

LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 15

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Editor: Peter Underwood

56 Kingston Street - Cambridge - CB1 2NU Tel: 01223 565036

E-mail - peter.underwood@tesco.net

www.classiclightweights.co.uk

My piece on Charles Atlas obviously awoke a few memories as we had several responses within hours of L News coming off the press.

Mike said: "Charles Atlas's 'System' was called 'Dynamic Tension' and probably led to more double hernias than pre-vacuum cleaning furniture shifting!"

Keith Tubby: "I seem to recall that the Charles Atlas system was known as 'Dynamic Tension' . I once came across the literature and without opening the envelope I shot from 6' 2" - 11 stone to 6' 4" - 16 stone. Just proves what a sound system it was (I forgot to mention that the transformation was not immediate but took place over the next 40 years!). I'm still 6' 4" but have managed to drop to 14½ stone."

All the way from Chicago, Keith Hellon says: "'Dynamic Tension' not useful if you were Walter Greaves. Personally, I preferred to kick sand to build up my leg muscles." (*For those not in the know, Walter was a well-known one-armed cyclist Ed.*)

And Peter Lowry – he of the beautiful machines: "Was Charles Atlas's body building course called 'Dynamic Tension'? I never succumbed but I think I remember the ads mentioning those words!" (*Yes, yes, yes -Peter still stubbornly refusing to 'come out' as a secret Charles Atlas man Ed*)

Mervyn Cook remarks : "But as for hanging onto Reg Harris's every word, have you ever read any of his articles giving advice on diet? Vegetables were for wimps, steak, eggs and bacon at every opportunity! Oh, and he once explained scientifically, and at great length, why women shouldn't ride bikes in competition. Hmmm! But a great champion!

Ed. I suppose it was no worse that the athletics officials who before WWI opined that if women were allowed to run and jump their insides would fall out! I assume these are the same people who led our troops into battle in WWI, same sort of logic.

Gordon Barnes has the following for sale:

- Campag Nuovo Record Rear Changer (the cassette (block) is 5 speed - cant remember when 6 speed came in but no doubt you can!)
- Campag Front Changer (may be Record but only says Campag)
- Campag Seat Pin (26.6)
- Campag Chainset 47/50
- Campag Pedals (no play whatsoever in bearings)
- Campag Large Flange Hubs (36 spoke front & rear) - these are on sprint rims which would be difficult to post from France so I could just sell the hubs
- Ambrosia Bars & Stem
- Mafac Racer Centre Pull Brakes with Mafac Levers

I can email photos of everything if anyone is interested.

I can take payment by Visa or Mastercard

Offers please to my email address gordon.barnes@orange.fr

I have been doing some research into track racing and it came back to me that, a few years ago, I was on a Wobbly Wheelers ride and was told the following tale by Dick Hampton:

"My father used be a successful grass-track racer, he was a farmer with a small-holding and used to keep pigs. He kept up his stock by winning them at village sports/cycle meetings. At many meetings the first prize in the main race was a young pig given by a local farmer. The farmer would of course pick the smallest of the litter, namely the runt. At the end of the meet we would head for home on the track bikes (with a single brake fitted for the journey). In those days there were only brown-paper carrier bags, no plastic of course, and the pig would be stood in one of these hanging by the handles from the handlebars. Its two front feet and head would be poking over the top of the bag. All was well for the first part of the journey until the pig got over-excited, probably speeding down a hill with father pedalling like mad on the fixed-wheel. The excitement would be to much for the pig's bladder control

and in no time the bottom of the bag was soaked and the first of the hind legs would shoot through the bottom of the bag. The race was then on to get home before the bottom of the bag gave way and the pig would land on the road and head off as fast as its (soaked) legs would carry it, chased by the family who would have to take turns carrying the pig home under one arm whilst riding on fixed. When we got home the pig would be carefully fed by hand until it was big enough to fend for itself.”

My researches entailed going through every edition of *Cycling* through the 1930's checking results and any other information relevant to Cyril and Dennis Horn. What intrigued me is the amount of space devoted to the controversial (then) subject of clothing. It seems that some scoundrels, or even club-fulls of scoundrels wore coloured leggings. I guess everyone knows that for racing it was compulsory to wear black from head to toe so as to be inconspicuous! This included the black alpaca jacket and black tights. Riders looked like a cross between Max Wall and a comedy burglar, only missing the bag marked 'swag'. Debates on this subject took up much editorial and 'Correspondence' space in edition after edition.

