

HISTORY OF NORWICH AMATEUR BICYCLE CLUB FOUNDED 1879

At 7.30 on Tuesday evening 30th September 1879 a group of cycling enthusiasts started out from the Volunteer Stores Public House, Chapelfield, Norwich, thus commencing the first club run of the newly formed Norwich Amateur Bicycle Club. Although they probably did not realise it, they were entering upon over a 130 years of continued cycling club history. This makes the Amateurs one of the oldest cycling clubs in the country.

Unfortunately there is little on record of those first years of the club. It is conceivable that the Norwich Amateurs were established following the demise of an even older club, the Norfolk and Norwich Bicycle Club, whose racing and other activities on roads around Norwich were regularly reported in the newspapers of that time. However, there is more evidence about the club from the early years of the 20th century. Handbooks and contemporary histories make reference to the successes of club racing members and also to the number of prominent Norwich and Norfolk people who were presidents, vice presidents and officials - Sir Samuel Hoare, Sir Frederick Low, Harvey, Copeman, Colman, Patteson, Bullard, Eade, Paul, Morse, Bignold, White, Chamberlin, Rumsey Wells and Wilmott. The list reads like a Norwich "who's who". (See the lists below.)

Membership in the early years numbered around 60. To start with this was an exclusively male membership and in 1909 the then secretary was quoted as saying, "Dame Fortune is the only lady member we desire." Not until 1936 were ladies admitted to membership. The annual subscription in 1890 was 5/-. In 1938 it had risen only slightly to 6/-.

The aims of the club were, in brief, (i) 'the encouragement by protection of the cyclist in the aim of producing speed' and (ii) 'the protection, by organising cycling in numbers, as a means of protection from physical abuse.' It seems that some members of the public could be quite violent towards cyclists in the 19th century.

Despite the fact that the first president was a parson, the Rev. J.J. Gurney, the club's headquarters were usually in licensed premises. After being founded at The Volunteer Stores, it moved in 1880 to the Grapes in St. Giles, to the Norfolk Hotel, also in St. Giles, in 1883, the Shirehall Hotel in 1900 and eventually to the Black Horse, again in St. Giles. There it remained until the building was destroyed by bombs in the Second World War. For many years subsequent to that the club was based at the Wagon and Horses, Tombland, followed by some time at the Youth Centre on Duke Street and The Mischief on Fye Bridge. The ecclesiastical connection has been re-established with committee meetings now taking place in the Christ Church centre at the bottom of Constitution Hill.

In 1911 the club seemed to be at a very low ebb, to such an extent that the menu and programme for the annual dinner of that year was set out as a 'Funeral Feast - In Memory of the Club', including chief mourners, eulogies and suitable lamentations! However, it cheated the grave on that occasion and made a good recovery.

The club was always to the fore in racing matters and in the first 40 years of its existence names such as Davy Cutmore, Herbert Golden, the Sawyer Brothers and Herbert Kett brought fame to the amateurs. Between the wars prominence in racing matters continued with the Horn brothers Dennis and Cyril on the track. Dennis became the National Sprint Champion of England and represented his country in the World Championships. Also prominent on the track were such riders as Bert Alexander, Bob MacMeekin, Freddie Jackson and Bill Cooper, not forgetting the club's previous chairman, Les Lawrence. The Amateurs were also well represented at the many track meetings throughout East Anglia during this period and on several occasions won the National Cyclists Union Track Team Shield. On the road the club often headed the time trial result sheets, with Les Lawrence, Freddie Jackson and Lennie Woods being prominent names. Indeed Lennie

Woods was one of the fastest time triallists of the early 30s, being almost the equal of the great Frank Southall in 25 mile events. Woods is remembered yearly through the presentation of the Lennie Woods Memorial Trophy for the fastest rider in the club evening 10 mile time trial series. Mention must also be made of the late Jimmy Nudds, probably the club's best all rounder racing man of the thirties, also remembered through the presentation of the A. J. Nudds Trophy for the fastest 100 of the season.

