

CHAPTER FOUR

A New Beginning - The Harris Era

Throughout the country there was optimism with regard to the successful ending of hostilities in Europe in the near future and the Club took the decision to promote an Open 100 mile Time Trial in Cheshire, along with four Club Events on the road.

The first Club '25' in 1944 had an entry of 12 to underline the awakening interest. Against this background it was interesting to note that the Easter Tour to Grinshill in Shropshire was supported by 10 members, eight of whom were on bicycles and the Chairman noted that the youngest was 34 and the oldest 74.

A trickle of new young racing members led to increased activity on the Road and particularly at Fallowfield Track and a return to competition by Reg Harris indicated that he was approaching his form of 1939. With the support of George Lewis, Arthur Cross, Harry Dyson, Dennis Conroy and Joe Mokwa of the U.S. Forces stationed in Manchester the Club was again beginning to make itself a force in Track Racing circles.

The outstanding event of the season was the winning of three National Championships by Reg Harris who had started racing again in 1944 after three years in H.M. Forces.

Strong support had been given by our riders to Time Trial events in the area, although without individual successes.

The seeds of two ideas, which were to have far reaching consequences for the Club, were sown in the Autumn of 1944.

Firstly was the idea originated by T. A. McDonald of a Country Headquarters which could be used as a meeting place and for accommodation for our younger riders who were competing in Time Trials in Cheshire.

Of greater and more far reaching importance for track sport in the Manchester area was a joint meeting with the M.A.C. Grounds Committee on the subject of making the track more attractive to the general public. It was from this Meeting, and others which followed, that probably developed the scheme to build a steeply banked concrete track at Fallowfield instead of the existing shallow red shale surface which had stood since the late 19th century.

Increased enthusiasm was also making itself felt among the members of the Manchester Wheelers' Club House Ltd., who approached our own Committee with a proposal to repay their Debenture Bond. However, this was rejected unless the accrued arrears of interest upon the Debenture was paid. It was felt that the Debenture Bond acted as a safeguard for the Manchester Wheelers' Club interests.

The increased racing activity was reflected in the Annual Smoker and Prize Distribution held at the Club House, South King Street, on the 24th November, 1944, which was supported by fifty members and seventy five visitors. The Smoker was one of the highlights of the local social season and received very favourable comment from the cycling fraternity.

1944 had been a year of reawakening.

The Annual General Meeting voted enthusiastically for what was virtually a return to a full programme of racing and social events for 1945, the major event to be the resumption of the Race Meet on the second Saturday in July, 1945. A very ambitious programme was arranged, although unfortunately the Vi-Tonica and Muratti Cups were not available for

competition as several holders of these Trophies were unable to enter due to being members of H.M. Forces.

On the road there was to be an Open '100' and an Open 12 hours, together with four Club Events at 25 miles and also a new venture, an Open 50 mile Time Trial.

Although the earlier publicity campaign had not produced any results, new members were now coming forward in steady numbers. There was also a gradual drift back of members who had completed their Service with the Armed Forces. Against this, some younger members were still being called up for military service.

The Race Meet was run off in glorious weather before a crowd estimated at between 7,000 and 10,000 spectators, the highlight being the winning of the 1,000 yards N.C.U. Championship by Reg Harris, who, during the season, added to this two further Championship Titles, the ¼ mile and the ½ mile Grass.

All sporting activities were now beginning to enjoy boom conditions and cycling was no exception. Harris in particular enjoyed a steadily increasing amount of Newspaper and media publicity which associated itself with the Manchester Wheelers' and was probably instrumental in leading to a welcome influx of young embryo racing cyclists. A Club Junior 10 was promoted which resulted in ten entries and ten finishers, a certain sign of enthusiasm.

Membership grew rapidly in the first half of 1946 with an increase of almost 30, being a cross section of all ages and types. Young newcomers to the sport, promising riders from other clubs in the area, and a nucleus of mature officials wishing to take part in the activities of one of the most successful cycling clubs in the country.

1946 was to be the most successful season ever in the Club's racing history. Apart from the multiple success in track racing, some of our riders were now making fastest time in road time trials (the first for a number of years) and also winning team awards, and some idea of the Club's racing strength could be gained from the fact that seventeen riders contested the Club Track Championship at an evening meeting on the 6th June, 1946, which attracted a crowd of between 4,000 and 5,000.

In the midst of this success the Club was compelled to cancel the 1946 Open '100' due to there being less than one dozen entries. This was probably due to its clash of date with both the Anfield '100' and the Isle of Man Cycling Week, which at that time attracted very many officials and riders from the area.

In May 1946, the Club was honoured when one of its Life Members H. S. (Bert) Anderson was awarded the N.C.U. Gold Badge of Honour.

In June 1946, a plot of land in New Platt Lane, Goostrey, (together with an existing building on the site) were purchased by Jimmy Taylor and donated to the Club for its use as a Country Headquarters. It was to be called Taylor House, and although it was a very generous donation and blessed with good ideas it was to be a bone of contention and indeed proved a mixed blessing. Unfortunately a situation arose where half the members felt obliged to make Taylor House a weekly pilgrimage to carry out the volunteer work, whereas the other half felt that a freer atmosphere of racing and Club-runs was far preferable.

In fact Taylor House was never used to the extent envisaged, and with the changing habits of racing men, who, in the affluent early '60's travelled out to events by motor car instead of riding out on Saturday afternoon for an overnight stay, its popularity as a centre of activity declined steadily until in 1964 it was decided with great sadness to return Taylor House to its original donor.

The fame and charisma of the Club was not due only to the prowess of its racing members. From its earliest days there had been outstanding officials and notable characters among its membership. One such was Charlie Fletcher, a member from the early days of the

Club who died at the age of 74 on the last day of the Easter Tour. Charlie had been a member when paced racing on both road and track were the fashion, and more notably in the early 1900's was one of Manchester's few racing motorists. He was also Manager of the Empress Motor Company in Manchester, one of his employees being an apprentice named Alcock, later to become famous with Brown as the first men to fly the Atlantic.

Our principal successes on the road were won by Cyril Cartwright, already an English Champion and -5 mile and 30 mile record holder who had joined us because his future ambitions were in track racing.

At the same time our junior ranks provided us with promising riders in Ray Potter, Derek Robinson and Norman Tare.

In a Saturday afternoon Club 25 on the 10th August, Cartwright set a new Cheshire record at 1.0.37 and there were 24 starters.

A successful racing club must have support from its older non-racing members. Fortunately this support was forthcoming even to the extent of a number of Wheelers' being at the Zurich World Championships to give support to our two members who were representing Great Britain in the Amateur Sprint Championships, Reg Harris and Alan Bannister. Although one of the favourites to reach the finals, Reg, disappointingly was eliminated in the quarter finals by the Dutchman, Bijster. For Alan Bannister it was more a matter of gaining experience which was to stand him in good stead in later Championships.

Disappointment at his failure in the World Sprint Championship was all the greater when in September, 1946, riding in Paris, Reg Harris beat all the World's top amateur sprinters including World Champion, Plattner.

38 new members had been added to our ranks during 1946 with the further influx of 12 in the first 2 months of 1947.

At the Annual General Meeting in 1947. Reg Harris successfully proposed a change in the Club's racing colours and in the strong patriotic atmosphere of the era, especially when English riders were competing with success abroad, the choice was inevitably the national red, white and blue. Blue was to be the predominating colour of the jersey with white/red/white bands encircling the body.

At this time the Club was by far the most successful track racing club in the Country, and inevitably was the subject of a great deal of jealousy. The fact that it was continuing to attract many promising riders from other clubs in the area naturally led to considerable criticism. An official of one club publicly stated that "The Manchester Wheelers' are wolves raiding the fold". The Club naturally countered this by publicly stating that riders had joined us without the slightest coercion. There is little doubt that successful clubs will always attract ambitious racing men but there is little doubt also that both our top riders and their enthusiastic supporters spread the gospel around that the Wheelers' was the best club to be riding for. Success will not be achieved by standing aloof - there has to be an obvious interest on both sides otherwise other clubs will step in and promising riders will go elsewhere.

An even more ambitious programme of events was planned for 1947. Apart from the Race Meet, two Open Evening Meetings, two Open Events on the road (the '100' and the '12') and six club events were programmed.

A new scratch sprint event was introduced to the 1947 Race Meet - The Grand Prix of the City of Manchester.

Prosperity arising from the Race Meet was added to by successfully persuading a number of cycle and component manufacturers to carry advertisements in the Club Journal.

Of subsequent historical interest was the fact that the winner of the third handicap in our Open '100' was a certain Norman Grattage, (at that time riding for the Pyramid Road Club) who was later to become one of our most enthusiastic members and create a record in the number of years for which he was to officiate as Race Meet Secretary.

International amateur riders of the '70's would be interested to learn that the Club sent at its own expense a team of four riders (Reg Harris, Cyril Cartwright, Alan Bannister and Norman Dove) to compete at a track meeting in Paris in early 1947. Most disappointingly this meeting was cancelled due to wet conditions.

The Race Meet of 1947 was an outstanding promotion and is worthy of special comment.

Club members were extremely successful, first three places in the handicap being won by Manchester Wheelers'. This was followed by Cyril Cartwright winning the pursuit and Reg Harris winning the Vi-Tonica Gold Cup and the Grand Prix of the City of Manchester.

THE RACE MEET - 12th July, 1947

Once again we were favoured with grand weather on this "Second Saturday" in July and the 55th Annual Race Meet gave thrills and excitement to 15,000 spectators in traditional manner.

Reg Harris was the star performer with two sprint wins to his credit - Vi-Tonica and Grand Prix, while Tommy Godwin (Rover C. C.) won the Muratti for the second time; Cyril Cartwright dominated the 4000 metres Pursuit race, French riders Jeannot-Blusson made at least one complete ring round the Madison field, and three Wheelers' E. F. Withington, W. L. Wilson and J. Pennington, took the first three prizes in the lap handicap! and all off the same mark, 56 yards!

We must not forget to mention also that Marjorie Brown (Brodsforth C.C.) won the Sun Cup for the second year in succession and promised to make a return visit to complete the hat-trick next year.

In winning the Vi-Tonica Trophy for the third year, Reg Harris made it his own property, thereby creating a record as the first Wheeler to win a Race Meet Trophy outright, in 44 years! The race itself brought Reg, Bannister, Pond and Godwin together, but in the final we find Reg winning by a length from J. W. Pratt (East Mids. Clarion) with Bannister and Pond inches behind! A fine effort by Pratt and a great win by Reg.

The competition for the new race -The Grand Prix of the City of Manchester, brought out some exciting sprinting, and in the semi-finals we had Harris, Bannister and Meadwell (East Mids. Clarion) in the first heat, and Godwin, Waters and Pond in the second heat. From these, Harris and Godwin emerged as winners to contest the final with Bannister and Pond riding for third place.

In the final, Godwin led at a steady pace with Reg keeping a watchful eye on him. Godwin wound it up and went away in the back straight but Reg followed, caught him, and came round to win comfortably by a length. The Sash of the Grand Prix was presented to Reg by Councillor Sharpe on behalf of the City fathers and Reg. rode a lap of honour to the cheering and acclamation of the crowd.

Bannister won the race against Lew Pond for third place by opening up a lead of two lengths at the 220 yard mark and holding onto an inches win at the line.

The Madison (40 laps) was a good race, and the French pairs, Jeannot-Blusson and Brizon-Babinot were the dominating factors in an otherwise mediocre performance, R. & W. Waters and McNulty-Simpson being the only other teams to take sprint points. Jeannot-Blusson lapped the field at the twenty-fifth lap and there is little doubt that this helped to "make" the race - from the general public point of view - for in spite of President

Macdonald's efforts at the "mike" to clarify the situation as it proceeded, great confusion existed in the crowd as to the progress of the race. The spoken word helps a great deal - particularly to those with a keen interest and some initiation into Madison racing, but to the general public (roughly 50% of our "gate") the main interest MUST be visual, and if future Race Meets are to "stage" Madison races we must give this type of event much more study than hitherto for it's success - a success which is undoubtedly merited and appreciated by those who understand the race.

The Muratti Cup race, over 5 miles, was again won by Tommy Godwin (Rover C.C.), this being the second time in succession, and here again a third win will mean "goodbye" to the Cup.

The race was not outstanding as a performance though the Frenchmen tried to break up the field on one or two occasions, Tommy himself having to make the effort to catch them. This did not detract from his final effort and he was well placed at the bell - unlike Reg who was well out of position. Godwin was a winner all the way with Bannister pressing him closely but failing by half a wheel, with R. Waters third.

RESULTS

Lap Handicap. 1, E. F. Withington (56); 2, W. L. Wilson (56); 3, J. Pennington (56), all Manchester Wheelers; 4, L. Cooper (Sheffield Phoenix) (48). Time 33 secs.

Sun Cup (Women's ½ mile Hcp.) 1, M. E. Brown (Brodsworth C.C.) (24); 2, J. Marvell (Sheffield Don.) (80); 3, G. B. Copeland (Oldham Clarion) (52). Time 68 secs.

10 laps (5020 yards) Roadmen's Pursuit. 1, C. Cartwright beat J. Simpson (Hemsworth R.C.) by 2 ½ secs. in 6 mins. 37 ½ secs.; 3, K. Redford (Altrincham Ravens).

Vi-Tonica Cup (1 lap Scratch). 1 R. H. Harris; 2, J. W. Pratt (East Mids. Clarion); 3, A. Bannister. Last 220 yds., 13 ½ secs.

Grand Prix of the City of Manchester (2 laps, 1004 yards). 1, R. H. Harris; 2, T. C. Godwin (Rover C.C.); 3, A. Bannister. Last 220 yards 13 ⅔ secs.

40 lap Madison. 1, Jeannot-Blusson (France), 8 points; at one lap: 2, Brizon-Babinot (France), 8 points; 3, R. & W. Waters (South London R.C.), 7 points; 4, T. McNulty (Glasgow St. Christopher's) - J. Simpson (Hemsworth R.C.), 4 points.

Winners of special prizes at 10, 20 and 30 laps: Jeannot-Blusson (1st sprint); Jeannot-Blusson (2nd sprint); Babinot-Brizon (3rd sprint). Time 25 mins. 52 ⅔ secs.

Muratti Cup (5 miles Scratch). 1, T. C. Godwin (Rover C.C.); 2, A. Bannister; 3, R. Waters (South London R.C.); 4, W. Waters (South London R.C.). Lap winners: 11. Worthen (Manchester Clarion), 4; S. Blusson (France), 2; R. Rouffetau (France), 5; W. Waters (South London), 4; N. W. Brown, 1; T. C. Godwin, 1. Time 12min 14 ⅔ secs.

RACE MEET DINNER COMMENTS

"The Vi-Tonica Cup is a nice piece of work to take home" - (Reg Harris).

With Charlie Anderson's translation, Marcel Babinot paid tribute to our generous welcome.

Eric Withington, the winner of the lap handicap, was the youngest rider on the track.

Sid Bowkett, whilst extolling the virtues of the Race Meet Secretaries, was not pleased to be dug out of retirement, now having only one eye, one leg and a paralysed bowel!

Eddie McGrath was congratulated on his first effort as Advertising Secretary.

