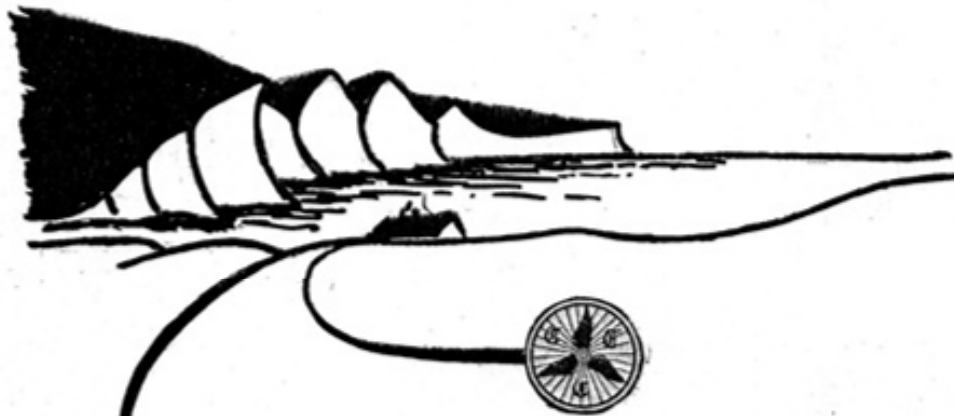


The  
**Coaster**



*the magazine of the*

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION  
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

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CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

"THE COASTER"

ISSUE No. 5.

SUMMER 1983

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EDITORIAL

Welcome to issue number 5 of "The Coaster", I hope you will enjoy it as much as the last one. We have articles ranging from a report on the Home Counties Rally and one on the London to Brighton Ride to a piece on the humorous side of epitaphs, also there is part two of Jack Dunn's American holiday and of course the usual crossword.

Don't forget us, if you are going on holiday during the summer then how about a write-up for the Christmas issue; copy on almost any subject will be considered, remember it doesn't have to be about cycling. Deadline for the next issue the middle of November.

But to more serious matters. Quite a few of you are probably Youth Hostellers; well how would you feel if half the Youth Hostels in this country were closed? Pretty bad I should think, if

the reactions I've seen to this suggestion so far are anything to go by. Highly unlikely though you are probably thinking. However this is the likely result of decisions taken by the National Council of the Y.H.A. when they were presented with the results of last years survey of members commissioned by the National Management Committee. Only members of Y.H.A. national committees had recieved copies of the survey, so many delegates had only the summary which was on the chairs when they entered the conference. The survey had been co-ordinated by John Parfitt, who gave a visual presentation and, I am informed, so mesmerised the audience that by the end they were largely in a mood of panic. They were willing to clutch at any straw to save the Y.H.A. and so the proposals arising from the survey were accepted with virtually no opposition. Most were more concerned with the costs of such measures.

Some proposals were positive and worth looking into, but I would like to draw your attention to two that should concern most people. The first is the suggestion that they should close hostels with little usage, ie. all those that do not make a decent profit. This would no doubt mean the loss of important link hostels in some areas. We already know of several in Southern Region that are to close (including Ewhurst Green, a purpose built hostel), which others are likely to follow? Blackboys? Telscombe?

The second suggestion was that they should concentrate on those Hostels with usage potential and heating, in other words drawing people away from many small hostels which they could then close due to lack of use leaving, in effect, only the larger hostels being run more along the lines of hotels. I also understand that they are even looking at hostels that are making profits, with a view to selling any that would fetch high prices, in a bid to help the faltering finances of the Y.H.A. (Hostels such as Alfriston?).

Other suggestions include extended hours, more space invaders, T.V. in common rooms and even tables and bunk lights in dormitories so members could read at night. Hostels would open earlier and there would be no time for lights out. I would not fancy being woken by people coming in after midnight when I had been cycling all day. Even going Bed & Breakfast there are 'rules'!

Bunk lights and tables in the dormitories would encourage people to stay up later, especially the 'suitcase brigade', disturbing members who are probably tired out and want to sleep. All this at extra expense to try and bring in more members.

As to the survey, the figures given in the summary which I have seen appear to have been interpreted in a slightly misleading way. For instance it is stated that winter usage has declined, since only 16.5% of members used hostels in winter in 1981 compared to 22% in 1961, but when you take into account the fact that these are percentages of two very different figures, ie. just under 190,000 members in 1961 compared to just over 280,000 in 1981, then the truth can be seen, for it actually indicates an increase from about 41,000 to about 46,500, an increase of 5,500. This may not be much, but it definitely is not a decrease in usage. The same is probably true of other figures given.

The aim of certain members of the National Council seems to be to close small and little used hostels and concentrate on the money spinners. Thus closing down useful link hostels on cycling routes away from the tourist areas. To quote one delegate, it is important to "inform all concerned that the association should remain a voluntary movement faithful to its aims rather than a trendy business run by highly paid professionals."

If you feel strongly about this then write to one of the cycling papers, or even to the Y.H.A. council themselves and help

show that there is opposition to these ideas. I feel that a lot of wardens will naturally be on our side, since it will obviously affect their conditions as well.

David.

P.S. I have yet to meet any member who was polled in this National survey of members.

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CLUB RIDING

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A BIT FROM OUR SECRETARY

Message from Editor, No DEMAND. "I want a sex report from YOU!" A What! Sex report, but I don't know anything about it! I mean we didn't have sex education when I was at school. Taboo subject. The only person to give me any was Dot Collins who said, "Never on Sundays!" I know I could ask Yub he's an old and wise chap, but he says he's past it, whatever IT is, and he and Phyl only have hazy memories.

I would ask Ken, but you know how embarrassed he gets. He's so shy he'd go bright red and stutter. How about Fred then, as President he must be clever enough to know. He works for the Dental Board too and that's to do with something medical isn't it? But what about Thelma, she might not like me approaching Fred. She's also bigger than me. I know, Bill Collins, he's been around a long time he's sure to know. What was it he said about the day they burnt their double bed, they "stood to attention remembering all the good times they had in her." "Sorry Iris since my illness my memory is not so good".

Animals are the answer, that's how children learn, or so Heather tells me. The rabbits were both female though they did act a bit funny at times. The dog, he was male, no go there he didn't bring his girlfriends home, just came back tongue hanging out then slept for hours exhausted. We have a hamster but it's so hairy I can't tell the difference, besides it bit me when I tried to look.

I don't like to ask the younger set, they are so confident and probably know it all, after all they DID get sex education. I don't like to admit that I don't know everything like they expect me to.

"Sorry Mr. Editor, but I can't think of anything about shh.....  
..sex." "I said SEC's report not SEX you fool".

Oh I know about THAT, but I'm too late for the deadline now.  
You will just have to buy the bi-monthly news letter.

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BOOKS IN THE D.A. LIBRARY

Winged Wheel - The history of the Club.  
A Centenary Route - details of the round Britain ride.  
The Great Bike Race - an account of the Tour de France.  
The Penguin Book of the Bicycle - history of bikes and cycling.  
England by Bicycle - a springtime tour.

Available on loan to members, apply Iris Stevens.

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Seaford and Newhaven Section Library

C.T.C. British Road Book Vol. 2 - South Midlands, Wales and  
East Anglia 1898.  
Vol. 3 - Northern Counties 1897.  
Vol. 4 - Scotland 1897.  
Vol. 2 - South West England 1922.

The Cyclist's and Automobilst's Road Book 1907.  
Short Spins Around London 1907.  
The Contour Road Book of England - Western - Northern 1913-1914.  
Cycling scrapbook, cuttings from Cycling & CTC Gazette 1922-28.  
CTC Gazettes - most years from 1928 to present Cycle Tourings.

Available on loan to D.A. members, apply Ann Rix.

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SALE OF C.T.C. GOODS.

A selection of goods; safety wear, saddle covers, water bottles (the drinking kind), badges, etc. are held by your secretary, Iris Stevens. Why not purchase from her and help D.A. funds, it won't cost you any more. She is also willing to order any goods you require that are available from the C.T.C. shop. This not only saves you postage but it also donates 5% to our D.A. funds.

# HAPPY DAYS



SUMMER, AS IT SHOULD BE,  
AND WE DREAM ABOUT  
AND PREPARE FOR!



AND THE  
SORT  
WE GET!

(I just hope this isn't prophetic or I'll get the blame! Ed.)

C.T.C. FIXED CENTRE HOLIDAY - NORTH WALES.

by Iris Stevens

The holiday was advertised in Cycletouring as '1 week fixed centre holiday. Bring your own tent all meals and facilities in house. Five daily rides with experienced leader. £45 inc. packed lunch.'

"How about it", says Ken, "sounds good. No runs leading for a week".

"And NO COOKING", says I thankfully.

We duly booked for Spring bank holiday week and bought the O.S. 116 to find Bron Haul, near Abegele. What a surprise, hidden away in a mass of lanes above the river Elwey, and I do mean above, 500' straight up. Looking closer what do we see but lots of little black arrows, no wonder the prospectus said a good range of gears advisable.

