



## Newsletter April 2026

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### Contents

- News in Brief
- Wednesday Evening Time Trials
- Mallorca Training Camp
- First aid course
- Third party insurance
- Annual club dinner
- Cyclocross at Milton
- Club shirts
- Chris Hopkins
- Introductory Group Rides

### NEWS IN BRIEF

With the wet winter now firmly behind us it's time look forward to warmer weather with no rubbing mudguards to distract us and midweek evening 'top up' training rides no longer need to be confined to the bedroom or garage.

And to kick start the summer riding season, in the last week of March many of us joined Tim Williams on the Perfect Condition Mallorca Training Camp 2026. It was a real success. Tim Williams of Perfect Condition has kindly penned a summary of the week for the newsletter. A big thanks to Tim for organising such a

successful week.

And don't forget the Wednesday Time Trial rides kicked off on April 8<sup>th</sup> at Bottisham – a good time to see if your winter training regime paid off. See the web site for up-to-date details for future time trials.

Mallorca week was largely incident free but there were a few scrapes in the gravel and a fall due to a broken derailleur hanger but thankfully nothing major. If there had been it may have tested our newly trained first aiders. In November 2025, several enthusiastic wood-be-first aiders attended a first aid course developed specifically for the cycling community. Will Lockhart, the organiser, has kindly written a short piece on the day's training. Take aways for the day are a recommendation for cyclists to carry a rudimentary first aid kit and to have access to a defibrillator at organised events such as time trials. Indeed, yours truly had the need to be patched up on a recent club ride. I was grateful



to Rosie (ST16) who had a small bag of plasters on hand to tidy up what could have been a messy ride home.

Talking of accidents, the Committee discussed the subject of cycle insurance both at club level and at the member level. More on this later in the newsletter but for now, in today's litigious society and whilst not mandatory, the Club encourages you to hold your own third-party insurance to protect you in the rare event that you are presented with a claim.

On a more positive note, at the end of January the Club held the annual dinner and awards ceremony at Selwyn College. The evening was a huge success with good food and great company. Beverley Caruthers and Bunny Upton ensured the evening went smoothly with the award ceremony and a cycling themed quiz. Do read Beverley's article later in the newsletter.

In January this year, James Ward and a few other CCC members together with Cambridge Junior Cycling Club assisted in the organisation of the Milton Cyclocross event at Milton Country Park. James has captured his enthusiasm for this format of racing in his article later in this newsletter. Do make sure you read it and it may spark something in you to fit knobbly tyres and join in the fun.

At the ST16 Christmas Party in December, the subject was raised as to why more members don't wear a club shirt for the Sunday group rides. I have written a short piece on this later in the newsletter – I would really like to hear your views as to why you do or don't 'wear-the-shirt' on your rides.

And to close this newsletter, Chris James has kindly written a note in celebration of his good friend Chris Hopkins who many of you may know passed last June at the too young age of 66. He played an active part in the club in the 90's and was still cycling right up to the end of his days.

Lastly, if you have any further suggestions to improve the layout or content of the newsletter, please do let me know.

Thanks for reading.

Geoff



## MALLORCA TRAINING CAMP 2026

BY TIM WILLIAMS

Following the success of last year's training camp this year's was almost a carbon copy. We went to the same hotel and used the same transfer company, but we went a week earlier due to Easter.

A lot of the same people came, but there were several new faces and several who were back after coming in previous years. As always, however, it was a fantastic group. The atmosphere over breakfast and dinner each day was just lovely and all the groups on the road were a joy to ride with.

The fact that so many people return to cycle in Mallorca year after year is a testament to how great the cycling there is. It's big enough to have every type of terrain and small enough that they are all within reach. There are enough roads that you can ride for miles without seeing a car or even another cyclist, yet you are never quite isolated in the middle of nowhere. I've been there more times than I can remember, yet I still find new roads to ride on.



My aim for the camp is that everyone has a great time, rides a little more than they thought that they could, and comes home tired, happy and healthy. I structure the camp to help people do that by mixing the length and terrain of the rides. I keep my fingers crossed that the weather doesn't get in the way and this time, with rain on just one day, we could follow the plan.

Each day we set off as four groups. Whilst some people chose the same group each day others



were flexible, and the with the routes heading for the same area there was often scope to swap groups during the day. Mobile phones, a WhatsApp group and GPS make it much easier for everyone to keep track of the groups.

It seems that every cyclist loves a café stop and the photos in the camp album suggest that there were plenty of those to enjoy – both during the rides and on return to base.

I would like to thank everyone who came. I feel so fortunate that everyone is so thoughtful and considerate. It's a privilege that you came to my camp.

Finally, I'd like to thank Julian Newton, the man in the Merc, for being everywhere.

