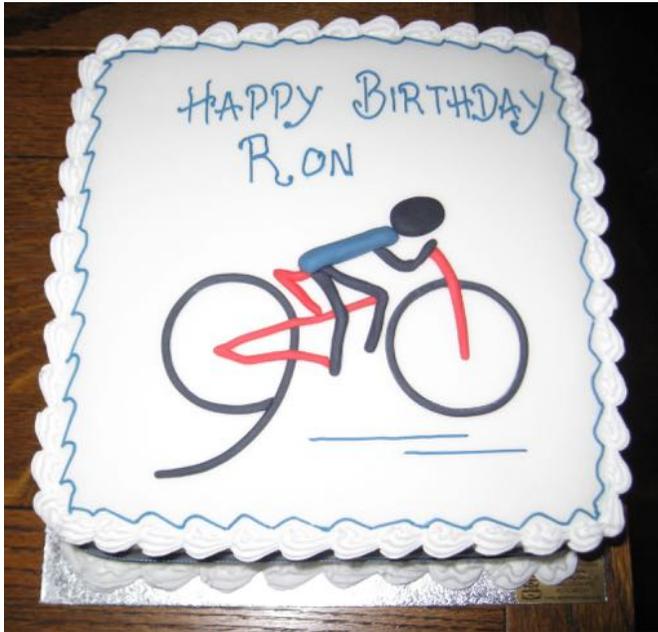


# The West Surrey Cyclist



**April – June  
2015**

Price £6 (four issues delivered)



## WEST SURREY CTC 2015

CHAIR	Mark Waters	01483 414307 <a href="mailto:chair@westsurreyctc.co.uk">chair@westsurreyctc.co.uk</a>
SECRETARY	Nick Davison	01428 642013 <a href="mailto:secretary@westsurreyctc.co.uk">secretary@westsurreyctc.co.uk</a>
TREASURER	Arthur Twiggs	01252 721395 <a href="mailto:treasurer@westsurreyctc.co.uk">treasurer@westsurreyctc.co.uk</a>
RIDES SECRETARY	John Murdoch	01276 681131 <a href="mailto:ridessecretary@westsurreyctc.co.uk">ridessecretary@westsurreyctc.co.uk</a>

### ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

	John Child	01483 893900
	Laurie Mutch	07887 650777
	Roger Philo	01483 233381
PRESIDENT	Chris Juden	
VICE-PRESIDENT	Rico Signore	
AUDITOR	Peter Chimes	
MAGAZINE EDITOR	Dane Maslen	01483 721856 <a href="mailto:editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk">editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk</a>
WEBMASTER	John Child	01483 893900 <a href="mailto:webmaster@westsurreyctc.co.uk">webmaster@westsurreyctc.co.uk</a>

## WHAT WE ARE

CTC is the national cycling charity. It is the oldest and largest cycling body in the UK, promotes all forms of cycling, and has championed the cause of cycling for well over a century. Its network of local groups, of which West Surrey CTC is one, has 70,000 members. Membership includes third-party insurance, a cycling-related legal helpline, and a bi-monthly national magazine.

**CTC headquarters:** Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford GU2 9JX.  
Phone 0844 736 8450.

**CTC website:** [www.ctc.org.uk](http://www.ctc.org.uk)

**West Surrey CTC website:** <http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/>

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Sat 21st March:** The Phil Hampton Memorial Ride, 10:00, Four Marks. See the item posted January 8 at <http://www.nhampshirectc.org.uk/> for details.

**Sunday 12th April:** 35/50 mile Reliability Ride, start 8.00 – 9.00 from Crown Court car park, Godalming, GU7 1EE (SU970440). Roger Philo 01483-233381, [roger.philo@virgin.net](mailto:roger.philo@virgin.net)

**Saturday 18th April:** Cycle Jumble, Ripley Village Hall, 09:00.

**2nd-4th May:** May Day Weekend in the Yorkshire Dales, based in Giggleswick, near Settle. Rides every day leaving village centre at 9.00-9.30. Contact Derek Tanner for details: 01276-474553 . Also opportunity to spend the previous week 25-30 April in Middleton in Teesdale.

