

Hallo Everybody

We have a bumper issue this quarter as so many of you have sent in very interesting articles. Thank you all very much. I think I shall save some for next time but, please don't think that means that more articles won't be welcome!



I am not a computer expert and I do my best but, sometimes, articles may not appear in the exact format in which they were submitted. I hope you understand and that you all enjoy the read.

Judy Scott, Editor

ooo000ooo

Secretary's Notes

After more than a year of disruption, CTC Suffolk rides have returned to "normal" with a published programme on our website. From what I have seen, numbers of Thursday riders are comparable with pre-pandemic levels; some new riders have joined the club, and other "dormant" members have become "active".



This latter category is of particular significance for me, as I was one myself. I joined the CTC in 1982 whilst working in London, not to participate in club rides but for the general membership benefits which are still relevant today – information (in those days solely via the magazine or telephone calls to HQ), third-party insurance and legal help. For the next 28 years I cycled on my own coming into contact with local CTC groups when participating in an event they were running. Only after retirement did I join regular club rides to fill some of my newly acquired free time (whatever happened to that, I wonder?).

I mention this because not everyone is aware of quite how many members we at CTC Suffolk have in this "dormant" category. Only about 10% of our membership list are actively involved in regular or with a small group of friends, only occasionally club activities, by which I mean they are on the email lists for Sunday and/or Thursday rides. (The latest figure I have from Glen is 123 out of 1085). Now that the Winged Wheel is available for all to read on our website, any of our dormant members may be reading this. To them I'd like to say they would be welcome to turn up for one of our club rides at any time. And there is no need to wait for retirement, as we have rides on Sundays as well as Thursdays – just look on our website for the published rides programme which will show where they start and where they go.

John

A Grand day Out

No nothing to do with Wallis or Gromet, but a story of a Thursday away-day to Essex.

I guess if you are a Cyclist a car journey is always an horrendous experience, and on this occasion, it was for some. Our own fault, as to get to the start for 9 30am at Danbury we needed to travel in the rush hour on the A12.

Starting at Danbury Common we skirted Danbury to the west and headed north to Lt Baddow. The Main Street of Lt Baddow is called North Hill and is well known as a cyclist training route. We headed down into the Chelmer valley past "Paper Mill Lock". Bridging the river, we made our way to "Hoe Mill Lock" and Bridge, passing through Mowden and Ulting. Pressing on via Woodham Walter and Curling Tye green, brought us to Maldon for Coffee at the Barge café on the quay, but not before stopping to admire the triangular church tower in the main street.

Suitably refreshed and with substantial cake slices consumed, we set out for our lunch stop at Rettendon. The route took us via Mundon, Roundbush, Purleigh, Stow Maries and Woodham Ferrers. This area is less hilly than that to the North with straight road between villages.

Lunch was taken at Rettendon Bell, which offered a good selection of beers and food.

There was a choice of route back to the start, but mindful of the rush hour traffic a short 10 mile ride was chosen via South Hanningfield, skirting the Hanningfield Reservoir then on to West Hanningfield and you guessed it, East Hanningfield. We completed the route via Bicknacre and North to Danbury Common. Just in case you are wondering there isn't a North Hanningfield.

I was pleased that in total we numbered 14 riders.

Maurie



Riders and bikes on the Quay.

50 years on a tandem

By Mike Havard

A while ago I was asked "How do you start tandeming". So how did I get into it? You may remember that in a recent article I mentioned my friend Andrew. Well, his parents had a tandem that hadn't been used for years. We decided it might be fun – and it was. In those far off days, club runs were made up mostly of young people (of course club runs are still made up of young people, but all with the now fashionable grey/silver hair). We must have caused havoc when sprinting for road signs etc, but we all survived without incident.

Then we decided we should try racing them. Occasionally we could scrounge a lift to an event, but sometimes we would ride to an event. For an event starting at Bishops Stortford we might stay at a club hut overnight – one I remember was right by the fence of Stanstead airfield! How things have changed. Then we were just weirdos, now we would be locked up as terrorists. We were very successful. More often than not we would place in the top 30. Most events would have less than 40 tandems.

One weekend I remember we went to watch the Skol 6 day race at Wembley, getting home after 2 in the morning and then getting up at 5 to go to an event. We must have been on a high from the event as we managed to get into the top 20.

Then university got in the way and after that I moved to London. While in London a colleague said he had a tandem frame he would give me should I wish. "Yes please" I replied, expecting a Hetchins or Claud Butler. I tried to look impressed when I was presented with a rust encrusted frame of suspect origin.

Soon after my company were moving me to Ipswich and were happy to pay for my moving expenses. I only had a bed and an old tandem frame to move but felt it warranted hiring a big van at company expense and in that way we could take in a race on the way back to Ipswich. Andrew's tandem went in the van with loads of room to spare. At the event the van also served as a spacious changing room and we thought we must look very impressive as we opened the rear doors and wheeled out the tandem. It turned out that the size of the tandem carrier was no reflection of racing prowess.

Then girl friends got in the way. Fortunately Ann was a cyclist. Being a gentleman I would let her ride on the inside – but this led to arguments when I turned left and she turned right. Or I was accused of going too fast. The relationship was hanging by a thread until she mentioned that her parents had an unused tandem. Phew! Now we always went the same way at the same speed and could save our arguments for more mundane subjects; like did we really need wedding photographers or couldn't we just get hitched without telling anyone. I lost most arguments but at least I was in charge when on the tandem.

Then kids got in the way. Kiddy cranks were installed but there were arguments as to whose turn it was to have a ride. I rooted around in the back of the shed and found the long forgotten tandem frame. A quick visit to Madgetts who added brake bosses and managed to

replace the red rust with red paint. The severe rust attack always made the frame look as though it had barely recovered from a case of small pox, but fitted out with all the spare parts I could find and another set of kiddy cranks we could each take one of the kids. Problem solved. If only! Now the argument was who was going to ride with who. But we overcame that and surprisingly quickly the kids no longer wanted to be seen with mum and dad, let alone on the back of a tandem.

So Ann and I were finally allowed out by ourselves again. We decided to go to Yorkshire for a short holiday. Of course the weather was against us and when struggling up a steep climb in the pouring rain Ann said it was too steep and we should walk. "Not yet" I said pressing on, only realising a little later that she had somehow dismounted while we were on the move (I have still not managed to work out how she did it). Of course I was in trouble again for leaving her behind. Then I got into more trouble for saying that I thought it had suddenly got easier. Now we go walking when on holiday.

We have lost count of the number of times we hear "she's not pedalling" and get particularly annoyed when it comes from a cyclist. Recently we were out minding our own business during Covid lockdown isolation when we heard a shout of "you need a longer bike". Nice one! Often women will say they couldn't ride on the back as either they couldn't see where they are going or they like to be in control. Ann is generally happy on the back, though always complaining that she should have brakes. I tell her it wouldn't make any difference – the ones I have work well (shh, actually not true). Being on the back gives her the opportunity to conduct bird counts when we are out. I occasionally have to remind her of her primary role when I realise she has become too engrossed in counting birds or admiring posh houses and gardens but we have survived 40 years of tandeming together.

Roll on the next 40!

ooo000ooo

Over the Hedge

I was riding out through Great Blakenham past the remains of the many quarries and it set me thinking about chalk.

