

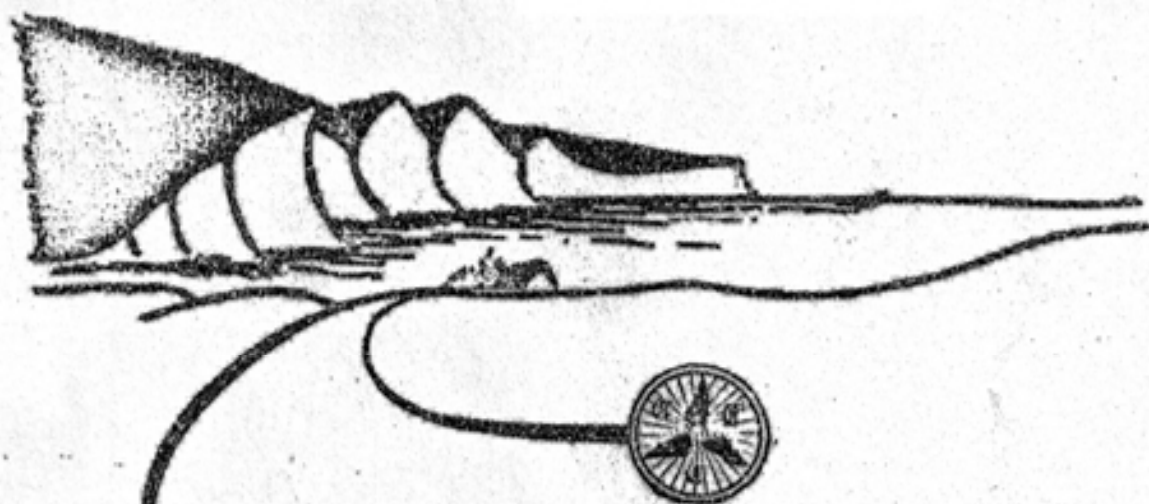
The



Christmas
Peace and
Goodwill



Coaster

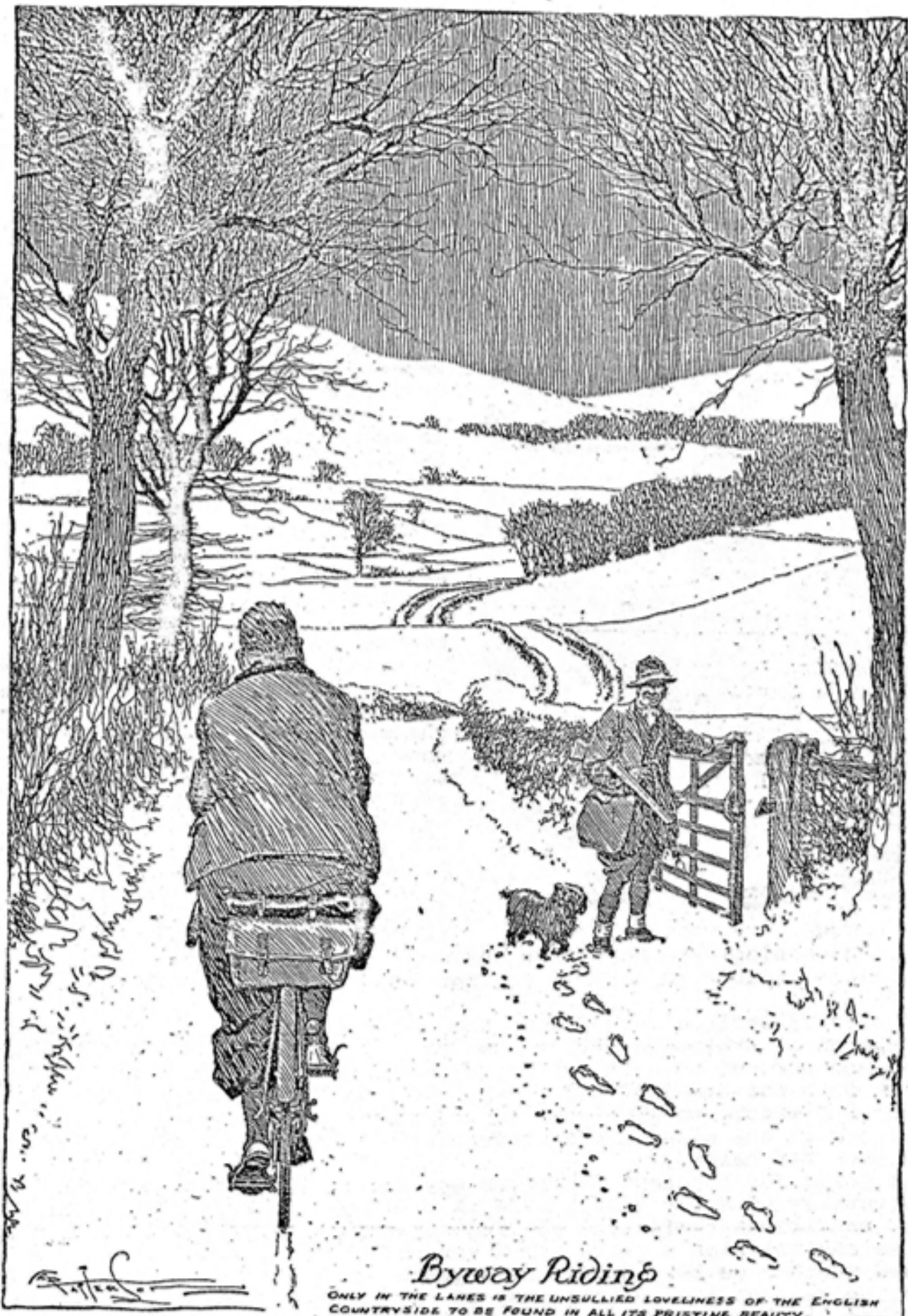


the magazine of the

EAST SUSSEX DISTRICT ASSOCIATION
CYCLISTS' TOURING CLUB

8

20P



Byway Riding

ONLY IN THE LANES IS THE UNSULLIED LOVELINESS OF THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE TO BE FOUND IN ALL ITS PRISTINE BEAUTY.

by Vic Elsdon

A fine dry morning greeted my friend Bernard and I on awakening at Langdon Beck. We had been fortunate in finding accommodation at a small cottage just beyond High Force and were therefore well placed to start the crossing without delay. Having taken the turn at the Langdon Beck Hotel we were soon in low gear and rising steadily on a good narrow road with spreading moorland on both sides. After three or four miles we left the metalled road, lifted our cycles over a locked gate and found ourselves on a very loose stoney pot-holed track that rose and fell alarmingly. Following one hair-raising descent we crossed a concrete bridge and breasted a further fierce slope when a sound of rushing water met our ears, though no river was here in sight, but by dismounting and climbing a bank we caught our first sight of Cauldron Snout, a spectacular fall on the River Tees.



Cauldron Snout is a fine mountain cataract, but its impressiveness depends on its volume of water. After continuous heavy rain it is a tremendous spectacle, a torrent of angry, cascading waves, white with rage. Its rocky channel is dolerite.



As even the rough track we were following is denied to cars by reason of the locked gate the fall is not made easy to reach and in consequence is much less visited than its wild beauty deserves. The water does not plunge in a single fall but descends in a series of giant steps of black basalt, while on either hand the savage weathered lime-stone rocks burst through the green turf and make an impressive setting for the roaring waters.

Back in the saddle we followed the rough track for another mile and reached Birkdale Farm, one of the most isolated houses in the whole country. While fording the burn that runs through the farm-yard a large black Labrador dog came up to investigate us and though I trod on his back paws twice in quick succession he showed no animosity but led us to the farmer's wife who pointed out our first objective - Moss Shop.



In lead-mining days Moss Shop was a stable for horses and the point was clearly visible as a large conical mound high up on the skyline at 1713 feet.

No clearly defined path led up the steep slope, so skirting the edge of a system of drained ditches, we made straight up the wet and boggy ground and refused to halt before gaining the ridge, where we were glad to sink into the sun-drenched grass. Good it was to drink coffee from our large Thermos, to gaze down on the tiny farm that we had just left and listen to the ceaseless chatter rising faintly from the raging Maize Beck far below.

The going for the next few miles was fairly level but deep gullies and stretches of boggy ground made it difficult to keep a straight course and it was comforting to find an occasional cairn. A time came when we had not seen a cairn for a very long while, and we were undecided whether to keep to the high ground or to descend and follow the river, so we consulted an old copy of "Cycling" in which Bill Oakley described his journey across, from which we concluded (quite wrongly) that we had reached the point where he turned aside for the Maize Beck

and we chose to do likewise. Four hours and two gallons of sweat later we wished we hadn't. We descended to the beck down a stiff slope of tough heather, bog-cotton, and waist-high grass, sometimes through patches of yielding bright green moss which sucked longingly at our shoes but with the slope in our favour we soon lost height. Having reached the beck we expected the going to be somewhat easier, but countless minor tributaries had each to be crossed, while the unpredictable windings of the main stream added considerably to the length of the route. Moreover now and again the water gushed headlong through high banks forcing us to make wearisome detours up the flanks of the hillsides. We called a halt around 2 o'clock for a hasty lunch and finished off the contents of the Thermos, but soon resumed the struggle against the restraining heather as we could not be happy until we again struck the correct line of approach which leads to the only practical spot to ford the Maize Beck.

