

# WHEELER'S DIGEST

Events | Guidance | Club Updates

## Welcome...

Welcome to the March edition of the Wheeler's Digest.

Without your stories and news this would be a very brief news-letter so please send me anything cycling related, preferably with some photos as well, to [webmaster@wellesbourne-wheelers.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@wellesbourne-wheelers.org.uk)

Next issue at the end of April 2024

Steve Kirk - Editor

## Diary Dates

27 April - ~~Netherlands Club Trip~~  
**CANCELLED**

28 April - [Ride the Reservoir](#)

3-6 May - WOWW IoW Club Trip

12 May - ~~Majorca Club Trip~~  
**CANCELLED**

18 May - [Bard's Ride](#)

26 May - Ride London

22 June - CFC Coast to Coast

30 June - [Tour d'Ilmington](#)

7 July - [Broughton Castle sportive](#)

## New Members

Terry Letherby

## Distance Award

Top five so far (km):

Gordon Matthew	1,016.0
Peter Dewis	966.4
Mike Veal	917.6
Alison Speechly	860.6
Peter Coote	843.8

## Climbing Award

Top five so far (m):

Peter Dewis	10,945
Peter Coote	10,043
Efe Tunc	9,291
Alison Speechly	8,407
Mike Veal	7,769

## On The Front

As we move into spring, the predominantly wet and changeable weather has led to frustration with some rides being cancelled and others needing to be diverted because of the amount of standing water. Despite this most of us are managing to get out and there have been a few notable achievements since the last bulletin.

Gary Gristwood and Peter Coote recently had creditable performances in the Mad March Hare Sportive which started at Wythall Transport Museum just south of Birmingham and went to the west over a 110 km course with over 2000 m of climbing. Well done to both of them.



again soon, Nick.

The new combined 10.00am Thursday start time has now been running for three weeks. This was always going to be something that we would refine on the basis of experience. The Sports Centre Car Park is proving to be a better venue for giving the pre-ride briefing than the layby. So far, Dene and Hastings riders have stuck with the groups they are used to riding with. However, I am hopeful that it may give opportunities to members who want to take on new challenges, but where they can do so in a controlled and supported way. I recognise that new challenges of this sort are not attractive to many of the Mountford regulars, but anyone is welcome to come along to the briefing if you are thinking about taking on something new.

It is early days for the new distance and climbing awards. So far, Gordon Matthew and I are leading the way in terms of distance, both having ridden just under 530 miles since we started recording. Peter Coote and I are ahead in ascent in that we have both climbed just over 29,000 feet. However, it's early days and I am sure we will see these change as we are all able to get out more. I should add at this stage that I do not have the complete distance and climbing figures for all members of the Strava Group. To do that I need to be able to follow you on Strava. I have sent out requests to be able to do that and if those requests are accepted, I will be able to have a more complete record of everyone's achievements.

So far no-one has submitted any times for the time trial course, but I imagine that will be something members will want to do as the weather improves. At the moment, road closures in Ilmington are making it difficult to get access to the Foxcote climb. However, it is possible, and I recently rode it with a time of 6 minutes, 38 seconds. That was a big improvement on the time I reported last month, but I still think it should be an easy target for many of our members.

Finally, a couple of pictures showing my family's cycling heritage. The first is of my dad with tandem and sidecar - our main family transport in the early 1950s. The second is of me on my first bike, trialling a prototype of an early cycling helmet!

See you out on the roads and let's hope for better weather to come.

*Peter Dewis - Chair*

On the same day a group of Sunday Club regulars had a rather more gentle 50-mile ride when we took part in the Evesham Wheelers Reliability Ride. This took us through some pleasant, but unfamiliar countryside as we made our way through Pershore, Tewkesbury and back to Evesham.

While the rest of us were dodging the showers Larry Coltman was riding in the Canary Islands where he put in some impressive performances. During his stay, he rode over 300 km and climbed over 5500 m. Well done Larry, the record of your rides on Strava made me quite envious.

