

# The West Surrey Cyclist



**July - September  
2014**

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## WHAT WE ARE

CTC is the national cycling charity. It campaigns for both road and off-road cyclists. Membership includes third-party insurance, legal claims advice, travel and technical guidance, on and off-road route information, and a bi-monthly national magazine. It has 70,000 members and affiliates and is the oldest and largest cycling body in the UK. It has a network of local groups of which West Surrey CTC is one.

**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 June:** Cycle Jumble, Ripley Village Hall, 09:00.

**Wed 9<sup>th</sup> July:** Charlotteville Guildford Town Centre Raves, from 7.00pm; exciting road racing in the centre of Guildford. It is likely that Club members will wish to meet up to watch the action together, see the blog (<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/category/blogs/>) to check on any arrangements, or start making suggestions yourself.

**Sun 20th July:** 100 and 75 mile Reliability Rides, option of led ride or route sheets. Start Goal Farm Golf Club, Pirbright GU24 0PZ (SU939567) at 08:00, entry fee £2, Roger Philo 01483-233381.

**Sun 10th August:** Prudential RideLondon-Surrey Classic. See <http://www.prudentialridelondon.co.uk/>

**Sun 17th August:** Tour of the Hills and Tour of the Greensand Hills. Start Shere Village Hall GU5 9HF (TQ074480) at 09:50 and 10:30, entry fees £3.50 and £8, each respectively.

**Sat 13th September:** Cycle Jumble, Ripley Village Hall, 09:00.

**Sat 13th September:** Stage 7 of The Tour of Britain, Camberley to Brighton. See <http://www.tourofbritain.co.uk/stages/#.U5nLglHfu5k>. See the blog (<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/category/blogs/>) for arrangements being made for Club members to meet up to watch the action together.



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 £4. Send a cheque payable to 'CTC West Surrey Group' 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**

*Much has changed since the last issue.*

*We have a new website and with it has come the elimination of the confusion caused by different internet domain names for website and email addresses. Forget both [ctcwestsurrey.org.uk](http://ctcwestsurrey.org.uk) and [westsurreyctda.org.uk](http://westsurreyctda.org.uk): everything now uses our new domain name of [westsurreyctc.co.uk](http://westsurreyctc.co.uk).*

*For the first time in several years we have a new ride group. This has proved to be the straw that breaks the camel's back as far as the Rides List is concerned. In recent times it had been becoming increasingly difficult to squeeze everything onto a single A4 sheet. Now it would be impossible. For the benefit of those who are accustomed to pulling the Rides List (i.e. the centre page) out of the magazine, the content of the magazine have been reorganised so that the two centre pages can be pulled out without destroying any articles.*

## **LETTER COLUMN**

### **Russ Mantle**

Within a few minutes of hearing of your appeal for material for the magazine Russ Mantle showed me an article about his mile-eating exploits from Cycling Weekly July 20, 1989.

Sadly you can't show a picture of the young Russ from 1965 on his racing bike that appears in the article.

The journalist Peter Knottley and cycle tourist, reported that "MILE-EATER MANTLE" started his logbooks when he started cycling in 1952 and by the time of his article, almost 25 years ago, had logged 430,000 miles. He said that Russ was frequently reported in the cycling press for his time trial successes. To quote Russ 'Marvellous when you're young and fit. You feel you can tear the pedals off the cranks'. His favourite gear was 81 or 82 fixed. He claimed that he couldn't turn big gears nor had the ability to win the sprint in the bunch finishes that you get in road races hence he stuck to time trials. He has trophies at all distances from 10 miles to 100 but preferred 25. Amazingly his typical cadence was 110-115 rpm.

I've also learned from this article just how active Russ has been in touring and of his involvement with this club. He was our rides secretary for 19

years. His holidays were always in hilly or mountainous areas and combined high passes with mountain walking, scrambling and photography. Russ said 'I love cycling up and down the big Alpine passes, sometimes three or four the same day. My longest and highest bike climb is 32 miles all uphill from 2000 feet at Granada to the top of the Vic Del Valeta peak at 11,150feet. It took me 4hours 45 minutes in hot weather in 1987'. Over a tour of around 25 days he climbed 130,000 feet in the Italian and Swiss alps! Obviously Russ has always liked large numbers.

