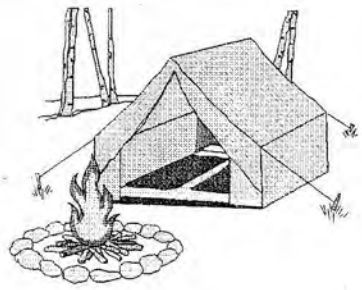

The Coaster

the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 33 - Summer 1998

50p

East Sussex District Association - Cyclists' Touring Club

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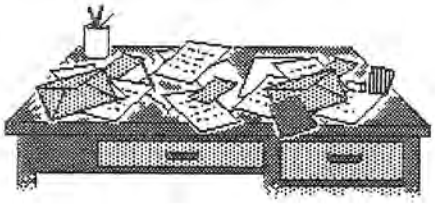

From the Editor's Desk.

A slightly delayed issue this time, for which I apologise. I'm afraid I've been a bit snowed under at work, computerizing our Library catalogue and issue system.

Quite a good issue this time. A couple more good articles from Bill Whiting (with his own illustrations), memories of riding with the D.A. from Ann Rix and another article plus several pictures (of course!) from Roy James, to mention a few. Amongst the rest we have a report from Norman Eastwood on his End to End ride, which just scraped in by the skin of its teeth - a day or so later and it would have gone into the next issue, but I felt this issue needed a couple more pages to round it out nicely.

As I type this at the start of August the Summer seems to have finally arrived (rather later than usual!), let's just hope it stays for more than a few days and we see a bit less of the wet stuff for a while.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue and also enjoy your cycling, whatever the weather.

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

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Mid-week Section: Esther Carpenter:
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Memories

by Ann Rix

My first ride with the East Sussex D.A. was on the 23rd April 1950. A friend persuaded me to go, she and I had had several rides out on our own before she heard about the cycling club. At that time my steed was a heavy Raleigh 'All steel bicycle', black in colour with a three speed hub. We met the other riders of the Seaford Section, as it was then, in Station Approach, Seaford.

Frank Howlett who was the D.A. Assistant Secretary at the time started the Section in 1948 when the Sussex D.A. split into two D.A.'s. Frank was manager of Freeman, Hardy and Willis shoe shop in Seaford and as he had been a member of Eastbourne Section he wanted to get a Section going in Seaford. Starting first as a sub-section of Eastbourne, Bill Collins, then President of the D.A., led their first ride as a Section on 25th July 1948.

Back to my first ride, started off O.K. but found the hills a struggle then to my surprise I had a push from one of the riders which was much appreciated. A very nice chap - I married him four years later. I must have survived that first ride somehow to want more of the same. I do remember it was fifty miles and seemed a very long way.

The Seaford Section had Clubnights at the Seaford Boys Club in Mercread Road every Thursday evening and everyone paid the grand sum of 6d for the privilege, most of which went to the Boys Club. My friend and I are down in the Treasurers book as having been there on 20th April 1950, when we joined there were fifteen members.

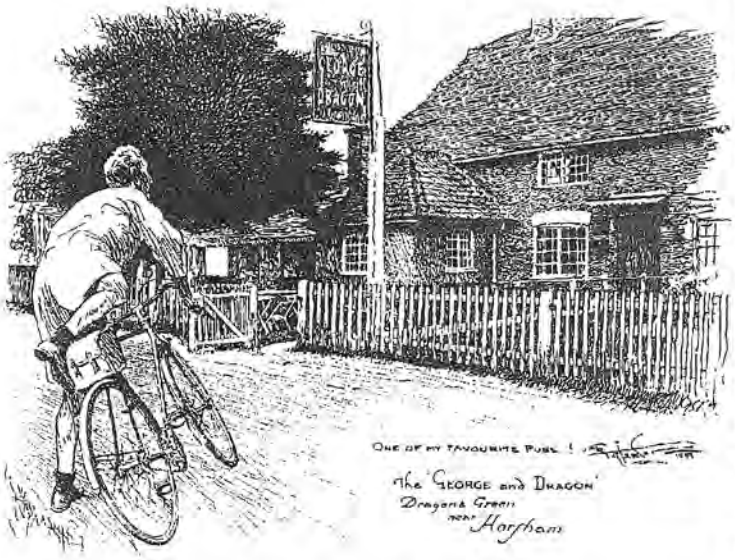
I do remember the D.A. Photograph when ninety-five members attended, taken at Ashburnham on May 21st 1950, which is in the D.A.album, as is the photo of the West Sussex Rally on June 4th at Henfield that we went to. The Annual Rally and Children's Day on July 2nd was also at Ashburnham when sixty D.A. members enjoyed the day. There were many tandems with children stoking, Rann trailers too I think. I remember Bill Collins with his daughter Val on the back of the tandem.

By then though I had bought myself a lighter steed - a Humber Beeston Clubman in flamboyant amber- double fixed 73/79. We all rode 'fixed' in those days which was much easier as no-one suddenly eased up - or stopped - when changing gear. When Bob and I bought our Claud Butler tandem in 1954 after we were married, that was 'fixed' as well until our first son was on the way in '55 and a few months before he was born I protested. There is more control of the cycles with a fixed wheel - if you

are prepared to pedal down as well as up - it also gets you into a steady pedalling rhythm. I don't want to do it now though as I do enjoy a good freewheel downhill - unless there is a headwind when it seems most unfair that we have to pedal when we could have a rest.
Several of us used to cycle to the Cycle Track at Preston Park, Brighton, most Wednesday evenings through the summer to watch the racing, meeting up with the Lewes and Newhaven Section there sometimes. 30th July 1950 was my first visit of many over the years to Bedgebury Pinetum. We had tea at the Royal Oak, Whatlington, that day and one of our members had fifteen fairy cakes, he was never allowed to forget it. As nowadays the tea place depended on the destination though there were so many in those days that we had a choice of two or three in an area that fitted in with our route home.

