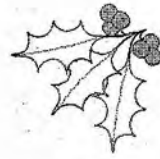
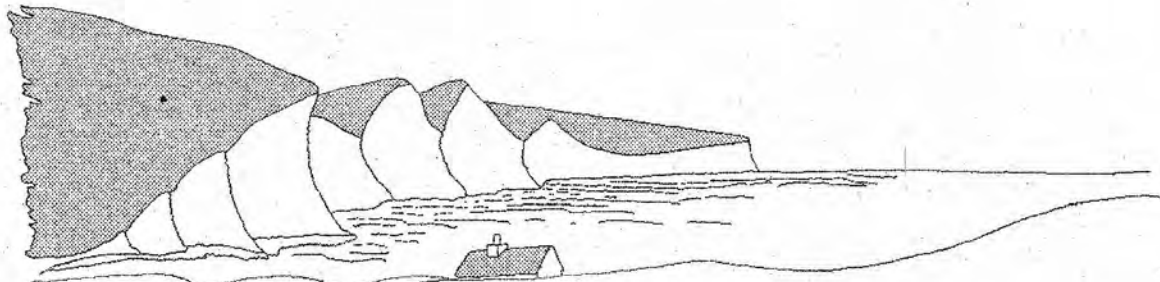


The



Coaster



*the magazine
of the*

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 27 Christmas 1994

50p

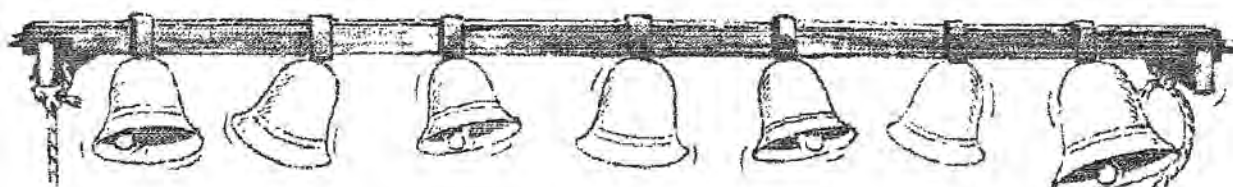
East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club

PRESIDENT MR. DENNIS JAKEMAN

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

"THE COASTER"

Issue No.27, Christmas 1994



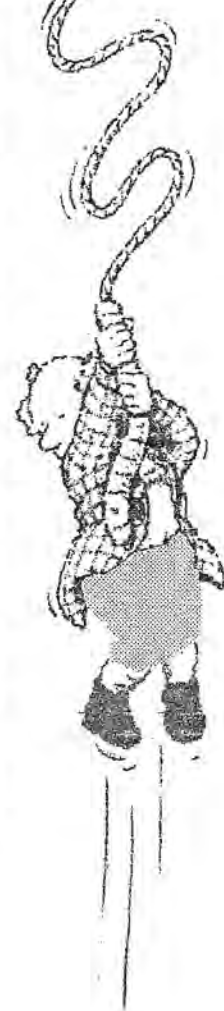
From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to the Christmas issue of the East Sussex D.A. magazine. This has been an interesting year for cycling, with the Tour de France coming to England for the first time in 20 years. The numbers of people out on the roads to watch 'Le Tour en Angleterre' were amazing and it seems to be having in effect on CTC membership, if not on the numbers riding with us- East Sussex membership is up by 30 this year. At about the same time we saw the launch of the finalized East Sussex Cycle Strategy, which is already starting to show results, with more invitations to take part in consultations on new road and transport plans than we have ever seen before. Let's hope that the Tour and the subsequent events layed on to take advantage of the publicity generated will help raise peoples awareness of the benefits of cycling and prove a permanent boost to the cycling cause and not just a temporary one.

In this issue we bring you not one, not two, but three articles on trips back across the channel. There's also a report on the New Forest Cycle Week and a newcomer's insights on the D.A. Touring Competition amongst others. I hope you all enjoy this issue and if you feel like writing something for the next one I'm always willing to accept articles.

*Deadline for the Summer issue - June 13th 1995
Happy Christmas & 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 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.

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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.

MUD AND IRON HORSES

Sunday, 11th September - East Sussex D.A. Touring Competition

A beginner's Impressions - by Tim Evans

This was my first outing with the massed ranks (or is that the rank masses?) of the CTC, and my first go at anything so serious as a Touring Competition(!). I woke to the sound of rain; I would stay in bed - "I can always ride next weekend". Five more minutes ... now it was easing off. Blast! I'd better give it a go. A bit of breakfast, pack up some sandwiches and the flask and I was ready.

By the time I opened the front door, the rain had stopped and the road was drying. It's a lovely ride down through Spithurst from Newick to Barcombe Cross; I like Barcombe, but I didn't realise then how much time I'd spend there that day!

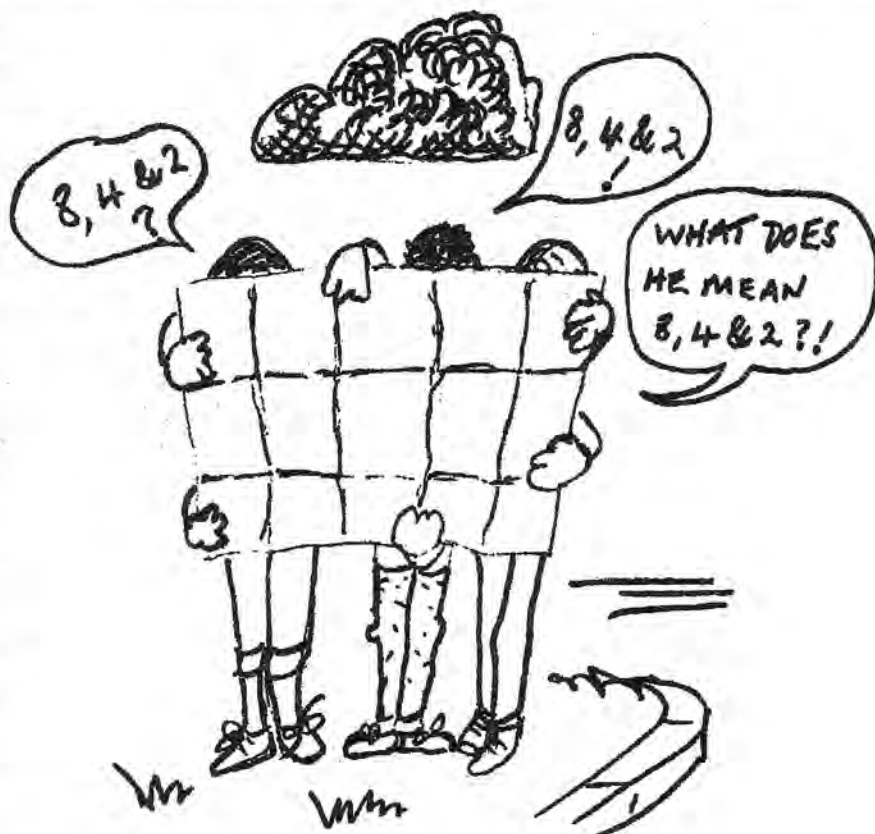
Got to Ringmer in good time, the cyclists were friendly (as cyclists always are of course) without being overwhelming, and in due course we were issued with our instructions, and the list of things to collect along the way. Some of the clues looked a bit baffling so I ignored those and solved the ones that seemed to make sense, tracing my route on the map to the lunch stop "where they discard heather" or Ditch the ling. Having confirmed that fact, I bartered this piece of knowledge for the company and experience of John and Sally.

