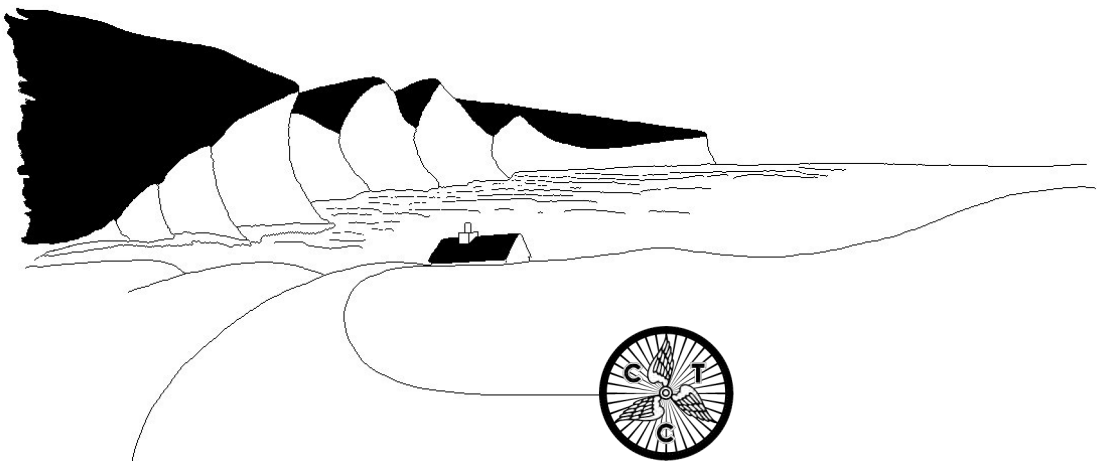


The



# Coaster



*the magazine of the*

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION  
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 46 - Summer 2006

£1



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

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***" THE COASTER "***

***Issue No. 46, Summer 2006***



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

*Welcome to the Summer 2006 edition of "The Coaster". A nice selection of articles this time, with a few other oddments thrown in; hopefully something to keep everyone happy as you sit outside enjoying the summer sunshine.*

*Some great touring articles to whet your appetite for something a bit different, in this country with Richard Thatcher on the C2C Reivers Route, or further afield with Rose & Mick Hills in New Zealand. Though I hope that nobody has the type of experience that John & Pat Christmas did in Tenerife.*

*There are also articles on cycling in the music halls and Brighton chain pier, as well as a short piece from Roy James and, of course, a couple of his usual excellent drawings.*

*For those of you with internet access, I hope to make back copies of "The Coaster" available on the website in the near future – space permitting. The intention is to eventually have all but the last 2 issues available at any time – so watch this space.*

*Enjoy your reading and 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:-

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Cotterell House, 69 Meadow,  
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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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## THE SURPRISING PLEASURES OF SERENDIPITY

by Roy James

I was aware of the pleasures of serendipity long before I understood the meaning of the word, yet I now regard it in the manner of an attitude of mind to be observed with quiet enthusiasm. It is inexpensive, requires no extra effort, does not need to be avidly pursued and as a cyclist I am able to enjoy its delights on what is the least likely of occasions. In fact improbability plays a major role in serendipity.

Chamber's Dictionary describes it thus:-

SERENDIPITY. The faculty of making happy, chance finds. (Serendip, a former name for Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. Horace Walpole 1717-1779 coined the word from the title of a fairy tale "Three Princes of Serendip" whose heroes were always making happy, chance discoveries of things they were not in quest of).

How well that description fits the pursuits of the cycle tourist. Often we set out to go somewhere, see something, only to find an unexpected happening changes the course of the whole day. Many times the ride passes with nothing out of the way occurring, but we know that next time perhaps, serendipity will be waiting around the corner.

At one time I would be enthusiastic for some particular feature or well known place and would go to much effort and probably many miles to see it, only to be faintly disappointed upon arrival. Perhaps it would be crowded with other people eager, like me, to see this special place. It may start to pour with rain, or be closed on just the one day I am visiting and I would leave wondering why I had bothered. Then on the way home some little unexpected thing catches the senses. A rainbow after that heavy rain, a tree in early blossom or a dazzling avenue of autumnal leaves and I would put my bike away satisfied that I had not been let down.

