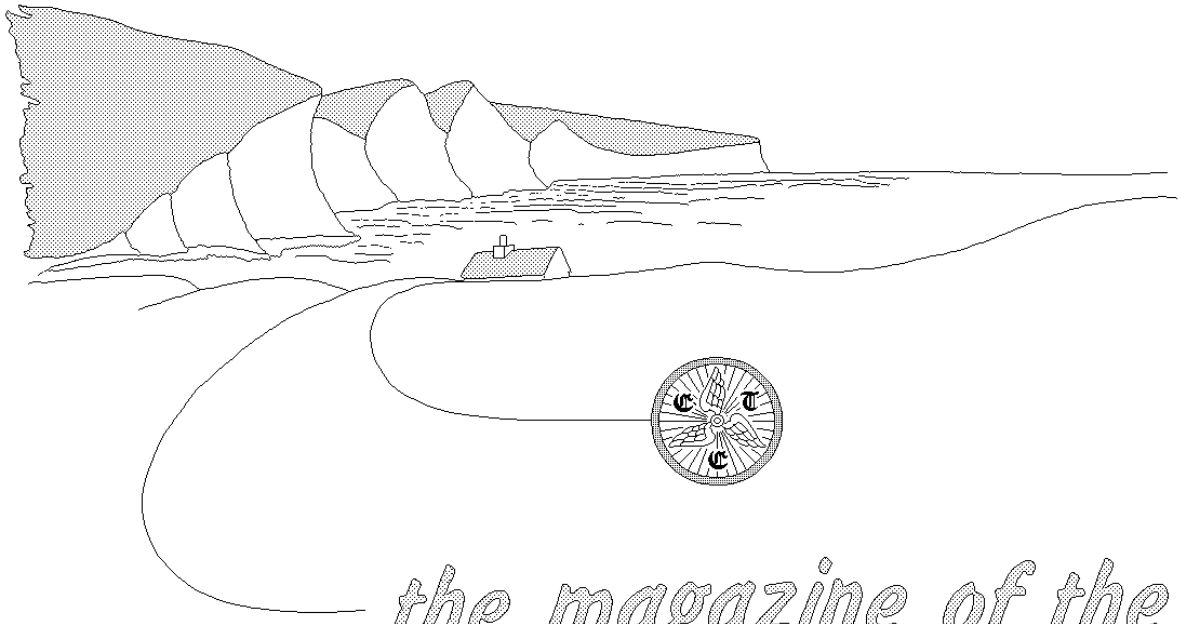
The Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 32 - Christmas 1997

50p

East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club

President - Ted Haynes

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

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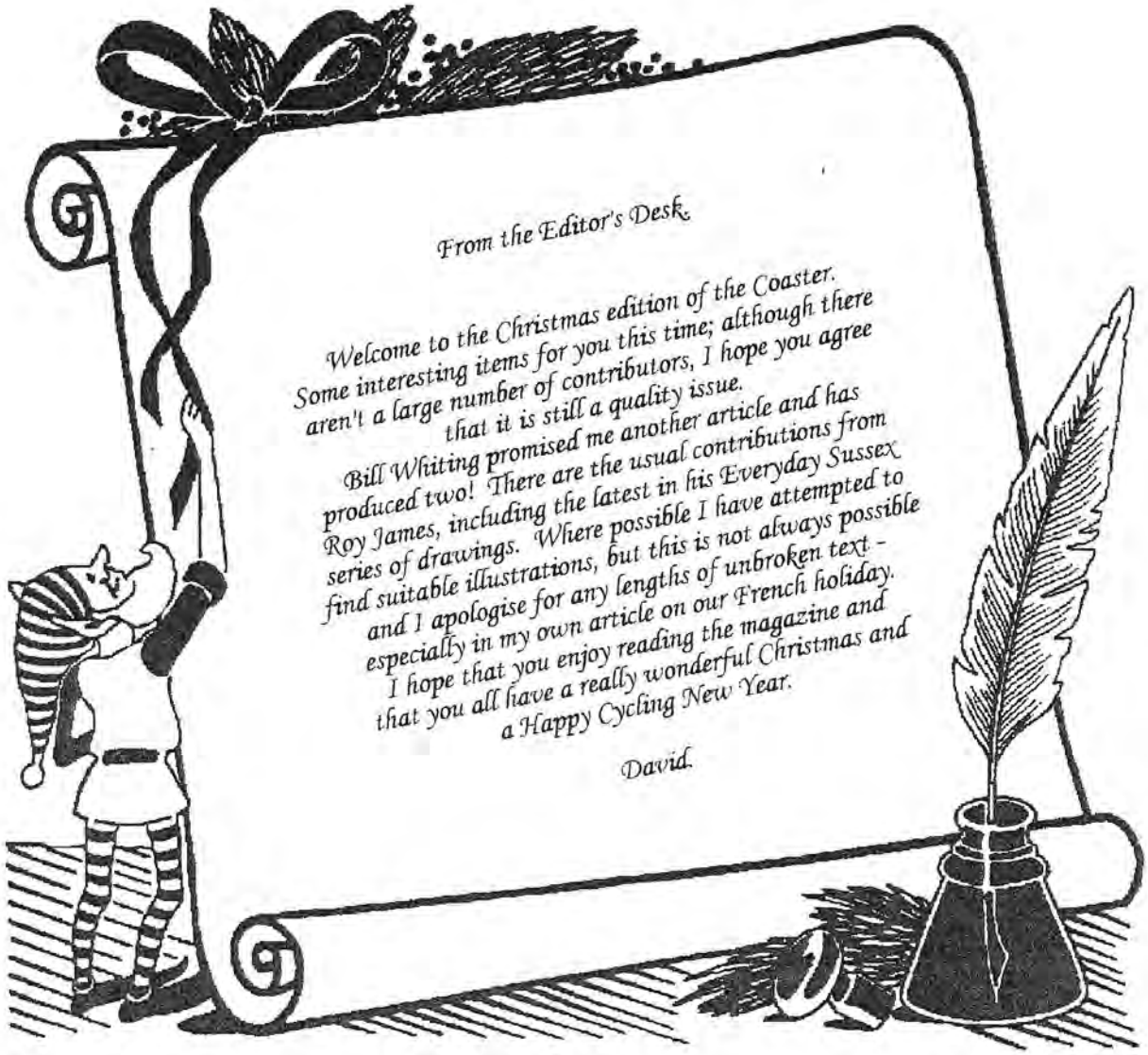

From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to the Christmas edition of the Coaster. Some interesting items for you this time; although there aren't a large number of contributors, I hope you agree that it is still a quality issue.

Bill Whiting promised me another article and has produced two! There are the usual contributions from Roy James, including the latest in his Everyday Sussex series of drawings. Where possible I have attempted to find suitable illustrations, but this is not always possible and I apologise for any lengths of unbroken text - especially in my own article on our French holiday.

