

**Cyclists' Touring Club**  
**Hertfordshire District Association**  
**Annual Report for year ending 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007**

This is the 79th annual report for the Herts DA of the CTC.

The total number of CTC members in the County on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007 was 1435 (In 2006 the total was 1378).

Looking at last year's report memories of an outstanding Summer came back. Oh wasn't that a long time ago! This year's Summer has been described as the warmest Winter on record! So much rain that even some of the hardiest riders within the Sections decided not to bother! However, the DA has run a very full programme of Sunday, midweek, starter and Audax rides and another social programme enabling riding and non-riding members to meet and chat.

Despite the weather, 2007 has clearly been an outstanding year of cycling for our members both within Hertfordshire, the surrounding Counties and further afield. From the Section reports, members have been cycling in the Far East as well as Europe. Of particular note is a series of rides Angela Feaviour (Western Section) and a friend have been undertaking. They started riding parts of the North Sea Cycle Route in 2004 and have ridden sections of the route each year since. We hope you enjoy Sweden next year.

Within the County, there have been some noteworthy developments. The Bishop's Stortford Section has been renamed the Stort Valley Section. After a couple of heroic attempts to get more people out on their bikes, John Curry managed to form a nucleus of riders from the Harlow area. This started as a spin-off from National Bike Week with some having ambitions of riding the London-Cambridge charity ride. As a result, the Section now runs rides from both Bishop's Stortford and Harlow on two Sundays each month. Well done John!

Audax rides have been a regular part of the DA's programme for many years but Peter Southworth has established the Ring of Herts (200Km) and East Herts Loop (100Km) rides. Bob Corbett is now organising two off-road rides, the Stevenage Semi-circular Off-road Ride (50Km) and the Greenwich Meridian Challenge (50miles). This year we ran ten registered events and the Committee wish to record its thanks to the organisers of these events, Paul Boielle, Jim Brown, Peter Southworth and Bob Corbett. The Committee is equally grateful to those who marshalled these events. Without them, we could not run these rides, so a huge vote of thanks is due to you all – thank you! We could not offer such a broad and diverse programme without these people, but we always need more. Please volunteer, as the more helpers we have, the lighter the load on each.

All the Audax rides and the Cecil Cooke Memorial Trophy were registered as District Association Touring Competition (DATC) events this year. Perhaps the increased number of the Audax/DATC events has encouraged participation in the competition or perhaps those taking part are keen to run these events. Wherever the truth lies, Hertfordshire is currently fourth in the team section of the competition and Alan Wratten has come second on a tie-break to Kim Suffolk in the individual contest. Alan has qualified as a gold medallist in the *Mille Miglia* competition having cycled 1083 miles (1743Km). Congratulations Alan. Bob Corbett is currently 23<sup>rd</sup> and Stuart Hammond is in 38<sup>th</sup> place. Well done the Herts Team.

Medals, this year will be awarded on the basis of the DATC events ridden. With the results from Summertime Reversed to come, there are already 13 medal winners with another 27 possible medallists from a total of 115 different riders. Quite a success! Many riders say how much they

enjoy the rides and express their appreciation to the marshals along the route. Its very pleasant chatting to the riders although there is little time to do so at the first check on the March Audax!

### **Photographic Competition**

Every year the quality of the prints and slides increases and this year was no exception. Albert Jarman retained the slides trophy with Barrie Wood coming second. Dave Dickenson took a clean sweep in the prints competition with two photographs placed joint first and his other print coming third. Congratulations to both Albert and Dave and many thanks to all those that entered. The DA is in the process of purchasing equipment to project digital images, which should open both parts of the contest to the increasing number of digital photographers amongst our membership. The subject for 2008, chosen by this year's winners, is 'The Village'. Please encourage all members with a camera to enter next year and raise the standards yet again.

### **Touring**

Judy Allfrey led a tour to Castle Hedingham Youth Hostel over the Easter weekend this year. The weather was (surprisingly) superb and Judy organised rides to Polstead, Barrow and White Roding. They enjoyed many miles of quiet country lanes and excellent tea stops. The Committee wishes to register their thanks to Judy for organising another very successful Easter tour.

### **Finance**

Stuart Hammond, Hon Treasurer, reports that the DA is in a healthy financial position.

