AUDAX UK
long distance cycling

BMD161012 Trophy Inscriptions

As members will know, we have now completed the physical handover of the AUK Trophies to the National Cycle Museum. However the schedule of trophies for particular feats that the Baard maintains at http://www.aukweb.net/official/trophies/ is still extant.

When producing last year's awards, I paired up all the trophies with appropriate descriptions, retaining the trophy name, and adding the name of the winner and the year . All this was done in order to maintain the heritage status of particular awards, particularly as we had not ascertained any permissions to dispose of or discontinue any trophies. In producing a list of engravings which included all these details for the supplier, I ensured that no further engraving costs were incurred over and above anything already provided at an all-in cost.

As the Awards Secretary was taking over this job this year, I sent him a list of the engravings so that he would be able to do the same without doing the same work to make everything fit in and wrote:
" As promised, you'll find attached to this the main list of engravings that I submitted to the trophy suppliers last year. It may be useful, but not for the names of last year's winners. It's how the trophies are best described in as efficient a manner as possible given space constraints; I did my best to summarise the names of the trophies and the reasons for award. On awards other than those where engraving is direct to glass, an Audax UK centre is crucial to this."

He responded:
" I think the three of us should maybe have further discussion on wordings for the mementos, and these are my thoughts...

I agree with the principle that the wordings should more accurately represent what the individuals have actually done, which you have made good moves towards, however I also feel that this should perhaps be the main focus of the wordings, rather than starting off in capital letters referencing old trophies that we no longer use.

My reasoning is that things have moved on, and the board has 'retired' the old trophies, for the sensible reasons that it saves all the transport, insurance and storage costs and also the general faff of handing them out and recovering them a few hours later. Indeed we are no longer even engraving ongoing winner names onto the old trophies, since they are now at the museum. Accordingly I would question whether we should still use those old trophy names on the mementos themselves? After all, AUK provides the mementos, not the original donor. Also, letter space is limited and if we cut out more of the 'less relevant' wordings, the inscriptions would be more succinct and pleasing to the recipients, and I'm pretty sure no donor would ever see the mementos....

Indeed, I imagine that the original trophy donors might not be pleased that their trophies have been discarded, (for want of a better word) though I would hope that they might understand the reasons why the board chose to do so. If any of them are still around, however, it might be a nice touch, if, in published lists, where space is not an issue, we still used them.

Many trophies had names that I do not know of, and I imagine that 99.9% of the membership would say the same, so you might feel that with the departure of the old trophies, we should maybe start afresh and 'retire' the old names on everything.

My point about focusing on the recipient's actions, is best illustrated by an example:-
CHALLENGE ACP 1987 TROPHY
Veterans' Cup
Greatest Distance
Name Date

This is the wording on one of my mementos, and ignoring the name and date, there are three lines, with capital letters on the first line, which is the least relevant one, in terms of what the recipient did to merit the award.....
If it just said
VETERANS' CUP
Greatest Distance
Name Date

it would be cheaper, simpler and more succinct.

I would therefore propose that we further simplify the wordings by omitting (just on the mementos) the old trophy names

Your thoughts gentlemen?"

It seemed to me that this was a decision for the Board, which maintains the list of trophies, so I responded:
" I think it goes too far to say that the Board has retired the old trophies. They may have been handed over to the National Cycling Museum, but that is not much different from them being handed over to me and placed in a storage facility under a railway arch in Halifax for 361 days of the year, except that the Museum can place them or a selection on display so that people can see them.

Some time ago the Board decided that the appearance of the trophies in the appendices to the regulations was anomalous as it was responsible for what was handed to whom and why. That list remained as a schedule for the Board and was what I followed in handing things out last year, and that schedule is still in operation. So I'm not in a position to say Yes to your suggestion, although I could say No and was initially tempted to do so.

I would add that some of the people referenced in the naming of trophies are still alive and some died only recently with a trophy being a memorial. Where trophies are named after members, former members etc., it's likely that the association remains important to some members. After all, we are only 40 years old as an organisation. Plus, it should be possible to retain the trophy name in the paid for engraving of some trophies while for others the letter count is immaterial as you've probably noticed. The Board thought that keeping the names attached to trophies was a way to soften any blow arising from the donation of the physical trophies to the Museum.

Rather than me saying No, it's probably best if I put your suggestion to the Board who can then decide without the complication of allowing me to vote on the matter except as a casting vote. There's a Board meeting next week and if Graeme is happy with you making the suggestions and will put it on the meeting agenda, we can discuss it.

Note that at least one of the awards, the Dave Lewis Trophy for the greatest distance by a member in a 24 hour time trial, is unlikely to fall under this remit as there has never been a main trophy; it is awarded (and paid for) annually by Anne Learmonth."

A further reply from the Awards Secretary said:
" Your explanation of the boards decision about the trophies and its ongoing responsibilities with reference to the schedule is very interesting, and informative, and thanks for sharing that.

As I surmised there were some very pragmatic reasons for donating them to the museum, and I would have voted in favour, had it been put to a members vote. My only reservation would have been to suggest that we should first seek opinions / support from donors still with us, and maybe from the close relatives of those no longer with us, to try and avoid upsetting anyone. I imagine that was indeed done... The board probably had a lively discussion and made a good informed decision.

I actually think it was was a major change, since we used to see/hold the trophies every year, whereas now we don't, but on balance it was the right thing to do.

I started the discussion because there seemed an anomaly between no longer using/having the trophies, and continuing to use the names. In my past experience, and with my MBA hat on, I have seen companies who want to make major changes in policy, do so via a series of smaller changes, rather than in one fell swoop. I wondered if the board was doing the same, starting off with the museum decision, and initially keeping the names (to 'soften the blow' as you put it), with the intention of eventually changing the names after the dust had settled. It may not yet be the right time, but surely sooner or later the names should be phased out.

I had great respect for Dave Lewis, having ridden with him many times over in Wales in my early days. I remember he used to disappear for ages, and then pop out of some side turning with a big grin on his face. He really knew all the short cuts! Respect for the donors was my only reservation as regards no longer using the trophies, however the board's decision suggests to me that pragmatism trumped respect. Operational issues are important, and sometimes you have to make hard choices.

I'm happy to follow the boards direction on this, and maybe they might decide to proceed in very small steps, the smallest one I can think of being to keep using names where there is a continuing element of memorial, and perhaps update the rest.

By all means share these thoughts with the board....."

And yes, these thoughts are now shared with you all. As you can see, I am keen that we recognise the origins of all of the trophies that we choose to present for historical, memorial, or other reasons and that the links with our past are retained while we move forward. I don't agree with the Award Secretary's apparent belief that donating the trophies to the National Cycle Museum represented a part of a major organisational change.

However, the decision is the Board's, and I would be grateful if you would help me there. I'm sorry that it will take you longer to read all this than it will to make a decision.

Chris Crossland
10 Oct 2016