It was 4.30 before we finally sighted our next cairn built right on the bank of the stream while thirty feet away across the racing waters lay its brother. This was evidently the approved crossing place, forbidding though it looked, so proceeding from rock to rock sometimes above the water, sometimes in it, we edged across to safety and dragged our dripping mounts up to the further bank. The next miles had an easy upward trend and soon the gorse and heather gave way to short stretches of perfect level turf which were quite rideable.

Though the fells still rose considerably on either side, right ahead we looked out into space and we knew a mounting feeling of approaching climax. The last few steps were taken and there at a height of 2000 feet the ground ahead disappeared and we stood on the brink of one of this country's most spectacular sights - High Cup Nick.

The Nick is an enormous chasm, half a mile wide, in the shape of a horse-shoe, with sides that start as sheer precipice and then taper off gradually over some 1200 feet down to the bed of High Cup Gyll. The lower slopes are covered in scree, black at first then changing to a vivid green where the moss and lichen had gained a hold and the eye was lead down the foaming river, over the peaceful Vale of Eden to behold - perhaps thirty miles away - range after range of Lakeland mountains, looking most bewitching in the soft clear light of early evening.

The size and majesty of this surviving evidence of a vast natural upheaval wrenched apart countless generations ago held us spell-bound and we would gladly have spent several hours up there had time permitted, but we had no desire to tackle the descent in the dark.

All too soon we were edging warily along the western tip of the chasm trying not to look down over the sheer drop. After a while the route retired inland a bit, and several rocky streams and stretches of boulder fields obstructed our progress, while in one place the path plunged down a green hollow at such a steep angle that even though zig-zagging there was real danger of having to let the bicycles slide down on their own. With aching



High Cup is commonly referred to as High Cup Nick, which, however, is properly a cleft in the escarpment.



High Cup

fingers on the brakes we lost height at a prodigal rate and at last met the first sign of civilization in the form of a gate. After that, all was plain sailing as steep grass slopes gave way to steep pot-holed lanes leading at last to the welcome village of Dufton where we ordered a belated tea at 6.45, having completed the fifteen mile crossing in nine hours. We met no people whatever the whole way over save for the farmer's wife at Birkdale.



(All drawings accompanying this article have been taken from Wainwright's 'Pennine Way Companion,' Ed.)

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THE CYCLIST'S PRAYER

(This was found in the Reader's Digest, though I shouldn't think that dedicated cyclists would agree with the last line. Ed.)

Lord, Thou who hast never ridden a bicycle, help those who have to. Only Thou knowest the dangers we are subjected to and the difficulties we go through. Grant our prayer! Help us in the upward slopes. There is no need to push us downwards. Support us when the brakes do not work. Support us, to, when the trouser leg gets caught in the chain. Deliver us from Traffic Wardens when we are on the wrong side of the street. Deliver us also from cars that are on the wrong side of the street, when we are on the right side. Remove from our path the stones (I am speaking of real stones) or we shall pass over them. Remove also the nails, the broken glass and other cutting and piercing objects. Sustain us when we go through a deep hole full of water that seemed a shallow hole. Rescue us in the muddy streets, particularly when it's raining. Deflect us from the mud when we are wearing clean clothes. Deliver us from bicycle thieves. Deliver us from dogs that like to run after us to bite the wheels. And, above all, help us to buy a car.
Amen.

(I would only add to that, 'and deliver us from Ken Steven's rough stuff!' Ed.)

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Odd Cuttings. (The Law.)

William James McLeod admitted that, on February 4th, in South Methven Street, he assaulted a Traffic Warden and punched him in the face. McLeod's agent said that he had mistaken the Warden for a Police Officer. (Perth Courier.)

A man accused of robbing a frail 85 year old woman in Burnley St. said that he could not have committed the crime because he was burgling a house elsewhere at the time. (Burnley Express.)



IS MY REAR LAMP STILL ALIGHT,
OR HAVE I NOW BECOME COMPLETELY INVISIBLE?

LOTS OF XMAS CHEER!!



**Ride it off in a
Happy New Year with the
CTC**

SEAFORD & NEWHAVEN SECTION'S EXPEDITION TO
HAMPSHIRE. AUGUST 1984

by Ann Rix

Six of us set off on the Saturday of August Bank Holiday weekend, it was a lovely day, which was just as well as with Alec in the lead we went the long way round to Portsmouth, 78 miles. A very pleasant route which gave us many interesting things to see and explore, the first being folk dancers at Shoreham. The Shoreham Folk Dance Society and a Folk Dance Society from Normandy were each performing their traditional dances, the French dancers were particularly striking, with the men dressed in black and the women in long dresses with very high stiff lace bonnets. Over the old Toll Bridge, up the lane to Steyning, it was along here that we had Andrew Attwood's company for a few miles (he was out on a training run). Bypassing Washington as usual by going via Rock Mill we arrived at Storrington for lunch by the pond (and for some to do some shopping). On to Petworth where three took the short-cut while the rest went through it, stopping for a rest we were very surprised to see Alec, Adrian and Joey approaching, we thought they were still in front, but they had stopped for a rest and missed us.

Midhurst was the next stop for refreshments, at the Bus station, with a good view across to Cowdray Park. Descending to a valley Alec pointed out a church standing alone in the middle of a field, we left our bikes by the hedge and investigated. There used to be a manor house and estate, but they happened to be where the railway wanted to go through, so rather than have trains passing in front of the house the owner had it demolished and one built further away. Only the church, cottages and a farm nearby remain of what was Idsworth. Shortly after this trouble struck at Waterlooville not far from the hostel, Joey's rack had dropped onto the rear brake so when he applied the brakes sharply at a roundabout only the front one worked, this caused his bike to stand on the front wheel and then return back and buckle the rear wheel. Being steel and badly buckled we found trueing it impossible, then Adrian came up with a good idea, four of us rode to the hostel, Colin and I Adrian's wheel back to Joey and Alec, put it in Joey's bike and brought the buckled one back. To add to this the assistant warden had overbooked, so the five males had to sleep on the floor in the common room when it was cleared, after 10.30pm. William joined us here, but as we were late arriving he went to the cinema.

Next morning we were lucky enough to find a cycle shop open (lucky, I should think it was a miracle on a Sunday! Ed.), and bought a new wheel, the owner kindly changed the block at no extra charge. When fitted we all headed into Portsmouth as it was Navy Day, and the Dockyard was open to the public, also many of the ships. After three hours five of us had had enough and as Stephen was interested in the airforce we headed for Tangmere military aviation museum, then on to Arundel and the hostel where John Wells joined us and then Alec and Adrian arrived.

Monday morning we headed down to the coast, finding small lanes and a piece of roughstuff we had done before near Angmering. A visit to the Marlipins Museum at Shoreham, goodbye to William at Brighton, John riding back with us to Seaford and then on to Polegate.

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Odd Cuttings

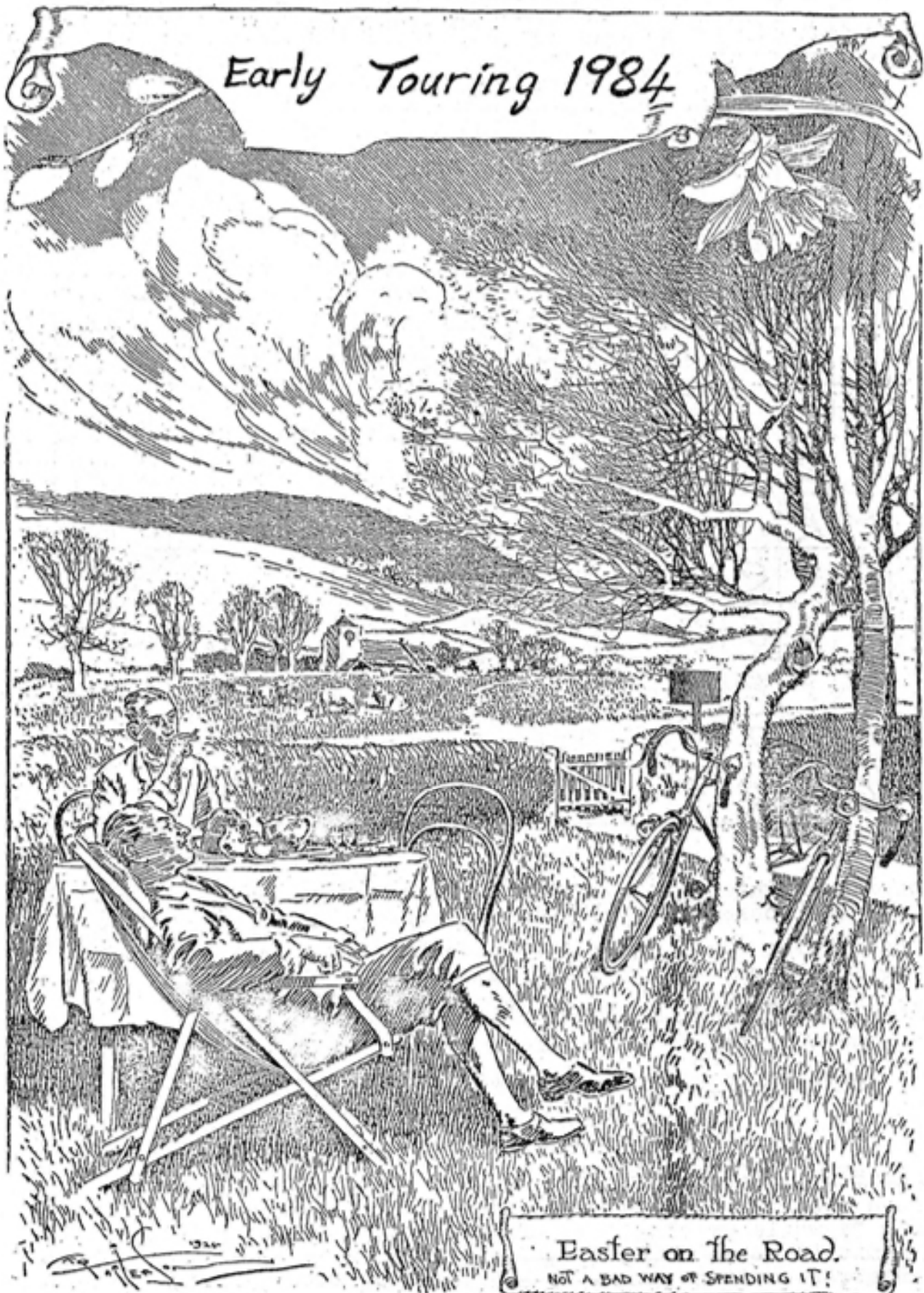
'Miss Morrison, a sociologist and police management researcher at Strathclyde University near Glasgow, said she decided to go to Philadelphia because there were 65 rapes a month there'

