



Welland Valley Cycling Club

Welland Valley Cycling Club: A History by Peter Riley



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Dedicated to all those members who rode with the Club and are no longer with us.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this history. Pictures have been provided by members, either directly or through Club web and social media posts (including #PictureOfTheDay in 2020). Special thanks to Maureen Conway, who provided pictures of Jack Granger and Donald Lees.

Foreword

In late 2017 I was appointed Chair of Welland Valley Cycling Club, and after losing an evening pouring through the minutes of meetings going back decades, I quickly felt that it was time that the Club captured properly its history.

Peter Riley took on this task and convened a couple of Club Nights in Lubenham to share stories (and check facts).

During the first lockdown of 2020, the Club ran a 'picture of the day' feature on social media, which kept the Welland Valley community connected, and many of the pictures shared have been included here.

The lessons from Peter's report for me are that Welland Valley Cycling Club's rich past establishes the values and traditions that make the Club what it is today.....and that changing Club kit can be somewhat problematic!

This written history ends at the end of 2006, along with an Afterword that comments on the Club today. The Club has gone on from strength to strength, and I look forward to an update to mark the centenary of the formation of 'Welland Valley Wheelers' in 2027.

Thank you, Peter, for this amazing record of our Club from 1927 into the 21st Century.

Jonathan Durnin, Chair, Welland Valley Cycling Club (2017 to 2022).



In the beginning ...

In the summer of 1927, Market Harborough was a town of some ten thousand people and, like the rest of Britain, was suffering from economic depression and high unemployment: the town also faced a particular local problem of poor housing. Many of the properties in the small courts and back lanes of the town centre were uninhabitable forcing the Borough Council to release the land north of Welland Park for new housing.

King George V, King Charles III's great grandfather, was on the throne, Stanley Baldwin was the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was Winston Churchill and on Friday, 1st July the *Market Harborough Advertiser and Midland Mail* carried adverts for the Oriental Cinema, which was showing *Shore Leave* starring Dorothy Mackail, for Isaac's in Coventry Road which was holding a sale of bankrupt stock of men's trousers – 50 pairs for 5/6 (27½p) and Eastmans Ltd of Church Square had best quality Canterbury Lamb and Mutton for sale.

Under the headline: 'Local Cycling Club's General Meeting', it reported that 'a large gathering of cyclists attended the general meeting of the newly formed Welland Valley Wheelers: Mr. H. H. Leach presided.'

Mr. Leach said that; *"Cycling as a pastime is becoming more popular year by year. Cycling clubs have sprung up all over the country and this town does not wish to be left behind in the great advance."*

It was decided to present an attendance medal for club runs and it was hoped that the competition would be keen for possession of the medal thus ensuring a good turnout week by week. The Club run on Sunday 3rd July was to that fine old cathedral city of Peterborough. Start 9.00 am in the Market Square.'

The same newspaper carried an advertisement for an 'All Steel Raleigh Cycle' for £6-7s-6d (£6.37½p) available from St. Mary's Motor Company (now George Halls Cycle Centre) at £1 down and twelve regular payments.



From the Club Minutes:

GENERAL MEETING

Adult School, Coventry Road, Market Harborough

27th June 1927

For the formation of a local amateur cycling club with the objects of touring, racing etc.

Chairman: Mr. H. H. Leach

The Club to be called Welland Valley Wheelers. Club colours are black and gold

- *Captain: A. Sharman.*
- *Secretary and Treasurer: W. Vials*
- *Asst Secretary and Handicapper: R. Sear*
- *Time Keeper: W. Smith*
- *Committee: C. Rabin, R. Playford, D. Kelly, R. Kelly.*
- *Press reports: R. Kelly.*

At the subsequent Committee meeting, the fee for joining the Club was set at one shilling (5p) and the subscription for a half year set at one shilling and sixpence (7½p).

Since 1890, racing on public roads had been banned by the National Cyclists Union as being too dangerous so there were no 'Open' time trials. Competitive cycling was limited to 'private' time trials, and, in the early days, Club activities consisted mainly of regular Club runs which, as now, started in the Market Square with riders split into two groups: the Hard Riders and the Social Section. Routes and timings were planned, whenever possible, for the two groups to meet for tea.

Destinations for Club runs in the early days included, for the Hard Riders: Peterborough, Stratford-on-Avon, Bedford, Luton and Huntingdon, while the Social Section headed for Oundle, Wicksteed Park, Stamford, Lutterworth, Hinckley and Rushden.

There is an entry in the Club Minutes stating that the destination for the Club run on 23rd October 1927 will be New York! We can only hope that this should read Newark.

Despite the ban on racing, in August 1927 a challenge cup for the best time over 25 miles by a Market Harborough rider was inaugurated in the name of St. Mary's Motor Company to be known as the Marshall Trophy in honour of the Club President – Mr. Marshall.

Although the number of Club members is not recorded, the Committee decided to present a suitable prize for whoever recruited the most new members. In its first year, the prize was won by W.C.Vials.



Jack Granger (right) sporting a black and gold Welland Valley Wheelers jersey

Towards the end of 1927, it was decided to hold a Dance in the Co-operative Hall to raise funds for the Club. Admission to the Dance was set at 1 shilling (5p) and the costs of hiring the Hall and crockery plus printing tickets and advertising amounted to £2-1s-6d (£2.7½p). The Excelsior Band charged £2 for the evening.

In November 1927, Welland Valley Wheelers became affiliated to the National Cyclists Union and the Leicestershire and Rutland Section of the Cyclists Touring Club.

In December of that year the inaugural Hill Climb had to be held a second time owing to 'errors'! The Club Minutes include no further details, but the Committee appointed fresh officials and timekeepers for the re-run.



The year drew to a close with a Club Supper held at Emerson's Café with medals of gold, silver and bronze presented to the winners and runners-up in the Club's time trials and other competitions.

