



## Keeping up with the Redmon Cycling Club

### Editor's Comment

J A

Welcome to the latest, bumper edition of the Redmon Quarterly, with some really great articles. Sadly, it will be the last issue, as I have realised that most members of the Club are not really interested in reading it, and even less enthused to contribute. It is hard work chasing people and very time-consuming typing and producing the newsletter. I'm only thankful this month to Geoff and the two Davids for the efforts.

I have produced 20 newsletters over the last five years, but the outlook for the Club has changed. I have tried to make it informative with news of the Club's activities, but it's very difficult without contributions and something to write about. Our membership is in decline and few members are actively engaged with the club. We only have three racing and no social activities for a few years. So, it is time to call it a day.

Where to go from here... Perhaps it should be replaced by an annual summary of the Club's activities? Ah, but we do this already with the General Secretary's Report for the AGM. So any suggestions and help from volunteers will be welcomed by the committee.

Perhaps a few more members will attend the Club's AGM this year, than they did in 2021, as we do have a lot to discuss. The AGM will be on 19<sup>th</sup> November, and Richard will be sending out the papers in the next week.

Finally, my thanks go to David Eccles for always contributing his wonderful Redmonsters and the occasional article; to Geoff Goat for his regular stories of his past adventures; to Ken Izzard, Jean Walsh, Eddie Allen, Peter Horsfield, David Powis and Malcolm Pearson for their contributions; and most importantly my wife for the proof reading. I'll bet she won't miss it.

### 2022 AGM – 19<sup>th</sup> November

J A

The Club's 2022 AGM will take place on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2022 at Walliswood Village Hall at 10:30am. It has been held here for the past few years, so you ought to be able to find it. The post code is RH5 5RJ.

We encourage you to attend as there are several important matters that need to be discussed. Input from the membership is important and without it you can't blame the Committee! Please do come along.

### Wot of The Future

D E

"Ere young'un, see you gotta know the 'Olmewood course proper to do a decent time..."

For this, pronounced a week before the Redmon Championship Ten in August, 3022, is The Future. The speaker, a stout garrulous individual with what in Ireland might once have been described as an 'expensive' complexion, framed by whiskers and a flat cap, was lecturing a spotty youth in the friendly surroundings of Riker's Laserkaff at the bottom of Bx'll (used to be Box Hill in the 21st century). Back in the day, Rikers would have provided a high tannic plant-based beverage admixed with refined sugars and (yuk) mammal milk. Here in the 22nd century we're drinking 'PB tips' a mildly energy-promoting pale green fluid foaming slightly in throwaway biodegradable test tubes. Aah, progress...

"You gorra go off fast, lad, to get in enuf revs to switch on the para-wotsit fairing see..." The CTT had caved in to public pressure back in the 2080s to allow the use of sub-atomic fairings, just as they had belatedly done in the case of recumbent machines for time-trialling twenty years previously. [The Paragravetic Fairing was first used in the TT stage of the Tour de France in 2077, but was then summarily outlawed, resulting in the entire British Brompton/Marmite team being sent home – a decision still as controversial as Maradona's 'hand of God' World Cup goal in 1986. The device, now perfectly standard in 3022, functions on an auto-generated electrical impulse rearranging the molecular structure of the air surrounding rider and machine into a customised streamlined envelope giving extreme aerodynamic advantages; please do not ask for more detail.]

### REDMONster



– finds his race helmet handy even when the season's finished

Recumbents of course have been around since the year dot. Though standard tubing made from Redmonium was not around in the year dot. These days the best frames are crafted, at terrific cost, from cold-drawn quad-butted Phobosium. This being a rare mineral only obtainable from the deep mines on Phobos, one of the moons of Mars. [Actually the metal is not so very expensive itself; the added cost, like so many other things, comes with the transportation bill.]

“Next get that that wosname thing on soon an’ you’re a go-er.” Our young hopeful was then advised to slot the transmission into Hyperdrive mode to tackle the downward swoop towards Bugr’run roundabout (Beare Green in the day). There is not sufficient space here to describe the intricacies of the Hyperdrive Mode, but suffice to say, it imparts a substantial acceleration via an expanding chainwheel, and in combination with the Lo-Pro depressor (nicknamed the ‘bed-rest’) would further reduce frontal air pressure. “Not too sudden though, on account of...” [Follows long tedious anecdote of rider whose over-enthusiastic deployment of an early version of this profile alteration facility had resulted in painful and embarrassing road burn to certain nether bits, ahem. Young hopeful’s eyes roll up.]

