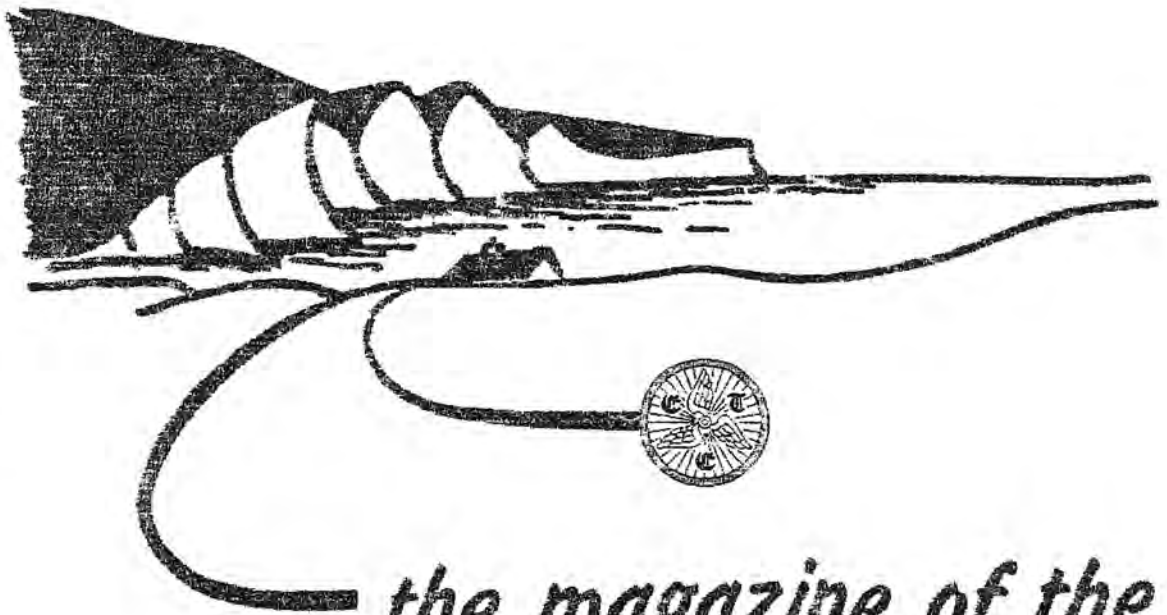


The  
**Coaster**



*the magazine of the*

**EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION  
CYCLIST TOURING CLUB**

No. 19

25p

East Sussex District Association - Cyclists Touring Club

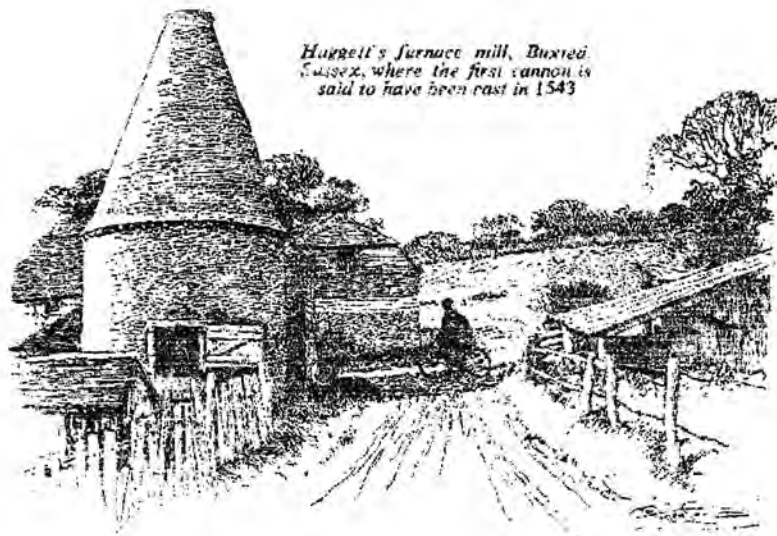
"The Coaster"

Summer 1990 - Issue No.19

PRESIDENT MRS. ANN RIX

Secretary

& Editor: David Rix, 27 Fullwood Avenue, Newhaven E. Sx., BN9 9SP.



*Hargell's furnace mill, Buxted  
Sussex, where the first cannon is  
said to have been cast in 1543*

Editorial

Owing to David being in hospital waiting for an operation for a displaced disc, this edition has been put together by my eldest son Jonn and I (in consultation with David) so please address any comments on it to us.

At the time of going to print (end of June) David will have been laying on his back for seven weeks so I am sure all D.A. members will wish him well and hope to see him on his feet again before too long.

If you've got a story to tell, or an interest that you would like to share with other members, or a tour you want to write about, then don't hesitate, the length doesn't matter, it can be just a few lines up to a few pages. Think about it, especially if you have just been or are going on holiday, it would be nice to have a few new contributors. We will print (almost) anything - I don't think David has turned down anything yet. The magazine is only what you make it.

*Ann Rix*

## 2nd East Sussex Firemans' Randonnee

by Geoff Boxall and Roger Bradgate

Well! the 13th of May arrived with good weather predicted and following urgent re-arrangements required due to Sealink problems (the captain had tried to sink the "Charres" leaving only one boat working), we prepared for the start. This year a stronger contingent (12) arrived from Dieppe by boat (10 minutes early - but who bribed the captain is not known!!) and a total of 72 riders signed on for the start, of these the Fire Brigade fielded six entrants, four of which were from Eastbourne fire station. We set off for Seaford at 08.35 looking like a well dressed version of the Tour de France, the traffic found it hard to pass the group in the early stages but were uncomplaining. From Seaford we progressed on to Alfriston, through the lanes to Berwick, Chalvington and East Hoathly by which time the riders had broken up into about four or five bunches. From here a steady climb was taken through to Cross in Hand, Five Ashes, Castle Hill, Rotherfield and then via Jarvis Brook to Crowborough fire station where piles of beef, salmon and cheese sandwiches and apple pies and cake were demolished and washed down with tea, coffee, fruit juice and Yub's home made beer. The Mayor of Crowborough Councillor Paul Scott and Diana his wife attended to socialize with the riders and having heard of the home made beer and sarnies the fire brigade fielded a socializing committee of Tony Miller, Terry Johns and Peter Cameron-Waller - "sans velos"!!

