

1967

The first good news of 1967 was that the Paragon Polo Team had won the Surrey Cup beating Crystal Palace in the Finals by 5 – 4. The Team were Alan Roberts, Tony Knight, Dave Fish, Alec Bird, Keith Ongley and Chuck Bettle. This was followed by some bad news when one of our younger riders Colin Wye died in a tragic accident at home. He had just started to show some promise by winning the SW London and Surrey Schoolboy Sprint Championship at Herne Hill. He was also a fair dart player and eliminated a number of more seasoned throwers in the Club Championship.

The local racing season started with the Croydon and District Hardriders and a convincing win by Peter Head (Redhill) in 1.12.03. John Sargeant came 3<sup>rd</sup> with an excellent 1.17.14. According to the Blah he was the only Paragon rider not to crash or puncture in the wet and windy conditions. Derek Hull came 12<sup>th</sup> in 1.22.01. Our other finishers were Rowan Vacher 16<sup>th</sup>, 1.22.24, Ian Murray 21<sup>st</sup> 1.24.06, Mick Marguerie 30<sup>th</sup> 1.27.17, 34<sup>th</sup> Brian Harwood 1.29.12, 38<sup>th</sup> Graham Bristow 1.31.25, 43<sup>rd</sup> Barry Sturgess 1.32.18, 48<sup>th</sup> Pete Fryer 1.34.38, 51<sup>st</sup> John Jennings 1.36.19 and 56<sup>th</sup> Andy Murray 1.39.17.

Ray Runham and Robin Buchan started the season as they hope to continue and that was with a win. They paired up to ride the Portsmouth Command event over 50 kms. With a time of 1.14.14 they won by over a minute. Brian Harwood rode with Phil Headon (East Surrey) and they finished in 1.21.25. On the same day Bob Corby rode the Castlenau '25' that is ridden on gears of 72 inches or lower. His 1.5.05 was very commendable.

On a beautiful spring morning Terry Slattery won the first Club Event .His time for the 10 miles was 25.10. Bob Corby was 2<sup>nd</sup> with 25.26 and Rowan Vacher 3<sup>rd</sup> in 25.30.

On the same lovely morning the 14<sup>th</sup> Brighton Trophy road race was held. The first Prime on the Caterham bypass was won by K Gotman and a small group of six riders crept away from the bunch just before Blindley Heath. This group contained Robin Buchan and it got itself together and started to work with a vengeance. By 'The Wall' to the top of the Ashdown they were 1½ minutes clear and by Uckfield 2.45. This had increased to 3.30 by Lower Dicker. Down to Polegate, along to Wilmington and Alfriston then the climb of High and Over the lead increased. It was here that hopes of a 'Home' victory were dashed when Robin Buchan unshipped his chain. Although he was quick the gap had opened. He chased all the way to Newhaven and got to the break just as they started the climb out of the town. It was here that Dave Nie (Dragon) attacked and Robin did not have a second effort left. Robin picked up Dave Mellor (Tame Valley) and together they rode out the last miles in a forlorn chase over the coast road to Brighton gradually losing ground but perfectly safe as the bunch was now 5 minutes behind. At the Finish on the Promenade Nie won easily from K Wood (Oldham) and Geoff Cross (Hemel Hempstead) and Peter Buckley (Oldham). Robin was placed 6<sup>th</sup>. John Sargeant started but managed to get his chain stuck between cogs and spokes when at the bottom of 'The Wall'. This was the worst possible place for this to happen. Eventually he, two men and a screwdriver released the chain but John was by then so far back he

climbed into the Broom wagon at Uckfield. Ray Runham and Derek Hull finished equal 12<sup>th</sup> in the main bunch both quite satisfied to have stayed in contention

In complete contrast to the Club '10' the '25' was as nasty a morning as you would not wish for. It rained, it blew, it was freezing cold but at least it did not snow! Bob Corby won the Jim Fox '25' with a time of 1.5.41 in front of Terry Slattery, 1.6.14 and Ian Murray 1.10.00. Bob took the Handicap from Terry Slattery and Graham Bristow. Ray Runham finished 7<sup>th</sup> in the Nonsuch road race with both John Sargeant and Derek Hull unplaced in the bunch. Our Club Professional now riding in England, as he had become a father during the winter months, took part in the Dover to London Classic. On a very windy day he stayed with the leaders with only a bit of a wobble going over Wrotham Hill. Came the Finish in Bromley High Street Keith was placed 4<sup>th</sup> in the leading group of 15 riders.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> March Rowan Vacher did 1.5.30 in the ECCA '25' 'somewhere in Essex' and Mick Marguerie rode the Kentish Whs Novices and returned in a little over 1.10.

On Good Friday Ray Runham came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Crawley Whs '25' with a 1.0.16. With Bob Corby 1.4.35 and Terry Slattery 1.4.38 they won the Team race. Other times recorded by Club riders were Derek Hull 1.4.55, Rowan Vacher 1.6.07, John Jennings 1.7.40 and Barry Sturgess 1.7.57.

Easter Sunday saw more success for the Club when Messrs Vacher, Jennings and Sturgess B lifted the Team prize in the Dulwich Hamlet '25'. Rowan recorded a 1.6.26, John a 1.7.00 and Barry 1.8.46. Rowan Vacher won the first junior event, a 10-mile, in 25.31 from John Harding, 29.41 and Ian Parsons 30.27.

Ray Runham and Robin Buchan struck again when they rode the Oval 2up time trial. On a cold, clear morning on a 26½-mile circuit they took 1.3.09 for the distance. Rowan Vacher made 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Eagle Middlemarkers '25' with 1.7.30. Barry Sturgess finished in 1.12.38 whilst John Jennings found a stray kerb on one of the roundabouts and had an enforced rest on the grass verge. It was so nice he stayed there for a while and did not trouble the Timekeeper. The next morning Robin Buchan took the field apart in the West Kent road race. In heavy rain he broke away after 5 miles with four other riders. Then with 20 miles to go he attacked them and rode on his own to the Finish. He crossed the line over 3½ minutes before the next man. Keith Butler rode a Televised Criterium at Thornhill and finished 8<sup>th</sup>. Barry Sturgess was 12<sup>th</sup> in a Pirbright Point to Point with Rowan Vacher back in the bunch.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> April Ray Runham, Robin Buchan and John Sargeant rode the West Kent 3up team time trial. They went round the course in 59.51 to break the course record and win by over 3 minutes. As the course included Death Hill and Vigo Hill this was some achievement. Comment was made that they were so smooth they made it look easy!

