

VTTA North Midlands

The racing year: 2023

Thursday 23rd February

It seems incredible that racing has already begun but, following the season's opening Ely & District CC hardriders 25 on the 12th Feb, it was Coalville Whs 10 last Saturday on the sporting A10/34 between Griffydham, Breedon on the Hill, and Osgathorpe, near Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and which is mostly in the lanes but with a B-road finish. As I recall, it was pretty windy last Saturday. That didn't stop Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) doing a 26+ mph ride, for 6th place, in 22-48, whilst Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) was 13th in 24-27. Junior female, Ella Jamieson, rode an impressive 23-54 for 9th place, and was fastest woman; one to watch, as she's on the GB academy squad. Fast man Ollie Peckover was quickest overall, in a superb 20-23.

Thursday 9th March

The early season races continued last weekend. VTTA North Mids riders were active in the Yorkshire VTTA/Jem'Hadar 10 on the lumpy V212 single carriageway south of Boroughbridge, and in the M&DTTA 10 on the rolling J4/20 at Byley, Cheshire, both held on the Saturday afternoon, which wasn't too windy but was cold.

In Yorkshire, Steve Gibson (Peak RC) won the road bike event, with a cracking time of 23-26. Nice one! In the fully open event, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) kicked off his season with 25-27, with John Martin (Elmsall RC) doing likewise with 27-34 after a year off racing. 2022 BBAR Marcel Schubert got his season underway in fine style, winning in 20-35. Isabel Mayes, still a junior, was fastest woman, with 25-19.

Whilst Marcel's time was impressive, Tokyo Olympian and former world champion team pursuiter Charlie Tanfield was one and three quarter minutes ahead of local fast men Alistair Ribbands and Alex Royle, with an uber-fast 19-50 on what are slow roads (honestly). Everything else being equal, Tanfield may well have been putting out something in the region of 20% to 25% more power than Royle and Ribbands. I guess that's what it takes to be world class. Espoir Kate Richardson's time was a fine 23-29 as quickest woman. Back in the realm of vets and mortals, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode her first race of the season, recording 31-01.

Thursday 23rd March

In Saturday afternoon's 10 on the lumpy V212 south of Boroughbridge, Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs) was just ahead of Daryl May (Sheffrec CC), with 23-27 to 23-33. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) went a bit quicker than his previous ride on this course, recording 25-16. John Martin (Elmsall RC) continued his comeback to racing, with 26-10. Kieran Morris was top of the leaderboard, in 20-38, whilst Sue McFarlane was quickest woman, in 26-06.

Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) followed-up her 31-01 of two weeks ago on the J4/20 10 course at Byley, with 30-21 in the M&DTTA event last Saturday. Charlie Tanfield lowered the course record to a frankly incredible 19-07, almost two minutes quicker than local fast man Alex Royle! Emily Martin dipped under 23 minutes, with 22-57, as fastest woman.

Last Saturday, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode Coalville Whs 10 on the hilly A10/34, stopping the clock in 25-46, whilst Mike Allen (Team Enable) got his season underway, with 30-16. HUUB Wattshop rider Alex Pritchard was 29 seconds quicker than Matt Bottrill, in a superb time of 20-40 given the nature of the course. Andrea Winkless of the promoting club was quickest woman, in 27-19.

Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was 4th vet in Round 1 of the Merlin Cycles Classic Series, last Sunday, over a testing 22.5 mile course in the South Downs, finishing in 56-38. Super-fast Vet Chris McNamara carried on where he left off last year, winning this category, in 51-25, whilst Jennifer George was fastest woman with a very rapid 57-59.

Thursday 6th April

The premier event last weekend was Sunday's classic race. No, not that one (Flanders), but the Circuit of the Dales; probably the hilliest 50 mile time trial on the calendar. Starting and finishing in Ingleton, with the climb from Hawes to Ribbleshead to negotiate in the 2nd half, it's a proper tough one. Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) reported good conditions but not much time to take in the scenery.....recording 2-18-44 for a fine 22nd place from 66 starters. Former BBAR Richard Bideau was well-beaten into 2nd place by junior Patrick Casey who finished in 1-56-17 as the only rider under two hours. Christina Wiejak, a specialist at these type of events, was fastest woman, in 2-19-20.

The previous evening, Addform Vive Le Velo promoted a 10 on the popular V210 course which runs mostly on the A168 dual carriageway between Dishforth and Topcliffe. Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) was 11th in 21-40, Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) came home in 23-45, whilst John Martin (Elmsall RC), improving with every ride, finished in 25-08. At the top of the field, Adam Duggleby tied with junior Alex Beldon, in 19-43. Of the fastest half dozen times, four were posted by juniors. Ella Jamieson, also a junior, was quickest female in a rapid 23-15.

Thursday 13th April

The first event of the bank holiday weekend just gone was Buxton CC's mountain time trial, incorporating round 2 of the Merlin Cycles Classic Series. Good Friday was the date and, somewhat unbelievably, it was dry & sunny with only light winds. Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was 2nd vet in the 'any bike' category, in 59-11, which is quick for this tough course that consists of two 11 mile laps (3 laps for men under 40) climbing from Longnor to Flash Bar on Axe Edge, before traversing the moorlands to The Winking Man pub, followed by the precipitous descent back to Longnor. To add to the test, there are downhills on the uphills and uphills on the downhills. This is Nick's second event in the Series, and his 2nd place should put him in a good position for the Series overall, although, with four events still to run, it's early days. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) competed in the road bike category, recording 1-06-12 and 1-34-41, respectively. Kelly Murphy was fastest woman in 1-05-39, pro rider for AWOL O'Shea Worx, and using the event to get in some sharp hard road efforts as training for the Irish national team pursuit squad, whilst taking it steady on the descents. Not taking it steady, anywhere, was John Archibald, who took 33 seconds off his own course record, completing 3 laps in 1-16-36 at an incredible 25.8 mph average speed.

Also taking place on Good Friday was City Road Club (Hull)'s 10 on the V714 between Gilberdyke and Howden. It was a breezy one. Steve Gibson and Peak RC teammate Andy Hicklin both rode, recording 22-06 and 22-52, respectively. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode his quickest time of the year so far, with 24-10. Jack Levick was fastest, in 20-00 dead! Vanessa Barker was quickest woman, in 25-37.

On Saturday afternoon, Sleaford Wheelers had a good-sized field for their 10 on the C10/10 which runs south, then back north on the A15, with the start on the edge of the promoting club's home town. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was 6th in 21-53, whilst Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs) finished in 22-52. Jack Levick was a bit quicker than the previous day, finishing fastest with 19-54, whilst Madeleine Gammons was quickest woman, in 24-44.

