

the link y Cyswllt

THE MAGAZINE OF
CHESTER & NORTH WALES CTC
CAER A GOGLEDD CYMRU

we are
cycling
The cyclists' champion UK

In this edition

Read how:

Joe Patton conquered LeJog

Chris Smith went 'international'

Two Mills rode 'Coast to Coast'

Janet Jones supported 'Y Canol'

plus all the usual features including:

Reader's favourite rides & tours

Technical tips

Bikes & Bits for Sale

And so much more

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Always a good read!

*The views and opinions
expressed in 'The Link' are
those of the contributors
and do not necessarily
reflect those of the editor,
Chester & North Wales CTC
or the policies of the CTC
National Office*

Front Cover:

Now, if we go down this
steep hill will we have to
cycle back up it! Oh yes!
Kiko Park Valencia, Spain



The Editor

Well, what a 'topsy turvy' year this has been!
I can't normally edit a Summer Edition of 'The Link' because
we're normally away touring around Europe and can you wonder at it
when you look at last year's tour photo on the front cover! This year was
different because I had been troubled with a failing left hip (my right one
had already been replaced in 2010) and I'd been on the Welsh NHS
replacement list for over a year having been admitted twice for two
subsequent cancellations for the operation
So after waiting for eighteen months and lodging an official complaint my
number was called for mid June. Perfect I thought, touring's been ruled out but I
could produce an extra edition of 'The Link'. Hoorah!

So far, so good I thought except that it turned out I
couldn't sit at my computer for fear of dislocating
my new hip - I've done a dislocated hip before and it
really, really 'stings' so didn't want to do it again!

Coupled with this, our plans for moving to Spain had
to be accelerated because the house we were
renting had been sold and we only had a couple of
months potential rental left.

So big rush now on to pack up all our belongings
and get them into storage except the bits (and two
bikes) we wanted to take with us to Spain in the first
instance. You see how long it takes to pack up 180
boxes and nineteen bikes!

Then would you believe it, a few days before we
were due to catch the ferry to Spain, our rental
house owner advised we didn't now have two
months but probably two weeks as her house sale
had been brought forward!

So the first job we had to do when we did arrive was
to drive across Spain chatting to Estate Agents
searching for a long term rental - a long term rental
because we want to make sure we're in the right
area before we commit to anything.

Coupled with this, we went through the house sale
of our bungalow in Rossett!

So, to cut a long story short, mission now
accomplished. We now have a place close to
Alicante from October to March so when you want
somewhere to stay for your cycling holiday you can
contact us through our website:

www.sarahandmartin.org

Now, because we are in Spain and although I can in
theory produce 'The Link' I won't be around in the
Chester and North Wales area to pick up the gossip,
do those group rides or take those significant and
embarrassing photographs. I'll need lots of help and
suggestions from you the readers. You know what
you want and to make it easier for you we have two
willing volunteers who can help you.

Janet Jones in Wrexham and Tony Swannick in Two
Mills have kindly volunteered to co-ordinate
articles/input etc so get what you can to them or
email me directly and we'll make sure we have a
magazine to be proud of!

See you on the road

Martin

*So what's in store for you in this
edition of 'The Link'!*

A Message from Your President	4
Remember Alan's Trike Kit?.....	5
Technical Tips.....	6
Oldie but Goodie.....	6
My First Bike	6
Letters to the Editor	7
Cycling Recipes	7
Cafe of the Year?.....	8
Just a Thought	8
Caption Competition	8
On the Campaign Trail.....	9
Smile, you're on Camera!.....	10
Trip to Gran Canaria	11
Two Mills Ride to Eaton Hall.....	12
Triennial 100 Miler.....	12
Ovine Info.....	13
Kit Choice.....	13
The Thoughts of a Racing Cyclist	14
Group Riding more thoughts!.....	16
Bits and Bikes.....	16
The Lake Article.....	17
Joe Patton's LeJog.....	18
The Link History Lesson.....	24
The Mysteries Of Average Speed	27
The Ferguson Interview.....	27
John Walker's Preamble!.....	28
Get Your Kicks on Route 72.....	29
Audax Reports.....	32
Welsh Festival.....	33
Janet's Ride for Charity.....	34
The 'F' Word.....	37
My Bike.....	38
Carole Boardman.....	39



Most of you will have seen the news item in the latest *CYCLE* showing the happy faces of Roy and Joyce Spilsbury who were honoured to be part of the select group of CTC members chosen to attend The Queen's 90th birthday celebrations at Her Majesty's "street party" in The Mall on 12th June. It is good to know that Roy, such a tireless worker for cycling – especially Welsh cycling – was recognised in this way. And we must not forget Joyce whose support of Roy has made his achievements possible. Well done to them both.

Derby Day

I did my Chester and North Wales "duty" back in May by attending the CTC AGM in Derby. I cannot say that it was the most exciting event of my year so far, but at least it keeps C&NW in the minds of the "powers that be". We are, you may be pleased to know, quite well thought of, to the extent that I was introduced to a fellow cyclist from another part of the country (I forget which) who wondered how his group might attract more beginners and returnees to cycling. I could not answer all his problems but I did talk about summer evening rides such as there have been in Wirral and Chester for many years. I

pointed out the "blooming obvious" that for many people, cycling is essentially a summer pastime and that a ride of five miles can seem daunting for a beginner. I recalled that from small beginnings we have had a number take up cycling and become keen club riders and even go on to help in the running of our activities. I also mentioned our women's riding groups which have done a great deal to give women confidence on the road. Whether my words to this man will cause an upsurge in cycling activities in his area, I shall never know but one hopes for the best! The AGM itself was long and at times tedious. (Aren't you glad you didn't go?) Obviously all members have the democratic right to take part but some of the individual proposals put forward (and voted down) were ill thought out and suggested an approach to cycling more in keeping with yesteryear than the present day. How on earth, for example, the Editor of *CYCLE* could be required to achieve a balance between showing cyclists with helmets against those without, and to make this his "priority" (over printing deadlines, for example?) was beyond me - as it was beyond him. And, of course, the "rearguard" action over the introduction of "*Cycling UK*" continued after the AGM with our own "Referendum" in July in which an overwhelming majority of the membership voted in favour of the change, in my opinion quite rightly.

Pleasant Days

Much pleasanter "duties" for me included attending the Treasure Hunt and Map Reading

Competitions at the end of April. These were based on Trefnant at the Cross Roads Cafe which was an ideal location. I could only be there for the finish in the afternoon as, in the morning I was with other C&NW members on the Dean's Field at Chester Cathedral where the Church was taking part in what I believe is a national scheme to promote cycle rides by designing routes linking up interesting churches in each Diocese. Unfortunately, the site was tucked away and not well signposted so that there were more cyclist helpers there than curious visitors.

Sue Booth kindly took over the running of our increasingly popular Bob Clift Memorial Cheshire Cycleway Rides at the end of June. June wasn't 'flaming', and some of the participants got a trifle wet in the afternoon. Apart from awarding the Skelding Trophy to Ben Larwood, the youngest rider on the 100 mile ride, I was pleased to see that our women's cycling groups have been successful in producing riders not only for the shorter 50 mile ride but also for the 100 mile version. Their looks of wonderment and satisfaction upon completion of a first "century" of miles can only augur well for the future.

Two weeks later it was time for the "Vets' 100". This year, of course, it combined with the occasion of the CTC Triennial Vets rides. That meant the certificates for finishers were provided by CTC. The organiser at their end who approved the design of the certificates did not have the wit to ensure that there was a space for the age of each rider as has been

the normal practice. And yet we were assured three years ago that in future there would always be space for the age of riders to be shown. What is more, in 2013 David Ackerley, the then organiser, objected to the fact that for this, a major National Event, the Certificates were not signed by the CTC President. It was agreed that this would be done in future. Needless to say, 3 years is a long time in CTC terms and "somebody" forgot to arrange it.

However, it was a good day on the bike for the riders in spite of a "scattering of showers" (as they say) and at least the freshening wind was a good help "home" for the riders after tea. As always, the refreshments for the riders were excellent. Our own helpers looked after the morning break at Overton and there was the usual enormous

salad lunch at Llandrinio – topped up with a very filling tea at Overton. Riders were from a wide area. I had a pleasant lunch talking to a rider all the way from Hereford but from even farther away was our oldest male rider, 84 year old Frank Skinner from Cirencester. Winner of the women's trophy was our own Criccieth based Doreen Lindsay. Well done to both of them! Thanks are due, too, to all the helpers and not least to Laurie Mason organiser of this our prestige event.

Days Ahead

So, looking ahead, our successful programme of Audax events continue with the "Momma" rides in early September followed by my President's Rides and presentation of the President's Trophy on the 25th of that month. For the second year running, I have invited CTC's Executive Paul

Tuohy to join us. (After all, he did say at the AGM how he would like to have more contact with individual members in member Groups!) Whether Paul will be able to come depends on his other CTC commitments, of course. However there's nothing to stop *you* attending. Details are on our website and the first requests for tickets have arrived already.

D-Day

And finally on a happy note, let C&NW congratulations be offered from all of us to Founder Member and D-Day Veteran, John Pegum who will attain his own Century on 20th September. Her Majesty will have to honour another of our members then!

Mike Cross

Remember?

Remember in the last 'Link', Alan Johnston wrote a superb article on how he used to convert to three wheels when the roads started to get slippery with the onset of winter?

Well; over the last few years that I've been riding to the Eureka and I've always parked my bike in the corner of the car (bike) park nearest the road.

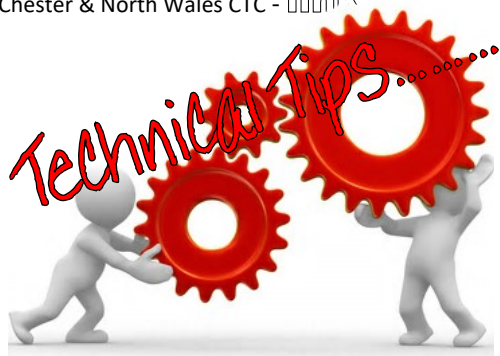
There's a heap of old rusty frames in the hedge in that corner which I've never really taken any notice of.

Had a closer look the other day and what a surprise to find that the white one is a old Raleigh with a Trike Conversion!

Small World eh?



- If you can't get it goin' with zip ties and electricians tape-it's serious.
- If you ride like there's no tomorrow-there won't be.
- Grey-haired cyclists don't get that way from pure luck.
- Catchin' a June bug (or wasp down your shirt) @ 20 mph can double your vocabulary!



What ideas do you have to make life just that little bit easier?

Fed up with getting 'mucky' hands when your chain comes off!

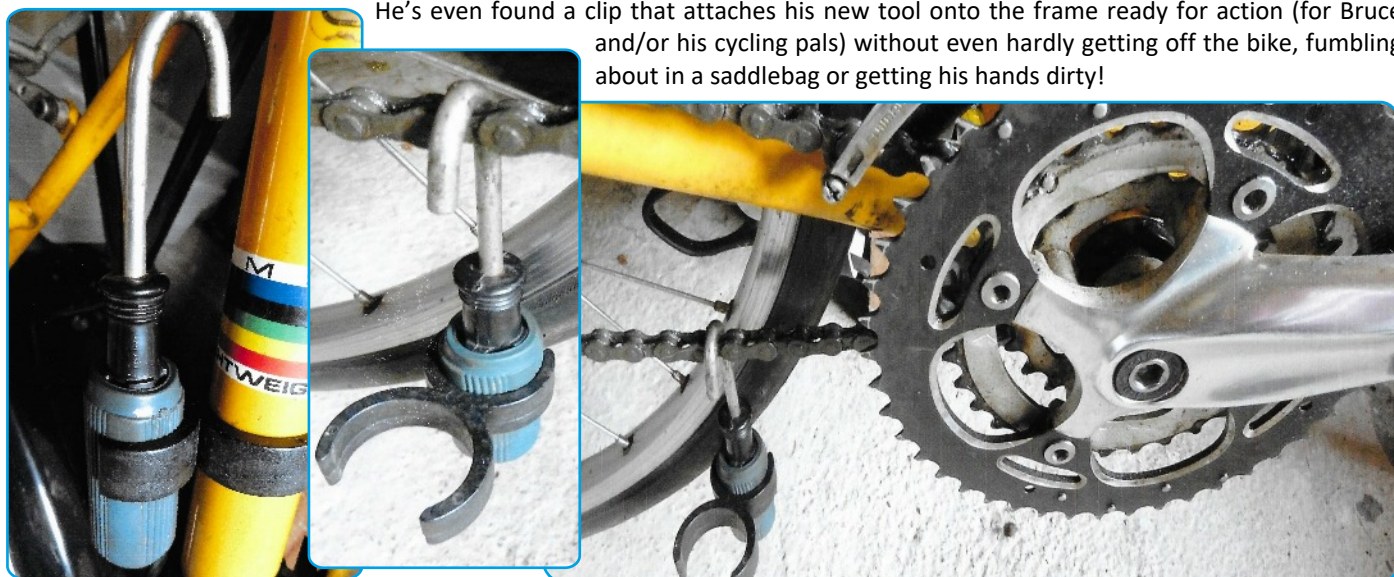
Bruce Graham does, so he's invented a Chain 'Putter Onner-er'!

Bruce writes; "Find an old screwdriver and make an open bend after first sawing off the screwdriver end. Make it so that the chain will slide easily through the tool and by pulling down and forward you can easily but more importantly, cleanly, pull the dislodged chain forward onto the correct chain wheel."



Bruce Graham

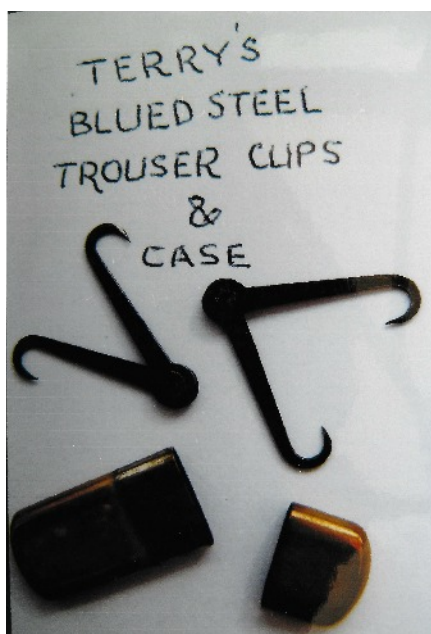
He's even found a clip that attaches his new tool onto the frame ready for action (for Bruce and/or his cycling pals) without even hardly getting off the bike, fumbling about in a saddlebag or getting his hands dirty!



'Oldie but Goodie?'

Bruce also writes in to tell us about another 'rave from the past' - trouser clips!

Those were obviously the days when there was more material in one's trousers!



My First Bike!

Bike's now gone but she's kept the stabilisers, just in case!

OK -
So dig out those old
photos - there must be
somebody you can
suitably embarrass!

Who's this then?
Answers inside the
back cover!





A regular topic for 'the Link', so now is your opportunity to tell us what you REALLY think!
We have 1700+ members in our area all with their own opinion on matters, so tell everyone what you think, what irritates you, your good ideas etc.

From: Hildegard Feldhaus-Jones
<hildegardfj@gmail.com>

Sent: 16 May 2016 17:39:29

To:
watsonswanderers@ctcchestera
ndnwales.org.uk

Subject:

Hi all. Thought I say a quick Hello to you all at the beginning of the cycling season. 12 months ago I was stamping the cards of the 'Audax' (?) racers at Holt. You won't believe it but I've just followed your example and

started (just) to cycle on a racing bike. At the moment I'm not going with the cycling club yet but give me another couple of weeks and I will be amongst them. (RSF Münster).

Best regards to you all - Harry and all the Youngsters.

Lots of love. Xxx

Hildegard

Reply from:

From: David Matthews

<dmanu@outlook.com>

Sent: 16 May 2016 19:04

To: Hildegard Feldhaus-Jones

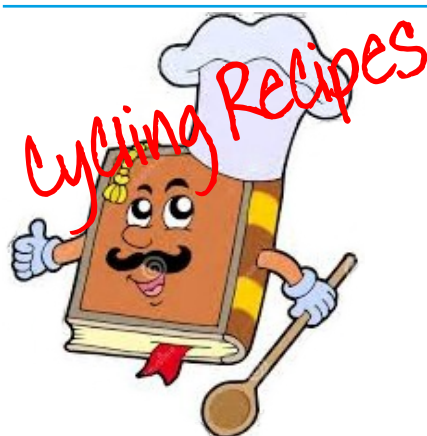
Subject: Re:

Good to hear from you Hildegard. We were in your cafe last weekend with the Audax ride again. All went well and we hope to repeat for our fifth year in 2017.

