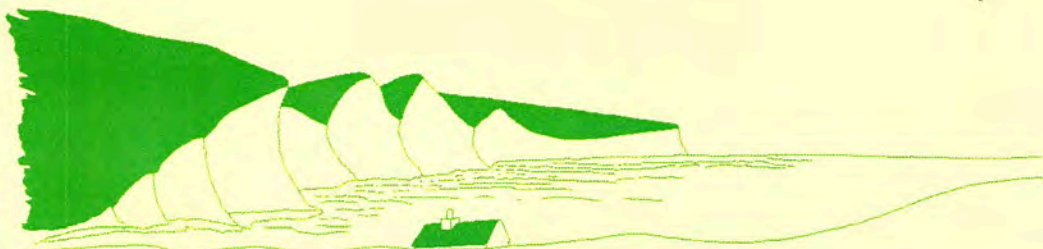




The

Coaster



the magazine of the

**EAST SUSSEX
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB**

No. 47 - Summer 2007

£1





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

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"The Coaster"

Issue No. 47, Summer 2007



From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to the Summer 2007 edition of "The Coaster" and apologies for its slightly late arrival. Various things, including having to move an entire school library have conspired to delay me.

A couple of excellent touring articles this time, from Ann Rix on a week in Dorset and John Regan on a slightly longer trip to Hong Kong and New Zealand. There's also an item for anyone interested in local history, on the history of the river crossing at Newhaven. Other than that there are the usual little fillers, as well as some old adverts from copies of the CTC Gazette in the D.A. Library and several more of Roy James' excellent line drawings - you may even spot yourself in one of his drawings sometime.

If you've been anywhere interesting (or are going) then please remember The Coaster, articles are welcome anytime now for the Christmas edition - deadline is mid-November.

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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Tel: 0870 873 0060
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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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AN AUTUMN HOLIDAY – 2006

By Ann Rix

Jenny and Geoff Boxall arrived at Seaford as arranged at about 9.30am on Monday 16th October, off we went by 9.50am loaded up for the run down to the West. Met up with Andy Hall, our organizer for the trip, plus Joyce Wickens and Les Springett at Rownham Services. Les had collected Joyce from Heathfield and they then drove down to join Andy at Hassocks for him to drive the three of them on the next stage, we then had only two cars at our destination. We arrived first at Rownham and splashed out on expensive cardboard cups of tea @ £1.50 but agreed we needed them, not having had time to do a flask beforehand - well I had ridden forty miles the day before, Geoff had been out to elevenses and Jenny was busy preparing and cooking our first evening meal. The others arrived soon after we got back to the car and, having heard the prices, they decided their water would suffice (I think they had probably had a drink at Andy and Lorraine's before coming on).

The complicated transport had worked fine; we all had our picnic lunch sitting in the cars, as it was a bit chilly, and then set off at 1pm for the next stage. This time in we went in convoy with Andy in the lead; we had a job at times to keep them in sight especially when cars slipped in between us at roundabouts. The scenery was changing the further west we went; we were used to the run to the New Forest each year for the CTC Cycle Week and the area around Ringwood and Moors Valley Country Park. Since leaving the M27 we were now on the A31, bypassing Wimborne Minster to eventually head down to Wareham and on to Stowborough and The Lookout Caravan Park, right on time, 2pm, to pick up the key.



As the neighboring caravan was unoccupied we were able to have the cars parked either side of the caravan which helped with the unloading. Made ourselves at home, it was a very super van, we were very impressed, soon sorted ourselves out as to who would sleep where then had cups of tea and unpacked the food, etc. After a long drive a walk was decided upon, to explore the area, this ended up with us walking into Wareham passing very old houses on our way. A rest for Jenny and I by the bridge watching the swans and

ducks on the River Frome while the others visited the Information Center. We returned via the marshy area and the cycleway, one hour fifty minutes later we were glad of cups of tea again back at the ranch. A super meal from Jenny was much enjoyed then some decided on an early night at 9.30pm.

Tuesday we were awake about sevenish to cups of tea, in bed, from Les, much appreciated by Joyce and I, and Geoff and Jenny. The problem was though that Joyce and I stayed chatting each morning till we heard more sounds about and finally stirred. Breakfast over we were away about 9am to be led by Andy around and up and down the back lanes to Corfe, seeing the thousand year old castle standing amongst the hills on our way. It looked complete from that angle, it wasn't until we were nearer I realized what a ruin it was, with



only some of the main walls remaining. Corfe Castle is one of Britain's most majestic ruins and has been an important stronghold since the time of William the Conqueror, it controlled the gateway through the Purbeck Hills, but during the Civil War the castle fell to treachery from within then was destroyed substantially by the Parliamentarians.

Unfortunately we didn't have time for a visit but did watch a school group as they clambered up the steep hillside, so after a look round at the shops and taking some photos we had early elevenses at the Courtyard, very nice, with little extras like chive butter with a cheese scone, the latter fresh from the oven.

We tried to find the cycleway to Swanage with no luck, so headed along the main road to join it further on. We were then up and down really steep lanes below the Purbeck Hills, stopping for a photo shoot at Knitson Farm with the gang in front of a painting of cows. Finally we reached Swanage where the breakers were rolling in and with a stiff wind blowing we decided to head round the bay to find shelter on the SW end. An early lunch sitting looking out over the bay was disturbed towards the end by showers, we hurriedly donned our waterproof trousers – we had had to put our jackets on earlier for a short shower, also needing them for warmth. Off we went when it stopped to climb out of Swanage to get to Durlston Head to find the Lookout Café for tea and cake and a warm up.

