

LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 8

(March/April 2007)

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'also incorporating news from the Lightweight Group of the V-CC'

The second **Lightweight Group Weekend** will be held at Langport, Somerset on the weekend of 30 June/1 July. For those who don't know the format, there is a ride on Saturday and Sunday sandwiching a dinner at the Langport Arms Hotel on the Saturday evening. It is of course possible to do just one ride or the two rides without the dinner. For pre-1960 machines equipped with period components. Subdued clothing please (no modern lycra trade-jerseys) Organiser is Alex Von Tutschek vontutschek@onetel.com or phone: 01225 465532. If you cannot contact Alex his 'deputy' is David Palk - phone: 01329 829677

Mad and Foolish 2007 – March 31; Black Bike Ride meet 9am for 10.30am start at Pembridge Village Hall April 1; the **Lightweight Ride** meet 9am for 10.15am start at Madley Parish Hall. We have a new route in our gorgeous Golden Valley this year and we'd like as many as possible to enjoy it. Colin Barrett's phone number is 01981 250108 if anyone needs a set of details.

In the last edition of Lightweight News I cheekily talked about six-foot cyclists in girl's P E or gym knickers. It seems that they weren't the only ones to find an alternative use for these garments. In *Cycling*, May 29th 1940 the following was reported:- "The problem for many girls is to keep the dress or skirt down when cycling. And it is more of a problem just now because fashion has decreed both short skirts and abbreviated underwear (*down boys!*). Bare leg is all right below shorts and bathing costumes but we are, perhaps strangely, embarrassed about displaying bare flesh above stocking tops. To our way of thinking the solution to this problem is simple. It can be dangerous to ride one-handed in a constant endeavour to hold the skirt down, and although there are 'anchoring' devices in the form of elastic skirt holders we prefer to see the care-free girl who has slipped on extra gym knickers for her cycling occasions and who can in consequence forget about her skirt or dress knowing that whatever happens she is 'respectable and presentable'." I bet the girls thanked *Cycling* for this gem of information. It is reassuring to know that they had their eye on the main problems of the day when the country was at war.

I have always felt the the Lightweight movement gravitates on the Southern part of the UK, possibly due to the fact that Hampshire has for so long had a very active and strong lightweight section which naturally became the epicentre of the Lightweight Group. However Chris's piece on the Blackpool Road Club plus a page on the website (Classic Lightweights) about the Hill Special marque helps to redress the balance a bit. There is also a Hill Special Road/Path in Readers' Bikes. We also have an entry on Whittaker and Mapplebeck/Pennine on the site (this was initially in Lightweight News 4) which Patricia and I researched. Now to cap it we have memories of life as a 50's cyclist in Bradford which follows Memories of Blackpool R C Part 2.

Memories of Blackpool Road Club - Part two

By Chris Aspinwall

Races were time trials and fields of 120 riders were the norm. My father Phil states it was very hard to get entry to an open event without a 'time'. Entries were sorted prior to the event. The first man off in an event was always a rider from the promoting club. The fastest rider went off at 60 on the starting sheet, next fastest at 30 and then 90, then the other 10 marks, then 5 marks and the remaining spaces filled with other riders. Riders couldn't compete in open events until aged 18. Second class open events were run to allow riders to compete to get times and some clubs promoted second class events where there was a very large entry. Blackpool RC didn't promote any open events but it did run club events. Any open event entry was judged on the applicant's fastest time and entries could be returned with a note to state that entries closed at a certain time for the event e.g. 50 mile T.T. entries closed at 2 hrs 10 mins. A medium gear event was the opening event of the racing season and the season was usually brought to a close with the hillclimb events. Phil remembers the Blackpool area as having strong riders. Jemmy Stott held the National 25 mile T.T. Championship, Pete Shuttleworth was another champion at the distance and Randy Allsop was the National 50 mile T.T. Champion. Phil left the Blackpool RC in 1956 after the close of the racing season and moved to Cleveleys RC as his fiancée was a member of this club. He moved from Blackpool to Cheshire in 1963 and believes the Blackpool RC must have folded in the 1960s.

