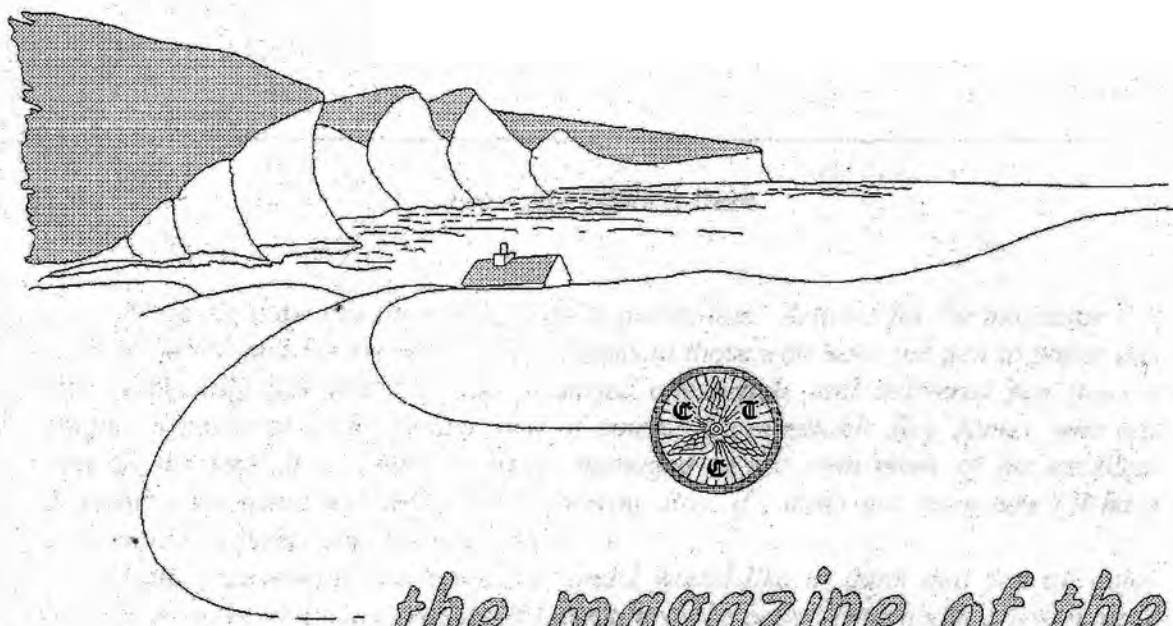


The



# Coaster



*the magazine of the*

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION  
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 31 - Summer 1997

50p



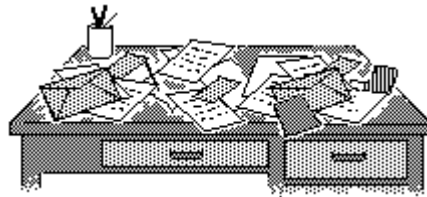
## *East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club*

*President - Geoff Boxall*

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

**" THE COASTER "**

**Issue No. 31, Summer 1997**



### *From the Editor's Desk.*

*Not a big issue this time, but I hope a quality one. Articles for the magazine still seem to be few and far between. Many thanks to those who have put pen to paper this time, especially Bill Whiting, who promised one article and delivered two (plus a couple of pages of cycle quotes), and of course the inimitable Roy James, who has (due to the lack of a Xmas '96 issue) managed to get even more of his excellent drawings than usual into this issue. Knowing Roy, if I don't use them now I'll have even more to squeeze into the next one!*

*I enjoy producing the magazine, and I would like to think that you all enjoy reading it, however I can't produce if I don't have the copy. How about a few more of you putting pen to paper and letting us have an article. It doesn't have to be a long one, we can always fill in with cuttings and pictures and we can always scan in line drawings to illustrate if you have any.*

*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.

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44 Saffrons Park, Eastbourne, BN20 7UX

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

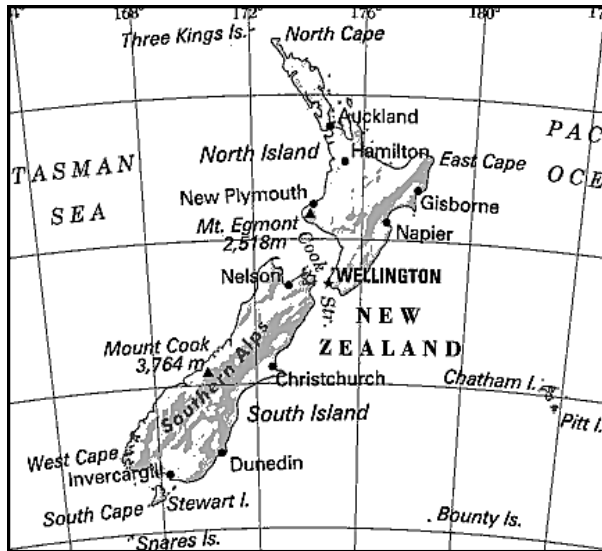
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Seaford & Newhaven: Ann Rix:  
3 Sutton Drove, Seaford, BN25 3EU

" *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.

## HAERI MAI AOTEAROA

by Bill Whiting



The experts told me that New Zealand was a small country with very little traffic. It was always sunny and warm. Never believe an expert! This is what it is really like, as seen by someone with considerable experience in such matters (just under 4 weeks, and in a car!) But, when 'Baggy Shorts' twists your arm you have to submit (April/May Newsletter) or suffer the risk of having 'Green tyres' fitted to your bike.

Every schoolchild will tell you that New Zealand comprises two islands, stretching over 1000 miles from Cape Reinga to the southern tip of Stewart Island, beyond Invercargill on South Island. The trunk

roads are mainly tar sealed. Outside towns the by-roads are normally unsealed, with granite or laval chips the size of small railway ballast, Every now and again main roads turn into unsealed tracks for lengthy stretches. When a huge 50 ton truck roars past on these lengths the scene is reminiscent of the old London fogs. By and large the road system, certainly to the tourist spots, is good and smooth.

