

1978

The year started with some serious discussion at the AGM as to the merits and demerits of opening the Club's membership to female Members. Gordon Davies outlined his views of the matter and the Chairman read out a letter from Fred Lee. Both gentlemen were of the opinion that in view of recent sporting developments and the increase in female participation in all sports the Club should seriously re-consider the position. Keith Butler put his view that any seriously competitive club should remain all male, as the necessity of completing hard training miles was not compatible with nursing the ladies along. Andy Murray commented that he wished the Paragon were half as successful as many mixed Clubs. John Parsonson also pointed out that should the proposal be successful a considerable number of changes would have to be made to Club Rules that the Proposers had not tabled. Eventually the vote was taken and the Proposal was lost by 10 votes to 23 with a number of people abstaining.

A further proposal was to reduce or omit the minimum age limit of 14. The meeting was of the opinion that while the idea was good it would be impracticable to support. One does need a person or persons to take youngsters 'under their wing' so to speak and a Club room where such young people felt welcome. The upstairs room of a Public House where all had to walk through the downstairs bars was not considered the best place to send such aspiring athletes. The motion was lost but with regret that the Club could not cope with a very young membership. (Judging by the legalisation in place in 2004 it would be a miracle if the Paragon ever became a haven for young and aspiring racing cyclists. The Rules and restrictions now in place make it almost impossible for any club to recruit young members without the members being subject to Police Investigation and having to attend various courses to learn how to look after children. Any one would think we had never raised any ourselves!)

Alan Gordon was re-elected as President and Den Pearson was elected a Vice President in recognition of his years of service as Magazine Editor. The Committee for 1978 are Les Black, Graham Bristow, Paul Dennison, Jack Platts, Bob Reddin, Charlie Rogers and Arthur Sharp.

Stan Butler drew the meetings attention to the Club Trophies. Many of these never saw the light of day as the events to which they had been donated no longer existed. The incoming Committee were instructed to look into this matter. (The same things are happening in 2004 as history repeats itself yet again!)

Den Pearson informed the Meeting that the Addiscombe CC will be 50 next year and while it is a shame that they have lasted so long and count as our deadly rivals a suitable message of Goodwill and Congratulations will be sent!!!

News from Foreign parts was that Ron Stretton had an addition to his family in the shape of a baby daughter and that he had fallen off a ladder and broken

four ribs. This is something he never managed to do on a bike! There is a moral there!

The New Year started with some bad news for us if not for the riders. George Clare and Steve Hackett both changed their status to Second Claim. George, in order to remain on the Scottish National Squad, has rejoined the Wallacehill CC. Steve is to be sponsored by his employers National Westminster Bank. Dave Worsfold decided to revert to the Redmon CC.

The racing season got under way with the East Surrey Hardriders '33' on the 5th March and we had teams in both the Senior and Junior events. In the Senior event Ian Murray started his season as our best rider with 1.25.44 but, regrettably, some way behind the winner's 1.16.15. John McNee finished in 1.35.50 and Charlie Rodgers 1.37.22. The Juniors were led in by Paul Dennison with a 37.43 not far behind the winner Tim Stevens. (Tim is still racing and winning in 2004!) Our other juniors were Martin Webber, 48.39, Ray Jarrett 49.11 and David Feneron 49.14.

The following week the CDCA held their Hardriders event. Andy Murray had not planned to race before Easter but a period of good weather and time for training showed him the error of his ways. He repaid his hard work with a 3rd place in 1.20.34. Les Black just beat Jack Platts with 1.26.19 and 1.26.24 respectively.

The first Club Event of the year was a 10 miles Scratch event on the 19th March. Steve Hackett won this race in convincing style in 25.17 but it was close for 2nd place. John McNee just got the decision with his 27.01. Graham Bristow had 27.05 and Gordon Button 27.06.

