

# The Crooked Wheel

The occasional newsletter of The Fenland Clarion Cycling Club

2008: Issue 3 : April

## Welcome back.

Welcome to issue 3 of *The Crooked Wheel* and, more importantly, one that contains input from a large number of our members. Despite some early nervousness, many of our club mates have now contributed to what you will read in the following pages.

Our main objective for this newsletter was to better communicate what's going on in the club and enable more people to take an active role in club life. This edition contains articles from many different contributors and we hope that this will encourage even more readers to tell us about what they are getting up to on their bikes. One of the core values of The National Clarion is "Good Fellowship" and it's great to see so many of our club mates getting involved.



*Chapeau!*

Unless anybody else knows different, Dave Langlands takes the "*Chapeau!*" award this month. Having ridden through the snow to get to the called off sportive, Dave went on to complete the 270km Tour of Flanders Sportive the day before the famous race. We'll let Dave kick off proceedings this month with the tale of his Flandrian adventure.

Happy reading,  
*Paul*

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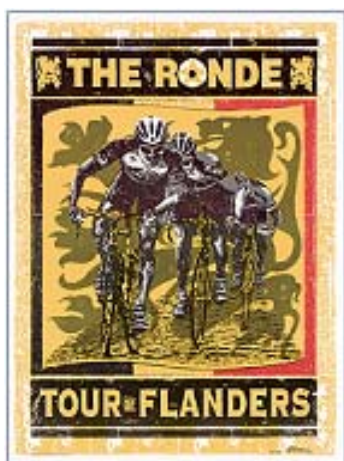
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## 2008 Ronde van Vlaanderen Sportive Ride

*By David Langlands*



The Ronde van Vlaanderen or Tour of Flanders as it is known in the UK is one of Europe's oldest classic races having first been run in 1913. It is famous for the series of steep and narrow, cobbled climbs that come in the second half of the race with the winning break often coming on either the Muur van Geraardsbergen or Bosberg which are 20k or so from the finish.

This is one of the few classics that runs a sportive the day

before the professionals compete and the police and marshals use this as an opportunity for a dry run. As such, the 16,000 or so participants have largely closed roads to ride on and are waved through almost all junctions by smiling police men and women (a bit like a UK road race then!). The sportive can be ridden over 75, 140 or the full 256k and a number of Fenland riders have ridden the mid-distance event over the years.



This has the 'advantage' of including most of the climbs without depositing you at the bottom of the first one with the best part of 100 miles in your legs. However, there is something strangely alluring about the full distance so this is what I entered this year.



Having spent much of the winter enthusing about this event with various club mates it was slightly disappointing to be going alone, albeit after the brief trial run on the 'pavé' of

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Old' (2 meters of cobbles attacked with vigour in the NCRA handicap; one puncture and lots of cursing the outcome) I can't say I'm surprised.

The day of the event started early with the alarm going off at 3:30. This allowed just enough time to fill up on cereal, drive to the finish at Ninove where busses were lined up to take the 1,000 full-distance riders to the start in Brugge. At 7 am, having walked across the official signing-on platform, a dozen of us headed off under cold but dry conditions. A pack soon formed of several hundred, led by some 'monster Belgian' with thighs the size of a regular person's torso and an old-school leather 'hair net' in place of a regular helmet. This man paced us for two hours to the first feed station, where clearly most people felt hungry as the group then disappeared into the food tent leaving 30 or so riders not wishing to stop. However, this was still enough to provide a bit of shelter so we carried on. It was about an hour later that it started to rain. On the plus side it only rained once during the day but this shower did last for four hours and included various bouts of hail and sleet!

Undeterred we carried on and were soon at the bottom of the first climb, a fairly modest asphalt number. This was taken at a reasonable pace and all was well. It should be noted at this point that with four hours gone we were still not

quite half way round and if there is one 'Golden Rule' on a long ride, its not to ride too hard too early.