(Johannesburg Star.)

'Now alarmed, police have warned the public not to trust anyone claiming to be a policeman.'

(Newcastle Sunday Sun.)

Early Touring 1984



Easter on the Road.
NOT A BAD WAY OF SPENDING IT!

by Iris Stevens

A sunny morning and a tail wind heralded the start of 10 days of superb touring weather. Lilly-white legs appeared on the first day and soon turned to bright red, and if you were lucky brown, before it all peeled off.

Nine o'clock at Offham was the rendezvous for some of the party, the rest travelling to Havant by car. After a slight delay because David had had to go back for his hostel card, we were under way for the first refreshment stop at Ditchling. They were a little surprised to be asked for morning coffee at 9.30am., but some of us had been on the road since 8.00 o'clock. Another pause at Lower Beeding to cheer the riders in the Crawley-Shoreham and back then it was to Bramber for official elevenses.

With the easy push of a tailwind we were soon passing under Chanctonbury, through Storrington and then Amberley. The climb to Whiteways Lodge picnic area had us sweating (sorry perspiring) profusely, so the lunch-stop complete with icecreams was more than welcome. Out came David's white legs and we descended swiftly to Barnham Junction from where we were catching the train, thanks to Persil vouchers, through to Portsmouth and the ferry to Ryde.

Tea and cakes in Ryde before we tackled the rough stuff over Arretton Down. A mistake, it's all up hill from the north, when reaching hard roads we had to wind it up to get to the hostel in time for supper. Mistake number two as you would have read in the last issue.

At Whitwell we met the rest of the crew which, with Brian Brodhurst who was to be our guide for the next 3 days, made 13. This number didn't prove unlucky as you will have read in David Mason's report (in the last issue, I still have a few copies if you missed it, Ed.). The weather remained superb and as the very nature of the island means plenty of zig-zagging about is done, the strong easterly wind was no problem.

The Isle of Wight and particularly Whitwell (providing you self-cook) makes a nice fixed-centre short tour. The scenery is superb, rough stuff great and teashops peltiful. We even had morning coffee at the church at Brading. The second one of the day! Jason joined us on Sunday, having a few hours off from Sandown Hostel, thus pushing our numbers up to 14 for tea in Brian's garden.



On Monday five of us bid farewell to the Crowboro' Party, Brian then led us over the downs to Freshwater, to view the 'Grockles' (see his article 'A place full of nutters') at Alum Bay. (So that's where they were all weekend.) At Totland Bay hostel we bid farewell to our official

guide and prepared ourselves for a further six days touring on the mainland.

A sharp ride next morning along the old railway line to Yarmouth had us on the 10.00 am. ferry for Lymington. Looking at all the expensive yachts moored here one wondered where we got the idea we were in a depression. Cutbacks and unemployment had obviously not touched this corner of England. An uneventful ride through the back of Christchurch and Bournemouth, with just the compulsory food stops and a chemist for sunburn lotion (it was only April?), soon had us at Poole Harbour. Another ferry ride across to Studland (photos of Old Harry rocks) before we swooped down into Swanage. We were too early for the hostel so tea and enormous chocolate eclairs (58p. each) were partaken before we tackled the steep streets to the hostel.

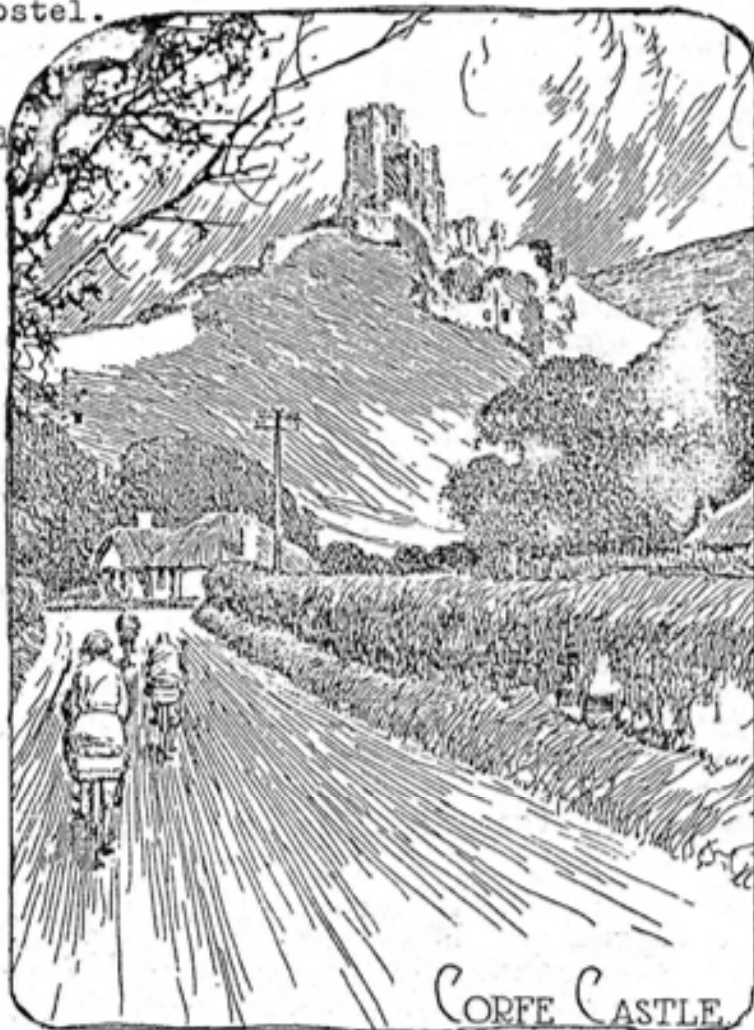
At Swanage we were joined by Maurice Colburn, and next morning he soon had us climbing straight out of this little seaside town and down into Corfe Castle. Early coffee was taken as we were not sure whether there would be anything on the next stretch across the Lulworth Ranges.

Fortunately for us this beautiful part of the Dorset coast was open. It is a crying shame that for the most part it is closed to civilian traffic. The views today from the top of the Purbecks were magnificent and cameras were much in evidence.

We pattered on with that ever helpful wind behind to Dorchester for afternoon tea, passion flower at that, and to stock up with provisions for supper. We were self-cooking from now on, mistake no. 3, the meals at Litton Cheney, where we were heading, looked superb that evening. However first first we had to visit Maiden Castle, what must surely be one of the biggest earthworks still in existence. After climbing up and down the steep banks, Maurice led us on a bridlepath before we reached the lanes that led up(!!!) to Hardy's Monument. Hardy the admiral, not the author. After this climb in which I had shed half a stone Heather would not speak to any of us. However after we had descended down the beautiful valley of the Bredy's her spirits were restored. We remembered a previous tour, on an equally as hot day. We had come the other way up the valley, watching the buzzards wheeling on the thermals as we climbed.

The funny little hostel at Litton Cheney came into view looking like a group of farm buildings, but the most welcome looking thing was the cool trout stream running by the door. I quickly got down to splash my scorching legs which by now had developed prickly heat.

Thursday morning was the turning point when we had to turn back, into the wind. So after purchasing postcards from the brief leather shorts and Doctor Martin boot clad warden, we headed for the first climb of the day, a 1 in 4 to cross the A30. Before we left the warden had asked David, who was purchasing a cloth badge of the Cerne Abbas Giant, if he would like it in a plain paper wrapper!



CORFE CASTLE.

It was to be a hilly ride to Cranbourne and the head wind was not going to help, so we decided to give the Giant a miss and follow as many river valleys as we could. Lunch was taken in Milton Abbas at the country museum. The village itself is unique, if that is the right word, in the fact that it is away from the original site, having been removed by the wims of a local landowner. Something that thankfully couldn't happen today. (We hope!) Everything now is too uniform, thatches and all. We were quite tired by the time we reached the hostel, so a short tour of the village after supper and it was early to bed.

