

**Standard
Times
Midlands
VTTA
March
2023**





Front Cover:

Our newly appointed Editor, having just been presented with the Les Lowe Trophy for the greatest Cumulative distance ridden on “K” courses during the 2022 Season. (See also Page 11).

His grand total of 110.5 Miles narrowly beat Steelie’s impressive cumulative total of ZERO miles, so hardly anything to choose between them . . . really . . .

Inside Cover:

There are some minor cosmetic differences of course, as you can see from these two recent photographs illustrating some of the very slight variations in style between the retiring editor and the newly appointed editor.

In one photograph we can see a rather garishly clad elderly gentleman demonstrating a rather unusual riding position astride an equally unusual machine, and in the other photograph we have Steelie!



Contents

This edition should really be called the Alan and Margaret Colburn Story, because the vast majority of the content has been supplied by them. In fact both Alan and Margaret have been a very regular contributors to this publication since I became editor over 5 years ago, for which I have been very appreciative.

Quite a slim edition again this time however, with no Member Profile and not many photographs, but it was either that or delay even longer!

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Enterprise

A very enterprising friend of mine went into business making yachts in his loft. He did very well too—in no time at all his sales went through the roof!

View from a Chair with Go faster stripes

Alastair Semple

Welcome to the 2023 race season – Yes that's right not long until our first K course events. I have the usual mixture of emotions – excitement, a little trepidation, have I done enough, have I done too much, will I still fit into my skinsuit

2023 is set to be an exciting year with the return of the Midlands Points Series, a couple of new courses in the district, the RTTC National TTT Championship and the VTTA 10 mile Championship all taking place on our local roads - so we have a bounty of racing for all !!!.

Competitive Cycling For Life

I recently attended the VTTA National AGM where it has always a pleasure to listen to the incredible performances at the awards presentation. Among the outstanding performances, Conrad Moss rode 46:12 for a 25 at age 47, Richard Oakes rode 18:10 for a 10 at age 53 (and won the World Amateur age 50-54 championships in Italy), Andy Grant rode 1:48:39 for a 50 at age 69, and Graham Mann at age 73 completed 348.07 miles in a 24 hour! Angela Carpenter at 53 has a new 10 mile record of 20:24, faster than any younger women vet. Rachael Elliott and Ian Greenstreet continue to blitz the mixed tandem records with a combined age of 102. They set a 25 mile record of 48:45, a 50 mile record of 1:39:57 and a 100 mile record of 3:40:26. Our trike members have also been busy this year with Mark Vowells, age 69, setting 3 new records (at 10, 15 and 25 miles) and Mary Corbett, age 64, twice breaking the 10 mile record. The standout record breakers of the season however must be Norman Harvey (age 89) who with Mary set new records on their tandem trike at 10, 15, 25, 30, 50, 100 miles and yes 12 hours as well.

Age Adjusted Times (AAT)

At the National VTTA AGM Age Adjusted times (AAT) were voted in as the new way to present results at National VTTA Championship events. The traditional standards system reports results as a rider's 'plus', ie., the improvement in minutes and seconds over the 'base' time the standards system gives for their age and gender.

Age Adjustments uses the same statistical formula as the standards tables and will therefore produce results in the same finishing order and with the same gaps between riders in terms of minutes and seconds. What changes is the presentation not the formula which has been carefully determined from thousands of vets' results.

For solo riders in distance events, the age adjustment for the age, gender and machine of the rider should be subtracted from his or her actual result to produce the age adjusted time.

This gives an easily understood result table which can also be readily compared to other riders and is hoped will help make the VTТА more visible to riders not familiar with the VTТА. From 2023 the VTТА will be using Age Adjustments in preference to plusses in all the national championships and competitions and the NEC is encouraging all VTТА groups to do the same in their own events.

Here is a [link](#) to the AAT tables on the VTТА website and below an example of how results would be presented.

