

LIGHTWEIGHT NEWS - 25

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A very Happy New Year to all our readers! I've just realised that this is the 50th Edition of the combined *Cambridge Lightweight News* (25 editions) and *Lightweight News* (another 25). For a technical reason we changed the name midway but from the next edition will revert to *Cambridge Lightweight News* as I always think of it this way, having to admit it is often just a gossipy account of what we do from here in Cambridge, but helped from time to time with some informative pieces from a core of contributors. If you are able to contribute, please submit as a Word document to the email address above.

Lightweight News started as a letter to a couple of friends in Hampshire telling them what we were doing with our lightweights locally in Cambridge. The letters were copied on and gradually became *Cambridge Lightweight News* No. 1.

Measuring frames can be confusing. Several years ago if the frame was measured in inches then the measurement for the seat tube was centre of the bottom bracket to top of top tube. If it was metric it was centre to centre. Sadly this tradition has been lost and there is often confusion as to the exact size of the frame.

Nowadays there is yet another variant thrown into the equation, the sloping top tube. Manufacturers sometimes use the 'virtual' or apparent measurement, i.e. where the top tube would intersect the seat pillar if it were horizontal. Not all do this, some measure the head tube instead!! This leaves you to work out the real size of the frame. I have been trying to work out what size I want in a new frame. The last one I bought was done by visiting the shop with an existing machine and holding it alongside another stock machine and then adjusting the new seat and bars to match, which again doesn't seem very scientific. When I next visited the shop the new bike was built up without bar tape and there was still a chance finely to adjust stem height and seat height. As it happens it was just a tweak of the brake position on the bars plus bar angle changed minutely. After this the bars were taped up and I have been happy on it since.

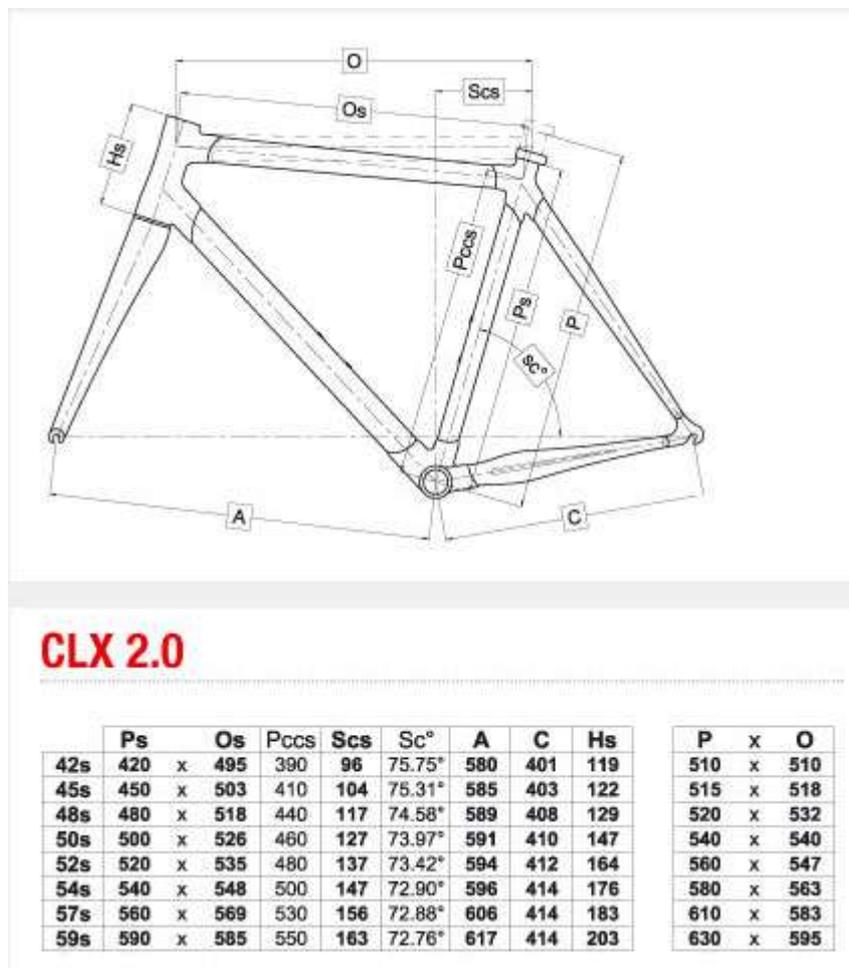
Having long passed the date when I could acquire a bus pass there is another slight difficulty to cope with. I have the centre of the bars some 6cm below the seat top whereas younger riders today have at least double the difference. This is why they can have smaller frames and not too many spacers (if any) between the Ahead set and the stem. I have to choose slightly larger frames to avoid an extreme of spacers but I never think the larger frames are so well proportioned as the small to middle sized ones. This goes for classic lightweights as well. Another possibility to use is that of a stem which rises slightly rather than being parallel with the ground; I wondered why some of these looked all right whereas others didn't. I eventually found out that the sloping stem will match up to a sloping top tube but will probably look wrong with a horizontal one.

