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

In this edition.....

Read about:

Glynn Jones and friends' France on a Shoestring

Doreen Lindsey's Tandem Story

Three Cols in Italy by Mike Frith

Eroica Britannica by Mark Jones

Tourist Competition Results

Joe Jord's Charity Ride through Europe

Momma Rides Report

And so much more.....

Winter 2017





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Always makes for a good read!

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

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**Front Cover:**  
The Cycle Museum at Llandrindod Wells (See page 6 for more details)  
Photo: Graham Arnold



Welcome to my first edition of  Sorry we missed the Summer edition but we are back on track now.

I have huge shoes to fill, Martin Brooks did an amazing job getting The Link to the great read it is today. With the phrase, “*if it’s not broken, don’t fix it*” in mind I’ve kept to Martin’s great format and included all the regular features we’ve come to love. I hope you will join me in my journey as I learn and adapt to this new job as Editor. For those that don’t know me, I’m a novice....I was introduced to cycling about 8 years ago. I joined CTC, as it was called then, in 2012 shortly after my End to End adventure. I learn something new on every ride. It’s a journey in more ways than one.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this edition, please continue to send in your stories, emailed, typed, handwritten, scribbled on the back of a beer mat, whichever way suits you best, I’ll transfer them to the printed page. If you would prefer I can come and see you, you can tell me your story and I’ll put it into print. We love to read about your adventures but your article doesn’t have to be long; half page short stories, anecdotes, jokes, experiences or grievances work well. Talking of grievances don’t forget the ‘Letters to the Editor’ page needs filling and I have introduced a new feature, hope you like it, see page 38. Safe riding,

*Janet*

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## A Message from Your President. (Revised).

Sad to say but this year has been overshadowed by the untimely death of *Link* Editor Martin Brooks. Although Martin was a relative newcomer to Chester and North Wales CTC, he participated enthusiastically in our activities, and served on our Committee where his contributions were measured and thoughtful. But perhaps his greatest legacy will be his work as *Link* Editor. In the short time that he occupied the post, he completely transformed its format putting it on a par with the best in club magazines. He carried on his editorial work even after he and Sarah moved to live in Spain, working on the (never published) Summer edition almost until the time his cancer killed him. Our loss, of course, is nothing to that of Sarah and the other members of his family and our deepest sympathies go out to them. Martin was one of those people whom it was a privilege to have known.

But his work goes on. When I heard the news of Martin's death, I feared for the future of *The Link*. I need not have worried for I found that one of Martin's UK-based support team was ready and willing (although perhaps a little apprehensive) to step in and join the distinguished ranks of Editors. So, we welcome new Editor Janet Jones, sure that she will receive much support in her self-imposed task. Now, the best way each of you can demonstrate your own backing for Editor Janet is to encourage as many

new subscribers to *The Link* as possible - and to write some articles for her, too!

### Archival Matters

It's worth mentioning in passing that for many years we have sent a copy of *The Link* for safekeeping to *The Cycling History and Educational Trust*. (Bet most of you have never heard of it!) I was reminded of this when I noticed our regular donation recorded in this autumn's edition of its journal. (I have some eclectic tastes in reading matter!) In addition, our Archivist, Arthur Miller, ensures that other material worth preserving is periodically lodged with the Chester Record Office. Arthur also keeps up to date our *Roll of Honours* book. This includes, *inter alia*, holders of the CUK's Certificate of Merit and other national awards as well as lists of our past Presidents, Secretaries and Treasurers, winners of Trophies and so on.

### Eventful Days

I remarked in my Message for the unpublished Summer edition about our 'events season' and referred to those that lay ahead. Now by the time you read this, 2017's events will be well and truly over. However, let us not forget the valuable work done by event organisers and their helpers (not forgetting family members 'encouraged' to help!). The reward for all their hard work can only be measured by cheerful cries of '*Thanks*' from those taking part but it is always very satisfying for organisers to hear such words none the less. And, of course, for what they are worth, may I also add my own presidential '*Thanks and well done!*' for the untiring work of all volunteers this year.

But, (and there's always a 'but') I was sorry for Liz and Peter Conway, organisers of the Treasure Hunt and Map Reading at the end of May when only seven entrants turned up at Lady Heyes Campsite in Delamere. A lot of work goes into preparing events like these. It wasn't a bad day for weather, either – and some entrants had come a long way to take part. I do hope Liz and Peter will persevere and that ALL riding groups will make a point of including this event in their 2018 rides lists.

### London Calling

In May, craving excitement in my humdrum life, I decided to attend Cycling UK's AGM. This was held in London – starting, of all times, at 10 am. (I protested!) No, I did not drive down nor book a hotel but I happened to be in Oxford (that city of bicycles!) and, having, a day to spare, got up early and took the train to Paddington. As one might expect with that timing and location, it was poorly attended. However, a number of significant changes were made (not least to increase your subscriptions). Every year at these AGM there have been a series of what I would call ill-thought-out and badly worded motions put forward (with the best of intentions) by a limited group of members. Restrictions are henceforth to be introduced, in particular on petitions. (These are costly to organise.) I do feel is that there is an element amongst some CUK members, those who have not yet come to terms with CTC becoming CUK and having charity status. Perhaps they have not fully understood what the duties and legal responsibilities of charity trustees are, as opposed to those of the former CTC councillors. CEO Paul Tuohy spoke of his vision of CUK becoming nationally recognised as the principal body promoting and supporting cycling for all – to pinch a recent slogan, cycling "for the many and not the few"! I think there has been some evidence in that respect in the media recently. However, Paul has come to recognise better the valuable work done by the likes of volunteers like ours. I wonder whether his visit to take part in our President's Rides and Lunch last year had anything to do with it!

### Birmingham Bonanza

I joined about a dozen C&NW members at Cycling UK's Annual Get Together in Birmingham on 7<sup>th</sup> October. Speakers included Wirral's own Chris Boardman, now Cycling and Walking Commissioner for Greater Manchester. He talked of the challenges of his new job – and his ambitions for it, too. Later, we were inspired by the humour and enthusiasm of speakers Joy Anibaba and Lorraine Dixon, two middle-aged women, whose health (and that of



others) has been changed for the better by the cycling groups they founded in Birmingham.

Above all, we were thrilled to discover that when the Volunteer of the Year Awards were announced, the Best Campaign winners were none other than our own Caernarfon Bypass

Campaign Group of Roy Spilsbury, Chris Compton, Richard Keating, John Mather and David Wood. This recognised their tireless work to ensure the safety of cyclists on the Lon Eifion Cycle Path when the planned Caernarfon/Bont Newydd bypass is constructed. What's more,

the whole team was awarded CTC's prestigious Arthur Moss Award for Merit, a great distinction (and the fourth time C&NW members have been so honoured in since 2005 – when Roy also won it!).

And all this on top of presentations to our Tourist



Competition National Winners, both individual and team. Well done everybody. It was a day to remember!

#### Touched

Some older members will remember Raymond Jackson (known to many as 'Jake') who died in November 2013

aged 80. 'Jake', from New Ferry, Wirral, was an enthusiastic cyclist. With increasing age, his severe deafness was a handicap but he joined in group activities with obvious pleasure. Ray spent his final 3 years in a nursing home suffering from vascular dementia. With no family or relatives, his funeral was sparsely attended. Of the dozen or so of us there, half were his former cycling companions. But he did not forget us and I learnt earlier this year that his solicitors had contacted us regarding a £500 legacy Jake had left C&NWCTC. I was touched.

#### Last Word on the Late John Pegum

And finally, at the funeral in March of centenarian and founder member John Pegum, I learnt that John, a Second World War veteran, was awarded the French *Legion d'Honneur* shortly before he died. He was entitled to this because he was one of those who landed in France (in a glider, behind enemy lines) on D-Day 1944. A true hero. **Mike Cross**

### President's Club Ride Sunday 24th September



Thanks Mike a great time was had by all!

A dry, mild day started with everybody meeting up for a coffee in Prestatyn followed by a photo call at The Offa's Dyke Monument. Two routes were ridden by approximately 35 riders to Cefn Meiriadog Village Hall. A fabulous lunch of salmon, beef and ham, potatoes and various salads followed by cake and yoghurts was served. Vicky Payne was the very worthy recipient of The President's Award, for outstanding service to Chester and North Wales CTC.

**Well done Vicky!**



## National Cycle Museum

Temple Street,  
Llandrindod Wells, Powys,  
LD1 5DL

*Cover Story.....*

Website: [www.cyclemuseum.org.uk](http://www.cyclemuseum.org.uk)



Graham Arnold

The National Cycle Museum is located in the centre of Llandrindod Wells. If you turn east off the A483 onto Spa Rd E, there is a small car park but just a bit further (right into Princes Ave) there are ample parking spaces near a lake.

Overlooking the lake is a really good café, which is handy because there isn't one at the museum.



The museum is packed full of interesting exhibits roughly in date

order from bone-shakers to modern, with lots of memorable and strange items in between. Also on display are a collection of old CTC plaques.

The lady in charge is very helpful and is very knowledgeable about the exhibits. There are plenty of items which will bring back memories with the occasional murmurs of "How did we manage to ride that!" from fellow visitors.

Photography is allowed in the museum but its best to avoid "flashing". There are so many bikes and cycle stuff packed in together it is quite challenging to get good shots.



We take the bicycle chain for granted but it's amazing how long it took our ancestors to come up with what we see as an obvious design. An example of an early attempt at this is



shown (1898 Humber ladies bike with a Simpson lever chain)

Similarly with gears. You have to ask yourselves "why did it take us so long to develop the standard derailier we all use today?"



Towards the end of the displays, examples of racing/touring bikes we may have actually used in our youth are displayed. See photo of the 1969 Dawes Galaxy Tourer which may bring back memories to many.

Also on display is the carbon fibre bike that Bruce Bursfield used for his record breaking ride of 209.13mph in 1991 (fixed wheel enthusiasts would



be queuing up to ride this. It weighs less than 5kg)

Llandrindod Wells is a picturesque town with interesting walks (well signposted) through wooded areas. The town and museum are well worth a visit.



Graham Arnold



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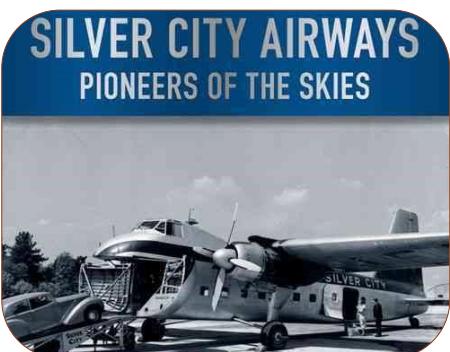


**The year – 1953. The month – July. The objective – A cycle trip to France.**

In the 50s I cycled with three close friends all over North Wales and parts of Cheshire and Shropshire, sometimes camping. The furthest trip was a camping weekend in Blackpool (sun, sea and girls!)

At the start of 1953 we talked about a trip to France, Ron, one of our group, was unable to come so the three of us went ahead with the planning.

The only local Travel Agent in Wrexham was Denbighshire Travel. On enquiring about ferry prices, they informed us that it was just as cheap to fly with Silver City Airways and much quicker. From Lydd to Le Touquet – price five pounds return plus ten shillings (50p) for the bike – so we booked – sorted!



Next step a passport from Liverpool, Maps from Smiths – Michelin Map of Northern France three shillings (15p) and an Esso map of South England from any Esso garage six pence (2½p).

We already had a small three-man ridge tent and one paraffin primus stove. I just needed a warm army blanket and a folding saucepan and flying pan set plus some lard for cooking, small tins of Beans etc. and a bottle of Camp coffee!...

Remember that? I already had panniers.

The last day of work came around, we came up the shaft of Bersham Colliery at 1.30pm, had a shower and picked up our wages and holiday pay. The colliery closed on that Friday for Colliers fortnight, last week in July, first week in August. I changed £15 into Francs plus £5 in sterling, this was to see me through 2½ weeks (wow!)

Panniers and saddle bag all packed on Friday night, up early Saturday morning, a quick breakfast, met up with the other two and we set off on the A5 heading for London. I was riding an Armstrong bike, Chris was on a Dawes and Dai on a Coventry Eagle.

We headed for Shrewsbury and stopped for some food. While we were in the café it started to rain quite heavily. We sat in the dry for far too long but we had to get out sometime so after donning our waterproof oilskin capes we set off down the A5 again, only completing 60 miles on Saturday. It was about 250 miles to Lydd and we had to be there by lunch time on Monday.

We camped in a field on Saturday night and set out early Sunday morning on the A5 to London. The weather was much better so we reached London late evening crossing the Thames on Vauxhall Bridge, leaving London on the Dover Road. At about 1am we stopped with 140 miles covered that day leaving 50 to do to the airport. Too tired to put the tent up we slept under some trees by the roadside until we were woken by the morning traffic. We covered the last 50 miles in good time, tidied ourselves up and got something to eat.

The airport was little more than a group of wooden buildings. We were eventually called to the departure area and escorted to our plane – A Bristol. Our bikes were already loaded along with a couple of cars.

The take off was a bit bumpy and the flight lasted about twenty minutes.

We landed at Le Touquet and set out for Paris – on the wrong side of the road! We teamed up with another cyclist who could speak French, he came in handy when shopping!



It was a two day ride to Paris via Abbeville and Amiens with a stop at the cathedral and Beauv. We slept one night under the stars on the back of some large hay carts, wonderful!

Our companion left us in Paris. We spent a short time there, camping in a public park at St Denis. While in Paris we visited several bars and the Arc De Triomphe, we rode along the Champs Elysees, long before The Tour! Next, we visited the Tower. After doing the maths it worked out



at 10/ to the halfway platform (50p) or 17/6 to the top (87½p) we decided on The Full Monty, the top it was. More than worth it for the views over Paris.



Arc De  
Triomphe  
1953

I took a few photos at the top, my camera at the time was a Kershaw Penguin which used 120 roll film, eight shots per film (negative size  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ ), so I had to ration my shots. Unlike today's digital cameras which take hundreds on a tiny card or maybe on your phone, the only phone to me at that time was in the next village in a red Tardis box where you put two old pennies into a slot dialled your number and when someone answered you pressed a button marked 'A', no Answer? You pressed button 'B' to get your money back.

After Paris we continued south to Orléans then Blois and Tours, following the Loire to Angers and Nantes. We had no set plan we just enjoyed the cycling and the sights. We camped rough in fields, no one seemed to mind. We stopped when we felt like it and cooked in turns on our one primus stove.

Every morning after packing away our gear we would cycle to the nearest village, locate the village pump for water, wash, then find the village bakery for fresh bread and the pastry shops for cakes – Yummy!

One evening we made friends with some girls from a local farm and the family allowed us to sleep in a nice clean barn on fresh straw wrapped up in our blankets. This was after consuming a couple of bottles of local plonk – pleasant dreams!