Easter came on the 24th March and the Crawley Whs held their 2-day, 3-stage Time Trial event. However as usual with early Easters the weather was not of type suitable for fast racing. Dave Clark, who had not raced since 1973 when he produced a 53-minute '25', was not impressed with his 1.5.30! He did have the satisfaction of beating Andy Murray, 1.5.54. Other rides were by Ian Murray, 1.7.01, Jack Platts, 1.9.08, Paul Dennison, 1.9.37, and John McNee 1.12.45. To put these rides into perspective the winner was Dave Stalker (Feltham) in 1.2.09. The Junior Section was won by Sean Yates later to win Stages and take the race leaders Yellow Jersey in the Tour de France. Hindsight is a wonderful science!

The Saturday races were the Crawley Shoreham and back (44 miles) in the morning and a 10 mile event in the afternoon. Andy Murray was our only taker for the 44 miles and he took 1.59.04 for the journey. He paid for this effort in the afternoon when he only managed a 26.21 and was beaten by brother Ian's 25.27. No mention has been recorded of Andy's placing in the overall classification.

On Sunday another team rode the Festival '25' and recorded the following times; - Dave Clark 1.4.10, Gareth Earwicker 1.6.10 and Les Black 1.8.18. Then to continue the tale of woe of a particularly hard Easter Graham Bristow

and Les Black were our only finishers in the Bec '25' on the Monday with 1.10.48 and 1.11.35. Not exactly earth shattering performances but excellent for building up the moral fibre!

From the Blah we learn that the new member signed-on in April was one Graham Watson. Little did we know at the time that while Graham became a pretty competent time triallist and road man he was to become one of the top photographers in the Cycling World. His books of photographs of the Tour de France are on every discerning cyclist's bookshelf and he can be seen at every Cycling Classic event perched on the back of a motorcycle taking close-ups of the action.

Another sign of how things have changed over the years. In the April Blah there is a note that Norwood Paragon Namestrips are available at £1 per pair for sewing onto racing shorts. Printing on cloth has come on a long way since then!

On the 2nd April the Kentish Whs held their '25' and after the gruelling events of Easter it was time those that performed then should show the benefit of those very hard racing miles. And so it came to pass! Ian Murray was our best man with a 1.0.10 followed by Graham Bristow 1.2.55, Jack Platts 1.4.25 and Les Black 1.4.50.

Thirteen men had entered the Jim Fox '25' and ten of them greeted the Timekeeper. Andy Murray was soon back with him again as he punctured a brand new tub shortly after his start and so took no further part in the proceedings. Conditions were a little harder than the previous week and it showed in the finishing times. Ian Murray was fastest in 1.2.50 comfortably in front of Graham Bristow, 1.4.11 and Les Black 1.5.53. Gordon Button took the Handicap with 1.0.03 by just 1" from Ricky Tyson, 1.0.04 with Bob Strevens back in 3rd spot with 1.1.20. The event was a success for some lads as five starters put up personal best rides for 25 miles. They were Gordon Button 1.6.33, Rick Tyson 1.7.04, Bob Strevens 1.10.20, Charlie Rodgers 1.10.56, and David Feneron 1.25.31. Alan Colburn started his season with a 26.48 in the Hinkley '10'.

On the 13th April Stan Harrison died. Stan was one of the great Norwood Paragon Track Team that delighted the fans at Herne Hill both before and after the War. He had joined the Club after meeting Arthur Bristow at a grass track meeting in 1935 and although he rode the odd time trial his main interest was always the Track. During the War he had a reserved occupation but helped to keep the Club going as Track Secretary and racing whenever possible at Paddington. (Herne Hill being used as a Barrage Balloon Centre). After the War he regained his former eminence to become one of the country's leading sprinters. Paired with Jim Hampshire he won the National 1 mile Tandem Sprint in 1946 and the Centre 5 miles Championship. He would also turn out for the Pursuit Team when required. After a serious accident at work he retired from racing but represented the Club on many Committees. He was elected Vice-President in 1959 and Chairman of the Old Paragonian's Association in 1963.

