



Eden Valley

Newsletter

June 2015



issue 49

Editor's notes

Thank you everyone who has sent material for this edition of our Newsletter.

In this edition you will see:

1. a New Year Message from our President. My apologies for not publishing this sooner, still, as I write this, the 28th April, snow and hail has been falling / hitting the fellside above me, so mention of winter weather may not appear so incongruous.
2. an article by Lance G on the Himlayas and life
3. a lunch with Alex Knox (Nigel L and Alison S)
4. an article on the Club week in Ayrshire at the beginning of April (Alison S)
5. An Old Timer's Tale (Dick Phillips)
6. a 'poser' for you (Dallas)
7. an article on an outing in the Alps last September (Nigel L)
8. A glimpse of Spain (February 2015) (Nigel L)
9. 'News' (resume of Committee meetings/ reminders)

Please feel free to sent your photos, thoughts, news, views and accounts for the next Newsletter.

Please send material to news@edenvalleyctc.org.uk.

I hope you enjoy this Edition. Nigel L

1. A NOTE FROM JANET, OUR CHAIR(PERSON).

Having tried to communicate with many of you at the Christmas dinner through the ether (and would have almost failed without Geoff as interlocutor!), here's a more traditional approach: a slot in the newsletter.



As I write this, snow has arrived in Cumbria and looks as if it will be staying a little while. But ice and snow never defeated CTC Eden Valley and although some rides have been cancelled this winter, we have had a few good walks to cafe stops, some have ventured out cycling on more main roads and others have taken to more eccentric means of transport (see below).

Watch it though, folks...I remember Mike Lee of Palace cycles telling me a few years ago when we had a cold snap that he knew loads of cyclists who had broken all kinds of bones (I think we may have had a few in this club too?) so if in doubt, stick to the turbo trainer or take up some other fitness training like swimming in the ice like they do in Finland:), or head for the sun as some of you will be doing in February.

I am sure all of you have lots of exciting plans for 2015. As far as the Club is concerned, we have many things to look forward to.

The runs list for the first quarter is now out (*ed note: and been 'run'*) and there is a good variety of rides for all abilities. Thank you to all runs leaders who have volunteered rides and thank you to Parker for putting his first runs sheet together with the help of CJ and Geoff.

On 25th February at 18.45 we have (*ed note: and had*) a social evening with food and photos at Coral Room Cafe, Plumpton. Special guest will be Dick Phillips (known to his friends as Iceland Dick) with photos of his early cycling days when he crossed Iceland on a bike! The club run will be from Plumpton that day to enable those travelling a distance to just make one journey and get changed and freshened up nearby (CJ's bathroom by arrangement, I believe).

We are all looking forward to our post-Easter week away at Girvan(*ed note: see article below*) - always a great occasion and a chance to meet up with people we might not see out on the same rides during the year. Thank you to Claire and Dallas for making this possible!

You will have seen that the Birthday Rides are coming to Newton Rigg in August! This is a really large, prestigious and popular national event in the CTC calendar and I am very proud that we have a little team of Eden Valley members who have agreed to work with CTC to provide route sheets and other work requiring local knowledge. There is quite a bit of work involved, particularly now in the early stages, so any volunteers would be very welcome. Please contact Geoff Anderson if you would be willing to ride some routes and help with route sheets.

A belated Happy New Year to one and all! Hope to see all you up the road at some point and enjoy your cycling in 2015!

Janet

2. CYCLING ON THE 'ROOF OF THE WORLD'.

Some members will remember the day they heard the news of the conquest of Everest (29th May 1953). Although only 6¾ years old at the time, I can vividly recall my dad proudly describing how difficult it was to climb to the top of the 'roof of the world'. The news of the achievement was like a sunbeam piercing the gloomy austerity of post war Britain – what a coronation street party we had just 5 days later! I spent the next 60 years yearning for an adventure in the Himalayas.