The café was on the seaward side of the cliffs, so after tea we walked further down to see the globe of the world in the Country Park. The 40 ton Portland stone globe owes its existence to the formidable and eccentric George Burt. He and his Weymouth architect, G.R. Crickmay, built the nearby Castle in 1887-8 as a deliberate fake for use as a restaurant. All over the Country Park are stone benches and plaques set up by Burt giving information or improving quotations. The Globe is surrounded by slabs inscribed with Shakespearean or Biblical passages, whilst others remain blank for intending graffiti artists. There were also large plaques of interesting details on the side of the café about distances at sea, etc. Back to Corfe on the main road for a visit to the Bakery for pies for our supper then back into the lanes for the last miles back. Cups of tea of course then showers, some taken at the main park area which were very good ones. A super supper again with Les peeling spuds and opening tins of baked beans, Joyce and I warming pies and mashing the potatoes, simple but very good just what we needed after a cold day out.



Wednesday, rain in the night coming against our bedroom window, we usually had it just ajar so Joyce had to close it a few times. Early tea in bed again, looked at the forecast –

oooh not too bad – so, leaving a bit later at 9.30am meant we missed the rain. Some roads were still wet as we rolled along some lovely quiet lanes in and out of little hamlets and villages. We passed Bindon Cistercian Abbey - founded 1172 (took a picture on the way back) - on our way to Wool where Andy hoped Rose Mullion Tea Rooms would be open, alas, only open Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday and closing weekend of 21st October. On we went about one and a half miles to the Tank Museum at Bovington where we had a super elevenses, well Andy and I did, taking up the offer of homemade cake and drink of our choice for £2.95 (after all we were on holiday), the others settling for drink and a bar.

On again, passing the viewing point to stop and watch the tanks charging up and down, one caused problems when smoke belched out both sides and it ground to a halt. A crew came out to sort it while we watched others, one with a trailer bumped its way through muddy water, we hoped they would go over the steep hill that evidently some already had, but alas not to be. Passed Clouds Hill, the rural retreat of T.E.Lawrence, but that didn't open Wednesday either. He bought this tiny isolated brick and tile cottage in 1925; the rooms are apparently as he left them and reflect his close links with the Middle East.



Andy then took us to Throop for the lovely cycleway to Turners Puddle, only a short distance but passed two fords on the way. On to Bere Regis for lunch in the Churchyard, sunny to start with but the sun soon went and we got chilly. Joyce found some windfalls and thought they would come in handy for supper the next day. Andy investigated and found the toilets had been vandalized, but we could get a cup of tea at the pub and use theirs. All agreed and we had a good warm up and felt better for the

next hour and a half to Moreton Old School for tea and cake. We had nearly finished when a coach load turned up so we soon moved on. Back through more quiet lanes, via East Burton and Giddy green, to Wool, retracing our steps of the morning, then through West Holme to Stowborough. Here we parted company, the three chaps headed for Wareham and the shops for potatoes, etc., while we three girls went the short distance to the caravan. Showers and preparing supper (Jenny), another good meal, chatting about all sorts of things, after the washing up (by the chaps) Jenny got her crossword out - getting us to help. Bed at 10.30pm.

Thursday. A look at the forecast again - could be OK, it had rained in the night again and was supposed to clear – we had breakfast then lo and behold some blue sky appeared. Ready by 9.30am and off we went prepared for anything. A strong wind could cause us trouble and I was in two minds as to which cap I started with. It wasn't too bad as we headed out along the main road, but as we were descending a steep hill just before Corfe it blew off in a strong gust. Les heard me shout and stopped, then with my winter cap on (which should stay put) we joined the others, turning left at the bottom and taking the road to Studland. This involved more ups and downs, but with super views over to Poole just before the long descent. Just before the bottom Andy flagged us down; he had seen a notice 'Coffee Morning' outside the Wesleyan Church on the outskirts of Studland. We parked our

steeds in the small garden at the front, with Jenny leading the way to enquire if they could accommodate six cyclists, this resulted in the ladies, and one gent, quickly putting more chairs out to make a larger circle around the large table and we all sat there enjoying hot drinks and biscuits and chatting - I think we made their day. The man was able to give Andy information about the Chain Ferry we were intending to catch across to Poole.

Bidding farewell, we went on down to investigate the beach area, Geoff wanting to ride along the beach to the Ferry but we were not too keen. Fortunately Jenny and Joyce went to see the old Police House expecting it to be unoccupied, to their surprise it was inhabited by two policemen. They were helpful telling us about the area and that the beach route was all right for mountain bikes but not ours. They said there is a lot of activity there during the summer months which is why they keep the police house going, they were doing there house work when the girls found them and when they asked if they'd mind if I took a photo they quickly put the cleaner away. All that area is under the National Trust with car parking charges, not many people there though.



We moved on along a lovely stretch of road passing Studland Heath and a nature reserve to South Haven Point where we passed the car toll then waited for the ferry. We needed our jackets as a cold wind was blowing and we stood by a small building for shelter. We could see it being loaded on the other side so didn't have too long to wait. Soon unloaded and on we went 70p each for the privilege, Joyce and I getting wet shoes as the sea surged over the side of the landing ramp and then the cars were sent on. The sea

was very rough but didn't affect the heavy chain ferry much. Back on dry land once more we rode along to find a spot for lunch, very breezy but did manage, just, sitting on blocks of stone amongst the flower gardens with sand blowing about, though it got rather chilly.

