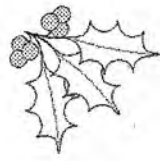
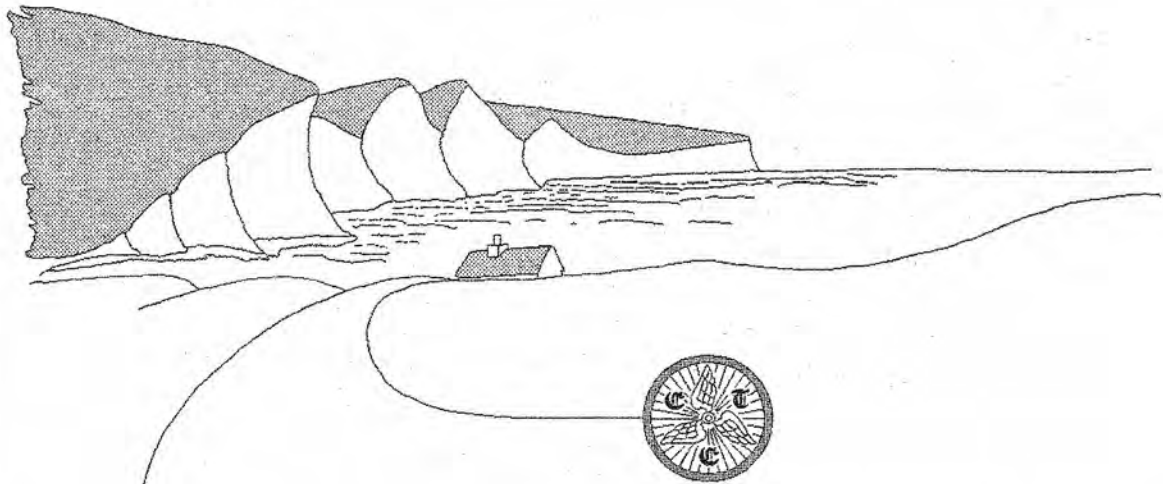


The



Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

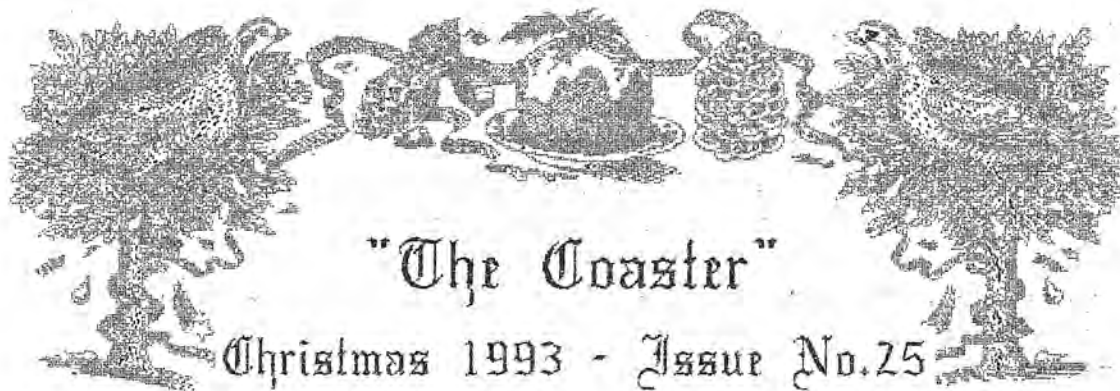
No. 25 Christmas 1993

25p

East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club

PRESIDENT MR. DENNIS JAKEMAN

Secretary & Editor: David Rix, 27 Fullwood Avenue, Newhaven, E. Sussex. BN9 9SP



"The Coaster"

Christmas 1993 - Issue No.25

PRESIDENT'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

During the past year your D.A. Committee has been actively involved in consultation and public debate on the development of the E.S.C.C. Cycling Strategy and the Sustrans cycleway from Newhaven to Heathfield. We have reached the stage where the C.T.C. in Sussex is being recognised as an authoritative body to be kept informed and consulted on such issues, and anything which adds to the recognition of the C.T.C. has to be good for cycling generally.

As Tim Hughes said (CT&C October/November 1993), "recognition by those in varying levels of authority that cycling is a good thing benefits all cyclists and that means C.T.C. members too. Anything that strengthens a cycling culture and adds to the numbers of people cycling for whatever motive increases the pool from which C.T.C. members and leaders can emerge". At the moment there are only 382 C.T.C. members registered in this D.A. of whom about 100 (that is about 26%) are involved in D.A. and Section activities. Compare this with the membership of motoring organisations such as the AA and RAC and you will see why we need to build on what we have achieved so far.

So my message for 1994 is, make your contribution by supporting the D.A. Committee in the work it is doing, so that we can continue to make our voice heard in places where the interests and safety of cyclists are at risk.

To quote Tim Hughes again, "the right to ride a bike in safety and comfort and with and for enjoyment, has to be worked for and sometimes even fought for."

I WISH YOU ALL A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A SAFE & PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.

Dennis Jakeman.

THE CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

The Cyclists' Touring Club (originally known as the Bicycle Touring Club, the present title being adopted in 1883) was founded at Harrogate in Yorkshire on August 5th 1878 by Stanley Cotterell. It is Britain's national cyclists' association, devoted to the encouragement of cycling for recreation and as a means of transport, and to the protection of cyclists' interests.

The CTC was the first Touring Club to be formed in the world. Membership details may be obtained from:-

C.T.C. National Headquarters,
Cotterell House, 69 Meadow,
Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3HS

or from the local District Association (D.A.) Secretary or one of the Section Secretaries whose addresses are listed below.

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

D.A. Secretary: David Rix, 27 Fullwood Avenue, Newhaven, BN9 9SP.

Eastbourne & Hailsham: Frank Dewberry:
44 Saffrons Park, Eastbourne, BN20 7UX

Mid-week Section: Esther Carpenter,
10 Maplehurst Rd, Baldslow, St. Leonards on Sea, TN37 7NA

Seaford & Newhaven: Ann Rix,
3 Sutton Drove, Seaford. BN25 3EU.

THE COASTER is published by the East Sussex District Association of the CTC. The opinions and comments expressed herein are the opinions and comments of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the East Sussex D.A. or its Sections. Contributions on any matters relating, even vaguely, to cycling are always welcome and should be sent to the editor.

Carry On Camping
by Roy James.



I am not by nature one to seek hardship, camping to me seems a deliberate attempt to return to the wild from whence the human race has struggled for centuries to free itself. After all why sleep on hard ground when there are perfectly good beds all over the country to be hired by the night for the cost of a few pounds and with breakfast thrown in.

However, occasionally in the summer and only during a long, dry spell, the wolf cub in me longs to return to boyhood and once again sleep for a few nights under canvas. It is not an elaborate business - even if cycle camping could be - and I take with me the very minimum of gear. A heavily laden bike is all very fine on the flat with a following breeze, but even a short spell of uphill work is enough to make one realize that little is lovely in the way of luggage.

