



Editor's notes

A big 'thank you' to everyone who has sent material for this edition of our Newsletter.

Our Blog is performing its functions; where else will you learn that the Queen, despite being in the area, had not said she was intending to join Keith and Kathy's ride? Where else has Les said that we might be missing him, why, and reassured us it will not be for ever? Where else could Les publicise his flights of fancy? Where else would we learn that Shilbottle is twinned with Hery, in France? And ... a great deal more.

The last edition of this Newsletter I edited was in winter; what a contrast being sat in the same chair taking my ease to write, now wanting to let the outside air in. There must be a lot of articles in the pipeline from our summer rides for inclusion in the next Newsletter; please send them to us (Karen's turn next time) at news@edenvalleycyc.org.uk by Friday 18th October 2013.

Those of us lucky enough to go to Shilbottle in April will remember it for its success for a long time to come, I believe. Les has let us have his thoughts for this Edition.

Since our last Newsletter we have had our 'Trivets' outing on the 19th June. Speaking for myself, I enjoyed the occasion enormously.

One of our number, Keith G completed the Fred Whitton, which may inspire some others of us to try for our own sense of achievement, if not his time.

The summer weather is bringing out our members, really good seeing people meeting for full rides as well as for coffee stops and rides beyond.

We have a couple articles on rides in France, one on a ride in South East Asia and another in Scotland; our bikes are getting out and about.

I hope you enjoy this Edition. Nigel



Keith, wet, finished, looks pleased.



1. 2000 miles around South East Asia

I got made redundant. Disaster? Not really. It became my opportunity to fulfil a lifelong ambition, to go on a long cycle tour. My time window was January to March 2013 and I was recommended to try South East Asia as this is the time of year that it's coolest.

I flew to Bangkok and spent the next ten weeks riding around Thailand and Laos, fitting in a day trip to Burma as well. From Bangkok I headed north, visiting the ancient capitals of Siam at Ayutthaya and Sukhothai before having a few days off in the northern city of Chiang Mai. Navigation proved tricky as the best maps I could find were at a scale of 1:550,000. I met some Belgian cycle tourists who had GPS and were able to find smaller quieter roads than those shown on my maps. How I wished I'd bought one.

After Chiang Mai I went in to the mountains, great scenery, and quiet but oh so steep roads. I got a 24 hour visa for Burma and then came back to Thailand, travelling east beside the Mekong to the Golden Triangle where Thailand, Burma and Laos meet. I took a two day trip down the Mekong to Luang Prabang, with my bike strapped on to the roof of the boat and then turned south travelling along the virtually traffic free roads of Laos. Life here is calmer especially in the under-developed rural areas, getting food and accommodation was sometimes a challenge, electricity was usually available but running water only in bigger settlements.



I crossed back over the border near the Laotian capital of Vientiane and fell off my bike whilst negotiating railway tracks on the bridge in no man's land between the two countries. Fortunately no serious injury to me or the bike. I then went south to the coastal area of south west Thailand, near the border with Cambodia. Accommodation was plentiful and often I took a cooling dip in the sea to end the day, with temperatures now in the high thirties. I ended my trip in gridlocked Bangkok, which is not a great place for cycling in, yet surprisingly has a good selection of bike shops, one of which boxed up my bike for the flight home.

I managed to live quite well on less than £30 a day, which included accommodation, food, museum entries, visa's, boat trips, flights, pre trip inoculations, malaria tablets, the all important dog dazer and even four haircuts!

If you want more info here's a link to my blog, jefftrueman.wordpress.com

2. Cycling on Luing

I tend to think that the club won't be interested in the areas in Scotland where we have paddled but recently David and Maria were talking about the 'mountains of Luing' so I decided to write about our trip there in January.

The first weekend in February we stayed at the Loch Melfort hotel which is next door to the National Trust Arduaine gardens. Bedrooms have a lovely view down the Sound of Jura. Although the bed and breakfast rate was a bargain, when we left we realised they had made their profit on the evening meals. Still it was a welcome winter break.

We decided to explore the island on bikes; when you paddle round you generally only see the coastline. We drove north and then over the Clachan Sound to Seil across the grandly named 'Bridge over the Atlantic'.



Bridge over the Atlantic

Seil, along with Easdale, Luing and Belnahua, were extensively quarried for slate in the 18th and 19th centuries, earning the name of 'the islands that roofed the world'.

We parked opposite the 18th century inn called Tigh an Truish which means 'house of the trousers'; apparently after the 1745 Jacobite rebellion when kilts were banned, islanders are supposed to have stopped here to swap their kilts for trousers before heading to the mainland.

