

## CAMBRIDGE LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 26

(March/April 2010)

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I have uploaded several interesting entries in the *Readers' Bikes* section on the website, a few new builders, plus some reminiscences about the lightweight scene in South Africa during the 50's 60's and 70's.

There are people in the world of classic bikes who get deserved respect for their views. One such is Peter Kohler from Washington USA. We were very pleased to read a mailing of his on Classic Rendezvous, which went:

*Harvey and others with queries re. Stronglight cranks should consult our own Robert Broderick's superb contribution on the subject on the equally superb (and boy is it ever!) Classic Lightweights UK site: <http://www.classiclightweights.co.uk>*

Peter went on to say:

*Totally unrelated, you might also check out the just posted and outstanding piece on cycling in Durban, South Africa in the 1950-70s*

In the last edition of *Lightweight News* I mentioned the modern method of sizing machines with sloping top tubes. Mick Madgett (who does sort of thing this for a living when not restoring classics in his back workshop!) pointed out that a major factor is of course top tube length. No use buying or building a bike and then finding that you need a 14cm, or worse, a 3cm stem to get the right reach. Having taken Mick's advice I am now thinking that I need to go a size smaller than I originally thought, which is good news as most small bikes seem to look better than the larger ones.

This of course affects the all important overall look of a machine which can be a very subtle thing yet make a bike stand out to those in the know. Size has been a factor over many years of changes in bike styles, back to the classic era, whenever that was. A different time to different people. Some time ago I was leaving Cambridge University Library which has hundreds of bike stands in its two bike parks. I wasn't consciously looking for anything but there amongst 'the dross' something caught my eye at the opposite end of the park. I wandered down out of interest and began mentally to tick off things like early GB brakes and stem, then the Brooks Swallow saddle. Arriving on the spot I focussed on the tapered tubing and realised that here was a Gillott Tapertube on fixed with all the classic gear. I much later learned that the owner had it from new in 1949. He has now taken it to France. This was a classic example of that certain quality some machines have to us with an interest in such things. I hope I don't upset anyone here but an immediate disqualifier from the classic look is what have been known as 'pillcock brakes' (Mick Madgett again). These are the brakes with a double lever allowing one to brake from the tops of the handlebars. I think it is safe to say that they were always fitted to the cheaper end of the market and were also brought out for American exports. They have now been replaced for serious cyclists with the more efficient 'inline' levers which do the same job but with a bit more style and are mounted close to the stem giving extra levers for those with small hands who cramp up on long steep descents on machines with dropped bars.

Here in the UK we have had a cold snap weather wise since before Christmas and an odd thing seems to be happening. On our modern bikes I use a track pump and keep the tyre pressures at

100psi (7bar). During the warmer months of the year, every few days I have to put in 3 – 4 extra pounds to keep them up to pressure. Since the cold spell, I still check the pressures but never have to top them up! One other factor is that we haven't been doing the same number of miles but I never thought that it was using the wheels which reduced the pressures. Do we have any scientists out there who have an answer to this one?

**Chris Harrington** is looking for a Harden 40h gear-sided large-flange hub or alternatively a gear/fixed version. He has a very good double fixed for swap or will buy outright.

Email: [charrington531@aol.com](mailto:charrington531@aol.com)

**John Bloomfield** Tel: 01992 576357 is arranging the sale of a machine owned by a friend who recently passed away. The friend, Ray Harris, is mentioned many times in Chris Hoy's biography as his early mentor. The machine is in Scotland and is a Mercian 22¼", flam. Green with chrome forks and rear ends. 12 speed with all Campag equipment inc. Hubs on grey Mavic rims. Fitted with carrier and with either pedals with clips or SPD's. John is not sure of the model.

**Alan Hughes** :- A few issues ago you highlighted the difficulty in sealing cable ends with a soldering iron. I am totally inept with this tool and when I was racing motorcycles in my youth I chanced on a better method of soldering nipples, which can also be used to seal cable ends.

Melt some solder in a small tin (I use a tobacco tin but anything "pressed out" rather than soldered up will do) and simply dip the fluxed cable end in. Remove, shake off surplus, job done. I used to hold the tin in a pair of gas pliers and melt the solder with a gas blowlamp. As long as you shake or wipe off the excess, it shouldn't increase the cable diameter to the point it won't go through the clamp bolt.

