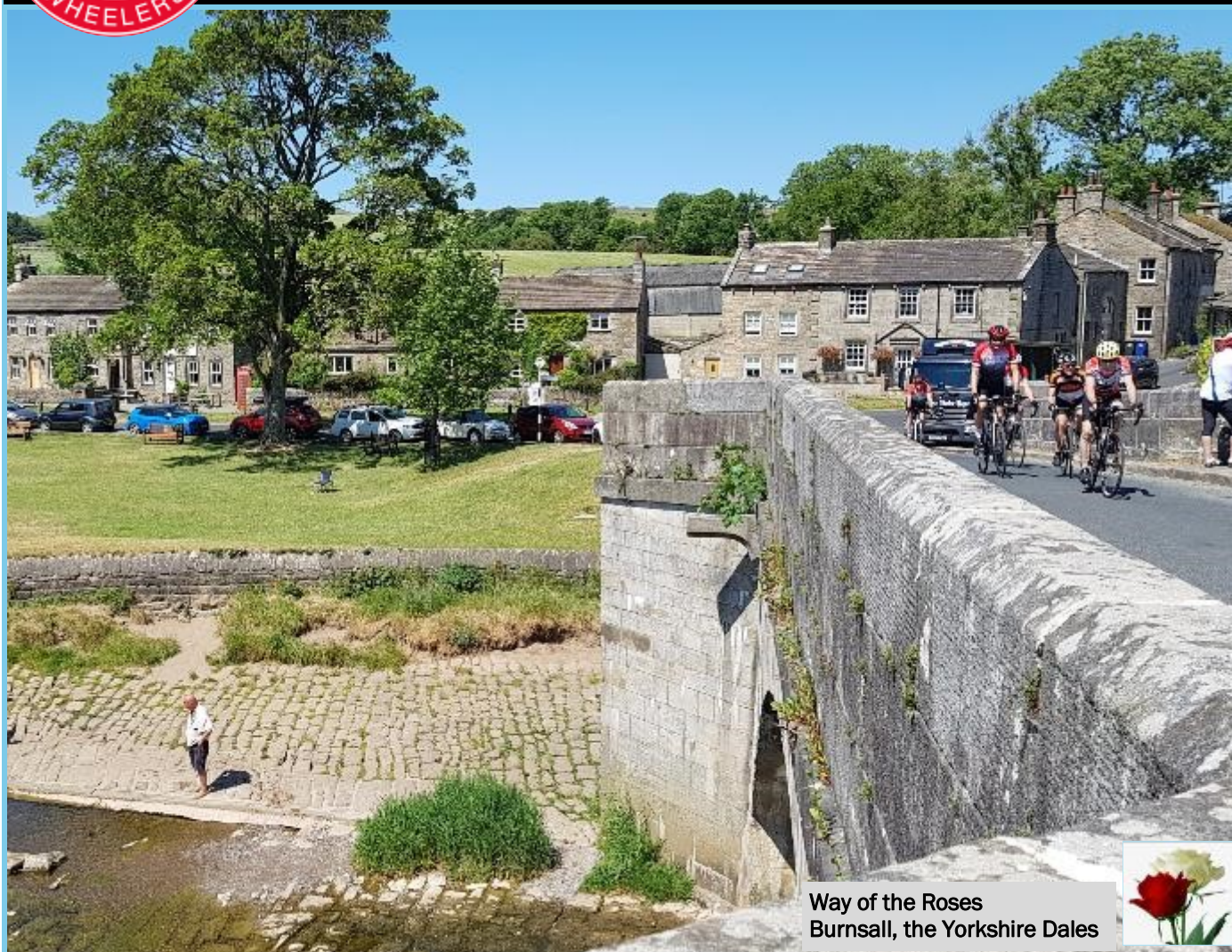




# Quarter Wheeler

The magazine of the Hounslow & District Wheelers



Way of the Roses  
Burnsall, the Yorkshire Dales



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*A Round up  
of  
2023!*

**Editor: Patsy Howe**

patsyhowe@live.com

Please contact me if you have any  
comments or would like to suggest news  
or an article for the magazine.





# The Ron Brown Memorial 100

28<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Promoted by the Hounslow & District Wheelers on the Farnham-Alton course.

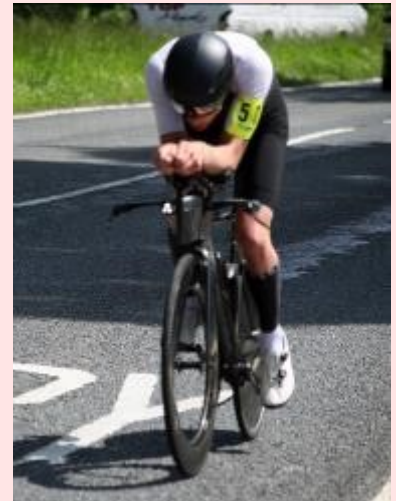
In a closely contested fight for top honours Lee Williams (Fulfil The Potential) carried off the victory from Sam Barley (AS Test Team) by 2 minutes 13 secs.(3.44.48 against 3.47.01). Colin McDermott (Festival RC) was third fastest with 3.47.52, a time which gave him the vets' prize with the impressive plus of 1.6.56.

Emma O'Toole (DHC) took the women's award with 4.19.50.

It's noteworthy that both the leading men and the women's winner have come to time trialling from triathlon, as did last year's winner, Paul Burton.



Lee Williams (left) has been riding time trials since 2019. He started as a triathlete but found that cycling was his strongest discipline and, not unnaturally, has decided to concentrate on time trialling. His main interest is long distance and his target for the year is the 24. Last year he finished second with 506 miles; this victory looks a hopeful indicator of form.



Sam Barley (right), who looked very aero on his bike, may have been a little disappointed not to win, but said his main motive for riding this race was as triathlon training and he proved this by going for a run after finishing! What might he do if he concentrated on cycling?



The women's winner was Emma o'Toole (left), yet another who has come to time trialling from triathlon. Like Williams, she found cycling to be her strong suit, but after a couple of unfortunate road race crashes which caused some injury problems, she followed the well trodden path into time trialling. Sixth in last year's BBAR she is now tempted to ride a 12 hour – let's hope this result encourages her ambition.

This race was the 54<sup>th</sup> in the Ron Brown series, but the event's history goes back to the legendary Calleva RC's club 100 before the 1939-45 war. The Hounslow hopes to continue the promotion, but this year the club found some difficulty in getting enough volunteers for marshalling and other duties. We can only hope for more help in the future.

Chris Lovibond.

May 2023.

## Thank you for all the help.

Due to a rapid decline in entries for the Thursday night evening 10 series (3 riders in total last year) and club 25 weekend events (3 riders, and only 1 finisher in 2023), it was agreed that it is no longer viable to continue to run these on the same basis in 2024.

The Pete Marrows trophy, which has previously been awarded for the fastest time recorded in the evening ten series will now be presented for the fastest 10 of the year, in any event. The Good Friday 25, Midsummer and Autumn Cup trophies will be mothballed and a decision made about running future club 25's will be made at the AGM in the summer. Please attend if you have comments or suggestions.

The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Interclub 25 event will take place in 2025 and we will continue to support this event, as well as running the Open Ron Brown Memorial 100, scheduled for Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> of May 2024. This is one of only two races in the South of England held over this distance, and helps decide both the Men's and Women's' National BBAR titles. Please support this event thank you.

I have enjoyed Hounslow club events, racing since 1989. 'On Thorpe' H10/6 racing around Thorpe Park to Staines Bridge Roundabout (Before the traffic lights) then back to Ron and Jan Richardson's house for a cup of tea. The H25/6 course went across Runnymede, up the dog leg to the kidney shaped roundabout at Windsor, then to Windsor Theatre and back to the start. (P.B. 1.2.34 on a road bike). See the link below for some H25/6 nostalgia!

<https://www.timetrialllingforum.co.uk/index.php?/topic/143542-favourite-courses-that-provoke-nostalgia/&page=2>

There are simply too many volunteers to name everyone, the usual suspects Trevor Gilbert, Jeff Marshall (signs at Chobham Common) Martyn Roach (The Squirrels P.H.) Kevin Fairhead, the ultimate pusher off. Ron Jones did more than his fair share every season. Antonio, Linda, Patsy, Bill, Chris Lovibond, Norman Howson, Jo Wells .... Thank you all.

Bruce McMichael  
Racing Secretary





## Some thoughts from Nic Stagg regarding the "Medium Gear Athletes Ten"

In the last few years I've raced more and more on fixed wheel, in fact if I'm honest I'd say that most of my best time trial rides have been done on fixed. These include 57:19 on 72" (12th fastest in Medium Gear history) 22:45 on Medium Gear, recorded in 2018 on H10/8, 54:09 on H25/2 riding 52x15, 58:07 on CC01 (old version) on 88"

In April 2023 my mum passed away rather suddenly; I was really affected as I had lost my Dad a year before. I needed something to focus on and decided to establish a Medium Gear Athletes Ten record. For people who aren't aware, an "Athletes" attempt is ridden on a standard bike with spoked wheels - no tri-bars, disc wheels or aero helmets are allowed.

I converted my Dolan TC1 fixed wheel TT bike, fitting normal handlebars and replaced the Corima Disc/Aero+ front wheel with a pair of Mavic Gel280 rims Campagnolo/BLB 28 spoke hubs. The front wheel is the very same I had purchased for me in 1986!

The season was marching on and I needed to find an event and try to establish a time.

I'd decided on a Maidenhead CC evening ten on H10/10, it was a warm, windy evening, not ideal conditions on a far from easy course, I arrived in plenty of time riding the course on a road bike. After my warm up, I signed on, got my number, went back to the car to swap bikes and equipment.

I pumped the tyres up on the Dolan to 170 psi, put on my skin suit, rubbed embrocation on my legs, cleaned my sunglasses and rode to the start.

Here goes nothing I thought! It was a tailwind down the Drift Road and I knew I had to start very fast as the back section of the course (up Hawthorn Hill, through Winkfield Row) would be a real grovel.

The main problem with riding 72" is the gear is too small with the wind and too big into it! I'd set myself a goal of trying to ride as much on the hooks as I could, starting hard 27/28 mph, heart rate 160, 164, the average speed was up over 26mph.

I knew the left turn off the Drift road would be much slower and as I climbed Hawthorn Hill dropping to about 18mph at the top, my heart rate was 169! Through Winkfield Row, trying to hold as low a position as possible into the wind (what a grovel) 23-21 mph in places and then up past the pub at 18 mph. After that, left back onto the Drift Road, 24-25 mph, I dug in as much as I could but knew I'd only manage a 25 minute ride, 25:54. That was hard I thought as I crossed the line trying to gulp in oxygen.

This season I'm really going to aim to smash the time. I'll ride H10/8 or H10/1 - faster courses. I've got to do a 24 - well I'm hoping to!



# Notes from a talk by Michael Hutchinson on his 24 Hour Championship Ride.

(Given at the Pedal Club's October lunch)



The Club's guest speaker for October was the distinguished time triallist and cycling writer Michael Hutchinson. His subject was the 24 hour event he rode this year, his first attempt at the distance.

Our guest told us that it was something he had always wanted to do, and this is probably true of most time triallists although many, perhaps wisely, put it off until it's too late for them. Most of Michael's friends thought he had finally gone mad, but this is clearly not the case.

He found the actual riding surprisingly easy, the required power output being less than for 'normal' racing; the most difficult part was eating and doing this while maintaining an aero position. The recommended amount was 80 grams of carbohydrate every hour, and although it's not immediately obvious what this equates to in energy gels or cheese sandwiches, it does sound like a recipe for an upset stomach.

A further problem is gaining the necessary experience. There is now only one of these events in Britain each year; even a 12 hour time trial or similar length training ride only takes you to the point where a 24 starts to get difficult.

On the day (and the night) it rained for the first fourteen hours, which brought into focus another requirement for the all day rider: the ability to believe, contrary to the evidence, that things will get better. In Michael's case this was helped by Julia Shaw handing him up a bidon of tea....at just the right moment. Even so there were difficult times – reluctance to get back on his bike after a scheduled six minute early morning stop still remains as a vivid memory.

It was clear that after the finish (well, certainly by October) that, contrary to his friends' opinions, it had been worth the effort. His distance was 486 miles which would have been enough to win as recently as 2004 and on this occasion gave him fourth place – not bad for a first attempt!

In closing, Michael made this observation: over the past decade the interest in competitive cycling has gone 'long'. The beginning of this movement goes back to the Race Across America, (first edition 1982), but more recently there have been European events on a similar theme, probably the Transcontinental Race (first ed. 2013) being the most prominent, but there are others like the Austrian 'Glocknerman' (1997) and The Race Across the Alps. A feature of the early days of bike racing in the late nineteenth century was ultra long events (Paris Brest Paris, Bordeaux Paris and the very long early Tour de France stages). Perhaps we are witnessing a 130 year cycle.

I can't be sure whether this comment was flippant or serious, but it's certainly true that there are cycles within cycling.

Chris Lovibond,

October '23.

# A very sticky ending – a tale of time trial tribulations in Sussex

## by Loz Wintergold

In fact this should really be titled a very sticky beginning, but more of that later.

You may be forgiven for not knowing me as I decamped from Hounslow some years ago but have remained a loyal subject of the Wheelers in deepest Sussex. I was once part of the Hounslow and District long distance TT revival in the 90's and was privileged to race alongside Colin Roshier, Paul Holdsworth, Rob Richardson, Mark Silver and Jo Wright under the watchful guidance of Martyn, Jeff and Trevor G (who was never shy to give an opinion or regale you with his racing career).

