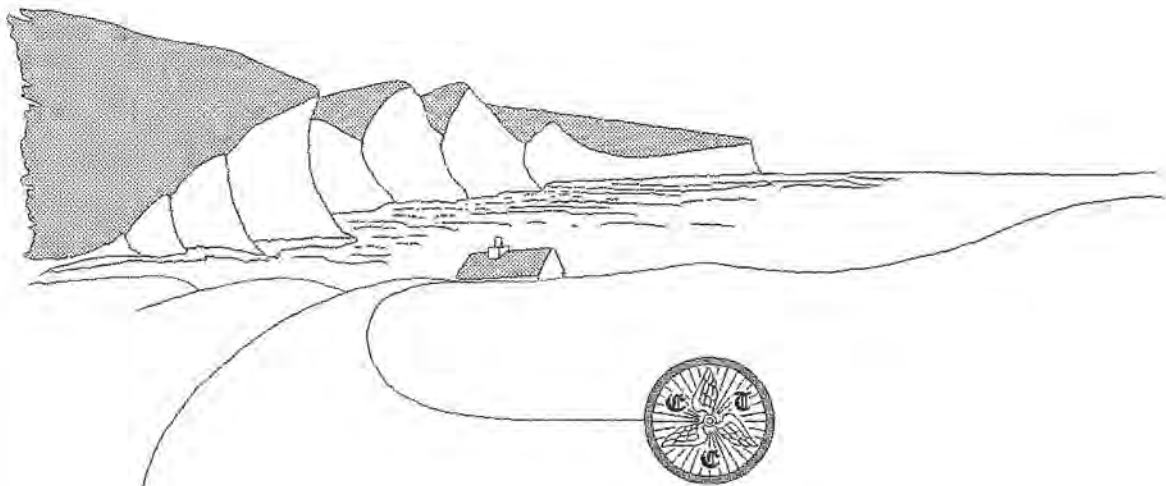


The



# Coaster



*the magazine of the*

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION  
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 26 Summer 1994

25p

*East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club*

PRESIDENT MR. DENNIS JAKEMAN

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**"THE COASTER"**

*Issue No. 26, Summer 1994*

*From the Editor's Desk.*

A summer of hot days and thunder storms (so far), the Tour de France in England and holidays on the way. Thoughts of long days in the saddle enjoying our beautiful countryside. Mind you by the time I take my holiday it will probably be raining again - well we can always dream. Magazine time has come round again and I have a small, but select, crop of articles for your enjoyment. (Surely there are others out there who have interesting holidays, or thoughts they would like to pass on.)

What have we got for you this time? Well, Roy James has been to Corsica, without his bike but still managing to get some cycling in; a first article from Len & Jean Steel who have been trying out their new folding bikes; a report on this year's Home Counties Rally - but why not leaf through the pages and see what else we have to offer.

Articles for the magazine are always welcome, at any time not just near the deadline. So if you feel like putting pen to paper, to write or even to draw, then please do - I'll accept almost anything. I've only ever rejected one item, and that only because it was too rude for inclusion. So why not start your literary career here. The deadline for the Xmas edition is the second Sunday in November.

Happy cycling,  
*David.*



## ***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 Meadrow,  
Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3HS

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

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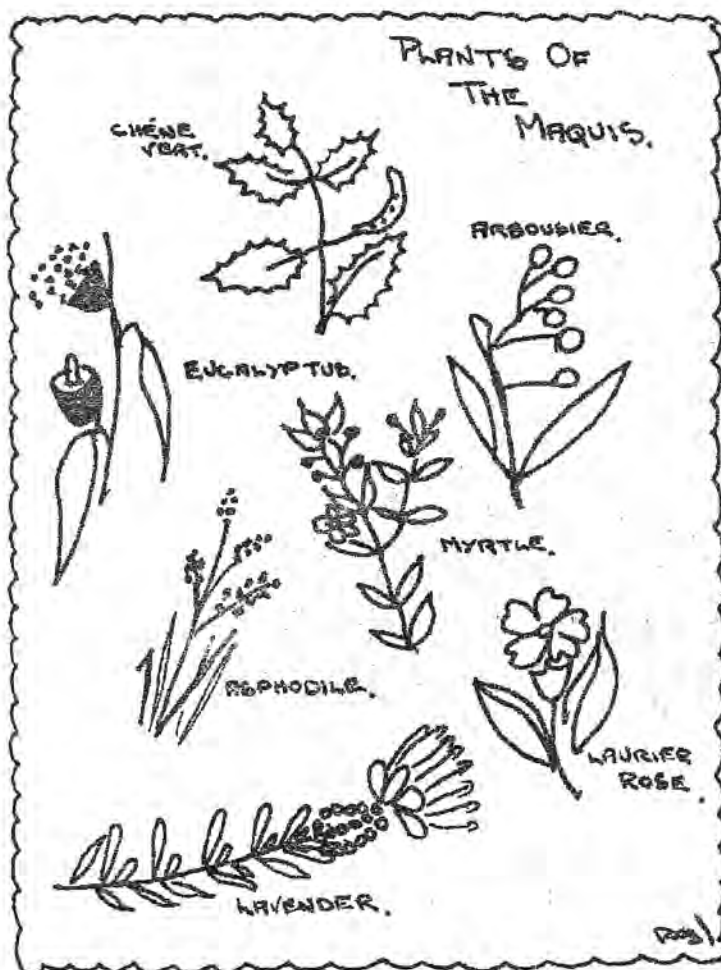
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## UNE PETITE RANDONNEE EN CORSE

by Roy James.

