

**HISTORY OF THE
HEREFORD & DISTRICT
WHEELERS CYCLING CLUB
1928-2008**



Cover: Touring in 1945
Inside cover: Racing in the 1930s

CONTENTS

	Page
Early Cycling in Hereford	3
Formation of the Wheelers	5
Early Years of Club Racing	12
The First 'Open 25'	17
South Wales Cycling Association	28
The First Decade	33
World War II	38
The Early Post-War Years	39
The 1950s	47
Three Counties Cycling Association	49
The 1960s	53
The Golden Jubilee	60
The Wednesday Wheelers	66
The New Millennium	68
Audax	69

Appendices

- A. Articles Written by Frank Shubert
- B. Early Newspaper Cuttings
- C. List of Members

HISTORY OF THE HEREFORD AND DISTRICT WHEELERS CYCLING CLUB

Early Cycling in Herefordshire

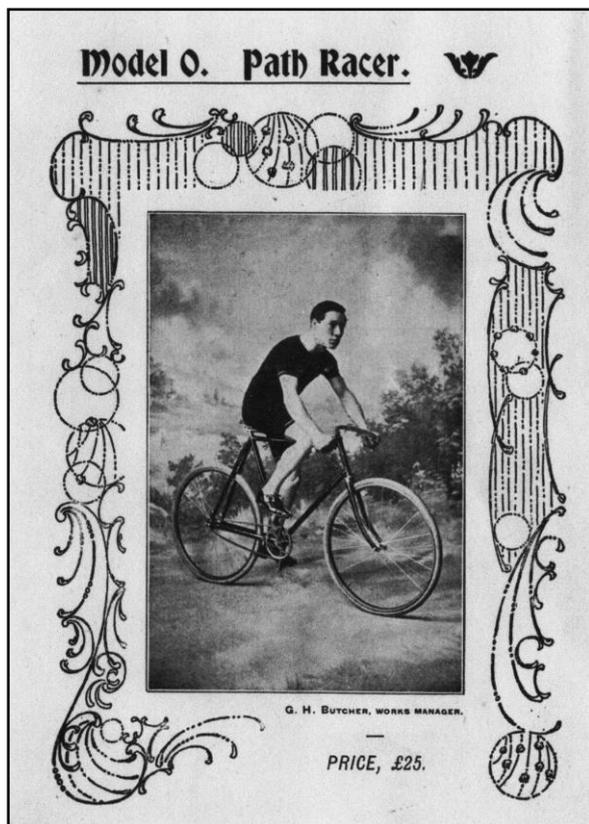
Although there is general agreement that the design of today's bicycle is little different to some produced in the latter stages of the 19th century, there are many competitors claiming the final definition of what was called the safety machine. John Kemp Starley (1854-1901) was certainly in the forefront of these. By 1885 he had established the Rover – a triangular frame, 36 inch wheel at the front, 30 inch in the rear and a chain drive from a chain wheel to the rear hub. In September 1885 George Smith rode 100 miles in a little over seven hours five minutes on this bike. In the 1890s Starley established the Rover Cycle Company – the ancestor of the Rover Car Company. So our sport goes back a long way.

Towards the end of the century cycle racing had become popular. The picture shows three racing machines on Edgar Street Football Ground (with Conningsby Hospital in the background) circa 1895; a Raleigh the mount of Edward Howell, the Raleigh agent for many years in Commercial Road; Harry Matthews with a R. Whitworth; and Mr Campbell with a Campion.



Mr. G.H. Butcher M.B.E. was head of the firm of James Fryer, motor engineers at the Dragon Garage in Aubrey Street in 1908. Before that he was

works manager at Wichcliff Cycles of Stroud. The picture below shows him on a Model 'O' Wichcliff Path Racer. Details attached state:-



The illustrations of this machine tell their own tale. Its speed, style, and running powers, will assert themselves in 1898.

Specifications

Frame – 22, 24 or 26 inches

Tread – 4 inches only

Tires (sic) – 1^{3/8} Palmers, on Jointless Rims

Chain – Perry's 1/2 inch Roller

Gear – 70, 75, 80, or to order

Saddle – B 11

*Weight – 22 to 24 lbs. This is **NOT** the lightest Machine in the world; a featherweight never wins a race.*

Later on he featured in a local newspaper article riding his bike, with his son on his back, on the frozen River Wye. He was made a Wheelers vice president in 1935, a position he held until 1960.

RIDING ON THE RIVER WYE 1917



THE FIRM OF JAMES FRYER, motor engineers and distributors, opened their Dragon Garage in Aubrey Street, Hereford, 50 years ago—on 1st February, 1908. It is therefore, perhaps not inappropriate to reproduce this picture, in which the cyclist is Mr. G. H. Butcher, M.B.E., who was at the head of the business for many years. He is seen riding on the frozen Wye at Hereford in 1917. Riding pick-a-back is his second son, the late Mr. Alec Butcher, who, by a coincidence, was born on the date mentioned above—1st February, 1908. The middle one of the three other boys is Mr. Basil Butcher, Mr. G. H. Butcher's youngest son, who is now a director of James Fryer Ltd. Mr. G. H. Butcher, now retired, is in his 84th year. Although it is not clear from the old, faded photograph we reproduce, in the background is the river bank, with some one walking along it.

Hereford even had its own army Cyclist Company by this time. The 1st Herefordshire Rifle Volunteer Corps was raised at Hereford in 1860. This became 'A' Company 1st Herefordshire (Hereford and Radnor) Rifle Volunteers in 1880. In 1888 this Company formed a Cyclist Section which was elevated to 'L' (Cyclist) Company in 1900.

A notice requesting volunteers to join the 1st Herefordshire Rifle Volunteer Corps 'L' (Cyclists) Company was published soon afterwards;

THIS Company was raised in the year 1900 when the Country had a bad attack of 'War Fever,' but it must not be supposed that the Battalion had no Cyclists before that year as it was one of the first to have a Cycle Section, which was formed by Colonel Scobie [see picture of Regt officers below] in the year 1888.

In those days the Section consisted of some twenty men who were mounted on all sorts and conditions of machines, viz.:—high bicycles, safeties and kangaroos with tricycles of various makes and

patterns and must have appeared a curious muster when on parade.

One hundred and eight is the average strength of the present Company which is recruited from Hereford, Ross and Kington.

The Uniform, which is adapted for cycling, is a smart one and consists of Field Service Cap, Blue Frock with White Piping, Knickers and Puttees, with Brown Leather Equipment, whilst a Working Dress of Drab with a Slouch Hat is served out for Camp, Musketry and Field Days.

The Rifles are slung with Clips under the top bar of the Cycle and the Great Coat, Waterproof Cape, and Canteen are carried upon a Lucas' rear carrier.

Each Man has been, and still will be until the end of the year 1904 (when the allowance will be £1), allowed the sum of £2 towards his Cycle, provided he attends Camp.

This allowance is in addition to the usual Camp allowance and pay (when any) given to the whole Battalion.

To obtain this allowance the Cycle has to be produced at Inspection and must have straight or raised handle bars, a step on the rear wheel, and strong brake.

The cost of all repairs to Cycles, damaged upon Parade, is refunded from the Company Funds.

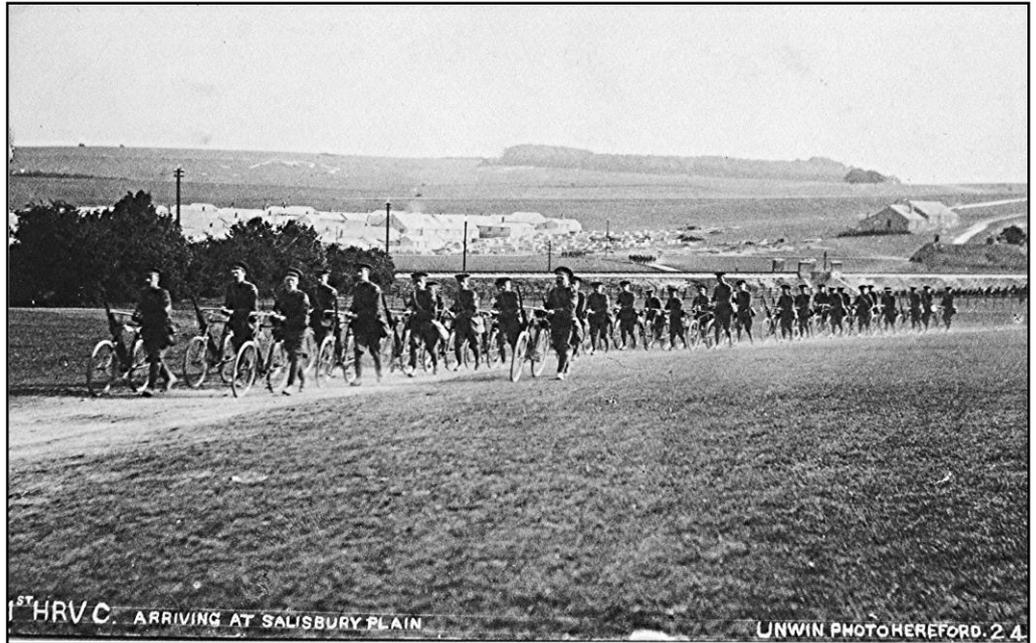
The Carrier and Rifle Clips and all Uniform and Equipment are supplied to Recruits free of cost, but they are held responsible for their good condition.

The principal duties of a Cycle Company are Advance, Rear, and Flank Guards, Escort to Guns, Scouting, Road Reporting, and Orderly Work, whilst it is expected to be as efficient in ordinary Infantry Work as the remaining Companies of the Battalion.

Its Training, however, being so varied, considerably relieves the monotony of Drill and its Rides Out cause it to be the popular Company that it is. At Hereford and Ross comfortable

Clubs with Morris Tube Ranges near by have been established and it is hoped that at Kington a move will shortly be made in the same direction.

The reader is not expected to believe that the work of the Company is all pleasure for it is not, and often one wishes, when pushing one's Cycle across country, such as Salisbury Plain and the Hills of North Wales, that one were an 'Imperial Yob' or a simple 'mud crusher' once more.



The latest addition to the Company's Equipment is a large Trailer, built by men of the Company. It can be drawn either by Motor or three men with 'tow-me' rods.

It has easily carried a man and his broken mount, can take sufficient food and drink for the Company all day, or be converted into an Ambulance.

Twenty-five Recruits are required every year to keep the Company up to its present strength.

Intending Recruits should apply personally or in writing to the Officer Commanding, Hereford, or to any Officer or N.C. Officer of the Company at either Hereford, Ross or Kington.

Formation of the Wheelers

At the end of the 19th century there were many Herefordians, riding various types of machine, seeking to develop their skills. By the 1890s there were two city-based clubs formed as a result

of the increasing interest in the sport; the Hereford Road Cycling Club and the Hereford Cycling Club, run by officials J Pulley (Patron), J Lambe (President) and J Rankin MP (Vice President) from their headquarters



at the Mitre Hotel. Hereford. 'In those early days of cycling members rode penny farthing and safety machines and day runs seldom crossed the county boundary.'

The clubs thrived and became more adventurous but then came the First World War which took many members away and by the 1920s both clubs were on the decline. Despite, or because of, unemployment and poverty moves were soon afoot to do something about the situation for a new generation of cyclists. The Wyeseide Cycling Club arrived on the scene in 1925, but probably due to lack of publicity followed by dwindling membership, it slowly folded after only three months or so.

Frank Shubert was determined to attract fellow cyclists by contributing articles in both the *Hereford Times* and *Hereford Journal*. A series of press cuttings under his *nom-de-plume* 'Wyesider' and illustrated by line drawings created by Bill Gaines are included at Annex A. There were soon enough riders meeting for Sunday runs that the idea of forming a new club began to crystallise. On 18 February 1928 the following paragraph appeared in local newspapers:

*OF INTEREST TO CYCLISTS
A Herefordshire Cycling Club?*

We are informed that negotiations are on foot for the foundation of a Cycling Club in Herefordshire. Mr F Shubert of 13, Hopton Road, Hereford, would be glad if those interested would communicate with him at the earliest possible date. Mr. Shubert says that he has already negotiated with several well known cyclists in Hereford and district and they all offer him their support. There will be a trial run to Chepstow to-morrow (Sunday) starting at 10 a.m. from High Town. All attending will be cordially invited.

Frank recalled in an article he wrote for the *Vegetarian Cycling and Athletics Club Newsletter*: 'The group's initial run was a gathering of 20 cyclists, with a tandem in the lead, setting off for Chepstow via Ross-on-Wye, Kerne Bridge and Coleford for lunch. Thereafter it was through the Forest to St Briavels. A really breath-taking surprise was the view of the tidal River Wye from the sheer Llancaut Rocks and on the downhill run which followed, Chepstow's famous castle and Brunel's tubular railway bridge appeared. A splendid tea was enjoyed at the Swiss Café in Beaufort Square and the return to Hereford took in the scenery of the Wye Valley through Tintern to Monmouth. In the last hours of darkness approaching home the light of acetylene lamps added a fascination of their own.' Frank obviously had a way with words.

On 3 March 1928 the *Hereford Times* carried a report:

CYCLING CLUB

It is quite apparent, judging from the large number attending the second trial run of the prospective Hereford Cycling Club last Sunday [26th February], that the pastime in the district is gaining in popularity and the interest and enthusiasm steadily increasing. Thus there is every reason to feel that the projected club will soon become an established fact.

Favoured with excellent weather, the party of over twenty set out from the High Town at 9.15 a.m. to make for the Three Elms and the road to Canon Pyon. After passing Mortimer's Cross and Aymestrey a stop was made at Wigmore to enable the party to pay a visit to the picturesque remains of the old castle. Adforton and Brampton Brian were eventually left behind, and in a few more miles the company reached Bucknell, where another halt was called for lunch. On resuming, the route lay through the hills to Chapel Lawn, some really splendid scenery and excellent views being ample compensation for the somewhat indifferent road traversed alongside the Redlake.

Further on Rockhill, 1,130 feet high, was reached after a rather stiff climb and then followed some steep gradients which had to be negotiated before the party's arrival in quiet

little Clun. During the time that remained prior to tea, the cyclists inspected the castle ruins and old fortifications. The Buffalo Hotel contributed successfully to the next point of interest by providing the contingent of hungry cyclists with tea.

The return journey home via Craven Arms, Ludlow and Leominster, proved a pleasant and merry affair which passed off without any trouble or mishap. The new comers to the party were A Evans, K Lock, J Williams, G Whiting, T Rowberry and A England and all performed with credit.

For tomorrow's (Sunday) ride arrangements have been made to spend the day at Llanfiangle-nant-Melan (New Radnor) for a picnic and ramble amongst the hills. As it is hoped to form the Cycling Club before that date, it will constitute the first official run. The party will start from the High Town at 9.30 a.m. and bring lunch. A meeting to form the club was arranged to be held in the Town Hall last evening [Friday 2 March] at 7.15 o'clock.

By this time Frank Shubert had approached the Mayor of Hereford, Alderman Alfred Kear, for support. He knew the mayor's interests included the promotion of outdoor exercise – particularly cycling – among the youth of the town and was not disappointed. Alfred Kear allowed the inaugural meeting of the club to be held in the Town Hall, defraying all costs and taking on the responsibility of chairman himself. The week following the second trial run (10 March) the *Hereford Times* included two cycling articles, again without crediting them to any reporter or source, but presumed to be the eloquent lines of Frank Shubert. The first reported on the founders' meeting:-

FOR CYCLISTS
Rules and Objects of Hereford's New Club
THE OFFICIALS

The formation of a club for cyclists in Hereford has for a long while been discussed and a meeting took place on Friday [2 March] evening at the Town hall under the presidency of Mr Alfred Kear, who was supported by Mr Herbert Minton and Mr W Lees.

Mr Kear, in opening, pointed out the obvious advantages of a cycling club in the town from a health-giving and social point of view and Mr F Shubert proposed that a Cycling Club for Hereford and District be formed

This was seconded by Mr Minton and the proposal was unanimously adopted.

Mr Shubert suggested that the new club should be called the 'Hereford and District Wheelers Cycling Club', and found a seconder in Mr S Williams

An amendment that the Club should be named the 'Wye Valley CC' was proposed by Mr H Crompton and seconded by Mr D Parker, but after some discussion the proposition was carried.

The meeting then went on to the choice of officials and the following were elected: Club captain and honorary secretary, Mr Shubert; vice-captain Mr W Lees; honorary treasurer, Mr D Parker. A committee of four was elected as follows: Mr S Williams, Mr Minton, Mr I Lambert and Mr S Norman.

THREE SECTIONS

The objects of the Club were then discussed and it was decided that they should be as follows:

**HEREFORD AND DISTRICT
WHEELERS CYCLING CLUB.**

FOUNDED 1928
(Affiliated to N.C.U.)

■ ■ ■

Name.....

Address.....

.....

The Hereford Times Ltd., Printers

1. That the Club be purely an amateur cycling and touring club, having three sections – Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Half-day runs on Thursdays and Saturdays with mileage up to 60. For day runs mileage be up to one hundred.
2. That the Club be affiliated to the Cyclists Touring Club.
3. Occasionally paper chases, sunrise runs, map-reading contests and other sports to be held and that efforts be made to arrange lectures.

The following are the main rules of the Club;

1. That the Club be called the Hereford and District Wheelers CC, affiliated to the CTC.
2. That the Club exists for the purpose of promoting the sporting and social activities of cycling in accordance with the wishes of the members and within the resources at its command.
3. That the subscription to the Club be an annual one of 5s. with an extra 2s. per annum should a member desire affiliation to the CTC. Subscriptions payable on entry and thereafter on the 1st January each year in advance.
4. That the management of the Club be vested in a committee consisting of captain, vice-captain, honorary secretary and treasurer and four members to be elected annually at a general meeting of the Club which will transact all business of the Club.
5. That the candidates for membership must be nominated by two members and approved by the Committee.
6. That the Committee shall have power to expel or otherwise deal with a member guilty of conduct detrimental to the interests of the Club.

7. A quorum shall consist of five members of the committee.

It was decided that should there be any demand for the formation of a racing section the question should come before the Club at a later date.

Among those present at the meeting were: Mr Shubert, Mr C Beach, Mr S Williams, Mr D Parker, Mr H [Horace] Hands, Mr S [Sid] Norman, Mr I [Ivor] Lambert, Mr G Underwood, Mr W [Bill] Gaines, Mr G Whiting, Mr L [Les] Powell, Mr F Lewis, Mr J Williams, Mr E Preece, Mr A Gladwin, Mr J Lloyd, Mr K Lock, Mr W Lees, Mr H Crompton, Mr S Evans, Mr R Reece, Mr S England and Mr W Talbot.

Later Frank Shubert recalled more of the rules. 'The club could not be dissolved or disbanded unless more than 75 per cent of the members desired that course. On the road the members would ride in pairs, strictly observing the code of the day. There was to be provision for the offside rider to drop in behind his nearside companion when traffic conditions warranted the move. Special responsibilities entrusted to the captain (in front) and the sub-captain (in the rear) ensured overall safety.' These rules were included on the inside covers of the new blue membership card.



The Black Swan Hotel in Widemarsh Street shortly before demolition in the 1970s

Following the inaugural meeting the club was fortunate in obtaining headquarters and meeting room at the Back Swan Hotel, Widemarsh Street, where on 15 March the first general meeting

took place. During 'any other business', Frank Shubert expressed the view that 'it was hardly desirable that the offices of the Hon Secretary and Captain be invested in one person.' He proposed that the members release him from the former position and appoint a successor. This was accepted and MR SW Williams was appointed. Herbert Minton was also elected as the first Chairman.

At a further meeting the club rescinded the intention to become affiliated to the Cyclists Touring Club as it had been discovered that the National Cycling Union offered similar advantages on more favourable terms. The respective merits of both bodies was to form much subsequent debate with the result that affiliation to either was never really permanent.

It is worthy of note that Col Henry Evan P Pateshall D.S.O of Allensmore Court was a founder



Col MJG Scobie CB (Hon Col Herefordshire Regt) front centre with Lt Col HEP Pateshall DSO (CO the Regt) on his right

member and subsequent president of the club. His family provided the funds for the building of Allensmore Parish Hall which the Wheelers still use for the annual 'Come and Try-it Ten'. He was the son of Lt Col Henry Evan Pateshall East Yorkshire Regt. Educated at Rugby School and the RMA, Sandhurst he was gazetted into the East Yorkshire Regt on 10 February 1899.

He took part in the South African War (1900-02) and served in Burma (1906-08) and was Adjutant to the 4th Cheshire Regt (TF) (1902-12). On retiring in 1914 after 18 years service he was gazetted Major 1st Herefordshire Regt and commanded two Coys. On mobilisation he was appointed Staff Captain Welsh Border Inf Bde Welsh Div (TA). Proceeding overseas in July 1915 he was present at the landing in Sulva Bay, Gallipoli. He was appointed DAAQ 53rd Welsh Div November 1915 and served until evacuation in December 1915. Among other periods of service were; Egypt (1916-17) and Palestine (1917-18). Demobilisation came in April 1919 and he was appointed temporary command of the 1st Herefordshire Regt after the cadre had returned from France. For gallantry Col Pateshall was twice mentioned in despatches and awarded the DSO in the New Years Honours 1918. He was promoted to Brevet Colonel in 1924.

It is most likely that Col Pateshall was brought in as just a figurehead to afford the club some 'political' clout. Les Powell introduced him but thereafter his attendance on club runs was in spirit only. At least that was the suggestion included in a poem (reproduced later) written to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the club.

It should be remembered that it was not until 1928 that women won equal voting rights, replacing the limited woman suffrage granted after the First World War. The 1928 Olympic Games held in Amsterdam were also the first games to have track and field events for women. Prohibition in the US was still in force – 1,565 Americans died in this year from drinking bad alcohol in addition to the hundreds killed in ‘bootleg’ wars. And Stalin set up the first Five-Year Plan for collectivisation of Soviet agriculture in 1928. It was also the year that the Wheelers set off on their first club run. An account of the first official run of the new club on 4 March was reported in the *Hereford Times*:-

CYCLING

Hereford and District Wheelers’ CC at Radnor Forest

The first official run of the Hereford and District Wheelers’ Cycling Club was held on Sunday, and favoured with exceptionally good weather, proved a great success.

At 9.45 a.m. some 21 enthusiasts started out from the High Town and made for Kington by way of Bridge Sollars, Letton and Eardisley. After passing the imposing Stanner Rocks, and on through the fine scenes around New Radnor, the party arrived at the Red Lion Inn at Llanfiangle-nant-Melan shortly after one o’clock. Here cycles were stored, and then all set out towards the curious Tomen Castle for a picnic beside the Summergil Brook.

Having satisfied their hunger and thirst and fortified themselves for coming events, the ramblers made over the moors and heather wastes, to enjoy en route, splendid views in all directions. Eventually the wild ravine associated with the famous waterfall of ‘Water-break-its-neck’ was reached and explored. For over a mile the pathway through the forest land of Esgair Nantau was traversed in Indian file.

On climbing the precipitous slopes of Vron Hill (1,716 feet high), the ramblers developed into scramblers. Their efforts were rewarded, however, by the magnificent spectacle of the Radnor Forest range of mountains, the most prominent points of which were the Great Rhos (2,166 feet). Black Mixen (1,343 feet) and Great Creigan. The fierce descent to Cum Broadwell caused much amusement and jollification. It was decided to leave the Shepherd’s Wells and Whinyard Rocks for another day.

After a nine-mile walk, the party returned to the Red Lion Inn, where Mrs Williams had provided an excellent tea. A splendid moonlight night contributed to the enjoyable nature of the homeward journey, which was accomplished without serious incident.

Tomorrow (Sunday’s) run is to Church Stretton starting from the High Town at 9 a.m.

Bill Gains reminds us that these were the days of single fixed gears, double-cogged hubs and acetylene gas lamps. Lycra had not been invented and plus-fours and ‘Norfolk’ jackets were *de rigueur*. He



Early training run taken at Church Stretton by Mr DM Parker. L to R: C Beach, F Shubert, A Evans, W Gaines, S Williams, S Norman, F Crompton, V Brown, H Hand & L Powell

recalls that on one of the preliminary runs Fred – sorry, **Mr** Fred Radnor – who hailed from Bishop’s Castle took part wearing a bowler hat and bow tie, riding a ‘heavy tradesman’s’ machine (a butcher bike?).

The fourth and second official run of the Wheelers set off towards the east. ‘After surmounting the ridge of the picturesque Malvern Hills it was fairly easy going through the Worcestershire

countryside by way of Upton-on-Severn and Pershore to Stratford-on-Avon. After lunch here the club visited Shakespeare's birthplace in Henley Street as well as the Old Theatre beside the gentle flowing River Avon. Leaving this Warwickshire Mecca, a short detour was made to Anne Hathaway's cottage at Shottery, and the homeward trail touched Evesham, which place proved a convenient venue for tea. Over a hundred miles were covered during the day, but the riders proved their fitness and had no complaints

no complaints to make.' There followed almost weekly accounts of the exploits of the newly founded cycling club in the newspaper:

11 March 1928. ... *Extremely cold and severe weather [with snow showers] prevailed on Sunday but the wintry weather failed to daunt the spirits and keenness of the Hereford and District Wheelers on the occasion of their trip to Church Stretton ...*

... The crossing of the Long Mynd was by grass-covered track trailing by the heathery slopes of Bilbatch Dingle, followed by the fierce descent of Burway Hill ...

... At lighting-up time at Craven Arms the intense cold had so frozen the water in the chambers of the [acetylene gas] lamps that it was only with the utmost difficulty that they were made to function ...

(This of course was an era when traffic violations by cyclists were taken rather more seriously than is the case today). *A report published on 7 April 1928 stated:*

'On April 22, only three weeks' hence, it becomes compulsory for every bicycle to carry a rear lamp or suitable reflector after dark. At the moment hardly any reflector has been passed by the authorities as suitable. Severe regulations have been made. Reflectors which you and I know to be adequate are being rejected. Dealers have no stocks, for no one knows what the official reflector will be. The whole thing is a typical illustration of official muddle. Within about three weeks **seven to ten million cyclists** (our emphasis) are expected to equip themselves with a fitment which is not even decided upon to say nothing of being made. The thing simply cannot be done. No great harm would ensue from postponing the date until the autumn. At the end of April it is not dark till 9 o'clock, and till midsummer the daily light is extending.

Someone should bring the question up in Parliament, and at the same time ask why the authorities are insisting on an expensive and highly technical article, which will involve the people in a great expenditure, instead of something simple, but effective.'

18 March 1928. *The Club Run was to Langorse Lake via the Black Mountains and Abergavenny. ...Mr Frank Powell – an old Hereford boy who had come from Newport joined them for the ride...*

22 April 1928. *Rhayader and the Élan Valley. ... It was with all pleasurable eagerness that the members of the Hereford and District Wheelers looked forward to their ride to Rhayader last Sunday even though it has to be admitted that the summertime alteration to clocks led to a deal of confusion and caused no little delay, there was nevertheless quite a good number of enthusiasts in the High Town for the start at 8.30 a.m.. The weather was gloriously fine if a trifle cold ...*

20 May 1928. *On a run to Brown Clee Hill on this date it was reported:- ... Progress through the glorious forest land of the Clee side, by a winding dirt track, gave rise to much jollification, as also did the fierce descent through the bracken and slippery*

W Gains (rear), L to R: H Hand, D Parker & F Shubert



slopes by devious ways to Burwarton Park. So much time had been spent, however, in this wild neighbourhood of the Clee, that despite the rapid and thrilling eight-mile run down to Ludlow, it was nearly seven o'clock before the Wheelers arrived there for tea...

