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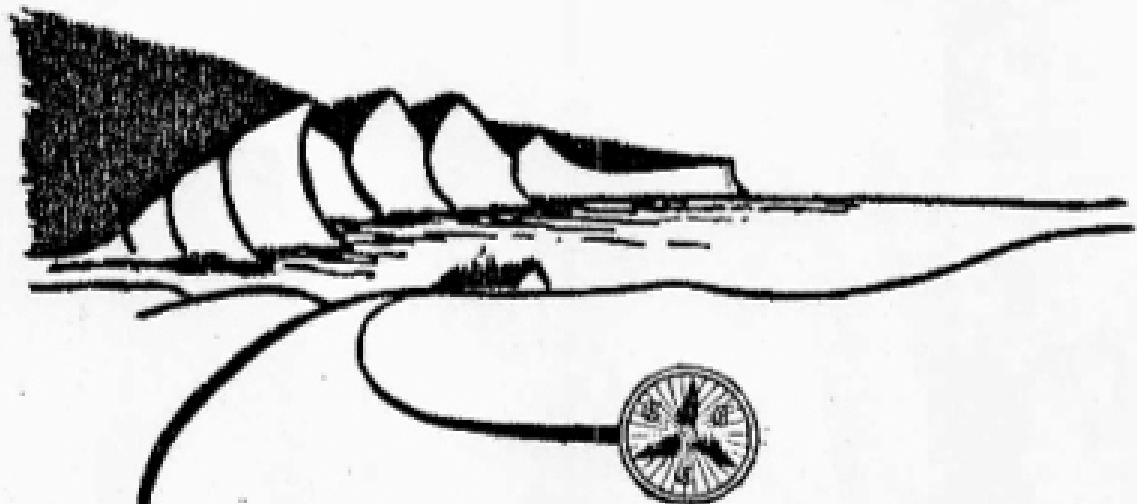


*Christmas
Peace and
Goodwill*



Coaster

no. 12



the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

12

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CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB
EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

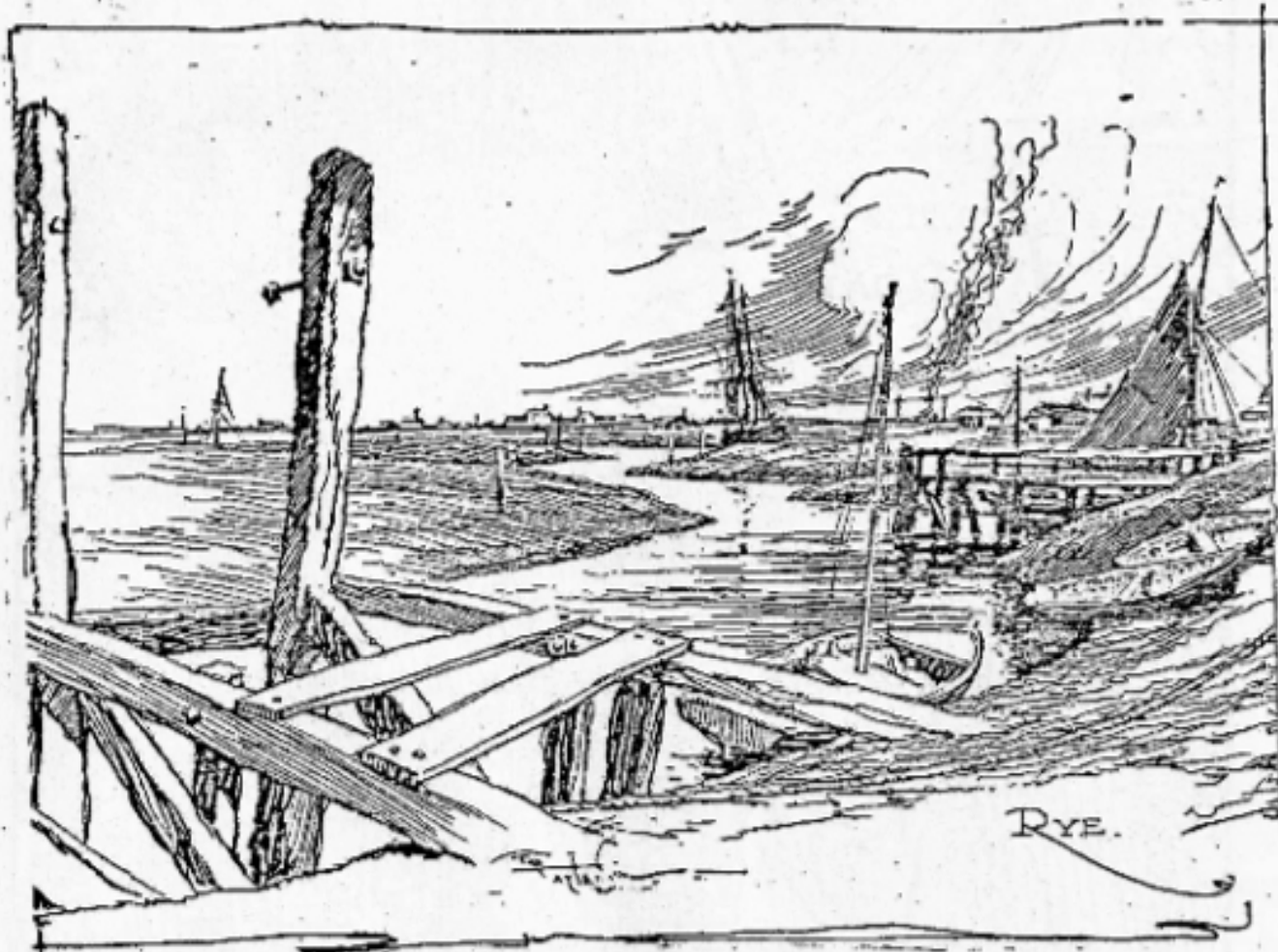
"THE COASTER"

CHRISTMAS 1986 - ISSUE No. 12

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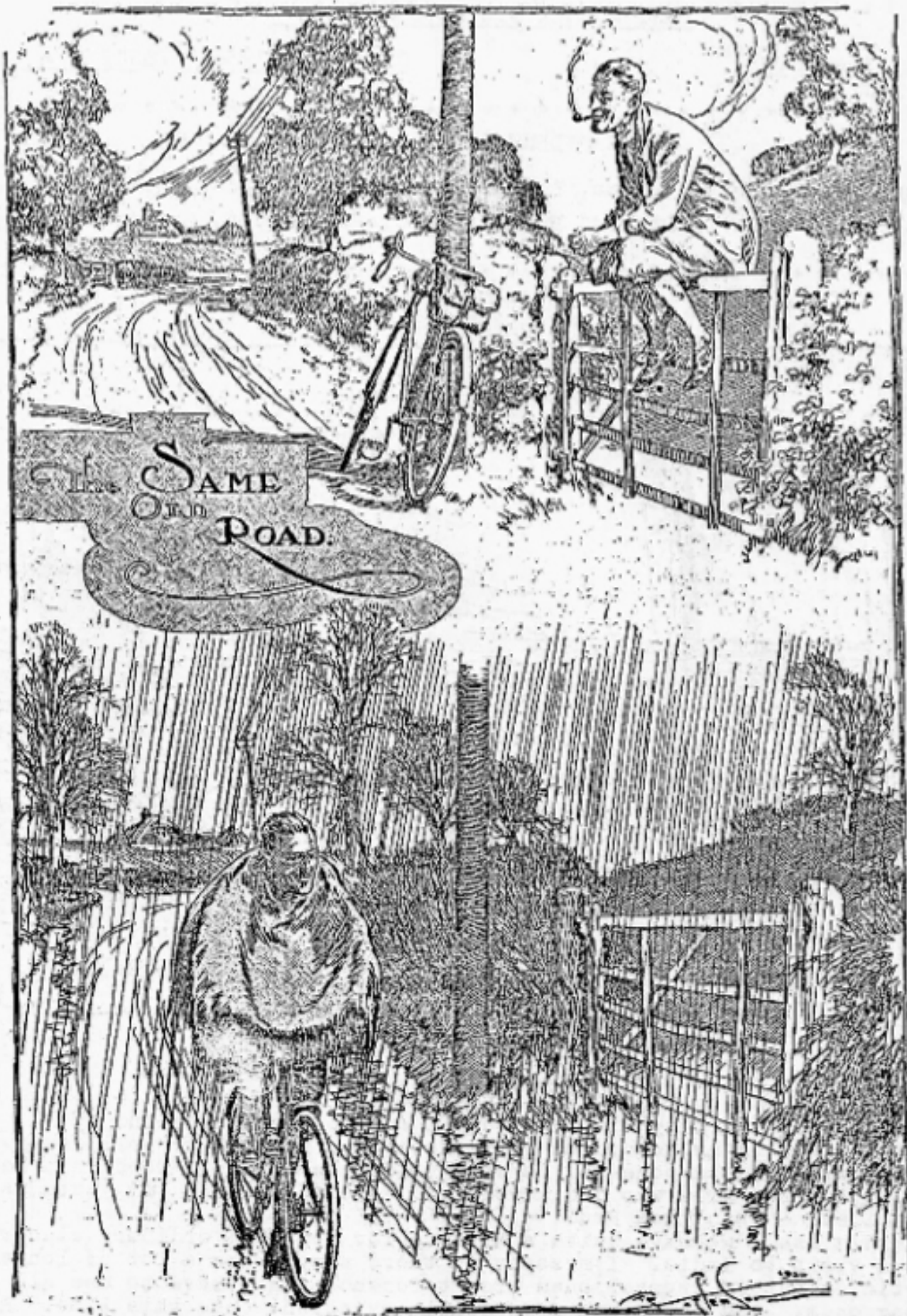
EDITORIAL

I'd like to start by wishing you all a Happy Christmas and by congratulating my mother on being made D.A. President, well deserved after all she has done (and is doing) for the D.A. A word must not be forgotten for Fred who did a very good job during his six years as President - thank you Fred.

This issue we have quite a mixture for you from ordinary club rides to a visit to India. I'm sorry if there seem to be a lot of longer articles but if shorter ones aren't forthcoming I have to use all the long ones. And there are some really excellent ones this time. Roy James has even supplied illustrations for his, and if there are any other artists out there your work will be welcomed.

It's your magazine - use it. Tours, gossip, even criticism is welcome.
DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE ? MID JUNE. get writing.