The loss of several of the club's top racing men to the newly formed East Anglian Cycling Club in 1921 no doubt affected the racing performance during the following 20 years but at the same time there arose the keen rivalry which has prevailed between the two clubs since that time. Another traumatic period for the club, at a later date, was when in 1949 there was a mass resignation of members during the dispute with the British League of Racing Cyclists which has since been amicably resolved.

Not surprisingly the club went through some lean years during the Second World War. The continued existence of the club was no doubt due to the keenness and devotion of a few remaining members, notably Ivy Nudds, who rallied round to ensure that something remained for those who would eventually return from the war and hopefully take up the sport and pastime again. So it was that in the late forties and fifties the club was again a force to be reckoned with. Derek Neave was practically unbeatable at short distances and Les Lawrence once more returned to competition, being backed up by such riders as Philip Smith, Billy Rix and Harry Banham. On the local grass tracks Johnny Marr and Peter Farrington were hard to beat. In the mid fifties the club had amongst its members one of the country's fastest 25 milers, Ray Barker, who unofficially broke competition record in 1953 with a "56" in a club event. Other fast contemporaries were Terry Grint, one of the first men to break 2 hours for 50 miles, and Peter Woodhouse, prominent in the National Best All Rounder Competitions.

In the 60s and 70s the club has had its ups and downs racing wise. Geoff Paice and Brian Cushion shared the honours, with Geoff holding the 12 hours record and Brian those at 25, 30, 50 and 100 miles. At the end of the 1970's and into the start of the 1980's Andy Pegg rewrote the record book by taking club records at 25, 30 and 50 miles. Between 1979 and 1980 John Stark also took club records on a tricycle at 10, 25, 30, 50 and 100 miles, whilst at the same time a team of young lady members, Gill Street, Val Borwell and Yvonne Cooper, set new individual and team time trial records. The club has had over the years a formidable team of veteran riders with Philip Smith, Bob Ward, Eddie Fone and Roy Lemon.

The club has always done its' share of promoting Open Events – both Time Trials and Road Races. For many years it ran the spectacular Norwich City Centre Criteriums around a closed road circuit in the City centre as well as a day of racing on the Lotus Test Track. It has gained, over the years, an eye catching collection of silver trophies, some being allocated to the open events, others to various club championships competed for over the racing season.

It should be stated, however, that, although a prominent racing club throughout its history, other aspects of cycling life have not been neglected by the Amateurs. Club runs were always well supported, summer and winter. It was always the duty of the club captain, an honour much sought after, to lead the runs and indeed plan them beforehand, sometimes with the help of a runs committee. The early club rules incidentally laid down that the captain shall have entire control of runs including the power to compel members to slacken speed or dismount when passing horses, to give orders to ride in single file and give permission to members to fall out of runs. He could also collect a fine of one shilling for any offence of infringing the rules. The club has had a long succession of worthy holders of the captain's post going back to a Mr A Nobbs who served from 1879 to 1892. It is also of interest that the club had a bugler from 1881 to 1897 when the post was

abolished. Early photographs of the club show members in uniform, consisting of dark blue military tunic, breeches, peak cap with club badge and white gloves. The bicycle was the old high ordinary and the groups usually include the bugler.

It was during Bert Rump's term as secretary in 1957 that he introduced the club's magazine, "The Amateur", which flourished under the editorship of the late Ivan Jeckell. This has now been replaced by a monthly electronic newsletter.

Club members have always been to the fore in the administration of the sport and pastime outside the sphere of the club itself. Les Lawrence was chairman of the British Cycling Federation, East Anglian Division for many years, also a long serving former chairman of the East District, Road Time Trials Council. Ken Voisey was secretary and treasurer of the East District since 1956 and Ivan Jeckell Secretary of the Norwich Cycling Association for many years. Previous Chairman, Mike Johnson, continues to act as Courses Secretary for the East District and Derek and Jenny Lusher do much work for the British Cycling.