Another day we were looking around a pretty little village when a local man attracted our attention we walked over to see what he wanted. It turned out he wanted a bump start for his car, this we did for which he

gave us a handful of Francs which we spent in the pastry shop, where else? He was a typical French man, black beret and a fag in the corner of his mouth. Dai was so impressed by the beret he bought one to wear for the rest of the trip!

Another little incident that happened, we were overtaken by a tandem assisted by one of those little 'phut phut' engines on the rear wheel. We tucked in behind them and drafted for about five miles until they turned off – spoilsports!

After Nantes we struck North to Rennes and then Mont Saint-Michel. This is reached by a causeway when the tide is out. We visited the monastery, there were plenty of cafes and shops there. Then we crossed back before the tide turned. From Mont Saint-Michel, the route back to Le Touquet took us via Caen, Rouen and back to Abbeville and eventually the airport. A few incidents happened on this leg of the trip. We had one wet day so we didn't want to put the tent up if possible. We cycled down a little side lane to a railway siding and came across a guards van, slid the door open, lifted all our gear inside, all nice and dry, made a



meal, spread our blankets out and went to sleep.

We were woken the next morning by someone banging on the door. We opened the door to be faced by two Gendarmes (on bikes) complete with truncheons and pistols. They demanded our passports. They were like Good Cop, Bad Cop. Good Cop was having a bad hair day and searched through all our gear shouting at us all the while and kept touching his gun. I thought, 'He's going to pistol whip us at any moment now and shout – "Ve haf vays of making you talk" They eventually left us in peace and we continued on our way.

We did have another incident which caused a 'panic' riding in single file looking for a suitable spot to camp Dai in front suddenly braked causing us all to end up in one big heap on the floor. We untangled ourselves and checked the bikes – PANIC! Mine had a bad buckle in the rear wheel and the right chain stay was bent. What to do now? In the middle of nowhere, never a bike shop around when you need one.

After a bit of thought we carried my gear along a little track into a field. Dai and Chris unladen themselves of all their gear and set off back to the last village with my wheel, leaving me to set up camp. I abandoned this idea as a couple of Gypsy caravans started to set up camp the other end of the track (they were proper Gypsies with horse drawn bow top caravans). I kept a low profile until the other two arrived with my wheel as good as new, repaired by the village blacksmith. We straightened the chain stay with a couple of stones or bricks, loaded up and moved on, panic over.....PHEW!

We picked apples by the roadside and bought fresh peaches from the local village markets. On one occasion we were in a nice little village and needing some food. We looked for the local pastry shop (where else!) I went in and behind the counter there was a lovely young girl.

Our eyes met over a tray of custard slices and I immediately fell in love (with the girl not the cakes!) Although it was a close call! I left the shop with a heavy heart and a bag of cakes. Oh well the cakes were delicious!

We eventually arrived in Le Touquet with time to spare for our mid-morning flight. However, owing to a general strike in France, there was a four hour delay in flights (there's nothing new). We hung around topping up our tan until our flight was called.

Twenty minutes later we were back in Blighty! We went to what passed as customs to collect our bikes. Another Panic! Only two bikes, Chris's bike was missing. We reported this to the officials in charge and they instructed the crew of the next plane out to search for the missing bike. We retreated to the café for food and drink. After which

we sat in the sun waiting and watching each plane land, but still no bike. It was now late in the afternoon and we were getting worried as it was a long way back to Wrexham with Chris on the crossbar!



As a last resort the airport officials said there was one last flight back to France flying out empty to bring one last lot of passengers back. They sent Chris across on this flight to look for his bike. He travelled across in the cockpit with the pilot. He found his bike in time for the return flight, it was against a perimeter fence, probably for someone to pick up later. Chris arrived with his bike and

we set out for Wrexham only 250 miles to go! We were now also delayed by about eight hours. We did a few miles on the Monday evening, stopped for the night, then it was through London and the A5 for home, arriving in Wrexham Wednesday afternoon.

Thursday morning back to reality and work at Bersham Colliery. The dark wet atmosphere was a far cry from the hot sunny fortnight we'd just had cycling around Northern France.

We had several mishaps, incidents and adventures but it was truly a great holiday and we enjoyed every minute of it.

**Miles** — I'm not sure, about 1,500  
**Stats** — Weather — Brilliant

**Food** — Whatever we could lay our hands on — cakes!

**Punctures** — None

**Camping** — Anywhere rough.

Glynn Jones

## Talking of Chris.....



This is Chris showing off his new bike on a club ride one Saturday morning. Shiny and new and raring to go. Congratulations Chris. Ride with pride and ride safe. Loving the matching helmet and cap!

## For when you just can't bear to be off the bike.....





I joined the Guildford Phoenix Cycling Club when I was 15, there I made friends with Jo Stone. We were well established in the club when a friend offered us a tandem. We had some fun riding and racing on it, we were once in the local paper because we



had ridden a 30 mile time trial in 1 hour and 30 minutes. When boyfriends came along we sold the tandem.

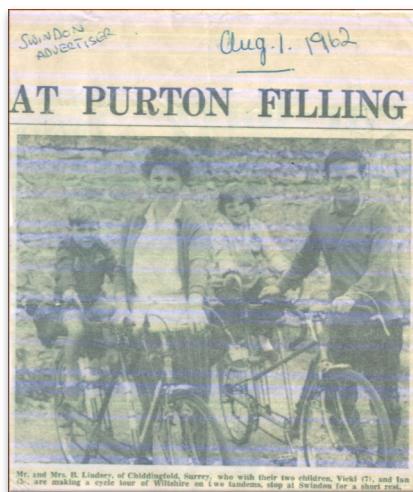
After marrying Barry and having two children we bought two tandems and had kiddy cranks fitted. We used to



go 'training' sometimes with the club boys. The YHA would not allow children under five years old to stay. Once our youngest was five we decided to do a trip from Surrey to Calne in Wiltshire to visit relatives. Our first stop was at Streatly Youth Hostel. Whilst travelling through Swindon we had a stop at a public

toilet which was next door to the local newspaper office, a journalist ran out with a camera who asked us to ride up and down the main street while he took photos, months after a friend gave us a copy of the Swindon Advertiser, we'd made the front page!

Another trip we made was to cycle from Chiddingfold Surrey to Corris Youth Hostel in Wales. One of our stops was at Stow-on-the-Wold hostel. Much to our dismay in the morning our young son woke up with



a fat face. We asked the wardens advice who made an appointment for us at the local doctors surgery, the doctor, who diagnosed mumps was impressed with our efforts and said keep going on your travels as the fresh air would do our son good and just keep away from others in the hostels. We did get congratulated from others about our 'bonny boy' with his chubby face. We kept going on the tandems until school and my racing activities got in the way.

I became secretary of the Rother Valley Cycling club, we had a twinning arrangement with Velo club Bernay in Normandy. One year when it was our turn to visit them in France the secretary of the club Denni asked if I would ride tandem with him in the Randonnee their club was running. At the end of the ride I was surprised

to learn that the tandem was homemade and the long bottom strut was a tent pole.

In 1999 we were retired so decided to move to Criccieth where our son worked for the Coastguard, granddaughter Hannah used to come out with me on a tag along but when she got too big for it I bought her orbit



tandem. We had some happy times riding with the North Wales Tandem Club attending their hostel weekends etc. We also attended the New Forest Cycle rally several times and one year we went to the Sesamek Federal at Quimper.



We made an impression there as we were both able to get out of the saddle and 'honk' up hills!

**Doreen Lindsey**

**"Give a man a fish and feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and feed him for a lifetime. Teach a man to cycle and he will realise fishing is stupid and boring" – Desmond Tutu**



## Letters to the Editor....

Just one letter this edition. Come on, send me your letters and tell me what you think of my first attempt at The Link. Good, bad or ugly, it can only lead to improvement.

### From John Ferguson -

*Back in 2014 I rode the 20% climb out of Ysceifiog for the first time. This prompted me to ask Noel Bundell who has climbed every hill in North Wales many times if this is the hardest climb in our area. This was his response:-*

**Bwlch Pen Barras (Old Bwlch)** on the Ruthin side is 25% (1 in 4) - perhaps even steeper on the inside of the hairpin.

One of the longest climbs is from **Glyndyfrdwy in the Dee valley following the Nant y Pandy** - this climbs about 1100 feet in about 1.5 miles, and is relentless in its steepness.

**Church Hill out of Glyn Ceiriog** is 25% and climbs 600feet in less than a mile.

The steepest road I've seen, although I have not ridden it, is **Ffordd Pen Llech in Harlech**. This is 40% or 1 in 2.5. You take a risk trying to get up as it is now one way down!!

I think there are many other hills around just as steep as Ysceifiog.

Happy climbing

Noel

**Can anyone else contribute more climbs to this list?**

Thank you for everyone who came to the Macmillian Coffee morning on 10/10/17



We raised the magnificent sum of £305, all of which goes direct to Macmillan.

Many thanks to the three Margarets; Matthews, Egerton and Williams for the baking and brewing to enable this event to be such a success.

David Matthews



Lemon Softies

Softer than a biscuit, but not quite a cake; this recipe make between 35 and 40 'softies'.

### Ingredients

7oz marg (or butter)  
7oz caster sugar  
1 lemon  
1teaspoon vanilla essence  
1 egg  
6oz ground almonds  
6oz SR flour  
Approx. 2 or 3oz icing sugar (depending on amount of icing required)



### Method

1. Zest the lemon. Mix the marg, caster sugar, vanilla essence and lemon zest together.
2. Sift the flour and add the egg and mix.
3. Add the ground almonds and mix.
4. Line 3 trays with baking paper.
5. Take a teaspoonful of mix and work into a ball then place on the tray. Repeat until all the mix is used.
6. Bake at 160° C (fan oven) for 10 to 12 minutes.
7. Leave to cool. Use about half the juice from the lemon to mix with icing sugar and decorate (amount of lemon juice and sugar will depend on the amount of icing you like)
8. Enjoy!

I said to the baker.

"How come all your cakes are 50p and that one's £1?"



He said,  
"That's Madeira cake"

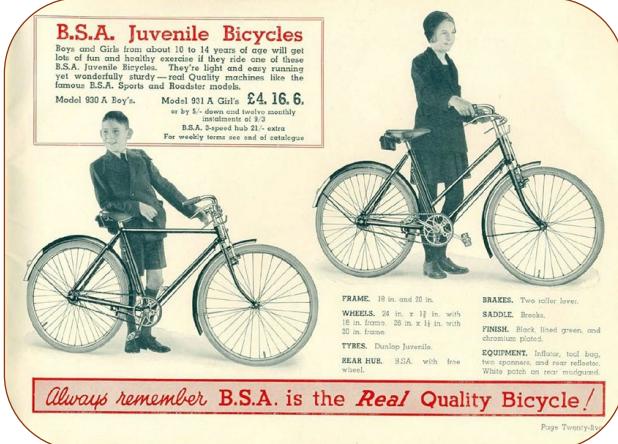


# LOVE STORY

The true story of a lifetime's passion.

*An unexpurgated tale of life's second greatest pleasure!*

Alone amongst the green fields and quiet lanes of Cheshire one Sunday in August, with the hot sun beating down, I was riding my bicycle and musing about Life in general when it occurred to me that it was 75 years ago, almost to the day, that for my impending 8<sup>th</sup> birthday I got my very first bicycle. Oh, my pride and joy! A second hand (or as they now say, pre-owned) BSA with 18-inch frame costing my Dad almost a week's wages. It cost all of £3.00. And oh,



how I wanted to get astride its saddle! But before I could do so, it was pointed out that my little legs were too short; so, I had to wait while my Dad, a carpenter, put wooden blocks on the pedals.

I soon learned to ride it on the tarmac of car-free Ridgefield Road before venturing ever farther on the empty roads (it was wartime). I rode it to school and to the swimming baths. Sometimes I pedalled off to my Aunty Kit's, a few miles away for tea and cake - and a guaranteed half-a-crown (12½p) supplement to my weekly 4d (2½p) pocket money. A major supplement, indeed! Later, I set out all alone exploring the country lanes around East Oxford. I knew nothing about punctures and didn't carry a

pump. (Punctures never happened in those days, you know.) And it never rained.

Little did I know of the pleasures and friends (including one who became my wife) that my years of cycling were to bestow on me. I look back and think of other bicycles and the thousands of miles covered in Britain, and of rides and tours abroad – from Egypt to Canada and sundry countries in between. Yes, I know, only a couple of days in Egypt – but they did include using a locals' chaotic ferry crossing over the Nile en route to the Valley of the Kings. (That was just before they started shooting tourist infidels.) Denmark was the location of our first (1956) tour: featuring must-sees like Copenhagen's Mermaid and Hans

Anderson's house, as well as cooking meals on a primus by the side of the road to save money. In later years, our wheels touched the tarmac of Turkey, graced grizzly bear country in Canada, and flew through France. We pottered in Portugal, climbed up to Como and meandered in Mallorca. And let's not forget the End to End.

Oh, I know so many of you can point to much, much more (and well done, too!), but I enjoyed what I have done just as much as those of you who have your own memories of even greater two wheeled adventures. It's great fun for all! (Except when the gale blows, the rain lashes, the roads are icy and your chain breaks.)

Now, my miles are limited but that day in August was memorable in its own way. It was short but it was sweet! Alas, nowadays, I find the hills hillier and the

miles longer and, come to mention it, it's less easy to get my leg over. The saddle, that is!



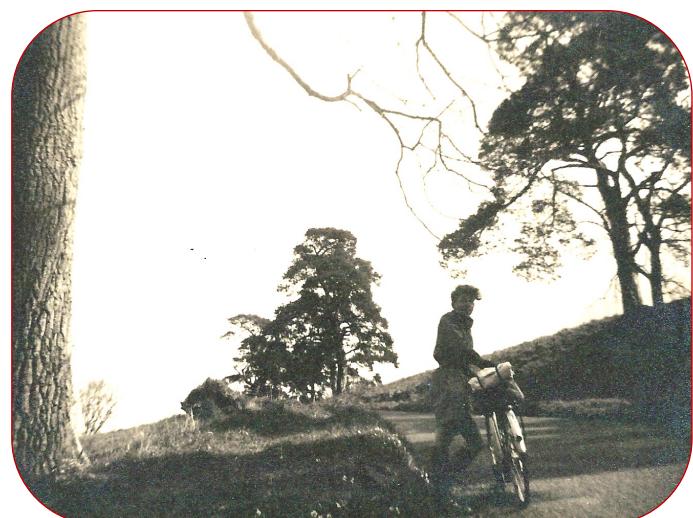
Mike Cross

And the moral of this tale, if moral there be? Enjoy your type of cycling while you can - be it rough stuff or tough stuff; long rides or short rides, and maybe in-between rides; beat the clock rides or never mind the time rides - or just pottering about rides - for one day you won't be able to. Ah! But now, come to think of it, I suppose that when we shake off this mortal coil (or whatever you do with mortal coils) there is always that Great Bicycle Ride in the Sky to look forward to – but, needless to say, only for the virtuous. (That must rule me out then.)

