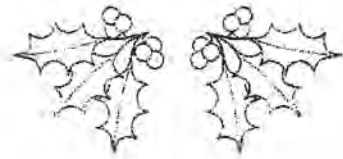
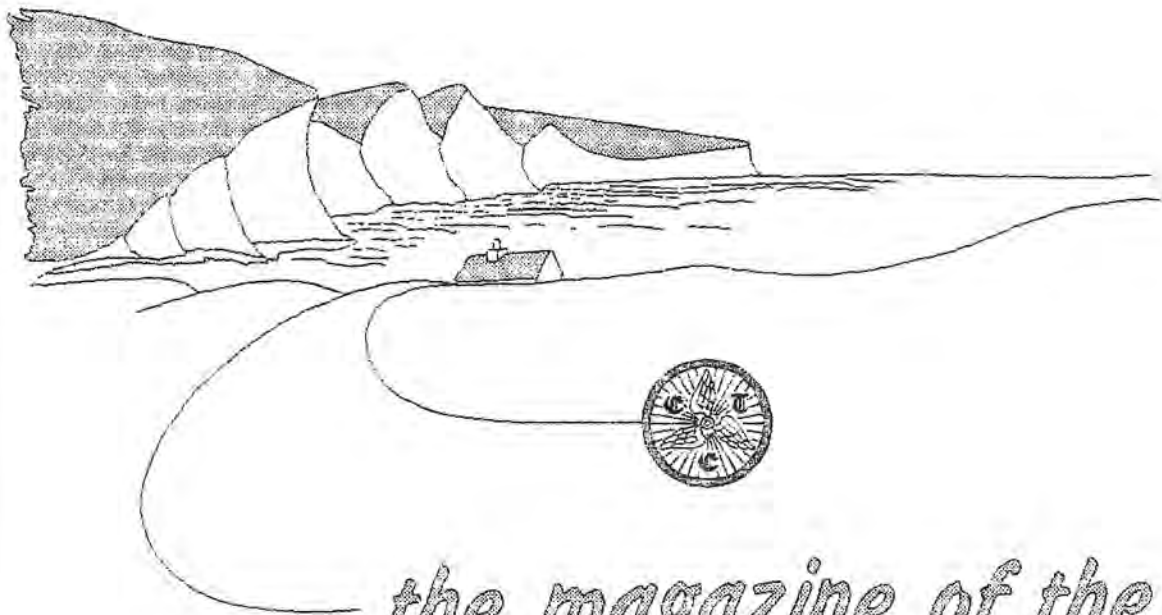


The



Coaster



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

No. 21

25p

*East Sussex District Association
Cyclists' Touring Club*

PRESIDENT MR DENNIS JAKEMAN

Secretary

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"The Coaster"

Christmas 1991 - Issue No.21

Another Christmas season has arrived and another Christmas "Coaster". Not a large edition this time, but I think, a quality one, with interesting articles on tours, not just at home either.

John Gallsworthy's cycle trip across the Canadian Rockies and Mick & Rose Hills tour in New Zealand make interesting reading.

Don't forget, if you've got anything to write about or if your a budding artist (there are some more of Roy James' excellent drawings in this issue), then let's hear from you. I'll accept almost anything!

All the best for Christmas
& the New Year,

David.

Seven Days in Scotland.

by Jonathan Dalton.

I took the overnight train to Pitlochry in the Highlands, changing at Haywards Heath onto 'Thamelink', Euston and Glasgow, from where I caught one of the latest class 158 'Sprinter' units which had space for one bike! From Pitlochry I took a lane across the hills, then into a head wind to Aberfeldy, where I went to the bank. From there I took the road to Loch Tay then the quiet road to the South of this arriving at Killin, where I stayed the night at the Youth Hostel, at about three o'clock. It snowed on the way there but did not settle; I was beginning to think that I had taken my holidays rather too early in the year, although it was April. That evening I walked to Loch Tay and back to Killin along the closed railway line.

Next day I had planned to go to Glencoe, but to save a day later in the holiday (my schedule had been over-optimistic) I took the train from Crianlarich to Spean Bridge and followed the Great Glen to Loch Lochy Hostel, stopping alongside the Caledonian Canal and walking the Fort Augustus Railway to Invergarry station before opening time.

The following day was Sunday so I went to church in Invergarry before crossing the hills to Loch Cluanie, then into the rain and wind to Ratagan Hostel, after sorting out a puncture in a hail storm. I had expected a fairly laid back day but it was quite hard work, even pedalling in low gear downhill the last 5 or 6 miles to the hostel which I reached about 6 o'clock.

Next morning I followed the main road to Kyle of Lochalsh, bought a new toothbrush to replace the one I had left at Killin and caught the train to Strathcarron, then took the direct road to Shieldaig and Torridon. I didn't take the Applecross road because of shortage of time but the direct route was a pleasant single track road. It is a great shame and totally unnecessary that many of these have been widened to speed the cars and lorries at the expense of cyclists, pedestrians and the environment. Hopefully a halt will be called before any more are done. I had a pot of tea in Shieldaig and arrived at the relatively under-used Alpine style hostel at Torridon about an hour later.

From Torridon it was a brisk 11 mile ride to Kinlochewe, resting momentarily at the passing places to allow traffic to pass either in the same or opposite direction, and then into the rain to stop for coffee at the side of the road near Kerrysdale, crossing the hills to Gairloch (lunch) then bed and breakfast at Aultbea, where the lady was the former warden of the now demolished Aultbea Youth Hostel and appeared in the CTC handbook. She gave me a large pot of tea and cakes when I got there and a super breakfast to set me up the following day.

On the Wednesday I took an easy pace to Ullapool Hostel, calling at a Hotel at Dundonnell where two nice girls, one Australian and the other German, who were working there for the summer supplied me with a pot of coffee (4 1/2 cups) and shortbread for £1.25. Then I walked to a summit before a long descent via Braemore Glen to Ullapool, where I changed over my front inner tube a couple of times because of a nail which had been in there all day but kept the air in.

From Ullapool the next morning I took the road North to Ledmore, then South East to Invershin station along the pleasant single track cross country road. As I had some three hours to spare before the train I had hoped to get a cup of tea at the hotel next door but it was regrettably closed at this time. I then caught the overnight train South, changing at Inverness and Euston before finally arriving home in Eastbourne.



A Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella.

by John Merckx

St. James, or Santiago, was an apostle who, according to tradition, carried the gospel into Spain. He returned to Judea in A. D. 44 and was beheaded by Herod. He was the first Apostle to be martyred. His body was taken from Jaffa to Iria Flavia on the coast of Galicia. At the time Galicia was ruled by a pagan queen, Queen Lupa, so James's followers concealed the body near the coast where it remained for 800 years. The apostle's tomb was discovered by a hermit named Pelagro, who found the sarcophagus, covered by a stone slab, in which lay the body and severed head of St. James. From the moment of discovery in 813 the pilgrimage to Santiago began and it continues to this day.

In medieval times there were three main pilgrimages; to Jerusalem, to Rome, and to Santiago de Compostela. They have all survived to the present day but the most popular is the "Camino de Santiago". One of the first pilgrims to Santiago was Charlemagne, and in the year 950 the Bishop of Le Puy made the journey. In medieval times going on a pilgrimage was a risky business and it was the monks of Cluny in France who took upon themselves the task of looking after the pilgrims, building hospices, churches and hospitals and encouraging the building of roads and bridges.