With a journey of over 300 miles to cover an early start was advisable, especially so motorway driving was ruled out due to the usual umpteen road works. We opted for a route through the Cotswolds and then keeping to the left of Birmingham entering Wales on the A5 at Llangollen and up over the horseshoe Pass to Ruthin and Denbigh. It was an uneventful drive other than it rained for about 250 miles of it. Next time we will avoid Evesham and Bridgenorth (blocked solid).

Arriving at 4pm we were welcomed first by the dog Flash who licked my ears out thoroughly and then by our hosts Ken & Pat Brown of the Chester DA, with a very welcome cuppa. After setting up camp we sat down around the large kitchen table to the first of our excellent evening meals and met our fellow companions. There were two lads Heather's age, Jeremy from Peacehaven of all places, Paul from Huddersfield who said we all talked funny. It took us a week to begin to understand him! An American lady, Pam, on a seven week cycle tour of Britain, along with ourselves. A mixed bunch experience wise.

Next morning we were ready for our first run led by Ken Brown, who as Chester DA secretary proved in the following days to know the area like the back of his hand. Having first demolished a huge breakfast and collected our packed lunches, setting the pattern for the week. The weather was overcast and quite chilly as we set off into the maze of lanes. Left and right turns one after the other to places with unpronounceable names, to us anyway. The gear levers working overtime especially on the little rings. A long hard climb up to the new reservoir Lyn Brenig (King Lake) to the sound of the Curlew, had us steaming up, but a chill wind across the lake made us all glad of a coffee at the Centre. A short bit of rideable roughstuff alongside Alwen Reservoir to lunch in some old farm buildings converted to a shelter and information centre. "This shelter must go on my list of brewing up places" (Ken). Some roughstuff after lunch into Clogaenog Forest was a bit muddy to start due to timber hauling, then it was quiet metal roads including a 2½ mile down hill followed by more rideable roughstuff alongside a river till we eventually came out on the flat river valley to Denbigh. From here it was up hill all the way, or so Pam thought, back to Bron Haul where a cup of tea awaited us on arrival. A super day out and just a taste of what was to follow in the coming week.

Rain delayed the start next morning. It stopped as Ken B. led us off in another set of lanes through one of the many villages with the name Llanfair. Climbing steadily above a tributary of the Elwey before we dived down into Gwytherin where coffee was found in the pub. Heading up the valley Ken B. assured us we

would not be riding for long and he meant it too as the three arrows on the map plus the tightly packed contour lines came to life. At 409 metres the sky cleared and a panoramic view of the mountains unfolded before us, our guide pointing out all the peaks before the clouds closed in again. The area was like the high Yorkshire moors, bleak yet beautiful. The baa-ing of sheep intermingled with the plaintive call of the curlew along with Welsh ponies with their young foals. The threatening rain held off so lunch was taken under a hedge high above Llanwrwst. Plunging steeply down we bypassed this busy little town and climbed again in steeply banked lanes which were amassed with wild flowers. This has been the one advantage of council cut backs. It means the verges are not cut very often, if at all in some places, giving the wild flowers a chance to bloom and seed, all to our benefit. The orchids in particular have been spectacular this year, with abig increase in numbers. A short stretch of B road had us in demand, first by a lad shot off the back by his mates, with a loose chain and fixed by Ken B. This was followed in a minute or so by a lost motorist looking for St. Asaph which lay to the North-east and he was going south. Being a real gentleman he drove off without a thankyou. "No wonder the Welsh don't like the English" comments Ken B. Before we can leave this B road and get back onto our now familiar Welsh dual carriageways (6'6" with grass growing up the middle) a lad asks Ken S. if he could fix his friends loose handlebars. The mind boggles how far they had ridden with them in that state. Borrowing an allen key from Pam the lads quickly established she was American but asked if we were Australian! This caused some mirth amongst us as we explained we did not live that far south. To which the boy replied "Well you don't half talk funny". This was the second time in two days, good job our 'uddersfield lad hadn't opened his mouth. Come on says Ken S. lets get out of here before we get anymore requests. The steep 1 in 4 drops had my Mafacs squealing like a banshee, but then we were on the Llanfair Talhaiarn road only to have to cape up for the remaining few miles.

With just 4 miles to go the cover plate came off Ken's block and he shed bearings all down the road. Rescue quickly came to hand when our host Ken Brown went ahead with the boys to collect his car while us girls followed at a more leisurely pace more suited to cape riding. That evening after dinner Paul & Jeremy along with Pam were given an exercise by Ken S. on reassembling a block.

Tuesday was a free day, the boys elected to savour the delights of Rhyl while Pam headed for Conway. We were all up and raring to go by 9.30 something to do with the beautiful warm sun shine. We were going into the mountains, the Ffestiniog Railway and the slate mines at Blaenau Ffestiniog being our goal. The trip being around 70 - 80 miles we were cheating and going by car. The drive through the mountains from Bettws-y-coed was fantastic though I would think from a cyclists point of view it gets to busy. This is were the lanes between Denbigh and the coast score, no traffic. However we were tourists for the day and on reaching the Llechwedd mines we had a conducted tour down into the depths. It proved very interesting and was not overdone. Mind you tne area looks awful with the huge piles of spoil (10 tons to 1 ton of slate) but effort is being made to turn the old workings into an interesting history of Welsh slate. Our return to the surface was quite a shock, with hordes of coaches and the like having filled the car park. We quickly descended into the old mining town of Blaenau Ffestiniog and as the day was perfect decided to leave the car and walk the 3-4 miles to a railway

station set in the mountains with no road access. We luckily found the station ok having seen the top of a signal post above a hill and climbed onto the platform with 15 minutes to spare. The bit of line we were to cover has only been extended this year and is not supposed to be the best part but the views were still very beautiful. The up & down train cross here on a very complicated looking loop so we were treated to the sight of both trains and hoped we were hailing the right one. We created a bit of interest I think among the crowded holiday makers as we looked rather hot and scruffy.

Wednesday started with the drizzle we were getting familiar with but our runs leader assured us it was to be a short easy day so we caped up and descended for a change to Denbigh. Fortunately the rain stopped before we reached the first of our major climbs up onto the Clwydians. The climb was very steep but Heather showed us all up by gently rolling her 26" gear to the top. The two boys were a bit amazed by her climbing ability and wanted to know how much low gears like it would cost. Though they were both well fitted out with reasonable gears, the steepness of the hills took there toll. Paul reckoned they didn't have anything like it where he lived! This day took its toll on Pam and she was quite despondent on the ride back saying that she thought in future she would go out on her own as all she saw was our backs, disappearing up the road. We persuaded her that we wanted her to continue and that we did not mind waiting at the top of the climbs & Ken B. assured her that Thursday was to be an easy day. An evening of slides after the usual excellent home cooking set us all up again.

Thursday morning had us setting off for St. Asaph, which has a city status due to its small cathedral, but not stopping, Ken B. certainly has an aversion to any forms of civilisation. On into gently rolling country to climb to a point where we had views across the Wirral and Mersey. Liverpool's two cathedrals could be clearly seen despite the haze. Ken S. stood his bike on a thorn here, so elevenses was taken while the repair was in progress. A few miles later we came across an ancient Celtic cross over 1000 years old with the carving still quite discernable. Lunch was taken in the porch of Whitford Church as it had started to rain yet again. Capes were finally abandoned as we climbed over the Clwyds and after a bit of rough stuff near Moel Arthur descended onto the flatter lanes south of Denbigh. From here it was the usual haul back up to Bron Haul. Having eaten ourselves to a standstill again we decided on a short(!) walk down through the fields to the river. Finding a bridge we just had to cross to the other side and found ourselves in a beautiful wooded area. It was decided to follow the river to the bridge we knew to be down the lane from the farm. Well as usual with Ken in the lead our walks turn into a marathon and two fields and several barbed wire fences later we came to a caravan park. Hastily putting Flash (the farm dog) on a lead we walked nonchalantly through as if we belonged there and reached our road on the other side. By now the light was fading and when we arrived back for our evening coffee it was nearly 10 o'clock and the Brown's were considering a search party (not seriously).

Our last day dawned dull and misty but Ken B. was determined we should have another chance to see the mountains. The hilly route towards the Conway valley ridden with occasional views of the sea and was the nearest he had allowed us to it. "You don't go there it's full of visitors!". How many times have we said the selfsame thing about our coastline. Just before lunch the rain really set in and it was capes on for the easy ride along the Conway valley to Trefriw where lunch was taken in a large

bus shelter opposite the woolen mills. Suddenly there was a clear patch and our leader asked if we would still like to continue with the run as planned up into the hills above the village to a rather beautiful reservoir. Of course we all said yes and after looking at some spectacular waterfalls (the rain certainly shows these to full advantage) we climbed a beautiful valley right up into the hills. There was a track right round the reservoir which Ken B. said was passable but we would have to walk a short bit of footpath at the head. Let's go then says Ken S. and we did, to get a third of the way and the heavens opened up again. Undeterred (we were wet anyway) we climbed the style to find the footpath section was nearly all bog. "Never seen it so wet, even in November", mutters our leader. It was well worth it though, apparently there is a super rough stuff crossing from here to Capel Curig, but not today. Back down we descended crossing the Conway by footbridge and into Llanwrst for tea and cakes. From here it was more ups and downs over some by now familiar country to a final celebration supper.

