

CHAPTER SIX

Sponsorship

The Club had been in decline for many years both as a cycling and racing club but the events of early 1979 were to lead to a revival in both cycling and racing successes which was to surpass all previous achievements in these spheres, other than the Race Meet glory and the Harris World Championships.

There is no doubt that the Club will forever owe a debt of gratitude to President John Dawson and his Committee for their initiative in redeeming its fortunes. Faced with a situation in which all forms of activity were at an extremely low ebb they set about the first essential task of increasing membership and activity both in Club runs and Club time trials.

Matters came to a head at a Committee Meeting held in January 1979 when resignations were received from two of our most successful riders, Ian Donohue and Terrie Riley who were leaving to join sponsored Clubs.

Dave Aston asked for financial support for our top riders but was informed that money was not available, and after discussion it was agreed that Dave Aston would present a policy for the future of the Club particularly with regard to Club sponsorship.

The Committee Meeting in February 1979 was the first to be held at the Peel Moat Recreation Centre, Heaton Moor. It had been felt for some time that the standard at Wilbraham Community Rooms did not encourage attendance and presented a poor image to newcomers to the Club. It was therefore agreed to hold a weekly Clubnight at Peel Moat and to hold there a Monthly Committee Meeting for which a separate room could be hired at a fee of £1.40 per night.

At Peel Moat, apart from the normal range of athletic facilities, there were the benefits of a private committee room, a storeroom for bikes, bar and social facilities.

This venue was chosen after an extensive search for new premises by that year's President John Dawson.

It was agreed that the recent hard backed Journal comprising several pages was excellent in content and appearance and efforts were to be made to continue a similar publication. At the same Meeting Dave Aston submitted a plan of action and a sample letter to members seeking donations or sponsorship.

Dave had some rather bright ideas regarding sponsorship which were circulated and discussed by the Committee.

He also explained how five of the top Manchester road riders from three different Clubs had transferred their loyalties. Four (including one from the Manchester Wheelers') had gone to a local sponsored Club, whilst the other had gone to a Midlands-based sponsored racing Club which was attracting membership from all parts of the country. He also quoted an extract from a cycling magazine which showed that the majority of riders in Star Trophy Events and Great Britain Teams were members of sponsored clubs. It was pointed out that prize money (which could be won only by the successful rider) would hardly cover the expense of participating in ten selected races for the Star Trophy Competition in all parts of the country. Additionally selected riders had to pay their own expenses from home to Airport of embarkation for B.C.F. International Events.

The publicity sub-committee of Dave Aston, Damian Whittaker and John Purdy also discussed the whole publicity field which led to a poster campaign in schools and youth clubs advertising the club's facilities to young riders.

Most important of all Gordon Buchanan and Dave Aston agreed to look after junior and schoolboy members on Sunday Club runs. The reappearance of Sunday runs on a fully organised basis was to have a most beneficial influence on the recruitment and retention of young members.

In general it appeared that Club members were in favour of sponsorship as a means of retaining, attracting and supporting successful riders and that the soliciting of individual donations was not a suitable means of raising funds.

President John Dawson had sent to all members a letter seeking either donations or sponsorship, and arising from this a letter was received from Jack Fletcher, one of our Life Members, offering sponsorship of the Club through his Company, Trumanns Steel Ltd. A sub-committee was formed to discuss the sponsorship after it had been agreed that Trumanns Steel would give financial support at a level equal to that enjoyed by the most successful Sponsored Clubs.

A Special General Meeting was held on the 2nd July, 1979 at the Gateway Hotel, East Didsbury, at which a decision was taken to enter into a Sponsorship Contract, the result of which was to have an impact on the Club's future equal to any event which had previously taken place in its history.

It was a matter of great pride to John Dawson that under his Presidency the upturn in the Club's fortunes took place and led to Sponsorship and the great revival in the Club's activities and unparalleled success in all aspects of cycle racing.

The association between Dave Aston and Jack Fletcher which was necessary to the Sponsorship was to bring highly successful results. The Club's racing strength had fallen to one first category rider only, and although news of the sponsorship in local press had led to comment in cycling circles there was a certain amount of amusement that the Wheelers' with its old fashioned name and image would make little impact and even Dave himself felt that we should possibly make a change of name and colours. However, the Sponsor would have none of this on sentimental grounds alone and felt that with reasonably good fortune racing success would be forthcoming and create an image which would greatly assist a successful youth policy.

For the sponsor it was at least his third attempt at reviving the Club's fortunes when they had fallen to a low ebb, but for Dave it was a new experience to find someone to share his enthusiasm and also to provide him with the material support which was necessary.

With the Racing Season virtually over and only Hill Climbing Events remaining in which to make an immediate impact, Dave was quick to make good use of this support. Having helped the reigning Hill Climb Champion, Gareth Armitage to his earliest successes he was able to persuade Gareth to join the club in time for the first Hill Climbs of 1979.

The first sponsorship Committee Meeting held in September 1979 at Peel Moat indicated that Dave Aston was actively forming a team of promising Hill Climb riders to back up Gareth Armitage in the hope of winning the National Hill Climb Team Championship, but although the Chairman agreed that the formation of a top team was of great importance he pointed out that the Club was progressing at the bottom end of the scale with new schoolboy recruits. However, there was a minority of opinion that the Club's reputation might suffer from Dave's efforts to form a successful racing team.

Only one claim had been received for the best all-rounder road championship and only one for the senior road race title but this was soon to change in the months which lay ahead.

The 1979 racing season ended with the winning of National Awards at senior level for the first time in over 14 years, Gareth Armitage won the Bronze Medal in the National Hill Climb Championship and was supported by Brian Lowe and Steve Wilkinson in winning the Hill Climb Team Championship, our first ever victory in this event and our first R.T.T.C. Championship since 1948 (Cyril Cartwright's 25 miles).

The 97th Annual General Meeting held in October 1979 at the Gateway Hotel, East Didsbury was in many ways a repeat of the year 1945/1946. New enthusiasm was evident with optimism that the golden years of the late 40's and early 50's were quickly going to return.

On the accounts side there was a profit for the year of £190 principally due to an increase in subscriptions of over £100 and of approximately £50 in donations.

Forty new members had enrolled during the year, the majority of them being schoolboys resulting from the poster recruitment campaign. Ten members had been struck off for nonpayment of subscriptions and there had been five resignations, some of them due to the members concerned being opposed to sponsored clubs.

Membership had now increased to 127, of whom 49 were life members.

Although the Sponsorship Contract was to begin from the 1st January, 1980 the main spade work had already been done in the latter half of 1979. A new Editor had been found (Fred Towers) who had carried out efficiently and with enthusiasm the publication of a first class Journal. Dave Aston had organised one of the best Annual Dinner & Prize Presentations of recent years, and whilst the Race Meet had not been held due to the condition of Fallowfield track the Saddleworth Festival Two-day Road Race, the Alexander Milnes Vets Road Race and a Trumanns Steel Criterium for Pro's and Amateurs held in Alexandra Park, Oldham, kept the Club's name to the fore as promoters.

Throughout its history there have been many members who have given life-long service to the Club and attained the highest office of President. There have also been countless other members of equal loyalty who contributed to the Club's success in their own quiet way - gatemen at the Race Meet, checkers and marshals in the Open Road Events, and generally to carry out whatever job the Club required of them. One of these members was Harold Haynes, a timber merchant in Moss Side, who was famous for his adverts of "Timber without knot-holes" and his death at 93 in 1979 probably ended a record length of membership. He joined the Club in 1909 and had continuous membership of over 70 years at the time of his death.

At a Committee Meeting held in November, 1979 the first signs of strife arising out of the Sponsorship Contract became evident when letters were read from five members of the Club complaining that Dave Aston and Jack Fletcher were acting in concert to offer inducements to top riders to join the Manchester Wheelers' Club.

Both members stated that any offers which had been made related only to the reimbursement of expenses for travelling and equipment, and on this basis the committee decided to take no further action unless the complainants substantiated their claims personally.

The sponsors indicated that they were prepared to review the question of their sponsorship if there was substantial opposition to the attempts being made to establish the Manchester Wheelers' as a top racing Club, particularly so as tangible benefits for other Club activities from the Sponsorship included the purchase of racing and touring

equipment, stop watch and typewriter and an issue of Club jerseys to all members wishing to make use of same were proposed under the sponsorship scheme.

The Prize values for the season time trials were also increased from the sponsorship backing. As the beneficial effect of sponsorship on Club activity generally began to make itself felt, disquiet among some senior members seemed to disappear with one exception. One of the Club's most prominent members and Chairman of the R.T.T.C., Peter Walthall felt compelled to resign his membership in May, 1980.

A unique sense of great anticipation was experienced during the first two or three months of 1980.

Our Hill Climb Championship Team did not include riders who were in the top ranks of those competing in other branches of the sport but our new members included a number of established stars, notably two Manchester riders, Mike Williams, a Milk Race rider and former Manchester Division Champion, and his younger brother Jeff the current Manchester Division Champion and R.T.T.C. Hill Climb Champion who was expected to win International honours during the next two or three seasons. The young Manx rider Steve Joughin, winner of the Manx International twelve months previously at the age of nineteen years was also introduced to the Club by Dave Aston and together with Peter Longbottom from York, a close friend of Jeff Williams, we had probably the strongest Road Racing Club Team in the country.

