

1993

This year was in many ways a bad year for the Norwood Paragon. With Gethin Butler and Martyn Dodgson's departure to the Ribble Valley GT Italia Team there has been a dearth of top class racing results and the loss of five long serving members will be hard to replace. Stan Butler, Bill Diplo, Monty Southall, Fred Lee and Frank Fischer are no longer with us.

Stan Butler died in May. Stan's father George (or 'Pop') would not let Stan join the Paragon straight away in case he wasn't good enough. So Stan rode a few time trials with the Elm Whs. Fortunately he showed some promise so George relented and Stan was allowed to put his name forward for membership in 1929. His first race was the Club '100' on 28th July 1929 that turned out to be a scorcher and on a course that, when subsequently properly measured, turned out to be 5 miles too long! Stan took 5.15.05 for the trip. Frank Southall rode a time trial and did a 4.57 and Reg Heath won the handicap. Later in the year he rode a 12-hour (208 miles), a Tandem '50' with George (1st in 2.4.20) and the Mayne Cup (1.10.02 4th and 4th on handicap).

Frank Southall picked him out and the pair rode and won many tandem events. But Stan also made the news in his own right. Stan was twice runner-up in the BBAR, fourth and sixth on other occasions. He was picked for the 1932 British Olympic Team to Los Angeles in 1932 and finished 17th in spite of having two cracked ribs. This came from a training accident in Toronto. During the War he was in the Home Guard and one of those who kept the Club going. After hostilities ceased he resumed racing, stirring the Club to action and became the anchorman of the team with Bernard Brown, Pete Kitchiner and Vin Callanan. In his own right he won the 24-hour Championship with a competition record of 458 miles. He did ride at Donnington, Brookland and in the first of the Isle of Man massed start races and he performed on the track in paced races and team pursuits.

Stan was a member of the Paragon Committee in various posts from 1930 until his death. For many years he was the Press Secretary and much of the post-war information in this History comes from those notes. He was President of the Club from 1971-73, Chairman of the CDCA and President of the SCCU and a member of both the Pedal Club and the Pickwick Club. He owned Allin Cycles in Whitehorse Road from 1946 to his retirement in 1980.

Steve Roach braved the cold of the South Downs on the 7th February riding the GS Stella hard riders event. He finished in 1.9. John Laurence and Deborah Renzoni came 11th in the Bejaoss 2up near Otley in 52.11

Josh Ansell was picked for the Surrey Team in the Junior Oakdene Stage race in the Bournemouth area over the weekend of the 22nd and 23rd May. On Stage 1 he instigated the winning break of 4 riders with 15 miles to go. In the sprint Josh came 3rd. Stage 2 was a short time trial over 4.9 miles where Josh finished just 49 seconds behind the winner. The 3rd and last Stage went over the famed Spread Eagle And Tollard Royal climbs. Josh attacked and stayed

away for about 10 miles before being caught by the bunch with 25 miles to go. Overall Josh came 7th.

In the Surrey League race at Balcombe on the 30th May Steve Roach, Dillon Adams and Chris Marshall escaped to form a five-man race-winning break but failed to work out the tactics properly as Steve came 2nd, Chris 3rd and Dillon 5th! The following day Steve and Dillon rode the Ashford Town Centre races and in spite of towing the bunch round they still managed to get 3rd and 6th places respectively. Chris Marshall, however, was going well in the Veterans Race on the Lingfield circuit winning from a two-man break. Josh Ansell went to Belgium with a Surrey Division team to race at Wervijk unfortunately he was caught up in a major crash after about 50 miles eventually finishing about 60th. Josh had better luck the next day at Langemark where he finished 8th from the leading group of riders.

On the 6th June Rowan Vacher returned a 59.18 and Doug Vacher a 1.2.18 in the Southend & County '25'. Pete Danckwardt came 6th in the South Eastern RC '25' in 57.30.

In the ECRA '100' on the 13th June, usually one of the swiftest in the country, John Yates took 4.32.29 to get round and the winner John French (Bath CC) took 4.5.08. This will give some idea of the foul conditions on the day.