The three of us set off, bagging the first few answers to the clues without difficulty, and keeping a few possibilities in mind in case nothing better became obvious. After a brief stop at the Old Station, Barcombe, we went up into Barcombe Cross looking for W.E.G. We looked down there, up here, over there and round that corner; up this road as far as here; turned round and retraced our wheelmarks, back down the road, round the corner, down the lane; no, that's far enough, better get a move on and leave this one if we have to. It must have been while we were looking "over there" on the first few passes, that we missed W.E.G. up there! Glowing orange and very nearly laughing at us. We moved on, collecting refuse along the way - I noticed some pitiful looks from people as I collected old tins from ditches and snatched blackberries and acorns from the hedges. Where would we find false teeth, though?

The rest of the morning passed pretty well; we missed a few clues, solved a few more, but still didn't quite get the one about "descending by 8, 4 and 2". Was it to do with road numbers? No. How about grid lines? Nothing doing. Perhaps its a red herring or out of sequence? Now we know the answer of course it's obvious.

Lunch among the tombs (well, almost) in Ditchling was pleasant, interrupted only by another quiz - a word search - and then more clues to follow on a walk around the village.

The afternoon took us along the bridle path from Ditchling to East Chilmington. At this stage we misjudged the leniency of our Quizmaster and opted for the shortest route to Barcombe (again) "crossing the railway once". Assuming "crossing" to be passing from one side to the other, we went under; we should have gone over*. Thus we rode a bridle path (or bridal path as the home made board nuptially put it) which was the stickiest, sloppiest, puddliest path I've seen this season. We got there quickly enough, but we missed three clues for the pleasure. We did a double, or was it treble, circuit of old



Barcombe, found the Matron's gravestone, and headed off for Ringmer. The final clue was, rightly, on the Village Hall, and we walked under it to claim our tea and cakes.

My thanks go to everyone who made me feel welcome, and specially to David for the quizzes and clues, Susan and Ann for the cakes, and Sally and John for letting me tag along! Now I'm off to wash my bike!

*Organiser's note - the relevant O.E.D. definition of crossing states "The action of passing across or over".



RATIONAL USE OF CARS

by Jonathan Dalton

With the now widely acknowledged problems of motor traffic, much thought is being given to alternatives. However, there is as yet little sign that car usage is falling, and it is even forecast to double in the next 30 years or so.

Even without official policies such as improving public transport (although these are, of course, very important,) motorists can reduce their adverse impact on the planet and save themselves money by rationalising the use of their cars (as some do) by using reasonable alternatives when possible. With the high fixed and relatively low running costs of cars many people are tempted to use them for all journeys in an attempt to get a return on their expenditure in doing so becoming slaves to their vehicles. For many trips the car is not convenient such as short journeys especially in towns, between and into towns, with the consequent parking problems, and commuting in the rush hour with all the congestion and danger of people in a hurry. These are also the most polluting trips: the engine does not get a chance to warm up and even catalytic converters do not work below 10 miles, and the wear and tear on the car is greater with consequent enhanced maintenance and renewal costs. If a car is driven less than about 5000 miles a year, it is cheaper to do without it and hire cars/taxis on the occasions when such means of transport are required.

As we all know, short journeys, and many long ones, are easily and quickly undertaken on foot or by bike. Although many are put off cycling by the dangers, it should be remembered that if they use a car instead they are endangering others as well as themselves. Bulky items can be handled on cycles using trailers if necessary. Commuting trips such as along the A27 lend themselves well to public transport, there generally being a frequent 'bus/rail service where passenger volumes are high as they are in the peak. When cars are occupied by only one person, these journeys are generally cheaper by public transport and even a once a week local 'bus service can benefit if used when available. It is surprising that more people who drive cars do not use motor bikes or mopeds which are less cumbersome on the road and easier to park.

Government and other official action is very important through planning, provision of improved public transport services such as reopened railways and tramways, cycle facilities and also fiscal measures such as the removal of the tax incentive for company cars and the movement of road fund tax from a fixed charge to one related to usage, such as on petrol. It is also essential to stop the road programme, as this encourages traffic growth as well as destroying the countryside and wasting resources.



WEEKEND ON THE COTE DE OPALE

by Iris Stevens.

A chance letter from France, inviting English clubs to take part in French cycling club randonnees, seemed an excellent reason for going to France for the May Day Weekend.

There were to be six of us, so what was the cheapest way? After pouring over several ferry brochures a Sealink 3 day return was settled on. The 10% discount I could get also had some bearing on it.

Early on the Saturday morning we met at the parking lot where Mick & Rose Hills were going to leave their car (£3 for 24 hours) and packed all the camping gear in the back of our estate. With the tandem and three solos on the roof, Heather, Mick, Rose, Ken and I squeezed in. Robert had been elected to go as a foot passenger (+ bike) as he was the fittest and could ride the couple of miles down to ferry. This way we were going to get over for £23 a head including Mick's car parking fees and a couple of gallons of petrol.

On arrival in Calais it was about 30 miles to where we were to camp at Equihen Plage, so Heather took off her bike to ride down while we four oldens went by car. We bought the picnic food and met them on route for lunch. Then it was off to find the site. This turned out to be right on the edge of the sea, not our usual choice, but the weather forecast had been good.

The patron led us up and up through a great number of static vans, most unoccupied, to a flat terrace all to ourselves. It seemed to be too early for tenters, but we weren't complaining, the view down the coast was superb. After Heather & Robert arrived we went into Le Portel for the inevitable food shopping and to find the start at St Joseph's School. The town was thumping due to the fact the fair was in the town square. St Joseph's turned out to be just behind it so we'd have no problem in the morning.

The event was the Amicale St Joseph, Sur le Traces de Napoleon, 50, 90 or 150 kilometres starting from 6 am till 12 noon. We elected to aim for a 9 o'clock start and as we were only about three miles from Le Portel it meant we did not have to get up too early. That evening we watched a beautiful sunset go down over the English Channel.

Next morning was bright and sunny, though a stiff breeze off the sea meant it was not quite warm enough for shorts. We arrived at the control the same time as bunch of Frenchmen resplendent in their club colours. We were very pleased we could compete in our bright yellow Lewes Wanderers kit. All the French clubs, racing or touring, have club clothing and very smart it looks. We signed in, Heather & Robert got a startled look when they signed for the 150. The other riders had left hours ago! They tend to start early and be home for lunch.