I must give a particular mention to Nick Hawtin. He rode a gravel bike event in Cannock Chase on 17<sup>th</sup> March but had a fall with about 9 miles to go. He managed to complete the ride and then drive home, only to find later that he had fractured a collar bone. At the time of writing, he is having surgery to plate the broken bone. It's hard to imagine what it must have been like getting home while carrying such an injury. I am sure you will all want to join me in wishing him a speedy recovery. We look forward to riding with you



## London 2 Paris - CureLeukaemia

Further to the report in the February Wheeler's Digest, here is an update on my L2P ride for Cure Leukaemia commencing 6th June 2024.

I'm cycling 500km from London 2 Paris in four days (Thursday 6th - Sunday 10th June) to raise funds for the blood cancer charity Cure Leukaemia because every 14 minutes, someone in the UK is diagnosed with a form of blood cancer.

Each day will be over 100km in distance with climbing of 1000m on average. My training is going well with my monthly mileage increasing January through March with around 1500 miles completed in the first 3 months of the year. This has all been outside in, shall we say, mixed weather!

To help me achieve my fundraising target of £1500, please give what you can on my [JustGiving page](#)

Your help and support are greatly appreciated. Many thanks in advance

Gordon Matthew - Hastings

## Bike servicing and repairs



Time to get the summer bike serviced ready for the new season or the winter bike at the end of the season!

WW member Rob Gullen (Cytech qualified) is now running his own workshop in Stratford servicing and repairing bikes.

See the [website](#) for the the scope of work undertaken. Charges are on a low-cost basis with fixed pricing (no surprises!) advised before work commences. Look out for some special offers over the next few months! Fast turnaround getting you back on the road quickly (local collection/delivery is possible)

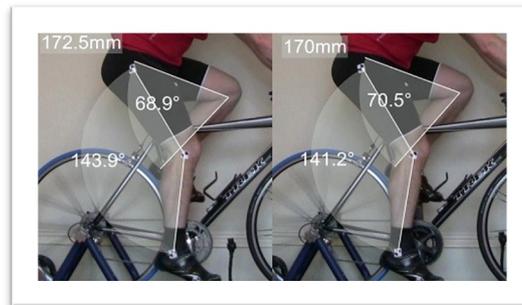
Rob Gullen  
[rob@bicyclerepairmanservices.co.uk](mailto:rob@bicyclerepairmanservices.co.uk)

## Tech Corner - Crank Length

The cranks on your bike are the levers that connect the pedals to the chain rings and bottom bracket. As a rule, bikes designed for smaller people have 170mm cranks, whereas taller folk on bigger bikes ride 175mm cranks, which if you think about it, is a ridiculously small range considering they are accommodating riders from under 5' to well over 6'. As a bike fitter, I realised that crank lengths are an especially important parameter in achieving a comfortable, powerful fit and that many people, especially those of shorter stature were being seriously let down by the bike industry.

Setting the correct saddle height is often defined by a suitable extension of the leg, but what is also important is the ability of the foot to pass comfortably over the top of the pedal stroke.

If the knee is too compressed, high shear forces can lead to pain and compromised power generation. It may not sound very much but a 5mm reduction in crank length can make a huge difference, especially as both compression at the top and possible over extension at the bottom of the pedal stroke are both reduced.



By measuring knee angles, we can see the difference a 2.5mm reduction in crank lengths makes here.

A more detailed analysis of crank length can be found here but in general terms and assuming typical leg lengths for your height (both male and female) my recommendations would be:

Height	Crank Length
Less than 5'4"	160mm
5'4" to 5'8"	165mm
5'8" to 5'10.5"	170mm
5'10.5 to 6'1"	172.5mm
Over 6' 1"	175mm

If on the cusp of sizes, it is always better to be on the shorter crank length as there is little downside.

Are there any indicators that your cranks may be too long?

- Your knees / hips / lower back hurt.
- You feel your upper body 'bobbing' when spinning fast and lightly loaded.
- Your transmission occasionally 'clangs' as you hit a dead spot at the top of the stroke.
- You prefer a low cadence i.e. 75rpm or less.
- Your knees come uncomfortably close to your chest when on the drops or tri bars.

