

Hallo Everyone

Here we are with another edition of Winged Wheel which I hope you will enjoy. Thank you to everyone who has contributed. It's been a funny old year weather wise hasn't it? It wasn't a brilliant Summer, then there was that awful flooding (which we avoided as we were in New Zealand!) and today the ride has been cancelled due to possible icy roads! Let's hope for better next year.



I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and all the best for 2024.

Best wishes

*Judy*

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### Presidents Ramblings 3

Here we are a month into winter and Christmas done and dusted, hope you are enjoying your Christmas presents, particularly the cycling related ones. I am mindful that previous ramblings focussed on cycle cameras and reporting motoring offences, so this time I will say little more than I continue to report the more serious incidents. These have been few, as I have not been able to ride much due to a shoulder injury.

Your committee continues to work on safe group riding. The basic presumption being that all individuals are responsible for their own safety and the safety of others. To assist riders, we publish, on



our website, guidance for riders and leaders, both of which are regularly reviewed and amended, so please make it a habit to read these. Cycling UK had a risk awareness drive, the early part of this year and a new document that sets out cycling risks and minimizing actions, will soon be added to the guidance. Some risks are of course within our control and others are not, and the risk assessment makes this distinction.

I am looking forward to riding more in 2024. A group of riders already have a, fully subscribed, tour of Northumberland booked for April and I am looking forward to hearing about it on their return. I recently went on a Photograph course based at Bamburgh, and visited Holy Island to the North and Beadnell Harbour, Cullernose point, Dunstanburgh castle, and St Mary's Lighthouse just north of Whitley Bay.

If you have any trips planned, I am sure the editor would welcome an article, and the readership might also be inspired to visit areas others have enjoyed. In the meantime here are a few of Photos



Bamburgh Castle from the North beach



Sunset Looking West from "Budle" point north of Bamburgh



"Cullernose" Point south of Craster.

Happy Cycling ---- Maurie.

### Acting Secretary's Notes

I have only one item of information to report in this issue, namely that I have arranged our 2024 AGM for Tuesday 30th April at 7:30. The venue will be the same as this year, Ipswich Sports Centre on Henley Road.

So in order to fill the rest of this column, and as it is the end of the Calendar Year, I thought I would recall some memories of our Spring Tour back in April. Hartington is really an excellent base for a cycling tour, in the heart of the "White Peak" with a network of surrounding lanes. Some of these are obviously hilly, but as an alternative there are 4 old railways nearby which have been converted to cycle trails and so offer more gentle cycling. They are named Tissington, Manifold, High Peak and Monsal.



We had rides utilising all of these trails, as well as on-road routes West to the Staffordshire "Roaches" (a distinctive hill range), East to the Tourist hub of Bakewell (where the Thornbridge brewery tap proved popular), and North to test the legs climbing Winnats Pass (well, a few did).

Here are a few photos ..



3 on my ride to the Staffordshire Roaches, which are in the background.

# Winged Wheel

December 2023  
Issue 301

CTC Suffolk

we are  
**cycling**  
The cyclists' champion **UK**



3 of us approaching Flash, the highest village in the UK (higher than Wanlockhead in Scotland, which I've also reached by bike). Thanks to Paul Fenton for dismounting to snap this.



On the middle day of the tour I led a walk down the upper reaches of the Dove for those who wanted a break from cycling. This was rather popular, as was the pub stop. The only excuse for including this in a cycling journal is the well-known celebrities pictured!

John.

### Sunday Rides Ramblings

I am struggling to find much to write about this quarter not helped by the fact that Judy and I were away for the second half of October and the first half of November. We were aware of the storms and unprecedented floods in October and were thankful that we live in an area which has never been known to flood. I know that the club rides were unable to get to elevenses at Wheelers in Hadleigh because the river had engulfed the road and, worse still, the back part of Maureen and Ken's house was inches deep in water.



Average attendance on rides has taken a dip this quarter, which is usual for the winter months, not helped by the atrocious weather. I know that some of our regular riders (myself included) are, for various reasons, not as regular as they used to be. We did experiment with a couple of rides in November to start earlier and get back home earlier to take full advantage of the limited daylight hours. Attendances on those rides seem to indicate that the idea is not particularly popular.