The results of their work can still be seen everywhere along the road. Every year a host of people carry on the tradition which has lasted over a thousand years. Each one goes for his own reasons but all are united in a remarkable fellowship. I am sure that nobody who makes the journey will ever forget it.

There are four recognised starting points, Paris, Vezelay, Le Puy and Arles. The first three converge on St. Jean-Pied-de-Port just North of the Val Carlos pass over the Pyrenees. The Arles route crosses the Pyrenees by the Somport pass and joins the other routes at Puente de la Reina S. W. of Pamplona. In medieval times pilgrims from England used to go by sea to Blaye near Bordeaux where they joined the route from Paris. My son and I started at St. Malo and cycled to Bordeaux where we joined the recognised route. We had cycled along much of the route before but we wanted to complete the whole pilgrimage from St. Malo to Santiago in the limited time available.

On the Tuesday the 29th of May 1991 we left Portsmouth in cold and cloudy weather and arrived at St. Malo the following morning, where the weather was just as cold and cloudy. We cycled eastwards along the rather dreary coast road and then turned inland to Do! There was a dramatic change in the weather and we were soon cycling in hot sunshine which remained with us for the next three days. Our route through France took us through Retiers, La Gaubretiere, Blaye, Bordeaux, Pissos, Peyrehorade and over the frontier to Roncesvalles in Spain. It took us through lush farming country, vineyards, the National Forest of Les Landes and through the foothills of the Pyrenees and across the Pyrenees to the monastery at Roncesvalles. We travelled on minor roads for the most part, stayed at one star hotels and fed very well. We arrived at Roncesvalles on the evening of Tuesday 4th of June and were welcomed by a charming monk who stamped our "Pilgrim's Record" card, gave us a lot of information about the "Camino de Santiago", showed us our bunks and invited us to the Pilgrim's Mass in the evening. The Mass in the beautiful church was most impressive. Afterwards a group of us went for our evening meal together which turned out to be a very cheerful affair.

Next morning before 7 a.m. we were all packing our gear



The Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela

and taking to the road again. There is no charge for pilgrims staying at "refugios". There is a chain of them all the way to Santiago at distances to suit pilgrims travelling on foot. They usually have bunks and washing facilities - cold water only in most - but in two we stayed in we slept on the floor. We met people of many nationalities and of all ages. We had picnic meals of cheese, bread and fruit during the day and went to restaurants for our evening meals which were always good. We enjoyed the local wines too.

The route through Spain is more clearly defined than in France. Foot pilgrims can follow many tracks away from the main roads but from Pamplona to Burgos it is difficult to avoid the main road. On Thursday the 6th of June we stayed the night at Belorado. The following day was cold and wet with a very strong headwind which made it difficult to make any progress at all. The cathedral at Burgos however made it worth while. The rain eased up in the afternoon but the wind stayed with us. The following day was fine and warm again and we crossed the huge plain to Leon on very quiet roads. We then crossed the wild and beautiful mountains of Leon and Cantabria into Galicia. Galicia is hilly, green and wooded and a most lovely part of Spain. We arrived in Santiago as planned in 14 days (1037 miles) and stayed in the "refugio" in the seminary. There were about 100 beds in one dormitory, 70 of them occupied. The cathedral and town are lovely. We returned home by air to Heathrow with no fuss and no damage to the cycles.

(The approximate cost excluding fares was £150 in France and £100 in Spain. The single air fare from Santiago was £230.)



Letters

(Well, only one actually, but I thought those involved with the event should see it.)

Brentwood,
Essex.

15th May 1991

Dear David,

Over a month has passed since Peter Gray and I rode our first Audax event - Your Southdowns 200 km on 14th April. What an excellent ride! We so enjoyed it that we've done two others since but, although we've had good rides in both, the availability of drinks and cakes have been sadly lacking. The Dorset Downs' flapjack and orange juice was a good try but the latest 200 km we undertook was devoid of both food and drink.

I won't identify the organisers for fear of embarrassing them!!

This is why I felt I had to write to ask you to pass on our thanks to those ladies (undoubtedly, ladies!) who baked cakes for us all, who brewed coffee and tea, who had prepared trifle, beans on toast, etc. at the finish and particularly those who must have given up so much time on that Sunday in order that others could enjoy the ride in your lovely countryside.

Would you please be so kind as to pass on our grateful thanks to those concerned.

We look forward to next year's event!

Yours sincerely,

Rosemary Radford.
(Shaftesbury C. C.)

(It's nice to know that our efforts don't go unappreciated. Ed.)

'Sentimental Journey' Revisited.

by Roy James.

Perhaps it was the knowledge that Laurence Sterne had passed through Montreuil-sur-Mer early on during his celebrated 'Sentimental Journey' in the middle of the 18th Century and had the first of his amorous adventures there that persuaded me to make the town the object of a three day tour last Autumn. It was however more likely the fact that, although no longer 'sur mer', the town is a suitable distance from Boulogne to make a satisfactory excursion away from the coast.

The ride to Folkestone is pleasant enough to be considered part of any tour, and by leaving Eastbourne at first light I was able to travel quiet roads for much of the way. Hastings and Rye had slipped by before I stopped at Appledore for elevenses. From there it was Ham Street, Ruckinge and across lonely Romney Marsh via Newchurch and Burmarsh before joining the A259 on the edge of Hythe. Even then I was able to avoid the main road for much of the remaining journey as there is a minor road along the sea front almost to the ferry terminal.

One ferry crossing is much like any other but the Folkestone-Boulogne passage has the undoubted advantage of being short. By late afternoon the boat had docked and I was among the first passengers ashore. A few minutes later I had joined the rush of traffic on the hill of Rue Porte Gayole that leads to the Old Town. The youth hostel is near the top of the hill - they always are - and I was pleased to find it unchanged since my last visit.

I settled in quickly, sharing a room with a hosteller from Australia who did nothing but complain about every aspect of England and France. Soon tiring of his tirade against his host countries I tidied myself up and walked to the old town in search of a restaurant, never a difficult task in France. The difficulty was in making a choice.

October is well past the main holiday period and some half dozen restaurants were doing their best to attract custom from the few passersby. Selecting a small establishment in a corner of the Grande Place de Bouillon, I entered to find only one other table occupied and that by a woman "d'un age tendre". Sterne in his time would have quickly found an excuse to converse with her - throughout his 'Sentimental Journey' a dropped glove, muddy pavement, mistaken seat at the Opera Comique were all sufficient reasons to introduce himself - I merely buried my head in Michelin No. 51 and planned the route for the following day.

At first glance the road to Montreuil starts with a long stretch of main road (19 Kms.) but closer study reveals that most of that portion can be followed on Routes Forestieres. At any time the forests of Boulogne and Desvres cannot be anything but beautiful and I was lucky enough to find them in the full flush of Autumn. After Desvres I took the D127, a quiet road that runs beside the river course. An unspectacular route perhaps, but one of tranquil charm that continues almost to the very walls of ancient Montreuil-sur-Mer.

It is a curious fact that whenever I arrive anywhere the children are just coming out of school. So it was in Montreuil. No sooner had I settled at a cafe table in the sun, with my croque monsieur and glass of red wine, than out they tumbled onto the cobbled Place. They had the Gauloises out in no time and establishing themselves at any vacant tables settled to their homework. I heard the murmur of laughter and chatter through the zzzzzzz of a warm half hour and I was ready for the return journey.

