

OS20 **PMR** I have ridden my bike every day for around 45 minutes

"I will be 76 in April (at my age every month matters) and have been a lifelong cyclist with a decade or so missing in my 30/40s. I have had polymyalgia rheumatica (PMR) since age 70 and have been on steroids (prednisolone) throughout. I have tried to come off but have had to keep taking them at various doses below 4mg per day which I am currently on. Whereas after the initial presentation it was just my shoulders that were sore, in the past couple of weeks I have started to get problems in the pelvic girdle and have had to increase the dose to counter that although the shoulders would probably manage on 1.5mg or so. I used to adjust the dose to reduce the pain to background level where it was generally unnoticeable but I am now inclined to take a little more Prednisolone to also try to reduce the fatigue of PMR.

"For the past couple of decades or so I have ridden my bike every day for around 45 minutes or so depending on the route I take and which bike I am on. I have a full suspension mountain bike for the tracks and a couple of road bikes, one with mudguards for the wet weather and a carbon road bike for the good days. I have a variety of possible routes all of which involve plenty of hills and I ride hard enough to be breathless, except when going downhill. I would like to think that all this effort would mean quite a high average speed but having tried to tag on to a cycling club, I have to admit that my 'flat out' is about as fast as the average cyclist would cruise along. The point is that even though I am probably not going that fast (I am after all 75) every day I push myself hard enough to get breathless and break sweat.

Why do I do it when it takes time and riding hard hurts? Because even though the PMR fatigue suggests going for a lie down, I can go for a bike ride and then feel 'renewed' after a shower. Sometimes I will have a 20 minute or so lie down as well either before or after as the PMR fatigue is not banished for the rest of the day, but after a ride I usually no longer feel the need for a lie down for several hours. Prednisolone tends to increase the appetite and accumulate fat so a ride helps to control that, although I am still currently 8lbs over my fitness weight of 11st 3lbs. Prednisolone is also bad for muscles, so regular riding helps there too.

I have kept a PMR diary which is currently on its 40<sup>th</sup> page and there will be many occasions noted there where I have not felt like going out for a ride, but gone anyway because I know that I will feel better on my return.