Competition continued throughout the entire weekend, but unfortunately the good weather did not, going downhill on Easter Monday which was when Manchester Bicycle Club's 10 was held, on the J10/1 Chapel-en-le-Frith bypass. Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) ended her weekend's racing with 29-33. David Parkin came home in under 20 minutes, with 19-51. Lucy Rogers was fastest woman, in 23-32.

Thursday 20th April

Last Saturday afternoon saw fairly good conditions – dry with light winds, albeit chilly – and this was reflected by fast times in Melton Olympic CC's 10 on the A10/3 which runs on the A46 south west of Newark, with four riders under 19 minutes. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) was 9th, in 20-33, and Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) was 23rd with 22-03. Oliver Peckover rode a super-fast 18-06 to finish as quickest overall. Lindsay Clarke was the fastest woman, in 23-23.

In Saturday's M&DTTA 25, Tom Thornely (FTP Race Team) opened his season with 55-41 on Cheshire's J4/8 which uses a circuit based on the outskirts of Holmes Chapel, Northwich, and Middlewich. Not a renowned fast course. But that didn't stop Simon Wilson from getting close to a 30 mph ride, with 50-17, and 2 ½ minutes ahead of the next competitor. Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) made the trip over the Pennines, finishing just outside the hour, in 1-00-03. Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode her first 25 of the season, finishing with 1-20-59. Quickest woman was Congleton CC's Alice Taylor, in 1-00-27.

Sunday saw the National VTTA 25 Championships taking place on the V236/1, which does two loops on the A168/A19 dual carriageway between Topcliffe and Thirsk. Potentially a fast course, if somewhat exposed to the wind. John Martin (Elmsall RC) was just shy of the hour, in 1-00-07. Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) got her season underway with 1-02-13, similarly Miles Haslam (Buxton CC), with 1-03-23. Richard Sharp was fastest on scratch, with a rapid 49-19, whilst Russ Richardson (age 65) had the best age adjusted time, of 48-09 with an actual of 54-24. Deborah Moss was quickest woman, in 58-03, and Linda Dewhurst (age 64) won the women's VTTA champs with an age adjusted time of 48-17 based on an actual ride of 1-1-05.

In a departure from time trialling, Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) and Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode round 4 of the Haus RT Darley Moor circuit races last Saturday, competing in the Masters E+ category, finishing 3rd and 9th, respectively, in this category.

Tuesday 25th April

Firstly, a result that I missed from the previous weekend's VTTA 25 championships at Thirsk: Martin Nelson (Out Of The Saddle CC) was the quickest North Mids rider, recording 58-35 on scratch, although Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) remains fastest on age-adjusted time, with 54-05.

The top event from last weekend was Round 3 of the Merlin Cycles Classic Series, promoted by Beacon RCC on a tough near-40 mile sporting course in the hills to the north west of Worcester. Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) strengthened his position at the top of the leaderboard in the vet's actual competition by winning the vet's category, in 1-44-57, over six minutes faster than the 2nd & 2rd placed riders. Emma Bexson was the fastest woman, in 2-07-29. This win puts Nick at the top of the vet's scratch competition and 2nd on target time, although it remains close between him and Mark Sanders from Mid Devon CC. Round 4 takes place on 7th May.

On the Saturday, Otley CC held their open 10 on the rolling V212 south of Boroughbridge. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) did 24-21. Mark Wolstenholme was fastest overall, in 21-07, and Hebe Pickering was quickest woman, in 26-00.

Over the faster roads of the F2, Shaftesbury CC ran their 25 on two laps of the Madingley to Caxton Gibbet stretch of the A428 dual carriageway. John Martin (Elmsall RC) was well under the hour, with 58-52. Conditions were "cool but nice and sunny, and the wind wasn't too strong". Man in form, Jack Levick, did 46-25, one of five riders over 30 mph. Lara Franklin rode 56-23 to win the women's race.

Also on fast roads, the VTTA East Mid 10 was run on the A10/3 which uses the A46 south west of Newark. It was pretty good conditions, with a tailwind on the longer outward leg. Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) won the women's prize in a close-fought race, with 23-51. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was the quickest North Mids rider, 9th in 20-24. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) recorded 21-05 and Mike Allen (Team Enable) did 25-04. David Hayward (Matlock CC) rode 26-37, following his 26-21 in the previous Saturday's Melton Olympic CC event on the A10/3 (another result that I missed), and Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) finished in 27-16. Two riders did 18 minute rides; the quickest being Alex Pritchard, with 18-28.

Although there were no North Mids riders, perhaps the slowest event last weekend was Cleveland Whs hilly 25, in which the fastest rider on a time trial bike was last year's BBAR Marcel Shubert, with 1-05-40, 16 minutes slower than his PB! But then the course does cross the North York Moors twice, climbing Blakey Ridge both ways and turning at Hutton-le-Hole.

Friday 5th May

Birdwell Whs 10 on the O10/1 last Saturday was popular with North Mids riders, who recorded some quick times. Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) was 6th in 21-46, Allan Wailoo (7 Hills CC) and Martin Nelson (Out Of The Saddle CC) also making it into the top 10: 7th and 9th in 22-11 and 22-23, respectively. Only just outside the top 10, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC), was in 11th spot and rode his fastest 10 of the season thus far, with 23-01. Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) was just over 25 mph with 23-59, and John Martin (Elmsall RC) was close to that mark, in 24-08. Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC) rode 24-45, Richard Walker (VTTA North Mids) 24-48, Mike Allen (Team Enable) 25-11, and Paul Heggie of the promoting club finished in 27-52. Quickest of all was John Brearley, in 20-20. Gillian Campbell was the fastest woman, with 26-54.

On the other side of the Pennines, in Cheshire, Macclesfield Whs held their 25 on the J2/9. Tom Thornely (FTP Race Team) dodged the potholes, at speed, finishing in 54-56 for 5th place. Tracey Gregory (Buxton CC) was not that far off a PB, with 1-15-54. Knocking all other times out of the park, Charlie Tanfield showed what can be done with a team pursuiter's power, recording 50-01. Emily Martin rode strongly to finish as fastest woman by some considerable margin, with 56-37.

Early Sunday morning was a cold one for Vive le Velo's 25 on the A165 south of Bridlington, breezy too, although on quiet roads and not too hilly. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) put in a wide-awake 54-32, whilst David Hayward (Matlock CC) wrestled a new machine to 1-16-35 after rather regretting an overly-ambitious low front end. Some position tweaks will soon put that right and faster times are assured! In form Richard Sharp was fastest overall, in 50-38. In the women's event, Sue McFarlane was quickest, with 1-03-31.

