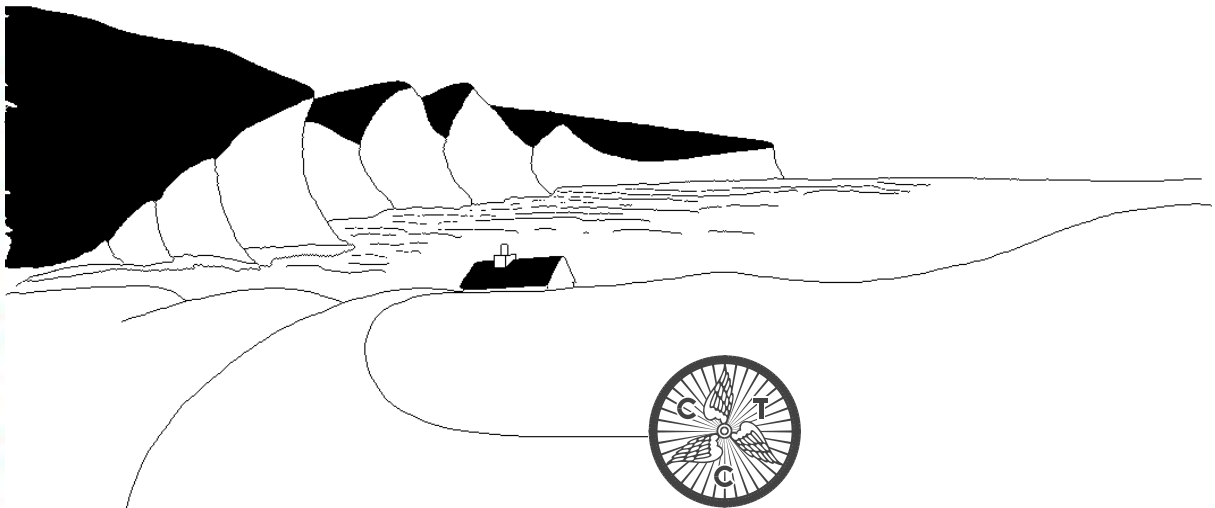


The



Coaster



the magazine of the

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CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB**

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

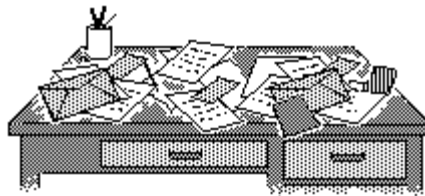
President Ron Street

*Secretary & Editor: David Rix, 27 Fullwood Avenue,
Newhaven, E. Sussex. BN9 9SP
E-mail: ctceastsussex@gmail.com*



" THE COASTER "

Issue No. 52, Summer 2010



From the Editor's Desk.

Welcome to the Summer 2010 edition of "The Coaster". It's nice to be putting out a Summer issue again after several year's lapse.

Some nice contributions this time, with touring reports from John Beaumont on his End-to End ride, from Brian Barrett on a holiday in Hungary and from Richard Thatcher on a short tour of Suffolk. Also there is an article from Ann Rix on what keeps her busy when she's not cycling, and the rest is items culled from various old cycling magazines and other sources, including a 1934 article from "Cycling" on building a recumbent.

So, enjoy your cycling this summer, go out for a potter round the lanes, find a nice country pub 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:-

C.T.C. National Headquarters,
Parklands, Railton Rd,
Guildford, Surrey GU2 9JX

Tel: 01483 238337
e-mail: cycling@ctc.org.uk
website: www.ctc.org.uk

or from the local East Sussex Group Secretary or one of the Section Secretaries whose addresses are listed below.

EAST SUSSEX CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

website: <http://www.eastsussexctc.org.uk>

Secretary: David Rix, 27 Fullwood Avenue, Newhaven, East Sussex, BN9 9SP
E-mail: ctceastsussex@gmail.com

Sections

Eastbourne & Hailsham: Christine Thomas:
12 Maple Leaf Cottages, School Lane, Blackboys, East Sussex, TN22 5LJ

Hastings & Rother: Marian Shephard:
Anderida, Sea Road, Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex, TN36 4LA

Mid-week Section: Esther Carpenter:
10 Maplehurst Road, Baldslow, St. Leonards on Sea, East Sussex, TN37 7NA

Seaford & Newhaven: Ann Rix:
3 Sutton Drove, Seaford, East Sussex, BN25 3EU

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Lands End to John O'Groats 15 May – 3 June 2010

By John Beaumont



I recently rode from Lands End to John O'Groats. The following is an account of the many highs and a few lows from the journey.

The ride was organised by CTC Tours and led very well by Chris Ellison from his van, which acted as a back up and transport vehicle. Every rider was loaned a SatNav onto which the route was loaded and marked out in green and blue on alternate days. The SatNav could zoom in to close range for towns or longer range for country areas of the route. The route used minor or B roads wherever possible.

Accommodation was booked in advance as part of the tour in hotels or youth hostels and included breakfast and dinner.

Saturday 15 May

The day started with me arriving at Haywards Heath station at 5.30am for a train connecting at Gatwick and Reading for the direct service to Penzance. Imagine my shock when I reached Gatwick with all my luggage to find the Reading train would only go part way because of engineering work and that my bicycle could not be carried on the replacement bus service and that the bus would miss my train at Reading. A desperate call to Sue my wife followed by a mad dash to Reading in the car followed, arriving with 20 minutes to spare.

We were met by Chris at Penzance station in the early afternoon of the 15 May, issued with our SatNav, and loaded our luggage onto the van and then made our way independently to Lands Ends via the scenic route through Mousehole and Newlyn, a distance of 14 miles and a couple of steep hills as practise for the coming days.

Everyone rendezvoused at Land's End at 5.00pm for photographs under the signpost and then returned to the Youth Hostel in Penzance by the easier direct route of 10 miles for dinner.

Sunday 16 May

Penzance to Lostwithiel - 55 miles

The day started with a steady drizzle which cleared up by lunchtime. I was told what to expect in Cornwall - long up and down hills with very little flat countryside - and I was not disappointed. Passed Trelissick Gardens (National Trust) at lunch time but no time to visit. Took the King Harry chain ferry across the estuary of the river Fal and gazed in awe at the container ships mothballed in what is one of the deepest natural harbours in the world. The afternoon followed the same up and down pattern as the morning, bypassing St Austell, before arriving at the hotel in Lostwithiel for the night.



Monday 17 May

Lostwithiel to Exeter – 65 Miles

Dry sunny day. Day started with a climb onto the edge of Bodmin Moor, past the highest public house in Cornwall at 995 feet, before descending to the very pretty village of Horsebridge then two climbs leading to Tavistock for lunch. The afternoon ride included the long climb, approximately 4 miles, up to Dartmoor and then across the moor passing the prison in the distance. We were lucky with the weather, as I understand that this section can be very unpleasant in damp or windy

conditions. Through Mortonhampstead and then two more climbs before reaching Jury's Inn, Exeter for the night. Seemed strange pushing the bikes through reception and into a conference room for overnight storage.

Tuesday 18 May

Exeter to Cheddar – 65 miles

Perhaps it is psychological, but everyone said that the first two days would be the worst and I was not ready for the Blackdown Hills between Exeter and Ilminster, but found these tough as they were across a series of valleys and had a number of climbs not dissimilar to those of Slugwash Lane. The afternoon across the Somerset levels, through the strangely named Huish Episcopi, to Cheddar was relatively easy, although it was into a head wind.

