

SPAM NEWSLETTER

October 2011

For members of the Salisbury Plain Area Mountain Bike Club

Meeting Report:

A very well attended meeting this month – it was after all our Annual General Meeting. Secretary Steve has done a full set of minutes, which he will distribute separately.

Briefly then ... we have a new committee consisting of:

Chairman: Martin Disney
Treasurer: Paul Fisher
Secretary: Steve Crosby
Publicity: Martin Charleworth
Events Secretary: Rob Rowe

As a club we donated nearly £7000 to charities in 2010/2011.

And more importantly, it was confirmed that the membership fee remains at £20. If you haven't done so, let me remind you that renewal is now due. You can rejoin using the SPAMBiking website or just send Steve a cheque.

We have a new Chairman!

So, SPAMBiking Chairman - I guess that's me for this year then. Firstly thanks to Mark Bullen for doing a great job as Chairman over the past couple of years; it's an honour to take over the reins, or should that be the handlebars from you!

A brief biopic of me, my bikes & SPAMBiking:

After moving to Trowbridge in 1999 we spent a few years knocking our house into shape and wasting money on so called 'essentials' like curtains and plates before we entered into domestic wedded bliss for a couple of years. Which left me fast approaching 30 with an expanding waistline. A new (healthy) pastime was required. The old mid 80's Peugeot

racer was dusted-off and put into service; 2nd ride out, however, a pedal sheared off at the bottom of the street and I was left lying flat-out on the tarmac. A couple of weekends later I was walking out of Johns Bikes with a shiny blue and silver Trek 4500 and started off down the slippery and muddy slope of MTB'ing. That was in 2005; the wheels on my Niner, bought this year, cost me more than that bike (just don't tell Delphine) and were obviously far more important than haberdashery and crockery; with colour coding & aesthetics equally as important!

After a few months spent boshing about on the bridleways local to Trowbridge and Wiltshire I was made aware of the SPAM Winter Challenge and in 2006 duly entered my first sporting event since school days. It was cold and, as the photo shows, muddy. But I loved it.



RIDE CALENDAR

Sun 30th Oct Swinley Forest – meet at the Lookout (10am) – Martin Charlesworth

Sun 6th Nov The Quantocks – meet at Holford – Phil Miles (Medium/Hard)

Sun 6th Nov Test Valley Tour – meet at Andover – 30km & 45km routes

All rides start at 9:30am unless otherwise specified – see website for more details)

Next meeting: Tuesday 8th November - The Churchill, West Lavington

It wasn't long before the squeaky square taper bottom bracket was changed, then the fork followed by disc brakes and obviously new wheels and then a full suspension bike. Six years on, the Trek has been pinched and I spend most of the time off-roading on 29 wheels.

Initially I just joined SPAMBiking to get the reduced event entry fee but started to get more involved 3 or so years back and started to go on club rides and help out at the events as well as attending events and races with a SPAMBiking shirt on my back. I met a load of like-minded folk and made a few friends and riding buddies.

I'm not the most widely travelled of riders; I know the Quantocks well; the in-laws live in Taunton so handy for a trip with the bike, ridden on Exmoor, Brecons, Afan, Cwm Carn and around here. I really need to see a proper mountain! With 3 kids under 6 years old at home, there are obviously priorities in other places. Which is how the road bikes crept in, it really is that much easier to get a couple of hours pedalling in whilst somebody small is asleep or otherwise occupied; out of shed, ride, back in shed!

What's this year going to bring? The September club meeting had a healthy discussion with reference to club rides and trying to make something regular, as well as improving the web-site; two things to hopefully make some progress with in the near future. The loss of Erlestoke as an event base is a real shame especially after all the good things said about the Erlestoke 12, but it is a positive that we are being allowed to run the Winter Challenge from the HMS Arthur; hopefully things will come good with a new event site for our 12hr event. I've got some thoughts; I'll mull them around and hopefully have the chance to talk them over at the next meeting. So, on to the next event, The Winter Challenge, and I look forward to seeing members old or new or just there to eat the cake!