The Blackpool RC was a racing club and didn't have a strong social side, unlike the Cleveleys RC. The Cleveleys club had a Christmas club dinner dance and a Valentine's dance. The 'off season' when racing had ended was spent youth hostelling, usually going to attend dances. The dancing attire was carried in the saddlebag. Youth hostelling was also part of the spring training drive to get fit for racing. Terms used when riding in the bunch was "oil up" for a car

approaching the bunch from the rear, “oil down” for a car approaching from the front, “easy” to get the bunch to slow down, “below inside” or “inside” for a pothole or obstacle in the road. Phil states that the term “bonk” was definitely used to describe Glycogen deficiency!

Other memories are of going on midnight runs in the autumn. Phil used a carbide lamp and was usually encouraged to the front of the bunch because it gave off a good light. In the days of less street lighting, once you went out of the town it was very dark. A favourite prank was to shout “bring out your dead” as they cycled through the villages. Another memory is of the Shard Toll Bridge over the River Wyre. It was a 1d for a bicycle and rider, so the bunch used to rush the bridge shouting to the attendant last man is paying. This usually resulted in them avoiding the toll charge until one clear frosty night the attendant heard the sound of the approaching bicycle tyres and closed the gate at the bridge before they reached it, causing a pile up. Phil also has memories of riding the Bootle Track in Liverpool. He had to ride the bike from Blackpool to take part in the meeting and relates that the locals started rolling bottles down the banking of the track when local riders were being eclipsed in races. He also competed on the Onchan Track on the Isle of Man on a few occasions.

Phil returned to cycling in the late 1970's and rode for the Kings Moss CC, having long ago sold the Holdsworth Zephyr and Hercules Kestrel. He did ride a few time trials on his Holdsworth Cyclone but ordered a new bike for gears from Ernie Witcomb, London via Dave Kane Cycles in Belfast. Phil's cycling career came to an end in 1991 when he was diagnosed with cancer and had to undergo major surgery. He still has his bikes and happy memories of life awheel. He could never bear to part with the trailer he towed his children about in and it is still hanging up in his garage. It may appear at a V-CC event in the future!

Bradford's bikes and builders in the late Forties and early Fifties – Part One 'or such bits as I can remember' by Jim Shaw (Cambridge)

In the December 2006 newsletter of Cambridge Cycling Club there was an extract from Lightweight News of a piece by Leeds lad Gordon Barnes which made reference to something written earlier in L News about Johnny Mapplebeck. As J M was of my time and place it took my mind back. Peter Underwood kindly sent me a copy of his brief history of Whitaker & Mapplebeck and Pennine, and pointed me to the Classic Lightweight website. These filled me in about the days before my time and 'what happened next' after I had gone on to a motorbike, then eventually to Cambridge.

Out of the past came people I had known - Geoff Whitaker and Johnny M of course, Ken Russell, Bill Sugden, the Baines brothers and Geoff Wood; and that brought to mind another Bradford lightweight builder who should be commemorated before he is forgotten, Walter Greaves. I'd better do that before it's too late, there's also Geoff Clark. Even now I am hard put to remember some things which were part of my everyday life back then.

My timespan in the golden age of empty roads and glorious frames was quite short really, extending only from 1947 until 1952, but it was crammed with cycling, and progress was everywhere.

Walter Greaves

As so often, it was happenstance which brought me to the joy of 'proper' cycling via the proximity of Walter Greaves' shop. At Easter 1947 my father said that if I passed my School Certificate he would buy me a bike so in due course, Walter W Greaves being just down the road, off we went to see about one. 'Much the best if I tailor-make a frame specially for the lad, and we can build the bike just as he wants it.' The estimated built-up price was £14.

The man himself.