Another subject which was repeatedly put to various organisations was a proposal to allow men to race in shorts. Time after time this was thrown out at various national levels, so back to the inconspicuous all-black attire then.

What caused even more apoplexy was the subject of women's dress. Red faced Colonel Blimps must have sat in their clubs, clutching their port, almost bursting out of their Harris tweed suits at the thought of women showing a bit of leg. There was endless comment upon the subject, some giving descriptions almost bordering on the erotic, of what women looked like from behind when wearing shorts – I was getting quite excited reading it! And that was after a cup of National Service tea with Bromide in it.

In one edition there was a page on *Girls and Cycling Clubs – Do girls lose their dainty femininity?* opposite another page headed *What Every Mother Should Know* – yes, it was *Cycling!* which quoted, “The question of clothing has worried some mothers. One says, “some of the girls I have seen down our street are like brazen hussies – just wearing thin blouses, a pair of very abbreviated shorts, no stockings and a pair of sandals (down Alex!)”. “I told my friend there are a number of girls who do cycle in the minimum of clothing – I am not altogether critical”: says the writer. He goes on (the spoilsport), “I should say the best style for girls is either a well-tailored plus-four suit, or perhaps when it is a little warmer, a pair of well-tailored shorts, a blouse and an alpaca. Skirts, never - not on a club run.”

Even the war didn't stop this speculation. *Cycling* for 29 May 1940 writes on its leader page 'Skirt Problem', and goes on, “The problem for many girls is to keep the skirt or dress down when cycling. And it is more of a problem (for the women, or the men! It didn't say) just now because fashion has decreed both short skirts and abbreviated underwear. Bare leg is all right below shorts and bathing costumes, but we are, perhaps strangely, embarrassed about displaying bare flesh above stocking tops.” The item goes on suggesting that an additional pair of modest knickers may be a solution. With all this speculation going on, *Cycling* would, these days, be sold from the top shelf along with the other porn magazines!

It wasn't only womens clothing that occupied (bad word choice!) the mind during the war. In spite of Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the London, Birmingham and Coventry blitz, up in Leeds we learn “Men's Wear Deteriorating” in *Cycling* 5 March 1941. Re 'Jubilee Number', it says:

“I was particularly interested in your reference to dress. Whilst most women cyclists are now much more sensibly and artistically clothed. Men's styles have very much deteriorated. The wide 'shorts' often badly cut, and ankle socks commonly seen nowadays often exhibit an expanse of hairy legs with perhaps knobbly knees and certainly do not look smart, whereas these disadvantages are not visible in the style of 30 years ago. At that time, closely fitting knickers, just covering and buttoned below the knees, with neatly ribbed black or brown stockings not turned over at the top were the order of the day and looked very artistic in most men; whilst a pair of shapely calves were shown at their best; the owner could feel proud of them. This style was also suitable for cold weather and gave protection to the knees in case of a spill, to which all are liable. I quite admit however that, in some cases, 'shorts', if reaching to the knees and not too wide, worn with stockings, may look as well on men as on women, but the latter have the advantage of more rounded knees. The present alternative of 'plus fours' looks

very ugly, being far too long and baggy and by their excessive width make even a good pair of legs look like spindle-shanks.” Signed *Black Stockings*, Leeds

How invigorating it must have felt to know that one is so right, as long as the stockings weren't inadvertently turned over.

Not everything was about men's and girl's clothing though – there were some adverts for bikes, and trawling through the thirties it was interesting to see a change in style from very small frames with laid-back angles and long fork rake; even for track frames, to the more upright angles with less fork rake (the two go together of course). This seemed to start when our track riders were mixing it with Continentals who had frames with very little clearance built for fast tracks with steep bankings. Claud Butler was quickly on the case and was producing track frames for the Horn brothers, Toni Merkens of Germany, and E W Chambers, which look modern in design, even by today's standards. Claud's bikes were also ridden at the Wembley 6-day races. As an amateur Merkens was using a Major Taylor stem on his Claud most of the time. Just before he turned professional Claud Butler introduced a World Champion path frame (Merkens had won the Amateur World Championship on a C B frame), which was fitted with the droopy stem soon to become well-known as the Merkens stem.

