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Spotlight – Magazine of the CTC Essex DA, a local member group of CTC, the national cyclists’ organisation

President: Brian Taylor

Volume 6/2010

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Closing date for the January / February 2011 edition is on **15 Dec 2010.**

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Editor's foreword

Upon the distributor's request, the number of pages has been reduced to 36 per issue. The reason for this is the postal gauge measurement, which allows a maximum of 5 mm per item. Thus up to now Peter had been ironing all 180 plus issues to ensure the cheaper delivery. However, it could not be guaranteed that at the other end some officious postal person would double-check, and, as by then the ironed fold had relaxed, an additional postage fee could be applicable.

What will therefore happen is that there will be now two editions available... Yes, you can accuse me of possible discrimination, but with the later publishing time, the online community will not be able to benefit from the "latest" runs' lists. I intend to arrange the reports and stories into the 36 pages of the hardcopy, whilst the full length of all articles will be available in the online version. To console the paying community, the online version will appear at least 6 weeks into the active runs' lists' calendar. Also, there won't be that much more to read, as I will only leave the original bits in that I had to cut to keep the amount of pages of the hardcopy in check.

I hope that you have supported well your member groups' AGMs – now that you have your copy of Spotlight in hand: off you go on **Sunday, 14th November to our Essex DA AGM, from 10.30am!** (For more details see "Forthcoming Events", page 17)

Here are some highlights of this issue: Some brief book reviews by Steve Gregson on page 8. Dot reports her latest experiences in a "Foreign parts" update on page 33, and Julie recalls the "Newham Off Road Bike Ride" on page 33.

Since most sections are moaning of the steady decline of cycling companions and debating how to capture new members, there is some advice from Master-Recruiter John Steer on page 24.

Your editor,
Stefan Eichenseher



The President's piece

This year has passed so quickly, and I was always under the impression that as we get older we start to slow down. Well, not this year.

In September I was racing the Penny Farthing around the Knutsford Circuit, which was great fun. There were 86 riders in total from all over the world and the event takes place every 10 years. Then, the following week was the Rough Stuff, which was also a god fun with fine weather and 12 riders. Starting off, we had to share the first part of the route with the equestrian club, but we tried very hard not to frighten the horses. And on the Essex Way it was a matter of avoiding the walkers. So with 29 miles of rough riding a drink in "The Viper" with the Chelmsford section went down very well. This was closely followed by a 2 week cycling tour of France with an element of doing the tourist bit and again the weather was good for September.

Back to business

Now we are in October, the AGM season has started, so we need to support our club and our member groups. If each person can do a bit, instead of 2 people doing it all, the interest and variety is much better. So, if you would like to see more action in certain parts of the club, we are always looking for new suggestions on the committee on how we can help new and old cyclists have fun and enjoyment as safe as possible.

The committee meets on the second Wednesday of each months in the Reading Rooms in Billericay High Street at 8 pm, for 2 hours and somebody experienced in Mountain Biking would be very welcome.

Take care on the road!

Brian Taylor

Member Groups' Reports

Chelmsford Member Group

10th October: - **Bures** – “Ten, ten, ten,” sounds like some sort of Citizens Band jargon. But of course it was nothing more than the date. For October, it was a mild day, and once the sun really got going, a definitely warm one. Accompanied by Norman and Keith, I pointed the front wheel at the easterly breeze and we battled it more or less all the way to Coggeshall, taking the Terling route then crossing the open expanse of the “Airfield” to enjoy the full effect.

At Coggeshall we met a very windswept John, who had come the same way on his recumbent trike. Dave and Beryl were already within, and so six went forward to lunch at the Eight Bells. Threeses was taken at Stisted, via Countess Cross and Colne Engaine giving the riders a good selection of steep hills and rough surfaces to contend with on the way. I'm always keen to try new foods and so sampled a portion of “Hummingbird Cake” at Chez Shaun that was beautifully sweet and I'd bet also highly nutritious. We took the usual route home and the group dispersed along the way until the original three returned to Chelmsford.

Adrian Leeds

[Unfortunately, this is all that the Chelmsford member group seemed to have been up to in the last few months. I am aware that the group is getting older, but could some of you please let us know how you fare?

There are some ideas floating around that ride reports don't have to be written anymore, as I was mentioning that I preferred them in electronic form. However, I did not anticipate that this would reduce the reports to nigh-on zero.

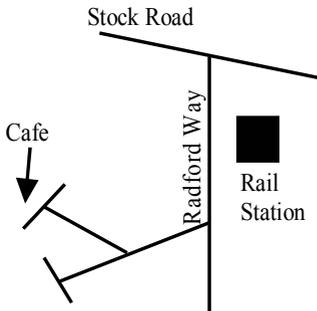
There are people who want to keep in touch with the riding community through the magazine, rather than going out. In order to give them, the opportunity to know what's going on, I need these reports. Ed.]