The hostel at Cheddar was difficult to find and rather cramped, the only other guest was a gentleman who spent his life visiting hostels and had an electronic picture frame display to show his collection - such was the level of entertainment in Cheddar.

Wednesday 19 May

Cheddar to Hereford – 83 miles

The longest day. Started with two climbs, the first out of Cheddar parallel to the gorge made worse by heavy lorries going to a quarry en route, and the second around Portishead. The SatNav came into its own as it guided us through cycle lanes on the edge of Bristol over the Avon Bridge and then the Severn Bridge to Chepstow in Wales for lunch at 40 miles. I was lucky being in the first group to circumnavigate Bristol as, after we passed, someone came out and put a wire across the track causing one rider to fall and cause minor damage to herself and bike and several punctures were caused by tacks spread across the path.

After lunch we climbed a steady 3 miles to St Briavels, before continuing along the ridge of the Wye Valley to Coleford and Symonds Yat where there was a 1 in 5 descent down to the river valley and then on to Ross-on-Wye, which on passing through looked a pleasant town but no time to stop. Back roads to Hereford and cycle track through the city for the overnight stop at the Premier Inn with dinner at the Beefeater next door.

Thursday 20 May

Hereford to Telford (Shifnal) – 65 Miles

Rode through the glorious rolling Herefordshire and Shropshire countryside, along the upper Wye Valley, through Leominster to Ludlow where we stopped for lunch, meeting a Mick Chay in the café who was interested in our adventure as he had ridden in the Milk and Peace races in the early sixties. In the distance could see the Long Mynd, favoured by hill climbers, but were relieved when we left Ludlow along a bridle path and were held up by sheep being moved, before crossing the racecourse and a range of hills bringing us to the Severn Valley and Much Wenlock. Continued to Iron Bridge, which looked very impressive in the gorge, before continuing to Days Inn at the motorway service area for the night.



Friday 21 May

Telford to Youlgreave (Derbyshire) – 65 miles

The day started with a long, pleasant, relatively flat route to Stone, a market town in Staffordshire, where everyone congregated for lunch, some taking advantage of a stall selling local Staffordshire oatcakes and others a fruit stall. After Stone we entered the Peak District, first in Staffordshire and then into Derbyshire. The first real climb came with the 1.8 mile ascent of Star Bank near



Oakamore, followed by a well earned cup of tea at the top. One wonders that there are villages on the top here and how they managed in the snow and ice of the recent winter. A long descent followed by a stretch of old railway, which reminded me of the Avenue Verte from Dieppe, before taking to the lanes again and arriving in Youlgreave for the night. Youlgreave is a working village in the Derbyshire Peak District, where we stayed at the youth hostel which is an old converted Co-op store.

Saturday 22 May

Youlgreave to Outlane (nr Huddersfield) – 51 miles

A very hot day circa 28c. The day started crossing the Derbyshire Peak District and then into South Yorkshire, past the Lady Bower reservoir where the Dambusters practised, before continuing across The Strines, a road apparently very popular with Audax and road race organisers. It has two or three very long and steep climbs on open moorland with little shelter, in our case from the sun, but it is no doubt equally challenging in the rain or wind. The small village of Langsett was the venue for lunch before continuing across the edge of the Pennines to Holmfirth, famous for Last of the Summer Wine. Holmfirth seemed a tourist honey pot, unfortunately we did not see Howard and Marina on their tandem, but followers of the programme can appreciate the hills in the surrounding area. The route from Holmfirth to Outlane was through urban West Yorkshire, with many long hills and not particularly attractive countryside and culminated with a climb up an aptly named Scapegoat Hill to the hotel at Outlane. This was most definitely the hardest day for myself, mainly due to the heat and constant ups and downs.

I have since learnt that cycle clubs in the West Yorkshire area have a reputation for breeding hill climbers.

Sunday 23 May

Outlane to Hawes (North Yorkshire) – 61 miles

Another very hot day which started as the previous day had finished with long ups and downs into Sowerby Bridge, culminating with a downhill so steep in parts it was virtually unrideable. Here I decided that I would go off route and take the main road through to Skipton, avoiding Haworth that I had visited before. Stopped at Keighly in Weatherspoons for mid-morning porridge and tea at £1.49, the bargain of the trip. After Skipton the route climbed through Wharfedale, which looked magnificent in the sunshine, a steep climb over the divide and down a long descent into Hawes in Wensleydale where the youth hostel was the stop for the night. Hawes was the mid-way stop in both miles and cycling days.

Monday 24 May

Hawes to Carlisle – 70 miles

Hawes is near to the famous Ribbleshead viaduct, one of the highest points on the Settle and Carlisle railway line, and the route followed this railway down the Eden Valley via Kirkby Stephen and Appleby, famous for its annual horse fair, to Carlisle. I managed to go off route as the SatNav colour for the day was green, which made the route difficult to distinguish from the other black roads in the sunlight. Circumnavigated Carlisle to stay in Premier Inn to the north of the border city. Had my first and only puncture from thorn on cycle track outside the hotel. Hotel was near the Eddy Stobbart depot and have never seen so many of that company's lorries.

Tuesday 25 May

Carlisle to Abington – 61 miles

Into Scotland at Gretna Green, seemed very tacky and touristy, but had first glance of sea, the Solway Firth, since the Severn Bridge. Then a choice of two routes, the longer via Dumfries and Warlockhead, the highest village in Scotland, or a direct route via Lockerbie and Beattock. Took the

direct route which followed the main railwayline and motorway using the old road which is now a Sustrans cyclepath. This model of three routes following the same terrain was quite common in Scotland. The route was uneventful to Beattock, except we stopped for mid-morning in a truck service area that specifically banned cars but served cyclists, what a change! After Beattock the route climbed for several miles and I joked with my cycling companion, an ex-railway fireman, about the effort to fire a steam engine over this gradient. At the summit the three routes followed each other to our stop at a hotel in the services area at Abington.



Wednesday 26 May

Abington to Stirling – 68 miles

Day started on rolling main roads before taking minor roads through Central Scotland and the old Lanarkshire coalfields, passing the towns of Forth and Shotts, which were extremely depressed areas with no apparent economic activity and not only businesses and shops boarded up but houses as well. Passed around the edge of Cumbernauld, a new town, but why are all the houses plastered with grey pebbledash making them look so miserable. In Cumbernauld started to realise why the Scots have a reputation for a poor diet, when in a pub for lunch was told the choice was mince, haggis or fish and chips all with minimal vegetables. After Cumbernauld the route climbed over a moor to Stirling where we stayed in a youth hostel, a converted church next to the castle at the top of the city.

Thursday 27 May

Rest day Stirling

Had my bike checked out in Stirling as I was worried about brakes, also tightened my Brooks saddle and decided that I would lighten my load by taking off the rack and going lightweight. In the afternoon visited the castle and came to appreciate the strategic significance of Stirling as it controls the routes North as well as Central Scotland, and as a result of this position its nearness to the famous battlefields of the wars between Scotland and England.

Friday 28 May

Stirling to Pitlochry – 61 miles

Pleased to be back in the saddle and on to the final stages of the journey. Left Stirling by the Wallace Memorial a volcanic stack in the middle of the valley. Over another moor and on to Crieff, busy town on the side of a hill, before climbing on main road to follow glen to Aberfeldy. Aberfeldy seemed a tourist town but was disrupted by repairs to the gas mains in the principle street. The route followed a picturesque valley and cycle path to Pitlochry for an overnight in the hotel. Pitlochry is a very pleasant town but its main industries appear to be tourism, farming, shooting and fishing.

