

Hallo Everybody

Welcome to the latest edition of Winged Wheel and a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed. Several contributions, this time, really have a winter theme to them, making this a special Christmas issue. On that subject, may I take this opportunity to wish you a very happy Christmas and all the very best for 2023. If you would like to write something for the next issue please send it to me at editor.ctcsuffolk@gmail.co.uk and not my personal email. On the whole, the on line version of the magazine is working really well but please will 'T Pollerman' get in touch as he is still paying for a paper copy which no longer exists, the on line copy is free to access. Happy cycling.



Judy Scott
Editor

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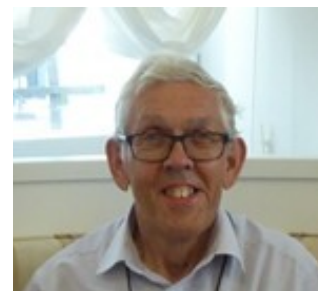
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PRESIDENT'S PIECE

DECEMBER 2022

I was looking back to my ramblings this time last year when I mentioned there was the threat of reintroducing Covid restrictions. As we know this did indeed happen straight after Christmas. Personally, I have taken up every vaccination that has been offered and I can do no more. Judy and I tested positive immediately after getting back from Ireland in July but fortunately only suffered mild symptoms. It seems that Covid, in some form or another, is here to stay so we have to accept that and get on with life.



During the last few months we have noticed the effects of climate change. We have gone from exceptionally high temperatures during the summer to way below average temperatures in the last couple of weeks, without there being much autumn in between. As some compensation, the leaves on the trees have lasted much longer with spectacular colours well into December.

As I live in close proximity to the editorial staff of Winged Wheel I have privileged pre-publication access to the magazine content. Elsewhere in this issue is an article which brought back memories of cycling through the notoriously hard winter of 1962/63 when the Big Freeze started on Boxing Day in 1962 and continued for 10 weeks. You will also find in the following pages reports of rides being cancelled because of adverse weather conditions. I don't recall a single occasion through the whole of the Big Freeze that a ride was cancelled; it was left to each individual to choose whether or not to ride. Having said that, this was 60 years ago and we live in a different world in so many ways. In addition to that, our regular riding membership was of a totally different generation to today's riders. We were, in the main, in our teens and twenties and invincible (well in our eyes anyway).

On the subject of age, I am returning to my perennial concern that the average age of our regular club riders is steadily increasing and there seems to be no obvious answer to reverse the trend. Perhaps a new year will bring new ideas.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and safe and enjoyable cycling in 2023.

Michael

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Secretary's Notes

Winter has suddenly arrived. The last few days have been very cold, but often dry and bright, with a hoar frost. Perfect conditions for cycling at this time of year, I used to think. But time seems to be catching up with me : I have become more reluctant to risk a spill on black ice, despite remembering that this has happened to me before without leading to serious injury. And this is without factoring in the uncertainty of ambulance cover.

I've been out walking instead (you can still take a tumble on the ice, but at lower speed). Whilst walking I notice others happily cycling past. This just demonstrates that whether to ride or not in such conditions is an individual choice depending on age, attitude to risk, knowledge of local road conditions etc.



Last Thursday we were faced with a decision of whether to cancel the club rides or not. A warning of ice had been issued for our area, but in the below-zero temperature it was sunny

and the roads mainly dry. Cancelling would mean depriving those happy to cycle of an organised ride; not cancelling could risk a call for medical assistance. And I suppose you could argue that cancellation could lead to those who want to cycle doing their own thing but without any backup in the event of an accident. In the event we went ahead with a limited ride, as one leader was happy to continue as long as anyone turned up at the start, the other not.

Whether to take part on a club ride or not is always an individual choice, whatever the weather and road conditions. Whatever your choice, do err on the safe side and enjoy your cycling (when weather permits).

John.

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Sunday Rides Report December 2022

We are now operating with no Covid-related restrictions. Most people have had a booster injection this autumn and the risk of serious consequences from Covid-19 is deemed to be low. The rides continue to be supported by a good number of club members.

After the extremely high temperatures in summer we have had variable weather in autumn.

We have had a run of Sundays with a good deal of rain, some continuous.

As a result, one ride was cancelled for easy and medium rides. On three Sundays virtually no medium riders ventured out but a valiant number of easy riders turned out, against the odds, making it to elevenses.

The number on Medium riders continues to be less than on Easy rides.

There was a quarterly ride to Ashfield village hall (hampered by significant rain) but fortunately a number of members drove out to support Ashfield as they had gone to the effort of preparing refreshments for us.

There was also a quarterly ride to "Wheelers", 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. I recently received an email from the organiser, thanking us for our support and advising that over the four Sundays £1400 was raised for church funds. They will be back next summer, the first Sunday of the month: June to September.

For the second year the informal Christmas lunch has been held at Station House, Campsea Ashe.

This was well supported despite the sub-zero temperature all day. We received a warm welcome.

Through experience, a more efficient food provision system was used, which was effective. Unsurprisingly few travelled to the venue by cycle due to the adverse weather conditions.

Ride Leaders:

There remains an issue with getting sufficient ride leaders, particularly for the Medium rides.

A relatively small number are regular volunteers and I continue to be grateful to them.

A number of Medium rides have gone ahead with no leader being listed for the day.

A schedule of rides for January and February will soon be put together, which will include the freewheel competition at the usual venue near Claydon.

Derek Worrall

Sunday Rides Coordinator

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THANK YOU

Thank you to all who have enjoyed coffee and cake at "Wheelers" and supported the Blaxhall Audax. This year you have raised £520 for EACH (East Anglian Children's Hospice) Well done for supporting such a worthy cause and we hope you will continue eating cake and coffee with us in 2023

Ken and Maureen Nichols

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Lincolnshire Wolds short break

I decided I wanted to see more of the Lincolnshire Wolds as a result of riding the Bomber County 200 km audax based at Carlton Le Moorland. The route has a brief sortie into the Wolds en-route to Louth control. It's the most scenic part of the route.

