

# Cycle Chat

75p

Leicestershire & Rutland CTC

Since 1897

Summer 2022



[www.ctclr.org.uk](http://www.ctclr.org.uk)

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**This is an abbreviated list for on line versions only.**

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*Front; Askrigg, Yorkshire Dales. Note the CTC Winged Wheel on wall Photo Dave Binks*



## ***Editor's Thoughts***

Winter seems to be reluctant to let go this year.

I have just returned from a week's cycling in the Yorkshire Dales (see photo on front cover). To say it was cold is a bit of an understatement. The combination of the elevation and very strong east wind at times nearly took the skin off my face! The wind was so strong one day that it nearly blew me to a standstill - going downhill !! The first 3 nights were with a group at Hawes Youth Hostel, after which I moved to Kettlewell Youth Hostel. I had been to Hawes YH a few times, but had never stopped at Kettlewell YH. Because of Covid fears at Hawes I would have had to book the entire dormitory (£55/night!) But as Kettlewell is independently run, rooms could be shared (£20/night/bed).

I really think the YHA should change its name from "Youth" Hostel to "Old Folks" Hostel, because it seems that only old folks actually stop at them. The YHA accepts group bookings from school parties, but these are just for educational purposes, and because of child protection fears, they book the entire hostel, thus denying space to anyone else. I am still a member, but wonder why, because of the difficulty finding a hostel where I want it and with space.

In March I enjoyed a week's solo cycling in Norfolk and another in Staffordshire, near Alton, but used my caravan as accommodation for both.

In a week or so I'm off to the Isle of Wight for another week's cycling holiday with a different group, this time staying in a hotel in Shanklin. I hope it's warmer than Yorkshire!

*Dave Binks*

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## From the Secretary



Hopefully by the time you get this edition of Cycle Chat we will have a new Secretary. In the meantime, I would like to publicly thank the retiring Secretary, Neil Dixon, for his work and efforts since he took over from Ray Clay.

See the Group website for the latest information [www.ctclr.org.uk](http://www.ctclr.org.uk)

## NEW MEMBERS



Peter Witting reports:-

Regular readers will know that we welcome new members and list them by their location. However, due to “Data Protection Issues”(!) National Office are unable to supply any info. for this edition. However we still welcome them to the Group and hope they will join in our local activities.

**By virtue of your CTC/Cycling UK Club Membership, there are no additional fees or subscriptions to pay for riding with your local group, so why not go along and try one of our group rides?** Contact the ride organiser first so that he/she can welcome you on the day. You won't regret it.

## Cycle Chat Administrators

Pete & Lyn Gale manage the role of Cycle Chat Administrators. They handle all subscriptions and finances as well as actually posting your hard copies out to you.

Any queries re subscriptions, advertising etc, should be addressed to them.

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# President's Notes

## Jim Gerrard writes

With the weather finally warming up a bit, I've at last managed a few rides in shorts. (Bearing in mind that this is written in April) Also quite a few lunch stops have been enjoyed alfresco even back in Jan/Feb/March.



I enjoyed the David Sulley Memorial ride in March in good company and weather. Although fairly windy it was how we prefer it, ie wind assisted on the return. Also enjoyed have been a few good rides with the two groups I ride with, Nuneaton and Charnwood. With the Bluebell flowers well and truly out now and the sweet smell of them (when not overpowered by the smell of yellow rape) very nice.



Returning from Whittington (Staffs) last week it always feels a bit surreal when the road is below the adjacent canal water level as it is at Fisherwick for a short stretch. It is also like this when leaving Snarestone on the Twycross road. There must be plenty of other instances, some of which have been experienced but I cannot recall where! Some seem to be at the same level, as Basin Bridge Lane Wykin, Barrow on Trent by the Trent and

Mersey, and the Cathiron road from Brinklow by the Oxford canals. I seem to have a thing about cycling next to canals as apposed to cycling on tow paths!

On more serious matters, by the time you read this our AGM should have been held on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May at Congerstone Village Hall. Refreshments on a 'bring and share basis'.

In the last issue we appealed for volunteers for both the Secretary and President positions without which we will be unable to continue as the present arrangement. Any presentations should also have been made at the meeting.

The Meriden Memorial Service was also set for 15<sup>th</sup> May.

As this is likely to be my last Presidents report I wish you all another safe and enjoyable cycling year.

See website for all up to date information [www.ctc.leic.org.uk/](http://www.ctc.leic.org.uk/).

Words and canal photo by Jim Gerrard





## Technical Topics

By Peter Witting



### Technology Failures!

After last October's Paris-Roubaix race I commented that the trend to tubeless tyres didn't seem very successful at preventing punctures. But it was very wet and muddy, so how did they do in this year's dry conditions? Even worse: Not only were there even more punctures, but riding a flat tyre on cobbles with carbon rims simply resulted in the wheels folding in half! I think more may revert to old-style tubulars next year. Or maybe they'll try the foam insert technology to aid the tubeless tyres?

### Need New Kit? Get it While You Can!

We had been hoping that delays in supply of cycle components due to Covid-19 would be ending in 2022. Instead, there are further Covid lock downs in China halting production, and Russia's war in Ukraine is affecting clothing production! Giant are expecting disruption to their supply from China, while other brands are also likely to be affected. Local bike shops have been unable to complete orders due to maybe a single missing item. Big firms are even completing bikes with more expensive components just to get the cash flow! Later this year supplies of clothing due to be supplied from Ukraine are likely to run out. I checked the label of a recent Assos rain jacket, and it was made in Lithuania rather than Ukraine. Not sure how the supply of titanium from Ukraine and Russia might affect frame supplies. They are the nearest European sources, but plenty further afield. Best not to delay any important purchase.

