

Greetings fellow Exeter Wheelers,

This is your **Springtime 2026 Member's newsletter**.



First up, **something very important** that we urge you all to do if you've not yet done so – give your responses in the ongoing (until 10th of April) [consultation on the Dryden Road safe cycling route](#).

This route is in danger of being lost as a safe cycling route, despite it forming part of a designated active travel route.

You will have received information from the club about this matter a day or two ago, but if that passed you by then here on our website is the info you require.

It only takes a few minutes to complete the [online DC consultation form](#), and it is important that as many of us as possible, as cyclists, do so, in order that local councillors and authorities feel confident enough to implement and, in this instance, keep in place safe cycle routes.

Just **ten minutes** of your time would be so well spent by getting your individual response in.

The club itself will be making its own representation in the consultation process, but it is crucial that individuals reply in their own right.

We've put [together a document](#) that both states the club's position on the matter and provides guidance to members for getting responses in.

Spring is now upon us, the snowdrops, primroses and other spring flowers are there for us to see in the hedgerows as we cycle past . . . although our attentions are usually now taken up in avoiding the potholes.

Of course, we can **report potholes** to Devon Highways [here on the DCC website](#). Such are the financial constraints that local authorities now work under, and so many are the potholes, that nowadays/at present these have to be at least 4cm deep and 30cm in width before they will be addressed . Not good news for cyclists – and no wonder gravel bikes are becoming so popular, with their fatter tyres. Perhaps such machines should be renamed simply 'British Road Bikes'? The 700 x 18mm tyres of yesteryear would not be groovy on modern roads, and with climate change it's only going to get worse. Sigh.

Nevertheless, the better weather is great to see, and was kind, aside from some early drizzle, for the two **EWCC Audax events** on the 8th of March – more details on how they went later in this newsletter.

Quite a few '**Saturday Social**' riders opted to miss their Saturday rides the weekend of the Audaxes, conserving their energy/available time resources for whichever Audax they had opted for, so it was only 9 or so who turned out for the Social on the 7th, but they all enjoyed their morning's ride from Exeter > Stoke Canon > Bradninch > Talaton > Ottery > Tipton & thence to the café at the canal basin in Exeter for refreshments.

Remember there is plenty of info on the **club's rides** [here on our website](#)

The Tom Hawkins Road Race –

Exeter Wheelers have been organising races every year since its founding in 1924, aside probably from the war years, and we are proud to again be offering our annual [Tom Hawkins Memorial Road Race](#) to the bike racing world. This is one of the top bike races in the south west. It will take place on Sunday morning 19th of April, with the HQ at Uffculme.

We are, however, needing to find further volunteers to help at the event. The race organisers Jon Hare and Pete Bishop are in need of the following:

- A **qualified First Aider** to be initially at HQ then at the finish line area for any individual outside of the race itself requiring attention.
- **Line judges** – we need two or three people on the finish line, at least one of whom to be videoing the first riders over the line.
- Whilst the trend is for there to be a coffee vendor's van present in the HQ car park for people to buy coffee and cake from, it isn't always easy to find such, and really shouldn't we as a club at least provide a cuppa and something to eat for riders and helpers from club funds? **So, a couple of people to serve teas/coffees** from the HQ hall's kitchen/hatch please! it'd be good to have some home-made cakes on hand too

As a club, we really really do want to keep the Tom Hawkins Memorial Road Race on the calendar, as there are so many races be they Time Trials or Road Races now vanishing up and down the land.

Ex-gratia payments are available to helpers at our races, for instance each line judge can request £20, and a static first aiders £25. Other roles would also receive

EXETER WHEELERS PRESENT

BRITISH CYCLING SOUTH WEST

SCAN TO ENTER

THE TOM HAWKINS MEMORIAL ROAD RACE

SUNDAY 19TH APRIL 2026

9 LAPS / 110KM / 68 MILES
2ND, 3RD, 4TH CATEGORY
REGIONAL A | BAND 3

RACE HQ
**MAGELAKE HALL, CULMSTOCK ROAD,
UFFCULME, DEVON, EX15 3DP**

SPONSORED BY
Exeter Brewery

payments, and those who Email the club at info@exeterwheelers.co.uk Thank you !!