On we went with Geoff and Andy trying to find a road that led to the Old Quay, Geoff saying "I know it's here somewhere" from the days of riding the 'Dorset Coast'. A bit further on they found it; we then had a lovely ride by the sea, all along the Quayside, into the



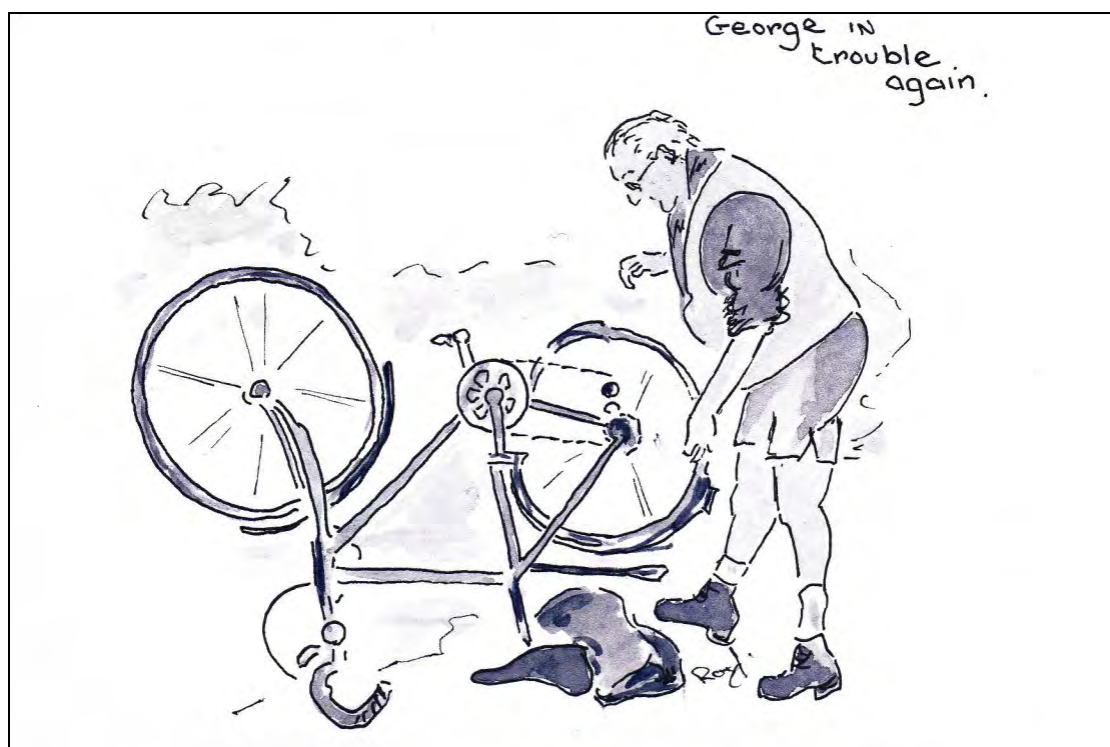
wind, to reach Old Town where we had mugs of tea for 70p at The Fisherman's Café. Came out of the café (we had just got in before they closed so were very lucky) to find a heavy shower in progress so quickly donned our wet weather gear. I was alright as I had already put my weatherproof trousers on for warmth at lunchtime and was wearing my winter jacket. We were lucky as it didn't last long, but was driving at us as we turned into the

wind. We had to use the main road back, which was a bit dicey to start with, but later we used the footpath from one side to the other which took us to the outskirts of Wareham. Into the town to stock up for supper again, Andy and I went on ahead to put the kettle on and the others soon arrived, all back by about 4.30pm. This was just as well because the clouds were gathering again and it wasn't long before the heavy showers came and we were glad we were warm and cosy in the van. Jacket potatoes, quiches and peas went down a treat followed by churchyard apples and custard (the apples having been 'rescued' by Joyce after our lunch yesterday - she couldn't miss the opportunity of windfalls). Bed by 9pm for me but the others lingered on. A stormy night with showers had us waking up at times.

Friday. Our tea boy arrived at ten minutes to seven, a bit later than usual owing to the stormy night, thank you Les they were much appreciated. Had to get packed so couldn't stay in bed chatting too long. Breakfast over and getting everything packed, loading the cars and bikes - now a lovely sunny day, clear skies with just a line of cloud on the horizon, a shame to have to leave. Jenny prepared our last drinks and we had more of Les's biscuits which we had been plied with all week. All packed and away by 10.25am. We joined the A351 then the B3075, passing Wareham Forest, then it was onto the A31 passing a large estate with a stag gate at one corner then a lion atop the main entrance. Topped up with fuel and saw Andy go by at 11.08, 11.14 in hot pursuit. Into Hampshire and onto M27 passing areas with the chestnut coloured bracken, then skirting the New Forest with me dropping off a few times. We missed joining up with the others for lunch, caught up with the rain clouds soon after 12pm, had a convenience stop in Arundel, then finally found a quiet spot for lunch - Sompting Church car park where a funeral was just finishing. Left there at 1.10pm to reach Seaford at 2.30pm to unload me and my gear and have cups of tea before Jenny and Geoff headed home to Ringmer.

Our thanks to Andy for a very well planned holiday.

Ann



INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE TERMINALLY STUPID

These are all actual package labels or from instruction booklets.

On Tesco's Tiramisu dessert (printed on bottom) -- "Do not turn upside down."
(well...duh, a bit late, huh!)

On Marks & Spencer Bread Pudding -- "Product will be hot after heating."
(...and you thought?...)