The next morning there was a cold northeasterly wind blowing that slowed riders on both Portsmouth Road and Crawley courses. Terry Slattery finished the De Laune '25' in 1.6.11 and Nick Gibson 1.8.30. Ray Runham had a deflation and failed to record a time. In the SCCU '25' Bob Corby was 6<sup>th</sup> with a 1.6.01 that reflects on the hard morning. Geoff Williams finished in 1.9.15, John Jennings 1.9.36, Andy Murray 1.11.35 and Ian Murray 1.13.40 (plus time out for a puncture). Robin Buchan was in the forefront of the action in the West Croydon Whs road race on the Lingfield circuit. He broke away with five others and stayed in front until just before the Finish. Brian Dacey (De Laune) managed to stay clear but Robin was caught 'on the line' and to rub it in John Sargeant went by him to claim 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Robin was 4<sup>th</sup> and Derek Hull 13<sup>th</sup>. Barry Sturgess rode at Pirbright again and finished 8<sup>th</sup>. Both John Jennings and Rowan Vacher finished in the main bunch.

There was a large Club entry for the Brian Wray Memorial '25' and eight started the event. The result was one of the closest finishes seen in the area. When one considers that Robin Buchan was 13 seconds slower than the winner and came 4<sup>th</sup> in 1.1.29. Ray Runham was 5<sup>th</sup> with 1.1.49 and Ian Murray made up the winning team with a 1.6.49. This was a good effort as he managed to throw himself off swerving too violently to miss a stone. Our other finishers were Derek Hull 1.7.21, Terry Slattery 1.8.36, Graham Bristow 1.9.34, Barry Sturgess 1.11.30 and Mick Marguerie 1.11.47. On the same day Bob Corby rode the Army CU '25' at Andover and clocked a 1.4.46 to be in the top dozen. Vin Callanan made his 1967 debut in a Veterans event on the Pound Hill course fortified with ample supplies of sherry from Alan Gordon to fend off the effects of a heavy cold. It is reported that he was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the event but no times are given.

Keith Butler came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Charlie Parker Memorial race behind his team-mate Alan Ramsbottom. The others in the break were all watching Keith for the sprint so he allowed Alan to drift up the road to an unbeatable lead. He then took the sprint for 2<sup>nd</sup> place.

Bob Corby won again when he did fastest time in the Dave London '30' and collected the 'pot' for 1<sup>st</sup> on handicap as well. Barry Sturgess was 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1.23.08 and Harry Corby 3<sup>rd</sup> with 1.25.42. Robin Buchan and Ian Murray went west to sample the Bath Road Hilly '50' over the Berkshire Downs. On his first venture at this race Robin was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> with a very respectable 2.7.51. Ian took a large size in 'parcels' and came back in 2.22.20. Graham Bristow produced a personal best '25' in the Glendene Novices with a 1.6.53. Newcastle was the destination for Keith Butler on the same week-end. It was wet and the course went up a small mountain laughingly called a 'bank' eight times. In the end Keith was placed 11<sup>th</sup>. Then on the Sunday the professional 'circus' moved nearer the coast. This was a flatter circuit and the racing was fast and furious. Two minutes were taken off the lap record that on a 7½ mile lap is no mean feat. On the last lap Keith jumped clear with Arthur Metcalfe and Hugh Porter but were caught with less than a mile to go. Keith was eventually placed 15<sup>th</sup> in the 30 up sprint. John Sargeant came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Balham senior event on the Lingfield circuit. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> category event Rowan Vacher was 4<sup>th</sup> and Nick Gibson 6<sup>th</sup>. Pete Fryer should have been 7<sup>th</sup> but in 'forgot' to cross the Finish line! He thought he had crossed the line and stopped by his friends to accept their plaudits. You only do that once!

The Winter Polo League had now finished with the Paragon 'A' team in 4<sup>th</sup> place just ahead of the 'B' Team. Various results are printed in the April Blah. On March 4<sup>th</sup> the Paragon drew with a combined London and Scottish team 7 – 7. On the 9<sup>th</sup> March Croydon Aces beat the B team 8 – 1 and the A team beat Crystal palace 8 – 7. On April 2<sup>nd</sup> the B team beat Croydon Aces 7-2. Next week the A team beat Croydon Aces B team by 14 – 3. A Northampton Team, Little Irchester, came down to Purley Way to find out how Polo was played in this neck of the woods. The Paragon won 5 – 2 in this 'friendly'. (To our knowledge Polo was never a 'friendly' game whilst players were on the pitch) Then on April 23<sup>rd</sup> the B team played their last game of the season against Waddon and won 7 – 5.

While the Paragon were always a force on the actual pitch it should be remembered that they were also part and parcel of the British Polo Association and had no small say in its running. Tony Knight was the BPA General Secretary, Alex Bird was the Youth Organiser, Pete Wall was National Press Officer, George Ongley organised the Hurlingham Cup, and Alan Roberts is Croydon League Secretary with Tony Knight, Pete Wall and Alec Bird also on the Croydon Committee. The to round things off Alec Bird is the English Cup Competition Secretary.

There was a tremendous amount of Polo played in this area at that time. In this summer of 1967 the Paragon had two teams in the Croydon Midweek League, two teams in the English Cup and two teams in the National League.

