

The



Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

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working for cycling

*East Sussex District Association
Cyclists' Touring Club*

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"The Coaster"

Issue No. 38, Christmas 2001



From the Editor's Desk.

Finally there's enough copy to put together at least one issue this year. It's a shame, since so many people say how much they like the magazine, that more people don't take the time to put pen to paper (or perhaps I should say finger to keyboard) and dash off a few lines for us - I know from reports I get that lots of you often do interesting things or have been touring in interesting places. So why not put it down on paper and let us all know what you have been up to.

I hope you'll think the wait was worth it. We've got some good contributions this issue, including:- two French trips, the latest (rather belated) update on Rob Russell's travels and the suggestion that Shakespeare was a cyclist at heart.

I hope that you all enjoy this issue and continue to enjoy your cycling.

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

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CROWBOROUGH-MONTARGIS RAID 2001

by Geoff Boxall

On Tuesday, June 5th, Roger Bradgate and I took the 08.30 ferry to Dieppe. We had lunch in Le Parisienne, overlooking the marina, and then rode down to Torcy le Grand to spend the night with Eric, a friend from the Fireman's Randonnee days.

We were there by early afternoon and so we dropped our baggage (total load in my case 27 lbs) and then had a ride to see the old doodlebug site on the D99 a little way out of Bellencombre at Ardouval. There they have a ramp with a V1 on it pointing at London. (We did 85 km for the day.)

On Wednesday we tried to get into the Formula 1 Hotel at Vernon, but found it full. The local tourist office could not find a bed for us in the town, but turned up a chambre d'hote 10km back the way that we had come, on the opposite side of the river. Roger muttered, but a bed in the hand is worth two damp hedgerows on a cold night. It turned up trumps, we were given a lovely room and a glass of cider on arrival and, after a shower, drifted into the village for supper. On our return we purchased a bottle of cider and polished that off before going to bed. (128 km)

Thursday afternoon saw us in Rambouillet, and once again in a tourist office. Again there was "no room at the inn". We suggested that they try Etampes, a further 40km down the road, and at the third attempt succeeded. The evening meal was pricey but the starter and dessert were help yourself jobs and so we did just that – and felt that they hadn't made too much out of us. After 134 km you do have a reasonable appetite.

Friday was a doddle, only 75 km to Montargis. We were met after 40 kms by three of our French cycling friends who had ridden out to meet us. After a short time one of them hailed a lady in one of the villages en route and before we knew it we were in the house drinking coffee and being offered Calvados. Further down the road we met Michele with whom we were staying. We were overjoyed at seeing her, because the previous year she had suffered a stroke and she was now making an excellent recovery.

Once in Montargis it was a busy round of visiting old friends – Saturday lunch with Bob – evening meal with Francoise. Sunday, a quick 55 km with Roland and a fit 40 year old, Roger opting for the 35 km larger group, led by Jean-Noel. Back for a mid-day barbecue, French style, prepared by Jacky who I first met in Crowborough doing exactly the same thing in 1982 after my first twinning raid. Couldn't manage much that evening at supper.

Monday elevesnes was Champagne (two bottles) with Guy and Rene and Michel Drury the editor of the local paper. Lunch was at Roland's for Michele, Roger and myself. Roland's barbecue is a brick job built on the top of his dog kennel. The evening meal was at our hosts with guests, Francoise and his wife.

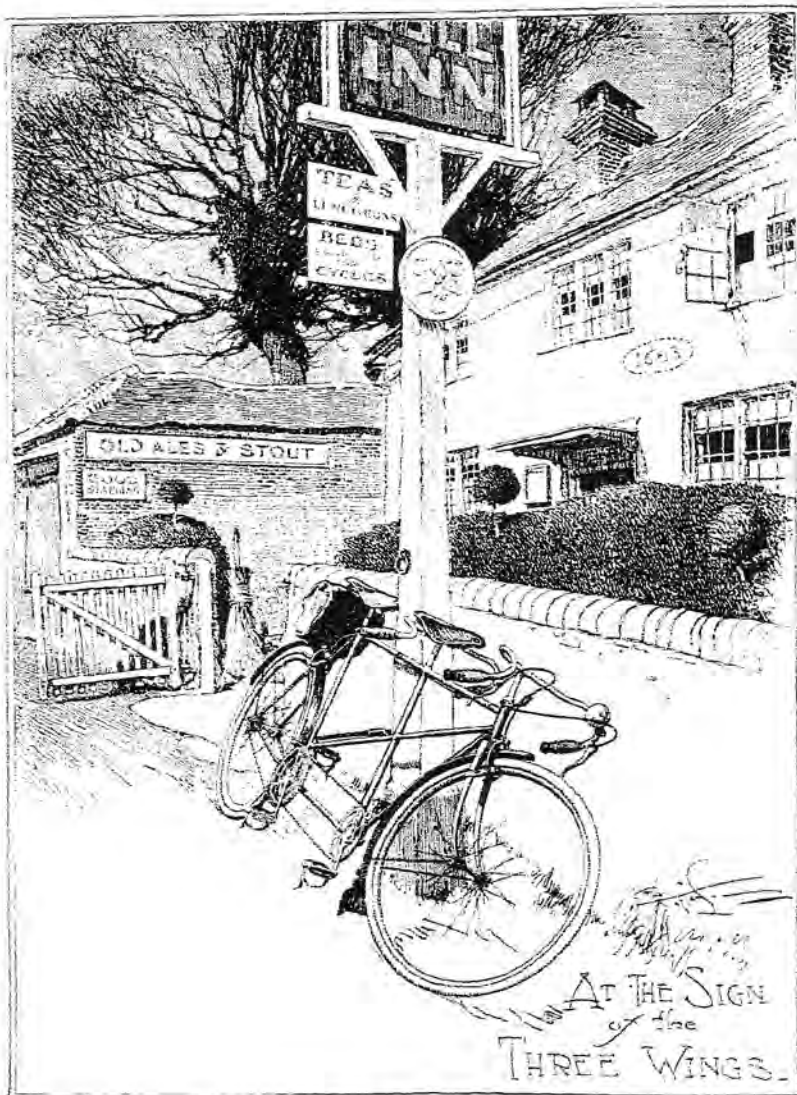
We left at 8.15 on Tuesday morning, after a photo call for the local press, and once again we had our escort of cyclists. Coffee and eau-de-vie was 40 km out at the house of one of our escort. Back in Rambouillet, looking for a bed, the tourist office seemed distinctly unhelpful and Roger stormed out muttering darkly, closely followed by two of the staff who then suddenly could not do enough for us. They found a room for us in Houdan, which was 1½ hours ride further on. (151 km for the day.)