(This history of the club is adapted from that written by the late Ken Voisey to mark the 100th anniversary of the club's foundation in 1979.)

(See below for a list of past and present Club officials.)

NORWICH A.B.C. CLUB OFFICIALS 1879 TO THE PRESENT

President:

1879 – 1880	Rev. J.J. Gurney
1881 – 1888	S. Newman
1889 – 1889	R.G. Bagshaw
1890 – 1892	J.J. Dawson-Paul
1893 – 1894	S.G. Buxton
1895 – 1895	C.S. Gilman
1896 – 1896	H.T.S. Patterson
1897 – 1905	Sir S. Hoare
1906 – 1907	L. Tillet
1908 – 1908	C. Finch
1909 – 1909	J.J.W. Deuchar
1910 – 1914	Sir F. Low
1919 – 1920	T.H. Dunmore
1921 – 1922	C.H. Finch
1923 – 1923	E. Hilton-Young
1924 – 1935	H. Harper-Smith
1936 – 1949	C.V. Willmott
1950 – 1958	E.K. White
1959 – 1962	G.W.J. Allen
1963 – 1963	H.A. Juby
1964 – 1983	E.A. Howes
1984 – 1993	L.A. Lawrence
1994 – 2001	I.R. Jeckell (~)
2002 -	D.K. Lusher

Chairman:

1910 – 1911	C. Rackham
1912 – 1912	F.B. Spanton

Vice-Chairman:

1937 – 1947	S.C. Morter
1948 – 1948	E.K. White
1949 – 1952	A. Mickleburgh
1953 – 1958	E.A. Howes
1959 – 1964	F. Manning
1965 – 1967	B.E. Rump
1968 – 1970	B.F. Ward
1971 – 1977	M. Johnson
1978 – 1982	R. Lemon
1983 – 1983	J. Loveday
1984 – 1987	M. Johnson
1988 – 1989	P.G. Smith
1990 - 2003	J. Newman
2004 - 2006	P. Johnson
2007 -	A. Byrne

Secretary:

1879 – 1881	A.W. Goldsmith
1882 – 1882	A. Miller
1883 – 1883	W. Osborne
1885 – 1887	G.H. Gedge
1888 – 1894	H.G. Miller
1895 – 1898	N.W. Miller
1899 – 1900	H.J. Kett
1901 – 1904	A. Howlings
1905 – 1908	H.J. Kett
1909 – 1911	Rumsey Wells
1912 – 1912	E.J. Phipps

1913 – 1920	Rumsey Wells	1913 – 1913	H.J. Kett
1921 – 1931	H.T. Sawyer	1913 – 1914	H.A. Towlson
1932 – 1934	A.T. Nicholls	1915 – 1915	H. Golden
1935 – 1948	A. Mickleburgh	1916 – 1919	Rumsey Wells
1949 – 1958	E.K. White	1920 – 1920	H. Golden
1959 – 1967	E.A. Howes	1921 – 1922	H.J. Kett
1968 – 1970	B.E. Rump	1923 – 1933	H. Cullingford
1971 – 1983	L.A. Lawrence	1934 – 1936	W. F. Palmer
1984 – 1987	A. Chisholm	1937 – 1946	H. Cullingford
1988 - 2006	M. Johnson	1947 – 1947	B. Payne
2007 -	P. Johnson	1947 – 1964	B.E. Rump (~)
		1965 – 1966	G.W. Smith

(~) – Died in Office

Secretary: (contd)

1967 – 1970	R. J. Watts
1971 – 1977	D. K Lusher
1978 – 1998	P. Churchill
1999 – 2002	C. Aldous
2003 - 2007	J.Newman
2008 -	E.Dean

Assistant Secretary:

