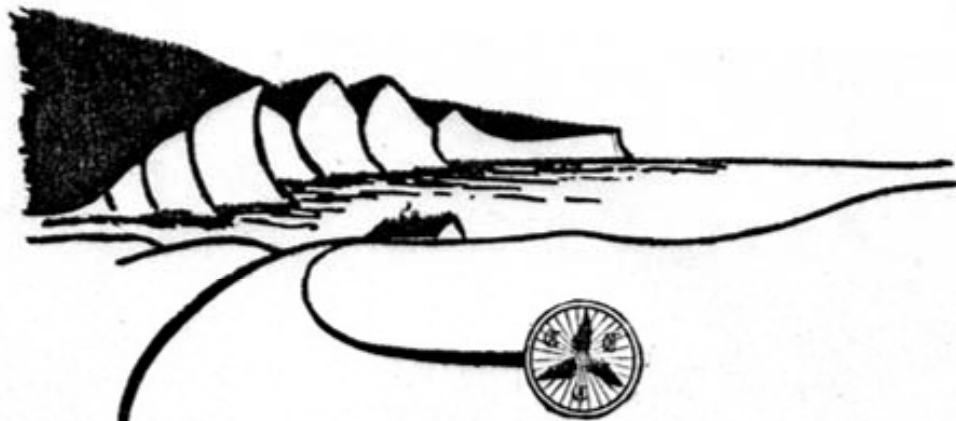


The



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"

CHRISTMAS 1983 - ISSUE No. 6.

PRESIDENT FRED MEHEW

Secretary: Iris Stevens, Pedlars 3, Lansdowne Crescent, Hailsham.

Treasurer: Ann Rix, 3 Sutton Drive, Seaford.

Editor: David Rix, 72 Lewes Road, Newhaven.



Ruins of ROBERTSBRIDGE ABBEY.

EDITORIAL

Well this is the third issue of the Coaster that I have edited meaning that I have lasted longer than any of our previous editors. Maybe I have a lesson to learn from this, since neither of them is with us any longer. Mind you I could understand them getting worn out trying to wring articles out of people, I have had to rely heavily on the same contributors, and I am grateful to them for all they supply (as I prepare this I have recieved yet another piece from Victor Elsdon at Ringmer, which will now have to wait till the next issue), but surely there are others of you out there who have stories to tell, or things you have seen which you would like to share. The deadline for the next issue is the beginning of June. But I will accept articles at any time.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and I would like to thank Esther & Maurice Carpenter for doing the photocopying for us.

A Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year to you all,
David.

STOP PRESS+STOP PRESS+STOP PRESS+STOP PRESS+STOP PRESS+STOP PRESS

After having had interminable reports of the imminent arrival of the Stevenses special hand built Tony Oliver tandem, your Editor with total disregard for his own safety has managed to get hold of this exclusive picture of Ken & Iris on their first test ride.



SOME NOTES ON CYCLING TERMINOLOGY

After I was accosted by an indignant Joe about a word used with reference to him in the Coaster, I got to thinking that there had been lots of peculiar words and phrases I had to learn when I first started cycling back in the 50's. Some are still in use and others have taken on an entirely new meaning. "You ought to do a dictionary of words and phrases", says the Ed. So here goes. If I have left any out let's have them for the next edition.

Out on a club run one day a rattle emitted from the rear of my bike. Stopping to investigate I was told "Your stays need tightening". Well I know I was a little plump but this was a bit personal, I didn't wear them! Stays were large pink things with lots of hooks and laces my Grandmother had worn. Proper passion killers. We were at the 'roll on' age and I certainly didn't wear that on a bike! Explanation: they meant the bolt had come loose on my mudguard! Then there was the day I got the BONK or KNOCK as it is now known, which I did frequently. This is a stage close to death when the eyes do not focus and the knees turn to jelly. Remedied by food, lots of it and drink, plus a helpful push up the hills.

Here are a few other terms that the new cyclist must learn. Oil up or down means there is a car trying to pass in one direction or the other, usually expecting the cyclist to disappear into thin air.

Your head's loose well we all know that, why else would we spend Sunday with this barmy lot. No it means the bit that holds the bars in the frame is loose.

An iron is a bicycle. Your top tube is not a crossbar. The comic is the current popular cycling magazine. A Tester rides timetrials usually rather early in the morning or, if on a major dual carriageway, during peak traffic times. This is to take advantage of breathing in the maximum carbon dioxide fumes.

A Tourist when said with disdain by a multicoloured apparition in a pixie hat riding a stripped down racer, means a person riding with mudguards and saddlebag.

We've lost Joe - Fred - Mabel or whoever. Does not mean that the rider has gone forever, it simply means that he/she has lost contact with the back of the bunch. (This was the remark that upset our Joe.)

Then we come to Scrubber, we daren't use that word now, it's taken on an entirely new meaning since the morons in the world have pinched it. Fancy saying "She's a scrubber" you would get lynched. Yet all it meant was that that person usually occupied the bottom few lines of a result sheet. In other words they weren't very good. Likewise Seafront wheelers referred to those people who looked the part but never did anything, known today as posers, (e.g. rode up and down the sea front never far from home.

In the 50's the Eastbourne Rover's were into Goons so several of their phrases were pinched. One of the most popular being, "I've got the Nadgers!" (The Nadger Plague of Ninfield). This meant the rear end, on the person not the bike, was of a somewhat tender disposition (position usually was a lot to do with it) caused by revving ridiculously low fixed gears on Stan Nash's clubruns.

Mind you the cry that went up the other Saturday had us all looking a bit worried. "Ken's lost his balls!" Well! It's alright just ballbearings out of his block sprinkled generously along Underhill Lane near Ditchling. (See report on Arundel weekend elsewhere in this issue, Ed.) Then lastly there is the Half-wheeler one who makes his companions ride faster than they want to.

by A.Bikie. Yet another term pinched by motor-cyclists

A MOIST CENTURY

by Victor Elsdon

August 23rd was heralded by a gloomy dawn and massed banks of clouds, heavy with rain. Taking comfort from the old country jingle "Rain before seven dry by eleven", I made sure my cape was in easy reach and set forth in the dry. Three miles from home found me caped and hatted as squall No. 1 struck, turning the roadside verges into hurrying streams and the early motorists dashing off to work, sent up showers of spray mostly aimed at me!

From Hailsham I used a delightful narrow lane which curves about a series of irrigation channels through Rickney to Pevensey Castle, but today I kept well to the middle, for all else was under water. The Norman's Bay road was much the same but by Cooden Beach I was able to de-cape and at Bexhill had a sandwich and a swig of tea in a shelter on the deserted front, with a sullen sea rasping on the shingle close at hand.