We have all experienced these 'happy, chance finds' and they do make our cycling lives richer. So cheers for serendipity. It will probably be waiting over the next hill.



## THE HOTEL CESAR, TENERIFE – ONE MONTH – NOVEMBER 2005

By John Christmas

All holiday reps have a certain amount of training before joining the holidaymakers, a kind of finishing school. These had been to a never-get-started-and-when-you-do-make-a-cock-up-of-it school. Excursions were arranged. One was cancelled because there had been a huge storm – thirty-six pylons were very badly bent and ten large palm trees over one hundred years old were blown down. Guests who were going on the trip were not informed and waited for a coach which never arrived. Guests who were not going on the trip were informed.

Within three days, eight of the guests had requested to move to another hotel and there had been a protest meeting (which we had come across by accident). Those that opted to move to another hotel could never have had such entertainment as we did. There was a shortage of staff and those working did so at speed. One young lady, who had graduated from the Herr Himmler Charm School, would lay the breakfast cutlery on your table while you were actually having your evening meal. She would take your order and then disappear, gone home for her memory pills. One day she disappeared never to return – must have gone back to take charge of the camp. Then there were the bread rolls – tough and chainsaw resistant, some were still on show at the end of the four weeks, apart from one occasion when the hotel ran out of bread – this was at 9.30 am. One guest, who had become accustomed to the hotel surrealism, was wondering if, at this stage, guests should purchase their own bread – there was a supermarket only 400 yards away.

This hotel was all inclusive, but management had decided that wine which was inclusive should not be inclusive until they had decided we could become inclusive, maybe they were promoting the beer, Dorado est. 1939, which was splendid, indeed on one occasion a guest pulled the pump handle and a spectacular shower shot over two guests and the counter – most impressive indeed ... that made everyone inclusive – Germans, Finns, Dutch, waiters, the lot. The tea and coffee making facilities in the room were impressive, a huge kettle, the socket for which was by the sink in the bathroom and, if you were not electrocuted, you could make tea or coffee.

The storm was such that it cut off electricity to some towns. Affected out lifts it did. Alternate days they seemed to be out of action and the management put a notice on the bottom lift – out of order – but not on the other three lifts. I saw a German trying to get into one of the ‘out of order no notice’ lifts and I said “Kaput“. In the meantime I went to reception requesting more Out of Order notices. Then I saw the German again while I was carrying these notices – he probably thought I worked in the hotel. They needed help. There was a notice inside one of the lifts ‘room for four persons only’ and a big lady from our party had got in – it’s not over till the big lady sings – but on this occasion it was well and truly stuck over before even tuning up because the lift broke down, the big lady was stuck and as a result missed the welcome meeting.

There were at least three ways of shuffling off this mortal coil at the Hotel de Cesar – 1) Electrocution – as above. 2) Incineration and 3) food poisoning. You could also quite easily break a limb by gliding off the slippery slope outside the hotel. After a week a substantial chrome rail was placed on the slope. We played table tennis on the roof (the fourth floor) you could play badminton there as well. There notices indicating where the fire exit was – but the actual exit seemed to have been super-glued shut. At the protest meeting we

had come across earlier one guest was worried about food poisoning, silly fellow, minor point. I said to the harassed senior rep that “the exits on the roof are not much cop, a Joan of Arc situation is developing” - but it was four days before anything was done. They were waiting until the building was well and truly alight because they wanted to see me on the top floor shouting heroically from the flames “I TOLD YOU SO”. On the fourth day two large men finally came on the roof and freed the door. Then came the burglars. Amongst the guests were two jolly hoteliers from Torquay who were covered with plenty of sparkling jewellery and rather bright clothes. They spent a lot of time buying more clothes in Tenerife and they liked men with hairy legs. During the night four rooms on the floor above us were burgled, they took some cash from these ladies and £200 from another room. The ladies were very cross. It was an inside job – between 11 pm and 7 am. This was not the grand finale. We were playing cards with with eleven other guests when (like pensioners the world over) one lady slapped another around the face, called her a bastard, punched her and then poured wine over her. In our group we had a rep but she did not get up because she was scared. A pensioner said to her if you don’t go to calm things down then I will, but the rep. did not move. This incident had to be reported to the Spanish police as it was just short of GBH and definitely frowned upon.