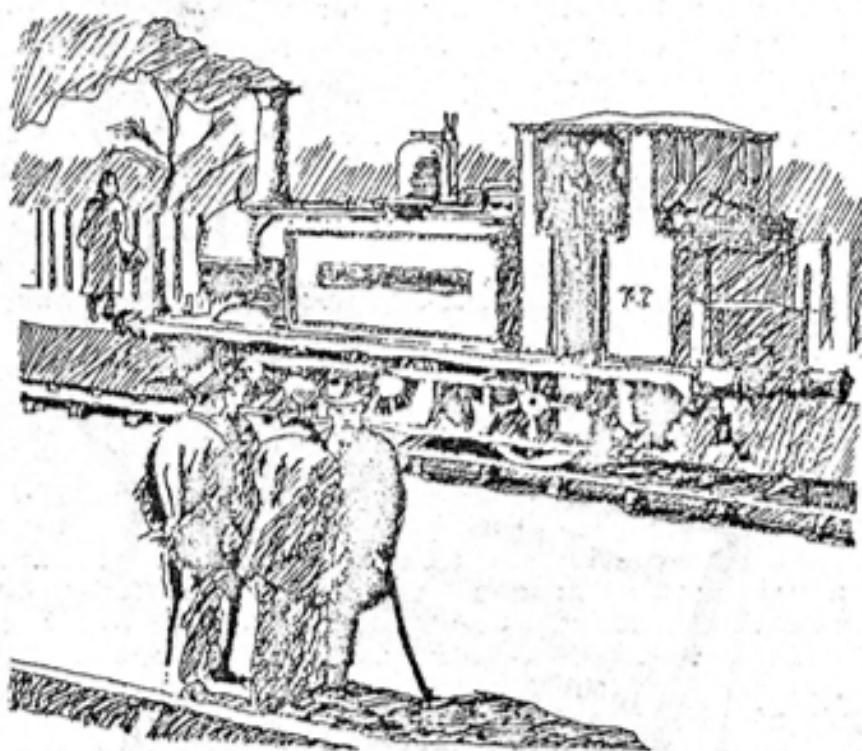
As usual we were away soon after nine in the morning and were in Fordingbridge to buy the days provisions in time for elevenses taken in a ladies outfitters. The next stretch had us grovelling across the very exposed section of the New Forest, known appropriately as Deadman Hill. With lunch on the green at Lockerley it was memories of two previous tours for several of us. Following the Test Valley to Stockbridge, we had hoped to get afternoon tea but were out of luck. Continuing by the lovely chalk river we stopped in Wherwell for icecreams, with further memories of the previous Easter. The old school at Overton was to be our destination for the penultimate night.

The hostel was quite busy and had the added attraction of some jobs trying to get in during the night, but they were sent packing by Ken. The warden does not live in so these small problems do arise. Maurice said they had experienced it a previous year when a man had spent the night in a chair in the common room, disappearing before the warden arrived next morning.

Being steam railway buffs, a ride on the Watercress Line (the Mid-Hants Railway to give it its official name) could not be missed, so next morning it was enroute through the lovely Hampshire countryside to New Alresford, for a hoped trip to Four Marks. "Yes of course you can take your bikes", needing no second bidding tickets were purchased and the bikes installed in the guards van. The line will soon be extended all the way to Alton to link up with B.R., they had hoped it could go west to Winchester, but the branch joins the B.R. track on the mainline before reaching Winchester and understandably B.R. would not allow steam trains on the busy line.

However our trip was quite eventful with a train robbery (staged) and a fire (unstaged) when the train made an unscheduled stop to try to put out an embankment fire caused by sparks from the engine. No luck so the fire brigade was called from the next station. Enterprising as ever, among the usual railway souvenirs, watercress is sold on the trains. We purchased a bunch and with permission ate our lunch on the station platform at Four Marks. We got some funny looks from the next train load of passengers at the sight of a picnic spread laying on one of the platform seats.

From here Ken took over and led us all through to

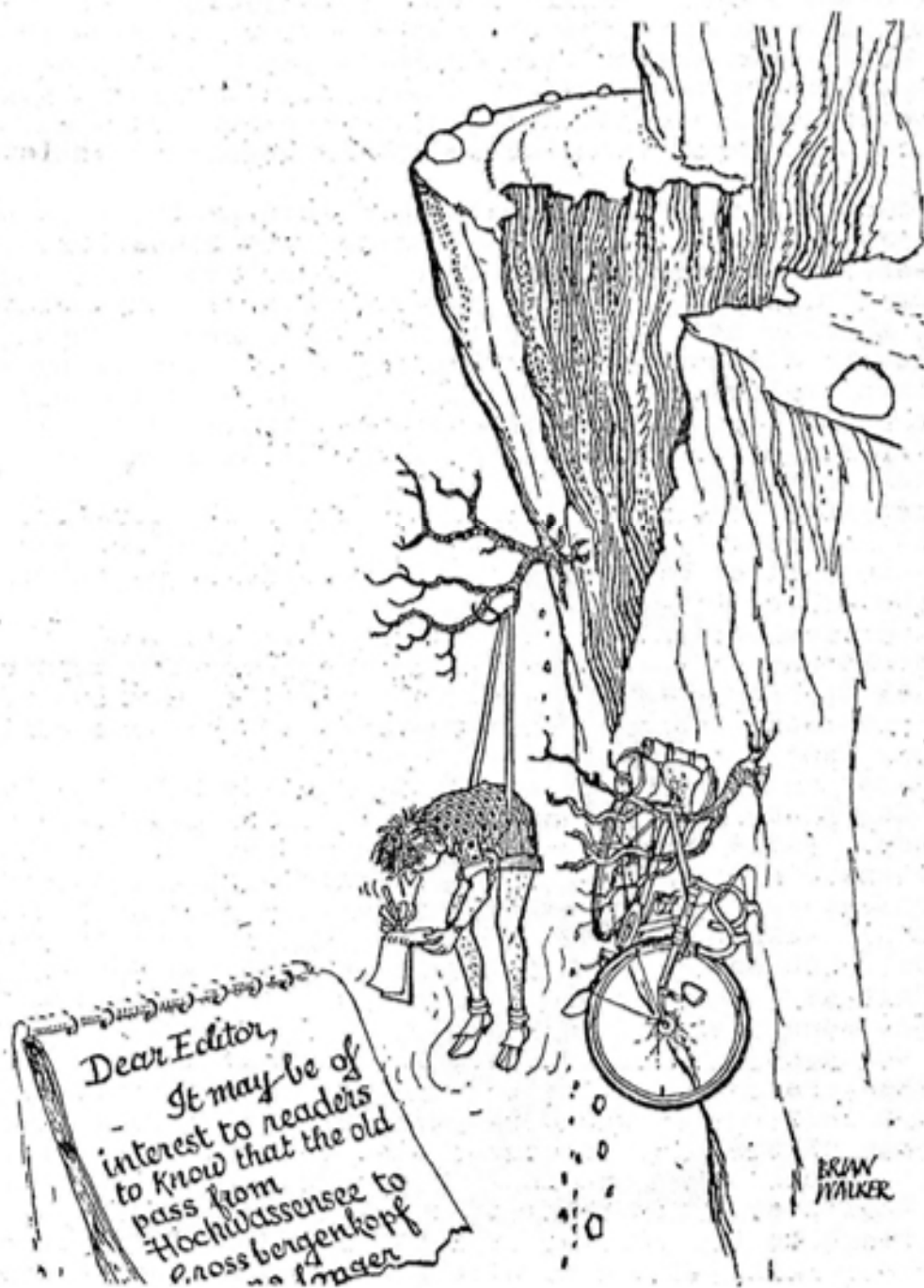


Waggoners Wells, a series of hammer ponds set in steep woodland near Hindhead. The cool walk through the trees was very welcome, and Maurice tried to throw leather in. This prepared us for the final climb out to the top of the Devil's Punchbowl and Hindhead hostel.

Having stayed at and enjoyed Hindhead in the past it was a disappointment to find the hostel dirty and the blankets full of holes and none too clean. This may not have been too bad but the types staying there were not the usual hosteller. We will not be going there again in a hurry.

All too soon the tour was winding to an end. We bid farewell to Maurice as we swept down off the rim of the Devil's Punchbowl and he headed towards Luton. We wended our way through the delightful Surrey lanes, getting a cheerful greeting from the West Surrey DA (it was one of Iris' admirers, Ed.) as we headed for Alfold Crossways. Here a brief stop to watch a roadrace go by then homewards into a chilling wind. It was the first day we had had to ride in jackets for ten days. The only argument of the tour was about how much peel should be removed from the potatoes.

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A CHRISTMAS CUSTOM - THE NUMMERS' PLAY

If you had been living in a village about a hundred years ago, your house might have been visited on Boxing Day by a group of oddly dressed men calling themselves 'Mummers', 'Guizers' or 'Tipteerers'. In some districts, their faces would be smeared with soot or with ruddle, a reddish powder used for marking sheep; in others (e.g. at Marshfield in Gloucestershire) their faces and clothes were hidden under strips of torn-up paper, or they had paper rosettes and ribbons sewn to their clothes, and in certain areas they wore wigs, top hats or old military uniforms, to suit the parts they were to play. For they had come to act their traditional play, whose words and actions had been passed on for generations by word of mouth.

