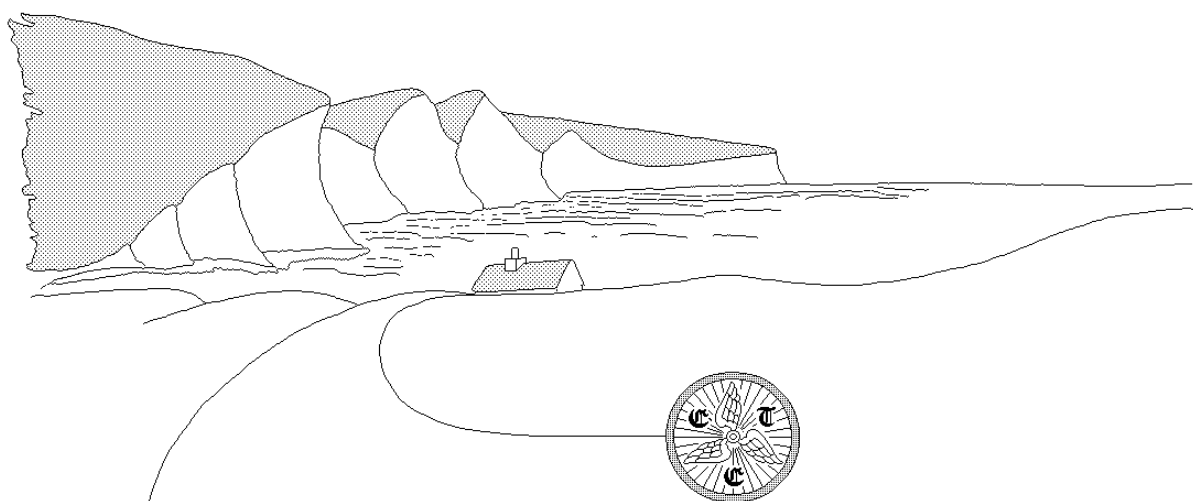


The



Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 29 - Christmas 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. 29, Christmas 1995



Are you sure it's only one month to Christmas?

From the Editor's Desk.

A good year for the D.A., I hope you all enjoyed the Rally at Ringmer and took full advantage of all the fine weather since. The allocation of over £40 M to Sustrans from the lottery came as a surprise, maybe things really are starting to look up for cycling! We've got some good articles for you this time including a report on the first Hastings & Rother hostelling weekend, a piece from Roy James (and some more of his excellent drawings), a couple of poems and a special report from Audax catering supremo Dave Hudson on his lone British alternative to the Paris-Brest-Paris - read it here first! Something to keep you occupied while the mince pies go down.

I'm always looking for articles or small items to fill in, so if you feel like putting pen to paper let's hear from you. Almost anything will be accepted, it doesn't have to be about cycling. I've only rejected one item so far - for reasons of good taste.

Have a very Merry Christmas & a Happy New Year - see you up the road!

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

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

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

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

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

Sections

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

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

Mid-week Section: Esther Carpenter:
10 Maplehurst Road, 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 C.T.C. 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 (or on any subject of interest) are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor at the address given at the front.

IT'S A NICE DAY FOR A CYCLE RIDE

by Stephen Moss (From "Weatherwatch", in The Guardian, Thursday 9th Feb. 1995)



As a regular cyclist I have a vested interest in watching the weather. Rain, snow and fog can all cause problems. Any moisture not only results in an uncomfortable ride, but can also make braking and cornering difficult.



Cyclists often use a forecast of rain as an excuse to take the bus or drive to work. But according to cycling guru Richard Ballantine, the risk of getting wet is much exaggerated. He maintains that most days, in south-east England at least, have no measurable rain. Moreover, the chances of getting wet during the commuting hours of 8-9am and 5-6pm are negligible - only once a month. Ballantine concludes that the benefits of cycling - both financial and healthwise - far outweigh the occasional soaking.

But this is to ignore the less obvious weather-related perils faced by those in the saddle. The most hated of these is the wind. Wind is important to cyclists because, along with friction and hills, it is one of the main things that slow you down. It is an unwritten rule of cycling that whichever direction you're going in, the wind is always against you. Pessimistic cyclists don't even like a following wind, as they know it will be against them on the return journey.

So the ideal weather for cyclists is a clear, dry, windless day, with a nip in the air to prevent overheating. A blocking anticyclone in early autumn is most likely to lead to such optimum conditions. Yet according to "The Bike Mag", if and when global warming takes effect, these circumstances could be few and far between in the future.

Global warming is likely to lead to an increase in those weather conditions loathed by cyclists. These include higher humidity, wetter winter weather, and an increase in storms, particularly at the equinoxes. Knock-on effects of higher temperatures might include an increase in the occurrence and severity of photochemical smog, caused by the sun's effect on car exhaust fumes and other pollutants.

It all sounds pretty unpleasant. Even so, as traffic congestion increases, cyclists have one compensation; their journey is still likely to be quicker than the car driver's, whatever the weather!



THE SONG OF THE NEW BIKIE

(by kind permission of Ernie Barnard of the S.W.London D.A.)

I wish I had a mountain bike,
A rooting tooting mountain bike,
A dunk it in the fountain bike,
To wash away the mud.
On pavements I would love to ride.
I'd scatter toddlers far and wide.
With geriatrics I'd collide.
I don't mind spilling blood

I'd think of it as quite a lark
While riding in the local park
To scare young lovers after dark,
No lights would I display.
With one-way signs I'd have no truck.
I'd charge ahead and trust to luck,
With drivers looking thunderstruck,
In total disarray.

My father's car would take me miles
To ride in all the mountain trials,
I'd win the lolly, plies and piles.
How lovely to be rich.
And should another fellow speed
To try and rob me of the lead,
It's then I'd do the dirty deed
And push him in the ditch.

But if you asked me 'Would I ride
Through pleasant lanes and countryside,
A welcome pub to stop beside?'
I'd answer 'What the heck'
To ride with motor cars around
and gaping pot-holes in the ground,
I wouldn't for a thousand pound
I wouldn't risk my neck.



THE PARIS-BREST-PARIS ALTERNATIVE

by Dave Hudson



The month is not August the time of day is neither 10.p.m. or 5.a.m. but it is a Monday, the 19th June 1995, early evening. The bike is loaded, the rider is ready to go, but who is he and what is he up to?

