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NEWSLETTER

Dear All

All set for 'Le Mans 26' - less than two weeks to go until the big event! After all the hard work in getting together this 26th Ride, we are all really looking forward to getting on our bikes, with lots of lovely new route and new destinations.

This Newsletter contains most of the details you have been waiting for, but more information will be in the Rider Pack on departure.

We have carefully plotted the route, trying to find the right balance between hills, distance, traffic load and scenery. The ride is a departure from recent years, as not only are we all doing five days again, but we are also offering shorter and longer day options on three of the days! Having recently done a hotels recce, mainly following the longer routes, I can assure you that I am certainly doing the longer route between Laval and Le Mans on Day 3 - absolutely gorgeous!

Lunchstops are not organised, as there are suitable towns with plenty of restaurants and patisseries en route, as indicated in the route notes. Waystops in the smaller villages have been alerted to our passage through. We hope you can satisfy yourselves at recommended stops!

The number of riders this year is quite a bit lower than recent years, probably mainly due to the huge attraction of last year's 25th Ride celebration - but small is beautiful, as they say! It also means fewer hotels and a greater feeling of togetherness! We also have the added attraction of being entertained in Le Mans by the eponymous and multi-talented 'Kings of Le Mans' (look it up!) - and it's my 25th year!

So, we trust that you are all well prepared and looking forward to the Ride, as well as having been successful with your sponsorship.

You will also find roomsharing and any overdue balance details above your address. All balances are due before leaving, so please send in now!

We hope that the weather is kind in this topsy-turvy year!

Safe and enjoyable cycling to all.



Dressing up for the Last Night Party in Caen

Many of our riders (especially the ladies!) like to dress up a bit for the dinner party at the Castle - but remember the weight restrictions on your luggage! It shouldn't be a problem

to be in early enough to get ready this year, as the last day is a bit shorter!

Fancy Dress

It has become a Bike Ride tradition that riders, especially groups, cycle in fancy dress on the last day into Caen - why not think of something and give it a try?



BIKE CHECKLIST - PLEASE READ!

The following is a basic checklist to be carried out before taking part in this year's Paris to Hayling Charity Cycle Ride. As you all know a very hard working Support Crew assists us all on the Ride. They try to carry spares for the many varied makes and types of bikes being used, but sometimes one of us turns up with an unusual steed, which often happens to be the one that requires some form of maintenance. If we all took just a few minutes of our time checking our bikes before we depart, we could save Support a lot of hard work and headaches, searching French cycle shops for the spares required.

TYRES & TUBES

Mountain / ATB bikes 26" x 1.25" - 2.5"
Racers / Hybrids, newer bikes 700c x 20-28,
Older bikes 27" x 1.25"

SPOKES

Yes, these do occasionally break!! Obviously there are many different types, lengths, etc. If you are unsure, you can contact me and I will try to sort you out before we go.

BRAKES & CABLES

The main problem here is the type of brake blocks used: usually a spare pair can be purchased here in the UK for a couple of quid. Check your cables for the standard end fittings, usually either a barrel or pear shape.

CHAINS

Not usually a problem, as most are the same pitch and work OK on most systems. But be aware of certain newer race bikes e.g. Campag 9/10 speed require special narrow chains which will not be carried by Support.

Obviously, it is up to us all to ensure that our steeds are in good working order for the ride, especially tyres. If anyone requires assistance or is unsure what are standard parts/sizes, please don't hesitate to contact me before departure. A few pounds and a couple of minutes spent before we leave can result in a more pleasurable ride.

Hope you all have fun.

Call TONY HART on 07833-601489 for bike advice, before the ride.

E-mail: carbonciocc@ntlworld.com

CYCLING STUFF

Whilst the support vehicles carry water, high energy supplement, essential medical supplies and some bike spares, it is vital you ensure that you are largely independent.

Please carry the kit to repair a puncture, including at least one spare tube, a pump and also two water bottles. The sooner a problem is solved, the sooner you are on your way. The support crew will of course soon be there to help, where necessary.

As mentioned in previous information you will be expected to pay for any bike spares used during the Ride.

Helmets

It is a requirement that everyone wears a helmet during the Ride. We have had too many accidents, both on the main event and on related rides, where damage to the cyclist would have been more severe, if not fatal, should a helmet not have been worn. We cannot take the risk any longer. Support crew will not police you, but may remind you.

