

CAMBRIDGE LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 33

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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

Most of this edition consists of my ramblings. If you have anything you feel is suitable for publication please forward to the email address above.

At last I have solved the sequence of the first four editions of *Coureur/Sporting Cyclist*. The first edition is Winter 1955 and was produced as a one-off to test the demand for such a magazine which was sold through cycle shops. It was produced and published by Jack Wadley following the demise of the weekly paper, *The Bicycle*, to which he had contributed whilst travelling the continental cycling scene. The second edition of *Coureur* was published in Spring 1956, followed by Summer and Autumn of the same year. These four editions had the following banner at the top left of the front cover:



Following the Autumn 1956 edition there was a gap until May 1957 when the publication was re-named *Coureur, the Magazine for the SPORTING CYCLIST*, following a dispute over the use of the name of *Coureur* from another publisher.

The first issue under the new title was listed as "May 1957 Volume 1 No. 5" and was to be published monthly by Charles Buchan's Publications and printed by the Garden City Press at Letchworth, Herts, to be distributed through newsagents. The editorial by J B Wadley explained that he had produced the first volume as an experiment to test the demand for a high-class magazine for the sporting cyclist and that by going into a contract with Buchan (distributor of other sports magazines including football), production and distribution would be taken care of. The publication finally ceased in 1968 when it was incorporated with *Cycling Weekly* for a while before being quietly dropped.

My interest in the *Sporting Cyclist/Coureur* is that it was a mine of information on the builders and retailers of classic lightweights for this period as advertising space was offered at a more reasonable rate for the smaller companies. I have decided that each edition of *Lightweight News* will have a synopsis of the advertisers in an edition of the Wadley's magazine, starting with Spring 1956, (my first edition, Winter 1955, is bound without the cover and adverts). They were:

Walter Flory, importer of Weinmann and Huret, inside front cover; Condor Cycles; Mercian Cycles; Ken Ryall; Allin's of Croydon; Rory O'Brien; West End Lightweights; Gillott; Wilsons of Birmingham;

Holdsworth; Simplex; Ted Gerrard Lightweight Cycles; Good Friday Festival at Herne Hill and Stronglight.

In the very first *Coureur* it was interesting to read that Tom Crowther of Mercian Cycles (at this time the sole proprietors of Mercian were listed in their adverts as Mr T and Mrs E D Crowther) had been on the management team for the UK women's team in the *Tour Feminin* comprising Joy Bell, Daisy Franks, Beryl French, Eileen Gray, Millie Robinson, June Thackray, and Sylvia Whybrow. Millie Robinson won the event outright with June Thackery second. Other British riders finished 7th, 9th, and 22nd. There were 37 finishers in all.

Just as Edition 32 went to press we went to a weekend **bicycle polo event** which was held at an indoor venue in Cambridge. Bicycle polo has enjoyed a great revival as an offshoot of the fixed-wheel phenomenon which is prevalent in many urban areas around the world. At the Cambridge event some thirty teams were entered including entries from France. The tournament consisted of 10 minute games played by two teams of three and the games ran continuously throughout most of Saturday and all of Sunday. There must have been close on a couple of hundred people gathered at the event, all cyclists of course, and there was a great atmosphere. These events, which attract the younger element, incorporate modern technology into their running and the whole thing was controlled by computer programmes with information available within seconds. The image on the right shows the screen projected onto the wall which gives the scores, time remaining, and the name of the two teams playing. Below them are the names of next two teams wanted on court as there is only about one minute change-over time. All of this is updated as time ticks by. Results were posted on a Forum within minutes and were known all over the country by people using their iPhones and other mobile devices. Feedback from these fans was then placed on the tournament's thread on the Fixed-wheel Forum.



As an aside, whilst on the subject of mobile devices, I was in an art gallery recently where the owner was showing a woman a picture she liked. The woman took an image on her phone, sent it to her husband who texted back that he also liked it so the deal was done. All in under a minute.

The fixed wheel revival has brought a much-needed breath of fresh young blood to the world of older bikes. Many people have found that there is a demand for the in-between frames that are around and they are used as for fixed-wheel riding, mainly with modern fixed components, including large-flange hubs with deep section wheels, modern single chainsets, etc. A few years ago track frames and old double-fixed wheel were of very low value but are now in much demand at jumbles by both the coureurs/fixed riders and of course the 'dealers' who go to great measures to try to get hold of this stuff. I have seen one such person walking alongside an incoming car at a jumble (not that I go to many), hammering on the driver's window and shouting, "have you got any fixed frames or equipment" – all this before the car stopped.