In the space of six months, Welland Valley Wheelers had come into being, organised a series of Club runs, held a number of time trials, held a fund-raising Dance and a prize giving end of season Supper. All this is testimony to the efforts and determination of the Club's first Officers and Committee.

An early Club dinner including Donald Lees, Jack Granger, Benny Foster and Jeannie Foster

January 1928 saw the Club's Annual General Meeting held at the Peacock Hotel. The Treasurer reported a satisfactory balance sheet with cash in hand standing at 10 shillings and 5 pence (52½p) and a stock of Club badges to the value of £1-11s-8d (£1.56½p).

There was a plea from the Treasurer for all subscriptions to be paid by 1st March. Such a request seems to have become a Club tradition carried on right up to the present day!

Early in 1928, the Committee established target times for place-to-place rides.

- Market Harborough to Cambridge and back. 106 miles in 7 hours.
- Market Harborough to Skegness. 84 miles in 5 hours 15 minutes.
- Skegness to Market Harborough. 84 miles in 5 hours 15 minutes.
- Market Harborough to Skegness and back. 168 miles in 11 hours.

To achieve the target times and qualify for a medal and certificate would require an average speed of 15 to 16 miles per hour. Given that, today, a time of under 4 hours for a 100 miles time trial is not particularly remarkable, these targets provide a fair idea of the frames and running gear then in use and the state of the roads in the 1920s.

The Club's longest running trophy, the Hunter Challenge Cup, was inaugurated in 1928. The following year it was decided that the trophy should be awarded on a Handicap basis over 25miles – as it still is today. There are no club records noting its origins but it seems likely that this may be the Marshall Trophy under a new name.

Before the start of the 1928 racing season the Committee formally accepted proposals for the Club 50 miles and 100 miles time trial courses. The Club '50' was set for 17th June – first rider off at 6.01 am – and the Club '100' to be held on 19th August. In addition to the awards for place to place rides, the Committee established monetary prizes for the winners and runners-up in Club events. The winner of the Club '100' would receive 50 shillings (£2.50) and the winners of the Club '30' and Novice '25' would receive 25 shillings (£1,25p). It must be borne in mind that in 1928 the average weekly wage was around £3.25p for a five-and-a-half-day week. It is not clear if or how the receipt of financial awards would affect a cyclist's amateur status for competition purposes.

The Welland Valley Wheelers racing programme for 1929 was:

- 25 miles Time Trial (low gear – 63 inches and under)
- Open Novices 25 miles Time Trial
- Club 30 miles Time Trial
- Club 50 miles Time Trial
- Six Hours Scratch Race
- Hunter Cup
- Club Hill Climb

There is no mention of the Club 100 for which a course and prize money had been agreed the previous year.



A Welland Valley Wheelers Club Run, with Donald Lees on a tandem

For much of the 1930s, little changed for the Club. The emphasis remained on Club runs and social events including the Weekend Camp. The Club became an Associate of the East Midlands Road Racing Association and, for no recorded reason, cancelled its membership of the National Cyclists Union (NCU). Three years later the Club re-joined the NCU; possibly to gain the benefit of some form of insurance for Club members.

In 1930 a Club '5' and a Club '10' were added to the racing programme and there is the first mention of the 'Club Gold Medal' with points awarded for placings in Club Time trials and completing Club Runs. Over time this competition evolved considerably and has become the Club Championship that we know today. There is also the first mention of a 'Hard Riders test' although the Minutes do not elaborate on this event.

During this time, we see mention of the 'Hospital Carnival' which involved fancy dress cycling events and Penny Farthing races. Presumably this is the fore runner of the Harborough Carnival with which the Club is involved up to this day.

On 1st December 1937, Welland Valley Wheelers applied for membership of the recently formed Road Time Trials Council. The same year Benny Foster won the Club Hill Climb. In 1938, Benny set Club records for the fixed place to place events:

- Market Harborough to Cambridge and back – 6 hours and 3 minutes
- Market Harborough to Skegness – 3 hours and 55 minutes



The Benny Foster Medal

Benny Foster became a major figure in British cycling over the years. He managed several British cycling teams, notably at the Mexico Olympic Games in 1968 and a number of professional trade teams in tours and one day races. He was a member of the organising committee for the World Cycling Championships held at Leicester in 1970, inducted into the Cycling Hall of Fame and was awarded the OBE for services to cycling.

Today, the winner of the Club Hill Climb is awarded the Benny Foster Medal.

Britain went to war on 3rd September 1939 and at the Committee Meeting held on 1st October that year it was agreed that, despite the hostilities, the Club should continue to function. If holders of the Sasoon (there is no prior or subsequent reference to this trophy), Vials or Hunter Cups were to join His Majesty's forces, the trophies should be returned to the Club's Trustees.

The Club records for the War years are sketchy and, possibly, incomplete. An Annual General Meeting was held each year but the Minutes record very few Committee Meetings. During the years 1940 to 1946 there is nothing to suggest that the Club did not hold its usual programme of races and time trials although there is no mention of any social events.

Lest We Forget



On 29th February 1944, Flying Officer Cyril Timson – a member of Welland Valley Wheelers and a former pupil of the Robert Smythe Academy – took off in a de Havilland Mosquito to attack an industrial complex in German occupied France: the aircraft did not return.

Cyril Timson was 22 years old and is buried in the Military Cemetery at Grandcourt in northern France.

In 1948, the Timson family gave permission for the '**Cyril Timson Memorial Trophy**' to be awarded to the fastest rider on handicap over 25 miles. A trophy was paid for by public subscription and The Timson Cup is competed for, annually, up to the present day.

The Club's Silver Jubilee, a Coronation and going downhill and uphill

It was business as usual in the post-War years. Course checks revealed that the '25' was two tenths of a mile (352 yards) short so the new start would be '25 yards north of Pole No.74 on the main Leicester Road'.

