

## NEWSLETTER JULY 2017

### Tour of the Highlands 2017 by Kate and Ramona

Kate: At some point last Autumn, a certain Scot in CCC suggested taking part in the Tour of the Highlands which takes place at the end of May... a good target to keep up the winter training, he suggested. Well, four of us (Michael, Noelle, Ramona and I) took Al up on the idea and found ourselves six months later in the Highlands of Scotland, telling Al this was all his fault.

Luckily Scotland was having its annual three days of summer as we headed up to Glencoe, and we were joined by Al's parents for a BBQ and sunbathing at the campsite before we settled down into our sleeping bags just metres away from the start line; a good place to stay as registration was from 6.30 – 7am. The views from the mountain at 6am on a clear sunny morning were gorgeous and we were all looking forward to getting going on what we were promised was a beautiful route. At the start we found out Eileen Roe, national circuit racing champion, was taking part for the day with her Dad! We turned up at the start line, with her looking very smart in her champion's jersey. We were in our Cambridge kit which matched her jersey rather well. We rolled along chatting with them for the first 20 miles or so, which was a great experience. She told me Scotland is actually this sunny all the time, it's just a well-kept secret; now I know too, I mustn't tell anyone else. I should have known she was lying.....

#### Day 1 start, Glencoe



Ramona: On the first day, we took off too quickly, but desperate to keep up with Eileen Roe. As I saw Kate ahead chatting away to Eileen I was hanging on the back thinking "blimey! It's going to be a tough 3 days". Luckily Kate's initial exuberance calmed down and we carried on a much steadier pace.



Exterior of Hobbit House in Glencoe.

If you would like to stay here you must book well in advance.

Interior of Hobbit House.



Kate: Oops!! Anyway, the first proper climb came after about 40 miles and the first feed stop. We all developed a taste for Aussie bites; the feed stops were always excellent (the sportive organisers did claim they do the best feed stops in the country, I wouldn't argue otherwise). As we started climbing over Ben Lawers, the heat really took its toll and it felt pretty hard going. Not that I am complaining about it being hot and sunny! The views along the loch were gorgeous though, and the descent was great fun as the organisers had even been out the night before and swept the corners clear of gravel. After this the climbs came regularly and we went over Schiehallion, Trinafour and Errochty, before the road flattened out a little as we rolled into Pitlochry before a sting in the tail of a short steep climb up to the finish. Day 1 complete: 101 miles, 1919 metres of climbing (according to my Garmin anyway!).

Ben Lawers



We stayed in the local youth hostel in Pitlochry where the bike shed was already full; happily they agreed we could keep our bikes in our room, which the 5 of us were all sharing. Getting the bikes



and our kit in the room was a bit like playing Tetris, but we managed! We were up by 5.30 the next day for another early start; unfortunately Al became unwell overnight and had to withdraw, so four of us headed back up the hill to the start, which began immediately with a climb. Day 2 had many more riders. We were joined by those doing the single day Three Pistes Sportive along the same route. They were told at the start they were wusses and had to let us 3 day riders draft them all day, which I thought was rather a good plan as the wind had picked up and we were facing 80 miles of head wind.



Ramona: The unforgettable organizer Alan is indeed a sadist, you were never sure what the distance truly was at the end of each day until the finish. Insults had been chalked on the road to give motivation or humiliation but very well organised with other helpful messages “slow down” on some steep descents and an ambulance crew waiting to patch you up if you’d overcooked a turn. The music playing as you approached the summit of climbs (I amused myself by guessing where the speaker was buried as the wind bounced the sound around).



Kate: Day 2 was the toughest day with a number of climbs including three of the highest passes in Scotland. The first feed stop of the day was at the top of Glenshee ski resort – not a bad climb but a real slog into what was now a cold headwind, temperatures had dropped by about 15 degrees overnight. After a long descent off Glenshee this we knew we had three climbs in quick succession, finishing on the Lecht which had rather legendary status as difficult and steep climb, with a number of steps to it. It lived up to its reputation, made all the more challenging by the headwind and the peak being in the clouds, obscuring the view! It was bleak up there and at this point the four of us dived into the chalet café and ordered coffees. Why more people didn’t do the same I can’t imagine! Maybe it’s not the done thing on a sportive but a hot drink did our spirits the world of good, and the descent off the Lecht was most enjoyable.