e.g.10 mile TT

Rider 1 Male 58yrs (AAT = 1:31) – actual time 25:33 – shown in results 24:02

Rider 2 Female 56yrs (AAT = 3:55) – actual time 28:01 – shown in results 24:06

Rider 3 Male 57yrs (AAT = 1:24) – actual time 28:21 – shown in results 26:57

Distance/ Time	10	10	10	10	15	15	15	15	25	25	25	25
Unit	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m	m
Gender	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Machine	B	B	T	T	B	B	T	T	B	B	T	T
55	0:01:12	0:03:48	0:03:13	0:06:04	0:01:50	0:05:45	0:04:52	0:09:10	0:03:07	0:09:42	0:08:14	0:15:27
56	0:01:18	0:03:55	0:03:20	0:06:12	0:01:59	0:05:55	0:05:02	0:09:21	0:03:23	0:10:00	0:08:31	0:15:46
57	0:01:24	0:04:02	0:03:27	0:06:19	0:02:08	0:06:06	0:05:13	0:09:33	0:03:39	0:10:18	0:08:49	0:16:06
58	0:01:31	0:04:09	0:03:34	0:06:27	0:02:18	0:06:17	0:05:23	0:09:45	0:03:56	0:10:37	0:09:08	0:16:27
59	0:01:38	0:04:17	0:03:41	0:06:36	0:02:28	0:06:28	0:05:35	0:09:57	0:04:14	0:10:57	0:09:27	0:16:49
60	0:01:45	0:04:25	0:03:49	0:06:44	0:02:39	0:06:40	0:05:46	0:10:11	0:04:32	0:11:17	0:09:47	0:17:11
61	0:01:52	0:04:33	0:03:57	0:06:53	0:02:50	0:06:53	0:05:58	0:10:24	0:04:51	0:11:39	0:10:08	0:17:34
62	0:02:00	0:04:41	0:04:05	0:07:03	0:03:02	0:07:06	0:06:11	0:10:38	0:05:11	0:12:01	0:10:29	0:17:59
63	0:02:08	0:04:50	0:04:14	0:07:12	0:03:14	0:07:19	0:06:24	0:10:53	0:05:31	0:12:24	0:10:52	0:18:24
64	0:02:16	0:05:00	0:04:23	0:07:22	0:03:26	0:07:33	0:06:38	0:11:09	0:05:53	0:12:48	0:11:15	0:18:50
65	0:02:24	0:05:09	0:04:32	0:07:33	0:03:39	0:07:48	0:06:52	0:11:25	0:06:15	0:13:13	0:11:40	0:19:18

It is hoped the new method helps all vets understand their own and others results as a personal best time (age adjusted) rather than a mysterious ‘plus’. We hope this will encourage participation and make more over 40s interested to join the VTТА, as membership across the country is dropping.

Here is a link to the VTТА website with a more detailed explanation.

<https://www.vtta.org.uk/news/460-what-is-the-vets-handicap-time-question>

Midlands Points Series

I am pleased to announce that we are able this year to run the points competition once again. Thanks to the continued sponsorship from Tim Wood [Echelon Cycles](#) and matched funding from the Midland VTTA there will be a bounty of prizes for the top 10 finishers at the end of the season. It's essential that you have your VTTA account linked to the CTT online results system as this is how points will be allocated:

- All Midlands 'K' Open events (except hill climbs) are counting events.
- Open to all active / paid up Midlands VTTA members.
- Solo bikes and trikes only (no TTT's or tandem rides)
- Best six rides score – but only four rides needed to qualify for awards.
- Age Adjusted Times / Standards used to decide the position of the field.
- Only Midlands VTTA members included in deciding the finishing positions.
- Points allocated as follows: 100 to the last placed rider, 105 to the second-last, and so on up to the first placed Midlands VTTA rider.
- To minimise the risk of a tie in the final table each rider will receive one additional point for every K course event ridden. This is not limited to the 6 counting events.
- Any remaining ties will be resolved by the rider with the best average placing across his/her highest scoring six events taking the higher place in the final table. If there is still a tie this principle will be extended to seventh event, and so on.

We will publish results throughout the season on the Midlands Group News page on the VTTA website [LINK](#) around the end of April, June, July and September.

I think we have 23 events eligible for points this season so hopefully something we can all get involved in and will add another dimension to your 2023 season.

VTTA 15m 1st April - 'The Welland Trophy' - it's no April fool!

Once again, we're running a 15m event on the K47/15 at Welland, which incorporates 'The Welland Trophy' competition between VTTA and BMCR (British Masters Cycle Racing) riders.

Come along and help VTTA to retain 'the ashes' of British veterans' time trialling!

There's also a 3-up TTT event if you prefer a team effort (any clubs and any ages can combine).

2023 Midlands VTTA Championship Events

This year we (the committee) have chosen the following events to contest the Midlands Trophies.

Birks Cup	BOS 15 miles (usually 10mi)	K47/15	1 st April 2023
Wells Cup	BOS Men 50 miles	*A50/2	10 th June 2023 (VTTA National)
Victory Cup	BOS Women 50 miles	*A50/2	10 th June 2023 (VTTA National)
Stoke Cup	Fastest 50 miles	*A50/2	10 th June 2023 (VTTA National)
Billy Steer Cup	BOS Men 25 miles	*R25/7A	27 th August 2023
Bicknell Cup	BOS Women 25 miles	*R25/7A	27 th August 2023
Williams Rose Bowl	BOS Men 10 miles	K48/10	17 th Sept 2023 (VTTA National)
Bart Cup	BOS Women 10 miles	K48/10	17 th Sept 2023 (VTTA National)
Massie Plate	BOS over 65	K47/15	22 nd July 2023
Jones Cup	BOS 50-64	K47/15	22 nd July 2023
Nomads Cup	BOS under 50	K47/15	22 nd July 2023

***NOTE:** You will notice that the 25 and 50 are being held on fast courses in South Wales and East Midlands respectively.