September 1948 sees the first mention of the Saxon Cup and the following month there were complaints regarding the conduct of younger members during Club Runs. The Committee agreed that the offenders would be "spoken to!"

In 1949, Eric Cousins was elected to the Committee; this marked the beginning of his service to the Club which has stretched over 70 years.

The following year, Welland Valley Wheelers seems to have embraced the concept of equality when Miss Blagden was elected to serve as a Lady Member of the Committee.

In 1950, Mr. L. C. Wilkinson offered to provide three trophies for competition within the Club:

- The Wilkinson Trophy for a 25 miles time trial to be held annually. Any member who wins the Trophy in three successive years OR completes a 25 miles time trial under one hour will retain the trophy in perpetuity.
- The Wilkinson Juniors Trophy for a 10 miles time trial competed for by Junior members. Any member who wins the trophy in three successive years to retain the trophy in perpetuity. This would not be possible under the Club's present Age Categories.
- The Armstrong Trophy for the 'Ladies of the Club' to be held over 10 miles and, again, to be held in perpetuity by any lady winning the event three years in a row.

In the present day, The Wilkinson Cup is awarded to the fastest time by a lady member in any 10 miles time trial and the Armstrong Cup goes to the fastest rider, on time, over 25 miles at the Hunter Cup event.

At this time, the emphasis was still concentrated on Club Runs and the Committee decided that a member must complete three Club Runs to be eligible for any trophy.

Club Record Times 1952

25 miles – 1 hour 4 minutes 55 seconds

30 miles – 1 hour 18 minutes 3 seconds

50 miles – 2 hours 25 minutes 50 seconds

Ladies 10 miles – 28 minutes 7 seconds

Junior 10 miles – 25 minutes 13 seconds



Pushing off

The year 1951 opened with controversy over the Club's courses for 10, 25 and 30 miles time trials. It was reported to the AGM that the courses had again been checked and were found to be "on the long side." The 10 mile course was 198 yards too long while the 25 and 30 miles courses were 495 yards too long. (440 yards = $\frac{1}{4}$ mile)

In April 1951, Welland Valley Wheelers joined the newly formed Northampton & District Cycling Association while preparations were made for the Club's Silver Jubilee the following year.

To celebrate its Silver Jubilee the Club promoted an Open 25 miles time trial followed by a Club Rally and tea at Foxton. Events at the Rally included a Sack race, Egg and Spoon race Wheelbarrow race, Slow Bicycle race and Freewheeling.

Later that year the Committee decided to decline an invitation from Market Harborough Urban District Council to take part in a historical pageant to celebrate Queen Elizabeth's Coronation. The Committee also decided that Welland Valley Wheelers would not be represented on the

Coronation Sports Committee. There are no reasons given for these decisions and it seems very strange that the Club would not wish to take part in national celebrations of such importance.

The topic of 'Evening 10s' first appears at the AGM in early 1953 when it was decided that they will be held each Thursday from May until August on a course from St. Luke's Hospital to the Rose and Crown at Kibworth and back. In 1955, the 'Evening 10s' were cancelled due to "a lack of support." George Halls raised the matter of 'Evening 10s' in April 1956 and the decision was postponed until the AGM in 1957. It was agreed that they would be run fortnightly on a Handicap basis but they were then postponed indefinitely in April 1957.

The late 1950s and early 1960s saw major concerns about the continued existence of the Club. The Vials Trophy was not competed for, and the Committee decided that it would not be sensible to make plans for the Annual Dinner because so few members were attending meetings. The Annual General Meeting held on 10th January 1960 attracted only 11 members: a further meeting was arranged for the end of the year but only 7 members attended. In the meantime, Committee meetings were cancelled for lack of a quorum. A Club Meeting was held in February 1962 attended by just 3 people – including Mr. V. Barnett – when it was decided to hold a Reliability Trial and to re-introduce Evening 10s during May.

The Club records and the Minutes of meetings for this period are patchy, poorly written, illegible in places and seem to be incomplete. There is only one recorded meeting in 1963 during which it was agreed to award points for the Evening 10 series and to arrange a date for the Welland Valley/Rockingham Forest Interclub 25. It was agreed that the Club Dinner would be a buffet meal held in December.

From 1965, the Club seems to have enjoyed something of a revival. There was an increase in the number of members attending meetings and the racing programme was extended to include a Club 30, a Club 50 and a Four-up Team Time Trial to be held over the full Olympic distance of 100 kilometres (62 miles). Two years later it was decided to add a Two-up Time Trial and a Place-to-Place Time Trial; Market Harborough to Northampton was suggested. It was also agreed to restore the Club Hill Climb. Plans were laid for the Club to promote an open Road Race although there were difficulties in finding a suitable course that was acceptable to the District Council and the Police.

The idea of Evening 10s seems to have become more settled in the late 1960s and monthly Reliability Trials were introduced with certificates awarded to everyone who completed a Trial. The Committee initiated enquiries for the purchase or lease of land on which to build a Clubhouse.

In August 1967, four members of the Club rode the 12 Hours event at Coventry; George Barnett completed 224 miles, Vic Barnett rode 216 miles and Dave Livesley and Mick Smith both covered in excess of 200 miles.

Probably the most bizarre event to appear in the Club's calendar was introduced in 1967. The Boxing Day 10 was introduced as a 'Novelty Event' with fancy dress encouraged for all riders and the finishing time of each rider written on a slip of paper and dropped into a hat from which the 'winner' would be drawn!

On 31st March 1968, Welland Valley Wheelers promoted its first Open Road Race for the Harborough Mail Trophy. The race for First Cats was run over 52 miles and offered a Prize Fund of £40. Abbey Stores presented trophies for the support races. Ken Hankins, Editor of 'The Mail', presented the trophies and prizes at a ceremony held at the Ritz cinema.

