

LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 22

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On the first bank holiday in May we took our bikes to Steyning near Brighton for Tony Spoor's Bluebell Ride which has become an early season favourite of ours. There were some 30 riders in all riding a great selection of classic lightweights. I took my 1949 Rotrax Super Course as Tony's ride is under the flag of the Hampshire Section and the Rotrax was built at Southampton in that county. Patricia took her Carpenter for its inaugural ride. It is an Olympic Mass-Start which includes in its catalogue specification a braze-on boss for the Pennine CO2 pump. After a lot of searching and some help from Peter Brown we managed to get hold of the correct clip which we got replated. We had previously tried a normal Terry tool clip which held the pump when stationary but as soon as the bike went over any bumps the pump started to slip, so the bike is now resplendent with the boss, the clip and a Pennine CO2 pump, a true state of bliss to be sure – it doesn't take much to make an old man happy! John Spooner was on the ride with another CO2 pump in its correct cradle, the longer Milremo version of the Edco pump, and he was nearly as happy.

The following day we went on to Phil Wray's Three Counties Lightweight Ride which took in Bucks, Oxon and Northants. We had hired a Renault Kangoo van for this weekend as we don't own a car. The Kangoo conveniently takes four bikes side by side with just the front wheels removed. This leaves room for the luggage down the middle (or a fifth bike if you have no luggage). However we only took three bikes on the outward journey as Patricia was picking up a small Roberts made in 1985. This is to be her winter bike for rides not involving the V-CC. Poor Cinders had to ride the same bike two days running whereas I did this second ride on my Cinelli Course.

We had been worried in the past about the front wheels when the bikes were in the van, it seemed as if they could scratch a frame if they moved around during the ride. Then I remembered that we had a pair of lightly-padded wheel bags so now the two wheels can actually act as padding between the bikes. There are two plastic hooks on the van sides which take the other two wheels.

The following weekend we organised a ride in the nearby county of Norfolk using Castle Acre as its base. Patricia rode her Hetchins Spyder and I was on my other Rotrax, a Premiere which has a Sturmey FM 4-speed gear. Amongst others, we had two Hetchins and two Bates join us on this ride – at the start a passer-by was eyeing up the Hetchins and he told us that his first bike at age 15 years was a Hetchins (lucky lad). He went on to say that he got into cycle sport seriously and progressed to take part in races organised by The League and rode in the Tour of Britain in 1959 – his name was Brian Clayton and he rode with the Dun Valley Road Club. As he left he explained that he was more into golf these days – we made him 'wash his mouth out with carbolic' (a common utterance of parents in the 40s/50s if a child were to blaspheme).

The following weekend, our third in a row, we travelled to the flagship lightweight event in the UK, Terry Pearce's Reading Ride. We rented the van again for this weekend and included an overnight stay in Bath before returning to Reading for the ride. We sometimes travel to Reading by train with a bike each but the weather forecast for this weekend was bad to say the least. Patricia had planned to ride her Pat Hanlon, which is later than most of our classics but is a piece of lightweight history as it was Pat's own machine and was built for her by Tom Board. I wanted to ride my 1950 Frejus Supercorsa M, which is a replica of a Tour bike of the era with Simplex gears front and rear. Both of these machines are on sprints, and without mudguards of course, and the Reading Ride uses some narrow lanes with high banks resulting in quite a bit of gravel being washed onto the road in places. Being a belt and braces couple we hedged our bets by taking a couple of bikes with mudguards just in case.

We woke up on the Sunday morning of the ride to glorious sunshine and a blue sky. However, by the time we had breakfast and drove to the start the rain had started. It was so bad that Terry delayed the start for 30 minutes – something he had never done in the 10 or so years that we have supported his ride. This decided it for us and we opted for the wet-weather machines we had taken as a precaution. I had a Hobbs Racelight and Patricia had her Gillott Spear, both with mudguards. A few miles into the ride the rain stopped until we got to the lunch stop but the journey back was in steady rain. However, we enjoyed it in the way you do – I think it is called the Dunkirk Spirit. Devotees of WWII or readers of tabloids will know what we mean. In spite of the weather there were some sixty riders, less than the hundred or so who usually support Terry and Pauline in their annual epic, but still a decent turnout under the circumstances.

By now we were approaching the second May Bank Holiday and we held our very own Meridian Ride a couple of miles from home. For this we were blessed with a day of warm weather and sunshine. We had 21 riders at the start and were joined by one more at the lunch stop. I decided to ride my R O Harrison Shortwin which is on fixed and Patricia took the Carpenter to show it to the riders who were not at Steyning. We hold this event on flat terrain so as to be suitable for fixed-wheel and this encouraged Dave Jarvis to bring out his lovely single-speed Paris Galibier which I had never seen before. We also had a Claud Butler USWB tandem and a Roberts trike to add to the variety.

