

BONK!

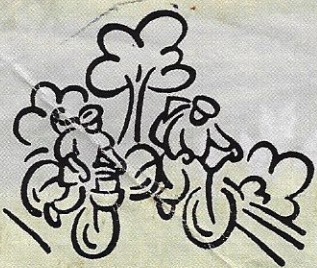
THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL

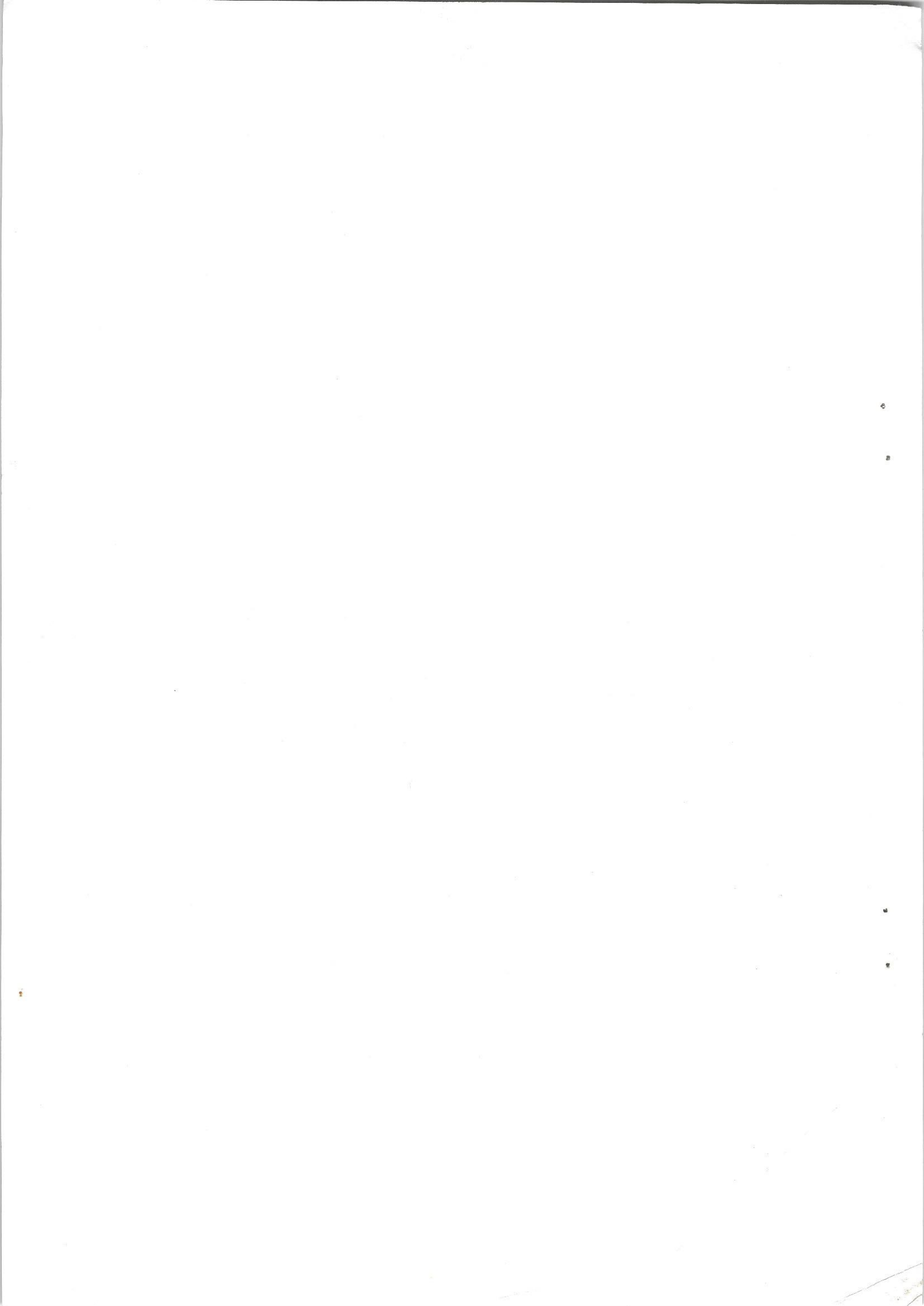
East Sussex

Cycling Association

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EAST SUSSEX CYCLING ASSOCIATION

President Richard Sutton

New Series No. 86

Spring 1999

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Editorial

We wrote in the Christmas editorial that Roy Humphrey had retired from his Association posts and about fifteen people met at Ridgewood Rise on January 28th to see him presented with a beautifully executed water colour painting of the Ash Tree Inn at Brownbread Street, especially commissioned from a Crowborough artist. Most people are aware that it was at the Ash Tree that the Association came into being in 1946 and it was appropriate that a special card had been produced by the Lade family showing on the cover the names of all the affiliated clubs past and present, and inside, pages had been signed by members of all the the current clubs. We hope that Roy will recall happy memories of his life in ESCAland when he looks at these mementoes.

