

James Bond's creator, the late Ian Fleming, had a dictum which he often and summy repeated. It went something like this: "Tough men are very rare particularly after 40 when nature and disease have dented them."

On the 9th of July, however, it was an epigram shattered with all the ferocity of a James Bond karate chop by the 36 "tough men," each over 40, who battled for top honours in the 1972 National Veteran's Road Race Championship at Kirkham, Lancashire.

The event organised by the Ribble Valley Cycling and Racing Club and sponsored by Dynamo (Beecham Products) was run over five, 12-mile laps of a twisting rural circuit—similar according to many to the Leyland course used for the National Amateurs the week before.

THE SPATS OF HERMES

by B. PARKINSON

It was to prove a treat of a tussle and until the last 4 of the 60 miles was anything but a foregone conclusion for riders whose ages spanned two decades. A testimony to the fitness and determination of men who were competing internationally as far back as 1939.

Started precisely at 1 p.m. by Kirkham's number one citizen Councillor John F. Eadon it was soon apparent that it was going to be a no-quarter-given-no-quarter-asked contest. The age-points-classification race within a race seeming to spur every rider towards a high fast zenith—psychologically at least.

From the start from the Market Place bowl the bunch had to climb some 250 yds. to a left-handed hairpin there to turn on to the course

proper of this 60 miles ding-donger. The day was sunny and warm, the only "spoke in the wheel" as it were, being the strong breeze incessantly every inch of the way, over the course.

From a following car there was a feeling engendered that we were going to witness that sort of battle one expects from a "class" field of such "notables" as Jowett, Sandy, Jones, Clarke, Maitland and the many more who have filled columns of magazines and newspapers recounting their exploits of derring-do.

But to the business in hand. After about four miles from a bunch, travelling in excess of 24 miles an hour Wolverhampton RCC man Charles Morris and local rider John Mallinson (Ribble

Valley C & RC) gave best and came off the line. No mercy however and the rest steamed.

By 8 miles the 5 riders who through narrow lanes broke off the front had been back. Most of the horse work being done by Stan Jones (Concorde RC) last year's champion seemingly in great shape and than willing and able to defend his 1971 position.

The repair held for a further two miles. Maitland, Sandy, Jowett, Clarke, Brian Durlacher up and away for a 2 miles which effectively split the bunch in half. Work, however, by those in the rear brought

Bob Maitland on the right looks happiest of the medal winners as pose with the Mayor of Kirkham.



back and it was a solid phalanx of riders who swept through Wesham thence into Kirkham for the first of the 5 laps. It had taken just 27 minutes.

Up the hill, into the lefthander, on to the course proper and lap 2 was on. Clayton Velo's Jack Spencer seemed here determined that the proceedings be enlivened. It was a brave, short lived attack which seemed on its repulsion to quieten those with such thoughts of glory so early such was still the speed of the peloton that when 40 year old "youngster" Frank Garvey (South Manchester RCC) punctured he must have realised the effort that was going to be needed to rejoin. It was not to be.

After 17 miles seven men lost 100 yds. off the rear. Taylor, local man Mike Jones, Horsman, Richards, Mitchell, Mainwaring, and Moran. Then with 4 miles to the end of lap 2 Fred Hurt (Velo Club, Lincoln) provided the second puncture of the day. In the next 2 miles Garvey and Hurt joined forces in a grand slam attempt to rejoin first the seven backmarkers then, fates be kind, the fast moving leaders. A Barnackis of an effort that brought them in 9 min 2 sec after the main bunch, after a duo ride that speaks volumes of their fitness and determination.

Just before the 20 mile mark—a devilish hairpin known locally as Hellfire Corner—Yorkshireman and title holder Jowett jumped clear and no matter how hard the chasers tried the tough northerner was not to be caught. Not until he had pounded out lap 2 and all but completed the 3rd. At this point Jowett sat up and "allowed" the main peloton—by this time consisting of 20 riders—to take him back. Tactics not tiredness it seems.

Maitland and Sandy up to this point had undoubtedly been the main activists of the chase. It would, however, have been overly prescient at this stage to have forecast the

winner of what was proving by every mile to be a contest of great endeavour. Each rider seeming to have brought the spats of Hermes in his knapsack.

Indeed for the rest of lap 3 the whole of lap 4 with no one able to break free—and many tried—it seemed that the crowd that had gathered at the finish were going to see a 21 man sprint finish.

Peter Sandy (Somerset RC) the elder brother of ex-professional Brian Sandy had other notions.

With just 4 miles to the flag and attended by a "second wind" Jowett the lanky southern rider made off. For the next mile there was just a whisper of doubt that these two "youngsters" would make it.

The dividing ribbon of roadway by each wheel turn however became the more established and although eventual 3rd place man Maitland was able to break from the bunch he could not bridge the gap, and had to be content with his sprint win from a 19-man peloton.

Titleholder Jowett and Sandy were left to fight it out. And it was anyone's guess as to who would win the sprint down the dip into Kirkham's market centre. Peter Sandy in the last few yards managing that extra push necessary to make him a worthy victor.

I came away feeling that it was a great pity that in the way of things there had to be a winner. It was, however, fitting justice that all the finishers should have a token of their endeavours. And with such a bounteous prize list everyone was able to take home a memento of an event which must become a deeply entrenched part of cycling road sport.

It has struck almost as an after-thought that the Nationwide Television fitness fanatics could do worse than visit the 1972 event and see what 2 wheel exercise can do. Not a spare ounce of fat in the place!



PETER SANDY

RESULT

1	P. Sandy	Somerset R.C.	2-24-50
2	K. Jowett	Club Velo Cruz	at 1 lgth
3	B. Maitland	Concorde R.C.	at 18 s.
4	S. Jones	Concorde R.C.	s.t.
5	D. Petty	Keighley Velo	"
6	A. Halsey	Bacchfield C.C.	"
7	R. Parkin	Club Velo Cruz	"
8	J. Moran	Coventry R.C.	"
9	S. Hood	Newcastle Chev.	"
10	J. Mattox	Wolverhampton W.	"
11	F. Connel	Johnstone Wks.	"
12	D. Horsman	Keighley Velo	"
13	H. Scarth	Club Velo Cruz	"
14	P. Ward	Birkenhead Vic.	"
	A. Devenish	Johnstone Wks.	"
15	D. Gambles	Marlboro' A.C.	"
	J. Bennett	Beperion R.C.	"
16	J. Spencer	Clayton Velo	"
19	D. Clarke	Dilham Century	"
20	J. Armitage	Club Velo Cruz	"
21	H. Mainwaring	Larkhill Wks.	"
22	A. Newton	Abbotsford Pk.	at 45 sec.
23	M. Jones	Ribble Val. CBRC	57 sec.
24	H. Hill	Middleton CC	at 1-45
25	W. Braithwaite	Sheffield Ph.	5-38
26	D. Burrows	Clevesley R.C.	7-35
27	F. Garvey	S. Manchester	9- 2
28	F. Hurt	V.C. Lincoln	s.t.
29	L. Durlacher	Solihull C.C.	10-45
30	G. Taylor	Rhos on Sea C.C.	15-48
31	R. S. Richards	Scale Wks.	s.t.
32	D. Mitchell	Keighley Velo	s.t.
33	J. Mallinson	Ribble Val CBRC	at 1 lap
34	C. Morris	W'hampton RRC	"

(Left) The pace was always hot as the "old boys" contested their title.

