



## **THEY RODE A BLAZING SADDLE!**

### **Cycling UK Stevenage Presentations and Christmas Lunch \* The Twelve Rides**

SOPHIA MORRIS, PENNY SCHENKEL and ALAN BAXTER will be riding the Blazing Saddles into 2018 as they were the main prize winners at the Cycling UK Stevenage group's presentations and Christmas lunch on Sunday. Despite the heavy snow nearly everyone made it to the King George IV in Baldock for the 1230 start.

Sophia won the junior Blazing Saddle with GEORGE UNDERHILL second and ZOE NUTTALL third.

In the women's competition there was a remarkable tussle for third, fourth and fifth place with only two points separating Sophia Morris fifth with 73, HELEN HARRIS fourth on 74, and winning "New Kid On The Block," from JACKIE COOPER who emerged in "bronze" position with 75 points. NICOLA MORRIS was second on 91 while PENNY SCHENKEL was leading lady and won the "BOSC" trophy, her massive 149 points was enough to place her second in the overall competition. It is perfectly possible for a woman to win overall and it has happened hence BOSC – best opposite sexed cyclist. If a woman wins overall the leading man gets the BOSC.

However the amazing ALAN BAXTER won the Blazing Saddle, it really is a saddle, with 190 points and averaging almost three qualifying rides every week throughout the year. DAVE HALL was second man on 140. There was another tight battle here for third, fourth and fifth with PAUL BOIELLE third on 98; JON COOPER fourth on 97 and JIM BROWN fifth on 96.

Gold, silver and bronze medals were awarded for Emitremmus, the Start of Summertime Specials, the Skills Challenge and the various other events organised locally throughout 2017. JILL BORCHERDS won the tourist trophy as best local rider in the national competition.

STUART HIGHAM won the local skills challenge with Penny Schenkel first woman and KIERAN HIGHAM first junior.

Jason Morris introduced the cycling treasure hunt to the calendar in 2017. The event produced joint winners in Nicola Morris, Sophia Morris. Penny Schenkel and Pete Woolmer.

The awards were presented by JIM BROWN, group secretary who retires from the national board of Cycling UK on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 after 26 years, with a lot of help from MELODY BROWN. Jim was first elected to the Council of the CTC in 1990.

This was also an occasion to say thank you to all the volunteers who made the 188 rides and seven events possible during the year. In particular JILL and JIM BORCHERDS won the Ride Makers' Award for all their hard work administering the Blazing Saddles statistics and doing the group's printing. Jackie Cooper, Paul Boielle and Pete Woolmer for leading the most rides. The vital role of sweeper was not forgotten with awards to super sweeper PAUL HILL, Paul Boielle and Penny Schenkel. There is a radio link between the leader and sweeper on local Cycling UK rides so no-one gets left behind.

The 2017-2018 Blazing Saddles competition starts now! Yes we confess a certain Mel Brooks inspiration when the Blazing Saddles was launched in 1992.

### The Twelve Rides of Christmas

Cycling UK in Stevenage have twelve rides of Christmas and you will be very welcome. The twelve will include Santa's Cycles, Cold Christmas, three Saturday Starters – morning rides ideal for newcomers and the Resolution Ride.

All the rides are free! Here are the choices:

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup>. Saturday Starter. Morning ride to Watton-at-Stone. Coffee, tea and cakes in Crumbs. Meet at Costello's Café in Fairlands Valley Park (SG2 0BL) at 10.30a.m. Sociable pace with a radio link between leader and sweeper so no-one gets left behind. Back by about 1p.m.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup>. The Cold Christmas Ride. This one is a bit longer. Keeping in theme it will take you to the small village of Cold Christmas and the meridian line. Meet by the Christmas tree on

the green outside Springfield House Community Centre in Old Stevenage (SG1 3EJ) at 9.30a.m. Expect to cycle about 38 miles at a moderate pace.

See the Christmas lights with Santa's Cycles on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>. This is great fun. Why not decorate your bike – lots of extra festive lights can be very effective – and get your fancy dress on for a tour of the town. Meet by the old Stevenage Christmas tree (SG1 3EJ) at 7.15p.m.

The Saturday Starters will be out again for a morning ride to the Letchworth fountains on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Meet Jim at Costello's Café in Fairlands Way (SG2 0BL) for a 10.30a.m. start. There will be a refreshment break. Expect to be back in Stevenage about 1p.m.

