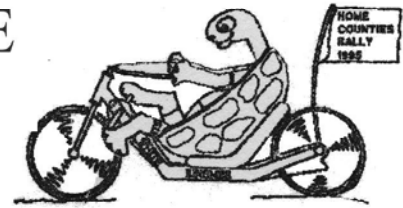
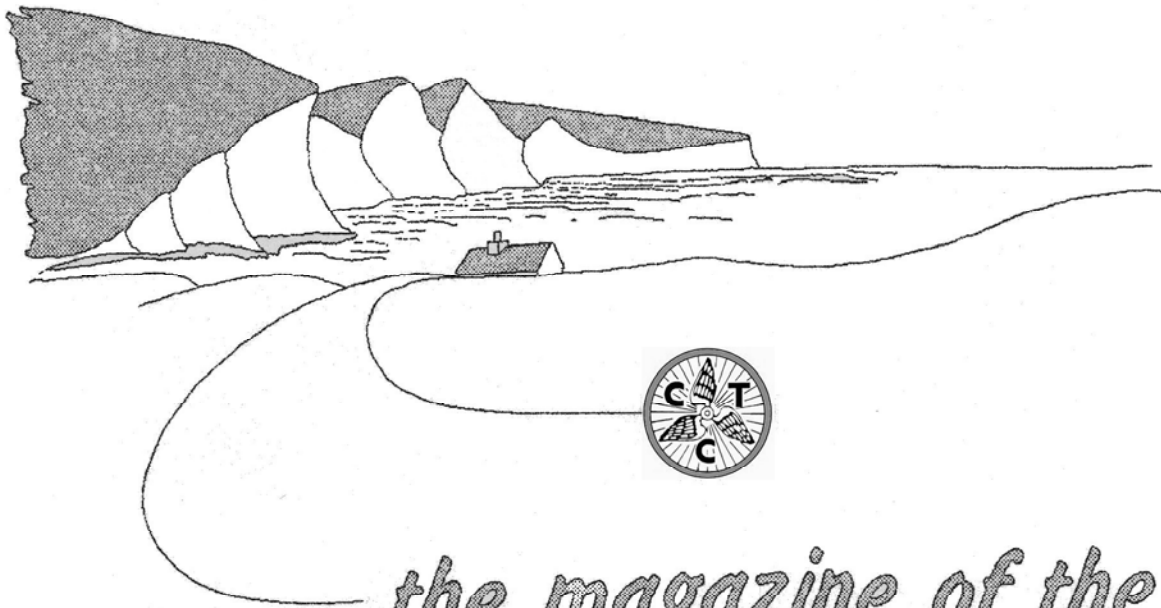


A SELECTION FROM THE
FIRST 15 YEARS OF



The

Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

A SPECIAL RALLY EDITION

No. 28 - May 1995

50p

East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club

PRESIDENT - GEOFF BOXALL

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

"THE COASTER"

Issue No.28, May 1995

Special Home Counties Rally Edition



From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to this special edition of "The Coaster", and a special welcome to our visitors for the Home Counties Rally. I hope that you all have a good time in our part of the country and take home some fond memories of cycling in the Sussex lanes.

It occurred to us that it would be nice to put out an issue of the magazine for the Rally and, on checking, we found that the magazine has been going for exactly 15 years - though unfortunately not always 2 issues a year.

I would like to thank Dennis Jakeman, who in fact edited the very first issue of "The Coaster", for helping me with the selection of the articles for this issue. I hope that you all like our choice from what has appeared over the years, and if anyone is interested in acquiring full copies of previous editions then have a word with me and I'll see what can be done.

Deadline for the next issue - November 12th 1995

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.

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

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

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

Hastings & Rother: Peter Jenner:
8 Hazelwood Gardens, St Leonards on Sea TN37 7HL

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

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

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

East Sussex D.A.
Newsletter
Christmas 1979



ONE THE EAST SUSSEX D.A.

When replying in advertisements, please mention the "C.C. GAZETTE"

A BEGINNING

The first issue of "The Coaster" was published in December 1980 following a successful bumper edition of the D.A. Newsletter at Christmas 1979.

Reproduced on this and the following page are the contributions by the late Bill Collins, our D.A. President for many years, and Ann Rix, joint editor of this precursor to "The Coaster".

CHRISTMAS 1937

by Bill Collins.

The Eastbourne Section members decided a tour over the holiday, with a farmhouse or reasonable hotel as a centre would be just the job, Bill would fix things. Names were taken with deposits and I wrote and booked for about 12 members at a well known Cyclists' Tea and Bed and Breakfast farm at Thursely near Godalming.

In those days one worked quite late on Christmas Eve, we closed our shop at 10.30 p.m., it was snowing then froze. When I arrived home the three girls - Dot, Vi and Gladys - had decided to train to Godalming (Sunday service

on Christmas Day in those days) then walk through the woods to the farm, about 5 miles.

We met at the bottom of Chalk Pit Hill on Christmas morning at 7 a.m. 9 males (all hard bitten types) "Tiger" Dopson says, "What about it, are we going?", "PLUM" Warner informs us all "The Mail must go through", Horace says, "What else have we come down here for?".

7.15 a.m. and we are away, the roads were icy but all being on fixed wheels managed to stay upright until we got to Lewes, someone shouted "Harpic's" off, then Frank Howlett, then Alf Harris, then "Plum" (a few harsh words) and we are off again - Offham, Westmeston, Ditchling, Hurstpierpoint, Albourne.

It felt a little warmer so we had a snack and hot drinks from flasks. After the stop, about 10 minutes, it was "crates out" and away, through Beeding and Cowfold progress was good, only a few bad patches of ice. We arrived in Horsham between 10.30 and 11.00 a.m. and found "hunger knock" had caught up with us, so we settled down for more food in the Carfax Bandstand.

Then along came the Law, his remarks were, "You blokes must want a job, leaving the comfort of home". I gave him some of my dates and he took an apple from Alf, then with a "Cheerio" and Christmas Greetings we were on the road again.

Bucks Green and the Surrey Hills had had recent snow which was quite deep in places. We left

this main Horsham, Guildford road and took to the lanes for Godalming. Here the going was difficult with deep ruts, where a tractor or charabanc had gone through. Spirits were kept high with "Plum" shouting "the Mail has almost got through", and we arrived at "Sunnyside Farm" about 3.00 p.m. and sat down to a meal. Dot, Vi and Gladys arrived soon after, having had a hard walk with the suitcase, which contained spare clothes and Christmas presents.

We found our "Digs" was a cottage in the orchards, very comfortable, nice warm beds and a log fire. Our Christmas Dinner would be served at 7.00 p.m. in the big Farm House. What a meal! We sat eating for about 2 hours and Frank had arranged some very hectic games to follow. After a super party we all went over to the Cottage, I remember the Farmer saying as we left - "You'll wake up to a foot or two of snow", he was right too.

After a huge breakfast, we could see going for a ride was out of the question so we spent the day about the Farm, a few snow fights, eating and drinking, so boxing day ended with another party.

We had got to get home on the third day somehow. The next day, I think it was Sunday, we woke up to hear water dripping, a rapid thaw had started, so after a late breakfast the girls made for the station, we men to see them in Eastbourne about tea time.

I think the Christmas weekend three days cost us 25/- or £1.25 each these days. Readers will note I mention 9 riders, I fail to remember the other 2.

All those on this Christmas Tour were real true dedicated cyclists, but in the near future it was talk of war, we got that over, some went their ways abroad, some took to petrol, but I have kept in touch over the years.

Happy Days

Bill Collins.



TEA AT IVY'S

Whenever I have to collect names and 60p's for tea at Ivy's there is always a ready response "yes please", and if there are any new members who have not yet sampled Ivy's tea there are plenty willing to explain what it means.

An early lunch is essential! Not later than 12.30 p.m. if possible. You are met (sometimes before you can get inside the door) with a hot cup of tea, welcome any time of year.

We sort ourselves out as to who sits where, either at the tables for 2 or 4, or the long one for 8 or more. Then with Ken kept busy serving plates round (and clearing away afterwards) we start. Usually a slice of hot meat pie with salad and potatoes, followed by fruit pies and custard, second helpings are offered then if anybody can find a corner for more out comes the jelly and cream and, of course, plenty of cups of tea.

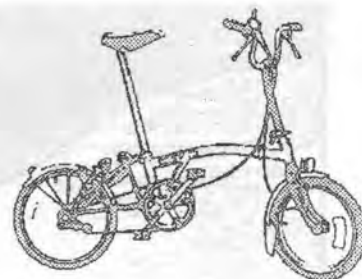
Where else would you get such a tea now-a-days, the sort that cyclists appreciate, it's not surprising that times are usually slow on the homeward journey.

Ann Rix.

FLYING BROMPTONS

by Len & Jean Steel.

(From Issue No 26 Summer 94)



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.

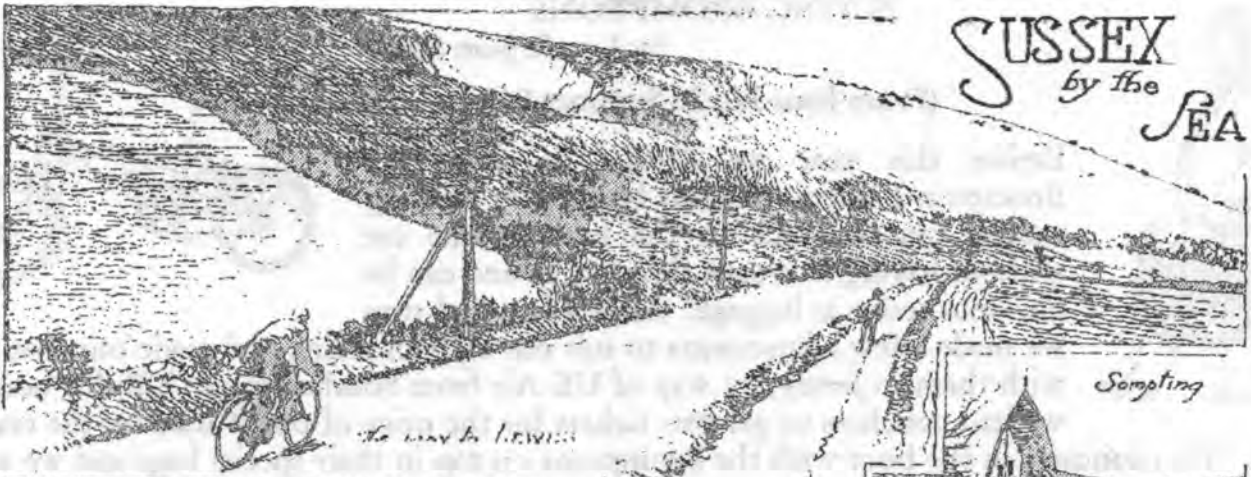
In Jersey we stayed in a country house hotel who very kindly allowed the folded bikes to be kept in a cupboard by the reception counter. We spent a very pleasant week in Jersey with a day trip to Alderney, this time by Aurigny Airlines. On this trip mention of the bikes caused the comment, "You will 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.



