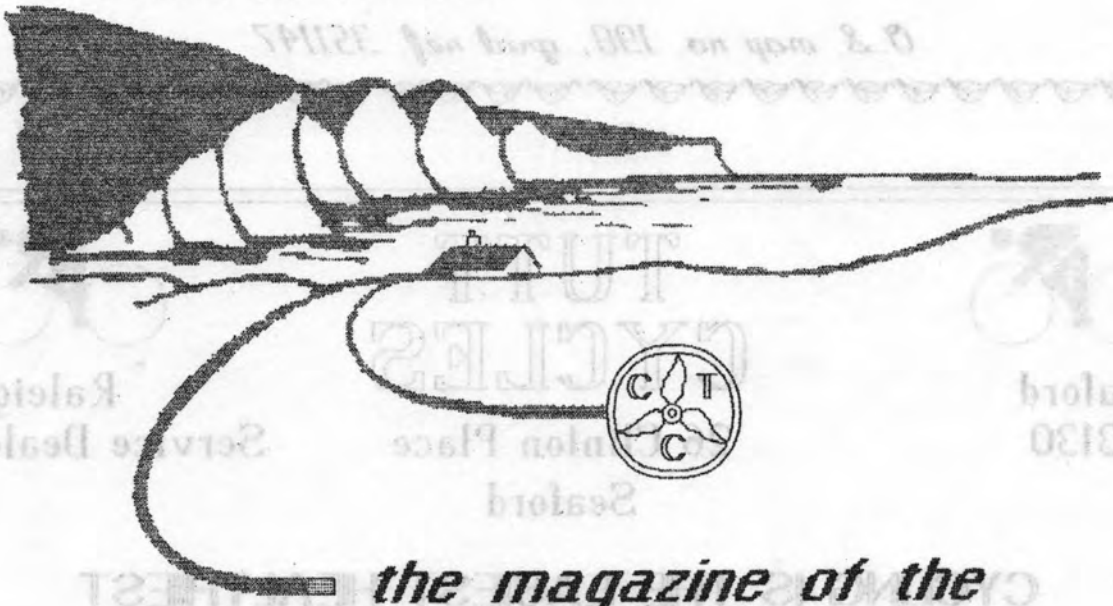


The



Coaster



the magazine of the
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No 15

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"THE COASTER"

SUMMER 1988 - Issue No. 15



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the summer edition of "The Coaster", packed (well almost) with articles. I'm sorry if this issue seems slightly smaller than usual but it is not an easy job squeezing articles out of people. Nice to see a couple of contributions from our Rights Officer, Jonathan Dalton, one expressing one of my favourite gripes, the problem of bikes and trains (B.R. trains of course).

I'm always hearing from members about their exploits, on and off their bikes, so come on put pen to paper, you don't have to be a professional like Jeffery Archer to write, we'll accept almost anything. I look forward to reading your contributions for the Xmas edition - deadline mid-November.

The weather so far this year has been very changeable, what with a good June and then a wet start to July, so let's hope the rest of the year is better. Sue and I are currently looking forward to two weeks in Yorkshire, taking in the Birthday Rides, and providing all goes well you can read the write up in the Xmas edition.

David Rix.

The Cotswolds at Easter

(A report on the Camping & Hostelling Section Easter Tour)

by Iris Stevens.

As usual the section decided on a fixed centre Easter tour, which would give us 4 rides in each direction. Stow hostel was a good choice except that it was always an uphill finish.

Fourteen of the fifteen participants met at 10.00 o'clock on Good Friday in the square of Stow-on-the-Wold and immediately descended on the nearest coffee house. This promised to be a good weekend. The fifteenth member, Maurice, was to join us that evening, being the only one to actually cycle to the hostel.

Having replenished ourselves we quickly descended out of Stow, only to climb a few minutes later, and headed for the Rare Breeds Centre at the Cotswold Farm Park. Suddenly a cry of 'Tandem's lost its chain', shortly followed by David and Stephen walking up the hill with a broken chain. With loads of advice, a spare piece of chain and black hands it was duly repaired.

After an interesting walk around the Centre, and much photographing of the different breeds of pig, we escaped the cold wind by retreating into the cafe. Having had our fill of pigs and sheep our next stop was to be Moreton-in-Marsh for afternoon tea. Unfortunately everyone else had had the same idea, the place was packed, so it was back to Stow instead. Here we found a rather bonked up Maurice, riding fixed he had fought a head wind all the way from Luton. The hostel was full, mainly with cyclists, all of whom seemed to think theirs were the only bikes to go in the shed. We soon altered that before taking over the members kitchen for the first nights meal of Carbonade of Beef supplied by Iris, and a dessert by Jenny.

A change of plan for Saturday's run as David swapped with Ken who was leading a ride towards Tewkesbury so that the hand printed silk centre could be visited at Beckford. A quick chilly descent again, out through the Swells to pass what must be the most picturesque brewery in Britain. Donnington Brewery maker of the local brew. This was followed shortly after by another lost chain and burning rubber this time. It was Maurice on his fixed wheel skidding to a halt. Elevenses was taken in the pub at Snowhill, but not before Ken had pointed out where he had been evacuated to during the war.

A pretty roughstuff route with a rather hairy muddy descent led us to Buckland, a pretty village ablaze with spring flowers. Lunch was taken on the recreation ground at Beckford sitting in the sun and sheltered from the wind by a thick conifer hedge. The silk printing workshop at Beckford proved interesting, as the craftsman explained his art he produced dozens of replica scarves. A visit to the shop confirmed our suspicions - expensive!