Thursday 11th May

The top 10 in last Saturday's Sheffrec CC 25 on the O25/11 at Hatfield was packed with North Mids Vets. The results are provisional at this stage, but Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) continued his strong form with 55-02 for 2nd place to the ageless Julian Ramsbottom who recorded 53-05 on what was quite a mild day with light winds. Allan Wailoo (7 Hills Cycling Club) also rode strongly with 56-50 for 5th spot. Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC), Daryl May (Sheffrec CC), and

Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) in only his 2nd race of the season, finished 8th to 10th with 57-41, 59-22, and 59-38, respectively. Sally Maitland was fastest woman in 1-03-52.

In the Dukinfield CC 50, Tom Thornely (FTP Race Team) was 6th with a rapid 1-51-29 on the challenging Cheshire J4/9 course between Middlewich, Byley, and Northwich. Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) did a five minute PB, with 2-42-02. Fast man David Parkin was quickest overall, with an impressive 1-45-51, whilst the fastest woman was Lucy Rogers in 2-02-06.

Matlock CC's 10 was held early on Sunday morning on the A6 between Darley Dale and Bakewell, in cool conditions but with no discernible wind. Tom Thornely, having raced the previous day, was just edged out of top spot by Matt Bagshawe's 21-37, recording 21-43. In 4th place was Mat Iving (Buxton CC) in his first event of the year, with 22-07. Chris Lea (Buxton CC) was 8th in 23-33. Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) rode 25-46 and David Hayward (Matlock CC) did 29-04. Tracy Gregory also 'doubled-up' after the Dukinfield 50, finishing with 29-20. Anne Haslam (Buxton CC) recorded 32-10 in her first event of the season.

Thursday 18th May

There were some fine performances in last Saturday's Melton Olympic CC 25 on the A25/34 south west of Newark and which is mainly on the A46 dual carriageway to Stragglethorpe and back. Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) did a storming ride on his road bike, fastest in this category, with 57-07. On time trial machines, Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was 3rd overall in 52-02, whilst Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) was close to winning the women's category, 2nd in 1-00-32 and just 21 seconds down on Denise Burrows. Also taking part were Chris Lea (Buxton CC) with 57-12, and John Martin (Elmsall RC) in 58-47. Ace junior Finlay Tarling was two and half minutes clear of the rest of the field, in 48-31. It was a cold day, but dry, although the light to moderate northerly hampered many a return from the Stragglethorpe junction.

On the slower roads of Cheshire, Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) did her fastest ride on the J4/20 10 course this season, with 29-39. Lucy Rogers was quickest in the M&DLCA event, in 22-58.

Thursday 25th May

A stiff headwind on the much longer outward leg of the Sherwood CC 10 on the A10/3 last Saturday afternoon meant that times were significantly slower than earlier in the season. The A10/3 uses the A46 dual carriageway between East Bridgford and Elston/Thorpe. There is almost two miles difference between outward and return legs, so fast times need a gentle south westerly...not a north easterly. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was quickest of the North Mids Vets, in 21-09. Alan Cooke (Peak RC) rode 23-20, Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) 24-02, Mike Allen (Team Enable) 25-27, and David Hayward (Matlock CC) 29-37. Somehow the top riders seem to be less affected by headwinds, and that was the case with Oliver Peckover who was fastest overall in 18-44. Diane Egerton-Warburton was quickest woman, in 24-09.

On Sunday morning, in Ravensthorpe CC's 10 on the V511 single-carriageway course between North Duffield and Barby, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) was well over 25 mph, with 23-27. Mark Wolstenholme was fastest, in 21-30, and Gretchen Zoeller was quickest woman, with 26-04.

Also on Sunday morning, but with an old-school early start of just gone 7am for Mat Iving & Chris Lea of the Buxton CC, Mid Shropshire Whs tried out a new 50 course between Espley, Shawbury and Shawbirch (which uses the same circuit as next Monday's Anfield BC 100); the D350/1. Times for most were also old school..... 2-07-37 for Chris although a much more rapid 1-56-45 for Mat. Nevertheless, it can't be that slow a course, as Alex Royle won in 1-48-57. Deb Hutson-Lamb was

fastest woman, in 2-11-29, some 40 seconds quicker than Joanna Cebrat – silver medallist in last year's National 24 Hour Championships.

Thursday 1st June

Last Sunday, Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear products) continued his assault on the RTTC Merlin Cycles Classic Series, placing 3rd on scratch in the Mens Vet's event. Round 5 took place around Greystoke Forest, located east of Penrith, and promoted by Border City Wheelers CC on a 28 mile hilly course. Nick finished with 1-12-29. With one round to go Nick leads the Vet's scratch competition and is 3rd on target time. Fingers-crossed for that final round, on 11th June.

Also on Sunday, East Bradford CC held their open 15 on the V221 which runs parallel to the A1 to the south of Boroughbridge. This is a lumpy course, evident in the winner's time of 32-33 (Mark Wolstenholme), which is slow by current standards. Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC) finished 7th in 35-25. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) rode 36-35 and Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) 37-09. Suzanne Noon was fastest woman; 45-45 on a road bike.

The Anfield BC held their classic 100 mile time trial on bank holiday Monday. First held in 1889 and with the exception of world wars, foot and mouth in 2007, covid in 2020 and epic roadworks in 2021, the event has been held every year. Chris Lea rumbled round the grippy Shropshire course in 4-21-48, for 21st place. It was cold and became windy but, overall, conditions were reasonable as it stayed sunny and dry. In the middle of the race, Alex Royle, 2nd in 2022, had caught and passed his two minute man, Benjamin Goodfellow, and was looking good for the win. However, Goodfellow paced it better, recatching Royle and then distancing him by almost 7 minutes; Goodfellow winning in a superb 3-42-07 with Royle 2nd again, in a still remarkably rapid 3-46-55. In the women's event, Christina Murray, current women's 24 hour record holder, was some 7 minutes slower than 2022, finishing 2nd in 4-24-19 to Lucy Rogers' 4-19-47.

In Rutland CC's mid-week hilly time trial on the Circuit of Longstone Edge course, last Wednesday evening, Nick Latimer, Gordon Wordsworth (Rutland CC) and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode 45-49, 59-20 and 1-09-39, respectively. Tracy was the only woman to brave the testing course. Junior, Patrick Casey, was quickest overall, in 42-37.

Thursday 8th June

On another day with a headwind after the turn, the VTTA Notts and East Mids 25 on the A25/34 south west of Newark last Saturday saw most times blunted by the wind. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) was 9th with 52-48, John Martin (Elmsall RC) was 35th and just over the hour, in 1-00-16, whilst David Hayward (Matlock CC) shaved a second off his PB, finishing with 1-08-14 and 58th. The age-adjusted times and places are interesting. 49-56 & 2nd for Andy, 55-12 and 21st for David, with John one place behind in 55-25. Adds another dimension to the results. George Peden was fastest overall with a blistering 46-57 and Susan Semple was quickest woman in 1-00-48. On age-adjusted time the evergreen Julian Ramsbottom headed the leaderboard in 49-47, with Susan in 4th place overall with 50-24.