The annual Paragon pilgrimage to the University Tandem '30' was still in vogue and 1967 was no exception. Ray Runham and Robin Buchan were 2<sup>nd</sup> this year with 1 1.3.17. Back south of The River the SCCU was a victim of a wrongly placed marshal that resulted in a course of 48.8 miles instead of the customary 50. Bob Corby was 4<sup>th</sup> in 2.4.02 whilst cousin Harry did 2.18.27. In the 34<sup>th</sup> Nomads '25' John Jennings recorded 1.5.17, Vin Callanan 1.5.43 and Geoff Williams 1.7.28. On the 30<sup>th</sup> April Terry Slattery won the East Surrey Road Race on the Newtons Hill Circuit. He had chased down the break that had gained 5 minutes on the field then timed his sprint perfectly on the climb to Wych Cross to win by 2 seconds.

The Redhill '50' was on a new course south of Buck Barn and it included the climb of Washington Hill. Now those generations of Paragon flyers that have ridden the Worthing Run will know all about this Hill. If you are going well it is a fast climb on the big ring but if you are not.....! It was, therefore, quite fitting that the winner of this event should be Robin Buchan with a 2.5.02. Ray Runham was suffering from the joys of moving house and 'only' managed 2.7.28 for 4<sup>th</sup> place. With Bob Corby finishing in 2.8.18 and Ian Murray in 2.9.20 the Team race was a formality. In the Hillingdon Junior '25' Rowan Vacher ought to have achieved a personal best as his 1.4.45 was subject to an addition of 1½ minutes late start. The previous Wednesday he had reduced his 10 time to 23.33 and brother Doug also reduced his figures. Doug's time was 27.14 and he followed that with a 27.32 in the West Kent Schoolboys '10' for 5<sup>th</sup> place. The Veterans (London & Home Counties) managed to get the worst of the weather with rain 'like stair rods'. Vin Callanan was 4<sup>th</sup> in 1.5.53 whilst Harry

Corby did 1.8.20. At the International Grand Prix at Crystal Palace neither John Sargeant nor Derek Hull were placed although they were in the front group and timed in at the same time as the winner. Keith Butler was 8<sup>th</sup> in the Professional event.

May 14<sup>th</sup> was the day of the SW London and Surrey Division Road Race Championship. John Sargeant was hoping to repeat his win of 1966 whilst the man in form was Robin Buchan. Robin, John Sargeant and Derek Hull had escaped from the main field but with 40 miles still to go Robin punctured. The power and drive went out of the break with Robin's departure and this group were reeled in. Then John, Derek and three others got clear of the field. They managed to drop two of the riders but Froud (Festival) punctured close to home leaving our two lads out in front. So John Sargeant did defend his title successfully and both he and Derek earned a ride in the National Road Race Championship. Our two Veteran time triallists, Ray and Robin, teamed up to ride the South Eastern 2up 33 miles. They not only recorded fastest time of the Vets in 1.25.48 but won on age standard as well. That was a nice little double.

Another win for Bob Corby, and his third Club event of the year, came in the first Club '50' when his 2.8.50 was far too good for Ian Murray's 2.14.00 although Ian did take the handicap. This prevented Bob from taking three handicaps in a row. Rowan Vacher was 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2.18.32 and Graham Bristow 4<sup>th</sup> in 2.23.10 after falling on a well, (or badly?), positioned cowpat.

On Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> May Keith Butler rode the Southern Velo Professional race on the Lingfield circuit. The course was six laps of the circuit making 90 miles to cover. On the second lap a break was developing along the A264 and Keith decided to go for it. Midway between bunch and break there was a bang and our man pulled over to the side of the road with a puncture. It took too much time to change the tub so when Keith reached the Changing Rooms he decided to call it a day. A nice cup of tea, a leisurely change, then back out to watch the Finish. Which, in essence, is what he did. The difference was that by the time he had changed a furious thunderstorm was raging outside. One minute Keith was cursing his luck then a few moments later he considered he was the only dry rider around. What a nice things punctures can be! It rained so hard that one rider reckoned that he did not have to wash his jersey. It was so clean he just dried it out and rode in it again on the Sunday.

We had a team in the Kingston Hilly '73 but their efforts came to nought. Robin Buchan did finish in 3.4.16 but had a hard time of it as he broke a cog. This put the other cogs nearby out of action as well leaving Robin with only the top two. Not a nice option in a Hilly event that lives up to its name. Ian Murray came in with 3.15.43 and Barry Sturgess 3.42.44 after puncturing 'on the line'. The subsequent rush to change the tyre and find a replacement to take round with him ensured he lost over 6 minutes before he actually started. In the St Christophers '25' Rowan Vacher did 1.5.26, Harry Corby 1.7.25 and Geoff Williams would not divulge his time after arriving at the start rather late.

More seasonal weather came with the 'new' Whitsun and the first to welcome it was Terry Slattery. He finished the Farnham '25' in a new personal best time of 1.0.02. Bob Corby rode the same event but doubts it as he rode in a violent

storm for his 1.4.55. Terry missed it completely! Bob made up for it the next day in the Rufus Whs '30' when he put up his personal best time of 1.14.02. Graham Bristow moved into the senior ranks and clocked 1.5.42 in the Bromley RC '25'. On this day we had teams in the Addiscombe 3<sup>rd</sup> category and senior races. However for once we did not do well in an Addiscombe promotion. In the first event John Jennings won the first prime but both he and Nick Gibson ran out of steam up the hill to the Finish and were not highly placed. Messrs Sargeant, Hull and Slattery were paying the price for their successes. Every move they made was countered and they were expected to chase down every subsidiary attack. It is a hard life being a top class bike rider! The Result – no prizes.

June 4<sup>th</sup> was a celebration day as a Club record that had stood since 1934 was beaten. The man was Ian Murray and he was riding a tricycle in the Addiscombe '50' finishing in 2.23.58. Ian could certainly handle a trike and passed two solo riders along Bonnetts Lane during the last 3 miles. Harry Corby did 2.16.00 in the Veterans National Championship but failed to win an award. Cousin Bob did a 2.6.44 in the Brentwood '50'. Down on the Portsmouth Road Doug Vacher essayed his first '25' and passed the Timekeeper in 1.9.58. This was not bad for a 14 year old and it had brother Rowan rather worried as he (Rowan) was 10 minutes slower in his first '25'.