Bonk is back to being thin again! Only four club contributions were received by the closing date. Fortunately we have been able to secure the services of William Hickey who has promised to write a few paragraphs about any club who's notes are missing. He kicks off with a report on behalf of the Crawley Wheelers. If you don't want to suffer a similar fate in the future buy a pencil and a notebook and submit your own news!

Best wishes for the 1999 season.

Maurice & Esther

BRIGHTON EXCELSIOR C.C.

The Christmas outing to the White Lion at Thakeham was its usual festive success. Thanks to Rick Stringer for organising it yet again. The lunch was followed by a full afternoon of usual banter, pints and ports and brandies round the welcome log fire, and of course Bill the landlord's warm reception.

President's retirement. Bert Absolom, after more than thirty years as the Brighton Excelsior's President and fifty two years as a loyal and active member has decided it's time to retire and hand the post to someone younger. He has done a stalwart job and we have special memories of the earlier years when he was club captain for many years and many hours of fun and companionship were spent on the many clubruns that Bert organised for us, with sit down booked teas at many locations throughout Sussex, including old bakeries, cafes and many pubs, and although high speed was not the essence we regularly did over 100 miles. Also, he and his wife Pat's unerring support of track racing at Preston Park and still continuing today as one of their many interests. He did other less sought after jobs too, such as Easy Club secretary and Easy Club treasurer, which was the Excel's version of a savings club. Although not a racing man himself he and Pat have given many, many hours of support to our sport, marshalling in events all over Sussex, etc. Well I hope that's covered the main parts of it and the very least we can say is a big, big thank you to Bert for being there. Keep the pedals turning and good health for the future.

Our annual 50 in 4 saw only a small group take part this time. On a cold December morning they departed for a fifty mile detour to East Chiltington from the Red Lion at Shoreham. Keith P., Bob Harber, Andy Marsh, our hon. gen. sec. Rick S. and iron man Chris Beckingham. Iron man was not up to it this time and so took a shorter route to meet up at lunch. Icy patches kept them on their toes to Dial Post, approximately half way and after a short stop in the bus shelter they were soon under way again and into the hillier parts, in and around Gay Street. The miles did have an effect although all made it to the Queens Head to a 'cold' pub, although offering a warm welcome and twelve pizzas to aid recovery for the ride home.

Well, I'm sure we will enjoy the impending hardriders as the next day out in the imminent season.

See you up the road.

Excelsiorian

SUSSEX NOMADS C.C.

"80 in 6" Reliability Trial

March 21st 8.30am

Cowfold

Further details from Alan ☎ 01273 558511

CLOSING DATE FOR SUMMER EDITION OF BONK

5th JUNE 1999

for distribution at the ESCA 50 on June 20th

SOUTHBOROUGH WHEELERS

I was pleased to be able to attend the presentation to Roy Humphrey on a January evening at Ridgewood Rise where Roy now lives. Congratulations to the Lade family who did so much hard work to produce an excellent booklet of signatures to accompany the painting of the Ash Tree Inn which they had commissioned. Roy was very grateful. It was a nice social occasion but I had to leave fairly promptly in order to see most of the Pete Crofts slide show being given at our clubroom on the same evening. He had some superb slides of last year's CTC trip to the East Indies (Bali, Flores and Lombok) showing both the scenery and local life. In 1999 it's to be Peru, Pakistan, New Zealand and the Phillipines and despite this call on his time he has bought an RTTC handbook - presumably to fill in the gaps with a bit of racing.

This ambition was probably rekindled by his great performance in the Southborough new years day 10 where he collected fourth place with a 23.52 - only 45 seconds behind winner Brian Taylor. The weather for this event was exceptionally benign and certainly far nicer than at least a dozen mornings in the 1998 racing season. It was Bill MacNay's first Open promotion and went off very smoothly. Despite a poorer entry than earlier years a good crowd gathered for the after event socialising as befits this season. Pete Holland rode twice - on a solo trike at the back of the field and a tandem trike at the front of the field. His partner on the tandem this year was Jackie MacNay (Bill's wife). She had never ridden a tandem before, never ridden a trike before and barely ever ridden a bike before! A true New Year spirit.

The weather for the club Boxing Day 10 was somewhat different. It poured with rain before and after the event though a relatively calm hour between allowed most of the 20 riders a reasonable ride. We again welcomed a fair sprinkling of the local CTC group although it was Nick Gritton (Team 2000) who beat Colin Nightingale to win it. A first this year was baby Austin Lomas in a kiddy seat for the first two circuits of his fathers ride. Mother Denise (nee Crofts) had to desist after the second lap in order to look after him. Neil Whelan, on holiday from university, took 3rd place whilst a suprise 4th went to Cameron Laws. He is a friend of the Hardings who was riding his first ever race. Mind you, he is a London Messenger rider. The gathering at the pub after the event was a very warm occasion and a welcome refuge from the rain.

The ESCA lunch this year lacked the cross toasts of former days but we quite enjoyed it although the L shaped room gave it an odd feeling. The Tree family were out in force to see Gill collect her ladies trophy and Warwick Dunford made it his first outing since his replacement hip. He still managed those steps with beer in his hand I noticed!

