



East Anglian Newsletter

May 2019 — Issue 253

Editor: Andrew Grant Email: newsletter@vttaea.co.uk

Do not adjust your training; there is a fault with the weather; normal service will be resumed as soon as possible.

Having ridden back from the aborted start of the ECCA 50 a week or so ago, the third event I'd entered this year that had been cancelled for safety reasons, I was chatting to Mick Hodson, and realised I'd got off lightly. By dint of entering a couple of events in exotic, far-flung places like Surrey and Hertfordshire, I'd actually managed a couple of races in the last month, whereas poor Mick hadn't put disc wheel to tarmac all season.

Ironically, the Group circuit 25 he'd organised hit one of the more benign weekends, being merely glacially cold, but lacking the howling, gusting cross winds that had the turbines at Balsham overloading the National Grid and forcing the cancellation of our Group 25 on the E2/25, organised by Michael Martin. Antony Birt's excellent debut as a Group event organiser on a pleasantly traffic-free and infrequently-visited stretch of the A12 near Woodbridge also survived the climatic conspiracy, but as far as the Group's programme is concerned, that's it, so the racing round-up is a bit thin this time.

Are we all becoming millennial snowflakes (to continue the weather motif)? I don't think so; it's more the wisdom and prudence which comes with advancing years.

Each one of these race cancellations was the right call. When I think back forty years and remember racing in torrential rain and gloom in the evening rush hour on the F3 (on what is now a combination of the M25 and A1M), or, again, in a monsoon and bank holiday traffic on the E72, without a rear light, or helmet, or even a fluorescent rear number (frame numbers in those days; just between the down tube gear levers for those far too young to remember) I'm forced to conclude we were certifiably crazy.

Too many of us still are, so let us salute race organisers who have the courage to save us, and potentially our sport, from ourselves.

To remind you that things can be better, below, with kind permission of North Norfolk Wheelers, is Bruce Williams' account of last year's EDCA 12-hour which featured a few of the usual EA VTTA suspects. Who knows, it might even inspire one or two of us to enter a "12" this year; there's still plenty of time before the closing date!

Andy Grant

The Barbecue in the Sun – EDCA 12hr Championship Report

Photos by kind permission of Fergus Muir

What a day we had for the Eastern District Championship on Sunday – the CCB 12 hour is the EDCA Championship – with brave souls from around the country descending on Norfolk early on Sunday to do battle with the clock, the roads, each other and, above all, the elements. Men and women, stars and novices, young and old, all were there for the challenge.

I went down to the Eccles Road turn about 1030 – first rider started at 6.01 – to meet one or two marshals and helpers and then made my way up to the Browick / Mulbarton turn (the top end of circuit 2, the southern/western end being Eccles road) for 12 noon along with 4 other marshals at the same place (the turn consists of two roundabouts separated by a bridge over the A11) all doing our EDCA marshalling duty without which these events could not take place. With two different circuits on the A11 – each about 20 miles and each being covered by the cyclists up to 4 or 5 times – followed by a cross country lane trek to the finishing circuit, plus an official feeding station, this time trial needs almost as many helpers and officials as competitors. Half a dozen or so time keepers are located on the finishing circuit in order to time and stop the riders just as their allotted 12 hours elapses.

A unique atmosphere is found at 12 hour events with great camaraderie between the cyclists and with helpers for one or other also giving assistance to others in need, say, of spare wheels or bottles. A large crowd assembled at the Hingham village turn on the

finishing circuit with every competitor that was still going – this is an attritional race – getting a gladiatorial clap and cheer as they rode past, many of them temporarily increasing their pace as a result, despite 11 or so hours in the saddle. I got to the finishing circuit about 5pm and would have cheered them on myself but I was too tired and dehydrated to find the energy. Strangely, quite a few of the finishing circuit cheered me as well, leaving me wondering as to the mistaken identity that was apparently taking place, until someone more alert than me pointed out that it was because of the ‘elderly’ car that I was driving. Funny things, bikes and cars, really, but it is the people that are more interesting than the metal.