Oh, and life's greatest pleasure? I thought you'd ask. Well, as there may be amongst you those with high moral standards and tender and delicate dispositions, I think it will be best not to dwell on that but leave it to your vivid imaginations. (And the Editor would have censored it, too!)

## Mike Cross

**And risk being called a spoil sport in my first edition as Editor Mike!  
Never!!**



## C&NW CTC Llysfa Si Hill Climb and Freewheel 30<sup>th</sup> September 2017

In spite of the damp start to the day riders began arriving at Llysfa Si from 10.45am to sign up for the competitions, and other members came to help and support the event. As usual the bus shelter at the College was transformed into a temporary office, and the weather dried up a bit as riders rode round to the start.



Earlier in the day Pete Dilworth had put up warning signs for the event. Dave Statham, Peter and Gwynneth Jones drove to the top of the hill to record the times, Christine Matthews Lumb and Gerry Machell got organised at the start, and Glennys Hammond found a good spot to photograph the riders on the climb.



Riders proceeded up the hill with varying degrees of energy and

enthusiasm; the weather was warmer than the previous year which helped many of the competitors to improve on their times. Ben Hughes was clear winner with a time of 6 minutes 11 seconds; his best time yet. He is now



a Cycling UK member so was presented with the trophy for his victory. Steve Jones was second in 8 min 1sec narrowly beating Emily Larwood who was 3<sup>rd</sup> and also first junior and first lady rider (8 min 8sec). Steve Larwood was 4<sup>th</sup> (and 1<sup>st</sup> Vet) exactly one minute behind his daughter and Terry Davies was 5<sup>th</sup> in 9min 42. Ken MacDonald was the first super vet with a time of 9.55 closely followed by Mike Gilbert (9.58) who was 7<sup>th</sup>. Lowri Evans was 8<sup>th</sup> and first Lady Vet (10.06) with Kath Morris only a few seconds behind at 10.14. Paul Mills was in 10<sup>th</sup> place after his chain came off just before the finish line, followed by Graham Gadd and Ifor Jones. Roy Spilsbury, the only 'mega vet' to attempt the event said it was about 60 years since he had last climbed the hill; once he had turned the first corner and started on the steep section he decided enough was enough and returned to photograph the rest of the field.

Everyone then went to Graigfechan where the vital task of sorting the

lunch order was completed before the freewheeling could begin. 15 people took part in the competition, helped by a good tail wind. Gerry Machell started the riders and most got as far as the car park entrance. Mike Gilbert won the event, with Roy Bunnell a freewheeling specialist coming in second place. Unusually there was a tie for third place with both Paul Mills and Graham Gadd reaching the same spot. Kath Morris repeated her previous good form in the event with 5<sup>th</sup> place as well as first lady; Emily Larwood was first Junior, and 10<sup>th</sup> over all. During the event the rain had started to fall gently so as soon as the last rider arrived there was some urgency to record the finishing positions before the chalk marks were washed away.



Once people were settled in the pub the results were calculated and everyone enjoyed their meals and a further chance to socialise. The presentations were then made and the riders and volunteers were thanked for making the event a success. Thanks also to Coleg Llysfa Si for allowing use of the yard and the Three Pigeons Graigfechan for their hospitality.



**Lowri Evans**

**"Let's have a moment of silence for all those stuck in traffic on the way to the gym to ride stationary bikes!" - Anon**



## 16th to 18th June 2017

This year I thought I'd try an event with a bit of a difference. I'd read about the Eroica in the 'Cycle' magazine and spoken to another rider who had done the event.

Eroica events were started in Italy with two aims – to protect those old 'strada bianchi' (white [gravel] roads) that the 'old school' cycle races used to use. The idea was to try to protect these iconic routes similar to the pave in Belgium. The second aim was to invoke the spirit of bike racing in the old days – so the events are open to



pre-1987 steel framed bikes, with down-tube gear shifters, non aero brake levers and non-cleated pedals.

Eroica events are gaining in popularity and as well as Britannia and L'Eroica there are events in Japan, Spain, Limburg and South Africa; The original (L'Eroica) event has been running since 1997, the UK event started in 2014.

My bike for the event started with me buying a Holdsworth Mistral frame from Andy Polakowski. This is a Reynolds steel 531 frame from 1980. I also managed to get a set of wheels from Andy with Weinmann rims and Campagnolo Record hubs. The rear wheel has a Suntour 5-speed block

so this set my sights on getting Suntour components to match. Glynn Jones sold me the derailleur and front mech and I managed to get a pair of Suntour down tube shifters at the Manchester bike jumble.

The bottom bracket and drive chain came from Planet X – who now sell the Holdsworth marque and new components still fit the old frames.

Other items – Mafac Racer brakes, GB handlebars and a Carradice saddlebag came from Lowri, who had a stash of donated items in her garage. The seatpin was from Graham Gadd and the saddle (Brooks B17) from Tony Wilkinson. Other bits and pieces were from the bike jumble or bought on-line at Planet X or SJS cycles. A huge "THANK YOU" to everyone who helped me with the bike.

### The event

Eroica Britannia is a mixture of a music festival, a celebration of old-school bicycles and a bike ride.

I went for the whole weekend; the site moved to its new, bigger venue at Finden Grange, near Ashbourne. The site has access to the High Peaks Trail.

Arrival is very similar to any other large festival event. You are directed to a car parking area and park up, unload your camping gear from the car and carry it to a camping area and exchange your ticket for a wristband. Once your tent is up, you change another ticket for a festival wristband and then you are allowed into the festival site. There's a main HQ tent to register as a rider, but it was evident that lots of people are there for the weekend atmosphere and not riding at all.

On the festival site there is a main stage, two large bars, two smaller bars, lots of shops and trade stands, a bike jumble and lots of food outlets. There's a fairground, a family tent and the usual paraphernalia associated with festivals.

My Friday night consisted of putting up my tent, getting a pint, losing my car keys and spending two hours looking for them, eventually finding them, having another pint and going to bed!

The main stage music finished at 11pm but the bars are open until 2am – and have amplified music! I made a BIG mistake camping too near the

festival – it was noisy. Something I'll be suggesting to the organisers is that they should offer riders a quiet campsite – particularly those doing the longer ride as it's an early start.

Saturday consisted of looking round all the stalls – Brooks saddles, Carradice saddle bags, Vintage Steel Bikes, Spa Cycles, National Trust, tweed stalls, Best of Britain retailers – lots of stuff that would appeal to those who take their heritage cycles seriously – looking around the crowd there are plenty of them – people dressed in period cycling gear, plus fours, woollen race jerseys, or just dressed to match their machines – straw boaters and stripped blazers, flat caps, heavy cotton shirts and waistcoats. The ladies are in summer dresses with crinoline underskirts. There are competitions for the best dressed – man, woman and family – and a best dressed dog!...and of course the Best Moustache!

The main stage music for the evening was ABC – "Shoot that Poison Arrow" and "The Look of Love" the only two songs I knew but they were pretty good. During the day there was a range of music from a local choir, rock bands to a full brass band. There are deckchairs scattered around so you can sit and relax with a gin and tonic and watch the world go by whilst listening to some rather good music.

Again the bars were noisy and didn't shut down until 2am – and I was up at 5am for a 6am start!!





## The Rides.

Riders can register for three distances. Short – 25 miles, Medium – 55 miles or Long – 100 miles.

When you register you pick up a pack with your race number to pin on your jersey and a matching number to tie on your bike with string! You have a ride book which gets stamped at various food stations and there are three stickers to match the distances so you can chose to change on the day you ride. I chose the 100 mile ride.

I didn't have a great start to the day. At 5am I put my water on to boil for a coffee and porridge – and the gas ran out!! I had to make do with two nine bars and a coffee purchased from an early morning vendor! I made my way to the start arena to meet up with about 50 other riders who had chosen to do the 100 miler.

Most of us were on traditional road bikes – there were a few Hutchins, Holdsworths and Raleighs and some beautiful Italian bikes but more impressive was the 3-speed gentlemans' town bike ridden by someone in full tweeds and a very old, very heavy looking single speed bike ridden by a young man in a white woollen racing shirt, cap, goggles and inner-tubes worn over the shoulders.

We were set off along the High Peak Trail by a gentleman in a ringmasters outfit, waving us off with the Union Flag at exactly 6am. It was 16 degrees already – it was forecast to reach 29 degrees or higher during the day!

The ride took us along the trail to meet tarmac roads and on to our first

### You know you're a cyclist....

.....When anybody mentions distance you immediately think of how long it would take to cycle it.....

stop – only 11 miles – at Ilam Hall, it's a gothic mansion run by the National Trust, who were there to feed us a bacon butter and coffee. Very welcome after only nine bars!

The ride goes onto the Tissington Trail, and eventually back onto the High Peaks Trail into the River Derwent valley, which ends in a very steep decent – lots of people walked down this section as there were some very old brakes on some very old bikes!

Once we were back on the tarmac we rode past Chatsworth House and onto the Monsal Trail – a former railway line complete with bridges and tunnels, and some spectacular views, then onto lunch at an old station at Millers Dale.

Lunch was handed out by volunteers and there was plenty to eat and drink. You could even have a beer if you fancied it – I stuck with water and lemonade as we'd only completed about 55 miles.

climb with 16% sections. Yes, I have ridden it before but today it was too much in the heat. So again I was walking for maybe 800m.

Then there's the downhill from the top to Chapel-en-le-Frith and onto a huge climb into the Goyt Valley. Our third stop was at Errwood Sailing Club next to the reservoir, all riders making use of any shade possible and taking on as much water and fluids as we could.

The final leg goes up the Goyt Valley, up onto the 'Cat and Fiddle' road and continues climbing onto the moors before dropping down into Longnor and down to the River Dove, before a very challenging climb at Crowdecote – 20% and another 500m walk! The tarmac road gave way for the last time to the High Peaks Trail and back to get my final stamp at the Eroica HQ. At the end you get – a small can of beer!! That's it!

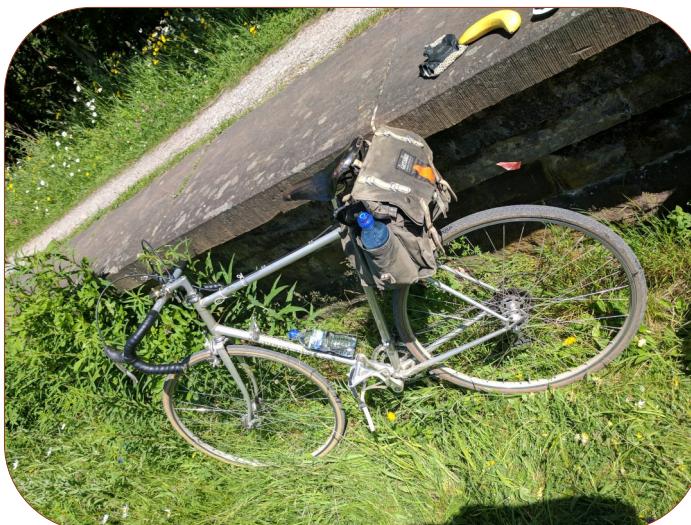
Would I go again? Probably – it would be nice to do it with a bit of company. I enjoyed the challenge of riding a bike that I'd put together with the help of others but knew every component that had been bought and fitted.

I may just go for the Saturday and the ride on Sunday. I may prefer a campervan and would definitely be further away from the bars after midnight.

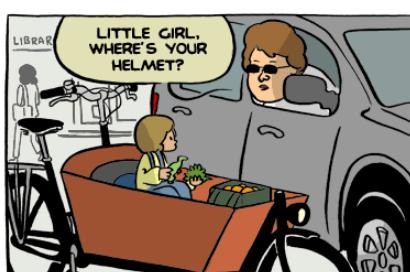
Its certainly not a cheap event but the atmosphere is brilliant and some of the people must be crackers riding in tweeds on the hottest day of the year.

The people there are great and there would be lots of help if you broke down or needed help.

Maybe it would be nice to go to the original L'Eroica in Chianti – now there's a thought! **Mark Jones**



After lunch we were faced with a very steep climb from the River Wye – my gears slipped right at the start of the climb and I found myself walking for about 300m – up to Wormhill, Whetstone and Tideswell and on towards Hope and the Edale Valley. Any of you who have done the Dark Peak Grimeur audax ride will know what comes next – MamTor! A 2mile





When I joined the Wednesday Riders I soon found out that if Tony was down as the leader of a ride it would be a long and hilly day out. Everything changed in 2012. What follows I find truly inspirational. Tony is back leading and the rides are just as hard although he now has a little help.

#### **How long have you been a cyclist?**



1

I used to be a mountain biker riding the Flintshire challenge for ten years until I was 61 (it's a young man's game). The foot and mouth outbreak in 2000 meant that I couldn't ride over the tracks so I started road cycling. I joined the CTC in 2003 and started going out with the Mold Informals and Wednesday Riders. After a short while I was regularly leading rides.

#### **Did you take part in many events?.....**

Yes, once I became a road cyclist I rode the Snowden charity ride eleven consecutive years, the Wild Wales plus a large number of 100 mile and Audax challenge rides.

**1. Taken the first time I climbed the Ventoux to celebrate my 70th birthday. I was using a ratty ex mountain bike that we used to carry on the motorhome because it was unlikely to be stolen. I actually broke 2 teeth of the middle chain ring during the climb.**

#### **What about riding abroad?.....**

We own a motor home and love going to France for six weeks each summer. Over the years I have rode many routes there including the Voie Verte which has the longest cyclists tunnel in the world (1.6 K long).



2

In 2012, I rode up Mont Ventoux to celebrate my 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday. I repeated this ride the following year.

Unfortunately, two months after this ride I was diagnosed with cancer.

#### **That must have had a devastating effect on your general fitness.....**

At first, I managed to carry on as normal but as the treatment kicked in I became too weak to ride. It meant that between 2012 and 2015 I didn't ride at all.



#### **What was the solution?.....**

I missed getting out in the countryside and cycling with friends, as I live in Bryn-y-Baal every time I come out of my front door I have to ride up (or down) a hill. As I was now three years

**2. Me descending after climbing to the summit celebrating my 71st birthday. I'd built the bike using a titanium Mtrax frame bought for £23. The seller wanted £30, but I beat him down. It was fitted with some of my own hand-built wheels, and Jonathan still uses it.**

older and obviously my treatment had weakened me, the answer was to buy an electric bike.

#### **Was there a lot of choice?.....**

Yes, I researched this quite thoroughly. A major consideration was that it needed to fit on the back of my motor home, so it couldn't be too long or too heavy. The Raleigh Motus fitted the bill.

#### **Back to France?.....**

You bet! Last year as well as all the normal wonderful cycling on paths in France I rode up Mont Ventoux (twice).

I got a number of astonished looks (and a couple of expletives!) from struggling cyclists as I rode past them.

#### **I'm amazed, how did the battery hold up?.....**

I decided to buy a spare battery (which cost £700). The original is supposed to be able to cover 94 miles on the flat and the new one 120 miles.



