

Hallo Everybody

It's that time already, for another copy of Winged Wheel I mean! I hope that you enjoyed the last one and I am pleased to say that I received several favourable comments. I feel that I am finding my feet a bit more now so I will, hopefully find it a bit easier as time goes by. Thank you for the contributions that I have received for this issue, more will always be welcome in the future. I trust that you are enjoying the lovely weather and managing to keep cycling.



Judy Scott

Winged Wheel Editor

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## **PRESIDENT'S PAGE**

In the last Winged Wheel I struck a rather pessimistic note in wondering whether our club rides would return to a pre-covid normal. This is unusual for me as I am usually an optimistic, glass half full sort of person. However, the last two or three weeks, since we have been able to meet in larger numbers, have proved me wrong thankfully. It has been great to meet up with friends that I haven't seen for weeks, if not months, and catch up with all the news. It is pleasing that we have had a few new riders coming along since restrictions were eased.

We still need to be careful to maintain the "rule of six" when meeting indoors but with the summery weather we are experiencing at the moment we can be more relaxed in venues that have plenty of outside space. By the time you read this we will know if restrictions can be eased further or whether, as seems more likely with increasing cases of the Delta Variant, the current level will need to be maintained for a little longer.

Regular riders and Committee Members will be aware of my worries, which I express from time to time, that we seemed to become a more fractured group even before the wretched virus banned our club rides and restricted them severely for over a year. This is particularly relevant to Sunday Rides where, at present, the E and MP rides have different starting points. This was necessary while restrictions were in force but now things are easier I would like to see common starting points for both rides and regularly meeting at refreshment venues.

Of course we have different types of rides to cater for different needs but our strength, which has served us well over the years, is that we have always been a unified "club" and long may it remain so.

On a personal note Judy and I are looking forward to a "staycation" in South Wales and Pembrokeshire, not touring but with the bikes on board, and we are hoping the current spell

of good weather will last. I hope, like us, that you will be out on your bikes as often as possible and enjoy it wherever your travels take you.

Michael

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## Secretary's Notes

In the last newsletter I wrote about our forthcoming AGM on Zoom. This went ahead as planned. The formal business was brief, there being no changes to the Committee. It was followed by questions to a representative from Cycling UK's Volunteering team (Gjoril Berg), mainly about the changes to membership made last summer.

Many of us felt the online AGM was rather "flat", and are keen to return to a physical meeting next year. So I have booked the Rushmere Village Hall in Humber Doucy Lane for 7:30pm on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Hopefully we will have more social interaction, not to mention tea and cake.

From late May we resumed following a published programme of rides rather than "book in advance". However Covid still casts a shadow. We can associate outside in groups of up to 30, but the "table service" rule means that café and pub stops are more likely to be busy, and take longer to serve us. We have also struggled to find leaders for rides, partly due to the lingering effect of shielding. How long-term these problems are is difficult to tell as yet.

I have only managed a couple of "normal" Thursday rides so far. On both occasions I was leading. The first time felt very odd with a relatively large number of riders trailing behind. I still prefer smaller groups, but that is impossible given the shortage of ride leaders. The second occasion did feel more like the Thursday rides of old, with a reasonable number of 10-11 on each ride.

John.

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## THURSDAY RIDES REPORT

Life has started again, and I'm both surprised and very pleased that, right from the (re)start, that so many of us are out riding on a Thursday morning; numbers of riders are already just as high as before the lockdown started, all those months ago. Of course, the recent good weather has helped, and given us ample opportunity to get the wheels turning again and burn off some of that cabin fever built up during weeks of house arrest.

Until mid-May we were still limited by the Rule of Six; this meant a different pattern of riding, more, and varied work for me, and a need for ride leaders to be more inventive. But

that need was also an opportunity, and from this we've learnt how we could change things to make rides different.

That, I hope will take place as from October; the current rides lists are, of necessity, quite conventional, as we had to get things up and running again in a hurry.

I'm sure you're all thoroughly fed-up with me mithering about the shortage of Thursday Ride Leaders (a problem that has now been solved, at least for the time being) so instead I'll write about the possibility of two or three different start points (which could open up new areas for us to ride through) earlier (and later) start times and, instead of the rides lists being published quarterly, which meant potential leaders having to commit themselves up to 20 weeks in advance, the lists will be shorter and come out more frequently.

On top of all this, I want to give leaders the chance to design their own rides (as we did during the lockdown – and as we always did for Awaydays) so if you've got a route you always wanted to share with the Group, let me know and I'll try to fit it in for later in the year.

Richard Watson  
Thursday Rides Coordinator

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## Sunday Rides Report

In the last quarter things have started to thaw in a number of ways. The winter dragged on far longer than usual and there was a reluctance to consider putting away the winter clothing. Quite recently the weather has bucked up and with the relaxation of government rules in mid-May there has been more freedom of movement.

We now have the option of eating in, which is useful when it is too cold, too wet or even too hot. Tea in a proper pot and cup (one of the simple pleasures of life restored).



The programme of rides has been supported by a good number of club members and recently some new riders have come out and experienced our Sunday rides. Numbers on rides are increasing.

There have been a few classic Suffolk rides such as taking the bikes over on the ferry from Old Felixstowe to Bawdsey, travelling up to Orford and back to Ipswich. Old favourites such as Campsea Ashe Station Cafe and Dedham Craft Centre are a pleasure to visit.

