



Introduction

2024 sees C&NW CTC celebrate its 85th Anniversary – this year's President's Ride & Lunch will also be a celebration of the anniversary.

2023 was a busy year although the impact of Covid-19 was still felt in the way groups operate, event entries and volunteer participation (apparently many clubs & voluntary organisations across the UK are also feeling the effects).

Sadly, the Club has lost several members during the year some of whom are mentioned below:

Merfyn Jones – was a regular with the Wrexham Reivers & Café Hoppers for many years. He will be remembered as a strong rider and a gentleman, ready to help others and have people on his wheel. Sadly, illness stopped him riding for the last few years. There was a good turnout of Club members at his funeral in Pentrebychan

Martin Thompson – another strong rider who had been a regular with the Wrexham Reivers & a member of the C&NW CTC Tourist Competition team, passed away after illness. Another rider who will be missed by all who knew him. 10 members of the Club attended his funeral in Chirk & represented C&NW CTC.

Samuel Maurice Ashton – who passed away aged 91. He had been an active member of C&NW CTC together with his wife Jean. He had undertaken several tours & completed Vets 100 events.

Harry Watson - well known in the cycling community and founder of Watson's Wanders Harry passed away in May 2023. During his lifetime he had recorded rides totalling over 700,000 miles, with many of his rides ending late at night or in the early hours of the following morning. A group of riders from the Club was able to meet Harry's cortege and ride at the front to the crematorium. Those who knew and rode with Harry will remember his exploits for many years.

Our thoughts are with their families and friends, and with those of others in the Club who have passed away but are not mentioned above.

Congratulations to John Violet whose campaigning work over many years was recognised with a Cycling UK Certificate of Appreciation earlier this year.

1. Informal Group Reports

Ynys Môn (Anglesey)

There are only a small number of members in the group (who have all be riding together for many years). Some riders supported events such as the Welsh Festival in Ruthin in July.

Chester (including summer evening rides and Chester Fabulous Ladies) (Sue Booth)

Chester have had a quiet year; numbers are generally down and I was unwell for several months. We supported the Chester Campaign with the Fancy Women's International ride in September, and we had a leaders only ladies' weekend to Hartington last summer. We also celebrated 15 years of the Fab Ladies, with a picnic at Walk Mill and a marvellous cake by one of our riders. However, we have started our summer evening rides again with enthusiasm!"

Watson's Wanderers (Allan Samuel)

We have ridden almost every Tuesday during the past year. We typically have 12-15 on our Tuesday rides even up to 20 and have an active group of approx. 30 with an average age of ca 67. Numbers have been steady with a few new joiners and a few falling away.

Despite periods of cold and wet weather we have continued with our weekly celebration of "rubber meets pot-holed tarmac".

Our formula of relaxed riding with faster group(s) and slower groups seems to do the trick and help the group to thrive.

Our rides set off from the Plough Inn, Christleton and cover all points of the compass. We have found that some of our regular stop-offs have closed or have restricted their opening times during the past couple of years. But some, at least, are amenable to opening up just for us for lunch or elevenses if we book in advance!

We were sad to say farewell last year to our erstwhile leader, Harry Watson who died age 94. His wife Celia (also an avid cyclist in her day) had pre-deceased him by a few months. Harry cycled over 710,000 miles during his lifetime and as leader of Watson's Wanderers, he took us to 620 pubs. We are carrying on his legacy but we have a smaller number of pubs and cafes to call into - a sign of the times we are now in.

Wednesday Riders (Paul Mills)

Pre Covid approx. 30-35 Riders would often turn up on a Wednesday Morning, since Covid and the closure of the Eureka café where we used to meet, we have not returned to issuing a general invite to newcomers.

Most people are either riding as small groups of CUK friends or just with family etc, keeping in touch by various WhatsApp groups.

Wrexham Reivers (Lowri Evans)

The group has continued to ride as many weekends as possible, however bad weather has resulted in some cancellations. There are often two routes on offer – with impromptu rides when ride leaders can't be found in advance. Stuart Evans & Mark Jones have led many of the advertised rides with others taking a turn occasionally; it might be good to share the ride leading between more of the group members this year. Rides continue to be arranged by email on a week-by-week basis. Thanks go to all of the ride leaders and to all of the riders who have turned out and kept the rides going. In December there was the traditional Christmas meal at the Ponderosa, which was enjoyed by all who attended. Sadly, Paul Mills was injured in a road collision on his journey home and spent several days in hospital.

Several riders are off their bikes at the moment due to accidents or illness, it is hoped that they will all be out riding with the group again soon. It is good that many turn up at the start of rides for a cuppa & a chat even if they are off the bike.