Few roads, except those in the South Island near Canterbury, are flat or straight. Along the coast the road may zig-zag in and around the bays and inlets, particularly where the coast is mountainous. Inland there are many high passes, and here the roads are alpine in nature with overtaking places every few miles (sorry kilometres, NZ is 100% metric; unlike the UK). Cycling progress over these (and you may not have any choice) can be slow and hard going. Coming down the other side needs good brakes, and several layers of newspaper inside your shirt. Distances between villages can be high also, 40-50 miles is not unusual. Accommodation is generally inexpensive (from motels at £30 a room to backpackers to YHA for £5-£8 per person per night) and relatively easy to find. Careful planning (not forgetting the vertical distances) and pre-booking can reduce the risk element, but we found that in North Island advance booking in February/March (the tail end of the summer holidays - the SAGA season) was not necessary as long as you arrived at 3.30 p.m. or so. In South Island accommodation is just that little scarcer - we booked ahead at lunch time and were thankful we did. This latter approach gives much greater flexibility. The Tourist Board puts out several very complete accommodation guides (as do backpackers and the YHA). Thus if you find a strong headwind (and it certainly blows when it can) or heavy rain (it doesn't drizzle in NZ, when it rains it comes in large quantities), you can alter your plans accordingly. There are plenty of campsites, but in the volcanic regions which cover many scores of square miles, you may find the ground hostile to tent pegs and distinctly lumpy to lie on!

So NZ is big; what of the people and the traffic? There are 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> million people in NZ of which 450,000 are Moari. One third of the population lives in Auckland - which itself is said to be larger in area than Greater London. In the cities traffic is heavy and few drivers observe speed limits. Apart from the section of State Highway 1 in North Island (which is

very busy) most other roads are relatively traffic free. In South Island the main roads are very quiet. In the small towns you wonder if there is life on occasions. Nearly all main roads are two lane, but with a substantial sealed 'hard shoulder'. This latter provides a clear way for cycling but beware it is used by slower traffic, not just in which to park, but also to pull over to allow faster vehicles to overtake. It is clearly marked with white stripes.

The Pake(white population) is embarrassingly friendly and helpful. They show a level of politeness and interest which has not been seen in the UK for 30 years or more. They are, however, not 'laid back' but keen and efficient. You will be impressed by the cleanliness everywhere (towns, buses, cafes, motels). The roadside verges are kept almost to lawn height.

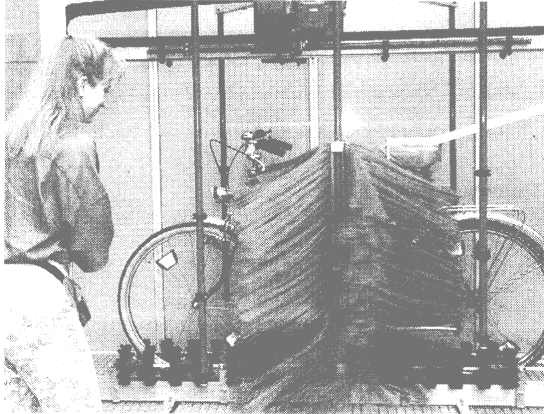
Cycling is much in evidence. We were amazed at the loads many bikes were carrying. Several times we saw what appeared to be mobile pannier sets, only to find a small female rider hidden behind them. Almost invariably the cycle was a rugged mountain bike (very few traditional tourers were seen). This makes sense as you never know where the seal ends and unsealed road begins. If you decide to carry everything, you will appreciate the lower gears and sturdier frame. New Zealand law requires all cyclists to wear helmets.

New Zealand is a land of marked contrasts. At times you could be forgiven for thinking you were in the UK. Soon you could be in a desert-like wilderness of boulders and scree. On the west coast of South Island the road runs through a rain forest so thick with vegetation that you cannot walk through it. In North Island you will find three active volcanoes in line south of Lake Taupo, viz Mounts Tongariro, Ngaurahoe and Ruapehu. In South Island there are large glaciers, Franz Joseph and Fox, not far from Mount Cook, the highest peak in New Zealand, with the Tasman glacier hanging from its precipitous slopes. The vegetation is exotic, palm and fern trees (yes, fern) are very common (oaks are rare imports from Europe). Until man arrived in 950 A.D. there were no animals, only birds, to form the wildlife. Insects (apart from wasps and bees) are generally safe; the Weta, an oversized grasshopper that's lost its 'hop', can be startling to meet but it is harmless. There are no snakes in any of the islands and only a few harmless lizards. The greatest hazard seems to be mosquito and sandfly bites (just like Scotland), which can cause swellings. Swimming in lakes and rivers could also prove dangerous from giardia, an intestinal parasite, spread by opossums, other mammals and ducks. A word of comfort - piped drinking water is probably purer than in the UK. New Zealand is scrupulously careful with the environment. There is no unleaded petrol. Your aircraft cabin is sprayed before arrival in Auckland to prevent the import of 'nasties'. No food or fruit can be imported - even stricter than California. They have a wonderful country and they are determined to keep it that way.

At least one of our DA members has ridden in NZ. (Pity it couldn't be me.) For anyone thinking of holidaying there on bike, foot or car, there could be no better handbook than Lonely Planet's 'Travel Survival Kit - New Zealand' (770 pages, £11.95 from good bookshops). The Maori speakers among you will know the greeting that forms the title of this piece - Welcome to the land of the Long White Cloud (their name for New Zealand) - so it is only left for me to say 'E noho ra'.



### Les bicyclettes ont aussi leur laverie



La première laverie automatique pour bicyclettes vient d'ouvrir à Munich. En Allemagne, si la voiture reste reine sur les autoroutes, le cycliste est roi dans les villes. Le décrochage du garde-boue dure cinq minutes et coûte l'équivalent de 25 F.

### Bicycles also have their washer.

The first automatic bike wash is about to open in Munich. In Germany the car may be king of the autoroutes, but the bike is the king of the towns.