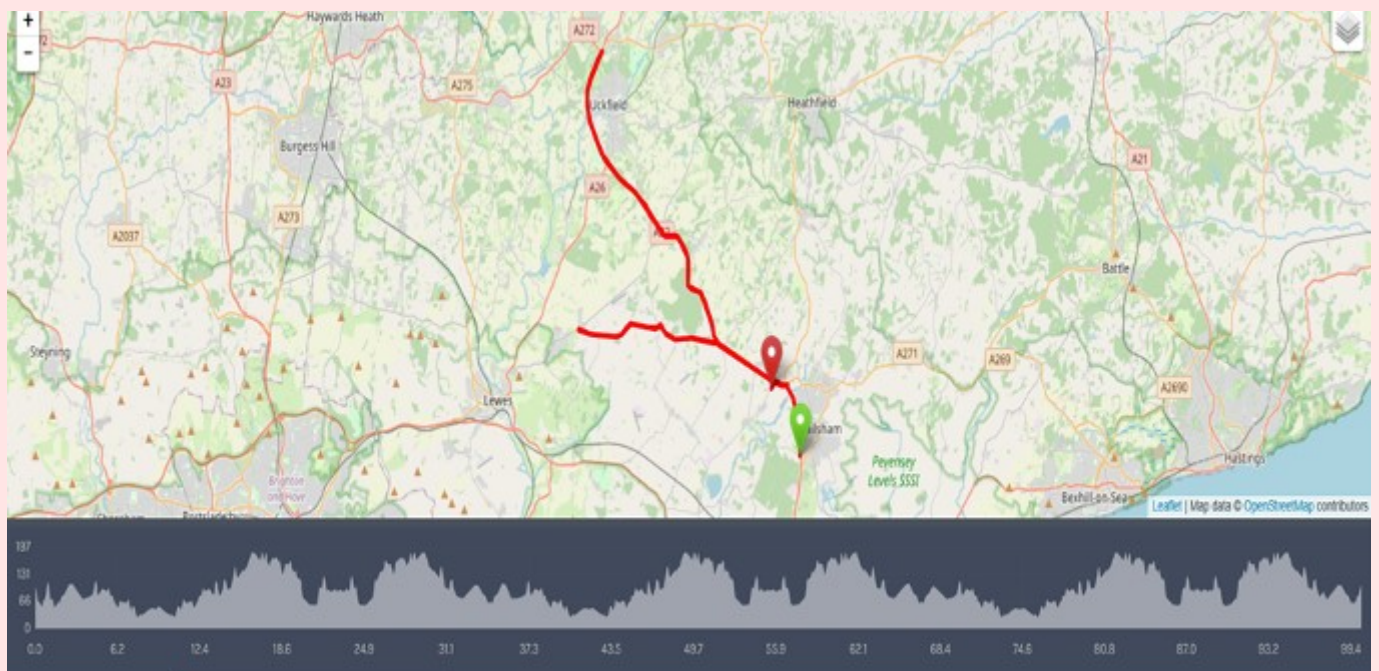
Since moving to Sussex I have dabbled with triathlon, managed a few ultra marathons and completed the odd time trial to keep myself in shape.

This year I hoped to complete a marathon, a 100 mile time trial and a long distance triathlon as a challenge to give me a bit of focus. First challenge ticked off in April – 3.16 marathon, job done.

The next challenge was the 100 mile TT. Scanning the CTT website I noted the HDW event clashed with a family event, not that I minded missing out on the pave of the A31. Last time I visited I lost my bottles, bottle cage and some useful bolts that held my bars together. The National 100 looked just the ticket though – undulating single carriageway with 5 laps. I could leave bottles at the turn to pick up. It would be a real challenge for man and machine.

Unfortunately, my bike had other ideas. As I tried out my trusty steed the day before the event my fork steerer decided that it wanted to part company from the rest of the fork leaving a rather unsatisfactory steering arrangement. Cervelo P4 forks are not readily available (in fact there are none in the entire universe as I have since discovered) so I was forced to apologise and DNS.

With some interim, non matching and unaero forks to keep my nose off the ground I found just the 100 mile challenge I was looking for on my own doorstep. The infamous G861 – 31<sup>st</sup> fastest out of 33 100 mile courses. All single carriageway, 1000m of climbing and 50 roundabouts (9 of which were U turns). Just the job for an honest and challenging ride.





Being self supported, I usually leave a bottle or 2 on the ground to pick up and use a between the arms bottle cage. On this occasion the course made it tricky to leave them in the right place. This gave me the opportunity to try out the bladder down the skinsuit solution that seems to have become quite popular. I already had one I use for ultra marathons so I checked that it would hold 1.5 litres and still fit down the front of my skinsuit, which it did – quite the Trevor Gilbert look.

Race day arrived looking rather blustery but mild with the chance of rain later on.

In spite of my usual faffing I got to the start timekeeper in good time and quickly settled into a reasonable rhythm. I don't know about others, but I sing sections of songs in my head to pace myself – I was into the second line of Queens Mr Fahrenheit when there was the sound of carbon and chain. I don't remember that sound featuring in the percussion I thought as my legs span uselessly in space.

Looking down I noticed the chain was now jammed between the frame and wheel. Realising there was no chance of picking it up whilst coasting I came to a stop. 1.5 miles in and my first mechanical. Even for me that's quite some going. "Hi ho," I thought although that wasn't quite what I said in the heat of the moment. Dismounting on the non drive side, I lent over to unpick the chain only to find myself assaulted with a torrent of sticky liquid. In the process of leaning over I had given gravity the upper hand and additionally squeezed the bladder containing my race fuel. This had overcome the meagre fluid valve and filled my helmet with a sticky isotonic mix. Cursing some more I freed the chain and replaced in the customary location (ie not dragging along the floor) and heaved my big gear back into action.

Immediately I noticed a secondary consequence of my leaky bladder (in addition to the sticky hairdo) – somewhat limited vision. High 5 is not advertised as a visor cleaning liquid for good reason. Second stop to clean visor on grass verge. Back on and into the groove, until...Mile 6. Repeat above steps again including impromptu hair wash. Mile 10 – yep it happened again as did my accidental leakage. Mile 15. At least this time I remembered to not lean over and have a premature discharge.

At this point I did think about giving up, having passed and repassed my 2 minute man twice. However, I am not a Hounslow quitter so I upped my dismounts.

The last few miles were rather thirsty as I had drained my tanks, mostly into my helmet, and I wasn't able to suck the energy drink out of my hair. The rising wind just prolonged the torture.

With the finish line gratefully crossed, I went out for my customary post race run and reflected on my achievement. I was very pleased to have finished and my hair did look quite fashionably spiky. I also did a mental unpick of the things that went less well. I had encountered chain dropping problems before and had deliberately changed my oval chainring for a nice carbon round one and put a chain guide on but couldn't work out why I had trouble.

Arriving back at the HQ I gave my bike the once over and quickly discovered the probable cause. My 55 tooth chainring was actually a 51.5 tooth chainring. I imagine that the initial incident was when I lost the teeth and any poor surface or gear change then caused the chain to drop.



I wonder how much of the 10 minutes I was behind the winner I had lost with my calamities?

So, there you have it – a sticky beginning but a happy ending.

# ROGGO'S RAMBLINGS

Roger Sewell



Funny year 2023 as I found myself not enjoying my riding, being alone was rather tedious and I found myself not wanting to stop for a tea/coffee break and so mileage took a bit of a tumble for the year. I won't get to my regular 10,000 miles although it has picked up a bit since August as my (youthful!) enthusiasm returned. Twenty three time trials completed with one non-start with varying degrees of performance leading to the acceptance that I need to race on a good course on a good day if I want to get up to 25 mph. The return to the 'old days' of chatting round the result board seem to have declined with such large fields it can be a long time hanging around waiting for friends to get back so, despite seeing Loz at a couple of events, we never had the chance for a long chat. Again it was quite noticeable that there seem to be less three man/woman teams riding, with fields of 60-odd riders having 40 different teams. Whatever has happened to the proud feeling of riding for your Club? So ended my 60th consecutive season with a best 25 of 1-00-07 (close!) and 10 of 23-32. These added to my, not particularly spectacular record, but I have entered 1904 time trials (not including enter on the line events, evening 10's etc.), didn't start in 112 and didn't finish 55, taken over so many years I suppose it's not too bad a record with most of the DNS's having legitimate reasons, very few "I didn't feel like it" and none because of weather conditions. Hopefully I can celebrate with an event next April which will coincide with the 60th anniversary (possible the Farnborough and Camberley event normally around that date).

The thorny subject of modern club rides was highlighted up here when a rider died on a club ride but no one realised he had been left behind and, upon returning to look for him, found him in a ditch too late for treatment. Why is it that club rides have become 'races' where the slowest rider is left behind, fast training rides are one thing but they are not for everyone and it should be made clear the difference. Before I joined the Hounslow I would often see them on the A4 at Maidenhead and would attach myself to them, taking a short cut when I got dropped (very quickly) and rejoining near the end. Eventually coming out on the Sunday morning rides when it was always a pleasure to ride at a leisurely speed and, if dropped, the group waited apart from a couple of times when I found myself with Norman Howson off the back. It also reminds me of a ride when I was up in Scotland, a new rider joined our Saturday rides and on the way home we had to climb a horrible hill and the club split. There were about ten in the group so I got to the top and waited. The two of us now well behind the others. It was a long slope down and I said to my companion, "Don't worry they'll wait just round the corner". They weren't there and had continued regardless, ignoring the etiquette that comes with club morning rides. Jokingly I said, "Oh they don't like you" and we never saw him out again!

Out at every East Anglian vets event there is chap marshalling who travels over from Norfolk. Although we have spoken I never realised that he is Bruce Williams who (I have been told recently) was a member of the Hounslow years ago, I must catch up with him next year.

It used to be so simple, when racing, I had a time given that corresponded to my age, so 76 years old my standard time to beat was 1-17-41, so when I did a ride of 1-03-14 I had beaten my standard by 14 minutes and 27 seconds and thus, had a plus (+) 14-27. It always seemed so easy.



However some riders couldn't understand this format so it has been changed now to "Age Adjusted Time" whereby they take a calculated amount off your actual time ridden. Unfortunately I find this rather unreal because the age adjusted time for one of my 25's was 48-26. Now as my best ever 25 was 54-21, to me this time is an unrealistic assessment and a theoretical time that is hardly credible and so , for me, becomes pointless. As far as the difference between the two statistics is concerned they have been worked out so that it has very little in the resulting positions so I see no need to change the format, but then I'm an old codger who doesn't like change.

And now absolutely nothing to do with cycling \*. Why did the chicken cross the road? Answer: To get to my house. It was on February 5th I looked out the patio doors and saw a chicken eating the bird seed that I had put out. She seemed quite happy and spent the rest of the day wandering around the garden. Nine months later and she is still arriving in the morning and disappearing at night. Once Pam and I got into the garden she became inquisitive, as we dug a hole or weeded she would immediately be there grabbing worms or ants. She seemed quite happy with human contact although didn't take kindly with being picked up. We were curious as to where she lived and so one day we watched as she flew up onto the fence separating us from a neighbour. After a few minutes she hopped down into the next door's garden walked up the drive, through her gate and proceeded to walk down the road for 20 or so yards before going into the garden of a house up the road. Every few days she would lay an egg in a large pot that was filled with bark. One day she didn't turn up and we wondered why so we walked up the road to the house and happened to see the owner and asked whether the chicken was his. It seems as though it is a wild chicken that lives in a secluded spot in his garden with a couple of unadopted kittens - where they have all come from is a mystery but 'Chubby', as we call her, is perfectly happy to arrive early in the morning and stay until just before sunset when she trots off on her journey home.

\* Unless you remember R.J. Chicken now known as Chicken CycleFit, cycling dealership which has been over a 100 years!

Keep turning those pedals fellow Club mates and hopefully I'll see some of you next year.



## CONTRIBUTIONS NEEDED

Do you have a favourite bike? Why not write about it for a future issue?

Do you have a question (or solution) for our FIX IT item?

Tell us about your racing career.

Describe a ride, sportive or race that made an impression (good or bad)!

Send photos, poems or funny stories - we want to hear from you!

Queries, contributions or suggestions to Patsy Howe (editor) [patsyhowe@live.com](mailto:patsyhowe@live.com)

## Captain's Report 2022/2023



Hi All

There were 45 Sunday runs listed between 6<sup>th</sup> November 2022 and the final ride on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023. With one point for each of the runs attended, plus a point for assisting at our open Ron Brown Memorial 100 mile time trial on 28<sup>th</sup> May and a point for helping at each of our club tt events, the maximum possible total would have been 48 points.

I was absent for the first three rides, being on holiday in Spain (where there was no rain - even on the plain) so my thanks to Bruce who stepped into the breach,

After an inauspicious start on 6<sup>th</sup> Nov. when the ride to **Farncombe** had to be cancelled, as it was just toooo wet, Bruce led six members on the 40 mile round trip to the Wyevalle Garden Centre at **Marlow** the following Sunday. Only three members, including Bruce, turned up for the 50 mile ride to Watts Gallery at **Compton** on the 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. I was back from Spain in time to lead the 4<sup>th</sup> ride to the Rural Life Centre, near **Tilford** but once again it was pi\*\*ing down and the ride was cancelled, rained off. The 5<sup>th</sup> scheduled ride to the Bia Hub at **Twyford** on 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. went ahead with only four of us riding the 40 odd miles. The last two rides of the year, on 11<sup>th</sup> Dec to **West Clandon** and 18<sup>th</sup> Dec. to **Hare Hatch** were both cancelled, the first due to minus 5°C and fog, the second icy roads. So four of the first seven rides did not happen!