Your health must be improving if you have got a race bike now. I trust you are feeling much better.

Best wishes to you in Germany.

David Matthews.



This recipe is Lowri's adaptation from an old recipe in a Be-Ro cookery book.

It's for a sweet loaf; somewhere between bread and cake!

Ingredients

1lb SR flour
¼ teaspoon of salt
1 teaspoon of mixed spice
2oz marg or butter
4oz sultanas
2oz candied peel
½ pint of milk

Method

1. Mix flour, salt, sugar and spice in a bowl
2. Rub in the fat
3. Stir in the sultanas and candied peel
4. Pour in milk and mix to form a dough; work into a round
5. Grease a 8" round tin (it needs to be a deep tin – you can use the sides of 2 lined loose bottomed tins)
6. Bake for about an hour at 170° (fan oven)
7. Enjoy!





Here's one we hadn't visited before!

Came as a welcome 'port in a storm' after having a Saturday 'thrash' with the boys in the Welsh Hills! Llandegla Shop & Café

Good prices, large portions and comfortable soft chairs - that Selle Italia Flite saddle gets a trifle hard after a while!



From Sarah Joseph, Editor of a Muslim lifestyle magazine:

It's sad that I need it, but we all have to slow down sometimes. The Dalai Lama was once asked what surprised him the most in life and his response was man;

"Because man sacrifices his health in order to make money.

Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health.

And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then he dies having never really lived."



Walkers are OK but only a single cyclist?

OK - Own up! Are you that lucky person?

Seen outside the Peal 'O' Bells in Holt





On the Campaign Trail.....



Mark Jones

Wrexham.COM

NEWS TWEETS EVENTS WEATHER PROPERTY



Vandals Smashing Glass on Llay Cycle Path Causes Problems For Bike Users

Published: Friday, Aug 12th, 2016

Ongoing issues with a 'small minority of inconsiderate individuals' smashing glass on a local cycle track, has deterred cyclists from using the path and has caused damage to bikes.

Over the past two weeks there have been a number of reports of broken glass being found across a cycle track on Llay New Road, particularly between Llay and Bradley. Earlier this week there were further reports that broken glass was covering both the cycle track and the pavement.

It is thought the glass is being broken deliberately by a 'small minority of inconsiderate individuals'.

The ongoing problems have resulted in several cyclists getting punctures in their tyres. It has also reportedly deterred cyclists from using the track, with some opting to use Llay New Road itself instead.

Councillor for Llay, Rob Walsh stated there had been complaints about the state of the cycle track and the amount of broken glass along the Llay New Road since February, however these have increased in recent weeks.

He said: "Cyclists have contacted me stating that their tyres have had punctures after negotiating this track. The complaints have become more frequent in recent weeks possibly due to the increased number of cyclists during the summer season. It has got so bad that many cyclists refuse to use it anymore and now stick to the road, which defeats the purpose of having a cycle track in the first place.

"I have made Wrexham Council's Streetscene aware of this issue from the start, and in fairness they have done their best to clear the track of broken glass on a regular basis. The problem is there are a small minority of inconsiderate individuals who think it acceptable to smash glass in public places. This has been a recent problem throughout Llay, not just on the cycle track. The police are also aware of the issue.

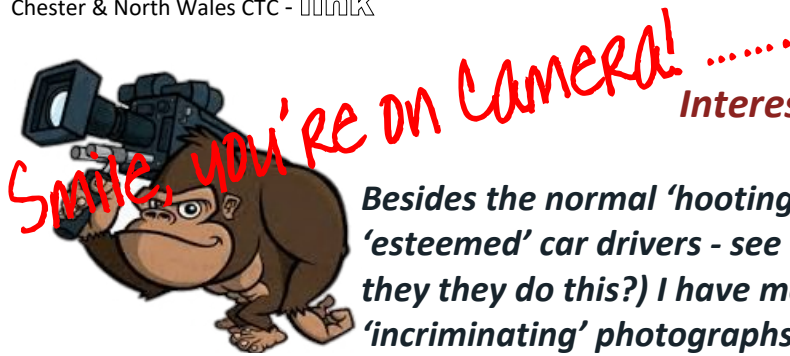
CLlr Walsh added: "I have asked for a site meeting with Wrexham Council's Streetscene team in the near future, so we can identify the best course of action to make the track safe for cyclists once again.

"However, I do urge members of the public to contact the police immediately if they see anyone smashing glass bottles in the community. This is sort of behaviour is not acceptable."

While we're on the topic of getting something done about the impositions on us cyclists - have a look at the 'Smile - You're on Camera' section - we have had a couple of really good results there!



"My philosophy is to think up a new philosophy whenever I need one"



Interesting selection in this edition!



Oh what fun it is to ride out with our friends around Tattenhall !

Heading out through Rossett the other morning, the bus overtook me with about 6ins to spare. I wasn't very happy with this so sent an official complaint to Arriva complete with this photo. The Operations Manager responded the next day requesting the original video, which I sent him. He then followed up with an apology , promising disciplinary action against the driver and free Arriva Travel Vouchers as way of recompense!



While visiting friends down south we were most surprised to see the approaching Police car taking in a Costa coffee while happily driving! Again, I sent an official complaint to the Police 'Professional Standards Department complete with photo and GPS map showing time & place. I received an apology and a promise to discipline the offending officer.

So .. my suggestion is to get a camera so we can 'educate' our traffic colleagues that they need to be mindful of us!



Trip to Gran Canaria

The winter of 2015/2016 seemed to bring endless rain – when it wasn't raining the Cheshire Lanes seemed to be full of mud, water, and pot holes. So I found myself booked on a trip to Gran Canaria for a week of sun with my wife and daughter in early March this year. Now whilst they love lying by the pool and soaking up the sun, I can only cope with about half an hour before I want to be on the move, so my mind turned to how I could combine this week away with some cycling. I've never been brave enough to take my bike on a plane and it seemed to have the potential for all sorts of hassle, so I investigated the option of bike hire. I found a chain of bike shops Free Motion (others available) on the Island including a branch near our hotel, selected a suitable model - Cannondale Synapse Ultegra, entered my preferences and it was all fixed.

Once settled in to our hotel in Puerto de Mogán, I wandered down to the shop, where I found the bike I ordered, already



set up to my size, with the SPD pedals I had asked for. The assistant handed me some vital spares, offered me a helmet, lights (for the tunnels) and a lock, sold me a map, and off I went.

The resort we stayed in was, inevitably, on the coast and so on a mountainous island the only direction to go was upwards. What a revelation this was; carefully graded inclines, not a pothole

to be seen, wonderful scenery, no rain and temperatures around 20deg. Even the traffic wasn't too bad – some of the usual crazy drivers, who I assumed to be English, but most were courteous. On the second day I had booked onto a tour with Free Motion, the rides all started from their shop in Playa Del Ingles, so I had a little drive to the start. They divide their tours into three levels, Hobby, Sport and Sport plus. I decided to



go for the slowest one, Hobby, and was glad I had! They have a different route each day and I had picked a 70km one entitled Soria. The pace was fairly brisk. I cycle regularly with the groups Wednesday and Sunday Rides without any particular difficulty and was just able to keep up with the pace of this ride. The group was a mixture of ages, and nationalities, and although Brits made up only about 20% of them, English was the common language. The ride included 3600 ft of climbing and was completed at an average of 12.9mph. It was a good introduction to riding on the Island, but I quickly realised I could easily do similar rides on my own and that is what I did for the rest of the week.

Free Motion have set up a network of local cafes and suitable locations around the island who cater for cyclists – including having a small range of cycling essentials available for purchase and tools for loan!

There's a lot of climbing which ever way you go, but the inclines rarely go above 10%, indeed I never saw anything above 12% on the Garmin, nothing like as steep as some of our Welsh lanes. I did come across one short section that had a surface like one of our local roads, it was marked as not suitable for cycling!

Some days I just cycled for a couple of hours and was back at the hotel by the

time the family were ready to go out; other days I made it more of a day ride. So there we

have it – breathtaking scenery, great roads, excellent bikes, cycle friendly cafes, what more could we want?

Telling some other Wednesday riders about it someone suggested I organise a group holiday next year. I don't feel able to take this on – however it struck me that if I was to nominate a particular week, then other people could book themselves in directly if they so wished. This

would save all the work of coordination, collecting money, eating preferences, choosing hotels etc. Those who wished could then meet up each morning and go riding. If you are interested then please email chris4boundary@gmail.com and say when you would prefer – I am thinking of February 2017.

Details of our trip to Puerto de Mogán

Jet2.com Manchester - Gran Canaria

We stayed at the Cordial Mogán Valle Apartments; this is a mid price apartment complex which offers a range of options from apartment only to full board. Next door is the Cordial Mogán Playa, which is a more upmarket hotel – and has the Free Motion shop within its complex. There are many more accommodation options in the town. I booked through lastminute.com but there are many alternatives offering slightly different rates at different times.

Puerto de Mogán is the quietest of the resorts on Gran Canaria and furthest from the airport 40 mins. Has a wide range of eating and drinking places, a sandy beach, a marina, shops, weekly market and so far as I could tell, no nightclubs. Bike Hire details at <http://www.free-motion.com/en/gran-canaria/> The bikes do get booked early so don't leave it till the week before you go! **Chris Smith**





Two Mills

Sunday Ride to Eaton Hall Estate - 28th August 2016

As you can see even before the ride



starts there is some very serious business to discuss, and lots of tea to drink before the riders are refreshed and ready for the strenuous exercise to follow, then it is across the road to the bus stop ready to start. So eleven (12 with Peter Williams who had started in advance) set off on this rather special ride to Eaton Hall when we are allowed to enter the Estate on this one of only four days in the Year when it is open to the public, for charity, the weather was kind to us and the day better than we may have expected.

Off down Woodbank and on to the Greenway at Blacon which was not too busy to start with and good progress was made which allowed time for an



enjoyable stop at Meadow Lea café, service was quite quick which was good so all were ready for a departure in good time, what a happy group, the camera man got stuck for keeping folk waiting because he could not find his gloves which were on his hands! And as a result we missed the traffic lights for the rather long road works.

We entered the Estate at Aldford and were picked up by security who verified our credentials, our leader kindly agreed to a stop by the lovely Blue Bridge over the river Dee. Then on through the Estate passing many deer on the way, more than I can remember seeing last year.

Having paid our £7 entrance charge everyone was free to explore the gardens as they wished which were up to their wonderful standard and a joy to behold, some of us also entered the Chapel and were able to listen to the marvellous organ music which was being played live, an unexpected bonus. Others may have been to see the



narrow gauge steam railway, this was originally built to carry all the building materials from the main railway for the building of the Hall, but now just gives pleasure rides around the grounds.

The route back to Eureka via Eccleston and the Chester Race Course was altered to avoid the wind along the Dee path, so went by the canal basin and path to join the Greenway and on home through Saughall. A very enjoyable ride and day out with our thanks to Andy, our very positive leader, but most of all it is the company that makes it so special.

David Collinson



Cycling UK Triennial

100 mile Ride

This very successful event organised by Chester and North Wales CTC took place on a generally fine day on Sunday 10th July 2016, starting and finishing at Duddon Village Hall.



Seventy-one entrants set off in seven groups of riders every ten minutes from 8am after a send-off by the Ch&NW CTC President, Mike Cross.

Many participants thanked the caterers for an excellent lunch provided at Llandrinio and morning & afternoon refreshments at Overton Village Hall. Laurie (Organiser) was pleased to say that there were no serious mishaps. Only one entrant suffered a cross-threaded pedal and had to return in the 'Sag Wagon', but all others finished the course. Riders came back tired but very pleased with all aspects of the event.

Most riders, some of whom had travelled some distance, were able to stay for the presentation of certificates and trophies. Trophies were awarded to the Oldest Lady Rider, Doreen Lindsay, and the Oldest Gentleman Rider, Frank Savage. All riders received a personalised certificate recording their achievement.

The 100-mile round trip was well-planned and smoothly organised by Laurie Mason who thanked all the volunteers for giving up all or part of the day to make the event such a great day out for the riders. Glennys Hammond



Dvine Info ... Sheep & the

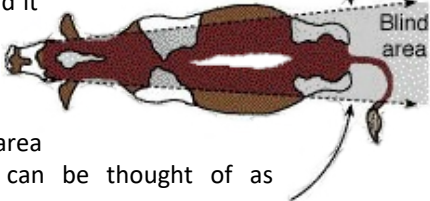


'Point of Balance'

Those of you who have worked with farm livestock can move swiftly on from this item; it is not intended for you. It will outline a few the principles used in designing livestock handling systems and is intended for those cyclists who are total mystified by the behaviour of sheep on the road.

Earlier this year I was riding along the Panorama above Llangollen when I caught up with 2 riders (riding 2 abreast) who weren't able to pass the group of sheep that were running along in front of them. One of the riders said he couldn't understand why the sheep didn't stop and look round thus allowing the cyclists to get past; he was sure the sheep wouldn't be able to see him.

1. Sheep and cattle are herbivores, and need to be aware of predators. They have evolved with their eyes positioned on the sides of their heads so have a much large field of vision than humans. Sheep are flock animals so tend to move as a group; if one is isolated on one side of the road it may suddenly dash across to join the rest.

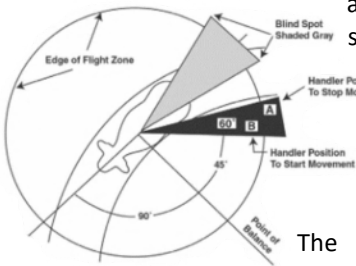


2. Livestock have an area around them which can be thought of as

'personal space' this is known as the flight zone. Once people enter the flight zone the animal will start to feel threatened, and sheep will generally move away if they can. If livestock are approached too suddenly or too closely their behaviour can be unpredictable; lambs are particularly flighty.

3. The size of the flight zone will vary according to how familiar the sheep are with people. Sheep that spend a lot of time grazing by the side of the road (as on the Horseshoe Pass) are very used to people and traffic so have a very small flight zone where as those less used to human contact will have a much larger flight zone.

4. At last – the 'Point of Balance' – with respect to livestock rather than cyclists toppling off their bikes. The point of balance is at an animal's shoulder. Livestock will try move forwards if people are behind the point of balance, they will go back if people are ahead of the point of balance. If people are behind sheep on the left, the sheep will tend to move forward



and to the right; if you watch sheep dogs moving sheep down a lane you will see the dogs zigzagging behind the sheep to keep them moving forward.

The cyclists mentioned earlier were in the flight zone, and in the field of vision, so the sheep kept running along the road. Once the cyclists singled out so they were on one side of the road and dropped back a bit, the sheep slowed down, stopped panicking and were able to move far enough away from the cyclists to be out of the flight zone so the cyclists could get past.

Lowri Evans

This is the section in 'The Link' where you've tried out a piece of kit and like it enough to tell your fellow riders.

Dave Statham particularly likes these from Sealskinz 'Overshoes with removable rear lights'



Especially good with the integrated side zips so it isn't a struggle to get them on. The mode selectable rear lights are removable - remember that before putting them in the washing machine. They can handle wind, rain & mud but not a number 3 wash!

The nights are starting to draw in now so let's get prepared! Dave Statham





The thoughts of a Racing Cyclist – 1953

On reflection, I was never really a 'racing cyclist' more of a 'cyclist who did a bit of racing'! These are just a few of my thoughts during one race that I did.

First of all, I got into racing by joining a club with two friends, Ron & Chris, 'The Wrexham Premier R.C.'. Before that we toured around North Wales, the Wirral and Cheshire. We had our moments of pretending to race, sprinting for the 30mph signs, first to the top of a climb and so on.

'The Premier' was a League club (B.L.R.C.) and we went to watch some racing and thought, "We could do that."