Wednesday was Roger's birthday and we were going to Charleval – where we had stayed two years ago. The only snag was that the Auberge was up for sale when we arrived. We were directed on to the next village where we found a magnificent chamber d'hote, set 200 metres back from the road. The evening meal in the village (Roger's treat – thank you Rog.) was equally magnificent. Another 97 km ridden partly in a thunderstorm.

The ride to Dieppe was completed by 1 p.m., where we called in on our friend Agnes, who gave us a little repas. It was more like a mini banquet! The 18.30 evening boat was running late, but we were back to Ringmer by 21.00 (English time) where Roger's wife, Helen, was waiting for him with the car.

The total round trip amounted to 845 km and, including the purchase of 3 new IGN maps at 3ff 30 each, I spent a total of 1422ff or £142 (excluding ferry fares). Lunch usually consisted of a sandwich and a beer outside a bar, costing between 25ff and 35ff. Rooms and breakfast were 250ff to 400ff per night for 2 or 3 sharing.

All the roads have been resurfaced in the last couple of years, unlike our highways and anyone riding "le velo" is looked up to in France.



HELVETIA'S ANGELS

In this year of 2001, the Swiss Defence Ministry announced the phasing out of the Swiss Bicycle Regiment as part of a modernization of Switzerland's armed forces. On February 28th the Daily Telegraph published a suitable editorial, aptly enough on its obituary pages. It ran thus:-

Helvetia's Angels.

It seems curious that the world's only bicycle regiment should be based in Europe's most mountainous country. Switzerland's crack bicycling troops, soon to be disbanded, must take some time to climb from the valley floor when responding to mountain-top incidents. But the sight of all 3000 of them hurtling down again - at up to 55 mph - would be enough to strike fear into the heart of any aggressor. It is no wonder that, throughout the regiment's century-long history, Switzerland has never been invaded. Can Swiss citizens any longer sleep soundly in their chalets now that their government has unilaterally sacrificed its ultimate deterrent?



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A Swiss Army mountain bike



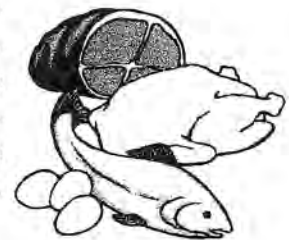
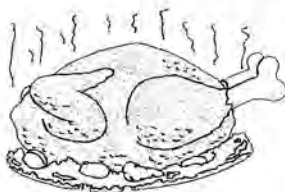
Swiss Bicycle Regiment troops in action



DINNER IS SERVED 1

Oyster sausages, snail pie and sparrow dumplings were not uncommon elements on the bill of fare, as English dining habits struck an increasingly exotic note from the start of the Tudor Dynasty in the late 15th century. The first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, celebrated Christmas in style at London's Greenwich Palace in 1486, the year after his accession to the throne. A contemporary account of the feast describes:

"The table at which the King sat was richly decorated and groaned beneath the good fare placed upon it, for there was brawn, roast beef, venison pasty, pheasants, swan, capon, lampreys, pike in latimer sauce, custard, partridge, fruit, plovers and a huge plum pudding which required the efforts of two men to carry. Afterwards, plays were performed and there was much music and dancing, and in the large kitchens after the spit had stopped its ceaseless turning and the King had dined ... a merry crowd gathered."



A HOSPITAL IDYLL

The following letter appeared in the Eastbourne Gazette & Herald and earned Dot Collins a silver pen for the Star Letter of that week. We reprint it here for those who may not have seen it.

The Editor.
Eastbourne Gazette & Herald
1 Commercial Road
EASTBOURNE
BN21 3XQ

17 July 2001

Dear Sir

I know that you get many letters from people who have been treated at the District General Hospital, full of praise for the treatment they have received. But I would like to add my comments on the subject.

I have just spent time in East Dean and Seaford wards, recovering from a mild stroke. The day I went in, I must have been the ultimate 'patient-from-hell', mainly due to ignorance of procedure, and gave them a lot of extra work. But did I get any reproach or censure? No. I received the utmost understanding and compassion. All the nurses are brilliant and a credit to their chosen profession. Also, the physiotherapy department are working really hard to get me mobile again.

My only complaint is the lack of an early morning cup of tea. You know, that restorer of morale, the panacea for all ills, the good old English cuppa! We sit up in the morning waiting to hear the trolley with noses twitching and lips drooling, and what can we hear? Some activity! Can it be? No, it is the team for blood pressure and temperature. All very necessary for our recovery, but I would swap it all for a cup of that ambrosial liquid.

More activity this time perhaps? No, it is nifty nurse with her questions of "have we been, or did we go yesterday"? Lassie, if you would bring us a hot cup of tea, we would "go" as much as you want, no problem. What to do? I know. we will organize a posse of patients with bed-pans and zimmers rampant, and go and storm the ramparts of the kitchens in search of that elusive tea-bag! Mind you, when I do get it, with my innate clumsiness and useless left hand, I shall probably deposit half of it in the bed, to join forkfuls of last night's macaroni cheese. Ah well, it's all part of life's rich pattern

Enough of this facetious nonsense. On a serious note, I am sure this hospital has the potential to be in the top grade, the basics are there - strong modern buildings, airy and spacious, and an excellent team from the medical staff to the domestics, cleaners and cooks. Here I must comment on the food. There is an excellent choice, varied and imaginative, and the homemade soup is wonderful, thick and creamy and equals anything Delia can do, wonderful stuff. I could live on it!

I know that economic resources hamper your efforts, but go to it citizens, and I am sure we can create in the Eastbourne DGH a hospital that will be the flagship of hospitals in the south.

So. Mr. Editor. I will finish this letter before I churn out any more drivel, and just wish all concerned every success in creating a really wonderful hospital -

Yours sincerely

Dot Collins (Mrs.)



LETTER FROM (180 MILES NEARER TO) AMERICA
by Bill Whiting

Yes, there is life after E.S.D.A., but it is different! Those of you who read "A Dorset Diary" in the last issue of "The Coaster" will know that Margaret and I were living in a small property in Burton Bradstock. We were looking for something larger, which would accommodate our furniture, at that time expensively in store in Dorchester. Well, we've arrived, and to prove it, we're here! We could find no suitable home in our adopted village (of over 30 years standing). All the houses we were keen on were either taken off the market, or never reached it in the first place. Thanks to de Bono (an American management guru) we thought laterally (about seven miles laterally in fact), to end up in Portesham. On the same coast road as Burton Bradstock, it is nearer to Dorchester, the English family Robinson (of Dorchester Cycles) and the West Dorset Section of Wessex DA.