Early on Sunday morning A3crg held their 50 on the potentially very rapid P881L/50 course, based on the A3 at Petersfield, Hampshire. However, as with other events last weekend, the brisk north easterly made for tough conditions. Paul Burton did the fastest ride of the day, with 1-39-26; quick, but still 3 minutes slower than in this event last year. Tom Thornely (FTP Race Team) did a fine ride, 7th in 1-46-08, at an average speed in excess of 28 mph. Simone Mitchell of the promoting club was the quickest woman, in 1-57-06, after a close battle with Lizi Brooke - less than 30 seconds slower. Finally, in the East Anglian VTTA mid-week event on the F2A/10 course, which uses the A428 south

of Cambridge, Mike Allen (Team Enable) rode 24-55. Rob Walker was over a minute and a half clear of the rest of the field, with 18-12, and Emily Varley was quickest woman, in 23-13.

Tuesday 13th June

The results of the previous Saturday's Yorkshire Road Club 25, in which Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield), Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC), and Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC) competed, are now out: for Sarah, Paul and Martin respectively, 1-04-32, 1-02-08 and 58-04. Not an easy course and a slow day, with the fastest time being 53-06 by Euan Adam, with the quickest woman being junior rider Cat Ferguson with an impressive ride of just under the hour, in 59-56.

The top event last weekend was the VTTA National 50 Championships held over 2 laps of the A25/34 course south west of Newark. Conditions were akin to riding a turbo into the exhaust of a hairdryer. Hot! And really windy. There were 31 DNS and 18 DNF. Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) endured to record an age-adjusted time of 2-17-37 as the only finisher from the North Mids. On AAT, Andrew Gallacher won the men's event in 1-45-10, and Deborah Moss the women's in 1-47-07.

Last Wednesday evening Yorkshire Cycling Federation promoted the Cragg Vale hill climb which starts in Mytholmroyd and climbs south to the Pennine Way, 4.8 miles and close to 1000 feet of height gain. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) had one of his best results in a hill climb, placing 5th with 18-07.4, to the winning time of 15-29.9 by Marcus Cram. Sarah Lewthwaite did a strong ride, finishing as fastest woman and 6th overall, in 18-33.0.

Friday 23rd June

A quick recap of last weeks' results:

There were two midweek open events – Buxton CC's 10 on the Chapel-en-le-Frith Bypass, and Peak Road Club's hilly lap from Stoney Middleton to Calver via Litton, Miller's Dale and Ashford in the Water.

In the Buxton event, Alan Cooke (Peak RC) did 22-25, with Chris Lea at 23-15, and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) 27-48.

Peak RC's hilly time trial saw plenty of North Mids vets: Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products), Allan Wailoo (7 Hills CC), and Tracy Gregory were on time trial bikes and recorded 45-16, 46-56 and 1-09-54 respectively to Andy Nichols time of 42-32 as fastest on a time trial bike. On road bikes, Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC), Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC), Ady Dench (Team Sheffield) and Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) did 47-47, 48-29, 49-38 and 51-23, respectively, with James McKay going fastest on any machine, in 41-58. It's a close run thing as to whether a road bike or time trial bike is the quickest option in this event.

Last Saturday, the M&DTTA held their Championship 50 on the grippy roads of Cheshire. Tom Thornely (FTP RaceTeam) had a great ride, with 1-48-44 for 4th place. Mat Ivings (Buxton CC), Chris Lea, Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) and Tracy Gregory were riding too, finishing with 1-54-16, 2-05-23, 2-14-22 and 2-46-10. A certain Mark Lovatt did 1-55-19, on his road bike.....

Also on Saturday, Witham Whs held their 10 on the C10/10 south of Sleaford; Anthony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) did 22-04, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) 23-41, with Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) close behind in 23-45.

The top event this coming weekend is Cambridge CC's 'Viking' 50 on the F2/50 on Saturday afternoon. With a forecast light south westerly (best wind direction for this course) and high

temperatures, it should be a fast one. Tom Thornely, Simon Warren, and Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) ride. Hydration will be important!

Wednesday 28th June

The top event last coming weekend was indeed Cambridge CC's 'Viking' 50. It was a hot one! Tom Thornely (Buxton CC), Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC), and Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) battled the heat. Tom Thornely did a PB with 1-41-17 and having gone sub 50 minutes for the first 25 miles!!; Simon Warren doing 1-58-22, on his road bike!, and Sarah Harrison riding a PB too, in 2-04-37. Fastest ride on the day was that of Neil Harris in 1-38-43, whilst Kim Barfoot Brace just about survived a lost bottle to finish as fastest woman in 1-52-58.

Over in Cheshire, Salford CC held their open 25 on the J2/9 between Chelford, Knutsford and Holmes Chapel. Mat Iivings (Buxton CC), Daryl May (Sheffrec CC), Chris Lea, and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) rode, recording 56-33 for 4th place, 1-01-05, 1-01-43, and 1-15-08, respectively. Whilst it was a degree or so less hot than Cambridge, a combination of the heat and a brisk south westerly slowed most riders. Claire Harrison won the women's event, in 1-02-05, whilst Alex Royle overcame a string of 2nd places to finish fastest in 52-50.

On Saturday evening, Seacroft Whs ran their 10 on the Selby by-pass. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) was just over 25 mph, with 23-54. Scratch rider Adam Duggleby more than lived up to his billing, with 19-08. Helen Goldthorpe was fastest woman, in 24-42.

It might seem early in the season for hill climbs, but last Friday Sheffrec CC promoted the Bradfield Hill Climb up Woodfall Lane. Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) had a cracking ride to finish as first vet and 4th overall, and in a vet's course record of 2-20.7. Yvonne Twelvetree rediscovered her hill climbing legs to finish in a fine 2nd place from 4 women, with 5-06.6, aged 72: Hat's off! Andy Nichols was a mere 0.1 seconds faster than juvenile rider Isaac Oliver, but posting the fastest ride of the evening, with 2-13.1. For the women, Macc Whs Alison Dockney was quickest, in 3-26.6.

In a late result from Tuesday 13th June, Matlock CC held their open 10 on the A10/16 between Darley Dale and Bakewell. David Hayward of the promoting club rode 28-26, and almost 40 seconds faster than his May ride in an open event on this course. Lee Tunnicliffe was a convincing winner in 20-35, whilst Morgan Newberry was a smidgeon outside 25 mph, with 24-01.

Sunday morning was Sowerby Sunday Club's 10 on the rapid V210 between Dishforth and Thirsk. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) powered his road bike to 22-00, whilst another veteran road man, well-known Julian Ramsbottom, was just under 20 minutes on his time trial machine, in 19-53.