Results for the first two months exceeded all expectations, no fewer than nine riders sharing seventeen wins. Outstanding was first place by Steve Joughin in the Grand Prix of Essex, a Star Trophy International Event. Steve, backed up by Jeff Williams and Pete Longbottom also won the Team Race. This notable success was followed up by Jeff Williams winning the fourth stage of the Sealink International on the York to Manchester stage finishing four minutes clear. The following day Steve Joughin won the Manx Line Grand Prix of Lancaster, a Professional/Amateur Event. There were also wins both in road racing and against the clock by Mike Williams, Brian Lowe, Peter Walthall and Malcolm Fraser.

The old adage "any publicity is good publicity" certainly became true when the contract with Trumanns Steel Ltd., was suspended for the month of May. The suspension arose from a breach of Rule for Racing 54 regarding Advertising.

The facts were that Trumanns Steel Ltd., had inserted in "Cycling" and the "Manchester Evening News" a photograph which included our top riders for 1980 together with a note of their Championships or other outstanding performances. The Club and Sponsor pleaded guilty, but in mitigation stated that it was due to over enthusiasm to advertise that the Wheelers' were "here again". The Club Committee accepted the explanation that the advertisements had been placed in good faith and accepted the penalty that during the month's suspension no clothing was to be worn displaying the Sponsors name.

Even prior to the demise of Fallowfield Track, Manchester Division riders had played little part in the winning of National Championships, with the exception of Motor-Paced Events, but all this was to change at the National Track Championships held in Leicester in July 1980.

Two riders from the St. Helens area had been introduced to the Club in the Spring and it gave immense satisfaction to have the National Sprint Champion and National Tandem Sprint Champion within our ranks once again. Terry Tinsley accomplished a magnificent week's riding in winning these two premier Track Championships as he also won the Silver Medal in the National Kilometre Championship. Dennis Lightfoot won the

Junior Kilometre Championship and also took the Silver Medal in the Junior Pursuit Championship.

Further successes followed in the Manchester Division Road Race Championships when we took first five places and there were numerous successes during the Isle of Man Week, the Harrogate Cycling Week and in other events including the winning of the Team Award in our own Open 100. Phil Rayner, still in the Schoolboy ranks, won the Bronze Medal for third place in the National Junior 25 Miles Championship. Our Open "Jones Homes Road Race", sponsored by companies controlled by members Peter Jones and Len Milnes was won by Steve Joughin with Jeff Williams third, Pete Longbottom fifth and J. McManus sixth. The final Star Trophy Event of the year - the 90 mile Tour of the Peak - was won by Jeff Williams by a clear 1½ minutes and in the same event Steve Joughin clinched victory in the season long Star Trophy Competition. The last of our members who achieved this feat was D. Harrison in 1964.

One of the most satisfactory aspects of the season had been the high level of support for Club events, one of the evening 10's attracting an entry of thirty.

Again at Club level the influx of new members led to our winning the Manchester Division B.C.F. Trophy for having enrolled the highest number of new members in the Division during 1980.

The Road Racing Season ended as it had begun in Essex with Steve Joughin winning the British Sponsored Clubs' Team Championship which was promoted in conjunction with the 26th Criterium de Vainquers 100 km Road Race. We were again the overall team winners, Pete Longbottom, Steve Joughin and Mike Williams being the successful trio.

The Hill Climb season concluded a most successful year which had seen us re-established as a top racing and active cycling club.

We were again disappointed in the National Hill Climb Championship when Jeff Williams was beaten into second place by only one fifth of a second after being knocked off his bike whilst warming up and receiving a broken nose and severe bruising.

Apart from this set-back we had Gareth Armitage in third place and Steve Joughin in fourth to take the Team Championship by a large margin.

The Annual Dinner Dance & Prize Presentation was in keeping with the highly successful racing season and 214 members and guests (probably a record) celebrated a year of sporting achievement at the Manchester United Executive Suite.

Although the Sports Company had been removed from the Registry of Companies some years ago it was only in September 1980 that it went into final liquidation, the final accounts showing a surplus balance of approximately £1,000 which was transferred to the Club account under the heading of Race Meet Reserve.

33 members were present at the 98th A.G.M. held at the Gateway Hotel, East Didsbury on the 10th November, 1980. Membership had now reached 164, of whom 47 were Life Members. 57 new members had been enrolled, 3 resigned, and 4 were struck off.

Club riders had won three National Track Championships, the National Hill Climb Team Championship, Manx International Team Trophy, British Sponsored Clubs' Team Championship and the B.C.F. Star Trophy.

The Monday Club night at Peel Moat Recreation Centre had been a worthwhile change of venue. The bright modern surroundings with a wider range of facilities for young people in general made it an attractive meeting place for our active members and for the holding of Committee Meetings. Somewhat surprisingly there was little interest in making use of the Competition or Training Rollers.

The Journal had been published regularly throughout the year with Fred Towers maintaining the high standard of the best Club Journals of yesteryear.

There had been a small loss on the year, despite the fact that subscription income had increased from £156 to £393. Unfortunately expenses in connection with the Journal had risen to £200 from £28 - printing having increased from £43 to £120. Although the aim must be to achieve a balanced budget - a successful Club may face expenditure of this amount and must find sources of income to match.

There was no adverse comment on the sponsorship, it being fair to presume that racing successes had tended to stifle criticism.

At the Committee Meeting in November, 1980, a letter was read from George Wright complimenting Fred Towers on the Club Journal. A welcome indication that the Journals are read with interest by many of our older members.

It was generally agreed that the Annual Dinner & Prize Presentation had been a great success and the innovation of a display of photographs of our racing successes throughout the year due to the efforts of Norah Fletcher was greatly appreciated.

There was little doubt that the year 1981 would see a continuation of our success. There was not quite the same sense of anticipation as there had been in 1980 and although there were doubts that we would be able to equal our road-racing success of 1980 a further influx of new established riders ensured that in Time Trials we would have an outstanding year and there would be greater numerical successes in Track Racing.

Two outstanding Time Triallists had joined our ranks. Arrangements had been made with John Woodburn, who lived in the South of England and was the B.A.R. of 1978, to join our ranks in order to make an attack upon the Lands End to John O'Groats R.R.A. Single Bicycle Record. At the other end of the scale Dave Lloyd, the Wirral rider who had been virtually unbeatable at events up to 50 miles would add wider horizons to our time trial ambitions, whilst on the track there was the ambition to win for only the second time in our history the National Team Pursuit 4,000 metres Championship. This latter challenge was to be headed by Hugh Cameron, a Teesside rider who was now working and living in Manchester and who had won a medal for this event with his previous Teesside Club. Our track presence was also increased by new members in Paul Gerrard, Mancunian holder of the Motor-Paced Championship, Darryl Webster, a highly promising Team Pursuit and short distance rider from Leicester and Hugh Cameron's Madison partner Gary Cresswell from Middlesbrough.

Jeff Williams and Steve Joughin had publicly declared their intention of living and racing in France for a large part of the 1981 season with a view to turning professional, but their possible absence was neutralised to some extent by the addition of Bob Downs, 1980 Olympic Representative and an outstanding Stage Race Rider. Although the road racing season started on a more moderate note than in 1980, Time Trials began with a "bang" with Dave Lloyd recording his first win of the season in the Ruthin R.C. '25' on the 29th of March. Dave's season totalled 31 time trials of which 30 were won, his only defeat being by Roger Iddles when Dave was suffering from food poisoning. These 31 events gave him 23 Course and 28 Event Records.

As the year progressed our list of successes continued to grow in all three types of cycle racing.

The National Track Championships at Leicester included a report by "Cycling" in their issue of the 15th August. "Manchester Wheelers' are back in the National Track championship business. This distinguished track club, now Sponsored, took the 4,000 metres Team Pursuit on Sunday, deposing the holders V.C. Europa in the Final".

Over thirty years had elapsed since we last won this Championship and two members in particular, Norman Grattage and Jack Fletcher, were more than satisfied after

their personal interest. On many occasions in the late 1940's and 1950's the Club had fielded teams which made them more than strong favourites to win but for one reason or another something always seemed to go wrong on the day, except in 1947. In 1981 the riders were free from any other competition and had trained together under Hugh Cameron's guidance for many weeks before the Championships.

Seven Golds, six Silver and five Bronze Medals, and although Terry Tinsley failed on this occasion in the Sprint Championship he was successful in the Kilometre Time Trial and Tandem Sprint. Eight riders shared in the medals tally.

Dave Lloyd and John Woodburn confirmed their supremacy at each end of the scale.

Dave captured the Hour Record at Leicester Track on the 28th July covering 45.5 kilometres (28.5 m.p.h.) on a 90.6 gear. This record was previously held by Phil Griffiths. As part of his build up during the previous weeks Dave had also taken the 5, 10 and 20 Kilometre Records.

Dave also shattered the R.T.T.C. 10 mile Competition Record, taking a massive 30 seconds off the previous best time set by current 25 mile champion Martin Pyne earlier this year. Second in the event on the Q10/19 course at Tonbridge, Kent was Sean Yates 25 miles R.T.T.C. Champion of 1980.

At the other end of the scale John Woodburn gave us our first R.R.A. Record when he successfully attacked the London to Bath and Back, recording nine hours 3 mins. 7 secs. for the 211.2 miles, beating the existing record held by Les West by 3 mins. 58 secs., an average speed of 23.3 m.p.h.