Saturday 29 May

Pitlochry to Boat of Garten (near Aviemore) – 66 miles

Warned that the day could be cold and damp, also that they were still skiing in the Cairngorms. Ride followed climb over Drumochter summit at 1515 feet, not high by Alpine standards but the climb was an easy 20 miles long with the main road, railway and cycle path again following each other. Damp at summit and pleased to reach relative warmth of café in Dalwhinnie. After refreshment continued downhill to Kingussie and then by back road to Aviemore, passing the ruins of the Ruthven Barracks where English troops were garrisoned in order to suppress any uprising by Highlanders. Stopped at a quaint garden centre with bird watching hide and scrumptious home made cakes. Boat of Garten is about six miles from Aviemore on the Speyside preserved railway and we stayed overnight at the very comfortable hotel.

Sunday 30 May

Boat of Garten to Carbisdale (near Bonar Bridge) – 79 miles

After heavy overnight rain, started in cold and wet conditions for the climb to Schlod summit, a mere 1300 feet, with the three routes again passing together before following the Sustrans route with superb views across the Moray Firth into Inverness. Route followed the cycle route across Black Isle to Dingwall before passing Cromarty Firth with its oil rigs, being repaired, and then heading north through Alness to the view point at Struie Hill. The view here looks out over Dornoch Loch, a sea loch and precedes a magnificent descent to Ardgay where we followed a by-road to Carbisdale Youth hostel. The youth hostel is a former stately home of the Duke of Sutherland and is made to look like a castle standing on a hill. Inside there are some erotic statues and paintings - not sure if these have any real value!

Monday 31 May

Carbisdale to Bettyhill – 58 miles

Left Carbisdale by footpath that used the railway bridge to save retracing our route back to Ardgay and then followed the road to Lairg the last shop before Tongue 35 miles. There was a distinct change of country with very few trees and where there were some they were pine woods planted by the forestry commission. The road to the North is an “A” road with passing places and not



dissimilar to the lanes in Sussex. There are two places of note along this route to the North, the first is Crask Inn, an isolated public house where the landlord keeps some cattle and sheep as well as providing a cottage for rent to fisherman. The other is the village of Altnaharra, with a hotel and school, and holds the record as having the lowest temperature in the British Isles.

The weather on this day was fantastic with any wind mainly from the southwest, and made cycling on this road and the coastal road to Bettyhill a truly uplifting experience. The vistas at Tongue and Bettyhill, with

the sun shining on the golden sands and sea against a backdrop of moors and cliffs, were truly inspiring.

Tuesday 1 June

Bettyhill to John O’Groats

Unlike the glorious weather of the previous day we awoke to a dull day with strong south easterly winds. The first part of the route was up and down to Reay and at one point we had to pedal down a long hill into the wind just to keep up momentum. At Reay the route followed the cycle route inland before descending to Thurso, past the most northerly railway station in Britain. Over coffee in Thurso and conversation with a retired GP, who lived in the town, we learnt that people up here were frustrated that the people in Edinburgh never mind London did not appreciate the distances and the problems it brought. After Thurso we passed through Castleton, famous as the port through which stone used in London streets was shipped.

Arrived at John O’Groats at 2.45pm and after all the handshakes, photographs and congratulations, did wonder if all the effort was really worth it as it is such a windswept desolate place with minimal cliffs and absolutely no scenic value. Was surprised however at how close the Orkneys were.

Wednesday 2 / Thursday 3 June

The journey home

The journey home started from John O’Groats at 8.15 am on a coach and trailer bound for Edinburgh. The size of Scotland is underlined by the fact that Edinburgh was not reached until

4.15pm with only two short drink stops en-route. The route passed by several of our overnight stops and it was somewhat disconcerting to cover a day's ride in an hour or so.

I had dinner with two cycling companions and then joined the sleeper and the first I knew was when the train pulled into Euston and there was a knock on the door with my breakfast. Fully refreshed I then walked across London with my bike and luggage to Victoria and caught the train to Haywards Heath, arriving home 20 days after leaving.

Conclusions

The ride from Land's to John O'Groats was 1032 miles, compared with 874 on the signpost at each place, cycling time was 16 days, longer than most tours, but the route was on minor roads and did encompass Yorkshire and Derbyshire, traversing wherever possible minor roads and sometimes tracks. The average daily distance was 65 miles, with a minimum of 49 miles and a maximum of 83 miles. Unfortunately no one kept a record of the total feet climbed.

I did learn one or two lessons in that I probably should have carried less weight and also made the effort to loose some personal weight before I set out. My lowest gear was 30 on the front and 28 on the rear, it may have been better to have had a 26 or 28 on the front.

Riders tended to ride in small groups according to ability and use their SatNavs for directions. The riding group size was 24, made of 21 Brits, 2 US citizens and 1 Australian. The youngest rider was 23 and the oldest 69 and the average age 60. There were 6 ladies in the party and 2 married couples. I would like to thank Harry, a member of Solihull CC, who accompanied me most of the way, often giving much needed support.

I would like to thank everyone who sent messages of support during the ride and have made or pledged a donation to Cystic Fibrosis

(<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/JohnBeaumont>)

which with Gift Aid means I should raise well over £1500. I would also like to thank my long suffering wife Sue for her support encouragement and maintaining my Twitter Blog (johnbicyclist).

I would urge any keen cyclist to undertake this tour as it is well worth the effort, but if you want to stop and explore everywhere you pass through you will probably need a minimum of two months.

Alternative bicycle designs of the 1890's

Although introduced in 1885, the new 'Safety' bicycle did not herald the immediate end to alternative bicycle design as this wonderful picture from around 1890 illustrates. Two of the machines are 'front drivers' the middle one having lever drive instead of pedals. These machines were a geared version of the Ordinary or Penny Farthing machine (which itself remained in use until the early 1890's) and remained popular until at least 1893 when the Safety design finally became the norm.



Nothing New in the Bicycle World

The following article appeared in the issue of *CYCLING* for the 10th August 1934.

A Design for a Recumbent Bicycle

Mr. A.C. Davidson Suggests that the British Manufacturers Should Build a Horizontal Bicycle, and Discusses the Plans and Assembly of a Time Trial Machine.

Whatever may be the faults attributed by the foreigner to the British manufacturer, it seems unlikely that an undue fondness for "taking the bull by the horns" will be one. Rather does he believe that we go quite as fast, nearly as far, and much more safely by hanging on to the tail. This attitude seems to apply to a good many things, and among them, at all events of late years, must be numbered the bicycle.

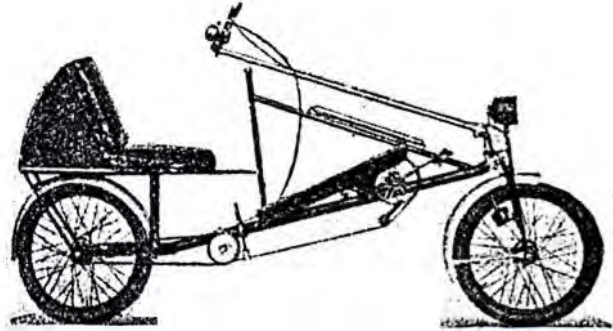
Most of the popular ideas in detail have originated in France, and we have been an unconscionable time in adopting them. The calliper brake was used for 20 years before it crossed the Channel; the derailleur gear, only recently adopted for tandems, might have been in use for nearly as long if we had listened to some of our friends on the other side.

The narrow pedal popular for racing, although it originated here, found its market in France and was only taken up at home after it had become popular there and in America.

