

# The Gemini<sup>★</sup><sup>★</sup>

## Bulletin

**Autumn 2022**

In a year of ups and downs, we again come together as a club at Sophie's Choice restaurant in Sidcup for the annual dinner on 4 November and award trophies to our worthy members celebrating their achievements representing the Gemini BC. This year the recipients are:

**Clubman of the Year - Colin Smith**, voted for by the club membership for organising the Gemini events at Hog Hill

**Senior evening 9-mile time trial trophy - James Hawkins** who clocked the highest average speed over three events in the series

**Senior 25 Mile Trophy - Huseyin Vardal** for the fastest 25 mile time trial time in the season (54:16 on the Q25/3 course at the Kent CA 25)

**Hill Climb Trophy - Huseyin Vardal** for coming 5<sup>th</sup> in the CC Bexley Stansted Hill Climb and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Gravesend CC Hill Climb on Exedown.

**Mercury Massed Start - Valentino Fontana** for amassing the most BC points during the season

**Veteran road racing trophy - Valentino Fontana** for being the club's most successful rider in vets racing during the season

**Long Distance Trophy - Neil Harrigan/James Hawkins/Huseyin Vardal** for covering 332 km in the Chase the Sun coast-to-coast event

**Charlie Almond Shield - Colin Smith** Awarded for merit on a bike for his consistent placings and two wins in veterans' races during the season

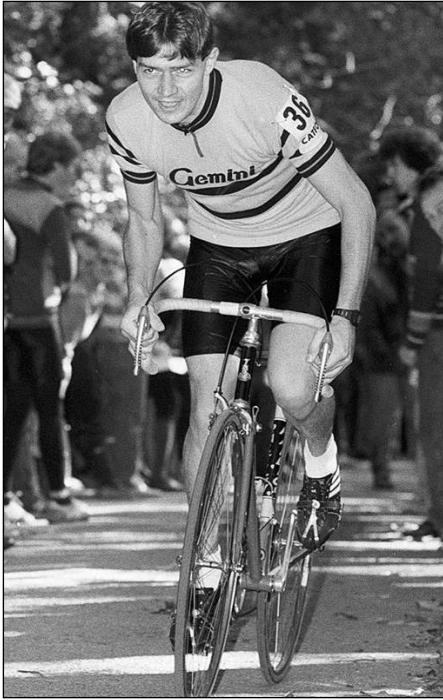


Huseyin Vardal at the CC Bexley Stansted Hill Climb

### **Peter Elliott and Russell Fenton memorial races**

It was with great sadness that the club lost two long-standing members earlier in the year. Peter Elliott competed successfully in road races and time trials in the 1970s before working full time at Welling Cycles where he will be fondly remembered for serving club members and all cyclists with his father Fred. As a juvenile rider in 1975 Peter won both the Kent Cycling Association 10 mile championship with a time of 23:44 and the South East 10 mile championship. At national level, Peter, along with David Akam and Stephen Homewood, won the team award in the 1977 Junior 25 mile championship. The highlight of his racing career was victory in the 1976 Harlequins Grand Prix, which was a prestigious event at the time held in North London. He also achieved a personal best over 25 miles of 55:55 in 1976.

Russell Fenton was a prolific winner on road and track from the 1970s to the 1990s and then switched to time trialling in the 2000s with continued success. Russ won many local road races and was divisional road race champion in 1986, as well as attaining top 20 results in the prestigious Star Trophy national road racing series and national championships against top calibre fields. He also won the Rochester Criterium, despite that not being his favourite format of racing.



Peter Elliott and Russell Fenton

In recognition of their contribution to the club, Colin Smith organised a pair of BMCR veterans' races at Hog Hill on 5 June in their memory. Peter's family were in attendance, as was Russell's mother Patricia, who all helped hand out the prizes in an emotional post-race ceremony. Fittingly, Colin won the EFGH Category race and former Gemini member Matt Holmes riding for the Arctic RT won the ABCD Category event. The club will be running these races on an annual basis as a memorial to Peter and Russ.



