

Cycle Chat

Leicestershire & Rutland CTC
Since 1897

75p

Autumn 2023



www.ctclr.org.uk

Leicestershire & Rutland CTC Officials

Secretary

Alan Hartshorne, 16 Chadwell Rd, Leicester, LE3 6LF 0116 2314891

Cycle Chat Editor email:- davebinks@ntlworld.com

Dave Binks, 92 Balmoral Road, Mountsorrel, LE12 7EN 0794 1151792

Cycle Chat Administration

Pete & Lyn Gale, 6 Bluebell Close, Donisthorpe, Swadlincote, Derbys
DE12 7RW tel 01530271665 email :- lyntian@hotmail.co.uk

This is not a complete list of officials



Editor's Thoughts

As I write this, the Tour de France is in full swing and is proving to be highly entertaining with a battle going on between two previous winners, Vingegaard and Pogacar. Sadly there is no longer any Mark Cavendish to excite us in the bunch sprints following his retirement after suffering a broken collar bone in a crash. But Brits are currently occupying 3 of the top 10 placings. Strong showings by the remarkable Yates brothers just 1 second apart in 5th and 6th places! Tom Pidcock, in his first TdF is also showing astonishing ability and fills the 8th place, a mere half minute behind them. It's truly amazing how the Continental race scene has been infiltrated by British riders since Chris Boardman's days. Long may it continue.

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My jaunts have taken me to various destinations and the last before writing this, was to Bavaria, Germany. The weather was great and the villages and towns were just stunning. I was spoilt for choice when choosing colourful pictures of cyclists to put on the cover of this edition. It was my first time in Germany, other than an occasional overnight or fleeting business trip and I was impressed. Friendly people, really good cycling facilities and considerate drivers. One thing I did notice was the lack of both litter and overweight people. It makes me rather ashamed to be British when I compare them to us.

A last minute trip to the west coast of Ireland was abandoned after a week due to cold temperatures, strong winds and heavy rain forecast for the foreseeable future. But it's still on my bucket list.

The Welsh Festival of Cycling is between now and my next cycling holiday which is to Sweden. More of that next time.

Get out on those bikes and enjoy the rest of the summer, while you can.

Dave Binks

From the Secretary

Alan Hartshorne



Well here we are in summer, I know it's summer because I am constantly getting pizza delivery drivers knocking on my door for a house around the corner. I know they don't cook because I got a caller to buy their oven!

They keep telling us how warm it was in June but early part of the month was cold and grey in the midlands whilst other parts were roasting.

Cycling UK are reporting that accident rates are down, but I have had two accidents, neither my fault. One was an e-scooter hurtling round the corner, no attempt to avoid me, too fast for me to avoid him. The second one, I stopped at a junction and found myself on the ground; a van had run into the back of me. So I was pleased at a City Cycling Meeting we were told the police were going to target fast riding cyclists & e-scooters in the city centre. I did see them actually doing this one Friday. I also noticed that the police are post coding cycles in the Leicester Market each Friday.

On the Sunday following the AGM, a small group of us joined the crowd at the Cyclists' War Memorial Service at Meriden, where Morgan Reynolds, the oldest member of our group at the Service, presented the wreath.

We held the AGM on 20th of May but it was very disappointing that only 8 attended. We need you to tell us what you want!

Peter Witting is standing down next year as Treasurer after holding the role for 50 years. An incredible record, so many thanks to him. We will need a volunteer to replace him or we will no longer be able to continue. How did we get in this position? We organised the AIT Rally in 1972, the Birthday Rides in 1984 & 97 and we always had volunteers in plenty. However most of those we have lost and the ages of others means they cannot continue.

I have taken over the off-road event as Charnwood didn't want to do it this time. The start is at Staunton Harold Reservoir 10.30am Sunday the 8th of October. I hope you will support it.

The President's ride is 3rd of September. I hope to be there, but a problem with my right eye may stop me.

As the numbers were very low at the Carol Service last year, this year's is in the balance. We really need you to volunteer.

Recently I had the misfortune to have a tyre blow out going down hill but I managed to handle it well and didn't fall. The sidewall split so a long walk home followed. After 7 miles a chap in a car stopped and offered me a lift home, normally I am nervous about accepting lifts from strangers, but with another 3 miles left I took the chance and he took me home. It turned out he was a keen cyclist and off-duty policeman. Then some time later I was out for a ride and the tyre felt bumpy so went to pump it up. It repeatedly went down, so after 3 goes I put another inner tube in; same result. Again, a chap came up and offered me a lift but this time I declined. I put the original inner tube back in and this time it went up! Three lads came along as I was putting my wheel back in and one of them gave me his phone number, saying if I had any more trouble he would pick me up and take me home. I think it's nice to know there are good people about.

See the Group website for the latest information www.ctclr.org.uk



President's Ride

Neil Dixon invites you to join him. The President's Ride will start from Lutterworth Town Hall on Sunday 3rd September, at 9:30am. The destination is Thornby Buddhist Centre for coffee, followed by lunch at the Wharf Inn, Welford. If you intend to ride and go on to lunch, then please let me know in advance, so I can book sufficient space at the pub.

Come and join me



Technical Topics

By Peter Witting

Assault & Battery – The bad news and the good?

It seems that EVs, Electric Vehicles, are bad news for us cyclists. The reason is potholes! EVs double the stress on roads compared to previous vehicles due to the battery weight. They increase the tarmac cracks leading to more potholes. It's the weaker unclassified roads used by us cyclists that will suffer disproportionately worse damage. With half the number of potholes being filled now than a decade ago, and a £12 billion backlog, is our government going to further increase highway repair funding? Answers on a postcard!

The goodish news comes from Toyota. They are researching new battery technology to increase driving range with lower cost. Could that technology trickle down to E-bike batteries or even our bike lights by the end of the decade?

“Forever” chemicals and our Rainwear

It seems the lightest, best (and most expensive) cycling jackets from Goretex, their “Shakedry” kit, uses PFOA chemicals in the waterproofing membrane. These are now regarded as dangerous “forever” chemicals, due to be phased out. It's not just Goretex that are having to make changes. The shakedry technology stops raindrops sticking on the outside of the jacket, thereby allowing sweat to pass through the membrane and keeping you dry inside -

simple! Will the replacements be as good? Time will tell, but if you want a waterproof jacket that can screw up into your spare waterbottle, ask Santa now!

