

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. 56
Christmas 2014***



From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to the Christmas 2014 edition of "The Coaster". Unfortunately, it was not possible to produce a Summer edition this year due to lack of copy, but I hope that this Christmas edition will make up for that. I'm pleased to see new contributors coming forward, and would welcome more in the future - anything that might be of interest to fellow members is welcome - it doesn't have to be just cycle tours!

Some excellent items this time, with reports on rides in France (from Mary Simmons), across the Thames Bridges (from Richard Thatcher), and a trip through France with Bruce Allcorn back in 1959. There's also an article from Geoff Boxall about an old Rudge bike he's done up, as well as a few other odds and ends..

So, when you can get out I hope you enjoy your Winter cycling. When you can't why not put your feet up at home, or find a nice country pub with a roaring fire and a good pint, and enjoy reading your copy of the Coaster.

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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" THE COASTER " is published by the East Sussex Cyclists' Touring Club. The opinions and comments expressed herein are the opinions and comments of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the East Sussex Cyclists' Touring Club or its Sections. Contributions on any matters relating, even vaguely, to cycling (or on any subject of interest to cyclists) are always welcome and should be sent to the Editor at the address given at the front.

THAMES BRIDGES BIKE RIDE 2014
by Richard Thatcher



I noticed an advertisement for the above event in the CTC magazine back in February. As someone who spent many years working in London I was intrigued by the idea of cycling through the great metropolis from east to west.

The ride involved cycling over all the road bridges between Tower Bridge and Hampton Court Bridge. Thus it was on a dull cloudy Sunday in May I found myself riding along Jamaica Road to the start in Southwark Park.

My chosen distance was the shorter ride of 34 miles which I thought I could easily manage. However a very strong wind blew steadily all day from the West, mostly against our direction of travel. Crossing some bridges this became a dangerous crosswind threatening to drive riders into the opposite carriageway.

After an 8.30am start I made my way through familiar back streets to Tower Bridge and was reminded of the wonderful experience of running the London Marathon as a member of the Rothschild Runners team.

The view from Tower Bridge was wonderful. The route signage was brilliant, as were the marshals who seemed to be always on hand when you most needed them, guiding the 2,000 plus riders taking part.

On through the City and on to the Embankment, the first “pit stop” was in Battersea Park at 11 miles. Time for a quick espresso. Before leaving the park I noticed a heron patiently waiting for a late breakfast!

The route then took us through Hurlingham Park before joining the Barnes Common cycle path, parts of which had not recovered from the previous winter flooding, making the going more suitable for mountain bikes rather than my Ridgeback tourer. Progress was not helped by the presence of numerous dogs some of which had little or no rapport with their owners! (shades of the Cuckoo Trail!)

After a further stop at Chiswick, with free Mars bars on offer, a dog leg took us to Kew Bridge. On the return leg we were forced to stop so that a rowing eight could be launched. Leaving the river we headed into Richmond Park. Spankers Hill came as rather a shock, however the views from the top made the climb well worthwhile. On the gloriously fast descent, to the accompaniment of scores of parakeets, we passed a large herd of deer before leaving the Park at Ham Gate.

The final pit stop came at 28 miles where lovely juicy apples were distributed. The river was regained at the beautiful Teddington Lock, where the sun made a brief appearance. After Kingston we stayed on towpaths. The frequent stops and starts, together with the headwind, were beginning to take their toll and I eventually had to stop outside Hampton Court Palace with cramp in my legs. Eventually I continued to the Finish in Hurst Park, where food and a welcome pint were on hand.

Happily we were allowed to put our bikes on the tube back to Waterloo, which made the return journey simple.

All in all it was a most enjoyable experience though it proved harder than I had anticipated. The Stroke Association raised over £200,000 from the event and my sincere thanks go to those who supported my efforts. Next year I may do the 55 mile version which takes in some of the other London parks



Hampton Court Bridge



Thanks to John Regan for forwarding me this item, originally performed (quite a few years ago now) by Peter Skellern and Richard Stillgoe

Bibliothecaire.

Joyce the Librarian (keen vegetarian) forty and living with mum,
Wears sandals and glasses, attends evening classes and wonders if romance will come.
Though she'd never been kissed it's not something she'd missed until some weeks before
When George, a Rotarian, handsome Lotharian, walked through the library door.

George was unmarried and the torch that Joyce carried was burning a hole in her heart
She wanted to show him but didn't yet know him, she didn't know where to start.
So with growing abhorrence she read D H Lawrence to glean a few ideas...
Which she turned down flat - she couldn't do that - not in a million years!

Joyce the Librarian (strict vegetarian) was burning with animal lust
Alarming sensations, strange palpitations, a mix of delight and disgust
So she buried herself rearranging the shelf to try and control her dreams
Joyce the librarian, the disciplinarian, was falling apart at the seams.

The very next day she kept out of the way when George returned his books
But with growing conviction, as he wandered through Fiction, she threw him some longing looks.
And when George joined the queue, she knew what to do, she smiled and removed her specs
Then looked in horror for he'd come to borrow "The Further Joy of Sex".

Perhaps because latterly she'd read "Lady Chatterley" something went snap in her head
She gave herself gladly, wildly and madly, that night to George in his bed.
And then, just as she'd feared, George disappeared, some other librarian to woo
Now there's a sob in her voice for both book and Joyce are a fortnight overdue.



NO ORDINARY CYCLIST

Billie Fleming passed away in May this year at the age of 100. Her women's distance record of 29,603.7 miles in one year was unbeaten. We thought members might be interested in this interview published in cycling just before her death. .