Thursday 6th July

Last Wednesday, Peak RC/Myhill.cycling.co.uk's 'mountain top finish' was the summit of Longstone Edge, featuring the North Midlands' Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products), Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC). Yvonne and Tracy were 4th & 5th in 8-51.8 and 9-25.8, respectively, to winner Sally Maitland's 6-55.2 Nick had yet another 'podium', 3rd in 5-03.3 and fastest vet, with the top spot being taken by junior Isaac Oliver, in 4-44.9.

Lindsey Roads CC's Andy Thomas was just a handful of seconds off winning Witham Whs 25 on an L-shaped course to the south of Sleaford, recording 55-32 for 3rd place to the winner Dominic Righini-Brand's 55-28. So close! Clubmate Tony Nash was 9th in 58-28, whilst Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) rode 1-00-57. It was a good day out for the Righini-Brands, as Evgeniya was fastest woman, in 1-05-43.

Sunday morning saw the classic distance of 100 miles being raced by Tom Thornely (FTP Race Team) in the Welsh CA Championships on the A40 between Abergavenny and Monmouth, whilst Miles Haslam (Buxton CC) rode the SCCA & WCTTCA event which used the same triangular circuit as this year's Anfield BC race. Riders in both events had to deal with a rising westerly which became cruelly fresh as the race wore on.

Tom Thornely rode a superb 3-36-43 for 3rd place, and at one point was challenging the winner Chris Gibbard who rode a very strong final leg to finish in 3-34-44. Roxy Woodfield was the fastest woman, in 4-26-08.

Over the slower roads of Shropshire, Miles Haslam battled the windy conditions to finish with 4-40-49. David Parkin was quickest of all, with 3-42-34 and over five minutes ahead of the next competitor, David Williams. Jo Cebrat had a close finish with Hayley Wells (less than a minute behind), but winning the women's race in 4-33-07.

Top event this coming weekend is the RTTC National 100 mile Championships promoted by CC Breckland on roads to the edge of Thetford Forest. Tom Thornley rides, in his second 100 in consecutive weekends. It's a stacked field containing, amongst others: Alex Dowsett, Jake Sargent, Tom Hutchinson, Adam Duggleby and John Archibald. Ideally we'd have live coverage on Eurosport or GCN+, but will instead have to make do with the Tour de France.

Thursday 13th July

No live coverage on Eurosport or GCN+ of the RTTC National 100 mile Championships last Sunday, meaning that we missed out on a gripping finish in which Adam Duggleby in the closing miles of the race overturned what appeared to be a decisive lead by Alex Dowsett, winning by a mere 25 seconds, in 3-25-05, and John Archibald suffered yet another puncture in a replay of last week's 50 Championships. It was also close between Emily Martin and Lizi Brooke for much of the race, but with Emily powering ahead in the final stages, to record 3-55-10. Tom Thornely (Buxton CC), in his second 100 in as many weeks, finished in 9th place with 3-42-45, and average speed of essentially 27 mph.

On the O10/1 last Saturday, Rutland CC saw a good turnout from the North Midlands. Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was 4th in 21-44, Tony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) 5th in 22-20, Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC) 7th in 22-36 and Daryl May 10th in 23-07. Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) did 24-01, Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) 24-35, Mike Allen (Team Enable) 25-14 on his road bike, Ben Hamilton from the promoting club rode 27-02, and Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) 29-23. Ian Guilor was joint fastest with Mark Walker, in 21-06. Rebecca Waterfield was the quickest woman, in 24-36.

7 Hills CC promoted an open hill climb last Friday evening on the OHC21 course which climbs Whitelaw Lane from Dore to the Hathersage road. It proved a very popular choice, with 87 finishers including 23 under 16s, and the reason was probably that it was on a closed road. The youngest competitor was just 8! Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) again went head to head with Tracy Gregory, triumphing in 6-25.1 to Tracy's 7-04.1. Nick Latimer was fastest vet, quicker than all the senior riders, but was bested by junior rider Isaac Oliver in 3-36.1 to Nick's 3-41.1. Still, cracking ride. Jenn Dick was the quickest woman, in 5-11.1

Last but certainly not least, Mike Allen (team Enable) reports that he has 'found his racing legs', racing to 23-23 in the East Anglian VTTA 10 on the F2A/10 south of Cambridge last Thursday, and a new Group Record, shaving 2 seconds off the legendary George Steers' time from 1999. Rob Walker was quickest on the night, in 18-31, whilst Julia Freeman was the fastest woman, in 23-52.

Thursday 20th July

Apparently no North Mids vets in that 22km time trial on Tuesday and which finished up Hinault's favourite climb, so here's a report from the Seamons CC 25 last Saturday.....

Braving the wind and torrential rain, Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) rode a fine 56-12 for 10th spot overall. Tracy Gregory (Buxton CC) also toughed-out the conditions, finishing with 1-17-47. Alice Taylor was the quickest woman, in 1-00-12, whilst fast man David Parkin took top spot with an impressive 52-13.

Sunday was no less windy. In the Yorkshire VTTA 10 on what should be the fast V210 (on the A168 dual carriageway), it would have been a slog back to the finish. Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) battled round in 28-35. Fastest on the day was 21-20 by David Glew, whilst Vanessa Barker rode strongly to finish as quickest woman in 23-55.

Thursday 27th July

It wasn't just the cricket where rain stopped play last weekend. Across four events there were 9 DNS and one DNF (puncture) from North Mids vets, but Alan Cooke (Peak RC) and Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) flew the flag in the Sherwood CC 10 on a wet Saturday afternoon, whilst Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC) battled strong south-westerly winds in Sunday morning's VTTA East Anglian 25 on the F2A/25 near Cambridge.

Alan and Andy finished in 22-12 and 20-55, respectively, whilst fastest man George Peden did the trick that fast man do, which is to be seemingly unaffected by the conditions, posting a 33 mph ride, with 18-02. Sally Maitland was inside 25 mph pace as quickest woman, in 23-53.

Martin recorded 1-00-43 in his first open event of the season. Doing the fast man magic, Paul Burton was quickest overall, in 47-30, whilst Linda Dewhurst was quickest woman, in 58-27.

It's got to be drier and less windy this coming weekend, surely.....

Thursday 3rd August

Last week I wrote that the upcoming weekend had to be drier and less windy than of late? Let's see how that turned out.

Early Saturday morning and Chris Lea rode the Congleton CC 50 on the rough roads of Cheshire. The weather was fine as he arrived at the HQ, still looking good as he changed into his race gear, and then, was that a spot of rain as he left for his warm-up? It was. The forlorn scene at the start, as riders huddled under trees in a futile attempt to stay dry, became bleaker as the heavens opened and biblical rain fell, leaving the roads awash. And then the wind got up. A mediocre time of 2-05-15 ensued. At the sharp end of the race, David Parkin blasted round in 1-49-17 and Alice Taylor of the promoting club posted the fastest time by a woman, in 2-04-39.

