

The Emergency Services Road Race Championship 2009 was hosted by Gloucestershire Constabulary on Sunday 16th August at Staunton village near Tewkesbury. The event organiser Mike Horsmann did a fantastic job especially considering he "picked up the baton" late in the day from the original organiser Colin Mattison who had changed jobs and whose wife had had a baby so his personal circumstances changed dramatically in the run up to the big day, however, he still played a supporting role which was invaluable on the day.

There were only 11 Fire Service riders which was very poor and something which will need addressing for the 2010 event? Race day arrived and the conditions were perfect with bright sunshine, clear blue skies and a slight breeze. 37 riders took to the start line of the 8.9 mile loop. The race was fairly neutral for the 1st lap but with the appeal of a prime prize on laps 3 & 4 of the 6 lap race the main "players" took turns at the front of the peloton wearing down the opposition with constant attacks off the front. The main players were Ian Sim Strathclyde Fire, Alan Nixon Durham & Darlington Fire who seemed to take turns applying the pressure but with little gain or advantage. At the end of lap 2 a small group of 3 or 4 riders got a small gap and held it up the climb to the prime prize closely followed by the pack. On lap 4 Alan Nixon made an audacious attack at the approach to the prime climb but was reeled in with yards to go. The race seemed to nullify itself for the next lap with all the main players playing "cat and mouse" and saving their energy for what looked like a bunch sprint finish. At the start of the last lap Ian Treadwell West Mercia Police showed his hand and attacked off the front expecting to be covered virtually immediately, but, bizarrely, nobody wanted to take the responsibility? He got a small gap of approximately 100 yards which he held for most of the lap and it appeared that the peloton were just leaving him on the front to weaken his chances. Amazingly as the peloton turned off the main road with less than 1km to go to the finish line he still had a 50 yard lead and no matter how hard the chasing group sprinted they were unable to close the gap and Ian crossed the line with a bike's length to spare!! Phew a close call but perfectly? judged, although he confided after the race he thought he was caught about 50 yards before the line and the waiting supporters. The Fire Service had to make do with 2nd - Ian Sim, Strathclyde Fire and 4th Alan Nixon, Durham & Darlington Fire & Rescue. Ian Sim collected the Colin Townsley Trophy which dates back to 1987 when Station Officer Colin Townsley lost his life at the King's Cross underground fire in London and his wife very generously donated the trophy in

his memory and in recognition of his keen cycling background. The Emergency Services Veterans Champion for 2009 was none other than my own rider - Anthony McGouran Cleveland Fire who finished in a very credible 7th position overall just pipping the fast finishing Duff Fawcett Merseyside Fire another Vet and his lead out man and ex-Fire Service World Road Race Champion - Andy Bennett Merseyside.

A special mention to Colin's mum and the ladies and gentlemen of the Staunton W.I. who provided a fantastic post race buffet and a great cup of tea!! There was even enough for a couple of "doggy" bags for our long journey back to God's Country - yes - the North-East.

Finally a special mention to the very very generous sponsors - Zipvit, Science in Sport, Cycling weekly, Graham Watson - Tour de France photographer, Wheelbase, JE James Cycles, Parker International, Team Giordana, Probikekit, Lusso, Schwalbe tyres, Michelin tyres and Continental tyres.

A fantastic event and a huge vote of thanks to Mike Horsman, Gloucestershire Police who made it ALL possible!!!

Yours in appreciation,

Jeff Crawford  
GB Fire Service Cycling Secretary