Keith Butler was very busy over the holiday weekend. On Saturday he raced at Aylesbury and finished 5<sup>th</sup> in the 118 miles event when only 15 riders completed the course. It was then up to Hull for the Criterium around the Docks. With 5 laps to go there were 21 riders left in contention when Keith made a very silly remark. 'There are only 20 prizes lads – who is going to miss out?' Whereupon he punctured! Then it was back down to Gravesend for the Regatta Road race. Dame Fortune was a little kinder here as Keith found just before the Start that the tension bolt on his saddle had broken. The Start was delayed while he begged, borrowed or stole a spare saddle. Then after peregrinations around the Kentish Countryside Keith was placed 4<sup>th</sup> in a very tight finish. (Leather saddles had an adjustable bolt in the peak to keep the top of the saddle firm).

Derek Hull collected a 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Blenheim Park race. John Sargeant came 5<sup>th</sup> in the Vulcan road race. Derek's ride around Blenheim was no mean feat. At that time the circuit at Blenheim consisted of 1 mile smooth asphalt, 1 mile of cart track/bridleway and 2 miles of 'indifferent surface' to quote the programme. It was a circuit for the hard man and skilled bike rider. It also helped to have puncture proof tyres.

Bob Corby did the impossible on the 11<sup>th</sup> June in the Wessex '50' when he finished in 2.6.44 (again!) Barry Sturgess clocked 1.6.40 in the BCF SW London and Surrey '25'. Keith Butler rode the Criterium on Brighton Sea Front. He collected a couple of Primes, 4<sup>th</sup> place and a number of splinters from the chestnut pailings as he tried to come through on the inside for the sprint. John Sargeant won the Polhill Carnival road race at Frant on the Saturday and the following day came 9<sup>th</sup> in the Harold Hill Spider Trophy race. Robin Buchan had been to see 'The Giro' but was uninspired. He missed the break in the Hambeldon road race and had to be content with a place in the bunch and 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the King of the Mountains competition.

Terry Slattery made it a hat-trick of Purley to Brighton wins with a very quick and Record 1.30.09 some 9 minutes faster than 1966. Ian Murray was left far behind with his 1.36.08 and Vin Callanan came in 3<sup>rd</sup> with 1.36.54 that also enabled him to collect the handicap award. This record is Terry's in perpetuity until the Highways Authorities remove all the traffic lights on the Brighton Road so that we can race on its whole length again. (Having said that; there was always a set by Old Lodge Lane that was, fortunately, set to remain green on the Brighton Road side. The set at Redhill did need a marshal to jump up and down on the pad and all ignored the set at Patcham as it was just over a mile to go). There are now 22 sets of pedestrian crossing and traffic control lights between Purley and Brighton and the A23 is to all intents and purposes a motorway from Handcross to Patcham.

In the Wren Whs '50' on 18<sup>th</sup> June Robin Buchan's fairy godmother was out and about. Not only did he come 3<sup>rd</sup> with a 2.1.55 but he won 3<sup>rd</sup> Handicap as well. Bob Corby improved his '25' time in the Rufus Whs '25' to 1.1.49 and Rowan Vacher got close to his in the Festival '25' with 1.3.33.

June 28<sup>th</sup> and Robin clocked 2.1.19 in the Middlesex RC '50' on not an easy day. Bob Corby put up yet another personal best in the Hillingdon '100' with a superb 4.19.40. John Sargeant won another race on the Lingfield circuit. He broke away with Ron Ford (Crawley Whs) then dropped him on the last climb through Dormansland. Derek Hull was placed in the bunch. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> category race Nick Gibson, John Jennings and Geoff Williams were placed 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. Fine grouping but not high enough for the team prize.

John Sargeant went over to the Isle of Man to ride the Manx International. Unfortunately he could not fly over until the last minute so did not get a chance to familiarise himself with the course. Consequently the Mountain found him out. He did not realise it was so long. However he persevered and finished in 40<sup>th</sup> place.

On his return John finished 10<sup>th</sup> in the Kingston Phoenix road race in spite of the pouring rain that fell throughout the race. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> category race Geoff Williams was 6<sup>th</sup>. On the Ashdown Forest Circuit we had another Paragon 1 –2. In the 29<sup>th</sup> Whs 'Bill Stocker Memorial' road race Geoff Williams was 1<sup>st</sup> and Nick Gibson was 2<sup>nd</sup>.

In the Hemel Hempstead road race John Sargeant broke away with seven others after 40 of the 90 miles eventually taking 2<sup>nd</sup> place after a lot of hard work climbing all those hills.

Inspired by his '50' the previous week Robin Buchan broke Club Record in the Rapier '25' with a 55.58. Then the following day on the Portsmouth Road he won the Kingston Whs '25' with a 58.12. Not only that with Terry Slattery 1.2.16 and Rowan Vacher (a personal best) the Paragon won the Team race.

The Track Meeting though thrilling to watch was hampered by an overcast evening and a nagging headwind blowing down the home straight. This was not good news for those attempting to break Records. Beryl Burton went for the

10,000m and the National 5 miles Records. She achieved her National 5 miles Record, with a 12.6 seconds beating of Milly Robinson's old time, but failed at the 10,000m by just 7 seconds recording 14.34.0. Brian Dacey could only manage 1.14.4 in the 1000m attempt and Reg Barnett recorded 26.0 against Cyril Peacock's 24.4. Just when you needed some help the wind was blowing in your face!