We rely on a relatively small number of ride leaders who have kept the show on the road. A big thank you to the leaders.

To help share the load, please consider volunteering to lead a ride. We will be able to offer you help and guidance in route planning etc, to make the process a pleasant experience. If regular riders took the lead once a quarter, this would help no end.

With the summer temperatures up and the longer days we look forward to some longer rides.

The two Sunday ride groups (Easy and Medium) have been kept apart to avoid criticism of large groups gathering. This is now less of an issue and we will now gather together more and will be starting Easy Rides not solely out of Crown Pools, Ipswich. Details will be on the CTC Suffolk webpage and weekly ride emails will give a reminder of the details.

In the next quarter there will be a breakfast ride to Dunwich and also a welcome return of the President's Picnic.

Cycling UK has established a Cathedrals Cycle and we aim to visit the Pilgrims' Kitchen at Bury St. Edmunds Cathedral.

I am pleased to report that some favourite tea stops are back in action such as Ashfield Village Hall and Raydon church will be providing refreshments in the churchyard on the first

Sunday afternoon in July and up to September. The prospect of quality home made cakes helps to keep us pedalling forward.

Derek Worrall

Sunday Rides Coordinator

## REPORT ON MTB CONVERSION TO ELECTRIC ASSIST WITH HUB GEARS

### INTRODUCTION

Mountain bikes can be hard work on hills and rough terrain. My wife (Christine) was becoming reluctant to join in with MTB rides as the extra effort required (compared to road cycling) made it feel like a struggle. To enable us to continue riding off-road together, a little assistance was required. Starting with Christine's existing MTB, an electric conversion kit and other upgrades were fitted to the original bike. But was the result successful, or cost effective compared to buying a purpose-made electric bike?



### COST COMPARISON

Original bike: Boardman Comp 27.5" (2017) - Hardtail MTB £700 (paid £500 in sale)

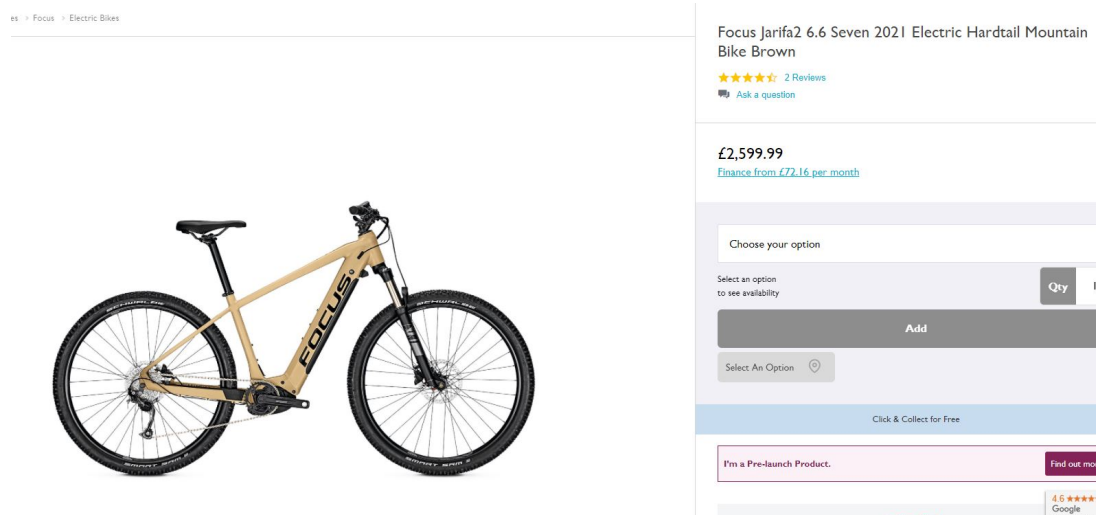
Conversion: Bafang BBS01B 36v 250w mid drive motor kit £344

Plus 14.5 Amp/hr 36v battery £317 (borrowed from our folding electric bike so zero cost)

**Total cost** (for original bike with conversion, including battery): **£1,164**

How does this compare with purpose-made hard tail electric MTBs of similar component spec. to the original Boardman?

Most are priced around £2,500. Here's one example:



## Focus Jarifa2 6.6 Seven 2021 Electric Hardtail MTB

### Specification

Frame - 7005 aluminium, 148x12 mm through axle, internal cable routing, post mount 180 mm

Fork - SR Suntour XCM 34 preload, 15x110 mm QR

Shifters - Shimano Altus M2010

Chainset - FSA CK-320, aluminium

Rear Derailleur - Shimano Altus M2000

Tyres - Schwalbe Smart Sam 2.25

Brakes - Shimano MT200, hydraulic disc brake

**Weight - 22,80 kg**

However, in addition to the electric conversion, a number of other changes were also made to the Boardman: Derailleur gearing removed and replaced by a Shimano Alfine 8 hub gear (in a new wheel set), giving improved chainline, easy gear changes while stationary, simple maintenance (only one rear cog) etc. Sprocket & chainring combination chosen was 21 – 44 T with 27.5" wheels, producing gear ratios from 30.85 – 94.55 inches, which is an adequate range for most riding, with or without assistance, (with electric assistance the lower gears are never required). Also upgraded tyres to Schwalbe Marathon Plus (puncture proof), Richie adjustable stem, a Bodyfit saddle, Ergon grips and Giant MTB pedals. The additional cost of these parts was approx. £350, so total cost was around **£1,500** - for a customized bike to fit Christine's exact requirements. (Actual cost to us was less as we already had the battery, and some of the parts removed have been sold).