In early 1968, Jean Hart rode a '10' at Knowle in Warwickshire and recorded a time of 29 minutes 53 seconds – a time which earned her second place in the Ladies event to no less a rider than Beryl Burton, the reigning time trial World Champion!

The Club celebrated its 40th birthday at the Annual Dinner held in early 1968. A celebration cake was cut by Bill Vials, then the Club's oldest member. Prizes were presented by Dave Paling who was leader of the England team at the 1967 Milk Race.

- Hunter Cup: John Godding
- Armstrong Cup: Mick Hockridge
- Timson Cup: Eric Wilkinson
- Vials Trophy: David Jarvis (Club President)
- Junior 10 miles trophy: Michael Powell (29.08)
- Junior Handicap Award: Roger Ward

... and Welland valley Wheelers won the Interclub with RFW that year.

In September 1969, Mick Arnold took over as Chairman of the Club which was on a firm financial footing and which boasted an established calendar of road races, time trials and social events which is very close to that of today.

Carrying the sponsor's name

In the early 1970s, Henry Ford became Chairman of the Club. Originating from South Africa, he was a successful businessman with his own roofing company. In 1977, the year of the Queen's Silver Jubilee and the Club's Golden Jubilee, he donated a Jubilee Rose Bowl to be awarded to the Best Schoolboy All-Rounder on average speed over 2 x 10 miles and 1 x 25 miles. It is interesting that the Club Minutes specify a schoolboy and not a schoolgirl.

After many years of providing tea and refreshments at Club road races and time trials, Miss Sybil Cragg retired. She presented a trophy to the Club which is now awarded for the most meritorious achievement in any branch of competitive cycling. Miss Cragg was subsequently made a Life Member of the Club.

The early 1970s saw a resurgence within the Club of interest in cyclo-cross with considerable success for Vic Barnett and Norman Powell.

The 1971 Club Dinner was held at the Ritz Ballroom, Desborough with the Saxon Trophy, the Livesley Road Race Shield and the Armstrong Trophy all going to Vic Barnett. Adrian Underwood took the Timson Cup, Jean Hart won the Hunter Cup, Norman Powell the Junior 10 miles Trophy and Barry Day secured the Vials Trophy.

In April 1971, Welland Valley Wheelers became a player on the national scene when Benny Foster and George Halls were appointed to the British Cycling Federation National Sub-committee for motor paced events. The same year, the Club promoted a 2 day road race which was won by the Mancunian rider, Ron Brooks of Nova CC.

The summer of 1971 saw Jean and Eric Cousins and Marion and Brian Cooper heading off to the Isle of Man to take part in various events during 'Cycling Week'. Back home, Mick Hockridge set a new Club record of 23 minutes 12 seconds for 10 miles. To complete the family double, Shirley Hockridge then set a Ladies record of 26 minutes 33 seconds for 10 miles.

The same month, Mick set a new Club record of 58 minutes 44 seconds riding in the National Campag 25 and, less than a week later, Barry Day set a new Club record for 50 miles of 2 hours 4 minutes and 21 seconds.

The trophies for the 1971 season went to Mick Hockridge – Armstrong Cup, Dave Burrows – Hunter Cup, Adrian Underwood – Timson Cup, Barry Day – Livesley Shield, Vic Barnett – Saxon Trophy, John Timms – Vials Trophy and Lance Marshall – the Junior Best All-rounder.

February 1974 saw certificates awarded to Mick Arnold, Marion Cooper, Eric Cousins, Dave Cooper, Peter Taylor, John Timms and Dave Webb for completing the 50 miles Reliability Trial in under three hours.

In the autumn of that year, the Club's AGM and a Harvest Supper were held in the Old Grammar School; 36 members of the Club were in attendance and cakes and refreshments were provided. The following morning, a Free Wheeling competition from East Farndon to Marston Trussell was held – first, George Barnett, second – John Timms, third – David Burrows.

In November 1977, the Club's Golden Jubilee was celebrated with a Dinner and Dance at the Ritz Ballroom in Desborough. Guest Speaker was Benny Foster OBE followed by dancing to the John Winston Selection. Tickets were priced at £4.25.



Lee Scampton, sporting pre ANC club kit

Just two years later, the Annual General Meeting was enlivened by a proposal from Alan Johnson that the Club should introduce new colours and designs for Club kit. There followed a 'heated discussion' among the members and the vote taken on the proposal resulted in a tie. The Chairman cast his vote in favour of retaining the existing colours.

The Club grew and expanded during the 1980s with a regular programme of competitive events – road racing, time trials and cyclo-cross. Welland Valley Wheelers was represented on local and national organisations and at the end of the decade could boast 50 active members.

The biggest event on the Club programme was the **Harborough Carnival Criteriums** which were organised in the main by Lee Scampton. The proportion of the profits allocated to the Club was an important contribution to Club finances although it is clear that the organisation required to run the events smoothly involved considerable time and effort by many people.

The picture on the right is from the 1989 Harborough Carnival Criterium, starting with riders lining up on the High Street. Left to right, are Maria Lawrence, Dean Barnett, Richard Mortimer, Terry Halls, Danny Halls, Vic Barnett, and Lawrence Cox.



The Criterium that year did not end well for Lawrence however....



Once again, the Club's time trial courses came under review as U-turns were banned and until a new 10 miles course could be found, measured and approved, the Club was obliged to run '10s' on the Rockingham Forest Wheelers course.

At this time, the sport of cycling was growing in popularity mainly due to the fact that Channel Four was regularly showing City Centre Criteriums sponsored by Kellogg's which attracted some of the big names of the time. Club Chairman, Frank Taylor, expressed concerns that despite the growth in the sport, not enough was being done to attract and encourage Junior members. Training programmes for Junior riders were devised and put into place.