On a bag of Fritos -- You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside.
(the shoplifter special?)

On Nytol Sleep Aid -- "Warning: May cause drowsiness."
(...I'm taking this because?...)

On an "Aim-n-Flame" fireplace lighter. --"Do not use near fire, flame, or sparks."
(Hmm ... so what exactly do they think a fireplace is?)

On a helmet-mounted rear-view mirror. -- "Remember, objects in the mirror are actually behind you."
(and where else do you think they'd be?)

On a hair dryer. -- "Do not use while sleeping."
(Warning for sleep walkers maybe!)

On most brands of Christmas lights -- "For indoor or outdoor use only."
(as opposed to where else?)

On a meat slicer at a supermarket -- "Don't stick your finger in the slicer when the slicer is rotating."
(Now, why is that not a good idea?)

On a pair of shin guards made for bicyclists. -- "Shin pads cannot protect any part of the body they do not cover."
(This one is obviously aimed at Americans, by the reference to 'bicyclists')

On a toner cartridge for a laser printer. -- "Do not eat toner."
(Must be for Americans!)

On a portable stroller. -- "Caution: Remove infant before folding for storage."
(Definitely for Americans!)

On a frisbee. -- "Warning: May contain small parts."
(They've lost me with that one)

On a Japanese food processor -- "Not to be used for the other use."
(now, somebody out there, help me on this, I'm a bit curious.)

* * * * *

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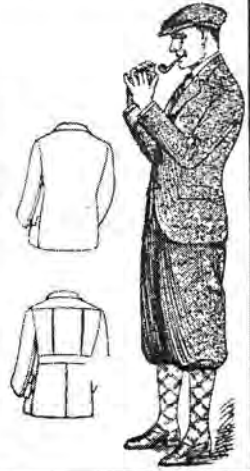
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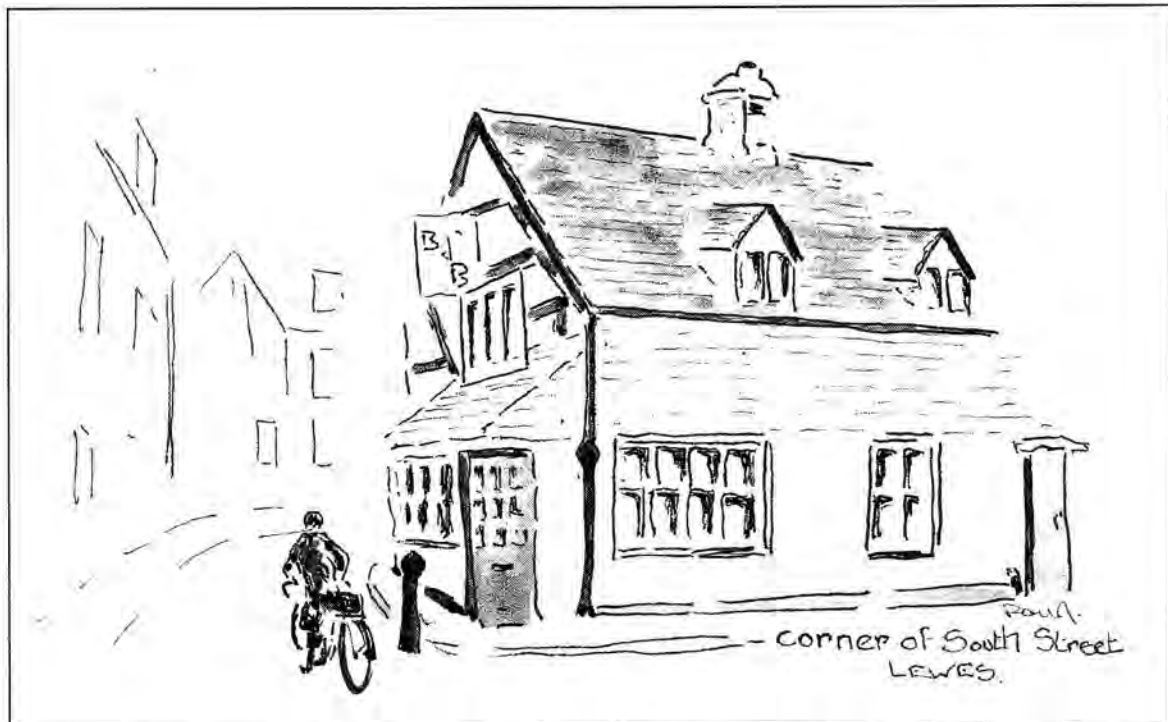
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Advert from the CTC Gazette - May 1930



Everyday Sussex by Roy James

Bridging the Ouse at Newhaven

The current swing bridge is the third bridge known to have been built across the Ouse at Newhaven. The name of Newhaven first appears in 1562, before that the town and port of Meeching existed as far back as the Norman Conquest. In its early days the whole flood plain was likely to be covered regularly and it would have been difficult to maintain fixed crossing points. Denton Island was then part of the mainland, the road from Brighton ran along the cliff top where Peacehaven now is, but then continued over “The Highway” (past where the TV mast stands)



along Meeching Down, down Church Hill and the High Street, over the point where Denton Island Bridge now stands, then turned to meet the “Long Drove” before following the old native trackway over the Downs to Alciston and Selmeston.