We are often reminded of Sussex and the Downs. Immediately behind us are the chalk Dorset Downs. Our garden is a mixture of flints and soil (mostly the first). Our road, northwards, out of the village (of 400 persons) is the local Up and Over, twisty, steep and well used. Just near the start of the hill, in the middle of the village, is Winters Lane, a dry, hillside road to Upwey via Friar Waddon and a Time Team dig of a couple of years ago. This lane affords amazing views southwards, of farms, sea villages, hamlets and the Isle of Portland, a whole panorama; a favourite lane to many of the local Wednesday Wanderers.

The highlight of our local cycling year (forget the Randonnees, we have those every year) was the Section's 75th Anniversary. Held at the end of May, over a weekend, it attracted riders from far and near. While I may have missed any ESDA riders present, I did meet a contingent from the South West London. They soon found that our local hills made Pebblecombe seem like part of Suffolk! (Yes, I did ride up Pebblecombe in my youth, on a couple of occasions, and that on a Raleigh with an FW hub!) There was a great turn out, with two group rides each day. Foot and Mouth Disease, which thankfully Dorset has avoided so far, prevented the third group, of mountain bikers, from going off-road. In fact we entertained (and exhausted?) about 220 riders. To reinforce the message that Dorset is not completely flat, Neville Channin presented, one evening, a slide show entitled "Return to the Andes" - Now there's some hills!

During the course of the weekend, rides took groups to Abbotsbury, Tolpuddle, Milton Abbas, Moreton (with its church with Laurence Whistler windows), the grave of Lawrence of Arabia (killed when his motorcycle went out of control), yes and even Dorchester. We hope our visitors appreciated that the mist and sea fret that covered the countryside for the entire weekend was totally unusual - this bit of Dorset is one of the driest places on the South Coast (beat that Eastbourne!). It was good to see so many appreciative grockles (Dorset vur strangers or non-locals).

I have managed a few short rides, but this year my cycling has had to go on the back burner. With two house moves in twelve months, plus the searching and viewing of prospective properties, time has been in short supply. Further, some of our other long standing activities have also eaten into cycling time. So has partial redecoration of the (fairly) new house. There is also another less obvious factor (not my advancing years) and that is that when you move to a picturesque part of the country (from another, equally delightful), you find that all your friends drop in or descend on you, very pleasant, but counter-cycling! I am hoping that now the Holdsworth has been serviced (I found time for that one wet weekend)

and the Dawes has its new tyres inflated, the wide open spaces will hum to the sound of Shimano and Continental again. However, Margaret is talking of a holiday Unfortunately, she no longer cycles, though she stills whispers gently about her teenage cycle tours around Dorset and Somerset. We came across her old log book during unpacking after the second house move. It made exciting reading for me (quite envious of her daily mileages) and very nostalgic for her. You won't catch me riding along the A303 nowadays! But you will, along Winter's Lane.

It was good to read the recent Section notes and that the D.A. continues to go from strength to strength. Long may it last.

Kind regards to you all and hoping that our paths will converge again soon!

Bill



DINNER IS SERVED 2

Feeling peckish one lunchtime, the Roman Emperor Claudius Albinus consumed 500 figs, 100 peaches, 10 melons and a huge, but undisclosed, number of grapes. The historian who recorded this feat, however, failed to disclose whether the self-same Emperor retired for an afternoon nap before waddling to the dinner table. There he would have cut a swathe through course after course of rich meats and fish, garlanded with such delicacies as thrushes and truffles, spiced with pepper and sweetened with honey.

UN-NATURAL HISTORY
Ava Noblines – (Latin for The Cycling Bird)

The quiet lanes of the British Isles are the natural habitat of this peculiar bird, but many have migrated to the cities, returning periodically to their native haunts. Unwary members of the public are often startled by flocks rushing round bends of our main high-ways.

The natural enemy of these birds is the Oilup, who either swoops on them from the rear or rushes head-on; after dark it first hypnotises them with its glaring eyes. The flock warn each other with plaintive cries.

The male bird of the species is easily recognisable by its lean hairy legs, knotted muscles, cropped head with scrubbing brush effect in front and a tense look. The female is plumper than her mate, especially when viewed from behind. Her hair is either wild or severely restrained, according to temperament and the reaction of the male during the mating season; some preferring charm and loose locks, others favouring severity and grim efficiency.

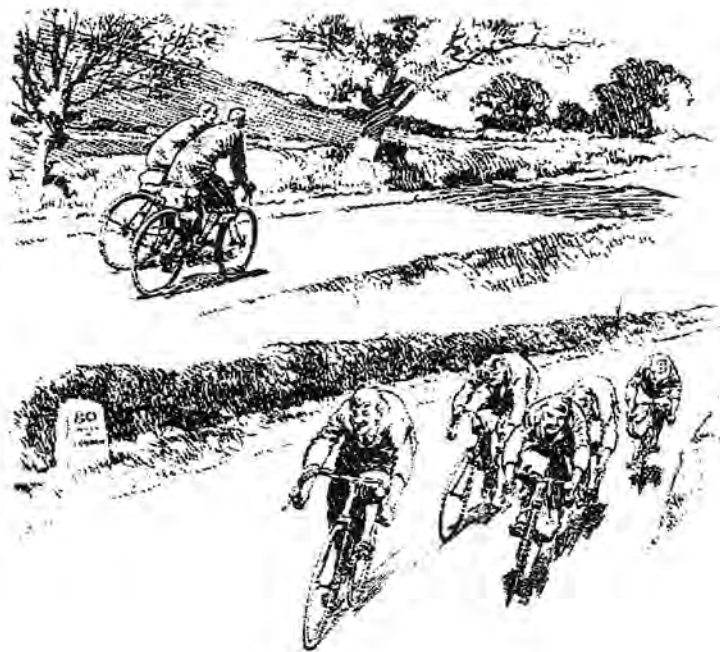
When the call of the wild results in mutual attraction, these quaint birds often change their usual mode of flight for a combined method. Alas, harmony is sometimes marred by doubts as to who should do the pedalling.

Should the pair entertain another long-legged bird, the stork, they add further to their travelling nest by building on to the side to accommodate their brood.

Never be unkind to these birds as they are harmless and can easily be tamed by cups of tea or tankards of beer. Try it sometime.

(Reprinted from "Awheel in Sussex", March 1947. Author unknown)

Many thanks to the contributor of this item – I'm afraid I've now forgotten who sent/gave it to me. Ed.



TACKLING THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

by David Morris

Over the August Bank Holiday weekend David Morris (our London rider) and a friend Tony rode the South Downs Way.

Saturday was a superb day, probably the hottest of the year. Fifty four miles were tucked away but we only went forty along the Way due to getting lost twice. Once trying to find the start at Winchester and again after stopping for lunch at East Meon, ending up in Petersfield instead of Butser Hill and having to ride down the A3 to rejoin the Way.