I travelled to Skegness by train on Friday 1st July. The rail geek in me enjoyed its first experience of the Grantham – Skegness line. Looking out at Heckington, the station struck me as being in an attractive setting with a picturesque windmill alongside. On arrival, after a light bite, including a bacon and egg bap (can't whack it!), with the help of my Google map and a taxi driver (always a reliable option!) I found the Clumber House hotel/guest house reasonably easily. I describe it as "hotel/guest house" as it gets called both. As there is a small bar and they do evening meal, it seems reasonable to call it a hotel. The feel of it, however, is more of an above average guest house, if that makes sense. The evening meal is three courses with tea/coffee for just £10. The cheap price caused me to have reservations about how filling it would be but I decided at least for the first night I should take the chance and find out – more to come.

Sorting things out in my room, I realised I had forgotten something. I had brought two Ordnance Survey Explorer maps: sheets 273 Lincolnshire Wolds South and 282 Lincolnshire Wolds North. I had, however, also intended bringing my AA 3 miles to 1 inch "Northern England" map. My thinking was it would help where the Landranger maps might not overlap.

After some cursing, I set out to look for the WH Smith with fingers crossed they would have the AA map. I further cursed that I would in a sense be wasting money because once home I would have two copies of the same map! However, WH Smith didn't have the AA map. What it did have was the adjoining Explorer map to "Lincolnshire Wolds South," sheet 274, Skegness Alford and Spilsby.

Problem solved as far as it could be, I went for a walk around Skegness. Although the seafront reminded me of Gt Yarmouth, overall I found it a nice town. It was a sunny afternoon so I sat outside a coffee bar with two lattes and a Bakewell slice. I surprised myself by resisting the temptation to patronise the nearby ice cream kiosk!

Now to return to the matter of a three course evening meal for just £10. My concerns could not have been more unfounded! I cannot fully remember what I had (perhaps I should start noting it down) but after finishing I was uncomfortably full and had to lay down for a while! Perhaps I should not have had the Bakewell slice! Of course, that day I was predominantly just sitting on trains. However, even on the two riding days, while not feeling overfull, I didn't feel I needed more. I realised I could forget the Wetherspoon for this trip. That is, at least for food. As the bar is limited, I did use the Wetherspoon for most of my beer.



However, credit to booking.com for finding me *the* place to stay in Skegness. I should add the proprietors (husband and wife and son) were friendly and helpful in letting me put my bike in their shed, where it was in effect double-locked by the combination of the shed lock and the locked driveway gate. Just to say that although the bar is limited, they did have bottles of Scorpion real ale and I enjoyed one all the three days over dinner.

Skegness – Welton Le-Marsh – Ulceby – Market Stainton – Horncastle – Skegness (67¼ miles)

Saturday morning was sunny but breezy. I left Skegness along the A52 to Winthorpe. The additional Explorer map did enable me to get into the lanes quicker than if I had used the AA map. It indicated a lane from Winthorpe toward Burgh Le Marsh. The issue was it's one of those roads requiring local knowledge because the signpost only indicates the church. That combined with not wanting to start looking at the map after less than 2 miles! I decided to ride a bit further along the A52 to check if there was another left turn. As I started leaving the houses behind and hadn't seen another left turn I concluded it must be the road I needed. I did, however, do what I had tried to avoid and checked the map. It seemed to fully confirm it, so I retraced.

Although a lane, it was quite busy and knowing Burgh Le Marsh (Bomber County control memories) is a big village, I guessed it explained the traffic so I figured I was on the right road. Once the signposts started it was fully confirmed. I turned right before Burgh Le Marsh to Addlethorpe. At this stage, the terrain was as Lincolnshire countryside is commonly perceived; pancake flat. They were pleasant lanes nonetheless. I seemed to have a side-headwind, although not troublesome. It was at this point the 'fun' began with having to find my way through a maze of lanes requiring frequent, time-consuming map checking. The end result was a radically different ride to what I had intended. My original plan was to get north-east of Louth to see Covenham reservoir and then see the north Wolds thoroughly. After a number of map and watch checks, I realised that plan was best abandoned. It means I didn't see the north Wolds as thoroughly as I intended. I will return to the issue to explain how I intend putting it right.

Addlethorpe is picturesque, as are all the villages I visited over the weekend so I wont repeat it.

I knew I was entering the Wolds when I approached the first hill near Claxby St Andrew. The Wolds' hills may not be quite as severe as those in more well known hilly areas but they are testing enough (signs advising of 1 in 10s and 1 in 8s) and are the proof it's a misconception Lincolnshire is completely flat (although there are surprises outside the Wolds too!).

My ride was through a lovely maze of lanes, some of them delightfully wooded to then give way to rolling hills views. I passed through Ulceby and Market Stainton to Horncastle, Just before Market Stainton, I descended a 1 in 8 and was pleasantly surprised it only involved descending it. Well, I did have to climb a bit from the bottom but it was nothing east Suffolk doesn't offer. Horncastle had originally been off my radar for today. It is, however, picturesque and was a good place for food and drink.

I'm ashamed to admit I didn't use the *Just One More Bike* cycle shop cum cafe. My excuse is that I only noticed it after I had bought my food and drink and sat on a seat in the square to consume it. I don't know how well patronised it is by cyclists but it seemed popular with locals.

Time was getting on so I admit I rode the final 20½ miles back to Skegness direct along the A158. Ironically it provided the toughest climb of the day. There is a long drag of a hill, shortly after leaving Horncastle, and although there isn't a gradient sign, it's also not very gentle.

The weather changed and it started raining. I put the waterproof on for the rest of the ride, although the rain stopped just before Skegness.

As I've already indicated, I had another great value meal at Clumber House and it was spot on the right amount. To further explain how good it is, I got different menu choices for each day, the Sunday menu including a choice of roasts.

Afterwards, I again went to the Wetherspoon, but didn't need crisps!

Skegness – Orby – Skendleby – Sausthorpe – East Keal – Great Steeping – Irby-in-the-Marsh – Bratoft – Winthorpe – Skegness (38½ miles)

Sunday morning also started sunny, but less breezy than Saturday.