SUSSEX by the SEA



The way to LEWIS



Sompting



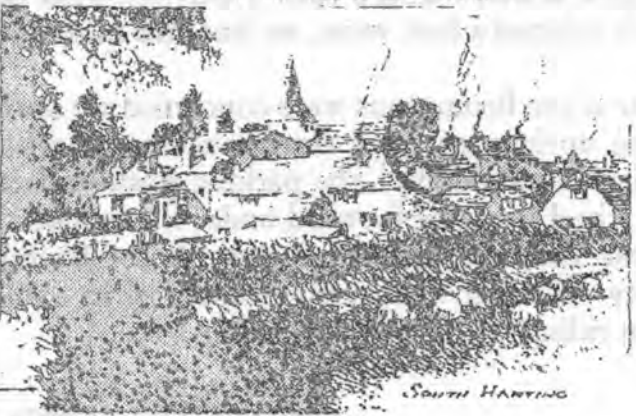
On the Downs



The Downs near CHAYTON



Black Horse Inn
HENFIELD



SOUTH HAVING

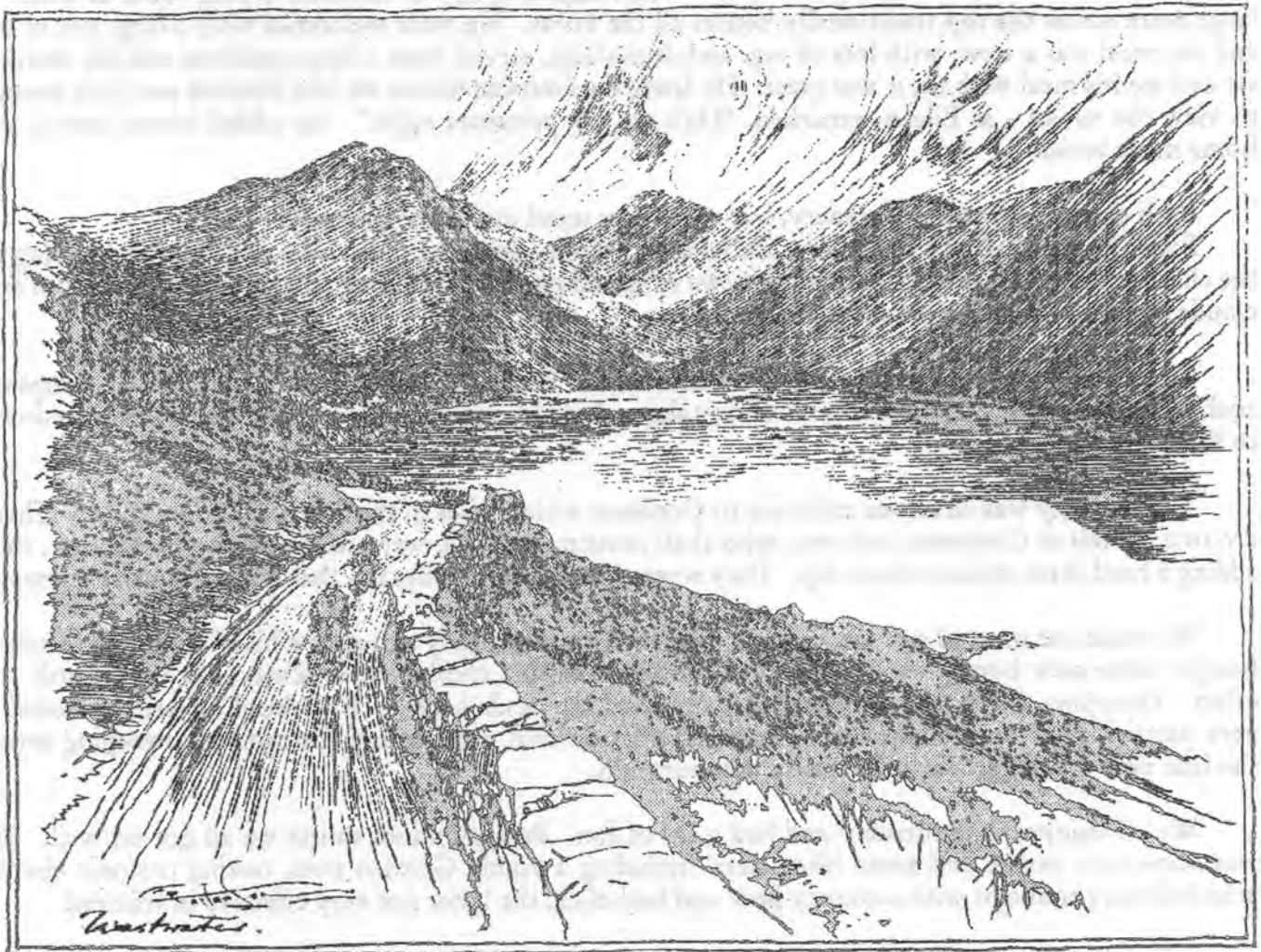
CUMBRIA REVISITED

by Dot Collins (From Issue no. 8, Xmas 1984)

For the last twenty years or so I have enjoyed walking holidays in the Lake District. I am a self confessed 'mountain nut'. Also once or twice in Scotland and North Wales, but for me the Lakeland Fells are the most enjoyable, I always feel so fit and energetic up there - the mountain air I expect.

I was fortunate enough to manage two ten day periods up there this year - Bill is a very understanding husband, knowing how much I enjoy it, he encourages me to join my friends.

The first in mid-July, Joyce and Ray Wickens, Ted Jarvis, Ray Gearing and myself, camped at Wasdale Head (a favourite spot of ours). The National Trust site there is lovely and quiet; being remote it doesn't appeal to those who need a town or village or shops near. We were blessed with nine days of hot sunny weather which only broke the day we left. Of course, being so dry the waterfalls and becks were not so spectacular, but I was able to swim in several tarns and had a swim in Wastwater most evenings, even had Joyce in once!



This time we explored some of the lower fells, which were enchanting, and had them almost to ourselves. A lovely holiday in every way.

August 30th found me on my way again, a 'hen party' this time, six of us, Thelma, Joyce, Daph and myself and two rambler friends Doris and Eileen. We were walking the Y.H.A. Lakeland Jubilee Route. It is about eighty miles using ten hostels, but we added a good many more miles and climbs, as some were very short, it could easily be condensed into a week.

It is a well planned route using existing footpaths and where possible follows a low level route, but each day includes one pass or ridge which gave us superb views and we were able to finish up feeling we had extended ourselves pleasantly.

The route starts at Windermere and finishes at Ambleside, we took one 1" O.S. map of the whole area and four O.S. Outdoor Leisure maps which are excellent for route finding. We were blessed with mostly dry weather, one day of "off and on" drizzle and one rather wet afternoon. From Windermere hostel we stayed at Patterdale, Grasmere, Longthwaite, Buttermere, Black Sail, Eskdale, Coniston, Elterwater and Ambleside. They were all very good and quiet - the first week in September seems to be a very good time to go.

Patterdale is particularly good, an excellent meal, including a birthday cake to celebrate a lady's eightieth birthday - nice not to be the oldest in the hostel for once!

Black Sail is an experience, originally a shepherd's bothy, the washing and sleeping facilities are primitive although the first time I was there we all washed in the beck! The atmosphere is terrific as there is one room which is dining room, common room and, in wet weather, drying room as well. A large beam across the top traditionally houses all the boots. We were welcomed with a large pot of tea and the meal was a stew, with lots of veg. and dumplings, served from a huge cauldron and the warden sat and ate his meal with us, it was great. He fetched us outside before we had finished our fruit sponge to view the sunset - as Eileen remarked, "He's got his priorities right." An added bonus here is the home made bread.

Each day had its quota of scenery, but some days stand out in the memory;

From Buttermere, the path along the lake on a sunny morning (I envied a dog its swim) ending in the climb up Scarth Gap with backward views of the lake and surrounding fells, lovely with the sun and clouds making changing patterns on them.

Over Black Sail pass and down to Wasdale where the path goes along the edge of our campsite, enabling Joyce and I to indulge in a bit of nostalgia. A slight pull up to Burnmoor Tarn, and then down to Boot and Eskdale.

The next day was an eleven mile one to Coniston which takes in the lovely Duddon Valley. There are two hostels at Coniston, and two, who shall remain nameless, went to the wrong hostel first, thus adding a hard three miles to their day. They wanted to get more miles in - that was their story anyway!

We made the most of our last day, we were in Ambleside early and after a bit of shopping (Thelma bought some new boots) we headed for Wansfell, a stiffish climb, but as always, so well worth the effort. Dropping down to Troutbeck we completed the circle back to Waterhead, where the hostel is very palatial, right on the lakeside. The weather broke that evening and the rain was sweeping across the lake next morning when we left to catch our train.

We all enjoyed it immensely and had a lot of fun. Being kindred spirits we all got on well. We met some nice people and some 'characters' including a young German man, oozing teutonic charm, who bade us goodnight with a courtly bow and heel click, the latter not very effective in trainers!

A holiday to remember and treasure and we recommend it to any other 'mountain nuts' who are reasonably fit.



Whilst kitting out my new Tony Oliver, I gave great thought to a part which I hold most dear. That piece of animal I sit on.

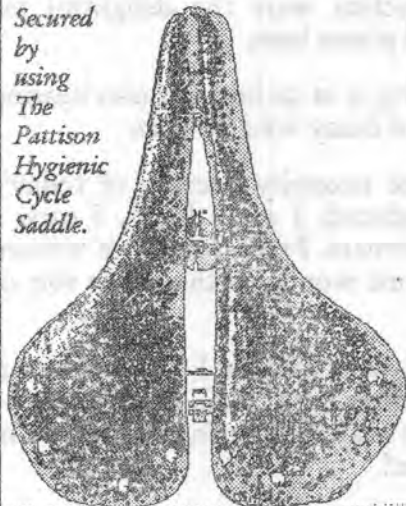
What on earth was I going to choose - a Brooks Professional, a B17 or one of those new-fangled things called an anatomical, "Ladies or Gents". Well up till then it hadn't occurred to me that they were any different. Saddles I mean!

On studying various books and catalogues I find these are not new but were around in 1895 called a hygienic saddle - the mind boggles!

"The Pattison Hygienic Saddle will do for the Pneumatic Tyre what the Pneumatic Tyre has done for the Cycle."

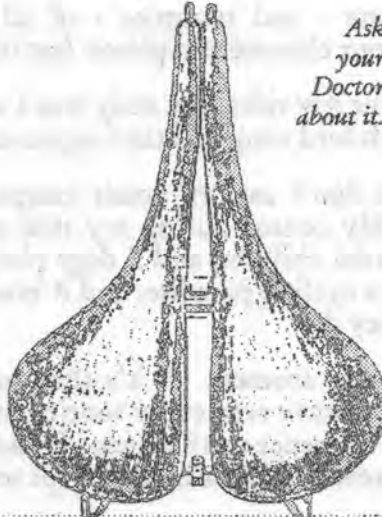
HEALTH ALWAYS

Secured
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using
The
Pattison
Hygienic
Cycle
Saddle.



Model A.

Ask
your
Doctor
about it.



Model B.

COMFORT NOW.

An advert from the C.T.C. Route Guide, vol. 4, 1897.

In my er, er, years of cycling I have ridden many saddles, some of which make me shudder at the thought. Now on the first bike that I purchased (on the never, never at 10 shillings (50p) a week) I had a hard leather Mansfield. Remember them? They were as popular as Brooks in their day. Later on I graduated to a Brooks Swallow, a narrow cut away job, which I managed to survive on for a number of years despite the previous owner having rejected it.

Then came the horror of horrors, riding Ken's track iron with a sprinter saddle. Bitter memories of a long Bank Holiday weekend away on this. I followed this with a plastic Unica which was used for racing, but these get a bit hard and uncomfortable touring. A second-hand B17 narrow came my way, nicely softened by someone else, and I rode it till it practically fell apart. Thelma once likened it to a well worn boot. A scrabble around in Geoff Wilcock's junk, sorry equipment, and another B17 came to light. Ah bliss.

Then came the first Tony Oliver, the tandem. "We will have to have Brooks Professionals", says Ken. They arrived, at a special price, non treated selects, and as hard as rock. Warmed in the oven and anointed with oil they were declared fit for use. Well Ken's might be (the oil keeps seeping through into his trousers) but mine is still as hard as ever. Half way through the day one has a great desire to honk, and Heather complains every time she rides it.

So it's back to decision time, what do I buy? "I can't put that ancient tatty leather one on my new bike, can I?" "NO!"

I looked at a B17 in Bill Rayment's and it felt like a lump of oak. Must have been a very old cow. So I have settled for one of these anatomic ladies saddles, just a cheap one in case I don't like it. I must admit it does feel strange but at least it's not hard. Perhaps it will get used to me.

In a recent magazine it said that a leather saddle was preferable as it could be moulded into your shape.