Walter's obvious physical feature was that his left arm finished at the elbow. That didn't stop him from brazing, filing, spray-painting, wheel building, repairing bikes and prams, or cycling. His claim to fame was that, in the 1930's he had established a world record for the highest mileage ridden in a year. This was as a pro for Three Spires Cycles, presumably of Lichfield. Establishing this in a British twelve-month, with an illness in February, was no match for Hubert Opperman's subsequent ride in sunny Australia. The machine Walter used when I knew him had a straight handlebar on the left side with a sponge-filled cup, both brakes going to a single lever on the right. He must have also had a gear lever up high at a time when all were on the down tube but that is one of the things I had forgotten.

Walter Greaves was an intelligent man of good facial features and strong opinions, firmly expressed, but without swearing. Unfortunately, he was born with an anti-establishment gene, which meant that he had fallen out successively with the various Bradford cycling clubs, and the cycling authorities in general. His two strongest opinions were about drink (dead agin) and Communism (for). He saw himself as representing the proletariat who would gratefully rally behind him. After I knew him well he divulged that he had lost his arm after an incident involving a door and his drunkard of a market stallholder father.

His shop

This stood at a busy crossroads, on the corner of Toller Lane, where I lived, and Whetley Lane, which led directly down to Whitaker & Mapplebeck's half a mile or so away. Everybody knew the shop because it was on the busy trolley-bus route up to the Infirmary and had outside a large swinging sign of Walter in profile looking out at the traffic as he rode towards you or away, depending on how you approached. It was no cycle showroom, there being no capital to tie up in stock. The most likely things to be found would be somebody's pram or a local 'grid' to be kept going a bit longer. There weren't too many of those either, thanks to the Bradford hills, the awful cobbles, and the fast smooth trolley buses. Walter and Renee lived 'over the shop' or rather over several and kept a pet monkey, so that the air upstairs was never quite fresh. Mrs G was tiny and would nowadays be described as 'feisty'. She was the first I heard to use the term 'Buggerlugs'. (*To him, not me*).

Out of sight in the cellar was the frame-building shop, usually quiet, as orders were very spasmodic. Little money for advertising. Most frames were probably re-orders or the result of having been seen out on the road. The centre-piece was the really impressive pivoted frame jig built from welded U-section girder, supported by tube mitreing machinery, paint spray and an enamelling stove. As the shop was near home I spent many hours there and my clubmates got absolutely fed up with 'Walter Greaves says...'

My first 'real' bike

Naturally this schoolboy was guided to the unconventional 'King of the Mountains', of which WWG was very proud. It achieved its objective by having a steep seat tube and short top tube, then cantilevering the rider out over the back wheel on a steel seat tube bent to the horizontal! Whether it did improve one's climbing I know not, as I was still rubbish on hills, but it did give me problems mounting a saddlebag. I had to make a Meccano frame. Also shy tuggos don't like being the object of curiosity.

I asked for a 'maroon' frame with gold box lining. 'Let's call it cerise, it sounds better'. The finished machine had a single freewheel, steel chainset and pedals, steel stem, narrow steel rims, Dunlop 'Road Racing' tyres, a Brooks B17 or B15, steel brake levers and 'Binda' bends. I read later that Henri Binda made it a point of honour never to rise from the saddle! The bill came not to £14 but to £20. My father, who ran a factory very firmly, was not amused. I wasn't present at the subsequent interview.

Later, when I wanted a '3-speed' Walter fitted me up with one of his, a single-roller 'Simplex'. My own derailleur! Sturmeyes were for 'chip-holders' (*poseurs who only used their bikes to ride round town and down to the chip shop - Ed*).

The frames

There were two designs available, the patented 'King of the Mountains', which had round forks, and the conventional 'La Victoire' with oval. Both had a solid brake-mounting bush in the rear bridge, Walter being dismissive of a transverse hole through the tube. The 'KoM' was Walter's attempt to achieve the rigid back end and short chainstays sought by such as the Baines 'Gate', twin-tube Saxons and the like, which all aimed to put the rider's weight over the back wheel. Both types of frame were 531 'welded' *ie lugless*. To watch this one-armed man mitreing and brazing, then eventually box lining by trailing a slim strip of paint-soaked paper filled me with admiration.