Mid-afternoon and it was the Chronos RT 10 on the F2A/10, south of Cambridge. Surely more clement weather down there? Not a bit of it. As the fastest woman Jessica Rhodes-Jones, explained: "It was a super strong gusty headwind on the outward leg.....as soon as you got onto the dual carriageway it hit you! I had an average speed of 40kph on the way out and over 54kph on the way back....." Mike Allen (Team Enable) fought his way round in 24-28. Somehow, Michael Gill did a sub 18 minute ride, with 17-40: no doubt at warp speed on the tailwind run to the finish.

How were things further north? Similarly bleak and tough. In the Pendle Forest CC 10 on the L1015 near Kendal, Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) also felt the rain begin to fall as he started his warm-up. Whilst the rain let up, the wind certainly did not, and the event was blasted by a strong south westerly. Mat

did 21-03, and not dipping below 30 mph on the wind-assisted return leg. A junior to watch out for, Maxwell Hereward, was quickest overall, in 19-25. Abi Smith rode strongly to finish as fastest woman, in 21-28.

Now then, surely this coming weekend will be drier and less windy!?

Thursday 10th August

The rotten weather continued last weekend, leading to the cancellation of Finsbury Park CC's 25 on the potentially fast F2A/25 to the south of Cambridge and denying rides to North Mids Vets on the Saturday. However, whilst the forecast looked grim, Tickhill Velo CC's 10 on the O10/1, also on Saturday, found a rare window in the weather and conditions were, amazingly, dry! Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) returned a time of 27-38 and Michael Weaver (Rotherham Whs CC) did 28-16. At the top of the leaderboard was John Brearley, with 20-35, and Lindsay James was only just outside a 25 mph ride, with 24-08 as fastest female.

Thursday 17th August

The results of last Sunday's RTTC National 12 Hour Championships are not out yet. I spectated for the last few hours on the finishing circuit and it was a privilege to watch riders as they stuck to their task, some grimly, others determinedly, and some at speeds that you'd be happy to do in a 25 - never mind after 10 hours of racing. Unsurprisingly for this year, it was windy for much of the day, showery at times, and far from ideal conditions. As for the course.....well, sporting would be one way to describe it; cruel, another. Chapeau to all finishers.

Earlier on Sunday, Darlington CC promoted their 50 mile time trial on the old A1 between Catterick and Kirklington. A lumpy course. Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC) did 2-03-32 for 11th place, whilst Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) was fastest woman, in 2-16-05. Nice one.

Also on Sunday, Chris Lea rode the Virtual CC 25 on the rapid R25/7 between Usk and Monmouth, finishing in 56-49. A race of two halves: 28.5 mph to half distance, 24.5 mph on the return journey. That pesky wind again. It was good to see Kate Allan putting most other competitors in the shade, with her 51-51 – at a faster average speed (28.9 mph) than even my wind-assisted trip to the turn, showing that she is recovering well from her crash in the National 50 Championships. Jake Sargent rode a super-fast 47-41 to finish top of the leaderboard.

Yorkshire Cycling Federation ran their 25 on Saturday afternoon on the V235, south of Boroughbridge. Another lumpy course and windy too. Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) did 1-05-56 and David Hayward (Matlock CC) 1-14-36. Junior, Joe Turnbull, was quickest overall, in an impressive 53-34. Abi Smith had a storming ride to finish in 56-35 for 6th place overall and fastest woman by almost 7 minutes!

Further south, in the ECCA 10 on the well-known and potentially fast E2/10, Mike Allen (Team Enable) was again thwarted in his quest for yet another group record by, you've guessed it, strong winds...finishing in 24-25. Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC) rode his first open 10 of the season, recording 25-32. A third of the field were DNS and there were 3 DNF, indicating just how strong was the wind. Nevertheless, there were three 19 minute rides, with Piotr Zulawski quickest in 19-01. Louise Robinson was the fastest woman, by just 1 second, in a rapid 22-24.

Thursday 24th August

Strong winds on Saturday afternoon meant that the VTTA East Mids 25 on the notionally quick A25/34 dual-carriageway course to the south west of Newark, didn't live up to its potential. Even the scratch man, Adam Duggleby, was affected, although he did manage the only 30 mph ride of the

day, with 49-53. Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) and Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC) put in fine performances in the conditions, finishing in 5th & 6th place with 54-33 and 55-57, respectively. Len Best (Matlock CC) battled round in 1-07-41, as did Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) and Michael Weaver (Rotherham Whs CC), in 1-14-29 and 1-15-54. Denise Burrows was fastest woman, in 1-01-35.

Duggleby rode again on Sunday morning in Manchester Bicycle Club's 25 on the resurrected J5/8 which uses the A50 between Blythe Bridge and Sudbury: the 'concrete mountain' course. Despite having to anchor-up at the Sudbury turn to avoid the kerb, he did 46-04! It was good weather, but not, as reported elsewhere, 'near-perfect'. What could Duggleby do in perfect weather, when fresh, and without any mishaps? Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) won the women's competition, in a fine 59-19 and the only woman under the hour. Nice one. Mat Ivings and Chris Lea rode from the Buxton CC, with Mat placing 9th in 52-23 despite several hold-ups, and Chris 57-32.

On Sunday teatime, Sitwell CC held their open hill climb on the road up from Ulley Reservoir, near Rotherham. Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) took on the challenge and was 2nd fastest of the three women, in 2-34.8. Espoir, Erin Avill, some 50 years junior to Yvonne, was quickest woman, in 1-36.5. Prolific winner of hill climbs, Andy Nichols, took his first win of the uphill season, in 1-11.9.

Thursday 31st August

Folks must be on holiday.....just the one result from last week; Steve Gibson (Peak RC) in Border City Whs CC 10 on the L108. This is a little-known course which looks very appealing: on the northern edge of the Howgills and handily placed for nipping into the famous Tebay services on the M6. Gently descending on a single-carriageway A-road to the westerly turn, before the long steady drag back towards the start. Steve was 10th with 21-33. Former BBAR and all round top bloke Richard Bideau was first by just 5s, in 20-37. Theresa Taylor was the quickest woman, in 25-24.

Friday 22nd September

Back to business. At the beginning of the month, Saturday 2nd, we held our North Midlands group 10 on the O10/1 at Hatfield, organised by Gordon Wordsworth of the Rutland CC, supported by members and friends of the group. 'We' took first and second places on age-adjusted time, with Andy Thomas' 20-08 (Lindsey Roads CC) and Steve Gibson's 20-14 (Peak RC), based on 21-14 and 21-38 for 5th & 8th place on actuals, respectively. Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) was fastest rider on a road bike, with a rapid 23-11. Ian Guilor was fastest overall, with 20-52. Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) was 2nd women on actual time, in a PB and new group record at age 73, of 30-02. Excellent work folks!