A ferry crossing over the Ouse is recorded as early as the 13th C. from the end of High Street over to what is now Denton Island and was operated in the mid-16th C by Henry Bates, a landowner of Denton village. It was often inconvenient and also expensive and a town meeting in 1783 called for a bridge to be built. In 1794 George III granted an Act for the building of a Drawbridge on the site of the existing ferry. This was the first bridge crossing at Newhaven.

Trustees were appointed to deal with the building and maintaining of the bridge. They arranged with contractors the building of the bridge, the erection of a tollhouse at the Newhaven side and for the building of the approach road or causeway, which was to be of a suitable width and standard to cope with the increasing traffic brought about by the growth and prosperity of Newhaven and its harbour.

Newhaven had a reputation as a ship building port and so a drawbridge with an opening of 45ft mid-channel was built, to be capable of taking both naval and merchant vessels, and a maintenance crew were employed to operate and maintain the bridge.

The Act stated that vessels were to have “free and unhindered passage” and also allowed “persons living in the Parish of Denton to pass over the bridge free of charge”, this was because they had always been allowed free use of the ferry in return for maintaining the “Long Drove” (now just “the Drove”) at their own expense.

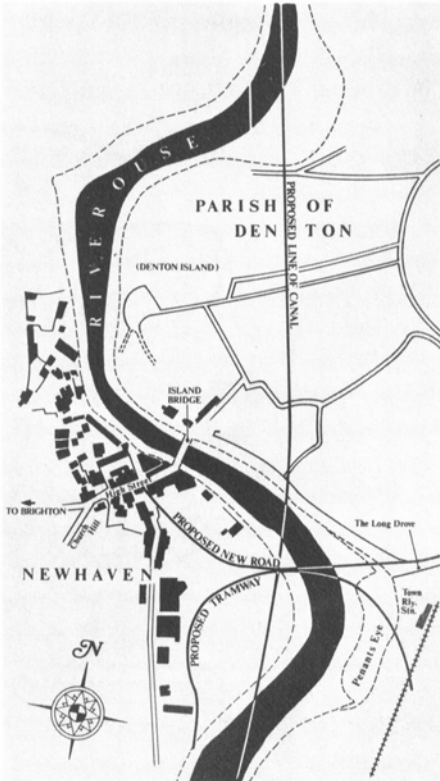


The local authority rated the bridge at £15 and granted permission for tolls to be collected. The fees charged were as follows:

Schedule of Tolls	
For a coach, chariot, hearse or others with four wheels	2 shillings
Chaise, chair, or carriage with two wheels	1 shilling
Wagon or wain with four wheels	2 shillings
Cart or other with two wheels	1 shilling
Horse, mare, gelding or mule	1 penny
Ass	Halfpenny
Score of oxen cows or meat cattle	1s. 8d.
Score of hogs, calves, sheep or lambs	Ten pence
For every foot passenger	Halfpenny

Money to build the bridge was raised by selling £1 shares and £1,675 was raised; a good part of this being used to compensate Henry Bates for the loss of revenue from the ferry. A standby ferry still had to be provided for emergencies. The bridge was operated by five men and was a proper drawbridge, which opened by the withdrawing of the two centre sections towards of the river banks.

This bridge served the people of Newhaven for well over 80 years, but then came the railways and the decision by the London Brighton and South Coast Railway to choose Newhaven as its port of departure for the continent. This provided the Trustees with some problems. For years the harbour mouth had been plagued by the build-up of shingle, caused by longshore drift, and many eminent engineers were consulted about the solution. The general consensus was to lengthen the piers, build a breakwater and straighten the river itself to help provide better “scouring” at the harbour mouth. However this would leave the existing bridge crossing only to a newly created island. Rather than maintain a second bridge it was decided to a totally new bridge across the new “canalised” river, slightly further south allowing it to meet up with the end of the “Long Drove”.



A map showing proposed alterations in 1863

In 1863 plans were drawn up for a new bridge with a pivoting centre section and a new road to be known as Bridge Street was to be laid from the bottom of High Street to the new bridge. It would also carry a rail and tram line. Work commenced on the new bridge in 1864, under the supervision of Henry Grissell civil engineer, and Mr. Jacomb the railway company engineer. The “S” bend in the river was straightened by cutting a new 2,800 ft long canal, creating what is now Denton Island, and a good deal of the excavated material was used to fill in Penants Eye, an area scoured out by the river where the ferry port entrance now stands. The river was widened and deepened at the bridge area and huge black piles were brought and driven between 40 and 70 ft. into the river bed. These were placed with extreme accuracy, as was the ironwork that connected them, followed by the double planking and side iron work.

The work took many months, but finally at 12.00 noon on the 22nd December 1866 the old toll bridge closed and the new bridge opened to the public free of

charge. The old bridge (now superfluous) was demolished in 1867 after being purchased for £4,000. The new bridge had a unique “equilibrium” device, whereby the ends of the bridge were suspended from the centre and the whole thing could be adjusted by turning the huge nuts at the centre of the steel pilings. At first the bridge rubbed the shore sides slightly, but this was slowly adjusted to get rid of the problem.



The bridge was turned by a gang of eight men operating a capstan in the middle of the bridge. This was a long process; the gates would be closed, the equipment put in position, the men would open the bridge to let the boats pass, then they would close the bridge and re-open the gates – imagine the queues that would cause today. With the opening of the new bridge traffic increased with people taking advantage of the free crossing. The occasional cart became dozens

and, with the coming of the automobile, the traffic grew and grew. By the middle to late 1950s it had reached vast proportions and, with a similar growth in river traffic, the strain on the bridge was a constant headache for the company engineer.

