

Winter Time Trial Report

In my December report I foolishly promised to tell you all about the Southborough Wheelers 10 held on January 1st. As it seems only right and proper that any published information about such an important event should be gained first hand, New Year's Day dawned early for me and I reluctantly left my bed at half past seven so that I and my 'team' could get to Bethersden on time.

Ominously, when I peered out of the window, there was no traffic moving in our road and there was a thick frost everywhere. When we started out we found that the roads were covered in ice! After driving slowly and carefully along the A28 (Maurice was at the wheel), we arrived at Rolvendon at five to ten. 'We won't make it in time for Tim to start', Maurice said with gloomy satisfaction. He became very despondent when I pointed out that the start was scheduled for ten thirty and we had plenty of time to get there. Conditions on the main road improved after Tenterden and we arrived at the hall to find a large crowd of riders in the car park, most of them as reluctant as my two heroes to get out and race. There were sighs of envy when Maurice got his trike from the back of the van.

Ron and Brenda Ash had gallantly gone for a ride on their bikes to inspect the roads and Brenda was looking very tight lipped when they arrived back. The results of their reconnoitring resolved a number of riders in their decision not to start. Event organiser, Warwick Dunford, was striding up and down with his worried event organiser's face on and was soon to be seen in conversation with Chris Worsfold, one of the favourites to win the event. 'Delay the start' said Chris. Warwick moved off to consider this revolutionary suggestion. Chris, obviously teetotal, didn't realise what was involved should there be a late start. 'Use the A28 between Bethersden and Tesco's round-a-bout', thundered Ron Ash. 'The road is rideable!' Some time later rumours filtered through, then confirmation. The race would be held at eleven o'clock; the start would be opposite the finish at Bethersden; the turn would be Tesco's round-a-bout and the course would be something over nine miles.

The assembled throng were galvanised into various kinds of action depending among other things, on whether they were riders or spectators, young and healthy or old and frail. Slash Rolings, who qualified for the last group on that particular day, decided to patronise the tea bar; Antony Barker leapt across his low profile, while his dad, Dave, sensibly kept himself covered up and Mavis stayed in the hall. I drove down the course to see how my duo were getting on and pulled into the lay-by at the start of the Great Chart by-pass where Nick and Dorothy Jackson were keeping an eye on the race. Tim had gone through by then but I was in time to see Maurice come past. He had caught his minute man and was well up on Tim. At last Tim appeared from the opposite direction and politely removed his headphones as Nick shouted that Maurice would catch Tim before the finish and he should play some fast music (at least, it was something roughly like that!). I returned to the car park to find a distinct lack of enthusiasm among the remaining riders as by then it was pouring with rain and the wind was blowing strongly. My other interest in the event agreed to ride if he could have his van on the course and the option to pack! I agreed in theory, changed vehicles and made my way back to the lay-by at the start of the Great Chart by-pass, where Nick and Dorothy Jackson were still keeping an eye on the race. The pride of Eastbourne came storming past and finished the event to win the second vet on standard award. Ron Ash, also a late starter, was third vet on standard and Shay Giles, who was almost at the back of the field, was not only first vet on standard but also won the premier award with the fastest time of the day. Obviously the float conditions favoured the late starters!

The New Year's Day 10 has provided the only racing excitement of 1986 so far but there are plenty of events to look forward to. We are promoting our usual programme and at the A.G.M. on Sunday it was agreed that Championships at 30 miles and 24 Hours should be added to the other distances on the Group list. As you probably all know by now, there will be a second event run in conjunction with five of our Group promotions and the point was raised at the A.G.M. that veteran ladies have to make their minds up when they enter our events as to whether they are, indeed, ladies or vets. So, please, LADIES OVER 40, please indicate on your forms what you would like to be. And promoters, Glad Mills doesn't care what she is as long as she has an early start! Finally, I have posted some medals and certificates to people I don't anticipate seeing during the early season. Other awards I will hand over to the owners at the first opportunity. That's it for now as I'm drifting off the end of the page.

Esther