

The



Coaster



the magazine of the

**EAST SUSSEX
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB**

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

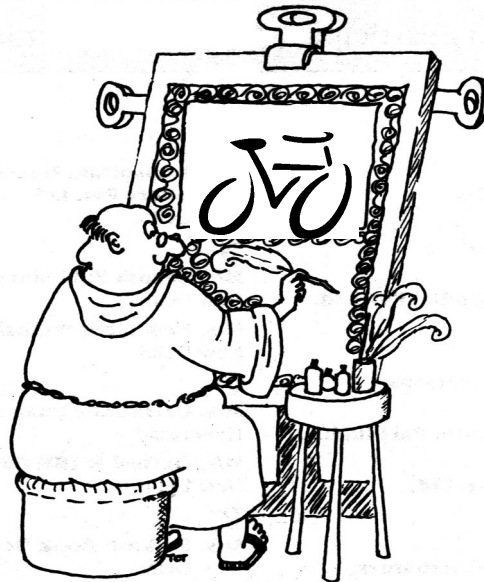
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" THE COASTER"

***Issue No. 55,
Christmas 2013***



From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to the Christmas 2013 edition of "The Coaster".

Once again the Christmas issue is the only one of the year. Only 1 article turned up before the deadline for the Summer issue, so it was not possible to produce one. I'm glad to say that a few more turned up in time for this issue, but I would still welcome a few more contributors in the future. Anything that might be of interest to fellow members is welcome - it doesn't have to be all cycle tours!

Some good contributions this time, with reports on a camping tour to follow the Tour de France in 1997, the 2013 New Forest Cycle Week and the 2013 Semaine Federale. There is also an item on the origins of some Christmas traditions, a drawing from Dave Healy, and a new drawing from the sadly missed Roy James, plus a reprint of his first article for the Coaster.

So, enjoy your cycling this Winter, when you can. When you can't why not stay in with your copy of the Coaster or find a nice country pub with a roaring fire and enjoy a pleasant read over a quiet pint.

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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An Ex-Farmers Memory

Tour de France 1997

Recently, while sorting through some old files and magazines, I found some old notes made during my trip to watch the early stages of the 1997 tour. The trip, my last to date, was prompted for two reasons. In the first instance the tour started with the prologue in Rouen, capital of the *Haute-Normandie* (Upper Normandy) region, followed by two more stages within the area, before heading further south. I thus decided that a worthwhile cycle camping trip was feasible, one that would provide ample opportunity to enjoy the tour atmosphere for a good three days. This also happened to be the year when Chris Boardman was widely expected to do well in the tour.

In the weeks leading up to the tour start date our weather, and that in northern France, was very wet. Indeed in mid June the French region around Rouen and Dieppe experienced some very damaging flash flood conditions. Consequently my decision to make the trip was not finally made until a couple of days prior to departure when the forecast at last suggested that conditions were set to become more settled and seasonal.

Day 1 (Getting There) July 4

Hence I set off from Glynde, my wife having driven me there, in the rain for Newhaven and the early afternoon fast ferry to Dieppe. On arrival at 4.45 hours local time, the Dieppe weather was no better, thus the donning of wet weather top for the ride inland toward Rouen. My intention was to cover about half the distance to Rouen and find a suitable area to set up camp for the night. Having stopped for milk and provisions at Bellencombte I finally, having ridden much further than planned, found a suitable overnight stopping point on the edge of a forest between Fontaine le Bourg and Isneauville. At this point, since setting off from Glynde, my total riding distance was a mere 69.5 kilometres. By now the rain had ceased and the cloud was giving way to clear sky with a nice warm breeze. Following a nice hot cuppa, biscuits and fruit, I enjoyed a good nights sleep, apart from the occasional disturbance created by some unidentified animal, I suspect wild boar, prowling the forest.

Day 2 July 5 - Prologue - Rouen - 8 km

Waking at 8.15 hrs. my first task was to make a nice hot cup of tea and enjoy a corn flakes breakfast. The overnight clear sky was still there and I could see through the forest that the sun was showing itself and promising to provide some much needed respite from the recent dull, wet and unseasonable cool conditions. There being no need to rush, as Rouen was only around 12 km away, I was able to allow time to dry my gear and lastly pack away my tent that had also by then dried off.

Emerging from the forest it was apparent that the weather was looking very much more summery. The sun was well up and feeling very warm. Thus I had a most enjoyable and leisurely ride into Rouen. Having been to the city three times previously I was able to find my way to the prologue start area very quickly. Most of the tour caravan and support vehicles were parked alongside the Seine. It was here that I came across the "devil's" vehicle, but with no sign of the devil himself. Having determined where the prologue circuit was located I then found my way back to the town centre for refreshments. Bordering a square I found a McDonald's restaurant beside a Patisserie and bar, outside of which there were a group of English cyclists from Stroud. Here I enjoyed a pleasant lunch and chat with the guys who were from the same club, the Evesham Wheelers, as the now late Neville Channin who, as many will be aware, was also a CTC member. My previous visits to Rouen were with Neville and friends to ride the local club's Randonnée.

The following two Paragraphs are extracts from www sites. (Rouen)

"Rouen, in northern France on the River Seine, is the capital of the Haute-Normandie (Upper Normandy) region and the historic capital city of Normandy. Once one of the largest and most prosperous cities of medieval Europe, it was the seat of the Exchequer of Normandy in the Middle Ages. It was one of the capitals of the Anglo-Norman dynasties, which ruled both England and large parts of modern France from the 11th to the 15th centuries. It was here that Joan of Arc was executed in 1431. People from Rouen are called Rouennais."

"In the centre of the Place du Vieux Marché (the site of Joan of Arc's pyre) is the modern church of Saint Joan of Arc. This is a large, modern structure which dominates the square. The form of the

building represents an upturned viking boat and fish shape.”