Or is it preferable to have our bottoms reshaped to suit the saddle?



A Coaster First?

by Peter Crowsley (From Issue No 25 Xmas 93)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I however finish on a disappointing note for all mile-eating and Audax enthusiasts, the mileages for these 'A' roads are: A3110 - 25/8 miles, A3111 - 5/8 of a mile, & A3112 - 11/8 miles - but there are some lanes. Perhaps that's the reason why there is no Isles of Scilly C.C.

ON SLEEPING IN COUNTRY CHURCHYARDS.

by Roy James. (from Issue no. 17, Summer 1989)

Cycling does not have to be only concerned with riding about the countryside and covering x number of miles in x number of hours, for now that summer is with us once again I can reveal a diversion that can be combined with it that enhances the act of riding to an astonishing degree. It is a pastime at once restful, healthy and cheap. It does not pollute the atmosphere and is one I sincerely hope to pursue into old age. In fact I would go as far as to say that as one gets older so it becomes easier to indulge in this particular inactivity. I refer of course to sleeping in country churchyards and for we Sussex folk, our own county probably offers the best opportunities for enjoying this facility anywhere in the British Isles. Of course a certain amount of subterfuge is necessary. After all, one cannot simply announce a day out by saying "I am just going for forty winks in a churchyard". However this is simply remedied. A sketch-book and pencil, a camera, a bird or wild flower book is enough to satisfy any curiosity about "What do you find to do out on your bike all day?".

The two pleasures compliment each other perfectly. Cycling can often induce a feeling of fatigue that automatically calls for 'a bit of a rest' after which one can set off with renewed energy. A flask of strong tea and half a dozen chocolate biscuits almost complete the requirements but there is one more vital piece of equipment, a waterproof cape or plastic sheet, for even on a summer's day the ground can often be deceptively damp. Nor is it a necessarily short season of pleasure. The end of March brings the occasional sunny period when a half hour rest at mid-day can often be enjoyed, (this year was quite exceptional, for on the 8th of February after leaving the Mid-week Section at noon, I enjoyed a perfect half hour in Chalvington churchyard, sleeping under an amazingly warm sun) while at the back end of the year, October is a much misjudged month and I have often snatched a pleasant 'shut eye' in the still autumn air.

Care must be taken however in choosing the site in spring or autumn. A quick survey of the church grounds can usually produce a protective wall or headstone where one can shelter from the sometimes chilly wind that can mar an otherwise pleasant day. Sacrilegious do I hear you say? Not a bit of it, for if there is a hereafter, those who have gone before may well find pleasure in sharing their last earthly plot.

There are no ground rules to follow. In fact it is probably better to let this recreation creep up on you than to actually pursue it. In my own case I have always found that country churchyards are ideal places for a spot of lunch and a seat in the sun. They nearly all have a south facing seat, often sheltered by the church from the possibility of a cold north wind. Then one day, cycling near Chanctonbury Ring and feeling ready for a spot of lunch, I caught a fleeting glimpse of a tiny church standing quite isolated in a field. I pushed the bike down a little wooded ravine, across a narrow wooden bridge and found myself in a daisy strewn field which served as the environs for All Saints Church, Buncton. Finding a spot on the dry, uncut grass and against the warm south wall of the church I was able to have lunch and look toward Chanctonbury Ring at the same time. Tiny figures were making what seemed to be an endless pilgrimage across the Downs to the 'Ring' hazy in the bright sunlight, but I had no reason to be envious, for my spot, chosen by chance, was remote enough to ensure a quiet half hour and I just 'dropped off'.

Since then it has been an almost deliberate policy to find somewhere for a nap and the Sussex churchyard can always be relied upon to fill the bill. Some indeed can present a dilemma of agonising proportions. Take the church of St. Simon & St. Jude at East Dean and that of St. Mary at nearby Friston. No more than a quarter mile apart the choice between them is a difficult one to make. However, St. Mary, Friston may just have the edge for the simple reason it lies at the top of fearsome East Dean hill and once having reached the top one can rest in the

churchyard and then go for a most delightful 'whiz' in any one of three directions. A steady decline through downland towards Jevington, a thrilling drop on the main road and thence to Beachy Head or in the opposite way, over the crown of the Downs to the beautiful Cuckmere Valley and on to Alfriston.

It was at St. Mary, Friston that my cover was finally blown. Out with my two grandsons for a day long walk, we stopped at Friston for our lunch and I had my inevitable sleep. The following year, passing in the car they wanted their parents to see the wooden cross with 'washed ashore' carved into it that I had shown them previously. "And that is where Grandad had his sleep", said one of them pointing to the spot.

So there we are... Think about it. Take your pick of the wealth of country churchyards that we have and one day when you are out on the bike and you feel a little drowsy just try my other recreation. You may be converted too.

'A PLACE FULL OF NUTTERS'

A Residents view of the I.o.W. by Brian Brodhurst. (from Issue no. 8, Xmas 1984)

The Isle of Wight has a few quaint sayings, some of which you ought to be aware of if you intend to cycle here.

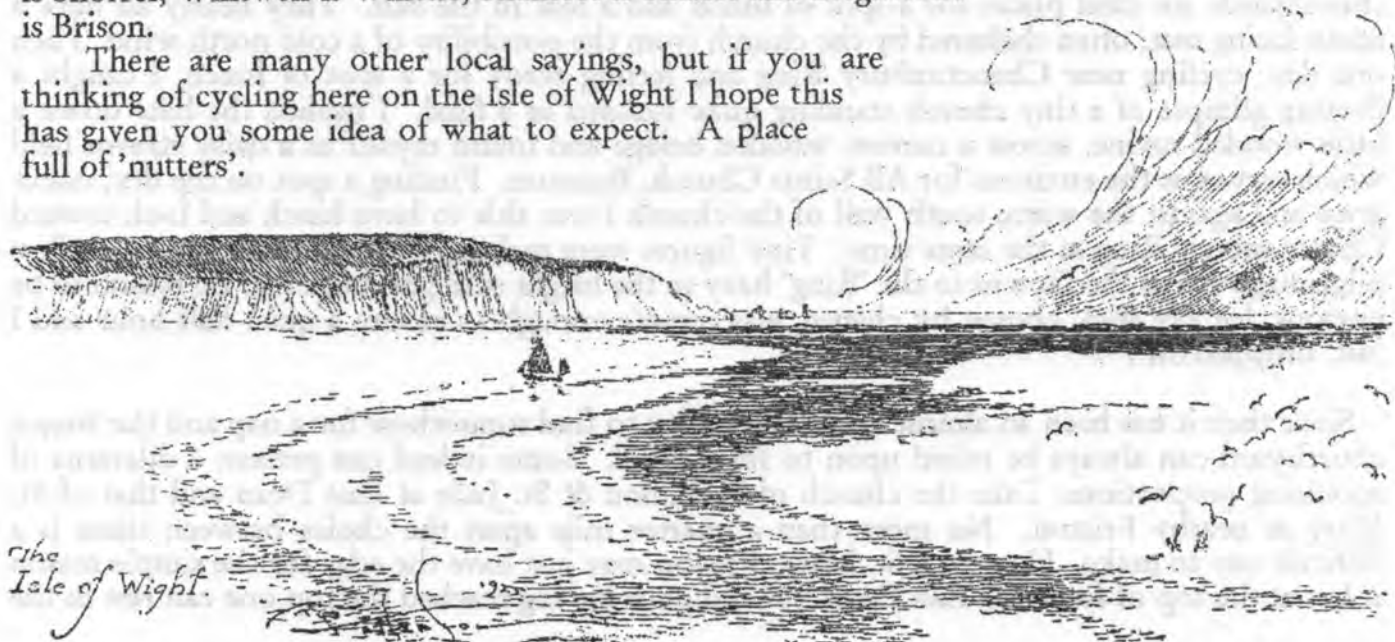
People who, like myself, move here from the mainland, or 'England' as some of the locals call it, are known as 'oveners'. Those born here are 'caulkheads' (corkheads) presumably from boat building days when caulking - filling the gaps - was done to the wooden decks of ships.

Lunch is 'nammet' - noon meat - and from this we get nammet break or nammet time for elevenses or tea break.

Holiday makers to the Island are usually known as 'grockles', normally herded into 'grockle cages' (coaches) so that they can be safely transported from place to place. They are occasionally released for short periods, but to ensure that they don't stray too far we have 'grockle traps' (souvenir shops) at strategic places. Normally they are released from these after the purchase of some useless object. By the way, what's got two legs, a trunk and is green? A travel sick grockle. Just thought I'd throw that one in!

Wherever you are on the Island you always seem to go, down Cowes, up Newport (Nippert), out Yarmouth, down Ryde, over Shanklin/Sandown/Ventnor, out Chale. Shorwell is Shorrel, Whitwell is Whittle, Shalfleet is Shaflet and Brighstone is Brison.

There are many other local sayings, but if you are thinking of cycling here on the Isle of Wight I hope this has given you some idea of what to expect. A place full of 'nutters'.



Reg Gammon
by Art Lover. (From Issue No 25 Xmas 93)



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

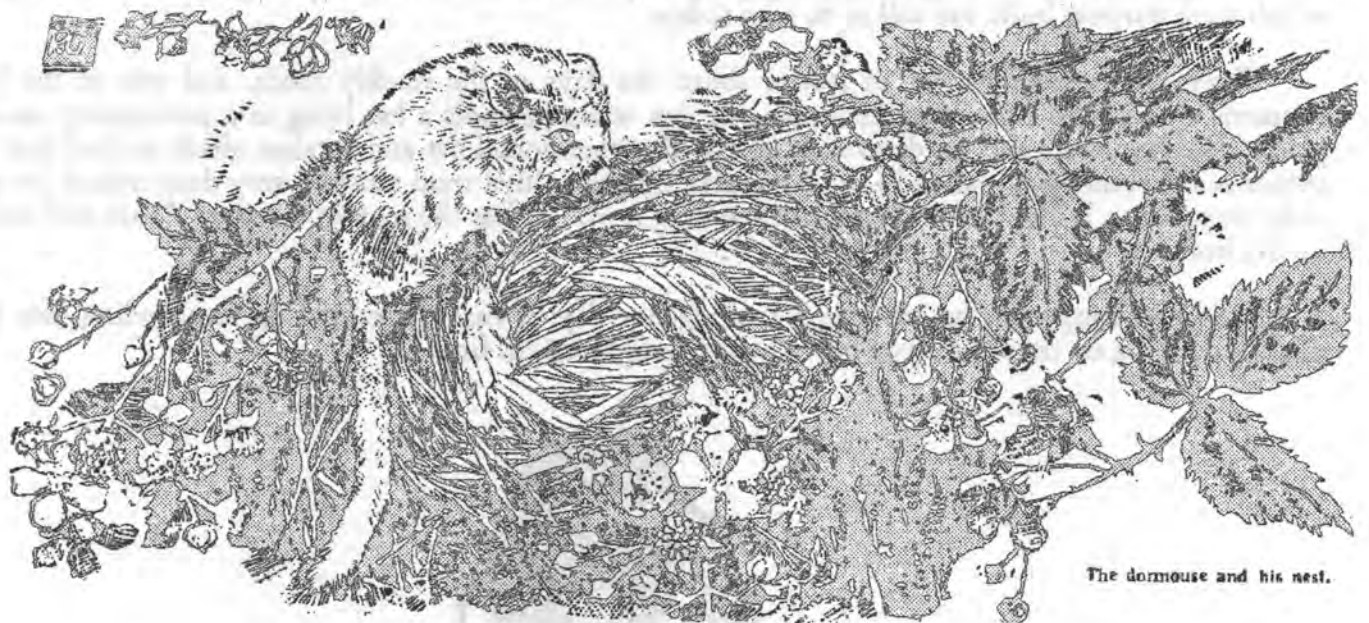
But Reg is far more than illustrator of cycling subjects, for although he wrote and illustrated a country feature for the C.T.C. magazine until 1984, a total of 60 years, he is much else besides. Most

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

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

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

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



The dormouse and his nest.