Even though Saturday's ride hadn't gone as planned, I decided, nevertheless, to stick to my plan for today. Initially, I repeated Saturday's route out of Skegness, along the A52 to Winthorpe, and then the lane toward Burgh Le Marsh. This time, I left the lane to follow the lane to Orby, after which I again found myself at Welton Le Marsh. The next village I wanted was Skendleby. From Welton Le Marsh, it seems I made an ironic navigational error. I followed the B1196 to junction with the A158 at a big and busy roundabout. The first irony is that it is the only very short stretch of dual carriageway on the A158 between two big and busy roundabouts, i.e. the most unpleasant stretch for cycling. Anyway, I negotiated the roundabouts okay to turn right onto the A1028 into the Wolds. I knew I was entering the Wolds because there is a sign indicating when you are entering. I also knew because, yes, it involved the first hill of the day! However, it's very much a long drag with a gentle gradient. Now the second irony, all the more so because I've only become aware of it from an armchair look at the map a few minutes ago. I could have turned right off the B1196 to

junction with the A1028, thus avoiding the A158. I suspect the road isn't signposted and, at the time, I saw no reason to check the map.

Of course, the lane off the A1028 to Candlesby is at the very top of the hill! From Candlesby, it was lovely lanes, including a wooded stretch to Sausthorpe. From there, I could simply have followed the A158 back to Skegness. However, I made a spur of the moment decision to take a lanes route. I crossed straight over the A158 to follow the lane to Raithby and Mavis Enderby. I was now leaving the Wolds but remember my comment about surprises! The lane started with a long drag, followed by a steep descent. It was then a few miles of up and down before a sharp descent to East Keal. I arrived there at lunchtime so made use of the village store and a seat on the green. It was a warm day so, yes, my lunch included a white Magnum! After lunch, I had a short busy stretch on the A16 before turning right along the lane to Toynton All Saints and Toynton St Peter and then lanes to Great Steeping. I was back on the 'pancake flat' but I disagree with those who say all flat riding is boring. For me they were lovely narrow, quiet lanes and the countryside had its own beauty and character.. From Great Steeping, I followed the B1195 to Irby in the Marsh. I then started a complex lane route toward Bratoft. Even with the Landranger map, the maze of lanes and lack of signposts meant much of my navigation was guesswork. I didn't do badly, eventually finding myself just outside Burgh Le Marsh, albeit not quite what I had intended. Again, I could just have returned to Skegness along the A158 but I checked the map for a lanes route. While doing so, the wind, which had got up considerably, gusted and it started raining so it was waterproof on for the remaining few miles. My route initially took me south, cutting just short of Wainfleet to turn north-easterly to again junction with the A158 at a crossroads about 3 miles west of Skegness. Nicely, the lane opposite went to Winthorpe. It was a win-win; it would be another first time lane and the A52 into Skegness is a bit quieter than the A158.

I was back at Clumber House around 2.15 pm. When I visited the seafront on Friday, I discovered there is a seal sanctuary, which I decided would be a nice thing to visit after getting back on Sunday. I pondered which to do first, the sanctuary or a light bite. The second won! I used the same coffee house as on Friday and then wandered to the sanctuary, only to be told final entry is at 4.00 pm. I was literally just 5 minutes too late – drat!

I do at least remember what I had for the main course on Sunday; roast beef.

Over my pints in the Wetherspoon I pondered how the trip had gone. Although I still hadn't seen much of the north Wolds, I had seen the south Wolds more thoroughly than I probably would have done with my original plan and covered some unexpected ground as well, albeit flat. I pondered that if I came again, I could take a more direct route to Covenham reservoir and the north Wolds confident I won't be missing much I haven't seen before. On the

second day, I might take a look at Wainfleet and some of the coast.

Ironically, therefore, everything had worked out for the better, especially as Clumber House being such a nice stay, it's good to have a reason to use it again. I will also ensure I make time for the seal sanctuary!

Monday morning was home on the trains, after a friendly goodbye with the proprietors, telling them I would be back. I'm also prompted to say after a good breakfast. I almost forgot to mention the full English is great and there are other options, plus they offer porridge for starter. One of the proprietors commented that overall the weather hadn't perhaps been too bad. That was correct, despite the trip including the first time for some years (yes, really!) I'd had to wear my waterproof for any distance.

In my opinion, Lincolnshire is an underrated county.

Finally, an interesting point relating to my article a while ago on the merits of modern technology or 'old fashioned' maps for touring. Although the main roads tend to have signs indicating when entering the Wolds, it was frustrating not to see any in the lanes and even the Explorer maps don't indicate the boundaries on the actual map, only on the broad outline on the back cover. However, the GPS tracks of my rides on Garmin Connect show the boundaries by contrasting dark and light shading. From them, therefore, I will be able to ensure I see the north Wolds as fully as possible. I'm impressed!

By John Thompson



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Hadleigh

A perfect day by Nicola Halton

Written in her head whilst out on her bike one day

I ride uphill and get so high,
I think that I will reach the sky.
The call of birds, the buzz of bees,
Across the land and through the trees.
A patchwork world spread out below,
The sunrise setting it aglow.

The smell of earth and new mown hay,
Adds richness to this perfect day.
The sky is clear, there's little breeze,
There are no better days than these.
I stop to work out where I'm at,
The noonday sun upon my hat.

I ride on now and see a sign,
For somewhere suitable to dine.
I sit beneath an old oak tree;
The nature park's just right for me.
The day is done; the sky turns red,
The sunset calls me to my bed.

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SUFFOLK CHURCHES BY CYCLE: ASHBOCKING

North of Ipswich is Ashbocking village but where is Ashbocking church you might ask? It is a long way out of the village and you may never have seen it whilst out cycling.

It is off the B1078, down a lengthy track opposite Hemingstone Garage. Confused? In modern terminology the "what3words" location is: speeded.disband.explorer. A lovely rural spot and well worth discovering.