Claud Butler was advertising one of the path frames as, “also available as a road model with Osgear and two brakes”. Using track frames in this way was quite popular in the 40's/50's period so Claud was ahead of the game here. His advert doesn't make it clear if the rear ends were changed or not. Track ends would have been better than normal rear ends but not as good as Osgear-specific ones which have a forward position for the wheel, so allowing it to be taken back, away from the gear, when removed.

Back to clothing though, (obsessed – Moi?) in the 50's every sporting cyclist hankered for a classy Continental shawl collar jersey of the type imported into the UK. They were quite expensive so some had them made at home by members of the family. Just about every family had at least one knitter amongst them, some thought they were better than they were – he says with feeling! In a *Cycling* of 1937 I found a pattern for the shawl-neck jersey. Being pre-war and British it is not quite as stylish as the later imported ones. This one has a button for the collar and a rather dinky little pocket on the front (probably to put the pipe in). However it could be brought up to the post-war look by removing the button and pocket. In our club, King's Lynn CC, the tifosi had a maroon jersey with blue and yellow stripes around the chest. Others had the stripes continuing around the arms. When my promised sweater arrived the body was long and the sleeves, even longer. I think my auntie had knitted it with broomhandles instead of needles as you could put a finger between each set of stitches. As well as being a mile too long there was no way the bands on chest and sleeves lined up either. I am debating whether to put the pattern up on the website but if you want a copy in the meantime I will be able to scan it with any luck.

Perhaps there is an unfulfilled market out there. Around this time it was also not unusual to see stars such as Eileen Sheridan and some of the top men riders walking around in dressing gowns at the start and end of events. Cyril Horn, in the 30s, bemoaned the fact that someone who beat him had a fancy dressing gown whereas Cyril only had an old overcoat for the prize-giving. Later on, riders started appearing in a cycling-specific track suit, also usually an imported article.

I also noticed that in 1936 Hercules sponsored a team, Southall-Peden, in the London 6-day. They were riding very big frames considering the year, a style which was later fashionable in post-war cycling. Frank Southall had about three inches of seat post showing – he was using an underslung Major Taylor stem which helped to lower the bars for a suitable track position although this was partly nullified by the headclip stem. The machines had Chater-Lea inch-pitch chainwheels.

In January 1938, Chas. Holland gave details of the machine he rode in Tour de France. It was 71/71 degrees with a 22” seat tube and 22½” top tube. The wheelbase was 42 ¼”, The forks had 3” rake; and the bottom bracket height was 10 7/8”.

The wheels were 27” with 15/17 tied and soldered D/B spokes. Sometimes he used wood rims, sometimes alloy. The wheels listed as 27” would probably have been the 700 continental sprints, known in this country as Continental 27s.

Nothing to do with cycling but when in the university library working on the track-riders piece I became very aware of a big change in life-style.

Just after I left school, the only people who ever learned to touch-type were, in the main, girls and women who went on to become secretaries; or if not so lucky, to work in the typing pool. Their standing in the world of commerce would often be defined by their typing speed, e.g. 40 wpm.

What I realised in the library reading rooms was that virtually all the students in the area I was working in were taking their notes directly on to laptops. This of course helps no end when converting the notes to papers, dissertations or doctorates as it is very simple to cut, paste and manipulate the material in this form. I was doing the same of course, as were most of the older readers so it isn't a 'youth' thing. What I also noticed is the number of students who were touch-typing which meant that they could get down much more copy in a given time. Talking to Patricia about this she told me that she taught herself to do it in one week realising with the advent of so many computer keyboards in the workplace it would be a real benefit. I don't know where so many students learned this craft, perhaps it is on the curriculum of some schools now.

Just one more item about this scene is that when the students go to the tea rooms for tea breaks or lunch, many take their laptops and sit working whilst they eat and drink – so much for the lazy students beloved of the tabloids!

