

# Welcome Address by Luigi Riccardi

President of Federazione Italiana Amici della Bicicletta

**I**N view of our interest in bicycle culture, it is with great pleasure, that, following the request of one of our members, Mr. Beppe Genazzini, we have accepted to sponsor the 12th International Cycling History Conference and we are honoured for the opportunity to host so many well-known personalities and experts in the history of cycling.

FIAB, or Federazione Italiana Amici della Bicicletta (Italian Association of Friends of the Bicycle) co-ordinates more than 60 cycle-environmental associations all over Italy, with the aim of promoting the use of the bicycle as a daily means of transport, in order to improve traffic conditions and the urban environment, as well as encouraging tourism by bicycle, i.e. a form of tourism which is environmentally friendly.

FIAB and its member associations constantly lobby with the public administrations to obtain regulations and bicycle-oriented policies in favour of a safe circulation of bicycles. Together, they organise big demonstrations of cyclists, as well as cycle tours for members and for all who want to participate.

FIAB also has a lot of experience in didactical school activities. A training course for teachers of primary and secondary school has been prepared and successfully tested.

FIAB publishes its own magazine – *Amici della Bicicletta* (Friends of the Bicycle) and publishes tourist maps, guides, and other publications. Among its

activities, there is also the organisation of cultural events, such as seminars and conferences. All information can be found on the official web-site.

FIAB is also responsible for the introduction in Italy of the “bike on train” service, which it is presently trying to further improve, extending it to long-distance and international trains.

Every year, a national “Bike on Train” Day with free transport of bicycles on trains and other public means of transport takes place.

Furthermore, FIAB has been instrumental in implementing a law to finance municipalities and other local bodies wanting to build cycle paths and other infrastructure facilities for bicycle transportation, as well as the inclusion in the municipal budget of a fund financed with the proceedings from traffic fines to implement road safety measures for cyclists, pedestrians, disabled, elderly, and children.

FIAB has designed the Ciclopista del Sole, a cycle route from the Brenner to Naples, which is the Italian portion of EuroVelo, the European network of cycle



Fjig. 0.2. At the farewell banquet in the Casino at San Remo, organizers Rosanna Cantarelli (center foreground) and Giuseppe Genazzini (third from the right) are flanked by, from left to right, Gert-Jan Moed, Rob van der Plas, Nick Clayton, Frank Berto, Carl Burgward, and Nicholas Oddy.

routes. It is also involved in another project for an even larger national network called Bicalia, which will include 12 itineraries, crossing the entire peninsula from north to south and from west to east.

FIAB co-operates with the authorities to modify the Road Code, in particular as regards the introduction of cycle paths and the relevant road signs.

FIAB also works with Ministries, Regions and local administrations to carry out bicycle research projects, as well as feasibility studies and other projects in this field.

Among the most important events organised by FIAB are the following:

- ❑ BIMBIMBICI, which takes place in May in more than 60 Italian cities, with the aim of drawing the

attention of the public and officials to the need to provide safe cycle routes from home to school.

- ❑ CICLORADUNO NAZIONALE, a four-day event taking place in June, each year in a different region, with the participation of hundreds of cyclists from member associations from Italy and other countries.
- ❑ CICLOSTAFFETTA, a cycle relay from Bolzano to Rome along the cycle routes of Bicalia, having the aim of making them known and promoting them.
- ❑ FIAB is a member of ECF, the European Cyclists' Federation.

# Editors' Preface

The 12th International Conference of Cycling History was ably organized by Giuseppe Genazzini and Rosanna Cantarelli. Accommodation, and most of the presentations, were in the beautiful spa hotel at Pigna, about 30 km from San Remo, where some of the associated events and presentations were held. Although unfortunately there was perhaps not enough participation from the host country, this was well offset by the quality of many of the presentations that were made. Subjects covered ranged from the discussion about a presumed early bicycle found in a museum in San Jose, California, to the use of the bicycle in war time, and from the restoration of leather saddles to adventure bicycle travel in the 19th century, whilst the organizers had seen to it that nobody ever got bored (or hungry) between presentations.