The thought of undertaking a ride such as the PBP was quite frightening, indeed I never thought I could ride such a distance. Whenever fellow Audax riders enquired if I would ride a 1200 or longer, I said I would only ride that distance if I liked the route, knew where I would get food that I liked, etc. etc., plus in 1995 the PBP date clashed with Worthing Excelsior's promotion so unfortunately I wouldn't be able to ride. So I was safe from riding a 1200 this year at least! However plans would change.

Towards the end of 1994 I learned that Ken & Jane Wilkie from Wellington (Event/Profs organisers & CTC Tour leaders)) were intending to ride from Land's End to John O' Groats to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary. Armed with the knowledge that on several of their end-to-end tours difficulty had been experienced in arranging transport home by train, I suggested how much easier it would be if I were to park their Transit van at John O' Groats. But how will you get home they enquired, I shall ride I said.

During January maps were scanned and distances measured and, strange but true!, my intended route for the ride unbelievably totalled 757 miles just over the 1200K. Naturally thoughts of much higher daily rides than I might have originally considered were now an option to be considered. I thought, "the PBP boys and girls will be reeling the 1200K off in under 90 hours, how long will it take me?" Holiday dates were booked at work which ensured that if I couldn't manage the ride in 90 hours I would actually have 135 hours available before the business hours of Monday morning called.

The Audax calendar provided training runs up to 600K, so I was as ready as I could be. However I have never ridden beyond 600K, but in true Audax fashion it is just a case of doubling it! I met up with Ken and Jane at Ullapool for a couple of easy rides as they neared their destination, to ensure my knife edge of fitness was retained. I know now that there could have been no better training as, reading their report of the Tour, Ken mentions that by this time they were pretty fit.

On the 'big day' the John O' Groats Hotel was the perfect venue for a large 3 course meal washed down with a pint of beer and a half bottle of wine; I was well aware of Velochio's words of advice "Keep off the wine and tobacco whilst on a ride." Well I had a few hours to spare and the wine ensured that my afternoon snooze lasted nearly 3 hours.

Surplus luggage had already been despatched with Royal Mail in Wick on that morning (would I be home before it arrived? surely not). Those who sneer that I despatched luggage should remember that spare luggage always precedes the Driver of a Rolls Royce and I was hoping that the machine I was travelling on would purr all the way home with only sound coming from the tyres!

Several People lingering around the Hotel enquired my route. I said the A9. They commented, "I think it is dual carriageway in places are you allowed to ride on it?" Others



enquired would I be Hostelling or B & B. I said no riding through the night, this prolonged the discussions so I found it easier to say yes B & B (bus shelter and a bun!). But enough chatting with the tourists, I had places to go, miles to cover. The weather was warmish and dry but sadly the wind was blowing from the south. At 6.25 p.m. with one kick of the pedals I was mobile!

After a couple of hours the wind was nagging harder against me and I was looking for a bus shelter, unlikely since I hadn't seen any buses, but at 27 miles I found a very small one, no seat but just room for the me and the bike. A cheese roll, a couple of cakes and a drink were transferred from the saddle bag to my tum!

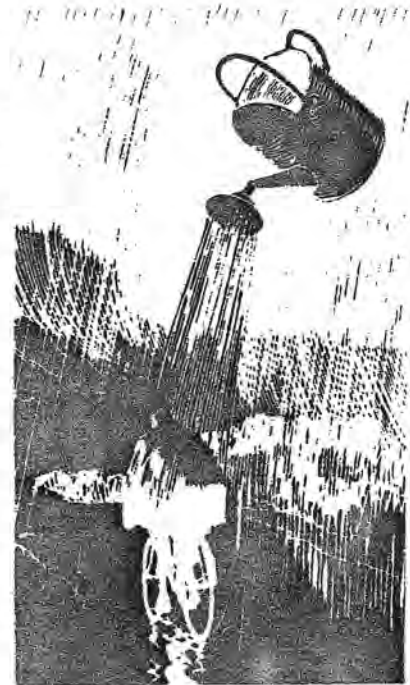
Another couple of hours and I was descending into Helmsdale after 54 miles, a welcome fish and chip shop provided a Hamburger and 2 teas, the burger would have served better as a tyre patch, cor it was tough! I was feeling a little (well more than a little) down. As I sat outside the chippy I eyed a hotel at the end of the street, and thought how nice, I could pack here and potter on tomorrow. It was tempting, but why not go just a few more miles and see if things improve, well of course I knew once I left there there would be no further opportunities for packing that night.

At Brora the drizzle started so on went the cape until around Tain. However on the stretch down from Brora I had a drinks parcel to collect. The day before whilst driving from Ullapool I had deposited 6 cans/bottles packaged up under a gorse bush. I had brought a large supply from sunny Sussex with me, but the very cold weather Scotland was enjoying resulted in several unused. I know George Berwick at Wormit overlooking the Firth of Tay will be impressed as in some 24 hour events, where food supplies are unknown, he hides tins of rice pudding in hedges on route.

After 74 miles I had drunk several of the cans I had carried and accommodated my new supply with ease. I plodded on through the night. However, being June and so far north, it was not a dark night merely a summer dim and my vista light sufficed for the front. For the other nights my Daylites, high power twin cateye lamps, would shine the way south.

Crossing the Dornoch Firth bridge was an eerie sensation, but its opening in quite recent years saved the long detour via Bonar Bridge. More drink and food was removed from the saddle bag before crossing to the Black Isle at 3.30 a.m. Clearway for 114 miles the sign showed as I gained height after crossing the Cromarty Firth bridge, only about another hour and I was crossing the Kessock Bridge with views of Inverness on my right. Near Daviot David raided the saddle-bag for drinks and more rolls and sadly the cape had to be donned yet again as the Scottish skies decided the Randonneur could do with freshening up as the new day dawned. I'm not riding all the way back home in this I decided, if its still the same in Edinburgh I'll call it a day. I had planned that the Little Chef at Tomatin (after 130 miles) would have provided breakfast, but with an hour and 20 minutes to their 7 a.m. opening time I was keen to press on, happy that I was ahead of schedule.