“You’ll see old thingy marshalling there, ‘hollering ‘Hup, hup!’ but you takes no notice, it only encourages him an’ if you gives ‘im a wave you’ll lose cadence...” [‘cadence’, never heard of it.]

Before the turn young hopeful is counselled to ease up a tad to allow for slotting in the gyroscopic equilibrator. [This bit of basic science, only sanctioned by the CTT as late as 3009, permits riders to take a tighter line through corners very much faster than before, while keeping machine and rider at a pre-determined optimum angle to the horizontal – but of course you knew all this anyway.] Impossible with this gadget to touch a pedal, a potential danger in the days of the Neanderthal fixed wheel machine. Although it has to be said there were a few crashes in the early development stages of the gyro, when over-confident testers passed out due to the excessive G-forces involved.

“Now then lad, ‘ave you got yer gel-patches handy? Need to smack one one before the home run, eh?” [Every serious time-triallist in the 3000s stuck slow burn gel-patches on before riding, but now there are fast absorption isotonic protein stickers which many slap on during the ride for an extra boost. Around the laser display results monitor at the end of the event one might see riders with thighs covered with multicoloured discs like a Damien Hirst artwork – anyone remember him – but it could still be eyewatering ripping them off afterwards.]

"Now, for getting up Skule (so annoying the way names change) you’ll ‘avter punch in some notches on the ‘ol

shunt. [It’s been known since neolithic times that recumbents are not great at getting up inclines, so the invention of the pneumatic frame contractor or PFC, colloquially known as the ‘shunt’, came as a great blessing to those whose power-to-weight ratio did not favour speedy ascents. A boon to lardy-bums in other words. A full explanation of this telescopic device can be examined on the collapsedpudding.com website, just don’t expect it here.]

“Then it’s eyeballs out to the chequered flag, eh, good luck, break a spoke har har!” [terminally bored youngster stifles immense yawn: iballs, smokes, chequered fag, wot on earth is he on about... ]

And so it goes. Just to think that in the centuries past there were rules about tri-spokes and disc wheels like wot Noah had in the Ark, silly old sods.

Aah, the Youth of the Future, eh?

### **A bike ride in Tuscany.**

**J A**

On the first weekend in October each year "L'Eroica" takes place in Gaiole in Chianti, Italy. It's a unique cycling event which started in 1997 with 92 riders, to celebrate cycling heritage of the past. Its aim is to preserve the area's heritage, and the historic dirt roads, the "Strade Bianche". They call L'Eroica an heroic cycle race, as it is on these roads through beautiful Tuscany.

The idea is so successful, it has been exported and replicated all over the world, although the Eroica Britannia is not as exciting as the 'Original' now being around Sussex and was unfortunately cancelled in 2022. I did fancy doing it as training for the 'real' thing.

There are tight rules for the event to replicate the past: a vintage steel bicycle with down tube shifters and ride in retro (woollen) clothing. I bought a 1984 531c Ribble with Shimano 600 running gear at a cycle jumble five years ago for it. It's been a plan for a while! I had to modify it quite a bit, particularly the gearing.

L'Eroica is a weekend cycling festival with six different events, bike competitions, Italian food, music and the largest cycle 'jumble' ever. The town is taken over.

Of course: the real challenge is the Long Route at 210 km. They say it's "the most authentic Eroica, a ride of at least 15 hours, with over 3800 meters of climbing.

This was our first holiday since before the pandemic, and fortunately I have a very supportive wife.

We arrived in the town three days before the event and there was torrential rain every day, with rivers running down the roads!. The locals hadn't seen anything like it in years. Sadly, I was now dreading Saturday.

The night before I arranged with a couple of others at the same hotel to meet at 4:50am to ride to the start. So, early Saturday, after a good breakfast, in woolly kit

and Redmon cap, in the dark and damp I rode down the hill to the start. We had our bikes checked, brevet cards stamped and were off.

The first few kilometers along local asphalt roads were very busy, jostling for position in the dark. The first spectacle was the steep winding road up to Brolio Castle lined with candles on both sides. It certainly took your mind off the tough ascent! Then down the other side on the first rutted strade bianche, where I lost touch with my compatriots until after the finish.

