



The



Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 36 - Summer 2000

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

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" THE COASTER "

Issue No. 36, Summer 2000



From the Editor's Desk.

A nice mix of articles this time. I hope you enjoy them.

As I write this the National Cycle Network has officially opened, as far as it goes. We now have links from the Cuckoo Trail down into Eastbourne and across to Cooden, but elsewhere we are still waiting. The Cuckoo Trail and it's extensions are all down to Wealden District Council backing Sustrans and all the various pro-cycling initiatives. Unfortunately, elsewhere we have not seen the same enthusiasm. Lewes District and East Sussex County Council come out with all the big words but do not back them up with action. Routes that we do have, like the Falmer to Lewes cycle path and the Lewes to Ranscombe Lane path were done by the Highways Agency (who have responsibility for Trunk Roads) and are nothing to do with the local councils. East Sussex keep saying they will do something for cyclists, but it is about time we saw some action rather than just words. If you feel strongly about this then write to Bob Wilkins, Highways Department, County Hall, Lewes or lobby your councillors or MP.

I'm sorry if I seem to be going on about this a bit, but in our area we have been waiting over 20 years for them to put a proper track between Seaford & Newhaven and we really feel that it's about time they got on and did it.

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:-

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Cotterell House, 69 Meadow,
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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.

A NEW APPROACH

by Roy James.

As we cycle our lovely Sussex lanes we must all have noticed how great has been the increase in wayside trash. It is useless to ignore it and as a responsible group of people it is up to us to do something about it.

My hope is that we can adapt a different attitude to all those bottles, cans, plastic bags, hub caps, builders gloves, etc., that we see every time we go out. Instead of cycling by that black plastic bag rustling in the branches of a wayside bush, imagine it to be a rook or crow that has flown down from the higher branches, of a nearby tree. After all, the bag is black, it is about the same size and with just slight suspension of belief it could well be one of our larger birds.

Drink cans cannot be likened to anything else. They are unique and should be regarded as such. Make a mental note of the different types you see. Notice their varying shapes. Some will be crushed perfectly flat. Others will appear to be in perfect condition and you will find all variations in between. I know some members of our club collect cans of the aluminium variety, but before they do so I would ask them to spare a thought for others who come after and may be deprived of the sight of what may well be the most prolific of our wayside varieties.



Car hubcaps have increased no end in recent years. Try and look for a certain type, they are all to be found in our hedgerows. It is quite possible that they will become collectors' items in years to come. However they can be rather cumbersome to carry home. Far better to leave them for others to enjoy as they pass. As an added pleasure, think of the fury of the motorist when he arrives home to find another hubcap off the car.



Builder's gloves can be seen everywhere and these again are of many colours and condition. Like our wayside flowers, at first they lay by the wayside, with their brave yellows and blues crying out for attention, but as time passes they become dirty and bedraggled. I used to collect them, for although there are many of the more common type, I particularly like the red and blue stripe (Manica Virga). Notice too how there are far more left than right hand gloves. Some breeding mutation I suppose.

Plastic bottles are difficult to love. Remember though that an enterprising Californian constructed a bungalow entirely of plastic bottles, so surely someone in our club can think of a way to appreciate this most common of our wayside treasures. The only thing I can say is that they don't smash and give us punctures.



More rarely, but by no means uncommon, there is the burnt out car. Stop and admire the twisted skeleton forced into fantastic shapes by the fierce heat of the burning car. Time would give them an added dimension, so why not leave them to be enjoyed by future generations instead of removing them after a few months.

I could go on, but perhaps this short piece will encourage you to find your own beauty in wayside rubbish. I can only say that Wordsworth may have found joy with his daffodils, but did it compare with my sighting of a pair of ladies knickers on the Hailsham roundabout.



DOVER TO NARBONNE BY THE BIKE EXPRESS

By John Christmas



There was a Renault car with foreign number plates in the car park at Dover. It had been clamped and there was a notice on it to the effect that it would cost the owner £200 to collect it from the police. The restaurant

inside the terminal is called The Upper Crust, a sharp contrast to the ethnic persons who were gathered about the lounge. They wore trousers that were very frayed and they had rings. In their ears, their noses and through their eyebrows. One young girl had a spike projecting out from the centre of her chin. Another had black hair - this had been dyed and two thick strands of it fell over her left eye. She looked like Harry Enfield's girl friend.

Unusually for Dover these persons were leaving England after having spent three months living rough. We went on the ferry with the Bike Express and up to the upper deck (aft). Our ethnic friends joined us. Very sociable they were. As we crossed the channel a large number of gulls followed, and our friends must have envied them because they started slowly waving their arms up and down as they faced the sun. They were in a stupor.

The journey to Narbonne from Dover via Calais takes 22 hours and we were the only two to be dropped off there. At 10.30 AM on Sunday 30th April in a deserted car park outside a huge supermarket. After a while Roger, who is the owner of Domaine de Rau at Mazerolles du Razes in Southern France came along. He has an ancient Renault with a primitive form of bike rack, which required the use of a large hammer to secure our bikes. We paid him for coming out to pick us up (70 miles) and he said, "Good, now I can get some petrol".

His farm is remote, well away from any traffic, and during the day you can hear the nightingales around the farm and at night the Scops owl which makes a bell-like sound. This owl is smaller than a blackbird. Boar hunts are held annually in the area around Mazerolles du Razes, and to ensure that as few boars get away as possible the huntsmen form a huge circle and walk towards the centre shooting as they go. Last year three of them were fatally wounded as a result.



A short distance from the farm we came across several notices placed in fields in the surrounding countryside. They were very large hand painted notices. They were all an indication of the feeling of the locals towards Jaures the mayor, who had taken a back-hander in respect of contractor's work towards a local tip. One notice said - "Jaures par donne-leur Ils ne savent plus ce qu'ils font".... Forgive Jaures for he knows not what he does. Some of the local people had obtained a quantity of Semtex and blown up part of a road in protest. It measured 20 yards in length. It seems that they were quite cross. There was one notice, which compared his actions with the massacre of the Cathars in 1244, a group which was opposed to the Roman Catholics.