This was part of John's build up for the End-to-End. The End-to-End attempt unfortunately resulted in gallant failure. For record purposes it can be stated that John Woodburn commenced his End-to-End Record Attempt in 1981, only hours after suffering from a glandular infection, which ended in an abandonment at Blair Atholl. This attempt did, however, provide very useful experience for his success in 1982.

Only sixteen days after his unsuccessful End-to-End John Woodburn won the National Championship "24", held in conjunction with the Mersey R.C. "24" with 488 miles, a truly amazing performance and followed this up by winning the National "12" Hours with 269 miles, thereby completing a 'double' not previously achieved in the 34 years of R.T.T.C. Championship history.

Earlier in the summer we had dominated the Isle of Man International Cycling Week, Dave Lloyd winning the International Mountain Time Trial, the Open 25 and leading our winning team in the 50 km Team Time Trial. Darryl Webster, Steve Joughin, Mike Williams and Phil Rayner all had placings in the top three in a number of events, and we easily won the award for the Champion Club of the Week.

We again won the team award in our Open 100, with Jeff Williams winning our other Open promotion, the "Jones Homes Grand Prix R.R."

At Junior level, Greg Newton, Paul Harvey and Phil Rayner won the R.T.T.C. National Junior "25" Team Championship (Greg also winning the Bronze Medal).

In the Manchester Division Road Race Championships Mike Williams took the senior title and Phil Rayner the Junior title. The season drew to an end with results even more successful than in 1980 and as in 1980 the Tour of the Peak again saw one of our riders win the Star Trophy, with Bob Downs 7th position giving him an unbeatable number of points. Although Bob had been a previous winner of the Star Trophy in 1979 he had never won a Star Trophy Event prior to his winning the Zorbit Grand Prix this year. He followed up that win by winning the Classic International Tour of the Cotswolds and with high placings in the Sealink and the Milk Race was certainly the most successful and consistent Roadman in the country during 1981.

The year again ended on the highest note with the Hill Climb Season. We had more riders than ever taking part in Hill Climb events this year and the season ended with ten wins, numerous placings and ten team wins. Every event in which we had a senior team entered was won by a large margin. Will Mansfield, one of our schoolboy members, won the English Schools C.A. Hillclimb Championship and incidentally recorded a faster time than the winner of the under 18's section, Keith Reynolds, a G.B. representative in the Junior Worlds.

The greatest event of the Hill Climb season was the Championship itself, and we had 15 entries out of 120 on the Start Sheet.

The event was held on the Horseshoe Pass at Llangollen and for the first time in the history of the Hill Climb Championship the police deferred the start by two hours due to driving snow and slush on the Pass. It was third time lucky, and a memorable day as Jeff soared to the top in 9 mins. 17.0 secs. at number 60 and we waited for another sixty minutes until the reigning champion, Malcolm Elliott, at number 120, had finished. Jeff was backed up by Darryl Webster in third position and Gareth Armitage 8th to make us Champion Team for the third year running. An idea of our strength in this event can be gauged from the fact that Pete Longbottom 9th, Greg Newton 11th and Steve Joughin 13th were second team and we finished 11 riders out of 11 starters in the first 51 finishers.

Club Time Trials had again been well supported with 47 members taking part, the average number of starters per event being 20 riders.

The saddest moment of the year was the passing of T. M. Barlow at the age of 90. Tommy was probably the last of our members who could be described as "one of the great Manchester Wheelers" and certainly we shall never see his like again. An obituary appeared in the January 1982 Journal.

T. M. BARLOW

With the passing of Tommy Barlow the Club has lost one of its greatest and longest serving members.

When I spoke to him at the R.T.T.C. Championship Presentation in Derby two years ago he said to me that he had just two ambitions left. Firstly he wanted to reach the age of 90 and then to see the Manchester Wheelers' achieve its Centenary. He reached his 90th birthday in October last.

T.M.B. joined the Club in 1913 and was elected to Committee in 1915. That Committee included some outstanding administrators and officials who had guided the Club from its infancy and there is little doubt that Tommy learned much from them and he in turn as Racing Secretary and Editor set standards for many other of our officials to follow. He was small in stature but a giant in ability and certainly, during the later years of his life, was a cartoonist's dream, with his slight stooping figure, usually garbed in "plusses", and with a hand-rolled cigarette somehow affixed to his upper lip. "Cycling" described him as a human chronometer, but this description sadly underrated the man. He was a member of a number of Cycling Clubs and indeed a founder member of several. I would think that only we in the Wheelers' saw the full range of Tommy's abilities. His vision was bounded by the cycling scene, otherwise he would have achieved greater eminence on a wider stage. Highly efficient as a Road Racing Secretary, he was the innovator of the Midnight '12' (starting at 9.30 p.m. on Saturday evening to avoid the traffic problems of the late 1930's) and was the first to use stationary time-keepers on the finishing circuits of 12 hours and 24 hour events. Although somewhat aloof by nature he nevertheless attracted a warm affection and respect from others.

He was one of nature's gentlemen of the old school and was probably against any form of commercialism. He nevertheless derived genuine satisfaction in the standing and success of the Manchester Wheelers' Club, something I first realised in 1938 when I was talking to him in Knutsford on a Saturday Club Run. "With all these young riders coming into the Club-golden days lie ahead again" he said.

The "History of the Manchester Wheelers' Club 1883-1933" was compiled and produced by Tommy and will remain as a permanent testimonial to his ability and contribution to this Club.

His duties as Competitions Secretary to the R.T.T.C. from 1945 to 1977, which involved all the B.B.A.R. Tables and Competition Records required a tremendous amount of time and work and were worthy of national recognition.

He was a raconteur with a dry sense of humour, time-keeper for all types of cycling competition, time trials, track racing, road records, cycling historian, and all carried out with efficiency and to his memory we pay our respect and admiration. We extend our understanding sympathy to his son, Peter.

A large number of mourners from numerous cycling Clubs and organisations attended his cremation at Peel Green Cemetery and the following were among the representatives from Manchester Wheelers' Club: G. Buchanan, M. Bradshaw, J. Carson, J. Dawson, L. Fletcher, Jack and Norah Fletcher, N. Grattage, Len and Shirley Milnes, Bob and Lena Morris, L. Myatt, L. G. McGrath, L. Whittaker and F. Towers.

J.F.

The Racing Review at the end of the 1981 season reported as follows:-

When Jeff Williams soared up the Horseshoe Pass at Llangollen to win the Hill Climb Championship, and to lead Darryl Webster in third position and Gareth Armitage to the Team Championship, it set the seal upon the most successful season ever in the Club's history.

Reports appear elsewhere in the Journal recording the successful youth and day-to-day cycling activities of the Club but the sport of cycle racing in 1981 has seen us emerge as Track Champions at Leicester, and as the premier Road Racing Club with three of our members having won four out of nine of the Star Trophy Events along with the winning of other Classics and International representation. In Hill Climbing four of our riders have won ten Open Hill Climbs together with numerous placings. Dave Lloyd set a new competition record for 10 miles and gained the Hour Record on the Track.

In the Time Trial world we made little impact in the B.B.A.R. apart from John Woodburn's meritorious sixth position but we won three individual Golds, two Team Championships, Silver Team Medals in the T.T.T. and also two individual Bronzes, so that we may justifiably claim to be at least the second most successful Club in this branch of the sport.

Perhaps next year we can make a bigger tilt at the B.B.A.R. and some of the other R.T.T.C. Championships.

Let us hope our good fortune continues until our Centenary Year.

The 99th A.G.M. held on the 9th November, 1981 at the Gateway Hotel, East Didsbury saw the largest attendance for many years, 48 members being present, in addition to the President Len Milnes. The General & Financial Secretaries' Reports, Accounts & Balance Sheet, the Auditors Report and Sponsorship Committee Report were all received without dissent.

The most significant item, to consider and accept the Sponsors offer to extend Sponsorship for a further two years was carried unanimously.

The Dinner Dance & Prize Presentation was again held at the Manchester United F.C. Executive Suite, the previous year's record attendance being comfortably surpassed, 229 Members, Guests and Visitors assembling to applaud an impressive collection of trophies and awards.

1982 - A RECORD YEAR FOR THE CENTENARY

Jubilee years of all classes, Silver, Golden, Diamond, usually bring forth extra efforts to mark the particular Anniversary, but the 100th is something special and as we entered our 100th year it was inevitable that strenuous efforts would be made to make the year the best ever in the Club's history. The high water mark of the Harris Era was 30 years ago but probably 1980/81 were the most successful years in the Club's history, not only as a racing club but as a cycling club in the widest sense.

It was not inappropriate therefore for Editor Fred Towers to write as follows in the January, 1982 Journal.

"At this time last year we looked forward to the new season and speculated whether it would prove to be as successful as 1980, our first year of sponsorship.

We were not disappointed. 1981 proved to be another outstanding year, the final high-lights of which are recorded elsewhere in this Journal.

The year was also not without its touches of sadness as we saw the passing of senior members whose names have become inextricably linked with the history of the Club, most recent "T.M.B." Tommy Barlow our senior member, whose obituary also appears in this Journal.

Looking, however, to the future there now seems to be no reason why the Club should not go from strength to strength and reach 1983, our centenary year in as fine a shape as ever it has been."