He confesses in the article that he sometimes thought that he ought to try something other than cycling but always comes back to it with renewed enthusiasm.

There has of course been a lapse of 25 years since this article appeared so Russ may well have bettered some of these tours. I recall almost 15 years ago him telling me of a tour in Canada where he combined mountain walking and cycling. This Wednesday Russ told me he has now ridden 934,000 miles. If you saw Russ at Seale you could see for yourself how well he looks with all this exercise and he is still smiling. His smiles greatly impressed the journalist all those years ago. It's interesting that miles and smiles are so similar.

Bob McLeod

## **TOUR OF THE HILLS 17/08 – MARSHALS NEEDED**

**By John Murdoch**

This is our première event of the year, and its reputation continues to grow. After the undoubted success of last year's event, with some riders still talking about the spread of food available, but having long forgotten about the pain of the hills, it is likely to be even more popular this year.

Such an event can only take place with the wholehearted support of our members, and one of the most vital tasks is to man all the marshal points. That requires a large number of volunteers, so please advise me if you can help on the day, by contacting me on 01276-681131 or e-mail [johnmatsouthview@btinternet.com](mailto:johnmatsouthview@btinternet.com). Please also indicate if you have any particular preferences e.g. location, early or late control etc, and I will try to accommodate your wishes, which obviously is more likely if you get in early.

# NEW RIDES LIST – IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE

## By John Murdoch, Rides Secretary

**Ride Gradings** – for simplicity, there is now only one form of grading to indicate the nature of a ride, in terms of average speed and distance. This uses a simple numerical system, from 1 to 4, with 1 being the most gentle ride, and 4 the most strenuous. See:

<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/ride-groups/ride-guide/>

(*Overview of all Rides and Groups*) for full details. This system is used consistently on all rides lists and on the website (e.g. calendar).

**Late Changes to Rides** – there will be occasions when a Ride Leader decides to make a late cancellation of, or change to, a ride e.g. adverse weather conditions. These will be advised in the *Latest News* section of the website (<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/>), in the middle of the *Welcome* page. It is highly recommended that before setting out on a ride, this section is checked. You can receive e-mail alerts of all new postings by signing up at:

<http://westsurreyctc.co.uk/category/blogs/>

Changes may also be advised by way of group e-mail. If you wish to receive such e-mail notifications, please go to the *Welcome* page, look for *Quick Links* on the right hand side, and click on *Sign up for announcements etc* (the 5th item down). There you will be able to specify any particular Ride Groups in which you are interested.

**Midweek Wayfarers** – the alphabetical key of E, I and F is no longer used (and not before time, some would say!) and the 1 to 4 gradings system is used consistently. Each Wednesday rides of Grades 2, 3 and 4 are offered. On some Wednesdays one start point is more distant, as indicated by the abbreviation *TA* (Train assisted). This particular ride will be for Grades 3 and 4 (as shown on the Rides List); the Grade 2 ride will retain a more local, and different, start point. It may be that a “Bonus” ride at Grade 3, also with a more local start point, will be added at the last minute. This will be advised in the *Latest News* section of the website, so it is particularly important that this is checked if you are interested in such a ride, and also that you sign up for e-mail alerts of such postings; see “Late Changes to Rides” above.

# **EVER BEEN LET DOWN BY YOUR GPS?**

**By Ian Pickering**

GPS devices are becoming increasingly popular with cyclists to help with navigation and to record their rides. They are great when they work but it can be very frustrating when you get home and find you can't upload your ride due to corrupt data.

So it was recently when last week's CTC ride, which I had logged on my Garmin Edge 705, failed to upload to Garmin Connect. However, I do not give-up easily so after a quick Google search, I found a program which claimed to be able to fix corrupted Garmin files. It took a little figuring out (and I guess it helps that I have a background in IT), but it definitely works and I managed to repair the corrupt data file quite easily and successfully uploaded the ride to Garmin Connect.

The program is an XML Editor called firstobject (XML is an industry standard format for data files which Garmin also uses) and is available free from [www.firstobject.com](http://www.firstobject.com). Once you have installed the program on your computer, you have to manually copy the data file from your Garmin's memory to your PC, then open the file in firstobject. (My Garmin Edge 705 stores the ride data in .tcx files. This may be different on the newer Edge 500/800/810, but I think they still use XML, so it should work.) firstobject will automatically scan and highlight any corrupted data which you then simply cut-out, then save the file and manually upload it to Garmin Connect.

