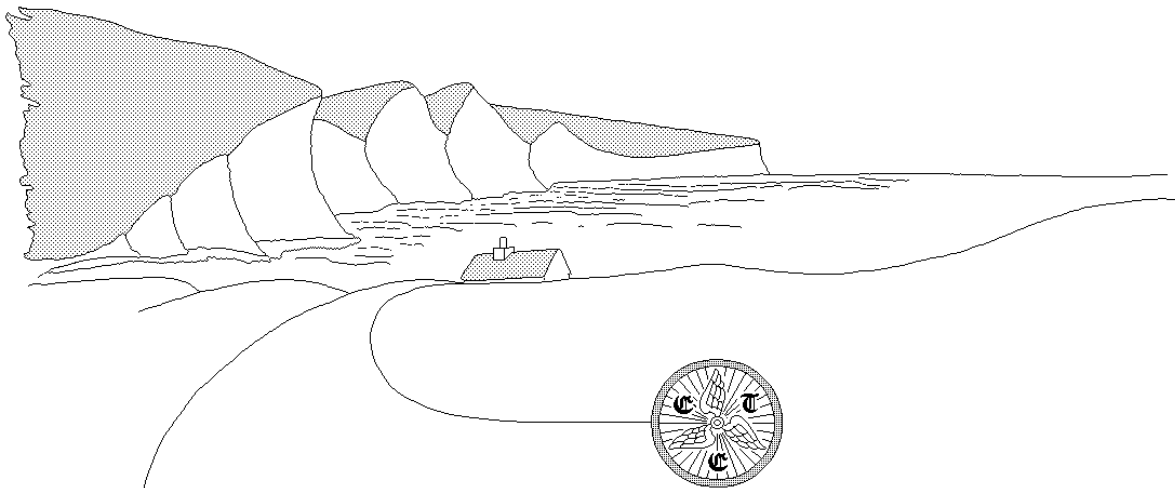


The



Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 30 - Summer 1996

50p



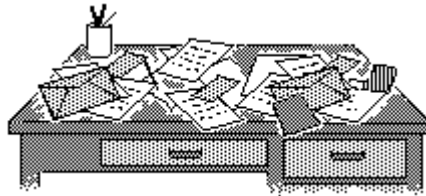
East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club

President - Geoff Boxall

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

" THE COASTER "

Issue No. 30, Summer 1996



From the Editor's Desk.

1996 looks like being a good year for cycling, with the National Cycle Network now well and truly on the agenda, and East Sussex have now committed themselves to a policy of including cycle facilities in all new road schemes - though we're still waiting for many of the proposals made in their much vaunted Cycle Strategy to be put into effect, e.g. the working party of local cycling groups. We can't really complain though, since after years of ignoring pleas for better facilities public opinion is starting to turn in favour of cycling and local authorities are beginning to sit up and take notice - let's just hope they listen and get it right.

We've got some good, quality articles for you this time, ranging from the Suez Canal to Red Indians and including a report on the last ever "Home Counties" Rally - don't worry the Rally does live on but has been renamed the "South of England" Rally.

Roy James continues to supply his excellent line drawings of everyday Sussex places and also a continuing series "Joy of the Open Road", usually featuring well known East Sussex D.A. cyclists - your editor was caught in the snow mending a puncture a year or so back!

Articles, or even interesting snippets and cuttings, are always welcome. So if you feel up to putting pen to paper to tell us about your holiday, or an interesting ride you've done, or if, like Roy, you feel like drawing something, then let's have it! Almost anything is acceptable if of general interest to our readers.

As I type this I have just heard the news that our climate is going to change over the next thirty years and the South of England will become more like the Loire Valley. I've just looked out the window and it's started raining, so I for one look forward to the future and some long hot summers - providing they can sort out the water shortage!

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

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Eastbourne & Hailsham: Frank Dewberry:

44 Saffrons Park, Eastbourne, BN20 7UX

Hastings & Rother: Peter Jenner:

8 Hazelwood Gardens, St. Leonards on Sea, TN37 7HL

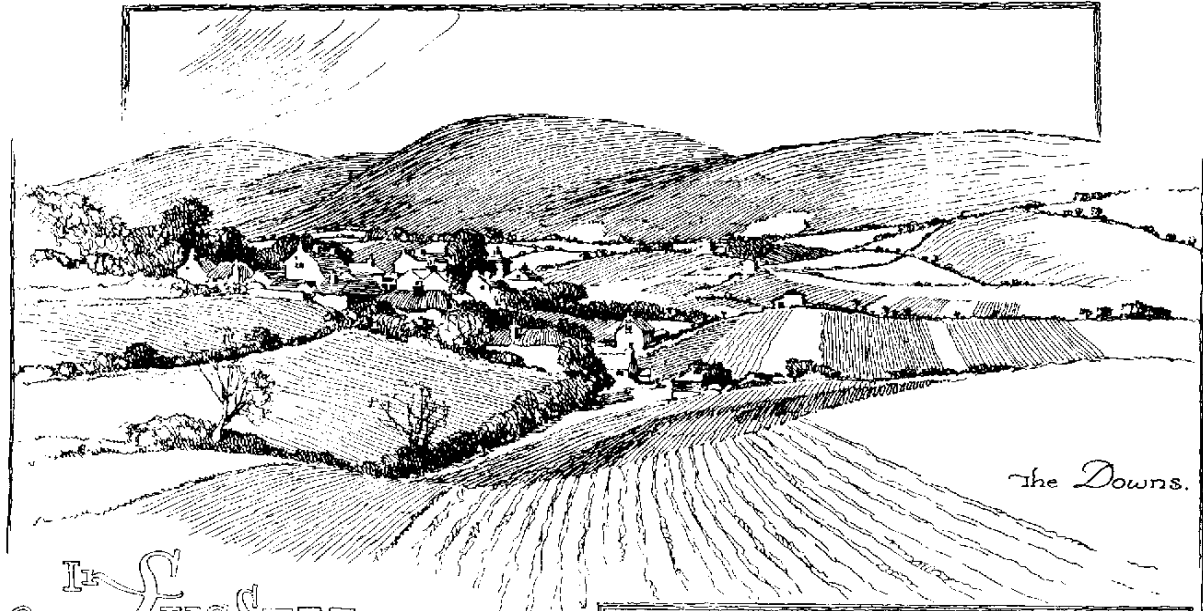
Mid-week Section: Esther Carpenter:

10 Maplehurst Road, Baldslow, St. Leonards on Sea, TN37 7NA

Seaford & Newhaven: Ann Rix:

3 Sutton Drove, Seaford, BN25 3EU

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In SUSSEX
with a
Bicycle



RINGMER 1995
THE LAST 'HOME COUNTIES' RALLY
a report by Ann Rix

After all the months of preparation who would have thought we would have such a wonderful weekend for the Rally. Melting with perspiration on the Friday as we transported what we all thought we would need. Dennis Jakeman kindly took me, the large notices and stakes that had been passed on from Reading Rally the year before, boxes of cakes, paperwork, display boards, plus my camping things, and we managed to do it all in one trip.

