

Newsletter

Hours of leisure
Miles of pleasure

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Gravesend's High Rollers



Luke, Mike and Steve Harrington atop the Tourmalet and the road up



Results

Time Trials

5/6/12 GCC Q10/24

K Ward (v) 28.33

12/6/12 GCC Q10/24

J Tibbs (v) 23.46

M Coulter (v) 26.46

L Harrington 26.54

S Harrington 27.07

K Ward (v) (fxd) 28.07

M Harrington (v) 30.52

13/6/12 CC Bexley Q10/26

A Gibson 24.30

19/6/12 GCC Q10/24

L Harrington 26.06

M Coulter (v) 26.45

K Ward (v) 27.30

20/6/12 CC Bexley Q10/26

A Gibson 24.12

26/6/12 GCC Q10/24

J Tibbs (v) 23.42

G Terry 25.54

M Coulter (v) 26.46

K Ward (v) 28.12

30/6/12 SFA Q10/22

J Tibbs (v) 23.43

L Harrington 26.55

M Coulter (v) 27.30

3/7/12 GCC Q10/24

J Tibbs (v) 23.31

L Harrington 26.24

K Ward (v) 28.04

D Barclay (v) 29.31

M Harrington (v) 30.53

4/7/12 CC Bexley Q10/26

A Gibson 24.19

8/7/12 VTTA Q10/30

J Tibbs (v) 23.10

G Terry 24.00

8/7/12 Farnham RC H25/8

A Gibson 1.03.22

10/7/12 GCC Q10/24

J Tibbs (v) 23.33

G Terry 24.38

R Bettaney 25.02

L Harrington 26.34

S Harrington 27.46

K Ward (v) 28.35

M Harrington (v) 29.58**PB**

D Barclay (v) 30.55

15/7/12 GCC Ramsay Cup Q25/8

J Tibbs (v) (section winner) 1.00.30

G Terry 1.03.32

A Gibson (v) 1.04.21

S Harrington (sectn winner) 1.08.37

L Harrington 1.10.46

17/7/12 GCC Q10/24

J Tibbs. 23:34

N Harrigan 24.37

G Terry 24.44

S Harrington 25.12**PB**

L Harrington 26.11

Mike Coulter 28:33

Mike Harrington 30:27

24/7/12 GCC Q10/24

J Tibbs (v) 23.19

N Harrigan 23.50

G Terry 24.38

M Coulter (v) 25.42

L Harrington 25.53**PB**

K Ward (v) fxd 27.16

C Bramley (v) 28.11

A Dennison 28.12

D Barclay (v) 29.22

Road Racing – Cyclopark

14/6/12 R Bettaney 1st

21/6/12 R Bettaney 1st

29/6/12 R Bettaney 3rd

8/7/12 Surrey League RR 70m 1/2nd Cat

R Bettaney Bunch

Sportifs

1/7/12 Reigate Sportif – 54 miles

A Dennison 3hr 19 silver

Ironman

1/7/12 Outlaw Ironman, Nottingham

S Hunter 249th/1000 & 24th in age group

Swim 2.4 miles 1.08

Cycle 112 miles 5.50

Run 26.2 miles 4.48

A Pyreneenan sojourn

by Mike Harrington

Day 1 - Friday 22nd June 2012

After a delayed ferry crossing and a 10 hour drive we finally made it to Saint Savin, in the Haute Pyrenees. The "Le Lantern Rouge" cycling lodge is set in a medieval hill top hamlet dating back over 1000 years. Paddy our host is out on a 10 day coast to coast cross-Pyrenees trip he organises, from Baritz to Narbonne. Olive his wife showed us around the cellar fully equipped with tools and a washing machine, and adequate storage for the bikes, and to our rooms. Once the wheels were refitted we rode off down the hill into Argeles-Gazoust to spin the legs and to generally find our way about the town.