Now we have a new type of bicycle which has actually shown that it can break records and, apart from Cycling's public-spirited action in taking over what should be part of an enterprising trader's business, and importing a sample for trial, nothing seems to be done. This is especially strange in a period when speed of travel is verging on lunacy. One reason may be that many of the smaller makers, who are generally the most enterprising, do not know very well how to tackle the problem and may be deterred by the necessity of getting special lugs and fittings to carry out the plan as the sample was.

To try and assist, I have, therefore, got out a design for a machine that can be made almost entirely from standard parts. It is not suggested that this is the best way to do it; but it is the easiest, and, anyway, is an advance on the French arrangement. It is considerably lighter and, if there is anything in the low position, it should find it.

The seat is lower than in the Velocar; in fact,

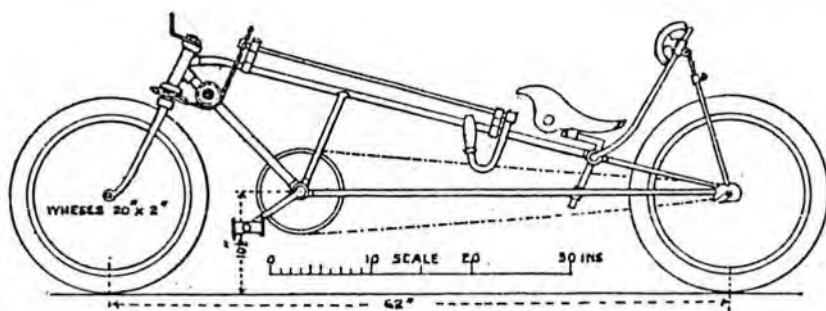


The Velocar, the machine that has caused so much controversy. It has been proved to be faster on the track than the ordinary lightweight

both this and the bracket are as low as is possible. This necessitates a slightly longer base, which is an inevitable drawback to the type, but it gives a better distribution of the weight between the two wheels and makes for steadier steering. The handlebar is placed where a good pull can be obtained at it, instead of up in front of the rider's chest. That the type is fast it has already shown. Whether it has any merits for general use, or contains points that might be pursued with advantage, can only be ascertained by trial.

One of the chief difficulties with a machine of this type is the coupled steering. The obvious method is to use a pair of bevel wheels, but unfortunately these are very awkward and expensive things to make really well and it is essential that the steering should be firm. Chains and cogs of an accuracy superior to the average bevel wheel are easily obtained, so I have adopted the method shown as easy to try and having the advantage that experiments on gearing down the steering could easily be made.

The chain would have to be heated red and twisted through a right angle in two places, but if heated quickly with a blowpipe the heat would not travel far along the chain and no re-hardening would be necessary. The two small guide pulleys, if fixed to a clip sliding on the bottom tube, form a convenient method of adjusting the chain and keeping the steering firm, a most important point with this type.



And this is the diagram of Mr. Davison's proposed horizontal bicycle, showing the lines along which (so Mr. Davison suggests) the British manufacturers should move in order to reply to the foreign invention.

The front part is an ordinary head with shortened fork blades, the top tube being bent slightly to come in horizontal. This top tube may be 1 in. by 20 or 22 gauge. The bottom tube is the ordinary $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. diameter. The duplex lower stays may be $\frac{3}{4}$ in. or $\frac{7}{8}$ in. by 20 gauge, and carried right through from the bracket to the back spindle.

The Seat Cluster.

The seat cluster is about the only rather awkward part of the job. With an acetylene welding plant it presents no difficulty in building up from a piece of $19/16$ steel tube, but if brazing has to be relied on it might be "dodged up" from a bottom bracket cluster. The down tube lug, bushed with a short piece of tube, would form a clip for the seat pillar, a hole for which should be drilled through the bottom part of the barrel.

The lug for the usual down tube should be cut off and a short piece of $1\frac{1}{8}$ in. by 16 gauge tube put right through the barrel and brazed to both back and front surfaces of it, the front part projecting to form a lug for the top tube. This should be drilled through with a hole from top to bottom for a $\frac{3}{4}$ in. seat pillar that would be strong enough in such short length.

This seat pillar should continue down through two flat pieces brazed across the top and bottom of the duplex bottom stays and should be clipped to them in some manner to strengthen the frame. The duplex stays for the back-rest

can be attached by flattening the ends and bolting them to a large washer placed inside the cups, by a short bolt with the nut outside to grip the stays.

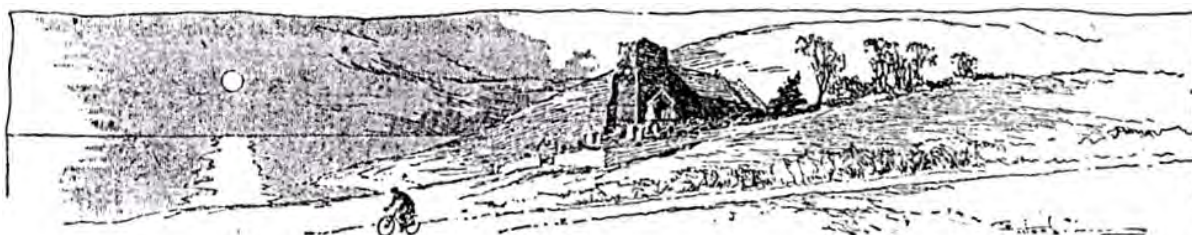
For a trial machine the back-rest might be of wood, which is easily worked to shape, covered with leather or American cloth. It should, of course, be adjustable.

It is just possible that with so long a chain drive there may be trouble with swaying, although Mr. Beevor, the inventor of the horizontal tricycle, who feared the same thing, does not find much trouble so long as the chain is well in line and kept fairly tight. If necessary, however, a light aluminium guide pulley, working between the two inner surfaces of the chain, could be fitted by a sliding on the two lower stays somewhere under the peak of the saddle and would form a convenient auxiliary tensioning device for the chain.

For a commercial article the steering tube would have to be mounted on ball bearings, but for trial purposes plain bushes would be free enough. The bottom bracket is normal, but requires a very large chain wheel to get a racing gear. The largest wheel generally stocked is 60-tooth, and this, in conjunction with a 14-tooth sprocket, would give a gear of 85. This would probably be high enough - perhaps too much - but a larger chain wheel could be made specially without much trouble.

For road use a variable gear would be an advantage, and the Sturmey-Archer new two-speed, giving a 25 per cent drop and easily altered from fixed to free, would make the machine suitable for either road or track. Please, Mister Unknown Briton, do try to get ahead of the foreign manufacturers for once!

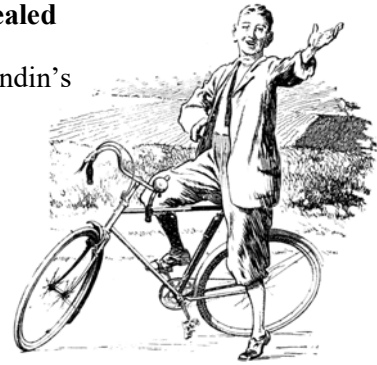
A.C.D.



The Mystical Bicycling Experience Revealed

(Thanks to Grace Richardson for providing this chapter from Eric Sundin's book-in-progress, *Out From Under The Car*.)

Compared to the presumptuous car, the humble bicycle costs far less, does not bring on speeding tickets, provides exercise, may be parked free on sidewalks, bestows moral superiority, is efficiently simple, low on maintenance, can save time etc. These can be important, even crucial factors in deciding whether to ride a bike.



