



CTC North Hampshire

**September - December
2009**



**on road
off road
leisure rides**



Something for everyone

Contacts

www.nhampshirectc.org.uk

Frank Pote: frank.pote@btinternet.com

Andy Watson: andrew.w.watson@btinternet.com

Andrew Heaton: Andrew.Heaton@uk.thalesgroup.com

Welcome

In the last magazine I wrote about the South Downs National Park and this time you can read Janice's account of her family's ride along the South Downs Way. CTC North Hampshire riders have also been venturing further afield: Stephen has written about Sardinia and David and BOB's team have "Ridden The Rockies". If you'd like to share your riding experiences with our readers email me at andrew.w.watson@btinternet.com.

For those of us who have been staying nearer to home the summer riding has been mixed – with everything from a 30°C heat wave to dull cold and rainy days. All of our rides have been really well supported and there is a steady stream of new faces. If you're new to cycling or returning after a long break come and try our rides – they are all listed on the web and the rides list and most areas have easy rides to start you off.

Finally, most of us know that cycling can help to improve or maintain our health and now there is an opportunity through "Inspired Living" to prove it and raise money for cancer research. A CTC North Hampshire member is one of the team of volunteers. Our web site and www.inspiredliving.org.uk has more information.

Enjoy your cycling – Andy

Up Coming Activities

The summer BBQ is at Newton Valence on Saturday 29th August and everyone is welcome from 12:30pm onwards. There will be rides starting from Fleet and Alton to help you work up an appetite!

The New Forest weekend, 4th to 6th September, will be based around Bransgore. Accommodation is self-organised but there will be various organised rides to suit slower and medium paced riders. Email Frank, frank.pote@btinternet.com, for more information or look on our web site for details of camping and B&Bs.

Dan, 01420 80783, is organising our Pace Judging and Freewheeling competition on Saturday 12th September. It starts in Little Dean Lane between Upton Grey and South Warnborough, by Tile Barn Farm, SU709481. You can enter on the line for £1 and earn DATC points!

Cycling the South Downs Way

The South Downs Way is a long-distance national trail stretching for 99 miles from Winchester to Eastbourne along the top of the South Downs, and its 4,150 metres of ascents and descents make it a challenging route for cyclists. Living so close by it was on our “must do one day” list, and we decided to ride it this year as, when considering an Easter cycle tour, Oliver said he preferred off-road cycling. Not being a very keen off-roader myself I was slightly anxious about my abilities, but hoped I would manage if we didn’t attempt to break any records and allowed plenty of time. I divided the route into four sections to keep the mileage down to what I hoped would be a reasonable 25-ish each day and booked bed-and-breakfasts in advance, so we were committed to doing the distance, whatever the terrain and the weather. We all have mountain bikes, and each carried a saddle-bag or panniers containing clean clothes and food.



The three of us, Dan, Olly and I, set off one sunny morning from Chilcomb, just outside the official start in Winchester which was busy with road works, and made good progress to Milbury’s at Beauworth which disappointingly was not open for refreshments. We ate some of our own food before continuing to Queen Elizabeth Country Park for a welcome late lunch. From there it was

only six more miles to our B&B in South Harting, making the first day our easiest one. We had all suffered punctures although there were more tarmac sections than on subsequent days. Off-road, the surface varied from grass to compacted gravel to bumpy boulder-strewn tracks. None of our bikes has suspension, but we were taking it easy and rode slowly over the rougher sections. The combination of steep gradients and loose, rough surfaces meant that I soon discovered the bottom gear on my mountain bike and then more or less stayed in it for the rest of the trip! Not being confident off-road I walked up many steep tracks with deep gullies and loose flint and chalk boulders, but then so did Dan and Olly.