Pre-covid we had, for some years, arranged a traditional Christmas lunch at the Queen's Head in Great Wenham. Regrettably after things got back to "normal" the pub were not able to cater for us anymore so we opted for a less formal lunchtime gathering at the cyclists' favourite Station House at Campsea Ashe. This went down well with a very high turnout, and last year not everyone being able to get a seat in the room we hired. A suggestion was put forward that we might revive the traditional Christmas meal which Paul Fenton kindly agreed to organise. The Rides Committee felt it would be wise to keep our options open and also provisionally keep the informal lunch on the programme. Unfortunately the more formal meal had to be cancelled through lack of support, but to the opposite extreme I had to insist on pre booking for Campsea Ashe to limit numbers as it was oversubscribed.

On the subject of Christmas I would like to wish you all a Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year. A final note that there is a full programme of rides on the website for January 2024 and I look forward to meeting some of you so we can shed the excess pounds together doing something we enjoy.

Happy cycling in 2024.

*Michael Scott*

Sunday Rides Coordinator

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Maureen and Ken Nichols have asked me to pass on their thanks to everyone who helped with and supported their 'Cycle Jumble' in the Summer. Thankfully, the weather was good.

They had 7 stalls and served tea and cakes to raise £250 for Retinitis Pigmentosa and £80 for the Spinal Injuries Charity. Some of the remainder of the goods were donated to Recycle Woringford to go to Africa.

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### **Suffolk Churches by cycle: Dennington By Derek Worrall**

The church of St. Mary's has a dominant position in the middle of the village, overlooking the green. It is of substantial size and has many treasures, some of which are unique.

Whilst Dennington is not one of Suffolk's wool (or more correctly cloth) towns its grandeur is due to the link with the wealthy Wingfield family from the Laxfield area. The current church is mediaeval and is unusual in that it retains seven doors from that period. The benches have numerous animal carvings also from that time.

One particular unique carving is of note; that of a Skiapod. A mythical creature with one enormous foot which could serve as protection from the sun.

Another notable piece of woodwork is the three-decker pulpit from the 1620's.

Some box pews remain and there are extravagant chapels, surrounded by intricate and highly decorated screens. Within one are detailed alabaster effigies, still retaining original colour.

In the north aisle is the remains of an ancient one-handed clock mechanism from 1675. The new clock is from 1948 and commemorates the fallen of the second world war.

Next to the old mechanism is an unusual Victorian sand table, used for teaching children to write.

The organ is of note as it is from an illustrious maker a "Father Willis" organ. It was transferred to the church in 1967 and set up by Bishop & Son of Ipswich (Bolton Lane).

The font has an interesting fifteenth century octagonal boldly coloured cover which has been restored using paint made using historical techniques.

The best has been left to last. The greatest treasure is a hanging canopy, called a pyx canopy, covering the reserved sacrament, contained within a small box (or pyx). It can be found hanging above the altar. Up to 1927 it was used as a door stop until its historical importance was realised.



If you are cycling to The Neathouse or The Dennington Queen pub it is well worth popping into the church as there is so much of interest to see.

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### ***Mid Winter***

Picture this.

The sky is a ...nothing; the colour of thin worn out cotton: The air, still, bitter as stone: Thin. Unnourishing. Cold. The only sound is a distant indistinguishable murmur.

Trees, like sentries, mark their territories along the flat skyline; silhouettes down the centuries, identifying themselves only by their familiar shapes. The land rests, yielding only bare earth following a wet autumn, in wait for a Spring renewal. Fields streaked with silver channels of entrapment. Water waits for release, the ditches and dykes all too busy moving the surplus on. You can hear the urgent message from the pipes. Last years bramble and lucrutious growths, sag and lie. The Spring's gay abandonment of energy long since spent out. Hedges claw and grapple towards the outside and enclose and harbour the restless streams asunder.

We are alone. All humanity seems distant, irrelevant, unnatural: Out of step with the slow, timeless, evolving of the seasons. We are now inside ourselves. The body moves now in consciousness. We think on our position, economy of effort. Rhythm ! We try and ignore the deep chill in the cheeks – on the brow, freezing feet. Think only of rhythm, pace, economy. Measuring our effort against the known requirements of the ride - eeking it out or, on windy days, flinging it with gay abandon onto a glorious tail wind. Memories seep back in: That wall, that Church, that hedge, that tree! That rough piece of road. That drain, That hill. All seen and passed many times before but cherished for good and bad nevertheless. The '*bread n butter*' routes of our winter routine.