Bucking Bronco – an epic fail!

Have you ever had your bike refuse to move forwards, rear up and drop you backwards off your saddle – just like a bucking bronco? Hurriedly setting off from our coffee stop to catch those up the road, I had jumped on the bike and pressed on the pedals. Unbeknown to me, the last gearchange had pulled the gear cable through its clamp. That left the chain in a large sprocket, while the rear mechanism had shifted to the smallest. The mechanism had jammed at this extreme angle, refusing to rotate the chain. As I began to fall sideways, I grabbed the bike rack behind me which pulled the front wheel off the ground, dropping me backwards off the saddle - an epic fail!

Can I prevent it happening again? The Shimano cable clamp has always seemed a bit suspect to me.

I think I'll make a secondary clamp around the gear cable, using an old electrical mains cable clamp from a connector. Just as I use a twin-bolt seat post collar, described in Cycle Chat June 2019 – the belt & braces approach!



A Tube is a Tube – or is it?

Eclipse inner tubes have been around for some years. Maybe it was the pricing around £25 that deterred me – and still does! Instead of conventional Butyl, they are made from thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU). That means they require matching patches for repairs, but overnight curing so no roadside repairs. Reviews claim they can improve performance on a lightweight bike, less so on heavier machines. Other TPU brands are available, but I'll stick with butyl for now.

Just for fun

A mini touring quiz.

No. 1



Rutland Jeff asks how well you observe what's around you.

When out cycling, do you keep an eye out for curiosities?

Here are some that Rutland Jeff. has found – can you find the common answer?

The following villages all have something in common, but what are they?

- Whissendine, Rutland has the second tallest with 4 (2), still working.
- Heckington, Lincs. This one has 8, (there's a water version at Cogglesford). It also still works.
- Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire's last survivor of this type with 4.
- Swannington, Leics. Adjacent is a history of 800 years of coal mining, but this one is 200 years old and has 4.
- Sneinton, Notts. Owned by the City Council but managed with an adjoining science centre and has 4, still working.

Another test to come in the next edition

All villages have Windmills: Number = number of sails

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.

Pete & Lyn's details are : -

Address: 6 Bluebell Close,
Donisthorpe, Swadlincote, Derbys DE12 7RW
Phone 01530 271665 email lyntian@hotmail.co.uk

List of winners 2022/3 CTC Events



Throughout the year, the Leics & Rutland Member Group runs a few competitions to encourage us to get out and about on our bikes and join in group activities. The winners of the various trophies are as follows:-

- Overall Best All Rounder Peter Witting
- Sulley Rides Oldest Man 100k Dave Binks
- Sulley Rides Oldest Women Gill Lord
- Bull Family Trophy Jones family
- Hames Award Jean Deacon
- Club Person Of Year Alan Hartshorne
- Photo Competition
 - Club Life Dave Binks
 - Theme Trees Neil Macmillan
 - Pictorial Jim Gerrard
 - Humorous John Catt

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.



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

CYCLE PATHS OR TRACKS



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 people cycling on their bikes
(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 2023)

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

Last date for entries extended to 31st January 2024

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

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

Some thoughts on “Getting Older.”

Rutland Jeff.

Notwithstanding my ongoing skin cancer and osteo-arthritis, etc I have been conscious that cycling is not as comfortable as it has been for most of my cycling life. Not only am I having to push up more (less) steep hills, or, having shorter rides, but it starts to hurt after about fifty miles, so I have been forced to consider solutions – and yes, I am fed up with those who are telling me to “ease up, you are getting older” (84), even, “I wish I could do what you do.”

Anyway, during spring this year I tackled the problem head-on, and following is a little of what I have discovered, just in case it may help those in a similar position to myself, or even enlighten those new to our glorious pastime. For convenience I will split my ‘learnings’ into two distinct parts.

First - Heads.

A year or two ago I was clinically told I was losing my eyesight, so had eye surgery (and strong antibiotic medicines), to try and hold this in check, which seems to have done the trick, BUT, means I now have restricted sideways vision and sun sensitivity etc, and coupled with the arthritis means I have severe problems in glancing behind before adjusting my riding position on the road. That’s easy to put right, (silly me thought), I will use a cycle mirror to see what is behind – after all I had them for many years whilst cycling with my daughters, then as very young children, and also go back to factor 50 sun cream.

I duly looked through the *Useful Spares Box*, found in seasoned cyclists’ sheds, and yes – I still had my many years ago used mirror. The problem came when attempting to re-fit it to my handlebars, as I now have a new bicycle and this in turn had more ‘clutter’ mounted on the bars – you know the sort of things, bar end extensions, brake lever and gear lever clips and so on, to that of my bikes of former years! Quite simply, there was no room to fit it and for my hands. In another magazine, recently, was a piece by another (younger) cyclist who was extolling the merits of a cyclist’s mirror that clipped to his helmet/glasses; so I bought two. I had considered a mirror that fastens to the frame near the front forks and is adjusted to see rearwards between one’s legs – an obvious NO in my case as I had a ‘pylon’ construction Moulton frame and the fixing clip was impossible to attach. Also, I would have had a lovely view of the front of my rear saddlebag!



Typical bar end mirror

Back to that helmet mirror – I chose two versions. The first resembled a mirror on the end of adjustable stiff wires. It was easy to fit to my helmet headband, and adjust to see rearwards (when at a stand-still alongside the kerbside), but was useless when riding as the often rough and pot holed road surface nowadays, set up constant vibrations in the mirror leaving me with headaches, and completely unable to see what was behind.

The second version had a stiffer plastic mount which fitted by either using a Velcro patch around the helmet headband, or, directly using a sticky patch to the helmet itself, with the actual mirror on a ball joint at the front end. It was a ‘**!!!**’ to set up at the kerbside, and like-wise suffered from seemingly magnified vision vibrations – in part because the mounting arm was not bendable and was over long.

Try again, this time using a slightly larger mirror mounted on a ball joint and to be fixed into the hollow end of the actual handlebars. This time, (*there was no makers name to the kit*), the mount was made from thin plastic mouldings. Eventually after finding a shim (actually a piece of plastic tubing scrap), to fix it in the handlebar ends, I broke the clip when tightening the fixing screw (one turn looser - it fell out, one turn tighter - the clip fractured and it fell off leaving the fixing part inside the bars). So, after liberal use of superglue, a steel washer and longer bolt, it was re-fitted, and off I went to the shops. Within four miles the weight of the mirror and road vibrations badly fractured the plastic mount above the ball joint -so off it came and into my saddlebag. More superglue didn't improve matters for a further trial.