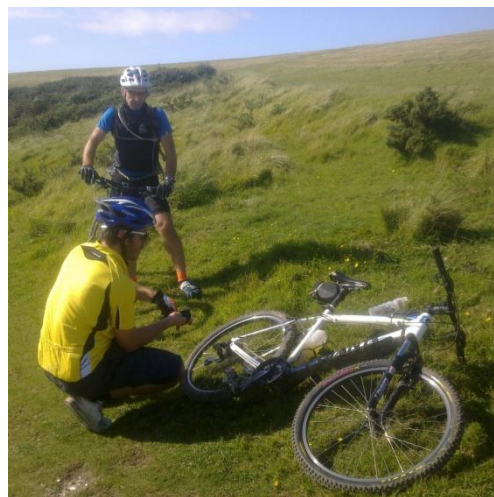
Best regards

Martin Disney

Ride Review: 1

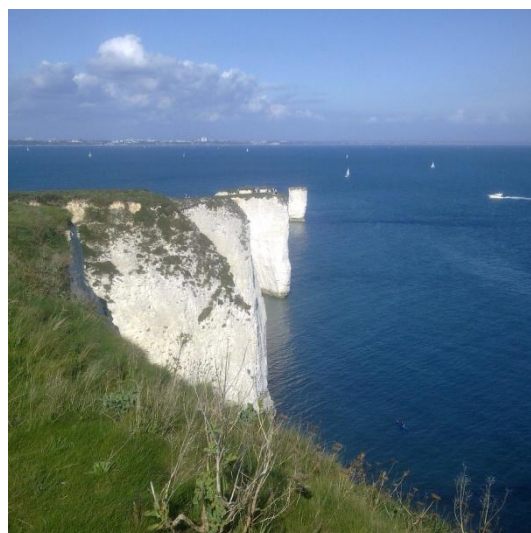
Isle of Purbeck 24th Sept by Simon Smedley.

On a sunny Saturday morning five of us met up in the shadows of Corfe Castle. Myself, Dave Nuttall, Phil Miles and two of my mates Nigel and Polly. The first part of the ride was a nice wooded singletrack section by Norden Campsite which opened Nigel & Polly's eyes as they had not done any off-roading before!!



After followed an undulating run over to Swyre's Head including lanes, gravel tracks, grass descents and dusty fields. a refreshing downhill section came next back down towards Corfe Castle then came a tough wooded and wet climb towards Worth Matravers. Then a run down the Priest's way into Swanage but far too many gates to manoeuvre through.

Time for lunch at the Red Lion in Swanage now and a refreshing pint of cider with a light salad snack which appeared on a plate about 18" in diameter?? Our next challenge came after being shouted at by an old lady for riding on the sea front pedestrianised road!! was to get from sea level up on to Harry's Rocks!! with a good stoney climb but well worth the effort with amazing views of Poole Harbour, Isle Of Wight and The English Channel in wonderful sunshine.



Then off to Studland Heath for some fun and sliding around with an over the bars dismount hey Nig!! in the sand dunes, next came a trundle through Newton Heath and many of its forest roads and tracks. A bit of road work came next then the last killer climb of the ride back up onto the ridge, and a well deserved descent back to Corfe Castle.



4 1/2 hours of riding, 35 miles covered and 2000ft of climbing and now time for a very nice Polish Cheesecake provided by my girlfriend. Well done lads a great days riding had by all.



(I did wonder what sort the cake was – Ed.)

Ride Review: 2

Eiger Bike Challenge by Phil Miles

Alan and I drove out to Grindelwald for the start of our annual Pilgrimage to the Alps, meeting up with Mike (he of the bridge crash on The Brecon Beast) and setting up camp in the shadow of The Eiger. We'd entered the Eiger Bike Challenge to kick the trip off.

See <http://www.eigerbike.ch/profil.php>.

After all, how hard can 88km be? We set off the following morning for a warm-up spin, riding some of the course that had already been marked. It already started to look as though 88km could actually be very hard indeed with 3,900m of climbing which made it steep both up and down.

The Swiss certainly know how to organise a bike race. Although the exchange rate made the entry fee fairly pricey, you got a 'present' of a very presentable gilet, a good pasta party the night before the race and breakfast from 4-30 on the day of the race.