We cycled due south to Cuan where a small ferry crosses over the Cuan Sound – which we know from experience can be a wild place when the sea is running – the scene of Nigel's last (2011) capsizing. In the western part of the Sound, the spring tide rate is 7 knots. The ferry runs about every half hour with a longer break at lunchtime; in winter, on Sundays, there is a passenger service only.

The problem with arriving by ferry is that all roads lead uphill. We headed south following the surfaced road that runs the spine of the island and then turned right to visit Cullipool on the west coast. We spent a memorable few days here a while ago staying in a friend's house. The big picture window looking out to the lighthouse at Fladda, the slate island of Belnahua, across to the Garvellachs and north to Mull gave us much more entertainment than TV ever could.



Cullipool

Having checked and found that our friends weren't at home, we turned back to the spine road and travelled further south, then, at the road junction, west again to Black Mill Bay where much of the slate left the island. What you see now is a large neglected jetty and a cluster of houses.

We turned back across the island and down into the village of Toberonochy which is arranged round a pretty harbour on the sheltered side of the island. The road passes the ruined church of Kilchattan first recorded in 1589 and in use until the 17th century. The cemetery remains to remind you of the life that was led here.

From Toberonochy we headed back north with another detour to the west and down to Ardnamir Bay which looks over to Torsa across a narrow channel we have paddled through. Thinking we were miles from anywhere, Nigel was caught by surprise by a phone call from a fellow parish councillor asking if he could put notices up in our village!

Before leaving Luing I must mention the cattle; a cross between Highlands and Shorthorns that was officially recognised in 1965. One year we were camping just south of Toberonochy and discovered we were in the way of the herd's movements. The prospect of facing off the herd, with young, was rather daunting. Fortunately they walked calmly through our camp.



It was a modest ride; just under 22 miles and 1,391 feet of climbing. Sorry David – no mountains! Nigel was pleased we were back in time to watch the rugby.

Alison S

3. PERPIGNAN TO BORDEAUX with a few Pyreneen Cols



Just the beginning- but note the fully laden bike

The dream of doing the Raid Pyreneen had sustained me during the winter but for me this was going to be impossible carrying camping gear and unrealistic even if I had a team car and domestiques. As it was the Col du Tourmalet was closed - 'Route Barre' 'Risque d'Avalanche'- and I could only get to within 4.5 km of the top. The Col d'Aubisque was also closed so I had to turn back at the Col du Soulor.

As I struggled into a strong headwind at the start I thought that going from West to East would have been a better plan. Another piece of advice is to get up-to-date maps. The French 'White Van Man' that shouted at me seemed to be giving me encouragement but in fact he was telling me that I was going onto a main road where bicycles were not allowed. This was confirmed by tooting horns and flashing head lights but I had been siphoned onto the dual carriageway with the only escape a few kilometres ahead. I was rescued by a highways maintenance worker who initially advised that I walk along the hard shoulder but then realised that this would prolong

my exposure to danger so he gave me a lift to the exit road. The blue flashing lights that followed us might have been intimidating but when two very tall young Gendarmes unfolded from the very small police van to shake their heads and admonish me it was difficult to keep a straight face.

It is also a good idea to make a photocopy of your passport and keep it safely in a pannier but a bad idea to leave the original on top of the photocopier at home.



Some big people in the Pyrenees



Higher and wetter

I abandoned the Pyrenees when the cloud came down and the rain started and went through Lourdes a week before the floods. The flat Landes and Atlantic Coast were a welcome change and after the massive Dune de Pilat at Arcachon I

turned inland to Cadillac and 'Entre deux Mers' to follow the 50 km piste cyclable from Sauveterre-de-Guyenne into cycle friendly Bordeaux to await the Bike Bus home.

My altitude training on 8 significant cols and 854 miles of cycling had not, however, prepared me for Karen's ride around the far side of Bassenthwaite on the Wednesday after my return. Now that really was a challenge! *Ian B*



It's higher than that now, officially 1569m

4. SHILBOTTLE (Blowing In The Wind)

The Answer my Friends is that not only did we sing the song at Shilbottle when half the mob (hopefully) enjoyed music in the 'big house' one evening, we also experienced it on the bikes – big time! Gale force southerly to westerly on all except the last day, but generally a bright and dry week. On the worst day riders got blown off the road, Janet got clipped by a passing car, we pedalled flat out *downhill* into the wind at 4 mph and freewheeled the other

way on the flat at 25 mph; our rides felt like double the distance - mind you the BBC did have a yellow wind alert!! All that and Shilbottle sits on the top of a 500 foot hill (there's even a clue in the name), so at the end of our exhausting rides, what goes down must come up

Nearly 40 filled half a dozen chalets, including 10 or so 'hangers on' comprising out of area 'old timers' including Trubys (with a non cycling Anthea due to ankle operation), Nobby and John Welch, plus various friends and spouses; as always a great crowd with oodles of jovial banter. The EV away week virgins comprised Steve from Kendal way, the Cumella's friend Ann and Geordie lass Shona, who all survived their baptism of EV with flying colours!