The Professional Omnium with Bill Painter and Keith Butler against Dave Bonner and 'Goz' Goodman was a cracker. Keith and Bill won the flying 1000m in 1.10. The Points race was tied and Bonner and Goodman won the Double Harness Pursuit. The main race was the Harry Grant '10' and was another humdinger. Robin Buchan in his inimitable fashion went on the attack from the start. All the early moves were countered then about halfway Robin went again with Brendan McKeon and Reg Smith. These three worked well together and built up a lead the length of the straight. Then the Aces realised that 'something' had to be down and the chase was on! Bit by bit the escapees were pulled back and they were caught with just 2 laps remaining. There followed a tremendous wind up that had the crowds in the Stands on their feet. It was Ron Keeble though who produced the 'coup de grace' with a beautifully timed sprint to win the race and the O.P.A bottle of Champagne. The race time was 10.55. In 2<sup>nd</sup> place were Brian Dacey and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tony Gowland.

Coming back to more mundane matters Ray Runham was 4<sup>th</sup> fastest in the London Region Pursuit Qualifying Round with 5.33.7. Terry Slattery also qualified with a 5.39.3 but John Sargeant was just outside the top16 with 5.43.7. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> Round Ray beat Mulberry (Vulcan) but Terry went out to Ron Keeble. In the Team Qualification our team of Robin Buchan, Ray Runham, John Sargeant and Terry Slattery recorded the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest time of 5.5.4. Unfortunately due to business and family reason Ray had to retire for the season and the team were eliminated by the Old Kent in the next round.

John Sargeant scored the greatest victory of his career so far when he won the Twickenham Grand Prix road race on 9<sup>th</sup> July. This was one of the selection races for the World Championship and Olympic Games and contained many of the best riders in the country. Reputations are only as good as your last ride so John ignored them. He broke away in the first 10 miles of this 100 miles event with six other riders, a move that did not appear to be dangerous at the time. Three others did get across to the break and amongst the company were Geoff Cross, Mick Brown (Hemel Hempstead) and Martin Roach (Hounslow). As the race progress the break shed a few riders but with one lap (10 miles) to go the break learnt that Dave Nie (Dragon), a noted sprinter, was only 50 seconds behind and closing fast. John and Martin Roach immediately attacked leaving their tiring companions struggling and holding off Mr Nie. At the Finish Roach had no reply to John's sprint and John came home to win by 2½ lengths. This was a truly great ride. For the third year in succession we won the Dulwich Paragon '25'. This time it was Rowan Vacher with a 1.1.12; that is 1.21 faster than his previous best time. He also took 2<sup>nd</sup> handicap with this ride. In the SCCU '50' Robin Buchan was 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2.3.40. He was beaten by Pete Crofts (East Surrey) who he had trounced in the rapier '25' last weekend. Then to rub it in the East Surrey also beat us to the Team prize. Bob Corby finished in 2.7.28 and Harry Corby 2.15.26.



The following week was more of the same when John Sargeant took the Champagne and Flowers road race over 72 miles of the Pirbright circuit. This time John's margin of victory was 4.20, i.e. about 2 miles. In 2<sup>nd</sup> place was Derek Hull (who won in 1966) and he in turn was some 40 seconds clear of the next man. Terry Slattery was again in fine form when he made fastest time in the Moon Trophy '25' although his winning margin was nothing like the Purley to Brighton. In Paragon terms he got home by 18" from Rowan Vacher with Geoff Williams on 1.2.45 in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Geoff's ride was a personal best and he also won the Handicap. (In the actual event our three lads were 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>). Les Black did a 1.3.21 for his first race of the season. Graham Bristow also produced a personal best of 1.4.42, as did Andy Murray with a 1.8.14. The Paragon won the Team Race with Messrs Williams, Bristow, Sturgess and Murray A. It was Keith Butler's turn to ride the Blenheim Park Circuit. He also came 3<sup>rd</sup> being one of only 6 riders that did not puncture. Bob Corby 'on holiday' rode the Midland Counties CA '25' and 'got under' for the first time with a 59.57. Robin Buchan also chimed in with a personal best this time at 100 miles. In the Goodmayes '100' he recorded 4.12.49 for 5<sup>th</sup> place, a 14 minutes improvement and he failed to get a handicap award. (Also Cycling left him out of the published finishing list just to add insult to injury!).

In the Coronation 2-day based on Long Clewdon, Oxfordshire, John Sargeant found himself being even more closely followed and marked so 'only' managed to finish in 4<sup>th</sup> place. Bob Corby was also in winning mode when he was one of only two finishers in the Goss Green '100'. His 4.31.42 was far quicker than Ian Murray's 4.47.13. Over night and early morning rain sadly depleted the field and a rising northeasterly wind put pay to many a hopeful ride on the way back from Horsham. Harry Corby failed to start as the overnight rain had flooded his van engine and he did not fancy the 30 miles ride before the Start in the rain. Bob Corby finished his holiday by riding the Oldbury '50' in 2.6.52 (just missed that 2.6.44) but won no prizes. The Pound Hill '25' course was used by the Kent RC for their '25' and Robin Buchan remembered all the pot holes, tricky corners and man hole covers to stay upright in the wet and the wind to win in 1.0.09. Not a fast ride for him but a good one for course and conditions. Rowan Vacher did his 3<sup>rd</sup> 1.1 in a row this time with 58 seconds. This gave him 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the London St Christophers '25' as well as 2<sup>nd</sup> on handicap. Barry Sturgess finished in 1.5.34 without falling off. As he went a minute faster with a crash on the same course a drastic action packed '25' should see him under the hour with no problem.

Robin Buchan ended up in Kings College Hospital after a fall at the Track that left him with a chipped collarbone. The Club had a very easy ride to two Team Pursuit Finals. In the West London Team Pursuit Championship they had a bye in the first round and the Westerly had to cede the semi-final leaving the lads to face the De Laune in the Final. In the SW London and Surrey Championship they were fastest qualifiers and due to meet the Festival in the Semi-finals and the Festival did not turn up to ride!

