



TIMBER



Expanding, Building & Maintaining Mountain Bike Trails and Routes in the Thetford Forest

Newsletter Issue 1

www.timbermtb.org

January 2008

Happy New Year and the new TIMBER newsletter

Welcome and thanks for all your efforts in 2007

TIMBER chairman John Gould

The New Year is traditionally the time to review what has been achieved in the past twelve months, why break with that tradition?

A year ago in the dark months of 2007 we had a series of meetings in a variety of venues, before we finally came to rest in Oak Lodge... by far the most comfortable location! The early days were spent thrashing out our objectives, charter, image and committee. Almost as soon as he took on the post of secretary Graham Elliott had to resign, owing to pressure of work, and was replaced by Mark Davies. Graham's presence is still felt as he attends as many meetings as possible and, on the trails, can be seen in his hideous pink TIMBER t-shirt! Christine designed our website and passed on the administrative duties once she and Frank moved to Spain.

Next trail building day Saturday 2nd February, 9:30am in the Gorilla car park, High Lodge



Phillip Goodrum demonstrating the correct way to ride the new Tightrope section (photo by John Gould)

The TIMBER group has been bursting with ideas and enthusiasm it's been hard to find the time or resources to give them the attention they deserve. Despite this, we have achieved a lot.

Trail Building

Our first foray into trail building saw the Tightrope section of the Red Route develop from Paul Jewby's brainchild into a technical section as yet unseen in the forest.

A few months of solid work from the TIMBER trail crew and invaluable assistance from Darren and Alex from the Forestry Commission, saw us in a position to hold an opening event The TIMBER Tightrope Challenge on the morning of the prestigious 12 Hour Dusk till Dawn in October. Racing was fast and furious over the short but technical course. It was all a bit of fun and a good warm up for the main event later in the day. A short video clip can be seen on the website.

Our first winter trail building sessions have seen a start to the 39 Steps where we plan to create a fast, swoopy descent with big berms to replace the eroded, puddle filled "moguls" that are currently on offer. Plans are afoot to extend the trail beyond this section, missing out the old boggy trail and into "new" areas. If all goes to plan we will have technical sections, a rock garden and more log based obstacles.

The website has a calendar section with dates of future trail building days – more help is always required so please come along. See the last page for meeting point details.

Events

There are no firm plans for events in the immediate future, although we are not short on ideas. For example, we would like to plan a Trailquest (orienteering on a bike) for the summer, given enough time and volunteers. The emphasis would be on having fun and any funds raised will go towards trail building.

Several TIMBER members are taking part in the Winter Series XC races in Thetford. Results will be posted in the newsletter. If any other TIMBER members take part in any events or if there is an event you think others would be interested in, please let us know so it can be included in the next newsletter.

If anyone has any photos for the next edition send them in. They could be of trail building, you being "rad", comedy dismounts etc...

Winter Series Round 3

Race Report by Dave Tortoisshell

The forecast rainy day didn't materialise at Thetford but the day was heralded by strong winds gusting around High Lodge as the TIMBER trio of Richard Muchmore, Dave Reynolds and Dave Tortoisshell set up the stand in the race arena, using a lovely Scott Spark, kindly loaned by Paul Hill at Bike Art, as the model for a TIMBER T-shirt. With leaflets held firmly down we chatted away to racers and spectators alike as they milled around waiting for the start of the race and hopefully secured a few new recruits.

As the time drew closer the grids started to fill up, with the vast majority of riders in the most hotly contested 2 hour category. An early departure to the start line and Richard and Dave T were up with the front runners, Richard in his retro purple Ilford Crest kit and Dave sporting the strip of the Army. The 4 hour riders were on their way and the tension began to rise in anticipation for the 2 hour riders. The horn sounded and we were off. A mass sprint start out of the High Lodge arena and onto the fire-road got the legs and lungs working before the inevitable bottleneck at Squirrel Scamper Pit as riders queued to drop through the bombhole and on to the first section of singletrack.

Despite most people hoping the rain would hold off the course got progressively muddier and muddier the further in to it you got, in some areas it was pure, liquid mud, in others, where it was starting to dry, the consistency was more akin to porridge. An energy sapping first lap later and the racers were beginning to spread out and settle in to a natural rhythm - pedal, pedal, pedal, slip, slip, slip, pedal, pedal, slip - as tyres, no matter how knobbly failed to grip in the glutinous mud.

