



AYR ROADS CYCLING
CLUB
Newsletter

May 2004

**EARLY SEASON SUCCESSES
FOR AYR ROADS.**

The club has had some excellent early season racing results. Vic returned from New Zealand with a fist full of medals. Gavin got a first and second in the Moscow APR series and was only one of three Ayrshire riders to finish the Girvan 3 day. Alex McAllister and John Alexander have also been competing in Road Race scene and Neil Campbell came forth in the Fullerton "10". The club colours have been seen at many events across the country and will no doubt be seen on the continent before the season is out. Good luck to all those competing this year.

EVENING EVENTS

Now it is almost May and time for the traditional evening 10 mile time trials along the A78. We meet on Thursday nights at 7pm on the Corraith road near Loans. Now is the time to come along and attack that personnel best time !
If you don't fancy a race then there is plenty of quite roads between Loan, Symington and Dundonald for a short easier run .

QUICK - CLOTHING !

You will have to be quick if you want to purchase any new club clothing. John Mason will be placing an order very soon, so if you need a new jersey for that photo on the podium contact John at 01292 443157 or e-mail at Jmason.penthouse@btconnect.com

Just a wee tour.

Blair and Arnie are having to re schedule their May tour. Possible dates are now around the end of August or early September. If you fancy a few days gentle touring somewhere in Scotland at this time please contact Blair or Arnie with availability.

FINAL DEMAND.

Membership fees are over due and many people have still to pay their £15 fee. If you have not paid yet please send your fee to; Alex McAllister at 7 Maberry Place, Troon. KA10 7LA
Up to date contact details would also be appreciated.

A RAY OF HOPE.

Late into a Friday night we sat in Neil's house discussing how to attract new members to the club, we debated at length many schemes and argued over there pit falls. Eventually it was agreed to start an "easy" ride on Sundays so any potential new member would not be dropped on the club run as it hurtled down the Girvan valley. One small article in the Ayrshire Post resulted in Ray Grana from Prestwick turning up on a wet Sunday morning in April. Gingerly we towed Ray out of town, sheltered at the back of the bunch from the driving rain he was gaining great words of wisdom from the veterans of the bike that he was so unfortunate to be sitting beside. Blackie's brae came and it was our Captain and secretary who declined the climb. Ray climbed the brae more comfortably than many of the remaining bunch. Obviously he didn't know what was ahead of him or he would have saved his strength....we thought. Second to the junction at Pinmore he refused the easy option of down the Byne and headed for more miles with Kenny Wilson to Lendalfoot. Chairman Robertson and myself headed for some recovery in the Café at Girvan. As you would expect at this stage the more gentlemanly approach of nursing new members around South Ayrshire was abandoned on the homeward leg became as the race to get home before the rain returned. I would like to be able to report on who won the sprint into Ayr. Kenny is not saying and as I was a hundred yards off the back. I could not be sure, but I thought I saw a Ray of hope for the future of Road Racing in Ayr Roads colours. *Welcome Ray.*

HIGH NOON by Alex McAllister

Some speak of Chiappucci's ride to Sestrieres in the Tour of 1993, or Roche's pursuit of Pedro Delgado to La Plagne; some remember Lemond's TT ride into Paris to take the jersey by 8 seconds from Fignon; but the fine detail of the greatest win of all time has been known, until today, only to the 7 men who took part in the battle itself. What momentous event was this, you may rightly ask? It must surely have been before the advent of camera-motorbikes and television, of lycra and indexed gears; a Paris-Roubaix perhaps, a Tour of Flanders, a Giro d'Italia? The truth, my friends, is more mundane and more recent; the Assel Valley race from the world-famous Blackie's Brae to Pinmore on Sunday 25 January 2004, an occasion worthy of ten thousand words (however editorial constraints have restricted the author to the following short paragraphs).

The usual thoughts flit through the author's mind as the dreaded left turn draws ever nearer; 'if only I hadn't opened a second bottle of wine last night'.... 'maybe nobody will go hard'.... 'my winter frame is so effing heavy'.... 'why can you never have just one helping of black forest gateau'.... 'it's bloody unsporting that some of the Ayrodynamic are still on their summer bikes'. A plan starts to form; need to get back early, domestic chores, would have to miss out the Assel today, such a pity when legs feeling good, etc, etc. These thoughts are organising themselves into a semblance of order when the bike turns left as if on autopilot. Where are we now? Oh for **** sake, Blackie's!!!

Too late now, fumble with the lever and get into the little ring, shift the chain rapidly across the cassette, and spin as though your life depended on it. God, this is hard. Across the bridge, still spinning like a demented Catherine wheel, your author is starting to lose contact with the cream of Ayrshire cycling. Get out of the saddle and power through the bends; like Sinatra the black forest gateau threatens a comeback. A minor miracle; the top of Blackie's arrives and your author is still with the front group. Time to take stock; for the Ayrodynamic there is the sprinter Girvan, the lone break specialist Muir, the 'rouleurs' Connell, Wilson and McNulty. For Ayr Roads there is Paul Muir and Alex McAllister, two fine but ageing competitors. It looks bleak, only a madman would bet against another Ayrodynamic victory along the Assel.