After a short break for Christmas, the first ride of 2023 had six members riding the 40 odd miles to Squires Garden Centre in West Horsley, led in my absence (always on holiday) by Bruce. The next two rides on 15<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> January were both cancelled as it was just toooo cold, apparently! ( I was still in Spain). Bruce took the ride of five to Marlow on 29<sup>th</sup> January, Back in the UK, the next seven weeks passed uneventfully with between five and eight members taking part, but on the 26<sup>th</sup> March we were rained off once again.

On the final counting day of our Clubman competition, Our destination was The Bia Hub (now Velo Life) at Twyford. 6 members were out, including our editor Patsy Howe, who had arranged to meet the rest of us at the café. En-route it rained! The further we went the wetter it got until we were totally drenched. West of Maidenhead we unanimously decided to abandon our ride and head back to Staines. We stopped long enough to message Patsy to let her know what we were up to. She is made of sterner stuff though and was the only one of us to make it to Twyford. I awarded her double points!

We had one or two surprises when arriving at our tea stops eg, on 30<sup>th</sup> April, when we finally arrived at 'The Barn' at Turville Heath which is at the top of a long climb, they could not accommodate us as we had not booked and they were full to capacity.... We were a bit disheartened as we had been delayed on the difficult climb, by my bro' John who had broken his chain. However we went down to the Chocolate Theatre in Henley for our refreshment. Very good!

Much more recently we arrived at Watts Gallery at Compton, slightly knackered, having just gone over the Hogs Back (via the ascent of Wanborough Hill), only to find that they could not serve us as they had no mains water supply (the water was also out for much of the area around Godalming with problems in the area lasting for a couple of days). Undeterred we rode west to Seale for our tea 'n coffee etc. Also very good!

So for the year **Sun 06<sup>th</sup> November 2022 to Sun 29<sup>th</sup> October 2023** the points tally for the Clubman Trophy are:

**Ladies: Jill Bartlett 14points**

**Men: Les Saunby 29points**

**Myself 24points**

Stay safe out there

Jeff

Ps I am always looking out for new destinations for our club rides and recently thought I had one to add. It has the interesting name of Flat Harrys Cyclery, Michelles Café, Cookham SL6 9EE. I asked Ian K. to add it to our 'regular Clubruns' which he promptly did. However, after I rode there, I was disappointed to find out that they are not open Sundays - as they like to ride their bikes on Sundays!

Who can blame them? It is a great café though the rest of the week.





Clandon Park

# Club runs 2023



Above & Left:  
Velolife, Wargrave  
Below: Billingbear

Unlabelled photos all  
at Staines Bridge





## Club Runs to end of April 2024

Date	Destination	Address
14th January	Henley (Ride Leader needed)	Toad Hall Garden Cr. Marlow Rd. Henley, Oxon. RG9 3AG
21st January	Farnham (Ride Leader needed)	Manor Farm Tearoom, Seale, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 1HR
<b>27th January</b>	<b>Trial Saturday Ride Cookham</b>	Flat Harrys Cyclery, Michelles Cafe, Unit 2, Lower Mount Farm, Long Lane, Cookham, SL6 9EE
4th February	Compton	Watts Gallery Teashop, Down Lane, Guildford, Surrey, GU3 1DQ
11th February	Wokingham town centre	Rynd, Town Hall, Market Place RG40 1AS
18th February	West Horsley	Squires Garden Centre Epsom Rd, West Horsley, Leatherhead KT24 6AR
25th February	Arbourfield	Lockey Farm Café, Sindlesham Rd, Arborfield, RG2 9JH or Henry Street Garden Centre, Swallowfield Rd. Arborfield, RG2 9JY
3rd March	Twyford (Ride Leader needed)	The Bia Hub, Waltham Rd, Reading RG10 9EE
10th March	West Clandon (Ride Leader needed )	Clandon Park Garden Cr. The Street, West Clandon, Surrey, GU4 7RQ
17th March	Hare Hatch (Ride Leader needed)	Sheeplands Garden Cr. London Rd. Hare Hatch, Twyford, Berks. RG10 9HW
24th March	Tilford or Seale (Ride Leader needed)	
31st March	Henley (Ride Leader needed)	Toad Hall Garden Cr. Marlow Rd. Henley, Oxon. RG9 3AG
7th April	Mytchett	The Basingstoke Canal Centre, Mytchett
14th April	Marlow	Wyevale Garden Cr. Punp Lane South, Marlow, Bucks. SL7 3RB
21st April	Wargrave	Velolife, Willow Ln, Wargrave, Reading RG10 8QS
28th April	Hughenden Valley	Village Store/Coffee Shop, Coombe Lane, Hughenden Valley, Bucks. HP14 4LD

See '[Regular Clubruns](#)' tab on website for more details of destinations & downloadable Strava routes

## Veteran Cycle Club Century Ride

24<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

This was a brilliantly organised event, entirely the work of Francis Thurmer – more on this below.

I wasn't at all sure I could still cope with 100 miles in a day and I started with serious concerns about how and where I would be that evening. This had started as an invitation, became a daydream and progressed to being a project with work going into preparatory mileage and bike improvements.

Arriving slightly late at the Benson start, I told Francis not to delay and that I would meet him at Wantage (elevenes). This proved to be the right decision since the main group were already a little behind a tight schedule when we did meet; this 'tightness' related to our desire to finish before dark.

Leaving Wantage we had a group of six: Francis (Hard to Find bike spares and Oxford VCC), Steve Griffiths (N.London VCC), Peter Fuller (N.London), Roddy Maddocks (Oxford), Robert Wyatt (Corinium CC) and myself. We made steady progress in a north westerly direction, mostly into the wind, to reach our lunch stop at Fairford without drama.



Fairford

We were back on the road by 3.15, which was only slightly behind schedule, going north towards the Windrush valley. Now we were getting into Cotswold country and there were a couple of stiff climbs which saw me (57" bottom gear) and a couple of others walking. We 'crossed' the main A 40 by an underpass on a quiet lane, which Francis claimed was the main design point of that part of the route. Whether this was strictly true or not, we now had Sherbourne in front of us, with several miles of the beautiful Windrush valley. This proved to be an almost perfect cycle-touring road with enough gradients to add interest to views of the river running, at times, close to us; this was enhanced by the sight and smell of the cow parsley and may blossom at the height of their season.

Progress was steady rather than fast with one member beginning to have a (mild) bad patch before we reached Burford (made famous by Charlie Pope's cycling diaries) and from there it was an easy run to our 'tea' stop at Witney. Mr. Maddocks left us at this point to go straight home to Oxford, but since he had ridden out from home in the morning, his day's mileage must have been similar to ours.

Time was now running short – we had thirty miles left to cover and, at the very most, three hours before complete darkness. I did not mention this at the time, but I was seriously considering abandoning the group and making a dash for it down the main road. However, looking at the map, I could see that Francis' route was fairly direct, and I thought that if we were caught in the dark there would be some safety in numbers, so I stuck with our dear leader.



Francis



As it turned out Francis' route was excellent, using a lot of good cycle paths which were often the bypassed former main roads, but although there was no 'defaillance' or big hills, the speed was tantalisingly slow as the light began to fail. We had a final stop at a shop in 'Kingston Bagpipes' to stock up on food, then through Abingdon and on to the final stretch, leaving the A415 for a couple of beautifully quiet miles through the now by passed town of Dorchester and onto the last three miles of A423 to Benson. This, for me, was really unpleasant: I never liked riding in the dark, even when young, and now with vision challenged both by age and by ultra bright modern headlights, it was scary.

But we made it – I was back at my car by about 9.50.

It's worth remembering that this was a V-CC ride (even though it didn't really feel like one) and that we completed just over a hundred miles with no mechanical problems except for a couple of easily remedied chain derailings; the youngest rider was over sixty, so we can claim a high degree of reliability among the ancients.

Probably as a result of the modest pace and plenty of stops, no one suffered badly. I was certainly glad to finish, but I would still have felt perky enough to have contested a sprint finish for the Benson sign!

Chris Lovibond  
May 2023.

Foot note:

I haven't mentioned this in the article, but my bike was my Sunbeam using an AM (Medium ratio 3) Sturmey hub, but fitted with super tyres. I could have put the good tyres on a more conventional bike, but although most of the others had relatively modern bikes, having a 52 chain ring would not have helped much, bearing in mind the expected (and actual) speed.

## An extract from the 'Oldie' magazine, submitted by Jeff

### OLDEN LIFE

#### WHAT WAS bicycle face?

The dawn of the modern bicycle age at the end of the 19th century ushered in a moral panic among the guardians of public virtue. Some doctors warned that using the contraption could lead to a medical condition they dubbed 'bicycle face'.

'Over-exertion, the upright [and immodest] position on the wheel, and the unconscious effort to maintain one's balance tend to produce a wearied and exhausted "bicycle face",' reported the *Literary Digest* in 1895.

It went on to describe the condition: 'usually flushed, but sometimes pale, often with lips more or less drawn, and the beginning of dark shadows under the eyes, and always with an expression of weariness'.

Elsewhere, others said the condition was 'characterised by a hard,



Pedal power struggle

clenched jaw and bulging eyes', which was of course most unfeminine.

In 1895, the *New York World* published an exhaustive list of don'ts for women riders: 'Don't imagine everybody is looking at you', 'Don't use bicycle slang. Leave that to the boys' and 'Don't cultivate a "bicycle face".'

In an 1897 article in London's *National Review*, British doctor A Shadwell claimed to have coined the phrase. He described the dangers of bicycling, especially for women, saying 'cycling as a fashionable craze has been attempted by people unfit for any exertion'.

So what was really going on? Threatened by the speed with which cycling was taking off, and what it could mean for society and women's role in it, the Establishment attempted to ridicule, or even medicalise, a perfectly normal activity.

If women decided to hop on their bikes, what might they do next?

Developing 'bicycle face' was the least of the female cyclists' concerns, especially for America's

Annie Londonderry, who cycled around the world between 1894 and 1895. She made the move from skirts to bloomers to a man's suit during the course of her journey, slowly becoming more and more of an affront to those who thought women cycling was uncouth.

The press said, 'Miss Londonderry expressed the opinion that the advent of the bicycle will create a reform in female dress that will be beneficial. She believes that in the near future all women, whether of high or low degree, will bestride the wheel.'

Although she was a bit of a fabulist when it came to her own adventures, Londonderry wasn't wrong about both the change in dress – out went the whalebone corsets and in came shorter dresses, split skirts and even bloomers – and women's push for freedom.

The silent steed has been the choice and symbol of suffragettes and feminists the world over, promising its riders the pleasures and advantages of speed, good health and greater freedoms.

**Sonia Zhuravlyova**

## Une Balade en Velo

Chris Lovibond

Autumn weather can make a bike ride irresistible – Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> October was just such a day; clear and sunny, a light wind and perfect temperature.

Fortunately, I happened to be in a great place to exploit the conditions: the Seven Valleys region which is about forty miles south of Calais. The traffic is so light and the roads so free of potholes that it would be possible to imagine that you were back in England before things started going to pieces!

The main point of this piece is to accompany the rather whimsical photos that go with it, but my route was from Torcy (62310) via Embry and Henonville to Neuville sous Montreuil and back via Beaurainville. There was some climbing, but this was touring, not training.

I'd like to arrange a trip to the area next Spring – I should be able to find reasonably priced accommodation. If anyone is interested I'd be pleased to hear from you – have a look at the more conventional 'road' pictures which give a better idea of the riding conditions. No date has been fixed as yet.



French Whimsy

Please let Chris know if  
you might be interested  
0741 501 2067





Before Lebiez



Frisson Spire



Lebiez descent



## The 1949 Tour de France

The bunch has just come through the city wall of Montreuil.

The road is no longer 'pave' at this point (it is just round the next corner), but everything else is the same. This place is a natural magnet for anyone touring in the Seven Valleys, but since Brexit there haven't been many British tourists.

Chris





# The e-bike experience with reports from Clive and Eddie

## E-bikes

by Clive Williamson



I've been an e-biker now for over 5 years. I was 87 years old and had arranged a cycling trip to Wales with a couple of friends, both of whom are much younger than me. Knowing the kind of hilly terrain I was going to, I thought it was a good time to convert to ebiking so I would have more chance of keeping up with my friends. I have never looked back. Definitely the right decision.

Ebiking has developed a lot since I bought my bike, so my experience is somewhat out of date. I'm sure there are many more options these days, but for what its worth I have a few comments about attitudes and the kind of bike to buy.

Firstly I think a change of attitude is required. You don't buy an e-bike thinking about speed and trying to keep up with your companions. Forget dropped handlebars and simply go for the most comfortable position, which in my view doesn't include speed positions. You'll be in your 80s, time to relax and simply enjoy the cycling. I do most of my cycling alone these days, which is the safest, not everyone's choice I know, but a fall in your 80s is not to be recommended.

There will almost certainly be a weight issue as e-bikes are heavy. Mine weighs 23kg with the tool bag fitted. 23kg I can manage, although I need help to load it into a car. For me weight is to be welcomed up to a point. Weight gives stability, a much desired advantage in these heavily pot-holed roads. Also get the best tyres you can. I use Schwalbe Greenguard and have never punctured, although after a lot of use they can start splitting at the side. But again wide tyres easily ride over the pot-holes.

Having bought the e-bike my cycling horizons broadened dramatically. I was riding in the North Downs without any problem. Leith Hill, Coombe Bottom, all were within my compass. This is fine as long as the bike behaves itself. If I had a mechanical problem during a ride, I probably would not be able to fix it without help. I acknowledge my abysmal ability with bike maintenance, so I regularly have it done locally so that I have confidence riding into remoter areas. To date I have never had a problem in more than 10,000 miles of riding the ebike, but it could happen.