The other tea places also linger in my memory, if we went north there was Castle Tearooms at Nutley, Horns Lodge at Chailey, Cafe at Pease Pottage, Ramblers Rest at Buxted or the Brewers Arms at Ringmer. If we went west we had the choice of the George and Dragon at Dragons Green, The White Horse at Maplehurst, the Black Horse at Nuthurst, The Gables at Dial Post or the Belmont Cafe at Bramber and the Cafe at Sayers Common. If we went east there was The Ash Tree at Ashburnham, The Star at Waldron, Chestnut Tree Cottage at Boreham Street the initials for the C.T.C. as they were members. This was our favourite as they used to provide a super spread with pies etc. We also used the Terminus Cafe in Hailsham and the Polar Bear Cafe in Lewes quite often on our way home.

The prices in those days were 1s.3d or 1s.6d for tea, with large teapots as illustrated by Frank Patterson, lots of bread and butter and jam, cakes too of course, then riding home in all weathers - on the main roads in those days with not much traffic. One in particular I remember on our way back from Dragons Green in West Sussex with the freezing air covering us in frost. It was at the George and Dragon that I first came across the framed sign hanging on the wall for 'The Ancient Order of Buffaloes', it was in the room where we had tea and the old wooden door had a spyhole where the members of the Order could check on those wishing to come in. There were probably other times as well but I do remember we had to wait our turn for tea at the Ramblers Rest at Buxted as another cycling group were there first. In those days with so many cyclists this was not unusual even though all had booked beforehand.



Unfortunately the Seaford Section came to an end at the end of September 1952 because most of the members wanted us all to transfer from the C.T.C. to become members of Lewes Wanderers C.C., a racing club. The few of us who didn't carried on, joining up with the D.A. rides when it fitted in. Having three children in three years from September '55 to

August '58 curtailed our riding far, but we kept cycling. It wasn't until 1975 that my husband Bob proposed trying to start a Section again, our three children by that time could do their own thing if they did not wish to come, David being the only one really keen though the eldest John had come occasionally. He is the back-up for David and I with all the paperwork we do for the D.A., sorting out any problems with the computers.

We contacted the D.A. and they gave us their blessing so when the D.A. had an invitation ride we advertised it in Seaford, even had a photographer from the local paper, several lads turned up and it went on from there. As a family from Peacehaven had joined us soon after we all decided to name it the Seaford and Newhaven Section this time to cover a larger area. The Lewes and Newhaven Section having come to an end not many years after our Seaford Section had.

SPELLING CHECKERS

(The following item appeared in the FCOT Fellowship News, and I hope they will forgive me for pinching it and reproducing it here. Ed.)

A former colleague, now in the USA, sent me an ode that his daughter found on the internet. His computer incorporates a spelling checker, so he ran the verse through it to discover which words an American checker considered wrongly spelt. He says (I haven't counted) there are 111 errors - according to his spell checker there are none!

OWED - SPELLING CHEQUERS

I have a spelling chequer Eye disk covered four my PC.
It plane lee marks four my revue Miss steaks aye can knot sea.
Eye ran this poem threw it. Your sure reel glad, two no
Its very polished in its weigh, My chequer tolled me sew.
A chequer is a blessing, It freeze yew lodes of thyme.
It helps me right awl stiles two reed, And aides me when aye rime.
Each Frays come posed up on my screen Eye trussed too bee a joule.
The chequer pours on every word To cheque sum spelling rule.
Bee fore wee rote with chequers Hour spelling was inn deck line,
Butt now when wee dew have a laps, Wee are not maid too wine.
And now bee cause my spelling Is checked with such grate flare.
Their are know faults in awl this peace, Of nun eye am a wear.
To rite with caries quite a feet Of witch won should be proud,
And wee mussed dew the best wee can, Sew floors are knot aloud.
That's why eye brake in two averse Cos eye dew want too please
Sow glad eye yam that aye did bye This soft wear four pea seas.

TWO ENGLISH GENTLEMEN IN MALLORCA

by Roy James

"What we need is a change", I said to William. "A complete change. Something different from our usual rides along familiar Sussex lanes. Somewhere warm and sunny."

"Mallorca," he replied. "They do say that much of it can be perfect for cycling and it should be warm in the middle of March."

So that was it . The decision was made.

Gatwick Airport at 3.00 a.m. can be deadly but we did our best to get a little sleep. 4.30 a.m. and the check-in was filling with passengers and promptly at 6.30 a.m. we were in the air. Two hours later we were re-assembling the bikes in the sunshine of Palma airport. A little time spent studying the exit from the airport would have saved much trouble, but we were anxious to be away. In our haste we found ourselves approaching a motorway, while on the other side of a high fence was a quiet lane that other cyclists were using. There was no alternative other than to lift the cycles over. No easy task for two mature English gentlemen but we managed and were soon in the little suburb of Son Ferrial.

By mid-day we were in undulating, fertile countryside. Orange and lemon trees heavy with fruit were everywhere. Ancient olive groves soon became a familiar sight. The warm, early day sunshine had disappeared under lowering clouds and as we started the steady climb to the hillside town of Valldemossa it was touch and go as to who would arrive first, us or the rain.

As it happened the rain beat us to it and as we arrived in the little town the last of the visitors were boarding their coach for the return to Palma. Although only late afternoon, with the departure of the final coach a strange stillness descended over the damp streets of Valldemossa. Fearful that the few shops would soon be putting up their shutters we made enquiries for somewhere to stay the night and were directed to the only hostal in town. C'An'Mario on the edge of town is a one star hostal. The type of small hotel scorned by the guide books, boot we were very happy in a pleasant room with views of the town and hillside sloping down to far off Palma.

In 1838, Frederic Chapin and his cigarette smoking, trouser wearing lover George Sand together with her 14 year old daughter spent a Winter in Valldemossa but they were far from happy there. Constant rain, Chapin's ill health and rejection by the townspeople led George Sand to write a withering account of the island that Mallorca has never forgiven. Nevertheless, her book 'A Winter in Mallorca' provides an astringent read for anyone interested in a view of the island in the middle of the last century. Perhaps they were unlucky, but as William and I walked out into the star filled night we agreed that the stillness was what we had hoped to find.

