



Olympic Velodrome

## *Spindle* – March 2012 – [cycleclubsudbury.com](http://cycleclubsudbury.com)

**N**ot many miles on the bike during the early part of the month for most of us. I really didn't expect 100mm of travel chaos to float down and settle on the roads outside and throw all our biking aspirations out of the window. Training schedules have obviously been messed about with and the miles will have to be clawed back before the season begins. This situation thankfully didn't apply to me as I turned the heating up and just watched more tele'. Fortunately the weather guru redressed the balance later on and produced spring like conditions for us all to enjoy. Within the space of 8 days I calculated a temperature difference of 22degs. Very odd!

I finally re-acquainted myself with the bike and struggled a bit at the beginning, convinced the brake blocks were locked on to the rims as I floundered up the hills! (Nothing new there then, I hear you say!)

**T**here has been a lot of media focus recently concerning 'us' Lycra Louts displaying poor riding practices by jumping red lights, cutting up cars(!), riding on pavements and generally pi\*\*ing off anyone behind the wheel of a vehicle. Trouble is, we have all seen it happen but invariably, the culprits are not usually 'proper cyclists' but commuters desperate to get to and from work on old clunkers and youngsters who don't give a toss anyway. To compound the problem, they always seem to be clad in dark clothing and rarely have any lights. But as 'we' are also cyclists, we get tarred with the same brush. So the general public's perception of you, me and all decent law abiding riders is that we are all cycle riding tossers!

We really do have a 'duty' to portray ourselves as responsible and helpful (to other road users) to change this situation.

I can never quite 'get' riders who wear black or dark clothing on a bike out in the lanes on a dull day. Drivers seemingly have enough trouble seeing us with bright stuff on, so don't give them an excuse (after they have just whacked you off your bike) to come out with

the old chestnut of 'Sorry, I didn't see you mate'.

I blame the clothing manufacturers for compounding the problem by producing nearly all riding kit in black. What's that all about?

As for having no lights, they can be had for under a fiver for a set that will 'do' the job in urban areas. School kids are the worst offenders for being lightless and parents must take the blame here I'm afraid.

Anyway, rant over!

**O**ur recent evening talk by Daniel Coughlan from Peake Fitness was well attended. I'm sure all of the audience went away with a lot of useful information and tips to put into good use during the coming months, both off and on the bike.

It's a vast subject to cover but he managed to condense into interesting 'bite size' chunks Daniel did point out that CCS members are entitled to a 10% discount for the physio services he provides at Stoke Golf Club.

**W**orld Cup Track cycling at the new Olympic Velodrome was held recently as a test run for the real thing during the summer. I was fortunate to get hold of some 'hard to get' tickets via



Robin W, who had to forego his because of his recent mobility problems.

After initial concerns about security into the velodrome, (it was akin to airport screening!) the day went well in the brand spanking new building. The British track riders obviously found it to their liking as they gathered an impressive array of medals. With double the spectator capacity of Manchester, the atmosphere certainly took your breath away (or was it the 30deg heat inside?) especially when Team GB were in the running for a gold. Chris Hoy was the star as usual and plucked victory from the jaws of defeat nearly every time he rode. How does he do that?

A top bloke if ever there was one! All we need to do now is get our 4 man pursuit team sorted and for Victoria to get her head into gear and we could have another hatful of Olympic cycling medals this summer.

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### CCS TIME TRIALS - Important News

All Cycle Club Sudbury time trials are run under the auspices of Cycling Time Trials, the national body to which CCS is affiliated.

To cover time trial riders for insurance purposes, the Club pays a levy to CTT for each rider who rides in a time trial. In recent years this has been £1; unfortunately the rate for 2012 has now been increased to £2. CTT justify this increase by saying that the Club affiliation fee, at £30, has remained unchanged for a long time, and they need more income to cover the increased cost of insurance, other increased administration costs, and an increased drug testing regime! (You have been warned!)

The Club has therefore decided that the following increased rates for riding time trials will apply during 2012.