Ian Murray paired up with Dave Worsfold for the 34th Nomads 24 miles 2up time trial and they recorded a 59.30 while Les Black and Alan Colburn were a bit slower in 1.4.25.

We had three men in the SCCU '25' on the 16th April with Andy Murray being fastest of them in 1.1.37. Alan Colburn finished in 1.3.13 but Graham Bristow was having sinus problems and slowed to 1.7.05. At the CDCA Reliance Fernhill Meeting at Crystal Palace our two representatives, Paul Dennison in the Junior event, and Graham Watson in the Senior race both finished in the main bunch and unplaced.

Jack Platts, Les Black and Charlie Rodgers rode the De Laune '25' on the 23rd April and recorded 1.6.24, 1.6.47 and 1.10.27 respectively. We also had two teams in the South Eastern RC 2up time trials. Ricky Tyson and Paul Dennison were 2nd in the Junior section with a 1.3.59 ride for 24 miles whilst Ian and Andy Murray were 'only' 6th in the Senior with their 1.23.41 for 33 miles and felt disappointed with their ride. In the Midlands Alan Colburn did his season's best '25' with a 1.2.57 in the Coventry Olympic event. Graham Watson came 6th in the Epsom Road Race and moved up to become a 2nd Category rider. Ray Puttick, now a 1st category rider, came 9th in the Middlesex Clarion event at Ryde Heath.

On the following Saturday Charlie Rodgers achieved a personal best of 1.8.05 in the South Western RC Longmarkers '25' whilst in the Tandem Section (unrestricted) Les Black and Graham Bristow were pleased with their 56.38. Alan Colburn did 25.01 in the Croydon RC '10' on the Polhill Course. On the Sunday Rick Tyson won the Junior '10' in 27.27 but the news was of the first 1978 Team Race for the Paragon in the Dartford Whs '25' when Gordon Button produced a personal best of 1.4.09 for 5th place to lead Jack Platts, 1.4.46, and Charlie Rodgers, 1.9.48, to the award.

Ian Murray clocked 23.29 in the Hounslow '10' on the Saturday afternoon then joined out four riders in the Addiscombe '10' on the 6th May. Their times were Ian Murray 23.09, Andy Murray 24.02, Graham Bristow 24.51 and a personal best from Paul Dennison of 24.54. Jack Platts and Charlie Rogers rode the VTTA '25' and recorded 1.5.10 and 1.9.19 respectively. Ray Puttick came 2nd in the Croydon RC road race on the tough Woldingham Circuit. This is his best placing so far in 1st category events. However Ray is nothing if not thorough and likes making things hard for himself. He crashed early on in the race. He then punctured and had to change a wheel before chasing to regain the peloton. After that he picked up two primes before crossing the line in 2nd place. Quite a day! Paul Dennison finished in the bunch in the Junior race.

On the 14th May we had seven riders in the CDCA Moon Trophy '25' and although the times recorded were not out of this world three of them were personal bests. Les Black was fastest with 1.3.09 followed by Gordon Button 1.3.59 (PB), Graham Bristow 1.4.30, Jack Platts 1.4.49, Alan Colburn 1.4.54, Charlie Rodgers 1.7.52 (PB) and David Feneron 1.22.18 (PB). Ray Puttick was 6th in the East Grinstead Road race around the Lingfield circuit whilst

Graham Watson finished unplaced with the main field. Paul Dennison finished with the main bunch in the Junior race. Ian Murray finished 6th in the Tooting Sporting '42' with a 1.36.19 ride. Two events took place on the afternoon of the 20th May and it proved to be an excellent day for time trialling. Alan Colburn came in with a personal best of 23.25 for 6th place in the VTTA Birmingham '10' whilst Jack Platts had to be content with a 25.02. Down south Graham Watson, who joined the Paragon to go road racing, put up the fastest time of the year, and a personal best, of 57.53 in the SECA '25'. Not to be outdone Paul Dennison also improved and he finished with a 1.0.34. The next morning Alan Colburn got under the hour with a 59.48 in the Atherstone '25' and Jack Platts arrived at the Finish in 1.4.01. Sunday was also Redmon Hilly '73' day and Ian Murray was our sole representative finishing in 3.7.43. Gordon Button was also a lonely finisher in the Redhill '25' with a 1.4.

