



Hallo everyone, this is my first step into the world of editorship. I have a very hard act to follow as Richard made such a good job of it! I am not really sure that I would have taken on the task if it wasn't for the corona virus pandemic which left us all with time on our hands and it is certainly proving to be a learning curve! A big thank you to everyone who has contributed and helped. As the online newsletter will now be accessible to all members, there is a good chance that more members will contribute which has already been the case but that does not mean that articles from regular contributors will be any less welcome so please don't stop sending them in.

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PRESIDENT'S PAGE

When I sat down to write my page for this issue of the new style Winged Wheel I wondered what on earth I could write about. Our Secretary has commented on the change of date for our AGM and outlined the online format which has become necessary for this year. Having been locked down once again since Christmas there isn't very much to report. I can't even congratulate the winners of the Attendance and other trophies as, for obvious reasons, they were not awarded last year. So, in desperation I referred back to my Page from this time last year for inspiration.

I wrote of the number of club rides that were either cancelled or disrupted by a succession of storms but hoped for better weather to come. Thankfully we had the better weather but little did we know then that, on the horizon, was a far greater storm looming that would disrupt our lives for a whole year and more. We had some respite with the introduction of "the rule of six" which allowed club rides in a limited form, but then came the lockdown once again after Christmas. Despite this Judy and I have continued our twice a week rides, weather permitting, but over shorter distances within the constraints of staying local.

The Prime Minister's announcements earlier this week give some encouragement that things will return to some sort of normal in the foreseeable future. All being well, the "rule of six" looks set to return around the end of March, with pubs and cafes able to serve food and drink, outside only, from after Easter. This should allow us to restart club rides, albeit limited in numbers, from the end of March. I am sure our Thursday & Sunday Rides Coordinators will keep members informed when the time comes.

I must confess to being a little concerned as to whether our club rides will ever get back to the carefree pre-covid days. I also wonder if any of our favourite pubs and cafes will have closed their doors permanently. Personally I can't wait for the day I can meet up with friends once again for a social ride, but I am also aware that, for others, it may take a little time before they can feel confident to socialise safely.

There is good reason to be optimistic that the worst is over. In the meantime, stay safe and well and I look forward to meeting up with old friends once again. After all, we are all a little older than when we last met. Will we recognise one another, I wonder?

Michael Scott

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Secretary's Notes

Welcome to our new-format Winged Wheel, and many thanks to Judy for taking on the job of producing it.

With not much cycling to write about, I'll use this column to tell you about our forthcoming AGM. As mentioned in my last column, the cycling "year" has been extended by Cycling UK to 18 months, ending on 31st March 2021.

Clearly CTC Suffolk will not be able to meet to hold our AGM in the normal way, hence the plan is to hold the meeting online. We will use "Zoom" for this. Our licence allows us to host up to 100 participants. As a guideline, we had 21 attendees at our 2019 AGM in Rushmere Village Hall, so we have some capacity for expansion ! We have been using Zoom for our Committee Meetings since last March, but the AGM will represent a different sort of challenge, so if you choose to participate, it will be a learning exercise and you will need to bear with us. No tea and cakes this year I'm afraid, though you are welcome to bring your own.

The AGM has been set for Tuesday 4th May at 7:30pm. This gives us time beforehand to prepare our internal reports and accounts, and afterwards to submit a summary of these to Cycling UK before their deadline of May 31st.

We need to know the number interested in participating in good time, so an email will go out before the end of March for you to respond to. At this stage you will also have a chance to raise any special items for the Agenda, or to make nominations for Committee posts.

In late April we will send another email to all members making our reports available to read online. A voting form will be included for any motions which can be agreed before the AGM, such as the election of officers.

Then, a day or two before the AGM, we will send the Zoom link to the meeting to attendees only.

John.

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Sunday Rides update

ARE WE NEARLY THERE YET?