Even the most optimistic of our members could hardly have foreseen how successful 1982 was to be.

There are probably other Clubs with equal sponsorship for time trials and track racing, but although we have numerical strength in road racing there was no reason to assume that we would emerge from the 1982 season not only as the outstanding road racing club but also the most successful club in track racing and time trialling.

These claims are based on the number of championships won by our members, together with B.C.F. and R.R.A. Records of a National character.

On the 20th February, 1982 "Cycling" reported:-

"Kenny Gray pulled off what is likely to be the first of many wins for Manchester Wheelers' team during the coming season in Sunday's Man of the North Road Race at Heywood, Greater Manchester."

Truer words were never written.

The first four Classic Road Events of the season were dominated by our members. The Chequers Grand Prix, a B.C.F. World Championship trial at Goodwood was won by Mike Williams with Joughin second, Jeff Williams fifth and Des Fretwell eighth, and according to Press reports our riders claimed roughly £300 - £400 worth of prizes. In the next event, The Grand Prix of Essex, Steve Joughin repeated his win of 1980 with Mike Williams second and Jeff Williams fourth. The next Star Trophy Event was the Essex Trophy and again Steve was the winner with Mike Williams second, Jeff Williams seventh and Bob Downs ninth. This was followed by the Pernod Grand Prix and Steve collected his third classic win with Jeff Williams second. Of the nine events which form the basis of the Star Trophy Competition Steve Joughin, Mike Williams, Jeff Williams and Mark Bell won seven and in the remaining two, Steve Joughin was second in the Isle of Man International and Dave Lloyd was third in the Tour of the Peak, and there have been numerous other placings in the Star Trophy Competition.

Despite the successes of 1980 and 1981 there were still plenty of targets at which to aim. With the opening of R.T.T.C. Championships to ex-professional riders the 25 miles and the 50 miles Championships were obvious targets for Dave Lloyd and indeed he was a favourite for these two events.

Another target for Dave was the new Holdsworth - Cycling Classic League Competition based on performances in eight selected events at 25, 50, 100 and Hilly. As all these events were to be held on "sporting" courses it was a competition which was tailor made for Dave's particular abilities. Our ambitions were for one of our riders to win the Road Race Championship, the B.B.A.R. Team Championship, the 100 kms R.T.T.C. Time Trial Championship etc. There were also the two top honours in rides against the clock, the B.B.A.R. and the End-to-End. We were confident that given favourable conditions John Woodburn would reduce the End-to-End Record by a considerable margin. Although Dave had declared himself as being interested in the B.B.A.R. it was likely that his commitment to the Classic League Competition would rule out any possibility of his being able to select fast days on fast courses to topple the reigning B.B.A.R.

Early June found Dave Lloyd achieving one of his R.T.T.C. Championship ambitions by winning the 25 miles Championship in 53.54. Target number two, the 50 mile Championship led to Dave's first defeat of the season in a Time Trial losing by 14 seconds. It was definitely an off day for Dave and was probably his worst 50 of the season, but we had the satisfaction of winning the 50 mile Team Championship for the

first time ever, the other two counters being John French and Darryl Webster. These three riders complemented by Bob Downs were winners of target number three, the R.T.T.C. 100 kms Team Time Trial Championship. Their time was 2 hours 6 mins. 57 secs. a 7 seconds beating of the G.S. Strada who were hitherto undefeated. In between these events we had again been Champion Club of the Week in the Isle of Man Cycling Week. Dave had again won the Mountain Time Trial and Darryl the Open 25. Steve Joughin won the Willaston Handicap.

Apart from numerous other placings and the Team Time Trial our points total during the week was greatly supplemented by winning performances from our Juniors and particularly Will Mansfield who won all three Juvenile Events supported by Robert Holden in two events with second position and a Junior 10 Team Award with Deno Davie making up the team. Most of the prizes in our Open promotions were taken by our riders with Phil Guy winning the 100 (the first win ever by a Club member) and supported by Gary Picard and Paul Greer the Team prize. The Jones Homes Grand Prix Road Race was won for the second year in succession by Jeff Williams with Bob Downs joint second, Phil Rayner in 4th position at 11 secs (surely Phil's best ever performance as he had only just entered the Senior ranks). A new promotion, an Open 1-4limit 25 resulted in Will Mansfield taking second fastest time in 1.01.42 also taking the prize for the fastest Juvenile and supported by Robert Holden and B. A. Miller winning the Team Award.

The National Track Championships at Leicester again resulted in our being the most successful team in the Championships with nine Gold, two Silver and five Bronze, an improvement on last year despite the fact that Terry Tinsley missed out in both the Sprint and Kilometre Championships. The 4,000 metres Club Team Pursuit Championship was won for the second year in succession in a new National record time of 4 mins 35.88 seconds, our team this year comprising Hugh Cameron, Darryl Webster, Greg Newton and Phil Rayner. Phil was our most successful rider in the Championships winning two Gold medals in the Junior Points and Junior Pursuit Championships and a Bronze medal in his first Madison Championship partnered by Terry Tinsley. The 50 km Motor-paced Championship was won by Des Fretwell, last year's Champion Paul Gerrard having joined the professional ranks.

In winning the 50 km Madison Championship Hugh Cameron became our fourth individual Gold medal winner, Terry Tinsley having again won the Tandem Sprint Championship to add to our remarkable total of wins in this event.

Within hours of the completion of the National Track Championships Jeff Williams had achieved his ambition of becoming National Road Race Champion. The occasion was the Benedictine Grand Prix incorporating the National Road Race Championship at Market Harborough, the distance being increased to 114 miles in line with the world amateur championship distance. An interesting keenly contested event ended in Jeff Williams winning in 4 hours 40 mins. 34 seconds with a comfortable margin of several lengths over his breakaway companion. Out of the second group of three riders Steve Joughin won the sprint for third position with Bob Downs in fifth. This was only our second ever victory in this Championship, our previous winner being Pete Gordon with a breakaway in 1964.

During these many weeks of successes John Woodburn had been kicking his heels waiting for favourable weather conditions for his attempt on the End-to-End Record. Both the single and tricycle records had fallen at the beginning of July with favourable winds, but thereafter the winds had swung round to the North and had persisted from that direction for what was considered to be a record length of time. He had been waiting for almost seven weeks during which time he had ridden only one competitive event, the Westerley 100, in which he finished second with a good time of 3 hours 57 mins. 45

secs., and then suddenly weather conditions were favourable and he set off from Lands End in dense holiday traffic with virtually no publicity with the result that very few people were out along the route to give him a welcoming shout. However, it is in these conditions that John's dour determination makes him such a formidable competitor and he appeared to have little difficulty in overcoming the problems of roads congested with holiday traffic and heavy rain in the early stages. He took the 24 Hour Record with a total of 494¼ miles with little signs of distress and went on to take 96 minutes off the newly created End-to-End Record, setting a time of one day, 21 hours, 3 minutes and 16 seconds, the fastest ever average speed of 18.828 m.p.h.

The End-to-End is the most coveted and glamorous of the R.R.A. Records, and John is only the fourteenth rider to make a successful attempt since 1900 which gives some idea of the quality of his performance. We are indeed honoured that a rider has carried the name of the Manchester Wheelers' in this superlative cycling achievement.

In August another R.T.T.C. Team Championship was won by our riders, this time in connection with the 12 hours Championship, Phil Guy (who also took the Bronze medal) being supported by Martin Harney and Gary Picard, who recorded 261.067, 256.88 and 249.76 miles respectively to win this Team Championship for the first time in our history.

Dave Lloyd had won the Cycling - Classic League with a unique record. He had competed in nine events (eight count) and had won every event in Course and Record time. Obviously a record which will never be beaten. Although he had been D.N.F. in the R.T.T.C. Championship 100 he had ridden two remarkable 100's which were part of the Classic League competition. The first was the Anfield 100, the first time he had ridden the distance, which he won in a time of 3 hours 47 mins. 10 secs., a 9 minute beating of the Course record. Many onlookers considered that this was the finest 100 ever ridden and many who know the undulating Shropshire courses will probably agree with them. The second 100 was the Barnesbury C.C. 100 on a course which had not seen four hours beaten previously. There was heavy rain throughout the event and the course included twenty-eight roundabouts!!

Although John Woodburn had decided to rest on his laurels after the successful End-to-End he was persuaded to ride the Luton Wheelers 12 hours, the aim being that a good ride by John would probably enable us to win the B.B.A.R. Team Championship. Despite staleness after his record ride and a lack of motivation he covered 269.97 miles, a new Club record and certainly reciprocated our support for the End-to-End by taking 5th position in the B.B.A.R. but more importantly being our number one counter along with Phil Guy and Martin Harney in winning the B.B.A.R. Team Championship.

Later in the month Steve Joughin won the International Classic Tour of the Cotswolds and with it the Star Trophy Competition for 1982 with a total of 66 points. In this competition Jeff Williams was second with 41 points and brother Mike third with 40 points. Unfortunately Mike was knocked off his bike by an overtaking motorist in the middle of the season at a time when he was at the top of the Star Trophy Competition and also in line for World Championship selection.