9 June 1928 And later on a trip to Bridgnorth:- ... a very poor portion of the road near Aston Eyre, surfaced with broken glassware, crockery and other articles foreign to modern components of road repair, caused a deal of trouble and several punctures ...

There are transcripts of more newspaper cuttings describing these early rides at Annex A.

Attempts were made to make rides a little different. On 25 November 1928 a 'Distance Judging Competition' was held. 'The leader of the run had a sealed cyclometer affixed to his machine and riders would guess how far they had travelled at the end of the ride. A fee of 6d was charged to provide the prize. Unfortunately the weather was extremely bad, not only keeping attendance low but also preventing the following of the planned secret route of the leader. However, these difficulties did not spoil the event which followed the approximate route of;

Burghill, Credenhill, Kenchester, Bridge Sollars, Madley, Kingstone, Whitfield, Wormbridge, Kilpeck (for lunch), Much Dewchurch, Wormelow, Harewood End, Picts Cross and Foye. It had been intended to cross the Wye at this point but the state of the river made the bridge impassable. Many detours had to be made, including the negotiation of a railway bridge, before the

"Hole-in-the-Wall" could be achieved. Between here and Fownhope further



Red Lion Inn at Llanfiangel-nant-Melan,; for many years a most popular tea place with the Wheelers. 'Mine Host' was Goss Green of 'End to End' fame

floods were encountered, and coupled with approaching darkness, progress was slow and dangerous. At Mordiford the situation reached a climax with the Hereford Road being several feet under water. Following some much needed refreshment, however, they eventually reached home via Dormington and Lugwardine. The final mileage was 69¾ and Bill Gains was the nearest with an estimate of 71.'

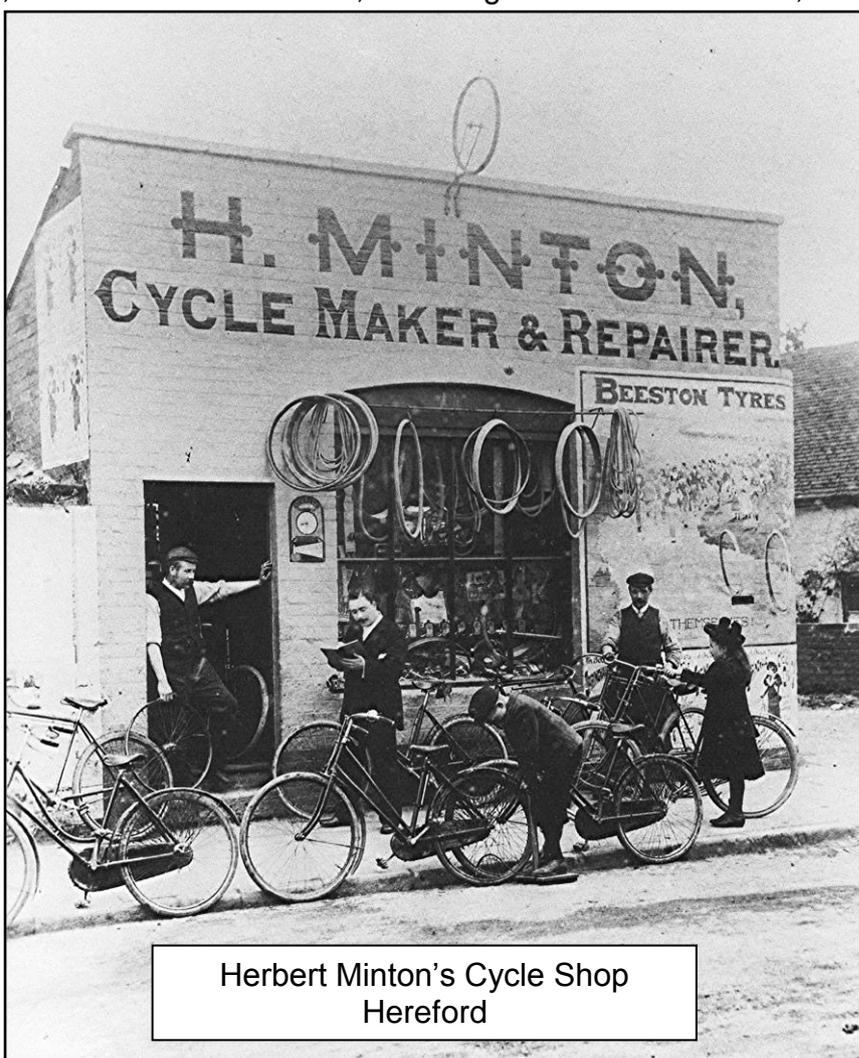
Early Years of Club Racing

It was inevitable that racing would be introduced into the club at an early stage. Frank Shubert was racing *circa* 1920. His daughter, Heather, used to race too. A little over twelve months following the formation of the wheelers Frank had an unfortunate difference of opinion with some officials of the club regarding administration and the running of some events, so he decided to join the Cheltenham & County CC as a first claim member in 1930 but continued his association with the Wheelers. At one time he lodged with club members Don and Nell Price, in Hopton Road near the railway station. Franks parents (his father was a tailor) also lived in this road at one time. Soon afterwards he lost his job in Herefordshire when widespread unemployment reached record levels. He was a printer and lucky to be offered work in Kent for

a national paper (probably The Herald) and commuted by bicycle. 'He would set off to Kent on his bike on Sunday, do a week's work, while taking part in club runs with a local club, before returning to Hereford on Saturday morning.' It is of interest that Frank was a vegetarian and managed to do this on a diet that excluded animal protein. Eventually an opportunity to exchange Rochester, Kent for Rochdale, Lancashire and better employment led Frank to becoming a founder member of the West Pennine Road Club. Here he had second claim as he continued as first claim member of the Cheltenham club.

Bill Gaines was another founder club member with an impressive annual mileage. Founder member Herbert Minton was a national ¼-mile grass track champion in 1910 and raced until the 1920s. Bill Gaines claimed Herbert was the holder of two world records. He rode around town on a penny farthing and ran a bike shop in town. The Hereford Journal Directory of 1912 shows Herbert, Cycle Maker and Repairer, at 53 Whitecross Street, but living at 10 Victoria Street, and Henry Minton Farrier, General Smith Motor and Cycle Maker at 10 Victoria Street, where on the gable end of what is now number 30 clearly can be seen a painted sign, 'Minton Motor & Cycle Works', to this day. The picture shows Herbert's shop but it is not known if Herbert is the one casually dressed in the doorway, or the more dapper character with the book.

At a Wheelers' meeting on 24 May 1928 some members asked that 25-mile road races be included in the club's activities. The proposal was defeated but a month later club members were taking part in a 25-mile time trial nevertheless. A report in the Hereford Times of 30 July 1928, featuring the 'Newport and District Wheelers Open 25' held on this date stated; 'Forty-five riders out of a possible fifty-one faced the club's handicapper and timekeeper Mr G Smith – the scratch mark being occupied, as usual, by C Beddow of Newport and District Wheelers with 1 hr. 7 min. 0 sec.' Hereford and District Wheelers' riders were well down the list: Sid Norman, 1.19.42; F Lewis, 1.24.38; and Les Powell, 1.27.23. In the team race Cardiff 100 Mile came first with Hereford and District Wheelers six and last in 4.11.20.



Herbert Minton's Cycle Shop
Hereford

Bill Gains records; 'Towards the end of the first year came a desire to indulge in a sporting event and this was expressed in a "100 in 8". It took place on September 16th 1928 and achieved remarkable success. The course (straight out and home) began by the 2nd milestone on the Hay Road and proceeded via Whitney, Clyro, Glasbury and Brecon to the little village of Halfway, near Llandoverly. Entries totalled 17 and consisted of the following: S Willams (7.01.20), H Crompton (7.38.00), C beach (6.16.15), E Preese (7.18.00), A Evans (6.02.05), V Brown (6.57.37), G Underwood (7.17.40), L Powell (6.23.00), F Shubert (5.39.35), S Norman (6.31.30), H Hand (7.25.20), K Lock (7 20.20). W Gaines, I Lambert and F Lewis did not start,

while F Crompton and A Gladwyn failed to finish. Officials were; Timekeeper DM Parker, Half-way Checker H Minton, Marshals A Aston and W Macklin.'

The Wheelers was initially very much a gentlemen-only club but soon they were recruiting the fair sex and Miss Marjorie Pritchard and Miss Gwen Brown became the first lady members. The subject of racing and lady members were agreed at the first Annual General Meeting:

*HEREFORD WHEELERS
Mixed Club Suggestion at Annual Meeting.
Competitive Events.*

The annual general meeting of the HEREFORD & DISTRICT WHEELERS CYCLING CLUB was held at the Black Swan Hotel, Hereford, on Thursday evening in last week, when there was a representative gathering. In the absence of the President (Col. H. E. P. Pateshall, D.S.O.), Mr. W. Gaines was voted to the chair. He read apologies for non-attendance from Mr. F. J. Parsons and Mr. Alfred Kear.

The Hon. Secretary (Mr. S. W. Williams), in presenting the first annual report, referred to the enjoyable nature of the many varied and interesting rides which the Club had undertaken during the past twelve months. They had, he said, toured and explored fairly extensively in a wide area, covering some fourteen counties and in spite of occasional inclement weather only one run in the whole twelve months was cancelled.

The statement of accounts and balance sheet presented by the Hon. Treasurer (Mr. D. Parker), showing the Club to be in a sound position financially, were considered very satisfactory and were formally adopted.

The Officials

The meeting proceeded to the selection of officials, which resulted as follows:-

President, COL. H. E. P. PATESHALL, Allensmore; Vice-presidents, Mr. F. J. PARSONS (ROSS), Mr. ALFRED KEAR, and Mr. HERBERT MINTON (Hereford); Chairman, Mr. W. GAINES; Club-captain, Mr. F. SHUBERT; Vice-captain, Mr. C. BEACH; Hon. Secretary, Mr. S. W. WILLIAMS; Hon. Treasurer, Mr. D. PARKER; Committee, Mr. H. CROMPTON, Mr. A. EVANS, Mr. L. POWELL and Mr. V. BROWN; Hon. Auditor, Mr. W. GAINES.

It was agreed that the Black Swan Hotel, Hereford be once again the Club Headquarters. A demand was expressed for more events, including those of a competitive nature; and from among the many suggestions forwarded it was proposed to hold various 25, 50 and 100-mile Time Trials; Speed and Distance Judging Competitions; Hill Climbs, All-night Rides, Surprise Runs and Paper-chases provided the necessary support for these events was forthcoming.

A Mixed Club

The question of a mixed club caused some discussion and eventually it was decided that lady cyclists interested in the subject should communicate as soon as possible with Hon. Secretary Mr. S. W. Williams, of 1, Westwood, Pengrove Road, Hereford.

The subscription still remained at 5s. per annum, and as the club had again affiliated with the Bristol Centre of the N. C. U., membership with the Wheelers was deemed both reasonable and attractive. The purchase of a first aid outfit was considered a necessary expenditure and the investment in a song book regarded as a step in the right direction towards vocal perfection

A vote of thanks to the Chairman for presiding brought the meeting to a close.

The club held its first racing event in 1929 – a scratch 25-mile TT – with the winner being Les Powell in a time of 1.10.44. A report suggested, 'Perhaps the chief feature of the event was the fact that the first six on the list beat "evens" or 20 miles per hour, which is distinctly good going for a non-racing club like the Wheelers. The course was 'from the Dead Bridge, Moore Park, to Eardisley Railway Bridge and back.' This was followed by the first handicap '25', run over the

same course. 'Competition was exceptionally keen for Frank Shubert had secured 4th place in the Acme Open 25 a couple of weeks earlier.' Frank was first in 1.08.20 with Les Powell 2nd in 1.08.30.

Next came the first Handicap '50', run on a course starting at the 2nd milestone on the Hay Road and continuing via Whitney, Clyro and Glasbury to a point near the Talgarth turn and then retracing to the start point. Les Powell was first in 2.34.30.



The first Handicap '100' used the same course as the inaugural '100 in 8' held in September last year. 'Conditions were warm and there were many retirements. Frank Shubert came first in 5.25 with Les Powell second.' To cater for demand the 2nd '100 in 8' took place in 1929 which established the practice of riding this event as a bunch at a uniform speed. 'A unique feature of this trial was the fact that the course followed a devious route which completely circled the city of Hereford. Beginning on the north side it touched Canon Pyon, Baron's Cross, Pembridge, Kinnersley, Bredwardine, Madley, Belmont, Dewchurch, Ross, Ledbury, Trumpet, Newtown, Burley Gate, Bodenham, Dinmore, and Hereford.' A halt at Bredwardine and Ross occupied about 35 minutes. Among the successful competitors, was Miss G Brown.

'Open Events' held in 1929 did not attract many Wheelers. One of the reasons may have been the difficulty of reaching the various venues – the nearest being over 30 miles. The only records available show: 'Newport Wheelers 25', ridden by F Shubert, S Norman and A Evans; 'Bridgend 25', with the same trio participating; 'Acme Wheelers 25', where F Shubert came fourth; 'Cheltenham 50', again Frank Shubert who clocked 2.25; and the 'Speedwell 100' held on the Bank Holiday in which Frank finished in a 'very creditable 5.07' with S Norman taking 20 minutes longer. The winner of the last two races was one JK Middleton who had been selected as one of four riders to represent Britain in the 1929 World Championships

The 1930 Racing Season of the Wheelers opened with a '25 run over the same course as that on 19 July 1929. 'The event can be considered unique insomuch that a lady member actually took part. Whether such a spectacle was desirable must remain an open subject. Certainly Miss G Brown put up a performance which not only enhanced the position held by fair cyclists generally, but also placed her quite close to the male contingent.' The times were: 1. L Powell, 1.10.20; 2. J Wilce, 1.13.20; 3. P Meredith, 1.15.30; 4. G Beach, 1.17.07; 5. I Lambert, 1.20.00; 6. H Hand, 1.22.05; and Miss G Brown, 1.30.15 – with a scratch time of 20 minutes this put her only 3 minutes 05 seconds behind scratch time winner J Wilce.

Some of these early club time trials appear to have been planned almost on the spur of the moment. In July 1930 an article in the *Hereford Times* began:

As a change from the usual run the members of Hereford & District Wheelers entered upon a competitive event in the nature of a 25-miles time trial. The starter was Mr CT Oswin Prosser of Messrs Con's Cycle Stores. At 7 o'clock G Beach was dispatched with the scratch man Les Powell being the last to leave the starting line which was the Dead Bridge, Kings Acre Road.

Sid Norman had the misfortune to puncture at the bottom of Tin Hill [Staunton-on-Wye], which put him out of the running but luck held good for the other competitors who all finished in a rain-storm.



S Norman held up by I Lambert at Twyning Common

The finishing times were: No 10, Les Powell, 1.10.20; No 9, J Wilke, 1.13.20; No 2, Perce Meredith, 1.15.30; No 1, G Beach, 1.17.07; No 6, Ivor Lambert, 1.29.00; No 5, Horace Hands, 1.22.05; No 4, Miss G Brown, 1.30.15.

For some the bicycle was not enough and they were at least experimenting with faster means of transport. In the records of the Petty Sessional Division of Hereford can be found a summons issued to Percy Meredith in 1930: 'On the fifth day of October 1930 at Lugwardine he did unlawfully drive a motor car, to wit a motor cycle, on a public highway at Burcott Pike Cross Roads without being licensed for that purpose.'



SCENE NEAR PERSHORE ON A WINTER CLUB RUN. 1931.

By 1931 some members of the club still did not believe enough racing was being included in the annual programme and extended their time trial activities by joining the Cheltenham and County Cycling Club. In particular by this means they managed to take part in longer distance races including 'standard rides' such as the 'Oxford and Back' and 'Twelve Hour' time trials. It may be that Frank Shubert was an influence here as he still turned out for the Cheltenham club despite living in Lancashire.

Most of the club racing reported during the year revolved around 25-mile time

trials, although at least one 30-mile handicap event took place. The route used on this occasion consisted of the 25-mile course and an extra 2½ miles added on each way by turning short of Eardisley Railway station, and proceeding through Winforton and Willersley to Whitney Toll Bridge where the turn was made.

The First 'Open 25'

At the fourth annual meeting of the club the question of headquarters arose as they were without a permanent meeting place. (They eventually decided on the Omega Café in Edgar Street. 'General and committee meetings were happy affairs largely through the kindness of the proprietress, Mrs. Phelps'.) Regarding affiliation, the club decided to revert to its original choice viz.: The National Cyclist Union. 'Mr S Norman then stated there was a general feeling in the Club that the holding of an open event, preferably at a short distance, would do much to increase the Wheelers' prestige, he therefore proposed that an Open 25 mile Handicap Time



PHOTO BY MR. P. MEREDITH.

TAKEN Outside the "BAY HORSE INN" on the occasion of the CLUB "25", JUNE 5TH. 1932
L TO R. MESSRS. A. ASTON, S. NORMAN, W. GAINES, W. MORRIS, J. F. JONES, R. LLOYD, I. LAMBERT, P. G. JONES,
AND T. VANSTON. OTHER CYCLIST UNKNOWN.

Trial be promoted. Mr. V Brown seconded. The Chairman, whilst not doubting its chances of success, reminded the members that it would entail considerable work and expense, but he thought if the club were sufficiently enthusiastic the venture could be launched with confidence. Apparently this state of affairs already existed for the proposition was carried unanimously.'

This confidence turned into a great success when the Wheelers held their first 'Open 25-miles Time Trial' on Easter Monday 1932. The *Hereford Journal* dated 2 April 1932 reported:

Visiting Riders' Success In Local Club's First Open

Easter Monday, 1932, will figure as an important day in the history of the Hereford and District Wheelers, for on this occasion the Club launched its first open event, a 25 Mile

Road Time Trial. The starting card contained a list of 67 entries which can be considered quite satisfactory, more especially when it is realised that the Wheelers cannot put up so many riders as the more fortunate promoters with a larger membership. Newport and District Wheelers, in addition to supplying the scratch man C Beddow, were represented by several short distance experts, notably WG Curtis, who received a minute. Other short markers included FO Jones (Glamorgan RC) and WJ Farmer (Worcester St John's), $\frac{3}{4}$ min. each, W Tilling (Cheltenham and Country), 1 min., while the local club pinned their hopes on S [Sid] Norman with two mins. An interesting entry was a tricycle ridden by WB Grainger (Glamorgan RC), 12 mins.

At the time of starting, conditions were far from promising and in a short while it began to rain, the downpour getting worse as each succeeding competitor pushed off. It speaks volumes for the enthusiasm of the riders that there were only ten absentees and of the 57 starters only four failed to finish, one of which punctured. Competitors came back liberally bespattered with mud and many with disappointing times but C Beddow rose superior to the bad weather and rode a meritorious race to clock 1 hr. 6 mins. 26 secs., thereby knocking over a minute and a quarter off S [Sid] Norman's previous record. That rider greatly disappointed, his time of 1.11.4 being far below his best. However, he may find consolation in the knowledge that several other speedmen whose names are coupled with fast times failed to add to their reputation. This may be due to the weather conditions or equally possible to the fact that the early season found some of them not fully prepared.

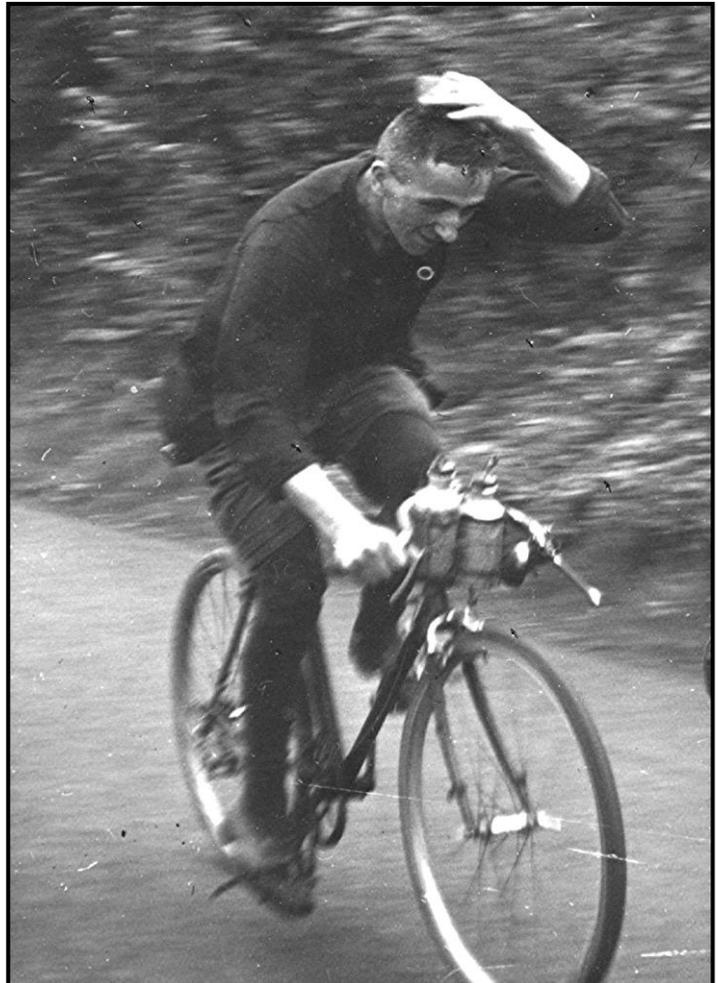
Second and third positions were also filled by members of the Newport Wheelers, RS Abbott, 1.8.9 and WG Curtis, 1.8. 33. It is obvious from this that the Newport Club also annexed the Team Race with an aggregate time of 3.23.8.

First and second handicaps went to FC Bradley (Carmarthen Wheelers) who, with an allowance of 12 mins., could show 1.0.32 and AJ Dancey (Gloucester City CC) recorded 1.3.16 after deducting 8 mins. The latter rider only just secured his award for WB Grainger did extraordinary well to push his tricycle round in 1.16. His allowance of 12 mins. brought his handicap down to 1.4.

Another worthy achievement was that JC Bolshaw (Cheltenham, a rider of over 60 years of age) who did 1.27.14.

36 riders beat evens, or 20 mph., including the following Hereford riders; S [Sid] Norman (2 mins.) 1.11.04 and P [Perce] Meredith (6 mins.) 1.11.34.

A word of praise is due to the officials who, although experiencing an uncomfortable time in the rain carried out their duties with extreme credit. They were B [Bill] Gains (timekeeper), Miss M Pritchard (checker), G Beach (starter), Messrs S Williams and V [Vince] Brown (checkers at the turn) and Messrs N White and A Ashton (marshals at Bridge Sollars and Willersley).



Founder member Les Powell in action

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

OPEN
25 MILES HANDICAP
ROAD TIME TRIAL
EASTER MONDAY, MARCH 28th, 1932
ENTRIES CLOSE MARCH 17th (first post)

HEREFORD & DISTRICT
WHEELERS C.C.

AWARDS

1st FASTEST : VALUE £1 10s. 0d.
2nd " : " £1 0s. 0d.
3rd " : " 10s. 0d.
1st HANDICAP : VALUE £1 5s. 0d.
2nd " : " £1 0s. 0d

FASTEST TEAM : THREE SILVER MEDALS

Please enter me for the above event, for which I enclose Entrance Fee 2 s. 0 d., and subjoin the following particulars:—

Name of Event	Date	What was the Course?	Type of Machine ridden (Bicycle or Tricycle)	My actual time or distance	If a handicap what was your start?	Who was on Scratch?	Who did and what was the fastest time or greatest distance?	If delayed give approximate time lost and particulars
My fastest "25"								
My fastest "50"								
My fastest "100"								
My best "12"								
Last 2 performances at or nearest the distance of this event								

I hereby declare that the above particulars are complete and correct. I have read the Rules and agree to abide by them, and accept the decision of the Promoting Club on all points as final. I further declare that I am an Amateur Cyclist—that is to say, I have never competed for a money prize, or for a wager, nor have I received any remuneration whatsoever for competing in any cycle event.

Forms as this may be obtained from The Saville Press, 79 Albert Road, Silvertown, E.16, at 8/0 per 100; 300, 9/6; 500, 12/6; 1000, 15/-; 5000, 17/6; Printed complete with headings, prizes, etc.

(1) DEFINITION OF UNPACKED RIDING. Competitors in unpacked events must ride entirely alone and unassisted. They must not take shelter from any other rider or from any vehicle on the road. If one competitor overtake another he must pass as widely as possible, and no shelter must be given or received. Food and drink or other necessities may be handed up only by persons on foot. Competitors when dismounted must wheel or carry their machines without assistance whilst covering any portion of the course.

(2) ANTI ADVERTISING REGULATION. The Committee (of the Promoting Club) reserves the right to withhold the prize in the case of a prize winner, and refuse the entry on all future occasions of any competitor who allows his machine or equipment to be described and

(3) SUITABLE COSTUME. Competitors must be completely clothed from neck to feet. The costume should be inconspicuous, and must include a jacket of which the sleeves must not be turned back above the elbow. Headgear, if worn, must be inconspicuous also. Competitors numbers should not be displayed.

(4) STARTING AT THE APPOINTED TIME. Competitors to start at the time allotted to them, or lose the time they are late.

(5) RESTARTS. A competitor having once started shall not be allowed a second start.

(6) Each competitor must call out his number when he passes a checker and at the finish.

(8) An entrant who improves on his previous best at any distance after sending in his entry form must immediately inform the Hon. Racing Secretary, giving full particulars.

(9) The rules of the road must be observed.

HON. RACING SECRETARY—

ADDRESSES—

NAME OF PROMOTING CLUB—

EVENT AND DATE—

SIGNATURE..... (Write clearly)

FULL POSTAL ADDRESS

BICYCLE OR TRICYCLE..... NAME OF CLUB (one only).....
Competitors who fill up their entry forms *unsuccessfully* will render themselves liable to disqualification
A rider may not accept more than one invitation for simultaneous competitions.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

HEREFORD & DISTRICT WHEELERS'
OPEN 25 MILES TIME TRIAL
EASTER MONDAY, MARCH 28TH, 1932. AT 7 A.M.

Table with columns: No., Name, Club, H'cap, Mins., Start. Lists 67 riders and their performance times.

*This Rider is a veteran.

YOUR NUMBER IS..... START AT.....a.m.

ROUTE.

Beginning at a point about 1 1/2 miles from HEREFORD ON MAIN HAY ROAD, proceed to EARDISLEY RAILWAY STATION and retrace to Start. The Course runs straight past A.A. Box (1 1/2 miles), leaving HAY ROAD on left. CHANGING ACCOMMODATION available at BAY HORSE INN near the Start.

Competitors are requested not to adopt the dangerous practice of "cutting" corners, this applies particularly to the "S" bend at 11 miles.

The usual Rules and Regulations relating to Starting, Unpaced Riding, Suitable Costume and anti-Advertising as recommended by the Road Racing Council, will be strictly enforced.

Timekeeper & Hon. Secretary - - MR. W. GAINES, Blenheim House, Clifford Street, Hereford.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

HEREFORD & DISTRICT WHEELERS'
OPEN 25 MILES TIME TRIAL
EASTER MONDAY, MARCH 28TH, 1932, AT 7 A.M.

Summary table showing Fastest Time, Second Fastest, Third Fastest, First Handicap, Second Handicap, and Fastest Team with their respective riders and times.