The youngsters left and we settled down to a free cup of coffee before departing on the 90k ride. Next minute we were hailed by West Kenter Brian Barratt and his Southborough Wheelers friend. They were feeling a bit jaded due to the fact their hotel had been opposite the fair and they hadn't got much sleep. We bid them farewell and made to leave just as a group of English arrived, Four East Kent, amongst them, having come over on Seacat that morning. They were all riding the 50k so had plenty of time.

The ride went northwards up the coast, first passing through Boulogne where we missed an arrow (all painted on the roads), and rode up through the town the hard way looking out for our first clue, Napoleon's Statue. Fortunately it is on top of a tall column that can be seen for miles so we were soon back on route.

Swinging away from the coast, leaving the 150k to go further on, we rode through quiet undulating country to the first control at La Capelle, only a short way out of Boulogne, but we had taken a more circular route. Here we were given hot chocolate and honey bread.

Leaving the control, a pleasant ride followed through the forest areas to Desvres. A nasty double arrow job soon after had us walking. At the top whilst admiring the view Brian and his mate caught up with us. Brian having ridden the event before said we now had miles of down hill, and so there was, a long scenic valley with the wind behind us.

The second control was at Recques-s-Course, but with a sting. A sharp right and oh! up to the chateau. Another Napoleon connection. There had been others, but a bit obscure to us English. Outside these splendid gates another tressle table, laden this time with glasses of wine, mint flavoured mineral water and best of all, plum custard tart. So this was the tart they had promised would 'confort' us. Not quite the French tart Mick had been hoping for.

After getting our cards signed we pushed on to find somewhere out of the persistent cool wind to have our picnic lunch. From this point we turned back northwards, passing through villages we had seen on a previous randonnee, and stopping for a coffee at a bar in Halinghen where we had done so

before. We were joined by the two West Kents and spent a pleasant time nattering as cyclists do.

It was time to move off, down the steep hill where I had shed my gear jockey wheels two years ago, and down on to flatter roads for the run towards the coast, only to go off route again. (Napoleon again). Obscure directions after the Forêt de Hardelot found us riding the wrong way up a crowded promenade at Hardelot Plage (so this is where everyone is).

Out comes the map for the first time that day. "It MUST be that way", said Ken, after we had traversed the same roundabout twice. It was right, but we had lost a lot of time and would have to push it to be back by 5 o'clock and the award presentations. Winding it up we picked up a number of British riders some of whom had gone off course like us. It was punch up the hills back through Equihen and a freewheel down into Le Portel. We checked in at 4.45pm, we had made it! No sign of Heather and Robert though; however 15 minutes later a hot annoyed couple arrived, after making the same mistake as us - viewing the sea at Hardelot.

Having refreshed ourselves with some beer we awaited the long prize presentation (the trophy table was loaded), speeches first in French then translated for us ignorant types. Then Lewes was called and I was sent up for our cup. As far as we could work it out the awards were being presented for the size of each clubs entrant. Kisses and a line up for the official photo followed. Then it was wine and biscuits, all for the 7 franc entry fee. Heather and Robert paid 10ff but they had an extra control feed. A most enjoyable day on quiet country roads. Afterwards it was back to the campsite for a brush up before finding a restaurant to round off the day.

Next morning we packed up, after arranging to meet Heather and Robert who were riding back to Calais, for lunch. A pleasant hour was spent wandering around the walls of old Boulogne then it was off to Guînes to meet the other two for lunch. Later in Calais we sat in sun and watched several serious boules matches whilst whiling away time until the ferry departed. A fitting end to a weekend in France.



UNUSUAL DAYS

Superflush Sunday - January 27th 1987. The much-publicized name given to the day on which the American Super Bowl football game was played. Harvey W. Schultz, New York's Commissioner of Environmental Protection, bestowed the name. He pointed out that millions of New Yorker's would be watching the game on television, and if they all went to the bathroom at half-time or at the end of the game and simultaneously flushed their toilets, there would be a serious, if temporary drop in water pressure.

Nippy Lug Day. The Friday following Shrove Tuesday. A name used in Westmorland, where children traditionally pinched each others ears on this day. 'Nip' is used in its normal sense of 'pinch'. 'Lug' was originally the flap of a cap which covered the ear, but came to be used in Scotland and the North of England for the ear itself. Scottish teachers were sometimes known to their pupils in the nineteenth century as 'nip-lugs', because they pulled the ears of pupils who annoyed.

THE TWO ROADS

From "A Sussex Highway" by Ruth Cobb (1946)

And so I came to Westmeston. The road had begun to descend suddenly, but halfway down the hill it opened out on to a miniature green. There were some farms, flint barns, and open sheds showing brightly coloured red and green carts, and a village church, nothing more. The little church faced West. There was a sense of peace about the aged building, with its lych gate and old tombstones, showing where villagers had been laid to rest for hundreds of years. The tiny tower was covered with wooden shingles surmounted by a miniature steeple. The roof, of Horsham stone, extended at one side to form a long eave; beneath it was the door, as in the earliest form of Christian church.

Westmeston is extremely old, and is mentioned in the Domesday Survey, and it is known that it once belonged to a Saxon Countess named Gueda, when it may have been quite a big settlement. Its name may be related to an ancient word connected with an enclosure. The village may well have existed as a farmstead for the swine that were then kept in large numbers.

Westmeston was given to William de Warenne by William the Conqueror, like so much of the land along the road. I saw that the church was dedicated to St. Martin, and knew that it must be Martin, the Bishop of Tours, who lived in the fourth century; the story of how he divided his cloak with a Roman soldier is well known, but somehow he seems to have become associated with the protection of drunkards. There may have been an ancient pagan festival kept with much feasting and rioting on the 11th November, which happens to be St. Martin's Day. It is a fact that Edward the Second granted a charter for a fair to be held at Westmeston annually on that day, and there may have been considerable liveliness to finish the feast.

I could see that the road I had travelled along seemed to turn sharply to the North at Westmeston, under shady trees, leaving the line of the downs behind. That was not the direction I meant to take; I wanted to follow the old track all the way to my destination: that track, surely, must run somewhere under the downs.

There seemed to be nobody about of whom I could ask the way: it is extraordinary how deserted the country can still be at certain times of the day. The only living thing in sight was a strange dog which ignored me. Then, fortunately, a boy came through the gate of a farmyard.

"Where does the main road lead to?" I asked him.

"Ditchling."

