never knowingly used the little chainring.

On Saturday afternoon, Sherwood CC promoted their 25 on the smooth-surfaced A46 dual carriageway south west of Newark: the A25/34. Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs CC) did 57-03 and Michael Weaver (Rotherham Whs CC) 1-08-58. Patrick Casey was quickest overall, with 48-55. Kate Kirkland was fastest woman, in 1-00-38.

Duggleby was racing and winning on the Saturday too, recording 20-24 in the Harrogate Nova CC 10 on the lumpy V212 which runs south of Boroughbridge. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) was 8th in a fast 22-11, whilst club mate Andy Hicklin was off two minutes in front. However, a shipped chain that required dismounting to untangle, meant that Andy was in some danger of being caught. The prospect of being passed by a clubmate is all the incentive you need to ride harder, and Andy held off Steve, just, with 24-08. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 24-22 and Anne Haslam (Buxton CC) did 30-19. Josie Smith was the quickest woman, in 24-20.

Thursday 6th October

As Autumnal weather takes hold, time trials have largely given way to hill climbs. Last weekend, members of the VTTA North Mids were racing up The Snake, Tan Hill, and Monsal.

On the Snake on Saturday morning a cross-tailwind led to some rapid rides, with Joanna Blackburn smashing the women's course record of 15-21.6, with 14-13.8, and also beating Sarah Storey. From

the North Mids, Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) rode 18-09.4 and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) did 24-04.8, for 7th and 18th places from a large field of 23 female riders. Patrick Clark rode a super-fast 12-12.2 as fastest rider of the day, almost 15 mph average, but still some way off Tejvan Pettinger's 2013 course record of 11-36.6.

Sunday morning and the wind was still blowing from the west, meaning that there was a headwind for Stockton Whs CC event on Tan Hill. All 10.88 miles of it! Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) was very specific as to the distance; he must have suffered with every pedal rev in the exposed upper reaches of this monster climb, recording 40-39.8 for 11th place. Junior rider Matthew Cole was fastest overall in 35-09.9, and Hannah Farran was quickest woman, in 43-28.6. As an aside, 3rd-place on the day went to the versatile Marcel Schubert, who is the winner of this year's men's British Best All Rounder competition.

On Monsal, Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) did a fantastic ride, with 1-26.4 as fastest veteran and taking 7th place overall. Gregg Booker won in 1-19.4, but over 5 seconds slower than Malcom Elliott's 1981 course record of 1-14.2. Bithja Jones, last year's national hill climb champion on Winnats, was fastest woman, in 1-39.9. Full results are not yet available. Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club), Richard Walker (VTTA N Mids), and Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) were also on the startsheet.

The previous weekend, Team Lifting Gear Products promoted two hill climbs on the Saturday. First up was Pea Royd Lane, site of several national championships. Tom Bell, last year's winner on Winnats, romped up in 2-26.8 to record the quickest time. Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) rode 5-56.7, at age 72. Hat's off! Fastest woman and 2nd on the Winnats in 2021, was veteran Mary Wilkinson, with 3-04.6. In the afternoon, it was a short blast up Mill Lee Road immediately south of Low Bradfield. Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) tied on time with fastest woman Emilie Verroken, in 1-17.5. Gregg Booker was quickest overall, in 50.5.

Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) and Chris Lea rode two of the few remaining 25's that weekend. In Sunday morning's Cleveland Coureurs event on the T252/3 course on the A19, postponed from earlier in the season, Trev recorded 56-48 in light winds but having to endure a very chilly 6 Celsius at the start. Adam Duggleby won, again, in 47-47, and Caroline Ratcliff was fastest woman in 1-03.51. Saturday afternoon saw the final event of the year on the F2A/25 course south of Cambridge. A fresh north easterly blunted most rider's challenge for a fast end to the season; Chris finishing in 57-56. Even Chris Fennell was over a minute and half slower than last year's event, only doing.....45-52 (32.7 mph average).....what an incredible time! Laura Davies was well placed overall, 25th, as fastest woman with a very strong 52-47. Aged 92, Peter Horsnell rode 1-20-47; he doesn't look a day over 80. Also incredible.

