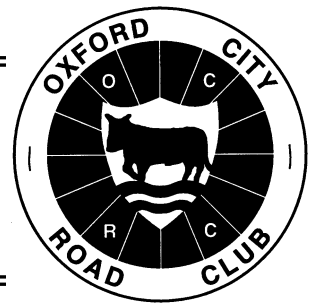


# Oxford City Road Club News



Welcome to a new issue of the Oxford City RC News. At the last AGM I took over the publicity for the club, and hope to be able to publish a few copies of this newsletter every year, to let you know what's happening in the club, and what we've all been up to. If you have anything you'd like to contribute, or you've taken place in a cycling event recently, I'd like to hear from you, even if its just a list of finishers in a TT you took part in. In the future, I plan to be able to post most of the stories that appear here on a new website devoted to the OCRC. This is a development that I'm sure will appeal to many of our members, as the Internet increasingly becomes the number one medium of communication.

*Howard Waller*

## In this issue...

- Latest race news from the Duo Normand and Mallorca
- Sunday rides list 2000
- Trip to Calshot track
- Early time trial dates for next year

## What's Happening...?

### *Reading track*

Fed up with slogging away on the 'turbo' in the evenings? Here's the cure! Two sessions a week, on Tuesday and Thursday, between 8:15 and 9:45pm, under the floodlights at Palmer Park cycle track (I hesitate to call it a 'velodrome'). The sessions are loosely organized by Prime coach Dick Poole, and cost £2.95. You ride your own road bike, and most people take their 'training' bikes down, as a fair bit of sand gets thrown up on to the track from the long-jump pit—not good treatment for those fancy nine-speed transmissions! Two groups usually form up, out of the need to get a bit of discipline in the riding more than anything—we have seen anything up to 80 riders there. The slow group

ride around the blue line in pairs at about 20mph (sounds fast compared to our club rides, but you're on a track with no hills, so it's not that bad). The fast string follows the red sprint line and keeps up a steady 24mph, until someone decides to make everyone work hard for their money by doing a lap or two at 28/30mph. Quite a few riders like to swap in and out of the fast line when they can't keep up with the pace, adjusting the session to suit their own fitness. We've seen mountain bikers and even a tandem there. A few familiar faces from the summer chaingang have also been spotted getting in a few sneaky miles in, most notably Percy and his mates.

### *Spanish training camp*

With a view to kick-starting our road race season next year, a few of us are considering spending a bit of time in the warmer climes of Spain, but rather than forking out on all the dosh to go with Graham Baxter or Sporting Tours, this will be a DIY version—all you really need to take is a bike, and the sunshine comes for free. We'll probably be going to the Costa Blanca (Alicanté airport) for two weeks in March, from the 4th to the 19th, which will bring us back to Oxford just a week before the clocks change and evening training becomes feasible again. Those interested in joining in should contact Howard or Geoff.

## *Ghent-Wevelgem*

Ever fancied watching a bit of the European action? This famous one-day classic takes place in the first week of April, and isn't so far away that you can't get to it comfortably in a weekend. We'd like to get a few of us together to go over this year—take our bikes and do a bit of riding while we're there.

## *Manchester Velodrome*

It is hoped that we can get a few people together from the local area (a minimum of ten is probably going to be cost-effective) to organize a visit to the fabulous Manchester Olympic Velodrome early next year. If there is enough interest, we will try to hire a minibus to cut down on the cost of individual travel. I am sure that those of you who have ridden there before will be only too ready to re-visit the experience, and any track novices should take the opportunity to try it out—you'll be hooked. It'll make a welcome break from the damp slippery roads that we have to train on at the moment! Andrea, the resident coach, is a good teacher of the skills required for the track.

## *Milton Keynes Bowl criterium series*

Looking ahead to the longer summer evenings, the Milton Keynes Bowl will once again be hosting a Thursday evening criterium series. These races start at 7pm, and the series goes on all summer long. Those of you who have designs on placing in the league may want to buy your race number for the summer (approx. £2 fee for the whole summer), or you can enter-on-the-line for about £4 and see how it goes. Just get away from work sharpish in the evening, bring your race licence down, and off you go. The races are open to all categories of rider, from Elite downwards, so if you're a lowly 3rd cat like me, don't expect to be up at the pointy end of things for very long. They do make for a good sharp training session though. On one occasion last year I got the opportunity to race alongside (or should that be 'hang on for dear life in the slipstream of...!') some semi-pros from the Netherlands, over on a

cycling trip and cleaning up on the criteriums here. On another occasion I found myself on the wheel of Maxine Johnson, getting in a bit of speed work before the women's national road race the following weekend. The beauty of the criterium format is the commissaire allows you to drop in at the back of a bunch if you get dropped and lapped, so you'll still get those quality training miles in, right up to the end of the hour.