Our claim to have the best time trialists at both the shortest and longest distances was given further weight when Dave Lloyd added the R.R.A. 25 miles Record to this year's list of successes. He had made one unsuccessful attempt in mid September on the Beftubs course, just north of the Scottish border, when he found himself riding into unexpected cross winds, but within a week had made a second attempt riding generally south easterly from Bowes Moor and recorded a time of 42 mins 37 secs, an average speed of over 35 m.p.h. and beating the existing record by almost four minutes. We now hold the shortest and the longest place-to-place R.R.A. Records.

The Hill Climb Season was a fitting climax to our most successful season ever. With Daryll Webster, Steve Joughin and Jeff Williams at the Commonwealth Games and Gareth Armitage being unavailable it seemed beforehand that our impact on the domestic hill climbing scene would be almost negligible this year but Dave Aston assembled and trained a trio of junior and juvenile riders in Will Mansfield, Robert Holden and Mark Jones and their performances, supplemented by rides from Phil Rayner, Dennis Lightfoot and Greg Newton gave us a remarkable total of 7 wins in team races and individual wins for Will Mansfield and Mark Jones.

The National Hill Climb found us at full strength with the exception of Darryl Webster, who was still in Australia, and Steve Joughin, and we had the satisfaction of seeing Jeff Williams complete a unique double, of the National Road Race Championship and Hill Climb Championship in the current season. We were again Team Champions by a convincing margin and on this occasion Jeff was supported by Pete Longbottom in 4th position with another unique performance by Will Mansfield in 9th position. Will became the first schoolboy competitor to win a Gold medal at senior level in the history of R.T.T.C. Championships.

In the Commonwealth Games held at Brisbane, Australia, Bob Downs had the honour of winning a Gold Medal in the 100 kms Team Time Trial, and bronze medals had been won by Terry Tinsley in the 1,000 metres Time Trial and by Darryl Webster in the 4,000 metres Team Pursuit.

The effort and the will to make 1982, our 100th year, our most successful season ever had certainly been realised. In fact it is doubtful whether any Club either before or after this year will ever equal the remarkable total of successes achieved by Manchester Wheelers' riders during the past year, and it is with pleasure and satisfaction on behalf of the Manchester Wheelers' Club that we record its appreciation of the efforts of many riders, champions and otherwise, who have carried the Manchester Wheelers' name and colours during this memorable year.

The date of the traditional Christmas Lunch had to be moved to 16th January 1983 due to the fact that so many members were attending the B.C.F. and R.T.T.C. Prize Presentations, either as prize winners or officials but the occasion did serve as a reminder of our strength as a cycling club when 50 members and friends were present at Rivington Barn to enjoy the usual substantial five course meal with the hordes of motor cyclists in the Barn being segregated from us by the eight sturdy Trumanns Steel stands of 1982 photographs. Gordon Buchanan at the head of his thirty odd strong group of enthusiastic riders, youth hostellers from the age of sixteen years and under, gave his usual witty speech of welcome and informed the gathering that the price of the meal included a raffle ticket for which the prizes would be two team bags.

He then asked Shirley Milnes and Norah Fletcher to draw the two winning tickets, and lo and behold they drew numbers 49 and 50, Derek and Barbara Bowyer, two of our visitors who a few days earlier had made application to become full members.

The Prize Presentation for the 1982 season was a memorable occasion in view of the record number of B.C.F. and R.T.T.C. Championship successes plus the R.R.A. End-to-End, 24 Hours and 25 miles records and in itself took over one hour to complete.

The following extract from the January 1983 Journal records this memorable evening:

ANNUAL DINNER DANCE & PRIZE PRESENTATION

This function makes as many demands on its organisers as any open racing promotion and in some respects it is even more demanding. Nothing less than a very high standard is considered acceptable. For a good many years, through bad seasons and good, the Wheelers' function has met this criterion. None more so than those of the last few years at the Executive Suite, Manchester United F. C.

For this year's event, on November 20th, Len Milnes' persuasive powers had ensured the presence as chief guest one of the most celebrated after-dinner speakers in the country, the patronsaint of Bury Football Club, Canon Reg Smith, who treated the 218 diners to a most entertaining and scintillating discourse, which did full justice to his reputation.

But even Canon Smith, presumably unused to glory at Gigg Lane, was bewildered by the extensive gathering of talent which constituted the Club prizewinners, whose night this was. New President Jack Fletcher, who earlier had opened proceedings by welcoming the many friends and guests of the Wheelers, very fittingly entrusted the not inconsiderable task of introducing the prizewinners to his wife, Norah, whose presence along with Jack at so many events throughout the season had provided moral support and encouragement for our riders.

The numerous riders, track, road, time-trial or record-breaking, whose performances have been fully chronicled in Racing Review throughout the season, all had their moment of glory. The main spotlight fell, rightly, on those who had reached the pinnacle in their chosen sphere, club championship, national championship or national record.

Anthony Stanton, worthy winner of the Handicap Championship, led off the long succession of award winners introduced by Norah Fletcher and the ceremony drew to a close, not before the Reverend Smith had developed severe arm-ache, with the principal recipients Hugh Cameron (Track), Bob Downes (Road), Phil Guy (BAR), Dave Lloyd (National Champion) and the man of the End-to-End, John Woodburn, manning the platform. Each in his own individual style spoke in reply to Norah, who had introduced the Prize-winners with a following speech.

There remained one award to be made, the President's Trophy, which Jack Fletcher, amid general approval, presented to the person who for the past three years has done so much behind-the-scenes in connection with the competitive activities of the Club, and with this Journal, his wife Norah.

Apart from the dancing, there remained one other activity, the raffle with as many prizes as there had been prizewinners, to round off another extremely successful evening organised by Len Milnes.

F. TOWERS
Editor

Norah Fletcher's Prize Presentation Address **20th November, 1982**

"I think it is fair to claim that 1982, the final year before our centenary dinner in April, has been the greatest ever.

At the beginning of 1981 there were doubts whether we would be as successful as in 1980, but in fact 1981 was our best year ever. 1982 was a year of multiple success in track, time trials and road racing and it is difficult to be modest about our riders' successes.

Highlights of the year included the National Road Race Championship, the 100 Km Team Time Trial Championship, and the B.B.A.R. Team Championship, which

entitles us to a mark of distinction at the B.B.A.R. Champions Night. Incidentally this is the first time since 1946, when it was won by the Dukinfield C.C., that the B. B. A. R. Team Championship has been won by a club from the north west. The 25 mile Championship, the 50 mile and 12 Hours Team Championships together with the Club Team Pursuit Championship over 4,000 metres won for the second year in succession against a revival of interest in competition from sponsored clubs in the Midlands, South Yorkshire and London.

Seven riders have this year won ten gold medals in B.C.F. National Championships and 11 riders won 18 gold medals in R.T.T.C. Championships. Two riders established three new R.R.A. records.

Always looming ahead was the challenge of Lands End to John O'Groats, especially as the record had been broken with a very gallant ride shortly before John Woodburn's first scheduled date.

To Dave Aston in particular and to ourselves in general there has been the satisfaction of seeing our junior riders of last year break through successfully to the senior ranks, and now we have a new crop of really young racing lads who show both ability and promise especially in the recent Hill Climb Championships.

We have again used our resources to support the sport of cycling in the widest sense, promoting an Open 100 miles, an Open Middle Markers 25 and the Jones Homes Grand Prix Road Race and our successful programme of club events has been supported by 42 members.

Our first awards go to members who have won prizes in events confined to club members.

It is always encouraging to have the support of some of the top riders in club events but obviously where they are held in the evening, travelling factors make it rather difficult. Nevertheless, Phil Rayner and Phil Guy have both been among the club events winners but will receive their awards later in the evening along with their national awards.

In the Fred Currie Memorial 50, first place was taken by Ian Wilkinson with a time of 2.8.19 - Ian was also a member of our team which won the Manchester & District B.A.R.

Second place in the Memorial 50 was taken by Brian Miller with a time of 2.20.26.

Winner of our Club Handicap Championship and with it the Reg Harris Trophy, our most prolific handicap prize winner with three firsts and three seconds, Anthony Stanton.

Our Junior Time Trials Champion is a young man who last year at the age of 14 suddenly appeared in the Southport Criteriums and despite his somewhat casual approach, rode under Dave Aston's guidance and caused something of a minor sensation.

This year in the Isle of Man 25 he returned a time of 1.1.28 for the distance, a four minute improvement on a terrible day against his previous best, a time which most onlookers could hardly believe. He obviously has a great potential not only for bike racing but for the social season, also along with Will Mansfield and Mark Jones, a likely championship team for club dinners and the dancing thereafter.

Robert also had two wins in club events including the Hill Climb on the Cat & Fiddle. **Robert Holden** Winner of the R. G. Thomas Trophy.

Our Junior Road Race Championship has again been won by a junior of great promise. Obviously he has the right sort of background because his father was New Zealand sprint

champion and also competed at Fallowfield in the 1950s in the all black strip of that country.

Although his main interest is in road racing, he has the ability to ride well against the clock, and next year we are expecting him to give support to a team which we think can win the Junior 25 mile Team Championship for a second time.

Deno Davie

First Handicap in the Club 10 on the 20th May was won by Spencer Cragg.

Winner of the 1st Handicap in the Club 25 on the 20th March was Ian Haywood.

Dave Midgley was the winner of the 1st Handicap in the 25 kilometres on the 29th July.