At the Annual General Meeting in December 1985, concerns were expressed about a weakness in the Club's finances, and it was decided to research the possibilities of finding sponsorship for the Club as a whole or for individual riders. It was agreed that Golden Wonder and Crosby Valves should be approached. The local franchise of ANC Parcel Service had been involved in supporting the Carnival Criteriums and having seen the size of the crowds it stepped forward as a possible sponsor.

In 1985, a new British commercial cycling team, ANC-Halfords, was formed: the success of its riders in home races and in the Milk Race under the leadership of Malcolm Elliott was to lead to the first entry of a British team in the Tour de France in 1987.



Peter Riley in the ANC kit

On 28th October 1986 at an Extraordinary General Meeting of Welland Valley Wheelers, representatives of ANC offered to sponsor the Club for three years at £1,000 each year. The Club would change its name to Welland Valley ANC – thus dropping the word 'Wheelers' – and a new Club strip would be introduced based on the design of the professional team's kit. Club members would be required to wear the sponsor's kit whenever they were competing or taking part in a Club run. Whenever possible, members would wear the new kit when training or riding for leisure. Financial support would be available for individual members to buy new kit.

The motion to adopt the sponsorship deal was carried by a substantial majority.

By 1988, there was noticeable increase within the Club in road racing with fourteen members taking out BCF (British Cycling Federation) racing licences. At the same time, it was

reported that the mid-week Evening 10s were attracting an average of twenty starters each week.

At around this time, the Club lost the A.A.Brown Trophy. The trophy had been presented to the winner of the race but he was not a member of the Club and couldn't be contacted.

Advertisements were placed in *Cycling Weekly* and the *Harborough Mail*. It was decided that, in the future, winners of Club trophies who were not members of the Club would be presented with a medal while the trophy itself would be held for safekeeping. The advertising did not bear fruit and, eventually, a new trophy had to be bought. The Committee immediately made enquiries about insuring the Club's silverware!

To complete the misery, it was decided that, following the closure of the bar at St. Luke's, Club nights would be held at Taylor's Fish Parlour.

At the end of 1989, the initial sponsorship deal with ANC ended however, the company agreed to renew the deal for a further three years at a rate of £500 per annum and the provision of a van bearing the Club and sponsors' names. Subsequent to this agreement, members approved changes to the Rules and Constitution of the Club:

- (i) The name of the Club shall be Welland Valley ANC Cycling Club.
- (ii) The Club's official colours will be red, white and blue.
- (iii) The Club may have second claim members if approved by the Club Committee.

A new design for Club kit was introduced with a change from a white background to a blue background as this was easier to keep clean.


During 1990 there was considerable development and expansion of cyclo-cross activities under the guidance of Vic Barnett and ANC offered a trophy for young riders. In parallel with the increase in cyclo-cross participation, Neil Holman introduced competitive activities and races for All Terrain Bikes.

In the early years, what we now know as 'Mountain Bikes' were called ATBs – All Terrain Bikes' or internationally as VTTs – Velo Tous Terrains.

The scoring system for Club Championship events was re-organised and the option to discard the worst result was introduced.

The Sybil Cragg Cup for meritorious competitive performance was awarded to Neil Holman and Rod Gilbert for their tandem ride in the National 24 Hours Time Trial.

In December 1992, the Committee produced a revised Constitution for the Club and it was proposed that an Extraordinary General Meeting be held in February 1993 for members to discuss the proposal. There is no record of such a meeting or of the proposed changes to the Constitution.



STARTS
1.15 PM

DON'T MISS THIS
UNDER THE RULES OF THE BRITISH CYCLING FEDERATION

1.15-1.35	JUVENILE RACE INCORPORATING THE W.C.R.A. SCHOOLS CHAMPIONSHIPS	40
1.45-2.10	3rds AND JUNIORS	50
2.20-2.55	V.C.R.A. CRITERIUM CHAMPIONSHIPS <small>(7 laps out of 40 laps out)</small>	60
3.05-3.25	NATIONAL T.A. TRIKE CHAMPIONSHIPS	60
3.35-4.05	W.C.R.A. WOMENS CRITERIUM CHAMPIONSHIPS	60
4.15-5.00	MAIN EVENT	60

THE CARNIVAL CRITERIUM
1" • 2" • 3"
CATEGORY RIDERS

MARKET HARBOURGH CARNIVAL 1992


CYCLING

Comes to Town!


ON SUNDAY

JUNE 14TH

PRESENTED BY




WHEELERS
CYCLING CLUB



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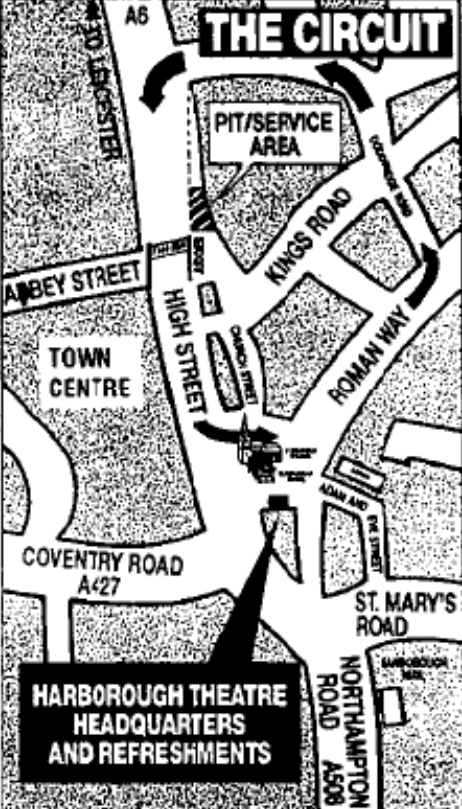
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Fax: 0858-433922

THE CIRCUIT



HARBOROUGH THEATRE
HEADQUARTERS
AND REFRESHMENTS



OFFICIAL PROGRAMME

Tandem Tales

In the summer of 1985, Neil Holman started work at George Halls Cycles and hidden away in the rafters was Rod Gilbert's 1932 Sun tandem. After some discussion, Rod and Neil decided to have a go at a Club time trial.