This may sound quite daunting if you are not confident and/or experienced in IT, but it's worth a try and it solved my problem. There is a very detailed video on the website which explains how to use the program.

# **LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION – BICYCLE!**

**By Hilary Stephenson**

No doubt many of you will be glued to your television screens at the beginning of July as you follow the progress of the Tour de France through Yorkshire. I might view the odd few minutes myself, but mainly to make myself homesick for the beautiful Dales countryside which formed such an

important backdrop to my Yorkshire childhood. Much as I enjoy cycling, I have never been a great fan of competitive sports or spectator sports, although I will confess that I was swept along by the general enthusiasm for the 2012 Olympic cycling events. If such major events encourage more people to hop on a bike themselves, as seems to be the case, then I am all in favour of them.

When it comes to watching bicycles on a screen, my own preference is for feature films which celebrate bicycles as an integral part of everyday life, either as a means of transport or a leisure activity. There are some iconic images which spring to mind such as Paul Newman cycling around in pure ecstasy in *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (1969). His style of cycling does not comply with the West Surrey CTC new riding guidelines, however, featuring as it does Katherine Ross riding on his handlebars and later Newman (or more probably his stuntman) riding alone backwards, with predictable consequences!

Another film that portrays the sheer exuberance of riding a bike is the Italian film *Cinema Paradiso* (1988). It also reflects the usefulness of bicycles in an era before motor cars began to dominate our lives. A film is being shown simultaneously in two neighbouring villages and the reels have to be ferried to and fro at breakneck speed by bicycle. Later in the film we see how cars have ruined the beautiful square which previously served as the centre of village life. The bicycle in another classic Italian film *Bicycle Thieves* (1948) is a far cry from the light-weight, sporty models that race up the Surrey Hills. This bicycle is a workhorse. Amidst the economic hardship of post-war Italy, Antonio is relieved to finally find work hanging posters around the town. First he must retrieve his bicycle from the pawnshop, something which he is able to do only by pawning the family's bed linen in its place. Disaster strikes on his very first day at work though when his bicycle is stolen whilst he is up his ladder. With the help of his son he frantically scours the town to try and track down the bicycle thieves.

My current favourite bicycle film though is *Wadjda* (2012). This is the poignant story of 10-year-old Wadjda who yearns for a bike so that she can ride around with her neighbourhood friends. This might seem a reasonable enough desire for a 10-year-old, but this is Saudi Arabia, where women are still not permitted to drive cars, so Wadjda has to pit her wits against the forces of this highly conservative society if she is to achieve her dream.

Apart from the bicycle dimension, this is a fascinating film in other respects as it is the first feature film from a Saudi woman director. Many scenes had to be filmed from inside a car as it would be deemed unseemly by the Saudi authorities for a woman to be seen directing a film in public. The film very much deserved its Oscar nomination. Fortunately any film buffs among you will soon have the opportunity to see *Wadjda* as it is being shown on the opening night of the Electric Theatre Film Festival in Guildford on Monday 28 July. I would be happy to organise a West Surrey CTC film outing to watch this excellent film. Please email me if you are interested: [hilary878@btinternet.com](mailto:hilary878@btinternet.com).

## **THE BICYCLE ICYCLE 2014**

**By Mark Waters**

What is not to like about the Bicycle Icycle! Even on a day like that of the 6th April – damp, claggy, soggy without being fully wet, with hilltops shrouded in impenetrable grey mist – there is a beauty and a symmetry about this ride which delivers a truly satisfying experience. It climbs throughout the ride from within a half mile of both the start and finish, and plunges to the same degree. Countryside is reached in under two and a half miles of the start and the route uses extraordinarily little main road, so you're always in the lanes.

Let's describe today's lanes in a word or two: not good! After a good ten days of decent, dry weather in the area you might have been fooled into thinking that water levels were finally banished below ground: not a bit of it! I don't recall much rain of late but you'd think it'd been raining on and off for days by the look of the lanes. There is a lot of choss on some of them and some very poor stretches of tarmac too. You could also see as you rode around the hammering the trees had taken over recent months: fresh arboreal amputations were in evidence in many places.