Seventy members took part in the organisation and as officials, nineteen members competed in the events, and took nine of the twenty major prizes.

Monty Brierley emerged from retirement to take over the "gate" once more while Tom Macdonald did his Presidential "stuff".

Billie Webb was the Manchester Wheeler who took a Muratti Cup home for "keeps", forty four years ago.

"Press" support was acknowledged as very good this year, and by our friend Jimmy McDermott in particular.

"I have never seen a better meeting in any country, and it was worthy of the reception accorded it." - E. J. Southcott, President of the N. C. U.

"The 55th of the series has excelled anything that has gone before it - Manchester Wheelers' is full of stories - first, second and third in lap handicap off same mark - produced the first winner of the Grand Prix." - etc. - J. F. McDermott, Kemsley Newspapers.

Premier honours continued to be won by the Club both on road and track. During the summer Cyril Cartwright, Bevis Chapman and Ray Potter set a new 25 mile Competition Team Record and Cyril Cartwright a new 30 mile Competition Record.

On the domestic scene the Club had 16 riders winning one or more points in the Manchester Track Racing League, the first three places being taken by Geldard, Bannister and Harris.

The Club won the National Team Pursuit Championship for the first time and Reg Harris won the National Sprint Championship.

Harris and Bannister won the National Tandem Championship, this being the first of Alan Bannister's Tandem Championships.

Reg Harris recorded 51 wins in Open Events.

Great Britain had not provided a World Champion in modern times. 1947 was therefore the most outstanding year in the Club's post-1914 history when in August 1947 Reg Harris became Amateur Sprint Champion of the World.

In 1905 Jim Benyon, Manchester Wheelers' Club, had won the World Amateur Sprint Championship in Antwerp, having been second in 1903, and third in 1904.

The Journal recorded Harris's historic victory with two articles from the pen of T. A. McDonald, President of the Manchester Wheelers' Club.

REG HARRIS AMATEUR SPRINT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD 1947

To us, club mates and friends of Reg, his triumph at the Parc des Princes, Paris, was indeed an outstanding event; the achievement of the hallmark of world superiority, richly deserved, by one of "ours". To Reg it meant the realisation and achievement of an ambition conceived eleven years ago. Eleven years with his eyes fixed on the one target - Champion of the World in his chosen sport!

Reg did not climb to the top the easy way; only dogged determination and courage enabled him to overcome many of the obstacles to ultimate success. In the early stages of his career, facilities for training were almost hopelessly inadequate. The only reasonable piece of road available for sprinting was a very short stretch running straight into - the gates of a cemetery! To attend meetings at Fallowfield, Reg had to slog over miles of setts trailing his sprint bike. Not exactly the ideal preparation for a hard series of sprint events!

Came the war; a complete break from cycling of any sort, and an arduous campaign in the North African desert. A fortunate escape from a blazing tank, and then the hard road back to fitness and health, in which, naturally, cycling played the predominant part.

Followed the gradual achievement of racing ability and form which established him, at home and abroad, as one of the World's most outstanding sprinters. Then, the greatest

disappointment in his racing career, an unexpected defeat at Zurich in the Championship event of 1946.

The defeat of one year, however, once the period of bitter disappointment had passed, was only to serve as the final item of experience necessary to ensure complete success the following year in Paris. Despite natural speed, ability, track craft and all that goes to make the complete track cyclist, Reg would not have realised his great ambition without that characteristic determination and courage which has marked every step to success in his racing career.

On the Club side, Reg joined our ranks as an up and coming youngster from Bury in 1939, and soon made good friends with club mates young and old. This strong interest and attachment to the Club was soon evident, and he has developed a spirit of "Wheelerism" which is as worthy of emulation by our younger members as his riding technique and ability. Reg is the first to acknowledge any assistance rendered by the Club and his club mates, and is ever ready if, in turn, he can be of service. It is, therefore, with a tremendous feeling of pride that we say Congratulations Reg, on an ambition well conceived and wonderfully achieved - we salute you - World Champion - Manchester Wheeler.

TOM MACDONALD
President

HOW REG HARRIS WON THE WORLD'S AMATEUR SPRINT CHAMPIONSHIP 1947

The story from inside the track

The Parc de Princes Track, Paris, July 27th, 1947, 4 p.m.! A roar from thirty thousands throats - Reg Harris, approaching the last banking, has made one of his electrifying "jumps" - from the front - and Cor Bijster is straining every muscle and sinew to hold his wheel. Round the banking and down the straight they come, to the continuous roar of the crowd, Reg still out in front, and so across the line, head down, all out, to win by a clear margin the second final of the World's Sprint Championship.

Reg Harris, Manchester Wheelers, Amateur Sprint Champion of the World, 1947! At last Reg had won the title so well deserved and rightly his. Britain had gained its first World Championship victory after a gap of 25 years. The Club, for the first time has a World Championship to inscribe on its honours list. Such thoughts flashed through my mind as I stood by the line and watched Reg sprint past and as I ran out to meet him when he came round to receive his jersey and bouquet. Then the donning of the jersey, the National Anthem, the raising of the Union Jack, the Lap of Honour; events which will remain vivid in my memory for a lifetime.

So much for the final act which so successfully culminated the efforts and preparation extending over a considerable period. Some weeks prior to the Championship, Reg and I had checked over the arrangements. The date of departure for Paris in particular, was an item for every careful consideration, and also other Continental engagements prior to the Championship. In the light of the previous year's experience, it was decided to cancel engagements to ride in Zurich and Paris against his possible opponents in July, as travelling and racing of this type so close to the main event had proved to be detrimental to Reg's form in the 1946 Championship series. Further, arrangements were made to fly to Paris on the Thursday prior to the heats - to commence on Saturday and so avoid too long a stay in Paris before the event, during which period nervous tension is unavoidably increased, and also minimising the danger of upset from a change in climatic conditions and strange food. When we arrived in Paris. in the middle of a concentrated heat wave, we realised how fortunate the decision had been. The heat was intense - sweat poured from everyone at the slightest

exertion. In view of these conditions, light training only was required, as too much work would obviously soon lead to staleness. Incidentally, both Marriner and Godwin, to my mind, damaged their chances by too many all out rides prior to their pursuit events. So Reg was content to amble a few laps on Thursday afternoon, and have a couple of sprints on Friday, as much to gain the feel of the gear and light tyres as anything else; and that was all. This again was largely the result of our own assessment of the factors which may have contributed to Reg's failure the year before, when he had indulged in rather over keen training immediately before the actual events.

The Championship series were a most extraordinary and unexpected demonstration of poor organisation and mismanagement on the part of the F.F.C. First, the haphazard arrangements for riders' accommodation, and then the last minute alteration of the heats to 9 o'clock in the morning, instead of the afternoon, only confirmed at 11 o'clock Friday night, tended to throw the best laid plans out of gear, and almost cost Reg the Championship in the first heat! In addition the slackness of the whole organisation was apparent on all sides. A new sprinting rule concerning the position of riders in relation to the blue line marking on the track, passed by the U.C.I. on the Friday before the events, was not conveyed to riders; and Reg was one amongst others who suffered disqualification without realising that he was committing an offence!

For our part, a programme was decided between ourselves to operate during the whole series, and it was rigidly adhered to despite official protests and arguments. The N.C.U. had generously given me a free hand in the matter, and team manager Bill Bailey co-operated in every way. Immediately Reg had ridden, he returned immediately to the cabin for a refreshing sponge with eau-de-cologne and very light massage to the hands of M. Guerlache, that very fine Belgian "soigneur" who was assisting the British team. A touch of cooling crème de menthe behind the ears and on the nape of the neck, a sniff of inhalant to clear the nose and throat, a mouth wash and a little drink, and Reg was ready for the next round. In addition the bike and tyres were carefully checked over by Johnny Berry who was acting as unofficial mechanic. In the course of these checks a rubbed tread and a damaged toe clip were discovered, proving the usefulness of these precautions. We were very violently "bawled out" by the chief Commissar for being late on the mark on one occasion, but when it was explained that it was the fault of their own steward - all was forgiven or nearly all. I was reminded that competitors were required to remain in the competitor's enclosure whilst the event was in progress. But no "bawling out" or officious Commissar was going to disturb our arrangements this time. Again memories of Zurich!

All went well until the second match with René Faye in the quarter-finals. Reg was disqualified for riding him high and then allegedly "cutting" him on the last corner. Faye had switched down and raising his hand had not continued the sprint, whilst Reg had put in an "all out" 200 metres. This was a very dangerous moment. Reg was resentful of the disqualification and obviously disturbed; Faye was riding extremely well, he had run Reg close in the first match and would obviously be fresher for the decider. Reg was 'up against it' and he knew it. But a few quiet words, and our champion was ready to show to the world his true merit and outstanding ability. Whilst we held our breath, Reg rode like a master to outwit and beat Faye both in tactics and speed - a truly wonderful ride!

On the day of the finals, Reg went from strength to strength, and although Bijster's form was difficult to assess on his riding in the earlier heats, Reg was full of confidence and proved himself the master in every department. Reg rode out a worthy winner and the plaudits of the crowd left no doubt as to the popularity of the new World Champion.

Reg had ample Club support on the inside as well as the outside of the track. As already mentioned Johnny Berry acted as mechanic to Reg and the team in general, whilst

Charlie Anderton, our member now living in Paris was always on hand operating an unofficial intelligence service between the track and the cabin, and also Syd Cozens to pass on any other useful information.

The final item at the Parc, remembered with considerable pleasure, was the toasting of the new Champion by the British contingent, including Harry Ryan, Bob Haine, Jim Wallace, Bert Miles "Teddy" Southcott, Dick Taylor and Bert Anderson and Syd Cozens of "ours".

Apart from the "Official" British contingent, Manchester was well represented in the persons of Johnny and Ida Berry, Arthur and Harold Crye, Jack and Norah Fletcher, Norman Grattage, Alan Hague, Len and Flo Myatt and Eric Moore of the Withington.

Then away from the track to a celebration dinner at the fashionable restaurant "La Coupole" in the heart of Paris, along with Arthur Bradbury and family with Monsieur Michelin as host, Madame Michelin, their daughter, and amongst others present, Henri Sensever, third in the Championship. The singing of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow", and the French counterpart, by a somewhat inebriated company was something to be remembered. And so to bed with heads singing but spirits high for the first real sleep for four days.

T.A. MacDonald

The year 1948 was one of continuing success. Harold Crye, President, was an outstanding member who had contributed much to the Club's activities.

There was a steady increase of new junior members which led to some alarm among the elders of the Club who, in their wisdom, felt that the Club's traditions and standards could suffer from the introduction of too many new junior members at one time, but on the other hand a substantial minority felt that it was a retrograde step to stifle the continued introduction of new blood. Their view was that it would be better not to restrict new membership but to uphold standards by guidance and supervision.

The following report from the minutes of the Meeting is worthy of publication.

7th MARCH 1948

Mr. A. J. Bradbury then asked the Meeting whether or not there should be some restrictions placed on the entry of new members into the Club?" A spirited discussion took place on this controversial topic during which the attitude of certain junior members came under fierce criticism. Finally the Meeting passed two Resolutions recommending to the Committee (a) that membership be closed to applicants under 16 years of age, and (b) that no junior member be admitted unless proposed by a member of at least five years standing (There are already three eager prospective members awaiting their sixteenth anniversary).

On this somewhat drastic note-in comparison with the rather quiet beginning- the Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the Chair-and another administrative year was launched on its way.

- H.B.

Social events continued to prosper with an average attendance of 15-20 on Sunday Club runs and the Summer saw the introduction of a Bowling Handicap for which the premier award was the 'Nickold Cup', being a creation in bronze and brass which simulated the Muratti Gold Cup. It was the creation of our champion club-runner at the time, Norman Nicholls.

A notable new member in 1948 was Councillor Harry Sharp (at that time one of the leading activists behind the reconstruction of the Manchester Athletic Club ground) who was later to become Lord Mayor of Manchester.

The first Club event in 1948, a '25' in April, received 26 entries, excluding Cyril Cartwright and Bevis Chapman, who had entered separate Open 25's each making fastest time.

The Club promoted an Easter Track Meeting at Fallowfield which was supported by a crowd of 5,000.

Among the highlights of this meeting were Cyril Cartwright's tie with Benfenati the Italian World Pursuit Champion and a double by Ken Parson, one of our junior members who, at 18 years of age won both the Open Handicaps.

The 1948 Race Meet, the 56th, again enjoyed excellent weather and a near capacity crowd despite the counter attraction of a Test Match at Old Trafford.

56th RACE MEET - SATURDAY, JULY 10th

Amidst the uncertainties of this coldest July for 26 years, July 10th stood out as a day ideal for staging our biggest enterprise, and, despite the counter attraction of a Test match, our programme attracted a crowd which, if not an actual record, must have been very near to it. Fallowfield was packed to capacity, and the order to close the gates had eventually to be given – a very fine tribute to the attractiveness of the programme arranged by our Race Meet Secretaries and the publicity campaign of Walter Wilson.

Johnny Berry and Walter Wilson are to be particularly congratulated for their achievements in this promotion. Both were officiating for the first time, Johnny as Race Meet Secretary and Walter as Advertising Secretary, and with the now "Old Stagers" Tommy MacDonald (whose perfection must surely be unrivalled) as Financial Secretary, we had a team of whom any organisation would be justly proud. Long may they serve together.

One of the advertised highlights of the programme was the engagement of Wally Summers (Great Britain) and Arne Pederson (Denmark), two professional motor pace followers, who were calculated to arouse a great deal of enthusiasm in their presentation of a phase of cycling sport not often witnessed at Fallowfield. That their efforts were appreciated by a large section of the public was obvious, but to many of the more knowledgeable, the speeds they attained were not nearly high enough, and if this type of racing is to be successfully promoted in future years, a great deal more will be expected from the riders.

The racing generally was of a very high standard and each event provided its own thrills.

In the 4000 metre National Individual Pursuit Championship, Cyril Cartwright and Charlie Marriner met in the final after the former had eliminated D.J. Keeler (in the fastest time of the day) and the latter had beaten K. Biddulph in the semi-finals. Right up to the bell it looked like Cyril's race, but with a super human effort, Marriner drew level in the last lap and, I think for the first time in history, we saw a Championship shared by two – they had tied with a time of 5mins. 43 ²/₅ secs. – 2 ³/₅ secs. Slower than Cyril clocked in his semi-final against Keeler.

The Grand Prix of the City of Manchester provided its own batch of thrills. Emerging from the heats we had Reg Harris, Alan Bannister, A. Schandorf (Denmark), L. Jackson and Norman Dove, and Bill Brown as winner of the Repechage, joined these five to enter into the semi-finals.

Alan, drawn against Jackson and Bill, led over the line in that order, and Reg beat Schandorf in the heat for the semi-finals. The final for 3rd and 4th place was therefore between L. Jackson (West Riding) and A. Schandorf. On paper – Schandorf looked a certain

winner despite the very fine performances which Jackson had been putting up for some weeks previously, but this meeting was destined to be a milestone in the racing career of the West Riding boy. Jumping into the back straight, he opened up a gap from the Dane which the latter was never able to close, and in one magnificent performance, he touched headlines. It can only be this ride which brought his ability to the notice of the World Championship Selection Committee, and his inclusion in the team, has therefore come as a complete surprise to all who failed to witness this effort.