I hope that you enjoy reading the magazine and that you all have a really wonderful Christmas and a Happy Cycling New Year.

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 Meadrow,
Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3HS

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

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

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

Sections & Secretaries:-

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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IMPRESSIONS WHILST CYCLING THROUGH SUSSEX

by Janice Newman

(For those who haven't met her, Janice is a visually impaired cyclist who helped organise the International Metro Rally for similar cyclists when it was held in Britain in 1993.)

I have been heard to say, while participating in sporting activities, that if it doesn't hurt, I'm not enjoying myself. I am finding that it is not necessarily the case when cycling in Sussex. Until recently I had not often had the opportunity to ride in this county, and to discover its pleasures, but now, thanks to my friends Jenny and Geoff Boxall, who have welcomed me so warmly into their fold, I am discovering the local wonders.

I live on the outskirts of London, and I am lucky enough to have an assortment of steersmen to ride my tandem with me, but we have to ride some distance to get away from the noisy polluted roads. So it is refreshing when riding with Geoff to be surrounded by lovely quiet leafy lanes and fresh air. I remember one Saturday morning, when Geoff and I were on our way to meet "The Saturday Club", it was delightfully sunny spring day, and we stopped down one of those lanes for me to inspect a clump of wild primroses and the grassy verge. Later in the year, to look at Clematis cascading over a wall, and honey-suckle tangled in the hedgerow, filling the air with sweet scent. Geoff always likes me to get close to what he wants me to see, and on one memorable occasion, on the beach, I got my feet wet when a wave rushed in while I wasn't looking. The Loom Mill near Hailsham was an absolute delight to me, where we spent several hours looking at the thousands of different fabrics and yarns, and purchasing hand-made crafts. Poor Geoff thought we would never get away.

Now, I am sure Jenny won't mind me saying, but Geoff and I do not have an intimate relationship, though when you are riding tandem together you do build a certain rapport. I first met Geoff in 1993, when he volunteered his services as steersman, when we organised an international ride for visually impaired stokers. Poor Geoff got lumbered with me. We hardly got a chance to know one another then because I was pre-occupied, wondering if we had organised each day properly. Anyway, recently he invited me to do the "Bright'n Breezy" Audax 200 km. If we didn't discuss intimate details before, I don't think Jenny will mind, under these extreme circumstances, if we did now. We all started off the ride very 'Bright'n Breezy', and it was a pleasure to meet other Audax riders, and we chatted as we went. We paced ourselves well, and everything seemed to be going well, but as we passed the halfway point, I became more and more saddle sore. I tried to suffer silently, but as the silence grew longer, only interrupted by my long sighs and sounds of discomfort, Geoff realised my problem. We discussed the pro's and con's of not wearing knickers under cycling shorts, and the various potions recommended for this ailment. Whilst finding this interesting conversation helped to pass a few miles, my bottom was becoming increasingly sorer and hotter. We pulled into the grassy verge, on what thankfully was an otherwise deserted road, Geoff dived into his pannier, produced a container filled with a creamy substance, and said,

"Dip your finger in there, put it down the back of your shorts and apply where necessary."
If he had not been looking the other way he would have seen instant relief on my face.

"It's cooling and soothing," I said.

"Oh yes! It's put many a fire out that stuff." he said.

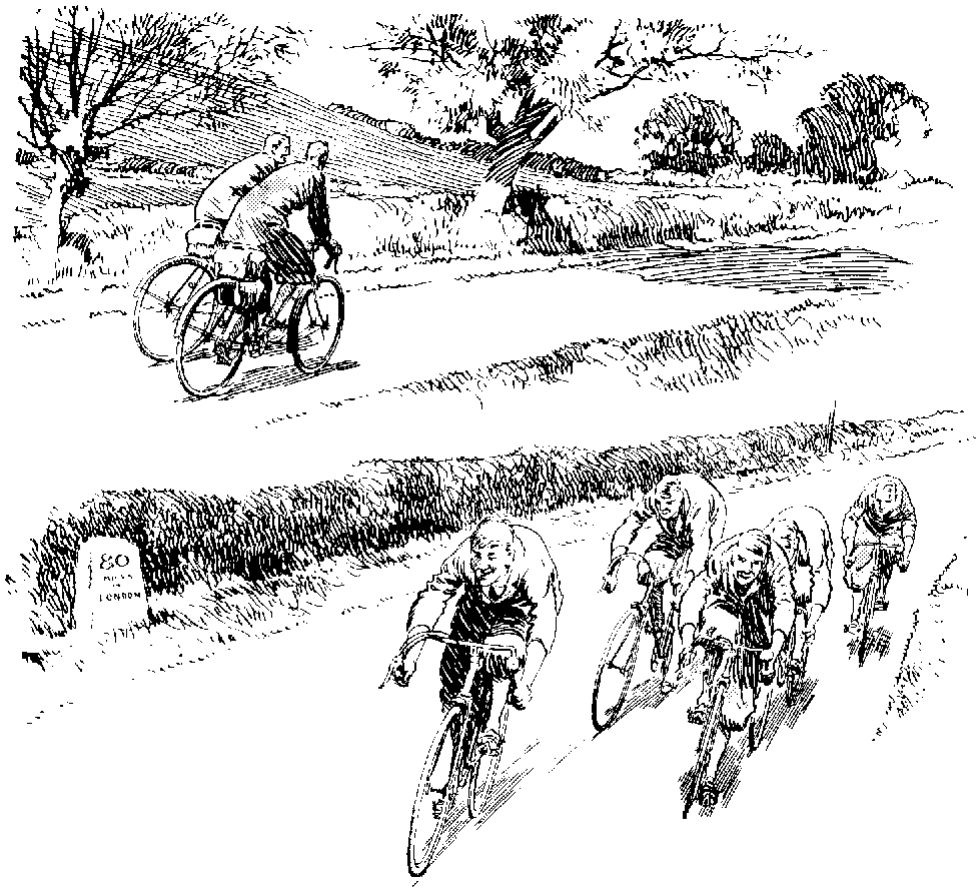
"What is it?" I asked.

"Drapoline." he said, "It's what they use for nappy rash."

I think I had zinc on my bottom when I was a baby, but evidently things have changed since then. It never occurred to me before, that babies all over the world are experiencing such bliss.

We completed our 200 km in 11 hours. We met some very friendly people along the way. We were not feeling so 'Bright'n Breezy' towards the end, we all hurt a little, so it shows we enjoyed ourselves.

Geoff, thank you for giving me the chance to meet the challenge, and Jenny, thanking you for lending me your husband.



A SHORT HISTORY OF THE SAFETY BICYCLE

by Bill Whiting

Let's forget Leonardo da Vinci and his drawings of a bicycle*, the trumpet blowing cherub riding a 'hobby horse' in Stoke Poges parish church's stained glass window of 1642, the Frenchmen Niepce and Michaux of the early 19th Century, even Baron Drais de Saverbrunn of Mannheim and his Draisienne of 1818. The safety bicycle of a design not too far removed from current style seems to date back to H J Lawson, when he patented his 'Bicyclette' in 1879. (His trade name soon entered the French language though he was very British!)