Its basic pattern goes like this: The first speaker is the Caller, whose job is to clear a space for the actors, call for silence, and introduce the other characters; often he is dressed as Father Christmas:

'In comes I, old Father Christmas,
Be I welcome, or be I not?

I hope old Father Christmas will never be forgot.'

Then comes the hero, who is usually called 'King George' or 'Saint George', but may sometimes be some other noble person, such as Lord Nelson. Whoever he is, he boasts of his great deeds, and is at once challenged by the first villain, then by a second, and maybe a third; typical names for them are Turkish Knight, Black Prince, Bold Slasher. The fighting is done with thick sticks, and there is plenty of loud boasting:

'I'll cut him, I'll hew him as small as flies,
and send him to the Devil to be made into mincepies.
Mincepies hot, mincepies cold,
I'll send him to the Devil before he's three days old!'

'My head is made of cannonballs,
My body is made of steel,
My arms and legs of first-class brass
I challenge you to feel.'

After several fights, someone gets killed - a villain usually, but sometimes George. At once all the others shout for a Doctor, who demands a fee, and boasts of his travels and his marvellous skills in a quick stream of nonsense patter.

Eventually he produces pills or a bottle of medicine, which he forces down the 'dead' man's throat, at which the 'corpse' jumps up. In comes a comic character carrying a frying-pan or ladle in which he collects money from the spectators while the rest of the cast perform a final song or dance, and the show is over.

This basic type of Mumming Play, called the Hero-Combat play by modern scholars, was performed in many parts of Scotland until about 1900, after which it became much rarer. But there are still places where performances have continued unbroken to this day, and others where it has been revived from old texts. Generally Mumming Plays are performed around Christmas time, but there are exceptions. In Cheshire it is done in early November, and it is called a 'Souling Play'. In Cumbria and Lancashire it is done on Good Friday and is called a 'Pace Egging Play', for 'Pace' means 'Easter'.

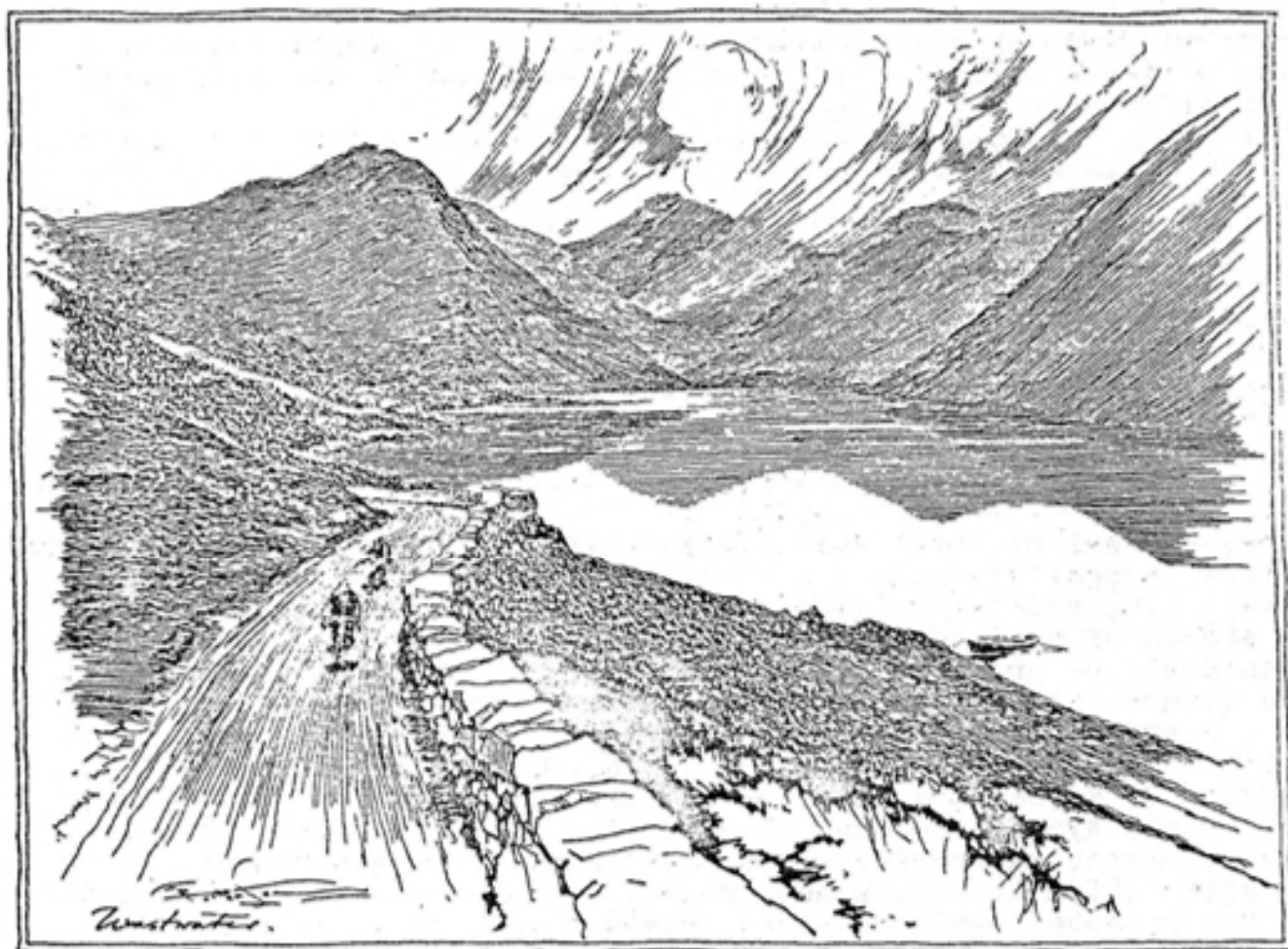
Nowadays, Mumming Plays are done purely for fun and to keep tradition going, with any money collected going to charity; in the past, however, the performers were working men who were glad of extra money, beer and food for themselves, though they of course also enjoyed the dressing-up, the 'fights', and the Doctor's nonsense. Many scholars think there was once more to it than that. They think that the death and revival of a main character represents the renewal of life as winter turns to spring, and that the play was meant as a kind of magic to encourage the fertility of nature. But the present texts show no trace of this idea.

* * * * *

For the last twenty years or so I have enjoyed walking holidays in the Lake District. I am a self confessed 'mountain nut.' Also, once or twice in Scotland and N. Wales, but for me the lakeland fells are the most enjoyable, I always feel so fit and energetic up there - the mountain air I expect.

I was fortunate enough to manage two ten day periods up there this year - Bill is a very understanding husband, knowing how much I enjoy it, he encourages me to join my friends.

The first in mid-July, Joyce and Ray Wickens, Ted Jarvis, Ray Gearing and myself, camped at Wasdale Head (a favourite spot of ours). The National Trust site there is lovely and quiet; being remote it doesn't appeal to those who need a town or village and shops near. We were blessed with nine days of hot sunny weather which only broke the day we left. Of course, being so dry the waterfalls and becks were not so spectacular, but I was able to swim in several tarns and had a swim in Wastewater most evenings, even had Joyce in once!



This time we explored some of the lower fells which were enchanting and had them almost to ourselves. A lovely holiday in every way.

August 30th found me on my way again, a 'hen party' this time, six of us, Thelma, Joyce, Daph and myself and two rambler friends Doris and Eileen. We were walking the Y.H.A. Lakeland Jubilee Route. It is about eighty miles using ten hostels, but we added a good many more miles and climbs, as some days were very short, it could easily be condensed into a week.

It is a well planned route using existing footpaths and where possible follows a low level route, but each day includes one pass or ridge which gave us superb views and we were able to finish up feeling

DID YOU KNOW?

Daylight Saving.

Early on a summer's day in 1907, a man enjoying his usual morning canter over a common in Kent noticed that many blinds in the houses were still drawn. The man was William Willett, son of a London builder, and it gave him the idea of Daylight Saving.

Through his energetic advocacy, the first Daylight Saving Bill came before the House of Commons a year later. He could not understand the ridicule and opposition with which his idea was met, and he persisted in pressing its advantages. But it was not until 1916 that the Bill became law and then only as a wartime measure of economy. However it remained in force until 1925, when the Summer Time Act as we know it today came into operation.

Newhaven Bridge.

The history of a ferry on the site of the bridge at Newhaven can be traced back to the 13th century. But in 1784 King George III granted an Act for the construction of a Toll Bridge. At that time Newhaven had a thriving shipbuilding industry which was to the West of the river crossing, so a drawbridge was constructed which had an opening span of 45 feet in mid-channel.

It cost £1675 to build - in contrast to £½million for the latest replacement.

The tolls for a one-day return trip over the bridge were 2 shillings (10p) for a 4-wheeled cart, 1 shilling (5p) for a 2-wheeled cart, a penny (½p) for a horse or mule and ½ penny for an ass. Pedestrians were also charged a ½ penny, but a score of oxen or cows cost 1 shilling and 8 pence (about 8½p) and a score of calves, hogs or sheep cost 10 pence (about 4½p).

