

27th July 2023

Crash

**"You crash on a bike,
the first thing you do is try and get back up on it.
No whinging!"**

David Millar, *TV commentary from 'Le Tour de France'*

Unless you're involved in a crash yourself, you'll generally only hear about crashes that happen to other people, and you'll seldom be around to *witness* a crash. That can't be said for the *Tour de France*, the epic, punishing three-week cycle road-race which takes place every July. There are so many cameras following different parts of the race that the viewer can often see a crash happening in real time. Such was the case recently when a spectator's outstretched arm – taking a picture on a mobile-phone – caught a passing rider, causing a ripple-effect to run through the *peleton* (the main bunch of riders), resulting in a massive crash. Ouch! Pretty scary to watch and devastating to be involved with.

David Millar is a Scottish retired professional cyclist, who won four stages of the *Tour de France* between 1997 and 2014 and was UK national road-race champion and national time-trial champion in 2007. He's recently been described as an "elder statesman of cycling", and, like all road-race cyclists, he knows about crashes. He's said, "Everything's going on within the peloton. There's about ten different races going on. There is also a survival element to it. I love the fact that it's so epic. You crash on a bike, the first thing you do is try and get back up on it. No whinging!"

Mark Cavendish, from the Isle of Mann, has 34 stage wins in *Le Tour* to his name and hoped to take a thirty-fifth victory this year to give him the all-out lead in stage wins. But he was victim of a bad crash which forced him to retire from the tour with a broken collarbone. Yet this is what he has said about crashes:

I never think: 'If I crash, I'm going to hurt myself.'

I might think: 'If I crash, I'm not going to win.'

Everything's about that finish line.

"No whinging"? "Everything's about that finish line"? "The first thing you do is try and get back up"? I hope you're never the victim of a bike-crash – real or metaphorical. But if you are, might this attitude help?

A prayer for today

When I wobble or crash, I hope I'll be OK, and have the resolve to keep going. Amen