Main results table with columns: H'cap, mins., H. M. S. Lists all 67 riders and their performance times in detail.

In addition to the above, one rider checked 1hr. 10mins. 5secs., but was disqualified for not completing the full course. Entered-67 Started-57. Finished-53.

IT IS WITH EXTREME PLEASURE THAT THE COMMITTEE HEARTILY CONGRATULATE THE WINNERS. AND THEY ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS THEIR DEEP APPRECIATION FOR THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE WHICH ENABLED THE EVENT TO BE CARRIED TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

TIMEKEEPER & HON. SECRETARY

MR. W. GAINES, 4, CORNEWALL STREET, HEREFORD.

The event proved to be a popular fixture and took place every Easter until the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1935 the local paper said; 'From a modest affair of four years ago, the Hereford Wheelers' annual open 25-mile team trial has now achieved a very enviable position, and it is a matter of congratulation that such a small club should stage one of the most important events in the West of England.'

The Hereford Journal of 11 June 1932 ran a report on the Seasons first Club 25, held on 5 June 1932 on 'a fine and sunny morning, notwithstanding a troublesome cross wind.' S [Sid] Norman was scratch with 1.10.6, P [Perce] Meredith his nearest rival with 1.11.9, A Gooding 1.13.31 and JF Jones 1.14.20. 'Making his first appearance in competition since 1929 V [Vince] Brown came next although returning a time nearly 3 mins. below his best.' Under the sub title 'Tandem Disappoints' the article said; 'G Underwood with a male 'crew', 1.13.48 strongly disappointed and a reminder that perfect understanding between parties is essential.' Apparently some riders did not start that fresh; 'It is a remarkable thing that no less than five competitors cycled in immediately before the event, two of them coming from as far as Lyonshall and Ross.

There was a rider at the bottom of the column. 'It should not be imagined from the above that the club are exclusively a racing organisation. On the contrary its primary objectives are to promote the social activities and interest of cycling generally, by holding weekly runs to its members. Anyone (either sex) wishing to participate with a view to joining can obtain full details from the Hon Secretary, 4 Cornwall Street, Hereford.

Despite the success with '25s' the staging of a really good '50-mile Time Trial' was proving elusive for the Wheelers. On the first attempt practically all the leading riders 'packed' or punctured, with the exception of Les Powell, who prevented an almost complete fiasco by returning a good time of 2.34. It seems the general view afterwards was that the course – Glastonbury-on-Wye (via Clyro) and back was too strenuous so this event adopted a new route from the second milestone on the Hay road to Eardisley Railway Station, across to Sarnsfield and then on to Weobley to a point just a mile beyond Credenhill. From here the riders retraced the route back to the start. The first intuition that things may go wrong was when scratch man S Norman failed to show through illness and at the start nearly half the field were missing. 'Doubtless the heavy rain in the early hours decided these members but the irony was not a single drop fell during the race.' The upshot was that an apparent newcomer, JF Jones seized the moment to record the fastest time of 2.35.40 and the handicap as well. 'Apart from the winner no other rider did himself justice. Lack of nourishment during the race may have contributed to the moderate times of several members. H Hand in particular, getting up late, started without any breakfast, while PG Jones had a hard ride in from Ross in the wet immediately before his start time.' Oh, and a couple of marshals also failed to show up.

A note in the local paper stated that the Wheelers were to pay their annual visit to the Elan Valley, starting from High Town at 8.30am. 'Their usual practice of approaching this lovely spot from the direction of the 'Drovers Track, not only enhances and widens the impression of this beautiful part but also makes an enjoyable detour from Rhayader and saves traversing the same road twice.'

The 1932 Racing Season was wound up with yet another 'Club 25' which S Norman won again, thereby proving his newfound status. Although the season would seem to have been dominated by competitive events the club was keen to point out that the regular runs continued. 'They were mostly of a less adventurous character so that possibly the time-trialling faction could cultivate pure speed.' In fact there had been a disappointingly small attendance on the weekly runs as was pointed out at the Fifth Annual Meeting held at the Omega Café, Edgar Street.

A new president was elected; Mr FJ Parsons of Ross, a previous vice president was to be invited to take up the position. The most important business, however, was to ascertain if the club wished to repeat its 'Open Event'. The members were most enthusiastic and it was decided to make it an annual affair.

The fact that the influx of cycle tourists into Hereford during Easter 1933 appeared much greater than usual aroused considerable interest, and when it was noticed many of them had spare wheels attached to their machines, curiosity deepened. A large proportion of these cyclists were of course competitors in the Hereford and District Wheelers' second 'Open 25 miles Time Trial'; the spare wheels being 'sprints' for the race.

The Wheelers' optimism was fully justified as the event attracted 90 riders, some coming from as far afield as London and Lancashire. Among these were to be found practically all the best riders from Wales and the adjoining counties, and included: C. Beddow Newport and District Wheelers, the previous scratch winner, H. James,



Wheelers founder member 'Vince' Brown, racing and touring in the early years

Glamorgan RC, ER Craddock, Warwickshire RC and FO.Jones, Glamorgan RC. F Shubert founder of the Wheelers and now in Lancashire, entered on behalf of the West Pennine RC. He had entered last year but had failed to show.

Speculation ran rife regarding the chances of Beddow and James, for while the former retained his supremacy last season by lowering the Welsh competition record to 1. 04. 26., the latter had put up a series of remarkable performances, especially at 50 miles, culminating in his winning the 'Vegetarian 50' in 2. 11. 21., a ride which placed him in the front rank of the country's best.

The morning dawned with weather very suitable for good times. After the field had been despatched, preparations were made to receive the first finisher, who appropriately enough turned out to be No.1 on the card, F. Shubert, with his time of 1. 09. 6., a little below his best. Another early starter, L. R. Craddock, returned in 1. 06. 21., a time fast enough to beat the previous course record by 5secs. He was followed by LI Thompson with 1. 06. 42.; and then R. S, Abbott came along in 1. 06. 04. Almost immediately



Herbert James, soon to become a Raleigh professional. His 1.03.46 was to remain a record for pre-war 'Open 25s'

afterwards, H James flashed over the line, clocking 1. 03. 46., a time which 'caused no little sensation'. Eyes now awaited the return of Beddow, who had started 25 minutes behind James.

As the minutes ticked away it became obvious he could not make any further improvement and 1. 06. 30. had elapsed before the scratch man came in.

Despite optimism on membership at the AGM the Wheelers ran a column in the Hereford Times advertising a 'Special Invitation Run'. For some time past it has been felt that there were many cyclists living in and around the city who, 'although modestly indulging in the pastime, hesitated to join an organisation which would considerably enlarge their scope, in addition to providing pleasant companionship. This apparent contentment with a lonely existence may be due to a variety of reasons; perhaps they feel their equipment is not correct, or possibly consider club runs are too strenuous. Yet again, perhaps they do not get a really favourable opportunity of introduction. In order to create such an opportunity, the committee of the Hereford Wheelers have arranged a special half-day run for to-morrow (Sunday), commencing at 2. p.m. from High Town.'

The route has been carefully chosen, and the club attempted to provide an itinerary which combined attractive scenery without the expense of undue effort, together with a convenient and popular place for tea of course. The run left Hereford by way of Belmont, proceeding up the Golden Valley to Hay, and then to Whitney-on-Wye for tea. The total mileage should not exceed 44, and the journey was spread over a period of about six hours, allowing an hour for tea and a return by 9 p.m. An average speed of eight miles per hour was envisaged, which they thought within the capabilities of almost any cyclist of either sex.

Regarding equipment, 'it may be mentioned that while a light bicycle is desirable and this does not necessarily indicate a racing machine, a heavier mount need not debar one from participation in the pastime, certainly not on this occasion. While on this subject, it is the generally accepted view that the ideal touring instrument is a compromise of comparative lightness and comfort, adjusted to give the rider an effective position.' As a further inducement to join the run tea has been booked for an estimated number at 1 shilling head, with the rider that should numbers exceed this it was possible to obtain alternative accommodation near by.



A half-day picnic run. Taken on 4 June 1933 at a spot near Pandy. Back row: P Meredith, M Preece, V Brown, F Barnes, W Gains, PG Jones and I Lambert. Front row: E Lewis, M Weedon, Mrs Gaines, G Andrews

Although the run was aimed especially for prospective new members, an equally cordial invitation was extended for the following day trips, 'although of course some experience is necessary to undertake these longer rides with success.'

June 4th, Llangorse Lake, start: 9.30

June 11th Club event.

June 18th, Shrewsbury (via Richard's Castle), start 8.30

June 25th Stratford-on-Avon, start 8.30

The article also congratulated Ross-on-

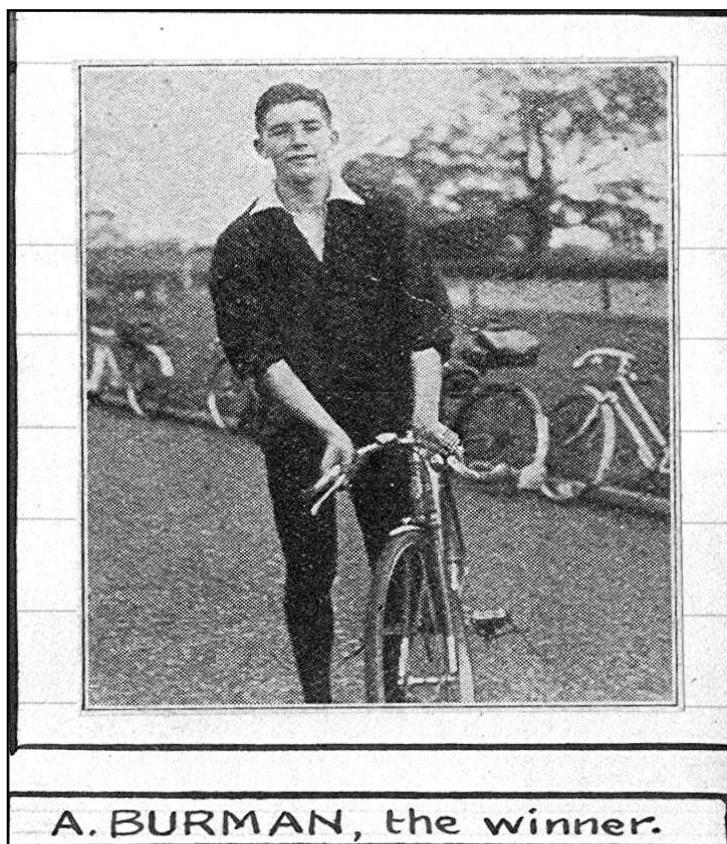
Wye upon its new cycling club and was certain that the 'Hereford Club and wheelfolk generally will wish the Ross and District Cycling Club a long and active existence.'

Perseverance brings its rewards and the Wheelers eventually managed to hold a successful 'Club 50 Mile Time Trial' in 1933. Event without the indomitable S Norman, the interest shown by members was keener than ever with a host of improving riders. The halfway point was only a mile away from the start and interest was initially focused here. R Bircher (despatched third) a relative newcomer raised some eyebrows by coming through first. F Barnes came next followed by scratch man JF Jones. As the obstacle, 'Tin Hill', featured in the last nine miles these early results were not conclusive. The scratch man came in first with a time of 2.28.09 who was 7 minutes faster than last time. The first handicap was the rider clocking the second fastest time – P Meredith in 2.31.54.

Occasionally the club laid on a 30-mile time trial. In October 1933 they wound up the year's racing programme with a time trial over this distance. It was the first event at 30 miles since 1931 and consequently attracted a great deal of interest with some novices taking part. Sadly there is no record of the 30-mile course. A Gooding did not start through illness and HM Lewis lost nearly 40 seconds by 'pulling his back wheel over, either by insecure wing nuts or a too vigorous start.' The leading times were: 1. JF Jones (scratch) 1.24.43; 2. Perce Meredith (2 secs) 1.25.41; 3. F Barnes (4 secs) 1.25.47; 4. PG Jones (5 secs) 1.27.40; 5. R Bircher (5½ secs) 1.28.21; 6. FL Tong (5½ secs) 1.28.30; 7. HM Lewis (5½ secs) 1.30.40; 8. Harold Beeks (5½ secs) 1.32.35; 9. WJ Grundy (5½ secs) 1.32.38. For JF Jones it had been a 'very profitable season for in addition to winning three club events, he also annexed two handicap awards.' Members claimed that, taken collectively, these results constituted the best times put up by the Wheelers up to this date.

At the AGM in 1934 there was concern that the 'ladies' did not take part in racing and as a consequence their membership fee should be at a reduced rate. It was finally decided to fix the fee at 2s. 6d. with full membership remaining at 5s. It was hoped that this concession to 'girl cyclists' would make membership of the Wheelers even more attractive.

The 'Open 25' in 1934 attracted the largest number of cyclists to Hereford ever seen. The card had 99 names (of these 96 started and 93 finished) with fewer than half a dozen residing in the city. Apparently more than the stipulated number of 100 entries were received but many arrived too late for inclusion. H James, last year's winner, could not attend as he along with many other middle distance riders was taking part in the 'Charlotteville 50'. (He was beaten by LJ Ross of Liverpool in a time of 2.11.40). However, Wales still supplied the scratch man – LT Cooke of Cymric RC. Weather conditions were not as favourable as last year and the winner, A Burman of Warwick Roads, came home in 1.06.04 well outside the course record set in 1933. Scratch man Cooke finished fourth. PJ Meredith was the first Wheeler home in 23rd place, beating F Shubert (now West Pennine RC) placed 28th.



In 1934 the 'Club 50' provided big surprises. There was 'a phenomenal ride' by a novice, H Wood, on his first race and dire failures of the scratch man and other short markers to live up to their reputations. 'The recent "Cheltenham Open 50" gave PG Jones, TH Beeks and HM Lewis

the opportunity to improve on their times.' In blustery conditions Beeks won in a time of 2.30.23 with newcomer H Wood taking second place in 2.32.35.

More surprises were in store for the 'Club 25'. S Norman's three-year-old record was twice unexpectedly beaten with both riders separated by only a second. Unfortunately the winner of the '50', TH Beeks, could not race due to an accident. If there has to be a wind it is better to face it on the out leg to have it behind on the return. Such was the case in this event. A rider came into the finish at least two minutes before anyone was expected and again astonishment greeted novice H Wood. His achievement of 2.07.30 easily beat his performance in the '50' as it beat the course record by 14 seconds. On the day no one expected to see such a time but within a few minutes JF Jones came home in 2.07.31.

In 'Cycling' in 1934 it was announced that founder Frank Shubert, with his new club the Cheltenham and County CC, won the Yorkshire '24-hour' with a distance of 411 miles one weekend, the Irish Road Club '24-hour' with 381 miles the following weekend and a fortnight later covered 207 miles in the 'Anfield 12'. In August 1937 riding again in the 'Irish Road Club Scratch 24', under 'tropical conditions', Frank registered what was probably one of his best performances. 'Riding with imperturbable precision throughout a torrid noontide and evening he ran out of time with a record total of 404 miles, 201 perches. In establishing a new Irish record Shubert exceeds by seven miles and four perches his previous record put up in the event in 1935.' In winning the event for the third time Frank made the trophy his own property. His grandson, Jonathan Shubert says the family still have the '5 feet high solid silver trophy'. PG Jones and Perce Meredith of the Wheelers came second and third. Before he died Reg Pugh said that the Wheelers also won the team prize in this event but it could not have been on this occasion as Shubert belonged to another club. He also stated that Frank still probably still holds the record as they ceased to hold the event shortly after this date.

Club runs were still very much enjoyed by some members of the Wheelers as suggested in the article which appeared in the Hereford Times:

Hereford Wheelers visit Much Wenlock and the Corvedale



Ancient Guildhall at Much Wenlock

The Hereford and District Wheelers' visit last weekend to the pleasant little Shropshire town of Much Wenlock revived happy memories of similar trips in the club's earlier days. With a helpful breeze and brilliant sunshine, a good muster of clubfolk left High Town to proceed along familiar roads to Leominster, where the less frequented and perhaps more pleasant route through Luston and Richards Castle offered welcome

alternative means of reaching Ludlow.

That ever-popular town was achieved by 12 o'clock, to be followed in turn by Culmington, Diddlebury, and Munslow, where the members renewed old associations with the Crown Hotel for lunch. On resuming, the weather was uncomfortable warm. but the journey up the beautiful Corvedale provided ample compensation with some typical Shropshire scenery. On through Shipton, over undulating countryside to Brockton and Bourton, and then an exhilarating run down to Much Wenlock. Here was plenty to interest but unfortunately lack of time compelled a rather hurried exploration.

The Guildhall – only one of the numerous black and white buildings in the town – is supported on pillars, two of which once formed the ancient whipping-posts. Even now, the clasps for the hands can still be seen. The old Abbey, reached by the 'Road to Ruin,' could not be visited this time.

The long climb up to Five Chimneys, on the way to Church Stretton, was followed by the run along the top, past the spot known as 'Major's Leap', where the view is wonderful. On the right of the road, and far below, the landscape spreads out in a magnificent panorama, and, with the Stretton Hills in the background makes an unforgettable picture. Reluctantly the Wheelers continued through Longville-in-the-Dale to Wallsbank where, in view of the passing time, a detour to Marshbrook offered a quicker means of reaching Craven Arms for tea.

The return home via Ludlow and Leominster proved uneventful, and, with the approach of darkness, lamps were lit at Dinmore, and the cyclists arrived at Hereford about 9.45 p.m., conscious of the satisfaction that 94 miles of enjoyable cycling can give.

By popular desire, this week's run is another trip along the banks of the Brecon-Gilwern canal, leaving High Town on Sunday at 9 a.m. and proceeding via Hay and Brecon. All cyclists are welcome.

A plea for additional club events in the shape of standard rides formed an important part of the business discussed at the Wheelers 7th Annual Meeting. PG Jones advocated a couple of standard rides as an added attraction to members. After discussion it was decided to promote one event – Hereford to Shrewsbury and Back – since the shorter distances were adequately covered. These shorter events were also increased by the addition of a 'Low Gear 25'. In connection with the racing programme, the club decided to affiliate for the first time to the Road Racing Council. It was pointed out that all previous events had been conducted in strict compliance with this body's recommendations in any case. Other proposals included a move to reduce the subscriptions of non-racing members to 2s 6d, and to introduce a rebate scheme similar to that operated by the CTC at that time. Both were adopted and served to make membership of the Wheelers even more attractive to wider participation. General members' fees remained at 5s and ladies 2s 6d, while individual affiliation in either case to the NCU (which included insurance against third part risks) cost another 2s.

So, early in the 1935 season the Wheelers held their first ever 'Medium Gear 25'. By way of an explanation it was said that practically all clubs commence competition work with trials such as this, the object being to give riders an opportunity to work up gradually before the more serious events. On this occasion the gears had to be less than 72 ins, very little more than the every-day cyclist and about 10 ins below that normally used for racing. Scratch man, JF Jones, was the winner in 1.08.10, only 40 seconds slower than the course record. He used a 71 ins gear and averaged over 100 rpm.

From a modest affair of four years ago the 'Annual Open 25' had achieved a prominent position. It was now considered to be one of the most important racing events in the West of England. In 1935 the Wheelers received a record entry of 140, and of the 100 who were accepted none were slower than 1.13. A Burman (Warwick Roads), last year's winner shared the scratch mark with D Lewis (Clarion C & AC). The shortest markers (½ minute mark) were ER Craddock (Warwick Roads), T West (Cwmcarn Paragon) and FW Southall (Walsall Roads). As on the

previous two occasions it was obvious that there would be a duel between Welsh and Midland clubs. Last year's honours went to the Midlands but this year it was all to the Welsh.

Conditions appeared ideal as the first rider took off at 7.01 am but later several riders complained of a stiff breeze on the return. This did not seem to bother the fastest riders with T West romping home in 1.04.58 long after everyone thought the two scratch men had taken first and second spot. The handicap awards were widely distributed, going to Bristol, Wolverhampton and Cardiff. C Palmer (Severn Roads) with a handicap allowance of 6 minutes returned 1.03.02 to secure first place.

As decided at the AGM the club held its first 'Hereford to Shrewsbury and Back Standard Ride' on 22 June 1935. It differed from the usual time trials as three standards were substituted for the usual fastest time and handicap awards. These standards were tabulated as: 1st., 5hrs 15mins, or better; 2nd., 5hrs 45mins; 3rd., 6 hrs 30 mins. The start was 6.30 am with riders being despatched at 5 minute intervals. 'Although conditions were ideal locally, the riders ran into several sharp showers further afield and a troublesome cross-wind.' The distance was 102 miles and the course did not include the immediate centre of either town. JF Jones started first, led all the way around the course and arrived back at 11.43, an hour before the next rider. Results were;

Standard	Name	h m s
1 st .	JF Jones	5 13 51
2 nd .	RE Burcher	5 32 25
2 nd .	Harold Beeks	5 33 46
2 nd .	E Butterworth	5 41 32
3 rd .	Les Powell	5 54 19
2 nd .	Perce Meredith	5 43 05
3 rd .	PG Jones	5 56 26
3 rd .	CR Hall	6 11 26

The 'Club 50' in 1935 would have seen the fastest time ever – some 8 minutes better than the course record. Unfortunately 12 minutes was added to scratch man JF Jones's time of 2.20.35 due to him missing his slot and starting late. 'This unfortunate incident, although regrettable, must be regarded as the competitor's responsibility, and one sadly reflects that a rider of Jones's standing and ability should jeopardise his own chances, and in a certain measure the well-being of the event by a display of forgetfulness.' The incident should in no way distract from the popular success of E Butterworth's efforts. He capped a season of consecutive improvement with a time of 2.29.34 to record the fastest official time. His 6min.30sec handicap also secured him this prize too.

South Wales Cycling Association

The first recorded mention of the club becoming involved with the South Wales Cycle Association appeared in the local paper in 1935 which reported on the Associations '12-hour'.

12 HOURS' TRIAL LONG DISTANCE EVENT PASSES THROUGH HEREFORD.

Last Sunday morning at 11-42 a.m. an unusual scene was enacted in Broad Street. A determined cyclist, clad in tights and alpaca, pedalled swiftly around All Saints' Corner, called out the number '33' and disappeared down Eign Street.

He was the scratch man and forerunner of the thirty odd competitors taking part in the 12-hours' Road Time Trial, promoted by the South Wales Cycling Association. D.I Mould, the rider in question, is well known in road sport and his performances this

season are such as to place him in a useful position in the B.A.R. Table Competition of the country's best. The Cardiff a 100 miler's recent successes include the Cheltenham Open '50' in 2.12.24, and his own club's Open '100' in 4.42.47. With his already established supremacy at 12 hours, these rides stamp him as an all-rounder of really high merit, certainly the best in Wales.

Minute Intervals.

Beginning near Cardiff at 6 a.m. the competitors were despatched at minute intervals to pursue an exceedingly devious route to Newport (49.72 miles), Abergavenny (82.38), Hereford (105.81), Whitney (122.85) and Hereford again (139.89). Afterwards they proceeded around Usk and Chepstow and numerous short detours.

As stated, D. Mould led the way at this point, his time being 5.9.56, actually 7 minutes inside 'evens' or 20 miles per hour. Within a short while the field began passing through at irregular intervals, but none could record figures even approaching those of the scratch man.

By 3 p.m., all had left the city to continue their efforts against the clock nearer home. From news received later it was revealed that Mould maintained his lead to win comfortably.

Below are the leading riders:

D. Mould, Cardiff '100'	scr	223½
J. W. James, Cwmcarn	12	217½
W. E. Rose, Cwmcarn	10	216½
W. Gibbon, Cardiff '100'	13	21 5½

Mould's winning mileage is believed to be the greatest covered in a '12' in Wales, the previous best being R. S. Abbott's 218 in a Newport event five years ago.



Together the two clubs inspect the Maen Hir Stone

Port Talbot is a considerable distance from Hereford so it was an improbable suggestion that the clubs should join up for a combined run. Even so on a summer's day in 1935 the Wheelers set off in keen anticipation of meeting up with the Port Talbot club in Brecon. Although not blessed with ideal weather – not to mention the choosing a longer route in the circumstances and some mechanical problems – an enjoyable day was had by all. So much so that future such

events were to be included in the programme. After eventually meeting up, 'under the satisfying influence of lunch however, these earlier misfortunes were forgotten.' Afterwards they cycled together out of Brecon to Cradoc and the Maen Hir Stone near Battle. 'Now raining dismally, the two clubs regretful separated, Port Talbot Wheelers to pursue a stiff ride into the wind while the Hereford Wheelers, with a more helpful tail wind, made for tea in Hay. Moonlight made the return home via Clyro and Whitney a pleasant and exhilarating affair.'

There was obviously a demand for more social events to be included in the Wheelers' activities. Shortly after the social visit to Brecon, members organised a lecture evening at the Black Swan. Before a highly expectant audience Vice President GH Butcher gave a talk on architecture. He

traced the various styles of architecture from Saxon to Tudor, while quoting local examples throughout, and obviously had a wealth of knowledge on the subject. Many of the places given were familiar from the various club rides thereby adding to the interest on future visits.

Early in the following year the Wheelers held their First Annual Dinner – ‘an epoch-making event.’ It took place at the Booth Hall and ‘served in Mrs Wheatstone’s inimitable style.’ Among the many members were included the familiar faces of H Minton, W Macklin and W Vanstone. After dinner the president gave the Loyal Toast and I Lambert, the chairman, expressed his appreciation of seeing so many happy faces. He also conveyed the good wishes of Frank Shubert, the club’s founder member. ES Newman then toasted the club. With several amusing reminiscences, he revealed his love of the bicycle, and reminded those present that although he now possessed a car for business purposes he still relied upon his bike for that intimate association of the countryside which is impossible with the motor vehicle.

The club’s response came from W Gaines, the general secretary, who conveyed the member’s appreciation for Mr Newman’s good wishes and for the active interest of the president and vice-presidents collectively. Finally CT Prosser proposed the popular toast to the ladies, after which the tables were cleared away to make room for the entertainment – music by the piano accordion trio of L Norman, L Osborne and L Powell and community singing. Somewhere in between came the presentation of prizes. ‘Thoroughly happy, if a little tired, the gathering then linked hands to conclude with “Auld Lang Syne”.’ Those were the days.

The 1936 AGM saw a return to the Black Swan. The problem of choosing a programme of club events for all provided plenty of discussion. A ‘Hill Climb’ was added and a ‘Club Championship’, based on the collective performances of the season. Two cups had been donated at the meeting and one of them, given by ES Newman, was allotted for this. Events decided upon, exclusive of the ‘Open 25’, were two ‘25s’, two ‘50s’, ‘Shrewsbury Standard’, and a ‘Hill Climb’. For the touring members there was the usual ‘100 in 8’ and the ladies needs met with a ‘15-mile’ time trial under conditions imposed by E Edwards as donor of the other cup. Subscriptions remained the same with optional affiliation to the NCU (including third party insurance) for 2s. extra.

The ‘Open 25’ attracted even more applications and its growth in popularity perhaps a little embarrassing, as 65 entries had to be rejected. Despite drizzling rain and a strong wind 94 riders started. Last year’s winner, the ever popular South Wales, T West, overcame all to average 23mph to win for the second time. S Baxter of Warrington Roads took the handicap award. Wind and rain also spoilt the Wheelers first ‘Club 25’, with RE Burcher taking first place in 1.12 25.