The glow of expressed heat becomes a surprise in the frost, which gathers like a ghost over our chest and arms. We become two bodies – warm, even hot back; cold chilled front. Sweating core – freezing extremities. The heart pumps towards an equilibrium. Eyes and brain work hard. Rhythm! Economy! Calculating the safe Line. Puddle or pothole! Effort and Heart in continuous aggravated dialogue until a truce is reached after about 5 miles.

Further on, it expectedly rains. You win some you lose some. Shower or front? If shower we press on, the warm shower and dry clothes will make all well. If front, better to 'cape up' early, but how many times do we not! If the wind is against, a few miles of purgatory awaits, but we've been here before. If we are lucky it will be bad enough to be one of those '*remember when*' experiences, but perhaps a scaring experience that can take weeks to heal in the psychy. If the wind is aft we can feel indomitable champions as we fly in the spray, tyres ripping through the puddles.



We turn for home. Onwards is now 'less' than 'more'. Our thoughts turn to home comforts. If we have judged rightly the wind is behind and the ride is more of a glide. Being cold, wet, the tyranny of the 'routine' - the '*getting the miles in*' no longer weighs heavy. There is a sense of confidence. As we approach home a sense of satisfaction grows. Another one in the bag. Good ones are when the legs glow. We reflect. Bad days are parked to the back of the memory. Good days are savoured over the hot tea and crumpets. Hot showers and warm clothes are appreciated like Christmas morning!

**Paul Fenton**

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OH! SUFFOLK

### [A Love Letter to the County](#)

Not a County to shout about its sights  
She is a gentle lady with many delights  
Not a lady to boast or grab your attention  
But calm and soft natured is the sensation

Her lanes twist and turn past cottage and barn  
Her villages in the sun are peaceful and calm  
Her beaches of shingle and sand stretch to the horizon  
Where wild birds call throughout every season

Although her curves of valley and hill  
They can still feel the north east chill  
In winter the bare orderly fields are exposed  
Where pewits stand in silent rows

In February water lies in her ditches  
And in summer loud shouts come from cricket pitches  
Her coast is the first to receive the morning sun  
As early rising farmers get their day's work done

Thought by some to be flat and featureless  
She has delights at all corners of the compass  
Her south is full of hills, short and steep  
Her north has broads where bitterns creep

In high summer her scent is of hot cornfields  
In autumn it is damp earth, as the plough tills  
In spring her lanes are full of flowers  
And the wind turns mills of post and towers

She carefully hides her pastel hued villages  
Built proudly by craftsmen throughout the ages  
Her rivers start with just a trickle  
And finish at the sea where the waves are fickle

Her ancient mediaeval towns  
Are often based around castle mounds  
Although founded many centuries before  
When Danes, Viking and Saxons made war

Her high ground of woods and fields  
Is renowned for producing very high yields  
Her people are not strident or loud  
But over centuries have been resilient and proud  
As her churches call the faithful to prayer  
A vixen and cubs appear from nowhere  
Frost lingers in every damp dell  
As mourners walk to the sound of a tolling bell

These are her jewels hidden away  
To be explored another day  
The church towers round and square  
Are not to be matched anywhere

The pre-histories left little in our soil and sand  
But Romans left their roads across the land  
Saxon and Angles came and left their place names  
Then the Normans came and laid their claims

During the First World War  
Her horses, ploughmen and more  
Left her shores to give their blood  
And many Suffolk bones still lie in foreign mud

Ships have always been part of her heritage  
From Redwald's ship to Containers on her edge  
In winter her dress can be deep snow  
But later the yellow primroses will grow

In Breckland the windblown trees stand stark row by row  
And in the big skies giant clouds some and go  
In January the Siberian icy winds blow

To make young children's cheeks aglow

You can feel her history in every lane  
The ghostly tread from where they came  
Her history is quietly lying in every hill  
In the evenings you can feel it if you just stay still

Oh Suffolk, I am in your spell  
And will not stop as I know you so well  
Now I will say goodbye  
With a happy smiling sigh

Ken Nichols  
October 2023

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Ray Wand sent in this picture of the old Safe Harbour pub in Edwardian times and wonders when we last saw so many people out on a ride! The pub was located in Grimwade Street and closed in 1938. Michael Googled the Safe Harbour pub that some of us will remember which was in Meredith Road and closed in the 1990s.