David



THE 600 MILLION MILLIMETRE EVENT or THE JOYS OF RANDONNEE RIDING

a report on the Windsor-Chester-Windsor

by David Kiernan

The talk is loud, the same old jokes bring nervous or resigned laughter, last minute fiddling with equipment, food re-pocketed, clothes adjusted. WHAT! where is my Brevet card, final look at the route instructions, then the map, two or three minutes to go, more people arriving pushing through the throng of cyclists, bikes lent against anything upright as riders check in at the start control. Cycling jerseys from all over the South East, West and North East suddenly move at last purposefully as bikes are gathered up, wheeled out onto the road, the time has come, it's the start of the 'BIG ONE' - the Windsor-Chester-Windsor. 600km lay before us, rumours of headwinds are pushed to the back of our minds as David Rix and I push off with the main body of cyclists. "CHRIST! are we going at this speed all the way? I'll never make it"; but as always happens the super-fast men and that Swallow tandem with the Chinese writing pull the bunch apart, and soon we found a wheel to latch onto, fast but not too fast. As we settle down the field spreads out, it will actually spread out over miles and hours as time progresses, uppermost in my mind and David's and the rest of our group was to get some time 'in the Bank', get the time but not kill ourselves off in the first stages doing it.

Eight cyclists riding together, joined only by a compatibility of pace, cross Buckinghamshire at a steady speed. With a word to David we take the lead as a pair, giving those who have made the pace a well-earned break; not a lot of comment during this manoeuvre except thanks from the leaders as we are riding with experienced cyclists and the transfer goes like clockwork. "This wind is so hard to push against I'll never keep this up", a glance at David, who has settled nicely, makes me think I'm the only one defeatist thoughts like this and I make some feeble joke to put a brave face on it, but I push on. The countryside is being covered quickly and there is now no sight of any further groups, but no, there is a cyclist far ahead, a straggler from a faster group, well we will see, we really are moving, the ride seems much easier now as I settle down to the journey. Soon two more riders take the lead from us and we can relax. The straggler is caught and joins our group and the first control is reached. Brevet cards are stamped, the urgency to get more miles in pervades everything and everyone, but I think "I must eat". Unfortunately the restaurant (The Little Chef at Bicester. Ed.) although open does not have enough staff to serve anything but drinks, typical isn't it!

Everyone drinks and the group pushes off. The group is running well and fast and suddenly we are into the Cotswolds and everyone attacks the hills; I knew I should have eaten; to save strength and to avoid the 'BONK' I drop off the back and reduce my cycling rate and force myself to cycle up the hills within my strength not at its limit, surprisingly the group does not quite get out of sight. Forcing back thoughts of pursuit of the group I maintain a comfortable speed and soon I am at the top of the high escarpment overlooking the Vale of Evesham and enjoy a fast winding descent into Broadway, the next control. In the middle of the village I meet the rest of the group and David again; the local shop is open and they stamp our cards and we all buy food. Full of calories I am ready to face the next stage. Mile after mile, hour after hour we move through changing scenery, lush growing country, steep sided gorges, busy bustling towns, small villages, each being a mental landmark towards the next control. The group is thinning, the straggler has straggled off our group, no matter, he will be happier at his own speed. One of the original group has got the bonk and stopped but it looks like the rest of us will be together for some time.

Hello! Whose this? A large group of cyclists coming towards us,

ribald remarks exchanged as they flash past, this was the Kidderminster starters heading south, Kidderminster being where our next control is situated.

Kidderminster control, cards stamped, down the road to the cafe for a good nosh, everyone is revived and we push on northward, and 'bang' straight into the wind. "OH NO!", I think, "not 100 miles of this." Open country, wide, empty roads and the steady headwind - murderous. The lead pair is now continually changing but we appear to be getting nowhere in this terrain; but we are, slowly the miles going, my legs ache, hands numb, and I have pains in places I didn't know I had places. Then we stop at a wayside garage to rest, drink, and buy and eat bonk rations. Another group arrives, they have taken the wrong route and have had to cycle some miles further than they need, so we all join up and cycle off as one big group in shared misery. We all start together but soon the group fragments, the last 30 miles have really taken their toll of me mentally and physically. Two others are in the same boat, so we join up and ride a sedate three up until the next control is reached.

This control is a true oasis, a large roadhouse serving hot meals of all descriptions, a place to eat, wash and sleep if you wish. There were lots of cyclists there, some had stayed some time and slept and we had caught them, but they had all fought their way northward and were now only 35 miles from the turn. Fed, washed, and ready the final northward stage is tackled and I was happy to be part of a large group. Darkness was falling and it was a relief not to have to worry about navigating as it was obvious that others knew where they were going. Tiredness was going to be a problem, "please God don't let me puncture, I couldn't stand messing around in the dark with a breakdown". Thankfully everything is O.K., however my wonderfully expensive dynamo refuses to light my lights, so I am forced to use a tuppenny ha'penny Wonderlight, which works perfectly, as the rear light and I tuck myself into the middle of the bunch. Everything seems different up here, inky blackness punctuated by blazing lights on the skyline of some gigantic industrial complex making who knows what, crossing large main roads at totally deserted junctions guarded by ever changing and purposeless traffic lights as there are no cars or lorries or anything else but us riders to be seen.

Yes, it's true, we are near the control, the turn, meal, sleep. Sleep, yes sleep, we all have a good "time bank" despite everything and we do need to sleep. Within two miles of the control we are lost, the route instructions are very awkward and we make a wrong turn; we do even complete strangers as well as myself always think that David Rix knows where he is going? After climbing a huge hill and cycling in a complete circle we find out how to get to the half way control. At last we've arrived, cards stamped, lights, warmth, food, friendly faces and sleep. I drift off to sleep with the thought that the wind will push us home.

It seems I have not been asleep but a second when I am awake and waking up David Rix, who I do believe was asleep before he was laying down and who roundly curses me. Then the rest of the group are waking and we are all ready to move and we are out in the night again away from the haven of the control. "Gosh it's cold, blimey I'm stiff, my legs are like jelly", but I tell myself I am going home and the wind will be behind me. All of us leave the sleepy village of Moore and to me the going is easier. I feel more alert and try to make out my surroundings in the night instead of just bashing through. We all ride easily, a smaller group but mostly the original people from the start, we cross miles of countryside with ease; it's marvellous what a decent rest and properly digested food will do, and then the moon comes up showing gently undulating country. I feel good and confident - there are only 170 miles to go. The first control of the return leg is

reached, we eat again and then have a further 45 minutes rest. I feel even better for the extra sleep. Southward we move, the wind turning the wide flat roads into a pleasure rather than purgatory. Before long I am climbing the hills above Kidderminster and enjoying the thrill of a fast swooping descent into the town for more food, yes another meal - by this time in an event all my energy comes from the food I take on board at food stops, that's why food is so important that I must eat at least every 50 miles or more often if possible. It must be the same for the others as they all tuck in to the food being sold at the control.

Little did David and I know that we would soon be parting company from our companions and would not be seeing them again until the end of the event. Speeding away from Kidderminster on wide nearly traffic free roads our cycling companions went ahead some 200 - 300 yards and on reaching a large roundabout outside Droitwich went the wrong way, cycling in the opposite direction round the bypass. They had mis-read their maps and deviated towards Bromsgrove, I understand the conversation was lively and the language interesting when they discovered their mistake, but these things are character building I'm told. Now down to just David and I we tackled the Cotswolds, and just before Broadway we came across a man on a trike apparently fitfully dozing yet still moving slowly along - a trike is to be recommended if you want to sleep on the move. We gave a discreet cough and he awoke to thank us and ask if he could follow, which he did. This chap, an Ancien de Paris-Brest-Paris, although initially tired stayed with us until after a sedate tea stop and the control in Broadway, a rather twee little restaurant, then shot off on his own and roared up Fish Hill whilst David and I walked up and rested our cycling muscles.

The Cotswolds were crossed and we howled along to Bicester, the last but one control, in fine style buoyed up by knowing that we were within striking distance of the finish. Bicester control, the self same restaurant that was open the previous day but could not serve food, now served delicious pancakes and ice cream. Cards stamped and then off and away on the last stage, the worst and the busiest. One great main road, Bicester - Aylesbury - Amersham, speeding cars, exhaust, noise and once again for me the onset of tiredness; however I wasn't going to cycle within my strength now, for I knew I had only to reach the last control, however I had to force myself to concentrate on my riding. Into Amersham, right at the roundabout and there was the last hill, a monstrous cliff of a hill, which appeared to go straight up. I groaned inwardly and just could not get myself to cycle up it, with one glance at each other David and I dismounted and walked it - at the top it was just 4½ miles to the finish. What a relief to arrive well within time and the feeling of satisfaction at having covered 383 miles makes all the effort worthwhile. I'm riding it again next year. (Same here. Ed.)

* * * * *

MOTORING NEWS

The driver reversed into another car and then, putting her car into forward gear, drove into the wall at the front of the store. She then reversed again, hitting the other customer's car again. This time, on driving forward she went straight through the low wall and 12-foot-square plate-glass window into the store. Her car pushed the big vegetable stands into the next aisle, and without pausing for breath she started to reverse out again. The car went back through the glass window (or, more accurately, where the window had been), shot across the car park and hit the parked car of the Co-op manager. The car then hit the wire perimeter fence and a tree before coming to rest in the car park.

(From the "Haslemere Herald".)

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Editor,

Following this craze of announcing how they 'do it', I set about making a study of these literary gems.

Starting with that rather pathetic effort of the CTC - 'Cyclists do it silently', do what? I've always found them a far from silent lot, especially when gathered together.

However here a few gems I have noticed when not overcome by exhaust fumes. There is the now familiar 'Young Farmers do it in wellies', green ones I presume (when seen in the back of a Range Rover. While 'Ex Young Farmers do it in comfort'.

Or how about 'Rugby players do it with odd shaped balls' and 'Archers do it with a quiver'.

By now I am all of a shake and I find 'Electrician's do it shockingly', while on the briny 'Windsurfer's do it standing up', when not in the water that is, and what about 'Windscreen repairmen do it by the roadside'.

There must be dozens more and my curiosity is running away with itself. WHAT IS IT? Perhaps one of your kind gentleman cyclists could explain 'it' to me.

Yours fraternally,

Ena Sent (Miss)

P.S. Perhaps your well read readers could look out for others. My glasses are getting a bit steamed up.

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DOWNHILL ALL THE WAY AFTER THROWING A WOBBLY

(This short article by Janine King appeared in the 'Guardian' newspaper recently and we thought it might be of interest to our members.)

Will somebody please tell me what is so bloody about a cyclist? Why it is I cause the average motorist such concern that he feels compelled to mouth abuse every time he passes?

We are not all children, with stabilisers, rolling out unexpectedly from a driveway. We are not one step up from pedestrians. We are members of the road. There are even signs for us in the Highway Code. Not just 'No Cycling' either.

Yet to you Kings of the Road we are intruders. We are not supposed to be in the path of any boy racer. We should stick to our cycle lanes.

