



# La Gazzetta

Newsletter of Rochdale CTC & the East Lancs Road Club



No.62 November 2020

## WELCOME

In this issue we have a fantastic article by one of the Club's newest members, Ayaiz Ahmed. When the annual Manchester to Blackpool ride was cancelled due to COVID, Club members got together and did the ride themselves.

Mike Coulter has been arranging group rides on Zwift. If you're not familiar with this indoor riding app, read all about it below.

Our Welfare Officer, Heather Preston, explains the mental health benefits of cycling and Shaun Donnelly rounds up the recent news from around the Club.

## BLACKPOOL & BACK: A CYCLISTS JOURNEY

Pardon the Hobbit inspired reference! I thought it may bring the eye to what I'm hoping will be something of interest!

Well, numerous rides with the Saturday club ride and our designated ride leader, Shaun Donnelly brought up in conversation that he's supporting two lads with a sponsored ride to Blackpool, that conversation in the upstairs of Anna's Café snowballed into a plethora of discussions with trepidation for some and gusto from others.

Conversations turned to the logistics of how we would do a ride to Blackpool and even back, for those who wanted, and how those happy to support would help the two charity riders with the morale boost they needed.

Well, as with everything 2020, not everything goes to plan! The charity riders were forced to cancel but ELRC club members took this as no reason to change their mindset and vowed to continue. Discussions continued, WhatsApp was awash with last minute messages and it was all go!

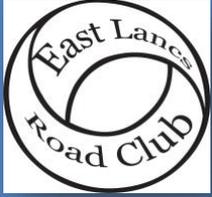
It was a strange feeling for unaccustomed riders to be leaving before the crack of dawn in the dark on a Sunday when everyone else is having a lie-in, clad in layers of lycra, pockets full of bars and gels to get us through the day knowing the psychological and physical task ahead.

On my way to meeting the group in Littleborough, I looked down and realised I had no bottles with me! Anyway, I won't go into what my wife said to me over the phone when I woke her up at 6:30am to bring me my bottles and the rest of it, best maintain the positive tone of this story!

Arriving at Littleborough centre 15 mins late, the group finally rode off in the direction of Todmorden and off on a personal adventure, knowing some members of the ride had never rode a century before. We pedalled under the guidance of Shaun and before we knew it we came to Accrington!

Riding into town like Hells Angels on a budget with no engines or leather, the group got its first puncture! A sterling group effort to get back on the road, (most notable was Suzanne commenting that Accrington Town Centre smelt like stale urine), we continued onto Preston and hit the outskirts of Blackpool. Another puncture! but the group was invigorated knowing that it was another 15-20 miles and we can say we hit the 60-mile mark without no major setbacks.





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## BEST ALL ROUNDER

This year's Best All Rounder (BAR) competition finished at the end of November. There were fewer Club runs taking place due to lockdown but thanks to energy and enthusiasm of Shaun Donnelly all the Reliability Rides were run. The only event missing being the end of season Funnium.

The BAR has three categories, Female, Male and Junior and your winners in each category are as follows:

Female: Suzanne Millar  
Male: Shaun Donnelly  
Junior: Sam Kelly

Congratulations to all our winners. Full results can be found at the Club's website page for [BAR Standings](#).

Elation flowed through the group as the familiar signs appeared and we knew Blackpool was a few miles away, the famous tower began peeking on the horizon and grew in stature and prominence. We finally stopped at the beach beside the Tower and Shaun took his bike onto the sandy shore to christen his tyres, a smile beaming across his face. It's amazing how a man taking his bike to the beach gives him so much pleasure!



The obligatory photo after accosting any passer-by who made the misfortune of making eye contact with us and the triumphant poses with our trusted steeds by our sides! Left to right: John Crook, Shaun Donnelly, Suzanne Millar, Andrew Finerty, Ayaiz Ahmed, Roger Bucko and Chris Lowe.

It must have been around 11am and we were all prowling the arcade front for somewhere suitable to sit down and treat ourselves to a traditional cyclists' meal of fish and chips. Food consumed and water bottles replenished, the group rode back home.

As we rode alongside the horse drawn princess carriages, I thought to myself; this is a surreal experience when 'the world really does look different on a bike' and for those who have been on the main strip in Blackpool by car, riding on two wheels along somewhere as iconic as Blackpool is something to savour, amongst cycling friends, well that just adds that something special!

Changing the scenery, the group went through Lytham St Annes and past the sand dunes, passing the windmills and all the families who had taken the opportunity to get out whilst the lockdown still allowed.

The journey back, now you can feel the muscles tiring and the mental resilience lower, the long ride back and the prize of a sofa and a well-deserved drink to celebrate. Legs began to tire but the group helped push each other on and get back home taking the Chorley route.

By the time we hit the outskirts of Bolton, we stopped and had to say goodbye to one rider, ensuring they were fine and had a lift organised to pick them up, we continued back.





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## LOCKDOWN QUIZ

Would you like to know your cycling personality? The Guardian has a fun quiz (sponsored by a tyre manufacturer) to while away a few minutes. Go to the [Guardian Quiz](#).