Polo news that the B Team having reached the semi-finals of the English Cup for the second year running had to concede the match as after a series of accidents a team could not get to Solihull. The A team also failed to reach the

Final but they were beaten by Crystal Palace 8 – 4. Three players were picked to play an exhibition match for the Apex (Inter County) Trophy at Windsor Park. They were Keith Ongley, Alec Bird and Peter Durbin but it was not clear on what side. We believe two played for one team and one for the other.

The August Blah reports the death of George Woolmer a name that can be found quite frequently in this History during the 1920s and 1930s. Never a great rider he was, however, a great Clubman. He was always out on runs, weekends and tours. He could be relied upon to help out where ever and whenever. The sort of man that no Club can exist without and it is part and parcel of Paragon history that whilst being a top class racing Club we have always had men like George in the background. They enjoy being part of the racing scene and being on Christian name terms with the best riders.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July was Club Open '50' day and for the first time in the history of the event the Club failed to finish a team. Seven entered, three started but only two finished. Apart from Robin Buchan who was out of action with his collarbone injury the other excuses were not very convincing. The Open Time Trials Secretary's report in the Blah was less than complimentary. 'If all the non-racing members of the Club had turned round with similar excuses we would not have had a marshal on the course. As it was many comments have been heard praising the Club for such a well-run event. A pity our racing men can't be bothered to live up to the standard and compete in their own Club promotion whatever inconvenience it may temporarily cause'.

Chris Sharp, (Eastbourne) was the winner in 2.2.12 with Dave Eldridge (Delta) 2<sup>nd</sup> in 2.2.27 and Ron Ball (Redmon) 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2.7.23. The Redmon won the Team Race. Our two finishers were Graham Bristow, 2.19.45, and Terry O'Loughlin 2.34.32.

John Sargeant collected another 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Victor Berlemont Memorial road race on the Newtons Hill Circuit. The winner was Dave Nie who put 3½ minutes into John and his three chasing companions.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> August Graham Bristow did a 1.5 in the Oval '25'. And Harry Corby did his best '25' of the year with a 1.6.20 for 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Balham Veterans event. In the Baz Wells Memorial road race on the Pirbright circuit John Sargeant was once again 2<sup>nd</sup> place and the winner, once again, was Dave Nie. This time the distance was only half a wheel.

In our 20 laps Handicap race at Crystal Palace Dave Nie was again victorious. This time he was in front of Reg Barnett (De Laune), John Branch (Woolwich) and John Clarey (Woolwich). All our riders finished in the main bunch. They were Geoff Williams, Graham Bristow, Bob Chambers, Les Black, Derek Hull and John Sargeant.

In the Kingston Phoenix Long Markers Barry Sturgess knocked some seconds off his best '25' when he came 4<sup>th</sup> in 1.4.29. In the All London road race Championships John was 2<sup>nd</sup> yet again. This time he was beaten by John Winstanley (Finsbury Park). John broke away with two other riders but both of them were from North London and managed to work him over in the sprint. In

the opinion of the onlookers John was by far the better rider. In our combined meeting with the Catford CC at Crystal Palace the winner of the main race was Brian Dacey. Bob Chambers and Les Black won some primes and were constantly in the thick of the action but were not placed in the final sprint. Graham Bristow and Geoff Williams also finished in the bunch in the 3<sup>rd</sup> category race.

On the Ashdown Forest in our own 3<sup>rd</sup> category promotion the winner was Don Awcock, Central Sussex. He was later to go on to represent Great Britain in various International Events but this is how he started. He showed his class that day by catching the leading break with a mile to go. He went straight by and won by 20 seconds! Geoff Williams was 3<sup>rd</sup> and with this he had amassed sufficient points to be upgraded to 2<sup>nd</sup> category. On August 20<sup>th</sup> Bob Corby was back in action with a 2.7.03 in the Fulham '50'. Then on the 27<sup>th</sup> he rode the Vegetarian '50' and produced yet another personal best with a 2.3.46 for 12<sup>th</sup> place. In one of the last Monday Competitions of the season Keith Butler came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 'Devil' behind Ron Keeble and won the 5 miles Points.

Keith Butler went to Leicester Track for the 1000m Professional Sprint Championship. He had entered the sprint as a warm up for the 10 miles Championship that ended the meeting. It didn't work out that way. In the 1<sup>st</sup> round he disposed of John Aslin (Carlton) in 12.8 then had to beat him again in the quarterfinals as Aslin had won his Repechage. This was another 12.8 last 200 metres. In the Semi-finals and Finals the races were in 'best of three' format. Keith had drawn Norman Hill (Geoffrey Butler Cycles) in the Semis. In the first heat Keith won in 13.0 and in a very close and hard fought race won the second heat in 12.5. This put him into the Finals against Bill Painter (Mercian Bantel). In the first heat Painter jumped first Keith tried to come by him but failed with a 12.8 last 200 metres. The second heat was even faster but Keith got by in the fastest time of the Championship 12.3. The third and last heat was almost a replay of the other two but Keith lost by inches. So it was only a Silver Medal for Keith. By the way in the 10 miles Championship Keith was placed 4<sup>th</sup>. Moore (Croad Automatics) jumped away with 1000m remaining. Hugh Porter (Mackeson), Goz Goodman (Truman Steel) and Keith chased him down but only Hugh Porter got passed Moore to take the title.