After a week we moved on to a place called Durban, which had been subject to severe flooding. We called at the local hotel, had a beer and asked the landlord if he had a room for the night. He said Yes. His wife said No. (This was because they were still having

problems caused by the storm in the previous November.) He told us that there was bound to be a room at a hotel in Ripaud, which was on our route. So we called there. A lady was clearing away tables after lunch. She looked harassed. We asked for a room. 'Complet', she said. This means Full Up in French, but in her case it meant 'I have had a busy day. We may have plenty of rooms, but I would prefer you to shove off'. So shove off we did and we had only travelled about a kilometre when we could hear police sirens and eight police motorcyclists came into sight - they preceded the Aude Tour Feminin and shortly after about 100 lady cyclists went past. It was very impressive.

We found a Logis to stay in at Sigean. A member of the staff gave us a choice of the green room or the yellow room. We chose the yellow. It was very bright and very comfortable. After breakfast the following day we set off, even though we could hear thunder and within a very short space of time we were caught in a heavy downpour. We continued on to Peyriac de Mer where we looked around some large lakes and a nature reserve where we saw some black winged stilts. The French seem to have quite a few wildlife sanctuaries - but there never seems to be a lot of wildlife about. They like the ortolan bunting - in a pie.

After three days at a big holiday resort called Gruissan we went back to Narbonne. We walked along the canal bank into Narbonne and Pat disturbed a snake close to her feet. This snake which was of a dark colouring and about three feet long hissed at us. All chemists in France stock anti-snake serum. We saw it again when we returned to our hotel. We were picked up by the Bike Express within two minutes of our correct departure time and they had come from Spain. There were only eleven passengers in total all the way to Dover.

No punctures.



Everyday
Sussex
by Roy James



LETTER FROM AFRICA 2



Thank you to Geoff Knight for passing on another letter from our old friend Rob Russell, then (1999) in Africa, but currently somewhere in South America.

Just seeing the words, "Fireman's Randonnee", set my memory banks into replay mode. I missed just one, as well as this year's. I used to get into furious burn ups in order to get back first. Then I went English and rode a tricycle. Happy days! If Phil Hitchcock was here he would be one of the well. Nearly 40% of the adult population of the town have HIV/AIDS. He cannot go one better than that.

At present I'm putting together a presentation for a fund raising sponsorship in England for \$10,000. We will be able to purchase a mini bus if we are successful. It means writing a lot about the project and taking photographs to put in a folder for presentation to potential sponsors. The courses at the school would benefit enormously if we were more mobile. You already know something about transport conditions here.

Today we had an open day, when local politicians, headmen, chiefs and potential sponsors were entertained by the fantastic school choir, a play written by the students and the little kids from the Child Aid house, which is also on the site, for the benefit of the local community. All the mums were there too. Nice to see the smiles that the recitation in English brought to their faces, many of them were in fact grandparents, as the mums were in the city. The smell of wood smoke on clothes and bodies. We were all pestered with flies, which I was watching settle onto bare feet and shiny vaselined legs. Babies were kept quiet with a spot of breast-feeding; this was followed by being tied onto mum's back for a little sleep. The preparation for this event was long and tiring. It meant that I was at the City Council Nursery selecting plants. We got bougainvillea, frangipani, fan palm, aloe vera, sisal and a lot of other trees and flowering shrubs and plants were selected, with and help and advice of a knowledgeable gardener. Transport was hired and the consignment taken back to school, where my agricultural students were waiting for immediate transplanting. The beds had already been prepared. Just a question of watering in the plants.

I have persuaded the director to approve the purchase of a motorcycle to save time for myself and the principal. The other day when I hitched a lift on a pickup I realised I have been missing the open air, the chance to stop and admire the views, shop for fruit and veg. at wayside vendors, to take photographs and also to save time. Quite like old times astride a motorcycle passing through the hot African countryside.

The walk to school is always a pleasure, as is the return journey. It takes half an hour. The scenes I pass vary according to the weather and the time of day. When it is sunny and still, in the early morning, birds can be heard singing close by and in the distance. They are hard to see but the variety of sound is wide; chirps, whistles, melodic songs soaring, repetition, calls and answers, there is even a croak. The clouds are often out, at this time of year and they are frequently low and black as if a storm is about to break. The variation of colour in them is from brightest stunning white, to darkest grey. Visibility of the surrounding hills can be shrouded by cloud, or a heavy shower can be seen approaching between two hills, as it deposits its rain, sweeping along as seen from a high vantage point. It has not yet been cold, even when I have was in drenching rain with my shoes squeaking and my tee shirt sticking to my skin. The most relaxing part of the day is lunch time, as I sit under the shade of a

mango tree, near to the log fire that all the school cooking is done on, whilst one gazes out over the valleys and surrounding hills with a bowl of nshima, (powdered maize flour cooked as a porridge), with either fish from Lake Malawi, or a ladle of beans, spinach, or maybe boiled pumpkin leaves. The school is still being built and the students built their own dormitories. The cauldron full of food sends its smell across in the breeze. The cool shade of the mango tree allows one to enjoy the warm breeze whilst gazing at the surrounding hills, little maize fields, huts, some have a tin roof that glint in the sun. There are large outcrops of rock to be seen protruding out of some of the hillsides. Students and staff share the shade with me, whilst we squat on flat stones, or on our haunches. Greenery stretches as far as the eye can see, as the rains are just

finishing. There are about twenty hills in total to view, at distances from one mile to about five miles, others stretch away into the distant Zambezi valley. Nguludi is about an hour and a half walk away by foot, this is where one gets the bus to Limbe.