The cleaning of mudguards lasts 5 minutes and costs the equivalent of £3

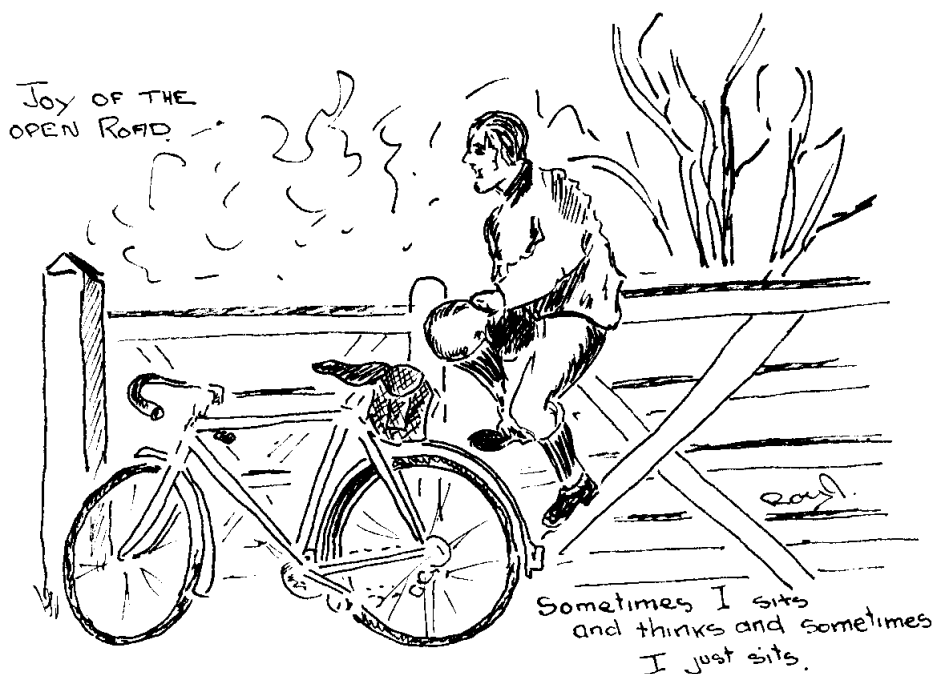
(Seen in "Ouest France" 31/08/96)

### Trouble at Seaford

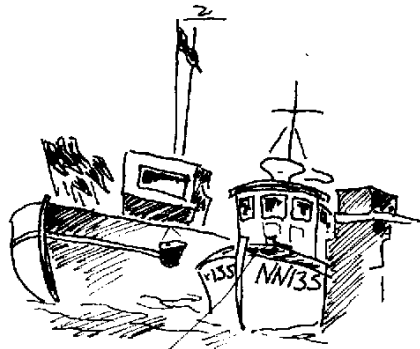
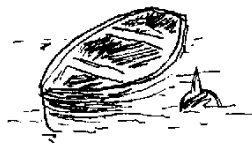
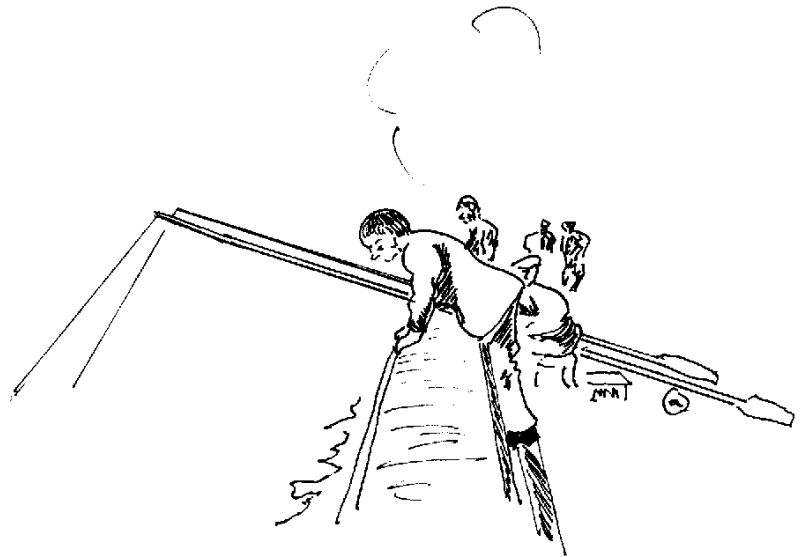
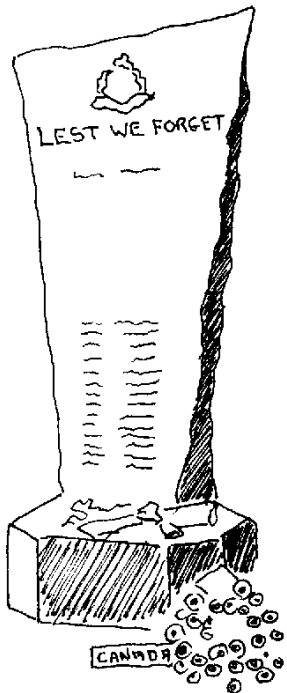
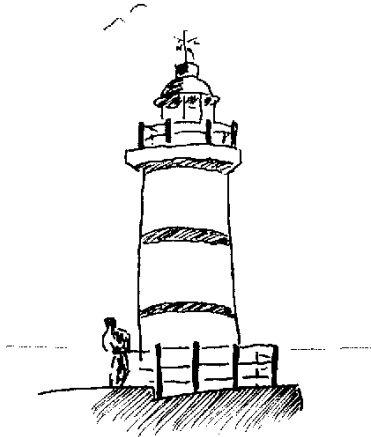
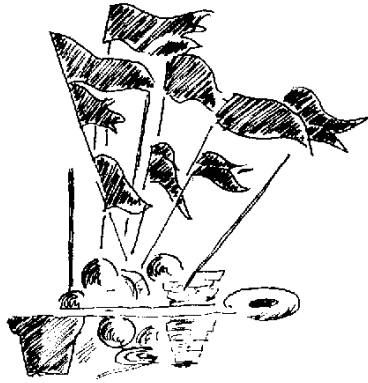
T. Harben, esq; the Bailiff of Seaford, having between eleven and twelve on Thursday night, received information that Lieutenant T\_\_\_\_\_ and J. O\_\_\_\_\_, Esq; were to meet at six next morning on the beach, near the Signal-post, for the purpose of fighting a duel, ordered the Constable to take the parties immediately into custody, who in consequence caused Mr. O. to be called from his bed, and made a prisoner of him; but the lieutenant, to elude his search, concealed himself in a bathing machine, and in the morning, attended with his second at the time and place appointed, where he waited two hours for the arrival of his antagonist, and then retired to his apartment in the barrack, where he was taken into custody. They were, however, soon after liberated, on finding two sureties, who entered into recognizances of £150 each, for their keeping of the peace towards each other in future.

