

LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 1

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As from January 1st, Cambridge Lightweight News loses the pre-fix 'Cambridge' and becomes the newsletter of the Lightweight Group of the Veteran-Cycle Club. This is the first edition under its new title. We welcome the many members of the V-CC who have expressed an interest in the Lightweight Group. The newsletter will be a platform for discussion about bikes and cycling and to exchange information in a positive and friendly way. C L N was often a personal account of lightweight matters here at Cambridge along with news and information from friends and enthusiasts. Constructive contributions, long and short, will be very welcome. With the formation of the Lightweight Group we have acquired many new readers and so I may repeat some items from earlier C L News.

As you will have read in News and Views, the Cambridge Section is holding a ride in May dedicated to the memory of Neville Ireland who was the Paris/Rensch marque enthusiast. He was very enthusiastic as a M E and always responded promptly to any query, also carrying out a lot of research, and was about to publish a book on 'Spanner' Rensch. Luckily for us, Alvin Smith has taken over the task of M E, and he is just as dedicated. The ride will be for all makes of lightweight but we hope that owners of Paris/Rensch will bring them along. I have spoken to Neville's wife, who is delighted to hear of the ride and hopes to join us at lunch, the provisional venue for which is the Ickleton Lion. Alvin was already hoping to arrange a ride for Paris/Rensch during 2006 and he is planning to come along in May, take part, and perhaps get some feedback for his later ride. The Bates, Ephgrave and Hetchins rides are always good days out and we hope this one is as well supported: the Paris/Rensch machines are worthy of a ride of their own. There you go folks – five months to get them polished up and ready to go. The ride is very suitable for fixed-wheel machines.

Soon after that, July 1/2nd, the Hampshire Section will be hosting the first Lightweight Group weekend with rides on Saturday and Sunday plus a social event on Saturday evening. Further details will be announced soon but remember that for this weekend of rides machines should be from the period 1930 – 1960.

As I edit this edition I am also building up Patricia's 1948 Paris Tour de France which has been renovated by Gerry at C & G, Liverpool. He made a superb job of it, the front and rear ends are chromed, the rest of the frame sprayed black. This frame has the bi-laminated head lugs and as it is so small the bilaminate is all in one. All of the cut-outs are sprayed white which in effect gives a white head tube, the top of the twin plate fork crown is white with the red, white and blue chevrons. In such a small frame the seat tube is naturally short and we did not want it to be too fussy so we had the 'Eiffel Tower' transfer with the 'Paris' bands above and below it. The result is a fairly simple but classic look. As the rear ends are just over 110mm we may have to fit 4-speed rather than five with a Simplex Tour de France gear to do the changing. Chainset is Chater Lea, the round crank version. Bars Capo Berta on GB alloy stem and Universal brakes. Wheels 26" Conloy rims with Blumfield SF G/F hubs and a Brooks Swallow saddle to finish it off.

Patricia and I have inadvertently created an up-to-date example of the problems to be encountered by future restorers of classic lightweights. We both have modern hand-built lightweights built by Paul Donohue of County Durham about seven years ago and we have steadily up-dated them to keep abreast of developments. Recently we had them both converted to carbon-fibre forks, Aheadsets, Carbon Stems and the newer bar styles, quite a big change. Looking ahead to about 50 years hence, I wonder what specification a restorer would use as his datum? If he had the modernised spec. I'm sure some enthusiast would declare that it was wrong being several years ahead of the build date.

When we are restoring classics we always try to equip a machine with components to match the period of the frame. Having said this, from time to time we have to fit something as close as we can whilst we search for the ideal part. It does not stop here, however, as with luck some even tastier bit comes along -

say a hand-built stem of the same make as your frame. I have an R O Harrison lapped stem fitted to my Shortwin. If you ever see one, it is identified by the trade-mark five-pointed 'star' with R O H inside it.

I would like to show an unusual component in each L News and will start off with one of the rare pre-war riveted Airlites, a front as I don't have a rear. As you can see, the flange instead of being pressed onto the barrel is riveted to a small flange (which is pressed onto the barrel). I would like readers to send details, plus an image, of similarly rare items and we can show them to readers who may not have seen one.