**Sunday 31st May:** Stonehenge 200, Danebury 150 and Elstead 100 from Elstead Village Hall starting at 8.00, 8.30 and 9.00 respectively. Nick Davison 01428-642013 [stonehenge200@westsurreyctc.co.uk](mailto:stonehenge200@westsurreyctc.co.uk)

**Sunday 21st June:** Off-road ride, nothing too technical. Arthur Twigg 01252-721395 07796-832425 [arthur.twigg@gmail.com](mailto:arthur.twigg@gmail.com)

**Sunday 19th July:** 75 and 100 mile Reliability Rides.

**Sunday 16th August:** Tour of the Hills and Tour of the Greensand Hills.

More details of the July and August events will appear next issue.



The West Surrey CTC magazine, *The West Surrey Cyclist*, is produced every quarter. Subscribers to the magazine also receive the rides list.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION FOR PRINTED COPIES OF THE MAGAZINE AND RIDES LIST IS £6. Send a cheque payable to 'West Surrey CTC' to Phil Hamilton, 165 York Road, Woking GU22 7XS.

PDF COPIES OF THE MAGAZINE AND RIDES LIST ARE FREE. Send an email to the editor ([editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk](mailto:editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk)) to be added to the distribution list.

The magazine and rides lists are also available on our website:

<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/the-club/magazine/>

<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/rides-and-events/ride-lists-downloads/>

## **WELCOME TO OUR WORLD**

*Recent months have brought cause for both sadness and celebration: in January we learnt of the death from natural causes while out cycling of Barry Rolfe, while in February Ron Richardson celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I believe that a number of West Surrey CTC members attended Barry's funeral in Poole.*

*Barry moved to Dorset about a year ago, having previously lived near Reading but ridden with us because his company was in this area. During his time with West Surrey CTC he became a leader of the Intermediates group of the Woking Midweek Wayfarers, thereby helping to resurrect that group after it had been leaderless for some time. His emails describing the planned rides were unfailingly full of enthusiasm, as was he.*

*Barry's other claim to West Surrey fame was winning the Wooden Crank for wearing his cycle shorts inside out on a ride to coffee one Wednesday in 2010. He was of course amused by both his blunder and the award.*

*Soon after I first started riding with the West Surrey DA (as it was then) back in 2001, I was astonished to discover that Ron was over 75. At the time he was still riding with the 'fast' Woking Midweek Wayfarers group (as for that matter is someone who is about the same age now that Ron was then, so evidently my scope for astonishment has diminished over the years). Most people expressed the hope that they would be able to ride as well when they got to his age. I confined myself to wishing that I could ride as well at the age I was then as he could.*

*After his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday Ron rode 80 miles for charity. At the time I joked that we would let him off with 90 kilometres after his 90<sup>th</sup>. I have to confess that at the time I didn't expect that ten years on Ron would still be turning out on Wednesday rides. In fact many of you will probably have seen Ron on a club ride more recently than me: he's considerably less fussy about the weather he'll brave on a bike than I am.*

*If memory serves me correctly, Ron continued to ride with the fast WMW group until he was about 80, but even after he switched to the Intermediates he proved capable of causing me great embarrassment. One Wednesday afternoon in spring 7 or 8 years ago the fast group was returning towards Woking when we encountered the Intermediates at Wyke, also heading home after lunch. The two groups intermingled as we turned*

*onto the A324 ("Old Voke's road"). Approaching Dolley's Hill, I realised with horror what was about to happen. Sure enough, as my tired legs complained bitterly at yet another hill, no matter how trivial, Ron came charging past me on the ascent. Overtaken by someone 32 years my senior, I consoled myself with the thought that I'd catch up again after the hill. Hah! Not a chance!*

*I'm sure you'll all join me in congratulating Ron on his recent 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and wishing him many more years of cycling. Oh, and by the way, Ron, if towards the end of March you should happen to encounter me struggling up a hill as I attempt to get fit again after my winter lay-off from cycling, could you refrain from overtaking, please?*

## **LETTER COLUMN**

### **Back to basics!**

15<sup>th</sup> December 2014: The ongoing discussions seem to me to be mainly concerned with the (dismissal? early retirement?) of the technical adviser. What interests me far more is how our management is allowed to take such steps apparently without consulting the general membership. So far all I have heard are rumours, speculation and suppositions – nothing, as far as I am aware, has been published or explained satisfactorily to the CTC membership. Perhaps we are only here to pay our fees and let the powers-that-be do as they please.

