

## Neville's travels and sporting life remembered

**An obituary, written by Ferdie Gilson on former member Neville Chanin, who died on 17 April 2010, featured in last Spring's Gazette. Chris Harvey, of Old Gits' fame, reports from Stroud Museum where an exhibition was staged last June to October on Neville's travels and sporting life.**



Neville was part of the group of the all-conquering runners that the club produced during the 50's. He was a talented athlete, whose particular preference was cross-country racing. At the end of the cross-country season, he would make the teams for the road relays, but would be off riding his bike during the track season over the summer. He would arrive at the start of the next cross-country season with tales of the foreign countries that he had cycled through during his holidays. His November slide shows of his travels became a much-looked forward to annual event in the club's itinerary.

In the 1970's his job as a food technologist took him to Stroud, and he soon made his mark with the local cycling fraternity. Over the years, he clocked up an incredible mileage on his bike and visited a great number of countries during that time. So impressive was the distance he covered and the places he had visited, that his adopted town decided to honour his memory with an exhibition of his travels and his sporting life. The exhibition was mounted in Stroud museum last year and created so much interest that it was extended for a further month. The exhibition was visited by many of his friends from abroad whom he had met during the one million kilometres he had covered on his bike.

I, along with many of my generation, come from a cycling family, therefore,



when injury forced my retirement from running in my late forties, I turned to cycling once more. I joined Evesham Wheelers and found myself in the same club as Neville. It is hard to exaggerate the impact that Neville's enthusiasm and love for cycling has had on the cycling fraternity in this country and abroad. In 1972, he organised the Tour des Trois Vallées in Dieppe as a commemoration to the allies' losses during the Dieppe Raid of 1942. It

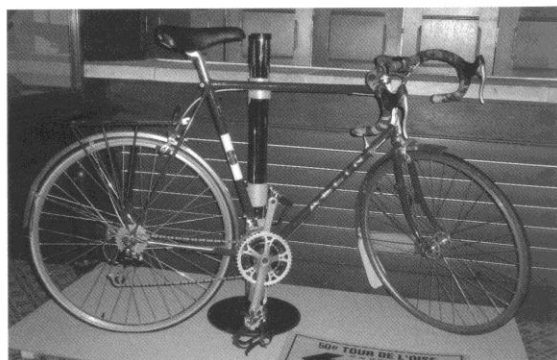
continues to this day. He was considered to be one of the best ever presidents of Evesham Wheelers, and was a tireless campaigner for anything that could improve cycling as a sport, and for cycling in general. It is not unusual for members of Evesham Wheelers when wearing their club kit on the continent, to have complete strangers stop them in the street, to shake their hand and mention Neville Chanin.

I visited the museum, which exhibited alongside his cycling memorabilia many of the running trophies he had won during the years he represented SLH. It would seem that Neville was an inveterate hoarder, and the museum will be holding many items that would be of interest to our club. I have therefore sent a list of his trophies

and SLH memorabilia that the museum is holding, to Mick Firth to pass on to the committee. It could be that the club would be interested in displaying some of the items for the 150th celebration of the club's founding, in nine years' time.

I realise that there will be many club members who wouldn't know his name nowadays. Neville was such a character, that those who knew him will never be able to forget him. He had an eccentric and quixotic sense of humour. In one year, in the Surrey County Cross Country Championships, he insisted that our team would complete the race wearing party hats that he had collected after the New Year's Eve celebrations. Another time I can recall seeing him run on the last lap of an equally important race, holding a metre long icicle and whirling it around his head like a sabre as he came up the finishing straight. In spite of the encumbrance this must have caused him, he still made the scoring team for the club, in a race, which we duly won. Happy days!

**Chris Harvey**



*Exhibit photographs by kind permission of Stroud Museum*