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Lake Meadows Cafe – Lake Meadows Park - Radford Crescent
Billericay – Essex - CM12 0AQ

Cyclists always made welcome

A few book reviews-

By Steve Gregson

“2 WHEELS, THOUGHTS From The BIKE LANE” - Matt Seaton puts down 250 pages of thoughts we can all identify with. Guaranteed to make you chuckle.

“KINGS Of The MOUNTAINS” by Matt Rendell - How Colombia's cycling heroes changed their nation's history. A great read for anyone interested in cycling, South America and/or politics.

“The Hungry Cyclist” – Tom Kevill-Davies pedals from New York, USA to Rio in Brazil in search of the perfect meal.

I found 2 of them in Basildon library.

Haivering Member Group

Aug 1st - Just four of us today, Jeffrey, Steve, John & myself, whilst waiting to set off from Roomes store, we saw about 20 riders with Kelvin as their leader heading for St Mary's Lane.

We tagged on to discover that they were from Central London CTC heading out to the "Three Compasses" pub. We lost ground by the end of Pike Lane, so we settled to ride to Langdon Nature Reserve via Horndon-on-the-Hill.

After our coffee break we set back to home choosing to go through Bulphan completing just over 20 miles. **Gordon Peel**

Aug 8th - Seven riders set off: New rider Lavoga, a nurse from Ilford, Barrie, Gordon, Jeff, Ken, Steve and leader, Dave. Lavoga rode along for a couple of miles then she headed back to Ilford. At Peartree Green Steve felt a twinge and, as he was saving himself for a tour he headed back home. The rest carried on to Mountnessing, then Stock and on to Great Baddow for 11ses at Baddow Antiques.

After our caffeine fix we set off for Little Baddow. Owing to a slight navigational error we ended up at the wrong bridge and I led the group along the bumpy towpath to our lunch stop at Paper Mill Lock. Lunch was promptly served, but we had to do battle with the wasps.

For the return trip we made an orbit of Chelmsford via Boreham and Little Waltham, on to Writtle and Margaretting and then at Ingatestone we raided the Co-Op for sports nutrition (fizzy drinks & Mars bars).

The last lap took us to Hutton and Warley for a fast plunge back to Upminster with a mileage just short of the 70 mark. **David Rowlands**

Aug 15th - Lady riders, Natalie Smith from Upminster and Debbie Hryb from Gallows corner, joined Les, Gordon and Dave for a ride through the suburbs to Hog Hill, where we tagged on to the Redbridge Skyride (13km on closed roads). After a nice motor free ride to Barkingside we found ourselves back at Hog Hill minus Les and Debbie who had to be home early.

The rest carried on to Hainault Forest for coffee, followed by a bit of rough-stuff to Lambourne End and some not so softes' ups and downs

to South Weald; then back to Upminster clocking up 33 miles in the process. **David Rowlands**

Aug 22nd - Andrij Bebko from East Ham joined Alex, Ken, Jeff, John Wynstanly and Dave on a fine morning. We sped our way northward to 11ses at "Norton Heath Café" (now open Sundays). Whilst sat outside Brian Stevens rolled up. After a natter we left him with his coffee and set off for Willingale, High Easter and Pleshey bound for Littley Green.

"The Compasses" had a beer festival on, so there was a good choice of ales, but the usual Huffers were not available. So after a quick burger from the BBQ we set off for Howe Street and Writtle, then on to Ingatestone and 3ses at the Heybridge garden centre.

John W left to get a few more miles in and the rest took a more direct route home via Hutton and Warley clocking up 66 miles. **David Rowlands**

Aug 29th - Lavoga joined Gordon, Jeff, Ken, Steve and Stuart to make the Softees numbers up to six for a not so softies ride to Stapleford Aerodrome for 11ses. Then some climbs to get to High Beach before carrying on to Epping for well earned fish and chips for lunch.

Another rollercoaster ride followed to Abridge and Collier Row, where the group split for their homes. **Gordon Peel**

Sept 5th - Five riders set off to Heybridge Basin this Sunday: Ken, Jeffrey, Barrie, Stuart and Gordon (Now known as the A team). We took our usual route which comprised of Pike Lane, Fen Lane and then Lower Dunton Road. We then headed for Billericay and the Hanningfields.

When we reached Hanningfield Reservoir we stopped to take some snaps as Ken had not seen it before. Then we went on to the RHS Garden Centre at Rettendon for 11ses. The coffee was good, but the service was a bit slow.