Next morning all packed up we bade farewell, us three vowing to return to explore still more. Pam heading for the station and Chester to continue her tour. The boys awaiting the arrival of their respective fathers. We headed for Anglesey to order a super tandem, but that's another tale. It had been a super week despite the weather and the group had knitted so well together that by the end we felt like old friends. We would whole-heartedly recommend it to anyone. Ken Brown quickly sizes up his group and is a very good leader, whilst Pat spoils us all with her cooking, fresh butter, milk, cream and cheese from their Jersey cow. Son David will even give you a lesson in hand milking as he did with Heather.

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EIGHTH LONDON - BRIGHTON BIKE RIDE 26th JUNE 1983

A Personal View by Ann Rix

What's that noise going on and on, oh no, it can't be time to get up yet. Switch off alarm, 5.15am., looks like being a lovely day though. Cup of tea to wake me up (take one to mother), make a flask of coffee and have breakfast (good job I'd prepared food to take the evening before). Made it to Seaford Station with five minutes to spare to catch the 6.25am. to Brighton, to find Paul waiting, but no sign of Alec. Newspapers were being unloaded from the guards van, then on with our bikes plus two others, then at the last moment Alec. So far so good.

Arrived at Brighton in time to catch the 7.00am. to Clapham Junction but this is where our troubles began. This year all registered riders were allotted starting times so we thought no need to ride to Brighton to catch the very early train which we have done before. Unfortunately the message had not got through to BR. There were about twenty riders waiting but were not allowed on, we were told we should have caught the earlier special bikes trains. So a wait of forty minutes for the next one (which was going to London Bridge) and hope we would get on. Just managed it with careful, then found it was a SLOW train, stopping at every station.

We had starting times between us all from 8.30 - 9.30, these were all passed before we reached Norwood Junction, here we managed to change and get on one to Clapham Junction, 10.15am. - nearly four hours travelling. A short ride to the start to find a few riders still there, then off at last, on our 56 mile



SOME TRANSATLANTIC TRAVELS - Part 2

by Jack Dunn

When we landed at Raleigh-Durham in North Carolina early on that last morning of September, we had not only been transported from the West to the East but also from Summer to Autumn. For though there was already warm sunshine before 8 o'clock there were brilliant Autumn tints here and there among the trees - a foretaste of the glories to come in a few days, when we hoped to be in New England at the peak of the celebrated 'foliage season'. We felt we were just starting another holiday!

We had come to North Carolina to visit an elderly couple who had invited me to their New Jersey home for my first visit to America two years previously. Now they were settled in a very nicely appointed retirement estate in a region known as the Research Triangle (from three highly prestigious universities all within a few miles). We had a day and a half in the area then flew on to Washington to spend the rest of the day on a walking tour of the main sights of the federal capital. Next morning we renewed contact with the cycling world at Newark, one of New York's airports; Marvin Lyons, who was my companion on a tour in France the previous year, came to meet us here. The Lyons' home is in Wyckoff, New Jersey, one of the very pleasant outer suburbs north of New York and it was to be our starting base in a day or two for our New England tour. Marv had already arranged with the splendid Ridgewood Cycle Shop in the neighbouring township for our hire of suitable bicycles, but it still took a day or so to get these near enough right for our tastes; such fripperies as mudguards ('fenders') and pumps had to be insisted on, but we eventually took the bikes without lamps (or anywhere to hang them!) in the belief that we would not need to ride after dark. (Needless to say, this was enough to ensure that we would get caught out at least once, with a race against darkness extending well after lighting-up time!)

We spent a day in Wyckoff and surrounding boroughs with Marv and his wife, seeing the local sights and doing a bit of shopping. Apart from the shopping centres, which can be as brash and vulgar as anywhere, this commuter area is very beautiful with its wide residential roads flanked with lawns and shrubs and always shaded with trees of great variety. Marv is a well-known figure in these parts on his 18-speed Carlton, with his white helmet and his miniature driving mirror attached to his spectacles which he never ventures to ride without. He took us by intricate but traffic-free routes through the residential roads and footpaths and even through a gap in the hedge to make a dash across a motorway! We saw parks, gardens, lakes and trees, already putting on their Autumn finery, but we didn't see any real open country and this is what Marjorie and I were itching for.

But next day we were away on our own through a few more commuter boroughs and into the countryside at last. The general idea was to work our way up through the western side of Connecticut and Massachusetts and as far into Vermont as we could comfortably manage in the time. We thought we would spend about 10 days touring before returning to Wyckoff for a few days; in fact we were away 12 days.

Our outward route was much the same as I had taken two years ago; it is partly dictated by the need to cross the Hudson River in tolerable traffic conditions. Above New York City, bridges are few and far between and carry motorway traffic, but the toll

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bridge at Bear Mountain is approached by comparatively minor roads, including the delightful Seven Lakes Drive, which is barred to commercial traffic and is the obvious choice. Beyond this there was a certain amount of guess-work in our route-finding for we were up against the lack of informative maps, while sign-posting on our kind of roads was almost non-existent.

We had glorious sunshine for our first day out, but next morning it was dull and threatening; worse, there was no breakfast at our motel, just coffee, and the nearby restaurant wasn't open yet. We found pleasant and quiet roads going in the right direction but we didn't find any breakfast. The nearest we got to it was a cup of coffee and a ham roll, taken standing in a corner in a village grocers', about 11 o'clock. That evening we suffered a minor plague of punctures in my back wheel and were panicked into booking into the first hotel we came across in Great Barrington. This was by far the scruffiest resting place we came across in America and we regretted not having looked around more critically before deciding on it.

The next day we hoped to get into Vermont but digressed in the morning to see the famous Music Shed at Tanglewood, the Summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra; then it started raining at mid-day and soon after Pittsfield we decided to call it a day at about 3 o'clock and lazed around our motel room, getting dried, until it was time to go out for dinner. We had rain all the next afternoon too and after our week of perpetual sunshine in California we felt we couldn't take this treatment and began to talk of turning back for Wyckoff if it kept on - I don't suppose we would have done so but anyway the weather cleared up next day. We were into Vermont now, the Green Mountain state; Vermont is largely mountainous on the Grampians scale or a little higher, but the mountains are mostly wooded, not green now but ablaze with the autumn colours that we had come to see.

I am not sure what makes autumn so much earlier, more sudden and more colourful in this part of America than in our own islands. No doubt, the richness of colour is partly due to the prevalence of the maple among the great variety of trees. Its leaves take on any colour from green to pure yellow and through all the shades of gold and red to deep crimson, sometimes on the same leaf even. The severe frosts in early October coming so soon on the heels of the hot summer probably account for the short duration of this spectacular display. It seems that it is all over in two or three weeks. We were there at its peak but already the leaves were falling profusely.

For the next few days we were mainly at altitudes of 1500 to 2000 feet and became well aware of the severity of the frosts in the mornings, while we enjoyed warm sunshine during the day.

Accommodation was sometimes not easy to find in Vermont. The hotels evidently cater for the ski-ing in season as much as for the summer tourist trade, but there is also this short season in October when the fall colours bring the visitors flocking in. We were fortunate in spending the peak weekend with a couple who are listed in the American Cyclists' Hospitality Directory. I had stayed with them one night on my previous trip and had a warm welcome again this time. Their house is 1600 feet up and when we woke on the Sunday morning there were 18° of frost! Also there was a power cut and therefore no water, which had to be pumped from a deep well. We had intended pressing on for "home" that morning but when power and water had been restored and breakfast was over, Donald and Nancy pressed us to stay another night and so have a chance to see more of their country or

"have a look at Boston". Boston is 130 miles away! "Take the car I mean - we won't be using it today". Well, Boston was a place I had wanted to see and we had been in the saddle for eight long days, so the attractions of a softer seat prevailed and we saw where the famous Tea-Party signalled the painful road to American Independence.

Next morning, Donald and Nancy were off early for their teaching jobs, leaving us to breakfast at leisure and shut up the house; the generosity and trust extended in America to almost complete strangers seems incredible at times. With only a matter of days of our holiday left we had to get moving South again and we spent most of that day on the delightful Route 8 which wanders up and down the mountains and valleys just like some of our Welsh border roads and with virtually no traffic on it - there are also practically no shops and no bars. We did find a shop in one village designated "Grocers and Antiques" but the grocery business had lapsed years ago. Fortunately we had food left over with us, for our first opportunity to buy anything came in mid-afternoon at a farm selling apples. Several times in New England we found antique shops where no other shop was to be found - this seems to be a trend in our country too we have noticed. It seems there were wild bears on this road - a local lady walking in front of us had just seen one cross the road in front of her she told us.

The pattern of sharp frosts and cloudless sunny days continued for the rest of our New England tour. One morning, realising that we were only a few days, but many miles, away from our flight home, we made an early start for the day's ride, too early for the only local cafe, and we had to do about 18 miles in a freezing misty morning before we got breakfast.

On the last day of our tour we rejoined our outward route at Bear Mountain Bridge, crossed the Hudson and took the Seven Lakes Drive again back into suburbia - unfortunately at the evening rush hour.

Next day we spent with Marv pottering around within a few miles of his home. The foliage display had by now spread well into this area and as Marv pointed out we really had no need to travel up to Vermont to see the "colours".

