



NEWSLETTER

9th February 2021

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Hello everyone. This Covid matter is going on too long. Will all, or any, of our Forthcoming Events actually take place on the advertised dates? Who knows - speculation is of no value! More wait and see.

Nevertheless, more excellent stuff here thanks to Darren Orchard and special thanks to him and Paul Dytham for recognising a new opportunity for WRC members.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CLUB RUNS - Jan to May 2021

All rides commence at 09.30 and will be subject to COVID restrictions relevant at the time

SUNDAY, 7th MARCH from TOP O'TOWN CAFÉ, DORCHESTER

Leader; DARREN ORCHARD (07946 264 130)

SUNDAY, 11th APRIL from WOOL RAILWAY STATION

Leader: ADRIAN EDWARDS (01305 262 632)

SUNDAY, 9th MAY from WOOL RAILWAY STATION

Leader: DAVID DUROSE (01305 854 994)

***FOR THOSE STILL UNPAID* - CLUB SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE**

Another year unchanged at £10 (£5 for Juniors). Cheques please payable to Wessex Road Club, to our Treasurer:- DAVID DUROSE, Christmas Cottage, 6 East Farm Lane, Owermoigne, DT2 6XP

**Or - BACS to bank sort code 40-43-38 account no. 11028146 in name of Wessex Road Club.
(If paying via BACS please use a reference comprising SUBS together with your first initial and surname, as far as the number of referencing characters will permit - example SUBSWBROWNING)**

DARREN ORCHARD reports on latest activity in Zwift circles and also introduces a new, exciting opportunity for WRC members -

Our second Zwift season is well under way but to date has been a little up and down and, if I'm honest much of this is down to me. Lockdown combined with family responsibilities and the difficulties of getting any ride in on a bike has been tough. However, others have generally filled the places up, and only on one occasion have we had an issue finishing a race - and that was due to one rider's heart rate monitor not working - which means disqualification: with that rider out of the race it meant that we did not have enough competing riders finishing.

So the Road races are by far the more enjoyed for some of our racers, even though we have another quality local Vet TT rider, Paddy Dunn, joining us for Zwift. Paddy is a great chap that has spent lots of time competing locally in 10 mile TT's and achieving sub-20 min TT's. Unfortunately he has had to sit out the last two seasons due to a few issues, and of course Covid, but I for one hope he decides to join our club from CC Weymouth (this could be a hard process as I believe he is currently a committee member there!) Never say never though.

Covid has not just taken its toll on myself, but others that have kids who ride for us. The sad news of this lockdown in January also did nothing for the morale of other riders as they were eager to get a few races under their belt in 2021, and has hence affected their effectiveness to plan and keep the training hurt up. While Zwift is a bit of competition it is certainly no substitute for real outdoors training and racing.

So onto the races, and I now have 4 to report upon. And here are the results:

Race 1: Richmond, London UCI course:

Giles Greening 4th
Jonny Cooper 43rd
Richard Porter 49th
Darren Orchard 59th

Race 2: France

Team disqualification - insufficient riders completing the course (due to heart rate monitor failure).

Race 3: Innsbruck

Giles Greening 5th
Phil Cole 6th
Mike Walkey 31st
Paddy Dunn 46th
Richard Porter 60th

Race 4:

Phil Cole 3rd
Giles Greening 4th
Toby Manning 27th
Paddy Dunn 44th
Darren Orchard 51st

Please bear in mind that there are usually about 80 riders entering each race, and that this season we were unexpectedly promoted up a division, leaving us in the 3rd division of Cat A racers, rather than the 4th division of last year - so it is noticeably harder.

Phil and Giles have really been banging in the points for the team during this season, and we are all thankful for their awesome ability on this very difficult platform. But the continued response from all riders to compete for us during this shorter season of only six races (eight if we manage to make it into a play-off spot) has been nothing short of amazing. With two riders having constant issues with their technology they have had to sit out most of this season: here's hoping they can get rid of the gremlins and return a.s.a.p. Unfortunately it is doubtful that we will gain promotion this year, but this time around I am more interested in having a team competing regularly together, and in good spirits.

At this point both Giles Greening and Paddy Dunn are not members of Wessex RC however using Zwift has really allowed us to come together as a group of riders and ride and chat more about bikes. I for one feel there is a growing bond between us and I am going to ask both riders to join our club officially for the rest of the season. As already discussed, this may be difficult for Paddy but Giles could well be ever so slightly easier. I am unsure how things lay with him and Tri UK as he is an ex-team rider and I think they have only just parted ways. He is great rider who could, if he wished, probably be easily signed up to another local team and become financially supported. So I live in hope for both, but I feel this has been somewhat of a trial for both parties.

(One more race that I must refer to.....)

One more race that I must refer to is the one we entered on another online platform called 'Road Grand Tours', or RGT for short. This platform is slightly different than Zwift and many believe that it is a more realistic cycling simulation - especially for racing although it's certainly less supported in terms of the public. One amazing thing is that over this lockdown period RGT have given clubs the chance to have full memberships for free - both myself and Paul Dytham jumped at the chance. Another brilliant thing is that now we have the membership we can organise actual races that we map from either real life riding, or by mapping a route from mapping programs on the computer. So in theory we could map out the Wessex RC 50mile TT course and simulate it online. Paul and I are looking at what we could promote on that platform to keep some local racing going.

Now back to the race we entered. We had the largest team entry competing in the race promoted by 1st Chard Wheelers. The line-up consisted of 31 riders (17 computer generated and 14 actual entries). It was clear to see that we had a massive advantage over the rest of the entries with our team of four riders (Darren Orchard, Phil Cole, Mike Walkey, and Toby Manning).

The race started well and my legs felt ok, or at least a half-hour of hard effort in them. Toby is our resident sprinter and we needed him to stay up with the front for the whole race - so he needed to hide. Mike Walkey has been finding lockdown life tough - like myself, so I was just happy he could make it! Phil Cole has found some fantastic form and has been training very hard recently, so a great performance was on the cards.

Starting out we found the pace a little easy so we quickly got on the move. Up the first tough climb of this three-lap race I made a move and went hard. My thoughts were to see what the other riders had in them and to my surprise I managed to break with Phil Cole, and Toby then followed on and tucked in. Meanwhile Mike Walkey had missed the move and was now riding with another quality rider, Matthew Norris of Primera Team Jobs. The gap grew a little more and then after about 35 minutes of the race I started to feel the legs crumbling - hardly surprising at that moment. I fell off the pace but Phil and Toby continued. Matt Norris and Mike Walkey stayed together for the rest of the race while never reaching the front - I think this was due to Mike making Matt do all the work. In the final moments of the race Toby hit the front and managed to pip Phil Cole to the win. Toby admitted to sitting in, and Phil allowed this to happen - as any good team would.

Final results for our team were as follows:

Toby Manning: 1st

Phil Cole: 2nd

Mike Walkey: 4th

Darren Orchard 7th

(out of 31 riders)

Who's that? Well, More normally seen on a motorcycle with that camera hiding his face, it's -

GRAHAM WATSON

- who actually retired from that function in 2017 after nearly forty years of providing fabulous images from the Grand Tours and other major cycling events not to mention many books from the same and similar shots.