Day 2- Saturday 23rd June 2012

The big one! Steven and Luke planned to attack the Col du Tourmalet, 18.3 Km of climbing with an average gradient of 7.6 %, peaking at 10%, at this point there was no turning back. Although we did not fully know the way to the Tourmalet, we thought we were on the correct road; we even stopped to ask a French cyclist if we were on the correct route, which he confirmed. So we carried on and after 10km of climbing along a mountain stream we arrived at a lovely town called "Cautrerets". As we had not seen many other cyclists en route and as we had not seen any signs for the Tourmalet that Steven decided we needed directions, so he sped off to the tourist office for directions. Then came the bad news, we were on the wrong road, we were heading up the Col d'Espagne!, which proves the point that if you can't speak French don't!

We retraced to find the correct route and it was not long before we started climbing again; this time things started to look familiar from the You Tube videos I had been watching over the preceding months. It was not long before I was cycling on my own, as both Luke and Steven had decided that they couldn't ride at my pace. After a while the cool temperatures of the valley and lush greenery disappeared as we rose above the cloud line into the blazing sunshine and desolate mountain scenery. After what seem like an eternity, running low on drinks, and cursing the boys for leaving me to die, there was a cafe, thankfully selling water. At this point it crossed my mind to wait, they must come down eventually! But could not give up now. Refreshed and back on the bike now counting the marker boards to the summit, came around one bend and could hear Luke's voice booming out from the top with words of encouragement. Not far now. The final stretch the summit and Luke and Steven were both there, and as I made it I was overcome with emotion that the pain and anguish was over.

Whilst discussing the ride at the top, whilst posing for the photo, Luke could not believe he missed the cafe and was gasping for a drink as there was nowhere on the top to get a drink, although you could buy souvenirs and potted plants!!! It turned out Luke got separated from Steven and followed some other cyclists up the Laurent Fignon road, effectively a short cut since its 1km shorter!! Which we will never allow him to forget.

Riding down was as demanding as riding up; the acceleration was incredible as was the coldness. After a stop for lunch we made our leisurely back to the lodge. In total that day we did just under 60 miles and a total climb of 14321 ft.

Day 3- Sunday 23rd June 2012

An overcast morning, a pleasant change after the extreme heat of yesterday, we decided to start with the with the Col de Spandelles , 15.5km long average of 6% and a max 13% and is 1380

meters at the summit. The ride there was a lovely tree lined route, which provided nice shelter as we soon rose above the mist in the valley. On this climb there were no marker boards to the summit, and Steven kept insisting that we were nearly at the start of the climb. Anyway once out of the trees we were at the summit, another amazing hot day and tremendous views.

Now down the other side via Ferrieres to the Col du Solour, 11.9km long, 7.6% average gradient and the summit at 1474 meters. The route down the Spandelles was a winding tree line narrow road, a nice descent until a double puncture, but the pit crew changed both wheels in double quick time. The ride along the valley was relatively short before we started climbing again. Once again Luke and Steven rode off into the distance, last time I saw them until lunch. This route is very quiet, just a few cyclist and motorbikes and the odd car. Scenery is again spectacular; once again at a slow and steady pace I make my way to the top, a few hundred metres from the summit I could hear Luke again booming out encouragement.

Over lunch the stories started to come to light. Steven had just over overtaken Luke when a French couple on a motorbike went past them both cheering them on, as he went past Steven he jumped on the bike's wheel and was paced for about 1km at 9 or 10 mph before he couldn't keep up anymore then he gave him one last cheer and whizzed away.

After Steven sped away on the Solour with around 10 km to the summit Luke rode up to the wheel of a German cyclist and they rode with each other the rest of the way to the top with the thought of cold beer waiting for them. The conversation kept referring back to Germany beating England on penalties; well we all know how that finished. After lunch a nice leisurely 21.5 km downhill to the lodge. Today we did 42 miles with 11315ft of climbing.

Day 4- Monday 24th June 2012

Another lovely bright morning, our last day. It was planned to do the Col Du Solour, but this time from the St Savin side. Then to the Col d'Aubisque, which is accessed via the Col du Solour. This way up averaged 5.7% for the Solour and , for the Col d'Aubisque, which was only about 7km long, an average of about 5% and a max of 8% for the last two kilometres.