Arriving at Ringmer about 3.45 p.m. we were soon either putting up the notices or directing early arrivals to use the side entrance on Harrisons Lane. We had been given permission to mark out the camping pitches then, so John Taylor, with son Andrew, together with Mick Hills and Geoff Boxall got busy doing so, and the early arrivals had to wait till that was done. The school was still busy clearing up but we had hired it from 5 p.m. and so were able then to get in and start putting up notices, the display boards for information and get ready to register arrivals. Jenny Boxall, in charge of catering, headed for the kitchen to get the urn on, as arrivals were all given free drinks which they needed on that hot day.

The majority arrive on Friday evening nowadays, the rest filter in on Saturday morning, so we were very busy that first evening and eventually managed to get our own tents up in relays. It was 10 p.m. 'curfew' that night, which caught some of the campers out, for the caretakers didn't want to be any later after coping with a school week. I had a problem as in the rush I had forgotten my sleeping bag - good job it was a warm night as with odd bits of clothing over me I survived. Another problem was that during the hounds - howling like banshees twice during the night which woke several of us up. The foxhounds

are in kennels at Ringmer!

Up early Saturday morning to head for the dining hall to have our breakfast, then either help Jenny with serving drinks and handing out packed lunches, or on reception, or getting ready to help with the rides. Geoff Boxall, in charge of rides, had his leaders and helpers all planned for the three days, with A, B, C plus off-road if needed each day. The C rides were the most popular having 60-70 each day and so were the most difficult to control, but we got there in the end.

Those of the D.A. who came and helped did a grand job, some were camping whilst others came either for one or two days or all three to do what was needed and spread the load of looking after our visitors.

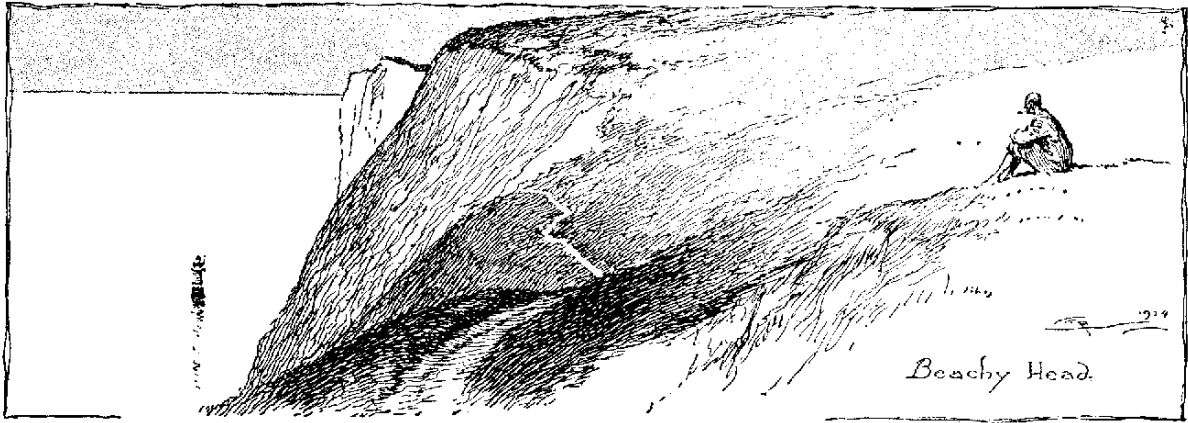
Evening meals were great, catered by East Sussex County Catering who do the school meals - Geoff said they were not like the school meals he remembered. After Saturday's no-one felt like moving by 7.30 p.m. when the Barn Dance was due to start! We finally struggled in from 8 to 8.30 p.m. We must remember another time to start it at 8.00 p.m. There was no problem Sunday night as it was the slide show and the choice of presenter paid off as Mick Dennett from Plumpton gave us all a superb display set to music of varying views, scenes and times of day around Sussex and the Downs. Swans on the Cuckmere by moonlight for one, but the one that really amazed us was the field of gold at dawn, cobwebs completely covering the field and turned to gold by the rising sun. The meals and the slideshow were taken on trust, not having sampled either before, so David and I breathed a great sigh of relief at the result. The night-time toilets too worked o.k., not greatly used, probably owing to the hot weather, but necessary just the same.

The heat affected some riders, which was not surprising, but it kept fairly cool in the school for those who took their turn there. Jenny was there all weekend, supervising her team of helpers, apart from her shopping trips to Tesco's each day for fresh bread and fillings for the packed lunches and the occasional stroll around the campsite. She escorted the local Council Chairman and his wife round it on the Sunday, he was very impressed with the neat layout. The residents afterwards said how quiet we all were, they just saw riders leaving in the morning and returning later in the day but otherwise would not have known we were there.



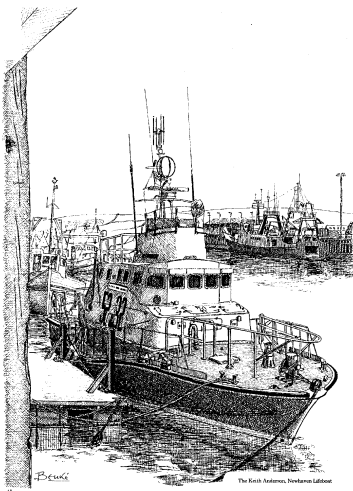
Our new Hastings and Rother Section took care of the A ride on Saturday which went into their own 1066 country, some riders commented that they hadn't realized East Sussex was so hilly. The B ride explored the Cuckoo Trail, Mick Hills took the off-riders over the Downs, David, Susan & co. took the Family Ride to Drusillas while the rest of the C riders went down to Cuckmere Haven.