The second day found the South Downs shrouded in hill fog and there was no view, with visibility down to a few yards, although this slowly improved during the day. After seven miles of ups and downs we descended to the Moonlight tearooms in Cocking for a refreshment stop only to find it closed. Fortunately there is a village shop which saved the day by serving hot drinks and cakes, and had a bench outside where we could sit and recover before the slog back up the hill to rejoin the trail. We found nowhere to stop for lunch, and by the time we reached the Riverside Tearooms in Amberley it had also closed, so we survived the rest of the day on the biscuits and cakes we carried with us. There are very few places along the trail which serve food, and it was bad luck finding three of them, which we’d hoped to eat in, were closed. By the time we reached our B&B in Washington we were ravenous, but luckily there was a good pub serving food just around the corner.

The third day was Good Friday and it was wet. It was hard to keep Olly’s spirits up as we all got wetter and colder, with no views to compensate as again it was foggy up



on the hill tops. We ploughed on and reached the Devil's Dyke by lunchtime where we were amazed to find a large restaurant right on the trail on top of the South Downs. It was just in the right place at the right time, and we gratefully found a table inside where we could warm up, dry out a little bit and have a good meal. Spirits raised, we ventured forth again, but the weather did not improve and so it was with relief when we finally descended into Lewes and our last B&B, right in the centre by the castle.

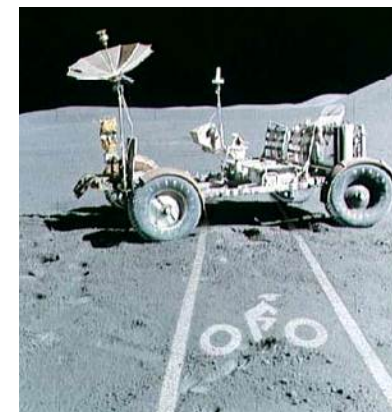
Looking out next morning we could see the hill tops were still in the clouds, so we chose not to retrace to where we had left the trail, but instead cycle down the valley and rejoin it at Southease, thereby missing out a climb. That morning we covered many miles of grassy tracks and passed through a couple of hill-top car parks, near to which we were surprised to meet numerous groups of people out for a walk in the fog. We made it to Alfriston for a pub lunch, then in the afternoon the clouds lifted and the sun broke through as we approached Eastbourne and the end of our trip. We arrived on the seafront with our legs covered in South Downs dust, all our biscuits gone and our brake blocks worn down, to find Mike, our chauffeur home, waiting for us. We celebrated the finish by throwing stones into the sea and eating ice cream. Would I do it again? Probably not, but I enjoyed the challenge, as did Dan and Olly. It was great to ride it but also great to finish, and we all felt a sense of achievement at the end.

There are many websites with information about the South Downs Way, including bed-and-breakfasts. One which was particularly helpful was www.bikedowns.co.uk, which describes the route in detail and also gives lots of other useful information. We used a Harvey map of the South Downs Way, available from www.harveymaps.co.uk, which was usefully printed on waterproof paper.

Many thanks again to Ray and Mike for generously giving up their time to drive us to and from the ends of the South Downs Way, which enabled us to complete the trip in four days. Janice

Moon Rover Blocks Cycle Lane

If you thought that illegal parking in cycle lanes had become far too common what do you think of this recently published moon rover photo? I'm not too sure if the US Government will be taking any action though.



But seriously, www.mybikelane.com lets cyclists "photograph and shame" vehicles that are parked in cycle lanes. This might have some effect on drivers, the council or the police but I wouldn't count on it.

Inspired Living

Inspired Living is involved in an activity aiming to raise £1 million to fund research into cancer cures and prevention, and wishes to demonstrate that minor changes in lifestyle (diet and exercise) can reduce the risk of cancer.

The activity consists of a two year research programme looking into the effects of exercise and nutrition against the risks of cancer. At the core of the research programme will be a three week 1400 mile cycle ride from Winchester to Gibraltar, through France, the Pyrenees and the spine of Spain.

