

Hallo everyone Here we are again with a new edition of Winged Wheel. I hope that you have all had a wonderful summer and that you have enjoyed the weather. You would have to have been really unlucky to have had poor weather for your holiday this year! We had a fantastic time in Ireland and I hope that you enjoy my contribution to the magazine. Many thanks to everyone who has sent in articles and, if that doesn't include you, perhaps you could do so next time! If you would like to send in an article, please send it to [editor.ctcsuffolk@gmail.com](mailto:editor.ctcsuffolk@gmail.com)



Happy cycling.

Judy Scott (Editor)

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Letter to the Editor. 1/9/2022

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their cards, gifts and for attending our 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary celebration in Hadleigh Guildhall and gardens in August. You all helped to make our day even more memorable.

With family, friends, good weather and live music we hope you all enjoyed the day as much as we did.

We hope to see you up the road very soon

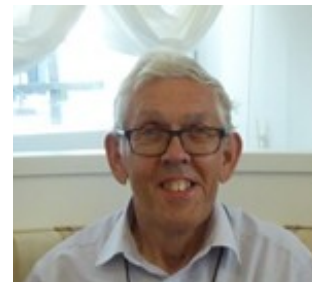
Thank you

***Ken and Maureen Nichols***

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## **PRESIDENT'S PIECE SEPTEMBER 2022**

We now seem to be coming to the end of a record breaking summer in so many ways, with unprecedented high temperatures and lack of rain. Once or twice we parted early from the club ride to get home before the hottest part of the afternoon. In my ramblings for the last Winged Wheel I mentioned that we were heading for Ireland (notoriously wet!) and hoping for dry weather. Surprisingly we had very good weather, with only one wet day at the beginning, and getting hotter and sunnier as time went on. We were away through the first heat wave and came back to a garden which was seriously de-hydrated.



As regular club riders know, a few years ago I bought an e-conversion to fit my existing bike. It was not my intention to use the power to storm up hills or ride off the front of club rides but to enable me to ride comfortably within the group, keep pace with other riders and enjoy my cycling. The kit which I have enables me to easily click the motor on and off as I need, and other riders are often not aware whether I am using the motor or not.

It was brought home to me recently how much I depend on the battery power for enjoyable cycling. When I unloaded the bike from the car on our first day in Ireland it had obviously upset the sensor which operates the motor. After failed attempts to reset it I had to manage without it for the duration. It was not a problem for just the two of us as we adapted our rides to suit the circumstances, with frequent walking up hills.

There has been debate in recent years as to whether e-bikes are suitable for group riding. E-bikes are becoming more and more common and my own view is that cycling clubs/groups need to embrace this, as long as those using battery power ride responsibly within the group situation. From my own experience, in CTC Suffolk, we have done precisely that and I have received nothing but encouragement from my fellow club members who realise that I probably would not be cycling without the assistance that the battery power affords. In a time when obesity is a problem, and we are all being encouraged to become more active I am doing my bit, albeit with a little help from my friends (and a battery).

Enjoy the rest of the summer and always remember that anything that moves (specifically bikes and cyclists' legs) deteriorate if not used regularly.

*Michael*

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## Secretary's Notes

As I write, the year seems to have flown from August temperatures to October in a single day, without passing through September. It feels cold, especially as I am resisting the lure of central heating for now. No doubt I'll adjust, as Autumn is my favourite season for cycling – memories of blue skies, clear visibility, riding over crisp yellow and brown leaves etc !

Cycling UK's year ends next March, with our CTC Suffolk AGM to follow in early May. As I mentioned in the last Winged Wheel, we would really like to see more of you at the 2023 AGM. So with that in mind I've arranged to hold it at Ipswich Sports Club on Henley Road, which has a bar with good beer! It will be on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May starting at



7:30pm. If you are at all interested in how the club is run, or just want to make sure it continues to do so, please put it in your diaries.

Most of you who are active riders will be familiar with the work done by the Rides Coordinators, but keeping the club going as part of Cycling UK does require some “backroom” work which is done by the rest of the Committee. However by the time of the AGM I will have been on that Committee for more than 10 years, 3½ of which as Secretary, so I now wish to stand down. Time for some new blood !

What does the Secretary do? Well obviously the main task is to organise meetings of the elected Committee to ensure the smooth running of the club and resolve occasional issues which arise. We have four meetings a year, plus the AGM which is open to all members. In addition the Secretary acts as a main contact between Cycling UK and the local club, as well as a point of contact with our members via the contact details on the CTC Suffolk web page. If you are interested in volunteering for this role next year, please do contact me to discuss it. Or if not, but are prepared to help out with any of the other roles on the Committee, or have questions about what is involved, again feel free to raise it with myself or one of the other Committee members.

*John.*



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## ***Mid Summer '22***

There's something very special about mid-summer don't you think? Long hours of daylight. Hot sultry afternoons when the cool shade of a siesta feels luxurious. Warm balmy evenings; the occasional gift of a magnificent sunset. When the abundance of nature feels close.

An advantage of retirement and being of a 'certain age' with good health is the ability to see and take advantage of the 'sweet spot' opportunities that present themselves in life – those times when combinations of timing, place, experience and mood provides for an elevation of the senses and well being into a kind of euphoria. Cyclists of a certain sensitivity yearn for such combinations and, if we are lucky enough to indulge ourselves, seek out, plan, and create the opportunities that are likely to bring this sense of well-being about. For me this often happens around mid summer. Natural regeneration is at the peak. The countryside is festooned with blossoms, seedlings, song and aromas. Through diligent preparation through winter and spring I am often at my peak of fitness, and freedoms (although my wife might not concur regarding the latter!), to be able to take advantage of windows of opportunity for good touring as and when they occur.

I do enjoy cycling in the Norfolk/Suffolk border country. The lanes either side of our border right across from Mildenhall to Lowestoft provide some of the easiest and most rewarding cycling and, by some extension into the Breck in the west and the Broads in the east, a most diverse East Anglian landscape. The Broads are surprisingly near at Beccles and the lanes of our north Suffolk coastal strip and Waveney District are for us 'southerners' often neglected in our touring plans.

An opportunity presented itself this year to take myself off for 3 days mid week around mid summers day to revisit my favourite lanes in the southern Broads and north Suffolk, basing myself at the 'Three Rivers Pitch & Paddle' camp site at Geldeston just across into Norfolk from Beccles. The site is set alongside a small waterway just off the River Waveney on the edge of Geldeston village, It is a serviced site for tents and motor homes, with grassed and shingle pitches, some with electric hook up, and some pitches in a more wilder setting.

This break turned out to be an exceptional experience through a combination of very warm weather, warm evenings beside my log fire, time to enjoy some afternoon reading in some cool shade, some beautiful very quiet lanes around the meadow edges of the rivers Waveney and Bure, all making for a delightful time. It included a very serendipitous visit to The Lock Inn community pub at Geldeston for an evening meal, and a visit to the weekly powerboat racing at Oulton Broad on the Thursday evening – another 'annual pilgrimage' for me to this exciting sporting event.

Those that know and tour with me will know that I tend to pack a lot in to my touring experience, perhaps a combination of enthusiasm and greed. This visit was no exception. Starting early I was at the site at Geldeston by 9.00 opening. and on the bike by 9.30.