Billie Fleming is no ordinary lady. In 1938, then named Billie Dovey, she rode a staggering 29,603.7 miles across the United Kingdom on a mission to promote the health benefits of cycling.

She rode every single day of the year in a wide variety of weather conditions to spread the message. Her mammoth tour included many evening engagements that required her to give a talk at the end of a long day's pedalling. Fleming's ride attracted a huge amount of interest and press attention as the year progressed. Her huge mileage set a women's record, and garnered her attention internationally, too.



In 1942, Pat Hawkins set out to take the record from Fleming. But although Hawkins's end of year total mileage was almost double Fleming's, at 54,402.8 miles, it was discredited after the Australian cycling authorities scrutinised her logbooks.

Billie later married George Fleming, also a cyclist with a huge racing pedigree who took on and smashed a number of cycling records himself.

Today, Fleming's mission to promote cycling's healthy benefits still bears fruit, and last month she celebrated her 100th birthday at a retirement home in North Devon. Dave Barter paid her a visit to hear her story.

What got you into cycling?

Billie Fleming: I just met a boy who rode a bike; he introduced me to it. I guess I was 18 years old at the time, I couldn't ride a bike, I'd never been on a bike before. He used to take me onto the Barnet Bypass in Mill Hill, London, in the evening and teach me how to ride this bike. He used to ride about a metre out from the kerb and I had to stay in the gap.

How did this lead you to the record?

BF: It was just an idea I had, I didn't set out to attempt a year record. At the time there was a lot of publicity about the Women's League of Health and Beauty [an organisation concerned with women's health and fitness]. I was so besotted with cycling that I thought, "Well, you could keep fit by riding a bicycle." I had this idea that I could do just that.



How did you go about making it happen?

BF: I wrote to several companies and Rudge-Whitworth responded. They provided me with a bicycle and the necessary sponsorship so that I could set out to ride my bike every day for a year.

Were there other sponsors?

BF: Part of the set-up was sponsorship by Cadbury. I appeared in a number of their

advertises and they sent me five pound slabs of chocolate every month.

When did you start riding?

BF: I set out on January 1, 1938 with the promise to my sponsors that I would ride the bicycle every day for a whole year. I managed this despite the harsh winter in December 1938, when it snowed. Instead of taking myself down to the West Country, where it wasn't snowing at the time, I scratched around the snowy roads of London for a few hours instead. I was fortunate in 1938 as it was a lovely summer, however.

Where did you start?

BF: I set out from Mill Hill in London, out towards Hatfield and Stevenage as a round trip. When I changed my direction I had to complete a cycling checking card and send it back to Mr England at Cycling magazine [now Cycling Weekly].



Tell us about the checking cards?

BF: Often I'd complete two or three a day, and get them signed by witnesses. I had a cyclometer on the bike and had to go to the Cycling offices in Bowling Green Lane in London for them to check that it was sealed and not tampered with. Cycling magazine came out to follow me one day and strangely enough I had a puncture, the only puncture I had in the entire year.

Describe your average day in the saddle.

BF: I'd ride during the day and in the evening I would often go to a cycle shop. I also had to call in on Rudge-Whitworth cycle dealers and have a discussion with them about the ride.

It must have been a long day for you?

BF: Yes, but I was young and fit and ready to take on anything.

Describe the bike and equipment you were using?

BF: It was a Rudge-Whitworth fitted with a three-speed cycle derailleur gear. You don't want more than three gears, do you?

Some modern bikes are equipped with 33...

BF: You can't tell the difference between them. Three is plenty, 33 is ridiculous. The Rudge-Whitworth was a great bike. I found it really comfortable to ride, even on long 100-mile-plus days.

How were the roads in 1938?

BF: There was less traffic, of course. Other than that, well, roads are roads! In fairness, the road surfaces were similar to those encountered today, but ^[L]the lack of traffic made cycling ^[SEP]a lovely experience.

How far were you riding each day?

BF: My average was about 81 miles per day, but in the summer I rode further in the better weather and longer days. One day I was in York, woke up in the morning and said to myself, "I think I'll ride home today," and set off back to Mill Hill. I ended up riding 196 miles. I loved it.

How did you manage for food and water during your record? Did a crew support you?

BF: I was completely self-supported throughout the record and used to go into cafes or shops to get some food. I didn't carry any water with me at all; just a saddle bag with some clothes and tools.

What was your final mileage figure?

BF: 29,604 miles for the year. I don't think it has been beaten since. An Australian lady, Pat Hawkins, made an attempt in the 1940s but her record was disqualified for [irregularities]. I didn't ever meet her.

Was there an event at the end?

BF: I finished at the Agricultural/Horticultural Hall and they had a reception there for me. Mr England was there along with the cycling journalist community.

What happened next?

BF: I was planning to ride across America but the war came and those plans were cast aside.

Tell us about your husband, George Fleming?

BF: I met him quite a while after the war. My first marriage broke up and meeting George was a turning point in my life. He was just the most wonderful person and also an amazing cyclist. He was a really talented racer and the first to do 50 miles in under two hours. He did this ride on the famous Bath Road course.

Did you meet any of the other mileage record holders?

BF: Yes, I met René Menzies [French long distance cyclist], he was quite a character, and I also met Tommy Godwin [the men's year mileage record breaker] in 1940.

How would you describe Tommy Godwin?

BF: Well, someone who liked riding his bike! He was a no-nonsense, hardened rider. Not a chatty man.

Have you kept an interest in cycling over the years?