The camp site is important and here I proclaim a debt of gratitude to Ken Stevens for pointing me in the direction of Harwoods Farm at Henfield. Just about a three hour ride

from my home in Eastbourne, Henfield still retains many of the best characteristics of the English village. A blacksmith, couple of pubs, several baker's shops and a tea garden. Finally, a beautiful village green where more often than not on a summer's evening, a game of cricket is in progress.

As in many other villages in the late 20th century through traffic can be intolerable at times, but once the quiet of Harwoods Farm is reached one is in a more peaceful world. So for those of you unfamiliar with the location allow me to put it at TQ 195,154. The approach from the village starts off as a good road, but after about a mile the way becomes a stony track with tall hedges standing on either side and respect for cycle tyres demand that you walk for a short distance. Finally when the track seems to come to an end you have arrived at Harwoods.

Often I have arrived to find the presence of just one or two other tents and although there is the choice of an open field or the apple orchard I always go for the open field. Here on a clear night I have seen the full moon rise and slowly traverse the night sky and in the morning awake to the first rays of the sun.

Meals tend to be a rudimentary affair when I am "en plein air". Muesli mixed with milk powder so that I need only add water. Possibly a little bacon cooked on my mini stove and jammed into a bread roll. But always plenty of tea, for with a mug of tea on the ground as I sit sniffing the early morning air, all seems right with the world.

I freely confess to being something of a laggard when camping. Never in much of a hurry to do anything or go anywhere and in this respect I find it useful to pack an uninteresting book of some kind - 'Collins French Verbs' I find very suitable. In this way I find my attention being constantly diverted. A blackbird in the hedge, rabbits sunning themselves at the edge of the field, perhaps chatting briefly or at length with another camper as he makes his way for water at the single tap. So many little things are constantly happening that the first couple of hours on a fine morning pass in a flash.

Do I do any cycling whilst there I hear you ask? Well yes, as a matter of fact I do. Although I don't as a rule leave the camp site too early as I like to have morning coffee at the tea garden in the village and I don't want to be too late returning for I usually call in again for afternoon tea. Sometimes a longer ride is in my mind, perhaps a visit to Chichester or to Steyning and then that wonderful ride over the Downs to Sompting. Storrington, Amberley and Arundel can all be visited easily on a leisurely day out. For shorter rides, Shipley Windmill, Knepp Castle grounds or All Saints Church at Bunton, very remote though only a few yards from the A283 to Petersfield.

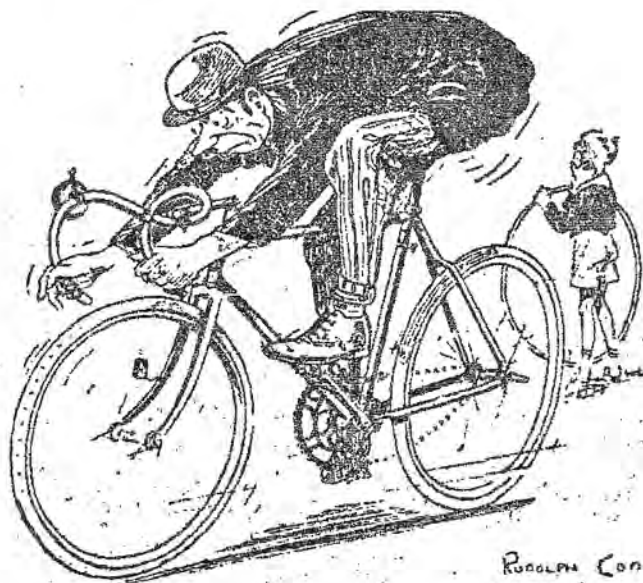
So there you have it. Camping can be fun, with a bit of cycling thrown in one can have a good time. Perhaps the worst part of the whole business is packing everything away at the end of the breaks. When the tent finally comes down and I see the patch of crushed grass that was home for a few days I realize perhaps its not so bad after all.



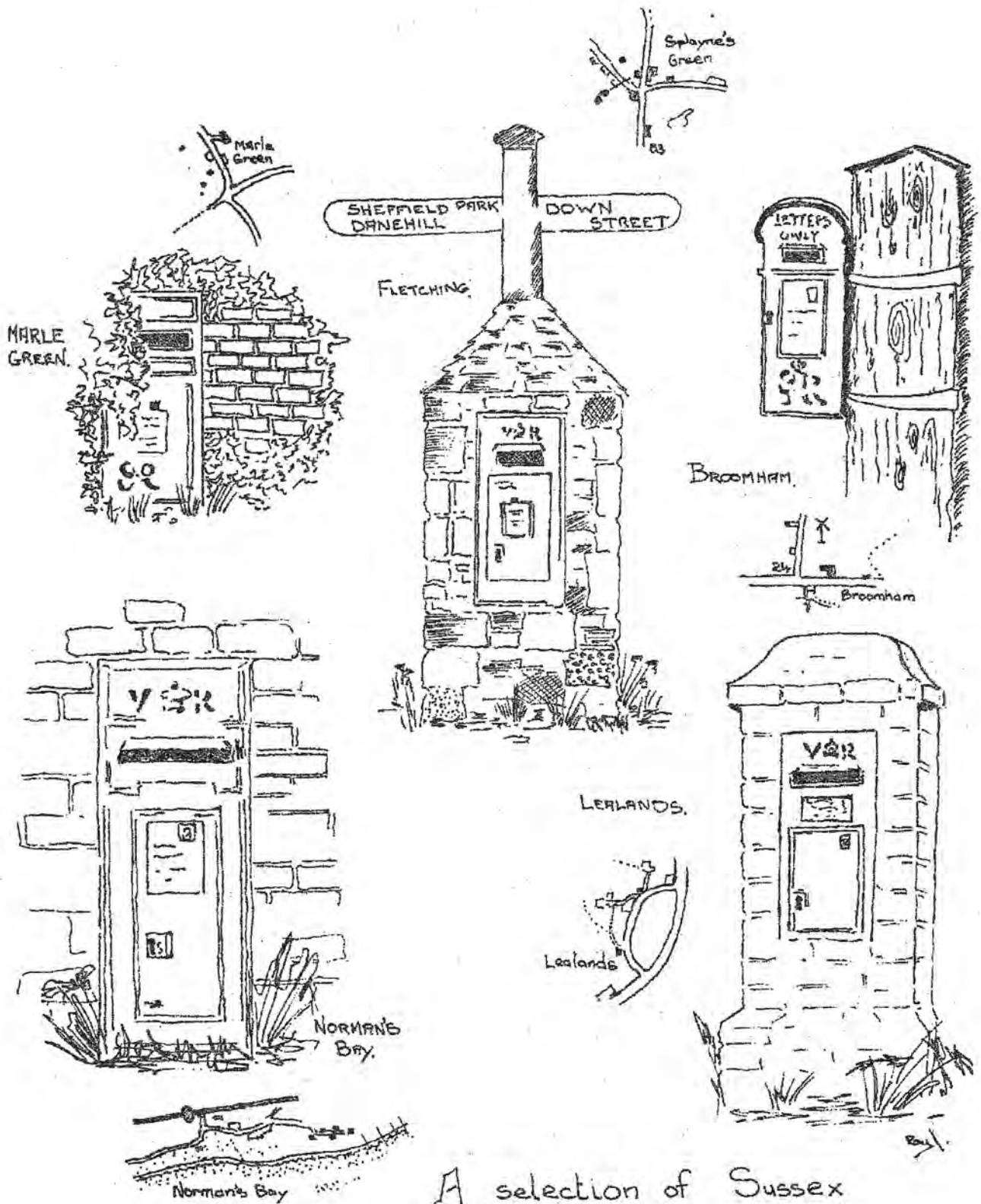
The Mail on Sunday's list of Britain's "10 Oddest Societies".