At 6:50am, the first control point and refreshment stop at 30km in Siena, I was to have a wonderful surprise. After a steep cobbled street, just over the brow, the sight of the Piazza del Campo in the mist and fog was quite astounding. The spread of food for our breakfast was unbelievable, fresh Italian breads and pastries, fruit, coffee, juice and not a gel in sight.

The fog started to ease, as the sun rose, and for the next hour, I rode almost due south along some very mixed and undulating roads. The visibility and weather was improving quite rapidly at this point, and hopefully my soaking wet woollen kit would begin to dry out.

The food at the second rest, at the top of a hill, in the little village of Murlo at 50km was absolutely astounding. I've never seen so much food at a cycle event, and I made the most of it! It was quite social, but I had to carry on – out of the village square through an ancient archway, and down a gravel hill track.

The next section was probably the toughest of L'Eroica, but probably equalled my suffering for the last 40km of the event. The first hour was a series of local roads undulating through the beautiful countryside, but at 9:00am I hit the bottom of the climb to Montalcino. It took me an hour to ride 15km, climbing 500m along the strade bianche, with some sharp hairpins. Many riders walked, but I'm pleased to say I didn't, passing the first few 'idiots' riding pre 1930s bikes and dressed in plus fours and caps. They had started earlier at 4:30am.



I arrived in the centre of Montalcino, Costa del Municipio at 10:30 in bright sunshine as it was turning out to be a beautiful day. I should have trusted the lady at the event registration on Thursday! Again a fantastic spread of food, and was I hungry. And good coffee!

I touched my maximum speed of 70kph, down the hill out of the town, 8km of beautiful smooth tarmac. Now past the half-way point, but then back onto the white roads and to some of the most beautiful countryside I have ever cycled in. And the sky was blue and sun shining. Rolling white roads now, with a few steep lumps. But this is where the accidents and injuries started, two ambulances and riders lying on the verges, mainly poor bike control and not looking far enough ahead. One serious crash right in front of me, on a steep descent hit a deep pothole. Unfortunately, the very heavy rain over the previous few days had a disastrous affect by washing a lot of the roads away.

The next control point at Buonconvento and did I need it, the sun was very hot now. 125km done and 84km to go, mainly upwards. The next refreshment stop was in the town square at Buonoconvento. The whole town was out to help. I enjoyed a bowl of the local speciality, ribollita, a lovely thick soup, pastries, cakes, fruit...

After the grub I felt great, and was riding at a nice brisk pace, overtaking many of the earlier riders. For a while I thought it easy, along gently climbing tracks, a couple of nasty lumps but great fun. An hour and a half later I approached the last control point before the beginning of the final mountain climb. Asciano was beautiful, firstly riding past the water fountain, then down narrow cobbled streets to the tables of food and drink. More ribollita, pastries and fruit. Chianti on offer here, but I declined. Each rest stop was taking me longer.

At the beginning of each section of the strade bianche was a sign advising its length, and perhaps disheartening when it was lengthy. After Asciano it was mainly hard white roads and I still had 60km to go.

The next 29km took me an hour and a half as the roads were so tough. Exhausted by the time I reached the last rest stop at Castelnuovo Berardenga, to a party. The town square was packed with riders. Even more food, thankfully. No idea how much I ate, but it was needed.

The next 45kms to Radda in Chianti was some of the hardest riding I have ever done, a long mountain climb on rough white roads. It was along the side of fast flowing mountain rivers, through some beautiful forestry and quite deserted countryside. My speed was so slow at one point I'm sure walking would be faster. I was consoled that others were pedalling as slowly.

The top of the penultimate climb was at 190km and I enjoyed a little rest for 3km downhill. Then the the final big push up to Radda, which was so, so hard. If I could have given up at this point I would have. My legs no longer had the strength to push the pedals, but eventually I reached the end of the long section of strade bianche, with relief in relatively smooth tarmac. The Radda control was a relief too, and I even stopped to photograph the sun setting over the valley.

10km to go now and I knew what to expect, I'd watched the online videos. At a sharp climb, then the strade bianche down hill to the finish and it was beautiful. The sun was setting as I rode past the final vineyards, farms and villages. And fast too; I had to brake hard several times for people blocking the road. Then slowly pedalling along Gaiole's main street to the finish area, with arms in agony from holding over the rough terrain, and fingers numb from the brakes. But after 14 hours on the road, with my photo done on the finish platform, medal and finisher's bottle of Chiant in hand, I was greeted with a hug from Lorraine. And I could tick off the ride that I had wanted to do for years.