Soon it was time to set off in order to find a suitable spot from which to watch the prologue. I found a nice area overlooking the course at the top end. From here I was able to see the riders as they covered a flattish area after climbing to the highest point before dropping back down toward the finish. There were hundreds, if not thousands, of British fans around the course that quickly warned, by the noise they generated, that our very own Chris Boardman was on his way. Indeed this was also a good signal, after the last rider had finished, that he had succeeded in recording the fastest time of 8.20.00 (avs. 52,465 km/h) to take the yellow jersey. Thus day 2 was concluded with a ride of about 30km back along the D154, to a point just short of St-Hellier on the edge of the Foret d’Bawy.

My chosen over-night camping site was an area bordering an angling complex. The ground was partially covered by tall grass and reeds, that provided not only some privacy, due to it being around 1.5 mtr. high, but also a comfortable under tent bedding. There was also a fast flowing stream with crystal clear water providing an ideal washing facility. By around 21.00 hours I had set up camp and was glad to settle down for another good nights rest.

Day 3 - July 6 - Stage 1 - Rouen - Forges-les-Eaux - 192 km

Today being Sunday, and the start of the tour proper, I was keen to get mobile early in order to find a decent vantage point. I was therefore happy to be disturbed, just before 06.00 hours, by several rather noisy French anglers arriving for their weekly dose of angling pleasure. Having again enjoyed my hot drink and cornflakes, followed by a very refreshing wash in the afore mentioned stream, and having broke camp, I was on my way at around 09.30 hours.

My overnight stop proved to be only 6km. from the bottom of the first listed cat. 4 climb. This was a gentle ride up through the Foret d’Bawy. Having ridden to the top, I quickly realised just how early one has to be in order to get the best viewing spots. Accordingly I retraced to a point around half way up and settled down to wait for the first of the tour caravan vehicles to arrive.

It was around ninety minutes before the first of the vehicles appeared. It then seemed like hours before the last vehicle passed by, many having stopped to distribute numerous advertising items, hats, paper flags etc. The media vehicles were also able to give spectators news about what action had so far taken place since the start in Rouen. Soon after the last of these followed the first of the police outriders and then the race commissaires and then the riders. At this point the race was still in one group. The peloton passed very quickly, even though the climb at this point would be considered steep for many riders. The prime at the top was won by ‘Arturas Kasputis’ (Russia) earning the right to wear the polka dot jersey on stage 2, when it would be passed to Laurent Brochard, who then held it until stage nine when he won in Laudenville.

It was now time, the broom wagon having passed by, to make a dash to Forges-les-Eaux. Once up the prime hill the roads were good and the ride to the finish was uneventful. The only problem arose on the outskirts of the town, where road closures were in force. My planned route was barred by numerous Gendarmes who were adamant that not even an English cyclist was going any further. Reluctantly I was forced to take the detour, which seemed to go in totally the opposite direction to that required. Eventually I found my way to the “Centre Ville” and found the main road along which the race was soon to enter the town en route to the finish close to the ‘Casino’. Having made good time I was able to take some refreshment. While looking for a good vantage point to watch the race I came across Graham & Jane Lade along with members of the Sussex Nomads.

Soon the last of the tour caravan passed by, quickly followed by the police escorts and commissaires’ cars ahead of the first group of riders. News had arrived about a mass pile up a few kilometres from the finish, that had delayed many in the peleton. The stage was won by Mario Cipollini, who led in the first group of riders that included Chris Boardman in 35th place. The win gave Cipollini the yellow jersey pushing Chris into 2nd. place overall.

Forge Les Eaux. *A farming and spa town, with considerable light industry, situated by the banks of the rivers Andelle and Epte, in the Pays de Bray, some 34 miles (55 km) southeast of Dieppe, at the junction of the D921, the D1314 and the D929 roads.*

Known as "De Forgis" in 1186, the first part of the name, Forges, is derived from the fact that it was an important centre for the mining and manufacturing of iron in Roman times. The second part of its name comes from the therapeutic use of the thermal waters from the sixteenth century onwards. A

seigneur from Forges took part in the Battle of Hastings and another took part in the First Crusade. During the Hundred Years War, a certain Philippe de Forges was killed in 1356 at the Battle of Poitiers. Years later, but in the same conflict, the English besieged the castle and took the town, in 1418. Blanche d'Evreux, widow of Philippe VI of France, came here to take the waters in the fourteenth century, but it was the Chevalier de Varenne who really began the vogue in 1573. The spa became famous after the stay from 21 June to 13 July 1632 of Louis XIII, Anne of Austria and Cardinal Richelieu. Because of the royal visit, the parks, gardens and many water sources were developed, including three lakes that still exist today.

Subsequently, many famous figures from French history have taken the waters. A large pottery factory was active from 1797 to the end of the nineteenth century. The casino was first built in the nineteenth century but destroyed by fire in 1896. It was rebuilt and reopened in 1902.

1906 saw the first (in France) annual butter conventions.

The railway station was opened in the 19th century and runs a TER service to Gisors and Dieppe.

Day 4 – July 7 – Stage 2 - St-Valery-en-Caux - Vire - 262 km

Today I was awake early, or should I say arose early, having had very little sleep. On arrival at my overnight stop all seemed quiet and peaceful. Little was I to know what the early hours were to unleash. I was awakened by lots of clanking and loud diesels, that I quickly recognised as that created by a busy railway yard. Being on top of a hill the noise from the railway below was unrelenting; hence the early start for my last day of following the tour. Caudebec was only a few kilometres ride from Pavilly and so there was no need to rush, hence I was able to take my time over breakfast, the usual cuppa and cornflakes, but still managed to arrive there at around 10.00 am.

Having established the route of the tour from the town, to the Pont-de-Brotonne, stocked up with essential supplies and posted cards to grandchildren, I went in search of a good vantage point. Surprisingly the cards were delivered before I arrived back home. Realising that the approach to the river crossing was likely to be jam packed with spectators I decided to stop alongside the Seine, within sight of the massive bridge over which the race would soon be crossing on its way south. From the height of the road bridge it was apparent the route provided a sharp climb in order to reach the main road leading to it, indeed I had actually ridden part of the route on my way to Caudebec from Pavilly. My chosen viewing point was blessed with a low wall that would provide means of getting a better view of the race as it passed by. Being early I was able to enjoy the summer sunshine relaxing on the riverbank watching the many boats, barges and leisure craft on the water.