This would have been a fine day for the 12 hour with wind speeds below 5 mph all day, except for the unrelenting heat that made the day so attritional. If I were doing the 12 hour (optional guffaws cost extra) I would most certainly pull out of the event after a few hours to avoid this kind of exposure. Temperatures officially reached 30°C by mid to late morning and did not drop until 5 or 6 pm, but the A11 is largely exposed and with the heat bouncing back off the tarmac, probably riders were experiencing temperatures in excess of 35°C. How they kept going is a mystery to me, but many of them did and some even looked strong in the last few hours. Suffice it to say that my marshalling point had no shade and I got burned on the face and hands.

My 4.5 hour stint of duty started interestingly when National 100 mile champion, Alice Lethbridge, who also broke her own competition record in the EDCA ‘100’ 3 weeks earlier, turned up at Browick on a road bike asking me where she was supposed to be for her own marshalling duty. My hopes that she had turned up to re-acquaint herself with me

being dashed and much as though I am sure I would have enjoyed the company, I had to tell her that she was due at the Eccles road turn and so send her on her way 10 miles down the A11. Despite riding an ordinary bike and with a back pack, apparently she managed to overtake one or two competitors on the way. We never did that in my day (it was regarded as bad form) but I guess she was worried about being late to marshal!

Andrew (Andy) Wilkinson was last man off and said to be on a mission to regain the competition record (of 318 miles) that he had established in this event 6 years ago. He has been back the previous two years but in support of his wife, Jill. As far as I know, this was his first attempt at the 12 hour since he regained comp record in 2012, the driver for him being that Adam Duggleby had the temerity to take his record with ride of 322 miles (when the aforementioned Alice Lethbridge also broke her own national record achieving 290 miles) at the National 12 hour championship a few weeks ago.

Wilkinson first won championships and BAR's back in the mid and late 1990's and I assume that he is now approaching 50, so coming back for a tilt at the 12 hour record after a long gap always seemed like a tall order. He started very fast – as he did 6 years ago – but we saw him stop on the Browick / Mulbarton bridge (his helpers were there) after 6 or 7 hours. He later told officials that he was suffering with back pain and I noticed that his black skin suit was stained white by body sweat as he struggled to remove it. The bike position is always tough on a long distance event – no one knows more about this than Wilko – but the heat of the day was also gruelling for the riders.

The fastest rider that I could track at my station was Charles Mitchell at number 30, a

novice in the 12 hour, but the winner of the EDCA '100' a few weeks before with the very fast time of 3 hours 26 minutes (an average speed of just over 29 mph) who was taking about 46 minutes to cover the 20 or so miles of circuit 2. Mitchell also had his team mates from A3crg back, the same guys that did the '100', with Stephen Williamson (number 40) looking very strong taking about 48 minutes for each circuit. Mark Smith of Crawley Wheelers was also back after the '100' and looking strong as did Victor Chetta of Artic Tacx (a man who had ridden the 24 hour event only two weeks before) at number 45 and likewise Matt Ivings (Buxton CC) at number 25.



Local man and vet Dave Green of the promoting club (number 20) started well but seemed to struggle in the heat, but he still finished with a fine 289 miles (provisional).

Simon Hardy of Kings Lynn was one of those that seemed to get stronger in the second half of the event and still looked fresh after completing his 240 miles, 6 miles more than he achieved the previous year. John Swindells of Icenii Velo, however, really seemed to struggle in the heat of the day (after starting well) finishing with 240 miles, but again he rode without a helper. As a man on or about 4 hours for the '100 and covering a lot of miles as he does, I believe that he could do 260 miles on the right day with the right backup. This was a day only for people with remarkable resistance to heat exhaustion

which, sadly, did not include me. What was that I said about the marshals' trade union?



The ever popular John Golder (Chelmer CC) chose this 12 hour over the ECCA event later this month and was chasing a national age record. (I am guessing that he is 63 or 64).

Nugget, in Chelmer colours, merges with the foliage

It is believed that he achieved comfortably over 260 miles (probably about 264) and that he therefore achieved his goal, but provisional results were only available for the leading riders and all are subject to verification.