We'd forgotten from our visit 6 years ago how good the facilities were. Free use of swimming pool (which Rachel lived in), jacuzzi, steam and sauna rooms, games room with pool, table tennis, bar football etc. We had a fun and raucous evening there, including attempting the record for how many cyclists could squeeze into a Wendy house - yours truly rather enjoyed being the only bloke squeezed in with 6 hot ladies!

We tried to cycle out into the wind and return with a tale-gale, but soon ran out of rides starting south. Still, between the several groups we split into, managed Newbiggin, Alnmouth, Alnwick (pronounced Arlnmouth and Annick respectively), Amble, Morpeth, Rothbury, Wooler, Craster, Seahouses, Banburgh plus various gardens, tourist spots and NT piles in the area. Until the final day that is, when the wind dropped and most of the group made it to a sun drenched wind free Holy Island, either direct (70+ miles) or car assisted.



Banburgh castle

Several good cafes were unearthed and one ride took a stalwart trio to the famous cycle café at Elsdon, but pick of the week was Chillingham Castle 11's en route to Holy Island, where Karen encouraged the café to open early for us – in this vast medieval room festooned with antlers, weapons and a huge roaring log fire where we indulged in home made baking. Most attended the Italian Job meal out on the last night, although a breakaway group salivating for fish & chips all week indulged their whim al fresco before joining the others for a drink.

Memorable moments? CJ well off the back with the faster mob, bewailing gluten, lack of exercise, diet and any other reasons for his nom de plume 'Tubsy Two Tums'. I suffered a split along the wheel rim, but it survived the week though nobody would ride behind me. Parker saying he was too tired and going off to ride with the moderates. And then without Ruth to help, woe of woes I had to COOK one night, although Sue and Ann fearing retribution by Sam and Ella took me in hand (not in the biblical sense you understand) and I have to confess all I did was buy the ingredients and peel the mince or something. And in similar vein Rachel discovered the missing baked potato – submerged in a huge bowl of rice pudding. Ah yes, there was I thinking I'd done the longest ride of 78 miles on the Holy Island day, but chatting to Ra-

chel (who did start off an hour and a half before everyone else armed with 2 rock buns and a malt loaf), concluded she did a couple more so gets the distance prize for the week.

And finally thanks yet again to Ian Brewis for the oft thankless task of organising our superb stay.

Les M

5. TRIVETS 2013 (photos courtesy of Rosemary K-O)

Three years ago I had just joined our club and was wanting to increase the distances I felt confident about cycling; the 2010 Trivets came at the right moment for me.



setting off

This time I was not sure if I would be in the area for the event and was delighted when I found that I could take part. I think some 41 people cycled the full route and there were others who cycled part; some had come from long distances away. The event would not have happened without the considerable efforts of a small number of members and heart felt thanks go to them.

Choice of an organising team requires vision and 'something special'; the team (or at least one of them) must have made the right noises or done something

good in their lives for us to be blessed with lovely weather.

I was cycling with the 'yellow' group; admittedly this was the 'slow' one but it was awesome to witness the speed at which some (probably all, they went by so fast) pummelled past us. Our modest approach lent itself best to coping with life's little vicissitudes, and cope we did; I think we were the only group to have a puncture (I was in a group that had one last time, a point perhaps worth noting should you think it might be fun to come with me next time); our leader had the misfortune to lay her cycle on and off the tarmac buckling the rear wheel and making a rush job of body engraving; proud we were that she cycled on for the remaining 25 miles to complete the event.



on our way

Nigel L

6. Cycling by Numbers and Magic Mushrooms

Forget the maps, forget the sat nav all you need for a Dutch cycling holiday is a biro and the back of your hand!

Throughout most of the provinces in the Netherlands there is a very comprehensive net work of cycle routes that take you on quiet roads, tracks and sometimes cyclable, by ordinary bike, off road.

Where routes intersect they are numbered and there is a map; so to plan your route you look at the numbers that take you to where you want to go, write them on the back of your hand and that's it. No more pouring over maps etc. If you do go wrong you can just adjust your journey at the next map.