They are looking for 100 people to join a research programme and they will be expected to follow a 9-12 month exercise and nutritional regime in advance of the full three week cycle ride. Alternatively you can join part of the ride, either on the continent or on an initial leg from Winchester to Portsmouth.

Inspired Living will be holding a fun, social and informative BBQ at 7pm on Saturday 5th September at the IBM Hursley Social Club in

Hampshire. Apart from the BBQ and entertainment, they will explain the project in more detail before asking people to commit formally to participate. See www.inspiredliving.org.uk/events for more information.

Ride the Rockies June 2009

A trip of self-discovery? In its 24th year, the annual non-competitive Denver Post Ride the Rockies event involves 2000 cyclists selected on ballot from some 3500 applicants. It's on a 6-day, 380-mile loop in the USA Rocky Mountains in June, ascending three of its most scenic and challenging mountain passes, showcasing Colorado's spectacular scenery.



My elder sister lives in Boulder, Colorado, and back in February I was invited to join her husband Tim and a couple of friends and enter as a team of four. And then we learnt that, despite the dubious team name (“BOB’s Team” – Bums On Bikes, since you ask), our application had been successful – suddenly the pressure was on to achieve adequate fitness for such a rash idea! Regular gym sessions and a warm-up 6-day tour in Scotland in May ensued.

Somewhat surprisingly British Airways offer to take “sports equipment” free of charge, so I borrowed a bike bag and dismantled the trusty steed for the big journey. I travelled to Denver a week ahead of the event in order to give myself a

reasonable chance to acclimatise to the altitude. Denver is nicknamed “the mile-high city”, my sister lives at 6,800 feet (metric-free, the USA...), and the entire event was on roads of 6,000 feet and above and up to roughly twice that on two days at least. As things turned out, this preparation seemed to work well, and I was barely affected by the thin air at all. Tim and I did 3 training bike rides and went hiking on another couple of days, up to 10,600 feet, and by the end of the first week I had run out of excuses, having to admit that I was ready, and jet-lag free!

The organisation, advance planning and detailed administration for such an event was most impressive, and evidently reflected the number of years’ experience of the organisers. The prime purpose of the sponsors of the event is to create income for the communities through which the tour passes, and these towns go to immense lengths to welcome, accommodate, safeguard and feed the participants. Bearing in mind that one or two of the overnight stops were in relatively small settlements, with perhaps 1,000 inhabitants, the impact and strain on the infrastructure of 2,000 cycling visitors descending upon them is huge – long queues were an inevitable feature of the week, particularly for showers and food.

However, the overall feeling throughout the event was of brilliantly welcoming and pragmatic folk, who got out of bed at times that most of don’t even acknowledge exist, to provide breakfasts, ensure washing facilities were maintained, guide us out of towns onto the right roads etc. etc. We chose to camp each night, and provision was made for our luggage, including tent,



sleeping bag and clothes, to be carried on to the next destination each day. There was good medical support; State Patrol policemen cruised up and down the route all day on their flatulent Harley Davidson motor-bikes; a number of so-called “Sag” wagons were provided to rescue riders who decided for whatever reason that they could not continue on the ride that day and so on.

For those of you who have yet to visit this part of the world, the scenery never fails to astound – it is simply jaw-dropping. Even the drive to the start at Glenwood Springs was through towering, mountainous and



picturesque ski-country (little snow, though, as we were in mid summer of course), with names which evoke such Wild West images: Ponderosa Gulch, Carson Creek, Glenwood Canyon etc.

Day 1: the adventure commenced with a mere 80-mile ride to Hotchkiss, a small busy town close to the incongruously neighbouring activities of coal-mining and vineyards. I’m not sure whether it was just because it was the first day, but the steep climb up McClure Pass (only 8,755 feet) seemed on reflection to be the toughest hill of the whole week and proved a rude shock to the system, but the dive down the other side was adequate reward, somewhat diluted by a head-wind and the only rain of the week. A fun diversion near the end of the ride for a little Chardonnay-tasting on offer at the roadside, and then into a hot shower, a few beers and energy-restoring plate of pasta; we were in our sleeping bags before 9 p.m.