BF: Oh yes! The last big thing I did on my bike was in 1957. George and I went to the Pyrenees and cycled over the whole mountain range from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea, including all of the classic mountain passes. The Col du Tourmalet was my favourite. You never think you're going to reach the top. We spent two weeks in the mountains and finished with a week's holiday by the sea.

Are you still interested in cycling?

BF: Yes, I watch the Tour de France and other events.

How would you compare cycling today with 1938?

BF: I find it hard to compare the two. I think modern cyclists have a harder time than we did due to the traffic on the roads. More people were riding to work in those days, but I think it's starting a bit more in London now with people commuting. I wouldn't want to ride there though.

Where did you like riding the most/least?

BF: There weren't any worst ones; everywhere was interesting because you have a bike and you could discover things. My greatest discovery was possibly Yorkshire and the countryside there, over Sutton Bank. I'm looking forward to seeing the Tour there in 2014.

How far afield did you go during your year?

BF: I got as far as Loch Lomond in Scotland. One evening the Glasgow Wheelers invited

me to their club run and we went out for a ride. On the way back from the cafe we were coming down a long hill into Glasgow, I was in with the group, and didn't see a pile of grit. I rode straight into it and fell down within this group of men. I felt a right twerp.

Do you think your campaign to promote the healthy benefits of cycling worked? Did you get a lot of attention?

BF: It's hard for me to say. People were very enthusiastic about my ride and people would often come and see me in the evening when I gave a talk at a shop or village hall. I'd tell them how nice it was to ride a bike; it keeps you fit and doesn't make any noise!



What advice would you offer to anybody planning to take on a challenge like your record today?

BF: The only thing I could say to that is that you have to really want to do it. Whatever the weather is that morning, you have to put your clothes on and get on and ride the bike. It's not funny walking out in the pouring rain and getting on your bike. You have to hold the determination to want to do it. You will have bad days, but the good days make up for all of the bad ones.



SCRAPBOOK OF BICYCLE ITEMS FROM 1896

A scrapbook of newspaper clippings detailing cycling accidents and news from 1896 was created for the Statisticians Department of the Prudential Insurance Company of America, and is now housed in the Lilly Library at Indiana University. Here are a few of the items.

CYCLING BAD FOR GIRLS.

Mrs. Smith Thinks It's All Right for Women of Mature Years.

Mrs. Charlotte Smith, President of the Women's Rescue League, attended the meeting of the Central Labor Union yesterday to confer with a committee of the union appointed six months ago to collect statistics as to immorality ' in New York. The statistics were not ready yesterday.

After the meeting Mrs. Smith was asked what had become of her crusade against women bicyclers. She said:

"I do not object to old women riding, or to an entire family going out together on bicycles. What I am fighting against is girls who are just reaching womanhood riding out alone. It undoubtedly leads to immorality and has been the ruin of many girls.

"Mind, I don't say that the attitude is immodest or the dress improper. I know, however, that in cycling there is grave danger to the morals in young girls. Many fallen women have told me that their downfall dated from their first bicycle ride."

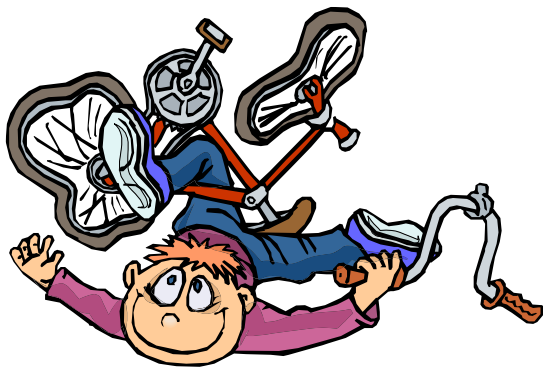
***New Danger to Cyclists
Caterpillars Make Riding Risky in
Bedford Avenue, Brooklyn.***

Bedford avenue is the favorite highway for bicyclists in Brooklyn, being the most direct and central route to the Eastern Parkway. Unfavorable for riding as yesterday was, the avenue was crowded with wheelmen. Some of them had a novel as well as unpleasant experience in their progress over the smooth asphalt pavement on the block between De Kalb and Willoughby avenues.

Early in the afternoon it was noticed that few riders returning from the park escaped an upset at this point. For some at first unknown reason they would lose control of their wheels, and after wobbling around for a few seconds, slip off. Not infrequently three riders would be sprawling on the ground at the same time.

It was found that there was no defect in the pavement, which is as smooth as glass and much more slippery. It was owing to the latter Condition that the singular mishaps occurred. It was finally discovered that the caterpillars, which proved such a great pest last year and have returned again this summer, were responsible for the trouble.

There are big shade trees in this particular block, and yesterday thousands of the caterpillars dropped from the branches onto the pavement and were crushed by wagon wheels. As soon as a bicycle struck the dangerous spot the tire would slip. Many women riders had their dresses badly soiled, but as far as could be learned no one was injured. As a precaution sand was thrown on the pavement and policemen were stationed at each corner to warn the wheelmen of the danger.



Bicycle Brakes.

THE EDITOR OF THE SUN - Sir: I have read with a deal of interest and satisfaction your article in today's SUN respecting bicycle coasting and the use of the brake. You say:

"If a person is able to wheel at all, power to control his machine certainly depends on his ability to stop quickly. And the brake enables him to do so."