But what is the primary attraction, the very essence of bicycling? It is, of course, the mystical experience of actually riding a bike. This experience lies more in the area of poetry than prose, more in art than in science, more with singing in the shower than with watching TV. It can be put in words but perhaps no more effectively than having beautiful music, a gorgeous sunset, or how your dog looks at you put in words. Riding a bike is play, pure fun, and a game. It holds true for someone who has not ridden a bike in a while, and miraculously remains the ever blooming experience of the daily rider.

Mount your bike, take a few leisurely pedal strokes, and you'll marvel at how easily and far it rolls (unless, of course, you started uphill). Listen to the gentle whirring of whirling wheels, and the ever so lightly crunching sound of tires on pavement or gravel. Clang your bicycle bell. It does not startle, and does not threaten. It forever announces: "Look Ma, no hands!" Riding unfailingly brings us back emotionally to our early bicycling experience. We will always remember the excitement of mastering (be it after a few bruised knees and scraped elbows) the seeming impossibility of balancing on only two wheels. We will never forget our first new and shiny bicycle (whether in actuality shiny and new or not).

Our first bicycle endowed us with fantastic speed compared to running, allowed us to venture from the neighborhood, gave us our first taste of controlling a moving machine, granted invulnerability from the mean dog down the street, and the first seductive hint of leveraged human power. Bicycling will let us relive our amazement over the effortlessness of just quietly gliding along. When young we told ourselves, on some level: "This is how Life itself will unfold for me!"

Above all, we remember what it was like to be a kid. In the face of sometimes harsh conditions in our hearts we were carefree, adventurous, noble, indomitable, and always invincible. We possessed resilient and bouncy bodies, and it would never be otherwise. The air smelled fresh (even if we grew up in the inner city, or in a factory town), food tasted heavenly, sleep was deep and delicious, right would prevail, true love was always requited, and ... we would never know greater buddies.



Cycling tour in Western Hungary

by Brian Barrett

Looking in 'Cycle' for a holiday with a difference I found Tradnatura Sports, a family-run cycle-touring company with several great-sounding itineraries to choose from. I liked what I read about the company. It is owned by a couple - Peter Beck and his wife Marietta - and that, in addition to van-supported cycling, the tours provide plenty of sight-seeing adventures as well.

Soon Peter and I are correspondents. In the e-mails that fly back and forth between us, I can tell that Peter has a warm sense of humour and that he and Marietta will do whatever it takes to make our Hungarian experience safe, informative and fun.

The tour I chose has a name: Castles and Spas of Northwest Hungary. There will be seven cycling days and one day of rest. The distance to be covered will be some 220 miles. We will stay in castles, bathe in thermal waters (a huge attraction in lots of middle European countries but especially popular in Hungary), visit cathedrals, monasteries, museums, Lake Balaton (the Hungarian Sea), and sample local gourmet foods and wines all along the way.



I fly to Budapest to be met by Peter with his light-up-a-room smile. After a welcome dinner at the Normafa Hotel high in the Buda hills, I meet my fellow cyclists: a Swiss, a German, a Hawaiian-American, a Mexican, and three other Americans. We speak three languages and use them interchangeably. And amazingly, despite diverse ages, abilities and personalities, our mutual love of cycling bonds us together from day one until we say good-bye. Interestingly, Bill from South Carolina emigrated from Hungary when he was just 4 years old.

After a morning tour of the Pearl of the Danube (the river divides the city of 2 million inhabitants in two, Buda and Pest), we bus to our cycling starting point — the city of Győr in the northwest corner of the country. Following a restful night in a former Carmelite cloister and a 20-item breakfast spread in the morning, our group gathers at the starting gate.

This most definitely isn't one of the super-aggressive cycle tours I've been on before. The daily rides vary from 15 to 45 miles. The roads, with few exceptions, are relatively flat. Even Alexandra, a woman from Seattle who claims she hasn't cycled much before, does just fine.

Although our cycling days last seven to eight hours, we stop often for sight-seeing. Our lunch hour is actually twice that long. Peter and Marietta take turns cycling with us, alternately driving the 12 seater passenger van with its bike/luggage trailer. I compliment Peter on his handling of this cumbersome outfit – he tells me he drove a tank during his military service!

When it is Marietta's turn to prepare the picnic, we famished cyclists are in for a treat. After our morning ride we find her in a park that borders the Danube. She stokes a wood fire. An enamel-coated pot, suspended from a metal frame hangs over the fire. In the pot is a mixture of onions, red and yellow peppers and spicy pork sausage, sizzling together in paprika-drenched oil. The combination —called Lecső (Letcho) — qualifies as a Hungarian picnic staple.



As we pedal along quiet roadways, we are never bored. Plains of ripening wheat fields carpet the gently undulating terrain. Vibrant yellow rapeseed fields and patches of brilliant red poppies provide the contrast. Some days we ride for hours in nature reserves, where thick woods shelter us in a tent of green. And every few miles, we come to neat villages with friendly people who wave as we pass by.



Esterházy Palace

Plenty of diversions provide excuses to dismount: A Romanesque church from the 13th century where Carolyne gave an impromptu recital on the organ; a roadside cherry tree whose fruit will fall to the ground if we don't pick it first; an Esterházy family's Baroque Palace with its park in the style of Versailles; a roadside panzio that sells langòs (lang-osh) — fried bread dough, slathered with butter and fresh garlic; the famous Helikon library, whose 80,000 volumes make up the largest surviving “aristocratic” library in the world; a boat trip on Lake Fertő, where we briefly cross into Austria over the former ‘Iron Curtain’; the many storks nests on chimneys and specially constructed frames on the telegraph poles.

At the end of the second day, we nearly faint when we round a corner in the city of Hédevár, and a castle straight out of a fairy tale comes into view. We're even more bedazzled when Peter tells us that it's our hotel. The Renaissance-style structure is 400 years old. Our rooms are exquisitely furnished — 5 star plus. We dine like royalty in the finery of our jeans and lycra in an elegant library dining room. We give thanks for a day well spent in the tiny, but gilt-embellished chapel at the end of the hall. In one 12-hour day, we've gone from grubby to grandiose; from hot and sweaty to sophisticated and serene. It's just a little preview of the unending contrasts and surprises waiting for us in the seven days still ahead.

According to Peter, our cycling guide, Hungary's thermal waters have been popular since Roman times, and maybe before. Reportedly, there are some 1,300 springs and about 300 of them are used for bathing purposes. Some are very serious affairs, often attached to clinics, with people “taking the waters” for ailments such as respiratory, orthopaedic, cardiac, or psychological problems. Others follow a more recent trend that focuses on holistic and beauty treatments. Still others feature a watery venue for just having a raucous, good time.

For the eight of us on a 10-day cycling tour around north-western Hungary, bathing in thermal waters is simply fun (and a balm to muscles pertaining to bike seats!) We try four bathing establishments in as many days - each with a style uniquely its own. While sharing a warm water bath with others may not be high on everyone's recreational “wish list”, abstaining would mean missing out on a pastime dear to every Hungarian's heart. So, in the spirit of “when in Rome”, we cyclists plunge in.

It's a holiday weekend in Győr, and a huge number of the city's 130,000 residents are already cavorting in the popular Rába-Quelle pools when we arrive for our intro to thermal baths. What a shock! The scene is chaotic. Multiple pools, inside and out, are filled with elbow-to-elbow bodies. All ages, all sizes and all making lots of noise. Some bathers are afloat with the aid of cylindrical styro-foam tubes. Others just bob up and down in place. One pool features a built-in bar where the drinks are served in glass bottles and cups. That's right, you just swig your bottled beer there in the pool and try not to worry about shards of glass that might be under your feet from the previous bar fly. Or other foreign objects that might float up from the pool bottom you can't see. Or the ice-slick

floors that lead to the locker room. Elfsafety issues? They don't seem to exist here.