So we joined the Club and started racing. To put you in the picture with the League – under 18 years old you were a Junior and after your 18th birthday you were classified as a 3rd category. Win an Open race and you were moved to 2nd Cat. Win another Open race and you became a 1st Cat. You could also get category points by finishing in the first six.

Back to the Race in question The HQ and changing rooms were at the Balmuir Café in Gresford (see 'Link' back number). I remember riding there from home with my racing kit in my saddle bag. I parked my bike with the others behind the café and went in to get changed – black wool shorts, Club jersey (gold with red and black bands with two rear pockets and two front pockets), white socks, cotton cap, sunglasses and a full drinks bottled – sorted!

The next step was to ride through Wrexham with my mates to the other side of town to the start.

thinks: "All this riding around, I'm going to be knackered before I start!"

The start was by the Wrexham Cemetery.

thinks: "They've got this all wrong – the Finish should be here."

I looked around at all the riders in their multi-coloured racing tops and colourful bikes; all sorts of makes but my white Holdsworth didn't look out of place but I certainly did, thinking that they all looked like a "handy lot – a bit too handy for my liking!"

This particular race was organised by the 'The North Wirral Club' and was a Juniors & 3rd Cat Open event.

thinks: "Even the Juniors look handy!"

My team mates were Gwylfor Cooper, Ray Hawke and Dave Eccleston. One thing I should mention at this point is that 3rd Cat & Junior races were about 40-45 miles and restricted to 40 riders. This made the races extremely fast straight from the start.

thinks: "I don't like the sound of this."

The Starter dropped the flag and off we went down the short hill from the Cemetery and up the hill to Rhostyllen where the second flag was dropped to deneutralise the race. Somebody immediately attacked and the pace went up.

thinks: "Idiot, let me warm up first!"

We raced through Johnstown & Ruabon towards Llangollen in one tight bunch at

about 25mph (no computers in those days!).

thinks: "I can't keep this up and we haven't even reached the hills yet!"

Through Llangollen zipping up my jersey and straightening my cap just in case someone knows me.

Past the Abbey to the bottom of the Shoe and I start sliding back through the bunch. We start climbing and attacks go off the front.

thinks: "What do they think this is – a race?"

I try to move up the bunch a bit looking for my team mates – our gold coloured jerseys stand out. I can see Gwylfor and Ray up ahead; my legs are screaming and my chest is burning but apart from that, I'm OK!

Things ease off a bit after the cattle grid and I catch my second wind.

thinks: On the long straight up to the bends I think to myself; "Don't look to the right, you'll see the top". So what do I go and do? Yes, look to the right!



Glynn Jones





Thinks: B***** Hell!

I've ridden the Horseshoe many times but riding up it at race pace, well, that's different! I moved up the bunch nearer to Gwylfor and Ray but no sign of Dave, he must be behind. We reach the steep part by the white cottage and somebody attacks again.

thinks: "What a plonker" I think, "doesn't he know how I'm suffering?"

I slid backwards through the bunch – a gap opened and I lost the wheel in front – in other words, they dropped me! The gap widened and the bunch rapidly disappeared but the good news was that there were still some riders behind me.

I kept going, passing the Ponderosa - just a wooden hut in the 50's.

thinks: "Oh for a nice cup of tea!"

Starting down the descent I was passed by a car so, tucking in behind I followed it until we reached the bottom and started to climb. I kept drafting it up the climb to the crossroads where I caught the bunch. The car turned left so I re-joined the bunch where I tucked in.

Gwylfor told me that a breakaway of 10 riders were up front. We steamed down the Nant-y-Garth and on to Ruthin catching 3 of the breakaway in the process – 7 away now.

The next climb was 'The Bwlch' – not too steep but quite long where I slid through the bunch until I was 'Tail End Charlie' again. The elastic stretched until it finally snapped and a gap appeared but Gwylfor dropped back and paced me up the rest of the climb.

Roaring down to Loggerheads:

thinks: "I wonder if they'll stop at the café for a cuppa?" No, straight past and on to Mold. The descent down the 'Rainbow' was fantastic allowing us to breathe easy and rest the legs. By the time we reached Mold we had reeled in another 2 riders – leaving just 5 in the break. This meant that if we didn't catch that elusive 5, there was still a category place for whoever won the sprint for 6th place and I knew that Ray needed one more placing to become 2nd cat – he was 'up for it'!

We roared into Mold, one big tight multi-coloured group, whooping and shouting; the locals in the street must have thought we were mad. Turning right in

the centre of Mold we headed for Wrexham.

Before we continue with the race, let me put things into perspective. In 1953, the whole peloton would be riding steel frames made of Reynolds 531 tubing with 'rat-trap' pedals/toeclips & straps, a downtube shifter for the 5 speed block on the back with a lever on the seat tube for the double chain set on the front. We would have a drink bottle on the handlebars but around this year (1953) you could get one that fitted with clips on the downtube. We used Simplex or Huret gears unless you were well off;



then you could get Campag. Also don't forget we wore cloth caps – no helmets. Anyway, back to the race: through Pontblyddyn and Caergwrle – not far to go now. The plan was to get Ray to the front for the sprint. The three of us got on the front to control the speed. Gwylfor looked across at me and said: "The three of us will jump off the front at the 'The Old English Gentleman' – are you up for it?"

My answer: "Err no!"

"OK" Gwyl said, "Ray & me will try and break – you slow'em down."

'The Old English Gentleman' was a pub halfway up the hill before Gwersyllt and sure enough Ray & Gwylfor jumped. I sat in front of the bunch and soft pedalled. I kept to the left and kept watching for any riders coming through on the right. Someone tried to pass me but I switched across in front of him – I did this twice.

However, on the third time the guy came through he looked across at me (well, glared across really) and snarled:

"You do that again pal and I'll"

What he threatened to do with his pump, I can't repeat, but it sounded rather painful! I can still remember him; his name was Chamberlin, his jersey was red, the colour of Warrington R.C. and I remember thinking:

thinks: "Blimey he's a big bu@@er, I'm not going to argue with him".

The outcome was that I stayed in the bunch and we caught Ray & Gwylfor in

Gwersyllt. We were now fast approaching the finish and everybody was jockeying for position.

Where the Sainsbury roundabout is now was just a crossroads. The finish turned left into Plas Coch Lane. The yellow 'two hundred yard' flag was waved at the left turn. A mad sprint for the line resulted in Ray crossing the line, getting him sixth place and his 2nd cat licence. I finished in the bunch with Gwyl while Dave came in shortly after.

Another race over finishing in the bunch – once again:

thinks: An 'also ran' or maybe a 'never was' – take your pick!

Back to the café to get changed and ride home, get cleaned up, have some tea and meet the girl friend.

Ah well – put the mudguards and saddle bag back on and back to touring.

Happy days! **Glynn Jones**



Had a couple of instances recently where the first rider who reached the junction shouted "Clear" not realising that the following rider was actually 20-30mtrs behind. This rider assumed that the road was still clear but unfortunately a car had appeared from around the bend of the main road - whoops!

So The moral of the story:

Group Riding more thoughts!



Check who's behind you and how far they are before you shout clear!

Bits and Bikes



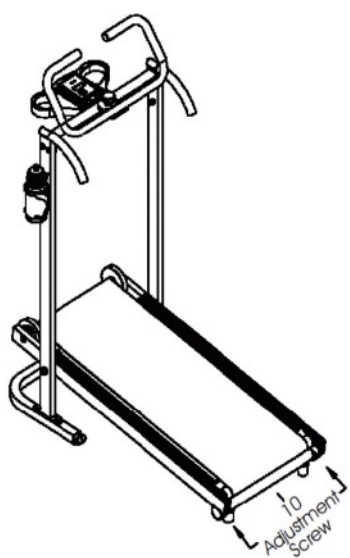
Well - all the bikes advertised in the last 'Link' have all gone now but what about this for those cold grey days when you can't get out on your bike!

**** For sale: Total Strider Manual Treadmill ****

Sylvia Staples has a brand new one of these machines currently living in her living room and still in its delivery box. Sylvia wants the space so no reasonable offers refused as all donations to go to the 'Blind & Partially Sighted' Charity. It cost over £150 and all offers considered.

This is an excerpt from the advertising:

Get fit in the comfort of your own home and save money on expensive gyms with the robust Total Strider. Trim, tone, shape and exercise your body at your own pace - from a short brisk walk to a marathon run, without being restricted by weather conditions or having to worry about security on the streets. Use of the upright handles gives you an all-body workout, helping you burn more fat and calories, achieving greater results than just walking. With a choice of 2 inclines the foldaway treadmill has a non-slip running surface of 180 x W50cm, complete with easy-grip safety handles and a multi-function electronic computer to monitor speed, duration and distance, as well as count the calories burnt. For compact storage, it folds upright to a slim 60cm and rolls away on easy-glide wheels under bed, in closet or behind door. instructional DVD and water bottle included. Maximum load 300lbs.

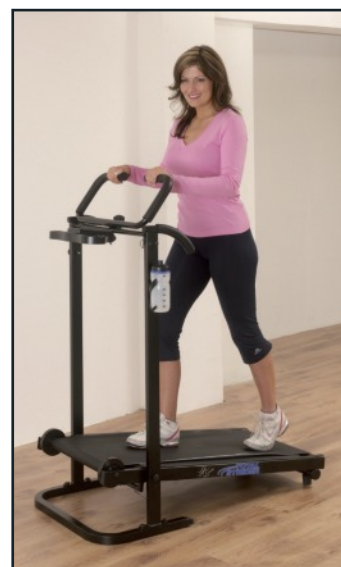


Open size: 1138 x W62 x D110cm,

Folded size: 1138 x W62 x D45cm.

Note it is a manual treadmill; it does not run on a motor.

Features: - Electronic computer to monitor speed, duration and distance, calories burnt



- No matter what make of bike you ride, it's all the same wind.
- Everyone crashes. Some get back on. Some don't. Some can't.
- Never try to race an old Geezer, he may have one more gear than you!
- Riding faster than everyone else only guarantees you'll ride alone.
- Never ask a cyclist for directions if you're in a hurry to get there.



Jane Marshall wrote in to suggest we printed this article from 'The Lake' - the topical magazine based on the Wirral and it's happenings! Glad she did - aren't you?

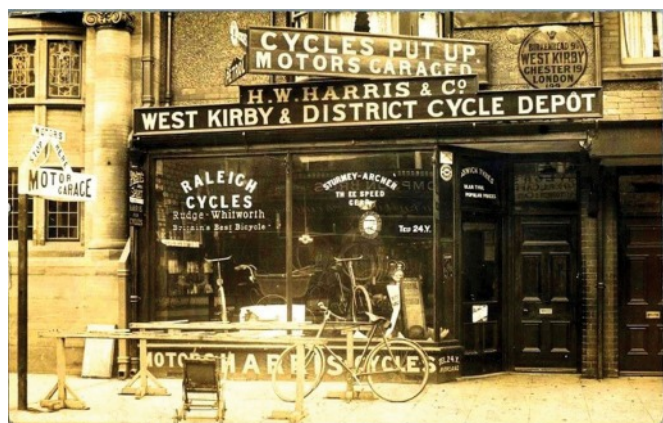


photographs and was able to tell us about his great-grandfather's shop.

The photograph above is of the West Kirby & District Cycle Depot owned by Henry William Harris from the early 1900s until 1913. The photo also shows advertisements for petrol and garaging for cars. The shop was situated next to the present day Barclays Bank. 'WROgue and WRObe' is the present-day

decided that it should form the nucleus of a fund for building a Cottage Hospital."

Henry owned the first car in West Kirby. Henry's garage was in Bridge Road (on the site of the recently demolished Bob Smith's garage). The whereabouts of this



shop and the address is 20 Grange Road. Local readers may remember this shop as 'Birkenhead & District Cooperative Society' in the 1960s.

photograph of Henry's first car is a mystery. From another photograph it seems that the 'ES' on a sign to the left of the picture seems to be the end of a pub sign - maybe Birkenhead Brewery Ales. Can anybody identify the location, please? It is likely to be in the West Kirby District.

Another interesting photograph shows the decorated shops during the 1911

Heather Chapman tells readers about the West Kirby and District Cycle Depot. The Lake reader, Ian Harris, contacted the West Kirby Museum Research Group in response to our appeal for information about West Kirby shops. Ian is the great-grandson of the late Henry William Harris (1869-1948). Henry took occupation of the cycle shop in Grange Road, West Kirby, sometime between 1897 and 1901. Ian showed us some fabulous, unique

The West Kirby & District Cycle Depot was already well established before the Bank of Liverpool (now Barclays bank) opened in 1908. The sign outside the shop says 'Birkenhead 9 and a half miles, Chester 19 miles and London 199 miles'. In the 1901 directory, the address was known as Grange Road West and Henry was listed as a cycle manufacturer and agent for Rudge-Whitworth. Henry and his family lived above the shop and later moved to Eaton Road, West Kirby. Henry had a workshop behind his shop dealing with cycle assembly and repairs.



coronation of King George V. West Kirby took an active part in the celebrations and the shops were decorated with flags and bunting. The shop adjoining the West Kirby & District Cycle Depot was Stevenson and Shaw, fancy drapers.

Thanks to readers like Ian, the research team are finding out a great deal about old West Kirby and will be able to create an informative archive for future generations. If you have any interesting photographs or stories, please contact Sue Jackson on 625 2298, or Val Frost on 678 8460 at 'The Lake'.

H. W. HARRIS,
CYCLE MANUFACTURER AND AGENT,
*Maker of the Celebrated "KIRBY" CYCLES,
and Agent for all the leading makers.*

REPAIRS A SPECIALITY.
FREE WHEELS CAREFULLY FITTED.
MACHINES MADE TO ORDER.
PLATING AND ENAMELLING.



The best class of Bicycles on Hire by the
HOURLY, DAY, WEEK OR MONTH
ON MODERATE TERMS.

BASSINETTES & MAIL CARTS
for sale and repairs.
PLEASE NOTE THE ADDRESS
GRANGE ROAD WEST,
WEST KIRBY



Lands End to John o'Groats in 14 days!



The 'End-to-End' challenge is so popular that an estimated 3,000 people do it every year. Many 'Chester & North Wales CTC' members will have cycled this, perhaps several times and taking different routes to the one that I followed:

It was never my intention to make this year's main cycling holiday the 'End-to-End'. I had been invited to join a friend who lives next to the source of the Danube, to follow that great river from Germany into Austria. Then as the mass exodus of Syrians and other nationalities began following the Danube by foot, I felt uncomfortable making plans for a self-indulgent holiday in an area of such human suffering.

I decided to do something for others. Cycling the 'End-to-End' for local children at Tŷ Gobaith & Hope House hospice sat more comfortably with my conscience.

The Planning Process

To move my good intention into a plan, research was required.

Page 1 of an Internet search engine threw up lists companies offering 'End-to-End' supported rides. Those who join a supported ride join a group of like-minded cyclists who are accompanied by

a vehicle that carries their personal belongings and stops at regular intervals along the daily route to supply the group with refreshments.

The cost of a supported cycling holiday includes route planning, booked lodgings, evening meals and breakfasts. At the date of my adventure, a 14 day supported ride cost £2045. This is an awful lot of money and certainly exceeds my modest occupational pension.

Rather than join a supported ride I brought a Cicerone travel guide: 'The End to End Cycle Route' (2012) by Nick Mitchell (ISBN 978185284670). The guide enabled me to load a full set of turn by turn directions from the Cicerone website into my Garmin that Martin

date of departure and used that time to search for less expensive guest houses.

With very little effort I brought the cost of overheads down to £794, and could have reduced it further if I had imposed on friends and family to get me to Lands End and back from Scotland, and used youth hostels or camped overnight rather than the use of guest house accommodation. I chose not to do so and was certainly happier to make my own travel arrangements at a cost of £794 rather than giving away £2045 for a supported ride.



Having decided on the route, when and where to stay and cost, the next equally important part of the planning stage was to maximise the benefits of this bicycle ride for the children at Tŷ Gobaith hospice. And doing things for charity it isn't all about money:

- As my bicycle has a GPS tracker I would be able to supply 'log in' information to my contacts at Tŷ Gobaith who would then share a live map of my whereabouts with the children on a daily basis. This stimulated discussion about the parts of the country being travelled through.

- The next challenge was to keep the children's attention by capturing their imagination. Recalling the stories I had been told as a

child and other classics, especially from Aesop's Fables, I decided to write 14 bed-time stories that would be relevant to my whereabouts on each day of my journey.