The break powers past the Barr road end, chains are ramped over to big rings, and the

speed rises dramatically. The author hides at the back of the line, desperately attempting to recover, and politely declining all invitations to come through. The line of riders moves swiftly and inexorably towards the next bridge and the subsequent steepening in the road. All too soon the bridge flashes past; ten seconds later no more bets are being taken on an Ayr Roads win as McAllister's tactic of being first on to the bridge then sliding back down the line is completed, unfortunately with fully half of the climb still to be overcome. This is only achieved by a series of ugly out-of-the-saddle thrashings of rapidly tiring legs. The seven gladiators drive their machines onward, bound together as though with invisible thread.

The pace being set on the endless drags is incredible. The Ayrodynamic domestiques just never let up for an instant, and then it happens. McAllister has had enough. It is asking just too much at this time of year. He eases off on the pedals and inevitably drifts from the back of the line. Then, miracle of miracles, the pace of the break momentarily eases. The legs protest vociferously but are over-ruled by the idiot compartment of the brain, which instructs them to pedal hard again. The gap is bridged, the break once more complete. Several lifetimes pass and still the climb continues in a fuzz of pain and suffering. What's this? The stream on the left of the road is momentarily glimpsed. Yes, readers, you have realised the significance of that seemingly innocuous fragment of information; the last bridge, the col, blessed relief, are all within reach. Your author's final reserves are expended to ensure that contact is maintained with his lone ally and with the enemy.

The powers of darkness that the Ayrodynamics most certainly are, drive ever harder, like a marauding band of orcs on the hunt for stray hobbits. Only a naïve bookmaker (and how common are they?) would offer any wager worth a sane person's consideration. The pace is unrelenting, but your hearts will be gladdened to know that your representatives are hanging on gamely, and even allowing thoughts of tactics to come to the fore. Paul shows momentarily at the front, a ploy which only serves to goad the cursed ones into pedalling even more furiously.

About half a mile before Pinmore, it suddenly happens; Girvan powers away from the break. Nothing can be done; to chase him would only invite his domestiques to sit on and take an easy victory. All is not lost, however. Girvan must

have neglected to explain his plan to his cohorts, who continue to drive on relentlessly like automatons. Perhaps they are so indoctrinated to his service that they have lost all power of rational thought? Round the last left hand bend, and the escapee is in sight. And he is being brought back! The two men in blue and white confer urgently. The heavier of the two, realising that his legs have gone, directs his companion to stay on his wheel. The colossus is now on to the finishing slope, the rest of the break only some 25 metres from his rear wheel. It's now or never! Ayr Roads' finest jump as one from the back of the line, and power past their rivals as though they are static. On to the slope now, and the sprinter is overhauled. McAllister is out of the saddle and gives his all for the forces of light. Behind, wailing and cursing emanates from the darkness as the misformed ones have the error of their ways explained to them by their leader. McAllister's legs give up on him, the ultimate sacrifice made for the greater good. Muir is projected towards the line as though an arrow fired from an elven bow. In vain, the enemy heave and sweat in his pursuit as Muir romps over the railway bridge to Nirvana. Shafts of sunlight stream down from the skies, and your author can hear the strains of a heavenly choir

as Paul floats up to the junction without the laying-on of a single opponent's glove. Victory was never sweeter!

POSTSCRIPT

The run re-assembled at the bus stop where the Ayr Roads riders munched their energy bars in smug silence while the Ayr-odynamics animatedly 'debriefed' the sprint.

The pace down the Byne was fast and furious. Quarter was neither given nor asked. Big Kenny was flying towards the last road sign before the roundabout when Kenny Wilson came off the wheels and hit the front like a rocket. Try as he might, Kenny G could not get round the Ayr Roads man. Two out of two for the club!!!

Knowing what the chances were of hanging on up the coast and hitting the line first at Doonfoot, we left the Ayrodynamics to it, and headed to the café for a victory pot of tea and a bacon roll. As Dirty Harry said, 'a man's gotta know his limitations'.

VIC POSSEE'S ON HIS RECENT SEARCH OF GOLD IN NEW ZEALAND

I was invited to go back for the 2004 South Pacific Masters Games held at Hamilton North Island, New Zealand. These Games are held every two years for people over 30 years old and from many different sports. I had competed in 2002 and had great fun and made many new friends, both in cycling and in other sports, so I was looking forward to the trip and an improved performance. Well the trip there, as we all know, is a long, long time sitting on your backside in an aircraft. I had planned to try and stay as healthy as possible, but I still got a heavy cold four days after arriving.

The first race – a week after arriving – was a time trial over 34kms. As I was not feeling very well, I decided to use the time as a training race for my main events later. I gave it 80% effort and finished in fifth position. Not bad and my host, who had watched the race, advised that the build-up of my race bike was slightly wrong.