The earlier ESCA reliability ride was hardly auspicious for Southborough Wheelers - only 3 successful rides. Several entrants DNS, one went off course, one finished so far outside his time his lunch was nearly cold and two entrants plus two who hadn't entered finished so far ahead of their time that the timekeepers were not in place. These reliability rides do help to drag out older members in an attempt to keep themselves fit although I am pleased to say that our youngsters are attending regular Sunday training rides. Here's hoping for a more concerted racing programme in 1999.

ROAMER

Hastings & St Leonards C.C.

Following an upbeat end to my last report in looking forward to next season, a small number of riders have drifted away from the club over the winter, most notably our leading performer last year, Nick Leech who has joined Eastbourne Rovers. Whilst we regret Nick's decision to move on, which will obviously effect our potential to do well on the time trial scene, we wish him well and hope that the increased competition will spur him on to even better times this year.

Winter club runs have been better supported this year, partly due no doubt to the better weather conditions. We are regularly joined by a number of the 'Bayeux boys' making for reasonably paced runs with well contested sprints with Martin Markowski desperate to preserve his unbeaten record. He has certainly been run close in recent weeks by Hastings road man, Dave Freeman.

Whilst on the subject of sprints, we were joined on a run before Christmas by former junior world team pursuit champion Heiko Szonn, resplendent on his Telekom team issue Pinarello and in full team strip. (I see from this weeks comic that Heiko will be riding for the McCartney team this year). Heiko, out for a steady 7 hour ride, (as you do), looked more than a little perplexed when on the approach to Pevensey from Eastbourne, a string of 6 or 7 riders went storming up the road, desperately hanging on to Markowski's wheel with a view to taking the sign - something like "crazy Brits" was probably what was going through his mind, particularly when, a minute later, we headed for tea and toast at the Sandwich Inn.

It has been good to see some of our newer members coming out on a regular basis, getting the miles in for next season. Youngster, Stuart Patterson looks to be getting stronger by the week and Bill Roddick looks pretty useful!

Club Chairman and runs secretary, Pete Campany has been off since Christmas with medical problems. We all wish him a speedy recovery and look forward to seeing him out again soon. (I am also running out of ideas for club run routes!).

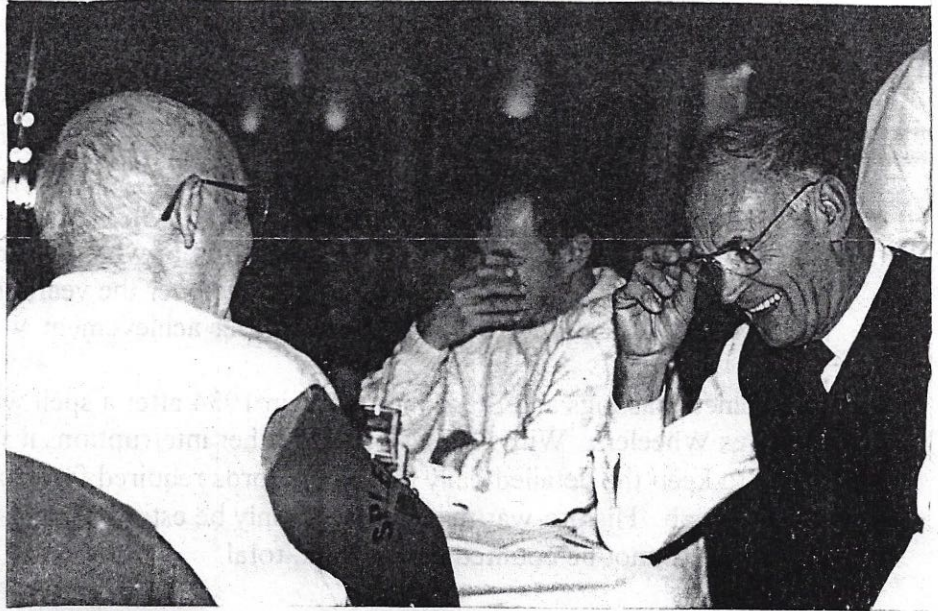
Anyway, thats all for now - roll on next season and some warmer weather!

DYNA-NITE

A HICKEYE VIEW OF.....THE CRAWLEY WHEELERS

Seeing is believing, opening my postbag in February I was greeted with a Dinner ticket from Lord Stokes, the Crawley overseer; it looked a freeby with the added compliment slip. I felt that Dave's conscience had troubled him over the 12 hour and he wanted to make amends for my day's marshalling at Cowfold. Well, arriving at Pease Pottage for the event and before I could say 'thank you Dave', Lord Stokes drew himself up and looked me straight in the eye and I quote 'I hope you brought the right money'. I thought, he's done it again, no expenses and now I have to pay for a dinner. I hear the St. Austell Wheelers is a nice venue!!