2. Events 2023 & 2024 to date

20th May 2023 Berwyns Audax Events (Dave Matthews)

Unlike 2022 this year's events had glorious weather; the entries were low but almost all of the entrants turned up to enjoy the sunshine.

Tour of the Berwyns 210km 2650m climbing

16 riders set out and all completed the route. There were no riders from C&N.W. CTC---our sole entrant having to scratch in order to ride a 400k to enable qualification for Paris-Brest-Paris. A very original excuse for ducking a 200k!

Panorama Prospect 130km 1000m climbing

12 riders turned up to ride this event including 4 from C&NW CTC. Two didn't finish, one due to several rear-wheel punctures, the other didn't declare.

Many thanks to Dave Matthews for organising the events, and volunteers Margaret Matthews who provided drinks & snacks and Janet Jones who organised & ran the control on the Panorama.

The event will be held on Sunday 12th May 2024. Dave Matthews will be retiring as organiser and is looking for someone to take over the events in 2025.

11th June 2023 Bob Clift Memorial Cheshire Cycleways

After a break due to Covid -19 and organising issues the 50- and 100-mile events were revived in 2023. Tracey Johnston volunteered to run the events and started to book venues, but had to pull back for personal reasons. Sue Booth then took on the organising of the event but unfortunately, she was unable to attend the day, however other club members ensured that the events were able to take place following Sue's carefully made plans.

Storms the night before and a poor weather forecast meant that several riders decided not to start the events. Warnings were given about debris, but unfortunately a couple of riders came off after about 10 miles on the 100-mile event. The other riders offered superb support before & whilst the emergency services treated the injured rider & Stuart Roberts was able to assist with the Sag wagon; one rider was taken to hospital by ambulance.

Thankfully the 50-mile event was without incident with riders enjoying the event.

There were a large number of volunteers, mainly doing short shifts at the start, at the various controls at the finish as well as taking photographs of the riders on the route.

Congratulations to all of the riders who took part in the event. Many thanks to all of the volunteers who made the event possible & Sue Booth the organiser who put so much work into organising the event, but who wasn't able to attend on the day.

2nd July 2023 C&NW CTC Bert Bailey Memorial Vets 100

66 riders turned up to ride the 56th edition of the Bert Bailey Memorial Vets 100 organised by Ian Slater. The riders were split into 9 groups each with a registered ride leader. All of the riders successfully completed the course – for some it was the first time they had ridden 100 miles in a day. Philip Owens from Merseyside was awarded the trophy as the oldest male rider (84 years), Vicky Payne the trophy for senior female rider and Helen Armstrong the trophy for the oldest rider on a n e-bike.

Riders were very enthusiastic about the event, full of praise for the organisation & catering. Many thanks to all of the volunteers, the caterers and Ian Salter for organising the event.

15th July 2023 Corwen Audax events 16th

Graham Hines organised this year's events which started from and finished at Yum-Yums in Corwen. Bad weather made the rides very challenging and reduced the number of riders completing the events. Congratulations to those who completed the rides.

204k Barmouth Boulevard - Controls at Llanuwchllyn, Harlech, Abergynolwyn, Mallwyd and Corwen. 6 riders were recorded by Audax UK as completing the event

105K Brenig Bach - Controls at Pentrefoelas, Llyn Brenig and Corwen

4 riders were recorded by Audax UK as completing the event including Steve Larwood from C&NW CTC

60km Bala Parade -Controls at Llanuwchllyn and Corwen.

4 riders were recorded by Audax UK as completing the event including Peter Dilworth from C&NW CTC

Thanks go to Graham Hines & Yum Yums in Corwen.

10th September "Momma" Audax Rides Report Brandon Edgeley

The three events have always started at and finished at Old Ma's Cafe in Tattenhall, however this closed at the end of August so the start was moved to the Barbour Institute with the finish at the Sportsman's Arms, Tattenhall.

210km 21 riders started (although one was back within an hour having broken a spoke). The route passed through Chirk, up the Glyn Ceiriog Valley to Llyn Vyrnwy via Pistyll Rhaeadr, over the Hirnant Pass to Bala, from Bala home via Melin-y-Wig, The Shelf and Hope Mountain.

130km 29 riders completed the event with the youngest being a 13-year-old.

55km 21 riders, which was a considerable increase in numbers from previous years. Whereas the 130 was notable for a young rider, the oldest completing this event was 91 (although as he was on an E-bike the ride couldn't be validated under Audax rules)
This year the event is scheduled for Sunday 10th Sept 2024 when Brandon Edgeley will be mentoring John Gallager the new organiser. – I hope to see you there!