## *Isle of Man*

We are planning a club invasion of the island this year, not for the famous TT races, but for the Manx Cycle week, which takes place over the week of 18th to 24th June. There are a whole series of races during the week. As well as the opportunity to watch the Pros and Elites taking part in the 3-lap road race over the mountain course and a time trial over one lap, there are also events on for the less talented amongst us—time trials, a hill climb, and a whole series of evening Kermesses with substantial (so I've heard) prize funds. There is a specific road race for the veteran category, and for the women as well. If there is enough interest we may be able to join forces and rent a holiday cottage while we're out there. Sara and Howard are going there to contest the women's road race and evening Kermesses, respectively.

## *Women's racing*

As last year, there will be a series of WCRA handicap races at the Milton Keynes Bowl. These take place on the 25th March and 1st and 8th April. BCF points are on offer, and there's a

prize for the series winners. Last year Jo and Helene from our club came 7th and 8th in the series (There are also supporting men's 'scratch' races). This series would serve as a good warm-up for the WCRA road race championship on the 14th May, which is in Rugby this year.

## *VC Venta races*

Novices to road racing might like to consider the VC Venta races that next year will take place on the Barnsfield Heath circuit, just west of Bournemouth (having been thrown off their usual venue, Thruxton motor race circuit). They have racing for all categories of rider, and the circuit is an easy 4.5 miles to learn on. Last year we found the VC Venta races a good introduction to the vagaries of road racing—a bit more gentle than you'll find at the 'school of hard knocks' at the Hillingdon and Eastway London circuits. Provisional dates are 4th and 18th March, 9th April, 2nd and 16th September.

## *On the continent...*

Looking ahead to the very end of the season, don't forget to leave a place in your diary for the Duo Normand and Master's Tour of Mallorca, both of which come up in September (see reports in this edition).



## **Contacts:**

Howard Waller Tel.: 01865 715332  
howard.waller@blacksci.co.uk  
John Jenkins Tel.: 01865 371655  
john.jenkins@rovergroup.com  
Geoff Moseley Tel.: 01993 811102

## **A trip to the Calshot track**

Howard Waller

On Saturday 27th November, a group from Oxonian went down to Calshot track to try it out, and to do a spot of filming. Alistair Batey of Oxonian works for Central TV, and he'd arranged for a crew to follow us down there, and film a small slot for the following Friday. As there were a few spaces left, four of us from Oxford City made up the numbers, as

we were also keen to try it out.

As I understand it, the original Calshot track was the 'temporary' one that was used for six-day racing at Wembley. It was then last used in London at some exhibition race or other in Earl's Court. When the fashion for six-day races died out in London, it was taken down to a hangar at Calshot Spit, south-west of Southampton, where there was an old flying boat aerodrome, and some rather large aircraft hangars falling into disuse.

Apparently the track didn't fit the hangar very well and had to be cut into sections, resulting in a rather lumpy transition from curve to straight. If anyone knows whether this is true or not, I'd be very interested to find out the correct version of events.

Whatever, Hampshire CC have thrown quite a bit of money at the facility in the past few years, and a new Siberian Pine track was built there by Ron Webb (the same man responsible for the surface at Manchester) in 1995. The hangar also incorporates an extensive indoor climbing wall and an indoor dry ski slope (!) at the far end.

It's obvious when you get there that the main limitations to construction must have been the width of the hangar. This was something that was not entirely resolved when you ride the track—there is a very abrupt transition between the curve and the straight that had almost everyone's back wheel slipping coming out of the turns, until we were taught the 'Calshot line'. Needless to say, the track is very tight—142m round (1 km to seven laps), and 45 degree banking on the turns (a touch steeper than Manchester). Because of its size,

they only allow a maximum of 16 riders on the track at any one time. Despite the steepness, however, it's still not steep enough to balance the forces involved when you're at 200 m sprint speed—everyone was involuntarily climbing the banking around the turns.

After dividing us into two groups, the novices were allowed a gentle introduction to both fixed wheels and the wooden banking while the rest of us got used to the tightness/dizziness of the track (even above the blue line). The 'g' forces round the turns took some your neck some getting used to, and on the way home Gil worked out that we were probably pulling between 1 and 2 g at maximum speed. Despite this it was amazing how quickly our brains adapted to riding on something that would require a ladder to walk up.