Chalk is basically a type of limestone, but clearly different to the Great Scar Limestone found in the Yorkshire Dales, where wonderful features like Malham Cove show it off at its best. Neither is it like the tall dolomite cliffs found in Italy. Chalk is a soft limestone, easily eroded by the waves on the coast to form features such as the White Cliffs of Dover.

A quick glance at a geological map of East Anglia shows that Chalk underlies most of the region. It only reaches the surface in a few places, often as a result of earth movements in distant times. But these deep layers of Chalk are essential for us because the Chalk is porous and holds water. As a result, when it rains, some water seeps down into the earth and

gradually finds the chalk where it is absorbed, a little like a sponge. So the Chalk is an underground reservoir of water, generally known as an aquifer. This is where much of our drinking water comes from.

We would have to go back into deep time to find where the Chalk originates. In a period known as the Late Cretaceous about 90 million years ago, when dinosaurs were still walking around the Earth, something caused volcanoes that lie beneath the oceans to increase in activity. In a series of events this caused a build up of Carbon Dioxide in the atmosphere and the spreading lava beneath the seas displaced the water causing a global rise in sea levels.

Much of England that had been enjoying a period above the waves was now inundated beneath warm seas and small creatures called Coccoliths flourished in the conditions. These creatures are tiny algae who extract the mineral Calcium Carbonate from sea water to build internal hard parts like miniature bones. When the algae die, these hard parts fall to the sea floor mixing with silt and clay to form an ooze. It is this ooze that accumulates over time, is compressed and buried, eventually forming the chalk. In some places, silica accumulated in the chalk and during the burial processes formed thin layers of flint or chert.

Around 65 million years ago, the Cretaceous period came to an abrupt end, probably as a result of a large asteroid impact which triggered a series of other events causing global climate change and a major mass extinction – famously wiping out all of the dinosaurs except birds. The layer of Chalk across East Anglia was subsequently buried and major earth movements caused it to tilt towards the east. Later sediments were built up above it and subsequently eroded in some places, exposing the Chalk once again. Where it is exposed, Chalk has been quarried and used on the fields in agriculture. It has been used in the cement industry. It is used in putty or as a whiting to paint cottages. It can be found in buildings as stones or clunch. Chalk was used in toothpaste and by tailors and builders for marking out.



We have already mentioned its value as an underground water reservoir. Towards the west, where the chalk is tilted up and near the surface, it creates the downland habitat. Riding over to Newmarket, there is a distinct change in the flora and a stop on the Devil's Dyke in spring can give a wonderful experience of chalk wildflowers. One of the most attractive are the Pasque Flowers which grow there, although a trip past Cambridge to Therfield Heath near Royston will leave you aghast at the sight of over 60,000 in bloom. As their name suggests, Easter is a good time to look.

Where the tilted layer of chalk is exposed in the east, it is often the lower, older chalk that is seen. The most famous exposure is at Hunstanton Cliffs and from the beach you can look back at the white base of the younger chalk above older Hunstanton Red Chalk and Brown Sandy Carstone. These striped cliffs are also home to an isolated nesting group of Fulmars, birds that look a little like gulls but are actually petrels and fly with very stiff wings. They are usually found further north.

A final delight to find on a ride to Thetford Forest is Grimes Graves. Here, our prehistoric ancestors mined down into the chalk in search of flints to fashion into stone tools some 5,000 years ago. If you have never climbed down the ladder into the mines, it is a treat in store.

Hedgewatcher

ooo000ooo



Professional Mechanic Martin Nichols
Bringing back Brilliance to the Bicycle.

Lovingly Fixing Bicycles ... from Classic to the Cutting Edge

Let Sunny Day Make Your Day

07807 326267 or 01473 806391
fixme@sunnydaycycleworks.com
Hadleigh

GRAND OPENING of New BMX track in Ipswich

A few Suffolk CTC members enjoyed an exciting morning of BMX racing in early September. The meet was organised by Ipswich BMX Club to celebrate the grand opening of their new track on Landseer Park.

For the last 2 years CTC Suffolk has made charitable donations to support the hard working and enthusiastic group who run the club in Ipswich; many of them volunteers of some 40 years standing. Initially, we gave £500 towards fundraising for the new track. Donations like ours helped attract larger amounts from other official bodies. Our most recent donation was used to purchase special helmets for loan to young riders wishing to try the sport.

We were delighted to learn that the Club had successfully raised the £300,000 needed to construct a new track to current national standards.

Ipswich BMX Club is the UK's longest running Bicycle Motocross Club. Their ethos is all about having fun on bikes, as one big inclusive family. The community spirited Club has been called home by novices, local legends and World Champions alike.

The first ever race held by the Club (known as the Witches back then) took place at Landseer Park in November 1980 on one of the country's first purpose built tracks.

Moto-cross champion Dave Bickers and Barry Scott-Webb from Ipswich Witches Speedway helped to construct the original track, which used a ramp attached to the side of a lorry for its start hill! A dirt start hill soon followed on the former landfill site and old shale from Foxhall Stadium's speedway track was used to surface the Ipswich track, making it the country's first local authority track.

Local CTC members at the Grand Opening were pleased to see Bryan Potter, one of the Club's founders who played a key role in the early local scene, running local BMX emporium Leisure Wheels on Nacton Road.

The Club continued to grow through the 1980's and its Landseer Park track underwent an extensive rebuild and layout change in time to host the first of two consecutive international events in 1989 and on Ipswich BMX Club website.

<https://www.ipswichbmx.co.uk/> 1990.

On Saturday, racing at the opening of the new track attracted more than 100 riders of all ages from many other BMX clubs – Milton Keynes and Royston to name but two. It also included an appearance by at least one current national champion.

If you missed the fun and want to pop along on another occasion, details of future meets can be found

Philip & Margaret Hancock

Winged Wheel

September 2021
Issue 292

we are cycling
The cyclists' champion **UK**



The Tour That Never Happened

By Pete Smith

Inspired by first tour articles by Michael Scott and Mick Hearne, let me tell you about my first tour.

It was 1956 (yes I know) and the cycling bug was really beginning to bite and the only answer was to join a cycling club. And so I became a West Suffolk Wheeler. 1950's club life was good with club runs, club nights, time trialling and hostelling weekends. One of the early things which struck me in the Club was the large number of second claim members, some of whom were only around for months and others for what seemed years. I can recall Pete Williams – Camberley Wheelers, Alan Marks – Maesteg and District, Tom Docherty – Hitchin Nomads, Ray Charles – Calder Clarion (the brother of Beryl Burton), Harry Milburn – Barnesbury Wheelers. There were others whose names I have now forgotten. These riders all helped to up the Club profile, most of them in time trialling. Tom Docherty lowered the Club "25" record more than once. The reason for this influx of "foreigners" was National Service. All of the second claim riders were either locally based in the Army or the Air Force and appeared to have quite a lot of time off !

I became quite friendly with Alan Marks, the Welshman, and it was his suggestion that we spend a week touring in his area of South Wales in summer 1958, almost a foreign country to me. So we made quite ambitious plans to go hostelling around the Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast, etc. All went well until a few days before we were to leave Suffolk, when some political crisis blew up in the Middle East, Iraq I believe, and most servicemen had their leave cancelled and were to stay on base. Alan successfully argued that a war could be waged without him and he was allowed to take the planned leave, but with the proviso that he left an address where he could be contacted and return to RAF Honington at short notice. So this meant staying in one place, In this case Alan's parents home in Maesteg, and not hostelling around South Wales. So we travelled by train via London, don't recall cycling from Liverpool Street to Paddington being a big deal, to Cardiff. Alan's parents were very welcoming and gave us lots of Welsh hospitality, so although this wasn't the week we had planned we had a memorable time and got spoiled rotten !