2nd October 2023 Hill Climb & Freewheel events (Lowri Evans)

Most of the volunteers & riders met up at Llanbenwch Café prior to the event for a cuppa and a chance to sort stopwatches, entries and equipment before heading for the hill.

Ben Hughes was a clear winner on the hill climb over 2 minutes ahead of Steve Larwood was 2nd overall & 1st veteran, Ian Bellingham was 3rd. Sally Cunliffe was 4th and 1st Lady
Ian Bellingham won the freewheeling (at his 1st attempt) with Mike Gilbert, Ian Bellingham and Sally Cunliffe in a 3-way tie for 2nd place. Due to the new 20mph speed limit in Graigfechan a new course was used this year. 9 rides took part – there was a special category for e-bikes this year won by Dave Statham.

Everyone then rode (or drove) to Llanbenwch where times were calculated and prizes were presented. Tables had been reserved and people enjoyed lunch and chat thanks to Sara & Gwion and their staff at Llanbenwch.

Thanks go to the volunteers and competitors who make the event possible and who come to enjoy a social event. It is hoped to hold the Hill Climb & Freewheel again this year on Saturday 28th September – take the opportunity to come and enjoy the day.

Corwen Audax Events 14th October 2023

The weather forecast was wet; and riders on both of the longer rides encountered some very heavy rain at times, but there were also some sunny spells.

The Clwydian 212km 13 riders completed a very challenging ride – in addition to the weather conditions a road closure at Llanfihangel GM complicated & lengthened their challenge.

The Clwyd Gate 138km 8 riders completed the event with some encountering torrential rain on the Horseshoe Pass and the descent to Ruthin. This year the route was altered to avoid the A494 decent to Ruthin as there were major roadworks.

The Bala Mini-Bash 60km 9 riders completed

Thanks once again to the organiser, Graham Hines who had a very long day in Corwen, with Yum Yums as the control which was closed to the general public for the afternoon & evening

22nd October 2023 Presidents Ride – St Asaph – Llanfair DC

Flooding in the Vale of Clwyd on the Friday followed by an emergency route check on the Saturday resulted in late changes to the route sheets to ensure that riders didn't encounter deep water. Fortunately, the weather was good on the day and riders assembled in St Asaph & took one of 2 routes to Neuadd Eleanor, in Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd. David Matthews, the President, had organised an excellent caterer who had prepared the hall and provided tea & coffee, soup & sandwiches and a choice of pudding. John Violet was presented with President's Trophy in recognition of his cycle campaigning work. 27 people attended the event.

1st January 2024- New Year's Day Meet

2024 saw a return to the Carden Arms, Tilston where riders and member had a warm welcome. Several groups rode out to the events including riders from Chester, Watson's Wanderers, Fab Ladies, Wrexham Reivers, Wednesday Riders & Two Mills.

Many thanks to Dave Matthews for arranging the meet.

3. Club Communications

Facebook & work of the Publicity Officer (Paul Mills)

Our Facebook public page has 700+ members 37% Women 63% Men

A Public Facebook group is an **open group** where anyone (who is on Facebook but not a member of the group) can easily find a public group upon searching and see: the content that members post, the comments on it, the list of group members, the list of admins and moderators

Age range	Women	% women	Men	% men
13-17	1	0.1%	0	0%
18-24	3	0.3%	6	0.7%
25-34	21	2.4%	30	3.5%
35-44	35	4.0%	64	7.4%
45-54	92	10.6%	118	13.6%
55-64	115	13.2%	160	18.4%
65+	58	6.7%	165	19.0%

Recent figures show members from 20 countries, the vast majority are UK based. Volunteer admin & moderators have worked hard to keep the site clear of unsuitable material by declining some participants and posts; they have during the year approved an additional 120 participants.

Instagram

We have also recently started an Instagram page to enhance our social media presence, we do have a few followers at the moment and hope to build this up in time.

<https://www.instagram.com/chesterandnorthwalesctc/>

Website

The Webmaster is Simon Tiplady who has done background work on the site and made some updates during the year.

[Chester & North Wales CTC \(ctcchesterandnwales.org.uk\)](http://www.ctcchesterandnwales.org.uk)

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Cycling UK group page

Mainly updated by the C&NW CTC secretary. There have been issues with accessing the site since the autumn when the new website was launched by Cycling UK – some have now been resolved and the Secretary is in the process of adding all of the 2024 club events.

[Chester and North Wales CTC Caer a Gogledd Cymru | Cycling UK](http://www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups/chester-and-north-wales-ctc-caer-gogledd-cymru)

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The secretary & registration officer continue to have issues with accessing ride leader & volunteer registrations (this has been an issue for many other groups as well).