Winner of the Russell Fenton memorial race Matt Holmes on James Hawkins' wheel





Left: Matt Holmes with Julian Cann and Patricia Fenton. Right: Colin Smith with Sheila, Paul and Fred Elliott

Tragically, the club has lost other former members this year. Maureen Chisnel passed away in August. In the early days of the Gemini she, along with her husband Derek, was an avid supporter of the club and helped it grow in to one of the most respected cycling clubs in the south east. Alan Steinle, who was also a member when the club was first founded, sadly passed away in October. Peter Green also passed away in October. He had success on road and track in Gemini colours in the 1970s and 1980s and was a well-liked and respected personality in the local cycling scene over the years.



Peter Green

October was also the end of an era for the club when, through no fault of their own, the ladies at the Speedgate cafe were forced to shut their premises. We wish Sue, Karen well for the future and thank them for all the teas, coffees and cakes they served us over the 30 plus years as Gemini members have stopped there for refreshments on their rides enjoying endless chat and banter.

## Time Trials

Huseyin Vardal, Neil Harrigan and James Hawkins have represented the club in open events this year, posting some fast times on the courses around Kent. Huseyin proved to be something of a specialist in time trialling on a road bike, winning the Medway Velo 10, Kent CA 10 and 25 events in that category and leading in a 1-2-3 clean sweep for the Gemini in the latter event with Neil and James.

<b>Open events</b>		
<b>Date/Event</b>	<b>Rider</b>	<b>Position and time</b>
<b>August</b>		
14 <sup>th</sup> - Kent CA 25	Huseyin Vardal	4 <sup>th</sup> 54:16
<b>July</b>		
30 <sup>th</sup> - VTTA Kent 10	Huseyin Vardal	6 <sup>th</sup> 21:15
<b>June</b>		
12 <sup>th</sup> - VTTA Kent 25	James Hawkins	5 <sup>th</sup> 57:10
<b>May</b>		
15 <sup>th</sup> - Medway Velo 10	Huseyin Vardal	1 <sup>st</sup> 22:32 (road bikes)
1 <sup>st</sup> - Wigmore CC 25	Neil Harrigan	4 <sup>th</sup> 58:11
	James Hawkins	6 <sup>th</sup> 58:35
<b>April</b>		
17 <sup>th</sup> - Kent CA 25	Huseyin Vardal	1 <sup>st</sup> 57:24 (road bikes)
	Neil Harrigan	2 <sup>nd</sup> 57:29 (road bikes)
	James Hawkins	3 <sup>rd</sup> 59:46 (road bikes)
3 <sup>rd</sup> - Kent CA 10	Huseyin Vardal	1 <sup>st</sup> 23:37 (road bikes)



James Hawkins

## CC Bexley 9 TT

Several participating riders had complained about the difficulty of the Q10/27 10 mile time trial course, used in the past few seasons, which made for slower times than the courses previously used for the CC Bexley evening 10 series. As a result, the organisers shortened the distance to nine miles this year, moving the start to its previous location at the top of Death Hill and cutting out the climb. The Gemini's protagonists this season were Huseyin Vardal, James Hawkins, Chaz Hollosi and Colin Smith. Huseyin turned up at the last event of the series to take the win in 19:19 on a night of fast times and James had a second and a couple of third places in the events.

<b>CC Bexley evening 9 series</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Rider</b>	<b>Position and time</b>
<b>August</b>		
17th	Huseyin Vardal	1 <sup>st</sup> 19:19
	James Hawkins	6 <sup>th</sup> 20:01
10th	Chaz Hollosi	8 <sup>th</sup> 21:20
3rd	Chaz Hollosi	5 <sup>th</sup> 21:38
<b>July</b>		
27th	Chaz Hollosi	6 <sup>th</sup> 21:40
13th	James Hawkins	3 <sup>rd</sup> 19:58
	Chaz Hollosi	6 <sup>th</sup> 21:52
<b>June</b>		
29th	James Hawkins	2 <sup>nd</sup> 20:21
	Colin Smith	7 <sup>th</sup> 23:39
22nd	Colin Smith	8 <sup>th</sup> 23:52
15th	Chaz Hollosi	9 <sup>th</sup> 22:09
	Colin Smith	11 <sup>th</sup> 23:38
<b>May</b>		
18th	Colin Smith	12 <sup>th</sup> 24:04
<b>April</b>		
20th	Colin Smith	8 <sup>th</sup> 24:07
13th	James Hawkins	3 <sup>rd</sup> 21:30
	Colin Smith	5 <sup>th</sup> 23:53