Per season: CCS 1and 2claim members; £45-00. Members of other clubs; £50-00

Per evening: CCS 1and 2claim members; £3-00. Members of other clubs; £4-00

(Rates previously advertised were:

Per season: CCS 1and 2claim members; £25-00. Members of other clubs; £30-00

Per evening: CCS 1and 2claim members; £2-00. Members of other clubs; £3-00)

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### CCS 'FACEBOOK' GROUP PAGE

Did you know that CC Sudbury has a 'Facebook' Group page? This social networking web-site is free to join and use and is a great way to communicate quickly with all your other club mates. It has the potential to be a valuable resource for club members. You could post messages here to let other members know about events you intend to ride or go to watch, or if you would like to organize a weekend ride or for anything else cycling-related for that matter!

At the moment only 45 of you have joined in. It would be even better if more of you signed up. So why not sign up and join in? Click on the 'Join our-Facebook' heading on the CCS web page <http://www.cycleclubsudbury.com>

and follow the on-screen instructions to create a 'Facebook' account (if you don't already have one) or to join the CCS group page (if you do). Once you've created your account and joined the group, don't forget to keep an eye on posts on the group page to see what's going on.

### CCS 'FLICKR' GROUP PAGE

CC Sudbury also has its own dedicated 'Flickr' group page. 'Flickr' is an image (photo & video) hosting web site. Photos & videos can be uploaded here for other people to see. You don't need to sign up the 'Flickr' to see these images- just click on 'View our Flickr group' on the CCS website and this will take you to the CCS 'Flickr' group page. However, if you want to upload photos yourself you'll need to have a 'Flickr' account and be a member of the group. To do this, again, just click on the 'View our Flickr group' on the CCS web-site, then click on the 'Join this group' heading on the CCS Flickr group page and follow the on-screen instructions. At present very few members have taken advantage of this. So, why not join in? Perhaps you might have taken some pictures of club-mates at a recent Audax? Or taken some pictures of a trip you made to see the Tour de France? You could upload these images to the CCS 'Flickr' group page to enable your fellow club members to see them. Don't forget to add a title, description or tag (when prompted on screen) as this will help users of the site easily find the photos they are looking for.

Jonathan Weatherley

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The pic above shows Barbara Law putting grandson James through his paces on the 'rollers' ready for the summer (?) season. I bet grand-dad Terry was behind it all.....

**A** new bike facility has been set up in Glemsford in the west of our area by biker Malcolm Borg who is offering CCS members a 10% discount on repairs and bike consumables. Details as shown below.....

*The Cycle Clinic*

*Unit 1 Clockhouse Farm*

*Cavendish Lane*

*Glemsford, Suffolk.*

*CO10 7QA*

*01787280535*

*07890788212*

*[www.thecycleclinic.co.uk](http://www.thecycleclinic.co.uk)*

*[workshop@thecycleclinic.co.uk](mailto:workshop@thecycleclinic.co.uk)*

*Cytech Accredited & ACT member*

\*And don't forget that Rob Morse at LifecycleUK in Bildeston, also offers CCS members a similar 10% off most things in the shop.

**Our own Mad March Hilly Open Time Trial is *this Sunday*** starting from Lavenham (at 8.00am!) If you want somewhere to bike to and cheer on the large contingent of 11 CCS riders taking part, come and give them some support. Eats and drinks at the village hall will be available, so no need to find a café stop either. The course starts from Lavenham and takes in Gt.Waldingfield, across through Newton Green, Boxford bypass, Hadleigh bypass, up towards Semer, then across to Monks Eleigh and back to Lavenham.

It's interesting to note that Mac McDermott's 30mile Vets TT record set with Colchester Rovers has been finally broken after 33 years. His time of 1hr 06mins 55secs was bettered last season by Jim Reed (CRCC) by 22secs!

The East District Cycling Associations Short Distance Open T.T. completion results have just been published. It shows two of our members; Damon Day and James Rush were very close together in the listings, with Damon at 14<sup>th</sup> place with 26.2374 average mph and James in 10<sup>th</sup> place with 26.3476 average mph. These were the taken from their best 4 x 10mile TT's and 3 x 25mile TT's.