The event itself is always a nice lunch. Paul Spenceley again acted as M.C. Tony Killick, by chance, found a photo of himself, had it framed and delivered a well rehearsed speech on its origins, this was coupled with a 'This Is Your Life' catalogue on Owen Drake who looked suitably bewildered by it all. Alan Hale, sporting last year's suit from a mail order specialists Argos, was his usual self (distant); Ron Gager spoke nostalgically about the 'demise and resurrection of Keith Brock, who could shortly be casting an eye on joining the Crawley. Mike & Marina Bloom collected a fair share of the Crawley pots, medals and club records for once (but only once). I congratulate them both and offer them sincere best wishes for 1999.



(Ron Gager takes advantage of the Crawley Lunch being on Valentine's Day to propose marriage to Geoff Boore. photo above by kind permission of Jack Harris)

We always seem to get an obligatory Crawley Wheelers prize list and what's on which usually runs to sixteen pages and contains articles by the aforementioned. Noticeable items included the clubroom tea roster and there's a first aid night, however there is a pre-requisite that you should take the used tea towel home and return it clean! Stewth, what goes on at their first aid nights?

Mike Bloom heads an item titled "Mike's Mutterings". Perhaps this should be likened to what lively dialogue takes place at the hardware store when Marina decides to take a 'sicky' from her wheelbuilding and does a bunk for an all day potter round the Crawley by-pass. Lastly Mike makes some astute observations as stated:

- i) The brain leads and the body follows.
- ii) Strength is the most important of the four "s"SM regarding better cycle performance in general (help, ed, what are the four "s"SM?).
- iii) Every rev of the pedals is a little strengthener.

Cripes, what philosophy, I commend Alan Hale looks at this little lot. Since the average age of the 'Crawlies' is getting on, clearly this advise should not go un-noticed.

Finally Lord Stokes admitted in total confidence that nearly 20% of the Crawlies are over 65. If Glenn Hoddle was around what would he make of this lot?!

W.H.

Jack Southerden Clocks Up 500,000 Miles

Long time readers of Cycling Weekly (and its forerunner) may remember several articles over the years on members of the 300,000 mile club. Peter Knottley's article in the 22 June 1989 issue was on Jack Southerden who had clocked up 455,000 miles since 1949. Since then Jack has steadily been adding to his mileage and the prediction was that he would reach the 500,000 milestone in the summer of 1998. He was actually ahead of schedule and with the good weather in the Autumn of 1997 just made it before the end of the year. In his usual modest manner he kept the news to himself for a while until prompted to divulge the information.

Whilst admiring the painting of the Ash Tree Inn in Brownbread Street, Ashburnham, on display at the ESCA lunch I started talking to Warwick Dunford. During the course of the conversation I brought up the subject of Jack's milestone and Warwick suggested that something was put in Bonk. Since Jack was present at the meeting called in November 1946 to discuss the formation of what was to become ESCA and has participated in numerous Association events over the years there could be no more appropriate publication than Bonk to record this achievement.

Jack joined Hastings and St Leonards CC in 1934 after a spell with the short lived Hastings Wheelers. With war service and other interruptions it was 1949 before he began to keep the detailed daily mileage records required for accreditation by the 300,000 club. His pre-war mileage could only be estimated and included numerous events but cannot be counted in the grand total.

His mileage built up rapidly from his first year's total of 11,680 to 22,380 in 1953, his most prolific year. Jack says he wanted to see how many miles he could do in a year whilst holding down a full time job, an average of 61 miles a day! He then tailed off to a more modest 10 to 15 thousand a year until 1965 when a series of operations on his eyes kept him off his bike for many months. The problems with his eyes were probably as a result of a severe adverse reaction to exposure to an industrial fungicide / pesticide whilst working in an enclosed loft space. Over a period of time the treatment to alleviate the symptoms may well have caused long term damage to his eyes. Before long Jack was increasing his mileage again and after his retirement in 1977 was not far short of 20,000 for three years running. The only year he dropped below 2,000 was in 1984 when his deteriorating eyes restricted him to only 722 miles before a cataract operation improved his sight again.

Many of his miles were down to racing, supplemented heavily by the need to ride out to and back from events. He was ESCA BAR in 1950 and has probably clocked up more ESCA racing miles than anyone else, unless anyone knows different! He rode 14 ESCA 12 hour events totalling 2,837 miles, excluding the 180 for his one DNF. He also completed 27 ESCA 100s.

Jack is Club President and still has a very active interest in the world of cycling but did not do many miles last year because of ill health. With the better warmer weather on its way the familiar sight of Jack in an old Hastings club top may occasionally be seen on the roads again, but having achieved his target of half million miles may be he will restrict his exercise to walks around the Old Town.

A Taste of Austria 20th June - 6th July 1998

For many years I had wanted to visit Innsbruck and Salzburg and the expanding network provided by European Bike Express seemed to offer a reasonable way of doing this. Their coaches follow three main routes: through central and western France to Bayonne near the Spanish border; through central and eastern France to Germany and Spain and through Switzerland and Italy to just beyond Venice. I took the third. The drop off point at Basle on the French/German/Swiss border, although not the closest seemed to be the least strenuous way of reaching my desired destination. Venice is closer but look at those mountains en route to Innsbruck or Salzburg! O.K. for a youngster but not for a fully laden spring chicken of 66.