Having spent an hour at the workshop we decided to head back via Winchcombe, where tea would be taken. Five made the decision to forego tea and take the shorter route, whilst the rest replenished themselves in Winchcombe before tackling the climb out. Maurice had warned us that we would be walking; David, Heather and Ken just had to prove him wrong. The rest walked and rode a bit. John was steering Steve today. Back at the hostel we sat down to Rose's Chicken Marengo followed by pie and cream. Maurice spent some time attending to his chain then it was off to sample the local Donnington ale before retiring. John managed to find a pub with a jazz band playing.

Sunday dawned a beautiful day (jammy David), the best of the holiday, warm and sunny. David led us off on his ride down the Windrush valley, Starting with the Swells and Slaughters to get us into Bourton-on-the-Water before it got too crowded. Elevenses and a quick look around the tourist spots and we escaped the crowds. A

climb up to Farmington then through Sherborne, Windrush and Little Barrington to a traffic clogged Burford. Out along the Windrush river to Swinbrook for lunch. David sent us on a short tour around the village to get our picture going through the second ford of the day. The Hills' on their tandem had been the only ones to ride the previous one and had ended up with wet feet. Maurice had also worn a bit more rubber off when his chain came off again.

A warm, sunny lunch spot beside Swinbrook church and then the ride split. The Boxalls electing to go back on their own, while David led us an up and down route via Wychwood Forest to look at the little church at Shorthampton near Charlbury. Then a roughstuff track to Charlbury, which was completely devoid of tea shops. Fortunately the little dairy was open selling ice-creams. So after taking our fill of these and packets of biscuits, it was back to the hostel and Sue's bacon pudding. The local pubs were again visited for a night cap.

After Sunday's glorious weather, Monday was a disappointment, cold and very windy, blowing from the East this time - a head wind home for Maurice. The Rollright Stones were Iris' target as we plugged our way into the cold wind, via the many picturesque villages, like Cornwell, to climb up to 600 feet and the stone circle. We didn't hang around long as the wind was cutting. A fast descent, followed by the inevitable up, and into Chipping Norton for elevenses on the top floor of the Antique Centre. Fortunately Maurice had found this excellent cafe on Good Friday, the lady said they had only been open a few weeks. We soon tested the excellent home cooking.

Geoff, Jenny and Nicola returned back to Stow from here, whilst the remaining eleven carried on to Great Tew and some roughstuff. Shortly on which, the final mechanical crisis arose. The Hills' Peugeot tandem gear appeared to slip and Mick unceremoniously tipped Rose off. On close inspection the slipping gear turned out to be a stripped hub! It was decided to take lunch and give the matter some thought as we were about 20 miles from Stow. Iris had actually been instructed by Ken to have a short(!) ride as we still had to drive home that day.

A stroke of luck came when the chosen lunch spot happened to be near a typical farmer's tidy tip. Mick foraged around and found some stout wire and, with the aid of David's pliers, patiently wired the back sprocket to the hub, ending up with a fixed-gear tandem. Gingerly we set off across the field to reach the road, where a descent caused the gear to get all wound up - just at the moment that Gerald was commenting to Iris, 'He ought to have taken that gear off, it won't work'. A short confab and then John and Ken set off back to Stow, about 18 miles away, for a car. Meanwhile Mick gets his hands blacker by removing the gear and shortening the chain to fixed. Hooray, it works and off we set, steadily at first and then with increasing confidence. Still no sign of the car and Mick rather hopes he can get back without a lift. A few short stops to ease Rose's bum and to give her a chance for a quick drag (along with Gerald) and we eventually reached Stow. Still no sign of Ken and John, but one car is missing. About 15 minutes later they return, convinced that we wouldn't travel very fast they had taken a different route and missed us. However while we were loading the cars, Mick sprinted up to the square and booked us into the cafe, treating us all to scones and cream - a fitting end to another good Easter Tour.

Where to next year?



Cyclists and Railways in the 21st Century.

With the inevitability of coming oil shortages, as North Sea reserves run down and imports become more difficult, it is certain that the use of motor vehicles must be severely restricted. As well as improving the prospects for public transport, many more people will turn to the bicycle, especially for local journeys.

For local journeys, particularly for those who don't wish to cycle long distances, it is important to develop and expand the railway system for all varieties of traffic, and also its ability to carry cycles. The present trend on the railways of designing new rolling stock so that it is unable to carry cycles (and also parcels, prams, post office mail and much else besides) must be resisted and these trains modified with adequate van space. To cater for extra passengers, trains can always be lengthened!

Cycles and railways are ideally complementary forms of transport, and this should be encouraged, especially by the re-opening of closed lines, to put all parts of the country within easy reach of a railway station. While many rural stations were a long walk from the villages they served, it was but a relatively short cycle ride, and adequate cycle storage facilities should be provided at stations, including the option of secure left luggage facilities. This would save on and be a lot cheaper than car parking areas, which could be accordingly reduced.

At the peak of the railway system earlier this century, we had nearly 25,000 route miles of line, the most rural points being no more than 3 or 4 miles from a railhead, except in certain parts of the Highlands of Scotland and Wales. Now there are about 10,000 miles, but this could be expanded again to its former comprehensive extent at a fraction of the cost of the road program, which, apart from being expensive and environmentally destructive, only perpetuates deaths and injuries in accidents, and is against the interests of cyclists and pedestrians.