Beacon Hill we went up instead of around, David coming off on the way down and leaving the bike thirty feet back up the hill! B&B Saturday night was at Cocking. Three pints and a massive steak at the pub and bed by 9:30.

Away at 8:30 next morning, up Cocking Hill into drizzle and mist and a puncture. The tube was wet by the time it came out and three miles later the patch came off, this time we changed tubes! At 11:30 it started to rain and didn't stop until Ditchling, of which more later.

Lunch Sunday was at Washington in a pub run by Jimmy Saville and Jerry Hall look-alikes, a complete Sunday roast with sweet!

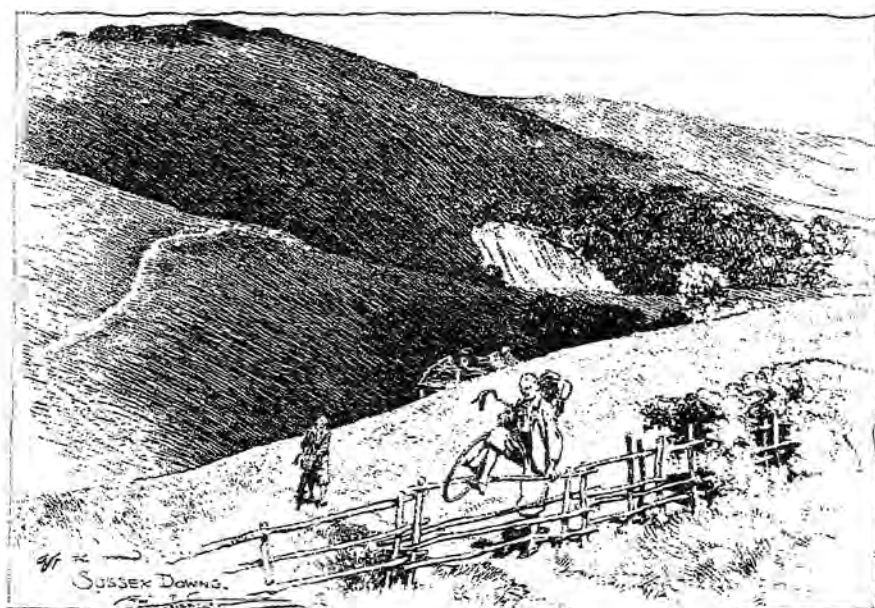
By now the weather had turned really nasty and we saw nothing of the view, we were managing only seven or eight miles/hour and could see only shapes in the mist.

By Ditchling visibility was down to fifty feet and it was dark at 4:30!

We made a decision to finish into Eastbourne on road, the A27 which would have only been two hours and safer, by the time we reached the A27 the weather had overtaken us and we were back into rain and mist.

Tony's wife was in Brighton with a car and rack so we went there and arrived at my caravan in Pevensey by car.

Honour dictates that we finish, off road/on bikes/on the Way, later this year!



Letter from Rob Russell dated 21 Feb 2000
Platypus Backpackers, Bogota, Colombia

It is great to be in fresh air again after the sea level of Panama City. All 10,000 feet of it, hill and high rises is a fair description of crazy Bogota, the capital of Colombia. It is a land of Unknown territory, of myths, cocaine, emeralds and El Dorado. Gabriel Marques, his book "100 years of" is a tale of magic set here. It is called after Christopher Columbus, but now "Locombia", the mad country. A civil war has been going on for over 50 years. It is roughly the size of France, Spain and Portugal, and has more plant and animal species than any other country in the world. Mountains up to 21,000 feet, a coast on both Caribbean and Pacific. There are lots of climatic and microclimates, over 1,550 species of birds, from Condor to Humming Bird, over 3,000 species of orchids. Number 2 producer of coffee, sugar, cotton, largest coal deposits in South America. New oilfields, nickel, copper, iron. Half the world's emeralds are mined here, and the best. Third largest marijuana producer and now heroin. There are a lot of other things that I have found out, but first back to Guatemala.

It took eight days to get here by bus, most tiring, but interesting. Guatemala to San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador, was straightforward. The day before leaving Guatemala City an American told me the air quality measured five times below the minimum! Looking down onto the mountain—surrounded plain there was just a cloud hanging over it, no buildings could be seen. Every—one at the commune a rousing send—off, hugs and kisses. The next morning I boarded the bus for Tegucilapa, the capital of Honduras.

As I said earlier my Spanish lessons were not progressing well. The bus went to Nicaragua. The good news is I did not pay and anyway I was going there. Nicaragua is the poorest country in Central America, but the people were friendly and helpful. Accommodation and local eating establishments were recommended. Cities with Hill, Trees and greenery are so much nicer than the flat and green-less places like Guatemala City and Mexico City. Hill poke up behind buildings, rooflines vary, perspectives filled with details and space and colour. Costa Rica was particularly nice, very beautiful on the coasts with coconut and palm trees. It prides itself on its eco-tourism and not having an army. Just sitting in a pedestrian area watching life go by gives a good impression. The high-grown organic coffee was wonderfully rich flavoured. I was so happy in Panama. It only has low hills. A breeze from the Pacific keeps the temperature down, but the humidity is over 75% and 90F. The noisy buses in the narrow streets of the old colonial city where I stayed kept me awake at night. The rich suburbs were full of malls for shopping. Over 10 miles of shops with neon signs in the worst American commercial manner.

The heat and noise combined with the continuous travel were getting me down. Baking hot, six countries, twelve customs and twelve immigration controls. Packing and unpacking; changing of money. Anyway, peace again. The silence last night was unnerving at first. Today I spent exploring Bogota with its futuristic architecture, splendid colonial churches, lots of museums including the gold museum, the most important in the world. It has tree—lined main avenues, large shantytowns, beggars, drug dealers, graffiti and an amazing variety of architectural styles that all bunch together; Classical Greek, 1960's Bauhaus, Le Corbusier, colonial Spanish, Art Deco, Romanesque and other styles. The population is 7 million. It is not a safe place. One goes out with passport and other valuables in the safe box. 12,000 peaks overlook the city, you cannot be indifferent to the

place, I love it.

I had heard quite a lot about a commune called "Atlantis". It was run, as it had been from 1970, by dominant women and submissive males, who do the heavy work. A squat in London was run as a therapeutic centre based on William Reich, a former disciple of Freud. The guerrillas had asked them to move from their place deep in the heart of their territory (Guerrillas movements all become paranoid). The new farm tried to carry on in its ecological manner in the mountains 50 miles out of Bogota. A lot of gossip surrounded it on its free sex therapy. They are serious and work long hours seven days a week. The living is very basic. Electricity is used only for lighting. They are nearly self-sufficient, and are all vegetarians. Food is cooked on a home-made stove. Beautiful mountains surround on three sides, with stunning views across valleys and distant Andes ranges, haze-shrouded.