In environmentally sensitive areas they have “mushrooms”, little low sign posts with directions. I have a photo of Ian pretending to be a Dutch gnome sitting on one on our first Dutch holiday, sadly I seem to have lost the photo!

Then there are the sign posts, red for the most direct routes, usually a separate tarmac road alongside the main motor road,

green for a quieter more scenic route still with a good surface. Combine this with almost never having to give way to cars, [though the cyclists in Amsterdam are terrifying] and having your own lane on round-a-bouts, Dutch cycling is a breeze.



Dallas

7. A SUNDAY RIDE OUT

There are times when it all goes swimmingly. Alison felt encouraged to take on a 50 mile ride after her enjoyment of Shilbottle and Keith and Cathy are very considerate leaders. We trundled out of Staveley and were almost dry when we reached Grange over Sands for coffees and cakes (it was the end of April this year so rain was considered better than hail). Refreshed we idled our way to Cartmel, climbed a little and felt good as we came down toward Haverthwaite as people puffed, danced and even walked their way up in the opposite direction seemingly ‘doing’ a sportive.



Alison again astride her bike

The mixing of ancient and modern sometimes works well.

On this occasion it did not; Alison’s modern approach to cycling sometimes reaches heights

not normally seen, her take-offs show great promise; her landings show potential if not perfection. Her wheels caught in the metal gutter / track across the entry precipitating her practice. Alison was unusually quiet for a short while after.

Diplomatically, I remained outside realigning her saddle and bits while Alison went in and had sympathy and a baked potato, restoring elements.

Not wanting to await my returning (and thereby finishing the ride without her) for the car, Alison rode the 25 miles back even enjoying with us the lovely back roads on the west of Windermere, the wet ferry and the warmth of the climb from the lake to Crook.

Alison's bike needed new brake blocks, which made me check and find that my bike did too. The bike was soon mended. Alison was a tad sore for a while after but now seems fully recovered.

If you have read my article above about the Trivets and noted the similarity of '25 miles to go and someone falls off' I would like to remind people that I have been on rides when no-one has been injured or even had a puncture.



the wet ferry

Nigel L

8. ANOTHER TOUR DE FRANCE



Getting up at 2.30am on Saturday to go to catch the European Bike Express (Bike Bus) is never the best way to start a holiday particularly as you are bound to miss most of your sleep the following evening as you travel through France. So it was that I found myself in Montpellier at 9.30 French time on the following Sunday and full of confidence set off on a potential 120km journey to Le Vigan just S of the Cevennes.

It was a glorious day and the Sunday club riders were out in force. I almost got scooped up by a group who asked me where I was headed. 'Cirque de Navacelles' I said – 'Ah Tres jolie'. So onwards and upwards over the Col du vent (there wasn't any and it was getting even hotter) and on through a village where a group of walkers were having a lunch stop in the shade outside the local bar.

At this stage I decided to re-route and rather than go across the gap at Navacelles I would take the more



Illustration 1: valley of the navacelles

major road to Le Vigan and save myself a few km. Alas – bad decision because I still had to cross the valley with an even greater descent and ascent. Never mind the bike was going well

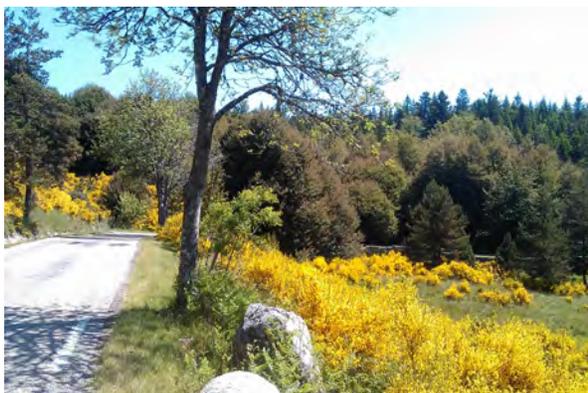


even if I was getting rather tired! Swooping down to Madieres was great on the disc brake enabled Jamis, even if it did mean losing 1000ft. Then the climb back up the other side, but what views – you did at least get the satisfaction of seeing where you had been. On towards le Vigan – much easier now – and the descent into the Valley but a nasty sign says 'route baree 5km' and the only alternative is an extra 30km. No choice I'll walk around the obstacle. On the way down the 5km I meet German motorcyclists

with the same idea on their way back up waving their arms to stop me but I am committed. Well when I arrived at the section of road it had completely vanished and a sheer section of hillside was being reinstated with vast concrete reinforcing rods driven into the hillside and signs of a tiny footpath in the scree. No choice but to unload the bike and ferry bike and luggage across avoiding getting spiked by a steel rod. At least when I finally got to the campsite it was the cheapest of the whole trip. €2 for the night! I slept from 9pm to 6am solid.