### **70 on my 70<sup>th</sup> by John Thompson**

I reached the 'big 7-0' this year and as my birthday (30<sup>th</sup> July) nicely fell on a Sunday, I decided on the theme "70 on my 70<sup>th</sup>." That is 70 miles, not km.

I decided the distance would work out nicely if I rode from Oulton Broad to Eye, for a full English in CafEye, returning by a slightly different route, giving me the opportunity to ride a particular lane for the first time, to finish at my current favoured local pub, The Bell at Carlton Colville (the food is excellent!) for a Sunday roast.

It's said "the sun shines on the righteous" and perhaps especially if it's your birthday. Well, Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> July started warm and sunny and stayed so. There was also no wind to speak of. A very slight headwind outward but that meant a slight tailwind return, which is the better option – especially on your birthday!

For the most part, my route to Eye followed part of the first stage of my "Silly Suffolk 160/200 km Audax route, via Hulver, Redisham, Rumburgh, St James, Metfield and Fressingfield.



After Fressingfield, I decided on a change to the usual Audax route, to go to picturesque Hoxne village centre, not having been there for a long time and realising it's a nice place to photo, as is Goldbrook bridge, just outside the village. I expect many of you know the bridge has a certain history story, albeit some might call it a fable. It is that in 869 AD the then king of East Anglia, King Edmund supposedly hid under the bridge from his Danish attackers but was spotted by a newly-wed couple who reported on him. However, before he was led away, he supposedly spat out a curse directed at any couples who henceforth crossed the bridge, wishing them a lifetime of unhappiness. Edmund was tortured as the Vikings demanded he renounce his faith: he refused, so was lashed to a nearby oak tree where he was whipped until he was stripped of skin. Broken, battered and bloody, Edmund refused to

forsake Christ. Vikings were cruel, particularly towards the followers of 'the White Christ' who they considered to be cowards. Edmund's bravery in refusing to become the vassal of a heathen or denounce that he held dearest led to his death. He was beheaded on the orders of Ivor the Boneless and his brother Ubba and his head was tossed into nearby woodland – his followers later found him and later his head, guarded by a wolf who allowed them to take the head for burial.



Had I done some research pre-ride, I would have realised there is a stone cross that allegedly marks the spot of the oak tree King Edmund was allegedly tied to. I've a feeling I saw it without realising it's significance.

Back to my ride, I continued through Cross Street to Eye, for one of CafEye's terrific full English breakfast's. Imagine my disappointment on seeing a notice on the door advising they were temporarily closed! Nothing for it, I would have to use the Co-op. So I sat on a public seat with a sandwich pack and crisps and a Lucozade. The sun was really nice, making me a bit reluctant to move.

However, move I did, initially retracing along the B1117, to turn right just east of Eye town boundary, along that 'first time' lane. It's signposted as being part of the Suffolk Historic

Churches Route, which leads me to a digression. I have been trying to find out who were responsible for the setting up of the route and also the Mid Suffolk Cycle Route and Suffolk Coastal Cycle Route. My initial assumption was that they were set up by the county council but it seems not. For the churches route, it seemed logical to ask the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust but it wasn't them and they have no idea who is behind it either. I've also drawn blanks with the other two **Can anyone solve the mysteries for me?**

Back to my ride, it's an idyllic lane; very narrow and almost rough stuff for a short stretch and with a short but quite steep hill. A pedestrian/walker coming toward me as I got to the top said "Well done." However, I might be in danger of exaggerating. I doubt any of you reading this would have great difficulty tackling it.



From the end of the lane, I followed the pleasant quiet wooded lanes through Redlingfield to Horham, then back onto the B1117 through Stradbroke, to then follow my "Silly Suffolk" 100 route via Wingfield, Withersdale Street, Mendham, St Cross, St Margaret South Elmham, Ilketshall St Andrew, Ringsfield and Weston, from where I retraced the outward route back to Carlton Colville and then to The Bell. The Garmin indicated 72.93 miles so I achieved my objective.