Rebecca Murley of Wisbech Wheelers, making her first attempt at this distance after a top season and a tremendous sub 4 hour ride in the EDCA '100', was the subject of much interest and cheer and was provisionally given the win with 267 miles, however she believes that this is miscalculated and will be corrected to perhaps 260 miles. Helped on the day by



her loyal parents, she started cautiously and, as a result, finished strongly, as did John Golder. She said the heat did not trouble her too much except for her feet which, at her request, her parents regularly doused with a bucket of cold water. Many riders got the Tour de France mountain stage treatment with a bucket of water being tossed over the whole torso. I think you possibly needed that every 10 minutes. I know I did. I had bottles of water with me, but they were hot...

Christina Mackenzie of the Stirling Bike Club was accredited with 266 miles, a Scottish National record, and this may be the winning distance for this event, she also having done the 24 hour event two weeks previously. Some people just won't give up. The men's team win has provisionally been allocated to A3crg – Messrs Mitchell, Williamson and David Shepherd – with a combined distance of 891 miles, a new National Competition record assuming distances are confirmed. Finally, special mention should be made for the husband and wife tandem team of Becky and Howard Lewis (Mid Shropshire Wheelers) who recorded 286 miles, also provisionally a new Competition record for the mixed tandem.

Charles Mitchell won the men's event with a provisional mileage of 311 miles, an average speed of about 26mph, an extraordinary effort on the day provided the distance is confirmed, Mark Smith is provisionally second with 296 miles with a further 5 riders recording distances in the 290's, Dave Green being 8th with 289 miles.

Personally, I am not sure if 12 hour events should take place under temperatures like these, but the riders, or many of them that finished, clearly have other ideas. I got home about 8pm for a cold shower and some after sun lotion. I had worn long sleeves and long

trousers advisedly, but I should have taken a face mask and gloves. Some might say that these accoutrements could usefully be permanent, but I could not possibly comment. Later I switched the TV on and

came across an old edition of Morecambe and Wise; "Bring me Sunshine", they chortled...

Bruce Williams

Bill Thorncroft



Bill Thorncroft, Brentwood RC, 1.06.45 in the Romford Wheelers CC Open 25 July 1948. Winner G. Fell, 59.15. Note how busy the Southend Arterial Road is.

It was with great sadness that, in January, we had to report the passing of Bill Thorncroft of Essex Roads CC whom many will remember as an organiser, timekeeper, official and President and committee member of the ECCA. He was admitted into hospital in mid-December and died on Wednesday 23rd January. An obituary appeared on the Group web site with a link to the following article written by another ECCA President, Dick Spanton, also sadly no longer with us. Bear in mind that it was produced for Bill's 90th birthday but it really sums up what Bill meant to cycling in this area.

An Appreciation of Bill Thorncroft

by Dick Spanton, ECCA President

Bill Thorncroft is now retired from all of his local cycling activities, but it was felt that his many friends and Cycling Officials would be interested in reading of the amount of work that he has contributed to the development of cycling in our area. I have known Bill since 1947 and have been a friend for most of those years, so took on the job

of writing his cycling history.

My memory would not do him justice so a pub lunch was arranged and, with pen and paper to hand, we ate and talked. The following is an appreciation of Bill's life, but concentrating mainly on the cycling side.

Bill was born in 1921 and began cycling as most youngsters did then, when he was given a bike to cycle to school in 1934. His enjoyment of cycling freedom grew and in 1937 he was one of the founder members of the Brentwood Road Club. He became a Club official and in 1940 he was voted on to the RTTC and ECCA Committees.

May 1941 and everything changed when Bill was called up and drafted into the Royal Tank Regiment. Following training, he ended up in North Africa in 1942 in the drive to conquer Rommel's army. For Bill there was no armour protection or guns to defend himself because Bill's job was to drive a lorry laden with high octane petrol to refuel the tanks as they advanced across the desert.*

At the cessation of hostilities Bill ended up at Bovington Camp near Wareham, prior to demob. Bill had his bike there and became friendly with a man called Harvell who was a member of the Poole Wheelers, and who had been a competitor at the 1932 Olympics. Mr. Harvell encouraged Bill to compete at the Poole hard track. Bill was finally demobbed in September 1946 and went back to his old firm before being head-hunted by a larger firm, where he was put in charge of a department, and where he remained until his retirement in 1984.

