

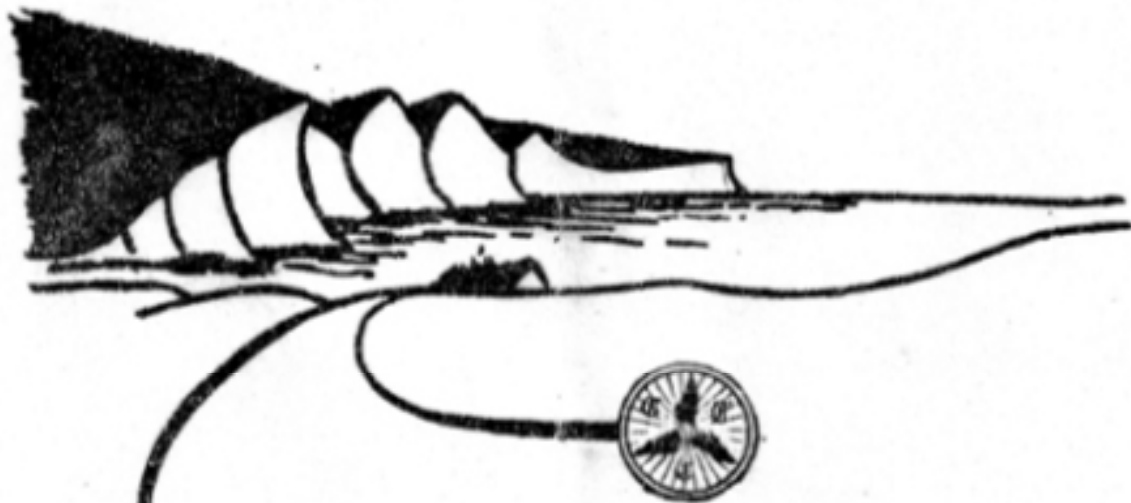
David & Susan

The



Coaster

no. 10



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

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CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB
EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

"THE COASTER"

CHRISTMAS 1985 - ISSUE No. 10

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR READERS.

Thanks to all those who put pen to paper for this issue. Don't forget deadline for next Coaster - mid-June - so that should give you plenty of time to write something. I am pleased to have some new contributors for this issue, lets hope there are more where they came from. Remember it's your magazine.

David

1

INNOCENTS IN SOMERSET

by Joyce Wickens

The idea of a Youth Hostel Ready Route had appealed for some time, accommodation and all meals in one booking, no hassle. So inviting Jill to join me we chose the Somerset trip.

All duly booked we listened to well meaning friends warning of "mechanical problems". So armed with a dumbbell spanner and two spare tubes we set forth for Bath Hostel, the start of the tour, with my bike on the roof rack and Jill's bike in the back of the car.

A halt was decided upon to view the cathedral at Salisbury. I was rather surprised when people started shouting as I entered the multi-storey car park. A sickening thud brought me to an immediate stop - I had forgotten low roof. Fortunately the bike was not damaged, the car being low enough for it to almost miss. Yes Ray, that was how the roof channel of my car got bent! We did not stop to see the Cathedral after this.

Continuing to Bath Hostel the warden advised leaving the car at the University car park as there is a security guard on duty, a tip worth knowing.

Day One and we set off for Street, a distance of 44 miles. We had travelled 5 miles when Jill announced that something was wrong with her bike, it was very hard going. No it wasn't the Somerset hills - the gear jockey had seized solid. Freewheeling down hills and walking up we eventually arrived at a village where a word to a sympathetic local soon brought forth a can of oil to ease the offending piece of mechanism. All was well until descending the steep hill into Wells there was a bang, telling me I now had a broken spoke in the rear wheel. The tyre rubbed badly on the chain stays making riding impossible. A spoke key would have been a help, so I decided to enlist the help of any cyclist. In Wells two lads looked startled and rode off rapidly; no doubt their mums had warned them about strange women making odd requests.

No cyclists in site, so Jill and I set off in opposite directions to hunt the town. I drew a blank but Jill was jubilant, she had hauled a young American cycle camper out of a cafe. With a few deft twists of the magical tool my bike was rideable again. Instead of the wheel wobbling from side to side it now went up and down, and thus I continued to Street. The next morning I took the bike into Ray Chick's shop for the repair and also bought a spoke key and a can of oil.

The tour contained no further mechanical failures, not even a puncture. The route was well planned, winding through delightful lanes and villages, avoiding main roads, with shorter mileages for the hilly sections and a very easy day in the middle of the week.

Crowcombe, Minehead, Holford and Cheddar Hostels were also used. In short a most enjoyable holiday - great fun.

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NEW FOREST CYCLING WEEK

20th. to 28th. July, 1985.

Organiser :

Enjoy a weeks camping at Roundhill and riding on the Forest tracks. Organised rides, or go as you please. Write for further details.

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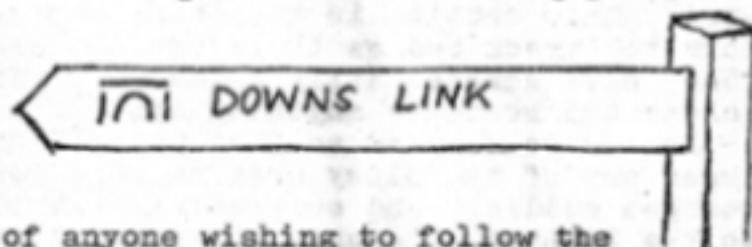
THE DOWNSLINK - BY UNICYCLE!?

The following letter was received by your editor just too late for the last edition. I have no clue to the identity of the writer other than the fact that the letter is signed 'Tonto (The Lone Ranger)' and that it was posted in Glasgow. Since I found it interesting I include it here in its entirety for your edification.

Dear Mr. Rix,

It has come to my attention that you are responsible on a bi-monthly basis for news, gossip and libellous remarks (I never make libellous remarks! Ed.) in a publication directed at the members of the Eastbourne & Hailsham District Association (slightly inaccurate) of the Cyclists' Touring Club and whilst I will be making day rides on my unicycle in your area I feel it may be of interest to you, and your members, if my comments on things that I find could be used in this publication, therefore the following is detail of my evaluation of the new Downslink route between Bramber and Horham.

Thursday, 4th July, dawned bright and sunny and very warm, getting the unicycle out of the broom cupboard I set off for Bramber to start up along this route, unfortunately it is not very easy to find and after searching for nearly an hour up and down the bypass and in and out of the back streets of Bramber and Steyning I was forced to call in at a purveyor of sweetmeats and drinks to refresh myself and the unicycle. The owner of this establishment well versed in the strange ways of the Bramberites informed me that there was a signpost at the base of the Castle pointing into a housing estate - a very unlikely route - sure enough there was the signpost and at last we were on our way.



(for the benefit of anyone wishing to follow the Downslink I have added this drawing of one of the sign posts you will find. Ed.)

The first part of the ride is very boring as it is through the bungalow estate to the north-east of Bramber Castle, however the sign posts once you know what to look for are quite easy to find, and eventually after a few left and right turns you are led onto a bridlepath which is covered with extremely sharp flints, which would easily tear the unicycle tyres to pieces therefore I walked nearly one and a half miles over undulating countryside on this smooth but stony flinty track until, after passing the last farm, a sharp right hand turn is made and the track progresses along the side of a field of Barley to make an easy access with the old track bed some one mile north of Steyning and Bramber.

In general there is no evidence of horse or motorcycle use at this stage of the Downslink life and the surface is passable in general throughout its entire length, without too much undue discomfort to a cyclist. It is a wonderful sensation to cycle along a level track whilst the countryside around you goes up and down and you remain nice and level. Just before Henfield is reached the countryside changes to very much greater woodland, and at Henfield itself you have to leave the track bed to take a diversion through the houses and pick up the line at the Station (by the 'Cat & Canary' public house. Ed.) where you cycle through the remains of the old goods yards. The countryside gets more interesting as you proceed towards Partridge Green and the condition of the track bed starts to vary from an easy hard compressed mud to more ballast and loose stone giving concern for the state of the unicycle's tyres, however nothing untoward occurred.

At Partridge Green they have built a housing and industrial estate across the track bed and it is necessary to use the Bridle Path and road to circumnavigate the obstruction. The Downlink is regained at the side of the overbridge at Partridge Green Station, but it is not very clearly marked and access back on to the formation is gained by a very steep path which leads onto the old railway route again. After about one hundred yards repairs to the formation are being carried out and the cyclist is well advised to dismount and walk for a hundred or so yards.

North of Partridge Green the countryside gets very much woodier and more interesting and the track bed starts to deteriorate in places, there being more infilling of ballast, and the nice hard surface tends to get a bit rutted but not too bad. It is very interesting to cycle through West Grinstead Station as although from the road it looks intact from the rail bed it is very difficult to make out the platforms as everything has a luxuriant growth of foliage over it and new trees are sprouting out from the most unlikely places.

After West Grinstead the line passes through a large field which the farmer has claimed back but obviously has had to give a right of way over as there is a well trampled track to the far side where you can pick up the railway again.

It is necessary to leave the railway track bed just before you reach Southwater to pass under a special bridge built so that the A24 can pass unhindered, you rejoin the railway line again at Southwater Station which unfortunately is showing signs of turning into a dump, there being cars and general rubbish distributed about the area. It is necessary then at the start of Southwater platform to leave the railway line and regain the track bed some way down Church Lane to the north of Southwater. This section is the least attractive as Gipsy's are trying to claim the track bed as their own and erect many gates across it which they have unnecessarily fixed with very hard to undo ropes hoping to close the route to anything other than walkers. These unnecessary fastenings were removed so that I could pass unhindered. The line then passes out of the Gipsy area on to a long well wooded embankment and emerges suddenly and surprisingly at the site of the old junction with the Horsham to Arundel line right on Christ's Hospital playing fields. The route is well signposted through Christ's Hospital, regaining the public road at the overbridge just to the south of Christ's Hospital station.