## Zwift Academy 2022 Report

D P

After a somewhat injury curtailed 2021 (this may form another article at some point) on what was always going to be a 'transition' year and enlivened by an early summer boost in 2022 with a bonus cycling trip to the Algarve (providing a window in what a bit of fitness can do for you), I was hit by the swift realization that school holidays and the start of the U9 football season again meant I was certainly moving into the time crunched category.

With this in mind, it coincided with scrolling Zwift for a session to use up my enthusiasm. Up popped the first of the scheduled Zwift academy rides.

For those not familiar, Zwift run a program each year, open to anyone to essentially scour the virtual world for future professionals, the reward being a pro contract with Alpecin (Male) and Canyon –SRAM (Female). You have to do an extra session to qualify for this but otherwise the same course. Once complete, 5 finalists from each gender are selected for a training camp in southern Spain, where one male and one female winner is selected.

With my 10mile TT time obviously not getting me the call from Dave Brailsford, this seemed the ideal opportunity! This concept made it at least more exciting to my 9 year old son, than sitting on a bike in the shed going nowhere!

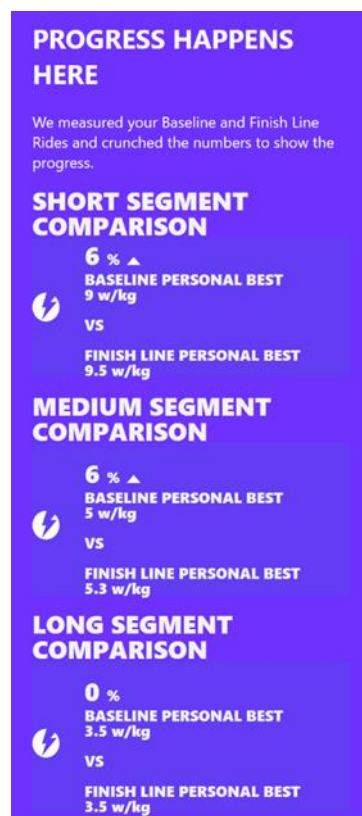
All of these sessions start with a baseline ride – here you ride a course in Zwift with 3 timed sections; one short (flat 300m); medium (punchy 900m climb) and one long (box hill type climb). I lined up to the planned session with almost 100 other riders. Once underway we were repeatedly told 'it was not a Race!' (if I had a pound for every time I have heard that) and we were only timed on those segments and so take it easy in between (that bit I can do)! For each segment we were switched to a TT bike so there was no drafting! With low expectations I rode on the writing on screen told me the first segment was coming up. For those interested the sessions are written by two British former pros including Dan Fleeman. I hit the start of

the section pretty hard and felt pretty good. This was in contrast to the top of hill where I was glad the bike wasn't moving otherwise, I would have fallen off (just like real life then!). I then soft pedalled to the next section (sprint) before repeating the pattern of going too hard before dramatically tailing off. This just left the final climbing session the Volcano KOM – this was more tactical. On what turned out to be surprisingly tired legs I rode within myself until I saw the KOM banner with a really unfair steep section just preceding it! After a short down hill the session was done. Once complete I received an email from Zwift with my breakdown, telling my phenotype; in this case whether I was a sprinter, pursuiter or time trialist based on where my w/kg (the key stat in Zwift) put me in the pecking order. It told me that I was actually a sprinter, placing in the 81st quantile; this was surprising but also made me feel a lot better about my TT results as it clearly wasn't what I was made for!

Now I had my baseline results; I now had to set about improving them. Zwift had set up 6 sessions to be completed over 3 weeks before the final finish line ride (repeating the baseline ride above). I won't go into detail (for all Zwift users the workouts can be found in the workout folders) but essentially these were pretty tough.

Anyway with these in the bank, again somewhat shoehorned into my schedule, I rolled around back to finish line to see how I had improved. I had better knowledge of the segments and how to pass myself so I was clearly going to smash the previous times! I will never learn will !! Without the gory details, I managed to start a bit more powerfully on segment 1 (medium) before a fade of equal amplitude. The second (sprint) segment I started a bit more

powerfully before dying a fairly rapid death before on the third segment I started a bit more powerfully before.....well you can guess the rest. With all the effort I managed to reduce the segment times by 5s, 0.5s and 13seconds. A lot of effort for marginal gains but still at least I didn't get slower. Just to round things out I get a further email from Zwift, confirming that I am still a sprinter and that my w/kg haven't changed!