It was all new to me anyway and the week turned out probably better than we had planned despite missing our tour, because at that time the 1958 Empire and Commonwealth Games were being staged in Cardiff. So several days were spent commuting by bike from Maesteg to Cardiff to watch cycling events. We saw the great Ray Booty (the first man to ride 100 miles in under 4 hours) win gold for England in the road race and also watched Track Racing at Maindy Stadium. Conditions were pretty primitive then, Maindy being an outdoor concrete track, with less than perfect surfacing. However we saw Normal Sheil (25 mile time trial champion at that time) take gold and Tommy Simpson (who subsequently died on the Col du Tormalet when riding the Tour) take silver in the individual pursuit. There was also an international invitation "50" for elite riders and we cheered on Mick Ward of Haverhill

September 2021
Issue 292



Wheeler to victory in that event. Mick was at his peak at that time and was winning time trials week after week.

So it really turned out to be a very good and memorable week after all, although unfortunately that first tour had to wait and I never got to tour in South Wales!



ACTION OUTDOORS LTD

THE OUTDOOR PURSUITS EQUIPMENT SPECIALISTS

15 Court Farm, Branham,
Manningtree CO11 1PW

Tel & Fax: 01473 211647

email: info@actionoutdoors.co.uk
www.actionoutdoors.co.uk

Outdoor Clothing & Footwear – Lightweight Tents - Sleeping Bags
Cycle Panniers – Cycle Rucksacks

Discount Available For
Suffolk CTC Members

www.downsleepingbag.co.uk www.vaude.com

PETER BERRY AND THE DUNWICH DAYNAMO

Since his diagnosis of early onset dementia at the age of fifty, there have been more than a fair share of doors slammed shut in Peter's face. The repercussions of the diagnosis meant he lost his business, his income, his ability to drive and some of his autonomy. The rapidly deteriorating short-term memory now means that Peter is not able to read or watch television because he cannot retain the thread of what he has read or what has been said.

I can only imagine how lonely it must be to wander in a world where access to so much is denied to you; how frightening it must be to feel the walls close in, how terrifying to sense that the breath is being squeezed from your body. A shrinking world must be a scary place. However, in Peter's words the 'simple bicycle' enables him to throw open the doors and allow him access to the world again.

Always one for a metaphor, a bit of hyperbole or sometimes both together, Peter once said that, "Cycling is like a balloon that takes me high into the sky, far above the dirty mist of dementia. Up here I can breathe and think, down there I am suffocated. Long may I fly on my bike."

In his pre-dementia world, Peter had always wanted to ride the Dunwich Dynamo but work commitments and family life meant that he never got around to it. Therein lies a salutary lesson about procrastination! Now that he's not working and has time, the overnight nature of this event meant it was going to be impossible as Peter gets incredibly tired in the late afternoon/evening. It seemed yet another door was closing. However, being Peter, he was nimble enough to jam his cycling shoe in the door before it slammed. He was determined that he would ride from London to Suffolk; he just had to find a solution to a problem - something at which Peter most surely excels.

Peter decided that he would ride the route during the day and, thus, the Dunwich 'Daynamo' was conceived. To bring it fully to life, Peter needed the intervention of others (to plan travel arrangements, hotel stays, publicity, fundraising) but he certainly did not need any help in tackling the distance of over one hundred miles.

As dementia crept insidiously into Peter's life, tasks with which he had been familiar became unexpectedly complicated. One of the things he started to find more complex was the ability to change gears consistently on his road bike. Whilst this was manageable over short journeys, Peter knew that he would be too mentally fatigued to use gears for any greater distance. The solution to this problem? Peter would cycle the Dunwich 'Daynamo' in its entirety on his single speed bike.

When I agreed to cycle with him, I had no doubt that Peter would be the one to whom I would turn to fix any mechanical issues and so, as with many of the events in which we are involved, we retained the symbiotic nature of our relationship. It is really important to reiterate that I am NOT Peter's carer. I am his friend and we both use the abilities we possess to be mutually supportive of the other (and, as anyone who knows me will testify to, my abilities do not include mechanics or navigation!)

And, of course, whilst no one had any doubts that Peter would effortlessly cycle the 'Daynamo', we also all knew that memories of the event would quickly dissipate, even before the ride had finished. Peter once described me as his external memory or, as he put it, his 'plug in and save device'. This was where I would find my niche: I would be Peter's memory stick. And, if I'm honest, I have been described in the past in less flattering terms than this.

Our 'Daynamo' event was all the more precious because it was the first time Teresa would ride with Peter on a cycling challenge. A relative newcomer to cycling, Teresa (despite her trepidation at the fact that she had never cycled more than eighty miles in one go) was

determined to make the journey with Peter. The emotional pull of cycling was clear for all to see as the two Berrys stood side by side in their Alzheimer's Research UK (ARUK) cycling tops, pausing to drink in their shared moment, just before the first turn of the pedal propelled them on their way together.

The fourth member, and a very key one, of our party was London-based Andrew, who took responsibility for navigating us out of London. Without Andrew I remain convinced we would still be wandering aimlessly around Stratford International Station.

Cycling has the power to unite people and to enable us to engage with those around us. It was both touching and trusting in equal measure that strangers donated money for the ARUK fundraising *en route*; it was wonderful that one of Peter's friends took the trouble to wait for us on a main road somewhere in Essex so he could take a video as we all cycled through. Gestures like this bring out the best in humans and remind us that there is good in the world and philanthropy can triumph over misanthropy. And all because of the 'simple bicycle.'

We completed the ride in just under eight hours with no punctures or accidents. Peter, on his single speed bike, was tired only in his mind but the triumph etched across his face when we reached Saxmundham was a memory that, for Teresa, Andrew and me, will remain. For Peter, the nuances and details of the ride have already faded but the emotion stored within his heart of having achieved, having conquered, having overcome, will always be there.

We cycled to raise money for Alzheimer's Research UK and the total currently stands at more than £1,100. The link below is the tinyurl to the JustGiving page should anyone want to donate. And here we are, at the start, with Lucy from ARUK sandwiched between us.

<https://tinyurl.com/aannyp6v>

You can read more about Peter's cycling and how he lives well with dementia in his book, "Slow Puncture" written with Deb Bunt and published by The Book Guild.

<https://peterberrylwa.wixsite.com/peterberry/the-book>

Winged Wheel

September 2021
Issue 292

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK



Get a life

Get a bicycle from



FRALEIGH

SCOTT

DAWES

DIAMONDBACK

FOR ALL YOUR CYCLING NEEDS

YOUR NEXT BIKE

DISCOVER YOUR HONEST BRITISH RIDE

FIND YOUR RIDE

418 Norwich Road, Ipswich, IP1 5DX 01473 464611

PRESIDENT'S PIECE SEPTEMBER 2021

We are now threequarters of the way through the second Covid-disrupted year but it appears that we are nearly? out of the woods (we all hope). Being avid cyclists we have been lucky that, throughout the trials and tribulations of the last eighteen months, we have been able to enjoy our country lanes on two wheels without any serious difficulties.

