

Hallo Everybody

It's time for another Winged Wheel and I hope that you all enjoy it. Have you all had a good cycling Summer? We have had some lovely rides but haven't had a cycling holiday. If you have, perhaps you would like to write an article about it. We are going to New Zealand next month and whilst we won't be cycling, I'm sure that one of us will still put pen to paper but try not to be too boring! A huge 'thank you' to those of you who have sent in articles and, whilst on the subject, can I make another plea? Please send articles, as an attachment, not in your email, in Calibri font size 12 with pictures already inserted as I'm really not a computer whizz and I do spend a lot of time on trying to sort things out. Having said that, I do enjoy receiving articles and seeing it all come together.



Judy

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Presidents Ramblings 2

I want to start with a Joke, courtesy of "Facebook" A Policeman is handing a driver a speeding ticket through the open car window. The driver says "what am I supposed to do with this ticket? The policeman responds, "save them up and when you have got enough, get a Bike!"

Joking aside and thinking outside the rectangular cardboard container, by reporting driver's misdemeanours, are we not addressing one of Cycling UK's principle objective, that is to get more people cycling.

When out cycling, we all experience close calls from time to time, but as one member's recent experience confirmed, without supporting evidence it's your word against the drivers. To be fair to the Police, they have limited resources so are unlikely to waste them on cases that are not clear-cut. This is why cycle camera footage is so important. Footage enables you, via the review process, to identify the necessary information to secure Police action. Date, Time, location, Make/ Model of vehicle and Registration are all requested by the reporting app. This is not to say they are all compulsory but clearly the date, time, location, and registration are vital. The video footage will show the Police what happened, but you will need to describe the incident sufficiently in your report to encourage them to request the footage. The effort is worthwhile, up to end of July this year I have reported 60 incidents, and this has resulted in 27 prosecutions 18 notices/advisory letters and 15 no further actions. No further action is not to say the cyclist



or group were not put at risk. Often it is difficult to determine a registration accurately because of the condition of a vehicle's plates, or reflections. Notice/advisory letter means the misdemeanour is put on record and will be used if other incidents are reported. So, while those who receive these letters are not being prosecuted, they are perhaps more mindful of their driving as a result.

The ultimate goal is for every motorist to be conscious that a cyclist may have a camera.

I should just say, I don't go out looking for incidents to report, and I only report those that cause me alarm, or when with a group I can see other riders put in danger. Over the 20 months of reporting, I have worked through a learning curve on what to report and what not to, so I expect my percentages to get better, and I feel I am doing my bit towards achieving the ultimate goal of getting driver to respect cyclists and their right to use the Highway in safety.

Many active riders are on the WhatsApp group and will know earlier in the year there was some debate as to whether a rider was safer in a group or out solo. I am afraid my experiences don't bring any clarity to this debate. On the one hand a group has a greater presence on the road whereas a solo cyclist is easily missed. Groups can cause holdups and lead drivers to risk inappropriate manoeuvres, while solo cyclist don't necessarily register in some drivers psyche and therefore the need to comply with the Highway code doesn't occur to them. Perhaps the conclusion we should draw, is that the risk is just simply different.

There are still a few days of summer left so enjoy your cycling and stay safe. ---Maurie Parish

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Acting Secretary's Notes

I know a lot of you enjoy cycling in the summer weather, but whilst I enjoy the warmth (up to a point!) I do find the humidity rather wearing as the summer goes on, especially on the hottest days. So I always look forward to that first morning which is definitively autumnal, when it feels fresh as soon as you step out of the door, and my energy levels miraculously increase. This morning is one such.

I mentioned our tour to the Peak District in my notes for the last quarter's Winged Wheel. I've always felt that the last week in April is an ideal time to have it, falling outside the range of possible dates for Easter, after the schools go back, but before the holiday season starts in May. However now that Cycling UK have changed our year-end to 31st March, from the Secretary's point of view it comes at the



worst possible time, in the period between the Committee meeting to review the old year and the AGM in the 1st week of May.

For this reason I'm not planning to organise a club tour next Spring. So if anyone else wishes to get involved, you won't be stepping on my toes!

That said, I am still planning to resign as Secretary at the 2024 AGM, so the role remains very much open for a new volunteer.

John.

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Sunday Rides Ramblings

It's been a funny old summer! As I recall, apart from one or two exceptions, through June and July our Sundays were plagued with chilly north or north easterly winds but very dry. Until recent years our prevailing wind through the summer months was from the southwest and warm. That's the effect of climate change we are told. In the first part of September we have gone from hot sunny days with temperatures of 30+ but now, as I am writing, we are experiencing very strong winds and struggling to get up to 20. Not to mention, between all this, storms and torrential rain with flooded roads.



