

Sandown Caravan Park

The



Coaster



the magazine of the

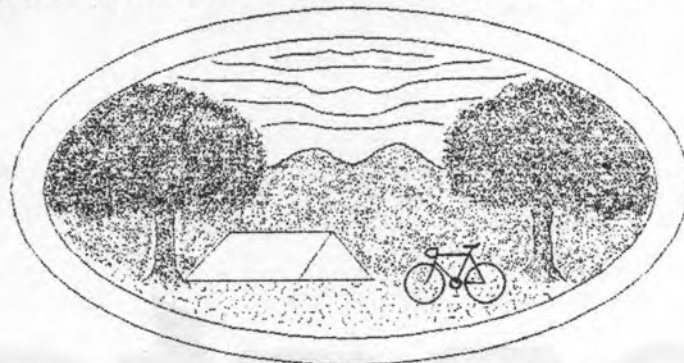
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No 16

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"The Coaster"

Christmas 1988 - Issue No.16



PRESIDENT MRS. ANN RIX

Secretary
& Editor:

David Rix, 11 Park Drive, Close, Denton, Newhaven, E. Sx.



Editorial

Well, magazine time has come around again, and we have another offering of members scribblings for you - including; a working holiday in France, a few tours and a prize crossword. I must apologise to Roy James for the late appearance of his Bayeaux article and the latest in his "Everyday Sussex" drawings, which should have been in the Summer issue, but somehow they got mis-placed - still better late than never.

I have managed to get a few pictures into this issue, other than the adverts, and it is hoped that with new facilities that allow us to transfer pictures to stencil that we will be able to have more pictures as in the past.

As always we rely on you the member to supply us with articles, so keep them coming in, we can always use them.

We are currently looking forward to Christmas on the canals, and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Very Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year.

David Rix

ODD CUTTINGS

Among the items on the extra spending which she found would get the council a bad name was £1.00 for a carpet in the nuclear bunker.

PLEASE KEEP TO THE PERMISSIVE FOOTPATH. National Trust notice

CHRISTMAS AT CANTERBURY.

by John Gallsworthy

Although this short tour took place last Christmas I thought it may interest those thinking of a Christmas Tour this season.

Deciding I wanted to do something other than sitting up all night waiting for Father Christmas I thought a four or five day tour would be worth a try. As I was going on my own Youth Hostelling seemed the ideal way of meeting like minded people, so out came The Book and a hunt for a hostel open over the Christmas period was undertaken. At this point I should say that it is essential to pre-book accommodation as many places are closed.

Fortunately it was Canterbury's turn and so a route was planned that only involved 40 mile legs each day, bearing in mind the short days and a good possibility of lousy weather.

My first leg on Christmas Eve was to Kemsing and Geoff Boxall rode part of the way with me. The weather was somewhat miserable and so a pub lunch went down well. I left Geoff near Tonbridge and set off to the hostel. Going through a village I heard the dreaded psst-psst-psst each time the wheel went round and I thought "Oh dash! I have a puncture". I had just passed a very seasonal butchers shop with braces of pheasant and other Christmas fare, and the butcher let me use the lights to execute the repair (he didn't offer me a pheasant though!!).

Kemsing Hostel was quiet, there only being three of us, and so I had a welcome early to bed.

Christmas Day dawned bright and clear and I had a super ride through the lanes calling into Maidstone in the faint hope of a cafe for 11's. Nothing doing, but I soon found a playing field with a seat and I enjoyed a pleasant half an hour sitting in the sun eating my sandwiches. My lunch stop was a pub and luck being with me I picked one where a free drink of punch was handed out on entering the hostelry. In fact pubs proved a haven of warmth and beer at lunch times but did not provide food and it was essential to carry this with me for the day. The day continued well, apart from two more punctures, and I arrived in Canterbury at 4.30pm.

To my surprise there were about 40 hostellers staying there. Some were people travelling and their itinerary put them in Canterbury for Christmas, but mostly they were people who, like me, just wanted "to do something" over the three day period. In the evening the warden provided a superb five course Christmas Dinner, complete with crackers and silly hats, and so a very pleasant evening ensued.

Boxing Day, the weather being a bit miserable, was spent looking at the sights around town and surprisingly there were quite a lot of people wandering about. True to English enterprise there were no restaurants open except Macdonalds. This dictated afternoon tea was taken at the hostel which turned out to be an extremely social occasion as other hostellers wandered in, and by pooling resources tea, cakes and biscuits were enjoyed. As "tea" became extended someone produced a bottle of Port and so we even managed "drinks before dinner".

The next day the Hostel was closed and so everyone continued on their various ways, mine being to Rye. There I spoilt myself and went B & B returning home next day.

All in all a very successful break.

ODD CUTTINGS

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PLEASE KEEP TO THE PERMISSIVE FOOTPATH. National Trust notice.

THE DORDOGNE BY OVERNIGHT EXPRESS

by Iris Stevens

When we heard that the French Railways were offering a special service to cyclists we decided to give it a go. Having decided on one of the four routes offered, it was away to the travel agents to book. First travel agents had never heard of a motorail service for bikes. It turned out they didn't deal with S.N.C.F. The second said "yes, we can book it for you". The bike bit threw them, but I had read the small print and was able to put them on the right track (ha ha).

Over the next few months several hiccups were sorted out. "Did we mind going outwards by ferry from Folkestone and returning to Dover by Hoverspeed" - no, we didn't mind, never been on a hovercraft before. Then they couldn't fit us in the same carriage on the train outward bound. Would we like to pay extra and have a three berth compartment - yes, we would.

Finally departure day came and bikes were loaded onto the car for a hop down to Hythe, where Roger Burchett was going to keep an eye on it for two weeks. A tailwind into Folkestone had us arriving in plenty of time to find that the ferry was delayed an hour due to some dispute. This of course had a knock-on effect. By the time we reached the rail terminal it was to be a 2 hour delay, but we didn't know it at the time.

To help relieve the boredom cardboard packaging was produced for us to pack the bikes in. No alterations to the bikes were needed, only removal of baggage. We were impressed - a definite plus for S.N.C.F. against air travel where the bikes have bits removed and generally mucked about, then they are rammed in on top of the passengers baggage with no regard to the bikes or luggage. Eventually we left Boulogne, a great long train full of cars on open decks and surf boards lashed to the sides. Our bikes were all nicely tucked up in a closed wagon, as we soon were. Travelling Wagon Lit is certainly a civilized way to travel. The French trains are beautifully clean and carpeted and we had a very comfortable night as the train hurtled through France.

About 8.00 am. Saturday morning we pulled into Brive (-la-Gaillarde) station to the sight of people sitting at long tables on the platform eating breakfast. It was reminiscent of the victory street parties. It turned out to be the motorists on an earlier train eating the free breakfast. Cyclists have to pay for theirs! Something Neville Channin has taken up with S.N.C.F. as he says cyclists need it more than motorists!

Collecting the bikes we were soon on our way out of town heading South towards the Dordogne River. At Turenne we stopped for a coffee and a wander round the ancient hill top town. Lunch was taken in the shade as by now it was very hot. On again, stopping for a beer and provisions, to arrive at the tiny village of Creysse and the campsite on the banks of the Dordogne. Here we intended to stay for three nights so as to visit the deep limestone caverns at Padirac and the cliffhanging town of Rocamadour. Both are tourist attractions but are well worth a visit. On a bike you soon get away into the tiny lanes.