### Fake Tan.

I usually reckon on shorts from mid-May, the time of the Meriden service. But this year, that's when I plan to be abroad. I really don't want to be displaying my winter-white legs! So, I've borrowed my wife's Garnier "Summer Body" to prepare my legs for the holiday. Once there I'll be using Calypso "Once A Day" sun protection – hopefully!

# **This year's theme for the Photographic Competition is**

**yet to be decided, but you can start pulling together your entries to the other categories now.**

It is expected that this year we will repeat the method used in 2021 when we were unable to hold the AGM in other than a "Virtual" form via Zoom.

Instead of requiring entries to be in print form, which would usually be on display at the AGM, we are asking for entrants to submit digital entries "on line" in .jpeg format (the usual type for digital cameras). They will then be posted on the internet for all to see, in Google Photo Albums. However, recognising that not all have access to digital cameras and the internet, hard prints can be sent to John Catt at 32 Bramcote Road, Loughborough LE11 2SA who will scan them into digital form. In this case you must include a note giving him permission to include them in the on line album. If you want your prints returned, enclose a self addressed stamped envelope.

There is no entry fee but a maximum of 4 images per category will be accepted from individual members.

The Google Albums will contain the warning that copyright remains with the photographer and unauthorised reproduction is not permitted, but there is no way that we can prevent anyone from copying the images, so entrants must be prepared to accept this risk.

## **CATEGORIES :-**

Class 1: Pictorial (Smith Trophy)

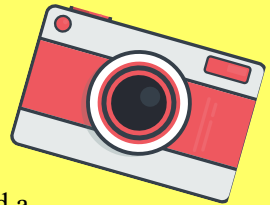
Class 2 Club Life - to include at least three cyclists  
(Alan Haywood Rosebowl)

Class 3: Humorous (Sue Greaves Shield)

Class 4: Novice (member who has not previously entered a photo)

Class 5: Junior (under 18 on 31st December 2021)

Class 6: Theme of the year is yet to be decided. (George Clownes Tray)



## **Last date for entries 31st December 2022**

Send your entries in .jpeg format (including your name and membership number) to : - [photocomp@ctclr.org.uk](mailto:photocomp@ctclr.org.uk)

**PLEASE MAKE IT CLEAR WHICH PHOTO GOES INTO WHICH CATEGORY.**



## In the Print

Pete Etheridge, from Kettering, who's exploits have appeared in this magazine in the past, has had a couple of his memories published as the "Letter of the Week" in Cycling Weekly:-

### 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2022

When my brother Don was 6 years old he caught diphtheria and pneumonia. I remember the doctor saying to my mother if he lasts the night he will probably be alright. He did last the night but was very weak afterwards. I was only a year older than him but I used to take him to Paddington Clinic where he had to sit in a chair stripped to the waist and wearing a pair of black goggles while he received UV light treatment. I had to stay on the stage and not look at the UV lamp. Of course I used to peep out to see what was going on. He grew to a height of 6 ft 6 inches (not unusual for an Etheridge), but was never very strong, but did manage to ride 230 miles in a 12hr race. He once went to America on one of John Lumbers' CTC tours. John left the planning of the route to an American guy who had been on one of his tours This idiot planned daily rides up to 100 miles which was too far for everybody but Don. He rode the whole route often not getting to the hotel until 10 o'clock. He got altitude sickness going over a 10,000 ft pass in the Rockies and rode through Death Valley. On another tour he rode over Mont Ventoux (France) on his own. He died at the age of 82 from lung failure. He was very fond of my daughters, Sally and Jane and would keep an eye on them when they came on tours with us.

### 5 May 2022

I first rode a bike when I was 5 or 6 years old. I pestered my dad till he got me one. It was much too big for me, I could only just reach the pedals, so he swapped it for a Royal Enfield with 18 inch wheels and rod brakes. I used to ride that bike round the streets of Paddington, did not know where I was going but always found my way back. One day I decided to ride round the block. As I was turning right out of Elgin Avenue (without signalling) I was hit by a Rolls Royce (they were very quiet then) I was thrown across the road and landed on the pavement on the other side. The driver picked me up, put me in the back of the car and took me home. He picked up my mum and they took me to hospital where they found I had broken my collar bone and strapped my arm to my chest. The driver owned three Rolls Royce cars and a chain of butcher's shops. He wanted to pay for me to go to a private school and used to come round every Wednesday with a big joint of meat. This went on for a few weeks until my dad came home at lunch time and told him not to come any more. Years later I asked him why he did, and he said my mother was very attractive and he thought that was the attraction!



# Charnwood Chatter

## Jim Gerrard brings us up to date

With all rides being completed this quarter it seems quite a while since a ride was cancelled due to inclement weather.

March saw us visiting Kegworth via Rothley Station, Coton in the Elms via Newton Regis, Stoke Golding via the Battlefield center at Sutton Cheney, Melbourne via Shardlow and a quick look into the vast quarry at Breden on the local cycle trail.



*National Memorial Arboretum*

April saw us at Carlton via Burbage Common, Burton on Trent via Willington, Sawley via don't know where as I wasn't able to ride on that date and Elford via the National Arboretum at Alrewas.

So far May has only seen us at Ratcliffe Culey via Newton Regis and Polesworth.

We have had some good days out and only managed to lose riders on two occasions although on one ride it happened twice. Leaving Melbourne we managed to split up with some following the planned route, the rest doing an impromptu route via a track. The other being round Sawley and the various options in the area. Arriving in Burton on Trent we were temporarily disappointed to find our regular watering hole now closed at lunch time. However, this was quickly remedied by finding another great pub on the Market Place near the river. We have also discovered a new lunch stop in Melbourne where I seem to recall a longer than normal lunch being taken. This was before we lost riders! Numbers have been fairly consistent, but a couple of our regulars seem to have gone over to the other side and have discovered the joy of walking. Hadrian's Wall and The Ridgeway national trails among others between them. Consequently, we don't see them so often as they cannot keep up! Stephen is also missing for several weeks at a time while he bags BCQ's or checks them out now that he has taken on the validator roll for Cycle UK. With the rest of May and our Summer rides including the group holiday in the Malvern area to look forward to what could be better.