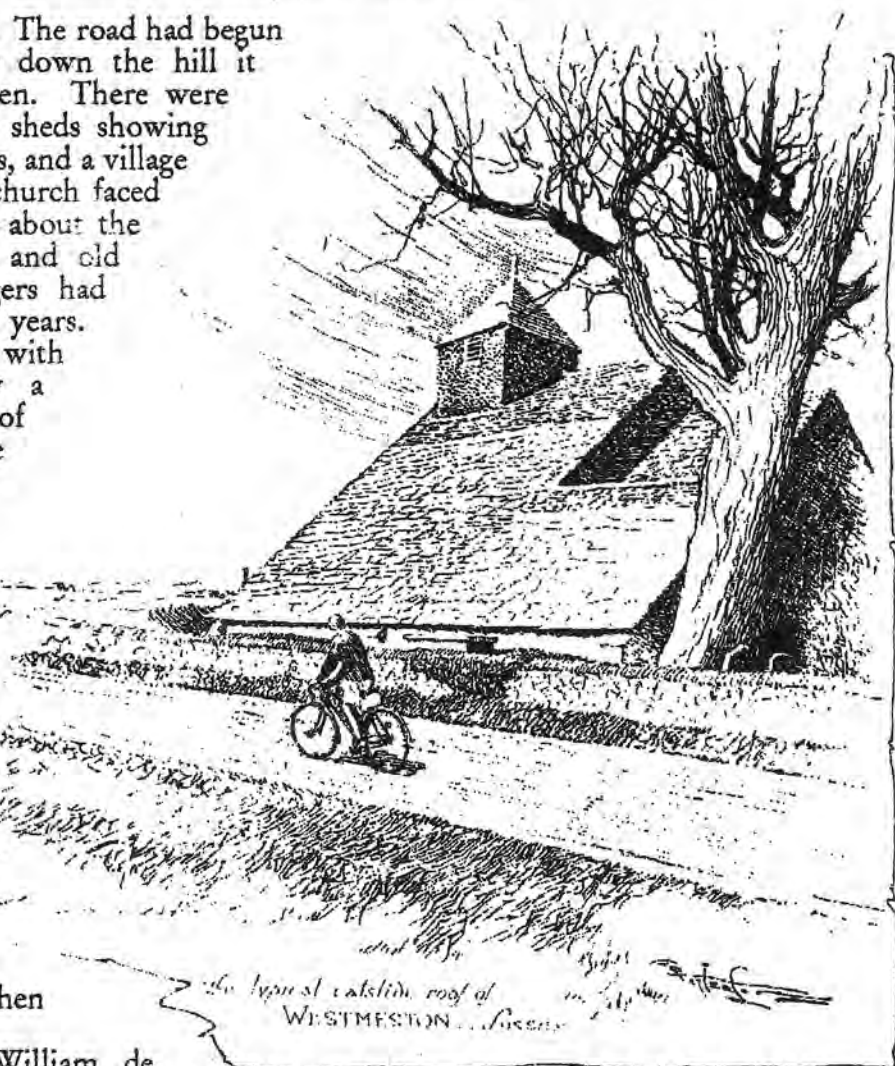
"But after that? I want to reach Clayton."

"You'll come to it past Ditchling."

"But there must be another way, closer to the downs?"

"There's only Under Hill Lane."

Under Hill Lane! I liked the sound of that: that was certainly the road for me. The boy pointed over his shoulder to what I had thought was a track that merely led to a farm. I turned my back on the main road, and the boy called after me: "If you want Ditchling, you are going the wrong way," but I



paid no heed.

It was quite obvious that I had found the direction I wanted. It was a narrow lane, only half the width of the road I had travelled up to the present: it did not look wide enough for a big farm cart to pass along it; but it followed the curve of the downs, and I was seeing them as they who had first worn the track had seen them. I did intend to go to Ditchling, because, although it lies a little way off the early track, it is still part of the story of the road. I meant to approach it, not by the main road, but by one made by the Romans - a continuation of the one that ran from their encampment above, on down the steep side of the Beacon.

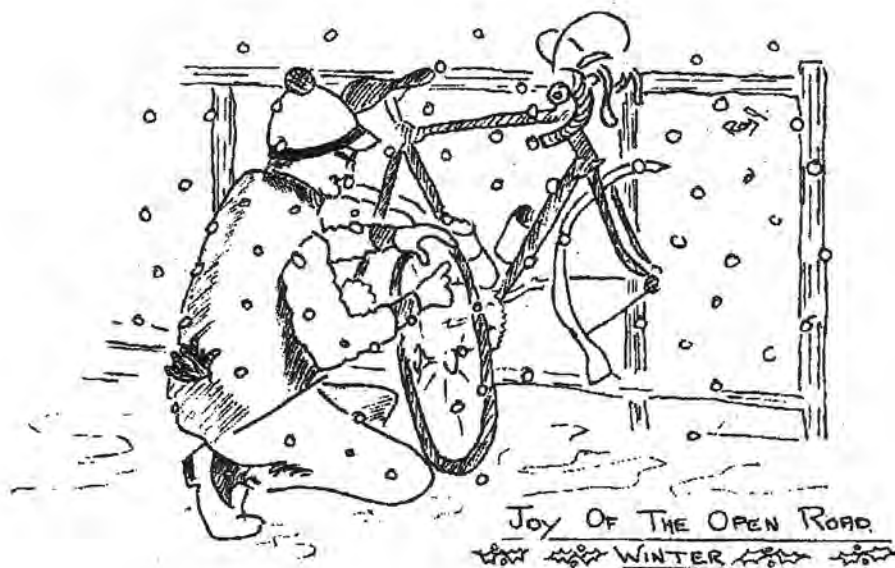
The sun was lighting up the hollows of the downs, the effect changing every minute as I walked along. There seemed to be many ancient quarries, now overgrown with grass, and mounds of many queer shapes, some perhaps prehistoric barrows, others earth that had been thrown up from the quarries.

I realized that I was seeing Ditchling Beacon for the first time, the greatest height of this range of the downs, 813 feet. It must be a great view-point, and it was singularly impressive, I thought, as I gazed from below. Probably primitive man fortified that height; the Romans certainly saw the value of the position, and did so. Many a beacon must have been lit there on days of rejoicing and victory. ... I saw a narrow, muddy, leafy path on my right running north, and wondered whether it was one of the paths that had been used at night by smugglers; many had come across the downs about here, I knew. It looked to be impassable at present. Farther away I could see a group of red roofs, clustering below the short spire of a church - that must be Ditchling.

I was close enough now to the Beacon to see the Roman track, known as Ditchling Bostall, taking its zigzag course like a mountain-way down its steep side. It looked from here as if it would be impossible for heavy vehicles to go up and down it. But I knew that they had done so all through the ages; that it had been in the past the ancient coach road between Brighthelmstone and London, and that the ascent had been nothing for the tanks and motor vehicles of recent times.

The road was densely wooded at its foot, then crossed the Under Hill Lane, and continued towards Ditchling. From there I could see my way ahead, continuing with the line of the downs that I should eventually follow for the last part of my journey; but I was turning my back on the hills for a while.

The road that ran from the foot of the Beacon to Ditchling was very straight, so straight that I might have guessed, even if I had not known, that it had been made in the first place by the Romans. It was indeed straight and rather dull.



