

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OTLEY CYCLE CLUB

Prepared by Trevor Howe, inspired by Ken Hodgson, September 2026

Hi everyone

I hope you enjoy September's **Ot' News**:

Calendar Events:

Monday, 14 Sep, last chance to try on Centenary Jersey at Chevin Cycles, orders to be placed end Sep / early Oct

Sunday, 20 Sep, 30-mile club TT event on the A168 between Walshford and Boroughbridge to close out the Triangle season organised by Liam Mealey.

Sunday, 27 Sep, 3 Peaks Cyclo-Cross, the UK's toughest cyclo-cross event featuring at least 9 club riders.

Wed, 30 Sep, Committee Meeting at clubhouse @ 19.30, all welcome.

Saturday, 3 Oct, culmination of the club **Time Trial** season with the double challenge of the **Guiselcliff and Norwood Edge Hill Climbs**.

Sunday, 29 Nov, Xmas Ride-Out lunch and Awards Presentation - delicious food from the Pie Collective at the Old Otliensiens Rugby Club. This event sold out last year so please put the date in your diaries now, tickets to go on sale through Ticket Tailor early in October. The lunch is also a great chance to meet members of our very successful Race team.



Regular rides programme:

Every Sunday - the B section has posted a calendar of weekly rides through to Oct. The **Storm (A)** group also rides every Sunday. Keep an eye on WhatsApp and / or the RdesApp on our website for the rides organised by both groups.

Tuesday mornings, the weekly **Abbey Dash** is a steady social ride to the Abbey Tea Rooms, usually leaves BX at 10.00, 23 miles @ 10 /12 mph. E-bikes welcome. You'll often meet more than a dozen club members at the popular café.

Tuesday evenings, our weekly **Brownlee Road Racing Development Sessions** return after the summer break, led by Stuart Hall & Peter Middlebrooke. Sessions run 19.00 - 20.30 and are bookable through Trybooking later this month.

Wednesday evenings, regular **A section & Social** rides, join the relevant WhatsApp group or check on the website for ride details.

Thursday mornings, regular **Zephyr Social Rides**, typically around 40 miles @ 10 /12 mph. E-bikes welcome. join the WhatsApp group or check on the website for ride details.

Thursday evenings, weekly summer **Triangle Time Trial** series, the Triangle rides have finished for this season although two further TT's to end the club season are listed below.

Saturdays, Mountain Goat - hillier rides @ 14 mph, typically 40+ miles, check for rides on WhatsApp or the club RidesApp.

Alternate Saturday's, we've begun putting on a series of **Beginners Social Rides** to Abbey Tea Rooms and local **Gravel** rides which are open to members and non-members, meeting at 9.00 am at Chevin Cycles. Take up has been a little slow but with more promotion further rides are planned. New riders, ride leaders and back markers are always welcome.

What else is happening?

WhatsApp Community



The OCC WhatsApp Community, with 186 members, is proving to be a very useful way of keeping in touch and communicating ride plans & changes. If you are a Club member, aged 18 or over and missed the chance to join the group originally then click [here](#) to enrol via mobile phone (to maintain privacy this link only works when also logged on to OCC website).

Club Centenary, Otley 800, Tour de France Femmes

Next year will be a big year for the Club as it celebrates its centenary, for Otley as the town celebrates its 800th birthday and for Yorks cycling as the Tour de France Femmes starts in Leeds on 30 July.

The Club will mark its centenary with a Centenary Booklet, a Centenary Jersey in conjunction with Santini, by organising themed rides and events through next summer tying this in with an Anniversary Dinner / Party.