It's not possible to make a direct cost comparison with new bikes of this spec. because there are no electric MTB's available with hub gearing. The nearest comparison would be with electric hybrid bikes (i.e. no suspension) fitted with an Alfine hub. Again, prices are more than £2,500, as in this example:

Electric Bikes > Gepida > Gepida Legio Alfine 8 - 2018 Electric Bike



 This product is now out of stock

OUT OF STOCK  
 £2699.00

## WEIGHT

Most purpose-made electric hardtail MTB's weigh between 22.5 – 24.5 KG. The total weight of the Boardman conversion (inc. all additional components changed or added) is now 22KG, so at the lowest end of that range.

## PERFORMANCE

The first test ride was 58km (Woodbridge to Shingle Street return) with about 2/3rds offroad via forest and heathland tracks. All aspects of the conversion performed flawlessly. Power levels can be toggled up or down while riding to select just the right amount of assistance. The hub gearing works smoothly, with the shift sensor cutting motor power automatically when changing gear to avoid strain on drive train. The MTB Marathon tyres with their deep profile tread had plenty of bite in loose and sand but still quiet and smooth on road. Christine liked the higher handlebar position with the adjustable stem. But perhaps most pleasing of all was that the bike still rides very well with the motor switched off, without noticeable drag. This is a big advantage compared to many electric bikes which feel like pedaling through treacle when the power is off.

To maintain a comfortable pace with the strongest riders in the group, Christine was generally using power level 5 (or less) from levels 0 – 9, i.e. using only about half the

available assistance from the motor. Starting with a fully charged battery with 4 lights, there were 3 lights remaining at the end of the ride, indicating that about one quarter of the battery capacity had been used. Given that a residual 25% should be left, that indicates that one third of the available capacity was used. In other words, there was enough battery capacity to go three times further if necessary. In reality there's a limit to how far one wants to ride in a day and the battery can always be recharged each evening. It may appear then the battery is larger than necessary, however, it's always good to have plenty in reserve and batteries loose capacity as they age, so in a few years time it will probably be about the right size!

In comparison, if you paid the extra money, would a purpose-made electric bike really offer any better performance? Yes, they are usually more sophisticated, with a torque sensor that effectively modulates the power output smoothly by sensing when effort is being applied to the pedals and gradually adding power (i.e. so your efforts are augmented, not substituted). The Bafang kit only has a simple cadence sensor, so as long as you're turning the pedals it delivers the full complement of power to the level you've selected, i.e. without modulation. It's therefore possible to 'cheat the system' by ghost pedaling and letting the motor do all the work, but that would drastically reduce the range (and give you no exercise of course). In short, the comparison is rather like the difference between automatic and manual cars: Automatics are easier to use, but it's still perfectly possible to drive smoothly with a manual: You shift gear and alter acceleration to adapt to changes in gradient and speed. Likewise with the Bafang system you can change power levels and gears as you ride to stay in the 'sweet spot' where you are putting in as much effort as you wish, while letting the motor top up the rest, at the speed you require.

## **SPEED**

How fast does it go? Is always one of the first question people ask about electric bikes. If you need to go faster buy an electric moped and get a license. For road legal electric bikes without a license, it's not about high speed, it's about a 'helping hand' to maintain a steady pace for hills and headwinds etc.

The effective top speed of all electric bikes is determined by three factors:

1. The power output of the motor. 250W is the UK legal max. (You can fit larger motors, but only for off-road use).
2. The max. speed at which the motor is programmed to cut assistance: UK law stipulates approx. 15MPH. However, some systems (inc. Bafang) can be set higher.
3. The largest top gear of the bike, i.e. the speed at which you 'spin out'.

## **INSTALLATION**

Mostly straightforward, but there are some niggles with the Bafang kit – e.g. cables are longer than needed and cannot be shortened because of waterproof molded-on plugs. Excess cable was bundled under the downtube as neatly as possible.

Special tools are required to remove original bottom brackets. A special Bafang tool is also required to fit motor unit to BB shell (but can be purchased with kit for about £15).

Battery mounting was by far the most challenging aspect of fitting the kit, as extra 5mm rivet nuts had to be fitted on the downtube to mount the battery base. A/A rivet nuts are too soft



and steel is not compatible with A/A frame tubes. S/S are the recommended option but are very tough to compress, esp. working in a confined space on awkwardly shaped tubes. After DIY setting methods failed it required the purchase of a special setting tool (£38). Even then the M5 mandril was damaged on test rivets (due to excessive force required to set) so had to buy replacement! (NB: It is MUCH easier to use plain steel rivet nuts – which are OK with steel frames). Conversion to the 8-speed Alfine hub was easy, as it matched the Boardman's rear dropout width of 135mm.

## CONCLUSION

Electric conversions are not cheap, but still represent excellent value compared to purpose-made electric bikes. Compared to factory fitted, built-in crank motors, the external Bafang motor unit may look more crude, but can be easily accessed for disassembly and servicing when required (and parts are available). Purpose-built electric bikes often have specially designed batteries to fit into the frame, which are neat, but are usually very expensive to replace and become obsolete when the model goes out of production. With the Bafang kit the battery is generic and externally mounted, meaning that almost any battery of the correct voltage can be used, so are cheaper and easier to replace in future.