Ramona: Deciding what to wear - me nearly starting the day without a mac for the 2nd day (with temperatures of 10-12 degrees ) I would have died from hypothermia up at the top of Glenshee ski centre. Underestimating the time it takes to get to the start line, the shovelling down of breakfast, the faffing, the panic as everyone is waiting for you while you try and decide to wear arm warmers and/or leg warmers. Gilet/jacket combo, sun cream or no sun cream  
The new way of eating, shovelling down food at the food stops, handfuls of jelly beans, washed down by coke, trying not to choke on Aussie bites and sreen loaf and remembering to breathe in between bites. Shameful memory - teasing Al for going to get a drink at the pub when we were itching to leave - little did we know how much he was struggling with illness and needed caffeine as a pick me up.

## The Lecht



Kate: By this point we'd formed a group with four good riders from Shropshire, and a couple of others, and were working together well when the terrain allowed. After a little bumpy section, Michael stopped for us all to regroup as (he said) it was flat/downhill now for 20 miles or so until we hit the final climb up Cairngorm. Good plan (we said). We rounded a corner and faced a wall of a climb with gradients that briefly hit 25%. Michael didn't live that one down for a while....

Then there was the promised flatter section to take a rest before the final long 9 mile climb up Cairngorm. The gradient on this wasn't as brutal as some of the earlier climbs so you could find a rhythm and enjoy it, but the climb didn't let up until crossing the final line at the very top. The views and atmosphere at the finish were great as there was a party on the mountain for those doing the single day event. Our party would have to wait but we enjoyed our free bowl of pasta before heading back down the mountain to our overnight stop in Aviemore. Day 2 complete: 113 miles, 2735 metres of climbing.

Ramona: [The climb at the end of the 2nd day to get to Cairngorm was so demoralizing. Counting 55 revolutions before 0.1 mile was reached in the granny ring was not working as any kind of comfort or motivation. I was on my own and had to reach deep to keep those wheels turning. We were all cycling alone at that point but were only a few minutes away from one another and the finish on the 2nd day.](#)

Kate and Eileen.



Kate: We were allowed a later start on the final day as we were promised the first 100 miles would be the fastest century we'd ever ride as it was flat/downhill all the way until we hit the climb back into Glencoe... we were sceptical, as East Anglians, let's face it, we know flat. The pace for the first 40 miles was tough as we worked hard to stay with a big group, but the miles did fly past. At the first feed stop we found out Scotland's famous midges had come out of hiding as the sun had gone and the wind had dropped; they made us stick to a quick stop! The next 20 miles we did as a smaller group and at the following feed stop we waited for our new friends, the Shropshire lads from yesterday, to give us a better sized and matched bunch for the rest of the ride as the weather was deteriorating and sharing the work and protection seemed sensible. From here the rain became pretty steady and the last 50 miles seemed a difficult prospect; but we put our heads down and kept going around Loch Linnhe with views of Ben Nevis and Fort William towards Corran Ferry. On arriving there, we realised we had just missed the ferry; initially the prospect of waiting in the rain for the ferry was most unappealing, but the girls snuck into a nearby pub for a loo stop and had the brainwave of buying takeaway coffees which we could have on the ferry! Bliss. Much jealousy exhibited by the 40 or so other riders who took the ferry with us.

#### Day 3 finish, Glencoe

From here it wasn't far to Glencoe and we found ourselves slogging along the valley with a headwind driving the rain into our faces. It wasn't pleasant; and then we started to climb with about 10 miles to go. I wasn't sure I could make it, but an emergency gel did the trick and Ramona and I were determined not to let the guy who sat on our wheels for these horrible miles pass us at the finish! There's nothing like a bit of stubbornness to get you over the finish line, back where we'd started 3 days before in entirely different conditions. We regrouped in the ski centre chalet for hot drinks and a bowl of chilli with a number of people we'd ridden with throughout the day, where we shared a real sense of achievement for completing what



had been a tough day, despite supposedly being the flat day. Suffice to say, it didn't include the fastest century I've ever ridden! Day 3 complete: 113 miles, 1204 metres of climbing.