Bearing in mind the above, it is important that when buying the e-bike you have the word reliability fixed in your mind. Bikes can be unreliable. To avoid this always get knowledgeable advice before committing to the purchase. If possible get a decent tryout ride beforehand. Also reliability means cost. Reliable parts are expensive, but worth it. There have been reports of bike batteries catching fire, but it usually turns out the bike was bought from a dodgy back street dealer. I have a Bosch motor/battery – as reliable as you can get. I'm told the battery has limitations and needs to be replaced regularly, but after 10,000 miles I have never had to replace mine.



A big decision to move over to e-bikes, but if you are in your 70s and 80s, time to start thinking about it.

# My Passion for E-Bikes

by Eddie Green

How did this happen? Well, it could be considered a new outlook on the way I could enjoy my cycling in the future. A totally new concept on how to progress and accept a new way of turning the pedals. I knew that the late Rob Richardson was also toying with the idea to go electric so, after chatting with this senior member, I followed suit.

A company called Cyclotricity in Ash Vale, producing electrically driven cycles and conversion kits, made it easier to bite the bullet and make the change. So, on the 14th September 2015 (how time flies) off I went to discuss with their experts what was required for this new bicycle mode - propelled by electricity!

My first option was to supply one of my road bikes for adaption. I chose my "Fort" bike, a sturdy aluminium frame manufactured in the Czech Republic, and then in-depth discussions with the Cyclotricity mechanics regarding the best set up for me followed. This was only the start! I now had to choose from either a rear or front generator drive

and consider the implications of the various set ups. Bearing in mind the threat of punctures, I chose the front drive so that there was no chance of entanglement of the drive chain with the leads of the electrical connectors when the wheels are released from the dropouts. Also torque washers had to be fitted on the wheel spindles to slide into each of these dropout positions before securing the wheelnuts tightly. No quick release set ups were being used for safety reasons, which meant heavy duty spanners had to be carried and this now added extra weight to repair kits - not good for any "light" minded cyclist! I then got familiar with the control unit on the handlebars which registered the battery outputs for three levels of normal use. Not satisfied with the set up, I had a separate throttle lever built into the electrics that had to be physically and constantly held down by me if I wanted more power uphill or along the flat at speed, ever mindful that this action was draining the battery quicker. Also, one has to be sensible with rim brakes, especially in wet weather conditions.

As I became more confident with the bike the lads would sit on my back wheel for an easy ride. I must admit it was beneficial in many situations. After a café stop when a loo emergency was required, for example, - the group having set off ahead and being able to catch and pass them. It was a great feeling to wind them up. When we used "Rootes" café (no longer operating) on a Tuesday I remember on one occasion Dave Stalker and I, having been abandoned, used the throttle to make a speedy attack and ate up the miles to catch them. Dave hung on to my back wheel, like \*\*\*\* to a blanket and was very impressed with the power output using the throttle.

How did this first set up all end? It was 2017 in Rye Grove when I was confronted with a large vehicle coming down the slope ahead of me. I stopped on the grass verge, lifting the bike over a gully and waited until the vehicle had passed, then lifted the bike to place it back on the lane surface. Surprisingly the front wheel fell out of the fork ends, ripping the electric connectors asunder. Eventually I managed to put the wheel back into the fork dropouts but noticed that the slots had spread open due to the torque washers trying to rotate. Re-adjusting the torque washers I tightened the axle as best I could to gingerly return home, under pedal power. On inspection and reflection, I had a warning and a lucky escape from injury should this have happened on a later





excursion when I was giving it some welly using the throttle. So, it was back on Shanks's pony until another brain wave developed.



Ed conquering the Wicklow Mountains

Following this episode in Rye Grove, I was still keen to follow the e-bike path again. I did my homework browsing the internet looking at bike manufacturers producing e-bikes. So, in 2018 I decided to buy my first Giant e-bike, after delving into their design data. It was a proper looking and presented road bike which I renamed "EDDIE'S-BIKE". The battery housing was integral to the down tube, and the battery is easily removed or can be kept in situ for re-charging using the adopted battery charger for this system. We should note that any replacements to these items should only be carried out by Giant operatives. Recent warnings have been posted by the authorities about cowboy systems which have caused battery explosions and uncontrollable fires in domestic properties with loss of life. Next item was the drive unit encased in the bottom bracket, controlled by torque sensors that respond to the pressure and rotation of the pedals. The control monitors have 4 or 5 levels of power to suit the terrain you are riding on and it is my choice which level I choose - experience comes with use. A fit cyclist can, however, override the restricted speed of 15.2mph and I had to do on many occasions when riding with our group. I was always in my element though when riding up steep hills - as the

group found out. My Giant E-bike has always performed to my liking especially on the well organised trips that Dave Howe has arranged. He always seems to know where the steep climbs are on the meandering lanes and off the beaten tracks. Although I was very dubious when I first looked up the courses he had planned - the bike conquered all he threw at it, and me! The first cruncher was the West Coast of Ireland, the second was west to east across Britain - St David's to Lowestoft and the third was the East Coast of Ireland. The bike could have completed this last venture, if one of the group, had decided to propel it on its way - actually it did do it, in the warmth of John M's van, whilst I was in Cork University Hospital! But for me, I blew a gasket and succumbed to the pressure,,,,,,,,,,,,, Since that unforgettable day June 2022 the bike has been dormant, but it has now had a lease of life, as I insisted it would be a good idea to assist Graham, our Club Chair, for his rehabilitation after his knee operation. Maybe more club folk will one day be on e-Bikes to prolong their enjoyment of cycling, joining me, Peter S, John G and Clive W.

I must now close this e-bike oracle, and remember, for me, it is an E-bike (Eddie's -Bike).

SAFE RIDING EVERYONE

### Club Strava Group (reminder)

Anyone wishing to join should search for 'Hounslow' in Strava and you will find the Club Group, you can then request to 'join the group' and one of our group admins will admit you to the secure group.

I am happy to answer any questions via email if anyone would like to know more.

Ian Kirk: [ianjkirk@gmail.com](mailto:ianjkirk@gmail.com)



# MEET A MEMBER



This issue Les Saunby has kindly agreed to be the subject of our regular 'Meet a Member' item

Les moved to Staines with his wife in September 2020 in the middle of the Covid crisis, having moved from Tamworth in North Warwickshire to be nearer to their daughter and the grandchildren.

Being a keen cyclist, one of the first things he did was to look for the nearest cycle club. He joined Hounslow & District Wheelers and started to ride with the Club on a Sunday morning from the Bridge, it being within one mile of his new house.

Les has ridden bikes since his early teens. With money saved from a paper round and help from his father, his first real bike was a Viking Mileater with Campagnolo fittings. He joined the East Coast Olympics Cycle Club and enjoyed social rides, time trials and massed start races on airfields left over from the Second World War (being too young to do massed starts on public roads). He also went on youth hostel tours with a friend and found that he preferred social riding;

Cycling was always a way to keep fit but came second to his love of hill walking and climbing. With a group of friends he spent the next 30 plus years walking and climbing in the Lakes, Wales and Scotland, completing over 230 of the Scottish Munros. Visits to the Dolomites in Italy and the Alps in Austria then followed.

With the Tamwoth CC



Taking up regular riding again he joined the Tamworth Cycle Club finding that one of the advantages of living in the area meant that the whole of the Peak District National Park was on his doorstep and perfect for cycling.

A favourite ride of his is one ridden under Audax rules. It is 160 miles long and very hilly. He has ridden it three times and, because of the hills vowed, after each one, never again!

The route starts from Shenstone near Litchfield and meanders north to Hartington (cheese shop is worth a visit) returning via Ashbourne to Shenstone. He has ridden many Audax events in the surrounding area and reckons that this is one of the best. "The countryside is beautiful", he added.

Up to the time he moved Les was told that there would be no areas in 'London' suitable for cycling. He discovered how wrong they were; certainly finding the countryside different but pleased to discover there is no lack of suitable areas to ride.

He is continuing to do the Sunday rides and, in addition, has joined the Tuesday coffee morning rides. He has also enjoyed the multi day ride in the east of Ireland and the Lancashire, Yorkshire CTC with the Club.

His two bikes are KTM Revelator for Summer and a Cannondale Super Six for winter.

Right: The Morecombe to Bridlington C2C (leaving Lancaster)





# Highlights of a tour in Morocco

By Richard Callum

December 2023. Jetting home from Morocco seemed to me the antidote to where I had just come from - Essaouira, the walled and ancient port (and island of Mogador) on the Atlantic coast. As the plane gained altitude I found myself falling, falling and feeling sleepy.....



No cycling this time, but my thoughts travelled back to 2011 when Clive, Stuart and myself went on a tour of Morocco organised by Saddle Skidaddle. We totalled 11 riders (with our own bikes); this included the two local leaders, Mohammed and Said. We had two back-up wagons for transfers, helpers, cooks, luggage and, of course sag/broom! We prepared our bikes in our hotel, situated just outside the walls of the Old Town of Marrakech and left the following morning, heading towards the snowy peaks of the Atlas Mountains. We had full winter riding kit, but only needed it for the high roads, otherwise shorts. The sky remained cloudless for the duration of the tour.

Lunchtimes were alfresco and lovingly prepared by the accomplished crew and often enjoyed by the side of a babbling stream. In this Berber country, (Berber's form 60% of the Moroccan populace) the tagine rules. No, a

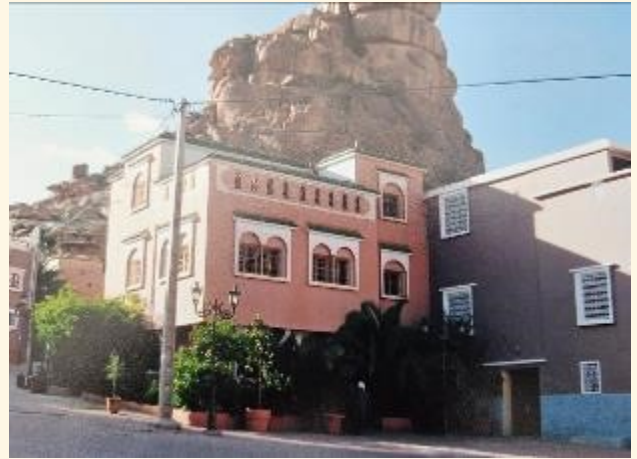


tagine is not a warlord but a stewpot with a funnelled lid. The food is cooked and served in the pot. We all enjoyed this and the variety of fruits and other culinary delights - delicious and unhurried.





Gradual climbing all afternoon, everyone going at their pace of choice, stopping and taking photos, and, all the while the thermometer falling, falling..... We arrived at a village near the summit (the name of it escapes me but I know it is where walkers put up for the night on their way to conquer the summit). We cyclists had a taste of that when we all had to climb with overnight luggage. The bikes were put away in the transport as there was no road to the hostel.



After supper we were billeted out to our 'rooms', log cabins on the steep mountain side. All lovely and rustic - except for the cold. Oh yes, there was a wood stove that one kept going all night long, but only by carrying an armful of logs from just inside the back door. Plus a hot water bottle. Before the descent, by the same road we used the day before, we gathered for short advisory lecture concerning ice on certain bends that had remained in permashade. Members of the crew would station themselves on any icily suspect bends as each rider approached. Caution was needed even to the point of dismounting at that point.

Tizi 'N' test is the big climb and it was the highest surfaced road in the whole of Africa (at that time), and our cycling group was scheduled to be picnicking at it's cold and windy summit! With many great views while riding to this lunch stop, it took a while for everyone to gather for welcome food and rest. I bagged a stone bothy that was both a windshield and a suntrap while enjoying lunch and the views towards the south-west and the greener flatter valley and the Anti-Atlas mountains to which we were heading in the next few days. I remember the vast swathes of polytunnels that have just the right conditions for growing fruit and vegetables for home consumption and export.

Our final few days were enjoyed, riding in more summery kit, site seeing and not wanting it to come to an end. But a few days and some climbing still to be done, Clive's pedal snapped. No injury, although the bike could not be fixed. The spare bike was put to good use by Clive, who found to his discomfort that the gears were too high. Same with my gears and yet I live to tell the tale - I too had to use a service spare; front wheel that is. The front wheel cones kept coming loose - don't ask! Nobody could fathom why.



That particular tour stuck in my mind more than most that I have completed. Clive used it to help him prepare for his LEJOG shortly after when in his 80th year.

Climate note: There had been almost no snow on the Atlas mountains at the time of writing.