In summary, it all works very well. The power can be adjusted to any level to boost the rider's efforts as required – which means that the rider can match their speed to the group pace while still selecting an assistance level that allows a good workout if they wish. Unlike many electric bikes, it remains very pleasant to ride unassisted when required and the range of gears is still sufficient to cope with most terrain. This inspires confidence and avoids 'range anxiety' – i.e. thinking that if the battery dies you'll never be able to pedal the thing home!

The change to hub gearing has also been successful and complements the electric assistance very well, bringing many advantages over derailleurs. The only disadvantage - of having fewer gears at the low end for steep hills, is compensated for by the power assistance. It's surprising that no manufacturers of electric MTBs have yet offered this combination. Watch this space!

D Kemp  
April 2021

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## MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

I guess the short answer to that heading is YES your membership does matter!! First and foremost it affords you the opportunity to take part in organised club rides and to lead rides if you feel able, this is as well providing you with other benefits such as insurance protection, discounts off a wide range of goods and Cycle Magazine.

There is an elected committee who deal with a wide range of matters including, through our two Rides Co-ordinators, organising weekly rides, encouraging members to volunteer, keeping a list of approved ride leaders and keeping in touch with you.

This brings me to my first point. We can only keep in touch with you if you keep your membership record up to date. It's amazing how often some members change email addresses or mobile phone numbers. Unfortunately I don't have a crystal ball and if you don't let on that your contact details have changed you stop receiving notifications.... simple.

So two simple things you can do:- First if you have changed your email or mobile phone number recently please let me know. I can then ensure that you receive the emails that you have opted for and if you are a regular rider that your phone details are updated with our coordinators.

Second PLEASE check that your membership details are up to date with Cycling UK.

To do this you will need to log into your Membership Account. You do this by visiting [www.cyclinguk.org](http://www.cyclinguk.org) then in the lilac coloured line find and click on " my account ". If you haven't yet set up a membership account you will need to do so so click on "Register New Account". When you have an account click on " my account " then on the next page enter your login details.

Once logged in you will see your account name and underneath that a row of options with "view" highlighted. This page shows the information held for you. Name, Membership number, Membership Group, Address. Email addresses, Telephone numbers, DOB & types of cycling.

If any of the information is missing or incorrect then at the top of the page click on "Edit" and make the changes. Don't forget to click on SAVE !!

Once you have done that click on " Mailing Options " here you can opt in or out of various mailings. If you want to keep on receiving local emails make sure that the " unsub Local Updates " is NOT checked . Again once you have made any alterations click on UPDATE.

It's simple and once done you should receive information from us and Cycling UK.

My second point relates to ride leaders. Thanks to the efforts of Derek and Richard, our ride co-ordinators, we are fortunate to have a great list of rides to choose from each quarter on Sundays and Thursdays. However those rides can only take place if they have a leader. Over time there is always a slight change in the leaders pool. However the last 15 months with the pandemic has seen a marked reduction in the number of leaders offering to lead rides. Some due to no longer wishing to lead and no doubt some due to members being apprehensive about joining in group activities.

So PLEASE will you consider offering to lead a ride? Speak with Derek or Richard or whoever is leading the next ride you are on. There is plenty of help available and it will give some relief to those who are leading more than their fair share of rides.

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Glen Smith, Registration Secretary



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### **My most ironic punctures**

**By John Thompson**

I think it might be fun to write about what we regard as our most ironic punctures. I think it should include the most annoying or even cruel if they badly affected a ride. Hopefully, you can laugh about them now! You might feel it's corny I'm focusing on punctures. Yes, it's the classic 'breakdown' non-cyclists associate with cycling. Such gems as "What do you do if you get a puncture?," and "How long does it take you to repair a puncture?" etc. I think I've pretty much explained my most ironic mechanicals in previous articles. However, if you want to include other mechanicals, fine.

Before moving on, an account of an amusing experience related to how non-cyclists associate punctures with cycling: for some years I worked at Yarmouth, riding from/to home at Oulton Broad. One afternoon I pulled the bike out of the rack and realised the headset was a little loose. As I gave it a turn with the spanner, the office manager came passing and said, "What ya got a puncture?"

Here goes with my puncture stories:

- There is no debate needed on the cruellest so far for me. It was a flat tubular with just around ½-mile to go in a 100-mile time-trial! As it was the rear wheel, I considered staggering to the finish line by honking to keep my weight off. However, I judged it still risked damaging an expensive sprint wheel and could be unsafe, i.e. swaying. I, therefore, changed the tubular.
- This one is on the borderline between being frustrating/annoying – I hope that makes sense! I was about 10 hours into the West Suffolk Wheelers 12-hour time-trial. I didn't have a car-helper, so I had to change the tubular and pump it up. I finished with 216.01 miles.. The winner was Geoff Mann (Hainault Road Club) with 249.3 miles. I was, therefore, comparatively speaking, well pleased with my result. Realistically, the puncture didn't make a big difference. However, the fact I did a good ride probably made it that bit more frustrating it prevented my result from being that little bit even better. All readers who have ridden or are riding time-trials know any puncture is frustrating/annoying, especially if you think you're going well, perhaps even on a personal best. It would, however, be defeating the object to write about all my time-trial punctures and boring to read. Paradoxically, if you think you're going badly, a puncture can be a convenient excuse!
- The next one down in the frustrating/annoying category was in the Cambridge CC "End Of Hibernation" 200 km audax. I forget at what precise distance it was, perhaps around 150 km, but near Monks Eleigh. Thinking I had found and removed the cause, I changed the innertube. No doubt, you've guessed! Yes, just a few miles further on, it was flat again. I desperately felt around the tyre several times. There were instances of, "can I feel something here?" and nipping the tyre to see if something came out, but I didn't find anything significant. Fingers crossed, I nervously changed the innertube again! Yes, that's right, a few more miles along, just before Castle Hedingham, down it went yet again! I lost count of how many times I felt round the tyre this time. That was because I was now on my last spare innertube. Yet again, I didn't find anything significant so even more nervously fitted that final spare. With no further punctures, I could still have finished within the time limit. However, with no spare innertubes, I didn't want to risk it. That was, especially as the official route involved potentially gritty lanes. The direct-route was on main and busier roads. Unwelcome as it was in one respect, it was the sensible thing. However, it was still with a prayer I wouldn't puncture again. Mercifully, it was a case of third time lucky! To this day, however, I cannot recall anything significant coming out of the tyre when I checked it the third time. It must have been something very slight, which presumably explains why it took a few miles to go flat again.
- I regard my most ironic as being on my tour of the Chilterns Cycleway. All the real rides had been puncture free. On the day of the return train journey from Stevenage, I punctured just a few hundred yards from the hotel while riding the short distance (perhaps 'as much as' 1½ miles) to the station. As I had a train to catch, I

was relieved it was easy to find. That said, my ticket would have been valid on later trains. You might remember I mentioned this one in my article on the trip. However, as I regard it as my most ironic, it seems appropriate to include it.

- A close second for irony involves two punctures. For four consecutive years in the 1980s, I rode the CTC annual 400 km audax. I would take six days holiday, travelling to wherever it was by train on the Friday-before. After riding the event over the weekend, the next week would be riding cross-country home. For two consecutive years, the penultimate day's ride home was between the former Milton Keynes and Saffron Walden youth hostels. From Baldock, there is a predominantly lanes route available to Saffron Walden. I can't now be sure of the precise spot, but it was in a lane, I think near Barley, that I punctured on the first year's ride. Can you guess what's coming? Yes, more or less precisely 1-year later (it might indeed have been to the day), I punctured in probably slap-bang the same spot. As it was a very lightly-used lane it arguably makes sense. Nevertheless, still ironic.
- Now another I've mentioned before. I do so again because I want to finish on my most amusing. It was on one of the rides on one of my tour reunion weekends. It was another instance of several flats due presumably to difficulty finding the cause. Repairing, thankfully, the last one, on removing the innertube a worm fell out!

I hope I can look forward to reading about others' ironic and amusing experiences.

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## Letter to Editor

Many thanks for the new format Winged Wheel. You, and your contributors, have certainly done a magnificent job in producing such an interesting read at a time when we all thought nothing had really happened!

I was particularly interested in Ken Nichols' article about bridges along the Brett. Reading his notes about the bypassed cast iron bridge at Brent Eleigh (Bridge 14) I seemed to recall being told years ago that this is a Scheduled Industrial Monument. Of course, I immediately went to Google to check the accuracy of my memory, and this led to a happy hour's diversion during the latest lockdown.

The extract below (from the Association of Industrial Archaeologists Conference Tour of Essex in August 2012) confirms that my memory was correct and gives a bit more detail which I thought may be of interest to other WW readers.

*At Monks Eleigh a pump on the green in front of the church was made by Ransomes of Ipswich about 1840; a similar pump by the same makers stands in front of the Town Hall in Hadleigh. Our road crosses the Brett again between Monks Eleigh and Lavenham. Beside the*

*modern bridge stands a cast-iron bridge by Ransomes dated 1813; it is a scheduled Industrial Monument.*

Under normal circumstances our Suffolk rides include parts of Essex so many of us are well aware of the very attractive countryside and close historical links between the two counties. The experts attending the conference and tour were reminded of this in the Introduction notes below:-

*In recent years Essex has suffered from the image of Essex girls and men, which rather oddly affects how it is viewed as a landscape. Our visits do penetrate into southern Suffolk because the Stour was always more of a link than a barrier, and in particular the main industrial theme for eight centuries, textiles, very much spanned the border. Over the years weaving of various materials, wool, silk, horsehair, artificial silks, dominated the Stour valley and the adjacent areas.*

*Constable's Stour Valley, the epitome of English countryside, is, after all, half in Essex, with the Stour being the county boundary for most of the border between Essex and Suffolk.*

Hopefully by the time the June WW is printed we'll be sharing rides again and able to enjoy the delights explored by these 'expert' visitors from across the UK nearly 20 years ago. More importantly, our landscape and heritage can help attract 'staycation' visitors, especially cyclists, who do so much to support the local economy.

Margaret Hancock

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## **Cycling UK and Campaigning.**

These are my personal views.

Sometimes I wonder where the "Cycling Touring Club" I joined many years ago, has gone! When CTC morphed into Cycling UK, I thought it would be great for cycling, and would take a form rather like the RICS, where different interests are arranged in colleges. I rather imagined each specific interest would have its own input and these would be considered when a balanced campaign was constructed.