Ramona: Should we mention our final treat? Our luxury stay: - The look of amazement from the B&B owner when 2 drowned rats turned up on the doorstep just wanting the key. She turned her meet and greet into the Spanish inquisition! I realised that I couldn't string a sentence together and any type of polite conversation was going to be brief! Luckily Kate was much more conversant and she listened to instructions whilst I found the kettle very quickly and there we sat in that room all evening heater full blast, long soaks in a hot bath and eating as much as we could in luxurious surroundings compared to the previous 3.

## Andy Wins as Team Comes Unscrewed

Intent on defending their title from last year, Cambridge CC had a strong team entered on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> June for the East Anglian VTTA 50 mile time trial – effectively the East Anglian vets' championship – with Andy Grant and Colin Lizieri from last year's team and Martin Reynolds taking the place of Ken Platts, who contrived to miss the closing date. The wheels came off the plan, along with Martin's cassette lock ring, 20-odd miles into his ride, which at least spared him the 20-mile return slog into a brutal 18-knot headwind, gusting to 30 knots. In such conditions, it took real moral fibre to ride past the finish to complete the final 10 miles and a number of riders succumbed to temptation. One who didn't was Colin Lizieri, who normally revels in tough conditions, but even he was battered five minutes back on his best with 1:55:54 and an eventual 12<sup>th</sup> place on standard.



Andy (left) had a lonely ride; off no.5, he was soon first rider on the road with only his power meter for company, and that wasn't telling him anything very encouraging. The attempt to get it to produce some more impressive numbers paid off though, with 1:52:35 good enough to win the event on standard and carry off the Syd Parkinson Cup, ensuring that Cambridge CC didn't go home empty-handed.

The previous Wednesday evening, Chris Dyason (below) travelled to the fabled V718 near Hull, for the City RC 10, where he justified the journey with a fine 21:34, an East Anglian VTTA age record. Clearly in form, he followed this up on Sunday with second place on standard in the Sleaford Wheelers 15, setting a Strava KOM for the outward leg.

The event produced two 17-minute rides, with professional Dan Bigham running out winner in 17:24 and leading his team, Brother NRG Pro Cycling, to the National Team Competition record three times over with three different combinations of team mates.



## **New National record for Ken Platts**

In the ECCA 100 mile time trial on Sunday, Ken Platts set a new VTTA benchmark for 65-year-olds with a fine 3:52:12. This ride was less eventful than his existing epic 2015 record for 62-year-olds which included a brief pause for a crash during which Ken broke his pelvis - a fact of which he was heroically unaware until attempting to get off his bike at the finish.

Three laps of the A11 course saw rising temperatures and light winds, fast conditions which produced the first three 30mph rides ever at the distance, the fastest, by Adam Duggleby in 3:16:51. Womens' competition record also fell, with Alice Lethbridge recording 3:42:37 to take 2:45 off the old record.



## **Results**

Early on Sunday the 28th of May the ECCA 25 championships were run on the E2/25, the course is actually a bit long so it should really be called the E2/25.1. The route starts near Newmarket and heads South West following the other E2 variations. In the past there was a services at the turn and people used to jokingly call the course "Burger King to McDonalds and back". The E2 is a fickle course, it is very exposed with little

tree cover so the wind direction is critical in determining whether there will be quick times. Small changes can be the difference between an ordinary day and a fast one, apparently the best conditions are a Westerly. In the run up to the event TT'ers had turned into amateur meteorologists and were out in force trying to predict the conditions. There were hushed murmurings of a potential super-fast "float day" similar to last year where Dowsett smashed the comp record. They needn't give up their day job though as it was yet another South Westerly making it a slog to the turn.

It was lovely and warm but the wind meant that most of the top riders were 1-2 minutes slower than their PB's, mostly set at the same event last year. Colin Ward won with 48.51 (Essex Roads CC).