The promised ‘Ladies’ time trial was in fact a ‘10’, not the 15 miles announced at the AGM. The event was held on the same day as the club ‘50’. Interest in both races was high as members were keen to see how the females fared and times for the ‘50’ were now to be included in the new Club Championship. Conditions at the start were ‘excellent’, though a strong cross-wind was experienced later – ‘a much greater handicap than a pure headwind.’ The outstanding characteristic of the ‘Ladies 10’ was that 5 minutes covered the finishing times of all competitors. Results were; Miss D Hancox (32.45), Miss D Jones (32.57), Miss J Sanders (33.47), Mrs M Meredith (33.50), Miss E Walker (35.52) and Miss W Hiles (37.06). Two features stand out in the ‘50’; only 2 seconds separated the first two places (FW Jones, 2.29.10 and TH Beeks, 2.29.12) and R Jauncey (10min handicap), riding in his first race, smashed the handicap with a ride only 5 minutes behind the scratch man, FW Jones.

The last time trial of the year and second ‘Club 25’ was a much more anticipated affair as TH Beeks and FW Jones were keen candidates to take the new ‘Club Championship’ award. In the even Jones was more than 2 minutes below his best to leave Beeks with the fastest time, first handicap and first winner of the championship cup. There was some debate about the way of

calculating the average speed for the new award. Instead of the easiest solution of dividing the total distance into the total time taken they opted for the 'average aggregate' formula – the average worked out separately for each ride, then added together for the final average to be obtained. The results of the new competition were:

	'25'	'50'	'100'	Av
TH Beeks.	21.71	20.12	18.76	20.19
FW Jones.	21.17	20.47	18.10	19.91
PG Jones.	20.01	19.85	18.61	19.49
P Meredith.	20.36	19.90	17.30	19.18
R Richards	19.62	19.36	17.53	18.83
E Cox.	20.27	19.17	16.32	18.58

Members were delighted to see the return of S Norman, after an absence of five years, for the first club 'Hill Climb'. 'Harp's Pitch', the venue for the event, was only 400 yards long with a maximum gradient of 1 in 6. Unfortunately it did not attract the support anticipated. Early starters all appeared to falter in the final few yards at the end of the climb but then Les Powell romped home in fine style with a time of 61 seconds. His time looked set for the new course record when old-time member S Norman stormed home in 55.4 seconds to claim the cup donated by the club Chairman, I Lambert. E Cox also came late to take second place in 58.8 seconds.

At the 1937 AGM Vice-President Major GH Davey proposed a 12-hour time trial as a new club event and was prepared to provide the stimulus to that end by offering a Challenge Cup. His proposal was readily accepted and the event was held later in the year sandwiched between the two '50s'. The course used provided five 'detours' of varying distance from 62 miles to 20 miles, with a five-mile finishing circuit. In accordance with the recognised practice no roads were traversed more than twice, the exception being the final circuit and the area in the immediate vicinity of the central feeding station. Entries were especially good, the only prominent absentees being RE Butcher and the new Club Champion, TH Beeks. This was probably down to the fact that the event had been included in the Club Championship. The weather was ideal for the six-o'clock start and E Cox clocked 3.09 for the first 62 miles, only 3 minutes outside 'evens'. 'He stayed [at the feeding station] only a minute to eat some rice pudding and replenish his feeding bottles.' He was still in the lead at the 145-mile point with 7.57 but PG Jones drew level at 160 miles when Cox was going through a bad patch. Leading times at 176 miles were PG Jones 9.56, E Cox 9.57 and P Meredith 10.05. However, it became apparent when the riders entered the final circuits and picked up their 'escorts' with synchronised watches, that Cox had retaken the lead. The club captain was 'escorting' Cox and found the remaining 35-minute chase 'no easy feat with touring equipment.' Cox had completed over three circuits when his time expired giving him an impressive total of 211½ miles.

With so many cub members missing events from the exacting schedule for the Cub Championship only four riders qualified; FW Jones, E Cox, L Powell and P Meredith. FW Jones was the winner with times of; 22.58 ('25'), 20.80 ('50'), 18.55 ('100'), 17.02 ('12 hours') with 19.74 the average.

Again the time difference between the first and last riders in the second 'Ladies 10' was less than 5 minutes. That their times were all four minutes faster than last year's event suggested there had been some serious training in the meantime. A new member, Miss E Baynam, was the winner, out of seven competitors, in 28.18.

As well as the racing the club was still attracting many members to the joys of weekly club runs. In 1937 they set off on the most ambitious run yet in the clubs short history. It took in the area of mid-Wales north of Llandovery and west of Rhyader and covered a distance of 146 miles – to

be completed in one day. 'Naturally the onslaught of the ancient track way known as 'Carn Ricet', which connects Ffair Rhos (near Tregaron) with Pont-ar-Elan was restricted to the attendance of the more experienced riders, which was further depleted at 4.30 am on Sunday morning by those who overslept.' An alternative route commencing at 09.30 am catered for these and the less ambitious members.



After breakfast at Llanwrtyd Wells.

5 hours earlier members had set off on a run to take in the remote beauty of mid-Wales including the Towey Valley

Before reaching the spot where the track started, the riders had to take in the Elan Lakes, past Graig Goch Dam and up to the end of the valley. They found the track with some difficulty, 'a barely discernable line running up the side of the mountain.' In fording the Elan one member slipped and 'got more than a little wet.' Of course in these early days they were forced to walk but eventually reached 'a high tableland' where progress was slowed by large patches of bog. It was here the rain came down in sheets. At last they found themselves at the highest point of 1,752, where they mounted their bikes and road down the mountain 'in an ungainly fashion.' At the bottom they encountered a second ford and with the rain now abated decided to have lunch. They still had 6 or 7 miles to go to Ffair Rhos but eventually made it after negotiating more bog. Turning north they passed through Yspytty-Ysywyth and Pont-Rhyd-y-Groes and after another spell of walking they came across the old coach road from Devil's Bridge. The rain had recommenced as they made their return to Rhayader. There they enjoyed a wash and a 'partial' change of clothing before tea. The rain had ceased for the return journey but 'making the most of the favourable road, the miles reeled off with pleasing regularity.' They arrived back in Hereford at 11.00 pm exactly.

Prior to this outstanding club runs in the past included; Barry Island (130 miles), Rollright Stones (135), Ellesmere Lakes (140), and the North Wales All Night Ride (195).

The eighth '100 in 8' took place in 1937 and attracted eighteen riders, three of them female. The three (E Baynam, W Hiles and J Saunders) emulated the achievement of Mrs G Powell (née Miss G Brown), hitherto the only female member to perform this feat in 1929 and 1930. The Newent-Gloucester-Kempsey course had proved to be most suitable from all points of view. The well-honed timetable allowed for two 20 minute halts and a 10 minute margin to ensure the ride was not a great deal over 7 hours:

	Arrive	Depart	Distance
Hereford	-	9.00	-
Trumpet	9.45	-	10.5 miles
Dymock	10.11	-	16.5
Newent	10.26	-	20
Gloucester	11.05	-	29.5
Twigworth	11.15	11.35	31.5 (feed station)
Tewkesbury	12.10	-	40
Turn	12.50	-	50
(near Kempsey)			
Tewkesbury	1.30	-	60
Twigworth	2.05	2.25	68.5 (feed station)
Gloucester	2.35	-	70.5
Newent	3.17	-	80
Dymock	3.33	-	83.5
Trumpet	4.00	-	89.5
Hereford	4.50	-	100 access

Late in the year Vice President GH Butcher – the man featured in an early newspaper clipping riding his bicycle on the frozen Wye – gave a talk to the members assembled in the Black Swan Inn about early bicycles. He was eminently qualified, as besides his own practical experience in the industry, 'he personally knew JK Starley, inventor of the safety machine, and nephew of the famous James Starley, undoubtedly the greatest figure in the development of the bicycle.' In summing up he emphasised that without some of the earlier cycle inventions such as the differential gear and Ackerman steering, the motor car could never have been developed. Incidentally, James Starley is the only man among cycle inventors to have a monument to his memory. This is located in Coventry where he made sewing machines and clocks.

The First Decade

On Boxing Day 1938 a party of enthusiastic cyclists set out to recapture the spirit that had brought them together ten years previously. Appropriately they were led by Frank Shubert who had left the club seven years ago but clearly still remembered all the old byways he used to cycle over. His profession of monotype operator had recently taken him to the Irish Free State, where as a member of the Irish RC he was contemplating establishing more records. Tea was taken at the Red Lion, long associated with cyclists in general and the Wheelers in particular.

The first ten years of successful club activities were also enthusiastically celebrated at the Third Annual Dinner held at the Booth Hall Hotel. The large gathering included practically everyone of cycling note in the district. H Minton, W Vanston and W Macklin were among many other famous Hereford riders present. The Ross CC was also represented. During the toasts Bill Gaines likened the present situation to that in 1928. 'Membership then numbered something like 25, whilst the only event was the "100 in 8". Now membership was double that with events ranging from the important "Open 25" right through all the popular distances of time trials to a

“Ladies” event, “Hill Climb” and of course the universal “100 in 8”. As tradition dictated and with the musical cooperation of L Powell games and entertainment were soon in full swing.

228 club cyclists wanted to ride in the 1938 ‘Open 25’, which somewhat emphasises not only the popularity of the event but also the growth in the sport in a more general sense. As only 100 could race a great deal of thought had to go into the selection. The fastest riders had to be given a place and the Handicapping Committee also had to ensure a representative array from all the participating clubs. The high standard of the field restricted the Wheelers to only three places – F W Jones (1.09.42), S Norman (1.11.02) and E Cox (1.12.48). T West of Cwmcarn was the overall winner with A Burman of Warwick Rds second and DW Morgan of Walsall Rds third.



Scene at the start of the 1938 ‘Open 25’

‘For many years, this annual event, with its convenient geographical location, had provided an excellent opportunity for leading riders from Wales and the Midlands to test their racing ability. However, the early season, with its usually less suitable weather, precludes ultra fast times. This occasion proved no exception, the morning being extremely cold, with a stiff cross wind.’ Nevertheless only six riders failed to turn up. Eight riders failed to finish including S Nash (Cheltenham) who punctured twice, and RK

Braddick, just returned from Australia, where he represented Wales in the Empire Games. ‘Certainly he must have felt the change in temperature.’

The last ‘Open 25’ before the war was the 9th, held in 1940. Entries well above the stipulated 150 were received. There were 91 starters and the conditions were good. All the main duties, however, were performed by members not actively concerned in the management of the club. This was caused mainly due to a cycling accident of the promotions secretary, PG Jones. ‘Fortunately PJ Meredith stepped into the breach and there were no difficulties.’

Initially the course began at ‘Dead Bridge’, about 1¾ miles from Hereford on the Hay Road to Eardisley Railway Station and back and subsequently started at a spot just over the summit of Swainshill on the Hay Road to a point near the ‘Stowe’ (short of the 16th milestone) and return. Throughout the headquarters and changing facility was at the Bay Horse Inn.

The annual winners of the pre-war ‘Open 25’ were as follows:

1932.	C Beddow (Newport W)	1.06.26
1933.	H James (Glamorgan)	1.03.46 (course record)
1934.	A Burman (Warwick R)	1.06.04
1935.	T West (Cwmcarn)	1.04.58
1936.	T West (Cwmcarn)	1.05.38

1937.	VV Edwards (Port Talbot)	1.07.24
1938.	T West (Cwmcarn)	1.05.23
1939.	F Butterworth (Cheshire)	1.05.38
1940.	DK Hartley (Dunkinfield)	1.05.36

Name.	Club.	H'cap. mins.	Actual Time h. m. s.	Name.	Club.	H'cap. mins.	Actual Time h. m. s.
1 D. K. Hartley	Dukinfield C.C.	½	1 5 36	45 G. Carrier	Wolverhampton City	3½	1 11 46
2 D. R. Jackson	Cheshire Roads	2	1 5 49	46 G. Evans	Worc. St. Johns	6	1 11 50
3 A. Burman	Warwickshire R.C.	½	1 5 56	47 W. G. Price	Rover R.C.C.	2	1 11 53
4 J. Walker	Wolverhampton Wh.	1	1 6 13	48 R. Matthewman ...	Leicester Forest.....	4½	1 11 58
5 E. R. Craddock ...	Warwickshire R.C.	1	1 6 30	49 H. Griffiths	Warwickshire R.C.	7	1 12 2
6 W. T. Hobday ...	Rover R.C.C.	1½	1 6 39	50 R. A. Hoare	Midland C. & A.C.	2½	1 12 13
7 T. West.....	Midland C. & A.C.	Scr.	1 6 42	51 P. F. Bailey	North Cotswold	4½	1 12 14
8 P. F. Possart	Solihull C.C.	3	1 7 0	52 J. Dack	Walsall Roads	5½	1 12 15
9 D. Ransome	Cwmcarn Paragon.....	5½	1 8 4	53 G. J. Mitchell	Midland C. & A.C.	5	1 12 20
10 A. J. Crockett.....	Cwmcarn Paragon.....	3½	1 8 10	54 W. F. Poole	South Wales Clarion	5	1 12 22
V. V. Edwards.....	Port Talbot Wh.	2½	1 8 10	55 J. Booth	Leicester Forest	5	1 12 31
12 N. K. Topliss	Solihull C.C.	2½	1 8 11	56 J. T. Brettell	North Worcs. R.C.	3	1 12 33
13 R. J. Hawkins ...	Tredegar Road Club	5½	1 8 13	57 E. Pretty	Rover R.C.C.	3	1 12 36
14 R. Chandler	Mersey Roads	3½	1 8 25	58 W. Kay.....	Chester R.C.	4½	1 12 40
15 T. H. Reynolds ...	Walsall Roads	Scr.	1 8 28	59 A. J. Gillett	Byways Road Club	5½	1 12 51
16 C. R. Collier	Tredegar Road Club	4½	1 8 42	60 M. Marshall	Port Talbot Wh.	5½	1 12 57
17 D. Stapleton	Mersey Roads	4½	1 8 45	61 R. Matthews	Leamington C. & A.C.	6	1 13 22
18 R. D. Marsden	South Wales Clarion	3½	1 8 55	62 R. J. Wheeler	Banbury Star C.C.	4½	1 13 23
19 S. Latham	Derby Ivanhoe	2½	1 8 59	63 C. W. Alexander...	Cardiff "100"	4	1 13 24
20 A. Steel.....	Hereford & Dist. Wh.	8	1 9 16	64 H. Neale	South Wales Clarion.....	6	1 13 28
21 W. A. H. Bailey ...	Solihull C.C.	½	1 9 28	65 A. H. Mantle	South Wales Clarion	6	1 13 31
F. W. Jones	Hereford & Dist. Wh.	3½	1 9 28	66 S. Lee	Lancs. Veg. C. & A.C.	4½	1 13 32
23 K. J. Pool.....	Hampton R.C.C.	4	1 9 33	67 J. L. Hatfield ...	Cwmcarn Paragon.....	3½	1 13 37
24 T. Williams	Chester R.C.	2½	1 9 43	68 H. T. Willis	Warwickshire R.C.	5½	1 13 44
25 A. N. Farquhar ...	Leicester Forest.....	3	1 9 54	69 F. W. Pearce ...	Hampton R.C.C.	7	1 13 46
26 E. L. Bushell	Rover R.C.C.	2½	1 10 3	70 T. Green	Ross & Dist. C.C.	8	1 13 49
27 W. S. James.....	Midland C. & A.C.	3	1 10 12	71 M. Davies	Cardiff "100"	7	1 14 2
28 W. S. Williams ...	Mersey Roads	3	1 10 14	72 A. Cooke	Arden Wheelers	3	1 14 7
29 R. Rock	Port Talbot Wh.	3½	1 10 15	73 S. Norman	Hereford & Dist. Wh.	5	1 14 13
30 S. G. Nash	Cheltenham & C.C.C.	2	1 10 17	74 A. H. Hyett	Byways R.C.C.	7½	1 14 22
31 W. M. Perrett	Walsall Roads	4	1 10 27	75 F. T. Beeson.....	Rover R.C.C.	4½	1 14 23
32 N. Baxter	Cheltenham & C.C.C.	2½	1 10 33	76 S. T. Baldwin	Newbridge & Dist. Wh.	7	1 14 29
C. Cook	Cwmcarn Paragon.....	4½	1 10 33	77 E. E. Rowe	Walsall Roads	7	1 14 33
34 J. R. Jones	Dukinfield C.C.	5½	1 10 45	78 C. Probert.....	Gloucester City C.C.	8	1 14 59
J. G. Smith	Cwmcarn Paragon.....	5	1 10 45	79 W. E. James	Cardiff "100"	7	1 15 1
36 H. Whitehurst ...	Wolverhampton City	4½	1 10 51	80 G. Gwynne	Ross & Dist. C.C.	5	1 15 4
37 S. L. Cregen	Lancs. Veg. C. & A.C.	4½	1 10 58	81 G. O. Sharp	Derby Ivanhoe	6½	1 15 20
38 R. Baynham	Tredegar Road Club	5½	1 11 2	82 G. H. Bassett	Hampton R.C.C.	6	1 15 42
C. C. Smith	Dukinfield C.C.	4½	1 11 2	83 A. R. Lewis	Worc. St. Johns.....	6½	1 15 47
40 R. Burson.....	Walsall Roads	2½	1 11 7	84 C. O. Farmer	Arden Wheelers	6½	1 15 50
41 J. R. Meredith.....	Midland C. & A.C.	5	1 11 26	85 J. Matthews	Ross & Dist. C.C.	7	1 15 54
G. Chafer	Derby Ivanhoe	4½	1 11 26	86 I. Little.....	Cheltenham & C.C.C.	5½	1 16 17
43 R. A. Burrows ...	North Worcs. R.C.	7½	1 11 27	87 G. C. Woodman ...	Rover R.C.C.	3½	1 16 38
44 B. Mee	Hereford & Dist. Wh.	7	1 11 38	88 W. D. Monk	Rover R.C.C.	3	1 20 24

100 Accepted. 91 Started. 88 Finished.

Results of the 1940 'Open 25'

Leslie (Les) Charles Powell, born in Hereford and a founder member of the Wheelers, did not ride in the last 'Open 25' before the war but returned to feature in the first club 25-mile TT afterwards. He had been a prominent participant in touring and racing until 1940, becoming the hon. secretary and responsible as the contact man for potential membership and the Sunday rides. His collection of medals awarded for his achievements spanning the decade from 1928 to 1939 is shown below. The collection gives a snap-shot of the club's activities in the early years and, only cycling purists would say, is marred by the two plaques included for recognition of his attendance at rallies under the auspices of the Auto-Cycle Union (ACU).

The ACU was founded in 1903 as the Auto-Cycle Club with the aim of developing motor sport through clubs and arranging touring facilities for individual members. It was renamed the ACU in 1907 and organised a series of Quarterly Trials and National Six Day Events before the end of that decade. In the pioneering days of motor cycling the term 'auto cycle' meant any powered

two-wheeler and was, therefore, synonymous with motor cycle. This early usage is perpetuated today in the name of the ACU, which is the governing body of motor cycle sport in the UK. Many enthusiasts would designate the inter-war period as the golden age of motorcycling: club life

had many facets; and there were hill climbs most weekends on the public highways. These were days of competition and conjecture, not monotonous runaway victories and predictable winners.

The 1929 'Hundred in Eight' medal probably belonged to his wife. Formerly Miss Gwendoline Dora Brown. She was the first female Wheeler to complete this ride and also took part in the 1930 event. They were married in 1931 at Holmer Church and lived next door to fellow Wheeler member Tommy Boalch in Holmer. Gwen died of a stroke at Preston-on-Wye, aged 69.

Les entered 'service' at the age of 14 but due to an interest in all things mechanical rose to become chauffeur. He later went to Prails, as the then equivalent to today's HGV driver. Another move took him to Painter Brothers as a maintenance engineer. As war approached Painters formed a unit

of the Auxiliary Fire Service which he joined and became a Leading Fireman. In this position he was transferred to serve in the London during the Blitz.

On his return to Hereford after the war he left the Wheelers to pursue other outdoor activities He and Tommy Boalch took up canoeing after building their own boat. He became friends of Percy Blanford a well known canoe designer and built canoes for his family, the Holmer Scout Group and Jack Petersen, former British Heavyweight Boxing Champion. Les took this interest into the scout movement and led patrols on National Scout Canoe Cruises on the Wye, Severn and Thames.

On retirement at the age of 65 he designed, built and paddled a sea kayak across the Channel to France. He also became a keen hill walker and as a member of the Nansen Club took part in ski touring and climbing expeditions in Norway. In 2001 he died of pneumonia in Hereford General Hospital aged 94.

Below are shown a collection of the medals awarded to Les Powell from Hereford Wheelers and other clubs. The medals awarded to riders in these early years were most attractive and would have been fairly expensive as they were made from silver. Later ones also incorporated enamel badges on the silver. It would appear they were in common use for winners of TT events throughout the cycling clubs of the three counties of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester.

The two bronze plaques in the collection are for attendance at the early Auto Cycle Union National Rallies at Donnington in 1936 & 1939, the first rally taking place there in 1933. This suggests that Les also had a love for the motorcycle when the vast majority of machines were British-made and not as mechanically reliable as those of today. The Rallies survived the war and are still held every year





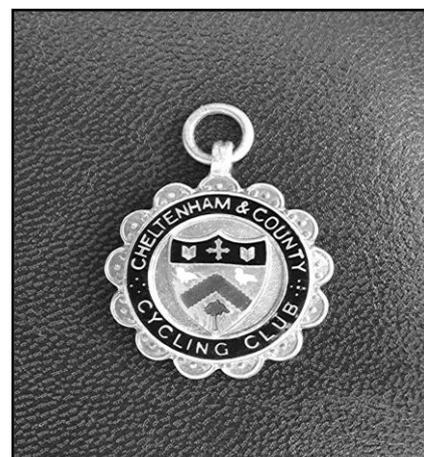
- | | |
|---|---|
| 01. HW 100m in 8hrs 1937 | 17. HW 3 rd Hill Climb 1936 |
| 02. HW 2 nd in 50m TT (2.26.26) 19/06/1938 | 18. NK |
| 03. HW Salop & Back (5.23.31) 1937 | 19. Cheltenham & County CC 12hr TT (196m) 1937 |
| 04. HW 1 st scratch 25m TT 1929 | 20. Ditto Oxford & Back (4.10.42) 1937 |
| 05. NK | 21. HW 2 nd 50m TT (2.30.12) 30/5/1937 |
| 06. HW 12hr TT (205m 827yd) 1937 | 22. HW 100m in 8hr 1938 |
| 07. HW NK | 23. HW 100m in 8hr 1928 |
| 08. HW 12hr TT (197m 537yd) 1938 | 24. HW 2 nd 25m TT 1929 |
| 09. RDCC 3 Counties 1938 | 25. HW Salop & Back (5.54.19) 1935 |
| 10. HW 1 st 50m TT 1929 | 26. HW 100m in 8hr 1936 |
| 11. NK | 27. RDCC 100m in 8hr 1938 |
| 12. HW Salop & Back (5.23.22) 1938 | 28. HW 2 nd 100m 1929 |
| 13. NK | 29. HW 100m in 8hr 1929 |
| 14. HW 1 st handicap 50m TT 1929 | |
| 15. NK | |
| 16. NK | |



06. H&DWCC (silver)



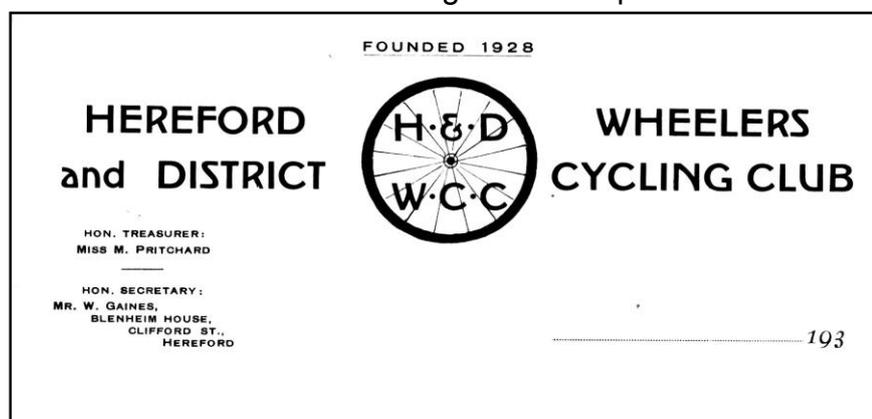
12. H&DWCC (silver & enamel)



20. C&CCC (silver & enamel)



By this time the Wheelers had a small metal badge shown above, which looked like the clubs crest of today. Indeed, the pre-war printer's block of this badge survived the re-formation. In the badge collection at the National Cycle Collection at Llandrindod Wells there is the old Hereford Road Cycling Club badge incorporating a wheel and spokes which may have influenced the design for the Wheelers badge. A badge with the club's initials on the inside of a cycle wheel, which appears on a letter head printed in the early 1930s, suggests that the wheel design was thought of early in the formation of the club. It is not known why or when the lion was included in the design but it must have been some time before 1934. For the first time the 1934 'Open 25' Start List shows the same badge as in the printer's block above.



At the AGM in February 1939 members of the Wheelers witnessed probably the greatest upheaval in the history of the club. The general secretary and treasurer did not seek re-election, the position of club chairman was swept away and several prominent members of the committee either did not stand or were defeated. It

virtually transferred the management from the 'old and bold' to the younger, more active members. At this time the overall membership was 46.

The question of electing a new club chairman was opposed by a large majority and it was decided to allow the new committee to choose one of their own. Hector Hiles proposed also that the offices of captain and vice-captain be substituted with one 'Runs Advisor'. This was approved and Hector Hiles was appointed into the new position.

World War II

A year later however, there was concern that membership had been poor but it was agreed that the war-time policy would be to function as actively as possible, and that the constitution of the committee should remain unchanged. The annual report for 1939 stated that, 'the outbreak of war in September restricted activities somewhat, but it was found possible to complete the programme of events, and runs continued.' The club runs had been well supported, and had attracted members of Ross Cycling Club on several occasions. There was also much cooperation between the two clubs in time trials. The dance, proposed to be held in October had been cancelled as a result of the war but there was quite a good gathering for the annual dinner, held at the Market Tavern, in December.

It was also resolved that; 'all members of HM Forces desiring to take part in club activities, including time trials should be allowed to do so free of charge, if invited to do so by a club member.' However, normal entrance fees had to be paid for events.