In addition to the 11 shiny trophies listed above we also have 4 season-long competitions below with the first 3 applying to Open events across the country:

Season Long Trophies – Best All Rounder

Cyclo Shield	BOS Men/Women Any open 25, 50, 100 miles
Godiva Cup	BOS Men Any two open 10 miles + any two open 25 miles
Bayliss Cup	BOS Women Any two open 10 miles + any two Open 25 miles
Les Lowe Trophy	Furthest cumulative distance on Open “K” course events

Racing on the National Stage

We're lucky this year in that the national 10, 50 and 100 mile events are local to us, even the 15 is not too far from those that live in the south. Here are the dates for your dairy and hopefully the Midlands VTTA will be well represented by its members at each of these events. I know there are 5 riders from my own team registered in the Midlands targeting these national events, so we would only need one additional rider to make us eligible for 'Group' team awards (6 riders of any gender)

VTTA Championship dates for 2023:

Event	Organiser	Course	Date
10 miles	VTTA Midlands	K48/10	Sunday 17 th September
15 miles	VTTA East Anglian/ Cambridge CC	F2/15	Saturday 15 th July
25 miles	VTTA Yorkshire	V236/1	Sunday 16 th April
30 miles	VTTA Scotland	WM30/02	Sunday 30 th July
50 miles	VTTA East Midlands	A50/2	Saturday 10 th June
100 miles	Shropshire CA	D100/8	Sunday 2 nd July
12 hours	RTTC Nat. Champs. (ECCA)	E2/12HR	Sunday 20 th August
24 hours	RTTC Nat. Champs. (Mersey Roads)	D24hr	Sat/Sun 23-24 th July

That's it for now folks, so until next time Stay Safe, Stay Fit and above all, Stay on your Bike!

Alastair

Age 40 or more? Ride a Bike? Above Average Intelligence?

Then surely you must already be a V.T.T.A. member!

To join contact Margaret Colburn

margaret.colburn@martley.org

or go to the website <https://www.vtta.org.uk/>



Editorial - Mixed feelings!

Steelie

After giving it a great deal of thought over many months I have reluctantly come to the conclusion that with everything else going on in my life, something had to give.

I am busier with work these days than I have been for more than a couple of decades. Nine months of the year I live abroad and I have been working 14 hour days with little time for exercise, not even riding a bike (properly). This has been my merry-go-round for the last two years, but finally I have come to my senses.

Sadly for me therefore, but happily for you, someone else will henceforth be the VTTA Midlands Editor, so this is the last Standard Times with my name on it.

This “someone” of whom I speak is a very accomplished individual with many gifts, not the least of which is his impressive ability to succeed at whatever endeavour he chooses to embark upon, whether that be riding a bike at an average speed of almost 30mph, or being a chess champion!

You will by now I am sure have realised that our new editor is none other than our previously dubbed “**Man for all seasons**”, so please put your metaphorical hands together and give a very warm welcome to Simon Dighton.

The inside front cover may illustrate something about the slight differences between Simon and myself, and I think we can all look forward to better informed and better written editions of Standard Times. (See what I did there Simon . . . No Pressure!!)

So finally a very big thank you to the committee members who put so much time and effort into the Midlands Group, it has been a real pleasure working with you all.



All the best to one and all—don’t forget to say “Hi” as you ride past!

Steelie x

2023 Points Series

Margaret Colburn

Qualifying Events

Listed below are the 23 Open K-Course qualifying events for this years' Points Series, for which the prize list value is £500:

1	04-Mar-23	Wrekinsport CC (Charity Event)	K21/18E	18 M
2	19-Mar-23	Banbury Star CC (Hardriders TT)	K4/23	23.5 M
3	25-Mar-23	VC Sevale (Malvern)	K46/10	10 M
4	01-Apr-23	VTTA (Midlands)(Up To 80 Riders)(Inc. TA League)	K47/15	15 M
5	15-Apr-23	Droitwich Cycling Club	K22/17	17 M
6	16-Apr-23	Stratford CC	K10/10	10 M
7	23-Apr-23	Merlin Cycles Classic Series (3 Of 6)(Beacon RCC)(Men)(Entries Close 09/04/23)	K22/39	39 M
8	30-Apr-23	Coventry CC (150 Max Riders Plus 15 Reserves Min 25% Women)	K11/10T	10 M
9	06-May-23	AeroCoach (Midland Road Bike Champs)(Men)(SC)	K47/15	15 M
10	20-May-23	Stafford RC (60 Riders)(Women & Juniors)	K48/10	10 M
11	10-Jun-23	Redditch Road & Path CC	K34/10F	10 M
12	17-Jun-23	WattShop 2 Stage TT (Stage 1) Special Conditions (Fee For Two Stages)	K48/10	10 M
13	24-Jun-23	Worcester St Johns CC	K47/12H	12 M
14	01-Jul-23	AeroCoach (Midland Champs) (Men)	K47/15	15 M
15	09-Jul-23	Legato Racing Team (Men)(Max 90 Riders Across 3 Events)	K15/10	10 M
16	15-Jul-23	Wyre Forest CRC	K46/10	10 M
17	22-Jul-23	Worcester St Johns CC	K47/15	15 M
18	23-Jul-23	Leamington C&AC	K11/10T	10 M
19	30-Jul-23	Rugby Racing Cycling Club (150 Riders Inc Up To 40 Women)	K11/10T	10 M
20	13-Aug-23	Coventry CC (150 Max Riders Plus 15 Reserves Min 25% Women)	K11/10T	10 M
21	26-Aug-23	Droitwich Cycling Club	K32/10	10 M
22	17-Sep-23	Midlands VTTA (Incorporating VTTA National Champs)(Pref To VTTA Members)(Pref To Women)(Tandems (Fee Per Rider)	K48/10	10 M
23	23-Sep-23	VC Sevale (Malvern)	K46/10	10 M