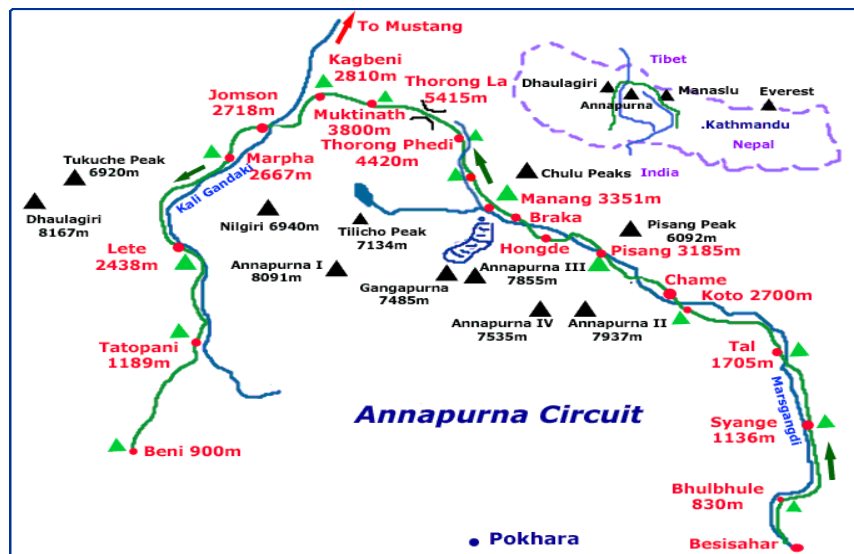
A 'life changing event' early in 2014 provided the required kick up the backside and an opportunity to satisfy the yearning. Surfing the internet for accommodation, HelpX.com offered a homestay with voluntary work helping to build a school on a mountain overlooking the Annapurna range.

Googling 'Himalayas trekking' provided a massive choice of 'derring do'

adventures. The Annapurna Circuit has often been voted the best long distance trek in the world. The 100 to 140 mile horseshoe route encircles the massive with six climate zones from tropical Besishahar (800m) to arctic on the Thorong La pass (5416m) (17,769 feet 11¾inch).

The South African word trek is defined as 'a long

arduous journey, especially one made on foot'. An unappealing activity for a 68 year old with dodgy knees but Wikipedia states, 'thanks to the [new] road, mountain biking is becoming very popular'. Game on! However, for whatever the reason, it



was impossible to enthruse friends to play, so on October 8th 2014 I flew alone with a one way ticket to Nepal.

Within two days of arriving, I was cycling Kathmandu valley cycle routes on a new (2015) Giant Talon 1, testing my fitness and mixing it with the teaming crowds of highly skilled, but extremely undisciplined Nepalese road users. The downhill single track challenges of the Himalayan mountain trails were tame compared to a right turn in the Kathmandu 'rush hour' (9am to 9pm 7 days a week)!

Cycling usually reduces the 15 to 20 days taken to trek the Annapurna circuit by half. Starting at Besishahar (800m) it took 4 *arduous* days pushing and carrying the bike with my 14kg backpack up 600m hills each day to reach the half way stage at Manang (3,331m, population 5000 with 3 cinemas).

Travelling alone was never a problem. There was always an opportunity to mix with adventurers of all ages. It was astonishing to discover the majority of travellers were single ladies aged between 18 and 65! I spent 2 nights in Manang using the extra day to acclimatise with a trek to the Ice Lake (4600m) accompanied by Swedish lasses Karen and Maria each 20 something years old.