A short stretch of rough-stuff from Galley Hill (where the Conqueror landed) brought me out on the Hastings road at Glyne Gap for a few crowded miles of promenade riding. There is a mighty hill out of Hastings, long and steep and again the deluge came, while I walked up on the pavement leaving the gutters their racing muddy streams. A fairly hilly road follows for much of the way through Guestling Thorn and lovely old Winchelsea before descending to the flat lands around Rye. Just before Rye the heavens opened once again in a spot totally devoid of shelter, at the same time the car traffic seemed to increase tenfold. It was a relief to turn off on the Camber road, though I was well aware that my saturated stockings were conducting rain into my shoes. A following wind was evident across Walland Marsh and soon the lofty column of Lydd church signalled my half way point.

I had a selection of sandwiches with me as I had expected a normal August day, but would gladly have ignored them for a hot lunch inside had a place been available, but it was not to be, so making use of a convenient tombstone I spread out my supplies, but promised myself a hot snack on my return through Camber.

I needed that snack long before Camber for the helpful wind of the outward journey was now a real menace, calling for long stretches in low gear. Gradually Rye crept nearer but, as before, just on the outskirts another squall struck and I was back to riding in water inches deep. A short respite at Winchelsea was soon paid for in the form of thunder and lightning, but a handy bus shelter saved me from a further soaking. More shelter was needed a little further on, and here a neon light of a small engineering firm showed a dry entrance way. Great metal presses and powerful steel drilling plant were all set up ready for action, yet the place was deserted - evidently a tea break!

Five o'clock in the afternoon is not the best time to hurry through Hastings, but for a while I made better time than most cars as I had set my thoughts on tea at Bexhill. A restful half hour inside in the dry, refreshed by cups of hot tea was most welcome, but no sooner had I restarted than down it came again. Having now only twenty miles to go, I ploughed through Pevensey and Hailsham once more and was able to complete the ride I had long planned.

I had had my 70th birthday a few days earlier and this 100 mile trip was in celebration of it. I must pick better weather for it when my 80th comes round.

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Odd cuttings. 'A ghost-like figure which resembled a Giraffe & carried a handbag scared two women out of their wits when it loomed in front of their car on a Karoo road in broad daylight this week.'

(Johannesburg Sunday Times)

A VIEW OF CYCLING (taken from 'Junior Weekend Book')

"The great art of riding, as I was saying, is to keep your balance"

Learning to ride or even balance on that new looking bicycle is not as difficult as it might at first seem. A friendly hand to the saddle to steady you so that you don't fall off, (assuming that you are going to of course), is a much more satisfactory way of learning than anything you do by yourself. (They always say, two heads are better than one.) Sitting easily upon the machine, hold the handle-bars gently but firmly and place the balls of the feet on the pedals. Remember to pedal only with your legs and not your whole body as it is easier this way (whoever said this needs their head examining don't you agree).

When you want to stop, don't put your brake on too suddenly, and use the back rather than the front or you might meet the ground. Keep away from traffic until you are sure that you won't wobble.

Very soon you will be ready to go for a long day or weekend run on your bike, or perhaps even a touring holiday. The distance you cover depends on the weather, the traffic and how much cycling you are used to. Thirty miles a day is usually about the minimum, and if you are in good form, fifty would be average. When setting off on a tour, see that your bike is oiled and in a good state of repair. Have your saddle at an angle which is most comfortable, but if you suddenly get very tired alter the tilt a little. It also helps if you get off and walk a hill or two, alternatively stop and have a rest. Plan your tour in country as varied as possible as a cyclist has to look at the same piece of scenery for quite a long time. Cycling up and down hills may not be much fun (you can say that again), but it has its compensations.

What book did I say at the beginning, that doesn't matter, as it gives the address of the C.T.C. and says join it as it too has its compensations.

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SNIPPETS TAKEN FROM THE BOOK :-
"THE ART & PASTIME OF CYCLING 1900"

Thanks to Ken Stevens for spotting these gems.

The art of cycling is by no means a simple one; even the most experienced have much to learn and the difficulties of acquiring the necessary knowledge are increased by the number of faddists - men of one or two ideas, who pose as authorities and lead others astray (if the cap fits, wear it).

Dismounting from a Safety Bicycle.
This is a simple matter, it consists of pushing the body backwards out of the saddle and by a simultaneous motion of hands and feet alighting on the ground with one foot on each side of the back wheel, the bars being retained firmly. This method is not to be attempted by short-legged riders, (I wonder why?).

When touring and you get wet through, change your clothes if possible. If you have not got a change, go to bed for a few hours until your clothes are dried, (this must be the reason for damp blankets in Youth Hostels).

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KEEPING THE SANITARY INSPECTOR AT BAY

from 'The Sussex County Magazine'

Even before I became a degenerate in plumbing matters I was quite aware that sanitary inspectors had it in their power, like policemen, to make things difficult for those who do not toe the line. In fact a respect for the potentialities of these officials has been with me since, very early in life, I heard my aunt retail how she had vanquished a neighbour who was being awkward about a leaky cesspit.

She had threatened him, not mincing her words, with the Sanitary Inspector, and had dwelt in some detail on the punitive action he could be calculated to take when he arrived. The threat seemed to work well. At any rate I remember my childish disappointment on learning later that the Inspector's visit (and accompanying drama) was not after all to take place.

For nearly two years, since I retreated from well-plumbed quarters in a city and began living in a rural Sussex cottage without drainage or sanitation and watered only by a shallow well, I have been at pains to keep the Sanitary Inspector at bay. I have even foregone his dust collection service - thereby giving myself a lot of bother digging holes - lest the men should look unfavourably on my living conditions. Already, I knew, there was an adverse description of the cottage somewhere on the council's files (I learnt as much accidentally from the previous owner, after purchase), and it was plain that a slight reminder would be enough to set the wheels of local government in motion against me.

However impartially I might weigh up my apprehensions I came to the same conclusion: I am just the sort of person rural sanitary authorities are paid to track down and deal with. In an age of near-compulsory welfare, I told myself, rural England must be stiff with condemned cottages. And how did they get that way? The Inspector called, a condemned notice appeared in the front window, the occupiers were informed that further human habitation was forbidden - unless sweeping changes were carried out. "Sometimes," I have read, "no machinery exists for relieving a cottage."