On one occasion a friend of ours went to the dining room and could not find a seat for himself and his wife. He was told by the Maitre d’, “We operate a rota system here sir, no room at present”, so my friend came back – when they let him out on parole. The trouble is he felt guilty – he was going to buy the Maitre d’ some flowers – it was ‘as good as it gets’.

We had a lady Italian guide who was very dramatic in speech and clothing. She had on funny looking tights and white plastic curtain rings in each ear. The rings on her fingers were almost an impediment – huge – one had a Buddhist priest on a raised surface. She took us on several tours, but had a habit of starting sentences ... never to finish them. I don’t know what she was on but I would have like some of it.

We met some of the people who had moved to other hotels at the airport on the way back. “Did you have a nice time?”, we asked. And of course they said, “Oh yes“. But we told them we were going to get £500 each (well, that was a porkie pie for a start). And we had a far more interesting holiday. One day I found a cockroach, a very large one, but it was a hygienic one – it was in the bath! Towards the end of the holiday I met a Finnish couple who lived in a town 200 km East of Helsinki. I saw the Finnish lady in the bar and was curious to know the name of this town near Helsinki. She went to get her husband as her English was not very good while I went back to playing cards with my friends. I saw the lady walk past - again and again and again for about two hours - we were still playing cards. Maybe she was on the same stuff as the tour guide, lucky girl. Bit like the animal in the play Rhinoceros and just as surreal.

When we finally left the hotel our patio door was still insecure. Jolly good hotel that was, lots of interesting things going on and the beer at the hotel – Dorado est. 1939 – was very good indeed.



## CYCLING AND THE MUSIC HALL



At the end of the 19th century, when the bicycle became a popular form of exercise and transport cycling acts started to develop. Acrobatic music hall performers began to experiment with what new things could be achieved on this new contraption? Although how and why someone discovered they could put out candles with bicycle wheels is a mystery.

As far as women were concerned, the bicycle was a controversial invention. For one thing, they had to mount the contraption which gave comedians ample scope for innuendo. Doctors warned of damage to women's sexual organs, not to mention

their fragile nerves. In reality it meant that women now had an independent means of travel. It was also a chance to exercise in public although this was also disapproved of in some quarters. The popularity of bicycling as a sport, particularly one that women could participate in, is reflected in the number of trick cycling acts in music hall programmes.



The Kaufmann Troupe of Trick Bicyclists claimed to be 'The greatest and most refined cycle act ever produced'. Kaufmann's Cycling Beauties were an all female formation cycling team who appeared wearing full Edwardian fashionable dress or tight-fitting short-legged garments that look surprisingly like modern sportswear. They made their debut at the Alhambra, one of London's leading music halls, in 1899, in an eight week engagement at £40 a week. They must have been well received as they reappear from time to time on the Alhambra bills until Kaufmann broke up the act in 1912. The numbers in the act varied, but it must have required

particular skill manoeuvring so many cyclists on the relatively small space of a stage.

The Elliotts and the Seven Musical Savonas were famous in the 1880s for being the only cycling band. Unusually, they had achieved fame on the music hall stage by combining the skills of trick cyclists with a musical act. They had performed together since the 1870s but later they split into two contrasting acts. The first was the trick cycling act, the second was The World's Only Saxophone Band, playing over 50 instruments between the seven of them. Here we see them in musical mode. Hatsley, The Boy Wonder, rode a unicycle on the high wire while playing the trombone. As well as the novelty, there is humour in the mismatch of time periods.