Colin Smith making his starting effort at the CC Bexley 9 mile evening TT

### Road and circuit racing

Valentino Fontana carried on from where he left off last year by racing through the winter and getting some consistent results. In the Masters 40+ category in the East London Velo Winter Series at Hog Hill he was 7<sup>th</sup> in round 1 on 22 January and 10<sup>th</sup> in round 4 on 15 February. In the Full Gas Winter Series at the Olympic Velopark he took 7<sup>th</sup> in round 5 on 18 December and 10<sup>th</sup> in round 11 on **23** February.

In the Full Gas Spring Cup Series he was 8<sup>th</sup> in round 2 at the Velopark on 8 May and 8<sup>th</sup> again on week 3 held at Hillingdon on 16 May. In the Full Gas Summer Circuit Series he got in the top ten on ten occasions, taking 2<sup>nd</sup> in round 24 on 8 September. Val was also 6<sup>th</sup> in the Masters 40+ event in the Ken Wright Memorial Circuit Races on 29 May.

Ian Dawson achieved top ten results in the Masters 50+ category, taking 8<sup>th</sup> at the Full Gas Summer Circuit Series at the Velopark on 8 June, 6<sup>th</sup> in event 7 of the Full Gas Circuit Series at Hillingdon on 2 June and 10<sup>th</sup> on week 5 of the Summer Circuit Series at the Velopark on 27 May, as well as 8<sup>th</sup> in the Summer Circuit Series event on 11 May at the Velopark. James Hawkins also represented the club at the Kent League Cyclopark Circuit Races on 14 May, while Colin Smith rode to 17<sup>th</sup> in 60-64 E Category in the BMCR National Road Race Championships on 10 July.





Valentino Fontana

### **Trip to the Tour de France**

Neil Pearson relives the trip to watch the cobbled stage at Villers au Tertre and Bugnicourt on 6 July: Colin Smith, Brian Scarboro, Julian Cann, Andy Bates, and myself left early doors to catch the Eurotunnel shuttle heading for the cobbles of northern France, with Colin organising the trip and driving for the day. We eventually ended up at Villers au Tertre where the crowds were already building with hours to go before the Tour arrived; after many kilometres walked and freebees grabbed from the publicity caravan, we found our spot at the end of Sector 11.

Brian, clearly a pro at these types of events, bought along his extending pole with Fabian Cancellara perched on the end dressed appropriately in a Gemini jersey accompanied by a union jack and the Lion of Flanders, this attracted some jovial attention from those around us and pictures taken by official press photographers.

After randomly bumping into a group from the Medway Velo in the middle of this dusty French field, we secured our positions ready for the spectacle coming towards us. With the buzz of helicopters snaking their way in the distance gradually getting closer and with more and more motos and cars flying passed creating a funnel of dust, we knew it was just a matter of minutes before they would be upon us, then with a rush of noise, dust, and just plain chaos it was done!

So, with 80km of racing to go we found a typical French bar in a town full of stereotypical French and Belgium cycling supporters with their cycling jerseys straining to keep the beer bellies in whilst smoking cigars, Duvels and the local Tripel D'Anvers beers were enthusiastically sunk whilst watching the race on the telly on the wall. Now, with excitement building as the race drew to a conclusion, a big beer fuelled cheer went up for the winner, whoever he was. We said 'au revoir' to our hosts and started on the long stagger back to the car. We had a fantastic day out and look forward to the next big cycling spectacle around Europe.