Continual complaints and acute frustration brought about the decision to plan another new bridge and road layout for Newhaven. It seems a replacement bridge had been discussed since before the first world war, but it was 1973 before anything really happened. But first they dealt with the road system, building one half of the now maligned ring road. Then, similar to the work in 1866, huge piles were driven into the river bed and the preliminary works were carried out very much in the same way as for the old bridge. The steelwork for the bridge was delivered by road in five large sections, each 80 ft. long and 8 ft 6 ins. wide and taking 2 to 3 days to transport. The bridge was assembly took place on the eastern approach ramp and took six weeks. Once ready the river was closed for seven days in August 1974 for the bridge to be moved into position.

It's hard to imagine now - with traffic lights, electric barriers and a 90 second turning movement, meaning traffic is seldom delayed more than 10 minutes - what it was like when the previous bridge was turned by hand, delaying traffic for more than half an hour every time a boat went through. Perhaps some wouldn't be so quick to complain if they new what it used to be like.



Choosing a New Bike

(Thanks to Roy James for unearthing the following advice)

When the season comes to an end Club members may well look towards the next year and a possible new bicycle. It is hoped the following will be of some use in their choice of a suitable machine. Mind you this was first printed in 1933 !!! Roy.

A cycle is of the right size for rider if, when a heel is placed on a pedal at its lowest position, with the leg fully extended, an inch or so of the saddle pillar projects from the saddle tube.

A three-speed gear, though it adds considerably to the cost of the cycle, is well worth the extra money. It makes riding more pleasant and less laborious in undulating and hilly country, and in windy weather.

Either brake should be capable of pulling up the machine quickly, when used alone. Transmission from brake levers to brakes should be rods, not cables, which are subject to rusting and therefore unreliable.

The front mudguard should project some inches beyond the front fork. Chain-cases must be well fitted to avoid rattle. It is important that the saddle should be a thoroughly comfortable one, especially if the machine is ridden long distances. The saddle wallet should be large enough to accommodate a repair outfit and cleaning rag as well as the tool kit - the items of which should be preserved carefully - and oil can.

The self-contained electric lamp, weighing about 1¼ pounds, is the most handy for town use or for touring in the long days. One with a carrying handle is to be preferred. Acetylene lamps should be kept charged with carbide, and water should not be poured into the reservoir till the lamp is likely to be needed. A pricker for the burned should be carried.

P.S. How many members remember those days?

JULY, 1930

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STURMEY-ARCHER GEARS, LD., NOTTINGHAM.

TO HONG KONG, NEW ZEALAND AND TOKYO WITH JOHN REGAN

I accepted an invitation from my brother, Michael, to join him on a visit to his younger son, John, who now lives in New Zealand. So on October 9th we landed at 17.50 in Hong Kong to spend a few days there on route. A long bus journey to Kowloon followed and eventually we found our small family hotel in the backstreets. This is the best time of year to see Hong Kong as it is not too humid or hot. I was surprised to count only about six bicycles in total during our stay. There were lots and lots of buses which were good value. The ferries to Hong Kong Island and other islands were also very reasonable. Bright illuminations and hanging air conditioning units mixed well with the electric cables which went everywhere. Everywhere was crowded no matter what time of day it was but everybody seemed to be going about their daily lives peacefully. We left Hong Kong on Friday 13th and flew to Auckland and then on to Christchurch where John Regan II and his wife, Wendy, met us and took us back to their home in Loburn which is 6 miles north of Rangiora. Christchurch is 25miles south of Rangiora.



On the Tuesday we took delivery of our campervan and set off for Arthur's Pass in the Southern Alps where we enjoyed a short walk in the mountains. We stayed at Moana Lake, Murchison, the Wairow Valley and Pickton on our tour of South Island. We met up with Wendy and John again at Blenheim to enjoy a Bank Holiday weekend – yes, it did rain. On the Sunday we watched a bicycle race as we sat and drank our coffee in a small town called Havelock. The competitors in this competition completed the first phase by kayak. The second phase, which we were watching, was by bicycle and the third and last phase over the mountains to the coast was by mountain bike. These 'Kiwis' are tough. Suddenly there was a loud bang as an elderly lady pedestrian stepped out in front of a tandem ridden by a man and his lady partner. All three were thrown to the ground and stayed there. The pedestrian and the lady on the tandem were badly hurt. We now witnessed the emergency services come into operation. Wendy, a well qualified nurse, rushed over to help but was soon joined by a lady doctor and two other well qualified first aiders. John helped to control the passing traffic. The police, fire brigade and ambulance took a little time to arrive for two reasons. The first is that they were all volunteers and secondly there were long distances to be covered. Eventually the injured were taken off to hospital and we hope that they will make good recoveries.

On the Monday we visited Nelson and enjoyed a delicious fish dinner at the Boat Shed. We sampled all the products at a family brewery which produced beers with such interesting titles as 'Tall Blonde' and 'Red-head'. John and Wendy set off for home and we stayed at a good site on the beach at Motueka. The following day we walked around a lake. We had to cross over two fast-flowing rivers stepping on rocks. I felt that we were lucky to

negotiate these rivers successfully. However, the path led us to the wrong side of a mountain and we had to retrace our steps and cross the two rivers once more. We were lucky the second time too. This was one of the large lakes of the Nelson Lakes region. On the Wednesday we walked along the Abel Tasman trail which had wonderful views of the sea which went from a deep green in colour to its usual blue with shades of turquoise in between.