Unfortunately I am insufficiently au fait with the CTC constitution to comment on whether the management is acting within their rights by making their very undemocratic decisions but, I would have thought, some sort of enlightened explanations would have been more than welcome and all this bad feeling could have been avoided.

I am very concerned about the attitude of the CTC management and am seriously considering withdrawing my membership (possibly along with many other CTC members)!

22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015: I have now heard first-hand how some of the key staff were dismissed/made redundant, with very scant (and unsatisfactory) on-line replacements. What the membership would like to know is, who is going to update and verify these websites, as there does not appear to be

anybody left at headquarters with sufficient inside knowledge to keep the information current and up-to-date.

If there is no drastic re-thinking at Headquarters I will definitely withdraw my membership.

19<sup>th</sup> February 2015: Since writing the above, secrecy and obfuscation by CTC HQ has increased. Not one decision has been explained satisfactorily to the membership, everything we learn is based on supposition and hearsay! What do they have to hide from us? Mismanagement? Negligence? It all points to unprofessional conduct towards the membership, i.e. mirroring the famous mushroom management strategy: "Keep them in the dark and feed them manure"! I was hoping to find some explanations in the latest CYCLE magazine but, apart from a letter from Angela Byrne & David Wood, absolutely no mention of the dismissal of Chris Juden, or the dismantling of the Touring Section.

Luckily we can still enjoy our cycling and ignore CTC HQ (as they obviously do us).

Rico Signore

## **Save Our CTC**

Like all organizations, CTC has changed over the years. Virtually none of the staff now employed at CTC Head Office has any interest in cycle touring. Becoming a charity in 2010 has heralded even greater changes, resulting in 'campaigning' taking over the main focus from that of serving members' interests. In September/October 2014 a number of CTC members in West Surrey and other clubs around the country felt that these changes went too far when CTC made redundant the roles of Technical Offer (Chris Juden), Touring Offer (Andy Hawes) and Training Officer (Greg Woodford). This was in addition to a failure to replace Mark Waters when he retired three years ago. It was felt that this round of redundancies was the last straw, that the CTC club had lost its way and that we needed to get things back to a more balanced position, supporting its members and a focus on cycle 'travel' whilst focusing its campaigning arm on the needs of the 'hard done by' cyclist.

Campaigning should not consume resources to the exclusion of all else and its focus needs to align with 'fighting the cyclist's corner' rather than

supporting short-lived charitable projects. This change in emphasis towards more 'campaigning' has largely been brought about by our elected Council, who are the trustees of the CTC Charity and who largely support this change in direction (with even more pro-campaigning members being elected to Council this year).

A great many active members have been trying to convey their dissatisfaction with the new focus to both CTC Head Office staff and CTC Council through emails, phone calls, trying to attend the 17<sup>th</sup> January Council Meeting, and finally by trying to submit motions for the CTC AGM that is to be held on 18th July.

These attempts at communication have, by and large, fallen on deaf ears; our repeated attempts to arrange a meeting with Paul Tuohy, the new Chief Executive, to discuss these changes in direction have been unsuccessful; Council restricted access to the Council meeting in January even though members are encouraged to attend; and finally, attempts to put motions to the AGM have been largely refused. As a result, it will not be possible for members to vote on whether the club should have Technical and Touring officers. Many motions were, we believe, erroneously rejected because they 'could be perceived as indirect discrimination', which, we believe, is akin to hiding behind "Health and Safety".

Note: Our local councillors have been supportive; however, those councillors have minimal influence on Council, since it is now dominated by 'campaigning' councillors. At the January Council elections, they failed to be re-elected to positions on either of the Council committees; moreover, they have not even been shown the motions for the AGM, nor given any information about the rejection of those motions: they are out of the loop entirely.

People who have been following materiel placed on our West Surrey website Forum page, on the Forum page on the CTC national website <http://forum.ctc.org.uk/viewtopic.php?f=45&t=92645>, and on Chris Jeggo's 'Where should CTC be going?' Facebook page will be aware of the frustration that many members have experienced when trying to have their views acknowledged and listened to.