It was certainly not meant to be any kind of a cycling holiday, and as we were returning by train from Ajaccio to Calvi along the mountainous spine of Corsica that May afternoon nothing was further from my mind. Then came the almost final stage of our four hour journey. For nearly an hour, from Ponte Leccia in the northern centre of the island to L'Île Rousse on the coast, our little train twisted its way down the mountainous slope. Beside us for most of the time we could see the splendid N197 making its way to the same destination. What a tempting sight it was, sometimes dropping from view for a short time only to pop up again when it was least expected and all the time not a car to be seen.

I knew that on this holiday a cycle ride on that fabulous road was out of the question, but the following morning I made enquiries in Calvi and discovered that plenty of mountain bikes were available for hire at about seven pounds a day. Half a day would give me a small chance at least to take in a little of the coastal hinterland. If I left in the afternoon I would miss the heat of mid-day. So, duly at about 2.00 p.m. I set off on a hired bike towards the village of Lumio, about ten kilometres away. The coast road was busy and as I neared Lumio the gradient became steep as I turned off the main road towards the village. Lumio is pretty and flowering and like most other Corsican settlements has made little effort to attract the tourist trade. Anyway, its approach road is too narrow and steep for excursion coaches to get into its heart. This leaves an attractive "Centre Ville" quite without visitors. The coaches call a visit to Lumio a brief pause on the main road while the passengers crane their necks to catch a glimpse of a tree lined square with flowers tumbling from quiet villas. All this was for me alone that afternoon as I sat in the shade of a eucalyptus tree for a rest and a beer from the ubiquitous 'bar'.



Shortly after leaving Lumio I turned right on the D71 and was immediately engulfed with silence, for on this minor mountain road no vehicle seemed to venture. Terraced gardens, small cultivated fields and vineyards and olive groves with bright orange nets spread under the trees, ready to catch the ripening olives, appeared near the tiny hamlets of Lavatoggio and Cateri. Elsewhere, the maquis reigned. This undergrowth is a gathering of holm oak, juniper, arbutus, lentisk, heath, bay, myrtle and box. All these highly aromatic plants perfume the air and have earned for Corsica the title of "The Scented Isle". Napoleon, Corsica's most famous son said, "I would recognise Corsica blindfold by its scent alone". The sketch pad came out and a few brief line drawings quickly made to remind me of that beautiful afternoon.

At Cateri I turned right again on the D151 and started a long steady climb that brought me finally to the Col de Salvi. Far below lay the Bay of Calvi, probably sweltering under the afternoon sun, but up here the air was fresh and sweet. For now I was in the

Bolagne, a fertile area and still one of the most prosperous rural areas in the Island.

Then a pleasant descent followed, most welcome after over an hour of climbing. Until, set on a spur of rock, the village of Montegrosso came into view. The 'Place' of Montegrosso, dominated by a small, elegant baroque church opens onto another glorious view of Calvi and its bay and it was here, while pouring another beer, that I was greeted by two cyclists from Norfolk on a C.T.C. tour. On this day taking a break from the main group. We chatted briefly, bikes were examined and then I left them for the final part of my ride.

The section from Montegrosso to Calenzana is full of small pleasures; Oak trees and Chestnuts grow from the heathy slopes and all the time there is a steady descent into Calenzana. At the entrance to the village, in a boxy glade of eucalyptus, several games of boules were being played. I stopped - for to be frank, I enjoy the rests as much as the cycling - and watched a game that both fascinates and mystifies me. Close by, standing amid ancient olive trees, I found the chapel of St. Restitute, claimed by the guide books to hold the remains of the saint, martyred by the Romans. But such things strike a chill within me and without pausing I was soon leaving the village on the long, straight road that continues to fall steadily to the coast.

Back on the N197 and not far from Calvi I took a dusty lane that led me through pine trees to the sandy beach. A swim in the calm water of the bay completed a ride that may not have been long but was indeed memorable.



EVERYDAY SUSSEX No. 16 by Roy James

## AND BABY COMES TOO

by David Rix

We had already been wondering about what to do when Martin was due in 1991. Like many others before us we didn't see that having a small baby should stop us from enjoying our cycling. We had started scanning the classified ads. in *Cycletouring* for trailers, but when he finally arrived we still had nothing sorted out (mind you at the time I was busy preparing for the Paris-Brest-Paris in August).

It happened that a few weeks later we went up to CTC HQ to visit the new shop and for me to see Betty Sayers, the D.A. and events officer (we also joined Martin up while we were there). While Betty and I were chatting the subject of children and bikes came up. "You need a copy of Chris Juden's handout." she said, and duly went off and found one. It's only about half a dozen photocopied A4 sheets, but it's probably the best (sorry) best guide to what's available for taking children by bike that you can get. It goes into detail on all the permutations, from simple child seats to kiddyback tandems and trailers. Having looked through this we saw that one particular child trailer that we had noticed adverts for, the Burley Lite, was recommended by Chris as probably the best child trailer on the market. But then we saw the price tag - nearly £300 - we definitely hadn't got that kind of money to spare. Granny to the rescue! Ann had been keeping up on our progress and she said that her mother, my Gran, who had died just after Martin was born, had not left a lot but she would have been pleased for some of it to be used for her great grandson. So I got onto Burley Lite Imports about ordering one. They did not have any in for immediate delivery, but forty were on their way from the States and were due any day. I placed an order on the spot to be sure of getting one - he told me twenty were already spoken for!