On the cycling front, Bill went back to the Brentwood Road Club. Most cycling clubs and organisations lost many of their members and officials due to enemy action and the immediate post war years saw them struggling to "pick up the pieces".

Bill threw himself whole-heartedly into the fray, not only with the Brentwood R.C., but also with London East RTTC and the ECCA and then the ECRA. One wonders how Bill found the hours to do it as well as riding a bike and earning a living. His cycling C.V. includes posts as Treasurer, then Hon. Gen. Secretary, followed by Chairman of the Brentwood Road Club until it ceased to function in 1977.

Then he took on the job of Hon. Secretary of the RTTC London East and then as Chairman. Bill was also with the ECCA as Secretary for 31 years, then as Chairman followed by the Presidency. Bill is now a Past President and Life Member of the ECCA. As if all this work was not enough, he took on the Chairmanship of the ECRA for 30 plus years.

When the Brentwood R.C. merged with the recently-revived Essex Roads Cycling Club in 1977, Bill might have thought that he could take a back seat as far as Club jobs were concerned. The much-venerated Eddie Munson was the current Chairman, but he became ill and hospitalised in 1978 and Bill was voted into the Chair, and remained Chairman for many years.

With all this administration work it is surprising that Bill found time to ride a bike, but he did, and with a vengeance. Bill rode mainly Time Trials, but also joined in with post-war circuit races round parks and old aerodromes. Grass track racing was much in vogue post-war and Bill joined in the many Essex meetings. Also included was a bit of hard track and roller racing – mainly in the winter. Bill's "claim to fame" in the roller-racing sphere was when he beat the great Reg Harris in a flying quarter mile on the Isle of Man during Cycle Week.

Bill started and finished in thirteen 24-hour races, forty-eight 12-hour races and over one hundred 100 mile races. 25 and 50 mile events are too many to count. The peak of Bill's achievement in medals was when he won a National Championship Team medal in the 24 Hour Championship with Dick Poole and Dave Meisner.

For me Bill's determination to finish at all costs is best exemplified in the Kent Centre and Trike Association 12 hour race in 1952. The Brentwood team were Vic Gibbons, Dick Spanton and Bill. The event was run off in a dawn to dusk gale force South Westerly.

I remember seeing trikes being blown backwards when they free-wheeled for a drinking station.

The great Medway Wheelers had five or six of their best riders entered and the Brentwood trio ate them for breakfast, lunch and tea! Vic won the race, I was second and Bill did a very creditable distance to fill that important third team counter, to win the race. The hardest day I've ever raced!

As well as Time Trialling, Bill's steadfast determination led him to attack and beat four ECRRA place-to-place records, two of which still stand today.

Bill's favourite part of cycling was touring and he has visited England, Scotland, Wales and Southern Ireland. Europe was grist to his wheels and he has covered Holland, Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Other trips were made to Israel and Nepal. The other side of the world has also been included and he has made several tours to Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.

In twelve visits to the U.S. he toured the West Coast to East Coast three times and North to the

South Borders three times. Bill has toured in every U.S. State with the exception of Alaska and Hawaii! As one might expect, Bill has kept records of his mileage and this now totals in excess of 750,000 miles. A remarkable achievement.

Almost as an after-thought in our "over lunch" chat, Bill recalled his time-keeping exploits for London East, National and Record-breaking events and his event promotions. He has promoted over 200 ECCA events as well as events for the Brentwood R.C. and the Essex R.C. and has promoted National Championships at 10, 25, 50, 100 miles and 12 hours.

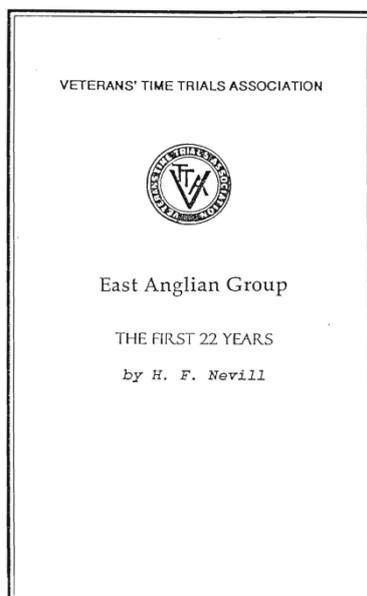
Bill has made a truly remarkable contribution to cycling in his lifetime! He recollects that he thoroughly enjoyed his job and does not regret one minute of all the work he put into it.