Typical helmet mounted mirror

Fourth try – I found a racing cyclists' version of the third, with a much smaller mirror (seemingly slightly convex and made from chromed plastic), with a sturdier plastic mount made by Zéfal. This works and is undergoing trials at present, *but I have to remember it is there!* I can also fold this one back to avoid knocks when parking/garaging, and not have to re-adjust when using on the next ride. Hopefully no more having to use those arthritic joints in twisting and turning to check behind.

Second - Bums.

I have used Brooks saddles for countless years, usually swapping them from bike to bike as needs required, so why am I now not comfortable on mine? Height, slope, position front to rear all didn't seem to work anymore after say fifty miles. I just got sore.

One of the first articles I penned for this magazine was about cycling shorts. Perhaps this was the reason, so I did some research. Apparently, one website informs me, the pad in modern cycling shorts should be replaced after 500 miles or so, as it losses its density and hence effectiveness, ALSO, more modern synthetic short pads are

available in different densities and shapes, so as to be more efficient for different styles of riders. Long dead and buried are chamois leather ones which had special creams rubbed in to make them supple etc. or synthetic pads which often outlived the shorts!

To cut a long exploration short, I needed a density 4 or 5 pad, designed to suit a male cross-country sports cyclist. This should (hopefully) give me the required support/cushioning together with width for my 'sit-bones' and which would be long enough front to



back for a more up-right cycling position for cycle touring. Seems the old idea of asking for a six or eight panel bib style cycle shorts for a waist of xx inches, and with a synthetic pad is now dead and buried! (To note: density one pads are for swimmers/tri-athletes or those wanting minimal support or comfort, whilst density six (are harder to find) and much bulkier. Modern shorts pads also need to be washed after each single use).

Anyway, I chose a pair, tried them, found they seemed to meet my need, and then ordered more to allow for drying time between washes, (it is the foam pad that takes ages to dry out), and am now on an extensive period of seeing whether this solves my comfort problem. (Tomorrow's ride will be about ninety miles, so here's hoping I made the right choice).

Addendum;

After that ride (to Lincoln and back), the mirror was a dream when traffic was behind, whilst the shorts pad was also successful, duly allowing for three/four refreshment breaks.

By the way: Newark on Trent roads are cyclist abominable – you seem to be locked into a gyratory system, with narrow carriageways and signs hidden amongst other street furniture. The surfaces/road edges are so poor you take a risk giving hand signals and holding the bike on course!

On tonight's BBC news was a report of SINK HOLES collapsing Newark's town centre roads.

Editor's Note

The idea that cycle short pads should be replaced after 500 miles and that there is a choice of densities when buying pads is news to me. Obviously, more expensive shorts will (or at least, should) have better quality pads, but I have never been offered a choice of density. It's always been "take it or leave it" and many of my shorts have done thousands of miles and are still soft and comfortable..

Let us know what your experiences are.

“Both Sides Now”

Words and photos by Peter Witting

Those of a certain age may recall Joni Mitchell’s song from 1966. It came to mind when I spotted the magenta symbol for the National Cycle Network exiting eastwards on my O.S. Landranger map for Mansfield & Worksop. But my adjacent map for Lincoln & Newark lacked that magenta symbol. The maps were dated 10 years apart. I discovered that between 2006 & 2016 Sustrans had opened a new crossing for cyclists over the River Trent. The Fledborough viaduct on the old rail line is now part of NCN 647. In theory I could now ride both sides of the Trent north of Newark; would it work in practice?



I chose my touring Mercian for the exploration. The Conti Top Contact tyres would cope with whatever surface Sustrans had provided. The Mercian’s Carradice Camper saddlebag would also be needed for all the clothing I might need to cope with threatening summer weather! After an hour’s drive up the A46 to reach the A1 north of Newark, I parked up at the bypassed village of Cromwell. This was to the west of the

Trent. A clubrun passed by as I unloaded my bike.

The quiet lanes were a joy, north from Norwell, over the A1 to Sutton on Trent and through the hamlets of Grassthorpe, Skegby and Ragnall. My plan was to first cross the Trent from west to east using the Dunham toll bridge – ‘cos it’s free for cyclists! I wasn’t alone as I was passed by a pair of club cyclists. The 50p fee for cars maybe kept the traffic low on the A57, before I turned south on the A1133.

Soon I had turned off for North Clifton, with the lanes flooded from overnight rain. Access to the Fledborough viaduct was signposted at the old rail bridge. You could even follow the track all the way to Lincoln. I scrambled up the bank rather than take the circuitous route up to the level of the old rail line, and headed westwards.





The surface was indeed gravelly, but no problem for my touring tyres. I'd hesitate to risk Gatorskins on the surface, though you might get away with it. The flat mile & a half track was a delight; even a few trackside flowers too. Only one rider passed on the whole length, until I reached the end. Here I got in conversation with a regular user, who was very pleased with the facility. Several cars had parked up here, so he was not alone.

I headed south, trying to reach a pub before the black clouds delivered their next drenching. I passed under the power lines from the now defunct High Marnham power station, to become a green energy hub with fields full of solar panels if approved.

The Lord Nelson at Sutton on Trent proved my port in a storm, with the rain arriving just as I was ready to leave! Oh well, maybe another half and a coffee! Had the rain held off, I'd have made it to the Milestone Tap and it's micro-brewery back at Cromwell. Maybe another day, when I can introduce others to the delights of NCN647 and the Fledborough viaduct.



Tight Tyres

I have always prided myself on my ability to get tyres fitted back onto bike rims without having to use levers. As anyone who has had to use levers to get a tyre back on knows, there is a high chance of pinching the tube betwixt lever and rim and causing a cut in the tube and thus putting you back to square one.

I have always ensured I squeeze the tyre all the way round, so that it can drop into the well of the rim, which allows enough movement to slip the tyre back on AT THE VALVE.

I have increasingly arthritic hands and have always been able to pull using the palm side of my fingers to drag it over the lip the last few inches. I have never had the strength to push it with my thumbs, and find dragging it easier.