The Les Lowe Trophy

Alan Colburn

A little bit of background (literally) on the Les Lowe Trophy is that to the right you can see a statuette named Phoebe.

This is one of a pair, the other is named Titania, won by my Grandfather in a bike race we think about the 1890's.

On the left is a Perpetual clock with which I offered to time Simon D's next Championship ride but he wisely turned down the offer! Although extremely accurate, you can't stop the damned thing!

In a reflection on the Trophy you can just see your local intrepid photographer complete with Smartphone trying to outshine David Bailey!



Yul Brynner

Yul was a famous Russian-American award-winning Hollywood actor (born in Vladivostok) who starred in many films. I recently discovered, much to my surprise, that he was also a big fan of Liverpool Football Club!

Another interesting “factoid” I learned about him is that he was allergic to aftershave!

Yes, it's true—Yul never wore Cologne!

Dates For Your Diary

24 May 64	Liz McColgan born
25 Nov 90	Eilish McColgan born
30 Jul 99	Tom Pidcock born
4 Mar 23	Tom Pidcock wins at Strade Bianche
4 Mar 23	Eilish McColgan breaks 10,000m record: 30:00:86
21 Mar 23	Closing Date for Birks Cup K47/15
30 May 23	Closing Date for Wells Cup A50/2
30 May 23	Closing Date for Victory Cup A50/2
30 May 23	Closing Date for Stoke Cup A50/2
11 Jul 23	Closing Date for Massie Plate K47/15
11 Jul 23	Closing Date for Jones Cup K47/15
11 Jul 23	Closing Date for Nomads Cup K47/15
15 Aug 23	Closing Date for Billy Steer Cup R25/7A
15 Aug 23	Closing Date for Bicknell Cup R25/7A
5 Sep 23	Closing Date for Williams Rose Bowl K48/10
5 Sep 23	Closing Date for Bart Cup K48/10

NOTE: There will also be a national 10 mile Zwift TT later in the year - info on the VTTA site when it becomes available.

2022 Awards Winners

Margaret Colburn

The 2022 Awards winners are listed overleaf, medals and plaques have been posted out and trophies delivered where appropriate.

As you already know, the 2022 awards lunch did not take place due to lack of support so there are no photos available. As it happens, this was to have been the last time Greta Spiers organised the lunch, so it seems very fitting to thank Greta for all her hard work over many years by featuring the photograph below.

Here she is “reflecting” on her own well-deserved award of the Mary White Plate:



2022 AWARDS WINNERS

	DISTANCE	PLUS	TROPHIES
MEDALS			
B.AWCOCK	10MILES		
D FINN	10MILES		
T KENDERDINE	10MILES		
G MACKINNON	10MILES		
S SEMPLE	10/15MILES		BART CUP
	16th out of 60 (National Certificate)		BAYLISS CUP
G SHUKER	10/15MILES		
D SHERIDAN	25/50MILES		
PLAQUES			
S ADCOOK	15MILES	7.59	
	25MILES	17.02	
	100MILES	1.04.05	
J HOWARD	10MILES	7.07	
	15MILES	7.31	
	25MILES	18.43	
	50MILES	29.34	
A SEMPLE	10MILES	4.51	
	15MILES	5.27	
	30MILES	12.46	
ACTUAL			
S DIGHTON	10MILES	21:25	
	15MILES	31:32:00	
	30MILES	01:08:11	
A SIMPKINS	10MILES	23.04	
	15MILES	35.28	
	25MILES	57.56	
	100MILES	4.26.06	
AWARDS			
Short Distance			
J COSTELLO	1st		BIRKS CUP
			GODIVA CUP
J HOWARD	2nd		WILLIAMS ROSE BOWL
S LORRAINE	3rd		
3 Distance			
S ADCOOK	1st	Group Plaque	
	17th out of 76 (National Certificate)		
A SIMPKINS	2nd	Group Plaque	
S DIGHTON			LES LOWE TROPHY
G SPIERS			MARY WHITE PLATE
D STEEL			MARTIN ELLIS PLATE

The Coronation

Alan Colburn

A topical subject this year, but this is not about the Coronation you were probably imagining! This article harks back to the early 1950's and concerns the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.