By Kingussie I was well and truly ready for breakfast, but at 8.45 no such premises were open. A short ride on into Newtonmore and I spied the perfect venue. They didn't



At Brora the drizzle started.

seem to open until 9.30 but I dosed on the pavement opposite, eyeing the establishment each time my eyelids opened. The £3.70 breakfast did wonders, although I don't think I will ever acquire a taste for black pudding which I washed down with the large pot of tea (7 cups I got out of that one Neville - incidentally if you wonder Neville, did I carry the flask? no I didn't).

With traffic now increasing on the A9 I followed the old road for several stretches a good part of the way to Perth. The cafe adjoining the bus station scrambled a couple of eggs on toast for me which powered me on towards the Forth Bridge. A short distance before the Bridge and my computer records that a third of the ride had been covered 400K in 23 1/2 hours.

All thoughts of abandoning had long passed with the improved weather and once over the Bridge I rode into Edinburgh. Some searching found a suitable pub which fuelled me with soup, lamb pie and veg. plus coffee and, oh yes, sorry Velochio but I had a pint of shandy.

Around 10 p.m. as I pedalled out of Edinburgh well fed, I thought, I've got this ride in the bag now, quite why I felt that then with about 750K to go I'm not sure, but it made me pedal swiftly. My intended route was via Peebles and Eskdale to Langholm and onto Carlisle. However, having ridden through Monday night with not a bus shelter or cafe to "just get in out of the night" I could amend the route as I felt fit; after all no secret controller would spring up in the middle of the night at the side of the road with my tea urn and a fine spread of food so I could go whichever way I pleased. I pedalled via Biggar (in a bigger gear!) and descended into Abington at 1.30 in the morning. From my drive north I had remembered the existence of a Welcome Break service station just off the M74, and whilst it was not a 24 hour opening in the cafeteria other than weekends I knew the petrol station would provide and escape from the night and some refreshments.

The micro wave was soon in business heating a large hot dog with onions washed down by a couple of hot chocolates. Now where could I get my head down for an hour or so? I could remain seated on the floor but the automatic door, sending a gush of cool air in every time a customer came in, was not the answer. There must be somewhere. Insufficient room in the hallway leading to the loos but what about this door, the disabled loo? I was a little disabled after my 31 hours on the road and the body length square cubicle, impeccably clean, seemed the perfect answer as I stretched out. My mitts provided a thin but suitable pillow and yes I thought I could doze off for an hour or longer here. Lovely ... but sadly it was not, within a couple of minutes loud voices could be heard in the corridors as numerous legs could be heard trotting to the loos. Fists banged on my bedroom! I ignored them, but further thuds made me decide this was not suitable. I bravely opened the door and said "it's all yours," expecting to be run down by a wheelchair, but it was a passenger from a National Express coach which had limped into the service area with mechanical problems. With over 40 people milling around I knew those few minutes would have to do for that night. I drank some more hot chocolate and headed south.

However all was not bad, the headwind which had been an irritation since the start had vanished and the forecasted northerly wind assisted me on the southward leg on the A74. This road from Carlisle to Glasgow is now ideal for the most part, since the increasing number of M74 stretches leave most of the old road now downgraded to B road status in places. Back on the A74 I climbed the Beattock summit along with the night truckers and as the engines of their 38 tonners grunted the lower gear was selected, and as I grunted my rear mech clicked into a lower gear. Checking my computer recordings later I noticed the maximum speed had increased to 53 M.P.H. which would have been on that descent.

It became quite cold on this stretch (the fast descent?) and at Allandale I dived into the Service station situated at the start of another M74 stretch. As I snapped my fingers the automatic doors opened for the tired Randonneur who was soon working his way through a pot of tea. With hindsight this establishment would have provided the ideal place for a couple of hours sleep but, although I was a little sleepy, I wanted to push on down the old A74 via Lockerbie and Gretna Green. I had planned to have breakfast at the 24 Hour truckstop at Carlisle which I reached at 7.30 a.m. This was an important stage in the ride as just over 600K had been covered and I had been on the road for 37 1/2 hours. Well, I thought, only like a WCW to do now but of course no delicious food from Daphne at Marlow or more food/sleep facilities that Dave Pountney always provided at Kidderminster. The sheer size of my breakfast took my mind off the distance still to be covered as I worked my way through this mountain of grub; there was on offer the standard, large or extra large breakfast and no prizes for guessing which I had selected. All 11 items on the plate including toast were 'seen off', washed down with two large mugs of coffee and it was time to get the pedals turning once more.

South on the A.6 towards Penrith I overtook a young lady accompanied by a van advertising that 'Helen' was walking from John O' Groats to Land's End!! My ride didn't seem that epic at all! A few miles further on, having only slept for 1/2 an hour since I left John O' Groats it was time to correct that balance slightly. A grassy field adjoining the road was selected and I was soon well away. Unfortunately the transit van, and noisy loudspeaker, telling everyone of Helen's long walk decided to spin into action just as it passed my field. No matter I was soon asleep again and had an hour and a half.

Feeling much better I sped south pausing only at a garage for supplies from their cold cabinet. The long haul over Shap was covered with ease and then the long run down to Kendal. Preston, by now late afternoon, and a stiff climb lay ahead via Belmont, which was about 1000 ft but oh, what a lovely run down into Bolton and all the way on into Manchester. The main road all along this stretch could not have been more traffic free and with the tail wind all was well. From Southport I turned south to Adlington (now 8.45 p.m.) where I knew a Little Chef existed along with a comfortable Welcome Lodge. This was an important stage as, at around 800K, 2/3rds of the way had been covered. I had decided that if a room had been available I would have had it, blow the cost. However there was 'no room at the Inn' they were full. It was not really possible to have booked the room beforehand and I didn't want to know in advance that they didn't have room. Oh well into the Little Chef for a 3 course meal and out onto the road again at 10.p.m. Had I have seen another place in the area I would have tried, but of course nothing.