There are however people in this movement who appreciate the older bikes and build them up as authentically as they can. This is probably why so many refer to our website as they are completely new to the game and can find much guidance there. Readers' Bikes was set up to be visual guide for

people wishing to build a bike with period correct components and it is easy to find a year to match a given frame and look at several options of components. We have marked the fixed wheel bikes in the section with an italic 'F' to help this new wave of enthusiasts. Sadly, some people don't care so much and change a frame to suit their needs but this has always been so – the number of classic frames with modern equipment has always been quite high. I know one 'old pro' rider who had his 1950's works frame stretched as he wanted to continue using it but always rode with groups of fast riders and needed all the gears and stopping power that they have. He did talk at one time about a 'period' restoration on another frame but found that he was doing more and more riding in fast groups. I ride in fast groups but am lucky enough to have one set of bikes for one usage and another for the other. Trying to keep up in hard groups with 5-speed gears and old brakes is almost impossible unless you are young and super-fit. The close ratios in multi gear set-ups give riders the chance always to have the correct cadence for a given condition and the ability to slip from gear to gear and back again with no effort has to be sampled to be appreciated.

Without this new intake of owners, some worry that collecting older machines will diminish greatly as all of us 'old codgers' reduce our collections with ongoing years. The ranks of collectors could never be said to be bursting with younger members until this new phenomenon took hold.

Some of the new fixed brigade even use modern machines with vertical dropouts for fixed wheel use. To get finer chain adjustment there is an option of using a single 'half' link to adjust chain length rather than the normal pair of links which create a much longer or shorter chain. This reminds me of something puzzling. Taking a normal half-inch chain; if I shorten it by the usual pair of links, i.e. a one-inch difference – how much difference does this make at the rear ends? (I know Mick Madgett will be the first to put me out of my misery!). My theory is that half the difference comes out of each the upper and lower chain run giving half-inch as the answer. There was recently a great debate on the Fixed-wheel Forum as to how a subscriber could accommodate extra links on his machine with the later (and shorter) Campagnolo rear ends. I asked this question, and if the answer was yes, then his problem would be solved, however my comment was ignored and the discussion centred around other solutions to the problem.

Cambridge is one of the most cycle-friendly cities in the UK and as such there are thousands of bikes being ridden here every day. There are also some thirty-five bike shops. Many cycles are absolute hack bikes in various states of repair but amongst them are some very nice machines of various types. During one lunchtime of an hour in the town I saw at least twenty fixed-wheel machines and many more 'racers' of various standards amongst the bikes passing by.

Where we live there is a steady stream of bikes going past the house all day and amongst them are pupils on their way to-and-from the local schools and sixth-form colleges. Amongst the teenage girls a new fashion has evolved over the last year or so in that they ride bikes with high handlebars, many Dutch imported, and on the bars are mounted very large wicker baskets. Those without the genuine Dutch machines have their handlebars as high as they get them to take the obligatory large basket, even makers such as Raleigh are cottoning on to this and raising the bars – sometimes on adjustable stems. The high bars give the riders a right regal look as they ride along with baskets full of books and a laptop computer. This is probably the female equivalent of the fixie bike amongst the boys. Having said that, there are still a number of girls and women using fixed and only a couple of days ago a woman turned to me at the traffic lights, looked at my fixed machine and said that she was building one for herself but was having to do it as and when she could afford the parts – a flashback of about sixty years for me there.

We had a varied April with our own V-CC Section's ride on the first weekend. I rode my R O Harrison on fixed wheel and Patricia took her 1963 Carpenter 'Olympic Massed Start' on gears of course. This

is a machine we were very tardy in getting restored but when it was finished it turned out to be a pleasure to ride and looked terrific. At the end of this ride we went to the Millpond at Cambridge to meet up with the London Fixed-wheel brigade who had organised a fixed-wheel ride from London to Cambridge. There were some 54 riders and many were justifiably proud not having covered this distance on fixed before. They had a good turnout of women riders and a surprising number were called Kate – maybe it's in the genes!

The following weekend we travelled down to London (by train I'm ashamed to say) to take part in the **annual Tweed Run** starting in the Paternoster Square next to St Paul's cathedral. The event consisted of a ride through London's West End, past some of the city's best-known sites (Westminster Bridge, Horse Guards Parade, Trafalgar Square) in a group of 500, everyone with a smile on their face for the whole of the day. I was going to wear a hired tweed jacket plus waistcoat with my tweed plus-tuos but as the forecast was for a warm and sunny day I realised that we were allowed to wear a woollen jersey which turned out to be ideal for the weather on the day. Patricia stuck to her original choice but minus a fur collar to the jacket. Tailors turned out in Savile Row and Jermyn Street to appraise the immaculate tweeds and tea dresses on show and there was a huge, brilliantly organised picnic in Lincoln's Inn Fields.