Harry J. Lawson was a colourful, dynamic and powerul little man with an eye to making money. Later, in the 1890s, he was to gain fame (or notoriety?) for buying the British end of Daimler and acquiring most of the worthwhile master patents on the design and development of the early motor vehicles - but that is another story.

Lawson's 'Bicyclette' had a large (40") front wheel and a small rear wheel (24" diameter) driven by a chain. The front wheel steering was indirect, via rods to bars on the top tube near the rider. The diamond shape of the frame was very rudimentary.

Only a few were built as the machine failed to excite the cycling fraternity which was still wedded to the Ordinary. However the Rover, built along similar lines in 1884, was a success even though it, too, had indirect steering. BSA also produced a safety bicycle of virtually identical appearance in the same year.

The 1885 Rover, built by J.K. Starley was perhaps the first safety bicycle of now familiar shape. It had direct steering and wheels of nearly similar size. What is mor e, it had tangentially spoked wheels, another of Starley's inventions. In the same year, the Premier safety bicycle went on sale. It had equal sized wheels which were radially spoked.

The year 1886 saw the first practical tandem, built by Dan Allbone and A J Wilson. (Dan was a well-known and successful racing cyclist with the North Road Club.) the machine had a single diagonal backbone offering a low rear saddle. It had indirect steering, though for 1887 the steering was made direct.

Cycle design moved forward slowly over the next few years. However in 1893 a Dane, Mikali Pedersen, who had settled in England, developed a radically new design of frame. It was completely triangulated with light, duplicated tubes. The apexes of the triangles assimilated the principal stresses. Many readers will recall the unusual shape of his frame (copied more recently by a firm in Eastern England, with Shimano components!). Manufacture of the Pedersen was carried out at Humber's Beeston works in 1897. However, the works was closed in 1902. A new production line was established at R.A. Lister's factory at Dursley, near Stroud - these machines became known as Dusrley Pedersen. It was produced in mens and ladies styles. Production continued until 1914 at Dursley though a version was made by Stephenson

Cantilever Cycle Company until the early 1920s.

Apart from rare excursions from the accepted norm (such as the Pedersen), cycle frame design remained relatively unchanged until after the 1939-45 war. In the latter years of the war, a cycling journalist, Frank Urry, proposed a variety of novel ideas including a small wheel bike. The concept was taken up by A V Roe (of aircraft fame) but again, it did not fire up enthusiasm amongst cyclists and faded from the scene. Only in the mid 1960s when Alex Moulton of Austin Mini fame designed his now famous small wheeled, rubber suspended cycle did the next major advance really become a commercial viability. Now cycles such as Bike Friday and Bickerton as well as Alex's Moulton, are popular and very successful.

Many components that we take for granted also have a 'history'. Take the free wheel, for example. The ongoing improvements in the chain driven safety cycle led to the invention of a reliable free-wheel in 1891. However, cycle braking systems were not up to scratch - a fixed wheel is a surprisingly useful feature when brakes are inadequate! Harold Bowden (owner of Raleigh) was the first to improve braking, by his invention of wheel rim brakes (1900)
Hill climbing (on our then unsealed, rough, roads) was made easier by the introduction of derailleur gears and simple 3 speed hubs during the 1390s. Bowden offered the Sturmey-Archer 3 speed hub on his cycles in 1902. The Armstrong-Triplex hub was introduced in 1906.

Rough English roads were not conducive to comfort or speed of two wheeled progress. The development of the pneumatic tyre in 1889 was to change all that for the better. Many endurance and long distance records were established as a result. The desire to know how far one has traveled has always obsessed the cyclist from the earliest days. The first practical cyclometer was invented by J C Thompson in 1877. It had three dials for yards, miles and tens of miles. The maximum reading was 100 miles. It was quite a bulky affair hut by 1900 compact cyclometers, some with a bell to sound on each mile, were available. These were basically revolution counters relying on a spoke mounted striker engaging with a star wheel on the instrument - a far cry from the Hall-effect magnetic triggered computers that adorn many a handlebar in the 1990s.

One wonders where cycle design will move next. Current trends towards sealed throw-away components are not necessarily an improvement - especially when they disintegrate on a Wednesday ride! Some of us remember the long life we experienced from hubs and bottom brackets with oil holes! Design has changed much over the last 120 years. I wonder if we will recognise a cycle in 2120?

(*Editor's note: For those of you who may have missed it, a Vatican priest recently admitted to having done the 'Leonardo bicycle' during the '60s - he was doodling on the back of one of Leonardo's sheets of drawings.)

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CHRISTMAS PAST

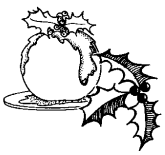
A Dickensian Christmas: the Original Article

(from "The Making of Charles Dickens" by Christopher Hibbert)

Every Christmas Charles Dickens *took his children to a toy shop in Holburn to buy them presents, and would give marvellous parties.*

There was one memorable Christmas, in particular, the one after he finished the *Christmas Carol.* He had been utterly absorbed in the theme of that book, throwing himself into the writing of it with an enthusiasm that he had scarcely ever felt before, sharing the joys and sorrows of his characters as though they were his own. He had always been liable to do this, being as moved to tears by the tragedy of Little Nell, as to laughter by the comedy of his letters - George Putnam noticed in American how, when he was writing to his friends at home, Dickens's face would be "convulsed with laughter at his own fun". Now, over the *Christmas Carol,* he admitted that he "wept and laughed, and wept again, and excited himself in a most extraordinary manner in the composition; and thinking whereof he walked about the back streets of London fifteen and twenty miles a night when all sober folks had gone to bed". He had finished it in less than two months, despite a great deal of unaccustomed rewriting, and then, again in his own words, " broke out like a madman".

And so at Christmas there were "such dinings, such dancings, such conjurings, such blind-man's-buffings, such theatregoings, such kissings-out of old years and kissings-in of new ones" as had ever taken place "in these parts before". An at a children's party at the Macready's house his excitement was feverish. He performed a country dance with Mrs. Macready; he displayed his remarkable skill as a conjuror, producing a plum pudding from an empty saucepan and heating it up over a blazing fire in Clarkson Stanfield's hat, ("without damage to the lining"), changing a box of bran into a live guinea-pig. Jane Carlyle who was at the party and watched him exert himself until "the perspiration was pouring down", thought that, although he seemed "*drunk*" with his efforts, he was "the *best* conjuror" she had ever seen.