You can see a screen capture of my daily route and also read the children's stories on my cycling blog:

<http://harlechjoe.wordpress.com> And let's face it, we are all children at heart!



Brooks showed me how to use. I then contacted a selection of guest houses mentioned in the guide and obtained their quotation for bed and breakfast.

My travel plan required train journeys to reach Penzance and further trains to return from Scotland. The initial cost for train travel and overnight accommodation was £1,148. I then waited until special saver train tickets became available 12 weeks before the



The Adventure:

Day 1

It took 11 hours and 3 separate trains to travel from Harlech to Penzance, the station nearest to Lands End. The trains were all on time, the bicycle reservation system worked well and it was easy to load and unload my bike on and off the train without assistance.

Arriving in Penzance at 7:30pm I cycled 12 miles to Lands End in just over an hour. Here a dog walker kindly agreed to take my photo whilst his four legged friend eyed me up for his supper.

At the time of my arrival everything at the Lands End Visitors Centre was closed. Pleasingly the land-mark signpost was in place and although tempted to follow the pointer to New York that particular road was underwater and John o'Groats was closer. I had intended to register my ride in a directory of End-to-End attempts that has been managed by the 'Lands End Hotel' but they have stopped doing it.

Day 2

From my comfortable guest house in Sennen I cycled back to Penzance and followed a 4 mile coastal path along the shoreline of Mounts bay for this wonderful view of Saint Michaels Mount. Quite a few road and several shop signs were printed in English and Kernewek, an ancient Cornish Celtic language. I wondered whether Kernewek was now being promoted as a first language for local inhabitants in the same way as Welsh.

That night I stayed in the beautiful harbour town of Looe having cycled a glorious 73 miles.

Day 3

Today's journey would take me to Devon via the Torpoint Chain Ferry, which crosses the river Tamar to Devonport in Plymouth. The crossing was delayed as a merchant vessel made its way to open sea.

I asked one of the ferry men whether he knew what was being carried. He explained the cargo was China Clay (Kaolin), a profitable local export. He told me that millions of tons are exported to the ceramics industry in Italy, Spain and Portugal. It is a raw material used in the manufacture of tiles and sanitary ware. If what I was told is correct, isn't it



incredibly sad to see the Cornish family jewels being exported when tiles and sanitary ware could be manufactured in Cornwall, creating employment with a smaller carbon footprint?

The City of Plymouth was fairly easy to cycle through and in next to no time I reached the village of Yelverton for a lunch break before ascending onto Dartmoor, characterised by its ponies that watched as they peacefully grazed and the prison that I hurried past in case I was recognised!

The climb onto Dartmoor was rewarded with wonderful views and a welcomed descent to my overnight stay in Exeter. I had cycled 58

combination of less effort for more speed and a shorter day in the saddle. Even the weather was on my side - a dry, cool day with a slight breeze.

My route took me through picture postcard villages including Stoke St Mary where I stopped to photograph the 'Half Moon Inn' that was to feature in my story for the Tŷ Gobaith.

After a leisurely lunch I made my way towards the Somerset village of Somerton and noticed a ladies purse on the road. The purse was bulging with bank notes, credit cards, a driving licence and a 'National Insurance Card'. So I stopped in Somerton and



miles, 12 miles less than scheduled due to the ascent of Dartmoor.

Day 4

Cycling from Exeter in Devon, the 71 miles to Wells in Somerset had fewer strenuous hills and much improved road surfaces. This provided a glorious

asked where I could find the police station and was told it closed several years ago. The nearest one was in Glastonbury, a town that I was passing through as part of my route.

Glastonbury is dominated by its 'Tor' which has spiritual associations that are reflected in the culture of its townsfolk with many 'New Age' middle aged people (who looked rather old-fashioned) and an aroma of narcotics in the air. Glastonbury is equally well known for its Biennial music festival. As for a police station, no chance. I was given directions to the town fire-station where the police have an office. The fire station was deserted. A notice on the window informed me the police office would be manned for 2 hours the morning after next.

I continued my journey to the town of Wells, my destination for today and found a police station. Its front door was



locked and a notice asked callers to use a telephone on the wall for assistance. My call was not answered. Fortunately I noticed a policeman walking from the rear of the police building toward the car park in front of me. Hanging up the telephone I went over to him, thrust the purse into his hands and reported my find. He made a note of my details and asked if the owner could be given my contact details to which I agreed. I felt relieved the purse and valuable contents were now in the safe hands of the police. It would have been nice to have received a word of thanks from the owner but hey-ho, I'm sure she was grateful.

Day 5

A journey of 57 miles from Wells to Monmouth was one of my shortest cycling days so enjoyed a lie-in and hearty breakfast before setting out to enjoy the delights of Bristol. As this was a Saturday, commuter and school traffic would be avoided.

The steep climb up the Mendips was less strenuous than the climbs I had faced in Cornwall and my descent took me past a large expanse of lakeland at Chew Valley. My guide book says the lake is a special protection area due to the plants, birds and other wildlife it supports.

My route passed through the traffic free Ashton Court Estate that offered a panoramic view of Bristol that I later navigated through without difficulty.

Leaving the southwest of England by

book recommended stopping to look around.

As convoy of lorries passed by, their



weight caused the deck of the bridge to wobble. Gulp, I didn't like that at all, or the considerable distance beneath my feet to the water below and vigorously pedalled along and off the bridge into Wales for an easy cycle ride through Tintern and onwards to Monmouth.

Day 6

I love staying in guest houses and am frequently spoilt by their owners and last night was no exception. I was welcomed with a pot of tea and several slices of warm, homemade Victoria Sponge coated with homemade jam. The owner even washed and tumble dried my laundry and made me a packed lunch for today..... lucky me!

Rested and raring to go the first part of today's Sunday morning journey was a straight and very quiet 'B' road all the way to and beyond Hereford. I stopped for lunch in a village named Clun, a local beauty spot that is named from the river it nestles alongside.

Settling down to my packed lunch, a couple sitting nearby asked where I had cycled from and where I was heading for, so I explained what I was doing and why.

They had a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel named Ruby who looked rather frail. My heart sank with sadness when the owners told me they had brought Ruby to Clun for her last treat before being put to sleep the

following day. They gave me £5 for Tŷ Gobaith and I promised to dedicate a chapter of my children's story to Ruby and have now done so.

At Shrewsbury I completed my cycling for the day having ridden 80 miles. Although today's distance is higher than my earlier days of this trip, the terrain had been flat and the absence of head wind enabled good progress to be made.

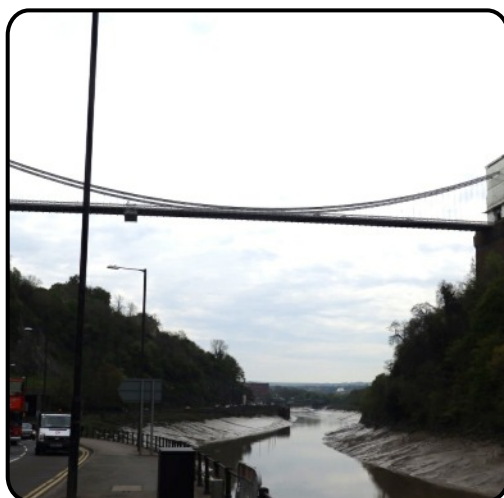
I parked my bike under 'Quantum' to give the sculpture a sense of proportion. As you can see by my bicycle, the structure is massive and must have drawn on considerable design and engineering skills to build.

'Quantum' celebrates the scientific achievements of Darwin, whose place of birth was Shrewsbury.



Day 7

Cycling from Shrewsbury I saw many signs for 'Percy Thrower' gardens. When I married and bought our first home, I used to watch 'Gardeners World' and Percy's advice inspired and helped me to tend my first garden. I wanted to visit the 'Percy Thrower Garden Centre' but somehow managed to miss it completely, so I now have a reason to return to Shrewsbury and spend more time exploring the area. Today's cycling followed quiet unclassified roads through the Cheshire plains and a wonderful lunch break at the Meadow Lea Café that I knew would be a good place to stop, having read about it in previous editions of the 'Link'. A sandwich was followed by home-made cake, coffee and an ice cream in the company of several other cyclists who were also enjoying their lunch time



cycling under the Clifton suspension bridge the route into Wales crossed the Severn Road Bridge where my guide



treat at Meadow Lea.

When I stopped overnight on the outskirts of Runcorn today's cycling distance was 60 miles

Day 8

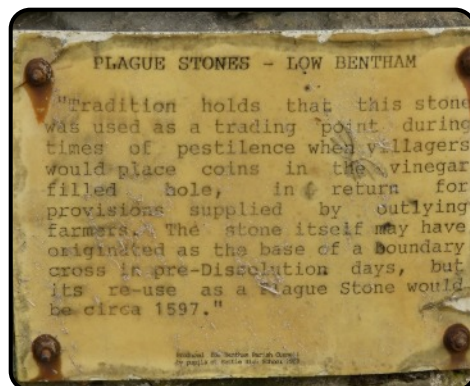
As a resident of North West Wales I have had numerous bicycle rides to and through the North West of England. My routes have avoided traffic congestion by following the Deeside marshes, the 'Trans-Pennine Trail' and most recently the Sefton coastal path. Today would be different. My route would be along busy urban roads.

To avoid the morning rush hour I left Runcorn at 6:30am and very quickly discovered the roads were already busy, either by night workers or people setting out to join nearby motorways for destinations many miles away.

'A' roads took me through Warrington, Birchwood and Leigh. By the time I had reached Bolton the morning rush hour, characterised by processions of slow moving buses, grid locked cars and the morning chorus of emergency vehicle sirens were all in full swing.

The strained expressions of motorists reminded me of the years I had spent stuck in 'going-to-work' traffic. Some drivers sipped from mugs of coffee, others were chatting on their mobile telephones, others were doing both. Respite from the madness of life came after cycling over the green 'Wainwright Bridge' in Blackburn on less busy 'B' roads into the Forest of Bowland.

I found myself cycling along Watling Street that I remember from school days as being an important Roman road. This took me through the village of Hornby (I wonder whether this place is associated with model trains?) from where I cycled over the steepest of moorland roads filled with birdsong to reach the village of High Bentham.



Today's cycling had covered a distance of 75 miles and it was early enough for a walk around the village.

The main road threaded its way downhill to another village, aptly named Lower Bentham where I noticed this interesting plaque on a dry-stone wall.

Day 9

Last year I had a wonderful cycling break touring the southern Lake District. Today the route brought me back into Kendal and onwards to Windermere.

On my last visit I had insufficient time to



visit Dove Cottage, the home of William Wordsworth. Today's route took me to its doorstep. I had hoped to find a postcard with daffodils overlaid by a verse from that famous poem, or even a book of his poetry. Neither were to be found.

Last January's floods had caused enormous damage to this part of England and one of many roads, the A591 over Dunmail Rise, had been partially washed away.

The A591 was on my cycling route to Keswick and today the road reopened.... how lucky was that? The other piece of luck was the road had opened a week earlier than expected and many motorists were still using different routes, so the A591 had very few users.

Close to the top of Dunmail Rise I spotted this AA telephone box and remembered the large AA door key my Dad kept on his car keyring to get inside these.

When taking the photograph I thought this AA box must be one of the very few still in existence, then in Scotland I passed several more. Perhaps they have



been kept in areas where mobile telephone signals are poor?

I have never been inside an AA telephone box as they were in remote places I wonder whether they are stocked with flasks of hot soup, cream cakes, and packets of biscuits.....umm, perhaps I should ditch the CTC and join the AA?

Tonight was spent in the pretty Lakeland town of Keswick, 55 miles from High Bentham. Here I found a launderette and spent a relaxing hour watching my washing trundling around in circles.

Day 10

An early morning shower and freshly laundered clothes revitalised me for today's bicycle ride into Scotland.

A steady and lengthy 15 mile climb from Keswick was rewarded with a wonderful descent into Carlisle where I joined NCR 7 and crossed the border into Scotland.

I continued cycling and quickly arrived at Gretna Green for lunch at the famous Blacksmiths Forge. I noticed that the complex has been developed for civil marriage ceremonies. Provision has been made for wedding catering and



there is a suite of rooms for overnight stays. The complex looked really smart and offers a wonderful venue for marriages. Tonight's guest house was in Moffat roughly 73 miles from Keswick.



Day 11

Cycling further into Scotland, worn out carriageways with numerous pot-holes slowed my pace of cycling. Then Glasgow came into sight. During my working life I had made many visits to an industrial area in a poor part of town known as Govan.

My memories of the City were of grey buildings, poverty and traffic congestion. Over the years, the passing of time has changed things for the better and my route took me along the wonderful tree-lined NCR 75 into the heart of the City.

The river Clyde runs through the City of Glasgow and many say that the river is responsible for its wealth. In days gone by, the trade it brought and the industries it supported would have done so.

These days the river bank forms a very pleasant pedestrian and cycling route with a mixture of high quality housing,



less salubrious areas, university and office buildings. Ornate bridges cross the Clyde at regular intervals. Many are

for pedestrians, others for trains and others for road users.

On the way to Dumbarton I stopped next to this sculpture where a passer-by took my photo. It is called 'Bankies Bike' and the famous around-the-world cyclist Mark Beaumont unveiled it 8 years ago to promote safer cycling.

After cycling through Glasgow and its suburbs my route took me to Dumbarton where I enjoyed a well-earned Pie & Pint and stayed overnight.

Day 12

Today provided me with the most scenic days of cycling. I travelled alongside the banks of Loch Lomond on it 'West Loch Lomond Cycle Path' for well in excess of 10 miles before joining the A82 for a steady ascent of the Great Coe to enjoy a spectacular view of the Scottish Highlands.

Amusingly I was passed on several occasions by a group of a dozen or so road cyclists who were part of a supported LEJOG ride. Each time they passed and disappeared into the distance I would catch up at one of their numerous rest breaks. On the last occasion they invited me to stop and join them for refreshments. I politely declined, not wanting them to delay my progress.

Today's bicycle ride ended at Fort William, 86 miles from Dumbarton where I had stayed the previous evening.

Day 13

I had read several online stories from people who had cycled from Lands End to John o'Groats in which many of the writers expressed concern about the cycling route to Inverness. Some commented that a cycling path alongside the Caledonian Canal presented a puncture risk, others warned the A82 was dangerous to cyclists due to its narrowness and volume of traffic. Others wrote that the B862 involved steep climbs, extra mileage and exposed moorland.

My choice was to stay on the A82. It follows the most famous of Scottish

Lochs, Loch Ness. It looked absolutely beautiful and as today was a Sunday, the volume of traffic was not great and the absence of large goods vehicles reassured me that its narrowness would present no greater risk to my safety than it had done all day yesterday.

I arrived at Inverness early in the afternoon having covered 68 miles.

Day 14

This was another great day of cycling in Scotland. My journey out of Inverness overlooked the Moray Firth where numerous Oil Rigs were moored. I wondered whether this was a sign of an industry in decline.



What isn't in decline is the business of tree logging. It is amazing that one machine can fell and strip a tree of its branches, cut it to size for transportation and stack it on top of other logs within 15 minutes.

By lunchtime I had arrived in the village of Lairg. The weather was chilly as the door of a nearby closed cafe opened. Its lady owner beckoned me inside saying:

'Come in out of the cold. We close every Monday and host a lunch club for the elderly. They aren't due for another hour so come in from the cold'

What a wonderful and unexpected act of kindness. She gave me tea and biscuits and refused payment. Before leaving I made a generous donation into a charity box on the shop counter.

My route then led along a steady, lengthy incline to Altnaharra. Here, for the first time in my life, I saw several different herds of deer roaming freely in the Highlands. What an amazing,





wonderful sight - they were as big as horses!

Having cycled 80 miles I stayed in a guest house for the night. I asked the owners what it was like living here in the winter. They said Altnaharra is frequently cited as the coldest place in the UK (as recently as one week ago it was still snow covered). They keep warm by burning peat that is dug from the rear of their property and much of their food is grown in their garden, fish caught from a nearby lake or culled meat. The local store is 20 miles away and an arrangement exists for the post van to deliver sundry items.