Shouldn't we, who are cyclists and love the countryside, press for a sensible transport policy and fight the road lobby, who want to cover the land in concrete.

Jonathon Dalton.
Rights Officer,
East Sussex D.A.



A Cyclist's Dream

by Ann Rix

It was one of those beautiful long June days, only a fairly light cooling wind, which was needed, as two members of S & N headed out into the lovely quiet lanes of Sussex.

Only two because Alec was riding the 'London to Brighton' for the British Heart Foundation. Having caught the 5.00 a.m. train from Brighton he got away early from Clapham Common and reached Brighton by 11.00 a.m., thereby missing most of the estimated 40,000 on the ride.

Colin, Alexandra and Robert, with more exams to come, were busy revising; Russell was out with the Marine Cadets; Jeremy was still

having to recover on Sundays from his Saturday job; Joanna was working; and Frank was still in the U.S. of A.

Joining David Kiernan at his mother's for early elevenses, it was then up Grove Hill to take the road via Vines Cross to Old Heathfield. A good view of Punnetts Town Windmill as we climbed in the heat up to Broad Oak, followed by a cooling swoop down to the Rother Valley to join the lane that wanders along to Witherenden. Up to Stonegate where we decided to keep to the high ground and go via Wadhurst, having good views back over the valley and the trees that had missed "The Storm". Many had gone up on the ridge though, very noticeable as we rode along to find the cyclists' way into Bewl Water along the bridleway.

Lunch on the bank looking out over the reservoir where some mini sails and several fishing boats were adding to the scene. Ann was remembering how different it looked in 1976 'The year of the drought', when the reservoir was finished and should have been full of water, but they had been able to ride through as they had in the past, though over a dusty and empty reservoir.

Lunch over, only 1.10 p.m., where shall we go next? We decided to ride the bridleway through Bedgebury Pinetum, the extension of Kew. Orchids were in bloom and foxgloves too where many large areas of trees had been devastated by last October's storm. Quiet lanes still to Iden Green, we were now well into Kent with its timbered houses. A short stretch of main road, though not very busy, into Tenterden for early tea at the station where a train full of holiday folk was getting up steam for its journey through the countryside to Wittersham Junction.

Appledore next, to ride along by the Royal Military Canal to Rye. The canal was constructed by Pitt in the Napoleonic War to help with the defence of the coast and was also used for transport. Through Rye as quickly as possible, with its seething mass of people, to reach the lanes again near Winchelsea. Leaving the low ground with its view of Rye windmill we reached Udimore and then Cripps Corner, remembering breakfast runs there a few years ago when it was a cafe and Eileen who catered so well for the many cyclists.

Along to Whatlington, with the long swoop down and long climb back up to Battle. A short rest, drink and eat at the top to last us till taking up the invitation from John & Eve Seviour to stop at their new abode at Bodle Street Green. This was not to be ignored after such a long hot day; we arrived there at about 7.00 p.m., just as John had given us up and was going for an evening spin to meet his son, Andy. Relaxing over numerous cups of tea and coffee and biscuits, it was an hour later before we headed for Hailsham where David & I finally parted company. Twelve miles later I was home too, with enough energy left to climb Hindover Hill after a superb ride of a hundred and five miles, the most I've ridden in one day for a long time.



Odd Cuts.

Gedling Borough Council has lifted a tree preservation order made ten years ago on two trees on Clifftin Road, Burton Joyce because they are no longer there.

One of the trees, an elm, was felled in 1980 because of Dutch Elm Disease and the other blew down in the recent gales.

(Nottingham Advertiser)

THE BALLAD OF RANDONNEE RON

by Audax Al

There's a story I wish to pass on now
Of a Randonnee rider named Ron,
Who before the bug bit just went touring,
But for him those days are long gone.

The first time he rode wasn't easy,
He'd entered a local event,
After urging from some of his comrades
He packed all his gear and he went.

Up bright and early on Sunday
In plenty of time for the start,
Our Ron ate a filling cooked breakfast,
Egg, bacon, lamb's kidneys and heart.

He reached the first check feeling knackered,
Having jumped on the back of the bunch,
Instead of just taking it steady,
And pacing himself until lunch.

He staggered inside for a coffee
And the marshal said, "here, where's your card,
You look like you need some refreshment,
They all say that first section's hard".

After two cups of coffee it's better,
And he watches the riders come in,
Then asks as they leave, can I join you?
Why not they reply with a grin.

Their pace he finds is much better,
And keeps with them all of the way;
One of them's come down from Norwich,
200 miles - just for the day.

He finished that ride in 12 hours,
And went in the bar for a drink.
When asked will you ride any others,
Said - I might do next year I think.

But the bug had really got in him,
And he found it wasn't too long
Till he'd done a 3 and 400,
With a 600 coming along.

Now on weekends throughout the season
You can see him at every start,
The fanatical look on his features
Of the man who, "just wants to take part".

Last year saw the Paris-Brest-Paris,
And Ron he was bound to be there.
He'd turn up whatever the weather,
Whether raining or windy or fair.

At work the next day they all asked him,
"Well, how did you do and who won",
And look quite surprised when he answers,
"Oh no, we just do it for fun"!

Now the randonnee season has started,
And the Dorset Coast it is here,
"One last time", says Ron at the start line,
At the end he says, "see you next year"!

A.U.K.



A.U.K.



Did You Know?