TEN GET HOT IN BELGIUM

by Colin Miller

"How about a ride in Belgium at the end of June?" said Barry.

Having never ridden on the continent before, I was much taken with the idea of riding in one of the "Belles de Europe" events at Melle, near Ghent, in Belgium. The remainder of the ad hoc Hastings & Rother group were similarly enthused and all ten members signed up for the adventure.

Barry had managed to get some cheap tickets for the car ferry, and so it was that 2 cars, one tandem, 6 solos and eight people boarded the 00.45 ferry from Ramsgate to Ostende. Ron and his wife, Christine, had decided to travel from Dover to Calais and drive up to Ghent, thus minimising the opportunity for mal-de-mer to strike.

The Ramsgate contingent had optimistically planned to snooze the journey away, but unless you hire a cabin, snoozing is not really possible. Most of us tried to curl up on the floor between the tables and grab 40 winks at some stage during the night but the throbbing of the ship's engines and the frequent announcements over the tannoy, each time in four languages, prevented much rest at all.

After disembarking at an unearthly hour on Sunday morning, a quick drive down the empty motorway got us to Melle in plenty of time for the start. We were welcomed by the organiser and invited to select which of the three rides we wished to undertake. Most of us chose the middle distance, the 90km ride, but Barry and Margaret decided to wait for Ron and Christine to arrive from Calais and for the two tandems to embark on the 60km route. Suitable provisions were purchased from the start and from a nearby patisserie and we set off in the sunshine.

The route sheet was simply in the form of a list of the villages riders should pass through, no detailed instructions at all. Fortunately, the letters 'HR' and an appropriate arrow were painted on the road at all junctions and led to trouble free navigation. Early on in the ride, several of us instinctively moved to the wrong side of the road when confronted simultaneously by a traffic island and an approaching car, but no blood was spilt and we soon settled into cycling on the right.

Belgium, for those who do not know, is a densely populated part of Europe and seemed to me like one enormous village conurbation. No-where was particularly busy, but there was no empty countryside between villages. The road surfaces varied from wonderfully smooth tarmac to cobbles, the latter shaking bikes and riders to an alarming extent.

And the number of other bicycles! I'm not sure whether it was National Bike Day in Belgium or whether it's always like that, but we passed literally hundreds of bikes ridden by every type of rider from racing cyclists on stripped down machines (the minority) to grandmothers on single speed dreadnaughts (the majority). Luckily, the Flanders area is relatively flat terrain, but notwithstanding, many of the riders were a dangerous shade of red as they stood on their pedals and forced their heavy steeds over the small rises.

The day continued hot and sultry as we followed the HR's on the road. This is apparently the standard way of route marking locally as many junctions bore faded evidence of previous rides by different organisations. We had to keep an eye on the time as we had a boat to catch, the 17.30. We arrived back at the finish shortly after 2.00 p.m. and were able to consume delicious cold Belgian beer before loading the bikes for the homeward journey. A magnificent cup was presented to Captain Barry as leader of the largest overseas contingent to take part in the ride, and individual trophies were purchased as reminders of an excellent day's cycling.

A swift drive back up the motorway, a smooth crossing and drive home had us back in Hastings shortly after 10.00 p.m. A tiring experience but one we all intend to repeat when the opportunity arises.

Our thanks go to the drivers, Barry and Paul Mockridge, and again to the tour organiser, Barry Mockridge, for getting the show on the road.





Minslead Church

Brockenhurst Church
mentioned in Domesday.



Buckler's Hard



Tyrell's Oak,
Hurn

THE NEW FOREST.

"Tis better far to roam these wilds
For health unbought;
Than pay the doctor for his
Nauseous draught."

near
Verwood

NEW FOREST 23rd - 31st July 1994

Geoff and Jenny, as promised, arrived at two minutes to eight on Saturday morning, to kindly take me with them down to the New Forest Cycling Week.

This was started by Peter Knottly in 1975 and has been organised for ten years now by Brian Brodhurst who arranges for the C.T.C. to have an area for the Rally. One part for the lightweights where no cars are allowed to park, they are left at the end of the larger motorised part of it though most of the lightweights come under their own steam.

A short stop on the way down for elevenes then arrived at Roundhill Campsite to book in about 12pm, put our tents up and unloaded the car, got settled in, had our lunch, then decided where to go for the afternoon. Jenny thought it would be nice to go towards the sea so we headed out across the old airfield on a hot afternoon (it had been hot for the past few weeks so we were wondering how much longer it would last) following the tracks till we met the road. We had crossed Beaulieu Heath where heather and the occasional late harebell were in bloom, to turn left to Norleywood.

This brought back memories as there used to be a Youth Hostel there and our family had stayed there on a cycle tour back in 1966. No car transport then so we went down by train to Southampton, stayed at the Youth Hostel, then cycled on around the areas Youth Hostels, Salisbury, Cranborne, Burley, Norleywood then back for another night at Southampton. Back on the train for us and the two tandems and one single plus two Guinea Pigs from the Hostel warden.

From Norleywood we dropped down to join the Solent Way to Lymington, had a wander along the water front seeing the many yachts and chuckling at some of their names. A meander up through the town where the market folk were coming to the end of the day then back to find some tea. Back to our steeds then followed a quiet way up Vicars Hill to zigzag the outskirts of Boldre and find the track that would take us up to Dilton Farm, then right and left to the camp site. We had hoped to take the smaller track there but the brambles had taken over so was unpassable.

Sunday and another hot day. We dropped down to Brockenhurst then out to join the old railway track to Holmsley, a little stretch of road, then that welcome tea at the Old Railway Station tearooms. Iris and Ken and the group they were leading arrived almost immediately after us. They were going to the Steam Railway but we were heading for the Reptillary as Geoff and Jenny missed out on that last year. As it was so hot many of the reptiles were trying to keep in the shade, just as we were doing, but we did manage to find some.

After lunch we rode along to Lyndhurst where we had another meander looking at shops. To good advantage too as I found a folding chair, just what I needed for this camping lark, Geoff bought a tin-opener (they had forgotten theirs), Jenny and I found cards that depicted the junction we had come round that morning with the ponies across the road, holding up the traffic outside the bus shelter just the same. We reckoned they must always be there.

It was then exploring time as we all tried to remember which tracks we had taken in the past but we went a bit too far as we ended up at Balmerlawn but at least we knew where we were and the road made us feel as if we were floating along after the jolting and the concentration needed on the rough tracks. We were later getting back but had had a lovely day out, considering the forecast had been for thunderstorms and rain with strong gusty winds. Geoff reckoned it had been the best thunderstorm day he'd ever had. We never even saw a cloud! We heard later that Romsey area had had it but it bypassed us very nicely. The best comment I've had so far about my frame came from one of a group we met along the tracks, they were looking at it and I explained and then he said 'oh that accounts for it, I thought the builder must have needed his eyes tested'!