The final for 1st and 2nd place had to be decided between Reg and Alan. A final between two club mates – the World's Sprint Champion and the English Sprint Champion no wonder the crowd was on its tiptoes. For a lap and a half we were treated to a marvellous display of "Tactics" and it speaks well for the knowledge of the sport by Manchester spectators, that every moment brought the excitement to a keener pitch. It was in the back straight that Alan "went" with a superb effort. Against any other man, he could, by virtue of his remarkable speed, have won, but Reg, riding at the peak of his form, proved himself master of the situation. With the wonderful judgement and speed which has made him the dominant rider of the amateur class - he passed Alan on the home straight to win this classical race for the second year in succession.

The 550 yards scratch race provided complete confirmation of the great form of our number one and two Sprint Champions, and after very exciting riding in the heats, we saw a final between Reg, Alan, P. Nihant (Belgium), Tommy Godwin and Bill Brown, who finished in that order.

The "Devil" proved itself, as usual a very popular race, with all the thrills of the mad scramble which takes place down the finishing straight, in order that a rider should not pay the penalty of being last to cross the line. Amongst our own members, Ken Pearson rode particularly well to be placed third to L. Davies (Abbotsford) and B. E. Foster (East Midland Clarion).

In the ¼ mile handicap, which was contested in a manner which delighted the crowd, the M.A.C. were well to the fore with their popular riders, H. Crosdale and J. S. Twigg occupying first and second position followed by E. M. Leigh (Stockport R.C.) and T. G. Horrocks (Pyramid R.C.).

The ladies' half mile handicap for the "Sun Cup" was probably the most exciting of its series, Miss M. Brown, needing only one more victory to make the cup her own, was the most fancied starter, and her splendid riding justified the confidence which her supporters placed in her. Nobody could have foreseen the remarkable form of Mrs. B. Farquhar (Leicester Forest), who, riding off a mark of 85 yards, went "all out" from the pistol and maintained the lead given to her by the handicappers. Mrs. Farquhar is to be congratulated upon her fine win but Miss Brown must also be complimented upon her splendid efforts to take home the trophy for the last time.

The last event of the day was the "Muratti" surely the most famous of the "Invitation" 5 miles held in this country. It was a pity that due to the length of the programme, some of our patrons were unable to stay for the race, for it most certainly provided the most exciting incidents of the day. Tommy Godwin (Rover R. C. C.) holding two shares in the valuable trophy, was expected to put up the ride of his life to make the cup his own, the huge crowd gave evidence of his great popularity by the encouragement it gave him. Considered by many experts as the predominant man of the times at this distance, his chances were very good indeed, but it had to be conceded that his opposition was very strong. The English riders alone represented a formidable list, but when the strong Continental contingent was added, the forecasting of the result became mere conjecture.

It is a matter of great concern to all, that the race was marred by a most unfortunate accident which occurred involving Alan Geldard, Reg Harris and P. Nihart (Belgium). Alan, riding in the middle of the field, had a tyre blow-out, which made the avoidance of him crashing impossible, and the "pile up" of the other riders named was inevitable, riding as they were, so closely bunched. The injuries sustained appeared very serious, and for some time it looked as though Reg may be unable to compete in the Olympic Games. All England was glad to receive the announcement that he would be fit enough to represent his country. But this does not concern the progress of the "Muratti". Despite the elimination of these three possibles the remaining "field" was still of such outstanding merit as to do justice to any 5 mile "Classic" and as successive attempts to "Break away" were made and overcome, the excitement grew in its intensity. With 2 laps to go, J. Atkinson (Dinnington) the five-mile Grass Champion, made his effort to leave the "field" with Tommy Godwin on his wheel, and Alan Bannister, Schnoor and Casier giving chase. It presented an opportunity for the race to be finished in a manner ideally suited to the type of riding in which Tommy excels, but, entering the finishing straight, Alan, still a length behind Godwin, who had now dropped Atkinson, made a really superb effort. Never have I seen him ride better and Tommy was just unable to stave off the challenge. It was "Banny's" race, a remarkable finish to a great day's sport, and Alan is to be congratulated upon the realisation of one of his cherished ambitions.

After the labours of the day - came the feast, about 100 officials, prize-winners and other guests dined at the New Shades restaurant and later made their way to the Clubhouse. The after dinner speeches were models of good humour and sincerity, and President Harold Crye conducted the proceedings with dignity and efficiency. Sid Bowkett in proposing the toast of "The Race Meet Secretaries" paid well deserved tributes to the efficiency and team work of these officials. He made particular reference to the brilliant handling of the microphone by Tommy MacDonald, whose work in this connection he described as the best within his experience of racing. The toast which was received with great enthusiasm, drew forth most modest responses from Tommy, Johnny Berry and Walter Wilson. It was apparent to all that the three had co-operated to the fullest possible extent and enjoyed their heavy labours on the Club's behalf.

Mr. A. R. Haine in toasting the prize-winners, coupled all those other competitors who had failed to be placed, and Alan Bannister excelled himself in a response which was delivered with great confidence and polish. Arne Pedersen surprised us all with his knowledge of the English language, when called upon to add a few words, and he said that he was agreeably surprised to find that the Club's hospitality to him as a professional, was equal to that which he had previously enjoyed as an amateur. The President then called upon us to drink the health of that other great prize-winner Reg Harris who had featured so much in the afternoon's sport, but who, by virtue of the unfortunate accident during the "Muratti" was unable to be present, and this toast was received with acclamation.

The formal part of the proceedings closed with a final toast, most ably and kindly presented by that great friend of the racing men, Charlie Lawton, who told us many things to make us blush with pride or as I prefer to see it endeavour with even greater effort to do that for the Club to merit the great confidence which he expressed in it.

- A.J.B.

FULL RESULTS OF THE RACE MEET

National Individual Pursuit Championship (4000 metres)

- 1 C. Cartwright (Manchester Wheelers)
C. Marriner (Southern Paragon C.C.)

- Tied for First Place - Time 5 mins. 43 ²/₅ secs.
3 D. J. Keeler (Veg. C. & A.C.) 5 mins. 56 ²/₅ secs.
4 K. Biddulph (Stone Wheelers) 6 mins. 5 ²/₅ secs.

¼ Mile Handicap

- 1 H. Crosdale (M.A.C.);
- 2 J. S. Twigg (M.A.C.);
- 3 E. M. Leigh (Stockport R.C.);
- 4 T. G. Horrocks (Pyramid R. C.).

Grand Prix of the City of Manchester (2 laps - 1004 yards)

- 1 R. H. Harris (Manchester Wheelers)
- 2 A. Bannister (Manchester Wheelers)
Time for last 220 yds., 13 ²/₅ secs.
- 3 L. Jackson (West Riding C.C.)
- 4 A. Schandorf (Dansk Bicycle Club)
Time for last 220 yds., 14 secs.

Ladies' Half-mile Handicap for the "Sun" Cup

- 1 B. Farquhar (Leicester Forest);
- 2 M. E. Brown Brodsworth R.C.);
- 3 M. Soens (Liverpool Phoenix);
- 4 G. Copeland (Clarion).
Time 1 min. 5 ¹/₅

"Devil Take The Hindmost"

- 1 L. Davies (Abbotsford Park C.C.)
- 2 B. E. Foster (East Midlands Clarion)
- 3 K. G. Pearson (Manchester Wheelers)
Time 10 mins. 7 ³/₅ secs.

550 Yards Scratch Race

- 1 R. H. Harris (Manchester Wheelers)
- 2 A. Bannister (Manchester Wheelers)
- 3 P. Nihant (Belgium)
- 4 T. C. Godwin (Rover R.C.C.)
Time for last 220 yds 12 ⁴/₅ secs.

Professional Motor Paced Pursuit Match - 20 laps

- 1 Arne Pedersen (Denmark) 10 mins. 17 secs.
- 2 Wally Summers (England) 10 mins. 17 ¹/₅ secs.

Professional Motor Paced Twenty Lap Race

- 1 Wally Summers 11 mins. 28 ⁴/₅ secs.
- 2 Arne Pedersen

Five Miles Scratch Race for the "Muratti" Gold Cup

- 1 A. Bannister (Manchester Wheelers)
- 2 T. C. Godwin (Rover R.C.C.)

- 3 B. Schnoor (Dansk Bicycle Club)
- 4 G. Casier (Belgium)
Time 11 mins. 35 ⁴/₅

FROM THE JUNE 1948 JOURNAL

CONGRATULATIONS

TO ALAN BANNISTER - Sprint Champion of England who, by winning this coveted title in competition with our own Reg Harris, proves beyond doubt, his right to be placed amongst the foremost sprinters of the world.

TO CYRIL CARTWRIGHT - 25 Miles Road Time Trial Champion of England. By his brilliant win, Cyril took revenge for his misfortune in missing the title last year (by puncturing) and, riding against the cream of the country on a day when only he could beat the hour, became the first man to hold the title for a second time.

TO REG HARRIS AND ALAN BANNISTER 1 Mile Tandem Champions of England who, by winning the title for the second year in succession, proved their undoubted supremacy at this class of riding. Can the Olympic Selector's Committee overlook a team made up of the Sprint Champion of the World and the Sprint Champion of England? We hardly think so.

As so often has happened in the past the name of the Manchester Wheelers' winners was to the fore, not only because of the prowess of its racing men but of controversy. Once again events surrounding Olympic selections gave cause for Widespread comment as shown in the following article.

EDITORIAL

It has long been a matter of concern to the hundreds of thousands of people interested in the Cycling sport. that a fair measure of Publicity has not been afforded the game in the lay Press. The feeling is strongly held that other sports far less widely supported have received much greater publicity.

As the Olympic Games approached, it was felt that our prospects of receiving a good Press were better than ever before and due recognition of the international importance of Cycling would at last be accorded.

It is a very grave reflection upon the N.C.U. that such a golden opportunity to obtain the best possible type of publicity was thrown away, and instead of the prestige building store of news which it had at its disposal being used to feed the newspapers-this powerful media was utilised to ventilate a purely domestic issue.

That the British World's Champion - a man who, when on his form has proved himself unbeatable-should be subjected to the humiliation of distorted reports on his "lack of team spirit" and "I know what is best for me" at such a time, is nothing less than scandalous. Surely the facts were obvious. On July 10th, only one month before the "Games," Reg. Harris was involved in an accident which caused a very disturbing injury to his left arm. With characteristic determination - he continued to ride to maintain his form, but as recently as July 24th he had a set back and was dosed with M. & B. tablets to lower a temperature of 103 deg. Both he and the N.C.U. medical adviser still thought that there was time to regain his fitness, and he loyally did everything possible towards this end.

Would not these facts, if published in the Press, have provided a better publicity for the sport and given the rider a much greater encouragement than that which was published.

Of the Games themselves, the details of the results are well known and the Club angle will be published in the next issue but the earliest possible opportunity must be taken to offer

our proud congratulations to Reg Harris, Alan Bannister and last but not least, Alan Geldard. Their performances reflected the greatest credit upon themselves, their Club and their Country.

- A. J. Bradbury
Sept. 1948

The Club again played its full part in providing a large number of officials for the various cycling organisations, and its contribution to the N. C. U. Manchester Centre was remarkable with numerous positions being filled by Manchester Wheelers' members.

Alan Bannister's enthusiastic riding was rewarded by his winning the 1948 National Sprint Championship at Herne Hill. Alan Geldard won the first of his three National 25 miles Track Championships.

Cyril Cartwright won the 25 miles R.T.T.C. Championship and also tied for first place in the 4,000 metres National Pursuit Championship (the joint holder was Charlie Marriner).

Alan Bannister also won the Meredith Memorial Track Trophy awarded to the rider scoring most points in 20 selected races throughout the season. Second place was taken by Reg Harris one point in arrears. Reg missed a number of selected events due to injury.

The two outstanding events of 1948 were the Worlds Championships and the 1948 Olympic Games in both of which the Club was very actively concerned, especially the Olympic Games reported upon by Tom MacDonald.

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

It is often the case that events looked to with eager and expectant anticipation fail in their realisation to come up to expectations. This was my personal experience of the Track Events of the Games. As a member of the Olympic Organising and Track Control Committees, I had, along with other enthusiasts, been working for months to build up the setting for the events at Herne Hill, and yet I felt a sense of intense disappointment in the actual presentation at the London Track. This disappointment was not in any way connected with the results, but rather with the lack of "atmosphere" of the cycling series compared with the athletic events at Wembley, where the staging and presentation was so impressive. Herne Hill seemed definitely flat. I could not help thinking that a wonderful opportunity had been missed by the fact that our sport had not been presented to the world in the Wembley setting.

As to the actual events the results and general details have already been adequately covered by the cycling Press. Our disappointment was intense.

In the sprint, Reg. was definitely off form; and club-mates at the Hill realised at an early stage that he was not moving too well; but right up to the final we kept hoping that the occasion would bring out that little bit extra which might spell "Victory." It was not to be. Probably the deciding factor was a bad wheel slip on the last corner in the first final, which put Reg. right out of his stride when coming up on Ghella, and incidentally, caused him to bruise his ankle very severely on the crank.

The tandem event was extraordinary in many respects. The first final was one of the finest tandem races I have ever seen; Reg. and Alan rode brilliantly to beat Terruzzi and Perona decisively. With this in mind. the second heat of the final was a most amazing race. Not only did our representatives make had tactical errors and show lack of real understanding, but when beaten for first position at the last banking Reg. gave the sign to ease up, leaving the Italians to romp away without a fight. The final, ridden in the gloom of late evening was the most exciting race of the whole Olympic series, and at the last banking our pair seemed to have the race "in the bag," but the Italians fought all the way, riding on the outside to gain an inches-victory. Apart from the final, the sight of Reg. holding up the

bucking tandem with "Banny" clinging on for dear life, after a "blow out" on the last banking, was something to be seen to be believed. Looked at fairly and impartially, it appeared that our boys, whilst fast enough to win, suffered somewhat from lack of riding together as a team; a practical necessity to build up the cooperation and understanding essential to tandem sprint work of Olympic standards.

The Team pursuit Event gave us some magnificent racing, but nothing more thrilling than the British Team's win over the Danes, and their final record breaking effort for third place. We knew Alan Geldard was good, but his riding at the Hill was a revelation even to his Manchester friends; he was without doubt the most outstanding rider of the British Team. The Wheelers were proud indeed of their representative. We, as a Club, still cannot reconcile the omission of Cyril Cartwright from the selections; and impressions of the Game strengthened our view that Cyril should definitely have had a place. Taking the programme generally, however, it seemed to suffer from the lack of the essential ingredients of attractive cycle racing. The tandem series alone gave us fast, clever racing, with spirited finishes; and even in this event the distance was too long. There again, I think the Cycling Events suffered by comparison with the Athletics at Wembley, in that they were not so truly representative of our sport. The Time Trial lacks spectacle, and is uninteresting except to the real enthusiast. There would appear to be room in the programme for a distance event, either of the "point to point" type or an international Madison race; at least it would introduce more real racing, and give opportunities to a different class of riders. Further, the limitation of entries to one per country in each event has a detrimental effect. Under this system many riders of championship class are excluded, whilst many of the non-European nominations are very inferior riders.