The fare to Basle was £130 return (£150 to Venice), and the company provides one of the safest forms of bike transportation presently available, as the bike is secured in a specially designed bike trailer towed behind the coach. On the railways it is difficult to take the bike on the same train as yourself across international borders, and if travelling by air, baggage handlers are not always the most bicycle friendly.

I caught the coach at Dover at 2.00 p.m. This arrived punctually, having come down from Middlesborough, and after collecting passengers and bike, continued on to the Dover - Calais ferry (crossing time about one hour). A reasonably comfortable drive followed, with comfort stops, via France, Belgium, Luxemburg and Germany to basle, arriving at delightful time of 2.45 a.m. on a Sunday morning. A room in a Formula 1 hotel just round the corner had been booked. Later that day I cycled into central Basle, to the main railway station, and caught a train to Kreuzlingen/Constance on the edge of the Bodensee (Lake Constance). Two changes were necessary, at Zurich and Weinfelden (both in Switzerland) but connections were quick and the trains punctual and efficient. All had luggage vans, and guards on the whole were helpful. In Germany, Austria and Switzerland, with a few exceptions, you can take your bike with you on the same train provided it does not cross borders. The fare to Kreuzlingen, a three hour journey, was £28, including a small charge for the bike. The booking clerk at the Basle station information office was very efficient and spoke excellent English. From Constance I crossed the lake by ferry to the German town of Meersburg, on the northern coast, and then started cycling in earnest. B & Bs are easy to find in Germany and Austria, clean and quite cheap (£10 - £20 including en suite shower and breakfast). They can be more expensive in big towns. I carried a tent and the usual camping paraphernalia but did not use it as accommodation was usually readily available. On some of those hills I cursed that tent.

Apart from mentioning the itinerary I will not bore you with details of the ride except to say that most of the time cycle-ways were numerous and excellent and well marked on the local maps. But be warned, if there is a good cycle-way beside the road and you ignore it by staying on the road, you get beeped. I did not seek macho mountain passes - the smaller ones finished me off quite easily. But on the whole the cycling was easy, the routes often following river valleys. That is not to say that I didn't puff frequently, and get off and walk sometimes. Another time, carrying less baggage, I would like to try more of the (gentler) passes, as the scenery is magnificent. I stopped at the following places, sometimes for more than a day:

Freidrichshaven, beside the Bodensee	Bavaria
Lindau, a beautiful town, also on the Bodensee	
Laufenegg, a farming area in the Allgaü	
Füssen, an attractive town in a beautiful location at the edge of the Alps (two castles)	
Garmisch Partenkirchen, next to the Zugspitze (9717ft) and Germany's highest peak	
Innsbruck, a beautiful city backed by a wall of mountains	Austria
Kulstein, site of a splendid castle	
Salzburg, another beautiful city (Mozart associations)	
From here, did a half day coach tour of the Salzkammergut, the local Lake District	

For the return journey I took the train through Austria from Salzburg to Bregenz, on the eastern end of lake Constance (Bodensee). This cost £33, took four hours and passed through some glorious scenery. I then cycled through Switzerland back to Basle, following the lake shore and the Rhine, and stayed overnight at the attractive town of Schaffhausen, and at Kaiseraugst near Basle. Total mileage by bike five hundred and seventy two. The return coach of European Bike Express arrived just fifteen minutes late which wasn't bad considering it had come all the way from Venice, and returned its bikes and passengers safely to the U.K. The pick-up point at Basle lacked shelter but fortunately it was dry.

Except for two fairly hard days, the cycling was moderate to easy. Average mileage forty seven miles per day, ranging from twenty five to seventy five miles per day. I was usually on the road by 9 or 9.30 a.m. and looking for B & B by 5.00 p.m. Route finding was fairly easy although I missed a number of cycle paths, probably through insufficient knowledge of German, and three occasions wasted an hour or more because I had gone wrong. On the whole, the cycling maps were very good, although at one point in Bavaria a large reservoir was not shown, which had me puzzled (and lost) for some time - it was a new one.

It was a thoroughly enjoyable tour which has whetted my appetite to see more. My wife was very trusting to let me go alone, but next time I shall take her with me (if she would like to come??) otherwise the list of jobs awaiting my return will be too daunting!

M.R. Isitt
Mid-Week Section



FOR SALE

£350

CONDOR "Designer Select" 1991
Dark green time trialling bike. 23" frame 531

£350

Triathlon bars. Campagnolo hubs and gear change. Mavic rims.
Cinelli stem/bars/seat pin.

Details or to view: Jack Dunn 01825 732166

SUSSEX NOMADS C.C.

Monday, it's spring, the snowdrops and crocus are blooming, even the daffodils are trying and it's nice and warm. Tuesday, it's winter, the snow is on the ground and I am grounded again; the weather on Tuesday always seems GROT, so it's the turbo again. These days you have to be fit to keep up on clubruns. We have been very lucky to have had an influx of new members and they all go quite fast, especially up hills and these days there are certainly more hills than in the past.