Richard sped off with the faster riders whilst Dave settled in to a steady pace aiming to catch one of the RAF riders he had been just behind on the line. With Graham (not wearing his pink T-shirt or tutu for a change) acting as a marshal encouragement was never far from hand as he honked his horn at riders emerging from the top of the dragging climb HRH.

Just over two hours later and Dave was hot on the heels of his RAF nemesis - with less than half a mile to go Dave was just a few short bike lengths behind, passing Rabbit car park he had managed to reverse the deficit and entering the wide grassy stretch in to the arena a tussle to rival anything Le Tour has to offer developed. In the all-out sprint through the arena the RAF rider managed to draw level and coming in to the final narrow section between the trees in the run to the finish line he gained the inside line and just managed to close Dave out to gain the line first. A handshake and congratulations were quickly exchanged before both riders collapsed over their bars exhausted and speechless after three laps and a spectacular finish that saw many spectators cheering on the inter-Service rivalry.



DaveT, racing for the Army, narrowly edged out in the final few metres by RAF rider Andrew "Slinky" Thirlwell in a dramatic sprint finish.

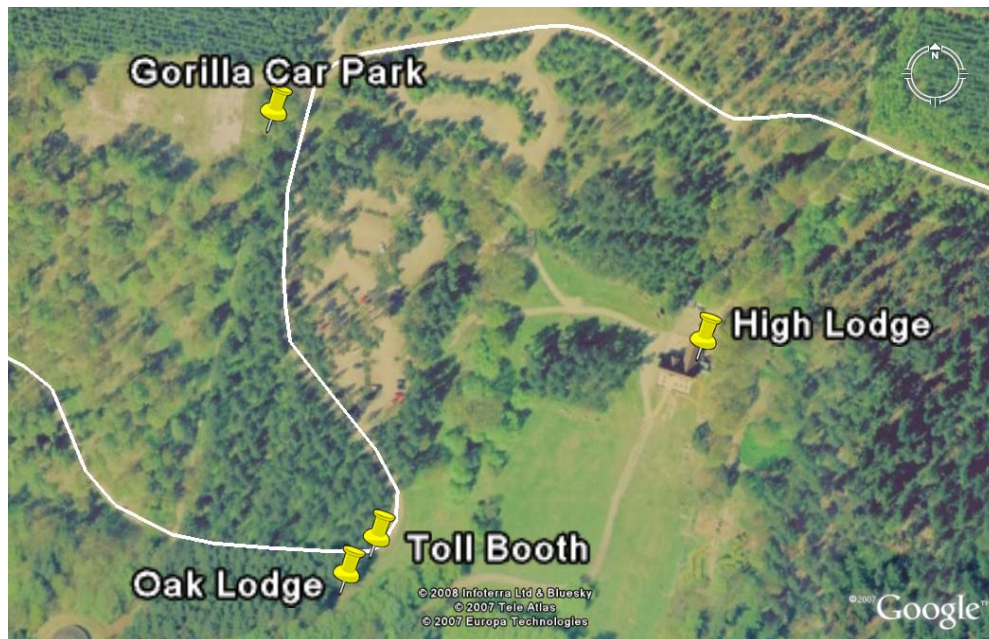
Half an hour later and Richard emerged triumphant from a fourth lap but covered in mud. A quick change and it was back to the stand for both riders to perk up a cold looking Dave R and to dish out a few more leaflets before heading home for a hot bath and an early night.

A good course, exciting racing and tough conditions – these are the ingredients that make winter racing such fun at Thetford. Roll on the fourth and final round...

NOTICES

NEW MEMBERS

We are always on the lookout for new members. If you would like to find out what we get up to or would like to join us on our woody gardening trips make contact via the forum or simply meet us on trail building days (9.30am in the Gorilla car park) or come to a committee meeting (7.30pm in Oak Lodge).



Directions to meeting points for trail build days and TIMBER meetings

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Subs are due in April. Annual membership fee: £15.00. Under 18's: £7.00. The Treasurer will be in touch closer to the time – prompt payment would be appreciated. Everyone will be sent membership cards on renewal.

TIMBER COMMITTEE

- Chairman – John Gould
- Secretary – Mark Davies
- Treasurer – Peter Harper
- Fund Raising – Roger Powell & Richard Muchmore
- Chief Trail Pixie – Paul Jewby
- Webmeister – Colin Herd
- PR – Dave Tortoisshell

CONTACT DETAILS

Email – info@timbermtb.org

Forum – <http://timbermtb.org/forum>

NEWSLETTER

Send contributions, photos and ideas for the next newsletter to peterh@peterharper.info. If you are interested in editing the newsletter you are more than welcome.

TIMBER SPONSORS

