

Wally Fowler

CTC member Wally Fowler just broke the UCI Masters 80-84 hour record. CTC Communications & Media Officer **Tony Upfold** spoke to him



● Wally on the Newport track on 24 October, smashing the age-group hour record

Wally Fowler's wine cellar doubles up as a training room, which is apt for a cyclist of such fine vintage.

Stourbridge Cycling Club's 81-year-old superman might even need to build a special champagne rack if he keeps breaking world records at this rate.

Wally destroyed the UCI Masters 80-84 one-hour world best by more than six and a half kilometres at the Newport Velodrome in South Wales on Saturday 24 October, clocking up a distance of 35.772km. He also holds the age-group bests for the flying 200 and 500m time trial, and now has a clean sweep in his sights with an attempt at the pursuit record at the World Masters in Manchester next October.

'I haven't drawn up my training regime for the next record attempt yet, but it might include cycling Alpe d'Huez, Galibier and Ventoux,' said this remarkable veteran, a CTC member since the 1980s. 'They are three of the world's most iconic mountain climbs and I'd like to ride them while I still can – sometime between the National Masters in June and my pursuit world record attempt in October.'

At 5ft 4in and 10st, great-granddad Wally is a sprinter at heart. But he has done plenty of cycle touring and – as his finest hour in Newport proves – he is no slouch when it comes to endurance.

He has lived in Kinver, Staffordshire, since 1983 but comes from Brighton, where he started track racing with the now-defunct Brighton Stanley Wanderers in 1950. He said: 'After National Service with the Army, I began

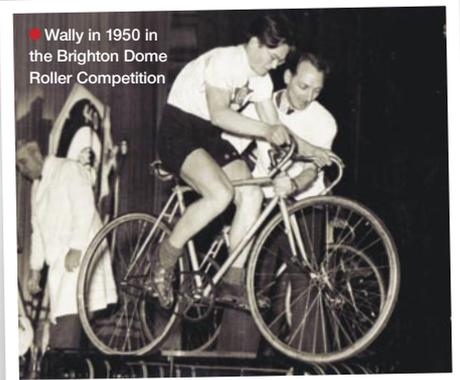
"I got back in the saddle in 1980 and mainly spent my time touring. In 2007, I got involved with the Masters"

a career in marketing, and cycling had to take a back seat for two decades as I chased jobs, moved around the country, and brought up a family. I got back in the saddle in 1980 and mainly spent my time touring.

'In 1994, at the age of 60, I cycled from Land's End to John o' Groats with a clubmate from Stourbridge CC, Nigel Roxburgh, who now lives in Australia. He was 12 years younger than me and twice as tall – so I sat on his wheel all the way. I'm sure my front wheel wore a hole in his rear pannier!'

In 2004, Wally cycled the 600 miles from Oregon to San Francisco with a group from Stourbridge CC, and 12 months later he was off on another adventure – this time alone. 'I decided to cycle the three Raids in consecutive years – starting with the Pyrenees in 2005, followed by the Alps and Dolomites, each about 600 miles in 10 days,' he recalled. 'When I got back from Italy, I wondered if I could still ride the track again after an absence of 50 years. So in 2007, at the age of 73, I got involved with the Masters.'

Wally rode the Raids on his 1960s Major Nichols touring cycle, which is now set up on a turbo machine in his cellar at home. 'It's a genuine wine cellar – with wine in it,



● Wally in 1950 in the Brighton Dome Roller Competition

of course! I had half-an-hour on the rollers nine days after setting the hour record and wondered how I could have cycled at the pace I had in Newport. It was hard work and I suddenly felt 81,' he admitted.

Wally's son Stephen and granddaughter Natasha were on lap-counting for his latest record-breaking ride. Sadly, one person was missing as he took the crowd's acclaim in Newport – his wife Margaret, who passed away suddenly last year.

Wally added: 'I have lived with CTC at my elbow for 65 years as a cyclist. They gave me useful advice and information for my End-to-End ride and provided major input when I cycled the three Raids. In the 1950s, we racers did not generally consider CTC. It is only when you mature and get some common sense you start thinking about the wider organisation for the benefit of cycling as a whole. And the obvious one is CTC.' ●

The video of Wally Fowler's hour record is online: bit.ly/ctc-wallyfowler



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