On via Macclesfield to Leek. I soon found a take-away here for pizza and whilst my order was prepared I sipped a coffee (which came in a china cup). Careful planning here I thought - when my large 6 slice order came I ordered another coffee, which thus ensured I was O.K. for sitting in one of the 3 seats intended for those awaiting their takeaways for another 1/4 hour. I ate 4 of the large slices and packed the other two in the saddle bag for later in the night. My intended plan was the A523 to Ashbourne but I remembered a long climb from



Waterhouses from years back, so decided to go via Wetley Rocks to Meir which I am sure was harder. The A50 to Uttoxeter was much easier but now, at 3.a.m., also a little misty and I was in need of warmth. A petrol station was spotted on the opposite carriageway, with some of my remaining energy mustered I lifted the bike over the barrier and was soon

inside their small store. The microwave was soon heating my burger and with a large hot chocolate I was feeling better. I wondered, could I grab some sleep here? No disabled loos, but where I had slumped down onto the floor by the microwave wave to eat my goodies hadn't seemed to cause any concerns from the chap at the cash till. So I switched off for 1/2 an hour and was not disturbed. On waking more hot chocolate before I slipped away into the imminent dawn at 4.a.m.

Marchington, Drayton in the Clay, Kings Bromley were familiar places encountered on the Jim Hopper/Ian Hill events, but no sign of them out training! On via Lichfield and the A446 towards Coleshill. Another call for sleep came along this stretch and a full two hours went too quickly in a field. Much revived and onto Coleshill and a cafe on an industrial estate provided another large breakfast. I felt I was nearly home being on more local ground, but I still had a long way to go. Kenilworth, Royal Leamington Spa and onto Banbury. It was early afternoon and the temperatures were way in the 80's again. I lost count of the litres of cold drink consumed on this ride, but another one was downed here. Just north of Oxford another hours kip would get me home. More liquid, along with choc bars and a bag of Brazil nuts which I had carried from John O' Groats were all seen off here. I cleared Oxford by 7.30 p.m. with a determination not to be out on the road for a fourth full night.

I developed a good turn of speed and was hoping that had an evening 10 been taking place from Crowmarsh Gifford I would have made the riders sweat trying to pass me, however no events were on but I kept the pedals turning well right on to Henley-on-Thames. At Wargrave I phoned Mum to report on my days progress and said I would sneak in quietly during the night. I also gave Andy Seviour a quick progress report, as I was about to pedal away the phone rang! Yes - Andy had dialled 1471, he wanted to know more about the ride, he told me of John Major's intention to stand down and I suggested Phil Benstead for the job, who better than to cause controversy!!!

I rode into Twyford and was the last customer in the town's fish and chip shop, named "The Big Fry". I felt as important as Robert doing such a long ride, dining at an establishment which may have been named after him? Scampi along with onion rings and what I am sure were the entire contents of the chip cabinet (and tea of course Neville!). I felt I could ride all the way back to John O Groats - well maybe not.

Had I have stayed at the Welcome Lodge on Wednesday night I would have re-charged my cateye front lamp battery. I had carried the small recharger for that purpose. As I rode the dark lanes to Bracknell I worried that the lamp, still shining brightly, could not last a third night? I calculated that it could not have had less than 8 hours use during Tuesday and Wednesday nights, how long before it faded? If used on the lower 2.4 watt broad beam 10 hours on continuous is the maximum, but I had also used the 10 watt "burn everyone else of the road" spot beam on occasions. A minor worry ... just ride on David.

From Bagshot to Guildford my vialight sufficed with the lit roads, but as I once more rode into the darkness shortly after midnight, I hoped neither I nor the light would die before reaching Shoreham. From time to time there was a noticeable dimming of power, but as I rode past Wiston Pond near Steyning the 1200K had been covered in 80 hours. Now only 7 miles and I would be home. The light continued to dim slightly but lasted right to my shed door at 2.55.a.m. Friday morning. I am sure like me it hadn't much life left in it. A quick drink and a bath before slipping between the sheets.

My Royal Mail parcel from Wick arrived on Saturday!!! I had beaten it home.

The recovery was about a day longer than for a 600K event and I didn't resist any demands from my body to sleep. On the Sunday I went for a 40 mile morning ride with the

hurtling down the steep hill from the hostel into Wantage to survey the town associated with King Alfred. There was a funfair set up in the market square which prevented us from fully appreciating the town, but some of us were able to return later in the weekend, once the fair had departed, to see the attractive buildings surrounding Alfred's statue.

We followed part of the Oxfordshire Cycle Way out of Wantage on the B road to Ashbury, past the White Horse at Uffington (not as easily viewed as our own 'Long Man') where the group split. Judy and I found a pub in nearby Woolstone for an early 11's whilst the rest of the group (Sally & David, Marian, Barry & Maggie) continued, climbing steeply over the scarp slope before free-wheeling through Kingston Down to Lambourn for their lunch. Judy and I visited Woolstone church (a busman's holiday for us) and were able to supply slight mechanical assistance (OK, we lent him our pump) to a man and his daughter taking part that day in Oxfordshire's sponsored Historic Churches Cycle Ride.

We too climbed the scarp slope before revelling in the long descent into Lambourn, arriving just as the others were leaving. They continued on to Boxford, near Newbury, before turning north for home. We re-victualled in Lambourn and started over the Downs, seeking a suitable spot for a picnic lunch. We ate amongst the ancient Seven Barrows, just south of the Ridgeway Long Distance Path. After lunch and an hours snooze in the sun, it was time to head for home and, like the others, we used the Ridgeway Path to get us back to the hostel. The dry summer meant this off-road section was in good condition, but meeting many walkers, several riders and horses and two or three 4-wheel drive vehicles made us realise what pressure the path is under, and what an awful state it must get into after the winter rains.

Sunday's weather was in complete contrast, and although we left in the dry, it was only going to be a matter of time before we got a soaking. Again our route followed the Oxfordshire Cycle Way, this time east across the flatter areas of the Vale of the White Horse. Our destination was Didcot Railway Centre, which offered a little shelter from the inevitable rain as we looked around the engine sheds and rode the few hundred yards of track. For those of us who are fans of God's Wonderful Railway, the sight of several restored and operational steam locomotives, together with appropriate coach and wagon stock, made for an enjoyable hour or two, despite the rain. Most of the group then took to their cars and returned home, ready for work the next day. Marian and I had no such constraints and intended to spend the next few days cycling home. We continued on through the rain to Streatley hostel, on the banks of the Thames.