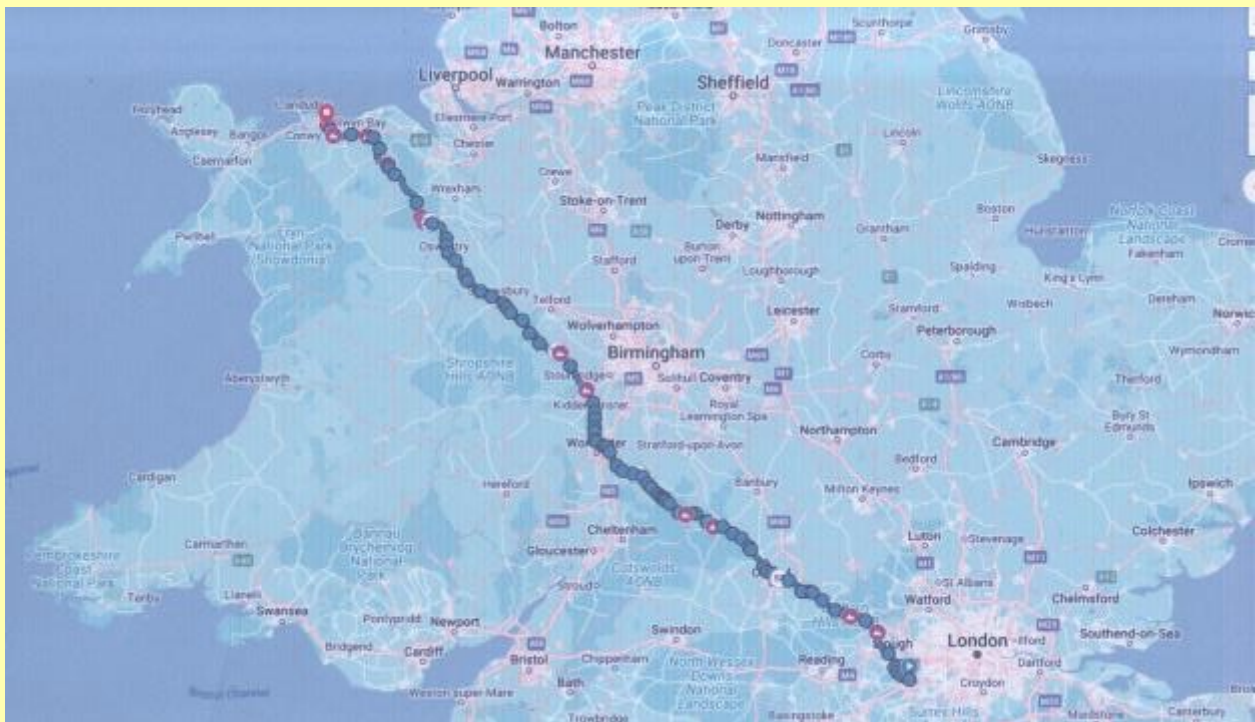


# Ancient History

## A cycle-camping (Bivouacking) bike ride, 68 years ago

Jeff Marshall

Whilst decluttering my loft recently I uncovered three postcards that I had sent to my parents nearly 70 years ago. At that time postcards were virtually the only method of communication when away from home. Amazingly, my mum had kept them, in with other documents relating to my school days. I inherited them years ago but had not looked at them in all that time.



They embody largely forgotten detail of a cycle-camping tour to North Wales I did, aged 15, in August 1956, together with my schoolfriend Barry Quincey.

We set off from Staines, to boldly go where we had never been before, early on Fri 3rd August with £5 each in our pockets and our bikes loaded up with panniers and saddlebag to the rear, with a tiny two man ridge tent shared between us. I had the fabric tightly rolled and Barry the poles. We also had as much tinned food as we could carry and a primus stove for brews and fry-ups.

Our bikes were so heavy at the back, that when we rode uphill, the front wheel often lifted off the road! Our destination was Colwyn Bay. I do not remember why.

We rode on main A roads nearly all the way, something that would be unthinkable today. We were following a route suggested to us by my dad, who was a long distance lorry driver, taking and servicing earthmoving hireplant like bulldozers, cranes etc. on an articulated 'low loader' all over the UK. He knew the roads everywhere it seemed. To have an idea of where we were en-route, we used paper ESSO maps which cost sixpence at any garage. There was not much traffic in those days and any large vehicles trundled along at not more than 25mph!

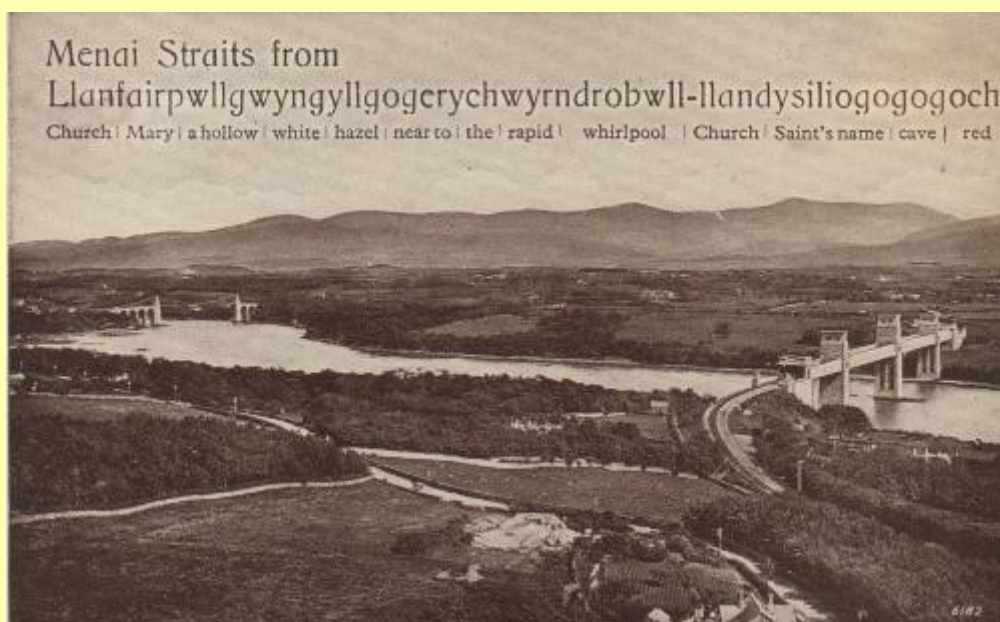
We cycled all day via Slough, Beaconsfield, Oxford, Woodstock, Chipping Norton and reached the village of Moreton in Marsh at about 80 miles. It had started to rain so we pitched our wee tent behind a big ol' farmers haybarn to keep our kit dry, and walked to the nearest pub for a drink.

I can't remember what we drank, but when we returned the rain had caused the ridge of the tent to sag. Being inexperienced campers we decided we should use the guy ropes to tighten it up.....As we did so, the tent tore at both ends! Not knowing what else to do, we covered it with our capes and decided to sleep up in the haybarn loft.....In the morning at first light we heard someone moving about below. We held our breath, but in a minute the tines of a pitchfork appeared at the top of the ladder we had climbed the night before and the head of a farm labourer followed. "Aarr!! what'm you boys doin' ere then?" he said. We explained our predicament and he decided we'd have to come see the missus. In the kitchen of the farmhouse the farmers wife listened to our tale of woe. In no time at all Barry and I were seated at her table eating a full English! Next thing she was repairing our tent on a large sewing machine!! We could not believe our luck - jammy buggers or what!? We were then shown all around the 300 acre farm by her son Martin. He proudly told us that we could call him Fartin' Martin like all his mates - he was a wicked bugger! When we got to a stall with a huge prize bull in it, surrounded by rosettes, first in class etc., he took pleasure in firing his catapult at its testicles! The bull went wild, its hooves battering the sides of the stall. Luckily the stall was built like a brick sh\*thouse and survived the onslaught. We decided we'd better get going before he got us into trouble.

Despite a late start we got on the road again and after a tough, 80 mile, day via Broadway, Evesham, Worcester, Kidderminster & Bridgenorth we reached the town of Much Wenlock. We spent our second night (Sat 4th August) here, tucked away in a field on its outskirts. Uneventful!

After a very early start, a brew and some beans, we got on the road again via Shrewsbury, Oswestry, Llangollen, over the Horseshoe pass, Ruthin and Denbigh. We finally arrived after a very hilly 80 mile ride at Colwyn Bay on Sun 5<sup>TH</sup> August, where we found a farm which did camping as a sideline, and pitched our trusty tent. There were chickens laying eggs in the hedgerow and mushrooms growing in the field. We helped ourselves to these and bought a sack of spuds from the farmer. We were quids in!

I bought a postcard and sent it home. It is postmarked 8.30 pm, 5<sup>th</sup> Aug 1956. The postage stamp cost 2d! (less than 1p). It says "Dear Mum & Dad, we're here!! Arrived yesterday afternoon and found fairly good camping site not far from the sea". It goes on to tell of our adventures en-route at the farm in Moreton in Marsh.



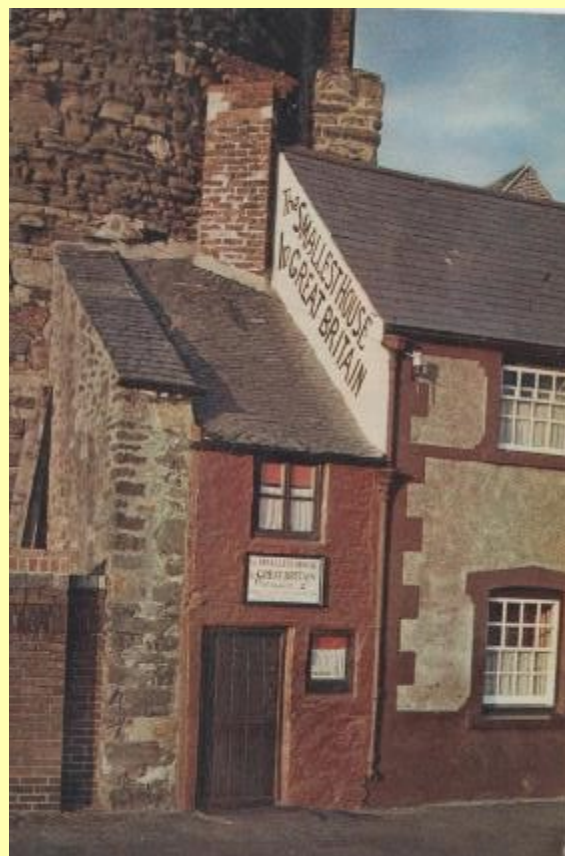


Colwyn bay had a tram system in town. Riding through after it had rained I came a cropper when my front wheel went down into the tramline. Being young, I sprang up like a jack-in-the-box with only a graze. Wheel OK luckily.

Whilst at Colwyn Bay, I sent two more postcards home. On the 7<sup>th</sup> August I wrote "Having a lovely time here. At the moment the sun is beating down & there isn't a breath of wind anywhere. Yesterday we went to Caernarvon Castle and it poured with rain, but none at the campsite only 25 miles away. Today we are going to the Llanberis pass. Shall see you on Sunday". It seems we did quite a bit of riding from the campsite while we were there. One day, we got to a clifftop above a rocky beach. We walked down to the beach via a long winding path. We looked up at the cliff and foolishly decided to climb back straight up the cliffs by holding on to sea cabbage plants which grew from the cliff face. We got two thirds of the way up and found we were stuck. Looking down we could see the sea crashing onto the rocks below. Suddenly I lost my grip on my handhold and started sliding down. Barry was just behind me and amazingly he managed to grab me, arresting my slide. Phew!! We were shitting ourselves I can tell you. Somehow we made it to the top, exhausted and thanking our lucky stars.



Then on 8<sup>th</sup> Aug I wrote "We're having a smashing time here and for four days there has been nothing but sunshine and my legs are getting a 'bit 'o' brahn on 'em' but this morning we had some rain. We are going to Conway to see the smallest house in Great Britain. The scenery in Llanberis Pass and Swallow Falls was beautiful. Owing to slight shortage of 'lol' we are starting for home on Thursday and hope to be home Saturday dinner time.



We were! We still each had half a crown (12.5p) left from our fiver!

Our parents wrote to the farmers wife thanking her for her kindness and for saving our holiday.

# ANOTHER BLAST FROM THE PAST

A 1000 mile Youth Hostelling tour of the South West thro' 11 counties, in olden times.

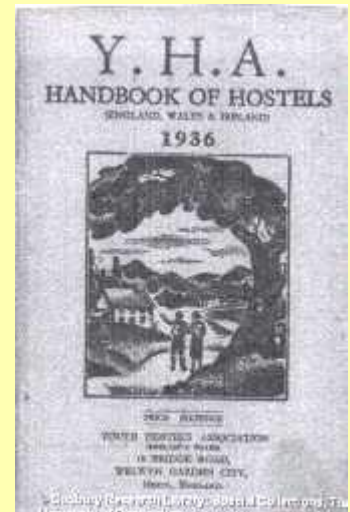
I was 16 years old in 1957, had been at work for a year. My wages were burning a hole in my pocket. My friends, Paul Glanville, Barry Quincey & Peter Palmer were, like myself, all apprentices. Paul and I were in engineering, Barry in boatbuilding and Peter was also in training. We all had YHA junior membership cards, bought for the princely sum of seven shillings & sixpence, 37.5p today (16 and under 21 years of age ) obtained in May '57 which had to be presented and signed, on arrival, at each hostel. At that time there were over 300 Hostels and 300,000 members of the Youth Hostels Association. At that time only walkers, cyclists and horse riders were catered for, no motorised travellers at all.

Today, Paul, Barry and I are all still alive & kicking, in our ninth decade, but we have lost contact with Peter.

I have to come clean at this point and admit that I do not remember all the detail of this ride. But whilst reminiscing during a recent phone call, my friend Paul G (who has a better memory than me anyway) mentioned that he had kept his 1957 YHA membership card which shows all the hostels we visited 67 years ago!!?? So he then sent me copies as well as photos he took on our travels.

Encouraged by a big ride to the North Wales coast the year before, the four of us planned a more ambitious and indeed, luxurious cycling holiday, using the facilities of the Youth Hostels Association. No more cycle camping for us - oh no! This time we were travelling light and sleeping in beds, well bunks actually. We did not book ahead, we just turned up and registered.

We all lived in Staines, so in the August '57 shutdown, full of beans, we met outside Barry's house in Laleham, ready for the challenge. Our bikes were pretty basic - 5 gears. Mine was a Holdsworth, ruby flam with gold head tube. Pauls was an Elswick Hopper, a bit too big for him. Our gearing was not very low. Ie too high really, as was the norm then. Slotted shoeplates on the soles of our shoes engaged with the rattrap pedals (mostly Campag copies). I used small panniers to carry my minimal kit, made from white canvas by my mum, who was handy with a sewing machine. The others used large saddlebags. We used the main roads again as in those days they carried little traffic as so few people owned a car.....bliss.





**Day 1 ;** Our first hostel was about 65 miles away, about 1.5 miles west of Marlborough, Wiltshire, **Plough Cottage**, on the A4 Bath Road. After we arrived and had done our obligatory chores and eaten a meal prepared by the warden, Paul recalls that he did not sleep well that night, as he was on a top bunk next to a window and headlights from passing vehicles kept waking him up.