But cyclists are a hardy bunch and our regular riders soldier on through whatever the weather throws at them. What else can you do when you are 10 miles from home, the roads turn into rivers and water gushes **out** from manholes, as happened on a recent ride coming home through Woodbridge?

Over the last three months our Sunday Rides have attracted an average of 30/35 members riding for some part of the day although, on average, only 14 or 15 attend the whole ride. Out of our 86 registered riders 59 have ridden with us at some point over the last nine months. So I think I can safely say we are a flourishing club, but there is always room for improvement. We do seem to struggle to attract new younger members but this is a perennial problem to which there doesn't seem to be an obvious answer.

I closed my piece last time wishing you all a great summer cycling. I hope you did, and now autumn has arrived suddenly and the days are getting shorter, but we can get some lovely weather at this time of the year. I have read articles that suggest the autumn leaves are likely to be more colourful than some years and stay on the trees for longer so I hope you enjoy it while it lasts.

Michael Scott

Sunday Rides Coordinator

Suffolk Churches By Cycle: Crowfield

Another hidden away church, All Saints is a long way from the present village of Crowfield, which developed along the Roman Road, Stone Street. It can be found off a lane going from Coddendam to Stonham Aspal but is not visible from the road. Upon seeing the church notice board, go down a path by an old moat and you will find the quietly situated church. Well worth the effort.



The what3words location is: fail.lingering.retrain. The church is usually open. It is a compact building and up to the 1920's was known as Crowfield Chapel. It was only in 1923 that Crowfield became a parish, separated off from Coddendam. From the outside it looks ancient and on the inside rather Victorianised (due to a major refurbishment in 1862).

The flint-faced nave is fourteenth-century and the added on fifteenth-century chancel is timber-framed. There is simply no other church building of this construction in Suffolk.

The timber-frame is also visible inside and adds to the character of the place. The quality woodwork extends to a single hammer-beam roof with carved angels. Bench-ends are also highly carved.

There is a lot of Victorian glass with a rare royal arms of Victoria in stained glass, high in the west wall.



The church has no tower but has one Victorian bell (from Taylors of Loughborough) in a turret. On top of which is a weather vane displaying a proud crow.

The churchyard is noted for a good display of wildflowers throughout the year. The springtime flowers are particularly extensive with primroses of various colours plus cowslips.

Within the churchyard lies the grave of National Treasure, Roy Hudd OBE, who had lived next door to the church for many years.

Consider popping in to have a look when out cycling to elevenses at Stonham Barns or Woodfarm Courtyard Cafe in Crowfield.

Derek Worrall

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Tea and Cake



Ray Wand kindly sent in this picture postcard that he found on the Isle of Wight. He says that he has some more. So watch this space! It all looks like good fun doesn't it!

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STOP, THIEF!

A feature item in our Autumn copy of 'Cycle' Magazine under the same title as this, brought to mind an amusing anecdote from one of my club tours to the Lincolnshire Wolds a few years ago.

We had arrived in Lincoln city centre and intended on a visit to the Cathedral. It was a wet and dreary day. Mindful of the story from our Ken whereby he had his bike stolen from outside the Cathedral, I guided my charges to an area a little way distant where we could lock our steeds away from the cathedral precinct under a bit of cover but with a reasonable passing footfall.

Glancing around cautiously gauging the security of the area I spotted first one then another mid 40's male a little way off furtively waiting around. "They look a bit suspicious I thought" "They could be working in pairs".

"Hang about a bit", says I. "I'm not too sure about those guys. They could be sussing out our bikes". After about 5 minutes neither they or us moved off, raising my suspicions further.

“OK, let’s move over to the Cathedral with our bikes and see if they follow us”. They did!

“OK guys, I’ve been here before. I don’t like the look of those guys. You lot go in and I will stay with the bikes until you return and then I will go in”. After a minute or two the suspects gave up and moved off together into the Cathedral, still not talking to one another, confirming in my mind that they were working together. After a further few minutes I gauged that they had given up on their targets and it was safe to leave the bikes at least for a short while, having locked them up together of course.

Once inside I spotted suspect 1 and suspect 2 having a heated altercation with their wives/partners, regarding confused arrangements for meeting up. They were clearly a well acquainted foursome on holiday like us!

You can never be too careful!

Paul Fenton

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Easy? Breakfast Ride By Judy Scott

On Sunday 30th July, a little band of ‘easy riders’ met at 7.30am by Crown Pools for a breakfast ride. It was a lovely morning as Stephen led the ride out of town on beautifully quiet roads through Coddendam and on to Thondon to arrive at Stoke Ash for breakfast. We had a table booked for us and it was a lovely surprise to be joined by Maureen and Ken who had driven there to meet us. The breakfast was delicious and the chat was just as good!