This is absolutely true, although the average bicycle instructor, dealer or agent will say otherwise if questioned on the subject. The cycle trade everywhere discourages the use of brakes, and for a purely business reason. It probably costs a dollar to equip a bicycle with a reliable brake. Supposing the annual output of a manufacturer to be 50,000 machines, the brake item alone would take \$50,000 from his profit if every cyclist demanded this accessory, which, from the standpoint of the thoroughly practical rider, is absolutely necessary. The riding public has been systematically taught to believe that the brake is an appliance fit only for women or effeminate men. Yet I think it could be easily proven that fully 75 percent of all cycling accidents would be avoided if all wheels were fitted with brakes. Evidently the matter is of sufficient importance to merit the consideration of law makers. The stock arguments of the dealer and subsidized instructor are that the brake is in the way, and that it injures the tire. This is arrant nonsense. The brake is in the way of nothing. If used constantly when unnecessary it would very likely spoil the front tire in time, but it is rarely that the competent rider finds it necessary to use it. He reserves his brake for emergencies. The present writer had ridden constantly since 1885 and provided himself with a new bicycle annually. For one year he tried the experiment of going brakeless, and found that the extra watchfulness required, the inability to coast, and the general lack of that feeling of security which goes with the consciousness of being able to stop instantly at any time, took away much of the pleasure of riding. It is a fact that riders who have once accustomed themselves to the use of the brake are never known to abandon it. The majority of wheelmen who ride without brakes are those who began without them, in the belief that they were unsightly, cumbersome, and of no practical use.



‘BACK IN TIME’

An account of a cycle tour through France in 1959 by Bruce Allcorn

The 2014 Tour de France brought back memories of 1959. It was the year Stan Nash and I had a two week holiday in France, our route taking in the Riviera coast, Alps Maritime and the Higher Alpine Route. The inclusion of the Col d’Izoard in this year’s tour sparked my memory.

Cycling over to Newhaven Stan claimed the Alps wouldn’t be any tougher than our High and Over, just a bit longer! From Dieppe we caught the train to Paris and cycled across the city which was very exciting. Our onward destination was Toulon and for some reason our bikes travelled ahead on an earlier train. On arrival at Toulon we were greeted with a platform full of cycles. Stan enquired where ours might be and, to our relief, we were directed to an underground store where they were hanging up.



Bruce at the summit of the Col de la Cayolle

Our route took us from Toulon along the Riviera coast through St Tropez, St Raphael, Cannes and Nice to Monaco. My old photos show that we had lovely sunshine all the way. Retracing some of the route we then headed up into the hills. We passed Goudon, home of scent making and on to views of the Grand Canyon du Verdon across fields of lavender. Our final view of the Canyon was from Point Sublime. We stayed overnight in Castellane where there is a small church perched high on a massive rock overlooking the town.



Stan at the summit of the Col d’Izoard

Lovely scenery accompanied our route between Annat and Entrevaux where road, river and rail follow the valley together; then on through the Georges de Daluis. We were now at the start of the high Alpine route with the Col de la Cayolle at 2326m. As we neared the summit a spectacular thunderstorm erupted in the valley below and made us wait before descending on wet, gritty roads. Next came the Col de Vars at 2108m and then the big Col d’Izoard at 2360m. We rode the mountain in the opposite direction to the tour route and from the helicopter shots and watching the riders descend it appeared the road had been vastly improved. What spectacular scenery, I had forgotten how incredible it all was!

Departing from the tour route we headed for the Col du Lauteret at 2048m which took us on to our highest point, the Col du Galibier at 2645m. The summit photo shows it dull and overcast with snow still lying around. Our final Col, the Col du Telegraph, was down hill all the way, in rain, to St. Michel-de-Maurienne.

We were now nearing the end of our holiday with Annecy on Lac d'Annecy our final destination. We stayed a couple of nights enjoying the sunshine around the lake and old Annecy in the evening and while there saw Brian Robinson riding out to the start of the Tour de France stage from Annecy.



Brian Robinson & team mate head for the stage start

I would like to add, in passing, that in the mountains we had to walk some of the stretches that were too rough to ride and also came across a stretch of road being rebuilt after winter floods that had washed it away. We had a great welcome from the French road menders.

Homeward bound, we caught the train back to Dieppe via Paris. Then from Newhaven it was back down High and Over. A memorable fortnight.

Our cycles: Stan rode an Ephgrave, I had an E.F. Russ, with Williams double chain ring and four sprockets on the back. Our travel allowance was £50.00!



THE VET'S SONG

By John Leeson

(I don't know who sent me this, or where it's from, but I thought members would like it. Ed.)

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>The time has come, the Veteran said, To talk of many things, Of thirty-four tooth sprockets And twenty-six tooth rings.</p> | <p>Of youthful window-gazing At rows of gorgeous frames A pageant of chrome and colour Crafted by honoured names.</p> | <p>And canopied by pendant frames Pictures from magazines Of continental heroes In sun-drenched racing scenes.</p> |
| <p>Of bicycles and bikers Of barns and bridleways Of backroads and of bridges We knew in yesterdays</p> | <p>Of frames by Russ and Rotrax Claud Butler and Ellis-Briggs Frames brazed up with fancy lugs, Or welded in bronze on jigs.</p> | <p>Of Coppi's blue Bianchi With Campagnolo gears Of proud Bartali's triumphs And René Viettos tears</p> |
| <p>Of handlebars once popular In shapes no longer seen: Binda and Capo Berta, Ventoux and Azureen.</p> | <p>Track-irons angled at seventy-five Road frames at seventy-two Road track frames for double lives And short-base specials too.</p> | <p>Of battles on the pave And tactics by the team Of frantic tyre changes And sprinting for the prime.</p> |
| <p>Of curly stays by Hetchins And curly forks by Bates Of chromed and convoluted lugs And sleek bi-laminates.</p> | <p>Frames in orange and heavenly blue Purple flam with jade Diamond-panel and barber's pole Chequer and blended fade.</p> | <p>And so the legends came to life Through unknown lensman's skill As optics and photochemistry By proxy brought the thrill.</p> |
| <p>Of Taylor's touring tandems And Higgins' racing trikes Of sidecars and Rann Trailers On vintage family bikes.</p> | <p>Heraldic badges and stylish script Chevroned Olympic bands And lugs picked out by sable brush In dedicated bands.</p> | <p>Of epic Tour and Giro The "Allez!" and the cheers As men roll up Galibier And wish for lower gears.</p> |