The period of hibernation is nearly over. Brightly coloured cyclists are emerging from their burrows as the temperature starts to rise. Mostly individuals drawn out by the sun, the occasional pair. Some crepuscular (what a great word), coming out at dawn and dusk to squeeze some pleasurable cycling in.

Thankfully, cycling for exercise has been allowed over the last year. We have managed to keep cycling in some form, despite varying restrictions. Large group rides have not been possible for a considerable time but the Rule of Six gave us an opportunity to meet together in a socially distanced manner.

As winter set in, that luxury was withdrawn but we can still meet one other from a different household, to cycle for exercise. The winter temperatures reduced the incentive to venture out as no one wanted to risk falling off and ending up anywhere near a hospital.

There was then the conundrum of how far we are allowed to cycle, within the rules and regulations. Boris Johnson was criticised for cycling seven miles from his home. There was an attempt to define local, which would be suitable for walking but would be very restrictive for cycling. Thankfully, common sense has prevailed as taking regular was seen as being very beneficial for the whole population.

As we now venture out, mostly with at least one Covid-19 vaccine on board there is added confidence that all will be well.

When out cycling, we have benefited from pop-up coffee shops, takeaways and local shops. Hopefully most of our favoured tea, coffee and cake stops will survive. Later in the year we will see how the public houses have fared.

Who would have imagined that the highlight of a cycling week would be to venture over to Hemingstone Hut, in the middle of the Suffolk countryside, where the Coffee Station van was parked up, administering quality coffee and cakes to a windswept, socially-distanced queue of walkers cyclists and motorists? The simple pleasures have kept us motivated. If all goes to plan, we will be back to The Rule of Six by 29th March and I will keep you posted. For now, we are all in the same boat and I look forward to seeing you out and about as soon as possible.



Derek Worrall

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Thursday Rides

How to write a Thursday Rides article, when there have been no Thursday Rides? Perhaps to reminisce about what life was like before all this, then record how we managed when **some** riding was permitted, and finally to look forward to better times ahead.

Life's changed significantly for all of us; from my point of view the routine of dividing the year into four quarters was the basis of the job. In the first month, I was drawing up the list of rides for the following quarter, linking start points with coffee stops and lunchtime pubs, getting the length of rides right for the time of year, ensuring the three points on the ride were the right sort of distance apart and making sure rides didn't go in the same direction for two weeks running.

In the middle month of the quarter I'd be asking leaders to take on some of those rides; I always arranged an elevenses stop at the beginning of that month at Brandeston, Ashfield or Cretingham, where I could be sure of a getting a lot of potential leaders in one place. At the end of that month, the rides list was (hopefully) finished and ready for inclusion in Winged Wheel, and I could have the third month off!

No more; that hasn't happened since the beginning of last year, although somewhere in my laptop there's the beginnings of a list for the third quarter of 2020, started (in foolish hope) following an utterance by someone (last March) that we could "send the virus packing" in 12 weeks.

The last "normal" Thursday ride was as long ago as last March, when Jon Gorrige and Peter Freeman led us from Copdock to the Fox & Hounds at Groton. There followed an hiatus lasting until June, when we were able

to restart with smaller rides (up to six of us) socially-distanced, and having a combination of picnics, and refreshment stops in those places that were open. Despite (or perhaps because of) the restrictions, we found lots of new routes, new start points and several new refreshment spots. On three of those Thursdays we had as many as 21 people out riding, and over the whole period a total of 51 riders participated. After Lockdown 2.0 took November out, we had just three more weeks of this in December, before Lockdown 3.0 put a stop to group cycling once again.

It's not just riding that's been curtailed. Our Christmas lunch, always successful and well-attended, couldn't happen in 2020. We had a plan for an Easter lunch instead, to signal the restart of things, and as a big get-together, but at the time of writing it's clear that Easter will come too early in the end-of-lockdown roadmap for this to be possible. All this doesn't mean that the points trophy (which I've heard scurrilously referred to as the "get a life award") won't still be presented this year – it will be for a longer period than usual, and all rides will qualify.