They had agreed to produce the Runs List every three month instead of the usual monthly posting. The second quarter of the year is copied below;

PROGRAMME FOR APRIL, MAY, JUNE, 1940

7th April.	9.30 a.m.	Hergest Ridge. Dinner - Kington.	Tea - Hay (Wye Hotel)
14th April.	8.0 a.m.	Club "25". Usual course.	
	2.30 p.m.	Symond's Yat.	Tea - Symond's Yat (Church Ho.)
21st April	8.0 a.m.	Wotton-under-Edge and Cotswolds. Dinner - Stroud.	Tea - Quedgeley (Mrs. Biggs)
28th April	8.30 a.m.	Caer Caradoo (Church Stretton Hills) Dinner - Church Stretton.	Tea - Craven Arms (Millboro' Café)
5th May.	9.0 a.m.	Tintern and Raglan. Dinner - Tintern.	Tea - Abergavenny (White Swan)
12th, 13th May	Two day Whitsun tour into Central Wales, starting 8.0 a.m. on the Sunday morning. Arrangements to be made by Mr. P.G. Jones.		
19th May.	9.0 a.m.	Club "50". Usual course.	
	2.30 p.m.	King Arthur's Stones.	Tea - Bredwardine (Benfield)
26th May.	9.0 a.m.	Edw Valley (Radnor Hills) Dinner - Forest Inn.	Tea - Llyswen (Vaughans)
2nd June.	8.0 a.m.	The Wrekin.	Tea - Craven Arms (Millboro' Café)
	9.0 a.m.	Wenlock Edge, Dinner - Munslow.	Tea - " "
9th June.	6.0 a.m.	Shrewsbury and Back Standard Ride.	
	2.30 p.m.	Afternoon Run to Stowe Inn for tea.	
15th, 16th June.	Youth Hostel week-end to Cleeve Hill Hostel, starting 3.30 p.m. on the Saturday afternoon. Arrangements to be made by Mr. Richard.		
16th June	8.0 a.m.	Bourton-on-the Water (Cotswolds) Dinner - Bourton.	Tea - Haw Bridge
23rd June.	8.30 a.m.	Waun Fach and Grwyne-fechan (Black Mountains) Dinner - picnic.	Tea - Grosmont.
30th June.	7.0 a.m.	Porth-yr-ogof Caves. (Brecon Beacons) Dinner - Storey Arms.	Tea - Brecon (Gwalia Cafe)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE "12 Hour" will be held on Sunday, 7th July, and the inter-club run with Port Talbot Wheelers on Sunday 14th July.

At the AGM held at the Black Swan on 4th February 1941, it was agreed that no 'official' time trials would be held in 1941 and that a letter would be sent to the Cycling press to inform them there would be no 'Open 25'. This blanket policy was amended at a later meeting to hold racing events if sufficient members wanted this. Enquiries had also shown that RAF personnel from Credenhill Camp were interested in taking part. A year later it was reported that runs were 'fairly' well supported and time trials with the RAF had been successful. Club riders Arthur Steel and Fred Jones were consistently 'fine' riders and prizes had been won by J Nelson and R Smith of the RAF. The last committee meeting recorded before the end of the war was that held at the Black Swan on 2 October 1942. The only item in the minutes was to say there would be no runs selected but members would meet every Sunday in High Town at 10 am and decide on where to go before setting off.

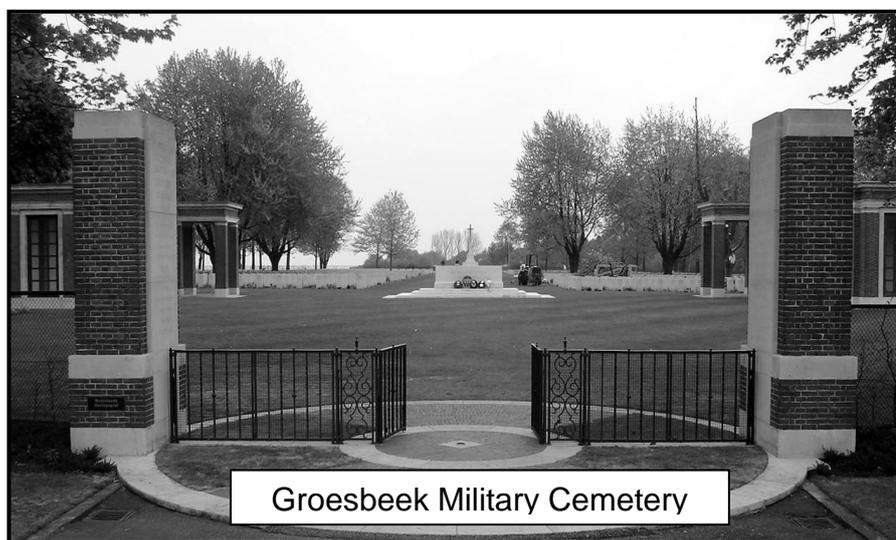
The Early Post-War Years

Early in 1945 the older members who had kept the Wheelers functioning from 1942 'with fewer or no official programmes' were joined by a group of keen young cyclists including; Keith Hayward, Reg Pugh, Alan Bevan, Johnny Bayley, Ray Lewis (who was later killed while serving

in BAOR in 1946), Tommy Boalch and Phil Jones. Secretary Harold Beeks had continued with the administration of the club during the war years. World War II, with its associated conscription, had put paid to the cycling ambitions of many club members. In fact most sports had been affected and only results from the Hereford Rugby Club and the Herefordshire Darts League had appeared in the *Hereford Times* – the only local newspaper printed during the war. Shortly before the war ended a few riders started to get back together again. Les Powell, a founder member, Tom Boalch who worked in the same tile factory in Hereford and Keith Hayward used to ride to Hay-on-Wye over the black mountains on Royal Enfield 'sit-up-and-beg' bikes during this period. They would have tea in Grosmond before heading home in the dark.

In December 1945 HW Hiles included a paragraph in the runs list; 'During the period under review several members are returning from the Forces, and we shall be glad to meet "up on the road" PG Jones, L Morledge, Arch Nicholas, RE Burcher, Eric Cox and Ted Butterworth.'

One member of the Wheelers did not return from the war. Sergeant Arthur John Steel of 1 St Martin's Crescent, Ross Road, a keen and popular young member and club captain (1940-42), served with the 5th Battalion of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry until he was killed in action at the battle of Venlo, Holland, on 22 November 1944. His name is commemorated on the

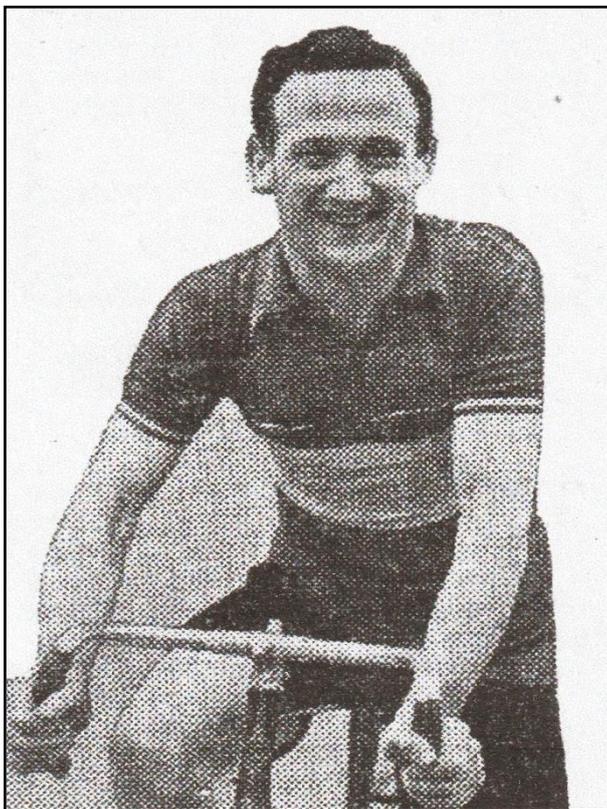


Groesbeek Memorial in the military cemetery near Nijmegen. Here are recorded the names of more than 1,000 members of the Commonwealth Land Forces who died during the campaign in north-west Europe between the crossing of the Seine at the end of August 1944 and the end of the war in Europe, and whose graves are not known. To perpetuate his memory his parents, John Charles and Edith Steel, presented the club with trophies for the best

handicap aggregate in the club '25s' (The Arthur Steel Handicap Trophy) and a 'Memorial 50' (The Arthur Steel Memorial Trophy). At first they wanted to give £100 for the purchase of club premises but were dissuaded from this by the committee. In addition to the cups they also made a handsome donation to the fund for a shield to be competed for annually for the best all-rounder over distances of 25, 50 and 100 miles and 12 hours. Space for names on the shield was filled by the time of the club's Golden Jubilee and a new trophy was purchased to replace it. The first club member to win the trophy was Alan Bevan in 1946 with 1.08.24 for the 25, 2.25.29 the 50 and 5.17.38 for the 100 miles (average speed 20.47 mph). The last name on this shield was Colin Rumsey in 1976 with 1.01.16 for the 25, 2.08.10 for the 50 and 4.28.45 for the 100 miles (average speed 23.04.53 mph)

There were other casualties of the war. In the 1955 Eric Cox won three cycling trophies despite being laid off since the war from paralysis in his ankles and feet. He had only begun cycling again in the summer of 1954.

His name first appears in the record of membership in 1936 and before long he won several of the club's major awards: the 80-miles Club Championship, the Three Cities 86-miles event and the Club 12-hour TT.



Eric Cox

He joined the army in 1939 and served with distinction on active service during WW2. He was captured while fighting in Italy in 1943 and spent the remainder of the war as a POW. His paralysis occurred during his incarceration and, as a consequence, he spent twelve months in hospital following repatriation where doctors declared he would never ride a bike again.

Eventually he was able to work again as a plasterer in the family firm with the aid of foot supports. Desperate to get back on a bike again and against doctors advice he borrowed a 'sit-up-and-beg' machine and slowly improved.

He married Edna in 1948 and, with her encouragement eventually felt fit enough to race again with the Wheelers. His first race was a spur of the moment decision in May 1954 when, not unexpectedly, he came last. With persistence within a year he was riding better than before. Most evenings, after working from 0700 to 1800 he was out on his bike. The training paid off and he won the Three Cities 86-miler in a record time of 4hrs

6secs, the 12-hour TT with 226 miles and the Men's BAR Award. At the age of 40 and still winning in record times he was awarded Herefordshire's Sportsman of the Year title.

Cycling had been his inspiration to get him back to fitness so that he could dispense with the calipers and lead an ordinary life. The Wheelers played a big part in getting him back into the sport he loved but he was always insistant that his remarkable comeback was made possible by the encouraging support of his wife.

At Easter 1945 the following notice appeared in the *Hereford Times*:

Recent efforts to inaugurate a 'runs programme' for the Hereford Wheelers came to fruition over the Easter weekend when two very enjoyable rides were carried out. On Sunday six members visited the waterfalls at Craig-Pwil-Du near Erwood the first time the club has been there for several years.

[After visiting the falls] the party were soon round the table at Llyswen where Mrs Vaughan had laid on a first class tea.

The following day nine members showed up (including three in shorts). Kington was the objective for dinner and it was decided over the meal to cross Hergest Ridge to Gladestry. [They returned] to Kington at about 5 pm and there the Club was joined by the President, Mr ES Newman ... A word of gratitude is due to the only lady member on the run who 'dispensed tea'.

A run will be held tomorrow (Sunday)...and anyone interested is invited to attend. Service cyclists are especially welcome.

Before the year was out the club appeared to be much more ambitious. In this local newspaper dated 8 September the club said; 'Up to 1939 the Wheelers held one or two 24-hour rides every year, and there was never any dearth of supporters. On the longest ride in the Club's history, a visit to the Peak District covering 234 miles, a dozen forfeited their night's sleep. Now that the Wheelers have regained their pre-war strength and vigour there was a demand for another 'twice round the clock' ride, and after some discussion it was decided to break new ground and visit the Pembrokeshire coast. It was originally hoped to set up a new record, but the actual

mileage was about 221. Since, however, three of those participating were youngsters whose combined ages only totalled 52 years, no one need fear for the future of the Club.'

Racing had also recommenced.

To meet a growing demand, the Hereford Wheelers on Sunday staged a 25-mile time trial, the first sporting event in their programme for over four years. Although held mainly to give the newcomers to the Club a chance to ride against the clock, the event attracted entries from riders who were racing 10 and 15 years ago. Among these, it was pleasing to note Mr. A. Evans, veteran of the North African campaign, where he was wounded, and Messrs. L. C. Powell [founder member] and P. J. Meredith [1930 member]. All told, 14 riders entered, and only two failed to start.

Naturally, times are not to be compared with those of pre-war days, and the winner, Mr. F. W. Jones, is the only one who has raced throughout the war, and he returned 1h. 7m. 28s. – an excellent ride. Mr. H. Price held the watch, and among the times he returned some are particularly worthy of notice. Mr. K. Hayward for instance won the novice's prize and filled second place – with a time of 1h. 14m. 49s., an outstanding performance in the circumstances. Mr. J. Miles also caused favourable comment, his time being 1h. 17m. 58s. Despite his youth, Mr. R. Lewis crossed the line with 1hr. 18m. 24s. to gain sixth place in his first race. It is unfortunate that Mr. T. Boalsh, the remaining novice, was hindered throughout with mechanical trouble, and Mr. A. Evans had three dismounts to adjust his rear wheel.

The finishing times were:- 1, F. W. Jones, 1h. 7m. 28s.; 2, K. Hayward, 1h. 14m. 49s.; 3, T. H. Beeks, 1h. 15m. 24s.; 4, S. Norman, 1h. 16m. 7s.; 5, F. J. Hiles, 1h. 17m. 58s.; 6, R. Lewis, 1h. 18m. 24s.; 7, P. G. Jones, 1h. 18m. 30s.; 8, H. W. Hiles, 1h. 19m. 9s.; 9, L. C. Powell, 1hr. 19m. 40s.; 10, P. J. Meredith, 1h. 22m. 51s.; 11, A. Evans, 1h. 24m. 15s.; 13, T. Boalsh, 1h. 26m. 56s.

One new member, Mr. R. Pugh, chose to ride a private time trial and, on a very heavy and unsuitable machine, he covered the distance in 1h. 22m. 40s. This performance was probably the most outstanding of the day.

Plenty of assistance was provided by enthusiastic wheelers. Messrs. Cox and Butterworth marshalled the turn, and Mr. A. Bevan was at the only road junction on the course. Mrs. Price brought refreshments to the finish.

Later in the day the Wheelers met in town and proceeded leisurely to Grosmont, where Mrs. Rees provided the tea.

On Saturday night the Club is embarking on its most ambitious run to date. Subject to reasonable weather it is hoped to visit the Pembroke coast near Tenby, covering over 240 miles.

Tea is being arranged at the Bear House Trecastle, where those who wish may meet the Club.

On recent Sundays the Wheelers have had enjoyable and well-attended, runs to Cantlin Cross, Lightspout Falls and Llangorse Lake, and runs for September will shortly be chosen. Full particulars can be obtained from H. W. Hiles, 60, Ryelands Street and Mr. T. H. Beeks, Cromer, Credenhill. Anyone interested can be sure of a hearty welcome on any run.

The *Hereford Times* also reported 'another 25' taking place. Reflecting the post-war situation a note at the bottom said; 'J Morgan from Ross made his first ride for some years and showed that he is rapidly recovering from his ordeal as a prisoner-of-war. He is still, in fact, on sick-leave.' Another prisoner-of-war, Eric Cox, was told he would never ride again after being crippled 'for life' following his incarceration for two years. He defied the odds, supported by his wife who encouraged him to get back on his bike, by winning the All-Round Championship Shield in 1955 with an average speed of 20.285 mph for the year. As well as the shield he won two other cups during the year – The Three Cities Race (in 4hrs and six seconds) and a 12-hour TT (226 miles).



'THE GANG' (part only) 4 November 1945

L to R: Horace Hands (a founder member), Harold Beeks, Nigel Campbell, Don and Nell Price (Franks Shubert's landlord and landlady), Alan Bevan, Keith Hayward, Johnny Bailey, and Rea Pugh

A Special AGM was eventually held on 17 November 1945 – the first full gathering of the club since October 1942. ES Newman presided. Harold Beeks referred to what had been a very difficult period of the club's history but said the club was now strong, numerically and financially. (The number of members at the end of 1945 was 35, including four ladies.) ES Newman was once again elected president and CT Prosser, EB Howell, GH Russell and GH Butcher vice presidents. Hector Hiles became secretary and treasurer while Phil Jones continued as racing secretary. Keith Hayward, Perce Meredith, Alan Bevan, G Cave and Horace Hand were elected to the committee. Bill Gains was made an honorary life member for all the great work he had done for so many years. At the meeting it was decided to have two sections – the 'hardriders' and the 'loiterers', and Harold Beeks and HM Price were elected captains respectively. The two club runs were 'arranged for most Sundays – the Hardriders to cover about 90 miles and the Loiterers about 40 miles.' The secretary was anxious to know the names for each group ahead of the ride, as it was not always possible to arrange the same tea venues for both groups. It would appear that catering was even more of a problem since the end of the war. 'Unless something was done to gauge numbers more accurately the club ran the risk of losing some excellent tea places.' By this time even bread was rationed.

The first reference found of rides for the two sections was in December; 'Tomorrow (Sunday) the hard riders starting at 9 am are crossing Gospel Pass, tea having been booked at Llyswen for 5 pm. The loiterers, under the leadership of HM Price are visiting the Bosbury district starting at 10 am with tea at Bosbury.'

Perhaps this new tough guy image led members to hold a 'Rough Stuff 10' time trial in the winter months. There was then much debate about prizes being awarded so that 'loiterers' had the chance to win something. The first event was planned for February but flooding in and around the city caused it to be moved to March. A New Year's Eve run did take place though

with members asked to bring a cup and sugar (the latter was still rationed) for a brew-up at midnight. Milk was provided.

The post-war Wheelers never did manage to acquire an office of their own. Instead they held meetings at the YMCA, for which member George Walker generously donated the cost of a room for twelve months, Westfields Hall, St Nicholas' House, Friar Street and, later, St Martin's old school, where the fixture was Tuesday evenings. The meeting place was subsequently moved to Stretton Sugwas village hall and stationery, records and books stored in a garden shed belonging to Perce and Mary Meredith who lived opposite the hall. This temporary nature of meeting places is probably why much of the historic documentation and photographs of the club has been lost over the years. A few old photographs exist but these are held personally by third-age members. One printed below, dated 1945, shows members with the Jones family at Rhos Goch, Painscastle, a private farm house where they used to stop 'for some grub'. Included are Mr and Mrs Jones and family who lived at the farm house where the food was provided. It is believed that Mr Jones as well as being a farmer had a cycle shop in the village.

The club's main activity remained touring with an element devoted to racing. This is not surprising when considering the length of some of the 'races'; they were usually 25 miles, 50 miles, 100 miles, 12 hour and 24 hour. The two sections of 'hardriders' and the more laid back 'loiterers' tended to create an element of friction and, in 1947, some of the faster riders moved to the Gannets Cycling Club. This club was formed in 1946 by ex-servicemen, such as Edgar Thomas and Arthur Symonds, returning from the war. They tended to favour road racing in the summer and cyclo-cross in the winter. By 1955 they were promoting two 'Open Road Races', the Wye Valley Grand Prix and the Tour of the Malverns Road Race. On the 11 December of that year the Gannets held their first 'Open Cyclo-Cross' race in Hereford. The organiser, Eddie Thompson of Mastercraft Cycles in Bridge Street, says that conditions were so bad that out of 33 starters only 13 remained to tackle the 4th lap of the course. They also held 50-mile Australian Pursuit (handicap) Races. This club continued to race until fairly recently. The surviving six elderly members still, in fact, pay subscriptions to the CTT and other racing bodies, hoping that someday young riders may be recruited to join them.

In 1948/9 Jack Prosser re-formed the Hereford Road Club and so, for about a decade or more, there were three cycling clubs in Hereford. They were all well supported. On the same day in August 1955 the Gannets held the 'Open Tour of the Malverns', race with 90 participants, while the Wheelers held their annual '50-miles TT Open Race'. The immediate post-war years had again experienced a large increase in the popularity of touring and competitive cycling. 'Though there were economic hardships through unemployment, cycling offered a panacea for the ills of the day.' It was an era where cycling heroes were as popular as footballers and some members of the club raced against riders such as Reg Harris during his time with the Manchester Wheelers. 'He sometimes rode 25s and if you were lucky enough you found yourself on the same start list.'

A Special General Meeting of the club held at the YMCA on 9 November 1946 to discuss new Club Rules. A sub-committee under the chairmanship of Perse Meredith had drawn up a comprehensive set of rules for the meeting. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that alterations and additions to the agreed set of rules could now only be made at an AGM and must be submitted in writing no less than seven days prior to the AGM. A copy of the proposal including amendments made at the meeting is shown below.

***Hereford and District Wheelers Cycling Club
Proposed Club Rules***

As put forward by the Committee to the Special General Meeting on 9th November, 1946, at the Y.M.C.A. Hereford.

1. The name of the body, hereinafter called the Club, is the Hereford and District Wheelers Cycling Club.

2. The Club is to affiliate to the National Cyclists Union as from the 1st January each year.
3. The purpose of the Club is to promote the social and sporting activities of cycling, in accordance with the wishes of its members and within the resources at its command.
4. Membership of the club to be open to both sexes on payment of an annual subscription as follows, subject to Rules 5 & 7: 5/- per annum for male members and 3/6 per annum for ladies. All subscriptions are payable on election to membership and thereafter on 1st January each year, except that subscriptions from newly elected members paid after 30th September shall be valid until the 31 December the following year. Subscriptions become overdue on 31st March. Members whose subscriptions are overdue shall not be eligible to take part in any activity of the Club. All subscriptions paid to become the property of the Club.
5. The management of the Club to be vested in a committee consisting of the Hon. General Secretary, the Hon, Treasurer, Hon. Times Trials Secretary, Captain (Hardriders), Captain (Loiterers) and six members elected annually at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee to elect its own Chairman from among its members. Any member of the Committee absenting himself from three consecutive meetings, without tendering a satisfactory explanation, shall be deemed to have resigned; the vacancy thus caused to be filled by the Committee from among the general membership. A quorum shall consist of five committee members.
6. A General Meeting (of which seven clear days notice shall be given) shall be held annually in January, to receive the Secretary's report, audited balance sheet for previous year, and to elect President, Vice-Presidents, Executive Officers, Committee, Auditors and Delegates for the ensuing year.
7. The Committee shall have power to expel or otherwise deal with any member guilty of conduct detrimental to the interests of the Club. The member to have the right of appeal to a general meeting.
8. Applications for membership, on the official form, together with the amount of the annual subscription, shall be forwarded to the Secretary, who shall bring the names of the candidates before the committee for election.
9. The Hon. General Secretary shall convene a Special General Meeting within fourteen days of receiving a requisition signed by not less than eight members, or on a resolution of the Committee.
10. The Committee shall have the power to decide any question not provided for in the Rules.
11. The club shall publish a Year Book annually, containing Club Rules, list of member's names, reviews of the year's activities etc., the book to be available to all members at a nominal charge to cover printing costs.
12. The Club shall not be disbanded unless more than two thirds of the membership desires that course.
13. The Committee may, subject to the approval of a General Meeting of the Club, offer Honorary Life Membership of the Club to any member, or past member, as a token of appreciation of outstanding service given to the Club,
15. No one, on ceasing to be a member of the Club, shall be entitled to wear the Club Badge.
16. Alterations and additions to these rules can only be made at a General Meeting of the club and details of any proposed alterations and additions must be in the Hon. Secretary's hands at least 7 days before the meeting.

RULES OF THE ROAD

1. The Captain, or his deputy, to take command of the Club, pace to be left to his discretion.
2. Members shall ride two deep when convenient, sufficient room to be left between each pair to enable the right-hand man to fall back into single file when necessary. The

recognised rules of the road to be observed at all times. No member to pass the leader without his permission.

3. Each member shall carry an efficient tyre repair outfit and sufficient tools for minor adjustments.

4. Members are advised to carry a small first-aid outfit on Club Runs.

5. Members, when attending club functions, at all times to conduct themselves in a manner not to reflect discredit on the Club. This applies especially at catering establishments.



HEREFORD & DISTRICT WHEELERS CYCLING CLUB 1946

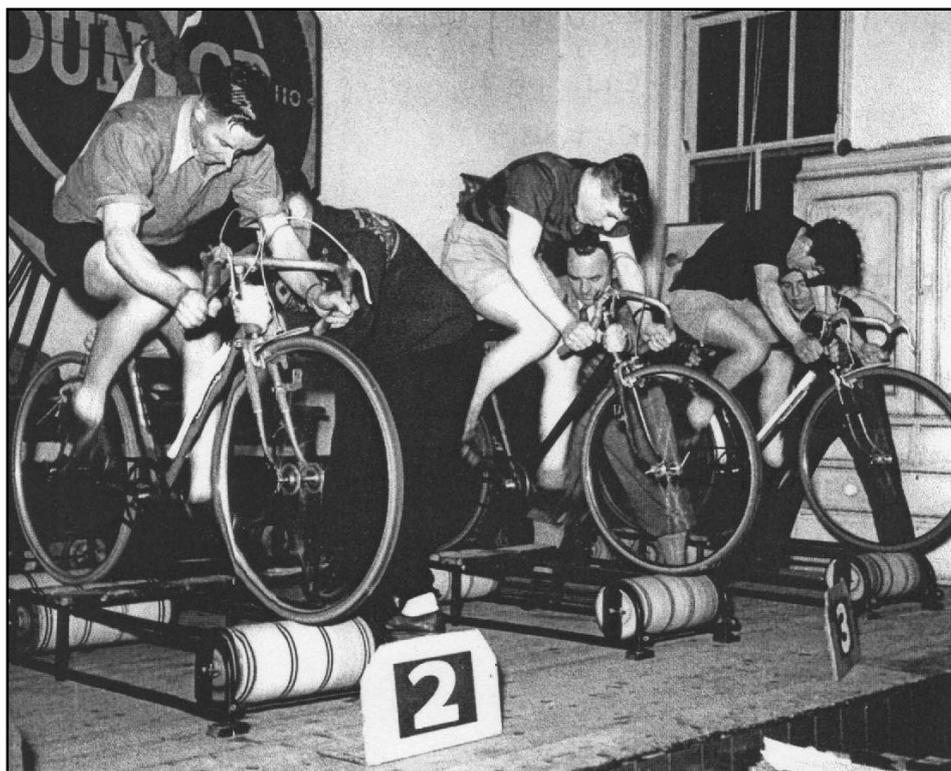
Standing (left to right): Fred Jones ('brother to Phil, he took up cycling after contacting TB and told to get as much fresh air and exercise as possible'), Jack Adams, Tom Boalch, Les Steel ('brother to Sergeant Arthur Steel'), Edgar Thomas, Reg Pugh, Perce Meredith, Keith Hayward, Alan Bevan, Harold Beeks ('who broke the Hereford to Shrewsbury and back record'), Sid Norman ('Sid and Fred Jones rode all the way to Johannesburg. Sid remained there working in an asbestos mine and died at a young age'), Don Price ('who rode a 'sit-up-and-beg' bike'), Ivor Lambert, Bryan Mee ('who suffered from polio in the 1950s'), George Tansel, Wilfred Wood, Freddy Hiles, Phil Jones, Lawrence Morledge.

Sitting (left to right): Ted Drake, May Hands, (?), (?), John Bayley, Jean Jones, Pat Meredith (child standing), (?), Nell Price with baby (Richard Meredith), Ida Morledge, (?), ? Lawford ('twin'), Mary Meredith, ? Lawford ('twin').

The club carried on with the tradition of holding evening 10s and every year invited novices to a 10-mile TT. In the early 1950s this 'Novices' Race', usually held on Saturday, offered the following to riders who had never participated in races previously; '... besides the Con's Trophy, to be held for one year by the winner, there will be three prizes. Riders can enjoy six months free membership of the club if they so wish.' The Wheelers also advertised 'Social Runs' on Thursday evenings starting at 7pm, with 'everyone welcome'.