On balance it was a very pleasant trip as the weather has been so dry the going proved to be very acceptable, what it would be like after continuous rain is another story and what it will be like when horses have used it more will be interesting to see, it all depends on the willingness of the local council, which appears to be Horsham, to maintain it as a through way.

(I hope that this contribution is not a one off, and look forward to receiving any further details of Tonto's perambulations on his unicycle)

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DID YOU KNOW?

The Malling Table. After the slaying of Archbishop Becket in Canterbury Cathedral, the four murderers fled South West, arriving the following night at Old Malling Farm outside Lewes. Hungry, thirsty and saddle-weary, the four flung themselves around a table and placed their fatal weapons upon its surface; but the table immediately rose up and threw the arms to the ground. Again the weapons were placed upon the table, and again they were thrown to the floor.

In Anne of Cleve's House Museum in Southover High Street, Lewes, there is a slab of stone claimed to be the actual table.

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SPONSORED BIKE RIDE, 7th Sept. 1985

(a tour of some Sussex churches)

by Ann Rix



An event that started in Suffolk in 1982 has spread so well that this year several counties took part. Organised by the Sussex Historic Churches Trust with half the sponsorship money going to them and the other half to churches of the riders (or walkers) choice, or to Save the Children Fund. The Trust helps churches that are over 100 years old with their repair bills.

All denominations were asked to be involved and this made it most interesting for the cyclists and walkers, who tried to visit as many churches as possible between 10.am and 6.pm on the saturday.

A glorious day helped as Alec and I went from church to church, with the company of Susan & Frank Drader as far as Southease, stopping to chat to the people waiting to sign our sponsorship forms (come on, you talk too much says Alec). Several were sitting outside enjoying the sunshine and giving us a smiling welcome, with offers of refreshments and telling us about their church. At Bishopstone the vicar told Susan & Frank of the mass dial over the parch, then on to Denton and Tarring Neville before visiting Newhaven Roman Catholic (a change of priests the week before meant they were not prepared so we left papers there). Then to the Baptist Church who said they would sign for the Roman Catholic. A climb up to St. Michaels; we left Susan & Frank here as they headed along the Ouse while we aimed for Peacehaven and Colin's company for a while.

The new Sussex chapel at the Church of the Ascension in Peacehaven had to be seen, it was built this year and is dedicated to "The Saints and Witnesses of the Church in Sussex". The Roll of Honour to be placed there will contain the names of the five pre-reformation Saints of Sussex - Wilfrid of Selsey, Lewinna of Alfriston, Cuthman of Steyning, Dunstan of Mayfield, and Richard of Chichester. It will also contain witnesses of later date, including both Protestant and Catholic martyrs. On to the Roman Catholic, then the United Reformed at Telscombe Cliffs before the up and over, and down into Telscombe village. Then Piddinghoe and back to Southease, where we had our

lunch and said goodbye to Colin.

Rodmell was next and we heard of the problems for the parish as the church roof has to be replaced, after the estimate for the cost was accepted the cold winter made it worse and the cost was doubled. Work has started so they hope to raise the rest that is needed. Iford, Kingston, Southover, and a walk to avoid Station Street, took us to Cliff High Street and St. Thomas Becket before riding along by the river and up the path to South Malling. Here a lovely picture awaited us, a wedding group outside the church posing for their photos, a small table with refreshments was waiting for us on the left so we added to the colourful scene.

A stop for tea and cakes at St. Michaels, over the road to see Westgate Unitarian Chapel; the original chapel was made from the main part of an Elizabethan manor house in 1700, altered in 1913 to make a chapel and church hall. A look at St. John Sub-Castro's 'battenburg' ceiling, then the United Reformed, St. Anne's and St. Pancras, before going over the hill to Offham and the ancient church at Hamsey.

The new Baptist Church at Barcombe, where two friendly girls told us of the many who come from the area around and fill the church. Then a fast ride from St. Francis' Church in Barcombe to go up to St. Bartholomews at Spithurst (had to include this one as my mother's family have lived at Spithurst for over 200 years). Back down the road to the Mills and across to Ringmer, with the wind behind us we flew along the road to Laughton, managing to reach Ripe just on 6.p.m, having visited 38 churches on our journey of 61 miles.

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SMUGGLING & WRECKING AT SEAFORD

Seaford, as so many other coastal towns, was well known for its smuggling and wrecking propensities. This type of 'work' was carried on to such an extent that the inhabitants were called 'Shags' or 'Cormorants' by neighbouring towns.

The favourite place for running contraband cargo was Cuckmere Haven and many fights took place there between smugglers and the old Preventive Force (a body of men whose main duty was stop contraband goods being landed). One gang who managed to evade capture for years was called the Alfriston or Black Gang and a large part of the contraband was run by them. The gang broke up after their leader, a local butcher named Stanton Collins, was caught and sentenced by Lewes Assizes; according to differing sources he got either seven years for sheep stealing or for receiving stolen bushels of barley, but in any case he was transported (presumably to Australia) for that period. Collin's home is now the Smugglers Inn, and you only have to tour the building to credit that he led a smuggling gang. Their are 21 rooms, 47 doors and six staircases in this strange building, with one of the rooms having no fewer than five doors plus a false one that doesn't open.

Even excise men were open to bribery, on more than one occasion the crew of a revenue cutter received money not to see the landing of a valuable cargo of spirits.

Mariners of those days were often heard to say "God preserve us from Seaford and its Shags" when passing up or down the channel in stormy weather. The old trick of tying a ship's lantern around the neck of a donkey and sending it to browse on the cliffs on a stormy night was used to draw ships close to the shore for the wreckers. In a terrific storm on December 7th 1809 no less than 7 vessels were wrecked on Seaford beach.

In Seaford and many surrounding villages there exist many old houses containing cellars and secret rooms which were used for concealing smuggled goods.

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CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB EAST WARWICKSHIRE D.A.



in their Golden Jubilee Year
hope to welcome YOU to the

1986 BIRTHDAY RIDES

in the
**HEART
OF
ENGLAND**



Anne Hathaway's Cottage



The Heart of England is comprised of six central counties though much of our riding will be confined to Warwickshire lanes - leafy, meandering; a world apart from the mental picture most people have of the Midlands.

Dramatic scenery? Not really. Peaceful? Certainly. Interesting? Very. Castles and country houses, brick and timber medieval villages, historic monuments and sites - the Avon Valley and Shakespeare Country - all connected by a myriad of minor roads producing a landscape that typifies the story-book English countryside. For those reasonably fit such areas as the Cotswolds, Edge Hill and the Burton Dassett Hills are within range.

Each day a selection of rides of varying distance will be arranged and for the evenings it is planned to present slide shows, dances, the Birthday Dinner, etc.

Accommodation has been arranged at the University of Warwick (on a green site just north of the A423 Coventry to Kenilworth road) in self catering flats consisting of five or six bedrooms grouped around a well equipped kitchen-dining area. Each flat has its own bathroom and W.C. A refectory and bars are available on the campus as are banks, laundrette, a licensed supermarket, medical services, shops, sports facilities etc. Campers are catered for on a neighbouring sports ground. Two Supermarkets are situated under one mile away

Communications to the area are good. Being central should be convenient for many members. The approaching cyclist has ample chance to avoid the main roads whereas the motorist has easy access from any direction without any problem.

Convenient railway stations are at Coventry (3 miles), Leamington (10m), Rugby (14m), Birmingham International (14m) and Nuneaton (17m, avoiding the industrial side of Coventry - or 14m direct)

East Warwickshire D.A. are proud and pleased to offer a package which we hope will more than match the excellent events held in recent years

Will you please join us for the 1986 Birthday Rides in the Heart of England when we ourselves will be celebrating our Golden Jubilee.



UNSCATHED!
(and that's how it should stay. Ed.)

WITH PETER IN WALES

by Iris Stevens

"Wales is the only place on earth worth visiting", so says Peter Burbery. Well he went on about it so much that we had to let him take us just to prove him wrong.

The last week in May was set aside for this expedition to the Towy Valley, and Peter informed Rita that he was going away with Ken, Iris & Heather for a week. "You're not going, there's too much gardening and decorating to do", she says.

So it was just after 6am on a May morning that Pete was seen furtively loading his gear into an already overloaded chevette and speeding away without saying goodbye. That got him into trouble later but we did leave her Heather's hamster for company.

After an uneventful drive we crossed the Severn Bridge with no trouble, despite Pete's dire warnings of convoys of caravans, and into Chepstow for coffee. A visit to the castle was abandoned when driving rain swept through and it was on into Wales. Driving past a sombre looking Tintern Abbey we realised we had missed a turning and were heading up the Wye Valley. Turning back we found our road and were soon heading up towards Brecon with its Beacons looming out of the rain. "I told you it would rain. It always does when I go camping.", "Shut up Burbery and find us a lunch stop." Fish and chips had us parking right opposite the shop in Sennybridge, so that Iris would not get the chips wet bringing them back to the car. Then it stopped raining.—Hooray, Rhandirmwyn here we come.

Right in Llandovery and there it was, the Towy River and its beautiful valley. Through Rhandirmwyn noting its contents - a shop, pottery, and a place offering farmhouse teas. Make a note of the last, and then on to our chosen site, Galtybere, a farm right beside the rushing river, tucked tightly into a fold in the hills, with sheep everywhere.

Not many tents to be seen on the site despite it being Bank Holiday but then we espied a lone well-laden cyclist. It was Maurice (Colburn), who had travelled across by train from Luton to join us for the week. "I want to go to the toilet", announces Heather, on a site with no facilities. "Then you can put the tent up", says her father. She then spent an amusing twenty minutes endeavouring to get the sentry box erected in rather a strong wind. Maurice eventually rescued her after it had blown away once, and peace was restored.