I was glad to have chosen my Holdsworth for the ride: a sturdy workhorse shod with well proven Conti Top Touring tyres. Against that is the fact that he's a heavy old thing with downtube levers, so it wasn't destined to be an easy ride – despite the fact I'd probably done more riding this year already than I normally did, by a large margin. That's what probably got me round because the seven of us didn't hang about much.

Peaslake was too early for a coffee stop; there was off the route and involved a long-ish descent and re-ascent, and by the time we got to Shamley Green's shop, I think we just wanted to get on with it: we were counting the number of hills to go by then! I'm saying all this because what it means is that basically we didn't stop anywhere for longer than about five minutes



Wonersh

and I think some of us would have enjoyed a coffee stop. Maybe it's not a million miles to the Peaslake shop from the homeward route, at a distance that would suit the ride very well. I shall investigate! This, ladies and gentlemen, is called evolution, and life should be full of it.

When I crawled out of bed that morning, having been working on a new version of the route sheet until two the previous night, I felt about as unenthusiastic as everyone else must have felt on observing those lowering skies, the blanket cover, the more-than-likely chance of rain. (Actually to add to this observation, it was actually raining at 8 o'clock in Godalming.)

A mere six stalwarts of the road presented themselves at my garage at the appointed time. All looked enthusiastic and not in the least downhearted by the weather; the Bicycle Icycle experience is augmented by a bit of weather and, besides, it had stopped raining. Nevertheless we kept our waterproofs on. There were:

From West Surrey CTC, Claire Hooper, Peter Hackman, Chris Boggon, Clive Richardson and your reporter.

From further afield, Trevor Strudwick, a past member of the group but now living in South Wales who was ruing the fact that no groups as good as ours existed in his area. Trevor was here to renew his acquaintance with the Surrey countryside. And Andrew Grundy, a friend of Chris's living not far away in Tadworth and a CTC member of 5 years standing.

Andrew and Clive both had punctures, both were quickly repaired. Traffic was light and the roads, though potholed, strewn with debris on occasions and often running with water, were the roads we know and love and there

were no spills. This ride is seldom flat and the scenery associated with such terrain means that one is in for a feast of delights. Being April, there was an abundance of spring flowers, perhaps a little bedraggled, but lovely nevertheless. The predominant pine of the Surrey Hills never looks any different but there was a difference in the atmosphere; one associates dank, muggy brown days with autumn, yet here it was in April, but there was that extra frisson of nature coming to life.

I have to say that the hills kept coming. The delightful ride south through Thorncombe Street down to Gate Street was a scene of tarmacian devastation in places but still as beautiful as ever. On Winterfold we drew slowly past groups of mountain bikers, covered from head to toe in mud.



South of Thorncombe Street

Peaslake followed, then up the unkindly steep and long Radnor Road. Eventually the road descends to Holmbury and you know you've conquered the second of the three big hills. Leith follows and after some initial pain on Pasture Wood Road –

surely the hardest hill of them all – the final climb is relatively gentle.

There's no turning left down towards Friday Street yet: the Rhododendron Woods car park demands a visit and an answer to a question, since it's an Information Control. A chance for a breather, albeit short. I search out a few more questions for subsequent years, comforted by the knowledge that I'd already put the bike into a nice low gear so as to get an easy start for the re-climbing of the hill we'd just descended to get here. And so back up we go: this is the turning point, it's downhill all the way now – well not quite!

I really like that lane down to Friday Street and it was as delightful today as ever it was. The sharp climb from the lake proved easy enough today – I have a very low granny on the Holdsworth! - and I think I might have snapped a good shot of Clive and Peter bombing the hill. The lane continues and descends gently to the railway bridge on Sandy Lane, just above Shere. A plunge down to the fleshpots of this fine village didn't seem to be on the cards today, though I can't for the life of me think why –

probably because it's become customary not to go there.

Onwards through Farley Green and a haul up and over Farley Heath before reaching Shamley Green. The end was in sight – almost, but there was some brilliant riding still to come: Wonersh... Bramley and my favourite lane past Snowdenham Manor and back, once again, to Thorncombe Street. This time it's through the hamlet and turn right to continue on the lane called Thorncombe Street, past the bottom tip of Winkworth Arboretum and all the way up the hill to the B2130 and the left turn, past David Shepherd's glorious Elizabethan mansion – is he still there? - down into Hascombe and the second Information Control on the corner of the one turnoff to the right up Mare Lane.