After saying ‘good bye’ to Maureen, Ken, Philip and Margaret, who weren’t joining for the rest of the ride (see Margaret’s article) 5 of us rode on to Burston. On the way, we passed



through Diss where we were spotted by the medium riders. It really was an enjoyable route and so nice to see places that we hadn’t been to for ages. Burston Strike School is extremely interesting. Sadly we were not able to go inside but it is still well worth a visit and we just had to take some pictures to record the day. The Burston strike began before the outbreak of World War 1 when Annie and Tom Higdon were sacked after a dispute with the local

school management committee. It did not end until the first skirmishes of World War 2 were taking place. As a response to being dismissed, Annie was to set up a marquee on the village green where local children, mostly from agricultural families, were taught. For 25 years Annie and Tom taught the community's children in a range of subjects until Tom died in 1939.

After a snack (we didn't need much after that breakfast!) we rode on to Debenham. This turned out to be the hardest part of the ride as it was rather windy and hilly. We managed to find some interesting cycle routes and, on one of them we saw fields of roses. This, for me, was one of the highlights of the day. We made it to the Leisure Centre for a very welcome drink.



By now, I think we were all feeling a bit the worse for wear but we still had the ride home to cope with and it was raining by then. We arrived home wet and tired but rather pleased with ourselves having ridden 75 miles.

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Scandal in the Suffolk Countryside in the 15th Century.

The breakfast at Stoke Ash White Horse tempted us but at the time we were not fit enough to continue to Burston so decided to explore that remarkably quiet area north of Framlingham and east of the A140. A quick look at the OS map the day before revealed a disused priory and remote church at Redlingfield. This sent me to my history books for a bit of background information, and a route was planned back to Ipswich via this delightful spot, then Worlingworth and Framlingham.

On a beautiful morning we set off led by Stephen Read and enjoyed a steady ride in good company to the White Horse. Here we were joined by Ken and Maureen for a superb breakfast with plenty of coffee and fresh orange juice and the usual lively conversation. This set us up for the onward ride to Redlingfield along very quiet lanes, and a fascinating delve into Suffolk's ancient and more recent history.

The church was charmingly simple, though monthly services are apparently attended by only a handful of parishioners. Despite this, the porch noticeboard held a photograph of the vicar and 4 parishioners' sponsored "Pedal to the Palace" to mark the late Queen's Diamond Jubilee and raise funds for improvements. On the wall inside was the local project to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee - a plan of the village in 1977 showing field names and

type and varieties of crops planted in each. It was illustrated with lovely sketches of the older houses and significant places in the village, including the mobile library stop!

The excellent church guide, written by a great enthusiast, Roy Tricker, explains the principal features of the building. It also details the history, and scandalous goings on at the Priory in the 15th century as can be seen in the extract below. We should remember that in that, pre-Reformation period, there was much conflict and rivalry between Bishops from the male dominated Roman Catholic Church and wealthy Priors - especially those where women were in charge!

Redlingfield Priory

This small community of Benedictine Nuns was founded in 1120 by Manasses, Count of Guisnes and his wife, Emma, who was the daughter and heiress of William de Arras, Lord of the Manor of Redlingfield. In the same year, Redlingfield Church was appropriated to the priory, which was erected beside it. In later years the priory was able to draw revenues from parts of the manors of Hickling (Norfolk) and Rishangles, also portions of the money and tithes paid to the churches of Walpole, Melton and Levington. The nuns were able to give the aged and poor inhabitants a daily dole of pence, bread, beef and herrings throughout Lent and Easter each year at a cost of £8.

It seems the priory was not free from the occasional piece of scandal! One notorious Prioress was Isabel Hermyte (who served from 1419-27). She was the subject of a Bishop's Enquiry in 1427. It appears that she had not made Confession for at least two years, neither had she observed Sundays and Festivals. What was worse, she had taken to sleeping in a private room with Joan Tates, a novice, she had "lain violent hands" upon Agnes Brakle on St Luke's Day and she had been alone with Thomas Langelond, the bailiff, in "private and suspicious places" such as a small hall with windows closed, and "sub heggerowes". She had neglected her priory in other ways and was a bad influence on Alice Lampit, her Sub-Prioress. She resigned, the Sub-Prioress did penance the following Sunday by wearing white flannel and no veil, and the other five nuns and two novices were made to do penance by fasting on bread and beer every Friday.

In 1514, Bishop Nykke made a personal visitation and then all was not well. Alice Legate, the Prioress, was not satisfied with the obedience of the nuns, and the nuns complained that the Sub-Prioress was cruel and severe in administration of corporal punishment, occasionally actually drawing blood. In addition to this there were no curtains between the beds in the dormitory and boys had been allowed to sleep there. There was no proper infirmary and the refectory was not being put to its proper use as a dining hall. It seems that this was all put in order because at later visitations in 1520, 1526 and 1532, all was found to be satisfactory.