Another personal best for Alan Colburn came the following weekend in the VTTA (Kent) '25' when he reduced his time to 59.19. Not to be outdone our other Vets in the race also improved. Jack Platts reduced his figures to 1.1.34 and Charlie Rodgers to 1.6.35. Nearer home Gordon Button got in on the act with his personal best '25' of 1.3.25 in the Addiscombe event. Les Black was however slightly faster with a 1.3.12.

Ian Murray went out west for a holiday and combined this with some racing. His trio of events were a 24.49 in the Acme (Rhondda) '10', a 1.2 in the Welsh CA '25' at Builth Wells and 2.2.57 in the Wessex '50', his best ride for 2 years, on the way home.

Four riders took part in the SCCU '50'. Alan Colburn took 2.13.06, Les Black 2.14.40. Graham Bristow 2.21.03 and Charlie Rodgers 2.23.26 that was his best ride ever. In the Surrey Road '25' Gordon Button finished in 1.4.13. Another four riders took part in a Junior '15' and each did their best time for the distance. Rick Tyson was 1st in 40.19, Paul Dennison 2nd in 40.34, Dave Feneron 3rd in 50.17 and Martin Webber 4th in 53.19.

Pete Corry and George Clare won the double harness pursuit at the 34th Nomads Meeting at Herne Hill and later came 4th in the Madison.

During the SCCU Evening Meeting Pete got into the winning break during the Roadman's 25 miles race. He attacked on the last lap and was still in front coming into the last 200m only to be overwhelmed by the whole of the England Pursuit Team riding this event as part of their training for the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton.

On the 17th June Paul Dennison finished the SCCU '10' in 27.30. The next day Alan Colburn was our best man in the South Eastern '25' with 1.2.47. Also riding were Gordon Button 1.4.37, Les Black 1.4.41 and Paul Dennison 1.8.20. A strong northeast win slowed everyone on the return. Graham Watson and Ray Puttick rode the Penta Grand Prix near Reading and came 12th and 9th respectively.

Graham Watson was a glutton for punishment on the 24th June for in the morning he rode the South Eastern '25' recording 1.0.41 and in the afternoon the Southend '25' where he 'only' managed a 1.2.20. Then on the Sunday morning he took 9th place in the Balham road race at Alfold over 74 miles. Pete Corry came 6th in the George Tennant Memorial Trophy race at Crystal Palace in a very fast race.

The Open '50' was run on the 25th June on the Worthing Road. C Grady (Bec) in 2.4.02 won this year's event. Grady beat last year's winner Jim Walker (Bec) by 2'25" and in 3rd place was John Killick (London St Christophers) in 2.7.46. Our riders were Les Black 2.13.37, Alan Colburn 2.15.20 and Graham Bristow 2.23.09. The Handicap winner was C Roberts (Redmon), 1.55.35, from John Killick, 1.57.16 and our Les who collected 3rd place with a nett 1.58.07. The Bec took the Team race. With first and second placed riders plus Dan Grady, father of the winner, clocking 2.13.21 the result of that part of the prize list was a formality.

Jack Platts was due to be No.1 for the '50'. He had a reputation of managing to get a late start in a large number of his time trials so being the first man off was going to be a strain to the system. However all was not lost. A few days before the race the Promoter, Charlie Rodgers received the following note from Jack:-

I'm sorry I can't come out to play,
I'll have to make it another day.
The legs, with anticipation, no longer tingle
I'm stuck in bed with b*****g shingles.
Three weeks ago I felt quite nifty,
Now I'll miss our Open Fifty.
I know Al, Les, Graham and Bob
Will all say it's a put up job.
To stop them having their bit of fun,
When I'm pushed off at Number One,
But when I next race twenty five miles
I'll change the place of all those smiles (I hope).