I'm never entirely certain why anyone would want to use Mare Lane other than a cyclist because he's been routed up it, but no fewer than four cars chose this particular time to use the road and get in our way (and us in theirs no doubt). The explanation as to why a car that drove to the top of the hill and then decided to immediately turn round and head back down again will forever remain a mystery.



Mare Lane summit

Another mystery is why the road on the Hascombe side of the summit is now in worse condition than the Markwick Lane side; it never used to be.

And so finally to our last real hill, on Markwick Lane, which is ascended – or rather, struggled up – before the run down to Hydestile, and on over the level crossing at Milford Station to eventually reach the village and a return to the reality of cars and people and the general razzmatazz of life. We'd enjoyed a few hours out of the rat race, testing ourselves against the elements and the gradients of our local landscape. And what we did and saw and breathed and achieved was good.

# A TOUR OF WESTERN SCOTLAND AND THE OUTER HEBRIDES (part 1)

By Paul Gillingham

The island of Arran seemed a good place to start a solo cycle tour of Western Scotland and the Outer Hebrides planned for mid-April. It is often referred to as ‘Scotland in Miniature’, being cut in half by the Highland Boundary fault, its northern, mountainous half akin to the Highlands, while the south is comparatively flat and forested like the Lowlands. Besides, the 57 mile circuit around Arran is ideal cycling territory, a good run in a day for tough riders and an even better one in two for softies like me.

I’d taken the CalMac ferry from Ardrossan to Brodick, the ‘capital’ of Arran, and Day One was a leisurely ride along the east coast, first heading south to Whiting Bay and back up with great views across to the mainland and, opposite the pretty village of Lamlash, the looming presence of Holy Island with its Tibetan monastery the only sign of human habitation. The backdrop to Brodick is Arran’s highest peak, Goatfell, which rises above Brodick Castle, a wonderful place to park the bike for a visit as its previous owner, the daughter of the Duchess of Montrose, left everything intact, including all the family’s personal effects, when she handed it over to the National Trust of Scotland in lieu of death duties.

The road is virtually empty of traffic north of Brodick and hugs the coastline until it heads inland and starts the long ascent up Glen Sannox, the only serious climb around Arran’s perimeter. The fierce descent into Lochranza, the northernmost village, is exhilarating. On arrival I pay a courtesy call to the Isle of Arran whisky distillery, seek out the ferry terminal for Kintyre, book myself into the hostel for the following night and visit the 13th-century ruin of Lochranza castle, surrounded on three sides by the sea.



I had given myself two weeks to get to Inverness for the train home but hadn’t planned the route exactly, nor booked any accommodation beyond the first night, as so much depends on the weather, the headwinds and the terrain. Mid-April can be cold and wet and is too early to camp with a

lightweight sleeping bag, so I planned to rely on youth hostels and bunkhouses. The bike still weighed a ton, though, with four panniers and bar & saddlebag carrying 25 kg of kit, including cooking gear and bedding. But the big plus of April is that it is midge-free.

The next morning was gorgeously sunny, with blue sky and azure blue sea, with a real Mediterranean feel which was heightened by the many palm trees that flourish on Arran. I was now heading back to Lochranza, but via the longer route taking in the southern end and the west coast of Arran. The coastal road was virtually empty, with stunning views of the huge mound of Ailsa Crag beyond the Isle of Pladda and long stretches of white pebble beach. Mid-way I parked the bike for the mile & a half trek to the Bronze Age stone circles on Machrie Moor, taking a ‘selfie’ beside the highest stone at 18 feet, and then on to Lochranza nestled in the mountains.



Next morning I went round to the hostel bike shed to collect my bike, only to be frightened out of my wits by a herd of wild red deer who roam around there. It was a cold and grey morning, but having negotiated the deer it was just a short ride to catch the 7am CalMac ferry for the 30-minute trip across the Kilbrannan Sound to Kintyre. From the tiny ferry terminal of Claonaig the road was undulating across Kintyre to Kennacraig and then on to the pretty fishing village of Tarbert at the head of West Loch Tarbert.