Hints and tips:

Corrosion: up until last year anti-icing measures on UK roads entailed gritting lorries spreading a mixture of salt and grit granules, this was easy to see and was not too cruel on our bikes as cars soon dispersed it to the sides of the road. Last winter the local authorities started to suspend the salt in water before spraying it on the roads. In the Spring I noticed that the bikes I used for most of my winter miles (app. 200 per week) were in a sorry state indeed, in spite of reasonably regular washing. Several of our midweek group found that the rivets holding the mudguards to the stays had rusted away. I also realised that much of the bottom bracket area was quite corroded. This made me remember that at the finish of one of Cambridge Section winter rides I put away two bikes unwashed, and returning to them a couple of days later found that a lot of the alloy was covered in a white corrosion. Luckily I caught it early enough and it all washed off so was OK when I polished it up. The conditions to look out for are where there is high pressure weather system about so no rain and clear skies giving very cold nights. When you go out the next morning the roads are, to your surprise, wet. This is the salt laden solution waiting to eat up your prized possession – you have been warned!

TECHNICAL TIPS from David Palk (1) - STUCK SEAT PINS

All lightweight enthusiasts must have come across aluminium seat pins and stems that have become jammed fast and are impossible to remove. This is due to the electrolytic action between different metals, causing corrosion which swells the alloy and bonds it to the steel. The traditional methods of removal are by cutting with a saw blade or heating with a flame. Both methods are tricky and can cause damage to the frame or fork. Here are two alternatives that I have found to be successful. When fitting a replacement alloy seat pin or handlebar stem always apply grease to both the male and female surfaces of the interface to prevent the problem reoccurring.

1. Try this one first. Wrap a towel tightly around the seat tube of the frame where it contains the jammed seat pin. Pour several kettles of boiling water onto the towel. This relatively gentle form of heating will sometimes cause enough expansion to break the bond between the steel and aluminium. When the frame has been thoroughly heated, and whilst hot, try gently twisting the post out using an attached saddle. This method can also be used with a fork which has been removed from the frame. (*Editor's note: plumbers use a spray to freeze pipes for repair – spraying this on the seatpin could increase the chance of success.*)
2. Dissolve it out. Yes, really! A strong solution of caustic soda dissolves aluminium alloys very efficiently, but does not seem to damage steel. Caustic soda is extremely dangerous, but can be used as a last resort if a seat pin or stem is too deep to cut, or if paint finish must be retained. Read the instructions and take all necessary precautions when using caustic soda. Although available from any hardware shop, It can cause horrendous injuries.

TECH TIPS (2) - INTERNAL RUST PROOFING – David Palk

Frames and tubular steel components will rust from the inside, usually very gently and gradually, but if we want our frames to last indefinitely this internal corrosion should be subdued or stopped. I have used thinned bitumen paint in my last couple of restorations. This is available from any hardware shop. I normally thin it to the consistency of milk and then pour it into, and then out of, as much of the frame as is

possible. If also mixed with some used motor oil the solution will remain soft and tacky indefinitely. Any mess is easily cleaned up with white spirit. There are costly and elusive proprietary solutions on the market for this purpose, but bitumen paint is economical and very easy to obtain and handle.

Richard Cole tells the editor that he recently met someone with a very good replica Cinelli cycling jersey, the owner could not remember where it came from. Does anyone know who is producing them now? I am also looking for a 50s cycling jersey. I have one or two which I use but they are all a bit on the skimpy side as I am 6' tall but relatively slim. At L'Eroica there were dozens of superb jerseys being worn so I had the feeling that someone with a knitting machine was producing custom jobs.