And the club this week voted to extend the **'free entry for EWCC members to EWCC races'** offer for another year i.e. to the end of 2026 !

The Exeter Wheelers CC Annual Awards and Social Night took place last month, attended by 50 members, at the Cowick Barton Inn, and was a convivial affair. The guest speaker this year was Richard Hallett, whose lifelong immersion in cycling includes more than a decade as technical editor for Cycling Weekly, amongst other publications, testing and reviewing bikes and equipment, as well as being a published author on the technical aspects of the modern bicycle. A keen competitor over several decades, his cycling currently centres nowadays on sportives and pannier-toting touring after a former life spent riding endless laps of Herne Hill track and the Crystal Palace crit circuit in between riding time trials. He had some interesting tales to tell including how he had lift from Eddy Merckx, and how whilst most cycle equipment these days is well designed, he had come across some spectacularly abysmal (and dangerous) component designs ! Richard was on hand then to hand out the club awards, which were as follows:

EWCC Youth Academy best riders	Monty Higgins, Tiago Pacheco & Filipe Pacheco
Margaret Baker (Four Firs Hilly) overall winner	Andrew Whittemore
Margaret Baker (Four Firs Hilly) fastest EWCC rider	Andrew Whittemore
1 st club 10 mile time trial champion	Luke Osborne
1 st club 10 mile time trial champion, veteran category	Frederick Mayall
1 st club 'Evening Ten Mile TT Series' winner	James Greenaway
1 st club 25 mile time trial champion	Luke Osborne
1 st club 25 mile time trial champion, veteran category	Frederick Mayall
1 st 100 mile time trial champion	Luke Osborne
1 st 100 mile time trial champion, women' category	Nik Rorke
1 st club hill climb	Andrew Whittemore
1 st club hill climb, women	Ayse Vahiboglu
1 st British Cycling road and track, men	Finlay Webb 149 pts
2 nd British Cycling road and track, men	Andrew Whittemore 61 pts
3 rd British Cycling road and track, men	Gideon Aroussi 18 points
1 st club cyclocross	Tim Carpenter
1 st Audax super randonneur	Sarah Britton 3000km

2nd Audax super randonneur

Andy McRae 2790km

3rd Audax super randonneur

Richard Salisbury 1400km

Nik Rorke and Luke Osborne, pictured below, who took the awards for best 100 mile time trial performances amongst our men and women. Nik and Luke both rode the National 100 Mile Time Trial Championship event as their chosen 100 for 2025, which took place on a rolling course in Gloucestershire, on what was probably one of the hottest days of the year. Both found it very tough, with their speeds dropping drastically into the 2nd half of the race.

Nik said it was actually a bit scary, you knew you were entering dangerous territory in terms of body temperature. A piece of kit adopted by many of the top long-distance time triallists is the 'Camelbak', where fluid is stored in built-in water sacks in a wearable vest – this works well as it holds plenty of fluid obviating the need to take on liquid until later in an event, or not at all, depending on race duration. A rider's aerodynamics are also no need to move out of your 'tuck' position to reach for your frame bottles. However, as Luke related, on the day in question the heat meant that liquids stored in such a way ended up as warm as bathwater, yuk, and not therefore good for keeping a rider's core temperature within performance limits. Individuals whose drink supplies came via bottles kept in coolboxes then handed up to them did best. Camelbak's also make it look like you have a large beer gut or are possibly in your third trimester





Above, Finlay Webb being presented with his award for most BC road and track points by guest speaker Richard Hallett.

Fin races in the C5 para-cycling classification, and has moving up into the senior category for 2025, but despite his youth achieved superb results on in road races not only in the UK in national events, but also on the continent, including in world cup events. On the track, a string of fine performances clinched him first place overall in the Lloyds Para-cycling National Track Series in C1-5.

Our second highest BC Road & Track points gatherer was Andrew Whittemore, who included 1st place EWCC and Exeter University CC Westpoint 'Cream First' crit races, plus a 5th place overall in the Panaracer GP Stage Race, and 8th overall in the Tom Hawkins.