It was now lovely and sunny, so I sat by the harbour with a sandwich contemplating how I would get to my destination for this second day, Lochgilhead on Loch Fyne. There were two choices: either 14 miles direct on the A83 or a roundabout route of 36 miles following the coast. I chose the latter, which proved both wonderful and painful. Painful in the sense that the single-track road was extremely hilly and tough going. But

the views across the sea with varying shades of blue to the Paps of Jura were stunning and helped ease the pain. And beside the road I would see in the distance groups of people who, when I got to them, were straw-filled dummies arranged in various tableaux. One group outside a derelict croft had a glamorous waitress with a tray of drinks emerging from one doorway



and a sheep emerging from another, both of them approaching a table with a drunken, helmeted cyclist in lycra slumped over it. It wasn't clear what this represented, but further on the message was clear: a bride and groom in full regalia, she

holding the Saltire and he the Union Jack with a sign stating simply "Better Together", a clear reference to the coming referendum on Scottish independence.

After a long, hard climb it was a great relief to shoot 4 miles downhill to Lochgilphead, a dreary little town in a beautiful setting on the loch. There was no hostel, but someone had told me about a B & B which was a former cinema, so I was soon booked into the Empire Travel Lodge. Records showed that the old Empire cinema had been visited by Queen Mary in 1935, but apart from photos of Clark Gable, Bette Davis and Fred Astaire on the walls there was little to recommend it.

I did, though, have a good night's rest and a 'full Scottish' breakfast and it was another gorgeous day of sun and blue skies, so the omens were good. It was a 40 mile ride directly north up the main A816 to Oban, but the road was surprisingly free of traffic, possibly because it was Easter Monday. The area of Kilmartin glen is full of history and so I had interesting detours to the churchyard with its 10th century Celtic crosses and medieval grave slabs of Highland warriors and, further up the road, to the shell of Carnasserie Castle, one of the great Renaissance mansions of Argyle.

It was a very lumpy ride, so any break for R & R was welcome. Sitting in the sun outside one quaint old café I was joined by another cyclist, a guy in his 30's whose arms were covered in Beckhamesque tattoos. He was obviously a very hard rider as he was a regular at the Majorcan winter training camps. It turned out he was also acting chief sergeant responsible

for policing the Isle of Arran. Arran was fairly crime-free, he said, but his toughest challenge was policing Rangers-Celtic games in the days when kick-off was 3pm, time enough for supporters to get fully tanked up.

It was a great relief to get to Oban and to book into the superb SYHA hostel, a mansion directly facing Oban Bay. Next morning I boarded the CalMac ferry to Craignure on the Isle of Mull and decided to take the bus to Fionnphort which linked with the 5-minute ferry to the holy island of Iona. It had been a stunning bus ride through mountains and past lochs to get there and I was really looking forward to visiting this spiritual centre celebrated as the cradle of Christianity in Scotland. As an earlier visitor, Dr Johnson, wrote “that man is little to be envied whose ....piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of Iona.” The abbey is a beautiful building



and it was good to visit the simple grave of John Smith (1938-94), possibly the best Labour Prime Minister Britain never had, with its inscription “An Honest Man’s The Noblest Work of God” but somehow my piety failed to grow warmer there. Maybe it was the grey and wet weather I was now unaccustomed to or the fact that much of Iona Abbey, albeit an ancient site, was largely re-built in the 1960’s.

I returned to Oban by bus and ferry and was up early the next morning for the same ferry back to Mull, but this time with the bike. The aim was to pedal along the coast from Craignure to Mull’s main village, Tobermory, and back, a 45-mile round trip. The weather was good and the 2-lane road was very pleasant and easy until the village of Salen, when it reverted to single-track and started a long, steady climb. At the top I could see in the distance Tobermory, said to be the prettiest port in the west of Scotland

with its brightly painted 18th century houses lining the harbour. The last 3 miles were downhill and the road dropped very steeply to the port. With the sun on them, the houses were a snapshotter's dream in their blue, pink, yellow, orange and red colours. I had my lunch sitting at the base of the town clock and called in at the folksy Mull museum where I learnt not only about the sunken Spanish Armada galleon lying close to where I'd eaten lunch but also about the father and uncles of Robert Louis Stevenson who'd built most of the lighthouses in Mull and the rest of Scotland while he sat writing 'Treasure Island'.

