

History of the Fred Cleverley Memorial Fund

As a qualified electrical engineer, working at Littlebrook Power Station, Fred was exempt from military service during World War 2. He was therefore able to continue with his cycling activities, although shift work restricted his riding with a Section. A surprisingly tough character, he enjoyed cycle-camping, although he never owned a tent! He would “sleep under the stars” and if the weather was bad, he would string a line between two trees and peg out a plastic sheet over it. In the 50’s and 60’s, he toured in places such as Iceland and Bulgaria, long before the tourists arrived. He had some fascinating tales to tell.

When he could he rode with the West Kent Loiterers’ Section, and it was on the way home from such a ride (in about February 1973) at the age of 70 that he collapsed on his bike and died just a couple of miles from his home in Gravesend. Apart from cycling, his passion was Photography. We can recall him, year after year, at the Annual Dinner, standing in the corner of the hall with his camera, and in his high-pitched voice, shouting, “Look this way please”. However, nobody ever saw these pictures! After his death, at a time when most people only had one camera, it was found that Fred actually owned ten. These included the famous Swiss “Compass” camera, (now worth a fortune), 2 Pentax SLR’s, a Russian “Horizont” panoramic camera, which had a lens which swivelled through 120 degrees, a stereoscopic model, and a Zeiss “Contax” 35mm with interchangeable backs, (allowing different films to be used part-way through) and a telephoto lens which doubled as a monocular. Also among his collection was an early 20th century stereoscopic viewer, which comprised a mahogany housing with brass handles, chains and gearwheels. There were many unusual bits and pieces. This fascinating selection was displayed at the WK Clubroom to give members an insight to some photographic history.

Fred’s two elderly sisters, living in Hampshire, had no use for his photographic or cycling equipment, so generously donated it all to the WK to sell for Club funds. The total amount raised was around £750. He had been a stalwart of the Photographic sub-Committee for many years, (under the chairmanship of Les Morecroft), and he was also keen to encourage youngsters to club cycling. It was therefore decided by the West Kent DA Committee, (as it was called at that time), that a special fund be set up with the money, “to promote the interest of photography, and encourage junior members”. It would be called the “Fred Cleverley Memorial Fund” and would be administered by two Trustees. These were named as, Cyril Kermodé and Peter Scott. When Cyril died in January 2005, Peter Ashlee took his place.

In setting up the fund, it was decided that any member could request a grant for a deserving case, but that such grant would not exceed the annual interest on the account, thereby maintaining the capital. In the early years some money was given to a junior member to assist him to attend a Cycling Adventure Week. On occasions, the programme printing for the Annual Photographic Exhibition has been assisted. The Fund has also assisted a junior member to attend the Annual Dinner to receive his award. In recent times there have been few juniors members eligible, but there are some now who will be considered in the very near future.

Peter Scott

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