The next day it was off to the local track to fine-tune the set up for my next race on Thursday. This was my big chance to ride against the top rider in New Zealand who I couldn't beat at our clash two years ago. I was feeling a little better from my cold and on the day I said to myself 'all or nothing today, I am not coming 12,000 miles to be beaten!'

The first race was a 500 meters time trial and I was second to go to the line. Starting is very important in this race and when the start gun went, I could feel that I didn't have race legs and my lungs seemed very unwilling to expand for the 38+ seconds required for this type of race. In the end it was a bronze medal for my efforts. The fastest two riders were Bruce Goldsworth and a silver medallist in the road time trial two days earlier Well, I thought, better than fourth with nothing to show.

Riding my host's own bike, I raced in three more races – a 2000 meters scratch race and a 4000 meters scratch race. These are races when all riders compete together for the predetermined distance and then a race for the finish line. This was very hard for me as my lungs were still not letting me get enough air in to give it my best. I ended up finishing second to the same very good Kiwis, but I felt my condition improved as the day unfolded. Two silver medals to add to my bronze. Then the race which I never shine at – 'sprinting', but I rode the race for overall racing speed. Second again to the same rider. Well

he was now on a very good high, so my last chance was the race which I now target – 2000 meters track pursuing for my age group.

I changed back to my own machine which I had taken with me and started preparing mentally for a last ditch effort to win one gold from this slightly dissatisfactory series of racing all in one day. I went to the starting line with a very positive attitude and with my mind set on getting at least one win against this rider who had now become quite a pal **off** the bike. Well my race started against a rider that had taken the silver medal from the first race – and ex-Dutch top road rider called Harry Donker. In this race the riders start at opposite sides of the track and try to catch the other rider.

Due to the track size, it was 5½ laps. In the first two laps I felt that all my training had been in vain and I would again get beaten. Then, as if by magic, I began to feel stronger and by the end of lap 4 I was 'flying'. At the end of lap 5 I was slightly ahead. Half a lap to go, I finished with maximum effort and I could just see the other rider. My thoughts were that at least I had won another silver medal. I rode round the track to slow up as these bikes have no brakes and expected to see my big rival getting ready on his bike for his race, but no, it was the next age group starting their races. Well I held my breath – maybe a Gold? I went over to my rival and asked why he wasn't racing. His remark quite shocked me. He said 'I knew you could beat me'. At least I got a moral victory and my first Gold medal for this year. Racing on the track for us was over and I started to feel more pleased with the day's efforts. We had a welcome cuppa and a chat while all the results were checked and re-checked. The Organiser was my pal from 2002 who had suffered a heart attack between those Championships and 2003. I was pleased for him that all the races went to plan and he told me when I got my gold medal that he was so pleased because he couldn't beat either of my main rivals in our age group.

Now to relax for the rest of the Championships. Next day a race that we don't do in Europe – a straight line sprint over 300 meters. The road is divided by cones with a starting ramp to ride off. The day started very wet and windy. Luckily the wind was right behind each rider off the start ramp. Not knowing the ins and outs of this type of race, I watched how other riders prepared and raced. We raced in heats and I finished in fourth place which meant that I would ride for the bronze medal again. The two fastest riders were the same as the previous day. Putting that battle out of my mind, how was I going to win this bronze medal? I hadn't seen my opponent race because I raced before him. We got on our bikes and I noticed he had old style gear change levers for ultra fast changing. Over in approximately 25 seconds, this is quick-fire racing. Off the start ramp like bats out of hell, he was ahead of me and I said to myself 'he is not doing this to me'. With my next gear change I was level and then with the next I was ahead and that's how it stayed. An unexpected medal!

And so the final day of racing – Friday. A road race on open roads over 60kms. We lined up only to find that two of our main medal chances did not sign the start sheet. The Dutch rider due to injury and the winner of the first day's time-trial for reasons unknown. The start gun fired and the pace was hot – like most races in that part of the world. I hung on for the first of four laps, Getting warm and into my stride, things felt better than they had done since I arrived. I put my head down and took off up the road only to look round and find my pal from the track who I couldn't beat plus a guy I hadn't seen all week. The chasing group were dropping back now as the three of us put more and more pressure on the pedals – each giving it maximum effort. Due to my cold and the difficulty I felt in getting enough air into my lungs, I could see the other two riders knew each other well and they started making it very difficult for me in the way we started the final lap. Each lap had a small hill like the one into Straiton from Crosshill just before the finish. Last time up this climb, I could feel this pair were stronger and I was hanging on like crazy. Over the top and I was 60 yards off the back. I chased with all my effort having trained for this trip for speed and not distance. I got back on terms, but they were working together against me. No Pommy was going to win this! In the sprint, I finished 3rd, so another bronze medal.

Here's to 2006 and my next trip to visit the Kiwis!

Vic Possee

If you have articles for future newsletters please sent then to;
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