Apart from the very high cost of installation, I had no objection to a running supply of chlorinated water, a flushing closet, drains and so on. I have in fact been putting money I would much sooner have spent on gardening equipment - a motor mowing machine especially - into a special mod. cons. fund. But it would take years to accumulate and in the meantime one could only lie low.

Having done this successfully all these months, I was really beginning to feel safe when an awkward thing happened. The Chief Sanitary Inspector for the district, the very man whose shadow has been across my harmless and congenial way of life, recieved a high award for his work and I, having taken a small job as correspondent for a county newspaper, was obliged to go and interview him. I had actually to ring him up and ask for an appointment.

He knew my name (though I had given only the name of the newspaper on the telephone) and looked up with what seemed a professional interest as I entered his office. I began the interview hurriedly, with a look at my watch. I congratulated him on his award and asked if he would mind telling me, for the paper, what was his approach, generally speaking, to sanitary inspection. "Perhaps you could say 'via the kitchen garden path'," I suggested lightly trying to introduce the cheery note. He graciously brushed the joke aside. "My approach is direct and personal," he said, "and in sanitation matters this council is undoubtedly in the forefront of all local authorities. When I came here in 1927 there were any number of primitive practices going on against which we had to take strong measures...."

I felt I had enough material for my piece and was on the point of

VETERANS TRIENNIAL 100 MILE RIDE

by Iris Stevens

Loading the bikes on the roofrack early on a beautiful June morning I wondered what on earth had possessed me to agree to enter the ride. 100 miles! I had not ridden that far in one day in years, about 20 in fact.

"Of course you can", says the spouse, "all you need is a few good club runs". Only to be echoed a few weeks later by Marjorie Dunn, who assured me I would find it easy.

Ken was very keen to ride having missed the last one, being two months short of his 50th birthday. This year with the age altered to 43 for women and 45 for men we were both well within the age limit and Brian Wilkins found himself eligible. So here we were after picking Brian up from Lewes heading towards Godalming our chosen start. According to the start sheet there were to be 70 of us split into 7 groups with a leader and an assistant to each group.

On arrival at the start we meet several old friends, among them Brian Brodhurst, who will be riding in group 6 with Brian W. While Fearless Fred, that gnome from Lewes, is in group 3 being a lot older than us. Fred had taken it all very seriously, having ridden up to Godalming and back the previous Sunday, a total of 98 miles; "Just to make sure I could do it". He had also ridden up Saturday to stay overnight. This didn't do my confidence any good as my total mileage in any one day had been about 65 miles. That had been in March coming back from Canterbury.

Then with a kiss from Harold Coleman to give me confidence, (he rode the 100 miles on a Dursley Pedersen) we were off at a rapid rate trying to keep on the wheel of our leader, John Harper, a vet. himself. John's wife was one of the three ladies in the group and their son was the "sweeper up" or assistant at the back. After a few minutes I began to think we were doing a 100 in 8 not a ride in 12 hours. The pace was brisk to say the least (and Ann reckons our club runs are to fast!). This was supposed to be for vet's. Suddenly the assistant came from the back to say a lady was off and complaining bitterly about the speed. We slowed to let her get in, then off we were again through Puttenham to Seale under the Hogs Back. I had taken advantage of a stop on a hill, (to wait for the lady again) to remove my jacket. We had only been riding for about 25 minutes and I was beginning to expire. A Belgian gentleman in the group thought I was removing it to soon; he thought it still wasn't warm enough.

Our leader John asked us if the pace was too fast for everyone else, all the men including a trike rider murmured no, so I didn't dare say anything. The leader decided the majority counted and we would not wait anymore. Actually I was beginning to enjoy it, as the lanes we were riding through brought back many happy memories. Some only as far back as Easter when we rode through Dockenfield, on our way to elevenses at Selbourne. We had had a 5 minute stop by the Wey near Elstead for a cold drink, but were by now heading into Hampshire on what everyone said was the hilliest section. They ought to live in East Sussex, no wonder they ride faster. It is not as hard. The toughest climb was just short of Selbourne and was the only time I bothered to use the little ring. Here Ken & I recognised a picnic spot we had used on our way from Winchester to Hindhead last year. Then down into Selbourne we swept on the stroke of 11, and 25 miles done. Half an hour allowed then we were on our way returning by different lanes via Blackmoor, Headley and Frensham Ponds (a lot busier than at Easter) to Tilford for Lunch.

We brewed up in the bus shelter, having been the only ones not to book meals and then spent a pleasant hour renewing old acquaintances and making new, including giving the national secretary Alan

Leng some stick. Meeting up with Fred again, he harangued us about going to fast. Then he said it was 40 miles to here. This made my heart sink at the thought of 60 more to go.

Prompt on two we were rounded up by John Harper and moved off as did practically every other group. This created one gigantic club run and with much shuttling the groups got a bit mixed up, and caused havoc with the motorists. At Milford the National Secretary and his family left us to return to HQ for open afternoon and we set off through Hambledon, Chiddingsfold & Dunsfold to Cranleigh. It was around Dunsfold I started to feel it. My knees were hurting and I didn't think I was going to make it. The thought of having to ride as far East as Ockley and then having to return to Godalming was all too much. Ken, by now riding with me, (as he had promised to all day) said, "Of course you are going to make it, we've got plenty of time". He had said he would ride in the bunch all day, but it had not worked out that way due to the reluctance by some to go up front. He rode with me for a few miles but was soon up front again. Then just as I was about to fold Cranleigh was reached and cold drinks on the Green. A handful of dates were washed down with a couple of cups of lemon drink and with the water bottles refilled our 10 minutes was up. Getting on again I felt a lot better, though I was not looking forward to the ups and downs through Ewhurst. Finally Ockley & Weare Street were reached and we turned & headed for the tea stop. Around Ellens Green I was feeling a lot better, for I knew the last bit to Bucks Green and the tea stop was down hill. It made me feel a lot better when a suffering male asked me if it was much further to tea!

A brew up and an hours break lying out on the cricket pitch did wonders, and with only 12 miles to go I knew I could do it. There being no rules as to how early one finished we decided at 6 o'clock to go with the next group to leave so as to get home earlier. They turned out to be quite a fast group so we were soon dropped. However when we turned into the bridlepath section (all hard road) we met up as they were not sure of the route. Directed by a local we emerged in Bramley High St., then it was only a mile or two. Another short bit of roughstuff which cut out a big hill, wish we had known about that at Easter, and we were on the A3100 a few hundred yards short of the HQ. We had done it in just over 10 hours.