Our next stop was to be near the walled town of Domme, perched high above the Dordogne River. So it was off, following the river where we could, through fertile valleys of tobacco and walnut groves. At Souillac we stopped for lunch and found the busy little town full of cyclists. It was on the Dordogne cycle route, or maybe it was the Jazz Festival that attracted them. After an excellent lunch on a vine covered terrace we wandered on to a well shaded site on the opposite side of the river to Domme. Next morning we set off early to climb up to one of the old gateways, before all the tourists got there. The town was much changed in the 16 years since we were last there, all prettied up and full of expensive souvenir shops. By lunch time the place was full and by the sound of it most were British! And horror of horrors there was even a Dotto train running around the streets. However, despite this, the view from the parapet in the tower, of the great bend in the river hundreds of feet below, is well worth it. Out of season the place would seem even better I'm sure.

Leaving the photographers to snap what must be the most photographed view in the Dordogne, we hurtled down to cross the river for a visit to the very busy medieval town of Sarlat. Here, in a street packed with parked cars, we saw what the French use their bumpers for - to remove the front and rear cars so as to get out of a parking space.

By now we had had enough of tourist spots, so we packed up and followed the river downstream to St. Cyprien, pausing here and there for photographs and the local speciality - walnut cakes. At St. Cyprien it was a 15 mile climb to Rouffignac where we were hoping to stay a few days to visit the lesser known caves with wall paintings. Also the ancient city dwellings along the Gorges of the Vezere at Les Eyzies.

The campsite at Rouffignac was noisy and expensive, so we decided to go to another 7 miles away. Dutifully following the camping signs for another 2 km down a dusty track we came to a wood with a sign "naturists only"! Well I know it was hot but there are parts of me lilywhite which I didn't intend to expose. We retraced to the road and after a few miles found another campsite at a Centre Loisir. These leisure centres are becoming quite popular. They vary in facilities but all seem to have man made lakes for water sports.

As the price was quite reasonable we decided to stay for three nights and next day climbed to caves at Rouffignac. They were most interesting, with drawings of deer, goats and woolly mammoths. The guide book said it was a shame about the graffiti over some drawings. These turned out to be initials from cave explorers dated around 1850!

Next day it was down to the river at Vezere to view the ancient cliff dwellings, some of which were from early men but most were 12th Century dwellings including a chapel.

The following day it was pack up and away through quiet lanes Northwards. Had our only shower today, lasting about 10 minutes, but it is definitely cooler, all right for cycling through. One overnight stop, then Uzerche, another old town climbing up from the River Vezere. We stayed 2 nights and gave ourselves a day wandering around the old towns free of our bikes.

It was now wednesday and the holiday was slipping away. We rode off in a Southeasterly direction into the Correze region, a beautiful area of steep wooded ravines and sleepy villages. At one of these, Roche-Canillac, we put up our tents on a quiet municipal site. Next day we had a beautiful ride up and down the steep valleys to the Barrage du Chastang and the Dordogne, and a ride along the series of dams to Argentat where we enjoyed lunch in a riverside Auberge.

Friday, and we must now head for Brive and the train home on Saturday. One more leisure centre stop, at the religious village of Aubazines, hundreds of feet above the Correze River. We climbed up to the Puy de Pauliac where we had a magnificent view towards the Massif Central and South towards the foothills of the Pyrenees. All too soon it was into Brive on a very hot Saturday, visiting the cattle show for something to while away the time.

On a visit to a local supermarket Heather excelled herself by robbing a Frenchman of 10 francs. Seeing him struggling to lock a trolley into a line she took it from him and walked away. He looked a bit bewildered she said, but didn't say anything. It turns out that you had to pay for the hire and had it returned when you locked your trolley back into line.

That night we claimed our couchettes on the crowded train (slumming it this time) and awoke back in Boulogne. Breakfast in a quayside cafe, then onto the Hover back to Dover, where it was overcast and drizzling. On collecting the car it wouldn't start - the starter motor was broken!

We had been away two weeks without a puncture between us, though my second Madison saddle had broken almost a year after the last.

We enjoyed the trip by train and are thinking of doing the same next year, but probably on a different route

* * * * *

Prize Crossword

by Brian Wilkins.

There will be a small prize for the first all correct entry drawn after the closing date.
All entries should be sent to -
Brian Wilkins, Bellargus, 79 Overdown Rise, Mile Oak, Portslade. BN4 2YF.

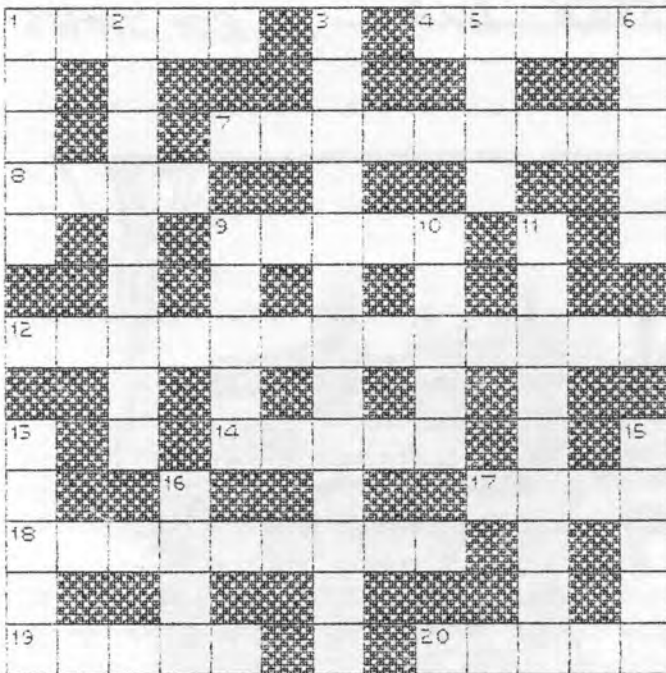
Closing Date - 22nd January 1989.