About a week later we received a call to inform us that the trailer had been despatched and it duly arrived in time to be used a couple of times before I went off to France. We had opted for the folding version the "d'lite" that weighs only about 18 lbs. and comes complete with quick

release alloy wheels (Weinmann rims and sealed bearing Maillard hubs) and a little flag pole. During the following year we probably became quite a curiosity round the lanes of our part of Sussex. The one thing we did add was a large notice on the back saying "Baby on board", we found the motorists were more considerate and gave us plenty of clearance when they knew. Mind you, on a lot of roads and lanes they did not have a lot of choice but had to wait until we could pull in and let them pass! We also



(I offer no apology for reprinting this picture from the Summer 1993 Coaster)

tended to gather a few curious onlookers when we stopped anywhere for elevenses, lunch or tea.

By the following May Martin was just reaching the point where a child seat would be more suitable for him; he was starting to take an interest in what was going past and you can't see that much out of a little window two feet off the ground. We started looking around and managed to get a nice seat and carrier (Rhode Gear) and also a helmet for him from Phoenix cycles in Eastbourne. Our range increased a little without the extra weight and drag of the trailer to tow, and with a child buggy cover adapted to fit over the seat in case of summer showers we were ready for most things.

By the beginning of this year, 1994, it started to become obvious that Martin would not be able to use the seat much longer - I was getting the odd broken spoke from the extra weight! Susan, though she took Martin some times, was not having this problem because their combined weights were lower, but she was finding that his weight on the back had its effect on the handling. It was time for something else, especially with a new addition to the family on the way.

The previous year at the New Forest Cycle Week we had picked up a kiddycrank attachment complete with freewheel and chain, all we needed was a tandem to fit them on. Mum's Claud Butler was really too big and being an ultra-short wheelbase model was not exactly suited for fitting kiddycranks to. Then we remembered that when we had been discussing his Rann-type trailer with Tony Worcester he had mentioned that he still had the childback tandem they had used up in his loft. A quick call to Tony and yes, it was still up there if we were interested. We picked up Mum and went over to have a look. It turned out to be another 'Claud' ultra-short - but, with a marathon tube running through the middle. Problem solved, we could fit the kiddycranks to the marathon tube and simply adjust the seat height. On further enquiry it turned out that the tandem had been Bruce Allcorn's and Tony had also had from him the crank shorteners that Mum and Dad had used when I was small - so they have now come full circle and are sitting in the garage waiting until we need them for Martin.

When it came to fitting the kiddycranks we were unable to use them after all - the alloy shell cracked around the bolt holes under only slight pressure (probably age and metal fatigue). So we fell back on a previous offer made by our friend Andrew Attwood, who runs the Bike Store in Worthing, and now have an Andrew Hague unit on permanent loan. for as long as we need it. After this problem and about three weeks of fiddling around and alterations - which included safety bars on the back for Martin, getting hold of a half link to get the chain length right and a sleeve for the kiddycrank unit because the tube size was different - we were finally ready for a trial run. The tandem went up on the roof and it was off down to Exceat for a ride down the concrete road. A great success! We were to adjust the height up or down on the front so that either Susan or I could ride it, and Martin seemed to enjoy himself, though it will be a while before his pedalling will make much difference.

Apart from a few times during the winter, when the weather was too bad for the child seat, the trailer was relegated to its hooks on the wall of the garage. And there it had been hanging for about a year when our daughter Emma arrived on Easter Day this year. The trailer has come into its own again, and has now acquired a couple of modifications - mudguards and a netting cover for the summer. We already knew of the problem of having no mudguards - people kept complaining when they were riding behind us on wet roads! Geoff Boxall (one of the wettest!) already had the solution in mind and rolled us a lovely pair of alloy mudguards, custom made

to fit the trailer, and attached to the quick release axles - so they come away with the wheels when the trailer needs folding.

The netting cover was a different matter. Martin, being born July and only being in the trailer for two weekends in August and then from September onwards, had not experienced travelling in the trailer in very hot weather. It soon occurred to us that it would be like a greenhouse, and poor little Emma would roast with the full cover over the trailer. Some alteration was needed. Luckily when Martin was born we had bought an insect net for his cot bed, but had never really needed to use it. Part of this, with some modification, was altered so that it could be fitted over the front of the trailer, whilst still allowing the full cover to be used if necessary. This meant that when it was hot the main cover could be rolled back and she would get a cool through draft, but the netting would keep out any insects or other things that flew by.

Now we can be seen on most Sundays, either meeting the group at Denton or Seaford to ride out for the morning to coffee, or with the tandem and my single on the roof meeting them part way for elevenses and then a ride to lunch. Susan rides the tandem with Martin (even though she won't ride the back of a tandem - she likes to feel in control) and I tow the trailer with Emma. Our mileages these days aren't that high - probably twenty to thirty miles, maybe a bit more - but we're getting out and enjoying ourselves. Our only real problem comes when we use the Cuckoo Trail - their barriers at road crossings are not designed with trailers in mind, which means lifting it over. This is not a problem when in a group, but would be impossible for someone on their own.

Martin occasionally falls asleep on the back of the tandem, but the padded bars form a good rest for his helmet. And Emma? Well, at the moment she seems quite contented - she just sits in her seat in the trailer and gets rocked to sleep.



Two flowers of the roadside verges.

THE SOUTHDOWNS 200  
by Colin Miller

or WHAT AM I DOING HERE WHEN I COULD BE CUTTING THE GRASS?

Now, I'm sure there will be dozens of articles for "The Coaster" reporting peoples' exploits on this year's Southdowns 200, but I should like to relate the tale of the ride as experienced by the contingent from the 'Hastings and Rother Hardriders (we find any ride hard ... etc., etc.) Section'.

This small but perfectly formed group was made up of Barry (let's miss this hill out) Mockridge, Marian (argh, my jockey wheel's gone again) Shephard and Colin (does this shirt clash with these shorts) Miller. I felt in august company, riding with a super randonneur and a past winner of the D.A. freewheeling competition. I will leave those who know the above to decide which is which.