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

LOVELY MUD!

by Brian Wilkins (from Issue no. 3, June 1982)

When our editor approached me at the anniversary tea and asked for a contribution, I at first thought that he was collecting for some charity or other and was somewhat relieved to find that all he wanted was something for the magazine. I was absolutely stuck as to what to write about, and then it hit me, why not write about getting stuck or rather the stuff we get stuck in, i.e. good old fashioned Sussex mud.

Now I realise that some people will think mud a weird subject to select but as most of you know there are one or two in our midst who are very attached to the stuff (or should that be the other way round), and there is one person in particular who can't seem to get enough of it and seems to revel in seeking it out on every possible occasion, and an innocent remark like, "I know where there is a good rideable bit of rough stuff", should be treated with the utmost suspicion.

We can forgive these people on the grounds that this love and obsession with mud is probably hereditary. I say this because for centuries Sussex was renowned for its mud. Country people referred to it as "loving mud" because "it do cling so", and in the first month of the year it was called January butter, presumably because it spread well!

People from outside the County had a few nasty things to say about the stuff. In 1749 Horace Walpole wrote, that if you love good roads never go into Sussex, and in 1751 another scribe wrote that the reason why Sussex women and cattle had such long legs was through continually pulling their feet from the mud. There is a record concerning one of the Kings of Spain who in the eighteenth century took six hours to travel nine miles in the Pulborough area, unfortunately they don't say what he was doing in Sussex.

Eventually things got so bad that something had to be done and one of the solutions tried was an act of Parliament compelling the Iron Masters to contribute to the roads, of which they were the major users at that time. This act provided that for every six loads of charcoal or one ton of iron transported, one load of cinder, gravel, stone, sand or chalk should be laid on the highway. Unfortunately this was largely ignored and things got worse rather than better, but did eventually lead to the turnpike system.

The above mentioned act was the first attempt in this country to make the user of the roads contribute to their upkeep in direct proportion to his use of those roads. The subsequent Turnpike Act made things fairer by making everyone pay by a system of tolls. Some of the toll houses, many of which were purpose built, are still to be seen today.

There are inevitably a lot of stories about the days of the muddy roads, and one of the best concerns a man who was riding his horse one day when he spots a hat lying in a particularly muddy patch. He dismounts and bends to pick up the aforementioned hat and is taken aback to find that the owner is still wearing it. "Good Lord," remarks the man, "that mud must be very deep indeed for you to be standing in it like that." "I am not standing in it," replies the man in the mud, "I am still sitting on my horse."!

So if you happen to be out rough stuffing one day beware of picking up any cycling hats you might find lying on the track - you never now what you might find.



PARIS-BREST-PARIS 1991

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

by Geoff Boxall (From Issue No 25 Xmas 93)



Paris-Brest-Paris
1891-1991

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

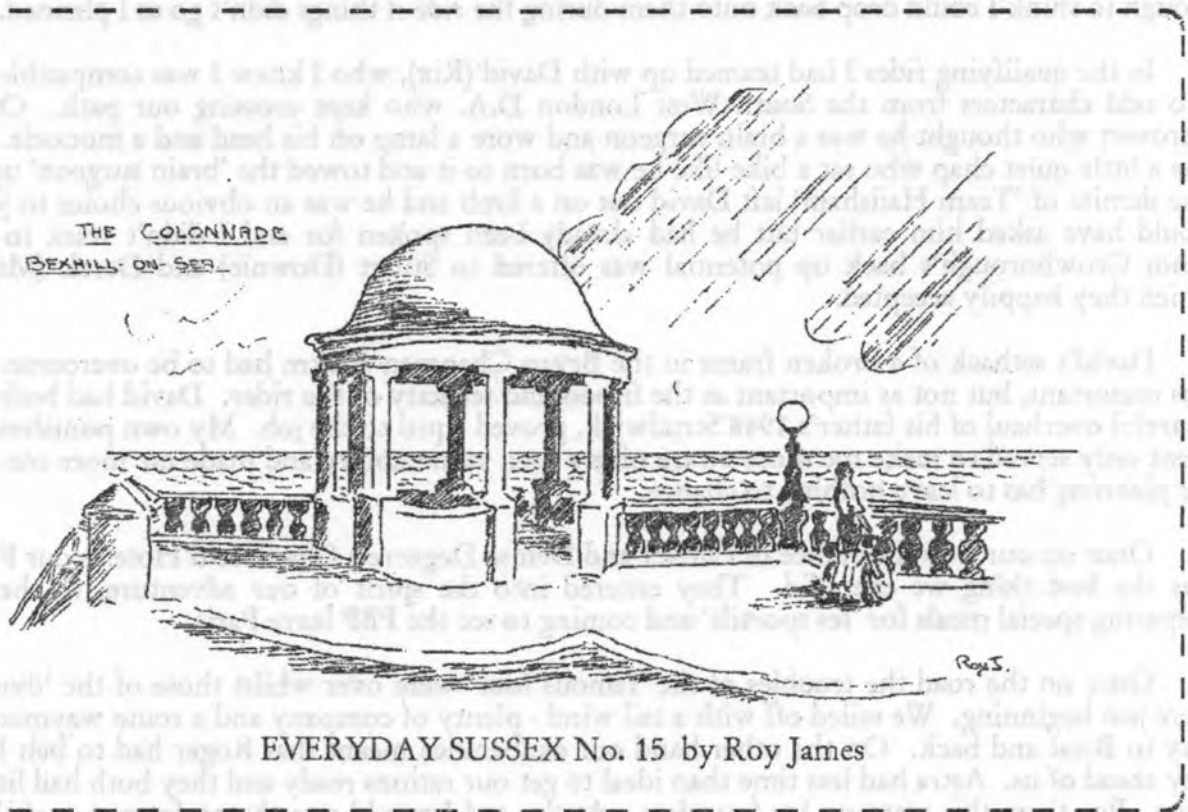
Imagine that elation magnified sixfold and that is what the riders felt arriving back in Paris. We had the glory but I know that it was only ours because of the magnificent backup given by 'the duo'.

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

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

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

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



THE COLONNADE
BEAHLILL-ON-SEA

EVERYDAY SUSSEX No. 15 by Roy James

First printed in the same Issue as the preceeding article.

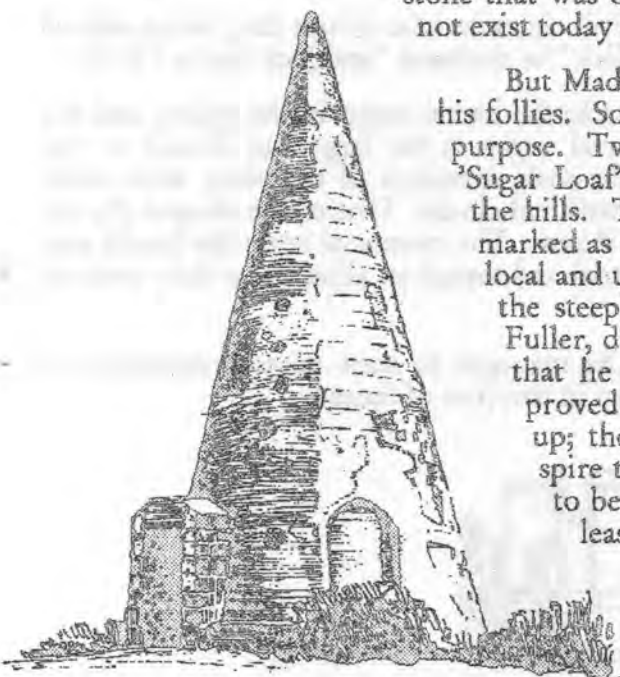
'MAD JACK' THE SQUIRE OF BRIGHTLING by David Rix (from Issue no. 9, Summer 1985)

The Brightling area carries the eccentric stamp of John 'Mad Jack' Fuller (1757-1834), member of an ancient family of iron-founders who lived at Heathfield in the 16th and 17th centuries and who established the foundry at Waldron. He was known variously as 'The Hippopotamus' because of his size, 'Honest Jack' (his own name) and 'Mad Jack', but though he was undoubtedly one of those who attract the name eccentrics, he was actually far from mad.

Fuller was the only son of the local rector and made a fortune out of Sussex iron and out of his estates in Jamaica which he inherited. He was well known in Sussex, a man of commanding appearance and one of the last men in the county to wear powdered hair and a pig-tail. He sat as Member of Parliament for Sussex from 1801 to 1812, though only after allegedly spending £50,000 to secure the seat. According to tradition he had himself drawn to Westminster in a carriage pulled by a great team of his own horses; it was said that he never travelled without 4 horses, a coachman, a footman and a man inside armed with a sword and pistols. It has been recorded that when he was delivering a fiery speech in the 'House', the Sergeant-at-Arms grew sick with fear and the Clerk-at-the-Table wished he had never been born.

Fuller was denounced during the 1807 elections for his interest in slavery, by his opponent Warden Sergison. It appears he was reluctant to defend his seat, but his successful defence was undertaken by some Sussex freeholders. It was pointed out that the Crown gained valuable revenue from British interests in the West Indies, and Fuller tried to brand Sergison with Popery, anti-Popery being very strong in Sussex (as witnessed at Lewes). It was over this election that Fuller had to be carried from the Chamber and placed in the Tower, after refusing to give way in a debate in which his West Indian slave-trade interests were deprecated, and which ended in his abusing the Speaker and calling him an insignificant little fellow in a wig.

For all his faults, Fuller was a patron of the Arts and Science, and it is to his credit that he encouraged the young J.M.W. Turner and commissioned him in 1819 to paint a series of pictures under the title of 'Views of Sussex', including 'The Vale of Heathfield', 'Battle Abbey' and 'The Vale of Ashburnham', and Turner stayed at Fuller's home while he was working on these. He also gave £10,000 to the Royal Institution, resulting in the setting up of Fullarian Professorships, one of which was held by Faraday. He also helped in the local community during a time of famine, employing hundreds of men to build a wall around his estate of 'Rose Hill', later known as Brightling Park, so that they could afford the high price of food. Perhaps the most outstanding benefit bestowed on mankind by Fuller was his timely purchase of Bodiam Castle, which he gave to the nation, in order to save it from being sold as a stone quarry. There are undoubtedly quite a few houses near Bodiam built from stone that was once part of the castle, and who knows, the castle might not exist today except for Fuller's intervention.



But Mad Jack' Fuller is probably best known in Sussex today for his follies. Some built for no apparent reason, others with an obvious purpose. Two catch the eye of passers-by immediately, these are the 'Sugar Loaf' and Brightling Needle, standing out incongruously on the hills. The 'Sugar Loaf' near Wood's Corner (map ref. 669196 - marked as a monument) was built in the early 1800's (the name is of local and uncertain origin). Made of stone and cement, it represents the steeple of Dallington Church, which according to tradition, Fuller, during a rather drunken gathering in London had wagered that he could see from his dining room window. Fuller was proved wrong, and calling himself 'Honest Jack', he duly paid up; then, to satisfy a whim, he caused an exact replica of the spire to be built, so situated that from his window it appeared to be rising from the ridge between there and Dallington. 'At least I can see it now,' he said, "and no-one can tell one from t'other." The building stands about 35 feet high, inside is a beaten earth floor some fourteen feet in diameter and sockets eight feet up the walls reveal where an upper floor was supported on joists. In the early days

it served as a cottage, and was lived in up until about 1880, though it must have been a bit of a comfortless place, having neither fire-place nor chimney, with its door facing north-east and its sole window facing due north. It fell into disrepair but was finally restored by public subscription in 1961 and presented to East Sussex County Council by Mr. D. Baker of Christmas Farm. Brightling Needle, a 40 ft. high obelisk, is a short distance away on Brightling Down (map ref. 670213), which at a height of 650 ft. above sea level affords tremendous views of the surrounding countryside. The reason for its construction is unknown and it serves no obvious purpose, other than to arouse the curiosity of the passing stranger. The needle has in the past few months undergone extensive restoration work to replace the stone facing broken away by the weather.