Biking onwards and upwards to Letar (4200m) I hired Santos, a 19 year old porter to carry my bike to the top of the Thorong La pass. It turned out to be a wise capitulation of my determination to do the entire circuit unaided. Snow levels were still high following a 2 metre dump by Typhoon Hud Hud 3 weeks earlier when 14 trekkers lost their lives in the 36 hour whiteout. Before summiting the pass we spent a night at High Camp (4850m). At this altitude the temperature at night was minus 7degC and with about 50% oxygen, walking, eating, sleeping and breathing is very hard work. Wounds from the occasional fall from my bike suppured and my bike and backpack were now tortuously heavy. I was fortunate to arrive early at High Camp because by 3pm it was fully booked and many trekkers had to turn back and go down again to Thorong Phedi (4420m)... how miserable is that! Mind you, staying at High Camp had its downside... 200 people sharing 2 toilets and no washing facilities due to the frozen water.





Once over the Thorong La pass biking down the challenging footpath was an unforgettable, adrenaline charged experience. Spending a night in the ancient Tibetan village of Jharkot (3710 m), the increased oxygen level enabled a blissful uninterrupted sleep (unlike High Camp waking every 15-30 minutes gasping for breath).

The next day, I was fortunate to meet 4 more Swedish lasses each celebrating their 50th year with a mountain bike adventure. For the next three days, led by expert Nepalese biking guides, we sped down the Mustang Valley jeep road and single track

trails alongside the river Kali Gandaki flanked by the mighty peaks of Annapurna 1 (8,091m) and Dhaulagiri (8,167m) arguably one of the deepest gorges in the world.

No expense spared, we luxuriated in the best hotels; first in the Buddhist village of Marthana (£6pn) complete with large Gumpa and ripe apple orchards; our last night was in Tatapani (£4pn) where we bathed in the natural hot springs. Arriving at Beni I had completed my Annapurna circuit 10 days after leaving Besisharhar.



IN CASE YOU ARE WONDERING is that it, game over? Has 60 years of yearning for the Himalayas been satisfied? NOT ON YOUR NELLY...now I yearn to return!

FOOTNOTE: The varied climates, cultures and the majestic scale of the Himalayas exceeded my expectations but I wouldn't swap them for the gentle charm, beauty and accessibility of the Cumbrian Fells.

Photo: Hallin Fell Sunday Jan 31st 2015
– two days after returning home.



3. LUNCH WITH ALEX KNOX.

Alison and I had a lovely lunch with Alex the other day. He treated us to omelettes cooked freshly by him. We had a delightful afternoon.

1. What was your favourite bike?

I had my first bike when I passed the 11 plus. When I started National Service I had an all black Roadster Raleigh with chromium plated rims. I added to it, of course – 3 speed Sturmey Archer gears and drop handlebars, for example. I swapped it for a tandem. I used to ride a fixed wheel bike, we all did in those days, it was a later Holdsworth now 68 years old .

2. What was your most memorable holiday?

There were so many – cycling camping in France, or youth hostelling in Scotland in the snow at Christmas-time, carrying ginger beer over the handlebars and queuing for the men's dormitory.

I remember going on a trip with my friend Brian shortly after the war. We cycled to London then took the ferry to Calais and travelled on to Paris. Calais was still very much a bombsite. We travelled using youth hostels with hay lofts and seeing picturesque villages with special toilets.

At the end of National Service I returned by bicycle from Rosyth to Newcastle via the A1, a sort of holiday. There was no bridge across the Forth then. It was a long way down the A1 and I was cycling through the dark with those old bicycle lamps where you had to screw the top down. Times have changed – I was quite happy cycling that area in the dark when today the prospect is quite threatening even in a car. You can't cycle anywhere now, the way you used to do.

3. What do you do as well as cycling?

For many years after I retired from advisory work for CCC, I was a CAB volunteer until they decided I was too old, then I worked for Eden Community Alarms. I have 3 children (Alastair, Angus and Fiona) and 5 lovely grandchildren. Visiting Alastair and his family involves trips to France and Spain. Fiona lives nearer, in Northumberland. Angus's two boys, James and Jonathan, are both very involved in cycling (James was racing in Rome the day of our visit).