Day 15

After a wonderful breakfast I left for my last full day of cycling before reaching John o'Groats. From Altnaharra a 20 mile descent made cycling from the Highlands to the outskirts of Bettyhill effortless. A glimpse of the North Atlantic reminded me that my journey was nearly over. Bettyhill is also the only place in the world where the working week lasts longer than elsewhere.



My route then took me along the north coast of Scotland to the village of Reay and its adjoining nuclear power plant, Dounreay. This facility, like others in the UK and throughout Europe is being decommissioned, never to be rebuilt due to safety and environmental concerns.

Today's bicycle ride ended in the village of Mey for my final overnight stay, having cycled 69 miles.

Day 16

Gosh, what a cold day. Dressed in a base layer, then normal cycling clothing with a topping of water-proofs I cycled into the mist for the final 7 miles of my 'End-to-End'. Thirty minutes later I arrived at John o'Groats where a passer-by took

my photograph. I look really plump in my layered clothing.

I escaped the dreariness of John o'Groats



and cycled back to sunshine and 'The Castle of Mey' the former summer home of the late Queen Mother. Here I enjoyed a reasonably priced pot of tea and a giant slab of 'Queen Mothers' chocolate cake - yummy.

As far as castles are concerned this one is large without being the size of Royal Palaces and looked extremely homely. I fully understand why the Queen mum enjoyed her summers here.

Relaxing to reflect on the past 16 days.

- I enjoyed the excitement of setting out and cycling through Cornwall and Devon. I then experienced easy cycling along the Somerset levels, Welsh Marches and Cheshire plains.
- Urban cycling from Runcorn to Blackburn was the least enjoyable part of the ride, yet this was quickly forgotten amongst the sound of birdsong in the Forest of Bowland and the beautiful Lake District.
- I loved Scotland; its scenery, the provision for cyclists in Glasgow and above all the kindness and generosity of the people I had pleasure in meeting.

Despite the 'End-to-End' being spoken about as a 'Right of Passage' for people to call themselves cyclists, I don't support that perception and don't have to prove anything to anyone. Nevertheless cycling from one end of the UK to the other does provide evidence of a physical and

mental ability to cycle distances of a reasonable length on a daily basis.

Before setting off on this adventure someone asked about the cycling distance between Lands End to John o'Groats and when I said it was roughly 1000 miles, the chap exclaimed:

'1000 miles, now that really is a very long way to cycle'

I wasn't being modest in my reply that cycling an average of 70 miles a day at roughly 10 mph isn't strenuous. Having completed the ride that view hasn't changed.



My touring bicycle was made for me

by a Swansea frame builder (Paulus Quiros) using Reynolds 853 grade steel. It is equipped with a Rohloff speed hub 500/14 that has 14 speeds with a gear ratio comparable to a mountain bike derailleur system. My wheels are fitted with a pair of 28" 'Continental Touring Plus' tyres.

Carried for the trip:

I used an Ortlieb handlebar bag for my spectacle case, wallet, camera, notebook and telephone plus a pair of Ortlieb panniers bags with 'Eagle creek' organisers to separate day, night and waterproof clothing items (one set of each). My comfort was aided by the use of a trekker handle bar and a bottle cage that carries a Stanley thermos flask.

Joe Patton



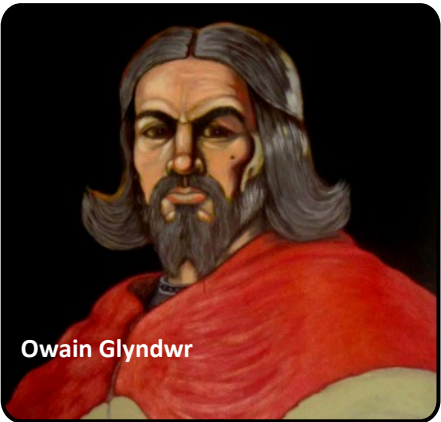


Continued from the Spring Edition

The Greatest Welsh Hero?

..... **Part 2**

As well as being known as a proud Welsh patriot, Owain Glyndwr was regarded as



Owain Glyndwr

a law abiding man who lived quietly and minded his own affairs in turbulent times. He began a military career in 1384 when he served on the English/Scottish border, and in the following year he fought for King Richard 2nd in that monarch's Scottish war. For a long time there had been a simmering dispute between Owain's forebears and Baron Grey de Ruthyn over land in the area of Bryn Eglwys. Baron Grey, an English friend of King 4th Henry 4th both of whom were unimpressed by the Welsh, had seized some land which Owain claimed was common land, but his subsequent successful appeal to the King and the English Parliament was ignored. In 1400 Baron Grey deliberately failed to tell Owain of a Royal command that he was required to levy troops for service in Scotland. The result of this serious but contrived failing was that Owain was considered to be guilty of treason and therefore an outlaw.

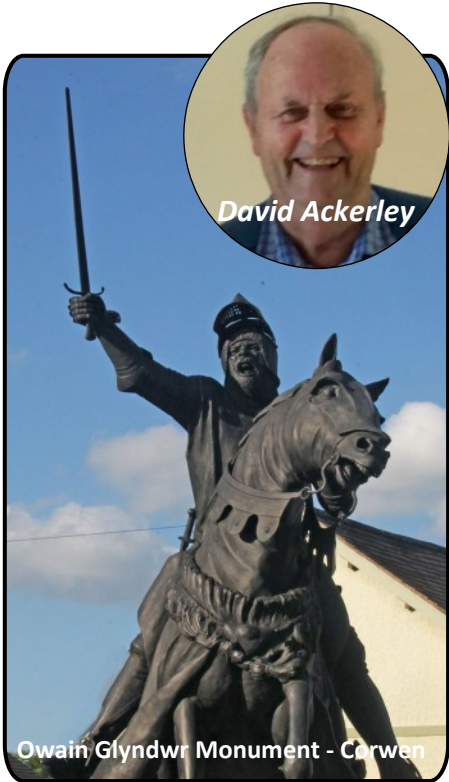
The upshot of Henry's ill treatment of his Welsh subjects was that early in 1400, civil disorder broke out in Chester when an officer of the deposed Richard 2nd was executed. As we have seen, Richard

the Second had had considerable support in Wales, and in September 1400 Owain assumed the title of Prince of Wales in Corwen. (in 2007 a statue of him was erected in the town's square). Thus commenced Owain's remarkable fourteen year rebellion against the English kings; most rebellions in medieval Europe of whatever sort usually lasted a few months at most.

Apart from Owain's charisma and initial widespread support, especially in the north, the other main reason why the rebellion lasted so long was that King Henry 4th, one of the most financially incompetent monarchs we have had, expected his commanders to contain the rebellion with totally inadequate resources. The revolt spread over all of North and Central Wales, becoming an all out war.

Henry 4th put Henry Percy (Hotspur of Shakespearian fame) in charge of the first punitive expedition to bring Owain to heel; this proved to be rather more difficult than expected, and Hotspur reluctantly issued an amnesty to all the rebels with the exception of Owain and his cousins, Rhys and Gwilym Tudor.

During the 1340s-70s Wales, like the rest of Europe, had been grievously afflicted by the Black Death with over a third of the population dying from it. Allied to the slow recovery from the effects of the disease, the mayhem caused by the rebellion and the disruption to their precarious lives caused the rebellion to



Owain Glyndwr Monument - Corwen

lose a lot of popular support. As a result, and to Owain's chagrin, most of Wales accepted the offer, so his cousins, the Tudors, needed some sort of a lever to bargain with the King. By means of trickery they captured Conwy Castle and Hotspur, realising it would be an enormous undertaking to recapture the castle, finally agreed that the Tudors should be pardoned.

In June 1401 Owain scored his first big victory over the English forces at the battle of Mynydd Hyddgen, some seven and a half miles to the south of



Site of the battle of Mynydd Hyddgen



Machynlleth as the proverbial crow flies. Once again we do not

have a lot of reliable evidence about the battle save that it took place on the western slopes of Pumlumon Fawr (Plynlimon) at around 1200 ft, and close to the present Nant-y-Moch Reservoir. This remote and marshy upland area, with the hump of Pumlumon Fawr looming over it, is a wild and desolate place even in good weather, as we had when we drove up to the reservoir



earlier last year. If you fancy visiting the area leave the A 487 at Tal-y-Bont and climb for about 9 miles before a gentle descent to the dam. From there the road continues uphill before a turn to the left downhill alongside the reservoir to the end of the track. If you want to go further to the standing stones you will be better off walking. Return to the "main" road, turn left and you will eventually end up in the region of Devil's Bridge. The reservoir, whose name translates as "The Pig Stream", is the first of three all connected by the river Rheidol and while water stocks last, generates electricity for Aberystwyth and the surrounding area for most of the year. This is the largest Hydro-electric scheme in England and Wales.

Some 1500 English and Flemish settlers from Pembrokeshire who felt threatened by the rebellion, took exception to Owain's presence and set about his small army, which ranged in size from 120 to 500 according to who you believe. The result was an overwhelming victory for the Welsh archers over the lightly armed enemy infantry. In 1402 the Penal Laws against Wales were enacted by the English

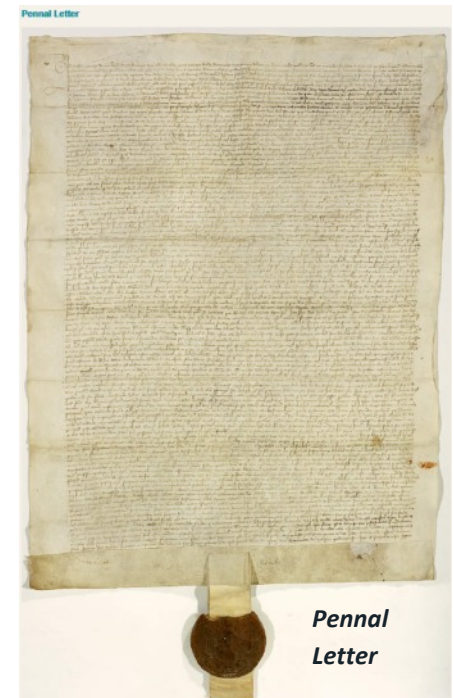
Parliament. These were designed to ensure English dominance but unsurprisingly had the effect of increasing the number of Welsh rebels. The following excerpt is taken from the website of the Owain Glyndwr Society;

After Hyddgen Henry marched into South Wales while Owain attacked castles in the borders and north. By 1402 the battle of Pilleth in Powys had been won and Owain was moving back and forth through the land. It was a brutal time in an often barbaric age, and the suffering it caused to local people and the many ruthless acts has not been completely forgotten, and a certain ambivalence still lingers in some country areas. He burnt the towns around many castles. The battle of Stalling Down (Near Cowbridge, Vale of Glamorgan) lasted eighteen hours when Owain with help from his French allies and men from the Glamorgan hills inflicted a terrible defeat on Henry and his army of many thousands. The armies met in a ravine and it was said that the blood was fetlock-deep.

In 1404 he captured the key castles of Crickieth, Harlech and Aberystwyth and held the first Welsh Parliament in Machynlleth, where he was also crowned Prince of Wales. He held two other Parliaments in Harlech and one in Dolgellau over the next two years, held an important conference in Dolgellau and signed a treaty with France. This was no minor revolt brought on by a local quarrel and for a short while it looked as if the Welsh dream of independence was within their grasp. Then the tide turned, battles in the south and east were lost, and in 1408 Aberystwyth castle was the first in Britain to be attacked by big guns and was eventually starved out. The winter of 1408-9 was terrible and many communities starved or froze to death. The heart went out of the resistance movement, the French allies sailed away and in 1409 Harlech castle, which was home for Owain's family, surrendered because of famine and sickness. His wife, daughters and grandchildren were taken prisoner (Put in the Tower of London, they all died there) and Owain himself was without a base. He faded from history, probably to

live in Monnington Court with one of his daughters. Certainly folk tale in the village says that a horse was kept saddled day and night in case he needed to get away quickly. Many historians believe he returned to his hills to die.

Somewhat surprisingly the extract quoted above fails to mention the



Pennal Letter in which Owain tried to get more help from King Charles V1 of France in return for changing his allegiance from the Pope in Rome to the one in Avignon, Benedict X111, who was favoured by Charles V1. As a result of the Scottish and Northumbrian allies of the Welsh being defeated the rebellion was losing its impetus, so early in 1406 Owain called a conference of his supporters at Pennal (about 6 miles inland from Aberdyfi on the A493) to consider this drastic and provocative change, as to King Henry, a supporter of Rome, this would make the Welsh schismatic as well as rebellious. In a letter written to Charles VI, King of France, dated 31 March 1406 and kept in the Archives Nationales in Paris, Owain demanded "that in return for support, the Avignon Pope would grant authority of the Metropolitan Church of St David over the other dioceses of Wales (and over five in England); that appointments to benefices in Wales were to be restricted to clerics who "could speak our language"; that English monasteries and colleges would no longer take over Welsh



*churches; that
two studia
generalia*
(Universities)

were to be established in Wales; that Henry of Lancaster was to be excommunicated; and that the insurgents were to receive full remission for any sins they might commit in their struggle against Henry. The emphasis on independence through the church and learning is known as The Pennal Policy. The above section in italics is taken from Wikipedia.

The Pennal Letter, carried to France by Hywel Eddoyer and Maurice Kerry, is considered a momentous part of Welsh history. Although the National University of Wales did not come into being until 1893, and the Church in Wales was not established until 1920, the dream had been born in Pennal. The letter is too long to be quoted here but a copy of can be found in Pennal Church, or it is available on the internet at: <http://www.canolfanglyndwr.org/pennal-letter.php>. The Church in Pennal, St Peter Ad Vincula, (St Peter in Chains) contains plaques with details of Owain's family and earlier Princes of Wales, as well as a small statue of Owain in the Heritage garden established in 2004 to coincide with the 600th anniversary of the Welsh Parliament held in Machynlleth. The French did promise to send another army to assist in the rebellion, but never kept to their word (What's new!) and without outside support the rebellion was doomed to fail. In 1412 Owain captured a leading supporter of the King at an ambush in Brecon, and this is the last time that he was seen by his enemies. The Welsh rebellion was now coming close to its end, though there continued to be raids

by outlaws and robbers in the name of Welsh independence, especially in the Snowdonia region. Whether they were all Welsh nationalists is another matter; many were simply rogues using nationalism as cover for their misdeeds. Henry 4th died in 1413 and his son, Henry 5th, one of our finest ever Kings, began to treat the Welsh in a more conciliatory fashion. Royal Pardons were offered to the leaders of the dying



Henry the Vth

rebellion, and King Richard 2nd's body was reburied in Westminster Abbey as a gesture of reconciliation. Owain was offered a pardon in 1415 but turned it down. Where and when Owain lived and died after the rebellion collapsed is another of the many mysteries surrounding his life. A popular theory is that he lived with a daughter in Herefordshire disguised as a Monk, but nothing is certain. Owain's son accepted his Royal Pardon in 1421 having previously refused one. This has been taken as evidence by some people that Owain died in 1420 or thereabouts.

Although many of his compatriots, especially in the south, were ambivalent to say the least about the rebellion as it undoubtedly caused much misery to many of those not directly involved, and despite enormous rewards being offered for information leading to his capture,

the charismatic Owain was never betrayed to the English, which speaks volumes for his hold on his countrymen. At the end of it all, Wales was left a very impoverished country, with some Royal officials as late as 1492 saying that the untenanted lands made it impossible to collect the Royal taxes.

The following eulogy is by Owen Rhoscomyl 1905, and is quoted by Chris Barber in his book "In Search of Owain Glyndwr".

His grave is beside no church, neither under the shadow of any ancient yew. It is in a spot safer and more sacred still. Rain does not fall on it, hail nor sleet chill no sere sod above it. It is forever green with the green of eternal spring. Sunny the light on it; close and warm and dear it lies, sheltered from all storms, from all cold or grey oblivion. Time shall not touch it; decay shall not dishonour it; for that grave is in the heart of every true Cymro. There, forever, from generation unto generation, grey Owen's heart lies dreaming on, dreaming on, safe for ever and forever.

