



L-R TOBY AUBERT, TEAM MANAGER AND SAM FIRBY



# Peddle power

## Martyn White meets Toby Aubert who will lead the cycling team in Melbourne following the sad loss of former Commonwealth Games cycling manager, Tony Richomme

**You were asked to step in at the last minute after the sad death of team manager Tony Richomme. How much of a loss will Tony be to the island's cycling scene?**

Tony's sudden and tragic death will be a huge loss to cycling within the Island. He was an active competitor and also stood on the Island Games Committee, Jersey Cycling Association and The Caesarean Cycling Club Committee. He had a sense of reason.

**What is it about cycling that gets people hooked?**

Cycling is a great sport, taking in all the countryside and views as you ride past. At Commonwealth Games level of competition there's not a lot to love about it though. Cycling is possibly one of the hardest sports to compete in, Time Trialing at a heart rate of 190 bpm. Road Racing for 180km at an average of 45 kph; it's tough!

**Tell us more about you. How do you view your role in Melbourne?**

I'm president of the Velo Sport Jersey Cycling Club and have appeared in five island Games, winning six medals. I've also represented Jersey in one Commonwealth Games, but sorry, no medals!

Once we're in Melbourne there will be technical meetings to attend and information gathering. The prime objective is to make sure Sam Firby, Jersey's only qualifying cyclist, has nothing to worry about and can turn up at the start of each race with a clear mind ready to do the business.

**How has Sam Firby prepared in the run-up to the Games?**

Sam has been distance training since September when normally training tapers down. He needs to be three months ahead of schedule, which is the stage he's at now. Sam will be racing as many times as he can before we leave for Melbourne and compete in events once we arrive. He will be concentrating on speed work just to sharpen up.

**How much has the death of Tony affected his preparations?**

Emotionally, the loss of Tony has been immense. I know that Sam will be giving his all on the bike and I hope I can give him the support Tony would have.

**Apart from the Olympics and World Championships, this is the premier sporting event for elite athletes in the UK. How does knowing this affect preparations?**

The Olympics and Worlds are huge, although we will meet some of the same people at the Commonwealth Games in Melbourne. And I'm sure that Sam's preparation would be no different. Sam went to The Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur and I was privileged to go to Edinburgh in 1986, so we have experience at this level.

**Describe the strengths and weaknesses of Sam as a cyclist...**

Sam is a good all rounder. He climbs well, rides well and sprints well. There are no weaknesses really.

**What do you expect from Sam at the Commonwealth Games? Can he win a medal?**

Sam is a talented rider and was the best rider overall in Brittany, which is probably the hardest region of France to win races in. Road Racing is a bit of a lottery, especially at World, Olympic and Commonwealth level. But on the day, all things being equal, we will have to wait and see.

**What do you know about Melbourne and the facilities?**

Not a huge amount. I've been playing catch up since the weekend. I believe the facilities are fantastic and will let you know once we are there!

**And who will you be star struck by should you see them there?**

The media today makes everybody accessible. I'm sure there won't be too many shocks.

**What would be the ultimate achievement from these Games for you and your team?**

A medal!

**And will you be holidaying afterwards?**

Not at all. We will travel back with the team and I have a wedding to attend in May.