On average we take up no more than two feet, travelling almost exclusively on the yellow lines. We do everything we can to gain your attention, to be noticed. Lights, strips of yellow, ten thousand tiny prisms per square inch, glowing in the dark on our backs and bobbing up and down on our ankles. Our hand signals are highly developed. The least you could do is indicate when you intend to turn left, especially if I happen to be on your inside.

And there are not that many of us really, compared with you lot. Very occasionally there are more of us, out for the day, enjoying ourselves in the company of a few thousand other cyclists. Twice a year to be precise. London to Brighton. London to Cambridge. Sponsored events. We start at 8.30 am on a Sunday to avoid you, to cause as little bother as possible. Some people ride two abreast in the countryside. A few roads are closed. Still you complain. Excuse us, we were only raising money for charity. But of course, the roads were not built for us cyclists. But for motorists. Bloody motorists.

We may cause accidents, but it is virtually impossible for us to kill anyone by hitting them. The humble hedgehog can give us a puncture



The Vagabond.

You can write me down among the worst lot

Song: "Joggin' Along the Highway."

Soon after I settled in Westham, nearly three years ago, I purchased the BBC Radio Sussex "Guide to Hidden Sussex" in which I read -

"Penhurst

To come across Penhurst without warning is an unforgettable experience. In a thinly populated part of East Sussex, at a place where two very minor roads meet, is what has been described as "a rare and exquisit manorial group" - a 16th century manor house on the site of a much older one, a 14th century church, and a few farm buildings. This is all, and the sight is dramatic in its simplicity. Let's quote again, from Barbara Willard: "This is the intensest countryside for miles - turned in upon itself, seperate, pinned to the past, silent, undisturbed; as country should be". This was also iron industry country, and the road running down to the old forge was built by Lord Ashburnham for the use of his tenants."

That set me itching to get there, so one day I made a start, albeit rather late in the day, and as it turned out abortive. However I will continue now I've made a start, as from the eyes of a "furriner".

My route started up Mill Hill through Hankham to Rickney, then across the Pevensey Levels. Soon after turning off at Rickney Farm by a bend in the road, at the foot of Horseye Farm, on its "eye" or island, I stopped merely to "stand and stare", not for the first time at that spot - I find there the slightly varied scenery, plus the silence broken only by warblers' song is rather nice.

At that spot is an old drove road, which is a nice bit of rough-stuff leading to Hailsham, another area where one can "get away from it all".

Whilst I was there an elderly chap came along with whom I passed the time of day. He turned out to be a surveyor from the Hailsham office of the Wealden D.C. on a survey of the countryside around here - lucky chap! We nattered awhile about the country in general until he decided he had better carry on with his "work".

As I had an object in view, I rather reluctantly "pressed on" along the winding road of the Levels and then steadily upwards by Cricketing Lane, through Cooper's Croft, Ginger's Green, Stunts Green to Cowbeech Hill and Cowbeech where I called in at the Post Office - cum - village stores, for some Mars bars, partly for my lunch and partly in case of hunger knock - I guessed there would be no cafes or tea shops en route.

By then it was lunch time(!) one o'clock, so I sat on the seat opposite the pub and had my picnic meal. After that break I continued north, through nowhere in particular, passing only farms and country houses, stopping at Tilement Farm to purchase plums, eventually arriving at that lovely little village of Warbleton. Yes, I know I mentioned Penhurst at the beginning, but I seldom go in a straight line to any particular place. Climbing up the steps to the church I was confronted with a glorious uninterrupted view as far as the South Downs. On the south wall is a seat on which, on a sunny day, one could spend a while basking in the sunshine enjoying the view - and perhaps a snack?

Inside the church is a squire's pew, up twelve steps, well above the congregation and in it is an old desk and a compartment for servants. It is still used. In the churchyard is, you would never guess - a toilet. I have never before seen a 'loo' in holy premises. It is but a brick shelter in which has been placed a bucket. I decided to make use of it!

The village, what there is of it, has a few lovely cottages and a rather nice looking old pub, which offers meals. From the church I went back downhill and round to Kingsley Hill, and on to Rushlake Green, which I found to be a very pretty village with its lovely green and old inn, the "Horse & Groom". The green is now owned by the Parish Council which purchased it from Henry Smith's Charity for £1! Near the green is

Stone House, a beautiful largely Jacobean building, but not much of it is visible from the road.

My next place of call was to the remains of Holy Trinity Priory, Augustinian, founded 1413 (quote from the 2½" OS map), down a bridleway, which turned out to be tarred, because it led to the Priory Hotel, converted from the old Priory. Without the notice at the beginning of the lane one would never think the lovely old building was now a hotel - it has not been spoiled, there being a complete absence of notices and signs. From there I naively thought I would follow another bridleway to Churches Green, through the lanes, then more bridleways to Penhurst. Upon asking a groundsman the whereabouts of the path, he said I would not get through, but I persisted in being shown. He took me to a gate and showed me the "way" across a field. No sign of a path, although he said people walked that way, so rather than follow my nose and map, I reluctantly returned back up the lane, all uphill, to the crossways, where I turned right to Churches Green.

By then it was too late to think of getting to Penhurst, so I gave up and came back through the narrow, hilly, unsignposted lanes (as if I hadn't found enough hills!) to the Sandhills Farms, Bodle Street Green and Windmill Hill of which I didn't think much, especially the dreadful old rusty iron windmill. I did however have another try at a bridleway, or lane, Comphurst Lane, leading to Herstmonceux Church, but was told the tarmac ended after a while and there were stiles to negotiate, so that idea was quashed. I then rode as far as Lime Cross where, seeing a seat, I sat and finished my rations before continuing through Chapel Row, noting the little pub, which must have been used first as a cottage - it is exactly like the one next door, on to Flowers Green, a nice little village. From there I took a back lane, Butler's Lane, narrow and winding, down to Golden Cross where a right turn to just past Chantler's Farm then left, back across Pevensey Levels via Rickney and Hankham, slightly disappointed, but nevertheless having seen a few lovely villages and some nice, if hilly, countryside.

I covered about 31 miles in about 8 hours, including all stops!

Having Penhurst still in mind, later in the year I made a further onslaught, but this time from the east - I never go in a straight line. At Pevensey I turned right, off the A27, to take the old road, through Middle Bridge after which, crossing and re-crossing the main road, I came to the Lamb Inn (far better than the deadly stretch of main road). From the old inn the lane steadily rises and above New Barn Farm, one has an extensive view across Wallers Haven and Pevensey Levels to the South Downs.

Passing through Hooe, (it has some lovely old cottages and Court Lodge (17th century) with gabled dormers, Elizabethan chimneys, and a glorious garden. The church at the end of a long narrow lane is worth a visit), I came to Hooe Common, noticing en route a road sign stating "Hooe" which was over a mile behind me! On through Russell's Green, I came to Ninfield, with its ancient Sussex iron stocks and whipping post, and then down a lane to the church, which I rode past at first because it is completely screened by yew trees and hedges. It has a sundial over the porch (a Mass dial, intended to let the worshippers in days gone by know when it was time for Mass. Ed.) and inside a minstrels' gallery. The arcaded stalls have a number of well carved poppy heads worked over 300 years ago. A lovely little church with many items of interest inside and out.

Drifting along through the village I noticed outside a bungalow which obviously provided B. and B. an unusual (for England) sign in German, "Zimmer frei".

Turning right at the end I followed the lane through Marl pits, passing an inviting-looking rideable farm track on the left, Burntbarns Lane, which passes through the farms of Burnt Barns and Angmerhurst, eventually to ascend the long straight rise up Freckley Hollow, a rather

spectacular sunken lane cut deeply into Sandstone with a canopy of trees forming a tunnel. At the end was Steven's Crouch, a nice scattering of cottages, where I overshot the unsignposted cross-roads because, having glimpsed a sign, at first thought it indicated a no entry into Ashburnham Park, but found it was in fact a restricted width road sign at the end of Penhurst Lane. I went over to look at the great iron gates the pillars of which are surmounted with stags, and at what was once a drive down to Ashburnham House, but now, sadly, grass grown. (During another ride, to its church, I saw more signs of neglect in the park - a drive 'repaired' with broken bricks and a lovely sunken stone bridge 'repaired' with railway sleepers, the botched 'work' of the present inhabitants, a religious society. Incidentally that ride provided me with a little bit of roughstuff, not only along the broken brick strewn "drive", but also on a farm track for about a mile to the lodge at the Ashburnham Forge end of the Park).

I had a little chat with the "gate-keeper" who lives in the fort-like tower by the gates, who confirmed that the lane lead to Penhurst and warned me of the 'S' bend at the bottom. I went down the lane and down is the operative word, always down, or, to add a little more German, "immer Bergab", rather like being on a mountainside, looking across to another, covered with a vast area of woodland, which is in fact made up of seven named woods.

Safely negotiating the bend at the bottom, it wasn't long before I found myself toiling up the hill opposite, down which was slowly coming a car, the lady driver of which looked a bit strained, negotiating the narrow broken-edged winding lane.

Finally there it was, I had arrived, here was Penhurst, living up to its description in "Hidden Sussex", the only obtrusive object being the MOT road sign indicating a narrow road, but there was a "village" sign!

After a stroll round the tiny place, admiring the lovely setting of the church and manor house, I went into the church where I was surprised at its well-kept condition, no different from a normal village church, but from where came the congregation and of what size, the area being so sparsely populated? Whilst there, two ladies arrived by car who said they lived not far away, but often came there, it was so nice.

Outside the church, I sat in the unused porch looking across to the ancient manor house, whilst having a snack, and "listening" to the silence. Lovely.

Eventually, reluctantly, I left Penhurst, and made my way back via Ashburnham Forge, Ponds Green, Brownbread Street, in which I was surprised to see, in such a small hamlet, a pub, Brays Hill, down to Henley's Bridge up to Welsen Cross down to Tilley Bridge up Tilley Lane passing Spinney Farm, the home of the Sussex Farm Heritage Centre, which houses a collection of rare agricultural machinery, as well as working shire horses, left to Boreham Street, right to Wartling via Boreham Lane, another hilly stretch, along the rather dull road to Pevensey and home, a bit tired, but well pleased with what I had seen on my journey, hilly though it had been.

P.S.

The forge, mentioned in "Hidden Sussex", at Ashburnham Forge (shown on the 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " OS map but not, strangely enough, on the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ") is probably at the place where two cottages stand below the level of the lane (yes it is, Ed.). I called in there on another ride to ask someone what were "Pond bays" shown on the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " maps. An elderly chap I saw, whose cottage he had re-named "Ammerwood" in place of its previous name, something like "Rats Hole", did not know the answer, although one is marked on the map at about his back garden, and he had been there for many years. He did however show me the iron-stained stream running there, where used to be a water-wheel (I learned later, such a "bay" was a dammed

part of a stream in order to create a waterfall to drive a water wheel). He also said a television crew had been there to film the area, including the stream, and the programme was to be shown in November (1985). He was of course in the programme. Not having a television set, I did not see it.

