

The ARCC Tour to Stratford upon Avon



All present and ready to go, well no, where's Alan?

The morning of 5th September dawned bright and clear, if a little chilly. The day we had waited for was here at last as we gathered with mounting excitement and anticipation. Getting everyone together was the proverbial "herding cats" routine, with riders' last minute trips to the loo, adjustments to bikes, checking food and drinks, last minute trips to the loo - again, Lynda checked her list, we should be 14 or was that 15, we were all here, no, who was missing? Alan Nixon was missing and after calls to his mobile were unanswered we waited no longer and were off, bags in car, 13 riders in line.

Our planned lunch was to be in Bicester and fairly soon we had settled into an easy pace and the miles rolled by. We arrived at Garth Park for lunch, just as a wedding party were gathering. They appeared surprised but soon bikes were parked, lunch was had and we avoided accidental appearances in the wedding photos. It was here that Alan caught us, having arrived at Link Car Park late, only to discover he'd forgotten his cycling shoes. Properly attired, he had ridden in classic Time Trial mode to catch us.



Lunch at Garth Park

It was over lunch that we discovered what the somewhat strange bright pink dressings were for around Lynda's knees but I suggest that you ask her yourself!



What are those pink bands?

The onward ride to Stratford was a revelation as we rolled on through beautiful countryside and villages. National Cycling Route 5 is a beauty!

Soon we were on the outskirts of the town and for some it was an excuse to put their heads down and go for it.

We arrived at the Youth Hostel a few miles out of town, got bikes locked up for the night and were soon showered and enjoying a pint or two. The short bus trip into town brought reminiscences about upper decks, etc and after more aperitifs we settled into the restaurant booked for dinner. For once your club colleagues were the quieter guests as there seemed to be several Hen and Birthday celebrations going on around us.

All too soon sleep called. Paolo was convinced he had seen a vision of a Crusader during the night but it turned out to be Andy Lane in a t-shirt with a red cross on the front.



Is this the 1st, 2nd or 3rd aperitif?

After what, at least to some, appeared to be a short nap, a very hearty breakfast and delays looking for keys to unlock bikes, the car was loaded and we were off.

Despite the warnings given Edge Hill, after a few miles, still came as a great shock. Unlike most of the hills in the Chilterns there appeared to be no easing of the gradient; it started steep and went on and on, nothing to do but drop into your lowest gear and keep going. Paolo did go up and down a couple of times "encouraging" his fellow riders!



Respite at the top of Edge Hill

A splendid lunch was had beside the canal at Lower Heyford and, suitably refreshed we were soon back onto some familiar roads, Brill Hill, Chearsley, Butlers Cross and Rignall Road (with the usual hammering pace to get home!)

In short, a really well planned and organised ride in good company, puncture free (apart from Justin after he left us), glorious weather and plenty of enjoyable food. This was the sort of trip that reminds what riding your bike is all about and is something that with a bit of preparation, common sense and planning can be recommended to all club members.

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All you ever wanted to know!

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Membership Fees 2010

All members one fee

£12.00

AMERSHAM Road cycling club

Club runs
Social Riding
Racing
Time Trials
Sportive's

Who finally proved his pedigree?

Cadel Evans –World Road Race Champion.

No more Mr second place, who never attacks.

He did on Sunday after seven hours of racing so gruelling that only half the field of 201 completed the course. It was beautifully timed and conclusive.

Good man!

What's on in October

Wednesday Evenings (Until it's too dark)

Easy and Hard Rides of between 15 and 25 miles
6.00pm - Pednor Loop (Chesham Corner)

Saturday Afternoons

A 20-25 mile ride without a cafe stop, ideal for riders new to club cycling.
1.30pm - Annie Baileys

Sunday Mornings

Easy, Moderate and Hard Rides of between 40 and 60 miles with a cafe stop around half way.
8.30am - Link Road Car Park

Short shots

- **Seasons final ARCC Ten Mile Time Trial on Sunday 4th October, sign on from 8.15am Link Car Park for start at 9am. We are planning to hold more time trials next season and some will be longer distances. If you've not tried it why not come out for this years last. See you Sunday!**
- **This is your club, if you have views, complaints or ideas unless you tell us it's like winking at pretty girls in the dark, you know but no one else does! Get in touch with any committee member or come along to our next meeting Thursday 26th November, remember it's your club!**
- **Have you ordered your new design ARCC kit? If not get onto the website and do it now, Justin is about to send our order in and the next won't be until next year!**
- **What challenges are you setting yourself for the winter, to keep and improve your current level of fitness? Thought about "Spinning classes" details on the club forum.**

News

Club Points competition

The winners of the Club Competition were announced at the end of season dinner and are;

Andy Lane—Senior Mens

Brian Chapman— Vet Mens

Rachelle Hembury— Womens

Congratulations to each one. It has been decided that the Points competition will be suspended for 2009/10 year

The Chiltern 100

We are continuing to work with Verulum to promote the Chiltern 100 which will be held in June 2010.

