

An Alternative Gents Weekend.

For me Gents weekend started with my first pint of beer in our digs - The Stags Head, Bowness late on the Friday afternoon. The cycling was an incidental distraction. Many, many beers later and some of us found our selves in the free to member's nightclub under the digs. Geoff Lund christened this the cauldron of ecstasy. There wasn't much in the way of ecstasy to be had but there were plenty of witches that explains half of Geoff's naming logic! I was only really there to keep an eye on Paul Fleming, given his recent drinking exploits but somehow I ended up on the dance floor along with Gethin doing what can only loosely be described as dancing.

My dancing and drink usually leads to disaster and this was no exception, as for some reason I found myself trying to break back into the hotel at about 3 in the morning. I was just contemplating a night in a wheely bin with all the other rubbish when I spotted the Hotel's barman in the kebab house who gave me a key. I celebrated my deliverance with a chip kebab and went to sleep at about 4. I was then woken by the sound of a sawmill at 4.30; this was in fact my roommate's snoring (I'll name no names!).

The next morning I felt very much like the congealed remains of my chip kebab and was therefore delighted that Paul, Gethin, Colin and me would be going on a "nice little circuit" - Paul's words, not mine. I had images of pottering along a canal towpath as my hangover gently dissipated in the pleasant late autumn sun.

The truth was not quite as civilised. The nice little circuit in fact took in Wrynose, Kirkstone pass and several other brutes. I found the best way of negotiating these was on my hands and knees after coming close and then finally falling off as my weedy legs gave way under the strain. As I crawled up one particular wall on my look plates, sweating profusely and wanting to decorate the pavement with my breakfast, I couldn't help but thinking - wow this is living! In fact that's a lie. In fact what I was really thinking was - I want to die, but only after viciously murdering the clowns who had talked me into this. The only thing that got me through the ordeal was Colin's promise to tell me what he had seen over breakfast behind the curtains of one of the opposing rooms. You'll have to ask Colin what he saw but I'm sure he'll be able to recount it in graphic detail!

What seemed like an eternity later and after the novelty of walking DOWN a "hill" that scared the beejesus out of me we found ourselves in the Blacksmiths arms, with a couple of pints and tonnes of food. Now this was terrain I could cope with! It was here that Colin ate his legendary steak pie. It truly was the jabba the hut of the pie world and he didn't need to eat again till the following Tuesday.

After a pacey ride back to the digs where we did Gethin for the sprint to the Bowness sign (he may say otherwise but he was just outclassed) the inevitable drinking started again. We again ended up in the "Cauldron of Ecstasy" but everyone ended up in bed at a reasonable time after the day's horrors in the hills.

The ride home was flat and sunny, only spoiled by the fact that we all wanted to puke after our breakfast fry ups and gallons of drink. The one highlight was the classy attack I launched on Colin down the A6. I could see he was heavily weighed down by pie so I knew it was time to make my move. A wins a win after all!!

John Morgan

ANNUAL DANCE AND PRIZE PRESENTATION - Friday 21st January 2005

90 members attended this function and it can truly be said that it was a very good night. The Guest of Honour was Andy Cook a well known eyeliner and a member of the Chippenham and District Wheelers. Andy belongs to the old school of eyelining and it shows. Cycling Weekly recently carried a good article on his achievements - amongst which is the fact that he had been placed nine times in the top 12 of the BBAR. He was joined by his wife Jacqui - herself having some very creditable P.B.'s to her name. The evening went off very well helped along by the friendliness of the staff and the very nutty DJ!!! His balloon skills must be seen to be believed and he certainly knows how to get, and keep, a party atmosphere. It's good to see club members and friends at this dinner that honours our racing members. Cyril always makes a terrific job of the photographic board and quite honestly it's as good a picture gallery as that displayed at the BBAR Champions' Night. We attend primarily to honour our riders but apart from that it's a good "do" and a good opportunity to meet friends under a different type of canopy - one in which we can display our fine feathers. All looked at their best - even out of club colours!

Our thanks go to Gillian for all the work she put in to make it so successful.