Anxious about your Christmas dinner? No worries. Nicola will take you on a spin to Hertford and back on Christmas Eve. Meet her by the old town Christmas tree (SG1 3EJ) at 10a.m. Expect to cycle about 30 miles with a break in the Rose Café. Then you can pedal off the pudding on Boxing Day when you can meet Robert in the old town at 10a.m. for a 20 mile ride to Radwell and back.

Now we are into a series of seven rides in seven consecutive days, and it's December.

On Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> there will be a Wednesday Wander. Meet by the old town Christmas tree at 7.15p.m. Don't forget your lights and warm layers. There are Wednesday Wanders EVERY Wednesday.



Then on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> there's a day ride to Norton and Ickleford. Leave Costello's Café (SG2 0BL) at 9.30a.m. and enjoy a coffee stop at Bickersdyke and lunch in the Old George.

Ride Nine is a morning ride to Hitchin and back on Friday 29<sup>th</sup>. Meet by the old town Christmas tree at 9.30a.m.

The third starter in the Christmas series is on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>. To enjoy this free morning ride to Codicote get along to Costello's Café in Fairlands Valley Park in time for a 10.30a.m. start.

Your last chance in 2017 leaves the old town Christmas tree (SG1 3EJ) at 10a.m. on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December. Don't miss out.

Then the Resolution Ride is a great way to see in the New Year. Meet by the old town Christmas tree (SG1 3EJ) at 10.30a.m. to ride to Vanstone Park and back.

You will find more rides on [www.stevenagectc.org.uk](http://www.stevenagectc.org.uk)



### **Saturdays Go Mornings**

Don't forget that in winter Cycling UK Stevenage's popular Saturday Starter half day rides start at 10.30a.m.

The weekly rides are ideal for newcomers. Get along to Costello's Café which is by the Sailing Centre (SG2 0BL) in Fairlands Valley Park in time for that 10.30a.m. Expect to ride about 15 miles at a sociable pace with a leader and sweeper who will be linked by radio. No-one gets left behind. This week's ride (9<sup>th</sup> December) goes to Tewin and back.

The Saturday Starters will go back to 2p.m. in March as the days get longer.

The Wednesday evening rides continue throughout the autumn and winter. Bring good lights and meet near Springfield House Community Centre (SG1 3EJ) in the old town at 7.15p.m. EVERY week. And there are lots of Sunday rides – see [www.stevenagectc.org.uk](http://www.stevenagectc.org.uk)

Remember Cycling UK ride with each other not against each other. Stevenage Cycling UK group rides have experienced ride makers, a leader and sweeper with a radio link, on the front and back – no-one gets left behind. You can get more details by contacting Penny (07787 816434); Jim (0793 968 7509); Nicola (0791 643 8610) or Tina (01438 235881), by visiting [www.stevenagectc.org.uk](http://www.stevenagectc.org.uk) or by emailing [jim@stevenagectc.org.uk](mailto:jim@stevenagectc.org.uk)

Cycling with your local Cycling UK group is a great way to get fit and enjoy the local countryside in good company. Cycling is fun, it's good for the environment, sociable and it's also good for you. Cycling UK Stevenage is the local group of Cycling UK – formerly known as CTC, the National Cycling Charity.

**ENDS**

More from JIM BROWN 0793 968 7509; Penny (07787 816434); or Tina Walker 01438 235881. For national information contact the national Cycling UK press office on 01483 238 315, 07786 320 713 or email [publicity@cyclingsuk.org](mailto:publicity@cyclingsuk.org)

The CTC, now known nationally as Cycling UK, is the national cycling charity. It is run by cyclists for cyclists. The national website is at [www.cyclingsuk.org](http://www.cyclingsuk.org)

CTC/Cycling UK works to promote cycling by raising public and political awareness of its health, social and environmental benefits, and by working with all communities to help realise those benefits.

CTC/Cycling UK has been protecting and promoting the rights of cyclists since 1878. CTC is a not-for-profit organisation funded through memberships and donations. We focus on the social side of cycling as well as being a powerful and independent voice on behalf of ALL cyclists. CTC offers a range of benefits, including insurance and legal advice, for every type of cyclist. By joining CTC YOU are supporting UK cycling and giving us a louder voice on issues that are important to all users of cycles.

#### Notes to editors:

Cycling UK, the national cycling charity, inspires and helps people to cycle and keep cycling, whatever kind of cycling they do or would like to do. Over a century's experience tells us that cycling is more than useful transport; it makes you feel good, gives you a sense of freedom and creates a better environment for everyone.

Local Website [www.stevenagectc.org.uk](http://www.stevenagectc.org.uk)

To join Cycling UK / CTC visit <http://www.cyclingsuk.org> or 'phone 0844 736 8451

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