Rest assured Bill that hundreds of us appreciate what you have done for us and cycling. We hope you enjoy your 90th Birthday.

**Bill's own account of his wartime adventures, "It Ain't Half Hot Mum," appeared in the May 2017 issue of this newsletter.*

Origins of the East Anglia Group

Younger members who know little of the Group's history might be interested to learn how it all started, as might older members whose memories are getting a little hazy. The former group might recognise some of the names commemorated on trophies; the latter group might recognise the names of old friends, or even, in one or two cases, their own. It strikes me that less has changed than we might think, including, sadly, the delinquency of some motorists, but more positively, the number of members racing to an age when they really should know better and the ability of veteran's champions to break their hip (or pelvis) then come back the next year and break national records.



It all happened in 1964. Early in the season several Vets living in the area were bemoaning the fact that if they wanted to ride in Vets events as members of London Group they had to travel as far afield as

Baldock, Biggleswade, Amersham, Maidenhead or Marlow, which in those days they could rarely do.

I had been a member of the London Group for a few years in the 50's but dropped my membership for similar reasons. When I heard the grumblings I thought it was time to do something about it. Realising there was Vet potential in this part of the country I got in touch with Lionel Lincoln, the then National Secretary and Treasurer of the VTTA to get his thoughts and ideas on the matter.

Lionel was most helpful, supplying lots of 'gen' and encouragement, and promised if a meeting was called to launch a new Group in the area he would attend and help give a good send-off. On June 7th 1964 Ipswich Bicycle Club was running a '25' on the old B7 course and as it was expected several Vets would be riding, it was thought a good idea to hold a meeting in Ipswich after the event.

After inserting a letter in "The Veteran"-and writing to all the Clubs in the area, a meeting was arranged at the Kings Arms Hotel, Thoroughfare, Cornhill, Ipswich. Lionel Lincoln travelled from Petersham in Surrey to be present as promised but only 8 other Vets attended. It was a little disappointing. Lionel said there was no need to worry, quoting the Surrey/Sussex Group which started with 4 new members and 6 transfers in 1957 and by 1964 boasted 72 members.

Those present at the inaugural meeting in addition to Lionel Lincoln were: Syd Parkinson (South Western RC) from Wells-on-Sea, Norfolk, Stan Raby, Jack King and Harry Haynes, Colchester Rovers, Les Dawdry, Tricycle Association, George Fuller, Ipswich DA CTC, Ron Fisher, West Suffolk Wheelers and myself, Ipswich BC.

After explaining the reasons for calling the meeting, I introduced the National Secretary and the meeting got under way, with Lionel taking the chair. It was decided to call the Group the East Anglian Group, and officials elected were: Chairman -Stan Raby; Secretary and Treasurer -Herbie Nevill; Racing Secretary -Jack King. Of the officials 22 years hence, Stan Raby and I were still holding the offices of Chairman and

Secretary/Treasurer respectively and of those others at that meeting, only Les Dawdry was still there.

As the Group was formed in June it was too late in the year to arrange any events, but, as well as those present giving a donation to serve as a small financial start, most promised to give a medal to first Vet on standard in one of their own Club's events which was much appreciated.

Harry Haynes and Jack King however teamed up on a tandem to break the Vets National Age Group record for 50 miles: 1.58.41 for age 46.

The following year (1965) a 25, 30 and 50 were arranged to be held in conjunction with Essex & Suffolk Border Combine events. Entries were now excessive, 12 for the '25', which was won 'on standard' by G.Tolliday (57) of Wren Wheelers with a +2.18 from his 1.12.37, while fastest time went to W.Bull (43), also Wren Wheelers, with 1.03.44.

The '30' had only 7 entries but a feature of this event was only 2 rode solos, the rest being on trikes. Felix Lelyveld (53), Colchester Rovers CC with 1.24.41 from the scratch mark was fastest on solo. Jack King (49) on trike won the standard award, +5.11 from 1.26.34.