All Saints church is Grade 1 listed and has ancient features, such as the Saxon font bowl, supported by Norman pillars.

The Bocking family were involved with the church for around 500 years. The tower and porch were built by Edmund Bocking in 1580 of thin, red Tudor bricks. There are a number of Bocking family brasses on the north wall with a description of those involved.





Vicars are recorded from 1326 and there are embroidered church kneelers for each former vicar. That is quite a few kneelers.

High on the south wall hang the Royal Arms of King Charles 1, dated 1640 with inscription "God Save the King".

The Arms are unusual (there are only four in Suffolk) and were hung by royalist vicar Theodore Beadle. He was imprisoned for his views and regrettably died in prison.

On the same wall is a finely decorated stone canopy (possibly over a tomb), with fruit and flowers and carved heads.

The splendid green altar frontal and embroidery on the lectern and pulpit are in commemoration of 900 years of worship on the site. They were stitched locally. (Not viewable on my last visit due to Advent colours being displayed).

The church has 6 bells, all by Taylor's of Loughborough. The heaviest bell, the tenor dates back to 1585 and was recast as it had developed a crack. The peal of 6 bells were installed in 1904. Taylor's is the only remaining UK bell founder and was recently saved by an injection of funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



The church is well worth a look and I have found it open on each occasion that I have visited.

Derek Worrall

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Rides with my Father by Paul Fenton

My father would have been 100 years old in November; An appropriate moment for reflection.

I owe my introduction to cycling and the CTC to Dad. He was a member of the Ipswich Bicycle Club in the mid 1930's. I think he did most of his riding with two good mates, George Moore and Ted Ashford – no one will now remember them, neither of them returned to cycling after the War. He did remember Wink Gardiner though as Club Captain of the IBC, and former CTC Suffolk sage and President, leading rides in the 1930's. A memory that

bridges the generations. Dad wasn't really a 'Clubman', but certainly clocked some impressive rides – just for fun, as did many cyclists of that tough era, when if you had a bike you were able to travel cheaply and far. The Working Man's Passport to the world!

I started riding 'properly' in my mid teens in the mid 1960's. I did, and have continued, to share Dad's spirit of adventure. A few tales of Dad's rides in the 30's even now occasionally filter in to my mind when riding. *'Sax and home by Snape'* was a summer evening staple. When the going is hard into wind or rain, I recall his tales of riding from Ipswich to Southend and back on a Sunday, a quick scrub up and down to town to the pictures. I have yet to achieve that!

Some of you might recall my led 'Ride(s) to the Capital' of a few years ago. This was one of Dad's 'Monument' rides. A retracing of the old classic ride into London (*'the smoke'*) from Ipswich following as much as practical the old route of the A12 into the east end and into the City. I first did this aged 16 with Richard Coe. Quite an adventure, starting from home at midnight and riding through the night to dawn on London Bridge on Good Friday, then down to Herne Hill for the International Track meeting, standing all afternoon and riding home to Ipswich through the evening getting home about 1am not just a little tired! I remember Dad with a glint in his eye telling me of the places en route to look out for. For some strange reason the 'Yardley' building adjacent to the Bow bridge sticks in my memory – now long since redeveloped. It was an art deco building with the name 'Yardley' in neon letters vertically arranged down one side. There seemed something exotic about the name; only seen then as a youngster in those glamorous displays in Department Stores at Christmas – a touch of Hollywood.

I also remember him telling me of a night ride he did with the Club around the *'big bun'*; Ipswich – Colchester – Bishops Stortford – Newmarket – Bury St Edmunds – Ipswich. Big Bun? Look at the main roads linking those towns. Inspirational tales to a young lad.

There was also the 'inside' knowledge that was passed down. How to spot a good bike? High Pressure rims, a little narrower than Endricks to take thinner tyres and more pressure for less rolling resistance. Carved lug-work, wrap over seat stays. parallel seat/head tube angles, 'D' to round forks with a gentle curve. A B15 flyer saddle. His own bike was an F W Carpenter bespoke frame – his pride and joy, traded post war for the Wedding ring. Always a Fixed Wheel, 72" in the summer 65" in the winter. Oh how those gear ratios have tormented me over the years. *"Dad used to manage this gear – but it is so hard!* But persistence with it made me strong and the Audax rider I became and built the tenacious spirit that has served me well in many challenges over the years. Then the obvious of course; How to mend a puncture. Using spoons as tyre leavers. Boiling your chain in oil!

Don't try it in the wife's presence or nearby!. A knack of dealing with Cotter Pins! Truing wheels.

Dad died in 1989 aged 66. It was quite a moment when I passed that age myself. There comes a time when one gets to the 'tree top' – the oldest of your clan. Imagine that feeling as a child when tree climbing your head suddenly becomes the highest point and the view opens up all around. Exhilarating but also a feeling of pensive nervousness. One becomes a mark for others.

Dad was just an ordinary working man. No great achievements, but a spirit of fun and adventure. Because he had been involved in local cycling clubs, when I became 15 he found me my first lightweight bike (second hand from Elmy's shop in St Helens Street). He tracked down the local CTC Secretary, found a rides list and set me on my way. That bike did tens of thousands of miles through the 60's and 70's, lived in the dining room at home until I got married, and shaped my future in many ways. My first ride with Dad was from Whitton to Kersey and back on a summer evening, me spread out on the SunSupalite like a young frog, dad struggling up the hills on his Kerry Green work bike. I still treasure the photograph taken at Kersey Ford towards the church. 57 years later the wheels are still turning and those memories linger on...

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Your Names

Your choices

NAME	STARTER	MAIN	DESSERT	TEA/COFFEE

Starters:

- A. Tomato and basil soup, freshly baked crusty roll (V+)
- B. Sliced smoked breast of chicken with rocket salad, crispy lardons of bacon and a Caesar style dressing.