We are looking for volunteers to serve on the organising committee. If you would like to get involved or discuss what's needed please contact the club secretary, Brian Chapman

ARCC - AGM

The club AGM will be held in January 2010 and details will be circulated well in advance.

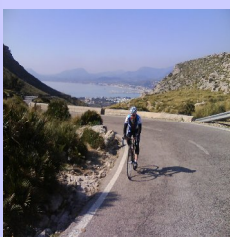
Have you thought about what you want from the club? Have you thought about what you could offer to the club and your fellow members?

If you would consider standing for the committee and would like to know what's involved contact the club secretary.





www.amershamrcc.co.uk



If you enjoy this article and are inspired to sample the joys of a cycling training camp why not check out the club forum for details of the trip to Mallorca in March 2010



Three Blondes at the Belvedere

By Lynda M. Kellam

The last time I enticed Rachele on a cycling holiday with me she found herself on a rigorous training camp in the Andalucian mountains. This time I had promised her a more relaxed sort of a holiday - just a bit of riding in the Italian countryside, nothing too strenuous and lots of time for the beach.....and to encourage her further, Julie, a fellow 'steady' rider, would be joining us. There was also a guarantee of good weather as we would go in the school summer holidays. I just neglected to tell her exactly how good the weather would be at the end of July in Italy and that there were a fair few hills in the area.....

We got off to a good start when Ryanair miraculously deposited us at Rimini airport on time and with our luggage (others weren't so lucky - one family spent 5 days using borrowed cycle shoes from the hotel and cycling in their everyday clothes). We duly arrived at the Belvedere Bike Hotel in Riccione, a 4-star beachside hotel with 6 cycle tour guides and numerous De Rosa bikes for hire. However, because only mad dogs and Englishmen (women) go riding in mid summer Italy, there were only 2 tour guides in residence and as a result a choice of only 2 rides each day. For most days the choice was; an easy ride with Austrian Steffi or an off-the-scale hard ride with ex-pro Italian Felice. For the first couple of days we all went along - very slowly- with Steffi, a good way to acclimatise to the 30+ degree heat, unless you are like Rachele who must be a pure breed Celt, not designed to ever be in temperatures of above 20 degrees. I never knew there could be so many shades of pink.

After a couple of days ambling along with Steffi I was 'invited' to join Felice's ride. Just him, me and a very capable English guy called David. The ride started with a 10 mile time trial - at my top end speed (obviously not theirs) - at this point the heat was in my favour as my muscles warmed up very quickly. I proudly managed to hang on the back of them all the way.....until we hit the hills. The next 30 miles were a never ending series of mountain climbs (which Felice called 'easy up') with only very short descents - the tem-

perature hitting 35 degrees.

Every time I got to the top of one climb, we were off again - the 2 guys having rested waiting for me to catch up. Never in the history of cycling has one person sweated so much as I did on that ride. We finally stopped for a break about 40 miles into this torture, at which point Felice, having taken a long hard look at me, made the decision to take the direct route (one long descent) back to Riccione instead of the longer route with more 'easy ups and downs'. I certainly wasn't about to argue.

Having witnessed the state I was in on my return, Julie and Rachele resigned themselves to a week of Steffi's slow rides. But no, the following day was Steffi's day off - Felice was leading the one and only ride - this was going to be his version of an easy day. Now Julie and Rachele would suffer just as I had. They should give an account of that ride but suffice it to say it was something very different to Steffi's rides. In fact, we all rode together again on the last day when Felice decided that the two groups would join up for a nice trip **up** to San Marino, with him leading. I very much enjoyed that day, particularly when a whole bunch of very professional looking riders - Felice's mates - turned up at the cafe in San Marino. I watched with great interest as the cafe owner gave them each wads of paper from his printer just before they left - which they stuffed down their shirts. Why? Because they would be going back down so fast they would get cold otherwise - in air temperatures of 30 degrees! Unsurprisingly, we didn't feel cold at all on our descent, despite the lack of computer print-out paper down our shirts.

We always got back to the hotel in time for the cyclists buffet lunch - the food at the hotel was unbelievable - fantastic quality and as much as you could eat - breakfast, lunch and dinner, plus wine in the evenings all included in the price. We spent every afternoon on the beach. On the first day we also visited the hotel spa. Ah yes - the spa. Swimwear of any kind prohibited. The choice was..... naked or one-size-fits-all unisex paper underwear of the sort hospitals make you wear if undergoing a surgical procedure.