**John Clark** points out that on their web site British Pathe show short clips of old bits of film about a minute and a half long. By searching on "cycling" I have found clips on T de F 1955, Milan San Remo 1957 with Brian Robinson coming third, Bartali, Anquetil, early Tour of Britain stages and much more if you want to spend the time and use search feature more creatively.

I am sure can be used for any other interests you may have - in my case old railways !

<http://www.britishpathe.com/index.php>

**Alvin Smith** and the Hereford Section have created a blog

<http://herefordcycleon.blogspot.com/>

He explains: This is your opportunity to keep in touch with old cycle interests as they vary and jump about with glee in all those parts of the world that appreciate good things. We must wait and see how things develop in this space - and the ball is in your court. Remember that courtesy is old but not old fashioned and will be insisted upon here. Areas for discussion can ramble and wamble but a few of my favourites are Paris, Rensch, Raleigh, Centaur, Maclean, Frederick, Major Nichols -they will do for a start. As for details, how about talking about gears, lugs, mudguards, saddles, old cyclists. (*No, not me- Ed.*)

Here is our so far up-to-date calendar of lightweight rides for 2010. Every year there seem to be more rides organised around the country, which has to be good for the lightweight movement as it is great fun meeting other enthusiasts on rides and discussing the hardware on show at the lunch stops. As a ride leader the only setback to this is trying to get them back on their bikes again for the second leg of the ride.

### **British rides for classic lightweights:**

#### **Sunday 28 March** - Bosham and Chidham via Thorney Island (Hants)

The Hampshire Section's Opening ride starting at Fishbourne near Chichester, 10 for 10.30am.

This is a flat ride so ideal for fixed.

Contact Dave Holder Tel: 01243 774437

#### **Sunday 28 March** - The Mad and Foolish Lightweight Ride (Hereford Section V-CC)

The ride is most suitable for lightweights and follows a "pick and mix" of route sections in the Wye and Golden Valleys between Madley and Hay-on-Wye.

Contact Colin Barratt Tel: 01981 250108 or email [frogmorephoto@btinternet.com](mailto:frogmorephoto@btinternet.com).

#### **Sunday 11 April** - Meon Valley Spring Tour (Hants)

From Bishop's Waltham, Hampshire. 9.30 for 10am. 36 miles of Hampshires finest scenery. Contact

Nick Wiley Tel: 07747 151160

#### **Sunday 2 May** - The Bluebell Ride - Steyning near Brighton (Hants)

A ride of about 30 miles for classic lightweights on lanes through the Bluebell Woods in this area.

Start 10am. Contact: Tony Spoor Tel: 01903 813763

#### **Sunday 9 May** - Major Nichols and Birmingham Lightweights Ride, from Mustow Green near Kidderminster. A 25 mile ride in this North Worcestershire area hedges

woods and pubs. Come and try out your Major - can it still beat those Gamesons and Jack Hollands?

Start 10.30am Contact Alvin Smith on 01568 770327.

#### **Wednesday 12 May** - Spitfire and Museum Airfields Midweek Ride (Hants)

Meet for lunch at the Fox Inn, North Waltham, Hants followed by 2pm ride start. Contact Tony

Beckett Tel: 1329 667746

#### **Sunday 16 May** - Reading Lightweight Ride, Theale near Reading (Theme is 'Built in Brum')

The UK's premier lightweight ride. Starts at Theale near Reading at 10am

Contact Terry Pearce 0118 9426731

#### **Sunday 23 May** - The Meridian Lightweight Ride, Cambridge

A classic ride for lightweights held on a flat route of approx. 35 miles to allow you to try out that fixed wheel, or the bike with gears you are not too confident with. All classic lightweights welcome, gears or not! Start at Trumpington Road Park and Ride, Cambridge at 10am prompt. Contact: Peter Underwood 01223 565036

#### **Sunday 30 May** – Hampshire's Historic Coast (Hants)

From Wallington Nr. Fareham. 9.30 for 10am start. Interesting and historic features along the coastline. Contact David Palk Tel: 01329 829677

#### **Friday/Saturday/Sunday 11/12/13 June** - The Bates Weekend, Bedfordshire. For Bates but other classic lightweights welcome.

Contact Dick Hampton 01536 518585

#### **Sunday 13 June** - PARIS : A Celebration of the BLRC Weston-Super-Mare Race in 1947. A 25 miler based on minor undulating roads which keep near the BLRC race circuit

with lunch stop a choice of 5 pubs and using the historic start and finish site. Come all ye Daytons!