The challenge, we understand, arose from a dispute between the parties, touching the priority of claim to a certain young lady in the neighbourhood.

(From the "Sussex Weekly Advertiser", March 31st, 1800)



NEWHAVEN  
CAMEOS.



## TALES FROM THE BIKESHOP

by John Bedford

(Many of our members will now know John & Beryl, who are well known faces at nearly all the rallies - taking part in the rides and then setting up their stall in the evenings to sell everything from the essential inner tube to those cycling postcards that you just can't get anywhere else. This article was intended for the Xmas '96 edition which never was. Ed.)

We started our business just over 18 years ago, naming it "Park Cycles" because we serve the Sutton Park area of Birmingham. I've lost count of the number of times I've been addressed as Mr. Park or Mr. Parks. We always have a chuckle when invoices are addressed to "The Accounts Dept." - there's only the two of us!

Over the years we've had some good laughs at the expense of our customers. A recent telephone enquirer was asking about the price of a new wheel for a mountain bike. The caller was asked if he wanted the price of a front or a rear wheel. The astonishing response was "Is there a difference?!"

Then there was the phone call asking for the price of a 2" inner tube. Beryl, quick as a flash, "Is it for a mountain bike?", Customer: "Yes, and does it come with the valve?!"

One of the most unusual jobs I did was a few years ago when I was asked if I could assemble a new bike. No problem, said I. I was rather surprised when I received a box of parts and found that even the wheels needed assembly. All the spokes, hubs and rims were supplied. The wheel was a 28" but there was no indication whether the spokes were to be laced three or four cross. This took a bit of puzzling out. The braking system was the old rod type and the owner would not give me any indication how he came to acquire this strange kit. Needless to say it had been manufactured in China.

Then there was the lad who bought a can of oil. He came back a few days later to say that whilst his brakes no longer squeaked, they were now incapable of stopping him even at the slowest speed. He went away to spend a happy hour cleaning the oil of his brakepads!

A frequent comment that we hear from male customers, when given a choice is "I'll take the cheapest. It's only for the wife". No wonder so few women cycle.

One of our club members wanted to know last year whether we would be selling at the Burton Audax. When we said "Yes, is there something you wanted?", he said, "Yes, can you look after my sandwiches for me!"

We are busy getting geared up for another season on the road, and look forward to meeting old friends when we set up shop at the Southern Counties Rally, Meriden, Cotswold Weekend, the New Forest Cycle Week and Mildenhall Rally. See you soon.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Odd cuts**

Spotted in a local paper by our fishing correspondent.

"If you keep your flies low you can pull out a twenty pounder."

CYCLING MISDEMEANOURS  
as reported in cycling magazines of the last century.

"The Hub", March 11th 1899

THE JOKE THAT FAILED

Stephen Giles, an out-porter employed by the London and North-Western Railway Co., at Birmingham, found a bicycle outside a shop in Smallbrook Road. He is such a wag, is Giles, that he could not resist the ludicrous idea of wheeling it up the street, and leaving it outside a public house, and did so accordingly. A constable, however, with a lamentable lack of humour, failed to see the point at all, although it was carefully explained to him. As a result Giles had to appear before the stipendiary at the Birmingham Police Court, and the joke was explained to him also. The stipendiary, probably thinking that such a piece of waggery was too much for one brain to cope with, concluded to leave it for a jury to think out, and accordingly sent Giles to the sessions. It should be said that the owner of the bicycle, Frederick Hawkes, cycle manufacturer, of Corporation Street, was not indisposed to accept Giles' plea that there was no felonious intent in his action; and the prisoner declared that he was muddled with drink, and had no thought of theft. He called Mr. Squires, station master at New Street, to give evidence as to his previous good character.

(No result of this case was published.)

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"The Hub", March 18th, 1899

A DRUNKEN CYCLIST

At the Mansion House Police Court, Douglas Anninon McIntyre, thirty-two, clerk, was charged before Alderman Sir Joseph Renals with being drunk and riding a

bicycle to the common danger. On Thursday week, about noon, a constable on duty saw the defendant, who was drunk, riding a bicycle in Fleet Street. He got on the Pavement, scattering the foot passengers right and left, and knocking down a lady. In Shoe Lane he tried to remount, but was unable, and was taken into custody. - The defendant said he was sorry, and he felt his position keenly. - Sir Joseph Renals said it was difficult enough to regulate sober people on bicycles in the CITY, without having the additional anxiety of looking after drunken cyclists, He fined the defendant 20s., which he paid.

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"The Hub", March 18th 1899

AN EYE OPENER

John Edwards was summoned for not having a lamp on his cart at Mayfield, and the police constable deposed that the transgressor offered him something "to close his eyes for once." The defendant pleaded guilty, and the chairman of the Bench said that he ought not to have attempted to bribe the constable, and imposed a fine of 10s., and 7s. costs. This ought to open Edward's eyes to the extent of his iniquity.

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"Wheel World", December 1881

Police constable ZYX4002 deposed that he was on duty the previous evening and saw the defendants riding at a rate of forty miles an hour; he walked after them and overtook them .... taking them to the station handcuffed.

## CYCLING IN THE SOMME

by Michel Machu.

*My friend Michel is a keen cycle tourist who lives in Villers-Tournelle a small village in the department of the Somme in northern France. I first met him nearly 20 years ago and we have kept in touch ever since. Some older members of Seaford & Newhaven section may remember a slide show that Michel gave when touring East Sussex in the early 80s. As a memento of that evening we gave him one of the old cloth section badges which he still has on his handle bar bag. Michel is a regular reader of The Coaster and contributed this short article on hearing that the editor was asking for copy for the magazine. Dennis Jakeman*

Many English people come to the Somme-department, specially to visit the sites of the First World War. It could be an opportunity to discover Montdidier and its area, located in the south-east of the Somme and to the south of the Somme battle front famous for the bloody battle of 1916. Montdidier is built on a hill. In the upper city two flamboyant churches were very much damaged during the Great War, but accurately restored. They are next to the modern Town Hall built in the Flemish style and are examples of late gothic art. Near the church Saint Pierre you will discover the site of the priory with its shady esplanade which offers a view over the Trois Doms valley, the lower town and the countryside. An orientation table gives information on the region and indicates the main monuments in the town. Montdidier is proud of having given life to Parmentier, the propagator of potatoes in France. He was born in Montdidier in 1737. He was an agriculturalist and one of the most distinguished food engineers and general supervisor in the Health Department of the imperial armies of Napoleon 1st. His statue adorns the square bearing his name. The street where his birthhouse is, also has his name.