3

I used the smaller battery to ride the 7.5K to the Chalet Reynard, when I got there it was only showing that I had used 40% of the available power. I decided to change to my spare and finished the last using 20% of the replacement.

#### **How does riding an electric bike compare with a "normal" bike?.....**

It's different but I love being able to get out and about again after my three years lay off.

#### **I always ask the interviewee what is their message What's yours?....**

Simple:- Don't give up!

**3. The of first time I climbed to the summit on my ebike when I was 75. Just shows you don't need a 3 grand super lightweight to take on what some say is one of the hardest of the Tour climbs.**

**Tony Small**

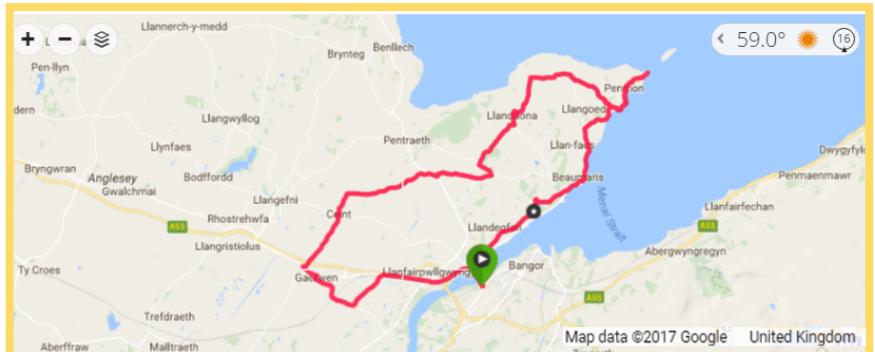


It's an early start and yes it's an hour and twenty minute drive, but wow it's worth it! I've visited Anglesey many times, from holidays with my parents to cycling trips with my son and more recently a weekend away with my sister. I will never tire of Anglesey. From the views of the spectacular Snowdon range, the unique landscape along the Menai Straits and beautiful coast line, quiet country lanes and fabulous places to eat.



**Picking up on a story Martin Brooks was following:- Jeremy Vine says he regrets that the female motorist who screamed abuse at him was jailed.**

**"The actual business of prosecuting was exhausting, time-consuming and very expensive". "I would have been happy with just an apology".**



Tony had planned a thirty five mile route around the South East of the Island. Starting at a very handy free carpark just the other side of the Menai bridge.

To start the ride cycling across bridge was good way to set up for a perfect day.



Our first stop, after taking in the views of the lighthouse and puffin island was a café at Penmon. Lovely friendly staff and good beans on toast and lots of tea! The cakes looked fabulous but we resisted knowing we would take in another café stop later



in the day.

I certainly stretched my legs on this ride, Anglesey is known for its hills and it lived up to its reputation! No sooner were we down, then up and up again but it was worth it for the views.

The second very welcome stop was in a garden centre. Great cakes again, we were spoilt for choice. I would have been rude not to have a slice of the squashy strawberry and rhubarb cake!

We then headed back towards Menai bridge. This ride was not about how fast or how far or how

much we had climbed or how fast our decent was, it was a ride to take in



the beautiful country we live in, to share stories and just enjoy the day. Thanks Tony and Glynn, can't wait for next year.

**Janet Jones**



**Have you ever reported an incident?**

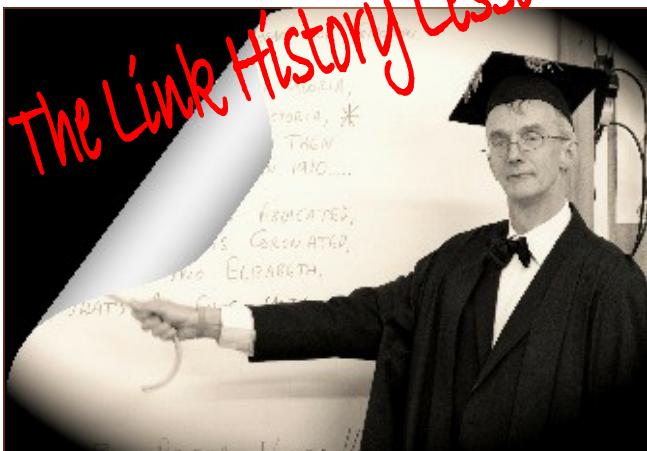
**How did it go?**

**What was the outcome?**

**Have you used Operation Snap (see page 19)?**

**Please share your experience in a Letter to the Editor.....**





## The Link History LESSON!

### Gwenllian – The Forgotten Princess!



Prince Llewelyn Ap Gruffudd (Llewelyn The Last) only had one child – A daughter Gwenllian born June 12<sup>th</sup> 1282. His wife Queen Eleanor De Montfort died giving birth to Gwenllian.

Later on  
December  
11<sup>th</sup> 1282

Llewelyn was killed near Builth Wells. His brother Dafydd was hunted down and executed in Shrewsbury. On the orders of King Edward 1<sup>st</sup> the baby



Gwenllian was taken to a convent at Sempringham, Lincolnshire. Edwards objective was to prevent her ever marrying and having children to continue the Welsh Royal line.



**Glynn Jones**

She spent the rest of her life there not knowing her true identity. She never saw Wales or learned Welsh. She died on June 7<sup>th</sup> 1337 not knowing that she was the last native princess of Wales. The nuns even denied her her real name and

called her Wencilian.



There is a Gwenllian Society and a memorial plaque of Welsh slate at Sempringham.

A peak in Snowdonia has been renamed Carnedd Gwenllian and there are peaks named after her mother Eleanor and father Llewelyn also her uncle Dafydd and a stone inscribed at the summit of Snowdon.

Just one additional note, Dafydd also had a daughter Gwladys. She was also spirited away to another Abbey at Sixhills Priory also in Lincolnshire where she died in 1336 aged 65. Thus extinguishing the Royal Welsh line completely!

**Glynn Jones**

## Accident on The Greenway

We all love to cycle the Greenway, miles of off road cycling around Chester. I know most of our members are pretty sensible but just a reminder that Chester Greenway isn't a cycle path but a shared use route that rightly includes small unpredictable children, horses, prams, and dogs who all have an equal right to enjoy the path.... ringing a bell or shouting without slowing is perhaps making an assumption that it's the other user's duty to quickly get out of our way! We cyclists should always slow right down if there are other users ahead.



A couple of months ago there was an accident where a cyclists knocked over a small child. The child was treated in hospital for a broken leg and fortunately had a good fitting cycle



helmet on at the time so sustained no further injuries. The mother states that "**had the cyclist slowed right down, called out, rang his bell, etc. he may have avoided this traumatic incident for both himself and my daughter**"

Please be aware and share with care!

**Details sent by Andrew Whitgreave**



## Shimano Ultegra RD-R8000-GS; 11 speed Rear Mech

This high quality component came on to the market in summer 2017 as a part of the new Ultegra Groupset. It is available as short cage (max capacity 30T) or long cage (max capacity 34T) and in mechanical or electronic versions.

We are concerned here with the GS (long cage) mechanical version only, which retails on the web at approximately £80. Expensive. But you get what you pay for!

The obvious advantage of this device is the capacity to use large sprockets without overloading the body and springs---or catching the upper jockey wheel on the teeth of the largest sprocket. The trick to obtain

this lies in the way the body hangs off an additional small arm, as can clearly be seen in the picture here. One consequence of the design is that the free end of the tension cable

has to be cut off at a precise length to avoid fouling the spokes. This issue becomes obvious on installation and causes no great difficulty.

Another new departure for Shimano is that the limit stops and tensioning screws now have small allan key heads rather than chewable screw heads. Much better in my opinion.

Shimano give a preferred method for setting chain length on installation. (See internet for full installation instructions). I am sure that this works---but I prefer to set a realistic position for the jockey cage between the outer chain ring and the 8<sup>th</sup> sprocket up from the smallest. This gives me a nice clean drive for the largest sprocket I personally use with



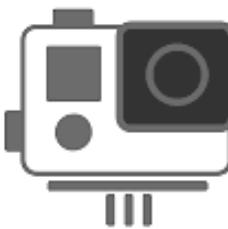
the outer chainring. (There are other ways to set length---but as I use a triple chainring setup this works for me. In any event, make sure the mech will handle largest chainring to largest sprocket without jamming up, in order to avoid accidents).

I have also tested this system on an 11 to 36T Shimano mountain bike block without any problems, which demonstrates the excellent range of this derailleur.

I have now used this setup over several hundred hilly kilometres and it has performed faultlessly. Overall opinion is of a very high quality item with much versatility---could be perfect for your touring bike.

**David Matthews**

## Do you want to report an incident that you have caught on a dashcam or mobile phone?



North Wales Police are working with the communities of North Wales to help reduce risk on our roads.

## What is Operation SNAP?

North Wales Police have been busy over the past few months bringing together Operation SNAP. This is our response to increasing submissions of video and photographic evidence relating to driving offences that members of the public have seen.

These reports have been coming into us in all sorts of ways. So we have developed a streamlined process to deal with them, which will hopefully make it easier for all involved. This is currently in its pilot phase.

## Why has NWP launched Operation SNAP?

The current boom in dash cam use (or helmet/bike cams etc.) means the public are capturing motoring offences including careless or dangerous driving and people being distracted whilst using smart devices.



## Support for Vulnerable Road Users

North Wales Police also recognises that vulnerable road users are now using cameras. Cyclists, both pedal and motor, are vulnerable on our roads. We see some awful very close passes and people pulling in and out of junctions, putting cyclists in danger. The publicly available figures speak for themselves – cyclists come off worse when they are in collision with a car. Often the car driver has taken an unnecessary risk, or didn't see them.

We will not tolerate this and wish to support all road users, especially the most vulnerable, in having a safe journey. This includes taking positive action in respect of looking at your footage and witness testimony. We will work with you to seek prosecution when appropriate, so we can alter the behaviour of those who take unnecessary risks and put you in danger.....

**Information taken from North Wales Police. Website find out more at <https://www.north-wales.police.uk/advice-and-support/safer-roads>**



## Martin Brooks 1948 - 2017

### Mike

Graham and I knew Martin for at most 4 or 5 years, our recollections of him are limited to his time as a cyclist in Chester and North Wales. In that time he became a regular rider with the Cafe Hoppers as well as the other CTC Groups operating in the area. As we got to know him he came across as someone with a strong character and personality and once the different styles of humour of the South had merged with the North West we had some fantastic banter with him on our various rides, which sometimes could be quite fierce but always in good spirit

### Graham

The first time I met Martin he was riding with Sarah near Beeston Castle. Seeing this long-legged cyclist and after talking to him and hearing his time trial competition times, which were better than mine when I was competing, I was pretty impressed.

On many occasions when I was hanging on his back wheel, I thought this wasn't a good idea, and on one occasion when I was trying to pass him beside the River Dee his comment "slow down tiger, you're getting old now" tickled me...typical Martin.

### Mike

Martin was very meticulous as to how both he and his bikes looked when he and Sarah turned up for a ride. The best example I can give you of this meticulousness was when Graham and I followed Martin and Sarah to their house in Rossett after a ride, to pick up some piece of kit or other. He

invited us in to see his garage, which if there was such a thing as an operating theatre for bikes this would have been up there with the best. The floor was painted, both sets of bikes were stacked in two racks and all his tools and kit had their designated place. To say it was immaculate would be a massive understatement!

As we rode away after a half hour tour we both commented on how we were impressed not only by the garage but also by the fact that he had a sink in it as well!

This perfectionism could also be seen in his planning for his and Sarah's trips across Europe and Spain and his entertaining blog. He was an expert in mapping and downloading route information on his Garmin.

This knowledge for mapping and directions across multiple countries didn't, however, extend to his rides with us around the Cheshire lanes. I don't think he ever got used to the variety and number of lanes there are to the same Cafe. My best memories of this are when we beat him in the various sprints for village signs, despite his superior strength because he couldn't remember where the signs were.

He got his own back though whenever we cycled along the River Dee cycle path. He used to tear our legs off with Sarah locked onto his back wheel while we struggled to keep up. We did get our own back when the road went steeply upwards but he was a strong rider on most terrain

Martin was someone who was always ready to help or provide assistance with anything to do with cycling.

### Graham

He was such a helpful guy. I own an old track frame which Martin researched for me. He contacted the bike shop in Stoke on Trent, weighed the frame and forwarded the frame number to them to see if they had built it. Regrettably they had lost a lot of their older records so couldn't confirm either way. Martin advised that I get it refurbished and resprayed. I followed his advice and am the proud owner of a ferrari red track bike...thanks Martin! He would gladly give his time to help anybody, a lovely person.

### Mike

Martin's enthusiasm for cycling and his readiness to help others was best



illustrated when he took over the Editorship of the Link Magazine.

Through his cajoling and persuasion and his own contributions he managed to get a larger variety of articles and topics and added his own articles on kit reviews, cycling safety, jokes and cartoons which made it a magazine of more interest to a broader readership.

From a local perspective, in my view it was better than most of the other National cycling publications.

When he and Sarah left for Spain we maintained contact through the medium of WhatsApp and followed the progress of his illness through both written messages and the occasional phone call. Whenever we were in contact he was always positive and looking forward. For me he was always a role model for positivity.

And that sums up what Martin was to us, not only a guy on a bike that we rode with but someone who liked having fun, lots of banter, would provide assistance whenever it was asked for, stayed positive in adversity but most of all he was a friend.

### Mike Frith and Graham Gadd

I rode with Martin a couple of times (he was way too fast for me!) I got to know him when I became one of his contacts in the UK for The Link. Martin was always so enthusiastic about the latest edition and made a fantastic job of it. Every contact I had with him; phone call, Whatsapp or email Martin was consistently enthusiastic, friendly, polite, encouraging and always a gentleman.

Janet Jones





When I think of Martin the words enthusiastic and energetic spring to mind. I first met him at the cafe in Gwersyllt when he came with Sarah to join in with a Wrexham Reivers'

ride. They quickly became regular riders with the group; Martin delighted in the company of the cyclists at the cafe as well as the chance to explore the beautiful countryside.

Over the next few years I was also privileged to enjoy his company on some long rides when he took up Audax riding. There was much gentle teasing and leg pulling which helped the miles go by and both he and Sarah were kind enough to ride at my rather sedate pace without seeming impatient.

Not long after he started riding with the Reivers I asked if he would be interested in editing the Link; he took it on with his trade mark efficiency. He was rightly proud of the editions he edited although as deadlines for issues approached I would be

reminded/blamed for asking him to be editor!

He played down his health problems; asking how he was after his hip replacement the reply was 'it stings a bit'. I gradually realised that his idea of 'stings a bit' would not be the same as most people's! He seemed to stay positive and interested in others to the end. Our last conversation was about a week before he passed away; he was interested to catch up with all of the gossip from the Reivers and C&NW CTC. He was still planning for the future with projects on the house and suggesting a visit to Spain this autumn.

His dry sense of humour, enjoyment of cycling and life in general was infectious. It was a privilege to know Martin; he is greatly missed.