Anyone who needs more information on Owain's life and his Rebellion should read the excellent little book "Owain Glyn Dwr, Prince of Wales" by R. R. Davies translated from the Welsh by Gerald Morgan. It is published by Y Llofa and its ISBN number is: 978-1847711274. Another excellent source about the rebellion, which is well worth a visit, can be found in the Owain Glyndŵr Centre, Machynlleth, built on the site of the famous parliament held in 1404 at which Owain was crowned Prince of Wales. David Ackerley



***That man Frith is at it again!
Remember Mike Frith's
inspiring article in the Winter
2015 edition with him riding
up Mount Ventoux three
times in one day with twelve
times in total? He's only gone
and done it again on his
annual holiday this year! Now
it's 13 x times!***



The Mysteries Of Average Speed

Chris Smith muses:

Now we all know that average speed is just distance divided by time taken – so why does our average speed often work out lower than we expect.

Modern technology means that many of us are now able to measure very precisely our average ride speed – whether this be on a GPS device (based on satellite positioning) or a bike computer (using wheel revolutions). On a recent long ride I got to thinking about this, and in particular the phenomena that results in your (or at least my) average speed dropping when I ride over a large hill, even though I may go very fast on the down hill section. Wouldn't the slow uphill be cancelled by the fast downhill?

First of all I thought just about riding over a mountain – which is what I was doing at the time. Imagine you ride uphill for 18 miles at a speed of 6mph. and then back down at 18mph – what would be your average speed? It's tempting to think it's halfway between the two, so 12mph. Not a bad average, much like many of our club rides. But wait – the distance covered will be 36 miles and the time taken 4 hrs, so actually the average speed is just 9mph – not so good.

So now let's consider that you have been riding for 2 hrs at 12mph before you come to this same mountain. Average speed will of course be 12mph. Now you ride to the top, you have covered 24+18 = 42 miles in 5 hrs, so average speed has dropped to 8.6mph and you have your quick descent ahead, how much will you be able to push that average back up. Now it's 60 miles in 6hrs so 10mph – much slower than the 12mph you might have been hoping for.

Well, you might be thinking, I could go down much faster than 18mph and get my speed back to 12mph. OK, so let's consider you can ride down at the speed of light and get there in almost no time at all. Now you have done 60 miles in a little over 5 hrs – still a little under 12mph. Of course you would need to be able to break many records, traffic laws, sensible guidelines and quite a few laws of physics to be able to achieve this!

My conclusion – that the only realistic way you can get to the other side of a mountain and maintain your average speed is to find a route around it!

Chris Smith



In this edition we have an interview with **Anne Peek** the owner of the famous Eureka Café. The Eureka has featured on TV and in many articles over the years now it's the Link's turn to add to that number.

How did you come to take the Eureka over?

15 years ago I was fed up travelling the country with my job and was looking for something that I could do to reduce my time in the car. My mother-in law saw an advert for a café complete with house. No commuting!

Was it stressful having to sell up and move?

Not at all, Ann and Neil (the owners) wanted to move back to Hawarden we were living there so we just swapped houses!

Have you made many changes?

Ten years ago we made major alterations during our closed period over Christmas. We knocked down walls and rebuilt the garage putting our kitchen in that area. This meant that we could double our seating area.

Four years ago we started opening on a Friday. It is not as busy as the other days so it gives us a chance to get all the home made cakes, soups and specials done for the weekend. We have also had a few of the local cycle clubs start up a "Friday Riders" group.

Tell me about the Eureka anniversary rides

We started this event a couple of years after taking the Eureka over as a way of saying thank you to all our regulars. Although they haven't run for the last two years we are hoping to start them again this year; Keith (my husband) and Noel Blundell devised the route and we add a mile to it each year to reflect the number of years that the café has been open (87 This year).

We are considering also having a 50 mile ride in 2016.

What's the strangest thing that you have been asked?

The Eureka is known for its "beans and a spare" dish. Someone once asked "before I order how many beans do I get?"

Eureka Cycles?

Keith used to take part in a lot of Triathlons and Cycling events. We were selling cycling spares from the café. Seven years ago it seemed a natural extension to open a bike shop. It is great to see how many people are now wearing "Eureka Cycle" tops,

What is your greatest frustration? ...

Trying to get a cycle path installed on the A540. Over the years we have been campaigning with a number of people including Peter Williams from the CTC and the Chester Cycle Campaign to at the very least get a path installed to Woodbank but all to no avail.

Holly's cakes seem popular!

I'll say! Holly loves her baking and she could make approximately 5 large cakes and also numerous muffins, cookies and cupcakes with none left by the end of the day! We have riders asking us to put a cake to one side for them as they know that by the time they get back from their ride they will all be gone.

Have you noticed a change in the type of riders over the last 15 years?

Yes, when we started it was mainly road cyclists that we served. Although they still form the largest group of customers we have had a large increase in female and leisure cyclists. People are happy to talk to anyone who arrives on two wheels. The barriers between groups have definitely broken down over the years.

A final message?

Thanks to all our loyal customers who have supported us over the years it's a pleasure to serve you. You can follow us on Facebook Eureka Cyclist Cafe or Twitter@Eureka_Cafe and eureka_baker.

Hope to see you next week.

So Readers, who would you like to hear about? Contact John with your requests!



A RATHER LONG PREAMBLE to the Two Mills Tour

It all started back in 2013.....when my youngest son in all his wisdom suggested that we (Michael eldest son, Daniel youngest son and myself definitely the group fossil) cycle the C2C from Whitehaven to Sunderland over the August bank holiday. Foolishly I agreed, foolish from the point of view of not having ridden a bicycle for at least six years, caused by having a left over curry deposited on me from a passing car driven(?) by the local Rock Ferry intelligentsia. So I blew the cobwebs off the old 1985 Puch tourer built with grade 1 gas pipe, triple crank and 6 gear cassette, or to be more correct 6 separate gears bolted together and then managed to cycle from Bebington up to Harwarden before falling off with severe leg cramp. Preparation complete, we drove up to Whitehaven, bribed a Kwikfit mechanic with a tenner and parked on the forecourt for the weekend. Has anyone manage to park in Whitehaven free of charge? After an expeditious start, it must have been at least 11:00 hours before we set off to tackle the first 50 miles or so. I must point out that the bike had not been serviced for a good number of years and was of the opinion if the chain needed changing after 10 years or so of use, it must be due to poor quality of manufacture, same theory applied to the gears. What I'm alluding to is that the running gear was quite noisy, which I thought perfectly normal with a bike of that age.

All went well until the Whinlatter pass, with a front to back ratio not designed to climb such steep hills all was going smoothly, a relative expression considering the noise I was making, until some very considerate local car driver overtook on the steepest part of the climb and promptly stopped in front of

me without warning. In those days I used the full metal pedal clips, complete with leather adjustors, so was not a happy bunny as anyone who uses clips knows how hard it is to cycle from a standing start on a steep incline to re engage foot into clip. Anyway after a long sunny rewarding day with fantastic views we arrived at Greystokes, Tarzans birthplace. I was utterly knackered, as although unknown to me at the time, so was the bike.

Second day dawned, with everything that could move aching, I crawled out of bed (guest house) to try and locate youngest (Eldest who is more sensible stayed in the same B&B) who was wild camping on the Greystoke grounds, now in public ownership. Wild camping in this instance is a loose description as his idea of camping was a bivouac strung between two trees, ground sheet on the floor, wearing only a pair of shorts, it was one of those rare but very warm August evenings that mosquitoes, gnats and everything else with a pair of mandibles revel in. When I eventually found him he looked as though he had a severe case of measles and was somewhat annoyed that with sympathy lacking I found it the most amusing sight that I had seen for a long time. Please bear in mind at the time he was 34 and a qualified lawyer who had read lots of Ray Mears and other such survival publications, obviously no mention of gnats. Perhaps a survival guide of how to sleep in a B&B should be written. After a hearty breakfast, riding was resumed, Keswick reached and chain snapped (this is a Sunday). Being a good few years old, the chain losing a few links wouldn't cause a great problem, or so went my thinking. Chain repaired and rattling (literally) along we reached Woodhead just outside Langwathby. Woodhead was one hill too many, hopefully not a problem now but then..... so walked up it, suffering the odd sarcastic snipe of the passing 70 year olds on two wheels. Langwathby reached and a few very tempting but strictly out of bounds local hostelries, out of bounds due to youngest's edict of no drinking, were passed and onwards to tackle Hartside or should that be Heartstop? I really was beyond exhaustion and had reached the mental point of writing last will and testament

and wishing (at the time) to be anywhere but the present location. So with

trepidation, and being physically very poorly prepared, I began the ascent out of Langwathby into the unknown. Lo and behold (it was Sunday) my secret prayers were answered, the chain snapped, wrapped itself around the 28 year old Suntour derailleur and snapped it off – right outside the only operating railway station in a 50 mile radius; SALVATION had arrived and not only salvation but the trains were running. After a contrived tearful parting with the youngest, the eldest and I jumped on the train back to Carlisle and then on to Whitehaven. Side note, the youngest made it to Sunderland but called himself John Walker and stayed in my booked B&B's – so much for wild camping!

However I did resolve to get back into cycling as although a C2C may not have been the ideal re-introduction back into cycling, the part that I cycled I thoroughly enjoyed. I decided not to return to lone cycling due to the unfortunate curry incident and rejoined the CTC with Helen and the rest as they say is history. The Puch went for £50.00 on Ebay and I am now the owner of some decent bicycles that get serviced at regular intervals and running gear gets changed every 2 to 3K miles irrespective of condition.

Also there was the desire to do a C2C but preferably an easier (does one exist?) route. Whilst waiting for the connection to Whitehaven I got into conversation with a kindred cyclist who suggested route 72 or Hadrians Way, longer but more scenic, hilly but not as demanding as the route from Whitehaven to Sunderland. Thus after three years of regular Sunday and Wednesday CTC Eureka rides I decided that my physical condition stamina was such that route 72 could and should be tackled but with pleasant and sociable company, enough said. Please refer to Brian's excellent report.

John Walker





“GET YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE 72?”

TWO MILLS TOUR June 10 - 15th 2016 “HADRIAN’S CYCLEWAY”

It started, as most undertakings of this type do, as idle chat over a mug of tea at the Eureka cyclist’s cafe, post-ride, earlier this year. “Why don’t we organise a group cycling trip to.....? You know the sort of scenario, we’ve all been there, everyone agrees it would be a wonderful thing to do (but secretly thinks “as long as someone else takes responsibility to organise it”) usually nobody does and the idea quietly dies, until the next time when someone else asks the question “should we try to arrange a group trip to?” On this occasion “cometh the hour, cometh the man” as the old saying goes. John Walker was that man and when he proposed that we go as a Two Mills organised group to cycle the 184 mile coast to coast Sustrans NCN 72 “Hadrian’s cycleway” in June over four days, and furthermore agreed to take on the considerable logistic challenge of arranging it all, there was no lack of interested participants.

John proposal, rapidly accepted by us all, was that we drive to the start point of the route on the west coast at Ravenglass on Friday 10th June with a first hotel stop there, a second night near Silloth (1st day’s cycling), a third night in Carlisle (2nd day’s cycling) a fourth night in Chollerford, (3rd day’s cycling) and a fifth night (4th day’s cycling) at journey’s end in South Shields on the east coast. All our baggage to be ferried by taxi from each hotel to the following night halt, leaving us free to

cycle unencumbered each day. At the finish of the tour we would be ferried back via minibus with cycle trailer to our start point. We also agreed with John that a west to east route was preferable, taking into account prevailing wind direction (usually westerly) and the warp and weft of the landscape with longer but less steep uphill and shorter (but very steep) downhill. All hotels were selected mainly on their geographical location, giving us roughly 40-50 miles riding each day, rather than their levels of comfort, or Tripadvisor ratings. All were perfectly acceptable for single night occupation. The most luxurious, the Crown and Mitre Hotel in Carlisle town centre, closed a rather ritzy ladies loo especially for us, just so it could be used as a store for 14 bikes, which was rather unexpected, but excellent



customer service (see photo) That they had also installed a ramp up their staircase for wheeling our bikes onto showed that this was obviously a fairly common scenario for them. The final night’s hotel, The Sir William Fox, at journey’s end in South Shields, didn’t have any cycle storage at all. As we had by far the largest room we rather nobly (I thought) volunteered to store most of them in our bedroom and bathroom, much to the hotel’s amazement. (well would you trust your best bike to luck outside overnight on the hotel patio? No, neither would we)

Six intrepid couples ultimately volunteered to join John and his wife Helen on this trip into the unknown; Andy and Joan Blomfield; Helen and Glen Grant; Andy and Tina Smith; Brian and

Sylvia Joyce;
Sue and
Dave Webb
and Sue
Sharpe and
Chris

Donnelly. John
and Helen had

walked the route some years previously but none of us really knew what we were letting ourselves in for. (We were soon to find out.....). John had also arranged for secure car parking with the Lakes National Parks near to our first night’s hotel accommodation. All we had to do was to pack our cases and bikes and drive there.....

*DAY ONE Saturday 11th June
PENNINGTON HOTEL RAVENGLASS to
WHEYRIGG HALL HOTEL near Wigton*

The day dawned cloudy but warm and remained that way most of the day. This was supposed to be the flattest day as we appeared from the map to be hugging the coastline, travelling north from Ravenglass and the official start point at the Glannaventa Roman Bath House where the group posed for the obligatory photo op. However we logged 57 miles and 672 metres of ascent. We had decided to take our time with regular stops for coffee/cake/lunch/afternoon tea and with much of the route traffic free paths with varying

surface rideability (soft sand anyone?.....especially galling for those of us who had chosen to use our carbon road bikes with 700 x 25 tyres, e.g me). Consequently progress was slow and we did not make our night halt until early evening even though we shortened the route by taking a short cut to the hotel.

*DAY TWO Sunday 12th June
WHEYRIGG HALL HOTEL to CROWN AND
MITRE CARLISLE*

This was scheduled to be the “easiest” day of the four as we were due to follow the coast along and around the Solway Firth (A designated area of outstanding natural beauty) to the Crown and Sceptre Hotel in Carlisle town centre, a scheduled 31 mile ride. However we missed a chunk out of the route the previous day by cutting off a corner in





order to make our hotel at a reasonable time and so we felt honour bound to go back and ride this section first. The ride therefore turned into an epic 47 miles, mostly into a headwind with 356 metres of climbing. A dry day with some sunny periods and so far, so good.....Tomorrow's hills however look forbidding and the weather is not looking too promising either.

DAY THREE Monday 13th June

CROWN AND MITRE CARLISLE to THE GEORGE at CHOLLERFORD

The day the weather broke, and the hilliest of the four as we struggled over the tops of some of the steepest hills I had ever ridden. A total of 1166 metres of climbing over 48 miles, most of it via successive ascents in the latter part of the day. As we entered the Northumberland National Park and the landscape grew progressively bleaker, the mist descended and it began to rain, softly drizzling at first before becoming harder, the higher we climbed. We attempted a coffee stop at the visitor centre café at Vindolanda Roman fort complex, but they refused to admit us, stating they were just closing even though it was 5.15pm with a stated closing time on their notice board of 6.00pm! The climb out of Vindolanda caused many of us to walk but undaunted we continued, bizarrely breaking into song as we cycled to try and lift our spirits. What the sheep sheltering by the dry stone walls thought of a raucous chorus of "California Girls" is better left to the imagination.....

We arrived at the hotel eventually, wet, tired and hungry (having previously separated into two groups and losing contact with each other en route) and in desperate need of warmth and shelter. This was the low point of the tour for me but food, drink and the good humour of the group soon restored a sense of equilibrium, especially with an easier day in prospect tomorrow and moreover only the final leg of the journey to come.