There was the same number of entries (7) for the Group '50' with Jack King winning the standard award again and Harry Haynes (45) fastest time: 2.26.32. The lack of entries was more than made up for by the enthusiasm of the members.

As the Group progressed, more events were held and entries continued to increase so that by 1987 the Group was running a '10', 2 x '25's, a '30', a '50' and a '100' and often got a full card for the shorter distance events. Also the Group has over the years successfully run Vets National Championships at all distances from 25 miles to 12 hours.

Membership continues to rise as predicted by Lionel Lincoln; 11 at the end of 1964; 18 in 1965; 25 in 1966 and by the end of 1986 there were 332 which included 31 ladies.

Until 1983 meetings were held at my home, to help keep Group's costs down, when larger premises were sought because of overcrowding. There were not enough members to warrant organising a Dinner and Prize Presentation after the first year of activities, so Ipswich BC kindly allowed the Group to combine the function with theirs in 1965 at Ipswich Co-op Restaurant with Stan Raby proposing the toast to the Ipswich BC and the Group and Ray Revett replying for the IBC and Jack King for the Group.

The following year the first of a series of luncheons and prize presentations was held at the White Lion Hotel, Hadleigh, Suffolk where there was always good food to be had and a happy atmosphere.

There were many distinguished speakers like Jock Wadley, Mal Rees, Rex Coley (Ragged Staff), Wyn Maddock, Lionel Lincoln, Vic Gibbons, Mick Gambling, Vin Denson, Beryl Burton and John Woodburn. Every year from 1972 the National President, Dick Clarke was a guest at the functions. He seemed to have a soft spot for East Anglia!

From 1976 Hadleigh White Lion became too small and after a couple of Luncheons at the Golden Lion Hotel, Ipswich, the Group got settled (in 1982) at Ipswich Post House. Even this proved a bit small as bookings were over the limit of 120 for several years.

The first trophy was a very nice shield made by Harry Haynes, who was a cabinet maker, and presented for the Group Road Championship over 25, 50 and 100 miles "on standard". This was followed at intervals by other members generously donating trophies for competition. Syd Parkinson gave 2, one of which he had won in a track race while serving in an Army Cycling Battalion in India in 1919 and now allocated to the Ladies Championship; the other presented annually to fastest group member on handicap in the Group '50'.

I too won cups for the fastest Group member on handicap at 25 and 30 miles and a 12 hour cup for greatest mileage on standard on either London East or East District courses. Charlie Clift, a Shield

for the fastest group member on handicap in the first Group '10'.

Geri Lang influenced his firm, Stourvale Meat Products, to donate a nice shield, and the rest of the Group's trophies were obtained by subscription in memory of members having passed on who had given excellent service to the Group. The Bob Haworth Memorial Trophy, presented annually to the fastest Group member on handicap in the Group '100'. The Ron Fisher/Jack King Memorial Shield to be allocated to all Group events in rotation for fastest group member on standard. The Geri Lang Memorial Cup for the fastest group member on standard in the early season 24.6 mile Hilly event.

In 1973 Lionel Lincoln passed away. He had left his plaque which was presented to him for outstanding service to the VTTA to his friend Mrs. Evelyn Hamilton who presented it to the Group and this was made up into a nice shield by Bob Ward and allocated to the fastest group member in the Group BAR covering events at 25, 50, 100 miles and 12hours, on standard.

Many members have served the Group well since its formation. Jack King, the first racing secretary took on the job of promoting group events in 1965 and right up to his untimely death at the age of 67 he had carried on promoting at least four events in the Calendar which had increased to two '25's, a '10', a 'hilly' 24.6mile TT, a '30', '50' and a '100'. Jack was a prolific winner of awards in Group events, but he liked the longer distances, riding many 12s and 24s both on solo and trike. In 1971 Jack broke the National trike 12 hour record with 205.684 miles and in 1973 took the Vets National Championship 24 hour with a plus of 52.700 miles (399.49miles) as well as other honours.

Another staunch supporter and worker for the Group, Ron Fisher of West Suffolk Wheelers, passed away age 63, a week before Jack King. He was Secretary of the Trike Association (Eastern Region) for a number of years and helped keep the trike section of the Group going strong.