The following day's aquatic experience is at the opposite end of the thermal-bath spectrum. These pools — situated in a leafy park-like setting — are gigantic, pristinely clean, and warm enough to loosen the kinks in our backs, necks, and legs. But the grandest of all Hungarian thermal baths are



those in Heviz. The city is well known throughout Europe. Full of hotels, restaurants and medical support services, Heviz is a nirvana for those who come for a “cure” as well as those seeking nothing more than a good soak. It takes a bit of getting used to, lowering ourselves into a spring-fed, 5-acre lake, a third of which is clogged with pink and white water lilies (beautiful, but spooky to swim with.) The lake is 120-feet deep. So, if we want our money's worth, we must choose to: One, tread water longer than we want to; two, bring a flotation device to wrap around our torsos (too late for that!) or, three, grab onto a moss-covered buoy while trying not to slide off.

Wine has been made in Hungary for thousands of years and is not only uncommonly good, but reasonably priced as well. While cycling along routes close to the Austrian border (western Transdanubia), we are tempted to avail ourselves of wine tastings at vineyards all along the way. But when the sun goes down, we wine tasters (literally) go to town. In Fertod, (Sopron region, well-known for its red wines), we meet the quintessential Hungarian host — Raspi. (No, his name isn't Rasputin,) but for the two memorable nights he wines and dines us in his renowned wine-cellar/restaurant, Raspi has us under his “spell”. It would be hard to find better wines anywhere in the world than the ones Raspi produces from grapes grown in his private vineyards close by. For two hours, he keeps our glasses full. That's before he heads to the kitchen and prepares a five-star meal for us as well.

To say that Hungarians enjoy their food and drink would be a gross understatement. And they are uncommonly proud of sharing it — even with folks like us whom they've just met. Any occasion calls for hauling out a bottle of home-produced “palinka”, a uniquely Hungarian brandy or eau de vie (distilled from fruits like apricots and plums). In our case, we toss caution to the winds. There's always tomorrow for a head-clearing, 50-kilometer ride.

Our last days of cycling are along the northern shore of Lake Balaton. Often called the “Hungarian Sea”, it is the country's substitute for a coastline, a place where locals and other Europeans escape summer heat. As Europe's largest body of fresh water, the lake is an aqua-playground big enough to please holiday-makers of every persuasion. All motor boats, with the exception of ferries, are prohibited on the lake.

Cycling along quiet roads flanked on both sides with terraced vineyards, we stop to photograph thatched-roof cottages and vegetable gardens tended with loving care. We stay overnight in Tihany, a town on a unique peninsula that cuts the lake almost in half. From a terrace restaurant high above the water, we watch the water change colour as the sun rises higher. The effect is kaleidoscopic, you might say, as the water changes from clear green to aquamarine.

Our cycling finishes at the eastern end of the lake, where we board the bus back to Budapest. This was my first trip to Hungary. I can't wait to return!

The tour was organised by: www.tradnaturasport.hu.

A Garden is a Lovesome Thing by Ann Rix



Well it is and it isn't, not for me this year anyway, having had such a long cold spring with biting North East winds I couldn't sow the seeds in March and April as usual. Those I sowed eventually in May didn't appear or if they did were found succulent by the slugs and snails (of which my garden has an abundance) while we were away camping. I therefore sowed again and with careful looking after may have late marrows and courgettes as they are doing well now. I have never bothered growing anything on, preferring to sow direct as they then have a good start - usually.



The potatoes and broad beans are doing fine, though both suffered from the foxes trying to dig them up, as did the first lot of marrows and courgettes. After I had put sticks around the broad beans they then turned their attention to the runner beans and onions, these are now barricaded with wire netting and sticks. I don't know if they were looking for eggs, as I found one when preparing the ground earlier in the year and one was in the compost. To crown it all a cub was eating green strawberries – I hope it had a very bad pain inside, so more protection around them. It's a good job I recycle all I can around the garden, the sticks were the trimmed branches from pruning the buddleias in the spring, small ones are shredded, as are other pruning jobs. Everything softish goes in the compost and only a few hard bits are left for the bonfire, with large logs left to rot for the insects. The compost is two large brick containers, as one is filled the other rots down for the next year.

The three vegetable plots are used in crop rotation, one getting the compost in the autumn ready for the beans and onions next spring. Marrows, courgettes, etc. next then potatoes, carrots and beetroot the third year, with spinach and anything else filling in where room. This works very well and there is usually enough compost to go round other things as well, some to the fruit trees, blackberries and gooseberries from time to time. The shredded branches are spread amongst the flowers and shrubs to help keep down weeds and conserve moisture.



I expect by now, if you are still with me, you are wondering why I bother. Well, on the plus side, I never know what I will find around the garden with its biodiversity, whether plants, that turn up courtesy of the birds, or insects I have never seen before. For a few years I have had the Rose Chafer Beetle, which I noticed first as it's larvae in the compost and, as there were a lot, it needed investigation. I found out they were good in that stage for irrigation of the soil (like worms) and when they changed, after three or four years, to flying beetles they were good pollinators, on top of that they are beautiful colours depending on what they are on or how the light catches them. They zoom about the garden and when they alight on candytuft, peonies, the Japanese Quince or the apple trees they can be green gold or red. Then there are the slow worms, from silvery babies to lovely copper adults, appearing from the undergrowth from time to time, as do the frogs hopping about.



My father always liked flowers amongst the vegetables and so do I, masses of Love in a Mist, poppies, with earlier on the forget-me-nots and violets. These all attract the insects and lots of bees, many different ones this year but not many honey bees, I let certain plants grow till I need the space, then they are dispatched to the compost, carefully leaving special ones that have appeared of course, the poppies get the same treatment as they get too big against the veg. Herb Robert pops up every where, it has been there since I can remember, with pretty pink flowers and leaves and stems that turn red, it comes out easily so no trouble. When all the above are well out and on their way the next to flower are the Buddleias, these attract the butterflies and for the last three years the Humming

Bird Hawk Moth, as does the Honesty.

The front garden has to more or less look after itself, with a succession of flowers and shrubs throughout the year, with weeding and pruning from time to time. Campanula wandering where it likes as do the bluebells, the Forsythia and Laburnham have finished as has the Wisteria on the south wall, the latter having been there since 1938. Roses now in full bloom, the right bank will soon be covered with the yellow flowers of the Rose of Sharon, with Fuchias and Rose Bay Willow Herb amongst them. Some plants that I have mentioned, others may think of them as weeds, but I don't, weeds are only things that grow where you don't want them too. The Valerian in it's shades of red would come in that category I suppose, but it appears where it wants too at the front and back and adds it's colour to the scene, as do the marigolds, the latter are marshalling the carrots and beetroot, with poppies in between the potatoes as well as Love in a mist and Larkspur.



The Aquilegias appear here and there - there was a lovely blue one this year - some of them have reverted to columbines but are a lovely deep purple. In the spring there is a mass of primroses under the apple trees, different shades and colours from pale yellow to the purple of the primula wanda, the bees have fun with them as they flit from flower to flower. All in all there are a lot more plus's than minus's.



So, if anyone wants to know why Ann isn't out more on Wednesday's with the Midweek, now you know - having devoted Sunday's to Cycling from 1950 when I joined the Cyclists' Touring Club, the rest of the week I'm trying to keep up with whatever turns up.

OUTING.

JANUARY, 1885.

THE WHEELMAN'S VISION.