Huge meals of many helpings created much methane. Everyone except me is fully bilingual. Everyone is grimy with patched clothes, rather like the Beverly Hillbillies. Hygiene was appalling. Water was carried up from a spring a couple of hundred feet below. At 11,000 feet that is exhausting. I cut the wood with an axe to keep the stove going and helped with the vegetables: watering, mulching, thinning etc. There were fruits new to me. There was the buzz of humming birds wings gathering nectar. The children fund-raise through juggling and also street theatre. One 14 year old girl writes and performs with two younger girls. She is very beautiful and talented, yet has never been to school. Another girl of 16 is a superb artist and is also the commune's seamstress. Fresh whole-meal brown bread and tahini are made daily. The only rule is: no drugs or alcohol. I drank aromatic teas with fresh limes— really tasty, but diuretic, and with my prostate I was peeing six times a night. They are also into birth charts (astrology) and tarot cards. They were open about sex and relationships. They ask for no money but one feels obliged to donate.

Back in Bogota I visited the world's largest gold museum. Stunning display of pre-Colombian indigenous El Dorado. The exhibition is displayed on two large air-conditioned floors, showing lifestyle from 1,500 BC-1,200 AD, and how made, alloys used, in all 33,000 pieces

Love, Rob

POSTCARD FROM ROB

The Cuba to Chile part of the grand tour is near to closing. It started and finished with Socialist presidents, in between were sandwiched communes. There have been adventures & contrasts. A return visit will have to be made to finish plans and to meet again some of my new friends. Pals in the UK are often on my mind. A nice day on the bike is a splendid thought, communicating with you.



THE BARD HAD A WORD FOR IT!

by Jack & Vera Dunn

(This article first appeared in "The Way of an Eagle" – monthly magazine of the Eagle Road Club – in the 1940's, a period when time-triallists had to be up very early and cyclists were always hungry!)

After long and painstaking research among the works of William Shakespeare, we have been led inevitably to the conclusion that the cycling-club world has for long done him an injustice in not recognising him as a kindred spirit.

True, the invention of the bicycle is alleged to have occurred two centuries after his death, but there can be little doubt that the Bard of Avon was a cyclist at heart, and the extracts that follow are proof enough that he was quite familiar with the many pleasures and pains that fall to the lot of the touring and racing cyclist.

For example, who but a time-triallist, or perhaps a milkman, would know about how:

"The grey-ey'd morn smiles on the frowning night
chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light." (Macbeth)

Surely, too, a touring memory of a sprint to reach the next village before closing time was the inspiration for this:

"The west yet glimmers with some streaks of day
Now spurs the lated traveller apace
To gain the timely inn." (Macbeth)

The racing world is well portrayed in Shakespeare. Here, in "As You Like It", the timekeeper explains, with true-to-life sarcasm, his duties:

"Time travels in divers paces with divers persons.
I will tell you who time ambles withal,
who time trots withal, who time gallops withal
and who he stands still withal."

And how's this for a picture of a real super "bundle":

"Even like a man new-haled from the rack,
So fare my limbs Weak shoulders
And pithless arms like to a withered vine
That droops his sapless branches to the ground.
Yet are these feet, whose strengthless stay is numb,
Unable to support this lump of clay,
Swift-winged with desire to get a grave
As witting I no other comfort have." (King Henry VI)

The gloating spectator wonders:

"Is't possible that so short a time
Can alter the condition of a man?." (Coriolanus)

The unhappy victim might regret having disregarded the words of his mother, who thinks all his racing is "Much Ado About Nothing" and is always advising him in Brutus' words:

"It is not for you health thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning."
(Julius Caesar)

And this is how he might reproach his racing secretary for bullying him into entering for a '50' before he was really fit:

"Lord how my head aches! What a head I have!
It beats as it would fall in twenty pieces.
My back o't'other side, - O, my back, my back!
Beshrew your heart for sending me about
To catch my death with jaunting up and down." (Romeo and Juliet)

To which the unsympathetic sec. Replies:

"The labour we delight in physics pain."
(Macbeth again)

We have all met the novice who thinks that, having become a racing man, he will find touring "a piece of cake" and mere miles of no importance whatever. He plans his first Welsh tour in this ambitious spirit:

"He is at Milford-Haven: read and tell me
How far 'tis thither. If one of mean affairs
May plod it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day?" (Cymbeline)

Disillusionment sets in, however, as he walks wearily up that long steep approach to Stow-on-the-Wold:

"I am a stranger here in Gloucestershire:
These high wild hills and rough uneven ways
Draw out our miles and make them wearisome." (King Richard III)

What a lot of distress he might have been saved by having with him a more seasoned tourist to restrain such enthusiasm as:

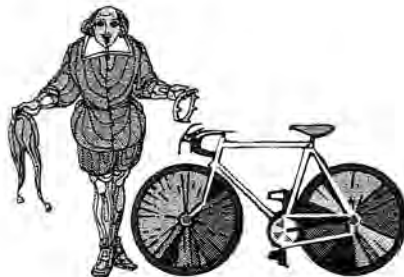
"How many score of miles may we well ride
'Twixt hour and hour?"

With this modest estimate:

"One score 'twixt sun and sun's enough for you,
and too much too." (Cymbeline)

But whatever aches and pains a day's cycling may bring, "All's Well That Ends Well" and Shakespeare knew that a well-laden table is the proper ending to a strenuous ride, and into Macbeth's mouth he put this everlasting blessing on all hungry cyclists about to fall to:

"Now good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both."





THE TRAIL OF THE MODERN IMPROVEMENT DEVIL.