ACROSS

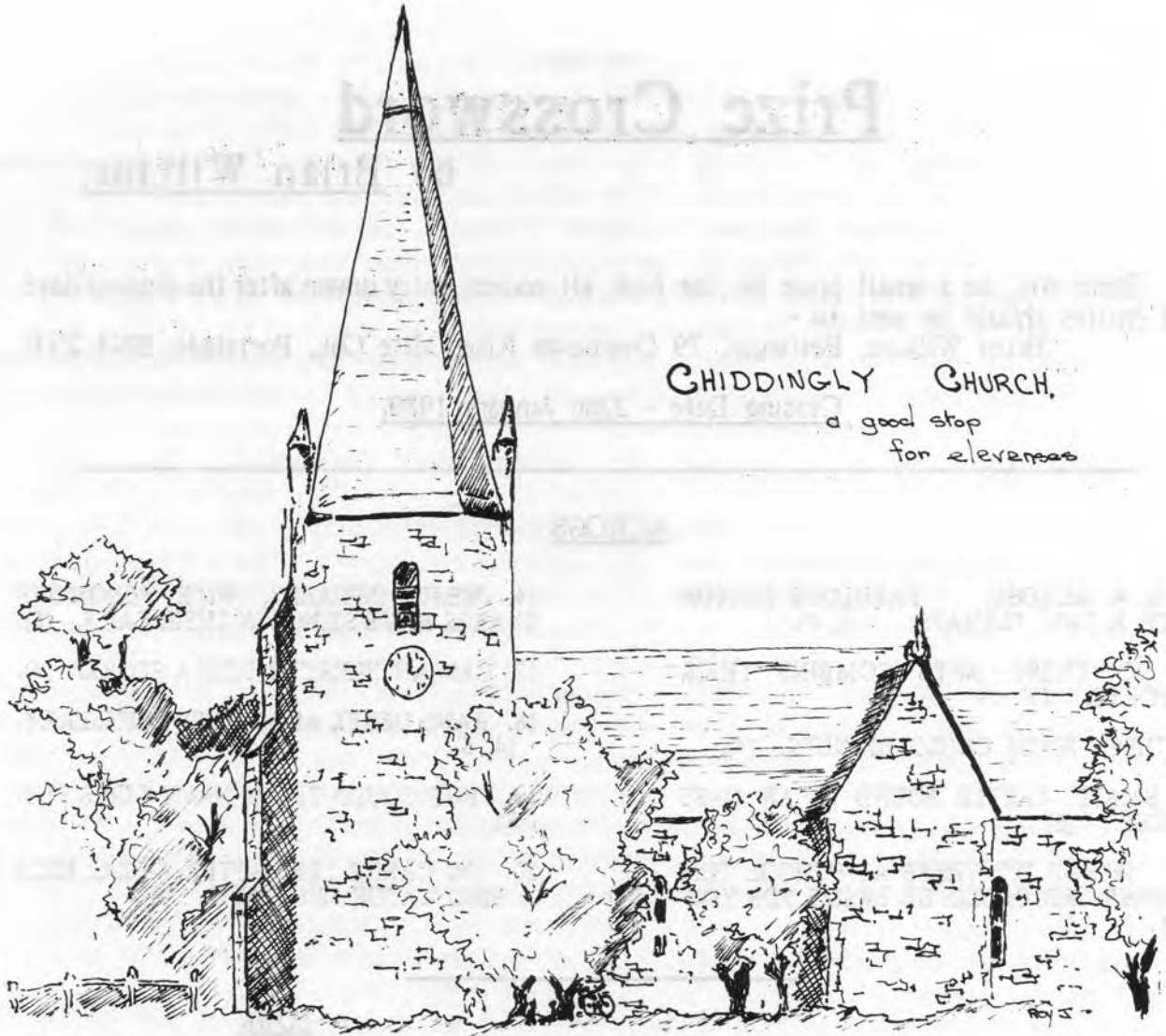
1. & 4. ACROSS. FABULOUS PERSON WITH A TAN, PERHAPS! (5, 5).
7. DO THESE ANTS COMBINE THEIR EFFORTS. (9).
8. THESE BIRDS COULD BE NUTS. (4).
9. SMALL CATTLE FOUND IN AN OAST HOUSE. (5).
12. IF YOU DID THESE AT SCHOOL THIS CROSSWORD COULD BE EASIER FOR YOU. (6, 7).

14. WEST, INITIALLY, WITH VENOMOUS SNAKES HAVE STINGS IN THEIR TAILS. (5).
17. CAN AN HIBISCUS HIDE A STORK? (4).
18. RANG DEREK ABOUT THIS FRITILLARY. (4, 5).
19. BUT COULD THESE NAVY GIRLS FLY! (5).
20. DO CARDS LEFT AFTER A DEAL HELP A BIRD CATCH IT'S PREY? (5).

DOWN



1. & 13. DOWN. I'D BOWL WACK OUT FOR THIS ARACHNID. (5, 5).
2. AN INSECT THAT WILL NEVER GET RUSTY PRESUMABLY! (3, 6).
3. HE RIOTS SO TELL ABOUT A CARAPACE. (13).
5. DOG, FIELD OR GUELDER (4).
6. A GOAT LIKE ANIMAL THAT COULD BE WORSE. (5).
9. WORMS THAT CAN BE SHOT ARE FOUND IN BARROWS. (6).
10. CRAZY AUK IN SOUTH SEAS INITIALLY GETS YOU MORE BIRDS. (5).
11. DOES THIS BIRD HAVE ITS BACK ON ITS BEAK! (9).
15. NEW PANES REVEAL A TREE. (5).
16. A VARIETY OF INKS COVER OUR BODY! (4).



CHIDDINGLY CHURCH,
a good stop
for elevenses

EVERYDAY SUSSEX No 5 by ROY JAMES



The Mill Bay HORSHAM.

THE S & N AUGUST BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND.
or "A Brambly Assault on the South Face of the Surrey Hills!"
by Colin Axon.

I met the others at Barcombe Mills Station for elevenses which we immensely enjoyed. After which Colin "the Careful", Kiernan "the Confused" (completely incompetent map reader), Russell "the pleb" Kiernan, John "Chicken Noise" Seviour, and Andy "even better Chicken Noise" Seviour (specialising in distressed chickens!) [from here on in things just get silly] headed for Burgess Hill so that some were able to buy some lunch, which we then ate on the rec.

On the way we had encountered our first bridlepath where we found a fallen tree, which everyone got around except me, a protruding branch caught in my pannier flap and over I went - no damage which a squirt of David Kiernan's savlon couldn't cure (from then on I was a little more wary, hence Colin "the careful"). After lunch we headed for Partridge Green and the disused railway line (The Downs Link. Ed.), the first part of which was very rough but by Southwater it had turned into a good track with just the odd dodgy patch. The only obstacle in our way was a sealed up tunnel near Rudgwick where we had to climb a very steep hill to find the railway again. The path turned patchy again with our legs being stung by nettles and, of course, not a dock leaf in sight!

We left the railway at Cranleigh where afternoonses was had at the tea rooms, which we do seem to have been frequenting recently. Then back on the road to the hostel via Holmbury Hill, where we nearly lost Russell, but he managed to find us again!

We rolled up outside the front door thinking "Ah, this is going to be a really good weekend", when guess who should come out of the hostel at that very moment - the "peace and clean air shattering" gruesome two-some - yes, you guessed it, Alec and Joe!! Unfortunately it was too late to go home, but at least they were camping (so we immediately went and warned all the other campers!). The evening as usual was spent eating, talking, eating, playing cards and eating, etc.!

Sunday was also seriously off-road; we went out by the back of the hostel over the sandy hills and down into Peaslake for elevenses outside the Trust House Forte Hotel. Then back to the sand. It started raining soon before lunch, which was had under a clump of trees with us gradually shifting around as the rain penetrated the leafy canopy.

As we put our capes on to move off it of course stopped raining. By this time both John and I had had enough rough stuff, so we headed back onto the road, which David does seem to have some difficulty in finding his way around! It was some time during the afternoon that the subject of how Andy had perfected his distressed chicken noises came up - apparently when Andy was small John kept chickens and Andy would go and sit in their coop whilst they were brooding! By this time I had perfected the cow noise (which made a few heads turn - some cows looked up as well!). We got back to the hostel at around 7 p.m. for the others to demolish the warden's cooking. Tonight we were up in the 'loft', where we should have been the previous night as well. This is when Russell earned his title "the pleb", as he tried to carry his panniers, bedding and other junk all piled and shoved under his arms and then wondered why he couldn't get through the hatch!

The next morning (Monday), we packed up and descended the Surrey hills very quickly - Alec and Joe were staying another night. We made it as far as Broadbridge Heath, where David made yet another map reading and decision making 'cock up' when he led us down yet another 'path' - this time the 'path' was O.K. but it was almost completely obscured by brambles and other assorted cyclist eating plants. By the time I realised it was ridiculous to go on I was unable to turn back. So I went on, David came back for me and wished he hadn't - I was very dischuffed by then and told him to stuff the rest of his path. "The next bit is clear", he said, "just follow the track".

Whilst I cleaned my glasses he disappeared, then I followed on as he had said, but I didn't catch them or see them - I suddenly came out onto a roundabout!

After a map consultation I figured out that I was only 200 yards from the beginning of that ultra grotty path that we had just trail blazed down. So I decided to go round by road thinking(!) that I would see them on the other side, but no, all I found were some tyre tracks. We had mentioned Shipley for lunch so I rapidly headed there, but again no sign of them and so I thought (I did a lot of thinking this day didn't I!) "sod you lot" and took my own way home via Partridge Green & Hurstpierpoint to Lewes.