HELLINGEN		
Les côtes   The hills   Le cooste		
▲ Molenberg	134	125
▲ Wolvenberg	144	115
▲ Kluisberg	165	94
▲ Knokteberg/Côte du Trieu	173	86
▲ Oude Kwaremont	180	79
▲ Paterberg	183	76
▲ Korteker	188	71
▲ Steenbeekdries	192	67
▲ Taalenberg	194	65
▲ Eikenberg	199	60
▲ Boigneberg	203	56
▲ Leberg	211	48
▲ Berendries	215	44
▲ Valkenberg	220	39
▲ Tenbosse	226	33
▲ Eikenmolen	232	27
▲ Muur-Kapelmuur	243	16
▲ Bosberg	247	12

For better or worse the next climb, the Nokereberg, was cobbled. Now I 'quite' like my cobbles and whilst not wishing to break the 'Golden Rule' it seemed like a good idea to press on a bit just to see how the legs were and also to test whether speed made any difference to how the bike handled on the wet pavé. With this in mind the speed went up and the group split. I think my companions appreciated this as there were cries of 'hurrah for the plucky Brit' from behind. At least I think that's what they were shouting.

The next climb wasn't for some time so we re-grouped and carried on at a sensible pace. This was, of course, until the first section of flat cobbles. There are 4 of these in the ride, each of a couple of kilometres in length.



*There's a good chance that if the pros are walking it's going to be ridiculous.*

By this time we were into proper Flanders farming area so most of the lanes were slick with mud from the fields. The pavé tends to have a crown so the idea is to ride on the top of this down the middle of the road. However, if you want to over-take you end up on the rutted edges of the road. This is not good, but with a fairly pedestrian set of riders ahead and a camera motor bike amongst them it seemed a shame not to go into attack mode. This was great fun but unfortunately reduced the group down to three. It seemed the 'Golden Rule' would have to wait for another day.

Over the next few hours the proper climbs started to appear with the Koppenberg being the most famous (22% gradient at its steepest, cobbled, covered in wet mud and packed with madly cheering Belgians).

I was extremely glad of my 'granny' 39x27 gearing at this point as everyone who tried to climb out of the saddle fell off. As the climbs came and went, fatigue started to make its presence felt and the rain just kept on falling. However, just as things were starting to get a bit grim, the Red Bull

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refreshment tent appeared on the horizon (hallelujah). Two red bulls to the good I was back in action and feeling (mostly in my mind) like the best bits of Andrei Tchmil, Peter Van Petegem and the great Johan Museeuw rolled into one.

The next climbs were dispatched with ease and the last bit of flat cobbles was taken at crazy speed, much to the delight of the spectators. It even stopped raining and before long the Muur approached. This is not that long but is the most famous point on the race and was packed with spectators and riders. Its great riding this as hard as you can as the crowd responds well.



However, given the number of riders and a group of fat mountain bikers in particular, my pace was steady until the last 50 meters where I found space, albeit at the expense of one of said mountain biker who was last seen veering off the road screaming obscenities at someone!

From the top of the Muur you're on the home leg with just the Bosberg to go. Having been slightly narked by my

inability to ride the Muur properly it was into the big ring and race mode for the last half hour (apart from the Bosberg which still required some respect/groveling) and the finishing straight was entered with a flourish of sorts after 8 hours 40 minutes and 164 soggy but enjoyable miles.

The following day, Stijn Devolder, the Belgian National champion won alone in a time of 6 hours 24 minutes. A true *flahute* (Flemish for 'hardest of the hardmen').



The atmosphere of this event is fantastic, as were the chips and mayonnaise after the ride, and I would recommend it to anyone. See you there next year.



## Belangrijk Zinswendingen

(Some useful Phrases)



Flemish (or Vlaamse).  
Bevoorading – Feed zone  
Kassein – Cobblestones

(pave is French)  
Hellingen – Hills ("Bergs" is an English variant of Bergen, which means mountains)  
Fiets - Bike  
Koplopers – the members of the front group  
Achternvolgers – the chasers  
Lekke Band – Flat Tire  
Ploeg – Team  
Renners – Riders  
Valpartij – A crash

## Leisure Rides

By Sandra Green

Mildenhall Cycle Rally takes place August 22nd- 25th (Bank Holiday Weekend) If you would like a camping pitch for you and your family, please contact Sandra Green 01733 206627. Cost last year - £20 per pitch.

We usually have quite a few Clarion members and friends camping, and it's a great weekend with Grass track races to watch, stalls to view and buy from, rides over various distances, cycle jumble or for simply a chill out weekend, with our now famous communal BBQ on Saturday evening.

## Manchester Track Championships

By Simon Jacklin

This year the Manchester velodrome played host to the UCI world track championships. All the best track riders from around the world were there to ride in various events over five days.