- The British Society of Football Philately
- The Transport Ticket Society
- The Hovermail Collectors' Club
- The Cambridge Paperweight Circle
- The Letter Box Study Group
- The British Beer Can Collectors' Society
- The Passenger Ship Enthusiast Association
- The United Kingdom Mini Bottle Club
- The Thimble Guild
- The Benevolent Confraternity of Dissectologists.

Perhaps readers have other societies which they think merit inclusion in this list?



Roadies Can self-assembled machine,
"WELL! WHAT FOLKS SEE IN THESE
RACERS BEATS ME!!"



A selection of Sussex
 ~~~~~  
 post boxes.  
 Can you find them?

## A Coaster First?

by Peter Crowsley

With such impressive reports like the Paris-Brest-Paris and other epic rides in recent issues of "The Coaster", I feel that I should no longer hide my light under a bushel and tell you that I have ridden the entire lengths of the A3110, A3111 and A3112.

These numbers may be unfamiliar to you, but in my opinion they constitute some of the most attractive touring in Great Britain. Not perhaps the wildness of the western Highlands nor the grandeur of the Lake District, but they offer an amazing variety of constantly changing panoramas. Except for one double hairpin climb the riding was not arduous - although the large cog was useful on that occasion. The roads were excellent though not well signposted and seeing litter was something of an event.

Scenery apart there was much else to interest a tourist, for some small detours would enable you to visit - a nature reserve which in places was positively Amazonian, a golf course used as a run-way, a Bronze Age burial chamber, a wind-powered de-salination plant, a helicopter pad, a Roman-British village - and take a trip to "Nowhere".

Another bonus, dear to the hearts - and tummies - of all cyclists were the delightful tea places/cafes every few miles - none of your chrome and plastic fast food places here.

Although I had excellent weather for my rides, not only was I seeing it at its best but also hearing and smelling it, for the air was filled with bird song and the fragrances of many wild flowers.

You may say that REAL tourists don't use 'A' roads except for necessity because of today's traffic, and indeed traffic there was. My census during my ride produced: 1 small lorry, 5 cars, 2 motorcycles, 2 scooters, 6-8 cycling school children and 2 dogs plus owners. From what I've written you may conclude that I felt this to be a cycling paradise, and it made me wonder if this is the sort of place where good cyclists go to when they die.

By now I'm sure your suspicions are aroused. If it's that good why haven't I heard about it before. Why indeed? I wouldn't claim to have read every touring article in the C.T.C. mags - which I started reading in 1959 - but I recall no reference to this area. In fact it may well be that the editor of "The Coaster" has scooped a 'first' and revealed Britain's best kept secret!

The explanation is simple you say. Crowsley has been at the sacred mushroom again. No - not unless someone laced my muesli before I began these rides. Explanation 2, this is a recall of some idyllic rides in the deep past (cos we know you're ever so old). No, these rides were done in May 1993. Then it's on some obscure Scottish island. Again no, this is England.

Baffled? Intrigued? Would you like to follow in my tyre marks? O.K. get onto the A272 and then the A30. But being proper tourist you will use the quieter 'B' roads. At the end of the A30 those who wish to ride all the way to the A3110 may experience a degree of difficulty and dampness for the next 28 miles. Far better to take a plane or helicopter, which won't take your bike, or a boat that will.

Providing you haven't cheated and read the end first you will have arrived at Hugh Town on St. Mary's in the Isles of Scilly. Not the Scilly Isles please, unless you wish to offend the natives.

At this point I will resist writing a 'my holiday' article, but issue a warning. The islands - 5 inhabited, lots of others which are not - are addictive. Remarks like "I came over on a day trip once and I've been coming back for the past 25 years" are amazingly common. I can understand the enchantment although it's hard to put into words. It's certainly not always a semi-tropical paradise and can have weather to equal anything western Scotland can throw up, and on this recent visit the gales were such that even the daily boat was cancelled on the day before I crossed.

I however finish on a disappointing note for all mile-eating and Audax enthusiasts, the mileages for these 'A' roads are: A3110 - 2 5/8 miles, A3111 - 5/8 of a mile, & A3112 - 1 1/8 miles - but there are some lanes. Perhaps that's the reason why there is no Isles of Scilly C.C.

## MEMORIES

by Mick & Rose Hills

After quite a few years of doing 'our own thing', amongst others bringing our family up, we ventured back to cycling. Although we'd always been in the Lewes Wanderers we were only involved in marshalling, but now the children were growing up we managed to get out on our own bikes. One evening at Club Night we were given a runs list by Iris and then we were away again!

Our memories and our thanks over the last 10 years are too numerous to mention, but recalling a few might jog other memories. Our most famous of course are the 3 Easters when the tandem broke down!

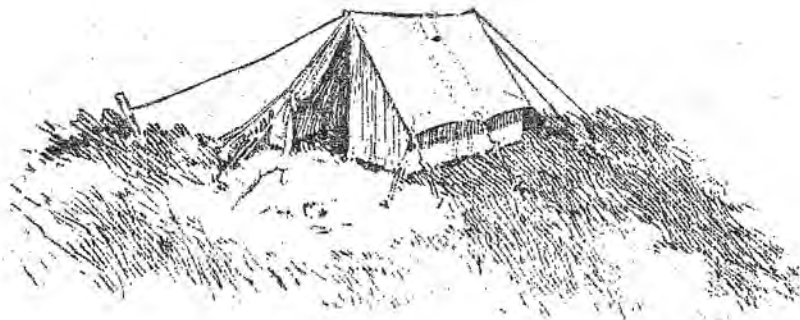
On the last day of the 'Stow' tour we stripped the thread off the back sprocket and Ken and John cycled back to the hostel to fetch the car, only to find that we'd rigged it up and managed to get back to Stow on the Wold and the tea place before closing time. The next Easter, on the last day again, we broke the spindle and, once again, Ken cycled back to Crowcombe Youth Hostel to get the car. The third time wasn't actually Easter. Iris had booked the self-catering cottage next to Welsh Bicknor Hostel, so the whole of Easter was delightful (we rode our single bikes), but the next time we were out for a few days, i.e. May Day Bank Holiday on the Isle of Wight for a Randonnee round the island, our bottom bracket went. Fortunately the caravan site where we were staying had a plentiful supply of spare parts so, although it wasn't quite right we managed. It was on the Isle of Wight again when the rear wheel again broke and this time the frame also cracked so it was down to hiring mountain bikes.