We left the town in early morning sunshine, well before the tourist coaches started to arrive. At first our way climbed up through orange and lemon groves and thereafter the ride was a delight of steep climbs and rapid descents with many a glimpse of the sea far below. Finally we arrived in the pleasant town of Soller. The plaza was crowded with townspeople and tourists sitting at cafe tables among the ancient trees and fountains. It was tempting to join them but for the moment it was more important to find a room for the night. Casa De Huespedes is tucked in along the Calle Real and not easy to find until we saw the blue sign with a single star that is supposed to indicate the simplest accommodation. We were quickly

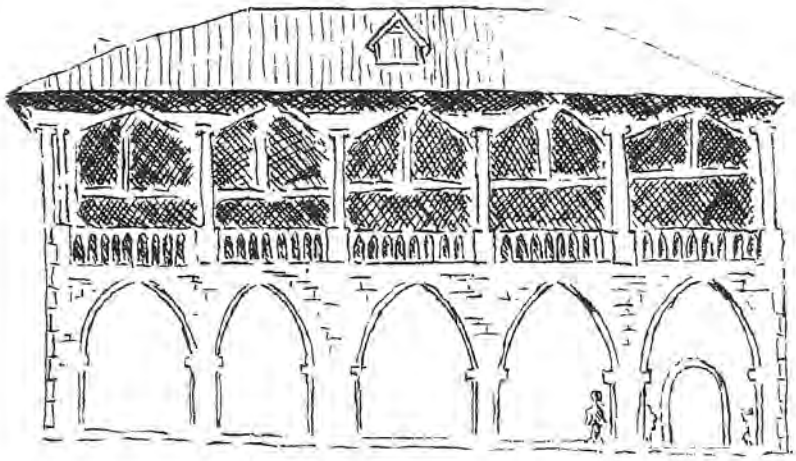
inside where Senora Margarita was almost motherly in her attention to us. A large room full of dark, heavy furniture including four beds was assigned to us.

A single track line connects Soller with Port de Soller a short distance away. We boarded one of the delightful open carriages that makes the journey every half hour and journeyed for about fifteen minutes through more orange and lemon groves to the quiet, sheltered resort at the end of the line.

From Soller to the monastry at Lluc was not really very far but it was nearly all uphill and took us most of the day. There were many pauses of course; to admire yet another view, to chat with other cyclists or simply for no reason at all. But surely this must be the very essence of cycle touring, not distance covered but pleasures experienced. When Senora Margarita made a telephone reservation for us to stay at the monastry at Lluc we expected something spartan so the reality was a pleasant surprise. A comfortable room with hot shower and good beds was waiting for our arrival. Once again the coaches were leaving as we arrived (Lluc is a very popular excursion) and within an hour the place was nearly deserted.

Pollenca is a dusty town redolent of Old Spain. We arrived to an empty plaza for it was siesta. A group of German cyclists were resting in a sunny corner after the exertions of the morning. We ate our oranges and looked across at the one hotel in town. Built in 1908, it had a grandeur completely lacking in modern hotels. We would have gladly stayed there but it was too expensive for gentleman cyclists. Instead, a barman gave us the address of a bar pension in nearby Port de Pollenca and we were quickly on our way along the straight road to the coast.

Hostal barro in the Calle Juan 23 suited us perfectly and it was the only place we stayed for two nights. Next day we cycled along the peninsula of Cap de Tormentor. While William cycled to the very tip of the island I stayed on the beach at Tormentor. After that it was time for our return to Palma. The combination of the flat, fertile plain of central Mallorca and a steady breeze on our backs gave us an easy, almost uneventful ride. Our last night was at the Hostal Puig di San Miquel near Montuiri and we realized then than it was nearly all over. The week that seemed to be lasting for ever was over in a flash as we entered Palma airport. Twelve hours later we were back in Gatwick.



WHAT A WOBBLY

by Bill Whiting

I should have known better! It was a lovely November morning and I succumbed to the temptation to take the Easy Option with the West Kent DA. (When hard work is around, who isn't tempted by an easy option?) Today, I decided to use my older cycle, which I had thoroughly serviced myself earlier in the year. All was well until we reached the first longish down hill stretch of lane, where the front brake was needed to control speed in the peleton, the rear brake, though good, wanted just that little extra help. At this point the riders behind held back even more and I knew instantly their strong feelings of self preservation ~ even at 10 mph.

"Is that a wobble?" shouted John G behind me. John W took one look at me (he was riding alongside me) and disappeared over the forward horizon.
"Yes" was all I could muster as the bars were weaving in my hands. By this time I had released the front brake and was slowing down only on the rear, eventually coming to a gentle upright and almost dignified halt. During the next mile, the same thing happened four more times. Enough was enough, so I bowed out of the ride with a certain CTC Councillor~elect cheering me up about "What do you expect from a cheap far east import". I should add that the bike is very English, built by Holdsworth long before they moved away from London to join Falcon. It has some 531 tubes, but more of that anon. I returned home safely to carry out an autopsy on the bike.

Scientifically, not a great deal is known about the causes of wobble, or shimmy as it is sometimes called, as applied to bicycles. At normal riding speeds it has more of a nuisance value than danger. At 20-30 mph, however, it can become dangerous. Because of fatalities in some UK police forces using motorcycles a rather better understanding of high speed wobble (tank slappers, in the trade) has been achieved. Such bikes, even with reinforced suspensions, carry heavy loads - radios, blues and twos instrumentation of varying kinds, security and first aid equipment. This upsets the front/rear balance. One model of bike, commonly used by the police, was thus given a speed restriction to keep machines below the critical speed. Even so, such experience has some relevance to us cyclists. At a cruder level, the average supermarket trolley also has a lesson to give us.

The possible causes of wobble are several and could be experienced in combination. Here is a simple check list:

Cause	Remedy
Slack wheel bearings	Adjust to proper tolerance
Loose head bearing (supermarket trolley syndrome)	Adjust to proper tolerance
Low frame stiffness	Avoid carrying luggage
Head angle too steep	Replace forks to give better fork offset (trail)
Flexible frame shimmying at moderate to high speeds	Reduce fork offset (care! ensure adequate clearance between crank and wheel)
Low speed shimmy	Increase front end loading and reduce rear end loading of panniers

Having suggested some remedies, I have to admit that there is always a possibility that implementing them will make things worse! The solution is one of trial and error. Surprisingly, the cheap far east import is less likely to be troublesome than the lightweight hand built machine. Its very chunkiness works to advantage in this respect.