At about 12.15 the riders departed to follow a route via Nutley, over the border to Horsted Keynes, Lindfield and returning to East Sussex for Wivelsfield Green, Cooksbridge and Lewes to follow the old road via Rodmell and Piddinghoe to arrive after 68.6 miles, earlier than expected, at Newhaven fire station. Once again the firemen excelled themselves in providing the bar, tea and coffee in a sociable atmosphere. Plaques were presented to the youngest rider Nicola Lade (13) from Eastbourne, oldest rider was Fred Mehew (68) from Eastbourne (much to the relief of Frank Drader who was heard to mutter that he wasn't gonna fill no date of birth in 'eos that'll fool'em - what Frank forgot was that us limeys keep records and they include D.O.B.'s). Once again ASPTT Dieppe Cyclo took the plaque for best overseas team and the lads from Eastbourne fire station claimed the best brigade entry shield. Medallions were also on sale for all finishers.

Only three riders failed to finish, one couple, dad and son collided near Cross in Hand when dad decided to give son a helping push, pedals tangled with an ensuing metallic crunch resulting in dented pride, dad's wheel representing a figure 8 but fortunately no injuries. The other non finisher was Mike Venn who retired at Wivelsfield Green with strained legmuscles - our condolences to Mike, last year he had to retire with a seized pedal - perhaps 1991 will be third time lucky.

The new route was voted a success and will be used again in 1991 (maybe slight deviations - depends on course builder Geoff Boxall's whims), when we hope to see all this year's entrants plus new riders.

We would like to say how much we appreciate seeing so many entries from our friends in the East Sussex D.A., your support and encouragement to those who were not used to cycling regularly in such an event or with a large group were invaluable, the comments received from many of the entrants have shown that with such encouragement many will continue cycling and many are looking forward to our next Randonnee. If you have not yet ridden our event we extend a warm invitation to do so. Our thanks are also extended to everyone who helped make the day a huge success, our friends at Newhaven fire station for the start and finishing point and welcome hospitality. Helen Bradgate for slaving for days to make and serve the food at Crowborough. Veteran cyclist Yub Moore (82) for donating 5 gallons of home made beer, and how nice it was to see Yub and Phil on their tandem trike at the finish. Jenny and Niki Boxall for manning the control points, Cliff Venn our intrepid photographer

Due to the problems of the return boat times the ASPTT Dieppe team were transported back to Crowborough to partake of a gigantic bowl of Chilli in Roger Bradgate's garden (liberally drowned with aperitifs and french wine) before finally leaving on the 22.30 boat to Dieppe, for them it would mean almost a 24 hour day before they were home again. The ASPTT Dieppe team presented the organisers, Geoff and Roger with a Pewter Plate which will be displayed at Crowborough fire station.

There will be the third Firemans' Randonnee in 1991 so keep the dust off your bikes and keep pedalling - the route is cyclist friendly, food, drink and company excellent and the cause worthwhile.

We look forward to seeing you there.

### "The Menace of The Sulo Bin"

by Roy James

We have all noticed the steady increase in the numbers of Sulo Bins when riding our country lanes and while I am not one given to wild imaginings I am unable to rid myself of the fear that they are not all they appear to be. It is surely time for someone to set the alarm bells ringing and be bold enough to air their suspicions, even if it earns the ridicule of others.

My own conviction is that these black monstrosities who stand brooding and immobile at the gates of many houses in the country are in fact an advance guard of future legions waiting to metamorphise into alien creatures from outer space.

Before you pour scorn on my suggestion, consider the facts.

- 1) All bins at the moment are situated outside town areas, mainly in less heavily populated districts where suspicions will not be aroused.
- 2) Many of our most influential citizens have these bins standing at the gates of their residences. Even our own Member of Parliament has one, although it is not always on duty. Does this mean that at times it returns to its own planet and reports on our law makers ?
- 3) Are such houses under influence of these so called waste bins ? If any of us have them standing at our own gates, can we be sure that we are not already under the control of forces we do not understand.
- 4) How do they arrive ? Has anyone seen them actually arrive at the gate ? If so, might they not have arrived 'en masse' at some other place, merely waiting to be placed in strategic positions all over the land by unsuspecting council workers.
- 5) They ignore friendly overtures. Just try speaking to them. Any language, it makes no difference. They just stand in their chosen spot, apparently oblivious of our approaches. Blazing sun, rain, hail, snow and wind, they are quite unaffected by the elements and I have the most disquieting feeling that things have already gone too far.

Towns too are being taken over, although at the moment no one has dared to air their misgivings. Not by Sulo Bins of course, for they are rarely seen in built up areas. But what about the bottle banks placed so strategically in many of our car parks ? When the time comes the coup will be simple and complete. Country dwellers already controlled by the black bins will be quickly followed into submission by citizens of towns made fearful and completely immobile by the capture of their cars.

What is to be done ? I don't know, for I can only pose the question. Even if a campaign is raised and by a united effort all Sulo Bins and bottle banks are destroyed, I fear we will still be lost - for what shall we do with our rubbish.

A Force To Be Reckoned With  
by Roy James.

How often we hear the weather forecast with wind forces predicted between 0 to 10 and still have no clear idea what it will be like out on the bike.

Perhaps the vivid precision of the Beaufort wind-force scale as described in a Met. Office pamphlet will be useful to us before setting out for the day.

Force 0. Calm. Smoke rises vertically.

Force 1. Light Air. Direction shown by smoke but not by weather vane.

Force 2. Light Breeze. Wind felt on face; leaves rustle; ordinary vane moves.

Force 3. Gentle Breeze. Leaves and twigs in motion; extends a light flag.

Force 4. Moderate Breeze. Raises dust and loose paper; small branches moved.

Force 5. Fresh Breeze. Small trees in leaf begin to sway;  
Crested wavelets form on inland waters.

Force 6. Strong Breeze. Large branches in motion; Umbrellas used with difficulty.