Two of 'Mad Jack's so called follies had obvious scientific value, they were both observatories. One, still known as the Observatory and now a private dwelling, was built on the site of Brightling windmill and is in sight of Brightling Needle on the road from Wood's Corner to Burwash (at map ref. 671207). It is a one storeyed building with a two storeyed centre and a lead dome. The other built to look like a Greek temple is in Brightling Park, it is a two storeyed pillared structure with a dome and is visible from certain sections of the B2096 ridge road. Both observatories and possibly other of Fuller's 'follies' were designed by Sir Robert Smirke, the architect of the British Museum.

John Fuller died in 1834, but even then he did not easily relinquish his hold on Brightling. In 1810 he had had erected in the churchyard a monumental pyramid (it can't be missed) which was to be his mausoleum. It was built only after an agreement had been reached with the vicar. The house across the road was once "The Green Man", the local inn, but the vicar disliked the competition and in return for allowing Fuller to build his mausoleum, he made him agree to close the inn and build a new one some distance outside the village. This he did and the inn, the 'Fuller's Arms', still stands about a mile away, its rooms having pictures of the life of Fuller and the village in the 19th century. Fuller had also requested that he be buried in his mausoleum, sitting upright in a top-hat with a bottle of claret in one hand and a leg of chicken in the other. Though it was later claimed that the vicar refused to do this when the time for burial arrived and that he was actually buried elsewhere (possibly under the pyramid) in the normal prone position. This appears to have been proven, since when the tomb was opened in 1982 it was found to be empty. There is no date on the tomb only the inscription from Gray's Elegy:

"The Boast of Heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour,
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

This echoes his claim that he was a simple Sussex man, and it is characteristic of him that, when offered a peerage by Pitt, he bluntly refused it. "I was born Jack Fuller," he declared, "and Jack Fuller I'll die."

Further reminders of Fuller can be seen inside the church; the barrel organ in the gallery and the plaques around the walls were donated by him. The barrel organ is the largest in Britain in full working order. When it was installed, Fuller presented the male members of the choir with white smocks, buskin breeches and yellow stockings and the girls with red cloaks. One of the plaques (by the door) is a memorial to Fuller himself, with a bust by Henry Rouw. The memorial bears the family coat of arms and their motto "Carbone et Forcipibus" (by charcoal and tongs) an allusion to their trade of Iron Master.

He may have died plain Jack Fuller, but in his time he managed to leave enough reminders of himself that it is likely to be a long time before he is forgotten in this part of Sussex.



Bodiam Castle

THE FORMATION OF THE EAST SUSSEX D.A.

by Dennis Jakeman (from Issue no. 18, Xmas 1989)

The Bicycle Touring Club, soon to become the Cyclists' Touring Club, was founded in 1878; not until 1894 was the first District Association formed by members residing in the Northumberland and Durham Districts. R.T. Lang, its first secretary said, "When the day comes that a 20th century historian includes cycling in the National History, the formation of the Northumberland and Durham District Association will be regarded as one of the most important episodes in the history of the Cyclists' Touring Club." (1)

Prior to this, one defect in the organisation of the Club was the increasing failure to cater for the social aspects of the sport; it not infrequently happened that members living next door to each other lived in blissful ignorance of the fact unless through some chance remark or wrongly delivered post!

The genial intercourse that existed among members of the Club in the early eighties of the last century gradually disappeared as the membership increased; the wearing of the Club badge considered not only a duty but an honour passed out of fashion and the Club consisted almost entirely of individuals who generally failed to see they had any interest in common and whose interchange of ideas on cycling and cycle touring was limited to immediate friends and acquaintances.

The gradual increasing desire in 1896 to form further District Associations was met by the formation of a committee, by the General Council of the Club, to consider the whole question and also whether financial support should be forthcoming. A committee of thirteen was appointed; four were in favour, three openly opposed the idea and the remainder were neutral, though even they were reported as being biased against! (2) Hardly very encouraging. However at the half-yearly general meeting held in July that year the formation of D.A.'s was formerly adopted and thus, although initially only faintly blessed by the Council, was the formation of D.A.'s throughout the country initiated by the members.

It was not until September 1926 that the Council gave its consent to the formation of the Sussex D.A., an occasion well remembered by Bill Collins. "I remember Phil Aris (to become the first secretary) contacting head office about a D.A. for Sussex and being told he needed the support of fifteen members; so he got a list of all the members living in Sussex and a meeting was held at St. Anne's Tea Rooms in Worthing (February 1925). I remember five people went from Eastbourne."

Twenty-three members attended this meeting and agreed unanimously to the proposal for a Sussex D.A. and that the area should be "A straight line from the sea coast through PEVENSEY and HAILSHAM to MARESFIELD and EAST GRINSTEAD, thence along the County Boundary to LIPHOOK, thence a straight line through PETERSFIELD and FAREHAM to the coast." (3) At that meeting Phil Aris was elected Honorary Secretary (protem) and it was agreed that Lieutenant Colonel C.H.S. Baskerville would be asked to become President "If and when the formation is sanctioned by the Council." (4)

At the inaugural meeting of the D.A. held at the Gildredge Hotel, Eastbourne on November 6th, 1926, attended by 27 members, these appointments were confirmed, together with that of the Reverend Frederick Hastings as Chairman and Arthur Wren (a name that figured prominently in the D.A. over many years) as Treasurer, and "after much discussion, scarlet and black chosen as the D.A. colours." (5)

"I remember," said Bill Collins, "that shortly afterwards Bert Pinnington asked me if I would take on the Treasurer's job as Arthur Wren wanted to step down. I said 'yes' and asked to see the books. I was told there were none and that there was only 1/6 (71/2p) in the kitty, this from the sale of a club tie! Anyway, I think that we were one of the first D.A.'s to be financially self-supporting and I remember getting a letter of thanks from G.H. Stancer (General Secretary of the Club) for our 'generous attitude'." (Bill was elected Treasurer in 1928).

However these are but early days and it was not until just after the Sussex D.A. had celebrated its 21st Anniversary on 6th November 1947 that the East Sussex D.A. was finally formed on 17th April 1948. This followed proposals put to the A.G.M. of that year, that resulted in the division of the Sussex D.A. into East and West Sussex, because of "the difficulties in catering for the membership within the large area of the Sussex D.A." (6)

Up to this point there were 5 Sections operating within the Sussex D.A.: Eastbourne, Eastern, Horsham, Lewes and Western. We note that a "Mr. H. Moore", better known to us as Yub, was a Section representative for Lewes on the Committee. After various proposals and amendments the following boundaries were agreed upon and minuted:

"East: The County Borough of Brighton and thence northward along the main Southern Railway line to the County Boundary at Tinsley Green. All towns and villages named on that line included.

West: Littlehampton, along the A284 to Arundel and thence to the junction with A29 at Whiteways to the County Boundary via the boundary of the Portsmouth D.A.

North: Between the East-West boundaries along the County Boundary." (7)

- References. (1) & (2) Lightwood. "Romance of the C.T.C." 1928.
(3) & (4) Minutes of the Meeting at Worthing 21.2.25
(5) Minutes of the D.A. Inaugural Meeting, Eastbourne 6.11.26
(6) & (7) Minutes of the 21st A.G.M. of the Sussex D.A., Newhaven 1.2.48

"Ou Est Le W.C.?"

Anon. (from Issue no. 18, Xmas 1989)

An English Lady is buying a house in Switzerland. On return home she realises that she didn't see the toilet in her new house. She therefore writes to the Estate Agent asking the whereabouts of the W.C. The Estate Agent has very little knowledge of the English language and so asks the Parish Priest to translate the letter for him. The only equivalent of W.C. that he can think of is Wayside Chapel. The following reply is therefore received by the English lady.

My Dear Madam,

I take great pleasure in informing you that the W.C. is situated nine miles from the house, in the centre of a beautiful grove of pine trees, surrounded by lovely grounds.

It is capable of holding 229 people, and it is open on Sundays and Thursdays only. As there are a great number of people expected during the summer months, I suggest that you come early, although there is usually standing room. This is an unfortunate situation, especially if you are in the habit of going regularly. It may interest you to know that my daughter was married in the W.C. and it was there that she met her husband. I can remember the rush that there was for seats. There were ten people to every seat that usually only held one. It was wonderful to see the expressions on their faces.

You will be glad to hear that a good number of people bring their lunch and make a day of it, while those who can afford to go by car arrive just in time. I would especially recommend your ladyship to go on Thursdays when there is an organ accompaniment. The acoustics are excellent, even the most delicate sounds can be heard everywhere.

The newest addition is a bell donated by a wealthy resident of the district. It rings every time a person enters. A bazaar is to be held to provide plush seats for all, since the people feel it is long needed. My wife is rather delicate and she cannot attend regularly. It is almost a year since she went last, and naturally it pains her very much not to be able to go more often. I shall be delighted to reserve the best seat for you, where you shall be seen by all. For the children there is a special day and time so that they do not disturb their elders.

Hoping to be of service to you.

INNOCENTS IN SOMERSET

by Joyce Wickens (from Issue no. 10, Xmas 1985)

The idea of a Youth Hostel Ready Route had appealed for some time, accommodation and all meals in one booking, no hassle. So inviting Jill to join me we chose the Somerset trip.

All duly booked we listened to well meaning friends warning of "mechanical problems". So armed with a dumbbell spanner and two spare inner tubes we set forth for Bath Hostel, the start of the tour, with my bike on the roof rack and Jill's bike in the back of the car.

A halt was decided upon to view the Cathedral at Salisbury. I was rather surprised when people started shouting as I entered the multi-storey car park. A sickening thud brought me to an immediate stop - I had forgotten the low roof. Fortunately the bike was not damaged, the car being low enough for it to almost miss. Yes Ray, that was how the roof channel of my car got bent! We did not stop to see the Cathedral after this.

Continuing to Bath Hostel the Warden advised leaving the car at the University car park, as there is a security guard on duty, a tip worth knowing.

Day one and we set off for Street, a distance of 44 miles. We had travelled 5 miles when Jill announced that something was wrong with her bike, it was very hard going. No, it wasn't the Somerset hills - the gear jockey had seized up solid. Freewheeling down hills and walking up we eventually arrived at a village where a word to a sympathetic local soon brought forth a can of oil to ease the offending piece of mechanism. All was well again until, descending the steep hill into Wells, there was a bang, telling me I now had a broken spoke in the rear wheel. The tyre rubbed badly on the chain stays making riding impossible. A spoke key would have been a help, so I decided to enlist the help of any cyclist. In Wells a couple of lads looked startled and rode off rapidly; no doubt their mums had warned them about strange women making odd requests.

No cyclists in sight, so Jill and I set off in opposite directions to hunt the town. I drew a blank but Jill was jubilant, she had hauled a young American cycle camper out of a cafe. With a few deft twists of the magical tool my bike was rideable again. Instead of the wheel wobbling from side to side it now went up and down, and thus I continued to Street. The next morning I took the bike into Ray Chick's shop for repair and also bought a spoke key and a can of oil.

The tour contained no further mechanical failures, not even a puncture. The route was well planned, winding through delightful lanes and villages, avoiding main roads, with shorter mileages for the hilly sections and a very easy day in the middle of the week.

Crowcombe, Minehead, Holford and Cheddar Hostels were also used. In short a most enjoyable holiday - great fun.