On hearing that Chris Juden had been made redundant, people started cancelling their membership. What we want to do is "Save our CTC" by getting it fixed, not by deserting the club; however, overall, it appears that

we have failed, that nothing will change and that having made CTC a charity, we have lost the control necessary to get our club back.

### Why we are so upset about these changes and what it means to loose the Technical Officer

Many members will have appreciated over the years:

- The catalogues of technical information on the CTC web pages
- Mentoring the CTC Technical Forum
- Technical reviews of bikes and equipment and technical editing of Cycle magazine

But more crucially, and not known by everyone, is the work the Technical Officer has been doing representing cyclists' interests externally: reviews of British Standards relating to cycling, the Department for Transport review of Cycle legislation known as the "Red Tape Challenge", and much much more. The Red Tape Challenge is a long, on-going process, which will not now have any representation from CTC to represent cyclists' interests.

### Where do we go now?

Our options are to :-

- Think long-term, remain in CTC and initiate the process of finding people willing to stand for Council who support our values, and thereby change the direction the club is going.
- Disband West Surrey CTC and form a new West Surrey group which could affiliate to CTC or some other club for insurance cover.
- Disband West Surrey CTC and form an independent group which could be called 'The Real CTC', starting again and leaving the old CTC to go its own way.

We intend calling for an EGM to discuss the future of West Surrey CTC and to seek all members' views. We really want to know what all our West Surrey family feel about what has happened and what the next move should be.

Angela Byrne and David Wood

# CYCLING MYANMAR – WHAT AN EXPERIENCE!

By Liz Palethorpe

Obtaining a visa to Myanmar was the first difficulty as no individual travellers, no backpackers, and no people with tattoos (although I think that this has now been lifted) are granted visas. Not wanting to go on a tour from one tourist sight to the next, we found an Australian company that took groups of no more than eight and used only Burmese staff. This sounded like a good option.

Meeting up in a hotel reception in Yangon we met our Burmese guide Ling - aged twenty three, five feet tall, a devout Buddhist but what an amazing cyclist. The first day in Yangon we visited the Shwedagon pagoda, the most revered Buddhist temple in Myanmar. What a fantastic sight, the central stupa 90 metres tall and gilded with gold leaf.

The next day after flying to Mandalay our cycling started. Not being able to take our own bikes we hired Trek mountain bikes with disc brakes and huge fat tyres. Well now, the roads have no road markings, no give way signs, no stop signs and only 3 roundabouts in the whole country: cars, motorbikes and cyclists just mingle not going very fast and the worst thing one can do is stop. We got on our bikes with great trepidation just remembering not to stop – scary stuff.



Idyllic main road

Gradually getting more confident we rode to U Bein Bridge – a 200-year old teak bridge 2 kilometres long built over a lake. We then rode near the Irrawaddy River along narrow minor roads – sometimes tarmac, sometimes

gravel or sand – and through river beds as there are few bridges on the minor roads – thank goodness we had mountain bikes. We gradually got accustomed to the heat – what a wonderful day with the beautiful acacia trees with their yellow blossom lining the roads – and watching the sun setting from the temple on top of Mandalay Hill was unbelievable. We were reminded of Myanmar’s colonial past as here was a memorial to the British troops who died in World War II – the battle of Mandalay Hill.

Up at sunrise 6.00am and on our bikes by 7.30 before the heat of the day we cycled narrow undulating roads - very little traffic and few lorries as most of the country uses river transport - always hoping for tree lined roads to give us some shade. We met up at little road side cafés where we sat on child-size plastic chairs drinking green tea. What an effort to get up – would my legs ever recover?



Typical rural road

The days followed, seeing monks in their saffron robes and carrying their begging bowls, being invited to a Buddhist ceremony and visiting local schools. Education is not compulsory but in the rural districts children aged seven enter a Buddhist monastery and receive a good education and at sixteen can decide their future.

My favourite day was getting up at 5.00am to see the sun rise over Mount Popa – a plug of an extinct volcano, a weirdly shaped hill 737 metres above sea level with a temple on the summit – it looked like gold in the sky. We cycled down to the base and then climbed the 777 steps to the summit passing many shrines, local pilgrims, Buddhist monks, and people selling souvenirs, trinkets, and small Buddha statues. I can't think how many monkeys lived here – quite a lot and one snatched my water bottle. At the summit a gleaming complex of gold stupas and Buddhist shrines and the breathtaking views over the surrounding plains. It was now only 9.00am and on our bikes along a very undulating road – well, hilly: thank goodness for our very low gears – we made our way to Bagan.