**Lowri Evans**

**Whilst Martin was a keen and prolific cyclist, he tended to ride with the Wrexham groups rather than the Chester groups---so I have few memories of being out on the bike with him.**

However, where I did meet up with Martin was at Chester and N. Wales CTC committee meetings, thanks to his enthusiastic uptake of the Link editorship.

Martin was always full of good ideas for improving the magazine which he put into practice, as evidenced by our excellent A4 colour magazine that Martin did so much to establish.

Even when Martin moved out to his new retirement dreamlife in Spain with partner Sarah, he continued to edit the magazine thanks to his enthusiasm and the wonders of the internet.

It is such a tragic loss that Martin's future was taken away from him at what should have been such a wonderful time in his life, with a new home to refurbish, lots of sundrenched roads to cycle and a sparkly new hip to help put it all into practice.

Thanks for your good work and enthusiasm Martin---it is sorely missed.



**David Matthews**

### **John Redman 1948 - 2017**

#### **Obituary**

The funeral took place at St Asaph on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2017, of John Redman from Lixwm, keen cyclist & musician. John died aged 69 after a brief illness, at the Nightingale Hospice in Wrexham on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2017. Shortly before he died, he kindly donated three cycles to the Bren Project in Chester.

John was born and brought up in Lancashire and from an early age was interested in brass band music. On leaving school he entered the RAF, in the catering section, but when his musical talent became evident, he transferred to the RAF

Band at Cranwell. He subsequently moved around with the RAF including Cyprus where he met his wife Lorraine. On leaving the RAF John became a manager with the NAAFI organisation, again with postings abroad including the Falklands.

He continued cycle touring on leaving the NAAFI, and did several major trips including the End to End. He was a regular rider with the Mold section (later the Mold Informals) and took part on some C&NW CTC events. He became a Sustrans Ranger and Cycle Trainer in local schools, which was where I met him, working initially for Flintshire County Council Road Safety unit and subsequently for Cycle Experience. For several years we worked together, known by the children as

Little John and Big John!

Having left the NAAFI and moving to Lixwm, John and Lorraine ran the Crown in Lixwm, before retiring to 'Hen Gerrig' immediately opposite.

Apart from his active career with several local bands, John was a Magistrate, Parish Councillor and enjoyed golf, working at Holywell Golf Club. John and Lorraine enjoyed touring with their Camper van & cycles. As well as his Brass instruments, John also learnt to play mandolin.

A large group of family and friends from various bands and cycling groups came to St Asaph to say goodbye.

**John Holiday  
(Mold)**



During late May and early June of 2014, about three weeks after my '3 times in a day ascent' of Mont Ventoux, my wife Lynne and I parked up our caravan just outside the small town of Cerialles, on the Ligurian Coast, about mid-way between Nice and Genoa.

The cycling reasons for this were; I wanted to ride the last part of the Milan–San Remo route, the traditional start to the Classics season and I had also arranged to meet up with a group of friends in the Italian Alps to ride some classic cols. The non cycling reasons were to get a bit of sea and sand and to explore the city of Genoa.

I ended up doing the first ride, the last 45 miles of the Milan–San Remo route on a Sunday – probably the busiest day of the week for traffic along the coast. Throw in the fact that, including both the start and finish towns, there were eleven quite large towns along the route, with an average of four sets of traffic lights per town, meant that there were in the region of fifty sets of traffic lights to negotiate! Outside the towns the coastal road was fantastic with impressive views of the Mediterranean and steep sea-cliffs. The other problem I faced was finding the famous ascents of the Cipressa and Poggio that have such an impact on the final result of the race. On TV the route is well identified with crowds and signs for the riders, on the first Sunday in June I ended up having to ask the way in a form of "Engtalian" from a couple of the locals. I did manage to find the hills, they obviously didn't have the impact on me after 60km of riding that they do on the professionals after 280km of riding. My arrival in San Remo wasn't met with cheering crowds either, just lots of cars as I tried to negotiate my

way back to the cycle path for the ride back. On reflection it wasn't a brilliant ride, in fact if asked to provide a comparison you would probably get a similar experience by riding through Llandudno and round the Great Orme a dozen times, only, and I know some Welsh people might disagree, without the magic of Milan–San Remo the Cipressa and the Poggio. In total I rode 134km with 1479m ascent.

For the second part of the cycling objective we were meeting up with a group of friends who were doing a supported ride from Chamonix in France to the top of Monte Zoncolan in the Italian Dolomites.



The arrangement was to meet up with them in the town of Tirano in Northern Italy and then ride over the Mortirolo and Gavia passes into Bormio and on the following day ride the Passo dello Stelvio from Bormio to its summit, where they would carry on with their journey and I would meet up with Lynne down in Bormio and we would then drive back to Cerialles and continue our holiday. So with enthusiasm we set off to Tirano on the Thursday morning, leaving our caravan in Cerialles. Despite a bit of stress getting around the outskirts of Milan and Bergamo we arrived in Tirano around 4.00pm. With the modern marvels of GPS we found the hotel and then with a stroke of luck came across our friends outside a bar, whilst we were looking for some parking. The rest of the evening was spent catching up, a few drinks with a meal followed by a relatively early night.

The next day dawned bright, sunny

and warm, along with the fact that it was my 67<sup>th</sup> birthday I was optimistic that the

day was going to be a good one. After the usual faffing getting six cyclists ready to ride we set off from the hotel heading north east on the main SS38 towards Bormio. We soon turned off this onto the SP26 heading to Mazzo di Valtellina.

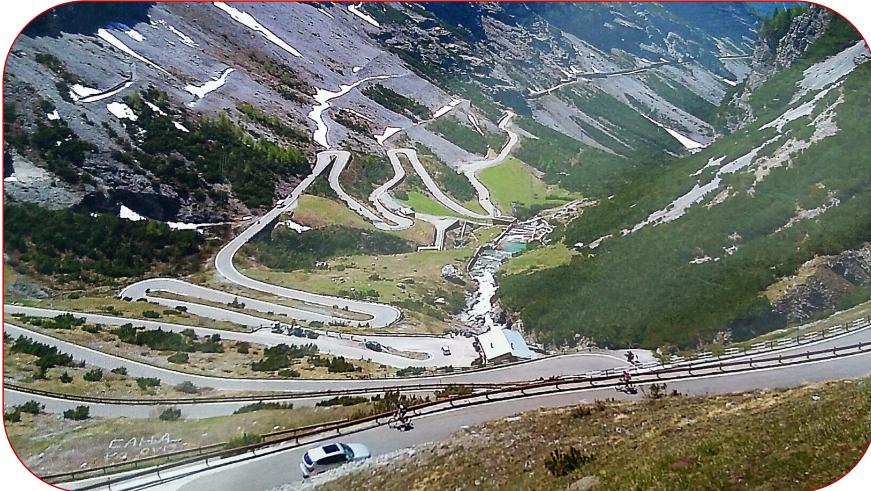
The Mortirolo is one of those iconic climbs, along with the other two that we intended to ride, that have been made famous by the Giro d'Italia. In fact Lance Armstrong was once quoted as saying that the Mortirolo was the hardest climb he had ever ridden (Mark Cavendish used rather stronger language to say a similar thing) but it is Marco Pantani that is most closely linked with the mountain and his appearance in the Giro, to the extent that there is a statue in his memory near the top.

The 'Pantani' route up the Mortirolo starts from Mazzo, however as we arrived at the first village along the road we saw a sign that said 'GF Santini'. Thinking this was the start of the climb we turned off and headed upwards. It was only some time later, after some research on this route, that we discovered it was a different route altogether. Leaving from Tovo di Sant' Agata, rather than Mazzo, it joins the 'Pantani' route about 2km from the summit, the route having been used as part of the Queen Stage (20<sup>th</sup>) of the 2012 Giro.

As we turned uphill the gradient immediately went up to an average of over 10%. With thirty eight hairpins! (information obtained later, as my eyes were boggling with the effort at the time) it has the same average percentage of the Pantani Motirolo (10.5%). The difference between the two is that after 8.5km up this climb the road flattens out and drops slightly for 1km, giving the impression that as



**Mike Frith**



the cover of the dense trees began to thin out the worst was over. This was the sucker punch!

As the road headed upwards again not only did the average gradient for the final two kilometres go up to 13.7% but the road surface changed from smooth tarmac to a rough rutted grooved concrete, with drainage channels crossing its surface. Not only that but the 13.7% average gradient hides sections of 21, 22 and even 23%. Suffice to say I pushed my bike up a couple parts of this section until we met the 'Pantani' route about 2km from the top. A bit more climbing was needed before the summit of the Mortirolo came into view at 1852m.



After regrouping with the rest of the team and a bit of a curse at the difficulty of the 'New Mortirolo', we continued downwards towards Monno. This was a straight forward descent through more dense trees until the final few kilometres when the hairpins appeared and dropped us down into the valley bottom. Picking up the SS42 we made good time along the next valley to Ponte di Legno (1258m), which in winter is a very popular ski resort but when we were there was a sleepy alpine village. There were various banners and signs around however, which left

us in no doubt that this was a major staging point on the Giro d'Italia and the start of the climb to the top of the Gavia.

After a quick lunch at a local restaurant we were soon on our way heading north to Pezzo, the first 3km of which were a gentle 5% or so that allowed us to warm up our legs after our stop. The rest of the climb averaged around 8% and is the most difficult of the ways up the pass and is the route Andy Hampsten rode himself into cycling history and became a legend after the 1988 Giro was hit by a blizzard on the Gavia.

The first part of the ascent was covered in dense trees but soon cleared as height was gained. There were lots of hairpins and an old snow tunnel near the top. This caused a bit of consternation as we rode through it, as the far end of the tunnel didn't become visible until half way through, but the potential for injury was reduced as we were riding uphill!

The top of the Gavia (2621m) arrived not long afterwards and although we were warmed through by the effort it was quite cold on the top. With lots of snow lying around and the Rifugio Bonetta and restaurants closed it was no place to hang about, so it was arm warmers and jacket on and once we were altogether, we set off down.

I remember it being a steady descent at the beginning as the road surface wasn't perfect, presumably due to weather damage. As we got lower the surface improved and once the last hairpins were behind us it was a straight high speed descent (77km/hr max) down into Bormio.

In total we rode 91km with 3547m ascent.

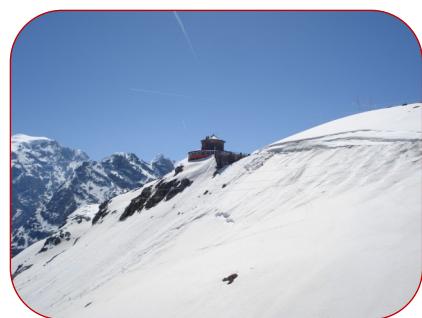
We stayed the night in Bormio at a very nice place called the Hotel le Genezilla. A couple of bottles of fizz to celebrate an excellent days riding and my birthday along with a substantial meal helped us all sleep well that evening.

The following day dawned sunny and much warmer than yesterday, with hardly a cloud in the sky. As this was our last day together we took a group photo before setting off. We were confident today would not present the route finding difficulties we'd had yesterday, as it was a matter of riding to the bottom of town, turning right onto the Via Stelvio and following it uphill for 13miles (22km) or so.

To describe the ascent of the Passo dello Stelvio in such a way however, is to dismiss one of the most iconic Cols in Europe. It has played a major part in many editions of the Giro d'Italia and provides some of the most perfect, most exhilarating, most 'gob-smacking' scenery available to cyclists anywhere.

The road started with the usual out of town buildings which slowly dwindled away, until after 3.5 km the first of the 5 tunnels was reached. After this the road snaked away into the distance until the head of the valley came into sight. There's no wondering how this road gets to the top, no wondering which subsidiary valley it might take. There in front of us was the thin line of the some 30 hairpins this road ascends.

A short distance from the top of the pass a road shoots off left heading down into Switzerland and if the desire takes you, a route around to Ponte di Stelvio and back up to the top of the Stelvio. Just off this junction sits the Picolo Tibet (Little



Tibet) hotel and as the name suggests a building that wouldn't look out of place in the Himalaya. It doesn't look out of place in this scenery either!

After over two hours of riding we reached the top at an altitude of 2758m and were met by azure blue sky, 4m high snow drifts by the road and a crowd of tourists flocking around the gift shops and restaurants.

Once our group had re-assembled we



found a table outside, ordered baguettes and coke, sat in the sun and reflected on the last two days. For my part I thought it amazing that I'd managed to ride three of the most iconic Cols in Europe over a birthday, with a bunch of good friends.

After around an hour sitting in the sun we all decided it was time to go our separate ways. Three of us were heading back down to Bormio, while the rest were continuing their ride to Monte Zoncolan. We said our goodbyes and headed down, stopping to take a few photographs of the hairpins down towards Bormio, before continuing another brilliant descent. The tunnels on the way back were taken with caution as the two guys I was with were catching flights back to the UK that evening and I had Lynne and a caravan to get back to. In total we rode 45km with 1613m ascent



Back at the hotel bags were quickly packed by the travellers and we waved them off to the airport. Lynne and I had decided to have a more leisurely departure and spent another night in the Le Genezilla. To celebrate we wandered into the village and found a nice Italian Restaurant for a real pizza and too much red wine, before heading back to the hotel.

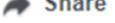
The following morning we headed off back to Cerialles to continue our holiday.

**Mike Frith**

 **Ros Clarke**  
1 hr

facebook

Semaine Federale 2017: for the 9th consecutive year the Clarke family went to this annual French CTC event, this year in Mortagne au Perche. Don't know if any others from Chester and North Wales went this year. We had been told it was hilly, and the first couple of days were rolling but not that bad in total. All the villages had lots of bike related decoration this year whether on the P1 or P5 routes, which was really nice. They had very efficient feed stations using a wristband chip this year and of course lots of churches and cathedrals to see. All campsites had live music every evening, which turned into an impromptu disco most nights. 2018 is in Epinal, in the Vosges region, all on one campsite.

 Like  Comment  Share





Ros shares experiences of a family trip to Semaine Federale 2017 on facebook. Looks like we all need to put this one on the 'to do' list!



boat" holiday with a difference organised by a company called Travel Eyes. The format of a large comfortable barge providing food and



accommodation for a group of people who cycle each day around the Dutch waterways before meeting up again with the barge is well established. The difference, for this week, was that half the people taking part had a visual impairment and the bikes were tandems. I had a little, and I mean little, experience of tandem riding many

years ago and no experience with visually impaired people, or VI's in the jargon. We assembled at the airport and were soon aboard the barge, meeting our guides and each other. The group included people from the USA, Canada, Finland and the UK aged between 35 and 79. The visual impairments ranged from very restricted tunnel vision to completely blind. The tandems were very heavy, step through frames, hub gears and brakes. Soon we were off on a very wobbly test ride around the busy paths alongside the waterways of Amsterdam. Was this a good idea I wondered as I struggled to

persuade the 35yr old cross country ski champion who was my partner to pedal more gently so we didn't crash repeatedly into the tandem in front or fall in the water! Could we really get around the acute turn coming up or would we be swimming soon? Things soon settled down and I thoroughly enjoyed the week. The Dutch cycling facilities are well known, but you have to experience them to really get it. We never once saw or heard an irate driver. If we got in their way, they stopped and waited patiently. We only cycled 30 miles each day and averaged just 8mph. For some of those taking part this was more than they had ever done before even on a single day. It was inspirational to see the way the VIs overcame their lack of vision and enjoyed the holiday to the full. We visited Amsterdam, Gouda, Rotterdam, Delft, Haarlem, Leiden, and Zaardam. A wonderful week I shall always remember.