Force 7. Near Gale. Whole trees in motion; inconvenience felt when walking.

The Beaufort Scale was invented by Rear-Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, who entered the navy in 1787. It continues as high as Force 12 but I find that after Force 7 it is better to stay indoors with a good book.

Through Route Traffic Calming in East Sussex.  
by Jonathan Dalton. (D.A. Rights Officer)

Traffic Calming is a method widely in use on the Continent which has been suggested for areas in Britain.

Basically it consists of self enforcing attractive physical measures, such as road narrowing and trees, to reduce the speed and aggressive tendencies of motor traffic, thus improving the environment. A development of the idea being tried out in Denmark is through-traffic calming, where instead of building a bypass around a town affected by heavy through traffic, at great expense and considerable environmental destruction, the existing main road through the town is adapted to calm and civilise both the through and local traffic. A scheme in Denmark has been monitored, and was found to only delay through traffic by some 9 seconds over what went before, and probably save time over a longer bypass route. It also cost a fraction of the amount required for a bypass. The scheme led to a reduction in accidents, and the severity of them, and importantly allowed local people to relax more while shopping, speaking to friends or whatever. Children were able to play in greater safety. It also encouraged increasing walking or cycling of shorter journeys, rather than car use, due to more amenable conditions.

These measures could be applied in East Sussex. For instance, a vast amount of money is proposed to be spent on a highly environmentally destructive bypass around Polegate. As well as damaging the pleasant countryside behind Polegate it will endanger cyclists at new roundabouts at either end. The road will be made redundant as increasing concern over global warming makes the curbing of motor use essential. Through route traffic calming of the existing route through Polegate and other communities where bypasses have been suggested is a much better and cheaper solution. The change in modal split it would encourage (more cycling and walking, less motoring) would reduce the volume of traffic on the roads with great benefits, and similar measures should apply everywhere.

## Hidden France - A cyclists paradise

by Barry Mockridge

For the past ten summers I have taken my family on holidays to the French Riviera and many readers will shudder with horror at the thought of traffic jams and sharing over crowded campsites and beaches with thousands of others from every corner of Northern Europe.

Yet within a few miles from the fabulous Cote D'Azur is a paradise for cyclists in which there is 73km of narrow road where you are more likely to find another cyclo tourist or a wild boar than a car.

This area is called the "Foret Domaniale D L'esterel" and lies between St. Raphael and Cannes and to quote the Michelin Green Guide - "It is one of the loveliest areas of Provence and has a breath taking beauty" and the paragraph that says it all - "The contrast between the busy life along the coast and the loneliness of the inland roads is extraordinary, the latter will please tourists who prefer to leave the well beaten paths for the pleasure of exploring on their own"

There are no large signposts to direct you here and even some english friends who have lived for 8 years in St Raphael didn't know of its existence except for the view from a car window on the motorway or the Route Nationale that circumnavigate the Esterel Massif. This well kept secret is closed to the public in the height of summer to guard against the threat of forest fires which from time to time have caused widespread destruction of vegetation and wildlife. 1986 saw the last major fire and I remember travelling through the grey dust with blackened trunks of Mediterranean Pines and cork oaks the only things left. The scars are still there in 1990 but the shrub has returned and even the black barked trees have sprouted new growth.

In this mountain terrain the soil is made up of volcanic rock - The Porphyry much prized by the romans in the building of columns for their monuments. Several colours are evident, mainly red but sometimes blue, green, purple, grey and yellow cut into deep ravines and craggy peaks that dispel any impression of mere hills. The great painter Claude Monet despairingly wrote to a colleague "to paint here one would need gold and precious stones".

Many unusual animals, insects, birds and flora inhabit the area and we've seen wild boar, red squirrels, tree frogs, praying mantis, stick insects, scorpions and Gecko (large bright green lizards). Europe's biggest snake (the Montpellier) is a native although we've thankfully never come across one; although they're harmless they are venomous (the fangs being set in the back of the throat).

I understand there are several rare birds but the only things I can recognise are Magpies and Jays which are common. I did have the thrill of spotting a Golden Oriole this May but in another part of Provence. Shamefully my knowledge of flora and butterflies is almost nil but anyone can appreciate the vivid colours that explode all around this natural wonderland. The air is full of perfumed fragrance from the wild lavender; and Thyme and Rosemary grow like buttercups and daisies in an english meadow.

Cycling in the Esterel is either up or down and one of the biggest challenges is Pic De L'Ours (1627 ft) a series of hairpin bends and constantly changing views. From the Notre Dame pass the road is prohibited for motor vehicles so your companions are other cyclists. Last summer I went to the summit with a FFCT member from "Pres" Paris and he volunteered to take my picture with the camera that was constantly slung around my neck. Feeling like Sherpa Tensing he bid me farewell and within seconds disappeared from view as he sped down the mountain back to the coast. I stayed a while to soak up the marvellous views and to relax under the midi sun.

A few days later I decided to tackle the big one - Mont Viaigre (2,027ft) and as the forecast was for a "scorcher" I made sure the bottle was full up with mineral water and donning sunglasses set off past the golf club to the entrance gate to the Esterel. After a short descent I was on the Aurelian Way (the great road from Rome to Arles and one of the most important in the roman empire). Only 8ft wide but you could imagine the legions of soldiers that would have marched on this roadway 2000 years or so before - what a good name for a book I thought "Fatman on a Roman Road" or perhaps it was the mid-day sun (what do they say about mad dogs and englishmen).

I was now climbing a steep incline and zig zagging across the narrow road thinking of Tom Simpson on Mt. Ventoux in that tragic tour of 1967.

With the sun getting hotter it was a relief to refill my bottle from a fountain with cool, clear spring water at the Des Cantonniers Forestry House. The road was now level for a few hundred metres and allowed me to relax before another "honk" up yet another climb. After several bends I got my first glimpse of the summit and it looked a long way from my present position. Not to be discouraged I mumbled to myself "when the going gets tough" but the inner man said "the tough get off and walk" and dismounted in sight of a rest area shaded by trees.