The following information is taken from WWW sites (Caudebec)

Caudebec-en-Caux is located 27 miles (43 km) W.N.W. of Rouen, on the right bank of the River Seine.

The tidal bore in the estuary of the Seine which is known as the mascaret in French, but locally as the barre, used to be well seen at this point. The development of the industrial polder towards Harfleur has changed the geometry of the estuary so that mascaret now seems to be a phenomenon of the past.

Since 1977 Caudebec has been served by the Pont de Brotonne, one of three bridges built across the Seine, downstream from Rouen since 1960, to replace the many ferries so making vehicular access between the Pays de Caux and the Autoroute A13 easier.

Eventually the first of the tour caravan arrived with the usual razzmatazz, loud horns, music, and race commentary from a whole range of advertising vehicles. As usual some would stop to give out various bits of advertising material, whereas others would just throw it out of the window while travelling at a pretty high speed. After what seemed like hours since I arrived at



Brotonne Bridge

Caudebec the race appeared and passed very quickly. I stayed at my chosen spot for a while afterward in order to watch the spectacle disappear into the distance over the 'Pont-de-Brotonne'.

Feeling a little deflated, realising my adventure was now effectively at an end, and it being time to think about heading home, I set off toward Yvetot. The route took me along the road the race had not long passed before it headed over the bridge, whereas I went in the opposite direction along the D37. It was here that I again met Graham & Jane who were making their way back to their car on foot. Such was the size of the crowd at this point that I also had to walk for a while.

Once clear of the congested area I was able to head toward my next stop that I hoped would be the stage start town of St-Valery-en-Caux on the coast. I soon realised that the rest of my day was going to prove hard going. Not only was the terrain hilly but the wind was coming from the north straight into my face. The area had also been ravaged by the recent torrential rains, and it was soon apparent my route to Yvetot and Doudeville was to be over roads that had suffered serious damage. Fortunately, regardless of all the surface damage, potholes, mud and stones I avoided incident and surprisingly did not suffer any punctures.

While climbing through a forested area, a French farmer on an ancient looking tractor, passed going in the opposite direction. In passing we greeted each other as is generally normal in this part of the world. As I neared the top of the hill I became aware of some shouting from behind. Looking back all I could see was the guy on the tractor waving and pointing to an object on the road. This I quickly realised was my cycling top that had managed to slip out from under the strap holding it on the top of my saddlebag.

Having passed through Yvetot I continued toward Doudeville. The D37 during the final kilometres into Doudeville proved to be very hard. It was exposed and headed straight into the rather strong wind that was blowing off the sea towards which I was heading. It was along this stretch of road that I suddenly doubted my map reading ability. For some reason I feared that somewhere, somehow a wrong turning had been achieved. However since there were no junctions or signposts for several kilometres I pressed on. Still doubting I was partly relieved when a convoy of vehicles approached from the opposite direction carrying what was obviously equipment used by the tour. At least I convinced myself this was the case and continued on my way. Eventually, by now I had forgotten about recording times etc., with a great sense of relief, I arrived at Doudeville.

Having passed through Doudeville without stopping, I quickly found the D20 and rode straight on to St. Valery en Caux. On arrival I rode straight to the beach area and enjoyed a brief stop for sightseeing, an ice cream and to rest in the very warm sunshine with which the area was now blessed. Before departing I purchased essential supplies, and refilled my bottles with fresh water.

From St. Valery en Caux my route followed the coastline via the D925 to Veules-les-Roses. Here I again diverted to the seafront and enjoyed another brief rest and ice cream. Then it was the D68 to Saint-Aubin-sur-Mer and then the D75 to Pourville-sur-Mer. Having ridden this section of my route during one of my previous visits with Neville and friends for the Dieppe Raid weekend, I knew there was a good climb prior to the final run into Dieppe. I therefore enjoyed another rest on the sea front prior to tackling the climb. Having plenty of time I also stopped to take in the views from a viewing area near to the top of the hill. Then it was but a few kilometres into Dieppe.

By this time of my adventure notes were lacking times, but from memory I arrived in Dieppe sometime around 18.00 hours. Since my next ferry opportunity would not be until next day, my last evening was to be spent idling around the marina area viewing the yachts taking part in the boating version of the Tour de France, before heading out of Dieppe on the D154 to a spot close to Le Boi Robert. Noting a signpost indicating what I believe to have been a viewing area, I headed up a very narrow lane where my night stop would be found within about 300 metres. It was here that I made camp at around 19.00 hours. The days ride proved to be the longest of my trip at 122 km.

The following is an extract from the Wikipedia [www. site](http://www.wikipedia.org). *Tour de France à la voile is an annual yachting race around the coast of France. Inaugurated in 1978, it links the English Channel to the French Riviera and is held in July.*

Famous skippers have taken part in the race, including Loick Peyron and the four time America's cup winner Russell Coutts. The race is, however, not reserved for professionals, and it also attracts amateurs and students thanks to three distinct rankings.