I had booked my place for 3.45 pm. I was 1 hour early but no problem; I sat with a pint of some real ale and a packet of ready salted to tide me over. I'm well known to the staff so I somewhat got the VIP treatment. There was a ribbon saying "happy birthday" draped over the table and when they brought me my dessert (I forget what it was) with one candle on it,

three of them sang “happy birthday.” After blowing out the candle, I joked it was a good job it wasn’t the same number as my age. It made them laugh! As I expected of The Bell, I got my money’s worth. Because of how full I felt after finishing, I realised it had been a blessing in disguise CafEye had been closed. I wouldn’t have done enough miles after a full English to have properly worked up an appetite for such a big dinner. No doubt I would have managed it but it wouldn’t have been the same.



After eating, I lingered for a while over another pint (or was it two?) before doing the 1.97 miles ‘through the houses’ home, thus a total of 74.9 (oh well, 75) miles

I can say my ‘big 7-0’ was my most enjoyable birthday ever so far. Yes, even better than any when I was a little boy. The weather helped but I think it still would have been even if it had been pouring!

In conclusion, it’s sometimes said life’s simple pleasures are the best. Well, the joys the simple pleasure of cycling can bring, especially if combined with the other simple pleasures of good food and good beer.

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### **Southern Scotland short break by John Thompson**

I’ve mentioned before that my long-standing Audax UK friend, Lucy McTaggart organises a number of audaxes based on Galashiels.

One of them is the 117 km Bluebell Run to Broughton and Back. I judged it would work out nicely to combine with the opportunity to include an extra day to at last ride in the Moorfoot Hills area. The Moorfoot Hills are between Edinburgh and Galashiels to the west of the A7.

On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April, I was on trains to Galashiels. It was my third return trip on the reopened Borders line but the rail geek in me still enjoys it. It's very scenic in parts, ironically, giving views of the Moorfoot Hills.

I had been disappointed to discover that both the guest houses I had previously stayed at had become room only. Indeed, I couldn't find a guest house in Galashiels that served breakfast. I decided, therefore, I might as well opt for the cheapest one available, the Monorone. It was a nice enough place and ironically, was immediately opposite the rail station. For a rail geek, having the station for the window view was arguably perfect! In the evening I went to the Wetherspoon for my food and beer. It's also what I intended using for breakfast for the three mornings of my stay. Read on...!

### **The Bluebell Run (Broughton and Back) (117 km)**

I was under the impression from having used one for accommodation (Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire) that all Wetherspoons opened for breakfast at 7.00 am. Imagine my frustration to discover it wasn't until 8.00! As the event start time was 9.00, I was concerned I would be cutting things fine. I made for the HQ, The Focus Community Centre, and explained my plight to Lucy who kindly made me some toast.

The Bluebell Run is so called because you supposedly see a lot of bluebells on the route. I will return to that.

Galashiels is often stated as being in the Scottish Borders, but this ride is completely in Scotland – Selkirkshire and Peeblesshire.

The scenery throughout the route is absolutely idyllic. Lovely views over the hills, wooded lanes and riding alongside the River Tweed. With such spectacular hill views and the fact it's Scotland, it hardly needs saying, the route is hilly and the hills start almost immediately. I mentioned in an earlier article that there is a stingy climb out of Galashiels. This event uses the same road and while not the longest hill, it is, ironically, the steepest. At least it's over and done quick – well, perhaps depending on in what sense one means "quick!" However, the lovely hill scenery also starts from the top of that hill. A little further along after the descent the route is wooded and runs alongside the River Tweed.





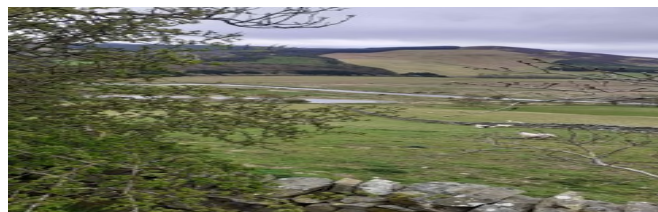
Although a flat few miles, for me it was one of the two nicest parts of the route. After 5.3 km in Clovenfords, the route is directed to avoid the A72 by turning left onto the B710 to Caddonfoot. From there, it was right for a 'splash' on the A710 to then fork left to Eli Bank and Traquair. There is a sharp climb initially away from the A702 and once at the top the view to the right overlooks the traffic on the A72, which isn't great, but also the River Tweed, which is nice. A little further along is a lovely wooded stretch passing through Eli Bank and Traquair Forest. The road runs very much parallel to the A72 so I suspect it's the 'old' road. From Traquair, (having skirted Innerleithen) it's right onto the B7062 through Cardrona Forest to Kings Muir and then Peebles for the info control. Peebles is an attractive town on the River Tweed, albeit busy. Getting out of Peebles involves a short stretch of the A72 before a zig-zag stretch of lanes, including a picturesque one signposted "Lyne station only" Realising there was no rail line in the locality, I figured Lyne was a closed station but was interested to see the building. Unfortunately I couldn't immediately see any building resembling a former rail station. Possibly I would have found it if I had looked a bit harder but I didn't want to lose too much time. Lyne station was on the Symington, Biggar and Broughton railway between 1864 and 1950, so at least not a Beeching victim.