In common with most people, we have decided to “staycation” this year in view of the uncertainties and restrictions over foreign travel. However this hasn't prevented us from taking our bikes to places in the country that one or other of us have not visited before. Last Autumn we cycled on the Isle of Wight and earlier this year to Pembrokeshire and the Gower Peninsular. In a few days time we will be loading our bikes into the car once again for a trip to the Channel Islands – almost abroad.

Whilst cycling around our quiet lanes and peaceful villages it is still possible to accidentally come across something you have never seen before. On a Sunday ride very recently stopped for lunch on the recreation ground in Kelsale where we made good use of the newly installed picnic benches. On the edge of the green was a fallen tree fashioned into a bench and a tree stump both with wonderful carvings of local wildlife. To cap it all a buzzard was circling lazily overhead.



September 2021
 Issue 292

In conclusion I would like to reiterate the comments above made by our Secretary and urge all our members to dust off their bikes and take to the road, preferably joining one of our weekly Thursday or Sunday rides, and enjoy the spectacular autumn colours of our beautiful county out in the fresh air. As we proved on our recent ride you never know what surprises may be waiting just around the corner. There is nothing like a cycle ride to experience the sights, sounds and smells (well some of the smells) of the countryside, away from the roar of traffic.

Keep the wheels turning and stay safe and well

Michael

ooo000ooo

Cycling for Solar Panels

Hollesley, my Suffolk village, is having a new roof on the Village Hall. In this time of Climate Emergency it seemed obvious to me that we should top it with solar panels, to reduce our carbon footprint and also the costs of running the hall.

Although I am an octogenarian I am reasonably fit and able. This would be my 6th long sponsored ride, the first being Land's End to John O'Groats with my husband in 1994. Over the years I have moved from a drop handlebar touring bike to a step-through Dutch bike, and for the past 11 years I have enjoyed a Brompton. I now have an electric version which is wonderful!

This ride, postponed from 2020 due to Covid would not be too ambitious, just 260 miles around Suffolk and Norfolk, with an average of a little over 40 miles per day, staying in B and B's. I wrote about my plans in the village magazine, and a Justgiving website was set up for me. Soon the money came in, large and small amounts, on the website and cash or cheques through my letterbox.

I arranged to talk to the children at the Primary School about cycling, and its advantages, to get to school, to see their friends and to be independent. I encouraged them to get on their bikes around the local lanes, although some are wary of the traffic, especially large farm vehicles and fast cars. They were very interested in my bike, especially when I showed them how it folds up so small! On 21st June, the whole school of 100 pupils had made flags and walked along the village street to cheer me off from my home. What a wonderful send-off!

I use a standard 3 miles to the inch road map, perched on top of my pannier, which is a good scale for cycling, choosing B and Unclassified roads as I plan my route. I soon passed Snape and visited Leiston Abbey, where a kind lady gave me a donation, before joining the busy main road to Southwold. My destination was Lowestoft, and I was impressed with the Sustrans and other Cycle Routes which kept me separated and safe away from the main carriageway. The town too, was cycle and pedestrian friendly.

The following day the cycle paths disappeared as I approached Great Yarmouth on the very busy A47. Soon it was minor roads and traditional flint buildings, old and new to Mundesley. Next day on along the North Norfolk coast with beautiful blue sky and sea, and no headwind at last! Some of the villages had 20mph limits and very narrow streets, but people were patient and gave way to each other, even to me! Hunstanton was my destination, and en route I passed lots of wild flowers, fields of poppies, a tree plantation, a big wind farm out to sea, and enjoyed coffee and cake in an old Flint Reading Room before visiting Cley Nature Reserve.

Next day proved to be the longest, 55 miles to Brandon. I took a diversion to the wonderful Castle Acre Priory I had visited nearly 60 years before, with special memories. Getting back on my route was difficult due to unclassified roads and few signposts to help. Eventually I reached Brandon for the night. Next day it was wet at first and I was glad of my waterproofs.

At Bury St Edmunds many visitors were out enjoying the cathedral and the lovely gardens. It proved very difficult to find my route onto the old Sudbury road, avoiding the main A14, but a pensioner stacking trolleys at Tescos showed me the way! I passed through the ancient timbered streets of Lavenham and Kersey to reach Long Melford for my 5th and last night away. Just 34 miles on the last day, with an unavoidable challenging short ride on the A14 before minor roads home.

The Brompton behaved perfectly, and the electric boost helped me against the wind and up the hills. I was never exhausted and look forward to riding many more miles in the future. So far I have raised a little over £3,100, which will buy only about 6 Solar Panels. We need 40!

Helen Lewis

Helen



Brittany

By Tim Edmunds

“Let’s go to France, we always go to Germany”. Such was the plan for a week tour planned for me and Harriet (aka ‘management’).

Nothing special. We don’t do long, daily, distances. We stop and look a lot. We enjoy a tour’s unpredictability. We don’t pre-book accommodation; we switch between campsites, B&B’s and, occasionally, extravagant luxury hotels or spas. The route plan is a forecast, rather than a prediction. What we find is often a surprise, we don’t travel with a ‘ten things to see in the Rhineland Palatinate’ list taped to the handlebars. In short, we don’t call them holidays we call them adventures – ‘an undertaking with an uncertain outcome’.

In this frame of mind we found ourselves and our bikes, one early Spring, crammed into the wrong carriage of a French train. We were breathlessly aware it was Spring because the Spring UK clock change the day before, threw us in St Malo, when we realised that, instead of the 1 hour 15 minutes we thought we had to catch our train to Morlaix (as we contentedly sipped our first coffees off the ferry), we had, er, 15 minutes. Shouting.

We were painfully aware that it was the wrong carriage because the nice man from SNCF was telling us. Loudly. We practised our Gallic shrugs and, hotter and sweeter than our fellow train passengers would have liked, watched Brittany pass by.

The attraction of Morlaix as a starting point was that it was well connected to various ‘green routes’ – old railways long abandoned – that take one towards the centre of Brittany and which then meet up with the Nantes Brest canal, another excellent cycle way. Follow this a bit, heading east (with the wind), then strike north to St Malo, or at least, link up with a train back to St Malo. Plan A.

The green route out was hard going. Recent rain had turned decades of forest leaf litter into a sort of green ‘glue’, which held on to our wheels greedily.



Green Route Brittany

Winged Wheel

September 2021
Issue 292

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK

But, eventually we reached first base - the remarkable town of Huelgot. If you are a grotto fan then Huelgot is your place. A short walk from town is a sort of giants' rockery, where boulders measured in tons and metres lay heaped together in a crazy, maze of granite. Go round, over and under them, it's like potholing without the roof. Interesting place, and Plan A was turning into a dream. Hotel, good food, great weather.



Huelgot, Le Menage de Vierge

Next day a relaxed ride to Carhaix municipal campsite. Feral children stood barefoot and silent, in the bushes watching us drink. Their uniform increase in age and height suggested a regular expansion of the campsite manager's family, a man we watched, whilst reading the fictional menu, clean the kitchen BBQ with his electric drill. It was 'Deliverance' meets 'Lord of the Flies'.

After a day lounging in the sun, we headed off to the Brest Nantes canal which threaded us pleasantly east to a camp at Glomel. At this point Plan B could be vaguely discerned through the heat of the evening sun.