## A TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND – JAN. 2006

by Rose Hills

We planned our trip to New Zealand with care. This was going to be for Mick's retirement in August 2007, but we got carried away and couldn't wait for it all to happen, so set off on Dec. 31st 2005 to Heathrow. Mike, our son, and his wife took us up to Heathrow mid-afternoon, as we had planned to have a meal there and book in leisurely, and they had to get back to a New Year's Eve Party. How fortunate that was, as there was an early booking desk and we found that, although the travel agents had charged us for a visa for Australia, we weren't on the "visa list" - as it's all done electronically there is no checking now. Not a very good system. We hastily paid for another set of visas and went off for our meal.

The Flight was uneventful and they remembered Mick's vegetarian meal, although we had packed cheese and biscuits just in case. We stopped briefly in Bangkok for refuelling, but had slept for about 6 hours, landing at Sydney early morning on the 2nd Jan. 2006. We had to abandon our cheese and biscuits before we went through customs and so with "nothing to declare" we thought we would take a taxi to Sydney harbour. We had been given a goody bag by the airline about an hour or so before arriving in Sydney, containing socks an eye mask and an apple. We were searched by the sniffer dog and his master thought he could still smell cheese and biscuits, but another customs officer threatened us with a big fine as he had found the apple! Profuse apologies all round and we finally set off by taxi to Darling Harbour. Slight drizzle but still very hot – though New Year's Day had been a record 40° C so everyone was glad of a 'cooler' day. We saw the replica "Bounty" in Sydney harbour and took a water taxi to the Bridge and Opera House. Lovely walk back to Darling Harbour, then it was back to the airport for the trip to Christchurch, South Island, New Zealand.

We arrived in Christchurch rather late in the evening and our friends were there waiting. We drove for about 15 minutes back to their house, only to discover that the lock in the new back door had seized up, so Mick and his mate used an old staircase (that had been for the flat upstairs) against a bedroom window and climbed in that way. Next Doug and Mick, both carpenters, sorted out the lock and then we packed a picnic and went out for the day. Our first stop was North of Christchurch, up a really steep hill with Christchurch spread out below us. We travelled on some very winding roads, some not even sealed, but landed up at Akaroa on the Banks Peninsula, this is the result of three volcanoes and Akaroa Harbour is the remaining legacy of the earth's fury.



Akaroa Harbour

Next day we picked up the Campervan and, after some shopping, we set off North-

West to Westport. Very sunny all the way, we didn't stop very much as we were a bit uncertain of the mileage and also all our camp sites were already booked before we left the UK – on the web. We set off South from Westport the next day to go to Franz Joseph Glacier with the sea on our right. We stopped at Foul Wind Cove (so named by Captain Cook, as when he landed there it was such a foul wind that he had to wait four days to land), where the sea and sky were unbelievably blue with the wind coming straight off the Tasman Sea.



Franz Joseph Glacier

Franz Joseph Glacier the next day was bathed in sunlight, but as this was the first time for about three weeks it was quite crowded and the helicopter trips were playing catch up. So, after our morning coffee and a good look round, we to press on to our next camp site at Wanaka.

Lake Wanaka is a really lovely town right by the lake and with the camp site overlooking it all. We went out for a meal that evening and were amazed by all the cars towing boats, boats being

launched, etc. – it was a boatmen's and fishermen's paradise. Next day it was on to Te-Anau, where we were staying for two nights, right beside another lake but so easy to walk into town. This is where we heard the Bell Bird, just like a tinkling bell, but we couldn't see him.

We were picked up by minibus in the morning to go to Milford Sound. Soon after everyone was aboard it started to rain and didn't leave off until late in the afternoon. This was the best way to see the hundreds of waterfalls as, judging by the very lush growth of ferns, etc., I expect they get rather more rainy days than sunny ones. We joined a boat trip that took right under a waterfall and then it was back by minibus to our camp site.

Monday 9th Jan. took us through beautiful scenery as we followed various lakes on our way up to Queenstown. Just before we got there we stopped at Arrowtown, an old gold mining town that hasn't altered much in over 100 years. We watched some people panning for gold and some kiddies riding through the fords and streams, and then it was on to Queenstown. This was Mick's favourite place, we took a cable car up above the town and watched the paragliders taking off and also the luge run, like a toboggan run but on concrete. Tuesday saw us the way to Tizel - another campsite by a lake - though not so much mileage this day so more chance for stops and pictures. From Twizel we went to Tekapo beside yet another lake - but very little town - we attempted Mount Cook, but although we left in brilliant sunshine the road up to Mr. Cook gradually got mistier and murky so there was no chance of seeing it. After Tekapo we headed back to our starting point in Christchurch.