So much for the competitors and events. On the organising side it was a pleasure to see so many Wheelers in official regalia at Herne Hill. Led by Bert Anderson, Chairman of the Organising Committee, the following members were engaged: President Harold Crye was a Timekeeper, Tommy Barlow recorded the events for present and future generations, Syd Cozens was the Liaison Officer, duties which obviously involved oceans of gesticulation, Harold Denison had the onerous duty of Enclosure Steward, Jack Sibbit acted as a Judges Steward, Johnny Berry had little opportunity to sport his Olympic rings, being official mechanic (how did you get into those overalls Johnny?), whilst Waiter Wilson and yours truly were Competitors Stewards. The Editor had the best job of all, he surveyed the proceedings from the Grand Stand, attended by a bevy of hand maidens. It is understood that he upheld the honour and dignity of the Club, by argument and explanation in no mean manner.

After Herne Hill to Windsor Great Park for the Road Race! This was a triumph of organisation for the Road Control Committee, with particular laurels for Secretary Vic Jenner. There also the Club Members were very much in evidence, and strangely enough the Road Committee gave me my hardest job of the whole Games, and as Chief Announcer I found myself more or less glued to a microphone for 5 ½ hours. The Olympic film does full justice to the Road Race, I recommend all members to make a special effort to see it, even though Herne Hill is almost ignored. Of many pleasant recollections recollection of this event, the most outstanding was of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, who apart from acting as starter, showed the keen interest of a true sportsman in the whole event and the organisation involved, and by his presence added that "atmosphere" of a big occasion which was so lacking at Herne Hill. The only tiring we missed here as at Herne Hill, was a British Victory.

- T.A. MACDONALD.

In September the Club was honoured by promoting the National 12 Championship on behalf of the R.T.T.C. conjunction with our Open 12 hours.

Our members won three N.C.U. and one R.T.T.C. National Championships during 1948.

Alan Bannister	Amateur Sprint
Alan Bannister & Reg Harris	Tandem Sprint
Alan Geldard	25 miles (Track)
Cyril Cartwright	25 miles (Road)

and Cyril Cartwright (partnered by J. Simpson, Hemsworth Wheelers) established a new Tandem Bicycle Record for 30 miles in 1 hour 2 mins. 10 secs.

The Annual Prize Distribution and Smoking Concert was held at the Club House in December 1948, again a unique and highly successful gathering of local club-men. Four National Champions were present, Alan Bannister, Cyril Cartwright and Alan Geldard of ours, together with Alf Hammond of the Cheshire Roads and the opportunity was taken to present the Bidlake Memorial Plaque to Reg Harris for his World Championship victory in 1947.

Annual Prize Distribution and Smoking Concert Friday, December 3rd. Clubhouse. 1948

With a crowded house, the traditionally informal Concert opened with a song, beautifully rendered (but perhaps not fully appreciated) by the Gorse Brothers. That they are first-class artists, no one can deny, that they were not in their proper setting, was equally obvious. Their "Forte" is a soft harmonious rhythm, which is hardly heard to advantage when there is a steady background of murmuring, and one felt sorry that they could not obtain the hearing which they undoubtedly deserved.

Those who were fortunate enough to possess a seat in close proximity to the stage, showed their appreciation in a manner which made the rest of us feel that we were missing something really good.

The demonstration of cardi-manipulation given by Compère Tom Jackson was perhaps more generally appreciated because it was visible entertainment rather than audible, and his masterly performance drew great applause.

Benefiting by past experience, President Harold Crye called upon Mr. E. A. Anderson to propose the "Manchester Wheelers' Club" as the first toast of the evening. Mr. Anderson, in a very effective speech, referred to the long list of prize winners as sufficient in itself to warrant his toast, and he also spoke very highly of the sociability of our rider members. Commenting upon the display of trophies, he said it was surely unsurpassed in the country, and he called upon those present to drink most heartily to a Club which was doing so much for the Cycling Sport.

In his response, Harold Crye said "We are proud of our Club, its name, and the City from which its name is derived. We expect our members to carry themselves as sportsmen at all times, and we are seldom disappointed in this respect." Harold went on and paid tribute to the part which Manchester played in the promotion of cycling generally . . . "It is a leading part," he said, "and we of the Manchester Wheelers do our best to help."

After another song by the Gorse Brothers, Mr. H.S. Anderson (Bert to us who are privileged to be his Club-mates) made a surprise presentation which had not appeared on the programme.

At this occasion Bert was acting in his capacity as Vice-President of the N.C.U., and before presenting the Rudge-Whitworth Cup to Alan Bannister, he gave a brief account of Alan's year of triumphant racing. Giving particular emphasis to the "High spots," we were

reminded of the part played by Alan as a member of the team who toured South Africa and of the prestige he brought to his country by the brilliance of his performances. Our thoughts were cast back to the day of the English Sprint Championship, when, riding at the peak of his form, he realised an ambition dear to the heart of every first-class sprinter, and added his name to that historical list of riders who had preceded him in winning the "Blue Riband of the Track." Alan's great part in the Olympic Games and the World Championship Series was also mentioned in detail and the ovation he received when the Cup was presented will long be remembered.

Bert's next pleasing duty was to make the presentation of the "Bidlake Memorial Plaque" which has been awarded to Reg. Harris for his victory in the World Championship, 1947. This award is made annually to the person or firm, who, in the opinion of the responsible committee, makes the most outstanding contribution to the cause of British Cycling. It was a great pity that, due to his commitments on the Continent, Reg. was unable to be with us on this occasion, but in his absence, H. S. A. outlined the manner in which Reg's win had done so much for British Sport, and the applause which was given to our absent Champion would have done his heart good, could he have been present to hear it.

Immediately following the special presentation the long line of prize-winners, each in turn, received their awards at the hands of the President. In addition to these awards, each was also heartily acclaimed by those present. The special reception given to the four National Champions as Harold shook their hands, will surely live long in the memories of Alan Bannister, Cyril Cartwright and Alan Geldard, of "ours," as well as in that of Alf Hammond, of the "Cheshire Roads." It is not often that a club is privileged to pay tribute to four such outstanding riders in a single night.

Next on the panel of speakers was our popular Hon. Secretary. It was Harold's maiden speech at a Club function, and on the face of it, his toast "The Prize Winners" promised the usual nice remarks about our racing men. When Harold does a job, however, the obvious is only part of his manner of tackling it. In his sincere and forthright way, he mentioned the officials, without whose work there could be no promotions to enable the racing men to compete for prizes, and in particular, he paid well deserved tribute to T. A. MacDonald, "that most able of officials," and to Johnny Berry and Walter Wilson for their work in organising the Race Meet, and other track events.

Of the Prize Winners, he said "It is true that we did not secure a First in any of the Olympic Games or World Championship events, but our boys were responsible for making the winners ride harder." A great lover of clean sport, Harold then threw himself wholeheartedly into the campaign against the use of "Dope." "If," said Harold, "the U.C.I. cannot control the riders and prevent the use of drugs, then it is time that we in Britain showed our disgust and withdrew from this body." He closed his remarks with a note of appeal to our road riders, whom he urged to enter events, not so much as individuals, but as members of a Club Team, with Team Honours always in mind.

Alan Bannister, replying on behalf of the Track men, made a most suitable response. He in turn paid tribute to the honorary workers, and told his fellow Prize Winners that the day would arrive when it would be their responsibility to become officials and ensure the continuance of the sport. "I hope that when that day arrives, we will not be found lacking," he said. To these sentiments, Ray Potter, speaking on behalf of the Road men, gave his full support.

After a further interlude of music, and when the gallant band of Hon. Waiters had seen that everyone's glasses were fully charged, the President called upon Walter Wilson to propose the toast "Our Visitors and the Press." Like Harold Buckley, this was Walter's first speech as an official of the Club, and the success of his effort assures him a place upon the

toast list for many future occasions. With an easy, confident manner, and with well chosen words, Walter welcomed our many visitors, some of whom had travelled from afar to be with us. In his references to "The Press," he took advantage of the opportunity to thank those journalists who had given publicity to the sport of cycling in general. and Wheelers' promotions in particular, and he assured these gentlemen that their efforts were very highly regarded by the Club.

Frank Sleman, replying on behalf of the Visitors, expressed their delight at being with us. As Road Team Manager for the British Teams at the Olympic Games and the World Championship event, he vigorously denounced the use of "Dope" by any contestant, which, he said, can never be excused. Mr. J. F. McDermott, speaking for the Press, referred to the bad publicity cycling is getting through the pens of journalists who were not conversant with the sport. He warned Club officials, that if the right type of publicity was to be secured, it would be necessary for them to take the Press more into their confidence. This would ensure that Cycling would be presented to the public in its proper perspective.

So much for the formal part. The usual "Get together" of members and their friends was a feature of the evening, and the spirit of conviviality and good-fellowship which prevailed long into the night, testified, in the words of a visitor, to "The friendliness and hospitality of the Manchester Wheelers'."

Some of the highest honours in the pastime of cycling were achieved during the year 1949.

In the sporting field:

World Professional Sprint Champion	Reg Harris
Finalist World Amateur Pursuit Championship	Cyril Cartwright (Silver Medallist)
National Sprint Champion	Alan Bannister
National 25 mile Track Champion	Alan Geldard
National Tandem Champions	Alan Bannister and Len Jackson
National Team Pursuit Championship (Silver Medal Winners)	Manchester Wheelers' (Geldard, Tate, Jackson and Potter)

In the field of administration:

President of the National Cyclists Union	H. S. Anderson
--	----------------

Track Racing was in its post-war heyday and the Club was far-and-away the most successful Track Racing Club in the country.

During the year events which would have normally been highlights were merely humdrum additions to the list of outstanding achievements.

H. S. ANDERSON PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL CYCLISTS' UNION

We wish to acknowledge the honour that has been bestowed upon "Bert" Anderson and the Club by his recent election as President of the National Cyclists' Union. His hard work and unstinted service to cycling activities in general has been well rewarded and we hasten to congratulate him.

To enlarge on the various offices that have been held and supported by "Bert" would require a more experienced pen than ours, we can but give a list of his activities as submitted to the General Council.

CENTRE ACTIVITIES:

First elected to Manchester Centre Council 1923.

Race Meet Secretary, Manchester Wheelers' Club 1923 to 1933, and was successively, Secretary, Vice-Captain, Captain, Vice President and President of that Club of which he has been a Life Member since 1940.

Member of Manchester Centre Executive Committee and has held office on that Committee and its successor, the General Committee, ever since.

Member of Manchester Centre Racing Committee 1925 to 1945 and, with the exception of about four years, has been Chairman, which position he still holds.

Has been Chairman of the General Committee from 1925 to 1945 and still holds that office.

Has been a member of the Social Committee and its successor the Touring and Social Committee of the Centre ever since the inception of such Committee in 1926.

Was elected Chairman of the Manchester Centre 1925 and has held office ever since.

Has been Chairman of the Private Members ever since 1925.

From 1931 to the re-organisation of the Union was Legal Secretary of the Manchester Centre, after the re-organisation of the Union, was the Legal Representative of Headquarters in Manchester & Lancashire.

NATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Was elected to General Council at Headquarters in 1926 and was a General Councillor until election as Vice-President in 1932.

Member of Headquarter's World's Championship Selection Committee 1925 to 1934, member of Olympic Games Selection Committee 1928 to 1932.

Member of Headquarter's Racing Committee 1926 to 1932.

Member of Headquarter's General Committee 1927 to 1939.

Member of Headquarter's Legal Committee 1931 to date.

Member of Headquarter's Appeals Committee 1930 to date.

Chairman of Headquarter's General Committee 1932.

Chairman of Headquarter's Legal Committee 1941 to 1949.

Vice-President of the Union 1932 to date.

Awarded the Union's Gold Badge 1934.

Chairman of the British Empire Games, Cycling events 1934.

Official Judge 1930 to date.

Awarded the Union's Gold Badge of Honour 1946.

Chairman, Olympic Organising Committee 1948.

Truly a wonderful record, once again in H. S. Anderson, a Manchester Wheeler has been prominent in the sphere of Cycling.

A. A.

At the A.G.M. in January 1949 a proposition that a ladies section be formed was defeated, only 20 voting for with 40 against and 4 abstentions.

The reconstruction of Fallowfield Track with its steeply formed concrete banking was completed. It marked the end of an era of "racing wet or fine" and heralded bright promise of higher standards of track racing, but in fact never produced the Champions which the old red shale and shallow bankings produced and led to the bankruptcy of some amateur promotions

and to the near bankruptcy of the Manchester Wheelers' Race Meet which was only saved by various forms of sponsorship.

The July Race Meet of 1949, the first to be promoted on the newly constructed track, saw the gates closed on approximately 15,000 spectators, a meeting at which Manchester Wheelers' members continued to figure prominently among the prize winners.

On the road the Open 100 received more than 100 entries and in September a Club '25' had a record 39 entrants.

In the Manchester Cycle Track Racing League, Manchester Wheelers' took first four positions as well as the Team Championships with 17 members winning 2 or more points.

Some idea of the Club's dominance of track racing was shown by the fact that at an Open meeting at Bootle Stadium, Liverpool in June 1949, 15 out of 20 prizes were won by Manchester Wheelers' members.

Membership at the end of 1949 stood at 210.

The World Championships of 1949 symbolised a Golden year and were splendidly described by Tom MacDonald.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS - COPENHAGEN

Reg Harris wins World Title

Cyril Cartwright Runner-up in Amateur Pursuit

If there was such a thing as a Wheelers' Anthem apart from "Digging up the Road" it might well have been played at the ORDRUP track in addition to "God save the King." The Triumphs were Club Triumphs! Even Patterson's success in the Amateur Sprint was due in no small measure to his training with the 'Wheelers' School' at Fallowfield. The Club has always maintained its faith in Reg and supported him individually and collectively during the 'black year' of 1948. Just how well founded was this faith, was proved to the world at Copenhagen. Strong representations had also been made on behalf of Cyril Cartwright to ensure that he had a chance of selection, and here again our faith in his ability was more than justified.

"You can't say you've seen real bike racing until you've been to a World Championship." Someone made this remark whilst we were chatting one day at Ordrup. How true that is! To appreciate the magnitude of a rider's success, and excuse the faults of the defeated, is impossible without a knowledge of the essential difference of a World Championship series from any other race meeting. Perhaps this is appreciated more from inside the arena. The tension is terrific. Half hidden, as it may be, by assumed nonchalance and noisy jocularly, it still dominates the whole proceedings. Everyone is keyed up: riders, officials, attendants and even Press men seem to be operating on a higher pitch than normal. It follows that the racing itself must assume a different character.

In the final our representative showed pluck and determination of a most outstanding character. Two days of tough racing had taken their toll, and Cyril was now feeling the lack of training background. He had not had time to build up his stamina. He lost after a terrific battle, fighting all the way, and the measure of his effort can be gauged by the fact that Reg and I had to support him as we took him from his machine; he was flat out. Popular as the

Danish victory was, the crowd rose to the magnificent riding of the Englishman. Cyril had definitely put Britain on the map in the pursuit series at last.