Next day we headed for **Hutton Youth Hostel**, North Somerset, just South of Weston Super Mare, after about 70 miles. Can't remember much about that.

**Day 3 ;** On the road again we headed South on A370 to Bridgewater then West on A39 along the North Devon coast road over the formidable 1 in 4 Porlock Hill, where we witnessed a small car having to reverse up the steepest part. then on to the fast descent of Lynmouth Hill, to **Parracombe Youth Hostel**, in the Exmoor National Park, Devon, after about 70 miles. I seem to remember that it was a very, very lumpy ride. Paul says he recalls that we had a pillow fight in the dorm there and he dreamt that the hills were like upside down pudding basins - bad dream!

**Day 4 ;** we followed the A39 and crossed the River Taw near Barnstaple and River Torridge North of Bideford and after many steep climbs, reached **Otterham youth hostel**, in the Old Rectory, near Camelford, North Cornwall by veering South of the A39 on a minor road. About 60 plus miles. I remember the place was overrun by cats !

**Day 5 ;** Paul's YHA handbook shows that we stayed two nights in **Otterham youth hostel**, we can't, really remember why, but presumably to recover from our earlier efforts.

However, whilst there, we roamed about all day on our bikes and cycled to several rocky coastal resorts, between Port Isaac and Boscastle including Tintagel where Paul got some photos with his basic little Kodak camera. Probably clocked up another 50 miles or so. (see Paul's photos)



JEFF, BARRY, PETER AT TINTAGEL



PAUL, JEFF, BARRY, NORTH CORNWALL

**Day 6 ;** We set off for the A39 and the 60 odd miles to **Penzance youth hostel**, still on the A39 crossing the River Camel at Wadebridge sticking close to the North Cornwall coast, we got close to Newquay on A392 and eventually picked up the A30 down to Redruth and Hayle before heading for the South coast of Cornwall at Penzance. The Hostel was a mile from there at **Castle Horneck, Alverton**. It opened in 1939 and is still going. We elected to scrub the last few miles to Lands End and back as the short steep hills had knackered us.

**Day 7 ;** Heading East, now on the hilly South coast of Cornwall, on the A394 it felt like we were heading for home, via Helston and Penryn on the A394, then Truro and St Austell on the A390 and over the River Fowey to the Cornish **Lostwithiel youth hostel** at St Faiths, St Winnow, Peregrine Hall, about 65miles or so.

**Day 8 ;** Heading for South Devon today, about 72 miles to **Exeter youth hostel**, over the River Tamar at Saltash on A38 via Plymouth, Ivybridge, Buckfastleigh, and finally over the River Exe and into Mountwear House, Exeter, alongside the river.

**Day 9** ; we set off along the South Devon and Dorset coast today heading for **Swanage Youth hostel** about 87 miles East, via the A25 and A3052, passing thro' Sidmouth , Seaton, and Lyme Regis, then on A35 to Bridport, Dorchester, Wareham and finally took the A351 down thro' Corfe Castle to Swanage, the Southernmost point on our tour.

**Day 10** ; we set off to catch the Sandbanks Ferry to Poole then Bournemouth for another 87 mile day, heading East along the South coast of Dorset and Hampshire on our way to Christchurch, and ultimately our destination, **Lymington Youth Hostel**, overlooking the Solent and Isle of Wight.



**Alfriston Youth Hostel, Frog Firle, Alfriston.**  
Frog Firle is mention in the Domesday Book. The House here was owned by Mr Austen-Leigh a relative of the novelist Jane Austen.

**Day 11** ; We got on the road early as today we had a ride of 100 miles ahead of us to the final and most Easterly point of our tour, **Alfriston Youth Hostel** in East Sussex, near Eastbourne. Our route was via Totton and over the river into Southampton where Paul reminded me that I had a very loud rear blowout which delayed our progress toward Fareham, Chichester, Worthing, Brighton, Newhaven and over the River Ouse to Seaford and finally North, alongside the Cuckmere River to the very last and poshest Youth Hostel of our tour, **Alfriston** at Frog Firle (photo left)

**Day 12** ; after what I am sure was a hearty breakfast, we set out for home, about 75 miles, by way of East Grinstead, Redhill, Reigate, Leatherhead and finally our home town Staines, where Paul took photos opposite Barry's house by the waterworks railings, before we went our separate ways. (see photos below)



**PAUL & JEFF 11 COUNTIES DONE**



**BARRY & JEFF 11 COUNTIES DONE**

Most of the youth hostels have been sold off by now and repurposed as hotels or houses and it is difficult to find info as to their exact whereabouts. I could not find any mention of the **Lymington hostel** at all, despite a diligent search.

Jeff: 29/12/23



# GP Mills Great Bicycle Ride (copied from The Rambler 1897 p 594 -595)

Submitted and introduced by Caroline Corke



*I have an 1897 bound copy of The Rambler, which was a weekly magazine aimed at cyclists, once owned by my parents. I was idly leafing through it recently when I came across this account of the remarkable Lands End - John O'Groats record completed by the indomitable George Pilkington Mills on an early modern bicycle. He also held the record on a Penny Farthing, a tricycle, a tandem and a motorbike. This was not the least of his achievements, but I am sure many people will know more about him than I do myself. A little online research suggests that this account may have the occasional inaccuracy but the article still, to me at least, captures the excitement of the event written in the language of its time. It's both very recognisable and at the same time so removed from modern day experience.*

Meritorious cycle rides are so numerous that it is difficult to pick one out from the mass. There are, however, certain performances which stand out boldly from the rest and none do this more surely than GP Mills sensational cycle ride from Lands End to John O'Groats in September 1891.

Although but a young man, Mills had for several years held the distinction of being the champion long distance road rider of England. Mills at the time held both the tricycle and high bicycle records over the course, a distance of 880 miles over a country extremely difficult on account of tremendous hills.

The record for the high bicycle was 5 days 1 hour and 45 minutes and Mills was sanguine that on a rear driving bicycle, such as those at present in use, he could reduce the time by quite 24 hours.

Mills made several starts, but wind and weather were against him, and it was not until midnight September 27<sup>th</sup> that he set out in earnest. His course lay through Penzance to Exeter, 122 miles, which distance he accomplished at a tremendous pace. Without pausing he went on to Bristol, 196 miles; Worcester, 256 miles, which latter town was reached in 24 hours from the start. Still he urged on his career, local cyclists assisting him as pacemakers over the cobbles of Nantwich, through South Cheshire to Warrington.

With scarcely a moments rest from the start the plucky rider tackled the tremendous upgrade known as the Shap Fells, and at length reached Penrith, 456 miles, having been two days in the saddle. He indulged in three hours nap here, and soon he crossed the border into Scotland. At 2pm on the third day Mills rode into Edinburgh having experienced so far very bad roads and rain.

Only a short stoppage was made at the Scottish capital, and the road to Perth tackled, distance 635 miles. From here it was evident that the rider was getting very groggy, and during the night it is said he fell asleep while riding. It was a black night, and so slow the pace that 47 1/2 miles occupied 7 1/2 hours. Mills was kept at his work by two riders who pedalled on each of them shouting 'Left Georgie' or 'Right Georgie' when it was necessary to turn.

Kinguissie was reached at 7.15 am on the fourth day, and at 10.30pm Inverness was reached. He reached Wick, 855 miles, soon after midnight, and it was not long after this that victory was almost snatched from his grasp. With only four miles to go, and nearly a day in hand his friends were jubilant, but poor Mills was very exhausted. Someone gave him a dose of stimulant, but unfortunately instead of the stimulating effect expected the drug had the opposite effect, and Mills fell from his machine dead asleep.

With only four miles to go his friends were frantic. They threw cold water on him, and did everything to bring him to his senses, but it was hopeless. For eight hours, he slept on. When at length he did wake it was to mount his machine and race like a madman over the intervening distance to John O'Groats house.

## G.P. MILLS 1867-1945

*Some additional photos and information accessed via the Rapha website (editor)*

The portrait (below) shows Mills on the Humber tricycle on which he claimed his End-to-End record of 1893. His other records for the End-to-End were:



1886 Tricycle (solid tyres)  
5 days 10hrs

1891 Bicycle (pneumatic tyres)  
4 days 11hrs 17mins

1893 Tricycle (pneumatic tyres)  
3 days 16hrs 47mins

1894 Bicycle (pneumatic tyres)  
3 days 5hrs 49mins

1895 Tandem bicycle (with T.A. Edge)  
3 days 4hrs 46mins



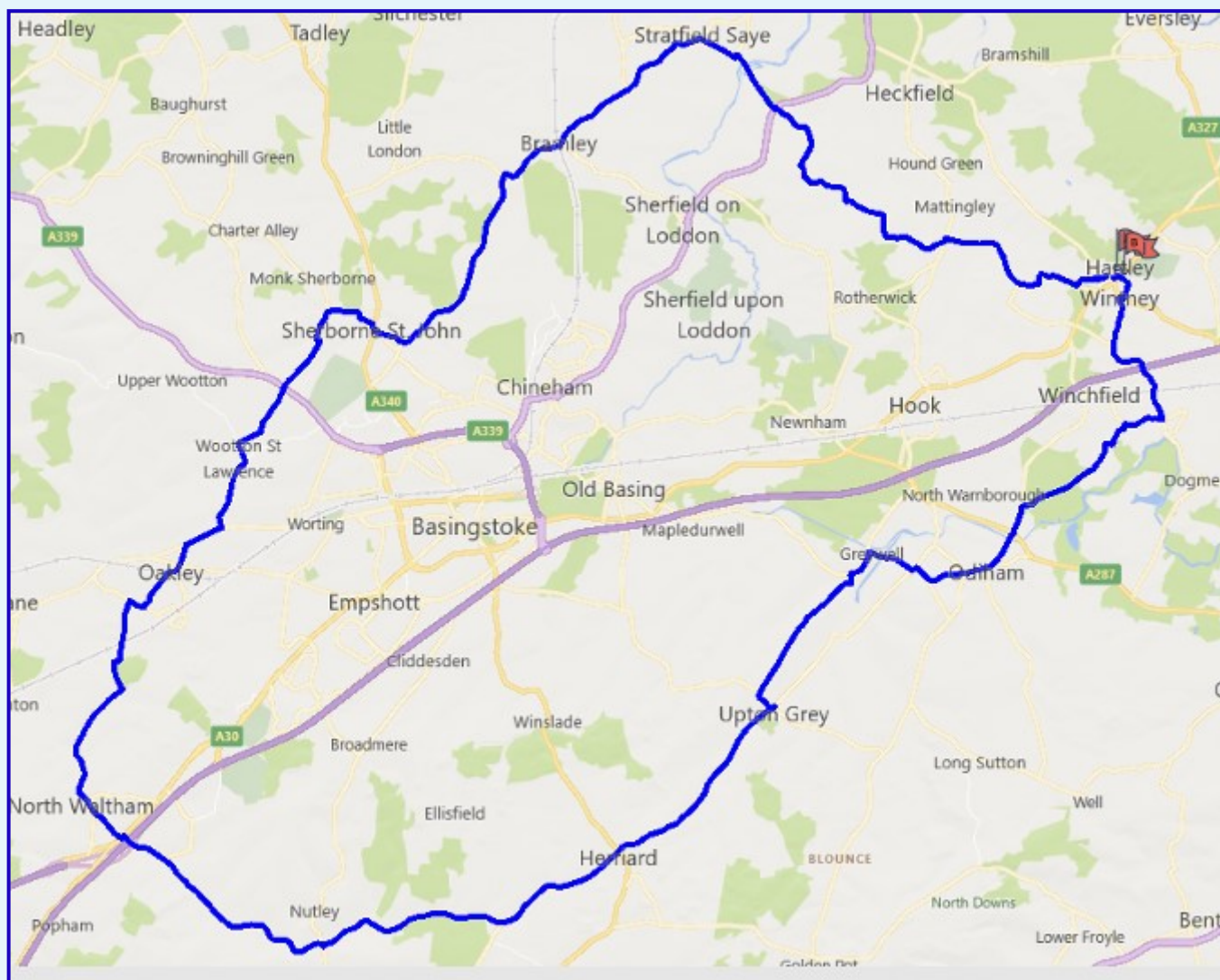
G. P. MILLS, winner of the first bicycle race from Bordeaux to Paris, 1891, with the party of Englishmen who accompanied him to France. From left to right (*standing*) P. C. Wilson, A. Brundrett, Rene de Knyff (of Paris), G. P. Mills, A. Lambert, H. O. Duncan, Felix Greville, P. L. Renouf ; (*seated*) L. Stroud, Major Knox-Holmes, M. D. Rucker, Captain de Bruno Holmes.



# The President's Annual Hampshire 'Park & Ride'

Friday 4th August 2023

Another successful and enjoyable 'around Basingstoke' ride took place in the summer.



# The Nordistes and the Tour

OK, so I've been to see the Tour, what am I going to tell you about the race? Nothing – every sports journalist in the western hemisphere can do a better job than an ordinary citizen like myself who just saw the peloton flash past.

But I can say something about being at the Tour in the Pas de Calais. The Nordistes (Northerners) are, in general, not very big on cycling; it's hard to say why this is, but it seems to have been so for a long time.\* There are a small number of sporting cyclists on the roads and a few clubs, there are a few road races, but it's nothing like Brittany or neighbouring Belgium and utility cycling is almost non-existent in the countryside and small towns, although I understand it does exist in Lille. A tiny smattering of young people are to be seen in the country lanes, but they are almost all on mountain bikes, which seems odd when the roads are so well suited to road bikes.