Sunday and John Gallsworthy led the A ride to Tunbridge Wells, Peter Crowsley the B ride to Pooh Bear Country and Ted Haynes the C ride to the Bluebell Railway and Sheffield Park Gardens. The roughstuff on the latter ride, along from East Chiltington, ended up with a delayed 11's at Ditchling with riders arriving in 3's, 4's and 5's many having walked what we consider



an easily rideable track, but we did get to Sheffield Park on time.

Monday and they were shorter rides as all had to be back at base for the farewell tea at 3.30 p.m., well they were supposed to be anyway! All rides headed for the sea, one to Beachy Head, another Ditchling Beacon and Brighton, and the C ride to the Ouse and Cuckmere Valleys and Newhaven Fort. Well ours, the C ride, did not go quite as intended!

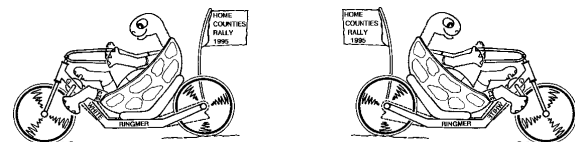


For one thing it was the day of the VE Day celebrations and so many people were queuing to get into Newhaven Fort that none of the riders tried to. (So much for having arranged party rates for the riders!) Our group though had a bonus, as having lunch down by the breakwater we saw the coastguards rushing about - the maroon set off - the lifeboat go out - and! the large helicopter arrive to lift 2 people up from the other side of the breakwater. We never did find out what it was all about. Tony Palmer had already left with part of the group so they missed all the excitement. We headed back, then, just before Chalvington, one chap stopped to pick up a large map on the other side of the road - without telling us! A bit further on someone said that 2 women had turned back - again without telling us! So we waited, and waited! Fortunately John G. and Sally came by and volunteered to go back, so we carried on

and all finally arrived somewhat late for the tea, but still just in time to get some! Which is what David meant in the Newsletter when he said that his mother was run ragged that day.

The campers were good - all packed up and cleared the site as requested - mine was the last tent to come down - how surprising! But we were very busy packing everything up - then Susan had to make 2 trips to carry all the last things back, and it was still fine - how lucky we were! The following days and week turned very cold - back to Winter again.

(As the title states this was the last "Home Counties" Rally - as of January 1996 the name changed to the "South of England" Rally, and a very successful event was run by Wessex D.A. over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend at Wyvern College, near Salisbury. Ed.)



ISLE OF WIGHT TRANSPORT SPECIAL

Earlier this year I received a letter and newspaper cutting from our old friend on the Isle of Wight, Brian Brodhurst. I reprint both here in their entirety.

Dear David,

Some time ago I gave you a little note for your club magazine about the strange language sometimes used on the Isle of Wight. Continuing on from this, I thought the enclosed cutting may be of interest.

A new British Homes Store has just opened here in Newport (nippert) and it has an escalator. It has been said that this is something new to the Island and even that it could be an attraction. I suppose they think that some of us have never seen one. The letter I have put a cross alongside in the enclosed cutting may be difficult to read if you are an 'ovener' and I can't guarantee that everyone speaks like this!

yours in cycling,

Brian.

**New contrapshun
don't ackle proper**

That ther Mr. Lepage as Garges an my vull suport over warnun us volk abowt that ther escelater in nippert.

Wheem came to town to get are pinshuns and saw this yer gert new shop, vull of vancy takle. Garge an me wer laffin fancyin us in yer woll takle wen we seed sum feller cum flotin down from the ceelin and we wer stuk to the flor. Then mor came down includin woll carter urry vrom over godshull.

E seed we could go up doin nuthin an garge an me wer a bit nervus, but urry sed twer eesy. We put a voot on the thing and it cleered off afore we could get tucher on ther.




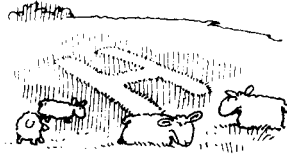
We ended up on flor with a gert crowd laffin at us.

Me dawter is going to get Garges an me pinshun in fewtur. I felt I must rite so that you can warm countrey people like us of this yer new -fangled contrapshun. It don't ackle proper.

We ad wun of them ther new tracshum ingines come up threw the villug tother day, diddunt we run.

Mr. marris es shepherd
(I look adder is sheep)
BILL SHEPARD
Elm Grove, Newport

The following ideas by I.o.W. cartoonist Besley, for other new transport schemes, appeared in the same edition.

			
	<p>FURTHER TRANSPORT SCHEMES TO CONSIDER ALONGSIDE THE PROPOSED VENTNOR RAIL LINK AND EAST COWES MONORAIL...</p>	<p>Porchfield People Mover</p>	<p>Chillerton Mountain Railway</p>



HOMAGE TO GILBERT

by Barry Mockridge



During the first week of January I received a phone call from the "Belle d'Europe" President, Alain Cordier, requesting my presence at a "re-union" of the organization that was to be held in Roubaix the following Saturday. Being sandwiched by a few days between a D.A. and a Section Committee meeting the thought of a 270 mile round car trip to France didn't initially fill me with any enthusiasm. As the "1066 Country" Randonnee was to be included in the series for 1996 and as it was our first meeting of the "Amicale Europeenne de Cyclotourism" (of which the D.A. is now a member) I promised to make the effort to attend.

Just before putting the receiver down and wishing Alain a Happy New Year, I asked if there was anything I needed to bring to the meeting.

"Bring your bike with you", exclaimed Alain, "Afterwards we're riding the last few kilometres of the Paris-Roubaix with Duclos-Lassalle."

"The Professional racing cyclist?" I enquired.

Alain explained that he was retiring and some sort of tribute was going to be arranged by the town of Roubaix in his honour. Doing some quick mental arithmetic it was soon obvious that I would have to leave home around 3.00 a.m. to be at the venue for the start time of 10 o'clock.

January 13th arrived and I duly caught the 4.45 a.m. "red eye" ferry to Calais. The drive to Roubaix is totally "autoroute", but being negotiated in the darkness and cold of a winters morning, on my own, was not the most pleasant of journeys.

