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## **CTC Coventry**

### **AGM 2022 – Chairman's Review**

I have been impressed by the resilience shown by the Club over the last two years. The pandemic more-or-less shut down our cycling activities for a period. Behind the scenes the Centenary sub-Committee was busy planning events to celebrate our Centenary and salvage as much as possible. The only significant loss was the grand 100-mile event, but even this was ridden by six stalwarts without the event catering in place.

The Centenary Celebrations were kick started by the publication of a Souvenir Booklet edited by Paul Morton who gathered memories from older and newer members of the Club. I would also like to thank many local cycle shops and watering holes who sponsored advertisements to fund the production.

By coincidence, 2021 was also the Centenary of the creation of the War Memorial Park and of The Meriden Memorial Service. Unfortunately, the planned triple celebration day had to be cancelled, but the Special Barbeque at Fillongley was salvaged. About 60 members had a wonderful day in the spacious grounds of The Fillongley Village Hall. The only problem was too much sun – it was tough, but we coped.

Not only did Mike Thomas manage the Barbeque, but he also planned a tour from York to Edinburgh in June. Enjoyed by 10 members it was a huge injection of freedom to widen our horizons.

The major cycling event was a 100-km Centenary Challenge ride into the Northamptonshire hills by 43-riders, many of whom surprised themselves by riding the distance and handling the hills. Dave Hearn did an excellent job of organising the catering and the only criticism of the event was that there was too much food – can you believe it?

The final formal event of the year was a Centenary Dinner at Hearsall Golf Course in October, ably managed by Mike Thomas. We were pleased to welcome Sarah Mitchell, Cycling UK's CEO, and Julie Rand, Cycling UK's Development Officer, to the dinner. Throughout the year we have been collecting money for the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance Service – we were able to present them with a cheque for £2625 at the dinner.

The year has made more work for our Treasurer than usual - keeping tabs of a variety of additional trading activities: production of the Centenary booklet; jersey and badge sales; barbeque, 100km and dinner bookings; and Air Ambulance collections. Thank you, Keith Jeacock, for keeping a clear head and looking after the accounts. Talking of important out of sight tasks, I would like to thank Alan Jelley for keeping the website constantly up to date.

This is often people's first impression of the Club and is key to our success. Also, thanks to George Riches who keeps our IT systems working – it's surprising how often external changes are made that could stop us in our tracks.

We have a new powerhouse in the Club: Vicky Palethorpe, who was named as one of Cycling UK's 100 Women in Cycling 2021. Not only has she been a very effective secretary since 2019 but has promoted a successful Women's Group within the Club. As an example, the 100-km Challenge Ride comprised 50% women riders – an order of magnitude bigger than any previous events. Vicky and Marina Friend have been liaising with local community groups in Willenhall and Foleshill to encourage people to cycle more: we now have a program of monthly introductory rides. Vicky organised a Women's tour to Northamptonshire last year, with another to Staffordshire programmed for this year.

There have been a couple of disappointments that I should mention: The Transport Museum asked us to help them with a cycle display they were planning – we spent a lot of time preparing some short rides for them and making us believe that, on receipt of archive material, there would be some publicity for our Centenary. However, our efforts disappeared into a black hole, and we heard no more. The same thing happened courtesy of the City Council with some historic City rides. The Council also disappointed us with a Centenary Garden display – Dave Hearn spent a lot of time preparing several designs, one of which was planted near the Starley Memorial. Unfortunately, no maintenance was carried out and it looked more like the Sahara Desert, than a tableau of cycle touring.

I must not dwell on the negative. Weekend rides have blossomed with rides on Saturday and Sunday. This has allowed a greater variety of rides catering for the differing needs of Club Members – short introductory rides, rides of different lengths with refreshment stops, faster rides with no stops, and women's rides. Thank you to all our existing leaders for making such an ambitious schedule possible. However, we are in danger of over-stretching our resources and we need more volunteers to lead rides.

Mid-week rides have also been popular with Tuesday Rides well supported. Marina Friend regularly leads a Wednesday Women's Ride, which has occasionally combined with a Thursday Ride.

Thank you, Dave Hearn, for keeping the Winter Clubroom going since pandemic restrictions were eased. This was helped by using some Tuesday evenings for special purposes – cycle maintenance and leaders' meetings. Please come along to next winter's Tuesday night meetings: I think you will find it inspirational to see what other Club Members have been doing on Club Tours, or on private tours. The bicycle is such an amazing form of transport taking you on adventures you would never experience by car.

Finally, a big thank you to for supporting Club events and a special thank you to everyone who has led a ride or helped run other events – this is such an important thing to do and is the only way we can make events happen. For example, the 100k Challenge Ride had 43 riders and required 20 volunteers to make it happen – some were riding, but others were staffing the watering holes, taking photographs, checking riders in and out at the start and finish, on stand-by with a rescue car or baking cakes in advance.