Fortunately the previous day's weather had improved considerably. Rain and wind was replaced by sunshine and a light, if cool, breeze. Both Marian and Barry are old hands at riding these sort of distances, but I look upon 200 kilometres as more of an odyssey than a bike ride. To those who regularly ride this distance and more, I take me 'at off to you.

We set off at a brisk, indeed alarming, pace. We hadn't gone far, Lewes to be precise, when Marian was true to her sobriquet and we paused whilst she rearranged her chain. The next pause was a bit further down the road, on the way to Newhaven. The secret control wasn't very secret - we all saw you Ann, I even got your autograph. (perhaps I haven't quite got the hang of randonnees yet). All of the ensuing route, past the first control at Arlington reservoir as far as Barcombe Mills was through familiar territory and, shedding layers as the day warmed up, we arrived at the Mills for an early 11's.

The next leg of the journey along the foot of the Downs was very pleasant, and I'm sure the folk sitting in the sun, supping their beer at "The Shepherd and Dog" in Fulking wished they were cycling with us. The sun was really making an effort now and it was necessary for me to cover my head as my very own solar panel was beginning to overheat. Barry unzipped his jacket several milimetres. The control at Woods Mill was most welcome, dispensing squash and cake to the masses. A drink was even offered to some very hot and burdened walkers following a local footpath. This offer was declined, perhaps on account of the various worrying fashion statements on display around the control car.

Life began to get a little hillier as we headed away from the Downs into the Weald and the climb to Cuckfield. Lunch turned out to be one of those impromptu affairs, taken at "The Witch" pub on the outskirts of Haywards Heath. As the pub didn't serve food (probably the only pub on the entire route which didn't) and none of us felt like going any further without some sustenance, beer was bought and saddle bags raided to see what victuals were lurking in dark corners. Fortified by a mixture of Waggon Wheels, crisps, flap-jack and beer/cider we pressed gamely onward and upward to Hartfield.

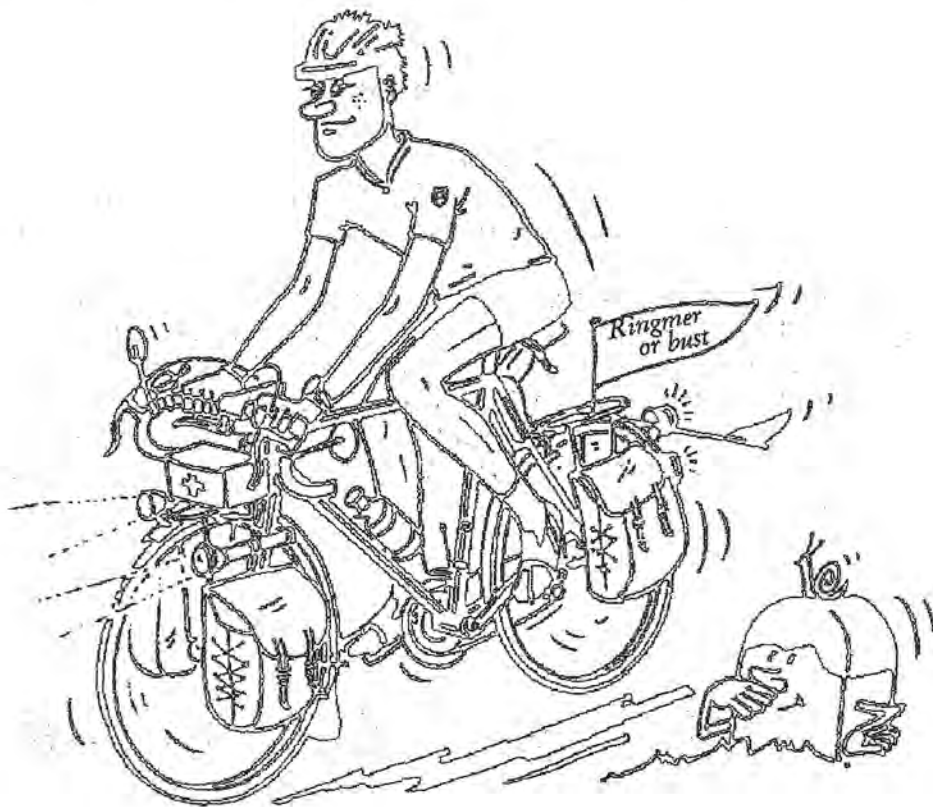
We left the fourth control and commenced the climb of one of the longest sections of uphill road in the Northern Hemisphere. At least that's what it felt like to me. If only we had known that this was but a foretaste of the remainders of this stage. Talk amongst the group had dwindled, a sure sign that things were getting serious and everyone set-to with their smaller rings and larger cogs. The ice cream van at the top was a joyous sight and life improved considerably as we sat eating our rather small £1.00 cones and enjoying the rather larger views. Suitably refreshed, we rode along the crest of the Ashdown Forest. The surrounding land was

lower than our present position; obviously it was going to be all downhill from here. Foolish boy! The remaining miles to Flowers Green were interminable brief downward swoops and sharp grinding uphill. Once or twice Barry checked that the perambulatory function of his cycling shoes was working satisfactorily, whilst my knees began to glow red - which I don't think had anything to do with the sun. Marian kindly waited for us at the top of each rise. When we eventually came to the control at Flower's Green we bravely disguised our haggard looks and glided through the gateway, looking, we hoped, like hardy cyclo-tourists game for many more miles yet. We sat soaking up the sun, as well as several cups of tea and some sausages, before setting off on the final leg of the journey.