**Now** a long awaited (by me at least as I've never actually seen him on a bike) series of articles by Brian Webber about the early years of our club.....

## **Back in Time -**

### **My Memories how it all started at CCS.**

*by Brian Webber*

#### **Chapter one.....**

It was very early in 1980 that I was told that a Cycle club was being formed in Sudbury and that they were meeting at 9am on a Sunday morning on the Market Hill. Having two boys one aged 11years and the other 15years old, I thought it would a good idea for them to join. Little did I realise that I would become a member as well. So on that fateful day we turned up with Tony Hall on the Market hill, my two boys on their racing bikes and me on my ASPB (all spare parts bike) which had a single free wheel. First person I spotted was Harold (Raymond) who I had been at school with many years before. He quickly pointed out that I should go along for the ride although I hadn't been on a bike for years I told him. The late Brian Nixon (time keeper & secretary) then

appeared and between them both I was press ganged into going on the ride. How far are we going I asked as we left the Market hill, not far today said Brian Nixon only about 20 miles, my heart



Brian Nixon & Brian Webber

sank I had visions of me in a heap on the side of the road. But as we cycled towards Henny, I thought this is not too bad, both my boys thought it was great as well. Then we hit the first hill and I could hear this horrible noise. My first thought was my bike was falling to bits, then I realised it was my heart banging and my lungs clanging. Brian Nixon appeared beside me "Keep it up" he shouted "You are doing well" (Liar). The rest of the ride was a blur. When at last we returned to Sudbury market hill, my legs were like jelly and my behind felt as if someone had kicked it. (No pain no gain) Harold & Brian Nixon approached me, "See you next week, same

time” they said, and from then on the Sunday club ride was a must, so the Webbers took out a family membership with Cycle Club Sudbury.

A few months later the Club started Thursday evening 10mile time trials. By this time I think the club had just over 14 members and the timekeeper was Brian Nixon. The start was near Cramphorns Nursery going out through Newton Green, doing a dead turn in the road at Assington High Road and back to finish at the Nursery, I was coerced into riding one of these TT's (the first of many). As I was still riding my ASPB, Brian N set me off second from last telling me not to worry when my minute man came passed me. I set off at a fast pace, the wind streaming through my hair (yes I had quite a lot then) and reached the turn. No sign of my minute man yet so I carried on back to the finish. Still no sign of my minute man, I pulled up at the timekeeper and gasped “My minute man didn't catch me”, “No” said Brian N. “he wouldn't, he packed in after one mile”, I came back to earth with a bump, “You took 34mins. Not bad for your first time especially on a bike like that one, but you will improve”.

It took me until the next season to get down to a short 28 on that course, but that's another story. *To be continued.*



## Wandering Memories.

by Brian (The Wandering) Mann

Funny isn't it how the mind wanders and mine wanders all too readily nowadays! There I was reading Lance Armstrong's book when I found myself remembering an Audax I rode a few years ago. I suppose what triggered it off was Lance's casual mention of gravel rash, which is an occupational

hazard for racing cyclists who habitually shave their legs to make cleaning up grazed skin a lot easier .

Anyway, I could see the face of my companion on that day but couldn't remember his name, this niggled me so much that I put my book down and started to run through the alphabet of names, hoping this would trigger off my memory, but to no avail so instead I remembered what I could of the ride.

It started at Pamber Heath near Aldermaston and was I believe 200k long. I was just about to start when this rider who I'd previously ridden with at Stevenage turned up late, I told him I'd wait for him to book in while everyone else left. We were just about to leave when he told me he'd left his mobile phone in his car a quarter mile away and couldn't remember locking his car! Fifteen

minutes later we set off, fifteen minutes later we stopped, the puncture fairy was angry with him for holding me up!

Puncture sorted; off we went again and soon took the left turn that leads to Watership Down. Now there are two bits to Watership Down, the lovely swoop that descends for ages along a grass centered track, rarely used by cars, but to enjoy this you first have to suffer on the climb which will have you standing up on your pedals and pulling hard on your handlebars until, like my companion, your chain breaks! They say trouble comes in threes so we counted this as number three! No harm done and after a quick repair we were on our way.