I think pride of place in our Club Handicap Championship must go to our third placed rider, because we rarely have a prize winner from the fair sex, but on this occasion we have a young lady who has not only raced with success but has given great support to our club runs even though she is usually in a minority of one, or at the best two, the daughter of our very excellent editor, Miss Anita Towers.

Runner up in our Club Handicap Championship was a member who made an excellent job of promoting our Middle Markers 25, his first involvement in race promotion. Again a more than useful club member who has been a welcome addition to the committee.

Rob Lindsay

This brings to an end our Club Prize Presentation and we now pass to the Presentation of Awards for National Championships and Records.

How does one arrange a programme of priority for these wide ranging awards when one Sunday morning we shouted encouragement to the team time trial quartet with two miles to go and saw them win this coveted R.T.T.C. Championship by seven seconds in a time faster than that with which the England team won the Commonwealth Gold Medals, and then motored back to Hattersley too late to witness, but nevertheless to learn, that our Open 100 had been won for the first time by a club member (Phil Guy) with the team winning the team award, and later that afternoon applauded Jeff Williams winning the Star Trophy event of the day, the Roevin Grand Prix. Or, to sit in the sunshine at Leicester one Saturday afternoon as our pursuit team won the 4,000 metres Team Pursuit Championship with a time as fast as the England pursuit team recorded in Brisbane until their bronze medal ride, and the following day travel southwards only fifteen miles to Market Harborough to witness Jeff Williams take the National Road Race Championship, our first since Pete Gordon's break-away victory in 1964, with Steve Joughin in 3rd position and Bob Downs 5th. Or to see John Woodburn cover 494 miles looking as fresh as a daisy after the first twenty four hours of his End-to-End and later to see him climb Berrydale as lively as young Dave Lloyd, and bound over the last twenty miles to John O'Groats at nearly evens.

Because we have had a longer history of track racing success, we felt that our first awards should go to our track champions.

Our first award goes to a rider who was our first gold medal winner, Junior Champion in the Pursuit and Junior Points Championships. This is the third year we have acclaimed him in this room and he has certainly achieved what we expected of him three years ago.

Apart from his two Junior golds, he was a member of our record breaking pursuit team, took 3rd place in the Senior Madison and was 4th in the Junior Kilometre. A good clubman and a great asset to this club. He also won our Junior Path Championship and four other club events.

Phil's certificate reads as follows:-

In consideration of his winning three B.C.F. Track Championships.

Junior Pursuit Championship Junior 30Kms Points Championship 4000 metres Team Pursuit Championship (team member).

Phil Rayner

Our second gold medal winner at Leicester was a newcomer to the club. At the beginning of the season he seemed to be taking the lead in organising our road riders, but then as the year progressed the demands of the G.B. training squads interrupted their normal racing activities, but in the 50Km Points Race at the Track Championships he took the bronze medal, finishing in front of numerous Manchester Wheelers' who were criticised in the Press for their inability to organise themselves into a winning combination. He achieved a personal ambition by winning the 50Km Motor Paced Championship in a time of 43mins. 58.82 secs.

Des Fretwell

One of the big disappointments at Leicester was the failure of Terry Tinsley to win either the Sprint or the Kilometre. This may have been due to the absence of Eddie Soens, his mentor, due to Eddie's time abroad in Japan and his taking over at short notice as team manager of the pursuit riders. However, it all came good on the Saturday when Terry and Paul Sydenham again teamed up to win the Tandem Championship with a record 200 metres time, and in Brisbane Terry had the distinction of winning the bronze medal and only narrowly missing the silver. Jack felt that he might have been good enough to do a long one six, and possibly win the gold in the Kilo, and it looked as though he would do a ride of this time but 'died' over the last half lap. Nevertheless, it really was a world class ride, and additionally, in the Commonwealth Games sprint he finished in 4th position, the best of the British riders. Unfortunately Terry cannot be with us tonight because he chose to stay on and do some track racing in Australia until the end of the year. His certificate reads as follows:-

In consideration of his winning the bronze medal, Commonwealth Games 1,000 metres Time Trial 1 min 7.932 secs. Brisbane, Australia.

It is rather unusual, but I would like you to give a round of applause in Terry's absence, because certainly had it been possible he would have been with us tonight.

Terry Tinsley

One of the most remarkable rides at the Championships was that of our pursuit team in winning the 4,000 metres Team Pursuit Championship. We had three members of last year's team, Hugh Cameron, Greg Newton and Darryl Webster, and at the last minute Eddie Soens included Phil Rayner, who had competed in the Junior G.B. team at the World Championships. They rode beautifully, and earned widespread admiration for their team work, to win in a national record of 4 minutes 35.88 secs. This year there had been no need for Hugh to get the squad together for training session's, because all four had been at it week in and week out as part of the G. B. Pursuit squad, and I am sure they were all heartily sick of pursuing. Darryl of course had the satisfaction of going to Australia, but our sympathy went out to Greg and Hugh at missing out on selection after having put in so many hours of training.

Additionally of course the time recorded by our club team, including as it did, a junior in Phil, made it appear to the onlooker that their potential was greater than the team which actually rode in Australia. These disappointments however, have always abounded through the years, when championship selection time comes round. Hugh at least had the satisfaction of being one of the gold medal winning pair in the 50 kilometres Madison Championship.

I have pleasure in presenting to Hugh a meritorious performance certificate in consideration of his winning the:

B.C.F. Madison Championship

I would like first to call forward Hugh Cameron, to receive his award for the winning of the Madison Championship.

I will ask Phil Rayner, Darryl Webster, and Greg Newton to join Hugh on the platform, to receive your applause for their record breaking team pursuit ride.

Hugh Cameron, Greg Newton, Darryl Webster and Phil Rayner

If the track riders made us the most successful club at the Leicester Track Championships, what can we say of the road riders. At the beginning of the year when that jovial Liverpoolian, Kenny Gray, won the early season Man of the North Road Race, 'Cycling' reported that it was likely to be the first of many wins by Manchester Wheelers' riders. As the year progressed we found that the cycling press was making a target for us of winning every Star Trophy event. A tall order indeed, and while admittedly, John Herety and Phil Thomas had departed from the amateur scene it still wanted a lot of doing, but over the year Steve Joughin, Mike Williams, Jeff Williams and Mark Bell between them won seven of the nine Star Trophy events, our only defeats being in the Manx International, when Joe Waugh rode a super hill climb to beat Steve Joughin into second place; and in the Tour of the Peaks when Dave Lloyd disappointed both himself and us, by not being able to break away from the field, and was beaten into third place in the final sprint. However, it was a tremendous road racing season, and at the end of the year Steve Joughin was a worthy Star Trophy winner for the second time with 66 points, with Jeff Williams in second place, and Mike Williams in third. Steve had started the season strongly, faltered in the middle, but finished strongly in winning the Tour of the Cotswolds beating Malcolm Elliott, a Commonwealth Games gold medal winner.

T.I. Raleigh Star Trophy winner - Steve Joughin

I would like Jeff and Mike Williams to join Steve on the platform - 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the T. I. Raleigh Star Trophy competition.

To Steve I have pleasure in presenting a meritorious performance certificate in consideration of his success. -Thank you Steve and Mike.

Remaining on the platform for his own meritorious performance certificate, is a rider who gave us the greatest moments of the road racing season. Hill climbers always have a special place in cyclists affections, and Jeff is one of everybodys favourite riders. Certainly this year he has scaled the heights, but also plumbed the depths. Nevertheless he has brought us fame and honour, in winning road racing's highest award.

Jeff Williams - National Road Race Champion

Jeff was also the winner, for the second successive year, of our Jones Homes Grand prix Road Race.

And so at last to the time trial scene, and the R.T.T.C. gold medal winners. The hill climb events of 1979 witnessed the first beginnings of revival in this club's fortunes,

and since then we have gone from strength to strength. Last year it was John Woodburn with Championships at 12 Hours and 24 Hours, and Jeff Williams with the Hill Climb Championship who led the way. This year we have won the gold medal for the 25 miles and 100 Kms Team Time Trial, together with team wins in the 50 miles and 12 Hours, and last month the Hill Climb Individual and Team Championships, and also the season long B.B.A.R. Team Championship.

The 100 Kms Team Time Trial, was obviously going to be a two horse race between ourselves and the G.S. Strada, who had beaten us in 1980 and 1981. With the well publicised needle between Lloyd and Griffiths there was a very competitive atmosphere before the start. We had the good fortune to go off last; although we were not the reigning champions, and this must have been an advantage, by giving us very useful time checks over the Strada. The winning margin was only seven seconds, and although it was a team effort, I do feel that pride of place in each team went to the two top fifty milers, Dave Lloyd of ours and Ian Cammish of theirs. In asking the team to come forward for their awards I am going to call first Bob Downs, our Club Road Race Champion and Star Trophy winner of 1981, and re-present to him his gold medal, won as a member of the England team, in the Commonwealth Games team time trial competition.

Bob Downs certificate reads as follows:

In consideration of his being a member of the England team, winners of the gold medal in the Commonwealth Games 100 Kms Team Time Trial Competition, Brisbane, Australia.

And a second certificate in consideration of his being a member of the winning team in the R.T.T.C. 100 Kms Team Time Trial Competition.

Bob Downs

Darryl Webster has been a member of two of our R.T.T.C. Championship winning teams and accordingly his certificate is in consideration of his being a member of the winning team in the

R.T.T.C. 50 miles Championship Team

R.T.T.C. 100 Kms Team Time Trial Championship

A second certificate is awarded to Darryl as a member of the 4000 metres Pursuit Team, bronze medal winners in 4 mins. 34.783 secs. Commonwealth Games, Brisbane, Australia.