Thursday 13th October

Mam Nick was the venue for Rutland CC's open hill climb last Saturday. A long tough climb. Especially those two ramps of 1:6 about 2/3rd of the way up, just when its really biting. Sarah Harrison and Yvonne Twelvetree from Sheffield Tri Club flew the flag for the North Mids, recording 9-29.4 and 13-11.2 respectively. Both have got more hill climbs lined-up including, for Sarah, the National Championships on the Old Shoe, Llangollen. Jo Blackburn was well up the field overall, finishing as fastest woman in 7-52.4. In a morale boosting win, Andrew Feather was 8 seconds faster than Tom Bell, with a ridiculously fast 5-40.7, reversing their positions in last year's National on Winnats.

Continuing his cracking season up the hills, Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) rode the classic duo of the Catford and Bec hill climbs on Sunday, finishing 2nd in 2-01.3 to Rowan Brackston's 1-57.8 on Catford CC's Yorks Hill, then 4th in 1-58.1 in the Bec, with Rowan Brackston winning again, in 1-55.1. Such close times! It's certainly looking promising for Nick in this year's National. Double national hill climb champion Bithja Jones was fastest woman in both events, with 2-18.8 on Yorks Hill and 2-10.6 in the Bec.

On Sunday afternoon's Carr Lane climb up to Palterton, promoted by the nearby Bolsover and District CC, Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) rode 4-02.0, whilst Andrew Feather backed up his win the previous day on Mam Nick, taking top spot in 3-08.0. Yvonne Twelvetree also rode the day after her climb up Mam Nick, finishing in 6-35.5. Celia Brown was quickest woman, in 4-40.9.

In late result from the previous weekend, on Monsal, Yvonne Twelvetree, Richard Walker (VTTA N Mids), and Simon Warren, finished with 3-22.9, 2-09.4, and 1-54.8, respectively.

Chris Lea ended his season with his first time trial in Wales, on the R10/17 near Abergavenny and which uses the well-surfaced A40 dual carriageway, recording 22-11 for the 10 miles. It was a lovely autumn day, with a westerly breeze making for a fast outward leg and the inevitable slightly slower return. Local rider Chris Gibbard won in 18-44. Diane Egerton-Warburton was quickest woman, in 22-51.

Thursday 20th October

As the weeks wind down to the national hill climb there are fewer members racing, but Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) continued his excellent run of form by finishing 4th overall and fastest vet in Lancashire Road Club's classic climb on the infamous Rake which features a cruel 1:4 ramp immediately before the finish; steep enough to need a handrail for pedestrians to winch themselves to its summit. Nick rode 2-36.6 to Kieran Wynne-Cattanach's winning time of 2-26.0 – who beat the reigning national champion, Tom Bell, by 1 second. Rebecca Richardson was the fastest woman, in 3-16.8, well ahead of her nearest competitor.

Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) took on Vive Le Velo's hill climb up the short but steep north edge of the Yorkshire Wolds, straight up from Flixton on the edge of The Carrs which separates the Wolds from the North York Moors. There was a relatively small field, nevertheless Simon finished a fine 3rd, in 3-36.2. Adam Kenway was the only rider to break three minutes, in 2-54.2, whilst Harri Wilson was the quickest woman, in 4-14.8.

Thursday 27th October

No racing news from last weekend. We wish Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) and Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) all the best for the National Hill Climb up the Old Shoe, Llangollen, this Sunday. Just getting to the start line in decent shape, free from recent colds or covid, is an achievement in itself.

Friday 4th November

The racing season ended last Sunday with a spectacular National Hill Climb Championships on the Old Horseshoe near Llangollen, promoted by Velotik and Wrexham RC. From the North Midlands, Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products), Sarah Harrison (Sheffield Tri Club) and Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) all did excellent rides. Nick and team mates Patrick Clark and Kieran Wynne-Cattanach won the team prize to become RTTC Team Champions, with Nick finishing 35th from a huge field of 268 men, in 6-43.18. Sarah won her age category, in a time of 9-18.54, finishing 31st from 67 women. Simon was a full minute faster than his trial run two weeks ago and 18 secs faster

than his target time, finishing 136th from the 268 finishers and 5th from 25 in the 45-50 category. Chapeau all round!