We had just one complete day left and we had reserved this for a trip into New York City; it was a Saturday and favoured with sunshine from dawn to dusk. For a start, we rode the bikes back to Ridgewood to hand them in as soon as the shop opened. They had served us well. They were both Japanese 10-speed lightweights, almost new; we wouldn't have liked the saddles provided but, acting on my previous hiring experience, we had brought our own saddles so we had been comfortable enough.

From Ridgewood, we had an hour's bus ride (incredibly cheap by our current standards) into New York City, then just walked and walked - the best way to see any city, but in New York just when you can't walk any further you can take the "Inner City" boat which leaves 43rd Street Pier at 3 o'clock every afternoon for a circuit of the whole of Manhattan Island, a three-hour trip packed with interest and the best value for money in tourist service that I know of. We finished up with an ascent of the Empire State Building at dusk and added a magical birds-eye view to the memories of our land-based and water-borne wanderings in the city. Then it was time for dinner. Then it was time for dinner, our last in America - need I say we went for the Steak? - and the bus 'home' to Wyckoff.

Next day it was raining but there was little to do but pack

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our bags, take leave of our good friends and keep our appointment at Kennedy Airport with Laker Airways (remember them?) who duly delivered us at Gatwick early the following morning.

In case any of my readers (if there are any still) should be remotely interested in the possibility of a similar trip, a few practical points might be helpful. The cost is, of course, a considerable obstacle; it certainly wouldn't be met from what most of us regard as our annual holiday budget. We looked on it as a once-in-a-lifetime trip and we are satisfied that it was well worth the big dip into our savings. Our total expenditure amounted, in round figures, to £2,200 of which £600 was for the Atlantic crossings, £500 for internal flights in U.S.A., £100 for car and cycle hire and £900 for hotel/motel accommodation, food, drink and "miscellaneous". (Remember these were 1981 prices). This was for a forty-day holiday, but for a third of this time we were enjoying the hospitality of friends for our accommodation.

Because of the various visits we were proposing to make, we felt the need to carry some "respectable" clothing (not to mention walking boots) and the problem of managing both suitcases and bicycles in the numerous airports decided us to use the bikes available over there. I think if we ever repeated this "once-in-a-lifetime" trip we would take our own, and whatever we could easily pack on them, and our hosts would have to "take us as we come". We would not attempt to range quite so far over the country and therefore not spend so much on internal fares.

As for cycling conditions in America, I have to remind you that our experience was limited to two or three small areas of a huge sub-continent so we cannot generalize from this; but I have described parts that were eminently pleasant for cycling and have mentioned others where it would probably be purgatory. Accommodation and catering difficulties have to be contended with - you could say it is all part of the fun! All this goes for many countries of course. Weather in some places at the right time is absolutely reliable, in others as chancy as in Britain. One thing I feel we could promise you is a friendly and helpful response from practically everyone you meet.

If, like me, you have the urge to go almost anywhere just because you haven't been there before you will want to go to America; but there will be a whole lot of other places you haven't seen and a good deal nearer and cheaper to get to. Still, it may be worth thinking about for next year, or when you retire.

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#### MORE BITS OF SUSSEX IRON

The earliest cannon to be cast in one solid piece was made at Buxted in 1543 by Ralph Hogge. The Hogges house still stands.

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It is said that 3000 iron horseshoes were provided for the Battle of Bannockburn.

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A large collection of local Iron Slabs for graves can be found in Wadhurst Church, 30 in number but 20 is more likely to be found.

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THINGS HOSTELLER'S SAY....

The following occurred at different hostels within the Southern Region and come to us via our good friend at Alfriston, Mike Hume.

How to win friends..... American to Warden, just as the latter had opened the door. "I just want to come in and check that this place is suitable for my sister and me to stay at." !!!

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American Wheelman, "I'll have some Oregano!"  
Warden, "Sorry sir we don't stock it."  
American W. "Why the hell not, every hostel should have the stuff!"  
Warden, "If we did, how much would you be prepared to pay for it?"  
American W. "Pay! Hell nothing! You should have it on tap."

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Bronzed 'Aussie', "Park my car in the village, how far's that?"  
Warden, "One mile and three pubs."  
Bronzed 'Aussie', "We'll move on." !!!

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Hosteller, "Warden!! Warden!! I've lost my contact lens, you MUST help me find it."  
Warden (in process of serving hot suppers), "Sure, when I get this lot out of the way, anyway where did you lose it?"  
Hosteller, "Somewhere on the Seven Sisters." !!!  
(Weather note. Driving rain, wind force 8, gusting 9.)

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German Hostellers, "We have much of value in our car, have you a compound mit fence, lights und guard?"  
Note: They were directed to the bonded car and lorry park in Burrfields Road, Copnor, Portsmouth.

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Young girl hosteller to Warden, "I think I've gone into labour." ..... and she had.

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Canadian Girl Hosteller, "What time's the bus on Sunday morning?"  
Warden, "There isn't one."  
C.G.H. "Why not?"  
Warden (in devilish mood, something to do with age, you know Ken), "Well the R.S.P.C.A. dictate that the horses should be rested on Sunday mornings."  
C.G.H. (after long period of thought), "Do you mean to say you close a road to exercise horses?"  
Loud Back Fire - Exit Warden.

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P.T.O.

School Teacher to Warden, "Thanks very much Warden, these two visits have been great. Now, about the £2,000 Bill, the County Treasurer at Chelmsford is paying that and God knows when that will be, but to be going on with here's the deposit for next year." Hands over cheque for £40.00. !!!

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BOOK REVIEW (by the Editor)

Here's the Church by Peter Watkins & Erica Hughes

On our travels by bike we often visit churches, sometimes to look, sometimes to find shelter from the weather, and sometimes to use the porch for lunch. But whatever the reason one can usually find something of interest to draw attention. This book is a pleasant change from the usual kind of books on churches, which either attempt to list different types and go into details with pictures of lots of different churches, or go into extreme detail about the architecture and development of churches over the centuries.

They may be simple or grand; old or new; made of wood, stone or brick, concrete and steel or corrugated iron. Some rise loftily to the skies; some are tucked away down country lanes and smell of damp. But no two churches are alike. What is a church really for? Why is it decorated and furnished in the way it is?

Peter Watkins and Erica Hughes attempt in this book to answer these questions, and they have done a very good job of it. They have collected together fascinating, curious and unexpected facts and figures, presenting the church not just as an historic building but as a living and vital centre of the community. It all makes for a lively, unstuffy guide to the characteristic features of the church, explaining simply the reasons and history of all the different parts of the church from the Altar to the Steeple and the bells in it.

Here is an extract from the chapter on the churchyard.

Epitaphs

You will sometimes find carved on a gravestone, not only the name of the person buried there, but also a description of his life and character. Epitaphs can give a fascinating and useful insight into how people lived in past times. Sometimes they were composed by professionals; some were made up by friends. Often the priest or the schoolmaster was asked to write one. Some are poetic; others are humorous. Death is not always a 'grave' matter! It is a good thing 'never to speak ill of the dead', but it is hard to believe that anyone could be as perfect as some epitaphs suggest. It has been said that a tombstone is about the only thing that can lie on its face while standing upright!

In bloom of life  
She's snatched from hence  
She had not room to make defence;  
For Tyger fierce  
Took life away  
And here she lies  
In a bed of clay  
Until the Resurrection Day.

This epitaph tells of the unusual death of a woman in 1703. She

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was killed by a tiger which had escaped from a touring menagerie.  
When the letters on a grave were hand-carved, the stone-mason sometimes misjudged the amount of space needed. One epitaph was meant to read

Lord! She was Thine.

There was not enough room for the final 'e' which had to be engraved on the back; so the inscription read:

Lord! She was Thin

This seems an excellent book and I would recommend it to anyone who has ever wondered about the reason behind different parts of the church and its fittings.

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GRAVE HUMOUR

This item seemed appropriate after the previous article.

Somebody once said, "If men could see the epitaphs their friends write they would believe they had got into the wrong grave..."

It's no wonder cremation is getting popular when you get real grave-stone epitaphs like these...

Erected to the memory of  
JOHN MacFARLANE  
Drowned in the waters of Lieth  
By a few affectionate friends.

Erected to the memory of  
JOHN PHILIPS  
accidentally shot  
as a mark of affection  
by his brother.

This gallant young man  
gave up his life  
in the attempt  
to save a perishing lady.

Alice Mary Johnson 1883-1947  
Let her RIP.

Here lies the body of  
Mary Ellis  
Daughter of Thomas Ellis  
and Lydia, his wife, of this Parish  
She was a virgin of virtuous character  
and most promising hopes.  
She died on the third of June 1609  
aged one hundred and nineteen.

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## EARLY JUNE IN THE COTSWOLDS & WYE VALLEY

by Victor Elsdon

It is not often that one can complain of too much sun, but in early June of this year an occasional black cloud would have been quite acceptable. The car took me to Minster Lovell, a few miles short of Burford, and there on the banks of the Windrush I left it to await my return. I lunched by the water close to the old bridge and would have dallied longer had there been any shade but there was none.