Mains:

- C. Roast local chicken breast with all the trimmings, roast potatoes, gravy (GFoR)
- D. Steamed plaice fillet, lemon butter, new potatoes, seasonal vegetables (GF)
- E. Vegan Shepherds pie with bubble and squeak mash, gravy (V+)

Desserts:

- F. Chocolate fudge cake, piped cream
- G. Vegan Duo of raspberry and orange sorbet, seasonal fruit (GF, V+)

NOTE – I MUST HAVE ALL ORDERS BY JANUARY 18TH.

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Where has all the snow gone?

I'm finding it hard to remember when cyclists had to battle through deep snow to enjoy their pastime. Although, as with most old people, the past is always clearer than the here and now, and when I say deep snow I do mean the hub deep snow that we experienced in the 1950's and 60's.

The kind which I encountered riding home sometimes along the Felixstowe Road near Levington Heath after a club ride, when the drifts would be blown through the hedges and you had to summon up a bit more effort to cut through them, in the dark with inadequate battery powered lights it was a real hazard. At this time the traffic on that road was so light that you had to cut your own furrow through the laying snow.

There was also an occasion when the club run starting from Ipswich was heading up Bourne Hill and encountered a tanker stuck in a snow drift at the top. Behind this was a taxi, which our group helped to push round so that he could go back down to town. We continued along the road to Tattingstone where the drifts were like great waves about 6ft high and we managed to build igloos in them. On arrival at Tattingstone "Wheatsheaf" about lunchtime we were informed "you are our first customers today". Another memorable ride was to Clacton Pier where we had the biggest snowball fight that I can ever remember and the roads were so icy we frequently came tumbling down like ninepins.

Ice is, and was always a problem; another occasion was after having tea at "Dollys" cafe in Framlingham we found it difficult to ride on the icy road and had to walk quite a bit. The icy cold wind froze the chains into stiff links which could not bend around the gear mechanism. After walking and freewheeling we managed to reach Martlesham Red Lion and I still had to

travel on to Felixstowe. The Scott's, thinking I might die of exposure at Kirton, kindly suggested I stayed with them overnight. After a long episode involving a red telephone box, I managed to reach a shopkeeper who lived at the end of our road in Felixstowe who relayed the message to my parents that I would be staying in Ipswich overnight. On arrival at the Scott's we looked more like arctic explorers than cyclist as it was still snowing. Maureen's Mum produced a bowl of hot water for us to stand in to release our shoes and socks from our frozen legs. Some things you never forget.

On one snowy ride Derek Worrall turned up on an unusual bike with knobbly tyres and straight handlebars which he said was a Mountain Bike. It proved ideal for the conditions as he rode serenely through the snow as we slipped and slid – lesson learned!

Best of all is riding through inches of newly laid snow which has fallen without wind, flakes resting on very possible surface. On a day like this find a lane where nobody has travelled, with only the marks left by wildlife, the soft crunch of tyres in the silence that blanket snow creates, is just magic.

Nowadays we are inclined to despair if we see more than a few flakes of snow and rides have to be cancelled, not necessarily because of the snow but because of the increased danger of traffic on the roads. How things have changed but would we go back to those times, perhaps not.

One of Santa's little Elves

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Forty years of Cycle Commuting by Dave Tricker

As I've hit 60, I thought it might be interesting and even possibly useful reflect upon my 40 plus years of Cycle commuting.

It started at Salford University when in my second year I decided that cycling to and from the University campus was a quicker option than walking and cheaper than the bus. My Raleigh Esquire 3 speed did well for the remaining two years for the 2 mile commutes.

I then got a job in London and found myself "reverse" commuting from EC1 where I had a shared flat (sounds posh but in reality it was nearly a slum – but cheap) out to New Southgate. For this 8 mile commute I purchased a derailleur geared tourer from the London Bicycle company. This own brand steel framed bike did me well. Cycling around London in the early 80s was fun. I remember only one minor accident resulting in a buckled wheel. Particularly interesting was cycling around the old Docklands before it was developed.

After redundancy I ended up back in my home town of Woodbridge in Suffolk and an 8 mile commute into Ipswich. This was quite a change as a lot of the route was on unlit county roads. I also acquired a new bike, a Raleigh Record Ace, which I still have and ride. This was

a decent bike with Reynolds 531 Tubing. Apart from stripped bottom bracket threads, the frame is still going strong.

Another redundancy saw me commuting 5 miles in the opposite direction, almost entirely on unlit and narrow country roads. This has been my ride for the last 27 years. For most of this time I have ridden the Record Ace, winter and summer. In the past couple of years though, the state of the backroads has become very poor. In the winter they can, in places verge on the un-rideable with 25mm tyres (unfortunately the Record Ace frame will not allow for anything bigger if mudguards are fitted). This set me looking for an old MTB frame with 26" wheels and fatter tyres. I struck lucky at the local Recycling centre where I spotted an untrendy Madison Ridgeback which I purchased for £35. It turned out that this early 90's bike had been little ridden. The Exage groupset needed a little oil, I fitted a stem and handle bars from my "box of many parts" that were more to my liking. The tyres appeared fairly new. It also had good steel mudguards fitted. On further investigation this was the 602 with a chromoly steel frame. So after an oil and a tyre pump up I had a good robust workhorse bike. I feel much happier on this bike on wet, muddy, pothole strewn roads. It's obviously harder work than the Record Ace, but manageable.

I have had one serious injury and two more minor ones over the years. Two of the incidents involved cars and the third debris in the road. I was very grateful for the Legal support from the CTC I received back in 2000 when I sustained a serious injury being knocked off my bike at a road junction.

One thing that has really come on in the last 40 years is lighting. I've been through most types of lighting: Battery, Rechargeables, sidewall dynamos, running surface dynamos, and now finally hub dynamos. The greatest thing that has happened for cycle lighting is the LED. I now have a 3W Shimano hub dynamos on both bikes, running LED head and tail lights. As I'm on a budget these are lower end items, but even so I can see well at night on dark country roads and never have to worry about charging batteries. I built my own dynamo hub wheels (thank you You Tube) and built one for my wife's bike as well. Seeking out seconds and clearance items (thanks SJS Cycles) I was able to fit a dynamo hub lighting system for about £100 – it's really worth doing.