Familiar lanes took me north to the Reedham chain ferry across the Yare and on to Acle via the easternmost lanes through Wickhampton and Halvergate with the occasional extensive views across the wide Waveney/Bure marshes. A tail wind and warming sunshine all the way. My morning destination at Thurne was reached for a late coffee stop beside the iconic 3 storey drainage boat-capped tower windmill by the Staithe. This Mill is occasionally open to visitors. There is a fine riverside footpath (bikes wheelable) from here to Potter Heigham; worth a stroll if you have time.

On reaching the river at the end of the Staithe the two bench seats were occupied, one by a single chap. Establishing there were no objections to my joining him on the bench, I attempted to establish some casual conversation but with no response. Either he was deaf, or particularly shy, or just unsociable. With broadland cruisers passing by and a gentle breeze the short break was nevertheless a delightful experience.

Normally this is part of my 'mini broadland tour'; a circuit from Norwich to Norwich via Horning, Potter Heigham, Thurne, Acle, Woodbastwich (Woodfords Brewery), Wroxham, Salhouse. This time I was undertaking a shorter version to allow time for a stroll along the boardwalk at Ranworth through the nature reserve. After retracing through Acle I headed west through Upton and South Walsham to late lunch at Malthouse Broad, Ranworth, where I was entertained by 'staff' attempting to release a Staithe bound couple from the staithe in a hire boat from two other boats berthed in front. Much pole-poking, rope throwing and pulling and to-ing and fro-ing ensued for about 30 minutes! The short stroll along the lane and board walk brings one very close indeed to the wet dyke flora of the Broads, where Swallow Tail butterflies and the delicious aroma of Meadowsweet excite the senses. An ice cream at the Ranworth Broad visitor centre made for a perfect addition to the days cycling experience. Onwards my return was by retrace to Acle and on to Reedham where refreshment was at hand at the Ship pub under the shade of the garden umbrella, and I was lucky enough to see the railway swing bridge open.

Back to camp by 5pm allowed enough time for setting up the tent (5 mins max), shower, change and a relaxing cuppa and good chapter of my book before strolling down the lane for eats at The Lock Inn. The evening was cooling to a soft balmy temperature. Cattle were softly shuffling in the adjacent meadows. Shade and light were forming slowly changing patterns across the marshland. The long stroll down the track to the Inn was easy and relaxing. The sound of jolly chatter gradually increased as the pub got closer. The Inn came upon me like an oasis. From calm countryside emerged this garden of many diners enjoying convivial company, laughter and, just out of sight, there was the sound of youngsters enjoying the free largess of a summer dip in the river. Further down a threesome group of youths were enjoying a summer evening fish. Canoes and small boats gently nudging in the lock were waiting to carry some of the diners back home. The meal, after a wait spent enjoying my book, was good plentiful and reasonably priced. To top it all I had just finished my meal when from the other room drifted the sound of a fiddle being tuned. With no prior advertisement, publicity or announcement a trio of musicians started playing Irish jigs and

reels in a side room – a fiddle, Irish pipes, and guitar, played to a professional standard. They were very good. This evening experience will remain in my memory as one of those chance blessings of a rich summer.

Day 2 was my revisitation to the lanes of north East Suffolk. On the road by 9.15 an early coffee was taken at a favourite bistro in Halesworth. Along came a chap in a wheel chair carrying a full size Macaw on his wrist. He stopped to chat with 2 friends emerging from the shop opposite with two dogs. To my amazement neither the dogs or the parrot took any notice of each other. I was expecting fur and feather mayhem!

Onwards Southwold was reached via Blyford, Sotherton, the delightfully named Uggeshall, and Wangford. A little too early for lunch, a 'meal deal' was purchased from Tesco's Express in Southwold after a short stroll and sit enjoying the early morning sea view. Next stop was Covehithe to enjoy the stimulating cliff top view, with a large section of recent falls in evidence. Be careful here the old road edge is substantially undermined at time of writing. Cottages and church are still some way inland from the eroding cliffs. With nowhere to pause comfortably for lunch I ventured on into Wrentham (here is a connections to the founder of the Clarion Cycle Club, who allegedly stayed overnight in the pub), and onto more narrow lanes through Benacre. Lunch was eventually taken in the churchyard at Benacre. The church was alas locked but with a convenient ledge in the porch to sit in the welcome shade.

The original plan was to head via A12 westside lanes into Lowestoft, but tales of traffic mayhem in Lowestoft around the construction site of the new bridge, I ventured no further into Lowestoft than was necessary to get to the Suffolk Wildlife Site reserve at Carlton Colville for a brief afternoon cuppa. The new visitor centre here is well worth a day visit. There are several miles of good paths through the reserve, a visitor centre with café and some elevated bird hides, and a small shop.

Return to Geldeston was via Mutford, Hulver Street and Ellough and through Beccles. The heat of the afternoon was quenched by several cuppas at the tent, and a good relax with several more pages of my book enjoying the shade of a convenient bush nearby.

Showered, cleaned up, and changed, the next plan was to drive to Oulton Broad for a fish & chip tea and the evening racing of powerboat classes on the Broad, starting at 6pm. There are 3 races in 3 classes of boat, monohulls, hydroplanes, and Formula 2 catamarans. Races are handicapped over 5 laps for monohulls and hydroplanes and 7 for catamarans. The racing is fast, noisy and spectacular over a circuit of just over a mile. Action at the Wherry Buoy turn viewed from the Nicholas Everitt public park is one of the most dramatic regular sporting sights in the East of England, and it's every Thursday evening.

A very pleasant and varied day of cycling and an evenings entertainment was topped off by a slow drive into a setting sun over the Waveney meadows, and a cool beer sitting next to my wood fire listening to Bob Harris and Trevor Nelson, until I was nearly nodding off into the embers. A very satisfied man.

With more sun in store for Friday morning and more broadland to enjoy, I took an arcing route to Reedham again via the very quiet and un-trafficked lanes in the peninsula that lies between the turn of the Waveney south of Haddiscoe, and west of the A143 through Thorpe and Little Thurlton. By now the Reedham ferryman recognised me as a regular and we shared short conversation regarding life and changes on the river. A short ride to morning coffee at the old post office in Riverside in the shade of a welcome umbrella, and a good earwiggling of two guys talking about their friend who appears to be regularly 'overcommitted' to grandparenting duties by (according to them) an over-demanding daughter-in-law served to remind me how lucky I was!

Returning over the land between the Yare and the Waveney to Beccles I arrived in time for a quick shower, change and scratch lunch from my saddlebag leftovers on a camp site picnic bench, and friendly chat with Jodie, the site manager. Jodie had kindly allowed me to leave my car on site after vacating my pitch after breakfast. The drive home was mellow, relaxed and reflective on an extraordinarily packed, but memorable mid-summer minitour. 161 miles over 2.5 days (67, 61, & 33 miles), visiting some of the best Broadland scenery, Suffolk's small towns, heritage coast scenery, and action-packed sport. Not least of all, an evening, possibly the best of the year, at one of Suffolk's best community pubs, (in Norfolk!). Keep that under your hat!