Jim Gerrard

# Mud, Mud, Where is the Mud?

## Words and Photos by Peter Witting

Not that I'm complaining! We've just had another very dry April, so I knew the Rutland Classic Cycle Race on April 24<sup>th</sup> would be dusty rather than muddy. It's our answer to Paris-Roubaix, but held locally mainly on Rutland lanes, and with loads of off-road tracks to add to the spectacle.

Shortly before my annual visit to the race, a Leicestershire lady posted on the Facebook page of the Roughstuff Fellowship asking if any local groups organised offroad rides. I offered to put together a mix of tracks to meet up with the Rutland Classic, for any fellow RSF members to join.

The lady apologised that she couldn't make that Sunday, and I hadn't any other takers for my ride, but it would keep for another year. I set off from Tilton-on-the Hill, north along the Old Melton Road marked as a No Through Road. I forked left off the fast tarmac descent of Marefield Lane onto the track marked "Unsuitable for Motor Vehicles".

Decades ago I'd used the track uphill, but downhill was quite another thing! My bike gathered speed, but the brakes had little effect on the fine gravel

surface. I was glad there was no one else to blame me for putting them in peril! The stream at the bottom was too deep to risk riding through, but there was a footbridge. Alas only one plank remained, leaving me to push from behind hoping the front wheel would not be deflected by the wind!



*Tilton on the Hill*

I followed the tarmac east of Marefield for less than a mile before turning left off Washdyke Road onto the track leading north to Newbold. The surface was better, the descent less steep, and the ford had a footbridge with handrails – luxury!

I turned eastward along National Cycle Network Route 64 to Owston. The locals had opened up the Village Hall to cater

for race spectators. Owston was the centre of the race, with multiple passages along the village roads. The hot dog and cuppa were very welcome at the table among all the other bikies.

I kept an eye on my watch to ensure I could reach the race on its first passage of the “Somerberg” track south east of Somerby. The map shows it as Bruce’s Lane, but it’s given the “Berg” title for the race in honour of the Belgian classics. Here on the hilltop was a pile of bikes of every description used by the spectators. Some stripped-down racers, some ATBs, some “gravel bikes” and mine – a plain old Mercian tourer!



*Marefield Lane*

The lead motorbikes were followed by the breakaway riders, then a few team cars throwing up clouds of dust, then the bunch some 7 minutes in arrears. The stragglers continued for maybe another 15 minutes, after suffering various mishaps, mechanicals and falls. I saw one rider head for the 1<sup>st</sup> aid with his arm



*Somerberg main bunch*



held aloft to stem the flow of blood. His white shoes were thoroughly spattered with red blood!

On a warmer sunny day, I would have visited the Stilton Cheese in Somerby for a quick pint before returning for the next “Somerberg” passage. Today I decided to leave the exposed hilltop location, and head for home – but that was not uneventful.

The race had reached the tarmac, turning right towards Owston. With the roads closed temporarily for the race to pass, traffic had built up at the cross roads. I decided to take the quieter lane ahead; but I was surprised by the number of cars approaching along the lane, and even a fire engine!

When I got the next T-junction, I realised why. Several police cars and another fire engine were dealing with the results of a crash involving several cars. That had forced all traffic headed for Oakham to be diverted onto the route of the Rutland Classic Cycle Race!

Anyone interested in joining me next year? There are a few more off-road sections and “bergs” I can throw in!



*Track to Newbold from Washdyke Road*

# Not all Cycle rides are incident free!

Jeffrey Eaves remembers past experiences

I'm sure we all have had cycle rides that are not that special, and perhaps the odd one that was memorable for some catastrophe or another – such as on a ride in Scotland, where I got soaking wet and resorted to completing it by train, and once in the Peak District where again it rained all day and I arrived at my Youth Hostel, to be welcomed by, “Everyone else has abandoned tonight's stay, so you have the whole place to yourself.” Even, on a 180 x 2 miler to visit my parents-in-law in Brighton, on my new Galaxy I had one spoke breakage after another. Again the train came to the rescue for part of the return home journey. On my return home I found the wheel had been laced 2x on one side and 3x on the other with the pulling spokes in opposing directions - I now build my own).

Another incident happened on a local ride last March.

The weather forecast was for a fine spring day – possibly even reaching light winds and a temperature of 14C - too good not to go cycling, so off I set with the aim of seeing the daffodil fields in the vicinity of Pinchbeck (in the Fens). Once upon a time this area was where spring bulbs were commercially grown for the home market, and



would have been alive with varieties and colour. I made a good start and progressed easterly passing finishing clumps of snowdrops, primroses and so on – even in one place seeing the first yellow brimstone butterfly this year – and in others new born lambs and a couple of calves. Just what could go wrong?

Well things started to go downhill just after my lunch stop on the banks of the Forty Foot Drain, a little east of Haconby. If you look at a map with a

magnifying glass you will spot a few lonely bridges over these waters. I crossed over as planned, spent a few minutes talking to a disabled man in a motorized wheel chair, and then proceeded easterly to see the place where I had spotted those daffodils once before, and yes they were there, but had that field shrunk a bit? Thence onwards again and made a loop back along another “Drove Road” back to Forty Foot drain and another bridge, again passing two more fields of commercially grown daffodils. Then the first disaster struck. The bridge gate had been replaced with one comprising **heavy** duty ‘H’ steel girders, which was just too heavy for me to open, (even if it didn’t have a latch)! Well not quite a disaster, as I was able to ride along the drain bridleway northwards to the next which turned out to be a standard ten inch diameter pipe. I am not that fleet footed/wheeled so on again along the now grassy humpy bridleway to a metalled road and a bridge I could actually cross with a bike, thence westwards along a not very interesting road across Dowsby Fen, and back onto the foothills leading off the flat Fenland.