Arriving at the velodrome around 8.45 a.m. local time I made the most of my early arrival and reclined the seat of the car to catch a few hours shut-eye before the others turned up. I noticed at an adjacent building a hive of feverous activity going on - banners and bunting being draped everywhere, tradespeople such as electricians and catering staff busily preparing this large hall for the afternoons celebrations.

Our meeting lasted nearly 2.5 hours and being conducted mostly in French, coupled with my lack of sleep, I felt completely brain dead. A quick change into my riding gear in the cold car soon woke me up and along with the other two English cyclists (delegates from E. Kent D.A.) we pushed our bikes over to the start of the short 20 km Randonnee.



Several thousand riders and spectators had gathered, milling around and chatting, reminiscent of the start of the Firemans Ride but on a bigger scale. There were Lycra clad racing types -who wouldn't have looked out of place

on the Tour - Randonneurs, Tourists, Mountain Bikers, Houswives on 'shoppers', kids on BMX's, in fact it seemed as though everybody who owned a bike in Roubaix had turned up. The local paper was being distibuted free of charge with a picture of our hero and his family on the podium of one of his race victories; the headline declared "Duclos Derniere" and went on to invite everyone to ride with him on his special tribute day.

I am sure that many readers will be aware of who Duclos-Lasalle is and will know of his career and achievements., others only interest in racing is watching three weeks of channel 4 coverage of the Tour de France every year. As I fall into the latter category I did a little research into the man and was quite surprised. He was 41 years old and was retiring after 18 years as a professional, all with the same team. Originally Shell-Peugeot then "Z" and finally Gan - different sponsors but under the same organization. Although from the South of France his speciality was the Paris-Roubaix, known by the French as the "Queen of the Classics" or more popularly "Enfer d'Nord" (Hell of the North). Back to back winner of the event in 1992 and 1993, he was second in 1980 and 1983 only missing one Paris-Roubaix in the last 18 years due to a hunting accident. Competed in 9 world championships finishing fourth in 1981. The winner that year was Bernard Hinault who maintains that Duclos should have been champion. "But I wasn't selected for that role", Dulcos modestly responds, "I was there to help France and Hinault." He won many other stages and races over his long career including Paris-Nice, Tour of Sweden and Tour of Corsica, so although "domestique" for the likes of Lemond and Boardman a very good rider in his own right.

His popularity and esteem with the French public was apparent when he turned up for the start of the randonnee; as he was mobbed by the people who just wanted to shake his hand or get an autograph. A chant of "Du-clos, Du-clos" was raised by the crowd as he tried to get his bike to the front of the ride. With the zoom lens on my camera I managed to get a few snaps through a little gap amongst a sea of faces. My intial impression was that he looked younger than his 41 years - a handsome man with a rugged, boyish face and a smile from ear to ear.

A long delay ensued with the inevitable interviews and photocalls with the press and then after a large roar we were off. This was truly a "peoples' champion" as crowds of supporters and well wishers had lined the route. Shopkeepers were standing outside their shops, families had turned out to cheer and the police had stopped all traffic at junctions and roundabouts. Here in France the bicycle is truly king, and where else would a busy commercial city come to a standstill on a Saturday afternoon but Roubaix.

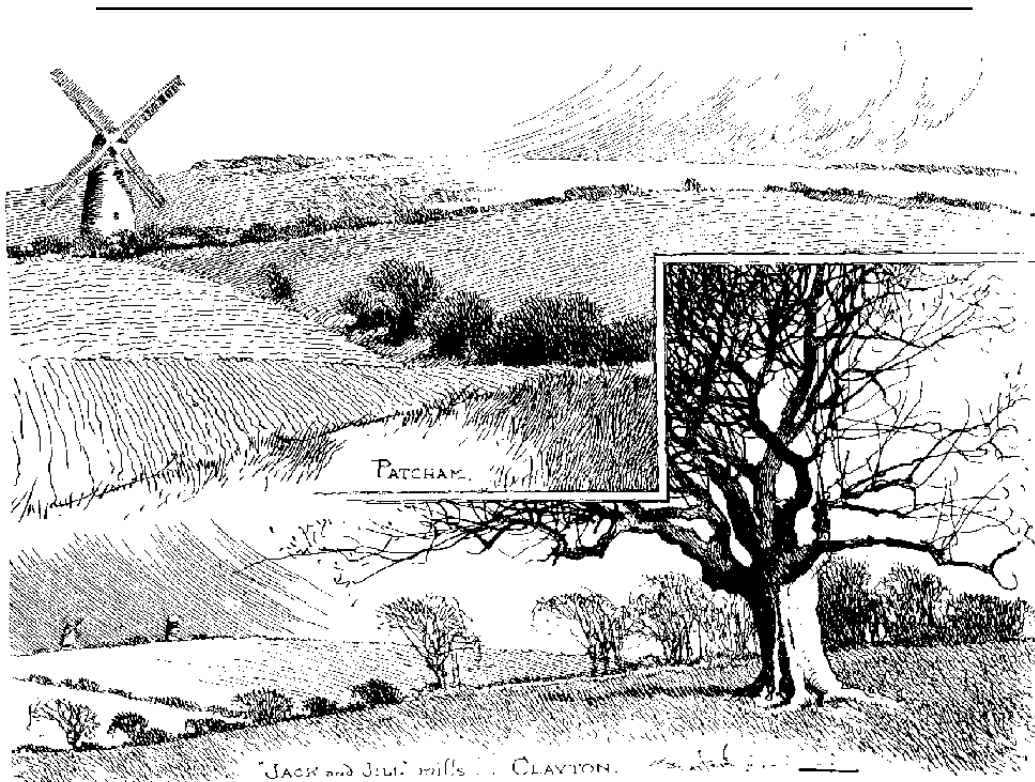
Within a short while we were into the countryside riding along the infamous "pavé" of Flanders at Hem, the last stretch of cobbles on the classic course. Deciding it was better to keep to the thin strip of tarmac at the side to avoid spoke breakages, or worse, I thought the noise of bikes clattering over the stones sounded like a derailed express train.. Then it was into the surburbs of Roubaix again with the pace hotting up, trying to hang onto the back wheel of a young racer (silly old fool), but you couldn't help getting caught up by the atmosphere and emotion of the day.