The one other thing I would really like to try on the winter bike is hub gearing plus a good chain guard. Sand and water applied liberally to chains and chainsets destroy them fairly rapidly. I do not have the time or inclination to clean down my bike every day during the winter months, so a sealed protected gearing system sounds like a very good idea.

I now cycle in "normal" clothes so don't have to get changed at work. I don't cycle hard enough to sweat that badly. I've still yet to discover ideal wet weather gear. Breathable fabrics do not remain breathable unless their water repellancy is maintained. This involves regular washing in Nikwax washes which I never seem to get round to doing. Also I'm not too sure of the environmental damage caused by some of these chemicals. I find that



Altura Jacket, cheap Peter Storm over trousers and waxed cotton over boots work fairly well for my journey times. I particularly recommend the waxed cotton over boots (but remember to clip your overtrousers over the top of the overboots).

Things learnt:

- Cycle commuting becomes a habit, it's cheaper than joining a gym, and is much cheaper than driving and better for the environment.
- A decent steel frame will last a life time.
- Second hand bargains can be found.
- Hub dynamos and LEDs are brilliant.
- Cycle clothing is not essential (ask the Dutch)
- The state of our roads has declined over recent years

It's worth belonging to Cycling UK for the free Legal advice alone.

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Right to Ride

Now is the time to begin to think about the future of our group. The AGM will come on the 8th May next year, however if passed experience hold true, the last month is insufficient to fill vacant posts.

I have raised my head above the parapet by putting my name forward for President for the customary 3-year period from May 2023, but I would prefer to relinquish the roles of PRO and R2R. Any volunteers? These two roles are not set in stone. Anyone who takes them on is free to make what they will of them.

With regard to the R2R I get the occasional email about alterations to off road provisions, ie footpaths bridle ways and the like. To date these have amounted to diversions. I have made the point to the relevant council officers, that I represent the Cycling group and therefore comment, if any, is confined accordingly. In the early days of my tenure, I tried to get the councils to consult our group about changes to the highway and cycling infrastructure, but they were not keen on generating numerous consultations, preferring a single approach to an organisation that represented all forms of cycling. Sustrans undertook this for a while this fell by the wayside when the driving force retired. I am sure also the costs implications had a bearing.

I also believe that R2R has a second theme to it. In my view us cyclists have a right to use the national road network safely. With that right comes responsibility, and while we expect the drivers of vehicles to respect our rights and safety, we must also observe the highway code and law.

With regard to PRO anyone taking this on has a free hand. My actions have been confined to writing article about cycling related issues and trying to get these int the public domain via the free publications and the East Anglian.

Cycling safety - Camera footage.

For those who know I have cameras fitted to by bike, hear are a few statistics from 2022

- Number of cycle rides 81
- Number of cases reported 49
- Number of cases "No further action" 10
- Number of cases "Advisory letter" 24
- Number of cases where a "Notice of intended prosecution" was served. 15

I am conscious that in the early days of reporting I was enthusiastic, and most of the 10 2no further actions² were in the early rides. The learning on my part means most of the incident I now report generate advice or prosecution actions.

I would encourage more cyclist to get camera and report incidents.

Maurie

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Wet and Dry

Most people will remember my reputation for leading wet rides. Burston Strike School and Bressingham Steam Museum spring to mind and Ray Wand will often tell the tale of him being a member of the black hand gang when, due to the amount of rain, the dye in his new gloves turned his hands black.



Spring forward to three wet Sundays on the trot in November and my led ride on the 20th November. Pouring of rain at the start, however, the weather forecast said it would brighten up before midday. Judith, Griff, Chris and myself headed for Kesgrave to pick up Judy, Michael, Paula and Jon. No sign of Paula and Jon and it transpired that Paula's human sat nav malfunctioned on route. Fortunately, they made it to Felixstowe

in time for elevenses.

A welcome stop at the excellent Cliff Top Café and the sun was shining, with lovely views out to sea. Margaret, Philip, Jennifer and Andy cycled to join us at the café, as did Derek. It was also nice to see Mary, Andy and Bob Stoner.

Lunch was Woodbridge and the sun was still out! If we repeat the ride in the warmer weather, I think Waldringfield would make a better lunch stop time wise.

Stephen Read



Cycling in the Netherlands

For the past several years we have holidayed in the Netherlands. We're "on holiday" from the moment we roll down our drive on the tandem, around noon on a Saturday. We cycle via Melton to Bawdsey and take the ferry to Felixstowe. From there we ride round the seafront to the Harwich Harbour Ferry. We use the last ferry of the day, at 16:30. Experience has taught us to pre-book!

In Harwich we usually grab a bite to eat in Morrisons before riding to the ferry terminal and a long wait to board around 22:15. We endure this wait, and it's built into our planning. The last thing we want is to miss the boat! The terminal is bright and airy with reliable vending machines. We pass the time doing crosswords, and often fall into conversation with other foot passengers and cyclists. Drivers hide away in their cars! Boarding always seems quite disorganised. There are several lanes for cars and a separate area for HGVs. There's a single lane for bikes and motorbikes.



Once on board, we head for the bike area of the car deck – several goal-post shaped (75cm high by 3m wide) steel tubes where there are (if you're lucky) webbing straps to secure your bike. We carry our own straps and also ride with pipe insulation on a few of the tandem tubes to prevent damage from other nearby bikes. We're never in too much of a hurry to get on board. Early boarders have already taken all the "goalposts", and later arrivals must lock their bikes to already parked ones – so late arrivals will be first to disembark!

We then head to our cabin and dump the panniers. This year we skipped Morrisons, and dined on board. The food was good – a bit pricey. We had a nightcap while the ferry headed out of the estuary, then bed. (Warm, quiet, comfy, with a sea view and a TV for the late news).

We're wakened by recorded birdsong in time for a shower and breakfast before disembarking and riding (smugly) past multiple lines of motor vehicles to border control and.... We're off!!