I am still a Sustrans Ranger - for Route 20. I was a Ranger when I was in Durham.

4. Where do you recommend for a good coffee or lunch break when out cycling?

There is a little spot in Winton where I call regularly for a hot drink and a cake. It isn't open to the public, but EVCTC members are always sure of a welcome.

5. Tell us about something not many people know about you and your past.

I have a hand-written letter from Sir David Attenborough. I first met him at Rosyth dockyard when I joined up for National Service in 1947. He was my commanding officer – Lt D F Attenborough. One day he borrowed my Raleigh Roadster. He was smartly dressed in his uniform – until he returned, hot and bothered, with one of the pedals in his hand! On his 80th birthday I wrote to him and I received a hand-written response.

6. What is your favourite cycle ride?

I don't think I can say. There are so many lovely rides around here and over into County Durham/Yorkshire – Hannah Hauxwell country. I was evacuated to this area in the war. We were told it was a 'rehearsal' to send the children away in case the war became dangerous. In reality, it was no rehearsal.

Complete with gas masks and haversacks, my younger sister and I embarked on one of a line of trams moving down Westgate Road to Newcastle Railway Station, then we were put in a train. After some travelling we found ourselves in a local cinema sitting on wooden benches in the front row of the stalls. We were then moved on to Halecat House in Witherslack. Years later, after I had moved to the Eden Valley, I went to the cinema in Kirkby Stephen and recognised it from our visit as children all that time ago.

7. Can you sum up what cycling means to you?

It has been a way of life – for me and my family. Some of my happiest memories are of cycling on a tandem with my wife in the period before she died. She tried a tandem before we were married but reckoned I never pedalled and she did all the work. It was a long time before she would try it again, but after a hire of one in Australia we bought one.

Cycling is good for your health – I had a boyhood friend who grew out of asthma through cycling.

Bikes have changed as has the environment. After the war people got cars and motor cycles. The world has changed. Cycling is coming back again.

I have met so many interesting people and want to say 'thank you' for all the wonderful company cycling has given to me.

I am particularly proud of my Grandsons (James and Jonathan). One had done 100 miles at age 10. Both are very keen cyclists.

4. EVCTC Holiday in Girvan (Alison Smith)

Many thanks to Rachel for finding us these lodges at Brunston Castle, near Girvan and to Claire and Dallas for organising us all – no mean feat!

Inevitably, the unseasonably hot weather came to an end just before our holiday and the week began cold and wet – enough to dampen the spirits of some of the less hardy amongst us. Many of the roads were in very poor condition with lots of potholes, and one group nearly suffered hypothermia on a trip early in the week.

Then, on the Tuesday – the day some people chose not to cycle because of the predicted deluge – it all began to improve, until sunshine became a feature of the second half of the week.

The best bit for me – apart from the wonderful company, of course – was being so close to the sea that I could visit it every day. The cycle from Dailly to Lendalfoot became a favourite for many of us in the week. The car journey to Largs, for a trip across to Cumbrae, was well worthwhile for those of us who love Scottish islands. Even using all the tarmaced road surfaces, it is difficult to cycle more than 20 miles but the Ritz cafe enjoyed our custom and the view from the top of the hill, across Bute to Arran and north to the Kyles of Bute, was well worth the climb.

The highlight for me was the visits to Arran. I had always thought the hills were too big for me, but then decided to ‘give it a go’. On my first visit I turned left out of the ferry and followed the ring road south, with lovely views over the sea out to Pladda and Ailsa Craig. The following day, I pushed myself even harder, being made welcome to join Keith, Cathy, Nigel and some of the other, faster, cyclists. We turned right out of the ferry, past the entrance to Brodick castle and over the pass by Goat Fell, returning, on both days, over ‘The String’ – the pass over the middle of the island. CalMac ferries provide a good service and, I thought, exceptionally cheap at £7.50 per adult day return with the bike going free. Taking the bike on the ferry is another story, but there isn’t room to tell it here.