Peering out of the window Monday morning we were greeted by sunshine once more and, as there were only 40 miles to cover to our next hostel at Windsor, the day began with us leaning over the bridge connecting Streatley with Goring, and watching the boats passing through the lock. The lock-keeper's job looked idyllic; tending his immaculate gardens, assisting holiday makers as they locked up and down, and winding the weir paddles to regulate the river's flow. What a wonderful life.

Off again, until we paused at the Maharajah's Well at Stoke Row near Henley. We investigated the elaborate decoration covering a much needed fresh water facility, provided for the old village, as you might surmise, by a Maharajah. I am in possession of all the relevant facts and figures as I was

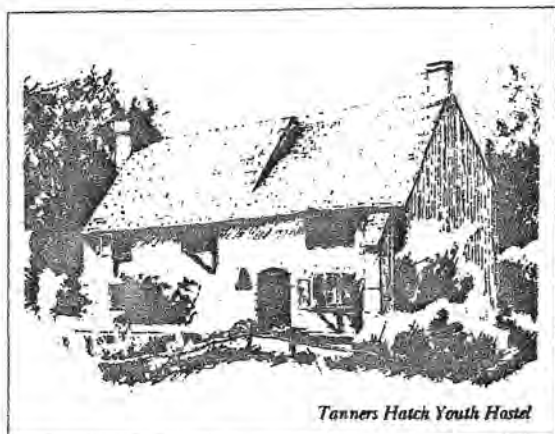


The Thames, from Goring Bridge, W. Streatley

waylaid by a little old lady selling a guide book to the well. She would not be refused! Lunch was taken at The Angel, Henley, sitting on their pontoon, watching the boats line themselves up carefully to pass through the elegant town bridge.

A few miles further on, and after another stop at a pub in Waltham St. Lawrence for 3's, we tackled the busier roads into Windsor. Making for the Castle, we were disappointed to find the gates being guarded by security men in raincoats rather than soldiers in uniform. The Castle wasn't illuminated at night either, as we later found out. That said, the Queen's Berkshire residence is a magnificent and impressive landmark and, from the road, there is no sign of either the destructive fire or the remedial work that is still being carried out. Windsor hostel, as might be expected, was much busier and, coupled with the indifferent food served there, made a very different impression than the previous two nights accomodation.

Tuesday's plan to cycle to Holmbury was thwarted when we learned that the hostel was fully booked. Instead we phoned ahead and arranged to stay at Tanner's Hatch. The weather wasn't so kind to us that day and, as we left Windsor, we knew that it would soon be time to get wet again. We managed to avoid as many busy roads as possible and got as far as by-passing Guildford before the heavens opened. A nearby tree gave a little shelter and after half an hour, as the rain eased, we were off again. The Surrey Hills beckoned and we warmed up and dried off a bit, climbing to the road running along the ridge. A stop for a late lunch at a farmhouse restaurant and then on to Ranmore Common to search out the entrance to the hostel.



Tanners Hatch is tucked away in the woods and is approached by a half-mile bridleway. Coming upon the building was like stepping back in time. It is one of the few remaining simple hostels. No meals provided, no showers and only an Ascot to provide hot water (unless you boil a kettle). Electricity was installed in February this year; gas lights are still used downstairs in the "common room", which is the size of a small front parlour. Heating is by way of a log fire and the conflagration we encouraged later that evening converted the common room into a

very effective drying area. As the hostel was self-catering, a situation for which we were not really prepared, we had to rely on the warden's "shop". This offered a choice of tins of baked beans or fruit cocktail. Dinner that evening was baked beans on toast followed by fruit cocktail. Breakfast the following morning was baked beans on toast! Upstairs is given over to dormitories, each containing several three tier bunks. When full, the hostel can accommodate over 30 people and must be wonderfully crowded at such times. The warden is quite an individual who has looked after Tanners Hatch for 27 years. He has no plans to move on. As there were only three of us sleeping in the hostel that night, with two others camping in the grounds, we had the place to ourselves more or less. When we left next morning, the warden saw us off, encouraging us to visit again, this time with the whole section.

We had many miles to go on Wednesday as we needed to reach Hastings (and Rye), but the weather looked good and we had all day to get back home. We stopped off first in Dorking to buy victuals for 11's and 3's and then headed south to Hurstpierpoint. We knew

we were on the homeward leg when we saw the South Downs in the distance. Ditchling provided a lunch stop and then it was through increasingly familiar territory to Lewes. After a stop for 4's, at the Old Loom Mill, we pressed on to avoid lighting up time overtaking us. We arrived at the parting of the ways, on the outskirts of Hastings, just after 6.00 p.m. We'd cycled 85 miles, with full panniers, and still felt good for a few more miles yet. Over the five days we had covered about 250 miles. A very enjoyable time for us and a great introduction to hostelling for the section. Our thanks go to Sally Fuller for arranging the weekend.



THE FIRST AMERICAN CHRISTMAS?

Christopher Columbus entered the port of Bohio, on Haiti, on St. Nicholas Day, December 6th, 1492, and named the port St. Nicholas. When the *Santa Maria* was wrecked on a sandbank, the chief of the island sent canoes to assist the strangers, and also provided a feast for the several hundred men in addition to several hundred natives who were present.

After these simple festivities, the work of building a fortress began at once. It was needed both as a home for those who could not find room in the *Nina* for the return trip and as a protection against the natives and wild animals. Providing a year's supply of biccuits, wine and other provisions, Columbus bade farewell to the forty men he had to leave behind and sailed for Europe on January 4th, 1493. According to his records, Columbus was the first European who received gifts during the Christmas season in America.

C.T.C. TOUR TO FINLAND & ST. PETERSBURG

A report by Brian Curtis

My first tour to Finland turned out to be one of surprises. Pleasant surprises... First there was the weather - the tourist books say the average July temperature is 17°C which is much the same as Scotland, so to experience temperatures up to 35°C was quite a shock! The freshwater lakes were very welcome for a quick dip in the middle of the day and there is so much water that it is easy to find a secluded spot for a relaxed swim in beautiful wooded areas. Another surprise was the degree of cycle path provision, with underpasses at the major roads. This was evident even in fairly small towns.

Finland is next door to Russia and has only been an independant state since 1917 when they seized the opportunity to declare independance from Russia at the time of the Russian revolution. Since that time, the Finns have developed a very strong economy by trading with Europe and have very close links with the other Nordic countries of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland.

