

## **2015 CHAIRMANS REPORT - HAFREN CYCLING CLUB**

2015 has seen the club continue to work hard to build a community club that reflects the needs of all ages, genders and sporting ambitions. Through 2015 we have seen significant growth both in the numbers of local cyclists getting involved and the diversity of activities and disciplines that the club now supports.

In 2015 fully paid membership has grown by 13.5% to 126, with the biggest growth areas being junior membership (up 31%) and women's membership (up 33%).

**Junior Club** - With 39 members in total, the junior section continues to expand and now offers Saturday morning cycle coaching to over 30 regulars.

The club is committed to providing a safe environment for its young riders to practice, as well as providing high standards of coaching and the move to the grounds of the Castalum factory has proven a good one during 2015 and has underpinned that philosophy.

Recognition of the club commitment to junior riders was rewarded during 2015 when Hafren obtained Welsh Cycling's Go-Ride Clubmark, for which the club had to demonstrate having met high quality standards in:- The Playing/Activity Program, Duty of Care and Welfare, Knowing your Club and its Community, Club Management.

The club is now also looking to work with local schools to offer opportunities to youngsters who do not currently attend the club sessions. Hafren will be offering a series of 5x60 sessions at Newtown High School, leading up to a Go-Ride Cyclo-Cross event in the spring.

The club is also in the process of working with Welsh Cycling to help provide a series of cycling sessions to local primary schools in early 2016.

In 2015 Hafren coaches helped Sport Powys run the Easter Triathlon Camp at Newtown Leisure Centre. This gave over 50 primary and secondary school children some introductory coaching and a chance to try a Triathlon (many of them for the first time).

Considerable thanks must go to Paul Bufton and all the coaches for their commitment and enthusiasm throughout the year.

**Women's Cycling** – During 2015 the club has embarked on work to address the 'male dominant' world of cycling. From small beginnings we have seen women's membership grow to 16 in 2015. The time trial series in particular has seen increased numbers turning up with regularly 6 or 7 women competitors each week.

In October '15 the club organised the first of three fully funded training sessions. Held at Sundorne Cycle Circuit, it provided a safe traffic free environment and was open to any local women, no matter what their skill level or sporting ability.

16 women turned up to this first session in what were less than ideal weather conditions. Feedback from this first session has now been received and the club will look to tailor future sessions to

ensure that the clubs significant commitment and investment in support of women's cycling is fully meeting the needs and aspirations of as many local women as possible.

The next two sessions that were planned for Spring 2016 are now under review. With the formation of a Women's Steering Committee, this group will now develop a plan of action for 2016 and beyond.

**Social Riding** - Social Cycling is the biggest part of our sport and sees the greatest member participation. The club have worked during 2015 to try and meet the needs of as many local 'Social Cyclists' as possible and our club rides form the platform for this to happen. Even within this area there is a diverse range of ability or 'need for speed'.

The Endurance, Tempo and Threshold structure was introduced in June '15 with the hope that ride formats were easier to understand with Endurance & Tempo catering for the more social riders, whilst Threshold allowed those who wanted speed, tough terrain and longer distance to do so without upsetting the more 'relaxed' club riders.

This format has proved difficult to deliver. In theory the Tempo ride should have proven the most popular, meeting the needs of those who sit in the 'middle ground', but we still see riders migrating to the slower or faster ends of the club ride spectrum and back to the 'old' two ride structure.

Clearly there is work still to be done and combined with our work with junior, women and novice riders it's apparent that during 2016 we now need to consider some shorter, less challenging rides as well as bedding down a usable format for the Sunday 'club run'. The shorter rides in particular are required to bridge the gap to the longer full club rides and in doing so we are then providing a full range of ride opportunities, hopefully meeting all the needs of our local cycling community.

**Competition** – Locally, Hafren again organised club time trials with a 16 race series spanning the Spring/Summer season. This series wouldn't be possible without considerable commitment and thanks must go to Tony Brooks for his continued effort in delivering another successful years racing.

In 2015 we saw a change in format with the requirement to marshal and therefore in doing so, gain bonus points towards the championship. This worked well and without doubt 2015 saw the best organised and best marshalled series to date.

The 'Open 10' in June was a total success – thanks to organiser Chris Taylor for organising and we look forward to continuing the clubs commitment to open events during 2016.

The club organised their third annual Cyclo-Cross event in Newtown on November 8<sup>th</sup>, with over 200 riders coming from across Wales to take part in what was Round 8 of the Welsh Cyclo-Cross League. Thanks to Paul Bufton for making this another resounding success and probably the best supported event in the clubs 2015 calendar.

2015 has seen our first venture into Grass Track racing, this proved very successful and will be back for 2016. This also proved to be great for family involvement and many came along to Welshpool armed with picnics and whether competing or not a fun time was had by all.

Roller Racing was planned during 2015, but due to what has now been identified as a 'major glitch' in our roller hardware didn't materialise, but Tony Brooks and Jonathan Andrews are in touch with the hardware suppliers and it is hoped that Spring 2016 will see our first events taking place.

Club riders have also been making their mark further afield whilst flying the Hafren flag. Notable mentions to Rebecca Richardson for her Top 10 at the National Cyclo-Cross Championships and to Jess Bufton for winning the Welsh Under 8 Cyclo-Cross Championship.

**Charity** - Supporting local charitable causes is important. As a community club it is key that we are putting something back into the community and we are proud to have supported the Welsh Air Ambulance and Severn Hospice over the past 3 years.

In 2014 we raised over £2,000 for Severn Hospice, which was donated at the beginning of 2015, this was also the on-going adopted charity for 2015. A final figure for 2015 has yet to be finalised, but will be communicated very soon.

**Awareness** – The club has worked hard over the past two years to increase awareness of its activities and commitment to its local community. Hafren CC regularly features in the County Times and MyWelshpool, with race reports, charity activities and social activities all shared with the local community – thanks to Darren Jarman for making this happen.

Our work with awareness has also gained us recognition further afield.

Our club jersey was featured in Cycling Weekly during 2015 along with many other club jerseys from across the UK. The overriding opinion was that we had pretty much one of the simplest designs and most recognisable jerseys of all those featured.

In August '15 we were again approached by Cycling Weekly who wanted to run a feature on a Welsh club and our name was first mentioned. This is quite an accolade given some of the longer running and more established clubs in Wales. A reporter and supporting photographer came over to Welshpool on October 18<sup>th</sup> and rode with the club, the resulting feature that was published on 19<sup>th</sup> November gave a glowing report on Hafren, its membership and its support of local cycling.

Finally, two items remain on the agenda which need to be carried over from 2015 – Asset Management and Asset Protection (Insurance). The club now possesses over £2,000 worth of equipment and support materials, this now needs to be managed and protected for future use. I hope the incoming committee will find time to address these points early during 2016 to further show that we are responsibly managing and maintaining the community investment in Hafren Cycling Club that we have received over the past 2 years.

In conclusion 2015 has been another great year and in closing may I thank the 2015 committee for their support and commitment throughout the year and wish the incoming Chairman and his committee much success during 2016.

Ride safely, but most importantly, enjoy the ride.....!

Rob Finch – 2015 Chairman.