The next few miles were the subject of an earlier ride to Folkingham recounted in this magazine, and all was well again, but the daffodils I knew were here were not in bloom. On coming to Irnham I was brought to a dead stop. Yes, I had seen some confusing signs about a road closure, but as per my custom ignored them as usually I could get off and carry my bike past the obstruction using the grass verge (on one previous occasion elsewhere, the road had been closed whilst one workman was sitting on a stool painting the handrail across a bridge – that saved me a seven mile diversion). Irnham was different though. There was a culvert under the road through which a

stream flowed, and at this particular point it had been excavated, and diverted into metre square pre-fabricated concrete pipe sections – and you’ve guessed - the sides and top not yet made good. Back to the map, to divert northwards was six miles, southwards was eight, BUT what about that track, is there a right of way? Lets take the chance - and yes it was a proper bridleway, so now just the odd mile off my route. Onwards towards home again, and then a very nice young lady policewomen brought me to a stop!



“Where are you going,” she politely asked.

“Colsterworth,” was my reply.



“Sorry you cannot get there this way, a lorry has overturned and with its spilt ten ton load of rocks was completely blocking the road. But hang on, let me ‘phone ahead, there’s a chance you might be able to squeeze your bike past on the verge.” She kindly did, and “Yes they will let you through, but you might have to wait a minute or two whilst they make sure it is safe.” To which I replied that “Now I am in my eighties, I am probably more cautious than other cyclists”. So I progressed on along the A151, wondering just where the problem was, and realizing how cycleable main roads actually are without motor vehicles! I got to the accident, on a nice straight section, just as the overturned lorry with its completely smashed driver’s cab side was being towed away, with an excavator re-loading the rocks into an empty lorry nearby.

On again, with one eye on the now diminishing daylight, and along a little used lane, (also with very minor roadworks), before coming to my road home via South Witham which was *again closed*, and so I would miss the carpets of crocuses along the roadside at Market Overton. This time I took no chances, and as I knew all the lanes around here, chose to go direct via Wymondham, only to find that about two miles from home the off-road cycling had shaken the batteries out of my lamp contacts, and I really should have my lights on!



As I mused on my seventy or so miles ride when at home, I gave thanks for the freedom a bike unremittingly gives, the glorious morning’s cycling, with lambs, calves, daffodils, and (shall I say) a more ‘different’ afternoon, and then realized all my experiences that day also included passing two badgers and six deer and several bunnies and squirrels, all hit by motor vehicles (four deer nearly adjacent to that spilt load), all lying forlornly on Lincolnshire’s verges!

(Jeff. from Rutland)

P.S. Since penning the above, there was a mention on the BBC’s Countryfile programme, that one of the winning pies at Melton Mowbray’s National Pie Competition, a few days before this ride, was called the ‘Road Kill Pie’ !?!?!?

## Obituary

### Ken Pepper

Sadly passed away on 6 March 2022

Ken was a major figure in Leics. cycling & held various posts over many decades. He was well-known for leading the UK party to the annual AIT Rally in various parts of the world. In 1972 he organised it himself – based at Loughborough!

(We had cyclists from all over the world here for a week). The following year, when it was based at Chiny in Belgium, he was presented with the AIT Gold Medal for services to international touring. He even led a trip to Japan.

Amongst the many other things Ken did, was to use his experience in getting consideration for cyclists when the A6 was heavily modified south of Great Glen.

Thanks to Peter Hopkins and Peter Witting for the words and photos.



*Ken (centre, dark shirt) doing what he enjoyed the most - overseas touring with fellow CTC members. Peter Hopkins is extreme right.*

# The Leicestershire CTC Paradox

Peter Hopkins ponders

I have been baffled for some time by a strange apparent contradiction.

CTC/Cycling UK membership has grown rapidly over the past twenty years, and has now even reached an all-time record, but over the same period active participation at local level has been moving in the opposite direction.

Membership of former CTC 'Sections' which were flourishing in the 1980s seems to have dwindled steadily since the 1990s. Some once-vibrant Sections have even disappeared altogether. Is this 21<sup>st</sup> Century trend peculiar to Leicestershire, or is it widespread?

If editor Dave decides to publish this, it is even possible that by the time you read it nothing 'official' will be left of what was once our old 'District Association', with its standard rides and competitions, its certificates, cups and shields, its social events, its rally and other activities which were once popular fixtures in a busy annual programme.

CTC membership at national level was always something of a roller-coaster throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century:

1901 : 51,339

1921 : 10,922

1927 : 25,116

1953 : 53,574

1968 : 18,000+ (I haven't got the exact figure)

During the 1970s another welcome CTC resurgence began, but total membership was still way below that of the fag-end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when it stood at 60,449 in 1899 – two years after the founding of Leicestershire & Rutland District Association in March 1897. But in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century we have at last beaten that long-standing Victorian record. Nowadays, I believe, membership is in excess of 65,000 – the highest in CTC history. At local level, therefore, activities should theoretically be booming as never before – but just the opposite seems to have happened.

There has to be an explanation for it, but I don't know what it is.

Even before I moved from Loughborough in 2008, it was clear that very few younger people were riding with local Sections. Instead of teenagers, as in former decades, the 'youngsters' on Sunday runs were by then in their 40s – and the

average age of DA committee members was already past 60. The shortage of invigorating ‘new blood’ was often lamented at our meetings.

One suggested explanation I have heard is that today’s younger generation are not ‘joiners’, and have little interest in pre-arranged corporate activities. Rather than, say, having a fixed Runs List with dates, times and venues set up several months in advance, they prefer to organise their own cycling more informally and adaptably with their friends, which is now so easy to do on an ‘ad hoc’ basis using the various facilities available on ‘smart’ phones. Communicating such things as last-minute changes to many other people easily, simultaneously and cheaply would have been impossible 30 years ago. This makes the organisation of runs looser and freer.