What should one do if an attack of the wobbles occurs while one is riding? The natural tendency is to 'fight' the bars. However, this will probably make things worse. Have you ever tried to ride a bike with reversed steering? (Turn the bars right to turn left!) No, the recommended way to handle wobble is to apply passive damping to the bars and close your legs upon the top tube of the frame even one leg will sometimes suffice. To slow down, release the front brake and use only the rear. On long hills use the rear brake to bring the speed down and use the front brake only towards the end of braking.

One leg will sometimes suffice.

When I returned home from my ride I checked yet again the wheel and head bearings. All were correct with absolutely no play, so I stripped the head down - I had serviced it not that long before. The reason for my wobble began to emerge. The top race had a 'full house' of balls, while the lower was two balls short. Head races should always be two short, So I removed two from the top race, repacked the races with thick chassis grease (to give some damping effect) and reassembled. I also noted that there was a very fine black line around the base of the new amber walled tyre, possibly caused by the brake block rubbing it. The blocks were reset to the bottom limit on the stirrup to touch the rim more centrally. Now this I find puzzling as in time past they were set towards the middle. Either the stirrup has shrunk or the forks have grown! But that is another story.

After these adjustments had been made, an exacting road test over hill and dale using only the front brake has proved that all is well again and my veteran Holdsworth is once more in good health.

EVERYDAY SUSSEX

WIND POWER GALORE

by Bill Whiting

Once nearly every village had its mill. Now, windmills are a rare but exciting example of a past way of life. Bill Whiting describes what to look for when you meet one of the grand old 'sky pilots'.

One of the great attributes of cycling is that you can stop and stare. A cyclist's stately progress through the countryside gives him a wonderful opportunity to take in the view of our everchanging scenery. Change often involves permanent disappearance. That great cycling artist, Frank Patterson, recorded much of the English rural inheritance from the early years of the century until just before his death in 1952. He sketched with a draughtsman's observation and accuracy an England to which so many of us would like to return. Amongst his 26,000 drawings there were a number that included the then common sight of a working windmill. On one occasion he described the mill at Earnley, near Chichester, as a 'sky pilot', so descriptive of the majesty of those enormous sails, dominating the neighbourhood. Thankfully, though many mills have been destroyed or decayed beyond recognition since 'Pat's' days, there are still a number which have been preserved, restored, and a few which actually work for a living. To the touring cyclist, the mill, on its mound, can be a useful landmark. To the potterer, it can be a source of much interest, to see the size, the skills which were employed to build it, and with imagination, the way of life of the miller, his family and the local community.

At first acquaintance, one mill looks like any other: a tower with sails (unless the 1987 storm blew them off!). Closer inspection, though, shows that this is a superficial impression, and that the mill is a complex structure with three main designs possible.
When mills first arrived in the UK is not entirely certain. Around the middle of the 12th century, roughly the time of the Crusades, is now generally accepted as the most likely. Nothing of that age exists now; the oldest are around 300 years old, but most no more than 100-150 years old. Wind power continued in use until the advent of the steam engine which gave power on demand, not just at the whim of the wind.

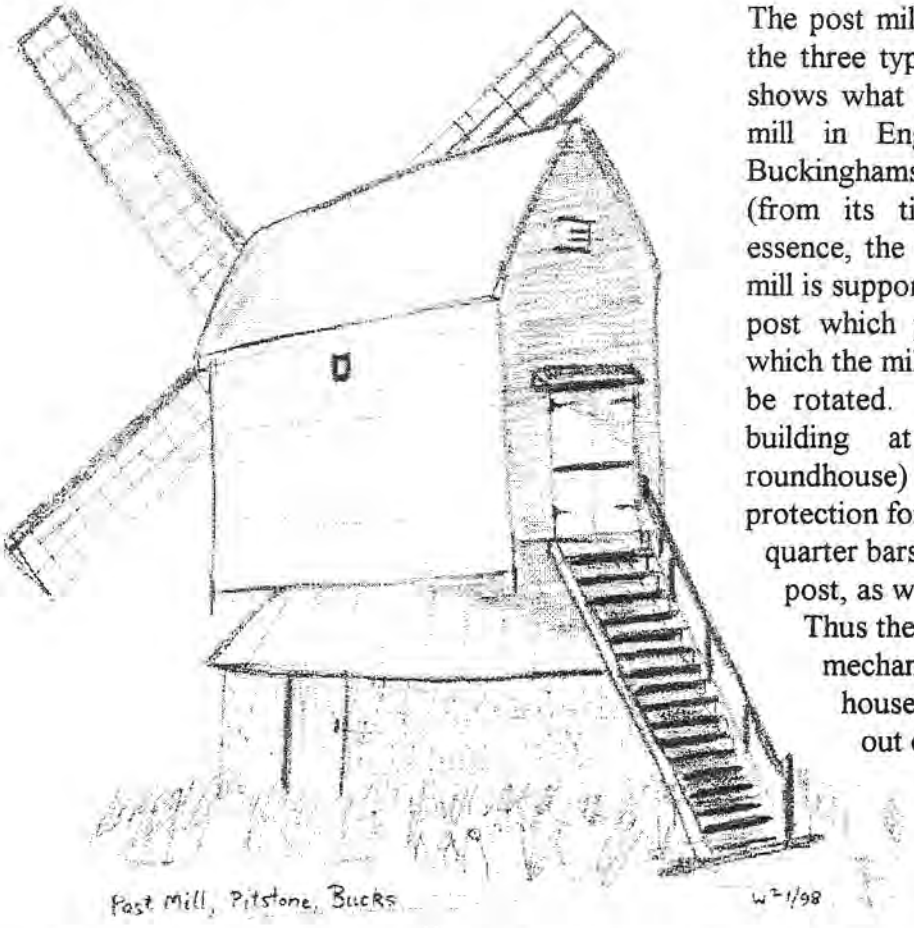
Early mills were under the control of the Lord of the Manor (in feudal times), the miller being his employee. Millers gained a reputation which was not one of respect and they were often dishonest. Chaucer wrote:

"He was a master hand at stealing grain.
He felt it with his thumb and thus he knew
Its quality and took three times his due...