However, I recently did have real difficulty fitting a new tyre, and much to my consternation, did have to resort to using my steel (I don't like plastic) tyre levers to get the last bit on.

“There has to be a solution to this” I thought and then recalled a recent article in “Cycle”, Cycling UK's bi-monthly magazine, talking about just this issue.



A quick look on the internet and up popped the article. Various tools, described as “tyre jacks” were described and tested. The one that struck me as meeting the criteria of being reasonably priced (c£10), lightweight (45g), simple, small enough (135 x 22 x 22 mm) to fit in your tool kit ON THE BIKE (no point in a huge tool that is too big to take with you) was the “VAR Tyre Lever RP-42500”. I took the plunger and bought one.

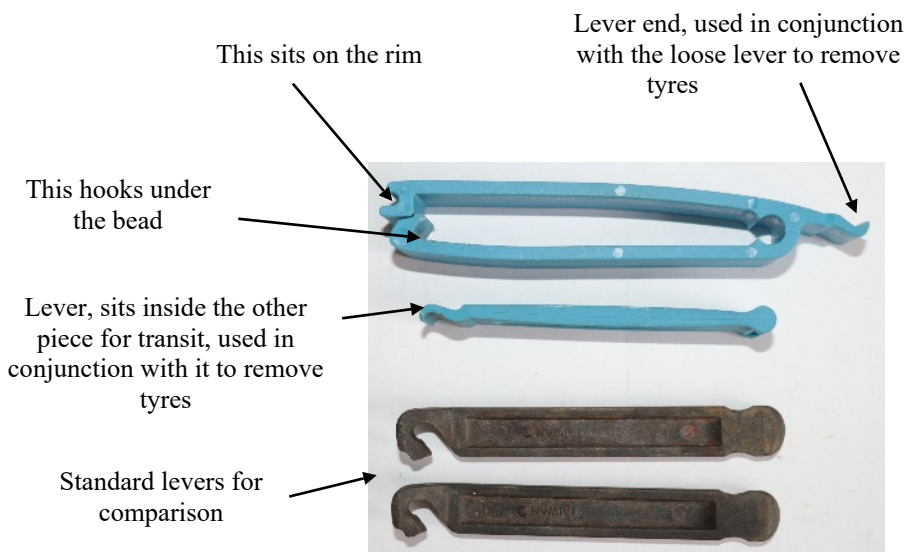
It's plastic, but fibreglass reinforced, so is pretty strong, and unlike some similar tools is used to both remove tyres and replace them. It's a two piece item, one fitting inside the other. Both are needed to remove a tyre, but only one to refit it. Replacing a tight tyre requires the larger, prong shaped one, to be used as a jack. You fit as much of the tyre as you can onto the rim, to the point where you can't get any more on by hand. You straddle tyre with it and sit one side of the jack on the top of the rim on the opposite side of the rim, and the other hooks under the bead of the tyre. It's then a case of levering the tool and popping the tyre over the rim. Removing the tool is a bit awkward, but wriggling it will do the job.

I have used it and it works well.

The two pieces fit together neatly and occupy little more room in my tool roll than a normal set of levers. My only criticism is that the ends of the tool that contact the tyre are a bit sharp, but a few strokes with a file soon sorted that.

There are other tools out there, and one in particular, a heavily advertised one shaped like a giant pair of pliers, works in the same manner, but is only suitable for refitting the tyre (not getting it off) and at 400mm long, far too big to carry with you. As a workshop tool it would be fine, but at far greater cost.

Bottom line - I recommend it if you suffer weak hands and tight tyres, but make sure you carry it with you. It's no use back at home if you need it out on the road!



Rims Splitting

Further to Peter Witting's item about rim wear and splitting rims in his "Technical Topics" page in the Summer 2023 edition of Cycle Chat,

***Roger Gale** has some more info.*

Some wheel rims are designed so that they can wear to almost nothing, but remain safe. The rims in question are the Ryde Andra and Sputnik. They utilise what they call an "Internal Safety Line".

<https://www.ryde.nl/sputnik/>

Cross section of rims when new



Ryde Sputnik Rim

Ryde Andra Rim

Typical cycle rim

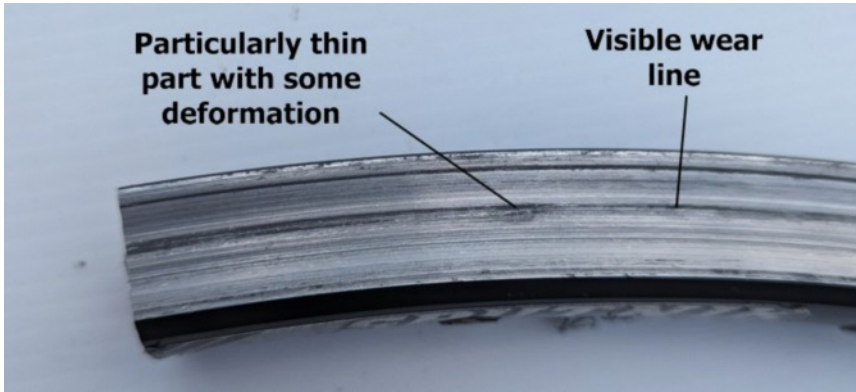
INTERNAL SAFETY LINE

This system shows the rim wear without the risk that the rim sidewall collapses immediately without warning. The pin channel is opening up before the hook is collapsing. With the visible crack in the rim the sidewall stays with its integrity, but needs to be replaced asap. This prevents potential accidents. Internal safety line is a Ryde patented design. Safety line is offered on all UP pinned rims.