I rang David in the evening and apparently they had had lunch in a pub at Dial Post and took roughly the same route home. All in all, despite the brambles, it was a pretty fun weekend.

THE BRITISH WEATHER.

Did you see
The B.B.C. ?
The whole of England has a drought,
But local is of course left out;
When the country's drenched in rain,
How come 'Local's' never the same?
Or sun is shining totally,
Except in places 'Locally'?
Blizzards, storm and squall,
Thunder, icy roads . . . they're all,
Occurring somewhere parochial;
Where is this awful place called 'Local'?

LETTERS

4 Buckland Gardens,
Calmore,
Southampton
SO4 2SB

26th Sept. 1988

Dear Mr. Rix,

I wanted to write sooner but due to the postal strike I have had to wait. I rode the 'Hampshire Hog' 200 km. earlier this month; my first CTC run and my first at this distance. Although a keen cyclist I have invariably either ridden solo or short distances (100 kms.). Five members of your D.A. "picked me up" and helped me along so that I not only finished the ride, I also enjoyed their company as well as the scenery. I do not remember the surnames, or even all the christian names of the group, however their faces and words of advice are well remembered.

Please accept my thanks to these five of your East Sussex D.A. who made an outing a good outing.

yours sincerely

Carl Calvert.

FOURTEEN WEEKS IN FRANCE

by Maggie Jakeman.

France, summer sun and bicycles is a combination which always works well with us and this summer we were able to prolong our stay by working for three months as on-site representatives for Susi Madron's "Cycling for Softies", a Manchester based company which arranges holidays in 8 different regions in France.

We first encountered the organisation 3 years ago when we went on one of these holidays ourselves in the Mayenne area just north of the Loire. It was whilst talking to the two representatives there that we decided that it was something that we would like to do too. After some preliminary enquiries we found that mature couples were as welcome as students but that we would have to wait for Dennis' retirement which was in January this year. We offered ourselves as a "package" since neither of us could fulfil all the conditions - Dennis went as the bicycle expert and I was the French speaker.

"Cycling for Softies" offers touring cycling holidays for periods of 7, 9, 12 or 14 days. Included in the price is transport to the base hotel, a fully equipped bicycle with panniers plus the back-up of on-site representatives. Holiday makers spend the first two nights in the base hotel, then one or two nights in the hotels en route and finally the last night back at base. There is also a further choice of holiday when the holiday makers use the base hotel only and find their own accommodation for their tour.

The job of the representative is to make sure that everything goes smoothly for the holiday maker. We were always at the hotel for their arrival and departure (even if flight or taxi were late) and made sure that there were no problems. We had prepared their chosen bicycles in advance and on issue checked that saddle and handle bar heights were at a comfortable level and sometimes even had to teach people how to ride with derailleur gears. Dennis always gave what he called a "bike demo", when he explained simple maintenance (brake and gear adjustments, broken spokes, wheel removal) and demonstrated with great aplomb, how to mend the dreaded punctures. My job was to augment the information in the holiday pack and talk in general about the area, give advice on what to pack (and what to leave behind) and pass on information about shop opening hours, how to get reciprocal National Health cover etc. There was no free day so representatives can either take a day off individually, or do as we did and take time off together in the afternoon. For this each representative receives a small weekly allowance, transport to and from the job, accommodation in a furnished apartment in the village and a meal in one of the hotels, once a week.

We chose to travel by car and carry our bikes on the roof. Living so close to Newhaven we would have preferred to go to Dieppe but the company only gets concession tickets with P & O so we had to cross Portsmouth - Le Havre. We took the night boat and had the luxury of a cabin for the voyage. Fortunately our arrival in Le Havre was early in the morning, as coping with driving on the right hand side of the road in a strange country and busy city whilst struggling to read the road signs sufficiently in advance is always rather fraught. It did not take us too long to soon be out in the country and looking for a wayside cafe for our first French breakfast of coffee and croissants.

Although we were to work in Provence our initial destination was Villereal, a base site for the Dordogne region, where we were to spend four days training. We left home a few days early in order to do some sightseeing en route and travelled by way of Chartres to see the cathedral, the Loire Valley to visit some of the fairy tale chateaux and the Venise Vert to see the canals.

The training was, for the most part, not particularly useful. What we did need to know was how the company operated its system, but the tedious hours spent listening and watching how to maintain a bike were not necessary for Dennis and not practical enough to turn me into a mechanic - I learnt a lot more from Dennis when we were actually on the job and I always felt that my bike demos, although painfully slow, were

probably more realistic for the majority of our clients.

It would seem that in the past, and to some extent even now, more emphasis has been placed on selecting people who can deal with people and speak French rather than maintain a bicycle, this latter being left to the training. However, we had a pleasant stay in a very comfortable hotel and had some time to look around the region on our bicycles. On our final evening Susi took us to the sort of country restaurant everyone hopes to find, for an absolutely mouth watering meal.

Training completed we took to the road again and drove on the autoroute all the way to our base hotel at Caromb, a small village in the department of the Vaucluse about 20 miles east of Avignon. The trip on the autoroute was not as horrific as might be supposed; French motorways are well-constructed and easy to drive on at a consistent pace, they go through rather attractive scenery and have excellent facilities in the various off-road stopping places.

We approached Caromb in the foothills of the famous Mont Ventoux in the late evening. As we drove towards the mountain with its white peak shining in the sunshine, we could see a scattering of small villages perched on top of low hills - the famous "villages perchs". Which one was ours we wondered as we drove further into the valleys.

Our route into Caromb was up a steep tree-lined hill, a hill which I was to climb up and down three or four times a day during our stay. It certainly was a picture postcard medieval village, with old crumbling stone buildings in a maze of alley ways and covered passages. Our base hotel, Le Belfroi (the belfry) was, as its name implies, beside the local belfry. Belfries are a common feature in these once-beleaguered villages, when the belfry served as a watch tower to signal the arrival of the approaching enemy. Sitting outside in the sun on the terrace were the hotel's landlord and landlady, Monsieur and Madame Lahontan, who welcomed us with warmth and offered us the first of many coffees.

Most of our guests were to stay in the more modern hotel annexe at the bottom of the aforementioned hill (hence my frequent climbs) but we initially stayed in the quaint old hotel with its low beams and stone walls. The dinner menu had been especially prepared for the "Susis" as our holiday makers are called in France. Madame had translated it from the French with no knowledge of English, just a dictionary to help her, so we weren't too sure what "smoked duck with lawyer" was going to taste like, until we realised that avocat can be avacado pear or lawyer! Translation apart, the dinner was excellent - a choice of five or six starters, a sorbet floating in a very strong Provençal liqueur, Marc, a choice of five or six main courses, the cheese platter and then, for sweet-toothed Dennis, the best course of all, a sweet trolley laden with mouth-watering desserts and if they didn't suit there was also the home-made icecream and sorbets.

Caromb is situated in the centre of the Vaucluse and in the foothills of the lower Provençal Alps. The area still has olive groves, but not so many as in former times. Instead there are fields of fruit and vegetables and hectares of vineyards growing grapes for bottle and table. The scenery is spectacular with high mountains topped by bare grey granite standing between flat plains. Hills there were in abundance but we found as usual in France that the gradients are fairly gentle and so the climbs are not too arduous and of course the views and then the descents quite breathtaking.

Work started on day two. We moved into a room in the hotel annexe, a renovated farmhouse set in an avenue of pines and with a garden with a ground cover of herbs which exuded perfumes as we walked. Beside the hotel was the garage which was to be our work place for the next three months. It was huge; more the size of an aircraft hanger and housing along with our 96 bicycles and their attendant tools and equipment, two caravans, one of which was used by the somewhat eccentric owner when he came to stay.