Then on to Bicknacre and Haze Leigh, and after a blast along the A414, we were finally reaching the Basin about 1 o'clock, taking lunch at "The Old Ship" pub overlooking the Locks and the River Blackwater. During our return Jeffrey's bike got stuck on his small chain ring and even after several stops to make adjustments he had to complete the

ride on the smaller ring. We rode back into Maldon and four heroes rode up Market Hill leaving me walking to the top.

Out of Maldon we went on the Fambridge Road to Purleigh, Cock Clarks and West Hanningfield. Now being north of the Reservoir we headed for Stock, Ingatestone, Fryerning, Hay Green, Doddinghurst, then the old familiar Day's Lane, Sandpits etc. Finally, we were getting back home about 5.30 with 70+ miles clocked up. **Gordon Peel**

Sept 19th - Gordon, Jeff, Ken, Stuart and Dave headed for Norton Heath for 11ses after which we set off for Willingale and Birds Green. After a slight navigational error we found our way to Fyfield and on to Moreton for lunch.

Fed and watered, we set about our return. While Ken left us to take a direct route home the rest headed for home via Chipping Ongar. On the climb to Stondon Massey our leader paid for his exertions and had to stop for a rest.

At Doddinghurst we retraced our outward route and found ourselves back in Upminster with 50 miles on the clock. **David Rowlands**

Sept 26th - Dave, Gordon, Jeff, Steve, Les and Barrie started off nice and easy to Langdon Hills via Horndon-On-The-Hill. After an extended 11ses Dave and Steve set off back home. The rest puffed up Old Church Hill and since we were all still alive at the top, we decided to go down Dry Street. On reaching the A176 Jeff turned for home. That just left us three intrepid Musketeers, who continued on to Wat Tyler Country Park via the B1464. After a quick exploration of Wat Tyler we returned home to Upminster. Our homeward journey presented a bit of a challenge: in form of the long drag back up Dry Street and the blustery, drizzly conditions, which seemed to be increasing all the time. We arrived back in Upminster about 3.30 and 40 miles on the clock.

Barrie Blazeby

South East Essex Member Group

22nd August - 15 riders set off this morning after partaking in an extra breakfast at the café next to the Hythe to Dungeness station. After about 5 miles it started to drizzle, which meant we stopped and covered up. Then about a mile or so later one of our new riders decided that she had had enough of the wet and in stopping promptly fell of her bike.

I stopped at the next T-Junction and asked why we were 3 riders missing over such a short distance. I was told that our new rider had gone home, as she didn't want to ride in the rain all day. About half a mile further on the rain stopped and the sun tried to come out. This was to be the pattern for the morning's ride. We had 2 punctures in the group: one during the heaviest of the rain for the morning. Luckily, it was a front puncture and easily fixed. On the way to Dungeness we stopped at a very old pub called "The Royal Oak" dating back to about 1736 or even beyond. The toilets were very modern and 21st century. I wonder what the pub regulars back in the 18th century would have thought of them. Our ride from Brooklands saw our 3rd puncture of the day and another downpour that stopped after a couple of miles across the Romney Marshes, and we arrived in the sunshine at Dungeness. After our lunch of various dishes we set off in the sunshine back towards Hythe by the seafront and then inland by quiet country lanes, until we reached Donkey Street and our cream teas' destination for our 3ses (it was about 5 o'clock really). Then we pushed for Hythe and our cars and the motorways, and home after what turned out to be a very nice day, if I say so myself. **J Steer**

29th August - It was the August bank holiday weekend and it was looking decidedly autumnal. The skies were threatening and the wind was gusting up to 18mph. I had been out of the saddle for a while due to holidays and a post flight sore throat from which I was just recovering. On the way to Wickford I had told myself that under no circumstances would I be runs leader, thinking that I would sit back and let someone else do the work. Twelve riders turned up at Wickford, including enthusiastic newcomers Vic and Alan. All the other runs leaders were taking it easy at Mildenhall and when the discussion arose as to who was going to lead, I was told by Ross: "You're the one with the sat-nav". Six miles separate Wickford and Billericay and to make an interesting ride you need to create a big loop: West Hanningfield / Stock / Margarettig / Mill Green / Ingatestone / Ingatestone Hall / Billericay, which was the course stored on my Garmin. This is a bit longer than usual but a good ride on unclassified roads and we reached Lake Meadows at for 11.30, where Charlotte had been patiently waiting. A few of the group rode on to lunch at the "Secret Nuclear Bunker" at Kolverdon Hatch risking the heavy rain forecast. **Peter Wotherspoon**

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29th August - I for once was at Mildenhall along with a few other SEG's. Some were camping, while others, like me, drove up for the day. Peggy, Dennis and Norman accompanied me. During the day we heard that JJ (John Jacobs) had been taken poorly the previous evening and was in hospital. About 2 hours later I was speaking to him, as he had been released. Like last year, I think that the Marquee had less stalls in it and I think that "Hard to Find" had a smaller Marquee than other years.