Our problem was that we'd left Huelgot on Saturday, and had spent Sunday counting 'Ferme' signs on the bars, cafes and restaurants we passed. Some shouting. We remembered Sunday in France were like this, so meals were of interesting combinations of iron rations and things found at the bottom of panniers, to be replenished tomorrow. But Monday was 'Heroes of the Resistance Day', another holiday. 'Ferme' took root.

I shouldn't exaggerate our predicament, no one left the tent saying "I may be sometime", but, as a guide, we were somewhere between 'extreme gratitude' to the campsite guardian who brought back a large tin of ravioli from his mum's house, and the depths of 'not quite desperate enough' to eat the stale packet of crisps with mouse bite marks at the bottom of the pack, offered by the one, open, bar. With its patio of unswept broken glass, ankle-deep

fag but I guess le patron hadn't found his 'ferme', certainly his customers at the bar looked as though they hadn't moved for months.

Festivals over, 'ouvert' now bossed 'ferme', and next day saw us noodling down the river towards a glorious, English-run campsite (Camping Gouarec). Sun, river, soft grass, delightful. We met a fellow traveller from our train, who, it emerged, was doing his own 'Tour de France', following the route of the Tour taken in the year of his birth which seemed a splendid idea. We eat.

Leaving Gouarec in sunshine, we were ambushed en route by Chateaux, Abbeys, Menhirs and other distractions.



Abbey Bon Repos

Progress was fascinating but slow, until, that is, the 20% descent over the final two kms to the campsite by a lake. I'd persuaded management of this destination (Campsite Merlin) largely on the basis of its fine lakeside terrace restaurant. There was a fine looking restaurant, but we also found waiters with their car keys in hand about to go home. The curse of 'ferme' ("only open for lunch this early in the season monsieur") struck again. But the French take dinner seriously, "wait here". We wait. Half hour later man emerges with the most enormous picnic of meats, cheeses, puddings, bread, bottles (cider and red wine) for a token sum.



Camp Merlin:Le picnic.

Tent up. Picnic consumed on lakeside terrace. Glorious sunset. Completely alone. Magic. If we'd known what was to come I think we would have stayed another night.



Camp Merlin: a fine evening

Don't miss the next issue of Winged Wheel to read more! (Ed)

ooo000ooo

My first Bike by Dave Etherington

Well, not my first bike, that had 3 wheels and solid tyres, but my first 'proper' bike. 'If you pass to the Grammar School we will buy you a bike,' said my parents So, when I was 12 my parents bought me a bike. It cost £16, £450 in today's money. This was remarkable because my parents had very little money. My father was a shop assistant and my mother was at home, as was normal in 1954. My mother was from a family of 10, and so was her father, so we had lots of Aunts and Uncles and Great Aunts and Great Uncles. Great Uncle George had recently died, so I assume that he had left Mum some money. Anyway, I had a bright red Raleigh bicycle, everything was steel, none of your aluminium rubbish, straight

handlebars, a single free wheel and 26-inch wheels. So, a heavy bike. This was freedom, and apart from cycling to school, I cycled all over the Vale of Evesham, where we lived. But my hero was Fausto Coppi; I had a picture of him on my bedroom wall. He had twin aluminium drink bottles on his handlebars, with large corks, and even though I had straight handlebars, I had to have the same. The village rummage sale had all sorts of things at ridiculously low prices, and I am sure that I bought my drink bottles there. Over time my bike morphed into something looking like a racing bike. Birthday and Christmas money, the rummage sale and the cycle shop in Evesham, provided dropped handlebars, 5-speed Benelux derailleur gears and a quill stem. But I still had the 26-inch wheels. My father had some old, white, cricket trousers which I purloined. I got my Mum to cut off the legs and make some shorts, and sew a large piece of chammy-leather to the backside, on the outside. When we moved to Reading, in 1959, I was 17, and while my parents moved I had organized a YH trip to the south coast. I was with my best friend Bryan, on his Sturmey-Archer 3-speed bike, and my cousin Tim, aged 13, on his rather small, single freewheel, bike. It went in a big loop through Reading, where we stayed with my Aunt Phyllis; Norleywood, in the New Forest; Swanage; Litton Cheney; Crowcombe; Clevedon and Duntisbourne Abbots; where Bryan left us to go back to Sedgeberrow. With the enthusiasm of youth, I had arranged for bread and milk to be provided at each Youth Hostel, so we had to move on next day, despite the moans, to the next hostel. When Bryan left us Tim and I carried on down the A4 to Reading and our new home. It is difficult to imagine, now, that there was very little traffic on the A4 in 1959. I saw Bryan once more before he died aged 62.

In 1960 I joined Reading Wheelers and did my first 25, on that bike. It was, of course 'stripped down'; no mudguards, fixed wheel and a tiny bell (legally required). It still had the 26-inch wheels, but by then I had toe-clips and Binda straps. I did a 1hr 3min, down-and-back, on the Bath Road. I wore my faithful old cricket trousers/shorts, an ordinary shirt and some old leather gloves with the fingers cut off. Cycling clothes came much later. By now I was working at the Met. Office in Bracknell, 16 miles away. Most of my training was cycling to and from work, plus club runs on Sunday. Coming home one evening, I was winding it up down the hill into Wokingham, when an old man with a 'cast-iron' sit-up-and-beg, bicycle, slowly walked across the road in front of me. I hit his bike somewhere around the rear wheel, shot up into the air and landed in the ditch. By the time I had sorted myself out he had gone across the road and down a lane. My bike was bent double, a complete write off. I was OK apart from some rather large bruises. This was way before cycle crash helmets, so I was lucky. Leaving the wreckage in the ditch, I picked up my 'bits and pieces' and set off for Wokingham Station and the train home. I have no recollection of going back for my bike, but it was the end of my bright red Raleigh. I did make up another bike from second-hand bits; frame from my road racing friend Terry Painter (he found it in his coal-hole, no markings, a frame of no-name), proper racing Campagnolo, Mavic and Stronglight goodies from John Woodburn (he would come down to the club house and sell off his 'cast-offs'). I raced on that, mainly road racing, with Terry and Rod Pike, for the next 4 years. We got some 'proper' racing tops made up in the club colours, with black cycling shorts. This was before Lycra, they were made from wool and the top had two pockets at the front and three at the back. I only sold that bike when we moved to Suffolk in 2006.

The Cathedrals Cycle Route? By Paul Jordan

I'm not interested. There are better rides and I've been there before.

So why is it that I keep getting drawn back to the recently published Cycling UK [challenge ride](#) round all of the 42 cathedrals in England? Thinking it through the advantages for me are that Cathedral cities offer lots of accommodation, cafes and bike shops. That means that it might be a good option for short tours in the winter. On the down side the more short tours I make the higher the travel costs to get the start and end of each. Also much of each ride is going to be in urban areas – slow, potentially less interesting and perhaps more dangerous.

And yet...

So it seemed to me the only way was to try it out. A train to Bury Edmunds wasn't a good start – one missed, one delayed and one pair of reading glasses dropped trackside during that slight panic time when your bike hasn't yet made it off the train but the passengers on the platform are getting impatient and surging to board.

Might as well offset the poor journey and light drizzle using a cake from the Refectory café. – That's better.

Clare and Finchingfield are not only my regular day trip menu from Ipswich but neither are they unfamiliar. Classic cycle touring country and very pleasant as the weather improved.