**Paul Fenton**

Footnote: *What is the difference between an Irish Jig and a Reel?*

*Wikapaedia says:*

*The jig is a form of lively folk dance in compound metre, as well as the accompanying dance tune. It is most associated with Irish music and dance.*

*Difference between jig and reel: (for non-musicians) To tell whether a tune you're listening to is a jig or a reel, let your foot tap along with the music at a natural pace, then see how many fast notes you count between each tap. **If you can count to 3, it's a jig. If you can count to 4, it's a reel.***

Surprises seen on tour:

*The Three Bears (Thurne)*



*Man with Macaw (Halesworth)*



# Winged Wheel

CTC Suffolk



## Bike for Sale

One of John Thompson's CUK colleagues has a bike for sale. (Pictures below) He bought a B'Twin triban3 racing bike new on a whim some years ago & rode about 50 miles total on 4 rides but never got into it so it's been sat since, safely tucked away in his garage and is in near excellent condition.

He wonders if anyone in the club is interested in buying it. It had great reviews when he bought it & is relatively lightweight at 22lbs (alloy frame and carbon forks) so it would make a great training bike. He would like £250 ono.

His email address is [andybird63@gmail.com](mailto:andybird63@gmail.com)



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## Ireland 2022

By Judy Scott

This year, we decided not to go abroad but to visit Southern Ireland. We had both been before but, not for a long time (in my case, not for 50 years!)

We wanted to cycle but not have an actual cycle tour so we put the bikes in the car and took the ferry from Fishguard to Rosslare. As soon as we drove off the ferry, it felt as if we were abroad as the road signs are different and, of course, the Irish use kilometres and Euros! I don't intend to bore you with all the details of our holiday but just to talk about some highlights and the cycling.

For our first 4 nights were in Killiane Castle in County Wexford. The first morning was dry and sunny so we cycled into Wexford which is a lovely fishing town with



interesting old town walls. We came back via a different route and missed a turning which was rather annoying as we had a boat trip to Saltee island planned. Luckily, we made it and, in spite of being scared on the boat as it was so rough and getting soaked as it rained all afternoon, it was well worth it as we saw the puffins which was the whole object of the trip! The next day, we cycled to, Curracloe beach which must be one of the most beautiful sandy beaches in the world, with no gimmicks, 2 cafes and good cycle parking. We paddled in the Atlantic before riding along the coast road. The next day we cycled to Johnstown Castle where we had a guided tour which was extremely interesting and we were amazed at how reasonable the entrance fee was, here and at all the places we visited.

We found all the Irish people to be extremely helpful and friendly which really adds to a holiday I think.

Before leaving Killiane Castle, which is completely disused, we had a look round, including going onto the roof where we had a really good view. We drove on to our next place via Blarney Castle which is well worth a visit although we didn't actually kiss the Blarney stone!

The gardens are also very beautiful. Our next stay was at the Rivers Edge Guest House in Killorglin where our host, Shaun, insisted on giving us lots of advice on the best places to visit and didn't seem to understand that we had done some research and had our own ideas!

We cycled to visit Ross Castle which is a Tower castle, of which there are lots all over Ireland. They were not a fortress or a defence but, a status symbol erected by the rich! Once again, we had a very interesting guided tour and then wandered around the grounds on our own. Our next visit was to the beautiful Muckross gardens.



Next morning, we put the bikes in the car and drove to Dingle to cycle round the peninsular where the scenery is amazing and the wild flowers just as good. The next day we



decided not to cycle but to drive round the Ring of Kerry which was fantastic. One of my favourite stops was at Waterville which is a lovely coastal resort, a bit like Aldeburgh but better, with much bluer sea! Then it was on to Derrynane bay and house by which time it was really warm and sunny. Needless to say, I took lots of pictures. It really is an exceptional place as the grounds stretch right down to the coast,

giving it an almost fairy tale effect. Then we drove on to visit Molls Gap and the Gap of Dunloe where the views just have to be seen to be believed. I know that we were extremely lucky with the weather but Ireland really is beautiful and well deserves it's "Emerald Isle"

title! Every day of our holiday had been so good that I couldn't really believe that it could last but it did! The next day saw us leaving Killorglin to drive to Tralee and on to Tarbet where we boarded the ferry across the Shannon to Killimer. We visited the Cliffs of Moher which are spectacular and the tallest cliffs in Ireland but the whole site is huge and rather commercialised, not quite our thing! We eventually arrived at Mallmore Country House, Clifden where we were staying for the next 4 nights. It is set in beautiful grounds reaching down to the sea. The following day we had perfect cycling weather, warm without being too hot and we rode the Bog road cycle route which was wonderful, so quiet with hardly any traffic. We saw the place where Marconi sent the first telecommunication across the Atlantic and, in almost the same spot, Alcock and Brown crashed their plane after the first transatlantic flight. We stopped for coffee in Roundstone, a lovely fishing village, with many brightly painted houses and we chatted with some other cyclists. We rode back through Clifden and on to visit Dan O'Hara's Homestead and Heritage Centre. It was very interesting but so sad as Dan was evicted from his home as he couldn't pay his rent when the potato crop failed.

Our next day was one of the highlights of the holiday as we rode the Sky Road, part of the Wild Atlantic Way. The scenery is amazing and the sea is so blue that it looks positively continental! The following day we drove to Connemara National Park where we walked half way up Diamond Hill on well surfaced paths and the views were fantastic. Then we went on to Kylemore Abbey which is still home to a community of Benedictine nuns. It's a truly magical place which also includes a walled garden which is so far



from the abbey that a shuttle bus runs between the 2. The garden is still being lovingly restored and they only grow plants that were around in Victorian times when it all began. In the evening we had dinner in a lovely local pub where we were treated to Irish music which we really enjoyed and it made a perfect end to our stay in Clifden.

Next we drove on to the Wicklow Way Lodge Guest House which is lovely and offers some wonderful views of the Wicklow mountains. The following day we cycled up to Sally's Gap which was a bit of a struggle as the road was steep, but it could have had something to do with having eaten a huge breakfast! Either way, the views made it well worth the effort and we thoroughly enjoyed riding down past Glanmacrass Waterfall. We thought we'd earned a rest so, on the next day we drove to Brittas Bay where I had a brief swim which was lovely and then we visited the National Botanic Gardens, Kilmacurragh, which we were surprised were free to enter. In the afternoon we went to Glendalough Visitors Centre which includes 6<sup>th</sup> century monastic site and we completed the 8K Derrybawn Woodland Trail which was very scenic and went up by a waterfall.

The next day was to be the last cycling day of our holiday and we rode to Powerscourt which is an enormous estate. We visited the waterfall first which, to me, at least, seemed unlike any other in that we couldn't see or hear it until we were right in front of it and it is the highest in Ireland. From the waterfall to the house and gardens is about 6K and, in spite of it being an up hill struggle for much of the route, we were so glad that we had cycled as it gave us much more of a feel for the size of the whole place than if we had driven. The gardens are fantastic and rated as number 3 of the top 10 in the world.

We spent our last 2 days in Dublin where we checked into the Castle Hotel, one of the many beautiful Georgian houses in the city. We had coffee by the river Liffey before visiting the castle which is still used for state occasions. We really enjoyed just wandering around the city and we felt that it had benefited from not being modernised during the 1960s as some English cities were but was done later when not so much concrete, but more glass, was involved!