The Club Track Events were held as usual at Herne Hill and saw a great overturning of favourites. We started with a 4000m Time Trial (just to get the lungs torn apart). John Sargeant, the expected winner, beat Rowan Vacher in 5.49.0 to Rowan's 5.57.1. Then Derek Hull riding with some venom did his best pursuit ever with 5.44.2 holding off Barry Sturgess, 5.49.9. In the third tie Les Black recorded 45.48.9 to Graham Bristow's 5.56.0. This gave Derek 3 points, Les 2 points and John 1 point. The 550 yards Sprint followed. In the first Heat Derek Hull beat Les Black and in the second Graham Bristow beat John Sargeant. In the Final Graham Bristow was too fast for the others but Les and John came down the home straight neck and neck then Derek went though between them for a real judges nightmare but just too late. The Result gave Graham Bristow 3 points, John Sargeant 2 points and Les Black 1 point. This meant that at the start of the 5 miles Scratch all four main contestants had 3 points each. The highest placed, assuming he was placed in the first three, would win the Championship. John Sargeant started fast and the rest lined out

behind him. The beauty of the '5' is that it is also a Points race so there is a sprint on every lap just to liven things up. Every lap was sprinted as Barry Sturgess and Rowan Vacher went for the points. Then just about half way Les Black punctured and although he had a fast machine change he could not regain the distance he lost. He overtook every one that was dropped but could not regain the leaders. With Les virtually out the 'guns' attacked. John Sargeant and Derek Hull went clear then Graham Bristow and Peter Fryer got up to them. Messrs Sturgess and Vacher felt the effects of their sprinting and dropped back with the others. Came the last lap with everything to go for from Sargeant, Hull and Bristow they stalled watching each other. Fryer took his chanced and jumped gaining twenty yards. Down the home straight came Fryer with the others gaining hand over fist but he just hung on for his first race win ever. Derek Hull put his wheel in front for 2<sup>nd</sup> place and thus became Track Champion for 1967. The Points race was a win for Barry Sturgess and Les Black took the award for the most Meritorious ride. The Result of the Club Championship was, therefore, 1<sup>st</sup> Derek Hull 5 points, 2<sup>nd</sup> John Sargeant 4 points, and 3<sup>rd</sup> equal Graham Bristow, Les Black and Pete Fryer 3 points. Between the Championship events the 550 yards Handicap was run. Rowan Vacher had Keith Butler to push him off and benefited from both the words of advice and the huge shove. Though 'dying' down the Home straight with Messr Sturgess B and Bristow G coming up very quickly he won his 'Pot'. Graham just got the verdict from Barry for 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Later in the year in the 1000m ride off for 3<sup>rd</sup> place Graham Bristow beat Les Black 1.23.5 to 1.24.1.

Derek Hull won his first race of the season in a Witcomb Criterium around Green St Green. It was rather a quick race. The 27 miles were covered in 56 minutes! Derek reported that he only won because it was too dark to see the Finish so he just went as hard and as far as he could.

Only three riders entered the Fryco Cup '50' and it was not a question of who would win but by how much. John Sargeant went round the course in 2.5.06 that constitutes a personal best by some three minutes and an extremely good ride considering the last 16 miles were into the wind. Derek Hull was a bit disappointed with his 2.14.17 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place but Harry Corby was content to 'tour' round in 2.27.44 as part of his training for the Rotherham Cup.

Robin Buchan took the Rotherham Cup for the 12-hour held in conjunction with the SCCU event that he won as well. It was an excellent ride, as Robin had had no competition since breaking his collarbone in July. In wet and windy conditions he covered 250.25 miles as against Bob Corby's personal best ride of 247.21. Bob was also 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Event proper as well. A pity we had no third man. Bob was the early leader with Robin back in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. By 132 miles Robin had moved into 2<sup>nd</sup> place and by 160 miles he was in the lead. Bob punctured around the 180 miles point losing him about a mile in total distance. It cost him the SCCU BAR as he was placed 2<sup>nd</sup> by some 'tenths' of a mile per hour. The shorter distance men were riding the 29<sup>th</sup> Whs '25'. Rowan Vacher was best in 1.3.42, John Jennings 1.5.26 and Barry Sturgess 1.8.32 with a puncture

John Sargeant won the Kingston Phoenix Autumn road race at Chobham. He went clear with two others after only 5 miles of the 75 had been covered. Later

a chasing group caught them only for John to attack again with Steve Smith. They pulled out a lead of 1½ in the last 8 miles before John won the sprint for the line. Derek Hull finished 11<sup>th</sup> back in the main group. Doug Vacher won the 15 miles Junior event in 41.50 from John Harding 42.51 and Laurence Parry 43.52. Laurence also took the Handicap. Rowan Vacher rode a private time trial in 36.32 to give the lads some idea of what they have to do next season.

On September 17<sup>th</sup> Rowan Vacher went north of The River to try the famed E3 course and to put the magic '59' against his name. As usual with plans of mice and men it went a glee. The course was shrouded in thick mist, Rowan had to go twice round a roundabout to get off it, overshot the turn and returned to the Timekeeper in 1.0.11. It is enough to make you tear your hair out. Robin rode the Eagle '50' and was placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in 2.4.22. In the Tooting event over the same course and distance as the Kingston Phoenix race John Sargeant won again. John Sargeant and Derek Hull went to Ugley in Essex to ride the Natsopa 2-day. John was 2<sup>nd</sup> on Stage 1 but lost valuable time in the Time Trial Stage. Although he was 3<sup>rd</sup> on Stage 3 this only brought him back up to 8<sup>th</sup> place. Derek too lost ground on the time trial stage and finished 20<sup>th</sup>. Doug Vacher won the junior '10' in 26.40 by just 2 seconds from Peter Hamilton 26.42. There was a tie for 3<sup>rd</sup> place between Ian Parsons and Laurence Parry both finishing in 28.02. Ian Parsons took the handicap award. Five others rode private time trials to keep their legs moving. John Jennings 24.33, Barry Sturgess 24.37, Pete Fryer 25.58, Graham Forster 27.16 and Malcolm Calder 28.35.

A team went off to the Farnham – Alton course to ride the Dragon CC '25'. Rowan Vacher still hoped to beat the hour but the wind came up across the course making it hard both ways. He still did 1.1.40 that put him high on the finishing list. Barry Sturgess did 1.4.58. On the Portsmouth Road in the SCCU '25' Graham Bristow was our fastest with 1.6.53 and Pete Fryer improved over 5 minutes to record a 1.8.33. Robin Buchan wound up his season by coming 2<sup>nd</sup> to Ron Ford (Crawley) in the Worthing Excelsior '25' with a 1.0.35. John Sargeant met his 'bogey man' Dave Nie in the Metro RC 'Grande Finale' road race at Green St Green. For the third time in two months Nie beat John over the Finish line. Doug Vacher won the second junior 15 miles with 41.12. Pete Hamilton was 2<sup>nd</sup> with 42.59 and that was an achievement as he had overslept and had to tear down to the Start. He had virtually ridden the race before he was pushed off and this was to affect the result of the Junior Championship.