A really super day out over a very good choice of route and well organised by the West Surrey DA. After collecting our certificates (and another kiss) we loaded the bikes and headed homewards vowing to ride again in three years. But I really will have to train for that.



Chiddingfold, one of the many villages on the ride.

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A CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD - CLUES

ACROSS

- 1/ & 14/DOWN. They're a real hang-up at this time of year. (9,11)
- 5/ Dispatch. (4)
- 7/ Relieve from pain. (4)
- 9/ A saucy fruit? (9)
- 11/ To be strung along at Christmas. (6)
- 12/ A many-headed monster. (5)
- 16/ Archaic time of feasting. (4)
- 17/ Total agreement. (9)
- 20/ & 28/ You may wish people this at Christmas. (7,9)
- 22/ Jesus was in here when he was away. (6)
- 23/ Like a cat. (6)
- 25/ Coniferous seasonal trees. (4)
- 27/ Take part in a winter sport. (3)
- 28/ See 20/ACROSS.
- 29/ See 26/DOWN.
- 30/ They didn't all have red noses. (8)
- 31/ They have replaced candles on trees. (6)

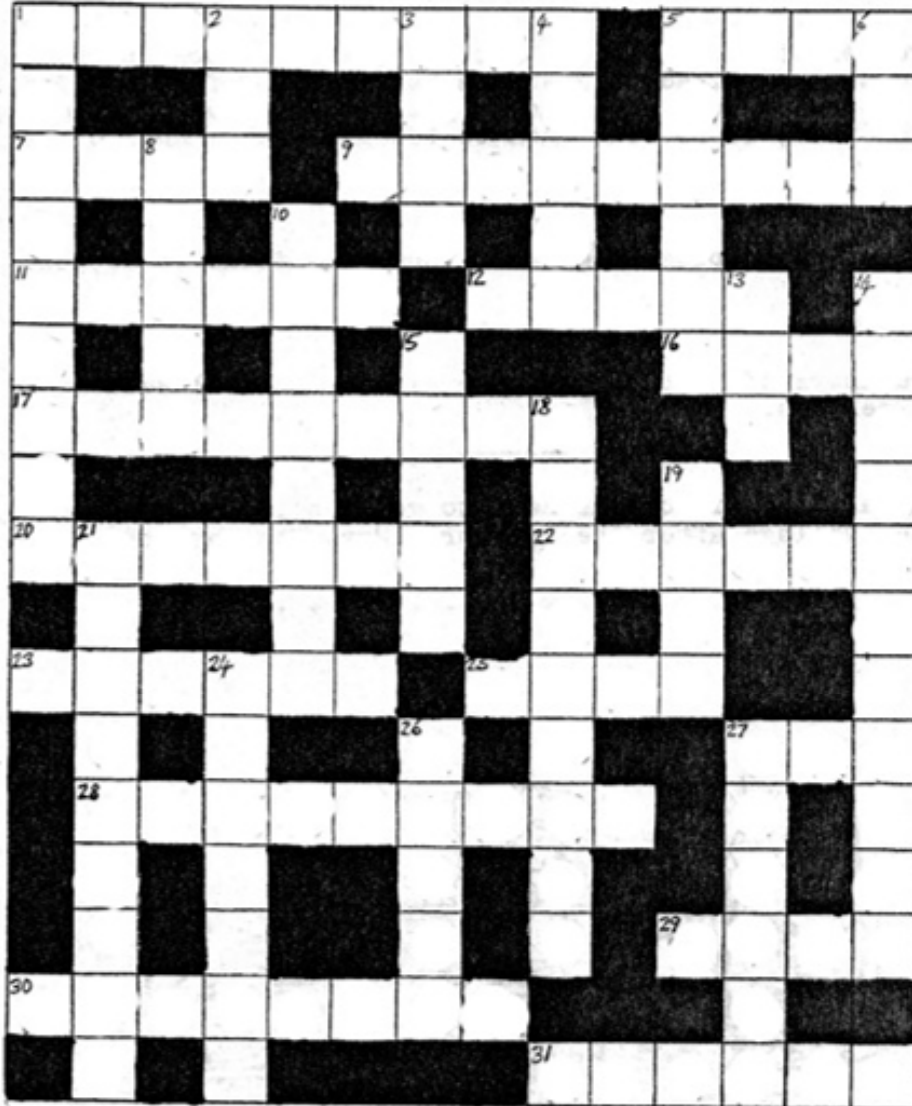
DOWN

- 1/ Old jokes roasted at Christmas? (9)
- 2/ Be careful when cycling on this. (3)
- 3/ You could say she was the mother of Christmas. (4)
- 4/ & 6/DOWN. Two things we always like the weather to be. (5; 3)
- 5/ A lot of this is drunk at Christmas. (6)
- 6/ See 4/DOWN.
- 8/ Bringer of gifts. (5)
- 10/ Large wine bottle. (8)
- 13/ A northern sea bird. (3)
- 14/ See 1/ACROSS.
- 15/ They say elephants are afraid of them. (5)
- 18/ Judges way of doing addition? (7-2)
- 19/ Small industrious insects. (4)
- 21/ It is never brown. (9)
- 24/ It must be a cold place. (7)
- 26/ & 29/ It is customary to eat these at Christmas. (5,4)
- 27/ Form of transport used over snow. (6)

A CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

by The Editor

(Note : not all the answers are to do with Christmas.)



ANSWERS AT THE BACK.

NAKED BATHING ON BRITAIN'S BEACHES.

In Victorian times bathing machines on beaches were everywhere. The machines, with their rusty old wheels, dim little windows and ricketty doors stood drawn up in rows, just above the high water-line. Here until 1914 some of them remained. After that came the neat rows of white painted huts and after them - except where commerce still insisted on their use - the undress anywhere and don't mind your neighbour habit that is still common today.

Nevertheless, commerce is not ousted without a struggle, and the battle between the bathers and the Borough Corporation of Eastbourne, somewhere round about 1930, is an example. NO HUT, NO BATHE was the rule at Eastbourne, but there came a time when bathers organised a revolt. Whilst hut occupants protracted their bathing, there appeared along the seafront a multitude of "mackintosh bathers", eager for whatever fun was in store. And fun they had. Police arrived by the van load and took hundreds of names and addresses. The news reached London and the national newspapers, and laughter took sides against the town. Eastbourne saw itself in danger of being blown off the map of eligible resorts in a gale of derision - and the victory went to the bathers.