"THAT BEASTLY OLD HOVEL -

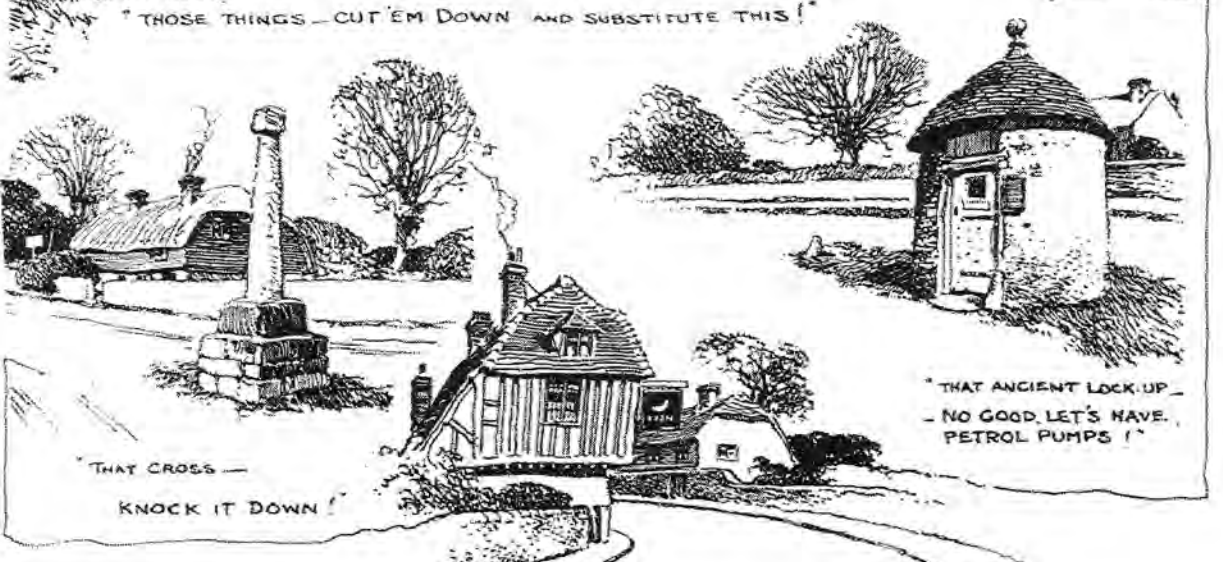
- WIPE IT OUT!"

"THAT MOSS-GROWN HUMPBACK -

- AWAY WITH IT!"

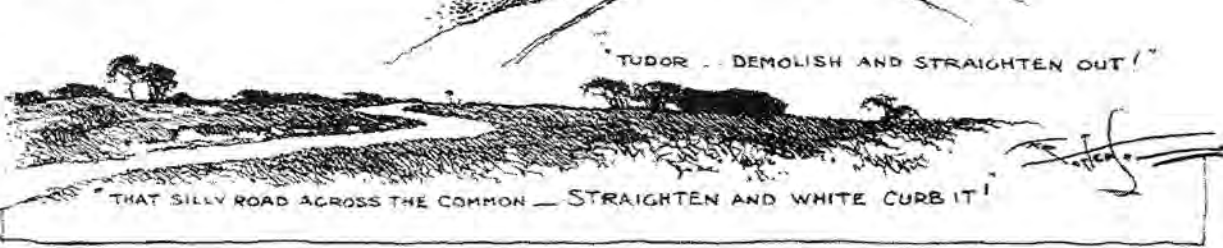


"THOSE THINGS - CUT 'EM DOWN AND SUBSTITUTE THIS!"



"THAT CROSS -
KNOCK IT DOWN!"

"THAT ANCIENT LOCK-UP -
NO GOOD. LET'S HAVE
PETROL PUMPS!"



"TUDOR - DEMOLISH AND STRAIGHTEN OUT!"

"THAT SILLY ROAD ACROSS THE COMMON - STRAIGHTEN AND WHITE CURB IT!"

FINDING THE RIGHT PERSON
(This article was received anonymously)

Over the years, the problem of finding the right person for the right job has consumed thousands of worker-years of research and millions of pounds. This is particularly true for high-technology organizations where talent is scarce and expensive. Recently, however, years of detailed study by the finest minds in the field of psycho-industrial interpersonal optimization have resulted in the development of a simple and foolproof test to determine the best match between personality and profession. Now, at last, people can be infallibly assigned to the jobs for which they are truly best suited.

The procedure is simple: each subject is sent to Africa to hunt elephants. The subsequent elephant-hunting behaviour is then categorized by comparison to the classification rules outlined below. The subject should be assigned to the general job classification that best matches the observed behaviour.

CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

Potential Mathematicians will display the following behaviour:

1. Go to Africa
2. Throw out everything that is not an elephant, and catch one of whatever is left.

Experienced Mathematicians will attempt to prove the existence of at least one unique elephant before proceeding to step 1 as a subordinate exercise.

Professors of Mathematics will prove the existence of at least one unique elephant and then leave the detection and capture of an actual elephant as an exercise for their graduate students.

Computer Scientists would hunt elephants by exercising the following algorithm:

1. Go to Africa
2. Start at the Cape of Good Hope.
3. Work northward in an orderly manner, traversing the continent alternately east & west.
4. During each traverse pass,
 - a. Catch each animal seen.
 - b. Compare each animal to a known elephant.
 - c. Stop when a match is detected.

Experienced **Computer Programmers** modify the algorithm by placing a known elephant in Cairo to ensure that the algorithm will terminate.

Assembly Language Programmers prefer to execute the algorithm on their hands and knees.

Engineers would hunt elephants by:

1. Waiting to be sued for Breach of Contract and then promising that the request to go to Africa will be given the highest possible priority, as soon as the trainee who was sent for two fish and chips and a coke comes back with the keys to the van.
2. Go to Africa, catch grey animals at random, and stop when any one of them weighs within plus or minus 15% of any previously observed elephant.

Economists don't hunt elephants, but they believe that if elephants were paid enough, they will hunt

themselves.

Statisticians will hunt the first animal that they see 'n' times and call it an elephant.

Consultants don't hunt elephants, and many have never hunted anything at all, but they can be hired by the hour to advise those who do.

Operations Research Consultants can also measure the correlation of hat size and bullet colour to the efficiency of elephant-hunting strategies, if someone else will only identify the elephants.

Politicians don't hunt elephants, but they will share the elephants you catch with the people who voted for them.

Lawyers don't hunt elephants, but they do follow the herds around arguing about who owns the droppings.

Software lawyers will claim they own an entire herd based on the look and feel of one dropping.

Vice presidents of engineering, research and development try hard to hunt elephants, but their staffs are designed to prevent it. When the vice-president does get to hunt elephants, the staff will try to ensure that all elephants are pre-hunted before the vice-president sees them. If the vice-president does see a non-pre-hunted elephant, the staff will (1) compliment the vice-president on his keen eyesight and (2) enlarge itself to prevent any recurrence.

Senior Managers set broad elephant-hunting policies based on the assumption that elephants are like field mice, but with deeper voices.

Quality Assurance Managers ignore the elephants and look for mistakes the other hunters made when they were packing the jeep.

Salespeople don't hunt elephants, but spend their time selling elephants they haven't caught, for delivery two days before the season opens.

Software salespeople ship the first thing they catch and write up an invoice for an elephant.

Hardware salespeople catch rabbits, paint them grey and sell them as desktop elephants.

VALIDATION.