I was glad that I didn't have narrow 1" tyres on my bike as some of the roads were not tarred. They did however take you through lovely countryside. I used Continental Top Touring tyres and covered 700 miles puncture free. There were some roads that had been superseded by new roads, thus leaving a well surfaced road that was virtually traffic free. The way the tour was planned gave up to three days at each stop, so we had a chance to cycle around an area without carrying luggage, before we moved on to the next stop. Our first stop was at Lahti, where the Youth Hostel was part of a hotel with really spacious rooms for either two or three. Each room had a kitchen and ensuite facilities. The chef prepared a meal for those who wanted one for about £6.00. Breakfast (they were superb) was always included in the price.

Our next stop was at Joutsa and this was completely different. The hostel was based on farm buildings and the farm was still operational. The accommodation was in chalets that were completely self-contained or in purpose built bedrooms in converted barns. Now, Finland is the home of the sauna, and this hostel excelled in this department with three different saunas for our use. The largest could easily seat thirty and was the traditional "smoke" sauna with a wood burning stove. A run along the wooden jetty was not obligatory but, with the lake being so clean and warm, it was a marvellous experience. Just great if you had any stiffness in your legs.

The three day trip to St. Petersburg was the jewel in the crown of a wonderful trip. There was so much to see of such quality, be it art or sculpture in the Hermitage museum, music from the Russian greats played in the conservatory where many of them studied, or the folk concert put on for visitors by dance students. The audience cheered and clapped with great enthusiasm and went back to The Ship (our hotel in St. Petersburg) overawed with the evening's entertainment. The contrast between the level of culture and the infrastructure of St. Petersburg has to be seen to be believed. You would not be over sentimental to have tears in your eyes seeing the ordinary folk of the city struggling to make ends meet in a place that seems to be crumbling away in many areas.

In the last couple of days back in Finland some people visited Helsinki, others cycled ot the interesting medieval town of Porvoo, while some enterprising tour members took a day trip to Tallin, the capital of Estonia.

All in all, a very interesting tour with the bonus of the weather.

Finland is not usually thought of as being on the cycle tourist map, but anyone interested can contact Brian at 23 Milton Crescent, Edinburgh EH15 1PF. Tel. 0131 669

5918

IT'S TRUE - WEDNESDAY DOES HAVE BETTER WEATHER

At last we have scientific proof of what the Midweek Section have always claimed - that they have better weather for cycling on Wednesdays than the rest of us have at the weekend. The following article is by Steve Connor, Science Correspondent of the Independent.

Chilly analysis of weekend weather.

Gardeners and outdoor enthusiasts who complain that the worst weather often occurs at the weekend may find their apocryphal tales have a scientific basis.

A retired meteorologist working on global warming has discovered from an analysis of satellite data going back to 1979 that weekends really are colder than weekdays.

He attributes the significant difference between weekday temperatures, which peak on Wednesdays, and those at the weekend to increased industrial activity which produces a short-lived worsening of global warming.

Adrian Gordon, a former Meteorological Office scientist who is now a researcher with the Flinders Institute for Atmospheric and Marine Sciences in Adelaide, Australia, discovered the weekly cycles in global temperatures after analysing satellite records over the past 14 years.

In a letter to *Nature*, Dr. Gordon says Wednesdays tend to be warmer than Thursdays or Fridays, which would expect to suffer a greater build-up of direct heating from industrial sources, because the research was based on Greenwich Mean Time and Friday is a holiday in the Muslim world.

"Thus at midday on Thursday, Friday is already starting to move over the eastern half of the world. This argument favours a possible Wednesday maximum in the northern hemisphere, where the Muslim faith is more predominant east of the Greenwich Meridian," he says.

"A further argument to explain the Wednesday peak could be that various holidays in the Western world tend to congregate between Wednesday and Tuesday. For example at least 2 per cent of Thursdays are Thanksgiving holidays in the United States, while the effect of Fridays is even more pronounced."

Dr. Gordon said yesterday that although the average temperature of a typical Wednesday is only a fraction of a degree above that of a typical Sunday, the rate of change he discovered over 7 days is 70 times greater than the temperature change expected as the result of man-made global warming over the coming decades.

However, whether the differences in weekday and weekend temperatures are enough to cause significant perturbations in the weather is still a matter of conjecture.



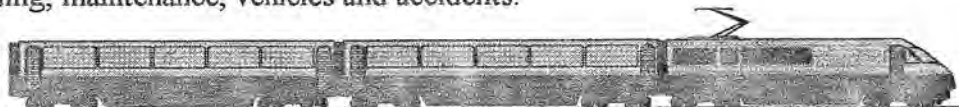
TRANSPORT IN RURAL AREAS

by Jonathan Dalton

Although public transport in rural areas has declined in the last 40 years or so, especially with the closure of most local railways and their replacement by considerably less satisfactory 'bus services, a car is not always essential although more likely to be useful and less of a hindrance than in towns. When railways were replaced by 'buses some 90% of former passengers were lost to public transport, many 'bus services following the railways into oblivion leading to the present scenario of apparent car dependence. Partly as a result of motor usage villages are not as self sufficient in employment and services as hitherto but, although distances in the country are generally further than those in urban areas, most journeys are still short enough to be more appropriate to cycling than motoring, and motorists can tread more lightly on the planet by using a car as a last alternative rather than a first, say when it has real advantages. This would also diminish the incidence of multiple ownership saving families money as well as helping the environment. Rural 'bus and train services, which are still good in many areas, would have a more assured future under such a regime, and would be able to expand and develop. It is important for the "powers that be" to ensure comprehensive facilities to avoid car dependency, including provision for travelling to work, which is often not catered for by rural 'bus services causing many to acquire and use cars they might otherwise prefer to do without. Motor bikes or mopeds might provide an additional alternative where only one or two people are travelling.

The demise of the motor car will not have a detrimental effect on rural life - country districts functioned well before its development and can continue to do so in the future. The end of car culture will lead to a revival of village shops and other services and therefore a more wholesome and inhabitable countryside, with facilities within easy walking and cycling distance of all people, and a comprehensive network of re-opened railways and revived 'bus services providing access to and from the outside world. Farm produce and other goods can be carried on environmentally friendly horse-drawn and battery operated vehicles with revived local rail and water freight facilities to take care of longer distance transport, whilst the quieter roads would benefit the use of horse drawn traps in addition to cycling and walking. Battery powered/horse drawn vehicles could also be of use to elderly and disabled people who cannot move under their own steam easily.