Leaving the best to last John Sargeant was accepted for the 'Criterium des Vainquers'. This race is only open to those who have won a 1<sup>st</sup> Category race or better during the year. There were 5 BCF Champions, 1 RTTC Champion, 1 Commonwealth Gold Medalist, 5 Continental riders plus former Tour de France riders and a host of former Champions. The pace was fast, very fast, as befitted this star-studded field. Eight men eventual forced their way clear and gradually extended their lead. The winner of the sprint was Peter Buckley from the Isle of Man who name is now commemorated in the National Junior Race Series. John was in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. With this performance, the Twickenham Grand Prix and the number of races he has either won or been placed in the top three his name must surely be before the Selectors for National teams.

The Mayne Cup '25' had Rowan Vacher on song to produce the fastest time of the morning with a 1.2.24 ride. It was quite a breezy morning as one can deduce from the times. In 2<sup>nd</sup> place was Derek Hull with 1.4.05 and 3<sup>rd</sup> was Geoff Williams on 1.5.01. Man of the Day was Derek Hull. He had been given 2.30 by the handicapper and he rode his track bike complete with 88" gear. It was nearly too big as his nett time was 1.1.35. Graham Forster missed this by just 5 seconds after taking 10 minutes from his 1.11.40. Barry Sturgess was 3<sup>rd</sup> on handicap. The other interest lay in the times of the juniors. Had Peter Hamilton gone fast enough to displace Doug Vacher. Peter finished the Mayne Cup in 1.11.50 and Doug Vacher 1.12.24. No, it was not enough so Doug was the 1967 Junior Champion. If Peter had made the start of the '15' and clocked a similar time to Doug then Peter would have won. That's how close it got.

The two Team Pursuit Finals that the Club reached with very few pedals turned in anger resulted in two defeats. The Team was Barry Sturgess, Les Black, Derek Hull and John Sargeant but they did collect silver medals. John Sargeant's ninth win of the year came in the Catford CC's Brighton to London race. John was very heavily marked but the attacks did show that John was the strongest man in the race. His first attack was after 10 miles that merely served to wake up the bunch and start them really racing. He tried again as the race neared the Ashdown Forest again without success apart from reducing the number of riders left in the bunch. It was really a question of when and where he would leave everyone. This point proved to be Titsey Hill with less than 10 miles to go. Seven riders came over the top clear of the rest but then had to ride hard down through Warlingham, Selsdon, Sanderstead and Addington almost in full view of the chasing pack. Came the sprint, though, there was no dispute. 'Sarge' loves an uphill sprint and he crossed the line in front to be the first man to win this end of season Classic twice.

His tenth win came in the Polhill Autumn road race when at the end of 64 miles around Frant he won the three-man sprint to round off a superb season.

Would you believe Les Black won the Hill Climb? Well he did in 4.11.4 ahead of Barry Sturgess, 4.15.0, and Rowan Vacher 4.20.0.

The last time trial of the 1967 season was Len's '10' on the Polhill Course. Of the Paragon lads Rowan Vacher was our best and 5<sup>th</sup> overall with a time of 23.50. Barry Sturgess finished in 25.27 with his legs in knots after a Keith Butler Circuit Training Session on the Friday evening. Peter Hamilton missed the vital last turn and ended up climbing through Farnborough Village whilst Doug Vacher continued his improvement with 26.08 missing 3<sup>rd</sup> handicap by 8 seconds. Les Black rode up Yorks Hill in the Catford Hill Climb in 2.20.4.

The silly season started as soon as the sensible one finished. Keith Butler has already wrecked two wheels, one gear and taken a bath in a stagnant canal, Dave Fryer has broken a pedal and brother Peter has flattened a number of trees on Shirley Hills in the Addiscombe promotion. Keith took his bath at the Enfield Town Show. In his heat he tried to cut inside Mick Ives on the last bend onto a bridge over the canal. He turned too quickly and went over the handlebars into the canal. After being pulled out covered with black stinking mud he rode on to the Finish. When Mick Ives finished he was killing himself

laughing. Ask what the joke was he just said 'Wait'. Sure enough this bedraggled creature came into sight and all was revealed. To add to the hilarity the Town Fire Brigade hosed both Keith and his bike down in the centre of the arena. Of course when the Final was run the crowds flocked to the bridge but an encore was not forth coming. Keith finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the Final. The 'fun' did not finish there as Keith had driven to the Show in his mother's VW Beetle and all his wet; stinking clothes were in the boot, which, in a Beetle, is in front. One and a half hours of smelling stagnant mud and water was not a good end to the day.

The 1967 Open Time Trial All-Rounder was Robin Buchan with an average speed of 24.030 mph. Bob Corby was 2<sup>nd</sup> with 23.277 mph.

At the very end of the year Robin Buchan married Margaret Chilcott (daughter of BCF official Basil). The Ceremony went off without a hitch. Many friends and relations, not forgetting a large number of local club and Paragon people, enjoyed a Reception in Redhill. But Robin and Margaret tried to deceive their friends. On leaving the Reception all and sundry thought they were off to Gatwick for a honeymoon abroad. Well they were but not until the day after the wedding. They did not think it a good idea to tell their 'friends' this fact because of what they knew their 'friends' could do that evening. So off they drove and took a circuitous route back to their house in St Andrews Road. Everything had worked out well until they swung into their drive. There in front of them was a heap of coal. The Coalman had delivered a ton of coal and dropped it right in front of the garage doors. In no way was Robin going to leave his car in full view. Too many of the neighbours were at the Reception and some of his friends also lived close by. There was only one thing to do – move the coal. So he did and it took 'forever'. What a way to start your married life!