Although Provence had been used as a holiday area before, this year was the first to have Caromb as its base, so we had the job of setting up the garage for the season. What greeted us were the bicycles, with pedals off and handle bars turned for storing,

leaning against the wall, grouped into frame sizes - 24" (black), 23" (grey), 21" (blue), 19" (red) plus some 18", some children's bicycles and a fairy cycle. It was Saturday and we were expecting our first party of four holiday makers the following Tuesday.

The Manchester office sends details of who is coming and what bicycles will be needed three weeks in advance and we had to get ourselves into a routine of preparing bicycles against this list, always keeping an eye out for possible shortfalls when we would have to offer an alternative frame size. There was a choice of frame types - 10 speed drops, 5 speed top tube or mixte frame and 3 speed hub "shoppers". When booking, holiday makers state the frame of their preference and give their height, a measurement which we found was not always a good guide to frame size but apparently when people have been asked for inside leg measurement they haven't given anything.

We had holiday makers arriving three times a week - sometimes only two would come, other times 16. In our busiest time, which was June, we averaged 12 people three times a week, so having bicycles prepared for those numbers meant a lot of initial very hard work.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays we farewelled in the morning and welcomed another batch in the afternoon. Each group had to have its bike demo from Dennis and the talk with drinks in the garden by me. Everyone spent the first day in the area around the village, stayed the second night in the base hotel and then set off on their tour on the third morning. When they left we stored their suitcases in the garage and put them back in their rooms on their return.

Only a small proportion of people have actually read all the pre-holiday leaflets and maps in detail and few had any firm plans about where they wanted to go, how they were going to get there, and what special sights there were to see. It was part of our job to help with this planning and apart from the talk we had a display of brochures and cards and maps with a selection of routes marked out. Holiday makers varied from current CTC members and ex-racing cyclists to the over 70's who hadn't ridden "since the war", so we had to take all this into account when recommending routes. Most people had been abroad before but we also had a smattering of less seasoned travellers. Whatever the category, everyone said they appreciated having the on-site representatives as a back-up if things went wrong, which fortunately for us as well as them, was not very often.

Dennis spent most of his time working on the bicycles and he soon found that looking after 96 bicycles, which were going to be lent out, required a different attitude to maintenance from our home "stable" of four. At first he worked inside the garage, but it wasn't long before the weather was warm enough to spend most of the day outdoors in a small rear garden (opposite an abandoned cherry orchard). I would attend to the admin and liaise with the various hoteliers and transport providers. My constant nightmare was that someone would miss a plane, a possibility since we were a two hour drive from the airport through a busy network of roads. I would also deal with everything that had to be dealt with in French. In between times I would help with the bicycles, making sure which ones needed to be prepared, "bagging up" the new requirements and giving the returned bikes a clean and initial check and adjustment. Keeping an eye on the logistics of people and bicycles in constantly changing circumstances meant I had to be well organised and never behind.

A belated six weeks after our arrival we finally moved into our apartment and began to really feel as if we were residents of the village. The apartment was within the old village. It had quarry tile floors and white walls and views from both sides - up the hill towards the belfry and across the valley to the slopes and the ever-changing view of Mont Ventoux, the site of the death of the English racing cyclist, Tommy Simpson. The sun rose directly behind the mountain, presenting us with glorious changes in sky colour in the morning and then again in the evening as the sun's rays hit it from the West.

Working, rather than holidaying in the village, made us feel quite a part of the community and it was not long before my daily shopping round included chats with

various small shopkeepers. Their attitude always changed when I said we were actually working in the village.

Life was not all work. Firstly there were the holiday makers themselves; we met many people with interesting hobbies and jobs and spent time talking to them over drinks before and after dinner. By the time we moved into our apartment the weather had become very hot (86°) at midday and Dennis began to go for some early morning rides when he often met immaculately dressed and equipped "sportif" riders, also taking advantage of the cool morning air. On our free afternoons we either cycled in the immediate vicinity (partly for pleasure and partly so that we could be better informed about the area), or we took the car and visited some of the more distant well-known sites in the area - the Roman amphitheatres in Orange and Arles, the magnificent Roman bridge the Pont du Gard and the hilltop villages, home for artists both past and present.

Time as ever caught up with us with many things undone but with happy memories of people and places to take home. We said goodbye to the hotelier and his staff over champagne after dinner on the hotel terrace one warm Provencal evening. Next day we set off for home via the Beaujolais with a stop in a riverside hotel and then on to a typical Normandy village before catching our ferry from Le Havre - the end of three memorable months.

AXON'S CAMPAIGN FOR REAL JARGON

(Any complaints or comments to Colin Axon, not the Editor.)

Jargon

Translation

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Binary contact, rotational to translational motion, mobility enhancement device. | A bicycle. |
| 2. Personally negative, mono-directional survival current flow | Your bank account. |
| 3. Emergency repair procedure no. 1. | Hit it hard. |
| 4. Symbiotic wrist mounted chronological counter. | Watch. |
| 5. Terminate with maximum prejudice. | Kill. |
| 6. Transparent wall maintenance engineers. | Window cleaners. |
| 7. Rapid deceleration factor. | Hitting the ground after you come off your bike. |
| 8. They exhibited a 100% mortality response. | They all died. |

MORE ODD CUTTINGS

An Asian firm of Builders, Singh & Sons, in the Birmingham area have a sign on the side of their van that says "You've tried the cowboys, now try the Indians".

There are about 10 honeymoon-worth British Virgins, and it takes a bit of time to get to any of them.

A POSTMAN'S LOT.

(The following article which originally appeared in the Sussex Post of February 1974, has been passed to me by John Bainbridge thinking it might appeal to our readers, I agree. Ed.)

Out before the first bird call, I make my way to work. Past our ancient church surrounded by moss-grown wall, on my right a gnarled yew tree keeping sentinel over the 'narrow cells' where past village 'worthies' sleep. I have travelled this lane many times, today is special. I am sixty, my established service is at an end; yes its smoked out butt end.

5 a.m., preparation begins, I remember arriving here forty years ago, complete with old 'shako', wages thirty shillings a week, 48 hours. The walls were painted 'workhouse' green, discipline was tough, our Head Postmaster an ex-colonel. No saint myself I could accept it. Scruffy, young, mostly hungry, the dole queue in mind, my service at Haywards Heath began.

This morning's conversation seems little different from many others. It moves from Chelsea's chances to sex and back to Chelsea's chances. A cry goes up, "Where's my effing keys, who's had my sodding hat?", football and sex are discussed with equal abandon. Very soon I am going to miss the hurly burly of the office, the jokers, the moaners, the groaners, the friendly gestures of everyday kindness giving sometimes a shoulder to lean on. On occasion being glad of a shoulder to lean on myself.

Anticipated pleasure of retirement is missing, in its place comes nostalgia, maybe a little sadness.

Musing must come to an end. Cecil arrives late and unhappy looking, surely one day he will walk in singing the grasshoppers' song, "Oh the world owes me a living". The Inspector gazes absently at the notice board not speaking to the late arrival, pleased another duty won't be lapsed. Such is the respect for this Inspector by the uniform grade he is referred to as the 'Pope', Protestant and Catholic alike are in accord with his title, for he is a good man, his office has heard many confessions. Anglican has equal right to the much worshipped docket, so all are happy.

En route for the country at last, I glance at the church clock fired by the suns early rays above the morning mist. So much has changed since my rural round began long long ago. The homely country pub, oil light, sawdust, roaring open fire, strong beer, replaced by neon sign, plastics, hygiene and swill. Square ugly houses where field and orchard enclosed grazing sheep and cattle.