Some die-hards probably attribute local decline to the relatively recent drastic re-organisation of the CTC: the scrapping of its century-old name, the adoption of charitable status and the abolition of the traditional DA/Section structure. The latter certainly necessitated a lot of re-thinking and re-organisation.

No doubt many felt “If it aint broke, don’t fix it!”



Was it ‘broke’?

There is also some evidence that many newcomers are mainly interested in cycling as a now-fashionable way of keeping fit and healthy, like jogging, ‘power-walking’\* and going to the gym or swimming pool – all very popular today.

They don’t want to potter along casually with sandwiches in the saddlebag and a relaxed lunchtime pint at a pub, with no idea of exactly how many miles the run is or how long it’s taking. They prefer the challenge of a specific target and time. In a small way, the CTC used to offer this but only once a year with their ‘Standard Rides’ (30mls in 3hrs; 50mls in 4hrs; 100mls in 8hrs, etc.) The enormous popularity of ‘sportives’, held every weekend and often expensive to enter, shows how much demand there is for this kind of against the clock activity – compared with the traditional, easy-going club run we all remember with affection.

It also needs to be remembered that even in the distant past there were many CTC members – perhaps even a majority – who did not take part in local activities. This included myself for many years. We joined because we believed in what the CTC was doing on behalf of cyclists – and for the Third Party insurance, the



Legal Defence/Advice, the magazine and the useful handbook with its recommended B&Bs and bike shops.

Assuming that the problem is not unique to Leicestershire & Rutland, there may be an element of truth in all these (and other) suggestions as contributory factors, but I doubt whether there is a single clear explanation which would account for the paradox of National Boom/Local Decline. The one comforting thing is that at least a lot more people are now becoming keen cyclists, which obliges official authority – including the government – to take our long-neglected activity seriously.

*\*The popularity of 'power-walking', which is very energetic, may account for the fact that on local country walks in the programme of the Ramblers' Association you will see many grey, white and bald heads – but not many walkers under middle age. Our rambling friends seem to have a similar 'problem' at local level!*





# Some Railway Line Memories

Jeffrey Eves Reminisces

Being a non-motorist, I have frequently had to use the railways to facilitate my cycling. In my younger years this simply meant arriving at a station, booking a ticket for myself, plus another for my bike, then a visit to the platform staff office where another ticket would then be pasted onto my rear mudguard stating my destination, and when the train arrived, lifting the bike up into a capacious luggage van – and off we went. Later, things became a little simpler, as bikes went free with their owner and you only needed just to turn up. Now, I find it easier to go in advance to my local station and let their clerk do all the hard work, BUT you still need to double check what they sell you. For instance, my last trip to Scotland, (2020) they made a mistake and gave me tickets for self at about £100 return for me, to Glasgow, and **50 pence** for the onward leg to Oban, the next day, and farewise for the return from –Inverness and Edinburgh later. However, there are other ways to enjoy cycle touring using the railways, and twenty or thirty years ago old unused cycle tracks were in places converted into long distance footpaths and often cycle routes. I may be wrong, but I think the first of these may have been the ‘Tissington Trail’, which linked with the ‘High Peak Trail’, in Derbyshire. If I ventured into the depths of my loft space, I



**Monsal Head Viaduct on the Tissington Trail**



should have the date, as these were highlighted in the then C.T.C. magazine, and shortly became a must for myself, as I ventured to visit relatives in the general region of Manchester, by bike of course, and logged some GREAT rides along both trails.



*Geat Central Way through Leicester*

Since then, more have become available, so here follows some

experiences of others either cycled, or used for convenience, such as using the station waiting rooms at Danzey (in Warwickshire), and others in South Wales and Scotland, to eat my mid-day sandwich! Incidentally, I have used the High Peak and Tissington trails several times since, and never failed to enjoy them. Mentioning the High Peak Trail, only a few years ago, it was extended northwards, which must have been at considerable expense as electric lighting accompanied the tarmac cycle path through the several tunnels along the extension to nearly Buxton..... I think I might have gone along it just after the formal opening, as I remember trying to phone my daughter (and finding no signal) as I was delayed by the hoards of families walking the extension, many with children in tow on their first bikes/trikes!

Another chance find was the Brampton Valley Way, between Market Harborough and the outskirts of Northampton. I had to go to some church meetings in Northampton, and twice used this route as a means of being “quicker.” (It did mean though, having to push through two half mile tunnels, as the track was dangerously uneven). At the trail’s southern end, choose your day wisely, as there is a fence down the centre, and on the opposite side to yourself are steam trains, running services on a preserved railway! I have also taken my dogs in their box (on the carrier there) – they enjoyed running alongside as I cycled, but **NO I’m NOT** walking through those tunnels! Unlike some others, this route is quite scenic and interesting.

I’m sure I do not need to draw Leicester riders’ attention to the Great Central Way, as it crosses north to south through the city, however, there may be a few unaware of its existence. I have used it several times, once getting horribly lost traveling north, when there were road work diversions just north of the City centre, and I was trying to access the cycleway past the Space Centre and onwards to Syston. On another occasion I used it during the pandemic, to access Leicester Cathedral from Rutland, and as much as possible off the City roads, and yet another when I rode south down it, before joining the canal towpath a

short way to continue a ride back home. This last ride was memorable for being very busy and with path side seats facing directly into uncut above head height hedges. A same fast food delivery man also passed me twice going the opposite way on his bike!

I cannot recommend the cycle trail in Lincolnshire between Southwell and Farnesfield. For the greater distance it is like riding a straight road between two high uncut hedges, and only views directly in front, or to the rear! The county does however have another, betwixt Newark on Trent and the village of Cotham. Take a 'pinch of salt' when you read the information board describing it as a place H.M. the Queen once used as a train passenger, for it might be an easy way in avoiding boring class A & B roads, but it does border a massive domestic household waste tip, complete with occasional methane gas burn off points. It's surprisingly busy, though, with local cyclists and walkers – no accounting to taste I suppose.