Having put the paper knickers on, first one way then the other (both looked equally ridiculous), the 3 of us ventured out into the luxurious spa which had every kind of jacuzzi, steam room, sauna, etc. known to man. And there was every kind of man (naked and in knickers) known to spas. It was all a bit much for me but interestingly, Julie went there every day after the beach.....

Balmy Italian evenings were spent sitting out around the pool, recounting the day's heroics and drinking wine with the other Brits. The last night got particularly alcoholic and raucous - to the point that one of us had to have anti-emetics in order to get on the plane the next day.....am sure it was something I ate.....All in all a fantastic trip, great experience and I would recommend the Belvedere to anybody wanting a mix of cycling and relaxation.

Addendum from Julie Anderson:

"After the slow rides with Steffi the two rides with Felice were great for increasing my stamina (that wasn't what I was thinking at the time...). Especially the 10k climb to San Marino in the heat. But I have to refute her insinuation about the spa! Fortunately the sight of me in my disposable paper underwear was enough to clear out the spa so that I could enjoy it all to myself. And Lynda hasn't mentioned the delights of getting to compare all our sleeping habits, as we took turns sleeping with each other. No doubt Rachele will be happy to tell all about having to put up with Nazi room-mates who tried to make her tidy up. A delightful pair to go on holiday with - oh and the cycling was good too."

Addendum from Rachele Hembury:

I'm not going to defend my messy tendencies, although I prefer to describe them as creative, but feel I should add a final note to clarify that we took turns in sharing rooms as opposed to "taking turns in sleeping with each other"!!!



La Marmotte 174km & 5100m ascent 4th July 2009

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A Riders Diary by Cameron Jack

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Well I can safely say nothing prepared me for that. It was awesome, uplifting, horrendous, hot, exhilarating terrifying & utterly shattering. Sitting on top of some of Europe's highest Col's gazing back down into distant valleys having pedalled and perspired your way up is kind of magical. The training hills of Majorca are pimples compared to the Alps, and my local Chiltern hills just ripples on the landscape against the seemingly endless twisting tarmac of La Marmotte. Just my luck that with report temperatures hitting 42 degrees and strong winds it was "the hardest Marmotte for years".

As I was flying back on Sunday I was reminded of why I dedicated this challenge to Help for Heroes, there were further reports of our boys being killed and maimed in Afghanistan, so thank you so much for your support. With the memory of the event still relatively fresh, even if the rest of me isn't.



Riders diary: 3 of us travelled out to Alp D'Huez on the Thursday night nervously entrusting our bikes to BA for the evening flight. Midnight in resort and straight to sleep, well after one medicinal beer, trying not to dream about the 21 hairpin bends we had just driven up that would mark the finish of the event in 2 days time.

Warm up and registration day: Friday, time to put the bikes back together and pedal a bit, eat a lot and get used to the altitude. For 3 ex rugby players the number of skinny people talking bike stuff did not help the nerves. The scenery is absolutely stunning, but enjoyment is tempered by the enormity of cycling across it. The banter was easing off as the day wore on and we got more and more loaded with calories. Kit laid out, ride food prepped, bikes numbered and loaded with water. Time for bed and a slightly restless nights sleep in our 3 man room.



The Morning: Up at dawn & a breakfast of pasta and porridge at 5.30am. Some people are in white paper decorator suits to stave off the cold on the 13km descent to the start in Bourg D'Oisan. The sun is still behind the ridgeline as we whirr down the grey mountainside. There are thousands of riders marshalled into the pens in Bourg as we wait. Lots of bling gear and bling bikes, there is a low hum of nervous multilingual chatter. Our wave is going, we strip off the warm gear and are funnelled into the main street under the bunting and flags, past the band and away.



Col Du Glandon: We roll fast along the flat to a false start of the climb, with a crescendo of changing gears we slow and ascend to a reservoir. A couple of km later the road banks up properly and stays like that for 25.7 km rising 1200m (less one small downward respite). Our jostling river of lycra and carbon surges steadily upwards. The police outriders are blowing whistles try and herd us to the right. The roads are not closed to traffic but this enthusiastic tide of bikes effectively overwhelms the cars. Two hours and 7 mins of pushing the pedals and I reached the melee at the top. A quick addition of layers to ward off the cold going down; there are too many people at the feed station to stop here, I've carried food in my pockets and water fountains await in the villages below. The descent is infamously dangerous, the bends are blind and steep, on the first couple I see riders lying prone in the edge of the road with medics working over them, the marshals are frantically waving red flags yelling "Accident!". The descent plummets 1500m over 23km of terrifyingly twisting roads.