The priory was finally suppressed, with other smaller monasteries, in 1536 and the nuns were sent back into normal life. Each was equipped with the paltry sum of 23s 4d with which to establish themselves in their new lives. Their two Chaplains received 25 shillings each and their 13 servants received small sums of money. Other than these trifling “rewards” they were turned out penniless. Grace Sampson, the Prioress, fared a little better - she was granted a pension of 20 marks per year.

The priory buildings and property were granted in 1537 to Sir Edmund Bedingfield (the next village has the same name as the family). The manor remained in Bedingfield hands until 1636, after which it was owned by the Willis and Adair families.



We were very fortunate that the owner of the adjacent farmhouse invited us into her garden for a close look at the remaining Priory building (illustrated above), used as a barn since the Dissolution.

Margaret Hancock
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Stephen Read sent in these pictures which were taken on a very wet ride some years ago when the black dye came out of Ray's new cycling gloves! Ed.





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MULL AND IONA **(A tour within a tour)**

In July 2017 Judy and I embarked on a car plus bike "tour" to Scotland. As part of the trip we wanted to visit the Isles of Mull and Iona but decided that, rather than take the car on the ferry we would just take the bikes on a mini tour of the islands. We parked the car by the Calmac Ferry Terminal in Oban and wheeled our bikes aboard the MV Isle of Mull for the 45 minute crossing of the Sound of Mull to Craignure. It was dry when we boarded the ferry but before too long visibility deteriorated with a misty drizzle and by the time we disembarked it had developed into very wet rain.

We were staying just on the edge of Craignure, on the coast road to Tobermory, which was our intended afternoon ride. As we approached our hotel, absolutely drenched after just a quarter of a mile of riding, we looked at one another and made a unanimous decision to call it a day. As we were unhooking our bags from the bikes at the hotel entrance a young man appeared out of nowhere and grabbed the bikes to lock them up for the night. That's what I call service! We checked in, quickly got out of our wet clothes and spent a leisurely afternoon making good use of the indoor swimming pool.

Next day dawned brighter than yesterday; it was cloudy and a bit chilly but dry. There was a hint that the sun might break through at any minute as we rode the few miles to Duart Castle. an imposing fortress high on rocky Duart Point with views across to the mainland. Seat of Clan Maclean the original parts of the castle date from the 13th Century and was sympathetically restored in the early 1900's. Some of the beautifully refurbished rooms are well worth seeing. From high up in the castle it is possible to see a small rock out in the middle of the Sound know as Lady's Rock which is the subject of a bloodthirsty tale. In the 16th Century the brutal Lachlan Maclean was married to Catherine Campbell. It was a marriage of convenience and Catherine was so badly treated that she tried unsuccessfully to poison her husband. After he had recovered he dragged her from her room one night, rowed out to Lady's Rock and left her to be drowned by the rising tide. During the burial service at the Campbells' ancestral home, with an empty coffin, Catherine appeared alive and well.



She had been picked up by a passing fisherman. Lachlan fled in a hurry but, on a visit to Edinburgh, he was fatally stabbed by Catherine's brother. We continued on our way westwards on the long climb up Glen More to stop at the Three Lakes Viewpoint with wide views



across to Lochs Eilein, Ellen and Airde Glais. Then an equally long drop down to sea level and a lovely gentle ride alongside Loch Scridian to Bunessan. On the descent we encountered two or three of the most vicious cattle grids I have ever experienced. It felt as if my brain had been shaken loose and was rattling around in my skull. We were both quite disoriented for several seconds and have been wary of cattle grids ever since. From Bunessan we were to head south across the narrowest part of the Ross of Mull to Ardachy House, our base for the next two nights. We started out of the village up



a very steep climb and then turned onto a single track rough farm road which took us



further and further from civilisation with no sign of the sea, which should have been ahead of us. The ride seemed endless but it was only about two bikes miles until we reached a cluster of low lying farm buildings. As we got off the proprietor came round from the back of the buildings and said how impressed he was that we had arrived on bikes. He led us round to the front of the house and to use the word impressive to describe what confronted us was a gross

understatement. There was a lush green meadow leading down to a silvery white sandy beach and sparkling blue sea with the sun blazing out of a cloudless sky. Paradise off the west coast of Scotland??

Next day dawned bright and sunny but with a “long-sleeved” chill in the air as we headed back to the main road and a direct route to catch the Iona Ferry from Fionnphort. This was my third visit and I think Iona is one of my favourite places. There is a calm and peaceful aura to the place despite the number of tourists. Maybe it was this peacefulness that encouraged St Columba to settle here when he was forced out of Ireland in 563. The Abbey has been the home of various Christian communities and the “Cradle of Christianity” in Scotland is still a place of pilgrimage to this day.