The Amateur Sprint brought disappointments tempered by the success of our friends Patterson and Heid. Alan Bannister was unlucky both in the draw and in the way his race went; and to all those who can be wise after a race is run, it is necessary to offer the reminder that nervous tension can upset even the most experienced rider's judgement. I think Alan had developed a complex about Jackie Heid, and he allowed the unfortunate draw to unsettle him too much. An unsettled rider is in no condition to tackle a needle sprint match. He lost at one point in the Championship where there is no come-back. It could happen to anyone! Reg Harris disturbed at Zurich in 1947 lost to Byster - remember?

With our riders out we took consolation in the success of Patterson and Heid, and revelled in their splendid victories. Patterson had ridden himself into tremendous form just before the Championships, and with hardly any necessity to resort to tactics, he just rode faster than anyone else. Actually the amateur standard of racing was not high this year, and with the elimination of Schandorff who struck poor form on the all important day, there was no one capable of seriously challenging Sid Patterson.

By contrast, the professional racing was keen and thrilling from the preliminaries to the final, and the rise of the Young "pros" from the amateur ranks has certainly added zest to the "sang pur" of cycle racing. Pauwels, Terruzzi, Ghella, Plattner and the others, demonstrated a complete disregard for the older "kings of sprint" and attacked with vigour their more experienced opponents.

Of Reg's riding, it would be necessary to call upon some of the superlatives more usually associated with the film industry to achieve an adequate description. The most hard bitten riders and track officials rose to a man at that third deciding race with Van Vliet. It was terrific! This was the race which won the "Rainbow Jersey." Reg drew number 2. This was a happy omen. Arie Van Vliet had to lead for the first lap, but, bear in mind, practically all the sprints at Ordrup were being won from the front and tactics had to be framed accordingly. At the end of the first lap Van Vliet rode high in the banking, Reg closed up, and then did the unexpected. He came inside Van Vliet holding him high against the outside wall, so effectively cutting out the possibility of a flier off the banking. Entering the back straight, Van Vliet, still on the outside of Reg, jumped - and what a jump! The Dutchman must have put everything he had into it, his machine absolutely leapt forward - and Reg although able to see every move, apparently could not match it - he lost ground, daylight showed between the two machines and broadened to a full length. The crowd roared! Then the amazing thing happened; Reg, moving faster than I have ever seen him move before. was after Van Vliet and gaining yes, gaining and ATTACKING. As they came round the last corner, Reg was up to Arie's shoulder, down the straight all out, neck and neck, and then, ten yards from the line, Reg hit hard with a terrific second jump, and went by to win by half a length. This race had everything: tactics, quick thinking, wonderful speed and clean riding.

I have never seen anything better! Reg told me afterwards that he deliberately let Van Vliet take the lead from the jump, knowing that having stalled him so far, Arie would go all out, and would not attempt any stalling tactics round the banking., whilst he, with a less exhausting jump. although entailing a loss of ground, would be stronger to attack down the straight. It worked out, but Reg was clocked to do 11.1 seconds for the last 200 metres to MAKE it work out, and at least one person nearly had heart failure during the process. After this, the final seemed an anticlimax, expert opinion had known that the draw as made by the commissaires, largely in the interests of Louis Geradin, meant that the real title race would be in the semi-final, and Reg's two decisive wins over Derksen seemed largely a formality.

Rainbow Jersey, victors' laurels, tour of honour, fluttering flags, the National Anthem, congratulations and acclamation. The King of Sprinters! A moment of deep satisfaction and pride. The country, the sport, and the Club, can be justly proud of Reg Harris.

I cannot close this account without paying tribute to the British road team for their fine performance. Only those present know what a sterling show they made in the whole team finishing in the main group. And finally to record an appreciation of that amazing rider Fausto Coppi. His demonstration of road racing ability in the professional race was extraordinary; only the fact that there was no hill in the circuit prevented him from winning. As some compensation it was pleasing to see him, almost too easily, win the World Pursuit Title. Excitement, arguments, sensations, surprises, tears and smiles and terrific racing. Copenhagen had it all! As expected the Danish organisation was excellent. With a wonderfully equipped track and first class accommodation as a basis, the Danes made every effort to ensure the success of the Championships. The pursuit events were made particularly spectacular with the now familiar red and green light signals, but Copenhagen went one better by introducing the Ray system of operation. Of Cyril Cartwright's performance no praise can be too great. Labouring under the disadvantage of an extremely short training period following his serious illness, his physical condition was not improved by the overlong journey to Denmark by sea, which severely limited his training on the important days before the racing started. Riding in impeccable style he beat successively Jorgensen (Denmark), Challeau (France), and then in the quarter finals Muller (Switzerland). This was the key race of the series for Cyril. Muller was an extremely tough proposition, and the race ran all wrong from our man's view point. The Swiss was a faster starter and Cyril, on advice, was adopting a more rolling start, which in economy of effort pays back good dividends in the later laps. But, Muller punctured twice, and each time Cyril had to re-start INTO THE WIND. A little disturbed by his placing 5 metres down for the second re-start, he quickly regained his composure, after a quiet lap which made the Swiss boy wait this time. Then a reminder that there was less than 2000 metres to go was sufficient to set Cyril off at full pressure, and there was no slowness about the start this time. The winking lights were soon in his favour and the race was well won. Cyril Cartwright had become a name!

So Copenhagen saw a further tremendous stride forward in international competition by British riders. It is with justifiable pride that we acclaim the success of - MANCHESTER WHEELERS.

T. A. M.

There was little controversy at the A. G. M. held in January, 1950 but the year began on a very high note when Reg Harris brought distinction to the sport and pastime of cycling by being elected Sportsman of the Year. This competition was organised by the national newspaper, The Sporting Echo, and was based on postal votes conducted on a national basis.

Cyril Cartwright and Alan Geldard were selected to represent England in the Empire Games to be held in New Zealand. Cyril brought further honours to the Club by winning the Individual Pursuit Championship.

Considerable argument had been held regarding the omission of Alan Bannister from the Empire Games Sprint Championship. As Alan was English Champion in 1949 (and obviously his form had continued to be good as he won the Championship again in 1950) his omission was surprising to say the least. The Club reacted strongly and promptly against his non-selection, but as is always the case it is virtually impossible to change any decision by the Racing Committee of the N.C.U. and so Alan was unfortunately not a competitor in New

Zealand. This was extremely unfortunate because he had competed with considerable success down-under at meetings especially arranged before the Empire Games and on those results would certainly have been among the medals.

Unfortunately, financial storm clouds were now beginning to gather again and the 1949 balance sheet showed that although the Race Meet yielded a profit of £502.0s.0d the nett profit on the year was only £4.9s.8d.

An Easter Monday Open Track Meeting was again promoted, but on this occasion cold, inclement weather produced a small gate and resulted in a loss of £271.0s.0d.

On the Time Trial scene the year was one of activity with 30 starters for the Club '25' in May and ended with an entry of 21 for the Club '50' in August.

In May/June the Club, at its own expense, sent a team of Track Riders to Denmark. It was to prove an unmitigated blunder, both financially and from the negative benefits which it gave to Club activities. The error was underlined by the fact that the Club had also to bear the cost of a new Muratti Cup, the last one having been won outright by Tommy Godwin at the 1949 Race Meet.

MANCHESTER WHEELERS TOUR OF DENMARK - JUNE, 1950

On Sunday the 18th of June the Club team of Len Jackson, Alan Geldard, Ray Potter and Ken Pearson returned from an enjoyable racing visit to Denmark where they had been the guests of the Aarhus Bane-Klub. Accompanied by Norman Davenport who was enjoying a racing holiday, matches were ridden on all the Danish tracks at Aarhus, Odense, Ordrup and Esbjerg.

During the early part of the tour the small 333metre tracks proved a difficulty but the riders soon adjusted themselves to the altered conditions, and everyone voted that -they were a considerable improvement on the "wide open spaces" of English circuits.

The hospitality, particularly at Aarhus was overwhelming, and, let it be whispered, one member of the Club who shall be nameless, got down to some serious courting whilst he was there.

One of the highlights of the fortnight was the excellent tandem-riding of Len Jackson and Alan Geldard, and prizes were won by every member. At Aarhus the riders were presented with Danish silver cake-trowels and at Ordrup with silver-gilt spoons - carrying the Royal Danish Crest.

The luxurious fittings of the tracks and the riders' cabins and the general atmosphere of comfort about the tracks was most noticeable. These however are paid for by the 25 per cent. grant which each Club receives from the totalisators operated at all the tracks. Without these, it was stated by Danish officials that cycle-racing could not exist. Whether the N.C.U.'s proposed breaking of the agreement with the AAA will result in the same happy state of affairs here is still a matter for conjecture, but one could not deny the thriving conditions of even the provincial clubs.

The hosts, Aarhus Bane-Klub, will by the time this has been printed have been to Manchester as our guests, their representatives being Hans Raugmann (Leader), Borge Mortenson, Alfred Houlberg, Borge Rasmussen, Brend Gissel and Jens Juul Eriksen.

W.W.

The Armitage and Reeks Memorial Shields, presented in memory of two members killed in the first World War and awarded to the Club Road and Track Champions were now

complete and it was decided to purchase two further Shields which would be named Critchley and Battley Memorial Shields (in memory of two members who lost their lives in the Second World War) to be presented to the Club Road and Track Champions annually.

The 58th Race Meet again enjoyed excellent weather and was supported by a large crowd, although smaller than in 1949.

Negotiations for the 1950 Race Meet showed that fees totalling £175.0s.0d were required for the two premier professional sprinters - Harris and Van Vliet. It was considered that these fees were too high for us to accept and a decision was taken to promote an all amateur meeting.

Probably for the first time in the history of the Race Meet, handicap events were deleted from the programme. Although not apparently reported on elsewhere it probably coincided with the disappearance from 'Skinners Hill' of the small bookmaking community who operated there and accounted for the large proportion of the congregation of non-cyclists who gathered at that part of the track.

'Skinners Hill' was the banking immediately after the finishing line and the small time betting which took place there provided a strong contrast to the totalisator betting operated at the tracks in Denmark where our track riders competed during their Summer visit to that country.

The Race Meet Dinner was held at the Rolls Restaurant, Manchester, at a charge of 7s.6d. per head.

1950 was not without its lighter moments. The report on the Opening Run at the Rose & Crown, Knutsford indicated that a number of members were ill following this function and it was suspected that whale meat had been included in the menu.

With a World Championship Final four National Championships, 1950 was to be Our best ever, five members taking part in these successes:

World Professional Sprint Champion	Reg Harris
Amateur Sprint Champion	Alan Bannister
25 miles Champion (Track)	Alan Geldard
Tandem Sprint Champions	Alan Bannister & Len Jackson
Individual Pursuit Champion	Cyril Cartwright

In the summer the Club mourned the passing of one who was regarded by many as the Club's greatest Champion, and this History of the Club would not be complete without the inclusion of one of the several obituaries which were written.

Nov. 1950
JOHN EPHRAIM SIBBIT
By Bert Anderson

The passing of Jack Sibbit calls for much more than the obituary notice in the last issue of the "Journal," and I feel proud that the Committee has accorded me the privilege of writing this appreciation.

In a publication like ours it is not possible to do more than pick out the highlights and characteristics in a career so lengthy and illustrious.

Again, in a Club like ours, it is not possible to point to one man and say that he was our greatest member, because our 67 years history is studded with great men.

There is, of course, no doubt whatever that Jack Sibbit's name is very high on the list; where it will remain for all time.

He joined us in the winter of 1919/20 a good handicap rider, a winner of local scratch races, a very likely winner of any local centre championship, a promising career in front of him.

He left us in 1950 a past President of the Club, leaving a great record behind him to enrich our history and point the way to present and future generations of young Wheelers.

In 1921 the Wheelers had for many years endured a lean spell, so far as National Championships and International Events were concerned, and I well remember the excitement at a local sports meeting, when the news came through that we had two men in the Final of the 1 mile English Championship at Herne Hill. They were Jack Sibbit and George Owen. This was George's day, but Jack had not long to wait and the following year saw him win the first of 15 English Championships, and he rode as a Champion for the next 15 years.

His first title was the 5 miles - his last in 1937 his eighth Tandem Championship. In between he won the ¼, 1000 yards, 1 mile and 25 miles National Championships and probably his greatest achievement, the 1 mile Tandem Championship eight times, with FOUR different partners. Five times with E. H. Chambers, of Brighton and one each with D. S. Horn of Norwich, A. White of Scunthorpe and our own E. W. Higgins. A very great captain of a tandem crew was our Jack.

He carried the Club's colours in almost every country in Europe, was chosen for World's Championships and Olympic Games, where he was second (with E. H. Chambers) in the tandem event to Bernard Leene and D- van Dijk, of Holland, in 1928.

His last International appearance was in the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936-when he was 40 years of age-and still a National Champion. Space does not allow any lengthy discourse on the colossal number of prizes he won, but the Reeks Memorial Shield testifies to his prowess of carrying the Club's colours to victory so often and for so many years in open races. He won more cups and challenge trophies than any Wheeler either before this time or since, and once told me "I would rather race than eat my dinner." Jack was no mean performer with a knife and fork!!

Personal memories crowd in of Jack the Clubman Wheeler the greybeards will tell you of his exploits, for he was a true Wheeler with all the requisite flair for harmless practical joking - whitewashing your new bicycle, emptying your saddle bag and fitting two nice new bricks in it.

Yet he taught many a good lesson - not always on the track. I remember that my first representing the Manchester Centre was in an appeal case v. J. E. Sibbit. Naturally, I was anxious to win, I was 25 - Jack 4 or 5 years older and Jack won on a technicality. As we came from the room after hearing the result Jack put his hand out and said 'I hope you won't bear any ill-will Bert.' I am glad to remember I had the grace to smile and say "no ill-will Jack." He taught me to lose with a good grace and I have never forgotten. I remember too his rather shy smile as he would stand up at N.C.U. meetings to fight for his Club or Centre. and once when a prominent champion was about to resign from the Club, he said "I wouldn't be KICKED out of the Wheelers - if I had to go down on my hands and knees to stay in."

Member of Committee for many years, Vice President, indefatigable worker in any job connected with the track game, a regular member of Club runs when racing and business allowed, a shrewd adviser, a good supporter of the social side of the Club and Clubhouse, a fine sportsman, and one of the greatest Internationals Great Britain has ever sent abroad. Wheelers' Delegate to the N.C.U., National Councillor, British Record Holder, Club Champion, British Team Manager, Olympic Rider, Member of the Racing and Records

Committee, British Champion, Prince of good Wheelers. HOW shall we remember him?
Each in his own way, but for all of us

At high noon

And when the sun goes down

We shall remember Jack Sibbit.

BERT ANDERSON.

Membership was still strong with 205 members, but the financial clouds which had begun to gather in 1947 had opened with a vengeance ending in an overall loss on the year of £687.0s.0d. Although the Race Meet had made a profit of £208.0s.0d. there was a loss on the Easter Meet of £271.0s.0d. and various other heavy expenses including the Danish Tour at a cost of £230.0s.0d.