Sweeping around a corner we were into the velodrome and a glance across to the finishing straight quickly dispelled any illusions of a sprint finish and a posers two arm salute, as already the pilgrims had started to gather in the presence of "Gilbus" (his nickname). Anyway, it felt like running into a cathedral, the history of the place makes you feel a sense of reverence and respect and I wanted to savour every second. I suppose you could compare it to a Sunday league footballer playing at Wembley or a village green cricketer at the crease at Lords. Riding up the steep bank on the corner soon cured the daydreaming as it was quite "hairy" looking down on the majority who preferred the safer

blue line at the bottom.

By this time Duclos was being presented with great bunches of flowers in the company of local dignitaries and politicians on a platform in front of the main grandstand. Still beaming he looked a little shy and overawed by all the fuss. After the speeches everybody sauntered back to the hall for the main tribute from his own people - the cycling world. On the way back Andy Basil (E. Kent D.A. Secretary) turned to me and said "Isn't that Eddy Merckx behind you", and on looking round I saw the great man (even greater these days as he's catching up with me - must be all the dinners/lunches he gets invited to) close enough to smell his powerful aftershave.

Inside the hall the faithful had gathered. Unlimited free beer was on offer, which was a curse as I had a long drive back but managed one or two just to be sociable. The occasion was important enough for the French Post Office to issue a special edition post card which was post marked "homage to Gilbert Duclos-Lasalle". As I bought one for 10 francs into the hall walked Bernard Hinault and amongst the mob managed to get him to sign the back of my newly purchased card (a double souvenir of the day). One by one the announcer introduced the legends of yesterday and a galaxy of today's stars on two wheels. Apart from the previously mentioned there was twice Tour de France winner Bernard Thevenet, Thierry Claveyrollet, Tour de France King of the Mountains in 1990, and current French champion Eddy Seigneur just to name a few. All of them were there to show their admiration and respect to a fine rider and a model professional and for me a day I'll remember for a very long time.



THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE BICYCLE

April 4th

"Ramsay Macdonald, whose father was a ploughman, bought a house in his successful years near the cottage of his youth at Lossiemouth. But, in desperate need of rest, he went off on a cruise and was knocked down by a bicycle and killed at La Rochelle. Only his ashes rested in peace at Lossiemouth."

This short extract from an article in the Daily Telegraph of April 4th about Ramsay Macdonald, Britain's first Labour Prime Minister, prompted the following correspondence to that newspaper.

April 7th

Sir,

I was astonished to read in the Daily Telegraph (April 4th) that Ramsay Macdonald had apparently met his end in a collision with a bicycle in La Rochelle. He certainly went on a health cruise, heading for South America; but he died of a heart attack in mid-ocean,

Frank Loxley
Frampton Catterell
Bristol

April 10th

Sir,

Unlike Frank Loxley (letter April 10th) it did not astonish me at all to read that Ramsay Macdonald was involved in a bicycle collision abroad, albeit not fatally. While driving with his daughter, Ishbel, in Thornley, County Durham, he knocked down my uncle George on his bicycle. Ishbel, I am told, later kindly visited uncle George in hospital.

Janet Taseland
Great Haughton
Northants.

April 12th

Sir,

It is probably not widely known that Ramsay Macdonald's involvement with bicycles, as recounted by your correspondents, went rather beyond that of the occasional road accident. At the turn of the century he was employed as a junior clerk at the London HQ of the Cyclists' Touring Club.

Leslie Warner
Godalming

A DAY TRIP TO THE CANAL

by Jocelyn Earl

But this was no ordinary canal - this was the Suez. We waited nervously in the hotel reception at 8.00 a.m., the time pre-arranged for the taxi recommended by the tour representative to pick us up. Would it be one of the thousands of battered indistinguishable black and white vehicles we had seen weaving and honking their way through the dusty streets of Cairo, overtaking to the left and to the right, whichever appeared to get 50 yards quickest, missing its opponents by inches if not millimetres? The driving in Cairo is terrible - and brilliant.

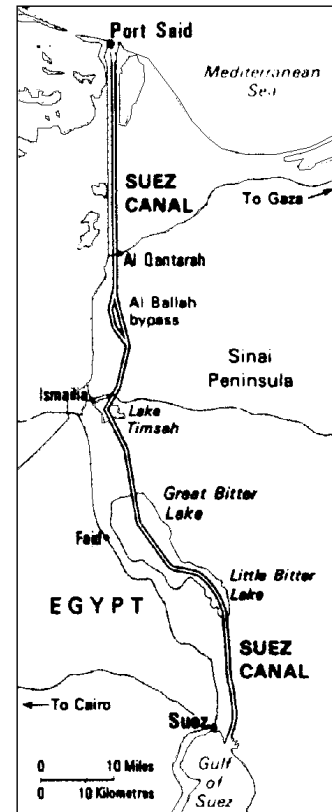
At 8.10 a white Peugeot estate car drew up and I knew instinctively this was he. A smart man with dark crinkly hair and a moustache homed in on my anticipation, shook my hand and introduced himself as Mohammed. I introduced William, who he from then on called Mr. William.

We got into the back of the well-used, rather untidy, but comfortable car. We had to go through the city again. All our trips had been into or through the city - though the manoeuvres of the traffic were entertaining enough, let alone the opportunity to see the life going on, the majority of it not seeming to have caught up with the 20th century, apart from the motor car, with horse and cart or donkey and cart regularly trotting by, seemingly blinkered to the hustle and bustle.

Mohammed was keen to know exactly where we wanted to go. We had booked for Ismailia, halfway down the Suez Canal, but he encouraged us to go to Suez, saying that he knew what visitors wanted to see, that they liked the best view of the canal itself and was insistent that Suez was the place. He needed to know in order to take the right road out of Cairo so we said yes to Suez. If we wanted, he continued, we could have a round trip, going to Ismailia after, though this would, of course, cost extra. We had agreed on 200LE (Egyptian pounds - £40) beforehand, so there was bound to be a catch!

We headed out of town, passing the 'City of the Dead', a tourist attraction of the old cemetery where 1.5 million 'homeless' live amongst the old tombs. We drove out under the shadow of the citadel of the sultan Saladin, built in 1183, commanding a strategic view of the entire capital, and within its walls the magical alabaster mosque of Mohammed Ali, founder of the Muslim faith.