The village of Streat, near Plumpton, was inspired by Chanctonbury when a suitable memento for Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, in 1887, was discussed. It was golden in every possible way and, though marked by all the conventional celebrations, something special and unusual was needed. Villagers agreed that a great V for Victoria should be marked in trees, on the high curving downland which overlooked Streat.

Odd tales have grown around that landmark, though it grew to be just as impressive as the villagers hoped. It has been suggested that 'VR' was intended, indicating Victoria Regina, but was abandoned because funds were exhausted. Alternatively, the V was perhaps a later creation to celebrate victory in a later conflict, possibly the Boer War.

However, the year really was 1887. So large a landmark needed many trees; a costly project, but the local gentry, as always (almost) could be relied upon. Mr Lane, Squire of Westmeston, lived only a mile away at Westmeston Place; he paid for the trees on the right side. General Fitzhugh, of Streat Place, paid for those on the left. A well-to-do farmer, Mr Cornwell, supplied the labour. His men brought the trees from Cooksbridge Nursery, which was about ten miles away; a generous contribution even though Marchant's Farm was prosperous. Its workmen did the planting as well, except for one tree on the Streat side. That was put in by Master Cornwell; he was only eight years old at the time, but such exciting events were still vivid in his memory during old age.

(From "Curious Sussex" by Mary Delorme.)

Eastbourne to Mersea Island. 30th April 1988.

by Jonathan Dalton.

Leaving Eastbourne at 7.30 in the morning, the weather was fine although the forecast was unfavourable. Once past the built up area at Polegate I was into Sayerlands Lane, then through Hailsham, Horsebridge and up the main road to Horam, where I photographed the remains of the much missed station on the 'Cuckoo Line'. Then down and up the steep hill to Maynards Green, Sandy Cross and down and up Newick Lane to Mayfield. The sun was pleasant and the day a good one for cycling. I took the short cut through Little Trodgers and passing through Mark Cross and Frant descended the long hill into Tunbridge

Wells. I then pressed on through Southborough to Tonbridge.

Tonbridge High Street was busy with shoppers on the Saturday Morning and I had to avoid pedestrians crossing the street with prams and so on, I passed the public school and took the Shipbourne road, and presently the lane to Plaxtol. It was pleasant to be away from my usual stamping grounds in country I had not cycled through much before. I took a wrong turning at Plaxtol and got back on the main road but soon corrected this and, back in the lanes again, passed through hop fields and a large quarry before climbing a hill into the busy village of Borough Green. The day was warm by now and I took several swigs from my water bottle.

I stopped at the village of Wrotham and photographed the church, including the bike in my picture. A mile or so later I got off to walk up to the summit of the North Downs, pausing occasionally to take in the view of the Kent Weald, at present spoilt with a motorway built across it. I then sped through Meopham, pausing occasionally at traffic lights as roadworks were in progress causing single line traffic. I passed Meopham station and dropped down to Gravesend, walking the last stretch to the ferry terminal through the pedestrianised town centre, busy, like Tonbridge, with shoppers. At the quayside I had a pleasant wait for the ferry and drank the coffee from my flask with some Mars bar.

The ferry was fairly busy and reaching Tilbury after the short crossing I was almost immediately in the countryside again. I crossed the flat marshland near the river then climbed a hill to stop for lunch at a pub in the picturesque village of West Tilbury. I stopped here for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour, eating my sandwiches in the garden with a beer and, before I left, asked the nice landlady to refill my water bottle, which she kindly did.

Taking the lanes to Stanford Le Hope in time I climbed One Tree Hill and came to the New Town of Basildon. I tried out the cycleway system through here, which consisted of footpaths on which cycles are allowed and where one has to give way at all intersections, often on foot. Five miles further on I reached Wickford and took the old road to South Woodham Ferrers, busy although by-passed by a new road near the railway line. South Woodham Ferrers is now a small new town, a shame as many of the old wooden bungalows, typical of Southern Essex, have been swept away and replaced by ugly brick houses, which have also shortsightedly been built on part of the trackbed of the closed but potentially very useful railway line to Maldon.

Climbing the steep hill through the old small village of Woodham Ferrers, then along to Bicknacre from where I cut through the lanes to join the road to Maldon, where I stopped at a cafe in the High Street for tea shortly before closing time. I descended the steep hill to the river, then passing through the industrial village of Heybridge, where the old 'Dark Satanic Mills' have given way to more modern factories, crossed the canal and pressed on through Mill Beach, with its caravan sites and cafe (of happy memory!), then Goldhanger and to Tolleshunt D'Arcy, where I stopped in the churchyard for about 20 minutes and finished off my grapes and water. I was now well over the 100 mile mark.

I descended station road, crossing the long closed Tollesbury light railway, then climbed through Salcott Cum Virley, along through Great Wigborough, Little Wigborough and Peldon and passed the 'Peldon Rose' to cross the Strood, a causeway, onto Mersea Island. It took about 10 minutes to do the last mile, and I walked the last hill, but I finally reached my destination, a welcome sight 11 hours and 110 miles after leaving home.

A Selection of Exam Howlers

Falling educational standards or rising standards of wit? Every year, teachers at a northern comprehensive collect, for staff room amusement, the most notable howlers made by children in school exams. Here, for your amusement, is a selection from the 1987 edition.