We had a guided tour of the 'Jeanie Johnston', a reconstruction of the only famine ship to have taken people to America and Canada and not to have lost any lives! Quite an achievement, given the conditions! Before leaving Dublin to take the ferry to Hollyhead, we had a trip on the river Liffey which made a really good end to an exceptional holiday.



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## Cycling with PC (Prostate Cancer)

On 29<sup>th</sup> March this year I was diagnosed with early onset Prostate Cancer (PC).

I am writing this article (a) to raise awareness and (b) to invite open discussion in our peloton of what is often a difficult subject to talk about.

Before you ladies skip to the next article believe me you have a very important part to play in ensuring the men of all ages and relationship in your life take action on any problems affecting "down below".

It is a sobering fact that 1 in 8 men will have a brush with this cancer sometime in their lives and most men over 80 have it although usually in a benign form.

However it can be cured if detected early enough. But early diagnosis is key to a positive outcome. Fortunately for me I have been under the care of the excellent Urology Team at Ipswich Hospital for a number of years, initially for "waterworks problems" and latterly for

an enlarged prostate. It was only after a spike in my routine PSA (Prostate – Specific Antigen) test that alarm bells were rung. An MRI Scan of my prostate followed and then only after a biopsy that my cancer was finally diagnosed. Immediate treatment then began. The result of this is my prognosis is good. There is every indication I can be cured and back riding in our peloton in the foreseeable future.

So to all my fellow male riders I beg you not to ignore any symptoms like wanting to wee more frequently especially at night or any difficulty passing wee. Get it checked out by a medical professional. But not all men have these symptoms so if you are offered an appointment at a Well Man Clinic or at an annual health check with your GP and you suspect something is not quite right please speak up. It will at least give you some peace of mind or conversely may define your outcome should anything untoward be discovered.

This has all been a very steep learning curve for me. But there is excellent help and advice out there nothing better than the information available, free of charge, on the Prostate Cancer UK Website. This I found so helpful for initial advice about symptoms and much much more. Please take a look. You never know how valuable your research might be.

I will be writing in a future article about my treatment pathway, the enforced adjustment I have found it necessary to make to my cycling activities and the kit I have purchased to help me adjust to my current circumstances.

Stay well and cycle safely

Ray (Wand)

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## **Just a few hills – looking for Woodbridge**

**By John Thompson**

Another place that had been on my ‘to do list’ for a while was Lundy island in the Bristol channel.

Initially, I intended riding on it but unfortunately the ferries don’t take bikes. That was disappointing but I accepted it would be a day off the bike. As the ferries run from Bideford and Ilfracombe, I decided it would be nice to combine it with a few days touring Devon, ideally starting with an audax. The “Valley of the Rocks” 200, starting and finishing at Honiton, was on AUK’s calendar for Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April. The ferries leave from Bideford and Ilfracombe. I chose Ilfracombe because I judged it would be the most likely to enable me to cover the most new ground.

Arriving in Honiton I was thrown in the deep end literally from the start. The route Google maps provided from the station to my hotel was straight up a 1 in 6! By that I mean the hill starts literally alongside the station car park. Although Google provided the quickest route, the map wasn’t very good. The Heathfield Inn was tricky to find so I resorted to asking some local people. It always amazes me when you ask people directions how little many of them

know about their localities. That said, considering how Lowestoft has grown over the years, I could be just as bad! Anyway, after directions from one lady, I retraced climbing another hill, the likes of which you don't see in Suffolk. As I re-approached a roundabout, I realised I had missed a sign for the Heathfield Inn. It was limited in its usefulness because there were no signs for the next two right turns. As I was now close to it, the local I asked was able to give precise directions. He commented, "it's a bit tucked away." Yes, part of the problem was that the Heathfield Inn is in an unusual location for a hotel. It's at the end of a cul-de-sac just away from a council housing estate.

Even riding through that housing estate involved another hill steeper than anything in Suffolk. It caused me to amusingly reflect on the irony that a few days before, Mick Madgett fitted a new triple chainset for me with a 28-tooth inner ring, 6 teeth less than the previous one. It had proved it's usefulness before I had even left Honiton, indeed literally from the off.

The Heathfield Inn is a charming, unspoilt 16<sup>th</sup> century former farmhouse (makes its location even more ironic). Inside, it has plenty of ambience, a good choice of ales and the food is excellent. The hotel side of it is small, just 7 rooms but they are fine.



Now the dramatic bit! After dinner while relaxing over a pint of some brew of real ale, I started thinking about the 200 km audax I was riding in the morning. I've been struggling recently with 200s. I think it's a combination of losing fitness during the pandemic because of so many cancelled events, plus being that little older. I talked myself out of it, especially considering how hilly the route was.

## **Honiton – Bampton – Dunkeswell – Honiton: 56 miles**

You might recall there was some exceptionally good weather in late-April. When I arrived in Honiton on Friday afternoon, I was pleased it was also the case in Devon. I'm also pleased to report it stayed that way for the whole trip. I was spot on lucky. That said, early Saturday morning it was still a bit cool. There was a light breeze. I started off, therefore in longs and a long-sleeve top. It wasn't long before they came off!

Having decided I would not do the 200, a study of the route sheet and my map indicated I could get a nice ride, covering a lot of new lanes by following part of the early stages of the route.

It initially involved following the 200 route to Bampton. The first hill was literally just round the corner from the Heathfield Inn, getting out of the housing estate! Then it was a descent into Honiton town centre. From there, initially I followed the A373 toward Cullompton. After about 4 miles I turned right into the lanes. I very quickly concluded if I had started the

200, I would have realised, even at that very early stage (barely 5 miles!), any thoughts of completing it were a joke!

Do I need to tell you how picturesque Devon lanes are? They overlook green rolling hills, plus occasional river views and pass through picturesque villages and hamlets, and are dotted with attractive thatched houses. That was the theme for the whole trip. Therefore, rather than keep repeating myself, as “a picture paints a thousand words,” I’ll let the photos do the talking. I will just comment on scenery and places I found especially nice. In that respect, I especially liked the villages of Uffculme and Prescott. I crossed the A38 at Appledore, continuing along lanes, via the charming hamlet of Ayshford to Bampton. I arrived nicely at lunchtime. Bampton has two tea rooms so imagine my disappointment they were both closed! The chippy looked badly in need of trade (no customers at all) but fish and chips was not what I fancied. I had to make do with the village store – sandwich pack, pork pie and soft drink.

As Bampton is close to Exmoor National Park, it might puzzle you why I didn’t continue following the 200 route into it. Beautiful as it is, I have toured Exmoor thoroughly. I judged, therefore, that to cover more new ground I would do better to do my own thing from there. I followed the B3227 for a short way, turning right into the lane to Clayhanger. I then followed a maze of lanes, through numerous villages into the Blackdown Hills AONB. I made use of the store in Dunkeswell for a soft drink and my favourite thing when cycling on warm days, a white Magnum. It was now only 7 miles to Honiton but so what I was touring. A nice spot en-route to Honiton was the village of Broadhembury, which the Grand Western Canal Country Park passes through.

The descent into Honiton was soothing but the sting in the tail was the climb from the town centre to the Heathfield Inn.

The evening was spent in my favourite way, over good food and beer reflecting on a rewarding day’s riding.