On the 2½" OS map TQ 61/71, is shown a R.U.P.P. leading north from there to Furnace Cottage, north of which is marked the site of ironworks. From there a track branches left to join the end of Lakehurst Lane, a surfaced road, the other end of which joins the Woods Corner - Ponts Green lane.

Along Lakehurst Lane are marked two houses - "Lakehurst" and "Pleasure House" (?). From Furnace Cottage another track bears right to Rocks Farm, again another ironworks site just north, and then on to the Darwell Hole - Penhurst lane.

The area, on the map, looks interesting - anyone explored those tracks? Presumably they are negotiable otherwise the cottage and farms would not be there.

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DID YOU KNOW? - OLD COUNTRY CURES.

- Against the ague - Imprison a live spider in a walnut shell, and wear it round your neck.
- For a headache - Moss that has grown on a human skull, powdered, and taken as snuff.
- To cure boils - Walk six times around, and crawl three times across, the grave of one of the opposite sex on the night following the interment.
- Quinsey & sore throat - A dirty sock or woollen stocking, worn at least for a fortnight, wrapped around the throat.
or - Take a cowpat, still warm from the cow, and fold it in linen to make a poultice round the throat.
- Warts (large choice) - Rub with - eel's blood;
or - a knob of lard, which must then be allowed to melt in the sun;
or - a piece of stolen meat, which must then be buried;
or - with the forefinger, while a funeral is passing;
or - with a cinder, afterwards wrapped in paper and buried at a cross-roads;
or - with two halves of an apple, which afterwards must be tied together again and buried;
or - a large black snail, which must then be impaled on a thorn;
or - with a snail, while looking at the full moon over the left shoulder.
or - Prick them with pins (one for each wart), then stick the pins into an ash tree or place them in a bottle in a newly-made grave.
- To cure wind - Swallow nine lead shot, to 'prevent the lights from rising'.

(I think I'll stick to the Doctor, thanks! Ed.)

A LETTER FROM INDIA

D.A. member Judith Tucker is currently spending a year in India, though without her bike, and we thought readers might be interested in reading her letters which she wanted circulated - so here is the first. Ed.

28/8/86

Dip-Tse-Chok-Ling Monastery,
Camel Track Road,
McLeod Gary, Dharmsala,
Himachal Pradesh,
India

Dear All,

I had a very straight forward journey to Delhi. The 8 hour wait at Warsaw passed quite quickly with everyone 'in transit' getting to know everyone else. After all we'd bought the cheapest ticket! We were not allowed outside to get some fresh air!

We arrived in Delhi at 9.20am. local time to a temp. of 29 c. (this rose to 35 by mid-day). We were lucky as it had been over 40 the week before! I & a young couple from Hull took a bus, then a 'taxi' (2 horse power) to a hotel recommended in the indispensable book "India - A Survival Kit". Then while they rested, having left my knapsack, I wandered off to sightsee and attempt to buy a bus ticket to Dharmsala. I walked quite a bit of the way, then went by taxi (it was 4 miles and very hot!) and bought my ticket - 65 R. = about £3.50 for a 14 hour journey of 527 km. - for the next morning. I had planned on travelling by night but the hotel proprietor said despite the armed guard the army provided it was better not to enter the Punjab at night, so I booked for the next morning. I had a 'dormitory bed' that night (6 in a room for 16 R's. - less than £1) and the next morning at 5 am. I was up. The taxi (a proper taxi) cost 40R's. (over £2), I knew I was being over-charged but there weren't many taxis around so 'supply & demand' won! My knapsack was put on the bus roofrack and as I heard everyone swarm over the roof then and at every stop I wondered whether it would still be there! But it was.

I had ticket No. 9 - a window seat, but unfortunately near the front. I had read about Indian driving and roads but had no idea that it would be such a nightmare! Although the bus was basic it wasn't uncomfortable and the air as we moved kept the temperature down a bit. It was the driving. Everyone uses the horn all the time and must overtake according to rank of vehicle. For the first 8 hours we travelled along a nearly straight road across the plain covering most of the kilometers with one lane of traffic in each direction. We halted at the debris of each accident. I asked after the people each time - they shrugged and admitted they were probably dead. It was the overloaded trucks I was told. (No MOT and they look as if they are tied together with string - the wheels and axle seem to part company from the truck very easily). The overloading did seem a plausible explanation, so reassured we travelled on until we came upon a tangle of bus and a tractor. Everyone did look concerned and tut-tut!

With one $\frac{1}{2}$ hour and two $\frac{1}{4}$ hour stops we arrived at the mountains. We had a change of driver (pity; by then I had some faith in ours despite his overuse of the horn!) and the new driver swung the wheel around as we rounded the bends with a casualness I found disconcerting. In several places there was hardly any road - it had fallen into the ravine. "Don't worry it didn't happen today", said my neighbour. The people? I asked. "There were some casualties", he said. I gazed down into the ravine and knew no one could have lived. By then he and I had covered the Punjab politics (it is only a few terrorists who come over the border into India. It isn't the Indian people he told me. Where have I heard that before? N. Ireland? El Salvador? Afghanistan?) & the vehicles roadworthiness, hospitals, doctors or lack of, etc., etc. So I offered him a mint. An hour or so later I offered him another.

His neighbour saw (there were three to a seat) so I offered him one too. He hesitated and my neighbour launched into a Hindi explanation which must have been complimentary as the overcrowded bus passengers craned to see. It was the end of the packet so, embarrassed, I looked out of the window again!

It was after 9.30 pm. by the time we arrived at Dharmasala. The last 50 or so kms. we stopped every few yards to pick up and drop people. Obviously the bus had become a local bus! I decided it was too late to start walking and looking for a monastery so I booked into a hotel for the night. The next morning I wandered up to find a bus to McLeod Gary and met an American woman who wanted someone to share a taxi with. She collected lots of plates of glass for another new monastery building (she's married to a Tibetan monk; he has a residents permit, she doesn't so she's here 6 months of the year) and we travelled together. McLeod Gary is only $\frac{1}{2}$ an hours steep walk - a good 2 degrees temperature difference as it's much higher up the mountain - but it's 10 km. by motor road. The taxi was worth it as I was loaded and hadn't dared to eat any of the food offered at the bus stops the day before. I climbed down the 281 steps to the monastery and had arrived at this wonderful spot.

Tse Chok Ling is a small monastery of 37 monks. Each boy is sponsored by someone "in the West" at 20 US dollars a month - mainly Swiss sponsors. They (the boys) come from very poor illiterate families. Most Tibetans have had no schooling at all in Tibet and this has made them obsessed with the need for a good education for their children now they have discovered the outside world. They still hope to regain Tibet, but the more realistic ones realise Tibet will never be as it was before the Chinese takeover in 1959. The older boys arrive here with no schooling, the younger ones have had some very good intensive education at kindergarten or infant school level. Here they spend nearly all their studies on Buddhist texts, meditation and chanting. But in the afternoon for $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours I talk English with them. This is their only ordinary lesson time. They come here at 10 years old officially (there is one 9 year old). Also there is an 8 year old staying here, attending local in the morning and 'my' class in the afternoon while his parents buy woollens in Kashmir to sell here in the winter.

So I have this class of about 14 boys, 8 - 17 years old, the younger ones who can read some English, the older ones who have had no education of any sort. The idea is that they should understand basic English and make themselves understood. I have bought a simple book for teaching English from but I only read it beforehand. It's so inappropriate to their way of life. It is about Indians, but it gives examples of combing hair (these boys have none!), sitting on chairs (they sit on the floor to eat, for lessons, etc.), eating with spoons, etc. (they eat with their fingers though they bring me a spoon). They are so keen to learn and are so affectionate. Lama Tashi is the director - a loved revered old man who speaks no English. Thupter is the assistant director who can turn his hand to most things and does speak English - and does all the office work. He's aware his English is not always correct so periodically I turn into secretary! He dictates and I am expected to turn it into presentable English; mainly to the Swiss sponsors, friends and benefactors.

Each morning I go off after breakfast to read in the Tibetan library or visit some Tibetan establishment. Everyone is so welcoming and stop what they are doing to take me around and answer questions. I've visited the Tibetan Children's Village (known as TCV) where 1,385 children, orphaned or destitute, are looked after. Actually it worries me that this obsession with education is making so many mothers bring their children here and leave them - as it worried Dervla Murphy. Anyone who hasn't do read her book "Tibetan Foothold", Pubd. by Murray, It describes these people and this lovely spot so much better than I

can. I've also visited the local day kindergarten (about twenty 3-4½ year olds) where they learn the English alphabet and all our nursery songs in English plus their Buddhist prayers by heart. I also visited the day school which has 4 pre-school classes and 2 of each class 1 and class 2. After this age (about 8) they go to the TCV to join their classes. They have a very high standard of education now. They can go to one of two huge boarding schools. The classes are very disciplined but happy. The parents pay about 30 Rs. per month if they can. This means that the parents appreciate their education (30 Rs. is less than £2) but it's waived in most cases.

The Tibetan library costs 5 Rs. (approx. 6p) to join for a month. We cannot remove/borrow books but can read there all day. It's the most beautiful walk down there. These very steep slopes are less forested than they used to be. The Indian govt. are concerned at the change in weather patterns and are trying to encourage people not to cut down trees. So now it is illegal without permission. Many still get cut down, others are stripped of their branches! They look like trees do once Lewes District Council have been at them in Seaford! Very poor people who need fuel will cut wood. It's obvious. Indian women and children are out with their cow, sheep or goats. At least one member of the family is with the animals all day. There are groups of Indian roadmenders who do quite good engineering jobs but I wouldn't want to drive over the end result. There are two major falls of road into ravine and I am watching the repair with interest. It's all done by hand. Hammering metal pegs into the cliff, breaking the pieces into even sized pieces and building dry stone walls and disguising these with mud.

I have visited the Tibetan modern hospital and done the rounds with the doctors. Their patients are mainly T.B., gyna and dysentery, nursed by members of their own family. They desperately need money for drugs for the T.B. patients who are proving resistant to the usual ones.

I also visited the Tibetan medical centre. Great respect is given to the traditional medicines. I gather they do have remarkable success with such illnesses as jaundice and hepatitis. But the much revered 'doctor' told me (through an interpreter) that they don't have much success with diabetes. So do you refer them to the Dalek hospital I asked? No. So they die? Yes !! Asthma, I am told, they treat well. Every case is different and needs diagnosing by Tibetan doctors. I copied out the medicines - plants mixed with cows urine sterilised by boiling! I think the Pilgrims (special school in Seaford) boys might get better without the treatment if they knew what they were going to be given!!