Tim Williams



## FIRST AID COURSE FOR CYCLISTS NOVEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup> 2025

WILL LOCKHART REPORTS



First Aid for Cyclists Level 2 (VTQ)

**QUALIFICATION SPECIFICATION**  
QUALIFICATION NUMBER: PRO/74/FAFC

This Qualification is Endorsed by an Awarding Organisation Regulated by Ofqual



The club organised a first aid course, tailored for cyclists, and delivered by a company called ProTrainings, which took place last November. There were eleven students, ten from CCC and one from CJCC, and our instructor, Stuart, is a qualified first responder, so I certainly felt that we were getting good instruction from someone who has to put the theory into action on a regular basis. The course took the entire day to deliver - starting around 10am and finishing around 4pm, with a break for lunch, and took place in one of the upstairs rooms in St. Andrew's Church Hall in Chesterton.

This was my first aid course, so I really had very little idea what to expect. I turned up thinking perhaps that we would sit and listen whilst some theory was explained to

us, then we'd go onto some more practical work. In fact, it was much more of a two-way process, with Stuart asking us questions, then using our answers to expand on the current topic. He also had a refreshingly straight talking approach to the subject, several times he made the point that in a healthy human, blood goes around the body, and air goes in and out, and that if you encounter someone for whom that was not true - bleeding, or not breathing, then they were in need of first aid.

The topics we covered on the course were:

- What to carry in a very basic first aid kit
- How to put someone into the recovery position
- How to do a basic assessment of someone who is unresponsive, to check if they're breathing or not
- How to administer CPR (chest compressions)
- How to use an automatic external defibrillator
- How to deal with someone experiencing hypovolemic shock
- How to deal with someone who is choking
- How to remove someone's cycle helmet without moving the head (if a spinal injury is suspected)

We also talked around the subject, particularly in the morning - considering why you would give first aid, what might make you reluctant to give first aid, not putting yourself at risk, and not going beyond what you've been trained to do. I think one thing that really helped on the course was that most of us knew many of the other people in the room, which made some of the practical work a little easier, for example when practicing how to put each other into the recovery position.

At the end of the day there was a short exam (multiple choice questions) on what we'd been taught. Everyone passed, which means we all walked away with a level 2 Vocational Technical Qualification (VTQ). We get a certificate which is valid for three years from the date of the course, after which time a refresher course is recommended. You also get access to online training material whilst the certificate is valid.



There were a few technical gremlins. The course can be delivered without requiring a smart phone, or internet connection, but it's a little easier if there is working Wifi (or good mobile coverage). Unfortunately, the church hall's Wifi had decided to play up that day, and some of us found mobile reception to be very poor. I think we were all able to register online, but the exam had to be done literally old school, with pen and paper. Stuart also wanted to show us a video on YouTube, but without Wifi we had to resort to using someone else's phone as a mobile Wifi hotspot.

Finally, one practical thing we could all think about doing is to carry basic first aid kit. As Stuart put it: you carry a puncture repair kit to mend holes in a tyre, but what about mending holes in you? He suggested what might go in a very minimal kit:

- Thin gloves - nitrile or even just a pair of the ones you can get at petrol stations
- One (or more) wound dressing(s)
- A survival blanket

Would I say the course was particularly tailored to cyclists? I'm not sure I would - almost all the training was first aid that might need to be administered in any setting. That's not a criticism, just an observation. I am very grateful to have gained a first aid qualification. I sincerely hope I will never need to put it into practice, but the course has given me some confidence that if the worst did happen, I would know what to do.

### THIRD PARTY INSURANCE BY GEOFF ARNOLD

Firstly, before you read this, I need to issue a caveat that I am not an insurance expert, and this article is written in the spirit of bringing the subject of insurance to your attention for you to carry out your own research on the subject.

Firstly, at the basic level there are two types of insurance, one that provides cover should your bike be damaged howsoever caused or someone steals it. The second type of insurance is third party insurance which is if you cause damage to another person or property.

The club is not particularly interested whether you have the former insurance. That said, such cover is available usually as part of your household contents insurance with cover provided IF the bike is damaged or stolen when stored at your home. Should you require insurance for when you are out riding or it is parked at a café, and is stolen, this type of insurance is usually quite pricey – in the order of £200-300 for a year.

The important insurance and one that you are recommended to have by the Club is third party insurance. This will provide protection for you should anyone try and blame you and your bike for causing an accident or damage to them or their property. Importantly, the cover will defend you even if there is a spurious claim and the damage or accident was not your fault. There are again many providers of this insurance – as an example British cycling 'Core' membership includes this insurance cover as part of the membership fee of £52/year (as of April 2026). Equally your own household insurance may include this a part of your premium – please do check as you wouldn't wish to be paying twice if you don't need to.

Naturally the choice is yours as to whether you take insurance and indeed what type of insurance and level of cover will give you the peace of mind when you are out riding.