5th September – I, along with eleven other SEG's (1 other never made the start, it should have been 12) rode the Leukaemia event (their 16th year and my 15th year). I hope that they have all raised a good amount of money towards this sad disease of the blood.

12th September - I was still sunning myself in Spain at Norman's winter retreat, so I know nuffing, ok? **J Steer**

19th September - I led 13 riders to Lake Meadows via Great Burstead. This made a change due to not going up Brock Hill. Six of us continued to Ongar for Lunch. Peter H then led us back via a farm track through to Blackmore and Ingatestone, as the group favoured a more direct route than the one that I had planned via Fyfield to avoid the A414.

26th September - Thirteen cyclists started from Wickford and included John S, who was wearing a natty pair of shorts over his long pants (Max Wall look-alike, rather than Superman). We had also Wayne with us, who had just completed a gruelling John O'Groats to Land's End ride in 15 days - all in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis charity. Plus a welcome visit from Steve Gregson. We arrived at the cafe in Norton Heath and were soon tucking into various hearty meals, some more so than others. Ross 'Shoveller' H should be entered into the Guinness Book of Records in the fast eating category. Chris 'Plodder' or 'Shut that Door' G was steaming with frustration every time anyone left the café and failed to put wood in't hole, as he sat right besides it. Six went onto lunch. **Ian Mather**

3rd October - After working all night I arrived at Wickford just in time to lead 6 riders to Lake Meadows. Only Martin P and I continued on to lunch at "The Cricketers" (Mill Green), possibly due to the dire weather forecast, and other riders riding the Viking Trail in Kent. Fortunately the rain wasn't too heavy in the end. I arrived home with 60 miles on the clock at the early (for me) time of 4pm. **I Cable**

On **3rd October** 10 of us drove down to the East Coast for the annual Viking trail. “Would it rain?” was the big question following the wet weather shown on Ryder Cup Golf TV coverage that weekend from Wales. Surely, we would be caught out on the Kent coast eventually. Well, the morning was fair albeit windy. The ride along the coastal path was against the wind all the way to our brief stop at Ramsgate and even stronger for the route to the Manston airport museum. The café was very busy, but tables steadily became vacant and we were soon digesting jacket potatoes and Hurricane burgers. After a quick look at the Spitfire and Hurricane and photos of those terrible events 70 years ago, we left Manston just as the rain started to fall. Initially it was just drizzle, but on thinking our luck would hold the heavens opened and we looked a real sorry bunch. Thank goodness our cars were waiting back at Minnis Bay to protect us from the real world.

10th October - Thirteen left for Maldon from Wickford and we were joined by a new rider called Colin, who had escaped from Runwell. An uneventful ride through the Essex countryside was only interrupted by Julia succumbing to the forces of gravity, when her saddle slowly descended and she realised she was riding a kiddies bike. Ian M & John C gallantly dismounted their steeds and came to the rescue - Allen keys in hand to do battle with the unruly saddle. After a number of adjustments, she was soon on her way again. I was confident that the main group would be waiting for us at some point on the approach to Maldon, but alas we only caught them up when we arrived at Morrison's. The leader was apparently told that the missing group had turned off and was taking a different route to Morrison's. In the café we were joined by Andy, Margaret, Lynda and her nephew Paul. Nine went onto lunch, including Paul, who had only been on his bike twice this year. We arrived at the pub in Messing only to find that they didn't do snacks, so we went onto Kelvedon (“Railway Tavern”) leaving Brian P sampling a pint of Gangly Ghoul! Unfortunately, on our way John C got a puncture, and Martin F, Mike & John S stayed behind to assist with repairs. The arrival of 9 hungry cyclists at the Railway Tavern at Kelvedon didn't cause too many problems for the staff and we were soon tucking into our scrumptious baguettes and refreshing drinks. We left at 3pm and headed home stopping at Tropical Wings near South Woodham Ferrers for a cuppa and a cake. From there we headed our separate ways and by the time John S and I got home to Shoeburyness, we had done 84 miles. **Ian Mather**

Continued on page 22

Forthcoming Events



Organisers: *please advise me of what you wish to be included*

Date	Event	Organiser
14 Nov	[DA] Essex DA AGM, 10:30 at the Chelmer Club hut, Meteor Way, OS167, TL698067	Brian Taylor
12 Dec	[DA] Christmas Meet, "White Hart", Margaretting Tye	Brian Taylor

If not stated, please see the Impressum (p. 4) for organisers' contacts.