We now have almost thirty members, so no more jokes about Nomads having meetings in phone boxes or bus shelters. Some of the new members are new to club cycling and ages vary from 16 to 30 years and also vary in size from small to barn door size. We are also pleased to welcome Martin Penfold and Teresa Thompson to the club so giving the younger ones someone to compete with up the hills on Sundays. Crafty Alan has volunteered to take any slower ones: who knows, Geoff might also have to help him.

Next week is the club '5' and we expect a good field (providing it is spring and not winter that day), and in following weeks I expect clubruns to have ten plus riders.

To go back a little bit, the A.G.M. was very poorly attended so there were no volunteers for any jobs, consequently all our officers are as per last year, and the year before, and the year before that, recurring, etc. The fish & chip supper was also short of club members but Geoff and Alan had a good evening swapping tales with six visitors. The last event of the year was the Christmas 10 and we had a good number out on a pleasant morning, and apart from the riders who included our President Vernon Hyde, Eric & Ruby Howell were there plus a former Brighton Excel man Derek Bennett who rode with Alan in the early fifties. After the event we had tea and mince pies, all free of course. We are so generous to our members.

New Year brought the Dinner; once again at St. Catherine's Lodge Hotel in Hove. Fifty eight people sat down and the ladies had a yellow carnation buttonhole. Roger Davies sulked at the A.G.M. because they were for ladies only so he was given a plastic flower so that he didn't feel left out. I almost forgot to mention the fact that 'Sussex' Nomads are twenty one years old, although the Nomads go back much further than that. The club is even than Geoff Boore but not as old as Vernon. So we had a birthday cake and this ceremoniously cut by our President and shared out, perhaps we should have asked Vernon to do a five loaves and three fishes job on it because it didn't go far. The evening started with Geoff Boore being presented with a Little Chef menu and gift pack so that he would feel at home as he does a lot of time in Little Chefs. Cross toasting was up to standard and amidst much laughter this went on throughout the evening. Poetry was even being composed and recited to great effect.

An incomplete award was made to Andrew Hinton for an incomplete ride in the Archer's Road Race in France and later he was given the Reg Porter Sportsman's Trophy for driving our support car to and from the Archer's for the last two or three years. Ron Keeble was our guest for the night and he made a funny speech, although a little blue it was almost a variety turn. Ron and John Woodburn were all part of the act with Alan explaining finally where the Nomads came from, the evening went far too quickly, and if you weren't there, HARD LUCK! Still, never mind, next year it will be better so see you there, SAME PLACE, SAME WEEKEND, SAME PRICE, book now!

Already the Nomads have been to the fore, a goodly number rode both the Lewes reliability trial and the Worthing 100k (that's 62.5 miles), this all in preparation for our own 80 miles in 6 hours on March 21st. This year the start is at Cowfold and we expect to cover some new lanes and climb some different hills but this only training for the Worthing 200K. (THAT'S A LONG WAY).

Finally a story from the Dinner. Keith & Audrey Chandler were late (surprise! surprise!). Once before they were a day late! so we rang the. The manager of the hotel dialled the number and Alan took the phone, a little girl said 'Hello'. Alan said 'Is your Dad there?'. Little girl, 'No'. Alan 'Is your Mum there'. Little girl 'Yes, but she's in the bath'. Alan 'Oh well, tell her to hurry or she will miss dinner'. As Alan put down the phone Keith & Audrey walked in! I wonder who we phoned?

That's it. See you soon. Stay bright.

Nomadicus

Lewes Wanderers

Just for once, let's hear it for Geoff Boore. Yes, yes, he talks a lot and something nasty has happened to his body over the years; but give the man his due: when it comes to riding a bike, he can still hack it. This is not just my opinion: it was one of the main talking points among those riders who (like Mr. Boore) survived our 100k. reliability trial in January.

If you, dear reader, had seen him puffing up the hill to the Burnt Oak checkpoint after only 12 miles you would probably have called for an ambulance. The others in his group had arrived some minutes earlier. They signed the check form, applied lotion to their legs, drank Buck-U-Uppo from their bottles - and cruelly shot off down the road as soon as they saw that Geoff was summoning the strength to take a banana from his pocket. It is rumoured that some were laughing. Anyway, the laugh was on them, because our hero got round well inside the qualifying time, unlike others I shan't mention. *(Hope that's all right, Geoff. I had a job to read your writing. Just send the money to me, c/o Maurice and Esther. Thanks.)*

The other name gasped through wide open mouths on the circuit was that of Graham Jeffs. He's usually an inoffensive sort of bloke, known to give any passing dog, cat or even cyclist a friendly pat or wave; but he has let his election as our runs leader go to his head. The organisation of the reliability trial was one his duties. He offered a choice of two circuits, distributed maps and route sheets, booked Chailey Village Hall, arranged coverage of checkpoints - and then cleared off to Australia. This meant that when riders who had foolishly attempted the longer circuit arrived back at the hall, he wasn't there to be scragged. It had been the enticing thought of revenge which had kept them going on the **/=#| ^^**!!! climbs.