Gideon Aroussi, pictured left, was our third highest BC Road & Track points-gatherer, gaining his points via 5th in the SW Regional Criterium Champs in the vet. 50-59 category, 5th in the Dawlish GP Support Race and 6th in the Tom Hawkins.





Our top EWCC Youth Academy riders Monty Higgins, Tiago Pacheco and Filipe Pacheco, pictured above at the Awards Night, have not been resting on their CX laurels, but are presently engaged in riding the various rounds of the SWXC league, a.k.a 'Cross Country' or Mountain Bike Racing – this looks like fun if a little scary on the descents at times. . . . Filipe and Tiago have also got their dad Diogo now racing the events too.



Our Hill Climb organiser Andrew Whittemore (left) was not only the fastest EWCC rider up the Stoke Woods hill, but was also overall winner of the Four Firs Hilly Time Trial.

Andrew's wife Thuza was also present on the evening, in a heavily pregnant state, and indeed a month or so later they became proud parents of a baby girl, which they have named Beatrix, pictured on the right here. She looks very wise.



Mother and baby are reported to be doing well. Thuza had been able to swap notes and receive advice from new mum Rebecca Osborne at the do, as Rebecca and her husband Luke brought along their very lovely baby Annie to the do.

An extensive raffle was held at the end of the evening, many thanks to all those who bought along prizes.

Next year the event will start at an earlier hour, possibly starting mid or late afternoon, as this would work better with many people. It would also mean no danger of sounds from any pub 'open mic/band nights' drifting through to us.

There are plenty more photos from the evening and indeed other EWCC-related photos on the club's [2026 photo web page](#) – feel free to post any of your own 2026 EWCC photos up there, it's there for all of us.

EWCC members enjoyed a visit to the Newport Velodrome



Exeter Wheelers Mike Mason-Saunders, Phil Harris, Dave Wilkinson, Andy Webb, Diogo&Tiago&Filipe Pacheco, Aaron Lawrence, Jon Hare, John King and John Cowen made the trip. Fin isn't in the picture above as he was whizzing round the track at the time.

Phil Harris said afterwards "When an opportunity to tick off an item on your bucket list comes your way you must grab at it. I have been a lifelong follower of cycling as a sport so the chance of riding in a velodrome was not to be missed. It did not disappoint! Not having ridden a fixie for over 50 years the session started with some trepidation. This soon passed. We were expertly coached with a series of small challenges each building our skills and confidence until it seemed as though we were racing around. A great day out! Thank you Exeter Wheelers CC"

We will be planning another of these trips in a year or two, and will give more notice next time and maybe a later start time, as it was a bit early in the for some, considering it was a fair few miles up to Newport in the first instance.

EWCC Whatsapp groups & Spond.

Communication is the name of the game and we are currently getting ourselves organised with Spond. Many will know what Spond is, and some won't.

Many sports and community groups use it, and we are starting to do so with our rides, plus will configure it to help us with such things as membership management.

"Spond simplifies event planning and participation coordination. The platform allows you to create events, invite people, and keep track of results and registrations, making it easy to see who is attending and communicate with participants. With great user-friendliness and the ability to streamline the planning process, Spond is a practical tool for groups, sports teams, or organizations looking for better control over events and participation".

You can find out more from the [Spond website](#)

We will be introducing 'granularity' into our Spond setup in due course, so that members only get notified of rides of the type/day they are interested in rather than all of everything hitting members ! Please bear with us

If you are keen to get started with Spond and haven't already done so then you can do the following:

- Download the Spond app to your mobile phone (or [click here](#) to visit online)
- Search for 'exeter wheelers cycling club' and request to join
- Alternatively, [click here](#) to join the club automatically
- If asked for a code to join the club, the code is PECOI
- Set up your account and provide next of kin and medical details
- That's it!

We'll continue with our club **whatsapp** communities, these allows you to chat with other club members.

[Click here](#) to join the Exeter Wheelers community, which contains a number of channels for specific interests and rides.