The downtube transfers were, I think, a Times New Roman style in solid gold letters, with either 'Walter' or 'WW' small then 'GREAVES' large. Almost certainly 'Walter'. The head and seat tube transfers escape me altogether, although I associate 'La Victoire' with an oval. Pathetic, when I've seen them times without number. When I went to order a new frame Walter was displeased that I wished to go conventional but instantly realised on which side his bread was buttered. I can't even remember how it looked but it was Paris-style using three colours. I do remember that my brother's 'La Victoire' was done the same way; a beautiful metallic turquoise frame with a silver 'splodge', then a flamboyant red one in the centre. How silly that I can't remember what my own looked like, or what became of it. I do remember that it was darned good, did a load of miles, had those dual-purpose rear drop-outs with the long guide spikes, and a hanger for my Osgear - but no beautiful lugs.

Walter's club

Once I had a bike and started knocking around a bit I found that half a dozen of the local lads were wont to go off from time to time, so I fell in with them and we formed a regular group. I recall that we could raise a Hobbs of Barbican, a WF Holdsworth with solid large-flange hubs (*very ugly*), and a Baines 'Gate'. Never to us a 'Flying Gate'. The others are forgotten.

Walter Greaves saw this group as a heaven-sent opportunity. Having fallen out with the local clubs, here was his chance to lead his own and do things his way.

We were all agreed on affiliation to the colourful BLRC but what to call this club? The Olympic spirit was Walter's sporting ideal, and he insisted that Olympic should be in the title. How about 'Bradford Olympic', the obvious choice? As there were already East Bradford, West Bradford and Bradford Elite (all NCU), Bradford Co-op Velo and the other League club Bradford RCC, together with the minuscule non-racing North Bradford. Greaves pushed for 'Airedale', so **Airedale Olympic** was born, with me as its first Secretary. Later came South Bradford and Star, both BLRC, and Bradford Elite turned 'League', to great rejoicing. Star was an 'exclusive' peel-off from Bradford RCC. We sought to register as our colours yellow with a black chest band, but Polhill RC already had that, so we made do with yellow with black collar and armbands. No before-breakfast all-over black clothing for the BLRC.

In the course of time we gathered new members, including about four from the Farsley area between Bradford and Leeds, and one of these relieved me of the 'King of the Mountains' which had so stupidly embarrassed me. After my time the axis of the club swung towards Leeds, which really *is* in Airedale. It's still going, and long may it do so.

Walter's dream was to open a cyclists' cafe at a certain bungalow on the Keighley road south of Skipton. Cyclists would flock to it - except that they wouldn't. Walter wasn't half as popular as he imagined. As far as I know he did go to live on that road and became a folk singer claiming, being Walter, to be the definitive voice of Yorkshire Folk, and living into his eighties. Someone who was there then will no doubt have the right story.

Geoff Wood

Geoff Wood was the 'Pennine' input to Whitaker & Mapplebeck, but this came just after my time. Geoff was a 'character', a natural leader, an entrepreneur, always entertaining company, and the most ingenious and practical engineer I have known. He knew people all over the place and had that talent of being able to talk to anybody. He was also someone to whom things happened and his stories were great. Being that bit older than the rest of us Airedale Olympians, many people and 'incidents' seemed to come from some not sharply-defined earlier life. He probably just drifted into our club from somewhere but, having joined, he stayed and became one of our pillars.

Geoff, his mother and her sister lived in a terrace of substantial Victorian villas which looked down on St Mary's Road, close to Lister Park. His father - Sam Wood, a winner at the Manx TT motorcycling, had departed for the Northallerton area sometime in the past. (*Not to be confused with the great Stanley Woods*) The family seemed comfortably off, and Geoff was hauled away on cruises from time to time. He told one fellow cruiser that he'd rather be leaning on the bar of The Spotted House with a pint in his hand than 'standing here in this monkey suit.' My mother was horrified.