The first post-war 'Open 25 Miles Handicap Time Trial' took place on Easter Monday, 22 April 1946, with the first rider, Hector Hiles, starting off at seven-one a.m. The Easter event was one of the first cycling events of the year under RTTC regulations. In 1944-45 Worcester St. John's CC had promoted an 'Open 25' on Easter Monday and asked the Hereford Wheelers to move

their date to Easter Sunday. With the support of the RTTC, the Wheelers were able to keep their bank holiday slot. Usually not much training had been possible up to Easter. Winters were much more inclement then, '...and of course the roads were never gritted like they are today when snow or ice deck the roads. St John's club in Worcester moved their event to Easter Sunday and on Sunday night in Hereford you couldn't move for cyclists from all over the country out on the town.' Reg Pugh, who was events secretary at the time, said that he needed to book 'digs' for 150 people. Most riders did not own a car and cycled to events with large saddle bags and racing wheels (some made of wood 'for lightness and comfort') attached to brackets on the front forks. The last race of the year was usually the Gloucester City 25 which was held in the second week of October. Cycling then reverted to Saturday half-day or Sunday full-day club rides when weather and road conditions were favourable.



Roller Racing at the Percival Hall

For the 1946 'Open' the timekeepers were HP Pritchard and Bill Gains, the handicapper was WE Garland, the judge Perce Meredith and the trials secretary Phil Jones of 60 Ryland Street, Hereford. A full card of 100 riders were accepted and of these 91 started and 83 finished. The event was won by a national star, Cyril Cartwright of Manchester Clarion, in a record time of 1 hour 3 minutes 31 seconds. Wheelers taking part were: Fred Jones (4th), 2½ min. handicap in 1.8.19; John Bayley (34th), 8½ min. handicap in 1.13.7; Alan Bevan (53rd), 12 min. handicap (2nd

handicap award) in 1.14.42; Reg Pugh (69th), 9½ min. handicap in 1.16.57; Hector Hiles (70th), 9 min handicap in 1.17.9; and Keith Hayward (71st), 12 min. handicap in 1.17.16. One C Hughes came last (83rd) in 1.25.48 with an 8 min. handicap.

With the intense competition of the post-war 'Open 25' it was a day for celebration when in 1948 a member of the Wheelers, Freddie Jones, won the event outright in a time of 1.5.3 – the only club member to date who has achieved this other than in the handicaps.

The 1950s

Shortly after the war the RAF formed the RAF Cycling Association. Squadron Leader Wooley, based at RAF Gloucester was a principal mover. One year the Hereford Wheelers ran the RAF 50-mile championship when 120 riders turned up. 'We also ran a 12 hr TT for RAF Stafford in about 1952 with a full card of 120 starters. We offloaded some of the work to clubs in Worcester and Gloucester. The start was at Lugg Flats before heading off to the Trumpet and Gloucester. Then a couple of legs around Gloucester before moving on to Worcester, Evesham, Tewksbury, Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick before they came back to Hereford after about eight hours. We then had them on two local legs before bringing them down to a five-mile circuit around Credenhill as the twelve-hour mark approached. A member would then shadow each participant

with a synchronised time-piece to officially record the distance reached in twelve hours.' Bradley Smith, RAF, was first with a distance of 252 miles.

In the early '50s the winter months were not completely wasted as far as racing was concerned. In 1953 an old newspaper cutting illustrates an 'Inter-City Cycle 'Race' between a combined Hereford Wheelers and Gannets team and Gloucester CC.

'Cyclists from the Hereford clubs, Wheelers and Gannets, competed in the inter-city roller race contest against Gloucester City Cycling Club at the Percival Hall, Hereford, on Saturday. Three out of the four events were won by Gloucester, including the team race, in which they beat Hereford Wheelers by two-fifths of a second.'

In the middle of the 20th century members of the club tended to make the most of the long weekend at Easter. In 1957 a group of the Wheelers left Hereford at 11 pm on the Thursday heading for the annual visit to London to see the Champion of Champions Cycle Race Meeting at the Hern Hill Track. By 10 am Friday they had reached their destination at East Acton. They then proceeded to South London by train to the track, returning to spend the night at Acton. The next morning the party split up with some riding to the south coast while the others returned to Hereford. 'The Easter Sunday run was usually a leisurely affair.' They rode out to Longtown for lunch, then over Gospel Pass via Capel-y-Ffin. Tea was taken at Hardwicke. On Easter Monday riders from as far away as London and Merseyside came by bike to compete in the 'Open 25' – the popularity of the event being shown by another full card of 120 riders. 'Conditions were excellent and the course record again fell to 1hr 1min 22secs.' The winner was J Blackhurst of Mid-Shropshire Wheelers. In the afternoon, the long weekend of cycling was ended by a tea-run to Ludlow, via Kingsland and Orleton, returning via Leominster.

The club also used to help out with other fixtures and individual record events – which today may be called Audax events. Members provided marshals and feeding stations for three individual record attempts; the Pembroke to London (a distance of something like 247 miles which eventually was completed in less than 12 hours), the End to End and Plymouth to Edinburgh.

Regarding training; 'the Wheelers spring training run (called the Sugar Loaf Training Spin) of about 125 miles would leave Hereford about 0700 hrs, be in Brecon for elevenses, Llandovery for lunch, then over the Sugar Loaf to Llyswen for tea before heading home. A typical weekend outing in those days was to set off from Hereford at 0500hrs on a Saturday morning, ride straight through Shrewsbury because there was usually nowhere open very early, have breakfast in Chester, lunch in Preston and be at the B & B in the Lake District that night, a distance of some 270 miles. Then on Sunday we would turn around and head back to Hereford – sometimes going hungry again at the end of the day because every café on the route had closed. In the 1950s most of us were riding about 15,000 to 18,000 miles a year.' Not all rides were successful. Keith Hayward remembers setting off to ride through the night from Hereford to Bala 'but then atrocious weather caused us first to take shelter and then to head back to the sanctuary of home in Hereford.'

Keith Hayward, who was a club member for over 61 years, served on the committee for most of that time holding many appointments, including three tours as president, and was hon. secretary for over 33 years, said that the secretary's job in the 50s, 60s and 70s also involved arranging the many formal dinners that were popular then. There was at least one per year, held in November, to present the prizes earned over the course of the season. 'Other clubs within the Three Counties Cycling Association were invited and we also went to their functions.'

At the club's Annual Dinner held at the Imperial Hotel on 3 December 1955, Eric Cox was presented with the Wheelers' All-Round Championship Shield, along with two other cups – The Three Cities Race (Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford) in a time of 4hrs and 16secs and the

12-hour event in which he covered 226 miles. Visitors included East Liverpool Wheelers, Ross Cycling Club, Cardiff, Royal Dean Forest CC, Evesham CC and Ivor Strangward (Gannets). Bill Gains replying to the toast referred to the advantages to be had from being a member of a cycling club;

'Apart from being the best way to see the countryside and the healthiest, during my time as a member of the Hereford Wheelers I have formed personal friendships, and, although I have not been an active member for some time, these friendships have deepened.'

Among the speeches at the Annual Dinner in 1957, again held at the Imperial Hotel, Reg Pugh, the racing secretary admitted that the last two events on the Wheelers' racing programme had probably saved the club from having the poorest season for many years. As he was introducing the trophy winners he said the club was 'saved' by two new novice riders – Colin Tudor and Colin Prosser – who in the last two events had surprised everyone by their fine performances. Perce Meredith, Vice President, proposed a toast to the visitors and Mr D White (Swindon Wheelers), holder of the national 24-hour record in which he cycled 484.81 miles and became the first person to better an average of 20 mph for the competition, replied. Entertainment was provided by the Condors Skiffle Group and the Oracles Concert Party.

Three Counties Cycling Association

The Wheelers were part of the Three Counties Cycling Association which was formed in 1948. At times there were as many as ten other clubs affiliated to the association – Gloucester (two clubs), Cheltenham (two clubs), Evesham, Worcester, Forest of Dean, Cirencester, Ross and Hereford (three clubs). 'We used to race nearly every weekend with 50 to 60 riders taking part.' This arrangement lasted for about 21 years but at the beginning of the 1970s the popularity of cycling started to fade and the association folded up.

It was reported that on Saturday 18 January 1957 the Wheelers set off for the Black Mountains in spite of bitterly cold weather. The riders included Les Rouse, 'sunburnt from his recent service in Cyprus with the RAF'. The following day they rode into Worcestershire, where, during the afternoon and evening, members attended the Three Counties Cycling Association tea and presentation of awards at Upton-upon-Severn.

'On an almost perfect Sunday morning' on 2 June 1957, Hereford Wheelers staged a 50-mile time trial on behalf of the Three Counties Cycling Association. Riders from Gloucester, Worcester, Evesham, Cirencester and Cheltenham clubs visited the local course in an attempt to improve on the 2hrs 8mins 3secs record of the 1955 event held by Gordon Taylor of Evesham. The course, which was horseshoe shaped, allowed the time keepers to check on riders at 26½ miles as they turned to climb through Credenhill on the return leg. Scratch man was Dave Pugh of Gloucester but at the halfway check he was headed by another team mate, T Rennie, in 1hr 6mins 4secs and by Hereford's short-distance star K Hyde in 1hr 7mins 4secs. Pugh fully justified his scratch mark, however, by finishing strongly to take first place in 2hrs 8mins 57secs. Rennie finished second to clinch the team race for Gloucester City. Hyde dropped to fifth overall.

Earlier Keith Hayward, E Cox, PG Jones and H Beresford of Hereford Wheelers, rode in the Three Counties Cycling Association 100 and were timed at 4hrs 58mins, 5hrs 6mins, 5hrs 7mins and 5hrs 6mins respectively. While Keith improved by three minutes in the club 100 the weekend before the 50-mile time trial, he had to be content with second place to his rival K Hyde who put in his best ever time of 4hrs 53mins 23secs.

Keith was again in action at the Three Counties Cycling Association 12-hour TT in July 1958, where the Wheelers took first team prize 'despite the poor conditions'. The team recorded: K

Haywood, 226.894 miles; T Hickling, 225.192 miles and G Pitts 212.884 miles; making a total of 664.970 miles.

Long distance time trialling proved to be popular among Wheelers members. Roy Cromack, who was in the forces during the 1960s and 70s, was a 24-hour TT record holder for over 25 years with a distance of 507 miles. It stood until fairly recently. 'A bloke called Wilkinson beat him eventually. Another member came to join us from RAF Credenhill after taking part in one of our evening 10s. His name was Johnny Woodburn and he was the British best all-rounder, for the combined 50, 100 and 12 hr TT, on three or four occasions.' Johnny Bayley was another potential champion but he gave up the sport when he knocked over and killed a man coming out of a pub in Hereford. He gave Reg Pugh his bike when Reg came out of the forces in 1948.



Grass-Track Racing on St George Playing Field

The club also found success in shorter distances. Dave Hopkins, for example, was a national 5-mile grass-track champion but was subsequently hit by a car coming out of a filling station on the A4 in the Wiltshire area and was killed. Members were also taking part in local grass-track meetings. These tended to be held as an additional attraction to country shows. In 1955 the *Hereford Times* featured a photograph of an attractive female cyclist with the caption; 'Miss BJ Morris [Hereford Wheelers] in action on the grass track at Vowchurch and Turnaston Show on Saturday. She made up the number of competitors required for the men's half-mile cycle race.' Apparently these were 'unofficial' races with cash prizes and club members were not supposed to take part.

It was not long, however, before the club were sponsoring its own grass-track meetings under the auspices of the British Cyclists' Union (which in 1959 amalgamated with the British League of Racing Cyclists to become the British Cycling Federation). 'A fellow from Hereford Council, J Thompson, in 1956 was looking for something to attract visitors to the town at weekends and got the club and other cyclists to stage a grass-track meeting along with athletics and other events on King George Playing Field. Brian Nicholas was the event organiser, the council provided the workers for marking the track etc. and club members helped out on the day by

providing officials such as umpires, starters stewards and time keepers.' The local paper reported the inaugural event under the sub heading of 'Excellent Running and Cycling'. Some 8,000 spectators turned up to watch '27 cycling and athletic events, a six-a-side football tournament, children's' races, a gymnastics display, an old-time boxing exhibition [whatever that means] and numerous side shows.' Cycling covered four heats of 440 yards, 880 yards and one mile. The last event of the day was called 'Devil-take-the-hindmost'. 'After a mass start the last bloke after every lap was taken off until there was only one left.' E Gordon (Wyndham RC) won the 440yds handicap, with a time of 35.9secs, and A Oakes (North Worcester RC) the 880yds handicap (1min 10secs) and the 1 mile handicap. Devil-take-the-hindmost was taken by MD Scott (Rover RCC) with PS Shaw (West Bromwich) and R Burke (Walsall RCC) taking second and third respectively.

Spectators did not pay an entrance fee but any funds required were raised by local firms having displays and a whip around for spectators' contributions during the afternoon. 'Seating was on cider boxes like they used to utilise at the football club in the old days.' The event was so successful it ran for about ten years. 'It was moved to the Racecourse in 1966 but it was never the same and petered out a few years later.' It is now hard to believe that the Wheelers were organising grass-track fixtures until the late 1970s.

Again 'thrills and spills' marked the Second Annual Hereford City Sports and Fete the following year. This time, eventually, 12,000 spectators turned up. Reg Pugh estimates that in later years as many as 15,000 attended. At the 1957 Fete, 'Many people were prevented from arriving in time to see the opening by the Mayor by a fire in the wooden flooring of Victoria suspension bridge believed to have been started by a discarded cigarette end. On this occasion T Chambers of Uckfield won both the 440 and Devil-take-the-hindmost and came second in the 880.

Following the third August Bank Holiday event the sports secretary, Mr CJ Chancy, while admitting it was a most successful sports meeting, said the number of local entries were disappointing. 'You could almost count them on one hand.' As a result, at the next meeting of the Gannet Cycling Club it was pointed out that the lack of local entries was because there was no place in the county suitable for training and no local competition where riders could learn the art of grass-track racing. A motion was made stressing the necessity for obtaining a grass track in Hereford and the formation of a grass track league but a suitable venue was never found and the league did not materialise.

The subject was also raised at the Wheelers' 30th Anniversary Dinner which was reported in the 12th December *Hereford Times*:

*Mayor's Tribute to the Wheelers
Good to see such comradeship*

The Mayor of Hereford, Mr DJ Shaw, paid tributes to the Hereford and District Wheelers Cycling Club at the annual dinner at the Imperial Hotel, Hereford on Saturday.

Replying to the toast of the visitors he said one of the most wonderful things in the club was the comradeship that had built up.

'It is good to see such comradeship' and he added 'and to know that the younger members are playing a part in that sphere'

The Mayor also paid tribute to the administrative qualities of the club leaders and referred especially to the work done by the secretary, Miss Janet Goode.

The Mayor said how much he and his wife preferred an informal dinner like this one, with its more homely atmosphere.

Not merely a duty

Mr I David proposing the toast of the Wheelers said there were some members who thought it was a duty to do something for the club to which they belonged, but he was inclined to disagree. Taken in the right spirit it was not so much a duty as an opportunity for everyone could get a great deal of enjoyment out of helping.

Most young people were anxious to help, and the older members could assist in many ways by giving of their experience.

Miss Goode, on behalf of the members, thanked Mr Keith Hayward for the help he had given since she took over the secretaryship from him after he had done the job for nine years.

Speaking of the activities of the club, Miss Goode said the season had been a successful one with the over 40s doing equally well as the younger members.

Mr B Nicholas proposing the toast of the visitors, referred to criticisms which had been made regarding the handicapping and the August Bank Holiday sports and described the things that were said were absolute rubbish.

He added 'we hoped for publicity and support, but we got cried down for our efforts.'

Mr ER Hickman, the president said because of business he and his wife had been unable to really get into the spirit of cycling, but they were both looking forward to the time when they could get out with the members again.

The Mayoress presented the awards which included: Club Champion, Keith Hayward; Handicaps 25, 30, 50, 100 and 25 miles medium gear 25, Arthur Steel Memorial 50 and Three Cities Trophy, K Hyde; Shrewsbury And Back, A Hickling; Evening 25, D Lloyd; Evening 10s, C Tudor; novices 10s, C Jones.

A dance followed.

The reference to medium gear time trialling came from the first competitive event of 1958 – a 25-mile event using medium gears. The times recorded by K Hyde and his nearest challenger, C Tudor, were particularly good with a bitterly cold east wind. The following times were recorded: K Hyde, 1hr 11min 18sec; C Tudor, 1hr 11min 30sec; D Lloyd, 1hr 13min 37sec; R Jones, 1hr 14sec 19sec; A Hickling, 1hr 14min 35sec; C Prosser, 1hr 15min 25sec; G Smith, 1hr 15min 38sec; K Hayward, 1hr 16min 48sec; D Hickling, 1hr 18min 21sec; F Jones, 1hr 19min 36sec; P Jones, 1hr 25min 13sec; P Meredith, 1hr 25min 58sec.

Date	Race	Time
29.3.59	Worcester St Johns Open 25, K.5	1.10.15
30.3.59	Hereford Wheelers Open 25, R.7A	1.10.45
12.4.59	Bath C.C. 25, O.5	1.7.59
19.4.59	Ledbury & Back	54.50
23.4.59	Evening 10, Hay Road	26.23
30.4.59	Evening 10, Leominster Road	26.34
3.5.59	Three Counties C.A. 25	1.7.58
7.5.59	Evening 10, Hay Road	26.30
14.5.59	Evening 25, R.7A	1.4.40
24.5.59	Three Counties C.A.50, U.27	2.19.33
28.5.59	Ross 10, Walford	26.03
7.6.59	Three Counties C.A. 100, U.37	4.46.47
28.7.59	Hereford Wheelers 100	5.2.27
20.8.59	Evening 25, R.7A	1.5.24
23.8.59	Shrewsbury & Back	4.56.45
30.8.59	Three Counties C.A., K.35	1.7.55
10.9.59	Evening Ten, R.7	27.5
11.10.59	Hereford Wheelers Hill Climb	2.21
18.10.59	Gannet C.C. Hilly 25	1.15.03

The variety of races that club members took part in the 1950s is indicated by entries in the Cycling Log of Tony Hickling:

The 1960s

The Wheelers enjoyed another busy Easter weekend in 1960. It started with an all-night ride on Thursday evening to London for the annual international track meeting at Herne Hill on Good Friday. They returned to Hereford on the Saturday, having covered 260 miles. This was followed by a 'sunny ride to Pandy and Longtown' on Sunday, before hosting the Annual Open 25 on Monday. The weekend was rounded off with an afternoon ride around the Forest of Dean.

The Three Counties Cycling Association was still in its heyday. On Sunday 6 May 1960 the Wheelers rode in the Association 25-mile time trial at Cirencester. Participants had ridden there the previous day and 'after the race they rode through Tenbury, Chipping Sodbury and across the Severn Estuary Ferry to Chepstow and St Arvans.' Here they met up with the rest of the club members 'who had had a very pleasant run from Hereford.'

It was in 1960 that the two clubs, the Wheelers and the Gannets, appeared to warm towards each other. In May of that year they held their first joint race together – a 25-mile time trial. The winner was a Gannet rider with another Gannet coming third. John Potter of the Wheelers came second with a time of 1hr 4min 38sec. The Wheelers also recorded the fastest team of three riders, Potter, Carter and Dave Lloyd who beat the Gannet's team by 4sec. The most outstanding ride of the day, however, was by Freddie Jones, a club veteran, who carried off the first handicap prize of 1hr 2min 33sec. In the afternoon the racing section, along with some of the Gannets met the touring section for tea at Walton.

The following month again saw the Gannets and Wheelers join forces for a 50-mile time trial, which was won by Colin Rumsey of the Gannets in 2hrs 12mins 58sec. John Potter and H Carter came second and third respectively. Potter could perhaps be excused his second place as he had been riding in a mass-start race in Wolverhampton the day before, where he finished 'well up in the field.' The following week he finished fifth in another mass-start event.

By 1960 the club still had its 'hard-riders' and 'loiterers', although the latter were more likely to be referred to as the 'touring section' in official reports. On 29 July 1960 the *Hereford Times* ran an article under the heading 'Hereford Wheelers Longest Run of the Year'.

The longest run of the year was undertaken by the hard-riders of the [H&D] Wheelers on Sunday when they went to Borth. The group made a 7am start and rode out along the Hay road to Kington and then Rhayader. It was raining slightly when crossing Plynlimmon but near the coast the weather was mild. After a meal and a little time on the sea front they started their return journey and met the rest of the club at Walton for tea. The touring section spent an enjoyable day riding up the Edw Valley to meet them....

Among the guests at the annual dinner held at the Booth Hall in December 1962 were: Jim Harding, Chairman of the Bank Holiday Sports Committee; Bill Vanston, a former track cyclist; and members of Cheltenham and County and Gloucester Town CCs. Proposing the toast to the Wheelers, Tony Halls of Cheltenham and County CC, referred to the club's successes over the years since 1928. He said that the Wheelers had been one of the first clubs to join the Three Counties Cycling Association. He emphasised the all-roundness of which the club could be proud. 'The club was considered to be of sufficient calibre that the National five-mile grass-track championships were staged in Hereford this year. In actual fact the grass-track championships were a wash-out with heavy rain on the appointed day. The event was postponed until the 26th August and was supported by a small athletic meeting. Local interest waned so much so that the *Hereford Times* did not publish the results.

In January 1964 the British Cycling Federation announced the dates of the first 'Stage Race' to be held in Herefordshire. It was to take place on the weekend 2nd and 3rd May and consist of

two road races and a time trial, over a total distance of 110 miles. The *Hereford Times* presented a new trophy to be awarded to the overall winner. It was assumed that the strongest challenge would come from six internationals led by Welsh champion Bill Owen and Tony Hutchings, who was ninth in the Empire games Road Race held in Perth. Other riders were the Minovi brothers who were with Worcester, St John's CC. Ray was an English international and his brother won the Wheelers' Open 25 the previous year. Also riding would be: Len Newell, the Coventry Division champion fresh from racing in France; Mick Florence, a Tour of Britain rider; and Bill Tait, who was champion of South London. Local competition was to be Tony Hickling of the Wheelers and Colin Rumsey who was then a member of Worcester, St John's CC.

In the event the overall winner was Ken Haddon of Saracen Road Club. Winner of Stage 1, a forty-mile road race, was R Pratt (Cardiff Ajax CC) in 1hr 39min 45sec, with Maken Minovi second and Haddon fourth. The next stage was a ten-mile time trial on Sunday morning which was won by Minovi in 25min 54sec. Mick Florence was second and Haddon third. Winner of the third stage, a sixty-mile road race, was A Lloyd (Saracen RC), second was D Pearce (Wolverhampton Viking Wheelers) and third M Evans (Edgbaston RC). Haddon was fourth and Minovi punctured to finish well down in the field. And of our local talent? Hickling DNF Stage 1 and Rumsey DNF Stage 3.

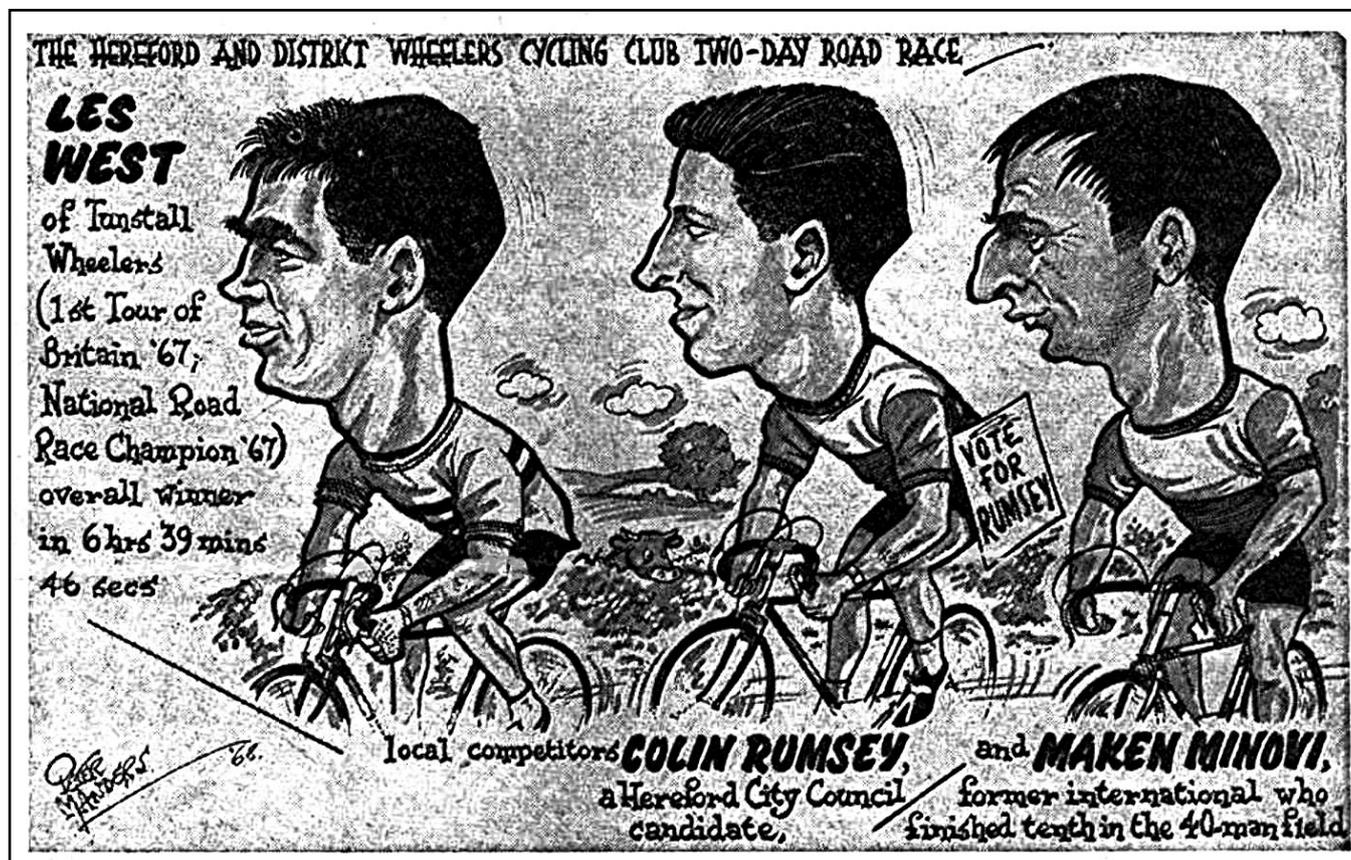


All the events were held over the same ten-mile course – Hereford, Callow, Kingsthorpe, Barrack Hill, Caldicott and Hereford. Both the road races started at the Broad Leys pub in Ross Road and finished in Green Crize. The time trial started and finished at the Electricity Sub Station in Green Crize. The photograph above shows this event under way in May 1965. The three Wheelers at the front are Tony Hickling, Mike Preedy and Colin Rumsey. Since 1960 the Gannets had organised a 70-mile road race over the same ten mile course on Whit Sunday weekends – the *Hereford Evening News* Road Race – starting and finishing in Web Tree Avenue.

The two day event continued to attract top riders throughout the 1960s. In 1968 Tour of Britain winner, Les West of Tunstall Wheelers won the race for the second year running. On the Saturday of that year the stage was marred by a bad pile-up when six riders came off while going down the hill at Kingsthorpe. One of them, Howard Darby, of Thornhill CC was unable to

continue but had already won the 'King of the Mountains' trophy as he had been first over four climbs on the first stage. At the conclusion of the Sunday race West was beaten in the final sprint by an 18-year-old Phil Griffiths of Gloucester City CC which gave the young rider third overall. As a departure from the original circuit the Sunday's 80-mile stage consisted of five laps of a course along Roman Road, Sutton St Nicholas, England's Gate and Dinmore Hill.