The rude shocks continued: I’ve personally never ever done two days back to back, each of 80 miles, and the morning of Day 2 was as much a mental as a physical test. The saving grace was at the top of a 35-mile seemingly endless ascent, when we reached the rim of the Black Canyon – riding along 10 miles of the most incredible spectacular scenery, with 2,000 feet sheer drops to green lakes below, snow-capped peaks in the distance and a road that dipped and soared through true “big sky” country. Words and photos sadly cannot do justice to the experience. Gunnison was our destination for the overnight stop – dismounting wearily from our bikes after 7 or 8 hours (well, for slow guys like me, anyway) in the saddle, one set to, locating luggage, pitching tent, finding showers and beers – not necessarily in that order. The temperature plummeted overnight and we had literally to shake ice off the tent before rolling it up that morning.

David

Find out how David and BOB’s team got on with the remainder of the ride in the next edition of the magazine!

Veteran-Cycle Club

Have you heard of the Veteran-Cycle Club? It’s not a club for older cyclists rather it’s for anyone who’s interested in a conserving, researching or riding old cycles – the clue is the hyphen in the name!

The Veteran-Cycle Club was originally formed in 1955 to promote the riding and conservation of old cycles in addition to the study and exchange of information about the history of cycles and cycling. Today the club has grown to over 2300 members from all over the world who enjoy many benefits and services through club membership.

The club includes all cycles from tandems to tricycles - from solid-tired machines through roadsters to classic lightweights and beyond – in fact anything collectable or of interest. The club organises regular rides and events which sees members out on veteran cycles,

often with riders in period costume. They also attend national and local shows, often giving demonstrations of cycles from the members' collections.

The breadth of interests is huge, for example there are special interest/study groups within the club including covering Hobby Horses, Lightweight and Classic Cycles from 1930 – 1960 and pre-1930 pneumatic and solid-tyred machines.



If you're interested have a look at their web-site www.v-cc.org.uk – there is a treasure trove of information, links to other sites, histories of famous old marques and photographs of members cycles. You may even be tempted to get out a classic bike of your own and spruce it up ready for showing!

Chris Boardman's Future Bike

Chris Boardman has unveiled his vision of the everyday bike of the future. The bike has solar cells, a motor, puncture-less tyres, fingerprint recognition for security and a carbon fibre frame. All of this has a price tag of £500,000 but is expected to be much more reasonable when in full production!



Touring in Sardinia

Five of the Petersfield group had a really enjoyable road biking trip to Sardinia in June. It's a big island with a fabulous coastline and a distinctly hilly interior. We flew easyJet from Gatwick to Olbia on the northwest coast and cycled for eight days in a zigzag to finish in the capital Cagliari on the southern coast. Then we took our bikes on a train back to Olbia for the return flight.

Early June was perfect for cycling with sunny days in the upper 20s Celsius. Our route took us on empty roads through a green patchwork of olive groves, vineyards, wheat fields, moorland and forests. The coastal stretches were magnificent with sweeping cliffs, beautiful sandy coves and clear blue seas.



We had chosen our hotels from the 'Lonely Planet' guidebook and each of them was welcoming and comfortable, but completely different from the ones before. It was low season, so the prices were quite reasonable and only a few other guests. The drivers of the few vehicles on our roads were very considerate and everybody we met was very friendly and helpful, despite the guidebook saying that Sardinians can be slightly reserved when dealing with strangers.

The local road engineers must have been cyclists because the roads were smooth surfaced (we suspected huge European Union funding programmes) and carefully graded to give easy riding uphill and wicked fast descents of hairpin bends. A couple of the best twisty descents were about 7 km long, so we suffered from 'grin muscle fatigue' at the bottom.

All in all, a cyclist's paradise!

Stephen