A different route north on the D146 had me often wondering if I was lost, for the road was quite empty. Finally I joined up with the D113 and at Le Turne, found yet another Route Forestiere through the beautiful Hardelot Forest which finally deposited me at Hardelot Plage, a pleasant seaside resort that seemed to have gone into hibernation for the Winter. There was still one cafe open however. Glass screens protected we few hardy customers who chose to take our coffee and pastries in the late afternoon sun but away from the now chilly breeze coming off the sea.

That's it really. The rest of the ride was completed in less than an hour on a road

quite without any saving grace except that it was well signposted and left me in no doubt that Boulogne was only a few miles away. A second night at the hostel found my Australian room mate still complaining, but this time I knew the score. After cooking supper I went to bed early well satisfied with a ride that had once again opened up new vistas and given simple pleasures.



Odd Cuts.

The following were noted by Maurice Colburn.

In the weekend Guardian 'Travel France' 21/9/91 was noted the fact that "Ho Chi-Minh*" worked as a pantry boy on Newhaven-Dieppe ferries immediately before World War I". *for the benefit of younger readers he defeated the Americans in Vietnam.

Also the same week Maurice spotted a plaque advising that he worked as a porter in the former Carlton Hotel in Haymarket, London in 1913.

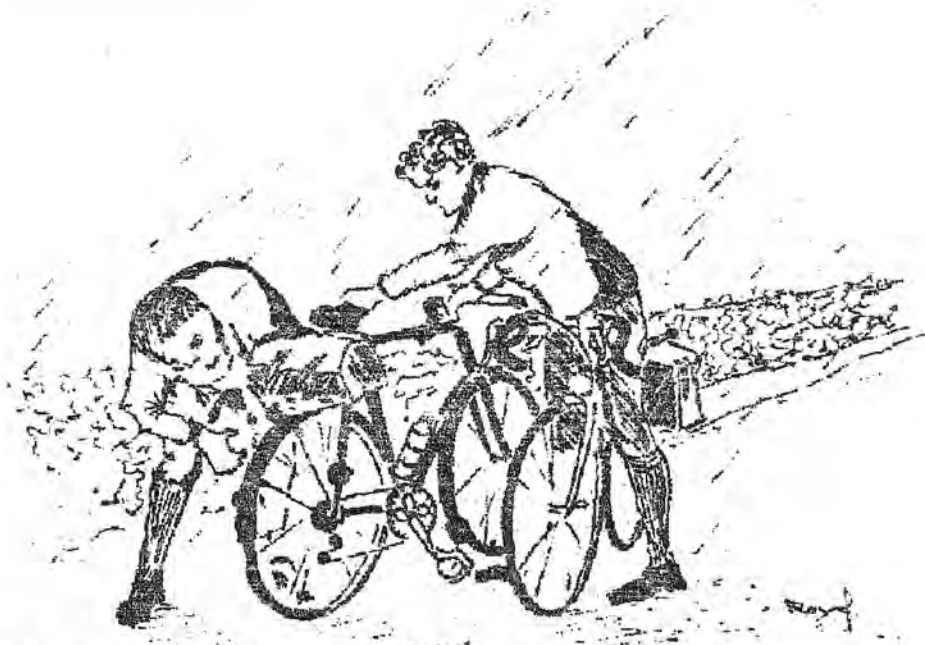


Wanted. - Wanted. - Wanted.

Does anybody have a Rann or Rann-type trailer that they would be willing to sell reasonably cheaply.

If so then contact:

Mick & Rose Hills, Tel. Brighton 414224.



THE BOY OF THE OPEN ROAD.

New Zealand Tour, 7 Days on the Coromandel Peninsula.
by Rose Hills.

With our holiday planned to New Zealand well in advance we thought all our plans were going to be scuppered due to the Gulf War, but after a few 'phone calls and a diversion we set off a day earlier than planned, in the snow, to Gatwick. We had a lot of stops on the way and arrived 2 days later in glorious sunshine at Auckland, where we were met by sister and brother-in-law, and a niece who had grown from a little girl to a young lady now at teacher training college.

Our cycling week was booked through an advertisement in the CTC magazine for a company called "Pedaltours" to the Coromandel Peninsula, and everything that was stated in the brochure was right and excellently administered. We hired bikes from them and duly arrived at a hotel on the outskirts of Auckland and, with a small try out up and down the road, we then all clambered into the minibus with the bikes stowed in a trailer on the back. There were two Canadian guys, Glenn and Sam, who had a repartee going all the time and an American lady, Pam. The bus drove through town to Clevedon on the edge of the Hunua range. The gradients round this part of the coast were quite gentle with the view of the Coromandel Peninsula to goad us on.

A route sheet was given to us each day, and we set off to meet the minibus again at lunch time at Waharua Regional Park, with our leader, Chris, overtaking us and setting up the first of many picnics under the trees. There was plenty of "tucker" and different fruits to try, my favourite was Nashes, a cross between a pear and an apple, very juicy with the skin similar to our Russett apples. After lunch we decided to go for a swim (temp. in the 80's) but to meet again just before Thames, where we were staying the night, to be transported to our motel.

Sunday morning and what has happened to the sun? Thames town looks like a ghost town or something out of the Wild West movies. We set off to the north of Thames and stopped to visit a gold stamper mine museum. Quite a big area at one time for gold mining.

When we set off again it was raining but too warm to wear capes, it was just like being in a warm shower. We followed the coast to Tapu and turned off to Rapaura Water Gardens and another picnic, under cover this time as it was really pouring. After a change of T-shirts we then walked to some preserved Kauri trees, these are huge and were originally used for ship masts. As the weather really closed in I decided to go in the minibus, whilst Mick rode. He went so fast that our leader, Chris, thought we must have missed him but he was waiting in Coromandel town for directions to our two nights accommodation. These were in colonial cottages on the edge of town and were delightful, with our meals booked in an hotel in the centre of town.

The next day dawned very sunny and we set off to Colville, with quite a few hills and then back to Coromandel for a trip on the model railway. It was quite spectacular with a system of bridges taking you up into the hills. It was originally used for collecting clay for the potteries but, although there is still a lot of pottery made, the railway is the biggest attraction now.

We set out on Wednesday in the minibus, to take us over an unsealed road high over the Kouma ranges, to cycle to Whitianga, a small fishing town, where we took the ferry boat, with cycles on the top, to Flaxmill Bay and then to Hot Water Beach for lunch. This really has hot water and when you wiggle your toes under the sand the heat is too much and your glad of the incoming waves to cool down. This is where Pam nearly lost her camera, passport, etc., as we were so engrossed in finding the hot spots that we didn't notice the waves. On the bikes again with a long climb of 4 kms. and a lovely descent to Tairua and our next hotel. Before dinner Chris took us in the minibus to a large hill almost surrounded by sea, which we had to climb on foot for the last bit just for the views. We were amazed by the earth on this hill as it was covered in shells and can only presume that it had been on the sea bed at some time and been pushed upwards like a volcano.

Day 5, Tairua to Waihi Beach, was a day we shan't forget in a hurry. We climbed some spectacular hills and then easy riding in 'Golden Valley', it seemed like the back of the Sussex Downs to us. We stopped at the top of a small rise for a drink and a farmer came out of his field in his truck and waved to us, unfortunately he had been moving his bee hives and they didn't like it - we moved off very fast with some angry bees following. Mick got stung a few times on the head which was very unpleasant and, as the road surface had deteriorated, he then got a puncture. I rode off as fast as I could, our hotel was only about 5 kms. away, and was so pleased to see Chris, who had come looking for us with the minibus. He picked up Mick in the bus and headed for our next stop at Waihi Beach. We were the only ones not to have been provided with puncture outfits and to be truthful we should have made sure we had them anyway.