We had taken our bikes on the ferry and with some cycling and some walking we covered most of the island before catching the ferry back. We then had to force our tired legs back to Bunessan and up the steep hill to Ardachy House for the final night of our mini tour.

Our tour within a tour ended as it started – WET. As we searching for somewhere to stay the night in Oban we were caught out in a violent thunderstorm with a torrential downpour. Despite this our visit to Mull and Iona was one of the highlights of our holiday – second only to a trip in a tiny dinghy on the loch at Dunvegan Castle on Skye when we were able to see dozens of new born seal pups at close quarters, almost touching distance.



By Michael Scott

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Maureen sent in the picture below of Colin Wilkinson who many of you will remember from Thursday cycle rides and he was a very active member of CTC and Wolsey Road Club in the 1960s. He had a serious accident earlier this year and he is now making good progress at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. He hopes to be home by Christmas and our best wishes go to him and his wife Shirley.

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On Your Bike

Not only has the Debenham Green Team been holding free bike repair clinics at the church outside Dove Cottage (thanks to David Carruthers), many of you will have noticed the small green stand in the car park at Debenham Cross Green. This is a bike repair station and pump which was bought and installed with a grant from Katherine Davies, the Sustainable Travel Officer at Babergh and Suffolk District Council and who is part of the Council's Economic Growth and Climate Change Team. One of our Parish Counsellors, Andrew Grand Adamson, organised the installation.

The repair station – which is free to use- contains all the tools, including tyre levers, usually needed for repairing and tuning bikes. It incorporates a stable bike stand to allow you to work easily and a torch style pump. It's been described as the 'Swiss army knife of cycle maintenance'. It is an impressive piece of kit with a universal adaptor, a pressure gauge and pressure chart, allowing you to pump your tyres up to the correct pressure on a range of vehicles including prams, trailers, wheelchairs and wheel barrows.

The aim of these initiatives is to enjoy the health and environmental benefits with the confidence that our bikes can be maintained and repaired as cheaply as possible.

Matthew Welch

Debenham Green Team

Tony Hutt, also from Debenham, sent in this picture of the bike stand.



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“It will be ready for you Thursday Sir!”

Cycle shops just aren't what they used to be. What became of them all?

Ipswich was so well provided for in my early cycling years. There seemed to be a cycle shop in most neighbourhoods whose bread and butter business was the journey to work horse and child's cycle repairs, with the occasional red letter day of a new bike sale, probably 'on account'. They have almost all disappeared – I suppose with our changing life styles and affluence. But something of the character of those small owner- occupier corner shops has also been lost over time I feel.

Have you any interesting stories or 'tales from over the counter' of the days when, to our great relief, that problem job could be solved by the mysteries of the man in the grey smock coat who reassured us with... "*It will be ready for you Thursday Sir*"?

We have been very fortunate in Ipswich in having a continuity of good quality specialist cycle retailers in the town. In the 1960's *The Lightweight Shop* ran by Geoff Mercer, husband of former DA cyclist Joan from what is now Jonty's Gents 'boutique for the stylish 'man about town' was the place to go for your special bits and pieces. I recall even now a visit one Saturday afternoon with my Dad to suss out what suitable machines were on offer for a 15 year old rapidly growing out of the '*Little Kerry Hunter*' famed red peril of Whitton. There was just one bike in the shop on gleaming display – stripped to the bare essentials. A true racing thoroughbred of it's day (or so it looked to me at the time); the *Falcon 'San Remo'*. This was it!. This was the place!

The shop had bare boards, no display cabinets, and absolutely no clothing. The most memorable aspect was the occasional tramping in and out from the rear of young men who obviously from their banter knew Geoff Tvery well, and were strangely 'familiar' with his stock storage arrangements. These behaved a bit like staff but were apparently not. Later I sussed these were members of either the Ipswich BC or Suffolk Roads Clubs; guys servicing and equipping their machines on his premises and from his stock, with that camaraderie and familiarity of an extended family. This was definitely The Place.!!

It was places like that, and later Buck Cycles, that one became easy with the language- the 'Campag', 'Cinneli', and 'Zues' that preceded the 'Deoro' and 'Shram' etc as those 'tell tale' words in the phrases that marks the territory of the 'in' places of their day. One knew that because try asking for a pair of Cinneli bars in say Doddingtons on the corner of Wellesley Road, and the chap in the brown smock coat and dark Brylcreamed-down hair would smile and roll his look slightly embarrassed away from eye contact and reply.. "Nnnno sir. That's a bit out of our range. Try Bucks on Clapgate Lane".