It was sizzling hot as I ambled my way to Skipton-under-Wychwood and Milton-under-Wychwood and after a network of lanes found myself on the main road heading for the hostel at Stow on the Wold. Stow is a charming Cotswold even when overflowing with visitors on a Sunday afternoon and it was pleasant to relax on a bench beneath the trees and watch the youngsters trying out the stocks. There were only a handful of hostellers staying the overnight so I had the members kitchen to myself; so having first sunk five cups of tea, I prepared something more substantial, leaving the cool of the evening for a closer inspection of the town's attractions. I set off next morning on the Upper Swell road and climbed the easy side of Stanway Hill before dropping steeply through the woods to Stanway Church with its immense Manor House nearby. Soon Bredon Hill dominated the view to the North, while I headed westward to Tewkesbury. The Abbey grounds gave a beautiful luncheon spot, before joining the stream of visitors to the interior. A short stroll across to Abbey Mill of "John Halifax, Gentleman" fame, then off to Upton-on-Severn where the antics of some novices on a canal boat trying to turn round and moor their craft in the strong current drew rude remarks from the onlookers.

My objective for the night was the hostel at Malvern Wells, and was of course at the top of a long long slope. The hostel is a large house standing in its own spacious grounds and gives splendid views of the distant hills above Cheltenham. There were five cyclists at Malvern, two girls of around twenty and two aged about 45, so I had the men's dormitory entirely to myself. We all took the evening meal prepared by the warden and afterwards spent a pleasant time swapping touring experiences.

The following morning I rode to Little Malvern, then parked the cycle while I walked up to the age-old British Camp which yielded rewarding views in every direction.

The next objective was Ledbury with its superb black & white timbered houses including of course the famous Market House, then on to lunch at Hereford. The Cathedral Close was crowded and after so much spaciousness I didn't feel like mingling but found a seat half a mile away close to a crumbling priory ruin. Returning to the Close I went round the Cathedral with its glorious stained glass and masses of marble tombs, then set out by the road North of the river for Staunton-on-Wye. The Wye being  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away the name is misleading, and as I was too early for the hostel I continued first to Bredwardine Bridge to visit the church where Kilvert lies buried, envying on the way the laughing swimmers revelling in the water. A second cyclist shared the large dormitory with me that night. He was a strict vegetarian and health food fanatic and at supper recommended me to try his nettle soup, but I resisted the temptation. First stop the next morning was Hay-on-Wye the town bristling with bookshops where I spent a pleasant hour just browsing, then changed direction and made for Dorstone, the entrance to the Golden Valley Road. I lunched in the churchyard at Peterchurch and finished of the

contents of my thermos. Later, on the road to Ross, I rather wished I had kept some back for it was ferociously hot, and I simply had to stop at a cottage and beg for water. The good lady kindly offered to make me tea but as I was clearly interfering with her gardening I didn't like to accept. Welsh Bicknor hostel lies on the Wye near Goodrich Castle some six miles south of Ross and the final approach after such a gruelling afternoon was not easy. The combination of a narrow stile, laden bicycle and a hip with limited movement was daunting and I was forced to remove my panniers to get across, and still had to surmount some twenty uneven steps before reaching the rickety old wooden bridge with the hostel now in sight. Though I followed the same route in reverse next morning the main hazard was removed for a gate by the stile previously padlocked was now open. I was bound for Gloucester via the Forest of Dean and Longhope and though quite hilly and bearing a full quota of lorries I found it pleasant enough and enjoyed elevenses at a nature reserve just off the highway.

A noted organist was due next day at Gloucester Cathedral and a team were tuning the huge organ to his requirements, and shrill chords then thunderous diapasons alternated with long sustained notes which vibrated uneasily through the vast echoing spaces.

Birdlip Hill after lunch, with little shade from a brazen sun seemed longer and higher than Bartholomew gives it credit for, and heavy traffic didn't help but at last I was able to leave the Cirencester road to sample the deserted lanes through Candle Green and Winstone to enjoy again a welcome at Duntisbourne Abbots. There were a dozen bicycles in the cycle shed, some secured in pairs by massive steel couplings suggestive of railway fixtures. Tongues were loosened while various separate concoctions were brought to the boil and a later a tramp to a local church rounded off the day. Alas the last day had arrived and soon I added myself to the army of vehicles speeding towards Cirencester. From there I took the Burford turn, and spent a pleasant hour at Bibury with its delightful crystal clear fast-running Coln river, where monster trout waited warily for anything edible. An artist of undoubted merit was working at his easel on the famous Arlington Row and had truly captured the scene.

A glimpse at Burford from the top of the High Street revealed endless parked cars so I waved it farewell and started on the final six miles to Minster Lovell once again, where ten horses were waiting patiently to bear me back, first to Kew, then to Sussex.

(More of Mr. Elsdon's writings in next issue. Ed.)

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### A LITTLE OWED

The following ode appeared originally in the Staffordshire County Library's Staff Magazine 'Phoenix'. Whilst entertaining it does reflect the concern of Library staffs at the sharp end of the service. (The editor wishes to point out that his library does not charge fines.)

We've had it to the eye balls!  
We've had it up to here!  
We're sick of moaning, wingeing folk...  
'Cos the charges are to dear.

"You went and closed at Christmas,  
We couldn't bring them in -"  
You'd think we had accused them of  
Some dreadful mortal sin!

"But Basil had the Asian 'flu -  
The goldfish went and died -  
We left it in the caravan -  
That's why there's sand inside!"

"But you forgot to stamp it,  
We haven't had it long.  
I took it out with this one,  
So your system must be wrong!"

"It rained, it poured, it belted down -  
The phone was up the creek -  
The cat was having kittens -  
And it's only half a week!"

"I haven't had a post card -  
Do you charge on children's to?  
I'm sorry Lucy's books are late,  
She flushed them down the loo!"

So please, sir, leave the fines alone,  
We can't take it any more.  
We know we're at your mercy,  
But we'll mutiny for sure!

We know we need the money,  
But the moans we'll live without,  
We're only here to serve them,  
But our patience has run out!!!

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From Cycling April 5, 1905. We notice a large proportion of clubs are organising road time trials of absurdly short distances. A time trial of anything less than 25 miles ceases to be a sporting event, but degenerates into an "unholy scrap" and we view with regret the organization of a large number of events 15, 10 or even five miles. For the most part it is the small and unimportant clubs which are thus playing the part of spoilsports. The big clubs are wisely setting the limit at 25 miles; some even at 50 miles. At the latter distance a "sultry" pace is impossible, and in fact, an event on the road over a less distance is scarcely worth recording.

(No comment!)

## THE EASTER TOUR

by Ken Stevens

The aim of this years tour was the Youth Hostels at Salisbury, Overton and Ewhurst Green, this gave us four days riding in various counties. The arrangements were made with BR to carry us from Brighton to Havant on Good Friday morning; the first snag was hit by the four who were to have caught the train from Berwick station, the train doesn't stop at Berwick as its a Sunday service, so a quick change of plans and a sprint to the A27 to Lewes. The main group at Brighton boarding the right train, with all the help from BR to load the bikes and on to Havant. The unlucky four had to catch the next train about an hour later, but still helped by BR; we apologised for being late.

At Havant station there was no visible sign of cyclists, so we made our way via Waterlooville where a cup of coffee was found in the shopping centre. Following the lanes we eventually reached Waltham Abbey, the weather, being cold and windy, making it hard work. A bus shelter was found, and dinner and a brew up put fresh life into us for the afternoon ride to the hostel. Fishers Pond and the lanes around Eastleigh to Ampfield - Timsbury - Kimbridge and Lockerley, and through the Deans to arrive at Salisbury hostel at 4.50pm. Here we met our friend from the Isle of Wight, Brian Brodhurst, who was to continue with us to Ewhurst. A stroll into Salisbury in the evening was cut short owing to it being very cold, so it was back to bed. Next morning supplies were picked up in the town before we took the road out, passing Old Sarum and following the river to Little & Great Durnford then on to Amesbury.

We all like to think that nothing undue happens to us or our bikes. Susan had a spoke go, so before leaving Salisbury David and Susan went to the local cycle shop for repairs, on their return Susan had found she had lost her purse, so had to return to the shop, only to find the purse had been taken to the Police Station, but it had not been handed in when they got there and so we had to leave and get them to post it on to her. By this time we had got cold and the weather did not look at all promising - so to Amesbury where we eventually arrived minus three riders and coffee was had in this busy little town. To get onto the lane we wanted a part of the A303T was ridden, but not for too long and we were soon back into the lanes near Boscombe Down in search of the Portway that follows the railway towards Andover. The sun came out for a while and as it was 1 o'clock it was dinner time, the Portway turned out to be a rideable track with small patches of mud; Brian may have thought I was getting my own back on him, for he with a new machine managed to get the muddiest.

With our wheels now firmly back on tarmac and a tail wind we headed for the Test Valley passing Danebury Hill to Longstock, after crossing the river to Chilbolton and Wherwell where practically every house is thatched; it was here that we were to catch a glimpse of the three lost riders heading towards Overton. Criss-crossing the Test we arrived at Witchurch, a quiet town now it has a bypass, a cup of tea was suggested, but where could we expect to find one at 4.30pm? but find one we did, the local Taxidermist, yes he who stuffs animals - birds etc., was also a cafe. Afternoon cuppa and cakes was enjoyed with the knowledge that it was only 3 miles to go. Overton hostel was once a school and has changed very little since, the washing facilities are very spartan, out in the back in the old loos. The common room is all there is except the dorms., so you cannot expect it to be quiet if it's full as it was on this night; the warden lives down the road, so you have to sign yourself in.