# The Crooked Wheel

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2008: Issue 3 : April



Myself and three other Fenland Clarion members shared a car to go to the first day of the championships. As we had never actually seen an indoor velodrome for real it was a big surprise. The first thing I noticed was the bankings, they were ridiculously steep! If you didn't hit them at speed then you would quite literally slide off. Of course the likes of Bradley Wiggins don't have to worry about that.



The atmosphere when the British riders mounted their bikes was immense. The crowd lifted the roof of the velodrome and cheered Wiggins for the whole of his 4000 metre race. The team sprint was also very impressive. The sprinters flew around the track at close to 70kph only inches away from each others wheels.

For me there were two main highlights, the scratch race

being the first. A scratch race is basically 60 laps (9mile) and there are no bonuses along the way, just first rider across the line after the 60 laps wins. From the off Aliaksandr Lisouski of Belarus attacked and nearly gained a lap on the field, but was sadly pulled back after a valiant effort.



In the middle the race the peloton realised their mistake in allowing the first break and diligently brought back any escapees. In the closing stages two riders attacked and were followed by a third. This looked like the winning move as it contained the current world champion. But Aliaksandr Lisouski, was having none of it. After the break collapsed there was just Lisouski and a Japanese rider left. Lisouski rolled passed the Japanese rider and was on his own on the bell lap with the Peloton chasing at his heels. The bunch opened the sprint and you could see Lisouski was feeling his early efforts. A Dutch rider was sprinting hard but the Belarusian held him off and took the win by one wheel length. What a race!!

The second highlight was meeting Britain's main man, Bradley Wiggins. Just as we were leaving he was walking

around and I couldn't miss the opportunity to have my photo taken!

So with all this inspiration, London 2012 here I come, I wish!

## Fenland Clarion take NCRA top team prize

*By Simon Pitchford*

Fenland Clarion enjoyed a highly successful NCRA spring road race series, taking the overall team prize. The top three highest scorers from each club/team win this. Top three representatives for Fenland Clarion were Malcolm Smith, Chris Wright, and Lynden Leadbeater.

Another success story was a great series of rides from top road racer Malcolm Smith who took a win, a third, a fifth and a sixth on his way to Third place overall.



*Martin Jones, Mike Shattock & Chris Wright enjoy a leisurely stroll up Brighthurst hill during the Middleton round of the NCRA Handicap Series.*

Photo courtesy of Sarah Brooke photography

[www.sarahbrookephotography.co.uk](http://www.sarahbrookephotography.co.uk)  
Chris Wright came out of semi retirement this year (only

# The Crooked Wheel

*The occasional newsletter of The Fenland Clarion Cycling Club*

2008: Issue 3 : April

joking Chris) had a good winters training, and put in some really strong rides to finish equal fifth in the series.

The series proved to be very popular this year with full fields of sixty riders each week even though the weather wasn't very kind to us. There were 9 riders representing Fenland Clarion in the series plus two others that entered at various races on the day.

Anyone who fancies doing some road races but are a bit nervous, I would recommend you enter the NCRA summer series in June. They are a great introduction into the world of road racing thanks to the handicap system. You would start off in one of the early groups then all you have to do is try and stay away from the fast guys and girls, simple.

## Top 5 & Fenland final positions.

- 1 Brett Harwood (wheelspin cycles) - 55 points
- 2 Carl Dyson (cyclingbargains.com) - 52 points
- 3 Malcolm Smith (Fenland Clarion) - 49 points
- 4 Matthew Barrett (Lutterworth cycle centre) - 45 points
- 5= Chris Wright (Fenland Clarion) - 35 points
- 5= Andrew Veasey (Rockingham Forest Whs) - 35 points
- 8 Lynden Leadbeater (Fenland Clarion) - 30 points
- 11= Simon Pitchford (Fenland Clarion) - 25 points
- 11= Martin Jones (Fenland Clarion) - 25 points
- 11= Mike Shattock (Fenland Clarion) - 25 points
- 26= Lindsey Clarke (Fenland Clarion) - 16 points **FIRST LADY**

26= Steve Clarke (Fenland Clarion) - 16 points

26= Philip Merritt (Fenland Clarion) - 16 points

## Easter Meet Update

*By Richard Newcombe*

This year it was the privilege of the Fenland Clarion to host the Annual Easter Meet of the National Clarion.

For those newer members who may not yet be aware of the history of our club may I inform you of a small part? Since the founding of the National Clarion in 1895 at an Easter Meeting of socialist cyclists, every Easter a gathering has taken place and this 'Easter Meet' tradition still carries on today. The activities now are mainly concerned with cycling, racing and touring around the location of the Meet.