The hills began to sap the energy from riders and we looked at the next hills with a foreboding sentiment but our muscle memory made sure we moved forward with every push. Some riders more than others, were feeling the strain as we hit the century mark but the group kept together under the ethos who starts together, finishes together. We finally rode down into Rochdale via Bury and we knew we had made a tremendous achievement of riding 112 miles and parted ways as we peeled off to go home.



Stats from my Wahoo for the day. Pause time included puncture repairs, toilet breaks in farmers' fields and Blackpool mooching around!

Despite some riders feeling the effects around the hundred mile mark onwards, the group stayed with together, encouraged all the way.

On a final note, I have to say that despite riders falling back and at times needing a time out, legs wobbling and the bonks hitting, other riders waited with patience, this is what I feel underpins the ethos of what is ELRC and why I felt I would write about our ride on that day.

It would have been very easy for riders to have carried on and leave tiring riders to their own steam to get home, but this was not the case. Despite one rider needing time off the saddle and plying with one of my gels, the rest of the group were waiting for us to catch up and help where needed.

To be dropped isn't a nice experience for any rider, but this definitely isn't how ELRC rides are conducted, so for those of you who thought you would sit this one out, maybe this article has helped you make your mind up that such a ride is within your grasp and next year, when things improve, we will be riding to Blackpool again and welcome anyone who would like to do it and share in our positive experience.

On a last note, a few weeks later we were again in Anna's Café and got into a conversation with some of the patrons as we precariously hobbled down the stairs to pay for our drinks. The usual jokes and japes about cyclists and Lycra ensued, but when we mentioned we had done a 112 mile ride two weeks before, we walked out of the joint like the two hitmen Jules and Vincent from the final scene of Pulp Fiction! If you're not familiar with Quentin Tarantino, here's the clip!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtHKzXng4bU>





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## LANCASHIRE'S VUELTA SUCCESS

Lancashire's Hugh Carthy rode to third place overall at this years gruelling Vuelta a Espana Grand Tour.

Carthy who hails from Preston took over the leadership mantle of his team, Education First, after a series of mishaps befell his teammates. Presented with the opportunity, he grabbed it with both hands and pushed eventual winner Primoz Roglic and second place Richard Carapaz hard all the way to Madrid.

To learn more about this local, unorthodox, no nonsense star visit [this article on Hugh Carthy](#).

## ZWIFT: RIDING UNDER LOCKDOWN

National lockdown is not stopping some members of the club getting out (or getting in as the case may be) on groups rides. Using the power of technology club riders have been meeting up and munching the miles over the internet. In this new virtual world the rule of two or six definitely doesn't apply.

The club's inaugural virtual ride took place on a wet cold & blustery Thursday evening in November in the virtual and mythical world of Watopia on Zwift. Seven riders met up, from the comfort and safety of their own homes and rode a 19.1 mile route. The ride was at a quick pace, as we were all trying our best to keep up with Stuart Duggan, who joined later, had to catch up with us and then proceeded to drop us all!

All riders on this ride were keen to push hard so the pace was quick and hard, with some tasty hills to climb - total of 833ft of ascent in total. A couple of riders fell off at around the halfway point, with five finishing. Finishers average speeds ranging [from 18.4](#) to 20.4mph.



At the time of writing two further club Zwift rides have been completed, each attracting seven riders on average.

The group Zwift rides are a great way to keep in touch with other riders and mix up your training routine in this cold dark & wet second lockdown.





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## TREK KIT & HELMETS FOR SALE

In search of ways of keeping themselves occupied during lockdown and having exhausted the usual outlets in common with many people, Club members Heather and Jon Preston have been clearing out their cupboards. They've found two helmets and some Trek Factory Racing kit.



There is one Bontrager Interval helmet 52-60cm and a Giro Saros helmet 55-59cm. The Trek kit consists of a short-sleeved top with full zip and bib shorts. Both are size large.

All items are used but in excellent condition. They can be yours for a suitable donation to the Club. Contact Jon on 07985 248367.

If you are interested in joining in follow Michael Coulter on Zwift and you'll be invited to future rides which will generally take place on Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings.

We might not be able to ride as a club outside whilst in lockdown, but we can keep riding together over the web. As the Zwift strap line goes - RIDE ON!



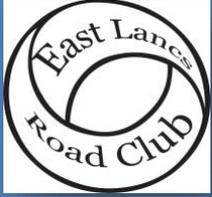
## FIVE REASONS TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH CYCLING

Well, 2020's COVID pandemic has thrown up lots of challenges for us all and looking after our physical & mental health is one of the biggest. There are lots of good reasons why using your bike should be your physical activity of choice for improving your mental health. British Cycling have put together 5 excellent reasons why cycling helps our mental health:

### 1. It gets you out in the open

While all exercise is good exercise, doing it outdoors gives you bonus points according to a study in Science Daily. The results showed that getting moving out in the open leaves you feeling revitalised, energised and optimistic in a way that bouncing around a gym can't, while feelings of tension and anger were reduced too. 17% fewer people who stopped cycling consider their lives worthwhile, in comparison to those who continued. So, ditch the gym (currently closed) and get on your bike to soak up the scenery, sunshine and positive vibes.