- * The pelvis protects the gentiles.
- * Q. What is an animal with a backbone called? A. A vibrator
- * Q. How can people conserve the environment?
A. Shoot trespassers.
- * Q. Give an example where the expansion of a solid causes problems and say how it is overcome.
A. Your fingernails grow and need cutting.
- * Q. Why can a bird sit on a high voltage cable without getting an electric shock?
A. The bird's feet are coated with rubber.
- * The difference between the North and the South is that they are different.
- * Q. Name the Peace Treaty which settled the war in 1919?
A. E.E.C.
- * Q. What does the sickle on the Russian flag stand for?
A. Chopping peoples heads off.
- * My first memory was when my nana used to carry me down the garden to look at the flowers. Then she would sit me on a plate of egg and chips.
- * There is no plague in Britain because we have a cure and rats are not popular and people are much cleaner and sterile.
- * Sir Francis Drake played with his bowels while the Armada sailed up the Channel.
- * Magellan circumcised the world in his 40-foot clipper.
- * The Pope could not marry Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, so Henry started the Protestant religion and married his self.
- * Joan of Arc was condomed to death.
- * An Arab is a man with a turbine on his head.
- * Q. State one change in boys at puberty?
A. There vice deepens.
- * Q. What is migration?
A. It is a headache that birds get when they fly south for the winter.
- * North Sea Gas has been found in Morecambe Bay.
- * As he grew older Wordsworth went out one evening because he felt the call of nature.
- * The light is focused on to the rectum at the back of the eye by the lens.
- * Q. Write down some way in which radioactive materials can be useful to human beings.
A. Atomic Bombs.
- * Margarine is better for you (than butter) because it spreads easily.
- * There was a large shawl round her soldiers, held together with a pink rose brooch.
- * Jenny is a clever girl and wants to go into bonking.
- * James I's eyes were always wandering around. His long thin beard helps him to do this.
- * Man is only a nackered ape.
- * Exams do put enormous stains on you.

Seaford & Newhaven Easter Tour '88

by Ann Rix

Herewith the saga of those who travelled on Seaford & Newhaven Section's journey to the great open Eastlands, to wander at will over the rolling countryside with many a jest to help them on their way.

It started as many have before with near misses at the station, Robert de Wimble and Jeremy Fisher Verrall lost back and front mudguards respectively on their way so only just made it. A good journey on the train and ride through London to Liverpool St. Station, then on to Colchester. Refreshments were taken before heading towards Ardleigh and Dedham, with a look at the church, then on to a tea stop at East Bergholt (Birthplace of Constable) for a visit to Flatford Mill, returning via a bridleway and footpath to Lower Barn Farm while rain clouds threatened. A walk round Colchester in the evening for five, while Ann disappeared to the Church of St. James for Maundy Thursday service. A nice hostel by the river!

Friday morning was repair day after Robert and Jeremy paid a visit to Halfords for mudguards - one set between them. John de Seviour and David de Hailsham assisted in the fitting thereof while Ann of Blatchington Pond stood by with accessories. Then all, with Joanna of the Toyshop, rode off in the sunshine through the lanes to Needham for lunch and Jeremiah Fisher to repair a tube. This took up the time until 3.00pm. when the 3 hour Good Friday service finished at the church and we were able to see inside. It has a marvellously constructed medieval roof, the posts which take the place of nave piers are supported in mid-air on the ends of great hammerbeams. These posts continue upwards to provide a timber clerestory with an almost flat roof and windows between the posts. Angels, which are on the hammerbeams, were added later. Leaving here we headed for Wickham Market and onto the sandy tracks to Blaxhall hostel. The hostel was formerly the village school and is in a tiny village on the edge of the Suffolk Sandlings, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Saturday morning we headed for Snape Maltings $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the hostel. On a pleasant riverside site this well known concert hall with art gallery, farm shop, etc. was interesting to see and we had to sample the cakes at the tea shop, even though it was a bit early for elevenses. All this was just as well because a few miles on Ann suddenly said, "Oh no!". She had a vision of her red jacket hanging on the wall in the hostel, which closed at 10.00, and it was now 10.30. After some decision we all went back and were lucky enough to find someone to let us in. The problem had been that beds are changed around depending on how many are staying and the hooks weren't by the beds, so it was a case of 'out of sight, out of mind'.

On again, a different way, on our journeyings in the Eastlands and this was our longest ride through rolling countryside towards Brandon. Framlingham was our next stop, to have lunch by the castle and to stock up with food. It was a lovely day, the wind seemed to follow us and the threatened rain and cold was stopped over the north country. We rolled on through Bedfield to Eye, heading for Bressingham Railway Museum. This unfortunately was closed that day, but we found tea at the large garden centre next door. Jeremy volunteered to lead for the next stretch, which gave David a rest, he had instructions to keep off main roads and did very well. Leaving the A1066 we found the lovely sign at Blo Norton and then at Thelnetham the sails turning on a windmill had us doing a small diversion for an inspection. Five climbed up inside and were allowed out on the fantail area, while Ann tried to get the best shot from below. After that with time getting on it was on to Euston and Barnham, with the last stretch from Elveden to Brandon through Thetford Forest which seemed endless. 7.00pm at

the hostel so five disappeared into Brandon to find the fish and chip shop while Ann had her special cook-up.