The next day cycling along the sandy tracks and little paths we explored Bagan, an area with over 2,200 pagodas and stupas, mostly built in 9th-13th century, some golden and splendid and others brick and plaster – an amazing sight, they were everywhere. Early evening we climbed the steps of one of the few surviving monasteries from the early Bagan period to watch the sun setting, a very spiritual experience.

Our cycling over, it was time to fly to Lake Inle and on to Yangon. My lasting memory is the extremely friendly and kind people – people who do not have many worldly goods, but happy and smiley. We then flew on to cycle in Thailand, which is another story.

## **ANNUAL DINNER**

**By John Murdoch**

After the floods of last year which temporarily closed the Mill at Elstead, over 50 of us were able to return to this venue in February for the 3rd annual dinner since its reintroduction in 2013.

This year our President, Chris Juden, kindly agreed to talk on cycling related matters. His wealth of experience and expertise gave him so much material from which to work, and he skilfully tailored his delivery to suit the nature of the occasion. Hence, he talked of the CTC and the key functions of the organisation, his work there, and made some interesting comparisons with how cycling, and national cycling bodies, differ between countries. However, as befitted the purely social gathering, he avoided any mention of his most recent experiences at CTC!

Chris' talk on the "Tourist" element of the Cyclists Touring Club (now CTC) linked with the achievements and plans of so many of our members, with John Child and Chris Williamson cycling from Lands End to John O' Groats later this year, and John Weatherburn all lined up for an unsupported camping ride across America which (provided the U.S. authorities allow John to stay in the country!) will be an epic trip. As was mentioned at the dinner, John is raising money for Cancer Research UK for very personal and understandable reasons, and I would urge you to have a look at his JustGiving page

<https://www.justgiving.com/John-Weatherburn1/>

and give him, and his chosen charity, the support they so richly deserve. Please also disseminate as widely as possible on social media: I am sure the story will strike a chord with so many people, and in that way the fund-raising will reach out so much further than John's immediate circle of friends.

The formal part of the evening closed with a celebration of West Surrey CTC and its members, with specific recognition of the great work done by so many cycle leaders, who have enabled a full range of rides to take place over the past year.

The following awards were also presented:-

Bert Bartholomew Trophy (oldest rider to complete 100-mile reliability ride)

**Bob McLeod**

Keith Parfitt Pot (event organisation)

**Roger Philo**

George Aylesbury Tankard (best Wednesday attendance)

**John Findlay**

Bill Inder Trophy (best Sunday attendance)

**Clive Richardson**

Wooden Crank (most amusing blunder of the year)

**Bob McLeod**



The final award was new, when it was agreed at the AGM that a “Golden Crank” should be presented annually to the member who had contributed most to the Club and the wider cycling community; our thanks to William Lowries for crafting this new award so beautifully. The committee decided that the first recipient should be Paul Gillingham, for actually doing something about the block of concrete that had blighted the A3 cycle path for so long. That “something” was to attack it with a lump hammer, and the clearance will have benefited so many as a result. Finally, there was a celebration of a milestone birthday; Ron Richardson turned 90 a few days before the dinner, and after mention was made of how cycling has always been part of his life (and probably more important than turning up on time during his working life) an appropriately decorated cake was presented to Ron, and enjoyed by all present; congratulations Ron, you remain an inspiration to us all.

I hope that the evening was enjoyed by all, and my thanks to all those who supported the occasion.

# MOUNTAIN BIKING IN EXMOOR

**By William Lowries**

Although I enjoy road cycling and touring generally, I also enjoy off-road riding. I am by no means a dare-devil, but I do enjoy some slightly hairy descents which has led to an inevitable number of crashes – some more serious than others, but in fact most of the injuries to my person over my lifetime (so far) have been through crashing or falling off bikes in one way or another. On most Saturday mornings I and various other nutcases set off over the Surrey Hills for a few hours of brisk exercise. It's good value mountain biking – you get a lot of very vigorous exercise in a short time.