I marked the crossing of the A120 in Rayne with an ice cream and pushed on joining NCN 16 and 50 until close to the outskirts of Chelmsford. The 'recommended' route on the Cycling UK website appears to have been auto-generated by CycleStreets.net, it leads to Colchester and down the side of the A12. I'm glad I made up my own route.

I understand that there may be some kind of card which can be stamped at each Cathedral but finding someone to do it would doubtless mean delays and would also mean that I would need to make sure that I arrived during visiting hours for each one. I made do with a selfie at Chelmsford - but my expression shows I clearly need more practice at those.



I still had daylight left and so pressed onward for a few more miles past a sunflower maze before stopping for a pub meal. As darkness fell I made my way up a restricted byway and spent a reasonable night in my bivvy bag.

That should have allowed me to get an early start for day 2 but the lane became so muddy my wheels jammed up and once my wheel was out to deal with that my chain got tangled up. Good job there was plenty of dew covered grass to help clean up my hands before I presented myself for breakfast in Old Harlow.

The route on this stretch is obvious – NCN1 from Chelmsford and down the Lea Valley makes an excellent route into central London. Unfortunately I needed to visit St Albans first. The logical thing is to leave the Lea Valley at Hoddesden but I continued on to Waltham Cross as I wanted to see the Olympic White Water course. A good stop for lunch watching the rafting.

I was back on NCN once I reached Hatfield where a converted railway line runs to St Albans and, unexpectedly passed flats which I recognised as the factory where I did my work experience week back when we had factories.



St Albans Abbey Cathedral is the resting place of Robert Runcie one time Archbishop of Canterbury, I was expecting an interesting conversation with an ex-colleague of his who was standing near the grave but all I got was a list of house prices paid through his life. Ho hum.

My campsite that night provided the opportunity for my first sauna since lockdown. What a treat.

Day 3 took me right across London, from Watford in the north west to Orpington in the south east. First on bumpy tracks next to trunk roads and then on indirect and poorly marked London Cycle routes until I reached Regents Park. It was Saturday morning and the outer ring road was being used by hundreds of road bike riders. Inner London proved much

September 2021 Issue 292

easier riding than the route inbound. St Paul's was ticked off and then the shortest hop on the whole countrywide route – just a mile to Southwark. This is one of the few Cathedrals I haven't already been in. It still is. It was closed for a wedding.



After some further cycling in central London I headed out on a somewhat better route to my campsite near Swanley. For navigation I was using the app 'OSM+' linked to a helmet with built-in Bluetooth speakers. On the whole it worked very well but on this stretch I got mighty tired of the phrase 'Attention speed bump!'.

Day 4 was a day trip so I could leave my camping gear behind. As I peddled along scruffy lanes over motorway bridges and along the sides of trunk roads I ruminated on how well off we are for cycle routes in Suffolk. Hats off to the Kent riders I saw that have this all the time. After my last Cathedral at Rochester I headed back through the North Downs. We don't have hills like that either.

Some time ago I read about an easier cycle crossing than the Dartford tunnel and so it proved. On my last day I caught the frequent ferry from Gravesend to Tilbury with no fuss for £4 single. As I rode from there back to pick up a train home from Ingatestone station I passed through a pretty village, the first I had noticed since Hertfordshire.

So that's 6 out of a total of 42 cathedrals completed. Will I continue? I still don't know but if I do it won't be alone. Being a city with loaded panniers is so hard when there's no-one else to watch your bike as you go to a shop or loo. Or even to admire all that ancient ecclesiastical architecture.

ooo000ooo

A MAGNIFICENT CABBAGE

Tessa West

I walk down the garden early on a June morning, leaving faint footprints in the dew on my way to the vegetables. There are neat rows of carrots and onions, less tidy lettuces and

spinach and bunches of parsley. I have come to find a cabbage to take with me to London as a present from Suffolk.

I survey the rows of cabbages. Each large, firm head is seated solidly on leaves spread over the ground, I consider them carefully before choosing one of the biggest. It is perfect: light green on outside leaves which are covered with tiny drops of water, giving the impression of inlaid mother-of-pearl with strands of cobwebs stretched across like shawls of fine lace.

I cut it, leaving a bed of flat-veined leaves each like a tree in one dimension. It is heavy and I need both hands to carry it. I strap it above my panniers, which are sprouting bags of sweet peas, roses and broad beans

After an early lunch, I set off for West Kensington having planned my route. I have divided the journey up into 15 miles stages. Warmth and a pleasant breeze make it ideal cycling weather, and even with the extra weight behind me I begin to enjoy the exercise and my progress along the first familiar roads.

At Sudbury, I am surprised that my private satisfaction at completing the first stage in good time is recognised by a modest fanfare of car horns and friendly shouts. How do they know? But then a clearer voice calls out "You've dropped something, love!" and turning round I see that one of my bags has escaped from the pannier and is lying in the road.

I dump the bike and run back just in time to save the sweet peas and roses from becoming a hedgehog's wreath. I repack carefully and carry on. The citizens of Sudbury must see me as a wobbling eccentric and ambitious whose life is contained in Sainsbury's bags insecurely attached to the back of a bike.

My imagination leads to even worse scenarios. What if the cabbage had been crushed into some sort of choucroute de route? What if the other vegetables had also spilled out so that a huge helping of crudities, probably avec escargot du pays, had spread across the A134. These startling visions of nouvelle cuisine propel me speedily into Essex.

I have resolved not to stop until I have been the road for two and a half hours, but another difficulty occurs: I cannot engage the next to bottom gear. However, I cycle on according to plan before rewarding myself with a rest and a drink. But once on the bike again, the only gear that works is top gear which forces me to travel much more slowly. The panniers are an unaccustomed burden so I resort to standing up and bearing down on the pedals when going uphill.

I am tempted to consider abandoning the cabbage. I could jettison it as if I were in a sinking hot air balloon. It must weigh at least six pounds and I regret having chosen such a big one. Perhaps I could leave it for a passer-by, or even try to sell it. But where could I leave it? What would someone think if they saw me unpacking a cabbage and depositing it on the roadside when I had just ridden miles with it?

I keep going at little more than a slug-like pace always riding south west. The traffic is not too heavy even on the A roads, but the proximity of some lorries is alarming. Then, by chance, my eye is drawn to a particularly lovely garden with flourishing vegetables. I recognise the care that has gone into producing them and am immediately struck with remorse. How could I have even considered abandoning the cabbage? Along a progressively tiring route I am reduced to walking up mere inclines, not just hills, but I am determined to succeed. In any case there is no obvious alternative. At last, south of Epping Forest, Essex gives way to London. The surroundings become more built-up, the buses are a different colour and occasional underground stations appear.

New energy surges when I see the first sign to the West End and I hurtle along Seven Sisters Road toward the heart of the capital. The cabbage is now weightless as I carry it past traffic lights, across roads, nipping in and out of queues of cars and hugging the backs of buses.

It is seven pm and the pavements are packed with theatre goers, tourists and people looking for places to eat. The smells of food reflect London's cosmopolitan population. Traces of samosas and tacos, pizzas and chips, curries and kebabs waft unevenly past me, but I detect no cabbages cooking. Displays of vegetables outside shops include yams, okra and aubergines: everything except cabbages.

It becomes crucial to deliver the majestic brassica to where it will be enjoyed and appreciated. No longer am I a cycling vagrant but a courier carrying a royal cargo. Unfamiliar with central London, I need to pull up outside several hotels to ask for directions. Uniformed doormen, only slightly surprised, willingly advise me while waiting for the next BMW to appear. I am sure that their menus do not mention cabbage.