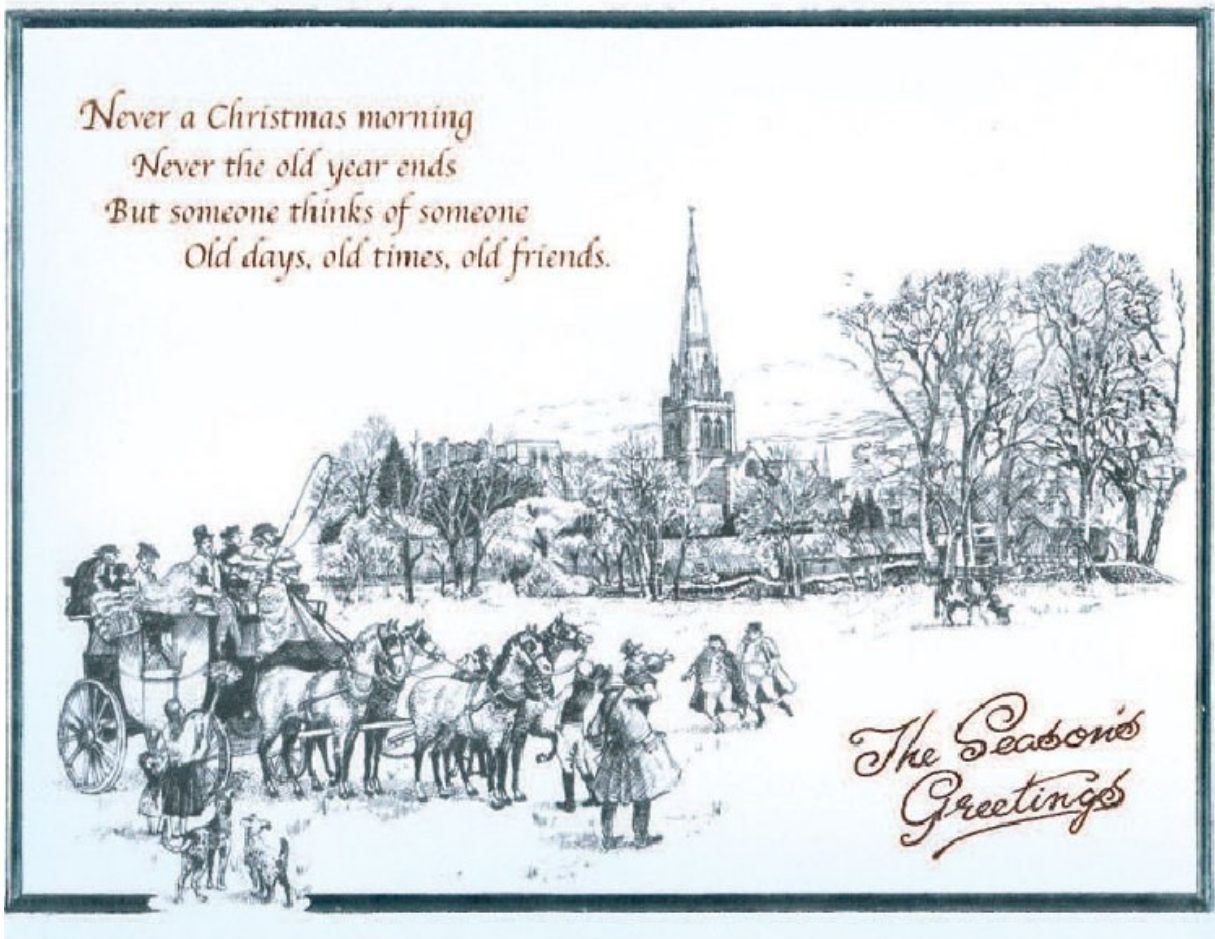
The race visits around ten harbours along the French coast. It includes one or two day coastal stages – that vary from year to year as well as intensive regattas at the various ports. The boats are transported by road (trucks) midway through the race from stages held in the Atlantic Ocean to those in the Mediterranean Sea.

Day 5 – July 8 – Heading for Home

Having enjoyed a good night's sleep, being disturbed by the local farmer, cutting his hay field next to my overnight camping area, was not so much of an unwelcome occurrence. It was, after all, almost seven o'clock. The weather was again looking to continue as it had since my first full day in France, that is to say, hot and sunny with virtually no cloud. I was in no real hurry to set off but still found myself heading back toward Dieppe soon after nine.

My last hours on French soil were spent looking around the town prior to heading over to the new ferry port. Arriving a good hour before sailing time I found myself, having an interest due to spending most of my working life repairing trucks etc., looking around some of the lorries waiting to board and chatting to their drivers. Having opted to return on the conventional vessel the time soon arrived to board ship, ready to enjoy a relaxing trip back to Newhaven, arriving at 19.05 hours UK time. My ride home to Broad Oak took around one hour fifty minutes. My final day's total riding distance was just fifty-seven kilometres.

Spanker



Lord & Lady Pensohywicks - Shepherdstreet with their manservant Gaylord Westerman cycling in Surrey



Hurry home Charles, there's a cleat, the energetics from East Sussex CTC are in the area, and the last thing I want is for the neighbours to see us cycling with a bunch of sweaty. ptebs, foot clown cleat OK.

DAVE HENLY 2013

The Traditions of a Classic British Christmas

At this special time of year, people come together to celebrate Christmas and to enjoy the festivities with family and friends. However, have you thought just where and when some of the other traditions such as the Christmas tree and greetings cards originated from? Here we take a look into the past to offer some insights into the traditions that have developed in the U.K. over the years.

Firstly, there is the Christmas Tree. With its bright lights and decorations it provides a source of wonderment for children and adds to the atmosphere of Christmas. The Christmas Tree was first used as a decoration in Germany and was actively encouraged in Britain by Prince Albert when he married Queen Victoria. In 1847, Albert wrote "I must now seek in the children an echo of what Ernest (his brother) and I were in the old time, of what we felt and thought; and their delight in the Christmas-trees is not less than ours used to be".

On the right is the original image of the Royal Family from the Illustrated London News in December 1848. From the 1840's onwards the popularity of the Christmas Tree made it an enduring feature of the traditional Christmas.



Once a hearty Christmas dinner has been eaten, many people enjoy the Christmas Pudding that follows as a dessert. In 1714, King George I (sometimes known as the Pudding King) requested that plum pudding be served as part of his royal feast in his first Christmas in England. In 1747, London food writer Hannah Glasse had given a recipe for Christmas plum porridge, but it appears that East Sussex cook Eliza Acton was the first to refer to it as "Christmas Pudding" in her cookbook.