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After a good nights rest we were able to get away quite early, Ewhurst Green being our aim, we headed South to North Waltham, Axford and on to skirt around the back of Lasham Airfield where elevenens were taken. By now we had noticed that we had had a frost and although the sun shone it was too cold to dilly dally. A few yards further on, a small museum of aircraft and bits were displayed in a field, it was free so in we went to nose out anything of interest. On the road again through this delightful part of Hampshire, crossing the A32 at the Golden Pot to Holybourne, these days this village is a sleepy village on the old A31, it brought back memories to Ken & Iris who have raced through the village in days gone by before the bypass. Into lanes to Binsted and the Alice Holt Forest, Dockenfield and across the Farnham and Hindhead road to Little Frensham Pond, where with the sun still shining we had our midday break, a tea van was conveniently placed at the Frensham Pond. Following this road through (I knew it when it was rough stuff. Ken) we crossed the road and took to the sandy bridleway over Hankley Common, most of it was rideable, but at times the sand became too deep, so it then became a walk. Here it was decided that Godalming would be alright for a stop for afternoon tea, so we took the lanes to Elstead - Peper Harow - Hurtmore and a drop into the back of Godalming. Unfortunately no tea was found here so we then pushed on out past the C.T.C. H.Q. and into the lanes to Womersley - Cranleigh and eventually we arrived at the Hostel with a little time in hand.

All were glad to get to Ewhurst, the males of the group were to have their own dorm. in the annexe, which is great as you are not likely to upset any other hostellers. Next day we were told that snow had fallen overnight in Kent & East Sussex; of course we didn't believe this until Geof Boxall phoned me at the hostel to find out which route we were going to take from the hostel, as he wished to pick us up en route. Our route home was to take us first to Ellens Green and Rudgwick, then across country to the A29 and the Little Chef at Five Oaks for elevenens, where it was decided to take the old railway track from Southwater to Partridge Green. Usually a very good track (Ken convinced everyone) but it was found to be a little muddy in places (a little! Ed.), but a lot of the damage had been done by the local farmers who use it as a road to link their fields, bringing mud from the fields onto the track. Still we pushed on regardless until we found an abandoned flat cart, here we decided to have our midday brew-up with one stove, two cups and six thirsty cyclists, I abstained, I think this was due to the fact that we had no washing up facilities. Once again on the tarmac at Partridge Green we headed for the B2116 and Ditchling, where refreshments were once again the order of the day, the weather by now looked a little black and ugly and it was while we had tea that it threw down hail and rain - we considered ourselves lucky to be inside. Still a few miles to go, the weather cleared and with everybody peeling off on their own roads home, I think everybody enjoyed it. I hope.

\* \* \* \* \*

Truth or Error? Seen on the bottom of a Coffee Shop Menu,  
"We reserve the right to serve refuse to anyone."

Sign of the times? From a garage in Herts. "Please do not  
smoke near the pumps. If your life isn't worth anything -  
petrol is!"

## MULGA BILL'S BICYCLE

by A.B. ("Banjo") Paterson

This item was sent to me by Phyl and Yub's very good friends, Fred and Barbara Hall, (whom several of us have met when we have camped at Streat), with the suggestion that a bit of Aussie culture would not go amiss. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

'Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that caught the cycling craze;  
He turned away the good old horse that served him many days;  
He dressed himself in cycling clothes, resplendent to be seen;  
He hurried off to town and bought a shining new machine;  
And as he wheeled it through the door, with air of lordly pride,  
The grinning shop assistant said, "Excuse me, can you ride?"  
"See here, young man," said Mulga Bill, "from Walgett to the sea,  
From Conroy's Gap to Castlereagh, there's none can ride like me.  
I'm good all round at everything, as everybody knows,  
Although I'm not the one to talk - I hate a man who blows.  
But riding is my special gift, my chiefest, sole delight;  
Just ask a wild duck can it swim, a wild cat can it fight.  
There's nothing clothed in hair or hide, or built of flesh or steel,  
There's nothing walks or jumps, or runs, on axle, hoof or wheel,  
But what I'll sit, while hide will hold and girths & straps are tight;  
I'll ride this here two-wheeled concern right straight away at sight."  
'Twas Mulga Bill from Eaglehawk that sought his own abode,  
That perched above the Dead Man's Creek, beside the mountain road.  
He turned the cycle down the hill and mounted for the fray,  
But ere he'd gone a dozen yards it bolted clean away.  
It left the track, and through the trees, just like a silver streak,  
It whistled down the awful slope towards the Dead Man's Creek.  
It shaved the stump by half an inch, it dodged a big white box.  
The very wallaroos in fright went scrambling up the rocks,  
The wombats hiding in their caves dug deeper underground,  
But Mulga Bill, as white as chalk, sat tight to every bound.  
It struck a stone and gave a spring that cleared a fallen tree,  
It raced beside a precipice as close as close could be;  
And then, as Mulga Bill let out one last despairing shriek,  
It made a leap of twenty feet into the Dead Man's Creek.  
'Twas Mulga Bill, from Eaglehawk, that slowly swam ashore:  
He said, "I've had some narrer shaves and lively rides before;  
I've rode a wild bull round a yard to win a five pound bet,  
But this was sure the derndest ride that I've encountered yet.

cont./

I'll give that two-wheeled outlaw best; it's shaken all my nerve,  
To feel it whistle through the air and plunge and buck and swerve.  
It's safe at rest in Dead Man's Creek - we'll leave it lying still;  
A horse's back is good enough henceforth for Mulga Bill."

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TEA - THERE'S NOTHING LIKE IT.

TEA - Discovered by a sage. - Eaten in Burma. - Kept by Mr. Gladstone in his hotwater bottle, in case he got thirsty in bed.

Tea has been all things to all men (and Women): A cure-all, a calm-me-down and a stimulant. But what do we really know about it?

Stemming originally from the far eastern corner of Asia, tea is consumed in the greatest quantity not by the Chinese, the Indians nor the English, but by the Irish - who quaff a mighty 3.71 Kilos per person per year! Legend has it that tea was created by Bodhidharma, the founder of Ch'an Buddhism, when after nine years of meditation, he found his eyelids drooping. To stay alert, he tore them off, and where they fell, there sprouted a plant whose leaves could be made into a brew which kept sleepy buddhists awake.

In fact, the tea plant is a relative of the Camellia. It has dark green foliage and beautiful white flowers. The word 't'e' comes from the Amoy dialect of Chinese (in Cantonese it is 'chah'), and the leaf was brought to Europe in 1606, from the Dutch East Indies. By 1657, it was being served in London, and when Catherine de Braganza came from Portugal to marry Charles II, she was said to have brought her tea-pot with her, and popularised the habit.

The first tea-shop was opened by Thomas Twining in 1717, when tea was strictly for the upper classes; the first corner house launched by the Aerated Bread Company in 1864, after mass plantings of tea in India had brought a good cuppa within reach of everyone's pocket.

There are now over 1500 different varieties of tea (Chinese, Indian and Ceylonese), and literally thousands of different blends.

The Koreans serve the leaves with raw eggs and rice cakes, while the Tibetans prefer to churn their tea with salt and yak butter. But it seems that the British are the only people to put milk in it. The habit of pouring the milk in first, it's said, having come about as a cooling device, to protect fine china cups from scalding tea.

As well as being good for the roses, cold tea is a soother for sunburn, an effective dye to 'age' cotton lace, and an excellent hair rinse!

**MORNING TEA.** A time-honoured custom where the tea tastes a great deal better if it's brought to you in bed. Teas for this time of the day tend to be of the stronger varieties, such as North China Congou or 'English Breakfast' (a blend of Assam with a more delicate Ceylon).

**AFTERNOON TEA.** Said to have been introduced in the 19th Century by Anna, Duchess of Bedford, to alleviate 'that sinking feeling', after it became fashionable to take dinner later and later. In the afternoon, tea should be a more delicate brew, and is often taken without milk. Keemun China tea has long been a favourite, as has Formosa Oolong, and more recently Earl Grey, its distinctive flavour produced by oil of bergamot peel.

HIGH TEA. Traditionally a habit more prevalent in the North of England and Scotland, high tea provides a substantial main course, accompanied by the usual bread, butter, scones, pies and cakes. Originally it came about as a less formal alternative to dinner. Mrs. Beeton noticed that young people preferred it since 'it can be partaken of at hours which will not interfere with tennis, boating or other amusements'. It has also been noted for its ability to keep small children quiet. A robust tea is the most suitable here, such as Darjeeling, produced on the slopes of the Himalayas, nutty in flavour and one of the finest of all Indian teas. Enthusiasts, however, may prefer Lapsang Souchong, the rich and pervasive smoky flavour of which demands that it should be kept in the cupboard in an airtight tin of its own!

(The above comes from an advertising booklet for tea services.)