On the way to the Solour, I was struggling, so we decided they would ride on to the Aubisque and back to the Solour and I would wait for them at the Solour. So off they went and I made my way up at my traditionally slow and steady pace. Luckily enough I made it up before they returned, or I would never had heard the end of it!

Sitting in the cafe at and looking down the road from the Aubisque, I could see them both racing back, the last 2km was an average of 6% which they sprinted up and Steven won. You could see him grinning a mile away. Turned out this was revenge for earlier on the Solour, Steven had stopped for a water break due to overheating and Luke did the honourable thing and jumped away and sprinted to finish after Steven had waited for Luke at 12k to go.

Steven says *"after leaving our dad me and Luke carried on setting a good pace we planned on doing both cols without stopping as if we were in the Tour itself. We stopped at the base of the Solour to fill our bottles from a fountain then rode the first 2 km together then we spoke about the imaginery competition for the polka dot jersey we were having. I was in the lead having been first up all the climbs other than when Luke jumped me on the Solour after I stopped and waiting for*

him..... twice. I decided to dig deep and set off at a high pace and after a few corners Luke was out of sight so I just carried on at the higher pace hoping not to blow up. About 3km from the summit a Belgium rider was on my wheel I tried to get him to take a turn on the front for a brief rest but he wasn't game. We went under 1km to go and there was a flock of sheep covering the road and he picked a spot and sprinted past me so I followed his wheel and gave it everything in the last few hundred meters to over take him and was pleased when I beat him by a good few bike lengths on the summit. He waved me good luck as I went down the brief descent of the Solour.

We were then on the d'Aubisque, the first 5 to 6km wasn't too bad I managed to turn a good cadence while in the big chainring. All I was thinking about was pulling more time out on Luke but the last km kicked up and it was pretty hard going, but seeing our host, Paddy, driving down the final km spurred me on to make the final push. After a brief wait for Luke we rewarded ourselves with a cold drink, then, out of the corner of my eye I spotted the new bike that I had won over the past few days.

We took it easy on the descent and stuck together rather than myself tearing away like on the previous descents. Luckily we were taking it easy as after one sharp blind corner we turned only to see a coach coming towards us hugging the whole road; luckily we were able get round without any trouble. We then had a short climb up the Solour which is only about 3km long, Luke wanted to bit of pay back for me beating him over the two previous climbs so he tried to sprint past me and carried on sprinting up the hill, giving it everything. We topped out at 18mph on a 5% gradient. Luke shouted you can have it as he backed off, which I only too glad to hear as I was about to run out of steam and was about to throw the towel in myself, but I was pleased at beating him on the two col challenge that we set ourselves".

From there we descended the Solour and rode up the Col D'Couradueque which is 16km 5.7% average and a max of 15% summit at 1374 m. This was a very quiet climb, never saw another person all the way up, not even Luke and Steven!, but once again we got there in the end , this time they were already sitting in the restaurant and ordering lunch, guess they couldn't wait any longer. Today they did 48 miles with 8418 ft of climbing; I did slightly less claiming old age as a reason.

Day 5- Tuesday 25th June 2012

A long 10 hour drive back to Calais and time to reflect the Pyrenees is a superb location for cycling, so many historic climbs. The "Le Lantern Rouge" is a great base, the proprietors make you feel part of the family, and the banter between the other cyclists staying there made the whole experience truly enjoyable. As far as the cycling, I achieved my goal of climbing the Tourmalet, and had five memorable days with my sons, which I shall treasure for a long time to come. Should anybody else be planning a visit to this area I would thoroughly recommend it, you will not be disappointed.



Steven says he couldn't work out to get down once up there – *isn't that what all climbers say?*

This & That

Congratulations to Mike Harrington for cracking that 30 minute barrier and for his perseverance in returning each week to ride the 10s. And to **Dave Barclay** who is now returning to pastures once common.