## **Honiton – Colyton – Northleigh – Honiton: 20 miles**

This was the short ride I had planned for the day after the 200. Not having ridden it, I could have gone further but I stayed with it because it involved a lot of first time lanes and I had an amusing objective. On the map I had spotted a village called Woodbridge! I had to go there!

Early (ish) Sunday morning the cool breeze was there again, although it was a bit warmer than Saturday morning. *Do I need to start in longs and long-sleeve top or don’t I?* Being my usual cautious self, I did.

Again, the first hill was just round the corner but there was no respite as immediately on exiting the roundabout I was straight onto the climb on the A375. I wasn’t far up the hill when I realised I need not have bothered with longs and long-sleeve top! At the top I appropriately undressed.



I wasn't on the main road for long. I turned left along a lane, although a quite busy one, It wasn't long, however, before I turned left again into some lovely lanes but, yes, involving lots of climbing, in search of Woodbridge! Every village was signed except Woodbridge! I passed through the picturesque villages of Church, Green, Farway, and South Leigh. From the map, I seemed to be going the right way for Woodbridge so it was baffling it wasn't on any signposts. When I arrived in picturesque Colyton, a cyclist who regularly rides those lanes came along. He had never heard of Woodbridge, or at least not one in Devon! We had a garbled conversation about where it might be so he offered directions as best he could. A little further along I stopped to check the map again. I reluctantly decided it was pointless continuing to pursue it, but, more positively, looking at the map more studiously I concluded I might have passed through it without realising as it's probably just a hamlet of at most a handful of houses. I continued to picturesque Northleigh, and then the final 4 miles to Honiton but of course, there had to be a sting in the tail of one more hill. However, the descent into Honiton was great! Getting back to the Heathfield Inn involved passing the t-junction with the road from the station so I took the opportunity to photo the 1 in 6 sign.

I arrived back nicely at lunchtime so had a light bite from the bar and had an easy afternoon reading and drinking real ale. I usually have a rule to not drink beer until the evening. Devon hills are an exceptional situation. That's my excuse and I'm sticking to it!

Wikipedia indicates Woodbridge, Devon, as a village near Honiton but curiously says nothing more, other than commenting the article is a stub. Make of that what you will!

## **Honiton – Ilfracombe: 66 miles**

I followed the A373 to Cullompton. The town centre, with old world buildings is attractive but, like navigating through many towns, every place is signposted except the next place you want. Initially, I went in the complete opposite direction to that for Tiverton. I got myself correctly onto the B3161 but didn't see one sign for Tiverton. It might be because the direct route is to turn left along minor roads and they are trying to avoid too much traffic on them. They are busy enough, however! Without the signposts it was difficult to know precisely which left turn I needed so I asked a utility cyclist. He directed me correctly, but having turned left, I double-checked with a pedestrian. Tiverton town centre also has an attractive old-world part but is a typical busy town. That is, a busy ring road with big roundabouts, passing industrial and retail estates. I wasn't sorry to leave that behind. After a spurt on the B3137 out of town, I followed the signposts for the villages on the old A361 and the joy of the flat could hardly have come to a more abrupt end! Maybe it didn't feel like the toughest approx 19 miles of the trip because it was still relatively early on but in strict terms of the gradients of the hills and how long they were, it probably was. However, being the old road it was quiet, and because it runs very much parallel with the new road to South Molton it was easy navigation and it offers some nice views. I also had a 'kindness of strangers' experience, although it might be said it's what cyclists do for each other. A couple passing me in a car gave me a gentle toot and waves. A few miles further along they were standing outside their home waiting for me, the lady holding up a large bottle of water. Yes,

they were cyclists. They commented on what a pull up from Tiverton it is and told me about their tours in France. They also told me how much more climbing I had to do. That is, to South Molton, which they initially assumed was my destination. They were impressed when I told them Ilfracombe!

Onward and upward to South Molton, I arrived nicely at lunchtime and had my usual shop lunch (yes, including a white Magnum).

To avoid a bit of main road, I went to North Molton to follow a lane to then join the A399. North Molton is close to Exmoor so those lanes were especially nice. The A399 was not uncomfortably busy and as it overlooks Exmoor is scenic. It was the climbing, not the traffic, that made it seem a long way. At the top, however, I was rewarded with the spectacular view of Combe Martin Bay and the also spectacular descent to Combe Martin. Of course, there had to be the sting in the tail of the final 4 miles to Ilfracombe, up and down like a yo-yo. However, with the sunshine and perfect blue sea it was a very scenic ride end.

I was pleased my b and b, Laston House (an attractive big period building in 3 acres of woodland) was reasonably easy to find and offered me a lovely sea view from my room.

After showering, following the directions given by the proprietor, I strolled to the harbour, seeing the town centre in the process, to ensure I knew the way to the Lundy ferry in the morning. Ilfracombe is a lovely town. I then went to the pub (I forget the name) recommended by the proprietor and enjoyed a tasty meal and good beer.

Lundy Island – day off the bike For a Tuesday in April, I was astounded by the number of people waiting to board the ferry, even though many of them were almost certainly retired. It might not seem very complimentary that I feel I can deal with Lundy briefly but it's because I think the photos do all the talking needed! I will say it's well worth visiting and I saw puffins.



Concerning cycling on there, even if the ferries did take bikes, I conclude it wouldn't be worth it anyway, especially as it's only ½ mile wide by 3 miles long. Serious mountain bikers would probably enjoy it and could perhaps tackle the climb of the unsurfaced road/bridleway away from where the ferry docks, but that is if it wasn't for the sheer number of pedestrians walking up it. It's difficult to see how you could avoid having to walk pushing the bike.

My only disappointment was not having time to visit island's pub, the Marisco Tavern. I'd had a good report. However, it wasn't the main reason I went – no, it wasn't!

Back in Ilfracombe, I showered and returned to the same pub for another tasty meal and more good beer.

No riding, but I probably walked around 6 miles, if including the walking I did around Ilfracombe.

## **Ilfracombe – Honiton: 71 miles (possibly slightly more – blip with Garmin)**

Today's objective was to return to Honiton via a slightly different route.

Laston House was nicely situated just off my road out of town, the B3230 to Barnstaple. Of course, it was only a few hundred yards before I started climbing! It was for once, however, a relatively gentle gradient with a lovely sea view from the top.

The road junctions with the A39 for the final little bit into Barnstaple. Studying the map beforehand, I spotted a minor road that could enable me to cut across the town, avoiding the busiest parts.. I came to what I thought probably was the road but there was no signpost. I reluctantly decided it wasn't worth risking getting lost in the streets so put up with Barnstaple's busy and congested roads. The stretches along the A39 and A377, which the cut across route would also have avoided, were very busy and involved negotiating a big and busy roundabout (the type I hate even driving around!) at the junction of the two. Fortunately, it was only a short distance along the A377 before turning left onto the lane to Bishops Tawton. Before leaving the A377, I passed under the flyover for the minor road I had hoped to use. It further confirmed my feeling the road I passed was the one I needed, which added to my frustration. Anyway, it was now lovely lanes and villages to Chulmleigh. My goodness the hills, continuously one after the other! They made me so pleased to arrive in Chulmleigh nicely at lunchtime to sit on a village seat, enjoying the sun with my usual Spar lunch. Yes, including a white Magnum.