Easy Rider Meets



Dates	Pub	Destination
14 November	Brewers Arms	Bicknacre
12 December	[DA] Christmas Meet, "White Hart", Margaretting Tye	
9 January	"The Three Compasses", West Hanningfield	

Easy Rider Lunch Meets - for details contact Pete Moore 01245 263165

For Sale

4x4 Spare Wheel Cycle Carrier £65:00, Halfords Cycle Carrier
Lighting Board £12:00, both as new, never used. Tel: 01245 320733

Chelmsford Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: Adrian Leeds

4 Oaklands Crescent, Chelmsford CM2 9PR, ☎ 01245 260272

Runs Secretary: Dave Russell

7 Willows Crescent, Hatfield Peverel, ☎ 01245 381055

Rides Start: Sundays: Civic Theatre, Fairfield Road 9am for 9.15am

All day rides start **9.15am**

For Tuesday evening destinations

call Peter Moore ☎ 01245 263165 or Dave Russell ☎ 01245 381055

Date	Destination	11ses	Leader
14-Nov	[DA] AGM, 10.30 am, Chelmer Club Hut		
21-Nov	Gt Sampford	Raine Station	D Russell
28-Nov	Fiddlers Hamlet	Hastingwood	A Leeds
05-Dec	Goldhanger, Chequers	“Barnes Plants”, Copford	D Russell
11-Dec	Section Xmas Dinner	“Orange Tree”, 7 for 7:30	P Moore
12-Dec	[DA] Xmas Meet “White Hart”	Lake Meadows	P Moore
19-Dec	Little Easton	Blue Egg, Bardfield	D Russell
26-Dec	Witham (10 am Start)	Boxing Day	A Leeds
02-Jan	Cold Norton	Hanningfield Reservior	J&B Taylor
09-Jan	Moreton	"The Shed", Sawbridgeworth	D Russell
16-Jan	Run to "11ses"	Castle Hedingham	A Leeds

Colchester Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: Alan Palmer
☎ 01206 792929, mob 07939 395067 or
alanpalmer@phonecoop.coop

Cycling Back to Health

Wednesday's, 11am, by Skatepark at Leisure World, Colchester
A gentle, mostly traffic-free ride led by Richard Monk.

Around 5 miles distance, taking somewhere between an hour and two.
We stop for refreshments somewhere half-way.

The Pete Finch Night Ride

Thursday's, 7.15pm by Tenpin, Colchester.

This is a faster-paced ride for more experienced cyclists. Distance usually upwards of 15 miles at a steady pace.

The destination is always a pub in one of the surrounding villages and cyclists make their own way home (there will always be someone to cycle with, however). It must be mentioned this is run by the SUFFOLK DA.

Members are welcome to attend *Bike Drinks*, for all local cyclists, held on the *second Tuesday* of the month, 8pm at "The Bricklayer's" (CO4 5AA)



The Bricklayer's Arms, Colchester

Havering Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: David Rowlands

43 Limbourne Avenue, Dagenham, RM8 1HU

☎ 020 8491 3209 or david.rowlands673@ntlworld.com

Runs Start: Roomes (Home & Fashion) Store, Station Road, Upminster

All rides meet 08:45 for 09:00 start unless otherwise stated

Softies Rides: Meet 09.45 for 10.00 start

Date	Destination
Nov 14 th	[DA] AGM, 10.30 am, Chelmer Club Hut (See forthcoming events)
Nov 21 st	West Hanningfield
Nov 28 th	Hastingwood
Dec 5 th	Havering Xmas Lunch (10:00 start)
Dec 12 th	D.A. Xmas Meet
Dec 19 th	Newney Green
Dec 26 th	Herongate Tye (10:00 start)
Jan 1 st	Mill Green (10:00 start)
Jan 3 rd	Moreton
Jan 10 th	Highams Park
Jan 17 th	Waltham Abbey

The leader will either be decided on the morning.

South East Essex Member Group – Runs List



Secretary: John Steer

☎ 01702 309958 – e-mail jonsue@blueyonder.co.uk

Runs start: from the Market Café in Woodlands Road, Wickford SS12 0AL,
Sundays at 9.30am, unless otherwise stated.