So far my hopes are that we'll be able to restart rides soon. If we can, then it looks like these will be, as last summer and autumn, our "up to six people" rides, and with most hospitality venues not opening until later, and not fully open for at least another five weeks, our picnic-making capabilities will be needed once more.

Watch this space.

Richard Watson

Thursday Rides Co-ordinator

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Joyce Amner, April 1925 – December 2020

Some members might remember Joyce Amner who used to cycle with the club many years ago with her late husband Cyril. Her son, Derek, also cycled with the club and he got in touch in December to tell me that, sadly, she died on 10.12.20 after suffering from vascular dementia for four years. I particularly remember Joyce as she was a friend of my late mum's. Joyce was president of CTC Suffolk from 1985 to 1987 and Winged Wheel editor from 1976 to 1979. Our thoughts are with Derek, his sister Marion. and their families.

Judy Scott





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Hadleigh

More Green lanes to enjoy....

192 parish councils in Suffolk are planning to introduce 507km of 'Quiet Lanes' across the County in 2021 as part of the Suffolk Quiet Lanes Project. These are small lanes with less than 1000 vehicle movements per day and regularly used by less vulnerable road users such as children, walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those on mobility scooters. Green signs will show which lanes hold this special status, the signs remind drivers they should 'Expect' to find other road users in the road and that they should 'Respect' their presence.



Getting the signs in place requires public consultation, which will be happening in the first half of 2021 on a parish-by-parish basis. The 'Suffolk Quiet Lanes Project' website gives full details of the project and a map showing all the proposed lanes. Highway code rule 218 sets out the requirements for drivers using these lanes. Quiet lane designation aims to prioritise people over traffic in a similar way 'Home Zone' schemes do in towns and cities.

Quiet Lane designation does not restrict vehicle access, provide traffic calming measures, or reduce speed limits. If these are required then lobbying Suffolk Highways, local Councillors, MP's, and Central Government is the way to get them. Funding of the project is shared between Parish Councils, Suffolk County Council and for parishes within their district, East

Suffolk District Council. Implementation should be completed by the end of 2021, look out for the green signs.

Chris Taylor (Project lead for Otley)

Christaylorotley@gmail.com

Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/quietlanessuffolk/home>

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Ipswich BMX Club

As the club had sufficient funds, it was a committee decision to make a donation to Ipswich BMX Club and we have received this thank you letter and picture from them.

A massive thank you to our friends at CTC Suffolk for their recent, generous donation which has enabled us to purchase 6 quality loaner helmets. These will go a long way to help safely introduce newcomers to our exciting sport.

So thank you once again to CTC Suffolk and its members, we look forward to putting them to good use soon.



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THE ISLE OF WIGHT ON TWO WHEELS

By Michael Scott

To be precise it was four wheels – two people + two bikes = four wheels.

In the short lull between Lockdown Mk.1 and the introduction of tier restrictions we decided that we could manage a short break to the Isle of Wight, which was on Judy's to do list, as she had never been. We combined this with a fleeting, socially distanced visit to see Judy's brother and sister in law who live near Southampton.



We arranged to leave the car there and only take the bikes on the ferry. Paul kindly offered to take us on a cycle friendly route of about 5 miles to the Red Funnel Ferry Terminal in Southampton. It started to rain soon after we set out and by the time we got to the ferry the rain, although not heavy, was very wet!

Visibility was very poor as we crossed the Solent and we could hardly see the land until we approached East Cowes. It was still raining hard as we set out for the hour's ride to the Chequers Inn in Rookley which was the base for our short stay. We chose this location as it was in the centre of the island and we could reach all areas within a comfortable day's ride. As we climbed the long drag up past the entrance to Osborne the traffic was very heavy so we decided it would be prudent to avoid the most direct, main convenient point onto through Downend and wet cloud and could ahead of us.