Friday 13th Jan. Now back at our friends in Christchurch where we had a lovely walk around the gardens in the centre and bought some fudge from a home made fudge

campervan for a car, as we intended to continue with B & B's and visiting our friends and relations in North Island. We travelled North to Picton keeping the sea on our right and seeing seals in some of the bays, but this was the East coast and did not seem quite so rough as the West coast. We arrived at Picton, checked into a B & B and went for an evening meal which turned out to be a disaster - one and three quarter hours wait for two salads - In the end we walked out, getting an earful from the chef, and had fish and chips by the harbour. Next day we set off for the ferry for North Island first thing in the morning.



Crossing the Cook Strait

We sailed out past the many little islands in the Cook Strait, not like the Dover/Calais crossing, then we had a long drive from Wellington to our next B & B at Lake Taupo (about 500 km). This was a lovely old house run by a retired judge, a bit quaint but very comfortable. Not very far the next day to our friends at Matamata. We stayed with them once when we did a "Pedaltours" of the Coromandel and they have stayed with us when they came over to Europe. We had a trip out to Mount Maunganui where

they have a holiday home with the harbour on one side and the sea on the other. We walked around the base of Mount Maunganui and watched the parachutes towed behind the boats, before going in for a swim under the very strong sun, and then on the way back to their farm we called in at the sailing club and had a delicious meal.

Next day it was a long drive to my sister's place at Hi Hi overlooking Doubtless Harbour, Northlands, just before Ninety Mile Beach and the peninsular to Cape Reigna, at the very top of North Island. She has a 4-bedroomed, 3-bathroom place with a view to die for. Normally she is busy running a very good B & B, but she took a few days off to take us out and about. We called into my niece at Whangerii on our way back to Auckland, had lunch at the harbour and then said goodbye to everyone there. We stopped at one more B & B before heading to Auckland airport and a 4.30 a.m. start for our flight to Bali.



Doubtless Harbour

Our lasting impression of New Zealand was the "wild" flowers that grow at the roadside, i.e. Euphorbia (common spurge), Phormium Texax (New Zealand

Flax), Crocosmia (montbretia) and lupins all growing wild.

BALI – this was a real R & R – we had been to Bali once before but only for a couple of days on our way back from New Zealand last time, this time we were stopping for five days. We had a superb hotel, with swimming pool and bungalow rooms right on a private beach. Went on a boat trip one day and were taken out to a reef, seeing shoals of lovely coloured fish, and then on to a turtle farm. Next day we went on a tour of the island and up to the volcano at Mt. Batur, which last erupted in 1996. We even managed a cycle tour – picked up by minibus and then taken to high up near the volcano again, but we cycled through lovely little villages with all the kiddies calling out “hello” in their sing-song voices. After about 20 km. we met back with the minibus, which took us to another town for a meal at a hotel before returning us to our hotel for a dip in the pool.



Mount Batur

We slept through most of the flight home, stopping at Singapore on the way where it was 30° so we felt very cold when we arrived at Heathrow to a temperature of minus 1C. Our daughter and her husband met us and put the heater on “high” in the car on the way home.

After reading through this account I realise that it is a true CTC event, i.e. Café to Café, or campsite to campsite.

Three things to bear in mind when travelling in New Zealand:-

- 1) Get petrol when you see a petrol station, as they are few and far between.
- 2) Stay within the limit even though there is nothing else on the road – the maximum is only 60 miles per hour.
- 3) Make sure all the cupboard doors in the campervan are latched before setting off as most of our pots and pans were rolling around the floor until we got used to catching the locks.