Here was a one piece metal bench that was a delight to sit on (being icy cold) and I was mesmerised by a large bird of prey (an eagle?) that zoomed up to the top carried by the uplifting currents of air from the sea. His ascent was effortless and I would have swapped my 18 gears for his wings. Oh well 'c'est la vie'!

Remounting to climb the final stretch I looked down the steep drops on my right side and soon forgot my envy of the eagle at the thought I could get a set of wings sooner than I planned if I went over the side.

Around another bend and on a retaining wall some religious Zealot had painted psalm 19.1 and I made a mental note to look it up on my return to England. It reads - 'the heavens declare the glory of god and the firmament sheweth his handiwork' (enough said!).

The radio/T.V. mast at the top was now in sight and I tried to find the last amount of energy to make it. The old legs felt like jelly as I've never been a good climber (at 16 stone I'm not really an "angel of the mountains" like a Millar or Herrera). The road came to an end at a Helipad - cum - car park and the last 200 metres was a rocky footpath to the summit. Abandoning the bike I scrambled over the boulders like an excited schoolboy to reach the viewing platform with its tremendous panorama from the Alps, over the Bay of Cannes and stretching away down to the St. Tropez Peninsula.

We discovered this area in 1980 almost by accident but its beauty and wildness have lured us back again and again. If you are ever in the south of France take your bike and check it out. I promise you won't be disappointed.



*Le Cyclo-Campeur—an illustration from the Good Companion guide to France*

Mudguards were not considered 'The Thing' on a speedy bicycle -- we would rather be seen like this.



And the "Real Cyclist" would not be seen with a cape



I remember loosing caste completely when I fitted a small brake to a racing Swift -- of course it was a 'plunger' acting on the front tyre.



Fortunately the tyre didn't bust at a critical moment or I might not be doing these sketches now.

Some of use became very clever at this form of braking -- others, of whom I was one. Never got the hang of the trick. This recalls what might have been a very serious smash but was really the softest fall of my life.



# Sixty Five Years Ago. and Some of our Follies.

Adapted from an article in The C.T.C. Gazette August 1928.

But it was permitted to tie a bunch of bracken under the saddle to catch the dirt -- or some of it!



But the laws of the road graciously allowed a gear case to be fitted to a speed iron and also ridiculously narrow and uncomfortable handle bars.



You see, at that time all speedy men scorned brakes, the only method of braking was by back pedaling or by inserting the toe between the forks and pressing on the tyre.



The pumps of those days were funny little ha'penny squirt sort o' things always suspended by rubber bands and always with a knot tied in the extension.



A bag was not carried and odds & ends, spanner and so on were carried loose in the pocket.

Yet, after all, we were a happy crowd -- no car traffic, no pot holes and little else to worry us. but perhaps crowd is not the word to use ... some of our younger readers will not believe me when I say that I once rode from London to Portsmouth and met only ONE BICYCLE on the journey of 72 miles!

TP. A. E. S. 1928

The second instalment of Round the world in sixty days  
by Jack Dunn

Reprinted with permission from the August 1989 Issue of "The Way of an Eagle"  
(Magazine of the Eagle Road Club).

Our tour through the North Island of New Zealand had an inauspicious start - with a visit to hospital! Waiting to round Sinclair Head and come within sight of Wellington we decided to go below for a cup of tea. Although the reputedly stormy Cook Strait was as smooth as a millpond and the ship steady as a rock, one of us managed to stumble over the raised threshold of a doorway and sustain a nasty gash in the lower shin. The ship's purser quickly laid on first-aid but it seemed that further repair would be needed and, in a matter of minutes, he had radioed ashore to arrange it; also a taxi to get us from the port to the hospital and back and someone to get our bikes off the ship and kept safe until we were ready for them. That done, he had tea and cakes brought into his office where we whiled away the rest of our passage exchanging travellers tales so we saw little of Wellington from the ferry and only a mile or two of fairly ordinary streets on our taxi journeys.

By the time we had recovered our bikes after the stitching job, it was the evening rush hour. We were due to spend the night at Paraparaumu Beach where Peter Wheeler (former Eagle member of the 1950s and 60s) and his wife, Jan, have a modern house in an attractive estate within easy reach of the beach and about 30 miles north of Wellington. With less than two hours daylight left, it had to be the train. Fortunately there is a frequent commuter service; no luggage compartments but no difficulty about taking bikes in with the passengers - imagine doing that at Liverpool Street at 5.30pm!

After a two mile ride from Paraparaumu station in near darkness we had a splendid welcome from the Wheelers, a most enjoyable home-cooked English dinner and a long evening of exchanging news and memories. Peter and Jan had to go to work next day and were disappointed that we could not stay until the weekend to see some of the near-by hill country but, with only a fortnight left before our flight from Auckland we had to decline. They left early next morning, leaving us to shut the front door on leaving but not to lock it; no worries about the crime wave here, it seems!

The next couple of days were possibly the least memorable of our tour. No choice of route for a start, other than Highway 1, the main road to Auckland, with plenty of traffic but with a good hard shoulder to ride on. Head winds, then rain, conspired to make us pack up early the second afternoon. But another day or two took us into the hills again. We were back on Highway 1, much quieter now, where it crosses the highest land in North Island by the so called "Desert Road". This is a 30 mile stretch over sparse moorland, certainly a desert so far as any possibility of refreshment or shelter is concerned. From the summit at about 3,500 feet there is a glorious drop of 2,000 feet or so in 15 miles, much of it in long, gentle slopes giving us fast free-wheeling, interrupted by occasional river crossings. These were welcome breaks for this was our coldest day and the brief, steep climbs generated much needed warmth. The descent ended at the delightful resort of Turanga but we had a moment of anxiety just before the town when a group of motor-cyclists showed undue interest in our approach and we were reminded of the marauding gangs we had heard about. However, they only asked to know the time - perhaps they really hadn't a reliable watch between them? - and we passed on unmolested.

Next day was nearly all on the flat, alongside the shores of Lake Taupo, though there was a vicious bit of hill-climbing to do before Taupo town, complicated by some massive road building operations. In the town, looking for refreshment, we ran across an obviously English cyclist, complete with saddle-bag and found he was an exile from Coventry. We spent most of the afternoon with him, mainly in the Botanical Reserve which was in his care.