At a T junction we hill to our left and take

away and put my gloves back on Judy was out of sight. I chased after her without success and when I arrived at our destination – no sign of her. I was just beginning to worry she had gone a long way off track when thankfully she arrived. There was a sign on the junction, where we needed to turn, pointing to a riding stables which Judy assumed was a driveway. All was well in the end. When we looked at the time we realised we had only been riding for about an hour. I have never known an hour last so long – it seemed as if we had been riding all day! We were made very welcome at the Chequers despite leaving puddles on the bar floor as we squelched through. We had a very comfortable room and, after a hot shower and change of clothes, we felt human again. For the rest of our stay we had mainly lovely sunny weather. Our room was facing west, looking across meadows with lots of horses, and we were treated to a spectacular sunset most evenings.

stopped to check the map. I told Judy to carry on up the the right turn at the top. By the time I had put the map



Next day our first stop was the picture postcard village of Godshill. The church on the hill with thatched cottages in the foreground is synonymous with the Isle of Wight. The reality was just as pretty as the picture. The entrance to the Model Village didn't look very inspiring but it was open and we were surprised to see how extensive and well looked after it was. Next stop was the beautiful Ventnor Botanic Gardens set up in 1970 on the site of a sanatorium for the treatment of TB. The gardens have a Medterrean type microclimate being south-facing and sheltered

from northerly winds by the chalk downs above. This was October so not the most colourful time of year but delightful to stroll around nonetheless. From the gardens we descended from Steephill down the aptly named Zig Zag Road to the sea front. After a stroll along the beach we had to climb back up the Zig Zag Road. I'm sure it was much steeper going up than coming down!



The following day we had pre-booked a visit to Queen Victoria's favourite Osborne House. We were very impressed at first sight with the cream-coloured exterior of the house glowing in the sunlight. Because of Covid restrictions we could only see some of the ground floor rooms, most with a distinctly Indian décor. If Victoria would not go to India then India would come to her! We wandered round the gardens and through the park to the beach with Victoria's restored bathing machine.



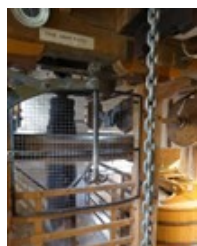
From here we followed part of the "Round the Island Cycle Route" and must have missed a turning at some point as we ended up on a very rough rutted truck

with water filled pot holes but it was going in the right direction and we eventually picked up our intended route. Shortly after, it started to rain quite heavily but we stopped to don waterproofs right by a petrol station so sheltered under the canopy until the downpour stopped. Our route took us past Bembridge and through Brading where we followed the signed cycle route in the wrong direction for a few miles and had to backtrack and resume our route which took us along the seafront at Sandown to Shanklin. We intended to stay out later than usual today to visit the gorge of Shanklin Chine which was due to be illuminated in the evening. It was a bit of a disappointment as the lights were switched on at five and we had to be out of the Gardens by 7.30 so it was still just daylight. Distinctly underwhelming! We had to light-up as we left Shanklin and had a dark ride back. It had turned out to be quite a hard day. The last time I had cycled on the Island was 1960 something and subsequent visits were by car. Our legs reminded us that, what seems undulating countryside in a car, is very hilly on a bike; the constant up and down all day long was very wearing.



We had another pre-booked visit today to the very well-preserved Carisbrooke Castle where we spent an interesting three hours round the fascinating museum and climbing the walls. The castle dates mainly from 12/13th Century with later alterations. King Charles 1 was imprisoned here for a time before his execution and more recently the castle was the summer residence of Queen Victoria's daughter Beatrice when she was governor of the island. The 16th Century treadmill is still intact to draw water from the 160 ft deep well. The treadmill is still powered by donkeys, although demonstrations were suspended because of Covid. We faced a daunting steep climb up out of Carisbrooke to Calborne where we stopped at the delightful Winkle Street with its row of picturesque thatched cottages and the stream running by. On the way back was a long drag up and over Brighstone Down, then a relatively level ride through pretty lanes, followed by an equally stiff climb up to Blackgang. It was a very clear afternoon so we were rewarded with wonderful views westwards to Freshwater Bay and the Needles.