In 1950 I qualified as a path lab Technician, an interesting career with a hidden bonus, but what on earth has that got to do with the title of this article of distant memories? All will be revealed later!

It was suggested that I write my recollections of the 1953 Coronation and I am happy to trawl through the memory bank and various publications to have another look at the Coronation of the longest serving monarch this country of ours has ever had.

The Big Day

This was 2nd June and was the first such event to be covered by television networks. Some of you may recall that TV screens in those days were about the size of a small laptop or tablet and it was estimated at the time that the average number of viewers per screen was 17!

Coincidentally, New Zealander Edmund Hilary and sherpa Tenzing Norgay had accomplished the first ascent of Everest on 29th May, but the news did not reach the UK until the day of the Coronation, so a truly momentous day in more than one way.

There was a grand procession to Westminster Abbey in the build up to the main event, with around 270 dignitaries representing the "Great and the Good" (as they were thought of in those distant times) from all across the Commonwealth, in support of her Majesty, forming the kind of spectacle at which we Brits have always seemed to excel.

The Great and the Good

One of the Equerries to the Queen is recorded as Captain Patrick Terence William Span Plunket—7th baron Plunket.

The Baron's page on this occasion is listed as Sheridan Frederick Terence Hamilton-Temple-Blackwood, 5th marquess of Dufferin and Ava. (What a faff when you have to sign a cheque!!). Some of the more unusual positions in this hierarchy I noted included such obscure things as:

- Harbinger of the Gentlemen at Arms
- Bluemantle Pursuivant
- Fitzalial Pursuivant Extraordinary
- Gentleman Usher of the Purple Rod

I also noted a subtle demarcation between the "Ladies" of the Bedchamber and the "Women" of the Bedchamber!

There were many and varied contingents of military units from the Commonwealth to add spectacle and style. During the next few days there was also a Royal Naval Fleet Review at Spithead on the South Coast, when it took the Queen nearly 2 hours just to sail around the fleet.

In Odiham there was a static display of over 300 planes and a subsequent Fly-Past of 600 aircraft.

Further Afield

Celebrations were also held in all parts of the Commonwealth, including obligatory military parades with the second World War still fresh in people's minds. The Canadian army for example, serving in the Korean War at that time, fired Red White and Blue smoke shells at enemy lines—original if not particularly effective!

"My" Coronation

So how did I celebrate the Coronation? In 1951 I joined the Royal Air Force as a Laboratory Technician and in 1952 I was posted to the Canal Zone in Egypt.

King Farouk had been given his Demob. Papers (in a manner of speaking), and in order to preserve the safety of the Suez Canal, several thousand military personnel were shipped out in a hurry and I found myself at Fayid Hospital, living out of a kitbag and sleeping on the verandah of one of the billets.

The situation did improve gradually, but before the “Big Day”, it was announced there would be a parade on the main square followed by a march past. We were not looking forward to all the “bull and brass” associated with such ceremonial activities, not to mention the hour and a half in the blazing Sun. Common sense and a little ingenuity prevailed when we realised we just couldn’t leave sick patients on their own for that length of time!!! BONUS!!!

I have to admit that we did celebrate, but mainly with sporting fixtures. I was a keen racing cyclist and was happy to be selected to represent R.A.F. Fayid in a special “Coronation Grand Prix”. This was a very fast event held over 21 miles around the camp roads and I am looking at the result sheet and photos of that event s I write. Unfortunately, despite being in the leading group of 5 riders for all of the race, I punctured on the last lap and finished a rather miserable 5th. The enduring result though is that I am still in touch with 3 of those riders almost 70 years on!

Our other, less grand but very memorable celebration was to climb Mt. Shubra with “Chalky” White and Barry Pearce. From the top of this small-ish mountain, overlooking R.A.F. Fayid, we wished her Majesty a long and healthy life.

Fifty Quid is Fifty Quid!

Morris and Esther went to the Air Display every year and each year Morris would say, ***"Esther, I'd like a ride in that helicopter"***. Esther always replied, ***"I know dear but that ride is fifty quid, and fifty quid is fifty quid!"***

Finally one year Morris said, ***"Esther, I'm 85 years old and if I don't ride that helicopter now, I might not get another chance...."*** To this, Esther replied, ***"Morris - that ride is fifty quid and fifty quid is fifty quid!"***

The pilot overheard them and said, ***"Tell you what, I'll take both of you for a ride and if you can stay quiet for the entire ride and not say a single word - I won't charge you. But if you say one word, it's fifty pounds."***

To this they agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy tricks but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks all over again but still - not a single word. When they landed, he turned to Morris and said, ***"By golly, I did everything I could to make you yell out, I'm really impressed."***

Morris replied, ***"Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Esther fell out but you know - fifty quid is fifty quid!"***

A Scottish Trip

Alan Colburn

Sometime during the recent infamous “Lockdown”, we saw pictures of the Kelpies at Falkirk. You may be asking – what’s a Kelpie. This is a mythological, shape-shifting water spirit which often takes the form of a black horse which is claimed to prey on humans. When I was looking for some background information, this creature seems to be a global legend and appears in many parts of the world under different names – in Australia it’s known as a bunyip !

