

Club Captain's Racing Season 2017

My second full racing season was sandwiched between the Southborough Wheelers New Years 10 and the Farnborough and Camberley Christmas 10TT on 16th Dec. A racing season totalling 1189 Miles.

The NYD is a bit of a tradition with the Rye Wheelers and it was pointed out recently by Jim that one year we fielded 24 racers. Recent years we have fielded 10-15 and its not just about the race, it's also about trying on the skin suit after over indulgence during Christmas festivities or to see how many layers certain racers can race in, it could also mean selection or de-selection for the opener 25 mile three up in March.

The previously mentioned "Three up" was to be the first race of this season, teaming up with Barry and Steve, however due to heavy wind and rain, we DNS'd (Did Not Start). So, my official start of the season was the VTTA 30TT, this was the event that was filmed by Monty Wilson and friends for their university studies and it was staged around a race between myself, Barry and Steve. The win was taken by Steve, Barry 2nd, leaving 3rd for me, although I did snag an early season PB.

A series of 10 milers on The Q10/22 (A20) affectionally know as an "hard mans cours" for its rolling terrain and often blustery conditions. It was at the first of these the VTTA 10, I was reminded by Jim that the the first rule of TT'ing is if your are on the start sheet you start. This was due to the DNS recorded at the Three Up! Since that one way conversation I decided to uphold that No.1 rule for the rest of the season. The Q10/22 didn't let us down as each race was blustery as to be expected, but I was happy to record a long 23 as a course PB.

These 10s plus a VTTA 10@10 put me in a good place for my first 25 of the season on the 30th April racing The Wigmore on the 25/8, this also resulted in a distance PB with a 1.01.31

Our Club 10's were staged between the 5th May and 25th August, I raced in seven of these, but I'm not sure the racing was as important as the post beer-brief in the pub afterwards.

The theme of wet and windy conditions played a part in a number of races this season, starting with the SPOCO 50TT, or "sporting course" on the A20. Two long rolling laps between Leeds Castle and Ashford didn't make for a pleasant 2hrs 15. The following week in Norfolk for a 100 was no better and on a course that's description that simply read "Horrible."

Into June, the weather was improving as well as my times starting with the KCA 50. Followed a week later by the KCA 100, on a better day and course than the recent Norfolk race, gained me a PB by 23 minutes (4.22.59) and 2nd in the Club Champs. My third and final race in June was back on the Q25/8 reducing my 25 mile time by a further 9 seconds, they all count! I had clearly peaked in June.

The rest of June and into July was taken up by the Maratona with the Wilson's, Steve and Mark Amon. An excellent trip to Northern Italy, although not with out incident for myself. A tumble in a tunnel on day two and face plant into a back of a car on the final decent of the trip, clearly I wasn't voted in as Club Captain for my bike handling skills.

The first race after the Maratona was the ... again back on the Q25/8 however this resulted in a DNF, I was in a tad of discomfort with a couple of my ribs after the Maratona tunnel tumble. So, with the 24HR only a few weeks away I withdrew my entry for the VTTA 50 including Club champs. I volunteered to marshal this race. Now, there is one sure way to put you off racing and that's

marshalling on Brenzett roundabout the volume of traffic coupled with racers hitting the roundabout from angles is enough to put any one off.

So onto the 24HR, 22/23rd of July. A fantastic event organised by the The Mersey roads. I had recruited two old Army buddies again, who both travelled down from the North of Scotland to stand on Press Heath roundabout on the A41/A49. This year turned out be a total wash out, literally, with a recorded rain fall of 18.5hrs. My support team were as vocal as ever but never sympathetic and my only comfort was a fold away chair constantly drenched in two inches of water. With a finishing distance of 377 24 miles down on last year there was no time to dwell as there was banter to share over curry and beer and there is of course 2018.

Next up was the ECCA 12HR on the 13th August in Cambridgeshire. Mark Amon had kindly offered to support on this one and provided excellent support, encouragement and fed me jam sandwiches. The weather was kind and the course was quick and I finished with a respectable distance of 235 miles, I felt good on the bike and I believe there's more to come in the 12HR.

The club 10's were coming to an end with the Club Championship on the 25th of August. September I raced the KCA 25 on the Q25/10 (1.02.07) and a very foggy VTTA 25 that favoured the late starters on the Q25/12. (1.02.11) 3rd in Club Champs.

October brought a wet and windy Grand Prix de Gentlemen, a 17 mile type of "two up". Where a racer paces another round the course, only letting them come aside for the finish. I, for the second year running paced Rebecca "Good Drills" Wilson. Despite the conditions and nearly being taken down by a wind blown tree branch we made it home with a PB. Nick paced Steve Gooch and were beaten to first place by a single second. The VTTA 15 including club champs on October 15th was the last official race of the season and I managed to get back some form with a 35.49.

Now, any sensible person would have left it at that, but scrolling though the CTT website I come across the The Farnborough and Camberley Christmas 10 (16th December). Getting clearance on the home front I put it to Nick "never say never" Wilson, who's a definite maybe. The day comes, defrost the car for an early start to Hampshire. Arrive at the hall, car park is an ice rink, Nick arrives, first words spoken. "You have some explaining to do Captain". Temperature not rising above zero, start delayed half an hour. Anyway, 2018 Time Trialling season finished that day with a lung busting 24.04, Nick with a 21 and another 51 head cases (93 on start sheet).

My reward apart from the self satisfaction was.

PB's 10, 25' 30, 100 and 12Hr
Club Champs, 3rd 25TT, 2nd 100TT 1st 12 HR (by default)
KCA BAR 3rd
KCA BAR Veterans 3rd
VTTA BAR 3rd
VTTA 85 Championship 3rd
National long Distance BAR 10th
National long distance BAR VTTA 5th.

If you got this far, thanks for reading.

Captain.