In the days of the Victorian bathing machines, even though ladies were by this time taking to wearing full length "flannel cases" as they were sometimes called, which tied at the ankles, it was the common thing for men to bathe naked. One young lady wrote to a friend as follows:

"...in the full glare of day and sunshine. Here is complete absence of costume as in the Garden of Eden before the fall of man and hundreds of men and ladies look on while the bathers plunge in the foaming waters or emerge from them. I really think the police should interfere."

The absence of costume presumably refers only to the male bathers, and we must wonder whether we have caught the scandalized young lady herself in the act of looking on.

Since the "gentlemen" whose lack of costume were such a stain on the gentility of Brighton, persisted for so long and so obstinately in their nakedness, the mixed bathing with which the era of the seaside was ushered in did not survive for long. Some resorts adopted ingenious safeguards, at one a bell was rung at different times for men and women to bathe - with a penalty for those men who were caught in the vicinity when the ladies were bathing.

What the men might see of the ladies "enveloped as they were in dark blue gowns fastened with strings about the ankles", we cannot know. The sport of the ladies with their "unblushing intrusiveness" upon the privacy of the male bathers, was more profitable, nor do we read of any fine connected with their misdemeanors. To look on and to disapprove at one and the same time seems to have been their calmly assumed prerogative. There is for instance the story of a Frenchman's experience at Brighton in the middle of the 19th C. Having gone for a swim, he returned to find his bathing machine was now fifteen paces up the shore. And between him and his machine, a mother and her two daughters, each holding a prayer book (it was Sunday) sat on three camp stools. What was he to do? He wasn't wearing a stitch of clothing, nor, though he looked wildly around, could he discover even a fragment of drifting seaweed to cover his nakedness. In his dilemma, he dropped to all fours, and began to crawl cautiously forward, raising himself by degrees "as much as decency permitted" in the hope that the ladies would take the hint and remove themselves. But they sat on in "serene unconcern". He crawled back into the sea and continued his swimming. But, as he justly remarks, "one cannot swim forever, while one can sit with fatigue for hours": the forces were un-

evenly matched. At last he did the only thing possible.

"I rose slowly, like Venus from the waves. Striving to a bearing both modest and unconcerned, reminiscent of the lost traditions of innocence of a younger world, I stepped briskly past the three ladies, who made no pretence of looking away."

The poor gentleman found out later that the three ladies were "quite puritanical" and had adopted this extraordinary method of punishing him for bathing on the Sabbath day.

(Parts of this article come from the book "Seaside England" by Ruth Manning-Sanders)

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A WINTER RIDDLE

In Spring I look gay
Decked in comely array;
In Summer more clothing I wear;
When colder it grows,
I fling of my clothes;
And in Winter quite naked appear!

What am I? Answer at the back.

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EARLY JUNE IN THE ELENITH

by Victor Elsdon

There is a wild region in Central Wales lying between Abergwesyn and Tregaron, Llandoverly and Devil's Bridge which the Welsh call the Elenith. Between the towns mentioned very few villages thrive and shops are non-existent, however Youth Hostels provide half a dozen simple hostels spaced over the area so one need not starve or lack a resting place.

I started from Chepstow, just over the Severn Bridge and rode North-West to Usk and found the Usk river in full spate. My route kept fairly near its racing waters most of the way to Crickhowell, the town sheltering beneath the huge bulk of the Sugar Loaf. The seven arches of Crickhowell Bridge held stoutly against the rich brown flood which looked intimidating, yet further on at Talybont-on-Usk several intrepid canoeists were swishing down-stream exulting in their easy passage.

With the Brecon Beacons on one hand and Mynydd Eppynt on the other, I followed the A40 to Brecon and Trecastle before turning up the mountain road for Llanddeusant. The last mile to the hostel from Cross Inn is a tough one where a break neck descent is followed by a 1 in 4 rise, which I could take only in 20 step stages. Fancy having to surmount that every time you went out.

I did very well at Llanddeusant Hostel and supped and breakfasted from the excess provided by a school journey party. They had so much over that they were happy to ply me with mushroom soup before my chop and lashings of peaches after it. While at breakfast next morning, porridge scrambled eggs and of course beans were in plentiful supply. I inquired whether they were coming down again next year!

After breakfast with a howling gale behind I flew into Llandoverly and stocked up on food before entering the Elenith via the Towy Valley and Llyn Brienne. The man-made Llyn Brienne is a worthwhile objective and boasts a good road around it. This scenic route covers vantage points high above the waters showing clearly how the high dam has raised the water level along several large tributaries and formed this splendid reservoir.

Rain came at lunch time but I found a sheltered spot to eat in. On remounting I found my cape inadequate in the tempestuous wind and could not keep dry, so that it was with relief that I completed the circuit of the water and turned west towards Tregaron, keeping a sharp lookout for the Dolgoch turn. True to tradition the last half mile to Dolgoch Hostel was little different from a river bed and if it hadn't been wet already the last bit would have done the job efficiently. Once inside however with only four hostellers, all vintage cyclists, and a roaring fire to spread our wet things around, our troubles were soon put to flight, and we chatted on touring and tourists till bedtime with only brief pauses while we filled the tea-pot.

Having only a few days available I had to refuse the pleasure of company towards Devils Bridge next morning and instead rode East over the Devil's Staircase and the road to Abergwesyn. Once a fearsome track with unbridged fords to cross, it is now a narrow road of good surface but the hills are as severe as ever. I walked down the 1 in 4 section of the Staircase and took elevenses by one of the watersplashes, eyed none to cheerfully by a local goose. Giant slopes on both sides kept me company down the fast descents to Abergwesyn and Beulah, where a sign-post to Builth Wells heralded a return to civilisation and shops. Glascwm Hostel is an old friend of mine and again found room for me though fairly full of American and Australian visitors. The old school room became the silent listener to a host of adventure yarns gathered from around the world.

Next morning started with a long uphill walk before getting clear from Glascwm to head for Clyro (of Kilvert fame), then Hay-on-Wye the city of bookshops. It was raining hard in Hay so I took tea and cakes in a cafe hoping it might stop, but not till I was nearing Peterchurch in the Golden Valley did the sun show itself. Vowchurch, Abbey Dore and Pontrilas came and went and soon I was booking in at the Monmouth Hostel. It was Saturday night and I was fortunate to secure the very last bed. I did not cook a meal but with uncluttered cycle rode across town to visit Tom and Glad Hart who fed me and made me most welcome. Tongues wagged about old friends and Northern celebrities of many years ago, but all to soon I realised I had no lamps and was forced to make a hurried departure. With a farewell to the River Monnow and a hail to the Wye, I was among the early visitors to Tintern Abbey next morning, and followed the Wye back to Chepstow to complete the circuit.