Leaving Chulmleigh on the B3096 was straight up another hill in the maximum heat of the day! The road shortly joins the B3042, which I followed to its junction with the B3137, which I followed into Tiverton, from where it was a retrace of the outward route. It was nice to know I now had a few miles of flat to Cullompton. Coming out of town, I was surprised how hungry I felt. With the thought of the hills from Cullompton to Tiverton, I thought it wise to eat so stopped at a garage store. I had a sandwich pack, crisps and a Lucozade (no Magnum this time!) Considering it wasn't a great distance from Chulmleigh or even a great deal of time since, I can only conclude it was the hills!

The climbs on the A373 for the final 11 miles made me feel as though I was in the final miles of a 200 audax. Again, however, the descent into Honiton was glorious but, also again, there was the sting in the tail of the climb away from the centre to the Heathfield Inn.

After showering, it was the usual thing of relaxing over good food (the stop at Tiverton hadn't spoilt my appetite!) and beer reflecting both on another great cycling trip and philosophically. Perhaps I have reached the crossroads with longer distance audaxes but if with just one more birthday (at the time) before the 'big 7-0' I can still do rides exceeding that number in distance, over that sort of terrain and carrying full touring kit, I'm still doing well.

Thursday I was homeward bound. The train route brought out the rail geek in me. It was my first time on the East Devon line and west of Salisbury. I was also pleased I've now mastered the route between Liverpool Street and Waterloo and return. Having previously made a 'pigs ear' of it, I made a special trip to London to walk between the two stations in both directions. That might sound drastic but it was worth it!

**Stop press:** I seem to be fighting back my audax fitness. I recently completed two rides just over 100 miles and surprised myself I didn't feel especially shattered afterwards – patience and fingers crossed!

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## Over the Hedge

*It was in May 2009 that I penned my first Over the Hedge, discussing the migration of Suffolk birds and what has been learned from ringing birds over many years by volunteers from the British Trust for Ornithology. This edition will be number 50, a milestone I never thought I should reach. So this will probably also be my last, especially as I still prefer the old paper version of the Winged Wheel. However, I thank everyone who has suffered my ramblings for so long and wish the Club well.*

Cycling around Suffolk and our neighbouring counties, we are treated to many wonderful medieval churches. Towers and spires are still a useful landmark and it is usually possible find a bench and enjoy a break for a drink, a snack or lunch. They are usually very peaceful places giving the opportunity for a moment of mindfulness.

Such moments allow us to focus our attention on the wildlife. Listen to the birdsong. Those migrants we talked about in 2009 often rest in churchyards and it is lovely to hear an early Chiff Chaff or Cuckoo. It is also a place where we have heard the purring of Turtle Doves, although sadly, the sound is becoming less frequent as these birds are critically endangered. During the Suffolk Birthday Rides from Framlingham, we heard the wonderful sounds of screaming swifts in Debenham, by that time, preparing to set off on their long journey back to Africa for the winter.

One of the most unusual birds we heard was perched in trees around Burstall Church in December some years ago. In a car, we wouldn't have known they were there but the shrill calls of a flock of Waxwings rang out as we cycled past, giving us the opportunity to pause and enjoy the sight of these rare winter visitors looking for fruit amongst the yew trees.

Many churches have changed their mowing regimes to encourage wild flowers to bloom in spring and early summer. Stopping for coffee at Coddendam, we discovered a host of orchids in the graveyard that would have been cut off in their prime in previous years. Barking has a lovely collection of primroses and cowslips that always cheer me up. Wild tulips can be found at Bildeston.

Churches can also come alive at night, when owls and bats can be seen or heard. In winter with its shorter daylight hours, I remember watching a barn owl from both Copdock and Washbrook churches on different occasions.

But the churches themselves are equally fascinating. Not just the stained glass and the interiors, but the fabric from which they are constructed. The medieval builders used largely local material or perhaps recycled stones from previous buildings. So the materials used can give an insight into the local geology. Using this premise, The Essex Rock and Mineral Society ERMS launched a survey to record the materials used, giving a good excuse for a ride south of the border. We have also visited a few close to the border but still in Suffolk and looking closely, it has provided a few surprises.

As we cycle along the Gipping Valley, chalk appears in walls. Closer to the Sanderlings and cement stone, sometimes known as septaria is found. Also, in churches such as Chillesford, Corraline crag is used. A much harder stone is the sarsen. This is quartzite and often used around the base or in a corner. Sproughton has a long row at the foot of the walls. Many pebbles and cobbles are used. Most of these are flint which is found throughout East Anglia and is sometimes shaped or knapped. Wrabness is almost entirely knapped flint. But harder sandstone or quartz pebbles were carried to Suffolk from as far as Wales or Cornwall many years ago, when the course of the Thames flowed across our county. It is a fascinating story to explore.

A real surprise can be found at Freston and Hemley, near Newbourne, among others. A close look at the walls reveals hard, patterned metamorphic rocks from Scandanavia. How did they arrive here? It is thought that they were brought as ballast on empty sailing ships, travelling empty across the North Sea to collect grain from our ports. They were left as the ships were loaded and bought by the builders in an area that has little hard stone of its own.

If you are interested in these stones or the Walls Survey, have a look at the ERMS website on:

[www.erms.org](http://www.erms.org)

If you have, thank you for dipping into the natural world over the hedge. Keep looking and we shall look forward to meeting you out on the road, at a cafe or in a churchyard!

Good Cycling,

***Hedgewatcher***

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## **SUFFOLK'S LOST COUNTRY HOUSES NO.4 – TENDRING HALL**

**By Michael Scott**



Some years ago, during my walking phase. I took a very pleasant footpath between the B1087 Stoke by Nayland to Nayland road and the lovely lane that leads from Thorington Street to Boxted Bridge, where I always stop to admire the tranquil scene from the bridge. But that's a story for another day! The route cuts across what remains of Tendring Hall park. As far as I know there is no connection with the Tendring area of north east Essex.

The only visible remains of what was an impressive mansion are the ruins of the front entrance below the hill from which Stoke by Nayland's grand church looks out over the Stour Valley.

It is thought the original Tendring Hall dated from the 1560's and rebuilt in 1630. A new house was built on the site in 1735 by Sir John Williams but, following his bankruptcy, the estate was purchased in 1760 by Sir William Rowley.



Designed by the renowned architect Sir John Soane for Admiral Sir John Rowley, and built of white brick between 1784 and 1786. The house was built on the side of the hill to give wide views across the valley towards Nayland. The total cost was £11,000, equivalent to about three million pounds today. The house was later extended in 1809 with the addition of a wing on either side of the main house.



Tendring Hall was the largest of Soane's earlier commissions but he is most well-known for his design of the old Bank of England in Threadneedle Street. Many of the original drawings for the Hall can be seen in the Sir

John Soane Museum in London which is well worth a visit.

The Hall was requisitioned during the WWII to house troops and POW's. After seven years of neglect it was left in a semi-derelict condition and was finally demolished in 1955.

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## **London to Brighton Charity Ride**

As some of you may remember from my previous article in Winged Wheel, I was riding the London to Brighton charity event organised by Skyline Events. This is a multi charity event and I was raising money for our own Suffolk Libraries which is an independent charity which keeps our local libraries operating independent of Suffolk County Council. The event took place on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> Sept so I thought I should write a brief report on my experiences.