After a cuppa we set off on foot to explore home for the next week. We couldn't have chosen a more idyllic spot, rushing white water, beautiful hills and the Lynn Briane reservoir only 2 - 3 miles away.

Next morning being Sunday we were soon on the road and up to the Lake that causes some purists to have palpitations. The flooded Towy Valley. Well not all of it is flooded and all I can say is that they made a beautiful job of it. Trees come right down to the waters edge, and the dam itself is covered in boulders, making it all look quite natural. Riding around it you go in and out, up and down as the natural contours make tiny inlets, usually fed by rushing streams. Even on this dull and damp day one could appreciate the beauty of it. There was Dolgoch Hostel looking forlorn and lonely in the now very grey landscape. A few minutes shelter under some trees, then it was up the 1 in 4 to the top of the Devil's Elbow. Here Pete regaled us with stories of the Tour of Britain climbing up it. We were descending, and after negotiating some very steep hairpins, it was down the long valley for afternoon tea at Llanwrtydd Wells.

Replenished we tackled Maurice's rough stuff. For mud it surpassed anything Ken produces; but after two punctures, negotiating gulleys and newly felled woodland, we immersed onto metal surfaces again, with Mo denying that he had wanted to go on the white road in the first place. So it was with muddy bikes that we ended the day.

Bank Holiday Monday lived up to its reputation by threatening rain, so a short ride to the Roman Gold Mines was planned. We may see a kite up that valley says our bird man. (feathered kite that is not paper.) Not finding any gold and with a sky that was definitely lead coloured, we turned to head back to camp with the excuse that Heather had some studying to do (0 levels the following week). That night supper was cooked under umbrellas.

Tuesday, and early morning tea was taken, by those who got up, in brilliant sunshine, thus setting the pattern for the rest of the week. Food and plenty of it was on the agenda for today. So leaving Heather in camp four of us rode down the beautiful green valley to Llandovery to stock up. Of all things Iris was hailed by a family she knew from her job as a lolipop lady. They were staying close by and we ran into them four times over the coming week.

On wednesday we decided to tackle the rough stuff crossing to Tregaron. As we were not sure what we were letting ourselves in for an early start was planned and we were on the road by 9.00am. We were on rough stuff almost from the start, with just a short bit of metalled road to the first farm. At the second a voice shouting up, up, was heard, the owner of which turned out to be an ex-cyclist from the midlands. He informed us that we were the first cyclists to use the track since it had been relayed. The first part, directly above the farm, was very tough, just as the contour lines on the map had indicated, with the newly laid loose scree surface making it even harder. However the views as we struggled up made every drip of sweat worthwhile. The sheer loneliness and beauty of it was awe inspiring, the only sound being the baa of sheep - not a kite to be seen.

Our leader, Maurice, well he was always out in front, would not let us have elevenses till we reached the metalled road by the lane leading towards Tyncornel Youth Hostel. Close by was the lonely farm where two years before a farmer had been murdered with his own shot gun. An eerie, semi-derelict place even on this beautiful sunny day. A sample of ale (just a sample? Ed.) was taken at the next village before riding into Tregaron. We got our own back on Maurice by making him wait till 2.30 for lunch. As we scanned the landscape for kites and only saw buzzards, Pete pointed out the farm that the big drugs ring had operated from. The winding up of which was known as Operation Julie.

Returning via Llyn Briane we visited the lonely chapel set in the hills beside the rough stuff track from Tyncornel. "Did that last February", says Maurice.

Thursday was again FOOD DAY, so yet another route down the valley was taken to Llandovery. The town was being spruced up and the bunting was out in readiness for the visit by the Prince of Wales on Saturday, to celebrate the Royal Charter. Maurice went off and got a few more mile in while the four of us took a walk round the RSPB bird sanctuary. We didn't see many birds but we got some super white water shots.

The week was now running out so fast that a bit more rough stuff was tackled around Llyn Briane. Still no kites, Pete was getting desperate, "I always see a kite when I come to Wales", he lamented. We did see a lot of buzzards though, at quite close range. The lady at the bird sanctuary said that a kite had flown through the day before. Tea that afternoon was taken at the farmhouse, where we ate ourselves to a standstill and still didn't clear the table.

"Same old boring weather", announces Pete on Saturday morning, as the sun streamed down on us taking our early morning tea. Pete, who had been up since six, had washed his hair in the fast flowing Towy and said it was so cold it had given him a headache. Farewells were said to Maurice, who was heading to Llandovery and the train home, while we loaded the bikes on the roofrack for a visit to Llandilo. The reason being a ride to a hilltop castle that was just out of our

reach. The day was very hot and the countryside a little different, the hills being not quite as high but still steep in hedge lined lanes. The castle, which I can't remember the name of (it was Welsh anyway) looked most impressive especially when approached from the sheer cliff face. On the return we just had to go through Bethlehem to take a picture of the sign.

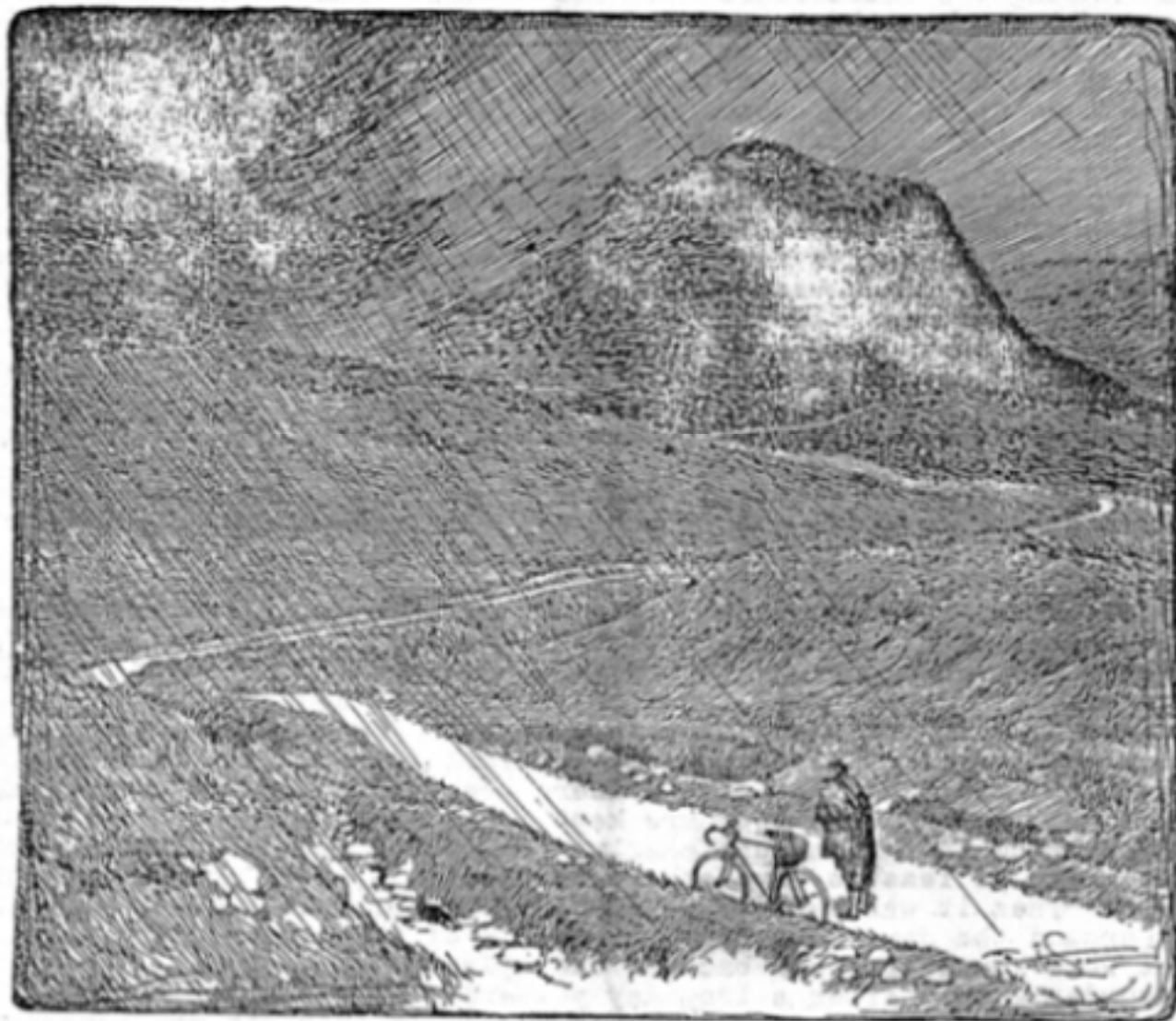
An early start was made for the drive homewards as we did not want to use the motorway more than we had to. So from just outside Chippingham it was all cross country and a pleasant quiet ride it was too, until we reached Midhurst. We had omitted to notice that Point-to-Point was on in Cowdray Park. The place was crawling with green wellies, and by the look of the darkening sky they were going to need them any minute.

We eventually got through, driving through heavy rain for a short time, then it was Portslade and a welcome cup of tea from Rita. Pete was ticked off for not saying goodbye. We loaded up with the hamster and plants from Rita's garden and then headed home.

Yes Peter, it is a beautiful place and we shall certainly be returning.

(Pete has since discovered the Yorkshire Moors. Guess where next years holiday is going to be.)

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THE BAILLIWICK OF GUERNSEY

by Sue Wilkins

The Bailiwick of Guernsey contains Guernsey, Alderney, Herm, Sark and Jethou, they are approximately 80 miles from England's South coast and 30 miles from the West coast of France. We had planned to stay on Guernsey and visit Jersey and as many of the islands in the Bailiwick as possible.