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"Programming is a race between programmers, who try and make more and more idiot-proof software, and the universe, which produces more and more remarkable idiots. Until now, the universe leads the race" -- R. Cook

## MURPHY'S, NATURAL LAWS AND OTHER POINTS TO PONDER.

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1. Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.
2. He who laughs last, thinks slowest.
3. A day without sunshine is like, well, night.
4. Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.
5. Back up my hard drive? How do I put it in reverse?
6. I just got lost in thought. It was unfamiliar territory.
7. When the chips are down, the buffalo is empty.
8. Seen it all, done it all. Can't remember most of it.
9. Those who live by the sword get shot by those who don't.
10. I feel like I'm diagonally parked in a parallel universe.
11. He's not dead, he's electroencephalographically challenged.
12. She's always late. Her ancestors arrived on the Juneflower.
13. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say will be misquoted, then used against you.
14. I wonder how much deeper the ocean would be without sponges.
15. Honk if you love peace and quiet.
16. Pardon my driving, I'm reloading.
17. Despite the cost of living, have you noticed how it remains so popular?
18. Nothing is foolproof to a sufficiently talented fool.
19. It is hard to understand how a cemetery raised its burial costs and blamed it on the high cost of living.
20. Just remember...if the world didn't suck, we'd all fall off.
21. The 50-50-90 rule: Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90% probability you'll get it wrong.
22. It is said that if you line up all the cars in the world end to end, someone would be stupid enough to try and pass them.
23. You can't have everything. Where would you put it?
24. Latest survey shows that 3 out of 4 people make up 75% of the world's population.
25. If the shoe fits, get another one just like it.
26. The things that come to those that wait may be the things left by those who got there first.
27. Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
28. Flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
29. Shin: A device for finding furniture.
30. A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
31. It was recently discovered that research causes cancer in rats.
32. Everybody lies, but it doesn't matter since nobody listens.
33. I wish the buck stopped here, as I could use a few.
34. I started out with nothing, and I still have most of it.
35. When you go into court, you are putting yourself in the hands of 12 people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.
36. Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.

TO AFTER OF

Frank Patterson cycling artist (or 'Pat' as he became known) was born on October 12th, 1871. He started on his artistic career quite early in life when, as a young boy in Portsmouth, he did illustrations for his sailor father's sea stories which appeared in the 'Boys Own Paper'. When he grew up and started work he did design work for the furniture trade, then in the 1890's his interest in cycling led him to the Temple Press who published 'Cycling' magazine. There was scarcely an issue after that that did not have some of his pen and ink illustrations. He became just as popular when, from 1925 onwards, his pictures began to appear in the CTC Gazette.

It was the settings and attention to detail that set him apart from his contemporaries; you had the feeling of having ridden down that road or could imagine yourself in that pub or tea-room. Through his pen and ink drawings he portrayed so well those intimate qualities of being a cyclist from the latter part of the 19th century through to the middle of the 20th century. Some of us would say these were 'the halcyon days' of the sport.

The pictures on these pages are reproduced from the D.A.'s archive of CTC magazines, from 1926 onwards. All of these pictures are CTC copyright.





The old Smithy  
at  
FITTLEWORTH.

here some of us took our old 'Ordinaries' for temporary repair.



The River Emsa dividing Hants and Sussex.  
J. WESTBOURNE

## C2C THE REIVERS ROUTE - SEPTEMBER 2005

by Richard Thatcher

On 4<sup>th</sup> September David Abbott and I set off for Caldbeck in Cumbria with five days cycling to look forward to. The weather was sunny and we broke our journey to enjoy a picnic lunch at Clumber Park, just off the A1 on the edge of Sherwood Forest. There seems to be many pleasant off road cycle paths in this area since we saw many groups, some with children pass by. We arrived at our destination (the Oddfellows Inn) after a further stop at Rheged just outside Penrith. A friend of David's had a hand in the design of what is a very imaginative modern building, with shops, restaurants and a mountaineering exhibition among the attractions. The Inn is located in the centre of the village opposite a farm entrance. When the wind is in the 'right' direction the smell in the saloon bar is very rural to say the least.