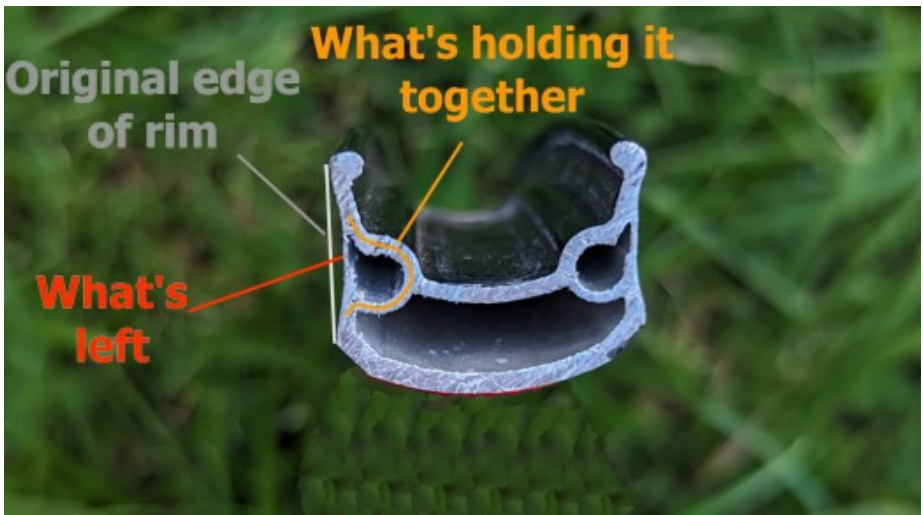
The brake pad wears the rim as normal, but the rim does not fly apart when it gets too thin.

Last year I noticed that a distinct line could be seen on one side of the rim on my rear wheel. In places it was so thin that it looked like very thin aluminium foil. I cut the rim up to see how thin it actually was.

The first photograph shows the line along the braking surface showing the rim is worn out.



The second photograph shows the cross section of a worn out rim.



No matter which type of rim you use, be sure to check for wear.

An exploding rim is no joke.

Photos ; Roger Gale

Rebellion Way (part 1)

Words and photos by Paul Hand

Having completed the King Alfred's Way and the West Kernow Way over the last two years, it seemed appropriate that the Rebellion Way should be the next one on the Agenda. The Rebellion Way takes its name from 2 Norfolk rebellions; Boudica's Rebellion in AD60-61 and Kett's Rebellion in 1549.

Having researched the route it did not appear that it contained as many off road/trail sections as did the other two routes, although the general feed back was that it was a very pleasant route to ride.

So the planning began, the route downloaded and then search for overnight accommodation. We had decided from previous experience that to try and do too many miles in one day on these type of routes can spoil the enjoyment and not allow time to stop off and look at some of the interesting land marks en route. So we set an approximate daily limit of around 50 miles and tried to work this into the plan.

The route starts in Norwich, although it could be picked up at any point, and wends its way around Norfolk over 232 miles, however, by the time we had found

our overnight accommodation this had risen to 280 miles.

Norfolk is a beautiful county with rolling scenery but can be sparse in some areas and finding accommodation to fit our route plan was a little challenging, however, we managed to locate suitable premises for myself and the two friends who were to accompany me.



We planned to start on the 4th June 2023, but travelled to Norwich the day before to meet up.

The 3rd June arrived and with the bike packed I set off from home to ride the 13 miles to Chellaston to meet with one of my companions to travel to Norwich. I did this via the Cloud Trail, which has



had a large proportion of the towpath surfaced.

However, I found when joining the tow path loose chippings had been placed on the tarmac surface making it quite difficult to ride. I can only assume that this surface dressing was to be swept in due course and thereby leaving a 'grippy' surface.

Having met up we made the uneventful journey to Norwich to find our parking place and then to the overnight accommodation.

Norwich, which I'm sure many of you will know straddles the river Wensum, has one of the country's largest medieval cathedrals and is the largest urban area in East Anglia. There is certainly a lot of evidence of ancient buildings and cobbled streets.

Norwich has had a varied and interesting history from Roman times to the present day and over the years has been a prominent and important trading centre.

The morning of our start arrived and having checked all our kit and loaded our bikes we rode off to Norwich Station. The weather was dry and warm; this was the perfect start.

Fortunately the ride to the Station was downhill, as Norwich is actually quite a hilly city. Being a Sunday morning the traffic was fairly light. As you can see, Norwich Station is an elaborate building and dates from 1886 shortly after the Great Eastern railway was formed.

We navigated our way out of the city passed some of the iconic medieval buildings that so far have stood the test of time. As would be expected some of the route was on main roads until we freed ourselves of the city and headed towards Caistor St Edmund and then on to Saxlingham Nethergate, all quintessential Norfolk village names.

After about 12 miles we had our first real climb towards Tharston. The scenery was now becoming more rural and the traffic easing, although we were still on tarmac.



My feeling was that the route was going to be about 70% on road and hope this wouldn't detract from the perceived charm of the ride.

Just outside Long Stratton we joined our first section of off road, for approximately two miles. In comparison to the King Alfred's Way or West Kernow Way, this was a very mild off road track, but we were away from the traffic and in the peace and quiet of nature.

After leaving this track we joined the road again and continued towards Tivetshall St. Mary, where we left the road again and joined another track. This was much shorter and very straight. Whilst on this track we were passed by another cyclist who seemed to be making very good progress and clearly wanted to 'burn the miles'. A cursory greeting was exchanged and he disappeared in a cloud of dust. Little did we know ours paths would cross again in a short while.



We continued to eventually rejoin the road. We came across the somewhat derelict remains of Tivetshall St Mary Church. Stopping to look at the remains and envisage what it would have been like in its heyday. It was now being returned to nature, although clearly was visited quite often.

Continuing our journey, we turned off the road towards Frenze on what appeared to be farm road. Turning the corner and seeing some farm buildings, we saw the cyclist who had overtaken us previously on the track. He was talking to a passenger in a car that had stopped.

As we got nearer, we could see that this chap was covered in blood on the side of his face and leg. We immediately stopped to offer any assistance that we could. People who lived in one of the adjacent houses had also come out. This unfortunate gentleman had clipped a joint on the the concrete surface which had taken his wheels from under him and he had crashed to the ground, hitting his head. He was clearly concussed. One of the residents said they would take him to hospital as it would be far quicker than waiting for an ambulance; after contacting his wife and ensuring that she would be able to meet him at the hospital. Unfortunately this chap wasn't wearing a helmet, and was



a classic example of what could happen when a helmet is not worn. We collected ourselves together and started off again, to be confronted about two hundred yards down the road with a rather wide and deep ford. Whilst contemplating how best to cross, and who was going to go first, whilst the others got the camera ready, we heard someone say 'there's a bridge around the corner'. This was to be the first of two rather large fords we would encounter. Continuing on down the track we entered the outskirts of Diss where we stopped for some lunch, as we had not come across any places to stop on the route so far. And being a Sunday decided to take the opportunity. This was to a bit of a theme in that there were precious few places to stop out side the towns or larger villages. Diss is a market town, and is mentioned in the Domesday Book, and is very close to the Suffolk border.