Sunday 23rd June. A short ride from home to Brighton Station from where we were to take a train (at about 6.am) to Portsmouth, then it was a short ride to the ferry terminal. It was then an 11½ hour journey before the ferry finally arrived in Guernsey (the ferry calls at Jersey first, where there is an hours wait before sailing again). Then the problem of finding the campsite in the dark (it was now 10pm) and with no signposts to guide us, as they don't seem to like these over there, it was after midnight before we had set up camp.

Monday 24th. - found us heading in the direction of St. Peter Port, the main town, and where we had arrived the evening before. It was warm but with showers. After a little shopping the rest of the day was spent lazing around the campsite, with a walk in the evening to the nearby Vale Castle and Lancrese Bay.

Tuesday 25th. We eventually set out on a wet and cold day to visit Le Friquet Butterfly farm. Here most of the day was whiled away with Brian chasing the butterflies with his camera. Then it was a quick ride around the coastline back to camp. I should also say that the campsite we had chosen was to the north of the island, a few minutes walk from the beach. The north end of the island was flat and at sea level but on travelling south the land rose quite suddenly about mid-way down the island (just after St. Peter Port) to a few hundred feet above sea level. Thus giving the southern end of Guernsey some lovely views from the cliffs and intermittent sandy beaches.

Wednesday 26th. The southern half of Guernsey beckoned us today as it was dry, so we headed for part of the coastal path, which we tried walking (but the bikes were a bit of a nuisance when we had to carry them up hill and down dale). On the way back we visited the Moulin Huet pottery, and a Gold & Silversmiths.

Thursday 27th. The weather had changed for the better and looked set to stay hot and sunny, so today was the first day we wore shorts. Herm island was the object of today's outing, this is set just off the east coast of Guernsey with about a 30 minute boat trip to reach it. There are no roads on Herm and walking is the only form of transport. Only one family lives on the island where they run a pub, a souvenir shop and small cafe. We walked along the coastal path around the island and spent a short while walking along shell beach.

Friday 28th. We had chosen today to visit Jersey (as Brian wanted to visit some of his long lost relations at the zoo), so we headed for St. Peter Port and took the hydrofoil to Jersey. After about an hour we stepped onto Jersey soil (well concrete then) and took the first taxi available to the zoo. Here an enjoyable day was spent wandering from cage to cage. The zoo, owned by Gerald Durrell, can be highly recommended. Most of the animals there are either rare or endangered species, and unlike most zoos are kept in large enclosures so that they have room to move around easily. The Dodo Restaurant in the zoo can be given at least a five star recommendation, both are well worth a visit. Then it was back to St. Helier by bus, then a quick shopping trip (around the jewellers shops - about ½ of the shops in the main street were jewellers) and back to the hydrofoil.

Saturday 29th. After a long day yesterday we had a lazier day shopping (yet again) in St. Peter Port, then ~~am~~ to visit the Aquarium and Castle Cornet, both in St. Peter Port, where at the latter we waited for the noonday gun to sound - we both went away rather deaf as the gunshot can be heard on the far side of St. Peter Port. After

lunch it was on to the Guernsey Toy Makers to see some toys to be made and then back to camp.

Sunday 30th. We spent today sunning ourselves (overdoing it of course) and clambering about over the rocky coastline not far from the campsite - acting like overgrown kids as usual.

Monday 1st August. We headed south again today and visited various tourist sites. These included the Little Chapel, built by a monk and decorated with shells and pottery. The Hanging Strawberry Farm was next where we had a lunch of sandwiches and, of course, the inevitable strawberries and cream. Then the woodcarvers and little zoo held our attention, the latter being a childrens' zoo for small monkeys, mammals and owls. We stopped on the way home to see the underground hospital, now damp and dimly lit. We walked through what seemed like miles and miles of tunnels, a few still containing beds, and a store full of German helmets.

Tuesday 2nd. Up early today for a visit to Sark, arriving after an hours boat trip at 8.am. All the 'roads' on Sark are dirt tracks, some gravelled over, with transport consisting of horse and cart, bicycles, tractor, or feet. Little Sark joins Sark via the causeway called Le Coupe, this causeway being the only part that is tarmacked, it is about 8 feet wide with a 100 foot drop either side. We were able to take our own bikes over on the boat - they were tied on the front - which saved having to hire some. In the afternoon we had a horse and carriage ride around the island, taking about 2 hours, you can get used to the quiet life over there quite easily. The scenery was breathtaking, especially when walking from the cliff tops down to the beach via a series of steps cut into the cliffs. We eventually left on the last boat - 7.pm arriving back at Guernsey just right for a Wimpy.

Wednesday 3rd. The candlemakers at Guernsey Candles kept us occupied with the fascinating coloured candles that they made. Then on to the Oaklands Craft Centre to watch the glassmakers and potters at work. - The Guernsey Tomato Museum had us learning the history of the tomato trade and how tomato wine was made. When the tomato market collapsed many people converted the greenhouses for flower growing, and carnations along with tomatoes could be purchased easily at the roadside.

Thursday 4th. We rode around the coastline today, stopping to cross the causeway into Lihou, a small island owned by one family and only reachable at low tide. (It has an area of approx. 38 acres! Ed.)

Friday 5th. Our last glimpse of the island today before we had to pack away our belongings for the homeward journey. We stopped at the reservoir and then at the airport - seeing the many small aircraft landing and taking off. A last stop for souvenirs and then back to the campsite for the long task of packing.

The ferry duly arrived at St. Peter Port at 10.pm and we headed for our cabin for the journey home, taking the train from Portsmouth to Hove, it being about 12 noon when we opened the door at no. 23.

I must add that our holiday was made more enjoyable, if that is possible, by the lovely attitude of the Channel Islands people. No-one hurried anywhere or rushed around in their cars, they would wait behind us as we cycled down many narrow twisting lanes until the road widened or straightened out before even attempting to overtake us. Wherever we went we were made most welcome, and they spared us the time to answer any questions we might have. All in all it was a holiday I shall not forget (a belated honeymoon maybe with just the two of us). It was also a rude awakening to get back to Portsmouth where everyone had their foot down as far as it would go and their fingers permanently on their horns. I would recommend the Channel Islands to anybody, and we shall return next year, this time to Jersey. P.S. Anyone liking jewellers shops should go to St. Helier, Jersey, from standing in one spot we could see at least 14 - Brian thinks we went into all of them until I found what I wanted.

Gadehill



Ighiteham Mote



Offham



KENT Wheelmarks



Lympne Castle



Westenhanger Castle

THE DAY THAT THE RAINS CAME DOWN

(A duck's eye view of the 1985 Birthday Rides.)

by David Rix

It was to be a nice little potter through the Sussex lanes up to Pembury for the 1985 CTC Birthday Rides. Geoff & Jenny Boxall had kindly volunteered to transport our camping gear, allowing us to travel with just saddlebags and take it easy. Susan and I were looking forward to a pleasant week cycling in the Kent and Sussex lanes in the August sunshine. What we got was more reminiscent of April or Novemberwell let's start at the beginning.

Saturday 3rd August dawned bright and clear and we were soon up and off on our way to Kent. Through the lanes from Firle to Ripe and Mark Cross, then Whitesmith through to Cross in Hand for coffee at the Little Chef. Up the main road to Butcher's Cross and then the short cut over Argos Hill (I'm sure there's a streak of masochism in there somewhere) and back on the main road to Mark Cross then Frant before turning off at oh, I nearly forgot! We had to shelter from a rain shower near Frant - back to the narrative before turning off at the edge of Tunbridge Wells for Hawkenbury and the camp site at St. George's School, Pembury (a lovely site for a summer camp!).

We reported at reception and collected our bags and tent and then descended to the lightweight site, on a nice level playing field about twenty feet lower than the section for frame tents and officials. I don't know whether putting up the tent had anything to do with it, but it was at this point that someone decided that we needed a thunder storm. With the fly sheet half up it was as much as we could do to peg it out in the strong wind and then get ourselves and everything else in out of the rain. It was at about this time that I realised that our plastic sheet which we always use under the inner, and to stand our gear on in the bell ends, was still sitting at home in the back bedroom. When the rain had cleared (and we had had lunch) a word with Ken and Heather, who were erecting a tent around a disposal point, provided the information that there was an industrial estate nearby, so with instructions from Heather we set off in search of a builders merchant for our plastic sheet. Just our luck - they all close at mid-day on Saturday. We did eventually get a light polythene sheet from a D I Y shop in Tunbridge Wells and then proceeded to get lost round said town. It then started to rain again - we sheltered - it eased up and we moved on with kagoules on - it got a bit heavier - the traffic lights went red - the heavens opened above us - the lights went green and we both made a bee-line for the telephone box on the other side of the junction! If anything it seemed to get heavier. When, after about 15 minutes or so, it eased up again we quickly moved off and found our way back to the campsite.

The lightweight site was starting to squelch a bit, but was OK. We exchanged greetings with Maurice Colburn (who was with his Bed's D.A. companions) and Brian Brodhurst, who at one point passed us en route from car to tent with all his gear in the plastic bag he had been given for his rubbish. We had all been given a plastic bin liner on arrival and were told to put it in the trailer in the playground when it was full (!) and get a new one from the site office. We all wondered what some people take camping, the combined rubbish of Ken, Iris & Heather and Susan & myself for the week would probably have less than half filled one bag!

After eating our dinner we made our way up to the officials section for a chat with Ken, Iris & Heather - Ken was in charge of Portalooc installation and unbunging - and we all went into the hall for a coffee and a chat before turning in.

Sunday started grey but dry as the cyclists massed for the start of the first rides. All 5 of us had opted for the days B ride to Rochester, looking forward to a nice wander round. Ken had volunteered

his services as a leader (we should have been warned ther), and since there were plenty of leaders, Sue & I went with the same group as marshalls.

A pleasant ride through several Kent villages and passing Boughton Monchelsea Church, where it started raining and we caped up, to morning coffee at the Cock Inn, Cock Street. Capes came off here - they came off again at lunch time, at tea time and finally back at the camp site. It was a nice route, it would have been even nicer in the dry.