DAY FOUR Tuesday 14th June

THE GEORGE CHOLLERFORD to THE SIR WILLIAM FOX HOTEL SOUTH SHIELDS

To our great relief the day dawned dry and clear and with a matter of forty odd miles only to do and most of the climbing behind us we looked forward to the

successful conclusion of our tour. Most of the route was traffic free, off road tarmac, either riverside path or converted railway, which joined up with what remained of Hadrian's Wall at various points. We completed 42.4 miles with 433 metres ascent. Highlight of the day for me was the grandeur of the entry into Gateshead/Newcastle

le alongside the Tyne, magnificent Victorian architecture, on a par with Liverpool's "Three Graces", supplemented by more modern works such as the futuristic "Sage" concert hall and the "winking eye" river bridge, all passing by as we neared journey's end. The closure of the Tyne cycle/pedestrian tunnel to get us across to the south bank of the Tyne and onwards to South Shields necessitated a trip across the river on a ferryboat (just like the Mersey ferry!) and prior to that we had stopped



for coffee cake and ice cream (and a celebratory beer) at the Cycle Hub café alongside the river in the heart of Newcastle. (Also the HQ of cycling holiday company Saddle Skedaddle) the weather being pleasant enough at this point to eat and drink at picnic tables alongside the river. (see photo)

In South Shields we found the official end of the HCW, rather bizarrely in the middle of a rundown 60's housing estate where we all took turns photographing each other by the signboard before





getting a passer-by to take a photo of the whole group. We then followed a bus lane/cycle path through the town. I was back marker and was able to do a favour to a breathless, running, middle-aged woman who urged me to "Goooah Slooor pet, so'as ah ken ketch that Buzz..." "Happy to oblige" I replied. "That Buzz" (bus) as it happened was right behind me and unable to overtake me as I duly slowed down as requested 50 yards from the bus stop. (yes, she caught it.....)

And so to the final hotel in downtown South Shields, where (as previously mentioned) we spent the night accompanied by a dozen bikes in our capacious ground floor bedroom. To celebrate we all walked to a local award winning Italian restaurant (thank you Tripadvisor) where we all enjoyed an excellent closing meal together. Andy and Tina Smith had devised an "Oscars" type award ceremony, post meal, where amid much ribaldry and hilarity as the drink continued to flow, various awards in various categories were made to members of the group. Just as well that at this point we had the restaurant to ourselves, and as I reassured everyone: (since they knew editor Martin had tasked me with doing a write up of the event for the "Link")

"What happens on tour.... Stays on tour....."

Although, to be fair, we did make John Walker wear his "Roman Centurion" helmet (see Photo) in recognition of his



role as head

organiser and group leader which he wore at the table to great acclaim. Next morning it was raining heavily as we awaited the arrival at our hotel of the minibus and cycle trailer combination to take us back to our start point in Ravenglass and pick up our cars. There was a

noticeable gender divide as all the male members of the party descended upon the hapless driver with opinions on optimal luggage and cycle loading procedures (see photo "how many men does it take"...) while all the women sensibly stayed under cover in the hotel doorway....

FINAL THOUGHTS

An excellent and well planned trip and a route well within the capabilities of the average club cyclist. The route was well signed at every junction with the usual blue Sustrans NCN 72 signs, usually with an additional "roman helmet" logo defining it as HCW and it would have been difficult to have taken a wrong turn. Many of us had maps and GPS/Garmin type devices, just in case the route became unclear (I had bought all six O/S Landranger maps as well as Sustrans own map of the entire route), but none of these precautions were really needed. We covered a total of 197 miles in all over the four days with breathtaking vistas at times and a route full of interest throughout. (If I had realised how close we were to the magic double ton I would have suggested pressing on past the hotel to realise the magic number—but that's a minor quibble). As befits a touring break we took our time with plenty of refuelling stops.

John was presented with a bottle of well aged cognac and a signed card in recognition of all his hard work in



arranging the logistics of the trip. Everything went like clockwork and was a tribute to John's thoroughness in covering every angle and outcome and the group gelled well from the outset and in the main cycled as a group together, with no great disparity in abilities. We couldn't have done it either without the timely intervention of many cafes and lunch hostelrys on the way and so a metaphorical "tip of the hat" and "chapeau" call to the following for cakes and tea/coffee above and beyond the call of duty; "CycleActiv" coffee house in Corbridge (excellent cycle shop and café—see photo of their cycle themed cappuccino's and accompanying cake); "House of Meg" coffee house; "Fairydust vintage coffee shop" in Silloth; "Wallsend tea room/guest house/campsite/coffee shop" and finally "Cyclehub" in Newcastle as well as all of the night halts, who couldn't have been more accommodating, we couldn't have done it without you. As already mentioned, a large raspberry to the Vindolanda Roman fort café who chose to ignore us in our hour of need late on day three when we really did need to stop and refuel.

Conversation on the last night was already focusing on where next for the group?

A circuit of the Isle of Wight was mentioned as well as going further afield, possibly the Canary Islands?..... Watch this space.... **Brian Joyce**

The weather was not too kind to us on the Saturday---but could have been a lot worse! A good forecast two weeks before the event became a terrible forecast four days beforehand. This forecast gradually improved to indicate showers and low temperatures. On the day we started with dull grey skies and rain showers which lasted until Prospect Tea Rooms at 50k. Then the clouds lifted and we enjoyed dry conditions---a marked contrast to the Willington Hall start/finish which was subjected to severe downpours during the day.

Tour of the Berwyns 205Km: 3100m ascent

There were approximately 70 entries for this event, which whittled down to 44 starters on the day--- probably caused by riders not liking the weather forecast. The DNS level fits with my rule of thumb that only 2/3 entrants ever turn up for a hilly 200k ride---mostly due to either a dodgy weather forecast or injuries/fitness issues relative to the demands of such a severe course.

All riders returned safely in times varying from 08:00 (chapeau! again to Ray Robinson) to 12:45 (1 hour inside time limit) by a team representing C&NW CTC. 4 riders were declared as members of C&NW CTC.



Prospect Panorama 135Km: 1000m ascent

This brand new event takes the long climb from Ruabon up to the beautifully situated Prospect Tea Rooms above Llangollen, exactly as for the 200k, but then short cuts back from the Panorama via Sun Trevor to Chirk. The route has been revised from the previous 130k Llangollen Panorama as it is felt that the steep climb up through Vivod was over severe compared with the rest of the route.

There were 25 entries for this event with 17 starters all of whom returned safely. 6 were declared as members of C&NW CTC.

All in all a very successful and safe set of events in which returning riders said how much they enjoyed the day out. It is intended to repeat these rides in 2017 on Saturday May 20.

The route in and out of Cheshire is to be improved in the light of 15 years past experience and the number of INFO

controls reduced to an essential minimum. It is assumed at present that the Carden Arms at

Tilston will still be shut: if it re-opens it is to be used as a control on the return leg. It should also be noted that riders following gps rather than a route sheet need to find a way to mark INFO controls



into their route plan; INFOs were overshot by many riders this year and they do matter for ride integrity.

Many thanks to Margaret Matthews and the staff at Willington Hall for operating the start and finish through a long 13 hour day. Also to John and Carol Pardoe of Seamons CC for assistance at Willington Hall and manning the control at Prospect Tea Rooms.

Dave Matthews

Corwen Summer Audax July 2016

This was my first year as organiser of these events and I had hoped that a new organiser might mean a change in the



weather as it has been pretty dire the last two years. Alas it was not to be and the forecast rain duly arriving cutting the field from 79 to 56. On the plus side it was fairly warm and not too windy.

The scenery on all three rides is stunning and my greatest fear was that the riders might become totally mesmerised and not concentrate on their surroundings. Conditions put a damper on this but I did notice a few cyclists returning with scuffed clothing and battered limbs. However on the whole everyone seemed to have enjoyed their day out.

There were 21 starters on the 200k Barmouth Boulevard including Audax" Royalty "in the person of Mr Mike Wigley. One Chester and North Wales member took part. Twenty finished in

times ranging from 11h 09m to 13h.16m.

The DNF actually completed the ride after sorting a broken seat post at the bike shop in Bala but his ride could not be validated as he had not passed through the first control at Llanuwchllyn. The tandem pair from Macclesfield had ridden out to the start leaving home at 2.40am and intended to ride home to complete a 400K. I'm sure they will have succeeded as they rode this very hilly event with panniers





and impressed everyone with their ascent of the last big climb: Bwlch Y Groes where they overtook quite a few. I understand the visibility



on the Bwlch was not good with one rider describing the moment the mist cleared and he caught sight of his companion in front of him as like a scene from "Gorillas in the Mist". A

bit harsh I thought but no offence seems to have been taken.

There were 27 starters on the 100k Brenig Bach with 23 finishers in times ranging from 4h 53m to 8h 05m. Eight were Chester and North Wales CTC members. One rider took a tumble before the first control at Pentrefoelas damaging his rear mech and decided to abandon and head back to the start. He looked fairly beaten up when he arrived back but after some food and a change of clothes he was ready to drive back to Buckingham. I spoke to him on Sunday and he was planning his next audax next weekend so no real harm done. Of the other DNFs two got lost and the other one abandoned as her husband had not realised until the night before how hilly the route was! (It always pays to plot out the route BEFORE you enter the event.) There were 8 entries for the 60k Bala Parade three of whom were C&NW CTC members. Only five finished- together in 4h 09m. The other three who were also

riding together decided to abandon and had a nice lunch in Bala before tootling back to Corwen for afternoon tea. Given that one of them was wearing a Beckham boot and found it easier to cycle than walk I don't blame them and think it was very sporting for them to turn out at all.

Overall I was pleased with the way everything went on the day and look forward to next year's event which will be the same weekend. Fingers crossed for better weather. Many thanks to everyone who took part and also to the Manor Craft Centre, the Royal Oak and all the other controls and as always the long suffering Graham who is always a tower of strength. His computer expertise has been particularly helpful this year. He has written two very useful programs which have enabled me to convert the audax downloads to simple start sheets and ctc competition results sheets in the blinking of an eye.

Vicky Payne



CTC Cymru Welsh Festival Llandovery July 2016

Due to various organisational problems



in the spring there was a late decision to return to Llandovery for the third successive year. As expected this led to a reduction in bookings, however the 32

who had booked were joined by a considerable number who turned up on spec resulting in an attendance of almost 60 riders.

Fortunately everyone was in the right frame of mind – ready to enjoy themselves, join in and make new friends, particularly those who had come to the Festival for the first time. This resulted in friendly group rides, cheerful competitions and lively discussions of the day's events in the evenings.

There were 3 road rides on most days to scenic destinations such as Llyn Brianne, Castle Carreg Cennin and Brecon. There were also two off road rides over the weekend, and the usual tourist competitions; as expected these were well supported by C&NW CTC members but it was good to see riders from as far away as Cornwall taking part. Thanks were due to Emrys Jones the organiser, and C&NW CTC volunteers John Holiday who led rides and assisted with admin, Terry Davies who volunteered to lead a ride, welcomed people to the event and made endless cups of tea, and Steve Jones who led rides (although one group begged for mercy as he was able to climb so well

they were getting demoralised even though he waited at the top of each hill). At the end of the Festival there



Lowri Evans



were lots of questions about 2017 as people wanted to come again. Enquiries are already being made regarding venues & the Festival may return to a site in North Wales. Details will be announced as soon as they are available. Hope to see you there!

Lowri Evans



Riding for Charity!

On 6th July, Caroline, Geoff, Zac, Dave and I cycled from Ysgol Hafod Y Lon, near Pwllheli, to Y Canol, Ysgol Heulfan in Gwersyllt, near Wrexham, and called at four Special Schools along the way; in Caernarfon, Llandudno, Rhyl and Flint.



'Y Canol', a resourced provision for children who have severe and/or profound and multiple learning difficulties. The route was 114 miles the most I have ever cycled in a day!

A bit about 'Y Canol': It's a Resourced Provision within Ysgol Heulfan, a mainstream primary school. There are currently twenty five pupils on roll all of whom have complex difficulties. This includes physical, visual, auditory impairments, communication, behavioural difficulties, autism, epilepsy and a wide range of healthcare issues that require medical interventions such as gastrostomy tube-feeding, naso pharyngeal suction, and oxygen therapy. All pupils currently receive 1:1 staff support due to the complexity of their needs. Variety Bus will be supplying the minibus but the school still needs to raise £17,000 towards the cost.



Anyway, not one for leaving things to chance and maybe being a teensy-weensy little bit OCD about organising things I decided to do a recce of the first leg of the route around Caernarfon. So, on the evening of 7th May I checked the forecast and, seeing that it looked okay, planned

to ride the following day. I finalised the route on Garmin Connect and uploaded it to my GPS. Planning to be out for most of the day I plugged it in to charge-up fully. I gathered all my other cycling gear together and retired for an early night.

After a little bit of a lie-in (it was a Sunday, after all!) I loaded the car with all the necessities, not forgetting my bike of course. I double checked to see that I had all the essentials; shoes, helmet, gloves. Personal safety first, I texted my sister to tell her where I was going and gave her a rough idea of my route. I was feeling great, the sun was shining, the roads were quiet and Steve

Wright's 'Sunday Love Songs' was playing on the radio so I could sing my heart out whilst no one was listening!

But, just as I was approaching Bala, my mood suddenly changed. 'Love Songs' was drowned out by a string of expletives S**t! B****r!! B*****s!!! I had just realised that my Garmin was still plugged in and happily charging away in the peace and quiet of the living room!

So now I had a dilemma? I was forty minutes into my journey. Do I turn around? Forty minutes back home then forty minutes back to here? I decided to carry on and rely on the 'Maps' app on my Windows phone. This method wouldn't be ideal as my ability to remember a series of instructions is limited to about two so I knew the ride would have to be punctuated by many stops. But by now the sunshine, scenery and music broke through my mood and again I began to look forward to the ride ahead.

I found Hafod Y Lon and parked a few streets away. The sun cream I had brought with me refused to spray so I ended up losing more on the ground than I managed to get onto my skin! It was called Soltan 'Once' but looking at my legs that evening I think it should really be called 'Twice'. After a look at my phone and repeating the next four directions to myself over

and over in my head, I set off, sailing straight past the first right turn but after a swift spin around and I was back on track.

The first part of the ride was a steady climb. If it is cold on the day of the charity ride this climb will certainly warm us up but if it is hot then at least we will be doing this bit at the coolest part of the day. There was a gentle breeze blowing today so it was perfect.

I soon realised that morning's second cup of tea had been a mistake and that, with the lack of anything more 'civilised' nearby, I needed a gate stop. Soon enough I found an ideal spot - a long straight road with a gateway where I could hide between the hedges. One last check up and down the road; there was no vehicle or person in sight and nothing had passed me for ages. So there I was, nearly finished but not quite, when the sound of an approaching vehicle panicked me and up came my shorts rather quickly! Turns out the 'vehicle' was actually the sound of a sudden gust of wind in the trees!

Continuing on my way, and after many more stops to check the route, I eventually arrived at Cycle Route 8. My problems with navigation were over for a while as this path would take me all the way into Caernarfon.

A good stretch of the path runs alongside the narrow gauge Welsh Highland Railway. I passed sidings, forgotten carriages, engines and the smallest stations in the land.

This route is gently downhill all the way to Caernarfon and I enjoyed the no-car, no-need-to-navigate freedom. I passed bluebells, buttercups, gorse flower (the scent was filling the air) and windberry bushes. The birds were tweeting happily as they also enjoyed the bright sunshine. People on route





were friendly with many a “Good Morning” or more often than not as I was now in deepest darkest Wales, a “Bore Da”. I soon learnt that many cyclists greeted me with a “lawn” (“You OK?”) instead of “Hi”.

I knew I was approaching Caernarfon because of an abandoned supermarket trolley in the middle of the track, and sure enough within a couple of hundred yards I got my first sight of Caernarfon Castle. An impressive steam engine was parked in the station nearby where the track met the road.

So, now to deal with the problem of navigating through Caernarfon, and with it the task of finding Ysgol Pendalar. I found it eventually, taking possibly the longest route around Caernarfon but not



helped one bit by the number of one way streets. Happy at having reached my destination I took a photo and sat having a bite to eat enjoying the sunshine and quiet.

Snack time over I found my way back to the cycle track, but not before relishing an ice cream and topping up with water in the shadow of the castle walls.



Off I set again, hitting a large butterfly with my face in the first 100 yards. I think the poor wee thing probably came off a lot worse than me!

Heading back along the track I started to feel extremely nauseous and weak. I stopped a couple of times to see if I could shake it off but decided I'd keep plodding-on, albeit slowly. I was at least getting there. After another stop by one of the many gates on the track, and lots more water, I started to feel a bit better and got my ‘mojo’ back just before hitting the hills back towards the car.

Navigation was still a problem. I missed a left turn and sped on downhill passing an old woman walking a dog. I got to the bottom of the hill and realised that I was heading the wrong way. Perhaps not a lot happens in this part of Wales but I think, considering the look on her face as she watched me crawling back up the hill, it was the highlight of her day. “Oops! Wrong turn” I exclaimed apologetically as I passed her again, at which she laughed hysterically. I wasn't quite as amused!