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CHRISTMAS DID YOU KNOW?

Mistletoe. There is a very old Norse legend which explains why we hang up mistletoe at Christmas.

Balder, the sun god, was so fine and great that all the other gods swore never to hurt him. They placed a spell on everything, to make sure he could not be harmed. Water could not drown him, nor could arrows, swords and poisons kill him. But when the gods were laying their spells, they forgot the mistletoe, and when Loki the god of evil, found this out he made a sharp arrow out of a mistletoe branch. He put the arrow into the hands of the blind god Hoder, and guided Hoder's hand so that the arrow struck Balder.

Balder was killed, but the other gods brought him back to life again. This story made the mistletoe an emblem of love.

Jesus taught that we should love one another, so Christians kept the mistletoe as an emblem of love. To remember this teaching they kissed under it, and so we have the tradition of kissing under the mistletoe.

Games. There were a lot of traditional games played at Christmas. Some involved dressing up and were perhaps the fore-runners of the Nativity plays which are acted out in churches and schools. Some of these games were played after Christmas Day and kept up the Christmas spirit until the New Year.

One of these games, which was played on Twelfth Night, has come down to us in the form of a carol, and seems rather strange until one realises that it was originally meant as a game. One person started it, the second continued and the third repeated it and so on. Everything had to be said or sung in the right order or a forfeit had to be paid. The carol if you haven't already guessed is "The Twelve Days of Christmas". One person started with, "On the first day of Christmas, my true love sent to me, a partridge in a pear tree", the second person would repeat this and add another gift, and so the verses (often more than the twelve we know today) got longer and longer, and more and more difficult to remember in the right order!

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A NORMAN INVASION - FRANCE 1983

by David Rix

It was a mild night when eight members of the Camping & Hostelling Section met at our flat in Lewes Road, Newhaven, on Friday 12th August, in preparation for boarding the 1.00 o'clock ferry. Our party comprised Susan & myself, Ken, Iris & Heather Stevens, Stephen Allen, and Sue & Brian Wilkins, (whom we had seen married the previous weekend).

A short wait at the harbour and then we were all onto the boat & settling down to try and get a bit of sleep during the four hour crossing. We were all pleased to have a relatively smooth sea and following the mad rush, when the motorists all try to get to their cars at once, we were amongst the first off the boat and, waved through customs, we were soon off on the road out of Dieppe. Some residents of Dieppe looking out of their windows at 6.30am. might have been treated to the sight of a number of cyclists changing into shorts on a street corner (we'll do anything at times!) after we had sweated our way up from the seafront. (Iris informs me that ladies do sweat under these conditions.)

It wasn't long before we were off into the peaceful lanes, (one of the great attractions of France for us) with the early morning sun shining down on us on what was to prove a beautiful sunny day. Having had such an early start we made good time and, with a short stop by the roadside for breakfast, we pushed all the way through to Yvetot for elevenses, (a distance we might normally take all day to do). Though the hills were very well graded, Stephen, who had not been on a bike for about 3 months, was suffering somewhat and on some of the longer drags I offered a helping push, which he tried to refuse at first, but was quite glad about later. Yvetot found us enjoying one of our favourite pastimes, tucking into delicious French cakes.

Avoiding main roads we then found ourselves descending for several kilometers through delightful wooded scenery, and winding valley roads to the banks of the River Seine, where lunch was eaten within view of the graceful lines of the Pont de Brotonne. Here we took advantage of the shade for a quick well earned kip after lunch. It had been decided to stop the first night at la Mailleray-sur-Seine, which was all of 7 kilometers upstream on the other side of the river. We had no trouble finding the municipal campsite which was on the road through the village, and after erecting our tents took a short walk down to check that we could get our croissants for breakfast the following morning, (another of our weaknesses while in France I'm afraid). Then a stroll round the village taking in the river after dinner and we were all ready to collapse, (Stephen had collapsed some time earlier!).

Sunday found us in the beautiful Foret de Brotonne (in the Parc Regional de Brotonne) heading for la Haye-de-Routot, where elevenses was had in the churchyard, which has a chapel and an oratory in two ancient yew trees. Later we crossed the A13 (the Autoroute de Normandie) and were very glad that we were on the quiet country roads. After lunch in a secluded spot on the banks of the Risle we pushed on through rolling countryside, before getting about a 3 or 4 km. downhill into Lisieux, now the most important commercial and industrial town in the prosperous Auge Region and also a place of pilgrimage for those coming to the Ste-Therese Basilica. Once in the town we found that the camp site was a couple of kilometers out of town, but luckily we had already got our food with us. We agreed that we could not leave Lisieux without a visit to the Basilica, and Iris, who doesn't like heights at the best of times, was a bit put out to find herself being towed up the steps of the dome, where

you can look down on interior, before going higher for the panoramic views over the surrounding countryside. Then came a massive ride, when we managed all of about 18 miles, down to the little town of Livarot, visiting the very interesting 16th C. Chateaux de St-Germain-de-Livert on the way.

On tuesday we reached Pont d'Ouilly in the Suisse Normande, which was to be our base for the next four nights. The first day there was a rest day, (which we were all glad of) and we spent it relaxing and looking round the town, but we still managed to get some cycling in by having a go on the Pedallos (pedal powered boats) on the local river. We also found a butchers that made some of the most delicious sausages I have ever eaten, they were like quarter pound beef-burgers and all meat; by the end of our stay the butcher was getting quite used to our visits.

Ken was in his element in this part of the country, hills everywhere and some fantastic scenery; two days of rides round the Gorges of the Suisse Normande should have satisfied even him for the rest of the year, (but it didn't as we have found out scince). We visited the Oetre Rock and also the Crests Route (along the top of the gorge overlooking the Orne), with great panoramic views up and down the river.

It stood to reason that since we had come virtually 3-4 kilometer down hill into Pont d'Ouilly, then we were going to have a climb up hill out of the valley. After that the rest of the day seemed comprised of long, but gradual, uphill and downhill. Lunch was had at Aunay-sur-Odon, where a plaque informed us that the town had to be almost totally rebuilt after the war. When we arrived at Balleroy and our next campsite, it was decided that to look around the local Chateaux we would need to stay an extra day, and it proved well worth it since the Chateaux grounds also houses an international museum of ballooning. The afternoon was taken up with a ride in the Foret de Cerisy.