Today was our last full day today and we had a long ride to the well-known coloured cliffs of Alum Bay. Judy rode down to the beach on the chairlift but I don't like heights so my courage left me as soon as I saw a sign pointing to steps to the beach. There were wonderful varying coloured seams of sand in the cliffs and a clear view of the Needles lighthouse from the beach. Alum Bay has a bit of a theme park feel to it but most of the gift shops and "attractions" were closed so not too busy. A café was open with a sunny sheltered terrace where we could sit outside. We snapped up the last two scones available (jam and cream of course) to accompany our coffee. On the return ride we paused briefly to watch the boats at Yarmouth and then continued on to the still operational water mill at Calbourne, although it is not currently working because of Covid restrictions. The mill was open, though, and very interesting as was the bygones museum.



Next morning we had a gentle ride retracing our steps to Cowes to catch the ferry with the weather sunny and warm, in stark contrast to our arrival a few days before. Paul met us from the ferry and guided us back to Totton for tea and cakes in the garden before we drove home. It was a very enjoyable and welcome break after the long lockdown and appreciated all the more when restrictions were re-introduced shortly afterwards.

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A PROJECT FOR ISOLATING in 2020

Maureen and I have long had the saying "So what's the next project then" and during this strange year of the virus we seem to have said this more than usual. Then one day during August I was walking along the River Walk at Hadleigh where there are several bridges, I decided to start drawing and painting several of them.

By the time I had walked home this gem of an idea had blossomed into me saying to Maureen "I've got a project, to find out the source of the Brett and record all the bridges along its length".

Maureen enjoys a project too, so was soon researching in books and on Google, and we had discovered that there were two sources of the river Brett.

Cockfield was what I started to call the source of the 'western end' and the other source was at Thorpe Morieux, the 'northern end'.

Armed with this information one day in August we headed off on our bikes to find the 'western end', which turned out to be near a road junction where there is an ancient parish boundary stone and near 'hundred stone pond'. This was just the start of many discoveries that made this project so interesting. My plan was to sketch the bridges, take notes on colours etc and then paint when I returned home in a handy spiral sketchbook. However I soon began writing descriptions of each bridge and the parishes that the river passes through.

I won't bore you with all the forty seven bridges we discovered and recorded, so here is the pick of those I found the most interesting, some you may know some might be new to you.

BRIDGE THREE –

This bridge next to the old Cockfield rail station has been very well designed and built by the Colchester and Sudbury Railway Company with both red and blue bricks of good quality. (Cockfield – open land of man called Cocca)

BRIDGE NINE –

A little gem of a Victorian footbridge, it is only one person wide with high walls on each side and is built of red brick. If you wish to visit, it is on the east of Lavenham and the river is confined to a very narrow slot.

(Lavenham – Laffa's valley and homestead)

BRIDGE FOURTEEN –

We are now on the A1141 from Lavenham and we come upon this one hidden in the undergrowth. It had been by-passed sometime before 1926 according to old maps and is a rare survivor of a cast iron bridge which has the date 1813 clearly visible.

(Brent Eleigh - Eligh – 'liia's clearing in the wood – Brent – meaning burnt appears to have been added to the original name after a fire in 1254 which destroyed the village'.)

BRIDGE EIGHTEEN –

This next bridge is down a very narrow lane in the centre of Monks Eleigh, mostly made of wood, it spans the river next to the old corn mill.

(Monks Eleigh – Eligh – liia's clearing in the wood. Monks – liia was likely to have been a monk as the manor was given to the monks of Canterbury)

BRIDGES TWENTY & TWENTY ONE –

These two low red brick bridges are in Chelsworth and are like Siamese Twins because they are joined together. A plaque on one has the letters R.P ESQ 1754, which refers to a Richard Pocklington rebuilding the structure.