Day 6, Waihi Beach to Matamata. This was quite an easy day (or were we getting fitter?); we headed inland through the Karangahake Gorge in the shadow of the Kaimai Range, some lovely waterfalls to photograph, then onto a disused railway and through a tunnel, with glow worms in it, with a picnic by the river. The road after our picnic was very undulating with a mountain range on our left and quite flat plains to our right, this led us to another big waterfall, which it took us at least 3/4 of an hour to walk through the woods to the base of. We were staying at a farm near Matamata for the night and had an enjoyable evening with our hosts, Val and Ian. We watched the cows being milked and the horses that they hoped to race in the trotting races next season, although we've since heard from them that one of their most promising horses has had an accident and was now injured. A quick dip in their swimming pool rounded off our day.

Our last day day cycling was from Matamata to Rotorua, and after a steep climb to the Mamaku Plateau it was a lovely downhill ride to Rotorua. The sulphur smell is quite strong in town but our motel was the largest yet, Mick and I had 7 beds in our apartment to choose from and plenty of hot water as most of Rotorua's water is heated from the natural geysers; it's quite strange to see the lovely parks with steam coming from the bushes.

Rotorua was where we were going to meet my sister again for a further trip to Lake Taupo, but that's another story. We were quite envious of the new group that assembled on Sunday morning, although Glenn and Sam were staying with them for a further week - we would miss their cheerful banter and especially Glenn's colourful shorts. Our bikes were taken over by other cyclists and two more were joining them with their own bikes. Our trip was certainly memorable, with a great variety of fruits and vegetables, lovely wildlife, the bell bird does just that and you can hear his call just like a tinkling bell. The butterflies were numerous, some little tiny pale blue ones fluttering round the front wheels. Vegetation in the North Island is semi-tropical but of great variety and the motels, hotels and restaurants were 1st class, but nowhere near as expensive as the Gatwick Hilton or so spacious.

Lastly the people themselves made us so welcome wherever we went and our leader, Chris, and his girl friend (who joined him on the last stop at Rotorua and lent us her car for the day) were so well organised without being too much so. A great time and can't wait to try another of the "Pedaltours" N.Z. Total cycling mileage was approximately 440 kms., mostly in temperatures about 75° F. but plenty of drinks and tucker on the way. GLORIOUS.



Odd Cuts. - From the "Daily Mail" April 25th, 1991. -

"Can I see the soles of your wellies?", said a cyclist as he pulled up beside an attractive 24-year-old woman in Cologne's Bluecher Park. She complied, he sank to his knees and started kissing her boots all over, before making off again. The girl reported the man as a pervert but police told her: "Kissing wellies is not an offence."

The following came my way, it's from an item in 'Women's Office News', and it casts an amusing and instructive light on the different responses that men and women provoke at work.
For example:

The family Picture is on his desk.
Ah, a solid, responsible family man.

The family picture is on her desk.
Hmm, her family will come before her career.

His desk is cluttered.
He's obviously a hard worker and a busy man.

Her desk is cluttered.
She's obviously a disorganised scatterbrain.

He's talking with co-workers.
He must be discussing the latest deal.

She's talking with co-workers.
She must be gossiping.

He's not in the office.
He must be at a meeting.

She's not in the office.
She must be out shopping.

He's having lunch with the boss.
He's on his way up.

She's having lunch with the boss.
They must be having an affair.



A Recycled Cycle Trailer.
by John Dalton.

Whilst riding home from the 1982 Cycling Club Christmas Dinner I bent the frame of my black wartime utility bike riding it into the back of a parked car. Repair were not economically possible, so the bike was dismantled.

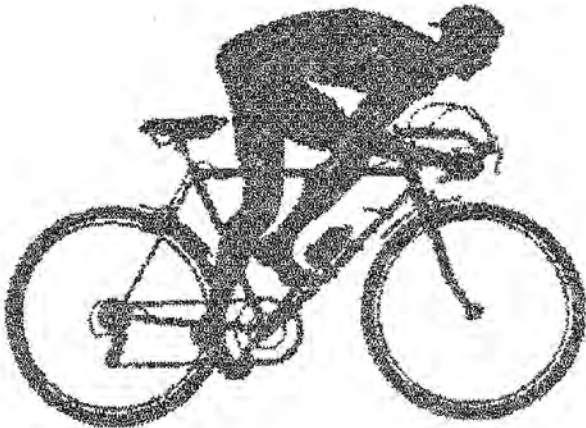
Recently I reassembled the bike, less front wheel, as a cycle trailer, with the front forks bolted to the rear of another bike. This made a sort of articulated tandem, like a Rann Trailer, able to carry larger loads balanced over the frame in large panniers or tied on like a donkey or the former Listowel and Ballybunion Monorail.

I have not yet perfected the coupling, but am working on this and meanwhile am wary of riding the machine in heavy traffic.



Poems
by Jean Clarke

Two feet - to walk
Two hands - to hold
Two Eyes - to see
Two Pedals - to fly!



Head Down
Eyes Up
Sharp Breath
Timer's Shout
Feet Whirl
Muscles Strain
Heart Pounds
Lungs Stretch
Back Flat
Thighs Push
Wheels Blur
Eyes Popping
Finish Line
SIT UPRIGHT
ARMS HIGH
GLIDE ACROSS
FRIENDLY CHEER
BIG GRIN!



Rapid Revolution is the Answer.

(During preparation for the Paris-Brest-Paris this article was brought to my attention)

Cyclists who want both speed and endurance should pedal faster, according to Anthony Sargeant of the Academic Medical School in Amsterdam. He has found that the optimum pedalling rate is 100 rpm. Muscle physiologists previously thought that the optimum rate was much lower at about 60 rpm. Sargeant studied the performance of a group of men on exercise bicycles which only allowed them to pedal at a fixed rate. He found that cyclists get maximum power output, for short periods, at about 115 revolutions per minute.

Cyclists can pedal longer if they are not using their maximum available force in each pedal stroke. They can use half the force in each pedal stroke if they pedal twice as fast. But cyclists cannot get as much power behind each push if the pedals are moving very fast. This limits the optimum rate to below 115 rpm. Sargeant found that cyclists pedalling at 40 rpm use 70 per cent of their total available power and those pedalling at 99 rpm only use 46 per cent and so have greater endurance.



In Cobbett's Country
by Roy James.

On Monday 28th August 1826, William Cobbett, Farmer, Soldier and Political Journalist, set out on horseback to journey down the length of the Avon Valley from Milton to Salisbury. It was another of his famous 'rides', chosen by him to try and discover the reason for the existence of thirty parish churches in a length of thirty miles and an average width of barely a mile. He had heard the Valley of the Avon described as "One of the finest pieces of land in all England" and wanted to see for himself the conditions of working people along the way.