Let's hear from Nick, Sarah, and Simon, starting with Sarah:

I've dabbled with hill climbs a little bit in previous years but, much as I like the scene, this is my 'off season', the time when I let mind and body rest for a few weeks and only do unstructured activity if & when I feel like it. Last year, I couldn't let the opportunity of taking part on The Winnats pass me by - I was so glad I went for it - and this year I decided to fight the urge to hibernate once again. I had a week off after my last triathlon of the season, then got back on the bike with a focus on far shorter efforts than I had been doing a month previously.

I'd reced the Old Shoe once in the Spring. It was tempting to leave it as that fond memory, but as I was already heading that way the week before the Nationals it made sense to reacquaint myself with the climb. In the recce it was reassuring to find that my time, at a very similar perceived effort, was a minute faster than it had been in the Spring. I did think I could take another minute off with a race effort, but that was not to be - all you can do is give what you have on the day!

On the Sunday, I headed over quite early as I had ideas for how I wanted to warm up - I didn't have rollers or turbo with me as for hill climbs I prefer to warm up on the road. But my plans for warming up had to be amended at the last minute due to the heavy showers that passed through soon after I arrived at the HQ Pavilion; not getting drenched too early on seemed a better idea!

The set-up at Llangollen Pavilion was ideal. Some people had expressed discontent that the HQ was three miles from the start, but it really was the only option for an event of that size in that area, and it was a very small inconvenience to allow the championships to take place in that beautiful location. Organisation was fantastic throughout, there were helpful and cheerful volunteers at every turn, and information about the event had been clear and plentiful beforehand. Excitement had been building within the online hill-climbing community, and it was great to finally be there and immersed in it.

But despite arriving in Llangollen with ample time, I nearly ended up with a rolling start as I arrived at the start line with 30 seconds to spare! It's not the first time I've arrived that late, and in those circumstances I like to spin myself the story that it's good that I'm not cold and that my heart rate is already up a little.

Nick and Simon agreed about the organisation, as Nick said:

The Nationals at the Old Shoe were fantastic. I was one of the organisers of the event in 2021, on The Winnats-, and we put in a huge amount of effort to make it an event to remember. I wondered if WinNats 2021 would be a tough act to follow, but Velotik and the Wrexham Roads Club more than stepped up to the task. Everything about the event was great.

Let's hear about the hill, from Simon:

This year the National Hill climb was held for the first time on the Old Shoe, 1500 metres of rugged tarmac just north of Llangollen, Wales. Hiding in the shadow of its more famous neighbour the Horseshoe Pass, the ascent can be roughly split into two parts. The first half hidden in the trees, damp and covered in leaves then after the cattle grid the beautiful exposed stretch across the hillside to the summit at the Ponderosa Café. Climbing a total of 203 metres at an average of 12% it reaches a maximum of 16% on its steepest ramps although feels much steeper by the time you get there. Not an absolute killer like last year's venue of Winnats Pass but for sure a substantial test and one that required a carefully calculated approach to avoid blowing up by half way.

Simon, and Sarah, tell us how things went for them up to that cattle grid; from Simon:

Instead of going off like an excited puppy and exploding (like I did last year) I was utterly determined to ride to my limitations and get it just right this time. I'm quite new to riding with power and even newer to actually paying attention to what my limits are so I was going to do some proper testing. We all dream of being able to hold 500+ watts for the duration like Mr Feather and Mr Bell but for us mortals, especially those fast approaching 50, that is just not a possibility. The key was to find out what effort I could drip feed over what I hoped would be 8 minutes and then stick to that like glue. I ran trials on locals hills and after much toil came up with a number (350W) from which I would not deviate.

The next challenge would be to execute the plan. This would require restraint, pacing, and more restraint. There's no good saying, oh it's the big one, the crowd will drag me along, NO, you cannot ride above your limitations, it will not work. Of course the first time I looked down at the power meter 10 seconds into the ride it naturally read 430W! SLOW DOWN MAN!! I did, and from then on I just about nailed it. Instead of going looking for the pain, I let the pain come to me (and it did). I took it steady and burnt my matches one at a time instead of all in one go. Boring maybe, but effective.