Born in 1799, in Battle, Sussex, Eliza Acton was also a poet but found widespread popularity with her cookbook "Modern Cookery for Private Families". Her book was acclaimed by future chefs, including Isabella Beeton and more recently by Delia Smith. Struggling with continued poor health (she sadly died in 1859). Eliza can be found in the 1851 Census, living with her mother in Hastings:

We all love to send and receive Christmas cards. One man in 1843 decided he had too many letters to send by way of a Christmas greeting so came up with the idea of a general one for all. Sir Henry Cole, first Director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, had an artist design 1000 cards, illustrated with a festive scene on the front, printed with the greeting "A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you". Born in Bath, Sir Henry Cole was

a well known civil servant and inventor of the time and managed the Great Exhibition at Crystal Palace in 1851.

Lastly, we take a look at another great Christmas tradition, the 'Christmas Cracker'. Developed by Thomas J Smith, a London confectioner and entrepreneur in 1847. By the year 1900 he was selling 13 million crackers per year. The idea came about whilst he was in France when he noticed some bon-bon sweets wrapped in paper with a twist at each end. He sold similar sweets initially with a 'love motto' inside and then added a trinket and the 'bang' as the cracker was pulled.

The idea for the bang came from when he threw a log on the fire and the resultant 'crackle' noise. He eventually perfected a chemical explosion to create a pop caused by friction when the wrapping was broken.

Here are a couple of images from the Illustrated London News, one is a front cover image from 1895 (right) showing a family enjoying Tom Smith's Christmas crackers and below is the very first illustration of a Christmas cracker.



Finally, don't forget those other traditions at Christmas such as the use of holly and ivy. Ivy was thought by our ancestors to protect a house against drunkenness, while holly was said to keep witches and tax collectors away!

Have a very Merry Christmas!



C.T.C New Forest Cycling & Camping Week 2013

By John Maxim

It was a nice warm Saturday morning as I made my way to the New Forest by train. After a relaxing journey with one change in Southampton I found myself in Sway. On the bike and cycling. A few miles later I was setting up camp at the Avon Tyrrell Activities Centre, Burley and the start of the New Forest Camping Week for me.

Cycling over to Brockenhurst for lunch and to buy some supplies. By chance meeting up with Paul Palmer in Brockenhurst and we cycled back to Burley.

Sunday - warm / sunny / slight cooling wind

I cycled with East Sussex members. At the head of the group was Paul with his map, each rider in place, and all regulating their speed by the leader. John Holmes, Bob Levett, Bill Earl, Val Marchant, Joyce Wickens and Pat Graham. With only 6 miles registered on my computer a halt was called for morning refreshments outside the Tea Rooms in Crow. After a leisurely stop and fresh legs made short work of the climb up Crow Hill to Picket Post. Bill departed us for Brockenhurst while we cycled on the forest tracks to Bolderwood for a picnic lunch followed by ice creams.



Tea at Annie's - a New Forest institution

Then through the woods to Annie's for some down to earth home baking, it's hard to beat for afternoon tea. Then back to Burley via Emery down and a couple of miles of the A35 and the back road into Burley.

Monday - warm and sunny

Cycling over to Brockenhurst with East Sussex members for 11s via Holmsley Station along the tracks. It's important to eat well when you are cycling, so we stopped at The Buttery Café, Brockenhurst. John H left us in Brockenhurst. Then back onto the tracks to Beaulieu for lunch. But Val had the

idea of having lunch in Bucklers Hard via the Solent Way. Paul was chief map reader today but had no idea about the Solent Way, so Val took over leadership to Bucklers Hard.

After a relaxing stop for lunch it felt good to be back on the bikes and cycling with Paul as leader. Burley bound via Hatchet Pond over Beaulieu Heath into the old Round Hill Camp Site then back to Brockenhurst and onto more tracks for tea at Holmsley Station. Just the thing to restore any lost energy. An enjoyable days ride with three important ingredients, good food, good company and plenty of miles.

When we arrived back at Avon Tyrrell Derek Pritty had just turned up and was in the middle of putting up his tent. Maurice Colburn had also turned up to make the numbers up.

Tuesday - rain in the morning, improved by midday

Joyce, Val and Paul had to pack up and de-camp today in the rain as they headed for home. John H, Rob and Derek spent all day at Sammy Millers, going by car due to the rain. I left midday on the bike when the rain stopped and blue sky appeared. Cycled down into Burley for lunch. Followed by cider tasting at the local cider farm in Burley. Then over to the WW2 Airfields Memorial. Maurice and Pat also went for a cycle ride in the afternoon. Bill also spent an hour or so on the bike.



The New Forest Airfields War Memorial

In the evening we had a cheese and wine social. It started around 7:00pm and still going at 11:00pm with too much wine left over from Saturday, John H helping all he can to drink it up.

Wednesday - *warm and sunny*

I was cycling on my own today. A quick ride over to Brockenhurst for 11s and then a visit to the Bank. Riding a maze of clearly marked cycle tracks to Lyndhurst and The Mad Hatters Tea Room for lunch which has a menu full of variety and quantity enough to challenge the most serious of cycling appetites. Turning north to Acres Down and Annes, but not stopping, onto the tracks to the Canadian War Memorial, then followed by more tracks downhill into Burley. John H visiting friends in the morning and on his bike in the afternoon. Derek and Bob riding the tracks and lanes together, providing you don't get lost or take a wrong turning with an out of date New Forest map Derek. Pat and Maurice riding their own informal route.

A Children's Time Trial in the evening, under 8s, followed by 8 - 10s then 10 to 12s and finally the 16s and under. A good time was had by all the competitors and spectators. With all competitors receiving a prize of a cycle computer and, Maurice's favourite bike accessory, a ping bell.