### **The Sections:-**

#### **North Herts Section (Jim Brown)**

NHS CTC offered local cyclists a very varied programme of on and off road rides, and social activities.

In previous years we changed from weekly to twice a month evening rides after the Cyclists' Curry Crawl at the end of September. However now there are Autumn Ambles every Wednesday throughout October.

The twelfth Emitremmus, on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2006, was huge. On a glorious Autumn day 358 set out from Fairlands Valley Park on our 101 kms challenge ride – a brevet populaire – from Stevenage to Saffron Walden and back, 321 had their rides validated. Easily a record. The link with the Stevenage 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations certainly helped the publicity but numbers from outside the area were well up. On this occasion the special medals were supplemented by T-shirts, polo shirts and "Cycling in our Community" medals. Frame numbers gave something of a big event feel – which indeed it was. We have started booking the Sailing Centre training room as an event HQ.

The Christmas lunch at Offley was a great success and full almost to overflowing. Three days later Santa's Cycles, while not quite on the scale of Chicago's Santa Rampage, cheered up people along the way to the Hermit of Redcoats.

More people seem to want to get some fresh air over Christmas and the New Year so we pedalled off the pudding on Boxing Day, 27<sup>th</sup> December and had a good turnout for the Resolution Ride.

A lively Bicycle Barn Dance was enjoyed. It would be good to see some energetic cyclists from elsewhere in the County.

No less than 313 completed one of the Stevenage Start of Summertime Specials. 61 at 62 kms, 156 at 115kms and 96 at 210 kms. Those that got efficient chain gangs going certainly benefited battling the headwind. Many thanks to Paul Boielle and his team for their hard work.

We organised a very busy programme for Bike Week and took full advantage of the facility to register rides in the weeks leading up to the week itself. Highlights included the Circular Cycle, which is becoming more and more popular, and the Teddy Bears Picnic.

The Section supported Climate Change Week with a ride to the Millennium Forest at Marston Vale on 15<sup>th</sup> July. Unfortunately Genevieve couldn't make it. However we dodged all but a few showers.

And the off road Audax and Cecil Cooke Competition were both in our area. Ably organised by Bob Corbett.

### **St Albans and Hatfield Section (Richard Stubbs)**

Over the year the Section continued to organise rides on Wednesday evenings, our 'Night Owls' rides, and longer Sunday rides.

The evening rides start in St Albans every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. and take various routes of about 15 miles, finishing at a pub, and are organised by Steve Brazier. Only three rides were cancelled due to the weather, and attendance is usually about six with a maximum of eleven. After last year's trophy for most attendance was won outright by Phil Slade, a replacement has been crafted and will be presented at the evening riders' annual dinner on 14th November.

Many thanks to the group of people who have lead our 52 Sunday rides throughout the year. We try to have different leaders each week who pick their own routes and stops. This helps to create variety in our destinations and leaders have been ingenious in coming up with new routes. They have included car-assisted trips into further flung areas. Quite a few established refreshment stops have closed over the year and we have been trying a number of new ones. We have had 45 different people coming along to these rides over the year (about the same as last year), but they didn't all attend at once! The unusually wet Summer affected participation but only one event was called off because of the weather.

The results for the Hargreaves Trophy, which is awarded for the most miles covered on the Sunday rides, have been very close this year. But the winner is Peter Ridhalgh, many congratulations to him!

The other results for this trophy (leaving off those with fewer than 10 points) are:

|                |    |                   |    |
|----------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Peter Ride     | 99 | Ian Smith         | 31 |
| Richard Stubbs | 97 | Bill Upsdale      | 30 |
| Steve Brazier  | 96 | Denise Hill       | 24 |
| Judy Allfrey   | 87 | Eric Cullen       | 23 |
| Jon Crosby     | 83 | Tracy Wigmore     | 21 |
| Carol Brazier  | 79 | Roger Hodgson     | 19 |
| Stuart Hammond | 74 | Alan Wratten      | 16 |
| Fred Curtis    | 69 | Adrian Winterbone | 15 |
| Craig Maxwell  | 35 | Barrie Wood       | 10 |

A well attended, successful long Easter weekend away based at Castle Hedingham was organised by Judy Alfrey.