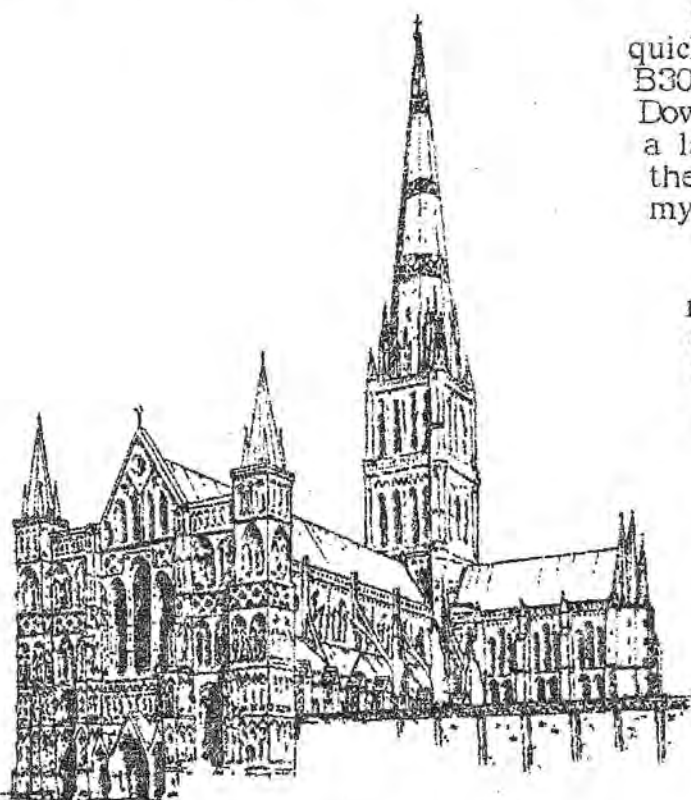
My reasons for making the same journey were simple enough. A minor road still followed the river Avon from Salisbury in the South to Upavon in the North. Perhaps I could combine the pleasure of cycling with visiting some of the villages and churches he had seen all those years ago.

I know that William endured hot weather on his ride, for he later wrote that he crossed the river fifteen or sixteen times and "How pleasant it was to be so much amongst meadows and water". As it happened, a little less water would have suited me very well when I set out on a late Autumn day to follow his tracks. As I left the railway station at Southampton a fine rain was falling, as it continued to do in varying degrees for most of the next forty-eight hours. This at least prompted me to call into Rotrax Cycle Shop and to buy one of their heavyweight capes. A wise investment as it turned out.

Suitably caped up I made for Cadnam as quickly as possible and then turned onto the B3079, B3078 and finally the B3080 to Downton, where I was at last able to get on a lane that ran quietly beside the Avon with the spire of Salisbury Cathedral signalling my way for most of that gentle road.

As a city for bicyclists Salisbury leaves much to be desired and details of my entry into that place are best passed over. Suffice to say I finally found the Youth Hostel and soon had my route planned for the following day.

Drizzly rain showed me the way out of Salisbury the next morning. North on the A345 with Old Sarum - Cobbett's "Accursed Hill" - rising on my left. A look at modern Salisbury's ancient predecessor seemed almost obligatory, but scrabbling over muddy entrenchments did little to improve my knowledge or temper. A greater effort of the imagination than I was able to muster on that damp day is needed to visualise its former importance. On



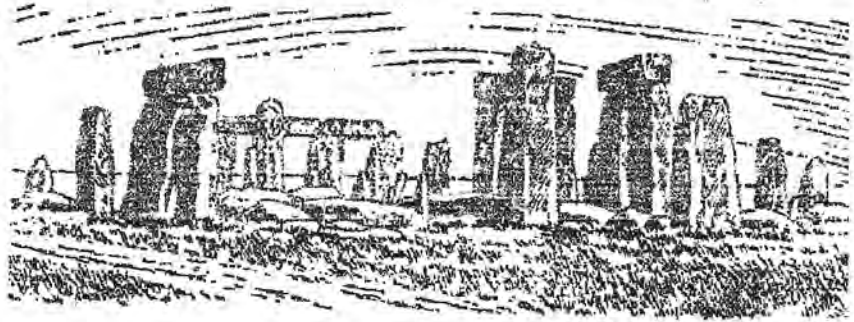
such a morning I could only sympathise with clerics and soldiers alike who had at one time to inhabit that bleak place.

Returning to my cycle, I soon said farewell to the main road and turning left on to a lane found myself heading in the general direction of those three delightful villages known collectively as The Woodfords. Lower, Middle and Upper Woodford hug the Avon stream with its widening water-meadows and waving lines of pollarded willows. At Middle Woodford where for some distance road and river cling affectionately to each other, I paused to watch a solitary angler. Balanced precariously in a coracle he was waiting patiently for 'a bite' and it occurred to me that cyclists are not alone in passion for their pastime. While I was musing on the merits of cycling and angling as leisure pursuits - neither interfere with the pleasure of others - he came ashore. We chatted

briefly and he shared with me the confidence that "John Evelyn used to fish here when he stayed with his uncle at Durnford. Still fine trout to be found".

I continued on past Heale House with its fine avenue of trees. In a valley of many splendid mansions and country houses Heale is probably the best known. Its historic association with Charles II - he hid here for several days after the Battle of Worcester - puts it firmly on the itinerary for many visitors to the area. Still my road followed the river. Through the villages of Wilsford and Lake hidden among the trees, until suddenly it stumbled on to the Devizes road a couple of miles from Stonehenge. Cobbett makes little mention of Stonehenge. He merely says "I rode up and looked at the stones". He was probably not greatly impressed anyway. He could wax lyrical over a field of turnips or be scathing of Sir Walter Raleigh and potatoes.

On the 30th August he notes in his diary, "One of the greatest villains upon earth who first brought the base root to England. What a pity, since he was to be hanged, the hanging did not take place before he became such a mischievous devil as he was in the latter two thirds of his life". I had not seen the great stones for at least 25 years and well remembered the children running in and out of their shadows cast upon the green turf.



STONEHENGE, LOOKING TOWARDS THE SOUTH EAST

How different things are now. Vandalism and mass tourism have made it necessary for Stonehenge to be 'Protected' and the "Magical Ring" now stands impotently behind a wire fence. Nothing can quite destroy their power however and perhaps I was lucky to see them again under the leaden skies and misty rain that evoked the pre-Christian era when they were first raised.

Into and out of Amesbury as rapidly as possible. One of the oldest inhabited sites in Britain - its name, some say, is derived from Ambrosius, the fifth century Roman-Britain and predecessor of Arthur the King - Amesbury now has little to commend it. However, a short distance eastward on the A303 set me turning North again on a route as near as dammit to the one taken by Cobbett. Soon I was zipping down the steep hill from Bulford to Durrington. Was this the hill of which he remarked, "So steep that I did not attempt to ride down it. Seeing a boy going to the stubbles with a drove of pigs, I beckoned him, and he came and led my horse down for me."? The road narrowed and soon I was seeing those villages of Milston, Figheldean, Netheravon and Fittleton, still much as he described them in his "Rural Rides". No longer though the grinding poverty that he saw. The few people about were on horseback or in mud spattered Land Rovers. Sadly much of what he described has disappeared under a plethora of army buildings, for here, where the vastness of Salisbury Plain becomes apparent, the military is much in evidence. The landscape