Still can be found the Sunday quietness of the lonely lane, winding like a stream by the thatched cottages of friends I deliver to. Sit with me a short while and take tea with Mrs. Lewry. Kettle humming on the hob, clock contentedly ticking time away. A log slips in the friendly fire showering sparks up the wide chimney. Two china dogs on mantelpiece with a bland look on their faces, that has been there for a hundred odd years, gaze at Mrs. L. as she dozes in the warmth of her room. Half read letters slipping from her fingers she wakes, her face furrowed by the plough of time and sadness, here many tears have run since her husband died. I drink my tea noticing the room's warmth has caused the curtain to cling to the window. A warmth equalled by the kindness of the lonely occupant.

Another friend, Bert, paralysed for many a year with a malignant complaint, he sat at his window day after day. I thought of him as a weak plant leaning towards the sun, a quick chat on the way out, sound horn on the way back. He's been dead a long time. I still sound the horn, I think he hears me yet.

Station service. Geoff, Danny and I stand by the gate, out pour commuters, haggard, pallid, worried looking, clutching briefcases that this morning contained sandwiches. Stubby fingers stuffing pipes, anxious eyes searching for harassed wives in choked up car park. We see them and envy none. Depressing rain blows fitfully across the platform, torn paper flaps forlornly from hoardings, signal lights reflect brightly on wet

rails, discarded wrappings trap our feet where this morning the dry leaves of country trees were lingering.

Often I pass through the grounds of the Holy Cross Convent. The unconscious beauty of the garden gives me great pleasure, heightened by the sweet singing of the sisters, their voices in holy song lifting to the rafters of the chapel. Moved in spirit I pause 'neath the ancient beeches and almost believe in God.

Toward the end of my dark ride home tonight I shall see a cottage light, a lamp that holds all my ambitions.

There's no moral to be read in this article, it could be from one day, any day, forty-six years cannot be condensed into a page or so. Not parcels, packets and letters, but to whom they are going has concerned me most. I have become a rich man, in friendship. So long. F.M. Jackson, Haywards Heath.

* * * * *

WEATHER LORE

Everyone must know the old adage -

Red sky at night, Shepherd's delight;

Red sky in the morning, Shepherd's warning.

and according to tests this is accurate about 80% of the time. But how many of you have heard these less well-known sayings and how accurate do you think they are.

1. If the sun goes pale to bed,
Twill rain tomorrow, so 'tis said.
2. When mountains and cliffs in the clouds appear,
Some sudden and violent showers are near.
3. Swallows high, staying dry;
Swallows low, wet 'twill blow.
4. When sheep do huddle by tree and bush,
Bad weather is coming with wind and slush.
5. Dew before midnight, Tomorrow will be bright.
6. If rainbow green is large and bright,
Rain is still somewhere in sight;
If red is strongest colour of all,
Then winds will blow, rain will fall.
7. The goose and the gander, begin to meander;
The matter is plain, they are dancing for rain.
8. Hark! I hear the asses bray;
We shall have some rain today.
9. The louder the frog, the more the rain.
10. Pimpernel, pimpernel, tell me true,
Whether the weather be fine or no.

Accuracy (according to tests):- 4, 7, 8 - none at all; 2, 3, 6, 9 - good;
1 - very good; 5 - excellent; 10 - almost 100%

AUGUST IN NORTH YORKSHIRE

by David Rix

We had said over a year before, when we first heard that the '88 Birthday Rides were to be in North Yorkshire, that we would have to go. I had long wanted to visit the North York Moors - Susan had been before - and this would be an ideal opportunity to see them in the company of people who knew the area, plus we could take the following week to explore on our own.

An early start July 30th (Sat.), with breakfast and elevenses on the way up found us in Malton by about 12.30, where we booked in at the campsite and then wandered off to find some lunch and to explore Malton & its twin town of Norton. After cooking and eating our evening meal the day was rounded off by an introductory slide show on North Yorkshire at the Milton Rooms in Malton. Here we bumped into several old friends including Keith Parfitt of West Surrey D.A. and Richard & Margaret Nicholl, formally of Edenbridge and now running their own section in the Aberdeen area.

Sunday and the first official rides found us on the C ride to Dalby Forest, our leader however seemed to think he was on an A ride and had us at 11's at Thornton-le-Dale just after 10 a.m. With 3 rides converging here the village was soon overrun and we were glad to have got our coffee early. There then followed a section of rough stuff (a bit muddy in places) up into Dalby Forest to Low Dalby where we joined the Forest Drive for a scenic ride to Everley, getting our first view of the famous 'Golf Balls' of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning Station on Fylingdales Moor. Lunch was eaten by the Everley Hotel with excellent views up and down the valley. A pleasant ride on our own back through the lanes, with tea at Ebberston - also full of cyclists - had us back at camp by 5.30 to be greeted by Maurice Colburn, who had just arrived hot foot from the AIT Rally in Shropshire the week before.

Monday and we were in York, with a good many other riders as 3 rides headed here. Only three hours to look round, though we managed a walk along the walls and a look at the Minster as well as a wander around the pedestrianised central streets, including the famous shambles.

Tuesday we went out on a C ride again, to Farndale, with some fantastic scenic views especially on the section between Fadmoor and Hutton-le-Hole, which though a magnet for the tourists is well worth a visit - especially the Ryedale Folk Museum with its old buildings. We decided on a change for Wednesday and started out on the B ride, "Tracks & Brows", but on reaching the picturesque village of Thixendale for elevenses we defected to the C ride due to the extremely muddy rough stuff - and we didn't fancy chancing any more. Not having had enough during the day, we then went to bed that evening completely worn out after the barn dance at the Milton Rooms.

Thursday we had a day off the bikes and drove into York to see more of this beautiful old city and its buildings and museums - you really need several days there's so much. On the way in we stopped at the relatively new, and very good, Yorkshire Museum of Farming and then on to the National Railway Museum where we also had lunch. Leaving the car in the long stay car park we walked into the city centre and the Castle Museum. Here we could have done with more time, there was so much to see with all the reconstructions of old shops and cottages etc., as well as the other displays, but we were soon having to go since we had booked with the group going to see the new Jorvik Viking Centre that evening - an experience not to be missed. The Viking Centre is a reconstruction of the original Viking settlement at York on the site of the actual archaeological finds, and it is complete with figures of the people, and all the sights, sounds and smells!

A change of plan on Friday with a visit to Castle Howard which, though excellent and in a magnificent setting, we did not think as good as Chatsworth which we had visited the year before. Being the 5th there was the annual Birthday Tea, which was held in the grounds of Hovingham Hall, then in the evening we enjoyed ourselves at the Last Night Dance.

Saturday morning saw a few empty spots on the lightweight sight, which slowly increased while we were packing and taking down our tent. Coffee was had in the comfort of Syd & Grace Richardson's van on the main site and then we did the round of the stalls at Malton market, picking up a few bargains, before driving North to eat our lunch looking out over Cropton Forest towards the Moors. Then it was on to our new camp site at Rosedale Abbey in the heart of the North York Moors.

After booking in and pitching our tent the afternoon was spent on a walk exploring the local area - it started off well and we got some magnificent views, but the A.A. Tourist Guide said nothing about the boggy section that we found ourselves squelching through - in sandals! My socks will never be white again. After this we decided to abandon the last section and head back by road.