**Chris Smith**



The independent published a story on 20th September 2017 stating that the Government is to carry out an urgent review covering reckless cycling.

This, I suspect, was a reaction to the very sad and unfortunate case where Kim Briggs died after being hit by a cyclist who was riding without brakes. During the trial prosecutors had to rely on an 1861 law designed to cover offences by drivers of horse drawn carriages.

Under current laws, cyclists can only be charged with careless or dangerous cycling, which carry maximum fines of £1,000 and £2,500 respectively. Riders who cause bodily harm can only be convicted under the 1861 Offences Against the Person Act, which covers "wanton and furious driving".

Earlier this month, Theresa May hinted that ministers were considering making changes to laws on cycling. The Prime Minister told MPs it was important that "our legislation keeps up to date with developments that take place" and said the Department of Transport was "looking at" the issue.

The review will be conducted in two phases. The first, which will conclude early in 2018, will assess the case for

creating new criminal offenses for causing death or injury by careless or dangerous cycling.

The second phase will look at wider issues involving road safety and cycling, including ways to make highways safer for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists.

In 2015, the latest year for which data is available, two pedestrians were killed and 96 seriously injured after being hit by a bike.

Meanwhile more than 100 cyclists are killed and 3,000 seriously injured on Britain's roads each year.





## FIRE SERVICE COLLEGE MORETON IN MARSH

**MON AUGUST 7<sup>TH</sup> TO SUNDAY  
AUGUST 14<sup>TH</sup>**

The 2017 Birthday Rides were based at the Fire Service College just outside Moreton in Marsh in the Cotswolds on the borders of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire . Nearly 500 cyclists participated, some (like ourselves) camping in tents, motorhomes or caravans within the college's extensive grounds while others took advantage of the en-suite living and sleeping arrangements provided "in house" within the college. Chester/North Wales CTC and Two Mills CTC were strongly represented with close to 30 members present and with the new Two Mills short sleeve tops visibly active most days they made a strong statement of corporate identity. One particular midweek ride saw 17 riders on one designated route with 15 sporting Two Mills tops a resplendent sight.

The local terrain was decidedly lumpy, in total contrast to last year's mainly flat Suffolk landscape. We completed 4 rides over the week, totalling over 180 miles overall with almost 10000 ft of climbing. One particular day saw us complete two 14% climbs in quick succession, returning to the college. One of them had obviously been used by a local cycling club for their annual hill



climb competition with signs affixed to telegraph poles "start of climb" and "finish". Half way up a third sign said simply "shut up legs"—summed it up really.

Evening entertainment was provided on a nightly basis with film shows, cycling related talks, a ceilidh and a jazz band on different evenings. There was also a bar where members could meet for drinks and chat and this is where we tended to gravitate after the evening meal.



A photographic competition was held over the week and our John Ferguson won second prize overall with a particularly fine action shot of Two Mills rider Dave Webb, (see photo below).



I won first prize in the "Playdoh Pictionary" competition on the final evening. The brief was to make a model that summed up your cycling week. I made a tea cup and saucer and a plate with a piece of cake on it (see photo). Most other teams



seemed to try to make models of cottages or fields with sheep and cows in them and seemed surprised at my choice of subject. Seemed pretty obvious subject matter to me, highlight of the ride and doesn't CTC stand for Coffee Tea and Cake? Always did to me.....

Here's to next year and the chance to do it all again in a different area of the country. See you there?

**Brian Joyce**



## Tourist Competition Results 2016 and looking forward

Those who attend the C&NW CTC New Year's Day Meet will be familiar with the presentation of the C&NW CTC Tourist Competition Trophies to the highest place male & female riders in the Club. You may not be aware that for the last few years C&NW CTC has done its own calculations to work out the most likely winners as the results of the national competition are not available.

At last the results have been published by Cycling UK (although they still haven't posted the full individual results). Congratulations are in order as the C&NW CTC team have once again won the competition by a very clear margin:

1 <sup>st</sup>	Chester & N Wales CTC	424
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Stevenage and N Herts	110
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Central London CTC	90
4 <sup>th</sup>	Suffolk	70

Congratulations to Paul Mills for retaining his winning title (& being 1<sup>st</sup> Veteran) and to Terry Davies for retaining 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Both took part in a wide range of events and only Paul's performance in competitions enabled him to draw clear for a win. Lowri Evans was once again 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Lady Rider with Steve Larwood in 4<sup>th</sup> place and making the team for the first time. As can be seen from the table below C&NW CTC took up all of the top 8 places:

Placing	Name	Points		Group
1 <sup>st</sup>	Paul Mills	111	1 <sup>st</sup> Veteran & team	C&NW CTC
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Terry Davies	110	Team	C&NW CTC
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lowri Evans	107	1 <sup>st</sup> Lady & Lady Veteran 7 Team	C&NW CTC
4 <sup>th</sup>	Steve Larwood	95	Team	C&NW CTC
5 <sup>th</sup>	Ifor Jones	84		C&NW CTC
6 <sup>th</sup>	Ben Larwood	74		C&NW CTC
7 <sup>th</sup>	John Wilkie	72		C&NW CTC
8 <sup>th</sup>	Dave Statham	65		C&NW CTC

The Larwoods decided to make their mark in 2016; not only with Steve making the team but also Ben gaining 6<sup>th</sup> place and Emily being 2<sup>nd</sup> in the girls junior competition (may well remember reading about her great performance in the Welsh Junior Track Championships – unsurprisingly those events didn't count towards the Tourist Competition).

In recent years there have been problems with reporting and recording the Tourist Competition results. One important change has taken place to make it far easier for individuals to be credited with rides- Cycling UK membership numbers can now be entered onto Audax online entries so the number will automatically appear on the results sheet. If you ride Audax events please make sure you include your Cycling UK number.

At the end of May there was a telephone conference with staff from National Office and other representatives to look at ways of improving the competition. Plans are being to be drawn up to speed up the publication of results, raise awareness of the competition and increase inclusivity by ensuring that certificates and recognition are given to those completing set numbers of events. Updates on progress should appear in future editions of the Link.

Submitted by Lowri Evans



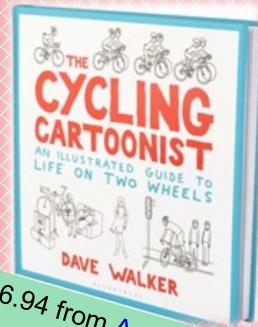
**Don't forget! Chester and North Wales AGM is to be held on Sunday 5th November at Pulford Village Hall (CH4 9DG). Everybody is welcome from 11.30 am. Beans on toast, tea, coffee, cakes available on arrival. Meet up with other members, Meeting starts at 12.30. Come and find out what is happening with your club. P.S. Please bring along Your Cycling UK membership card.**



Unfortunately a new bike won't fit into a stocking, so I've found some ideas that will, all you have to do is leave The Link lying around the house open at this page, highlight your preferred gift and fingers crossed on Christmas morning there will be a 'surprise' in your stocking! It's worth a try!



[notonthehighstreet.com](http://notonthehighstreet.com) - £15

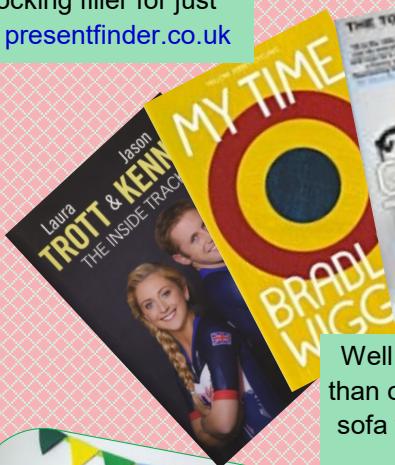


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Keep those pens in order with this novelty pen box! Great stocking filler for just £8.99 at [presentfinder.co.uk](http://presentfinder.co.uk)



Well it would seem they've all got a book out! More than one in some cases! What better to curl up on the sofa with on Christmas afternoon. Available from all good book shops!



Belt up!! £28 each  
[notonthehighstreet.com](http://notonthehighstreet.com)

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Please enter my details for THREE copies of the next issue of The Link magazine.

How many copies would you like to subscribe?  Small version (6pp)  Large version (12pp)  Both

THREE COPIES  £10  £12  £15  £18  £20

I agree to the above information being kept on an electronic database only for CTC members.

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It's really important that all payments go to Standing Order and Direct Debit. Please tick the following boxes if you are paying by Standing Order or Direct Debit. Without this information we won't know who's paid! Any changes should be made to Chester and North Wales CTC. Please send all subscription form and changes (where applicable) to The Treasurer.

To get their copy of 'The Link' of course! Where else can you read about all the rides & lessons our local members enjoy, the bikes they ride and so, so many wonderful rides on offer throughout the year?

We also have articles on local events, local history, even recipes designed for cyclists!

The magazine is specifically written for the members of Chester & North Wales CTC by the members as it's always a topical issue!

Information Form over for a Sums Form 



For that cycling friend that keeps pinching your copy of The Link buy them a subscription £10 for three copies. Bargain!  
[www.ctcchesterandnwales.org.uk/pdTheLinkRenewalForm.pdf](http://www.ctcchesterandnwales.org.uk/pdTheLinkRenewalForm.pdf)

# Merry Christmas!

Your President, Mike Cross, wishes all members of Chester and North Wales CTC and their families a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year. He looks forward to meeting many of you 'on the road' in 2018.



**we are cycling**  
The cyclists' champion UK



**ni yw beicio**  
O blaid beicio UK



I've always liked Yorkshire, and the idea of cycling over 6 days round the Yorkshire Wolds, together with a few diversions, was a lovely prospect. What made it even better was I was going solo so it was a bit of a challenge. I'd planned the ride for April which meant the roads would be quieter and also accommodation would be easier to come by. The weather would be cool, and there'd be early wild flowers, tree blossom and lambs, all to be seen from the saddle.

As always, everything going into my panniers had to be weighed on the kitchen scales ensuring the weight for each bag was no more than 5 pounds. That, together with my water bottle, brought the total weight to 11.5 lbs.

Last but not least, I was taking my new Giant Liv bike, a 70th birthday present, instead of my trusty 20 year old Dawes, to see how it stood up to carrying me and the bags over 6 consecutive days. I was all set to go!

#### **Day 1 (Saturday 15 April) Swainby to Kirby Misperton.**

I started after breakfast from my caravan at Swainby, just within the North York Moors National Park, and cycled the 19 miles due south on very hilly terrain to Helmsley. The tail wind was very welcome. The small town was busy with tourists, shoppers and motor bikers, I sat watching it all whilst eating the first of many scones en-route. The cycling after that was easy and pleasant to Kirby

Misperton, famous for Flamingo Land and also its vigorous campaign against fracking. There were good views looking back at the North York Moors. I stayed the night in a roadside pub and my total mileage for that day was 35 miles.

#### **Day 2 (Sunday 16 April) Kirby Misperton to Bridlington**

I set off in lovely sunshine on the Malton Road then the A64 to Scagglethorpe which led me on to the Yorkshire Wolds Cycle Way. I cycled on rolling terrain and through pretty villages, stopping at Weaverthorpe for coffee and chocolate (it was Easter Sunday after all). After Hunmanby, the route became generally flatter with lots of arable land, farms and rapeseed fields. The rain started at 2pm and I sheltered briefly at an

often through bright yellow rapeseed fields.

There were big wide skies. At

Driffield, I had the usual coffee and scones and then bade farewell to the Two Roses route as I headed south to Etton for a late pub sandwich lunch. A jolly couple on their tandem passed me with their small dog sitting contentedly in a basket on the handlebars. I decided to miss out the detour to Beverley and continued on to North Newbold for more scones, then on to South Cave to meet up with my husband at the local Travelodge. He was Vera Lynn

personified come to rally the troops! A real morale-booster! Today's distance was 43.5 miles.

#### **Day 4 (Tuesday 18 April) South Cave to York**

I left the Travelodge, wheeling my bike along the A63 for a mile amid thundering traffic. I

wanted to pick up the back road going north to Market Weighton but was met with a severe head wind. I decided to cycle north-west cross-country so the wind came from my right. It was a good decision and I enjoyed the relatively relaxed cycling through very attractive villages to resume the Two Roses route to Stamford Bridge (a splendid lunch) and then onto York, the city of bikes. Everywhere there were cyclists and tourists, and many beautiful old buildings and thoroughfares. I sat watching it all, sipping a cup of tea in the shadow of York Minster and felt all was well with the world. The guest house was comfortable and welcoming. I'd cycled 39 miles today.



Kath Mair



Flat pleasant road in The Wolds, a treat to cycle along

excellent cafe and art gallery at Bempton where there's also an RSPB bird sanctuary. I arrived in Bridlington like a drowned rat and it didn't help when a youngster kicked a football at the bike. Despite a severe wobble, I didn't fall off! The seaside town was heaving with people, noise, a fun fare, dodgem cars, ice creams, etc. I slept well at the seafront B&B whilst the bike dried off downstairs in the kitchen. Today's distance was 47.5 miles

#### **Day 3 (Monday 17 April) Bridlington to South Cave**

Today's cycle route joined the Two Roses Way out of Bridlington. It was dry, sunny and breezy, and the roads were long and flat and, like yesterday,

## Day 5 (Wednesday 19 April) York to Helmsley

I left York, heading north via Strensall to Sherrif Hutton. Another cafe stop here and I looked at the castle remnants outlined against the sky. From now, it was a rude awakening as I was back in rather hilly country. The area known as the Howardian Hills is beautiful, and its villages, like



before, attractive and well-kept. I cycled up to Terrington and called at the Lavender Farm for coffee and scones then on to Nunnington for lunch. At this point, I felt my energy at a low ebb so I decided to press on along quiet country roads to Kirbymoorside to refuel on an ice cream, then through Wellburn and Harome to reach Helmsley. I stayed at the youth hostel that night and had a very comfortable bed and a good

night's sleep. Today I'd covered 35.5 miles.



## Day 6 (Thursday 20 April) Helmsley to Swainby

Today I was returning to my caravan at Swainby, cycling the first day's route in reverse. I was in for a shock. The head wind was terrific as were the many sharp ascents and it remained like this all the way back. I staggered into Osmotherley for the usual tea and scones before getting



back onto the bike for the final 4 miles. Arriving at Swainby, I felt I could barely stand up! I'd taken four hours to cover the 19 miles. Once in the caravan, the kettle was on and I felt like a new woman!