The Annual Smoker and Prize Distribution was held at the Carlton Restaurant, Manchester, the change of venue being necessary because it had become obvious that the Club House in South King Street was not large enough for demand. There was an attendance of almost 300 people (all males). It was voted by all to be a great all male evening, although a little boisterous at times. We had within our ranks a World Champion in Reg Harris, Empire and National Champion in Cyril Cartwright and National Champions in Alan Bannister, Alan Geldard and Len Jackson.

As 1950 had been so successful there was little controversy and no change of Rules at the A.G.M. held in early 1951.

The elders of the Club continued to give substantial support to the racing and social programme and at the Opening Run on the 17th March it was noteworthy that 11 past Presidents were present.

Alan Bannister had been invited to compete in the Canterbury Games at Christchurch, New Zealand, and was in tremendous form winning the 440 yards International Scratch and also the 1,000 yards Scratch. He followed up these wins by taking second position in the 5 miles and by winning the Centennial Sprint Event. The Press down-under were amazed at his omission from the Empire Games Team in 1950.

The Club's ambitions for 1951 were outlined in the following article from the Journal.

FEB. 1951 EDITORIAL

The Manchester Wheelers' Club is a great Club-and in making that statement one is aware of its many imperfections whilst accepting that it possesses that intangible quality which sets it apart in its greatness from many hundreds of other Clubs. To occupy the office of Editor, therefore, is a task not without responsibility, requiring as it does, the presentation of the Club's activities to a national audience and recording for future generations a continuity of the history of "Wheelerism."

During the last few years we have seen figures like Currie, Bowkett, Barlow, Hodgins, McGrath, fade from the active scene, to be replaced in many instances by men unversed in Wheelerism. The unwritten rules which guide the activities of the President, Club Officials and Members of Committee into support of the Club's activities in all aspects have gradually relaxed. An influx of new members largely unable to absorb the Club's traditions has continued from the mid nineteen forties. These facts represent danger to the future success of the Manchester Wheelers' Club and one of the main objects of this Journal will be to combat this trend by guidance or criticism based on the Club's long history.

It is customary, at this time of the year, to endeavour to assess the Club's prospects of gaining honours in the cycling world in the season which lies ahead, and the natural trend is to take what usually proves to be a rather optimistic outlook. The honours gained by Manchester Wheelers' Members during the Harris era, however, have been on such a superlative scale World's Championships, Empire Championship, National Track Championships, Competition Records and a Road Championship that one feels that a decline in this amazing run of success must inevitably take place in the not too distant future. The prospects for 1951, however, are undoubtedly first-class. Apart from misgivings regarding the three-up finals in the World Championships, Reg. Harris will be a firm favourite for the Professional event. Among the English amateurs Alan Bannister will also be expected to retain his title and the prospects for Alan Geldard, Len Jackson and Cyril Cartwright are equally good. There is also a good backing of other track-riders to give the Club a powerful representation in this sphere. Potentially, the Pursuit Team is good enough to win the Championship-it has been for a year or so but has failed due to faulty management or lack of team spirit at a critical stage. This year, under Reg. Harris's guidance, we are hoping it will regain the honour.

J. Fletcher - Editor.

After seven successive years in which we had won the National Sprint Championship (four times to Reg Harris and three times to Alan Bannister) we failed to win this particular Championship. Alan was however again successful in winning the National Tandem Championship for the 5th year in succession, this time being partnered by Len Jackson.

Further disappointments followed when Alan Geldard and Cyril Cartwright each failed to retain their 25 miles championships (N. C. U. Track and R.T.T.C. Road).

In the Manchester Centre Team Pursuit Championship our team was beaten by the Mercury R.C., a newly formed racing club which had attracted star riders from a number of clubs in the Manchester area.

There were numerous successes on the track during the summer of 1951 and many of them to the credit of Alan Bannister, although as the season progressed Alan lost much of his earlier zest and enthusiasm and suffered something of a decline.

There had been fewer successes on the road mainly due to Cyril Cartwright losing his traditional fastest time positions to the Mercury riders.

Despite defeat in the Manchester Centre Championship the Pursuit Team did progress in the National Competition but was disappointingly defeated in the final by the East Midlands Clarion.

After being England's premier sprinter for the past three years Alan Bannister seems to have struck a lean spell which commenced with the National Sprint Championships and immediately followed his excellent performance of third place in the Grand Prix of Paris (Amateur). Alan's trouble at the moment appears to be a lack of confidence rather than physical, and if only he can recapture that determination which characterised his riding against Reg. Harris around 1946 and 1947 we have every confidence that our good wishes for him will materialise in the regaining of premier honours next year.

* * * *

Although the Pursuit Team has given evidence of inconsistency during this year it was a matter of intense disappointment to see them fail in the Final Round against the East Midlands Clarion. Their semi-final against Western Command C.C. was only run on the

Wednesday prior to the Final and the Wheelers were extremely lucky to win a gruelling tie by only $\frac{2}{5}$ second after Western Command had lost a man in the first lap with a puncture. On the other hand both Jackson and Geldard had done a lot of riding the previous night and appeared tired.

The Wheelers were then probably favourites to win the Final but Geldard punctured in the first lap and although the Clarion also lost one man, punctured in the later stages, they ran out winners by two and a half seconds. The team in both semi and the Final was Bannister, Geldard, Jackson and Potter with Joe Leigh acting as team manager.

A sensational Editorial in September 1951 outlined the uncertain financial position of the Club:

EDITORIAL

The Manchester Wheelers' Meet will not be held next year. Three years ago this statement would have appeared fantastic; it now enters the realms, if not of probability, at least of possibility.

Six successful Meets have been held since we returned in 1946 and yet 1951 will prove to have been one of the most critical in the history of the Club.

The Manchester Wheelers' Club cannot exist on subscription income but must rely largely on Race Meet profit. In the past even wet Race Meets have generally covered expenses, the loss on the year being limited to the average expenditure of the Club programme. The margin of profit on fine days has been sufficient to absorb those periodical losses due to inclement weather. These were the days of "Race Meet-Wet or Fine," when on bad days we could break fairly even and on good days make a substantial profit.

Note the change. "Racing if fine." In other words, the position could arise that the second Saturday in July brought with it practically all the expenses of a Race Meet with the only income that of before-the-day ticket sales.

On the second Saturday in July would come realisation that between one third and one half of the Club's assets had disappeared.

The financial dangers of a smooth surfaced, steeply-banked track in uncertain weather conditions have now become very obvious.

So much for the bad days; what of the good ones? We can do no better than review the Race Meet of 1951. Here we had an excellent programme which included the top professionals and most of the leading amateurs. The advertising was splendidly done; Press comment was favourable. The weather was not perfect but reasonably good. At the best we might have had another 2,000 spectators with an increase in income of £150. The outcome! Preliminary reports indicate that the Meeting was run at a loss apart from Programmes and even when this income is taken into account the profit will be under one hundred pounds. On the year therefore there will be a heavy loss to be added to that of 1950. This cannot go on indefinitely and viewed as purely a business venture the Race Meet is not a reasonable proposition as the promoters stand to gain nothing (in cash) but to lose a very great deal. And unfortunately although great prestige was gained this year that alone cannot be the basis for promotions of this class.

Of the last ten Race Meets, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939 were accompanied by rain; those of 1946-51 were fine, and if only by the law of averages then obviously some wet days lie ahead. As there is no margin of profit for reserve under present conditions the Club can carry on as usual for perhaps five years so long as we have fine Race Meet weather. Two or three wet days and the Club's economy will collapse.

The object of this article is to promote - or provoke! - discussion and correspondence NOW. It is not a matter to be brought unexpectedly to an A.G.M. but requires very careful consideration before that date.

The Race Meet of 1951 "... recaptured all the old glory ..." but has posed a question of major policy which will not be easily solved.

J. Fletcher, Editor.

Subsequently a sub-committee was formed to consider the question of Race Meet finances. It recommended that the promotion of successful Race Meets was feasible but must depend largely on a substantial degree of sponsorship. Whilst some degree of sponsorship had been usual with pre-war Race Meets, e.g. the Vi-Tonica and the Muratti, it was felt that the degree of sponsorship now required was on a much greater scale. It was essential to promote a successful Race Meet in order to continue the Club's present activities.

A letter was received from Williams Deacons Bank Ltd., congratulating us on fifty years of banking with them, this milestone having been achieved on the 15th November, 1951.

The outstanding performance of the year was the winning of the Worlds Professional Sprint Championship by Reg Harris for the third consecutive year.

The year ended on a rather disappointing note when in December, 1951, 24 names were removed from the list of members for non-payment of subscriptions. This reduced the list of members to below 200.

The Prize Distribution and Smoker was held on the 7th December 1951 at the Carlton Restaurant in the centre of Manchester.

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION AND SMOKER

7th December, 1951.

Whatever one thinks about the Smoker - whether it should be held at a pub, a club or the Free Trade Hall, or whether it should be free for all, restricted by invitation, transformed and adorned by the ladies - there is no doubt about its popularity in its present form. And why should it not be so? The average racing man is a full blooded creature - he wouldn't be a racing man otherwise. He likes a drink and a joke. He likes to yarn and make a nuisance of himself in the rat-pit with the fellows he sweated and strained and "thrutched" against on Sunday mornings or Saturday afternoons months or years before. He likes to bang with his glass on the table to the tune of "Digging up the Road" and to roar his acclaim of the man who could beat 240 in Cheshire.

This was the "Smoker 1951" as it was for many years before and, we hope, for many more years to come.

The room was soon as packed as we should like to see Fallowfield jammed on the second Saturday in July, and latecomers were faced with a thick haze of tobacco smoke, a forest of bottles and glasses, a shortage of seats, and a continuous rumble of voices which rolled into the background even Mr. Newman-Smith's efforts at the piano. At intervals, however, Mr. Fred Gort's baritone, powerfully accentuated by a microphone situated immediately over the President's head, dimmed all conversation. Entertainers Groves and Trafford (someone suggested it should have been Groves and Whitnall) had evidently been primed by their sponsor "Knocker" and had come prepared with all the questions-and answers, too!

Whilst the President presented the Prizes, with Harold Buckley calling the names and performances in very efficient manner, we had an unrehearsed farce, thanks to Ray Potter and his camera. Whilst the President and Club Champion delayed their handshake and maintained one of those fixed smiles so reminiscent of toothpaste ads. Everyone waited patiently for Ray's flash photograph. Patience changed to rude remarks, as you may imagine, and then just when Ray had put the instrument behind his back in disgust the bulb went off like something left over from the Fifth of November, and the house came down!

Arthur Bradbury carried on the good work by welcoming the Visitors and the Press in terms of "Ladies and Gentlemen" and drew a witty response from Don Lyford of *Cycling*, who chaffed us gently about Manchester and Fallowfield in particular. Tommy Barlow proposed the toast to the Prize winners, most of whom had by this time gone into an adjacent noisy corner and so prevented themselves and everyone else from hearing the nice things Tommy was saying about them. Ged Horn made a brief reply on behalf of the road-men, and A. J. Partington confirmed earlier impressions that his promise of oratory is as great as that of track-racing ability in replying for the track-men.

We were pleased to see so many prize winners present, particularly Bill Kinghorn and Erie Thornhill, and our concluding impression of a grand evening was the picture of Kelly and Arthur Clague careering into Market Street on the top of a vintage Austin Seven.

J. Fletcher, Editor.

The disappointments of 1951 led to a much livelier Annual General Meeting in January, 1952.

There was considerable discussion on the Race Meet and some misgivings when the Race Meet Secretary explained that on its present scale an outlay of £1,100 was required and even on a dry. day it was only likely to yield a profit of approximately £100.

1952 was year of recession and austerity for the Country and inevitably the outlook for cycle sport was likely to follow the same pattern.

FEB. 1952 EDITORIAL

We face 1952 with a programme which falls into the now all too familiar classification of "austerity". As in the national sphere we are facing facts in realising that to remain solvent we must keep expenditure within the limits of income.

Unfortunately the "austerity" period appears to be of long duration-so long, in fact, that what is now regarded as austerity will in due course *come* to be regarded as normal. Indeed, our own difficulties economically are part of the national malaise, for which at the present there is no foreseeable remedy, and to keep the Club in its present prominent position a policy of vigorous activity in Club life will be necessary.

In view of the reduction in the Prize List it was perhaps unfortunate that Rule 25 did not suffer deletion at the A.G.M. if only on the grounds of anachronism. The days when a man joined the Manchester Wheelers' Club for profit from the Prize List are surely over and make this respective Rule appear ludicrous.

If some form of restriction is deemed necessary, there is the contentious viewpoint that some standard of time, at least for road events, should also be required, as some of the road prizes are won with times which lag far behind current standards. For example, the elevation to a higher place of the Club records for the 100 and 12 hours might be a condition to the taking of a Road Championship prize!

J. Fletcher, Editor.

Also discussed at some length was a proposition to allow members to attend Committee Meetings as observers. The proposition was largely initiated by a number of intellectuals, new members of whom many were University under-graduates. It foreshadowed the pattern of events of almost fifteen years later but on this occasion the proposition was heavily defeated, only ten members voting in favour.

The summer saw a controversy between the Club and the N. C. U. regarding the non-selection of one of its members for international competition, the occasion being Cyril Cartwright's omission from the Olympic Pursuit Team.

This followed the situation which arose in the case of Alan Bannister's non-selection for the Empire Games in 1950 and again, although the Club strongly contested the matter with the N.C.U. it was totally unsuccessful in its efforts to obtain Cartwright's inclusion.

However, Alan Bannister, who had won his sixth consecutive Tandem Championship (this time with Les Wilson, Leeds Kirkgate) was selected for the Olympic Tandem Event along with a new member, Alan Newton, included for the Olympic Pursuit Team.

Inevitably the austerity of the year was affecting advertising and in strong contrast with the position of a few years ago, eighteen out of twenty advertisers in the Journal to whom the Editor had written declined to continue their support.

In the Olympic Games Alan Newton was a member of the Olympic Pursuit Team which took third place and was placed fourth in the Individual Pursuit. Alan Bannister and Les Wilson reached the quarter finals of the Tandem Sprint.

The racing season was to prove less successful than hitherto, less prizes being won on the track and very few on the road.

By ordinary standards however it was still a successful year, including the Diamond Jubilee Race Meet and a Club Evening Meeting in which Reg Harris as World Sprint Champion competed against amateur riders of the Club.

The proceeds were to be for the benefit of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, no prizes being awarded, this condition making the unique event possible.

CLUB EVENING MEETING. 8th August, 1952.

A rather dull evening restricted the attendance at the 1952 Club Evening Track Meeting held at Fallowfield in aid of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and Taylor House.

This meeting presented a unique programme in that Reg Harris competed against amateurs by special permission of the N.C.U., and the results amply proved that the rung in the ladder between amateur and professional bridges no mean gap!

The programme opened with 21 riders contesting the 1,000 Yards Club Championship, and out of the four heats Reg Harris, Alan Bannister, Albert Bagnall and Ken Pearson emerged the victors to contest the final. The result was in that order and showed Reg to be an easy winner with a time for the last furlong of 12.9 secs.

The 580 Yards Handicap again showed 21 riders having entered, and the first and second in each of the four heats were to contest the final. The finalists were Reg Harris (Scr.), Albert Bagnall (40), Alan Partington (40) and Don Murray (70) as the winners of the heats, and Nev Banks (45), Norman Davenport (60), Alan Walkden (45) and Norman Dove (40) as the runners-up, respectively. By a superb burst of speed in the back straight Reg Harris produced, to my mind, the finest exhibition of riding at the meeting, when with apparently no effort he came right round the field to win from Albert Bagnall and Alan Walkden.