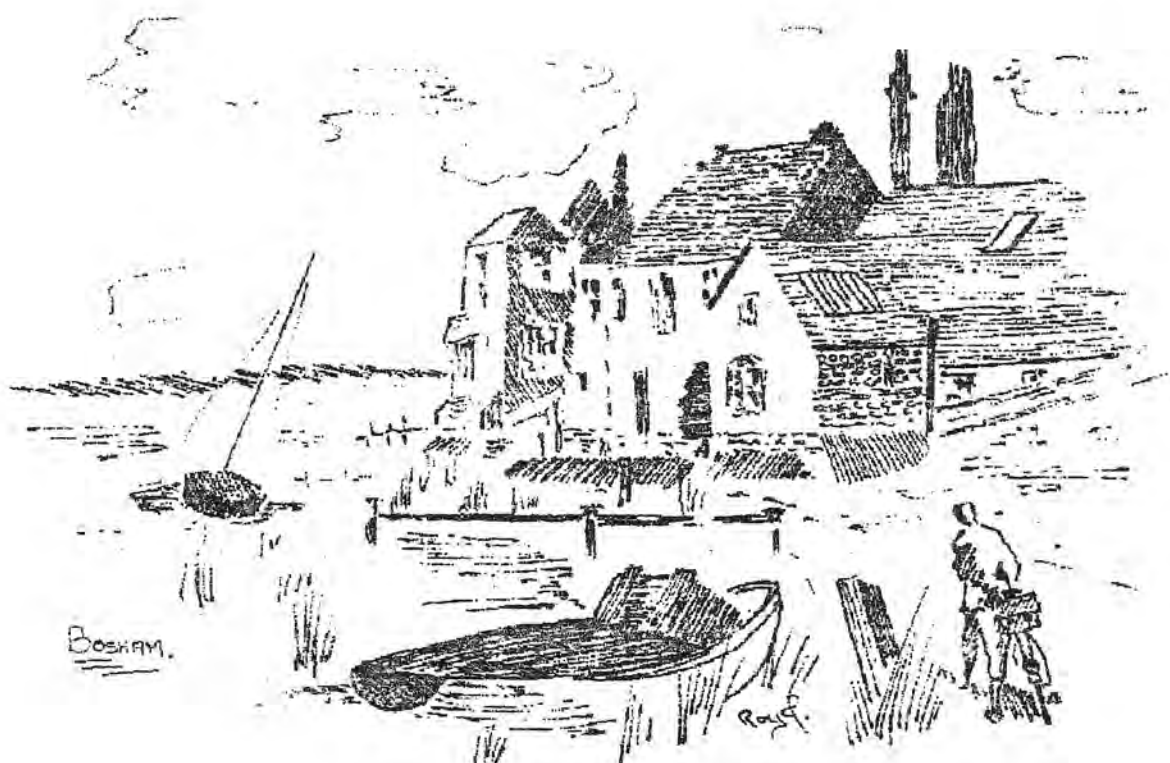


remains however and despite the persistent rain the ride gave many small pleasures. Sharing a 'brew up' with a rambler under the shelter of the lych gate of Fittleton church he offered me his Winchester address with an invitation to call in for a 'cuppa' whenever I am nearby. Such incidents do much to heighten the delights of cycle touring.

I left the Cobbett road, as I am pleased to call it, on the outskirts of the village of Upavon and turned South East on the A342 as far as Everleigh. Here I made one of those silly mistakes that cannot be excused. On the map I had noted a minor road that crossed the plain from Everleigh to Fittleton, but in the now heavy rain I took the first turn off in the village. Later examination of the map would reveal two minor roads, the first ending quickly in three separate tracks and another a little further on that was the correct road. Guess which I took? Ignorant of my error I started on the best of the tracks that faced me. The way became more desolate and the track although rideable became rough, difficult and continually splitting up. Soon I was using the compass I always carry to make sure I was going in the right direction. Warned off by red flags I had to skirt a firing range area. Distant occasional gunfire announced the army was very much in residence. At last, muddy and rather more concerned than I would admit to I tumbled through one of the many tank gates that allow tanks to enter the few roads that traverse the plain.

Thankfully I was back on tarmac, on the Cobbett road I was familiar with, only about three miles from Amesbury and with a watery sun at last lighting my way. In a period of about two minutes I was transformed from deep gloom to joy. I even stopped in Amesbury for afternoon tea. When I came out of the tea shop it was raining again.

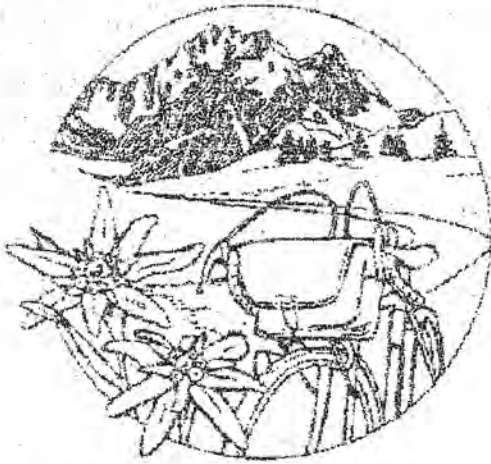




Everyday Sussex No. 10
by Roy James.

Across the Canadian Rockies

with John Gallisworthy



The start of my trip was Edmonton, Alberta. I flew from Gatwick, transferring at Toronto, both bike and myself arriving safely.

Edmonton I enjoyed. Apparently the town was becoming somewhat down market and it was decided to have a major revamp before it became a second rate business centre. The result is a very "open" city with imaginative modern buildings. It boasts an enormous shopping mall which contains a full size ice rink and swimming pool complete with concrete "beach", wave machines and about six water tubes. There's also a fun fair with a great big dipper. I think there are 500 or so shops.

After three days in Edmonton it was time to head west and so I set off on the Yellow Head Road. Named, I believe, after a very blond pioneer. My next major centre was Jasper and took three days to reach. The intervening countryside was open rolling farming land and sparsely populated. Naturally the local population are mostly farmers and when I stopped at the road-houses I had much enjoyment "earwiggling" conversations that covered such topics as moose, beavers, bears and snow mobiling.

Jasper I found disappointing. Its main function, I think, is as a centre for hiking, camping, etc. in the mountains. The town consists mainly of hotels and cafes. Unfortunately it rained like hell while I was there and a crowd of us spent the day in the dining shelter at the camp site. Luckily there were two wood burning stoves. A day like that is never really lost as with different nationalities travelling interesting conversations take place.

Mount Robson National Park was the next stop and I managed a walk to one of the lakes. Really this whole area is about hiking and camping in the mountains and the Canadians and Americans flock there to enjoy the fantastic scenery. They come by many forms of transport from the enormous US type mobile campers, large caravans to motor bikes, the large Jap. ones being most popular. The campers themselves also vary widely. Some just camp and enjoy what is immediately around them but many are serious hikers and spend many days away in the wilderness. There really is something for everyone. Most of the campsites I used were for the motorised camper and the stands are often gravelled so a camping mat is essential, also they play havoc with the tent pegs!

The ride continued through forested mountains with snow capped peaks in the distance and the road gradients continued to be long steady climbs rather than steep. Soon after Mount Robson I stopped at Valemont. This was a pleasant small farming centre, but its main attraction was the river. It is one of the main salmon spawning areas and I was fortunate to be there at the right time and so able to see this natural miracle.

My next point of interest put me just over half way on my trip. This was a part famous for its waterfalls. I arrived at the turn off the main road towards the end of the day and stocked up with three days food. I had about six miles to the first set of falls and camp site, and I must admit I struggled. I hit the steepest hills so far encountered and I think I also had a touch of bonk. Anyway, after setting up camp and making a meal things seemed better. Also the park warden told me I had climbed the hills and the next bit would be easy and it would be well worth my continuing. My idea of easy and a motorists idea of easy are somewhat different but after another 25 miles I reached my objective. The 411 ft. drop of the Helmaken Falls and Gorge, plus a super walk through the forest to get there, made everything worthwhile.

Continuing West I passed through some quite dry deserty terrain before arriving

at the Fraser River Gorge and Hells Gate. This is the point that gave the pioneers major problems in their quest to go East. The river rapids stopped boats continuing and the cliffs prevented overland travel. Stories of extreme bravery abound of the pioneers traversing the cliffs on rope and pole bridges. In the end the gorge was conquered and the railway built, allowing the push East to continue.