The 50k. route missed most of the worst hills but still presented riders with challenges of one sort or another. Like, for instance, whether to wait for Graham Seymour when he punctured at the start. A small group of his friends promised to ride on slowly to give him a chance to catch up. A few miles later, with no sign of Graham and the cold getting into their bones, they unanimously decided to act like real cyclists and leave him to fend for himself. It's a tough world out there.

The mystery of what makes a freewheeling winner is no nearer a solution after our latest annual event. Ten years of victories by under-eleven-stoners seemed to prove that wind-resistance mattered more than weight. Steve Burgess supported this theory one year by tying lead weights to his crossbar and finishing at the back of the field. Now it's back to the drawing board: last December, Bob Comben, Tony Longhurst and Richard Meed, none of whom are likely to see ten stones again, brushed aside the challenge of the skinny lightweights and led our championship event down Pick Hill, near Horam. Tony went on to win the Porter Trophy (named after Reg Porter) in a competition involving a series of non-racing events. We're trying to persuade him and other long-distance tourists to ride the Mitre's National Championship '24' this year. There's sure to be lots of lovely downhills, honest.

This piece is being written before the start of the time trial season, which is not to say that all our members have been lazing about (although Ian Landless is spending the winter on foreign beaches once again). Steve and Mark Burgess have been putting themselves about on muddy cyclo-cross tracks, to good effect. Steve usually wins whatever vets' prizes are on offer, but Mark is the star. He has won several youth races, sometimes by a big distance. The latest was at Greenwich, where he was leading by two minutes on the last lap when his frame broke. Steve had walked away from the circuit to prepare for his own race but ran back on hearing Mark's cry for help and gave him his own bike. Mark won with a minute to spare. His Mum is rightly proud of him but carries this to excess at times: on our Christmas MTB run, Mark was leaving the pub with the others when she demanded a goodbye kiss and chased him round a table. Winter riding through squelchy mud helped him to escape such a humiliating experience.

Humiliation was in the air, too, at the ESCA lunch. It was an enjoyable affair at a new venue, but was spoiled by a few lewd guests who harped on about women's knickers. Their victim was a respectable man of mature years, who had inadvertently allowed his name to be associated with these garments. He has asked me to point out that his last sighting of a filled knicker-leg is but a dim and distant memory.

Rotrax

WILLIAM HICK EY

It is quite serious to see how few youngsters are coming into the sport. It seems to me that each club in the area has a duty and obligation to trawl for the elusive young. I have said many times that they are out there, but we must go out and get them and not just wait, hoping they will come to us. I would further suggest that clubs have a very good look at their advertising material for 1999 and make a more determined effort to put themselves about. Ask Frank Blake, Tony Yorke and Vern McLelland. Their combined efforts have rewarded their respective clubs with a trickle of young aspirants.

I would further request that all clubs in Sussex put up, say, £50 to £100 to go into a Youth Expectation fund, thus enabling like minded club officials to openly preach cycling and its benefits to schools, etc. This funding could offset the cost of vehicle mileage, meal allowance, printing and stationery. In any event it seems to me that perhaps we should initiate an open forum for all clubs to participate and discuss Sussex cycling in general, we might even have time to look at a possible amalgamation of the two Associations, which in my opinion is well overdue.

In planning your new season, January would not be quite the same if you didn't participate in that quite ambiguous event called a reliability trial. The organisers always seem to go out of their way to emphasise that this event is not a race but to complete a specified course within a given time. Fairly recently due to dwindling numbers the reliability trials have been re-named Audax events. I think this is to prop up the numbers and give it a certain respectability. Whichever way, make no mistake, it is a race and nobody will convince me otherwise.

So there I was outside the Five Bells at Chailey under the scrutiny of Mick Kilby of the Looses, wondering whether I fancied my chances at sixty one miles of climbing in 4 hours and 40 minutes. I noted that the organiser was safely ensconced in New Zealand. Some forty souls set out at varying distances and times. Some 4 hours 38 minutes later, accompanied by my faithful domestiques, Peter Baker and part player 'The Raz' we returned to base. Having climbed virtually every major col in East Sussex, we were spared Argos, High & Over and Woods Corner, probably because they were not situated on the flight path. Sandra Hill's bread pudding was delicious, nice and moist, certainly on a scale of ten it has to be an eight, if the size can be improved it will be a nine. And what of the remaining combatants? A few drifted in but it looked like at least half the contingent were A.W.O.L. Mick Burgess did assure me that as the Looses broom wagon there were no further stragglers. I had to ride home. Did Mick have to ride home to Crowborough, I think not!!

Into February I ventured into west Sussex, the domain of the Worthing, for their pre-season warm up. Some 112k of sorties into the Cranleigh area. Again the header was an Audax warmer. I was assured, definitely no mudguards! Accompanied by a clutch of Sussex Nomads, we duly completed, having sampled chef Hudson's vittals, and Angela whingeing about a toe job in the middle of nowhere. Any, it was a nice little event. On returning to the hall it somewhat resembled a museum with price tickets every which way; soup 50p and a loaf of bread, administered with loving care by Dusty Miller; a 10p cup of coffee, dexterously executed by the sous chef Mike Poland (who told me in confidence he has only four years to retirement). I didn't ask who he was retiring from. Then we had a whole series of prices for a badge or a cloth reminder. Having completed the event, not forgetting of course the trick question on the Audax card, i.e. what is the publican's name at a pub at Wineham? Of course the name I gave was incorrect, silly me, I had gone to the wrong pub which I should have known. I am not sure if my ride will suffer a similar disqualification for this transgression!!