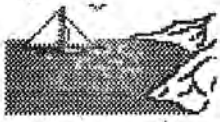
Monday, having had two rides on our own we thought we ought to do our bit especially as Iris had had to go back owing to the schools in our area having to go on till Wednesday which affected her and my son David. Iris has always led rides on the cycling week as do others so as to help Brian. This is one of the nice things about the week, it is all very informal, C.T.C. members can join one of the led rides if they wish, or explore the Forest tracks on their own, even go further afield.

Geoff wrote up our ride on the blackboard that morning, some do it the evening before. We then made ourselves ready and went to see if any were going to join us. Seven thought they would chance it! then as we left two more caught us. Most rides don't leave till 10am. as camping folk get very relaxed, have a leisurely breakfast then eventually get moving.

We had decided to go down to Lymington again but by a slightly different route to start with then round Norleywood and down to the Solent Way as before. Coffee and Tea stop in Lymington, we had our pot of tea for three then with two others made our way up the hill to the bakers where we bought two cakes each (for the price of one in the cafe), returned to sit and eat them on the quay watching the comings and goings on the yachts. One family in particular, as we watched, the youngest

of three children was being instructed on how to manage the boat to take them to their yacht. She fastened on her life jacket, undid the rope on the quayside when they were all aboard, sorted out the oars and began to row, a bit erratically to start with, but improving all the time.

Brian had told us of the tracks along the coast and when we got there we realised we had done them before, though we had to cast about a bit to start with to find the beginning. Along through Normandy then Pennington and Keyhaven Marshes to Keyhaven to reach the spit of land that goes out to Hurst Castle. A look over the bank of beach was called for so up we climbed, to be met by a strong sea breeze that nearly blew us back again and a super view. We were looking across to the Needles on the Isle of Wight (well, sticking out in a line from it actually) over a sea that you see depicted many times with the old sailing ships. A deep aquamarine with white horses rolling in and the strong smell of the sea. It was a real surprise to those who aren't used to being by the sea and even to those of us who are it was a real delight.



On to Milford on Sea to eat our lunch, we three sat on the beach getting sprayed as the waves rolled in while some sat back in the warm against the chalets and some went to find food. Inland then along quiet roads to find some very interesting tracks that needed a little negotiating in places! but our merry band entered into the spirit of things and Geoff was doing a super job leading with me as sweep and Jenny doing a bit of each. It's very handy having three as it's more folks to chat to others and tell them about the area or cycling if they are new to that.



By the time we reached the road our tongues were hanging out, what with the heat (it was very hot again) and the dust. The latter had been rising behind each rider as we had traversed the last track just as if we were in a Western. But! a shop! with ice creams and ice cold drinks, what a relief, and as the front of the shop was in shade we were able to recover somewhat. Back to Brockenhurst where it was shopping time again at the Supermarket then back up to Roundhill and the Campsite after another good day. Two riders had left us at Lymington after coffee to do their own thing, one after lunch at Milford so we brought the other six back safe and sound. One man, John and his son Darren, they were the ones who caught us just as we were leaving that morning, only intended to come as far as elevenses! They were enjoying it so much they carried on even though he had told his wife they would be back to lunch. Fortunately she is used to this so when he braved it on our return just before 5pm. she just shook her finger at him. They all came to find us that evening to tell us how much the two of them had enjoyed it.

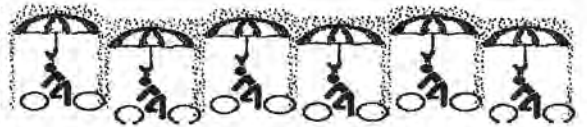
Tuesday, having told Jenny how much we had enjoyed the visit we made last year to Moors Valley Country Park, (she had told us about it) we decided we would take a ride there. Geoff asked if I would lead this time and he would sweep with Jenny helping in the middle again. This time there were thirteen of us, the usual number for the Camping and Hostelling Section's expeditions in the past and some of Seaford and Newhavens as well.

It had started to drizzle soon after we left Brockenhurst then stopped a bit, off came the jackets then guess what it came on again worse than before just before a junction. Fortunately as we stopped to don our jackets the woman who had served us at the shop the day before saw us and said the pub on the corner did coffees, and it was quarter to eleven! This was just what we needed on a day like that, though it was unscheduled, but that is what I mentioned before, even the led rides are very informal, you take things as they come just as we do on our Section rides.

Onto the B road to try and find a track that would avoid the A35. Unfortunately it was the wrong one we attempted but interesting! Being reinstated, which meant it looked as though it had been ploughed up! and it brought us out too far to the right so we still had to do a bit of the main road. After that it was plain sailing along quiet roads in the rain to the outskirts of Ringwood where we negotiated along a lane, then a twitten, to arrive at the very busy A31. This is where the fun started, along a footpath by the side of it to try to find the track that David had taken me along last year. That was easier said than done. There were no signs for what poor cyclists are supposed to do while they do major roadworks there, after four dived with the traffic and the others going round we all made it to the Park though three had collided when brakes failed to stop one of them and poor Maureen ended up as the cushion for the other two. I always carry arnica ointment for bruises nowadays so out it came with

instructions to Maureen to gently massage it in (she said you must be joking!) I told her it wouldn't work unless she could manage it.

A late lunch and a drink then some of us did the Tree Top Trail and saw the various large wooden animals along the way. Some had already started back, two were going out that evening, so only seven of us were left to come back as a group. This made it easier to keep moving as we had two groups on the way out with the slightly faster group having to wait for the slower ones at each junction. Geoff had his unique lighting system going at the back which was a great help to me at the front as with the wet misty conditions it was difficult to see the back riders. We headed back through Burley where we managed to squeeze past a major holdup with two large coaches blocking the road, to swoop down to Holmesly Station for a welcome tea stop. About to leave and we discovered Jenny's back tyre was down again, the first time was when we were about to leave the Park. Geoff told the others not to wait, we would deal with it. We rode back to Brockenhurst by road this time instead of the track as it was so wet, because of this we decided fish and chips there would be a good idea rather than trying to cook back at the tents. After a wash we ended up that evening in Stuart and Maureen's caravan where we were treated to tea and biscuits, coming away at 10.30pm. nicely warmed up and dry to go to bed.



Wednesday. The rain had cleared away and promised a better day. John, Darren and Marie came to see what we were proposing to do as they would like to join us if it wasn't too far for Marie. As two other rides were going to Eling Tide Mill and we had thought of going there we decided to visit Lyndhurst first for coffee and a wander, doing the ride in reverse to the others with afternoon tea at the Butterfly Farm where they were having elevenses. This worked very well until a roundabout where we were turning right, I was signalling to that effect at the back when the two in front jammed their brakes on without warning as a car came fast round in front of them and yours truly did a fast descent to the road. Fortunately at the house on the corner a man doing duplicating saw what happened, told his wife, she hastened to the scene to help, insisted I went inside where she provided a gauze pad in cold water to get the lump down. I had arnica ointment and tablets with me so refused other medication except dettol for a small graze on my arm and a rest for a while.