For those of you with more interest check out the Dr Hutch podcast where he talks to riders involved in esports.

Turns out I just need to hold my 2 minute power for another 58mins and then I will make it as a pro! I am still waiting for the phone call from Alpecin....

Post-Script: 5 Candidates were chosen for the Zwift Academy final; with one Brit in the male section: Will Lowden (a cousin of Jos Lowden) and one Brit in the female section Alex Morrice. Depressingly both look like they should be still at school!

### **Solo but not so low part three**

**G G**

THURSDAY: A very sharp frost greeted me in the morning. After falling short of my schedule yesterday I had some 20kms to make up, so I was off to quite an early start. My route started off flat, but gradually rose as of old, then I was dropping again down through a very wide gorge. The Rio Jucar followed me on the left and in places was frozen over. There was also a reservoir frozen over and this was "Sunny Spain"!

Suddenly, ahead of me I could see it, Cuenca. There they were the houses I had read about, hanging from the sky. This was Albarracín all over again, but on a much grander scale. There up in the sky was a bridge with a car crossing and a person walking. I just had to stop and gaze upwards. I have never before seen the like in my life, a whole city suspended from above. I wound my way into the city, looking here and there, there was so much to see on a lightning tour. This was a place I must return to one day. I wandered around for a couple of hours taking in the sights and a few photos. My needs next on the agenda, I required money, supplies and surely here must be a cycle store. I needed to restock with ball bearings. I had kept one ball bearing in my pocket as a sample. There were several possible shops I went in but I was directed to a gunsmith after they were unable to assist me. Eventually I struck gold, a cycle shop. I explained my wants, he had about twenty of the size I required. I had the future in mind, if things went wrong again. The block was still working on the few that remained, I bought his entire stock.

In due course I left Cuenca. The next mile or so were very uninteresting passing through the suburbs and the industrial areas of the new Cuenca. My onward course again followed the Rio Jucar, very undulating and winding road conditions and generally very bad. Down through Tórtola and on to Valeria, this was a little village just off the road. Here I stopped for lunch. I sat in a beautiful square, with the church being the dominant feature surrounded by white-washed cottages. A couple of mahogany brown Spaniards sat in the shade of their cottage. I wasn't alone, I had two visitors, dogs, yes I could spare them a crumb. A

Spaniard and his donkey crossed the square, this was the Spain that the package tour English never see.

I left Valeria, back on to the dusty road down through yet another cut in the earth's crust and on to Hontecillas. This was no more than a church surrounded by a few piles of rocks and stones in the shape of houses. There was habitation here, a few dogs and an old fellow asleep, so I thought until he lifted his head as I passed by. I was soon to reach the main Madrid-Valencia road, thank God. Those last few miles had been just little ups and downs over a terrible surface.

Before finding my "roost" for the night I wanted to see Alarcon. A sign by the road said 7kms, this I would dispute, it's the longest 7 kms I've ever known! There were about five "Swanscomb Cuts" in this short distance before the turn off. It was all well worth the effort, here was a lovely village, complete with its historic wall and gate-ways. The castle had been turned into a "Parado" (a state owned hotel). The whole sitting on a finger of rock jutting out into a reservoir.

I retraced my steps back towards Motilla del Palancar, over that 7 kms, up and down!! This was a larger than normal village and I found out in due course that this was an over night stop for the "juggernauts". I had some difficulty in finding a bed for the night here, for that very reason. I did however get a bed in a very pleasant guest house, opposite a restaurant. Settled for the night, I strolled across the road for dinner. I ordered a beer and asked for the menu, dinner will be served at 9.15 I was informed. The restaurant doors opened at the stated time, I was almost trodden to death by the onrush of starving drivers. The waiter was some what bemused by my choice of menu, soup and bread starter, main course, then I asked for soup and bread again instead of desert! A fine meal (480 pts).

FRIDAY: The following morning I sped on my way, on what I thought should have been a falling gradient, but no, more of those climbs likened to our "Swanscomb Cut". I had just over a hundred miles to pack in. En route, to break the boring main road, I visited the odd village here and there. Either I was on the road early, or the school bus was late. One such village: Castillejo de Iniesta the kids were all out in the road, I got a great cheer as I rode by.