The city soon came to an abrupt end and we were on the desert road to Suez. To left and right were army camps with young men lining up on one side to begin their 2 year national service, while on the opposite side of the road others were being discharged. These interspersed the dry, sandy and absolutely straight road; the Egyptian road builders were certainly advocates of 'the shortest distance between 2 points is a straight line'. Wonderful for cycling Mr. William commented. Indeed we did pass 3 European cyclists



Suez Canal

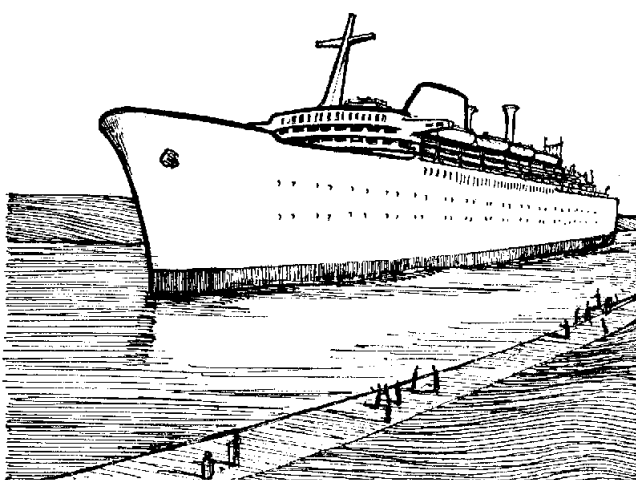
having a rest by the side of the road.

Mohammed was very friendly and his English was good, though his accent not always easy to interpret. He answered the many questions we fired at him, and showed us some photographs of his wife and 2 young children, and of a working trip to Luxor he had been on.

After about 1.5 hours the desert road had signs and we followed the one to Suez. Having stopped at a checkpoint and purchased a pass from dubious looking sentries, Mohammed seemed proud to tell us about the new tunnel, which he called a 'bridge', that had been built by the Japanese about 7 years ago.

With still no sighting of the canal we entered the 'bridge', a modern well lit tunnel reminiscent of the Cuilfail tunnel at Lewes, though with a slight dip as we were, after all, going under the Suez Canal. There was sea water above us; how could that be, when we had only seen sand?

Once through the 'bridge' Mohammed turned up a bumpy dust track, then suddenly there was a blue strip of water. The Suez Canal - it was amazing. Everywhere else you looked there was sandy desert, except for this 'road' of blue water. Yes, 'road' it was because how lucky we were, some 'vehicles' were on the 'road'. A procession of ships was passing and although most had already passed by where we were, 2 were still to come and with no sign of any more following we were lucky, so lucky, as 10 to 15 minutes later they would all have been past this spot. We hurried out of the car and stood right on the edge of the canal, with the water just a few feet from us.



A modern liner sails through the desert—on the Suez Canal.

This was not a tourist spot; it seemed like the middle of nowhere, as if this was a secret viewing place that just Mohammed and the driver of a small minibus also parked there new about. Mohammed told us not to hurry, so we stood in the wind watching the 2 ships pass and trying to absorb that after years of hearing of this famous canal we were actually here, and having walked along a little and down to the very edge could actually touch it, swishing our hands and pulling from the side a tiny piece of moss - Suez moss, to take home as a reminder.

After some photographs we reluctantly got back into the car and headed back to the 'bridge', but much to Mohammed's annoyance we had to go back about a mile to collect another pass to return through the 'bridge'. Not easy on your own, we commented to ourselves, knowing the procedures.

Once on our way again we decided to go into the town of Suez itself for lunch.

Mohammed seemed surprised that we had our lunch with us and were not going to eat out. First we stopped to see the fishing boats at the harbour, then at the fish market, where Mohammed went in search of cheap fish to take home. We wandered around, and were amused by some pelicans at a fish stall, one of whom reached right into the freezer with his long bill to pull out his lunch!

We were stopped in the street by a group of school children, perhaps on dinner break. They were around 11 or 12 years old, very friendly and so interested in us. It seemed as if they did not get the chance to practice their English very often and this was an ideal opportunity, especially for one girl who kept banging her head, racking her brains for questions!

All the stall holders, not trying to sell us their wares, were keen to show us their beautiful fish. One man, handsome to my eye, was sitting smoking a hubble-bubble pipe (hookah. Ed.), which had been a source of great fascination to Mr. William as we had seen many in the back street cafes of Cairo but, as women did not appear to be allowed in, he had not been able to try one out. UNTIL NOW! The man, so friendly, pulled up a chair and invited Mr. William to puff on his hubble-bubble pipe. A photograph had to be taken of course!



Mohammed found us an excellent spot for our picnic lunch, right by the Red Sea, where Mr. William paddled, and having shared our lunch with him and allowed Mohammed enough time to rest before the long drive, we set off back to Cairo, passing up the visit to Ismailia. The day had been exciting enough. We had wanted to see the Suez Canal and we had seen it. Once home if it seemed to good to be true we had a tiny piece of now dried-up moss to remind us.

(Thanks to Roy James for the drawing of the man smoking the Hookah. Ed.)



LOOKING BACK

Some of you may know "Camilla's", the second hand book shop in Grove Road, Eastbourne. Recently I bought a copy of "The Cyclist" there dated 26th April 1939. What a difference to today's scene. The formality of the writing style. The old style clothes. Marguerite Wilson's record breaking achievements. A new '50' record by Shake Earnshaw of over 30 mph - that surprised me. And a bike thief who was caught and convicted to 3 months hard labour! And so much more.

Contact me if you would like to look at this gem. *Peter Crowsley.*

MAJORCA MEETING

by Peter Crowsley

Because my friend Ellen had been given only months to live following the operation in November, we decided to have an early holiday, and maybe our last together, in Majorca last March. We were asked, on the advice of Ellen's art tutor, to make contact with a lady living there who had helped him set up painting holidays on the island. We duly met up and she drove us from our hotel to a village in the South-west called Capdella where she lived and had a holiday flat. She told us that it was used by walkers and cyclists as well as painters. I told her I was an active cyclist whereupon she told me that her next door neighbour had been a famous cyclist called Ian Steel.