Darryl Webster

John French was in the '50' Championship team and the 100 Kms team and accordingly his certificate is in consideration of his being a member of the winning team in the R.T.T.C. 50 miles Championship Team R.T.T.C. 100 Kms Team Time Trial Championship.

John French

Dave Lloyd's certificate records four outstanding rides which are:

Road Records Association 25 miles bicycle record in 42 mins. 37 secs.

R.T.T.C. 25 miles Champion

R.T.T.C. 50 miles Championship Team R.T.T.C. 100 Kms Team Time Trial Championship.

Bob Downs, Darryl Webster, John French and Dave Lloyd

The National Championship 12 Hours has been promoted in Cheshire on a number of occasions by this club, and has not always received the strongest possible entry.

However, this year it was again promoted in Cheshire, but this time, by the Manchester District Council who organised a superb event, the field for which included the British best all-rounder, and other leading riders. The event was only held two weeks after John Woodburn's successful End-to-End and inevitably led to his being a non-starter.

Obviously Phil Guy was destined to do a good ride. Martin Harney was a little unsure of himself, and may only have entered following some gentle persuasion, but the results exceeded all our expectations, with Phil Guy winning the bronze medal, Martin Harney riding an excellent first 12 of 257 miles, and supported by Gary Picard with 249.7 miles we won the Team Championship for the first time. Gary was absent from the Prize Presentation, and we thought he had gone home not knowing that he had won a gold medal and an invitation to the Champions Night at Derby. However, it transpired that he had finished on the far side of the circuit, and so missed having his photograph taken by Bernard Thompson. Congratulations **Gary Picard, Martin Harney and Phil Guy** Each of whom receive a meritorious performance certificate in consideration of their 12 Hours Team Championship.

I would like Phil and Martin to wait on the platform a moment, whilst I ask John Woodburn to join them, and to receive your applause in recognition of winning the British Best All-Rounder Team Championship. Phil of course, has been in the top 12 on a previous occasion, and this year he finished in ninth position, with a slightly lower average than last year, as he forfeited several rides on fast courses both to ride the National Championship 12, and to give team support to some of the Cycling Classic League events. Martin Harney also missed some fast days on Boro' when he would undoubtedly have improved his times at 50 and 100 miles. I know he is very pleased at winning these gold medals, but being tall, blonde and handsome, he does find the opposite sex somewhat of a handicap to his racing ambitions. For example at Leicester he was knocked out of the competitions at an early stage, and we usually found him sitting in the stands with one girl on each side early on. By later afternoon it had grown to two on each side, and on one occasion we found him finishing the afternoon with five girl friends. However, I would like to thank him for the support he gave to the team, at distances about which he was not possibly over enthusiastic. He is one of the young riders who joined us in the first two years of sponsorship, and is proving a very good Manchester Wheeler.

We would like publicly to thank John for his willingness to ride the Luton 12 in order to complete his three B.A.R. distances because it was necessary if we were to win the B.B.A.R. Championship. Very few riders who have completed a successful End-to-End would want to strive for a winning ride in a 12, only four weeks afterwards. He did agree to ride and finished in second place with almost 270 miles, a really terrific ride, because he must have been lacking a mental appetite for the event. However, what appears to be an unreasonable decision by the London North District Council reduced his mileage to 223 miles because actually due to poor marshalling he had omitted one of the southern legs. Other riders who were given a greater mileage, had also turned at this particular roundabout and the decision, which is still disputed does not appear to be without bias. He fortunately made the long journey north to Boro' looking for a fast '50', doing an amazing 1.48 and this still enabled us to win the B.B.A.R. Team Championship by a narrow margin. Thanks John for your loyalty and willing support.

We are going to hear from John Woodburn later in the evening, so I will ask him to join Phil and Martin whilst you applaud John's first ever B.B.A.R. Team Championship award.

Martin Harney, Phil Guy and John Woodburn
B.B.A.R. Team Champions

In Devon three years ago, we were beginning to make a modest impact to re-establish ourselves as a top racing club.

Gareth Armitage had won 12 out of 12 local hill climbs, and had thrashed a rising young star by the name of Jeff Williams on the Snake. After the Snake hill climb, Jeff was sprawled out in the back of his father's car absolutely shattered, and we thought, no way would he beat Gareth even though the 1979 Championship was on a roadman's course. History taught us that Jeff won that hill climb by such a big margin that we, among others, felt that the time keeper had made a mistake of one minute in his time. However, as the event progressed, the south country commentator gave out the news that it appeared that the Manchester Wheelers', "who had been poaching a lot of riders this autumn", are likely to win the team race. We did win the team race, and Gareth, who was last man off, took the bronze, although, had he not had an argument with a horse rider would probably have taken the silver. The following year on Nick O'Pendle, Jeff Williams, now returned to his native Manchester, missed the gold by the celebrated one fifth of a second with a broken nose, Gareth was third, Steve was fourth, and we had progressed to taking first and second teams. Last year on that memorable day on the Horseshoe, Jeff got us that elusive gold, and again we took first and second teams.

After three years of dominating the hill climbing scene it looked as though 1982 was going to be a non-starter. Jeff, Steve and Darryl were at the Commonwealth Games, Gareth this year was too busy looking after his young family, and some of the senior riders decided to call it a day after the Tour of the Peaks, and then, lo and behold, it was Dave Aston again, pulling it out of his bag of tricks. I suppose we all thought these young lads would acquit themselves well, but I think only Dave, with his outrageous optimism, could possibly have anticipated how well they would do. Two fifteen year olds, a sixteen year old, helped out now and again by a comparatively old man in Phil Rayner at nineteen, but we saw some fastest times including the breaking of one of Gareth's course records, and the winning of every team award until the last Sunday before the Championships. I think they were possibly getting over-raced and were beaten by the Dinnington and Chesterfield on that last Sunday. Jack spoke to Syd Ellis, one of our ex-members, who is now the main force behind the Dinnington. Syd was raving over their win at Ashbourne and Jack said, "Wait until next week when we'll have half of our first team riding". Syd said "Nay, come on Jack the're only juniors". Jack replied, "Well ours are only juveniles - we'll have to see what happens next week".

At the National Hill Climb three week ago I think that Dave Aston and ourselves were well rewarded when these young riders, Will Mansfield, Robert Holden and Mark Jones, not to mention Phil Rayner and Greg Newton, were climbing so efficiently and filling top places in front of many senior riders with the remarks from the commentator, "Here comes another of those outstanding young Manchester Wheelers', bidding to follow in the footsteps of Jeff Williams". Our youth policy had proved fully justified. Mansfield, Holden and Jones, two of them fifteen and one sixteen would have won the team championship without Williams, Longbottom and Rayner, and in fact were the second fastest team. A remarkable performance, possibly in Will Mansfield's case, a unique record for a fifteen year old schoolboy to win a senior gold championship medal. Will in particular has got to be a good rider because, as reported in Cycling, he used to be an Altrincham Raven, but is now a Manchester Wheeler, and by way of compensation I can tell you we swapped him for Peter Walthall.

In general this club has always given loyalty and support to its club riders, and when last year, Steve and Jeff went abroad, we retained our association and friendship, which paid

dividends when they returned and won many honours, both during the latter half of 1981, and throughout 1982. The same situation continued this year with Pete Longbottom, and Pete came back and helped us in the B.C.F. Team Time Trial and also said he would ride the Hill Climb Championship.

We believe one of the reasons he went abroad was to get out of having to ride a 12, because he has been bantered quite a lot about riding this medium distance event. Pete is renowned as a rider who always gives of his best, and he was well placed in the Milk Race and was the best G.B. finisher in this year's World Championship Road Race at Goodwood. However, the gold medal and one of those "yeller 'ats" has always eluded him, and no one was more pleased than we were when he got that gold medal, in this year's Hill Climb Championships. He was off number 41, and as he came back down the hill, Jack asked him what he had done, and he said "3.58 fastest". "Well done, Pete" he said "It'll be good enough for third place in the team," but in fact, he was second in the team and achieved his best placing in the event of 5th. Eight position in the Championship went to Will Mansfield, and we had already won the team race easily before Jeff went off at number 120.

There were 5,000 at the hill climb, and 4,999 believed that Jeff would be the winner. The odd man out was Jeff himself, and he has had such an in and out season, that we had to wait until he had crossed the finish line to be sure.

Again it was one of those days like the Road Race Championship when Jeff was on song and his ride was hallmarked, not only by his winning margin of 16 seconds but by the fact that he beat by four seconds, Gareth Armitage's record for Dovers Hill.

Congratulations Jeff Williams, National Hill Climb Champion and with Pete Longbottom and Will Mansfield Hill Climb Team Champions.

Last year John Woodburn gained our first Road Records Association record, the London to Bath and back, and this year a further three records have been added. As you know Dave Lloyd's start to the season was delayed due to the fact that he was knocked off his bike, by an absent-minded motorist in the Lake District. Fortunately, the injuries were not too serious, and within a couple of weeks he was in superfit form, setting event and course records, in the Cycling Classic League events. Near the end of the season, he was again in collision with an absent-minded motorist, (a lady this time, although Dave wouldn't call her that) and it looked as though his season would have a premature end, and, although it was at first feared that he had a leg fracture he did compete in the Tour of the Peaks.