On Saturday 4th October three of us set off bright and early (well early anyway) for Exmoor for a weekend of mountain biking in an area we hadn't ridden in before. We were staying at Exford youth hostel so we left our car there, changed and headed off. I cannot tell you much about the ride that day. Although we had driven through a lot of rain, the weather was now clear and mostly sunny.



The thing about mountain biking is that you don't necessarily go very far. I think on this ride we covered about 30 kilometres, but with some gruelling climbs, very wet conditions and rough and rocky terrain it was hard work. We returned to our hostel, which I remembered staying in many years ago while on a school geography field course, but sadly the hostel was to close

within the next few weeks as it required a lot of investment which YHA felt could not be justified.

The next day we drove about 30 miles eastwards to the Quantocks for a day's riding there. This was fabulous riding, a much more open landscape, but if anything, even hillier. In fact the distance we covered in about 4 hours of riding sounds quite pathetic - about 17 miles! But I can assure you that my companions and I were well and truly wrung out by the time we had finished! It was just relentlessly hilly! You slogged up yet another long, steep climb, immediately descended again, equally steeply, then up again etc etc. Wonderful views from the tops though, and of course no traffic, except a few horses and walkers.

## **MONTE CARLO BY BIKE – 1: GETTING STARTED**

**By Derek Tanner**

The best thing about cycling with West Surrey CTC is that there is always someone to talk to and offer “advice” on how to get more “enjoyment” out of your cycling. As a consequence (by listening and learning from our respected colleagues) our cycle tour to Monte Carlo was born.

Some say that the most difficult thing about cycle touring is the planning and preparation. We have rather drifted into the habit of starting a European tour just after the August Bank Holiday. My policy is to start at the farthest point from home. Every day is then a little closer to home. The penalty is that we are travelling North into the approaching winter and closing tourist accommodation. Invariably after about 5 or 6 weeks we get sufficiently despondent to head for a railway station and catch a train to a convenient channel port for the ferry home.

The sensible thing (“we are told by those that know much better”) is to chase the ebbing summer South to prolong the pleasure of those long days sat on the bikes, stopping only for a photo or a beckoning roadside bar. Where better (we are assured) than late autumn in Southern France. Once settled in our minds, visions of Saint-Tropez, Marseille, Nice, and Monte Carlo were irresistible.

Despite Anne's hatred of big, slow boats (smaller, very fast ones with her driving are much better) a reservation with outside cabin from Portsmouth to Bilbao committed us to depart the first week in September. The lift at

Portsmouth railway station was out of order so we had to carry the fully loaded bikes down the steps. We couldn't find anywhere safe to leave the bikes while we had a meal and the ferry was 2 hours late because of bad weather. It is a 36 hour crossing to Bilbao. The weather calmed beautifully overnight and we spent the next 24 hours either in the restaurant, watching whales or in the cinema (who can resist *Mamma Mia!*).

We arrived early in the morning the next day to torrential rain and a flat front tyre. Crouched in the cover of the customs post to repair it, one of the customs officers kindly brought a bucket of water to find the leak (as if there wasn't enough laying on the ground already). We were joined by a young (to us) solo cyclist from Llanelli (which was nice as it gave Anne someone to talk to).

Life started to look brighter after the second coffee and croissant in the café by the transporter bridge (the oldest in the world). The rain was easing and our new-found friend, being new to this game and using up valuable leave from work, was anxious for us to move on. By the end of the day we had covered 80km of mixed scenery and only stopped twice before we parted company, us preferring to go on to the next town rather than his suggestion of rough camping behind the petrol filling station we had just passed (chosen for supply of water and food).

We were in Markina-Xemein, a town on the Northern Pilgrims Route, The local policeman had just directed us to the pilgrims' hostel, when our travel mate rejoined us. With our past experience we were soon processed as bona fide pilgrims and given a bed for 5 euros a piece.

Slipping quietly away from the devoted pilgrims sitting in the communal kitchen eating sandwiches, we luckily found a bar where we were ushered into the back room and spent the next two hours alone eating and drinking everything that a pretty young waitress brought through the door.

In true pilgrim tradition we were out on the road by 0800 the next morning. I didn't get much sleep because every time that someone started snoring I was woken by Anne.