We remember the parties at Guestling, Alfriston, and Ripe Village Hall, the barbecues, Heather's 21st and Ken's 60th Birthday, Yub and Phyl's 50th Wedding Anniversary and many more. No wonder we've put on weight!

We've also ridden a few randonnees; the Windmill Rides, our Southdowns and the Firemens Ride, also in France where we intend to ride more.

The holidays as a group have been very memorable. Northumberland and the lovely castles in that area, Dumfries and Galloway camping in the Drumlaraig Castle grounds, Wales in the most ideal cottage, and many, many more.

Our thanks must go to Iris and Ken for all the bookings made for all our events and the numerous telephone calls. We've enjoyed them all and although the Camping & Hostelling Section is closing, this is the end of one era and the beginning of another. We are life members of the YHA and have cycled for as many years as we can remember, so 'see you up the road' (on our new tandem).



Churches with round towers always have a certain fascination for me which is probably due to their antiquity. This is not surprising since many of them are of Saxon origin and are therefore amongst the oldest surviving buildings in the country. I used to think that Sussex had the monopoly of round tower churches but on a recent long weekend with Len Steel in Suffolk I found I was mistaken.

Len and I were in Suffolk to visit the "Cycling Through the Ages and the Art of Frank Patterson" exhibition being held in Bury St. Edmunds. After visiting the Patterson exhibition at Billingshurst last year, the opportunity to see yet a further collection of these evocative drawings was a temptation we couldn't resist. Quiet Suffolk lanes, countless beautiful parish churches and Patterson had all the ingredients for a good weekend's cycling and we were not disappointed.

Round tower churches are almost exclusively an East Anglian phenomenon; of the 180 or so of the surviving round tower churches, only five (three in Sussex and two in Berkshire) are in fact outside the region, the vast majority (120) are in Norfolk and Suffolk has 42.

Pevsner lists over 400 churches in the county of Suffolk but we didn't need any convincing of this fact, even a cursory glance at the map suggested at least 50 within a 10 mile radius of Bury St. Edmunds. This somewhat taxed our ability to plan rides to cover all of these in the two days available, nevertheless we did manage to visit, explore and photograph 25, especially those with round towers. It was in one of these that I found the leaflet about the Round Tower Churches Society. On first sight I must admit to some scepticism, surely a candidate for inclusion in the list of Britain's "oddest societies" (1), but on reading further I found that there really was such a society and that it was founded by a W.J. Goode, who spent 20 years researching them all and in 1982 published the fruits of his labours in his book "East Anglian Round Towers and Their Churches".

Had it not been for the Patterson exhibition I think it unlikely that I would have discovered the existence of the Round Tower Churches Society. So it seems appropriate to ask our editor to illustrate this piece with a relevant Patterson drawing.



Southeast Sussex

Frank Patterson's drawings continue to have a strong appeal to cyclists and non-cyclists alike as is evident from the attendance at the Bury St. Edmunds exhibition which over 22,000 people visited. They have become a part of cycling history and continue to be used today in many cycling publications some 40 years since his death and 100 years since he submitted his first drawing to "Cycling Weekly" in October 1893.

If like me you enjoy visiting churches, why not plan a trip to East Anglia with W.J. Goode's book in the saddlebag or if your a Patterson fan perhaps a long weekend in Hertfordshire to visit the forthcoming Patterson exhibition to be held in Enfield, Middlesex, at the Forty Hill Museum, from July 7th to August 29th 1994, which again is being organised by Gerry Moore.

(1) On April 25th 1993, The Mail on Sunday published a list of Britain's 10 "oddest societies" which is reprinted on page ...



## PARIS-BREST-PARIS 1991

"These are my recollections, not of places but of people."  
by Geoff Boxall



Paris-Brest-Paris  
1891-1991

There have been various reports on "Team Crowborough's" 1991 PBP ride and this isn't one of them!

We could have ridden it quicker, but what is the point? We finished remarkably fresh and still able to enjoy everything going on around. Our riding speed - despite cries of being 'imprudently high' - turned out just right (by accident). You cannot ride that distance without adequate rest and that was something I was not prepared to sacrifice. The only way to enjoy the event was to remain as alert as possible.

I was informed in January '91 by Roger (Bradgate) that the ferry was booked and that he had "every confidence in me". What chance had I got?

I needed riding support and Roger Beaurain in Dieppe had indicated in 1990 that he would ride with me. I 'invited' the only other companion who I could 'guarantee' I would not fall out with after 1200km in the saddle to come along. Mick 'Copper' Burgess has been a friend for forty years - has ridden Paris-Roubaix and numerous continental randonnees and next to me has the steadiest wheel I know. (I merely quote what I am told about myself!)

As the year progressed my team disintegrated. Roger Beaurain was working away from home for long periods and was unable to get the miles in. Mick is a tireless worker for cycling and his involvement with the Lewes Wanderers, ESCA, Sussex track and promoting events left him with insufficient time to get fit for an event of PBP duration.

No matter what I thought - if I do not go now maybe I will never get another chance. I would not be alone - Roger and Astra (Morgan) and 'Team Hailsham' would be around. I was conceited enough to think I could drop back onto them during the ride if things didn't go as I planned.