SOUNDS FAMILIAR

(From Issue no. 3, June 1982)

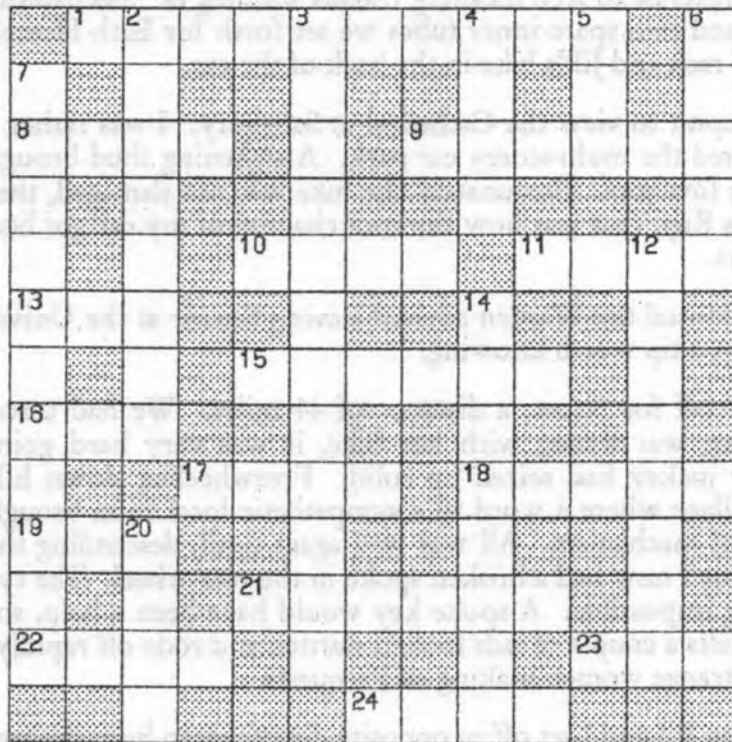
The following is taken from a book about Ditchling which was published in 1937.

"And then there is the traffic, the Bostal has been tarred, and London and Brighton crowd in upon us. On fine Sunday mornings the space by the dew pond near Ditchling Beacon is infested with cars. Some motorists even have the impudence to drive their cars right onto the Beacon - eighty yards or so off the road - and have been seen sitting complacently behind closed windows to the accompaniment of a portable wireless set - to which, incidentally, they were probably not listening."

Things do not seem to have changed much in 45 years. The tarring of the Bostal refers to the Beacon road on the north side, which previous to this was just a rough track, but was nevertheless regularly used by coaches and horses on their way from London to Brighton and coming via Turner's Hill. It must have been quite an experience.

A SUSSEX CROSSWORD

With a few exceptions the clues are mostly to do with things or places in Sussex. Good luck and, if you get stuck or want to check yourself, the answers are at the back.



ACROSS

DOWN

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. County town of West Sussex (10) 8. House more common in Kent than in Sussex (4) 9. Where they stitched up William and Harold (6) 10. & 13. Alfriston drinking place (4, 3) 11. Village - East or West (4) 13. See 9 Across. 15. Built in 1385 it commanded the upper reaches of the Rother estuary (6) 16. One time source of fuel for lighting (3) 17. & 21. He saved Bodiam Castle from becoming a quarry (4, 6) 18. Common building material in Sussex (5) 19. Type of tree (3) 21. See 17 Across. 22. He drew the plans for Brighton Pavilion (4) 23. Old form of yes (3) 24. Highwayman said to have been killed near Heathfield (4) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Where you can see the Conqueror's castle (8) 3. This 15th C. castle was home to the Royal Greenwich Observatory (12) 4. Form of transport in large towns before buses (4) 5. Member of the Cinque Ports (3) 6. What England was before the Norman Conquest (5) 7. A decaying village near Brighton? (11) 12. The show here is not for Northern England (8) 14. FLY I MADE (anagram, 8) 20. It may hang in low lying areas (4) |
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THE DORDOGNE BY OVERNIGHT EXPRESS

by Iris Stevens (from Issue no. 16, Xmas 1988)

When we heard that the French Railways were offering a special service to cyclists we decided to give it a go. Having decided on one of the four routes offered, it was away to the travel agents to book. First travel agents had never heard of a motorail service for bikes. It turned out they didn't deal with S.N.C.F. The second said "yes, we can book it for you". The bike bit threw them, but I had read the small print and was able to put them on the right track (ha ha).

Over the next few months several hiccups were sorted out. "Did we mind going outwards by ferry from Folkstone and returning to Dover by Hoverspeed" - no, we didn't mind, never been on a hovercraft before. Then they couldn't fit us in the same carriage on the train outward bound. Would we like to pay extra and have a three berth compartment - yes, we would.

Finally departure day came and bikes were loaded onto the car for a hop down to Hythe, where Roger Burchett was going to keep an eye on it for two weeks. A tailwind into Folkestone had us arriving in plenty of time to find that the ferry was delayed an hour due to some dispute. This of course had a knock-on effect. By the time we reached the rail terminal it was to be a two hour delay, but we didn't know it at the time.

To help relieve the boredom cardboard packaging was produced for us to pack the bikes in. No alterations to the bikes were needed, only removal of baggage. We were impressed - a definite plus for S.N.C.F. against air travel where the bikes have bits removed and generally mucked about, then they are rammed in on top of the passengers baggage with no regard to the bikes or luggage. Eventually we left Boulogne, a great long train full of cars on open decks and surf boards lashed to the sides. Our bikes were nicely tucked up in a closed wagon, as we soon were. Travelling Wagon Lit is certainly a civilized way to travel. The French trains are beautifully clean and carpeted and we had a very comfortable night as the train hurtled through France.

About 8.00 am Saturday morning we pulled into Brive (-la-Gaillarde) station to the sight of people sitting at long tables on the platform eating breakfast. It was reminiscent of the victory street parties. It turned out to be the motorists on an earlier train eating the free breakfast. Cyclists have to pay for theirs! Something Neville Channin has taken up with S.N.C.P. as he says cyclists need it more than motorists!

Collecting the bikes we were soon on our way out of town heading South towards the Dordogne River. At Turenne we stopped for a coffee and a wander round the ancient hill top town. Lunch was taken in the shade as by now it was very hot. On again, stopping for a beer and provisions, to arrive at the tiny village of Creysse and the campsite on the banks of the Dordogne. Here we intended to stay for three nights so as to visit the deep limestone caverns at Padirac and the cliffhanging town of Rocamadour. Both are tourist attractions but are well worth a visit. On a bike you soon get away into the tiny lanes.

Our next stop was to be near the walled town of Domme, perched high above the Dordogne River. So it was off, following the river where we could, through fertile valleys of tobacco and walnut groves. At Souillac we stopped for lunch and found the busy little town full of cyclists. It was on the Dordogne cycle route, or maybe it was the Jazz Festival that attracted them. After an excellent lunch on a vine covered terrace we wandered on to a well shaded site on the opposite side of the river to Domme. Next morning we set off early to climb up to one of the old gateways, before all the tourists got there. The town was much changed in the 16 years since we were last there, all prettied up and full of expensive souvenir shops. By lunch time the place was full and by the sound of it most were British! And horror of horrors there was even a Dotto train running around the streets. However, despite this, the view from the parapet in the tower, of the great bend in the river hundreds of feet below, is well worth it. Out of season the place would seem better I'm sure.

Leaving the photographers to snap what must be the most photographed view in the Dordogne,

we hurtled down to cross the river for a visit to the very busy medieval town of Sarlat. Here, in a street packed with parked cars, we saw what the French use their bumpers for - to remove the front and rear cars so as to get out of a parking space.

By now we had had enough of tourist spots, so we packed up and followed the river downstream to St. Cyprien, pausing here and there for photographs and to take the local speciality - walnut cakes. At St. Cyprien it was a 15 mile climb to Rouffignac where we were hoping to stay a few days to visit the lesser known caves with wall paintings. Also the ancient city dwellings along the Gorges of the Vezere at Les Eyzies.

The campsite at Rouffignac was noisy and expensive, so we decided to go to another 7 miles away. Dutifully following the camping signs for another 2 km down a dusty track we came to a wood with a sign "naturists only"! Well I know it was hot but there are parts of me lilywhite which I didn't intend to expose. We retraced to the road and after a few miles found another campsite at a Centre Loisir. These leisure centres are becoming quite popular. They vary in facilities but all seem to have man made lakes for water sports.

As the price was quite reasonable we decided to stay for three nights and next day climbed to caves at Rouffignac. They were most interesting, with drawings of deer, goats and woolly mammoths. The guide book said it was a shame about the graffiti over some drawings. These turned out to be initials from cave explorers dated around 1850!

Next day it was down to the river at Vezere to view the ancient cliff dwellings, some of which were from early men but most were 12th Century dwellings including a chapel.

The following day it was pack up and away through quiet lanes Northwards. Had our only shower today, lasting about 10 minutes, but it is definitely cooler, all right for cycling through. One overnight stop, then Uzerche, another old town climbing up from the River Vezere. We stayed two nights and gave ourselves a day wandering around the old towns free of our bikes.

It was now Wednesday and the holiday was slipping away. We rode off in a Southeasterly direction into the Correze region, a beautiful area of steep wooded ravines and sleepy villages. At one of these, Roche-Canillac, we put up our tents on a quiet municipal site. Next day we had a beautiful ride up and down the steep valleys to the Barrage du Chastang and the Dordogne, and a ride along the series of dams to Argentat where we enjoyed lunch in a riverside Auberge.

Friday, and we must now head for Brive and the train home on Saturday. One more leisure centre stop, at the religious village of Aubazines, hundreds of feet above the Correze River. We climbed up to the Puy de Pauliac where we had a magnificent view towards the Massif Central and South towards the foothills of the Pyrenees. All too soon it was into Brive on a very hot Saturday, visiting the cattle show for something to while away the time.

On a visit to a local supermarket Heather excelled herself by robbing a Frenchman of 10 francs. Seeing him struggling to lock a trolley into a line she took it from him and walked away. He looked a bit bewildered she said, but didn't say anything. It turns out that you had to pay for the hire and had it returned when you locked your trolley back into line.

That night we claimed our couchettes on the crowded train (slumming it this time) and awoke back in Boulogne. Breakfast in a quayside cafe, then onto the Hover back to Dover, where it was overcast and drizzling. On collecting the car it wouldn't start - the starter motor was broken!

We had been away two weeks without a puncture between us, though my second Madison saddle had broken almost a year after the last.

We enjoyed the trip by train and are thinking of doing the same next year, but probably on a different route.

THE DOVER COASTGUARD or THREE DAYS BY BICYCLE IN THE RAIN.
by Tony Palmer. (from Issue no. 23, Xmas 1992)

It isn't everyone who has been fortunate enough to visit the Meteorological Office at Bracknell, recognised as the world centre of excellence in the field of meteorology. There you will see banks of computers, fax machines and telexes receiving and analysing details of the atmosphere & the oceans throughout the world, throughout the day, every day without exception. A huge, costly organisation to forecast wind and rain.

Organise a cycling tour and I discover that, no matter where it is, both wind and rain can be forecast with the greatest accuracy over any time span you care to mention. Our trip to Dover was no exception. The rain began five minutes before setting off and continued for three days. Not bad timing even if I say so myself. There had been none before and there was none after.

Regardless of this we were spot on time at Dover as we rested our bicycles against the white walls of H.M. Coastguard. Elevenes time without elevenses, as we presented ourselves to the smart young lady at reception. Perhaps this was more by good luck than judgement but, whichever way it was, we were there. Alas, without our kind-hearted Frank and Peter. Neither Frank nor Peter joined us in the circular conference room, a room superior I am sure to the seating arrangements of the U.N. Security Council. Superior because it is surrounded by picture windows to give the most magnificent views across the Dover Strait to France and from the eastern English Channel to the southern North Sea; a panoramic view which we would most certainly have enjoyed had the rain not been lashing across those famous white cliff tops to the sea beyond. Hardly the tranquil scene described by Matthew Arnold in his poem "Dover Beach". But this did not in any way detract from the interest, or the care and attention given to our visit by the officer-in-charge, in describing the work of the coastguard, in particular at Dover. Unless of course you had forgotten to close your saddle bag or cover your saddle.

