

## Jim Love 15.01.1929 -1.03.2024

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Jim Love may not be known to the now many members of the Willesden and Sotonia Cycling Clubs. He was modest, principled, a strong but gentle man.

He started cycling as a teenager. As a Londoner he joined the Willesden Cycling Club when he was about 16 and quickly became a good rider taking part in time trails, track racing and of course club runs with often over 100 riders mobbing cafes!

Paddington track was his main track, then Herne Hill. By 1948 he had earned his place in the Olympic Team Pursuit. A bad crash a few weeks before the Olympics and an off-day at the penultimate training day meant he was reserve. Although some said it was team politics not to have too many "London boys" in the team, Jim was too modest to be drawn. The team won a Bronze Medal.

Jim maintained his links with the Willesden serving as club president. He still holds 2 Willesden Club records, maybe it is time to revive those events and try to beat him? He held the Club 25 record in 1949 at 1hr 1m 16s.

As a teenager Dad also became a keen photographer and over time took and inherited many photos. Jim, always meticulous, has passed this archive to the National Cycling Archive held at Warwick University free for anyone to visit <https://mrc-catalogue.warwick.ac.uk/records/NCA/1/49>

A printer by profession he loved books. Most of these are being sold for charity at a Bike Jumble on 21<sup>st</sup> April in Brockenhurst <https://boostbikehub.co.uk/ridesandevents/2024/8/17/retro-weekender>

One of Jim's many friends and track rivals was Charlie Mariner. In 1949 Charlie invited Dad to present prizes at the Southern Paragon annual dinner dance and it was there that Jim met Eileen, also a keen cyclist with the Southern Paragon. They married in 1952.

As many cycling clubs began to fade in the 1960s Jim and Eileen became founder members of the Sotonia Cycling Club in 1967. Jim sketched the orange and white club vest early designs at their kitchen table. Jim was club coach and President and remained a Vice President.

Jim was also a member of the Pedal Club and Scrumpy Wheelers which showed the breadth of his love of cycling.

In the build up to the 2012 Olympics in London Dad was honoured to be included, meeting many athletes, politicians and Princess Anne several times. He was given tickets to the 2012 track cycling and triathlon and was astounded and delighted to see so many people understand and cheered the track cycling events.

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Last summer Jim was again honoured to unveil a plaque at Herne Hill Velodrome to mark 75 years since the '48 Olympic track events were held there. Thought to be the last man standing from that track squad he was accompanied by his proud family and daughters of team members Reg Harris and Alan Geldard.

This proved to be a fantastic family day out. Dad delighted in seeing all the youngsters racing at the same meeting as internationals "taking part in the best sport in the world". This day buoyed him for the last few months of his long life.

Cycling was always the hub of Jim and Eileen's lives with the spokes being the friends, social events, competition, holidays, adventures, photography, books, fitness, and more friends and the rim joining all these aspects of their life together.

Jim is survived by his wife and sister, both Eileen, children Brian and Carol, grand-daughters Imogen and Lucy.