A good co-ordinated public transport system would relink small towns to the rail network, with connecting local 'buses linking the stations and towns with their hinterland. With a railway station within about 3-4 miles of all points most people could cycle or walk to the train, and adequate facilities for cycle carriage would expedite many journeys, together with secure storage facilities at stations while road and rail services should have adequate provision for luggage and other bulky loads, including sundries, parcels and post office mail. Post 'buses could complement stage services, and with the use of trains and 'buses to carry mail and parcels to and from post offices, with local delivery by bicycle or on foot, the Royal Mail would have little need for motor transport. Other light goods such as groceries to shops could be moved in the same way, lessening the need for delivery vans and improving the economics of rural transport. With greater use of public transport, any grants necessary for maintenance and investment would achieve a better return - the enhanced demand would justify more comprehensive and frequent services with lower fares (unit costs would be less) and considerably more money (and certainly resources) would be saved on road building, maintenance, vehicles and accidents.



THE CYCLIST'S STRUGGLE

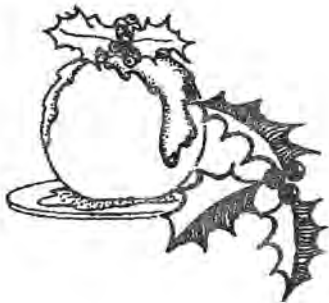
or "Anyone for seconds"

by David Rix

Christmas is coming,
And the Cyclist's getting fat,
He finds that it's a struggle,
In his red jacket and hat.
He looks like a jolly santa,
Going out upon his bike,
And all his friends can say is
'You know who you look like?'

As the festive time approaches
He's piling on the pounds,
As with his fellow cyclists
He does the usual rounds.
Of all the social functions
That are adding to his fears,
That he won't get up the smallest hills,
Without some lower gears.

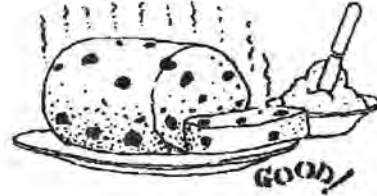
Then Christmas Day's upon him,
And it's worse than you can think,
With tempting sweets and foodstuffs,
And different things to drink.
Seconds of the Turkey,
And the Christmas pudding too,
And that last mince pie with coffee,
He knows he'll start to rue.



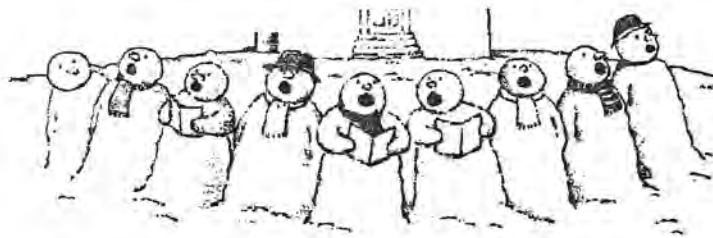
He knows that he'll regret it
When he climbs onto his bike,
But he can't resist an extra bit
Of the things that we all like.
But resolution time is here,
And he makes that pledge once more,
To cut down on the eating
And to ride his bike much more.

He'll soon be out upon his bike,
Climbing all the hills,
To get those extra pounds off,
While he dreams about mixed grills.
He'll be out on every club run,
Enjoying all the miles.
And thought of all those lost pounds,
Will bring on happy smiles.

When the warmer weather comes,
 And the shorts are out again,
 He may even strip down to the waist,
 If he's feeling really vain.
 He'll show off that tanned body,
 That by now is looking thin,
 As he wheels along the byways,
 With his club mates for a spin.



But he knows that its a struggle,
 To keep that healthy look.
 He must keep up all the exercise
 and read his diet book.
 For he always knows inside himself,
 When Christmas comes, the same
 Will happen just like last year,
 As the whole round starts again.



THE NEWEST WOMAN

Topic of the week from The Graphic, An Illustrated Weekly Newspaper, of July 13, 1895

"Forward, but not fast," is, if we are not mistaken, the device of a contemporary of ours specially intended to promote the interests of modern womanhood. Being quite content to say ditto to all that admirable sentiment we are all for moderate indulgence by the sex in the pleasures of the cycle, and the adoption by such ladies as like it, of the so-called rational dress. It is, therefore, with regret that we read of the ungentle behaviour of a certain lady cyclist in the suburb of Finchley.

She was going along the Great North Road, "looking behind her and riding on the wrong side of the road," thereby - if we may be allowed to say so - proclaiming her sex in the most unmistakable fashion. Not unnaturally she ran into somebody, that somebody being another lady. Thereupon she alighted from her bicycle, used what the sovereign people calls "language" and went for the other lady. She pulled her hat off, broke the pins in it, pulled her hair, knocked her down, and dragged her across the road.

We should be sorry to describe such behaviour as manly, but it is certainly not feminine, or, at all events, not the sort of thing one expects from a lady who has attained the eminence of intellectual emancipation which impels the emancipated to don the rational dress. The fact, however, is that the wearing of rational dress does not, apparently, suffice of itself to make or keep the wearer rational, as the case of this velocipedestrian virago sufficiently demonstrates.

(It seems that "road rage" is nothing new! Ed.)



THE ROAD TO BREAKY BOTTOM

Anonymous



Now I am in no way a connoisseur of fine wine. After all, anyone can make a trip to the nearest supermarket, take a bottle of wine from the shelf, pay at the checkout and be on the way home, all in the space of about five minutes. But I had promised my son-in-law a bottle of 'Breaky Bottom' for his birthday and now in early spring it was time for me to find that elusive vineyard. I had no idea of the exact location (You will find it at Grid Ref. TQ 404 503), all I knew was that it was near Rodmell on the Newhaven - Lewes road, so that would be easy enough to find wouldn't it?

All went well on the ride from Eastbourne to Seaford. Friston Bottom, recently cleared of many of its conifers and sparkling fresh in the young sunshine, was joyous. I even caught a glimpse of a fox, sunning itself at the edge of the clearing at new barn, enjoying the pleasures of this new found warmth. At Seaford however, the weather slowly took a turn for the worse. Following the track across the beach and past the old tide mills, I noticed low clouds beginning to scud in from the west and soon felt the first few spots of light rain.