Whatever happens normally in the area, it seems that on Tour day the locals remember that road racing is a national treasure and they come out to enjoy a day of hanging about for the sake of a few seconds of excitement (plus the feast afterwards, naturellement). On the day there are extensive road closures over a wide area which make it difficult to reach a good viewpoint, especially with a wheelchair, but even at our suboptimal spot (slightly downhill, middle of nowhere) there was quite a crowd and the feeling of general good humour was striking. It's perhaps worth mentioning that whereas in England nearly all bike race spectators are bike riders, in France they don't appear to be cyclists at all, just normal men, women and children having a day out.



Our little corner was supervised by a young woman gendarme, efficient but also friendly and we had quite a conversation with her – she took the photo of Sabi and myself which you see here. Normally the gendarmerie seem a bit unapproachable, so this felt like a little achievement in itself. If that photo makes me look a little uncomfortable I should mention I was having a 'bad fish day' (moules!) and I had recently pushed the wheelchair up a modest but noticeable hill.

Sabi is obviously not a natural sports fan and she might well have complained of boredom after a long wait for very short burst of spectacle, but the magic of the Tour worked for her, just as it did for the non cycling Nordistes who stood with us at the roadside.

\* I know that Maurice Garin lived most of his life in Lens, but his Tour victory is now 119 years old.

Chris Lovibond, July 2022.



# Way of the Roses - the plan by Dave Howe

Morecambe to Bridlington

Monday 12th June to Friday 16th June

Daily Cycling Mileages

Monday 12 miles

Tuesday 31 miles

Wednesday 36 miles

Thursday 55 miles

Friday 42 miles

Total Route 176 miles



## Participants (transport to Lancaster)

### Travelling with the van

John Marshall  
Peter Sprake  
Tony Cosstick

### Travelling by train

Les Saunby  
Jeff Marshall  
Bob Birt  
John Mattheson  
Peter Bennington

Linda Williams  
Patsy Howe  
Dave Howe  
Dave Sykes

Plus: Ian Chipman joining on route

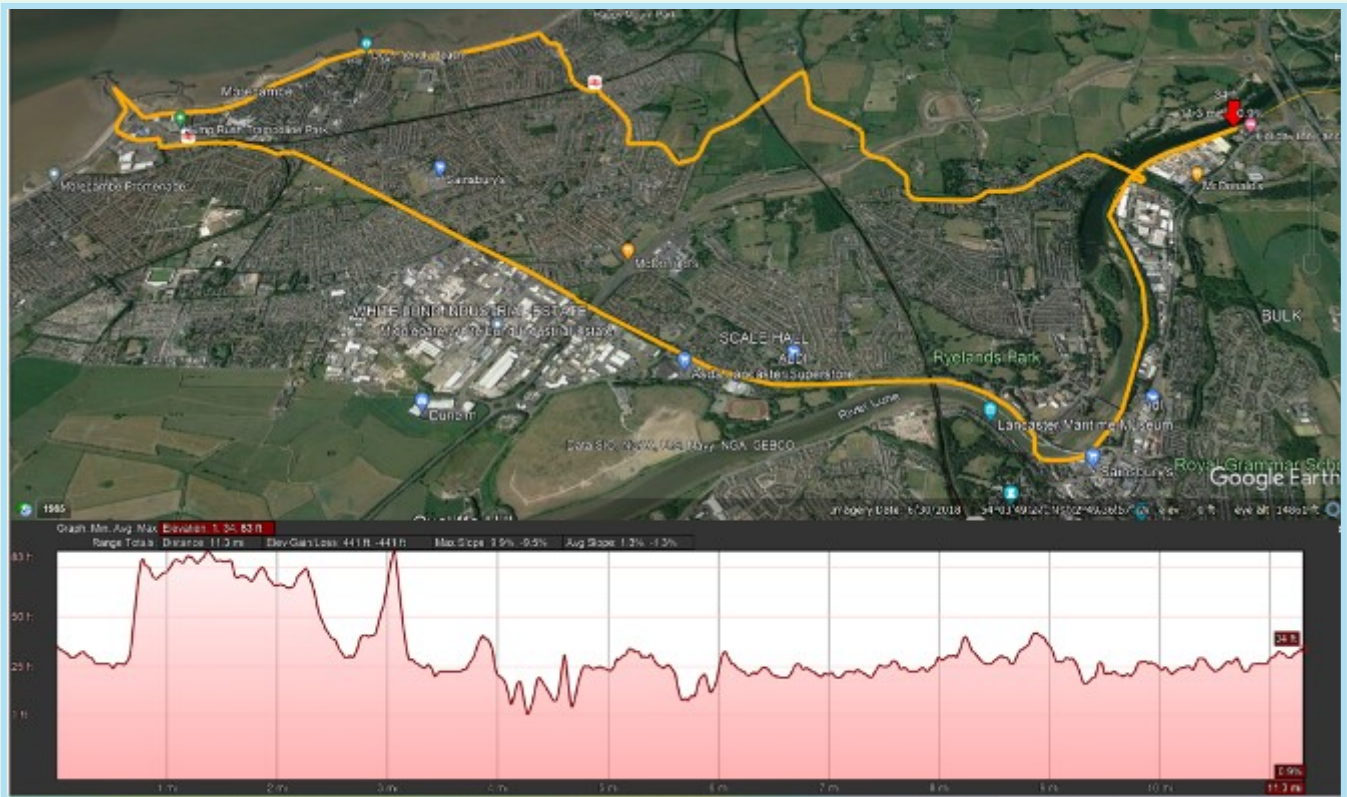


**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June**

Van loaded with bags and bikes heads to Lancaster. 260 miles. 5 hours.  
Remaining riders travel by train to Lancaster.

*All meet at Holiday Inn Hotel, Waterside Park, Lancaster, LA1 3RA*

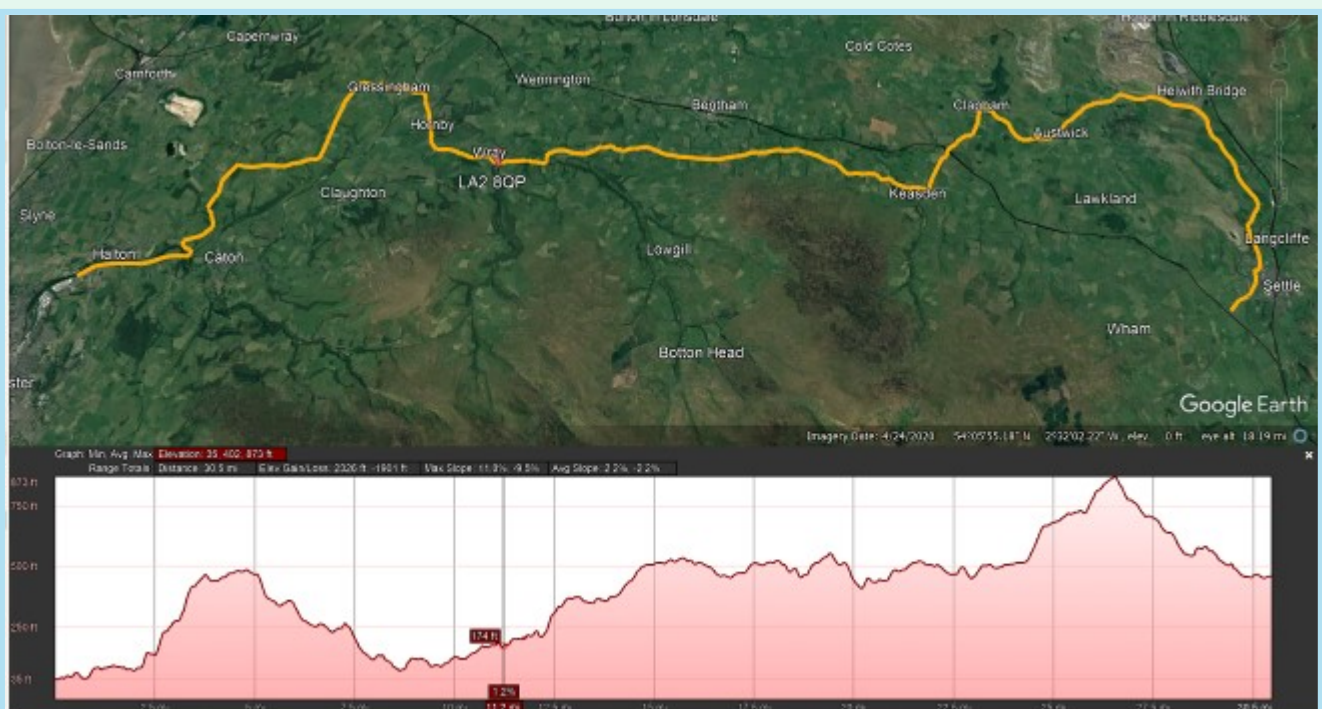
Warm-up ride to Morecambe for evening meal at the beach and wobble back. 6 miles each way.



**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> June**

Cycle to Settle 30.4 miles 2326 ft climbing.

*Stay at Craven Arms, Settle*

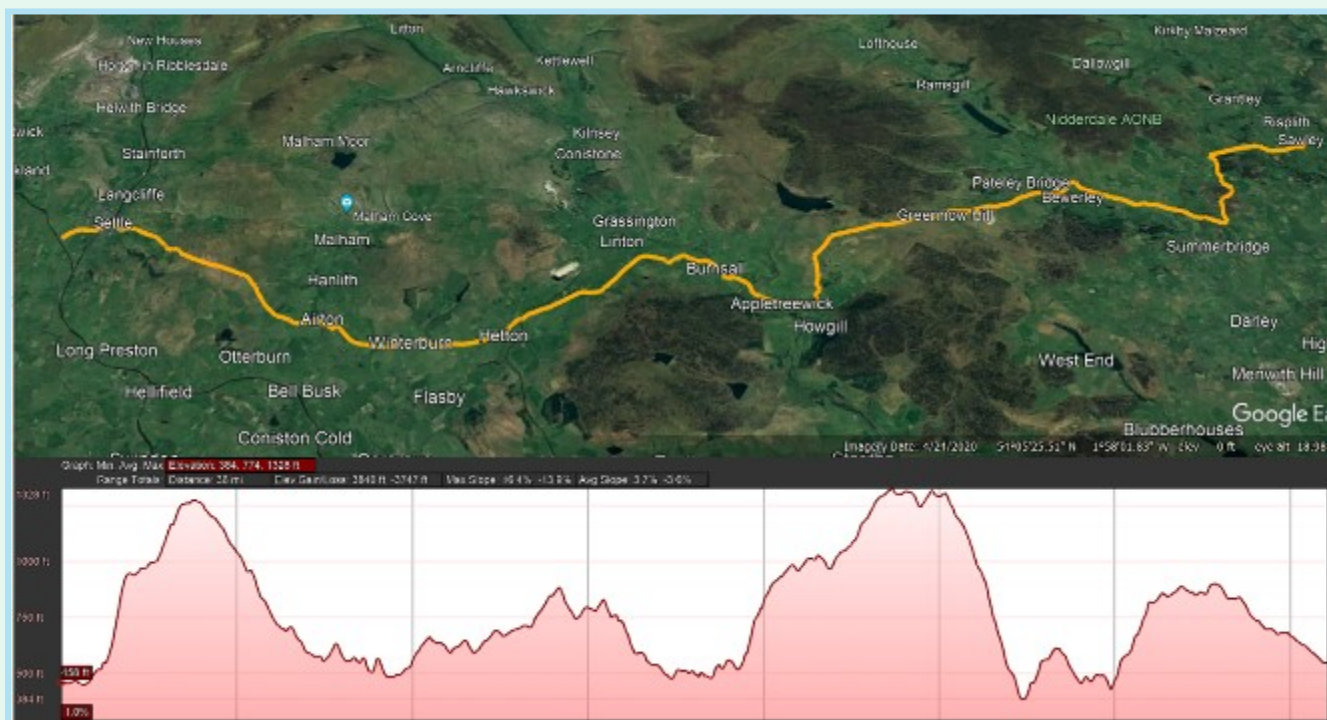




**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> June**

**Cycle from Settle to Sawley 36 miles, 3840 ft climbing**

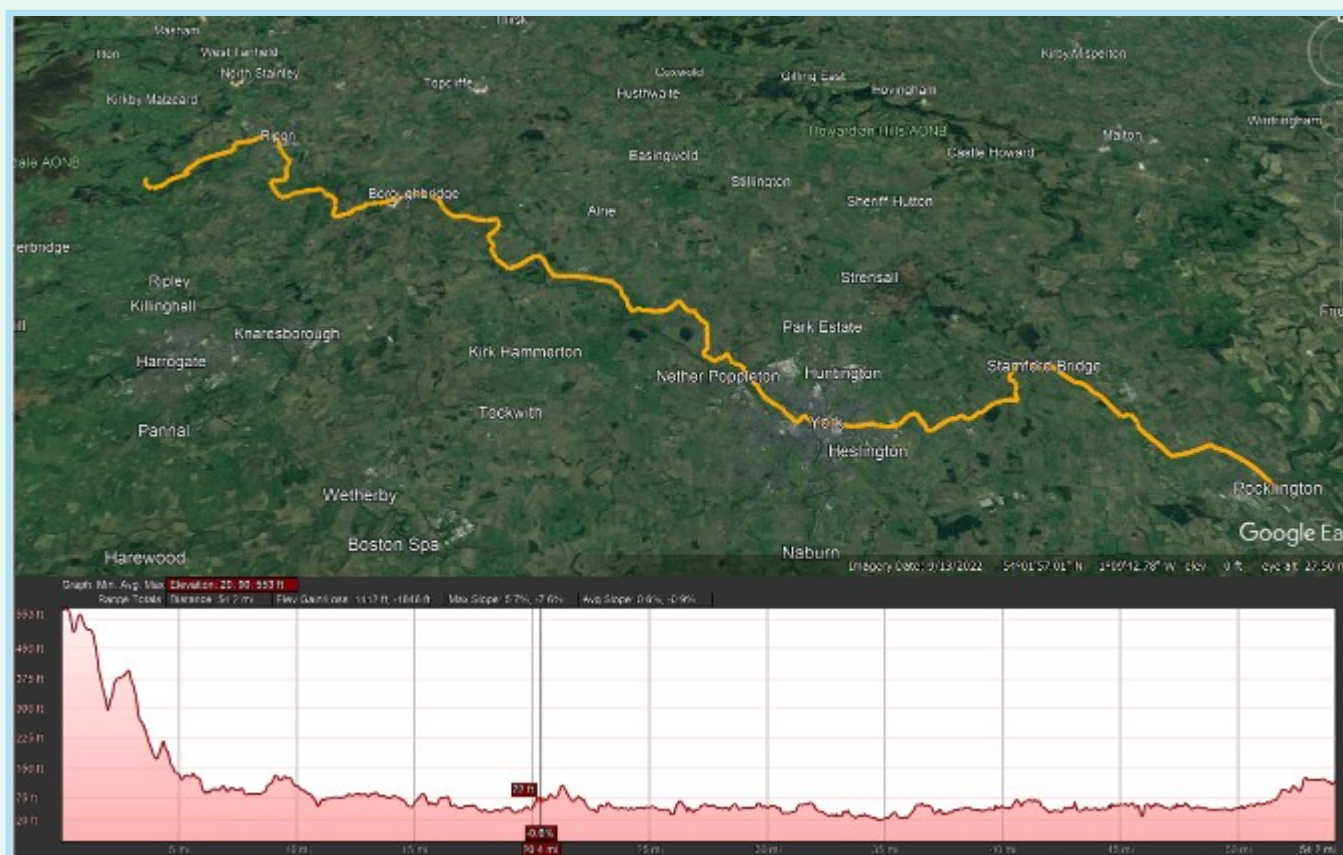
**Stay at The Sawley Arms, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 3EQ**