Thackeray was there, too, and Forster, and they were all "madder than ever" after supper with the "pulling of crackers, the drinking of champagne, and the making of speeches". Then the dancing started and Forster seized Jane Carlyle round the waist and whirled her into the thick of it. "For the love of heaven let me go," she cried out. "You are going to dash my brains out against the folding doors!" "Your *brains!*" he answered, "who cares about brains *here? Let them go!*"

Another Christmas, Dickens had galloped round the floor "for two mortal hours" with Mrs. Macready, after entertaining the children with a magic lantern and his conjuring tricks. Mamey and Katey had taught him the polka, and waking up in the night he had suddenly thought that he might have forgotten it, so he jumped out of bed and began hopping and prancing round the floor to remind himself of the step. At the party the next day, he went on dancing until everyone else was exhausted and gave in.

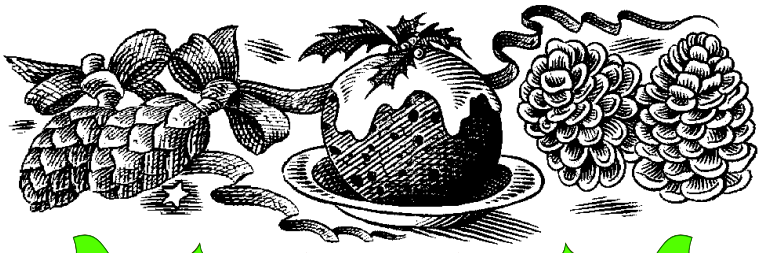
John Forster *was Dickens's closest friend and biographer;* William Macready, *another close friend, was a*

famous actor; Jane Carlyle, *critic and letter writer, was the wife of* Thomas Carlyle, *the essayist and historian, and one of the most intellectually brilliant women of her time;* Thackeray, *of course, was a renowned novelist and humourist;* Clarkson Stanfield *was an Irish marine painter.* Mamey (Mary) and Katey (Kate) *were Dickens's young daughters.* A Christmas Carol *appeared in 1843.*

And, in later years, at his home, Gad's Hill, near Rochester in Kent:

Christmas was still a special time for him, not as a religious festival but as a time in which selfishness was transformed into charity, friends and families were reunited and all brought "back to the delusions of our childish days".

At Christmas time the house was sometimes so full that guests had to be boarded out in the Falstaff Inn over the way or in a nearby cottage; and their host would take the whole week off from his work to entertain them. On Christmas Day itself they would all sit round the big mahogany table in the dining-room, surrounded by the holly and ivy which covered the walls and dangled from the gas brackets; and when the flaming pudding came in they would greet it by clapping, and Dickens would give his traditional toast: "Here's to us all! God bless us!"



END OF STORY.

by Roy James

Ten years ago, in the Winter edition of "The Coaster", I wrote an unashamedly fictitious piece called 'A Sort of Ghost Story'. This was based on my feelings after a few days in November of that year, cycling around Ypres and nearby war graves, searching for the memorial to my wife's uncle George who was killed in 1917. Little did I know that a true account of my visit would be stranger than any fiction and that the matter would not be settled for more than a decade

I quote from my diary entry for 10th November 1987.

> "I am sitting at the bar of the 'Old Tom' with a beer after a most exciting day, of which I shall now try to give a coherent account. My first call this morning was to the office of the War Graves Commission in the Elverdingestraat where I gave an assistant the very sketchy details as given to me, i.e. George Smith, Eastbourne, killed 1917, Royal Sussex or Royal Artillery. We went into a room lined with leather-bound books and there we found seven George Smiths of the Royal Sussex Regiment, but only one killed in 1917. His name is not just on a memorial, but there is a grave in the cemetery of St. Jan le Ypres only about six miles away."

Surprised and elated at my success I set off for the village of St. Jan. I quote my diary once more.

> "And there was the grave. It doesn't matter to whom I tell the story, it will not hit them as it did me. It was like a blow to the heart. Anyway, I took two photos (I hope they come out) and signed the visitors' book for Ami, Ida and Edie (his sisters), then returned here to Ypres where tomorrow I hope to spend an hour at their war museum.

Two days later I was back home and giving June all the details of the trip. All went well until I gave her George's address that the War Graves office had given me.

"Uncle George lived in Bourne Street, not Leslie Street," she said.

What a shock it was to discover that I had not discovered the grave of our George Smith, but of another who - as those of you who know Eastbourne well will be aware - would have lived not more than a hundred yards away and had been killed in the same year. They could even have gone to the same school together.

About a year ago I was visiting the Eastbourne Central Library and on the spur of the moment asked to see the Eastbourne War Memorial Book and in it found the entry:-

L/cpl George Victor Smith 532144
Royal Engineers
Home address 34 Bourne Street.

Supplied with additional information, in the form of his army number, I wrote to the War Graves Commission and a week later received the following reply:-

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Dear Mr. James,

Than you for your letter received three days ago and I am pleased to see that you have managed to locate some further details to assist us in the trace of your uncle who was killed in the 1914-1918 war. Sadly he has no known grave. However, in common with the thousands of other servicemen who have no grave, he is commemorated on The Pozieres Memorial, France. Servicemen from the Royal Engineers are commemorated on panels 10 to 13 of this memorial.

Pozieres Memorial encloses Pozieres British Cemetery, which is on the north-west side of the Albert - Bapaume road, 6 kilometres from Albert.

I am pleased that we have been able to help you identify your uncle.

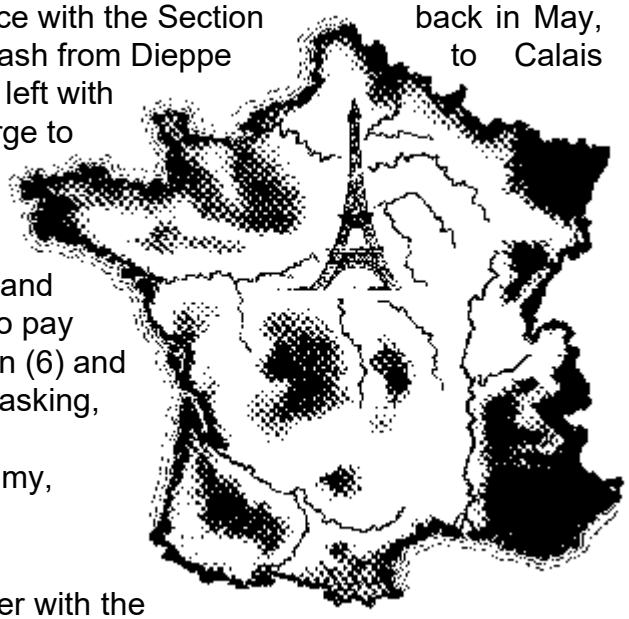
Yours sincerely

J Gimblett

for Director-General

FOUR GO TO FRANCE

by David Rix



Having had an enjoyable holiday in France with the Section back in May, which finished with a dramatic evening dash from Dieppe to Calais in a tremendous thunder storm, we were left with £40 in compensation vouchers and an urge to return to Normandy for a family holiday. We worked out that we could just get in with the car on a five day ticket before The end of the school summer holidays, and With the vouchers we would only have to pay half price. As the time approached Martin (6) and Emma (3) were getting excited and kept asking,