We made the mistake of tackling the rough stuff section along the Pilgrims' Way (a slight criticism here of the route sheets - no alternative was given if it was wet). We saw several people at the start of it who decided to go round, including the West Kent DA Sec., but no warnings were given. It looked a good track - to start with - but after about 100 yards it got a little muddy, and then it degenerated into complete chaos. Wet oozing mud, sections of track under at least 6-8 inches of water (probably more), and this went on for a good half of the 1 mile stretch. I'm not saying it was bad but it's the first time that I have seen a trike tip over that was doing less than 4 miles an hour. I know we've done some daft things in our time, but even we wouldn't normally tackle something like that; the problem was that by the time we realised, it didn't make any difference whether we went on or went back. A good half hour was spent at the far end unblocking wheels and cleaning frames, then to cap it all one of the Bed.'s DA had a puncture. (Who was it who said it couldn't get any worse.)

We eventually arrived in Rochester wet and fed up at about 1.30, which meant we really didn't have time to look around. A standing lunch was taken, under cover near some shops, then it was across the motorway and the shortest route (straight down the main road - avoiding a further section of rough stuff) to West Peckham for tea, a ploughman's which was very good. Then back to the campsite to clean up, eat dinner and make our way across the road to watch Malcolm Stapley's excellent slide show, which helped to cheer everyone up.

Monday dawned dull and dreary - the lightweight site seemed to be slowly sinking, - we removed our ridge pole because it was making water drip on the inner - Brian Brodhurst found himself flooded out and packed up and went home - and none of our lot seemed to be able to muster the enthusiasm for a ride. In the end Susan and I rode out to Hartfield for coffee, since we had booked, and then returned for lunch.

Then, on Ken & Iris' suggestion, we moved our tent up onto higher ground beside theirs before we all rode out to Fordcombe for the Birthday Tea, an informal affair with tea and cakes on sale and the chance to chat with other riders.

Tuesday turned out to be one of the best days we had - the sun shone! - but then we were coming back to East Sussex. Susan and I led a group of about 13 on the Herstmonceux run (I say about 13 because the number tended to change throughout the day). Ken & Iris had been involved in planning the route - you could tell by the hills. The climb up to Cousley Wood and Wadhurst, with a stop to look at the church, then the climb to Burwash for elevenses, then down past Batemans for the long 2 mile (measure it) climb to the top of Brightling Down and the Needle and Observatory. A short explanation about Mad Jack Fuller and his fallies before we continued, down via Bodle Street and Windmill Hill to Herstmonceux Castle and Observatory. An interesting hour was spent looking round the exhibition and the gardens before we set off for the ride back. No map needed here as we made our way through familiar lanes via Horam and Waldron to Hadlow Down for tea. The caterer that Iris had got in at short notice did us proud and we all enjoyed an excellent meal.

Just as we were about to leave it rained, but only for a few minutes and as soon as it stopped we were off again. Down wheelers lane and up up Skippers Hill to Butchers Cross and then - yes you've guessed, Argos Hill! - as if the rest hadn't been enough (a few people got off and walked, I can't think why). At the top we all had a rest and a look at the view from the windmill, then it was up the main road to Mark Cross before going into the lanes back to Pembury. I had a feeling we weren't going to get away with just one little shower, and sure enough the last few miles back to camp were a little damp.

Wednesday found us deciding on an East Sussex DA variation on the day's C ride, Hops and Orchards. Morning coffee was at the Castle Inn, Castle Hill, then we altered the route to have lunch outside Boughton Monchelsea Church, which has a beautiful engraved glass window in memory of one of the Kleinwort family. Then back via Yalding, with a stop for a cup of tea (the cafe by the locks claims to be open all year except for Christmas Day), to Beltring and a visit to the Whitbread Hop Farm. A fascinating tour of the oasts, with their various displays on hop picking and old country life, then another cup of tea in the tea shop before the ride back to camp.

The following day Ken, Iris & Heather were off to the Bluebell Railway, leaving Susan and myself to go off on the C ride - Goudhurst and Bedgebury. I WAS leading a group when we started, but when we turned off I found that most of them were following Ken on the B ride, and by the time we reached Brenchley for coffee we were on our own! However, as we were leaving there, we were approached by an elderly German couple who then proceeded to adopt us as their own personal leaders for the day. Our route took us round past Horshamden Church to Goudhurst, where we went up the church tower (opened specially) for the glorious views of Kent and Sussex, then on to Bedgebury for lunch in the Pinetum - taking with us a contingent from the Lothians DA, whose leader was having lunch in Goudhurst. After lunch by the lake in the sunshine we and our two Germans then made our way to Bewl Bridge, the next stop, and a cup of tea. It was here that we parted, they returning to their lodgings and Susan and I going down into Lamberhurst for tea. Back to the campsite to change and then over the road to see a slide show by Dave Pountney. As you can tell by the places we visited we found this an extremely strenuous day!

Unfortunately Friday turned out wet and gloomy - no enthusiasm for a ride so we all decided, horror!, to go out in the car (Ken, Iris, Heather, Susan & I that is not the whole encampment!). After a drive around we ended up sitting in the car, in the rain, at Tunbridge Wells eating our lunch, then a wander round the shops, tea at A & N, before back to camp. Susan & I persuaded Heather to go with us to the Last

Night Dance, Ken doesn't go in for that kind of thing (tribal stuff), and we all crept to bed at about 1.00 in the morning.

Well the week was finally over and, guess what, it was still raining. We were slowly packing things away a bit at a time, sheltering when the rain came on harder, when a voice from outside the tent said, "Taxi's here!", and there was Geoff, who had very kindly come out to give us a lift home. We got away about 11 and with a diversion for a cup of coffee at Geoff's we were home for lunch by 1.30.

Many thanks to Tom & Amy Sinclair and their helpers in the West Kents for a very enjoyable, well organised week. I can definitely say that the 1985 Birthday Rides were an experience, it was a shame about the weather but I think that all concerned managed to enjoy the week all the same. We certainly enjoyed and are hoping to make it to the 1987 Birthday Rides, to be hosted by Lothians DA - see you there?

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NATURE ANAGRAMS

Just a little fun, no prizes. The following 38 anagrams, when solved, reveal the names of plants, birds, animals and insects which may be found in the British countryside. Some are easy, some not so easy. The answers can be found on the back page.

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. BB PAPAL RC | 20. SLR REQUIRED |
| 2. MY WHOLE REALM | 21. DERRY REBEL |
| 3. TRACE ALL R I P | 22. NAPES |
| 4. ROAD LANDSLIDES | 23. EEEERRRP, ETC. |
| 5. CRUDE DIKES | 24. ROLLS BICS |
| 6. WEE LORD ALP | 25. TO CAVE |
| 7. CHEATS RECTORY | 26. E T LEANING |
| 8. ADMIRE LARD | 27. A LITTLE DOTING |
| 9. TRUSTEES LOTH BELFRY TOIL | 28. O MY SCARE |
| 10. LEAD POTS | 29. ONE NAME |
| 11. HASTE OVER SUM | 30. CABLE HATED THE WET |
| 12. GET ALE | 31. REVEL |
| 13. GENT OF METRO | 32. DODD ON RN HORSE |
| 14. RUNS TO NET | 33. RUDE VET LOT |
| 15. FUEL ON MY CHIN | 34. SOUTH TRENCHES |
| 16. JOCK TARTAN DATE | 35. POE RATING |
| 17. PERUSES H. P. SHRED | 36. LABEL HER |
| 18. FRISK HINGE | 37. O EASY DIXIE |
| 19. USA CRACK IT | 38. IMP NEAR NET |

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GARDENING CORNER

The 3 numbers on the fertilizer bag indicate the percentage of nitrogen. We have found the combination of 12-4-8 to be the most successful, suiting all your sodding requirements.

(from a lawn care manual).

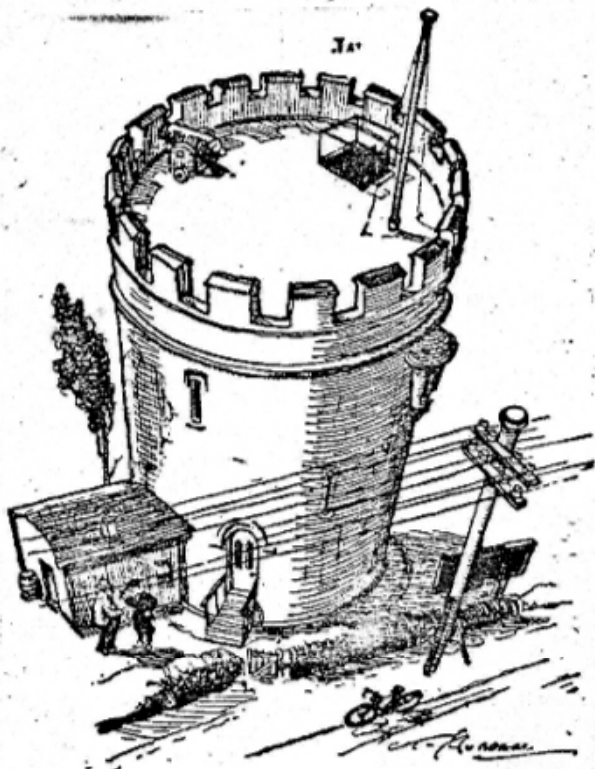
by Colin Axon

The Saturday started off dry but soon became very wet, though I did manage to reach Blackboys hostel before the persistent rain came. Paul got rather wet trying to put a new window in the female dorm.. It was still raining when it became dark, so I abandoned camping for the relative comfort of the large dorm.. The rest of S & N arrived after dark by car (Ann came on her own in the afternoon) courtesy of Steve's parents. We had a quick bite to eat before the slideshow started. We all now know exactly what white water is! The rain finally stopped mid-evening so that David K. could put on a fireworks show. Ah, it brings back the memories, waving sparklers around to make silly patterns. Then it was back inside for the supper, but I think the onion soup had a funny effect on Alec.