The 1914-18 war was the great turning point and many mills were forced out of business in the years after. Their construction materials, often wood, decayed and nature took over the site. Thus the remaining 'sky pilots' are held in veneration and,where possible, worthy of close examination. I say, where possible, because most are now on private land. The miller's house usually adjoined his mill. These are now frequently private houses, so check carefully that you are not intruding into someone's garden! Where this situation exists, there may be open days when you can legitimately explore the mill.

Cyclists and the sailors among you will be only too well aware that the wind can blow from any direction and at any speed. The sails are designed to be turned about a vertical axis and

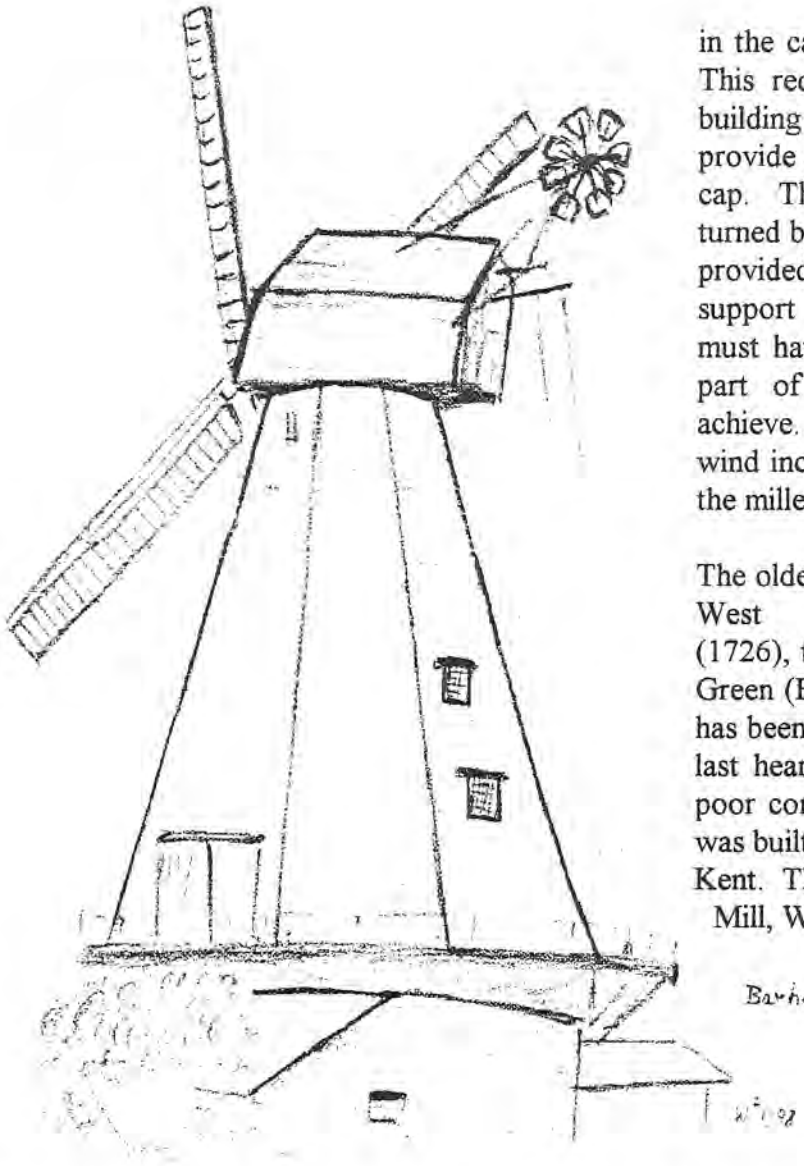
'reefed' to accommodate the playful breeze. In still air, productivity can be nil. In a high wind the sails can be damaged, and at worst the mill stones rotate so fast that the corn can ignite and burn. Over the years three designs of mill have evolved to make the mill adaptable and easier to use - post, smock and tower.



The post mill is the oldest design of the three types. The drawing (left) shows what is said to be the oldest mill in England, at Pitstone in Buckinghamshire. It bears the date (from its timbers) of 1627. In essence, the wooden body of a post mill is supported by a massive central post which provides an axis about which the mill and its mechanism can be rotated. The brick or wooden building at ground level (the roundhouse) provides weather protection for the crosstrees and quarter bars that support the main post, as well as storage space. Thus the mill structure and mechanism above the round-house could be turned in, or out of, the wind. It was a daily task of the miller to turn and adjust the mill structure to meet the changing direction and strength of the wind. To achieve this, post mills have a long tiller beam which projects from the base of the superstructure. In the case of the Pitstone mill, the stairway provided the leverage. To lighten the task further, a cartwheel was often added to the end of the beam (Argos Hill in Sussex has such a feature). For the really lazy miller, a horse was harnessed to the tiller!

Later, as mill design was refined further, automatic adjustment was developed. This was a fantail (as seen in the Barham and Woodbridge mills - see next two pictures) but this, too, could be applied in three ways. The least popular (for maintenance reasons) was a fantail mechanism fitted to the mill body, above the rear gable. Much easier to service and repair was the separate framework or carriage which was attached to the tailpole. The third method was to fix the fantail above the ladder. These last two methods required a rail or paved track around the mill. In some cases a simple lever, the talthur, was used to raise the steps when luffing the mill.

Smock and tower mills are very similar in design. The main difference is in the choice of materials used for the mill building - wood for smocks and brick or stone for tower mills. They differ from post mills in that they are of circular or near circular (6, 8, 10 or 12 sides) construction. Whereas the whole post mill structure is rotated, only the topmost cap is turned



in the case of smock and tower mills. This required a level of accuracy in building not previously achieved, to provide a 'true' bearing surface for the cap. The cap, now almost invariably turned by a fantail (rarely by a tailpost) provided the bearings and main support for the massive sails. This must have required much skill on the part of the millwright/carpenter to achieve. A cap that jammed as the wind increased could spell disaster for the miller.