We decided to travel up to Scotland for a few days in the middle of September and have a look at what has become a premier tourist attraction in a very short time. The Kelpies is a pair of horses heads constructed from perforated stainless steel – one looking up and the other peering down towards the newly constructed extension to the Forth & Clyde canal. The height is 90 feet and they weigh about 300 tons each. Magnificent to see at any time but the effect is better towards sunset when both effigies are illuminated from within. A really magnificent structure designed by Andy Scott, opened to the public in 2014, as a cultural acknowledgement to the working horses of Scotland who worked on farms, canals and in industry. In the first year after opening the site had over 1 million visitors. We visited the dedicated shop – not at all “tacky” – bought a couple of souvenirs and walked around the site licking a Mr. Whippy ice cream – my favourite !

A few miles away was the other attraction we had on our mini-list to see which was the Falkirk Wheel. Now, to be fair, when we first saw it, a Wheel was the last name I would have given this invention. After wandering around and looking from various angles I had to admit that I couldn’t think of a one-word description that would cover this amazing structure. In the end I reasoned that as the action was circular – it was a wheel!

Let’s cover the basic idea first. In school physics lectures we acquired the mantra that “Water will find its own level”. Another way of saying that water always runs downhill..... which leads to the next question which might be.....why doesn’t a canal empty all of its water out into the North Sea. The old timers who built these waterways knew what they were doing and whenever the canal had to go up or down they built locks to enable barges to transport their cargos. Basically, you build a removable barrier across the canal with another similar lock gate about 75 feet away. Barge comes up to the first gate, second gate closes behind it and the water in the lock is then evacuated to the lower level. Gate no. 1 then opens and the barge can then carry on its journey about 10 feet lower down.

If the gradient is more severe then a whole series of locks will do the job but there is an economical snag here – building and maintaining a lock is expensive and the operation is time-consuming. The longest lock flight in the UK is the the Tardebigge Flight on the Worcester & Birmingham Canal which boasts 30 locks and raises the canal 220 feet.

Now let's go back to Falkirk where they recently opened an extension to the Forth Canal and were looking to maximise tourist traffic and encourage other visitors to the area. Tony Gee came up with the world's first and only rotating boat-lift. It wasn't cheap when it was built in 2002, costing about 17.5 million pounds but it can lift a barge over 115 Feet from the Forth & Clyde Canal to the Union Canal above.

Ever since starting to write this piece I have been wondering how I can describe what it looks like and how it works so let's try this: Imagine guiding your barge into a container like an oversized tin can and shutting the entrance off securely so inside the can you have one barge plus water. This whole container is then lifted up in a circular movement to arrive "upstairs" in about 4 mins.

To "get off" you just reverse the operation – job done ! We had a trip on the local canal boat in which we were uplifted to the canal above us, had a little meander along the canal, then turned and headed back towards the Wheel. Then came the exciting bit as we approached the top of the Wheel support structure a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside revealed itself as if we were on board a slow flying helicopter.

There were, I admit, a few tremors of anxiety when we started to wonder if the wheel had turned round again or were we destined to be the first to nose-dive a canal barge from 100 feet. All was well, we breathed little sighs of relief and had a celebratory coffee when we landed 4 minutes later.

The explanatory leaflet goes to great lengths to announce it's Green Credentials by assuring us that the power needed to operate this amazing 100 foot lift is equal to boiling 8 household kettles of water or in technical terms 1.5kWh. Did I hear someone ask how this might be possible? No? O.K. I'll tell you anyway!

Do you remember Archimedes – clever Greek bloke – lived in Sicily about 270 BC. He had a bath one day, jumped out and ran down the High Street yelling that he'd found it!!

His Principle states that the upward force that is exerted on a body immersed in water is equal to the weight of the fluid the body displaces. This law of physics devised over 2000 years ago plus this new-fangled electricity has allowed this marvellous piece of engineering to be built and operated with minimum energy expenditure.

How clever is that ?

Top Tip 64 — Always Avoid Potholes

Steelie



Midlands Age Records (Repeated)

Steve Jenks

There are two versions of Midlands age records.

- 1) This is on the Midlands area of the VTTA site under 'group records'. These are age records set on any course in the country.
- 2) Found in the magazine and on the Mids VTTA facebook site are age records set only on K (midlands) courses and will be called Midlands age records (K).

Why Midland records are not entered on the National website

Looking at the two sets of records one thing stands out – Midlands (K) records have representation across the age groups. The main reason for Midlands age records (K) for road time trials to be continued that all records on the VTTA records site of a lower standard than that of an older person are subsumed by the older members' record. For example, last year, a sixty year old member achieved an outstanding ten mile time of 19 mins 31 seconds.