continued/

No time to free a hand for drink
Though mouths are dry with thirst
And muscles ache with every stroke
And heart feels like to burst.

From maillot jaune to lanterne rouge
Through joy to secret fears
A caravan of colour
Of courage, sweat and tears
.
The desperate optimism
Of one man's solo break
The team-work of pursuing pack
Intent to overtake.

The fury of the final sprint
On through-lined city street
The ecstasy of victory
The anguish of defeat.

Of winter Seasons cyclo-cross
On circuits through the wood
With risk of spills on unseen ice
And Maffacs packed with mud.

Of cat-and-mouse and sudden sprint
On wood in velodrome
Or lonely rides against the clock
On dark roads far from home.

Of Beryl Burton in full cry
Relentless through the night
Twenty-four hours to laurels new
A record in her sight.

Of early mist at starting line
As trialists arrive
With sprints beneath their handle-
bars
To ride the twenty-five.

Of club-runs routed home via Walt's
For scrambled egg or mince
And monumental mugs of tea
Which made the weak-armed wince.

A wondrous tea-rooms so attuned
To cycling clientele
A rider might buy beans on toast
A tyre, lamp or bell.

And racing men could stay the night
For Walt provided beds
Where TT types with early starts
Could rest their hopeful heads.

And there the bicycle was king
And life was sweet indeed
And motorists felt like Martians
A rare and alien breed.

So herds of club-men rode refreshed
From Walter's water-hole
Which reached the parts that others
couldn't
Most notably the soul.

By halcyon-haunted river
With willowed banks it lay
On fringe of water meadows
Where redshank piped in May.

Magnificent establishment
Oasis of delight
Where home-bound riders lingered
late
On summer evenings bright.

Enough of Walt's, the Veteran said
For there is much to tell
Of places and of seasons
And rides remembered well.

Of breakdowns and of lash-ups
Of blow-outs and of falls
And being towed for thirty miles
With seized-up free-wheel pawls.

Of homeward runs in winter
With mudguards spurting snow
As road grows whiter by the mile
In headlamp's palid glow.

Of top-gear thrashes down the wind
And hills we had to 'honk'
Of caped companionship in rain
Or senses numbed by 'bonk'

Of girls outnumbered ten to one
Who always stood the pace
The Wheelers girl in shortened shorts
Who always showed some lace

The fun of riding with the club
A member of the pack
The comradeship of twosome trips
With Viking-mounted Jack

And solitary rides enjoyed
Well armed with food and drink
On favourite roads with ample time
To unwind and to think.

The gloom within the canyon
Between the walls of mills
As dodging tramlines, we rode West
To freedom in the hills.

Of rough-stuff's stony byways
On heather-purple moors
And unknown road beneath the
wheels
On laden summer tours

Deep lanes in deepest Wessex
In shade of deep July
And chalk tracks on the open downs
Beneath an azure sky.

The leafy scarps of Shropshire
And lush South Devon vales
The mossy stones of ancient walls
By roads in Pennine dales

Of beech and birch and bluebells
In unexpected glade
Banana sandwiches enjoyed
In dappled sun and shade.

Of pleasure in meeting partisans
Who speak the cycling tongue
And recollect the gear we used
When all the world was young

And near or far, the Veteran said
Whatever scene you like
There's nowhere that's not better
seen
By rider on a bike.

(The official name of 'Walt's' was the Bridge Tea-rooms, a mile outside the village of Blyth in North Nottinghamshire. The tram-lines were for Sheffield trams because the 'mills' referred to were not woollen mills but the steel mills which used to line the road between Rotherham and Sheffield.)



TED'S TRANSPORT

Twenty or more years ago I was contracting in a drawing office in Crayford. Ted Land was my boss. We struck up a good friendship and a couple of years ago he rang me and asked if I would like his old bike.

It was a dilapidated 1936/37 Rudge Whitworth; after so many miles obviously not all original, but a challenge. It had been re-enamelled in 1959 and by 2012 was pretty rusty.

The paint job is only spray paint and I did renew brakes and drop the chain-ring from 48 to 36 teeth which, with a 14-17-20 block means I can get up most of the hills and stop quickly if I have to.

I persuaded Ted to write the bike's history, and here it is.

Geoff Boxall
January 2014



A Short History of a Rudge By Ted Land

It was during late 1936 or early 1937 (I cannot be sure of the exact date) that my parents bought the Rudge Whitworth cycle for me. In those days it was catalogued as a "Sports Bike"; it had Lauterwasser dropped handlebars and a cyclo derailleur three speed gear, all black as most bikes were then. It cost my parents seven guineas; that is seven pounds and seven shillings in old money. This was a considerable sum of money at that time, more than a week's wages for most workers, so in order to repay my parents (they had bought the bike on the never-never) I got myself a job as a paper boy at a local newsagents, for the princely sum of five shillings a week (25p) and so started the working life of my bike.