By the Thursday we had reached Puponga and 'Farewell Bay' which is the most northerly point on the South Island. There is a 27km spit and we walked along some of this. It was extremely windy but sunny. On our way South again we called in at Pupu Springs. Rain falls on the mountains and percolates underground and this process continues for anything between two and ten years before the same water gushes at great force into the lake at Pupu. By this time the water is cold and clear. This was a very sacred place for the Maoris. We proceeded South and visited the Clay Cliffs on our way to Alexandra. The Clay Cliffs are simply mountains of soft clay which are sculpted into weird and wonderful shapes by the driving wind and rain.



On our return to Christchurch from the South we visited Shag Bay in the hope of seeing the penguins. However, it was so windy and rainy that they decided to stay in comfort in the sea. On the Wednesday evening we set off from John and Wendy's home to join the local team in a friendly game of volley ball. After such an active life style we decided to go to Hanmer Springs on the Friday. At Hanmer Springs there are twelve different pools each full of water which gushes from under the ground but each one at a different tempera-

ture ranging from 30 degrees centigrade to 40 degrees centigrade. We just relaxed for hours enjoying the warmth and the sunshine as there were large protective sunshades in place.

On the Saturday we cycled up the Lees Valley to a height of about 700 metres and over a distance of about 20 km. We saw two 'Kiwis' coming towards us with two dogs. One of them was carrying a headless wild pig on his back. Apparently the dogs catch the pig and the hunters then decapitate it. I nearly joined my brother amongst the ranks of 'vegetarians'. Wendy's only comment on hearing our story was that wild pig is delicious. On the descent my nephew John broke his own record for speed as he reached 72 k.p.h. at one point. We followed a little more slowly. On the Sunday we all went to Waipupu beach and walked some distance along it. John took his cross country motorbike up the KuKu river valley. Michael and I were quite happy to follow on behind with ordinary mountain bikes. On the Monday I joined Wendy and a few of her neighbours who usually went for an hour's walk before breakfast and then Michael and I climbed into the mist to the summit of Mount Richardson – 1048 metres high.

On Monday I travelled alone to Christchurch by bus. I was joined at coffee by Dr. Chayler Weston who told me that he was the great-grandson of one of the doctors on the

first four sailing boats which arrived at Lyttleton Harbour in 1850. He then conducted a party of tourists around the Cathedral with an excellent description of objects which were dear to his heart. Though I had completed the tourist trail in Christchurch twice before on previous visits I never cease to enjoy it. The N.Z. residents have achieved such a lot in a mere 156 years. The next day Michael and I spent the day in Christchurch looking at vintage cars and other things of interest. We played volley ball in the evening. We had tea and cakes with a neighbour who invited us to join him for a walk with his club on the Saturday. So in preparation for this we climbed Mount Grey (about 1000 metres) on the Friday. The friendly neighbour, Geoffrey, took us to Mount Craigieburn which is near Arthur's Pass in the Southern Alps for the Saturday walk.



The walk was a pleasant uphill walk on a lovely footpath to begin with and I thought to myself that this was going to be easy. There were very high drops immediately to our right as this path proceeded upwards but these were nothing to worry about. Then quite suddenly the path ended and we were faced with a 45 degrees scree. Geoffrey set off at a good pace to cross this scree and I followed nervously. I did not look to my right at the long long drop. We proceeded over three or four

of these screes until suddenly some kiwis appeared coming towards us on mountain bikes! I took the opportunity of sitting down and taking a photograph of one of them as he went over the scree and thought to myself that I was feeling like a wimp. When we reached the last and longest scree we then proceeded to climb to the top of it. This was physically very difficult but we all made it. We had now reached a height of 5,000 feet and the wind was whistling through at great force. We had just reached the beginning of the snow level. However, we sat down behind a large rock and enjoyed our lunch before setting off downhill over the other side. Our reward was to buy a huge ice-cream on our way back home.

On the Sunday John took us all to Lyttleton Harbour for the New Zealand trail bike championships. This Championship meeting took place on a hill-top farm on the other side of Lyttleton Harbour which tourists see. We had such magnificent views throughout the day. For the second year running John won the cup for his category in trail biking. We all enjoyed a barbecue afterwards when all the Championship cups were awarded. On the Monday we met John for lunch in Rangiora where he works. In the evening we all went to Christchurch where we enjoyed ourselves in the bowling alley. I came from last place to win the first game – my first game ever. I was joint equal second in the second game. An analysis would indicate that I had beginners' luck and that eventually I will find my true grade somewhere way



down the score! Anyway, we then went on to enjoy some go-carting. We had a lazy day on the Tuesday apart from packing our bags for an early start in the morning. We were up at 4.45 am in order to catch the plane to Auckland and then onwards from there to Tokyo.

I had expected to find lots of Japanese cars in Tokyo causing huge traffic jams but I was agreeably surprised to find every single street lined with thousands of parked bicycles. Traffic jams and rush hours do not exist in Tokyo. Even senior executives ride their bikes. Most people ride on the pavement but it seems to create very little danger. As a pedestrian one learns to walk in a straight line and if you plan to deviate to either side it is worth while glancing over your shoulder to check as a bike may be there.