In the qualifying rides I had teamed up with David (Rix), who I knew I was compatible with, and two odd characters from the South West London D.A. who kept crossing our path. One was an extrovert who thought he was a brain surgeon and wore a lamp on his head and a monocle. His mate was a little quiet chap who sat a bike like he was born to it and towed the 'brain surgeon' up the hills. The demise of 'Team Hailsham' left David out on a limb and he was an obvious choice to join me. (I would have asked him earlier but he had already been spoken for and I didn't want to interfere.) Team Crowborough's back up potential was offered to Stuart (Downie) and Derek (Monkhouse), which they happily accepted.

David's setback of a broken frame in the Bryan Chapman 600km had to be overcome. The bike was important, but not as important as the fitness and tenacity of the rider. David had both and, with a careful overhaul of his father's 1948 Strudwick, proved equal to the job. My own punishment in that event only served to make me more aware of my own vulnerability and made me more conscious that the planning has to leave nothing to chance.

Once on our way the choice of Olivier and Denise Degorre's Chambre d'Hote as our French HQ was the best thing we ever did. They entered into the spirit of our adventure, to the extent of preparing special meals for 'les sportifs' and coming to see the PBP leave Paris.

Once on the road the troubles of the 'famous four' were over whilst those of the 'dynamic duo' were just beginning. We sailed off with a tail wind - plenty of company and a route waymarked all the way to Brest and back. On the other hand our exuberance meant that Roger had to belt like hell to stay ahead of us. Astra had less time than ideal to get our rations ready and they both had little time to sleep. For them this went on for four days. At the end I would rate the performance of the support team equal to that of the riders.

When Roger and Astra finished the Southdowns 200 I saw their elation and I know how they felt.

Imagine that elation magnified sixfold and that is what the riders felt arriving back in Paris. We had the glory but I know that it was only ours because of the magnificent backup given by 'the duo'.

The ride itself is now a blur of some wonderful bike handling, unsurpassable camaraderie and, as only the French can put it, 'ambience'.

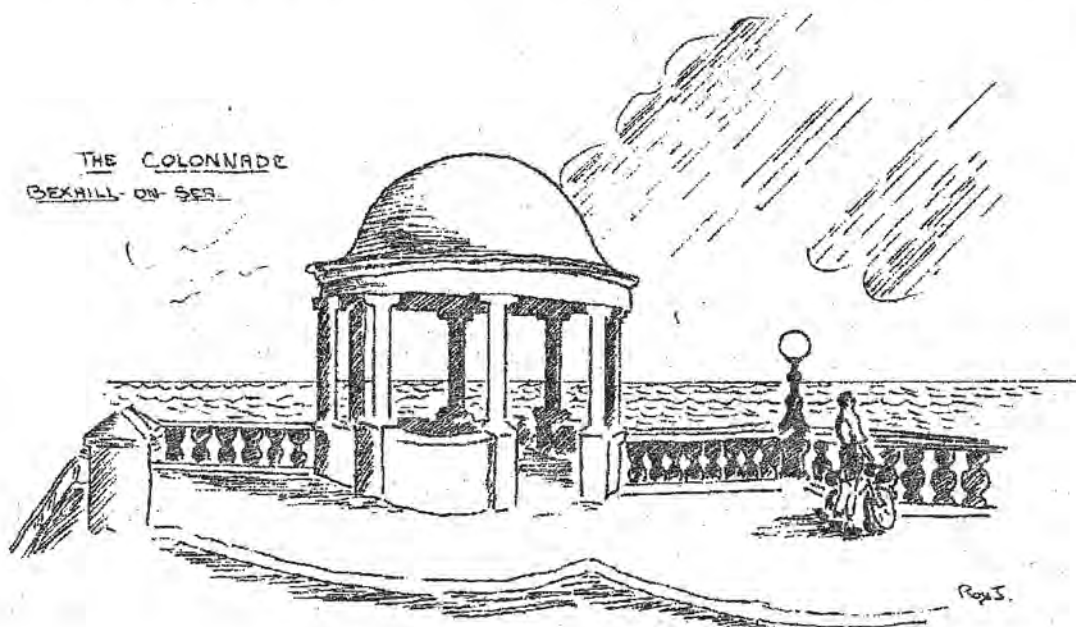
My worries? Team Crowborough was centred on ME. If I were the one to let the others down and have to drop off the back would the duo go on and help the majority? Mercifully that decision never had to be made. By the time Stuart's knee started giving trouble it was 'dans la poche'. We had time in hand and were well on the way back. Once again tenacity was more important than strength, and the bond which David, Derek, Stuart, Roger, Astra and myself formed was unstoppable.

My sincere thanks to everyone for pandering to my wishes on the way round and looking after the old boy so well.

In finishing I must not forget Helen and Pete, Jenny, Maureen, Susan and Sheilagh who put up with a year of getting ready and another year of debriefing and unwinding. To them the letters PBP must be the signal to switch off!



THE COLONNADE  
BEXHILL-ON-SEA



EVERYDAY SUSSEX No. 15 by Roy James

## A WEEKEND IN SUSSEX & SURREY by Ann Rix

Those of you who appreciate the changing seasons as I do, would have revelled in the glorious Autumn colours we saw on our hostelling weekend at the end of October. We had done this trip many times before, but never at just the right time - before all the leaves fell and had been spoilt by the winds.

The members slowly gathered by ones and twos at the Cabin Cafe, Maresfield, for elevenses. Ann Rix and Dick Colyer from Seaford and Denton, Geoff and Jenny Boxall from Crowborough, Bill Earl (Midweek Section) from Eastbourne, Marian Shephard from Winchelsea (who left her car at Hailsham), David Kiernan from Hailsham and a surprise! John Seviour from Polegate, who hadn't booked but hoped for the best. One missing was Paul Palmer who had had to drop out owing to cracked ribs.

We nearly lost David at Freshfield Crossways when some didn't realise that he hadn't started off when they did after a stop for a slight adjustment. He thought we had taken the road to Horsted Keynes, but soon found no-one in sight and returned. Through Lindfield, where a motorist came from behind and drove through the group as we were passing a stationary car - a pity she couldn't hear our comments - she was going too fast and just missed a car coming towards us!



Out through the little back lanes to Cuckfield and seeing more and more of the beautiful Autumn colours, then on to Staplefield to eat our lunch in the bus shelter on the green. Our next stop, after passing the Hammer Ponds at Slaugham with the reflection of yellow and bronze in the water, was at one of our favourite places, Horsham Park, for cups of tea and a warm up. On the way John was up to something new to some of us and which looked odd from behind; trying to catch falling leaves before they hit the ground, which is said to bring good luck if you can manage it. Passing Warnham Park we saw the large herd of deer which Dick thought was a 'stag'gering sight!

It was a sunless day, which was a pity as the colours would have been even better, even so the various shrubs in the gardens all added to a glorious feast for the eyes - acers, sumach, cotoneaster. Up to Ockley and then the climb from Forest Green to Holmbury St Mary - 58 miles for Dick so much the same for most of us - arriving at the hostel just before 5pm. Most hostels now have smaller rooms with about 4 to a room; Marian, Jenny and I had one to ourselves, which was nice. John managed to get in O.K. so all was well. Some had the hostel meal, while the rest cooked their own, then all settled down for an evenings chat and discussion on things to come.



Sunday morning and we were away by nine - much to the amazement of the group Ann was ready on time. Down the track from the hostel and, just before the road, a fox ran across in front of us, a splendid start to the day. We took the high road near Holmbury Hill to drop down to Ewhurst Green and then Rudgwick to join the Downs Link. The beeches, oaks and silver birches were resplendent in their Autumn cloaks, then along the hedgerows were the brilliant red berries of the hawthorn, some snowberries and a few blackberries still here and there.