My paper round lasted one and a half hours over approximately five miles, seven days a week. Around eight o'clock it finished; home for a bite of breakfast then off again on the Rudge to college at the South East of London Technical Institute at New Cross, a journey of about three miles, so with other journeys I made during the week I was clocking up about one hundred miles a week. During school holidays I did the occasional ride to the coast; Hastings being my favourite run.

I finished college in August 1939 at the age of sixteen and started work as an apprentice at a small engineering company at Bermondsey to become a toolmaker, and, of course, I cycled to work from Lee, Lewisham to Bermondsey. Just a few weeks after starting work, war was declared on 3 September 1939. In September 1940, due to the Government's reorganising aircraft production, the engineering company (it employed only twelve people) was transferred to a shadow factory at Keynsham, a village between Bristol and Bath to become the toolroom of the factory. We were making parts for Bristol aero-engines. The Bristol Aeroplane Co took over the indentured apprenticeship and so, for the rest of the war, I became an apprentice of the Bristol Aeroplane Co.

The bike went with me to Bristol and so into digs until 1945. During the war years I took the opportunity of exploring the country around Bristol and Bath, clocking up several thousand miles. With very few signposts, as most were taken down during the war, one had to travel by map alone. I well remember asking the way occasionally and getting suspicious looks; they probably thought I was a spy or fifth columnist.

My most adventurous trip was in 1944, July or August, I cycled home from Keynsham to London. This was during the doodlebug period. I was lucky none fell very near me during the ride, though I well remember watching several come over.

After the war, with my apprenticeship finished, I came home. Since then I continued to ride to the various companies at which I was employed, finally giving up cycling around 1975 when the old Rudge was put to rest in my garage.

Over the years it went through a few changes. I fitted alloy mudguards, various handlebars and sometime in the sixties had the front forks chromed and the frame sprayed blue.

Looking back I realise how lucky I was to enjoy cycling whilst there was so little traffic on the roads, particularly during the war years. I cannot help feeling sorry for cyclists these days having to cope with aggressive car drivers and the volume of traffic on our roads.



Some of the detailing on the bike and Ted with the fully restored item..



HAILSHAM TO GOURNAY EN BRAY BY FIFTEEN CYCLISTS

By Mary Simmons

The weather of Thursday the 15th of July was kind to the 15 cyclists who set off on the 11:30 am Newhaven ferry for Dieppe. We were a mixed bunch of abilities and ages, the youngest, Zoe, just 13, bravely took on a much older generation, some of whom were in their mid-70s. Now I know this is but mere youth to some of our hardened members in the CTC, but most of these OAP's were young in cycling years.



We wobbled and weaved our way from the port to the beginning of the Avenue Verte, this time choosing a trickier but, I was told, a quieter route. Seven of us were bed and breakfasting, the remainder were camping. The bed and breakfast at Arques la Bataille was immensely French and picturesque, causing the campers to sigh and continue en route to Camping de Deux Rivières. This is an old friend to my husband Paul and me, as we've camped there since the 1980s on our bikes, taking our children, sister Peggy and husband Mike, and their boys and my father.

After returning to the bed and breakfast for a wonderful repas francais, we settled down in our green and pleasant land by the river.

Paul and I were the support vehicle in our camper, along with another couple carrying tents etc. and dishing out cakes, fruit and drinks at appropriate times. To cater for the needs of the older members and new cyclists we allowed three days for the trip to Gournay, our twin town, with whom we have been involved for many years. This year it was decided to coincide the ride with their festival de St Clair, always held at this time of the year. We were hosted, entertained, wined and dined and generally looked upon as 'the Brits' who are welcomed with open arms, and the French counterparts who couldn't be more charming.

Second day saw us making an excursion from the Avenue Verte, to visit the V1 site at Val Ygot. If ever you are in the area this is well worth a visit, it is set in the Forest d'Eawy and gives one a true sense of the Germans actually being there. For me, the most moving item there is a statue of a woman kneeling and holding her dead child, such an expression on her face sums up the horrors of war.



So after another gruelling day of 20 miles in the tropical heat (you remember July?), we spent the second night at Neufchatel, another amazing bed and breakfast venue and a clean and pleasant campsite, and that evening visited Chez Jean Pierre in the town for dinner. The third day was just too hot and one of our troop, due to reduced lung capacity, really was struggling on the last hill, so he hung on to the door of our camper and I slowly pulled him up as this was my driving day.

The destination this day was to a 300 year old monastery farm, the owner of which owns Le Weekend Café in the centre of Gournay. He was very keen to be involved with us

and offered to host us all, some inside, the rest on hastily cut grass. He also provided the meal of wild boar and lamb kebabs. Our French friends all came to help in the preparation. In spite of soaring temperatures and humidity the fire was lit in the ingle nook and poor Rene was responsible for turning 50 kebabs. The table was scattered with bowls of this and that as we at last sat and ate, perched on top of a wonderful expanse of Normandy countryside. It was all done in true continental style, long tables butted together, lined with laughing people, noisy people, chatty people, all enjoying the mix of cultures and plenty of wine. The owner then disappeared along with the French back to Gournay and left us to it - locked doors? You must be joking!

The final day, still baking hot, saw us arrive and officially welcomed by Monsieur Le Maire in the Hotel De Ville. We received certificates of Le Meilleur (The Best) Cyclist and gifts.