My ride continued West and after a few miles the mountains opened up to a large fertile valley and a more-or-less flat ride to my brother's, South of Vancouver.

My total mileage was about 800 miles and took three weeks. I usually rode about 60 miles per day and this I found enough. As mentioned earlier the road gradients were good, but a continuous head wind gave me one or two hard days. I camped every night and always used official sites. These were expensive for the lightweight camper as we had to pay the same fee as the large campers. This was about £5.00 per night but all sites had good facilities and were clean and litter free. Food was not really a problem, but there are long distances between centres and it was necessary to carry some food at all times. Americans consider Canada expensive - which amazed me. Naturally my main expense was eating, but I really didn't find Canada any different in overall cost to here.

Although the ride was on the main East-West highway and it is only single carriageway traffic was no problem at all. There are two main reasons for this; one is the low volume of traffic and the other is a three foot wide hard shoulder. Cycling is very popular and there were other tourists but I didn't meet anyone going my way. Meeting people was no problem though, the Canadians being very open friendly people.

For anyone considering a trip to Canada I would highly recommend a tour. Cycling is certainly one of the best ways of seeing the country. (But then that's obvious isn't it?)



Turbo Bicycles

(This item from the New Scientist was passed to me by a member)

Benjamin McGibbon of Merseyside believes that if cyclists could work with their hands as well as their feet, they would go faster. So he is patenting a booster for pedal cycles (UK 2 229 684).

McGibbons system is a spring-loaded handgrip mounted on the bicycle frame. The handgrip is connected to a cable which pulls a gear chain over a cogged wheel. The end of the chain is anchored by a return spring and the cog is connected to the cycle wheel.

To aid acceleration, the cyclist keeps pulling the handgrip up and down against the spring, while pedalling in the usual way. It is unclear from the patent specification whether Mr. McGibbon has actually built his bicycle booster, whether it would work at all, and whether a cyclist could use it if it does.

But cynics should think twice before writing such ideas off as non-starters. In April 1986, *Patents* mocked Anwar Farooq of Louisiana for proposing a bicycle which uses the headwind it encounters to drive a turbine and provide extra power.

Mathias Schulenburg of Cologne in Germany was intrigued by the idea. He calculated that it could work, citing the work of the American boat builder Havilah Hawkins, who has built a boat with a windmill which drives the propeller.

To prove the theory, Schulenburg built a working model by grafting together two toy bicycles into a tricycle, attaching a toy windmill and adapting an old clock mechanism to provide gearing. A rubber O-ring transmits the power to the rear axle.

When a hair dryer is directed at the model it does move forward, even uphill. According to his calculations, with a 10 per cent windmill efficiency, the tricycle should move forward at 46 per cent of the headwind speed. Alas, a wind from behind makes the tricycle go backwards.

The P-B-P Part 1 - The Road to Paris.
by David Rix.



Paris-Brest-Paris
1891-1891



Paris-Brest-Paris
1891-1891

It all started in 1990 when Heather Stevens decided that she would like to do the four-yearly Paris-Brest-Paris 1200 km Randonnee, persuaded father Ken and fiancé Robert that they should do it, and then told me that I had to go to make up the foursome. The event had been in the back of my mind for a while but I had been undecided about it however, with three companions and the promise of car support from Ken's wife Iris and my wife Susan, I agreed.

The P-B-P as it is referred to is THE randonnee, the one all serious Audax riders want to do. Held every four years, it covers approximately 1200 km from Paris to Brest and back and has to be completed in a maximum time of 90 hours, which means completing 200 miles a day. Despite this it attracts several thousand riders from all over the world. To qualify a rider has to complete events at 200, 300, 400 and 600 kilometers. The Audax calendar duly arrived and over a Christmas week spent on the canals we sorted out our qualifying rides. However with the distance involved it was important to "get the miles in" and so from early in the year I was doing 20 or 30 miles after work, this increased once the qualifying rides were done.

First came the 200's - the classic "Dorset Coast" with torrential rain at times, our own "Southdowns" and Worthing's "Weald and Downland" - which were completed relatively easily on consecutive weekends in April. Next was the Marlow 300, where, unfortunately, Ken had to pack at the first control with back problems. Unless another 300 could be found our team was down to three. For reasons of cost and travelling distance we had agreed to ride our 600 before our 400. Everything was set to ride the 600 starting at Seething in Norfolk, and because the Stevens had a full car I had arranged to travel up with Geoff and Jenny Boxall. When I arrived at their home in Crowborough on the Friday night I was greeted with the news that the others would not be going, Robert had had an accident and even though he was alright his bike was a right off! Geoff & I were on our own.

Over the weekend I told Geoff that it looked like the P-B-P was out for me since the others could not now complete their qualifiers, and they had already commented about the cost of entry (£55 for British riders). Geoff then informed me that due to other commitments Mick Burgess and also a french friend who had hoped to ride could not make their qualifying rides, and Geoff had resigned himself to riding alone. He had an offer of backup from friends Roger Bradgate and Astra Morgan, and said he would be glad to have me along if the others agreed. Things suddenly looked brighter, I was back on course for Paris with only one qualifier to go.

Ken, Heather, Robert and I had already entered the Yorkshire Dales 400 km since this fitted in with our plans to spend the Spring Bank Holiday week in the Yorkshire Moors. However a midnight start put paid to Robert - he couldn't stay awake - and Ken's sciatica was playing up again, all of which found me continuing alone after the first check to complete the event in the company of half a dozen riders I grouped up with on the way round. If anyone wants a 400 km to ride, the scenery on this one is quite spectacular, especially sunrise in Swaledale when you've been on the road for six hours and have just completed a four mile climb.

With our qualifiers behind us it was down to the serious business of planning the trip. Geoff, who had ridden the Marlow 400, now informed me that two friends we had met up with on various rides, Derek Monkhouse and Stuart Downie of the S. W. London D. A., would be joining our team. Several meetings were held at Astra's home to decide on food supplies and other arrangements. Roger had already booked the ferry for his car and the original four of us - Derek & Stuart had already made their own arrangements and would meet us at the start venue.

In the meantime, Geoff and I had decided to have a go at the 600 km "Bryan Chapman Memorial Ride" from Chepstow to the Menai Bridge and back. I drove us up and we stayed at Chepstow hostel Friday and were at the station well in time for the 6 a.m. start. Then tragedy struck - five miles out from Chepstow my down tube cracked straight through. There was nothing we could do. I told Geoff to go on and in poor spirits I walked back to Chepstow to await Geoff's return.

Somehow I had to find a new bike in the next eleven weeks, and I didn't really have the money. My mother said I could use my father's forty-three year old Strudwick for club runs, since my only other bike was fixed wheel. Several offers came of bikes to borrow, but Geoff said, "What's wrong with the Strudwick?". As he saw it, if a frame breaks it breaks and my father's had already lasted longer than mine, which had only been twelve years old. So, despite reported comments that I was mad to ride on a forty-three old frame, I was back on the road to Paris.

The all important entry forms had been received and filled out, this caused some concern since one of the requirements was a signed statement from your doctor that you were fit to ride. It was with slight trepidation that I approached my G. P., however, despite my having spent the previous summer flat on my back with a slipped disc, he was quite happy to sign a declaration that I was "fit to take part in long distance cycling." - it somehow slipped my mind to tell him that we were intending to do 1200 km in under 90 hours. I wonder how many did tell their doctors the whole truth? Unlike myself some others were charged for the service - Geoff paid £10. Then the forms together with mug shots and other documents were off to Audax U. K. and thence to Paris and Audax Club Parisien, the organisers of the event.