## Some Words About the Contents of These Proceedings

Contributions 2 through 4 all concern the velocipede of Alexandre Lefèbvre (or "Lefebvre," as the name has generally been spelled in American publications). Initially, both Jacques Graber and Andrew Ritchie were scheduled to give papers on this interesting and little-known machine, and both had previously submitted articles (Ritchie's was still in editorial process in September) on the subject to *The Wheelmen*. Jacques Graber, however, as a result of the events of September 11th, was stranded in the mid-West of the United States and could not make it to Pigna. So Andrew Ritchie's paper was the only one given on the subject. This presented the Editors with a problem of fairness and balance, which we decided to solve in the following way: We have published Graber's contribution as presented in writing, which is essentially the same as the article first published in *The Wheelmen* ("The Lefèbvre Bicycle — Research on a Pedal-Driven Velocipede," number 58, May 2001, pp.2–10), and then after it we have published Andrew Ritchie's paper as presented at the Conference, which in turn is essentially his response to Graber's *Wheelmen* article and was also printed in *The Wheelmen* ("The Velocipede of Alexandre Lefebvre and Problems of Historical Interpretation", number 59, Nov. 2001, pp. 10–21). We are also publishing here a short "

Postscript," which Ritchie added to his *Wheelmen* article upon returning from Pigna, which summarizes some of the points of the discussion which followed. Jacques Graber, took issue with things said in Ritchie's article and submitted a further article both to *The Wheelmen* (published as "An Analysis and Observations of Andrew Ritchie's Article 7 'The Velocipede of Alexandre Lefebvre and Problems of Historical Interpretation,'" number 60, May 2002) and to the *Proceedings*. This we are also publishing here (though somewhat shortened), because it adds interesting new observations on the design and drive-mechanism of the Lefèbvre velocipede. We thought that the total discussion, and especially the large number of photographs and illustrations, succeeded in giving readers of these *Proceedings* a chance to familiarize themselves with the Lefèbvre machine and to put it on record. And we also thought that the nature of the dispute contained in these articles pointed to issues in practical and academic research in our field which were worth airing here in the *Proceedings*.

One of the Editors of these *Proceedings*, Andrew Ritchie, finds himself with a bit of a conflict of interest here in that he is also a party to the discussion about Lefèbvre as published here. So it is with slight trepidation and some careful wording that we attempt to offer here some Editorial reflections on the Lefèbvre articles, on research in general, on personal investment in research, and on different styles and focuses in the presentation of research. The sum total of the contents of the articles on Lefèbvre by the two writers will certainly give an interested reader enough information to form a good idea of the facts of the case, but that reader will also see two very different styles and approaches to research. We suggest that this may perhaps help to explain why these two researchers differ, and seem determined to squabble: They have different ways of looking at the machine and at the documents. But the answer to the mysteries of this particular machine will come, surely, from a historian/ analyst/writer who can put together the most persuasive components from both approaches, and produce a perceptive and well-reasoned historical analysis of both the documents and the artefact itself. This case may also ultimately be one where materials' science (analysis of wood, paint and metal structures),

in other words — Science— will, for the first time in bicycle history, prove to be the most crucial component in producing an acceptable diagnosis of the provenance of a very early machine, rather than an individual historian’s interpretation of the facts.

One thing is clearly to be desired – that the answers to the puzzle of the Lefèbvre velocipede, if and when they are produced and published, should “belong” to neither of these two researchers, and proprietary jealousies (the protection of research “territory” and “discoveries”) will necessarily give way to the

truth of the matter and become public knowledge and public property. One lesson to be relearned across the spread of these articles is the ever present danger of the repetition of mistakes and wrong dates from previous publications. One wrong date (a printer’s error) from Ritchie’s first 1975 article on Lefèbvre (“Stashed Away in San Jose,” *Bike World*, Oct. 1975), was still being argued over, as will be seen here, by both writers, more than 25 years later.

Andrew Ritchie and Rob van der Plas