I can't remember much of the route but we must have controlled in Hungerford before heading to Ramsbury where the incident which triggered these memories happened. I'm not keen on gravel rash, blood or broken bones and usually manage to keep things “shiny side up” as they say. Any close calls have been down to impatient motorists, especially the one who nearly got me on Herman Ramsey's 400 when a dozen of us had ridden through Melton Constable nearly 200k into the ride and I noticed George Hoppit dropping off the back so I slowed to give him a wheel, successfully dragging him back then dropping behind him to help again if necessary. As we were passing a side road on the left, a car came down the hill towards us and a sixth sense told me he was going too fast on the wet road to stop at the give way markings. I managed to accelerate alongside George as the car skidded to a halt on the centre line, missing my rear wheel by inches. The driver sat there for ages, probably shaken up by how close he'd come to wiping me out.

Not my fault, unlike the incident at Ramsbury where we were enjoying a downhill stretch and approaching a right hand bend fast, too fast. I was leading and can still see the verge on the left, quite a high bank covered in nettles and backed up by a barbed wire fence, suddenly my short sleeved shirt didn't seem to offer much protection from what was surely to come next.

Braking too late my bike drifted left, visions of laying my bike on the road were discounted as suddenly my front wheel gripped the road, transferring my weight forward, the rear wheel left the ground and flipped the bike round through 180 degrees, I caught a glimpse of my companion's startled face as I was by now facing the opposite way to where I should be.

My back wheel now hit the road, my brakes were still on, my weight was transferred to the seat, the bike flipped through another 180 degrees, the front wheel hit the road and by some miracle I was still upright, I released the brakes kept my

balance and freewheeled round the corner. "How did you do that, that was the best bit of bike control I've ever seen". When you've been praised like that you don't want to forget who said it, so I continued recalling the ride in the hope of remembering my companion's name.

Of course memories of Audaxes ridden merge into one after a while but I think we controlled at a small airfield, possibly Netheravon, where we saw a motley collection of Heath Robinson type planes and later at Popham Airfield which many may know as the airfield on the left at the M3 end of the A303.

It was here we caught up with Richard Phipps, Secretary of Audax UK. As I was due to ride my first 300k at Mildenhall the next week I asked Richard what it would be like. "Like a 200, only further" was his reply. And you know what, he was right, if you get tired and aching on a 200 you'll get tired and aching on a 300, not worse, it just lasts longer!

**PS** - at last I remembered my companion's name - it was Matt Sharrat from London, last seen on one of Andrew's rides last year. I had to spend ages looking through my old Audax handbooks and trawling through the lists until I eventually saw his name - oh for a more reliable memory!

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## Nick and Rob's big cycle adventure.

*By Nick Reed & Robin Sidgwick*

It was January 2011 and the snow was still on the ground. We hadn't been on our bikes for a while so our thoughts turned to choosing a destination for our next long haul cycling trip. It had to be somewhere different and a bit more challenging from our previous trips. We had cycled through Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Southern India so perhaps somewhere not so hot and humid. And so it was that last September we found ourselves in T4 at Heathrow waiting for our flight to Outer Mongolia via South Korea.

After travelling for a day and a half we arrived at our hotel in Ulaanbaatar (the capital of Mongolia) late Saturday night.

Mongolia is the size of France, Spain and Great Britain combined with a population of about 2.7million and is sandwiched between

Russia to the north and China to the south. It is a country of two cultures. Over half the people live in the capital which is heavily influenced by western consumerism. The vehicle of choice seemed to be large 4x4's but they were stuck in traffic jams most of the time and rarely ventured out into the Steppes. Most of the rest are Nomads living on the Steppes leading a very hardy and austere life and that was where we were heading. Leaving the stark Russian style architecture of the city behind us we caught a train for an overnight journey west of the capital. Our destination was Erdenet, a town of over 8000 miners dedicated to mining in one of the largest copper mines in the world, and then we could start cycling.