### Day 1)

At 9.15 am the minibus arrived to transport us to Workington and the start of the ride. There were 17 of us altogether including two ladies. Most of the bikes were hybrid or mountain bikes. We finally got under way at about 10.30 am and made our way towards Cockermouth along way-marked cycle paths and lanes. It is worth mentioning that our route (National No: 10) is not as well signposted as some I have ridden. We took a wrong turning somewhere but soon retrieved our route with the help of a local who was out for a spin.

After lunch at a pub wonderfully named 'The Bitter End' we made our way to the end of Bassenthwaite Lake before climbing up and over the Caldbeck Fells involving ascent of two really steep hills. We had some lovely views across the fells, although the weather was a mixture of clouds and hazy sunshine.

Total distance 28 miles.



### Day 2)

A bright sunny day greeted us as we set off north east though Hesket Newmarket to Dalton with one steep climb. We were now in the true Reivers country with peel towers and castles. We stopped to admire a splendid building called Rose Castle, so named since the stone of which it is built has a lovely light terracotta colour. Nearby I watched three buzzards at very close quarters as they called to each other and flew only a few yards from where I sat on the bike - unforgettable!

Later we picked up a cycle route, which was supposed to take us to the centre of Carlisle. We got very lost but, after seeking directions from the natives, finally arrived at the impressive castle in the centre of town. We could not readily find a lunch spot, but after a while found a pleasant churchyard in which to eat our baguettes (an idea borrowed from some of our Wednesday crowd).

After lunch we continued up the valley of the beautiful River Eden, arriving far too early at our hotel at Westlinton, which seemed less than pleased to see us despite an early stop at a farmhouse for tea at 2.30 pm. What to do? In the end we went for a short ride, partly off road, (Route 7) to Arthuret, where legend says the heart of King Arthur is buried. Total distance - a mere 40 miles.

#### Day3)

We Set off in wet and windy conditions, the flat terrain of the previous day soon giving way to undulating country with the occasional steep hill. We passed a few Peel houses some still in use as farmsteads. Lunch was taken at Bailey's Mill where hot soup and burgers helped to dispel the chill which had penetrated our water proofs. On setting off I put one foot in a cow pat which did little to improve my state of mind. Worse was yet to come as we soon entered the Kielder Forest a section of 13 miles off road. The Fort was definitely the wrong choice of bike for this trip, as the riding position and narrow tyres required my total concentration. At times the track was made up of small sharp stones. Inevitably there was a bang as my rear tyre blew. I found that a stone had cut through the sidewall. By changing the tube and inflating it to a low pressure I finished the remaining miles, occasionally walking to avoid the worst pieces of track. David mercifully had a spare folding tyre in his luggage, which we changed during the evening. The Inn at Stannersburn was the best we stayed at, but the owner was not amused by everybody hosing down their bikes at the end of the day's ride. To make matters worse the bar was not opened until after 6 pm, but undaunted, we all crammed into Dave's motor home for some liquid refreshment which suddenly appeared from nowhere.

Day Total 47 miles

#### Day 4)

The Morning started bright and sunny with a gentle breeze. The route took us along minor roads and farm tracks. We stopped briefly at Bellingham where we admired the buildings and particularly a Boer War memorial with a splendid sculpture of a soldier of the period.

At lunchtime we arrived at the highest point of the ride, high up on the moors. Dave had arranged a superb barbecue. At this point we should have covered 22 miles, but at the junction with the A887 we missed our turn off, going over 4 terrible blind summits before re-



alising that we must have made a mistake. Retracing our steps was however great fun reaching almost 40 mph at times. A further 14 miles and a couple of hard hills brought us to Stanfordham. To our surprise Dave had laid on a supper party for us to celebrate the last full day of his season and percussion instruments were handed out to accompany Dave on guitar and vocals. A fantastic end to a

to a great day's cycling.  
Day total 40 miles.

Day 5)

The hell of the North - Paris/Roubais? - Don't believe it - it's right here in England! Strong winds, bad farm tracks and cycleways, torrential rain right into your face. Only 25 miles to go, a doddle we had thought at breakfast. In reality it was one of the hardest rides I have ever done. But we had to meet the minibus at Tynemouth to take us back to Caldbeck, so there was no turning back. Going into the Newcastle conurbation we got lost at least twice, ending up using the urban cycleway to the finish. Surprisingly we only did a mile more than the official route. The minibus was parked by the lighthouse, which we could just make out through the spray coming off the sea. Hot drinks and a change of clothing soon put us in better spirits.