Montdidier could be a good starting point for cycling on country roads which are free of traffic and for discovering the surrounding region. The cyclist is best equipped to enjoy its pleasures of church, village-place, lake and wood. The rivers Avre and Trois Doms wind peacefully through an intimate countryside and this is an opportunity for cycling on the Trois Doms route which covers about 55km and follows sometimes the river. You will discover quiet little villages pleasantly situated such as Courtemanche or Ainval. Of course you will not see old buildings because a lot of them were destroyed during the two world wars, but you can sometimes discover an old farm. In Davencourt the castle which was built partly during the revolution is overlooking the Avre valley and the lakes; Guerbigny is most notable for its 13th century church.

Other quiet country roads may be taken to discover the villages in which the rebuilding is characterised by the new fresh aspects of the houses where the red bricks are allied with the blue slates. Best examples are Mesnil Saint Georges, Villers-Tournelle or Cantigny where a memorial at the centre of the village recalls the intervention of American troops on 31 May 1918. You can eventually extend your trip to Folleville where the church should not be missed. It is an example of late gothic architecture.

Of course you will find in Montdidier some good restaurants where you can try the pleasures of Picardy specialities such as leek pie or Picardy ficelle.....gastronomy can belong to cycletouring!



## CYCLE FACTS

Each year we cycle about 5 billion kilometres (ouch!) - but that's less than 1% of the total distance travelled in the U.K. Forty years ago 10% of the total distance travelled was by cycle (20 billion kilometres).

The British public bought 15.85 million bicycles between 1988 and 1994.

There are about 21 million bicycles in ownership in Britain today - that's about as many bikes as private cars.

Cycle use in the U.K. is relatively low: only 2.3 % of journeys are currently made by bicycle. This compares with 9.8% in Germany, 18.4% in Denmark and 27.3% in Holland. Some British towns do better than the average, for instance in York and Oxford about 20% of all journeys are made by bike.

More journeys are made by bicycle than by Railway and Underground combined.

Over 1 million people commute to work every day by bike - 6 million people are regular bicycle users, riding at least once a week.

Bike owners. More than four out of five school children own a bike but only one in three of their mums and dads have one!

Two thirds of junior school children were allowed by their parents to cycle on local roads in 1971 but by 1990 the figure had declined to only one quarter.

Nearly *three quarters* of all journeys made are local trips, *under five miles long* - even 60% of car trips are under 5 miles. Half of all journeys are less than two miles long, but most trips between one and two miles are still done by car! Lazy, or what?

Research for the Department of Transport has shown that in some British towns *nearly half of all trips* could be made by bike, and at least one in five of all trips would certainly be possible in many towns.

Cycling is two-and-a-half times more energy efficient than walking - it's not as boring either!

Health experts say that regular cyclist typically enjoy a fitness level equivalent to being 10 years younger than the rest of the population.

Cycling at just 5 miles an hour will burn up 250 calories on a five mile trip. If you average a reasonable 10 mph you'll burn 195 calories. If you can manage 20 mph, you'll only burn 165 calories! *Bizarre?* That's because, although you use more energy when you go faster, you are cycling for a much shorter time...

Source: 'Bike Zone Data Pack', the Bicycle Association's Official Project Resource/.

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Quote of the moment.

"Anything that you do for half an hour every day that leaves you slightly breathless must be good for you." Gordon Brittas (A.K.A. the actor Chris Barries)

## MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR by Pedaller

But it didn't start out like that. Just a couple of days in the French countryside was all that I intended. Late September had settled into a pattern of warm, sunny days and I had come over on an impulse. Serendipity was to be the name of the game.

On a previous visit to Dieppe I had found my ideal of a French pension. Tucked just behind the casino is the hotel-bar "L'Entracte". Perhaps not to everyone's taste with its rickety stairs and tiny chambres, but it had 'character'. The national flags of France and Great Britain hung out of the window in concord, the patron is amiable and the terms 'bon marché'. Just the place for an English cyclist with a love of France.

The road to Varengeville climbs steeply out of Dieppe, but there is a reward for the effort. On reaching the summit I was given a stunning view of the little resort of Pourville-sur-Mer and a few minutes later was coasting along its delightful seafront. The summer season was nearly over and very few visitors were around. The rather elegant hotel was open for coffee and the owner of the only remaining kiosk was half-heartedly putting out postcards and a box of plastic beach shoes. A few bathers were in the sea and I was quick to join them.

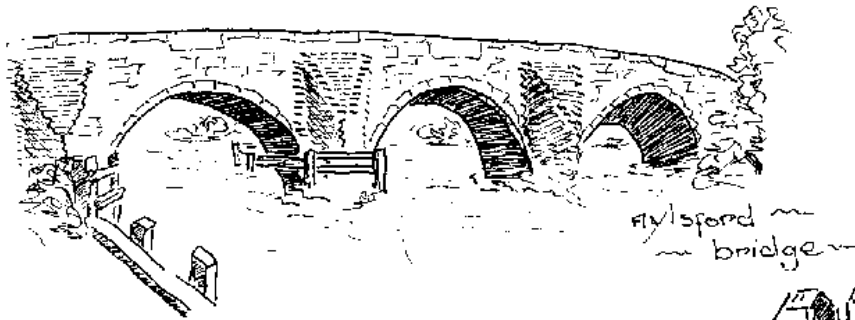
Varengeville-sur-Mer, as we all know, is twinned with our own Herstmonceux and it was there that I saw the notice pointing down an ever narrowing lane to the little 12th century church of St. Valery. High on the cliff edge with views seaward to Dieppe, the building is a curious blend of ancient and modern. The 12th century nave blends easily with the modern stained glass of Georges Braque, father of cubism, whose windows of reds and blues diffused by sunlight threw strange compelling shapes on the walls and floor. A soldier of Napoleon's 'Grands Armée' and a Seaforth Highlander killed in 1940 aged 21 share the dusty cemetery. How they came to this final resting place remains for me unanswered, but someone still cares, for fresh flowers have been placed on both graves.