After the novices had got a bit more confident, we were taught a sprinting line that had us drifting up to the red line entering the turn, and gradually dropping back to (and attacking) the black line through to the exit, which, although not the shortest, was most definitely the fastest and safest.

While this was going on, the

camera crew were setting up lights on the corners and panning with us down the straights, which generally added to the drama of the place. Alistair was also fitted with a 'pen' camera, first to his helmet, and then later on to various bits of his bike, to capture some close-up action footage.

To finish we had a couple of devil-take-the-hindmost races. The first one for the novices was won fairly convincingly by Paddy Smith, after Vic Prior unwisely thought he could use his time-trialling ability to outrun the opposition. The second, for the more experienced amongst us, turned into a cagey affair from the outset, but came to an abrupt end after the first sprint when the eliminated rider lost concentration and pulled up too quickly, hitting the top banking, and cutting himself on his slide back to the bottom, bring proceedings to an early close.

It's a good track but difficult to master. Riding there makes Manchester seem like a doddle by comparison. The report was shown on Central News on a Friday a couple of weeks back, for those of you that caught it.



***After I wrote this report, Bob Wells of the Oxford University Club, wrote this little addendum, which corrected some of the factual errors I made:***

"...The track that was installed in the seaplane hanger at Calshot in the early 1970s originated from the plywood track constructed for the London Six Day races held c. 1967-68 at Earls Court. (Six day races had been held in London in 1930s and there was another series at Wembley on a decent Ron Webb track in the 1970s.) It would be consistent with my memory if the new track at Calshot was claimed to be a rebuild of the larger Ron Webb Wembley track-but I really don't know if that is the case.

I was a spectator at the first post-war six and it was really thrilling. The pre-war sixes had followed the old formula of requiring one member of each team to be on the track continuously 24 x 6. The London revival introduced the current practice of having separate sessions. Hugh Porter (later four times world pursuit champion) and Peter Post (later manager of the successful TI Raleigh squad) rode but, if I recall correctly, the event was won by Danes Freddi Eugen and Palle Lyke.

All the plywood panels were flat so the ride was very rough with some wheel-bouncing transitions in the

bankings. ('Like riding round a thruppenny piece' meant something to the pre-decimal generation). There were some massive stack-ups in the race and several broken bones. Also several riders hit the bridge to the track centre. Instead of using dernies for pacing they attempted to use normal Raleigh mopeds. These had more problems on the bumpy track than the bikes and I saw races where the riders overtook their pacing motors in frustration!

Very little modification was needed to the Earls Court track to install it at Calshot. Harry Jackson used to organise a Friday night track league and Hampshire CC provided residential courses in the 1970s which Oxford City RC used to attend. This stopped when Hampshire CC put a surcharge on riders from other counties.

I had ridden a couple of seasons in the Meadowbank (Edinburgh) track league but found Calshot pretty difficult to ride. However, the coaches claimed that they hadn't failed to get all their classes of school kids riding up the banking by the end of a one-hour session. I believe that is how Shaun Wallace (British international track rider and pioneer of altitude tents) started his career.

Bob

# Tandeming in the Duo Normand

On Sunday 27th September we took our tandem to compete in the Duo Normand, an international event (in Normandy, naturally enough). Although this is primarily a two-up time trial, there is also a tandem section. The town of Marigny (it's about the size of Wantage) is closed for the whole day while the event goes on, and there are nearly 300 teams competing. The first riders were off at 8:30am, and the elites didn't start until nearly 5:30pm.

We'd originally planned on doing the event as a mixed two-up, but as Sara had missed out on a fair bit of the season due to injuries of one sort or another, we thought it better to take the tandem, which would suit our different fitness levels better. Ironically, I was probably the weaker on the day, as I'd gone down with a bad cold on the trip over the channel, and wasn't looking forward to over an hour's riding in the rain.

The course was over mostly "sporting" roads (i.e. covered in deposits from the local farmer's fields), with a short section of nice smooth main road in it (completely closed—imagine TTING along the A40 with no cars). It was flat for the first half, finishing with some nasty hills which we'd been warned to save some energy for. The roads were semi-closed, which meant that we'd have the whole of our side of the road to ourselves, and the small amount of traffic that there was would only be allowed to go in the same direction as we were. This is bliss for any tandem pilot, particularly as it meant that I was able to steer across the whole road to get the right line on the sweeping downhill sections, where normally I'd have been playing stop-and-go on the brakes.