The name may be unfamiliar to younger readers but Ian Steel was Viking Cycles professional who won the 1951 Tour of Britain, rode in the Tour de France, and was a top name in the era.

Thus I met Ian and his wife Pat for the first time since the Earl's Court cycle show in 1952. We talked about the things that cyclists do and I found that after a very active life he had moved to Majorca 11 years ago following an operation for throat cancer. He loved the island and many of the 'old pros' and other cyclists came out there to join him on island rides. He certainly looked very fit and was nearly 70 now.

Rather poignantly Ellen suggested that I should come out there cycling after she had gone. I probably will.

EVERYDAY SUSSEX No.

by Roy James



SEARCHING FOR ARCHIE BELANEY

by Roy James

As a child of the thirties I would sit entranced as our teacher read the stories of Grey Owl to the class.

"Here is the voice of a real Red Indian," she would say. "Not one of your imitations at the Saturday morning cinema."

At that time the legend of Grey Owl, said to be a half breed Indian trapper who had a change of heart and had become among the first of nature conservationists was one of constant fascination.

Years passed and memories of the most potent of my boyhood heroes slipped away and it was not until nearly fifty years later that his name surfaced again. My daughter became interested in him and began to search out his books in second hand book shops. It was she who broke the news. Grey Owl was no Indian of the Ojibway tribe, but an Englishman named Archibald Stansfeld Belaney and born in Hastings. Such were the bare bones of his early life that I then knew. Surely it would be worth while to try and discover more and Hastings would be the place to do it.

Hastings library seemed to be the most promising place to make a start. Standing in Claremont, just back from the sea front and squeezed between ugly, small shops, this vaguely Gothic building, built in the full glory of Victoria's reign, is still as a public building should be, both dignified and powerful. Chaining my cycle to the railings I entered and climbed the stairs to the reading room. Once inside I asked tentatively if they had any information on Grey Owl. I need not have worried, for the pile of newspaper clippings handed to me went back to 1938 and were going to tell me all that I needed to know.

Born in 1888 of a thirteen year old mother, Grey Owl, or Archie as I shall now call him, was deserted by both parents and went to live with his two aunts when he was four years old. They lived at 36 St. Mary's Terrace until he was eleven and then moved to Highbury Villa in St. James Road. From there he started at Hastings Grammar School. It was not enough for me to know these things. I wanted to see the house and school where he lived and was educated. Some of it was easy.

Leaving the library I negotiated the town's devilish one-way system to Queen's Road and past the one time site of Priory Meadows Cricket Ground, currently and disgracefully being turned into - you've guessed it - a shopping centre. I knew that St. Mary's Terrace and the site of the old Grammar School were both near St. Andrew's Bridge, the span carrying the railway line on to Rye and Ashford. What I did not expect was that the bridge built nearly a century ago to replace the old St. Andrew's Archway would be such an impressive structure. It soared over the road, supported on columns reminiscent of Classical Greece and at first sight took ones breath away. I turned into Nelson Road and began a steep climb that eventually took me to St. Mary's Terrace and Archie's home at number 36, high above the town, with sweeping views across crowded streets to wooded country beyond. As I looked at the plaque on the modest house declaring that "Grey Owl, Pioneer of Canadian Wildlife Conservation, Lived Here" I was satisfied that I had made a start on my search for Archie.

Nothing now remains of the old Grammar School on the corner of Nelson Road that Archie attended. It stood empty for many years and modern housing now occupies the site. Much imagination was needed on my part to picture him walking to school "with a snake or field mouse in his pocket" as his headmaster wrote in the school magazine, but I was happy to follow in Archie's footsteps. On now to Highbury Villa in St. James Road. No distance really, just under the bridge and opposite Alexandra Park. Highbury Villa must be at the end of St. James Road, for there were the steps and passageway leading into Quarry Road. Archie had school friends there and he would wait for them in the passage. They would go on then to their home in Preston Lodge and make wigwams in the garden. I stood in the passage, then walked into Quarry Road but it was too much to expect to raise the ghosts of the past. Instead I listened to the sound of children playing in a nearby garden and thought perhaps I was not too far from those other children playing Red Indians long ago.

Much of Archie's leisure time was spent in St. Helen's Woods. Here he would play his solitary games, imagining himself to be with the Indians he so admired. A map of the town shows a small area of woodland still called St. Helen's Woods and this had to be my next stop. More hill work followed but St. Helen's Park Road, just off Queen's Road, finally took me to the entrance to the wood. Much diminished now to what it was in Archie's day it is still a spot for solitude and quiet reflection. Away from the bridle path I leaned my cycle against a fallen tree and sat nearby, musing that yes, this place could set an imaginative boy's senses reeling.

When he was seventeen Archie's aunts finally gave in to his constant pleading and allowed him to go to Canada where he soon began to mix with Indians of the Ojibway tribe. In 1915 he joined the Canadian army, was sent to France, wounded and eventually arrived back in Hastings for convalescence. In a short time he married a childhood sweetheart at the Church in the Wood, Hollington.



Hollington Church, Near Hastings.
As it would have been in Archie's day

Hollington is but a short ride from Alexandra Park and an up to date map would have guided me to the church in no time. My dog-eared O.S. map however gave the impression of open country, instead of which I found myself in a maze of housing. After a few enquiries I was at last standing by the wooden fence that surrounds the Church in the Wood. Miraculously it still retains much of the tranquillity of the country church it must have been when Archie and his bride left it for their short life together. Richard the verger was working in the churchyard, but he took a few minutes away from his labour to take

me inside. Of the several yarns he was able to tell me as we sat over a cup of tea in the vestry, I was to enjoy most the story of the brass candelabra hanging in the nave. How it was removed (stolen) from a Russian church during the Crimean War and brought home in a soldier's rucksack. Perhaps a more determined searcher than I would have tried for a chance to find Archie's name in the marriage records of the church, but I was pleased to

have chatted with Richard. Now it was time to return to the sea front and on to my final destination at Hastings Country Park.

His convalescence complete, Archie returned to Canada and his old way of life, leaving his wife behind in Hastings. They divorced shortly after and he began to write articles on wildlife conservation. In 1935 he started a lecture tour of England. His home town was included in the tour and all England was fooled into believing him to be a half breed Indian. Except perhaps for one lady in his Hastings audience who had known him as a child;

"If that's not Belaney I'll eat my hat," she was heard to murmur.