Suitably refreshed, we continued our journey along Sustrans route 30 towards Knettishall and the southern part of Thetford Forest. Although we were still on the road, it was now very quiet with pleasant countryside and hardly any traffic. We only had to detour about 1.5 miles to our first overnight stop in East Harling where we stayed at the Elms Guest House. We were welcomed with tea and homemade cake and entertained by our hosts with stories about who they had stay there and their 'journey' as to how they acquired the property. Unfortunately we had to ride another four miles to the only pub that evening as it was the only one open for evening meals.

After a good nights sleep and a hearty breakfast, we bade our farewells and set off

on day two. We had to retrace our steps for about a mile or so then turned off to ride through Middle Harling woods. After rejoining the Kilverstone Road near Brettenham, on the outskirts of Thetford we came across this rather unusual well and memorial. Although this was related to St Andrews church, the church itself was about 200 yards away down a narrow track.

Continuing on we joined a track that took us into the heart of Thetford. We had planned to stop at the visitors centre at Grimes Graves for some refreshment, after a short ride through the forest just north of Thetford. However, on arrival we were faced with fact it was closed for conservation work and we couldn't wait until 2024 until it was complete.

After quick change of plan and a very minor detour, we stopped in Mundford for some lunch.



To be continued



Morning rush hour in Bavaria

Photo; Dave Binks

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Copt Oak

By Peter Hopkins

It's a small place, but it has an intriguing name. One theory suggests that it refers to an ancient cropped or pollarded oak tree which stood in the corner of the churchyard until the mid-19thC. Perhaps. But whatever Copt Oak's etymology, there can be few Leicestershire cyclists who are not familiar with its name and location high in Charnwood Forest.

I lived in Loughborough from 1960 to 2008, almost 50 years of my adult life, so the long climb through Nanpantan up to Copt Oak was a frequent cycling experience. Over that half-century, this tiny hamlet – little more than a church, a pub and a village hall – became for me the setting for a remarkably diverse array of bike-related activities which ranged from racing to camping, from youth hostelling to committee meetings and from Presidents' Rides to Carol Services.

Oddly enough, even before I arrived in Loughborough, I had first come across the name in 1958, though it meant nothing to me at the time. I still have a copy of the road race programme I received from Loughborough Colleges CC in April of that year, in which the 'Course Details' begin *Start outside Schofield Building, along Ashleigh Drive, right on B5350 to **Copt Oak**, right on B587 to Castle Rock*. . . (etc.)

This was the description of the circuit for that year's 62-mile Universities' Road Race Championship, organised by Loughborough on behalf of the UAU.



The climb to Copt Oak in the 1958 Universities Athletic Union Road Race Championship. I'm on the right with spare tyre strapped behind my saddle.

Note; no helmets, not even the "hair net" type.

There were 15 British universities taking part, and I was in the 4-man Oxford team. None of us knew anything about Leicestershire, which we rashly assumed must be flattish! So my first-ever climb to Copt Oak (in fact several climbs, for there were five laps) was actually in a race. Little was I to know that a couple of years later I would be living in Loughborough and tackling that same climb much more slowly for another 50 years!

(For the record, by the way, we came nowhere in that UAU championship event, but then neither did Cambridge – or Leicester, for that matter!)

So in 1960 I arrived in Loughborough to take up my first teaching post. Apart from that one day at the road race a couple of years earlier, I'd never been to Leicestershire before, so there was the exciting prospect of a completely new area to explore on my bike. The Sixties had not yet started to Swing, and in many ways the UK was still in the 1950s: all the Leicestershire collieries were open and busy (Nailstone, Bagworth, Ellistown, Snibston – etc.); the M1 had not yet reached the county¹, and there were a lot more railways running² (Dr Beeching's vigorous axe-wielding was still a few years away.)

One of my earliest Sunday runs took me via Copt Oak crossroads, where I was surprised to come across a small group of young men operating the village pump, busily engaged in filling what looked like a galvanised dustbin on wheels. They were all wearing plus twos with diamond-pattern socks – so I immediately identified them as cyclists, for this was our fashion at the time! It turned out that they were weekending at the nearby Copt Oak Youth Hostel, which (unknown to me) had opened only a few months earlier. To this day, I'm puzzled about that waterbin-and-pump, and wonder whether my memory is playing tricks, because it's hard to believe that the hostel – the tiny former village school – didn't have its own water supply by 1960. (There was certainly mains water in 1974 when Margaret & I walked up from home to spend a night there. The basin in the ladies' dormitory even had the luxury of *hot* water!)

As a hostel, Copt Oak was of course much too near for cycle touring from Loughborough, but over the years I did have the occasional cycling 'bednight' there: twice with small school groups to give them a foretaste of the YHA before a full week's tour, and once – urged by Margaret – on a 'bonding' trip with Colin when he had recently learnt to ride and had his own small bike. There were no other hostellers in that night, and he enjoyed the novelty of using a toasting fork at the glowing embers of an open fire!

It was a great day for Leicestershire DA when the YHA appointed Janet Cooper of Charnwood CTC as warden. The hostel became a popular starting point or check-in for a whole range of events such as Standard Rides, Presidents' Rides and heats of the British Cycle Touring Competition, with the bonus of handy refreshment facilities available in such an ideally sited quiet spot. On top of that, Janet let us use her closing night (Monday) for DA Committee meetings – which were cosy even in the winter, thanks to the coal allowance enjoyed in those days by Janet's husband as a miner!

Sadly, the YHA closed Copt Oak Youth Hostel at the end of 2002. Together with many other hostels, it was a casualty of the 2001 epidemic of foot-and-mouth



With my wife Margaret, holding our few weeks old son Colin, outside Copt Oak Youth hostel in 1975. It was a welcome break after the long climb

disease, which had drastically affected ‘bednight’ figures, and its Leicestershire location was probably considered less essential for survival than that of hostels in popular holiday areas like North Wales and the Peak District. It had cost the YHA £750 in 1959; in 2003 it was sold for £160,000! It’s now a private residence, but at least they display a sign saying *Former School & Youth Hostel*, with appropriate logos. As far I know, it was Leicestershire’s last youth hostel.