There was a good turnout of riders from the North Mids in the group 10. Tony Nash (Lindsey Roads CC) did 22-07, Martin Nelson (Out of the Saddle CC) 22-14, Daryl May (Sheffrec CC) rode 23-23, Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) 23-31, Paul Mapletoft (Kiveton Park CC) 23-49, Ben Hamilton (Rutland CC) 27-39, and Michael Weaver (Rotherham Whs CC) 28-50.

Also riding were Ala and Andy Whitehead (Rockingham CC) in their first open event on the tandem this year, recording 26-05 and, in so doing, winning the group's Watson Trophy for fastest ride on a tandem over 10 miles. Three other group trophies were also decided on the day, based on standard/age-adjusted time: the Cleethorpes Shield for fastest rider, to Andy Thomas; the Sheffield Central Cup for fastest female, to Yvonne Twelvetree; and the Ron Blythe Trophy to Ben Hamilton for fastest rider over 70. These trophies will be engraved and formally presented at our annual luncheon on Sunday 18th February 2024 at the Holiday Inn, Rotherham.

The following day, and at the other end of the time/distance scale, Tom Thornely (FTP Race Team) rode a stupendous distance of 303.37 miles in the Welsh CA 12, a mere three weeks after his ride in the National Championship 12. Wow. Previous winner of the event, Tony Jones, finished a smidgeon ahead, with 304.22 miles. Roxy Woodfield was fastest female, with a distance of 252.68 miles.

The next weekend, 9th and 10th September, was the Yorkshire Road Club's 25, and ECCA 10, on the Saturday, with the Cambridge CC 25 on the Sunday, followed by Bolsover & District CC's closed-road hill climb at Hardwick Hall.

In the Yorkshire Road Club 25, on the rolling V235 south of Boroughbridge, Paul Mapletoft and Andy Whitehead rode 1-01-17 and 1-04-37, respectively. John Brearley was quickest overall, in 54-13, and Rebecca Mason was fastest female, in 1-04-29. In the ECCA 10 on the potentially fast E2/10, Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC) and Mike Allen (Team Enable) were fairly close, in 24-18 and 24-34, respectively. James Jenkins rode a storming 17-28 as fastest rider; Deborah Beare was quickest female, in 21-55.

On the Sunday, David Hayward (Matlock CC) rode a 1-08-08 PB in Cambridge CC's 25 on the F2A/25; a good way to end his season. Martin Bullen did 1-04-05. Andy Critchlow was in great form, beating Matt Smith and recording 46-55 as the most rapid ride of the day. Kate Allan was 17th overall and did a very impressive 50-34, finishing a minute ahead of teammate Emily Martin.

Kicking-off his hill climbing season in fine style, Nicholas Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) was fastest vet in the Bolsover event, finishing in 7th spot with 1-37.1 to the winner, Calum Brown's 1-19.9. Yvonne Twelvetree, riding her 6th open hill climb of the year so far (!), recorded 3-19.7. Renowned hill climber, Emilie Verokken, was quickest female, in 1-57.4.

Nick was back racing uphill last weekend in Cheshire Maverick CC's event on 'The Brickworks' near Pott Shrigley, nor far from Macclesfield. A climb well-known to Manchester riders. Again, fastest vet, and 9th overall, with 6-52.5. Kieran Wynne-Cattanach was quickest, in 6-20.9 and local rider Alison Dockney was fastest female, in 8-28.9.

Early last Sunday morning it was the North Lancashire TTA 50 on the L5012 between Keswick and Cockermouth. The rain just about held off, but it was chilly with unexpectedly rapid variations in wind direction. Mat Ivings (Buxton CC) had a good ride, finishing in 1-51-56. Doug Watson was five minutes ahead of the 2nd-placed rider, with his superb 1-40-05. Deborah Moss was fastest female, in 2-04-15.

Finally, but certainly not least, Steve Gibson was on the podium in bronze medal position with his ride in the VTTA National Championship 10 on a sporting course to the south east of Stone. Steve had an age-adjusted time of 20-38 based on an actual of 22-02. Nice one! Ian Guilor took top spot with an age-adjusted 20-03. On actual, Leon Wright was quickest, with 20-20. In the women's race, Linda Dewhurst had an age-adjusted time of 19-27, with an actual time of 24-27, age 64; winning another national title in impressive fashion.

Thursday 28th September

Congratulations to Alan Sides (Rotherham Whs CC) who rode his first open event in five years, a week ago last Saturday, in the Darlington CC 10 on the T104/3 between Catterick and Leeming Bar. This isn't a fast course, and no rider dipped under 21 minutes, although Euan Adam came closest in 21-02. I hope Alan doesn't mind me saying that he is 79 and had a hip replaced not that very long ago. He completed the course in 36-05, and I'm sure there's more to come next season.

There were two fast 25's last weekend: on Saturday afternoon the East Anglian VTTA event on the E2/25 (making its return after years of roadworks) and, on Sunday morning, Bramley Whs open on the V236/1 between Topcliffe and Thirsk. Riders in both events had to contend with unhelpful winds, more so in the Bramley Whs event.

On the E2/25, Andy Thomas (Lindsey Roads CC) did a season's best of 51-05, whilst Steve Gibson (Peak RC) powered his road bike to a superb 54-46. Chris Lea did 56-43, pipped by 10 secs on age-adjusted time by Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC), with 1-00-34. Unfortunately, Alex Dowsett was DNF, with the fastest ride of the day thus being 47-44 from Neil Harris, and Louise Robinson finishing as quickest female in a rapid 54-46.

In Bramley Whs event, Andy Hicklin (Peak RC) dipped under the hour on his road bike, with 59-53. A strong ride in the windy conditions. In the event for time trial machines, Jack Levick was the only rider under 50 minutes, with 49-40, whilst Angela Hannon-Flaherty was fastest female, in 1-00-32. A shout out for Adam Duggleby who completed the course in 56-42, on a trike. Many top riders will be hoping that he sticks with three wheels next season.

Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear products) continued his hill climb season last Saturday on Pea Royd Lane in an event promoted by his club. He was a fine 3rd overall and first vet, in 2-45.5. Clubmate and prolific winner of hill climbs, Andy Nichols, did so again, in 2-29.9 Jo Cebrat was the only female rider, and she finished in 4-33.1

Thursday 5th October

As we get deeper into the hill climb season there are few time trials remaining. However, on Saturday, Finsbury Park CC celebrated their 140 year anniversary with an open 25 on the well-surfaced F2A/25 south of Cambridge. Chris Lea did 57-23. Local ace Matt Smith rode a superb 47-04 to win the open event, whilst Kate Allan rode a stunning 50-10 to win the women's event and at the same time finishing 9th overall.