People then retired to their hosts for the evening. We usually stay with René and Françoise and their daughter Maureen and have grown to be very fond of them. René was a policeman of some merit and is such a stereotypical smoking Frenchman. His wife, Françoise, is half English, which makes communication extremely relaxing. They live dead centre of Gournay, which at this time of year is full of loud music and funfairs. Needless to say we didn't go to bed before one.

The carnival was a great event full of noise and colour, costs a lot to put on, but brings out a real sense of community, although some partakers are from other areas and some are professional performers.

Thankfully, the weather cooled considerably for the return trip that was done in two days. Such a pleasant experience to set off once again on the quiet Normandy roads, chatting and absorbing all that it has to offer, for me the enviable vegetable plots and lots of space around the houses. Our overnight stop on the return leg was actually on the Avenue Verte. If any of you are interested, Katia offers a delightful setting, a lovely evening meal and a breakfast even if she did seem a bit last minute. She let us camp for free, it is not far from Neufchatel - at Nesle St Serre.

We ate a lot and had a lot of fun with a group of people, some of whom we hardly knew and had nothing to prove, because we are all too old to prove it now, but enjoying Les Velos, fresh air and France.



WHERE WERE YOU IN THE 1960S?

by John Regan

I was married in the early 1960s and we had two boys. We lived in Carshalton and I worked in the Royal Courts of Justice London where I was Librarian in the Bar Library. It was necessary to establish a separate law library for the Judges of the High Court and part of my duties were to purchase new and second-hand Law Reports and legal text books for this purpose. I arranged for these books to be re-bound where necessary and labelled for The Supreme Court. This new library was to be housed in a new wing which was being built for the Royal Courts of Justice and was to be named The Queen's Building.

In 1968 there was much pomp and ceremony as the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh opened the Queen's Building. They had expressed the wish to have a short break from these ceremonies and it had been decided that they would have a short coffee break in the new Supreme Court Library. So a few of us enjoyed coffee and conversation in the peace of the library with the Royal couple. There is a series of Law Reports which is entitled 'The Treason Trials' and we had set out a few of these volumes to be looked at. They both took great interest in these Reports. One of them detailed the Trial which led to the Execution of King Charles 1st on 30th January 1649. Oliver Cromwell was beheaded for High Treason just five years after this. The Royal couple talked about the recently released Academy winning British film 'A man of all seasons'. This film featured the events where the Lord Chancellor of England Sir Thomas More had refused to sign a letter to the Pope to request the annulment of the marriage of King Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon. He resigned rather than take an Oath of Supremacy which declared that Henry VIII should be the Head of the Church of England. Henry VIII had his wish to marry Anne Boleyn which he did on 25th January 1533. Sir Thomas More was beheaded on 6th July 1535.

On the morning after the Queen's Building had been opened 'The Times' newspaper featured an article on the subject and I was most surprised but pleased to see this photograph of me in the new Supreme Court Library. Some years later a new building was erected in Parliament Square to house the Supreme Court and these books are now in this new building.



A CYCLIST'S PET HATES

Norman Wright

The following is a light hearted, but albeit serious, look at things that can cause us all problems. Unfortunately it must be said that whereas the vast majority of us do not fall into the categories listed, a few do. Perhaps this little sample of one rider's opinions will help to persuade those few to mend their ways.

Firstly, there are those riders who appear to have a complete disregard for the safety and well-being of not only themselves but also others for the following reasons: -

1. Wearing dark clothing.
2. Not having lights in conditions of poor visibility & darkness.
3. Having no mudguards when riding with a group.
4. Riding down one-way streets against traffic flow.
5. Riders who ignore traffic signals (lights etc.).



Then there are others who fall into one or more of the categories listed here.

6. Riders who complain about hills.
7. Riders who complain about the weather.

Finally I complete my list of pet hates with the following:

8. Cars parked on cycle lanes.
9. Stray / loose dogs.
10. Cycle lanes that go nowhere.
11. News Reports that state-: "Cyclist collides with ..." suggesting it's always the cyclist at fault.

As a cyclist how do you rate this list? Can you add to it?

The facts (as I see them) and notes on the above list.

- Item 1. There is no valid reason for not being seen. Hi-vis cycling jerseys, gillett's or reflective bands / belts are readily available and inexpensive.
2. No rider has any excuse for not having good bright LED lights front and rear. There is now a very wide range of good lighting that ranges in price from the very cheap to the top of the range expensive models, that all run for many hours before suffering battery failure, and there are some very good modern dynamo systems favoured by those doing lots of night riding.
 3. Not having mudguards is simply un-sociable and un-necessary. There are designs available today that can be fitted even to machines with little clearance between wheels & frame.
 4. Such riding habits tend to get us all tarred with the same brush.
 5. Ignoring signals / lights is very dangerous and upsets, rightly so, other road users.
Again gets us all tarred with the same brush
- 6 & 7 Surely both are all part of the challenge we take on as cyclists.

And finally

8. A problem that occurs wherever there is a cycle lane, due to lack of enforcement.
9. Fortunately not that common on roads but a major problem on off-road cycle routes. Kindly note I am not anti-dog - I regard myself as a responsible owner of one.
10. Many towns have made half-hearted attempts to encourage cycling, but seem to run out of ideas and money when faced with certain sections of road and at junctions. Hence lanes suddenly ending.
11. Is it just me or do the majority of incidents reported by the media involving cyclists and motor vehicles always appear to suggest the cyclist hit the vehicle, or that the rider was to blame?