But it wasn’t the only Copt Oak facility. A short distance from the hostel is the Copt Oak pub,

formerly much patronised by hostellers, while the nearby village hall and its grounds provided a campsite for the CTC Centenary celebrations we organised in June 1978. The 70 campers, mostly family groups, came from all over the country to take part in a weekend of runs led by DA volunteers, rounded off with the annual DA Rally at Griffydam (which had by then become a tradition).

And finally there is Copt Oak parish church. Starting in 1953, St Peter’s has over the years been the venue on several occasions for the annual Cyclists’ Carol Service, the long-established pre-Christmas celebration which CTC sections and clubs have always included in their winter runs list.

So Copt Oak has a special place in my memory for its many happy associations, especially those which I enjoyed with Margaret and Colin in the heyday of our family cycling. I’m sure that I’m not alone in my affection for it.

¹ The M1 at last reached Loughborough (Junction 23) in 1966. I remember the excitement!

² Not only was the Great Central mainline (London Marylebone to Sheffield) still running via Leicester & Loughborough Central Stations in 1960, but there was also a direct local train service from Leicester to Burton on Trent, stopping en route at Desford, Coalville Town & Ashby de la Zouch stations.

Congratulations

Stephen Dee has completed the British Cycle Quest*, and now visited all 402 checkpoints, and is to be awarded the PLATINUM TROPHY by Cycling UK. His final checkpoint was made to the Isle of Arran checkpoint in June.



Stephen started BCQ in March 2011, so it took him 12 years 3 months to complete. He celebrated with a 12 year old malt whisky, at a hotel near to camp. In all he cycled 12501 miles, on days he bagged a BCQ checkpoint, an average of 31 miles per checkpoint.

**The British Cycle Quest <https://www.cyclinguk.org/british-cycle-quest>
A challenge whereby you have to visit checkpoints scattered throughout the UK., including many islands. There are no time limits, It's all about getting outside and cycling to find as many points of interest across the whole of Britain as you can. To prove you have been, answers must be obtained at the location that can only be found at the site.*



Stephen at Bagh a Chaisteil on Barraigh at the end of a 2 week tour bagging BCQs on Na h-Eileanan Siar

Pop up Charity Cafe Saturday, September 2 Get Busy Living Centre at Burrough-on-the-Hill,

The Matt Hampson Foundation is looking forward to welcoming riders of all ages, abilities and experience for what it is calling #GetBusyCycling Day on Saturday, September 2.

If you are out for a social spin with friends, joining a group run, building training miles or just looking for mid-ride refreshments alongside other



GET BUSY CYCLING DAY!

MATT HAMPSON FOUNDATION

QUICKIE

**SATURDAY, 2ND SEPTEMBER 2023
GET BUSY LIVING CENTRE
LEICESTERSHIRE**

FREE TO RIDE AND OPEN TO ALL CYCLISTS

- Ride a loop over 20, 40 or 75 miles from the Centre OR make it your day's destination • Add your Burrough Hill ride to our 'Everest Challenge'
- Tea/coffee and cake available • Win a Get Busy Cycling shirt

#GetBusyCycling #GetBusyCyclingDay #MattHampsonFoundation

cyclists, there is a welcome waiting for all sporting and recreational riders at the Foundation's **Get Busy Living Centre at Burrough-on-the-Hill**, near Melton Mowbray, on September 2 (10.00am-3.00pm).

The Foundation changed its original plans for a sportive event to instead host a more informal opportunity to meet cyclists.

Riders can still make the Centre their destination for the day, use it as a base – there are routes over 20, 40 and 75 miles available to download – or just call in for coffee and cake in return for a donation to the Foundation. Car-parking is available if you wish to ride out from the Centre.

All ascents of Burrough Hill will count towards a #GetBusyCycling Everest Challenge and visitors will be entered into a draw for a Get Busy Cycling shirt.

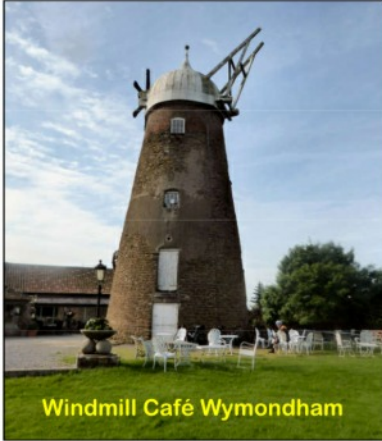
The Foundation, which supports young people seriously injured through sport, has numerous links to cycling and triathlon, and is hoping to host more cycling-themed activities in future.

As a rugby player with Leicester Tigers and England Under-20s, Matt experienced a life-changing injury which left him paralysed from the neck down and breathing via a ventilator but, rather than lament what he'd lost, he instead decided to focus on the things he could still do and to 'get busy living'.

The Get Busy Living Centre opened as his brainchild in 2018 to provide expert physiotherapy, specialist personal training, mentoring and advice to help people with life-changing injuries. Beneficiaries draw on the experience and knowledge of people who have been on the same journey, developing the tools and skills they need to move on as they start to rebuild their lives. The Centre becomes a place where they can be part of a strong and active social scene, and eventually they also start to provide support to others.

Matt was awarded an OBE in 2021 for his incredible achievements.

*More information:- #GetBusyCycling Day,
email gary@hambo.co.uk*



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE CTC

AN AUTUMN DAY OUT AUDAX

SAT OCT 14TH 2023

START 08:30 - 09:00

**FROM
TROWELL PARISH HALL, NG9 3QA**

DETAILS

Interesting rural route mostly on minor roads. 154 km with Café controls at Mountsorrel, Wymondham & East Leake.

Refreshments provided at the start and finish.

Minimum average speed 15 km/hr; maximum 30 km/hr.

ENTRIES

£8.00 for Cycling UK or Audax UK members.

(Plus £3.00 insurance for non members)

Closing Date for entries: October 4th.

Please Note: We are now unable to take entries on the day.

Entries via <https://audax.uk/>

**ORGANISER: Simon Young
simonyng800@gmail.com)**



Profits from this event will be used to support



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Photograph poster or scan QR code for more information.



Ride & Stride Event

Although not a CTC activity, the following may be of interest to some.