As I write the little boys chant their 'puja' - it is a most restful sound - a meditative sound which goes on and on. They are sitting on their cushions in the courtyard outside the Temple in the dark. The older boys and younger men are 'in retreat' - 6 weeks of 3 intensive long meditation sessions a day. They don't eat after mid-day. They are very friendly when they are around and chatty.

A few days after I arrived one of their two cows died. It was a tragic happening and everyone trooped down the next morning to mourn her passing. So now they have one cow giving very little milk, Bindu, who they hope will have a calf soon, and the calf of the cow who died who is 4 months, Mariamla. They hope to buy another cow with a good milk supply to fill the gap. It's very steep here for grazing but the animals seem to cope.

They have just brought me some Tibetan tea. I haven't the heart to say no. It's made by forcing butter, salt, milk and water and tea through a sort of cream making machine so it's thick and greasy. I suppose as time goes by the food will seem monotonous but at present it seems adequate. At least one meal is a vegetable soup mainly potato and noodles with boney stock liquid - sometimes with a 'moo' (a heavy doughnut). The main meal is sometimes the same with rice or curried

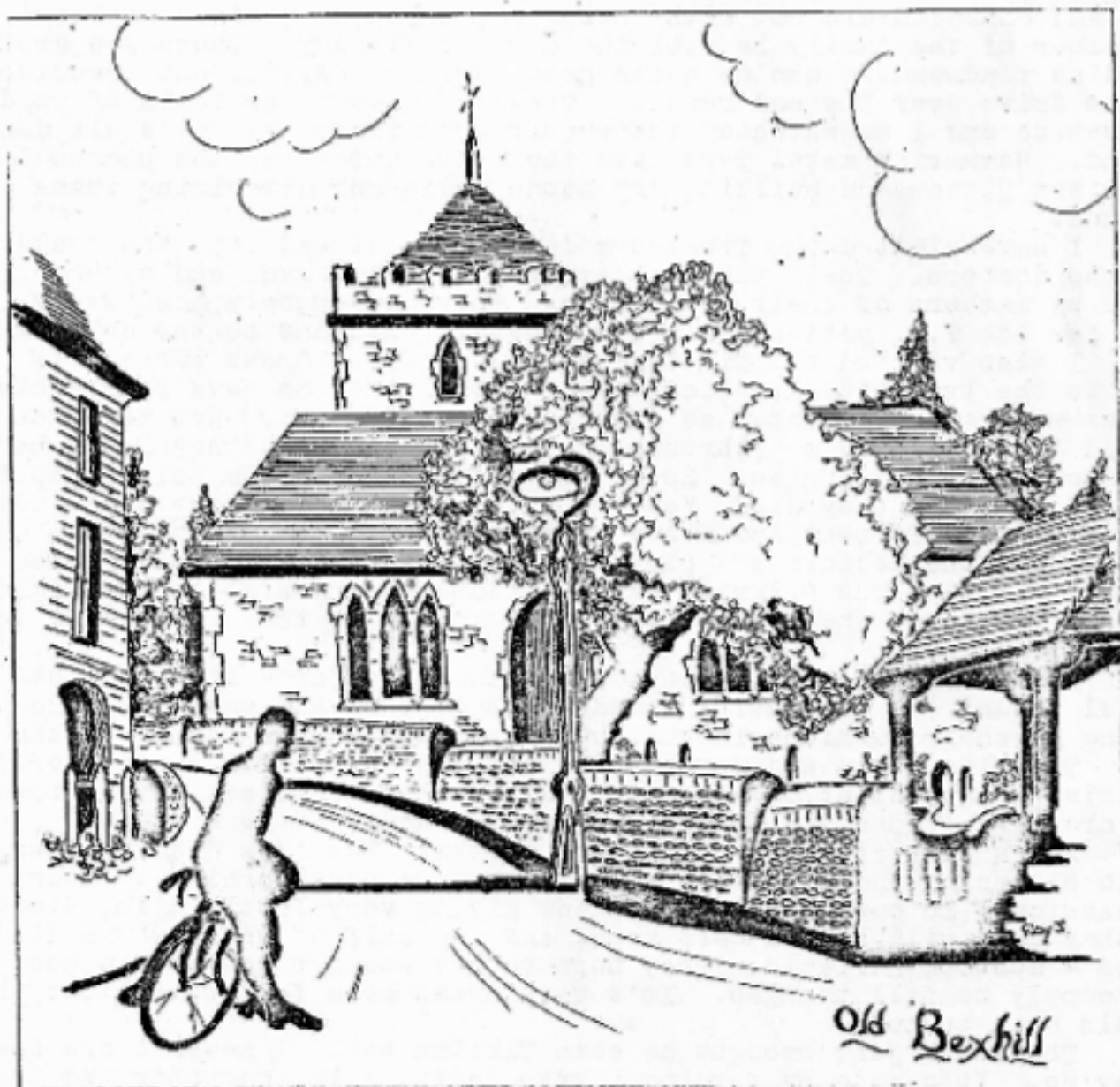
potato, sometimes with dahl. At breakfast we have chapatti and jam.
My room is about 9ft square with shelves and cupboard set into the wall. It holds 2 pieces of furniture - a bed with a beautiful Tibetan floor rug on it. It's hard but I like a firm bed. And a chair. Nearby (well, down lots more steps!) are the loos and the (cold) shower.

Till next time,
Judith.

(We hope to publish more of Judith's letters in future editions. Ed.)

EVERYDAY SUSSEX No. 2

by Roy James.



TO JEREMY AND DANIEL.

(An open letter to his grandsons)

by Roy James

Dear Boys,

Just a few belated lines to thank you for coming with me on a cycle tour this early summer and giving me the opportunity to catch again the thrill and excitement of my first bicycle holiday, when the world outside my own immediate environment seemed to be as alien as the moon. In no time at all I was seeing everything through your eyes. Finding the summery lanes sweet smelling and verdent as always, but with an added dimension of - dare I say it - Adventure.

I took a few simple precautions of course, although they were so

basic that you probably took no notice of them. No doubt you both felt able to cycle farther than I planned each day, but I kept mileages low enough for us all to appreciate the beauty and interest of the places we passed through. For I firmly believe that cycle touring is not rushing from one place to another as fast as possible. Booking the Youth Hostels in advance also made sense, as there is nothing more dispiriting than arriving at a hostel on chance and finding it full, probably with a group that have been bombing around in a coach all day. As for the bag of tools and spare tube, that had to be a good idea. The added precaution of a fluorescent jacket upon which I had painted the legend 'Caution Young Cyclists' and attached over my saddlebag may have seemed to you as 'going over the top', but by riding some twenty yards or so to the rear when I considered it sensible to do so, did put some form of restraint on the passing motorists. The important thing was that though you may not have noticed, it worked.

Before we left the house on that first morning and you were both impatient to be off, I warned that things would go wrong (they always do, that's part of the fun). That we could fall out (we didn't). Finally that we would finish most days tired and hungry (we did). Despite my counselling to keep reasonably close together, as we started off, one of you shot off down the road so fast that in no time you were at least two hundred yards in front. "This isn't going to work. This isn't going to work", I kept repeating to myself, but I gritted my teeth and hoped for the best. Sure enough, by the time we had reached Stone Cross and turned into flower strewn Peelings Lane, a riding pattern had emerged that was to last throughout the tour. Peelings Lane is always a delight, but today was something special. The lane side was littered with bluebells and red campion. Sunshine filtered through the luminescent green of the early summer trees that touched over our heads and I was not at all surprised to find you stopping to take photos barely twenty minutes from home. Lanes took us on an extended route to Blackboys, that most simple of hostels, surrounded by woods deep in the Sussex countryside. I know you will agree that it was perfect for the first night of the tour. The warden was friendly, the bunks were comfortable and that night as I lay in the dark listening to your steady breathing from the beds a few feet away, I thought,

"This is going to be alright".

Wind and rain followed swiftly on the heels of early morning sunshine the following day, but you seemed to take the vagaries of weather in your stride. Had you complained as we battled towards Lewes I would have sympathised, but you just leaned stoically over the bars and didn't murmur. Sausages in batter and chipe soon pulled three dripping cyclists back into shape when we arrived in Lewes. Above us, patches of blue sky began to appear as we headed for the railway station. I hope you understand my reason for using the train from Lewes to Horley. The ride to Holmbury St. Mary is a demanding one and I think my plan to take the sting out of it proved a success. In fact, you seemed to enjoy getting the bikes in and out of the luggage vans and up and down the platform stairs. Horley was soon reached and it was back on the bikes. Povey Cross, Charlwood, Newdigate and Bear Green slipped by under a tranquil sun until late in the afternoon we rested in a field and I made some tea before our assault on the Surrey Hills. The dogged way you tackled the long climb to Coldharbour convinced me that there would be no trouble with the rest of the tour, and just outside that village we found a seat amid the bracken and sat taking in the wide beautiful view of the Weald and distant South Downs. Now the lane took us along the crest of the hills, sometimes toiling up steady inclines, at others, swooping and climbing in turn over undulating woodland. Best of all, the long, magnificent freewheel to Abinger Common and beyond to that fine hostel at Holmbury St. Mary. Although lacking the simplicity of Blackboys, this hostel is perfectly placed for walking in the Surrey Hills and next morning, following the warden's advice, we pushed the bikes through the woods to Holmbury Hill, at 860ft the second highest point in the S.E. counties. Storm clouds were gathering over the long, dark promontory of Blackdown away to our west and we watched fascinated as the rain steadily approached. Too late I realised we were in for a soak, but somehow the three of us managed to crouch under my cycle cape during the hailstorm that rapidly ensued. As quickly as it arrived, the storm passed on leaving sunshine in its wake and we were freewheeling down to Ewhurst Green.

I know you enjoyed the ride to Arundel but it wasn't till the evening that you told me it had been the best day so far. I wanted to take you over the Downs on the bridlepath from North Stoke to Burpham, for it is one of my favourite byways, but when we reached Amberley rain threatened once more. For half an hour we waited in the delightful little church at North Stoke for the storm to pass over. Time and pendulous black clouds seemed to hang over us however and we decided to make a dash for Burpham. What an exciting ride it was over Camp Hill to Peppering Farm, with thunder rolling behind us and lightning flashing over the ridge of the Downs. The storm broke just as we reached the shelter of Burpham church, but the short spell of heavy rain was soon over and we finished the ride to the hostel at Warningcamp with tyres buzzing over wet tarmac.

A free day in Arundel involved nothing more demanding than a swim in their excellent outdoor pool and a visit to the Wildfowl Trust, where as you suspected, I had a sleep in the observation room while you both walked around the reserve. Once again feeling the need of a little exercise, we took the lane to South Stoke and from there to



North Stoke by a footpath involving two narrow bridges and five stiles. Once again you revelled in such crazy ideas.