We then headed for the Tide Mill to eat our late lunch. We had hoped to see the Mill working but it was high tide so could not be worked. Tea and another rest at the Butterfly Farm while the others explored did wonders then we rode back via Beaulieu shops by road as I didn't feel up to jolting tracks. Arrived back to find David, Susan, Martin and Emma had arrived at 4pm and were nicely settled in.

Thursday. After several ideas had been pushed around we agreed on what Geoff called plan C which was what Jenny had wanted to do all along. This was to ride to Lepe and Calshot. Elevenses at Exbury Tea Gardens and on to Lepe to lunch on the beach which was ideal for the children (young and old). We had been joined for the ride by Derek and Karen Pritty and their two boys Jack and Mathew who are six, riding their Rann Trailers, (they live at Plumpton Green). Maureen and Diane made up our number to thirteen again, their husbands were riding with the group round the Isle of Wight.

The sun had appeared after a cloudy start and the day was heating up. Along to Calshot Castle to see the various yachts and boats in and out of Southampton Water with the Red Funnel Ferries coming and going to the Isle of Wight. Up to the Craft Centre for tea and cakes before riding back via Beaulieu. Being back earlier than usual Jenny thought if we used the car to Brockenhurst we could stock up for the rest of the week on larger items. Little things we can manage on our way home each day. She kindly took Karen and I with her and we were soon back to all cook our evening meals.

Friday, and we split up for this one as David and Susan wanted to take Martin to Moores Valley Country Park as he would enjoy it more this year. As it would be too far for him to ride (at 3 years old) we went by car to a car park beyond Burley after a lovely elevenses at a quiet tea shop there off the main road. Unloaded the family's machines, my single, Susan and Martin's tandem and David's single from the roof rack, the Burleylite trailer for Emma from the boot, fixed all the bags on in their respective places and off we set. Through Ringwood to find the bridge over the river and take the footpath beside the busy A31 taking the route down the sliproad, under the bridge as before but this time going in on the Castleman Trailway to the road and Park.

After lunch and a play for Martin and David while we had a rest with Emma, we had a lovely wander round and saw all the wooden animal constructions this time, it was a sunny day and my camera was working again (the battery had given out the day before). Tea before we left then back to the car with Martin making good use of his kiddiecranks by pushing Susan up the hill to Crow faster than she really wanted, granny's fault! she was telling him mummy needed some help, Susan did say

though that she didn't think she would have made it otherwise.

Jenny and Geoff had taken a little group out to Holmsley and Annies with a visit to the Reptillary in between. All the groups from the site had done the same, though one did it in reverse, so those two teashops did a roaring trade. The evening finished with a large gathering for the traditional Barbecue but what with baby sitting and washing and cooking we didn't make it and Martin had gone to bed, exhausted with all his exertions at the Park, in and out and over and round the animals, as well as pedalling at times.

Saturday and we set off on our own again, because it takes so long with little ones to get things organised we were later than we'd hoped. David suggested a change of plan as we rode out along the tracks, so we headed for Beaulieu for elevenses and sat in the shade outside the tearooms with Emma still asleep in the trailer. She woke up on cue just as we'd finished, to be fed, granny assisting with the job of getting her wind up again.

Out along fairly quiet roads to be met by a traffic hold up while a group of cows made their way slowly along in front, when we were able to pass them Martin wasn't very happy about it so granny had to ride between him and the cows and all was well. On to Longdown Dairy Farm where we wandered round looking at the different animals, had our lunch at the picnic site while Martin enjoyed the play area. More animals, different kinds of pigs and goats, then geese, chickens and ducks, around to the milking sheds to watch the milking then back for the holding of baby chicks and ducks, which David did for Martin. A short distance to the Butterfly Farm for tea was called for and a rest before taking the tracks back to Roundhill.

Sunday. Geoff and Jenny, David, Susan and I thought it would be nice to have a ride together on our last day and we were joined by John and Darren. The idea had been elevenses at Lyndhurst but as we had managed to leave at 9am we were too early so David led us on to Annies where we sat in the garden until a thunder shower drove us inside. It stopped and we managed to get to the Reptillary (again!) and because it was cloudy we were able to see several snakes, frogs and toads but not the lizards. Then came the rain again for our ride back, getting heavier as we went. John did a great job pushing Susan and Martin up the hills, Geoff had been doing this earlier. I had to ride between their wheels at the back to avoid even more showers than were coming down as neither machine had a mud flap at the back.

Back at the campsite it was into Marie, John and Darren's caravan for Jenny and Geoff and into David and Susan's tent for all the Rix's with the rain still pelting down. A pooling of the food we had left provided an interesting lunch then Emma woke up requiring hers and soon the rain stopped enabling us to get our gear sorted out and into the cars while our tents dried out fairly well.

Geoff, Jenny and I left at 4.15pm. leaving the others still packing up and we reached my place at 6.45pm. David and Susan got back at 7.20pm and they had stopped for refreshment on the way back. Geoff and Jenny reached Crowborough about half an hour later, a safe end to a very good week in and around the New Forest.



CYCLING CITY BOOSTS JOBS

A survey of Holland's sixth largest city, Groningen, has concluded that its pro-bike policy saves at least £170 a year in hidden costs such as noise, pollution, parking and health for each commuter car kept off the roads. Fifteen years ago ruinous traffic congestion led Groningen to dig up its city-centre motorway in favour of the bicycle. Groningen, a city of 170,000, has the highest level of bicycle usage in the West. Fifty-seven per cent of its inhabitants travel by bicycle compared with 4 per cent in the UK. Since 1977, when a six lane motorway intersection in the city's historic centre was replaced by greenery, pedestrian streets, cycle and bus lanes and a zoning system which outlawed traffic, the city has staged a remarkable recovery. Rents are said to be among the highest in Holland, the outflow of population has been reversed and businesses are clamouring for more traffic restraint.

"This is not an environmental programme", says Gerrit van Werven, one of the architects of its cycling policies. "It is an economic programme. We are boosting jobs and business." Cycling in Groningen is viewed as part of an integral urban renewal, planning and transport strategy. New city centre buildings must provide cycle garages. The central station has room for 3000 cycles. A nuclear shelter under City Hall has been turned into a bike park and out of town shopping centres are banned.

The next step is the elimination of all cars from the city centre, except those belonging to residents. It will not be finished until the next century but Mr. Van Werven believes it will set a pattern for other cities to follow. "It's a little like surfing", he says, "you have to be on the first wave."

(From an article in the Independent by David Nicholson-Lord)



FOUR FOR THE ROAD

A letter to his companions by Roy James

Dear Bill, Ian and Peter,

Nearly four months have passed since we shared the Three Valley's Randonnee from Dieppe and I have only just got round to writing to you all to say how much I enjoyed your company.