Online meetings

Following research by Ian Salter in to alternatives to Zoom committee meetings are now held using Jitsi a free on-line platform.

Thanks to Paul Mills, Simon Tiplady, Chris Smith, Ian Slater and Mark Jones for their work on club communications and to all of the contributors.

4. Link (Janet Jones)

As you are aware this is my last Link report and Spring 2024 is my last issue as Editor. Providing the decision at the AGM is for the Link to be made an online publication Mark Jones will take over as Editor. Mark and I have met twice in the last few months to ease the transition. I will also be at hand should Mark need any help with future issues.

Current printing and posting costs

Printing cost: £3.27 each up 99

£3.20 - 100

£3.10 – 110

Postage: £2.10 each

Envelope/address labels 5p each

Total cost per copy = £5.42 (under 100)

The current subscription is £15 for 3 copies, which as you can see is running at a loss. Postage has risen twice in the last 12 months which has pushed the costs up. Therefore the Link has understandably run at a loss this year. I understand by about £170.00. £100 is still outstanding for an invoice for an advert.

77 copies were ordered for the spring 2024 issue.

I have enjoyed my stint as Editor. I would like to wish Mark all the very best, I know the Link is in safe hands.

Janet Jones Link Editor

Many thanks to Janet Jones for her work in editing the link. Also, thanks to Graham Arnold who has kept track of subscribers so the copies could be sent out.

5. **Cycle Advocates' Report**

Gwenda Owen is the Cycling UK's Engagement Officer for Wales, and she has a coordinating role for the Advocates in Wales and in the area covered by C&NW CTC we are fortunate to have several Cycle Advocacy Network (CAN) volunteers; John Violet with Kate Litherland covering Cheshire West and Chester whilst in Wales we have Richard Keatinge, Adrian Williamson, Roy Spilsbury, Richard Brunstrom and John Mather.

September 2023 saw the introduction of 20mph speed limits in Wales as the default built up areas which were previously 30mph zones in a bid to encourage active travel and to improve road safety.

Wales (John Mather)

During the year there has been work to ensure improve the safety of active travellers on NCR5. CANs reps and others have highlighted dangers of crashes on the A55 which have damaged or gone through the barriers from the road to the active travel route, and also the need for safe alternatives when NCR5 is closed following an accident or during repairs.

We are building an effective working relationship with Anthony Jones (Sustrans Manager for North and Mid Wales) and (working with others) will continue to press for new and improved cycling infrastructure and facilities in the five local authority areas here in the North. There are ongoing coastal defence works at Prestatyn, Rhyl, Colwyn Bay, and Bangor, which affect users of NCN route 5 along the North Wales Coast. Over on Anglesey, pressure is being brought to bear on Network Rail to allow the conversion of the disused railway line between Gaerwen and Amlwch into a multi-user active travel route. (It's currently largely neglected but subject to a gardening licence awarded to a group that hopes to restore rail services)! NCN5 at Conwy is discontinuous and we are working with Conwy and Sustrans to improve the situation here and in and through Llandudno. Conwy CBC has allocated additional resources to improve the active travel network and improvements are at last being delivered. We are working closely with them to develop their Levelling up Fund scheme to provide a shared use path between Llandudno Junction and Betws-y-Coed. Currently we have ongoing campaigns associated with proposed improvements to the A55 North Wales Trunk Road, the Conwy Estuary Trail and the renewal of Colwyn Bay promenade.

Nearer home, Conwy CBC has plans to improve its active travel network and these include the provision of new shared use paths associated with Dŵr Cymru's pipe bridge over the Afon Conwy at Dolgarrog.

England

Campaigning and consultation have continued with some notable success. Recently John Violet was informed that proposals for an Active Travel Route to Chester station by a new hotel development would be going head.

Chester Cycling Campaign is an affiliated group to Cycling UK and they are particularly thorough at perusing planning applications to ensure cycling is considered. In 2023 they organised an Active Travel Festival; C&NW CTC made a financial contribution to the event and also had a stand. Many thanks to John Violet & Kate Litherland for their ideas & enthusiasm and to Dave Mathews, Paul

Mills and others who volunteered in Chester on the day. It is hope that the Club will be able to have a stand again this year at a new venue nearer the centre of Chester.

John Violet was recognised for his campaigning work with a Certificate of Achievement, and also an article in the recent Cycle magazine.

6. C&NW CTC Committee

The committee has continued to hold regular online meetings (now via Jitsi). Although the online meetings don't allow an opportunity for signing cheques and informal discussions that are so useful, they do have the advantage of allowing participation from home and reducing carbon emissions.