The start was at 7-00 so that meant an early start before lining up for the off and about 10 miles of uphill, first to

the Grosse Scheidegg and then, after a brief descent, on up to a place called First. The initial descents consisted mostly of steps which seemed to be custom built for the wheelbase of my bike as both front and rear wheels seemed to go down a step at the same time. I don't mind admitting to walking down parts, as were the vast majority of people around me, when the steps got really steep. There followed some of the steepest tracks I've ever seen, both up and down on a mix of gravel and tarmac; I didn't know that tarmac could stick to slopes so steep without avalanching into a heap at the bottom. Definitely no alpine hairpins here and I thought that I'd fried my brakes on one descent only to have to sit on the nose of saddle to prevent pulling a wheelie as I winched my way back up the route as it wound its way round the valley above Grindelwald.



On one gravel descent, I heard the all-too-familiar sound of my tyre rapidly deflating, which meant that I'd not only got a puncture but that the tyre was trashed. I couldn't get my tyre boot to stick to the tyre but I got going again after losing what seemed like an age. We descended back through to town, via more steps and rocky trails where Mike decided that he'd had enough and retired to the campsite. The climb of the Kliene (i.e 'little') Scheidegg was actually bigger than the Grosse one, that's the Swiss sense of humour for you! Chugging up that, I came out of a feed station (of which there were many and well-stocked ones) to see a sign with said Kliene Scheidegg 6km/600m so I thought That's not too far to the top, then. I checked my computer to see that I was only doing 6kph that'll be another hour of climbing then!



The route signs then pointed up some grassy, cow-trodden field that I defy anyone to ride unless they wear their pants on the outside of their trousers and have a big 'S' on their chest. It actually gave the muscles a bit of a rest from the fire road climbing and once at the top, the trail contoured round to the train station halfway up The Eiger itself, over a ridiculously steep and slippery grass bank for the entertainment of the onlookers (I didn't realise how steep it was until I was committed) before starting the final descent into town.

Arse! I said as I felt the back tyre go soft again and, as I suspected, the tyre boot had moved to expose the tube (I am trying to go tubeless now, honest). Using my second tube, I got going again and descended without incident past our campsite after which a sneaky little climb took us to the finish in the centre of town.

To finish off the Swiss service, there was a bike wash where after you'd given it a hose and a sponge, a small army (well OK, four) mechanics descended on it to give it a polish and lube. In summary, this is a brutally hilly event with challenging climbs and descents, rather than the fire-road slogs that form the greater part of some Alpine events. It's organised with Swiss efficiency which makes the whole thing a pleasure. Where were you?

That evening, after the traditional post-race pizza which beats even cake as cycling fodder, we sat at the campsite and watched a spectacular thunderstorm makes its way up the valley until we had to retreat into our tents as the rain arrived at about 9pm. At least we got to ride in the dry and tents dried in the sunshine in Chatel, our next destination before lots more Alpine riding in France and Switzerland, and even a little bit in Italy, too.

Ride Review: 3

FoDEnduro Sunday 25th Sept by Martin Disney

After two glorious autumnal days and waking to a nice morning in Trowbridge we set off toward the Forest of Dean with bags packed lightly for good weather. Dave and I dropped into Bristol to pick up Tom under grey skies and by the time we reached the Severn the windscreen wipers were on..

This was my first 'riding' visit to the FoD; the Enduro has been on the radar for a number of years but has generally been on or close to the date of our Blast event. With no Blast this year, an opening in the calendar at the end of September appeared. So, off to the FoDEnduro where I think I got the filthiest that I have ever been on a bike..the mud was atrocious; but luckily most remained rideable.

The event is based out of the Pedalabikeaway Centre near Coleford; it consisted of a 9 mile lap which could be entered as either 1, 2 or 4 laps with 500 entrants in total. Four laps beckoned for me, Dave and Tom and also Mike

Pill who lined up next to us in the, by now rather damp, start-line huddle of 120 4 lap starters.

After the typical 'be careful of this and that you're riding in a mountain bike race' etc etc, we were away up a fireroad into the drizzle before dropping into the forest and a typical singletrack traffic jam! Tom disappeared up the road with me and Dave making chase. It wasn't long before a slippery incline had us all off and walking at which point I managed to lose Dave and dropped back down the train of riders.