### Case Study

Fellow Hastings rider Lynn asked my advice on why her winter bike felt sluggish compared to her nominally identical summer bike. Both were the same make and model, in the same size and set up as far as possible, identically. Lynn uses different shoes and pedals in the winter so my first thoughts were that these may be the culprits. Before getting to have a closer look, Ashley had a more detailed inspection and found the summer bike was on 165mm cranks and the winter 170mm! Fitting 165mm to the winter bike has largely resolved the issue and Lynn is much happier with this bike now.

Mike Veal - Hastings

### Our Strava Club



As you will have read, we are awarding prizes this year to the members who ride the furthest and climb the highest.

Collecting the data to send to Peter (Dewis) can be a bit of a pain so here's an easier way:

1. Join [Strava](#) (The FREE membership is all that you need for this).
2. Link your Garmin/ Wahoo bike computer to sync your rides with Strava.
3. Ask Peter to follow you so he can see your ride details.
4. Join the WW Strava club so you can see who is on this/last week's leaderboard.

Once set up you don't even need to log into Strava. All your rides will be automatically logged and Peter (bless him) will collect the stats. But there is a load more that you can do in Strava if you want, so worth having a look around.

Steve Kirk - Webmaster

### Forum Notifications



Having to remember to go to the Forum to read the latest ride reports can be a bit hit and miss. A better solution is to set up an email notification so a message will ping into your Inbox when a new report is posted.

1. Login to the Forum and open the Ride Reports board.
2. Click on 'Receive Emails and Alerts' button and choose third option (same label).
3. That's it!

Steve Kirk - Webmaster

## Peter and Gary - Mad as March Hares!

The Mad March Hare sportive, which took place on Sunday 24th March from the grounds of the Transport Museum in Wythall, South Birmingham, certainly lived up to its name as entrants had to contend with fierce headwinds and no less than nine categorised Garmin climbs, six of which were in the first half of the ride where the wind was doing it's worst. Total ascent over the 69.3 mile course was therefore a not unsurprising 5,541 ft!



The WW representation consisted of Hastings riders Peter Coote and me and, in my view, both of us put in a very good performance, with Peter getting round in 5hrs 11mins at an average speed of 13.4 mph to finish inside the top 100 of 346 riders in 79th place, whilst I finished inside the top 50 (which was my objective) in 36th place with a time of 4hrs 39mins at an average speed of just over 15 mph. Having said this, there were quite a few complaints on the event Facebook page about the leading riders achieving some ridiculously fast times and it

looks like some may have switched routes at the split point and rode the shorter route instead. This being the case, a fairer reflection is probably to look at the Strava route results set up for the event where, thanks to Peter sending me a copy, I was very pleased to see that I'd finished 10th overall.

I actually saw Peter twice on the day; once out of Stourport on Severn, where he was unable to speak as I passed him as he had briefly stopped whilst in the process of stuffing what looked like a Mars Bar into his mouth and then again when he arrived at the finish where we could compare notes.

For those of you that may know the areas of the route, it went briefly northwards before heading west, then dropping south and finally east. Places we rode through included Hopwood, Barnt Green, Caunsall, Kinver, Arley (where all riders had to cross a bridge across the Severn River on foot), Heightington, Stourport on Severn, Hartlebury, Elmley Lovett, Cutnall Green, Elmbridge, Wychbold, Stoke Prior, Stoke Pound and Tutnall. We also went through the Lickey Hills and the Wyre Forest en route.

Did we enjoy it? I'm not sure if enjoy is the word, but I think we both derived a great sense of satisfaction from firstly undertaking and then doing well in such a tough early season event.

Gary Gristwood - Hastings GO

## Mountford Group Growing



Recently Mountford had the largest group outing; 17 riders in total (2 guests over our normal members). Normal group size is around 10. Here we are at our coffee stop at Bishop's Itchington.

Chas Hilditch - Mountford Co-GO