There is a winding mud path that is passed along on the way to school, it is steep and one stumbles frequently, whilst edging ones way along. Tall grass has broken and fallen and covers many of the ruts, so that I have stumbled and sprained my ankles on a number of occasions. A walking stick now helps me to keep my balance better. Bare rock is often exposed, where the fierce tropical rains have washed off the top soil. A sharp scramble down a bank brings one to a river. There is no bridge, so off come my shoes and socks, so I can wade across. I now wear sandals so that I do not have to stop to take off my socks. The water comes up to my shins and is too wide to jump across - there is no room to get a run up anyway. Sometimes when there has been heavy rain it flows very fast. Once across I have to push my way through some sugar cane that hangs across the path. The steep climb has me puffing, with the added weight of my 35 litre Lowe Alpine Vision rucsac, which now has a rolled umbrella inside (as I keep getting caught in showers), books, camera, assorted spectacles, tools, compass and newspapers (I set up and run the school library and have got the British Council to donate old English newspapers from their library). As the top of the hill is reached one comes upon a small village mostly with grass huts. It is traditional, with clay pots outside many of the doors. Every day there is something new to see. Sheets of plastic opened out to dry maize in the mud baked yards. Kids playing games. "Azungu" is the word I hear children call out as I approach. Greetings, handshakes, smiles and waves. There are woven traditional maize storage bins perched upon poles to keep the grain dry. Green sticks are woven in and out of upright sticks. They are about a metre wide and one and half tall. Chicken and goats cluck and baa, as they make their way with heads down foraging. Cockerels can be heard crowing. Clumps of paw paws, shady mangoes, avocados, and clumps of bananas dot the village. Piles of discarded cobs of maize that have been shelled lie in heaps. Smoke from cooking fires emanates through the thatched roofs. Where maize stands the villagers are putting in ridges of soil between the rows and inserting sprigs

of the green leaves of sweet potatoes, to become the main crop when harvesting has taken place. Things just take root and grow! The twisting mud paths of the village are pounded flat with the passage of bare feet. The areas in front of the houses are swept daily with a broom made of twigs. The shapes of the fruit trees are all distinctive and add to the picturesque scene. Some of my students live here. The thatched roofs of the houses give the place an idyllic rural charm. Timeless, owing to the fact that there is no electricity or the clutter of cables, aerials and dishes that are associated with it.

The other day whilst returning home from school I was disturbed by a noise near to my feet, on looking down I saw a large snake moving away through the maize, it was going at about twice the speed that I was walking. Its body was about as thick as my wrist and just over a metre long. From its description it seems that it was a black mamba, probably the most dangerous of all African snakes because it attacks without provocation and it is also the fastest moving snake in the World. The walking stick can come in handy.

There is another route to school which takes about an hour. It is quite different, as there is no steep descent into a valley, nor a stream that one has to ford. There are larger houses that dot along the narrow mud road that winds its way across the upper valley and across to the other side and down the side back to my current home. A larger variety of crops is to be seen, such as Soya beans, tobacco, as well as larger areas of sweet potatoes, recognizable by the high ridges that they are planted on and their leaves which look like small maple leaves. Sorghum is also in evidence, this is a drought resistant crop that looks like maize in leaf and shape, but goes up to ten feet, or more, in height. There is no cob attached to the stem at about waist height, instead there is a sprig of barley like grain at the top of the plant.

There are four streams to cross, each with a bridge of sorts, one is made of sticks tied together, all this is higher up the valley before they all merge into each other. The other day I was making my way home with one of the students. We decided to take a short cut, as it was raining heavily, and he was leading the way. On reaching the river he hopped nimbly across the stepping-stones, with rapids swirling around them. It was easy to follow, one, two, three, slip. The rucksack, umbrella (which was up), followed by me, all tumbling into the river!

There are large hills on either side of the valley on this route, as the valley narrows as it climbs to higher country. To the north is the Mulanje Massif, an area of high plateau, with peaks rising to over 10,000 feet (3,000m). Mist often covers the area, but when it is clear the huge rock walls can clearly be seen. It is an area of hiking, reputed to be amongst the best in Africa. To the south the valley opens out as the streams turn into rivers on the flood plain of the Shire River. Livingstone travelled up this, as the Zambezi has rapids on it. This is just a little further to the south and is one of the great rivers of the World. Splendid views looking down towards the rivers are to be had, of greenery and rock. At one time the whole area was covered in dense forest, but tree felling has cleared it all away with resulting soil erosion.

Houses are of two types, traditional mud with grass roofs and clay bricks with corrugated iron roofs. Choirs can be heard all day on Saturdays practising in their little churches, there are a number of them as one passes along the road. Goats can be seen and heard. Chickens are all free range, scratching about all over the place. A number of houses have flowers in their gardens. A child fled in wide-eyed terror from me, with her friends laughing at her, as she had never seen an "azungu" before. It is sad to see men just gazing into space as they sit

on chairs outside their houses. They may raise a hand in greeting. This is partly a problem with illiteracy, but also in a male dominated society where the women do most of the work, with the men contributing generally little.

Soon the school should be getting electricity, hopefully, as the power poles are within 150 yards now. I am pushing a plan to introduce a literacy programme for the community and turn the school into a community school. It is also envisaged that I can set up a tree-planting programme through the local headman, as all the valley is almost cleared of trees.

Mangoes, which originally came from India, shade almost every yard and house. Often they have not been planted deliberately, but have happened as a result of chance from discarded pips that boys have scrumpted and eaten, throwing away the remains. Paths between villages are closely tracked by mango trees. Clumps of sugar cane appear regularly, as the Malawian has a very sweet tooth. Three big spoons are put into a cup of tea. Talking of sugar makes me feel how thirsty I am. A nice cup of green Japanese tea is most refreshing, unfortunately there is no one nice to share it with, she is now in Angola, but that is another story.

Enough of all that. Hope to go to town tomorrow. If the country director is there I may be able to send this communication to you.

I think of you regularly and hope that you are well and looking after yourself. Give my regards to the others.

From your fraternal pal,
Rob,



WATER AND MILLS – A CAMPING WEEKEND IN WEST SUSSEX.

By David Rix

Having decided against attending the 2000 South of England Rally, the Seaford & Newhaven Section agreed on a Bank Holiday camp at Goffsland Farm, near Shipley in West Sussex. This would give us access to the lanes of West Sussex and, weather permitting, parts of the Downs Link between Shoreham and Guildford.

Quite a few members of the Section and other friends in the D.A. started to express interest, which caused Ann some concern – she had only been able to book three pitches! But as the weekend approached various people dropped out, including Geoff & Jenny Boxall whose move into their new house was imminent, and Ann herself, who was concerned about getting various jobs done before my brother, John, moved to California. In the end it was looking as if it would be just us and one or two others.