The weather was being kind to us and the following few days were all hot and sunny. Sunday saw us going North over the moors via Rosedale Head to Castleton for coffee. It was a 5 mile climb followed by a steeper 3 mile descent, but the views across the moors were magnificent with the purple heather, just coming into bloom, stretching off in all directions. We continued along beautiful Esk Dale, crossing the ancient (and narrow) pack horse bridge at Danby and visiting the North York Moors Centre, where we had a chance to have a go at some spinning. Afternoon tea was at the Shepherds Hall Tea Rooms in Lealholm and then it was back over the Moors, with a distant view of the Golf Balls, to descend steeply back into Rosedale Abbey. After dinner we took a walk up Rosedale Chimney Bank to see the remains of the chimney, demolished in 1982 when it became too dangerous, and also to pick a spot to watch the Tour of Britain from on Tuesday.

Markets are common in this part of the country and Monday was market day in Pickering, with gaily coloured stalls and plenty of bargains, though nothing to tempt us. We had had a misty start but by mid-morning most of this had burnt off and it became very hot. The Beck Isle Museum proved to be well worth a visit with exhibits on local life and history, including old shops etc. - excellent value for money. Coffee was had in the station cafe at Pickering and then it was all aboard the North York Moors Railway for the journey by steam train to Grosmont. This trip has to be done, it takes in some spectacular scenery and must be one of the most enjoyable steam train rides I have had. We broke our journey at Goathland to enable us to visit Malyan Spout waterfall - though Susan let me do all the clambering over wet rocks to get the best pictures! We caused a bit of confusion getting off here since the guards van did not reach the platform and the bikes had to be lifted down, we thanked them but I didn't like to tell them that we were getting back on the next train.

Leaving Grosmont, at the end of the Line, we crossed two fords and then climbed steeply onto the moors, to eat our lunch at a point where we could look down on the steam trains puffing back up the valley. The road continued to climb for 4 to 5 miles, crossing Wheeldale Moor, to the Roman Road where the tarmac ended and we continued by track (and two more fords) for 1½ miles to Stape. Here the cafe recommended by Syd and Grace was closed so we had to forego tea, and shrugging this off we left the road again to take the track (better than a lot of roads I've been on) through Cropton Forest. It was cooler and peaceful amongst the trees, with one section that continued slightly downhill in a straight line for over a mile. Eventually we emerged at the Forestry camp site and returned up the valley to Rosedale.

Tuesday started cool but became very hot later. We took a loop south to the edge of the Moors via Lastingham and Kirkby Moorside for 11's, then back via Hutton-le-Hole to the top of Rosedale Chimney Bank where we made our way down to our chosen vantage point to watch the Tour. It was only luck that we were there, I had picked the camp site out as suitable several weeks before unaware that the Tour of Britain would pass through the village whilst we were there - in fact we only learnt the exact route when I managed to pick up a Tour guide on the drive up! We had arrived at 12.30 and sat and ate our lunch in glorious sunshine. There were already a good many people about even though the riders weren't due till after 4.00 p.m.

As the afternoon passed the crowds grew (over 3,000 we heard later) and it got hotter and hotter - a lot of burnt bodies that evening.

Finally at about 4.00 the riders were sighted at Rosedale Head and 15 minutes later they started the climb (the steepest part of which is more than 1 in 3), many of them making it look extremely easy - though surprisingly some of the Spaniards got off and walked. Too soon it was all over and the crowds dispersing, but I had my pictures to bring it all back later. The tea rooms, as you can imagine, did a roaring trade and we just managed to squeeze into one for tea and cream scones.

9.00 Wednesday morning found us packed up and on our way north to a new camp at Goathland, where we checked in, pitched our tent and were out on the bikes just after 10.00 on our way to Whitby. We stopped at Sleights, after the long sweeping descent off the Moors, for coffee at the Riverside Tea Rooms (very good value) and then rode on into Whitby.

Whitby is a delightful seaside town with a picturesque harbour; sections of the new town on the north of the river have been pedestrianised allowing the visitor to stroll around, and the old town to the south is a delight with its cobbled streets and ancient buildings. Susan wasn't so delighted when I suggested we take our bikes up the steep cobbled climb to the abbey, but we made it and enjoyed the view. We sat looking out over the harbour and watching the sea fog, laying about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile out, as we ate our lunch. Heading south to Robin Hood's Bay we met the fog, but as we walked down the steep streets of this picturesque hamlet we dropped out of it and, after exploring the twisting passageways and streets, we found on leaving that it had almost completely cleared. We did visit one new attraction - the Smuggling Experience - where you walked through darkened passages and experience the sounds, the smells and the unexpected scenes of smuggling on the Yorkshire coast in the 18th C. Plenty of 1 in 4's on the way back, and a stop to see Falling Foss Waterfall.

Light showers greeted us Thursday morning but luckily these did not last after breakfast, though it remained very windy. Susan was not too sure about my suggestion for today - doing an eight mile stretch of bridleway across the top of Fylingdales Moor. However we set off and the start looked promising, and although rutted and sandy in places it was not too bad. The views across the Moors were excellent, with the 'Golf Balls' in the background as an ever-present reminder of the present day and a stark contrast to the ancient stone cross that we passed on Lilla Howe. We did find one locked gate with 200 yards across a grass field beyond it, but then we were onto a gravelled farm track for the last couple of miles back to tarmac.

Coffee was had at 12.00 (it had taken a little longer than expected) at Rosalie's Tea Room at Chapel Farm in Harwood Dale - excellent cakes. We then headed via Hackness for Trouts Dale and ate our lunch looking back down it after the steep climb to the head of this beautiful dale. A bit of rough stuff to get us across to Dalby Forest and then along the well made Forestry tracks to the Forest Drive and Low Dalby, where we looked around the displays at the information centre, before continuing to Thornton-le-Dale for tea. Unfortunately this left us with a ride back up the main road to Goathland, but luckily it was not too busy.

The next morning proved wetter than the previous one - it was bound to be since we were moving on again. It was also very windy. We arrived in Helmsley about mid-morning to find it was market day, and to be greeted by a torrential downpour just as we reached the car park. Luckily it lasted no more than 5 minutes and we were soon able to enjoy a coffee in the Old Police Station Cafe and a wander round the market stalls.

Our campsite, at Bungdale Head Farm, was about 4 miles west, not far from Rievaulx, but was reached up a steep $\frac{1}{4}$ mile drive - excellent views though. After lunch we went out via Rievaulx, and the ruins of its magnificent Cistercian Abbey, and then up Ryedale towards Hawaby and over to the edge of Hambleton Hills where we had tea at High Paradise Farm on the Cleveland Way - the best value cream teas we have ever found. The views from here, and later from the top of Sutton Bank, out

across the Vale of York to the Pennines and Great Whernside nearly 40 miles away are magnificent. A drive down to Helmsley for fish and chips and then a walk along Sutton Bank rounded off our day nicely.

We descended Sutton Bank into Thirsk (the Darrowby of James Herriot's vet books) for coffee on Saturday morning - and another market. After doing a guided tour round Thirsk, taking in James Herriot's Surgery - a bit of an anti-climax as you can only look at the outside - we then continued through the lanes to Kilburn. We ate our sandwiches within view of the white horse carved in the hillside and then looked in the windows of Robert Thompson's Workshop in the village. The work of the 'Mouseman' of Kilburn and his workshop is famous worldwide for the mouse carved on all their furniture. They welcome visitors but unfortunately we found that they are closed on Saturday afternoons.

We returned via Coxgrove, where the church has an octagonal tower and an unusually shaped altar rail, and also passed the ruins of Byland Abbey and through numerous picturesque villages including Wass, Gilling East, Stonegrave, Nunnington and Harome. Nowhere however did we find a tea place, though I did manage to get two twix bars from a P.O. stores to sustain us. From mid-afternoon it had been overcast and we just managed to reach camp and put the bikes on the car roof rack, ready for the drive home in the morning, before the rain started.

Being our last evening we went out for an excellent meal at a little restaurant in Helmsley.