I like the idea that a single organisation represents all cycling interests, however in order to do so the organisation needs to realise that different cycling interests have different needs and cycling provisions can't be "one size fits all". Unfortunately, this has not happened.

I am a life member so the question of not renewing membership does not arise, however I do understand that others may feel this is an ultimate way of making a point. To those, I would say, no one at Cycling UK is going to change because you are no longer a member, better to stay and try and change things by having your say.

It seems to me that as part of gaining charitable status, Cycling UK has had to argue

they are all encompassing and have spent time and money on campaigning to prove the point.

I have no doubt that promoting cycling for children, women, and the disabled are worthwhile and to be commended, however I think when CTC became Cycling UK the membership (largely cycle tourists) that provides the funds, rightly or wrongly found themselves side-lined.

More recently the issue of cycle lanes has occupied more Cycling UK time than I would be prepared to pay for. I don't have time or the inclination to read or research every provision made either under the Covid emergency provisions or otherwise, but I know statistically many of those provisions will not be adequate and some may well be dangerous. Not least because they have been provided by a majority of people who have no knowledge or experience of cycling. Imagine then, how I feel when "my club" shouts about campaigning to prevent the removal of any of these facilities good or bad.

I am clear about one thing. The only way a cyclist can get from anywhere they may be, to anywhere they want to go is via the "Highway network".

In my view, by all means make segregated safe direct routes to encourage cycling use to schools, work and the shops in towns and cities, but this must not be at the expense of a failure to continuing to campaign to make the highway network safe for cyclists to use.

No one is ever going to produce a duplicate highway network dedicated to cycles, so drivers need to accept cyclists have as much right to use the roads as they do.

Cycling UK needs to adjust their perspective and begin to address the bigger picture.

Maurie Parish.

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This article was sent in by Stephen Read



## Over the Hedge

***With the easing of restrictions finally allowing us to stay away from home, Mrs. Hedgewatcher and I escaped to complete our first tour towards the end of May.***

It was a joy, if somewhat a shock, to be pedalling a bicycle with loaded panniers again. However, we quickly grew accustomed to the different feel of cycling and covering the ground in a very leisurely fashion.

Our first afternoon took us to Thetford. The sun even shone on us as we relaxed at a cafe in Stowmarket and the lanes through West Suffolk in the late afternoon glowed warmly. The spring migrants had arrived and we were passed by swallows swooping low over the fields in search of insects after their long flight north. Deer barked as we passed a copse near Barnham Common. In Thetford, a few swifts screamed overhead as we searched for an evening meal.

We enjoyed a walk along the river before breakfast and visited a very special site near the Nunnery, home of the British Trust for Ornithology. Breckland is home to many rare plants and some British endemics, those that are found here and nowhere else. Preserving the Breckland habitat is a challenge. Historically, the soil was continually blown by the wind and sandy heaths developed with very bare soils enabling these rare plants to exploit the niches. Few of these mobile sandy habitats remain and attempts to recreate them often involve scraping off the topsoil all together.

In one such place, near the Nunnery, last year a colony of rare Creeping Marshwort appeared. This is a very small, creeping plant like a miniature Cow Parsley. Until last year, it was thought to exist only at a couple of sites near Oxford, on bare flood plains near the river, kept clear by grazing cattle. We remember searching unsuccessfully to spot one on Port Meadows a few years ago.

Here in Thetford, removing the topsoil near the river on an area that floods in winter, has created exactly the right conditions for the seeds that must have lain dormant in the soil below for many years. Lots germinated and created a huge buzz of excitement in late summer last year. A further colony was later identified in Walthamstow Marshes later last year.

It was too early for flowers, but the leaves were just starting to show and we headed into the town for breakfast enthused for the day's ride. With little wind and no rain, we had a good ride to King's Lynn, pausing at the National Trust managed Oxburgh Hall for lunch, where we had lovely views of Green Woodpeckers amongst other wildlife.

The storm clouds gathered over King's Lynn as we explored the town that evening and we beat a hasty retreat, just beating the thunder storms back to our hotel. Riding across the Fens is always an interesting experience. There is wildlife to find in the dykes and rivers and along the verges of the roads. The weather was less kind and between Fosdyke and Boston we were treated to another thunderstorm. Typically, there is little shelter so we arrived at our B and B somewhat bedraggled but after a satisfying day. The network of small lanes kept us off the main highways.



Wind and rain shortened our next day as we fought a headwind into Spalding. Given the forecast for 40 mph headwinds the next day, we abandoned the ride to Cambridge and took the challenge of using the train, which actually worked really smoothly and gave us the chance to explore Trumpington Meadows, a nature reserve on the edge of the city where we found our first orchids. These were the unassuming green Twayblades growing with Adder's Tongue Ferns, which are equally well camouflaged. It's a lovely area and well worth exploring. A White Helleborine rounded off our day beautifully.

The rain held off until Stowmarket on our last day's ride home from Cambridge. There was still a lot to see including Buzzards and a Red Kite. The Packhorse Bridge at Moulton had delightful Wild Clary growing on it as well as lining the verges along the Newmarket Gallops.

Spring has certainly arrived at last and how wonderful to be able to explore it again from the bicycle on a short tour. Enjoy your rides and keep an eye over the hedge, there is always something to see.