Onwards through the lanes and the final 6 km to the Broughton control was the other part of the route I found the nicest. It involved a long drag of a climb and there was a road race on. It provided me with some fun. The finish was at the top of the climb and there were spectators. As I approached the flag on my touring bike, I raised my arm in victory to some fun claps. As I passed the spectators, I pointed to my bike generally but especially the pannier and tool bag, and commented, "They should try doing it with this lot!"

There was then a nice descent to Broughton and the control, the Laurel Bank café

It frustrates me not being able to remember what I had but it was very substantial and tasty and saw me back perfectly.

As the return is a retrace of the outward route, I don't need to write much. Just to say that after fighting my initial lethargy about immediately having to climb what I had just descended, everything was fine





I finished around 4.15 pm for tea and various bites and cakes, provided by Lucy. I felt pleased to have done just over 73 miles over a hilly route, including a café stop and photography stops in 7¼ hours.

Now, the matter of bluebells. Most of us didn't see any but while I don't think "there's always one" quite fits, yes, one rider saw one bluebell! Lucy has told me that for the future the event will be later to ensure they are out.

In the evening it was back to the Wetherspoon.

### **Galashiels – Innerleithen – Heriot – Fountainhall – Stow – Galashiels (44.74 miles)**

Today I was able to use the Wetherspoon for breakfast. Of course, I had the large version!

My initial intention was to re-follow the Audax route as far as Innerleithen, which I did as far as the left turn to Eli Bank. Suffice to say at that point I suffered a senior moment. For variety I decided to continue straight on instead of taking the turn. For some reason I didn't think it would take me onto the A72. As I approached a roundabout I realised it did. I was reluctant to retrace so decided, albeit also reluctantly, to grin and bear it. Nicely however, I didn't regret it. The A72 wasn't uncomfortably busy and as it runs alongside the River Tweed for much of its length, scenically it's not bad.

I didn't have cause to use it but from looking through the window it seems Innerleithen has a proper bike shop. By "proper," I mean run by a cyclist of our ilk, even though it's also open on Sundays. It's also opposite the junction with the B709, the road into the Moorfoot hills. It's probably the perfect location because the road attracts a lot of cyclists. I can imagine it being a 'water in the desert' type sight for cyclists whose bikes need attention. I made use of a shop and a public seat for a sandwich lunch before heading into the hills. It was immediately obvious why the road is popular with cyclists. The scenery is spectacular and there is a long but gently graded climb, giving the option of the challenge of it or enjoying a long descent. Local riders at the Audax finish said the climb is known as "Granite Hill." Googling, I discovered it forms part of an 82 km circuit, the "Tour of the Granites," starting and finishing at Mussleburgh. I'm guessing the area is called "The Granites" because of the architecture of the towns the route passes through. I'm now waiting for someone to tell me

I'm wrong! From what I ascertain, my route included most of the 'The Granites' route, albeit in the opposite direction. It was remiss of me not to note the distance of the climb from my Garmin. I would say about 6 miles. Even though it's a gentle gradient, I was tiring toward the end and was pleased to see the top. Just after the top, is the junction, where the B709 turns right to go through the village of Heriot and junction with the A7. Straight-on the road becomes the B7007 to junction with the A7 a bit further north. Both roads are equally scenic but I opted for continuing along the B709. Not just because the distance is shorter but the alternative would just have meant riding even further on the A7. Also, as I discovered, Heriot is picturesque, which I would have missed. Interestingly, the 'Granites Tour' is routed to follow the A7 to the B709 to include Heriot, even though from that direction it involves more riding on the A7