A validation survey was conducted about these rules. Almost all the people surveyed about these rules were valid. A few were invalid, but they expect to recover soon. Based on the survey, a statistical confidence level was determined. Ninety-five percent of the people surveyed have at least 67% confidence in statistics.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT.

This study has benefited from the suggestions and observations of many people, all of whom would prefer not to be mentioned by name.



From the
 sketch book
 of
 Frank
 Patterson



A text in trimmed evergreen at Hurstmonceaux. (Left) preserved at Seaford is the figurehead of *The Peruvian*, a ship wrecked there on February 18th, 1899



An unusual carving at Alfriston. (Left) a pretty byway at Thakeham, near Pulborough



FRANCE 2001 - 14/19th MAY

by Ann Rix

When Jenny found out that Mary Simmons, a new rider with the Midweek, and her family shared a cottage in France with another family and let it to friends when none of them needed it, she asked me if I was interested as we had thought of going over again. We all thought it sounded good, so Jenny managed to get the ferry bookings in early again, this time for two trips over the water, as Pat Graham couldn't manage the May one. I was collected by Geoff and Jenny soon after 7 a.m. on Monday 14th May, loaded my bicycle, foodstuffs, etc., then over to Newhaven to catch the 8.30 a.m. ferry. After last years experience of the food prices we took our own to have with the coffee/tea, arrived in Dieppe at 11.45 a.m. French time. Before leaving the terminal Geoff had to drive through a trough of straw and disinfectant, (because of the Foot and Mouth restrictions and precautions) this amused us as there was only enough of the latter for the right hand wheels to go through and no straw, as some had ended up at the side and the rest blown away. Drove down the D154 to St. Helier and found 'La Petite Maison', on a junction not far from the church, unloaded the car - sorted out - made our beds, etc., then had lunch.

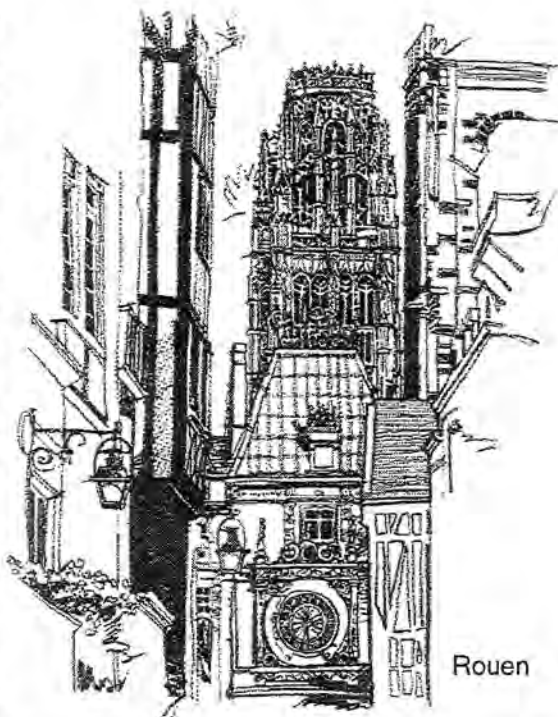
Left at 2.30 p.m. to take the small road opposite St. Helier, at the cross roads, to climb up the road through the Foret d'Eawy then, after some beautiful beech tree'd lanes, it was up and down, down some hairpins to find a flood at the bottom, then up, up, and up the other side. This was followed by a long downhill to St-Saens, where the Information Centre was the first stop for leaflets and a map of the area; a walk round the shops was next to find veg., etc., though we were tempted and fell for the strawberries for dessert. Back via Bellemcombe and then the little lane to 'The Little House' where it was on with the evening meal - much enjoyed - then to bed.

Tuesday - Geoff went out about 8.30 a.m. on a misty morn to Bellemcombe for bread. After breakfast we rode out to St-Saens for our first cake of the trip from the boulangerie there, along to sit outside a bar, having ordered our hot chocky, and enjoy them both. Refreshed we headed out and only made it to Bosc Bordel for our picnic lunch in a chilly bus shelter. Turned back via Buchy to head back to the cottage and change, then went by car for a larger shopping do in St.-Saens. A late meal then we sat by the log fire, by then it was going nicely, not smoking so much, we'd had to have the window open some time to get a draught through to get it drawing.

Wednesday, we took it easy to start with - well we were on holiday - and left at 10.55 a.m., after elevenses. Heading north, towards Dieppe, with the wind behind us, so we sailed along the Valley of the Varenne, first one side then the other, passing all the winding streams and rushing rivers. As we crossed over we went down the Rue due Pon de Pierre. First part was okay then, oh dear, water ahead and it was rushing across the crossing, with rustic woodwork either side, very narrow and apparently stones to walk on, couldn't see them. One of the items in the 'Book' at the cottage mentioned the bridge, the last time they had used it they took their shoes and socks off and waded across. NO WAY were we going to - Geoff took us round by the road to Martigny, where we hoped to find somewhere for our lunch. Nowhere, but we did visit the churchyard there and paid our respects to the three War Graves, two Black Watch privates and one Gordon Highlander sergeant, 1940. On to Arques-la-Bataille where, after a circle of the town, we finally found a seat up by the war memorial for lunch. Just in time, as it was on with waterproofs, as the showers came over and continued for a while as we later climbed up and up over the top to drop back along le Scie

Vallee to Longueville-sur-Scie and on to Auffay for cake and chocky. Before leaving we visited the station to check on train times for the next day to Rouen. A gentle climb out, over the top and down to St Hellier by 5.20 p.m., a super day out. Just started the washing up and Geoff left to go to the phone box to ring his friend Eric when next thing, they returned with Quentin (nine+). They had both come over, which was nice, brought champagne and cakes, stayed about two hours.

Thursday - Left 9.50 a.m. in the car over to Auffay for cake and coffee, caught the 11.11 a.m. train to Rouen. Very cold wind as, half an hour later, we were walking down towards the Seine. We had our lunch watching ducks, etc., the sun peeped out for a while, then clouds loomed over by 1 p.m., time to move. We visited Jeanne de Arc Cathedral, where we sat and enjoyed the peace, next stop was of course the Cycle shop for a look. Found a spot in the gardens on our way back up, to eat the Pain a Raisins we'd bought just before. Up to the station, had a look round the shops there then found a seat to wait, for an hour, in the Information Centre, very nice. Geoff had a snooze, Jenny and I read the leaflet 'Taking your velo by train', we loved the picture on the front with cycles upside down all along the top of the train. Watched folk coming and going as the minutes ticked by, left prompt on time at 4.44 p.m., half an hour



later at Auffay, collected the car from the car park, along to the Shopie for food, then back to the cottage just after 6 p.m. Our meal prepared and ready by 7 p.m., after which we had a walk to the phone box for Jenny to contact Roger in Dieppe, to arrange a time for us to visit him and Agnes on Saturday morning. We found the War Graves in the churchyard, June 21st 1944 to five R.A.F. and two Canadian R.A.F. Had a look at the swans then along to the bridge and back.