Bikes of many varieties featured, from classic lightweights to loop frames and ordinaries. There was even a bike with full-size piano attached. Patricia rode her Hetchins track on single-speed and I rode my Ephgrave road path on fixed. For some reason these images have lost their crispness since being reduced in size. There are other images from the Run on my Facebook page

http://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=194518813914137&id=100000680600553#!/profile.php?id=100000680600553

On the next day we reconnoitred a new route in the Suffolk area and had lunch at The National Stud in Newmarket. A must for horse enthusiasts at this time of the year as there are dozens of mares with their new-born foals in the adjoining fields, they never stray more than a couple of meters apart and the foals seem better at running around the fields that standing still when their legs seem quite disjointed.

The following weekend we went to Shelf near Bradford for the **'Bygone Bikes' annual bike display** combined with a short ride over one lap of a BLRC race route from the 50's. This area was quite a centre for riders and builders in the era of The League. We met Ken Russell again this year, still looking as well as ever. There was a display relating to his single-handed win of the 1952 Tour of Britain – a feat we will never see repeated I guess. It is great to see such a collection of classic road racing machines, especially as I was brought up in a mainly 'Union' area with its fondness for time trials so road/path machines often on fixed and with fancy lugs almost compulsory. Leaguers on the other hand went for much plainer 'Italia'-style lugs along with 10-speed gears. On the way up we visited the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. For this trip we rented the ever-faithful Kangoo van which took 5 bikes with space to spare for cases, etc.



We are able to place 4 bikes nose-first with front wheels removed. Each secured by a simple aero-elastic. The centre one is facing rearwards, also fixed with simple elastic.

Shown in the van ready for the trip to Shelf are, left to right, Pennine Italia, Pennine Richmond, Flying Scot Continental, Paris Tour de France and a Cinelli Corsa. Room for the baggage up the centre. Two of the front wheels are in wheel bags alongside the outer bikes, two on convenient

hooks on the side of the van and one tucked in behind the cardboard, which is there to keep it away from the paintwork on the frame. I rode my Pennine on the ride and Patricia rode hers. We were able to lend the Cinelli to a friend who visited the show (minus bike) for the first time.

There was a display of bi-laminated lugs at the show and we will soon be adding a piece on this method of construction to the website.

Derek Athey :- I am desperately seeking a Leach Marathon aluminium head badge with the three pin holes (50's ?), rather than the earlier two hole brass version (pre-War ?). Also, a friend of mine (an ex-collector and V-CC member who runs a cycle shop in Walthamstow) has acquired an unorthodox designed Les Rigden frame exactly as that which appears on your website under Rigden's name. Consequently he is after some original transfers. Derek's email is [Devondirect\(at\)googlemail.com](mailto:Devondirect(at)googlemail.com)

John Foster has the following for sale:

Carlton possibly *Super Python* (the ME doesn't reply to correspondence!), 1959 F & F, 531 throughout, 23". Pre-Raleigh takeover, expensive Mercian restoration, lovely purple flamboyant paint, correct transfers, nice lugs and delicate gold lug lining. Lovely frameset. £125
 Hobbs of Barbican *Streamweight* 1953 F & F, 531 throughout, 22.5", needing repaint but nice Nervex lugs. £75
 Claud Butler *Majestique* Mixte, 1970s, F & F, 531, chainset, brakes and headset included. £60
 Campagnolo *Nuovo Tipo* large flange hubs (1960s), 32/40 (solid not Q/R) screw fitting for block, hardly used and in superb (almost NoS) condition. £75

Campagnolo *Record* small flange rear hub (1960s), 32, straight Q/R lever, v.good. £30
All plus postage if required. Call John Foster on 01507 450044 or email:- [jafc4d\(at\)aol.com](mailto:jafc4d@aol.com)

Chris Avanti wishes to sell his Colin Cape lightweight bought from Colin about 10 years ago and used only twice in that period.

24" Frame, Cinelli handlebars, Simplex derailleur, Campagnolo forks, Mafac brakes, Mavic wheels, Brooks Saddle. See image below.



Needs a suitable home in exchange for £150 ono. Available to view near Sturminster Newton, Dorset. Contact [chris.avanti\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:chris.avanti@btinternet.com)

Paul Harding is looking for a 21 or 21.5" good quality frame for his son – he is willing to restore. Contact Tel: 01892-860511 or mobile 07785-267214, email- [paul.s.harding\(at\)btinternet.com](mailto:paul.s.harding@btinternet.com)