Well done and thanks to Andy Sangster for organizing the Ramsay Cup 25 - a splendid turnout with 95 riders on the start sheet. **Thanks** also to all those Club members who turned out to help - **Dave Abbots, Patrick McMaster, Len Brown, Colin Pearson, Mike Coulter, Graeme Moir, Roger Stevens, Marlene, Jacinta, Jack and Harry Sangster, Brian Perry, Mike Harrington, Don Bardoe and Mike Savage** for taking photographs - a real who's who of the good and famous of the Club. Thanks very much.

Thanks to Ian Stone, Roger Stevens and Don Bardoe who turn out each week to time, marshal and photograph the Evening 10s. **Good** to see **Chris Bramley** back in the fold again.

A miscommunication (let's be kind) saw a *GCC* rider miss the start of a 10 mile TT - he followed another *GCC* rider, already started the race, thinking he was being led to the start!!

When were you last out on a run and - the same car reversed back at you at speed - twice, the road being completely blocked by a lorry and roadworks so that progress was only possible via someone's garden and then to cap it all the road blocked by a herd of cows being moved from one field to another - can you remember when that last happened

DIARY DATE.....**Dinner & Awards Presentation****24 November, Saturday****The King's Head****Meopham*****Adrian Dennison ponders on his latest effort - the Reigate sportif***

I have many good intentions when it comes to cycling - commute to work as much as possible, do TT's more regularly and build up the miles with weekend rides. Unfortunately the reality doesn't seem to match my intentions and after a month of cycling to build up some good base fitness my work comes along and messes up the groundwork.

I have ridden about 3 or 4 sportives now and I enjoy the long(ish) cycle ride and have the competitive element of striving for a Gold, Silver or Bronze standard. Whether you start with friends or alone, you will invariably find yourself cycling with a bunch of like minded people and if you are lucky you will have the energy to talk coherently to them before you either decide to speed on or get dropped.

The Reigate sportive offered 3 routes of 85 miles, 64 miles and 54 miles. I chose the shortest route with my thinking that I could manage this comfortably given my previous weeks inactivity.

On arrival at the venue there was a smattering of people milling around with the main contingent of cyclists having already left to ride the longer routes. After the embarrassment of not knowing where to attach the tracking sensor and a bit of help from the staff I was off. The weather was cloudy and cool, which was quite nice as a group of us rolled out from Reigate eastwards towards Hever Castle. The first 20 miles were lovely - rolling roads albeit a few traffic lights and generally quiet country lanes flanked by rather nice houses.



Now I know I am my own worst enemy when it comes to pacing myself so when the chap came along on his TT bike pedalling at a relatively slow cadence I thought it would be good to sit on his wheel. After all I was feeling good and my legs didn't ache (well it was only 15 minutes into the ride). This was ultimately my downfall as after 30 odd miles the route became deceptively hilly around Hever Castle and the homeward run with my legs now feeling the pain. The guy on the TT bike was

well gone and my legs were continually asking my brain what on earth I was thinking of.

The heavens opened just towards the finish which was a bit of a shame as overall the ride was very enjoyable and I would recommend this to other club members whether you are a seasoned sportiver or looking for your first event. This particular ride is part of a series which can be found here: <http://www.southern sportive.com/index.php>

The only gripe I would have is that there was no goodie bag for finishers which I have received at other events. There was a bag but by now the heavens really had opened so the majority of cyclists were dashing to the cars for a quick return home.

So, after planning to cover the distance in under 3hr 18 and hit the gold standard I managed 3hr 19 for a silver instead. I knew I shouldn't have stopped for that fig roll after all!

Mike's musings on the Tour.....

- I'd best start by admitting that I wondered whether Brad was up to it, slightly sceptical to say the least. Won over by the last few days. Would liked to have seen some facial emotion, a la Voeckler – at least when **he's** won you know he's happy! Or a Cavendish 'hug a team mate' in thanks.

- is it only old male English cyclists who persist in wearing old retro jerseys – Mercatone Uno owners excepted



- the more cycling jerseys I see the more I am convinced of how good GCC's design is

- a largish group of Medway Velo riders were there – but seeing age and ability they might have fared better with zimmers

- ban team radios

- how aggressive and acquisitive the (presumably mostly) French crowd were in hoovering up the freebies from the

Caravan

- what a fine art the French have in getting the roads closed at the last possible moment and opened at the earliest – I'm impressed. Within minutes you'd never know the Tour had been.