Further evidence to me of his financial superiority was that he had one of those 'Continental' rollneck sweaters, price 5 guineas, from the back page of the Holdsworth catalogue, whilst I only dreamt. In 1949, at a time when British carmakers condescended to drop pearls before swine, Geoff bought a new Morris Cowley, which was the Oxford with a smaller engine, probably a 1300cc sidevalve. This was the time of column gear changes and bench front seats and I was privileged to borrow it regularly for my courting, on condition that I put in some petrol and washed it. To lend a new car in those days of scarcity was true friendship !

On one occasion a carful of us were in the Cowley climbing the hill to Horsforth rather slowly when Geoff suddenly jumped out and opened the boot. "That's why. I've still got that bloody anvil in here!"

Geoff the cyclist

Medium height, balding, steel-framed specs, and an unexpectedly high Bradford voice. Nothing about Geoff looked heroic but he was more than useful on a bike. For his 'Pennine Accessories' team, as it was in those BLRC days, he employed the seriously-good Manchester Independents Bevis Wood and Trevor Fenwick for stage races, and completed the team himself. Geoff wasn't their equal, but he was no make-weight either. With others, I took some of my holiday leave driving the support van. Bevis died in 2006.

L News 3 talked about tucking in behind lorries, as we all did when 'on the rivet', putting that last ounce of energy into the launch. John Hammond's coke lorries were a favourite, being high, flat-backed and not too fast. Of course it had to be Geoff Wood who is tucked in when the shovel falls off. It missed. From time to time Geoff and the Cowley disappeared into Lincolnshire where he had done RAF National Service. He was time trialling happily on familiar courses in the Louth area as 'Sam Wood' until he met his black-clad nemesis. With Geoff on the starting line this apparition pointed dramatically and declaimed the exact words, "I denounce this man! He is a member of the British League of Racing Cyclists". Thank goodness those petty days are behind us.

One of his exploits concerned the Yorkshire Dales RR which included Greenhow Hill, a vicious climb straight out of Pateley Bridge. He and Alan Clare, a good rider from Halifax, were off the back, but Geoff had some RAF 'energy tablets' for keeping pilots going, so he gave one to Alan to see what happened. 'After a couple of minutes he buggered off up the road, so I took the other one quick....'. They finished together quite happily but going to sleep that night was another matter. Strychnine is a constituent !

Greenhow Hill enters again on a winter's day when Geoff, riding his winter 'fixed' of course, was holed up in the pub at the bottom, chatting to the local farmers. 'Bet you can't ride up it'. 'How much?' £5 was agreed, big money in those days. The beer added '...and I'll do it in the saddle'. He told me that he expected them to drive to the top, and watch him come over the brow in the saddle, but they piled into their truck and followed him all the way. 'It damn nearly killed me, but I got the fiver'.

Another winter's day turned out to be one of the most entertaining I ever remember. As the weather was rather foul and sleety, Geoff suggested that the half-dozen of us headbangers go to a pub he knew not far away near Halifax which was cyclist-friendly and had a separate room with a big fire and large tables. Already installed was a tall and good-looking cycling stranger but obviously well-known to Geoff from that misty past, one Oscar Savile, who was really friendly and a delight to be with. Between the two of them they had us falling about all afternoon. His name wasn't actually 'Oscar' at all, but he was universally known as that from his Oscar Egg frame, the only one that I ever saw. Later I had to put him on a start sheet for a time trial (*rarities in the BLRC, with no formalities like proper forms*) as 'O Savile', then admit that I didn't actually know his proper name. 'It's James, or Jimmy', but Oscar's fine'. It was the man himself, a good climber of what he called 'the brown stuff', and later to be the smart public image of stage races like the 'Tour of Britain', becoming known as 'The Duke'. But to us Sir J is still 'Oscar'.

Part Two follows in Lightweight News 9

Gordon Barnes adds: Thanks for the text by James Shaw - what a coincidence! I used to be a member of both Ilkley & District CC and Airedale Olympic!