As far as club insurance is concerned, the cover is limited when it comes to club rides. Guests who are looking to join the club, can try up to two rides without joining the club. For these two rides third party insurance cover is provided by the club. Outside of club rides, the Club also provides third party cover for organisers of events such as time trials. If in doubt as to whether you are covered for a specific task, please contact a club official.

**MILTON CYCLOCROSS,  
SUNDAY 25 JANUARY 2026,  
MILTON COUNTRY PARK  
REPORT BY JAMES WARD**

Cyclocross seems to be one of the more extreme forms of cycle racing, involving putting too many people on an unsuitable bike on an unsuitable course and trying to go as fast as possible without crashing (much). Each year our club joins forces with Cambridge Junior Cycling Club to help run a cyclocross event at Milton Country



*Footage provided by Bart Hommels of the Vets 50+ mass start at Milton Country Park, with Cambridge CC (black kit version for obvious reasons) into the first corner in front (but not for long!).*

Park. This year's edition formed the 10<sup>th</sup> of 11 events this season as part of the Eastern Cyclo-Cross League, which runs from September to February. Each event across the Eastern Region comprises a series of age-related races throughout the day, starting with a very short race for the Under 8s at 09:15, all the way to the over 70's category, with the final race of the day for seniors and juniors in the mid-afternoon. Intriguingly the most popular category is the age 50-60s.

Over the season, each course is known for different characteristics. Some are fast and flowy. Some have a lot of steps to carry your bike up. Some tend to be muddy. Some are bumpy. Some tend to have a lot of slow corners and accelerations. Milton is notoriously difficult – typically muddy and slippery, with sharp banks to use max-power to accelerate over, while trying to maintain rear wheel grip and avoid wheelspins or sliding off around the corners. This is a course which takes its toll on the lower back and requires a lot of fitness and skill to go fast on. Of course, you can just walk round if you feel like it, though – and sometimes walking is faster!

This year's event was supported by many volunteers from Cambridge CC, with our own Bart Hommels as the Event Organiser. Each year we tend to spend a day or two preparing the course – finding new routes through the trees, adding new technical features (often off-camber slippery banks or a steep descent), removing rotten trees, blowing the leaves away,

strimming nettles, and designing and taping the whole course. On the day we need a small army of marshals and volunteers who typically have an easy job of just shouting encouragement, as there is no traffic to worry about (apart from the occasional stray dog or child!) and the course is already marked with tape so riders will do well to get lost. The park must be returned to normal at the end of the day, so all the poles and course tape is then taken down and put away in storage for next year.

My event was slightly more exciting than I'd hoped for. It started well with a perfect start and into the first corner in front (a huge advantage as you can then dictate the pace). It didn't last long though as for some reason my tyre pressures were way too low (somewhere around 12psi), and I crashed in the first minute, where my tubular tyres folded over and threw me off. This was followed by a really quite spectacular crash a little later on, with a similar cause, and being thrown through a stake, off the course, through the edge of a field on my back and back under the tape again and coming to rest back on the course, right in front of the rider behind me, who said "Oh hello again!" as he swerved past. Crashes are usually funny, although it really is difficult to get your head back into the game when your heart rate is already at 190bpm. The best I can describe cyclocross is it's like a time trial on ice but with endless sprints, trying to reserve enough brain capacity to deploy any technical skills you might have, whilst maintaining as much momentum as you dare.

Cyclocross is a brilliant spectator sport. It takes part on a short course so you can see riders for long periods if you stand in the right place, usually for 6-8 laps. There are thrills and spills to witness, race tactics, occasionally sharp elbows to lean on someone in your way, and occasional demonstrations of extraordinary skill. And you never know what will happen until it's over.

Next year's event is likely to be at the same time, so please keep an eye out for it – come and volunteer for an hour or so (no experience necessary) or just come and cheer us on!

Contact me, our Club Offroad Secretary ([offroad@cambridge-cycling-club.org.uk](mailto:offroad@cambridge-cycling-club.org.uk)), if you're interested in cyclocross, gravel or other offroad activities. We run occasional free training on Saturdays at Milton Country Park, for adults. CJCC (<https://www.miltoncountrypark.org/cjcc>) runs excellent coaching for 5–16-year-olds at MCP on Saturday afternoons during termtime. Thoroughly recommended and any bike can be ridden, ideally with wider slightly knobbly tyres.

## TO WEAR OR NOT WEAR

BY GEOFF ARNOLD

As noted earlier, the Committee is keen for riders to wear the club jersey on Sunday rides. Currently there are usually around 20% of riders wearing the jersey. Clearly, it's an individual thing with people choosing to ride what they feel comfortable wearing. From a club perspective, wearing the club jersey promotes the club and makes us recognisable on the road. It helps build a clear identity and can help attract new members who want to belong to a successful club. It also brings team cohesion and comradery and helps identify instantly who is on our ride.