There is now, for instance, an **EWCC Women's Whatsapp Group**.

And on this subject, at our next committee meeting an item on the agenda will be **women's participation** within the club, and would urge female members to come along to the meeting, or to send us your thoughts, feelings and ideas on the subject via info@exeterwheelers.co.uk

The **next committee meeting** is 7.30pm Monday 13th April, upstairs room, The Cuckoo Bar, Paris Street, Exeter

Mad March Audaxes

The 8th of March saw two EWCC Audax events taking place, being the 100km Mad March Up & Blackdown and the 200km Mad March What a Budeful Day. If you took part then you might like to share any pictures you may have by uploading them (a simple drgg&drop operation) onto the [2026 EWCC photo page](#)

The event was a sell-out for both the 100km (100 riders) and the 200km (50 riders), which meant a combined mileage completed of 20,000 kilometres, or roughly from Exeter to Tokyo and back as the crow flies. A crow with good endurance and full bottle cages that is.

Epic day out - tough!!! Nice surprise to find out I was first female 🏆 100 Really well organised. Great coffee/cake stop. Soup stop too!

Huge respect for 200 riders - wow! Big day out 🙌

20:36

Really enjoyed it, took it very easy. Amazing route in to Exeter on roads and paths 90% of which I'd never Been on or knew existed.

22:37

Event organiser Lucy Bufton (thank you for all your hard work Lucy!) says:

Despite the damp and foggy weather, the Mad March Audaxes had a strong attendance. 59 took part and completed the 100k Up And Blackdown course. On the 200k course, 49 of 51 starters completed the tough ride. There were many riders completing in both rides as their first ever Audax which was great to see. The event also raised money for the Wheelers and for a local charity Rowcroft Hospice.

Well done to everyone who took part! For more information on other Audax rides to take part in have a look at the calendar here: <https://www.audax.uk/choose-a-ride/calendar-events>. Lucy.

Sign on in the hall



**The north coast: sea,
mist, fresh air, and
all under rider's own
steam.**



**top of the
Blackdown Hills,
photo courtesy of
Veronica White**



5 month old Bonnie Buffon keeps an eye on Lucy and Richard's organisational skills.

The **South-West Cyclo-Cross League Awards Ceremony** for season 2025/26 was staged in the Heritage Lounge at St James Park, Exeter in January. Lovely to see our young Monty Higgins go up to receive his trophy for his overall first place in the under-8's Open Category after a SWCX season of ten races. Monty started all ten, and finished all ten, with a remarkable 8 wins and two 2nd places.

And hot off the press is that Monty has done the double in that he's won the SW XC (Mountain Bike) under-8's category too !



Exeter Wheeler Rich Taylor (left) received a special prize - the SWCX 'Spirit of Cross' Trophy, an annual award that goes to a member of the SWCX organisers in recognition of services rendered to SWCX. Rich also races SWCX, as is looking forward to riding in the 60+ category for the first time this coming 2026-27 season, where he will undoubtedly be getting many a podium place. It looks like EWCC will be well-represented amongst the 'super-vets' with Rich joining Nick Helsing, Duncan Coe, Dave Wilkinson, Andy Webb and Pete Bishop in the 60+ category.

More photos are on the [SWCX Facebook Page](#) and the full SWCX League Tables [are here](#).

SWCX will be holding the AGM on 22nd April at 19:15. This will be online, and if you wish to 'attend' then please email secretary@swcx.org and a link will be emailed to you. The league is run purely by volunteers and as such it is always on the lookout for proactive people keen to get involved. We are also still looking for a Treasurer for the upcoming season. If you are interested in either of these opportunities please email chairman@swcx.org

EWCC & Road Time Trials

EWCC will once again be the driving force in the Wednesday night 'Evening Tens' series (details to follow in due course), and we have our traditional springtime [Four Firs Hilly Time Trial](#) a.k.a. The Margaret Baker Trophy on the morning of Sunday 12th of April, and are in need of marshalls.