My first steed, the one dad eventually settled on after scouring the town for a bargain, came to me via a Saturday morning visit to A & H Elmy Cycles, in St Helens Street – what must now be the shop in longest continuous use as a Cycle retail and repair premises in Ipswich, if not Suffolk, if not England! The '*Sun Supalite*'. Spread out on it like a young frog I was with the seat full down and full forward. Yes I did grow into and through it. It served me for years. I did all my racing on it, toured for years on it, gained a reputation on it, carried my first child on it, and rode it literally to death. Not bad for £15 second hand.

In those days Mr Elmy senior was in charge. A kindly gentle man I recall, dad to the young Russell, who retired a few years ago passing the business over to the young and very capable Steve Grimwood. Again Smock coats were to the fore, and the arrangement of boxes behind the counter and the upstairs remained mysterious treasure troves of the hard to find.

Elmy's never really got going (until the present incumbent) as the serious specialist cycle shop. I think Russell quickly realised that the town could really only support one of those and Bucks had got off to a good start after *The Lightweight Shop* closed when the Mercers moved to Australia. It went through a period with moped sales when Raleigh brought out the 'Rapide' as a competitor to the NSU 'Quickly' which was fast replacing the 'push bike' in the Ransomes and Cranes bike sheds.

But there were so many of the others. Jacobi's of course on the Norwich Road at top of Bramford Road – birthplace of 'The Little Kerry Hunter' prepared by Mr Jacobi Senior, Mark Jacobi former Wolsey star's grand dad.

For those on Priory Heath there was Jacobs on Nacton Road. The Woodbridge Road end had 'Hammonds Cycle and Electrical' – a common coupling of trade -just along from the Golden Key. Deep in Castle Hill we had Flemings - again cycle and electrical – in Congreve Road. The owner there was a Dutch chap with silvery blonde hair. My Dad, who was a cyclist himself before the war with the IBC – (he remembered Wink as a Club Captain cyclist in those times), said he thought that Mr Fleming was the bloke who broke the hour record for a 25 mile time trial! I had my doubts but was strangely proud with the possibility of that little bit of reflected fame in having a World Champion just down the end of my road!

There was Webb's shop on the corner of Wallace and Bramford Roads. A counter and a hook in the ceiling from which the latest 'job by Thursday' was suspended.

The Spring Road end had Reads. A front room of a shop near Britannia Road. How he made a living out of a puncture repair kit and set of brake cables I will never know – for that was all that was ever on display in the window! Truth is he had a heart of gold and a skill with a pair of pliers second to none. He obviously had a good wheel building reputation because Tony Mullett, former IBC racing man and old mate had a pair of his racing wheels built there. Tony bought all the parts and took them to him to be built up. Tony said they stayed true and strong for years.

I remember a tale about 'Fag Ash' for that's how he became known to me through Tony and a few others. Having experienced a problem with his wife's Sturmey Three Speed gears, Tony took the wheel into the Spring Road shop on his way to work one day. Calling back a couple of days later, there was the hub inn'rds spread out on the counter as FA, pliers in hand and in that familiar brown smock and flat cap and with the butt end of a cigarette just protruding from the corner of his slim lips, he pronounced, "I dunno boy. This is a sticky one... I'm gorn a haf t' charge yer a fiver"! God rest his soul, and others like him.

Paul Fenton

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Easter in east Sussex – and Kent, just!

I usually spend Easter in Huntingdon, to ride The Double Dutch 200 km audax.

However, as I previously explained, I've had reservations about my ability recently to complete 200 km events. Initially feeling sorry for myself, it then struck me I could turn something negative into something positive. I resolved to achieve another long-outstanding objective. In October 2014 and 2015, I had long weekends based in Hailsham, east Sussex, primarily to ride the "Autumn Tints" 100 km Audax organised by my long-standing friend, Dave 'El Supremo' Hudson. After riding it in 2014, Dave sent me the route sheets for the three other 100 km events he organised. One of them, the "Hell Forest 100," I rode as part of my weekend in 2015. After 2015, my trips to Hailsham ceased because some new 200 km events, closer to home, started. However, I made it an objective to have another long weekend in Hailsham sometime to ride the other two routes.

This time, instead of staying in Hailsham, I opted for the Premier Inn at Polegate (3 miles from Hailsham), travelling there by train on Maundy Thursday.

The Premier Inn is a little outside Polegate town, in an industrial and retail area, so not the most salubrious surroundings. However, the hotel is nice, as is the bar/restaurant (yes, the food is good!) and the staff I dealt with were all friendly and helpful. It is, however, alongside the A27, which I suspect many of you would not want to ride on, even though it's only for a very short distance. There is however a cycle path alongside.

My initial plan was to do the Audax routes on the Saturday and Sunday and on Good Friday, tackle the climb of Ditchling Beacon for the first time. However, perusing the map Thursday afternoon in my room, I decided on a change of plan for Friday. It struck me I would have a more scenic ride and see more places for the first time if instead I went to see Darwell reservoir. I had mixed feelings at first because I had very much wanted to do the climb of Ditchling Beacon. I resolved that I would come to Polegate again.