The following weekend we were off to the Paris Ride held some 50 miles South of Cambridge and were able to travel by train this time, leaving home at 7.15am. We each have a 1948 Paris Tour de France so were able to take part in the spirit of the ride which started at Waltham Abbey and followed the River Lee Navigation Canal path into London before doing a 'memory lane' ride around the area of London where both Paris and Ephgrave operated either side of WWII. The ride incorporated a visit to one of the local bike shops where we were able to meet Eric Deeks who was a frame builder for Paris in the early post-war years. This shop is unusual in that it caters for the new generation of fixed-wheel riders as well as those wanting a steel-framed bike restored. Their URL is <http://www.sargentandco.com/>.

Neale Edwards at NEALEEDWARDS@aol.com has reproduced the Paris poster/catalogue which has always been my top favourite amongst all lightweight publicity material, being in a class of its own.. They are very crisp and clear and he has some for sale at rolled £7.00 incl. p&p (rolled in a tube) or £5.00 incl. p&p (folded in envelope). Originals of these catalogues would fetch a fortune on ebay and probably be inferior to the reproduction. Neale came to the Paris ride and very kindly donated a copy of the poster to each Paris owner.

Both of us also use more modern bikes when not on organised V-CC rides or just trying out our classics. Patricia has just acquired a 1985 Roberts (builder of hand-built frames at Croydon UK) which she will use for wet rides or on wet roads. She hasn't had time to give it a long road test yet as the weather has been so good she has been riding without guards all the time.

We have just got back from a trip to Italy with our Airnimal folding bikes. Folders come made for different tasks and the Airnimal is meant to be suitable for the sort of riding you can do on a modern lightweight. It folds into a suitcase and makes air travel much easier.

The fourth stage of the GiroBio, a 7-day race for some 100+ up and coming international riders was finishing close to where we stayed this year at Cesenatico, so we timed our day's ride to arrive at the finish at the right time. Amongst the displays near the finish was a police tent with two vintage Moto Guzzi police bikes, and a very early Alfa Romeo police car parked outside, as used to escort early post-war Giros. Some 10 minutes or so before the riders in the race proper arrived the two police bikes came down the finishing straight with a small group of L'Eroica entrants behind them staging a sprint finish to the line. The Alfa brought up the rear. L'Eroica were part sponsors of the main race. The prizes were presented by Gino Bartali's granddaughter, representing the Bartali Foundation, who sponsored one of the jerseys.

EXTRA LONG LIFE by Steve Griffith

In this age of annual model changes and upgrading it's sometimes difficult to comprehend how something could be made for over 30 years. This dating can be very helpful in seeking period correct components for that restoration. Below is a table of some of the more notable examples of longevity:

COMPONENT	START DATE	END DATE	CHANGES/COMMENTS
Brooks B17	1923	Still made	Badge no longer oval and position of bag loops moved back
Sturmey AW	1937	Still made	Changes in internals but basically the same gear
Stronglight 49D cranks	Mid 30's	Late 80's	Minor change to badging
Williams C34	Early 30's	1962	Chainring fixing changed from screw to splined mid 50's
Carradice cotton duck saddle bags	Early 30's	Still made	Older bags had tan leather piping, new bags have LED bracket and reflective triangle
Lytard platform pedals	Mid 30's	Early 90's	Pre war toeclips pick up is solid
Mafac cantilever brakes	1949	1984	Unchanged
Christophe toeclips	Mid 30's	Still Made	Earlier version had Christophe in lower case with an elongated C
Standard Cyclo rear gear	1928	Mid 50's	Latterly made in 4 speed 1/8 version

Dating using Components

I thought a list of components which can be dated would be useful in helping to date frames always assuming the equipment is original of course.

Williams's cranks and chainrings: all have a year code which is published on the CL website

Brooks: many post-1955 saddles have a year stamp on the cantle plate usually on the side with a letter code which I assume is the month

Lucifer dynamos; These have a unique serial number of which the letter is the year. Roughly A is 1946 and runs to Y 1971. The 800 series ran from 1950 D to T 1967 so generally the one for post-war rebuilds

Campag Hubs Record and Tipo year stamped on inside of locknut

Sturmey Hubs have month and year. 30's ones just have a single letter eg 7 =1937

Weinmann and Mafac brakes of 70's vintage have a month and date stamped either inside the arm or on the rear. For Mafac this only applies to the 2000 and Competition models

Not a man to rest on his laurels Steve is already into his next project – CLB/ALP brakes and is requesting information on CLB/ALP. He is currently researching this important French marque and would welcome information, e.g. copies of catalogues etc . Some specific questions:

- When did the Competition side-pull come out. I have it as 46/7
- Pre-WW2 - was Alp the trade name and did CLB emerge after WW2?
- Most importantly, what does CLB stand for?

Unlike some collectors of classic lightweights we also ride modern machines, especially for the longer faster rides where I need all the help I can get to keep up with the younger riders. This sometimes results in a day spent on a 'classic' followed by one on a modern machine. This got me thinking about the advance in technology. During a freezing day during last winter I fitted a pair of SPD pedals to a 1950's fixed-wheel machine in order to keep my feet warm by wearing neoprene 'boottees'. One of the joys of fixed is that certain feel of being at one with the machine. This is the same feeling one gets with SPD so doubling these up makes for a fantastic sensation, which in some way explains the popularity of the modern craze for fixed wheel bikes.