For gearing I started on 39 x 25, riding out of the saddle up the damp road whilst avoiding the slippery leaves, then sat down briefly to rest my arms before hitting the cattle grid. Thankfully some rubber had been applied to its slippery bars to avoid any accidents and it was here I changed down to the 27 sprocket, the end of the line for gears.

And from Sarah:

I don't have a power meter on my road bike, and my game plan for the climb revolved around knowing what heart rate I can sustain and for how long. Basically, I knew I had to keep a lid on it until the cattle grid at half way - though of course once you have a number on you always go a little faster than you might - and that depending on how I was feeling at that point I could give it a bit more, and once I was on the last steep section I could give it 110% (which isn't actually a lot given my long-distance engine ;-)) Lower down, the climb has trees on either side and it was quite quiet and peaceful, but then it opens up, and soon after the cattle grid it got loud.

Nick takes up the story:

The atmosphere at the top of the climb was incredible. Hundreds of people lining the road, with the crowd parting just enough to let the riders through, and the noise so loud that as a racer you were left with no option other than to squeeze out every ounce of effort. The hill was a bit long for me but I paced it well, saving my best effort for the two steep ramps in the second half.

Back to Simon:

Still holding back I tip-toed up the first of the two steeper ramps and into the shallower mid-section where once again I sat down before the full-on assault to the summit. I was now closing in on my 30 second man and almost had him, but I was also running out of power on the toughest part of the course. As my body started to give in the carrot I'd been chasing began to open up his lead again and I was now in a desperate chase to limit the damage to him. The higher slopes, even at 9.30 am were already starting to fill with noisy spectators and their awesome support dragged me through the wall of noise to where the gradient began to ebb away. With 100 metres left, arms and legs failing, I clicked up a few sprockets to muster whatever sprint I could and grovelled to eventually roll across the line, empty, naturally.

And so to Sarah:

I know I overtook some riders, but I don't really remember who or when. Cow bells, people shouting encouragement, horns.... I did recognise one or two people, and I remember thinking that clearly I wasn't trying hard enough if I was still noticing familiar faces, but it was great and meant I barely registered the discomfort as I just wanted to get to the top knowing I'd given as much as I could. The number of people out supporting on those upper slopes was amazing, and after last years' experience on The Winnats I was a lot more comfortable pointing my bike straight at the crowds and knowing they'd get out of the way.

I think I lost a few minutes after finishing. I don't tend to be in a bad state at the top of climbs - it's just how I am - but time kind of stopped for a bit because doing this climb had been a focus for the last few weeks and there it was.

Time to get our breath back!

Nick comments on his club's track record and the make-up of the field:

Team Lifting Gear Products won the team prize for the 7th year in a row. It was also very nice to see 460 riders entering the event, including a healthy field of juniors, showing that there are riders coming through in this section of the sport.

Sarah, and Simon, look forward to next year's Championships. First-up, Sarah:

Doing The Struggle in Ambleside next year does appeal to me as the longer climbs are marginally less of a change of direction after the triathlon season - and I have no doubt it'll be another amazing event - I'll see....

Simon wraps things up:

Next year I move into the 50 year age group so things get serious and if I want to compete with the ageing hitters I'll need to find more watts, oh and try to get my weight back the right side of 75 kgs.

There's no better day on the British calendar than the National hill climb champs, the perfect climax to another excellent year on two wheels.

Hear, hear!

The women's event was won convincingly by Illi Gardner in 6-46.65, with last year's champion, Bithja Jones, 3rd in 7-11. In the men's event there was a reversal of last year's result, with Andrew Feather pipping Tom Bell by not much more than 2 seconds, recording 5-29.54 and 5-31.9, respectively, and well ahead of Richard Bussell in 3rd place.

Here's to 2023!

Chris (Lea), Buxton CC

Membership and Communications and Recording, VTTA North Midlands