Friday finally came, everything was packed and ready, but it was pouring with rain. The forecast was for Saturday to be better, then rain overnight, showers on Sunday and fine on Monday. So it was a quick phone call to the campsite to let them know that we hoped to get



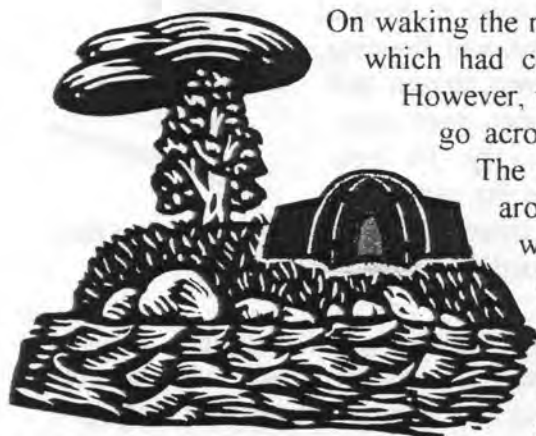
there sometime. Saturday morning dawned fine and sunny. There was a brief shower while we were loading the car and one on the drive there, but Martin (nearly 9) and Emma (6) were still keen to go and by half past ten we were on site pitching our new tent. Not too bad, it only took us about three quarters of an hour! With a few adjustments to get it all lying correctly.

There was plenty of space this time, only two caravans and a frame tent with pups – two one-man dome tents right beside it! The farmer suggested we pitch on the top section of the site nearer the others rather than the lower area we usually used, because it might be a bit muddy after all the rain. Later we were very glad of this advice.

We decided on an early lunch and then a ride up to Southwater and through the lanes to the Garden Centre at Mannings Heath, just below Horsham. We sheltered for five minutes at Southwater for a shower to pass and just made it to the garden centre as the heavens opened for about ten to fifteen minutes of torrential rain. We were pleased to find that they now had a proper, very good, coffee shop again, rather than the awful arrangement they had had a few years before where you were served over-priced drinks from a vending machine. This one will definitely be going back on the D.A. tearoom list now.

After a look around it was back into the lanes for the return journey, with the rain thankfully over for a while. A nice downhill run to Copsale, where we picked up the Downs Link to Southwater. This stretch, luckily, is cinder track and rideable in most conditions. We arrived back at camp to find ours was still the only D.A. one their, none of the others had ventured out. We had our evening meal and then ventured out for a walk along the tracks, in our wellies of course, before it got too dark. As we returned to camp it started raining and we were quite glad that we had just enough space to erect the folding table in the living area

of the new tent. We finally went to bed to the sound of heavy rain on the flysheet and the thought that the Downs Link would definitely be off the programme this weekend. Little did we know what was coming.



On waking the next morning we were relieved to find that the rain, which had continued most of the night, had finally stopped. However, finally yielding to a call of nature and getting out to go across to the loo, I was greeted by an amazing sight. The tiny stream, in a three foot deep ditch, that ran around one edge of the camp site, was now thirty feet wide in places! It completely covered our usual camping area, where the farm geese were now swimming, and was also right across the entrance road, effectively sealing us in! Once dressed, the children and I wandered down to look and take some pictures – we reckoned it had to be at least a foot deep across the road. Luckily it wasn't raining but, since it didn't look like we would be going anywhere in a hurry, we decided to have breakfast before doing anything else. By nine o'clock we could clearly see that the flood was subsiding but, even though I could easily walk through with wellies, it would be almost impossible on bikes – especially for Martin. After some discussion Susan made sandwiches and by ten the water was down to less than six inches, allowing us to get the car out and so we went down to Amberley and the Chalk Pits Museum for the day.

Martin and Emma enjoyed themselves with all the different things to look at and do, including riding on the Tramocar and the little steam railway. Being a Bank Holiday we were treated to a display of Morris dancing by the Martlet Sword and Morris Men and also dances by the folk dance group “t Olde Getrouw” from Varsseveld in the Netherlands, whose aim is to preserve the local dances and costumes from around 1900. We did have a little rain while we were there, but luckily not enough to stop us getting back into the campsite. We didn't think the conditions were suitable for a walk Sunday night, so it was reading and cards until bedtime.

Next morning things were slightly more normal, though there were still a couple of inches of water across the access road. We decided to pack everything up, load the car up, put the bikes on the roof and take the car out somewhere before starting our ride. Therefore by eleven o'clock we were in the coffee shop at the Pulborough Brooks RSPB Reserve at Wigginholt. Then it was bikes off the roof and out into the lanes of West Sussex. We wandered along through Greatham and Coldwaltham to Burton Mill Pond, with the intention of visiting the Water Mill so that Martin and Emma could get another stamp on their Sussex Mills Passport. However, when we got there, there was no sign of life – on re-checking the list it said that they opened Saturdays and Sundays, but didn't actually mention Bank Holiday Mondays - black mark for daddy.

Martin was very upset. To try and salvage something I said we could go on along the lane and up the main road – a total of about a mile and a half – to Coultershaw Water Pump, which was also on the list and was open on Bank Holiday Mondays. It turned out to be really great. The whole thing is run by the Sussex Industrial Archaeology Society and one of the old chaps on duty gave us a full guided tour – specially simplified for the children. The

pump is powered by a water wheel and was originally built and used to pump water to Petworth House – a distance of one and a half miles and a rise of one hundred and eighty feet. These days the pressure is reduced and usually powers a fifteen foot fountain beside the main road, in front of the pump building. Unfortunately, due to the heavy rain and flooding, the millpond was rather full, meaning that the wheel was almost half under water and couldn't be run. but Martin and Emma were quite happy with some hand pumps that they were allowed to try. He then took us down beside the swollen millpond to show us the old stables, where they used to house the canal horses in the days when the barges ran through on this part of the river. We felt that this had definitely been worth the trip.



A rather late lunch was eaten beside the pump building, overlooking the millpond. Then it was back down the main road and into the lanes for the return journey. But, what do you know? As we turned into the lane there was a sign saying, "Burton Water Mill - Open - Cream Teas"! So we would be able to get two mills instead of just one. But, what a change from the last time Susan and I had visited. The present owners were now geared to do doing teas. You entered via outside stairs into part of the upper mill floor, where the teas were served, and this was all of the inside that you could see. The lady was very friendly and quite happy to just stamp their passports, but we decided (even though we had not long had lunch) to have a drink there to avoid another stop at Pulborough Brooks on our way home. Martin was made up when he found that Burton was the water mill that had been on Groundforce and they had details and an album of photos for visitors to look at. You couldn't actually see the work unfortunately, other than a glimpse out of an upstairs window, because they had now grown a high hedge around the garden.