Their first event was a midweek '10' on the Brampton Ash course when they recorded a time of around 27 minutes. Having developed the taste for tandem riding, they decided to enter an Open event but the only one they could find was the North Midlands 100 at Retford – a big step up from a Club '10' but, undaunted, they completed the ride in 4 hours 45 minutes. Later that season they rode the Lincoln Wheelers '25' and just missed breaking the hour.



In 1990, having caught the bug, *Neil Holman and Rod Gilbert* Neil and Rod decided to have a good crack at tandem racing and had a new frameset specially made for them by the Clement family at Orbit Cycles in Birmingham. The training and new machinery paid dividends with the pair setting times at just about every distance.

- 5 miles: 11.49
- 10 miles: 22.03
- 25 miles: 58.34
- 50 miles: 2.13.09
- 100 miles: 4.34.53
- 12 hours: 242.6 miles
- 24 hours: 336.89 miles

When they set the 12 Hours distance, another pair set a national record for a tandem but they were subsequently disqualified because their support vehicle was spotted passing them more than twice – an odd decision considering that the bulk of the Course was based on the A1 near Sandy in Bedfordshire with constant traffic in both directions. Neil and Rod completed the event without support although Lee Scampton was riding the same event and was supported by Loz Cox who handed up a bidon to the intrepid duo.

A couple of weeks later, Rod and Lee paired up to race the CC Breckland 12 – they were supported by Neil in his old camper van and beat Neil and Rod's distance by ½ a mile.

Rod and Neil set the Club 24 Hours record on a course around Ely and Newmarket being the only tandem in a field of 51 entries. They set off at 10.55 am in brilliant sunshine and by 2.00 pm were riding through thunderstorms. They stopped for a puncture and Neil admitted having to rip the tub off the rim with his teeth because his hands were too cold to feel anything. At around 6.00 pm, the course went past race HQ and 25 solo riders climbed off. Neil and Rod sat in the car for ten minutes

or so to warm up and change into dry kit before setting out again. At about 1.00 am they overtook a very vocal drunken cyclist on his way home from the pub; words were exchanged! By 2.00 am, they were riding in Fenland fog which hung about until the sun burst through at 6.00 am. They reached the finishing circuit at about 8.30 am and knew they were going to complete the event – crossing the line after 336 miles.



The Jeannie Foster Shield

At the end of the year, they won the Boxing Day 10 and Neil donated to the Club the Jeannie Foster Shield. She was Neil's great aunt and had ridden for Welland Valley in the early days before serving with the Salvation Army. (The Jeannie Foster Shield is the only Club trophy which can be won by solo riders, two ups and tandems).

Having achieved just about everything they could, the pair went separate ways. Neil concentrated more on mountain bikes and Rod continued with several different stokers including Gavin Hinxman.

Into the modern age

In the early 1990s, Welland Valley – ANC was still a club with a considerable social life. Following proposals at the Annual General Meeting towards the end of 1991, the Club's social calendar expanded considerably with a pub supper each month, picnics, regular Ten Pin Bowling, a Youth Hostel Weekend in Derbyshire and a skiing trip to Scotland in February 1992. The cycling programme was not neglected as it included many time trials and road races organised either as Club events or Open events for N.D.C.A and N.C.R.A.

The 'Carnival Crits' went from strength to strength under the auspices of Lee Scampton with a programme for 1992 which comprised races for:

- Juveniles
- Women
- Veterans
- Tricycles
- First, Second and Third Category riders

In the summer of 1993, the Club invested in a 'software' program which would enable the easier production of result sheets for time trials. Based on this step forward into the age of technology, it was proposed that Welland Valley - ANC should put itself on the time trialling map by promoting a national Open event.

The Club included 26 members who had taken out a Racing Licence and a new 10 mile time trial course based at Kibworth was added to the calendar. At the same time, there were fewer riders in Mountain Bike events – something which Neil Holman put down to "a change in fashion among young people."

While plans were made for the Annual Prize Giving Dinner at which Tour de France rider, Adrian Timmis, would be guest of honour, the year ended in sadness and disappointment with a major split in the Club for reasons that were complex and involved a clash of personalities. A new, rival cycling club – Harborough Concord – was established but existed for only a couple of years. Former Welland Valley members were warmly welcomed back into the fold and the whole matter was considered closed.

There is an entry in the Club Minutes stating that no record of the 1994 Annual General Meeting remains. No reason is given.

In 1995, the long-established Club time trial from Market Harborough to Skegness was cancelled after objections from the police. Consideration was given to running the event as a non-competitive Reliability Trial but there seems to have been no appetite among the membership for such an event. It was agreed that the Benny Foster Medal would now be awarded to the winner of the Club Hill Climb.

With the approval of the Committee, it was decided that the Club and individual members would sponsor Tom Evans of Rockingham Forest Wheelers (*now a member of Welland Valley C.C.*) to aid his participation as a member of the Great Britain team at the 1996 World Disabled Games in Atlanta.

Eric Cousins, who was first elected to the Club Committee in 1949, was made a Life Member of the Club.

By the end of the year, Club membership had risen to more than 60 individuals and Club 10 mile time trials were attracting an average of 25 riders with one event having a field of 40.

At the beginning of 1997, Trevor Wise proposed forming a link between the Club and the English Schools Cycling Association – ESCA - in an effort to attract more youngsters to the sport of cycling. The Road Time Trials Council had backed a link between clubs and schools and, in March of that year, Trevor announced that he had secured a grant of £1,000 from the Sports Council to build a link between the Club and Uppingham Community College. The funds were used, primarily, to purchase a turbo trainer and a quantity of helmets. The money also supported a trip to Manchester Velodrome for young riders to try track riding.