Despite the energy-sapping final day, I thoroughly enjoyed my 6 days meandering round Yorkshire. I loved the solitude and the fact I could go at my own pace and stop when and where I liked. I had no punctures or mechanical problems, and my new birthday bike had served me well. I enjoyed chatting to strangers along the way, in cafes, in the accommodation and in shops. Most of all, it's the sense of freedom I like, and I'm now planning where to go for my next trip.

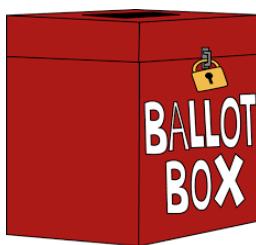
**Kath Mair**



**Thanks for sending this in Mike Frith. Now that's what I call service! Very handy!!**



**Well done to Peter Williams, Cycling UK's Right to Ride Rep, whose campaigning has successfully resulted in a wide tarmac area with a slip ramp onto the A540 outside Eureka Café. There is also refuge in the middle of the dual carriageway making the whole area much safer for cyclists.**



*cafe of the Year?*

Most of our members have a café they enjoy visiting on their rides where the staff go the extra mile to please their cycling customers. You have the opportunity to vote for your favourite watering hole where the service, food, refreshments and facilities are excellent and deserves the Award. In the past we have presented it to Tilly's, Walk Mill Bakery and Café, Meadow Lea Farm Coffee Shop and Pantri Bach, so they are not eligible this year. Each of the winners has been delighted to receive



the award and proudly display their framed Certificate in their café – presented in each case by President of Chester and North Wales CTC, Mike Cross. English and Welsh cafés are equally eligible so let's have your votes. The closing dates for nominations is by midnight on 15th January 2018. Please send your votes to Glennys at [web@ctcchesterandnorthwales.org.uk](mailto:web@ctcchesterandnorthwales.org.uk)



### **Chester and North Wales CUK/CTC Chairman's Meet (Formerly the New Year Meet)**

This annual event takes place once again on Monday January 1st 2018 at the White Horse in Churton.

We shall gather at the pub at 12:00/12:30. There is secure cycle storage for plenty of bikes.

Traditionally there are several rides to this event, usually from the Wrexham area, Eureka Café and Christleton Pond. There may be others. Details of ride times etc. to follow on the

website and facebook nearer the time. For those not wishing to pedal, there is plenty of car parking space also.

The White Horse staff are to lay on meaty and veggie hot pot along with various accompaniments to warm you up on arrival. Cost is to be around £8.

We hope that you can join us to enjoy this early season meet which gives an annual opportunity to meet many of our friends, old and new.



# 'MOMMA Rides' Report....'

## Saturday September 2nd 2017

At last, good weather! These rides have been blessed with storms and the tail end of hurricanes in the last few years so it was a great relief to have good, fine weather at last and not a day too soon as the Sunday was dreadful.

Last year we reported that Old Ma's café owner Brian was ill in bed with an infected knee. This year he is suffering a bout of shingles but in spite of this ran the café from 07:15 to 22:00 as the last rider from the



200k arrived to request a meal. Well done and thanks to Brian and his wife "Old Ma" for their support.

### Pistyll Packing Momma 209km; 3400m ascent

(Is your organiser the only person old enough to remember the early 60's song "Pistol Packing Momma" by Gene Vincent?)

A tough ride but thoroughly enjoyed by all the riders who experienced dry conditions and could see the beautiful views for once. Even the notorious



sh\*t slide near Pistyll Rhaeadr dried out this year and failed to claim any victims.

All 36 riders completed the route in times varying from 10h 2min to 13h 40 min---the latter just inside the time limit. Shaun Hargreaves completed the route on fixed wheel---an amazing achievement and probably not a recommended exploit. Mark Walsh and John Wilkie were the two riders from C&NW CTC

### Momma's Mountain Views 137km; 2000m ascent

Still a tough ride with three very steep climbs between Chirk and Ponderosa Café including the Old Horseshoe pass---and then steeply up Hope Mountain out of Llanfynydd.

Momma's Mountain Views was a CUK challenge ride this year. Riders received a musette and water bottle at the start and a certificate and rather elegant medal at the finish. So, for a £6 entry fee riders received all the foregoing, free parking, a free mug of tea or coffee and the Audax route and validation. How's that for value?

Your organiser rode this route in advance to check out the cafes and coincidentally as a

final heart pacemaker assessment, since insertion last March. As I am still here to write a report, the device passed this stringent test. All 24 riders completed the route in times varying between 06h 15min and 09h 59min. 11 riders were registered as C&NW CTC.

### Momma's Leafy Lanes 57km

A very pleasant day out with two family groups taking part. Especial congratulations to Gabriel Rees age 7yr 10 months who completed the ride within time, along with his



father.  
4 riders were registered as C&NW CTC.

Judging by feedback in the café everyone had a thoroughly good day out and were impressed by the quality and scenery of the routes. Next year the rides are on again on Saturday September 1 with a brand new info. control at Harthill (200 and 130km) to ensure that no one gets confused leaving Tattenhall. Thanks to all the cafes and controls for their help and especially to Margaret Matthews for handing out Brevet cards at the start.

**David Matthews**



The Charity Monster 3900km or 2400 mile bike ride through five countries for North West Cancer Research.

Cancer! The very word sends shivers down your spine. There can't be a family that hasn't felt the colossal influence of this dreaded disease. It has touched my family and my nearest and dearest's families. I wanted to do my bit to raise money for the fight against cancer. The superb North West Cancer Research seemed an obvious charity to help raise money for.

The plan for the Charity Monster was simple enough, cycle across Europe from Rotterdam to the Black Sea. Well not quite that simple, as after a bit of research the Romanian Transfăgărășan or Transalpina pass which I wanted to go over would possibly still be blocked with snow so early in the season. Plan B. I had ridden to Berlin a few times and have always felt flying home was sort of cheating, unfinished business if you like.



Looking at the map of Berlin my eye was drawn to the ancient Saxon capital of Dresden, from this historic city on the River Elbe it seemed obvious to carry on to the 'Golden City' of Prague and from Prague to the most cultural of cities Vienna and then along the Danube to Bratislava. At Bratislava, I would then turn for home backtracking for a while along

the Danube before heading into Germany once more and onto the Hartz Mountains and back via Munster and Arnhem to Rotterdam. 3900 km in total and a bit over two weeks or 2400 miles in old money. I would be solo and unsupported.

#### **Day One 223km (139 miles)**

[https://www.strava.com/  
activities/918366361](https://www.strava.com/activities/918366361)

The Netherland is one of my favorite countries and a wonderful place to start any adventure. The bike has been interwoven into every aspect of Dutch life, mothers transporting two or three kids on one bike – no problem, dog in a basket? Pretty common. Parrot in a basket – well only once but hey how often do you see someone taking a parrot for a walk? Double Bass and an entire orchestra? Only on a Sunday morning! Bikes for work, bikes for shopping, bikes for transport, bikes for sport bikes for life. No Government could have interwoven the bike into their infrastructure any better than the Netherlands and no people have grasped the simplicity of the bike for everyday tasks better than the Dutch. If the UK could do similar we would cut our congestion tremendously. The people are fantastic, food is excellent and beer is very fine indeed. I love Holland. If only it had an Alpine corner it would be perfect. Day one was a beautiful trip up the coast with sand dunes and sunshine.



I had few issues on day one except I had chosen to use MTB SPD pedals instead of my regular road ones, so I didn't have to take a spare pair of shoes. I hadn't adjusted the cleat correctly and was getting a bit of pain in my Achilles tendon and I also started having problems with my tubeless tyres. Both would be a headache for most of the trip.



Day one was beautiful, warm sunshine straight from the ferry, up the coast of the Netherlands, through The Hague and the nature reserves and sand dunes of the coast, beautiful car free riding. Late into the day the weather changed, becoming overcast and I found myself with no sight of land in the middle of the massive 32km long Afsluiddijk which links North Holland with the ancient country of Frisia across the bay of



Amsterdam. Frisia or Friesland used to cover a large swath of Northern Europe from current day Holland right up to Denmark but is now a much smaller province of the Netherlands with little over 600,000 population. Friesland has its own language and culture. I stopped in the lovely coastal town of Harlingen in a Dutch couple's house via the extraordinary organization Vrienden op de Fiets (Friends of the bike). It had been a wonderful sunny start to the trip.

#### **Day Two 246km or 153 miles**

[https://www.strava.com/  
activities/919931585](https://www.strava.com/activities/919931585)

A very wet windy day along the Dykes of Friesland and into Germany. I stuck close to the coast of the Netherlands to start in very wet conditions, with a lot of grit on the cycle paths this was to prove a mistake. It proved a frustrating day of gravel, cattle grids and gates and my

wheels took a hammering which would cause problems later in the trip. I could also hardly take any weight on my Achilles Tendon which really complained on the cattle grids. A puncture on my tubeless tyres, I thought they were not meant to puncture? Did I mention it was wet? I did have some wonderful views of the ocean from atop some of the dykes but mainly I rode below them sheltering from the gales and driving rain. My bike was absolutely covered with grit and grime that would cling tenaciously to the bike for the next 2000+ miles, which funny enough was as long as my front rim would endure the conditions.



By the time I crossed into Lower Saxony (Germany) the world seemed a better place, the sun had come out the roads were fast and lined with forests and open moor. Germany is a large country with huge open spaces, the fields have no hedges and you can see for miles. In the Old West at least nearly all roads have a cycle path or are very quiet. German drivers also have incredible patience and overtake amazingly safely. There are of course exceptions, but few countries feel safer to cycle in than Germany in my experience.

The hotel I stayed in was in the middle of a forest and was a 'Jager' hotel with much of its custom on the weekend. Not for the first time on this trip I would be the only guest. The hotel served wonderful food, great beer and the owner sat down to chew the fat. Brexit – what are you doing? Mmmm a question I have posed a few times myself.

I could hardly walk by now on my inflamed Achilles tendon I decided to

adjust my cleat. The main swelling and pain took about 10 days to finally subside and about a week after getting home before it had truly recovered. A silly self-inflicted injury which could have cost the venture. I still had problems with my tyre, it was flat again in the morning, I added more sealant and used the compressor in the garage to blast it into every corner of the tubeless tyre. That should fix it!

#### Day Three 191km or 119 miles

<https://www.strava.com/activities/922405973>

A wonderfully sunny day to cross into the Old East, the ex DDR is still very different from the West. Lots of communist era decay, falling down buildings, fenced off factories and general depopulation. Judging by some of the towns there is also more unemployment.

I was cycling through 20<sup>th</sup> century history. I passed two concentration camp remembrance memorials including the infamous Bergen Belsen and cycled through a beautiful environment on a massive scale, the fields went on forever, with no hedges or fences and deep forests, I crossed the beautiful River Elbe at Tangermunde, where I had a fantastic lunch below the fortified remnants of the ancient town guarding the River Elbe. Once the other side of the Elbe I cycled along old landrover patrol roads, had bits of bike hike where roads just ended in building sites, (Holland and Germany seems a massive land for improvements!) and the sun just kept shining. 25°C. To finish the day I had a fantastic pizza in Brandenburg on the Havel. I had stopped at the same restaurant and had the same food on a three-day crossing to Berlin the previous year with Phil and Joe from Chester Road club. It was quite nostalgic and the beer and pizza was just as good as I remembered it.

I was so relaxed making my way to the pre-booked hotel it was a bit of a shock to find it shut an hour before I got there and I had no place to stay!! A frantic half hour ensued before I found a cracking little hotel within my budget!

#### Day Four 191 km or 119 miles

<https://www.strava.com/activities/923677048>

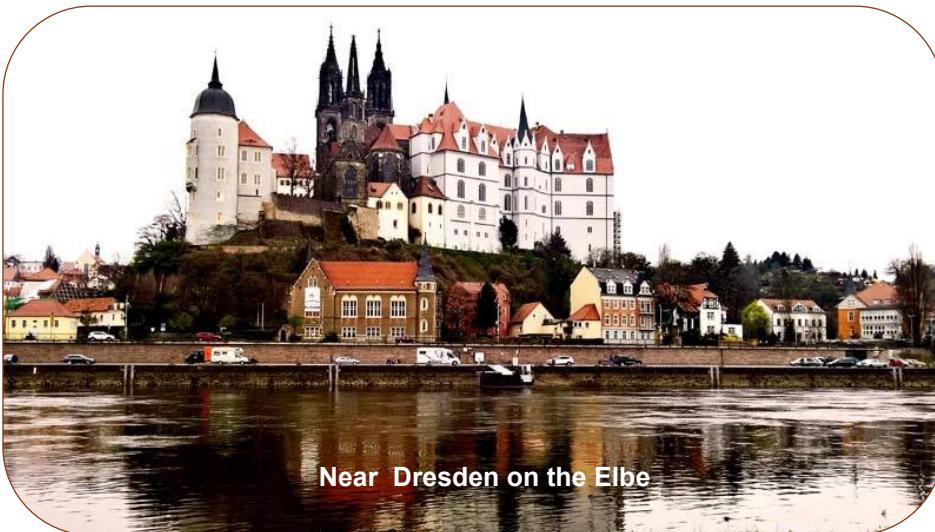
What a wonderful day, 27°C. After cycling past beautiful lakes and on tranquil bike paths my first stop was Potsdam for more tyre repairs,



sealant, CO2 canisters and a big pump! Onwards cycling over the Bridge of Spies of Cold War fame and through the forest on the outskirts of a very green German Capital to the iconic Brandenburg Gate, Berlin. A city full of people and full of bikes both sporting and transport and a vibrant multi-national city full of life. I love Berlin and it was such a shame I had only such a fleeting visit as the city was buzzing on such a beautiful spring day. I wound my way out of



Berlin along the Mauerweg, which traces the Old Wall which divided the city for so long, lots of information points and memorials to a city defining 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe. On past glittering lakes into the deep forests of the Spreewald. The people thinned



out and soon I was all alone in the deep lonely forest.

These forests just south of Berlin were probably the last place on earth you would have wanted to find yourself in April/May 1944. Centered around the small town of Halbe was one of the most brutal battles of WW2 where half a million troops played out the last dance of Hitler's Germany. The battle is unknown in the West, but the forest still seemed to hold its memories of the dying days of the Eastern Front. Still today there are people searching the vast forests trying to find the dead soldiers and civilians who made one last desperate attempt to avoid capture and captivity by the Red Army and flee to the comparative safety of the American lines the other side of the River Elbe. I stopped in Halbe for a while, looked around the small town and couldn't imagine the horror. As I went further into the Forest I stopped again to repair my bloody tyre, as the sun shone through the Northern woods it felt beautiful, still and lonely. I cycled on through empty towns on deserted roads and the only people I saw were old. Decaying factories, ghost towns but the forest endures. I arrived in Dahme/Mark for the evening, an old peoples' home doubled up as the hotel. walked into town for food, only the ubiquitous kabab house was open. They mentioned no visitors ever come here, even Germans. It felt like that, a lonely part of Germany where the young leave and the old people and the forest remain with

their memories.