I joined Ilkley & District CC after leaving the CTC to start racing but they had such a good team I was finding it difficult to get entries into road races where only 3 club members were permitted. I went on the club runs for a season & the chap with the recumbent (I think he was called Horace) Thornton was a regular every Sunday. He said he had built it himself and he had a jelly mould at the front to provide a streamlined fairing! (*No jelly for Sunday tea in that house then - Ed*) When we were all struggling into a headwind he left us for dead!

I then joined Airedale Olympic in 1957/58 and raced for them for a year then joined Leeds Coureurs (later that became Leeds Road Racing Club). The Leeds Chain Gang used to meet at Shaw Lane in Headingley so James would remember that if he he was involved! I stopped racing when I got married then started again in 1967 when we had moved to Otley & joined Otley CC, cycling into work every day in Leeds (on fixed wheel in the winter on a Bates with Cantiflex tubing - great bike). In 1972 I stopped road racing & started sailing! - that's another story!

Peter Brown whose brother Ken features in the Pollard page on our website adds: The local 12-hour Time-trial organisers had arrangements with Mrs Fiddling's café at Middle Rasen (Fids to many cyclists for whom it was a regular gathering point) to provide quick lunches for the riders who were competing but when Ken broke the Lincolnshire County record in 1950 he didn't stop, waved to everyone as he went by, and that was just about the end of Mrs Fids lunchtime stop for 12-hour events.

Incidentally, the Curator of the National Cycle Museum at Llandridnod, David HIGMAN, has received an award in the New Year Honours List (MBE?) for services to Welsh tourism.

Jim Stark has been accessing the website which has brought back some memories: "I seem to recall some time ago revealing that I was once a serious racing cyclist, participating in Time Trials mostly, with the odd massed start Road Race. This was some years ago of course, where some is more than 50. I recall racing seriously from 1951 to part way through 1955. Having met Sheila in 1954, my racing days were numbered! The training miles covered were unbelievable. I thought nothing of working all day, coming home for a meal then dashing out for a 50 or 60 mile training run in the evening, I must have been mad. There were occasional training runs of upwards of 150 miles. One I do recall was leaving my folks on holiday in Fort William, heading home to Edinburgh. Prior to leaving FW, I had thought of stopping off halfway but then changed my mind and wondered how quickly I could get home. This became a 130 mile time trial. In those days there was no bridge at Ballachulish, only a small car ferry. As I reached there, I saw the ferry was on the other side so I ignored it and went round the Loch, adding another 20 miles. You may find this hard to believe but this trip which was now 150 miles was completed in a few minutes over 7 hours.? I have many memories of those days when training and racing took over my life. Why was I in such a hurry to get home? I had a date with Sheila?? Within two weeks I won a 50 mile time trial - such a short distance??"

"I went looking for information on Ray Booty on your website. I never met Ray Booty when I was racing but I did meet him years later in an Engineering Office in Derby where we reminisced. RB must be one of the most outstanding athletes (in the widest sense) of all time. When I met him, he was in a Design Office in Rolls Royce & Associates in Derby. As I recall he was very unassuming and we had an interesting conversation."

“I had a Rattray Flying Scot, as many did, and in looking around for information I came across your site. I then noticed that one cycle builder was missing, namely George Elrick. What is weird is that the Google link I found refers to Flying Scot and Rattray but Elrick worked on his own in Stirling. I was there quite often when Time Trials were in the Stirling area.”

“I gave my Flying Scot to my young brother back in the 1960's but the little devil sold it, much to my annoyance. What I do remember is the extraordinary number of miners who were time trialists back then. Looking at your site, I recognise quite a few of the cycle names but not all of them. I only sent you a message because Elrick was missing. Whether my friend, as Jock Shaw, has anything on George Elrick I don't know but I will ask. I do know he kept a live interest in the cycling world for many years and may have officiated in some capacity when the Commonwealth Games were in Edinburgh. He just might know someone who has a George Elrick if he has maintained his contacts. I do remember the tiny GE shop. When I first saw it, I did not believe he made frames there but he did.”
Jim Stark (Once a member of the White Heather Cycling Club)

Peter Brueggeman tells us that there's an eBay seller 'fredrikkk' selling half-inch 2BA hex-head bolts on an ongoing basis for a buy-it-now price of 1.70 pounds for 10 bolts. 1/2 inch is a suitable length for mounting mudguards with a washer under the hex head. I have purchased twice from him with no problems.