To Conclude:

On a serious note please remember that all insurance companies will take every opportunity to reduce the level of liability. Recent history has demonstrated this in cases where it has been claimed that riders have been negligent by not wearing high visibility clothing.

CHRISTMAS FUN AND GAMES - VICTORIAN STYLE!



As the party season is well underway, it's that time of year when people want to relax, celebrate, have fun and really make the most of the Christmas festivities. As families, friends and work colleagues look to enjoy their time together and to enjoy each other's company, I thought we'd take a look at the popular Victorian party games people used to play back in the 1850s.

The best way to do this is to take a look at the popular newspapers of the time, allowing us to see what life was like. The Illustrated London News was launched in 1842 and published throughout the 1800s. This newspaper provided a number of social interest articles as well as other events and at Christmas in 1853, the paper devoted a large amount of editorial space to 'Christmas party games' in their special issue supplement. The article reviewed those party games that were becoming a part of the social scene.

According to The Illustrated London News, many of the party games of the 1850s had French origins. The French games were given English names but proved just as popular in London and Birmingham as they had in Paris and Marseille. There was no doubt they certainly caught the imagination of many parties and gatherings of the Victorian era. Here are some of the games popular in 1853.



'Get Out of That' – players seat themselves in a circle with one standing. To remedy the situation he or she must politely request one of the seated players to “Get out of that”. To the natural answer “What for?” he replies “Because you have such a thing (names such a thing) and I have not. The players should take care they have not about their person the object they name. A gentleman wishing to displace a lady would designate her necklace, ringlets, her flounces and her bracelets, whilst a lady could refer to the gentleman's waistcoat, boots or studs. The game can also be extended to mental or personal qualities, such as a gentleman may ask a lady to give up her place because she had an ‘enchancing mixture of captivating grace and touching innocence, to the possession of which he could never aspire’. A lady might unseat a gentleman on the plea that he is possessed of an amount of ‘self- conceit and impudence’ which she would be very sorry to share with him. Care must be taken, however, to avoid wounding the susceptibility of anyone.

'Jack's Alive' - The group sits in a circle. A lighted splinter is handed to one of the group. It is then passed around the circle, still lighted. Should the flame become extinguished, the one in whose hand the splinter is must pay a forfeit. The forfeit sometimes demanded is that a moustache be made on the upper lip of that individual with the charred end of the splinter. In passing the splinter the player must say Jack's Alive; failing to do this the splinter is returned to him and should it become extinguished before he can say this, it counts against him.

'The Health of Cardinal Puff' – a candidate is chosen, provided with a chair, a table and a glass of wine. They must proclaim aloud, “I drink the health of Cardinal Puff!” They must sip the wine once, holding the glass between thumb and first finger, tap the glass once, stroke their upper lip/ moustache once, rap once on the upper edge of the table, then the underside edge, rise once off their seat and stamp once with each foot. This process is then repeated only doing it twice, then three times and so on. The newspaper recorded ‘The attempt is invariably a failure, as something is sure to be altered or omitted in the strict order..and a forfeit is exacted.’

'The Lover's Exercise' – a gentleman must perform the part of ‘drill sergeant’ and he selects a lady to be his partner and then all other couples must form a line before the first couple. The drill sergeant then must adopt a military accent and issue commands such as “Eyes right”, “Attention!”, “Take ladies hands!”, “Arms around ladies waists!”, “Make ready!”, “Present arms!” and “Fire”.

According to the newspaper, the effect of this game is 'extremely martial and inspiring'.

'Tuning the Organ' - one member of the party is the organist, another person is his assistant. Both stand in the centre of a circle and the ladies of the group have to stand upright on their chairs and pretend to be 'organ pipes'. The organist advances to one of the ladies and pressing one finger against the side of his nose, makes a sound like a tuneless organ-pipe. The lady must answer in the same tone, imitating his actions. "That won't do!", says the organist, "that's not the note!", and the assistant must set the pipe right. He must do this by taking the lady up in his arms and transferring her to another chair. The organist then repeats the scenario with another lady, until every lady has been moved to a different chair, when the assistant, struggling now with fatigue, finally hears the organist say he is happy that the "organ is tuned".



'It was I' - the unfortunate person chosen in the group has to respond to all statements made by the group with the phrase "It was I". The newspaper gives the following examples...
"I saw a monkey playing tricks on an organ"- (The chosen victim answers- It was I). "I saw a man sneaking down to make cupboard love to the cook" - (The chosen victim answers- It was I)

'The Learned Pig' - one member of the group is 'the master' and selects another member to be the 'Learned Pig', the pig that knows everything. The learned pig must walk around on all fours, obey the command of his master and imitate the gait and grunt of a pig. The master introduces the learned pig as 'Mr Toby' and the game in the style of a showman. "Now, Mr Toby, which of these young ladies is most fond of flirting?" The learned pig then carefully examines all the ladies, grunting and sniffing at them until finally squatting down before one of them. This proceeding is



generally accompanied by roars of laughter at the expense of the lady who receives this unenviable distinction. The master may call upon the learned pig to point out "the gentleman who left an evening party, taking away a new hat, and leaving an old hat behind" and so on, fixing as many playful charges on the company as may be found entertaining.

Many of these games have evolved or continued to this day in social gatherings. The Illustrated London News of the 1800s did see itself as factual, moralistic but also provides a clear indication of the social side of Victorian society, giving us a taste of what life was like for our ancestors.

Enjoy your Christmas party or gathering wherever that may be...and maybe incorporate one of the Victorian party games into your own party this party season!

Merry Christmas!