I had one more wrong turn saved from a long detour by a last minute sighting of a Temporary Road Surface sign which I had passed that morning. Looking at the state of the road and the amount of times it had been patched it think it had been a temporary road surface for quite some time!

Fortunately I did find the car again and enjoyed the warm journey home, reflecting all the way on a lovely day out.



After several more recesses we were good to go.

Zac picked us up at 3pm on Tuesday 5th July in his converted ambulance and after playing ‘Bike Tetris’ for a while managed to get all the bikes, supplies, and us in the back. Geoff sat up front with Zac. Dave, Caroline, and I sat in the back. Dave unfortunately felt a bit queasy en-route which was a bit of a surprise as he's a paramedic and so should be very used to travelling in the back of an ambulance!

We reached Cwm Pennant Hostel near Pwllheli at about 5pm to be told we had the whole place to ourselves! Kitchen, dining room, and any dormitory we wanted to sleep in ... in fact we could

have had one each. Lasagne and garlic bread in the oven, table laid, wine opened, cakes, cheese and biscuits unpacked and our feast was ready. We discussed routes, GPS devices, weather



and ‘the right clothes’ ... the usual cyclists’ conversation ... before turning-in early.

I can't say I had the best night's sleep, probably because of feelings of trepidation about our ride. After all, I'd organised it and you can only hope that everything goes 100% to plan. Everyone was a little subdued the following morning (not the wine ... honest !), organising themselves quietly and politely. Porridge and tea was the favoured breakfast. Bags packed, washing-up done, and the ambulance was loaded. The chatter of the night before resumed when we got back in the ambulance to head for the start of the ride at Hafod Lôn. The weather was perfect, exactly as ordered; overcast, warm, dry without threat of rain, and the wind behind us for most of the ride. Everything was in our favour.

We got to Hafod Lôn just after 6am, bikes sorted, photo taken, then off we set and this time I had my GPS! Zac was supporting us in the ambulance. We set off on the previously recc'd quiet country lanes; or it would have





been quiet if it wasn't for the noisy ambulance following us! Geoff and Caroline were up front, with Dave and me a little way behind. Then "CLUNK" and the noise of the ambulance got further and further away! We turned around to see it leaning rather too far to the right in a ditch and Zac uttering words not suitable for printing here! We very quickly established that it was in far too deep and we would not be able to get it without help and so left Zac to ask at a couple of nearby farms, hoping the farmers would be up at 6.30 in the morning. Aren't all farmers up at that hour?

The first farm we came to was deserted (or we were ignored), the second was up a long steep track. It looked from the open curtains as though someone was up and a huge 4-wheel drive vehicle was sitting at the front of the house. "Sorted", we thought. But not quite! A very bleary eyed lady came to the door, messages were passed back to someone still in bed, and to cut a long story short



we were told to go and ask at the farm way across the valley! After speaking to Zac on the phone, reluctantly we decided to push on and leave him to sort it out by himself. Well, we did have a bike ride to complete.

The ride down to Caernarfon was beautiful. We managed to get a wiggle on and made up for some of the time we'd lost during the ambulance debacle. Finding Ysgol Pendelâr just as the caretaker was opening up we gratefully made use of their facilities and shared out our meagre supplies ... Silly us, we'd forgotten to take stuff from the back of the ambulance before leaving him (Karma?).

Great news! Before setting off again Zac phoned to report that he and the ambulance were out of the ditch. Hooray

! A friendly farmer had, with the aid of a tractor, pulled the ambulance out, unfortunately breaking the tow bar off in the process. As he wasn't sure if any more serious damage had been sustained, and if so whether or not it would cause him more problems along the way, Zac sensibly headed to our rendezvous in Llandudno instead of meeting us at our prearranged waypoints.

Off we set for Bangor feeling a little happier and joined Route 8 again. We negotiated a bit of early morning traffic then Route 8 merged into Route 5 before heading towards Tal y Bont. This was the longest leg of the day, and the most undulating. We headed along the coast and Llandudno seemed tantalisingly close for such a long time! By the time we got to Ysgol Y Gogarth we were all at the end of our reserves but very pleased to see that Zac and the rather battered and bruised ambulance had made it there too. Now Zac would join us for the rest of the ride and the old minibus from Y Canol, driven by Rob, would support us. A lunch of sandwiches, flapjacks, nuts, fruit, jelly babies (my favourites) and, of course, a cuppa was enjoyed. Zac donned his cycling gear, we took a photo, and off to go again. Next stop Ty Morfa in Rhyl.

The wind was behind us all the way and we were flying along. Sue, the Deputy Head at Ysgol Ty Morfa, made us very welcome and after another cuppa we were on the road again and heading for Flint. Rob in the minibus met us at Bagillt then drove behind us along the dual carriageway with a 'Charity Bike Ride Support Vehicle' sign displayed on the back. We were surprised by just how



many drivers good naturedly beeped

their horns and waved in support (at least that's what we think they were doing !!!)

Next stop, Ysgol Pen Coch. They were just getting ready to wind-up for the afternoon, so a quick stop then onto our final leg of the trip.

Whilst riding along the Chester cycle track we celebrated the 100 mile mark and cheers went up from us all. Only another 14 miles to go! We knew that Rob was waiting at the other side of the




bridge in Saltney Ferry. I saw the bridge from a long way off, but I swear it kept getting further away. I was flagging ... really flagging! When we eventually reached him I'm sure I managed to eat my own weight in Jelly Babies, nuts, flapjacks and cheese!

After refuelling we rode on familiar roads and headed back through Llay to Gwersyllt.

What a reception was waiting at Y Canol. We were greeted with banners, streamers, cakes, staff that had waited around and staff that had been home and come back again to welcome us. Even my mum and dad were there.

What a great end to a lovely ride!

Total mileage = **114.19** 

Total Cycling Time = **8 Hours 32 minutes**

Total overall time = **11 hours**

Average speed = **13.3mph**

Calories burned = **8360**

Special Schools visited = **6**

Punctures/Mechanicals = **0**

Injured Ambulance = **1**

The only thing really needing support **was the support vehicle!**

Money raised towards the new minibus = **£2,642!**

More than we'd ever hoped for!

Janet Jones



the 'F' word **No, no, no - behave!**
F = Fixed Wheel



Graham Gadd

Graham Gadd tells us who in Chester & North Wales CTC rides fixed wheel bikes and why they do!

Who?

and why?



First of all let's understand what a fixed wheel bike really is.

The fixed wheel bike has a simple transmission with no gears and just a single chain ring with a single corresponding rear sprocket - no freewheel so no back pedalling possible. In fact with these bikes you could pedal backwards should you so desire!

Well, the main reason I ride a fixed wheel bike as opposed to a single speed bike with a freewheel is because it feels 'so right' to ride!

Just get on the bike and ride it, after of course the initial sessions of 'how to ride it'!

A little while on your own coming to grips with not being able to stop pedalling and knowing when to unclip from your cleats is most useful because believe me it can be quite painful stopping pedalling when you're going at speed or forgetting to unclip at traffic lights etc.

The training effect when riding a fixed wheel bike is quite marked - there's no freewheeling down hills, no changing down when going up the hills and you try to keep up with the squad when they're battling along in their 53 or 50 tooth chainrings! It's a bit like when you take your dog for a walk - you walk 5 miles but your dog probably does twice that as he hunts up and runs hither and thither. You are definitely guaranteed a good workout! Reckon on an extra 20% effort throughout your ride.

Going up hills isn't as much of a problem as you might think because fixed wheel bikes are generally lighter and you can benefit from the 'flywheel effect'. That's when the weight of your legs spinning down a hill give extra momentum when you ride up the other side. Long hills are another topic, one which I don't really want to remember at the moment - but, ouch!

They are actually fun to ride, well every one riding close to me appears to be laughing a lot!

No, seriously, with no 'silly' gears to fiddle with, it's all pedalling and just pure riding with all your power going through the transmission and not being sucked away by derailleur gears, it's like the rider and the bike being more of 'one unit'.

Anyway, aesthetically, fixed wheel bikes look good, especially when built right and fitted with good quality components - I have a lot of bits that I have collected over the years so take great pleasure in 'mixing & matching' all my old Campag parts.

Then there's the gearing; do I use a 50 front/19 rear tooth combination or a 54/21 to achieve the normally accepted 70-71 inchs? (The distance travelled by the bike for one pedal revolution).

We haven't even mentioned the pedal cranks yet - 165mm length cranks or should I use 170mm cranks? Do you want to 'twiddle' or push the gears on your local terrain?

It's OK going but what about stopping? Just a front brake or both front and rear? How brave are you?

3/32" or 1/8" thickness chains - another decision to be made!

So you can see that this apparently simple machine has a lot of groundwork and design put into it so the rider has the ultimate enjoyment from riding it - not like a geared bike where after the frame size/material has been decided it's just a question on how much you want to spend on your brakes and gears, the type doesn't matter too much 'cos they all do the same job!

So for fun riding, simple maintenance and good exercise, give me my fixed gear bike every time! **Graham Gadd**



i ♥ my
bikeMy Bike - Member's Machines
The 'Tiger'

The ancient Greeks told a story called 'The Ship of Theseus' in which a traveller journeys to Athens and is shown the ship

of saddle, it was from a position of complete ignorance. My first 'steed' was a Claud Butler urban 200 ... a chunky-tyred MTB inspired urban run-about. When this was stolen I bought what used to be known as a 'gentleman's roadster'; a flat barred aluminium bike with a horizontal top tube, 1970's road bike geometry and designed for running round town. This bike was manufactured by a Scottish

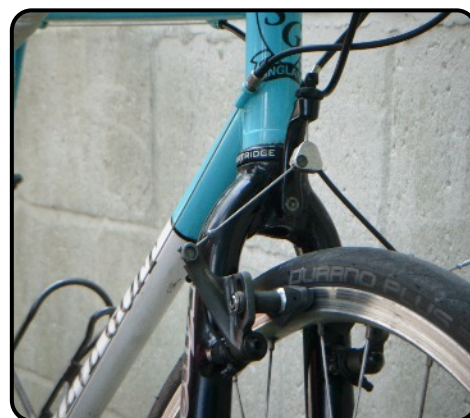
'steel-is-real retro-grouch' I am today.....so decided to see about having a frame built for me....on which I could transfer across all my 'tiger' components.



I consulted Colin Brick at The Wheelbase and he recommended Norman Roberts, a real 'old school' frame builder who had been building frames back to the days of The Milk Race back in the 50's. Norman said that he no longer had the strength in his hands to do the mitring, but recommended a 'young man' called Steve Goff up in Skelmersdale who would build a nice frame for me.

The 'young man' turned out to be somewhat grizzled, and had been building artisan frames up there for over 25 years. He watched me ride...took a few measurements, asked me what sort of riding I did, and we decided he would build me a nice 73 degree parallel angle Reynolds 853 frame. I chose a striking sky blue.....and asked if I could have the word 'Tiger' on one of the chainstays....as a sort of 'tribute' to the cheap 'n cheerful bike that had got me into cycling. "It should be ready in about 6-8 weeks" he said in his quiet Lancashire voice. (This was the back end of June)

After about 7 weeks I rang him. "I've had a bit on" he said. "I haven't quite got round to it yet. Give me a ring in 2 or 3 weeks and I'll tell you where I'm up to".



Three weeks pass. I call him. "I've been building a tandem for a couple that had been waiting awhile. I'll get onto it after that. Give me a call in a few weeks". Fast forward to mid- November with



in which Theseus had sailed to Crete to kill the Minotaur. "And to think" says the traveller "These are the very decking planks which Theseus's feet trod on back in the mists of time". "Well not the decking planks" replies his Athenian guide. "They crumbled into dust centuries ago and were replaced". "Yes but this is the very keel that sliced though the Aegean waves back in the age of heroes". "Well the keel was actually replaced about 500 years ago after it became infested by woodworm".....You get the picture. The conversation goes on until it becomes clear that 'The Ship of Theseus' does not in fact contain a single piece of wood that had been part of the ship that Theseus had sailed on!

The story of this bike is a bit like that. When I started cycling about ten years ago after twenty years on a different sort

firm called Tiger Cycles, who imported generic far-eastern frames, hung the most basic components Shimano made on them and badged them up.

Shortly after this I started to take more of an interest and began reading cycling mags/books/websites....and began to realise how inferior the components on this bike were, and so began the incremental process of upgrading, culminating some 5 years later in the original frame, but now sporting much higher quality 'kit' in general...and a lovely pair of hand built touring wheels in particular. On the bike as it was at that stage I used to regularly go out for full-day rides down to Shropshire, around Cheshire, up to Southport and back, across to Liverpool and up into Lancashire.

By this stage I'd acquired a few other bikes and was metamorphing into the



conversations of this ilk every few weeks and finally it was "I promise you'll have it for Christmas".

Finally a couple of weeks into December he tells me I can come and pick it up on

the 21st of December. "What time will you be here?" he asks. "About one o'clock" I say. The 21st dawns. About half past ten the phone rings. "You know you said you'd be here about one o'clock? Well could you make it more like three? I haven't started building it up yet!"

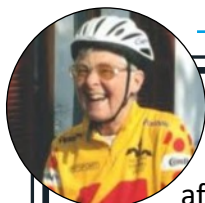
The bike when I picked it up that day was still a flat bar, and it had a touring triple at the front and Deore V brakes. Since then it's morphed into a drop bar bike, and in common with 5 of my 6 bikes has a single chainring at the front (42T in the Tiger's case). Tiagra assumes shifting duty at the rear, with a 9 speed cassette giving me a range from 37" to 100". The fork is a Kinesis cross fork, but the brakes are now XTC canti's. The wheels, hand built by Colin Brick, are black 105 hubs

laced onto Rigid Sputnik rims. The original Sunrace M90 flatbar shifter is mounted on a supplementary carbon bar under the main handlebar, which is narrow by modern standards at 40cm. So the levers on the hoods are purely brakes.

The saddle is quite interesting. It originally came supplied on my fixie, and is a single piece of moulded plastic, perforated for breathability, fixed directly onto the rails. It's longer from nose to back than most saddles, and has a little 'kick-up' at the back which gives you something to push against when you're climbing. Plus looked at along the axis of the saddle it has an 'arched' shape, which combined with the amount of flex from the lack of a chassis. Just makes it SO comfortable!

So that's my bike, in it's *current* form at least. A bit quirky but completely unique, which is just how I like it!

Steve Guinness



Carol Boardman

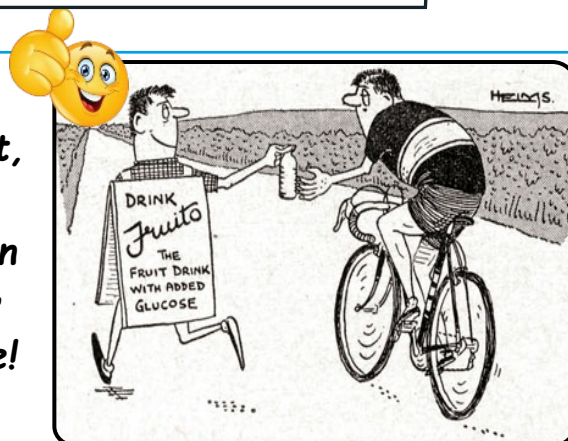
All of us will have been shocked to hear of the death of Carol Boardman after a road accident in Connah's Quay in July. Many of us had ridden with her or had met her at Eureka Cafe. Carol was not only a very talented and enthusiastic cyclist but also a very pleasant, likeable woman, proud not only of her famous son Chris and her daughter Lisa, but of her grandchildren as well. Our deepest sympathies are offered to Keith, Carol's husband, and to all members of her family. Carol's sad death while cycling was deemed sufficiently newsworthy to be announced on the BBC News, but we must not forget those other cyclists who meet with equally tragic accidents and whose names are known only to a few. I am reminded of this every time I travel the A540 and see the white bicycles left by the roadside as a reminder of tragic accidents and of the risks we are exposed to when we ride our bikes. There is a lot still to be done in changing public attitudes to cycling as well as to improving safety on our roads.



So who was it?



Yes
You're right,
it's Sarah
Hamill, seen
here in her
normal pose!



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