Being labelled the ‘party house’ meant we didn’t have much time for relaxation, so I returned home needing another holiday...

5. AN OLD-TIMER’S TALE (Dick Phillips)

This is a story I once told on a club run. Under Equal Opportunities legislation, I suppose I have to repeat it here for the other 87 of you.

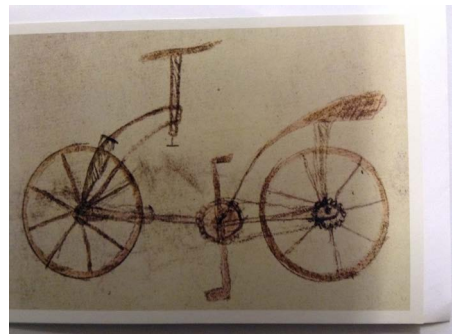
A clubmate of mine told me how a clubmate of his, who I had not known, was once cycling across Hayes Common in Kent (now in Greater London) when he punctured. No big problem; he set about repairing it, when an older man with a

forked beard rode up, stopped, said “You should never mend a puncture on grass; you’ll lose something”, and rode off without offering further help. When the puncture was mended, he found that he had indeed lost a valve nut.

Old Forkbeard was in fact a former national 5-mile champion. Knowing roughly how old I am, and that I had not myself met the victim, can you guess, within ten years or so, in what year this chap had won his championship? The answer, with a note on the characters, is on page 12

6. A POSER FOR YOU: (from Dallas)

Who drew this and when ?



7. AN OUTING IN THE ALPS (SEPTEMBER 2014): (NIGEL L)

Our objective was to cycle from Geneva to Nice taking in a few cols, travelling at a pace which would allow us to take breath en route. We went at the beginning of September taking 11 days cycling. Having the benefit of ‘backup’, Alison and Dallas in the van, we were able to cycle unencumbered.



It was a good time to travel, sun every day.

It was only on the last day that we had any rain whilst we were cycling. We did have a spectacular thunderstorm after dark at Beaufort. The Municipal campsite had Notices directing us to go uphill in the event of flooding (abandoning our belongings). We, or at least, I, watched the storm ranging round the ridges above and the water lying on the grass with some trepidation. I hope discreetly, I packed an emergency bag before settling into my sleeping bag that night. In the event the water level never got beyond ‘splashy’.





cycle past as we sheltered on the top, but I did not. The same, I presume, unicyclist passed us on a climb the next day. It was also Ian's birthday.

Briefly one morning we saw a recumbent. It overtook us when we were taking a drink at the side of the road. What became of it and the rider we do not know. I was impressed by the rider.

On the penultimate day I saw the largest toad I have seen; it was, sadly, dead in the road.

We all swam in the sea after some lunch at the campsite near Nice.

Other memorable bits include the ride from Bourg St Maurice to Lanslevillard. Apart from starting the day with a flat tyre, losing my chain as we set off and chasing Ian to catch up, we had the climb over Val D'Iserre. It was a chill day's climb. There was snow lying in the crevices for the last few Kilometres of the climb. Alison and Dallas's presence at the top with warm drinks was most welcome. We might have felt a certain level of humility seeing a man riding

a uni-



The cols we went over were: Moises, La Clusaz, Aravis, Saisies, du Pret, Cornet de Roseland, val d'Iserre, l'Iseran, de la Madeleine, Telegraphe, Valloire, Galibier, Lauteret, d'Izoard, de Vars, de la Bonnette. We travelled a little over 430 miles.

Would I do it again, 'yes, please'.

9. A GLIMPSE OF SPAIN

In February a few of us (a dozen or so) went for a winter warmer enjoying the familiar chill of Eden, or near, on the first few days and then the spring warmth of Spain coming on the 1st March, scheduled well with the opening (gentle) of general tourist cafes etc.