Good Friday, 7th April: Polegate – Darwell reservoir – Battle – Polegate (49.45 miles)

Good Friday morning, there was a cool breeze but it was sunny. I'm pleased to report that was the case for all my 3 days of riding. The ride started, along the Cuckoo Trail, a Sustrans', walking and cycling route, to Hailsham. It's the trackbed of the former rail line that ran from Polegate to Hailsham, then through Heathfield to Eridge, where it joined the Uckfield to Tunbridge Wells line, thus, at that time, forming a direct line between London Charing Cross and Eastbourne via Tunbridge Wells. The current Cuckoo Trail follows the former line from Polegate as far as Heathfield, after



which it is said to be impassible. The line was called the Cuckoo Line, because of the claim the first cuckoo of spring was always heard at Heathfield fair. The stretch between Polegate and Hailsham is quite wide so sharing with pedestrians isn't an issue, albeit sometimes involving ringing a bell or saying "excuse me." Back to the ride, from Hailsham, I first went to Lower Dicker. From there it was a ride along nice lanes through the picturesque east Sussex rolling hills, with some testing enough climbs and picturesque villages to Darwell reservoir. It included passing an oast house, which one perhaps usually associates with Kent. I saw a few more of them on the following two days. As east Sussex borders with Kent, I suppose it sort of makes sense there are a few there as well. Villages en-route included Muddles Green, Gun Hill, Horam, Warbleton, Three Cups Corner and Brightling. After that I'm not sure now because there are four villages close together. I think it was Hollingrove, where there is an especially nice view over the hills with the reservoir in the distance. A friendly local gave me directions to the reservoir. Following his directions through the lovely lanes, it struck me it was unlikely one could get right alongside the reservoir. A lady in the front garden of her expensive looking property confirmed it but gave me directions to the location that is the closest to it.

The reservoir was worth seeing and I was satisfied I made the right decision about the day's ride. I did suffer a frustration, however. It's another opportunity for you to have a laugh at my expense because it's down to my lack of smart phone knowledge. I wanted to take a photograph but because the sun was so bright, I couldn't see the displays on my phone. Of course, when I got back to the hotel and took a look around it, it was nothing more than I needed to increase the brightness!



From the reservoir, I rode through the village of Mountfield to Battle, 6½ miles from Hastings. You might already know the reason it's so-named is because it includes the site of the famous 1066 battle. By this time, the sun although still bright, wasn't quite as much so I was just about able to see my phone to take pictures of the Benedictine abbey and the attractive old-world high street. I wasn't inspired, however to take photos of the battlefield behind the abbey. That was because it has been completely 'touristed up.' There is a children's play area, a café with a visitor centre. Apart from the abbey remains, the most attractive thing about it was the Tudor/historical building that is now a private school. Being a sunny and warm Good Friday, it was busy, especially with families. I guess the visitor centre has displays about the battle but I wasn't tempted. I was tempted, however, by the café, After a jacket potato, pot of tea and

sticky toffee pudding, I was further tempted to linger over a second pot of tea. While lingering, I reflected that although the battlefield was an anti-climax, I had satisfied my curiosity. It was also my first time in Battle and it's a picturesque town so I was now even more satisfied I had made the right decision about the change of route. For the ride back to Hailsham, I initially followed the A2100, Hastings road out of town, to turn right onto the B2095, through Catsfield and Hooe. It was a predominantly descending ride because I was heading toward the area called Pevensey Flats, but it caused an irony. I was looking for a lane on the right to the village of Wartling. I saw a lane and hesitated but it had a "no through road" sign. Combined with there being no signpost and its narrowness, with grass in the middle, I concluded it wasn't my lane so I continued on the B2095. The lane was just before the last descent, and quite steep, into the flat terrain. At the bottom, I realised, I was close to the junction with the A259, which would take me to the roundabout with the A27. I was baffled. Fortunately, a local cyclist came along. He advised me the most direct way was to take the A259 to the roundabout and take the lane to Wartling from there. The thought didn't fill me with joy, even though it wouldn't involve the A27. Maybe he read my body language or realised it wasn't a great prospect or both, He told me there was an alternative and, yes, he directed me back to that lane! Now, here is the irony. It meant, of course, I had to climb the steep hill I had descended and it could have been avoided! Once onto the lane, I inferred the reason it's indicated as a dead end is to discourage driving along such a narrow lane. However, while it wasn't busy, obviously a few local drivers know it's not a dead end. In particular, there were a few cars parked by a river bridge (from Google, I think it might be the River Ashbourne). That leads me to say that even though it was through flat terrain it was a lovely scenic lane and the high spot of the ride. I mean, of course "high spot in terms of scenery, not height, because here comes the next irony. By having to climb the hill I wrongly descended, I thought I had unnecessarily added a climb when they should have been all over. How wrong one can be! Coming into Wartling involves climbing out of the Pevensey Flats and it was the toughest climb of the trip necessitating bottom gear (28 x32).