It's become a tradition with us to have our first stop at "Café Lola" in The Hague. It's a combined bike shop and café – very quirky, with exotic bike hardware and memorabilia on display. It's a good place to know about in case you have any unexpected bike problems. Excellent cake, and they don't mind you hanging around until the rain stops!! And open on Sunday mornings.

We spend the dark winter nights planning our route. We usually have a few attractions we want to include – museums, art galleries, wildlife parks etc and then, on Google maps, we mark out a draft point to point route with perhaps 15 to 20 overnights. We're not too worried about the turn-by turn details at this stage. We'll also earmark two or three places where we'd like to stop for two nights, so we can have a bike-free days exploring on foot.

So we now have a draft itinerary. Now the fun bit! We are members of “Vrienden op de Fiets (VoDF)” The Dutch for bike is fiet (pronounced “*feet*”), and a “fietster” is a cyclist. VoDF is “Friends of the Cyclists” usually referred to as “Vrienden” or “friends”, and is an organisation whose original aim was to provide “B&B” style accommodation for cyclists. These days, VoDF hosts usually offer accommodation to anyone who arrives and departs using muscle power alone. The only universal requirements for hosts is that they must offer secure bike storage, comfortable overnight accommodation with shower, and breakfast. The breakfasts are VERY hearty, often with enough bread, ham, cheese, hard boiled eggs, and fruit for a sizeable packed lunch. You’re encouraged to leave no food on the breakfast table!

VoDF have a website where members can book accommodation, and they also provide an annual A5 size directory of all the hosts, listed alphabetically by town. The paper directory and the website list, for each host: The host’s name and full address, email address, phone number, the number of rooms, the type(s) of bed in each room and any access problems. Nearly all speak good English.

While planning, each evening we usually manage to make bookings for 2 or 3 hosts, gradually working around our route. We most often use email to make first contact with a host, and most hosts reply within 48 hours. We write our requests in English and then include a Google-Translate Dutch version. Replies are usually in English. We run Dutch replies through Google translate. Occasionally we have phone calls with a host to address specific requests.

Before making contact we have a look at the host’s address on Google map’s “Street view” to give us some idea of the type of area – eg if there are nearby restaurants for our evening meal.

By booking early in the year we usually get our first choice of accommodation. Very occasionally, close to our departure date we get an apologetic email from a booked host who can no longer accommodate us, and we need to find an alternative. So far we’ve never found ourselves without a bed for the night. Locals often ride to a destination and only then phone around the local VoDF hosts to book accommodation.

This year we left our booking until August, but still mostly got our first choice of accommodation, with Zandvoort our first stop on the Sunday night. Only while watching the sports news on the TV in our ferry cabin did we realize that the Dutch Grand Prix was in Zandvoort on that Sunday! What an experience. As we approached Zandvoort through the dunes the roar of engines grew louder, and there was a squadron of helicopters buzzing overhead. We arrived when the race was nearly over, and the town was packed, with everyone holding a radio or phone to their ear. Huge cheers when Max Verstappen took the lead and eventually won! We sat on the seafront having a Google translate assisted

conversation with a spry elderly chap. That night, every restaurant table was fully booked – but we struck lucky when an Italian restaurant offered us a cramped table right outside the loos. We took it, and after a few minutes the waitress said an outdoor table had become available, and so we moved to it and had a great time amid a sea of orange bedecked revellers of all ages.

We've made many friends and stayed in all sorts of accommodation... houseboats, mansions, garden houses, terraced houses, cellars. We have never had a bad experience or been let down.

We'd recommend using VoDF for a great way to explore the Netherlands.

B&B using VoDF was 22.50€ per person per night this summer. It's rising to 25€ in 2023.

Annual membership is 10€ - but if you travel as a couple, only one of you needs membership.

<https://www.vriendenopdefiets.nl/en>

Andy & Jenny Barkley

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Just another cycle ride?

London Edinburgh London 2022 - Part 1 The Ride North

By Ian Lovelock

Evolution has designed Mankind to take every opportunity to save energy. Today we have the opportunity of moving between the Capital of England and that of Scotland by train, plane or automobile. But why do that when you can pull out of the shed an earlier energy saving invention of a few bits of metal welded together complimented by a couple of hula hoops with a chain connected to a rota to propel you along. Make the trip a return, add a few extra kilometres to exceed 1,500km, divert the route over some steep slope to climb 14,000m and add to that a time limit of 128 hours to complete the transit and call the thing LondonEdinburghLondon (aka LEL2022). Who would not like to have a try at that? (well, most folk in their right mind actually).

Saturday, 6 August, I'm excited as a child in a sweet shop at LEL2022 registration in London. Riders are everywhere, cycles are conscientiously strewn around, the atmosphere is buzzing. There are many old friends littered around and an abundance of new friends to be made in the week ahead. Andrew is with me, somewhat bemused by my enthusiasm as his anxiety grows. Maybe he has a good point in questioning why either of us have signed up to ride this crazy event. Why, indeed, am I subjecting myself to sitting on a bone hard saddle for 5 days 8 hours whilst deprived of a comfortable bed and many (many) hours of sleep? I've

done the event successfully in 2013 enjoying every pedal turn but was pretty poorly on my second attempt in 2017 leaving *demons to be dispatched*.

Sunday arrives, I am almost manic with excitement as I push my bike to the start line. Andrew and I had elected to begin the quest at 14:00 amongst the *Lantern Rouge* allowing for final preparation to be performed with exacting precision. And then we're off. Except for the unknown what can possibly go wrong? I suppress the adrenaline to ensure that no early accidents beset us and with the temperature in the 30C's we set off at a steady pace.

400m up the road, I discover my Garmin is not functioning correctly. The route is loaded but no roads are showing and there was no guidance at the first junction. I have a purple line on a blank screen and, worse still, I have no route sheets. Not to worry, I'll just take Andrew's lead and my Garmin will "squark" at me when I am off route.