Next morning it was up to Grimes Graves. This was very interesting - among the pine and fir forests of Breckland the area known as Grimes Graves looked, as we descended towards them, like infilled bomb craters. Four thousand years old, the name was given to the area by the Anglo-Saxons, Grim being another name for Woden and graves means holes or hollows. Through the centuries many ideas of its origin have arisen but in 1870 the true nature of the site was learnt when Canon Greenwell dug one of the hollows. After three years excavating he found it was a shaft 40 feet deep from the bottom of which radiated a number of galleries blocked with chalk rubble - a flint mine of the Neolithic or New Stone Age. Since then more of the area has been excavated to show that the total area mined was over 80 acres. In an area of about 34 acres there are nearly 800 shafts and shallower pits. The deep shafts are between 13 to 26 feet in diameter at the surface and up to 46 feet deep. At the top was soft sand and boulder clay then a layer of flint nodules (topstone), next soft chalk then hard chalk to the larger flint nodules (wallstone), and lastly through hard chalk to the large flints (floorstone) and to good quality flint. We had to don helmets before descending into pit no. 1, the only shaft which can be seen, where at the bottom gratings allowed us to see the galleries radiating out. It was dangerous to go far from the bottom of the shaft as the miners did not have pit-props, so when one was exhausted they just dug another shaft and filled the previous one with the waste, hence the crater appearance on the surface.

This was John de Seviour's day, taking him back to the days of his childhood. Bury for lunch, he said, as that was always a highlight in his youth, so Bury-St.-Edmunds it was. Back through Thetford Forest, this time in the sunshine, on the B1106 and on to Bury. After lunch it was exploring time for John as well, for roads and tracks had changed over the years. He wanted to take us on the bridleway through Ickworth Park, which we found with a little help from someone in the car park. This was enjoyed and it brought us out at Chevington Church. He took us next to Wickhambrook, where he hoped to find his aunt at home - for a tea stop! This involved some to-ing and fro-ing in the village while John tried to remember where it was. All was well, Auntie was at home and we were soon sitting down enjoying several cups of tea, well it was a hot day.

We finally reached the hostel at Castle Hedingham at getting on for 7.00pm., so after showers we enjoyed the warden's cafeteria meals - served from 8 - 9.30 and strongly recommended.

Monday and the weather had changed, gone the sun, a misty start, then the wind got up and John was reminded of how it blows there with not many places to get away from it.

David took us to Borley Church, associated for some with Borley Rectory, the most haunted house in England, which used to stand opposite the church but was destroyed by fire just before World War Two and totally demolished in 1945. The church was locked but luckily for us the woman who has the key saw us and opened up. She assured us the church is not haunted but many believe it is - the previous night a party arrived by car with a crate of bottles and wanted the church opened! Those who live in the village must have a difficult time, many who have lived there all their lives and those who worship there have not experienced anything ghostly.

An interesting fact is that the earliest known Rector of Borley, Peter de Catchpore 1236-1295 (he held so many other posts that he couldn't have spent much time at Borley) was Constable of the Castle of St. Briavels (now a Youth Hostel) and Forester of Dean.

A Bridleway once more, but a very lumpy one and stony at the end as

Jeremy found out, along the Stour Valley to Sudbury for lunch in the cafe. Into the cold wind for the last miles to Colchester for the train home having enjoyed our wanderings in the Eastlands. We left John de Seviour at London Bridge Station as he would be able to reach Burwash best from there. On to Victoria, the traffic not too bad, with time for something to eat before getting the train back to Seaford, where David & Joanna left us to ride back to Hailsham.



Odds & Ends from 'Small Oxford Book on Cycling'
compiled by Jeanne Mackenzie

(Thanks to Ken Stevens for digging out these snippets for us.)

For a few years one new mechanical marvel ran neck and neck with the other. On the 31st January 1900 'The Irish Cyclist' reported that the Chief Constable of Surrey had bought 125 Singer bicycles to set up a special squad of policeman, to overtake and halt motorists who exceeded the speed limit of 12 miles per hour.

From the early days the bicycle has been used as a record breaker - The fastest speed - the furthest distance - the oddest journey. In 1884 Thomas Stevens rode round the world on a high bicycle: it took him 2¹/₂ years.

Cycling is easily the most satisfactory way of touring:-
In the Summer of 1937 I set off on the most ambitious of my journeys with George - to ride across Holland into Germany, where the obvious and deliberate stimulation of war mentality caused me great concern. Yet even Nazi Germany had its comedies. In the Hartz Mountains I stumbled across a nudist camp, naturally its occupants were nude, but their leaders proudly wore a Nazi swastika armband.
Bernard Newman 1960.



Odd Cuts.

A driver who was charged with wrongfully using the car pool lane, set aside for cars with passengers, has been unable to persuade a California court that he was carrying any. He works for an undertaker and was accompanied by four frozen corpses.

Wanted. Doughnut machine and exercise bike. (I.o.W. County Press)

Real sports? Recent studies in America have revealed that 31 percent of sports injuries to women concern the breasts. At present researchers are using nude student gymnasts to help them design a safe sports bra.