At 11.15 we decided to put my tent up after all, it took approximately 30.3025 secs. (what?!? Ed.), not bad for 4 of us. Thankfully it didn't rain in the night, but Richard did wake up complaining that he was cold. I wonder if it had anything to do with the fact that he had left the tent door unzipped?

Iris ushered us off quickly in the morning, so we headed for Sheffield Park Gardens, very nice but just too late to catch the Autumn colours. We then popped across to the Bluebell line for a cup of coffee. Steven found that he had broken two spokes - of course it was the rear wheel and naturally it was on the block side. So he rang his dad up who brings his other bike out, meanwhile we get cold. So much for the second bike, slightly north of Cooksbridge the rear gear mech. throws a wobbler and delays us even longer. Adrian and I continued home ringing Steven parents on the way - to come out and collect him! Conclusion - it was an eventful but enjoyable weekend.

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WHAT THE BIRDS HEAR.

Guide: "You can't go over the castle yet, sir; smoking is forbidden."
 Tourist: "But I'm not smoking."
 Guide: "No, but I am!"



A SUGGESTION FOR 1925: ALTHOUGH NOT ORIGINAL I THINK IT MORE SUITABLE FOR THIS PURPOSE THAN FOR ITS FORMER ONE. PERHAPS IN THESE DAYS OF CONGESTED TRAFFIC DIFFICULTIES MIGHT ARISE BUT READERS MORE CLEVER THAN I, CAN PUT ON THINKING CAPS - ANYHOW, I'LL WRIGGLE (OR SWIM) OUT OF IT NOW.



WASTWATER

Lakeland Tour

A RETURN TO THE LAKES

by Victor Elsdon

I wanted to tour the Lakes. I wanted to cross the Trough of Bowland. I wanted, believe it or not, to see "The Hanging Walls of Mark Anthony". As I was touring solo, there was no-one to object, so why not do the lot?

I left the car in the Lancashire town of Garstang and turning east was soon under the shadow of Calder Fell (1505 ft). Circling the base of that grim height as far as Marshaw, I was then well set to achieve my first objective. The Trough of Bowland is a splendid pass which climbs to 1000 feet before reaching the East Riding boundary (as was - the boundary with Yorkshire is now about 10 miles further east. Ed.), and then descends at break neck speed to Dunsop Bridge. At both sides of the pass a wild stream foams and cascades down a boulder strewn bed, keeping company with the road and delighting the eye at every turn, to make the long hard climb most rewarding.

Slaidburn Youth Hostel housed me for the night and set me on the road at an early hour to seek for Langden Castle, high up on the moors above the Langden Brook. I cried "enough" before reaching that objective for the track was atrocious and the glaring heat beating up from the stones was overpowering, so I retraced my steps for a couple of miles and climbed the Trough again in the reverse direction. I turned Northwards now, over sun-drenched roads shimmering in the heat, heading for Kirkby Lonsdale. How I wished I could join the joyful swimmers in the clear waters of the Lune, but I had to be content with watching them from high up on the ancient bridge and cooling myself with an ice cream.

That night I was the sole host-eller at the old Knock Hostel, four miles north of Appleby, and enquired about the "Hanging Walls of Mark Anthony" which the map marks, some six miles away. The warden knew about them by repute, but though many cyclists had set off to find them, none had returned to report success. I too joined the ranks of the defected, for the region is thinly populated and growing crops discourage too much investigation.

The river, whose sheer walls are said to bear Roman markings, was very close but to reach it requires a bit of local knowledge.

As it was still early I had time to reach Dufton and achieve one of my objectives, High Cup Nick. Ideally this is better reached from the Cauldron Snout and Birkdale direction, when you can get the whole scene revealed in one breath-taking glance, while coming up from the south the climax builds up gradually. The Nick is an enormous cleft, high up in the fells which towers up on both sides to 2200 feet. Its sides, half a mile apart at first, fall sheer, then taper off by degrees to form a fertile valley 1000 feet below, through which a tiny river winds. Certainly a most spectacular chasm and well worth seeking out.

Though I usually avoid the large hostels, I found Penrith very good. It is set up in spacious grounds very high above the town, and gives unrivalled views over the mountains to the east.

Next morning I was soon riding the undulating road alongside Ullswater with bright sunshine dancing on the blue waves which lapped strongly over the stones bordering the shore. Though it was really a



Over the Lune
Kirkby Lonsdale

day for lingering, I would dearly have loved to storm Thirlmere over the Sticks Pass from Glenridding, but a short session convinced me that it is best traversed on foot, and indeed the



alternate route via Troutbeck and Threlkeld involved considerable climbs. I reached the tiny hostel at Thirlmere that night. Most Lakeland lovers are rather scathing at the fact that Thirlmere is railed off to prevent close approach, but Manchester Waterworks must be given a good mark for the interesting walks which they have created in the dense forestry plantations, culminating in a clearing high above the lake giving grand views over the Water to the sheer tree-clad slopes

on the farther shore.

The drought was well and truly broken next morning when a heavy rain lashed down and kept on till early evening. Grasmere and Ambleside, both usually thronged with rucksacked visitors, showed only a few dripping oilskins cowering in doorways and later at Skelwith Force I had the falls entirely to myself. A stand-up lunch of hard boiled eggs beneath a dripping fir tree sufficed for midday, then on again to Dungeon Ghyll and Blea Tarn, the Langdale Pikes barely discernible through the veils of cloud. The cape was little protection as I alternately walked and rested on the fierce ascent of Wrynose Pass (1270 feet). There was no point in stopping for more than a brief moment when at last the summit was reached and in prudence I walked quite a way down the early descent too - very galling! However the Cockley Beck and Duddon Hostel were now quite close and there I found a true welcome from half a dozen cheerful walkers all steaming round a large wood fire, where all the days troubles were charmed away.

It was dry next morning but very doubtful and blowing half a gale, still our gear was dry and there was lively chatter in the members' kitchen. I was first away and had to chivy off an inquisitive young bull before I could reach the road at Cockley Beck. I paused on the bridge and looked first backwards up the Hairpins of Wrynose and then forward over a similar view of Hardnott Pass, another 1200 footer, and wondered where else in Britain such a view could be equalled. I stopped many times on that steep ascent and could see far below me the tiny figures of the other hostellers, as they too made for the bridge and tackled the first slopes. The view from the summit was impressive and I drank it in as I walked down part of the way, but where the gradient eased I mounted and flew down into Eskdale at a furious pace. Here a signpost indicated a path to a waterfall on a tributary of the Esk and a most rewarding walk I found it. A grand tumbling torrent crossed at intervals by wooden bridges eventually led to a point where the stream positively bursts through a narrow cleft and bounds forward into a deep cauldron before escaping to join the main stream.

The afternoon again proved wet and after a short run alongside Wastwater I found a rough shelter from wind and rain from which I could see across the lake the fearsome scree which help to make Wastwater wilder than all the rest.

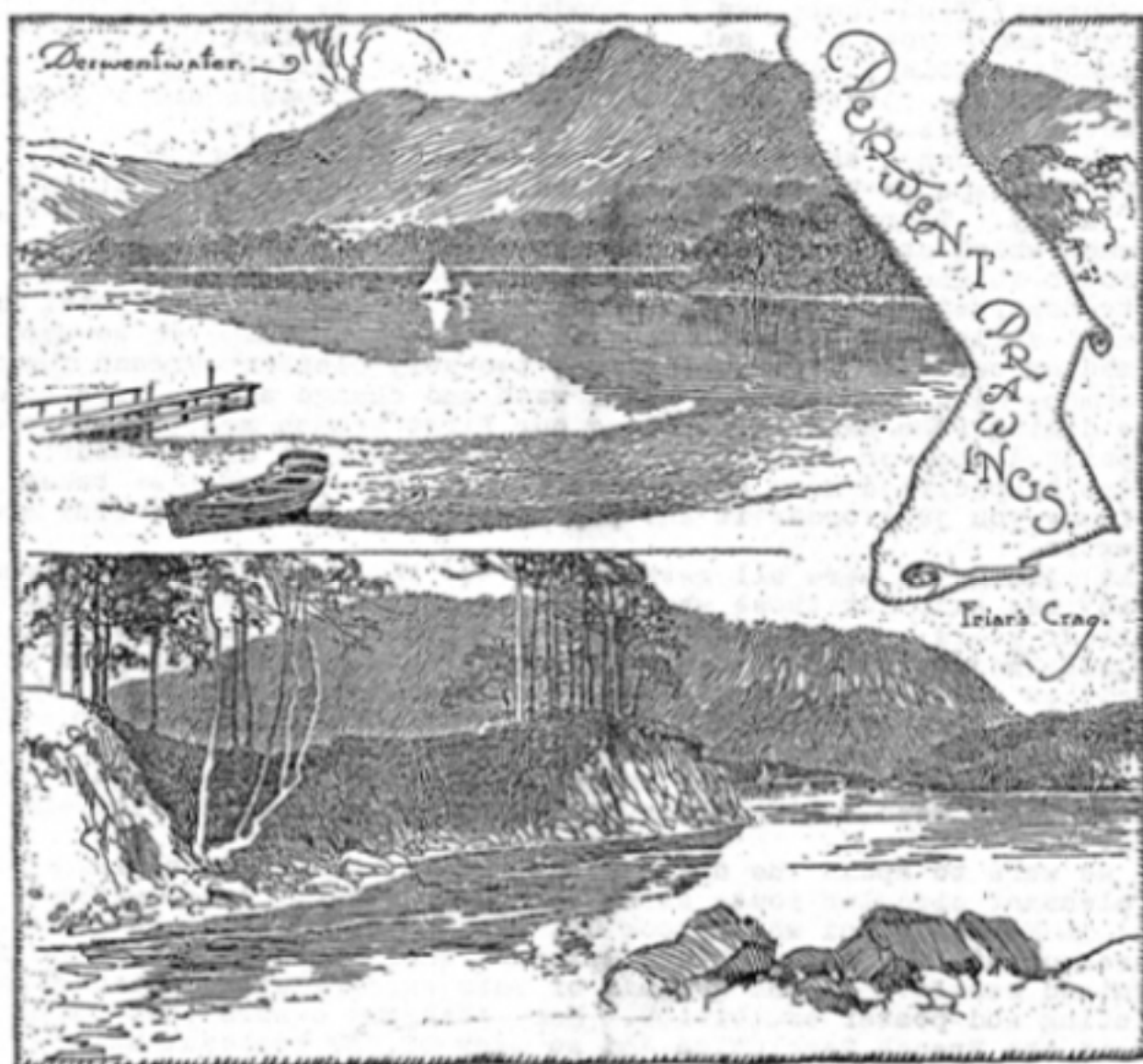
At Wastdale Hostel I met again my companions of the night before. They trooped in during a violent downpour very cold and wet, having come part of the way on the model railway which operates between Eskdale and Ravenglass. After a meal we all had a long session in the table tennis room, so it was a very warm veteran who eventually climbed into his sleeping bag that night.