This also started me thinking about the other changes and it is hard to know which order of preference to put them in. Brakes are a good example to start with: there is a hill just outside Cambridge (strange but true) and when I drop down it at close on 30mph on a modern machine I can brake at the very last minute knowing that the twin-pivot brakes will grab the rims and bring me to a stop in no time. On a bike with, say the older GB brakes, I start to slow down somewhere just over half-way down the hill hoping that I will be going slowly enough near the bottom to stop before the 'T' junction with an ominous graveyard on the other side of the road. We once hired mountain bikes in the Bavarian Alps and these came with hydraulically-operated disc brakes. We quickly learned that you don't pull the brakes on with this set-up but merely caress the levers with the finger tips and this is enough to bring you to a halt on the steepest incline. The disc brake, however, has never caught on for road bikes; possibly it is to do with weight or the strengthening needed near the fork or rear ends to cope with the reverse anchor torque.

With a 9 or 10-speed gear on the back of a modern machine the gears are so closely spaced that it is very easy to pedal at just the right cadence whatever the conditions. The drastic improvement in gear changing these days come as a result of Shimano's big involvement in the early mountain bikes. Competing on these one has to be able to change gear when straining to climb a ultra-steep hill over rocks and gravel which often means changing when out of the saddle and with maximum pressure on the pedals. There is no way this could be done with a non-indexed down-tube lever so the bar mounted indexed gears became the norm. These have been developed over the years to enable road bikes to have the same advantages via Shimano STI and Campag Ergo changers, a newcomer into the field is SRAM with their Red groupset..

This alone however didn't provide the complete answer so Shimano did a lot of work on the sprockets and chainrings. If you look closely you will see that some of the teeth are of about half-height – this creates a 'gate' for the chain to slip through onto the larger sprocket or ring. These are augmented on the chainrings by small 'ramps' tacked onto the inside of the rings. These are positioned in relation to the gates. When the front changer starts to move the chain towards the larger ring the ramp lifts the chain and 'flicks' it through the gate. Hence to super-smooth changes where the levers are just brushed and the next thing you know the change is completed. The close ratio blocks on the rear add to the silky change here and the modern technology allows for a wider gap between the front rings, which in turn has allowed the modern trend for compact chainsets with smaller inner rings. Chainset design for these has been changed to create a smaller PCD to accommodate the smaller ring. Modern chains are also now much more flexible than the old Reynolds style chains were which allows them to adopt the bend needed for these new set-ups.

On a much less technical note modern bars have more economically-friendly shapes and the tape is much better at absorbing road shocks. Saddles are now designed much more with the shape of the rider in mind, even to their being different saddles for women and men.

This just leaves frame and fork design with modern materials – this is a science all of its own so I won't go into that, nor the influence of wind resistance on the frame and wheels.

Patricia has **for sale** a Rivetts frame - number 15201 - 1951 - 20³/₄" road frame with oval to

round forks. 22" top tube; 17 1/4" chain stays, 11 1/4" BB, Nervex Professional Lugs, BB and fork crown. It has been sprayed light and dark blue by Mario Vaz and has the correct head badge. Sadly, the frame has a couple of small scratches acquired in storage. I guess Mario could supply some touch-up paint. One of the Rivetts professional riders from the 50's thought it could have been built as a Rivetts team bike.

Terry Hopwood 01763 248839 (Royston, Herts) has a **Curly Hetchins** for sale. He is a bit vague about it but having seen a photograph I think it could be an Experto Crede. It is 22", Resprayed by Hetchins 15 years ago - Racing Green, 10-speed gears (5 x 2), looks like Brooks Swallow saddle

Lizzie Harrington lharrington1@aol.com has a **Youngs of Lewisham** in need of restoration for sale which belonged to her father. She has photographs which she can email. It looks about 24" and has Nervex Professional lugs

Wood sprints – I have a front 26" wood sprint rim on a Bayliss Wiley L F hub with 15/17g spokes which I would like to swap for a rear 27" (700) wood sprint on a small-flange double-fixed (ideally Airlite) with 15/17 spokes. The 26" rim is in good condition and is not de-laminating. At the moment it has a 650 tubular tyre on which I tried to see if it would fit. The answer is yes with some pre-stretching and determination. Peter Underwood peter.underwood@tesco.net or 01223 565036

Bryan Clarke needs a couple of 26" HP rims 32/40: "I don't mind what they are as long as they are in good condition. I am able to make an exchange if suitable as follows - NOS 32/32 Mavic Argent 10 sprint rims - very light but plain alloy, 36/36 later Fiamme road style sprints used but braking surfaces untouched. Used fairly good NISI 36/36 sprints, labels intact have serrations on braking surfaces like San Giorgio. I also have a 700c HP on Maillard hub - single fixed with lock ring unused, made for Winter riding." ClarkeSharman@aol.com