The locals are flying down, I am trying not too brake too much to avoid overheating the wheel rims which would leave me prone to a tyre blowing. To add to this the heat is starting to melt the tarmac. This is not much fun, after 30 minutes my knuckles are white and hands going numb – must have forgotten to take my brave pills!

Col du Telegraphic: A blast along a dual carriageway in large packs and we are heading up again, another 1100m and 25.5 km. By now the sun is beating down on us and the temperature has climbed to 36+ degrees. I am watching my heart rate monitor trying to hold the effort below 141 bpm. This is my insurance policy against over lactating and seizing up. The top comes painfully, my feet have swelled and are killing me as they press down and against the sides of the shoe, still takes the mind off any other aches. I gulp a lot more water, refill and the peleton sails down a relatively simple descent into Valloire and on to the next the feed station.





The many hairpins of Galibier. Valloire lies well out of sight in the bottom of the valley in the middle of the centre photo

Col du Galibier: What a monster! Peaking at 2642m and I am glad I didn't know what was coming, 1200m of up over 17 km. The road rises fairly steadily out of Valloire towards the low point on the horizon. Chatting to some other Brits a few did know what was coming; one is on his 4th attempt to complete this ride. Using ignorance as my shield I pushed on. The valley narrows, the trees recede and the landscape gives way to rocks, then a set of hairpins off to the right soar upwards with a stream of riders grinding their way along them, ouch. It feels like we are summiting as we hit another plateau and the temperature has dropped. There is the ominous crack and rumble of thunder in the mountains below.

A few km on and after an hour and a half of climbing the full extent of the remaining climb is revealed – oh my god – hairpins twist for 3 steep km up through the scree fields with patches of snow still dotted under the cliffs. A few riders are off and walking or panting by the side of the road – this is far too early to blow. Trying to hold over 7 kph surely I can make the top in 20 mins? I stop counting and put my head down. Pushing and pulling at the pedals to drive the bike on, occasionally riding out of the saddle to ease my legs. By the time I make the top the sky has darkened and I am feeling a bit wobbly. I need to take a break, a photo and eat. I must recover my senses after 1.56 min of climbing and have my wits about me for an hour of descending. Again with warm kit on, clip into the pedals and off we go.

Down to Bourg: Now this is fun, the road is open and visible even if the drop off the side is vertical. No touching the breaks and very few riders pass me – the advantage of 13st of descending weight! On the exposed edges the occasional blast of wind sends chills running up my spine as the bike wobbles at high speed. Through La Grave and the tunnels, I remember to drop my sunglasses down onto the end of my nose and stay well clear of the cars as we whiz down from dimly lit gloom to light and back into gloom again. One tunnel bends for a few km with no dot of daylight. The blue and orange side lights zip by, surreal, the bike is canted over into the bend and buzzing down at 60 kph. As we drop the heat envelopes us. Another cyclist lies prone half way down this descent I think he probably clipped a car in the tunnels. Riders glue together again as we head back for Bourg, concentrating furiously we draft each other, centimetres between wheels to save our strength.



The last climb - Alp D'Heuz: Disbelief is the only way to describe it. I feel like this and I have got to climb 1160m & 13 km up to the finish line. I sit massaging my feet in the food station fill my bottles with isotonic and chew on some figs with a honey gel. Here goes nothing - back on the bike and a lot of me is aching. First 4 hairpins are reputedly the worst at a 12 degrees incline, my heart rate has rocketed to over 160 bpm, not good. It is a myth - it is still steep after the first 4 bends. The 21 turns have numbered signs but counting them down does not help. The sun is back on us as we crawl out of the afternoon shade in the valley. Riders are walking heads hung low, resting in the shade or diving under the waterfalls gushing into the culverts by the roadside. This is not for me, no stopping. As I break through into single digit bends my head is pounding. I compromise and stop at the one water station just over half way up. 45 minutes of climbing done but it is difficult to see my clock as my vision is blurred with the effort and sweat. A couple of minutes drinking and pouring water over my head and I am off again. This is all mental now, the fissures in my resolve are everywhere and I am trying to paper over them as fast as they appear. Hazy calculations of speed, time, distance convince me this must finish sometime soon.

As the course enters the resort people in the bars are cheering "Allez! Allez!" but the climbing continues. The sight of the highest roofs in Alp D'Heuz of few bends earlier served as a reminder of how far up the finish is. The incline finally relents 300 metres out, for the sake of tradition I drive the bike into a big gear and stand up, the jump in speed is disconcerting after 90 mins of climbing. The finish pen is a blur, and as the adrenaline drops I start to "crash". Can't hold down much food or water but at least I am not throwing up like some riders.