Friday found us heading east along the South Downs Way. A day of white, scudding clouds and hot sun. The track was rough but rideable for most of the time and made for a day of superb cycling. A following wind for the first time all week was an added pleasure and I was beginning to think that nothing would go wrong when just as we were in sight of Chanctonbury Ring one of you punctured. I rather think it made your day, as if such set the final seal on a tour and for that reason Jeremy I was quite prepared to overlook your comment about needing three forks. Puncture repaired, it wasn't long before we reached the Sompting - Steyning road and leaving the Downs for a while we swept into Daniel Defoe's "most enchanting little town of Steyning".



Here we bought food and drink for a picnic stop at Bramber Castle, thus preparing ourselves for the final climb of the day, on the bridle path from Upper Beeding to the hostel at Truleigh Hill.

You really left me behind on the final approach to the hostel and when I arrived your saddle bags were off and you were ready to sign in. I don't know what you think of Truleigh but I am always pleased to arrive. It has everything going for it. A splendid view over downland to the sea, a good members' kitchen (!? Ed.), comfortable sleeping arrangements and a drying room. While you were cooking I met again a very senior cyclist, whom I had last seen at Rock Hall in Northumberland. He and I sat talking and he amused me with anecdotes of his travels, most of which I had heard before. As we left the common room for our beds the news on the television was grim. Rain and wind were forecast for the morning.

The dismal forecast was confirmed next day. Heavy rain and strong winds battered us as we struggled along the high ridge to Devil's Dyke and in no time we were very wet indeed. Above Fulking I saw a narrow path going down to the road and decided to take it. The rain had turned what must have been a rough track into a morass of mud and chalk, but we slipped and stumbled down until finally reaching tarmac. The spring at Fulking was overflowing so we were able to stop and wash the worst of the mud off our bikes and ourselves. After that you really set a good pace and it was but rarely that I saw anything other than your tails (is that why they're called kids? Ed.) as we sped along under the Downs towards Lewes. A phone call to Fred & Marge Foulger and we were soon enjoying cups of tea and Kit Kats with them. His paintings are good aren't they? I guess that's what you meant when you said that they were "wicked". Some new way of saying "great, super, smashing" and all the other enthusiasms of the past I suppose.

Early evening found us at Telscombe, where we were to spend the last night of the holiday. We agreed to this being the best hostel of all. Quiet, warm, comfortable and in the centre of that little village secluded from the outside world by the Downs. How surprising it was to find the hostel so quiet on a Saturday evening. Perhaps the rain had discouraged week-end hostellers, and what a relief to get out of our wet things and cook a hot meal.

Sunday was dry and if we had followed the direct route home it would not have taken long. But in order to avoid the busy A259 between Newhaven and Seaford we took the bridleway from Denton along Poverty Bottom to Norton Farm and Bishopstone. Again, at the Seven Sisters

Country Park, I gave you the choice of a direct route or one involving some mild rough stuff from West Dean to Friston. Happily you chose the latter, for it is one of my favourite by-ways. A pity about the second puncture of the tour at Birling Gap, but once again it was quickly repaired and we were soon toiling toward Beachy Head. Here we stopped at the Mr. Whippy ice cream van before a thrilling run down to Eastbourne sea front and home. For me it had been the best tour ever. But more important, what would you say about it all? I rather hope it would be "wicked".

Love to you both and see you up the road,
Roy.

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THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT! & other comments.

(all printable contributions to the Editor.)

Overheard at Telscombe. (working party weekend).

Pete - referred to having trouble in the Ladies dorm.

Iris - objected when Pete said about "getting these odd bits of stuff out of the kitchen".

Ken Griff. - said he wanted a stripper in the gents wash-room and Iris said "The best thing would be to get them off".

David - "Before Paul put that there I could get the top one past the bottom one."!

Brian - said he wasn't sure that he wanted everyone to have his address and phone no. Ken told him that 99% of us wouldn't want it anyway!

Iris -(during the section AGM) "I can only see the blanks"
- on the programme.

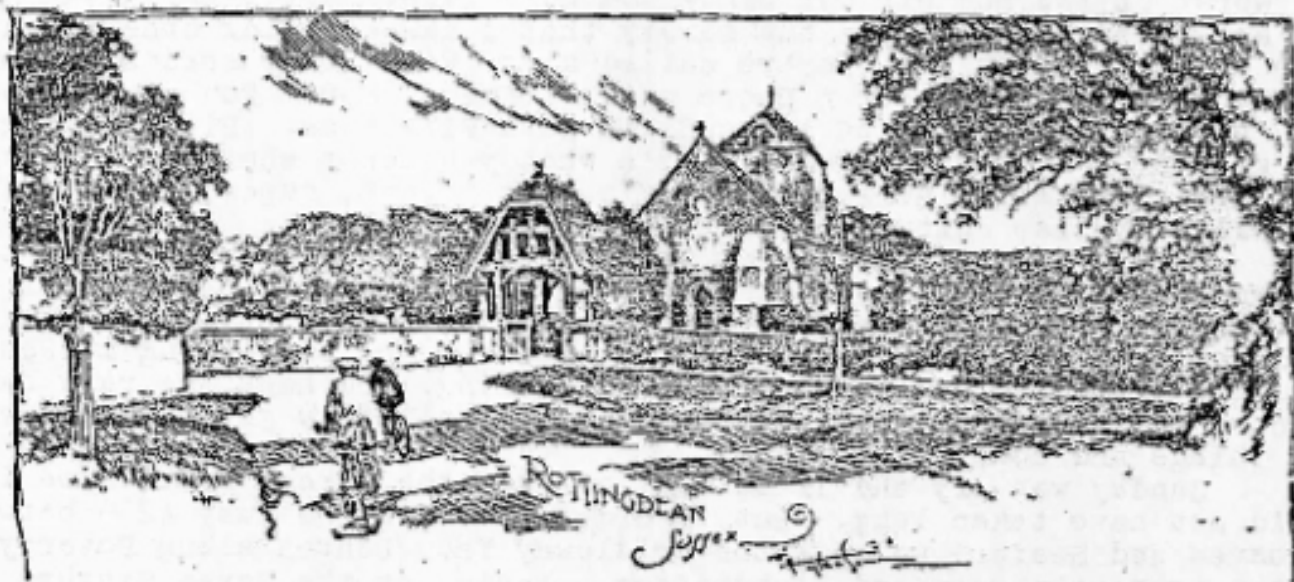
Two walkers near Outwood Mill -

"Yes, I saw it in the library, in a cycling magazine - £800."

And the startled reply, "What, for a tandem!"

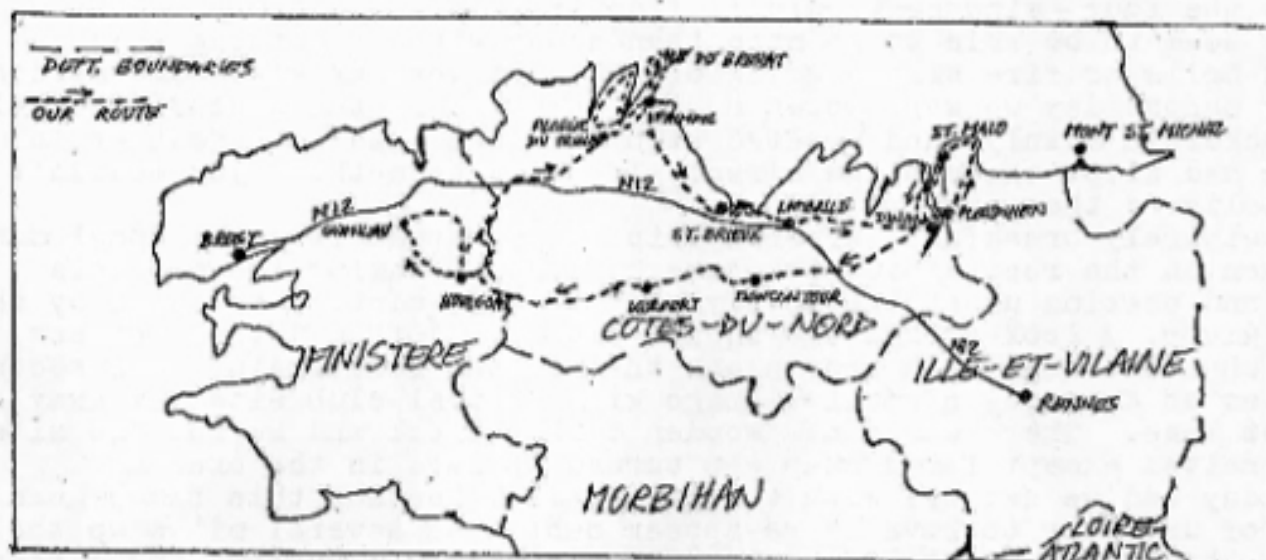
I don't think Geoff had the heart to tell them.

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CHICKENS, CHURCH BELLS & A FOUR-MINUTE WARNING

(or Waking Up in Brittany) by David Rix



August 14th and Sue & I are at Newhaven Harbour station eating fish and chips and waiting for the train to Portsmouth. We couldn't believe our luck, a straight through train from Newhaven to Portsmouth. Soon we were crossing Portsmouth to the ferry terminal to find the Boxalls already on board ($\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour early) and the others arrived not long after. There were 12 altogether; Geoff, Jenny & Nicola Boxall; Ken, Iris & Heather Stevens; Stan & Lily Burke; Joyce Wickens, David Kiernan, and Sue & I. This time we had a baggage wagon since Geoff had offered to take his car & trailer to spread the load, and by sharing the driving nobody missed out much on the cycling. 9.00 o'clock and we were on deck watching the lights of Portsmouth Harbour glide past, then inside for a cup of coffee before retiring to our cabins. It seemed like no time at all before we were up again and coming into St. Malo, where after a wait in the hold we finally rode off and had arrived in Brittany.

6.30 in the morning (French time) and we were riding out of St. Malo and suddenly found ourselves in the middle of a French clubrun. Strange, all these cyclists about on a Friday, until we find out it is a religious holiday and everyone who can is taking advantage of it. By the time we crossed the Rance at the Rance Barrage and met the Boxalls with the car we were on our own again.

A chat, a bite to eat and then we moved off again, leaving the now busy main roads for the quiet and virtually deserted country lanes - one of the great pleasures of cycling in France. For the first day the car was never far from us, meeting up for 11's, lunch, etc., and we did 50 miles passing through numerous tiny villages following the D28 and D44 roads, and seeing few other vehicles. Lunch was by a lake at Jugon-les-Lacs, after some shopping and a look at the market. During lunch it started to rain but it had cleared by the time we reached Moncontour and, after a bit of a search, found the campsite. A small site on the edge of town, relatively new and clean, with all facilities - though as Geoff pointed out to me, you had to bring your own toilet seat! Moncontour is an old fortified town built on a hillside, with lots of stepped alleyways and interesting old houses, also a good view from the top of the town if you can stand the climb.