Impressed with Froome, Voeckler, Sagan van Garderen and van den Brouke. Slowly becoming more impressed with Brad but is he really better than Froome?

Sky are strong but are they really strong or is it more to do with the dearth of the opposition. Still, you can only beat who your opponents are! Would have liked to have seen Contador there at least .

Sky – continually heralded as a British team – some thoughts. Sky may be registered in the UK but is funded by News International – foreign money and dodgy ethics. In the French 2012 official guide of

GCC – www.gravesendcc.org.uk

Secretary



the 25 listed members of the Team Sky squad only 5 riders are registered as being born in the UK – and of the 9 riding only 1 is born in the UK, Cavendish; of the 9 riding only 3 have British nationality. Team Europcar's (French) 25 man squad only have 6 non-French riders, FDJ (French) 4 non French, Euskatel-E 2 non Spanish, Saur-Sojourn (French) 0 non French, AG2R (French) 6 non French. Sky's budget at E15m is at least a third larger than any of these teams, 2.5 times that of Europcar. Which approach I wonder which will serve the long term cycling interests of their country better. Is Sky's a commercial interest or a cycling development project? *You can't keep an old cynic down!! Allez Voeckler, allez!*

The Ironman cometh - Steve Hunter is at it again

Steve completed the Outlaw Ironman distance triathlon at Holm Pierpoint in Nottingham on 1st July. The start time was 6am and about 1000 competitors.

Result	249 th /	24 th in age group
Swim	2.4miles	1hr 8mins
Cycle	112 miles	5hr 50mins
Run	26.2 miles	4hr 48mins
Total time		11hr 57mins



I was very pleased with my finish time even though in the run I got a bad pain in my left forefoot and needed to stop regularly to rest it.

The swim is similar to being in a washing machine with 1000 other people. The cycle course was a fairly flat course that could have lent itself to pushing too hard and not having the reserves for the run. There was a northern loop and southern loop, with the north loop having a big 12% incline in it and a few ups and downs, and a less technical southern loop, which had to be done twice, with lots of junctions and what felt like

a constant head wind. The wind was leg sapping on the farthest part of the loop as the road was straight and inclined. I set my bike plan for a cadence above 75rpm and average heart rate below 150bpm and achieved an average speed >30kph. I finished the 112 miles in 5h50m and felt good out of Transition 2 to start the marathon run which was flat and mixed surfaces but also a terrible head wind. My race plan was to achieve 10kph for the run and drink regularly. I started out fast and tapered down from 11.6kph to 10.3kph and felt comfortable until I got a bad pain in my left forefoot and needed to stop regularly to rest it. Still I managed a 4h48m run marathon and a total event time of 11h 57m and achieved my deadline of finishing before the European Cup started.





Yes – your guess is as good as mine!!
But he's in there somewhere! Steve said he's the one with the white skull cap

Forthcoming triathlons for Steve
19 August - Ashford stndrd distance
mid September - **London** - hoping to better last year's time.

Up & Coming events.....

- if you are interested in cycling from London to Paris in aid of Action on Hearing Loss over 7-10 September contact www.actionhearingloss.org.uk/paris

- **Bike Around Brands – 17 August** in aid of the Ellenor Lions Hospice for the Swanley and North Downs area. We generally support this. All it entails is turning up prior to the 6.30pm start and then riding round Brands for up to 2 hours. Adults £10, under 14 £5. If you want to raise sponsorship email cjmrobert@btinternet.com for the forms.