The elation comes later having drifted the short distance back to the hotel. Done it! An 18 month campaign having taken up serious distance cycling with this event in mind in Feb 2008 and there have been many ups and downs on the way.

"The hardest one day event in Europe for amateur cyclists" – I now know the journalists weren't kidding.

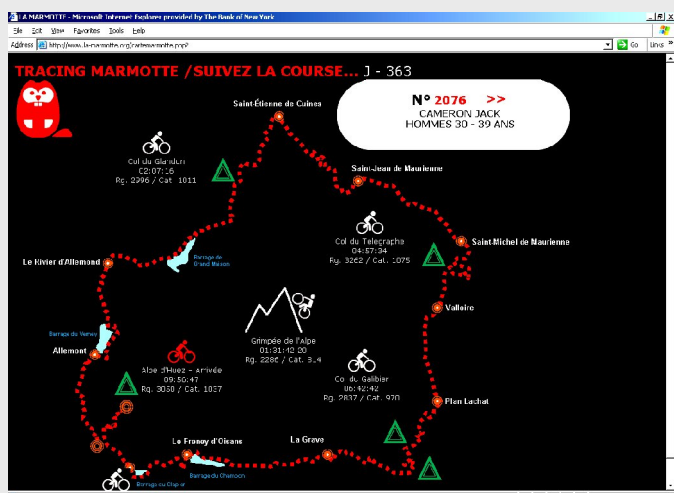
Well done to Cameron and congratulations From all at ARCC

Total time: 9 hours 56 minutes – Silver award category – for those who are interested the route, split times and where Cameron finished in the overall field of 7000 odd riders and age category details are shown here.

**Total raised – with the pledges in will be over
£2000 for Help for Heroes**

www.justgiving.com/hfcameron

Ed Note: If you have been inspired by Cameron's account why not donate to this very worthy cause or plan to raise money yourself.



Metabolic Assessment

By
Cameron Jack



Revelations of a metabolic assessment for an amateur cyclist

As I was getting closer to this years big rides (and the Alps) I was reading more and more articles about training and tactics using heart rate zones and calorie management. The fright of looming monster climbs convinced me I was still in dire need of shedding the extra pounds I was still dragging up hills. Plus I had a sneaking suspicion that my heart rate monitor might not have been serving it's full purpose in the top drawer of the desk. The Mrs bought me an early birthday present of a "Met" test with Target so I set aside an hour one Saturday morning to go down to the studio at Topnotch in Chesham and found myself hooked up to a computer, inhale / exhale face mask on an exercise bike. I was not sure quite what to expect so let me share the experience and aftermath with you, I am definitely a convert!

Here are the revelations: you get to find out exactly where you burn fat and carbs - no more bonking on rides by over cooking it. You find out how to train more effectively both using interval work and base endurance training. You get an assessment of what sort of diet best suits you, it's all about your genes and you can't change them so work with them. I learnt how to eat to get the extra lbs off and exactly how much to eat against my daily calorie burn. You also get to find out exactly where you will start to over lactate and where you will tie up and keel over.

My first conclusion was that I should have done this ages ago. A lot of things I had noticed about my riding now made sense. Training has become a lot more meaningful, plus there is the welcome distraction of using my heart rate on each ride or spin session. One piece of excellent news is that you don't have to work at Mach 1 to burn off that fat, in fact quite the reverse the best burn rates are under your maximum effort levels. The information I had was also a god send for getting around 107 miles on "La Marmotte". By monitoring my heart rate against my performance zones I had a degree of confidence that I could make it over 98 miles of Alpine Cols, and wouldn't have to walk on the last 9 miles and 21 hairpins leading up to the Alp D'Huez finish. I saw a lot of riders who were walking.

So I can report the following changes in my exercise habit, I do tailor session more effectively to endurance (base training) or intervals. I will let riders who are gunning above my pace ride on past knowing that I will see them later on if they have burnt out too early and I haven't. I have lost a quarter of a stubborn to shift stone and I know how to get rid of the rest without being hungry. This can all be done in good time as life is no fun without beer, wine and great food. I have now got another gizmo to play with and I finally know how it works.

If your Christmas present list is looking thin I can thoroughly recommend going and getting "Met" tested. Your winter training is likely to be more fun and productive than it might have been, plus you will be looking good in lycra (or party clothes); well the last bit may just be wishful thinking?

For info about the test I took see our sponsors Target Human Performance website and look under "Assessments":

www.targethumanperformance.com

Tel: 0845 094 5541

