**A year in the life of Border City Wheelers – 1951**

We have been provided with a fascinating insight into the club’s activities over 60 years ago through the donation by Eddie Roberts who was at that time a member and who now lives in Southampton. It comprises a monthly newsletter from March to December 1951 (August missing or not published), a set of club rules and racing rules plus the accounts for that year.

I am able to provide a tenuous link, because although I didn’t join the club until 1959, some of the members mentioned were known to me – either directly or by reputation. I’ll therefore add a few notes to link to the pages and photographs.

**March**: I didn’t know Denis Skelton, but he was obviously fast. Ian Watson knew him, so if he reads this, maybe he’ll chip in? I did meet Clive Tickell, but only once, when I bought my first pair of sprints and tubulars from him in 1960. I knew most of those listed for the AGM and now realise that R Elliott was almost certainly who the current TT League Division 1 trophy commemorates. Jim Wreay was my first form master at Carlisle Grammar School and Harry Adamson (affectionately known as Scadger) was the caretaker. Walter Tiffen owned the motorbike shop which used to be at Irishgate, opposite the end of Abbey Street and his father Billy presented our famous Tiffen Cup. Sid French had a hairdresser’s behind the town hall, Joe Rogerson had a butcher’s on Orton Road, Fred Baker was a ‘brummie’ butcher who worked at Cavaghan & Gray, John MacDonald was the caretaker at St Patrick’s school on Lowther Street. It was usual in those days to follow up a Sunday morning club TT with a club run, but those who rode out to Maryport for the MG 25 (on 72” gears) almost certainly did Newlands as well. By the way, for Armitage, read Hermitage!

**April:** First mention of Ron Sheckley, who died only last year. April 22nd beggars belief! Anyone familiar with the walking route from Borrowdale to Wasdale via Sty Head Pass will wonder how they could then head south to Gosforth and still have about 50 miles to ride home. First mention of Ronnie Wallace – at that time in Carlisle Road Club, but later BCW. He was my boss as Chief Accountant at Carrs (United Biscuits now) and it was with some trepidation that I first broke his club 100 record and then his Carlisle-Dumfries-Carlisle record. Presumably Hook Hewson was Bobby Hewson but JD remains a mystery – to me, anyway. Note that in those days you had to enter club events in advance.

**May:** “Carried a parcel” = was physically indisposed = the knock. Hardly considered worth a mention, apparently, but Scarth Gap is the major walking pass between Buttermere and Ennerdale and leaves the rest of the Ennerdale valley to be tackled before the long road home via West Cumbria. Reference to the “massed start” (ie road racing) circuit at Anthorn will raise interest in some quarters. It was a Naval air-base at the time. The Tuesday night training ride from the Crescent would be the famed Brampton- Longtown chain gang, a merciless 30-mile sufferfest.

**June:** The 25 would be at Maryport and obviously the day would be incomplete without a Lakeland pass, in this case Honister. C Hardman is familiar now for the Francis Hardman Cup trophy, but he holds the Carlisle-Edinburgh-Carlisle record. Note reference to the “poor” entry of 57 for the open 50. We’d be delighted with that number of entries now. The club run after the inter-club 30 went to Jedburgh (yes, THE Jedburgh) and reference to a “bundle” hardly needs explanation – see “parcel” above.

**July:** First mention of Ken Stubbs. This was old Kenny – there was a young Ken Stubbs too. Old Ken would be in his 20s, by the way. The NCU rally appears to have been a grass track meeting at Park House (near Asda now). George Kirkwood had a motor sales room at the bottom of London Road. The club 15 winner’s 35min 49sec is the first mention of a 25mph plus ride – remember that the first BCW sub 60 minute 25 was still 8 years in the future, and not on a local course. First mention of Alf Sewell, whose commemorative cup we still present for the BCW club 50 handicap. First mention of Derek Thompson (DT) who eventually went to live in Cheshire.

**September:** Clive Tickell won both senior and Junior championships.

**October:** A circumnavigation of Haweswater – not for the faint-hearted! The hillclimb was at Hutton Roof in those days, as it was right into the 1960s, but the Hot Pot (we called it the Tatey Pot) was at the Horse & Farrier, Haltcliffe, now gone. The venue became the Mill Inn at Mungrisdale, famed for its disregard of licencing hours and basic hygiene in those days. The club run often arrived there at 10am and left at 4pm, sobering up gradually on the meandering road north. Another epic off-road over the old coach road barely earns a mention – remember these were always road bikes, no MTBs in those days. Incidentally, this route is referred to in the September newsletter as Happius Claudius, which it was still referred to when I joined the club. I’ve never discovered why.

**November:** The club dinner was quite an occasion – still the case when I joined. Usually there would be several guests of honour and members of surrounding area clubs, most arriving on their bikes. The venue isn’t mentioned, but it was probably the “Balmoral Rooms” – ie the Co-op café in Botchergate. This was the location of my first experience of inebriation. I suspect that the track over Farras Moss is now the road over Langholm monument.

**December:** There hasn’t been much mention of favourite cafes, but obviously Ma McCall’s was one of them. I have no idea what the Scavenger Hunt was – but it was called off anyway.

**Rules/Regs/Accounts:** Strikes me things were a lot simpler in those days.

**Photograhs:** I’ll try to identify as many as possible.

1. Taken at the junction leading from Dockray to Douthwaite Head (for the old coach road (Happius Claudius) - Ken Stubbs; unknown; unknown; unknown; Tommy Moscrop; Derek Thompson: Sid French
2. Same location - unknown; unknown; Tommy Moscrop; Derek Thompson; Eddie Roberts (who provided the documents and photos); Joe Rogerson; unknown; Sid French.
3. Location unknown - Eddie Roberts; unknown; Tommy Moscrop; John McDonald; Sid French; unknown at front.
4. Taken at Eden Lacey Caves, nr Lazonby – back row: Sid French; Tommy Moscrop; unknown; unknown; unknown – front row:unknown; Derek Thompson; Eddie Roberts

And finally, the author of these marvellous newsletters remains a mystery, which is a great shame.