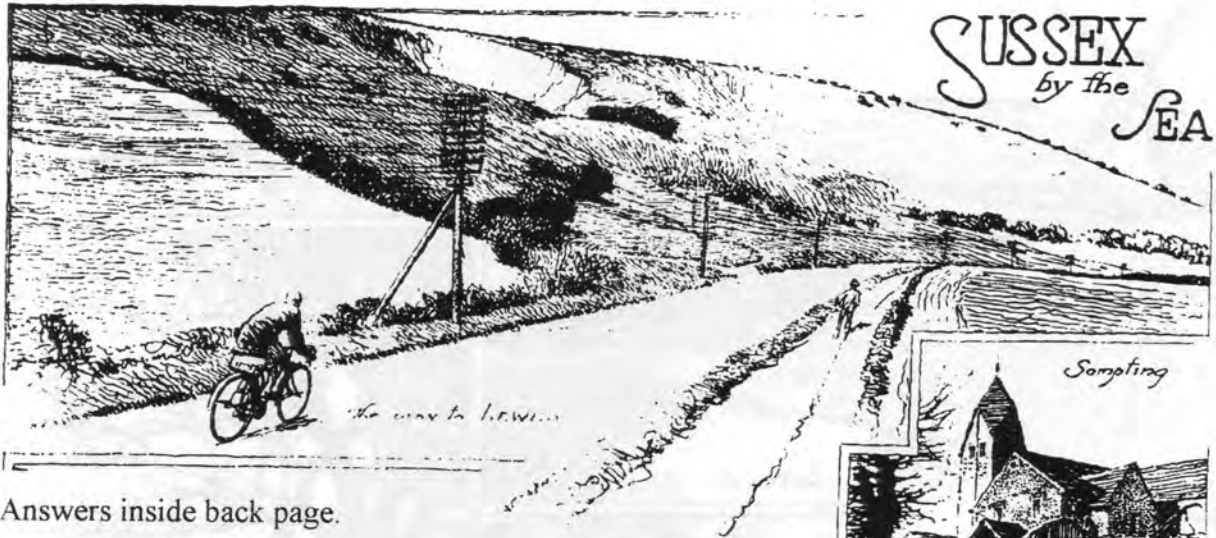
Two separate visits had rather eaten into our time and so we abandoned my planned, slightly longer, return route in favour of retracing our outward route. This seemed to pass relatively quickly, partly due to daddy being egged on to recite, and attempt to teach, various tongue-twisters to Emma and Martin. Back at the car park at the RSPB reserve it wasn't long before the bikes were loaded back on the roof of the car and we were headed for home.

Considering our doubts on Friday and the flooding on Sunday we managed to salvage a very enjoyable weekend from what could have been a total disaster. What's more important, it doesn't seem to have affected Martin and Emma's enthusiasm for camping, they can't wait for the summer holidays and the New Forest Cycle Week.