From picturesque Wartling, I rode to Herstmonceux and then along the A271 to Hailsham. I'll avoid a ramble. Suffice to say I made a 'pigs ear' of getting onto the correct section of the Cuckoo Trail, coming into Hailsham from the opposite direction, adding probably 2- 3 miles to my total distance.

Easter Saturday 8th April: Polegate – Lily's café, World of Water, Rolvenden Kent (67.73 miles)

This ride was a slight extension of Dave's Hailsham – World of Water 100 km Audax.

Firstly, it was back along the Cuckoo Trail to Hailsham, from where it was initially a retrace of the end of yesterday's route along the A271 to Hertsmonceux, from where, unlike yesterday, the route continues along the A271 to Battle. From there, it was through picturesque lanes

for a while through the High Weald AONB, via the picturesque villages/hamlets of Whatlington, Cripps Corner, Staplecross and Mill Corner to join the A28 for a few busy miles through Northiam. It was shortly after Northiam (still on the A28) that I crossed temporarily into Kent. I turned off the A28 along the lane to Rolvenden and Lilly's Café at the World of Water centre.

I soon realised why Dave chose this café for an Audax control. My goodness, the size of my cheese and ham omelette, chips and peas! That I was too full for a dessert says it all!

So I started the return ride on an overfull stomach! The route was predominantly along picturesque lanes through a number of also picturesque villages, broadly via Beneden, Burwash and Warbleton to join the A295 for the final approx 2 miles into Hailsham and then the Cuckoo Trail (not making the same mistakes as yesterday!) back to Polegate.

Easter Day, Sunday 9th April: Those That Don't Do Hills 100 km audax route in part.

You might question how it's possible to devise a route without hills in Sussex! It might be argued it's a fluke in that there are hills but with two exceptions they are all descended. Ironically, the first of the two exceptions was very early on in my ride, being a slight rise on a residential road out of Hailsham. It could be argued it doesn't really count but it amused me it was so early on. I pondered that if I have any contact with Dave I will pull his leg about it. The second exception I will come to.

I didn't do the first section of the official route to Norman's Bay. That was because I had done it in the "Autumn Tints" ride (I can, however, confirm it is pretty much 'Fenland' flat). Thus, once again it was initially along the Cuckoo Trail to Hailsham. The spoof climb out of Hailsham led to a shared bridleway that enabled avoiding riding on the A22, which is crossed instead. I then started to go a bit wrong, heading toward Lower Dicker. When I realised I wanted Upper Dicker, I retraced and got back on route. I then followed some pleasant, quiet, and, yes, flat lanes to West Firle. What makes them especially pleasant was that with the backdrop of the South Downs hills in the slight distance, they are scenic but without any effort required to enjoy it. From West Firle, the route uses the good quality cycle path alongside the A27 to the picturesque old-world town of Lewes. From Lewes, it was a short stretch on a shared facility to get out of town to then follow a lane route, more or less parallel with the A26 to Newhaven. Despite being in the South Downs National Park, it is flat! I don't pretend I enjoyed



negotiating the busy roads and big and busy roundabouts of Newhaven.

The route includes a stretch alongside the seafront but it's just a typical touristy seafront. As it was a sunny and warm Easter Day, there were a lot of people around. There is at least a reasonable cycle path alongside the A259 for the approx 3 miles to Seaford, which was another plough through the streets. The one good thing was that it was about 1.00 pm and I found a Spar for a sandwich lunch. Almost immediately on leaving Seaford, however, it was all change again because you re-enter the South Downs National Park. That is the second and 'real' climb I referred to earlier. It is a fair one, not so long but fairly steep. However, once at the top and pausing to take in the view, it's a glorious descent to picturesque Alfriston, from which it's back onto flat lanes to Arlington and Wilmington to then follow the cycle path alongside the A27 to Polegate.

Easter Monday 10th April: Home by train

I'm not usually so lucky!

Having had 3 lovely days for riding, the only morning it rained was the one when the only riding in Sussex I would be doing was the just under 1 mile to Polegate station. A bit of a damp ride but it hardly mattered.

My outward rail journey had been via London (Victoria), but the return involved a change at Haywards Heath to join a Brighton – Cambridge train, through a number of London through stations and Stevenage, to change at Cambridge and Norwich.

The rail geek in me found that interesting so, in its way, it was a nice finish to my tour.

Another objective achieved but, as I indicated, I will be returning to Polegate to ride Ditchling Beacon.

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