**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> June**

**Cycle from Sawley to Pocklington. 54.2 miles 1412 ft climbing.**

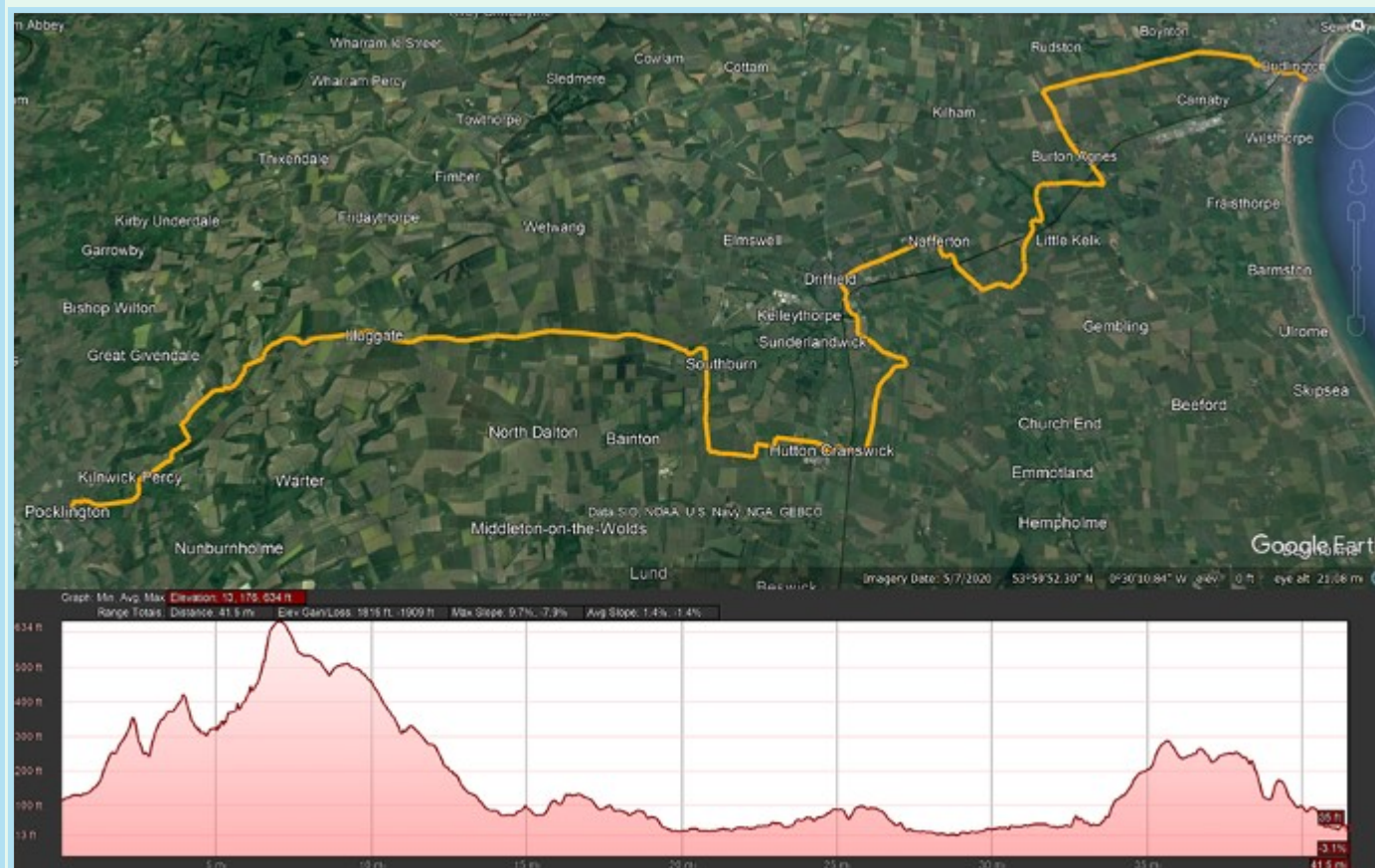
**Stay at The Feathers Hotel, 56 Marketplace, Pocklington, YO42 2AH**





Friday 16<sup>th</sup>

Ride to finish at Bridlington. 41.5 miles 1815 ft climbing



Finish at 'Salt on the Harbour' café.





# Way of the Roses - the ride

Morecambe to Bridlington

Monday, 12th June

We arrived at the Holiday Inn, Lancaster late afternoon and then met to fit pedals and check bikes at 4:40 pm for our first cycle of the tour at 5 pm. This was a gentle start with a 12 mile loop to Morecambe for dinner and return to our hotel.



Above: 'Bring me sunshine'  
Right: Dinner at The Midland Hotel



Tuesday, 13th June  
Lancaster to Settle

**Left and below:** From the hotel the route took us along the former Halton Railway, beside the river Lune, then north-east to Gressingham and south-east through Homby. We continued west to Wray, (where we stopped for coffee) and on through Mill Houses, Keasdon and Clapham where we stopped for lunch at the Old Sawmill Café. After that Austwick and then parallel to the River Ribble south to Settle.

**Accommodation:** Craven Arms





**Wednesday, 14th June**

**Settle to Sawley**

Continuing through the beautiful Yorkshire Dales, our route was short but tough! Straight after breakfast we climbed out of Settle and then continued climbing, following High Hill Rd, with hugely steep sections (up to 24%), until we reached the first summit of the day. Needless to say this stretch was accompanied by a lot of dismounting and pushing of bikes! Then followed the tremendous satisfaction of gliding down to Airton with a panoramic view of the Dales ahead. After some confusion, we regrouped for coffee at the Town End Farm Shop! Continuing in a more or less easterly direction we descended into the pretty town of Burnsall with it's old stone bridge and then on to Appletreewick.





A long climb (fortunately less steep than the first of the day) took us up past Stump Cross Caverns and onto a steep descent that took us into Pateley Bridge where we had lunch. A couple more hilly sections and a final gentle descent took us to our accommodation at the Sawley Arms.

What we needed was a good nights sleep!



This was the night, however, that 6 of our group had to share a bunkhouse comprising of three bunk beds! At breakfast, the following morning, I made the mistake of asking if everyone had had a good night! I won't repeat the reply but the answer was - in short, no! I gathered later that problems started when, between the six of them, no one could work out how to switch off a set of bright blue lights! This was finally accomplished and the group settled down to make the most of the rest of the night!



The 'king's affliction' is, however, prevalent in the age group of our tour and Peter B is rumoured to have needed the bathroom 10 times during the night. This in itself would not have caused too much of a problem, but unfortunately the blue lights now seem to have been set on automatic, waking everyone on each visit (described as being like Blackpool or a bl\*\*dy disco)! Apparently if you drink enough beer before going to bed this problem does not occur so the consensus of calculation was that Peter should have had an extra pint?!





Thursday, 15th June  
Sawley to Pocklington

Heading off, we passed Fountains Abbey (unfortunately out of view from the road) and continued on to Ripon. Our route then ran parallel with the river Ure for around 26 km before turning north-east and continuing for a further couple of kilometres to the Aldwark Bridge.



This bridge, built in 1772 is on a narrow country lane and lies deep within the Vale of York. It is, surprisingly, a toll bridge. Unfortunately, when we arrived it was closed for repair (impassable even to cyclists).

Moments of panic ensued as we worked out that the only way around appeared to be a 20 mile diversion on very busy roads! At that moment Jeff wondered off and discovered a sign with a map of Aldwark Golf Course and it looked as if there may be a footbridge!

Wonderful - we managed to make the coffee stop at Beningbrough Hall (left) after all!

Our next stop was in the historic city of York and refreshments with views of York Minster. Here we met up with Ian Chipman, who had cycled from his home in Doncaster, for the final part of the trip.



View from the loo!

Left & right  
York Minster



Back on our bikes again we set off for the Feathers' Hotel, Pocklington via Murton, Dunnington and Stamford Bridge.

Tony joined Math in the 'injured' corner - Math having lost an argument with a paving stone before we came away! Caught **speeding** by a sleeping **policeman**, Tony's progress was catastrophically and painfully **arrested** as he succumbed to the **forces** of gravity and hit the tarmac!





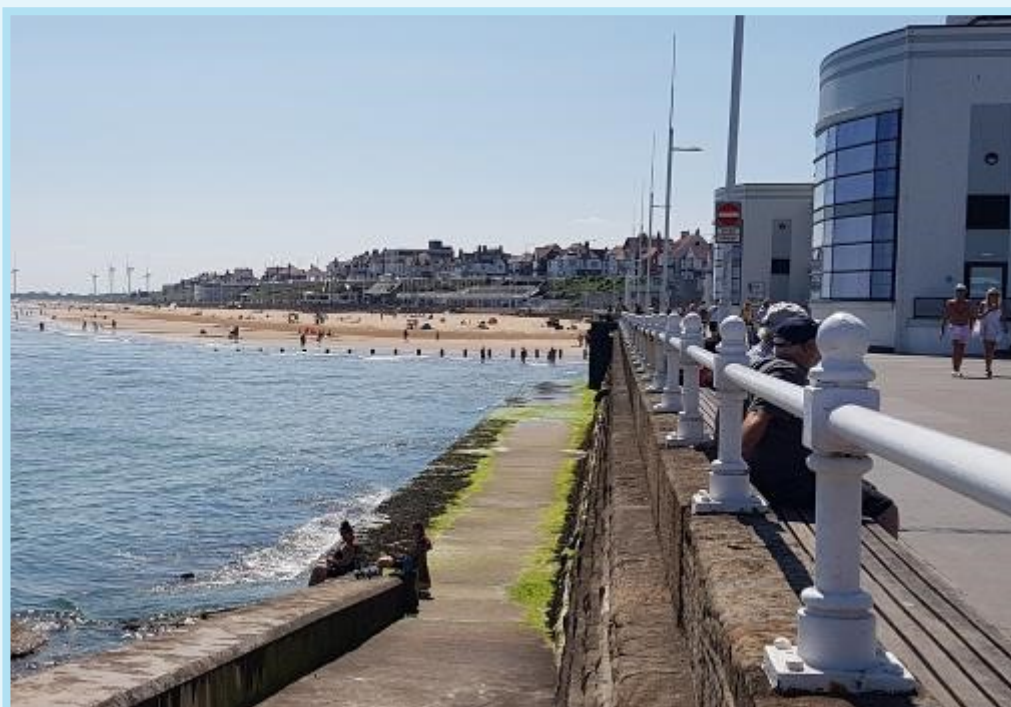
**Friday, 16th June**  
**Pocklington to Bridlington**

Starting off with a climb for most of the way through Millington to Huggate, we then descended to Tibthorpe and on to Kirkburn where we took a large detour into Driffield due to the hugely busy and dangerous nature of the direct main road!

After the café stop we continued on through Nafferton, Lowthorpe, Hapham and Burton Agnes before riding into our final destination - Bridlington!



Above: Café stop at  
Bell Mills Garden  
Centre nr Driffield



Left: Bridlington sea front



Left & Below:  
A celebratory fish and chip lunch at the Salt on the Harbour  
restaurant before departing for home.



*Patsy Howe: Editor*





Club Camp  
2023



## Summer Camp 2024

Saddleback Lane, Potterne Wick, (nr Devizes) SN10 5QT.

**Come and join the fun!** Family and friends welcome!

**Friday, 9th August until Tuesday, 27th August**

Further info: Martyn Roach 07779 718228





# The Hounslow out and about



## Your club Committee

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**Racing Secretary**  
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Chris Lovibond  
**Website Manager**  
Ian Kirk



## Distribution

This magazine is primarily distributed by electronic means. This saves the club time and money. If you're reading a paper copy that you received in the post and would be willing to switch to reading it on your computer or printing it yourself, please let the editor know.

## Next Issue

**Will cover 2024**  
**Please contact the editor with your contributions or suggestions.**  
**It's your magazine!**