This year as you know it was in Stamford and on Saturday afternoon John Royle, our Asst. Racing Secretary organised a TT and on the Sunday Steve Clarke our Racing Sec organised a series of Sportif rides. Sadly the weather was against us on Sunday and Stamford was blanketed in snow.

The first riders were to have been started by the Mayor of Stamford at 8.00am and at that time I made my way to Red Lion Square just to inform any entrants that had braved the snow that the event had been postponed until May Bank Holiday. To my surprise, braving the falling snow was

the Mayor resplendent in Mayoral Chain of Office sheltering in a doorway and ready to start the event. He was talking to one rider who had turned up at the start, Dave Langlands but he soon made his slippery way home when I told him the event was off. I gave the Mayor a lift home and I think he was grateful not to be standing around in the cold.

Notwithstanding the cancellation of the Sportif the weekend was a great success. Friday night members from eleven different Clarion Sections turned up to sign on for the weekend. Not all could stay at the Lady Anne's but the festivities centred on that Hotel.

That evening the first formal item was a Reception by the Mayor at the Town Hall where we had a few drinks and nibbles and a good old chat with Clarion friends from the far reaches of the country. The Vintage Cycling Club had brought a selection of old bicycles, including a novel Tandem, which was on display and great interest was aroused. After consuming vast quantities of free wine and beer a now fearless group that had elected to go on the infamous and bloodcurdling Stamford Ghostwalk trotted off to meet their fate.

We all had a heart stopping stagger through the gloomier and obviously very haunted parts of Stamford and our guide was a particularly

# The Crooked Wheel

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2008: Issue 3 : April

ghoulish member of the undead. This experience is very much recommended and a thoroughly good time was had by all who went on it. You will recognise any of the Fenland participants by the lingering paleness of their cheeks and the haunted look in their eyes. Quite late back to the Hotel after that but as always on Easter Meet nights there were many hardy cyclists in the bar swapping stories and catching up with the news.

Saturday morning and the National Annual Conference. Lindsay Clarke was Fenland's voting delegate and all of the motions we supported went through. The business involving Charles Jepson and his club went to a tribunal at his request and that was held after the Conference.

At 2.01pm the first rider would be off in John's TT and as I was assistant timekeeper off I went to take up my position. What a cold position it was. All the timekeepers and marshals pusher off etc were frozen. I just hope the riders enjoyed it. After that there was a slight lull in my day and then I was preparing for the evening entertainment. This was a live band and a buffet to which everyone came and all comers indicated their enjoyment of the evening. The food was particularly great.

Quite a late finish but I was not surprised to find quite a few Clarionites enjoying a nightcap in the bar. I did have trouble

finding the stairs when I went to bed.



Early rise on Sunday in order to help with the Sportif start. What a disaster, snow all round and the Sportif postponed. We manned the signing on for a few hours to tell entrants of the postponement but not many folks turned up. During the morning a Guided Town Walk had been organised by Steve Hope, who had also arranged the Ghost Walk and Mayors Reception. There were about 40 people from other sections who took advantage of this and all were impressed. Sunday night and the culmination of the year's competition was the prize giving.

The Mayor presented the prizes after we had eaten a magnificent dinner and indulged in a spate of cross toasting. The Fenland was right in the prizes and everyone was well pleased. After the formal events of the evening we remained talking and enjoying the music provided by an excellent duo 'Bluesky' til quite late. Afterwards I helped the duo pack up their instruments and saw them off.

I was quite prepared to find several members still in the bar and so I did. A night cap was

called for and we discussed the happenings of the weekend. The feeling was approval. I must have managed to find my room because I was in bed when I awoke.

If you didn't make it this year, Bury and Bolton are doing the honours next Easter and you will have a marvellous time if you go.

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## Come in Number 6, Your Time Is Up!

*On Behalf of Steve Clarke*

Our pin-on race number "6" went missing last year. Can you please check the back of your skin suit, boot of your car, wheel bags, helmet bags, kitbags, handbags (!) to see if you've got it please? If you find it, you can return it anonymously and we won't press charges!

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## New Members

*By Paul Frost*

As riders queued to sign on for the first Bluebell last Wednesday, we had 108 paid up members. This is already more than we had at the end of last season and we look set to hit 120 this year.