On my way to the church of St. Valery I had passed the Bois Des Moutiers, one of the premier gardens of France. Sir Edwyn Lutyens designed the house and Miss Gertrude Jekyll, that doyen of English horticulture, created the numerous gardens. Formal flower beds slowly give way to wooded parkland that in turn drops down to the coast. I saw most, although keener gardeners than I would probably devote a complete day to the visit.

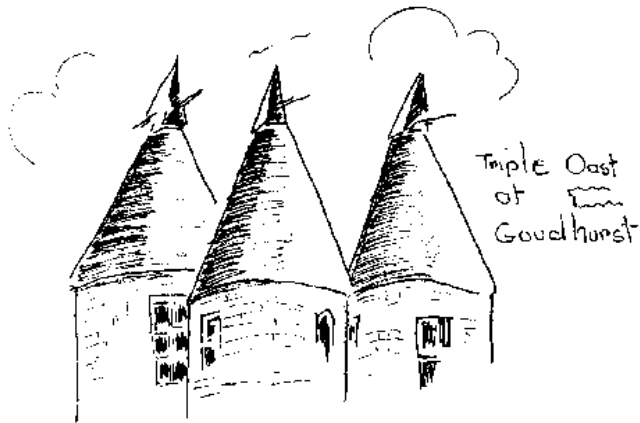
Rain rushed me to the nearby hotel-restaurant "La Terrasse" where I slept in a little room with a view of the sea and early next day I was on the coast road for Veules-les-Roses. Just another unpretentious seaside resort one might say. That would be true, but it had the quality of serenity that is hard to find these days. A bathe in the sparkling sea - for the rain of last evening had made way for early autumn sunshine - and then picnic on the beach. I was ready for a return to Dieppe. If I hurried I would catch the afternoon ferry. Such was the case. With minutes to spare I was on the Stena Londoner and giving a farewell wave to strollers on the harbour wall. Perhaps it wasn't such a mystery tour after all, but I was going home well satisfied.



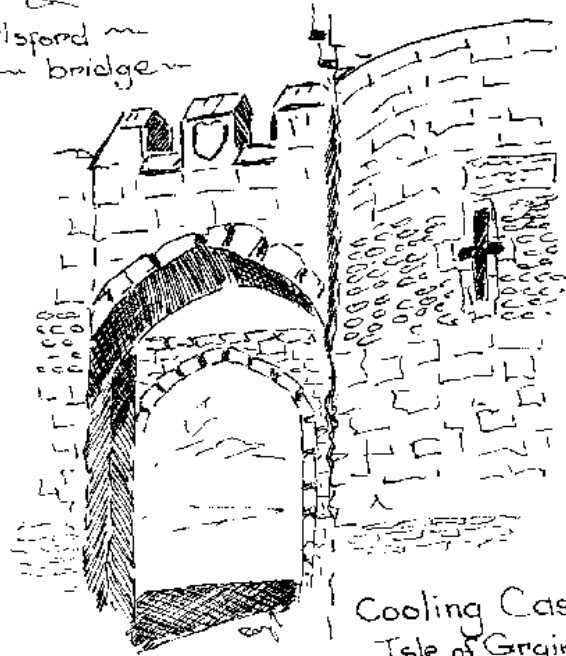
# North Kent Caper



Fylisford  
bridge



Triple Oast  
of Goudhurst

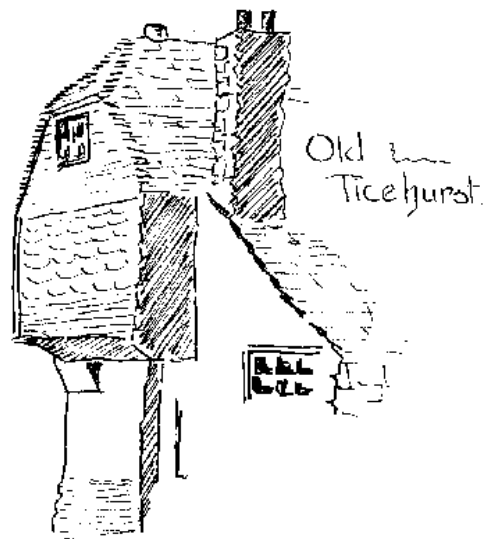


Cooling Castle  
Isle of Grain



UPPER CASTLE  
on the  
Saxon  
Way

Impressions of two days in  
Kent, on the lanes  
from Ticehurst  
to the  
Isle of Grain.



Old  
Ticehurst

THE DORSET HIGHLANDS  
or How I nearly Joined a Roman Legion  
by Bill Whiting

Dorset is one of those now rare counties in England which can boast a large number of quiet lanes and unspoilt villages. Most visitors are either hurtling through on their way to Devon or Cornwall, or aiming for Bournemouth or Lyme Regis. So far, thank goodness, much of the rest remains undiscovered. A cyclist's paradise, perhaps, but beware, the hills will test your lungs and your leg muscles. If you are young one road in particular might test your nerves! But more of that later.

One of my favourite rides is to the hill fort of Eggardon, just to the north east of Bridport, some 247 metres above sea level. For me that means a climb of over 240 metres, starting, as I do, from a coastal village a couple of miles to the south east of the town. Mind you, that rise in six or seven miles hides a multitude of other stiff climbs (and descents) on the way.

The first leg takes one over two steep ridges, northwards, to the village of Shipton Gorge. The name is derived from a local family of years ago the Gorges. Just to confuse the visitor, part of the village is in a gorge. A right and left turn after the village, through a farmyard and under the busy A35 road takes one to the charmingly named village of Uploders, which is higher than Lodors down in the valley. Just two rights and a left turn bring one to the road to Eggardon. At this point the climb starts in earnest. There is just 3 miles to go, but in fact one is still only 60 metres above sea level, so there is some hard work ahead.

The next landmark is Spyway. Was this hamlet a lookout in smuggling days? Or did it gain its name from some other clandestine activity? Nowadays it offers refreshment to the traveller in the shape of the local pub. The view, after the crossroads, widens to the left revealing the upward grind to the top, along the ridge of the hill. The vista of farms, cottages and fields now extends several miles along the valley.