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### DID YOU KNOW No.3

#### FINGERPOSTS & SIGNPOSTS

Fingerposts are often erroneously described as signposts. Correctly speaking, a signpost is a post on which a sign hangs, such as is to be seen outside many old village inns. A fingerpost is a post set up, generally where roads cross or divide, to show the direction to certain places.

Some of the old fingerposts in the remote parts of the country had rings with which to tether horses, for it must be remembered that fingerposts were primarily intended for the guidance of horse-back travellers. It was for this reason also that the height of a fingerpost arm was always set at eye level to a mounted man. In some parts of the country, where the district is liable to flooding, the fingerposts were marked with flood levels, but the improvement in land drainage in modern times accounts for the discontinuance of these marks.

In reference to fingerposts, an amusing story is told in Yorkshire of a wayfarer who, on asking the way to a village, was informed that he would find a 'parson' at the top of the hill which would tell him the way to go. "Your clergy seem very obliging," replied the inquirer. He was then told that in that district fingerposts were called 'parsons' because they always point the way but do not follow it themselves.

(from 'The Wayfarer's Book' by E. Mansell)

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#### ODD CUTTINGS

'Bicycle available for quick sale, looked after by young lady owner with collapsible frame.' (New Zealand Outdoor)

'At weekends Rosemary cycles "usually to Portsmouth". What does she do when she gets home? She strips and overhauls her bicycle.'

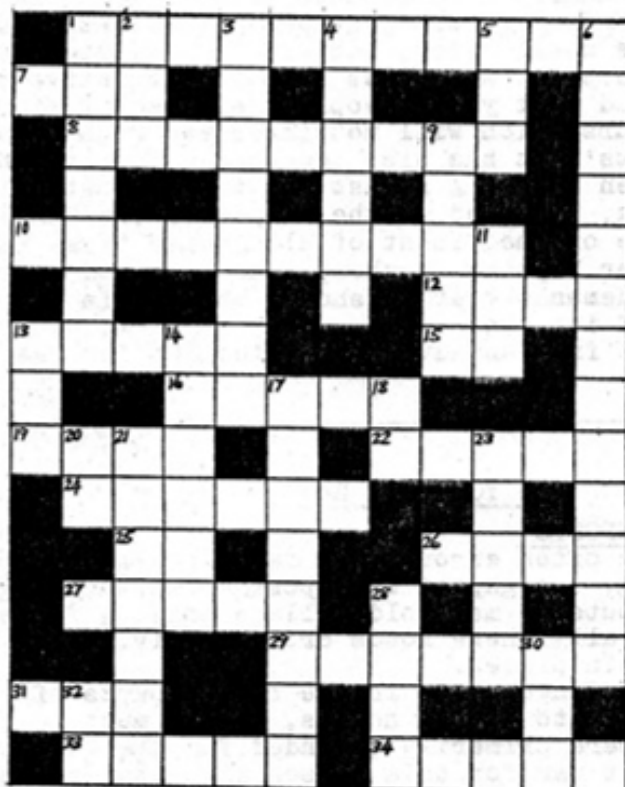
(Evening Standard.)

Notice seen on Xerox machine - 'The Typists reproduction equipment is not to be interfered with without prior permission.'

'A set of traffic lights has been stolen from a main road junction in Exeter. A police spokesman said: "Some thieves will stop at nothing."' (Exeter Express & Echo)

'Girl wanted for petrol pump attendant.' (Cambridge Evening News)

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1/ SEWER PARROT (anagram 4,7)
- 7/ Capital of Brazil until 1960 (3)
- 8/ Secluded downland village, with a youth hostel (9)
- 10/Village with round towered church (10)
- 12/they once pulled 3 down (4)
- 13/Getting old (5)
- 15/Not you (2)
- 16/Tree (5)
- 19/Having an acid taste (4)
- 22/African ruminant mammal (5)
- 24/Original inhabitant (6)
- 25/ The French (2)
- 26/Egg shaped (4)
- 27/Water bird (5)
- 29/One does not make a summer (7)
- 31/Soft, wet, spongy ground(3)
- 33/Bright, reflective (5)
- 34/A marsupial (4)

DOWN

- 1/ Olden form of taxation (7)
- 2/ fish eggs (3)
- 3/ Before Northings (8)
- 4/ Used to cut or turn earth (6)
- 5/ East Sussex town (3)
- 6/ A sad tree? (7,6)
- 9/ Flower (5)
- 11/Ariver of Devon (3)
- 13/Small insect (3)
- 14/& 28/Talkative toad? (6-4)
- 17/Anderida (8)
- 18/Negative (2)
- 20/A form of a (2)
- 21/Walter's cycle company (7)
- 23/Block on which metals are hammered (5)
- 28/See 14 Down.
- 30/Wise bird (3)
- 32/Map makers (abbrev.1,1)

Answers at the back.

A HOSTEL MEMORANDA - PART 2

by Iris Stevens

- Truleigh Hill Modern hostel spoilt for us by cycle shed or lack of it. Poorly equiped Members Kitchen for a Superior. Paul Cornford incinerated his beef burgers.
- Burley Run down & mucky but the warden did give us a ride on his new Roberts tandem.
- Brandon Beautiful restored house set in middle of LCC overspill estate. Attractions - Thetford Forest and (complete with hard hats) descending into Grimes Graves.
- Windsor & Oxford Just hostels of convenience - too many suitcase brigade and travellers "doing" Europe.
- Hathersage Friendly small hostel. Derwent Reservoir and finding "Little John's" grave. (In the local churchyard)
- Crockham Hill Kev Reynolds and his mountains. Usual abuse from said warden. Spaghetti Bolognese for supper.
- Blaxhall Visit to 'local' - spit and sawdust pub with country and western artists, singing in broad Suffolk!
- Castleton Yuk! Mucky and overcrowded.
- Windgather Cottage. High above Goyt Valley - 3 tier bunks - a great atmosphere - a real hostel as the warden at Castleton said.
- Kings Lynn Sleeping in roof and ducking under roof timbers.
- Hartington Hall Lovely stone building. Tiny mullion windows in rooftop dorms. High Peak Trial. Superb dining hall.
- Arundel Huge members kitchen. School parties. But remember a good Christmas party with mountains of food. - Pete Smith took a cheesecake home in his saddlebag!

Cont./



THE 1983 HOME COUNTIES' RALLY

or How We Spent The Weekend In Bed(s).

by David Rix

Friday afternoon, doing the last packing, then down to meet Susan from work, get ourselves some fish and chips then catch the train. The two of us joined up with Paul Attrell on the train, who was also going to the Rally, (though he was staying with friends instead of camping).

By 8.00pm we were half way across central London, in the middle of all the traffic, on our way to St. Pancras to catch the train that got us to Flitwick by 9.45. Then it was a two mile ride to Ampthill, where this year's rally was being held.

We found the right road and the right area, but had some trouble finding the entrance to Ampthill Park; in the dark we couldn't see the notices that the Beds. D.A. had put up. Ken, Iris and Heather had had the same problem, even with the car headlights! We eventually found the right place and also K., I. & H., who were pitching their tents at the top of the field (top being the operative word), where the ground was fairly flat. We set too and very soon had our new tent up next to theirs, before we all had a drink and turned in for the night.

Saturday morning dawned bright and we were up early, well quite early....well, by about 8.00 anyway, and we were soon cooking breakfast and then renewing old acquaintances, which meant that we missed the start of the 9.30 run; not that that bothered us since we preferred to keep our own pace. We took advantage of the fact that coffee was being served at the Rally H.Q. before we set off; in shorts for about the first time this year. We had decided to go on the ride that was going to Old Warden, where the Shuttleworth Collection of old aircraft is housed at the Aerodrome. Soon we were speeding along the Bedfordshire lanes, finding the going relatively easy after 'hilly' Sussex; in fact we hardly saw any 'real' hills all day.

We passed one group who had stopped for 'elevenses' and arrived at the aerodrome to find the main bunch sitting on the grass outside the museum having lunch. We thought 11.50 was a bit early for lunch, so we had a drink in the cafeteria and then went to have a look round the collection first. It was fascinating, with everything from early 'string and paper' type aircraft to First World War fighters and more modern light aircraft. They even had models of airships, and also there were old cars, old motorbikes, carriages and even a few old bikes on display.

Back out in the sun we sat and ate our lunch and watched the others mend several punctures. Ken went over to lend a hand, showing how it should be done, when one lad was about to put a tyre back on using tyre leavers. The ride back took us within half a mile of two massive old airship hangers just outside Bedford; two vans parked in front of them were literally dwarfed. We also stopped to look at the ruins of Houghton House (supposedly the House Beautiful of Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress') and were taken for Americans simply because we were in shorts.

The evening meal was fish and chips for all of us before we crossed the road to the hall for the Barn Dance and Social, which we all enjoyed; Ken and Iris talked with some old friends and made some new ones, while Sue, Heather and I, and even Paul when we pushed him, took part in the dancing. Ken and Iris

Cont./

turned in early and left the rest of us to dance till the end of the evening.