This is faster than EVERY time set by all males from 40 to 59 and so is the first age record in the table - anyone trying to get an age record who is between 40 and 59 would need to ride 19.30 or faster!

If this system were to be used on the (K) records tables it would wipe out around 30 - 40% of all records – clearly not an incentive for members to beat records achieved at the younger ages. For reasons of fairness, another caveat of Midland age records is that they are set on a (K) course.

This supports our local clubs and the officials who put on (K) events which have no really outstandingly fast courses and so prevents members from travelling (up to hundreds of) miles to fast courses purely to get a fast time. Not all members have the capacity to do this.

For this reason the only Midland age records are for 10, 25 and 50 miles as these are the only distances available on (K) open courses. Records are published regularly in our club magazine and are updated on the Mids VTTA Facebook page. They will no longer be published on the VTTA website on the Midlands News page to avoid confusion.

Age Records Table (March 2023)

Steve Jenks

Mens	10 miles		Time
40	Tim May	Media Velo	20:57
42	Brett Lowndes	Pro-vision Cycle Clothing	20:57
43	Steve Biddulph	Born to Bike - Bridgtown C	21:24
44	Peter Blackwell	Solihull CC	22:26
45	Mark Hamer	Stratford Roads CC	22:12
46	Brett Lowndes	Pro Vision RC	21:26
49	Jon Howard	Team Echelon	20:24
50	Jon Howard	Team Echelon	20:38
51	Alastair Semple	Stafford RC	22:08
52	Jon Howard	Team Echelon	20:22
53	Jon Howard	Team Echelon	20:54
54	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	22:07
55	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	20:45
56	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	21:01
57	Mark Wise	Team Jewson/MI Racing	21:06
58	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	21:29
59	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	21:25
60	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	21:16
61	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	22:09
62	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	21:53
63	Steve Loraine	Team Swift	22:5
64	Steve Loraine	Legato Racing Team	22:34
65	Steve Loraine	Legato Racing Team	23:04
66	Steve Loraine	Legato Racing Team	22:33
67	Garry Shuker	Walsall Roads CC	25:44
71	Alan Colburn	Worcester St Johns CC	26:05
72	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	24:42
73	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	24:11
74	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	24:1
75	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	24:4
76	Vince Jenkins	Leisure Lakes Bikes.com	24:47
77	Vince Jenkins	LeisureLakesCycles.com	24:17
78	Brian Newton	Team Echelon	24:57
79	Vince Jenkins	LeisureLakesCycles.com	25:33
80	Alan Colburn	Team Echelon Rotor	25:5
Mens	15 miles		Time
48	Simon Adcock	Team Echelon	32:33
54	Alastair Semple	Stafford RC	35:32
65	Stephen Loraine	Legato Racing Team	37:55
66	Stephen Loraine	Legato Racing Team	36:05
75	Bob Awcock	Born to Bike - Bridgtown C	43:57
77	Bob Awcock	Born to Bike - Bridgtown C	44:54
Mens	25 miles		Time
41	Brett Lowndes	Pro-Vision Cycle Clothing	0:57.24
42	Brett Lowndes	Pro-Vision Cycle Clothing	0:59.35
50	Matthew Moore	Walsall Roads CC	0:55.02
52	Mark Wise	Team Jewson/MI Racing	0:58.55
52	Dave Walker	Worcester St John	0:56.57
54	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	0:58.31
55	David Scholfield-Newton	Leisure Lakes Bikes	0:56.00
57	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	0:53.47
58	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	0:59.56
60	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	0:56.48
61	Paul Gould	Midland C & AC	1:06.56
62	Andrew Simpkins	Solihull CC	1:01.34
72	Bob Awcock	Born to Bike - Bridgtown C	1:06.32
73	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	1:04.52
74	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	1:02.44
75	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	1:05.26
76	Alan Colburn	M I Racing	1:01.57
77	Murray Kirton	A5 Rangers	1:09.55