The first half went pretty much to plan, nice and steady, apart from a near miss overtaking the following car of the team in front of us - he was too intent on watching the action in front

of him and hadn't noticed us sneaking up in the rear view mirror, with the result that we nearly lost the plot going over a wet and slippery pedestrian crossing as we tried to get around him. We later found out that our 20km split had been only 1 second faster than the tandem that finished second to us.

It was in the second half, over the hilly section, that I started to feel like I was breathing through a straw every time the road went uphill, but we were still reeling in the two-up teams ahead of us. A heavy shower 5km from the finish didn't put us off too

*...A heavy shower  
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too much..*

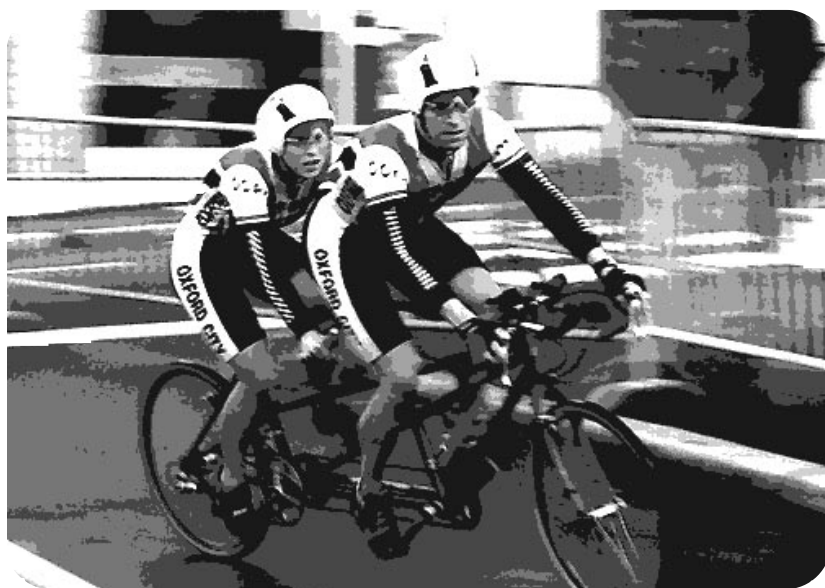
much, and came in quite handy to wash most of the muck off. The approach to the finish line was (very) downhill, with a sharp right hander immediately afterwards—a bit treacherous in the wet on slick tyres—so I was already braking before we got to the line, just to make sure we stopped in time. We finished in 1 hr 22, nearly two minutes faster than the next tandem.

After resisting the temptation to cough up the insides of my lungs, we got changed and sat down with a picnic to watch the afternoon's entertainment. The weather got progressively better throughout the day, and by the time Chris Boardman *et al.*

were setting off it was lovely and sunny, with hardly a breath of wind - a complete contrast to the morning. Chris and his mate Jens Voigt showed everyone the way, setting off last and covering the 54km in a new course record of 1:04.

At the presentation itself, the mayor of Marigny seemed a bit surprised to announce the winners of the tandem competition as a man and woman (all but one of the tandems we beat were all-male), but nevertheless we got to stand on the podium next to Chris B, and for our efforts were presented with a bunch of flowers, a strange roman pot trophy (which we later learnt was made of concrete), and a genuine yellow jersey each (Credit Lyonnais were sponsoring the event). We think it might have been Francesco Moser handing out the prizes (he was the guest of honour), but since neither of us knows what he looks like without a skin suit on, it was hard to be sure. Some winners received a much-coveted CL lion each, and there was a certain amount of backstage bargaining going on after the prizegiving to try and get one, but to no avail. Next year we'll have to go back and defend our title I suppose, although Sara's quite keen to have a go at the mixed 2-up section, as they won the lions rather than jerseys.

Howard Waller and Sara Dean



# MASTERS VUELTA DE MALLORCA

by John Jenkins

John Jenkins and Geoff Mosely enjoyed fast and furious road racing in bright sunshine on Majorca during the first week of October. The annual Vuelta De Mallorca for Masters is organised by the Mallorca Tourist Board in conjunction with Hoteliers Organisations and Local Authorities. It provides racing on closed roads with full Police escorts—even for lone riders when necessary!—for veteran riders from all over Europe—this year's overall winner was from Norway. Several of the riders are ex-pros and are used to the ceremonies and the presence of TV cameras at the start and finish, full barriers at the sprint areas, crowds of spectators lining the route, and jersey presentations to the winners after each event, but for our men it was a novel experience.