Friday - Left at 10.15 to climb up a road at the back we hadn't done before, as we went we found Solomons Seal growing wild. After elevenses at Bellencombre we headed up through the Foret Dominal of D'Eawy, the ancient Domain of the Dukes of Normandy, a gentler climb on a good smooth road with zig zags, to almost the same area we had explored on Monday. It kept fine all day, but a cold wind when the sun disappeared. We visited the site of the V1 launch area near Ardouval, very quiet spot amongst the trees, with the remains of the buildings still standing and one V1 rocket on its launch ramp, 1943-1944. A notice there asks for respect for the victims, No picnics. At Le Val Ygot. The victims were not only ours where the rockets landed, but there were also tremendous casualties for the forced labour the Germans used in the experimental stages of the rockets.

We left that sombre place and travelled on up and down till we found a nice bank to sit and have our lunch, with occasional sunshine shining through the trees. We rode on along the Grandes-Ventes for a while before dropping down to the D154, beside the bisons at Muchedent, which we had seen when we cycled to Auffay. Back along the Vallee road to St. Hellier by 3.30 p.m. for much needed tea. Had a rest, then Geoff and Jenny did some ti-

dying up while I had a sleep. Another log fire, going well this time, had our last evening meal then hot drink and bed.

Saturday 19th - Up earlier - breakfast - then tidying up. Jenny round with the Hoover, while Geoff and I cleaned. Made sure the Cottage was as we found it, left at 9.15 a.m. to head back along the D154 through Muchedent, Torcy le Grande, Ste. Germaine d'Estables, with lakes and streams on our right. Along the outskirts of Arc de Bataille to Dieppe by 9.45 a.m. - then looked for parking.

We three started walking up past the stalls at the Market, then half way up Geoff decided it would be best if he turned back to drive the car up to our destination, otherwise we'd run out of time. Jenny and I meandered on, then up to meet up with Geoff at their friends. Roger showed us what he had been working on, Agnes was still at work, when she returned she provided tea and cakes, large cups of tea which was great, we'd only had tea at the 'Petite Maison', coffee or chocolate when out.

Left about 11.45 a.m. to head for the port - boarded the Seacat at 12.50 and left on time at 1 p.m. French time. A fine and sunny day, arrived at Newhaven 2.15 p.m. left the port 2.20 p.m., back in Seaford at 2.30 p.m. to unload me and my gear, on with the kettle for refreshing tea before Jenny and Geoff went on to Ringmer. A lovely five day holiday, good company, pleasant surroundings, interesting area.



OH, LITTLE ROADS OF ENGLAND

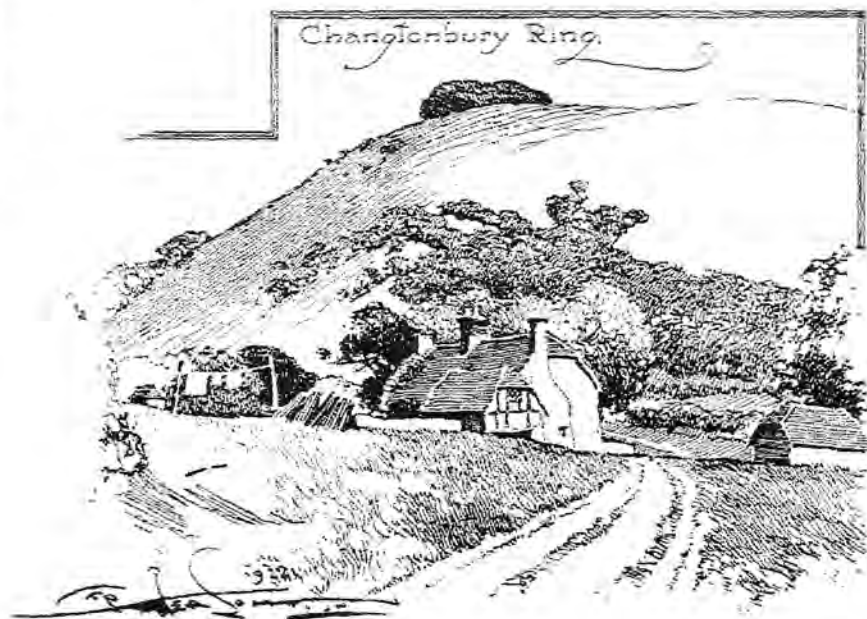
An old poem by Margaret Owen, published in 1926, but still relevant today

Oh, little roads of England
They have me in their spell,
They only share their secrets
With those who love them well
The little roads are gracious,
They have a happy smile,
They give you lasting beauty,
With every twisting mile.

I do not mean the great roads,
The Roman roads, the straight roads,
The can't-stop-cos-I'm-late roads,
But the little roads, the by-roads
The just-the-you-and-I roads
The find-us-for-we're-shy roads
That run below the Downs.

Where'er you go in England,
The little roads you'll find,
But only those who love them
Can find their peace of mind.
Their furry folk will greet you
Their birds sing loud and clear,
And you will hear them always
Till last night's shape draws near.

For I do not mean the fast roads,
The clear-my-way-and-blast roads,
The why-must-you-get-past roads,
The no-respect-for-caste roads,
That make this land hell.
But the little roads, the clear roads,
The bread-and-cheese-and-beer-roads,
The come-and-love-me-dear roads,
The never-mind-you-are-here roads,
That hold me in their spell.





The Coaster

Back copies of **The Coaster** - all issues - (mainly facsimiles) are available from the Editor - see address at front. There are also copies of the special Rally Edition produced for the 1995 Home Counties Rally, as well as the D.A. Christmas Newsletter, which was the inspiration for **The Coaster**. Cost should be about 50p per copy.

Facsimile copies of the first edition of the original Sussex D.A. magazine - *The South Saxon* - are also available. Please contact the Editor if you are interested as copies will be produced to order, though should not be more than for **The Coaster**.

D.A. LIBRARY

The Treasurer is the keeper of the D.A. Library, a collection of cycling books and CTC magazines, which are available for loan or viewing by members. The books include scrapbooks and early touring books.

The D.A. magazine archive includes copies of *Cycletouring* and the *CTC Gazette* going back as far as 1925. Most are loose copies, with a few bound years, though not all years are complete. Please contact the Treasurer, Ann Rix (01273 512357) if you would like to view the collection or want further information.