Start 10.30am. Contact Alvin Smith on 01568 770327.

**Saturday/Sunday 26/27 June** - Hampshire Lightweight Weekend (Hants)

Based at Arlesford, Hants. Two days of cycling plus social events. Contact David Palk Tel: 01329 829677

**Friday/Saturday/Sunday 9/10/11 July** - The Hetchins Weekend – details to be announced. For Hetchins and other classic lightweights

**Sunday 25 July** - The Bath Four Hills Ride (Hants)

Start in Bath, Somerset 9.30 for 10.00am. The Hampshire section ventures into deepest Somerset for this ride. Contact Alexander Von Tutschek Tel: 01225 465532

**Wednesday 4 August** - The Flower Pots Perennial (Hants). Afternoon ride

Lunch at the Flower Pots Inn, Cheriton, be ready to start the ride at 2pm. Contact Nick Wiley Tel: 07747 151160

**Sunday 22 August** - The Hobbs of Barbican Ride - On the Somerset Levels (final destination to be announced)

Contact Peter Lowry:- email(at)hobbsofbarbican.co.uk

**Sunday 22 August** - Clarendon Way and West Hants (Hants)

Start at King's Sombourne 9.30 for 10am. An undulating ride giving in some stunning views. Contact Bob Dampier Tel: 02380 263420

**Friday/Saturday/Sunday 3/4/5 September** - The Flying Gate Weekend

Based at Tenbury Wells (Worcestershire). Full details from Trevor Jarvis at email: jarvistandp(at)aol.com , website tjcycles.co.uk or Tel: 01584 811451

**Sunday 12 September** - The Ephgrave Ride, Cambridge

The annual ride for Ephgrave owners and owners of other classic lightweights. Start at Wittlesford Parkway (Station car park - £1 – start saving your sweetie money) , about 1-mile East of J.10 of M11. Make an effort to join the Ephgrave tifosi this year. An undulating ride with a good lunch stop. Contact: Peter Underwood 01223 565036

**Sunday 12 September** - The Midhurst Classic (Hants)

Start at Midhurst, West Sussex 9.30 for 10am. 30-mile ride beside the South Downs. Contact: Tony Spoor Tel: 01903 813763

**Sunday 3 October** - Fighting Cocks to Sandy Balls (Hants)

Start at The Fighting Cocks, Godshill (New Forest) 10 for 10.30am. Enjoy the New Forest and its animals; horses, pigs, sheep, etc. at their best. Contact Peter Darling Tel: 01275 511947

**Sunday 24 October** - Fishbourne Season Final (Hants)

Start at Fishbourne near Chichester 10 for 10.30am for a jaunt around Bosham and Chidham with lunch on Thorney Island.

Contact Dave Holder Tel: 01243 774437

(Hants in brackets denotes Hampshire Section V-CC Lightweight Ride)

Another event becoming increasingly popular amongst British (and American) riders is **L'Eroica**, run in Tuscany, Italy, on the first weekend in October. The event is sponsored by Brooks of saddle frame, who are now owned by an Italian company as the owner is a classics enthusiast and couldn't

bear to see production of this iconic saddle fall by the wayside when the UK owners couldn't keep the company going.

Bregan Faika from Brooks public relations department sent us this YouTube clip which will give you a flavour of the event. The only thing missing is the sheer numbers (in their thousands) of entrants from all over the world:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcTV9FBHOIM&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KcTV9FBHOIM&feature=player_embedded)

Mick Madgett [MADGETTSCYCLES@aol.com](mailto:MADGETTSCYCLES@aol.com) tells us about:

A 'Junior Version' of the Eroica is the Retro Ronde, the 4th edition of which is being held on June 27th this year. Based in Oudenaarde, the event starts and finishes at the Tour of Flanders museum in the town, and consists of 2 loops, each of around 30km. The first is pretty flat, with some 'Pave' sections, but nothing particularly severe, then the second (optional) loop takes in some of the classic 'bergs' of the area, including the Koppenberg, - the only hill Merckx had to walk up! (I've also failed to get up it!) The event has a great atmosphere, and is as 'competitive' as you want it to be; there are plenty of official feed points, as well as numerous bars around the course. A group of us make a weekend of it, so that we can get 'acclimatised'. Travel, via Norfolkline Dover- Dunkirk is pretty cheap for a 'car-full', & there are Hotels or B&B in or near Oudenaarde. Be Warned, however, it is also 'festival' w/e in Belgium, & the music goes on through the night in Oudenaarde town centre, so take your earplugs if you have a central Hotel, & want to sleep!! Mick is also a regular for L'Eroica and kindly offers anyone wanting 'tips' or help with entering to contact him.