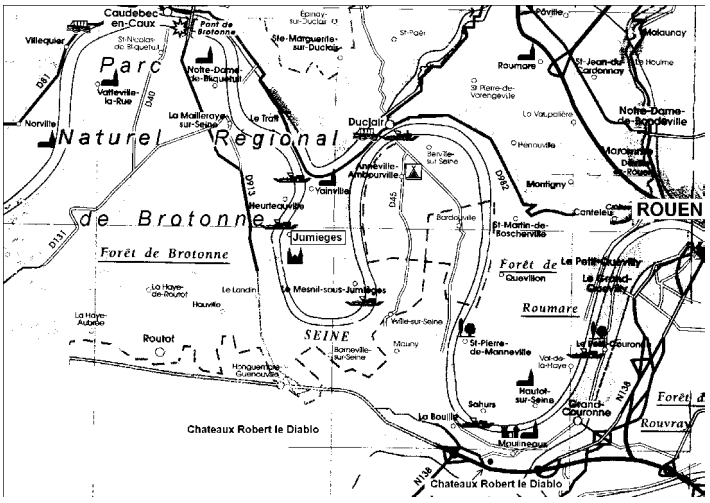
"where are we going?".

"France", came the reply from Mummy,

"Normandy", said Daddy.

We knew we were taking the car, together with the bikes and camping gear, but at this point we had still not decided exactly where we were going. We had been looking at the maps on and off for several weeks. Finally, almost the day before we went, we decided to head for Jumièges, on the Seine, where Susan & I had been years ago on one of the D.A. camping tours; this would give us an opportunity to visit Rouen again, also to explore the area around the Forêt de Brotonne, which we had only seen briefly on previous visits, and to take Martin & Emma on some of the little Seine ferries.

Finally the day arrived and we boarded the 6.45 am Lynx ferry from Newhaven for the 2¾ hour crossing to Dieppe - it should have been 2¼ hours but, surprise! surprise!, one of the engines broke down part way across. Once in Dieppe we ignored the "all other traffic" signs and followed the "centre ville" ones, turning off before crossing the bridge to pick up the D1 and made our way from there round to the D3 south towards Rouen, thus avoiding the long detour that the new port road sends you on. We left the D3 at Cleres and took the D6 to Pavilly, where we stopped for lunch and a look round the saturday street market, and then joined the D 143, which took us to the Seine at Duclair. We spent a little while looking round and checking out the local shops - then it was only a short distance on minor roads to Jumièges and the campsite. On arrival we followed the camp site signs, which led the way we remembered, but then found they led past the stade (playing field) to a brand new municipal camp site just beyond. On enquiring we discovered that the charges were a little bit more than we had expected, but the facilities were also better than the old site with excellent washing facilities, hot showers, and a small swimming pool, amongst other things, all included in the price. We actually paid the equivalent of £36 for the four of us for four nights - not too bad since we had to pay for the car, one disadvantage of not being able to cycle camp with the kids.



Jumièges lies on the side of one of the big meandering loops of the Seine, about 20 km West of Rouen, and is dominated by the twin towers of its ruined abbey. It also makes a good centre for exploring the area. We were hoping the weather would be alright since the last day or two had not been so good and on the drive down we had several heavy showers. Luckily Friday dawned fairly fine and so we decided on a bit of castle visiting. Three miles down the road we arrived at the ferry landing at le Mesnil sous Jumièges just as Emma fell on the back of the tandem. We decided not to disturb her, feeling that she needed the extra sleep after the previous long day, she then woke up the moment we disembarked and was rather upset to learn that she'd missed her first ferry trip - black mark for Mummy & Daddy. The great thing about the Seine ferries is that they are free for foot passengers - and cyclists! - so you can hop backwards and forwards across the river as much as you like.

We had a bit of a climb over the kneck of the loop and then a pleasant ride along by the Seine to la Bouille, where we stopped for coffee at a pavement cafe in a nice little pedestrianised corner and the weather decided we needed damping down a little. Luckily we had our refreshments in the dry and were able to take shelter in a local shop and but the day's provisions whilst the rain passed over. A short climb up from la Bouille and we reached our destination, the Chateau de Robert-le-Diable, the Castle of Robert the Devil, perched on the hilltop over looking the Seine with magnificent views over the river valley and surrounding countryside. Unfortunately it now also has a magnificent view of the A13, the Main autoroute linking Caen, Rouen and Paris which runs right past the Castle and the noise of the traffic is continuous. Luckily Martin and Emma were more concerned with being able to explore a real Castle. Much of it is ruined, but the self-guided tour takes you on a journey of exploration, through a reconstruction of the wooden chapel housing a viking long-boat, then up onto the battlements, down through the dungeons, up to the top of one of the surviving towers and then down again to emerge into the dry moat and return to your starting point. On the way round there are waxwork exhibitions depicting scenes from early French history, including the life of William the Conqueror. Martin and Emma thoroughly enjoyed it, especially the spiral staircases and long winding passageways. Our picnic lunch was eaten in the little picnic area (with the noise of the autoroute in the background!) and then Martin talked us into a game of crazy golf on their little course before we headed back.

A shower or two caught us in the afternoon as we headed north along the Seine to cross the river to Duclair - making sure this time that Emma was awake for the ferry trip! A bit of shopping and a stop at the Syndicat d'Initiative for some local leaflets,

then it was back down on the other bank of the river to le Mesnil sous Jumièges, where we stopped for a snack and watched the ferry come in, before heading back

to camp. We had been lucky not to get very wet and wondered what Saturday, when we planned to visit Rouen, had in store for us.

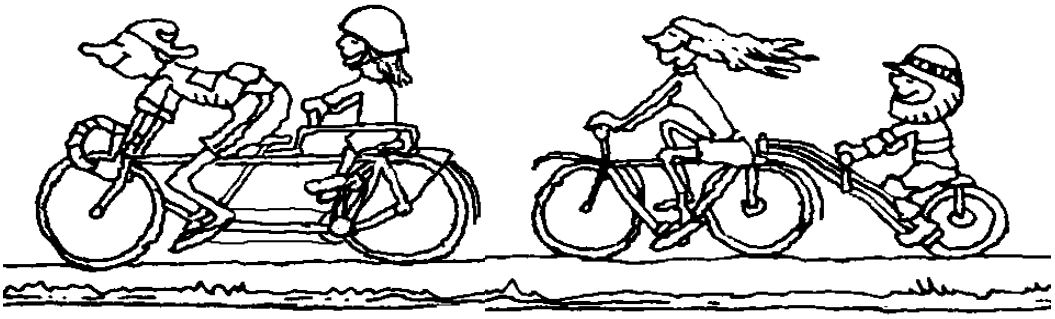
We woke to a grey, threatening sky and made the decision to leave the bikes at camp and go all the way by car - it proved a wise decision as we had wet weather for most of the morning. The drive into Rouen proved relatively easy and, using a map we had picked up the day before, we headed for one of the city centre multi-storey car parks and were surprised, especially on a Saturday, to find plenty of space and at a very reasonable charge, in a car park only a few hundred yards from the very centre. We were also surprised to find that the machines for paying catered for responses in different languages.