In the gathering gloom, 19 riders, including Reg Harris, contested the Five Miles Scratch Race. Various attempts at breakaways were made, but they came to naught, and

eventually Reg punctured and retired. After a spirited final lap Albert Bagnall proved the winner from Alan Walkden and Brian Foden, with a time of 11 mins. 33.5 secs.

Interspersed with the actual Club events were the Twelve Laps Motor-Paced and Ten Laps Motor-Paced events, contested by members of other Clubs, and these proved extremely entertaining and provided the Club members with a breather.

As a charge had been made for admission, the comic element which usually infiltrates into Club Track Meetings was not quite so evident as usual. Gerry Kelly, sporting a crash hat which would have qualified him for membership of the "Wheelers' Tigers" (if such an organisation existed), contested every event, including the Five Miles, which developed into a pursuit match, "the rest of the field v. Kelly".

All arrangements were well up to Wheelers' standard, and the subsequent remarks in Committee, where due credit was paid to Johnny Berry for organising the meeting, will indicate the splendid spirit which existed even though there were no prizes.

Walter Wilson prattled gaily at the microphone, and the "Members' Favourites" on the gramophone in between the events were greatly appreciated.

I left the ground feeling proud to be a member of a Club which could promote such a meeting with only Club members riding in the unpaced events. Excellent sport and entertainment provided by members doing their bit for the love of the game!

SPECTATOR.

In August, 1952 the Club promoted an open massed-start road race on public roads. This was the first promotion by a Manchester Club under N.C.U. rules and was reported on as follows:-

MASSED START ROAD RACE.

17th August, 1952.

On Sunday, 17th August, the Club once again took the initiative in the Manchester Area by being the first Club to promote a Massed Start Race on open roads under N.C.U. rules.

Despite opposition in the shape of a similar event at Leicester, a good-class entry of 42 was received, 36 facing the starter, which should have been Reg Harris-he, however, was also a non-starter, or should that be a non-starting starter? and Joe Leigh finally took the bull by the horns and the flag by the stick.

Defaulters from our own Club were Alan Newton, with World Championship selections clashing, and Don McCreery with a bad back (fibrositis, lumbago, old age, lady friends, or what have you?).

The race was round five laps of the Bollin Valley circuit (a circuit "rescued" from the B.L.R.C. due to the short notice of promotion) which included both Oversley Ford and Castle Hill.

The first lap passed quietly enough-one of the London boys puncturing and his teammates waiting-and it was only after the second lap, during which Ged Horn was prominent at the front that Alan Grisdale of Wigan and Roy Coleman of West Pennine essayed the first real breakaway. They kept this up for the next two and a half laps with the bunch continually chasing until they were finally caught with only ten miles to go. Meanwhile in the bunch-Ged punctured during the third lap Harold Worthen of Clarion crashed and Ian Sirett of the Mercury also fell heavily at Castle Hill, dislocating his shoulder and necessitating his removal to hospital.

At the end of the fourth lap Cyril Cartwright dropped, and by the fifth lap Ken Pickford of the Pyramid, Harry Hardcastle of Abbotsford Park and "Banny" were beginning

to really sort out the field in catching the fugitives-Banny however "blew up" at Castle Hill with five miles to go, and eventually Paddy Boyd and Bill Noonan of Birkenhead led the bunch into the finish. They were, however, unfortunately misdirected by an over-enthusiastic policeman, and in the sprint Ken Pickford won by lengths from Hardcastle, with Coleman third and Logan of M.A.C.C. fourth, both at inches.

Of our boys, the revelations were Cyril and Alan, whose only fault was that they did too much work so that both "blew up" before the finish. Ged punctured and lost steadily chasing a bunch which averaged practically 25 m.p.h., Joe Pilling also found the front was hard work and had nothing left, and Harry Whitehouse, after holding the bunch for the first few laps, also lost ground steadily to finish just ahead of Ged.

The main complaint was that the weather was too good-spectators were round the course in thousands, and plenty of traffic made riders very conscious of the narrowness of the roads in parts.

ODD TOPICS.

Don Mac's face when Tommy Mac just shaved between a charabanc and another car. *Banny and Pickford* climbing the hill together Ken on about 80: and Alan on 57. (Incidentally, this is our second Open which Ken has won-the best of luck to him in the " 12 ' for the hat-trick). *Knocker's Shirt*.

The Vice-President reports that his wife is a convert from Time-Trials to Massed Start.

The President claims to have walked 20 miles selling programmes, and is, gloomily contemplating the suggested Birmingham-Manchester M. S.

The Road Racing Secretary (Time Trials) Official (but strictly disapproving) time-keeper.

Finally-a word of thanks for the Marshals provided by other Clubs, the St. John's men, and the Police, who helped to make the event run smoothly.

OFFICIAL RESULT.

		h. m. s.
1	K. Pickford, Pyramid R.C.	2 35 42
2	H. J. Hardcastle, Abbotsford Pk R.C.	do.
3	R. T. Coleman, West Pennine R.C.	do.
4	L. Logan, M.A.C.C.	do.
5	B. Blakey, Yorkshire R.C.	do.
6	P. S. Boyd, Wallasey Silverdale C.C.	do.
7	F. Norton, West Bradford	do.
8	R. A. Taylor, West Pennine R.C.	do.
9	A. Grisdale, Wigan Wheelers	do.
10	W. Noonan, Birkenhead N.E.C.C.	do.
11	M. A. Robinson, Birkenhead N. E. C. C.	2 36 24
12	A. Bannister, Manchester Wheelers	do.
13	W. Linley, Sheffield Phoenix	2 36 55
14	J. Pilling, Manchester Wheelers	2 36 59
15	W. H. Happy, Norwood Paragon	2 38 25
16	G. Taylor, Huddersfield R.C.	2 40 13
17	F. Walsh, Cheshire Roads Club	2 41 16
18	L. H. Dodd, Sheffield Phoenix	2 42 24
19	D. H. Scholes, Huddersfield R.C.	2 43 43
20	B. Bolton, Yorkshire R.C.	2 43 46
21	H. Whitehouse, Manchester Wheelers	2 44 53

22	A. W. Jackson, De Laune C.C.	2 47 09
23	G. A. Horn, Manchester Wheelers	do.
24	M. Rumbold, Ealing Manor	do.
25	G. C. Drayton, Glendene C.C.	2 47 13

Did not start: A. Newton and D. McCreery, Manchester Wheelers; K. Biddulph, J. P. Ogden and E. J. Thornhill, Stone Wheelers; R. Coe, Birdwell Wheelers.

Did not finish: C. Cartwright, Manchester Wheelers; F. H. Worthen, Manchester Clarion; J. A. Bell and I. P. Sirett, Mercury; R. E. Smith, Yorks R.C.; A. Gascoigne and W. E. Dry, Sheffield Phoenix; H. Glunnbrook, Abbotsford Park; D. Jee, M.A.C.; S. Allington, Birkenhead; and K. Hulmon, Gomersall.

J. Fletcher, Editor.

The 1,000 metres Club Track Championship was won by a promising member who had risen from our junior ranks in Alan Partington of whom it was expected that he would follow in the footsteps of our previous champions and win National Honours.

A painting in oils by Bernard Hailstone R.A., being a copy of his original painting of Reg as Sportsman of the Year, was commissioned by the Club at a cost of 65 guineas. It was presented to Reg who requested that it be hung in our King Street headquarters.

Len Jackson, who partnered Alan Bannister for the past three years in winning the National Championship turned professional and further depleted our track racing strength.

The enthusiasm for long distance riding and time trialing continued and we received an excess of 37 entries for our Open Twelve Hours.

Although the number of racing successes had declined the Club continued to be extremely active and 44 members attended 12 or more Club runs throughout the year.

In November, 1952 Reg Harris riding at the Vel Vigorelli Track beat the World track record for 1,000 metres with a time of 1 min. 8.6 seconds. It is interesting to note that nineteen years later Terry Tinsley, riding on the Leicester track, won the National Kilometre Championship with a time of 1 min. 8.45 sees.

40 members had attended 12 or more Club Runs during 1952, with 71 supporting the Closing Run in October.

1952 showed a profit of £104 against a loss of £230 in 1951.

1953 was the Club's 70th Jubilee and it was decided to hold a Jubilee Dinner in Cheshire following the Race Meet.

It was recognised that inevitably there would be a decline in our Track Racing strength and successes from the peaks of previous years.

Changes were in the air and on the social side a Supper Dance (the first of its kind) was held at the Fallowfield Hotel and was a successful innovation with 98 members and friends being present.

On the racing side the accent was beginning to change with more massed-start racing on open roads and the position of Massed-Start Secretary was created, with the title of Racing Secretary being changed to Time Trials secretary.

There were good prospects of success by our riders in massed-start events.

Although an entry of only 19 was received for the first Club '25', a decline from previous years, a good start was made to the track racing season with four members winning prizes in Open events and successes in Open 25 miles time trials.

The Club affiliated to the B. L. R. C.

After seven successive victories Alan Bannister, was defeated in the Tandem Championship and with this defeat went the last National Track Title held by a Club member.

Apart from the honours which Alan had brought to the Club with his track racing successes he had been an enthusiastic Club man and a good Wheeler and acquitted himself with distinction as Editor. Alan probably created something of a record for a National Champion to be simultaneously one of the sport's most active officials.

FEB. 1953. EDITORIAL.

We look back on a year which, by comparison with recent years, has not been outstanding from the sporting aspect, but which, under the Presidency of Jimmy Taylor, has witnessed an increase in the tempo of the social life of the Club. Both Opening and Closing Runs were blessed with record attendances, and the Autumn Supper Dance was voted as the best of an excellent series of similar functions.

This increased interest in the social sphere augurs well for a healthy Club spirit. It enables all groups-Saturday club-runners and Sunday ditto, road men and track exponents, Committee members and Clubhouse stalwarts-to meet together under a common roof with a common interest, and so foster the Club spirit which has been the life-blood of the Manchester Wheelers' for the past 70 years.

For 1953, the Club's 70th year, the Presidential office is taken over by Harold Buckley, who, though young in years of membership, is a stalwart in terms of service, and we look forward to a memorable year with him at the helm. Harold's box office value lies only second to Jimmy, and it is hoped that he will preside at an Opening Run at which the gathering will exceed the number of years of the Club's existence. SO remember the date-March 21st-roll up and help to make the Run worthy of the occasion.

Whilst our confidence in Reg Harris to regain his World Title in 1953 remains unshaken, our main sporting prospects for the coming season lie in our younger members. On the track, first trust must be placed in Alan Newton to bring home national and international honours. Other aspirants to fame are Alan Partington and Brian Geldard, whom we hope this year will carry their names and the Club colours to victory in centres other than Manchester. In particular, our chances in the 4,000 Metres Team Pursuit are outstanding. In this respect we hope that Cyril Cartwright's rumoured retirement is not a fact, as he, together with Alan Newton, would provide the hard core of a combination whose defeat by any other Club team would be difficult to imagine.

When Jack Fletcher created the "Nucleus" in a recent editorial he also created a new enthusiasm among the road men of the Club. Long week-ends are included in standing orders, and if early season fitness can be used as a yardstick by which to measure future performances, we are assured of a bumper season on the road.

A. Bannister, Editor.

A team of four members competed in the An Tostal, a four day stage race in Ireland and acquitted themselves well, although not winning any of the premier placings.

Norman Grattage was the first Massed-Start Secretary.

A major promotion was the Manchester to Birmingham Road Race, total distance 105 miles, starting in Altrincham and proceeding via Chester, Whitchurch, Wellington and Brownhills to Sutton Park.

TOM DAVIES.

The passing of Tommy Davies, one of the "Old Brigade" of racing cyclists, will have been noted with regret by the few of his contemporaries who are left.

Tommy was a notable rider in the early days of this century, and held his own in the days when scratch mark riders could win their handicaps by sheer riding ability and grit. His successes on the track were too numerous to give in detail, but a few outstanding performances were:-

Muratti Cup in 1900.

Sydney Trophy at Sydney, Australia.

Mile Championship at Chicago, U.S.A.

Represented England v. France both as an Amateur and a Professional.

Represented the Rest of England v. Polytechnic.

He also held the British record quartermile in 28 secs. and the half-mile in 54 secs., both ridden on the old Fallowfield track.

After his track career he turned his talents to showmanship and toured the world with "Cycling in Mid-Air" and later with "Motoring in Mid-Air" opening at the Palace, Manchester in 1904.

Tommy's proud boast was that he always rode to win, and we could do with more riders with his spirit and determination today.

MANCHESTER-BIRMINGHAM ROAD RACE

August 9th, 1953.

Organised as one of the twelve "National" Road Races promoted under N.C.U. Rules in various parts of the country during 1953, the Club's Manchester to Birmingham Road Race did not "just happen". In fact it was the outcome of many hours of arduous work on the part of Don Murray and Ted Hill on the organising side and of many motoring miles and gallons of petrol used in route finding by Johnny Berry, Len Myatt and Norman Grattage.

Originally conceived as a Manchester to Derby and back event taking in both the Axe Edge and Cat & Fiddle climbs, the race was changed at the request of the N.C.U. to Manchester to Birmingham, and the course was selected in order to make the race approximately equal to the world championship distance of 115 miles. It was hoped that riders selected to travel to Switzerland would use the event as a final try-out before the Championships, and it was disappointing to receive the entry of only one of them-J. J. Perks (Earleswood Road & Path Club), who finished third.

A suitable course was quite difficult to find. At first an attempt was made by Len and Norman to find a suitable route via Ashbourne, a logical first choice which would give equal chance to both the hill-climber and the "routier". However, the route would not "go" between Ashbourne and Cannock; and, following a general pow-wow after a Committee Meeting, it was decided to approach Birmingham along the A.5 and Brownhills, whilst from this end the route was to leave via the Chester Road. The problem of going to two ends was solved by Johnny Berry who, putting in a hectic Sunday's driving, sorted out a course which was adopted without any modification.

Came the night before the event, and Bernard Rosser (Coventry C.C.) - who was my guest for the night-and I had a good look at the weather forecast for the following day on the T.V. It was, we decided, going to be fine and warm with the chance of a slight wind. This

surmise proved correct and the riders assembled outside the Bleeding Wolf at Hale to complete their pre-race formalities in conditions which promised a hot day.

The field departed from the Race H.Q. somewhat late, a delay which was accentuated by the riders losing the Commissar's car on the way to the start at St. Margaret's, the scene of so many Club run meetings.

The starter's flag eventually dropped 20 minutes late, and the field of fifty starters swung out into the Chester Road along the neutralised stretch to the traffic lights at Dunham Hill, and from this point the race was on - all 113 miles of it.

Following a pattern that has brought victory in many recent road races, an early breakaway was forced, a group of five riders, including Ken Marsden and Boyd (Birkenhead) were away to a lead half way up Bucklow Hill, but on this occasion they could not stay away from the main group and were caught after 10 miles, the field being in a group as it passed through Northwich. At Hartford activity was slight, and except for occasional abortive attempts by small groups to get away the main bunch remained intact except for casualties due to punctures.