## ***Hedgewatcher***



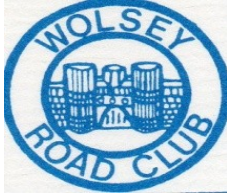
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## **The WOLSEY ROAD CLUB celebrates 60 years**

**How does a cycle racing club celebrate its Diamond year when so little sport is allowed due to the epidemic is perplexing?**

**Cycling clubs are renowned for their long life, with many having been in existence for over 125 years and a few topping 140 years. However the Wolsey Road Club, named after Ipswich's most famous son Thomas Wolsey, has packed many highlights into its three score years.**

**Started by a group of tourists from the Cyclists' Touring Club, Suffolk section who wished to try their hand at racing, it was born on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1961**

**After a modest start it grew to prominence after an influx of talented youngsters joined from the touring club during the late 1960's.**

**Before long the club was getting a reputation for promoting high standard ground breaking events, such as the Ipswich Town races and Felixstowe sea front races for all grades up to professionals which attracted large crowds of holiday makers.**

**Promoting became one of the club's main achievements in the 1970's with Time Trials, Road Races and the start of a Cyclo-Cross League in East Anglia. Both the Road Races and Cyclo-Crosses would break with convention by promoting events in the Ipswich town parks to take cycle racing to the public.**

**In 1981 the title of National 12 hour Time Trial Team Championship was won by the Club on Norfolk and Suffolk roads. Wolsey members also began topping the results in many forms of cycle racing.**

**The club has been fortunate to have had only three presidents during that time, all of which were inspiring in their own way,**

**George Fuller, Olive Forsbrook and Mick Pepper.**

**Current President is Maureen Nichols one of the founder members.**

**The benefits of cycling can be shown by the fact that five of the original twelve members are still on their bikes today. Membership has fluctuated up and down as with all clubs but current membership has remained around 60 for the last few years.**

**Success of recent years has been thinner on the road and cross events, but with a good team of committee and officials we look forward to more success in the future.**

**Now we come to the answer to the original question, an open 25 mile Time Trial and four Ipswich & District Cycling Association evening events in July. A celebration lunch in the autumn will mark this milestone in an uncertain racing year.**



**Members at the first AGM in 1961**



## Founder members celebrating 50 years in 2011

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Maureen has asked me to tell you all that there will be an annual lunch again next year. It will be at Ufford Park on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Put this in you your diary now! More details to follow.

Editor.

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Paul Fenton, who was the main organiser for the 2011 Birthday Rides, sent in these pictures.



## Vaccine dream *By Mike Havard*

It had been a beautiful day, I'd been a fair way  
and it had been a great day to be out with few cars about.  
The perfect day to be a rider and not an impatient driver.  
My legs were spinning and my tyres were singing  
And just for a mo I felt like a pro.  
I was on a flyer but the road got higher.  
My speed reduced – incline induced.  
As a lorry passed by my side, I grabbed for a ride  
but I couldn't hang on so I had to press on.  
At the top of the mound I turned around.  
The sun was getting lower and I was getting slower.  
On I was with the plodding with my head now a nodding,  
Things are on the wonk – I must have the bonk.  
Why did I have to roam so far from home  
because I'm going to be late for an important date.  
Things are hazy, I must have been lazy,  
sat in the chair and nodded off there.  
Pheh, t'was but a horrid dream – I'm still in time for my Covid vaccine.

## GEORGE AUTON OBITUARY

George joined the Wolsey R.C in 1979, he and his wife Wendy used to take their camper van to events to serve refreshments. He was always a popular and cheerful member of the Club.

He raced at a good standard but he also spent time supporting his two sons Paul and David. Paul time trialling to a very high standard with Club records for schoolboy and junior at 10 and 25 miles.

He was a Vice President, and Time Trial secretary from 1981 to 1984. He promoted the 10 mile and 25 mile Time trials. In 1981 he was the unlucky 4th counter for the club team that won the National 12 hour championship with 226.277miles.

He organised the 1989 and 1990 Reliability Trial from Nedging where he lived.

Ken Nichols

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## Vrienden op den Fiets

I'm a long standing CTC member and used to regularly go on the Sunday morning rides, occasionally with other family members. Time moves on and circumstances change. My wife and I are still very active cyclists, but now we 're both retired we can, and do, set off on our bikes at the drop of a hat.

We also ride up in Yorkshire when lockdown permits! Our daughter has settled there.

For the past few years we set off from home in Ufford on our tandem and cycle via Bawdsey Ferry, Harwich Harbour Ferry and the Harwich-Hoek van Holland ferry to tour in the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark etc. We are members of Vrienden op den Fiets and have made many enduring friendships with our VoDF hosts.

We have seen many exciting and unusual things but our most memorable "event" was in the Netherlands on the second morning of our tour in 2018. On the Wednesday morning before we left home I was lying awake shortly after 7:00am, listening to BBC R4 Today programme. There was an article about a herd of 22 European bison that had recently been introduced into Kraansvlak, a beautiful area of 330 hectares of dunes and natural ponds making up part of the Zuid-Kennemerland national park. I shook my wife awake to listen: "Hey Jenny we'll be cycling there in a week's time!"