We would love members to help organise celebrations, we are also on the look-out for club stories, memorabilia and lovely old photographs. Who is our longest serving member? Could it be John Churchman who joined this club in 1957 and the Old Otliensiens Rugby Cub in 1952. Or have you ridden with Beryl Burton like Christine Gascoigne? If you can help or can share memories, please contact Gareth at OtleyCycleClub@gmail.com

Centenary Jersey

Gareth sent an email to members on 3 Sep describing the beautiful Centenary Jersey designed for the club by Santini SMS and how to check fit and pre-order each jersey. Follow [this link](#) for further details from this email. Members have only a week until 14 Sep to try on for size, we then need to place orders end Sep / early Oct



Regular club kit @ Chevin Cycles

Our regular club kit in its distinctive blue design, is supplied by Santini SMS and sold at cost on our behalf by Chevin Cycles. You can find a list of the stock available at Chevin on the Club website [here](#) or contact Gareth.

We've known Chevin Cycles longer than any partner; you'll find their friendly staff are always happy to help members with kit and bike matters. Don't forget your discount on parts, bikes and services.

Olivia French - National Road Bike Ladies TT Champion

Congratulations to Olivia French of OCC who became the National Road Bike Ladies TT Champion on Sunday, 7 June on the 22-mile Tour of the Meldon near Peebles. There's an article on Olivia's ride on the club website [here](#).

In other rides, Olivia was 2nd in the Women's category at the Otley CC 10-mile Time Trial last April only beaten by World Champion, Anna Morris and won the Tickhill Velo 10 – mile TT in South Yorkshire in August.



Congratulations Olivia from all of your friends and supporters at OCC!

Time Trials – club end of season events

We're approaching the end of the years' time trial events.

On **Sunday, 20 September** (9.00 am start) we have the club **30-mile** event to close out the Triangle season. This runs on the A168 between Walshford and Boroughbridge.

On **Saturday, 3 October** we have our club **Open 2-stager** Hill Climb, taking on Guisecliff by Pateley Bridge and Norwood Edge, north of Leathley. Won by Daniel Middlebrooke of OCC last year, the club will usually field 6 or more riders on the day.



We'd love to see as many members as possible entered into these events. For the 30, select the event on the RidesApp on the club website. For the hill climb, entry is via the CTT website ([CTT / Otley CC Two Stage Hill Climb 2026](#)).

We also always need volunteers to help at each event. If you can spare time to marshal a junction, or help at HQ, please get in touch. For either event, please direct any questions, whether about racing or assisting, to liammealey@hotmail.com. who will hopefully see some of you out there.



Championship update

It's neck and neck in the current championship with just 2 pts separating John Raftery from Sam Ward:

Rider	No events	Total Points
John Raftery	10	70
Sam Ward	9	68
Helen Goldthorpe	8	55
Liam Mealey	8	47
Jonathan Hobbs	7	41
Sheldon Howcroft	5	39
Tony Wild	5	30
David Howe	4	26
Matt Asquith	3	24
Chris Yates	3	21
Tom Smith	3	18
Steve Broadleu	4	15

Rider	No events	Total Points
Tom Evans	3	15
Olivia French	2	11
Emily Middlebrooke	2	10
Tom Broadley	2	9
Ethan Roper	2	7
Daniel Middlebrooke	1	6
James Cullen	1	5
Louis Edwards	1	5
Chris Rowley	1	3
Gill Arnett	1	2
Andrew Roper	1	1
Claire Jessop	2	1

Well done to all 24 riders who raced this season and to the others who have helped the events go ahead. You can see all of the rides of the TT series on the club website by clicking [here](#).

RTTC National Hill Climb championship

Club veteran, John Raftery will not be defending his National Hill Climb titles when the event is in Somerset on 25-Oct (a long way to go to cycle 4.1 miles). John has won **national titles** in each of the last three years – On the infamous Struggle at Ambleside in 2023 in the 65-69 age group, at Hexham in 2024 in the 70-74 group and again at Matlock in 2025 also in the 70-74 age group. So well done John, we salute you!