Finally at the end of a long day and after dinner and a walk we retired to our tents, with Iris assuring everyone of a quiet nights sleep because of the peacefulness of French camp sites. Unfortunately not even Iris was prepared for the nerve shattering sound of the local fire station siren (about 200 yards away) going off at 1.45 in the

morning! The phrase 'loud enough to wake the dead' comes to mind. When it eventually died away, after several minutes, there was dead silence except for the sound of Iris giggling - and a voice asking if it was the four-minute-warning! I don't know why but after that we didn't seem to be able to go more than a day without getting loud church bells or fire sirens going off when we were around. The morning of our second day we were woken by the chickens in the next field (well the cockerels mainly) and greeted with the news that both Heather and Nicola had slept through the siren! If you'd been there you wouldn't have believed them either.

A leisurely breakfast, after a trip to get bread from the local shop, and then on the road again with Dave K. & Joyce taking the car this time, and meeting us at the lovely old town of Quintin for lunch by the Gouet River. A look around the square with its 16th & 17th C. houses, and a chance to buy more provisions then on the road again. Our second camp was at Kerpert, a small village with a rural club site $\frac{1}{2}$ km away in a quiet lane. There was a new wooden toilet block and we had the site to ourselves except for a chap who turned up late in the evening.

Sunday and we set off with the car (Iris & Heather this time) going ahead of us, only to have it re-appear behind us several miles up the road - they'd managed to round in a complete circle and had found themselves passing the campsite again! Due to a slightly delayed start we only did 14km and found ourselves at the Gorges de Toul Goulic for lunch. It should have been elevenses only, but by the time we had walked down into the wooded valley of the Blavet River, climbed all over the mass of huge rocks that lie at the bottom and returned to the car park it wasn't worth moving on. After lunch Iris & Heather left in the car to ensure that we got booked in at that night's campsite. We continued through some hilly country via Kergrist-Moelou and Mael-Carhaix to Carhaix-Plouguar which, surprisingly for a large town, was not too busy. Here we joined the scenic and well-graded D769 which took us through steep and thickly wooded hillsides to Huelgoat, where Iris & Heather were waiting for us having found three decent-sized emplacements for us to share on a pleasant site situated near the lake on the edge of the town. It was in a beautiful setting, as we could appreciate that evening as we took our walk before settling down to a relatively peaceful night.

Monday was, by general agreement, a rest(?) day, which the Boxall's, Rix's, Stevens' and Joyce spent exploring the environs around Huelgoat on foot. Huelgoat is situated in the heart of enchanting woodland and the Arree hills in the Armorique National Park, an area of natural unspoiled beauty, and there is plenty to do and see. Coffee in a local cafe was followed by clambering over rocks to visit the Grotte du Diable (Devil's Grotto), Roche Tremblante (Trembling Rock) and the Menage de la Vierge (The Virgin's Kitchen Pots), an enormous pile of rocks shaped (so they tell us) rather like kitchen utensils. We then followed the Sentier des Amoureux (Lovers' Walk) to visit the Camp d'Artus and the Mare aux Sangliers (Boars' Pool) where we eat lunch before wending our way through the woods back to Huelgoat.

Tuesday found us heading north to the Trevezel Rock, which we eventually reached - after a slight detour on some lanes not shown on the Michelin map. Trevezel is a large rock escarpment which juts up on the skyline with immense panoramic views to the south and north. We pushed our bikes up the rocky track, to the surprise of other tourists, and sat in the lee of the rocks to eat our lunch and enjoy the view spread before us. Then we contin-



The Trevezel Rock.

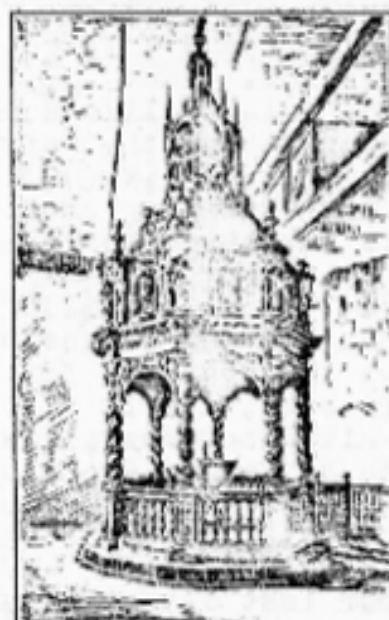
ued north a short way to Guimiliau to see the famous Parish Close and its Calvary, one of the largest in the region with over 200 figures. The church also has much of interest including a magnificent carved baptistry. From here we made our way to Pleyber-Christ and did a little shopping before following another section of the D769 scenic route back to Huelgoat.

The Cintree Rock was our first stop on Wednesday, since from the top you should be able to see the Arree Mountains to the north & the Noires to the south, unfortunately due to the trees having grown all we saw were the rooftops of Huelgoat. Then on descending we saw a sign pointing to the old canal, and after following narrow wooded tracks for ages (finding ourselves by the canal at one point - but on the wrong side) we eventually found ourselves riding along a narrow towpath about two feet wide with a narrow canal on one side and occasionally a steep drop on the other - great fun, especially for Stan & Lily on the tandem. A circuit of the Foret de Ambroise after lunch and then back to camp where, in the evening, Lily's birthday was celebrated with a cake and some bottles of wine.

Thursday and we were on the move again, following an interesting and scenic route up the D42 and then a short cut across to join the old N12, now bypassed by a massive new road that left us cyclists in peace. Down into the interesting old town of Belle-Isle-en-Terre, where the siren went off and we watched the firemen getting ready, and then off on small quiet roads NE via Begard to the small village of Plouec-du-Trieux and its small, though adequate, municipal campsite. By evening rain which had been threatening since mid-day became quite heavy and a visit to the local bar was enjoyed by all.

By now we were nearing the coast and Friday was to be a short hop to Ploubazlanec, just north of the large town of Paimpol, to base ourselves for another few days. Coffee (which is an established ritual on our French tours) was had in picturesque Pontrieux before moving on through hilly country to Paimpol, where lunch in an old square was followed by a short look at the shops. Then the short ride to Ploubazlanec where we were to meet Geoff, with the car, by the church. Being early we had a look at a couple of camp sites, but no sign of the Boxalls. Four o'clock, the agreed time, came and went and no sign of Geoff. After another half hour or so Ken, Iris and I went to look at sites further afield, with no luck. Then, after 5 o'clock, the car and trailer appeared, and Geoff had to admit to having gone east in Paimpol instead of north and guiding them to the wrong village (Plouezec). They had even found a site, pitched and scraped the potatoes for dinner before he realised his mistake! Jenny told us that he was so mad with himself that she insisted on driving back. We were just glad to see them and directed them to a site we had seen - a very pleasant small one just on the edge of the village.

Saturday was to be another mainly non-cycling day. Our intention was to visit the Ile de Brehat (just off-shore of Arcouest Point 4km. to the north) with our bikes, but we found that they could not take so many and decided to leave the bikes by the quay and walk when we got to the island. Stan and Lily declined, but later managed to get across with their tandem. We were just in time to rush onboard before the boat went, but were a bit taken aback when instead of landing the boat turned away and started clockwise round the island. We started thinking that we had got on a boat for a trip around the island instead of to it,



Guimiliau

and were very relieved when, after circumnavigating the island, we finally landed. It seems that the fare includes a trip round as well as landing.

The island, like Sark, does not allow motor vehicles - except for tractors - and the only other way about is by foot or bike. It is only about 3½km by 1½km and is a maze of tiny, and we spent a good part of the day wandering about enjoying the scenery and admiring the flowers - it is known as the island of flowers and pink rocks and is well worth a visit. Jenny even had us clambering over rocks in one of the bays and coming out in the middle of a French picnic party.

Sunday, and we set off to explore the next peninsular, going via lanes to cross the Trieux River to Lezardrieux and then up to the Sillon de Talbert, a spit of land stretching several kilometres out to sea. We walked between piles of seaweed drying in the sun to sit on some rocks and enjoy the view. Afterwards we rode down the other side of the peninsular to Treguier, where we had a walk the old town and cathedral, the bells of which nearly deafened us - they went on for 15 minutes.

Our last day at Ploubazlanec we awoke to rain. When we eventually went out it was to visit Paimpol for a better look round, and Ken, Iris and Heather, and Sue and I enjoyed a lunch of crepes in a small creperie. The afternoon was spent wandering around local villages and bays.

Tuesday we moved on to Lamballe, managing to get lost in St. Briec on the way, which put us (briefly) onto the cycle path beside the busy new N12, but also put us onto a quiet coastal road that brought us back to our original route at Yffiniac. On arrival at Lamballe Stan, who was driving that day, told us that the municipal site was no good - no water and the toilets were all blocked. A check with the tourist office turned up several sites nearby, one of which, at an old manor house, was just perfect. The site was in an old orchard with excellent washing facilities and a creperie in the manor house, which we and the Stevens' took advantage of, and we had the site to ourselves.

Moving on again we went along quiet lanes through forested areas and past some large lakes to cross our outward route at Corseul, where lunch was eaten outside the church, and then on to cross the Rance at La Vicomte north of Dinan and find our way to the last site of the tour at Pleudihen. A delightful sight beside the Rance that Ken & Iris had stayed at before - a pity the weather was slightly against us.



Dinan -
Place des Merciers.

Our first day here brought some roughstuff, recommended by Ken & Iris, as we did the river side track down to Dinan coming out near the old Port of Dinan. The town stands on a plateau overlooking the Rance from a height of about 240ft., and we pushed our bikes up the long cobbled street between the old houses and through the ancient gateway to the top, stopping to look in the multitude of craft shops on the way. Sue & I left Ken, Iris & Heather here and wandered round the old and new parts of the town on our own - though Sue refused to come up the old clock tower with me. A walk round the top of the old ramparts, with their magnificent views over the river, before a picnic tea below the Chateau and a ride back up the river path.

Friday brought heavy rain, Ken, Iris & Heather left in the rain for Combourg Castle, but Sue and I waited until after elevenses, in the bar near the site, and then lunch in our tent, before venturing out. We went north to Chateauneuf and then through the lanes to Dol-de-Bretagne in the Dol Marshes and then after a detour to look at the Champ-Dolent Menhir, one of the finest in Brittany standing over 30ft. tall, we took

an up and down route back to camp.