The following day, just before Bayeux, Stephen had a puncture, (one of many due to badly designed Milremo rims) and it was discovered while mending it that he also had a slightly 'clapped out' hub, (the bearing cup on one side was almost totally worn away). In Bayeux no cycle shops were open for repairs on a Sunday, but we were told one would be on the Monday. So, after shopping and then finding that the campsite was in rather close proximity to the sewerage works, we pushed on 9 kilometers towards the coast, where we found a pleasant farm site just outside of Arromanches, and decided to stay two nights and return to Bayeux for repairs in the morning. After all that neither shop we found had the necessary parts or even a reasonable wheel, so Stephen finished the tour on the same hub (though it was grating a bit as we descended into Dieppe - one week later!). After a visit to the Bayeux Tapestry we had lunch and then returned to Arromanches for a swim in the afternoon and also a look at the Mulberry Harbour from World War II, the remains of which are a constant reminder of that time. The following morning before leaving we visited the Landing Beaches Museum, with its models of the Harbour as it was when first constructed, and also original British Army film of the landings.

As we made our way along the Calvados Coast we saw many reminders of that time including the Pegasus Bridge, where a small monument commemorates the capture of the town hall nearby by the 5th Paratroop Brigade, and also visited the British War Cemetery at Ranville. We stopped the night at Dives-sur-Mer, with a beautiful old section of timbered buildings which has been turned into an artisans village, and then moved on to Honfleur. Honfleur was approached from the Cote de Grace, the hill above the town with views out across the Seine estuary, before we made a slightly hair-raising descent into the town. Honfleur is a picturesque old fishing town, now a mecca

for artists (and tourists unfortunately), and we allowed ourselves a day to just wander. So we wandered, round old buildings and through museums, and also looked in the souvenir shops (and also the cake shops). We also had a meal out in the evening at a very nice restaurant, where Iris, Susan & I decided on what we thought were Prawns for our starter, they turned out to be Oysters!

We now had two nights left before we had to be back at Dieppe for our boat home, and this meant a long ride to the only convenient camp site in between at Hericourt-en-Caux. Leaving Honfleur we crossed the N178 and climbed up onto a ridge where we had a panoramic view out over the reclaimed Vernier Marsh towards the Seine and the Pont de Tancarville. But rather than take the main road which crosses the bridge, we dropped down and crossed the marsh to the ferry at Quillebeuf, and once out of the oil refineries of Lillebonne we followed the relatively quiet roads to Hericourt.

Sunday found us making our way to rejoin the D55, crossing our outward route and following the same route we had used two years ago, but this time stopping at a newly opened campsite at Offranville. We had while on the French campsites always observed the French rule of no noise between 10.00 at night and 7.00 in the morning, so we were rather taken aback by two English girls who stopped us to complain about being woken up so early (they must lay in late at the private school they go to). They were soon in retreat when Ken quoted the rules to them and said that he thought 9 hours sleep should be enough for anyone their age. The Monday morning left us with time to shop in Dieppe before boarding the homeward ferry. Stephen, who had gone to visit friends only just scraped on by the skin of his teeth.

The weather was much as it had been all holiday, dry and warm, and we all wished we could have stayed longer. But all good things have to come to an end. Oh well, there's always next year.

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ODD CUTTINGS. "There is strong medical evidence to suggest that the common cold is caused by self-pity. Research among nearly six thousand sufferers over a three year period revealed the single common factor that they all felt very sorry for themselves!" (Punch)

"Local artist to hang in Tate Gallery." (Isle of Man Weekly Times)

"The Ramblers Association are interested in the footpaths that criss-cross the farms in question and feel that the laying of anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, even for practice, will impede their enjoyment of these rural walks." (South-East Farmer Magazine)

"Baby & miscellaneous items for sale." (Nassau Guardian)

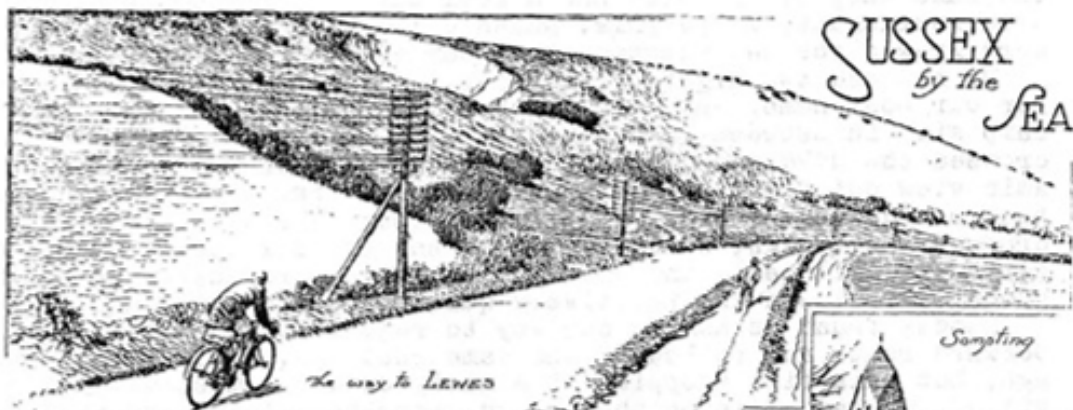
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AN OLD CHRISTMAS CUSTOM

'Tolling the Devil's Knell'

On Christmas Eve every year the bell-ringers of the Parish Church of Dewsbury in Yorkshire roll up their sleeves and prepare for a mammoth task. First they toll the bell 16 times, by ringing it 4 times in sets of 4, and then they get down to business, and they toll it once for each year that has passed since the birth of Jesus. So in this year they will toll it one thousand nine hundred and eighty-three times, (rather than me). It is said that if the custom is not observed then the Devil will have a free hand in Dewsbury during the coming year, and no-one wants to risk that sort of bad luck.

SUSSEX by the SEA



On the Downs



HOSTELLING WEEKEND:- Destination Arundel Y.H.

The weekend was planned with the gathering point to be Lewes, at the bottom of School Hill (a point of interest here, the hill was cobbled until 150 years ago and probably takes its name from the English word 'SCOL' meaning shoe. The name School Hill was used in a document as early as 1498.)