The oldest smock still in existence is at West Wratting, Cambridgeshire (1726), though an earlier one at Lacey Green (Bucks), moved from Chesham, has been dated at around 1650. When last heard of, this mill was in a very poor condition. The most recent mill was built in 1929 at St Margaret's Bay, Kent. The most unusual is Chesterton Mill, Warwickshire.

Tower mills were probably introduced around the time of the early smock mills, but they represent the ultimate in mill design and construction. The use of stone or brick for the main structure generally meant a more stable bearing surface on which the cap rotated. However, subsidence could cause distortion of the building, and in particular, of the curb on which the cap ran - a jammed cap could mean the final closure of the mill.

The caps on smock and tower mills are a study in themselves, what with gable, post mill, boat, conical, domed and ogee shapes. Even within these broad shapes there are variations. Various materials were also used in attempts to weatherproof mill caps, including thatch, board, corrugated iron, lead and copper, but the most widely used was tarred canvas on boards.

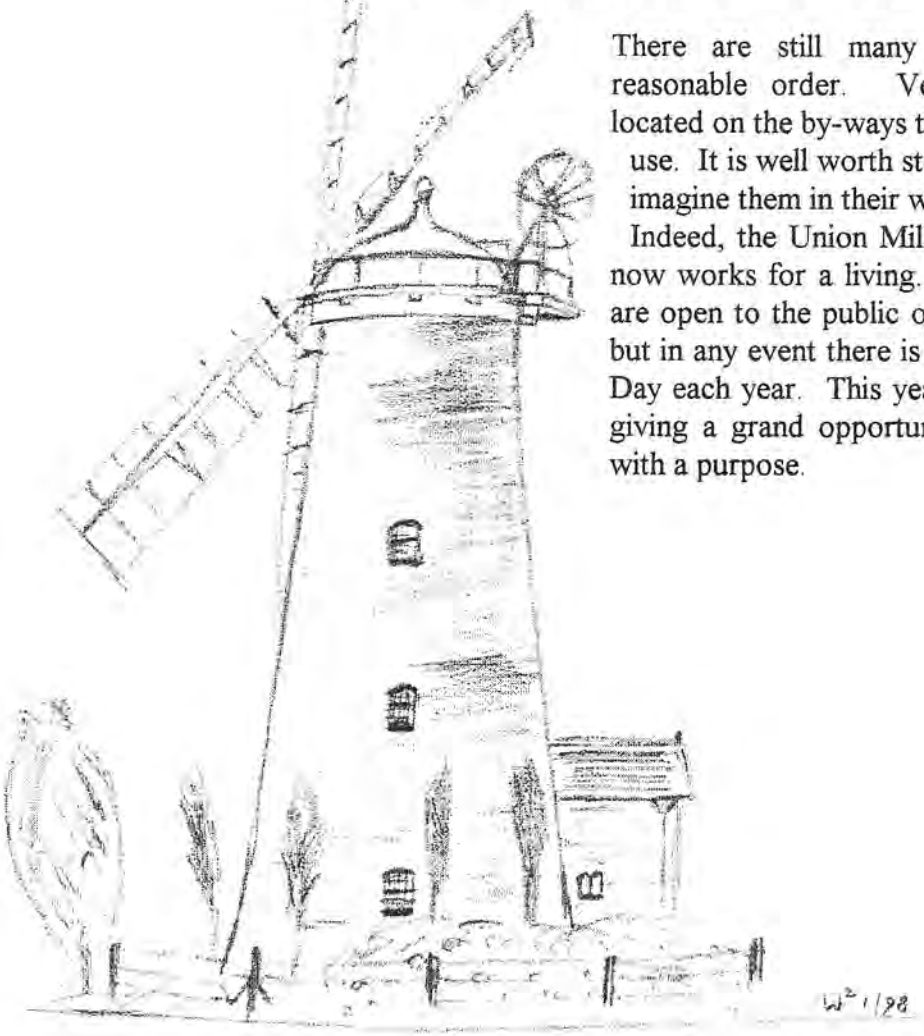
Very often, the first sight one has of a windmill is of the sails (sometimes called sweeps) against the skyline in the distance, on a wooded hill, perhaps. As in mill design, sails themselves underwent much development and improvement over the years. The earliest sails were of the 'Common' type - simple rectangular wooden frames upon which canvas was stretched. The sails were constructed around two sail stocks set at right angles and attached

to the wind shaft - the primary drive to the mill. The drawback was that the miller had to manhandle the canvas to suit the wind conditions, a time consuming and dangerous business.

A Scottish engineer, Andrew Meickle, was responsible for developing the spring sail. This comprised a series of wooden shutters rather like a Venetian blind. The blades could be opened or shut according to wind needs by a rod system. The miller still had to stop the mill to adjust each sail but the task was much quicker and safer to carry out. The angle of each row of shutters was controlled by pressure from a strong spring. A variant of this system used a roller blind; reefing was similar in action to a roller reefing gear on a sailing vessel.

The ultimate in sail design came with the Patent sail, invented by William Cubitt around 1807. Though outwardly similar to Meickle's design, all the shutters were automatically controlled by a rod system. Later, this was combined with a spring system to give complete 'automation' of shutter settings.

Generally mills were of four sail design. These, in an 'emergency,' could be operated with two. However, some mills were fitted with multiple sails - visitors to Spain will recognise the type! Multiple sails were claimed to give greater efficiency, and could still be operational with several sails out of action.



Tower mill Woodbridge, Suffolk

There are still many mills that are in reasonable order. Very often they are located on the by-ways that cyclists prefer to use. It is well worth stopping to look and imagine them in their working days.

Indeed, the Union Mill at Cranbrook even now works for a living. A number of mills are open to the public on regular occasions, but in any event there is a National Windmill Day each year. This year it fell on 10 May, giving a grand opportunity for a rural ride with a purpose.