Vicars Cross, the 29-mile point, was turned at 1 hr. 8 min. (25.6 m. p. h.) and helped by the twisting lanes into the Whitchurch road a strong group of six riders, including Ken Marsden, Joe Pilling and Martin (Solihull) had acquired a slight lead. Perks bridged the gap from the bunch to join the breakaway, and after 5 miles this group had a lead of 75 secs. which was reduced to 26 secs. at Broxton island and finally to nothing on the climb that followed. At Broxton we joined courses with the Liverpool T.T.A. 12-hour event as far as Whitchurch, where Mark Cooper was busy segregating road-racer, Time-trialist, and the mass of mid-day Sunday traffic at Hughes Corner. At this point, Cooper (Army Club, Catterick Wheelers) was away to a substantial lead, which at the "Raven" had increased to 30 secs. over Towers. A group of three were a further 45 secs. away and the bunch a further minute. Substantial though this advantage seemed, it was to be short lived, and 9 miles further all were back.

Immediately Gordon and Russell (Solihull) attacked, and aided by team support within the main bunch had gained a full minute by the milestone "Salop 6 miles" was reached. Though maintaining this lead through Battlefield corner, their advantage through the lanes to Shawbury was reduced by strong chasing action on the part of Perks, and Britton and Grieves (both Catterick Wheelers), and they were eventually caught a mile and a half before Shawbirch.

Then the real breakaway began to develop, and it originally contained Bowes and Swindells (Solihull), Rosser (Coventry C.C.), Ames (Concorde) and Parrott (Coventry R.C.). On the climb after Wellington the breakaway was consolidated, Swindells was dropped, and Wilson, Perks, Hayley, Sommerlad, Langston, Grieves, Gordon and Brittain "escaped" one by one from the bunch to make a leading group of 14 riders which was to remain unbroken to the end of the race.

Up to this point retirements had been numerous, due to punctures and the heat, and only about 28 riders were remaining in the race. At the A.41 roundabout (87 miles) the field was in two almost equal parts, the breakaway group of 14 leading the remaining riders in the race, who were all in one group, by about a minute.

From this point the race pattern underwent no change, and the leading group steadily increased their lead to 16 minutes at the finish, their only casualty being Heys, who punctured at 5 miles to go.

The finishing lane saw 13 riders all together. A long sprint on the part of Sommerfield (Oxonian C.C.) proved to no avail, and he was brought back; then Ames opened what looked like a winning lead, only to be seized with cramp; and the final sprint for the line

took place between Wilson and Rosser, the decision going to the former by a wheel, with Perks half a length behind third.

The performance of our own riders in the event was not outstanding, Ken Marsden being the only one to finish (in 17th position), and his performance can be best appreciated with the knowledge that he had a foot-long split in one of his rims for the last 75 miles of the event. Until this defect occurred he was prominent in all the important early breakaways, and we feel sure that without it he would have been placed in the leading bunch. Harry Whitehouse and Bill Walsh retired just before Battlefield, Harry with a puncture and Bill with fatigue, whilst Ged Horn found a newly-repaired shoe sufficient excuse to sit by the roadside on the Wellington climb. Neil Hibbert was last seen chasing the second group at the A.41 island, and at the same point Joe Pilling-taking the easy way to the finish in Bill Brown's van.

While Gordon and Russell were busy trying to break away near Battlefield corner, misfortune had overtaken the rear part of the "caravan" following the race. About four miles before Battlefield, Jack Fletcher's works coach (which was acting as the "bonk-wagon") came to a standstill having stripped its crown wheel and pinion. This in itself was a minor disaster, as equipment and clothing belonging to a dozen or so riders was being brought along to the finish in the coach. Due to lack of motor-cycle liaison between the coach and the following cars there was a considerable delay in getting information of the breakdown to race officials.

However, it was Jack Fletcher who saved the day with rapid action, and when he received information of the incident he immediately turned the Vanguard round at Gailey cross-roads and drove back post-haste along the route in search of the missing vehicle. A couple of phone calls to the finish pin-pointed the location of the coach, and it was eventually found drawn into a side road some four miles north of Battlefield.

Here the situation was reviewed, and putting the needs of the riders first, all the equipment was put into the boot and back seats of the car, the ambulance man from the coach collected, and they all returned along the route once more to the finish, arriving there at 5-5 p.m., only a couple of hours after the last finisher, which, considering the distances involved and the initial delay, was a fine job of work.

Thanks a lot, Jack, especially as your original offer of the coach to follow the event largely made the race possible, and it was deserving of a much better fate than this.

And a final word from the President, who wishes to convey his personal thanks to all motorists for their assistance, especially in the latter parts of the race where checking and marshalling arrangements were outside the scope of cyclists.

OFFICIAL RESULT.

1	L. Wilson (Leeds Kirkgate C.C.)	4-42-00
2	B. J. Rosser (Coventry C.C.)	at Wheel
3	J. J. Perks (Earleswood R & P. C. C.)	Hlf lgth
4	R. W. Bowes (Solihull C.C.)	Same Time
5	G. Gordon (Solihull C. C.)	do.
6	K. Parrott (Coventry C.C.)	do.
7	A. G. Hayley (Huddersfield R.C.)	do.
8	C. Charlton (Solihull C.C.)	do.
9	V. Grieves (Catterick Wheelers)	do.
10	A. S. Brittain (Catterick Wheelers)	do.
11	G. A. Ames (Concorde R.C.C.)	do.
12	M. J. Sommerlad (Oxonian C. C.)	do.

13	B. J. Langston (Concorde R.C.C.)	do.
14	A. Heys (Coventry Meteor C.C.)	4-43-45
15	M. Matthews (Kingston Pheonix C.C.)	4-56-00
16	P. G. Towers (Concorde R. C. C.)	4-56-10
17	K. E. Marsden (Manchester Wheelers)	Same Time
18	J. A. Bailey (Nelson Wheelers)	do.
19	D. Brooke (Monckton C.C.)	4-58-00
20	D. J Tranter (Coventry Meteor C.C.)	Same Time
21	D. Milsom (Monckton C. C.)	do.
22	B. Thomas (Actonia C. C.)	4-59-30
23	F. Garvey (Sth Manchester R. C. C.)	5-02-15
24	P. Oldham (Buxton C.C.)	5-05-25
25	L. T. Gibbons (Coventry Meteor C.C.)	5-10-20

Team Prize Winners-Solihull C.C.

Alan Bannister-Editor

In September the Pursuit Team again reached the finals in the National Championship but was surprisingly defeated by the Norwood Paragon. This defeat was very disappointing because the team comprised, Alan Newton, Alan Geldard, Alan Danson and Don Smith, four Olympic riders, and continued the failures of earlier years when in theory we should have been convincing winners.

In September 1953 the Committee expressed its congratulations to the road men for their recent Individual and Team successes in massed-start events.

In October, 1953 the resignation of Councillor Harry Sharp was received with regret.

Somewhat surprisingly in November, 1953 it was noted that the year had passed without any commemoration of the Club's 70th year, but it was decided that no further action would be taken.

On a purely historical note the Time Trials Secretary had reported that a catering licence would be necessary to provide and sell tea for non-riders at the finish of the Open 100.

The Committee noted that the Ministry of Transport were against the promotion of Team Time-Trials on Open road. The major disappointment of 1953 had been that for the first year since 1944 we had failed to win a National Track Championship.

A loss of £297 had been made on the year 1953 as the profit on the Race Meet of only £30 had been insufficient to cover expenditure in promotion of Open and Club events.

1954 began on an economy note with the Journal reduced in size due to the absence of profits from recent Race Meets but activity continued at a high level among the younger Time Trialists, Harry Whitehouse being outstanding, winning the Handicap in four successive Time Trials at Easter and also winning the team prize in the Yorkshire R.C. 50 supported by Ken Marsden and Don McCreery. This was an unusual success in an area noted for its dominance in the Time Trial scene.

At the other end of the scale Life Members, Jack Bell, Fred Currie, Arthur Guildford and Jimmy Taylor reached their Golden Jubilee of Manchester Wheelers' Membership, an unbroken membership of 200 years in total, all four members having joined in the same year of 1904. Few clubs could have claimed an achievement of this nature.

The successful Racing Season continued with two of our members representing Great Britain in the Worlds Championships, Reg Harris in the Individual Sprint and Len Jackson in the Professional Road Race.

Harry Whitehouse added to his Time Trialling successes by winning the Manchester Centre Massed Start Championship.

A crowd of 5,000 supported the 62nd Race Meet. The sale of tickets before the day showed a very steep fall, and probably reflected the fact that there would no longer be a capacity gate. The prospect of there being no racing if conditions were wet now made pre-Saturday sales of tickets a useless proposition and coincided with a sharp fall in interest in track racing from the enthusiasm of the early '50s.

Harry Hardcastle won the Muratti Cup with Alan Geldard in second place.

The Open '12' also showed a decline in the number of entrants, on this occasion there being a field of only 80, of whom 74 started.

Harry Hardcastle was second in the National Massed-Start Championship.

Our Pursuit Team which included Olympic representatives in Newton, Smith, Geldard, reached the semi-finals of the National Championships which were however cancelled due to disputed interpretations of Rules.

Reg Harris won the World Professional Sprint Championship for the fourth time, following his victories in 1949, 1950 and 1951.

After the highly successful but somewhat riotous Smoker and Prize Distribution of the year before, it was decided to hold a Prize Presentation Dinner at the Waldorf Hotel, Manchester (male only).

63 members and friends attended the Closing Run at the Rose and Crown Hotel, Knutsford.

Although the Club had enjoyed a successful year in all forms of cycling activity the gathering financial clouds had become more ominous with a loss on the year of £361 which included a loss of £140 on the Race Meet.

The current cash surplus of the Manchester Wheelers' Club and its Subsidiary, Manchester Wheelers' Sports Ltd., had now declined to around £500 and the possibilities of finding a sponsor for the Race Meet had now to be explored.

A gloomy atmosphere prevailed at the Annual General Meeting held in February, 1955 when it was proposed that a Race Meet be held on the second Saturday in July, 1955. Although the proposition was eventually adopted it was only after considerable discussion that the Race Meet should be abandoned unless a Sponsor could be found.

It was found impossible to obtain a Sponsor for the Race Meet but nevertheless the promotion went ahead.

President for 1955 was Alan Bannister, a worthy occupant of our highest office.

THE PRESIDENT.

Our President this year is Alan Bannister. He is known to all, both for his successes in the sport and for his regular support of Club activities. He lives as he raced-bustling, impatient, and always ready to snatch the initiative. His inherent drive and administrative ability, coupled with his vast experience in the track side of racing and a genuine interest in road racing make him a very capable President.

His racing successes include: three times British Sprint Champion and six times British Tandem Sprint Champion. He rode for England in both London and Helsinki in the Olympic Games and in the Empire Games in New Zealand. Frequently, being a Champion does not go hand in hand with popularity-just the reverse usually-but Alan's genial manner and willingness to help in any way at any time has made him just one of the boys. On Club

Runs, which he supports regularly, he can always be relied upon to provide some divergence in the shape of a dramatic stack-up from which he escapes unscathed or a tear-up in which he more than holds his own.

During the last two years he has edited the *Journal*, successfully colouring it with his own personality; and last season also saw him as our Path Team Manager, a job he is fitting in with his official duties this year.

Altogether a good Wheeler. If you want to find him, be a Wheeler yourself; you'll find him on any kind of occasion-track, road or club run.

D. McCreery - Editor.

National Service for H.M. Forces continued with the inevitable result that a number of our promising riders were lost due to call-up.

Four issues of the *Journal* were to be made during the year under the editorship of Don McCreery.

The Race Meet produced a profit of £117 against the previous year's loss of £150. This profit was possible due to the adoption of various economy measures assisted by increased advertisements in the programmes and a number of contributions from Club members.

The weather was perfect but the gate of 4,500 was disappointing.

THE RACE MEET. 9th July, 1955.

The Day the Wheelers did not win an Oscar.

The Race Meet this year was of considerable importance to the Club. In the first instance there had been doubt as to whether it was a wise risk to take in view of the general decline of public interest and support for cycle race meetings. A trend which is National and not only local. Also there was the threat of bad weather which after the summer of 1954 was very prominent in the minds of most people. Coupled with this is the question of engaging professionals, or being content with leading amateurs. But the relative importance of these considerations depends largely upon the extent of commercial sponsorship that can be obtained from the trade.

This summer then was to be a testing period for the Race Meet and, as events turned out, all fears were justified. We had the sponsor, we had the weather, we had the professionals; but we did not have the crowds.

The programme itself was attractive with the "Pros", Reg Harris, Sid Patterson, Arie Van Vliet and Cyril Peacock, along with popular amateurs such as Sheil, Brotherton, Thompson, Tighe and Harrison, with the Club represented by Danson and Newton. The advertising before the day was good, and no improvement of any magnitude can be expected on the present available budget.

So it was when July 9th dawned a fine dry day, that I went to Fallowfield hoping for a sign of the long-awaited revival of interest that is so desperately needed, but it was not to be while the ground was not empty, neither was it full. It was a pity as the meeting proved to be excellently managed and full of interest. Not a moment dragged and while the crowds did not fill the stadium I have no doubt whatsoever that not one single corner escaped the continual and everlasting patter from Oscar. Here in the announcer the Club had a very sharp break with tradition. In the past there has been a smooth trace of Oxford with the announcements. This time there were no announcements, just a perpetual yammer from which the astute were able to select the relevant items that seemed to have crept in by accident. Some folks liked him, some folks loathed him, but-and here lies the answer-no one will come to hear him, whilst many will stay away so as not to hear him. Farewell, Oscar.

In the odd moments that one was not discussing Oscar with someone or other, there were other things to attract or distract the attentions. "Things" like Fred Currie's straw hat, that was bought way back in the years and today was the first time that the weather had been fit for its use. Johnny Berry banging about looking like a man selling ice cream, and Jimmy Taylor resplendent in new boots.

Of the racing, little can be said that hasn't already been said. The ladies' event was the annual flop and the professionals proved that showmanship is still their biggest asset. The Muratti seemed to lack fire and while Middleton was a fine winner, the race did not excite as I remember it in the days of the red shale track. We are left with the thought that perhaps the public is right and cycle racing is not the sport that it used to be.

In the words of Benny Foster O.B.E.: "The time has come when to carry on is to go no further.

D. McCreery, Editor.

(Editor's Note - The 'Oscar' referred to was Jimmy Savile, later to become a famous disc jockey).

In the N.C.U. Manchester Centre Track Championships the Club took first four places in the Sprint - Jim Ewart, Alan Walkden, Alan Partington and P. Holden, whilst the Individual Pursuit was won by Alan Walkden and the 10 mile by Alan Danson with Jeff Thomas in second place.

In strong contrast to the previous year there were 171 entries for the Open '12'. There were 95 starters from a field of 100, with 60 finishers. The National Team Pursuit Championship again eluded us, despite the very strong team which we had available. On this occasion we were beaten in the semi-finals by the Polytechnic C.C.

Further laurels on the track were won when Alan Danson broke National Records at 1,000 metres and half mile.