



# THE WHEELER



WOLVERHAMPTON WHEELERS CYCLING CLUB Est 1891

NO 28 SUMMER 2016 EDITOR DAVE BROOKES 07948 838098 david.brookes@alumni.manchester.ac.uk

## 125TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Welcome to the 28th edition of the current series of the *Wheeler*. The *Wheeler* is published twice each year but in addition the club also has a comprehensive website and a very active Facebook page should you need further information.

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### A Little bit of History....

*Robin Kyte President*

The next few lines are intended to give a brief history and a flavour of the last 125 years of this prestigious cycling club. I hope that you find the content interesting, informative and even amusing. It all started in the Talbot Hotel in Wolverhampton on the 6th March 1891 when the club held its inaugural meeting. Records from 1892 show the Honorary Secretary, Henry Haden Kendrick to have been a solicitor from the Oaks, Bradmore Wolverhampton and the Captain to be one T. J. Rochelle. Initial membership was restricted to 30 and was by invitation only. At that time many cycling clubs had connections or affiliations to either religious or political groups, but the Wheelers did not declare any such criteria as a condition for membership. In fact to this day our ethics mean that we do not discriminate on the grounds of religious or political beliefs. However, we were somewhat slow to realise the considerable benefit of extending membership beyond 'men only' as it was not until 1936 that the club was opened up to women members. Some other rules that have long since lapsed, included a fine of one shilling (5p in today's currency) for anyone overtaking the Captain during a ride - Something today's president and chairman think should be reintroduced, at the current value of course! It should be remembered that in 1891 the 'Safety Cycle' with a chain drive and wheels of equal size was fast making

the Ordinary or 'Penny Farthing' obsolete. However, records show that the Molineux grounds were used for cycle races long before it became the home of the Wanderers Football Club including a Wheelers One mile race for 'Penny Farthings'. The Molineux was a venue which drew many famous racing cyclists of the day and attracted enormous crowds. In fact Englishman, James Moore, (resident in Paris) set an early World Hour Record covering 14 miles 880 yards. Moore was the winner of the very first official bike race at the Parc-de-St-Cloud near Paris on Friday 31st May 1868. He went on to win the very first Paris-Rouen a distance of 134 kilometres in just under ten & a half hours.

The club has survived through numerous wars, soon after its founding came the Boer War but it was the First World War that took a tremendous toll on everything, including cycling. It appears that the Wheelers survived pretty much as a small group of friends, although there is evidence to suggest that the first secretary, Henry Haden Kendrick, survived the Great War not passing away until 1947 aged 88. Alas, his son Haden Mostyn Kendrick did not, their family grave in St. Philips churchyard, Penn fields, testifies to this. World War II had a lesser impact upon cycle sport in Britain as it was engaged in its own internal conflict, The BLRC (British League of Racing Cyclists) versus the NCU (National Cyclists Union). It was in June 1942 that Percy Stallard, a former Wheeler, organised the first 'Massed Start' road race in the UK from Llangollen to Wolverhampton. This started a bitter conflict between the NCU's Time Trial based status and the road race rebels of the BLRC fighting to get Continental style, road racing established in the UK. The Wheelers were originally a NCU club and were banned 'Sine Di' (until death) by that body when we 'defected' and joined the BLRC! It was not until 1959 that the two bodies merged to form the BCF.

Over the years the Wheelers have produced an envious succession of Regional, National, European and even World Champions in various disciplines. Today, the 'Wheelers' are bigger and more financially stable than ever before and are devoted to serving their members both young and old. So, whether you are a teenager or a pensioner there is something for you in this wonderful organisation.

As part of the 125th anniversary celebrations, on Sunday 15th May the Sunday club ride re-enacted the very first Wheelers 'Club Run' out to Boscobel House, near Bishop's Wood (see over for photographs at Boscobel). Also a silver commemorative metal badge bearing the clubs name and set around a 'winged wheel' based on the original badges used by the founding members is also now available ( details also overleaf).



A large group of Wheelers enjoying the sunshine at Boscobel on the 15th May celebration ride

### Wolverhampton Wheelers Silver Badges

As part of the club's 125th Anniversary celebrations, a special silver metal badge has been struck with enamel infill (see photos). This badge is a faithful reproduction of the original 'Winged Wheel' design from the club's founding in 1891 and is available to club members only for the bargain price of just £2.50 each. The club has secured a limited quantity and sales will be on a 'first come -



first serve' basis.

Please contact *Robin Kyte* to reserve your historic badge either by Email [robinkyte@aol.com](mailto:robinkyte@aol.com) or by phone 01902 53913. Payment by cash or cheque payable to 'Wolverhampton Wheelers Cycling Club'.

Please note that the club will be hosting a celebration barbecue on the 14th August at the Wobaston Cricket Club in the late afternoon/evening - more details coming soon.

### Track Update

The track has now fully reopened after closure for essential maintenance which included repair to the track surface and a new fence. Although this has caused considerable disruption to our normal club activities it has ensured the long term structural future of one of the clubs most valuable assets.

The track league is now well under way and producing racing which is both as competitive and exciting as ever.

The regular track training has also resumed with the Monday night women only session running between 7.00 pm and 8.00 pm being particularly popular. Coach *Brian Handley* tells me that beginners are welcome and club bikes are available should you need one. Talk to *Brian* any Monday night.

*The Wheeler*



Club members take part in a large range of cycling events. The above group photo was taken at the end of the Shropshire Highland Challenge on 12th June.

### 'Summer of Cycling'

The Wheelers are promoting a range of youth cycling events this summer. The Friday night training sessions will continue to run throughout the summer and are open to riders from 8 to 16 years of age. In addition there are **Freewheel** events on Wednesday nights as part of the **Track League**. These run between 6.30 pm and 7.15 pm and are open to riders from 8 to 12 years of age. Club bikes are available for budding racers should they be needed.

On Saturday 3rd September *Karen Langford* is organising a **Youth Omnium** with 'Olympic Style' racing and prizes for the top three of each age group. Riders must attend a minimum of four Friday sessions to be eligible to race.

### Dates for your diary:

The club **100 in 8** takes place on Sunday 11th September and for the first time will start and end at Aldersley stadium with a Paris-Roubaix style finish on the velodrome. All proceeds to the Brain Tumour charity.

*Andy Jones* will be promoting the annual club cyclo cross event on Sunday 20th November. See *Andy* for details

A full range of **club kit** in various sizes is available for members to purchase. Contact clothing secretary *Jane Lister* for details and availability by email at [wolverhamptonwheelerskit@gmail.com](mailto:wolverhamptonwheelerskit@gmail.com)

Finally if you are reading this newsletter and are not a member you would be more than welcome to join us! **Membership** secretary *Debbie Lewis* can accept on-line applications but the previous manual method is still available for those who prefer it. Instructions for both methods can be found on the club website.