Land's End to John O'Groats Cycle Ride
19 June - 3 July 1998

by Norman Eastwood

Introduction

The ride was conceived some years ago as an opportunity to see parts of the UK I had not experienced. As a keen cyclist from my teens it seemed quite natural to undertake such a venture to enjoy the countryside at my leisure by cycling. My wife, Valerie suggested to undertake such a challenge should be accompanied by fund raising for charity. To this end, I decided to donate all money raised to the Cystic Fibrosis Trust and Macmillan Cancer Relief. With the support of family, friends, ex work colleagues, neighbours, local traders and people on route I have raised in excess of £1400 to be donated equally between the two charities. I thank you all sincerely for your generosity towards this achievement. However, a special thank you to Valerie is necessary for all her encouragement during the hours of training before the event and her effort during the ride. As driver of the support vehicle she always managed without fail to find the pre-arranged meeting locations and then to often drive ahead to find suitable overnight accommodation. This was achieved despite her being unfamilar with the many areas passed through.

The Ride

There are many routes possible from Land's End to John O'Groats but I wished as far possible to follow one that would take me through picturesque countryside and avoid heavily populated and busy areas. I selected one through North Cornwall, Devon, Bristol, English/Welsh Border, Lake District, East of Glasgow to Loch Lomond, the West and North Coast of Scotland. This involved a greater mileage than the usual more direct route which ultimately resulted in a total distance of 1160 miles being covered in 15 days of which 85.5 hours were spent cycling at an overall average speed ofjust over 13.5 mph. The weather is always a significant consideration of the cyclist. I experienced in total approximately 5 days of rain and generally felt I was cycling into the wind, an easterly in Cornwall and Devon and a north westerly in Scotland. The final day was the only one where a strong westerly assisted me, I covered 64 miles in just over 4 hours. My longest day was Day 6 from Chester to Morecambe, 93.2miles; my shortest, Day 15 from Tongue to John O'Groats, 64miles. My slowest day was Day 2, Camelford to Tiverton, 12.6mph. and my fastest, Day 15, 15.5mph. I did not meet many fellow cyclists on route. Four on 2 tandems on the last day to John O' Groats had left Land's End 2 days after me and had done well to cover the distance in 13 days even though they had taken a shorter route than me. I met another on Day 13 near Dundonnell in Scotland on a 600mile ride in 6 days, but the real character I shall remember was Dave, who I met in Somerset on Day 3. He was cycling in sandals, towing a trailer with a dog inside and was riding Land's End to John O' Groats return in 6 weeks, camping on route and raising money for Save the Children Fund. By chance I was to see him again while driving home from John O'Groats, cycling northwards on a really hilly section of the A68 about 20miles south of the Scottish border, he was still as cheerful as ever. I estimate he had covered about 360-400 miles in the 13 days since I had last seen him.

Food and Drink

Before setting off I had read of the importance of eating and drinking properly to

sustain the body over extended periods of exercise. Each morning breakfast consisted of plenty of cereal, toast and cooked breakfast but little fat. During the day I tended to eat and drink regularly. Drinks consisted of water, isotonic drink and, on particularly hard sections, a carbohydrate drink. I would drink on a regular 15 minute basis consuming about 2 litres during the average 6 hourly cycling day. I would eat cereal bars, bananas, pears and dried fruit. Sometimes I would eat cake or a sandwich or tinned rice. Eating was generally started 2 hours after setting off [never longer] then on a regular basis throughout the rest of the ride. I found to my cost on Day 2 when I had not eaten for about 3.5 hours that I was beginning to suffer. I never made that mistake again and as a result, even in hilly country when the ride could become hard, I always felt capable of continuing. Breaks for eating and resting were always quite short, 20 to 30 minutes at most. Evening meals were normal with plenty of carbohydrate. I did enjoy a beer in the evening but I restricted it to 1 pint. Had the weather been warmer I am sure I would have drunk less beer and more fruit juice and lemonade, etc.

Accommodation

The Bed and Breakfast accommodation was, with one or two exceptions, to a high standard and reasonably priced. The type varied considerably, a large converted barn [a whole suite on split level] near Chester, a small cottage near the banks of Loch Lomond and a hotel in Carlisle, which had once been the private residence of a well known industrialist, to mention a few. The only occasion when accommodation was a little difficult to Find was in a particularly remote part of Scotland approximately 20 miles north of Ullapool. The motel proprietor was not very helpful, believing me to be a captive customer after a hard days ride. The final straw was him wanting me to leave my cycle in the open overnight. We did not stay, although it did involve another 8 mile cycle ride to the next available accommodation.