Thursday - *The hottest day of the week - very (uncomfortably) hot, very sunny*

The sun beats down, warm, very warm from a cloudless sky. Bob packed up and de-camped for home. Bill went off for a cycle ride to the beach and a swim. Derek and John H went to Ford- ingbridge for lunch and back via Hurn Airport and a pub stop. I think they said it was to help them cool down and top up the liquid levels. While I cycled over to Lepe Country Park. When cycling I need to eat a diet high in Carbohydrates, low in fat and rich in essential nutrients so I bought an ice cream to cool me down. Back onto the bike for Beaulieu via Exbury Gardens. But it's not all about cycling, as I throw some energy into consuming some liquid refreshments and a very large slice of cake at The Bake House Café, Beaulieu, *aah.....bliss*. Then back to Burley, cycling along the tracks between Beaulieu and Brockenhurst through the woods for some shade against the sun.

Friday - *light rain in the morning*

Today I packed and de-camped heading for the Isle of Wight for two nights more camping. Giving me a chance to ride the Round the Island 100km Randonnee route on Saturday. Bill also packed up, but he went home. Which left Maurice and Pat with John H and Derek. John H was planning on going home later on in the day so he could get some cycling miles in first with Derek. This just left Pat, Maurice and Derek to enjoy the end of Rally B B Q.

The New Forest Camping Week is an event for cyclists of all ages and abilities being held at



Avon Tyrrell, near Burley, in the New Forest, with over 200 people attending the 2013 Rally. The Rally is traditionally a relaxed occasion, with rides being posted on a chalk board by anyone who is prepared to lead a ride or organise an activity. You can ride with a group or do your own thing, the whole week is very informal. They also offer the usual events like the Calshot velodrome, swimming, children's & adults' time trials, cheese & wine social and the Isle of Wight trip. The site offers a wide range of activities, especially for children and families. A relaxed, friendly, bike filled week.



You know you're living in 2013 when...

1. You accidentally enter your password on the microwave.

2. You haven't played solitaire with real cards in years.

3. You have a list of 15 phone numbers to reach your family of 3.

4. You e-mail/text the person who works at the desk next to you.

5. Your reason for not staying in touch with friends and family is that they don't have e-mail addresses or facebook or twitter accounts.

6. You've sat at the same desk for four years and worked for three different companies.

7. You learn about your redundancy on the 11 o'clock news.

8. Your boss doesn't have the ability to do your job.

10. You pull up in your own driveway and use your mobile to see if anyone is home.

11. Every commercial on television has a web address/#tag at the bottom of the screen.

12. Your grandmother asks you to send her a JPEG file of your new-born so she can create a screensaver.

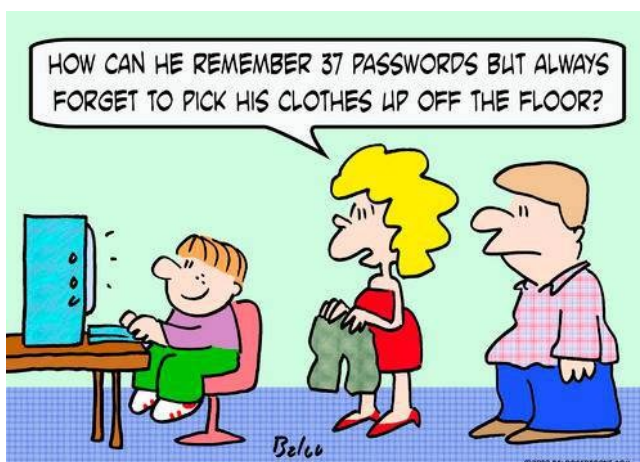
13. Leaving the house without your mobile, which you didn't have the first 20 or 30 (or 60) years of your life, is now a cause for panic and you turn around to go and get it.

14. You get up in the morning and go on-line before getting your coffee.

15. You start tilting your head sideways to smile. :-)



"You said I should spend more time with our children, so I turned their faces into icons."



16. You are too busy to notice there was no #9 on this list.

17. You actually went back to check that there wasn't a #9 on this list.

AND NOW U R LAUGHING at yourself.



NANTES 75th SEMAINE FEDERALE 2013

by John Regan

As arranged John Gallsworthy cycled into Newhaven Harbour at 9 30 p.m. on Wednesday 31st July prepared to experience his first Semaine Fe'de'rale. We quickly placed his bike onto my car roof and soon enjoyed a calm ferry crossing to Dieppe and then a smooth journey to La Lande Patry, near Flers for two nights. Muriel had been our hostess in 2011 and she made us most

welcome again for this first of two short visits. John G's adventures in the Antarctic and in other parts of the World kept us amused as we enjoyed Muriel's home cooking in her lovely home. On the Thursday Muriel took us to a health spa at Bagnoles de l'Orne which is situated around a beautiful lake. The Casino, apartments and Church were built in the 'roaring twenties' in 'Art-Deco' style which reflected the wealth and the mode of the rich people between the two World Wars. We enjoyed walking around the lake and then having a drink as we watched the world go by. We did not 'take of the waters' – the beer was fine. On the Friday evening we all enjoyed an evening meal in the restaurant which is incorporated into the indoor bowling rink in Flers before John G. and I set off for Nantes on the Saturday morning.

We arrived at the house in Orvault, on the outskirts of Nantes, which was to be our accommodation for the next eight days. We were greeted by the owner, M. Paul Dandelot, who immediately gave us a front door key each. He told us that he was leaving that very afternoon; that he was off climbing in the Pyrennes; that his Wife might ring and that his Son, Alexander, would be looking in on the Wednesday. Apart from that the house was all ours to enjoy. Paul then volunteered to show us the best way into the centre of Nantes on our bikes. As he sped ahead on a route which he knew well we did our best to memorise the 11.5 km cycle ride in readiness for our return ride back to the empty house that evening. Nantes is so cycle friendly that there is almost too much street furniture for cyclists to avoid. We bade farewell to Paul and then went on to claim our brochures from the Permanence. The brochures contained all our maps and tickets for each event and each meal for the next eight days. We certainly enjoyed our first Dinner at the Permanence, with salmon being the main course.