WHAT think'st thou, steed of mine, of steel,
Nor curbed by rein, nor urged by stripes,
Shall voices of the night reveal
The history of thy prototypes?
Must thy all-silent evidence
Of deftly made, progressive gain
Be given 'gainst sounds that vex the sense,
As Jehu whirls along the plain?

Thou canst not with thy slender rim
That glitters in the glow of stars,
Resemble one ordained for him
Whom Mercury bound with brazen bars;
Who in his spleen devised a lie,
Abused his love, deceived her sire,—
And base Ixion rides for aye,
By Jove's command, the wheel of fire.

Nor art thou of that bulky frame
That rolled before the Roman seer,
Whose triple chargers in the game
Were driven by far famed charioteer.
Not thine the form of globes that turned
On golden shaft in realms afar,
As Phaeton with ardor burned
To guide the course of Phœbus' car.



Far less art thou like myth that grew
In Aristotle's fertile brain,
A problem and solution too
Of what thy simplest feats explain.
More art thou as Dame Fortune's disk
That holds her prizes and awards,
Since whoso takes the offered risk
May sit among her favored lords.

Thus, in my vision as I flew,
The voices spoke of things of old;
Traditions, that I partly knew;
Legends, that to my wheel I told.
And as I rode, so still, so fast,
I read the dream of life aright,—
The charming record of the past:
The loving converse of the night.

Walter Dutton, Cycling Enthusiast and Artist

In 1887 Walter H Dutton was a 25 year old bachelor living at 13, Sandstone Road in the West Derby area of Liverpool. He and his 21 year old sister, Amy, his 23 year old brother, Arthur, and his 16 year old brother, Tom were all keen cyclists. Amy, Tom and possibly Arthur lived with Walter, their elder brother.

Walt had a certain artistic ability (the 1891 census identifies him as a book-keeper and artist in oil and water colour) and in March 1887, when he acquired a new tricycle tandem and the latest safety bicycle, he decided to keep a sketchbook diary of the cycling activities of himself, family and friends. These are but a few of the sketches Dutton penned back in 1887 and now published by North Wales CTC on their website.

As a 25 year old bachelor living in the West Derby area of Liverpool, he certainly put a lot of time and effort into planning his runs.



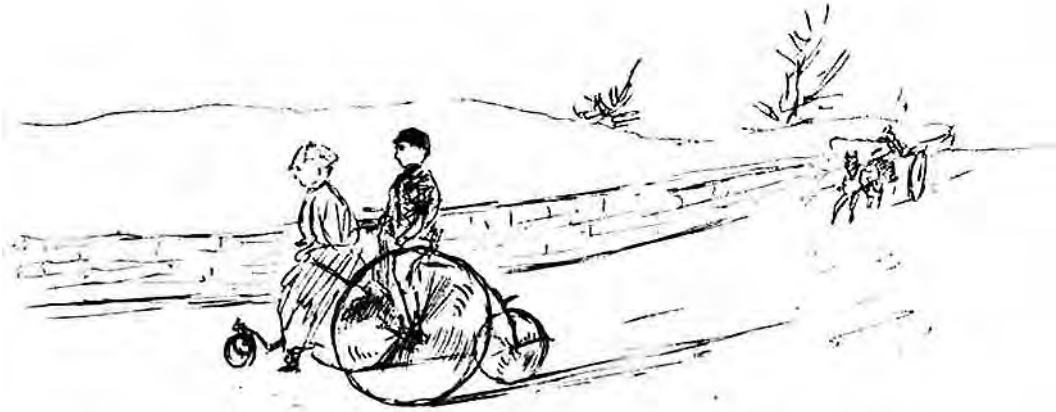
*We sojourn at
the Blue Bell
and discuss
-Bottled Beer
and from the
window watch
the wobbling
cyclists toil
against the
wind*

He sought out the proper inspiration at The Blue Bell, a favorite pub of Dutton's and his friends.

Of course, the day of the tour, Dutton made sure to lay in a sufficient supply of libation...



The Artist takes a supply of stout.



We start on our Traveller Tandem with the idea of finding a rideable cycle road to Aintree, and in a spurt with a Butcher's Cart we come off victorious



We consult the Map, as to the proper turning, and fail to find the Church marked thereon, give it up in disgust

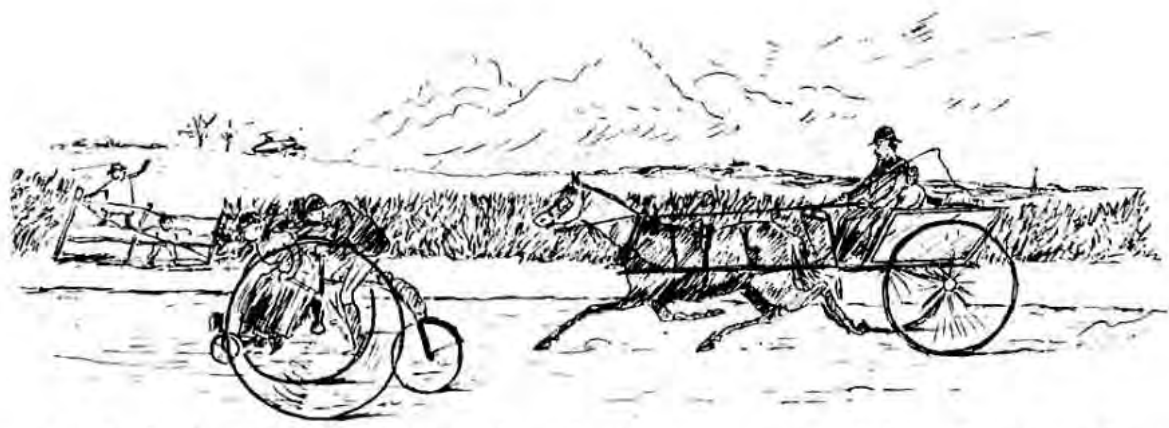


Jack Furniss (just back from London and the Gorges Baths) and Tom on the Tandem. Arthur and I on Bicycle are attacked by a dog


after calling
&
surprising
our
relations
at
Markis:
&
Aunt John
WE
find the
roads
bad to
Arrowe




where we observe bad weather to windward

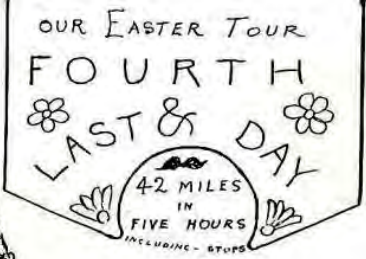



We have an exciting 4 miles ding dong race with a Trotting horse and ultimately shake him off; amid cheers of the Rustico




Some Cyclists









The last we saw of a flock of 2 Bicyclists who took us on

Whom we MET
-between Sandbach & Knutsford-

A Short Tour of Suffolk September 2008

by Richard Thatcher

We decided to give the Pennines a rest that year, besides which the price of petrol was at its highest, making the usual trip up north very expensive

Instead David Abbott and I decided that a gentle potter around a few picturesque villages in Suffolk would make a pleasant change. David kindly made the arrangements with Suffolk Cycle Breaks, who would provide routes, organise accommodation and carry our luggage from one overnight stop to the next.

We arrived at the farm near Needham Market where the organiser was based at about lunchtime, as requested. After the usual briefing, we were free to do as we wished during the afternoon. Our bags would be delivered to the hotel at Claydon about 4 p.m. unfortunately, by this time, it was raining quite heavily, but with nothing else to do we changed into waterproof cycling gear and set off for a tour of the locality.