## **The CLB story: Braking French Style**

### **Steve Griffith**

CLB were second only to Mafac as the leading post-WW2 French manufacturer of brakes. Like many French cycle component manufacturers they were located in St Etienne, specifically the suburb of St Chamond. CLB history typifies the history of the French cycle component industry post World War Two: initially very innovative then core products marketed for a long period of time. Finally, decline in the 1970's caused by a failure to understand and respond to the changing market and demise in the 1980's.

CLB seems to have emerged at the end of WW2. Brakes of the 1940's/50's are marked CLB ALP. Their full business name was Angenieux CLB SA. I have been unable to discover what CLB actually stands for although CLB used the initials for advertising slogans e.g. Ce Le Bre and Cha Leger Bloque.

### **1940's and 50's, CLB's Heyday**

Before WW2 a number of French companies had marketed alloy brakes. The most successful of these was Lam who realised that it was necessary to use more metal when switching from steel to alloy otherwise the brake would flex and offer very poor braking. Lam are also credited with being the first company to offer a hooded lever (mid 30's) which enable the lever body to be used as a position for the hands.

CLB took on both these Lam innovations. Their top product in the 40's /50's was an alloy side-pull available in two depths: standard (46 to 63mm), the Competition and short (35-54mm), the oddly named Hi Life. Of all the alloy brakes of the period they are the most effective, a fact I attribute to the thickness of the arms and the quality of the alloy which reduced flexing. The brakes soon became a favourite with top racing cyclist in France and BLRC riders in this country. CLB brakes were offered as an option by Paris and Stallard to name but two of the more progressive builders. The

Competition/ High Life have a distinctive profile, a unique quick release with a cable adjuster and brass bolts (fig 1). A variant of the Competition was the Professional, introduced in the mid 50's.

These are the classic CLB brakes and at the time the best stoppers available. The quick release enabled rapid wheel change and they proved themselves on the early post war Tour de Frances (many of the roads still suffering from war damage). Their only design weakness was that under repeated heavy breaking the central bolt could bend.

CLB also made a range of basic side pulls model 650, 700, 800. The larger the number, the bigger the drop.

With the introduction of Mafac centre-pulls in 1951/2 CLB popularity suffered a serious decline. As period photographs show, Mafac rapidly became the brake to have. Tour riders very quickly adopted them as did many riders in this country. The more conservative British rider stuck to GB leaving a very small market share for CLB. As a result of competitor developments CLB were no longer in the forefront and played second fiddle to Mafac.

### **Levers**

CLB levers until the late 50's have the clip as part of the lever body. This was also a feature of Lam, Burlite and early GB levers, an idea soon dropped by manufacturers due to the high incidence of fracture.

From their early days until their demise CLB made levers in different sizes.

### **1960's and 1970's**

During the 1960's they were imported by Ron Kitching. In the 1960's/70's British manufacturers and riders began to favour Weinmann as the brake of choice; CLB equipped British bikes were extremely unusual.

Throughout the 1970's CLB's main focus was on reducing weight. Lighter and lighter alloys were trialled; levers were drilled and even titanium used for some very expensive brakes. They had some success in breaking into the US market during the mid 1970's. It is interesting to note despite the change of material and design the distinctive quick release was retained. They even tried to lighten the brake cables marketing an alloy cable (model Duralinox) for the true lightweight obsessive. .... someone who would put weight saving above safety.

### **Demise**

In 1984 they were taken over by Sachs who had three years earlier bought Huret and Maillard. Around this time they took part in a joint venture with Vitus who marketed aluminium frames. The brakes continued for a few more years under the CLB name and then disappeared. Sachs found that CLB and other French companies with their outdated factories, outdated management and union practices were simply unable to compete in the modern world. With the exception of some top quality cantilevers for the Sachs New Success ATB group set Sachs ceased brake production. A nice touch is that these final products have a brake shoe is actually shoe shaped!