SUSSEX PLACE NAME QUIZ

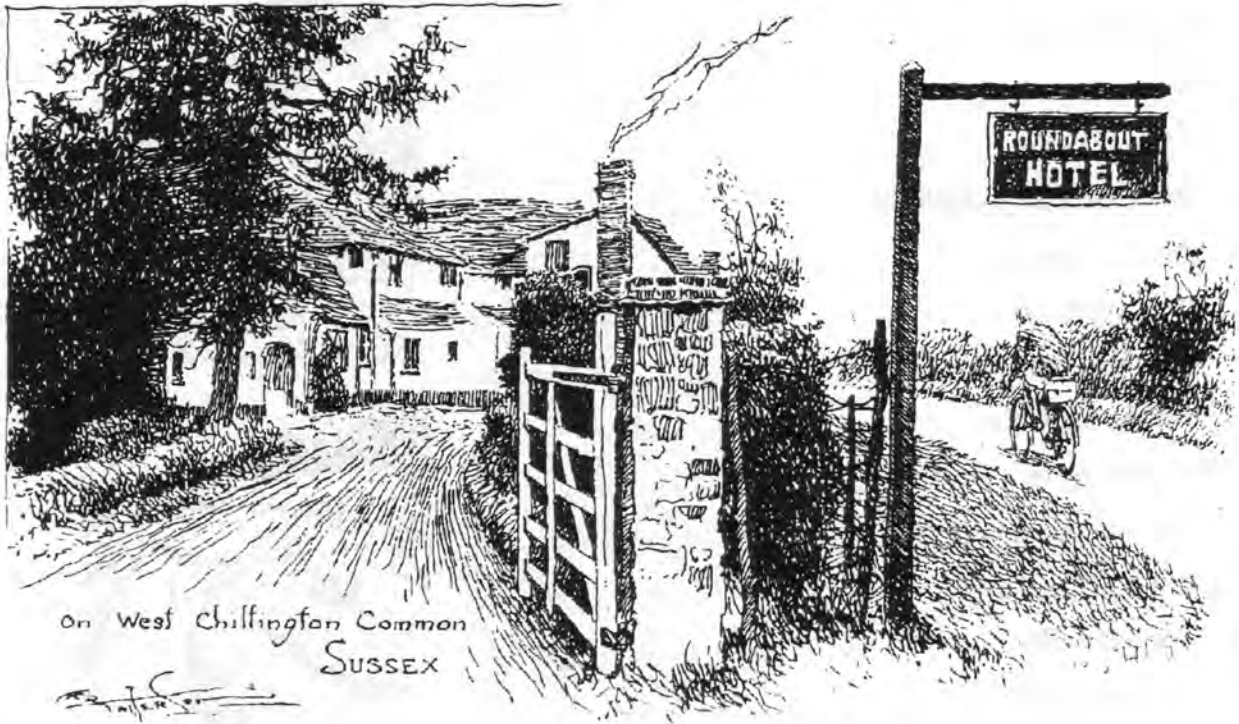
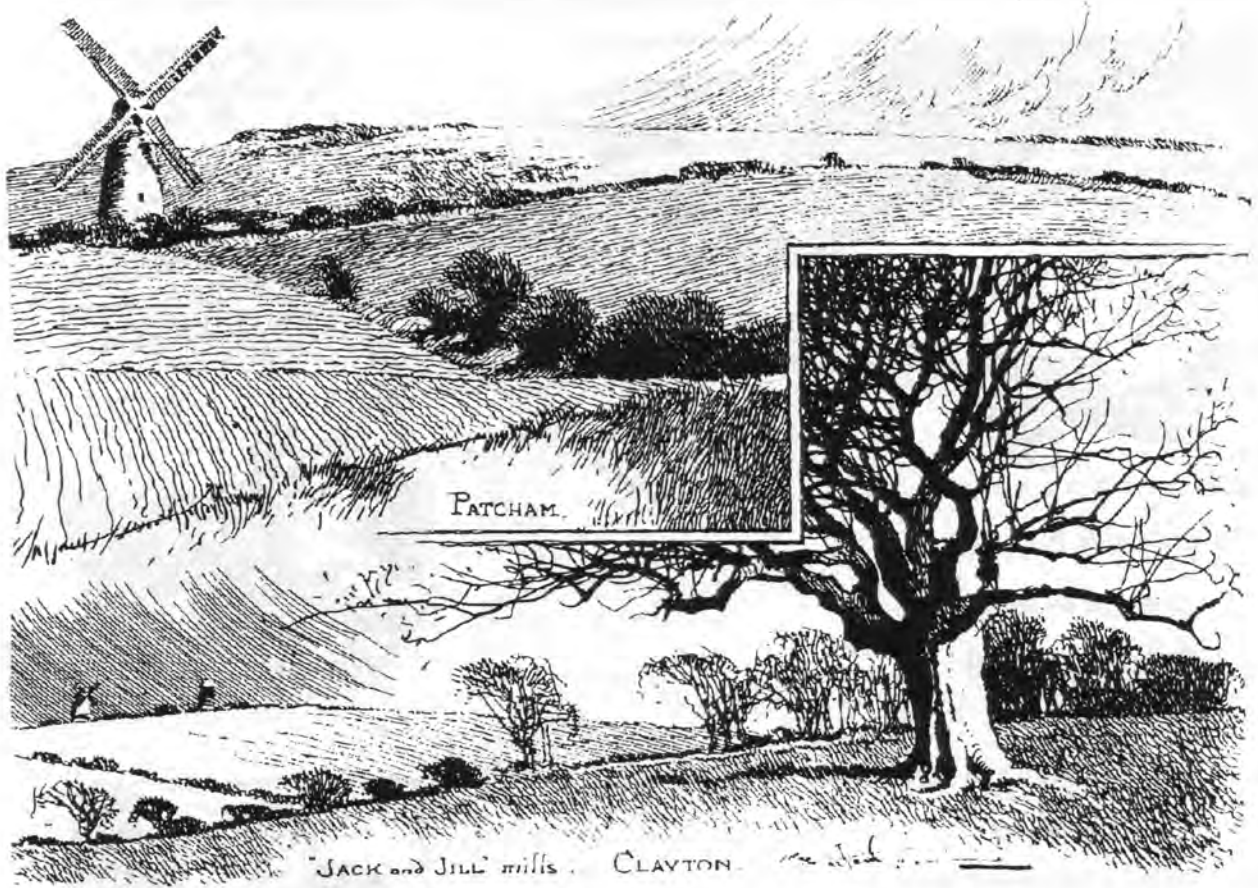
Thanks to Debbie Gearing for passing on this interesting little quiz. How well do you know Sussex (East & West). How many place names can you get right from the clues supplied.



Answers inside back page.

1. One was fought here.
2. Ready for picking.
3. Bovine nut tree.
4. This will give you a puncture.
5. Watery crossing
6. Helpful university man.
7. Carrion town.
8. Feline enclosure.
9. Type of bread.
10. What cricketers might do.
11. Bob's crossing.
12. Putrefying cleric.
13. Teachers favourite.
14. Prelate's pebble
15. A drawing of a pig's leg.
16. The sun sets on this cleric.
17. Wide English tree.
18. Little benefit.
19. A blonde bulb.
20. Money goes up here.





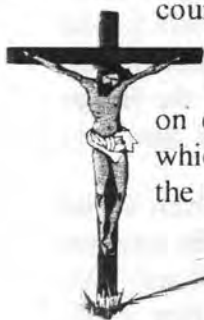
FRENCH TRIP FOR TROI, JUNE 2000.

By Ann Rix



Geoff and Jenny Boxall arrived from Ringmer just before 7 a.m. on Monday, 5th June, collected me, my trusty steed, camping gear and food, etc., and we made it to the port at Newhaven by 7.35 a.m. The day before I had ridden the shorter route of the 1066 with David, Susan, Martin and Emma, Martin riding his own cycle this time. It had been hard going against the wind, from Hastings along the coast to Pevensey, with a stiff Southwester blowing. I wondered how we would get on the next day, whether the catamaran would sail or not, as the sea was very choppy and it had been cancelled on Friday owing to the rough weather. Lo and behold, the wind had dropped, with the sea almost like a millpond, so no problem at all.

We left right on time at 8.30a.m.; as we had all been very busy beforehand we hadn't prepared for anything on board, therefore we were well and truly caught. Coffee and cake for three was £8.60, so resolved not to do that on the way back. Rolled off the Ferry at 11.50 a.m. French time, after watching the hydraulics lowering the ramp. Headed through the countryside on the N27 to Totes, then headed towards Pavilly on the D22, beginning to see the wayside Calvary's at road junctions. Through Bretteville, a typical Normandy village, rolling countryside, then forest rising on either side. Along the Pavilly Vallee, the valley of the Austreberthe river which we came across several times during our stay. Through Pavilly itself on the D142 to Barentin, both larger places, under a large railway bridge and on to Duclair by the D143 with forest again on both sides, arriving at 1 p.m., had lunch in the car then a stroll round. At 1.50 p.m. we headed for Jumieges along by the Seine and the cycle route, which is also part of the 'Route des Fruits', or the 'Fruit Route' as we called it, coming across it many times on our visit, though all we saw for sale were strawberries. Camp site at 2.15 p.m., a ride in the rain after setting up our tents, hot chocolat in a bar halfway round to warm us up. Still wet when we returned so into our respective tents for an easy meal then to early bed at 7.30 p.m.