In many ways, this was the beginning of the introduction at a later stage of the Go Ride programme which, in turn, evolved into the Whizz Kids.

Competitive cycling throughout much of the local area was affected in the summer of that year with the widening of the A14 trunk road. The South East Midlands region of the Road Time Trials Council banned all use of the A14 – now a dual carriageway – at weekends and Bank Holidays on safety grounds: once again, the search was on for suitable new courses.

This period saw a revival of mountain biking with Club runs and competitive events showing an increase in the number of competitors. Neil Holman organised a number of Trailquest events – orienteering on bikes which required not only bike handling skills but also the ability to read a map!

An interesting foot note to the season: the September issue of the Newsletter was short of copy so Dave Birch submitted a recipe for his favourite cake.

Concerns were expressed at the Annual General Meeting in October 1998 that the Club had become 'static'. Membership still hovered around the 60 mark yet the 'Testers, 'Roadies' and 'MTBers' seemed rarely to meet and mix. The programme of Club and Open events would remain the same as that for previous seasons. In the main, these events were well supported although the Club '20' attracted only three riders and was abandoned.

Congratulations went to a number of riders for their achievements during the year including Alex and William Wise who had competed creditably in National events and to Phil Rayner who set new Club records at 50 miles and 100 miles. It was proposed and accepted that the Clubman of the Year be awarded for services to the Club while the Sybil Cragg Trophy would be awarded on the basis of meritorious performance. The Club also appointed a Youth Development Officer.

Towards the end of 1998, the A1(M) was opened and the old A1 became available for time trials under the Course code N1. At the same time, further restrictions were placed in the use of the A14. At the end of 1999, cycling time trials were banned entirely from the A14 following a fatal accident.

On 14th January 1999, eighteen members of the Club attended an Extraordinary Special Meeting. There are no Minutes nor any records of the purpose or business of the meeting.

In May 1999, Paul Bramford organised a survey among Club members seeking their views on the future direction of the Club: a number of proposals were put forward.

- A 'get together' after each evening Club event.
- A second evening time trial series on a shorter, safer course to encourage younger riders.
- Regular Club Nights during the winter each with a theme and, perhaps, a guest speaker.
- The Club to offer cycling proficiency training for young people.
- Further development of the Mountain Bike section.
- The Club to promote a touring or Audax event.

In August 1999, there was yet another proposal to re-design the Club kit.

A new Millennium



In the first few months of the year 2000, a fresh design for Club kit highlighting the name and colours of ANC, the Club sponsor, was approved. This was short-lived. In May, a receiver was appointed for the Market Harborough franchise of ANC and the sponsor's name and logo had to be removed from all kit, signs, stationery etc. by the end of the year.

The Club became 'Welland Valley Cycling Club': the third name since its foundation in 1927.

Vic Barnett won the Grand Masters World Championship in Canada – the Club's first World Champion. Vic was to retain his title one year later. Closer to home, Bradley Rayner won the Mallory Park Tuesday Road Race series.

The programme of events for 2002 provided the basis of what we see today with evening '10's at Kibworth, Sulby and Bruntingthorpe in addition to the Club trophy events over 25 miles during the course of the season.

There were further discussions but no decision about incorporating events other than time trials into the Club BAR competition.

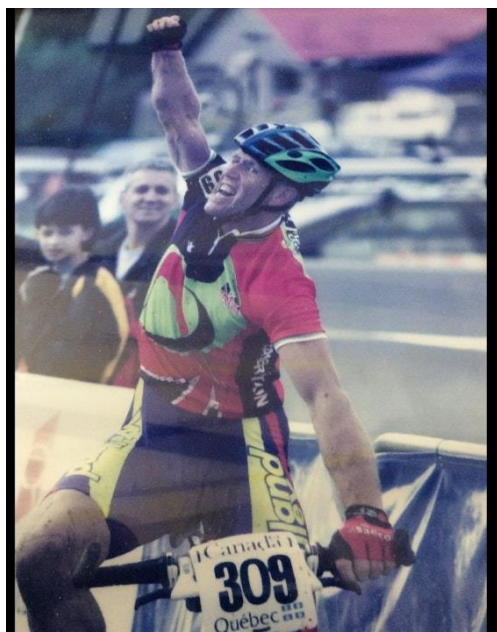
An application was made to the National Lottery for a grant to cover the costs of events at Bruntingthorpe and the hire of club rooms for time trial bases.

In January 2002 plans were made to support the Harborough Hackers – a group of disabled riders who were seeking support to ensure safe riding on the highway. It was generally agreed that Bruntingthorpe events would be ideal but there would be more of a problem supporting the Hackers on their regular Saturday Club runs.

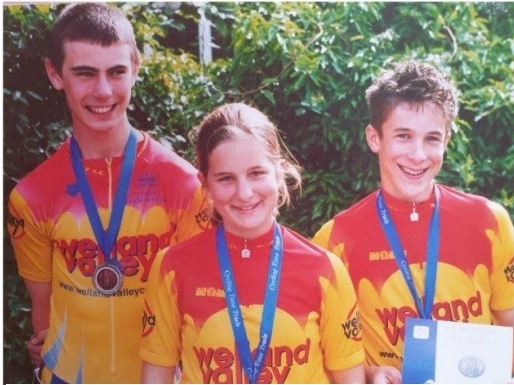
In the meantime, the search continued for the missing A.A.Brown Trophy.

In March of 2002 the operation and management of the Club's new 'website' was placed on a firm basis. It was believed that around 20 members were 'on-line' and would have access to the site.