The Lightweight Group also hopes to find interest in the social/cycling scene relevant to the area of interest. As an example, I came across an item by Reg Parkwith in an old copy of the 40+ magazine – Signpost. Here is an extract which refers to 1925 (I know, 5 years too early):

“Dad of course stayed at home working. On Sunday he would go to Club Row to buy bicycle parts. He would assemble the parts at home until he had a complete bicycle, which he had no difficulty in selling for 3 or 4 pounds. Both he and my mother were good cyclists. As I grew older Dad took me on his Sunday morning trips either to Petticoat Lane or Club. But it was Club Row that really fascinated me. Stalls and barrows lined this street all selling parts and fittings for bicycles even down to the transfers to adorn the head and seat tubes. These cost one penny and had fancy names like Gladiator or Viking. Dad made my first bicycle, a roadster. This was after he caught me trying to ride his wooden rimmed Raleigh with one leg through the frame. He taught me to ride in Victoria Park.” Bryan Clarke tells me that the Club Row market still exists but not as a cycle mart.



Do you think that this image of a time trialist in full flow personifies what our Lightweight movement is about? I guess most of us would love to be able to re-create this machine just as it was back in, what I would estimate, to be immediately pre- or post-WW2. Note the obligatory bell and black clothing. The Bates is also fitted with Resillian brakes, tubs, shortie front mudguard, pump and a lamp bracket.

Sturmey gear ratios

For Sturmey users I will reprint the Sturmey ratios as advertised in Cycling of January 1951:

- AM** - 3-speed medium ratio 15.55% increase, 13.46% decrease from normal
 - FM** - 4-speed medium ratio 12.5% increase, 14.3% and 33.3% decrease from normal
 - ASC** – 3-speed medium/close ratio fixed gear 10% & 25% decrease from direct drive
 - AC** – 3-speed ultra close ratio 6.66% increase and 7.7% decrease from normal
 - FC** – 4-speed close ratio 9.1% increase, 10% and 25% decrease from normal
- FM, AC and FC internals are interchangeable.

This one short piece gives you all the information you need to calculate your gearing. I can use my Bates Vegrandis in two formats. My favourite is as a 50s time trial bike on fixed with one brake and a ‘pinger’ bell with a pair of Conloys on Bacon Slicer Harden hubs. If I particularly want to use it at a hilly event I can replace the rear wheel with one fitted with a Sturmey FM – just to show off it is a 1951 dated hub which matches the year of the frame. With an 18t cog I get 72” normal gear which gives 81” top and 48” bottom. Some of the riders on the Bates ride in Hampshire had a 22t cog giving a 39” gear bottom gear which I envied on some of the steeper sections.

Derek Taylor from Shoreham-by-Sea says: The only 'old' frame that I have is a (French) Dilecta which I purchased from Strudwick Cycles of Brighton, in 1953 . I do need an appropriate bottom bracket and headset before reconstruction can begin!!! Incidentally, I am desperate to obtain any original transfers and any history of the Dilecta marque so I would be most grateful if any members can help.

Peter Kohler from the States has enlisted for the Lightweight Group, he has produce two detailed articles, one on Raleigh Clubman, one on Raleigh Lenton – URLs below:

<http://www.sheldonbrown.com/retroraleighs/clubman-kohler.html>

<http://www.sheldonbrown.com/retroraleighs/lenton-kohler.html>

Another member from the States, **Martin Hanczyc** has done a lot of work to try to identify Sturmeys Archer triggers, so no excuse to have the wrong one now!

<http://genetics.mgh.harvard.edu/hanczyc/pdfs/satriggers.pdf>

Bob Freitas (alias Nitro Bob), from the States, who we met in Italy at L'Eroica pointed us towards the Wool Jersey site. There are almost 12000 images of mainly lightweight machines on it. For example: Patricia has a Pennine with artwork on the top of the seat stays and sure enough there was another one (Bill Talbot's machines) which led us to a third and then by contacts to an interesting article on this by Norris Lockley. Wool Jersey can be found at: <http://www.wooljersey.com/gallery/> If you are not fed up with L'Eroica then Bob has 49 detailed images of classic Italian bikes exhibited in Gaiole sports centre. A must for the Italian bike enthusiast. Go to: wooljersey>nitro bob>Italy 2005>L'Eroica exposition to find it.