The first order of the day was to find coffee and then decide what to look at. We headed for the Place du Vieux Marché (the old market place), where we had coffee (or in Martin & Emma's case cola) in the same cafe as a young, cycle-camping dutch couple who had been at the camp site the night before. We decided to take a walk through the old part of the city, seeing the old medieval buildings and some of the other sights, but first we took them into the Church of Saint Joan of Arc to see the magnificent stained glass windows, which had originally been in the church of Saint Vincent (destroyed during the last war) and had been painstakingly restored here. We then headed along the pedestrianised Rue du Gros Horloge, with its splendid clock crowned archway, admiring the old buildings and window shopping. Taking the opportunity to hunt for a new jacket for Martin, we visited a few of the French department stores, but the only things we came away with were some new books for both of them. We were quite surprised though to find that C&A and Marks & Spencer have both now opened stores in Rouen, and we also noticed a few other familiar names on our way round.

Reaching the cathedral square we decided to eat in one of the restuarants there - luckily the rain had cleared up and we were able to sit at one of the tables set out in the square. We then had a look around the Cathedral , before taking a wander through the old streets to the gardens behind the town hall, where we found a playground for Martin and Emma whilst Munny and Daddy sat down for a rest. Then, giving in to Martin and Emma's pleas, it was back to the Cathedral square for a ride on the "Le Petit Train de Rouen", the local Dotto train, which took us on a 40 minute guided tour (French & English commentary) round the heart of the city, taking in all the main sights. We then felt we had seen all we could take in, in one visit, and headed back to the car and thence returned to camp for our evening meal. The weather was showing a real improvement and we hoped for good cycling weather the next day.

Sunday dawned bright and clear as, breakfast over, we almost coasted the 1 km down to the Jumiege ferry. As we disembarked on the other side a French club were just arriving for the return trip and we attracted quite a bit of attention with the kiddy-back tandem and the trailer-bike - though it might have been the flourescent pink tape on Emma's safety bars! Leaving the ferry we started the climb up the side of the river valley to the Forêt de Brotonne. Luckily most French roads are better graded than ours and the climb, even with the children, was not too strenuous. At the top we took the quiet road along the edge of the Forest and then turned off along one of the unmetalled Route Forestiers (forest roads). Many of these are excellent, the equivalent of our New Forest gravelled tracks, and this one was no exception. We travelled along this for several kilometres enjoying the scenery and peace and quiet and then, with careful checking of the map, negotiated a short bit of road and turned onto another track. This eventually brought us out on the South side of the Forest where we wandered through some pretty little villages, including Hauville, which has the only working windmill in Normandy.

Then it was back into the Forest where after several kilometers of quiet roads we turned off onto another Route Forestier, slightly less well used this time, which eventually brought us out into the Rond du Nagu (the circle, or ring, of the star), a clearing in the forest which is the intersection of 6 different tracks. The French family enjoying their picnic lunch seemed rather surprised to see us emerge from the track which, with grass growing up the centre, was obviously not well used, and they would probably have been even more surprised, had they still been there when we had finished *our* picnic, to have seen us leaving not by the well used access road but up another track that led upwards and seemed even less well used. Their was however method to this madness, the track I had picked brought us out in about 1 km into a car park which was almost at the top of the long road through the centre of the Forest, and saved us about a 5 km ride round. Susan and Martin received a round of applause from a French family picnicing at the edge of the car park, as they cycled up the last section of the track.



A few quiet roads through the top of the forest and then we descended through the trees to the banks of the Seine. Here we joined the quiet road that followed this loop of the Seine, wandering off occasionally onto the little side roads through the villages on what was sign-posted the "Route des Chaumières" - the route of the cottages. The south bank of this section of the river is known for its large number of thatched dwellings and all along here were typical Normandy cottages, with many having flowers growing along the ridge of their thatch. We stopped at a quiet

road-side bar at St. Nicolas-de-Bliquetuit, where Martin and Emma had a chance to enjoy themselves on some play equipment, then we passed over the main road, within sight of the Pont de Brotonne, and down the other side of the loop. Our route led us through several pleasant villages, and past some picturebook country cottages, to emerge again beside a wide section of the Seine that afforded views for a kilometre or more along the river in each direction. We followed the Seine down until we came in sight of the twin towers of the ruined Jumièges Abbey, standing proud amongst the trees across the river, and were soon back at the ferry we had left that morning. Martin and Emma clung to the railings, watching the river, as we crossed back to the grandly named Port Jumièges - about half a dozen houses and a ticket booth! - then it was back through Jumièges itself, now bustling with tourists, to the campsite. We got back relatively early, mainly due to Martin nagging us about wanting to go swimming in the little outdoor pool. He loved it, but Emma, though wanting to go in, was slightly more reluctant and waited until a group of French children left and they had the pool more or less to themselves.

The weather was not looking good for doing any cycling on our last day and so, as our ferry was not until 11 in the evening, I suggested to Susan that we pack up and leave, stop somewhere for coffee and then take the kids to a place we had passed on the way down called La Bocasse. La Bocasse, 2 km West of Cleres on the D6 is a delight for children, young and old; it is described as the largest children's theme park of its type in Normandy, and if you've got young children it's well worth a visit. There are all kinds of rides, for all age groups, from fairground type roundabouts to min-rollacoasters and water slides and, with lunch beside a mock-up western fort, we were there for about 5 hours. Martin & Emma loved it but eventually we had to leave to head back to Dieppe.

We arrived about 5 and checked first at the terminal that the Lynx was running - we didn't wan't to get caught out again. Oh yes, Susan was told, but it's running a little late - what they didn't say was how late! Thinking we were alright we went for a wander round the shopping streets, before settling on a waterfront restaurant for an excellent evening meal. With a couple of hours to spare Martin wanted to walk along the seafront, and it was on our way back that we were greeted by the sight of the Lynx leaving the harbour. This was about 9 o'clock - it should have sailed at 5 - and so we realised there was no way it could get back for 11. When we finally checked in we found we had to transfer to the normal ferry at 3.45 as the Lynx had been having engine trouble. This meant that instead of arriving home at just after midnight, we actually got back at 7 the next morning. The wait in the car was not very comfortable, though we did get a little sleep there and on the ferry, and it was infinitely preferable to the long drive up to Calais. When we finally got back I was very glad I had booked the following day off work as well just in case!

We'd enjoyed our holiday and the problems getting home were slightly offset by the fact that we got another £40 worth of vouchers, which can go towards our next trip - Susan reckons that this means our crossing only cost us £8!