The traffic was light and courteous. The roads were smooth. The climbs, long and not so steep as at home.

Generally the food was cheap and good value. In all, one wonders why a lot of people do not go to Spain in the 'winter' months, but may be they do.

(Nigel L)



10. NEWS ITEMS:

1. On the 15th July there is a Sportive raising funds for the local Hospice. There are three different routes to suit all abilities, these can be viewed on their website www.cyclethesolway.co.uk. They have a 'Family friendly' 10km ride, a 50km ride and a 100km ride.

2. The CTC have its 'Birthday Rides' in August in our area, being based at Newton Rigg from the 19th to the 25th August. Interesting rides have been proposed by members for it.

3. Resume of committee meetings 13/11/14 and 28/4/15: (Geoff)

Club clothing has been discussed again since the AGM and despite the lack of response to the blog requesting members to submit a design we are continuing to pursue the idea to have a design lodged with *ImpSport* which will then be available for any member to order individually. More News soon.

Birthday Rides: A number of members have been putting together rides(suggested routes) for the annual CTC holidays Birthday Ride event which is to be held at Newton Reigny near Penrith this year. It is good to support this event when it is in 'our area' and thanks are due to all involved.

Both the **Christmas Dinner** and the **Slide show and Social** seem to have been a great success and thanks again to the committee and others who have organised these events.

Club Direction: Although you might not expect your committee to consider such abstruse a topic we do consider from time to time whether we are providing what our members want. After some discussion it was considered that we should continue to embrace all areas of non competitive cycling that members are involved in.

This includes:-

long distance touring and camping,
day rides both long and short,
off road riding,
sportive and audax rides,

beginners rides

and other variations not to forget the away week and other networking opportunities for members to pursue areas of mutual interest outside the remit of the club

The staple of the club is the programme offered each quarter of varied road rides (and the occasional off road rides) that cover a wide range of areas and challenges and are made available through the good works of our own enthusiastic ride leaders. We are always grateful for this input from those who are prepared to lead rides and would encourage others to enjoy passing on their particular enthusiasms.

Address lists and Ride Leader registers: these are both available in their latest versions on our website under 'documents' and are locked files with a password which any committee member will pass on. The latter is a sheet of telephone numbers so that leaders would have recourse to telephone numbers etc in the event of an emergency on the ride. Both documents are kept up to date by Geoff, so any errors or changes to him please.

Trivets 2016: We are currently making enquiries to see if the CTC intends supporting this event next year. If so we would look to organising it again.

Audax Event : Your committee is considering the possibility of organising an audax in our area in 2016/17 It is seen as a way of encouraging new members and publicising our club as well as giving something back to the cycling community. Any input from members will be most appreciated when and if this goes ahead.

Week Away 2016: Claire and Dallas have kindly volunteered to coordinate again and, with Rachel's help, have already an eye on 'Ross Cottages' Belford Northumberland <http://www.rosscottages.co.uk> **Likely dates since Easter is very early(EMonday 28March2016) so 2-9 or 9-16 April 2016? More details soonish.**

4. AN OLD-TIMER'S TALE: the answer from Dick Phillips:

I was told this by a famous tourist, "Chater" Willis. I rode with him often in the late 1950s, when he was setting up a London group of the new Rough-Stuff Fellowship. We regarded him then as an old-timer: I've never ridden with anyone else with acetylene lights, front and rear. I now think he was probably only in his late 50s.

Old Forkbeard (an apt name borrowed from a former Swedish King) was George Lacy Hillier. I can date him; he died in 1941, aged 84. He won the national 5-mile championship (and also the 1-mile, 25-mile and 50-mile) in 1881, when punctures did not trouble us. As early as 1878, he was made a vice-president of the C T C at its inception. I imagine the encounter took place in the 1920s, but it could have been earlier, or any time up to about 1939.

We no longer use Woods valves, with loose valve-rubbers, but his advice is still sound.