The inhabitants of Denton were allowed across free "in consideration of their having repaired the Long Drove which shall now be a public road."

It was not until the mid-1800's that the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway Company transformed Newhaven port into the harbour that exists today. In 1866 they formed the new river cut and north quay, thus creating Denton Island, and built the first swing bridge. The toll bridge was sold to the harbour trustees for £4000, demolished and replaced by a dam with sluice gates. Recent studies suggest the dam might have suffered from severe settlement problems; in any case, it was replaced in 1904 by a new bridge, which in turn has now given way to a bigger and better one.

Christmas.

The pleasant custom of carol singing is very popular today. In the past, it was sometimes called wassailing (not to be confused with the New Year custom of wassailing the trees). At one time, children went round the houses with a miniature cradle and a doll representing the Christ child. The rhyme which went with this custom was:

I wish you a merry Christmas
And a happy New Year,
A pocketful of money
And a barrel full of beer.

Other beliefs connected with Christmas included the one that the Christmas tree, when its life indoors was over, should not be planted in the garden, otherwise as the tree thrived so the child would sicken.

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NORTH WALES BY BICYCLE

by David Rix

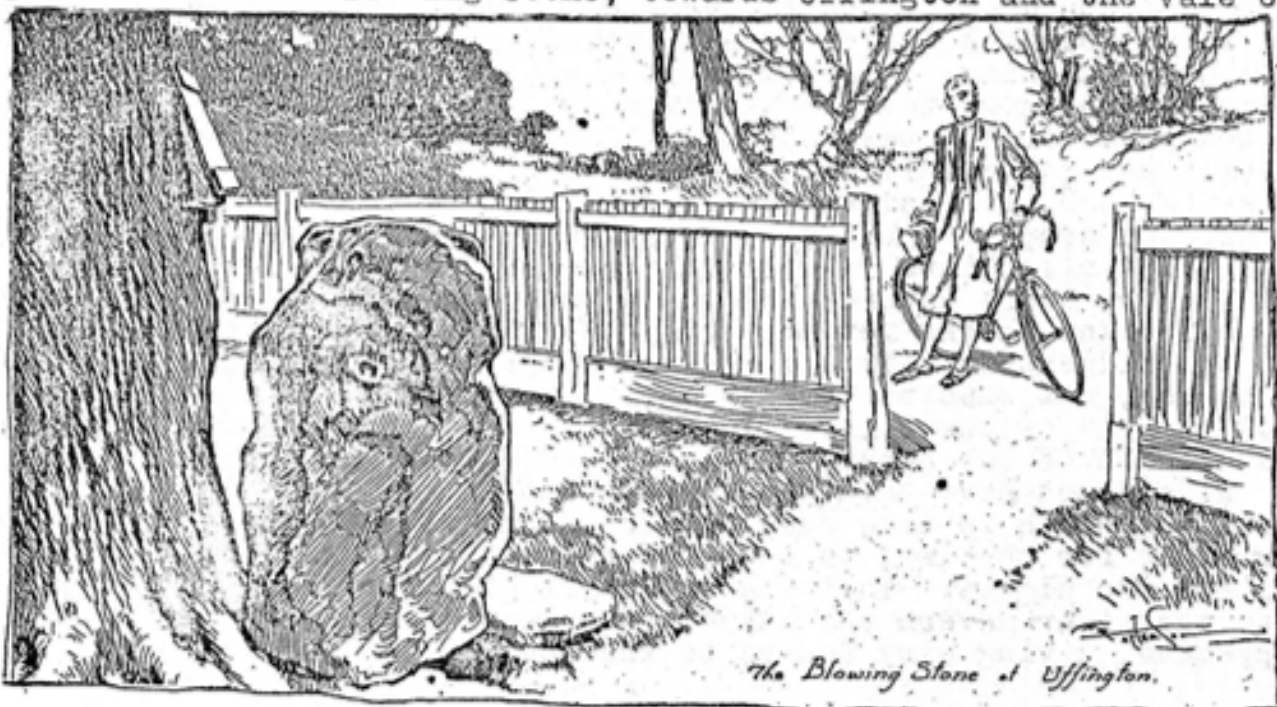
Having had our interest awakened by Iris' report of their week of cycling at Pat & Ken Brown's farm in North Wales, Susan and I decided that this was something we would have to try ourselves. We decide to book with them for the last week in August and, on Susan's suggestion, to use the previous week to cycle up there thus only having to pay one way on the train and seeing something of the country on the way up.

We set out on the Friday evening, stopping at Mr. Spear's campsite at Henfield, to take advantage of the extra time we would gain from this. Saturday dawned misty, but soon cleared and we found ourselves making good time; with a stop at Adversane for a cup of coffee we were in Haslemere by lunch-time. Looking at my map I realized that the campsite I had picked out, at Churt, was only about six miles down the road! It seemed ridiculous to waste half the afternoon when we had made the effort to gain time the previous evening, so we checked our lists of camp-sites to see if there was anything further on. The lists had nothing close enough, but the map showed a site at Wellington Country Park about eight miles south of Reading and within our reach.

As we moved on the day got hotter but none of the places we passed through had a tea shop or cafe. Finally we went into a shop in Crondall just North of Farnham, to buy some cans of drink and, just on the off chance, we asked about tea places. We were told there was nothing, but this resulted in a lady, who had just been leaving the shop, inviting us back to her house, where we sat in the garden with her and her husband and were treated to mugs of tea and slices of home-made cake! It just goes to show that good old British hospitality is not completely dead.

The site at the Wellington Country Park turned out to be rather expensive and there was no grass, it was all under the trees, but the facilities were good and the charge did include entrance to the park.

Having got further than I had expected to on our second night, I worked out that we could miss out the stop at Newbury and go on directly Lechlade, thus saving a whole day, and giving us the possibility of taking it a bit easier later on. Nowhere was found for coffee that morning but we did get some drinks in Aldermaston before pushing on round the end of Greenham Common air base (no sign of any demonstrators) to Donnington Castle, where we sat in the shade and ate our lunch. Then we carried on up the Vale of Lambourn to Lambourn itself (no tea even here) and then it was on over Lambourn Downs and then down, with a brief stop to look at the Blowing Stone, towards Uffington and the Vale of the



The Blowing Stone at Uffington.

White Horse. It was only Susan's sharp eyes that spotted a notice saying 'teas' and we made our way back to a hall we had passed $\frac{1}{2}$ mile up the road where the local ladies were doing their last tea of the season, and downed two cups of tea each. From there it was only a short ride to Lechlade, stopping only once to look at the massive tithe barn at Great Coxwell, the largest in England & Wales - 150 feet long.

A nice site at Lechlade and very reasonable, though a bit near the main road. A walk in the evening found us crossing the river into Lechlade for a quiet drink at one of the local hosteleries (an infrequent thing for us).

Monday found our mileage reduced somewhat. Our first stop was for an early coffee in Lechlade, then through the quiet lanes to Bibury, a picturesque Cotswold village, where we spent nearly four hours visiting the trout farm, the Cotswold Country Museum (housed in the old Arlington Mill) and also Arlington Row, a row of typical cotswold cottages, now in the care of the National Trust.

That night found us camped at a nice little farm site near Bourton-on-the-Water, having managed the staggering distance of 18 miles! The following morning we seemed to be starting for the same kind of mileage, with coffee in Bourton-on-the-Water and then a visit to Upper and Lower Slaughter, but our mileage soon picked up as we dropped down of the Cotswold Hills in a $2\frac{1}{2}$ mile descent and headed out across the Vale of Evesham.

Lunch was had in a picturesque spot by the River Avon at Fladbury, then we moved on with the sun getting hotter and hotter and our mouths getting drier and drier, ever on the look out for a tea stop.

In the end, parched and in desperation, we decided our only choice was to head into Droitwich (which we had intended to avoid), where we hoped we could get something. An enquiry at the Library and we soon found ourselves sitting down to desperately needed cups of tea at a nice little tea place in the town centre. Finally refreshed we were able to manage the last few miles to our next site by the River Severn near Ombersley (a nice site and not too expensive).

Our mileage dropped again the following day, since from Ombersley we rode the eight miles into Bewdley, where we visited the Bewdley Museum & Brass Foundry (very interesting), and then had our lunch before putting our bikes on the Severn Valley Railway for the fifteen miles through to Bridgenorth. This caused a bit of a problem, they would take the bikes yes, but when the train came in the guards van was $1\frac{1}{2}$ carriages of the end of the platform! It took three to lift (or should I say heave) each of our heavily laden bikes the six feet into the van! Luckily we did not have this problem the other end.

From Bridgenorth we then rode another eight miles, making a total of sixteen miles for the day, to the Ironbridge Gorge where we were going to stop for two nights. The site was small (tents only), and secluded, close to the River Severn and there was a footbridge over to the main road opposite, giving easy access to the rest of the Gorge.



Dovecot at BIBURY
Gloucestershire.

Ironbridge is well worth a visit, with at least half a dozen museums and other places to visit, all relating to the birth of the Industrial Revolution. The combined ticket sold by the Gorge Trust gave us access to the four main museums and was valid until all four had been visited. If more time had been available we would have liked to have spent another day there, we managed to visit all four sites but more time would have been needed to really do them justice.