Lake Taupo is roughly in the centre of North Island, is about 25 miles across and occupies the crater of an enormous volcano that existed back in geological time. Across the lake, some 50 miles away, North Island's highest mountains, rising to Mount Ruapehu, were crystal clear from our vantage point in the reserve.

The next objective after Taupo was Rotorua, the tourists' Mecca of the North Island, centre for all the natural wonders of this volcanic region. Our hosts at Taupo had rather guardedly recommended it for inclusion on our route: we ought to see it, they told us, but "it is a bit smelly". We had planned to stay two nights in Rotorua to give us a day to see the sights but, even before we got there, we began to have doubts about it. We had seen several columns of steam rising from the ground at some distance from the road, always accompanied by a foul smell when we passed to leeward. At several places there were signboards inviting us to enter and marvel at the volcanic wonderland but the same smell urged us to pass them by. Just before Rotorua there was a gaping hole near the roadside emitting malodorous steam and gurgling noises. There was nothing to pay here so we stopped and marvelled for a while, taking care to keep out of the way of hot, wet mud flung into the air every now and then as an extra big bubble of gas broke through.

Rotorua caters for tourists on a bigger scale than Queenstown and what puzzled us was how they managed to get people to stay there in such an unsavoury atmosphere. We soon decided that one night here was enough. I must say we had a marvellous fixed-price ad-lib dinner and we forgot the stink while we enjoyed it - perhaps the restaurant was air-conditioned to keep it sweet; the smell was still there when we got outside.

So, next morning we headed north for the Bay of Plenty coast at Mount Maunganui - the Kiwi Fruit coast as it has become known. We didn't make it that day; there was rain on and off and roadworks complications to delay us and we put up at Te Puke, at a motel run by an English couple. Sad to say, this was the place, where we got the poorest service of our tour, and pricey, too. And it was pouring with rain next morning. This was the only time that rain really stopped us riding; we spent the morning shopping, writing postcards and reading up Maori place-names, which had been intriguing us, in the public library. We had our snack lunch in a bar largely patronised by Maoris, some of them elaborately tattooed; one of them displayed arms, shoulders and face so heavily decorated as to make him look blue all over from across the room.

The afternoon was just showery and we pressed on to Mount Maunganui. Next morning was fine and we spent it on foot, climbing the Mount; no great height but rising straight out of the Pacific at the end of a long spit of land, spectacular enough and with splendid views from the summit. That afternoon foul weather was forecast, rain and high winds, a spin-off from a cyclone raging in the South Seas somewhere. So we resolved to do the next bit, along the supposedly busy Highway 2, under the sheltering roof of a bus. As it turned out, neither the wind nor the rain materialised, the road was quiet and interesting and we could have kicked ourselves for not being on the bikes.

Another day in the saddles and we were on the Coromandel Peninsula, one bit of North Island we had to see, such glowing accounts we had heard of it. It did not disappoint us. About the size of Cornwall, plenty of hill country but many miles of easy riding at first on roads hugging the sea-coast then careering up and down like a typical West Country coast road, Time was running out for us and we were glad to have had the lift in the bus the previous day for it enabled us to stay for two nights at Coromandel town and spend a day walking over the heights to within sight of the Pacific on the east side. We found this a lovely area and so very quiet, too.

Next day we were back at Thames, the gateway to the Peninsula, in good time to get to the hospital to have the stitches out of the wounded leg, which had healed well. To reach our last port of call we again had recourse to the bus. It would have been a long ride, finishing up on the busy road approaches to Auckland - a painful comedown after our three delightful days on the Peninsula. We had contacted George Garside, C.T.C. Touring Correspondent, before we left home and had asked him to arrange accommodation for us near their home at Papatoetoe, a few miles south of Auckland. Not until we reached there, was it made clear to us we were staying with them!

George and Mabel are ex-Lancashire cyclists who, it seems, have been practically everywhere in the world - except the Isle of Man, they confess! We had a long evening of travel chat and an exchange of slide shows - we had sent our earlier slides from South Island for processing and delivery to the Garsides. We didn't know they had to go to Australia for processing and they had only arrived that day!

Next day was our last in New Zealand but, before our evening plane to San Francisco, we were to have a conducted tour of Auckland's countryside. George had invited Charlie King, the Olympic champion of the 1920's and Alan Westaway, another ex-London veteran, to join us but Charlie was unable to. So four of us took an intricate route through residential streets, bits of cycleway, footpaths, a subway under a motorway and eventually a rough-stuff bridleway through a park to reach the open country. Mabel doesn't ride now and had laid on a fine tea for us on our return and, to crown the Garside hospitality, they loaded our bikes into their camper-van and took us to the airport.

So ended our six weeks in New Zealand and we left it with great regret on the long haul across the Pacific to San Francisco, about seven thousand miles. This was broken for an hour or so in Honolulu soon after dawn. We were entering the USA here and had to be taken quite a long ride by bus to the immigration department and back. From the bus windows we saw a flat landscape with palm trees nearby, the skyscrapers of the city a few miles away and the distant mountains of Hawaii's other islands. I longed to have a closer look at those mountains - some other time perhaps.

We had counted on arriving in California in late spring - but we had missed it! Here at the end of April, the countryside was already beginning to take on that parched appearance that we had seen on our previous visit - in September. On that occasion we had spent a week touring the wine country north of San Francisco Bay; this time we asked our hosts in Berkeley, to sort out our route for us south of the bay. Accordingly, after a day or two in their company, we were ferried by car about one hundred miles south and considerably left at the top of a minor pass to freewheel down to Carmel one glorious sunny afternoon.

Carmel is a great tourist attraction, a survival, or perhaps more a re-construction, of an eighteenth century town. We were not all that impressed with it; it obviously catered for the top-of-the-market tourist, with quaint shop-fronts deceptively showing luxury goods at Bond Street prices. We soon tired of the town - but the Mission was another matter. The Missions, which are numerous in California, were the religious centres set up by the Church close on the heels of the Spanish military conquerors of Mexico back in the seventeen hundreds. Those we saw, here at Carmel and at San Juan Bautista during our car journey there, were delightful collections of buildings in southern Spanish style set in beautiful gardens, havens of rest from the boisterous outer world even when thronged with tourists.