We stopped on the bridge over the Arun to look down at the winding river below (check your map and you'll see what I mean). It seems from the path lower down that the railway bridge was built on top of a footbridge. The first part of the Downs Link was good riding, on a thick carpet of leaves, but, oh dear, after Slinfold we had to keep stopping to avoid very muddy parts, which slowed us down. Ann then got a puncture, so we were late for our elevenses at Southwater Park - but the refreshments soon perked us up. Another bit of the Link from there to what used to be West

Grinstead Station, coming up onto the main road to ride to Cowfold where we found Bob Levett and Peter Wilson waiting for us for lunch.

Geoff and Jenny left us here as they would keep higher up, whilst we dropped down through Twineham to Hickstead and the cycle path south. 3 took the quicker route via Cobbs Mills and Hurstpierpoint College to reach Stoneywish for tea, ahead of the others who followed the cycle path to Pyecombe and came over Clayton Hill.

A splitting of the ways again after tea, now with our lights on. A good Autumn ride both days and a most enjoyable weekend.



## TRAFFIC REDUCTION THROUGH LESSENING CAPACITY

by Jonathan Dalton

It is now well known that the provision of extra road space through new construction or road widening causes increases in traffic to use it up. Conversely, experiments with road capacity *reduction* have shown that traffic can be reduced (traffic evaporation).

With the great need to reduce motor traffic to save resources, avoid accidents and protect the environment, etc., we should seriously consider reductions in road capacity, firstly stopping the road programme and then steadily evaporating the traffic on existing roads by reduction in capacity combined with traffic calming. Reducing the width of roads would release space for cycle lanes, public transport (bus lanes or reserved track roadside light railways) and environmental improvements such as tree planting.

To balance the squeeze on road traffic it is desirable to improve both the capacity and level of service of public transport, by increasing train and bus services, re-opening closed railways and developing tramway/light rail systems for busy routes and large towns. There is also a pressing need to provide again a comprehensive rail/waterway freight network to replace the heavy lorry. These measures would also of course make cycling and walking, which are the most efficient means of short distance transport, safer and more amenable.



## WORKING IN TANDEM

by Geoff Boxall

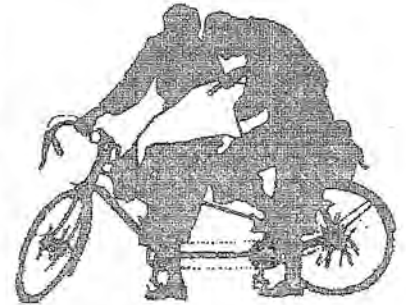
The third INTERNATIONAL PEACE RIDE took place at the Cycling Club Bungalows at Ugley near Bishops Stortford commencing on Monday the 6th of September 1993. This was a tandem event, all of the stokers being visually handicapped.

The first ride was held in America in 1989. Janice Newman rode in the second in Australia in 1991 and was "persuaded" to organise the third here in England in 1993. She found no commercial organisations willing to support the venture and eventually METRO stepped in. METRO is an abbreviation of the Metropolitan Sports and Social Club for the Visually Handicapped. It was formed 20 years ago by a group of blind people in a pub, one of the founders being Mike Brace, a member of the Crescent Wheelers, enter the connection with Ken Craven.

The event had 25 tandems on the road every day with stokers from Australia, America, Canada, Holland, Hong Kong, Latvia, South Africa, New Zealand and the U.K. We all met up on Monday and "familiarized" ourselves with our partners, I hasten to add that my stoker was the organiser, Janice, but don't let your imaginations run riot.

Ken Craven switched things round, swapped tandems and worked tirelessly to match drivers and stokers. I soon found myself a job cranking spoke nipples.

The rides started on Tuesday with routes provided of 30 or 60 miles, all having a common lunch stop. A van went around behind each group and provided repair and sag waggon facilities. There was one snag. The scale of the map supplied was at best 3 miles to the inch, probably 4. The route was marked in thick felt pen. The lanes were very small. Most of the drivers were not locals, some I suspect couldn't read maps anyhow. The result was that everyone had their own interpretation of where they were going and did not care much how they got to lunch so long as they got there.



On Saturday everyone went to Sheringham, John Seviour rode up with his Canadian partner, along with several other crews, some of them re-mixed from sighted pairs. Most of the party went by coach and toured Cambridge, where a conducted tour of Kings College had been arranged. While there Terry Waite came by with a camera crew in tow. Apparently it was the launch of his book. I took Barry Parslow round; he lost his sight a couple of years ago but in his time had ridden 4 P.-B.-P.'s including some on the trike and tandem trike. We had plenty to talk about. I have no doubt that he will continue to ride randonnees as soon as he can find a driver.

The format at Sheringham was the same as at Ugley. We had 3 riding days there. The day we went to Wells-next-the-Sea it hissed down all day. Janice and I left the hostel last, my partner having first made it clear to the warden that our booked breakfast had been late and that tomorrow it would be ready at the time ordered. We set off at a cracking pace, the 110 inch top rolling comfortably with the wind behind us. One by one those ahead were reeled in with loads of friendly banter as we passed. We eventually caught Steve Bamber of the Ely who was leading the pack. We had passed Bob Maitland and Margaret Allen and so we felt quite pleased with ourselves. We arrived at the lunch stop soon after eleven, dried off under the driers in the loos and had coffee. Lunch was taken shortly after noon and soon we were making our way back to the hostel. The drying room that night resembled a Turkish Bath.