Instead of competing in Somerset John will be finding time, as he does every week, to ride with the Storm and Zephyr groups



Hexham 2024

This year's memorable rides

The club offers a vast number of memorable rides each season which, if you've missed this year, you might want to pencil into your diaries for next year. While this list can't be comprehensive, here are a few of the year's highlights:

21-Dec Storm Section Bridges Ride - this iconic ride is based upon the Fast Section Bridges Ride of the 1980's and 90's which was a regular feature always the Sunday before Christmas, crossing every possible bridge, and the odd set of stepping stones between Otley and Grassington. Then it involved tracks, footpaths and fields and the occasional road and usually someone ended up in the Wharfe and soaked to the skin.

Six riders safely rode this year's recent incarnation which is a calmed down legal version that takes in 12 bridges in the ride to Kilnsey and back. This newer route still involve 5 footbridges and a modicum of off-road riding.



7 – 9 Jun – Ladies coast to coast ride along Way of the Roses organised by Sam Edwards. After last year's Coast and Castles trip, five lady members travelled to Morecambe by train to start their 170-mile ride late morning. Cycling through Clapham, Settle, Malham, York, and across the Wolds, hostelling Sat & Sun nights, their aim - to get the train back from Bridlington on Mon evening.

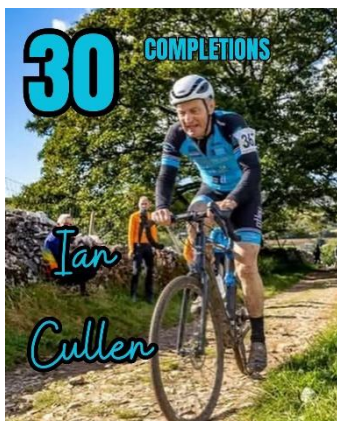
There's a great write up of the ride on the Member's Facebook page - just search for 'Morecambe'. And look out for next year's event.



12 Jul - Away day to Morecambe using the Way of the Roses route. A favourite B section ride, 65 miles from Settle to Morecambe and back along the same route.

On the same day – Pres Peter Clark was doing a hilly 170, the Etape de Tour again, going up and over 4 legendary Tour de France climbs Col de la Croix de Fer, Col du Télégraphe, Col du Galibier, Col de Sarenne and then for good measure, a climb to the top of Alpe d'Huez, **5,400m** of elevation gain. Well done Peter.

19 Jul – The 100-mile hilly in 8 (hrs). An annual club ride over 40+ years in the making. Suited to Storm, B's and B Plus riders. The premise is fairly simple do a 100-mile ride in less than 8 hours, including all stops. The route goes anti-clockwise around to Masham and then along Wensleydale to Hawes and over the infamous Fleet Moss from Hawes, a brutal 1 in 4 climb that ascends to the highest tarmac road in Yorkshire at nearly 2,000 feet, before heading back down Wharfedale, home and a pint.



27 Sep - The 3 Peaks Cyclo-Cross while not a club ride, is staged in the Yorkshire Dales every year at the end of Sep. It is the toughest and biggest Cyclo-Cross event in the UK ridden over 38 miles, with 5,000 ft of climbing & bike carrying. For Club Captain, Ian Cullen, last year's ride was the 30th time he had completed the race, finishing in 04:40:19. That's incredible, and he's going to do it again!

Nine club members have entered this year's race - Megan Cullen, Hazel Radcliffe, Tom Cullen, William Jowett, Kevin McCann, Chris Smith, Stuart Hall, Chris Radcliffe and Captain Fantastic Ian Cullen. This really does look a good day out (for spectators!). Good luck everyone!



Race Team ('Blue Train')

Otley Cycle Club has a proud history of helping riders reach their potential. Our Race Team (affectionately known as the 'Blue Train') is inclusive. It is coached tirelessly by Peter Middlebrooke and Stuart Hall with the support of a good many parents.



The team supports young riders, aged 12 – 22, who train hard and commit to a schedule of races over the year. Many riders move up through club coaching and rider development. Increasingly OCC is being recognised as a cycle club with a structure to support young cyclists to fulfil their potential. New riders are very welcome.