From Carmel the plan was to ride northwards along the coast till our time ran out, or we tired of the exercise, and Charles, our host, would drive out to bring us back to Berkeley. We had made up our minds we would get back to San Francisco to save him a longer journey and we duly managed this, so that he had only to drive to Golden Gate Park to pick us up four days later. We had to resort to his help to get over the Bay bridge, which is not available to cyclists.

On the way we saw some pleasant coastal scenery, though a bit "ordinary" after some of New Zealand's, some quiet country roads but also some inescapable traffic-burdened highways. We went through two cities, Monterey and Santa Cruz, both with extended suburban development along the road, and our approach to San Francisco was similarly uncongenial. All three cities have "Bike Routes" signposted but the waymarking is erratic and the "Bike Route Ends" sign may well leave you at some complicated junction with no other sign in sight!

Monterey was memorable for at least two things: a splendid aquarium, claimed as a world superlative, a claim which we could not dispute; and secondly it was where I lost Marjorie! I turned off the road on to a "Bike Route" unnoticed by her. Our rule for dealing with accidental separations is to go back to the point where we were last together but, after an hour or so, this hadn't worked and I was driven to phone the police for help to reunite us. Meanwhile, the old tune "I left her in Monterey" persisted in running through my head. The police were sympathetic and courteous and promised immediate action - and, of course, when I got out on the street again, there was Marjorie!

Much of the coast round here was carpeted - literally covered - with a bright pink flower from the water-line and extending over any open ground available to it and, further north, there were similar tracts covered with a glorious display of mesembryanthemum (I think) with large daisy-like flowers, sometimes purple, sometimes cream.

The influence of Spain in California's past is very evident, not only in its place names but in the public notices and such-like, in which Spanish often appears as a second language. But, arrived in San Francisco, we were astonished to see a fine windmill, built by Dutch colonists! like New York, San Francisco is very much a meeting-place of all races.

Our week in California ended at San Francisco airport with our only spot of bother over our bikes. According to our travel agent, they were to be carried free as part of our baggage allowance with minimum dismantling and unboxed. Here at S.F. they maintained this didn't apply to a U.S. internal flight; the bikes must go in a box, which they kindly provided, then wanted to charge us \$30 each! We protested; the debate was conducted with all possible courtesy and calm but we had to give in. Then the man said he could split the difference and let us off with \$30 the two! I still don't understand it!

We landed at Newark, New Jersey, after dark that evening and our old friend, Mar Lyons, was there to take us to his home where we stayed for a day or two, with a Sunday excursion to New York City and Liberty Island, before setting out on the last leg of our trans-American journey - a four-day ride to Boston. We had previously seen New England in the autumn, now we had planned to be there in springtime. Though we had been late for spring in California, we were too early for spring in the east; even in this first week in May there was all too little blossom or leaf growth and some of the woodland seemed hardly out of winter.

Our route this time was nearer the more populous coastal area of New England than before, when we went up into Vermont, and we had a good deal more traffic to contend with. The weather wasn't too good for a start and also finished up with a day of drizzle and fog in Boston. There were many long stretches of quiet riding through pastoral country with woods and lakes for variety and we had warm enough sunshine to enjoy picnic lunches, followed by a siesta, most days.

Boston Airport is approached from the city by a tunnel, not available to cyclists, so we had to get a taxi to take us and our bikes the last few miles.

We had lost track of the "Bike Route" after a mile or two in the suburbs and whilst still well short of the city, and with no idea where to go next, we were glad to hand over the navigation to a cabman with an estate car who conveniently appeared. So we got our bikes and luggage booked in for the evening flight to London with most of the day left to wander around the historic city. Two things took us most of our day: another aquarium, a close rival to Monterey's, and the old sailing ship, a relic of Revolution days, moored at the quay where the Boston Tea Party sparked off the Independence struggle two centuries ago, and serving as a museum.

There is a ferry across the harbour to the airport (perhaps one could use that to get a bike there?). We took the last boat at dusk and our last view of America before we were swallowed up in the anonymity of the airport was Boston's skyscrapers with their heads lost in cloud and all seen through a wet mist over the water.

Next morning we were at Heathrow, just 62 days, to be precise, since we left it. We had little taste for riding the roads out of the airport and when we saw a coach bound for Woking and with a cavernous baggage hold at the back we were quick to seize on this escape route and so we were able to start our ride home in Surrey lanes instead. It cost a fiver - but money well spent.

And that reminds me - most readers will be curious to know what the whole trip cost especially those considering a similar one, so here are a few figures.

Fares: The 1988 round-the-world fare (via Southern Hemisphere) was 1,540 each. We paid a lot less as a result of a misunderstanding between B.A. and our travel agent but we couldn't count on that luck again! No charge for the bikes except on the Trans-American flight as related. Bus or train fares in New Zealand were cheap, sometimes incredibly so, varying from about 3p to 6p per mile each, including the bike. Car ferry Picton to Wellington 13.50 each including bikes (80 miles). Air and launch trip Queenstown to Milford Sound and back 65 each - sounded a lot when we booked but worth every penny.

Accommodation: Motels were our choice, mostly excellent in New Zealand and in the range 20 to 25 per night for two, usually including continental breakfast. About the same prices in U.S.A. but not generally up to the New Zealand standard and breakfast often not even available. Thanks to the hospitality of friends and four night flights we only had to pay about 40 room charges. The "bargain break" in Singapore was a bargain indeed: three nights in a good centrally-placed hotel and a sumptuous breakfast, with an outing or two thrown in, for 38 each.

Meals: In New Zealand restaurant meals were good and reasonably priced but occasionally not available in small towns when a "take-away" in our room had to suffice. We nearly always had picnic lunches; midday snacks in pubs were hot pies, tasty and cheap, or nothing, only one pub went so far as offering sandwiches. One thing we liked in New Zealand: there is no tipping (except for porters we were told). In America, meals were astonishingly cheap; lunch for four in a smart restaurant in central San Francisco cost 27 odd including wines, while a light lunch with drinks in a Mexican restaurant out in the country came to less than 9 for three! In this context, Macdonalds' fast food, which we had to use once, did not appear cheap.