On Tuesday 14th the group returned to Ugley via Norwich. I teamed up with Tony Fielding, who stoked me home in 6 1/2 hours for the 100 miles. This included 1 1/2 hours off the bike for elevenses and lunch. By the way Tony is 70 and still actively time trialling. One crew made it in 4 1/2 hours, the stoker was a blind 38 year old Kiwi who's wife, who normally drove him, stoked Steve.

That left us with 3 final days at Ugley culminating in a farewell evening meal at Hornchurch.

Some of the highlights that stick in my mind are the Aussie crew who killed their front wheel on

the first day and borrowed my spare. I later learned that they had failed to negotiate an S bend and demolished the parapet of a wall. Then there was the tyre game one lunch-time played with a gang of friendly Hell's Angels. They had looped together about 20 foot of old motorcycle inner tubes and anchored one end to a tree. Participants then loop the free end around their waist and walk away from the tree with a screwdriver in their hand, thrusting it into the ground to leave their mark when they can get no further, before being catapulted backwards.

Then there was the time that my freewheel pawls disintegrated leaving us driveless. We sat down, ate bananas and eccles cakes, and waited. Along came Ken stoked by the Latvian, Marius. After a bit of head scratching I produced a rope and, while Janice and I put our feet up, Ken and crew towed us for about 10 miles to the lunch stop where I fitted a new block from the van. On another occasion Barry Parslow, on the back of the tandem trike, blew his driver's bottom bracket to pieces. Barry wryly remarked that the beast just wasn't up to his dynamic power. On his next outing his mount shed a load of chainwheel bolts.

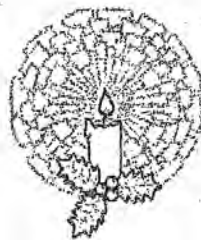
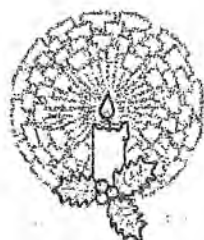
One evening, late, one of the girls entered her room and put the light on only to find her room mate, Elspeth, sitting up in bed knitting. Half a dozen tandems swept into one village where road works were in progress. We all came to a halt as one of the tandems punctured. Elspeth and Margaret Allen keeled over onto the grass verge unable to get their feet out quickly enough. Puncture repaired everyone moved off and I'm conscious of a rythmical bumping beneath me. I had flatted two rims, serious enough that both had to be replaced within hours, and not even punctured or damaged the tyre.

Another incident concerned an 18 stone Dutchman in his middle thirties called Gerben. During the day his Brookes saddle had split across the rivet holes by the nose. Barry Parslow, the saddle's owner, complained that he had only had it for twenty years and it had never given him any trouble. Gerben rode for the rest of the day on that seat. In the afternoon during a tea stop we heard a crack like a rifle shot. Looking round we saw Gerben, still in his chair but flat on his back on the ground. Both the back legs had sheared off simultaneously. Needless to say he received the yellow jersey at supper that night.

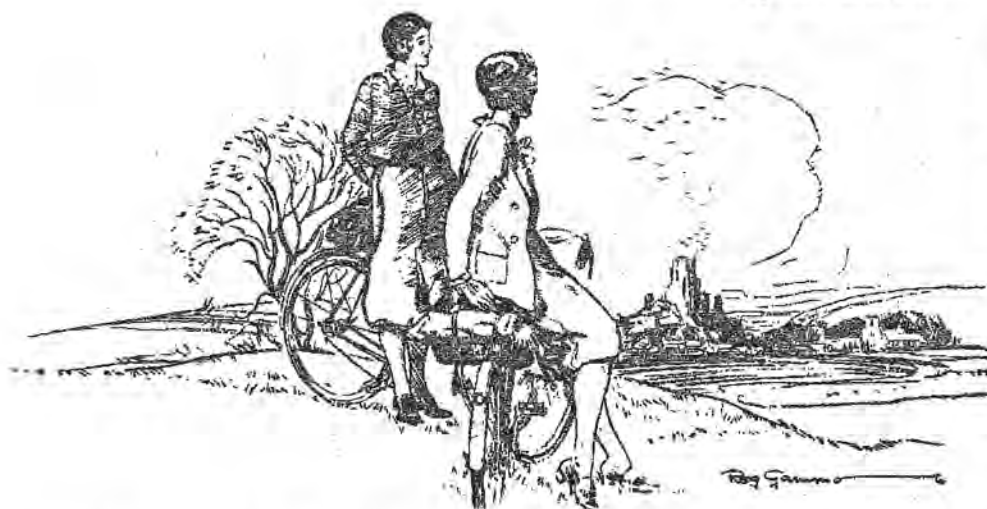
One evening, in Sheringham, we had a splendid meal in a hotel, a gift I believe from the local Lions. On another evening it was fish and chips, with jellied eels for those with strong constitutions.

The unsung heroes of the 10 days were the housekeepers. Two huts were used for breakfasts. Every morning they provided limitless porridge, tea, coffee, rolls and marmalade. They were there when we returned after our ride with baked potatoes, tea and coffee. Another team made packed lunches.

The week was very rewarding, very humbling, if that is the right word, and an insight into the world of the visually handicapped. There is a move afoot to put on a similar event next year, to be held in an army camp probably located in Hampshire. The aim is to make it affordable and open to more U.K. riders. If YOU have a reliable tandem and a week to spare you could help someone less fortunate than yourself next year.



Reg Gammon  
by Art Lover.



1994 will see the 100th birthday of Reg Gammon, an artist of the cycling scene, whom many of us remember alongside Frank Patterson with their illustrations in the "C.T.C. Gazette".

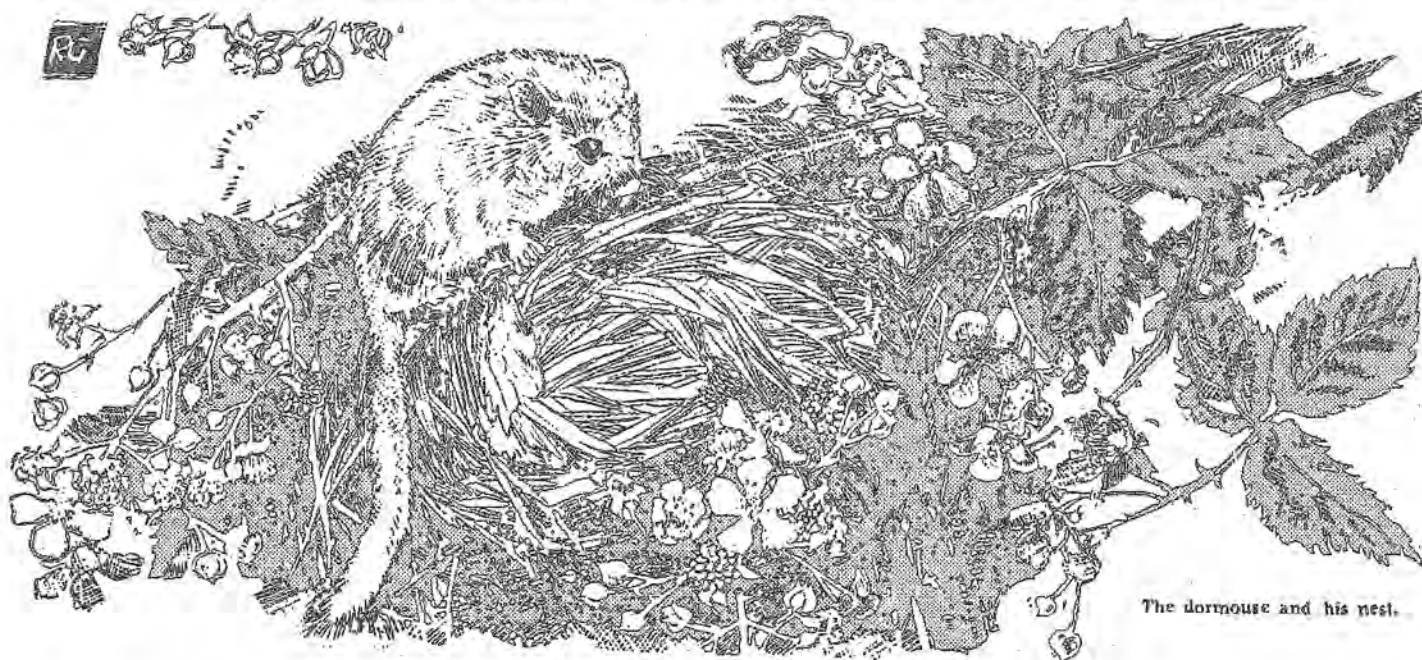
But Reg is far more than illustrator of cycling subjects, for although he wrote and illustrated a country feature for the C.T.C. magazine until 1984, a total of 60 years, he is much else besides. Most

importantly he is still with us, painting daily and exhibiting yearly at the New Grafton Gallery in Barnes, S.W. London. Next year a retrospective exhibition of his work is being mounted at the Royal West of England Academy, where he has exhibited yearly for an unbroken record of over 50 years.

Born in Petersfield, Hampshire in 1894 and educated at Churchers College, Petersfield, he was apprenticed to a village builder at Fernhurst, Sussex until illness prevented his continuing. In 1911 he was apprenticed to our own "Pat" at Billingshurst until joining the army in 1914 and 1916 being discharged on health grounds on each occasion.

In 1918 he married and began a long career as a freelance artist, working for numerous magazines and books of the BBC childrens' series "Out With Romany". The 1930's saw him forming a scout group and conducting cycling and scout and hiking tours in Scotland, the Lake District and Ireland.

1940 and Reg moved to Capel-y-ffin, Wales, and rebuilt a derelict cottage, joined the Home Guard and continued contributing to "C.T.C. Gazette" and "The Scout". In 1942 he purchased a forty acre sheep farm in the Llanthony Valley, Abergavenny and working with his younger son, John, they pioneered milk production and crop growing for the war effort and were instrumental in bringing electricity and the telephone to the Valley. In 1962 he retired from farming and moved to Somerset where he continues to the present time to execute paintings that glow with vibrant and unexpected colours.



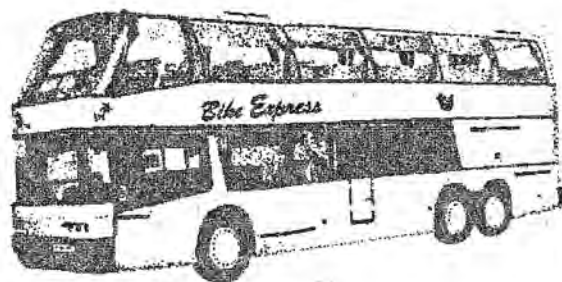
Both Illustrations have been taken from "The C.T.C. Gazette", Vol.57, No.10, October 1938

## CARELESS COUPLE GO COACHING

by Michael Rabbetts