At last I reach West Kensington, unpack my panniers and present the precious gift to my delighted host. At a glance he knows that this is no ordinary cabbage; it is a king and he therefore awards it pride of place at our feast.

This article was published in Bike Report in June 1992 edition 17. Since then most of my bike time has been spent enjoying local rides both on my own and with my husband. I've also cycled across Cuba and Romania, and we've been lucky enough to tour about ten times in France. I'm also a writer of bike handbooks, novels and biographies.

info@tessawest.co.uk

01787 281732

ooo000ooo

Cycling at the edge of Britain

By Paul Bass

A few years ago the Ordnance survey produced a rather nice poster of the Isles of The United Kingdom over five square kilometres in area. I downloaded it and sort of forgot about it, until one evening I sat with the poster and started ticking off the islands we have visited. There are 83 islands in total and we had already visited more than a quarter of them. Early in 2020 Government policy and personal safety forced the decision to holiday in the UK and what better way of avoiding the crowds than finding some of the remotest parts of the country. Looking over maps we decided to try and get a taste of some faraway places. This year we took our bikes to Orkney with the idea of getting a taste of some of the islands that make up the archipelago. Sailing from Scrabster (Thurso) to Stromness on the Orkadian mainland went without hitch. The ferry sails along the shore of Hoy with great views of the Old Man, a 400ft sea stack on the West coast of the Island. Once we had setup camp at Birsay in the North West of Mainland we set off on the bikes, through Twatt to the ferry for Rousay. The island lays a couple of miles north of Mainland. Rousay is known as Egypt of the North for the abundance of archaeology. Hedgerows of Fuscia greeted us off the ferry and the first Chambered Cairn within 500m of the pier. The island is rolling, and in places steep, the perimeter road took us back to the pier with a 40+mph descent. The next day we visited the Scapa Flow Museum and Churchill barrages on Burray. Scapa Flow was used to moor the British fleet during the wars and after a U boat penetrated the naval defence early in the second war the decision was made to protect with barrages and block ships. The construction is documented in the museum and quite an eerie sight with the rusting hulls standing out of the water next to sea lashed barrages. Visiting the Chapel built by Italian POW is worth some time and many of the POW's became friends with locals and remained on the Islands after the war.



A day trip to North Ronaldsay was too good an opportunity to miss, treeless and surrounded by a dry stone wall, the island is home to seaweed eating sheep and the tallest land based lighthouse in the UK.



The sheep ended up outside of the wall on the beach and over the years they have adapted their diet to the point where grass is too rich for them and makes them ill. We cycled to the lighthouse and back

Winged Wheel

September 2021
Issue 292

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK

via the shop/ café set up in a shed next to the road. Wild, bleak, untamed, beautiful, tailwind to the lighthouse and headwind home. The island sits on the eddies and currents where the Atlantic meets the North Sea. The ferry journey was 'memorable' Westray and Pappa Westray are North of Mainland and Rousay and they are joined by the shortest commercial flight in the world. After setting up camp at Pierowall we jumped on the bikes to explore Westray. Heading north we arrived at The Noup. Gannets, Common and Black Guillemots and a few Puffins sit beneath a Lighthouse. Watching the largest flock of Gannets diving for fish is spectacular and smelly! A short ride to Castle O'Burrian on the east coast took in a much larger colony of Puffin. The next day a three mile cycle ride from Pierowall took us to the airport for the 90sec flight to Papa Westray and a visit to Knap of Howar, the oldest dwellings in Europe. We had the site to ourselves, and no barriers to entry, only a sheep fence. Sanday was the last island we visited before heading back to mainland and the boat home. Low laying and with huge sandy beaches, the west end of the Island is dominated by Start Point lighthouse. Looking like a helter skelter without the slide, the lighthouse is painted with vertical black and white stripes to differentiate it from nearby lights. Lady village is in the centre of the island and has a museum of island life. The dense cloud cover and strong wind gave a memorable character to the island; I suspect it looks very different when the sun is out.

Back on Mainland we passed the World heritage sites of Skara Brae, the Ring of Brodgar and Stones of Stenness to the tidal causeway at the Brough of Birsay. We stopped off to have a look at the archaeological dig at Stenness. Orkney has a rich history from twentieth century POW construction back to Neolithic dwellings and a diverse natural history unique to these islands. Each and every island is different and has something to offer. It may be a long way from Suffolk and the weather is never guaranteed but well worth the time and effort to visit.



ooo000ooo

Scottish Borders and Northumberland short break

Winged Wheel

September 2021
Issue 292

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK

By John Thompson

A series of nice coincidences brought this trip to fruition.

I was browsing the map considering my next trip to Scotland. As I glanced over Northumberland it struck me I had never visited Holy Island. I decided to rectify it and, ideally, combine it with an audax in the area. My friends, Dick and Lucy McTaggart, were organising a lot from Galashiels. Then *Cycleclips* had an article, "Pedal Pilgrimages." It included the St Cuthbert's Way, between Melrose and Holy Island (69 miles). Melrose is 4½ miles from Galashiels.

I travelled to Galashiels by train on Friday 30th July, my birthday (okay, my 68th). On arrival at 14:45, I found Watson Lodge guest house reasonably easily. It was perfectly situated being close to the station, town centre, event HQ, (McDonalds) and the Wetherspoon. I was impressed. Firstly, there are four cycle racks under cover. That may not sound many, and they are the cheap ones, but it shows an effort and they probably don't have space for more. Secondly, I was pleasantly surprised they serve breakfast from 07:00 on weekends too. It meant I could have a full breakfast without being rushed for the 09:00 event start.



The audax is called *The Newcastle(Ton)*. It's a nice play on a place name because it goes to Newcastleton and is 160 km, i.e. 100 miles. To be precise it's 168 km (105 miles). It was a lovely ride but I think, for this article, it's better I limit what I write about it and concentrate on the other days. I'm intending to write a piece on it for AUK's magazine, *Arriveè*. Those of you who don't receive it could go to aukweb.net/arrivee. Briefly, it goes to Newcastleton via Hawick, returns to Hawick and back to Galashiels by a different route to the outward one. It hardly needs saying, a ride in The Scottish Borders and Northumberland involves lots of hills. Quite early in the ride I changed into the 34 ring and decided it might as well stay there. It did so for the rest of the trip! Of course, the toughest hills had to be toward the end! They affected my legs for the rest of the trip and beyond. It nicely leads into the next day's ride...

I pre-booked a 08.30 breakfast for Sunday as I knew I wouldn't be going far, in a sense that's an overstatement. The tiredness in my legs caused me to cut far short of even the short ride I had intended. I did a 'splash' over 10 miles! I can say a lot of the reason I succumbed was because of the climbing I, nevertheless, had to do. The ride was a little circuit starting

toward Melrose, turning left along a lane to Langshaw. Just getting out of Galashiels saw me in 34 x32 and climbing continued on the lane, quite gently at first, but after about a mile it gets vicious through to Langshaw. It was about 5 miles of climbing. Just north of Langshaw, I came to a junction with a lane to the left, not signposted. The map showed it goes to the

September 2021 Issue 292

A7, just north of Galashiels. I hummed and hared because I'm a reluctant defeatist. My original aim was to continue to Stow and return to Galashiels through the lanes in the Moorfoot hills. There will be another day!