Tuesday. It stopped raining soon after 2 a.m. after a very wet night, we all surfaced after nearly eleven hours - which we needed - the other two having had the move into their new house and getting it all clean for the carpets to go down the Tuesday before, me helping my eldest son with bricklaying and jobs over several weekends. After breakfast and once cleared up we rode out via a 'Chemin de Randonnee', along, down and up a rough track where the water had evidently poured down, so walked a bit. Past a Sanctuary to St. Philibert, in the middle of the Forêt de Jumieges, down a track similar to the first part, after which we joined the cycle route to Duclair.

A visit to the Information Centre, where we each collected a lot of useful leaflets from the kind young lady who was anxious to please. Lunch by the Seine watching the lorries and cars loading on to the 'Bac', this one runs every twenty minutes over the Seine and back. The lorries were hauling gravel from the quarry just the other side, as we discovered when we crossed over for a ride around the area between the bends of the Seine. We had already seen lots of orchids here, but when pausing



halfway down a long descent Jenny found some bee orchids, this made our day. On higher fields we saw lovely deep blue cornflowers in with the red poppies. Back down to the Seine to ride alongside it for a while before rising again through the cool Forêt de Mauny. We found wild strawberries to eat on the way up, these were delicious and very welcome as there is a great dearth of refreshment stops in the areas we seem to explore here. Down to catch the 'Bac' at Yville and return by another part of the 'Fruit Route' to Jumieges. After supper we had a stroll round the village. 25 miles.

Wednesday. Deciding to do our shopping first we car'd to the Intermarche at Duclair, stocked up, then visited a boulangerie for a cake each for our 11's. Back to the campsite to brew up and enjoy it sitting in the peaceful site, then left at 11.50 dropping down past the Abbey to catch the 'Bac' from Jumieges. This runs half hourly so, as we were early, a little ride around used up the time, then it was over the Seine again but in another direction to arrive the other side on another part of the 'Fruit Route'. This took us along by the Seine, quiet roads everywhere, to La Mailleraye sur Seine for lunch in the hot sunshine. A lovely seat facing the Seine, the water calm, with views along two stretches as it winds along. Next bit wasn't as good, as the track we took started off okay but turned out very bumpy; Jenny and I weren't very happy on this but just survived, fortunately we were able to join a road eventually. That took us to a bridge over the main road that climbs to the Pont de Brotonne, which we had seen from the track. Good views of the traffic coming down off the bridge and of the superb bridge itself, the golden strands stood out and shone in the sunshine, further on they looked like the sails of two yachts sailing along above the trees.

Along quiet roads to Vatteville la Rue where we found a site that had been given to the Count there 'for services rendered', in helping William do his conquering bit. By now we were crying out for one of our tea stops but, as I mentioned earlier, none to be found. We followed the 'thatched houses' route towards Azier, hoping all the way, but nothing at all. By the time we had climbed in the sunshine up to the Forêt Domaniale de Brotonne, we had to stop on a forest road. A large pile of logs made a good seat to eat our last rations before rolling down through the Forêt. Along those superb Forest roads back to catch the 'Bac' to Jumieges and then for me to get shots of the Abbaye while the sun gave me a good chance. Camp site by 7 p.m., supper then a stroll. 35 miles.



Thursday, 9.45 a.m. We left the campsite after our leisurely breakfast watching a pair of jays nest building - or as we thought practicing, as they were taking twigs to two areas, this delayed the washing up. Down and along the 'Fruit Route' to catch the 'Bac' at Yville sur Seine, twenty minutes to wait so a look around and time for a few shots for me. The trip this time was thrilling, we saw a large cruiser coming from our left and it was almost time for us to move. The 'Bac's' engines started - we thought, oh, he's just getting prepared for the wash - I had my camera at the ready - then realized we were moving - towards the cruiser! About 100ft apart Geoff thought - it certainly looked closer than that with both moving. On to la Bouille for a super 11's place, a hotel by the Seine, cake from a boulangerie nearby then sat with large hot chocolat and watched the world go by. A good route on to Rouen, with cycleways and cyclists' traffic lights alongside busy roads. Lunch by the Seine and getting baked while watching trams going over the bridge and a cruiser with its passengers docked nearby. A wander round Rouen, past Le Grand Horlodge with its old clock, to Jeane de Arc church, a marvelous conception, the outside and the inside were very impressive. On entry one is awed by it, the wooden roof that arches above, the original panes of glass set amongst

stone trees at the tallest side, with two linen like fishes stretched across the small window opposite. Ice creams, then to a cycle shop where Jenny and I managed to find some Carnac cycling shoes. The roads out were filled with traffic, plus road works going on as we climbed out. We managed to survive and after a welcome lemonade and a cake at the top it was plain sailing, literally, as we bowled along to Duclair by 7 p.m. Too late for the Intermarche but the Shoppi was open, back by the 'Fruit Route' to arrive at 8.30 p.m. after a long day out. Phone calls home, then a late supper and towards dusk we were entertained by the bats flying to and fro.

Friday. Breakfast over - no Jays today - evidently the area was not suitable. Geoff down with a cold so, not feeling up to riding, and as it had started to rain we decided to do our shopping in Duclair and see if it cleared up. Back for lunch in more or less fine then Geoff felt like a snooze so Jenny and I prepared for a last ride. But down came the rain, so quickly away with everything and into our tents - Geoff was asleep in the car. Nearly an hour later the rain stopped, he awoke and felt up to a car ride, change of clothes for Jenny and I again - down came the rain, so all three headed out for Caldebec-en-Caux to park and walk. Still trying to find IGN map no.7, though Geoff had managed very well with his older version, the only trouble he had was leaving Rouen as they had changed the road numbers. Along by the Seine we saw a cruise ship parked, visited another Information Centre and picked up more leaflets from another helpful assistant. Wandering on past shops we were intrigued by the wedding cakes - each portion individually wrapped - tier upon tier. The church did not seem very interesting inside but the outside was decorated around the doors and above them with small intricate figures, still in very good condition. We found the river running through the town then climbed up, and up, to have a super view over the town below and of a large ship and its attendant tug going by, it looked level with the chimney pots. Down to the car and back to the site by 6 p.m. to get supper - just in time too - as it came on to rain again. I had finished my meal but Geoff and Jenny still had their second course to come; a dive into the tent for Jenny with all the cooking equipment, etc., and a dive into the car for Geoff. Jenny and I, after washing up, left Geoff in the tent having a snooze while we sorted out the phone numbers to their friends in Dieppe. We had to inquire of madam in the site office if the numbers had changed, they had, it had a two now, just as ours has a one. We then had a walk down to an area we hadn't done before, noticing the patching of the old buildings. Coming back to walk through the churchyard we discovered it had a plaque for the War Graves Commission. We searched and finally found a small plot at the far side to two South