There are a lot of flies resident between Flower's Green and Hailsham. Not as many as there used to be mind, we managed to consume several bushels of the little blighters between us. Those that escaped being eaten, perished in the coconut oil protecting Barry's legs from sun burn. After the quiet lanes and relatively quiet main roads so far, the A22 was a rude awakening. Everyone was dashing back home, having enjoyed a day at the seaside and it was a great relief to turn off onto the road to Laughton and Ringmer. Those final few miles are best summed up by Barry's plaintive cry of "oh! Colin" delivered in such a desperate and pathetic voice. I'm sure he was kidding though, just to make me feel better. Certainly he managed to out-sprint me in the Scout Hut driveway. We had finished well within time, at 7.49 p.m., not quite the 'Lantern Rouge', a tandem from West Sussex pulled in two or three minutes later.

I drove home feeling pretty pleased with myself. My longest continuous ride ever, and still more or less conscious. Ah, but didn't that bath feel good!

P.S. Thank you to the cheerful and encouraging volunteers at each control and to the organiser, David Rix, who will be hearing from my solicitor shortly.



## FLYING BROMPTONS

by Len & Jean Steel.

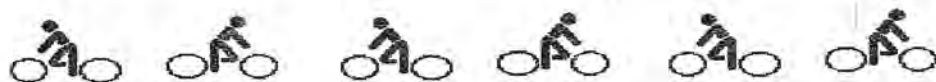
Earlier this year we decided to invest in Brompton Folders - reasons being they pack up neatly, can be stuck in the back of the car without having to worry about racks and can be put onto trains as luggage. After a few trial runs we made a few adjustments to suit our style of riding and made our first trip with them to Jersey, by way of UK Air from Southampton. UK Air because we had vouchers to get two tickets for the price of one if used by the end of June. Two suitcases in the boot with the Bromptons on top in their special bags and we were away.

In spite of the fact that our luggage exceeded the limit we did not pay any extra - this applied on all of our three trips. Probably because of the number of business travellers without heavy luggage there was enough spare to cover our excess. Although it was only necessary to remove the left hand pedal, we decided to remove both (we had changed the rubber pedals for rattraps so we could fit toeclips and straps) and these with the tools were put into one of the smaller bags for transit in the cabin. I think they must have blown the x-ray machine up as when we reached the other side the bag was emptied out and was being feverishly sorted over. The only comment was, "we don't expect to see bicycle pedals in peoples luggage". This problem was avoided on subsequent trips by putting all the iron work into a separate plastic bag and serving it up separately.

In Jersey we stayed in a country house hotel who very kindly allowed the folded bikes to be kept in a cupboard by the reception counter. We spent a very pleasant week in Jersey with a day trip to Alderney, this time by Aurigny Airlines. On this trip mention of the bikes caused the comment, "You will have to pay £5 each way for each", however when presented with two packages that looked like a couple of large plastic bags they relented. This short trip of just twenty minutes was an experience not to be missed; the planes were small and passengers sit side by side and get in and out through doors in the fuselage, which are opened and closed by the pilot before and after flight.

The other trip was to Glasgow, no trouble again as far as the flight was concerned both to and from Glasgow from Gatwick. But so far as cycling was concerned it was a dead loss. All we managed was twelve miles and during the trip we were nearly blown into the Clyde. However Glasgow is well worth a visit, if only for what can be seen and done in the city itself. While the South enjoyed a heat wave, we had rain most of the time and if not it blew a gale.

So far as the Bromptons were concerned we are both very pleased with them, they ride well and sitting upright my back trouble causes no problem. It is essential that one gets used to one particular peculiarity - the parking position is achieved by lifting the saddle and allowing the rear wheel to swing forward under the bracket, so it is not necessary to require a wall or fence to lean the bike against. If you lift the Brompton saddle for any reason - and there can be plenty - the rear wheel swings under of its own account. Incidentally this causes no problems when riding - even on rough stuff.



## MID-WEEK MEANDERS

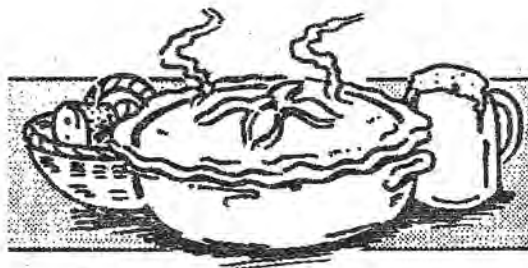
by Baggy Shorts.

The Mid-Week Section continues to provide a rich and varied programme on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The variety just about matches the characters who lead the rides!

For example on a recent outing, a simple enough ride on the face of it - from the Lagoon Leisure Centre in Hailsham to The Swan at Woods Corner with Len Steel as leader. Quite a crowd for elevenses with a few choosing not to join the ride because of other pressing matters. Amongst these Ann Rix and Geoff Boxall, who were surprised as they headed West to note that they were being pursued by Pat Graham, Mike Isitt and Ian Jamieson! They quickly told them, "Don't follow us, follow those others." The others in this case being John Mercx and John Muirhead who happened to be going straight to Bexhill! Fortunately their route did go past Rickney so they were able to put the three tail-enders on the trail of the main group heading for Herstmonceux. Then a mishap occurred - Ian had a puncture in his rear tyre, this right by the farm with the notice 'Alsation loose'. There is another notice too 'Rottweiler loose', but the moment the animal spotted the scowling Ian it turned tail and wimpered away with the owners rapidly fastening their vicious pet on a short lead as far away as possible from the fearsome Ian! Meanwhile as the puncture was being mended Pat and Mike shared a few nautical experiences! By the time the trio reached Woods Corner even Dennis Jakeman had completed his meal!