Bike Protection

As we are all cycling over, with no shorter ride and lorry this year, all are responsible for the protection of their own bike, which clearly includes locking it up when you are away from it. We have secure storage arranged, but best to be on the safe side!

Water Bottles

We still have plenty of the rather attractive 'Ride for Judy' water bottles, which can be purchased at £3 each, with the proceeds going to Cancer Research. Please let us know if you want one or more. They will be available on registration. Cheques payable to Fred Dyer, who has taken responsibility for sales and distribution. Cash to the registrars.

Tandems and Special Requirements

Please let us know if you are riding a tandem or have a bike with special requirements. Please supply your own spares, or make contact with Tony Hart on the numbers above.

Route Notes and Maps

Following the epic plotting of hundreds of miles of new route four years ago, we had less to do, but still had to plot several new routes and update the rest. Only one major 'route bar-rée' encountered on the recent recce! It would be wise, however, to carry Michelin maps for the areas we cycle through.

Leaving Arrangements

This is one more of our more complicated administrative and logistical problem areas, involving substantial efforts of co-ordination. Once again, your co-operation in allowing things to go as smoothly as possible is absolutely vital. The centre of operations is the Hayling Billy, Elm Grove, Hayling (023-9246-4989), except for those who are going straight to the ferryport. Please be certain to let us know if you wish to cycle direct. In these cases it is essential that you get your bike and bag to the Ship and Castle pub in the ferryport by 6.30pm.

There is a 15kg/33lb maximum total weight per person for all baggage, although we hope that you will keep the weight down to 12kg or less. This will be enforced on departure.

Sunday 10th July

You should be at the Hayling Billy by 5pm for registration, when you will be presented with your 'rider pack', before depositing your tagged bag with the appropriate support vehicle. Registration will start at 4.15 and finish at 5.45. You will also be asked for your sponsorship pledge amount.

You will then be cycling to Hayling Ferry and Portsmouth, arriving at the Ship and Castle (023-9269-1147) in the Ferry port, no later than 6.30pm, where there will be registration for those not going via Hayling. Registration here starts at 6pm and finishes at 7pm, when we make for the ferry check-in. Here you will also be asked for your sponsorship pledge amount. The Hayling ferry is expecting us and should accommodate us in shuttle crossings.

If you are taking a second small bag for the overnight ferry, containing the minimum necessary overnight equipment, such as toothbrush, passport and money, please attach a second provided tag to this bag. Some riders prefer to travel in 'civvies', with riding gear in the bag, changing in the morning. Please ensure that you put it in the baggage van before leaving the port in St Malo.

Return Home Arrangements

We are planning to return to Hayling via the ferry again this year, expecting to be back on the Island, in two crossings, by about 3.30pm on the Saturday, 16th July. Bags will be waiting at Hayling College, with hospitality courtesy of Hayling United FC

Cabin & Roomsharing Arrangements

The expenses for the Bike Ride are kept down to a minimum so that we can offer exceptional value for the entry money you pay, ensuring that 100% of the money you raise goes to charitable causes. We stay at good hotels, with cabin accommodation on the outward ferries, unlike the early days when we had dodgy hotels and slept on the floor of the ferry, or at best in couchettes, for not much less, but we still need to roomshare, at times with someone new to you. Your roomsharing partner is above your address box and we trust that the allocation will be suitable. If there is a problem or inaccuracy, please let us know. Most cabins are 4-berth but, where possible, couples are allocated a 2-berth or separate 4-berth.

General Cycling Guidelines

For many of you this will be your first major cycle ride and in some cases your first visit to France. It is therefore important to emphasise that it is not a race and that you are here to enjoy yourself. However we hope that everyone will complete the route and justify your sponsors' pledges.

1. It is vital that you cycle at your own comfortable pace. Even one mile per hour faster than your own pace over a longish distance will take it out of you. You will always be able to find someone to cycle with at your speed.
2. Take regular breaks. I prefer every ten miles or so, but some prefer 25 miles for a longer break. Waystops are arranged accordingly.
3. Eat regularly. French patisserie is wonderful for that extra boost. Take advantage of the lunchtime stops, even if you don't have a full meal. You will be surprised how much you can eat when you cycle for a full day. It is essential to keep the body salt and sugar levels up, as one of our riders discovered a few years back. Flapjacks are back!
4. Take plenty of liquids, especially if it turns out hot, even before you are thirsty. The support vehicles carries mineral water and a high energy drink and you should ensure that your two water bottles are filled regularly. We also take on plenty of liquids in the evenings!
5. The support vehicles are there to help you complete the day's cycling and in emergency. Please be as self-reliant as is reasonable, but, if in genuine distress, get help as soon as you need it. The vehicles are in good radio communication.
6. Please be aware of other road users: don't cycle two abreast on busy roads and don't stop on corners, if you can avoid it. When you do stop, it's best to put the kerbside leg down first. Please give hand signals and it is best not to cycle too close behind others, as we have had a number of accidents because of this. Safety first!