However, the latest mishap gave him a good excuse for not riding a 12 hour, but between these two accidents, Dave had given us a lot of rides to remember, particularly his record breaking win in the Circuit of the Dales and in the Bath Road Hilly '50'. He won every Cycling Classic League event in which he rode (nine in all) breaking course record on every occasion, obviously a record which can never be beaten, but probably his most outstanding ride, was his 3.47 in the Anfield '100'. Although not the fastest 100 ever ridden, it is regarded by many as the greatest performance ever in a 100, beating as it did by nine minutes the fastest ever ridden in Shropshire by Phil Griffiths.

His peak form earlier in the year probably led to a certain amount of staleness, at what was really, the most important part of the season, that covering the 25, 50 and 100 miles Championships.

He really had to work hard for his 25 miles Championship, and it was only his fierce attacking style, over the last three or four miles of the undulating championship course, that gave him a ten second victory over an out of the blue ride by Tony Mayer, and by 12 seconds over the 1981 Champion, Martin Pyne. Dave really did us proud in the 100 Kms Team Time Trial, and one look at John French and Darryl Webster, and to a lesser extent Bob Downs at the end, left no doubt as to who had been the pace maker. However, at the end of the season he

decided to go out on a top note, by getting the R.R.A. 25 miles. Rather impatiently, because the wind was not right, he made one attempt starting at Beef Tubs, but this ended in failure, and then only a few days later, he made his second successful attempt, starting at Bowes Moor on the A66, riding eastwards, and then turning southwards down the A1. He lopped a tremendous 3 minutes 46 seconds off the existing record, to finish in 42 minutes 37 seconds, at an average speed of over 35 m.p.h.

We are pleased to present Dave with his R.R.A. Shield for the 25 miles.

Lands End/John O'Groats - The End-to-End

As a youngster Jack had read of the exploits of End-To-End record breakers, Opperman the Australian, Ferris the vegetarian, and others.

There was a magic about this record which has always remained with him. When he read in "Cycling" at the back end of 1980 that John Woodburn had not been able to find anyone interested in sponsoring an attempt by him on the End-to-End, he was immediately interested. He took his arm when they were waiting to get some drinks at the bar at Derby, and told him that he might be interested in sponsoring his attempt. John gave him one of his quizzical and somewhat aggressive looks which Southerners have for us Northerners but however, the deal was struck, and particularly since last year's unsuccessful attempt, we have had a very close understanding. Despite the disappointment of 1981 and comments in the cycling world at large that he would never make a second attempt, we always felt confident that this rider, who we had followed with interest when he won the Bath Road 100, could take at least one hour off the record which had been established earlier this year.

Whereas last year everything had been right, the weather, the planning, all the backroom work, this year there were continual deferments of up to seven weeks, with the result that holidays, work commitments and so on played havoc with the support team, and then suddenly the weather forecast was right and John dashed down to Lands End with only a few people and set off at short notice in dense holiday traffic. Inside the hour for the first twenty-five miles over Bodmin Moor with the following cars held up in traffic blocks, 4 hours 20 for the first 100, 4 hours 18 for the second hundred, marshalled through the Potteries by Phil Griffiths, who on this occasion left his banter behind and did a great job of work. We were ahead of him at the summit of Shap which he rode so well that an onlooker said, "This is Lloyd doing a private", and then through Penrith, Carlisle, Gretna and like a bomb along the dual carriageway A74 to pass 494 miles in 24 hours. A lengthy stop thereafter for a rub down, change of clothing and sit-down feed. He gave one of his saucy grins as he quickly urinated on Keith Robins' front wheel, which promptly deflated, then he was off again to Edinburgh. It was now Saturday and there was almost a complete absence of marshals, no Sandy Gilchrist this time -- he had racing commitments, only Ed Zoller, at around 80 years of age, on one key island. John had memorised the route remarkably, and indeed, we were glad to follow in his tracks. After Blair Atholl there was possibly a psychological reaction after last year, and his speed dropped to around 15 or 16 miles an hour. He seemed a little concerned, and said to George Hunton the chief time-keeper, "What have I got to do yet?". George was giving him a studied reply as though he had all the time in the world, and Keith wanted him to have another sit-down feed.

We were up in the highlands and Jack suggested to John that he should get his big ring going and push it down the descents instead of coasting. He gave us all a withering look, got on his bike again with some mutterings of "Bloody this and bugger that", and after that he really got going. A long hairy descent in complete darkness from Aviemore down to Inverness. There was power in John's riding now and everyone was confident of

success. On the climbs of Helmsdale and Berriedale, Keith Robins sent us ahead in small groups so that we could give a shout to John every few miles. After last year's advice from Peter Barlow that every End-to-End rider has a bad patch and needs a few minutes sleep we were now continually looking for signs of distress. None were evident however, and as we walked up Berriedale, positioning ourselves at suitable intervals, we thought it would have been impossible for any rider covering 800 miles not to get off and walk. Nevertheless, John came up in great style. The climbs were something like the Winnats only longer. Incredible!!

Dawn was breaking, it was a beautiful morning, and as the sun rose, everyone, including the rider, was in the highest spirits. The biggest danger now was that one of the thousands of rabbits that scuttered about the roads could cause an accident but no mishap occurred, and so, into the John O'Groats Hotel and the official finishing point of the record, the main door of the hotel.

A one hour, 36 minutes beating of the record. A truly tremendous ride and the achievement of a lifetime by one of cycling's greatest long distance riders. Lands End to John O'Groats 1 day, 21 hours, 3 minutes, 16 seconds, a record average speed of 18.828 miles per hour for 847 miles, 494¼ miles at 24 hours. Ladies and gentlemen, it is indeed a privilege to present the End-to-End and 24 hour Shields to **John Woodburn**.

Our tradition is that the final awards of the Prize Presentation should be to the winners of Club Championships. Our three Champions tonight have all been awarded meritorious performance certificates in respect of their gold medal winning performances, but will now be presented with trophies awarded to the winners of our three Club Championships.

Firstly, the winner of the Harold Crye Memorial Trophy awarded to our Road Race Champion Steve Joughin, with a tremendous total of 199 points.

Secondly, the winner of the Club House Trophy awarded to our Club Track Champion, for the second year in succession, Hugh Cameron with 49 points.

Our Time Trial Champion for 1982 is a clubman in the best tradition of club riders. He has a cycling family background and has given us very loyal support this year. With his usual modesty I feel he has been a little embarrassed that his win was made possible due to the reduction of John Woodburn's 12 hour mileage in the Luton '12' but I know he has John's sincere congratulations as well as ours and we all appreciate the loyal support which he has given to the club, particularly at the B.B.A.R. distances. He is a Shropshire lad and his first loyalty is to the Mid-Shropshire Wheelers with whom he has remained a second claim member. It is a long cry from the days when the "Black Anfielders" poached some of their riders from Mid-Shropshire and used them to beat this club in the inter-club time trials of the day.

As well as the Jimmy Taylor Trophy for the Club Time Trial Championship Phil takes the additional Jimmy Taylor 12 Hour Trophy awarded to the club rider who covered the greatest distance in a '12' hours.

This win is in respect of his ride of 261 miles in the National Championship '12'.

Phil Guy

RESUMÉ OF THE SPONSORSHIP YEARS

One of the main reasons for the overall success of the Sponsorship years had been the efforts of an enthusiastic and conscientious Committee, undoubtedly one of the best which had served the Club during the last half century.

Len Milnes had given a business-like approach and dignity to the Office of President, and the principal Officers of the Club, John Dawson Financial Secretary, Matt Bradshaw General Secretary, and Fred Towers Editor, had been first class. The enthusiasm of Gordon Buchanan in organising the Juniors and the constructive support of Ron Park and Rob Lindsey ensured that the Club's affairs had been conducted in an outstanding and efficient manner, ensuring a vigorous and successful end to the Centenary Year.

CONCLUSION

On the 7th July, 1983, the Club will have been in existence for one hundred years, and its Centenary Year will be marked by a Dinner to be held in the Peacock Suite, Hotel Piccadilly, Manchester, on Saturday, 30th April, 1983 to be attended by civic dignitaries, principal officers of the B.C.F. and R.T.T.C. and by Members past and present who have won Championships riding for Manchester Wheelers' Club. During its second fifty years the Club has continued to encourage and develop the sport and pastime of cycling, but has played an even more prominent part in leadership at National level of the various cycling organisations and the successes of its racing members have been unsurpassed.

The changes which have occurred during the last fifty years have largely taken place since the early 1950's, and have made an impact on the Club's life, and indeed on cycling generally, greater than anything which had occurred before. Higher standards of living, widespread ownership of the motor car, and particularly the impact of television; which popularised other more sophisticated and also hitherto unknown sports but which did nothing to encourage the sport of cycle racing, changed the whole basis of the Club's life.

Following the demise of the Race Meet which was the basis of the Club's prosperity and success, there was reluctance to look for commercial support and a belated acceptance of the idea of Sponsorship, an outlook which was shared by many old established cycling clubs and which inevitably led to their decline.

The Manchester Wheelers' have undoubtedly achieved a brilliant Centenary, the inspiration for which most certainly derived from traditions and history created by its Founders and their successors.