On **Saturday 9th September**, the LeicesterShire Historic Churches Trust is planning a “Ride+Stride” sponsored event for cyclists, walkers, joggers, runners, horse-riders and mobility scooter drivers. The idea is for participants to

visit as many churches and chapels as they choose to in Leicestershire on a single day. By getting sponsorship participants help raise funds that are then split equally between a church chosen by the participant and the LeicesterShire Historic Churches Trust.

Routes are planned individually using the list of churches and chapels that is published on our website from late August.

There is more information available on the LHCT website:

<https://www.lhct.org.uk/ride-and-stride/>

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

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.



Cafe News



> The **Kingfisher Cafe** at Portland Fishing Lakes (near Sibthorpe, Notts) has re-opened, under new owners. I haven't been myself, but have been told they are as welcoming to cyclists as the previous owners. The entry is up a long rather bumpy drive off Longhedge lane, just south east of Sibthorpe village.

> A new (to me) cafe is open in the **Hardys Farndon** - Farm Shop and Café, at Farndon, Notts NG24 3SD. This is in Main Street, just SE off the old A46. The entry off the main road is blocked to cars, but bikes can pass through the bollards. Car entry is via Hawton Lane, immediately south of the Main Street entrance.

> **Cafe Ventoux**, at Tugby, has finally re-opened and by all accounts, on a larger, grander scale. Their website www.cafe-ventoux.cc has more details. See Terry Scott's report in the Summer edition

>The tea bar in the car park of **Belvoir Castle** has also re-opened, but under new management.

If you have anything of interest to other readers, please let Cycle Chat know so that it can reach a wider audience.

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

Editor: Dave Binks, email; davebinks@ntlworld.com tel; 0794 1151792
92 Balmoral Rd, Mountsorrel, Loughborough, Leics, LE12 7EN

Advertising and distribution: Lyn & Pete Gale - tel: 01530 271665

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

Forthcoming County Event Dates

Sunday 3rd September, President's Ride 9:30am Lutterworth Town Hall. See President's Report elsewhere for more details. Advance booking for catering, please.

Sunday 8th October "Memorial Ride" Offroad Event.

Start:- 10.30 from Staunton Harold Reservoir Cafe, 6 Calke Road, Melbourne, Derby DE73 8D. Choice of 16 & 25 Miles

Organiser Alan Hartshorne

Sunday 17th December Mince Pie Meeting

The famous Mince Pie Meet will again be taking place at Belton Village Hall (10.30am to 12-30pm). Tombola in aid of Rainbows Children's Hospice.

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

NUNEATON					Thursday rides meet at 10.30am. Saturdays 10am.
					
CYCLE CLUB					
<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Distance</u>		
3rd Aug	Thurs	St Marys Hinckley	Half day	Paul Hands	7414474233
10th Aug	Thurs	Hill Top Gdn Centre	Half day	Jim Gerrard	7876457146
17th Aug	Thurs	Sutton Cheney Wharf	Half day	John Andrews	01162 865738
24th Aug	Thurs	Heritage Café	Half day	Anne Taylor	02476 741276
31st Aug	Thurs	Makins Fishery	Half day	Angie Fisher	7824808788
7th Sep	Thurs	Astley Book Farm	Half day	Roger Payne	7757103139
14th Sep	Thurs	Morrissons	Half day	Paul Kuchta	7414474233
21st Sep	Thurs	Dobbies Gdn Centre	Half day	Eric Rowland	7768396806
28th Sep	Thurs	Peoples Café Bedworth	Half day	Angie Fisher	7824808788
5th Oct	Thurs	St Marys Hinckley	Half day	Jim Gerrard	7876457146
12th Oct	Thurs	Hill Top Gdn Centre	Half day	Chris Turley	7971289464
19th Oct	Thurs	Sutton Cheney Wharf	Half day	Gill Lord	01455 456708
26th Oct	Thurs	Heritage Café	Half day	Paul Hands	7414474233
POSTCODE KEY - NUNEATON LIBRARY - CV11 5DR, HILL TOP GARDEN CENTRE - CV7 9LH					
HERITAGE CAFÉ - CV11 4LU, ASTLEY BOOK FARM - CV10 7QB10 7QB					
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
2/7/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	Elevenes at Ellie's Field pop-up cafe
9/7/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	Elevenes at Rural Relaxing
16/7/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	
23/7/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	Bowden Stores
30/7/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	
6/8/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	Lunch at Rosliston Forestry Centre
13/8/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	
20/8/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	
27/8/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	venue Northern Cobbler
3/9/23	09:30	Lutterworth	President's Ride. Luinch at Welford
10/9/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	Elevenes at Ellie's Field pop-up cafe
17/9/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	
24/9/23	09:30	Broughton Astley	Lunch at Rosliston Forestry Centre

CHARNWOOD RUNS LIST

Date	Start	Eleven's	Lunch	Leader
03 Sep	9.00 W	Hinckley	Ridge Lane	Martin
10 Sep	Langworth	Cycling Holiday		Lyn
17 Sep	9.00 B	Shardlow Marina	Sawley	Nick
24 Sep	9.00 M	Newton Regis	Newton Burgoland	Paul
01 Oct	9.30 H	Dobbies Mancetter	Market Bosworth	Dave
08 Oct	9.30 S	Melbourne	Ticknall	Jim
15 Oct	9.30 A	Fradley Junction	Rosliston	Nick
22 Oct	9.30 W	Quorn	Newbold Verdon	Paul
29 Oct	9.30 M	Pretty Pigs	Colton in the Elms	Pete
05 Nov	9.30 H	Shardlow Marina	Derby	Martin
12 Nov	9.30 B	Wymeswold Lakeside	Woodhouse Eaves	Dave
19 Nov	9.30 S	Stenson	Repton	Jim
26 Nov	9.30 A	Bretby	Mount Pleasant	Lyn
03 Dec	9.30 W	Sutton Cheney	Carlton	Nick
10 Dec	9.30 M	Tamworth	Stoke Golding	Paul
17 Dec	9.30 A	Belton VH	Peggs Green	
24 Dec	10.00 H	Ashby	Whitwick	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 in a ride on a Sunday please contact David Smith on 0116 2417908 who goes out most Sunday mornings.

**The deadline for the Winter 2023 issue of
Cycle Chat is 1st November 2023**
That edition will cover December 2023, January & February 2024



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www.cyclinguk.org.uk**

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I enclose a cheque for £5 payable to "Cycle Chat" - includes postage.
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Bavaria, Germany photo Dave Binks