The clouds were low on the mountains next day as I left in my cape for Gosfirth and Calder Bridge, where I took the wild moorland route for Ennerdale aided by a powerful wind astern. Ennerdale Water did

not look inviting in the dull conditions prevailing and once again I had a stand up lunch under dripping leaves before scurrying on before the wind to stay at the interesting old water mill at Cockermouth.

It was dry after this for several days and my next objectives were Lorton Vale and Buttermere, where I parked my cycle to walk on foot up to the Scarth Gap. It was good to stand on the summit and gaze across at Great Gable and Scafell, while far below the Black Sail Hostel, a tiny speck amidst a welter of crags awaited the return of the climbing fraternity. Down again at Buttermere, I still had to cross Honnister Pass before I could claim a bed in Borrowdale, and though my 34 gear eased the lower slopes I was soon on my feet again marching beside the waters of a stream rendered milk-white from its contact with the local stone quarry.

Time was now running out and though it was a wrench to leave I now headed for Derwent Water and Keswick, then eastward to reach Ullswater again. The blue waves still battered the lakeside pebbles, while a kindly sun sparkled on the pleasant waters and the bordering trees providing a perfect setting for a final memory of Lakeland.



CYCLING FOR SOFTIES?

by Maggie Jakeman

Holiday packages are available for most destinations and interest groups, so a package cycling holiday was an inevitable development. Someone else makes the bookings and provides the bikes, a collection of maps and brochures and two on-site couriers and you pay less than if you had done it yourself.

There seem to be a number of package cycling holidays in Britain & France which camp but not so many which use hotels. Being "softies" ourselves (speak for yourself says Dennis), we of course were beguiled by the advertisements for Susi Madron's "Cycling for Softies" - holidays with a bicycle from 11 centres in France. The holidays can be for one or two weeks in three categories - "softies", "show-offs" and "adventurers". The difference between "softies" and "show-offs" is the distance travelled between hotels, in some cases only 15 miles for "softies". The "adventurer" holidays are a little different; here only the flight, the first two nights and the last night, all with dinner, bed and breakfast, of a two week holiday are included. "Advebturers" find their own accommodation for the other nights. "Softies" and "show-offs" get dinner, bed and breakfast in very comfortable hotels in quiet rural villages every night. All the rooms have a bathroom. A one week tour includes three hotels and a two week tour seven hotels.

Because of dates and the time we had available we chose a "softies" tour in the Mayenne Valley in southern Normandy, just north of the Loire Valley. Tours in the Mayenne and Sarthe Valley nearby are the only ones which use ferry and coach transport. We travelled from Portsmouth to Cherbourg by ferry and, along with 10 other "softies", were transported on a four hour coach ride to our principal hotel in the small village of Vaiges. Here at the Hotel du Commerce we were welcomed by our tour representatives, two very pleasant French speaking Englishmen, Mike and Andy. A quick wash and change and we were soon in the dining room eagerly awaiting our first French meal; we were not disappointed then or on any other evening. The cost of the tour includes a specified menu at each hotel but if anything else takes your fancy you just order it and pay the extra. *Coffee and wine are also extra.

Next morning we were all gathered in the hotel garden to be given our bicycles and, for those who needed it, explanations of how the derailleur gears worked and how to mend a puncture! Meantime Dennis was busily adjusting the bicycles to better suit us - putting on our own saddles and toe clips. We had some reservations about the bicycles - the gears were too high and they were not particularly light weight but they were fine for a week. We felt that for a two week holiday we would prefer to take our own - an option that is always available but would probably mean taking a car, something we are happier leaving behind.

As we were to spend the night at the same hotel, Dennis planned a very pleasant circular route along the quiet country lanes which abound in Normandy and which took us, among other places, to a picturesque hilltop town, Sainte Suzanne, once guarded by a lofty but now ruined castle. In the grounds of this was a chateau which housed a painting and poster exhibition. Many chateaux owners lost their heads in the French Revolution and so many of the chateaux have remained ownerless and unoccupied. We found on this and other occasions that the chateaux were now being used by the local councils to house either temporary or more permanent exhibitions of one kind or another. One such was in the Chateau in Mayenne which was given over to tableaux depicting scenes from the once annual but now abandoned town procession and fete.

Day two saw our original group go their separate ways, with only

three other people, Erica and her two teenage children, Anthony and Julie, on our tour. Except for one day when we had a joint excursion into a large town, Laval, we went our separate ways and then met up in the evening for the always delicious meal. And so the pattern continued, with two nights at each hotel. We of course were in the saddle each day, but the planning allowed those who had never had this type of holiday before to do other things if they wished. The "musette" bag which we were all given on arrival included maps and much useful information about the area and many of the family groups headed off to lakes and swimming pools, places of interest or recommended cafes and restaurants.

By judicious loops we were able to follow quite long stretches of the Mayenne Valley, passing through small villages and glimpsing or cycling beside the river wherever possible, stopping beside it whenever possible for our lunch of crunchy bread, cheese, pate and a sticky pastry.

The area we were in is very quiet and peaceful with not too many places of international renown, just charming countryside, a few modest chateaux and very little traffic. One day however we found ourselves outside the abbey famed for its cheese, Port Salut. Nowadays cheese is made in a modern co-operative factory next door. The abbey and its monastery still occupy a beautiful site beside the river and the dozen or so monks gather together several times each day to pray in a starkly tranquil chapel to which visitors are admitted, even in cycling shorts!

The weather was quite kind to us; two mornings had delayed starts as we waited in the hotel bar for some heavy showers to clear, but with no need to worry about our accommodation we had plenty of cycling time ahead and most evenings did not arrive at the hotel until 7.30pm. This to us was the biggest advantage of an arranged tour. In the past we have made our own bookings, but possibly quite unnecessary apprehension has always lead us to arrive quite early in the evening - just in case.

The final evening saw us and other "softies" and "show-offs" back in Vaiges. Our suitcases, which had been left behind, now in our quite luxurious room overlooking the courtyard garden and our tour representatives smiling a welcome. Fortunately we had not needed to contact them en route as our only problem, some broken spokes, we had sorted out ourselves and only needed to be re-imbursed. However had we needed help we could first have asked the hotel where we were staying or else could have contacted the representatives back at the first hotel.

A last breakfast of coffee and croissants, a coach ride back to Cherbourg, a rather hurried dash around the hypermarket and then the ferry to portsmouth. And the verdict? We're hoping to go again.

ODD CUTTINGS

Off his bike... Sir George Young's bicycle vanished from railings to which he had padlocked it. Police told him: "The good news is the night shift took it apart and it's clear of explosives. The bad news is no one told the day shift to put it back together." (Daily Mail)

The State Commerce Commission has wiped out an ad campaign publicising its ski races for New York business men after complaints about the slogan - "Let's see how fast your company can go downhill".
(New York Magazine)

Work on converting part of a Huddersfield town centre street into a pedestrian area has been hampered by people walking on it.
(Huddersfield Daily Examiner.)

Having visited the Yorkshire Dales a year earlier, I thought I would try my luck with the Yorkshire Moors. I had planned my route months in advance and booked all my stopping Youth Hostels ahead. Well the big day arrived, and I was off, loaded up with enough equipment to last me six months. I caught the early train to London, which was my first overnight stop. I booked into Holland House Youth Hostel which I may say is in the posh part of London, you know, Kensington. May I say that a visit to the Commonwealth Institute, which is in the Park just down from the Hostel, is a must. My main reason for stopping over in London was to visit the British Museum, to see a once in a lifetime collection of the Treasury of San Marco which, as everyone knows, is the greatest Classical, Byzantine, Islamic and Western Medieval treasures from the Basilica of San Marco in Venice. Which means that it remains the greatest church treasury in the world. You learn a bit more every day. It's a day that I will remember for a long time.

Well, up bright and early on Sunday morning loaded the bike and made my way to King's Cross Station. I had no trouble putting my bike on the 125 train, it must have been my kind sweet face. Arrived in York just after midday, rode to the hostel, locked the bike and walked back into York. As I was walking through the narrow streets I saw a long line of people, it must have been over a hundred yards long. It was for the Jorvik Viking Centre; this is the Viking City that the archaeologists uncovered in Coppergate. If you are ever in York you must go and see it. All the walking had made me very hungry, so back to the hostel to cook dinner then to bed early because of an early start in the morning.