Another Wednesday on a lovely day (yes we have occasionally had them, remember?) there were over two dozen at The Forge at Halland including Pat and John Christmas just back from a long break in Australia, Ernie Spray, Ken Griffiths, Geoff and Jenny Boxall and Jane Lade. The lunch destination was The Blackboys Inn and three routes were on offer - the three mile direct, a short diversion through Waldron and then the well researched route of the leader on the day, Mike Rabbetts. This was particularly interesting since as well as including most of the hills in Sussex, Surrey and Kent it visited also some Llamas, the sight of the first Ironmaster and a plaque dated 1563 amongst other features. However some riders like Len Steel, Ernie Spray and Tony Palmer were more anxious to be fed than be educated and hared off at pace to join the direct and alternative riders at The Blackboys Inn. Somewhat wearily over half an hour later, when Peter Bratt and Dudley Cheal had already left for their respective homes, the main body arrived - happily more knowledgable than when they set out. Special thanks to Mike Rabbetts, whose dedication meant that he had to climb the same hills three times on the day - coming, going and leading the ride!

Sad to relate the death of Harold Bateman - who last was tricycling with us on the Woods Corner outing - the Dallington Group. Shortly afterwards on a routine visit to his doctor he was ordered into hospital and survived in there for only one week. The Mid-Week Section were well represented at his funeral and grateful for the thanks the members of his family expressed for the pleasure Harold had enjoyed on his many outings. He was an active Mid-Week committee member and will be missed.



## HOME COUNTIES RALLY - READING 1994

by Ann Rix

Several of us have been to most of these Rallies since the first one at Godalming in 1978, which was to celebrate the Centenary of the C.T.C. The idea caught on and the Home Counties D.A.'s thought it would be nice to have another, so in 1979 it was at Lamberhurst, hosted by West Kent D.A. We hosted it in 1980 and 1986 at Selmeston, very ably organised by Iris Stevens assisted by her team of willing helpers. The idea then was to keep the Rally's as simple as possible in order to keep the costs down for families, etc. To have a barn dance and a slide show on the two evenings and also led rides by local people who know the area.

Since we did it in '86 the rallies have departed somewhat from the basics. The hosting D.A.'s have the job of all the organisation, so some have had a problem finding a venue that fills all the requirements as follows. A large field for camping, an area for camper-vans and caravans, as well as parking for all the cars, a hall for the barn dance and slide show, with a kitchen for providing meals and also facilities for serving drinks and cakes to the returning riders as well as to people arriving on the site. All of these need to be on the same site, therefore at Oxford in 1992 it was at a Rural Studies Centre a few miles outside. But this had its limitations as there wasn't room for caravans and some were unable to go. Therefore schools and similar establishments are now being used, since most are now under local management and only to pleased to generate some extra income. We still remember the one at Overton on the hill above the village, though David Kiernan and I were at the Youth Hostel in the Old Schoolhouse in the village. Another point about using schools is that they have showers, some hardy folk think that these are not necessary but if it's a hot weekend - or even a wet one - it's nice to have a shower before settling down to the evening slide show for instance.

Traditionally it has been on the May Bank Holiday weekend, at the start of May. There have been only two at the other end of May - on the Spring Bank Holiday - one at Brockham Green hosted by South West London which made a big loss and the one this year.

Regarding the possibility of loss - this is no problem - in 1980 we gave some of the profit from the Selmeston Rally to start a fund for this eventuality, and the other D.A.'s have done the same since. This means there is money available to be used if deposits are needed beforehand or to reimburse a D.A. if the weather is bad and there is a loss.



This year the one hosted by Reading D.A. was more on the grand scale since they used Pangbourne Naval College. Reading D.A. have grown over the years since they started up again, to the point where they now have about 100 riders out every Sunday. This meant that they had several of their riders on each led ride. There were the A rides of about 78 miles, B rides - 57 miles, C rides - 30 miles and Mountain Bike rides - 25 miles, on all three days, plus on Sunday an Audax 150km 'Rally Brevet Populaire'.

The Barn Dance that evening was much enjoyed by all; some feel that the price for this should be separate from the registration, but it does mean that all can sit inside if it's cold or wet and many just sit and chat and watch the antics of those who go the wrong way! The hall was full, but then there were 285 people at the rally, the most it has seen since Centenary year - usually it's just under 200. Reading though had pulled out all the stops and had all their members supporting the Rally whether riding or not.

Your scribe was flung around the floor by two Bobs. Bob Sharp of West Kent is notorious for this, several of us having experienced his methods before, it makes one rather dizzy! Bob Levett of our Section was a welcome respite this year, the first time he has been to the Rally. Dick Colyer had his first experience of it as well, though he opted out of the Barn Dance as he was riding the Audax the next day.

Nine of us were there at Pangbourne this year. Geoff & Jenny Boxall kindly took me with them on the Friday (the Rally started at 5.00 p.m. on the Friday and ran till 6.00 p.m. on Bank Holiday Monday) and we were the first of our D.A. to arrive. We had a lovely drive up through quiet lanes, it took a bit longer but was more enjoyable. Bob Levett drove Richard Colyer and they arrived some time after closely followed by John Seviour and his friend Gwen. John Gallsworthy and Sally Dennett-Thorpe came up early Saturday morning. Unfortunately David & Susan were not with us this time, David was still getting over the sciatica and with young Emma having just arrived there was the problem of transport with two youngsters now to accommodate on the bikes. I therefore took my notebook so as to be able to report back on anything we all felt should be noted for next year.

Eight camped and I was lucky enough to have booked early and was in the last of the eight places available on the site for accommodation. But guess where we were - in the SICK BAY! This caused much amusement, we even had the tray that pushes over the bed!