Mens		50 miles		Time
50	Alastair Semple	Stafford RC	2018	1.59.12
53	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	2016	2.02.35
54	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	2017	1.59.37
55	Simon Dighton	Beacon Roads CC	2018	1.58.55
56	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	2015	1.54.03
57	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	2016	1.56.29
59	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	2018	1.56.55
60	Joe Costello	Walsall RCC	2019	1.53.43
61	Paul Gould	Midland C & AC	2017	2.23.24
62	Steve Loraine	Team Swift	2018	2.00.45
72	Bob Awcock	Born to Bike - Bridgtown C	2016	2.17.15
74	Bob Awcock	Born to Bike - Bridgtown C	2018	2.17.52
75	Alan Colburn	Stourbridge CC	2006	2.14.26
76	Alan Colburn	Team Echelon/Spiuk	2008	2.15.49
77	Murray Kirton	A5 Rangers	2018	2.18.47
Ladies		10 miles		Time
41	Denise Burrows	Aerocoach	2020	23.39
42	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2008	25.03
43	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2009	24.42
44	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2010	25.23
45	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2011	25.23
46	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2012	24.24
47	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2013	23.49
48	Annis Moore	Walsall Roads CC	2016	23.56
49	Lynne Biddulph	Born to Bike /Bridgtown C	2018	23.24
50	Susan Semple	Born to Bike / Bridgtown C	2016	24
51	Susan Semple	Born to Bike / Bridgtown C	2017	23.23
52	Susan Semple	Born to Bike / Bridgtown C	2018	23.46
53	Susan Semple	Born to Bike / Bridgtown C	2019	23.2
55	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2021	24.44
56	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2022	24.15
Ladies		15 miles		Time
43	Denise Burrows	Aerocoach	2022	38.42
56	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2022	38.47
Ladies		25 miles		Time
43	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2009	1.04.08
44	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2010	1.06.18
46	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2012	1.04.48
47	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2013	1.01.10
48	Annis Moore	Walsall Roads CC	2016	59.02
50	Susan Semple	Born to Bike /Bridgtown C	2016	1.00.38
51	Susan Semple	Born to Bike /Bridgtown C	2017	1.07.06
Ladies		50 miles		Time
42	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2008	2.27.49
46	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2012	2.12.20
47	Susan Semple	Stafford RC	2013	2.15.40
52	Susan Semple	Born to Bike / Bridgtown C	2018	2.08.41

WE ARE (STILL!) HIRING

The position of Trophies Secretary involves seasonal work (winter period) with 4 social gatherings a year and one party! The role is simply to ensure all trophies are sent to be engraved before Christmas and available at the AGM in January to be presented. Please contact ascoaching@outlook.com or call 07955 032 010. It would be great to have **YOU** as part of our team.

The Nurse

Steelie

In the previous edition of Standard Times I told you about **“My Accident”**, and how the injury I had sustained became infected and took a year to heal. Part of this healing process involved a nurse:

Judgemental!

You can always tell, soon as you see them! Their eyes are too close together, so they have quite a narrow perspective on things.

I can always tell.

Peering around the corner of the reception cubicle at me she was, and I was about to say something about the size of her nose when the nurse appeared.

Different kettle of fish altogether she was. Someone’s Nan. Understanding, kindly, gently spoken and very caring with warm eyes. You know the sort.

I can always tell.

Sat down in her office now. **“Tell me about your leg”**, she said gently (as if talking to some doddering old person), so I got straight to the point, hardly mentioned the bit about the off-duty Nun in the Wagon R with the **“Jesus Saves”** bumper sticker, and when I had finished she just looked at me blankly for a moment - probably admiring how well I had dealt with the situation - I mused.

“What did you wash it with?” she said, clearing her throat with a slight choking sound. **“Vodka”** I said, **“Smirnoff – Red Label – good stuff”** I added reassuringly as her eyes widened.

There was that choking sound again.

I was just beginning to reflect on my **“Kindly”** assessment when she said **“What did you dress it with?”** And even as the words **“Toilet paper”** escaped from my lips, I knew I should have lied. **“Good quality, unused, 3 ply, Andrex”**, I quickly added (remembering the recycled Poundland bargain basement pack I had used), but I knew it was too late.

It wasn't the sharp intake of breath that gave it away, nor even the wide staring eyes, in fact I'm not exactly sure what it was, but I suspect the flared nostrils had something to do with it!

Frantically searching for something to say in mitigation before she passed sentence, I blurted out: ***"With Germolene!"***

What happened next was totally unexpected, and although I was clearly in the dog-house at this point, I also felt some degree of satisfaction – almost vindicated in fact – because she actually conceded that although neither the Vodka nor the toilet paper were ideal, they would suffice in an emergency, whereas she likened the Germolene to the worst chemical known to man ***"I really don't know why they even make it"*** she snorted in unbridled disgust!

Quite a formidable lady this nurse – certainly not one to be trifled with – which of course I knew from the moment I clapped eyes on her!

I can always tell.

Steelie x

Stop Press: Zwift Winter League Results

Following the previous seven races, what a climax in the final event of this over-distance ten miler turned out to be - Reuters were put on standby. Fastest on the night (13th overall) was again Sue Semple with her fastest time of 25.25 - having improved in each of the four races she completed.

Next came Alastair Semple in 17th with 26.20. One place and only nine secs behind came Adrian Osborn who also rode his fastest time of the series.

The cliff-hanger however was who would win the BoS. With Andrew Simpkins ahead but unable to compete in the last two events, Sue Semple rode her heart out to complete the necessary four rides with a time on standard that meant she leap-frogged him to take the BoS (best four results) by 1min 21secs.

Fastest riders overall for the series were Sue Semple for the ladies and Mark Wise for the men, who sneaked in an early ride of 22.45.

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2023 Committee Meeting Dates

Virtual via Zoom or at the Kings Court Hotel, Alcester

9th Feb, 11th May, 10th Aug, 9th Nov

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