The first site is the Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, housed in what was the Great Warehouse of the Coalbrookdale Ironworks, where you can see exhibits about Abraham Darby, its founder, and about the history of Iron in the Gorge, and also visit the remains of the original furnace.

The second site is the Severn Warehouse where the goods were shipped from, which has exhibits and an audio-visual show on the iron industry of Coalbrookdale.

The third site is Blists Hill Open Air Museum, where they are reconstructing, in many cases with original buildings, an entire working East Shropshire industrial community of the 1890's. All the people who work there dress in period costume; and you can walk down the gas lit streets, past railway sidings, yards and pigsties, shops and offices, you can hear the hiss of steam and clank of machinery, taste the butcher's pies, drink beer in the pub and see candles being made in the candle factory.

The fourth site is the Coalport China Works Museum. Coalport China was made here until 1926 when the company moved to Staffordshire. The old works have been restored as a museum of china, showing the techniques of manufacture and the products of Coalport.

No visitor to the Gorge can leave without having seen the Iron Bridge itself, cast in 1779, it was the first cast-iron bridge in the world, a spectacular advertisement for this versatile material. It is the focal point of the Gorge and has been a centre of attraction for over 200 years.

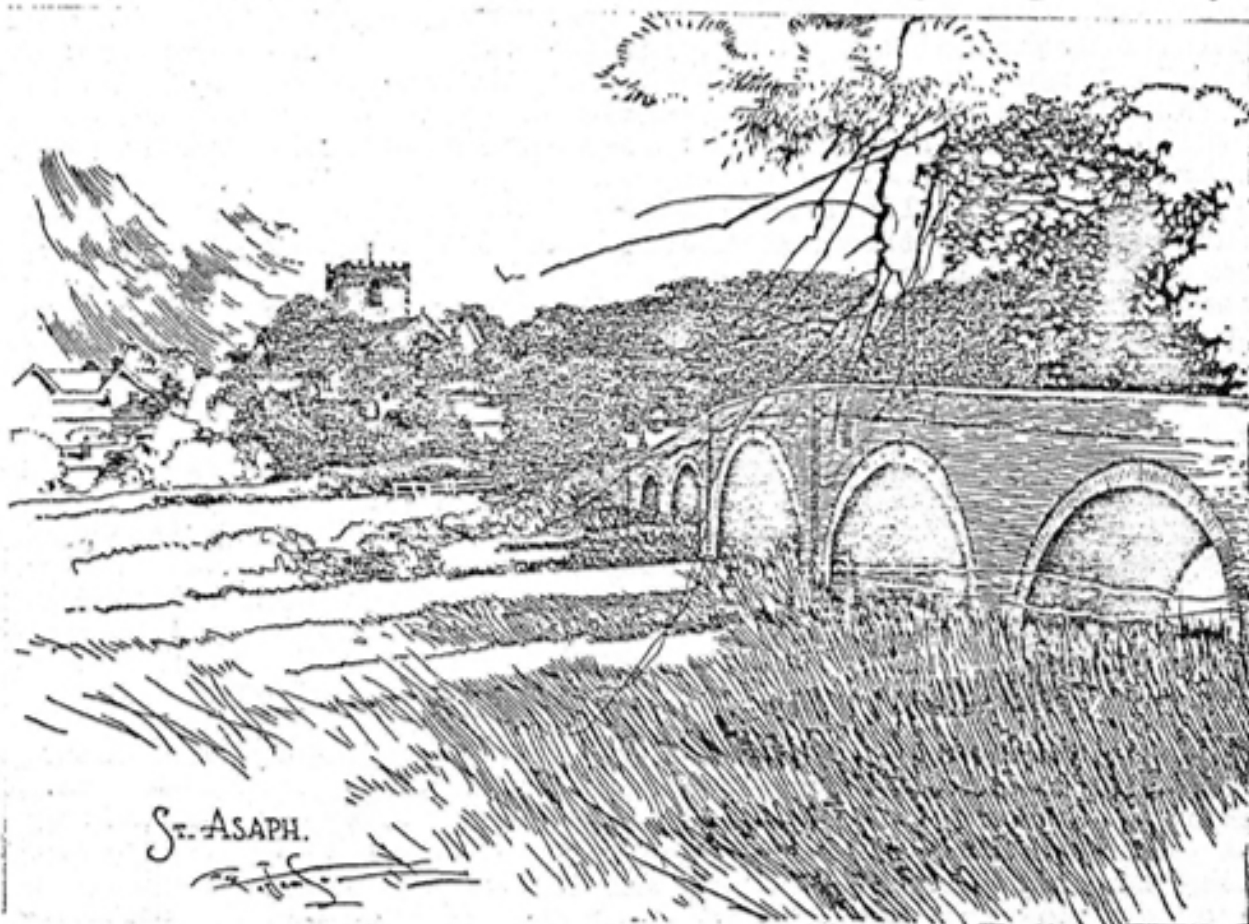
Our day in Ironbridge brought us our first rain; during the previous night the storms which had been threatening finally broke, but these had cleared up by the morning, except for a short thunder shower which made us dash for cover while we were walking round at Blists Hill.

Friday morning saw us packed up and on our way again by ten, with only a brief stop for supplies in the town. Coffee was had in a rather posh looking roadside hotel at Atcham (well the sign said morning and we reckoned the worst thing they could do was throw us out!), then on through the back of Shrewsbury. Places to stop and eat lunch were scarce and we eventually found ourselves sitting in the porch of a small country church at Hordley, eating our bread rolls cake and yoghurt. We then followed, roughly, the route of the Shropshire Union Canal to Chirk, where Susan had a puncture, and we took advantage of the stop to look at the Chirk Aqueduct and watch the canal boats going across and on into the Chirk Tunnel.

After mending the puncture and then having two cups of tea each in a local cafe it was on down the main road to Llangollen, where after finding our campsite, we went back down into the town just in time to go on the last horse drawn canal trip of the day. Being Friday it was fish and chips for dinner, which we ate sitting above the river watching the local kids jumping off the parapet of the bridge into the water! It was a good thirty feet and must have taken a hell of a lot of nerve.

Nearly there now, just one days ride and we could pitch our tent for a week and not worry about having to move on. First though we had to climb the Horseshoe Pass, which is one of the main routes into North Wales. Therefore to avoid the worst of the traffic (it was a Bank Holiday weekend), we started as soon as we could and, even though it was misty, were sweating our way into the steepest part of the pass by ten o'clock and by ten thirty we had reached the viewpoint on the other side of the pass and a well earned rest. Then it was off down the

other side with jackets on, it was still quite cold in the mist, then a short climb before a five mile descent into Ruthin and the Clwyd Valley through the Nant Y Garth Pass. We visited Ruthin Craft, where we had a cup of coffee, and looked at all the fascinating crafts, from Candle making to bookbinding, that were being carried on in the workshops of the modern purpose built craft complex. It was so fascinating in fact that we also had our lunch in Ruthin before pushing on up the Clwyd



Valley to St. Asaph, to see the cathedral - the smallest in England and Wales.

The last part of our weeks journey was uphill, as we followed the B 5381 west out of St. Asaph and up into the hills and mountains of North Wales to Bron Haul farmhouse, beautifully situated on the side of a hill above the valley of the River Elwy.

We had expected to find others of the weeks group there ahead of us, but we were the first to arrive, even though we lived the furthest away and had taken all week getting there. There were seven of us booked all together, the two of us, another David from Tunbridge Wells, Danny and Jim two young lads from S.W. London D.A., Denise from Hull and George from Aberystwyth who came with his caravan. Iris Stevens has already written quite eloquently in a previous issue on how good Pat & Ken Brown's cycling weeks are, what more can I add? Ken's knowledge of the narrow lanes and tracks took us all over his area of North Wales - it was difficult at times to distinguish between roads and tracks. The scenery was superb, and the cycling was great. The company was good and we all managed to do justice to Pat's excellent cooking. These weeks are something we can highly recommend and we only wished we could have stayed on another week. But all good things have to come to an end and Saturday saw us all bidding our farewells and setting off in our separate directions.

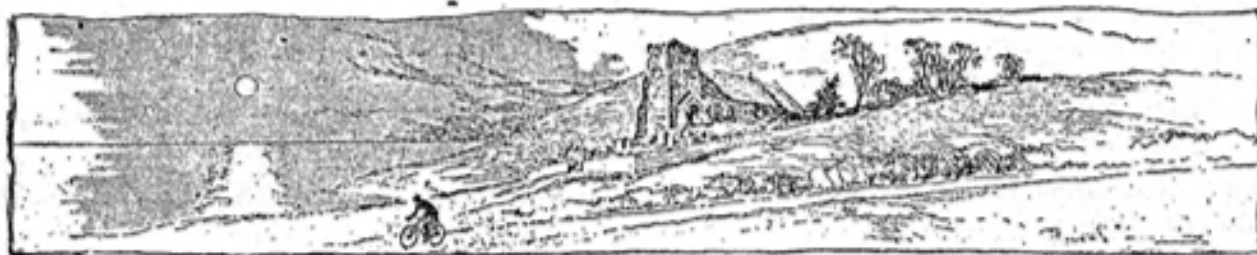
We had all said our goodbyes, but Susan and I found ourselves on the same train as Danny and Jim, but we were only going as far as Chester and said goodbye again when we got out there. We had decided to take

the train rather than ride into Chester so that we could have most of the day to look around this historic city, which we did, seeing the Rows and the Heritage Centre and being regaled by the Town Crier (who was a real character).