It's all right for you car owners. You can just put your bikes on, in or behind the Orion and off you go to somewhere far away, then unload the bikes and pedal off along lovely flat roads beyond sight and sound of horrid Sussex hills and Safeway pantechnicons. We underprivileged carless peasants, meanwhile, search for the few remaining rail services able (or willing) to take us away from it all. Megan and I had intended to ride round the Avon Cycleway this year. We would freewheel from Crowborough to Brighton and there take the slow but cycle friendly train to Bath. Oh no we couldn't. The Bath service was now operated with one of those ridiculous two coach Sprinters which take either a push-chair or one bike; and "you'll have to book well ahead, Sir, or the space will be gone." Space? You call that tray slot SPACE? Fat lot of good two people going on a cycling holiday with only one bike, anyway.

In the end we went to Bath via London, leaving the bikes at home and hiring some in Bath - an unsatisfactory compromise on uncomfortable machines which we used for only one day. A few weeks later we made enquiries about train travel to Hereford with bikes and were assured that there'd be no problem (and no booking) if we went by way of Birmingham. Lies, all lies. The damned Sprinters had spread to the Birmingham-Hereford line; not that we tried to use it - we found that out only after taking our bikes to Hereford by coach.



We read about this service in the C.T.C. magazine. Yeomans, the Hereford coach company, will take bikes on a number of their services, including the one which runs each evening from London (Victoria) to Hereford via Heathrow, Cirencester, Gloucester, Cheltenham and Ross-on-Wye. Getting to Victoria with bikes was no problem for us, because the line from Crowborough has not caught the Sprinter disease; and after ignoring the many "NO BICYCLES" signs on the walls and doors of the coach station, ours were slid without fuss, dismantling or turning of pedals and handlebars into the bowels of the Yeomans coach.

After a pleasant week among the black-and-white villages of Herefordshire we boarded the return coach for what turned out to be the most adventurous part of our holiday. The driver was not exactly in the first flush of youth. Frankly, he would have fitted very well into our Midweek Section. We heard him tell the coach hostess that he hadn't done this trip for 30 years, but didn't twig the significance of this until a few minutes after we'd passed the "welcome to Cheltenham" sign. I looked up from my newspaper a few minutes later to see that we were passing the "Welcome" sign again, but in the opposite direction. There were stirrings and mutterings from the few other passengers who, having an intelligence the equal of mine, were uneasily aware that something wasn't quite right. A young woman among them made the decisive move; she moved to the front of the coach and said, "You're going the wrong way." Give him his due, the driver admitted it. And he allowed her to guide him back into the town and to the bus station. Here he hit a bit of a snag because the woman was only going as far as Cheltenham, and he had to ask one of his new passengers to show him the way out.

Everything then went smoothly until we hit Cirencester, about ten miles further on (thank goodness we were able to by-pass Gloucester because ours was a relief coach). Here, the driver was told how to get into the town by a front seat passenger who then, carelessly, got into deep conversation with the chap next to him. As a result, we found ourselves touring an industrial estate. "Coaster" readers will be glad to know that two fully-trained Midweek Section members came to the rescue, making full use of those anecdotal memories for which the Section is famed. By recalling the names of the little Gloucestershire and Wiltshire villages through which we used to ride when we were young and beautiful we led the driver, passengers, hostess and whacking great coach through a network of pretty lanes and so on to the main road towards Swindon. Sighs of relief and admiration all round. Unfortunately, our cycling experience stops short of the approach roads to Heathrow Airport, where driver, hostess and the passenger who failed to stay alert in Cirencester had the devil of

a job to agree on where the coach was meant to end up. A last second turn got us to the right stop and after a hairy exit we returned to the M4 and the last leg to London. LONDON? You mean that great, throbbing, traffic-infested, highly dangerous rat-run? If he couldn't find his way through a little town in the Cotswolds, what hope had he of negotiating the Hammersmith flyover?

Do not fear; the Cirencester sleepyhead, anxious to make up for his earlier failure, stayed by the driver's side until he left the coach at Earl's Court. Then the hostess, who also had some Brownie points to make up after trying to brew the passengers tea with luke warm water, stepped into the breach and made sure we reached the coach station. We were about 30 minutes late, but had plenty of time to catch our train; and we had enjoyed what might otherwise have been a fairly boring journey. Don't be put off by our experience; after all, cyclists should encourage bike-friendly coach firms like this by using them as much as possible.

YEOMANS CANYON TRAVEL (0432 356201) can carry two bikes on the daily London-Hereford service for £3 each. Booking is essential - as far ahead as possible.

Yeomans can also take four bikes for 50p each on their Sunday and Bank Holiday services between Hereford and Brecon.

CYCLE ROUTES in the Hereford-Worcester area, recommended by Hereford Wheelers/CTC, are available in the Hereford City Information Centre. First class.



### FOR SALE

Peter Crowsley has been asked to sell the following by an ex-cyclist in Edenbridge.

24" RIVETT'S Frame. Gold, curly lug work. Chrome ends. Needs a re-spray. 531 tubing. Offers around £40

Also some bars - Maes, etc. and stems, mostly GB alloy 3 3/4". Mafac 'Racer' brakes and Simplex gears. Offers or barter/swaps.

If interested Telephone Peter Crowsley on 0732 862393  
or write Mill Hill, Edenbridge, Kent. TN8 5DQ



DEADLINE FOR SUMMER ISSUE - JUNE 12th 1994