Wales Borderers who died 2nd September, 1944, most of the other graves were typical - large black or grey marble with masses of flowers. We were glad we had found the two soldiers - we will remember them. Into bed about 10.30 p.m., then it poured down, but we woke to a fine morn, though not as warm as before.

Saturday. After breakfast it was packing up time, only bothered by a few ants and a few crickets in the tent during our stay, slugs on our last wet night inside the flysheet plus one large beetle who wanted to move in while I was packing. Were bitten the night we were late with supper, we hadn't used the insect repellent, not having been bothered till then. Leaving at 10 a.m. to take a different route back to Dieppe. Through Duclair for the last time, to Freville, rolling countryside as on the way down, Motteville, Doudeville, fields again, a patchwork of greens, lighter green of the young flax, yellowy green of barley, darker green of wheat, green and white of peas, a touch of yellow with green as the rape was starting to

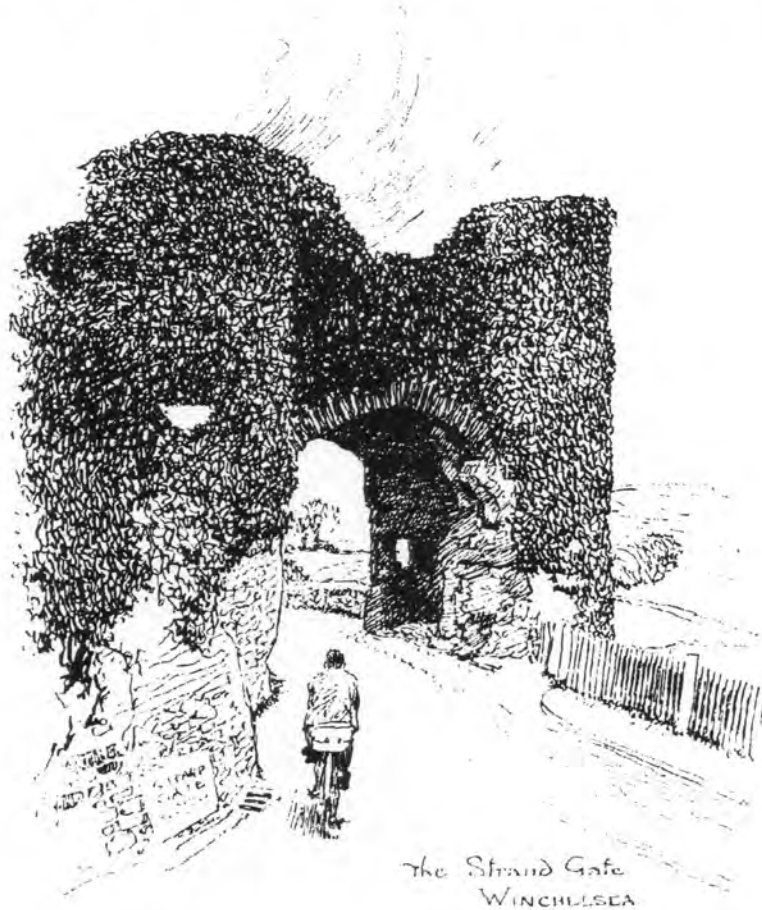
bloom. Rape seeding, then the patchwork as before. St. Valery-en-Caux at 11 a.m., a wander round, finally found a new IGN 7 map, had our last hot chocolat for two and coffee for one at a very reasonable price to our surprise, followed by a superb raspberry cake from the Boulangerie, which we had while watching the yachts. The flags were flying at St. Valery as it was the 60th anniversary of the battle there; we saw a few old soldiers walking about, with their medals proudly worn. Leaving on the D68 to Veules-Les-Roses, running along by the sea with its bands of colour - sandy to aquamarine. Pourville, then up the hairpins to stop at the viewing point to look back at the view, then down into Dieppe for lunch by the sea. Shopping, then up to their friends, Agnes and Roger, where we were treated to cold drinks and Gateau de Pomme comme Grandmere, which was superb.

While there, sudden hooting disturbed the peace - the usual carry-on with a wedding in France, all the following cars sound their horns following the bridal pair. Roger showed us his award for riding the Paris-Roubaix - a heavy chunk of the Pave on a small stand. It had been on the 4th June, the same day some of us were riding the 1066. Left them at 5 p.m., down into Dieppe for the ferry, which left 6.15 p.m. French time, back at Newhaven 7.15 p.m. English time. Off the ferry, then on to Seaford and unloaded by 8 p.m. A very good five days over the water.



SUSSEX PLACE NAMES QUIZ - ANSWERS

- | | | | |
|-----|-------------|-----|---------------|
| 19. | FAIRLIGHT | 20. | POUNDHILL |
| 16. | WEST DEAN | 17. | BROAD OAK |
| 13. | PETT | 14. | BISHOPSTONE |
| 10. | MAYFIELD | 11. | ROBERTSBRIDGE |
| 7. | CROWBOROUGH | 8. | CATSFIELD |
| 4. | SHARPTHORNE | 5. | FORD |
| 1. | BATTLE | 2. | RIPE |
| | | 3. | COWBEECH |
| | | 6. | WILLINGDON |
| | | 9. | RYE |
| | | 12. | ROTTINGDEAN |
| | | 15. | ETCHINGHAM |
| | | 18. | SMALL DOLE |



DEADLINE FOR THE XMAS ISSUE - WEDNESDAY NOV. 15th