Bob Haworth, a regular winner of fastest time and standard awards since he joined in 1965 also created a unique record by winning the Buckshee Wheelers "Bully Beef" trophy a total of 5 times. His life was cut short in 1978 at the 'tender' age of 57.

Syd Parkinson was a founder member of the VTTA in 1943 and we were proud to have this fine gentleman in our Group, where his enthusiasm was rekindled and he started racing again at 75 years, doing a fine 2.57.24 in the Group '50' in 1966. In 1967 he did 1.24.48 and +1.29 in the Group '25' followed by 2.56.07 and +2.43 in the '50' for an age 76 record. Syd was a proper character and the following is a true story: Syd at 77 rode a '25' in the Runnymede, Windsor area and was doing quite well when he spied an old friend on the road, stopped for a chat, set off again, just got speed up when another old friend loomed up which meant another brief natter, then on again to make a fast finish. His time ?? He did get moving, however, in the Fenland RRA '25' of 1972, his 1.30.48 being a national age group record for 81 years, as also was his 1.39.19 '25' at 82 in the last group '25' of 1973.

Syd passed away on February 2nd 1977 after not fully recovering from an accident while touring, where a silly motorist tried to overtake him in a narrow lane, squashing him into a high bank.



What can you say about Vic Gibbons, Brentwood Road Club, and later Essex Roads CC, who joined the Group in 1967. He won the RTTC National BAR in 1953 and 1954. His '50' of 1955 in 1.56.24 was competition

record, but 14 years later in 1969 (aged 47) he did a personal best '50' of 1.56.22, and also a '25' of 54.47. In 1979 while cycling to work in icy conditions he crashed and broke his hip, but such was the calibre of the man he came back after

about a year and set up National age group records for 61 years of 1.55.44 for 50 miles and 4.10.00 for the '100' as well as getting down to 53.52 for a '25' and 1.08.34 for 30 miles.

Phil Smith, Norwich ABC is another who has taken several VTTA championship medals as well as age group records -but is also serving the Group well in the capacity of Age Group Secretary. Phil's club mate, Bob Ward, who also wins many standard awards and the occasional fastest time, is another good worker for the Group, having taken over the Group Recorder's job after Geri Lang's death. Geri had done the job excellently for 13 years.

Two very senior citizens, Wally Spencer, 80 in 1987 and George White, 79, have had very successful racing careers winning many awards on the way. They were still competing in 1987.

When the Group was formed, Geoff Keeble, Colchester Rovers CC, timed the first event and since then he has timed practically everyone of them. In 1975 the Group presented Geoff with an inscribed plaque on the completion of timing 800 events. By 1986 that number had soared to over the 1000 mark. A wonderful record.

Two other Group members who worked hard for the VTTA are Sid Hayward and Doug Brunwin. When Sid's work took him to Southend he transferred to our Group from the Surrey/Sussex Group. He took over the National Secretary and Treasurer's job after the passing of Lionel Lincoln in 1973 and has continued in that capacity ever since, with occasional spells as VETERAN editor and Advertising Secretary. A fantastic worker.

Doug Brunwin needs no introduction as VTTA National Recorder, having taken over from Andy Burnett several years previously. He did a marvellous job in sorting out all the times and distances for the National BAR at the end of each season, compiling the table and getting it published.

I am sure we all appreciate the wonderful work all have done on our behalf.

Of the ladies - we have several racing and doing remarkable times: Diana Emery, Wendy Reynolds, Pat Pepper and Mary Horsnell to name but a few. Sorry they all can't be mentioned, but an outstanding ride by Mary Horsnell should be noted. In the National Championship '24', her ride of 394.150 miles at 52 years of age in 1983 went down as a National Vets Age Record.

The Group has gone from strength to strength since its formation in 1964 and helping towards

this must have been the Group's news sheet, The Veterans' Link, which has just reached it's 130 edition and kept all members in touch for 22 years and is still going strong, by way of my pen.

Footnote: Herbie, at the age of 70 gained Trike records in 10, 25, 30 and 100 mile events and a 12 hour event. A truly wonderful achievement.