A slight hiccup in my training rides came with the birth of our son, Martin, on July 6th, but this only slowed me up for a while and was made up for by a few Saturday morning rides with Geoff. Roger meanwhile was getting his car sorted out with stickers and arranging to borrow flags and rig up some sort of makeshift tent from the roofrack (as it turned out this wasn't needed). Geoff had also been busy and was getting himself sponsored in aid of Ankylosing Spondylitis, a chronic condition that sometimes results in rigidity and curvature of the spine, and which his friend Trevor suffers from. Geoff had just designed some special T-shirts for the A. S. support group.

Finally the day to leave arrived, Saturday August 24th, and Roger's car arrived outside our house at 8 a.m. emblazoned with lettering saying "Paris-Brest-Paris" on the front and back windows and the names of the four riders and the support crew on the side ones. There was also the Crowborough flag flying from the roof and a flashing orange light borrowed from Crowborough fire station. I was just glad that there was hardly anybody about at that time of the morning. Loaded up we drove to the dock where the car drew a lot of curious stares, as it did again when we left the ferry Dieppe. I think Roger had a slight panic when a french port official wanted to confiscate his flag - he'd only borrowed it for the week from the town hall!

Geoff & Roger's friends Eric and Anne-Marie were there to meet us - we were staying the night at their flat before driving on to Paris. In return we took them out for a meal before turning in for a good night's sleep. Sunday morning saw us off down the autoroute to Paris, with a brief stop to buy Baguettes, ham and cheese for lunch. We found the start venue, the Gymnase des Droits de l'Homme at St. Quentin-en-Yvelines, with little trouble and settled ourselves under some trees near one of the parking areas to eat our lunch. There were now less than thirty-six hours to go.

Today was bike check day. Everybody had to check in and have their lights, etc. checked and also show their spare bulbs and reflective clothing. No problems there for us, and once done a band was sealed round each of our frames, we were issued with a commemorative water bottle and could then go and collect our documents. A lady issued us with a brevet card and also a credit-card-sized plastic card bearing our photo - both had to be used at each check-in - we also received a small P-B-P pin badge and, unexpectedly, an Audax Club Parisien Super Randonneur Medal. Geoff and I were now all set for the start at 10 p.m. the following evening, we only had to wait for Derek and Stuart who had not yet arrived. But wait a minute - what was that the lady

said? Something about getting cards stamped in Paris. Geoff hadn't heard her, was I sure? A quick look at our brevet cards showed a box marked "Hotel de Ville, Paris", and on enquiring we were told that yes we did have to check in there and get the stamp between 12.00 and 2.00 the next day, but we weren't required to ride there. We knew there was to be a special commemorative ride, from the start to the Hotel de Ville in Paris, because this was the centenary of the event, but we had decided the time would be better spent getting as much sleep as possible before the start. Derek and Stuart had still not arrived so we decided to defer making a decision until we had met up with them.

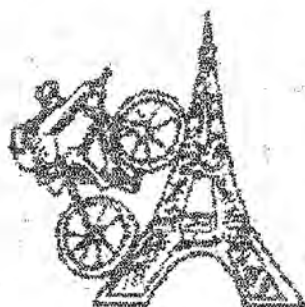
Not much later they arrived and we saw them checked in and then joined them at their hotel near to the start. They told us that the station was just up the road and we agreed to go into Paris by train and hope to get back with enough time for a three or four hour sleep in the afternoon. Roger and Astra would stay to sort out the car, but Stuart's wife Maureen, who had come for the week to do some sight-seeing, would come with us. That settled we said goodbye and headed for our night's lodgings.

Geoff and Roger had arranged accommodation for us at a Chambre d'Hote in Epone, about fifteen miles from the start, which they had used on previous trips to France. Olivier & Denise were old friends of theirs and Denise laid on an excellent meal for us. They had not known about the P-B-P and were fascinated to hear the details. When Denise learnt that we had nowhere to sleep the following afternoon she said that we must go back there - the rooms weren't needed till after 6.00 - and she also offered to do us a filling meal before we left for the event.

After an excellent french breakfast we rendezvoused with the others at their hotel and set off for the station. After sorting out the timetables we saw that we were on a direct line and were soon speeding on our way towards Paris. A distant view of the Eiffel Tower and then we were alighting at Paris-St. Michel station and heading along past the impressive facade of Notre Dame to the Hotel de Ville. The square before the building was already filling up and we recognised many familiar British faces. There were over 3000 taking part and we saw riders there from all parts of the world, many in distinctive national Audax Jerseys. Noon came and we joined one of the queues to get our cards checked. We didn't wait to hear the speeches after this but headed back for the station. It had been a brief visit to Paris with only a rail ticket and a stamp in a brevet card to show I'd been there - I'd left my camera back at Epone, so no pictures.

Geoff and I managed about three hours sleep that afternoon and then we all tucked into a massive meal of chicken and pasta served up by Denise. It was a bloated foursome who set off for the start - after the obligatory photos with Olivier, Denise and their family. We met up with Derek and Stuart in the bike park at about 8 p.m. as arranged and then went and got our start boxes stamped. Once done we had little to do but wait around until the start. Slowly people started to filter off to line up and we moved to join them. An announcement was then made that, due to the large number, we would be sent off in three groups, but there would be no time penalty because of this. 10 o'clock came and the first group were off - without us - and then, at 10.20, we got our chance as the second group were released, and we were off - on the road to Brest and back!

Read the concluding part in the Summer 1992 issue.



Where's the Fire?

A Report on the 1991 Firemans Randonnee by Geoff Boxall

The Firemans Randonnee attracted 91 entries of which 82 started and finished. The French ferries decided to strike on the Sunday, and in consequence the 8 riders from Dieppe with their ladies, for whom a minibus had been arranged, were unable to join us.

This year West Sussex D.A. Sections from Worthing, Horsham & Brighton were represented as well as Brighton and Worthing Excel., Eastbourne Rovers, Mid-Sussex, Gatwick Airport CC and 10 from the Lewes Wanderers. The East Sussex D.A. put in riders from all Sections.

The scene at Crowborough at lunchtime could have been straight from the 50's. Riders were wandering around in the sunshine looking at bikes and consuming Helen Bradgate's excellent refreshments by the plateful. All this washed down as usual by ale brewed by Yub Moore. Ray Wickens reckons he brews a good pint - and that's from a connoisseur! To add to the excitement there was a fire on the forest and the fire engines were racing out leaving the station empty to the cyclists.

At the finish Yub was ferrying interested riders to the town and back on the back of his tandem trike (especially the ladies).

Nicoia Lade won the plaque for the youngest rider, Ray Douglas for senior and best Brigade was Eastbourne just ahead of Hove and Seaford. The Firemens' Benevolent Fund was better off by at least £490 thanks to the hard work of Roger Bradgate who promised all the local businesses extra quick fire protection in return for a small donation. One rider raised £90 on his own, something which the organisers don't expect from participants, but which was very acceptable. Enough funds were left to have a unique medal made for next year (good news for date bar collectors).

My sincere thanks to all who came along and made the event such a resounding success and for the amiable and easy going atmosphere that you gave to it.

A lot of support for next year is already promised - I hope you can make it - let's top the 100 in 1992.



Deadline for Summer Edition Mid June 1992