We spent the night at a site just outside Chester, then moved on on Sunday to a farm site at Eccleshall just outside Stafford, stopping for lunch to watch the boats going through the locks on the Shropshire Union Canal at Adderley. The farm site was nice, but we were a bit taken aback when the farmer asked if we had our own toilet, but were relieved (groan!) when he said he could hire us out a toilet tent for 50p.

Next morning we were up bright and early, and we were packed and ready to go by nine-thirty, then it was into Stafford where we caught the Manchester to Brighton train and then the train to Newhaven and home, tired but happy.

It had been a long and weary two weeks, but something neither of us would have missed for the world.



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MAGIC MOMENTS FROM THE D.A. MINUTES 1935

Mr. Gisburn then made a proposal that the Club should institute a "Cyclists' Attack League" more than a Defence Fund. All road users (as distinct from those using petrol propelled vehicles) including members of all clubs, Y.H.A., Rambling & Walking Clubs, Pedestrians' Association, etc., should be enrolled to form a group numbering millions, to bring some weight to bear when discussing the terrible slaughter on our roads by mainly motorists.

Special meeting called to discuss request from Head Office to organise a Public Meeting to protest against present road conditions. (It was agreed to carry out the request.) It was proposed by Mr. Boniface (N.C.U. & B./Mitre) that the Music Room at the Royal Pavilion be engaged. "Hacketts Band" to provide some entertainment before the meeting & Mr. Gisburn was willing to show lantern slides also for a short time.

Eighty members assembled at the Woolpack at Herstmonceux for the D.A. Photo but only 25 stayed for tea. The proprietor on seeing the large crowd called in extra help and more food, which was not needed, this incurred a loss to him of 10 shillings (50p).

It was agreed to pay out of local funds.

The treasurer stated that he called in person and handed over the 10 shillings, but they would only accept 5 shillings (25p) with which they were fully satisfied. They would be pleased to cater to us again.

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Odd Cuttings American Caving Accidents 1982:

While preparing to ascend the 70 foot pit, a caver was nearly struck by a falling Opposom. (National Speleological Society News.)

"A PLACE FULL OF 'NUTTERS'"

A Residents View of the I.O.W. by Brian Brodhurst

The Isle of Wight has a few quaint sayings, some of which you ought to be aware of if you intend to cycle here.

People who, like myself, move here from the mainland, or 'Ingländ' as some of the locals call it, are known as 'oveners'. Those born here are 'caulkheads' (corkheads) presumably from boat building days when caulking - filling the gaps - was done to the wooden decks of ships.

Lunch is 'nammet' - noon meat - and from this we get nammet break or nammet time for elevenses or tea breaks.

Holiday makers to the Island are usually known as 'grockles', normally herded into 'grockle cages' (coaches) so that they can be safely transported from place to place. They are occasionally released for short periods, but to ensure that they don't stray too far we have 'grockle traps' (souvenir shops) at strategic places. Normally they are released from these after the purchase of some useless object. By the way, what's got two legs, a trunk and is green? A travel sick grockle. Just thought I'd throw that one in!

Wherever you are on the Island you always seem to go, down Cowes, up Newport (Nippert), out Yarmouth, down Ryde, over Shanklin/Sandown/

Ventnor, out Chale. Shorwell is Shorrel, Whitwell is Whittle, Shalfleet is Shaflet and Brightstone is Brison.

There are many other local sayings, but if you are thinking of cycling here on the Isle of Wight I hope this has given you some idea of what to expect. A place full of 'nutters'.



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DID YOU KNOW?

The largest tithe barn in Sussex, it's claimed, stands as part of Alciston Court. It's flint built with a steeply pitched tiled roof, and there are two pairs of double doors, one with a gabled porch, and an extension at right angles at one end. The total length is about 170 feet. It was originally a storage barn belonging to Battle Abbey, nearly twenty miles away.

There was an old custom in Sussex of burying shepherds with a tuft of wool in there hand, to explain to St. Peter why they had not always attended church. The last known record of this is at Alfriston in 1932.

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by Brian Wilkins

Saturday 14th July dawned dull, cloudy and wet although brighter weather was promised for later in the day. Anyway, at 1.30pm Sue and I dragged our excessively laden bicycles along to Brighton Station. We were bound for southampton, from where we were to ride to Roundhill campsite in the New Forest. This was a short distance from Brockenhurst. The reason for all the self-inflicted torture was the annual New Forest Cycling Week, which was being organised this year by Brian Brodhurst, who hails from the Isle of Wight and needs no introduction to our D.A. At the Roundhill campsite, a separate site is reserved for the rally, within which are two sites - one for lightweight campers and another for motorised or caravan campers. Both are very well situated with plenty of shelter, not that on this occasion it was needed for it turned out that we were to experience one of the hottest weeks of the summer.

The New Forest Cycling Week is a very informal affair, you can go on any of the organised rides or if you prefer you can do your own thing. If you are so inclined you can even organise your own ride. During this particular week you are allowed access to any of the gravelled tracks that criss-cross the Forest. (Please note that this concession is granted to all CTC members subject to being renewed every 3 years and has recently been extended to 1987.) Normally the only access to the Forest tracks is by horse drawn transport, which can be hired, or you can walk. This is therefore quite a scoop by the CTC and came about as a direct result of good behaviour by cyclists during the New Forest Cycling Week.

This article is not intended as a ball by ball account of what happened during the week, which was for us ten days as we stayed on after everyone else had departed. Suffice it to say that we had a thoroughly enjoyable week with plenty to do and see. (The Flora and Fauna of the New Forest is quite unique and there are things to be seen which occur nowhere else in England.)

Anyone wishing to attend next year's week should see below. We have promised ourselves a holiday in the Channel Islands next year, but we certainly intend going back to the New Forest again as soon as we can.

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NEW FOREST CYCLING WEEK

20th. to 28th. July, 1985

Come and enjoy a week camping at Roundhill campsite in the New Forest and riding on the Forest tracks. Organised rides or go as you please.

Further details from the Organiser :

Mr. B.J. Brodhurst,
25, Chatfield Lodge,
Newport, Isle of Wight,
PO30 1XR.
Tel. (0983) 52674



CHRISTMAS DID YOU KNOW?

Christmas Cards. Christmas cards are now so essential a part of the Christmas festivities that they can hardly be omitted from any list of established customs. Nevertheless, they are little more than a hundred years old, and were unknown before Victorian times. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, it was a pleasant, though by no means universal, custom to send complimentary verses, often of the sender's own composition, to particular friends at Christmas, or on other great occasions. For this purpose, specially prepared sheets of paper, with engraved headings and ornamental borders, were frequently used. Similar, but less elaborate sheets were used by schoolboys for the 'Christmas Pieces' given to their parents at the end of the winter term. These consisted of two or three sentences, very carefully written, which served both as a greeting and as a proof of progress in the art of writing, the latter, no doubt, being the more important from the schoolmaster's point of view. Ornamental stationary for these two purposes was sold in considerable quantities in the first half of last century, and from it the true Christmas card, with its printed message and pictorial decoration, seems to have developed.

More than one person has claimed the honour of inventing the new form of greeting, or has had it claimed for him in later years. A boy named William Egley may have designed the first card as early as 1842. This is now in the British Museum, but unfortunately, the date written upon it is not clear enough to show whether the last figure is a 2 or a 9. Edward Bradley, a clergyman of Newcastle, sent out lithographed greetings in 1844, and in the same year, W. A. Dobson, head of the School of Design in Birmingham, used hand-painted cards for his friends, to save himself the trouble of writing individual letters. Probably, however, the strongest claim to be the inventor is that of J. C. Horsley. In 1846, a pictorial card designed by him in 1843 at the suggestion of Sir (then Mr.) Henry Cole, was published by Summerly's Home Treasury Office, and about a thousand copies were sold.

This was the small beginning of a fashion which has never since looked back. By about 1870, the Christmas card had become really popular in England, and a few years later it reached the United States. As for the designs, these have naturally varied considerably in the course of a century, ranging from simple sprigs of holly and mistletoe and honest family scenes to really fine work by established artists. In our own time, the search for novelty has sometimes resulted in the appearance of pictures that are quite irrelevant to Christmas, and some that seem completely unsuitable for the feast of peace and loving kindness. But one familiar figure has remained constant from the beginning until now - the robin, friend of man and symbol of life-giving fire, who still appears on countless cards every year.

By one of those pleasant exchanges of customs which sometimes occur, the United States, which acquired the Christmas card from England in the first place, have now lent us a design which is essentially American. This is the poinsettia, the accepted Christmas flower of North America, which is now often seen on English cards and wrapping paper. It received its name from Mr. Poinsett in 1828, but in Mexico, its country of origin, it has another and older name. There it is called the 'Flower of the Holy Night', and has long been associated with Christmas, perhaps because its vivid scarlet colour marks it as specially appropriate to that feast of fire and light.

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Did You Know? American millionaire Diamond Jim Brady owned twelve bicycles - all gold plated!

A Final Thought on Winter.

How can Winter's blustery blow,
Which forcibly obstructs the flow
Of streams and founts and hoses,
Do the opposite to noses?

Anon.

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