Shopping: Mainly for food so far as we were concerned; prices not very different from ours either in New Zealand or America. One happy feature of New Zealand shops is that nearly all have projecting upper stories so that you can walk the length of the street in shelter from pouring rain or blistering sun. In some places there were no shops for many miles and we found it wise to carry a reserve of food and drink.

Luggage: Our bikes, each with a pair of small panniers, empty, attached weighed about 30lbs each. Saddlebags, crammed full, less than 10lbs so we were well within the free allowance on aircraft.

I carried my handlebar-bag into the plane with the heavy stuff in it (tools, lamps, paddlock etc.) and Marjorie had the rucksack, with bulky things such as capes, as hand luggage. We took no more spare clothing than we would for a fortnight in Europe and managed with occasional washing sessions to keep reasonably clean and sweet.

Money: We took cash, travellers cheques and credit cards but nearly all major bills were settled by credit card (Visa or Access) and we cashed very few of the cheques.

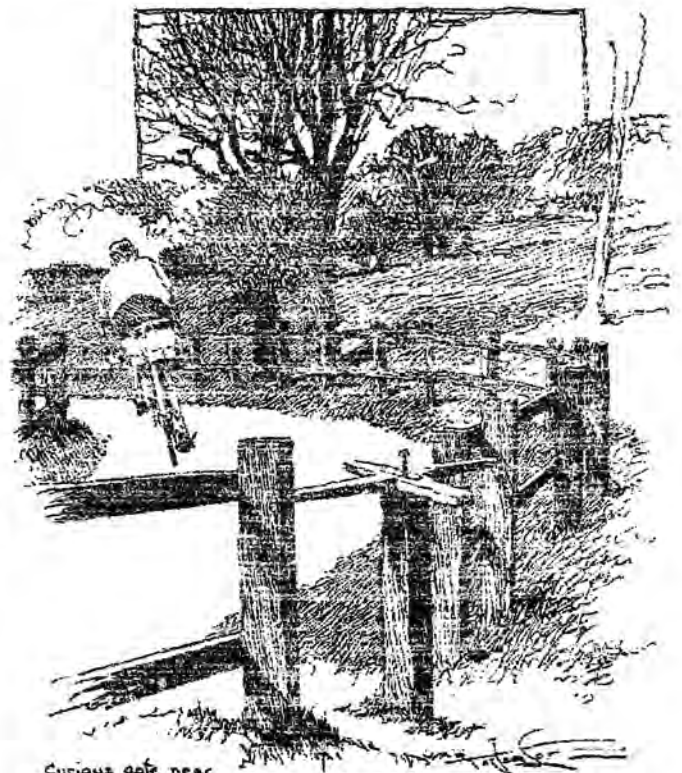
From the foregoing it will be clear that this trip meant a big dip into our savings but we had no regrets. We believe we planned our trip about right but we also acknowledge our great good fortune with the weather we had - we might not be so lucky if we tried it again. Especially we were glad we had chosen to "do our own thing" rather than join any form of organised tour. The Ramblers' Holiday tour, for example, would have cost about 2,500 for four weeks, almost all-in, everything arranged, no anxieties about finding a bed for the night, or the next meal, or the right road. But these are the spice of travel; above all they bring you into contact with the people of the country and, in New Zealand especially, this is a feature of our mode of travel (perhaps it's something to do with our advanced age!) but we do meet others. In New Zealand everyone seemed to be in the former category whoever they were, airport officials, shopkeepers, barmen and anyone else we happened to meet. So, if you travel to New Zealand, however you travel our advice is to make sure you meet the people rather than committing yourself to the company of fellow-tourists.

Freedom  
by David Rix.

The freedom of the bicycle  
Is badly under rated,  
By the townie and the motorist  
Who continue unabated,  
To rush about at brake-neck speed  
To get from A to B,  
The only place they'll beat us to  
May be the cemetery.

They see nothing of the the greater world  
Outside their heated windscreens,  
Stopping at official car parks  
To survey selected scenes  
While we upon our bicycles  
Can find time to stop and stare,  
Across the fields and hedgerows  
At the beauty that is there

Three hundred yards they reckon  
Is the furthest most will go,  
From the freedom of their motor car  
They might get lost you know!  
So when next you ride your bike  
Along some quiet country track,  
Spare a thought for all those motorists  
and the foresight that they lack.



Curious gate near  
COMPTON BEAUCHAMP . . . Berke

To ride a lonely bridleway  
Miles from any road,  
Can give a sense of freedom  
That will lighten any load,  
And the wildlife and the flowers  
One may see along the way,  
Can only help to add  
to the pleasures of the day.