Club Nights are the 2nd & 4th Fridays of the Month

@ St Laurence & All Saints Church Hall,
Eastwoodbury Lane, Eastwood

Date	Elevenses	Destination for Lunch
November		
14 th	[DA] AGM, 10.30 am, Chelmer Club Hut	
OR	Brentwood (King George Playing Fields Café)	Newney Green (“The Duck”)
21 st	Margaretting (Saddlery Café)	Danbury (“The Cricketers”)
28 th	Mundon, “The Round Bush” (Café)	Nounsley (“The Sportsman”)
OR	[MG] London Ride	Contact John Steer as above
December		
5 th	Leigh-on-Sea (“Sara’s Tea Garden”)	Great Wakering (“The Red Lion”)
12 th	Great Baddow (Bringey Pine)	[DA] Xmas Meeting Margaretting Tye (“The White Hart”)
19 th	Bunsay Downs (Golf Club)	North Fambridge (“TheFerry Boat Inn”)
26 th	Margaretting (Saddlery Café)	Little Waltham (“The White Hart”)
January 2011		
2 nd	Rochford (Beehive Café)	Paglesham (“Plough & Sail”)
9 th	Blackmore (Blackmore Tea Rooms)	West Hanningfield (“The Three Compasses”)
16 th	Maldon (Morrison’s)	Woodham Mortimer (Hurdlemakers Arms)

Also a member’s website with other cycling information about the group with GPX and TrackLogs (TCX) files provided: www.velocipede.org.uk.

10th October - 15 riders turned up at the start this morning and set off up Brock Hill. They then followed through to East Hanningfield, then on to Danbury and to the Maldon Morrison's Café. After 11ses 9 went on to lunch, which was supposed to be taken at the "The Old Crown Inn", Messing. But we were let down at the last minute by there being 50 odd people wanting lunches. With that we changed our lunch stop to the Railway Tavern Kelvendon. On the way Jon C got a puncture and as we were fixing it, Brian P turned up (having enjoyed a pint of Ghoul at "The Queens Head"). After lunch we all set of for home as the dark evenings started to descend. 84+ miles on the clock for me. **J Steer**

Making the Headlines

by Charles Comport

Sub-editors who should have thought more deeply...

- Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
- Juvenile court to try shooting defendant
- Red tape holds up new bridge
- New study on obesity looks for large test group
- Astronaut takes blame for gas in spacecraft
- Kids make nutritious snacks
- Man struck by lightning faces battery charge
- Local high school dropouts cut in half
- Hospitals are sued by 7 foot doctors
- Man kills himself before shooting wife and daughter

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Recruiting new members

by John Steer

CTC and some of our Essex sections ask how to recruit new riders. It's simple, don't be aggressive, be polite when you see cyclists at your 11ses stop or at your lunch stop, talk to them and give them your card or an enrolment form. Speak to cyclists, as you pass them, don't just ignore them. When you're talking to cyclists, explain that you're not a racing club but a group that cycles for pleasure and social reasons, as we all like to talk. Be prepared to spend time cycling with the slow riders and send the fast riders off with the group that is going a longer way to 11ses than the slower group that is taking a straight route. I find that it helps explaining to new riders that they aren't expected to ride all-day, or to ride from home and back again until they have gained strength, stamina and confidence. We all had to learn at some time, although for most of us it was when there was less traffic on the roads. Now we have become complacent with the modern traffic situation and expect new comers / novices to be the same. Give them time by riding with them or give them a buddy to ride with them and explain the workings of the group. Build their confidence up, praise them when they climb a hill or cover a distance greater than any they have done before. Encourage them to be part of the group by involving them into the group. When I get phone calls and emails from people interested in joining our group, I give them information about our rides. Sometimes they appear and sometimes they don't. But those that do appear generally stay and join the group. The others that you don't see are the ones that are worried that they are too slow or they are too fast for the group. (I can remember my first event before I joined the group I wrote in my log too slow for me I could have done the event in half the time)

The South East Essex Member Group is the biggest in Essex for members and I don't believe that it's all down to me as the secretary. I think that it's the group members all working together and encouraging new riders into our pleasure and past time of enjoying our sport of cycling the lanes and byways of the country or even the world.

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ANNUAL TRAINING CAMPS

February, March, April and September

A12 Cycle Tracks Campaign Log!

By Martin Cockersole

9 August 2010 - Me → Highways Agency (HA)

- Please sign the cycle tracks on the improved sections of A12 at Hatfield Peverel, Witham and Kelevedon.
- Please tell me how often they are swept as there is too much debris on them.

12 August - HA (alias W S Atkins) → Me

- Not aware there were ever dedicated footways / cycleways
- Not included in the scheme orders
- Not on Sustrans NCR network
- Footway (sic) swept every 12 months
- Hope the information is helpful (!!!)

12 August - Me → HA (alias W S Atkins)

- Very surprised HA not aware these were cycleways
- Attached screen prints from Google Street View showing the cycle route signing before schemes built.
- Cycling community of Essex will be outraged
- Check your facts before I light the touchpaper!
- 12 months is too long between sweeping

2 September - HA (alias W S Atkins) → Me

- The cycle signs in the Street View picture relate to permissions for cycling on the A12 itself
- These signs mean 'route recommended for pedal cycles on the main carriageway of road'
- Present investigations show footway is not considered a cycleway
- Won't do anything unless HA show legal basis exists or obtain it.