The scenery up to and along the northern coast was stunning. We found a camp-site for the night on the outskirts of San Sebastian. We were away by 0930 next morning, a dry but threateningly miserable day. We crossed the border into France and hid in a restaurant for lunch as the heavens opened. After dripping water all over the floor of the TI in Hendaye (remembered

as the finishing point of the "Raid Pyrenees"), we headed along the coast following the cycle paths, through Saint-Jean-de-Luz and towards Biarritz.

Passing a campsite with nearby restaurants was too good an opportunity to miss. We had the tent up just as it started raining again and vicious squalls swept in off the sea (only 50m away). Over dinner in the campsite restaurant we made a plan for an early start next morning. Returning to the tent, we found a frog sheltering from the rain. Trying to maintain a sense of hilarity, I was about to kiss it to see if it would turn into a princess or a handsome prince, before Anne suggested that I could get arrested. It rained all night. We went to the restaurant for breakfast, everyone else on the campsite left. During a lull in the storm we walked to the supermarket. We may get washed into the sea, but starve in France - never!

After another night of torrential rain we were in the bar as soon as it opened – drying out! The weather eased a bit over lunch so we pulled the tent down and headed North, skirting inland of Biarritz to follow the N10 into Bayonne, by which time the weather was almost pleasant. It is a big old town on a confluence of rivers, lots of character. It would merit a longer visit but we had an objective to get to a luxury resort up river. So after a picnic on the river bank we made good progress over the flat terrain, which was just as well, since the luxury resort was as dead as a dodo. In no uncertain terms we were sent on our way despite clutching their full page glossy advert that we had collected at the TI and it had started raining again.

After 5 km of disconsolate pedalling we rounded a corner and spied a faded sign in the bushes: "Camping" it read, although where was not obvious. Venturing around the back of the farmhouse, the window was open. Madame was stood there doing the ironing. About 2 hours later, after more coffee and gateaux than is healthy, we ventured out to pitch the tent in the orchard but within 2 steps of tarmac and close to a cosy kitchen, dining area and shower room.

We picked up more food in Peyrehorade the next morning and took a poke around the street market before heading towards Saint-Sever. Following the river bank through fields of sweetcorn made for a pleasant afternoon's ride. The campsite was on the edge of the sports ground, and not very busy. The facilities were superb, the friendly warden sold bottles of wine and brought table and chairs to the tent for our evening meal. Croissants were delivered to the tent next morning. We breakfasted by the river before

setting off, with the wardens “scenic route “instructions ringing in our ears. Our objective for the day was the holy shrine “Eglise de Rugby” near Grenade-sur-l'Adour. As we got close following the campsite warden's instructions, the bridge across the river was closed, which meant climbing up through the forest, over the ridge and back around. We had just found a sign pointing up a seriously steep and rutted road when a group of club cyclists on a training run shouted for us to follow them and we soon (if not easily) got dragged to the church via the longer easier gradient. Whereupon Anne rushed inside and threw herself onto the floor (for a considerable time). I was just about to call a doctor when she emerged from amidst the collection of rugby jerseys and other mementos hoping to have done enough praying to ensure that “Wales won the Six Nations Rugby Championship this year”. After bidding farewell to the statue of George and the Dragon and Mary cradling a rugby ball we took the short-cut into town for a steak lunch with wine.

In Saint-Justin that night we got thrown out of the camp-site bar a bit earlier than we would have liked, but it served to point out that the evenings were drawing in and we have only been going 8 days.

*To be continued.*



Deadline for next issue: June 12<sup>th</sup> . Get your cycling stories in to the editor now: [editor@westsurreytc.co.uk](mailto:editor@westsurreytc.co.uk)

*The editor welcomes contributions of all types, e.g. articles about cycling holidays, anecdotes about events on club rides, letters (serious or humorous) to the editor, product reviews etc. Short items are useful for filling the gaps left by longer articles and are very welcome. If you have photographs that could be used to illustrate your article, feel free to send them too. Whether they are used or not will depend on space constraints. All contributions will be acknowledged when received.*

*Front cover: The birthday cake that was presented to Ron Richardson at the Annual Dinner to celebrate his recent 90th birthday.*