Our last day in France took us to Cancale, a pleasant seaside town with fantastic views across the Bay of Mont St. Michel from the hill above the town, and then on round the Pointe du Grouin, with more views along the coast, and down into St. Malo. We did not have to be at the ferry until 7.30pm to meet the others and so, after a little shopping for wine and other things to bring back, we found a very good little restaurant near the port for a meal of pork chops and chips. Too soon we were on the ferry watching the sun set over the harbour and the distant Cap Frehel and then turning in for the night. But our tour did not quite finish with our arrival back in Portsmouth since we and the Stevens' had decided to ride back from there. It was great riding on virtually empty roads at 6.00 in the morning and it wasn't long before we reached the Little Chef near Emsworth, where we had to wait 7 minutes for them to open. Then a quick phone call to Pete Burbery to let him know that we would be at the Roundstone Garden Centre for elevenses, after which he led us all back to his place where Rita had laid on a smashing lunch for us. An enjoyable end to a good holiday.

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MORE ON 'THE' SADDLE

(From 'Three Men on the Bummel' by Jerome K. Jerome)

"Then there are saddles", I went on... "Can you think of any saddle ever advertised that you have not tried?"

He said, "It has been an idea of mine that the right saddle is to be found!"

I said, "You give up that idea, this is an imperfect world of joy and sorrow mingled. There may be a better land where bicycle saddles are made out of rainbow, stuffed with cloud; in this world the simplest thing is to get used to something hard. There was that saddle you bought in Birmingham; it was divided in the middle and looked like a pair of kidneys."

He said, "You mean that are constructed on anatomical principles."

"Very likely", I replied, "The box you bought it in had a picture on the cover, representing a sitting skeleton - or rather that part of a skeleton that does sit!"

He said, "It was quite correct; it showed the true position of the -"

I said, "We will not go into details; the picture always seems to me indelicate."

He said, "Medically speaking it was right."

"Possibly", I replied, "for a man who rode in nothing but his bones. I only know that I tried myself, and that to a man who wore flesh it was agony. Every time you went over a stone it nipped you; it was like riding on an irritable lobster. You rode like that for a month."

"I thought it only right to give it a fair trial", he answered.

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ODD CUTTING

"The steamy sex film '9½ Weeks' has been temporarily banned from Worthing's Dome Cinema until after it has been privately viewed by Worthing Council's moral watchdogs. The film 'Body Lust, Best Bit of Crumpet in Denmark' will be shown instead while the committee decide the fate of '9½ Weeks'." (Worthing Guardian.)

"Thirty women moon worshippers met on a hill Wednesday night to dance naked in an ancient pagan ritual, but called off the ceremony when 150 men turned up to watch." (from a Canadian paper.)



near TARRING NEVILLE.

EAST



Ann of Cleves' House
SOUTHOVER.

S
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U
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H
O
V
E
R



near LEWES

MEMORABLE MOMENTS WITH S & N

by The Seafordian Scribbler

Those of you who have been rash enough to ride with us will know that we don't have many dull moments. There is a certain bald headed gent who is a super leader, providing those following him are mind readers about what he will do or where he will go next. Beware if he signals to turn right - he's certain to go left. Just say "what about ideas for runs", and a list appears, he doesn't always get the distance right though, like the time we rode to Portsmouth and he kept saying, "not much further - not much further - till it ended at 80 miles!

Then there was the Invitation Ride this year - well we all know the response we get with those! Not even the usual regular riders, let alone any new ones. The advice for these is short distances, so Alec, Colin and Ann managed to get to Rodmel for 11's and Lewes Priory for lunch. On to Barcombe Mills for afternoonses, then back to Lewes and

tea in St. Michael's Church Hall (make a note of it folks - May to September, Sunday afternoons 2-6, very reasonable) where they demolished a large plate of cakes before deciding to explore the river path to Southease.

"There's a lot of styles", Colin said. "That doesn't matter", says Alec. Colin and Ann held him to that - he lifted all the bikes faithfully and carefully over each style - and Colin was right - there were a lot! The embankments required trail blazing where the cows hadn't been, Alec did this as well. Eventually they climbed onto Southease Bridge where Ann and Alec preferred the road home while Colin headed for Piddinghoe and the track over the top to Peacehaven.

The August Bank Holiday weekend was another experience that will be long remembered by those who went. Saturday morning - Our Glorious Leader, now working full-time, said he couldn't cycle up - we might see him later - with tent! Off we went, met Debbie Springett (one of the rash ones) at Beddingham, then headed up country to Wivelsfield Green

for 11's. Up Slugwash Lane to Lindfield to have lunch at Slaugham, afternoonses at Rusper, then a change from our usual route by keeping right towards Gatwick to find the bridleway to the south of it, which took us across a flat area towards Capel then over the hills to the hostel at Holmbury St. Mary. On arrival who should we see unloading his bicycle but A.D. himself. Some may be forgiven for thinking that this stands for Anno Domini, but S & N know better.

Next morning - weather looks promising - Alec wants to visit Stoke D'Abernon church to see the famous brasses - Colin wants to see Cotterell House! So off goes Alec with Jon, while Adam, Robert, Rajj (pronounced Ria), Debbie, Ann and Colin head for Shere, where all except the one who took them there try to get their bottom brackets waterlogged in the ford. Then it it was along the road to the Silent Pool, though there wasn't enough light for good camera shots.

On to Godalming and C.T.C. headquarters where the sun came out and we made good

use of the picnic tables in the grounds, several layers of clothing were shed as the temperature rose in the sheltered garden.

What came next was perhaps not a good idea - the Pilgrims' Way over St. Martha's on the hill. (picture over.)

This track is very sandy, so we rode a bit, walked a bit, slid a bit, then it began to go up and up, till finally we came out on the top by the church and collapsed for a rest and afternoonses.



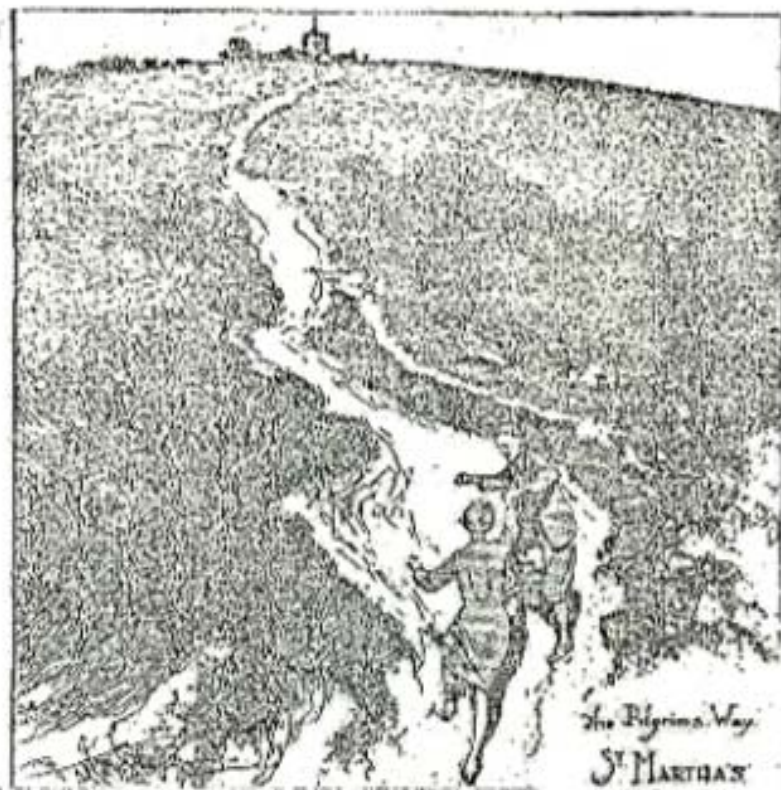
The Silent Pool

The only way to the church is by several sandy tracks, they have weddings (there was confetti by the gate) and funerals there, all wending their way up through the sand. From the top seven counties can be seen on a clear day, we had a good view of Chancetonbury Ring in the distance. A very steep descent on the east side brought us eventually back to a road, then it was time to return to the hostel after a good days exploring, though Colin's bottom bracket was making nasty noises (the combination of water and sand was too much for it).

That evening turned wet which kept everyone in, so hilarious, and often cut-throat, games of Ludo etc. whiled away the evening.

Next morning looked a little gloomy, Jon and Alec left to catch the train home (Jon was on Life Guard duty on Seaford Beach at 12pm.). The rest tried to find the Hostellers Seat on Holmbury Hill, but no such luck so we headed homewards. The rain started fairly soon and got wetter and wetter, so by lunch time we needed a stop in the dry and a Little Chef filled the need. Refreshed it was on to Shipley, where we found the mill about to open. A look around inside and then, what's that notice? Teas in the village hall - definitely! Super homemade scones and cakes went down a treat (another tea place to remember - they are open when the mill is and on Bank Holidays).

Into the rain again, I don't know about 'the rain in Spain staying mainly on the plain', we certainly had it up and down the hills as well as on the plains. When we reached Beddingham and said goodbye to Debbie we were all feeling rather wet, and squelching in our shoes with still some miles to go. The rain was torrential - like a curtain sweeping across the valley in front of us. Colin took the lead to give us some shelter, Raj thought he wasn't going fast enough so overtook, then he found out why! We soon caught him. I can't remember having ridden in rain like it, either my memory is going or the weather is finally getting to me.



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ODD CUTTINGS

Keeping a-breast of things?

"Ms D'espincy's breasts are aggressive. Yesterday they punched their way out of her singlet and ambushed the New South Wales Police Force. Like snipers, the breasts attacked without warning. They edged from cover, hovered dangerously and then shot into view. Officers had to take them, and their possessor, into custody for resisting arrest and assaulting police."

(Australian newspaper article.)

Virgin offers fortnight in Miami for £299.

(Advert in Huddersfield paper.)

GUIDELINES FOR CYCLING IN A GROUP

These notes are primarily for the guidance of new or inexperienced cyclists when riding with a Section or the D.A. By following them it is hoped cyclists will get the maximum enjoyment from rides.

- DO
1. Make sure your bike is in good working order.
 2. Carry a good tool/puncture repair kit and a spare inner tube.
 3. Carry wet weather gear if it is likely to be needed.
 4. Fit lights if you are likely to be on the road after lighting up time.
 5. Fit full-length mudguards unless you enjoy riding at the back when it rains.
 6. Carry sufficient food and drink for the ride.
 7. Ride in an orderly manner, never more than two abreast and in single file when necessary.
 8. Warn cyclists behind when you intend to stop.
 9. Always abide by the Highway Code.

DON'T

1. Pass the leader - he may not be going your way.
2. Overtake on the inside.
3. Carry luggage on your back - it's better in a saddlebag.

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D O N ' T F O R G E T - D E A D L I N E F O R
N E X T I S S U E I S M I D J U N E .