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## WARNING OF INCREASED BIKE THEFTS

As the popularity of cycling has increased, sadly, the number of bike thefts has risen. As always, it's important to keep your bike secure when not in use, consider using a good quality lock (around 10-20% of your bikes value). You can also register your bike at [www.bikeregister.com](http://www.bikeregister.com). This database is used by the police when they recover a stolen bike to contact the owner.

Specific insurance is available for bikes. However, bikes costing up to £500 are often covered on home insurance to some extent. Bikes up to £1,000 may require adding specifically to your policy. If your bike is over this value, consider special insurance.

If the worst happens and your bike is stolen contact the Police and keep an eye on Gumtree and eBay. Ads with few details and poor photos are often a giveaway.

### 2. Aerobic exercise reduces anxiety

A study in Science Direct showed that aerobic exercise, of which running and cycling are great examples, can significantly reduce feelings of anxiety, potentially preventing anxiousness from developing into full-blown panic attacks or disorders. A recent study showed that 18% more of people who ride a bike every day consider their life happy, compared to people who tried and stopped cycling. Any type of aerobic exercise will do the trick, but a bike ride is low-impact (so great for those of us worried about bad knees) and, as mentioned before, gets you out in the great outdoors where you'll soak up even more beneficial side-effects.

### 3. You can ride a bike socially

When it comes to riding a bike, you have the choice between whether you want to go solo or make it a social activity. According to a large study published in the Lancet, team sports are the best for improving mental health, with riding a bike coming a close second. So one can only imagine the benefits of grabbing some friends, family or co-workers and going for a bike ride as a team sport, restrictions allowing.

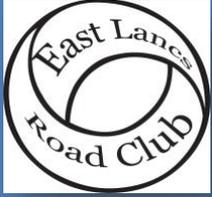
### 4. It's a proven stress-buster

Regularly riding a bike is proven to reduce stress in itself. 15% more of people who ride a bike every day are satisfied with their lives than people who haven't biked since becoming an adult. But there are other ways it could help. For example, in the long-term regular cycling can work out cheaper than a gym membership, which could alleviate financial worries. Plus, a 30-minute bout of daily exercise can boost memory and creative thinking, which could help you feel more positive about work.

### 5. It's easy to fit into your daily life

Unlike dragging yourself to and from the gym, riding a bike can be woven into your daily routine without disrupting it. Those who swap their dreary commutes for cycling to and from work have a much lower risk of feeling stressed, and there is research to suggest that making regular exercise a part of your lifestyle - like working it into a hobby or daily routine - can better improve your overall mood and wellbeing.





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## WANTED: NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Why not get your name in print? Articles for the newsletter are always in short supply and very welcome. If you have something to say you don't have to be Shakespeare just put a few words together and email me at [newsletter@rochdalectc.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@rochdalectc.org.uk)

## SHAUN'S CLUB ROUNDUP

What have you been up to? Let's start with Blackpool. The two events the club usually supports, Manchester 100 and Manchester Blackpool were cancelled. This caused a few bottom lips to pop out, so a replacement ride was organised.

We have since had a hilly ride to the Oil Can café in Holmfirth. That's definitely going on the calendar next year. It seems ages since we did the climb out of Marsden. The sky road offered little challenge to the nine of us as we all punched up in our own time. Martin Lucas zoomed up like a Grand Tour GC rider, I supported him by snuggling into his back wheel to protect him from and wild animals that might pounce! The week after we gave a massive welcome to two returning East Lancs' favourites, Andy and Tracy Bateson. I must say, both are riding well. We rode a Crawshaw Booth loop to Townley Hall. Simon Abraham could stand my rear mech clicking no more and after scratching about with his adjustable thingy the bike ran like a racer.

Since then, we have had to address the lockdown. Ah ha! Like that has stopped you. Strava shows your still out and about. The weekend stalwarts have addressed this by riding in pairs with a good hundred meter distance. Nobody can deny the 'Dunkirk spirit' is among us. We just won't be beat.

This lock down is scheduled to end early December. Let's have one last new event. The 'Christmas Treasure Hunt' is behind you... Ohhhh noooo it's not. This will actually be held on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December. If you're up for it, please advise me who your riding partner will be, and I will email you the treasure hunt details the week before. You can set off from your own chosen destination. I will alter it a little for each pair, so you are not grouping up. I have risk assessed this and feel that even if the restrictions are lifted, we should see the year out under the same regulations as now the last thing anyone wants is Covid for Christmas.

Your BAR is up to date and now finished and illustrates just what a good competition it is that seems to grow from strength to strength some really strong points achieved there.

Another thing that came up was the VETs (veterans rides). These tend to zoom off on a Thursday. Walter has picked up the reins here. Ian Southwood asked me about putting their rides on the calendar and absolutely we will as I think it's a great opportunity for the rest of us to join you when we have those sneaky days off work and you youngsters should be acknowledged for your rides.

Matt Jackson's successful track events came to a reluctant end. Several riders made it clear they are looking forward to resuming the Thursday night rides, endorsing the good work Matt did this year.