The following morning, as we descended Sutton Bank in the car to start our journey home, I was sorry to be leaving - but, our appetites whetted, I am sure we shall be returning in the not too distant future.

STATION RESTAURANT
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N.B. Jenny Slater tells us cyclists are always welcome and that although their normal hours are 12.00 - 5.30 they are always there in the morning - so even if it does say closed you are welcome to knock at the kitchen door.

BACKROADS TO BAYEAUX.

by Roy James.

The 'Duc de Normandie' flagship and most modern of Brittany Ferries fleet will land you almost on Sword Beach, the invasion beach for Britain's 3rd Infantry Division whose task it was to capture Caen in June 1944. But the present day holiday invasion is of a much more gentle nature and the ferry port at Oustriham-Riva-Bella opened as recently as 1986 does not seem to have altered in any way the thoroughly French ambience of this delightful if unambitious family seaside resort.

As with all invasions, timing is of the essence and my personal one last June seemed to be judged to a nicety. 6.30 in the morning may seem an ungodly hour on holiday but I had slept soundly in one of the admirable couchettes aboard for 6 hours and by the time I had ridden off the car deck and found a quiet spot along the sea front it was 7.00, the bakers were opening their shop doors and the smell of fresh baguettes was mingling with the salt touched air. At a little cafe-bar on my way out of town I took the owner by surprise when I propped the bike up against his wall and went in to ask for 'petit dejeuner', but he quickly slipped out and a few minutes later returned with a basket full of those lovely loaves. In no time I was putting away my first breakfast of the holiday in the accepted french way, dipping the crusty 'flute' in my coffee to soften the crust.

Off then on the by-roads in the general direction of Bayeaux. I love the sheer emptiness of this calvados region but, even allowing for the far from direct route that I took, the distance to Bayeaux can scarcely be more than 30 kms. Fields of flax were in bloom, blushing them with the palest hint of blue. Stop to examine the flowers and they are hardly visible but en masse they resemble more than anything a powder blue mist rising from the dark soil with the warmth of the sun. Here was perfect cycling country. Near empty roads passing through quiet villages, many of them twinned with similar communities in North and South Devon. Past high roofed and turreted farm houses seemingly deserted except for the occasional scraggly dog standing at the gate watching me with indolent eyes. So it remained until I reached Martragny, a hamlet scarce 8 kms. from Bayeaux. Here stands the Chateaux de Martragny with its excellent 4 star camp site. Quiet, well-ordered and spacious, Martragny has it all. Hot showers, swimming pool in a walled garden, shop, launderette and bar. You don't even need to do your own cooking. Order from the menu displayed in the shop daily and a cooked meal will be delivered to your tent. Such refinements were not for me however. I take an inverted pride in being independent when cycle touring and even if it is sometimes a bit basic I prefer my camping that way.

The next day I set off for Bayeaux. Once again on the little country roads that are the delight of rural France. These took me to the very edge of this charming, historical and, let's face it, rather touristy town. Could it be otherwise when it has in its keeping an historical document of such detail and beauty as 'La Tapisserie de la Reine Matilde'. Get a town map and I guarantee you that so compact is the town that you will know it like the back of your hand in an hour. But the tapestry is the thing. Housed in the 18th century former Seminary which has become a cultural centre under the grand title of 'La Centre Guillaume-le-Conquerant', the complete 70 metre work of art is displayed in an unimaginative but accessible way. Discovering that parties of 20 or more pay 10Fr instead of 17Fr I quickly joined up with a French coach party who made me very welcome. An extra 3Fr pays for a taped commentary that details events leading up to and including the Battle of Hastings. Gallic pride must be the reason for not mentioning Harold's stunning victory of Harald Hanrada at Stamford Bridge and of his troops' forced march from York just days before the final battle at Senlac, but in Normandy the Duke can do no wrong.

Where to leave the bike can often be a problem in a strange town, so may I offer a hint that has served me well in the past. Come straight out with the difficulty at the town's tourist office and invariably they will find a safe corner for it somewhere. My cycle ended up at the rear of the Syndicat d'Initiative in a cellar with several hundred bottles of wine so I knew it was quite safe.

On foot it is easier to explore the numerous cobbled alleys and lanes, allowing the atmosphere of the town to filter through. Bayeaux escaped serious damage during the invasion despite being the first town of any size to be liberated. A town famous for its pottery and lace-making, not to mention its graceful, medieval cathedral, Bayeaux

still retains many of its 14th century buildings built of that beautiful Caen stone and amply rewards a long day visit. Plenty of restaurants and bars to choose from, although 'hot dog au fromage' from one of the numerous take aways suited me very well.

After Bayeaux there is still the Suisse Normande, a region to the South-East that I found to be just perfect for a week of quiet cycling. That is another story though and if I have whetted your appetite for a few days in Normandy that is good enough for me.

The people well dressed; and, though last not least, the girls remarkably pretty, as, indeed, they are in most parts of Sussex; round faces, features small, little hands and wrists, plump arms and bright eyes. Sussex men too, are remarkable for their good looks.

William Cobbett:1852.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

by Rose Hill.

A trip to Northumberland, the unspoiled part of Britain, a land of castles and the Cheviot hills.

We set out by car with the tandem and Pete's bike strapped to the roof rack early Saturday with a new set of wheels for the tandem, only arrived the Wednesday before so no chance to try them properly. Straight run up the A1 stopping for breakfast and then at Richmond, a lovely old town, for dinner. We met the Stevens' on the only hold up - the Tyne & Wear Tunnel - so followed them to the campsite at Eglington just outside Alnwick. A walk round the little church and castle ruins to stretch our legs in the evening.

Next day (as every day) dawned sunny, we couldn't ride the tandem as the stoker had bruised ribs from a fall just the day before the holiday, but went by car to the seaside and the next day (still suffering) to Hadrian's Wall. It was a chance to see the Wall as we probably wouldn't make it by bike - just a bit too far.

Next day raring to go but the weather decided otherwise. A trip to Alnwick and then, as the rain came down at lunchtime, a day for being in the dry somewhere. Alnwick Castle, still very much a home with even a Christmas card from the Queen on the showcase. Some shopping done in Alnwick, a lovely old town with cobbled market place and very good tea rooms.

Wednesday was the highlight of the week I think with a trip round Kielder Water and back via an unmade toll road through the Kielder Forest; the water always makes a setting for photographs, so plenty of stops. We met some Americans touring for 3 months; they had well equipped fold-up bikes and were interesting to talk to. They had been over here before and we met them again at Bellingham where they were Bed & Breakfasting for the night. What a lovely life!

Another highlight was a trip to Lindisfarne or Holy Island, had to watch the tides here as it is cut off during high tide. The fishermen were sorting out their catch and some of the old boats were used as sheds - thought that was a good idea. Castle and Priory ruins here to see, used to be used by the Monks.

Thursday dawned bright again but let us down on our ride back, but can't grumble only about 1/2 hours ride in the rain and Mick had devised a dining shelter using the car roof rack and our's and Pete's tents so we were quite comfortable - very ingenious.

The other two castles we visited were Bamburgh, a photographer's dream as it stood out from the coastline looking towards the Farne Islands, and Walkworth, a real old castle and mostly in ruins but my idea of how they should be, able to use the imagination here and not formally set out as others. We found some good tea rooms and happy memories of them, one especially plied us with free coffees as they were expecting the press and would we stay till after they had been. You could tell they had only been open a week by the size of the slices of cake. We never got to Casters, where the kippers come from, but hope to return as there is so much unspoiled countryside to see and such variety. The Cheviot Hills formed a lovely backcloth for so many of the photo's, with very little traffic even on the few main roads.

A PLACE TO VISIT AGAIN ONE DAY.

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