What is nice about the Rallies is meeting old friends from other areas, swapping ideas, enjoying riding in different areas with people who know the surrounding countryside. Though all of us were Seaford & Newhaven Section we split up on the different rides over the weekend depending on what we wanted to do. Geoff & Jenny, John & Gwen and I went on the C ride on Saturday to Checkendon, through the Thames Valley, about 30 miles at a leisurely pace. Dick and Bob did the B ride, about 60 miles, to the Hambledon and Stonor valleys through the Chiltern beech woods. John and Sally were later getting going and so were caught by the showers before leaving the camp site and did a ride on their own later. It was a rather chilly day but managed to brighten up later. All rides each day went in the same direction so that halls on the routes could be used throughout the day, some had elevenses there, some lunch and some tea, some even elevenses and tea!

On Sunday we split up differently, Dick rode the 150 km Audax, Bob, John G., Sally and I went on the B ride, John and Gwen on the tandem ride, with Geoff and Jenny doing the C ride and seeing the 'Blue Pool' and the Kennett and Avon Canal. All in the direction of the Hampshire Downs on a lovely day. The slide show that evening was "Nepal, downhill all the way", by Dave Buckley. Very good but by the time it finally started most of us were falling asleep. When they had seen the hall before booking the College they did not realize that there were no curtains at the windows! Therefore the show, supposed to start at 8.30 (which we felt was too late anyway), was moved to 8.45, but finally started at 9.15. I and Geoff & Jenny gave up at the interval; we heard next morning that someone had trodden on the cable then and broken it, so they had another wait while it was soldered - so we were very glad we had gone. There had been a mini fun triathlon early evening, no doubt to fill in the time till dark, but only six teams took part.

Monday we all went out on the C ride as packing up would have to be done for the site to be cleared by 6.00 p.m., and we wanted to be well on our way by then. The rides this time were to the Berkshire Downs and the Pang Valley, with elevenses at a Garden Centre for us. We had a lovely run back after lunch and arrived in time to pack up before the afternoon tea at 3.30 p.m. A short stop at Five Oaks Little Chef on the way back with Geoff & Jenny and we were surprised how little traffic we encountered and the others said the same. My notebook came out as we travelled back so that I could get down the opinions of the other two, the pro's and con's of the event, to report to David and the Committee.

We were very pleased that Dick and Bob both came with us this year, as it gave them an idea of what was involved, because folks - if you haven't guessed already or seen it in the Newsletter - we are hosting it NEXT YEAR! And we shall need all the volunteers we can get.

The venue is already booked - Ringmer Community College - two miles from Lewes, the Caterer is being arranged for providing the evening meals on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and the Band and caller for the Barn Dance are booked. Other things are also under way, so much of the preparatory work has been done already. David was able to plan a lot of the paperwork needed while he was laid up, which will be very helpful later, as when we get more input only a few things will need changing and it will all save time.

We hope to have a few people responsible for different areas, some have promised and are willing to do this already. For instance Geoff Boxall has agreed to coordinate the runs and Jenny is doing the same for the on-site refreshments, etc. Now it's going to be a case of the more the merrier to help spread the smaller jobs around so that we can all enjoy it. So make a date in your diary now - May 5th-8th at Ringmer. (The Bank Holiday has been moved on a week next year to coincide with the anniversary of VE day.)



### GREEN COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

by Jonathan Dalton

When the railway system was at its peak, every part of Britain, except for certain parts of the Highlands of Scotland and Wales, was within 4 miles or so of a station, most people considerably nearer. This is easy cycling distance for most, especially on roads relieved of their traffic by railways and water transport, with horse-drawn or battery powered vehicles conveying local goods and those unable or unwilling to cycle, providing a coordinated sustainable green transport system.

Whilst reinstating such a system has its problems, it could be achieved at less cost than the proposed road programme, and would have widespread and far reaching benefits for the whole community. Cyclists and pedestrians have doubly suffered from road closures, having further to travel to and from railheads on increasingly hostile roads. Railways and cycling are ideally complimentary means of transport, the former generally for longer journeys and the latter normally for local use. The roads would become a peaceful network of country lanes largely free of the fumes, noise and danger of the internal combustion engine.

THE ORIGINAL LIGHT-WEIGHT CAMPERS?  
(An extract from "In Search of England" by H.V. Morton, 1927)

I was coming out of the village post office when a voice, which I knew well, cried:

"The very man! Do you know that my wife wrote three letters to you and never had a reply!?"

"No, I didn't."

"Well, she wants you to write about the new gipsies."

"Who are the new gipsies?"

"We are. There are heaps more, but we are typical examples. The habit's growing, too. The only way I can keep fit is by getting out of London for weekends, so we've taken to camping. Some weekends we go to Devon or Somerset or down to the New Forest, but this is our first Warwickshire camp . . . Look here, do you know Abbot's Mill? Good! Well, take the footpath to the left, and carry on till you meet a stream with a little bridge over it. Don't cross the bridge: it isn't safe: there's a plank to the left. Cross the stubble field to the wood, which you will see right ahead, and when you get there shout, and we'll hear you. Come to dinner! Sardines, bacon and eggs, and tinned tongue. . . ."

"I can't come tonight."

"Then come when you can after dinner. The stars are simply marvellous. You'll be able to write yards about it. Great Scott, that reminds me! I've got to get a half-yard of elastic. See you later."

John X the precise London business man, clipped and neat in everything, was the last person I would have expected to see in a lost village dressed like a rat-catcher. So, of course, I decided to go.

It was growing dark when I passed Abbot's Mill and struck off along the footpath which, contrary to all my expectations (for directions always lead you astray), led to a small stream and a decayed bridge. A rich gold field of cut corn with rabbits at the edges led on to ragged line of trees against the sky. Here I shouted. A man's voice answered some way off, there was a crackling of twigs, and in a few moments John X appeared at the edge of the wood with his sleeves rolled up.