Some 54 cm sloping frames are actually 58 but this information cannot always be found in specifications. I suppose us oldies were brought up in an era where you could order a frame to built within a quarter-inch, even an eighth in some cases. Now it is often 'small, 'medium', 'large'.

We also used to talk all the time about angles and I was a believer that 74/72 were the bees knees. It is a tricky job to check classic frame angles due to the lugs coming in the way just where you want to measure. I have a parallel shaped tool for measuring but still have to hold it clear of the lugs and eye the tubes up to the edges, not very scientific I'm afraid. It helps to set the angle to what you think it is and then eye it up – if it is wrong it will be apparent then

We often get measurements from the States for the website and they regularly mention 'standover height'. I think I can guess where they are coming from but have never heard of this done in the UK – perhaps we are not so delicate in the nether regions! I can understand this in relation to classics but can't imagine how it is done for the modern sloping top tube machines, if indeed it is, as the variation from front to rear is often several centimetres.

So now there are two new measurements to consider, standover height and head tube length. As an example, here is a Colnago measurement table, an honorary degree in mathematics awarded to anyone who can decipher it first time:



Having seen the CLX 2.0 at the Bike Show in Earl's Court several weeks ago I have spent much time since then trying to see some frames larger than the 52 which were on display. I think the 54 may be pushing things a bit for my height although it relates to 58 as we know it. I would like to see a 57 before ordering one but it seems that the CLX is rarer than hen's teeth. Will try to trace one down after the Christmas break.

By now you may realise that I believe some of cycle history carries on past any pre-defined date. There are a handful of builders producing frames today at the very least as good as were available in the 50's. Thanks to modern methods and materials, not to mention the money an owner is willing to pay, many of these builders are able to refine what was the norm back then. One example is the use of silver brazing to create a frame less stressed by heat during construction. I have recently read two books covering the later custom-built frames, the first is:

CUSTOM BICYCLES – A Passionate pursuit published in Australia by the Images Publishing Group Pty Ltd by Christine Elliot and David Jablonka with a forward by Phil Liggett. It covers the contemporary scene of custom building of frames and complete bikes in many countries with materials such as steel, stainless steel, titanium and even bamboo.

The second is:

FIXED – global fixed-gear bike culture published by Laurence King Publishing Ltd in the UK. Written by Max Leonard with images arranged by Andrew Edwards. This book covers the history of the fixed-wheel cycle from the late-nineteenth century to date, and the world-wide cult of the fixed in many forms from the ultimate in track frames to the courier's work bike, including a detailed description of keirin racing in Japan and roller racing, amongst many other topics.

Both are available from Club Sales of the V-CC at £35 and £17.95 respectively and from other booksellers.

We had a stroke of luck in November when we were visiting the big wicked city for the day on a Saturday. We happened into Regent Street to find half of it closed to traffic to enable a static display of all the cars about to take part in the London – Brighton Veteran Car Run due to be held on next day. We were able to have a leisurely walk up and down the display and noted that patina is not a cherished quality in the car world as virtually all of the cars were restored to their original pristine condition. One had to admire the quality of the restoration work and someone, only today, explained to me that the platers in the car restoration world would copper plate several times with polishing down in between in order to provide a good smooth surface for the final chrome or nickel finish. I didn't ask the cost to have this work done!

From **Steve Griffith**

The Best Quality and Most Expensive Bottom Bracket Ever ?

Recently whilst stripping a bottom bracket from a friend's MM frame I came across a rare example of the Stronglight Needle Roller bearing bracket which dates from the early 60's. By way of an aside, MM doesn't stand for Mickey Mouse rather Metcalfe and Mason. Arthur Metcalfe was a top British Professional rider who won the Milk Race in 1964 and was part of the ill-fated British Tour team in 1967 and 68. Wes Mason was another talented Yorkshire rider. In 1972 they teamed up with Ron Kitching to set up the MKM business based in Harrogate, Yorkshire. Despite buying the premises (an old Chapel), Kitching fell out with the other two and thus the name was contracted.