William

MID-WEEK SECTION

The Mid-Week Section may not be the fastest group of cyclists in the area but they are certainly the most sociable. No sooner had they recovered from the Anniversary Lunch (reported in the last edition of this magazine), than our busy secretary was distributing booking forms for the Festive Lunch to be held a few weeks later. The first Wednesday in January saw members assemble at the Home Maid, Horam on a beautiful morning ready for a brisk ride around the lanes in the couple of hours before the May Garland, just up the road, opened its doors to us. Meanwhile, in the cafe, the Eastbourne Rovers Yuppie Section were seriously comparing their mobile phones. John Dutson, John Armstrong, George Henty and Stu Greenway all swore that no cyclist should be without one, although I remember being out with Dave Copping one Saturday when his wife phoned and sent him off to his mother-in-law's and on another occasion he had to leave the ride when he was urgently summoned to work! A mixed blessing maybe. Anyway, the Lunch was a very jolly affair, the maximum sixty five had booked and it was fortunate that some members had to cry off because of other engagements or we could have been eating in shifts. This was the last occasion that Ken & Iris Stevens were to join us and we were pleased to be able to thank them for their work on our behalf and wish them well in the future.

Usually at this time of the year our numbers are depleted by holiday commitments as various people go off to find the sun, however, it seems at the moment as if the major trips are still in the planning stage. Richard Thatcher probably has the most ambitious project in hand as he is joining a charity ride across China in aid of Mencap. Naively we have allowed him to lead a few of our runs, little realising that he was using them as training for the future. There were some rumblings of discontent after the first one but luckily we all have forgiving natures and are sponsoring him for the trip.

Even though since then the weathers seems to have become more and more unfavourable as the year progresses, we still manage to assemble a large gathering for our Wednesday rides. In fact, at a recent committee meeting it was decided that an intermediary group should be formed as an alternative to the Alternatives. Jean & Grace will continue to organise the latter riders and Geoff Boxall has agreed to lead the intermediaries.

Saturday rides enjoy varying degrees of support but there are usually one or two people to be found enjoying a meal and a friendly pint or two in East Sussex hostelries. It is surprising how many 'names' from the past find their way to our gatherings.

We are looking forward to a full programme of clubruns and hope that everyone enjoys their cycling, whichever branch of the sport they take part in.

Baqqy Skonts

EVENTS 1999

Sunday 7th March (Association) GS/896 (Fairwarp) 17 miles Entry fee £4.00
Mrs. V. Stringer, 24 Saxon Road, Steyning BN44 3FP ☎ 01903 815685

Sunday 11th April (Association) GS/893 (Hailsham) 2up T.T. Entry fee £8.00
Mr. L. Hayman, 25 Chieveley Drive, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5HG ☎ 01892532073

Saturday 24th April (Association) G10/89 (E.Hoathly) 10 miles Entry fee £4.00
Mr. G. Lade, 66 Wilton Avenue, Hampden Park, E'bourne BN22 9HY ☎ 01323 509408

Sunday 25th April (Association) G25/89 (Fairwarp) 25 miles Entry fee £4.00
Mr. D. Freeman, 54 Pevensey Road, St. Leonards on Sea TN38 0LS ☎ 01424 434285

The 10 & 25 will have an overall classification prize as last year.

Sunday 20th June (Open) G50/83 (Fairwarp) 50 miles Entry fee £4.00
Mr. A. Limbrey, 13 Rustington Road, Brighton BN1 8DQ ☎ 01273 558511

Sunday 18th July (Open) G100/86 (U.Dicker) 100 miles Entry fee £6.00
Mr. M. Rabbetts, Jarvis Court, Mottins Hill, Crowborough TN6 3SE ☎ 01892 654422

Saturday 18th September (Open) G10/87 (E.Hoathly) 10 miles Entry fee £4.00
Mr. A. Cook, 4 Coney Croft, Horsham W.Sussex RH12 4EW ☎ 01403 251751

Sunday 19th September (Open) G25/89 (Fairwarp) 25 miles Entry fee £4.00
Mr. R. Blackmore,
Ladymead, Snowhill, Crawley Down, W.Sussex RH10 3EE ☎ 01342 713272

These two events are also open to tandems and there is an overall classification prize.

EAST SUSSEX CYCLING ASSOCIATION

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Treasurer: Mr. Mick Kilby, 11 Sherbourne Road, Hove, East Sussex BN3 8BA. Tel: 01273 423588

Consultant: Mr. Roy Humphrey, Ridgewood Rise, Highview Lane, Ridgewood, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5SY. Tel: 01825 764761

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