Now don't get the wrong impression, they are not all like that, and I can recommend the former railway track between Pitsford Water and Stanwick Lakes in Northamptonshire, mostly through a country park, though its north eastern end is onto a trunk road, whilst the track becomes a footpath past this hiccup.

Just by way of a change: during the 2021-2022 winter I visited two non-rideable railway footpaths. The first was a mere ten or so miles from home. When I was out for a ride I passed some hedges with walls in front, and spotted a new tourist information board in the gateway. I'd

never seen it before although I've passed that way numerous times. I padlocked the bike and progressed on foot, to find those walls were the sides of a railway bridge, and the hedge were the tops of some lofty Ash trees growing in the old railway bed below (near Tilton on the Hill). The footpath descended steeply to the track bed, and yet more signs told of local fossils to be found (I spotted some), and of badgers, and wild flowers. Apparently the fossils were revealed when the cutting



was constructed and are now world re-known, and might indicate the oldest rocks in England, I have heard that before elsewhere, but quite a nice interesting find and an hour passed.

The other was at Holwell, just north of Melton Mowbray. Yards south of the village is the old mineral railway to a quarry, which passes under the bridge. I



*Little Bytham Train Station - the model version*

found it years ago, and as there were “No dogs allowed” signs, never explored the pathway along the track, even though I knew of snowdrops there. This year I gave it a chance and visited. I wasn’t disappointed, as on the approach path from the road, and the first part of the track bed, were thousands, perhaps even millions, of snowdrops out in full bloom. I had literally never ever seen so many in one place – and even more occasional clumps alongside the track bed itself. Wanting somewhere to go one afternoon during lockdown, I hit upon the idea of checking out Little Bytham Station (Lincolnshire). I had picked up a book telling the story of a couple who choose this location to be the backdrop (i.e. scenery) for their model railway layout. This is the point where the London to York railway line and the former Melton Mowbray to Bourne, Lincolnshire, cross. So on getting there, I locked and parked the bike to explore. The station itself has long gone, and now there are just big gaps between the four tracks, so too has the steel girder over-bridge carrying the Melton to Bourne line, so the model railway layout was but a memory of olden times, nonetheless it was amusing to see the wire fence the model builders had taken the effort to measure for their model, (it was to be modelled precisely), and to see the adjacent Inn also scale modelled, but what I thought was the most interesting, were hints of a third railway line there, whose booking office was part of the adjacent Inn. It was a private line to the nearby local Lord’s family home at Grimsthorpe Castle, along which he ran at first horse drawn trains, then later he bought his own steam engine (called ‘Havilah’) and operated a regular service for himself and his villagers at Edenham. A couple of miles away the track goes under a

multi-arched road bridge, where the interested can access the track bed to view its narrow high arches. I estimate his service was more frequent than the local bus service that presently passes through my village today!

One last titbit; in May 2021 there was an item on BBC East Midlands News, of a new railway bed cycleway near Nottingham, so I took the chance to seek it out. It ran from Cotgrave Country Park to Holme Pierrepont, and yes I found and rode it, however it in its short length of a little over two miles, was a bit of a disappointment, for it just connected the two more interesting places I have sought out and enjoyed by bike. It even boasts (now) an aerial view of a small solar electricity generating farm but enables the cyclist to avoid some busier roads!

Have I tempted you to try marrying your cycling to trains? Here is a suggestion. On your Grantham Landranger map, find the Viking way (also smashing for an off road ride), at grid ref. SK847 323, there is a waymarked cycle track along a disused mineral railway line, follow it eastwards and gently downhill all the way and cross the canal over a pedestrian bridge, then rejoin it a short way along the towpath and thence into the Vale of Belvoir to SK 832 371, now part of NCN 15. Five lovely miles of cycling, even a friendly pub half way along!

So, bikes and trains still have something in common, and in my particular case have become indispensable. Not only are they making it possible for me to make visits to far off places, they are providing places for me to explore, even though time brings changes. When I did the Lands' End to John o'Groats ride could I get from Rutland to Cornwall, and back from Inverness with just ONE change in each direction (but sadly no longer). The railways are also able to provide excuses to visit other places where I have explored other things/sights/sites of interest, such as the East Anglian coastline!







*Leics BCTC heat, Griffydam, 1976. In the front, L to R - John Allen, Howard Naylor, Ken Pepper (no 29), Les Warner (CTC Nat'l Secretary), Peter Hopkins.*



*Photos courtesy of Peter Hopkins*

*Ken Pepper (middle row, centre, dark shirt) surrounded by fellow CTC members at the 1973 AIT Cycle rally, Chiny, Belgium.*

# Cycling the Bay Way

Words and pictures by Linda







*Laurel & Hardy immortalized in bronze*

The first week of April saw us having to take some leave, so we decided to go to South Cumbria to cycle the Bay Cycle Way, as well as explore the local area. The Bay Cycle Way is an 81 mile (130km) route devised by Sustrans, which goes along Morecambe Bay from Barrow-in-Furness to Glasson Dock near Lancaster, exploring the wonderful coastal and inland scenery along the way.

As we were staying in Cark-in-Cartmel, we decided to make use of the local railway station and do the ride over 2 days, but spent the first day just getting to know the local area. We decided to do the ride from north to south and set off for Barrow on the Sunday. The train was on time, virtually empty and there was no problem getting the bikes on. We also benefitted from an offer allowing cheaper travel to try and tempt people back onto the train.