I had a nice surprise as I approached the A7 junction. I had thought I would have to tolerate a few miles of that main road but there was a cycle route sign pointing to the minor road through Fountainhall. There was also a public seat. I couldn't understand why in the middle of open countryside but it was useful as I was feeling peckish so used it while eating an energy bar. Perhaps it was put there for cyclists! The cycle route option runs very much parallel to the A7 so, again, perhaps it's the 'old' road. Even ignoring the traffic point, the optional route is worth taking because it stays high offering nice views, albeit they have to be worked for as it's continually up and down (short, steep type).

In Fountainhall, I crossed paths with a cycling couple stopped, the male with his bike upside down so I asked if they were okay. He assured me he was. We chatted about our individual trips and he told me the last thing I wanted to hear. They had intended catching the train from Tweedbank to Edinburgh, i.e. the Borders Line, that I was supposed to be using to travel home the next day, but trains had been cancelled due to a signalling fault. On reaching Stow, I immediately made for the station and was relieved to learn everything was back to normal.

I had three options for the final miles from Stow to Galashiels. A route west that would take me back to the early stages of the ride, thus retracing into Galashiels, a route to the east or just direct along the A7. I didn't feel enthusiastic about retracing. Concerning the route to the east, I was familiar with part of it so knew it would involve more climbing. Having already done a lot I felt lethargic about more so I admit the final 8½ miles were along the A7. It wasn't uncomfortably busy.

In the evening at The Wetherspoon, I took the opportunity to read an interesting information board on the wall. Before the building became a pub (called Hunters Hall), much of it was Galashiels' main cycle shop from which the town's first cycling club was formed, with other parts of the building serving as the club room. It gives it a nice touch for cyclists to use!

### **Journey home Monday 1<sup>st</sup> May (May Day)**

I could actually hear the train announcements from my room. Thus, even though everything had been back to normal Sunday afternoon, I was still pleased to hear the announcements on Monday morning. I really did chose the best place!

I made my final visit to the Wetherspoon and was very disciplined. As I would just be sitting on trains all day, I just had the small breakfast! I enjoyed the return ride on the Borders Line, looking at at the area I'd just been riding in.

In conclusion, another area I'd been wanting to visit now done and I was now well on my way to achieving my aim of seeing all the parts of Scotland I believe to be the best.

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### **A Wolsey Road Club Update**

As I write this it's the end of the year, I can't quite believe it but apparently it is true! As you read this the festivities will all be over so I hope that you had a lovely Christmas and New Year?

Wolsey Road Club has had a good year with club members doing various things. Some of the club trophy highlights are:

Trevor Roberts winning a TT trophy

David Sawyer winning the Hill climb trophy after a battle with Keith Sparkes

Keith winning the Club ride attendance and

Viv Woodgate winning the Audax/Sportive trophy.

The weekly club rides had been going strongly throughout the year with regular attendance until the last 3 weekends, which have been windy, rainy and icy in varying degrees which seemed to put our club members off a bit? I'm hoping that as you read this, the weather has been a bit more favourable to us cyclists. We accept winter is cold and possibly a bit wet but the amount of rain has been unbelievable at times.

In 2023 Wolsey RC as usual hosted 4 timetrials on a 10mile course over at Copcock/Raydon, these 4 events are part of the evening TT season, run in conjunction with Ipswich Bicycle Club, Plomesgate, Orwell Velo and Stowmarket & District CC. If ever you feel like a try of this please just turn up. You don't have to have any special equipment, just turn up with your road bike and as long as you have a working front and rear light, and helmet you are free to pay your money and get a time for cycling 10miles.

Looking forward to 2024 Wolsey RC are starting to organise the annual Reliability ride booked for Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024 so we are inviting CTC Suffolk to stop off and see us at Bredfield Village Hall. There are 3 distances, 50km, 75km and 100km, and in 2023 we had several of you join us on the 75km route, it would be fantastic if we can increase this number! (GPX files are available for all routes prior to the day). It will be really good to see you for refreshments or if you feel like it, actually riding the Reliability Ride, either way you will be warmly welcomed.

I hope the weather improves a bit so we can all enjoy our cycling.

Stay safe

Karen Eaton

Chairman for Wolsey Road Club

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