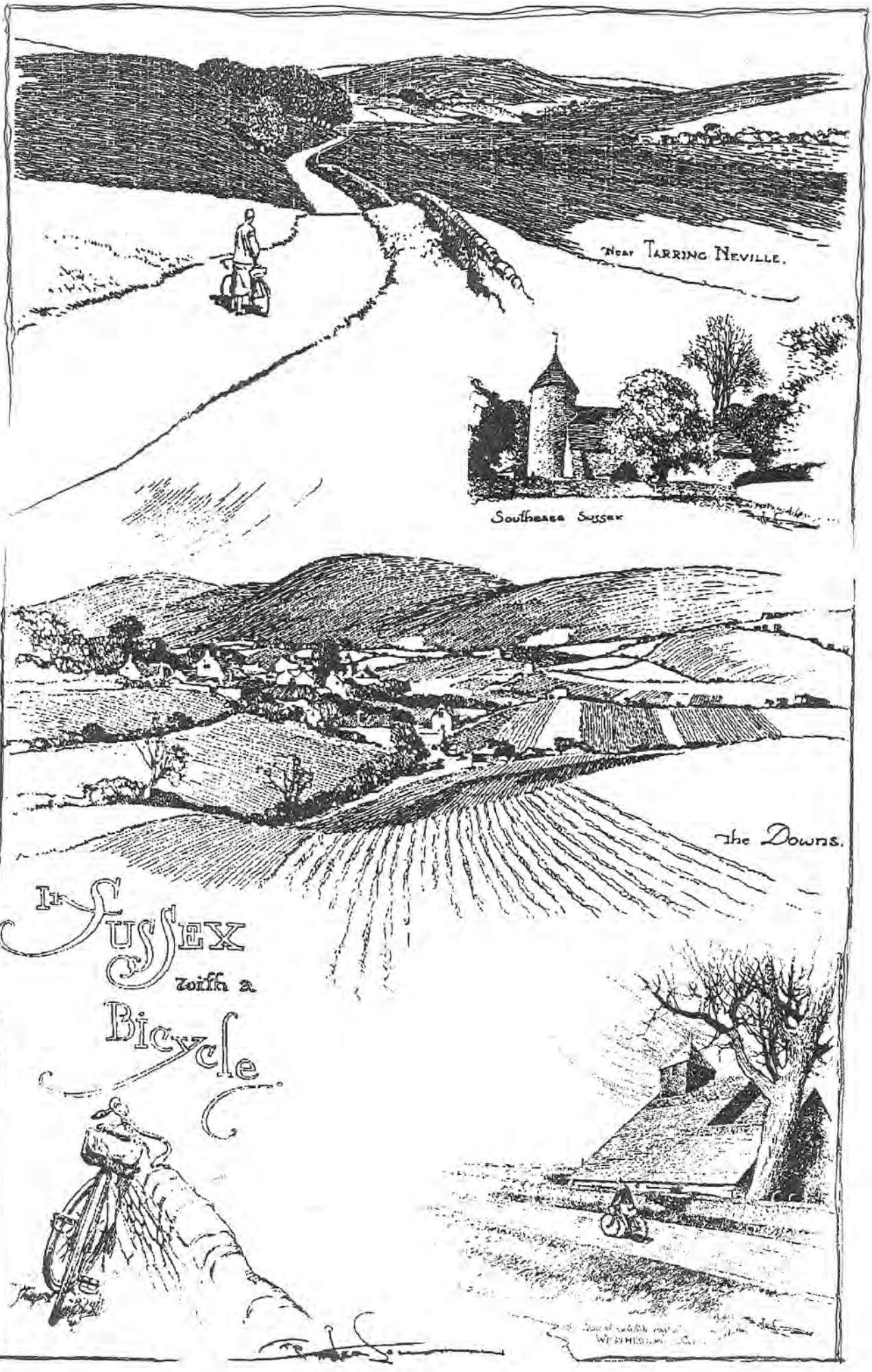
Equipment

For the technically minded my cycle was an Orbit Harrier, best described as a"Fast Tourer". The frame is built with a combination of Reynolds 531c and 531st tubing. Gears are Shimano Rx100 with rear cassette 7 speed and a triple front chainset giving gearing between 27 inch bottom gear and 103 inch top. Tyres were Michelin Tracer Keylar 700x25c. I experienced 1 puncture [on Day 10] but did not incur any mechanical failure throughout.

Conclusion

I have had a great time pursuing my main interest and in doing so have been able to raise money, with your help, for those less fortunate than myself. Thank you again for your support.

Norman Eastwood July 1998.


Near Tarring Neville.
Southease Sussex
the Downs.
In Sussex with a Bicycle.

WHY DO WE SAY THAT?

There are lots of unusual sayings that we use - some origins are obvious, most are not. This is hoped to be the first in a series explaining the origins of some of the more obscure ones.

Steal his thunder.
Stealing someone's thunder means to take glory or attention away from him. John Dennis, a seventeenth-century English dramatist, was the first man literally to have his thunder stolen.
For his play *Appius and Virginia,* he invented a new sound effects device to reproduce thunder, filling the auditorium with a loud rumble from a gadget that looked like a wooden trough. But audiences did not like the play and the management of the Drury Lane Theatre brought the curtain down after a very short run and staged Shakespeare's Macbeth instead. When a roll of thunder sounded at the appropriate scene in *Macbeth,* Dennis complained, "That is my thunder, by God! The villains will play my thunder, but not my plays.'
Alas for him, he wrote more unsuccessful plays than successful ones but was better remembered as a critic.

Laugh up your sleeve.
If you have secret grounds for amusement, you laugh up your sleeve. This was exactly what people used to do centuries ago.
In the Middle Ages, sleeves were very wide. If you wanted to enjoy a private joke, you cold raise your arm and use the sleeve to screen your face. By the sixteenth century, sleeves became narrower but people still spoke of laughing up their sleeve.

The Boot's on the other foot.
Today, this expression is used when a situation is quite the reverse of what it was originally. It was only 200 years ago that footwear makers began manufacturing left and right shoes and boots. Before that, they were the same for both feet.
A man who tried on his new boots often found that if one of them hurt, his problem could be solved by swapping them over. A total change had come about - the boot was on the other foot.

Sleep like a top
The wooden spinning top is one of the oldest of toys, an unlikely source of comparison with anyone who enjoys a deep sleep.
But the people of medieval times were fascinated by the toy. They noticed that when it spun round fast enough, perfectly balanced on its point, the top appeared not to move. They joked that the top was asleep. As far back as 1616, sound sleepers were therefore described as 'sleeping like a top'.

Hoist with his own Petard.
A person hoist with his own petard has become the victim of his own scheme. He sets out to injure someone else but the plan backfires and traps him instead.
A petard was a siege weapon in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Gun powder was put in a metal or wooden box and used to blow a hole in the weak point of fortifications. But the contraption was so erratic that whoever lit the fuse risked blowing themselves up.
Shakespeare was alive when the petard was in use. *In Hamlet, he* portrays Polonius, who

wants to trap Hamlet, as hoist with his own petard.

A pretty kettle of fish.
When somebody lands in a tricky, difficult, or awkward situation, they might well say, 'this is a prettykettle of fish'.
Years ago it was the custom in the Border regions of Scotland to go on riverside picnics where salmon would be caught, boiled on the riverside in a kettle - a cooking pan - and eaten on the spot. Such picnics became known as a 'kettle of fish'.
The word 'pretty' originally meant 'tricky'. So, when the picnickers were having trouble landing their salmon, which apparently happened a lot, they would be faced with a pretty (i.e. tricky) kettle of fish.

Back to square one.
This means that a plan has been abandoned and you are starting again from the beginning. It comes from the early days of radio commentaries on football matches before the likes of Brian Moore or John Motson.
To make it easier for the listener to follow the game, a diagram of the pitch was published, divided into squares and the commentator would continually refer to which square the ball was in.
The Goalkeeper was in square one and if the ball was returned to him by a defender, to start a fresh attack, it was 'back to square one'.