This month, we welcome:  
**Mark Smee, Grahaeme Colledge, Ian Cooper, David Fraser, Barbara Gunn and Matthew Hunt.**

# The Crooked Wheel

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## National Team Time Trial

By Martin Jones

The time trailing seasons is now well upon us and this year the club would like to enter 2 men's teams and 1 women's team into the National Team Time Trial which is being held on the 6th July on the AS/3 course over near Leicester.

The race is 50km with teams of 3 riders, which I am sure will be an experience for most people in the club given we only every on rare occasions do 2 up time trials. We are looking to enter the top six male riders and top 3 women riders on ability nearer the time when entries have to be submitted, which is 10th June-08.

To improve our chances of a good performance we are suggesting riding a couple of open 2up and 3up to get people into the swing of things.

Possible events to try:  
2up 4th May E91/25  
3up 24th May E1/10  
3up 14th June E1/10A  
3up 22nd June E18/13

If you are interested then please let Martin Jones know so he can keep an eye on people's performance for when entries have to be entered.

Keep the legs spinning.

## Club Shop

By Ian Waddilove



The Club Shop enjoyed brisk business at this week's opening Bluebell 10. We now have some stock of faster moving items priced as below.

We much prefer payment by cheque so if you intend to treat yourself, please bring along your chequebook.

These prices are only for items taken from stock, so please contact me for availability.

[i.waddilove@aol.com](mailto:i.waddilove@aol.com)

Item	Price £
<b>S/S Road Jersey</b>	<b>41.75</b>
<b>L/S Road Jersey</b>	<b>43.75</b>
<b>Track Suit Top Full Zip</b>	<b>45.75</b>
<b>GameX Rain Jacket</b>	<b>41.00</b>
<b>GameX Gilet (Sleeveless Jacket)</b>	<b>35.00</b>
<b>Armwarmers</b>	<b>14.50</b>
<b>Overshoes</b>	<b>13.25</b>
<b>Track Mitts</b>	<b>12.00</b>
<b>Caps</b>	<b>3.50</b>
<b>Bibshorts (XL 36)</b>	<b>30.00</b>



## National News

By Ian Clarke

National Secretary of The National Clarion CC

The National Clarion will run taster / coaching sessions for members aged 16 or under as part of the Clarion track championships. We will try to organise loan bikes too. The date is 30th August 2008.

## Results

Place to Place, Folksworth, 24/02/08			
Pos	Name	Time	Award
1	Paul Lilley	54	1st
2	Lynden Leadbeater	54.09	2nd
3	Dave Langlands	54.32	3rd
4	Chris Wright	55.24	2nd Hcp
5	Simon Pitchford	56.38	3rd Hcp
6	Malcolm Smith	57.21	
7	Mike Shattock	57.28	
8	Martin Jones	58.03	
9	Paul Asplin	58.31	1st Hcp
10	Mark Gardener	60.13	
11	Mike Barnsdale	61.14	
12	Steve Clarke	61.49	
13	Lindsay Clarke	62.31	1st Lady
14	Malcolm Jacklin	63.41	
15	Simon Jacklin	64.03	
16	Phil Merritt	64.06	
17	Sean Beard	64.55	
18	Bill Law	65.3	
19	Ian McNally	66.31	
20	James Warriner	67.24	
21	David Saunders	67.43	
22	Simon Pidduck	68.16	
23	Keith Kinsey	73.13	
24	Andy Pitchford	74.29	
25	Annette Wyld	75.27	
26	Sharon Smith	77.02	

# The Crooked Wheel

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2008: Issue 3 : April

Hard Riders, Southwick 30/03/08			
Pos	Name	Time	Award
1	Martin Jones	28.38	1st Fast.
2	Ian Waddilove	29.28	2nd Fast.
3	Lynden Leadbeater	29.36	3rd Fast.
4	Paul Lilley	29.38	3rd Hcp
6	Mike Shattock	30.39	
5	Malcolm Smith	30.39	
7	Paul Asplin	30.42	1st Hcp
8	Phil Ackerman	31.08	
9	Malcolm Jacklin	31.09	
10	Simon Pitchford	31.22	
11	David Wagstaff	32.29	
12	Steve Kaye	33.08	
13	Simon Jacklin	33.15	
14	John Royle	33.17	
15	Lindsay Clarke	33.35	1st Lady
16	Paul Kersley	33.37	
17	James Fordham	34.03	
18	Simon Pidduck	35.06	
19	David Saunders	35.24	
20	Phil Merritt	35.26	
21	James Warrener	35.5	
22	Ralph Stevens	36.41	
23	William Hebblethwaite	37.3	
24	Phil Lloyd	37.4	2nd Hcp
25	Richard Betts	38.18	
26	Keith Kinsey	38.3	
27	Georgina Gardiner	39.02	
28	Steve Tyler	39.1	
29	Sharon Smith	39.17	
30	Birgit Scott	40.05	
31	Shirley Frost	40.26	