14 September - Me → HA (alias W S Atkins)

- I'm astonished
- Attached photos of the same signs beside the existing cycle track North of Kelvedon adjacent to the Northbound carriageway, but clearly for cyclists on the track going South. Do they mean cyclists are advised to cycle south on the Northbound carriageway?
- Stop this nonsense
- I want to hear directly from the Highways Agency not Atkins

15 September - Atkins send case → HA

5 October - HA (yes, the real HA) → Me

- Can't answer yet, we are still investigating

20 October - Me → HA

- Attached a scan of the public information leaflet used by HA at the public exhibition for the Hatfield Peverel / Witham scheme saying they will rebuild the footway / cycleway adjacent to the southbound carriageway
- Clearly the HA knows these are cycleways. Please conclude this and get on with the remedial work

To be continued!

Note from the Ancient Mariner:

In the first line, second paragraph, it should have read "the most tragic incident" not "magic incident" in the "Civil War Incident - An Autumn Tale" !

Cycling the London Cycle Challenge – in Essex

by Neil Comport

[In the last issue, I reported that I had joined a team at work taking part in the London Cycle Challenge throughout June. I explained that despite a lack of 'proper' cycling in recent years I was managing to get out on a regular basis and was currently holding 1st place in the team with the most points/miles. Unfortunately this was tempered by the team faring less well and hovering around the bottom half of the bottom half of the placings for our category. To continue.....]

I kept to the same pattern of rides going into week 3 i.e. daily 5 mile rides after work extended to 10 miles on Friday. On Saturday I rode to Terling and, pausing at the ford to munch a Mars bar and banana, I recalled section and DA rides here in years gone by and remembered the more adventurous of us riding through it. I think even Dawn and I went through it on the tandem. Now the central section is akin to a small river and I wouldn't begin to contemplate riding through it. Does anybody now? My Sunday ride to Moreton, at 45 miles, was both my longest ride of the Challenge and the most enjoyable one, particularly the outward leg via Willingale. The return, via Greensted and Stondon Massey was harder work as there seemed to be rather more 'ups' than 'downs' but at least the unseasonably cool weather made conditions rather more bearable. Still plagued by hay-fever though.

Going into the last full week of the challenge, the Pedallers' standing in the leaderboard had dropped further to 126th place with 1,013 miles covered. I was however still holding 1st place with 306 miles and 356 points – 156 points ahead of my second placed colleague. A hitherto hidden competitive streak began to emerge, demanding that I hold onto my lead as we entered the final week.

I worked an additional day at home during the week meaning 3 daily rides of 5 miles and 2 of 10. Just as the previous weekend had been unseasonably cool, this weekend was, by contrast, seasonably hot. On Saturday, I repeated last weeks ride as far as Willingale but returned via Roxwell, Hylands Park and, climbed Private Road as an alternative to Galleywood Hill. On the outward leg I was bemused to be asked directions to Barking of all places by a heavily accented motorist who flagged me down at the A12 Furze Hill slip road He'd left the A12 thinking the 'Chelmsford' signs were for 'Chingford'. **Continued on page 31**

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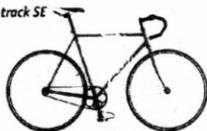
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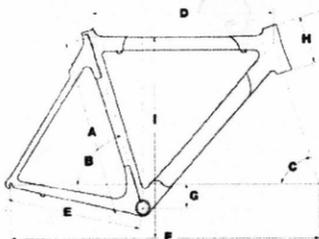
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I swiftly despatched him back down the London-bound track of the A12 hoping that his accent hadn't disguised a destination that was just five minutes down the road. No such entertainment on Sunday – just a straight-forward ride to Hutton and Billericay, returning via Hanningfield Reservoir. As I settled down to watch a miserable England performance against Germany in the World Cup, I realised that I'd completed my last 'long' ride of the Challenge and that with 3 days to the end of the month, the end was suddenly in sight.

I completed my usual after-work rides on the last three days of the month and as I neared home on the final day I reflected on the previous month. I'm not usually given to blowing my own vuvuzela but completing the Challenge had left me with a sense of pride and enjoyment at what I had achieved – I'd ridden a total of 416 miles and managed a ride on every day of the month. Thinking back to the start of the Challenge and my doubts about whether I'd be able to 'cut the mustard', I think I've surprised myself. It must be something in the genes!