First 4 riders arrived from the Hailsham area, followed by two from Newhaven, we are two short of our number and they would be late owing to the fact that one member from Seaford forgot to pack 1 hostel card. It was at this point agreed to have coffee and a wad, a nice cafe was found halfway up the hill on the right, it can be recommended. Eventually we were joined by the late comers, Paul and Inez and so we made our way out of Lewes towards Plumpton and Westmeston, entering Underhill Lane and crossing at Clayton into the narrow lane to Danny; after crossing the road to Ditchling Beacon a strange creature attacked Ken's block and undid the front plate, and when this happens all your balls fall out and being very tiny they are not easy to find again, but luck was with us, he managed to screw the plate up tight and proceed to Hurstpierpoint to find a helpful cycle shop. A new block purchased with a chain, old one removed, new fitted to run on old chain, keep fingers crossed sometimes it works.

We are now back on the road, left at the mini-roundabout to the A281 to Poynings, where the shelter at Cora's Corner was taken over for the Dinner Stop and Brew Up. Following the lane under the South Downs via Fulking and Edburton, Golding Barn now a wide, easy climbing road is where we leave the tarmac for the Bridleway, only a short one but more interesting than the road to Bramber. We pass through Steyning and looking up we see the famous Tree Clump of Changtonbury Ring; onto the old Washington road, bringing back memories of days past when the S.C.A. had their Luncheon at the Franklands Arms and climbing the hill in a 50 Mile Timetrial and having to walk, I must have been clapped out in those days, I rode it this time.

At this high point on the A24 the South Downs Way crosses the road and it is that Way we have intended to follow, Paul and Inez have decided that they would go by road and meet us at the hostel, so with my intrepid followers (foolhardy I'd have said, Ed.) including Ken Griffiths we tackled the steep climb up on to the South Downs. The Way is rideable but the descents have a lot of loose gravel, so care must be taken; on we travelled to the high point looking right you can see Pulborough and on our left the sea, taking the Bridleway to Peppering High Barn, down hill this bit, and quite fast, but our luck did not hold, Heather decided to puncture just when David and I had got quite a way ahead, so back we went, changed the tube and on our way once again descending fast as time was getting on, into Burpham (pronounced Burffam but I like it the other way) and Warningcamp to the Hostel. It was now quite overcast with rain threatening and we had pushed a lot of wind to get here by 5.30. A good rest and feed and a natter with two walkers from Eastbourne, one who had cycled, and who were now walking the South Downs Way.

Sunday:- All ready to start, right ho lets go, a yell from the back, we have dropped Paul & Inez, its all this Judo lark it takes to much out of you. Once again Paul & Inez plump for going the Coast way home and not into unknown parts that I have looked up on the map. So we are now six on the road to Arundel, quiet and peaceful this time of year, taking the road under the Castle to Swanbourne Lake and South Stoke where the Bridleway goes through a farm into an open field and the weather has decided to cool us all down by raining, but luck held, we found the track, it led into a wood and followed the River Arun and came out in Houghton, a short

sprint to Amberley Station where a cuppa was had at the Houghton Bridge Tea Rooms, by now the rain had stopped, but we cannot stay long as we have a lot of Paths to follow, Amberley to Wiggentholt Common, very nice for Autumn tints, another short Bridleway most of it unrideable due to the sandy soil which gets churned up by the horses (say no more), a right and left and more Bridleway eventually crossing the golf course to West Chiltonington. At Thakeham take lane to Thakeham Place for part Bridleway and Footpath for 1/2 mile to Warminghurst Church, nice little church now run by the Redundant Churches Association.

As it was getting near to dinner-time we quickly sped along the A24 and into another Bridleway which would take us into Partridge Green, in this peaceful path we restocked the inner man which then enabled us to get to Ditchling for afternoon tea via yet another Bridleway at Shermanbury. Our usual tea shop was rather busy so we decided to use the one around the corner and were pleased that we did so. The weather had been kind to us, and the wind we had pushed so hard out was now assisting us home, at times using our top gears. Altogether a very good weekend considering we should have gone to Holmbury-St-Mary but they were all full up.

Good news on the block, the chain ran on it sweet and sound all weekend its a 1st time ever for me that a used chain has not slipped on a new block
Ken Stevens.

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MORE CHRISTMAS DID YOU KNOWS?

The special food which was eaten at Christmas originally consisted of food which could be obtained in this country. Some of the very early carols sing the praises of the boar's head which was an early form of Christmas fare. It was carried into a great hall, where many people were gathered together to eat this delicacy, which was roasted and then placed on a great platter with an orange or lemon in its mouth. Roast beef, geese, capons, peacocks and swans were other things which were eaten by rich people. Later in the time of Elizabeth I, turkeys were brought back from America and became very popular as a Christmas dish and have remained so ever since.

Plum Pudding is so called because in days gone by prunes (dried plums) were used in the making of Christmas pudding. Today we use currants, raisins and sultanas instead, but the other ingredients - suet, breadcrumbs, eggs and spices - are all the same as they have always been.

Mince Pies were once called Mutton pies, because finely chopped or minced mutton was one of the main ingredients. Like the plum pudding the remaining ingredients were much the same as we use today. Although we no longer use meat, we still add suet, which is animal fat, in the making of both pud. and pies.

Mince pies used to be oval, or cradle shaped, and not round as they are today. One book tells us that this was to remind people of the manger in which Jesus was born, and that the pies were to be eaten quietly as people thought about the infant Jesus. This is possibly why people today sometimes make a silent wish as they take their first bite, and why others consider it unlucky to cut a mince pie

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Odd Cuttings. "I object most strongly to the introduction of daylight saving in Queensland, as I found while living in Victoria, that the extra hour of sunlight was peeling the paint from my back porch." (Brisbane Sunday News.)

ANSWERS

CROSSWORD

ACROSS. 1/ & 14/ Down. Christmas Decorations. 5/ Send. 7/ Ease.
9/ Cranberry. 11/ Tinsel. 12/ Hydra. 16/ Yule. 17/ Unanimous.
20/ & 28/ Seasons Greetings. 22/ Manger. 23/ Feline. 25/ Firs.
27/ Ski. 30/ Reindeer. 31/ Lights.

DOWN. 1/ Chestnuts. 2/ Ice. 3/ Mary. 4/ & 6/ Sunny ; Dry.
5/ Sherry. 8/ Santa. 10/ Demijohn. 13/ Auk. 15/ Mouse.
18/ Summing-up. 19/ Ants. 21/ Evergreen. 24/ Iceland.
26/ & 29/ Across. Mince Pies. 27/ Sleigh.

Answer to Winter riddle - A tree.

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IN SUSSEX... WE SUPPOSED LAST BORN OF THE CAVE-MEN.

"WHAT... TWO BIRDS TEETH AN MY OLD WOMAN FOR THAT THING?
AND NO CUT-OVY LUGS AN' DROP-OUTS!"