From Claydon we rode to Henley on quiet lanes utilising National Cycle Route nos: 1& 51, the roads were wet and very gritty in places. On the outskirts of Ipswich we turned back to Claydon, having done some 13 very soggy miles. The hotel was OK but unspectacular and the bikes spent the night out in the open, locked up under a fire escape.

The first day started overcast with occasional sunshine. Due to an error in our directions it took us a little while to find the correct route. We cycled though lovely undulating rural lanes, one of which was very muddy. After passing through picturesque Denham, we arrived at Stradbroke where we found a bakery where a lady with a wonderful Yorkshire accent made us some coffee which we drank sitting on a bench beside the church.



After a picnic lunch supplied by the bakery, we rode on, stopping to admire the beautifully restored windmill at Saxton Green, before reaching our destination at Framlingham at about 2.30pm.

Shortly after our arrival at the Crown Hotel I was surprised to meet a member of my wife's choir who was staying there. After a pint we set out to visit the castle and afterwards enjoyed a pot of tea at a nearby cafe. After an excellent evening meal we were entertained by the East Suffolk Morris Men, who were dancing in the square outside the hotel. Their stick dance was particularly physical. We had covered a total of 35 miles that day.

We left Framlingham en route for Dunwich, but had trouble with map reading. Fortunately we met a group of cyclists who would have been quite at home with our Wednesday groups. They regularly rode together but came from as far away as Dorset. After Carlton our navigation improved and, following a short stop to examine the remains of Greyfriars Priory, Dunwich was reached about midday. Frankly it was rather a disappointment with a rather scruffy beach and cafe. To the south Sizewell Nuclear power station dominates the coast. After a short stop we headed back to Westleton, where we had an excellent fish and chip lunch at a rather upmarket pub with prices to match.

After lunch we visited the RSPB nature reserve at Minsmere, where we were fortunate enough to see three Marsh Harriers, one at very close quarters. Making our way south we passed



though Thorpeness which is a strange place, having been built all of a piece as a resort in the nineteen thirties. Ours destination was Aldeburgh, which we reached at about 4.15 pm after stopping to examine the controversial shell like sculpture on the foreshore. After booking in at the White Lion Hotel we set out to have a look around the town. I always associate Aldeburgh with Benjamin Britten's opera "Peter Grimes" and, as I stood on the beach, I tried to imagine Grimes casting off on one of his ill fated fishing trips. In the evening we had a very satisfactory meal at an Italian restaurant. We had covered 35miles that day.

Wednesday dawned bright and sunny. After breakfast we headed for Snape with its famous malting , now a concert hall, where we stopped to take some photos of the picturesque riverside. Unfortunately the wind had got up as we made our way to Orford. Here I had hoped to view more interesting birds, but apart from the odd wader there wasn't much to see. After a short walk along the sea wall to look at the former military buildings at Orford Ness, we set off towards Woodbridge.

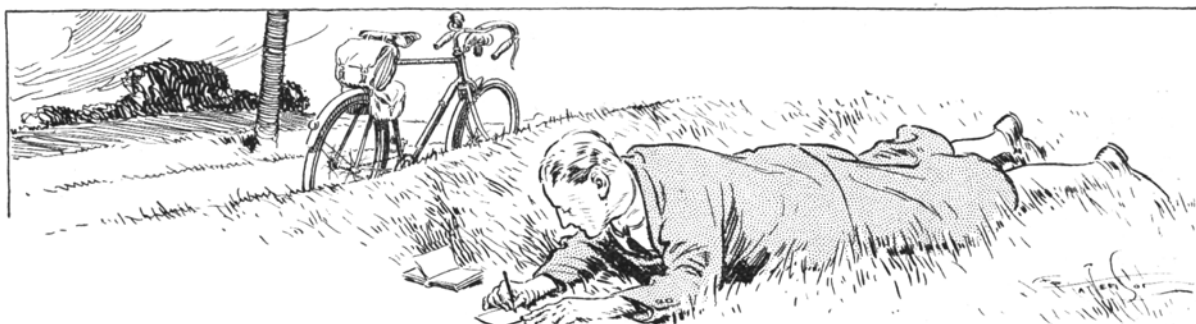
In this part of Suffolk many hedgerows have been torn out, creating vast fields across which the wind can blow unimpeded. The soil here is very sandy and this coupled with a strong wind creates the overall effect of a sandstorm. It seemed to get everywhere, particularly in ones mouth and eyes. Special care was also needed as sand had formed into small dunes in the road, capable of stopping the bike and decanting the rider over the bars. It felt like Lawrence of Arabia on Wheels!

Eventually the conditions improved as we headed inland. Just short of Woodbridge, having negotiated several small hills, we passed Sutton Hoe, which is of course famous for its Viking burials. I had a good look around the museum which was very informative and well presented. We eventually arrived at Woodbridge, feeling surprisingly tired, having covered only 32 miles during the day.

Thursday started sunny but with a strong headwind. Our route was surprisingly undulating. To extend the recommended route we visited the Deben estuary at Waldringfield, which was in no way spectacular but pleasant enough. We then followed NCR1 and NCR51 back to Claydon. Lunch was taken 'al fresco' near Great Blackenham in lovely rural scenery. Finally we made our way back to Needham Market, with a stop to look at a church which interested David.



The ride was completed at 1.30pm and at 2pm it started to rain! We had only covered 28 miles since Woodbridge but still felt pleased with our efforts.



Some early pacing machines

(I thought members might be interested in these pictures I found while doing some research. Ed.)



Taken in 1898, possibly at the Crystal Palace track in London, this picture shows the famous Dunlop pacing teams with multi World record holder John Platt-Betts and his Rover bicycle. Riding these multi seat machines could be a dangerous occupation and when crashes did happen the injuries to both riders and the men being paced could be very serious. Shortly after this picture was taken one of these machines crashed during a training session when a handlebar broke. Platt-Betts, who was travelling at around 30 mph just an inch or so behind, crashed heavily, breaking his jaw and suffering other serious head injuries. It would take him over eight months to recover and resume training.

In 1901 he crashed again while trying to set a new mile record at Crystal Palace behind one of the new motor pacing machines which appeared to swerve violently shortly before the collision. Platt-Betts suffered almost fatal injuries but did recover to ride again, although he never achieved the same level of success as his record breaking years.



An early outing of a motorised pacing machine, possibly 1899, showing John Platt-Betts in action.

Cycling snippets from 'The Rambler' magazine – September 1897.

To moisten the mouth. One of the finest things to keep in your pocket is a piece of orange or lemon peel. It does not matter how hard and dry it may get, when you feel thirsty, bite a piece and let it lie on the tongue for a few moments and it will bring moisture to your mouth. It is much better than drinking any liquid.

How to keep cool when cycling. To keep cool in hot weather procure a cabbage or rhubarb leaf (a large one) and pin it to the cap so as to hang down at the back of the neck. This, besides cooling the body, also keeps flies away.

An effective makeshift. When visiting a county town some distance from home, should the weather turn out wet, half a yard of cheap oilcloth purchased at the local draper's and cut into strips with your pocket knife, will provide mud-guards of which you need not be ashamed and which will be very effective.

Cycling etiquette for ladies. A woman need not consider it a breach of good manners if her masculine friend does not raise his hat to her when meeting on the road. Everyone is not expert in taking the hands from the bar. She should be satisfied with a polite bow and a friendly smile.

The bicycle as a torture. It is told as a fact that the present Sultan of Morocco uses bicycles as instruments of punishment. When any of the ladies of the harem offend him, he has them placed upon a machine and they are compelled to ride along a marked path in the Palace gardens. When they have fallen off a few times, and he has laughed at the spills, he declares their offences have been expiated.

For Sale

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