The full tour comprises 5 days of racing in 1 week, with fields of up to 95 riders. It includes two one-day races, the second of which is a criterium finishing along

the promenade at Arenal Beach, and a 3-day stage race, with transport supplied from the hotel to a different start and finish each day. Day 3 started at the top of a mountain in the north of the island (which even the coach couldn't manage, resulting in the riders

**...The bunch raced at speeds of anything up to 39 mph on the flat...**

having to ride up to the start) and included 12 hairpins up a Cat-1 climb to the finish line. The bunch raced at speeds of anything up to 39 mph on the flat, but fortunately

slowed considerably on the final climb! All the riders were invited to magnificent casino for dinner on the last evening, and for the presentation of prizes (one of which was a 2 week holiday). The whole week was a superb experience—the only problem is how to feel satisfied with LVRC racing for the next few months until we can go back again next year!



## Chippenham & District Wheeler's 3-up Team Time Trials

*Howard Waller*

Maintaining a strong tradition for our club in this event, our club sent two teams to contest this year's edition on 10th October. For the men, we had Gil Summy, Pete Blackshaw and myself, and the women's team consisted of Sara Dean, Jo Wilcock and Helene Carabin.

In the men's team, Pete gave me a few instructions about maintaining a steady pace and turning off the front after

counting 30 pedal revs (I'd not done any team time trialling before, but had done quite a bit of chainganging in various road races over the summer). So after a fast downhill start we settled into a good rhythm, with each of us taking our turns in good time. We seemed to me to be a very well balanced team, with no one rider much stronger than any other, and despite battling against a stiff headwind over the final few miles managed to beat by a minute the time set by the OCRC team last year. Our 1:03 for 27 undulating miles was eventually good enough for 3rd place, behind a semi-pro VC

St.Raphael squad who got under the hour despite a puncture, and a team from Bath.

The women's squad lacked enough experience at team trialling events and lost a bit of cohesion towards the end. Despite this they comfortably managed to defeat their rivals with a time of 1:20, and collect the winner's cheques.

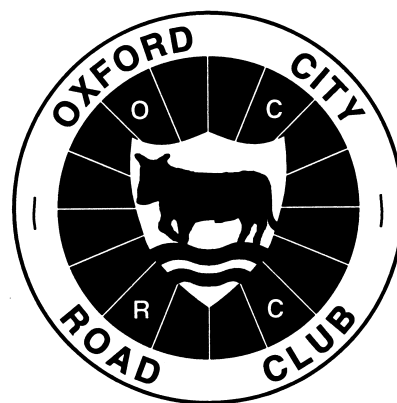


### Selected results:

1st overall	VC St Raphael	59:27
3rd overall	Oxford City	1:03:27
2nd Vets	Oxonian	1:13:58
1st Women	Oxford City	1:20:02

## Don't forget...

- 1 There won't be a club ride on boxing day, but we'll be going on Sunday 2nd January as usual. Howard will be leading a ride to the Cafe at the Great Rollright Farm Shop.
- 2 Your 2000 subs are now due. They remain unchanged from last year, so send your £9 to Ken Lansbury (note his new address: 44 Harwell Road, Sutton Courtney, OX14 4BW. Tel.: 01235 848381).
- 3 Provisional dates for the new year:  
*Sunday 26th March:* Club Hilly TT, 22 miles, East End, 09:00.  
*Sunday 23rd April:* Open Hilly TT, Long Hanborough.  
*Sunday 30th July:* OCRC Road Races, Otmoor circuit starting at Beckley.



## Sunday club runs 2000

Meet at Martyr's Memorial, St. Giles, 9:00 am

Date	Venue	Mileage
2 Jan	Grt Rollright Farm Shop café	60
9 Jan	Streatley Hill	60
16 Jan	Stokenchurch - Riverside café Benson	50
23 Jan	Burford Broad St. café	50
30 Jan	Chilton Garden Centre Teashop	45
6 Feb	Blackthorn Village Tea Shop	24
13 Feb	Morton-in-the-Marsh Market Café	60
20 Feb	High Wycombe	45
27 Feb	Northleach Corner Café	50
5 Mar	Tingewick	35
12 Mar	White Horse Hill	50
26 Mar	OCRC club hilly @ East End 22 miles	Event start: 09:00

All cyclists welcome—just turn up and join in.

Tel. John Jenkins on Oxford 371655 or

Howard Waller on 715332 for more information.

### Send all your news, views and results to...

Howard Waller  
10 Cornwallis Road  
Florence Park  
Oxford  
OX4 3NP

Tel./Fax: 01865 715332

Email: [howard.waller@blacksci.co.uk](mailto:howard.waller@blacksci.co.uk)