The ride back to Craignure was a grim ordeal as there was now a headwind and it rained the whole way, so it was good to be back on the ferry to Oban and to spend one more evening in the comfort of Oban youth hostel.

The first half of my Scottish tour was now over as tomorrow I would be heading for the Outer Hebrides. That evening the sun came out and across the windows of the hostel's excellent dining room sailed a returning CalMac ferry, illuminated by the sun's rays as it entered Oban harbour. It seemed a good omen for tomorrow's much longer ferry ride to the island of Barra and the start of my journey up the full length of the Western Isles.



## **TICKS – BE AWARE OF THEM!**

**By Mark Waters**

The subject of ticks came up in our recent committee meeting and I agreed to write a brief article on them for the magazine.

Ticks are nasty little things which carry diseases that can cause illness – even death! They're present in many parts of Europe and are becoming increasingly prevalent in the UK. Our recent mild winter means that they will increase in numbers alarmingly in the future. Therefore it's worth:

- being aware of their existence
- knowing when you could be at risk of getting one on you
- knowing how to remove them from your person
- knowing what the symptoms are for the diseases they carry

This is quite a big subject and is too big for full details to be included in this magazine. I wrote an information sheet for CTC when I was working there and if you contact them they will send you a copy – for some inexplicable reason, the old 'General Information Sheets' are not available on their new website. Alternatively contact me for a copy.

Briefly, if you're a roadie who never ventures beyond the edge of the tarmac, then you're probably not at risk; but if you ride off-road, go camping or walking, then you might easily pick one, or several, up, particularly if your legs are exposed.

It's possible to obtain special tweezers for the removal of the little blighters. The important thing is to remove them in such a way that the bit they stick into you to get at your blood isn't left in you when try to remove the thing. Stick 'tick removal tweezers' into Google search and you'll come up with plenty of information about where to obtain them and even a YouTube video on removing them safely.



A tick, probably *Ixodes ricinus*, waiting to grab a passing meal (photo by Dane Maslen)

Perhaps the most worrying thing is that very few doctors are aware of the seriousness of the threat posed by ticks and are not aware of the symptoms. So when you go to see your doctor complaining of persistent flu-like symptoms that won't go away, suggest that it might be that you've contracted Lyme Disease. The other disease they carry, though fortunately not in the UK, is Tick-borne Encephalitis which can kill. If you think all this is rather too alarmist, then be aware that in Austria, almost the whole population gets inoculated against the disease: that's how seriously they take it!

*Ed: as someone who is paranoid about ticks I recommend checking legs frequently when brushing through vegetation, especially grass. Spotting ticks is easier on light clothing.*

# YOUR VIEWS ON THE NEW WEBSITE

**By Louise Gagnon**

A mere 2 months has elapsed since the website has gone live and we've had over 800 viewings in May alone! So I thought time was ripe to collect a bit of feedback; please find below a dozen or so very short testimonials from your fellow club members.

How I would have loved to be able to collect testimonials from those "outside the UK" visitors. Our statistics for May indicate the following visitors from abroad: 9 from Brazil, 9 from Germany, 7 from the USA, and 3 from each Canada and India. (By the way, many thanks to Mark Heal for pointing us to the "website stats" technology).

Quite clearly a titanic amount of work has been done by the Website Design Team in order to deliver what is probably one of the best CTC local Group websites out there. Let me extend a personal and huge thank you to our Webmaster, John Child. I reckon he must have spent a good 400 hours of his personal time on this project in the past 7 months. John, your determination in seeing this through and your enthusiasm in seeking feedback to continually improve the website has been nothing short of astonishing. Well done, John!



Knowing John, chances are the clock actually read 5 AM and not 5 PM. Doesn't John look amazingly fresh at this time in the morning?!