DID YOU KNOW?

JACOB'S POST AT DITCHLING - A DEADLY DEED.

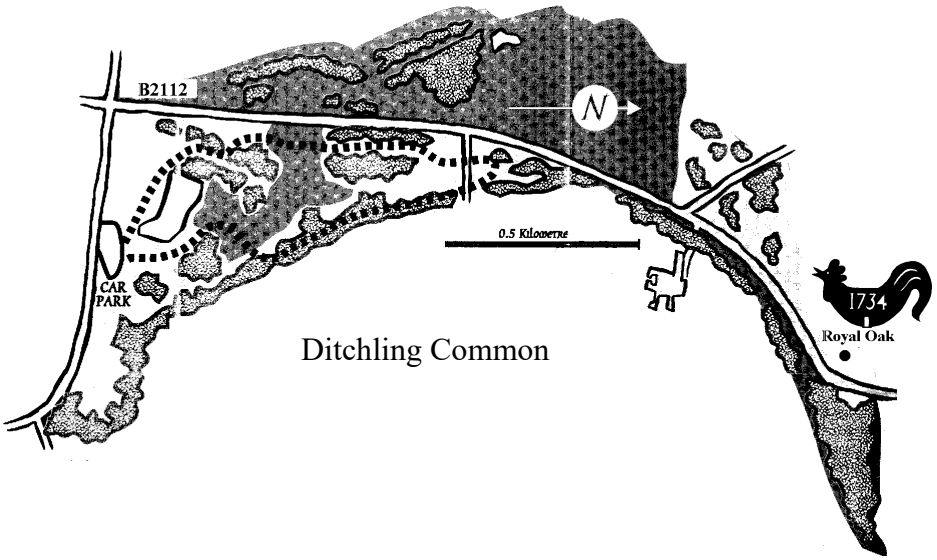
Jacob Harris, a travelling pedlar, murdered Richard Miles, landlord of the Royal Oak, his wife and their maid on 26th May 1734. Leaving them for dead, he stole a riding coat worth ten shillings and fled first to the Cat Inn, Turner's Hill. Hearing soldiers were hunting him, Jacob then hid up the chimney at Selsfield House, but was caught when they lit a fire to dry off.

Miles lived long enough to identify Jacob, who was taken to Horsham Gaol, He was executed and his body was returned to Ditchling and hung in a gibbet, until it disintegrated. The post, topped with a rooster, was left as a reminder of the crime, and a replica gibbet can be seen at Ditchling Museum. Jacob was also known by the Jewish name Yacob Hirsh and some say he was no more than a convenient scapegoat.

While Jacob's body was still on display, it was visited by barren women who would hold his hand in the belief that they would become fertile. In 1881 an old native of Newick told a local doctor attending an epileptic patient,

> "Ah, Sir, pity sure - a lye he 'adn't a bit of Jacob's Poist in his pocket - they do say no one wouldn't never 'ave this yere fallin sickness if he had a bit o' Jacob's Poist loike about 'im. Whoy Sir, people come moiles and moiles from round Ashdown Forest way to get a bit o' that poisty so as they shouldn't fall in these yere fits."

The apparent healing powers of the post existed long after the bones disappeared. As late as the nineteenth century people removed pieces of the post, carrying them around to ward off ills and cure the ague. Surprisingly, this practice did not stop when the post was replaced.

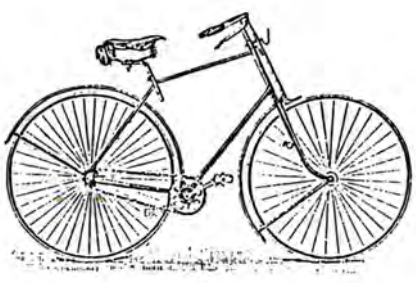


Ditchling Common

THE RALEIGH STORY

by Bill Whiting

Hong Kong has been much in the news recently on its return to Chinese control. It was acquired in early Victorian times, by the British, to provide a trading foothold with the Chinese nation. The climate is hot and humid, yet it became the location of many trading and financial companies.



In 1877 an employee of one of the trading companies, an Englishman by the name of Harold Bowden, found the climate was too much for him. On his return to England he settled in Harrogate where his doctor advised him he had only a few months to live. The same doctor suggested that cycling might ease the pain of his illness. Harold bought a bicycle and used it to such effect that he recovered within six months.

So interested was he by his means of recovery, Harold sought out the manufacturers of his cycle, a firm in Raleigh Street, Nottingham called Woodhead and Angois. His trading spirit led him to buy an interest in the company, eventually gaining complete control. With his entrepreneurial skills the firm grew rapidly.

In 1890 Harold floated the company and moved to larger premises in Russell Street. He recruited a record-breaking cyclist, G P Mills, to design and to manage the company. This was clearly a very shrewd move. George Pilkington Mills (known as George Milkington Pills behind his back) was well-known and respected. By 1896 Raleigh (the name adopted by Harold for the firm) was the largest UK manufacturer, employing 850 workers and producing 30, 000 cycles a year. Consequently the factory had to move to even larger premises, in Faraday Road, Lenton, a suburb of Nottingham, the site the company still occupies, alongside the railway line to Sheffield.

With George running the day-to-day business of the company, Harold was able to lend his attention to several cycling developments - the most important being the rim operated brake for front and rear wheels, patented in 1900. Until then, braking was largely a matter of 'spoon' brakes rubbing on the tyre of a fixed wheel. The firm also designed its own 3 speed hub gear, though it was not the first in the field.

Raleigh became synonymous with quality cycles, built to last, with world wide customers. (Remember the advertisement in the 1930s of an African native escaping from a lion, on his Raleigh bicycle?). At a time when the bicycle progressed from being a luxury possession to being a mode of transport for the artisan, Raleigh retained its quality image. It even became the subject of a music hall song in the late 1890s:

"I've lost my pal, that's why I've got this pal-lor on my brow,
I used to be a cyclist, but I'm on the sick-list now.
My Sally rode a Raleigh and we went out every day,
But a beast on a Beeston Humber came and stole my love away.

Chorus -

"Sally rode a Raleigh, and I journeyed on a Rudge.
I said I'd stick to Sally, and she said she'd never budge.
But Mohawks came and Singers came, and Rovers without number,
And one fine day she rode away with a beast on a Beeston Humber."

By 1933 Raleigh was making over 200,000 cycles a year. By a quirk (of retribution?) it bought out Humber cycles, starting an acquisitive period - buying up a number of other manufacturers - Rudge-Whitworth in 1943, and BSA and Triumph during the early 1950s.

Following the 1939-45 war, the UK cycle industry had grouped itself into two major producers, Raleigh Industries, and the British Cycle Corporation (which comprised Phillips, Hercules, Sun, Armstrong and Norman). The BCC was taken over by Tube Investments Ltd. (who also owned Reynolds, the steel alloy tube makers). The inevitable happened in 1960 when Raleigh merged with BCC.