There are Exeter Wheelers active in early season TTs this month, and there will be seven of them heading down to Tavistock for the [annual Tavistock Wheelers 25 mile hilly](#) TT that runs along the north-west edge of Dartmoor, a tough course that starts with a long hill ! Argh. This race is part of the CTT's 'Classic Series', being 6 races run on 'Sporting' courses up and down the country, and only road bike riders can win the overall trophy.

Finally, if anyone out there is feeling suitably bonkers, club 60+ veteran Pete Bishop will be riding this year's [National RTTC 24 Hour Time Trial Championships](#), and wonders if any other EWCC members might like to join him in entering. the event . . . you know you want to... it'll be an experience you won't forget.... Pete has entered 5 times, and finished 4 of them. If we get three members riding we will officially be a team ! And it being a National Championship you'll get your entry fee refunded by the club if you ask nicely !

At the other end of the Time Trial spectrum from the 24 Hour, the [National RTTC Hill Championship](#) this year is being held in the south-west on the Porlock Toll Road, 25th of October, organised by Minehead CC. The toll road is a nice long steady hill, unlike the gruesomely steep and horrible main road Porlock Hill. There will certainly be EWCC members entering the championship.

The **University of Exeter Cycling Club** have been very active in race organisation the last three or so years, putting on road race, crits, hill climbs and cyclo-cross events, which has been great to see. We are keen that they stay 'in the game', and there are ongoing discussions about how the two clubs might best liaise and work together.

At the recent **Exeter Uni Westpoint early-season crits** on the 28th of February there were a few EWCC riders taking part, with Tiago and Filipe Pacheco competing in the keenly-fought Under-12's Open category, and Michael Sanders-Mason going well in the under 16's - but for a late coming-together with another rider impeding his finish Michael would've finished in second place, having instead to settle for 5th place.

In the 4th cat. race EWCC'ers Sam Harris and Seamus Shard managed respectable mid-table 13th and 14th places.

The University of Exeter CC hold their [Road Race](#) on the 22nd of March, on a circuit based around Woodbury, Knowle, Colaton Raleigh and Newton Pop. They would be pleased if any EWCC members who are free on that day might like to volunteer to help. Again, use the info@exeterwheelers.co.uk email to offer your services.

Finally, more **good news to report on the youth side** – we are finalising details with cycle clothing supplier Shutt to expand our club youth kit range, similar to that which Wheel Velocity offers. We are also working to secure sponsorship to help subsidise costs for members.

Four EWCC members have also started a British Cycling off-road coaching course, due to finish in mid-March. Once completed, we will be able to begin offering structured off-road coaching to our young members and the wider community.

and stop press ! News just coming in !!

EWCC Youth Update – Exciting News!

We're thrilled to share that EWCC Youth has officially become a Go-Ride Focus Club! As part of this, we've received a grant that will support:

- Training and development for our coaches
- Race entries for our young riders
- New youth jerseys

We've also now officially partnered with Shutt Velo, which means our club kit is now available in a much wider range of sizes — including very small sizes for our tiniest riders! If you're a parent and would like your little wheeler to get more involved, we'd love to welcome you. Please join our dedicated youth group here:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/G1PCqUID9IZ98k562CN0N4?mode=hq1tcli>

Let's keep growing our next generation of cyclists! 🚴

You can find out more about Go Ride [here on the British Cycling website](#)

Late addition: New-ish Exeter Wheeler Duncan Coe, who has moved to the area from Berkshire area, has gotten stuck into things on the rides front and says: 'New Year New Rides - 2026 kicked off with some new ride options, to broaden the scope of what we offer members. These new rides are:

Sunday 'C' Ride (Leaving County Hall at 9am); and

Tuesday Daytime Ride (leaving Piazza Terracina at 9.30am).

Both aim to be sociable no drop rides, with speeds set by the group, but aiming for 14 - 16mph, with distances around 25 -35 miles. They will explore roads less travelled, aiming to get away from motorised traffic wherever possible. Routes are published on Spond before each ride. Whilst the weather in January and early February brought a number of challenges these rides are now getting into their stride. As the weather improves we hope to offer some variations with Fish and Chips on the beach one suggestion that we will explore further.'