One thought was to have everyone wear club kit on the first Sunday of the month. Is this something you would support? Please let me know through the newsletter email address. What would make you wear the jersey?



As a few examples of how clubs really promote the jersey, you will have often seen on the roads around here members of Walden Velo. They put the jersey at the front of its web site and photo suite (<https://www.waldenvelo.com>).

Similarly for those of us who were in Mallorca this year, we shared the hotel with members of VC Walcott from Bath who all turned up in their club colours (<https://vc-walcot.cc>).

Indeed, in Mallorca last year we managed it. You can see how great it looks.

If you'd like to own a prestigious Cambridge CC club jersey, please contact the clothier Ken Miller through the web site.

## CHRIS "HOPPY" HOPKINS

BY CHRIS JAMES

My wonderful friend Hoppy died at the age of 66, in June last year after a brief battle with a very aggressive cancer.

Hoppy was a mainstay of the Cambridge cycling club in the 1990's, and continued cycling with club members and friends, both on and off road up to a few months before his death.



James Ward writes: I just wanted to add a few words to say a big thank you to Chris James for his beautiful article on Hoppy, and to say how much I miss him too. The photo below was taken in 1998 on one of our trips to the mountains. Hoppy in his element.

I first met Hoppy on a club run in the early 90's when I threw a banana skin at him; I didn't mean to I threw it at the verge but somehow, he got in the way. We both laughed heartily and a great friendship was born. Club runs were always fun when Hoppy was out, he had an endless supply of jokes, and anecdotes, which were always essential at the numerous puncture stops, and café stop which was always Reed in those days. He could make up a limerick on the spot, though I can't for the life of me remember what he rhymed with the old gent of Furneux Pelham. His was also a lovely wheel to follow, and he taught me many a thing about group riding.

It wasn't all quips though Hoppy was also quick on the bike, he could easily hold his own on the chain-gang, was always at the pointy end of the annual reliability ride road race and got below 21 minutes for a 10 in the days before tribars and aero helmets. He represented the club in many road races, wining quite a few points along the way and was particularly proud of winning the Ugley Men's Road Race, and if his palmaris got a little better with the telling then so what, he was particularly fond of the saying "the older I get the better I was".

Off the saddle Hoppy worked most of his life in electronics, though he also had stints as a bike courier, and labourer, but his great passion was music. He played bass guitar in more bands than I can remember, always with that enigmatic anonymity only bass players can pull off. One band he was in with his mate Demi got a write up in the local news which described the band looking like two "Iggy Pops who had kidnapped Harry Potter", I don't think he was the Harry Potter. He combined his love of music with his flair for carpentry and electronics by making his own recording studio complete with a very fancy looking mixing desk.

Back on the bike, though he moved to Bluntisham many years ago he continued cycling with club members and other friends. His bike was always immaculate, it's fair to say somewhat more immaculate than his own attire, to the extent that on a training camp in Mallorca he took the bike into the shower to ensure he kept up the standards. Riding with Hoppy was always a joy, whether it was mountain biking along muddy tracks in mid Wales in mid-winter,

getting ridiculously wet and muddy, or descending endless alpine passes in high summer, shooting the breeze whilst continuously swapping the lead. Thinking back I realise now he had a particular strategy for his long rambling jokes, and stories; when mountain biking he'd start his tale at the top of a particularly knarly descent, on the road he's start the story at the bottom or a long arduous climb, either way you'd have to stay with him to hear punchline - no easy task! There are so many stories I could tell of Hoppy, but sadly not enough space to do them justice here. Next time we out though remind me to tell you a few - breaking out of a French hospital, and the slowest car crash in the world are favourites.

In 2014 Hoppy brought a dilapidated house in the south of France in the foothills of the Pyrenees along with a couple of friends. I shall best remember Hoppy sitting in the garden that house drinking a beer or two, reminiscing about the long ride we've just been on into the hills, and so many rides we've been on with so many friends - Hoppy days indeed. As many others who knew Hoppy well have said, I miss him dearly and think about him every day. Ride on Hops.

## INTRODUCTORY GROUP RIDES

BY WILL LOCKHART

The summer introductory rides are again planned for 2026. They depart from Cambridge Station at 10.00 and are about 20 miles in length. Pace will be to suit all riders with an optional coffee stop *en route* or at the end.



The first ride is scheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup>. In the past we've had good feedback from those attending and with some riders signing up for club membership and have joined the club rides. A special thank-you to the club members who helped last year; it makes a big difference having sufficient people at the front and back of the groups as well as riders to provide a bit of advice about riding and the club in general.

Please spread the word to anyone who is interested in group riding and potentially joining the club.

Please message Will Lockhart direct on his WhatsApp to sign up to volunteer or send a note to the newsletter email address in the heading.