A number of regular riders, together with cyclists from St Albans Forty Plus, enjoyed a trip to Western France organised by Anne Jarman.

Rona Wightman organised 'Five miles to fabulous' - two introductory cycle rides for novice female cyclists to coincide with Bike Week.

Members have been active over the year in overseas touring, either travelling with CTC Holidays or under their arrangements. Europe remains the most popular, but the Far East has also featured.

Many thanks to Ian Smith who has continued in his role as web master. There is no doubt, from the comments of new riders who come along, that the web continues to be our most effective way of communicating our activities to the outside world.

### **Stort Valley Section (John Curry)**

The Section changed its name this year to Stort Valley. This was to reflect the change in location of the majority of active riders. There has been a steady erosion of active riders from Bishop's Stortford and its near environs. This reduction in numbers from Bishop's Stortford has been balanced by an increase in the number of riders from Harlow. As a result a number of new members have been recruited for the CTC. The loss of riders from Bishop's Stortford is mainly due to age and infirmity! A notable exception to this is the redoubtable Leo Brown who, despite a dodgy hip and heart continues to ride. His chosen mount being an electrically assisted bike, which he uses when our breakfast stops are within battery range. It should also be noted that no one is recruiting in Bishop's Stortford.

Conversely, National Bike Week rides in Harlow have resulted in new members. Regular letters in the local papers, on cycling issues, have also kept cycling in the public eye and encouraged some lapsed cyclists out of retirement.

So far this year 43 individuals have taken part in our regular Sunday rides, some of them just once! Maximum on any one day has been 16 and the minimum just one, me! What a wet day that was! Average numbers this year are 7 per Sunday; however the Sundays on which there is a Harlow start as well can boast an average turnout of 11.

Since August we have increased the number of rides starting in Harlow from one per month to two, with some success. We have kept the Bishop's Stortford starts for the time being, but this is under review.

For National Bike Week four rides were organised. A total of 96 riders took part. However it should be noted that some riders took part in all four rides, so that in fact 60 individuals participated. An improvement on previous years, and some encouragement to go on. The best attendance was for the 5 mile event with 34 riders.

The Wednesday "Last of the Summer Wine" rides continue, with good support. As many as 8 riders can be expected at popular hostleries.

### **Western Section (Peter Southworth)**

The Western Section's main activities are the Sunday rides, which are held throughout the year. The rides are well supported with an average 12 riders and sometimes more than 20 on each ride. Starting points are at various locations in the Hemel Hempstead area. The main destinations are in the Chilterns, the Vale of Aylesbury and West Herts, using quiet country lanes to visit cafes and traditional pubs.

The Section organised hill climbing, freewheeling and speed judging competitions as part of the Sunday ride programme.

This year, the first Ring of Herts (200 km) and East Herts Loop (100 km) Audax events were held on 22 July. The routes were popular with the entrants and many riders used the events as training for the Paris-Brest-Paris Audax in August. It is planned to run the events again on 1 June 2008.

Section members took part in cycle tours in Suffolk, France (Semaine Federal, Pyrenees and Carmargue) and the Netherlands (North Sea Cycle Route).

**And Finally:-**

Despite the very wet 'Summer' it is very encouraging that so many have donned their waterproofs and carried on cycling. The Sections provide a very varied range of rides and events which, although quite different, suit that Section's riders. Many individuals have been mentioned in this report and thanked for their efforts that have helped the Sections and DA run very smoothly this year. There is another group that also deserves our thanks and they are the Section Secretaries, Jim Brown, Richard Stubbs, John Curry and Peter Southworth. They ensure the rides programmes which form the basis of the club's activities continue week by week. Finding 'volunteers' to lead the rides and arranging stops to cover most points of the compass is not easy. The Committee wishes to record it's thanks to all the Section Secretaries.

Unfortunately, not everybody can be thanked individually in a short report like this. Many people have worked during the year to help the Sections and the DA function. Please accept a collective but very sincere vote of thanks for your valued assistance. You are very much appreciated.

Looking forward, perhaps the Winter will be drier than this year's 'Summer'! But, whatever the weather, the Committee hope everybody has a very enjoyable, safe and rewarding year of cycling to come.

By Order of the Committee

B Jackson  
Hon DA Secretary.