The next weekend we ran our Open '25'. On a cool, windy and showery morning many riders found excuses not to get out of bed. Thirty-four from the maximum allowed of 120. Pete Howard (Woolwich) produced the fastest time with a 58.23. M Wilcox (Feltham), 59.24, came 2nd and D Douse (Antelope) 3rd in 59.43. Dave Silvester (Redmon) won the handicap with 54.00 from Steve Gaskell (Rodney), 54.12 and A Goodsall (Central Sussex), 54.49. The Feltham won the Team award. Our riders were Graham Button 1.3.35, Les Black 1.4.45, Paul Dennison 1.10.08 and David Feneron 1.24.07.

Alan Colburn rode the Walsall '50' and finished in 2.15.40. Locally we had riders in the Dulwich Paragon Middlemarkers '25'. Gordon Button improved again this time to 1.3.04 for the distance. Les Black completed the course in 1.4.00 and Graham Bristow in 1.4.59.

The 12th July was the date of the Inter-Club against the Addiscombe. You will note that normally one has an inter-club 'with' another cycling club stressing the social side and the pleasant get together before, during and especially after the race. This Inter-Club is always against the other. This attitude has its good points as borne out even in 1978. Of our eleven riders 6 produced personal best times for the distance. That is excellent locally rivalry bringing out the best. Although Dave Bull did the fastest time of the evening of 23.03 and John Smith the 2nd best it was the Paragon that took the Team Award. Our riders were Alan Colburn 23.50, Gordon Button 23.54 (PB), Les Black 23.56, Graham Bristow 24.25, Rick Tyson 24.57 (PB), Peter Smith 24.58 (PB), Vin Callanan 25.23, Terry Rowe 27.23, Charlie Shipwright 27.25 (PB), Dave Feneron 28.25 (PB) and Martin Webber 31.12 (PB). Martin Webber improved by over 5 minutes and took the Club Handicap. Terry Rowe came 2nd on handicap in his first race ever whilst Gordon Button came 3rd.

In the London St Christophers '25' Les Black, 1.4.05, just beat Graham Bristow, 1.4.27. Then on the 30th July Alan Colburn produced a personal best '50' in the Southgate event of 2.0.43 taking 6 minutes from his previous best. The next week he completed the Altringham '100' in 4.34.20. That weekend Les Black did 1.1.35 in the Bec '25'. Locally Ray Jarrett rode the GHS '10' Final and managed a personal best time of 30.57.

5th August and an ideal morning for racing was enjoyed by all. Therefore there was no surprise with a superb ride and personal best time by over 2 minutes for Pete Corry in the Unity '25' when he finished in 55.47. Graham Watson came in with 1.0.19. This was the day when Alf Engers beat 30 mph with 49.23! Graham Bristow in the meantime rode the Crest Middlemarkers and finished in 1.4.28. The next day in the Balham Middlemarkers '25' Gordon Button improved again to 1.2.19. Les Black finished in 1.2.42 and Charlie Rodgers 1.9.08. Peter Smith also improved to 1.7.16 in the Weybridge Whs '25'. Graham Watson came 5th in the VS Havant road race. Pete Corry and Ray Puttick finished unplaced in the Mills Enterprises race at Lingfield.

The Paragon Evening Meeting at Crystal Palace was held on the 8th August with the Schoolboys racing first. D Playford (Gemini) won from M Lucas (Gemini) and D Mayes (Gemini) in 3rd place. Just to rub our noses in the dirt the Gemini produced the goods in the senior race as well. T Blake came 1st with Paul Dennis 2nd (both Gemini) followed by John Withey (Wandsworth).