7. Report of the Awards Committee

The committee hasn't met during the last 12 months, however there has been communication between members mainly via email. Congratulations to John Violet was nominated for, and presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for his campaigning work. He was also featured in the most recent Cycle magazine. Several others have been nominated to Cycling UK; at the time of writing the committee is waiting to hear if the nominations have been accepted.

8. CTC Cymru

The CTC Cymru Welsh Festival of Cycling was held as a full-length version, for the first time since Covid, at Ruthin Rugby Club in July with up to 5 nights of camping and 4 days of rides & events. Riders from all of the C&NW CTC groups took part and many volunteered & helped out at the event. There were also riders from other Cycling UK groups around the UK. Weather was mixed, but those taking part were keen to return so for 2024 there are 4 days of rides planned, with the event taking place in Ruthin again.

9. C&NW CTC club kit

An order window was set up in later 2023. There were sufficient orders to reach the bulk order discount. 13 items were ordered; they arrived in early March. Kit has either been passed on to the purchases or will be passed on at the AGM.

Another bulk order can be set up in the future when it looks as if there could be enough demand.

10. Ride Leader Courses

Online courses have been set up by Cycling UK and all of the Club's registered ride leaders been invited to take part with several taking up the invitations. The offer of free courses for existing ride leaders will only run for a few more months.

Recently a new offer has been made for new ride leaders to undertake the course. The courses have been featured in the most recent Cycling UK magazine.

11. Safeguarding

Laurie Mason has continued in the safeguarding officer.

12. Archives

Graham Hill the Club archivist has sent electronic copies of club documents to Chester Archives. He has also taken scrap books, albums and records left by the late Glynn Jones to the Cyle Museum in Llandrindod Wells. We hope to display some others of Glynn's photos at the AGM.

13. Looking forward

The following table shows the C&NW CTC events proposed for next year. Please contact the Secretary or the organiser if you are able to volunteer to assist at any of the events.

Sunday 14 th April 2024	C&NW CTC AGM at Pulford Memorial Hall	Sec Lowri Evans
Weekend of 20 th April	Fab Ladies Weekend – Bala (now full)	Sue Booth
Sunday 12 th May 2024	Tour of the Berwyns & Panorama Audaxes	Dave Matthews
9 th June 2024	New Audax events 😊 in the west of the C&NW CTC area. Glan Gwna 200/125 A great chance for riders to experience new routes	Graham Hines
<i>Sunday 16th June</i>	<i>Chester Active Travel Festival C&NW CTC aiming – volunteers needed please</i>	
Sunday 23 rd June	Bob Clift Memorial Cheshire Cycleways 50 mile event – limited entries – Duddon start	Dave Matthews & Watson's Wanderers
Sunday 7th July 2024	Bert Bailey Memorial Vets 100.	Ian Slater
13 th July 2024	Corwen July Audax events Barmouth, Y Brenig Bach & Bala Parade	Graham Hines
<i>25th to 30th July 2024</i>	<i>Welsh Festival CTC Cymru Ruthin– rides on Friday, Saturday, Sunday & Monday</i>	<i>Emrys Jones / Lowri Evans</i>
<i>Sunday 27th August</i>	<i>Wild Wales entries now open – details have been circulated to members</i>	<i>Merseyside CTC</i>
7th September 2024	Momma Audax Events	John Gallagher mentor Brandon Edgely
Sat 28 th Sept 2024	Hill Climb & Freewheel – from Llanbenwch	Lowri Evans
Sat 12th Oct 2024	Corwen Audax Events Clwydian etc	Graham Hines
Sunday 20th October 2024	President's Ride & Lunch and 85 th Anniversary celebration– Walk Mill with Lunch in the Memorial Hall in Tilston.	<i>C&NW CTC President</i>

Thanks

Thank you to all who contributed to this report. A more detailed event reports, and some obituaries have been published in the Link.

Heartfelt thanks are due to all of the Club's volunteers including the members of the Committee, event organisers, rides leaders, webmaster, Facebook moderators, Link editor & subs manager, campaigners and the many other members who have worked hard and supported rides and events the year.

Special thanks go to some C&NW CTC volunteers who are standing down from their roles:

Janet Jones – Link editor – who has ensured that subscribers have interesting well produced magazines to enjoy

Graham Arnold – who has kept take of Link subscribers

Colin Bell -Treasurer -who has dealt with the Club accounts for many years with good humour and patience.

The Secretary would like to thank all who have helped & supported her in the role during the year; hopefully there is a bright future ahead.