Martin Vincent has done some good work for the website on Bates and says: “I have several Gran Sport and early Record rear mechs that can't be used because the cage pivots are too worn. I wondered if there was someone out there who can bore out the old pivots and fit oversized ones. If you don't know anyone who can do this, perhaps you could put something in Lightweight News to ask if anyone else knows where I can get this done.”

Mick Butler was adding some information to the Walter Greaves (a dedicated Communist) story on the website and came up with this: “I worked with a lot of communist or former communist party members, some were ex-Spartacus CC the former communist cycling club. A lot of these chaps were also Vegetarian CC.”

I always feel that there is an interesting story in the left-wing connections with cycling in the 30s 40s and 50s. Spartacus of course led the slaves rebellion against the Roman Empire but I hadn't realised that the Spartacus CC was actually a club solely for communists. The Clarion Clubs of course also had very left-wing leanings although set up by a member of the gentry whose ambition was to get working class people out into the country on their bikes at weekends. Google has many entries on the Clarion movement, I wish I had more time to research an article. When one reads biographies and obituaries of communist party members it is often mentioned that they were vegetarians. A look at racing results for this period also shows a more than expected success rate for the vegetarians not all of whom were riding for the Vegetarian C & AC. As a vegetarian myself I am especially pleased to own one of Dave Keeler's Mercians, all we have to check now is to see if AVT gives up his carnivorous tendencies (he has acquired another of Dave's bikes). (*Ed.*)

Pat Curtis remarks on clothing and says that Crawley CC were a 'jeans and cycle clips' club although they all wore Richelieu cotton socks (socks again you see) at 6.6d per pair. His first year of racing was done in cut down black jeans and a second-hand (10/-) club jersey. In 1961 after he bought his new Frederick he also afforded some cheap racing shorts (17/6d) but the legs soon went baggy and his mother had to take them in! By 1962 he was really in the money and bought a pair of Crodini training trousers, a pair of Crodini Giro shoes and a Rik Sport top. Some of this was paid for with a prize voucher for his first handicap placing in the SCCU 50 mile TT.

Clothing again - **Tom Jeffery** tells us that he can re-produce photocopies of a pattern for the ubiquitous shawl-neck sweaters beloved of all cyclists in the 50s. So if you really want to look like a cyclist of the era contact Tom and cross his palm with silver. All you have to do then is find someone who remembers how to knit – is there anyone amongst us who has a machine which could do this, they were all the vogue a few years ago and are probably up in the roof with the hoola-hoops. Tom's phone number is 01536 511236 (*Ed: I was promised one of these by a family member around Christmas 1950. When it came it was knitted much too loosely, was baggy and the bands on the sleeves didn't line up with the ones on the chest. Just as no one admits to being a bad driver, or bad at sex, no one at that time admitted to being an awful knitter or banjo/ukelale player!*).

Sunday 27 May 2007 - Cambridge Section Meridian Lightweight Ride - The first of our section's 2 lightweight rides – this is the flat one to encourage you to get out on that that fixed-wheel machine (not compulsory though), app. 35 miles with a coffee and a lunch stop. We always get a good turnout for this ride so come along with your thoroughbred pride and joy – and see it be appreciated by all. Start 10am at Bay 8 Trumpington Road Park and Ride, Cambridge. Just off Junc. 11 of M11 (A1309). 2 miles from Cambridge railway station. *Peter Underwood* %01223 565036 e-mail peter.underwood@tesco.net

Alvin Smith is hosting a discussion group on Major Nicholls during May. Please contact him if you are interested. Tel. 01568 770327.