The road is single track with passing places. At one such spot a car with four elderly passengers overtook me, and stopped several lay-bys ahead. Seemingly incredulous that anyone could ride up such a road, the four left their car and arranged themselves across the road, blocking my way. I am not discourteous by nature, but this time I had to ride through them or break my rhythm and stop, thus destroying all chance of me achieving my non-stopping objective.

At last the hill fort was reached, with its splendid view of sea and country, a true vantage point if one is worried about a neighbouring tribe and its territorial ambitions. It is a tranquil place; only the sound of the wind in the grass, bird song and the distant sound of bleating sheep. It has not always been thus and around 2000 years ago it was the scene of several battles against local tribes and the advancing Roman occupation force. Yet today, unless you are very young there is nothing to remind one of past troubles.

After a good rest it was time to return, this time riding over what was a chalk track but is now a metalled farm track under the parapet of the fort to Nettlecombe and Powerstock, West Milton and Lodors. While not without its ups and downs (gradients are never slight in

Dorset), the route home is easier - perhaps encouraged by the thought of a welcoming cup of tea back at base?

So, where do the Roman legionaries come in? The fort at Eggardon is said to be haunted by a couple of benevolent Centurions, in full garb. Local tradition has it that these two soldiers can only be seen by young children. A neighbour of ours (a local artist) confirms that a friend of hers was returning home by car with her two children early one evening, passing Eggardon on her way. Near the fort she felt very ill-at-ease and sped down the hill towards Bridport. When they reached home one of her children asked who was the man in the brass helmet and skirt she had seen on Eggardon a few minutes earlier. Until then, no-one in the family had known about the apparition.



### Cyclists pose road peril.

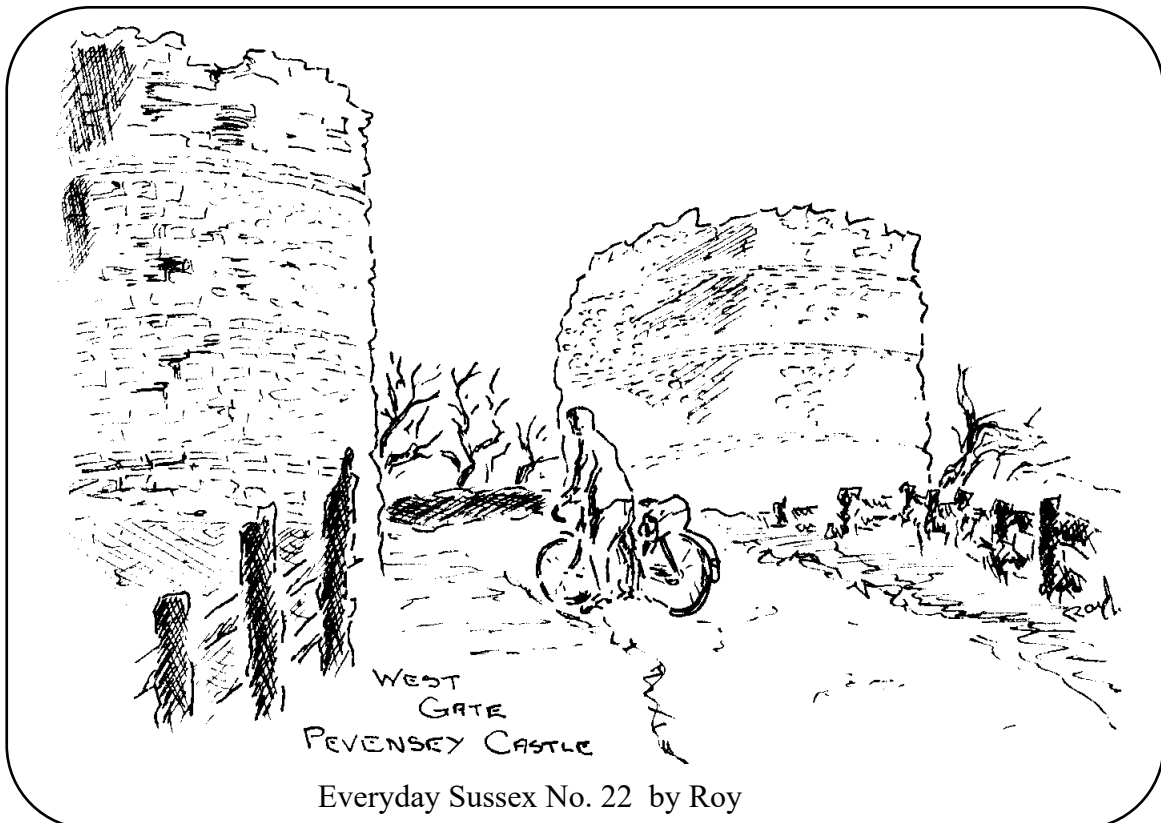
Groups of cyclists using Wroxall's narrow lanes are putting the lives of other road users at risk, it is claimed.

Parish council chairman Mr. Adrian Gallop complained cyclists were riding two by two with complete disrespect for other road users.

He said the situation was particularly bad during the Island Randonnee on May 5 and suggested the council contacted cycle event organisers urging them to confine routes to the main roads.

Mr. Bert Kennedy said there was simply no need to use narrow lanes for cycle events.

(From the Isle of Wight County Press, May 1996)



## CYCLING - THE EARLY YEARS

(Thanks to Bill Whiting for these snippets, which were all collected in John Woodforde's "The Story of the Bicycle")



Bicycling is a healthy and manly pursuit with much to recommend it and, unlike other foolish crazes, it has not died out.

The Daily Telegraph, 7th September 1877.

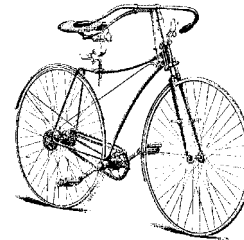
On wood pavement, a well-made tricycle constitutes one of the most agreeable, quickest and cheapest means of transport it is possible to conceive.

Letter to The Times, 1882, on a proposal to tax tricyclists.