There was a time when riders were recommended "never buy a bicycle unless it has one of these", these being the bird-like badge and the welded fork crown with the dished, chromed sides - so rarely seen these days. One wonders if the decision made in 1959, not to buy rights to produce Alex Moulton's small wheel cycle design, would have contributed to the need to merge in 1960, thus losing the best part of its identity. It was not until 1965 that Raleigh introduced its RSW16, a 16 inch wheeled, unsprung cycle, with chunky tyres. Its sales drooped 8% in 1967. Eventually it bit the bullet and did a deal with Alex Moulton, acquiring his husiness and retaining him as a consultant. Incidentally, sales of Moultons in 1965 were around 70,000; little wonder that Raleigh had to eat humble pie.

BIRD SURPRISE

(A Traditional Christmas dish from about 1814)

Take a large olive, stone it and then stuff it with a paste made of anchovy, capers and oil.

Put the olive inside a trussed and boned be-figue.
Put the bec-figue inside a fat ortolan.
Put the ortolan inside a boned lark.
Put the stuffed lark inside a boned thrush.
Put the thrush inside a fat quail.
Put the quail, wrapped in vine leaves, inside a boned lapwing.
Put the lapwing inside a golden plover.

Put the plover inside a fat, boned, red-legged partridge.
Put the partridge inside a young, boned and well-hung woodcock.
Put the woodcock, rolled in bread-crumbs, inside a boned teal.
Put the teal inside a boned guinea-fowl.
Put the guinea-fowl, well-larded, inside a young and boned tame duck.

Put the duck inside a boned and fat fowl.
Put the fowl inside a well-hung pheasant.
Put the pheasant inside a boned and fat wild goose.

Put the goose inside a fine turkey.
Put the turkey inside a boned bustard.

Having arranged your roast after this fashion, place it in a large saucepan with several onions stuffed with cloves, carrots, small squares of ham, celery, mignonette, several strips of bacon well-seasoned, pepper, salt, spice, coriander seeds and two cloves of garlic.

Seal the saucepans hermetically by closing it with pastry. Then put it for ten hours over a gentle fire and arrange it so that the heat can penetrate evenly. An oven moderately heated will suit better than a hearth.

Before serving, remove the pastry, put the roast on a hot dish, after having removed the grease - if there is any - and serve.

Note:
For those interested the following have been abbreviated from the O.E.D. entries.

Bec-figue - probably **Beccafico**; a small european migratory bird of the genus *Sylvia*, eaten as a delicacy in Italy usually in the autumn when it has fattened on figs and grapes.

Ortolan (or Ortolan Bunting); a brownish Old World bunting, *Embiriza Hortulana*, regarded as a delicacy.

The O.E.D. does not however indicate whether either of these is still eaten today.

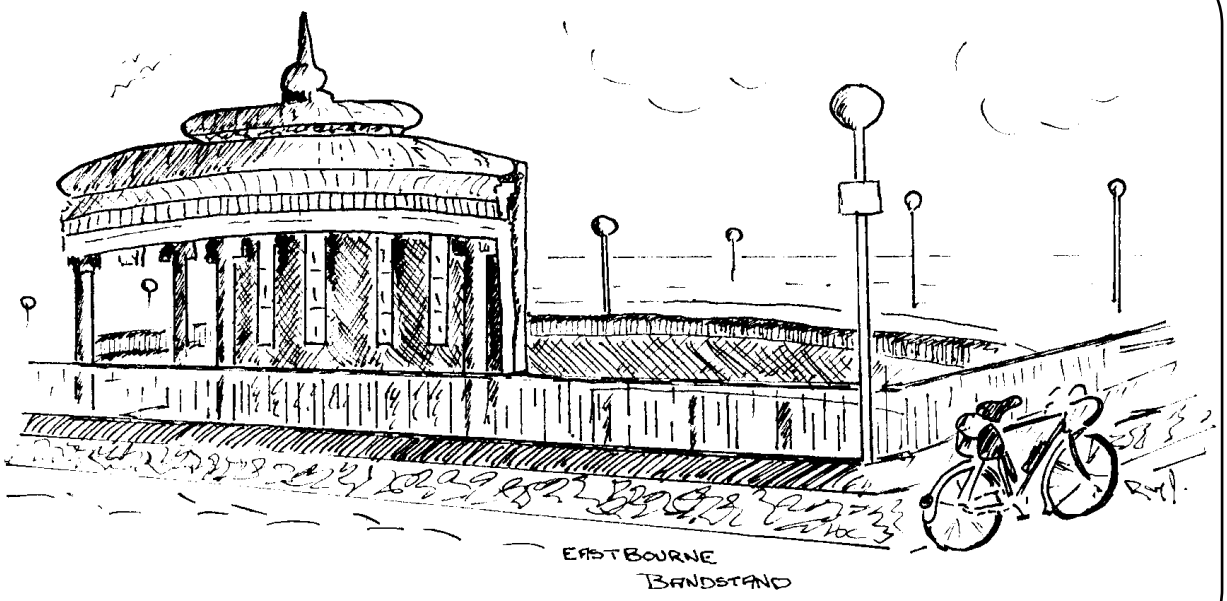
TO MY FRIEND DENNIS .....

from Michel Machu

One of the best memories of a cycling tour in the South of England is surely a Saturday evening when I met Dennis Jakeman. After arrival in Newhaven I had decided to look for a bed and breakfast place in Seaford, and I had just entered the town when I saw a cyclist whom I asked if he could help me and give me some information about the lodging possibilities there. It was the beginning of a long friendship. The cyclist was Dennis, and he answered that it would be better if we discussed about that at his home where he offered me a coffee. It was the weekend and we had some difficulties to find a bed and breakfast, and finally found a room at The Viking, a luxurious hotel along the beach, too luxurious for a cycle-tourist! Anyway, Dennis proposed that he show me round the surrounding region the following day. I found it very nice of him and it was for me a good opporttunity.

We met in the early morning and I guessed Dennis was happy to show me around Seaford. During the short stay we rode on quiet roads around Seaford and I could enjoy the magnificent views of the Seeven Sisters. We visited Alfriston, crossed the Cuckmere on a footbridge from which we could enjoy a picturesque view of the church. We stopped on the bridge, Dennis smoked a pipe, and we talked. I could immediately guess that I had made acquaintance with a keen cycle-tourist, our ways of cycle-touring were similar; Dennis likes to ride quietly and he knows where to see something attractive. We exchanged our addresses and met several times for the day. I suppose the readers of "The Coaster" know Dennis very well and they are lucky to ride with this cycle-tourist of considerable experience.

(Michel, from Villers-Tournelle in France, was, a good few years ago, presented by Dennis with a Seaford & Newhaven Section badge, which he wore proudly on his saddle bag and which provoked a lot of comment amongst other French cyclists. Ed.)



EVERYDAY SUSSEX by Roy James

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