In this area the river splits into several channels to pass under these bridges. (Chelsworth – Enclosure of a man called Ceorl)

BRIDGE TWENTY EIGHT –

Now we are close to the Hadleigh by-pass where it joins the road to Whatfield. It is a narrow wooden footbridge which crosses the river here next to Aldham Mill. Nowadays it is little used as shown by the high grass you must push through to find it. But back before the by-pass was built the CTC would have used it quite often.

(ALDHAM (The old homestead of a man called Fadda).

BRIDGE THIRTY TWO –

This bridge crosses the Brett near the Hadleigh River Walk and was only erected this year. It is a high handsome wood and metal bridge. However having opened during the summer it was closed in September with a reopening date of December, which has now passed. It is a delightful addition to the river views and we look forward to its reopening.

(Hadleigh (Heath clearing)

BRIDGE THIRTY SEVEN –

We are now just south of Hadleigh and in meadow land. We know of no other bridge like this, for although wide enough for a car, it has a metal barrier across with a wooden style for pedestrians.

BRIDGE FORTY FIVE –

We have moved on a fair distance and this bridge is down a private road towards the Mill at Higham. It is a pretty bridge with white metal gates. From here an avenue of trees leads to the next bridge, which is next to the Mill House.

(Higham – (High or Chief homestead)

I hope you have found some new and interesting facts along this journey and look forward to hearing about your project during 2020 or even 2021.

Ken Nichols

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Cycling with dementia by Deb Bunt

Amongst my essential items of luggage when I retired and moved from London to Suffolk were running shoes and swimming goggles. Those bits of equipment defined me: I ran and I swam (obviously I had shorts and a costume too, we're a pretty civilised lot in London, you know). I also owned a hybrid bike but, in those days, cycling ten miles was an achievement, twenty astonishing and anything over that was downright insane.



And then in Suffolk, I met Peter Berry and a friendship grew exponentially along with the cycling. Peter, a Suffolk born cycling fanatic, had participated in time trials in his youth and was still a great cyclist. At the age of 50, Peter was diagnosed with early onset dementia. With this diagnosis and the loss of his income, his business, his driving licence and, it must also be said, the beginnings of dark, dense clouds of depression, cycling took on a new meaning for him.

With another cyclist for company, Peter had already undertaken one challenge when he cycled across country from Aberystwyth to Aldeburgh. The following year, Peter, his wife Teresa, and I plotted a further challenge: to cycle across four counties of East Anglia to raise funds for, and awareness of, young dementia. But Peter wasn't just going to cycle; on no, that would be too easy. To raise the bar just a little higher, he vowed to cycle every mile of the near 300-mile route on his penny farthing. Another successful challenge was completed and the total money raised for Young Dementia UK was over £19,000.

Peter is a well-known figure in coastal Suffolk and he has brought immense joy to so many people who love to see him out on the penny farthing. He cycles virtually every day and, in doing so, leaves his "*dementia monster*" at home. Make no mistake just how important cycling is for Peter; he explains: "*I lose my way because of my dementia, but my bicycle is my*

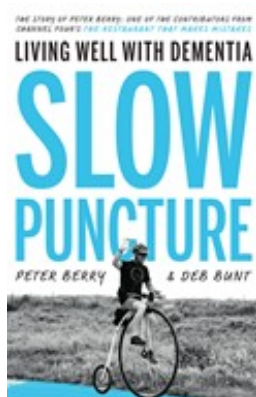
compass, taking me in a new direction away from dementia.” His cycling is his salvation, his joy, his very reason to be.

To mitigate the complexities of changing gear, Peter now cycles on single speed bikes. As dementia strips him of more of his abilities, Peter has to adapt. Changing gear became too complex but, as Peter says, *“for every problem, there is a solution”*. Some weeks ago, Peter told me he flipped his flip flop to go ‘fixie’ (although this term is apparently held in disdain by the cycling fraternity, who prefer the expression ‘riding on the cog’). But I find the expression disproportionately amusing, despite the high levels of immaturity this evokes, and thus Peter is now known to me as Mr Flip Flop.