Ahead of us lay nearly 400 miles of off road cycling and camping in the wild. There are only about 1000 miles of surfaced roads and the rest are either dirt/gravelly/sandy tracks with no signposts or you just ride across the grasslands. Fortunately our two support vehicles

(Russian vans that were built like tanks) were driven by nomads who had been hired for their navigational

skills. There were 12 people in our group and we had 7 Mongolian staff to support us, one of whom was a Doctor. Everything we needed was carried in the vans as once we left civilisation there were few opportunities to restock.

The bikes the group used were either Trek or Giant with front suspension. Maintenance was clearly not a strong point with the Mongolians as long as things worked OK they didn't see much point in regular or preventative maintenance. Consequently Rob's brakes didn't work fully, I had an almost bald rear tyre and my brake blocks were virtually down to the metal. When this was pointed out the response was underwhelming, our Mongolian 'mechanic' couldn't see a problem as my tyre wasn't flat and if you squeezed hard enough the brakes worked.



CCS shirts in Mongolia – Magic!

In the spirit of adventure we carried on. However the tyre and blocks were finally replaced after a few slippery moments on some of the downhill sections. Rob was less successful with his brakes but stoically did the whole trip with partially functioning brakes.

We quickly left Erdenet and rode over rolling grassland to the brow of a hill for our first view of the stunning panoramic scenery as far as one could see. Sadly words and pictures don't really do it justice but it was breathtaking and vast. Undulating grassland with hills bordering the Steppes, the sense of space and isolation was magical and nothing in the West compares. As we settled into our riding there were animals scattered along our route. There were herds of cattle, yaks, sheep, Kashmir goats and horses very often being herded by a nomad on horseback. Apparently the land is not owned by anybody so there are no fences or manmade barriers. Animals were free to wander wherever they wanted and occasionally we would hear a rumble and a herd of anything up to a hundred horses would come thundering across our path (literally) a truly majestic sight.

On one occasion we came across some Nomads who were herding their yaks to market. They had already been walking for three weeks and still weren't there. Nomads are remarkably tough and resilient.

Our days typically consisted of an early morning wakeup call

at 7ish when two of the cooks would bring us tea in our tents. It was a real luxury as the nights were sub zero and there was ice



on our tents most mornings. Breakfast was about 8 and having taken our tents down we were ready for cycling at 9am. The part of Mongolia we were crossing was between 5000 and 6000 feet so when the sun was out it was very intense with virtually no cloud but with a constant desiccating wind and most of us suffered blistering of the lips. During the first week the days were warm, about 25 C, but when the sun went down the temperature dropped quickly and during the night it was sub zero. We were cycling off road and the surface varied between dirt, grass, sand, gravel and rocky descents and ascents! Our limited off road skills were honed during the trip as our confidence grew. The sand was the worst and one or two people fell off in sand traps. Amazingly Rob and I managed to stay on. The support vans

would go on ahead and prepare a much needed lunch. We tended to cycle until late afternoon as we had to pitch our tents each day and it was dark by 7 00pm.

There was no light apart from torches & moonlight so the cooks had to set up their kitchen tent and prepare dinner before it got dark.



Very often we ate out in the open instead of in the communal tent and it was an unforgettable experience to be dining al fresco amongst such stunning scenery. For the first few days we were even given a beer with dinner until they ran out. There was little to do after dinner as it was cold and dark so it meant going to our tent early. It was always cold at night so we had to get into our sleeping bags with several layers on to keep warm. This meant the nights seemed a bit long but we did get used to it. We camped in a variety of locations including the side of a valley, the bottom of an extinct volcano, next to a lake, by rivers and once or twice in wooded riverside settings. This was a bonus as we were then able to light a fire during the evening to keep us warm and we could 'stay up' until 10.