Club Championship 2008 - Overall				
Pos	Name	PI-PI	H/R	Total
1	Paul Lilley	10	7	17
1	Lynden Leadbeater	9	8	17
3	Martin Jones	3	10	13
4	Malcolm Smith	5	5	10
4	Mike Shattock	4	6	10
6	Dave Langlands	8	0	8
7	Chris Wright	7	0	7
7	Simon Pitchford	6	1	7
9	Paul Asplin	2	4	6
10	Malcolm Jacklin	1	2	3
10	Phil Ackerman	0	3	3
12	Lindsay Clarke	1	1	2
12	Simon Jacklin	1	1	2
12	Phil Merritt	1	1	2
12	James Warrener	1	1	2
12	David Saunders	1	1	2
12	Simon Pidduck	1	1	2
12	Sharon Smith	1	1	2
19	Mark Gardener	1	0	1
19	Mike Barnsdale	1	0	1
19	Steve Clarke	1	0	1

Club Championship 2008 - Overall				
Pos	Name	PI-PI	H/R	Total
19	Sean Beard	1	0	1
19	Bill Law	1	0	1
19	Ian McNally	1	0	1
19	Keith Kinsey	1	0	1
19	Andy Pitchford	1	0	1
19	Annette Wyld	1	0	1
19	Ian Waddilove	0	1	1
19	David Wagstaff	0	1	1
19	Steve Kaye	0	1	1
19	John Royle	0	1	1
19	Paul Kersley	0	1	1
19	James Fordham	0	1	1
19	Ralph Stevens	0	1	1
19	William Hebblethwaite	0	1	1
19	Phil Lloyd	0	1	1
19	Richard Betts	0	1	1
19	Keith Kinsey	0	1	1
19	Georgina Gardiner	0	1	1
19	Steve Tyler	0	1	1
19	Birgit Scott	0	1	1
19	Shirley Frost	0	1	1

Date	Timekeeper	Assistant	Pusher	Helpston X	Bainton Turn	Marholm Rd. Turn
April 23rd	I Waddilove	M Smith	H Dhanji	J Fell	J Fordham	N Fraser
April 30th	C Garfield	S Lindsey	M Gardiner	P Gee	A Gibbons	M Green
May 7 th	P Ackerman	S Green	W Hebble'	R Holt	D Hutchinson	M Jacklin
May 14 th	S Clarke	T Scott	M Jones	S Kaye	K Kinsey	D Langlands
May 21st	R Newcombe	G Gardiner	P Lilley	L Leadbeater	B Law	P Lloyd
May 28th	I Waddilove	P Kersley	P Merritt	G Parry	D Lowe	S Pidduck
June 4th	No Event - Hereward League - Bourne Wheelers - Essendine					
June 11th	C Garfield	M Smith	A Pitchford	S Pitchford	G Prodrick	L Rawlings
June 18th	P Ackerman	S Lindsey	M Shattock	D Saunders	R Stevens	A Surman
June 25th*	S Clarke	R Newcombe	S Tyler	D Wagstaff	B Scott	M Wells
July 2nd	T Scott	S Green	P Asplin	L Leadbeater	P Welsh	D Hutchinson
July 9th	I Waddilove	A Wyld	C Benn	G Parry	M Cork	K Kinsey
July 16th	No Event - Hereward League - Spalding CC - Podge Hole					
July 23rd	C Garfield	G Gardiner	S Bollons	M Church	S Kaye	B Law
July 30th	P Ackerman	P Kersley	H Dhanji	J Fell	J Fordham	D Lowe
August 6th	R Newcombe	M Smith	M Gardiner	P Gee	S Hope	K de Nijs
August 13th	S Clarke	S Lindsey	W Hebble'	R Holt	A Gibbons	N Fraser

## Marshalling Rota

By Steve Clarke

Steve has issued a marshalling rota for this year's Bluebell Series. If you cannot make your allocated duty, please liaise with another member to cover for you.