Peter proves that living with a terminal condition is no deterrent from living and enjoying every moment as well possible; he averages 800-1000 miles a month, Teresa and I slightly less! Peter has also persuaded me of the merits of riding a single speed bike and I now accompany him on a vintage 1952 Roland-Jones bike (but refuse to go ‘fixie’.)

I am so thrilled how Peter and the cycling first inspired me and then triggered the dormant author in me. To find out more about Peter’s cycling, his dementia and his story, please do feel free to buy our book, *“Slow Puncture.”*

<https://www.bookguild.co.uk/bookshop-collection/non-fiction/self-help/slow-puncture-living-well-with-dementia/>



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Over the Hedge

Finally we escape 2020. Will 2021 be a better year? Surely it must, but we must tread carefully. As William Shakespeare said, “Beware the Ides of March.”

Amongst the other things cancelled last year was a trip to Sicily. Mrs. Hedgewatcher and I were inspired to visit after watching a presentation about a CTC tour by Colin Kindred, some years ago at one of the regular social evenings that took place then. They always provided inspiration for future tours and visits.

Sicily is dominated by Mount Etna, the largest volcano in Europe at 3,326m (10,912feet) about two and a half times the height of Vesuvius.

It remains one of the world's most active volcanoes with regular eruptions. However, the volcanic soil produced is very fertile so there is plenty of agriculture on its slopes with many orchards and vineyards.

Volcanoes appear for a variety of reasons, most as a result of “plate tectonics” – movements in the Earth's crust. The crust or surface of the Earth is made of a number of separate pieces that fit together, a little like a jigsaw. Continental plates are the land and Oceanic plates are beneath the sea. The continental plates are much older, thicker and less dense. The younger oceanic plates are created by volcanoes beneath the sea. A ridge of these volcanoes down the centre of the Atlantic Ocean, for example, is constantly creating new oceanic crust. Hence we are slowly moving further away from the USA at about the same speed as your fingernails grow.

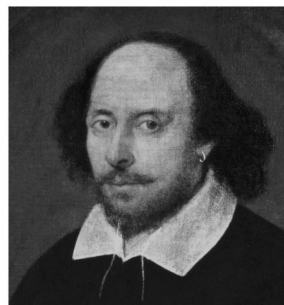
As the oceanic crust grows, so the older crust slowly moves around the globe. Throughout the Earth's 4.6 billion year history, the pieces of continental crust have come together to form one enormous supercontinent on several occasions. The last time this happened was around 300 million years ago and it stayed together until around 180 million years ago. That supercontinent is known as Pangea.

For the last 180 million years, the continents have been dancing away from each other, ready to reassemble themselves again in the future. However, as they move, they sometimes converge on each other. When this happens, continental crust buckles and mountains form. The Himalayas and the Alps are relatively recent examples.

The movement of the African plate into the Eurasian plate formed the Alps but is still active and is gradually closing the Mediterranean Sea. Sicily lies above the boundary between these plates and the movement causes the eruptions and earthquakes.

Who studied “Julius Caesar” for O level? Remember how the soothsayer warned, “Beware the Ides of March”? He was assassinated on The Ides of March, 15th March 44BC. Much bad fortune followed with little sun and failed harvests for the Roman Empire, as the soothsayer foretold.

Recent scientific research has been able to trace back climate data to 44BC using both tree ring growth analysis and studying ice cores from Greenland amongst other documented information. Evidence is growing that Etna erupted violently that year and that the resulting ash cloud was very extensive, effectively forming unseasonal wintry weather during summer, causing the failed harvests and the resulting illness and starvation.



**“ Beware
the ides of
March. ”**

William Shakespeare (Julius Caesar)

So perhaps Shakespeare based his story on fact not just fiction? Either way, if you go out with the bicycle on March 15th, do take care.

Hedgewatcher

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