1888 – 1894	N.W. Miller
1896 – 1899	S.C. Everett
1900 – 1900	H. Gilbert
1901 – 1902	H. Howlings
1909 – 1909	G.A. Lloyd
1910 – 1910	F.H. Burnett
1924 – 1924	W.G. Nelson
1979 – 2001	I.R. Jeckell (~)
2002 – 2005	T. Howes
2005	(Post discontinued)

Treasurer:

1879 – 1881	T. Warner
1882 – 1898	T. H. Dunnell
1899 – 1904	L.H. Browne
1905 – 1912	N.W. Miller
1913 – 1920	Rumsey Wells
1921 – 1923	A.T. Nicholls
1924 – 1924	N.W. Miller
1925 – 1933	H.J. Kett
1934 – 1942	C.A. Jolliffe
1943 – 1946	E.K. White
1947 – 1976	C.A. Jolliffe (~)
1976 – 1981	Mrs. T. Cooper (~)
1982 – 1982	R. Lemon
1983 – 2004	P. Andrews (~)
2005 -	T.Howes

Minute Secretary:

1911 – 1911	F.H. Burnett
1919 – 1919	N.W. Miller
1947 – 1947	H. Cullingford
1946 – 1960	B. Payne

1951 – 1952

1953 – 1953

1954 – 1959

1960 – 2001

Track Secretary:

1924 – 1924

1925 – 1925

1931 – 1931

1932 – 1933

1934 – 1934

1935 – 1935

1936 – 1936

1937 – 1939

1949 – 1966

1967 – 1970

1971 – 1972

1973 – 1976

1977 – 1978

1979

K.W. Volsey

W. Henning

J. Webster

I.R. Jeckell (~) (discontinued)

H.N. Sawyer

L.J. Comer

L.A. Woods

G.W. Larke

A.C. Moore

F.D. Manning

A.C. Moore

A.J. Nudds

H.E. Banham

I.R. Jeckell

A. Goodall

W.G. Cooper

S. Clitheroe

(Post discontinued)

Road Race Secretary:

1949 – 1951

1952 – 1952

1953 – 1953

1954 – 1955

1956 – 1961

1962 – 1962

1963 – 1964

1965 – 1976

1977 – 1978

1979 -

H.E. Banham

H. Rose

R.J. Barker

H.E. Banham

T. R. Paveley

A. Mason

A. Read

M. Johnson

C. Johnson

(post discontinued)

Club Captain:

1879 – 1881

1882 – 1884

1885 – 1885

1886 – 1886

1887 – 1898

1889 – 1900

1901 – 1904

1905 – 1905

A. Nobbs

T. Plumbly

H.T. Stanforth

C. Zipfel

L.H. Browne

H.J. Hayes

E.J. Scarlett

N.W. Miller

1961 – 1982	K.W. Voisey (~)	1906 – 1906	H. Cullingford
1983 -	T. Howes	1907 – 1908	Rumsey Wells
		1909 – 1909	G.A. Lloyd
Time Trial Secretary:		1910 – 1911	E.J. Phipps
1936 – 1936	W. Seppings	1912 – 1914	D. Cutmore
1937 – 1938	L.A. Read	1915 – 1915	W. Sawyer
1939 – 1939	A.F. Lock	1916 – 1918	H. Warvill
1947 – 1948	K.W. Voisey	1919 – 1921	W. Sawyer
1949 – 1949	K. Chapman	1922 – 1922	W.J.B. Frost
1950 – 1950	W. Henning	1923 – 1923	F.J. Archer
		1924 – 1925	H. Southgate
		1926 – 1926	S. Rix