The French Hotels

We shall be using a total of 12 hotels during the course of the whole event. We are using far fewer hotels this year, due to the reduced size of our group and the only place where the hotels are quite separated is Argentan, although on the same evening 14 are actually riding on and staying in Falaise. The hotel at which you are staying is on your rider card.

Please be patient, should there be an unexpected problem in the hotels, which are all very welcoming to us.

Rennes	Kyriad La Bretagne Hotel Sevigne	Tel: 00-332-99-30-25-80 Tel: 00-332-99-31-48-48 Tel: 00-332-99-67-27-55
Laval	Le Paris Citotel	Tel: 00-332-43-53-76-20 Tel: 00-332-43-67-19-25
Le Mans	Hotel Premiere Classe	Tel: 00-332-43-24-19-41
Argentan	Les Voyageurs Hotel de France Le P'tit Fischer	Tel: 00-332-33-36-15-60 Tel: 00-332-33-67-03-65 Tel: 00-332-33-67-05-43
Falaise	Ibis	Tel: 00-332-31-90-11-00
Caen	Ibis, Port de Plaisance Mercure	Tel: 00-332-31-95-88-88 Tel: 00-332-31-47-24-24

Reminders

- Please ensure that you have an EHIC card, giving access to medical treatment while in France, if necessary.
- Please ensure that you bring a valid full passport. Do not pack it in your luggage, making sure you have it with you on the ferries, especially on the return.
- The Bike Ride carries public liability insurance for the event, plus practise rides and related occasions. However, everyone should have travel insurance and to ensure that bikes and possessions are covered by home insurance.
- A security chain bike lock is a requirement. If you lose your bike, it's the train home!
- Bells on bikes, please!
- Optimists should bring sun-block.
- Knickers are inadvisable under shorts!
- You will be expected to pay for any spares used during the ride. Please sign for these, should you use them. You will also be required to pay for any telephone calls or mini-bar drinks, should you be unwise enough to take them, during the ride
- Please remember that the Support Crew also pay for the Ride and are not paid servants! They are not there to carry bags, except into the lobbies of the right hotels.

LAST MINUTE STUFF

- Pay in advance for Ride day meals
- Bags not available in hotels until 5 pm
- Make sure you have insurance
- Mobile phones can be very handy
- Bells on bikes, please
- Have a good time!

Emergency numbers

The personal emergency number you supplied to us will be carried by support. However, should you have to call the emergency services in France, the number from a mobile is 112. From a land line, call 15 for ambulance, 17 for police and 18 for fire.

Mobile Phones

A number of phones are carried by the support crew and riders, in addition to the Bike Ride phone: 00-44-7770-888501. When trying to reach one of these phones, whilst in France, it is necessary to prefix by the UK code 00-44 and to delete the first zero.

Rider Information Packs

Those with a thirst for information will be pleased to hear that an itinerary, with extra daily hotel detail, is to be included in the information pack provided on departure, once you have registered and given your sponsorship pledge. The pack includes three 'Rider Cards' which give you individual hotel and sharing details etc, one for your saddle and two to be attached to your bags. Route notes will be handed out on a daily basis, once you have handed in your correctly labelled baggage.

Morning Starts

As this is not a holiday (!) we are sorry to have to stress that there will be no opportunity for a lie-in. We expect to be away by 7.30 or 8.am, depending on the length of the day and so rising at 6.30 or earlier will be the norm.

Insurance

It is required that you have personal cover and provide proof before going on the Ride. If you have not sent in proof, please give policy details on registration, or sign the disclaimer.

Car Parking during the Ride

Some of you will wish to leave your car on the Island when you are away. Arrangements have been made to leave a small number cars in the secondary car park at the Hayling Billy, off St Mary's Road. Please let the Support Crew know that you are leaving your car and you will be given a card for display in the car.