Overall the organisation of the event was first class with lots of prompt customer service type support from Skyline. It is a well recognised route amongst cyclists that meanders down through Surrey and East Sussex. The event started from Clapham Common and as I had a 09:30 start time, London was busy and it seemed to take forever to get anywhere and it felt like we caught every red traffic light possible. Hence, we managed about 5 miles in the first 30 mins! There was excellent signposting and marshalling at the more difficult junctions with lots of interaction and encouragement from the Marshalls. Around 5000 riders enjoying the event with plenty of banter between riders. Great to see so many diverse groups of riders involved raising huge amounts for their charities. Lots of different machines on the road,

high performance, tourers, tandems, MTBs, Bromptons and even a couple of Santander “Boris bikes”!

As a slightly faster rider I caught up with multiple groups of slower riders. Unfortunately, there were some who, even at 10 miles in, weren't having a very good time of it which was a real shame and hard to witness. They were in their groups and being looked after but I think they could have had a much more enjoyable experience with better personal preparation and a well serviced bike. Anyway – let's not get dismissive and snooty about this, most riders were enjoying the day and raising lots of money for charity.

Regrettably, a real negative for me was the behaviour of a few individuals. The amount of litter some riders were leaving on the roads (gel sachets, energy bar wrappers, etc) was disappointing and I was also concerned with the lack of road sense of some of the riders. Maybe lack of cycling experience or simply a personal choice but some were riding with minimal awareness or consideration to other road users/riders. Most other road users were incredibly patient with the inevitable traffic queues but there were some minor altercations at busy pinch points which were entirely the fault of event rider's inconsiderate behaviour.

In general, the road surface on the route was dreadful – Suffolk back lanes are like a billiard table in comparison! I stopped to help someone who had a low speed crash directly in front of me due to a pothole and had just missed being hit by a following car. Fortunately, he was ok and the bike had survived but it was concerning. I was glad that I have a robust wheel set/tyres but it got physically very uncomfortable a few times on descents. I lost count of the number of riders with punctures. As someone who does regular industrial risk assessments, I really don't envy whoever had to do one for this event!

Let's get back onto the positive. As a Suffolk Boy I was pleased that I comfortably tackled some of the longer, more challenging hills of up to 10% which most riders walked up although Hazlewood Lane just south of Sutton was a little cheekier than I thought! However, despite my best intentions and training, I was defeated by Ditchling Beacon and I only managed about a 1/3rd the way. There were lots of riders walking up that I had navigate around and due to that I was acutely aware that I was holding up much faster riders behind and with the steepest 20% section still to tackle I accepted I wasn't going to make it without it getting “very messy” so I bottled out. Initially, the most impressive was a chap on a Brompton that wizzed past me on the hill – until I realised it was an ebike! The view at the top was worth it and I have an unfinished personal goal to go back to complete. Next year maybe?



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Brighton has some impressive cycle highways leading into town but due to the road closures, once in town, it was very busy and a little difficult to get through which involved some slow filtering in traffic which challenged some riders.

The event village in Brighton was excellent and well organised with refreshments and a much needed packed lunch provided. Bike and coach transport back to Clapham was efficient, although if I was braver and had an earlier start time I could have cycled back 😊?

Overall, despite riding solo, a really enjoyable day. I raised £730 for Suffolk Libraries and the group has raised over £2000.

## **Bill Money**

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### **The Benchmark for a comfortable, relaxing rest.**

You can often find a nice bench to relax on when taking a break from cycling through our beautiful Suffolk Countryside. Except for Lower Layham Church, where the bench has gone missing.

The photographs are Lower Layham, Higham and Thorpe Morieux.

Please remember, do not include members of the public or vehicles in photographs for publication without permission.

May your cycling be puncture free.





Stephen Read

Registration Secretary.



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## ***Royal Memories – A personal recollection***

The Second Elizabethan Age; one of the most expansive and pivotal of times for the modern world has now passed. Who knows what futures lie ahead. For those of us born into the Reign of Queen Elizabeth the Second we have been a blessed generation.

I am writing this in the period of State Mourning, on 12 September 2022. The Queen was the Royal Patron of the CTC/CUK. It seems right to me that recollections of Royal visits, encounters, memories are shared with friends and acquaintances at this turning point.

My first memories of A Royal visit was as an excited little boy, aged 4 waiting patiently on a gloomy day in 1954 to see Prince Philip arrive by helicopter in Christchurch Park, Ipswich to open a new wing of Ipswich High School in Henley Road. Mum held me close in the public throng; the excitement feeling like electricity through her grip on my hand. I had never seen so many Union flags before, wildly fluttering around my ears.

The first visit of Her Majesty to Ipswich was on the Royal Tour of 1961. My Primary School enabled us to go and see The Queen in the open topped Land Rover at Portman Road football ground. I had never been in a tiered stadium before. Perhaps in long recollection images are exaggerated, but the smile and beauty of the young Queen in her prime made a lasting impression.

In 1963(?) Prince Philip officially opened my Secondary School – Thurleston Secondary Modern in Defoe Road, Ipswich. We were naturally very pleased indeed to have the day off from school! I remember the helicopter – his vehicle of choice when making Royal visits touched down on our playing field. Fingers and noses were pressed hard against the chain

link fencing as we cheered, somewhat embarrassed as youths do, secretly relishing the fact we had escaped lessons for the day.

In 1977 I was in work when the Queen came to Ipswich as part of her Silver Jubilee Tour. We were allowed time out to go and see her process across the Cornhill. Again a warm sunny afternoon, colour, smiles, and good hearted cheering welcomed a very popular Monarch.

Much later, in 1981 my Dad and I witnessed the grandest jamboree of them all - the Wedding of the then Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer. We took an evening train the day before and joined the throng of thousands resting on the pavements overnight on Ludgate Hill, just out of sight of St Pauls. Sleeping bags, folding chairs, canopies and other improvised methods to 'stake your place' covered every inch of pavement for miles. The excited anticipation of the dense crowds, the thrill of the once-in-a-lifetime experience, genuine good wishes for the Royal couple, and good nature of the crowds will never be forgotten. We cheered heartily 8 deep from the pavements, clinging to lampposts or any other height advantage we could muster. We cheered on as vows were made in the Service relayed from speakers along the processional route. Dad and I afterwards slept the sleep of the exhausted in the small gardens at Blackfriars before catching the train home mid-afternoon.

A few years later in 1986 dad was now too old to make the trip to Andrew's Wedding to Sarah Ferguson. I was very active with long distance cycling. I had the mad idea of cycling down to watch the wedding. A full account of this experience appears as 'A Royal Appointment' in a previous Winged Wheel. Leaving work at 4pm I had an evening meal at home and set out around 7 excitedly for the ride to London on a balmy summer evening – I remember being in shorts. I was into central London around 1 am, and spent an hour or so riding around the procession route selecting a good spot eventually parking the bike in the left luggage at Victoria station. I walked back to the Mall to 'bed down' on my inflatable beach li-low (very popular with Audax 'overnighters' at the time). As crowds thickened early I changed my mind and headed for Whitehall where a height advantage was gained by sitting atop of a wall near Westminster underground station. 'Going with the flow' after the procession to and from the Abbey, I joined the grand throng to witness the Balcony appearance around 1pm. Tired stiff and exhausted I collected my bike a little later from Victoria Station and, after tying two souvenir balloons for my young twins to my saddle, started for the long ride home. Many good natured horn blasts accompanied me through Whitechapel and the inner Boroughs. Passing through Stratford one of the balloons pinged off and drifted away across the rooftops. One survived as a memento for the girls. Alison, bless her, within 5 minutes of being given it the next morning let go of the string in the garden and with our cheery blessing it sailed away to pastures unknown.