During the night it rained , and it rained the following day as well. This time we managed to be in time for the start of the run being led by our friend Maurice Colborn. The pace was rather fast and we eventually dropped of and went our own pace, joining up with the main group when we reached the rough stuff, it was rather wet but most of those there decided to try it anyway, rather muddy in places but we got through okay. The other end brought disappointment, when we could find nowhere that was open to do coffee for 30-40 drowned rats. Yes, the rain had started. The six of us found a large clean bus shelter further along the route in which we stopped for elevenes. Before we reached our destination at Stoke Bruerne we were caught in a cloudburst, right by where they had just started a road race! From then on it was capes on and off again for the rest of the day.

With the weather against us we abandoned our sandwiches, and settled for hot food in the Boat Inn, opposite the Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne, and then spent an interesting time looking at all the exhibits of canal life and history. The ride back was reminiscent of the canals, with the lanes running with 5 to 6 inches of water in places. Maurice, who we had caught up with again after his main group had had two punctures, decided against taking the route across the water meadows near Milton Keynes, but we still managed to go on one of the cycle paths.

The slide show Sunday evening was about touring in the Dolomites, and we enjoyed it even though there were a few slight hitches with the sound system at first.

Monday the weather was still "dull with occasional showers", but after getting the tents down while they were relatively dry and putting all the bags in Ken & Iris' car we followed the route for the Wrest Park run. It was 50p to go into the Park, including a look at a few rooms in the house. The Park had been done by 'Capability' Brown, with little buildings and statues dotted about, and also ponds and fountains. The gardens had got a little overgrown but we still reckoned it was well worth 50p.

Back at Amptill we just had time to load our bags, have a quick cup of tea, and say goodbye to everyone before Paul, Sue and I left the other three to dash to Flitwick for the train home.

We all enjoyed the weekend thoroughly even with the weather, and look forward to next years rally.

.....  
ODDS & (S)ODDS

You may never get to Heaven on Roller Skates, but some believe that a bicycle can take you to Utopia.

Even the army had uses for the bicycle. One General organised cycle manoeuvres near Brighton in August 1900 to explore the potential of cycling riflemen. The exercise was a success but with one serious accident to 2nd. Lieut. Clark, whose sword became entangled in the wheel, whoops! The Major General thought the sword should be abandoned as a cyclists' weapon.

.....

YOUTH HOSTEL WEEKENDS or The Tale of the Disappearing Cyclists.

by Iris Stevens

Our hostelling weekends have definitely taken on a touch of the Agatha Christies - we don't seem to be able to get through one without losing somebody. We all arrived safely at Blackboys on Friday night, though Alec and Joe did get the miles in a bit taking 3½ hours to ride from Seaford. Next morning after bidding Mike farewell we set out, "Hold it a minute Joe's in the bog!" After a couple of right turns we wait to regroup at the next fiveways. Taking the Poundsley Mill road we climb up to meet the ridge. So far so good, all together and a couple of miles covered. Cross-in-Hand reached, no sign of Alec & Joe, well never mind they know its elevenses in Burwash. Alongish wait over coffee and cakes - still no sign of the errant pair. "Oh well they will have to make their own way to the hostel, as they will never find us from now on," says Ken. This means he has a devious route planned. It is pleasant and mostly down hill to Etchingham, some of us are thinking that we aren't so unfit after all. Mistake number one, when we turn sharp left (and uphill) after the level crossing. "Much better than the main road", says Ken.

Hurst Green was passed by without a glance at the camping shop, proving that it isn't warm enough yet for camping. What am I saying, warm enough, I'm sweating buckets. Perhaps we'll stop for lunch at Bodiam. But no, the wind is blowing an icy blast through the car-park and they won't let us eat our own food in the cafe. "What we need is a bus shelter", said one. "You've got a hope", comments another. What's this smirk on our leader's face as he leads us up yet another ruddy great hill, a BUS SHELTER and a brick one at that with fantastic views back over the Rother Valley.

From here on it's up down and up again, through Northiam, Beckley and Peasmersh (not necessarily in that order, I was beginning to get confused), till a wonderful descent into Rye, where Ken says we can stop for a cup of tea. Refreshed we set off again, only a few miles to go to Guestling, mainly up hill though. What's this? Rye Harbour, oh he must be going to ride through the nature reserve on that concrete road to Pett. No! "The bridleway goes in here somewhere." Much consultation between our leader and David and we head off into a barren wilderness of shingle; sometime later we come across houses. Civilisation at last, but still no macadam. Then we swept out onto the concrete road belonging to the Southern Water Authority, it must be alright though because that police car following doesn't look to bothered. A munch at an apple and a look at the sea, it looks cold, then into the wind to Pett. Some of us are having trouble holding a wheel, then it all starts, up, up and up. Something has happened, I've got the shakes, FOOD I scream, me too says Susan, and Ann sprints ahead to stop the rest with the message that Iris has the knock. We are allowed to stop and eat, then it's once more on the treadmill, up & up till we reach the road above the hostel. Its lights look very welcome, but where is Steve. "He got the shakes as we crested the hill and has rushed into that garage looking for food", says Ken.

After abusing the warden, as is our usual practice, and filling up the inner man, we were reasonably disposed to find out what had happened to Alec and Joe, who had been there for hours according to them. It seems Alec had left his keys at the hostel and had gone back after sending Joe on to tell us. Being fairly new to the game Joe wasn't too fit on the haul up to Cross-in-Hand and didn't see which way we went. They are still speaking to us.

Cont./

After a good nights sleep we woke to rain and Dave Morris' Quiz. It eased enough for us to try and follow Dave's mind and instructions around the back alleyways of Hastings, though some got lost. However we all found our way to Audrey's lunch. Departing homeward into what was now a strong head wind we shed a couple at Sidley. On regrouping at Cooden, Ann was advised to catch a train as she was suffering with an injured back she had sustained slipping up in the Hastings alleyways. The rest plugged their way across the marshes to Pevensey, where there was a cry from Steve, "We've lost Joe." Alec volunteers to go back while the rest make for the cafe in Westham, followed a few minutes later by Joe, who Alec had found walking along the flat with freezing cold feet. The Hailsham trio left here and the rest pushed on to Seaford together, making it back more or less in one group.

Then came Crockham Hill, but that is another story, we lost four that weekend and not all together either.

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THERE ARE BICYCLES WHICH WILL TURN ANY SUSSEX PIMPLE INTO AN EVEREST -

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS 1/ Tree-sparrow. 7/ Rio. 8/ Telscombe. 10/ Piddinghoe.  
 12/ Oxen. 13/ Aging. 15/ Me. 16/ Aspen. 19. Tart. 22/ Okapi.  
 24/ Native. 25/ Le. 26/ Oval. 27/ Heron. 29/ Swallow.  
 31/ Bog. 33/ Shiny. 34/ Koala.

DOWN 1/ Tithing. 2/ Roe. 3/ Eastings. 4/ Plough. 5/ Rye.  
 6/ Weeping-willow. 9/ Bloom. 11/ Exe. 13/ Ant. 14&28/ Natter-  
 Jack. 17/ Pevensey. 18/ No. 20/ An. 21/ Raleigh. 23/ Anvil.  
 30/ Owl. 32/ O.S.

\* \* \* \* \*

ADVERT + ADVERT + ADVERT + ADVERT + ADVERT + ADVERT

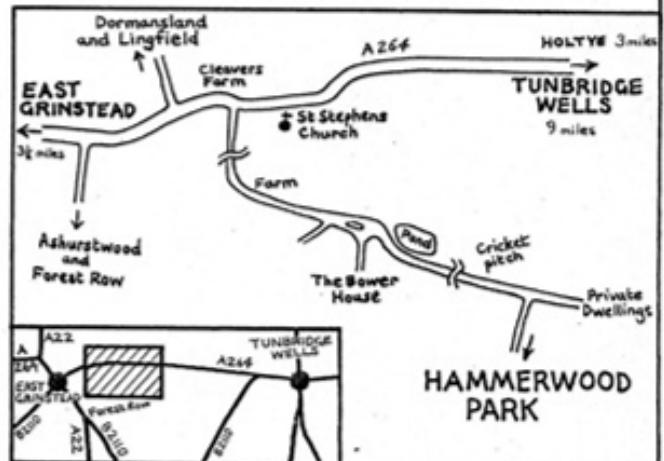
## HAMMERWOOD PARK

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The Camping & Hostelling section feel that this venture could use a little bit of free publicity, we visited Hammerwood Park at the beginning of July and found it very interesting.

It is one of only two houses built in this country by Benjamin Latrobe, who went on to become architectural advisor to President Jefferson and America's first professional architect.

The house passed through many hands from the time of its building in 1792, until it was left empty and derelict in the mid-1970's. Massive vandalism took place, and 3 tons of lead were taken from the roof, letting thousands of gallons of water in at fourteen different places feeding wet & dry rot throughout the structure.

It was in this sad state, in June of 1982, that David Pinnegar who had just graduated from Imperial College, London, as a physicist, aged 21, bought the property. Having come from a family of conservationists and also being fortunate enough to inherit his grandparents' house, it was possible to sell that to purchase Hammerwood Park.

David feels strongly that houses such as this should be restored and opened to the public to see and enjoy. Restoration has already started (last year in fact) and several rooms can now be seen in something of their former glory, including the drawing room & the victorian nursery.

There is no set charge for entry, but all visitors are asked to donate about £1 each towards the restoration fund, a £1 well spent we think.