Peter Beaven has a 24" Paris Galibier he would like to swap for a Mal Rees Rameles, ideally 23½". peter.beaven@bbc.co.uk phone no. 07989 197185



Stephen Bennett S.Bennett@siteco.de

Has a 21 inch Saxon twin tube frame (*see image left*) from about 1939 for sale. Although I am in Germany, he says, it is at my father's place in England near to Caterham. The seatpin would be included as the Saxons have unconventional seat tube dimensions.

I purchased it a while ago from a VCC member whose father was the proprietor of a cycle shop, and it was originally from the father's collection. The frame is in undercoat-condition, but transfers can be got from Lloyds, as most people know.

Martin Hines has viewed the website and tells us:

My Father's shop was established around 1950 and was known as Hines & Green of Finchley. My father, Mark Hines, had a partner Wally Green (Speedway rider). Some years later around 1959/60 Wally left to go and work for Samuelson film service and also carry on building frames for other well known manufacturers. My Father continued under the name of Hines of Finchley and carried on with his own hand built frames until 1964 time. By this time we had got involved together in karting and it was a mere formality to switch production to produce racing go-kart frames.

That was indeed the birth of Zip Karts in 1964 at 17 Hendon Lane, Finchley N3. Zip karts since then have brought the world of motor sport a host of heroes, the latest being Lewis Hamilton. Lewis was with my Zip Young Guns team from the day I met him at his first ever race at 8 years old. For the next 7 years he raced with the team and then to McLaren.

The only thing I wish I had was one of my father's hand-built bikes. Ideally I am looking for a Hines of Finchley bike that was made between 1960-1966 approx. email mah@zipkart.com

The new season is about to take off in a big way now and we have rides most weekends between now and when we go on holiday. This year we are taking our Hetchins to the Hetchins Weekend, having

missed out in the past few years. The Reading Ride is the event we plan our calendar around. We also have our own Lightweight Ride, The Meridian, on May 25 and there is a Paris Ride the next day.

Patricia's latest acquisition is a 19" frame which was Pat Hanlon's own machine. It is probably late 70s/early 80s so we will be looking for Campag gear for it.

For myself I have been building up a 25" 1948 Rotrax Super Course - Frame No. 49409 with 24" top tube; round forks; road rear ends; mudguard eyes; pump pegs on down tube; 17" chainstays; 42" wheelbase; top of seat stays 'sculpted'. Dark green with chrome head lugs, fork crown and fork ends. Also chrome rear ends. It has GB Hyduminium brakes, Chater-Lea chainset, Brooks Swallow saddle, GB Spearpoint stem and bars. The gear is an Osgear with the de-tensioner cable to the tension arm.

A few months ago I was approached by someone who couldn't fathom out how to rig this second cable on the Osgear. As I had no previous experience of doing this, I had to ask around. I learned, first get your cable, the nipple end is at the tension arm clip and I had to file the nipple to go behind this clip. The puzzle is what to do next. The answer is that the inner cable traverses the bottom bracket inside a short length of 'floating' outer cable. This cable goes up through the gap formed by the chainstays, chainstay bridge and bottom bracket; and from there over the top of the BB. On the band-on clip for the tension arm there may be a pressed-out cable clip which just steadies the cable in this position. The inner cable then goes under the rotating winged pulley at the gear change and is secured by a screw. The cable should be set up with the gear on the smallest sprocket and tension is added by turning the tensioner wingnut anti-clockwise.

The reason for this second cable is to take the tension off the chain; this was an obsession in the post-war period and one of the reasons that the fixed-wheel was so popular for so long. If you wondered how Campagnolo came up with a gear so complex and seemingly illogical as the Paris-Roubaix, it was also to cater for this obsession. Once the P-R gear is selected and locked up then there are no extra pulleys or tension on the cable. The gear can also be adjusted so that whatever gear is selected then the chain tension is not too tight. Without this adjuster the weight of the rider on the sloping rear-ends via the seat stays would push the wheel right back giving an excess of chain tension. You can adjust the setting to alleviate this.