Some readers may wonder why there is such an emphasis on websites such as those above. There is a wealth of information out there. To cite an example: David Palk visited us a few weeks ago and was saying that he had just acquired one of the Team Raleigh machines. I opened Wool Jersey and did a search and straight away we found details of two other Team Raleigh machines. Even if you don't own a PC, I'm sure most people have one in the family and with a bit of smooth-talking you could probably get your nearest and dearest to open one of these sites for you – especially if they are after a bit of babysitting.

From David Hinds – Granby Marque Enthusiast:

Granby the First of the British Lightweight Builders?

It is generally recognised that in 1912 Bastide introduced to the British cycling scene the concept of an all brazed frame with seat and chainstays going directly from the rear dropout to the seat cluster. This was the start of lightweight building as we know it. But who was the first British builder to follow this method of construction? This is where I stick my head above the parapet with the suggestion that Granby was the first of the British lightweight builders. By 1915 Bill Ewings, an active, racing member of The Catford CC. was advertising in the club gazette thus :-

Speedmen:

When requiring a new racing cycle call at the Granby Cycle Works, 324 New Cross Road, S.E. and inspect our new Path and Road Racing Cycles.

No Bolted joints, perfect rigidity with lightness, straight back stays tapering to the fork end. Our own special quick release fork end with which the wheel can be removed and replaced in 15 seconds.

Prices from £6 15s.

Other Racing Cycles from £5.

All classes of repair undertaken.

324 New Cross Road is next door to a public house, The Marquis of Granby, a well-known South London landmark. The position here gave rise to the name of the marque.

The quick release referred to in the advertisement was the first of a number of innovations that emanated from the Granby Cycle Works.

Ewings fought in and survived WW1 as did Percy Dean, another active Catford member, who shortly after the war became Ewings business partner. The two having raced as a tandem pair at 50 miles and 12 hours before the war.

By 1921 the marque was one of the most respected by racing men both on the track and in time trials. In June of that year they took a full double page advertisement in *Cycling* listing the events won on, and riders of, Granby machines.

In 1925 they made a patent application for their Taper Tube method of construction. This design was in pursuit of a “stiff” frame, the goal of many of the lightweight builders over the years. In 1926, the patent being granted, production then started of the Marque’s most famous product. - The Taper Tube and Taperlite models, these being favourites with many clubmen in the 1920’s & 30’s. Selbach produced, more or less simultaneously, a taper tube model although he did not hold the patent. It is thought that he had shared with Ewings & Dean the undoubtedly high cost of tooling up for the initial run of taper tube stock. Granby was also supplying taper tube sets to any builders who requested them.

The Marque continued to be popular with many club and racing men. In late 1936 or early 1937 Bill Ewings died and the business moved a few doors along the road to number 337. This move provided larger premises. Shortly after the outbreak of hostilities the shop closed and did not reopen at the end of the war.

Post war the ownership of the name passed to Ron Argent, another successful Catford racing man. Argent was somewhat of an entrepreneur having a range of business interests ranging from engineering manufacture to his chain of bicycle shops in North West Kent. He later became the landlord of The Star public house in Lingfield. For a time immediately post war Percy Dean remained within the business on the frame building side. Although ridden by a number of class riders, including Peter Beardsmore, a BAR holder, the Marque never regained its pre-war reputation and status as one of the leading lightweight names. Some nice frames were built during the 1950’s but as with many lightweight builders the Marque struggled on during the *Cycling & Mopeds* era but by the mid 1960’s the name finally left the lightweight scene.

The cover of the 1954 Granby Catalogue was illustrated with what I consider the most evocative cycling picture of the golden days of lightweight club riding and racing. The picture also exists as a watercolour painting and is shown below.



As the Marque Enthusiast I am always please to deal with any queries people have about Granby machines and try to keep a record of matters relating to the Marque. A CD with lots of information, photographs and copies of catalogues is available on loan to anyone who sends me three second class stamps. *David Hinds address as V-CC Yearbook.*

John Tole (V-CC) has some NOS 4-speed 3/32 Regina blocks 14 – 20T for sale at £8 each. It is quite tricky to convert a 5-speed to four so here is a chance to get the real thing at a very reasonable price.

Peter Underwood