Colin Rumsey and Maken Minovi changed clubs to the Hereford Wheelers in 1965. They were reported as being piped into second place in the Monmouth League two-up 25-mile time trial early in 1966. The winners, by a margin of 5 secs, were the Lewis brothers of Cardiff Ajax in a time of 59 mins 22 secs. In third place were the Welsh international stars, Tom Martin and Clive



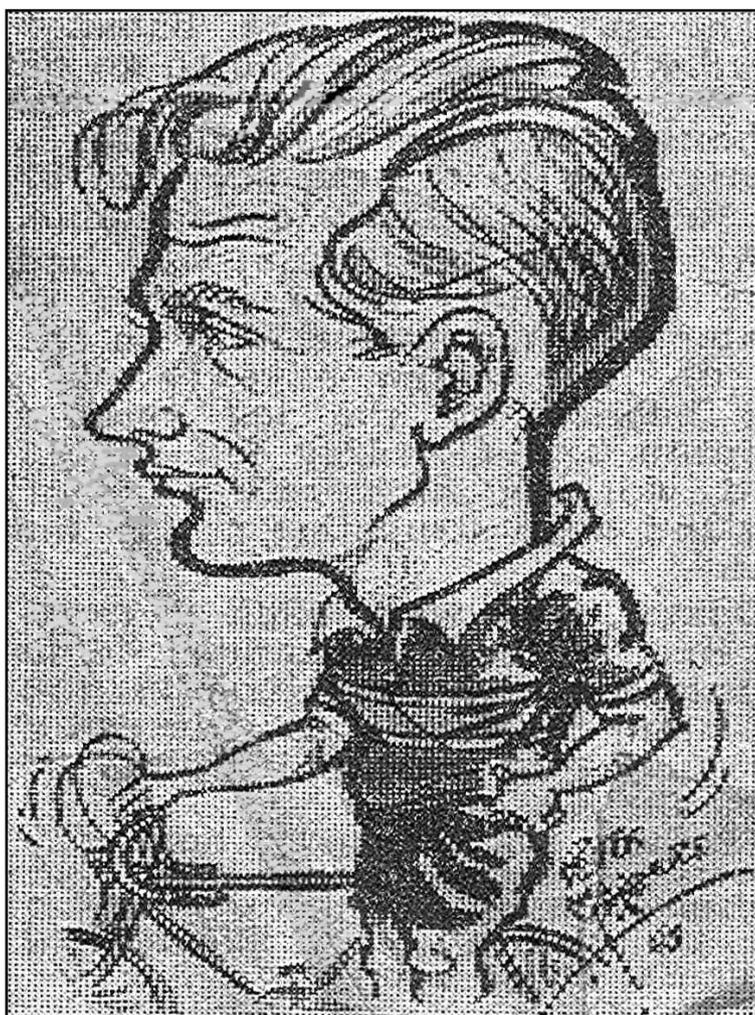
Tree in 60 mins 57 secs. 'The Hereford riders were leading the field until 5 mins from home, with Minovi riding strongly despite a recent back injury.'

It was announced in January 1964 that the club would hold a new competition for the fastest time from Hereford to Shrewsbury and back. A cup would be awarded for the fastest time for a Wheelers rider over the 100-mile course during the year. The first winner was David Lloyd. Colin Rumsey smashed his record by almost three minutes the following year when he clocked 4 hrs 38 mins 45 secs.

The Easter of 1964 saw, for the first time in fifteen years, a local man win the 'Open 25'. Sadly he was not a Wheeler but one Terry Harradine of the Ross-on-Wye CC. 'He rode a storming race in the cold and wet conditions.' Second place went to Clive Tree of Swansea Wayfarers and the team award was won by Cwmcarn Paragon. The Easter tour that year visited North Wales, setting out on Good Friday and visiting Welshpool, Bala, Dollgellau, Towyn, Aberdovey, Machynlleth, Llanidloes, Llangurig, Rhayader and Kington. Here they were joined by other members for tea before returning together to Hereford.

Four years later Wheelers member Maken Minovi set a new course record at Swainshill on Easter Monday 1968 when he became the first rider to break the hour barrier in the club's Open 25-mile time trial. 'He swept home in 59mins 28secs – exactly two minutes faster than second placed RC Garrett (Wessex Road Club).' A field of 113 riders from clubs as far apart as London,

Liverpool, Devon and Leicester competed but the hosts members were in dominant mood, and with Colin Rumsey recording 1hr 3mins 58secs and David Hopkins 1hr 6mins 23secs the Wheelers also carried off the team prize, beating Gloucester City by only five seconds.



Tony Hickling

success in this event.

For several years the club had awarded a trophy for the annual hill climbing event. For the sixth consecutive year, and for the eighth time in all, Tony Hickling won the event held on 26 September 1966. It took place over the 700-yard climb of Stockley Hill, which Tony covered in 2 mins 31 secs. However, it was recorded that the real race was for second place with Keith Hayward getting home just half a second in front of Freddy Jones in 2 mins 48.5 secs. Apparently it was a climatic finish. 'With heavy mist shrouding the finish line, Haywood and Jones suddenly came out of the gloom together with Haywood managing to get home first.'

Although Stockley Hill is not as steep as Westhope Hill, which was used by the club the previous year, or Capler, which was once the traditional course, most riders were over-gearred for the event. Hickling was lucky to choose a reasonable gear ratio and in winning became the first rider to collect the club's new hill-climb trophy. The previous cup was awarded to him outright in 1965 in view of his constant

The new kid on the block in 1968 was 16-year-old Dave Hopkins who recorded 1hr 6mins 23secs in the club's Open 25 to be part of the winning team. During the year he also set up a course record, completing 25 miles in 59mins 29secs and a 15 miles record with a time of 34mins 50secs beating former world champion Beryl Burton's time by six seconds. It was reported that it was a night for him to remember when the Wheelers celebrated their 40th Anniversary with a dinner at Brockhampton Court. On the night he was presented with two prizes, the Arthur Steel Memorial Trophy and the cup for the best junior all-rounder with an average speed of 23.899mph. The City Mayor, Councillor Ivor Williams said: 'You are already a record-breaker. I hope that one day you will put Hereford's name in lights as a cycling champion.' Sadly this was not meant to be. Soon afterwards Dave moved out of the Hereford area and, although he carried on racing, he was hit by a Land Rover while out on his bike and killed.

Guest of honour at the dinner was British road race champion, Colin Lewis who described his experiences in the Tour de France which he completed the previous year. Hopes of getting continental style close-circuit cycle racing in Hereford also moved a step nearer at the dinner. The Mayor said: 'I think it would make an interesting prospect for Hereford. When the road problem is sorted out and you ask us about it, I am sure we will give it sympathetic consideration.'

Young Dave Hopkins achieved national fame in the summer of 1971. The *Hereford Evening News* of 31 August reported...

CITY RIDER IS BRITISH CHAMPION

Dave Hopkins rode his way into the record books yesterday when he became Hereford's first national cycling champion by winning the British Cycling Federation Amateur 5,000 metres Grass Track championship at the Hereford City Annual Sports on the King George's Playing Fields.

Competing against the top 30 riders in the country over the distance the Hereford and District Wheelers rider dominated the race, and at the bell led by all of 70 yards.

He had put everything he'd got into the previous two laps to break clear of his nearest rivals and looked like coasting home until Coventry's Chris Dodd produced a scintillating sprint finish along with Featherstone rider Gary Hill.

With Dodd going like a train down the back straight they pulled back Hopkins's lead so much that as the Hereford rider came out of the final bend it looked for a moment as though he could be caught.

But will the large crowd cheering him on he looked over his shoulder and spotted the danger before producing every last ounce of energy to increase his lagging pace and finish 10 yards ahead of Dodd in a time of eight minutes 9.4 seconds which stands as a record time for the new event, which last year was raced over fine miles.

AS PLANNED

Afterwards Hopkins told me the race had gone almost as he planned except that he had hoped to have got away on his own earlier on. After a false start, the riders made a rolling start and it took Hopkins only 350m to hit the front, but there were several riders including Dodd and last year's national champion Ken Cowdell, who were determined to stick with him.

By the end of the second lap he was 20 yards clear of Dodd and kept his advantage over the next circuit, but on the fourth Dodd and John Read (Halesowen) made a determined and successful attempt to pull back and they closed the gap to two lengths.

WORRIED

Dodd then hit the front and these three riders then led by over 50 yards from the



The Mayor of Hereford presents the winner's jersey to David Hopkins after he finished first in the 5,000m cycle race.

chasing bunch. Hopkins regained the front position at the start of the sixth and quickly lost it again, and this stage he admitted afterwards that he was worried.

"I knew Dodd had a faster finish than I did and I realised I had to get away on my own again," he said.

And that's just what he did but only after three more riders had caught right up with a terrific surge of acceleration he went clear

and was 12 yards up at the start of the eighth lap. He then really turned on the pressure increasing his lead to 40 yards at the beginning of the ninth and 60 yards at the 10th, but all credit to Dodd and Hill for their tremendous last lap when they pulled back 60 yards.

"I always thought I could do it especially when I was so far up at the bell, but by that time I was fading. I got my head down and gritted my teeth but it was a painful last lap and I was glad when I eventually crossed the line," he said.

SECOND

Dodd took second position by less than a wheel from young Gary Hill who certainly looks a good prospect himself for the future.

Hopkins's time was in fact 22.8 seconds faster than that clocked by the professional 5,000m winner Tony Gowland of T.I. Carlton who won six out of six races which included two heats and four finals.

He completely dominated the professional section to win the Hereford City Professional Champion 1971 Sash with a maximum 26 points, with victories in the 2,000m, Devil Take the Hindmost 800m and 5,000m events.

Hopkins failed to qualify for the final of the 800m event which was won by the national champion over this distance Graham Rees of Halesowen who, came home in a time of 1 minute 15.4 seconds, ahead of Dave Watkins (Halesowen) and Welsh International John Beswick of Deeside Olympic.

TRAGEDY

It was in the heats of this event that the only tragedy of the afternoon occurred when John Hinksman (Leicester Forest C.C.) was brought down and hit by a rider from behind. He was taken to hospital with a suspected broken collar bone and badly gashed face.

The final of the 800m handicap event saw Hopkins who had qualified as one of the fastest three riders to have finished second in the heats, in third place at the bell. But the pace was too hot for him and he finished back in seventh place behind winner C. Davidso (Ferry Hill Wheelers).

Second place went to Dodd with N, Hale (Veto Club Central) finishing third.

The Hereford Wheelers rider also rode a good race in the amateur Devil take the Hindmost event, when the tail-end rider at the end of each lap drops out until there are six riders left who then battle it out over one final lap.

IN FRONT

At the bell, Hopkins was in front with Dodd and Watkins in hot pursuit, but he was unable to match their superior finish. Watkins won in 7min. 56sec., just ahead of Dodd and John Turner (Midland C. and A.C.) with Hopkins coming home in fourth place.

The 400m handicap was won by N. Hale in 31.7sec with Dodd second and C Davison (Ferryhill) third.

But for sheer power riding, Gowland, who is a better known as a six-day rider, took all the honours and thoroughly deserved the reception he received when he rode a lap of honour to conclude a tremendous successful afternoon's racing.

From the early 1970s most copies of the club's monthly Runs Lists can be found in the Hereford Library. Unfortunately the earlier editions include the month of the runs but not the year. It was interesting to see that during the mid-70s a notice appeared, 'It is hoped to produce a club magazine to be published later in the year.' No other reference to said magazine appeared

thereafter. Perhaps someone knows if one was indeed ever published before the arrival of the *Hereford & District Wheelers Cycling Club Newsletter* in 2006.

The Novices' Ten had been held annually for many years. It did not coincide with National Bike Week but its purpose was much the same as it is today – to introduce new riders to joy of cycling and the Hereford Wheelers. In 1974 it was reported that there was a good number of entries for the event held at Swainshill. The entry fee was 10p with the offer of free membership to all riders. It was open only to local novice riders belonging to no other cycling club and living within Herefordshire - in brackets afterwards was 'not Worcestershire'. It was probably because this county had several clubs of their own and agreements had been made not to poach members. This was borne out by welcoming a new member from Glasbury-on-Wye shortly afterwards. Even in those days Glasbury was well ensconced on the Welsh side of Offa's Dyke. In 1975 there was 'an excellent turnout for the event with 18 riders'. In 1977 there were 23. And in 1988 16 riders in the novice event 'took up the offer of free membership'. It did not say how many declined.

In 1975 members introduced an 'Easy Riders' run of about 35 miles every month which 'proved to be very successful'. This was in addition to the established 'Hard Riders' and 'Loiterers' runs. It would appear that later the Easy Riders and the 'Loiterers' later became one and classified as 'Easier Rides'. The club was much more of a social gathering forty years ago. There were runs for 'pony trekking', swimming ('bathing runs') and even a run to the 'recently opened Industrial Museum at Blaenavon, where trips down the coal mine are available at a price of £2.50.' This may be because of the general lack of car ownership and the bike was the only means of transport for a day out. A notice in a 1982 Runs List stated; 'Some members have expressed an interest in a car assisted run to get further afield. If you are interested and can supply transport for yourself and others please contact Ian Boushear.' The emphasis for more comfortable rides is probably best illustrated by the notice from Richard Jones Hon Sec; 'Some members have fitted mud-flaps to their rear mud-guards. Why not copy them and do you and your club mates a favour.'

Members also got together more for weekends or longer tours. In the summer of 1975 there was a two-week tour of the 'Yorkshire Dales across to the Isle of Man and back through north Wales.' In the year of the Wheelers' Golden Anniversary 'there was a large representative contingent of members at the CTC rally at York. The National Club were celebrating their centenary and we our half centenary, so that lovely banner we had [flying] at the recent tea was very prominent on the camp site.'

In the November 1974 Runs List there was the following item; 'Tickets for the annual dinner dance and presentation of awards at Brockhampton Court Hotel on 29 November cost £2.50 with a fee bus ride to and from the venue.' By the following year, however, this had increased to £7.00. It is unsurprising, therefore that the venue for the next annual dinner was changed to the Talbot in Leominster, at a cost of £4.00 including a fee bus pass. The buses normally took about a hundred to these dinner/dances departing from, and returning to, the Focus Cinema near the Old House. In 1990 numbers were down to sixty when both the timing and location had changed. Following this it was 'Lunch' at the Lord Nelson when it was reported that; 'Peter Hughes needed a wheelbarrow to take home the bulk of the racing prizes.'

In 1975 it was reported that Colin Rumsey had achieved third in the Welsh Cycling Association's Open 100, with a time of 4.28 but by the next month's runs list it was explained that he had submitted a letter of resignation, 'relating to some incident during the club's 50 on 1 August. A few years later Peter Hughes was congratulated also for coming third in the Welsh Cycling's Open 100 – his first ever 100 – and breaking the club's existing record, set in 1965, by 51 seconds with a time of 4.10.43. The club 100 held in 1977 was 'disappointing with an entry of only 35 riders.' Having said this a note added, 'a third paced rider declared it to have been one of the best organised events he had ever ridden in – including championships.'

The Golden Jubilee

In 1978 the Wheelers held the Golden Jubilee Dinner, Dance and Prize Presentation at the Town Hall with the Mayor and Mayoress in attendance. 82 members wished to take part in this memorable occasion but the council set a maximum of 80. 'Committee members were able to sneak in an extra two chairs and place settings without anyone – even the kitchen staff – noticing.' Eleven of the founder members were able to make it and were warmly received by younger members.

The Golden Jubilee day started earlier with a photo-call on the steps of the Town Hall with the Mayor and Mayoress in attendance. All 82 members then cycled to the 'Club Room' at Stretton Sugas village hall for afternoon tea where Reg Pugh, the President and the Mayor made brief speeches. All then dispersed to don best bib and tucker for the evening's dinner. The following letter of thanks from the founder members appeared in the *Hereford Times*;



GOLDEN JUBILEE DINNER 1978

Founder Members with Mayor

Left to right; T Crompton, Les Powell, S Williams, Vince Brown, Mayor (David Short), Mayoress (Mary Short), Frank Shubert, Alf Evans, Bill Gains, E Preece, Ivor Lambert, G Underwood. Horace Hands

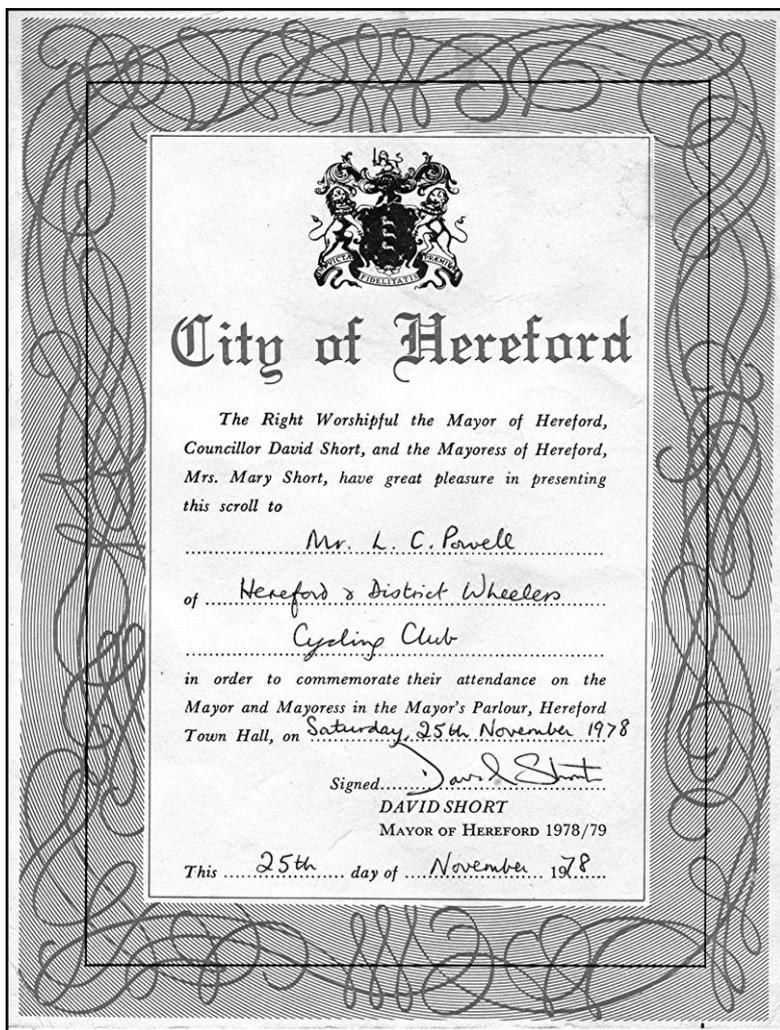
Memorable ride for cycle veterans

I am sure my fellow founder members of the Hereford Wheelers will join me in an expression of thanks to the club in general and to Mr and Mrs P. J. Meredith in particular for the recent wonderful golden jubilee run and celebration. For us to savour again the delights of club cycling, with our captain of 50 years ago (Mr Frank Shubert) leading the way, was an unforgettable experience.

The well-chosen 14-mile route provided a pleasant itinerary within the powers of those taking part. With other pre-war members in support and a large contingent of present-day Wheelers respectfully bringing up the rear, the whole company presented an impressive cavalcade.

We are also grateful to the Mayor and Mayoress of Hereford, Councillor and Mrs David Short, for giving us such a happy send-off from the Town Hall and to the police for their tactful assistance.

The scene at the finish at Stretton Sugwas with the new golden jubilee banner providing a background for further photographs, and the splendid repast inside the hall, completed a memorable occasion. Everyone, we feel, responded to club president, Mr Reg Pugh's warm welcome. Highlights to us were the Mayoral cutting of the magnificent cake, his speech revealing he was no stranger to cycling, little Miss Karen Dancy's posy presentation to the Mayoress and, of course, our captain's reminiscences of his founder colleagues. Of course the following were present: Messrs V. Brown, T. Cromton, A. Evans, W. Gaines, H. Hand, I Lambert, L. Powell, E. Preece, F. Shubert, G. Underwood, and S. Williams. Two regrettably absent were Messrs C. Beach and F. Lewis.



Despite a constraint not to mention further names I feel an exception must be made in the case of Mrs Arthur Smith. A modest lady of 81, she pedalled her way round the course with the best of them.

W. GAINES 8 Web Tree Avenue, Hereford.

The Hereford & District Wheelers' Cycling Club certainly had a glorious year leading on from to the club's fiftieth birthday. In June 1978 they regained the Reg Harris Trophy when they won the Herefordshire Inter-Club 50-mile time trial with an aggregate time of 6hrs 53mins 14secs from their fastest three riders. They were almost four minutes faster than the previous holders, Hereford Gannets, who clocked 6hrs 57mins 19secs. Apparently the Gannets were without their in-form rider, Norman Powell, but gained some compensation through Colin Rumsey. He crossed the finishing line first in 2hrs 14mins 5secs. Phil Transwell was second in 2hrs 15mins 37secs. The other two

riders who helped the Wheelers win the trophy were Eddie Hadley, who was fourth and junior Alan Hyde. The best girl competitor was Valerie Hadley, the sister of Eddie, so for them it was very much a family affair. Ross and District Cycling Club trailed in third place behind the Gannets in the trophy championship.

Those not around Hereford in the 1970s through to the 1990s may be unaware of the City Centre Races that took place then. 'Brian Nicholas always preferred mass starts and road races and had his wish with the 'Kermesse' which started halfway down Broad Street and followed the short course of West Street, Aubrey Street, King Street and up past the start by the Green

Dragon.’ And for those of you who think these streets too narrow for racing, you will not believe that the events included mass starts of 40 riders! Each race was made up of members of amateur clubs ‘plus a few professionals.’

The Hereford Carnival had become much larger with events taking part all week and in other venues as well as King George’s Playing Field. Road Racing was now included in addition to the Grass Track Meeting. In advertising the 1978 event, which started at 7pm on 15 July, promotion literature stated; ‘...the biggest attraction will almost certainly be the Kermesse cycle racing in the evening. With five races and in classes from schoolboys and juniors to amateurs and professionals, the cycle racing is yet another event which shows increased entries. Last year the round the streets races attracted many of the big names in this particular sport, among them Trevor Bull, Phil Bayson and Sid Barras.’

In the *Hereford Times* of 21 July there was a report stating;

There were thrill and spills at the Kermesse racing around the city streets when one rider broke a collar bone and another suffered concussion.

The fast course around West Street, Aubrey Street, King Street and Broad Street provided thrilling entertainment for the large crowd.

Ian Hallam, who was the British amateur pursuit champion on five occasions before turning professional, was among the fancied riders for the professional race but was beaten into second place. Ritchie Gregson of the Falcon Racing Team took first position, while Tony Gowland of Mid-Lett/Chrysler was third.

A record of 180 riders entered the amateur events and overall value of prizes and cash for the meeting was in excess of £600.



Finish Line in Broad Street

Of the next day’s grass track meeting the paper had the following to say;

London professional Steve Hefferman completed a hat-trick of victories at Hereford Carnival grass-track meeting organised by the Hereford Wheelers at the St George's Playing Field.

He won the 8,000m and 1,000m scratch events and also beat off strong opposition to win the 'Devil-take-the-hindmost'.

The hopes of four riders ended when crashed shortly before the last lap of the 1,000m scratch event. As the leading bunch jockeyed for positions at the sound of the bell, one of the riders lost his balance and brought down three others who were tracking him. Among the fallers was Eddie Hadley of the host club.

Hefferman who won the bronze medal for pursuit riding in the World Professional Championships in Venezuela last year missed out on another success when he finished third in the 800m scratch race.

This race was won by Liverpool's Terry Tinsley who finished just ahead of Sean Fenwick of London.

Fenwick, who is on the short list for the Great British Team to go to the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton later this year, was probably the unluckiest rider at the meeting. He produced some consistent performances but had to be content with second place on three occasions.

The Wheelers' junior rider Alan Hyde recorded his first victory in club events when, in August 1978, he won the eighth evening 10-mile TT at Swainshill. The 16-year-old registered a time of 24mins 36secs to take first place and break the domination of Phil Tanswell in the club championship.

After watching the world's top cyclists in action in the Tour de France, Tom Rees returned from holiday to record a personal best time in the club's 100-mile Open TT. Despite a fall at a roundabout he clocked 4hrs 36mins 12secs and with an allowance of 34mins comfortably won the handicap award. The race was won by Welshman John Shehan, of the Bynea Cycling Club, who posted 4hrs 23mins 42secs.

The event had incorporated the Inter-Services Championships where first place went to Derek Brown of the RAF Cycling Club. He was third overall with a time of 4hrs 31mins 48secs. The RAF also won the team award which had been won by the Hereford Wheelers for the previous three years.

In the September 1978 Runs List Keith Hayward as Hon. Sec. wrote;

Since you read your last newsletter the club has had what must have been the most successful month in over 49 years. For the first time ever the streets were closed for 'round the houses racing' which attracted 200 entries and was a spectacle never seen before by the local populace. And what publicity for the club.

Next day, with 60 entries, was the Grass Track and the 'pros' and others put up a marvellous show.

The last of this heavy programme of 'open' events has now gone by also – a recent 100. Attracting 40 entries and with a new promoter, Vera Hadley, it came as a grand finale to a great month. But ho, what a tragedy it was that after such a success the worst accident happened to Jack Court of Speedwell RC whilst turning at Rhydspence. Jack, who was a member of ours when working at the Hereford Times, suffered a broken arm and leg injuries and, at the time of writing, is in the Harriet Davies Ward at the General Hospital.

But for a short period in the late 1990s and early 2000s the Wheelers have been affiliated to the CTC. In 1989 Ross CC hosted the CTC Birthday Rides and asked Hereford members to lead some of the runs. 'This not only provides help to Ross CC and the CTC but will also provide useful experience for the 1991 CTC Birthday rides which we are hosting'. A new CTC District Association was proposed in 1990 'to cover Kidderminster, Evesham, Hereford etc. instead of

the remote Birmingham DA'. A competition for a badge for the new Hereford and Worcester DA was initiated in 1993. The formation of the new DA saw the introduction of an annual run ('easy ride') where lunch was followed by the DA AGM – initially at Puddleston and these days at Welland.

CTC camping weekends were still held regularly until the new Millennium, but it was not all plain sailing on the touring front. An item in 1980 covering CTC events stated; 'For the past couple of years Stuart has been the lone competitor from our club in the South Wales heat of the CTC national tourist trial and he would like more support from other members.'

There was also a lot of Youth Hostelling taking place. 'At the end of the month the weekend at Wilderhope Manor should be great fun. Not only is the hostel a unique and ancient building but we hope to go on the steam railway from Bridgnorth to Bewdley (with bikes) during the morning.' Hostel weekends were held once a month with the Sunday runs including an outing to meet the returning 'hostellers'. The Ross-on-Wye Wheelers held an annual 'Daffodil Weekend' comprising a choice of rides on the Saturday and Sunday with slide shows and dances in the evenings. Participants from Hereford Wheelers were booked into Welsh Bicknor Youth Hostel.