Next morning thoroughly recovered from my lack of sleep on the journey down and after the usual coffee and porridge for breakfast I call in at the local boulangerie for a couple of croissants and a baguette. All is well with the world, we are in France. Today's task is to get over Mt Aigual (1500m) and on to Mayrueis in the valley of the Jonte. Having got up early it is still cool for the first part of the ascent and the road doesn't seem nearly as steep as the last time I was here. Steadily we ascend with increasingly amazing views and as lunch time approaches I am tempted (and succumb) to stop for a coffee and refill of the 'bidons'. Up a little further and into the forest and we are there. The only way is down now and for virtually 2



hours that's it glorious views and the most amazing display of broom – it quite took your breath away. Mayrueis has a fine campsite with a visiting Pizza van and a swimming pool – great, and only €4 per night!

The next day after the usual start I am travelling down the valley of the Jonte and up to the Tarn. I stop for a pain au raisins in Rozier and along comes a train of donkeys carrying luggage. A party of walkers are repeating sections of RL Stevensons 'Travels with a Donkey' On my bike (a bit quicker)I

head up the Tarn passing all the canoeists to St Enemie and arriving in time for lunch decide to press on over the top to the Lot stopping at Saint Geniet d'Olt (€6.65) A day of wonderful views of the gorges and a tough climb out of the valley in the heat of the day.

Wednesday is to be the only wet day of the trip but 36hours of rain does get at you. I was glad I had brought overtrousers and despite the rain make it to Aurillac and can stock up on food in the Carrefour city and have a good meal despite the continued rain.

Thursday looks better with the blue sky beginning to appear again through the grey cloud. Today it's the Pas de Peyrol (1575m) . As I am leaving Aurillac up the valley of the Jordanne I notice the dreaded 'route baree' signs again and ask a Dutch cyclist who had clearly come down the valley about the problem. He says not to worry and that you can haul your bike across the new concrete road that they are laying at the top of the pass! He stopped to take a picture and had difficulty removing his bike as it had sunk into the still wet concrete! We had been for a family holiday here in the dim and distant past and I duly took a picture of the tiny gite where we stayed. On to the top and again what magnificent views and with them the inevitable run down the other side. I stop for a bite of lunch and soon get down to Condat which is my next overnight campsite.

After this section of the 'tour' the going gets



much easier and descending (wonderful seemingly endless valleys leading off the Massif central - La Couze du Valbeix and la Couze Pavin) to the plain east of Clermont Ferrand via Issoire, Thiers and Dompierre sur Besbre. I joined the Canal du Nivernais at Decize and basically followed this up to Auxerre where I picked up the bike bus home.

Although the scenery is not as mind boggling it is nevertheless very pretty and lots of interest along the way; not least the canal itself and the many glorious churches and cathedrals along the way. Oh and the amazing

coincidence of seeing that one of the villages was twinned with Shilbottle. *Geoff A*



You can view the route on Google Earth if you drop [this file into it.](#)

Or type

https://docs.google.com/file/d/oB_nVgHoi4V9TdkdBNVYwSERaeEU/edit?usp=sharing

into your address bar.

Notes and News

1. New Eden Valley Clothing

Karen says: We are still looking at designs to provide a full range of new Eden Valley clothing – from gilets, shirts to buffs and more - using the existing colours yellow and blue. It would be great if you could let us know if you think you would be interested in purchasing some new EV cycle clothing so we have an idea of possible interest? Also if you have any thoughts for a new design? Just drop us an email to news@edenvalleyctc.org.uk.

2. Slide Show, Friday 15 November, 7.00pm, The Stoneybeck Inn,

Sandwiches and chips will be provided at 8.00pm. Hope that many members can come along and show us pictures of your cycling exploits (there will be a 15 minute limit to the length of your show). A digital projector will be available so you just need to bring a memory stick with your snaps

3. AGM Reminder:

The Club AGM will take place on Saturday 26th October at 2.00pm in Langwathby Village Hall. If any members wish to make proposals they should discuss them with Janet by Saturday 12th October

4. A ride in foreign parts:

One of our members has expressed an interest in a holiday in say France or Holland or some such foreign country in the Autumn; one of those holidays which are not too strenuous. Is anyone interested / has ideas?