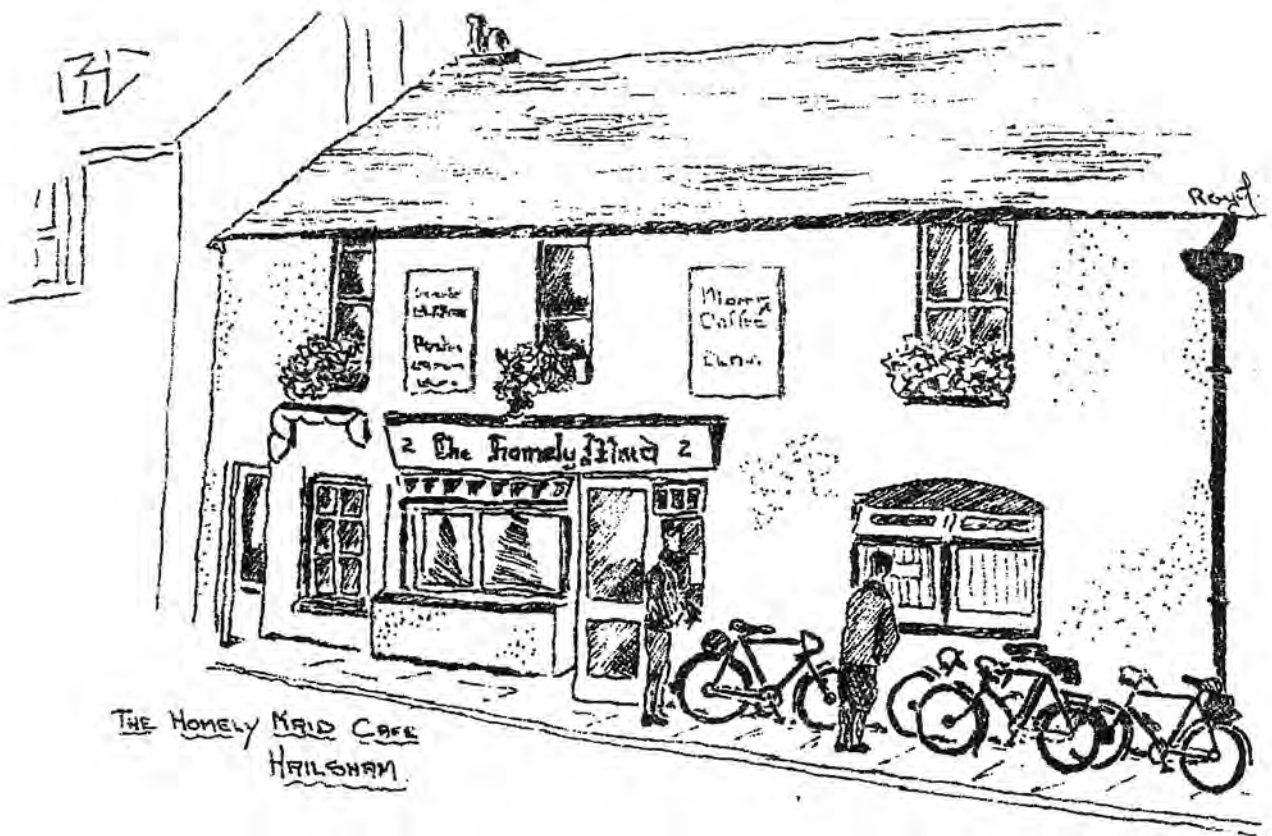


Across

5. Wing or Track (4)
7. Mixed up Katers (6)
9. See 4 down.
12. French Cycling Organisation (1,1,1,1)
14. Not us (3)
16. Morning for old building (1,1)
18. Uneducated (8)
19. Belonging to us (3)
20. & 11 down.  
Promoter of 13 & 27 races. (4,6)
21. Plan or notion (4)
23. See 86 across.
24. Celebration Rally (8,5)
25. Short time trial (3)
26. Female sheep (3)
27. How a bottle may be confined (5)
30. Complaint cyclists  
may suffer from (4)
33. One fifth of a foot (3)
34. Event organized by 82 (9)
35. Hanky panky in the corner? (5)
36. Pedal pushers (4)
38. Fingered gearing (5)
39. Alternative powered ride in Essex (8)
41. Your wheel might  
get stuck in one (3)
42. Organisation for motor-assisted  
cyclists (1,1)
43. Upper class repy, O.K.? (2)
44. Prevailing direction (1,1)
47. Old bicycle - cheap for its size! (13)
51. On condition (2)
53. Passage that's not at home? (4)
54. Brazed ear (3)
55. Frame slimmers aim to get (11)
59. Abbreviated public transport (1,1)
60. Short type of slide show (1,1)
61. See 50 down.
62. & 46 down  
May meet in the southeast (4,8,5)
64. Sink in the saddle (3)
65. See 50 down.
66. Advertising the short pair (1,1)
67. Initially a hub gear maker (1,1)
69. Valuable frame shape (7)
71. Common type of 47 (8)
74. Cuts from articles (5)
77. Alternatively (2)
78. Andrew -  
manufacturers in Holland? (5)
82. Long distance organization (5)
83. View a military map (6)
84. What cyclists need to be at night (4)
85. It sticks to tyres in hot weather (3)
86. & 23 across Front wheel holders (4,4)
87. Inflationary cover (4)

Down

1. Bar holder (4)
2. Lubricant (3)
3. Allen might use this on his lock (3)
4. and 9 across. Don't wait (2,2)
5. Abbreviated property preservers (1,1)
6. Not long worn by cyclists (6)
8. Not a highland path (5,5,3)
10. Run after dark (5,4)
11. See 20 across.
12. Group of tubes (8)
13. & 27 down. Capital racing venue (4,6)
15. See 50 down.
16. It can go anywhere initially (1,1,1)
17. Hostel user? (5)
18. Exists (2)
20. Bare type of shorts (4)
22. Morning moisture (3)
24. Ball that could be lost (7)
27. See 13 down.
28. Sounds like they make confused  
weeks (4)
29. Supplementary accomodation at  
73 down possibly (6)
31. Not out (2)
32. Signs of gas (4)
36. & 49 down. Five bar frameset (6,4)
37. Tyre with a bit of flare (4)
40. Cut tubes to fit a bishop (5)
42. What 24 across celebrates (11)
45. Their teas aren't abbreviated (1,1)
46. See 62 across.
47. Fixing for pump or guy line (3)
48. International cycling body (1,1,1)
49. see 36 down.
50. & 61 across & 65 across & 15 down  
Ride all the way to the top (5,3,2,4,1,6)
52. At a distance (3)
55. & 62 down. Light retainers (4,7)
56. Robin's head covering (4)
57. Magazine all racing cyclists go for? (7)
58. Characteristic style of expression (5)
59. May hang from shoulders or saddles. (4)
62. See 55 down.
63. One result of exposure on 20 down.(6)
68. Superior fixing point (4)
70. Type of ladies frame (5)
72. Letter missing at Christmas (4)
73. Accomodation not just for the  
young (1,1)
74. Belgian cyclist in a whirl (4)
75. C.T.C. area group (1,1)
76. Can be caused by long time in the  
saddle (4)
79. Cyclists like it fresh (3)
80. No good in America (1,1)
81. Abbreviated community (1,1,1)



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