

F O R T Y P L U S C.C.

A BRIEF HISTORY

Formation The Club came into being on 8th March 1951 following a letter to the cycling press by a Mr. Cecil Cooke, as a result of which 12 persons attended the inaugural meeting at 35 Doughty St., London (NCU Headquarters). Thus Cecil Cooke became its Founder and was invited to become its first Secretary.

Objectives To cater for cyclists of both sexes who had reached the age of 40 years, both as regards cycling and related social activities.

Club Structure Initially monthly runs were arranged on Sundays for the four quarters of the London Home Counties but after a few years new sections were formed:- 1954 - Bournemouth (by Freddie Folds) (in being until he died in 1964); 1972 - St. Albans (Albert Hankin); around 1972 - Luton (Jack Jefford); Sussex (Stuart Tackley) (taken over by the late Bob Edgar on Stuart's death); 1978 - Stevenage & North Herts (Bill Collins); Northern Ireland (Cyril Henry) (unfortunately this section did not survive due to political unrest); 1978 - Southend (Vic Stewart) (with Harry Peck as its first leader). Meanwhile mid-week runs became a regular feature in Herts, Essex and Kent, the last-named area being catered for by what was then the Southern Section. More recently a section has been formed in Northampton (Ron Mills). A total of 12 sections now constitutes the Club's structure:- Essex 'A'; Essex 'B' (for more leisurely paced riders); Essex 'Sunday'; South-East 'Wednesday'; South-East 'Sunday'; Southend; East Northants; St. Albans; East Herts; Stevenage & North Herts; Sussex; South Beds.

Subscriptions The membership fee on formation was the equivalent of 25p. The Club managed to run for around 26 years on the equivalent of a 50p subscription and today it stands at £2.50 for an individual and £3.00 for a married couple. In 1965 'commuted' subscriptions were introduced whereby members could elect to pay the equivalent of four years' membership fee which would cover five years' membership. A further concession now exists whereby a member reaching the age of 85 is granted honorary membership provided that they have been members of the Club for 15 years.

Club Magazine In 1954 Les Seymour edited a News Sheet, then in 1956 Stuart Tackley took over and developed it into the current Club magazine "Signpost", the cover for which was designed by Rose Ford. Editing, typing, printing and distribution have been done by various stalwarts over the years. The journal, issued quarterly, is now posted to all members.

Social Programme During the Club's early days Doris and Ted Groom were the main organisers of Christmas dinner/dances which were attended by such notables as Reg Shaw; Lilian Dredge; Eileen Sheridan; W.F. Stiles; Rex Coley ("Ragged Staff"); Les Warner; G.H. Stancer; Harold Abrahams and Lionel Lincoln. Around 1962 individual sections had become sufficiently organised to arrange their own annual functions.

Club week-ends were also arranged as well as tours at home and abroad, plus trips to places of historical interest. Most of these were organised by Tom Wooder.

Membership Statistics By the end of 1951 the Club had accrued 90 members and by 1981 this had increased to over 300. The efforts of Mae Lang were instrumental in attaining this level of recruitment and the Club now enjoys a strength of nearly 800. In 1975 a film was made by the BBC showing members on a run and recently a programme on ITV featured the South-East Section, one of the stars being the then current President Jack Wyatt.

Club Officials Early in 1952 Cecil Cooke died after collapsing whilst out on a Sunday run. In his honour his widow was invited to become the Club's first President whilst Howard Marshall took over the post of Secretary. A complete record of the Club's principal officials accompanies this history. In addition to those listed and others already mentioned in this text, names to associate with the history of the Club are Geoff and Peggy Bruton; Charlie Pett; Rita Woolf; John Cannon; Bob Finmore and Vic Palmer (the last two members making substantial financial bequests to the Club from their estates). Run leaders - although too numerous to name individually - have been instrumental in the successful life of the Club.

General Administration Four committee meetings are held during the year plus an Annual General Meeting. Minutes of meetings are circulated to all committee members. In 1990, following the appointment of Mrs. E. Blake as Membership Secretary, membership names and addresses were listed on a home computer and during the same year a Map Library, suitably catalogued, was introduced by Jim Stevens.

Current Activities These include an annual re-union; car-assisted runs; inter-section runs; annual dinners by individual sections; specialised menu runs (i.e. steak and kidney pie or fish and chip luncheons), and an annual 'utility' hundred mile event. Runs lists are issued quarterly to all members.

Miscellaneous Now available for purchase by members are transfers bearing the Club's 'logo'; cloth and metal badges, and distinctive cycling jackets and jerseys in the Club colours of emerald green and red, bearing the identifying inscription '40 Plus C.C.'.

Tankards, or gifts of equivalent value, are presented to members reaching the age of 80, provided they have also attained 15 years' membership.

Shortly before her death in 1986, Grace Gardner, who had served the Club for many years as Membership Secretary/Treasurer/General Secretary/Runs List Typist, cycled from Cape Wrath to Dover in spite of being, at that time, a victim of Motor Neurone Disease which had reached an advanced stage. As a result of this marathon effort and the generosity of sponsors, a large sum of money was donated to MND research, surely a fitting act by this loyal and courageous member who was featured in a BSC film about the disease.

The success of the Club has been due to the efforts of all those mentioned in this history, to the Club officials whose names are listed, and to many others un-named:-

CLUB OFFICIALS

Presidents

1. Mrs. Cooke ... 1952-1959
2. Mae Lang ... 1960-1977
3. Tom Wooder ... 1978-1982
4. Bill Moore ... 1983-1984
5. Eve Engel ... 1985
6. Ted & Doris Groom 1986
7. Jack Wyatt ... 1987-1990
8. Rose Ford ... 1991

continued over....

Secretaries

1. Cecil Cooke .. 1951
2. Ted Groom .. (short time)
3. Howard Marshall 1952-1954
4. George Canham.. 1955-1959
5. Les Seymour .. 1960-1964
6. Tom Wooder .. 1965-1976
7. Grace Gardner . 1977-1984
8. Ernie Vesper .. 1985
9. Maisie Wright . 1986-1987
10. Wulf Rowland .. 1988-

Chairmen

1. Ted Groom .. 1951-1954
2. Don Irving .. 1955-1967
3. Lew Pemberton.. 1968-1976
4. Frank Trueman.. 1977-1983
5. Bill Turner .. 1984-1989
6. Doug Brunwin .. 1990-

Treasurers

1. George Knapp .. 1962-1975
2. Mr. Shaw .. 1976
3. Mr. Thorne .. 1977-1979
4. Kathy Card .. 1985-1986
5. Eric Gobell .. 1987-

Magazine Editors

1. Les Seymour (News Sheet) 1954-1955
2. Stuart Tackley ("Signpost") 1956-1967
3. Stan Russell ... " ... 1968-1972
4. Bill Jennings 1973-1975
5. Stan Russell 1976-1978
6. Vi Wilcox 1979-1980
7. Rose Ford 1981-

Membership Secretaries

1. Kathy Card .. 1985-1989
2. Edie Blake .. 1990-

*This post did not exist as a separate entity before 1985. Prior to that date membership records were maintained by the General Secretary.

RF/EP - 1991