The villages and life generally were now becoming a little less primitive. The breaks off the main route were worth the energy and time, the shortest deviation returned me to another world. As I continued I could see my route ahead lay over yet another range of mountains. Nearing this barrier I found the road not going over but through. What a feat of engineering this must have been. As the road cut through this massive rock wall in a series of three tunnels, it steadily climbed as well, for a distance of some miles. Over the top, my



way now looked more human, there was however, the frequent climbs. onwards through Utier Requena and Chiva. Before Chiva, I did one of my off beat rides to Siete Aguas. Here the old Spain sat side by side with the new. Magnificent villas locked and sealed for the winter (probably belonging to some rich English gent) alongside the typical old Spanish structures, a village at rest only a mile on so from the main highway.

I was soon to return to that main highway and through Chiva. Outside Chiva I was once again back in the orange groves. My boyhood returned to me and I was off, scrumping! I filled my airways bag to the brim with beautiful fruit, there must have been 4-5 kgs they were pure necture, full of juice. The extra weight was noticeceable when I mounted my cycle again, thank God the hills were now behind.

I was getting close to Valencia, there was the airport. I had no difficulty in finding the hostel. The warden recognised me and bade me welcome. My room-mate for the night was to be a German. Housed, washed and changed I was on the town for the evening, if I could find Jan and Mario. After several enquiries, I located their hotel and their rooms. We spent the next few hours over a meal and a wine or two, exchanging the happenings of the past week. I think from what they told me it would be safe to say that my tour had been somewhat more venturesome than their stay in Valencia. We had however all enjoyed ourselves in our own way. I returned to the hostel late, the German I had previously left in the room having a meal spoke as I entered the room. We spent some time talking, a bit of Spanish, German and English. He was also at the end of a tour and was returning over land to Stuttgart.

SATURDAY and it was time to return home again. I was up early, as I had to meet the other two and have a last look around Valencia. Arriving at the hotel, I went to rooms 302 and 304. No reply from 304 Mr. Borg's room, so I gave a tap on Jan's door 302. I asked if Mario was around yet, this she did not know, so I gave another knock on 304. A bleary eyed figure appeared, "Come in Geoff, your're early. The time was 9:30 early!!

It was decided that I would go and have a quick look round and meet them later, after they had their breakfast. Off I went searching out the old-city and its narrow back streets, lovely old buildings, churches and the like. This part of Valencia was far removed from the banking and shipping centre. After a lightning tour round I went back for Jan and Mario.

The three of us set off for an hour's shopping. I ended up buying nothing. Time was pressing and our

departure neared, we returned to the hotel. I changed back into my cycling gear and set off for the airport, saying that I would see them there.

During the course of the week I feel they must have moved the airport, as it appeared to be much farther out from the city. At five past three I arrived, the flight was at 3:30 and I still had to dismantle my cycle. The mountain mud had set like rock, it had to be removed. In doing so left an unholy mess outside the airport complex. As I entered the departure area, I was greeted - "Are you Mr Goat for flight B.A.? We are waiting for you. I had made it by a shoe string!

The flight back was at first was one of sadness, seeing all those wonderful mountains below us, perhaps one day I will return. This in my opinion is one of the most arid and primitive parts of Spain and yet so lovely. Drinks and food were being served and soon we should be back at Gatwick. I wondered what the weather was like. To our surprise when we landed it wasn't bad. What should I do now, cycle the 17 miles home or go by B.R.? I had had a lovely holiday, so for thirty bob I let some one else take the strain. By the time my train reached Coulsdon South I had reassembled my cycle and it was roadworthy, out of the station up over the hill and I was home again with Brenda.

My trip over areas not so low, low in cost, about thirty pounds, but not so low in miles, about five hundred.

### Club Website / Facebook

**JA**

Since there will be no Newsletter in the foreseeable future, you will need to refer to the Club website and Facebook page. I will try to keep them updated with any news about the Club, or organised social activities.

Diary Dates	
19-Nov	Club AGM

Next Edition: <b>None</b>	Copy date: <b>N/a</b>
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### Committee Members

Chris Brewer (CB)      chris.brewer@redmoncc.co.uk  
 treasurer@redmoncc.co.uk or  
 webmaster@redmoncc.co.uk  
 John Allen (JA)  
 Richard Hoskin (RH)      richard.hoskin@redmoncc.co.uk  
 (020 8642 4778/07748 835907)  
 M Wakely (MW); J Chatterton (JC); Clive Walton (CW)

### Newsletter Contributors

David Eccles (DE), Geoff Goat (GG), David Powis (DP).

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