Judicious use of the de-tension cable on the Osgear will obviously reduce tension on the chain, giving it a free-er run; although whether as a rider you will be able to detect this is another question. Maybe, climbing a mountain or racing over long distances the cumulative effect will make a difference. As you change into a bigger sprocket so the tension arm, in effect, rises. You then need to tighten the cable to take up the slack. More important though, you need to slacken it when changing to smaller sprockets or else the tension arm will 'hang' from the cable and give no tension at all to the chain. It takes a lot of words to describe a simple operation but I hope it all makes sense to a reader!

I have been tweaking my blue Ephgrave road/path model which now has a swish pair of matching blue anodised Airlite hubs with Fiamme sprint rims. I'm now looking for a flattish lightweight ride on which to show it off. There is always the Ephgrave ride we organise in September and this year's route has some 'undulations' but I have done it on fixed before. Mind you, every additional year makes these challenges a bit harder, when the rear sprocket is the same size as the chainwheel I guess I'll have to admit defeat.

Paul Keeley, email paulk@minervadental.co.uk :- My dad has left me with EVERY single Cycling weekly magazine from 1967 to 2008 so if you know anyone that might be interested let them have my details

Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells writes in *Cycling* 1939 that wingnuts are not only unsightly but dangerous. One might easily knock one's legs against these large unsightly things thereby causing a nasty bruise!

Over the second **May Bank Holiday Weekend** there are two events for lightweights within a short distance of each other. The first is our own Meridian Ride starting here in Cambridge:

Sunday 25 May 2008 - Cambridge Section Meridian Lightweight Ride - The first of our section's two lightweight rides (bring an R O Harrison if you have one – I will ride my Shortwin and it would be good to see some more from the R O H workshop). This ride is the flat one to encourage you to get out on that fixed-wheel machine but all makes and types are welcome of course. The ride is approx. 35 miles with a coffee stop and a lunch stop. This ride is always a sociable, friendly event so come along and join in the fun.

Start 10am at Bay 8, Trumpington Road Park and Ride, Cambridge. This is just off Junction 11 of the M11 and taking the turn towards Cambridge. The start is 2 miles from Cambridge railway station but check carefully if there are any trains running that weekend! Contact *Peter Underwood* %01223 565036 or by e-mail peter.underwood@tesco.net and the next day head South for Waltham Abbey where there will be:

The PARIS Origins Ride 26 May 2008

In 2006 the Cambridge Section held the Neville Ireland Memorial Ride - the first Rensch/Paris themed ride since the Reading Lightweight Ride had had a Paris theme perhaps 6 years before. This year the Paris Origins Ride will explore for the first time the area of North London where Harry Rensch lived and created both *Rensch* and *PARIS* machines, and with the assistance of the North London Section, a day of *PARIS* riding and/or chatting has been planned.

Come along with your *Rensch*, *PARIS*, or *Ephgrave*, *Barker*, *Rivetts* or any other marque or your memories in connection with *Paris Cycles* or its staff. This invitation includes of course any *Condor* made frames or any of the other *Galibier* clones. We need to keep alive the memory of all these wonderful machines and their makers.

In order to give a pleasant relaxed country feel to the day we have a lunch area where we can sit and chat about the bikes and the ME's records. Details are as outlined in V-CC News and Views 324 and more details are available from Alvin Smith 01568 770327 or (alvin.smith@btinternet.com). We will be based at The Sun, 19 Sun Street, Waltham Abbey town centre, where we will have the back bar to ourselves. Ride options will be long - the Origins Ride at 25 miles, or the short - smoother tracks around the town's 'parkland' areas. Alvin will lead off the Origins riders down the Lea Valley towpath to Stoke Newington, Valhalla!, and return. For this ride use your winter wheels and start at 0930 from Le Cafe du Parc immediately opposite the Abbey main door; Le Café opens at 0900 for breakfasts. Short ride riders can meet at Abbey Gardens Carpark at 10.30 where John Clark of North London will lead the short ride at 1100 and on return can, if requested, give guided tours of the Abbey and Town – ask about Harold and the Bumper-Squire! Both rides will return to The Sun for lunch, with a bike display and group photo at about 1500 before departure or further short rides around Waltham Abbey area. Please tell any other Paris aficionados about the Ride and let Alvin know if you are coming so that Le Café and the Sun can be informed and any meals booked.