Day total 26 miles.



Thus ended a very challenging ride which, although no great distance, certainly tested our riding abilities to the full. Our thanks to Dave of Lakeland Holidays and his crew for their support and encouragement.



Everyday Sussex by Roy James

## BRIGHTON CHAIN PIER



The Chain Pier was opened in 1823, 40 years before there was any discussion about building the West Pier. The Chain Pier was actually built as a landing stage. It was erected before the railways came to Sussex and at that stage Brighton was on the quickest and most direct route from London to Paris so there was a fair amount of cross-channel traffic. However, the problem with that was that Brighton didn't have a harbour and

didn't have a pier so passengers were unloaded from boats on the backs of boatmen or carted out in dinghies. This meant they got wet and ripped off (as the boatmen often charged a lot to take them out to the bigger ships). The Chain Pier functioned as a landing stage, but it was also a bit more than that. It quickly became clear that people liked walking on the pier, over water, and it could therefore be argued that it was also a pleasure pier for promenading upon. It had little kiosks selling shells and often there was a band playing at the end of it.

The Chain Pier was actually designed in a very unusual way. It had large piles (pillars) with chains hanging from it on which the deck was suspended. This type of pier building technology, which was actually bridge-building technology, meant that the width of the decks on the pier were very narrow. By the middle of the 19th Century pier-building technology was starting to change and rather than hanging a deck from chains a new screw-piling technique was used. By simply screwing down piles, linking them together with a lattice of ties and braces and putting the deck on top you could build a pier to almost any shape or angle or size. The West Pier, for example, was 55ft wide at it's narrowest point compared with the 13ft wide Chain Pier. When the West Pier was first built it was essentially just an open deck, a promenade for people to walk along. It had several kiosks along the main deck of the pier and the two big toll houses at the entrance, including the Rock Shop which still there, but the Concert Hall and Pier-head Building weren't added until later.

What the owners of the West Pier had actually intended was to take over the Chain Pier, knock it down and build a new pier on the same site but this was refused. Undeterred the West Pier Company decided to continue with their plans elsewhere. Although pleasure-steamers did use the West Pier it wasn't actually built as a landing stage because by then (1863) the railways had come to Sussex and when travelling to France you could go through Newhaven or Dover on the train rather than in a



The West Pier in its heyday

horse and carriage. So, from the outset it was built as a promenade pier, a place for people to walk on, breathe in the sea-air, take in the ozone and listen to band music.

Apparently somewhere on Brighton sea-front there is a sculpture of some children with a caption underneath it, that says something like: "This is in memory of the children who worked on the building of the Chain Pier who were killed in the construction process." In fact, as far as we know, it's all just a myth that's emerged about the pier. Indeed, the contractors were very pleased to announce at the opening that there were no serious accidents on the pier and no-one was killed. Local historians think the stories were generated by campaigners for the abolition of child labour, who were still trying to maintain the image of poor 19th C. kids who had died on the pier (like those working down the pits). The truth is that the pier was almost certainly built by local men or navvies contracted from outside the area.



At one point in its history Brighton actually had three piers at the same time. In 1863 a company was formed which started on construction of the West Pier and then in 1891 work started on the Palace Pier which was being built by the same company that owned the Chain Pier, with the intention that once the new pier was completed the old Chain Pier would be knocked down. In practice however, in early December

1896, the Chain Pier blew down in a storm. In fact some of the wreckage from the Chain Pier floated westwards and hit the West Pier, knocking down part of the structure. The West Pier Company then sued what was effectively the Palace Pier company (who owned the Chain Pier). At one stage it even looked as though the Palace Pier Company would go bankrupt because of the damages it would have to pay, which suited the West Pier Company as the new Palace Pier would be a real rival to the West Pier.



Painting of the Chain Pier by John Constable (1827)

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