Their performance this season has been 'brilliant'. They have had a superb start to the road racing season, with lots of success from race wins, podium places, lots of BC points, significant presence at National series events, all helping our riders take the first steps into competition. Hopefully you will have seen their regular social media updates highlighting their successes, if not you can follow these links and meet the team on [Facebook](#) or on the [Chevin Cycles website](#). The Chevin Cycles site helpfully lists all 20 riders, with photos, achievements and goals for the season.



At the moment the team are at the very top of the British Cycling regional standings, no mean feat! They have had 8 riders progress up to 2nd category from 3rd this season, quite an achievement with big plans to progress further in 2027! So, a huge thank you to all of their supporters in helping to make this happen, you do make a massive difference to our young riders and help them to become a great team.

Sponsors

The Race Team has secured significant financial support again this season thanks to the commitment of multiple sponsors (from a variety of commercial sectors) including [Santini](#), [Chevin Cycles](#), [MAS Design Consultants](#), [BBS Natural Stone](#), [Bike Futures](#), [Richardsons Electrical](#) and [Nuffield Health](#). Our thanks once again go to Jon, Sanjai, Mark, Fraser, Ian and Nick for their very generous support.



Robyn Clay

Speaking of rider development, congratulations to former Race Team member Robyn Clay finishing her inaugural Tour de France Femmes avec Zwift riding for UCI Women's World Team Picnic PostNL. A fantastic event all round, we're looking forward to experiencing its Grand Départ here in Leeds next year, on Friday, 30 July 2027.

Robin won the Santini Women's Otley Grand Prix title in 2025 while riding for DAS-Hutchinson but was unable to defend her title this year having turned professional at the end of last season.



Edward Hall

And congratulations to our other '**National Champion**' **Edward Hall**. Ed won the National Junior Gravel TT Championship for the second year running and then backed that up with a bronze medal in the open bunch race. What an amazing weekend and achievements Ed!

Race Team - Acht van Bladel Dutch Trip

I couldn't end this note on the Race Team without mentioning their recent continental adventure. Peter Middlebrooke wrote this note for us on the Race Team's visit to the Netherlands in June. "Being invited to **Acht van Bladel**, a UCI 1.1 race for Juniors was one of the high points of the season for the RT. We had spent a lot of time and effort to sort out the logistics, entries, accommodation, travel etc.



The team (Adam Smith, Edward Hall, Daniel Middlebrooke, Thomas Smith and Zack Stobbs) and some parents, arrived at Dover in good time for their ferry, it was a very hot day and it was widely publicised that Europe was going to experience a heatwave over the forthcoming week, but we were prepared for the heat and had plans for keeping the lads well hydrated and as cool as possible.

Ten minutes before we boarded the ferry, I received an email from the event organiser saying that due to extreme heat warnings they had taken the decision to cancel the entire event. We were pretty shocked and disappointed. We quickly made the decision to carry on anyway; we might be able to find local races to give the lads some competition and whilst we all had travel insurance it would be unlikely to pay out just because an event had been cancelled.

On the ferry I contacted British Cycling and (like other teams) asked for them to extend the lads licences to Belgium as well as the Netherlands, we searched the internet for leads for local races in both, but as quickly as we found them, they were being cancelled because of the extreme heat warnings.

The next day all of the riders set out for a 3-4 hour training ride, by the time they got back the temperature had hit 42 degrees and they all agreed that it was the right decision to cancel the race in those conditions. They spent the next few days getting out early for a long ride before it got too hot and then added in an extra hour in the late evening as things cooled down.

We managed to get in some wild swimming, spectating at the Belgian National Road Champs and some great team building between the five riders. We didn't get to race but we made the most of the opportunity. All of the planning worked well and we are confident that we can now progress in 2027 with a more ambitious programme of racing some of the biggest Junior races in Europe."

What a shame! Well done everyone.

One final repeat item:

Children's Rides – the Club once had a very active **Mini-Flyers** group and should try and engage with parent members to discuss rebooting these rides or perhaps changing their format to include gravel and / or mountain biking with the aim of taking the children into a safer environment and off our busy local roads. Would any parents be interested in helping set this up? Again, the Club will support you in this.