Left: Neil soaking up the sun next to the cobbles of Sector 11. Right: The guys flying the flag for the Gemini whilst pretending to be Roger De Valaeminck

### **Chase the Sun coast-to-coast ride**

Winners of the club Long Distance Trophy - Neil Harrigan, James Hawkins and Huseyin Vardal rode an impressive 332 km in the Chase the Sun coast-to-coast event on 24 June. On the day of the ride James got up at 2.30 AM and the three arrived in Minster, Kent just before sunrise at 4 AM ready for the start around 45 minutes later. They overtook hundreds of riders before getting to Rochester on familiar roads and spotting the Gemini's Colin Smith out on a ride in the opposite direction near Longfield.

They entered London via St Mary's Cray and Bromley. Well out the other side of London, the lunch stop was at around 100 miles which they got to at about 10:30, averaging an impressive 19.5 mph to that point. James opted for a chip butty, sausage and a cheese roll, all eagerly consumed in readiness for the second half of the epic ride.

This would prove to be more difficult as most of the climbing was in this part, the toughest ascent reaching 15% gradient. Huseyin took advantage of the function on his Garmin Satnav/computer which showed the length and gradient of the next climb, helping pace the effort. After some rain showers they rode over the beautiful but challenging North Wessex Downs, with the cross wind and rolling terrain contributing to their fatigue.

After going through the town of Devizes, there was another stop at around 160 miles at a petrol station in Yarnbrook, where Huseyin got in a round of water and ice creams. Heavy rain greeted them for the descent of Cheddar Gorge, which tested their bike handling skills in the wet through the tight bends.

With around five miles to go riding over a deteriorating road surface of wet mud, gravel and potholes, James had a mechanical with his chain dropping between the crank and the chain

rings. Forced to walk up the steep hill he was on and requiring the assistance of Neil and Huseyin to fix the problem, they lost nine minutes sorting it out.

After riding hard into their destination Burnham on sea on the wheels of another group of three riders, they were greeted by Huseyin's family and hid under a shelter on the esplanade as a storm came in, thankfully after the ride was over, and they ate some much needed food and got into some dry clothes. Once the rain passed, James and Neil headed for the Wetherspoon's over the road to continue their recovery.

Their return journey was a nightmare of a cancelled train, arguments over getting their bikes onto the next one, late arrival into London and missed connections, proving that the only reliable way to get around the UK is with your own legs. James eventually got to bet at 1:50 AM after a very long day.

According to James's Strava stats, they covered the 205 miles in 10 hours 50 minutes at an average speed of 18.5 mph and he burnt 6,268 calories putting out an average 160W of power.



Neil, Huseyin and James having a well-earned break on their lunch stop at around 100 miles

## KCA reliability trial

Just last weekend, on Sunday 30 October, a few club members had the mad idea of tackling the 100km route of the Kent Cycling Association reliability trial, as well as riding to and from the start in deepest Kent. Neil Pearson takes up the story:

James Hawkins, Tim Kearley, and I set off at 06:40 in the rain and barely daylight to ride to the start of the KCA Reliability Trial at Claygate, east of Paddock Wood. Two hours later we made the start in heavy rain which followed us for all but the last couple of hours on the ride home.

James, who was clearly riding strongly along with Tim, patiently waited for me on a few of the steeper hills, with bananas and James's jelly babes fuelling the by-now sodden wet trio. We passed the Woolwich CC's contingent of riders who had punctured; maybe we would have stopped to help, but with the downpour of rain and remembering Russell Fenton's well versed quote "F@&%-em!!", we carried on.

At 90 miles covered, we stopped briefly at an Esso garage for a sugar hit. Covered in dirt, soaking wet and exhausted I was asked by the cashier "any fuel?" But I replied, only Shell V power for me nowadays (British Cycling sponsorship).

Once we had completed the KCA route back to Marden, we went on to Yalding to stop at the Tea Pot Island café for a very welcome bacon sarnie and coffee, then just two more hours to ride and home. It was a super day out and great company with James and Tim, with us all covering 200km on a very wet day around the lanes of Kent.



Neil Pearson, Tim Kearley and James Hawkins on the very wet KCA Reliability Trial