We set off a little late setting off on the Sunday morning as we followed the arrows upstream along the banks of the River Loire criss-crossing over several bridges. The directional arrows were not very complete and so we went up and down the banks of the river looking for them. However, after lunch we picked up on the route again and much to our surprise we met up with John Beaumont and his party – John Taylor, Laurie Bishop, Derek Mackleworth, Mike Phillips and Andy Cackett. We all



Evening meal at the Permanence

enjoyed a leisurely ride back together. John G. and myself doing 99.2 km in total that day.

The 'Beaumont' group (travelling in two cars) also used Newhaven. They travelled overnight on the Friday crossing arriving at their accommodation by mid morning, Saturday. Their home for the next 8 days was in the centre of Nantes at a private school, Saint John Baptist de La Salle. Although basic, the accommodation was comfortable providing twin rooms, hot showers and parking for both vehicles and cars. A popular choice shared with many other nationalities, and only 5 kilometres from 'The Permanence', where the rides started and evening meals were served.

Monday's routes were in a north-westerly direction and the scenery consisted of farms whose fields were divided up by bushes and trees. We followed in the direction of the 385 km. long Nantes to Brest canal. This canal was begun by Napoleon 1 and finished by Napoleon III in 1858 to ensure inland connection for the two ports on the Atlantic front. Our own distance on that day was 95.28km. Tuesday's routes were in a more westerly direction towards St. Nazaire harbour with its submarine base. John G. and I decided to visit this base as it lay just a little way from our route. This ship-yard was used by the Germans during the War to build and service U-boats. These U-boats were centred and controlled by the Germans, under the command of Karl Donitz, from the French port of



The U-boat pens at St Nazaire

Lorient. They were responsible for the sinking of millions of tons of allied merchant shipping. In spite of the Allies completely devastating the town of Lorient, these U-boat pens survived until the end of the War. It was most interesting to go inside one of these U-boats in dry dock at St. Nazaire and to realise just how cramped it was for the crews as they sought shipping with a view to destroying it together with all its cargo and crews. We enjoyed a typical French lunch in the Port before cycling back to

the car which we had parked at Savenay and in doing so completed our 85.68km cycle ride. This area is famous for its salt marshes where the fine salt can be on your table just three weeks after it has been collected from the salt beds.

John Beaumont and his group used their cars that day and like us visited St Nazaire submarine pens before cycling to the seaside resort of La Baulle. Popular as an upmarket french holiday resort it is in a large sheltered bay with golden sands and a warm sea. Before sampling the sea, the group adjourned to a beach restaurant dining on moules and frites and washed down with the local muscadet (see photo). Three of the group swam after lunch before showering on the beach and changing behind some convenient placed beach huts (no photos!!).

On most evenings we eight people from East Sussex would meet up for a beer and a chat in the main hall back at the Permanence. As the evenings were very warm we were able to sit on the large outside balcony over-looking the River Erdre. Music and singing were provided each evening in the hall. (see photo).

Each morning John G. and myself had to cycle the 11.5 km. to the H.Q. for breakfast and then to cycle back to Orvault each evening after dinner. Nantes is a very green city and

at times the cycle lanes occupied two thirds of the road space with just a single line left for the cars. There were in fact very few cars and even when they had the right of way they would stop and let us have priority on the round-a-bouts. We could not be sure whether it was simply the spirit of the Semaine Federale coupled with the fact that it was August and the French are all on holiday. There were excellent tram, bus and boat transport connections and we had purchased a ticket for any of these for the whole week but we did not have time to use them. With frequent views of the Rivers Loire and Erdre and the many parks and lakes it is certainly a beautiful city.



The food provided at a very reasonable cost was, by any standard, excellent. Breakfast was a self-help meal with yoghurt, various cereals with milk or cream, fresh fruit salad, crusty bread rolls with butter, jam, honey, cheese and coffee or tea. As an example of the mid-day lunches the first Saturday menu was: Sicilian tuna salad, Sauteed veal, forest tagliatelle, wheel of brie and mixed greens, chocolate pave followed by coffee.

Soup was available for every evening meal and each table was divided into six people who shared a bottle of iced water, a bottle of red wine, a bottle of white wine and a bottle of Rose. The first Saturday evening menu was as follows:-

Foam duck, mixed salad Medallian
Salmon fillet, butter prawns, scalloped potatoes
Plate of three cheeses and mesclun
Fresh fruit salad
Coffee
each meal thereafter was as varied and enjoyable.

Wednesday's routes took us to a beautiful spot, Lac de Grand-Lieu with its panoramic view of the lake and surrounding countryside. This area is particularly flat so that the only slight problem is the prevailing wind. On arrival back at the Permanence I discovered one of John G.s weaknesses: he is very partial to a triple Neapolitan ice-cream each day. We then explored the many cycle stands which were on display: John bought a new tyre and I bought a new cycle lock as my combination lock was not working reliably. We then sampled some Muscadet wine which we both found to be a little dry. We covered 149.28 km today.

On Thursday morning we were pleased to have put on our jackets because the ride to breakfast was misty and cold. However, the sun soon burnt the mist away and it turned out to be a perfect day. This was convenient as it was our 'pic-nic' day. Our route set off in a north-easterly direction and then swung around to go south-westerly to elevenses at Haute-Goulaine with its 15th century chateau. The whole chateau was devoted to the history of the 'petite-beurre' biscuits as produced by the LU company. Until 1846 M.Lefevre and his wife, Utile, sold biscuits which had been produced by Huntley & Palmers, but then they founded their own company LU whose 'petite-buerre' became as celebrated in France as

Champagne. Kraft bought LU in 2007 – we wondered why there was no possibility of



buying the biscuits anywhere in the grounds of this chateau – even in the small enclosure where two or three people struggled to serve coffee to 15,000 cyclists. A great lack of enterprise here, Kraft. However, with the sun shining and our minds nurtured we soon arrived at St. Sebastien-sur-Loire for our picnic which was efficiently served from large refrigerated vehicles. With live music and dancing and the pleasure of bumping into