"Just been washing up," he explained with a grin. "Beastly job! Come on."

He led the way along a little gamekeeper's track through the wood.

"Can you imagine a greater change from London than this?" asked John X, waving a hand to include the shadowy trees. "Weekend cottages and houseboats, and all that sort of thing, end in bridge parties and cocktails, and in time you meet all the friends you want to escape from. But this . . . one might be in the middle of the moon. Here we are. . . ."

We stepped into a sudden clearing. A wood fire was burning some way from a green tent. A touring car covered by a tarpaulin was in the background.

"We had an awful job getting the car up here; but it's worth it: we're right off the track."

Mrs. John X came out of the tent; and I never saw a prettier gipsy.

"You see," she said, taking me to the tent, "we have electric light tapped from the car."

There was a rug on the floor and two camp beds.

"Say when," said John X, approaching with a soda siphon.

We sat round the fire and watched the darkness creep out of the still woods and enfold the little clearing. We found the first star. The lights of the camp fire ran up the trunks of the nearest trees.

"This isn't our best camp by any means," said John X, lighting his pipe, "but the idea is not to stick in one place. You keep on exploring. Our best spot is bang in the middle of the New Forest, with a crystal-clear six-foot swimming pool at the tent door, and nothing for miles. . . ."

"Gorgeous!" said Mrs. John X. "I take a swimming costume with me, but I never use it. . . . and we hear the foxes barking, and one night we went with a gamekeeper to smoke out a wild bees' nest. We took over forty-five pounds of honey in tin bath. . . ."

John X got up and wandered off towards the car.

"I'm thinking," I said, "that this must be an excellent cure for married life."

"Hear, hear!" cried John X, emerging carrying what at first sight I feared was a large gramophone. "This gipsying together puts us right for the week after, doesn't it, old girl. Of course, some women would hate it. . . . Mary, give me a hand with this thing. . . ."

She got up, a neat silhouette against the fire, and helped him to fix up on the ground a big wireless set.

"This," said John X, "is only to show off to you: we keep it for wet weekends."

It was a queer experience to sit in front of a fire in the middle of a wood and hear a strong orchestra playing in London.

"It's friendly on a wet night," said Mrs. John X.

It was quite dark. The stars were indeed marvellous, powdered above the clearing. Moths flicked in the light of the fire, and in the outer ring of darkness the tall trees stood unruffled by the slightest wind, the yellow firelight touching their boughs and moving, flinging grotesque shadows.

"Any one with a car can do this," said John X, closing a great paw over Mrs. John's hand, "couldn't they Mary?"

Almost any one, I thought, watching them. It occurred to me that their short dashes from the responsibilities of their home are a secret worth passing on. The atmosphere of playing a game together is a great one to introduce into married life.

Mrs. John went into the tent and switched on the light.

"Oh, John," she cried, coming into the firelight, "there's a moth as big as an aeroplane on my pillow!"

"I'll fix him!" said John X, rising and striding to the tent.

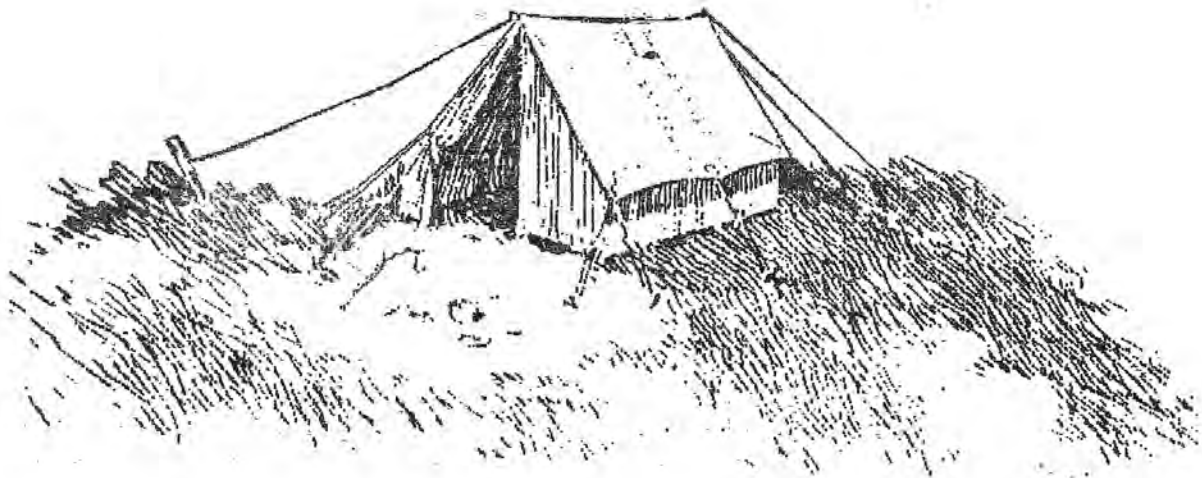
"Don't kill him: remove him!" cried Mrs. John.

"You're too late," came the reply.

"My caveman!" said Mrs. John X, lighting a cigarette.

John X lit a lantern, took me to the plank over the stream. The stars. The peace of that place. I watched his lantern bob back through the wood, and then there was darkness. I stood a moment thinking that no one would guess how lost together these two London gipsies were; only a few hours from their home and their children, but as alone together on this night of stars as if they were in the heart of the Libyan Desert.

There was a brief scurrying of cottontails at the edge of the dark field, and the rush of water at Abbot's Mill drummed loud in the hush of the night.



*DEADLINE FOR CHRISTMAS EDITION  
SECOND SUNDAY IN NOVEMBER*