Tony Miller came 3rd in the Century '25' with a 1.0.47. In the associated Tandem event Gethin and Allison Butler got together and produced a 50.41 but as Gethin is not a first claim member of the Paragon it could not stand as a Club Record. The following day, 20th June, it was the Robin Buchan Salver '25' and Gethin Butler broke his own course record with a 51.47 to collect an addition £100 for his efforts. Keith Reed (Clarence) came 2nd in 54.57 (?) and Pete Danckwardt 3rd with 55.47. Josh Ansell was fastest junior in 57.42 and with Steve Roach returning in 58.36 the Paragon won the Team race. The Mayne Cup awarded to the best Paragon rider on handicap also went to Pete Danckwardt. Other Paragon time were by Mark Kench 1.0.02, Stan Worrell 1.0.35, John Yates 1.2.38, Dave Adams 1.3.26, Jack Platts 1.3.42, Doug Vacher 1.5.05, Mark Oliver 1.6.39 and Roger Amer 1.7.40.

Josh Ansell took Gethin Butler's Junior Record with a 52.39 in the Polytechnic Invitation Evening '25'. He collected the Fastest Junior prize as well. Harry Featherstone did 54.01 and took the fastest veteran on Age Standard prize.

On the 27th June Pete Danckwardt won the Oxford City '25' with a time of 53.46 just a handful of seconds away from his best ever. In the Redhill Minor road race Josh Ansell made the break with Barry Elcome (Festival) and Adam Dallison (East Surrey) but made the mistake of leading out the sprint to ensure a 3rd place from three!

Harry Featherstone rode his first 100 miles race of the year in the Norland Combine event on the A1. The course uses the main road between Tempsford and Brampton with detours to Hardwick and Baldock. Kevin Dawson won in 3.36.22 but Harry was quite happy with his 4.2.06. Josh

Ansell came 5th in the Surrey Division road race Championship. His words "Too boring for words"!

The Inter-Club against the Addiscombe had to be postponed due to bad weather and poor visibility on the A24.

Josh Ansell rode the Guildford Town Centre race but made a hash of the start, which on this tight circuit is fatal to your chances of winning. Josh did recover but missed the break and had to be content with taking the bunch sprint for 5th place.

Jack Platts rode the Chelmer Invitation '25' and was rewarded with a season's best of 1.0.25. Pete Danckwardt had a season's best '10' in the Evening '10' at Holmwood. He did a 21.32 with Rowan Vacher on 23.47 and Doug 24.45. In the Kent League race at Tenterden Josh Ansell jumped across to a lone escapee and was joined by two other riders in a race-winning move. With 12 miles to go Josh jumped two riders on the Finish hill (1 lap to go) and then jumped the remaining rider with 5 miles to go when he went to have drink. Josh crossed the line 15 seconds clear to win.

In the Tour of Milland Valley (near Liphook) Josh Ansell came 2nd after initiating the winning break on the first climb of the prime hill (a mere 1 in 4 on the steep bit). Four riders detached themselves from the front gaining about 1½ minutes. On the penultimate lap Josh attacked again taking one rider with him and they stayed clear to the Finish where Josh lost the sprint to Lee Garner (VC Bad)

In the Essex Roads '50' on the 25th July Pete Danckwardt finally achieved a personal best of 1.53.04. It must have been a considerable help having Harry Featherstone as his 2-minute man and no doubt they exchanged pleasantries as they passed each other. Harry clocked a 1.57.29 and John Yates a 2.4.00 in spite of an early start in cold conditions.

Second Claim member Gethin Butler, riding for RT Italia, won the National 100 miles Championship in 3.44.45. Dillon Adams was involved in a nasty crash before the start of the Chatham Town Centre races when a rider going the wrong way hit him round the circuit. This resulted in a smashed cheekbone that required surgery.

Four Paragonians travelled to France for the famous La Marmotte Sportif event that takes in the Croix de Fer, Col de Telegraph, Col de Galibier before finishing on Alpe d'Huez. Jon Jennings finished 77th in 7.22.07, Steve Roach 766th in 8.50.28 and Allison Butler 2864th in 10.37.13. James Laurence called it a day before the end. In the Alpe d'Heuz time trial on the following day Jon Jennings came 18th in 55.56, James Laurence 24th 1.0.12, Steve Roach 28th in 1.4.34 and Allison 32nd in 1.14.02.

The Les Ingman Road Race had all the makings of a problem when a few days before the race temporary traffic lights were set up in Coopers Hill Road and the Gas Board started stockpiling pipes down Outwood Lane! Taking the hint

we changed the course to the Smallfields circuit only to find that both lights and pipes were removed on the Saturday!