Pete Corry made a good start in the Paragon Track Championships on the 12th August. He won the 4000m pursuit for the Bert Chapman Cup in 5.48.6 from Graham Bristow (5.55.4) and Les Black (6.00.2). Graham Bristow levelled the score in the 500m sprint by winning the AEU Cup for the 6th time in succession and the 9th time all told. Pete Corry came 2nd and Les Black was 3rd. In the 500m Handicap for the Frank Burton Cup Pete Corry took the honours from Les Black. The 5 miles Scratch was taken by Pete Corry and with this win he took the Club Championship. Graham Bristow won the Points prize and George Colget Cup.

In the Fryco Cup '50' on the 20th August Graham Watson was fastest with a personal best ride of 2.9.02. Peter Smith was 2nd in 2.17.49, also a personal best time; Charlie Rodgers took 2.25.06 and Charlie Shipwright 2.38.39 that, although slower than the others, was an improved best time. Pete Corry came 2nd in the Waterloo Memorial 50 miles road race at Lee-on-Solent.

On 27th August in the CDCA '25' two riders just failed to beat the hour. Les Black finished in 1.0.05 and Graham Watson 1.0.09. Charlie Rodgers was our other finisher in 1.8.05. The same weekend Graham came 4th in the VC Havant's event at Lee-on-Solent.

Out onto the Southend road on a Saturday evening went Graham Watson and came back with yet another personal best of 57.40. The next morning he was back to the harsh reality of the hillier and slower Surrey courses and the nearness of his last race. In the Belle Vue '25' he could only manage a 1.1.45. Les Black managed a 1.3.07.

In the Rodney '10' Graham Watson did 24.20 and the next morning came 3rd in the SCCU '25' with a 59.40. About this time the Juniors had a '10' and a '15' Rick Tyson won the '15' in 41.17 and David Feneron the '10' in 31.17. Ray Jarrett was 2nd in 31.52.

Graham Watson managed to get into the winning break during the Catford CC's Brighton to London road race but lost ground in the last two miles to finish in 9th place. Pete Corry finished in the main pack of riders with Ray Puttick a little further back.

A very poor entry for the Mayne Cup and even less managed to get to the Finish. Pete Corry was fastest on the day with a 1.2.16 followed by Rick Tyson, 1.7.17, and Graham Bristow 1.7.37. Even so Charlie Shipwright, 1.12.45, and Ray Jarrett, 1.23.41 did do their fastest times at the distance. Man of the Day proved to be Rick Tyson who takes the Mayne Cup for the second year in succession. His 1.7.19 was subject to an allowance of 7 minutes bringing him down to 1.0.17. Charlie Shipwright did not get close with his nett 1.1.45 and Pete Corry collected 3rd place with his scratch time of 1.2.16.

The Club Hill Climb was run off on the 15th October and resulted in a win for Graham Watson in 4.20. In 2nd place was Ray Puttick in 4.36. 3rd place was rather tight. Rick Tyson took 4.56 and so did Pete Ansell with Charlie Rodgers only 0.6 seconds slower in 5th place. Graham Watson produced a personal best '25' in the Essex Roads event with a 57.09.

Seven riders lined up for Len's '10' on the 22nd October and four of them managed to personal best times on a breezy morning. Graham Button was fastest in 24.06. Following Graham were Ricky Tyson 25.30, Charlie Rodgers 26.11 (PB), Charlie Shipwright 26.54 (PB), Ray Jarrett 28.20 (PB), Martin Webber 29.19 (PB) and Dave Feneron 30.13. On the same morning Graham Watson finished off the season in fine style with a personal best '25' of 55.56

in the Eastern Counties '25' and just failed to beat Pete Corry's 'best of the season' by 9 seconds.

Les Black won the Frank Cleeve prize for Team Points with 12. In 2nd place came Charlie Rodgers and Jack Platts with 8 each. Graham Bristow was 4th with 7 points.

Pete Corry won the Road Race Championship and Paul Dennison the Brian Hunt Shield for the fastest 10 miles by a Junior rider.