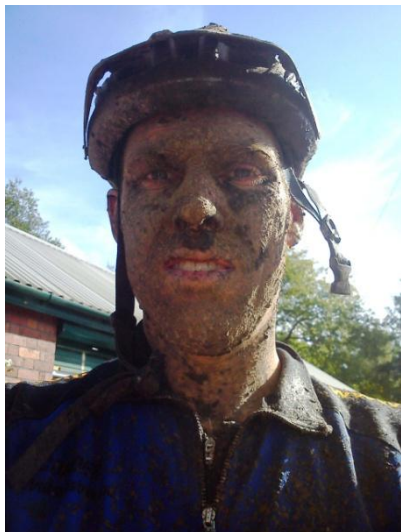
The course was a good mix of woodland singletrack with plenty of ups and downs linked up by a number of short fireroad stretches; 2 adrenalin pumping descents the first a steep drop and the second toward the end of the lap an old downhill run with a few switchbacks and drops and plenty of worried looking riders (walkers).



I reeled Dave in about the 1/2 way point of lap one and left him about to drop a few psi out of his front tyre in the hope of achieving a bit of front end grip around the very muddy slip-slidey course. At about the same point on lap two I managed to catch up with Tom. We raced on together until Tom was struck by cramp which saw him off the bike. Towards the end of lap three the sun actually broke through and the rain and drizzle of

the previous 3 hours of riding subsided. My final lap was uneventful, the sun was out, the tracks were clear of riders..if only I could have got the taste of mud out of my mouth and opened my eyes to see where I was going!

I was very pleased to finish in just under 4hrs in 7th position. The position was as much by attrition than speed or skill. Only 36 finished the full 4 laps! Unfortunately Dave suffered a broken spoke at the start of lap 2 and Tom threw the towel in with shot brakes at the end of lap 3.



Cleaning up after this event, believe me, took a very long time! I think I might still have some FoD mud in my ears!

Other Cycling News:

I see from the SPAMBiking website forum that lots of club members have been out on their bikes doing lots of riding.

Notably...

Chris Noble, David Janes & Rob Wilson doing the Bristol Oktoberfest.

Nigel Brown, Julian Lye & Pete Williams racing at Gorrick.

Phil Miles riding the Bear Bones 200.

Graham Heath & Steve Wallis in the Severn Bridge Sportive.

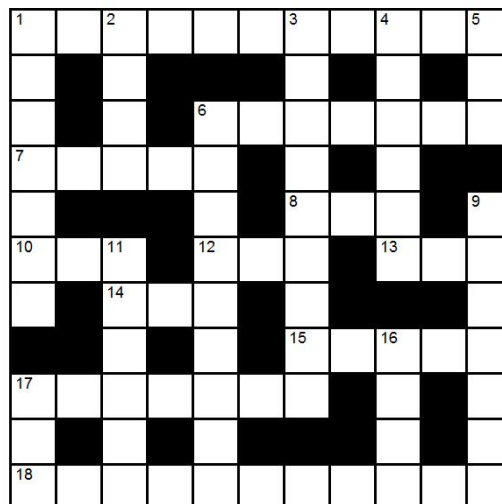
Special congratulations to Chris Noble who finished 1st at Bristol doing 8 hours riding round and round the new purpose built track at Ashton Court. I did a couple of laps a few weeks ago and wouldn't fancy riding it for 8 hours – respect!

Orange Road Bike:

Yes, the British Mountain Bike maker has built (and is selling) a ROAD bike. I'm not too sure if this is a one-off or the future.

See <http://www.orangebikes.co.uk/bikes/carb-o/> for full details.

Oh! look space for another crossword...



Puzzle - Oct 2011

Across

- 1 Rural & green place (11)
- 6 From ride aha! to silly person (7)
- 7 Dock green copper (5)
- 8 Droop from Agassi backhand (3)
- 10 Last club meeting (3)
- 12 Speedy measure (3)
- 13 The sensitive inner you (3)
- 14 Egg from no value (3)
- 15 Old fashioned but trendy (5)
- 17 Burn guy here (7)
- 18 Nun's cycling wear? (6,5)

Down

- 1 Gorge cheese (7)
- 2 Not windows (computer) (4)
- 3 Riding county (9)
- 4 Real cold time (3,3)
- 5 Finish (3)
- 6 Nick Park's speciality (9)
- 9 Palm seed or clown's head? (7)
- 11 Revealed bare bottom (6)
- 16 Dead people's home (4)
- 17 Rod or bra mix up (3)

Always wear a helmet on all club rides - mountain biking can be dangerous as well as fun.

Send ride reports and stories with small photos to dave@chitterne.com - thank you