For those who venture in this Strait, or take their holiday by ferry, it is reassuring to know that your movements are monitored by a responsible sleepless eye, from above; that you are scanned and recorded by the latest technology, warned of dangers, that there is organisation to pluck you out of the briny at a moments notice. Even for the undeserving and there are many of these. Passing through the Dover Strait one calm summer weekend, in dense fog, but with a blue sky and sun above, I came across an elderly man in a small wooden boat happily fishing with rod and line in the middle of the deep draft channel. No radar reflector, no sense, no understanding, certainly no receiver to hear a few home truths from irate shipmasters, or the calming assurances given by the female coastguards for those in peril on the sea. Another ten feet and only the arm that binds the mighty deep would have helped this intrepid mariner.

Intrepid mariners they may be but when disaster strikes it strikes suddenly and thereafter the sea is relentless and merciless to the unprepared. At those times we are grateful indeed for the likes of the coastguards whom we met in July, and for the organisation of ships and aircraft which lie in readiness behind them. Later that day we were grateful ourselves for the skills of the emergency services and for good samaritans along the road. (When Frank came off on a steep hill in the wet. Ed.)

We left that road far behind, subdued in spirit, to the homeward route. My weather forecast remained valid and accurate and needed no amendment. The distance was accurate, timing and teas less so, but with nothing more serious than gear mashing, a puncture and a few cases of mud measles, a new experience was added to our cycling repertoire.



TWYSSENDEN MANOR (A Youth Hostel gone, but not forgotten.)
from issue no. 9, Summer 1985

Many of us stayed at Goudhurst Youth Hostel before it passed from the Y.H.A.'s hands, but few of us probably now much of its history, we now intend to rectify this with the following short history.

Twysenden Manor is situated in an ideal position. The site was chosen evidently for the water supply and for its sheltered position from north and east winds. Its withdrawal and general seclusion from the main roads, no doubt influenced its selection as a refuge for victims of religious and political persecutions. In a later period the manor was used as a resort for smugglers in the conveyance of contraband from the coast to the metropolis.

The manor was built in the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) by Adam de Twysenden and early in the 15th century became the property of Roger Twysden. This old Kentish family represented the county in Parliament, one of their descendants was a captain of a troop of Kentish Gentlemen formed at Tilbury to oppose the hostile corrupters of the Spaniards in 1588. During the reign of Henry VI the estate was sold by Roger Twysden to one Roger Risccolin (Riseden). A part of Kilndown is now called Riseden. After that the manor was in the possession of the Austin family for several generations before passing, in the time of Charles I, to Anthony Fowle of Rotherfield. It was he who built the Oak Room and the central stone tower, and his coat of arms are over the fireplace of the Oak Room, as well as over the door in the courtyard. It is noted that Fowle covered the beautiful charming Ladies Room with oak panelling, covering the painting of a very graceful design and harmonious in colour - containing verses of the marriage psalm.

The estate changed hands again, being bought by the Bathurst family, a younger branch of the Finchcocks (there are some beautiful monuments to them in Goudhurst church). At the beginning of the 18th century Twysenden became the residence of Chief Baron Gilbert of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer and Fellow of the Royal Society. John Norris, the eldest son of Admiral Norris, was the next owner. After a short time the estate was sold to John Cartier, owner of the Bedgebury Estate (1790) with which it has continued to be incorporated.

When Mr. Beresford Hope (the step-son of Lord Beresford) came into the possession of Bedgebury, Twysenden was in a ruinous state and with his usual liberality he spent a very large sum on its reconstruction; members of his family lived at Twysenden until it became the property of the Crown. The Beresford Hope coat of arms is in the designs over the common room fireplace, and also at the Globe and Rainbow Inn, Kilndown, which has also been restored.

In 1947 the Crown Estate Commissioners leased Twysenden Manor to the Y.H.A., and many thousands of hostellers have stayed during their travels through the Garden of England.

It is a great shame that when the Crown Commissioners decided to sell off portions of the Bedgebury Estate, including Twysenden Manor, they were not willing to negotiate with the Y.H.A. as sitting tenants and the Manor passed into private hands. I am sure that many of us have happy memories of our stays at the hostel, even those who stayed in the annexe (or Frigidaire test centre), and will be sorry that it is now lost to us.



A PILGRIMAGE TO SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELLA.

by John Merckx (from Issue no. 21, Xmas 1991)

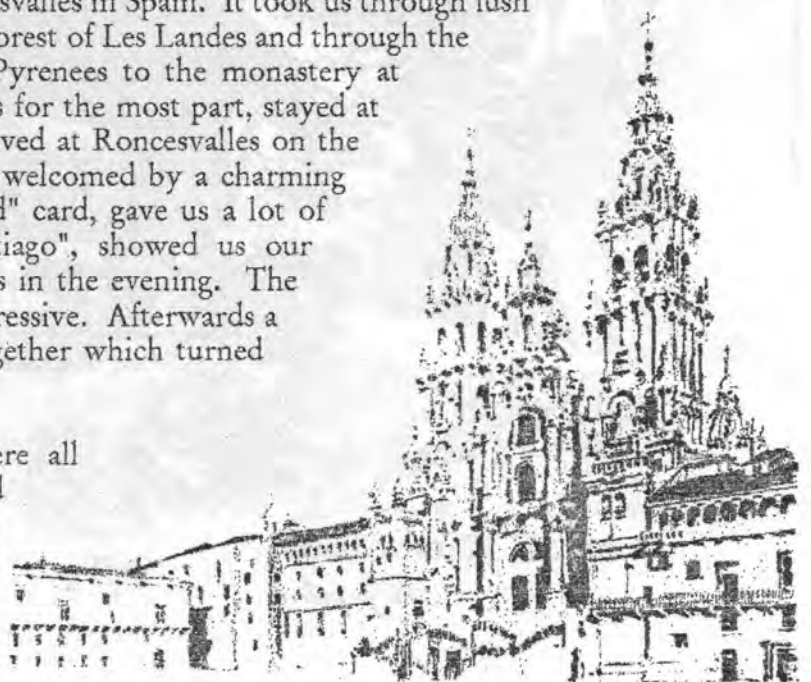
St. James, or Santiago, was an apostle who, according to tradition, carried the gospel into Spain. He returned to Judea in A. D. 44 and was beheaded by Herod. He was the first Apostle to be martyred. His body was taken from Jaffa to Iria Flavia on the coast of Galicia. At the time Galicia was ruled by a pagan queen, Queen Lupa, so James's followers concealed the body near the coast where it remained for 800 years. The apostle's tomb was discovered by a hermit named Pelagro, who found the sarcophagus, covered by a stone slab, in which lay the body and severed head of St. James. From the moment of discovery in 813 the pilgrimage to Santiago began and it continues to this day.

In medieval times there were three main pilgrimages; to Jerusalem, to Rome, and to Santiago de Compostela. They have all survived to the present day but the most popular is the "Camino de Santiago". One of the first pilgrims to Santiago was Charlemagne, and in the year 950 the Bishop of Le Puy made the journey. In medieval times going on a pilgrimage was a risky business and it was the monks of Cluny in France who took upon themselves the task of looking after the pilgrims, building hospices, churches and hospitals and encouraging the building of roads and bridges. The results of their work can still be seen everywhere along the road. Every year a host of people carry on the tradition which has lasted over a thousand years. Each one goes for his own reasons but all are united in a remarkable fellowship. I am sure that nobody who makes the journey will ever forget it.

There are four recognised starting points, Paris, Vezelay, Le Puy and Arles. The first three converge on St. Jean-Pied-de-Port just North of the Val Carlos pass over the Pyrenees. The Arles route crosses the Pyrenees by the Somport pass and joins the other routes at Puente de la Reina S. W. of Pamplona. In medieval times pilgrims from England used to go by sea to Blaye near Bordeaux where they joined the route from Paris. My son and I started at St. Malo and cycled to Bordeaux where we joined the recognised route. We had cycled along much of the route before but we wanted to complete the whole pilgrimage from St. Malo to Santiago in the limited time available.

On the Tuesday the 29th of May 1991 we left Portsmouth in cold and cloudy weather and arrived at St. Malo the following morning, where the weather was just as cold and cloudy. We cycled eastwards along the rather dreary coast road and then turned inland to Dol. There was a dramatic change in the weather and we were soon cycling in hot sunshine which remained with us for the next three days. Our route through France took us through Retiers, La Gaubretiere, Blaye, Bordeaux, Pissos, Peyrehorade and over the frontier to Roncesvalles in Spain. It took us through lush farming country, vineyards, the National Forest of Les Landes and through the foothills of the Pyrenees and across the Pyrenees to the monastery at Roncesvalles. We travelled on minor roads for the most part, stayed at one star hotels and fed very well. We arrived at Roncesvalles on the evening of Tuesday 4th of June and were welcomed by a charming monk who stamped our "Pilgrim's Record" card, gave us a lot of information about the "Camino de Santiago", showed us our bunks and invited us to the Pilgrim's Mass in the evening. The Mass in the beautiful church was most impressive. Afterwards a group of us went for our evening meal together which turned out to be a very cheerful affair.

Next morning before 7 a.m. we were all packing our gear and taking to the road again. There is no charge for pilgrims staying at "refugios". There is a chain of them all the way to Santiago at distances to suit pilgrims travelling on foot. They usually have bunks and washing facilities -

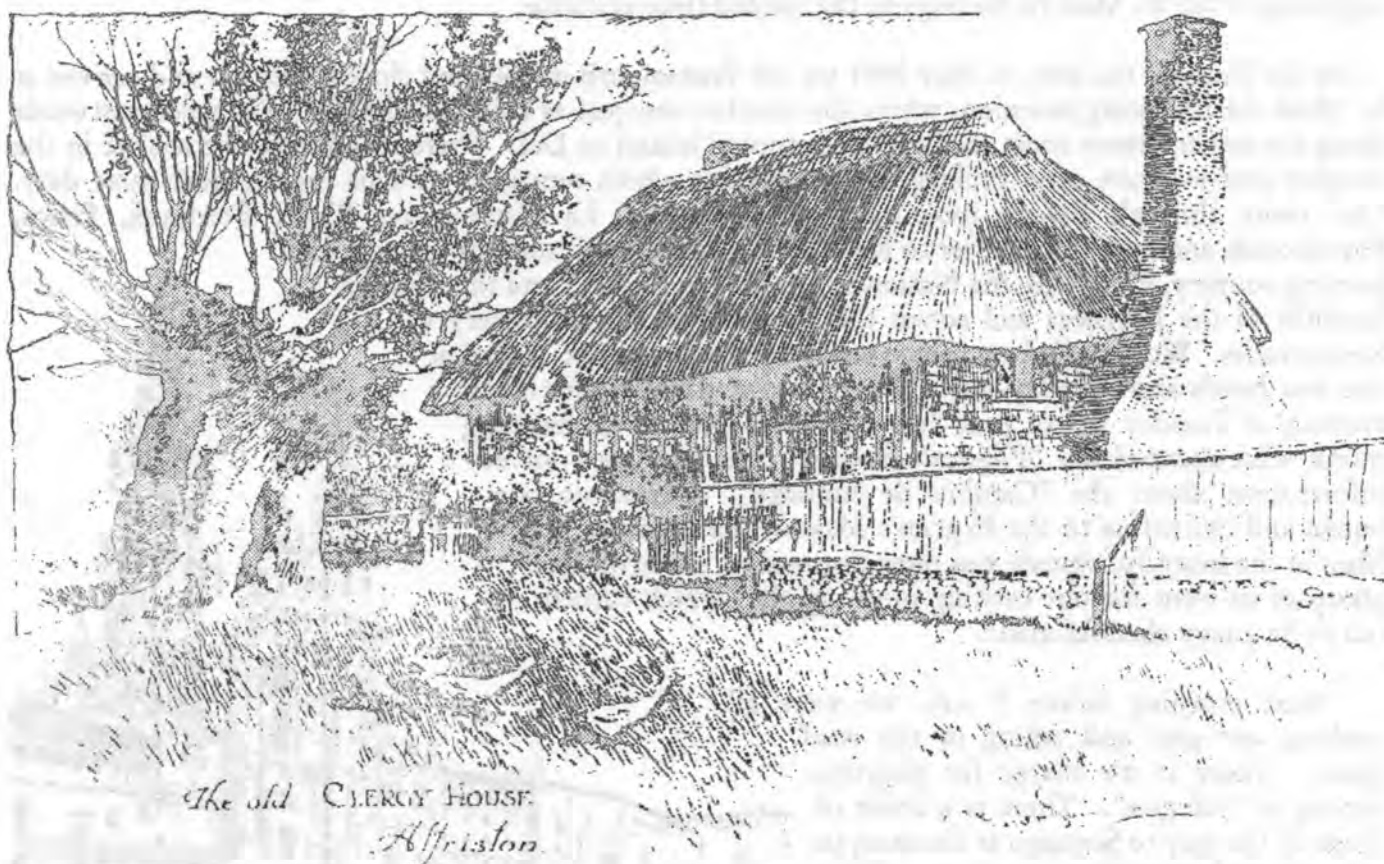


cold water only in most - but in two we stayed in we slept on the floor. We met people of many nationalities and of all ages. We had picnic meals of cheese, bread and fruit during the day and went to restaurants for our evening meals which were always good. We enjoyed the local wines too.