Andrew and Vanessa Attwood and Ken and Iris Stevens again, it was most enjoyable. We were all then led to the banks of the Loire to await a free ferry ride across to the north banks of the Loire. John and I then went to ‘les machines de l’Ile’, formerly ship-yards, which is now a wonderful centre for French mechanical engineering. It has been turned into a theme park for moving mechanical animals, plants and birds. The most world-famous animal is a mechanical elephant which is 12m high, 8m wide and 21m long and weighs 48.4 tons, and is made of steel and American tulip wood. It is lubricated with 2,000 litres of hydraulic oil with a 450 h.p. motor with a top speed of 3 km per hour. It is set in motion using 60 cylinders, of which 44 are hydraulic, 6 are pneumatic and 10 are gas. With fifty passengers on board it progresses on its route with all limbs working and its trunk spraying spectators with water as it goes. There is also a heron with an eight metres wingspan, carrying passengers, which flies over the Heron Tree. We also watched the animated exploration of the Carousel. This introduces its viewer to the surface of the sea and it sets off some motions at different levels. As usual most of the ten in our group met up for a beer in the large hall at the Permanence to talk about our experiences that day. We completed 80.88 km. today.

Friday’s routes went almost due north following the River Erdre which is famous for many beautiful chateaux which nestle on its banks. In days gone by this area was occupied by lots of iron mines. So far we had enjoyed beautiful sunny weather every day – the only rain had been during the night. However it rained a little at lunch time today. John and I joined Ken and Iris and Andrew and Vanessa underneath the temporary stage which had been constructed for the traditional dancers and musicians. We



We were able to enjoy our lunch in the dry. ‘Keep the best wine until last’ might well have been the organiser’s motto as we set off on Saturday morning in a south-easterly direction to roam over the hills and valleys of the Muscadet region. We certainly had some very panoramic views as we cycled through valleys whose slopes were covered in vines which were coming near to fruition. After 91.52 km. John G and I were ready for a drink.

After breakfast on Sunday we were all directed towards the centre of Nantes where

we were clapped and cheered as we rode around a circuit in town. We were then directed onto the Ile de Nantes and the 'Machines de l'Ile' once more. The elephant's morning stroll was in full course and there were shrieks and screams as it doused the cyclists in water from its trunk. John G. and I cycled back to the Permanence for lunch and then spent some time looking at the cycle stalls. As they packed up their stalls there were some good reductions in prices. Then it was back to our house in Orvault to begin packing ready for an early start on the Monday morning.

We called in to see Andrew and Vanessa at Briouse on our way to La Lande Patry but they were obviously out with Ken and Iris whose camp-a-van was parked in their drive. Who could blame them for taking advantage of such a lovely day. Muriel made John and I most welcome again at her home in La Lande Patry and we enjoyed the hospitality. John G.



telephoned Andrew and Vanessa and he arranged to meet them and Ken and Iris for a ride on the Tuesday. Andrew was able to take them all on a scenic route in and around St. Hilaire de Briouse but, as is inevitable in this region, it was pretty hilly.

On the Wednesday John G. drove up to Dieppe and we enjoyed another calm night's crossing. John G. then cycled home and I drove across to Eastbourne and home. Apart from a few most unfortunate mishaps on our bikes it had been another successful 'Semaine Federale'



Roy James 1929-2013

In August this year we received the sad news that long-time East Sussex member Roy James had passed away. Over the years Roy has produced numerous drawings for the Coaster, as well as the occasional article. On the left is the last drawing I received from Roy, in May this year.

On the following page I am reprinting the first article Roy provided for issue 2 of the Coaster, in 1981, which also includes the first of his drawings that we printed.

Soaked in St. Pois

by Roy James



If it had not been for the rain I would have ridden through St. Pois with hardly a second glance. It was just another village in the Normandy heartland with the usual scattering of shops and bars beside a narrow main street and I had seen many similar during that holiday in France.

But rain had been falling intermittently all afternoon, and now as I wheeled into the main street it had settled into a steady downpour. Rain had seeped through shoes and socks and was starting now to trickle down my neck, for there comes a time

when the best of capes will keep out rain no longer. Camping was out of the question and I was becoming desperate for any sort of firm roof over my head.

I rode the length of the village from the “École” at the top of the hill to the “Marie” at the bottom, looking for any sign of accommodation. There was nothing and the nearest town was Vivre, nearly 20 miles away. Just as I was giving up in despair I saw a villager at work in a carpenter’s shop (was he building an ark?). In a mixture of sign language and a few French words I was able to convey what I wanted.

“Cinq minute” he replied and hurried off in the rain. Sure enough, five minutes later he returned with a very well dressed man who wished me “Bon soir” and beckoned me to follow as he started up the hill. We walked the length of the village and must have appeared a truly incongruous pair, he in a smart suit, white raincoat and black umbrella; me squelching along beside in yellow cycle cape, shorts and pushing the bike. As we passed each open shop the inhabitants gave a respectful greeting to my companion, who was obviously a figure of much importance in St. Pois. As we drew level with the church he pointed to it and then to himself. It was becoming clear; he was the pastor and was going to shelter me in the church. I was past caring; anywhere dry would be a blessing on such a night. But we walked on until, arriving at the rear of the school, we were faced with a modern brick building. He produced a key and unlocked the door. Inside were bunk beds, a fully equipped kitchen and hot showers. Insisting that the bike came in as well he left me to spread out my wet gear and make myself comfortable.

After a good night’s rest in a room with about a dozen empty bunk beds, I awoke to find a clear day dawning. My spirits, damp as the rain the night before, rose with the sun. The pastor, for that is who he was, came round to see if I was alright and stayed for a cup of coffee. Then he walked with me to the edge of the village and wished me “Bon voyage”.

A little incident perhaps, but the sort of thing that raises cycle touring far above mere pleasure.