**H F Nevill
1986**

Racing Round-Up

As noted above, only two of the three scheduled Group events survived the April weather, though the Circuit 25, on the sporting (i.e. hilly and badly-surfaced) E33/25 benefited from a vigorous tailwind blowing directly from the Steppes down the long A1303 straight to Dunsley Corner, where the tedium of marshalling was relieved by the dramatic arrest by police and on-the-spot sectioning by medical personnel of a felon on a quad bike. Quite what he'd been up to the police did not divulge, but they completely missed the most brazen heist of the day



which was Drag2Zero's Matthew Smith's monstrous 51:48 for first place on actual and on standard with a plus of 14:26. **(right)**



Left scrabbling for the podium crumbs were Martin Reynolds (**left** +11:22) and Chris Dyason (**below right**+11:19), both Cambridge CC and both excellent rides by human standards. Crest CC's Sue Rogers was the only female rider.

Matt beat all the two-up competitors, fastest of whom were, for the record, Ollie Hucks and Sebastian Garry from High Wycombe CC in 52:05. The only tandem entry wisely thought better of it and were DNS. Plaudits to Mick Hodson on a very well-run event.

The following Sunday saw the first Group 10 for the Charlie Clift Shield with new organiser Antony Birt introducing us to the B10/36R, a tranquil, well-surfaced and surprisingly hilly stretch of the A12 in the Easternmost reaches of the Group's territory.

Andy Grant (Cambridge CC) with 21:59 couldn't emulate Matt Smith's feat on actual, but did renew his lease on the shield for the fourth year in succession with a win on standard and a plus of 6:14. Snapping at his heels were Cambridge team mates Ken Platts (+5:57) and that man Reynolds again (+5:53), which, not unnaturally, secured Cambridge CC the team award. CC Ashwell's Jackie Field



was fastest woman with +6:02.

Links to the full results are on the VTTA web site at: <https://www.vtta.org.uk/events/view/18066> and <https://www.vtta.org.uk/events/view/18860> respectively.



The Group 25 on the E2/25 should have taken place the following Saturday afternoon, but that happened to be a time when Storm Hannah was rampaging at right angles across the dual carriageway, so organiser Michael Martin took the courageous and correct decision to cancel in good time to save competitors a wasted journey.

The following day, the Cambridge trio of Grant, Dyason and Colin Lizieri, together with Elite Cycling's Mark Newton and RAFCA's Jason Davies, flew the flag for East Anglia in deepest stockbroker-belt Surrey in the National VTTA 10 championship on a single- carriageway course from an earlier era in the foothills of Leith Hill. Whatever those stockbrokers spend their money on, it isn't tarmac, but it didn't have much impact on a superhuman Keith Ainsworth, of Sheffrec CC, *(right, with*

women's champion Angela Carpenter, a3crg) who made his journey south worthwhile with a dominant plus of 6:32, 36 seconds clear of silver medallist Neil Mackley from a3crg and 48 seconds ahead of Andy Grant, *(above left)* who took bronze. A3crg also cleaned up the team awards both as club and as West Saxons, pushing Cambridge CC and the East Angles into second spot in both competitions.



Early Start for Record breaking

The clement weather at the end of March/ beginning of April saw an early start to the breaking of age records. First to go was the mixed tandem 15, on the 24th March. John Swanbury (72) and Kate Churchill (60), a recent recruit to the Group, set a new mark of 37:42 at a combined age of 132. This is also a National Record, subject to ratification.

Two weeks later Ken Platts lowered his own 25 (age 66) record to 53-04, just 8 days before his 67th birthday. The good weather didn't last; late April and early May saw the return of gales and rain resulting in the cancellation of several events and a lack of record rides. In mid-May the good weather returned and on 19th May in the ECCA 10, Andy Grant knocked 3s off Ken's 10 record, recording 20-46 at age 66. There may have been further records set in this event but so far no claims have been received.

The full list of EA records, updated to the end of 2018, is on the Group website. If you break a record, please get your claims in as soon as possible to help smooth my workload, although ratification cannot be finalised until the end of the seasons.

Ken Platts

Recorder and Record Sec.