As to the FG Pedallers, I'm afraid we didn't finish too well, ending up in 130th place out of 138 teams and collectively accumulating 1,430 miles. To put this in context, the category winners completed 14,666 miles. I did, however, successfully hold onto my 1st place but as there's no 'I' in team, I'll leave the vuvuzela in its box.

My thanks must go to Dawn and Alice for their unwavering tolerance and support and also the rest of the family for their encouragement despite displaying, at times, total disbelief, that I was still capable of turning the pedals. Sadly, Team Sky didn't respond to my availability as a standby for the Tour de France or the Tour of Britain but hey, there's always next year.

"Foreign parts" update

by Dot Sharp

Another visit to the Queen's garden at Sandringham to see the chainsaw sculptors at work – they were from Bulgaria, Germany, Japan, Wales and, of course, England. Their finished works were being auctioned off from £10 to 1000s of pounds

Stage 6 of the Tour of England was from King's Lynn to Yarmouth, so I made the effort to see them en route. The accompanying entourage of motorbikes made more of an impression, all 54 of them, plus a variety of support vehicles, an ambulance, camera crew and a helicopter overhead. The bikes did their usual whooooooosh and it was all over in a few minutes.

There was a "limited edition" of commemorative mugs on sale in one shop – so I bought two.

Last week we went to Oxburgh Hall, stately home of the Bedingfield aristocracy, but it poured with rain; so we only explored part of the house. A team of volunteers were dressed in Tudor style waiting to do battle, but it still poured. All the floors of the house were in brickwork plus a very impressive spiral staircase which led up to the roof and to the priest's hole. The moat completely surrounding the house was teeming with fish.

Missing you all – Dot.

Newham Off Road Bike Ride

by Julie Fairbairn

During the Summer months some volunteers from The London Cycling Campaign were advertising off road bike rides in Newham, taking in places of interest and local landmarks. This sounded quite interesting so Lee and I went along. Meeting at Stratford Station on a Saturday morning we arrived to find about twenty other riders on all types of bikes.

The first thing we did was go to the top of a car park to view the developing Olympic site, then we headed back to our bikes and set off along the Channel Sea Path in Stratford, and via back roads to the Olympic site viewing area at ground level where there is also a cafe.

We then cycled from Old Ford Lock to Bow Flyover via the River Lea towpath. This was a part of London I had never seen before and I found it really interesting. We carried on to Three Mills, all beautiful Grade 1 listed buildings and when the tide was low you could still see the paddle wheels from the mill. Our runs leader told us there were once eleven mills in that location and The Three Mills Film Studios are now also on the site. We continued along the towpath to Bow Lock (careful how you say that – I had already said it out loud much to Lee's amusement) and then we were shown a monument (hidden in the trees) to the Gas Light and Coke Company which used to be in that location.

We then cycled to the East India Dock Basin to view the Dome from across the Thames. Our tea stop was at Trinity Buoy Wharf (they made buoys here). This was quite fascinating as there was also a Lighthouse here, which we went inside and to the top of. They are playing ambient music in the lighthouse for the next 1000 years and apparently there are 993 years to go! Also at Trinity Buoy Wharf there is the Professor Faraday Museum and School. They also had brightly coloured container houses built on top of each other, a kind of environmentally friendly way of recycling sea containers. A fascinating place!

Our next stop was The Royal Victoria Docks, Excel Centre and bridge. We actually took our bikes in the lift and crossed over to the other side. Then we cycled through Thames Barrier Park and viewed the Thames Barrier. Cycling through the Thames Barrier Park you could smell the lavender as the park is well laid out with lots of mature plants. The back marker volunteer said that once he took a short cut through the park, but unfortunately realised he had a puncture so set about fixing his bike. Unbeknown to him he was accidentally locked in the park and had to climb over the six foot railings, passing his bike over first to get out!

Continuing on we went to see the (relocated) Grade 1 listed Brick Lane Music Hall at Silvertown - and what a fine building this is. Carrying on we cycled past London City Airport after crossing the bridge there. We cycled on through Beckton Park and even took our bikes to the top of Beckton Alps! What a view we had of surrounding London! Plenty of time for photo opportunities and a rest. We could also see the floodlights of Upton Park where the game was about to start.

We then cycled along The Greenway back to Stratford. We had cycled 18 miles in total, mostly off road, and it was a really fantastic day all thanks to the volunteers of the London Cycling Campaign!

Links

CTC Essex DA

www.essexcycling.co.uk

Chris' site: route planning resources

www.velocipede.org.uk

Cyclists' Touring Club

www.ctc.co.uk

Yet Another Cycling Forum

<http://yacf.co.uk/forum/index.php>

Nutty cyclist's insane world (Mike's site)

<http://www.nuttycyclist.co.uk/>

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