We ride through the first 200km very comfortably, drink profusely and stopping every 50km to take on more fluid. The temperature has dropped, the night has arrived, and we realise that Andrew's device is not that great a navigation aid in the dark. Route finding will now be a constant, and worrying, challenge for the remaining

1,300km. The night progresses, my anxiety rises as I have been suffering from narcolepsy on every ride over 300km this year. How can you fall asleep when riding a bike at 20-30km/h? Surely it's impossible, how can you switch off so completely that your mind shuts down, your eyes close and your legs turn on instinct alone. Believe me sleep happens all too readily, I have previously ended up in a ditch on ParisBrestParis and planted in a hedge on a ride in Wales.



Imagine my relief when Andrew suggests that we catch some sleep when we arrive at Louth at 240km. Although not part of our grand plan, I hurriedly seek out an air mattress and am informed that I have a limit of 75 minutes on the bed. It's a hot, sweaty, uncomfortable rest but I manage 45 minutes sleep and feel surprisingly refreshed. I search around for Brian Mann who's a

volunteer at this check point but he's sleeping and nowhere to be found, and I am jealous that he's managed more sleep than the pair of us on this first night. I feast on *overnight oats* which are just about edible and head out before sunup towards Hesse where I am promised a cooked breakfast.

We cross the Humber Bridge with the dawn to arrive in Hesse. Cauliflower Soup is the cooked breakfast at Hesse. Cauliflower Soup which is only just warm at that. I add extra salt to the dish which resembles the colour of my mug of accompanying tea. Cauliflower Soup, hardly the breakfast food for the Endurance Rider but it does promote a common thread of conversation with many other riders along the route (always look on the bright side!). On we ride to Malton at 360km where the food is much improved as the temperature begins to soar when we leave another control and start our climbs into the Howardian Hills. We head up towards Howard Castle, a Baroque vision challenged by Palladian afterthought completed in 1811 after 100 years in the building to gain a starring performance in *Brideshead Revisited* in 1981. A fabulous history to a beautiful building which we gain a fleeting glance from 1km distance. The route up to the panoramic viewpoint is significantly different from earlier years, the swine who has designed the change takes us over 5 significant climbs including one of 25%. The sun is relentless, and temperatures have climbed to over 35C so we're hot, tired and savage as we stumbled upon the "Secret Control", which prevent riders avoiding the beastly slopes, staffed by a Vicar who was able to administer the *last rites* to anyone in need.



After a bit of banter with the Volunteers, I ride on in good spirits as our next stop is to be the Travelodge at Scotch Corner. We arrive at 22:00, stock up at M&S, shower, pop two paracetamol and off to bed for 3 hours sleep feeling comfortably numb between clean sheets on a soft mattress. The alarm rudely awakes me, I pull on some fresh kit while eating the beetroot wrap & beetroot juice. A tad strange at 03:00 but I have heard that beetroot improves muscle performance by up to 15%, which sounds good. I've been drinking beetroot juice every day for two weeks



before the event, I have no idea if that is true but have convinced myself and Andrew that it will certainly give us an advantage.

We set off into the night to arrive at Barnard Castle School to be entertained in Hogwarts Dining Room with a menu choice of breakfast, dinner or tea (or all 3). As I sat resting and refuelling for no more than 30 minutes, I gazed upon the oak panel walls of the school

Hall reflecting on *Old Barnardians* with great admiration. These include George Bradford (Victoria Cross in 1918) plus Tony and Rory Underwood (England Rugby Wingers). Given

their achievements, a cycle ride up and down the spine of the UK seems trivial. I am inspired to persuade Andrew that he had at least to get to Edinburgh before any further thoughts of retirement.

After thanking as many Volunteers as possible, we leave with fully bellies and in a state of melancholy only to be face with the ride over the North Pennines. As the dawn rises and before the temperature soars, the route is diverted away from the single gradual climb of Yad Moss due to a road closure. The diversion forces us over two 600m climbs with the slopes of 16%, 17% and 18% that place fear into the mind for the return. Our reward was to arrive in Alston at 540km for a bit of luxury with a mid-morning coffee and a freshly baked bun.



We cross into Scotland at Gretna Green which found its fame and popularity via the Clandestine Marriages Act 1753 that prevented couples under the age of 21 marrying in England or Wales without their parents' consent. As it was still legal in Scotland to marry without such consent, couples began crossing the border into Scotland. Time has passed, laws have changed but Gretna retains a romantic allure as we saw for ourselves as we passed 3 weddings. Take it from me Gretna is not a scenic place for wedding photos. Nor as it happens was the subsequent road we used that winds alongside the M74 past Lockerbie. The sun



had baked us all day but with Moffat beckoning we pressed on arriving hot and flustered at the control to be welcomed, fed and watered.

Early evening, we leave the Moffat Control, head through the town, turn left and started up hill. Now, I have moaned about the hills earlier but the rise out of Moffat is long and steady and wonderful. To the right, views of the remote countryside constantly opening to the rhythm of my pedal turns. We climb, joined by Derek from South Africa, heading up to overlook the Devils Punch Bowl before traversing across the top of the Moffat Hills and onward to Edinburgh.

Evening light fades as the night arrives later in Scotland, and we arrive on the outskirts of Edinburgh to take full advantage of the street lighting. Passing the Airport, we head on to Queensferry to cross the old Forth Road Bridge (now part of NCN1) which is traffic free with views of the Rail Bridge to our right and the new Road Bridge to our left. I am pretty tired by now but also elated as we head down a track to Dunfermline School which marks the mid-point of the ride. We are welcomed in by Andy Rogers, I want to chat, but I am too focussed on sleep. I check in with the control, head straight for the Gym to book a bed, grab a shower and its lights out for me for another 3 hours of sleep.

When I wake, I am elated. I am now on my way back; I've had a shower and I've got clean fresh kit on. I've made it to Edinburgh. Further joy as Jan Swanwick, a friend, rides in. He'd looked like death at Louth where he was close to retiring but I had talked him out of any hasty decisions. Andrew appeared, we eat a hearty breakfast, drink lots of tea and head out to reunited with our bike. Our journey home was to start but what was unbeknown to us was that our Adventure had just begun.



To be continued in the March issue! (Ed)

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