Not that things started too well, for when we met at Polegate cross-roads early in the morning on the 25th June the weather was behaving badly. We were forced to ride to Newhaven in dull, damp and sometimes wet weather. It was a shame that Peter could not join us for the first part of the ride, but as he had his wrist in plaster as a result of coming off his bike while trying out his solid tyres, he had to meet us 'sans velo' at Newhaven Docks.

A good crowd of cyclists were already waiting to board and when we finally got our bikes stowed away on the car deck it really looked as if the ferry was exclusively for cycles and cyclists. That four hour crossing can seem never-ending, but with your company the time passed in a flash and by the time we arrived at Dieppe we had managed to get together a good collection of individual mustard, sugar and tomato sauce packs for Bill to use in the camper van.

It was no trouble finding the Hotel Tourist was it? Once arrived we quickly settled in. A pity Ian was exiled to a little room at the top of the building without the benefits of French television or the telephone, but you didn't really make a great deal of fuss and anyway we three who were sharing a comfortable room soon learnt to ignore you every time you had a moan about being shut away on your own.

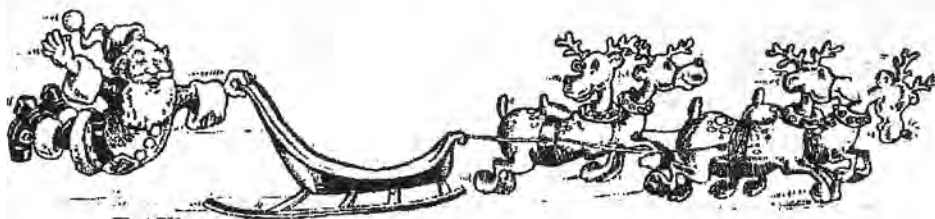
I really enjoyed the afternoon reception at the Town Hall for all the cyclists. Everything was well managed and we were made very welcome by the Mayor of Dieppe and the President of the Dieppe Cycle Club. Plenty of familiar faces were there and we passed a pleasant hour of chat and laughter. Our meal at Les Tourelles in the evening was a great success and I think we all had some of Peter's paella. Can't remember how many times we asked for "plus de pain s'il vous plait", but it kept on coming.

Perfect cycling weather next morning, calm and with occasional sunshine. Peter stayed in Dieppe to do some sketching, while we three set off at 8.00 a.m. on a quiet road that took us first to Arques la Bataille and a tranquil section beside the river Varenne. After a short stop at Bellescote, where we were offered something green in glasses in the way of refreshment by the check point officials, we climbed steadily into the Forêt d'Eawy. By now the large field of cyclists had dispersed and as we made a very leisurely way through the forest, making frequent stops for photos and to gather wild strawberries, we seemed to be the only three on the ride. Lunch stop was well organised in the grounds of a chateau near Douvrend. What about the wedding reception that was being held in the chateau? Have you ever wondered what they thought of sharing the ground with a crowd of cyclists? I know I have.

I thought the final stage of the ride was probably the best. A long, steady descent on a forest track through the leafy Forêt d'Arques brought us out finally at Martin-Eglise and we were virtually home. With some time to spare before the prize giving it was a good idea to go for a swim to cool off. Perhaps Bill we should not have returned to the Hotel for a rest. I still don't think it was my fault we overslept and missed everything. After all, I thought you were watching the television and would wake me up. At least Peter and Ian were there and Ian was the only one of us to get a medal. For the best turned out cyclist so he claimed, but I have my doubts.

Thanks again and see you up the road.

Roy

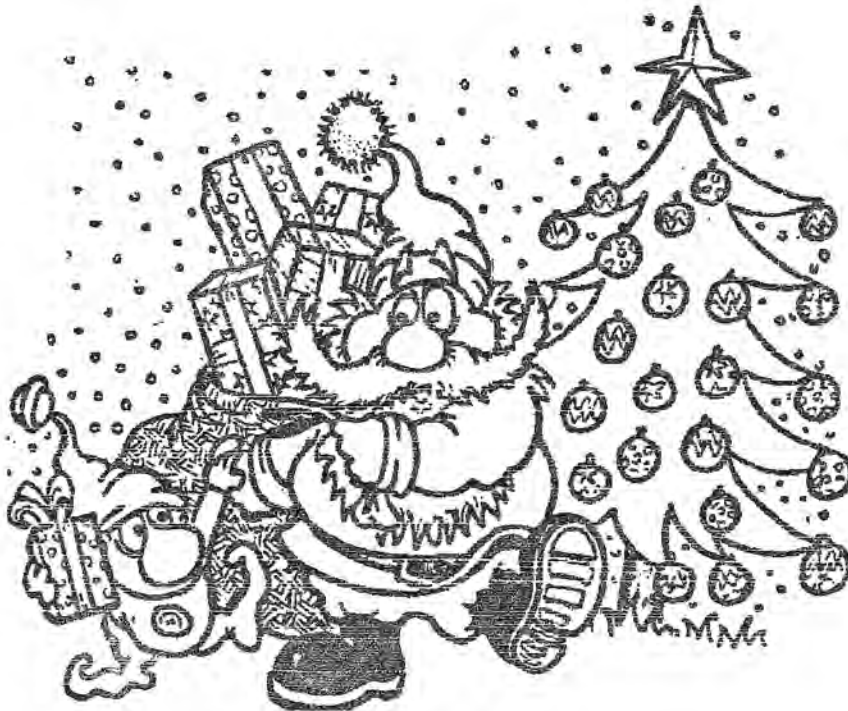


DID YOU KNOW - ST. NICHOLAS DAY

When the old gods ruled the world, Odin the All-father rode the skies of Germany and Scandinavia in winter with a crowd of elves and spirits; those mortals who offered him reverence were rewarded with gifts. In later years, Odin's horse, elves and gifts became the accoutrements of a Christian saint named Nicholas.

Nicholas lived in Asia Minor. Because he was supposed to have calmed storms at sea during his life, he became the patron of sailors; and because he supposedly restored to life three murdered youths, he became the patron of boys. But the most famous tale concerning him was that of three maidens whose impoverished father planned to sell them into slavery. Nicholas redeemed them with three bags of dowry gold, which he flung through their windows one night and which landed on their shoes, set to warm before the fire. For this deed, he became the patron of maidens, and Frenchwomen prayed to him for husbands.

He also became the patron of pawnbrokers, and his bags of gold are remembered in the three golden balls that are the sign of the trade. But gift-giving was his most important act. In Germany and Holland, children set out their shoes on the eve of his feast day, filling them with hay and carrots for his white horse, just as provender had been left for Odin's horse by their ancestors. Nicholas, they knew, would ride over the rooftops in the night with his elvish companion, Knecht Ruprecht. Ruprecht carried a switch for use on naughty young ones. But Nicholas carried baskets of toys and sweets, to be left in the shoes of all good children.



Deadline for Summer 1995 edition - June 13th

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