Extract from - On Your Bicycle by James McDermot

The diverse history of cycling shows it to be, like walking, an irrepressible and adaptive activity. This is not surprising since the human on a bicycle is, in terms of energy expended in relation to the rider's body-weight and distance travelled, the most efficient of all moving animals and machines. The bicycle is designed around the human figure, so that the most powerful muscles are used in the most effective way. Unlike motor cars, bicycles are accessible to nearly everyone, and benefit riders without harming others. Motor vehicles off-load their enormous social costs onto the community as a whole: they mean restricted mobility for the carless, the destruction of neighbourhoods, damaged and devalued property, road-building costs, lost agricultural land, police and court resources tied up, social services, hospital care for the injured, noxious exhaust fumes, airborne lead, asbestos dust from car brakes, acid rain, noise pollution, and a national dependence on imported Middle Eastern oil. Apart from that there is the unforgivable social cost of the 250,000 deaths on British roads since 1945. Drivers become victims of their own machines, or, in Illich's words, "captive consumers of conveyance". Some become dangerously desensitised: brutalised by the excessive speed and power put at their disposal. Yet we have become a car-culture, and shape accordingly our physical environment and way of life. This process has been encouraged by successive governments. For example, the tax subsidy given to company cars is greater than the entire public transport subsidy.

The bicycle is the vehicle of a new mentality. It quietly challenges a system of values which condones dependency, wastage, inequality of mobility and daily carnage. Cycling provides little scope for self-aggrandisement, consumerism or big-business profit: it is perhaps too simple, cheap and independent for its own good in this age of excess. The recent cycling boom has been a heartening resurgence of the human spirit. It needs, however, to be encouraged by government intervention. Motorists' behaviour needs to be more efficiently controlled so that their vaunted 'freedom to choose' no longer eclipses the freedoms of pedestrians, cyclists and others. Also, heavy goods vehicles, which demolish any claim we have to civilisation, need to be severely restricted. A fraction of the public resources spent on coping with motor traffic could finance networks of safe, uninterrupted cycleways in towns and across country, complemented by enhanced railway and urban public transport systems. Many millions more would then be able to make cycling an important and pleasurable part of their daily lives, at the same time improving the quality of life for us. Such facilities might well pay for themselves in terms of savings made by a lower level of motoring. Cycling is a boon to society and to ignore it is expensive. There is every reason why cycling should be helped to enjoy another Golden Age.



Odd Cuts.

A tombstone with the bride's name inscribed on it was presented by a bridegroom to his wife when they returned to Chicago from their honeymoon.

Giving evidence in subsequent divorce proceedings, the bride said that her husband took her to his garage and showed her the tombstone as soon as they arrived home.

A Hampshire Bank Holiday

by David Rix.

With nothing on the runslit for Spring Bank Holiday, due to various members of the Camping & Hostelling Section being off on holiday, Susan and I decided to spend the weekend camping in Hampshire. The first site I picked didn't do camping any more when I rang up, but we finally found a nice simple secluded site on a farm at Beech, near Alton. Driving down on Friday evening we had no trouble finding the site, which was reached by a very steep track that we had already been warned about. We and another couple were the only ones on the site that night, but over the weekend about 3 other lots came. The site was pleasant, an open area on the edge of woodland but surrounded on all sides by trees and with access to several footpaths and bridleways.

Due to rain during the night we decided against the bridleway and took the main track out to the road. We headed towards Alton and then took the B road down to Selborne. The weather was fine and sunny but with a strongish wind blowing, which we hoped would help us back later in the day. Reaching Selborne we stopped at the church to see the beautiful stained glass window in memory of Gilbert White, the famous naturalist and author of 'The Natural History of Selborne'. The window depicts St. Francis surrounded by all the birds included in the book, plus also the church itself and White's house.

After a look at the rest of the church we walked up through the village for elevenses at the Bush House Tea Rooms (found by checking in the new C.T.C. Refreshment Guide).

Leaving Selborne we took to the lanes via Empshott and Hawkley to Steep, rather ominous sounding but in fact not very hilly, the road into the village following round the contours of the hillside with some excellent views to the Downs and also over the wooded areas to the East. Crossing the A272 just West of Petersfield it was only a short time before we started the steep climb up to the summit of Butser Hill, our destination of the day. Our reason for coming here was to visit the Butser Ancient Farm, unfortunately my information was not accurate - the Farm was not here. On looking at the map on display we realised that it was at the bottom of the hill, so we decided to walk down the footpath, the route by road being three times the distance. Another miscalculation, the farm didn't open till 2.00 on Saturday and our sandwiches were with the bikes at the top of the hill! Oh well, back up the hill and then after lunch we descended the lane to the main A3 trunk road and rode the $\frac{1}{2}$ mile or more up this to reach the Farm. Well worth a visit, the Butser Ancient Farm is a re-creation of a Celtic farm of around 300BC, complete with round house and other buildings, and also livestock, crops and industrial area amongst other things - there is even an Iron Age chicken house! There are also special exhibitions on some weekends, including shearing, spinning, dyeing and weaving.

After an hour or so looking round we then had to brave both lanes of the A3 before climbing back over Butser Hill to return to the Meon Valley. A lovely ride along the quiet lanes and through the picturesque villages of East and West Meon, then on through gently rolling countryside to Hinton Ampner and Cheriton, ever hopeful of finding a tea place. But it was not to be and we finally stopped by the roadside for a drink from our bottles and a twix bar. By the time we climbed the ridge to the village of Bighton and the road back to Beech the sky had clouded over and we were lucky to get our evening meal finished in the dry.

Sunday the weather did not look too good as we set off West towards Winchester and beyond it the Test Valley. We passed through the

delightful town of New Alresford (not so new, it was founded in about 1200), and continued down the picturesque Itchen Valley, with its watercress beds and lovely thatch-cottaged villages of Itchen Stoke, Itchen Abbas and Easton, to reach Winchester. Consulting the Refreshment Guide once again we found an excellent tea shop, 'Minstrels', just off the main shopping precinct, and tucked into coffee, caramel slices and blackberry and apple pie - hungry work this cycling! While we were here it poured down with rain again, we had already sheltered from one downpour in a bus shelter along the Itchen Valley, but by the time we had finished our elevenses it had passed over.