Also on Saturday afternoon, the Welsh CA held their 50 mile Championships on the A40 between Abergavenny and Monmouth. A fresh westerly meant that the course didn't live up to its potential. Trevor Mayne (Birdwell Whs) finished with 2-04-05. Jake Sargent put several minutes into the two local fast men, Chris Gibbard and Tony Jones, with the only sub 1-40 ride, of 1-39-43. Long distance ace, Chris Murray, was fastest female, only just outside the two hour mark in 2-00-01.

Top event of the weekend though was the RTTC National Road Bike Championships, held on Sunday morning on a testing 18.5 mile course to the east of Bristol. A tailwind on the long opening downhill meant for a tough second half – generally uphill and into the wind. Steve Gibson (Peak RC) was just 7 seconds off an age-group podium, with 44-56. Despite a 30 sec late start, teammate Andy Hicklin was not very far behind, in 46-21. Mikey Mottram, riding for the Ribble Collective, won in 39-40, at almost 28 mph average speed. Hardman Mark Lovatt put in a strong performance, as ever, finishing in 42-56. The women's event was won by Ruth Shier, in 45-55.

Closer to home, Sunday saw Sheffrec CC's brilliantly-organised closed road hill climb on Monsal Head. There were 196 riders on the start sheet. Nick Latimer was fastest vet, and with a high placing of 10th overall, in 1-30.9. Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) finished just inside two minutes, with 1-59.3. Andy Newham (Lincoln Whs CC) did 3-07.7, on his trike! Yvonne Twelvetree (Sheffield Tri Club) continued her hill climb season, recording 3-36.4 and faster than several other riders. Abi Plowman was quickest female, in 1-53, whilst Andy Nichols was fastest on the day, in 1-20.5. Many have tried to break Malcom Elliott's 1981 course record of 1-14.2, including Darryl Webster, Chris

Walker, Jeff Wright, Dean and Russ Downing, Adam Blythe, Charles Taylor, Graham Briggs, Adam Kenway, and Calum Brown. All have fallen short. The record stands for yet another year.

Thursday 12th October

Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) has been taking on yet more hill climbs: Mam Nick last Saturday, The Snake on Sunday. And, the previous weekend, Whinlatter, in The Lake District.

In the Mam Nick event, promoted by Rutland CC, Simon fought the changing gradient to finish in just over 8 minutes, with 8-01.5. The fastest times were ridiculously quick, with Harry Hudson, junior from Matlock CC, posting the day's best of 6-17.4. Oliva French was fastest female, in 8-40.6. Those times for male and female winners were impressive, although well short of the stupendous course records of 5-37 and 7-34 by Tom Bell and Rebecca Richardson. Why not try riding Mam Nick, flat out, and see how far up you are at 5-37 and 7-34?

On Sunday in Glossop Kinder Velo's event, on The Snake, which demands a more constant effort, Simon did 15-14.1, about 12 mph – which is good going up that gradient. Double National Champion, Andrew Feather, was quickest overall, in 12-02.7; 15 mph, uphill! Olivia French won again, finishing as fastest female in 16-34.6.

Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) rode his 5th & 6th hill climbs of the season, on the same day - last Sunday - in the classic Catford CC and Bec CC events, posting excellent results to finish as fastest vet in both, in 5th and 7th place overall, in 2-02.2 and 1-58.5. That requires high W/kg. Teammate Andy Nichols won the Catford in 1-45.2, and finishing 2nd in the Bec to Harry MacFarlane who posted 1-43.7. Leonie Harper had a cracking day; quickest female in both events, with 2-28.5 in the Catford, and 2-21.5 in the Bec.

To note that it was the 127th occasion on which the Catford CC hill climb has been held.

In one of the few time trials left this season, Chris Lea rode the Cardiff 100 Miles RCC 10 last Saturday on the rapid although undulating R10/17, east of Abergavenny, recording 22-29. Three riders dipped under 20 minutes, the quickest being Joe Beech in 19-14. Diana Egerton-Warburton was fastest female, in 22-52. The weather at Abergavenny last Saturday, 7th October: sunny, dry, 23 Celsius.....!?

Thursday 26th October

Final preparations will no doubt be being made for Sunday's RTTC National Hill Climb Championships on the aptly-named 'The Struggle' in the Lake District. Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield), Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC), Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC) and Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products) ride from the North Midlands, in a humungous field of 460.

Simon has been competing in hill climbs for the entire season, including last Sunday's double-header of Riber, then Bank Road, in Matlock, promoted by the eponymous club. In the former he was first Vet, in 4-36.7; an event won overall by Andy Nichols in 3-33.7, with Frances Owen winning the women's competition in 4-44.0. On the shorter Bank Road, Simon rode 2-35.3 to overall winner Calum Brown's time of 1-47.5; Frances Owen again being fastest female, in 2-21.4 – making that 3 wins in open hill climbs this season. Two really solid performances by Mr Warren, that bode well for the National.

The previous weekend, Nick was 7th and once again first Vet, on The Rake, at Ramsbottom, in Lancashire Road Club's event, recording 2-35.8; a really fast time on a climb with a brutally hard 1:4 finish. Teammate Andy Nichols won overall, with 2-24.5, whilst Frances Owen was fastest female, in 3-14.7.

Tuesday 31st October

The superb, and some would surely say insane, highlight of the hill climbing season culminated in Sunday's RTTC National Championships on The Struggle: climbing some 2.4 miles from Ambleside to the Kirkstone Pass, and with a long tough opening section which gives way to a brief respite just after half-distance, but followed by an increasingly steep wall of a road to the summit and gradients of 1:4, for a total height gain of 370 m.

Nick Latimer (Team Lifting Gear Products), Simon Warren (Norwood Paragon CC), Sarah Harrison (Trek Sheffield) and Martin Bullen (Peterborough CC) rode. Martin won his 70 – 74 age group category in 21 minutes dead; Sarah was 2nd in her age category, in 20-09; Simon was also 2nd in his 50 - 54 category, in 16-26, whilst Nick had to contend with the super competitive 40 – 44 year olds, coming 5th in that category in 15-12. Hat's off to all!

At the very sharp end of affairs the top men and women were a class above their nearest competitors. Ill Gardner was a minute quicker than 2nd placed rider and teammate Lizi Brooke, in a new women's course record of 15-03. Andy Feather and Ed Laverack both broke the existing course record of 12-29, set by Laverack in 2021 and who finished in 12-06 this year, whilst Feather did a stunning 11-48 – close to 14 mph average, which is top class on those gradients, with both riders leaving 3rd-placed Paddy Clark well adrift in 13-05.

Here's to 2024!

Chris (Lea), Buxton CC

Membership and Communications and Recording, VTTA North Midlands