We alighted at Barrow, and after a little detour, arrived at Sandy Gap on Walney Island, the official start or end of the ride. It was interesting to see a different side to Cumbria, which the tourists don't usually see, although until 1974 this area had actually been in the county of Lancashire. We cycled

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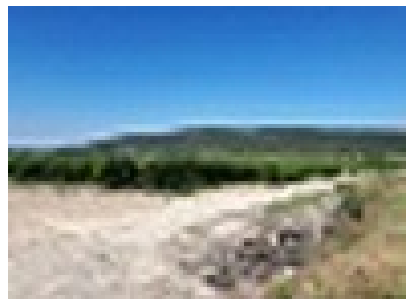
The house has 2 lounges, a large kitchen, 4 bedrooms & a bathroom. In addition to the large garage, the former bakery & shop, there is a secluded courtyard with barbecue & outside furniture.

It is in the village of Argeliers with restaurants & local shops. There is a newly opened supermarket on the edge of the village. The village is surrounded by vineyards, the products of which may be bought at the local Cave Co-operative.

To the north of the village are quiet roads leading up to the Montagne Noire. For off road cycling there is the towpath of the Canal du Midi (165 miles long), tracks through the vineyards & into the hills.

Nearby historic towns include Narbonne (13miles), Beziers (17m) & Carcassonne (31m), apart from historic sites they have large supermarkets & other useful shops such as Decathlon. The nearest Mediterranean beach is 22 miles away.

For more information call Chris on 0116-230-3274, 07982-021559 or access the web site in Google enter 'La Vieille Boulangerie Argeliers'





across the bridge back to the mainland, going through the former ship-building and industrial areas. We then picked up a traffic-free route along the coast with views of Roa and Piel Islands. Piel Island has its own king, the landlord of the pub, but the ferry wasn't running at this time of year, so there was no opportunity to meet him or sample his beer.

The route then headed inland, through some charming villages and a welcome coffee stop at Gleaston Watermill. We then passed through an area of limestone pavement and ancient monuments before reaching Ulverston, the birth place of Stan Laurel, of Laurel and Hardy comedy duo fame. After Ulverston the route crossed the Leven estuary, with fabulous views of the bay and the many wading birds which frequent the bay. We then had a traffic free section before reaching Cartmel, with its priory and its famous sticky toffee pudding shop, and then on to Cark (37mile total).

The next day was not so promising weatherwise, but we decided to catch the train to Lancaster and ride from south to north. The train was a lot busier with many people en route to Manchester Airport. However, we got the



bikes on safely and got to Lancaster for the ride to Glasson Dock. This was mainly traffic-free along the River Lune estuary, and after a coffee at Glasson Dock we repeated the ride back to Lancaster in the drizzle.



From Lancaster the route went via Morecambe (and the start of the Way of the Roses cycle route), along the Lancaster Canal through Hest Bank and Bolton-le-Sands and on to Silverdale and Arnside, an area of outstanding natural beauty. The weather had not improved, and although “great views” were promised at the top of Warton Crag, this was not to be the case. From Arnside, the route detours inland as there is no cycle path on the Arnside viaduct across the bay. It was becoming even greyer and murkier as we approached Grange-over-Sands, a genteel Edwardian resort and the roads felt busy. However, we were soon out of Grange to reach the quieter roads and back to Cark-in-Cartmel. (54 mile total)

Overall, a lovely two day cycle ride with some stunning views of Morecambe Bay, interesting landscapes, wonderful birdlife and a ride achieved without use of a car to reach start and finish points.





*Laughing in the rain at the 2004 Birthday Rides in the Peak District.* Dave Binks



*Barry Bogin finds out why the hill is named "The Struggle"*



*Happy Campers. 2014 York Birthday Rides*





*Now - there's a welcome sight !!  
Spotted by Dave Binks in Suffolk*

***Cycle Chat is the quarterly magazine of the  
Leicestershire & Rutland Group of Cycling UK***

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All contributions are welcome, send them to the Editor who reserves the right to amend copy for legal or production reasons.

Contributions should be in "MS Word" or similar, or neatly handwritten. Typed copy, CDs or flash drives are also welcome (CDs and drives will be returned). Please ensure Excel tables and PDF files are legible on an A5 page size. Cycling related photos, in .jpg format, with the photographer's name and permission are particularly welcome.

All contributions should be accompanied by the writer's name, address, telephone number or e-mail. If not stated, the photos are by the article's author. We try to acknowledge photo copyright whenever possible. If there is a problem, we apologise and ask you to contact us immediately.

Views expressed in letters, articles or editorial are not necessarily those of the Leicestershire & Rutland Group of Cycling UK

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# Cafe News



The popular **Cafe Ventoux** in Tugby has temporarily shut for a while, but the same people are now welcoming cyclists at The Fox and Hounds, Tugby for breakfast and food and refreshments. Feel free to pop in and treat yourselves to excellent coffee, cake, breakfast / lunch, or even a pint ( if you arrive within licensing hours ! ) They hope to reopen the cafe again in July 2022.

*At the time of going to press (early May 2022) cafes and pubs etc in our area are all open, and mostly without restriction, although there may be some minor rules in place. The situation in other UK areas, such as Scotland and Wales, seem to be the same, BUT ALL may change virtually overnight if HM Gov't deems it needs to tighten up contacts again. So keep your eyes on the local news and don't argue if the establishment owner asks you to do something.*

*With most people in the UK now double jabbed, and more and more having had their booster, the risk to us all is relatively small now, but IS STILL THERE, so caution please.*

## CARRY A MASK WITH YOU.

### WANTED - Your Photos

As I hope you have noticed, more photos are appearing in Cycle Chat but we constantly need more. The advent of digital photography has made taking, manipulating, distributing and reproducing the images easy these days, so there is no excuse for not giving your work a wider audience.



If you have some cycling related shots (not views) that would be suitable for publication and you would like to share, email them to [davebinks@ntlworld.com](mailto:davebinks@ntlworld.com)

Images must be in .jpg format (every digital camera does that automatically) and I must have both the name of the photographer and his/her permission to use it. I am particularly keen to see work that has been shot in vertical format because then it can be used on the front cover!