Anyway, back to the bottom bracket. Unlike later sealed brackets the cups were conventional (i.e. the fixed cup was not adjustable). Very heavily chromed cups, the special axle having four sets of needle bearings about 4mm long. Checking my Holdsworth Aids, I discovered this was featured from 1964 onwards. What is incredible to me is the price 105/- (20/- = £1). Compared this to the Campagnolo bottom bracket set at 46/9 or the Chater Lea at 17/- . The basic TDC set was 7/-.

Assuming Campag was usually the highest price it is not surprising that very few of these are found today. Stronglight made both cottered and cotterless (in axle lengths for the 49D) versions described as "suitable to carry heavy loads at slow revolutions". It would be interesting to understand what market Stronglight thought there was for a product twice as expensive as Campag's.

Bryan Clarke has a GB 1 3/4" girder stem in good condition (as the illustration on the website) that he would like to swap for something longer. CLARKESHARMAN@aol.com

Peter Underwood has a pair of the very rare 7/8" diameter Reynolds alloy Binda bars, essential for early lightweights with stem and/or brakes needing the smaller diameter bars. Would exchange for a pair of 15/16" Binda, Pelissier or Capo Berta bars.

Also has good condition TA double chainsets which are 44/48 for use with an early rear changer which won't cope with a larger gap. Each chainset will also have an additional larger outer ring for use with more modern set-ups. Two sets available, one has a 5-pin outer ring with smaller ring bolted to it with spacers. The other with a converter (3-pin) to six-bolt for both outer and inner rings. Sets available at £25 each plus postage.

Wanted 44T x 1/2" x 1/8" BSA 5-pin chainring in good condition – no rusting.
I also need two 'first generation' Campag front changers (with the arm to a cable stop). Will have 'Matchbox' front changers to exchange, one Gran Sport, the other Valentino or will buy.

I also have a 26" front sprint wheel with wood rim and Bayliss Wiley L/F hub - in good condition and I need a 27" (700c) rear wood sprint wheel with D/F hub (ideally Airlite S/F) to match my existing 27" wood-rimmed front. (These early sprint rims were known as Continental 27" – the name gives it away, coming from the continent they were what is now known as 700)

David Hinds – I notice that in the Warwick archive there is material deposited by Keith Levoir about the Catford Section of the CTC in the early 1950s. I rode with this section in that era and have some photographs that might interest Keith. He does not seem to be either VCC or FCOT so please could you ask if anyone knows his present whereabouts? david@hindspembridge.freeserve.co.uk

Likewise, the editor (Peter Underwood) has lost the contact details for **Rod Newlands** who submitted copy for the website under 'Reminiscences' - *Road Racing in the 50's*. If you are able to help please contact me, details at top of the Newsletter

Baines Register and Flying Gate News. From Trevor Jarvis

I am in the process of updating the Baines register and I would be pleased to hear from anyone who has a W.R.Baines frame or bike including those who may know they are already on the register to contact me, or if you know of someone who has a Baines would you please let me know or ask them to contact me. The more information I have is useful in putting this register together.

The W.R.Baines record books unfortunately were destroyed when the company closed and it is proving difficult to establish a good comprehensive register. Frame numbers and any bills of sale or an approximate date for when the frame was purchased through family connections, etc. would also be most helpful.

I will look forward to your replies.

Trevor Jarvis. 1 Northwich Cottage, Rhyse Lane, Tenbury Wells. Worc, WR158NH.
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As I am now passed the age of 75 it is time to think about the continued build of the "Flying Gate". Hence a young frame builder, Jeremy Cartwright, has joined the company to take on the building of the frames and to see that the company (T.J.Cycles) progresses. I will still continue to build and be involved for as long as it is practical.

Jeremy is fast learning the trade and doing many restorations of old classic lightweights in a new workshop with new precision frame building jigs, large surface table, shot blasting cabinet and all the rest of the tools associated with frame building. The company will also offer a nickel and chrome plating service for parts as well as for the frames.

The new address and contact numbers will be announced shortly, but will be updated on the web site www.tjcycles.co.uk In the meantime the above address can still be used.

27 December 2009.