I usually make stops along the Lewes road, to wander around the churches of Piddinghoe and Southease (both unfortunately locked these days) but rain was falling steadily now and determined to reach Breaky Bottom I swept past them with hardly a glance. Surely there must be a sign, I thought, as I approached Rodmell. Then, at Northease Farm, I saw the notice 'Breaky Bottom Vineyard 1 1/4 miles' pointing to the narrow track passing through the farmyard and winding over the distant downs. Just for a moment I wavered. Was any wine worth this journey? But I had come thus far and a streak of obstinacy would not allow me to turn back. Dropping into low gear, I slowly pushed through the muddy yard and on to the track beyond.

It was twenty years ago that Peter Hall first rented this little patch of farmland from his father-in-law. At that time the land was given over to arable crops, but Peter wanted to try and fulfill a long held ambition to own a vineyard. Certainly, at that time commercial English wine growing was a rare venture, with perhaps twelve vineyards in the whole U.K. Even in Roman Britain, when the climate of southern England was warmer than it is today, there was in fact very little viticulture. After all, what need did those Latins have of northern wine when they controlled all the land between Britain and Rome. One suspects that they were indulging in the spirit of nostalgia more than for any good practical reason. Centuries later the cultivation of the vine was still largely confined to the monasteries. So things remained until the present day, when a few pioneers decided to revitalize the craft. Peter Hall was among them.

The going had not been easy. Heavy winter rain had made part of the track very wet, but I knew the journey was going to be worthwhile for looking back over my shoulder the whole panorama of the Ouse Valley lay stretched out beneath my gaze. The drizzle of rain had almost ceased. The four lovely churches of the valley were clearly in my sight. Beyond, the River Ouse with Mount Caburn for a backdrop. Away to the south-east, sunlight glinted on a patch of sea far out from Newhaven. Now I was on the crest of the Downs and making a long, steady descent. Still no sign of the hidden vineyard until the track made a sharp turn and steep decline into a secluded hollow of downland. Two neat vineyards showed themselves together with a lonely cottage and yard. In the distance I could see a figure working at the vines. I leaned my bike against the gate and walked towards him.

In the way of the solitary worker Peter greeted me in a friendly fashion. "I'm busy with the pruning," he told me, "Should have finished it a month ago, but the days

never seem long enough?"

I explained my need for a single bottle.

"That's no problem," he assured me, "You had better have the 1990 Seyval Blanc. It was voted South East Wine of the Year. I grow five acres of the Seyval and just one acre of Muller Thurgau. Believe me, that keeps me busy all year round." He continued to chat in a slow, deliberate way as we walked toward the yard.

"Early in the year I have to filter and rack the wine from the previous years crop. Then there is the testing and bottling as well as pruning and tending the vines through the summer until harvesting. Mind you, the bombs don't make the work any easier."

Startled at this, I remembered rumours about Breaky Bottom being scheduled as a Home Guard 'last ditch' outpost in 1941, but Peter had heard nothing of it.

"The place was used as a mortar range by the military and I frequently have to call them in to dispose of a stray."

This seemed to me to be a good reason for abandoning the idea of viticulture on the South Downs but Peter was quite philosophic and quickly turned to another subject.

"By the way, do you know how Breaky Bottom got its name?"

I knew of course that "bottom" meant a cutting or hollow in the downland, but had to confess my ignorance of "breaky".

"Comes from the Old English 'Broec', means land broken up for cultivation. An interesting point don't you agree?"

The transaction of one bottle of wine completed in the dark, cool building that probably answers to the name of cellar, I had to ask just one more question. I had heard tales of jazz concerts at Breaky Bottom on summer evenings. Was there any truth in them?

"Not strictly," he replied, "In the past we did have three seasons of classical music and opera. Used to borrow the equipment from Glyndbourne. We've even had Nigel Kennedy here. Brilliant artist."

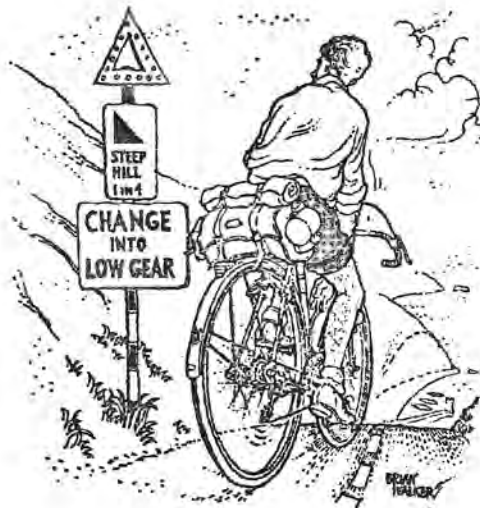
Off at a tangent again. "Come and see my sheep," he said.

Amazed that with all the work of the vineyard he could find time for anything else I followed him up the row of bare vines to the pasture beyond.

"I keep about forty breeding ewes that give me as many as fifty to sixty lambs in February or March. They keep me out of mischief," he grinned.

Looking around at the sheep I agreed they must certainly do that.

I left him then. When I reached the top of the ridge that gives the final view of Breaky Bottom I could just see Peter Hall working his way steadily down his row of vines. He didn't look up once.





LYCH-GATE
FRAMFIELD CHURCH

Everyday Sussex by Roy James



D.A. BADGES & JERSEYS

Why not show off your allegiance by wearing one of our D.A. cloth badges, sporting the East Sussex County Crest, as shown right. The badges are red with black lettering and the crest in yellow/gold. They are available for £1.50 each from Ann Rix, our D.A. treasurer, 3 Sutton Drove, Seaford. BN25 3EU



Also available are the new D.A. jerseys, now in the official D.A. colours of red and black, but offset with a smart yellow/gold stripe. The jerseys are made to order by Margaret Hopper (who makes the Audax jerseys) and are very distinctive, they are available with long or short sleeves, full or partial zip, and start at £16 - special orders (e.g. extra pockets) quoted for. Full details and order forms can be obtained from Ann Rix.

DEADLINE FOR SUMMER 1996 COASTER - MID-JUNE