#### Day Five 167 km or 104 miles

<https://www.strava.com/activities/925489729>

Well what a day, the temperatures dropped and it was struggling to get into double figures in the forest as I cycled South to rejoin the River Elbe and on to Dresden. I saw no one for hours. This was a day of bike wows, four punctures, one tyre disintegrating and limping along. It was a Sunday, Germany shuts on a Sunday! I was very lucky to find a bike service point open when I reached the River Elbe. A new rear tyre was fitted with good old fashioned inner tubes and I was on my way on what was now a lovely sunny day, cycling along the stunningly beautiful River Elbe to the sundrenched capital of the old kingdom of Saxony, Dresden. Dresden is magical and magnificent. Like a lot of German Cities, it suffered greatly in WW2, its case is particularly sad with the Fire Bombing becoming an infamous symbol of the horror of war. Today it was vibrant and such a contrast to the other areas of Saxony I had been through which seemed to be finding it hard to adjust to a united



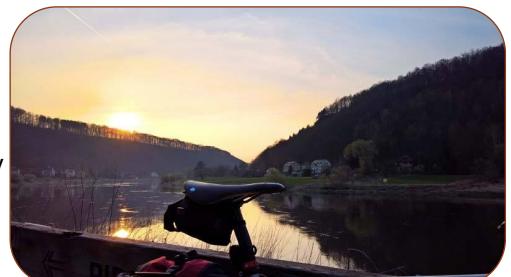
Germany. I lingered too long in Dresden soaking up the atmosphere of this pulsating city. Finally, I dragged myself away and headed on down the Elbe towards the Czech Republic, on beautiful cycle paths (and the odd cobbled section that threatened to remove my fillings!) past stunning resort towns and villages. I stopped just short of the Czech border in a little Pension (B&B) and had a fantastic meal in the local bar, my last in Germany for a while. It had been a long day; bike mechanicals had cost me a lot of time and for the first time I was off schedule. One good bit of news was that the new tubed rear tyre would have just one puncture all the way home. The bad news was, the front tubeless tyre was to start disintegrate next.....



#### Day Six 166km or 103 miles

<https://www.strava.com/activities/926709915>

Country number three, the Czech Republic. A country with the fortune both good and bad of being in the



center of Europe. I think Napoleon had once said, 'he who controls Prague controls Europe' This country's turbulent history reflects this location as various powers gained and lost influence. I wasn't sure what to expect, I'd imagined the road surface would degrade a little that was for sure, I wasn't wrong, well not totally.

I crossed into the ancient kingdom of Bohemia and into a Slavic land for

the first time on this trip, the cycle paths varied from stunning EU funded surfaces to hardly rideable goat tracks. The contrast was unbelievable. The first town I passed through was the 9<sup>th</sup> Century settlement of Decin, a major administrative district in what was once the Sudetenland and was one of the triggers for WW2. The Sudetenland had a generally Germanic population since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, but after WW2 the ethnic Germans were expelled. Who replaced them? I have no clue, but the town seemed depressed, a lot of people looked like they had had Vodka for breakfast. I didn't linger but carried on along the same river but now with a different name, the Elbe had become the River Labe. There were still plenty of reminders of German engineering along the river, old pill-boxes dotted along the river every few hundred meters!

The Czech Republic was spotless, I came across a site of what must have been a boozy evening. Beer cans, maybe as many as 50 of them, all tidied away and left in a transparent



bin bag by the side of the road. Tidy drunks!!

The general atmosphere was like Saxony, quite towns, few people but as I got further away from the borderlands the towns became a lot more vibrant and the atmosphere with it. Those borders still hold onto their history.

The drivers seemed to pay little heed to speed limits but generally gave plenty of space. The surfaces varied from super smooth to goat tracks. It was fun riding and I had a fantastic lunch in Pistany on a large boating lake and it was cheap. Then on to

Prague. Prague the ancient capital of Bohemia with influences from the Roman Empires, Habsburg Empire, Austro-Hungarian Empire to name a few it was pivotal in the Protestant Reformation and the 30 Year War and it shows, the architecture is jaw dropping. It is a city you should visit if you haven't already. Passing through on a bike however on a frigid day with armed soldiers with machine guns telling you to walk right across the center and a Achilles tendon that made the cobbles painful wasn't that

These sorts of things are annoying when at home. The bank seemed incapable of answering the bloody phone. After a good hour, I gave up and set an early alarm to call them before breakfast. It was all sorted in the morning.

### Day Seven 99k or 62 miles

<https://www.strava.com/activities/927709324>

After two days of dropping behind schedule I spend a frantic time cancelling hotels further along the



Prague

much fun. I must return without the bike.

I left Prague along the River Vltava into brooding dark clouds which soon turned to torrential rain followed by thunder and lightning as I travelled into Lower Bohemia. You couldn't make it up, could you? Thunder Bolt and Lightening in a Bohemian Rhapsody.

I found a hotel stopping early for the day (again) as floods and standing water made cycling unpleasant and the thought that the next hotel may be miles away. I wasn't in Northern Europe any more, accommodation was few and far between. It was a bit of a shock to see people smoking in the bar in the evening, but like Austria which I was due to cross into next, smoking was very much allowed indoors in 2017.

I had also had a phone call from my bank, my account had been hacked.

route and decided to have a short 'rest' day, what a different day, I was in wild open country with rolling hills and deer that darted across spring fields into cover. Small beautiful busy villages dotted across the landscape, Lower Bohemia was wonderful. You can tell the Czech Republic hasn't got the resources of Germany but it is spotless. It was wonderful seeing lots of Lada's and other cars I remember from my youth. It must be where old cars come to die.

The cycling today was hard going, with the variety of surfaces I'd come to expect in Czech Republic and an undulating route. I was looking forward to an early finish, a chance to rest and recharge in the prehistoric town of Pisek, crossing the second oldest stone bridge in Europe in the process. The hotel, was comfortable clean, tidy, maybe a bit dated but with excellent food and top service for about the same money as the meal alone would cost back in the UK. I was really beginning to like the Czech Republic, but maybe next time in summer, it wasn't warm!!

### Day Eight 187k or 116 miles

<https://www.strava.com/activities/929605070>

I left Pisek after a wonderful breakfast and straight up a big hill into ever more deeper forests, I had every layer





of clothing I had on me. I was unprepared for the near freezing cold in the deep forests and the day never really got much above 10c. It was another day of rolling Czech hills, varied road surfaces and quite towns as I headed once more towards a new country.

Ceske Budejovice was my first stop and having been really looking forward to this town was a little underwhelmed, my next stop Cesky Krumlof had the opposite effect, it was totally amazing and full of Chinese tourists – a sure sign it is of international recognition. Stunning architecture and medieval streets. Another town I must return to with more time. The town is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and it is easy to see why. I was also back in the once ethnically German part of Lower Bohemia. Prior to WW1 this area was 80% German and was part of the Sudetenland, post WW2 the German speaking population was expelled by the victorious Russians.

I was now near the Austrian border and looking forward to crossing the mountains into the Alpine wonderland. The climbing started not far out of town up wide quality roads with hardly a car on them. The sun came out, it still wasn't that warm but the world looked warmer! It was the first sunny day since leaving Dresden and as I gained height the world changed into high meadows and Army bases! The climbs were long but steady until finally I could see the colossal lake of Vodni nadrz Lipno, the other side of it was Austria. It was a delightful area of open Alpine fields and big sky.

A short ferry journey and a short climb and I was in Austria. A border is just a line in the sand, or is it? Everything changes, immaculate, wealthy Austria with its picture postcard Alpine landscapes. Lada replaced by the latest Audi or BMW.

My route now took me to Europe's mightiest river, the Danube 40km away

and all downhill! In no time at all I was on the Danube, and it was spectacular. Fairytale Castles above deep gorges and I'd be at my hotel in Linz in no time, or so I thought. The Danube has an excellent cycle trail but there was one section where a ferry takes you around a headland, unfortunately the ferry had stopped running for the night..... An hour and a half bike hike up a steep hill and I was cycling again. I stopped short of Linz at the first hotel I could find, it was already 21:00, dark,



cold and I wanted a beer. I had a massive room in a fantastic hotel for low cash, I think reception must have felt sorry for me. Then a pizza of quality and a couple of beers later and I was ready for bed after an incredible day of riding. Life was good, I'd crossed into Austria.

#### **Day Nine 248km or 154 miles <https://www.strava.com/activities/930976722>**

I was now over a 1000 miles from home and on the Danube, Western Europe's mightiest. The Danube's mighty banks are a tapestry of European history, a natural route for trade, transport, warring armies and migration. It was the frontier of the mighty Roman Empire. This history shows, with mighty castles guarding high above fortified towns. The riches

the Austrian capital and largest city on the Danube, Vienna. What a magical day of beautiful villages, wild pastures and flood meadows on super smooth cycle paths. The route only occasionally going on the road, Austria deserves its reputation as an outdoor lovers' paradise.

My Achilles was also quite sore today, probably aggravated by the climbing and bike hike of yesterday and I had more problems with my front tyre

which seemed to be now out of balance. My brake blocks were nearly metal on metal. All tyres, brakes etc. were new before starting the adventure, I was astonished how quickly the grit, rain and goat tracks had beat up my bike. Today I had purchased two more inner tubes after another couple of punctures and was now running tubes in both wheels. I made a mental note to never run tubeless tyres on a long ride! Today the weather also changed from a sunny morning to a dark and grey late afternoon that promised, then delivered rain and gales. By the time I arrived in Vienna it was pouring down, I still marveled at the cycling infrastructure sweeping me car-free under the bridges which crossed the Danube into the centre of a wet city. Vienna looked lovely in the dark with street lights glistening off the pavements and cobbles.

The hotel was clean and tidy, and very basic not serving food. I couldn't be bothered to go out in the rain and it was late, a bag of crisps was all I could find to eat. One advantage of travelling in colder times of the year is the heating is on in the hotel for drying wet gear and washing!



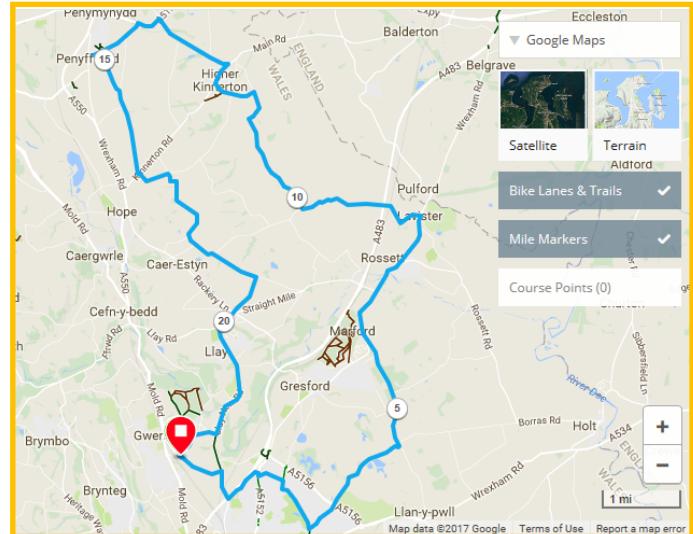
of a continent have travelled up and down this mighty waterway. Today it was my turn, heading south via Linz to

**Catch up with the rest of Joe's ride in the next issue.**

# Gwersyllt Circular....22.40miles



A relatively short ride but perfectly suited for a day when the weather is typically British! Good roads and fairly flat, Maximum elevation 402ft and a great café on route.



## Start at Gwersyllt Café (near Home Bargains).

1. R out of the carpark. Continue along Dodd's Lane and Rhosrobin Road to the T.
2. R into Llay New Road. After passing over the bypass L into Ty Gwyn Lane. Proceed to the T.
3. R then immediately L into Smithy Lane. R at roundabout into Box Lane then 2nd L into Jeffrey's Road.
4. Take the 6th L into Borras Road. SO at roundabout (beware, extremely busy road!)
5. Continue on Borras Road to Hosley Lane to the T. Turn R.
6. Continue down Marford Hill. And All the way through to Rossett. After passing Darland School turn L (after Beech Hollows) onto an unnamed road.
7. R into Cobblers Lane. R into Stringers Lane. L into Green Lane. Continue to Bennett's Lane.
8. R into Main Road. L into Kinnerton Lane.
9. L for a short distance on A5104.
10. L into Chester Road. Continue down Chester road and if you wish call in **Jermoley's** on the left, a converted post office, for good food and great cake!
11. Double back and take the 1st R into Terence Lane. To the T.
12. R into Lower Mountain Road. To the T Turn L then immediately right
13. Continue into Sandy Lane.
14. R into Shordley Road. Continue to Dark Lane.
15. R into Chapel Lane.
16. R at traffic lights in Llay.
17. L at the roundabout, proceed down Llay new road.
18. R into Glan Llyn Road. To the roundabout, turn L and the carpark and Gwersyllt Café is on the right.

<https://connect.garmin.com/modern/course/13237779>



"I used this brilliant site for a 1500-mile tour. It was better than the signposted routes!" — Cycling UK forum user

Win Jones uses Cycle Travel..... a start point and it will calculate suggested rides of various lengths. You can view the elevation profile via the 'Mountain' button.



Win Jones

Win tells me he has found **Cycle.Travel** extremely user friendly. There are numerous options including planning pub and café rides, reversing routes, circular routes, all routes are planned using 'B' roads. The map view is very clear, and printable turn by turn instructions are clearly shown. Routes are easily changed to preferred roads by clicking and dragging. If you don't mind where you end up just put in





Thanks Chris Byrne for this question and answers idea. This time the answers are from Glynn Jones. Send me yours and let's get to know each other!



1. How long have you been cycling? ..... Off/on the bike about 40 years
2. The best ride you have done? ..... Wrexham / Cardiff and back
3. Best holiday you have had? ..... Cycling in the Alps and watching The Tour
4. Your two favourite songs/music?....Suspicious Minds, Elvis & You Needed Me, Anne Murray
5. Two best books?..... Free Country & You Can't Take it With You
6. Who would you best like to meet present or past? ..... Princess Nest
7. What would you liked to have achieved / learnt?..... Welsh
8. What makes you happiest?..... Cycling in the sun, down hill with a tail wind!
9. Favourite film? ..... True Grit
10. Do you enjoy poetry, If so what's your favourite? ..... Not really so don't have a favourite
11. Would you consider riding an E-bike?..... Definitely
12. What single thing would make life better? ..... No potholes
13. What's been your longest ride?..... Approximately 300 miles
14. Do you think there is life on other planets? ..... No
15. Which person throughout history or today do you most admire? ..... Princess Nest
16. What trait do you most admire in people? ..... Honesty
17. What do you think are your best attributes? ..... Ermmm don't know
18. If you could ride one tour which one would it be, Tour de France, Giro, Vuelta?..The Tour
19. Have you a favourite building? ..... Blackpool Tower & Caernarfon Castle
20. Have you a favourite piece of Art/Picture/sculpture?..... Anything by Lowry



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