Towards the end of the season, the Committee addressed the contentious issue of wearing helmets: should the compulsory use of hard shell helmets be imposed on youth riders – and what about guest riders? The matter was deferred to the AGM when, after considerable discussion, a motion to make all riders wear hard shell helmets in Club time trials was passed by 1 vote.



Vic Barnett winning his second world championships in Canada in 2001, sporting a Great Britain jersey.



Bradley Rayner, Lorna Marlow and Alex Wise

The 2002 season proved highly successful for the newly named Welland Valley Cycling Club. Vic Barnett finished second in the World Masters Games in Australia, Bradley Rayner was the under sixteen GHS Champion in 22.16 – just three seconds behind the overall winner – and Lorna Marlow was the under fifteen girls champion in 27.02. William Wise was the British Schools Cycling Association National Champion.

Over greater distances, Sandra Arm gained a silver medal in L'Étape du Tour while George Barnett and Phil Rayner rode the End to End in a week.

The Club Championship underwent a face lift. With sponsorship from Freeth Cartwright Solicitors, league tables would be introduced to encourage competition at all levels.

The new Best All Discipline (BAD) Award was formulated to be held on a trial basis during the 2003 season. The aim was to encourage all members to compete in various disciplines and to determine who was the best all-round rider. There would be six qualifying rounds featuring cyclo-cross, MTB races, road races, a '10' mile and a '25' mile time trial and the Club Hill Climb. The experiment lasted only one season due to a lack of suitable events.

In 2003, the Club hosted the British Schools Cycling Association National Time Trial at Bruntingthorpe. The event was a great success with 146 riders taking part however, the Club suffered a loss of £275 on the day.

In March 2004, a Club outing to Manchester Velodrome saw 15 members try track racing.

Concerns were raised about the speed of Club Runs with separate groups forming as slower riders were left behind. It was decided to nominate Café Stops for the faster and slower riders to re-group. In the 'Wheelers' early days, the Hard Riders and Social Section had arranged to meet up for tea at a nominated café: *plus ça change ...*

In May 2004, a presentation was made to the Committee by a representative of British Cycling on the topic of 'Go Ride' – a major initiative by BC to support coaching and development. It was agreed that the Club would seek accreditation. Following a meeting with British Cycling and Harborough District Council, a number of venues for 'Go Ride' activities were identified and the first session was held at the Harborough Leisure Centre on 20th November with ten youngsters in attendance. Welland Valley Cycling Club was duly registered as a 'Go Ride' club and by the end of the year, 22 youngsters had signed up.

Not for the first time, concerns were raised about the safety of the Kibworth time trial courses. Alternative courses were considered in the Langton and Gilmorton area for the 2005 season. Traffic counts were undertaken on the Kibworth course and found to be acceptable. The course is still used regularly today.

It was proposed that a 3 Stage Time Trial event be introduced for 2005. A Prologue of 2½ miles, a 10 mile trial between Wigston and Shearsby and 2-up trial on the Gilmorton circuit to be run on three consecutive evenings.

In 2006 a further survey of the members' thoughts for the future direction of the Club was undertaken. The answers confirmed that the major interest for most people was time trialling and leisure riding although very few juvenile and junior members contributed to the survey.

In April 2006, Dean Barnett confirmed that the Club had formally signed up for a 'Go Ride' programme and must now decide whether or not to seek 'Club Mark' status – this would involve more formal regulation to ensure the welfare of those aged under 18. The proposal for accreditation was unanimously approved by the Committee.



The 'Go Ride' group was named 'Welland Valley Whizz Kids' and, by the end of the year, more than 35 youngsters were regularly attending 'Go Ride' events.

In autumn of that year, the Club held its first Audax event organised by Mike Vybiral. Some 130 riders took part and the event generated in excess of £500 for charity.

Afterward: Towards the Centenary

Welland Valley Cycling Club supports the various cycling disciplines and activities and, as a consequence, continues to grow and to develop the interests in cycling of all ages.

At the end of 2022 Welland Valley Cycling Club boasted 326 members, with regular events, competitions and activities covering racing – on the road and on the track - time trialling, cyclo cross, long-distance riding in Audax and Sportives, regular Club Runs for members of all ages and abilities and, to support all these activities, formal coaching programmes and participation in a funded Development programme. Underlying many of these activities is the Whizz Kids programme run as part of British Cycling's 'Go Ride' initiative to encourage safe cycling

The first half of the 21st century has seen enormous growth in the number of people participating in cycling whether for sport, for leisure, for travel or, simply, to enjoy the health benefits which regular exercise can bring. The Department for Transport reports that, in 2021, some 7.5 million individuals – around 11% of the population – cycled at least once in every four weeks.

These figures have been boosted by British success in all competitive disciplines: on the track, on the road, cross country, mountain biking, BMX and Paralympics. Each of the three Grand Tours has been won by a British rider and we have seen World and Olympic medals going to our men and women, Juniors and Masters.

Participation in cycling has also been reinforced by a much wider awareness of the need to limit harmful emissions and to care for our planet.

In common with many sporting events and activities, competitive cycling was brought to a close in 2020 by the coronavirus pandemic. After some months, the restrictions were sufficiently relaxed to allow the running of time trials in a manner that was reminiscent of the private time trials of the 1940s and 1950s. Social gatherings were banned so competitors were issued with a race number



which they retained throughout the season. Individuals were instructed to report to the time-keeper not more than one minute before their start time. There was no 'pusher off' so scooting off and clipping-in became a skill to practise and polish!

After completing the Course, riders made their own way home: no get together, no post-match analysis, no tea and cake. Results were posted on the Club website and competitors prepared for the next event with solo training rides.

The summer of 2027 will see 100 years since the formation of 'Welland Valley Wheelers'. Over that time the world has seen many dramatic changes but the concept of a human powered, wheeled form of transport has survived and developed – long may it continue.