Racing, of course, remained an important aspect of the Wheelers. The 1980 Club Racing Programme is shown below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Start</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Fee</i>
<i>Sun 16 Mar</i>	<i>Scratch 25</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>9.00am</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Sun 30 Mar</i>	<i>First Handicap 25</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>9.00am</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Mon 7 Apr</i>	<i>Open 25 (see RTT handbook)</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>10.00am</i>	<i>Free</i>
<i>Sun 20 Apr</i>	<i>Novices 10</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>7.15pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Thurs 8 May</i>	<i>First Evening 10</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>7.15pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Sun 11 May</i>	<i>First Handicap 50</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>8.30am</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Thurs 15 May</i>	<i>Second Evening 10</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Thurs 22 May</i>	<i>Two-up 25</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p per rider</i>
<i>Sat 31 May</i>	<i>Abertillery Inter-Club 25 (see Phil Tanswell)</i>			
<i>Thurs 5 Jun</i>	<i>First Evening 25</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Thurs 12 Jun</i>	<i>Fourth Evening 10</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Sun 15 Jun</i>	<i>Reg Harris Inter-Club 50</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>8.00am</i>	
<i>Thurs 19 Jun</i>	<i>Fifth Evening 10</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Thurs 26 Jun</i>	<i>Second Evening 25</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Thurs 3 Jul</i>	<i>Sixth Evening 10</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Thurs 10 Jul</i>	<i>Seventh Evening 10</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Sat 12 Jul</i>	<i>Kermesse (see BCF Handbook)</i>			
<i>Sun 13 Jul</i>	<i>Grass Track (see BCF Handbook)</i>			
<i>Thurs 17 Jul</i>	<i>Third Evening 25</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Thurs 24 Jul</i>	<i>Eighth Evening 10</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Thurs 31 Jul</i>	<i>Ninth Evening 10</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Sun 3 Aug</i>	<i>Open 100 (see RTTC Handbook) Qualifying Event for Club Senior BAR</i>			
<i>Thurs 7 Aug</i>	<i>Fourth Evening 25</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.30pm</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Thurs 14 Aug</i>	<i>Tenth Evening 10</i>	<i>ALL</i>	<i>7.15pm</i>	<i>20p</i>
<i>Sun 17 Aug</i>	<i>Second Handicap 50</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>8.00am</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Sun 24 Aug</i>	<i>Stratford RC Open 25 (see RTTC Handbook) Qualifying Event for Club Senior BAR</i>			
<i>Sun 31 Aug</i>	<i>Handicap 30</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>9.00am</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Sat 6 Sep</i>	<i>Hill Climb</i>	<i>Capler</i>	<i>3.00pm</i>	<i>50p</i>
<i>Sun 14 Sep</i>	<i>Middle markers' and Second Handicap 25</i>	<i>SW</i>	<i>9.00am</i>	<i>50p</i>

SW = Swainshill ALL = Allensmore

Note: Although we have a full competitive programme up to the end of the time trial season we hope to see you on our Sunday rides and occasional weekends at Youth Hostels.

The 1980 Runs List boasted 'our biggest weekend of the year passed off very successfully again. Nearly 200 entries for the Kermesse must have given Bryan [Nicholas] a feeling of

elation for all the work he puts into that and the Grass Track events. What a pity the weather was so foul on Sunday for the latter event. Dave Rudd was fourth in his event in the streets and but for a slipped chain was doing well on the grass.

The Reg Harris Inter-Club 50 was held at Swainshill in 1980. A note appeared saying; 'Dave, Phil, Alan and Tom are not the only ones getting their names in *Cycling*. Roy Cromack showed them all a thing or two in the recent Reg Harris Inter-Club 50 when he stormed around our hilly course with a 2.31.

By 1990 a new Wheelers star was shining. Peter Hughes won the first 'Evening 10' in a time of 22.43. A week or so later he clocked 22.03 in the Cwmcarn Paragon – only 1.11 behind national champion John Pritchard. The following day he finished third in the Abergavenny time trial, only 53 secs behind Pritchard. Hughes won the club 'Handicap 25' with a record time of 57.48. Shortly afterwards he won the Easter Monday 'Open 25' with a 58.20 in 'blustery conditions' – following disappointment a few days earlier when he DNF, with a broken spoke, in the Good Friday Wyre Forest RCC 31-mile hilly time trial. At the end of May he had lowered the club '25' record to 56.31 and came 4th in the 'Bromsgrove Olympique 25' at Worcester with 56.34. Hughes scored another notable victory in June in the Acme Wheelers 50-mile TT. 'On a hard course in less than favourable conditions he rode a PB of 1.59.04 beating Welsh BAR Champion Nigel Lewis by 40 secs. Success stayed with him for the remainder of the year and by August he had broken every club record from 10 miles to 100 miles.

The 'Shrewsbury and Back' event in July 1990 was made difficult with a strong headwind on the return leg. Only four riders managed to finish – BAR Peter Hughes was home first in 4.30, a long way ahead of Ned Potter (5.01.11) and vet, Dave Unsworth (5.06.23). The following month these three Wheelers took part in the National 100-mile TT in Radnor. Hughes came 15th with 4.19.02, Unsworth 4.46.53 and Potter 4.52.50.

It is unclear if the annual Novice 10 in the last half of the century attracted many new riders to the racing fraternity in the longer term. Certainly more youngsters raced with the Wheelers in those days. Mathew Biggs and his father joined together in 1991. 'Mathew, at only 14 years of age, could be another Peter Hughes with a 26.36 for the 10 in only his 4th race.' Alan Hyde was another fast youngster. A Ladies 10-mile Handicap Competition and an Evening Ten Handicap Competition was introduced in 1993. The fee was £1.00 per event, 40p of which would be accumulated and awarded as prize money. The first 'lady' would accumulate 6 points with the second getting 5 points etc. The first rider in the other event would have 30 points, again descending in point increments.

During this period cyclo-cross was also popular. In 1993 an appeal went out; 'Does anyone know a farmer or landowner who would let us run cyclo-cross events over their land during the winter. If so contact Ned Potter.' Ned was the coordinator and the organiser of our own events. For some time they were held at Foxley Estate, Mansell Lacy. The Runs List of 1993/4 began to publish the calendar of events for the Welsh Cyclo-Cross League. Mountain Bike runs also became popular in the 1990s under the auspices of Martin Craig, Tony White and Mick Morris. In 1994 Mick Morris and Tony White were joint vet winners (and 9th overall) in the Polaris Challenge, while Alan Hyde came 6th overall. The following year the two vets won this category again as well as coming first vets in the Trail Quest Open mountain bike event held in the Berwyn Mountains. Sadly Tony White suffered a fatal heart attack while riding in the club Evening 10 on 21 May 1998.

Long standing and loyal Wheelers member Percy Meredith died in January 1992. He joined the club only two years after it was founded and by 1933 was the Hon Secretary. For the remainder of his life he continued to support the club, not only by providing a base for meetings and the 'Open 25' on his premises, but also by serving in all the appointments on the committee. He was the Wheelers President from 1966-70 and afterwards was a vice president until his death.

At a meeting later in the year it was proposed, and accepted, that the 'Open 25' would become 'The Percy Meredith Memorial Open 25'. The club also presented Stretton Sugwas Parish Church with a bible in memory of Percy and the part the parish had played in the history of the Wheelers. The bible was used in the funeral service of his widow, Mary, many years later in August 2010.

In 1975 there was a full card of 120 for the Easter Monday 'Open 25 – and great weather'. And again twenty four years later in 1999 numbers were still up to almost a full card. The Open 25 was followed a month later by the Inter-Club 25 organised by the Abertillery Wheelers at Pandy. This appears to have been a regular fixture until the end of the period. Unfortunately the only results available are that 'Alan Hyde and Phil Tanswell were the most successful in 1980.'

The first reference of the Wheelers holding an event specifically for National Bike Week was in 1993 with a 'Hereford Wheelers' Challenge'. It was listed as a 'one off' event to raise funds for the club and Trinity School Physically Handicapped Unit and organised by Dave Unsworth. There were three events: a short fun ride 'suitable for families'; an intermediate ride – up to 40 miles – for occasional cyclists; and 'a testing 70plus-mile ride for expert cyclists'. Entry for under 14 was £1, over 14 £3 and for a family £6. It was a big success and £1,250 was raised for the Trinity School Unit. The following year the club effort for Bike Week was a much publicised leisurely, hill free, day's ride along country lanes with stops for elevenses, a picnic lunch and afternoon tea. It was later reported that the ride was 'enjoyed by a record number' but no yard stick was suggested.

The Wednesday Wheelers

In 1992 Dick Wallis retired from gainful employment and was able to get out during the week. If the weather was fine club mate Eric Rees would close his motorcycle business for the day and they would set off on their bikes. Occasionally their wives would accompany them. This soon developed into a regular Wednesday run and others started to join them. A 'club' badge was created and several of them started to wear it.

The Wednesday run normally took the form of a ride out to Jules's café by 11.00 to 11.30. They would leave with just enough time to arrive at the Crown at Dillwyn for a hearty lunch and a few pints. There then followed a leisurely ride to, say, Pembridge where 'an excellent strawberry and cream tea could be had for a nominal sum.'

Soon other club members were taking part – Bob Jones, Stuart Edinborough, Jeff Ward, Marcus and Nicola Bedwell, Keith Hayward and later on Don Smith the ex-Olympic Champion who used to cycle up from Monmouth. By this time the runs were getting longer and in all directions. Presteigne and Hay-on-Wye were obvious targets but others included the Old Bakery at Peterchurch, the tea room at Middlewood, the PO tea rooms at Pandy, Ewyas Harold, Eardisland, the Swan at Letton 'for rabbit pie', the Lamb at Stoke Prior and the Moon at Glasbury.

Apparently Dick Wallis used to say that 'cycling as we know it will not be around in ten years' time.' In 2007 Martin Halls, a member of the Wednesday group since 1994, wrote to contradict this and that the true spirit of the Wednesday Wheelers still carries on today.

Each week we meet at Jules, in Weobley, around 10.30 for coffee and a chance to put the world to rights. I am convinced the programme 'Grumpy Old Men' was based on the conversations we have! The group thrives and one Wednesday in March I counted 22 cyclists out on a not very pleasant day. However, in case I give the wrong impression, although most of us are past the usual retiring age there are a significant number of early retirees and even one regular member in his forties. Most are ex racers but several are less experienced cyclists.

In the best of traditions, the ride depends on the weather, particularly the wind direction! Some members find the ride to Weobley and back is sufficient but others will stay out for the day. In the summer there are often 2 separate groups. One will cover 40 miles in total while the other will do 50-70 miles. Do not be deceived! These are not training rides! In the true spirit of Eric, these are Social rides. No head down stuff for us! No sprints for the 30s signs! No way! Tight formation, good manners for other road users but, most important, good conversation as we go along and a good café for lunch or a cup of tea. True CTC (café to café) members. Picnicking in churches with associated sightseeing seems to be a favourite occupation of the group! Have you sat in the church at Cymyoy and looked at the verticals, seen the frescos in Brinsop Court Church, the W W 1 field crosses in St Mary's by the Wormsley golf course? How about the bluebells near Erwood or the Red Kites? Gladestry church has DIY coffee. Amazing what you see and learn.

So great is our enjoyment that we now have a Friday offshoot. We meet at the Baptist church hall in Ewyas Harold around 10.45, where we are made very welcome by all the village residents who refer to us as 'our cyclists'.



More recently, in efforts to distinguish the two rides, those meeting on Friday, despite being basically the same individuals, have begun calling themselves the Friday Antiques Road Show.

Monthly meetings of the Hereford Wheelers continued to be held but the meeting place frequently changed – usually reverting back to the Meredith's place at Swainshill until a new one was found. By 1992, however, following the death of Percy Meredith, the AGM was being held at Hereford Rowing Club and this became the meeting place for the monthly meetings. A new club venue was discovered for Friday nights in 1998 – the College Hill Youth Club – with sole use of all facilities including, 2 pool tables, snooker table, table tennis, dart board, sound system 'bring your tapes', TV, coffee bar weights room and showers. 'Bring your bike, go for a ride then come back for a weights session before a shower to then relax with the other members over a game of snooker.' For the first eight months this was free of charge and, as no other references to the club was unearthed, it is assumed the Wheelers moved back to the Hereford Rowing Club when charges were introduced.

The Wheelers were still organising an 'Autumn Road Race' until well into the 1990s. The course had been moved from the original 10-mile circuit of Callow, Kingsthorpe, Barrack Hill and Caldicott to a base at Credenhill Village Hall. It was now an 84-mile race of two circuits. The start was on the A438 at Swainshill and followed a route through Eardisley to a right turn onto the A44 at Kington. Once through Pembridge there was a right turn onto the A4112 and back through Eardisley to complete the circuit. This was repeated twice as far as Sarnsfield on the second circuit before turning left onto the A480 and the finish at Credenhill. The 1995 race card included 60 riders but no Wheelers were listed. Prizes were £60 for the winner down to £20 for six place with two 'primes' each of £20 for the first lap and £10 for the second and third lap.

For most of this period Wheelers' officials remained the same – President Bryan Nicholas, who also tended to organise the Open races, Hon Secretary Keith Haywood and Hon Treasurer Reg Pugh. These positions then appeared to change over frequently. It was also apparent that there was a lack of volunteers for many of the important appointments. The cry went out for a new press secretary. 'Phil Tanswell has been doing [the job] for 6½ years ... and we now urgently need a volunteer to carry on the good work. Another item said; '... there are fewer events this year due to the lack of marshals and timekeepers. There is no reason why any racing member cannot volunteer to assist occasionally.' In 1997 the annual Road Race was cancelled 'as no one was prepared to organise it.' The following year there were only three riders for the club 50 and only one turned up for the Hill Climb. The problem had to be urgently addressed but by the end of the period several of the big events run by the Wheelers, such as the Grass Track racing, the Kermesse and the Road Races were lost, probably for ever.

The New Millennium

Unsurprisingly, the Christian world saw the New Millennium as an opportunity for celebration and a resolution to do better, individually, nationally and internationally. Like most New Year resolutions, however, the momentum quickly faded and it was back to 'business as usual'. A new determination to achieve a better life-style with more individual exercise did not reflect a dramatic increase in sporting activity or club membership. For the first few years of the 2000s numbers of club members continued to fall and there was a general feeling that something had to be done to attract more cyclists across the board. Efforts were made to recruit more members without much success. Then with growing concern about the large percentage of people in this country now overweight and obese, following trends elsewhere, campaigns to exercise more and eat less became common. At the same time with an increased awareness of global warming, appeals were made to do more to protect the environment, such as getting people out of cars and onto bicycles. In large conurbations cycling became the acceptable means of commuting to work. Success by British professional riders in racing, especially on the track, also managed to attract more people into recreational cycling, by taking part in time trials, cycle sportives and triathlons.

This initiative in cycling, for the environment and fitness, was beginning to be experienced in increased Wheelers membership by the middle of the noughties. By 2010 membership reached over the 200 mark, a record in the history of the club. The numbers of riders turning up for club 10-mile TTs increased and by the first event of 2010 reached 70 – another record.

In 2003, to celebrate the 75th year of the club, members spent an enjoyable weekend cycling with Phil Liggett and his wife in the Shropshire countryside with an overnight stop at a beautiful at the YHA Hostel on Wenlock Edge. Wilderhope Manor is a Grade 1 listed Elizabethan manor house which, in 1936, was purchased by the WA Cadbury Trust who donated it to the National Trust on condition that it was used as youth hostel. Opening in 1937, it has remained in use by the Youth Hostels Association ever since.

During 'Bike Week' in 2006 69 novices – a record number and several times larger than had been experienced in recent years – turned up to test themselves over the 10-mile Allensmore

circuit. The start time was delayed until 7.10pm to process all the entries and it was inevitable that the event proved to be longer than usual. Calculating the results also took longer and it was decided that a more streamlined organisation was necessary to ensure the success of future events. As a result the 'Come And Try It' encouraged more novices to become members, which, of course, for so long had been the aim of the event.

AUDAX

Many members over the years have taken part in events organised by Audax UK, the internationally recognised long-distance cycling association, established in 1976 to oversee the running of long-distance cycling events in the UK. The idea of Audax was first formulated in Italy. Participants had to swim, run, walk, or cycle a set distance in 14 hours which was approximately the time between sunrise and sunset. The distance to be covered by cycling was 200 kilometres. Five years later a Frenchman, Henri Desgranges produced regulations requiring cyclists to form groups, each with a captain, that stayed together for the entire ride. Since then it has developed into an individual effort where riders may form into groups if they so wish. Distances have also increased with the Paris-Brest-Paris (PBP at 1,200km the oldest) and London-Edinburgh-London (LEL 1,400km) being the two more celebrated of the longer events. Check points (or controls) are positioned along the routes to confirm that riders complete the course. Some of the longer rides provide rudimentary sleeping accommodation for short breaks but generally cyclists will take rests wherever they are able. Food may be made available but generally it has to be purchased on route.



From at least 2007 Wheelers have successfully completed the PBP when Alex Haines finished the course in 57hrs 10mins. To qualify for the event Alex had to complete Audax rides of 200km, 300km, 400km and 600km in the previous year making him a Super Randonneur. The following year Dave Unsworth's name appeared on the select list of Audax UK's 2008 Super Randonneurs. It appears that Dave used this amazing 'build-up training' to achieve a gold award in the 2008 National 24-hour Time. Subsequently Wheelers Nigel Jones (2011 69hrs 48mins) and Daryl Stickings (2015 65hrs 50mins) completed the challenge that is Paris-Brest-Paris.

Like PBP the London-Edinburgh-London Audax happens every 4 years, attracting long distance cyclists from across the world. It is the smaller brother of Paris-Brest-Paris (PBP) but although not as well attended it is regarded as tougher, with the longer distance (1,433km) to cover and more climbing (11,128m). And, it is said, fewer cyclist-friendly locals. In 2013 four riders from the Wheelers decided they would take part; Nigel Jones, Anthony

Waddington, Daryl Stickings and Luke Williams. They all completed the exacting course in 99hrs, well inside the 115hrs allowed for the event.

In the world of Super Randonneurs they say the problem with riding Audaxes is that however hard a ride is you always manage to find a harder one. Not content with London-Edinburgh-London Luke Williams and Daryl Stickings decided to take on the Mille Cymru the following year; a 1,020km ride around Wales with 16,000m of climbing and a maximum time of 75hrs in which to complete it. These rides are often about extremes, sun burn can turn into freezing cold descents at midnight, one minute you can be wide awake, the next fighting the urge to sleep with 100k to ride to a control. This challenge proved to be 'a lot tougher than even the LEL and easily the hardest event' they had completed finishing only 2hrs inside the time limit.

For many years the local Audax event was The Cambrian, a 210km ride described as a 'breathhtaking ride via Llanidloes to Machynlleth and back with great views, quiet lanes and excellent cafés', was held originally on Easter Saturday. Closer inspection reveals there was 3,860m of climbing. The event, organised by Peak Audax based in the Peak district, the Cheshire Plains and the Lancashire Pennines, as part of the activities of Manchester & District CTC. started at Monkland Village Hall, just off the A44. Two other rides were also on offer: the Cambrian Minor, a 168km (3,305m of climbing) excursion following the same out and back route but turning back at Staylittie; and the Welsh Marches, a 120km (1,645ms of ascent) outing to Grosmont, Gospel Pass and Hay-on-Wye. The organiser for a number of years had been Audax UK member Daniel Webb. He was due to move to a new appointment and keen to hand on The Cambrian. In April 2012 Wheelers member Nigel Jones took on the responsibility of organising this popular event. He stuck with the original 210km ride (starting at 0800) and planned a shorter 140km outing, turning back at Llanidloes, leaving an hour later. Both rides started and finished at Eardisland village hall. This local event had been strongly supported by Wheelers members in the past and this proved to be the case again. Nigel organised these Audaxes for three years when he was joined by Luke Williams and Daryl Stickings to move the departure venue to the leisure Centre in Leominster. They also introduced a 80km ride via Little Brampton and Shrobdon.

An alternative Audax was also introduced by Hereford Wheelers in 2011. Starting from the Hereford Leisure Centre the 215km ride took in Ludlow, Hay-on-Wye, Monmouth and Ross-on-Wye before returning to the Leisure Centre. A shorter route of 100km took riders along the same lanes as the longer event but returned to Hereford from Hay via Hwys Harold. A 50km fun ride was included out to Pembridge and back. The event was held annually for three years but numbers for the 215km ride proved disappointing and it was discontinued.

For the first time during the winter of 2006/7 a more structured and focused training regime was introduced for those keen on racing. Bill Berry had taken the lead in the direction of the training programme. Initially a ramp test determined the individuals' basic fitness and then on alternate weeks a spin session followed by an aerobic session was designed to increase the individuals' cycling capacity. The gym test was made up of four exercises to focus other muscle groups of the body to help when cycling – press-ups, star jumps, squats and sit-ups.

These activities took place in Pateshall Hall until the hall became too small for the numbers wishing to take part. The venue was moved to Sutton St Nicholas School Hall in 2008 where, on occasions, more than 70 members turned out. They proved to remain popular and Bill Berry continued to coach these sessions until Stuart McFarlane took over following a coaching course.

Controlled Sunday morning training rides of varying distances during the winter months were arranged. Soon a system for the faster riders was devised whereby everyone met at 0900 at Steels Garage and set off in groups of equal ability. In addition a second set of riders met at 0930 for 'a brisk club ride'. More social rides were proposed to bring all members together. The

start of the 2007 season saw an invigorated membership attending club time trials supported by riders from Climb-on-Bikes and the Hereford Tri Club which led to more competition and improved times.



To celebrate the 80th anniversary of the Hereford Wheelers Club three days of various cycle rides were based around the Easter weekend. On the Saturday a well-attended 80km Challenge ride left the Hereford Leisure Centre and travelled through Leominster, Weobley, Staunton on Wye, Mocca, Eaton Bishop and back to Hereford Leisure Centre. On Sunday 3 different touring rides took place over varying distances from 20 miles to 60 miles. Finally on Monday the annual Percy Meredith 'Open 25' Time Trial took place on the Weobley course. A field of 39 riders took part with Hereford Wheelers, members putting in good performances. Jon Tetley was the best placed club members in 3rd place in a time of 1.1. 55, Gaby McDermott was the first lady in a time of 1.18.52 and Wheelers took the overall Team prize with Jon Tetley 3rd, Alex Haines 4th and Ian Rivers 7th. In total eleven Wheelers took part in the race.

In the middle of May it was decided to hold a 2-up TT in conjunction with the Veteran Bikes '10'. Based at Pateshall Hall it was also decided to hold a barbecue, organized by Andy Jones, following the racing. A large number of riders and families and friends made this a great success and ensured it became a permanent feature in the racing calendar.

2008 Racing Season

Sun	16th March		<u>35 mile Road Bike TT</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Sat	22nd March		80 km Challenge ride		
Sun	23rd March		Touring ride		
Mon	24th March	Open	<u>Hereford Wheelers 'Open' 25</u>		Weobley
Sun	30th March		<u>3 X 2 mile Sprint TT</u>		Stretton Sugwas
Sun	6th April		<u>1st '25' (Scratch)</u>		Leominster
Thurs	10th April		<u>Road bike '10' TT</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Thurs	17th April		<u>1st '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Thurs	24th April		<u>2nd '10'</u>	Leom 10 (Arrow)	Leominster
Thurs	1st May		<u>3rd '10'</u>	C10/17	Lugg Bridge
Thurs	8th May		<u>4th '10'</u>	Yazor '10'	Yazor
Sun	11th May	Open, 7, 16	Welsh CA '25' (Welsh C'ship)	R25/22	
Thurs	15th May		<u>5th '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Sat	17th May		<u>Veteran Bikes '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
			<u>2UP TT</u>		

and Club BBQ

Thurs 22nd May		<u>6th '10'</u>	Leom 10 (Arrow)	Leominster
Thurs 29th May	11	<u>2nd '25' (1st Handicap)</u>		Stretton Sugwas
Tues 3rd June		<u>Inter-Club 2-up '10'</u>		Ludlow
Thurs 5th June		<u>Inter-Club 2-up '10'</u>	Leom 10 (Arrow)	Leominster
Thurs 12th June		<u>7th '10'</u>	C10/17	Lugg Bridge
Sun 16th June	Open	<u>Welsh CA '50' (Welsh C'ship)</u>	R50/1B	
Wed 18th June		<u>3rd '25'</u>		Leominster
Thurs 19th June		<u>Come and Try It '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Thurs 26th June		<u>8th '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Thurs 3rd July		<u>9th '10'</u>	Yazor '10'	Yazor
Thurs 10th July		<u>10th '10'</u>	Leom 10 (Arrow)	Leominster
Thurs 17th July		<u>fun 10 (4th '25' postponed)</u>		Stretton Sugwas
Sun 20th July	Open	<u>RTTC National '100' Championship</u>	R100/1 rev	
Thurs 24th July		<u>11th '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Thurs 31st July		<u>12th '10'</u>	C10/17	Lugg Bridge
Sun 2nd August	Open	<u>Welsh CA '10' (Welsh C'ship)</u>	R10/17	
Thurs 7th August		<u>5th '25'</u>		Leominster
Sun 10th August	Open	<u>Welsh CA '100' (Welsh C'ship)</u>	R100/8	
Thurs 14th August		<u>13th '10'</u>	Yazor '10'	Yazor
Thurs 21st August		<u>14th '10'</u>	C10/17	Lugg Bridge
Thurs 28th August		<u>15th '10'</u>	C10/16	Allensmore
Sun 31st August	Open	<u>Welsh '12' hour TT</u>	12/95	Abergavenny
Thurs 4th Sept		<u>Haugh Wood Hill Climb</u>	Hill Climb	Haugh Wood
Sun 14th Sept		<u>Club '30' Championship</u>	TBA	

Jon Tetley was dominating the racing programme but after a couple of years he was being



overtaken by the improving times of Alex Haines and Ian Rivers. During the 2008 season veteran club member, Dave Unsworth, won the gold medal in the over 70s category in the National 24-hour Time Trial Championships, with a distance of 326.1 miles, and the Wheelers team of Ian Rivers, Jon Tetley and Alex Haines excelled by taking victory in the 100-mile TT, the 12-hour TT and the Best All Round prize in the Welsh Championships. Final Welsh BAR placings were Rivers 3rd, Haines 5th and Tetley 8th and Chris Hughes 12th. Also Alison Hall claimed 5th position and Sarah Lloyd-Stephens 6th in

the Welsh Ladies BAR. Rivers also gained 1st place in the Welsh Championship Points. Locally Rivers smashed all of the club's '10-mile' Time Trial course records.

Sarah Lloyd-Stevens was even more successful in 2009. As well as finishing Wheelers' BAR and fastest ladies 'Evening-10', she won the Ladies BAR in the seasons Welsh Championships. As a consequence she took the Herefordshire Sportswoman of the Year at the end of the year. A year later she won the Welsh 12-hour TT Championships to become the only woman in the history of the Wheelers to do so.

In 2010 club members participated at a higher level with Nicola Goodwin, Claire Hebblethwaite, Jon Tetley and Ian Rivers represented Great Britain in the European Ironman Triathlon Championships, having qualified by turning in good times in National Half Ironman or long-distance events the previous season. Goodwin won the silver medal in her age group and the others finished well up in their respective groups.

It would appear the club is experiencing a new lease of life in the New Millennium with success locally, in Wales and Europe.

Membership is soaring to record levels promoting, along with increased membership of other local clubs, such as Climb on Bikes and the Hereford Tri-Club, competition in racing to a higher level than ever before. All appears well in the world of cycling as the Hereford Wheelers look set to hit the 100 years anniversary with many more members and activities than at the formation of the club...**TO BE CONTINUED**



Sarah Lloyd-Stevens



Rear cover: Hereford Kermesse 1980s
Inside rear cover: Racing in the 2000s



www.herefordwheelers.com