We spent the Tuesday night with a VoDF host in Zandvoort, and off we went into Zuid-Kennemerland national park early the following morning. Jenny is my rear gunner and she was scanning the landscape for any sign of bison. It was a beautiful morning – not a soul in sight. Fresh sea air. After half an hour or so, with great excitement, we spotted a bison in the distance. As the morning went on it got hotter – and by and by we saw the occasional bison – always at least 500m distant. The heat increased and we saw them in twos and threes wallowing in the many large ponds. Shortly before we had planned to stop for lunch we were on a track. We'd got used to seeing bison. The track was straight but there was a sharp 90 degree left turn 500m ahead. The ground either side was waterlogged and marshy.

The track beyond the bend was obscured by a line of vegetation - bushes, small trees etc.

We made the left turn and were immediately confronted with about 10 bison about 30m ahead. Most were on the path and a few up to their thighs in the reeds on either side.

What to do? There wasn't much time to decide. They were huge! Horns like lances!

Stop? Tandem riders know that starting off can be a bit wobbly!

Stop and turn? The routes were very few and far between – and thunder clouds were gathering and the track wasn't wide enough for a U turn.

We rolled closer to the great beasts quietly whispering “They're vegetarians... they're vegetarians... they're vegetarians”

We carefully and silently weaved our way through, the huge beasts brushing against our arms and legs. The ones facing us directly were OK – we could make eye contact. The ones across the track were difficult... they inconsiderately left us with a very narrow path edge and we could easily have slipped off. Those presenting their backsides were the scariest because they sometimes seemed a bit startled and only saw us out of the corners of their eyes. When we were between two of them we just prayed they wouldn't close ranks!

The incident was over in a couple of minutes – but it was the scariest two minutes we've ever spent on our bike saddles!

On another occasion we were returning from Copenhagen, and our plan was to have an early start (3a.m.) to get the ferry from Rodby Haven to Puttgarten in Germany. From there we had planned a rail journey to Lubeck where we would catch a train to Hamburg. From there we had booked a fast train to Duisburg and then we could catch a train to Arnhem, where we had accommodation booked with VoDF.

We had every stage of the rail journey booked. (We sometimes will use trains to travel the last few km into and out of the centres of big cities - but this was the only all-day train journey we had planned cross country.) We had planned to spend some time in South Netherlands in and around the Biesbosch national park.

The ferry had us into Puttgarten in good time for our train. The train station is a small terminus for ferry passengers. There was a handful of travellers. Our departure time came... and went. There were no announcements and, our plans which relied on every stage being punctual, were unravelling. There was a group of three railway “officials” on the platform. I asked them what was going on and they said I was not to worry, the train would soon arrive. Time passed. It had got to the point where it would be impossible for a train to get from Puttgarten to meet our connection at Lubeck. So we wouldn't make it to Hamburg on time – and the high speed train ticket from Hamburg to Duisberg was not transferrable – and we'd booked the tandem on board!!!

We decided to just make the best of it – we were on holiday, after all.

Eventually a train clanked into the station, destination: Lubeck...but not in time to meet our connection. I went over to the German train “officials” and asked if they could suggest a better route. One of the guys – who seemed the most senior – said “Just one moment.” He went up to the front of the train and climbed into the cab. After a few minutes he returned and said: “You must not worry. I have directed the driver to take this train to Hamburg. You will be in time for your connection to Duisburg.”

Well! We offered him our sincere thanks, climbed aboard and did indeed get all the way to Hamburg in good time for our connection to Duisburg and Arnhem. We often reflect on this little episode, and wonder what would happen if a couple of German cyclists found themselves in Harwich station with a plan to get to Ipswich in time for a particular London train out of Ipswich, hoping eventually to make a connection to, say, Manchester... only to find the train to Ipswich was delayed. What is the likelihood of the British Rail official saying (in fluent German) “Don’t worry. I have directed the driver to take this train to London. You will be in time for your connection to Manchester”

As a footnote, we were up early the following morning and set off from Arnhem to Leiden. We were cycling into Leiden later that day and a van flashed its lights and tooted the horn and stopped 50 metres beyond us. This complete stranger was in a very excited state and said “How did you get here? How DID you get here?.” We had never seen the bloke before in our lives! When he had calmed down he explained that he had been driving more or less non stop from the ferry at Puttgarten with only a few hours sleep. He had seen us ride off the Puttgarten ferry the previous morning at the same time as he had disembarked – the yellow tandem is quite eye-catching! I was wearing my London 2012 cycling top – so I explained that I was a former Olympic Champion in 2012 and an ex professional rider. Jenny let me get away with this for a few minutes but soon put him straight with our adventures with DeutscheBahnhof! As we rode out of Leiden the following morning, guess who overtook us? Yep - the van man again! As the morning went on we were aware that some houses had school satchels hanging from their chimneys for no reason we could think of. We stopped to ask a passer by what significance the satchels on chimneys had. It turned out that it was exam results day, and if a student’s results were good, by tradition they would inform the neighbours of their success by hoisting their school satchel onto the chimney!!!

Andy and Jenny Barkley

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Maureen Nichols has asked me to add this:-

Wolsey Road Club 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2021 at Rushmere Village Hall, Ipswich. 1pm – 5pm. All Wolsey and ex Wolsey and CTC members are welcome to meet up to reminisce. Buffet and drinks approx £15.

Contact Trevor Roberts: email [trev1974@googlemail.com](mailto:trev1974@googlemail.com) Tel 01473 464215



Colin Ablitt has a pair of front racks for sale which are unused, complete with instructions and fittings. He is asking £12 including postage.

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