(~) – Died in Office

Club Captain: (contd)		1902 – 1903	W. Wallbank
1927 – 1931	A.C. Moore	1904 – 1904	W.C. Miller
1932 – 1933	C.A. Jolliffe	1905 – 1905	A.A. Hales
1934 – 1934	F.D. Manning	1906 – 1907	D. Cutmore
1935 – 1935	W. Seppings	1908 – 1908	G.A. Lloyd
1936 – 1937	H. Watling	1909 – 1909	S.H. Hook
1938 – 1938	B.E. Rump	1910 – 1911	D. Cutmore
1939 – 1939	T. Palmer	1912 – 1914	W. Sawyer
1940 – 1940	S. Lowe	1915 – 1915	H. Warvill
1941 – 1942	C.A. Jolliffe	1916 – 1918	F. Smith
1943 – 1943	P.G. Smith	1919 – 1919	H. Golden
1944 – 1946	Mrs. I. Nudds	1920 – 1921	H. Warvill
1947 – 1947	S. Lowe	1922 – 1922	D.S. Williams
1948 – 1950	W.T. Simmons	1923 – 1924	E. Daley
1951 – 1951	E. Howes	1925 – 1926	A. Mickleburgh
1952 – 1952	R.J. Barker	1927 – 1927	E. Howes
1953 – 1955	H. Rose	1928 – 1928	G. Larke
1956 – 1956	S. Hobart	1929 – 1929	F.S. Jackson
1957 – 1958	M. Johnson	1930 – 1930	A.F. Locke
1959 – 1964	I.R. Jeckell	1931 – 1931	W.F. Palmer
1965 – 1969	D. Chandler	1932 – 1932	C. Daines
1970 – 1972	I.R. Jeckell	1933 – 1933	F.D. Manning
1973 – 1973	P. Dring	1934 – 1935	H. Watling
1974 – 1975	D.K. Lusher	1936 – 1936	W. Seppings
1976 – 1982	M. Banham	1937 – 1937	K. Betts
1983 – 1987	D.K. Lusher	1938 – 1938	J.S. Rix
1988 – 1988	A. Byrne	1939 – 1939	K. Betts
1989 – 1994	J.H. Vincent	1940 – 1940	C.A. Jolliffe
1995 – 1997	E. Fone	1941 – 1942	P.G. Smith
1998 – 2000	D.K. Lusher	1943 – 1946	R. Hadfield
2001 – 2004	D. Glover	1947 – 1947	J. Loveday
2005 – 2006	Not filled	1948 – 1948	S. Lowe
2006 – 2007	Gavin Barker	1949 – 1949	L. Laband
2007 – 2008	Not filled	1950 – 1950	W. Henning
2008 -	David Moore	1951 – 1951	W.T. Simmons
		1952 – 1952	N.E. Read
Vice-Captain:		1953 – 1955	S. Hobart
1879 – 1882	G.H. Gedge	1956 – 1956	I. Green
1883 – 1884	E.A. Reeve	1957 – 1957	S. Hobart
1885 – 1885	C. Zipfel	1958 – 1958	I.R. Jeckell
1886 – 1886	L.H. Browne	1959 – 1959	R. Purvis
1887 – 1893	H.G. Miller	1960 – 1961	T. Wilkinson

1894 – 1898	S.H. Wright	1962 – 1962	G.W. Smith
1899 – 1900	E.J. Scarlett	1963 – 1964	D. Chandler
1901 – 1901	A.H. Howlings	1965 – 1970	I.R. Jeckell
		1971 – 1971	D. Chandler
		1972 – 1972	P. Dring

(~) – Died in Office

Vice-Captain: (contd)

1973 – 1973	J.H. Vincent
1974 – 1974	E. Stevens
1975 – 1975	R. Elliot
1976 – 1976	B. Cushion
1977 – 1977	L. Francis
1978 – 1979	R. Seager
1980 – 1981	A. Byrne
1982 – 1983	not filled
1984 – 1984	D. Cooper
1985 – 1986	not filled
1987 – 1987	A. Byrne
1988 – 1989	I. Scott
1990 – 1992	not filled
1993 – 1993	E. Fone
1994 – 1998	not filled
1999 – 2000	D. Glover
2001 – 2001	Jo Crohill
2002 -	T. Goodall

Membership Secretary:

A. Blackwell	2010 -
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Awards Secretary:

M. Johnson	2006 -
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