I was heading North for Malton, which was my next Hostel stop, but I wanted to visit the village of Sheriff Hutton which is 9 miles North of York. I can cycle with the best of them, but when I am on holiday I like to visit places because I love history, especially about Britain. Well it was a lovely warm sunny morning as I headed North along quiet roads with just a few farm vehicles and cars now and then to bother me. I could now see the village ahead, it seemed to be on a slope or hill with a castle ruins at the top. High grassy banks are along the main street and lovely stone and brick cottages perch above, with little flights of steps leading up to them. The present Castle was built by the Nevilles in the early 1380s and a century later became one of the favourite residences of Richard III. From the Castle York Minster's majestic towers can be seen 9 miles to the South. I also visited the medieval church of St. Helen and the Holy Cross, which was built in 1250. Amongst the interesting relics inside is the recumbent alabaster monument believed to be the tomb of the Prince of Wales, Richard III's only child, who died at Middleham in 1484. By now it was time for lunch so it was a visit to the village green, and also a chat with a few locals who asked me where I was heading for and where I was from, so I gave them a quick plug about Sussex and how nice it is and then I was off to Malton.

I climbed a steep hill to see Malton on the descent down the valley with all its farms. Malton is a famous centre for training race horses and also has the third largest cattle market in Britain. I crossed the River Derwent into Malton and found a tea shop, with home-made cakes - yum, yum. After feeding myself up I had to find the hostel, which was on the main road back to York. A very good day, I hope tomorrow will be the same.

Up bright and early next day as I wanted to visit Thixendale Youth Hostel. It was a beautiful morning. I came across a village called Birdsall, from here on it was up hill, but on reaching the top the view was worth it. To reach Thixendale is to feel that you really have arrived; it's not simply a strange and haunting place of

isolation, from the top you descend a narrow lane with high hills on both sides, it's this odd terrain which sets the place down precisely at a point where 16 small dales converge. You could call Thixendale the tiny capital of a minute republic of dales, the village itself is not remarkable it is simply its presence here that gives it a distinction. As I came into view of the village at the bottom of the valley with all the farm houses, it was a sight to see. The Hostel, with a steep roof, was the former school, but now is the village hall. The Church of St. Mary stands next to the hostel. There was also a small store in the village, a post office and the pub, and that's your lot. The warden ran the store and Post Office, she was a very nice lady, very friendly. I stayed here two nights, because not far from here was the village of Wharram Percy, the village abandoned about the year 1500, which I wanted to visit. You have to walk to Wharram Percy. Across the road from the hostel the path climbs steadily up Beamer Hill. At the summit pass the farm buildings, cross a stile, then you keep a sharp look-out for a path on the right leading downwards to the earthworks. Cross the latter to a metalled road to the other side, turn right, then left onto a road to Wharram Percy Farm. You can go to the church and see the excavations of the site of the village, which are still being carried out. I had had a lovely day exploring but was quite tired by the time I arrived back at the Hostel.

I had to be up early again the next day as I was off to Pickering, to see the North York Moors Railway. But first I wanted to visit a few villages which I had heard about - that's the only trouble with cycling holidays, you don't get enough time to visit all the places you would like to.

Thornton Dale was the first village I stopped at, the only trouble is that it is on the main A170, but luckily you can reach it by minor roads. I was now cycling north-westerly to find the villages of Lastingham and Hutton-le-Hole, set in the secluded surroundings of the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. Lastingham is a beautiful village of Saxon-origin, it comprises a cluster of ancient stone dwellings with its stream, village green and white timber fencing and footbridges. The famous church of St. Mary was a Priory in Norman times but the Benedictine monks who had intended to build a great church at Ieslingan, as it was then called, decided to move to York where they built instead St. Mary's Abbey. Even before the Normans the village was the site of a Saxon Monastery, and was considered to be one of the most ancient sacred sights in the whole of Northumbria, for the church was founded by Bishop Cedd in the 7th Century.

Well I had spent most of the day looking round the village - I had forgotten all about the time - and I still had to visit Hutton-le-Hole and get back to Lockton Hostel before 10.30pm. If any of you ever get to visit the Yorkshire Moors these two villages you must not miss. Hutton-le-Hole is considered by many to be the most attractive village in Yorkshire, it has won many prizes for its beauty. I think this is because it has everything for the country visitor; lovely babbling brook running through the centre of the widely spaced ancient stone houses, a broad undulating village green which straddles the beck over which cross white painted footbridges. Everywhere in the village you will see sheep grazing. I had a lovely day, then it was a mad dash to Lockton Hostel, but I made it by 10.00.

Well I was off to the Railway, and Wheeldale Lodge in the middle of the moors, and then on to Whitby and Robin Hood's Bay, but that, if I can remember, will have to come in the next edition of the Coaster.

(Editor's note. I have been asked by Alec to include these few words) A few words about a nice guy, who rode with me on the East Sussex 200k, Essex 300, Lincoln 400, & Wessex 600. Ask him about the ride from Skegness to Woody's Top YH, about putting on & taking off wet weather gear. I will give the true facts in the next edition about the 400k & 600k. I will write down here what the Hon. Sec. of Audax UK wrote to

me. "... however, I think it is quite an achievement to start from scratch and do the Super Randoneur series. On the other hand, so many people do once the AUK message gets home - there is nothing that cannot be attained if the determination is there."
I would like to salute a good friend and a nice guy, who got me through and achieved the same as me. Well done to you David Kiernan.

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HOSTELS UPDATE

(From our roving reporter Iris Stevens.)

It is several issues since we last reviewed hostels, so here is an update on the ones visited by C & H members recently.

- Holmbury St. Mary : A cheerful purpose-built hostel set in some beautiful Surrey countryside. Meals were OK too.
- Kensing : Another pleasant hostel set in the North Downs, ex-Goudhurst warden Stan made us welcome but his assistant gets a black mark, claiming they hadn't time to stamp hostel cards. Meals good.
- Blackboys : Still standing - despite a leaking roof. Another change of warden, for the better we think. Kevin keeps the hostel very clean and has a large welcoming fire. Advise on own sleeping bags in Winter as dorms are rather cold.
- Telscombe : A nice friendly simple hostel, kept in good condition by us! Do not rely on the store though. Duvets on beds and most dorms heated.
- Crockham Hill : Yet another North Downs Hostel, beautifully kept by Kev and Min, and you're made very welcome (if you are not abused first as we are!). Meals are first class and the Winter season of slideshows are to be recommended.
- Alfriston : A change of wardens with no detriment to the hostel. You can be sure of a good welcome from Wendy and Roy, not forgetting Jenny the assistant. A real superior, don't forget to book supper.
- Duntisbourne Abbots : A lovely Cotswold house near Cirencester. A good base for touring the quieter parts of the Cotswolds. Very pleasant wardens and super meals, all homemade, try the hot cross buns on Good Friday.

More next time, when we hope to give you the low down on Scottish Hostels - and Australian ones!

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PURITAN NAMES IN SUSSEX

(from Mid Sussex by E.V.Lucas)

Some of the oldest of the composite pietistic names that broke out over England during the Puritan revolution are to be found in the Sussex registers....In 1632, Master Performe-thy-vowes Seers of Maresfield married Thomasine Edwards. His full name was too much for the village, and four years later is found an entry recording the burial of "Vowes Seers" pure and simple....Heathfield had many Puritan names, among them "replenished" which was given to the daughter of Robert Pryor in 1600. There was also a Heathfield damsel known as "More-Fruits". Lower prints the following names from a Sussex jury list in the seventeenth century: Redeemed Compton of Battel, Stand-fast-on-high Stringer of Crowhurst, Weep-not Billing of Lewes, Called Lower of Warbleton, Elected Mitchell of Heathfield, Renewed Wisberry of Hailsham, Fly-fornication Richardson of Waldron, The-Peace-of-God Knight of Burwash, Fight-the-good-fight-of-faith White of Ewhurst, and Kill-sin Pemble of Withyham. Also a Master More-Fruits Fowler of East Hoathly, for it seems that in such names there was no sex.

(Regarding the unfortunate Master Richardson of Waldron, it is just possible his given name does not mean what it suggests, bearing in mind that a celebrated Sussex Dialect Dictionary defines the old Mid-Sussex verb 'fornicate' as to dawdle; to waste time. Work on it.)

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ANAGRAM - ANSWERS

1. CRAB APPLE, 2. YELLOW HAMMER, 3. CATERPILLAR, 4. LORDS AND LADIES,
5. EIDER DUCKS, 6. FALLOW DEER, 7. OYSTER CATCHER, 8. RED ADMIRAL,
9. TORTOISE SHELL BUTTERFLY, 10. TADPOLES, 11. HARVEST MOUSE,
12. EAGLET, 13. FORGET-ME-NOT, 14. TURNSTONE, 15. ICHNEUMON FLY,
16. NATTERJACK TOAD, 17. SHEPHERDS PURSE, 18. KING FISHER,
19. ARCTIC SKUA, 20. RED SQUIRREL, 21. ELDERBERRY, 22. ASPEN,
23. TREE CREEPER, 24. CROSS BILL, 25. AVOCET, 26. EGLANTINE,
27. LONG TAILED TIT, 28. SYCAMORE, 29. ANEMONE, 30. DEATH WATCH BEETLE
31. ELVER, 32. RHODODENDRONS, 33. TURTLE DOVE, 34. HORSE CHESTNUT,
35. ORANGE TIP, 36. HARE BELL, 37. OX EYE DAISY, 38. PINE MARTEN.

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ADDED EXTRA?

Sandy was the surprise victim of a North-East garage groups unusual way of off-loading their unwanted Sinclair C5. Mr. Rod Stewart, general manager of Minorities' Heaton Road Branch, said, "We couldn't sell it, so we decided to slip it into the boot of the first estate car big enough to take it."

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DEADLINE FOR NEXT COASTER MID-JUNE
SO LET'S HAVE SOME ARTICLES ON THOSE HOLIDAYS, TOURS, ETC.