Largely through the efforts of Lord Albermarle, who became president of the National Cyclists' Union in 1883, danger boards were put up at the top of steep hills. They were solid plates of iron, bearing the words To Cyclists this Hill is Dangerous. Within a year or two they were to be seen all over the country. (There was one on the Southborough to Speldhurst road until recently - W.P.W.)

There is only one phrase to describe his (Mr. Hoopdriver's) course at this stage, and that is - voluptuous curves. He did not ride fast, he did not ride straight, an exacting critic might say he did not ride well - but he rode generously, opulently, using the whole road and even nibbling at the footpath. The excitement never flagged.

H.G. Wells - The Wheels of Chance, Dent, 1896.



One hears of her in the neighbourhood of Windsor flying down-hill with two or three companions as daring as herself, all hand-in-hand, and not one of them even attempting to guide their machines, but trusting to balance. The very good riders all pride themselves upon being able to ride without touching their handles; and Miss Muriel Wilson, another smart cyclist, has been seen again and again in Hull with one hand thrust in her coat pocket and the other engaged in holding up her parasol.

Mrs. Harcourt-Williamson writing about Lady Cairns.

Bicycles, wrote Mrs. Gwen Raverat, (recalling life in the late 1890's) gradually became the chief vehicles for ladies paying calls. They would even tuck up their trains and ride out to dinner on them. One summer evening my parents rode ten miles to dine at Six Mile Bottom; their evening clothes were carried in cases on the handlebars; for of course, you couldn't possibly dine without dressing .... But when my mother came to dress that evening, she found that, though the bodice and train were there, the skirt had been left behind.

In the late 1880's the C.T.C. adopted (and sold) a neat uniform for its members (assisted by a jury of experts). It comprised a West of England 'tweed' with a small check pattern in grey. It did not show the dust, it was easy to wash, and

was tough enough to withstand any amount of wear. The jacket reached to just below the saddle, but for elderly cyclists it was a little longer. It was single breasted and cut high-up around the throat. The bottom of the front of the jacket was cut away in two curves to stop it rubbing against the stem and becoming oily. Riders with overdeveloped calves were recommended to wear baggy knickerbockers, but the thin were advised to encase them in closely fitting knee breeches. A deer-stalker hat was generally considered sensible headwear.

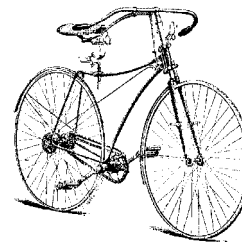
To Marie, riding my bicycle.

Brake, brake, brake

On my brand-new tyre, Marie!

And I would that my tongue could utter

The thoughts that arise in me.



Oh well for the fishmonger's boy

That his bicycle's mean and squalid;

Oh well for the butcher lad

That the tyres of his wheel are solid!

And

the reckless scorchers scorch

With hanging purple heads,

But

O for the tube that is busted up

And the tyre that is cut to shreds.



Brake, brake, brake -

Thou has broken indeed, Marie,

And

the rounded form of my Dunlop

Will never come back to me.

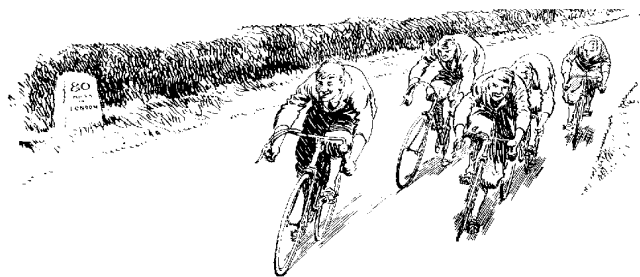
('Punch' in the late 1880's with apologies to Tennyson)

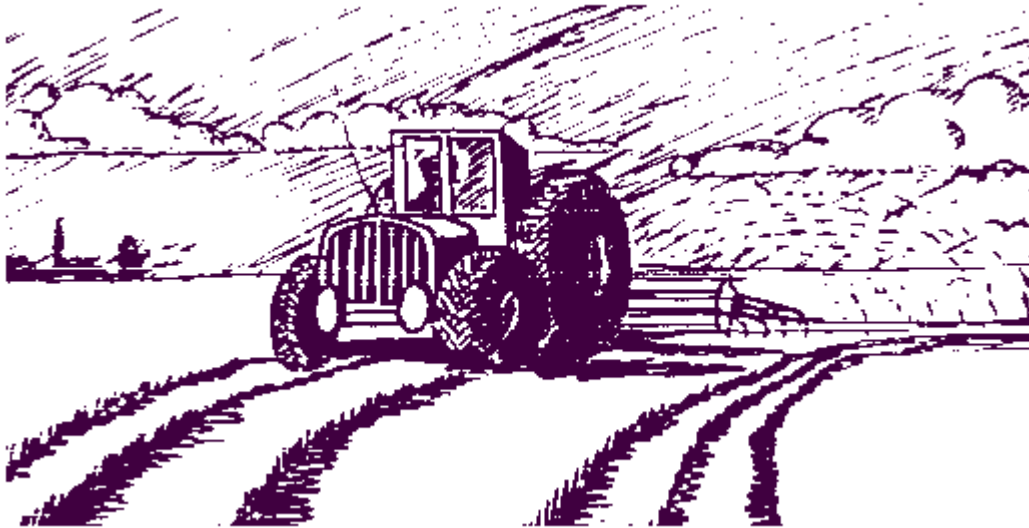
(Referring to the problems of 'spoon' brakes on the new air-filled Dunlop tyres.)

It is difficult to estimate the increase it has made in the average pace of the cycle, whilst it has not only made the task of propulsion at a given pace so much easier, but it has materially reduced the vibration - a point which specifically appeals to the elderly and more nervous rider. The younger cyclists, when the tyre was first introduced, were apparently not conscious of the vibration .... but without doubt they would be fully aware of it today if they changed from their air-filled machines to the solid-tyred cycles of 1888.

Lacy  
writing in

Hillier,  
1895.





### The Farmer's Lament

Dirty days hath September,  
April, June and November.  
From January up till May,  
The rain it raineth every day.  
All the rest have thirty-one,  
Without a blessed gleam of sun.  
And if any of them had two and thirty,  
They'd be just as wet and twice as dirty.

Anon. (seen at Washbrooks Farm)