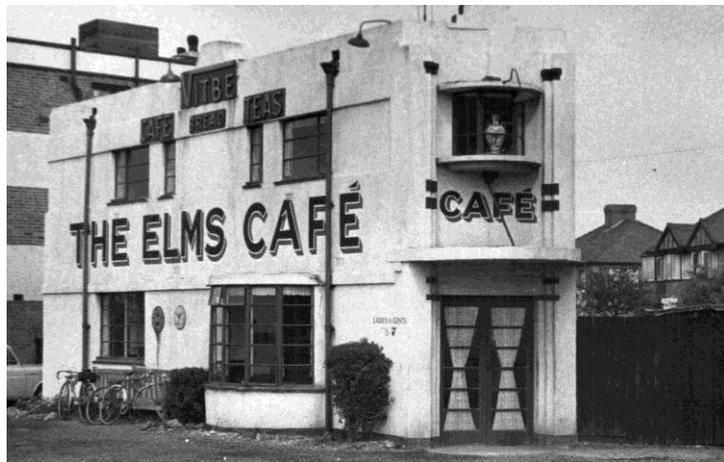
- **Cambrai 2 September.** In response to the Cambrai cycling club coming over for the opening of Cyclopark they invited GCC back for the Paris- Cambrai ride (or sections thereof). I had envisaged that GCC members might be able to go for the Sunday, the 2nd, but this is now less likely. In trying to fix my arrangements with Eurotunnel/Shuttle from Folkestone there are no vacancies for the whole 24 hours of Sunday – I would imagine it is the last Sunday before the English school Autumn term starts. I will be going but over a longer period. I have details of the Paris-Cambrai event.

QUIZ and a prize for 2 correct answers = bottle of wine



Who is this *young* rider? Photo c1957/8. Could be his first event. Still got the jersey but still saving up for shorts and socks.

Where was this 'cyclists cafe'? Photo 1950's. Nice Art-Deco building, now gone. Not Gravesend, but local. Another Art-Deco building still survives within a few yards of the site of the Cafe.



CYCLING: A CINDERELLA SPORT NO MORE?

During the 50's when I first started club cycling, cycle racing was know as a Cinderella or minority sport, and if reported on at all, it made only the broad-sheets, not what are now called the red-tops. But practically everybody had a bike for transport and leisure, even if they were not in a club.

Back then the only well known racing cyclist was Reg Harris, perhaps only because everybody having a bike felt some sort of connection to him. However those in the cycling club fraternity knew also the names of the top amateur riders.

In the 60's many outside the actual sport of cycling knew the name of Hew Porter due his marriage to Olympic gold medal winner Liz Dawn, Porter himself also being a medal winner. Then there was of course Tom Simpson and, to a lesser degree, Robinson and Hoban.

It wasn't until Boardman broke onto professional the scene that other than club riders knew who he was despite Robert Miller coming 4th in Le Tour. However from Boardman's time things for cycling are really looking up, not least from the cash being put into the sport from the News Corporation/Sky.

Over the last say, 4 years cycling is not only reported by the broad sheets but also the red-tops, chief among them the Sun, plus now many commercials on the TV feature cycling either to the fore or at least in the background.

Back in the mid 70's Pete Haswell then of the VC Elan, and other cyclo-cross riders spent 3 days being filmed for a television commercial only to have hardly 10-20 seconds on screen, but that was a very isolated incidence.

Now with the aid of the BBC showing track cycling and commercial channels showing the main tours and classics, cycling is getting mass coverage and the general public is more interested than ever before, something to do perhaps in that many of them have gone back to riding bikes for transport and leisure, and also to the great benefit of time trailing, taking part in triathlons.

Today Great Britain has world class riders in depth on the track and road, with many waiting in the wings ready to take over. I think the main reason for this is the selection process. Now unless riders are on top form no matter who they are, and are there, or thereabouts on the qualifying times, they don't get selected, and that's just as it should be. For years we've sent teams to compete in the Olympics/Worlds etc almost just to make the numbers up and the strange statement from British Cycling coaches, at least to me, to 'gain experience'. At the time of writing this article the top names in Britain's track cycling team are being left to sweat it out as to whether they will be representing Britain at the Olympics and at last the same selection criteria is being used in British athletics.

Don Bardoe

If you are looking for or expecting the usual list of events and clothing this edition is omitting them so refer back to the previous edition as those lists will cover races to the end of the season and the clothing stock.