## Testimonials

"The excellent new website is not just a vast improvement on what went before but the great difference is that I now visit much more often and

leave with satisfaction rather than frustration!” (**Mark Heal**)

“Informative and easy to use”. (**Sue Thorne**)

“The new website is gobsmackingly good and takes us from the age of the velocipede to an ultra new level in sophisticated club communication. (PS. I could write a lot more on the new website, which is brilliant. Many congratulations to its creators.) (**Paul Gillingham**)

“I don’t think I am the one to comment on the website as I have only looked at it a couple of times. I am not a facebook or website person. What I have seen seemed rather long winded although the calendar of all the groups rides is excellent. (**Liz Palethorpe**)

“Having joined up with the Wednesday group and been introduced to the new website I have found it extremely informative and I am delighted to note how all levels of cycling are accommodated almost on a daily basis. Best of all for me is that having failed to make the ballot for the Prudential Ridelondon Surrey 100, there within the website was a link [by John Murdoch] to my local hospice who thankfully still had a place for me. I hasten to add on my bike and not in one of their beds! Well not yet anyway.” (**Phil Gasson**)

“Top marks to all who helped to develop the new website – it is an absolute joy to be able to gain access to the multiple facets of the West Surrey CTC group, with valuable links to other sites. An added bonus are the super colour photos and route descriptions/maps”. (**Rico Signore**)

“I had a good look at the new website today and wanted to congratulate you and the team on an outstanding job. It looks really good and is very user friendly (which speaks volumes for the many hours of effort that has gone into the layout and design) – great stuff. May I wish you all the best for the launch”. (**Laurie Mutch**)

“Hi John and Louise: Just to confirm that I have signed up on the new website for blogpost notifications and emails about selected ride groups. It all seemed very user-friendly and easy to navigate. As you see, I have received this email confirmation of my request. Great work you have both been doing! (**Hilary Stephenson**)

“I think the welcome page does just that with the changing photos offering differing views of club activities. The way of displaying details of the rides in a calendar layout is very smart. It would be perfect if I could share that

calendar with my own iCal, until then I will continue to use the existing PDF version in my phone. Thanks for all the hard work on our behalf. **(Bob Macleod)**.

“Hi Louise, I love the new website, clear and simple to use, love the photo banner that comes up on the front page showing our familiar club members, and the blog is kept fresh and up to date. some useful links, especially "Made Good". Up-coming rides section with colour codes is most useful. **(Martin Vinson)**.

## **MAY BANK HOLIDAY TO SHROPSHIRE**

**By Marion Davison**

12 cyclists and one walker descended on sleepy Much Wenlock for 3 days organized and led by Derek and Anne Tanner: Chris, Lynette, Brian, Helen, Carol, Hilary, Liz, Roger Palethorpe, Roger Philo, Nick and Marion.

Our fine, sunny, first morning took us out into the rural sheep and cattle



farming dales of the Wenlock area with lovely names such as Wig Wig, Ticklerton, Cockshutford and The Crow's Nest. Coffee was at Church Stretton and lunch at Ludlow with its half timbered houses, followed by a strenuous afternoon, lightened by distant

views of the Welsh Hills. Quiet, well-surfaced lanes and scenic views took our minds off the hilly terrain.

Sunday took us up onto Wenlock Edge, which commanded great views North. A steep descent followed heading for Shrewsbury, where Anne's bulging tyre looked ominous, but thanks to Brian's spare she was soon on her way again. In Shrewsbury we took over the upper floor of an accommodating bistro for a long coffee/lunch. Chris led us on a circumnavigation of the town via the Severn towpath and parks, past

English and Welsh bridges, where we vied with prams, dogs, scooters and unicyclists, all enjoying the sunshine. That afternoon, following the meandering Severn river valley, we passed a friendly group of local CTC cyclists who rode 6 days a week Their 'support' van held an infirm member who didn't want to miss the day's outing and waxed lyrical over Chris and Nick's bikes. Our return route took us past the remains of the Roman city of Wroxeter, which had a café, into which Chris dived and they produced tea for us all, even as they were shutting up.

Bank Holiday Monday took us back into the Industrial Revolution at Ironbridge Gorge, a World Heritage site, via Broseley, where we visited tile and china museums and original blast furnaces for making iron and steel. A late lunch was enjoyed, courtesy of the Coalport YHA, before retracing our route back to the Gaskell Arms Hotel.

This hotel looked after us very well, with a special thanks to Lizzie who served us all with a cheerful smile, even dealing with her first boiled egg!

Many thanks to Derek and Anne for leading us around such a delightful area.



Deadline for next issue September 7<sup>th</sup>. Get your cycling stories in to the editor now: [editor@westsurreyctc.co.uk](mailto:editor@westsurreyctc.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: Riders climbing Winterfold during the Bicycle Icycle (photo by Mark Waters).