David McGaw bucked the trend with a PB and club record, finishing second with 49.01. Daniel Northover (Finsbury Park CC) was third in 50.44 and Finsbury Park CC won the team prize. Andre Dyason was pretty chuffed with his 53.47 for 13th overall. Andy Grant was 19th in 54.30. Colin Lizeri was not happy with his 55.43 and went home to angrily mow his lawn. His time was relatively good though and he finished in 34th well within the top third. The legendary Platts-meister was 46th in 56.19. Jan Ertner did a ride as silky smooth as his freshly shaved legs, 1.01.09 a strong time relative to his LTS PB.

Chris Dyason (Cambridge CC), did a fantastic job organising this event and making sure that it ran smoothly. Chris has also organised the ECCA 10 and Cambridge CC 10 events this year. Great job!

Also David McGaw also broke the club record for a 10 with 19.15 in a club event on the F2a/10 on 1st June. This means there have been new club records for 10, 25 and 50 miles all set within 3 weeks.

## One, Two, Three.

Spotted in Cycling weekly. Well done to Toby, Sam and Patrick. A result like this is a rare occurrence. After his first win last year, Patrick is riding with consistency. It is good to see our young riders doing so well in the tough world of road racing.

The screenshot shows a Zinio online reader interface with the following content:

**Sunday, June 18**  
**Curlew Cup (Women's Team Series round five, Stamfordham, Northumberland):**  
**E. 1, 2, 3: 1. Julie Erskine (Cycle Team OnForm) 2:53.36;** 2. H. Payton (Drops CT) at same time; 3. G. Panchaud (Bianchi Dama UK) +0.01; 4. C. Mason (Storey Racing) +0.02; 5. E. Nelson (Team Breeze) +0.15; 6. K. Archibald (Team WNT) +1.40; 7. N. Evans (Storey Racing) +1.41; 8. L. Massey (Drops CT); 9. M. Lowther (Team Breeze) all at same time; 10. N. Grinczer (Team WNT) +1.45.

**Calthwaite Road Race (Carlisle, Cumbria):**  
**E. 1, 2, 3: 1. Jack Stanton-Warren (Halesowen A&CC) 75 miles in 2:58.45;** 2. E. Roberts (unattached); 3. L. Szymanski (ABC Centreville); 4. M. McGuire (100% ME); 5. S. Dent (Spokes RT); 6. F. Robinson (Clay Cross RT); 7. A. Dalton (Cattford-Equipe-Banks); 8. R. Grant (Pro Vision Scotland); 9. J. Fowles (Team Chronomaster); 10. B. Barlow (Salt Ayre Cog Set) all same time.

**Haverhill CC Road Race (Thurlow, Suffolk):**  
**2, 3, 4: 1. Toby Parnell (Cambridge CC) 55 miles in 2:08.33;** 2. S. Barker (Cambridge CC); 3. P. Willan (Cambridge CC) all same time; 4. L. Orley-Crisp (Velo Schils-Interbike) +0.02; 5. L. Fenner (API Metro); 6. G. Moore (Pro Cycle Hire UK); 7. S. Griffiths (Pro Cycle Hire UK); 8. F. Moore (CC Hackney); all st; 9. T. Guy (DAP CC) +0.06; 10. I. Perry (Velo Schils-Interbike) at st.

**VTIA (Kent) 25 (Challock, Kent):**  
**1. Chris Fennell (Thanet RC) 50.18**  
 2. J. Cockrill (Abellio SFART) ..... 53.07  
 3. A. Meliak (Velorefined.com Aerosmiths) ..... 53.23  
 4. N. Fennell (Thanet RC) ..... 54.34  
 5. P. Sewell (Bigfoot CC) ..... 55.25  
 6. D. Martin (University of Bath CC) ..... 55.26  
 7. S. Henderson (Thanet RC) ..... 56.03  
 8. J. Osborn (Folkestone VC) ..... 56.33  
 9. T. Kingston (GS Invicta) ..... 56.38  
 10. G. Grahams (CC Bexley) ..... 57.18  
**Women:** Helen McKay (Les Filles RT) ..... 59.24  
**Veteran:** Andrew Meliak

**Saturday, June 17**  
**Kent Valley Road Club 10 (Levens, Cumbria)**  
**1 James Gillen / HT Condon 17.54**

With thanks to the contributors for this edition.



Please email any contributions to: [newsletter@cambridgecc.co.uk](mailto:newsletter@cambridgecc.co.uk)