Leaving Winchester we climbed out of the city, only to have to shelter under trees at the top of the hill before continuing. Finally a few miles further on as we sheltered again we decided to don capes and continue through the intermittent rain. We now found ourselves on a slightly lumpy route through the lanes, via Braishell and Michelmersh, to Mottisfont and the delightful Test Valley, with its meandering river. Finding nowhere suitable in Mottisfont, but with the weather improving, we removed our capes and continued up river in search of a suitable lunch spot. Nearly on the point of giving up and just sitting down at the side of the road we came across the Test Way. This runs for over 40 miles from Romsey to Inkpen Beacon, and at the point where we had met it followed the course of an old railway line, a bridge a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile up which provided an ideal lunch spot.

We were intrigued by the sign where we joined the path, it said, "The Test Way. Dedicated to the public as a long distance path. With permissive(!) access for horse riders and cyclists". Finishing lunch we stayed on the Test Way for the three miles through to Stockbridge.

Back on tarmac again we continued up the valley, pausing at Longstock for a picture of one of the unusual thatched fishermen's huts, set on bridges in the river for the anglers. With the sun coming back out again and the weather improving we continued through Chilbolton and Barton Stacey to the Bullingtons, then, just as we were giving up hope, a tea room! The Riverside Tea Rooms in fact, on the very quiet A30 just North of Sutton Scotney. It has obviously been there for years but is not in the Refreshment Guide, in our view a shameful omission as it proved to be excellent - 3 cups each from the pot and scrumptious home-made cakes, all at reasonable prices. Dragging ourselves away from here we continued, on quiet lanes, through peaceful Hampshire villages with such delightful names as Stoke Charity, Micheldever and Brown, Chilton and Preston Candover, and finally back via Bentworth to Beech and our camp site.

After dinner and with the sun still shining, but hidden by the trees, we took a walk on the quiet woodland paths and then back through the village before turning in.

Monday dawned wet and miserable. What to do? We couldn't go home without a ride on the Watercress Line, so when the weather cleared up a bit we headed for New Alresford and coffee in the Swan Hotel, before catching the steam train for the ride back to Alton (the bikes went free). Guessing the weather might not stay fine, the sun was out but dark clouds were looming, we rode the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles back to camp and just got the tent packed away before the rain came.

We sat in the car eating lunch before deciding to drive into Winchester for a walk round. First though we stopped for a walk through New and Old Alresford, with a stop to look at the beautiful old fulling mill by the river, which dates from when Alresford had a flourishing cloth trade. Into Winchester, with another visit to 'Minstrels' for tea, and a walk round the city with a visit to the Castle Hall to see "King Arthur's Round Table". Then we came back to see the Cathedral, and finished with a walk round the Castle Walls and

pretty riverside walk before the drive home.

A rather windy, and at some times wet, but a very enjoyable bank holiday weekend.



Sussex Roads in the 1860's

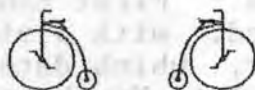
From "A South Down Farm in the Sixties" by Maude Robinson

The main London to Brighton road passed through one end of our parish (Saddlescombe, Ed.) and in the sixties was considered only for local use, although one four-in-hand coach ran in the summer to give Brighton visitors a taste of the old times. Once only we saw a real post chaise, with a postilion in light blue jacket and white breeches, riding one horse and leading the other, while a very old gentleman sat behind, evidently fearing to trust his person to the newfangled railway, although it had been running safely for twenty years.

In the sixties the toll gates were still in use. I think there were six in the depths of Sussex from Brighton to Crawley. Every few miles a white, locked barrier crossed the highway and from the little two-roomed cottage would come hobbling forth an old man or woman to take the toll. The price was a shilling for four wheels, sixpence for two, and two pence for horse, mule or ass, unattached to a vehicle. The calling of toll-keeper seemed to develop a certain crustiness of temper and malicious pleasure in keeping the traveller waiting, perhaps with an impatient plunging horse while, as slowly as possible, response was made to repeated calls of 'Ga-a-ate'. Change for coin was also a difficulty. How would the modern motorist like this cumbersome way of paying for the upkeep of the roads that he uses? In those days there were no steam rollers to smooth the highways. In winter a thick layer of flints was spread on the roads, to be gradually worked in by the iron shod wheels of the vehicles which passed over it. Every little parish repaired its own roads according to its lights. If the unpaid surveyor was conscientious and often used the road himself he would say to the road mender, 'No stone to be used which you cannot put into your mouth!', a test which we imagine was not often tried! If a farmer used a whole parish and kept no carriage he would sometimes take a spiteful delight in the badness of the roads which kept away the hated 'furriner'.

In the summer the loose flints were roughly raked to the side but everyone had to carry some tool to extract them from the horse's hoofs, and a messy business it was when the shaggy leg was soaked with mud and some sharp flint lay wedged between frog and iron shoe.

Was it in the sixties or later that the earliest bicycles appeared - first the 'bone-shaker', iron-tyred, wooden-spoked, with a nearly yard-wide handle bar? Next came the high steel bicycle with one tiny and one enormous wheel, only to be mounted by the most active young men, and a perfect terror to horses as they flew by.



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