The race itself proved to be a cracker. With a full field of 60 top class riders on an easier circuit than the one they thought they were going to experience caution was thrown to the winds. Immediately the bunch turned into Axes lane by the Dog and Duck at the end of the neutralised section the race exploded. The first 3 laps took 45 minutes and that is 28 mph. A small group of 5 riders sneaked clear by a few seconds. Then over the next two laps other riders joined them until there was a front group of 19. To be honest there was no bunch as such – just a long string of riders. The gap gradually grew until the 19 had a lead of 2.15 before a chasing group of 8 took off in pursuit. They got to 1.30 but progressed no further. Up front the speed and distance took its toll and riders were being dropped. Eventually the bunch split into 4 groups still dropping back but still going at a fair pace. Paul Rogers (VC St Raphael) was doing his best to break up the leading group and earn himself another Dinner Ticket. However it was not to be and a group of 13 riders fought it out for the Trophy having covered 98 miles in 3.45. It was a race worthy of Les Ingman. The Winner was Andy Lyons (Olympia Sport) from Bob Langley (Romford), Gary Baker (Olympia Sport) and Paul Rogers.

The Inter Club Map Reading took place on the 24th October based on Handcross. The course setter Vin Callanan had a good sense of humour siting one control at a farm called 'Hardriding'. The event itself was a Paragon success with Jon Jennings taking the honours in 1.2.40 winning by nearly 5 minutes from Ken Baker (Colchester) 1.7.35 and Dave Giles (Century) 1.8.56. With Graham O'Sullivan in 5th place (1.11.58) and Keith Butler 6th (1.13.06) the Paragon won the Team race. Allison Butler took fastest lady with 1.41.17. John Cleeve marshalled one of the checks and was offering tots of brandy to all that reached him. As he was positioned on the climb of Brantridge Lane between Staplefield and the Handcross – Turners Hill road his ministrations were greatly appreciated.

Harry Featherstone won the Open Time Trial Championship and Steven Roach the Track Championship. Allison Butler took both the Ladies BAR and the Road Race Championship. Josh Ansell took both the Junior Time Trial and Road Race Championship trophies. Steve Roach took the Off-road Plaque.

In the National BAR Gethin Butler (GT Italia) came 2nd to Kevin Dawson with 26.287 mph to Dawson's 27.062. Harry Featherstone came 48th with 23.874. His qualifying times and distances were 1.55.51, 4.2.06 and 251.314 miles. John Yates came 144th with 22.259 mph and a 2.1.04, 4.17.50 and 224.721 miles. Allison Butler was 33rd in the Ladies competition with 21.800 mph. Her times were 1.5.20, 2.11.53 and 5.4.41. Josh Ansell came 15th in the Junior Competition on 27.346 mph. His Qualifying times for the 2 '10's and the 2 '25's were 21.51, 22.12, 52.39 and 56.48.

In September Bill Diplo died. Bill joined the Norwood Paragon in 1928 riding his first Club Event, The Dunlop Cup '100' in July finishing in 5.44.00. His

only other Club race that year was the Mayne Cup when he finished in 1.11.06 for 3rd fastest time. Bill enjoyed riding long distance events and rode many 12 and 24-hour races. He was a baker by trade but also a keen photographer. When he was retired from his baking job with Broomfields he started a new career and a new lease of life at Inca Studios (then in St James Road Broad Green) where he became Shop Manager. From the start of his Paragon career Bill took an active part in Club life and in 1935 he was appointed Club Runs Leader a post he held for 13 years. In 1948 he also took on the post of Club Events Secretary and was responsible for all the Club time trial especially those for the Junior members. In 1956 took on the General Secretaries job, a post he held until 1962. Bill also represented the Club at the CDCA Meetings, The SCCU and the Southern Roads Records Association. He co-ordinated the Club Events and Walter Moon Trophy for 21 years and promoted the CDCA Hardriders event from its inception in 1977. In 1992 at the age of 85 and after 44 years as Club Events Secretary and 64 years of unbroken Club Membership he was forced to step down by failing health.

As a token of the Club's appreciation he was awarded the John Carter Memorial Book in 1956 and again in 1993. He was made a Life Member in 1970 and in 1974 was elected President of the Club. "Uncle Bill" was a most devoted and conscientious official and the ultimate Clubman. Whatever the weather Bill could always be relied upon to be there. Those who came in contact with him will long remember him and he has been impossible to replace.