The roads are well surfaced and the majority of cars are new. When the cars reach an age when they need to be inspected they are then exported to places such as New Zealand and the U.K. Pedestrians wait dutifully for the green man before they cross the street. This applies even when there is no traffic. They are anxious not to show bad behaviour to their children so that crossing the road safely becomes part of their culture. It certainly creates a quiet, calm city which is very safe for everybody. All male office workers wear similar black suit and shoes with a white shirt and tie. All waiters and waitresses and others in the service industries bow to each customer at every occasion. It is extremely charming. When using the Metro there are a few ground rules to observe. The first one is to establish just where you are at that particular time. The second is to decide the destination and then study the map to see which of the half a dozen lines you will use and for how many stations in the correct direction. The next challenge is to obtain a ticket from the automatic ticket machines. With the ticket you then have to find the correct platform and alight at your destination. As you will see from the ticket below we had paid 1000 yen at Ueno to travel on the Kaisai line to Terminus 2 of Tokyo Narita Airport on the 18th November at 9.20 a.m. Well, we did arrive at Narita Airport Terminus 2 in good time to catch our 12 o'clock noon flight to London. We were still flying at midnight but as we approached London we adjusted our watches to G.M.T.



Our holiday ended with a wonderful view of London as we flew up the Thames estuary and landed at Heathrow at 3.45 p.m. It had been a long Saturday 18th November. By contrast our six weeks enjoyable holiday had flown away in next to no time.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

(Thank you to Roy James for this reminder that nothing really changes.)

When Jerome K. Jerome wrote ‘Three Men on the Bummel’ as “a sort of sequel” to ‘Three Men in a Boat’, his rather better known book, he little knew that much of the chat between Harris, George and ‘J’ himself would find resonance with cyclists more than a hundred years later.

Three friends decide to go on a cycle tour of Germany, where a leisurely tour of any kind is often called a bummel. Before they set out, much of their conversation could have taken place yesterday.

On Monday afternoon Harris came round; he had a cycling paper in his hand.

I said, “If you take my advice, you will leave it alone.”

Harris said, “Leave what alone?”

I said, “That brand-new, patent revolution in cycling, record breaking, tom foolishness, whatever it may be, the advertisement of which you have in your hand.”

He said, “Well I don’t know; there will be some steep hills; we shall want a good brake.”

I said, “We shall want a good brake I agree; what we shall not want is a mechanical surprise that we don’t understand, and that never acts when it is wanted.”

“This thing,” he said, “acts automatically.

“You have too much faith,” I answered. “If you read an advertisement, you go away and believe it.”

He said, “If every man talked like you there would be no advancement. It is by ...”

“Then there are saddles,” I went on, I wished to get this lesson over to him. “Can you think of any saddle ever advertised that you have not tried.”

He said, “It has been an idea of mine that the right saddle is to be found.”

I said, “Give up that idea; this is an imperfect world of joy and sorrow mingled. There may be a better land where bicycle saddles are made out of rainbow, stuffed with cloud; in this world the simplest thing is to get used to something hard. There was that saddle you bought in Birmingham; it was divided in the middle and looked like a pair of kidneys.”

He said, “You mean the one constructed on anatomical principles.”

“Very likely,” I replied. “The box you bought it in had a picture on the cover, representing a sitting skeleton, or rather that part of the skeleton that does sit.”

He said, “It was quite correct; it shoed the true position of the ...”

“Possibly,” I answered, “for a man who rode in nothing but his bones. We will not go into details, the picture always seemed to me indelicate.”

The three friend continue to bicker amongst themselves. As their tour progresses, more and more their constant chatter proves beyond doubt that nothing really changes. In fact, “The more things change, the more they stay as they are.

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NIGEL JOHNSON-HILL, PARKFARM, MILLAND, LIPHOOK GU30 7JT

Rt Hon David Miliband MP
Secretary of State.
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
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16 May 2007

Dear Secretary of State,

My friend, who is in farming at the moment, recently received a cheque for £3,000 from the Rural Payments Agency for not rearing pigs. I would now like to join the "not rearing pigs" business.

In your opinion, what is the best kind of farm not to rear pigs on, and which is the best breed of pigs not to rear? I want to be sure I approach this endeavour in keeping with all government policies, as dictated by the EU under the Common Agricultural Policy. I would prefer not to rear bacon pigs, but if this is not the type you want not rearing, I will just as gladly not rear porkers. Are there any advantages in not rearing rare breeds such as Saddlebacks or Gloucester Old Spots, or are there too many people already not rearing these?

As I see it, the hardest part of this programme will be keeping an accurate record of how many pigs I haven't reared. Are there any Government or Local Authority courses on this? My friend is very satisfied with this business. He has been rearing pigs for forty years or so, and the best he ever made on them was £1,422 in 1968. That is- until this year, when he received a cheque for not rearing any.

If I get £3,000 for not rearing 50 pigs, will I get £6,000 for not rearing 100?

I plan to operate on a small scale at first, holding myself down to about 4,000 pigs not raised, which will mean about £240,000 for the first year. As I become more expert in not rearing pigs, I plan to be more ambitious, perhaps increasing to, say, 40,000 pigs not reared in my second year, for which I should expect about £2.4 million from your department. Incidentally, I wonder if I would be eligible to receive tradable carbon credits for all these pigs not producing harmful and polluting methane gases?

Another point: These pigs that I plan not to rear will not eat 2,000 tonnes of cereals. I understand that you also pay farmers for not growing crops. Will I qualify for payments for not growing cereals to not feed the pigs I don't rear?

I am also considering the "not milking cows" business, so please send any information you have on that too. Please could you also include the current Defra advice on set aside fields? Can this be done on an e-commerce basis with virtual fields (of which I seem to have several thousand hectares)?

In view of the above you will realise that I will be totally unemployed, and will therefore qualify for unemployment benefits.

I shall of course be voting for your party at the next general election.

Yours faithfully,

Nigel Johnson-Hill