The great Tragedy that is the death of Princess Diana will I am sure be remembered long by all. A tragedy that would grace a Shakesperean plot. The sense of grief kept me from making the journey to pay respects to a remarkable woman at her funeral, but I remember watching the funeral on the TV was almost too much to bear.

In 2005 my daughter Alison had recently set up home in Reading. Still into long distance cycling at the time I had the idea of riding from Cambridge to Reading, a route achievable in a day and avoiding London, to visit her. The return 2 days later was to pass through as many Green Parks of London en route to Liverpool Street Station as can be fitted in, including Windsor Great Park. This was the day of Charles and Camilla's Wedding. As I approached Windsor the traffic became sparse and then non-existent. I became forced to proceed on foot onto the Royal route, eventually squeezing along the rear of the 3 deep crowds outside Windsor Castle. Conscious of the length of my journey and the time I asked of the police officer on crowd control the time of the arrival of the Royal party. "Around 1" she said. With 30 minutes to go I decided I could not spare the time to wait so made my excuses and left much to the amazement of the dedicated crowds around me!

That was the last close encounter with a Royal. I have been lucky to have so many great memories. The sense of loss of something at the core of my generations identity of 'Britishness' remains with me still. The television coverage (as it naturally would) reminded us of what a very special lady Queen Elizabeth was; a tower of strength and commitment to upholding Christian values in her relationships with people and role as leader of Nations. She truly had every skill the job needed and that perfect smile. To be growing up through the 1950's & 60's with a beautiful young lady as our Queen was an aspect of my life I am now only really appreciating.

**Paul Fenton**

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## Cycle Maintenance Talk

On a recent Thursday ride, we visited Maureen and Ken in Hadleigh for coffee where their son Martin, of Sunny Day Cycles, gave us a talk on how to look after our bikes. He is happy to give talks on cycle maintenance on request. See how to contact him in his advert below. Here are some pictures, by Paula Roberts, of us enjoying his talk.



Number 296



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## Sunday Rides Report Sept. 2022

We are now operating with no Covid-related restrictions but infection rates are high again rising due to a new variant. The latest booster has started to be administered to the population.

The rides continue to be supported by a good number of club members. This quarter has seen higher numbers of members on rides, both Easy and Medium rides. On average, the number on Medium rides is less than on Easy rides but this has been reversed on a few occasions.

There have been quarterly rides to Ashfield village hall and to 'Wheeler's', the home of Ken & Maureen Nichols in Hadleigh. The numbers attending Raydon church afternoon teas has been high. This has been helped by great weather on each occasion, along with a quality selection of delicious home-made cakes. This year Raydon teas will also be offered on the first Sunday in October.

Venues come and go. We have used the new purpose built Duck and Teapot Cafe at Needham Lakes, which is proving very popular. The Courtyard Cafe at Crowfield (which replaced The Bus Stop Diner) has also been a success.

It was a privilege to be able to join Ken and Maureen Nichols on 21st August at Hadleigh Guildhall, to help celebrate their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

Ride Leaders:

There remains an issue with getting sufficient ride leaders, particularly for Medium rides. A relatively small number are regular volunteers and I continue to be grateful to them. Some Medium rides have gone ahead, without a leader volunteering beforehand. On the day someone will lead but this is not ideal.

A rides list has been put together to the first week in December and a replacement Sunday Rides Coordinator still needs to be sourced.

Derek Worrall

Sunday Riders Coordinator

## Chippis Cycle Museum

by Tony Bound

Geraint Thomas and I have two things in common. We are both Welsh and ride bikes – or, in my case, a bike. The divide, however, is speed, age and achievement. This in part can be explained by the following encounter on the road to Orford one Sunday morning. I was out on a slow ride to unwind my legs after a not-so-slow ride on the Saturday. A line of cyclists came by, the last of whom drew up alongside and we had the following conversation. “Tag along, come with us” he said. “No thanks” I replied. “Why not?” “How old are you?” “20” “Multiply by 4 and add 2” I said. I saw the cogs turning in his head. “Bloody hell”. He was soon back with the rest of the line and on his way.

Whenever I think of that incident I smile inwardly, thinking that he was most probably worried that he would be accompanying an ancient to the hospital – or worse

Dylan Thomas (no relation of Geraint as far as I know) opened “Under Milkwood” with the line “To begin at the beginning” and I will try to do the same. I grew up on a Welsh farm, mostly hill, and you may visualise the Victorian idyll – cows in a stream on a warm Spring day, lambs frolicking on the hillside, a cockerel crowing on a tidy muck heap and ducks on a clear blue pond. It was, however, hard work – cowsheds to clean out, smelly pigs to feed, work horses to groom, and butter churns to spin, come rain or shine. The house always seemed cold – no running water, no electricity, but there was a radio powered by a pair of dry and wet batteries. The wet battery was charged weekly by the local blacksmith – more of him later. The only means of transport, apart from a twice daily bus that chugged its way to Aberystwyth, was my grandfather’s bike, which I learned to ride when I was about ten. It was far too big for me – I couldn’t reach the seat and when my foot slipped off the pedal there was a very pained yelp. I soon discovered that my work hobnail boots solved the problem – perhaps the forerunners of cleats. It was my grandfather’s wish to visit his daughter, who lived 30 miles away but over some steep hills and, for some reason, he wanted me to go with him. The blacksmith was commissioned to build a bike for me from the many frames and spare parts he had collected over the years. I was very proud of my new ‘bits’ bike as we tackled the first steady climb of about 4 miles, out of the valley and through Devil’s Bridge up to the highest point on the Shrewsbury to Aberystwyth road. Coming off the top, I pulled on the front brake which somehow locked on, and I ended up head first, luckily on a mossy bank. I still remember my grandfather’s comment, “What are you doing down there?” The front brake was disengaged and never used again. The oddest thing is that I don’t recall having to get off once, on the climb or after that, during the journey.

Why this reminiscing?

A couple of weeks ago I met my nephew and his family at a bike museum in Chippis, a small Swiss town in the Rhone valley. I hadn't been looking forward to the museum until we got there. There were 3 or 4 rooms of one man's incredible collection, showing the history of cycling from the very beginning. The earliest ever bike, the first Tour de France winner's bike, and on to the present day, including Cancellara's bike and hundreds more. I was able to point out to my great nephews bikes like my grandfather's and one similar to the one the blacksmith built for me. I couldn't be sure if their looks signified disbelief or sympathy.

I do, however, hope that some day I will be able to return and spend much more time there, because this visit had been a special Sunday opening for us. These photographs are just a snapshot and in no way do the collection justice. You will, however, need to understand French or bring an interpreter, because the owner's enthusiasm baffled even my bi-lingual nephew at times.

**I heartily encourage any cycling enthusiast visiting that area to allow a half day for a visit to see this amazing collection.**