My 'compensation' was that the lane was picturesque. Nicely wooded in parts and where not it overlooked rolling hills. The stretch on the A7 was less than 3 miles and not especially busy. I was back at Watson Lodge around midday. I had an easy afternoon, strolling around Galashiels, going for a light bite, sitting in the sun and reading in my room. In the evening I patronised the Wetherspoon.

The St Cuthbert's Way is named after a Northumberland monk who was the most important saint of medieval England. I posted on my club's (Velo Club Baracchi) "friends" Facebook page that it was obviously appropriate for me to follow the tracks of such a person. I was disappointed nobody responded. Perhaps they accepted it is indeed obvious and not to be disputed!

Galashiels to Bamburgh (approx 65 miles)

A lovely sunny morning, nicely setting the theme for the rest of the trip. I started by retracing the previous morning's route along the B6437. Today, however, I continued to Melrose. It's a charming old-world town and looked especially nice in the sunshine.

I switched the garmin on for the 'Way.' I had learnt my lesson from my tour of the Chilterns Cycleway. In my article on the merits of modern technology compared to old-school ways, I acknowledged the usefulness of garmins on official routes because the signposting is spasmodic. The St Cuthbert's Way is no exception so the garmin was useful. Nevertheless, read on...! It starts simple enough, being well signed. After crossing the A6091, it follows what I think might be the old road to Newtown, then crossing the A68 to follow a nice lane and then a well-surfaced off-road stretch through lovely scenery, including a view of the River Tweed and passing Dryburgh Abbey. Just after Clintmains, I turned right onto the B6404 to St Boswells and was puzzled why the garmin indicated "off course." I hadn't seen any signposts. Yes, that's why I had the garmin! Obviously I hadn't looked at it closely enough. In St Boswells I spotted a sign for the 'Way' indicating



right. I wanted to check it out to try to understand how I had gone wrong. It was amusing! It took me along a residential road to turn right onto a short stretch of unsurfaced

Winged Wheel

September 2021
Issue 292

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK

bridleway/footpath ending at someone's garden. Now even more puzzled I started retracing. I spotted a lady in her garden. She explained it turns left before reaching the resident's garden. I looked again and, yes, there was a signpost easily missed. It pointed to the descent of a very narrow unsurfaced track, Presumably I missed a right turn somewhere in or near Clintmains. However, rough stuff difficult to ride is not my thing so I would have decided against it. Some might "tut tut", but as the ride was about 65 miles, it would have been too time-consuming anyway. I looked at the old-school map to get my bearings. Getting back on-route involved two main road spurts. First, left onto the A68, then left onto the A699 to shortly turn right onto a pleasant lane through Maxton. Shortly after there, I went off-route again. The lane left didn't have a signpost so I assumed it wasn't the route. I did, however, check the garmin. I didn't think it was indicating left. Approaching the t-junction with the A68 was when I noticed the garmin indicated "off course." The map indicated I wasn't far astray. It was just unfortunate I went a bit further than necessary and it involved an unnecessary, albeit short, stretch of main road. Once on the B6400 I soon passed the t-junction with the lane I should have used. I followed the B road to just after Nisbet, where just after a bridge over the river Tweed, I took a lane left to join the A698 just south-east of Crailling.

From Crailling, I was tempted to miss a bit of the official route to reduce distance. The official route is lanes through Craillinghall to Morebattle. I was happy to do just a little more on the A698 to turn right onto the B6396 through Eckford and then right onto the B6401 to Morebattle. It was pleasant enough and just before Morebattle it gets very scenic coming into the Cheviots, but of course, also hilly! I arrived at Morebattle nicely at lunchtime so made use of the village shop, sitting in the sun outside it with a sandwich pack and a soft drink. I actually bought two drinks and decided I didn't need the other one immediately so saved it for later – read on!

It was now through the stunning Cheviots scenery for the next approx. 20 miles to Wooler, but it got even hillier. It was obvious the affect of the audax was still in my legs. Firstly, I continued along the B6401 to Kirk Yetholm, then the B6351 to cross the border into England. I stopped there for photos and decided to have that other drink. Wait for it... I thought I had bought a flavoured water drink. I had – sort of! I downed a fair bit before realising I hadn't read the label properly. It was 'flavoured' with vodka! Whoops! I thought it best to pour the rest away! It was then through Kirknewton to Wooler. I had a short respite in the town with a drink and a Magnum. It sure was warm! Then it was the B6349 to Belford. From there, I left the 'Way' for the final 6 miles along the B6342 to Bamburgh. The road was busy but pleasant enough once following the coast. I was impressed by the signs put up by

Northumberland County Council advising drivers of the 1.25 metres they are supposed to allow when overtaking cyclists.



I was booked into the Sunningdale hotel for two nights. I had received an email advising their restaurant was closed on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. However, it was Monday so my heart dropped when told the restaurant was already fully booked for that evening. From the way the receptionist reacted, my disappointment must have been written all over my face! However, one of the managers (I inferred) came to my rescue by speaking to the chef. He apparently agreed to serve me straight away, before the restaurant officially opened at 19:00. I dumped the panniers in my room and sat down at about 17.50. Doing so in sweaty cycling clobber wasn't ideal but it's to their credit they went the extra mile. After showering, I strolled around Bamburgh, taking photos and sitting in the sun with an ice cream. It's a picturesque place. I had a couple of beers back at the hotel. Limited, as they only had bottles of lagers but I was happy.

For more of John's article, read the next edition of Winged Wheel (ED)

ooo000ooo

Sunday Rides Report

In the last quarter the Government relaxed the Covid-related restrictions with the so-called "Freedom Day" of 19th July. The Rule of Six ceased to operate so we had more freedom to gather in larger groups.

Taking a responsible stance, Cycling UK suggested that a maximum of 15 riders should be in a group. We know, from experience that large groups of cyclists on the road inevitably leads to conflict with other road users.

During the summer, even though we now have the option of eating in, we have often chosen to stay outside, to minimise the risks related to Covid-19.

The programme of rides has been supported by a good number of club members. The numbers on Easy Rides has increased over the quarter. A lesser number take part in Medium Rides but there is a core of regular riders with others choosing to join at elevenses.

There was a successful breakfast ride to Dunwich, setting out at 7.15am.

The President's Picnic at Saxtead Green was an interesting event as the rain came over at the wrong time so we sheltered under trees and ate cake. Fortunately the ride back was not in the wet.

We tried a few new venues for elevenses and afternoons, such as Castle Park in Colchester, Rio's cafe in Manningtree and Cretingham Golf Club.

Winged Wheel

September 2021 Issue 292

Raydon church was again able to host tea and cakes in the churchyard in the afternoons of the first Sunday in July, August and September. This has proved very popular and we have had the benefit of great weather on each occasion.

Ken and Maureen, and Keith and Nicola have kindly hosted teas in their respective gardens.

Ashfield Village Hall was undergoing renovation work, so was not available this quarter.

We have a good number of riders listed as willing to lead Sunday rides but a relatively small number of dedicated riders put themselves forward to lead. Hopefully, a few more on the distribution list will feel able to offer their services in the coming quarter. It is not a particularly onerous activity and support and assistance is available. If everyone on the list volunteered to lead once a quarter, there would be no shortage of leaders at all.

Derek Worrall

Sunday Rides Coordinator