The afternoon was well advanced as I passed the White Rock Pavilion where Archie had given his Hastings lecture. My final destination was fairlight and its stretch of unspoiled coastline to the East of the town. The strain of an arduous lecture tour had been too much for Archie and shortly after returning to Canada he died of exhaustion. He was not quite fifty years old. In 1975 a plaque honouring his memory was given to Hastings by the Ontario Heritage Foundation; and in the Hastings Country Park, facing the Firehills and the sea beyond the final piece of my cycling jig-saw fell into place. In fading light I found the plaque and was just able to read the inscription in memory of "Archibald Stansfeld Belaney who assumed the name of Grey Owl and achieved world wide fame through his books and lectures in which he pleaded for the recognition of the natural brotherhood between man and animals." I cycled away into the gloom of a February afternoon. It had been a good day.

Footnote

Hastings museum has an excellent exhibition, mounted at a cost of £20,000 and opened by Sir Richard Attenborough in March 1995. Entitled 'North America and Plains Indians' it gives the full Grey Owl story.



ODD CUTTINGS

Letter in the Isle of Wight County Press, February 9th 1996

Store bucks at fizz delivery.

My daughter in Scotland decided to have a bottle of champagne delivered to us on our 55th wedding anniversary.

She visited the Marks & Spencer branch in Stirling. On enquiry they confirmed delivery all over England and Scotland. When told it was an address on the Isle of Wight they said, "Oh sorry, we do not deliver overseas!"

P.G.R. DUFF
Barnfield Road
Bembridge

LIGHT RAIL IN EAST SUSSEX

by Jonathan Dalton

Measures to provide efficient alternatives to motor traffic in East Sussex should include reinstatement of a comprehensive rail system.

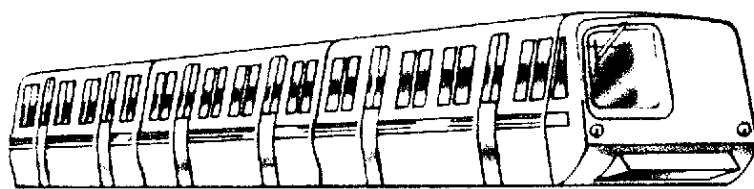
The campaigns to reopen the Uckfield-Lewes and Eridge-Tunbridge Wells lines are well known and it is County policy to protect these trackbeds from alien development. The Eastbourne-Tonbridge (Cuckoo line) and Tunbridge Wells-East Grinstead-Three Bridges routes also follow heavily trafficked corridors but have not in the past enjoyed such protection, though surviving infrastructure is now largely safeguarded through utilization for the Cuckoo Trail and Forest Way cycle/bridle paths. Rail links on these routes would bring benefits to a wide area.

Owing to alien developments reinstatement as conventional railways would be difficult but the adoption of Light Rail Technology with its flexibility and lower costs could provide an appropriate solution. The lines can use the trackbeds as far as possible with Tramway running along the Mayfield Bypass and East Grinstead relief roads and where building has taken place negotiate it with minimal or no demolition by using suitable roads or cut and cover tunnels underneath. They could also be extended on streets to reach areas such as Eastbourne Sea Front and Crawley Town Centre.

As they would have much the role of conventional railways, the trams should be capable of carrying light goods, parcels, post office mails, prams and cycles as well as passengers with the lines also capable of carrying freight in wagon loads and small trainloads. Automatic Train protection would allow the services to use conventional railways such as between Polegate and Eastbourne.

The Cars would be powered by electricity (overhead wires or batteries with third rail when using existing electrified railways), diesel power or a combination of these while there is also the possibility of low cost flywheel operation. Stations and additional halts to improve access should have secure cycle parking and at appropriate locations good coordination with bus services and the existing rail network. While the system could operate with a low level of staffing it is desirable to have people on trams and at busier stations for revenue collection and to provide information and security.

Space would be available alongside part of the routes for The Cuckoo Trail and Forest Ways and elsewhere these could be replaced by linking lanes and paths to maintain pedestrian/cycle friendly access which would be enhanced through a reduction in motor traffic and the reduced distance necessary for local people to walk or cycle to railheads. While the scheme would require investment this compares well with major road schemes which bring environmental destruction and increased motor traffic.



ON KEEPING FIT

by "Seedy"

(From "Camping" vol. XX No. 1. January 1924)

Now that winter is here, or hereabouts, all but the more hardy ones (such as those who braved the Alps) will be thinking of a spring mattress and sheets, rather than a straw palliasse and a couple of eiderdowns. Should you be uncomfortable upon the former, you will find it easy to get your beauty sleep by collecting all the boots in the house, spreading them over the floor, and then "kipping" thereon. You will then experience the delights of the Brittany camp all over again. If you get someone to boil several kettles of water in the room before waking you and to keep the room hermetically sealed, the resultant mist and damp will remind you, upon waking, of the early "workman's" mornings at Huntsmoor, and a few holly leaves scattered about will further heighten the illusion. Instead of tubbing in the bathroom, have a large bath on the verandah, and perform your ablutions there, first being careful to dip enough water to cook the porridge, make the tea and boil the eggs.

When it is wet, you can get a sheet of canvas, and suspend it about five feet from the floor, and then place a bucket of water (without the bucket) thereon. Thus you will have, amid all the soft comforts of the home, that delightful back-ache feeling which comes of walking inside a large "Cottage" tent with no fly-sheet in a shower of rain.

Instead of arriving from the office at night in a bright and cheery fashion, dig a trench about three inches deep and somewhere round eight feet wide across your front path. Fill it with sticky mud and, as you enter the gate, mutter to yourself "Yes, this *is* the field. . . . I recognise the peculiar viscosity of the mud at the gate." Then strike, say, a dozen matches, allowing the wind to blow out each one, examine the front door by the light of the last match, and exclaim "Cu . . . confound it! I *knew* I was in the wrong quarters." The next move is to wade up and down the trench for five minutes, after repeating the match process, going through the motions of unlacing a tent door and, after entering the house, of re-lacing it. You then sit on the hall mat, unlace and remove your boots, and place them under a square of mackintosh in the corner. Next . . . your wife will probably lug you into the dining room by your ear, and telephone for the doctor.