As we cycled further west the scenery changed and became hillier with forested hillsides and several rivers to cross. Mongolians don't seem to 'do bridges' much except in villages which were very few and far apart. We therefore had to cycle through them if we could or otherwise wade across. A couple of the climbs were quite challenging up to 2000m high, long and on a poor surface, usually gravelly which made the descents interesting. Our final westerly destination was Karakorum which was the old capital in Genghis Khan's time and is the site of an important monastery which hadn't been totally destroyed by Stalin when Russia ruled Mongolia. On route we were privileged to visit a nomad family in their ger tent. The tents are made of felt with a wooden frame designed to be dismantled for the winter when they move to more protected sites. Mongolian tradition is such that travelers can arrive unannounced, which we did, and be treated to genuine nomad hospitality. It is hard to imagine in the UK that 14 cyclists could turn up on your front door and expect to be invited in. There is a protocol when entering a ger which in order to avoid offending the family meant we had to move in a clockwise direction, men on the left and women on the right. The other custom we

experienced was drinking fomented mare's milk. The wife would pour the milk into a communal bowl which was passed round to each of us and we had a taste. It was considered rude if you refused but OK if you pretended to drink it. It wasn't that unpleasant a little like a yoghurt drink with a citrus hint. The family had 20 mares that needed milking by hand everyday quite a job. They depend a lot on their animals for food as well. Apparently they eat their horses in the winter when food is scarce. We saw very little fresh produce as there is nowhere to grow it. We came across one or two supply shops and they only had dried or tinned food and booze. In the winter the Steppes are covered in snow and travel is very difficult if not impossible.

Even in Ulaanbaatar which is the coldest capital on earth the temperature drops to -40C or more.



After 10 days

exhilarating cycling we had run out of meat so one of the nomads disappeared for a couple of hours and came back with a sheep he had bought for about £30. It was promptly slaughtered and butchered in a traditional nomadic way for that night's meal.

Needless to say we had fresh lamb that night. The following morning we awoke to find a herd of cows and yaks wandering through our camp and reluctant to move. They are very big animals close up but they were eventually persuaded to go.

However we struck camp and cycled towards our next stop which was a Ger Camp at Tsenger Jigguur Springs for the night. This was a collection of ger's on a site with facilities. Hot showers fed from a geothermic supply a few hundred yards along the valley, oh joy!! There was also a pool fed by the hot water and it was somewhat surreal to be sitting in hot water with the temperature of the air near freezing in the foothills of the Khangai Mountains.

Flush toilets had been built but didn't work, not unusual.

Having spent our first night in a ger tent which was very cosy as long as the woodstove was kept alight we awoke to a cold, misty and windy morning. Wrapping up in all available layers we set off through the foothills but after an hour or so the weather deteriorated and it snowed to the extent that we couldn't carry on cycling. We made another unscheduled stop at a nomad's tent while we decided what to do. Our nomad driver's knew

of a small village about 10 miles away that had a boarding school that might be able to shelter us from the snow but we had to cycle there first. Snow and a biting headwind combined to make it the coldest ride of our lives.

How relieved we were to hear that the school would let us use one of their empty dormitories for the night. Do not think that we were in luxury though. The school would have been closed in Britain it was in such a poor state of repair. No flush toilets just a hole in the ground outside with wooden planks over. No running water in the washrooms and flaking paintwork everywhere. This was a school where children from nomad families aged 7 upwards might spend 4-5 months at a time because they were too far from their homes to travel regularly. However it was great to be out of the elements.

Sadly this meant an end to our cycling and we missed two and a half days of our planned cycling. Incredibly the drivers managed somehow to get all our bikes on to the top of the vans and us on the inside plus the entire luggage. The concept of overloading didn't occur to them. The rest of the trip back to Ulaanbaatar was by van but we got to see Karakorum and visit the monastery which still had monks living and working there. On our penultimate day we had the chance to ride a Mongolian horse in sand dunes formed by sand blown from the Gobi Desert. A memory we won't forget.

Arriving back at UB we enjoyed some traditional Mongolian music and dancing including a Mongolian throat singer who was quite extraordinary. Following the inevitable shopping trip for souvenirs we embarked on our 34 hour return trip home.

We had had an unforgettable adventure in a little known country whose way of life is unique. The hospitality of the nomads was one of the main highlights and their ability to survive in such harsh surroundings is truly staggering. It certainly makes you appreciate what we take for granted. As I write this (Jan 31<sup>st</sup> 2012) the temperature in UB is -35C with wind chill -45C it puts last winter's snow fall and cold temperatures into perspective.

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*Olympic Footnote -  
Couldn't resist this one ....*