To keep costs down, only shots printed on the outer covers are in colour, but I can convert any others to black & white.

## Forthcoming County Event Dates

18 December      Mince Pie  
Meet, Belton VH, from 10.30am



### We need **YOUR** contribution

Cycle Chat is written and edited by volunteers, not paid correspondents. Your 75p per copy hardly even covers the cost of printing and posting, it certainly doesn't leave enough to pay anyone.

Without sufficient input from our members and readers (you), Cycle Chat will just fade away. Don't just leave it to others all the time.

We need items from you, yes **YOU!**

Anything with a loose connection to cycling is welcome. Your best/worst ride; your best/worst route/cycling holiday; your favourite or worst bit of kit; a recipe that would be particularly appealing to other cyclists; tips; things to avoid; photos with a cycling content (not just views); reminiscences of bygone days; letters of praise, or complaint; requests for info; etc, etc; or anything else that springs to mind.

Don't worry about your spelling or grammar; that is easily corrected by the editor who will also do the layout and make it look really good on the printed page.

With most having access to a computer, writing a story is easy, you don't have to do it all in one go. A good technique is to write down the bare bones, then go back and gradually fill in the details over the space of a week or two, thus letting your subconscious work away in the background.

**Yes, we ARE interested in what you have to say.**

Please send whatever you have to the Editor.:- [davebinks@ntlworld.com](mailto:davebinks@ntlworld.com)



Thursday rides  
meet at  
10.30am.  
Saturdays  
10am.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Distance</u>		
5th May	Thurs	Astley Book Farm	Half day	Angie Fisher	7824808788
12th May	Thurs	Morrissons	Half day	Jim Gerrard	01455 823787
19th May	Thurs	Dobbies Gdn Centre	Half day	Paul Kutchta	7414474233
26th May	Thurs	Peoples Café Bedworth	Half day	Roger Payne	7757103139
2nd Jun	Thurs	St Marys Hinckley	Half day	Gill Lord	01455 456708
9th Jun	Thurs	Hill Top Gdn Centre	Half day	Chris Turley	7971289464
16th Jun	Thurs	Sutton Cheney Wharf	Half day	Ann Jenkins	01455 212565
23rd Jun	Thurs	Heritage Café	Half day	Chris Taylor	02476 741276
30th Jun	Thurs	Makins Fishery	Half day	John Andrews	01162 865738
7th Jul	Thurs	Astley Book Farm	Half day	Karen Hand	7941508045
14th Jul	Thurs	Morrissons	Half day	Paul Hand	7941508045
21st Jul	Thurs	Dobbies Gdn Centre	Half day	Eric Rowland	7768396806
28th Jul	Thurs	Peoples Café Bedworth	Half day	Anne Taylor	02476 741276

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PEOPLES CAFÉ BEDWORTH CV12 8NF

ST MARY'S HINCKLEY - LE10 1DW, MAKINS FISHERIES - CV11 6QJ



# South Leicestershire Section

Contact Neil Dixon for more details on 0788 9854459

DATE	TIME	START	DESTINATION	COMMENTS
5/6/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Thornby	
12/6/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Tur Langton	
19/6/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Sutton Cheney Wharf	
26/6/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Billesdon	venue Northern Cobbler Rolleston Lodge Farm
3/7/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Draycote Visitor Centre	
10/7/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Sutton Cheney Wharf	
17/7/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Brandon Marsh	
24/7/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Medbourne	Elevenes at Rural Relaxing near to Cricket Club
31/7/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Thornby	
7/8/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Great Bowden	Bowden Stores
14/8/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Twycross	
21/8/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Tur Langton	
28/8/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Welford (Mini Meadows)	
4/9/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Billesdon	venue Northern Cobbler Rolleston Lodge Farm
11/9/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Medbourne	Elevenes at Rural Relaxing near to Cricket Club
18/9/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Twycross	
25/9/22	09:30	Broughton Astley	Brandon Marsh	

## CHARNWOOD RUNS LIST

Date	Start	Eleven's	Lunch	Leader
05 Jun	9.30 M	Fradley	Elford	
12 Jun	9.30 H	Rothley Station	Normanton on Soar	Keith
19 Jun	9.30 S	Sawley Marina	East Leake	Nick
26 Jun	9.30 W	Countesthorpe	Willoughby Waterleys	Jim
03 Jul	9.00 B	Sawley	Stapleford	Martin
10 Jul	9.00 M	Polesworth	Shackerstone	Dave
17 Jul	9.00 H	Thurlaston	Carlton	Paul
24 Jul	9.00 S	Markeaton Park	Dalbury Lees	Pete
31 Jul	9.00 W	Burbage Common	Stoke Golding	Nick
07 Aug	9.00 A	Fradley Junction	Whittington	Jim
14 Aug	9.00 H	Atherstone	Ridge Lane	Martin
21 Aug	9.00 B	East Goscote	Sutton Bonnington	Dave
28 Aug	9.00 M	Alrewas	Coton in the Elms	Paul
04 Sep	Cycling Holiday	Netherley Hall	Malverns	Lyn
11 Sep	9.30 S	Swarkestone	Repton	Nick
18 Sep	9.30 A	Bretby	Melbourne	Jim
25 Sep	9.30 W	Thurlaston	Newbold Verdon	Martin

A – Ashby HSBC  
M – DFS Measham

B – Belton Church  
S – Lount X Roads

H – Heather Church  
W – Bagworth Village Hall

Runs contact: Lyn Gale 07779 794317

## Leicester Easy Riders

Due to lack of members and old age, if any one is interested on a ride on a Sunday please contact David Smith on 0116 2417908 who goes out most Sunday mornings.

**The deadline for the Autumn 2022 issue of  
Cycle Chat is 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022  
That edition will cover September, October & November 2022**



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**Watermead Park, Leicester**  
**Photo:- Zoe Barker**