The route through Spain is more clearly defined than in France. Foot pilgrims can follow many tracks away from the main roads but from Pamplona to Burgos it is difficult to avoid the main road. On Thursday the 6th of June we stayed the night at Belorado. The following day was cold and wet with a very strong headwind which made it difficult to make any progress at all. The cathedral at Burgos however made it worth while. The rain eased up in the afternoon but the wind stayed with us. The following day was fine and warm again and we crossed the huge plain to Leon on very quiet roads. We then crossed the wild and beautiful mountains of Leon and Cantabria into Galicia. Galicia is hilly, green and wooded and a most lovely part of Spain. We arrived in Santiago as planned in 14 days (1037 miles) and stayed in the "refugio" in the seminary. There were about 100 beds in one dormitory, 70 of them occupied. The cathedral and town are lovely. We returned home by air to Heathrow with no fuss and no damage to the cycles.

(The approximate cost excluding fares was £150 in France and £100 in Spain. The single air fare from Santiago was £230.)





*The old CLERGY HOUSE.
Alfriston*

An Extract from "MEANWHILE"
by Jack Dunn (from Issue no. 11, Summer 1986)

This past year those of us who lived through World War II have had many reminders of it from the various 40th anniversary celebrations of its close. Those who are younger will have gained a certain familiarity with the more spectacular aspects of the conflict from a steady flow of documentary and drama on films and television during the intervening years, not to mention a mass of written history and fiction. But many of the less dramatic aspects of life throughout the war have gone largely unrecorded, perhaps because none of them appeared all that important in themselves, though taken together they added up to a background of normality against which we could quickly rebuild our fallen lives once the madness ceased. So it occurred to me to relate how a small spark of one such activity, club cycling, was kept alive throughout the war, ready to be fanned into flame again when peace was restored.

As one of the minority of Eagles permitted (directed, in fact) to remain in our civilian jobs and therefore to live in our own homes (so long as they stood up) I was fortunate enough to be able to keep up my cycling to a fair extent and thereby play a small part in keeping club activity ticking over through the war years. One picture often comes to mind when I think of those times -

A summer morning, a rather grey and misty one; a small group of cyclists, most of them in black tights and jackets, are gathered by the side of an otherwise deserted country road. One black-clad figure, seated on his bicycle, tightens his toe-straps while another holds him up. A man standing on the grass verge studies his watch while counting down the seconds: 30, 20, 15, . . . Suddenly the peace of the morning is shattered by the roar of an aircraft approaching at high speed, barely above the tree-tops. All eyes turn to it for a rapid assessment of its likely course; then as one man, all retreat with as much dignity as is consistent with the required haste, into the ditch - all, that is except for the mounted rider and his supporter. The count-down, shouted above the engine noise, continues from the ditch until, promptly on zero, the rider is launched on a lone and unpaced tour of Essex. By this time the aircraft has passed overhead harmlessly, to continue its journey for a few miles yet; no one there is any longer interested in its fate

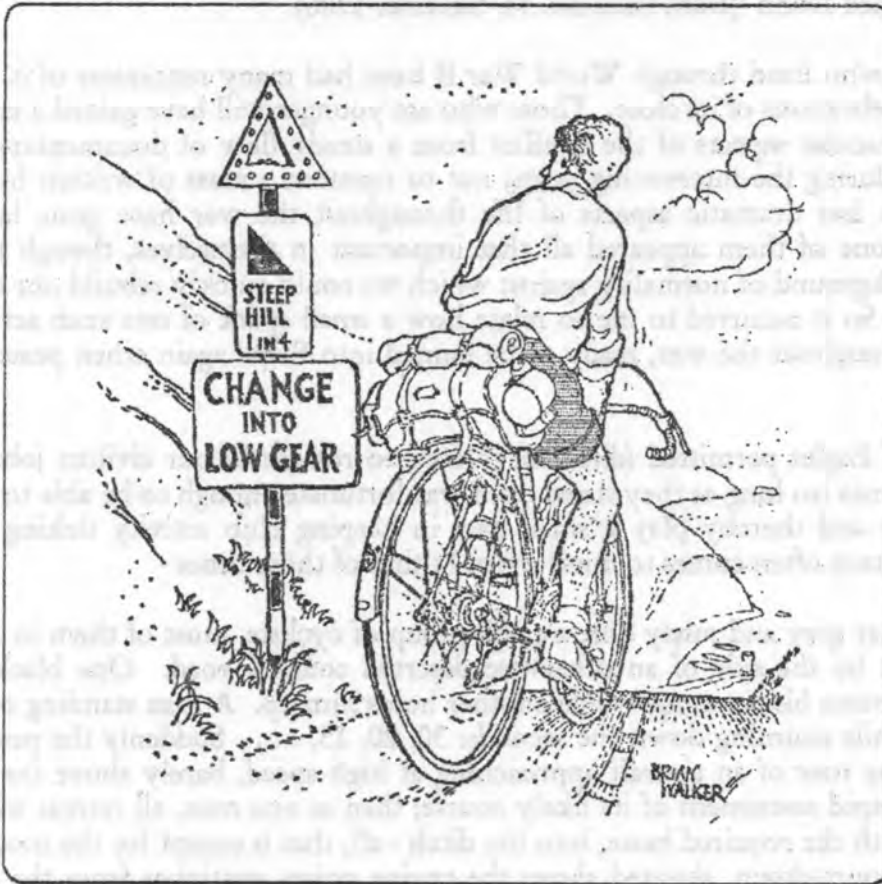
This scene was just beyond Abridge at the start of the 100 mile time-trial run by the East London Combine (I believe it was called) formed to organise combined club events when depleted active memberships made it impracticable for clubs to run their own. The rider was that admirable Eagle "Pat" Beasant, sadly no longer with us, and I seem to remember that the time-keeper was Eddie Engel. The intruder was one of the V1 flying bombs (alias buzz-bombs or doodle-bugs) to which the Germans resorted after the R.A.F. had swept their conventional bombers from our skies. For the benefit of any younger readers who are still reading, perhaps I should add that V1's were unmanned aircraft, each with a ton of high explosive in the nose, aimed in their hundreds at us from across the North Sea with just enough fuel to reach their target, usually London. So their approach was a matter of some anxiety, much heightened when the engine cut out!

Though not exactly typical of the start of a war-time event, this incident in its comic absurdity in a tragic setting, seems to me to sum up our cycling activities during the war - men at play while the battles rage, like Drake playing bowls as the Armada approaches.

The full article, printed in its entirety in issue 11, first appeared in the November 1985 issue of "The Way of an Eagle", the magazine of the Eagle Road Club. Anyone interested in a copy of the full article, about 4 1/2 pages, please contact the Editor.



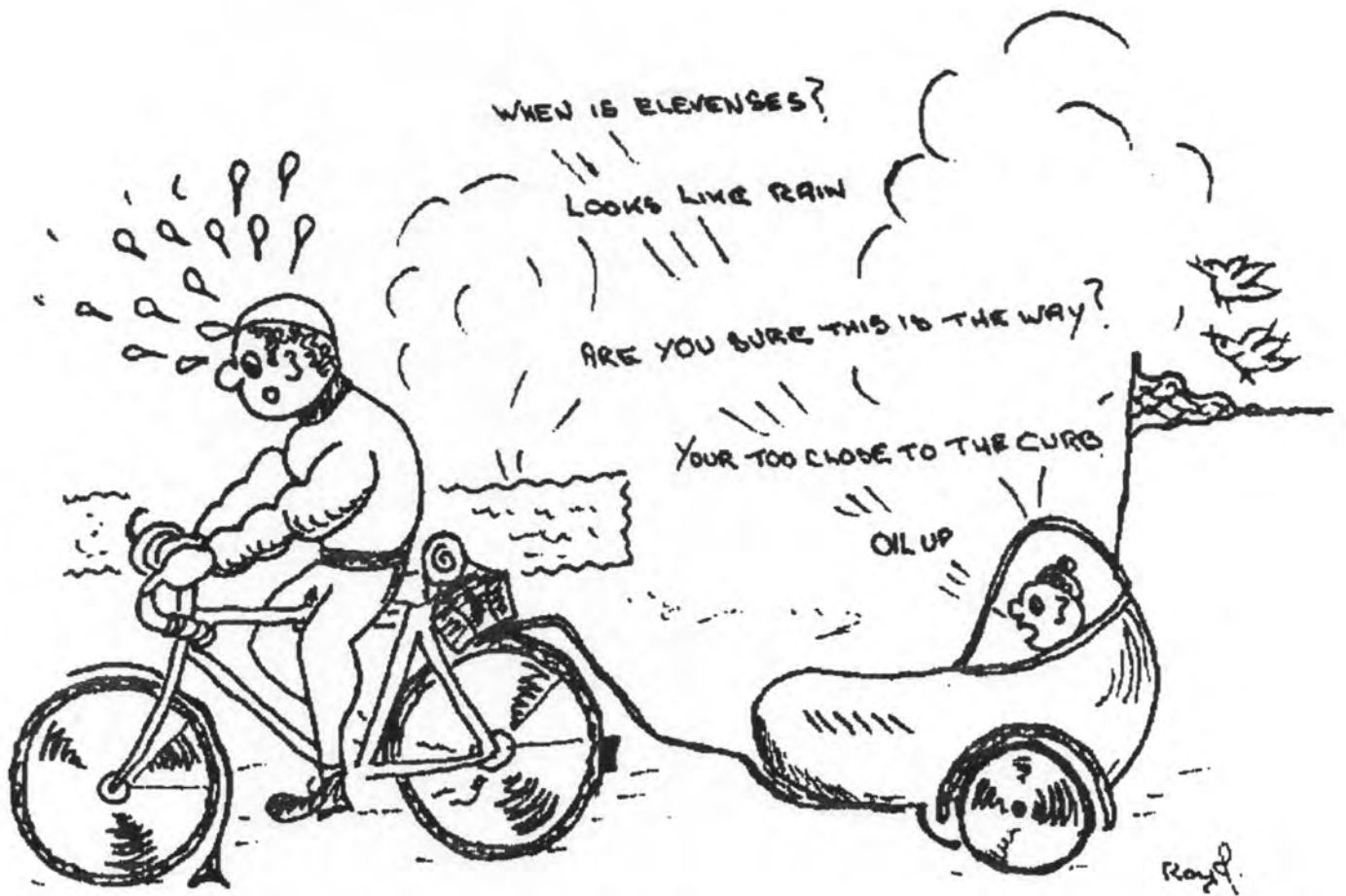
HILLS AS SEEN BY - "The Art and Pastime of Cycling" circa 1900.



Steep hills should be walked up. The severe strain may prove injurious to a beginner, and, in any case, will cause painful stiffness. Should the rider desire, or find it necessary, to stop when halfway up a hill, he should dismount rapidly before the machine has stopped or commenced to run backwards.

SUSSEX CROSSWORD ANSWERS

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THE EDITOR AND HIS SON ON A MIDWEEK RIDE by Roy James

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